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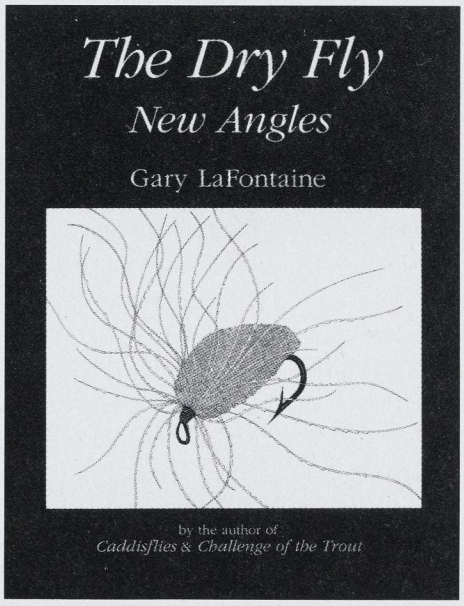

LaFontaine's Dry Fly

The Dry Fly, by Gary LaFontaine. Greycliff Publishing, Box 1273, Helena, MT 59624, 1990, 308 pages, $39.95 hardcover.

GARY LAFONTAINE'S THIRD BOOK is the fruit of more than ten years of research carried out by LaFontaine and skilled angler observers. The research involved detailed observation of trout and natural and artificial fly behavior from streamside blinds, fishing, and from underwater scuba diving. LaFontaine says his work was checked for accuracy by fish biologists, psychologists, physicists, entomologists, and other expert anglers.

The Dry Fly consists of ten chapters and appendices. The first two chapters offer respective theories on why flies and anglers fail. LaFontaine's conclusions may upset some anglers—he's highly opinionated—but his viewpoints are based on a lifetime of research and actual experience, both as a fisherman and a guide in Montana. Here are some examples of what he has to say on these subjects:

Why do imitations fail? "Failure has little to do with matching the insect; an imitation fails when, distorted by the surface film, it can't match the trout's perception of the insect's characteristics."

On primary and secondary triggering characteristics LaFontaine places extreme emphasis on the wing of the dun, as did Vincent Marinaro, who gets much mention in this book. LaFontaine says: "The fully emerged dun is not visible all at once; it appears bit by bit—with the wings upright and tall, peeking over the edge of the trout's window as the insect rides downstream. This is why the trout keys so strongly on the adult mayfly's wings."

And "It's possible to guess at the triggering characteristic of any dead-drift insect, not just mayflies, by watching how it floats on the water. If any part of the insect, including its legs if they are large enough or active enough, breaks through the surface film, this trait is noticed first. When an insect floats on the surface film without breaking through, any tall, upright feature will be noticed first. When an insect without upright parts rests on the surface film, trout notice the widest feature, whatever it may be, first."

On attractors: "~~It is a mistake to~~ think of an attractor pattern as anything other than a food form. To fish, it must appear to be something to eat—maybe an oddity, because of size, shape, color, or brightness, but it must still be recognizable as prey that may occur in a trout's environment."

LaFontaine psychoanalyzes trout in a chapter called "A State of Mind." No, trout don't "think" in the way humans do, and their brains are the size of a pea. But their brains function in reflexive ways that have a great bearing on how and why they respond to natural and artificial flies. He offers: "My belief is that traits in a fish are the evolutionary forerunners of emotions in human

Continued on page 16

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Continued from page 14

beings, and that for every complex set of feelings in us there is a simpler corollary in the basic brain. In humans those instinctive compulsions may be amplified by the mental power of the neocortex (and thus the phrase "the depths of emotion"), but they are no less real or demanding in a fish."

It's a long, perhaps fanciful leap from fish to humans in the complex evolutionary chain, and LaFontaine's education as a career behavioral psychologist may have influenced his creative reasoning. Whether one agrees with the author's epistemological analysis or not, his conclusions on trout behavior are both thought-provoking and expansive. The reader must make his own decisions on whether they are quaintly anthropomorphic.

LaFontaine's observations on the work of Dr. Robert Bachman in his trout behavioral studies on Pennsylvania's Spruce Creek at State College are important because they inspired the author to the study methods described in this book. Bachman used raised streamside observation blinds to watch trout in daytime. No fishermen were used except on one day near the completion of the study. LaFontaine used streamside blinds, and scuba-diver observers along with fishermen instream. LaFontaine concludes that Bachman observed site-specific trout behavior and that trout behavior varies opportunistically according to the disparate environments of different streams. It's an important distinction for fishermen, because, as LaFontaine points out, each stream presents different trout behavioral challenges for the fly fisher. In other words, fly fishing is not a simple game.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6 LaFontaine divides anglers into empiricists, generalists, and naturalists, or some combination of the three. He says empiricists select their flies by trial-and-error tempered with experience. Generalists believe that presentation is more important than fly pattern, and naturalists are those who match the hatch. He describes and discusses the fly-fishing tactics practiced by each, and why their methods sometimes work and sometimes fail.

One of LaFontaine's observations on flies in Chapter 6 reveals the foundation for his convictions on fly tying. "A predator in the distorted world of water doesn't perceive the whole insect on the surface, only the individual parts as they appear in his window of vision. The same principles for effective fly design control both wet

Continued on page 18

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Continued from page 16

and dry flies. The tier has to avoid negative characteristics, include all positive characteristics, and exaggerate the primary, or triggering, characteristic. It's not enough for an imitation to be perfect—it has to be a caricature of the natural." The caricature approach to fly tying is not new, but it has seldom been given such emphasis or rational expression.

On his judgement on fly profile: ". . .This is still the most important factor in surface imitation. The profile of the fly, whether it sits lightly *on* the surface film or rides flush *in* it, takes precedence over size, color, shape, or even brightnesss. Why? All of those other factors vary in their effect, changing with how high or low the fly rides."

The book's seventh chapter presents the conclusions of LaFontaine's long-term grasshopper study. It adds complexity to our understandings of this seemingly simple angling situation. LaFontaine ends the chapter by listing four general principles of hopper fishing that should help many anglers who fish hopper country.

In the chapter titled "Large Fish with Finesse" LaFontaine offers several methods of taking large fish on small drys. The chapter "Unnatural Acts" discusses when adding motion to the fly can be an asset and when it is a liability. This chapter is heavy in fly-presentation technique, and its sections on shelf-tailers is especially strong, although not new.

In the last chapter, "A Theory of Attraction," LaFontaine develops a theory for tying more effective attractor patterns. Through extensive research and testing every component of a fly, he scientifically designs "the perfect attractor dry fly" and gives the reasons why each component is as it is. At the end of each chapter, Lafontaine lists the flies that he carries in his boxes to meet the situations he has discussed. In the appendices he gives the patterns for each of these flies along with appropriate comments. Also found in the appendices are notes on observing trout, comments from critical readers of the book, a list of sources for materials and accessories, and a postscript.

The Dry Fly is illustrated with crude but acceptable black-and-white line drawings by Gretchen Grayum, and color-conversion black-and-white photos by R. Valentine Atkinson and others. There are four color pages, with only eight color plates of flies. It's unfortunate that Lafontaine did not use the color pages more effectively, since at least eight flies could have been shown per page to present the naturals and flies that match them. This color matching could have provided a vital (to the fly tier) visual foundation for what is set forth in the text.

Also, the publisher, in this case the author, should have given the reader at least 16 color pages to illustrate other important points that he makes in the book—riseforms and natural primary and secondary triggers, for example. The buyer deserves more color in a book of this importance, especially for $39.95.

The Dry Fly is scholarly and textbooklike, and if it weren't for LaFontaine's dry but often arcane humor, it could have been deadly dull. He keeps it lively with fishing anecdotes that are related to the points he wishes to make in his teaching, and with his pungent opinions. And he is teaching; the tone of the opinionated instructor is strong.

The Dry Fly delivers a lot for freshwater dry-fly anglers. So where does it fit in the literature on the sport? In the first rank. Every excellent book on fly fishing offers either a strong personal

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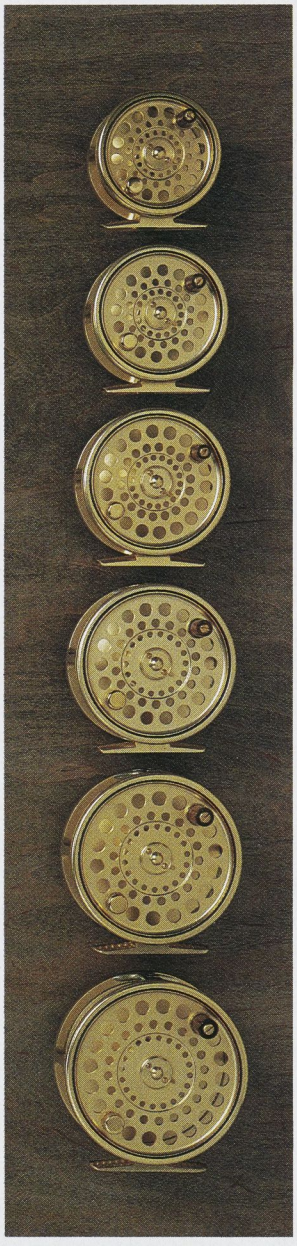

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viewpoint on the technical side of the sport or provides fine stylistic writing on its aesthetics. This one offers some of the best reflective analyses of trout behavior and dry-fly form and function in print. Every major author on the subject is not reviewed by the author, but most of the important ones are, and their contributions are placed in historical context. In fact, LaFontaine launches his departures from a thorough knowledge of past accomplishments by his predecessors. No author in the literature has done such a complete job of tracing and explaining the roots of his work.

There are other reasons why this book joins the first rank, despite its shortcomings in illustration. The author set out to add something new. Did he do it? We believe so. He has not reinvented the wheel. His flies are innovative—a little borrowed here, a little added there to previous attempts, all to create something functionally new. And his insights on fishing techniques, and the rational foundation for them, are explained in a way that no previous author has attempted. The intellectual foundation of his ideas is clearly explained, whether we agree with it and its quasi-scientific delivery or not. And there is no doubt that the ideas will have a strong influence on our fly tying and fishing for years to come.

The Dry Fly contributes much to a modern understanding of dry-fly fishing, perhaps as much as any book in the literature.

JOHN RANDOLPH
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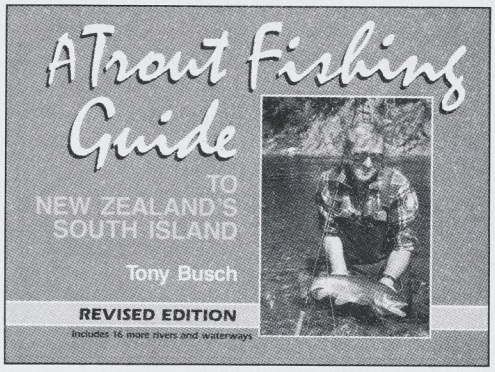
New Zealand Guidebook

A Trout Fishing Guide to New Zealand's South Island, by Tony Busch. Heyer Enterprises, U.S.A., P.O. Box 380177, Denver, CO 80238-0177, 1989, 206 pages, softcover.

MUST YOU HIRE a guide to successfully fish New Zealand's South Island? It is best to hire one if you have not fished the islands before, but you can find good fishing on your own, if you are lucky with the weather and are informed about the rivers and the fishing. Tony Busch's South Island guidebook provides much of the information you'll need to strike out on your own. An updated and revised edition of a 1986 publication, the introduction and a section entitled "South Island Techniques and Tactics" offer sound basic advice on how to fish the rivers, and the remaining chapters provide maps and detailed discussions highlighting specific access points, trails, bridges, stream characteristics, hazards, and many other important features.

The book includes 29 maps of the major rivers and lakes (16 are new) as well as numerous minor rivers and lakes that are seldom mentioned in print.



Busch also discusses where to stay and who to talk to when you arrive to get the latest available information.

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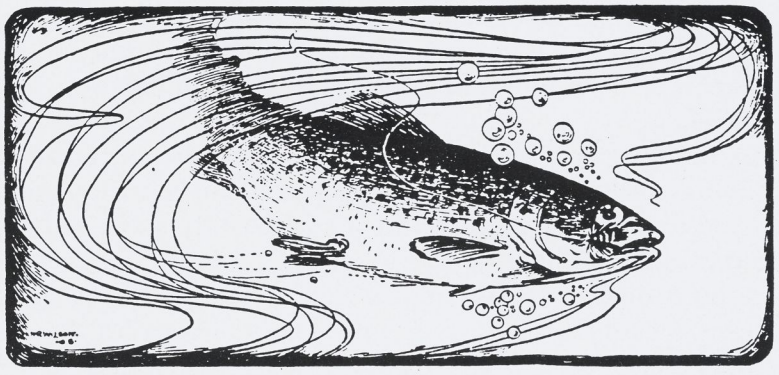


Bubbles

Herbert G. Wellington, Jr.

My first recollection of paying any serious attention to bubbles occurred many years ago while trying to present a dry fly to a salmon that was rising in the center of a large pool. There seemed to be no frame of reference by which to measure distance from my position to the fish, until I noticed that the surface of the pool was marked by many successive, almost parallel lines of bubbles. With some concentration and excruciating eyestrain I was finally able to place enough casts onto, say, the fifteenth bubble-line across the pool to raise the fish.

