



## FLYLIFE GIFT VOUCHERS

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**O**! Yeah, You! Stop. Right There.

I can see you nonchalantly thumbing through the pages of this hard copy, thinking to yourself "Who needs a hard copy format when I can Google everything I need." Well, I need a hard copy, and so do a whole school of others.

What's that I hear you say? Old School? Well answer me this: have you ever tried to sell a first edition @FlylifeRob? Guess what — you can't. Cripes, I don't think Twitter even comes in editions. You could take a screenshot the second it is tweeted, but where's the value in that? So put those thoughts from your mind right now, and consider this: that email you sent to FlyLife two or three years ago? Remember that Backcast they published in the hard copy format? That's now in print. Wow! One day it could be the Eleventh Commandment — how cool is that!

The fact is, hard copy editions are valuable because they're independent and interdependent — just like that trout you see now, fanning its tail as it holds in the current. You don't catch that trout merely by seeing it online; you reach for it, you feel its weight as it hooks, you marvel at its hue in the half-light, and you hold it before release. I'm not saying that the e-world has no value, but you wouldn't pay fifty dollars to see an online MONA exhibition, or a streamed Sia concert, would you?

Remember that trip to the Oreti you had last year, where you got that stunning photograph of a six-pounder leaping clear of the water, the spray backlit by the sun? That wasn't a trivial thing. You spent a lot of time, patience and energy to get that shot. So try this: look at the online version of your photo, and now look at the printed version. It feels different holding it in your hands, doesn't it. And when you're gone, that hard copy photo is going to exist in the world. And someone else might find it, pick it up, hold it and look at it, and maybe love it like kin.

If you disagree with me that's fine, just be sure to flick Rob a Backcast and say so. In the meantime, do the rest of us a favour and buy a three-year sub to the hard copy.

Nick Withers, Montmorency, VIC

# Backcasts

Readers' comments

**H**ere's an obituary with two goals. The first should be self-evident. The second is that I hope it helps alleviate the need to scrap the Backcasts pages.

Adrian Latimer, author of *Fire and Ice: Fly Fishing through Iceland*, recently emailed me the tragic news that on 1 July 2017, just short of his 75th birthday, Orri Vigfússon succumbed to lung cancer.

Orri was almost single-handedly responsible for preserving the world's wild Atlantic salmon stocks. Adrian wrote a sublime obituary for the UK's *Trout and Salmon* magazine, parts of which I have paraphrased to flesh out the following summary.

Orri was born into an Icelandic herring community and later became very successful in the vodka business. He watched in horror as the local salmon stocks plummeted. The really big problem began in the 1950s when commercial fishermen worked out that both the American and European forms of Atlantic salmon congregated in feeding grounds around Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Soon, thousands of kilometres of driftnets were being set across the migration lanes, and by the 1960s the numbers of fish returning to their natal rivers to spawn had crashed by 80 percent.

Having witnessed already a similar destruction of herring stocks, Orri decided that enough was enough. In 1989 he founded the North Atlantic Salmon Fund and dedicated the rest of his life and 'considerable personal means' to stop the decline. Using his stamina and business acumen, not to mention persistence and diplomacy, he was able to raise millions of dollars to buy back netting rights in Canada, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, England, Wales and mainland Europe. He even negotiated moratorium agreements with several national governments, and some eventually began contributing to the buyback programme.

Working with his coalition partners he eventually managed to reduce netting across an estimated 85 percent of the salmon's North Atlantic habitat.

'His message was clear and focused. Get the economics right and treat the netsmen correctly. Move fish-farming to onshore closed-containment methods to remove the catastrophic consequences of open marine aquaculture, with its infestations of sea-lice, genetic inbreeding from escapees and all-pervasive pollution (from faeces and chemical treatments).'

Orri's work has resulted in huge increases in wild salmon returning to their home waters to spawn, and the North Atlantic Salmon Fund remains testament to the power of one man's ingenuity and passion. Although Orri is gone, the Fund is still working to put in place some of the longer term plans Orri had been working on before his death. Adrian stresses that the NASF still needs support to guarantee the critical deals that were the jewel in the crown of Orri Vigfússon's vision.

Whether or not *FlyLife* readers respond to Adrian's pleas for donations, I hope they are inspired by Orri's legacy. The efforts of a single person can make a difference. A dramatic difference.

Greg French, Molesworth, TAS



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