

Mr. William H. Kelly III
Star Route 28B
Hunter Road
Claryville, NY 12725

Dear Bill,

Good to hear from you. I knew somebody out there still used wet flies. I do but had started to feel like a national historical area. Have been researching an article on the market and find that wets have dropped off the charts.

I don't think I'll get back to New York this spring -- have too much work to do landscaping this place here. But I would like to visit you one of these years at whatever you tell me is peak season. The Delaware sounds great but much like what we have in Montana. I'd like to hit the classic (yuk) hatches for brown trout, but even more I'd like to sneak some brook trout on their native turf. They stir major passion in my manly breast. Don't know if you saw my article in the latest Trout, but I was quite honest in saying I'd fly from Montana to fish Shenandoah Park in May. Besides, Montana has high water then.

Was it John Burroughs who used to plug the Catskills? Or maybe that was the Adirondacks. Anyhow, I could try to take some pictures and do an atmospheric article.

However, that's for another time. This summer I'll be exploring the small streams and lakes around here. The winter fishing has often been good, for reasons I don't understand. Would say insolation except that the cloudy days are better. The rainbows are spawning -- some of them -- but those I catch aren't ripe. They're in great condition and jump several times. You'd better come check this out. Doesn't make sense but it happens.

I don't know about jungle cock but am going to pluck a heron pretty quick if he keeps killing my spawners.

Yours,

August 2, 1983
Star Route 28B
Hunter Road
Claryville, N.Y. 12725

Dear Datus;

Please excuse the use of this elegant note paper. I'm in the process of having even nicer stuff printed up. I want to thank you for sending me a copy of your book. It certainly is very much appreciated. It is a breath of fresh air these days to read a fishing book that is well written and has a fresh approach. To me , the batting average for Angling literature has been very low since the 1940's. They don't make 'em like they used to, I guess. Several anglers I've talked with since seeing you are also favorably impressed . Again, thanks very much for your thoughtfulness.

Len Wright called a couple days ago. He was embarking on a salmon trip--without too much enthusiasm since the reports were low water and no fish. However, he had just gotten word of rain the previous night. Hope springs eternal, so he chanced the 1500 mile drive (round trip). Neither Len nor I have had much luck with the Neversink brown trout. It appears to be an off year. That would appear to be the case for the rest of the natural rivers of the Catskills according to reports of anglers I've talked with. Appears to be correlated with dearth of fishable hatches. There are fish present, of course, but it appears they spend a lot of their time feeding in the third dimension. The other day on my water, two hours of angling produced 17 brooks, 3 salmon and 2 browns. With the exception of a 12 inch brook trout, none were more than 9 inches. They were fun to catch on 24's though. About an hour ago, I

took a few casts in one of my pools (12:30 PM, fair, Air 80F, water 69F) and took 3 fish--2 brooks and a salmon--all 6-7 inch. However it involved a double with brook trout and salmon. #14 wet flies.

The next two trips to the shad pool produced 14 fish--16 including my partner's catch. These were filleted and smoked. My smokehouse is super and a thing of beauty. It quite closely resembles an outhouse on fire. Temperature control is excellent with an old Montgomery Ward sheet iron stove detached about 5 feet from the smokehouse and buried in the bank. Either hot or cold smoking is feasible. A small tornado occurring a couple weeks ago provided me with a cord of apple wood. Very convenient, since it missed my property completely.

I've been asked to initiate a guide service for local trout and salmon fishing to be booked through The Hatch, the Orvis shop run by Budge Loekle in Livingston Manor, and may do it. Haven't decided yet. I really believe my interest is more in fishing, so it would be a limited avocation.

Best of luck to you and if I can be of help in any way, please advise. Next you're back this way look me up. I can ^{provide} ~~provide~~ food and lodging also.

Sincerely,

Bill Keely

February 12, 1988

Star Route 28B
Hunter Road,
Claryville, N.Y.
12725

Dear Datus:

Your annual message of cheer and hope was much appreciated and I want you to know I sent out exactly zero greetings of the season this past year thus explaining the silence. I wish we lived (and ~~fixed~~ fished) closer together because in ~~the~~ short period of our acquaintance I had positive intonations of commiserating with a kindred spirit. By this I simply perceive we both hew to the relatively narrow trail of analytical, simple logic without attaching excessive meaning to cause-effect relations observed in the natural world. Cripes, there must be a better way to say what I just almost said ! Maybe it relates to adherence to the scientific method. I guess that's it, and I guess I've read one too many articles lately claiming the perfect wart cure--aquatic version. Too many plums and too many thumbs for me. There are more ~~ms~~ smart boys around than I bargained for. It's a blinking wonder I catch any fish at all, or ever have. I have a low backcast, the wrong leader formula, don't own anything stamped "Orvis", often fish wet flies, have a 3 dollar pair of sunglasses, Art Lee never writes and I think trout are delicious if you cook them properly. Likewise for salmon. But I digress.