Since that incident I have become an observer of bubble-lines until it has become more of a function of the subconscious than the conscious. Infrequently they have been useful in gauging distance, but much more often their value has been in betraying some facet of the behavior of current, or of trout.

Anything that deflects current will generally leave its trail of bubbles. In swift water they may be as dense as foam, and on still water they may be so sparse as to become barely discernible. Underwater obstacles can also often form bubbles and sometimes

become their only surface expression.

Almost all pools have a distinctive channel that weaves its way from throat to tail and is slightly deeper, cooler and faster than the waters on either side of it. These divisions between waters that are moving at slightly different speeds are usually indicated by bubble-lines, and where such lines bend for no other apparent reason it may be presumed that they mark undulations of the channel.

In thousands of complex ways on every stream, currents of differing speeds collide or meld or run along together, and can be read by fishermen only by their surface differences and by the foam or bubble-lines that they create.

A great deal of flyfisherman's time on the stream is spent in casting toward a bank. It seems important to remember that banks are paralleled by a narrow band of water that varies in width unpredictably and is slowed by friction with the land. Bubbles will usually define this lane in which fish will lie to feed with minimum expenditure of energy. The definition of this area (and of many other complex spots) by bubbles will assist the dry-fly fisherman in devising the proper methods for avoiding drag.

As with any objects on the surface, bubble-lines will be offset from their usual position by wind. Thus, in wind the leeward stripe of water along a bank will be wider, and the windward stripe narrower than normal; and the bubble vestiges of the channel through the pool will be downwind from its physical location. Since the flow of food underwater is only slightly affected, the nymph or wet-fly fisherman will have most cause to compensate for the distortion of bubble-lines that results from wind. Dry-fly fishermen will want their fly to ride along with the bubbles, which indicate where surface food, also, will be buffeted.

In addition to what close observation of bubbles can tell us about stream flow and contour, it can also reveal a lot about the behavior of trout. A bubble (or its absence) is often the best—and sometimes the only—clue to the type of feeding activity that is taking place.

The simplest way in which a trout forms bubbles is by a rapid displacement of water—a slash or a swirl toward an escaping prey. No experienced fisherman needs to read bubbles to figure out what is going on here. Very occasionally this type of rise might be confused with the much slower displacement that is made by a trout tailing in shallow water—an activity so gentle and deliberate that bubbles are seldom left behind.

A more complex formation of bubbles is created by a trout expelling air through its gills. Air is ingested only when a floating insect is taken off the surface and never when the object taken is in the subsurface. Goddard and Clark describe the mechanics clearly:

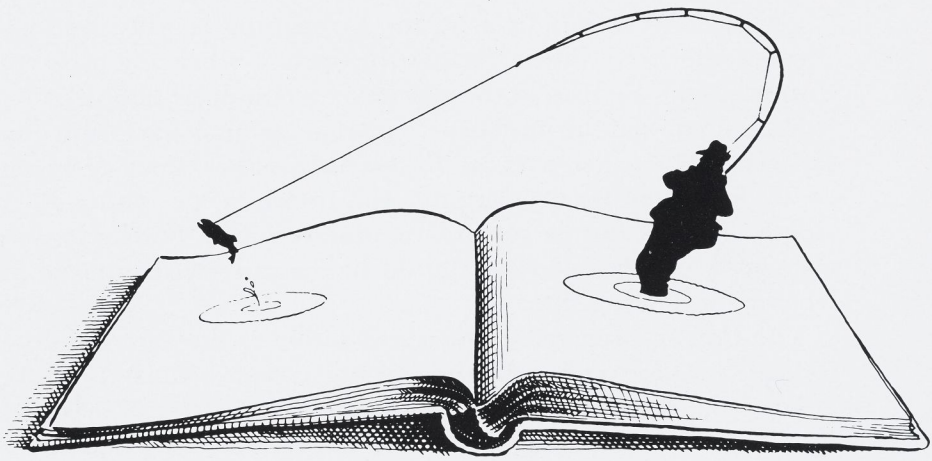
"When a trout takes a fly from the surface, it cannot help but take in some air as well. When a trout does take in air, it gets rid of it as rapidly as it can, by opening its gills. And because the trout is well below the surface when the gills are opened, the air rises to the surface as a bubble or bubbles.*"

Very often even the most experienced angler may have difficulty in deciding whether rises are to the fully-mature floating insect or to its incomplete, emerging, subsurface stage. Although a single rise may not be conclusive, observation of bubble formation on a number of rises should be definitively diagnostic of feeding on floating flies.

The tiny sipping rises—often as audible as they are visible—indicate feeding on insects that cannot escape because they are either dead (spent) or trapped within the surface film. The sound itself is proof that the tip of the neb has penetrated the film and a minute quantity of air has been ingested—probably too little to produce a visible bubble. With this type of rise the ears are as trustworthy as the eyes.

"Observation" along a trout stream means different things to different people—bird watching, appreciation of apple blossoms, cloud formation, sunlight and shadows. Among such wonders of nature it seems insensitive to suggest that a small amount of attention to the common bubble can be so hypnotizing, and so rewardingly informative. It is, however, an aspect of running water and has more relevance to a brown or a rainbow than a rainbow in the sky.

**The Trout and the Fly,* Benn, London, 1980—p. 57



Library Corner

BOOK REVIEWS

ATLANTIC SALMON FACT & FANTASY

Gary Anderson

Salar Publishing, Montreal (1990)

Fact and fantasy are surely there in Gary Anderson's latest book on salmon fishing. This interesting, handsome, clearly written book is a most worthwhile addition to the salmon angler's library be he tyro or pro.

Tactics

Organize around 3 subjects:

1) Trout biology + behavior

2) ~~Stream~~ Type of water: slow stream, fast stream, lake

3) Insect behavior, etc.

4) The anglers capabilities

tackle

sun direction

Note that both Sawyer (check) + Hersey insist that a weighted nymph should enter the surface before the line. (Explain how to avoid.)

See graph on water temperatures

dry flies warm up frigid-water brookies

By Harry Murray

By early March my fishing partner, Willy Downey, and I decided winter was well enough over for us to head for our favorite mountain brook trout stream. Some patches of ice still lingered along the old logging roads in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, but we were confident a four-wheel drive vehicle could get us to the stream. With our enthusiasm high after a long winter, we departed.

We arrived safely, grateful for the four-wheeler. The air was very cold and we put on all the extra sweaters we had brought.

According to our stream thermometer, the water temperature was 37 degrees F. Although mountain brook trout are active at lower stream temperatures than either rainbows or browns, we had never taken brookies on dry flies in water that cold, so we each knotted on large, heavy nymphs and headed downstream. We had eliminated streamers because there are no minnows in this particular stream.

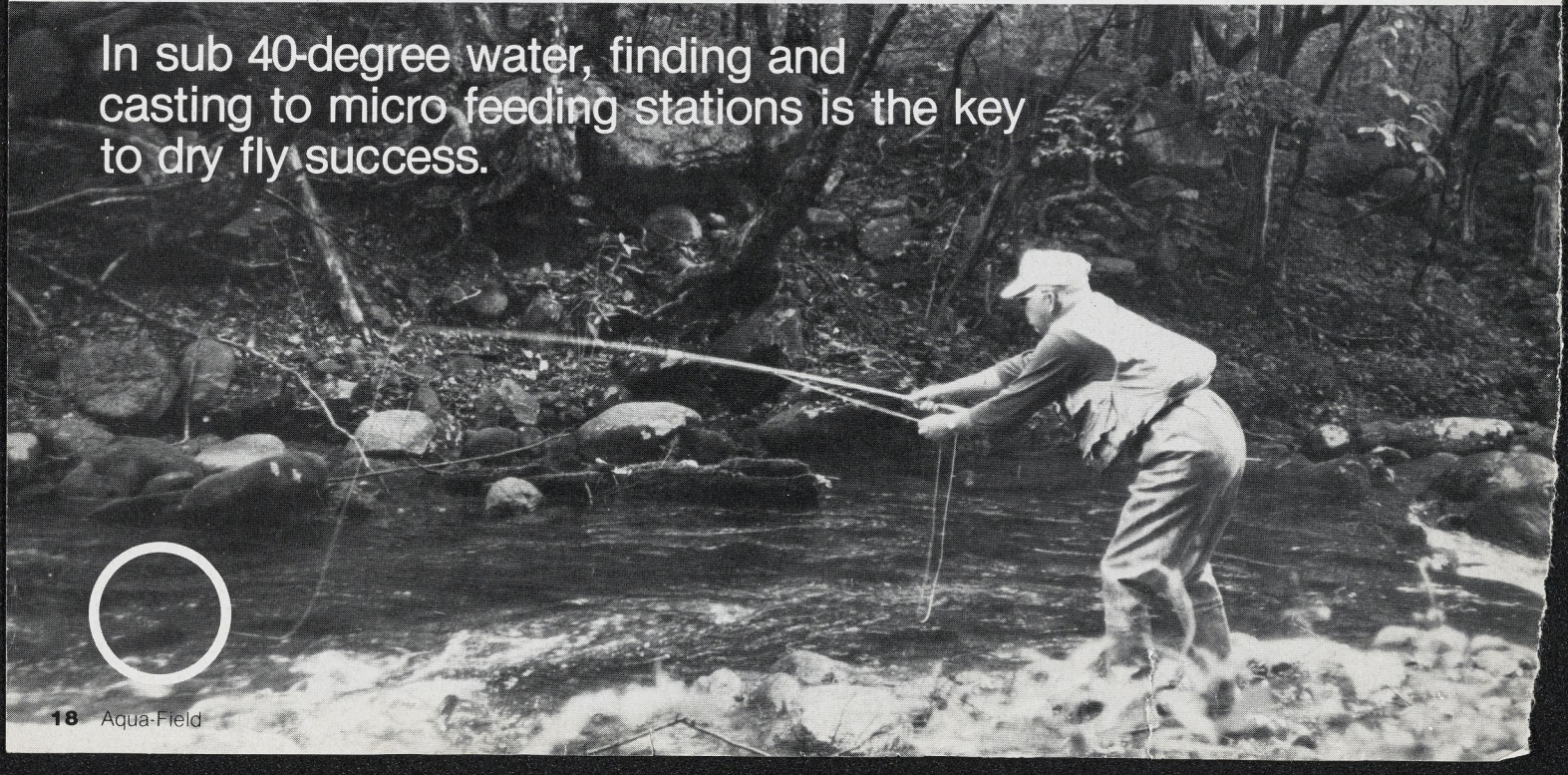
Easing my way into the first pool, I was surprised to see a brookie holding on a feeding station in a small back eddy in water only six inches or so deep. I felt sure it would take a dry fly, but since the nymph was on I decided to show him that. In the excitement of seeing the first trout of the season lying there saying "try me," I succeeded in hanging my nymph on a tree limb several inches over its head. Needless to say, I spooked the fish off its station. I was a little sorry I had not switched to a dry fly as I was sure this one fish in dry fly water was a fluke. I wasn't anxious to start switching from nymph to dry and back to nymph this early in the season as ice was already forming on the fly rod guides and my fingers were numb with cold.

I continued to fish my weighted nymph upstream and with exceptional success. It was the type of day I dreamed of all winter while tying flies and talking about fishing. Even with the low water temperature and patches of snow on the banks, those beautiful little brookies went for the nymphs in a big way. Willy enjoyed the same success.

After lunch I decided to go back to see if that first fish was out again; I couldn't get it out of my mind. Approaching the pool I saw it lying in exactly the same feeding station it had occupied at the day's beginning. Warmed by the sun and lunch and not too lazy to change my fly, I tapered my leader down to a 4x tippet and put on a No. 12 Mr. Rapidan dry fly. This combines the best of two early

Harry Murray is the owner-operator of Murray's Fly Shop in Edinburg, Va. He has fished Montana's trout waters for 20 years and Virginia's bass water for much longer. He also does some winter fly tying and conducts fly fishing schools at a local community college.

Circled spots show feeding stations where early season brookies can be taken on dry flies. Some are as large as three feet and some as small as a grapefruit.



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*outfit includes rod shown, matching Medalist reel, Air Cel Supreme WF floating line.

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FFT

season hatches in Virginia. It is a highly visible fly resembling both the Gordon Quill and the March Brown. It is fished in sizes 12 and 14.

