

CASTING CORNER



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Wind

Wind is the bane of a fly caster's life. It can be awkward when you are reaching for that long cast. Wind can make friends leave your side and go looking for a lee shore. When casting in close quarters, wind can cause severe embarrassment.

The wind we constantly encounter when fly fishing can also be a problem. Seldom do we go fishing without having to consider the direction and velocity of the wind. Recently, I had a long-time friend from the mainland visit for a week of fishing. I was hoping for some calm weather so I could wean him off the spin rod and onto the fly. No such luck on both counts.

The way you tackle the wind depends on whether you regard it as your friend or enemy. As an enemy the wind is invincible. If you only go fishing on calm days you won't get to fish very often here in Tasmania. You can select your fishing location based on a wind forecast but the prediction is often wrong. You can't beat it so you had better join it.

As a friend the wind has much to offer the fly fisher. Wind stirs up the bottom and dislodges food for the trout. Wind in the trees blows insects onto the water. A ripple on the water hides a poor cast or poorly tied fly. As a friend you have to take the wind as it is and do your best to work with it to achieve your goal.

This is not going to be technical article on how to cast in the wind. There are plenty of good books and DVDs which will cover this better than I can. However, my experience trying to teach my friend to fly cast in the wind highlighted some essentials that I think we should all be reminded of.

- Have the right equipment. When the wind blows put away that 4wt rod and make sure you have something more powerful with a fast tapered line and short leader. Overlining is not necessarily a good idea as a thinner line will cut through the wind.
- Brute force won't do it. Casting into the wind requires tight loops, high line speed and a steep trajectory. Practice hauling, casting tight loops and being smooth.
- Cast over the opposite shoulder, turn around and deliver the fly on the backcast or even change hands. It is not as difficult as it first seems and will enable you to fish on when the wind changes.
- Get the fly on the water. Don't false cast. Learn specialist casts such as the Belgian and Mulson casts which are designed to combat the effects of the wind. Casting in the wind doesn't need to be pretty, just effective.

If you are an experienced caster you can do all these things now and go fishing with the wind as your friend. For those starting out in fly casting, find a good book, casting DVD or get a lesson. If the wind is still your enemy you might want to consider the spin rod which is where my friend ended up ... again!