



ANZAAB Aspects of Book Collecting **Australian Angling Books**

Bookmark Australia

Background: Collecting Angling books has wide appeal, and not just for folk that fish. Many of the intrinsic characteristics of angling – solitude, meditative activity, excitement of the chase, celebration of the natural world – are also reflected in the collecting endeavour. Early literature with an Australian angling connection extends back to 1880, with the book *Vacation Tours in New Zealand and Tasmania*, by James Coutts.

Range: Australian Angling book collecting is diverse: trout fishing, freshwater flyfishing, saltwater gamefishing, sportfishing, (freshwater and saltwater), general fishing, and more. There are also numerous sub-genres collected, including colourplate books depicting fly patterns, particular waterways and angling ephemera.

Availability: There are numerous angling books available at antiquarian bookshops, and on-line. ‘Modern’ titles are plentiful, with the works of some of the most popular angling writers (Peter Goadby, John Sautelle, Vic McCristal, Lance Wedlick, Ron Calcutt, and the later work of David Scholes) readily available. Earlier works by *David Scholes* are scarce, as too, *John Hedge*.

Price-range: Good quality copies with dust wrappers of many angling books are available in the \$25 - \$50 range. The widely collected card covered Lance Wedlick titles can be found for around \$15.

The gamefishing title, *Gamefishing off the Australian Coast* by Athol d’Ombrain is around \$75. A first edition with dust wrapper of *An American Angler in Australia* by Zane Grey, published in 1937 can be purchased somewhere between \$1100 to \$1800.

Trout Fishing in New South Wales by John Hedge is increasingly hard to find and desirable copies cost between \$350 and \$425.

Possibly the most sought of all, are books by R.H. Wigram. The small first edition of *Shannon Rise* sells for around \$1200-\$1500; *Trout and Fly in Tasmania*, slightly less, and *Nymph Fishing in the Southern Hemisphere* published in 1939, sold at a recent auction for \$4400.

Footnote: The most influential angling book ever written – not Australian, nonetheless a part of many Aussie collections – *The Compleat Angler* by Isaac Walton, was first published in 1653.