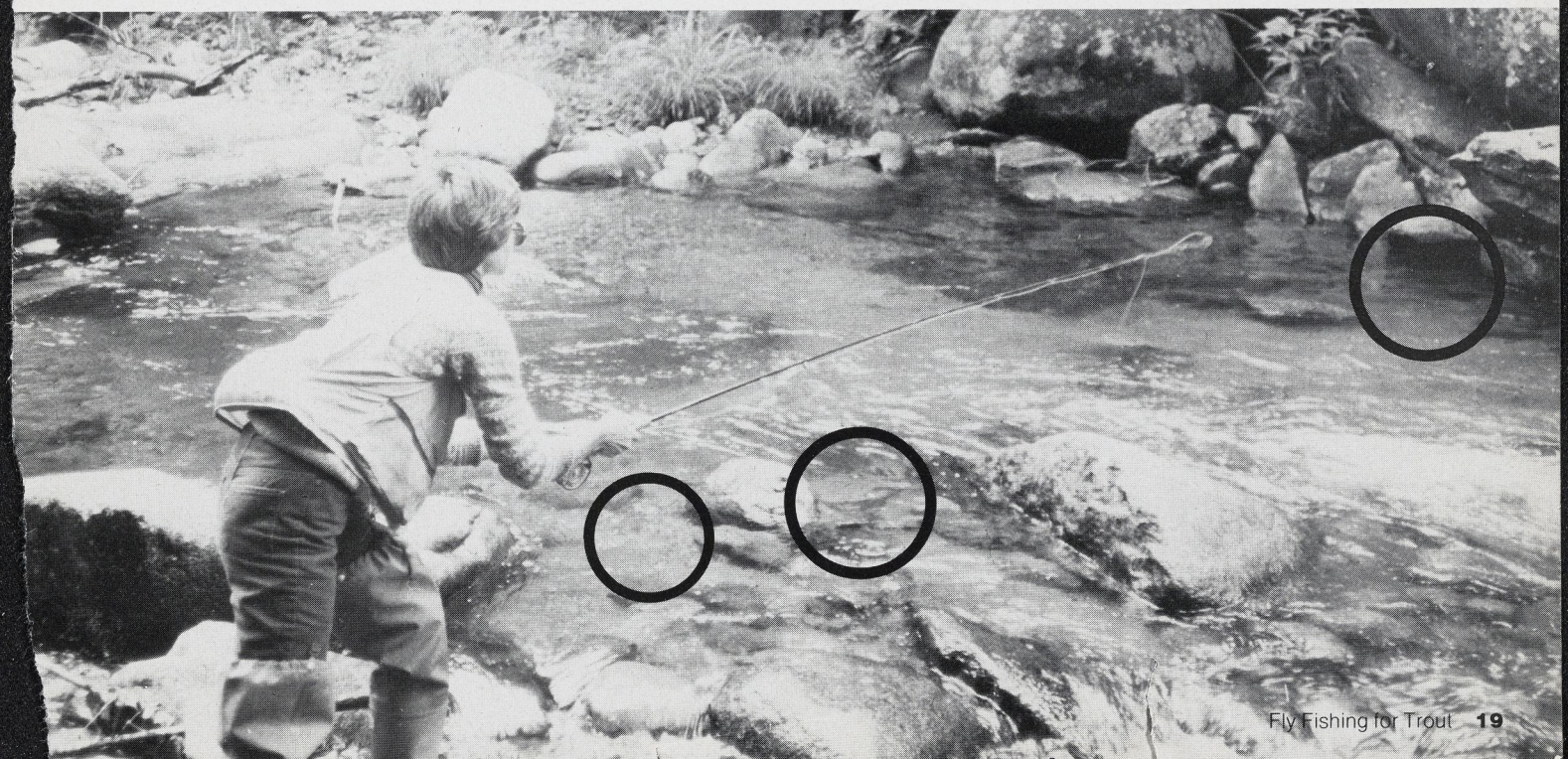
On my first cast I succeeded in hanging the dry fly on the same limb that had caught my nymph before. At least I was consistent. The fish spooked and I retrieved my fly. I decided to stay with the dry fly rather than rework my leader and go back to nymphs.

Downstream there was some quieter water which always produced good dry fly fishing in May and June. Hoping to find brookies on feeding stations there, I looked over the first pools, but because the stream was so full of water, summer feeding stations were nonexistant. The water was ripping through the pools so fast and heavy there were no "tops," water on which to even try to float a dry fly.

I looked over each pool and pocket using the first brookie's feeding area as a guide. After all, a 12-inch brookie can only take up 12 inches of water. If the other 20 feet of water in the pool is coming out like a downspout, the fish will find someplace else if it is feeding on dries.

Charlie Fox, the Pennsylvania fly fishing expert, years ago developed a game of miniaturization in which he would go to smaller and smaller flies as his tough Letort browns rejected the larger ones. I decided to take Charlie's approach in analyzing the pools with the hope of taking the fish on dry flies.

Some pools simply had no areas identifiable as dry fly feeding stations. The



Angler nets a nice brook trout taken on a dry fly below a short stretch of rapids.

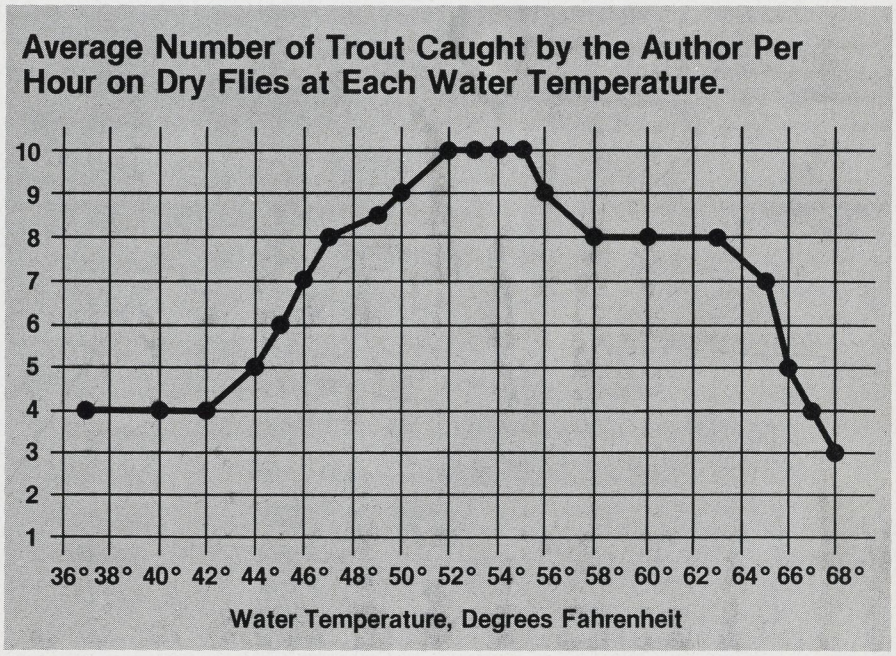
task of water reading was tougher than expected. It was easy to eliminate three fourths of the water, but the remaining one fourth was something else.

I decided to devote the next four hours to working with dry flies exclusively regardless of the results. With close observation and much trial and error I finally started putting it all together. Some of the patterns used were Dark Goofus, Royal Goofus and Coachman Trude, all in sizes 12 and 14. More than 20 brookies were caught and released in the next four hours and some were larger than any taken on nymphs earlier. Their feeding stations had some recognizable common denominators. These areas were well out of the heavy flow of the current, but none was in absolutely dead water.

The stations ranged from three feet wide to as small as a grapefruit and were usually less than a foot deep. It was easy to almost wade past one without noticing it because it was so small. I would come into the lower part of a pool and see nothing but white water and be ready to go on through the pool when I would spot one of these little "flat top" feeding stations behind boulders or off to the side of the main current. The small pockets behind boulders proved to be the most difficult to recognize, but once detected they were the most productive. Often they would present only a six-inch area in which to drop a fly, but that was enough.

The late Dan Bailey once described similar areas in the Yellowstone River as being located where the fast water meets the slow water. He said they were best distinguished by the short little pointed waves on top which seemed to get nowhere.

Careful observation of the pool is the secret to this type fishing. In his wonderful little book "My Friend the Trout," Eugene Connett tells the story of a young fishing friend who, upon returning from several hours of unproductive fishing in a different part of the stream, is shocked to see the number of nice trout Gene had caught. After discovering these fish had been caught on the same fly and technique he had been using, the boy asked for help; but rather than grab his own rod and demonstrate the method on the stream, Gene asked the boy to fish the next pool above them. The young angler waded out into the pool, but before he could make a cast, Gene called him back



and asked him to sit down with him to study the pool. After a few minutes Gene said, "If there was one real good fish in that pool where would it be?" The boy studied the water carefully and pointed out a certain part of the pool. Gene said, "And if you wanted to spook that fish where would you enter the pool?" Quietly the boy answered, "Exactly where I did."

Once these feeding stations are identified they are relatively easy to fish if you keep a few points in mind. The fast current around these pockets is the most difficult problem. If the line or even the leader falls on the fast water, even if the feeding station was hit dead center by the fly, seldom will a trout rise.

Fish in water at this temperature rise slowly compared to two months later and the fast current pulling on the leader simply drags the fly out of the pocket before the fish can get to it. For this reason it is essential to approach close to the feeding areas. An accurate cast is a must. A fly landing in the fast water six inches off target will not even be seen. A worse situation is when the fly lands close to the fish but so close to the fast water that the current immediately grabs the leader and pulls the fly away in an unnatural manner before trout can get it. This fish will seldom come back to the same fly even though everything may be right on the next presentation.

Get as close to the feeding station as possible without spooking the fish and measure your cast accurately by false casting. Drop the fly on target and immediately raise the rod tip high enough to get all the line and as much of the leader as possible off the water. The fly and only six to eight inches of leader should be on the water. The strike usually comes within the first five seconds and a delicate strike is required to prevent snapping the fish off on this tight line.

This close approach and required accuracy puts strong demands on tackle. There are many excellent rods which perform beautifully when presenting a fly 20 to 30 feet away but will not give the accuracy needed with the leader and only a few feet of line beyond the rod tip. Rods in the 7½ to 8-foot length work best. A much shorter rod than this requires wading too close to the feeding areas in order to have the reach needed to control drag. Longer rods continually hit the ever present tree limbs near the small streams. The rod I have finally settled on after much experimentation is a very delicate 7½-foot rod which handles a No. 4 line.

I never did catch that first brookie, but it led me to experiment with a new method of early season fishing. Maybe next March with the ice on the guides and numb fingers I'll get a third chance. I know a little more about that trout now.

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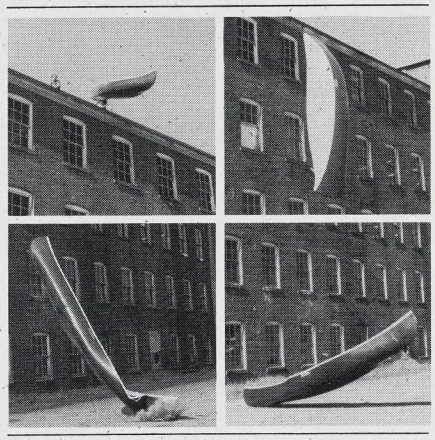

we got rambunctious and tested the canoe by launching it off the factory roof, then sold it at a discount to a fellow down the street. He paddled it for years, and only recently sold it back to us. Still seaworthy.

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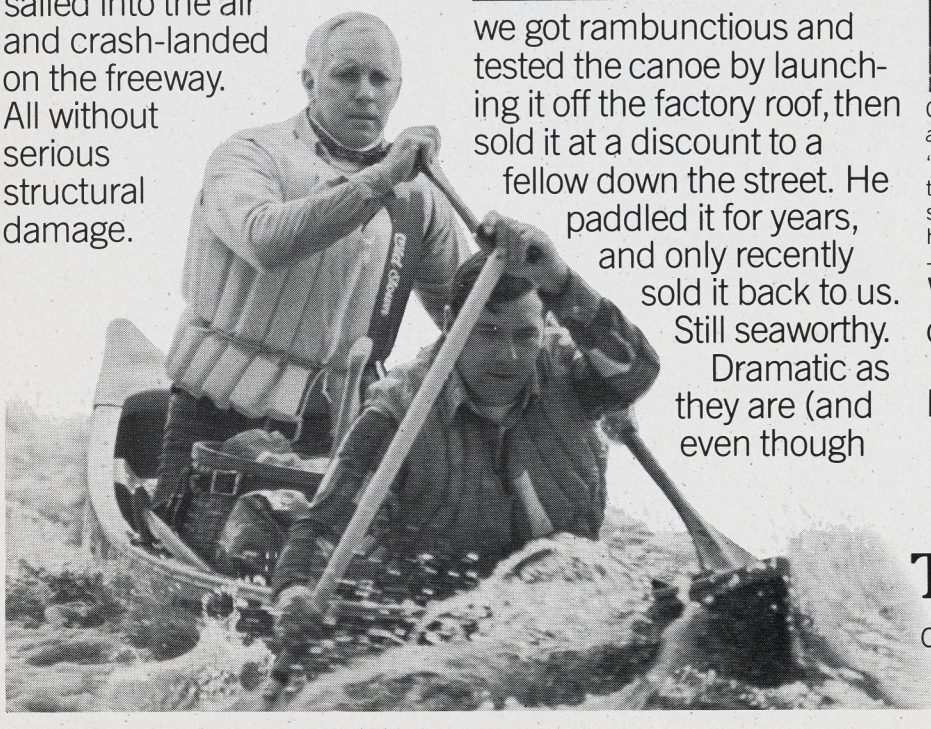

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Conquering Lip Currents
Joe Humphreys

A pool's lip is the dry-fly angler's toughest challenge and the trout's best friend.

I WAS JAMMED BACK into the brush next to the bank, down on one knee, trying to find room for the rod tip in a heavy stand of rhododendron.