As I started this letter, the house began to fill with smoke. Is somebody trying to tell me something? In this case I was ~~observing~~ ~~the~~ observing the cause though. My Vermont Castings Resolute fireplace insert woodstove was adjusted to the fireplace mode (door off and screen insert to enjoy the flames) but this blizzard howling around the house blew a significant amount of billow back into the living room

and kitchen and everywhere. After opening kitchen door, several windows, etc, things got back to normal. I heat entirely with wood here and it works out real well. For instance, notwithstanding the unusual incident described, the house is 70F. This really is too hot. I shoot for 65. I'll bet you get more and colder weather in Belgrade. This winter we've had a day or so at -15 or so, about two weeks at zero or slightly below, and that's it. Snow depth is not remarkable. Right now, with the 12^{inches} ~~xxxxx~~ or so over the last day it's about 20 inches, total. I consume 5½ cords per year of hardwood (maple, oak, beech ash, black cherry). Cut it myself. I haven't allowed TV to enter this sacrosanct domicile, but I do have VCR, which I like. As chance would have it, this being Abe's Birthday (born 1809 when the brook trout fishing was good) I'm now reading Freedom by William Safire--a real good ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Lincoln novel. Just finished Lincoln by Carl Sandburg.

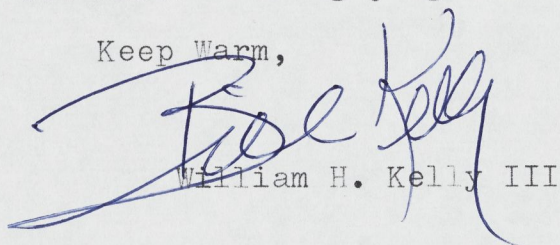
May would be a real good ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{time for} you to arrive and enjoy our piscatorial seasonality which you are absolutely correct in portraying as such. All things bright and beautiful in fishing are compressed, it would seem , into a two week period in May: shad run amok, the March Browns are on the Delaware (I released a 21½" brown during it last year in presence of sober and responsible citizens), the landlocks in Neversink Reservoir are on the prowl, the new stockers in the Beaverkill/Willowemoc make legends of obscure patterns and heros of nerd anglers and the one 12 inch wild brown on Len Wrights water goes on the feed. Len tends toward sophistry on the goodness of his favorite river almost always. I'm tempted to say this appears to surface lately in his literary attempts. Too bad. This can catch up with a person eventually.

So plan on coming East and this time we'll nail shad, you'll get

s shot at the West Branch Delaware (more like, I imagine, your Montana spring creek fishing) which has some frightening fish-- but--and I agree with Walt Dette-- we don't advertise this. When people call Walt's "Fishing Hot Line" they get everything up to date except even the mention of fishing on Good Old what's it's name. Walt is not behind the door when it comes to passing out the brains. He, at 80 plus, yet favors survival and I'm one of the many in the line forming at the left to assassinate him at the mere mention. We'll do the Beaverkill/Willowemoc No-Kills, hopefully the Esopus and the East Branch. This means a week, at least. You can stay at my house. For pure culture of wild brookies, I have places to go and things to do. To me this is great fishing. Wild brookies in abundance are a pleasure. Each one is not unlike a brilliant flower--reds, yellows, orange--fluorescent almost. Super. You may or may not (in May) time your arrival to fish with my May Regulars from California--two neat Md types and a less neat but extremely gifted angler/flytyer brother (loop wing dry flies and junk like that. Took a 7 pound brown on a #18 dry and other detestable feats). One MD is an extremely proficient artist: fish paintings, river watercolors, fish carvings. You'll see. Anyhow....

Get Here. Bring jungle cock! ^A

Keep Warm,


William H. Kelly III

A I jest.

love to find them. I expect much better results this year. There were plenty of salmon in the River during the November spawning run. Some to 7-8 pounds. Wait till next year!

No problem with wild brookies. In July yet, I fished Fir Brook Swamp, way back in from the road. Four of these mid-summer trips produced a total of 76 brookies. Wonder what it would be like in May when the fishing is good?

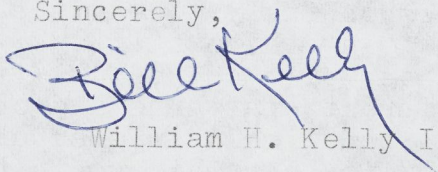
I'm enclosing a short squib I wrote for Catskill Fly Fishing Center. If you're a member, then you've already seen it and can consign this copy to the round file.

Fly tying is coming up next. I've got to go to town today and find some dyes. Have a bunch of caribou to dye.