The pool was 30 feet ahead—the cast had to be there the first time because there would be no second chance. With the rod tip in motion and the line moving, I squeezed off an almost imperceptible casting stroke. The leader and fly dropped just ahead and to the right of the shallow tailing water at the end of the pool. Without hesitation, the trout took the fly moments after its contact with the water. The fish was a stream-bred brown of nearly 14 inches with markings like some of the brook trout that inhabited the stream—a beautiful fish.

Earlier that summer afternoon on that mountain freestone stream, I was having my share of problems. The first pool had set the tempo: From my vantage point I could see a trout near the surface at the precise point where the water left the pool. My first cast was a direct shot, too direct—the leader straightened, the fly raced over the lip and the fish disappeared. On the next pool my approach was too close, a wake of water announced a frightened trout dashing for cover. I cursed myself because I knew better than to get that close in the water as low and clear as it was.

The following pool was no different: My approach was better as I stayed back and lowered my profile. I opened my casting loop, and the leader, designed for a drag-free float, looked as though it would accomplish its purpose. The fly danced toward the brink of the lip, a trout slid under it, but drag set in and the fish pushed water ahead of it as it ran for cover. The pool was long, and wake after wake broadcast the fright of a school of trout.

What had I done wrong? The open loop had nicely piled the leader; the tippet had been adjusted to complement the fly, but the cast was too far beyond the lip—it should have been directly on it. The currents were too fast and I allowed time for the drift, time that I didn't have.

Pennsylvania's mountain streams, with their heavy rhododendron and hemlock cover, consume a lot of my fishing time. Dry-fly fishing for mountain trout is challenging, particularly in the low, clear waters of late season. Casting room usually is restricted, and the fish are instinctively wary and easily frightened. The contest is even more complex because the course ou play, the stream, is designed to give the edge to the trout . Its most challenging obstacles are lip currents, shooting, funneling flows that drop at the tails of pools where water levels change between boulders and sweep headlong at the narrowing pool's end—at the very lip. They can be disaster areas for a dry-fly fisherman constantly trying to eliminate drag, and they can be a trout's best friend.

TOM MEADE PHOTO

TOM MEADE PHOTO

The author (photo at left) casts to drape his line over a rock to eliminate lip-current drag and prolong the fly's drift. Above, he casts the line low to the water and at the last moment adds a lift and a left curve—one of his "combination shots."

There are three essential elements—*only three*—of dry-fly fishing that, combined, enable you to accomplish the ultimate goal: catching trout. You must master those elements to conquer lip currents, the toughest dry-fly fishing challenge. Those three essentials are: 1. Position yourself in the best place to get a drag-free float and casting room. 2. Your leader must be designed to overcome drag and get the fly where it must be. 3. You should be able to make a cast that causes the leader to float the fly without drag. The rod, other equipment and fly selection play important roles, but they only complement the basic three.

Position

I ONCE HEARD SOMEONE say, "Always fish upstream when fishing a brushy mountain stream, because the fish always face upstream." Trout may face into the current but that may not always be upstream.

Most of the time, an upstream approach and casting position is advisable because fish do face into the currents and often that is upstream. But sometimes obstructions may make a *downstream* approach to the lip more productive, or you may have to cast from a considerable distance off the bank above the lip.

Suppose that you see a trout surface feeding at the edge of a lip, between two boulders where a considerable amount of water and drop increase the current's speed. You're not going to get any drift time but you *will* get immediate drag—no matter what casting technique you use—if you cast straight into the chute.

Position yourself *as close to the feeding trout as possible*. Being close offers better line control; you can lift more line off the water with an extended rod for a drag-free float. And being close allows greater accuracy for casting to fish, and over or around obstructions. Close may mean a better angle to your quarry—off to one side or the other depending on what hand

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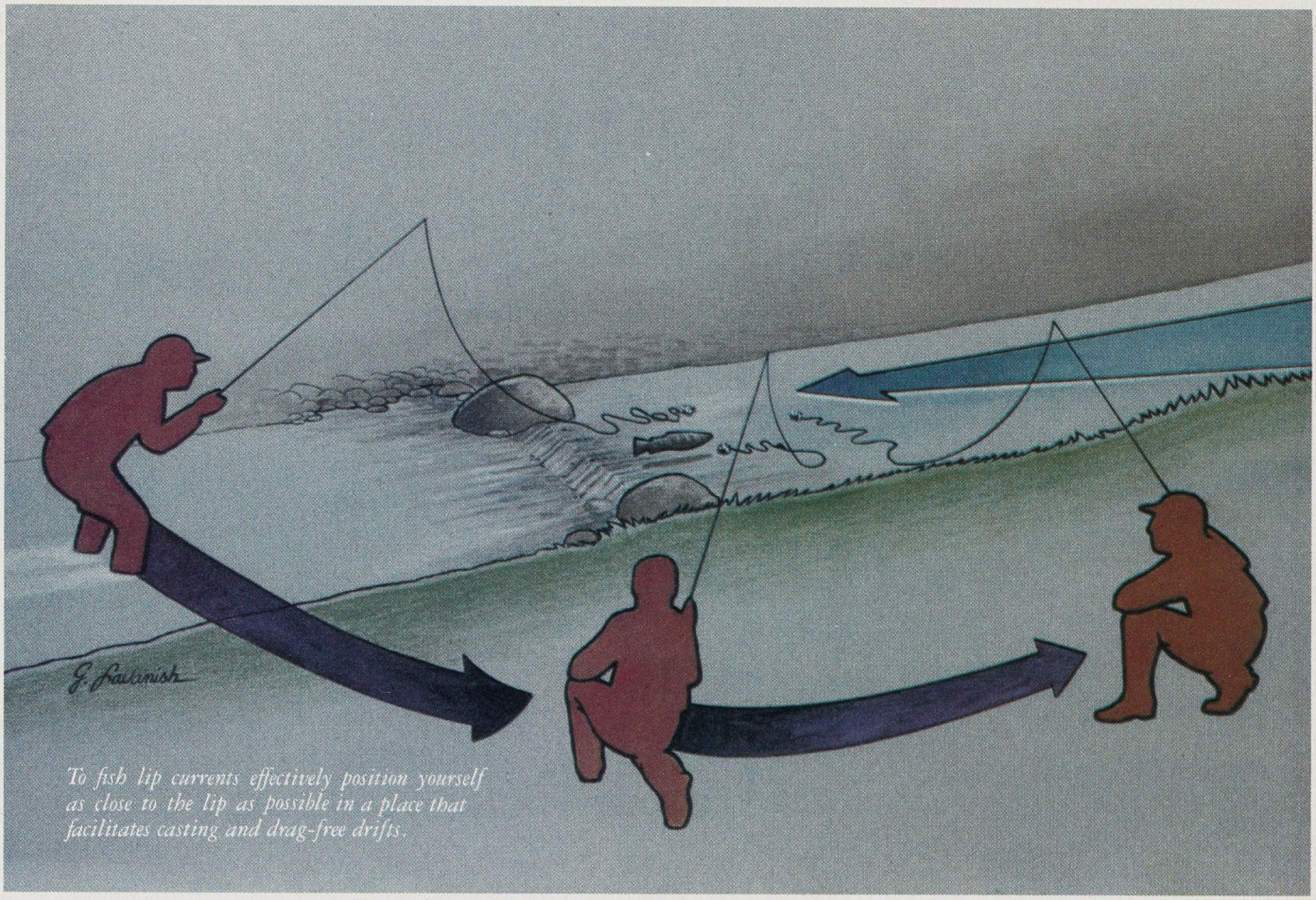
JOE HUMPHREYS, Penn State angling professor, is author of *Trout Tactics* and host of "Fly Fishing," to be nationally televised on ESPN, the cable sports network.



To fish lip currents effectively position yourself as close to the lip as possible in a place that facilitates casting and drag-free drifts.

you cast with or the obstructions that impair your casting freedom.

To get close to the lip you must keep a low profile. Fish against a background close to the bank, down on one knee or both, even if the water laps at the top of your waders. Whenever possible, keep the sun at your back; it's tough for *you* to look into the sun with eyelids, eyebrows and lashes, none of which a trout has, so the sun's glare will help hide you from a wary fish.

The water at the lip will dictate how close you can get. A riffly surface, mixing converging currents, or a considerable drop will help you get close. A shallow, flat lip forces you to keep your distance.

When the water is low and clear and you've got a population of well-worked-over trout, then keeping your distance is imperative. I've had anglers say to me, "Fishing for mountain brookies is easy—all you have to do is sneak up and poke your eight-and-a-half-foot rod through the brush and flip your fly on the water and..." And bull. Poke a rod tip over shy trout in low, clear water and wave it around and you'll cause a stampede. That approach may be possible in the spring when the water is up and off-color, but not on the low, clear water of the summer.

AUTHOR'S PHOTO

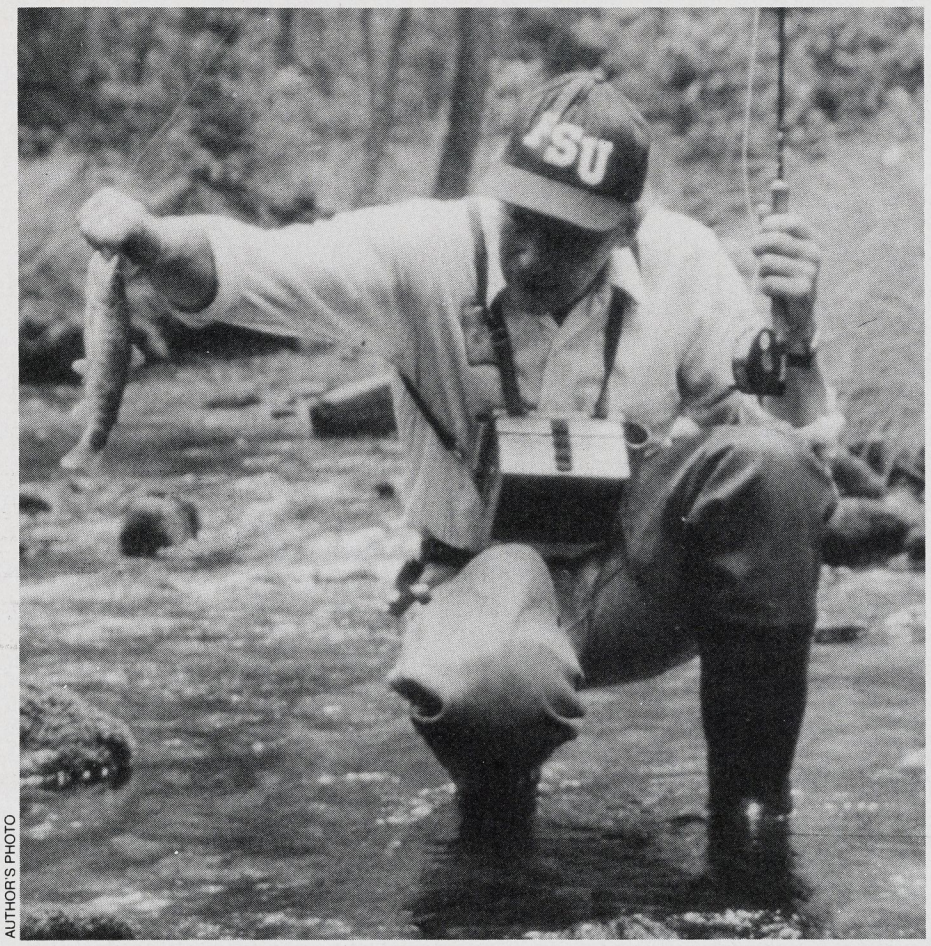
A trout lies on the lip of a pool where the current is comfortable and food funnels to the fish.

The Leader

GEORGE HARVEY'S LEADER design may be the most important contribution to the fly fisherman in the last 50 years (see FFM, Volume 11, No. 3.) A combination of stiff and soft nylon monofilament, the leader collapses on the water with its tippet extended for a prolonged float. The stiff portion of the leader enables you to get the fly back under the brush (an all-soft nylon leader will collapse, no matter how good a caster you are).

The best way to determine whether the leader is working is to stop a cast sharply overhead and let the line and leader drop at your feet to see if the soft-nylon tippet lies in S-curves. If the tippet straightens, it is too short; cut it off and replace it with a longer one. If the tippet falls in a pile and it is difficult to cast the fly, shorten the tippet. There is no one absolute formula for tippet length—you simply must work with it until it is right: until you see those S-curves right up to the fly. The tippet diameter depends on the clarity of the water and the density of the fly I'm using, but I never use a tippet smaller than 6X because when I hook a fish, I want to land it quickly, not worry it to death.

The length of the leader depends upon how open the water is. It may be 10-1/2 to 11 feet in an area where you have casting room, but when you step into a brush-pile you can't handle 10 feet of leader. Then, the leader might be five or six feet long but the design remains basically the



AUTHOR'S PHOTO

The payoff from a Pennsylvania mountain stream: a stream-bred brown with magnificent markings.

same, a combination of stiff and soft monofilament, and a long tippet section that casts the fly accurately and falls in S-curves.

Casting

I'VE ALWAYS COMPARED CASTING with shooting pool, particularly when lip currents are involved. You make some straight shots, but a majority of the casts are combination shots. The rod is like a cue and you put English on the ball—your line and leader—with your wrist and fingers. Where your thumb, knuckles and rod tip go, the line and fly go.

A straight cast directly into the lip means trouble. Any time you straighten the line and leader in fast water, across currents and into tailing water, you get drag.

If you must cast straight to the lip, check your cast high and drop your elbow, while keeping the rod tip elevated; the change of level will give you a wide, high loop and extra float time—if your cast is not too deep into the lip. When you must work directly below the lip, try to get as close to the lip as you can. (In some situations directly below the lip, close may be 40 feet.)

Another cast that puts slack into the tippet is the **drop cast**. Push the thumb of the casting hand up and quickly drop the rod tip to collapse the loop. Not only do you get slack in the leader, but the fly plops to the water heavily, an immediate attraction to the trout—if the fly is free of drag.

One of the best ways to attack lip currents on an up-stream approach is to move off to the side and work on an angle—you won't be casting directly into the current and from an angle you have different casting options—"combination shots." Open the loop and simultaneously cut your wrist in the direction of the cast to throw a **down-stream hook**, to make the fly lead the leader and line down to the lip.

Here's another combination shot you can use on lip currents to prolong a float: As the line straigthens on the forward cast, lift it over the bank, rocks, logs, debris or anything that can hold the line off the water. Shock the line with a quick stop, lift it over the obstruction and quickly drop your elbow as the line falls on the obstruction. The leader drops with soft S-curves to the fly and the obstruction will prevent line being swept away with the current and imposing drag.

An **underhand lift** is another good slack-leader cast: On the power stroke, give your wrist an underhand "kick" at the last moment to make the tippet and fly rise, then drop.

I have purposely avoided the term, "slack-line cast," because the soft monofilament in the *leader* has the slack; you can have all the slack *line* in the world and still get drag if your leader isn't right. The line can be perfectly straight *but you must have slack in the leader—right up to the fly.* To conquer lip currents you must understand that rule.

The flow on a lip usually is faster than the water above it, thus, you cannot cast too far above the lip and expect a drag-free float. When you see a trout on the lip get the fly in close to it; to cast too far above and beyond the fish will shorten the float because the fly and leader will drag over the fish.

Casting the fly close to the fish not only means less leader on the water but it gives the trout less time to examine the fly and make a choice about whether to attack it or lose it. Your first drift is the one that counts, because each subsequent cast over a fish diminishes your chances of attracting a take. Make each new cast upstream of your previous one—you won't waste time on unwilling fish and you'll cover more water and more fish.

Trout in a mountain-stream pool maintain a pecking order in which the biggest trout is dominant, controlling the best feeding lanes where the greatest amount of food is available. The dominant fish takes the best position and the other trout line up according to size. When the pool's lip offers the greatest volume of food and the most comfortable current, the biggest fish will be there and the smallest fish will be at the pool's head. If you can get a good drag-free float on the lip with your first cast and take a good trout, don't bother with a second cast because you took the best fish. Move on and give the other fish a break. If you take a parr-sized trout off the lip, punch the next cast well up in the pool, close to cover and the major currents at the top of the pool; the best fish will move to the fly.

Because of the pecking order, when you hook a small trout on the lip of a pool, you must get the fish out of there immediately. Control the trout's direction before it realizes what's wrong; the fish will be "off balance," allowing you to maneuver it over the lip and around obstacles below it. Often you can lift a trout over

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Lip Currents...

Continued from Page 33

the stones or brush at the lip. Of course you may lose an occasional trout and there will be times when you have no choice but to play the fish in the pool and put the other fish down, but if you can get the fish on the lip out of there without spooking the rest, the pool's "sentry" is gone and the others are left unguarded.

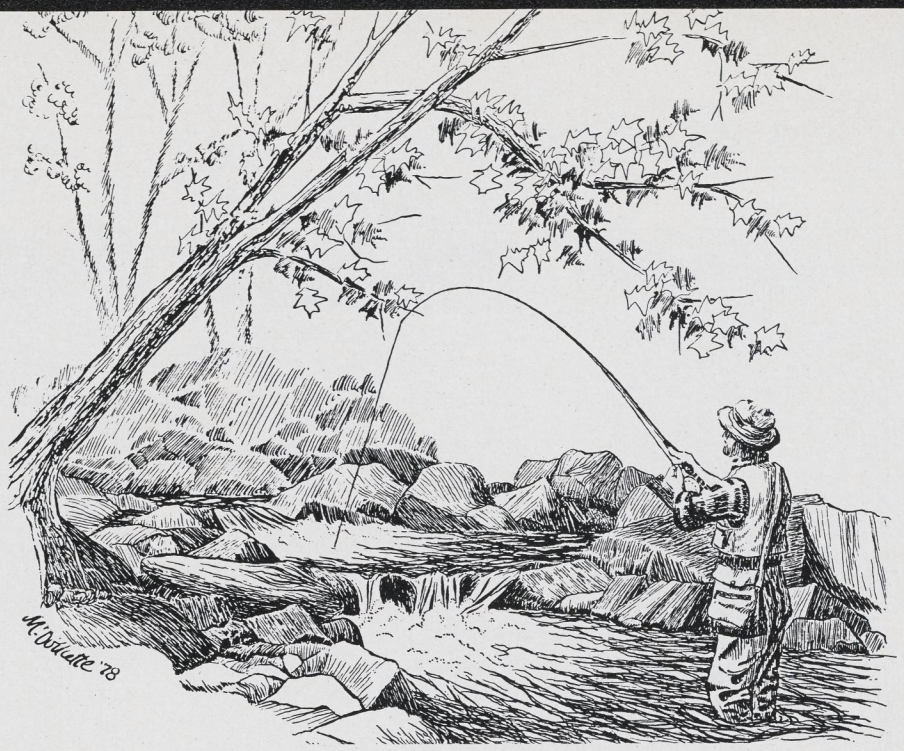
Whether that sentry fish is big or little, it can spot you from a heck of a distance away, so your approach is critical.

Use as long a rod as you can get away with. In tight brush I prefer a seven- or seven-and-a-half-foot rod—the longer the rod the more line you can lift over the currents. As soon as the fly settles on the water point the rod skyward with your arm fully extended to lift the line over the break of the lip for an extended float.

A short rod may give you more casting freedom, but you'll have too much line on the water and it's hell to control, particularly on a steep stream. A short rod also doesn't have as much punch and power without a backcast for distance in the restricted space a mountain stream affords.

Last year, George Harvey and I traveled to a mountain stream that we fish together at least once a year. I dropped George off, drove three-tenths of a mile and parked the car. George was to fish to the car and later meet me a distance upstream.

George was using an eight-and-a-half-foot rod; mine was a seven-and-a-half-footer. Because the stream wasn't restricted, George's longer rod was the better choice. But because the water, though clear, was high, I reasoned that I could get a little closer to the pockets and pools so the shorter rod would be adequate.



My first three or four casts took trout from lips and holding pockets, but then it happened—on a forward cast I broke two inches off the tip section. I won't go into the details of the accident, but George returned and helped me repair the tip, and from then on, my day went straight down hill. It was like casting with a poker, but worse, a short poker that robbed me of the length I needed for a good approach and effective presentation.

George likes to rib me on occasion and this was one of them. We fished together the rest of the afternoon and he out-fished me three to one—the longer rod made all the difference.

I caught trout, but I caught even more abuse.

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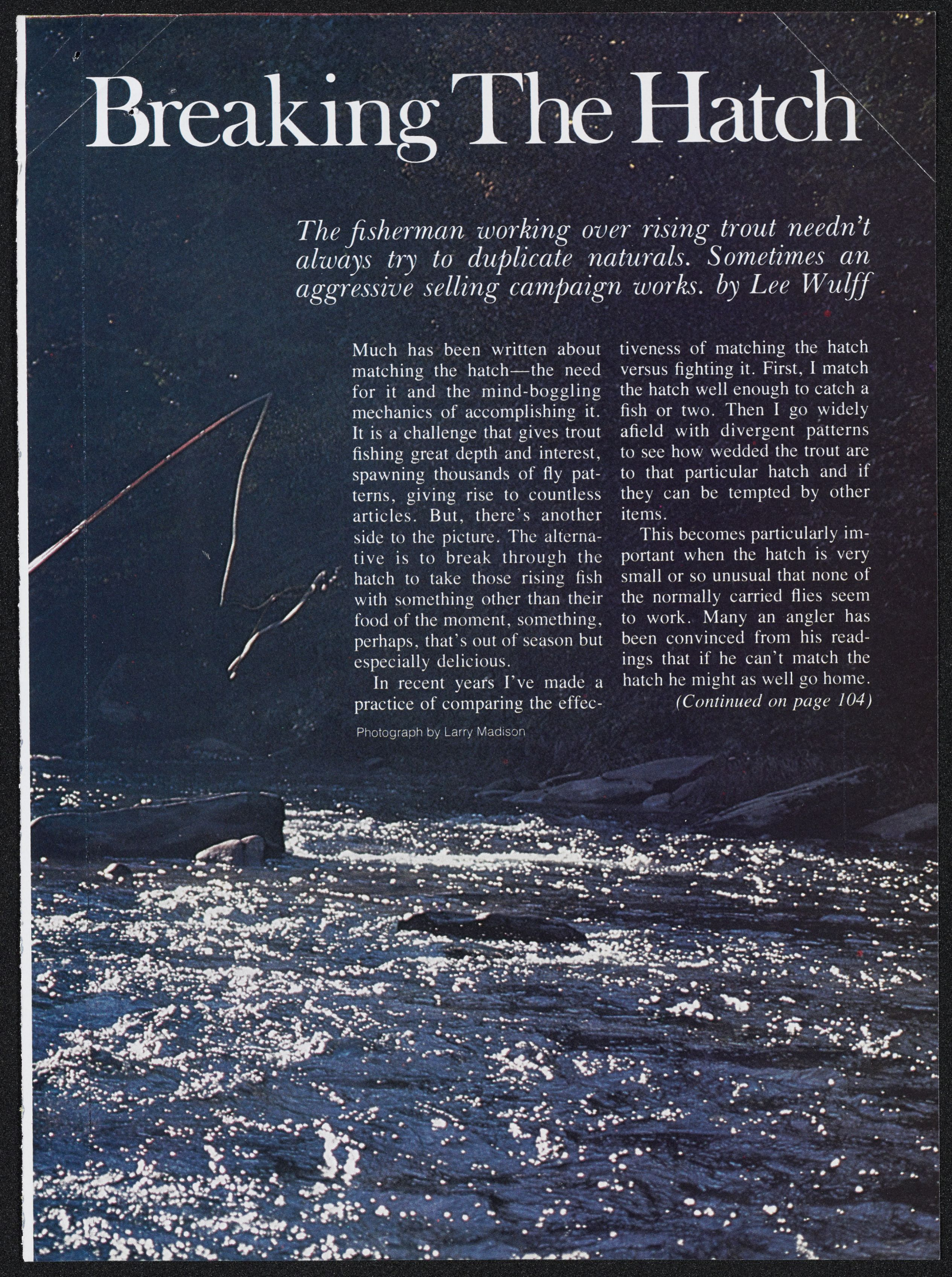
Breaking The Hatch

The fisherman working over rising trout needn't always try to duplicate naturals. Sometimes an aggressive selling campaign works. by Lee Wulff



Much has been written about matching the hatch—the need for it and the mind-boggling mechanics of accomplishing it. It is a challenge that gives trout fishing great depth and interest, spawning thousands of fly patterns, giving rise to countless articles. But, there's another side to the picture. The alternative is to break through the hatch to take those rising fish with something other than their food of the moment, something, perhaps, that's out of season but especially delicious.

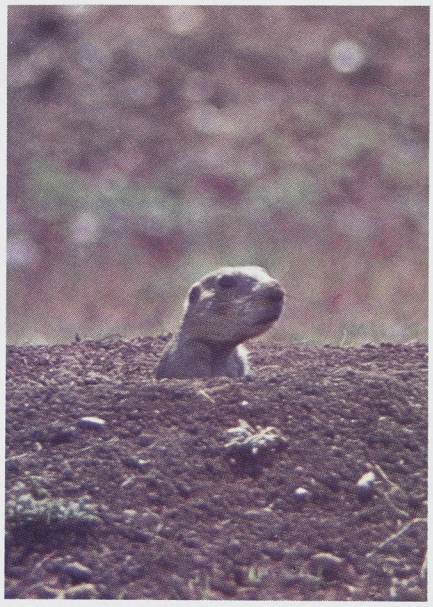
In recent years I've made a practice of comparing the effectiveness of matching the hatch versus fighting it. First, I match the hatch well enough to catch a fish or two. Then I go widely afield with divergent patterns to see how wedded the trout are to that particular hatch and if they can be tempted by other items.

This becomes particularly important when the hatch is very small or so unusual that none of the normally carried flies seem to work. Many an angler has been convinced from his readings that if he can't match the hatch he might as well go home.

(Continued on page 104)

Photograph by Larry Madison

Western High THE



Photograph by Charles Farmer

by Norman Strung *He's very available*

What the prairie dog lacks in size (it's but a few inches long standing up) it more than makes up for in availability.