Fished the Miramichi last September for 10 days. Fishin not wonderful but caught 5 fish including a tagged grilse (\$8.00 reward, fish at large 5 days between mark and recapture). I've got a lot to learn about salmon fishing. Ted Williams is a good fly tier and an excellent salmon fisherman. He makes it look easy to flail out 60-70 foot casts in continuous fashion with an 8½ foot rod. On the other hand he made it look easy to bat over .400. Unfortunately no one has done it since then. Ah well.

Have a good year and let me know your plans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Kelly". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "B" and a long, trailing flourish that extends to the right.

William H. Kelly III

January 7. 1987

Star Rt 28B, Hunter Road,
Claryville, N.Y. 12725

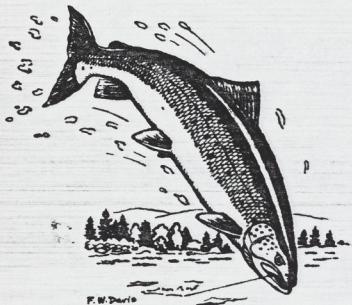
Dear Datus;

Thanks for the Xmas card. I sent out exactly none this year, in keeping with the proper image of the average Catskill fisherman eccentric. Sort of like the Norwegian bachelor farmers in Lake Wobegon Days by Garrison Keillor.

Yes, before you head for Montana, please let's arrange a fishing session here in the Catskills. I believe I can show you a hell of a lot better reaches of water than you fished last time. That is, assuming we are not in flood or drought. The trout are there and movable (even catchable!) given reasonable flows and temperatures. I'm thinking of East and West Branch Delaware Rivers plus the mainstem Delaware. These waters provide the best chance for fish a pound or better, with a percentage of them rainbows. The Beaverkill and Willowemoc are marvelous places to play with numerous fish more often than not up to a pound. I'm becoming increasingly less confident about catching the no-kill fish. Seems each year ~~xxx~~ they get "smarter" but maybe I'm getting "dumber" with age. Matching the hatch may not do it there with any consistency. Real small flies and correspondingly fine tippets have some appeal. I am going to toss in a #4 maribou muddler toward dark one of these days. It might (and other "different" patterns and/or actions) do something.

Shad fishing was super last year. I expect it to remain so in the future due to pollution abatement in the Philadelphia area. Even Len is getting interested. To make it more interesting, I caught shad in the Beaverkill last year. Certain pools there are preferred by the shad and also happen to be easily fishable by wading. This is not too well known and I hope to keep it that way. Under the right circumstances they are vulnerable to the dry fly.

The Landlocks were miserable however. I took only seven fish all year. The fish did not pull into the river-reservoir confluence and not being concentrated, it was a labor of



January 15, 1985
 Star Route 28B
 Hunter Road
 Claryville, N.Y.
 12725

enclosed ATLANTIC SALMON®

Dear Datus;

Last June you sent a scale sample from a 16 inch rainbow you took from your little stream. I used a medical microscope at low power to age the fish, which turned out to be a 3 year old. Using extreme and entirely unjustifiable scientific license I hazarded an approximation of growth rate for the entire population based on reading this one scale. In arriving at the representation plotted as the age-length curve enclosed I rather safely assumed the world is round and water flows downhill. Beyond these a pinch of legerdemain was required to attribute the following characteristics to the fishery.

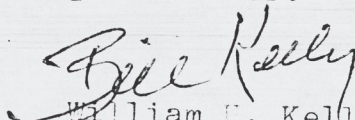
1. Growth in length proceeds uniformly.
2. The fish spawn in March and April.
3. Annulus formation is concurrent with spawning.
4. The population is closed, being essentially non-migratory.



It is a breath of fresh air to me in making this analysis. Usually I handled hundreds of slimy fish with cold wet hands, crated up the scale samples, took hours to read them, slogged around in bad weather identifying spawning beds, collected fall fingerlings for reference scales and early growth characteristics, etc. I like this method better. Albeit it may be just a touch less accurate and precise. Any resemblance between the enclosed graph and reality therefore may be entirely accidental. One more scale sample would probably destroy all of my current careful work rather than support it!

One thing though, growth rate is exceptional, that's for sure. S. gairdneri sp has tremendous genetic variability: resident vs transient, fall vs spring spawning, fast vs slow growth (food conversion), phenotype, food utilization (fish vs insects vs plankton) etc, etc.* It is yet possible your fish utilize zoo/phytoplankters somewhere in the annual food getting process, thus explaining optimal growth. Just a thought.

Have a good winter.


William F. Kelly III

OFTEN
* Life expectancy. ~~often~~ 4 years.
Some "strains" are twice that.
Youns may be 4.

AGE - Length Relationship

For Rainbow Trout

Read From DATUM Propon's

Stream in Montana

Length (Inches)

19
18
17
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6

AGE (YEARS)
x = Length April 1