There are millions of them throughout the West. I have seen dog towns as small as one acre and as large as 600 acres, the latter qualifying as a city rather than a town by virtue of its estimated 4200 inhabitants. Gaining permission to hunt them is no problem. Except for the rare study areas, and towns preserved because they are easily accessible to tourists, no one wants to have the critters around. In fact, it is common practice for ranchers to advertise the locations of their dog towns in local papers, in hopes that hunters will come and clean them out. They also represent the epitome of varminting diversity: a target for every shooting taste from casual plinking with a .22 to the long-range marksman committed to tack-driving accuracy at 600 yards and beyond. For clinchers, by shooting prairie dogs, varminters are benefiting more than a rancher with rodent problems. Controlling their numbers with bullets rather than poison helps preserve an intricate system of predators and their prey that includes rare raptors like the prairie falcon and the endangered black-footed ferret.

From a varminter's point of view, if there is one flaw in this tempting target, it is that their range is limited to the high plains of the West. The black-tailed, white-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dogs represent the major species, and between the three their towns encompass nearly a quarter of the nation; a broad band of sage and grassland that stretches from Canada to Mexico, extending roughly 300 miles on either side of the Continental Divide.

Within these wide-open spaces, however, dogs establish residence in predictable and easily found areas. The first thing they look for is easy digging. It's the rare town that occurs on a gravel hillside or shale slope. The dogs prefer to set up housekeeping in the rich alluvium deposited by erosion at the foot of small gulches, coulees and arroyos. These fan-shaped, gently sloping fields not only afford easy shelter, they also nurture the kinds of vegetation that prairie dogs love, and this is where the real conflict between dogs and ranchers occurs. Popular myth holds that dogs and ranching don't mix because livestock often step into prairie dog holes and break their legs. I have often questioned ranchers about this, and none of them has ever attributed injured livestock to a prairie dog hole. Rather, it is the simple fact that prairie dogs prefer to live on prime grazing land, where they nibble every plant in sight to the height of the grass on a well-kept golf course. Given a truly big town, this translates into summer pasture for around 24 head of beef—no small monetary loss to the rancher.

This manicured look doesn't stem from a dog's diet alone. In fact, they aren't especially fond of grass. What they demand in the place they call home is an unobstructed view of the lands around them; it is their primary means of defense. Hence, they will chop and chew any tall plant, be it prairie grass, sagebrush or juniper to the height of the green on a pool table.

This habit can cause some confusion if you're not aware of it. The first year I became hooked on shooting prairie dogs I got permission to poke around some ranch property near Cody, Wyoming, and bumped into a dog town in somebody's front yard. I knocked on the front door of the tiny, weather-beaten cabin to check on the owner's feelings about clean-

(Continued on page 80)

Photograph by Gary Zahm

By shooting only a few rounds before changing to a new dog town, varminters can enjoy a full day of hunting. Young dogs will tolerate an amazing amount of gunfire before diving into their burrows.

Breaking the Hatch

(Continued from page 45)

He puts all his effort into matching an insect that the patterns in his fly boxes don't cover and winds up quitting in disgust. It may be a close situation. All the imitations he uses are of the same type as the hatch. They aren't close enough to match it but they sure don't offer a real alternative either. He leaves unexplored that great smorgasbord within which may lie delicacies that could cause the trout he's fishing for to forsake the table they're feeding at and succumb to the new and irresistible delicacy.

It is a matter of basic concept. To break through the hatch you have to believe that within your understanding of the trout's nature you can find things he likes as much as those he's feeding on. Obviously, they're not there at the moment. But you can put them there. Trout are like people. They're not all the same, with the same tastes, and some, like people, are bored by monotony. Give them a choice, even when they're slurping contentedly, and you may be pleasantly surprised. At any rate, if you can't match the hatch, don't just give up. Put on an aggressive selling campaign with something else.

I can remember a day on the Henry's Fork. The trout were rising to something as small as a No. 22. I spent an hour getting three rises and bringing in two fish. Then I went the other way and spent two hours with a variety of patterns. I drew six strikes and brought in four fish. Two strikes were on a small streamer with a silver body and grizzly hackles to give it minnow shape. One was on a No. 6 Muddler. Another was on a No. 12 Royal Wulff. Next I tried a No. 18 Skater and finally a No. 8 Wretched Mess which is a stonefly-type nymph that looks as if it had just been through a near-death struggle with another of its kind a little larger and fiercer.

One thing different about the last two hours was that I moved more fish. When the trout were rising steadily in front of me and I was trying to match the hatch, I felt no need to move. I was content to work over those fish with the feeling that if I could match the hatch I could catch any fish feeding on it. When I changed to divergent patterns I still fished the rising fish, but I gave each one only a limited time before I moved on to another.

In order to be logical I moved *through* an area with each of my test patterns giving all of those rising fish a chance at it. Then, I'd come back and go through again with the next pattern. Changing flies so that only a few trout see each one will never tell you what the general preference of the whole assembly is. You can put on a fly, make a cast to a fish with it, catch him and think "that's what they're taking."

showers leave the woods smelling fresh and clean; the patter of rain on a tent makes a sleeping bag seem particularly inviting and the warmth of a campfire especially cheery. Add to that a pile of lightly floured bass fillets, a black iron skillet and good company and you have all the necessary ingredients for a fine time. If it turns out to be a fine time in foul weather suits, who really cares?

How to Plan a Canoe Trip

If you want to plan a canoe trip for smallmouths, you will find that state agencies in both New Hampshire and Maine offer excellent informational pamphlets regarding where to go. Write New Hampshire Fish and Game, 34 Bridge St., Concord, NH 03301 and ask for the pamphlet entitled "Recommended Fishing Waters." This concise booklet lists all the fishing waters in the state, tells which species of fish are found there, and indicates the degree of accessibility in each case.

Maps showing where campsites are located are available from the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, Office of Vacation Travel, P.O. Box 856, Concord, NH 03301.

In Maine a booklet entitled "The Maine Smallmouth" (50¢), together with a Sportsman's Index to Maine Lakes and various individual lake survey maps, are available from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Division of Information and Education, 284 State St., Augusta, ME 04333.

Maps showing location of authorized campsites are available from Bureau of Forestry, Department of Conservation, Ray Building, Augusta, ME 04333.

Special Restrictions

In Maine the daily limit on bass is reduced from five fish to three during the period of April 1 to June 20 and the bag may not include an aggregate weight of more than 7½ pounds. After June 20 the limit is five fish a day or 7½ pounds in aggregate.

Certain waters have had specific rules regarding artificial lures, flies or baits in past years. Check the rule book, although there are no specific restrictions of this kind on most bass waters.

In New Hampshire the limit is two bass per day during the period of May 1 to June 30 and most bass waters are restricted to flyfishing only. Some of the most heavily populated bass lakes such as Winnepesaukee, Winnisquam and Wentworth may be fished with single-hook artificial lures during the spawning season, however. Again, check the rule book.

There is no length or weight limit on New Hampshire bass. ■

Then if you switch to another fly and another and fail with them you may think your statement correct. Actually that fish might have taken any fly you put to him. You don't really know, and a dedicated angler likes to be sure, if possible, of what he believes. Only carefully planned tests will give you the answer.

Breaking the hatch is an extension of my strawberries-and-cream theory that trout may have a longing for a particular delicacy that is out of season at the moment. I believe they will be just as ready to take it as I am to forego the standard January dessert of apple pie a la mode in favor of fresh strawberries from Florida smothered in whipped cream when, surprisingly, it shows up on a winter menu. Remember, too, that not all trout are the same and one fish's favorite may be another's poison.

Stoneflies, in my opinion, are one of the best things with which to tempt a trout. I think trout miss them when they're not around, or they expect them to be around more than they are. They are almost always willing to take them.

Streamers offer a good mouthful, and a bit of a challenge, too, depending on how plentiful they are in the stream. It may seem ridiculous to offer trout something that imitates a baitfish while a hatch of insects is on, but it may be the streamer's very contrast to the insects that'll make the trout take notice.

Muddlers are great and so are Skaters.

The Royal Wulff is so blatantly unreal that I think trout simply say, "I just don't believe it."

I think their charm is that trout see in them something unusual, something to chase, the sort of can-I-catch-it feeling a small boy gets when a meadow frog leaps across his path.

The Royal Wulff is so blatantly unreal that I think a good many trout simply say to themselves, "I just don't believe it." Then they take a quick chew on it just to see if it *is* real.

I could list a number of times and places when I used flies that had no resemblance to the naturals but worked while the hatch was on. Instead, let me suggest that you make your own experiments. See if you can't reassure yourself that even if you can't match a particular hatch there's still a good chance you won't have to admit defeat. ■

Sports Afield July 1978

1978 ALL-AMERICA TRAP TEAM

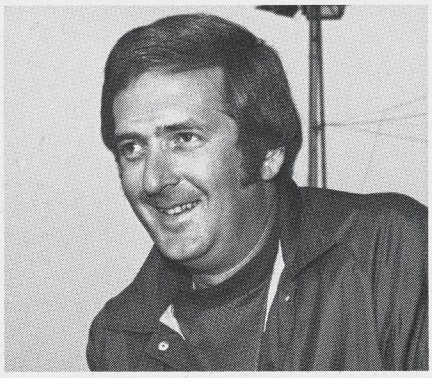
by Jimmy Robinson

Roger Smith, 37, of Wichita, and Dan Bonillas of Los Banos, California, have been named co-captains of the 1978 All-America Men's Trapshooting Team.

Smith, a data processing manager at Learjet, won the Grand American High Overall at Vandalia, Ohio, last August with a 965x1000, seven targets better than a field of 5000 gunners. Smith also captured the Spring Grand American Handicap at Phoenix in January with 98x100 from 27 yards, and the All-Around when he hit 394x400. Bonillas, a 31-year-old probation officer and shooting instructor, won the Spring Grand American High Overall with 489x500. Bonillas became the first trapshooter in history to break back-to-back 100-straights at doubles at the Grand. Big Dan, who has been on the *Sports Afield* All-America Team several times as a member and captain, headed the nation's high-average doubles shooters with a .9750 average; he also led handicap marksmen with a 1977 average of .9515 of 8000 targets, all from the maximum 27 yards.

Other captains included Martin Wilbur, a 17-year-old from Salina, Kansas, who won the Junior Grand American HOA; Susan Nattrass, a doctoral candidate from Waterloo, Ontario, named the 1977 Canadian female athlete of the year and 1977 national women's champ; Mike Kaelin, 67, of Wathena, Kansas, a veteran shooter and sporting goods dealer; Jimmy Hunter of Richmond, Indiana, the Grand's HOA among professional shooters and All-Around victor; and 14-year-old Tony Marucco, Stonington, Illinois, captain of

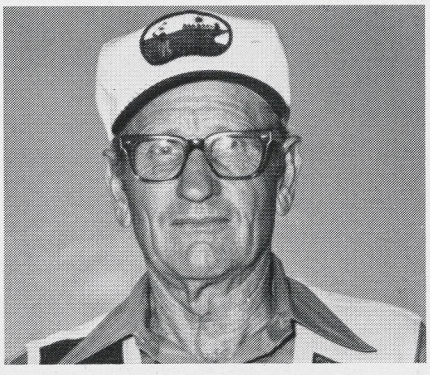
(Continued on page 114)



Roger Smith, Men's Co-Captain

Susan Nattrass, Women's Captain

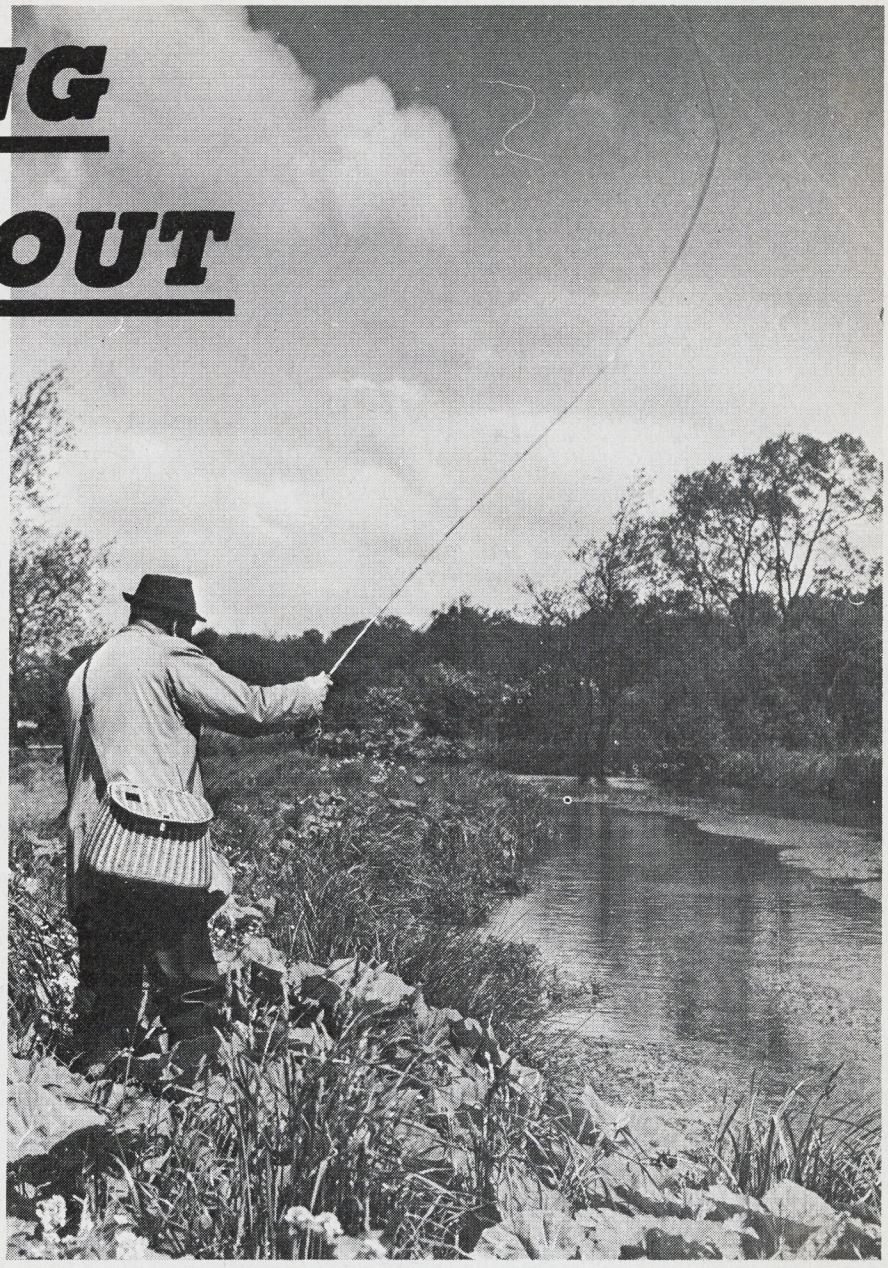
Martin Wilbur, Junior Captain



Mike Kaelin, Veteran's Captain

BOMBING FOR TROUT

A technique calling for accurate casting above all else, says ARTHUR OGLESBY



Reg Righyni, master fly-fisherman, on the Foston Beck, East Yorkshire.

THE GREAT BOOM in stillwater trout fishing and the dynamic effect it has had on anglers from all walks of life tends to overshadow the fact that the trout is basically a fish of the fast, clear waters of our rain-fed rivers and chalk-streams. Historically this is the environment from which our trout were sought. Classic writers on trout fishing had little to say about stillwater fishing for trout — unless, of course, it referred specifically to Scottish lochs, a few lakes in Wales and Cumbria, and the occasional Irish lough.

The most notable stillwater fisheries of those far-off days were probably Loch Leven and Blagdon — with Loughs Mask and Conn thrown in for good measure. Most certainly, in my neck of the woods, North Yorkshire, I cannot call to mind a single stillwater trout fishery where one might have had access when I was a youth. My apprenticeship to trout fishing was served on the small rock-girt moorland streams where it was not too much of a crime to cast an upstream worm and where a trout of 1 lb or more would rank for specimen status. In fact, the first trout I caught over 1 lb — it weighed 1 lb 2 oz — was regarded as such a good 'un that it won me first prize in a weekly newspaper competition. Today, it is doubtful if such a fish would get a mention — let alone an award!

Let me, therefore, take a few minutes to extol the virtues of these trout of our faster waters and to bring into highlight some of the tackle and techniques which might secure their downfall.

A careful study of all the classic literature on trout fishing will yield the information that, from the earliest times, the trout has been regarded as the premier sporting fish — provided that it was caught or sought with some form of artificial fly. Bait-fishing was often condemned because it made the fishing too easy, and we have grown to accept that what the Americans call 'matching the hatch' — imitating the natural fly on the water — has become the traditional way of taking trout.

Halford gave us dry-fly fishing as we know it today. History might accuse him of being over-zealous or over-dogmatic in his postulations that *exact imitation* (the italics are mine) was the only real way to deceive the wily trout. He went to great lengths of absurdity when he insisted that a concoction of fur, feather, tinsel and silk could look remotely like an ephemeral creature created by the Almighty. He did demonstrate, however, just how well he might caricaturise the natural fly with one of his own creations. But he misled a lot of anglers in his insistence that only through exact imitation could the angler ever hope to catch a fish. A more enlightened generation of river trout fishermen know, of course, that their imitation fly must be seen to represent food, but the slavish copying attributed to Halford is not the prime factor to ensure success.

It has to be admitted in Halford's defence, however, that hatches of natural aquatic flies are nowhere near so prolific as they were in his time. Today there are many rivers with a distinct shortage of fly-life. Trout have become more catholic in their diet — particularly those which have been cossetted in a hatchery for the first two or three years of their lives. One well-known American angler constructed a fly he calls the 'Nearunuf', the inference being that it looked like a natural fly of one of the Ephemerid family and that the trout were not too fussy anyway.

In my view, therefore, while the selec-

tion of the artificial fly may be an important consideration, the paramount factor in successful fly-fishing for trout lies in the presentation of the fly — particularly the dry fly. At the risk of repetition I will relate an experience which happened many years ago on a small chalk-stream in the old East Riding of Yorkshire.

A good rise was taking place below an old brick bridge. Large spring olives were hatching in numbers and some good trout were taking them down boldly. I moved into a position where I could cover the fish cautiously and I had on what I thought to be an adequate representation of the hatching fly. I cast with all the skill and dexterity I could muster; the fly alighted beautifully; the trout moved to take my fly, but at the last moment it turned away and continued feeding on the hatching naturals.

Many anglers would have concluded from this evidence that I was fishing with the wrong fly. I did, in fact, try a change of fly, but of five or six fish covered below that old Bridge there was not one which would take the fly on my leader. Back on the bridge, gazing down on the fish which had spurned my efforts, I snipped the fly off the leader and dropped it on to the water in front of a rising trout. The fish came for it as though it was the last meal of its life; took it with a bold rise, and moved away with it. That it would spit it out seconds later, when it detected the forgery, is of no account. When the fly was tethered to a leader, line and ultimately to me it would not take it; but when it was untethered, the fish was more than ready to accept it as food.

I continued the exercise by dropping other flies over some of the other fish. Without exception, all my differing patterns of fly were accepted in this fashion, leaving the one-and-only conclusion that it was undetected drag (undetected by me, that is) which caused the fish to refuse my flies when I had cast to them. The fish were not unduly bothered about the pattern of fly I had offered them, but they were highly suspicious of the way it behaved when floating on the water and attached to my leader.

It was this experience which led me to the belief that presentation of the fly was of more importance than the selection of the pattern, and it was to change my thinking in my tactical approach to dry-fly fishing. There was one season, in fact, when I fished the entire year with only one pattern of fly. It was a John Storey — a popular North-country pattern which was principally constructed for the river Rye in North Yorkshire. Nowadays, I would not like to be limited thus, but I do feel that we could make do with fewer patterns than many of us seem to carry.

☆ ☆ ☆

Common teaching for dry-fly fishing in the traditional style calls for the fly to alight quite a few feet upstream of where the fish is rising and for it then to float over the fish in the hope that it will be taken. There are times when this technique works and, indeed, proves very successful. There are other times however, as I have demonstrated, when this undetected drag takes over and all our best offerings are refused. The one technique which just might work in these circumstances I have come to refer to as 'bombing'.

Basically, this involves casting with accuracy and of placing the fly into the rings of the rising fish as they recede. The idea is to give the fish an immediate confrontation just as it has turned away with a natural fly. When done accurately, and with dexterity, it can achieve two things. First, if the fish is to take the fly before it passes behind, it will have little time for close scrutiny of the fly to see if it looks like the real thing or not. Second, there will be insufficient time for any drag to be initiated. The fish, in fact, has to take the fly on little more than an immediate reflex action or else leave it well alone. Sometimes the technique proves irresistible when more than one fish are lying together; but it does have its negative aspects. Badly executed it can cause the fish to flee in alarm, and once disturbed in this fashion it may be a long time before the same fish will give the angler another opportunity.

There are, therefore, few half-measures with the idea. Either the fish takes with gay abandon or there is a flash of silver and it has gone. Whatever else it does, the method calls for expertise and it may just give you a few fish to take home on a day which seems otherwise hopeless. Learn to cast with all the skill and dexterity you can muster and you will be better placed to catch fish on our rivers and streams than you ever will be by a study of entomological nomenclature. Show a man a hand grenade and he may be reluctant to pick it up. Throw it to him accurately and without his knowing what it is and ten to one he will catch it. We have the instinct to take things presented to us suddenly, and trout survive by being quicker than their bretheren!

Spindleberry

Great expectations: A commentary by EWAN CLARKSON

I KNELT on the shingle, the butt of the rod warm and vibrant in my right hand, the line, cold and wet, gliding through the fingers of my left hand. Somewhere in the inky darkness of the pool the tiny tinsel lure was, I hoped, dancing and darting through the water, emitting faint flashes of light. Somewhere close by, I also hoped, a sea-trout lay, ready and eager to strike at anything that crossed its vision.

A lifetime of experience has done nothing to assure me that a sea-trout will take my lure. Always the sudden jarring thump of a strike takes me by surprise. Always, it seems, a miracle has happened, a once-in-a-lifetime accident has occurred, never to be repeated again. Yet I fish on, and just often enough for it to be no accident, my disbelief is proved without foundation. Still it remains unshaken.

"There was a rabbit in your cabbages just now," said a voice beside me.

"Lucky rabbit," I said bitterly. "I'm surprised the woodpigeons and sparrows have left anything worth having."

I was fresh out of enthusiasm for bird-life at the time. Earlier in the year I had planted 24 cabbages, each with a little square of roofing felt round the base of the stem to protect them from the cabbage root fly. I had watched them grow into great green succulent globes, and then the birds had found them. Now not one was undamaged.

"There were 27 sea-trout in this pool earlier today," went on Spindleberry.

I made another cast, badly. Somehow the information irritated me.

"You humans are odd," said Spindleberry. "Here you are spending hours beside this pool, not even knowing if you are going to get a fish. In fact you'd be surprised and delighted if you get one of the 27. Yet when you plant 24 cabbages you expect to have 24 to eat. Just one cabbage would give you a thousand-fold yield on your seed, and the time you spent planting them was far shorter than the time you've spent by this pool. I'm sure you'd be far happier if you did not have such great expectations."

A sea-trout struck, and I missed it, and Spindleberry moved prudently into the shelter of the bracken. A dog-fox stole past on the opposite bank, and stopped, in the manner of foxes, to look back at me.

"Suppose that old fox caught every rabbit he went for," said Spindleberry. "Soon he'd be too fat to catch another."

Suddenly he ran off up the bank. "Try Clarkson's cabbage patch," he shouted after the fox. "He's giving green stamps with every rabbit you catch."

I went after him then, but, of course, I was too late.

Big Flies For Western Waters

FISHING

A. J. McCLANE
EDITOR

ANY Eastern fly-fisherman making his first trip West is apt to think that Rocky Mountain fly tyers are really a bit over the hill. After dealing with double-domed trout on rivers like the Beaverkill and Ausable, a display of the local patterns in Livingston or West Yellowstone might shake the visitor down to his felt soles. Some of the flies in fashion are the size of a hummingbird and have no more character than a hank of hair wrapped on a hook. However, practical members of the sombrero set learned long ago that big trout won't usually rise to a bit of fluff, and to coax one to the surface requires a monumental reward. True, the micros developed for more gentle rivers have their place here also, but in the West extremes pay off.

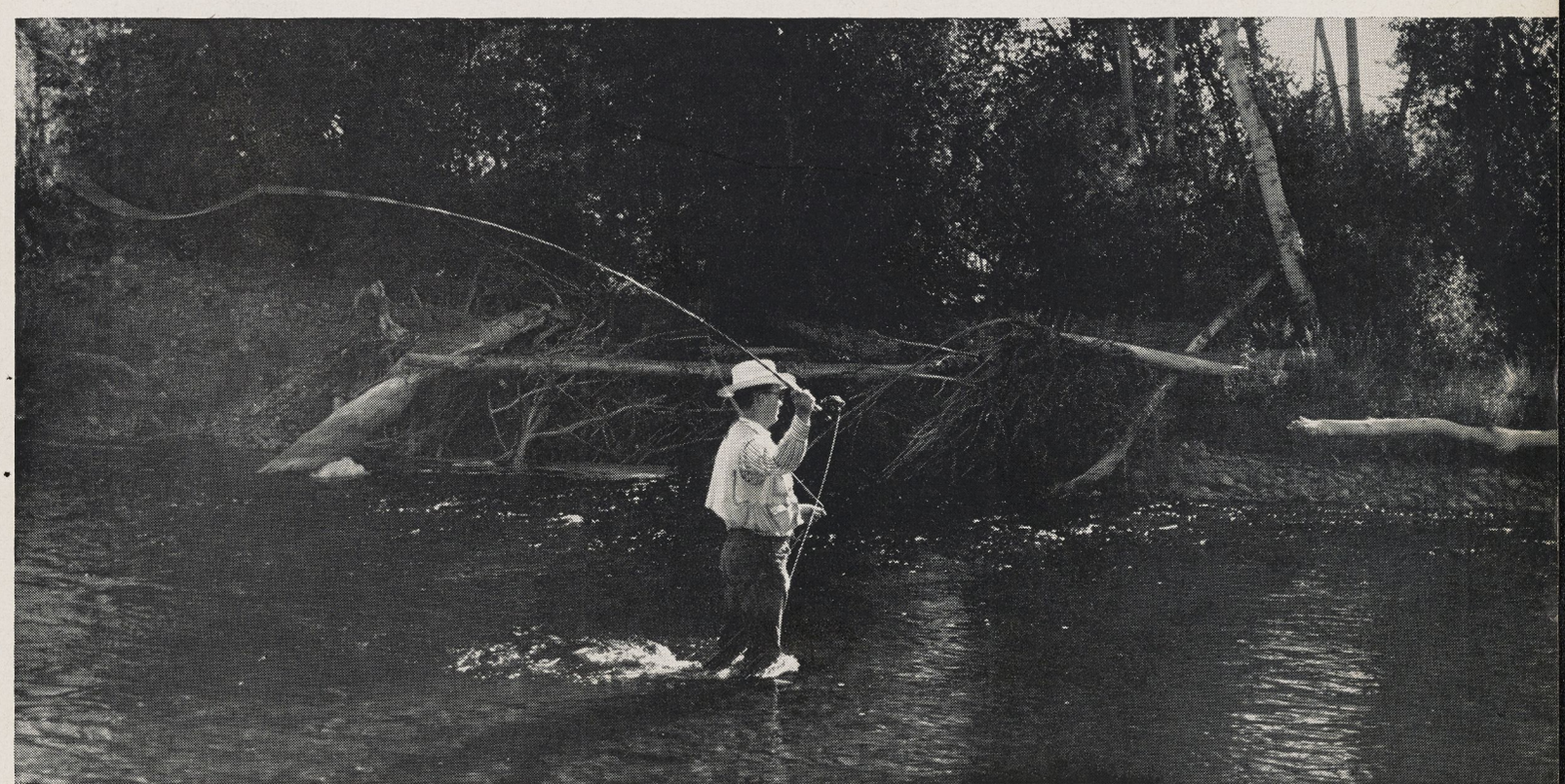
Several years ago, we floated a pair of double-enders down the New Fork to a long stretch where the river runs deep and foamy under a cut willow bank. Bill Isaacs and Larry Madison stopped at the first gravel bar and I rowed another half mile to the next pullout with Elmer George. It was early in the morning but there was already a nice hatch of small blue-colored mayflies on the river. They looked fairly close to a No. 14 Dark Hendrickson, so we went to work on the nearest risers that were popping away in midstream. We fished for about three hours, then took a coffee break.

Elmer said he'd released about twenty trout but his biggest fish wasn't much over 10 inches and most of them were 8- or 9-inch rainbows. I had the same results. This isn't *bad* fishing, but the New Fork holds much heftier trout. I had tried a Quill Gordon, a Blue Upright, and a Blue Quill hoping to find a better match with the natural and Elmer went through the same routine.

There was a time when I'd accept the fact that the big ones just weren't feeding, but western trout have their quirks. I tied on a No. 6 Goofus Bug, which looked about ten times larger than the ephemeral insect dancing in the air, and waded back into the stream. After covering a short distance along the willow sweepers, the surface exploded and I was fast to our first good fish of the day—a brownie of better than 2 pounds. By noon we had released a dozen trout in the 16- to 18-inch class.

When Larry and Bill came downriver to join us for lunch, they reported a similar experience. Mr. Madison is not only an exceptional fly tyer but a keen observer of western waters. We all agreed that while "matching the hatch" is a basic tenet of fly fishing, and without question a sound piece of advice, it is often true that it takes a veritable puffball—wholly unlike anything flitting in the air—to catch trophy trout in sagebrush country. The reason is probably no more profound than the fact that big fish normally hold closer to the bottom

Anglers on the big, brawling waters of the West cast outsize flies when they're out for trophy trout



than small trout, and in heavier water, where only a substantial food item would make swimming to the surface worth the effort. During the early July salmonfly hatch, large fish do stay near the top to nail those fat stoneflies as they zoom over the water depositing their eggs. Almost instantaneous strikes are common then; the fly seldom floats more than a few feet if it's going to be taken at all. But the exception doesn't prove the rule.

I kept a careful set of notes that season on the hatches that occurred, my results with respect to what was emerging at the time, and I collected hundreds of aquatic insects for later identification. It still makes interesting reading but I have to admit the great majority of large trout (which I count from 18 inches or better than 2 pounds) fell to the dry Muddler, Goofus Bug, Irresistible, Grayback, and Joe's Hopper. None of these flies resembled the significant emergences that may have been in progress. I missed the salmonfly hatch by a week.

My fishing that summer was confined to the New Fork and Green in Wyoming, and the Madison, Big Hole, Missouri, and Beaverhead in Montana with a couple of visits to Georgetown Lake. I fished eighty-nine days in all, for a total of 1,233 releases with the largest trout a brown of 7 pounds, 5 ounces. There were several blank days to be sure but we also experienced sixty- and seventy-fish days on some of the floats. I know that if I had included streams of a different character like Montana's Spring Creek or the Spring Creek feeding the Snake in Wyoming, it would have been a different picture entirely with No. 16 and 18 Light Cahill, Adams, Mosquito, and other miniskirted patterns taking the honors.

Unquestionably, getting a good high float in fast water is of prime importance in raising big trout. This also applies to low silhouette patterns such as Bird's Stonefly, Muddler, Joe's Hopper, and Sofa Pillow. It's when the fly is skimming along top in a lifelike fashion that trophy fish respond. If it hangs half suspended in the surface film, the ratio of strikes goes down rapidly. This requires prime materials in the fly and a reliable flotant as well as a long leader and short, accurate casts. Even a scraggly deer hair fly should be tied with the finest gamecock hackles. Light-wire hooks are also an advantage on patterns with hackles ranging up to 1-¼ inches in diameter. Many anglers feel that wings are not important on large dry flies but they're a great help for visibility to the caster working in rough currents or poor light. Although deer hair is little used in the East it is virtually a *must* in the West.

Deer hair flies had their genesis in Oregon. Undoubtedly frustrated by trying to float a dry pattern on the tumbling waters of the McKenzie, Rogue, or Willamette some unknown tyer resorted to hollow-celled mule deer hair. When used in a wing the hair caused the fly to pop up to the surface after being sucked under. The first of these patterns was the Bucktail Caddis, a palmer-tied fly with its wings sloped back along the body. The Light Buck Caddis and the Dark Buck Caddis have been around since Hector was a pup.

Then someone discovered that the wings could be tied down both fore and aft and this evolved into a whole series of dry flies epitomized by the Horner Deer Hair and later the Goofus Bug on which the body and tail are formed by pulling deer hair back over the hook shank and securing it at the bend. The same idea was applied to nymphs such as the Henry's Lake pattern and the Shellback, but, of course, these have to be weighted.

I have caught trout on large dry flies when there wasn't a sign of an aerial hatch and in examining their stomach contents found the fish literally stuffed with bottom organisms such as snails, nymphs, and sculpins. Apparently they just couldn't resist a big floater.

One day on many-fingered Georgetown Lake in western Montana the red-sided rainbows gave us a fit on our deeply sunken shrimp imitations. The trout were in the shallow portions of the broad weed beds and for several hours the fishing was hot. Then it stopped. There were no surface rises until I saw a dragonfly dart over the water and perch on some emerged vegetation. A trout swirled nearby evidently frustrated by its disappearance. I tied on a fluffy No. 6 Muddler and dropped it next to the weed patch and had an immediate strike. The fish took out my entire fly line and was into the backing before he rolled on the surface and displayed about 24 inches of crimson stripe—and was off. Disappointing perhaps, but the one opportunity to take a trophy trout came with the outsize dry fly.

Deer Hair patterns are not the only type of fly that will bring big trout to the top. Variants such as the Light and Dark patterns originated by Roy Donnelly (which are tied with mixed color hackles two sizes larger than regular for any given hook number) work extremely well at times. Because of its air resistance due to the large diameter of the extended hackles it is almost impossible to bring a variant down heavily on the surface of the water. It is a great boon to the mediocre caster and ideal for difficult trout. The fly does not imitate any particular insect, although it may suggest one, but it does have some of the ethereal qualities of many aquatics because it is delicate and rides high on the water.

The key in its design is the lightness of the hook. A light-wire hook permits the use of minimum hackle, and when that hackle is long the hook will stand away from the surface, provided it is supported by an equally long tail. Furthermore, it falls easily to the water and has less tendency to drag on complex currents; it literally bounces over them. This ability to move almost independently is no small part of its attraction.

The variant is most effective on swift water that is glassy or reasonably flat. In very turbulent runs the bulkier clipped-hair-bodied flies float better, and their larger impression against the surface is undoubtedly more useful in tempting trout to the top. However, on many rivers the problem fish are in the moderately swift places where artificials are easily distinguished from the real thing. There is a great deal of this type of water on the Firehole for example, and also on Henry's Fork of the Snake. The stiff, long, sparsely dressed is a brilliant suggestion of insect life under these conditions.

It is usually difficult for the amateur fly tier to find quality spade and saddle hackles which are necessary in dressing a variant; a rooster doesn't grow more than a half-dozen of the former, and commercial skinners are inclined to trim off the saddle hackles. For this reason, many of the popular patterns consist of two different mixed spades, such as ginger and grizzly or mahogany and grizzly. To get maximum flotation do not make a body on the fly, but wind the hackles around two-thirds of the shank length of the hook.

Some years ago, and just before his passing, I fished with a fine gentleman and author, Claude Kreider. Among other things he was a skilled rod builder and with his home-glued sticks Claude laid out a beautiful dry fly.

It was my first visit to the Firehole in Yellowstone Park and the river was alive with feeding trout that day. There was a Black Mayfly hatch in progress and the fish were greatly in evidence. A dozen widening rings in front of us caused me to joint my rod with trembling fingers. Under the sod bank right at our feet a handsome brownie rolled up to suck in a dun. We had found the Firehole at its best and there was nobody else on the river for at least a mile. I pawed hurriedly through my fly box and found a No. 12 Black Quill with just the right shade of hackle to match the natural.

Then I noticed Claude tying on a huge cream-colored variant. I knew he usually wore glasses but my naive observation about what was in the air and being accepted fell on deaf ears. Claude gave the variant a good oiling, then tossed it out with wiggly S-casts and proceeded to catch trout. I did too. The difference was that he took a 4-pound rainbow and a brown of about 2½ pounds while I raised Merry Ned with yearlings. It

wasn't long before I was borrowing his variants.

There was no magic in his performance. Claude had fished the Firehole many times, and after slaughtering the innocents over a period of time he began to experiment. He started by fishing a given hatch with flies that seemed to match the naturals, keeping note of his success. Then he tried various outsize floaters on the same water. Even during a hatch of small ephemerids, trout—especially big trout—came for the large fly. Convinced by repeated experiments, he began to fish them exclusively. The big fly has proved particularly valuable on swift Western rivers because it floats high even on deep swirls and riffled stretches of water. On such broken water, with the trout's vision more or less obscured, any exact imitation of a natural hatch is of secondary importance. The trick is to keep a "lively" fly dancing on its hackle points.

The big-fly story is, of course, contrary to accepted dry fly principles. It might also be added that *how* the fly is fished is often diametrically opposed to standard technique. On rivers that run at a full gallop I cast the big dry across and downstream about 90 percent of the time. There are several reasons for this: it's too much work banging away up the current in a really large river only to get brief floats; the fly will behave more lifelike on a rough surface when you can keep slack out of a line and adjust its movement with your rod tip; and lastly, contrary to what one would expect and what one actually observes, a big stonefly can swim like hell against a swift flow. Nature designed the stonefly for highly oxygenated tumbling riffles and its skill as a sprinter is classic. In most cases I imagine the trout mistakes the big artificial for a stonefly but whether this is so or not is less important than the prevalent belief that a floater looks more lifelike when riding completely free. This is a very fine point but it makes a critical difference on boulder studded Western streams.

Learning to cast a slack line is very easy. Correctly executed, the slack line cast is aimed directly down to the position of the fish, but it should float about half that distance. In other words, if the trout is holding 40 feet away, you should drop the fly about 20 feet downstream and cover the difference by shaking more line out.

There are several ways of making slack line deliveries. It's easiest for most people to false cast in the usual manner and, on the final stroke forward, stop the rod at a 45-degree angle, and when the line begins to pull shoot, simply wiggle the tip from side to side. This lateral motion will create little curves in the outgoing line. Play with this for a few minutes, and you'll find that you can make narrow or wide elbows of

slack with no effort. For most purposes, seven or eight small curves should be enough.

When you drift the fly down on a fish, don't get the slack concentrated in one big belly. It will get caught broadside in the current and cause drag. As a tactical advantage, the initial presentation should be made in a perfectly natural float. After the cast is fished out, you can begin animating the fly against a dragging line. So the rod wiggling must be timed to distribute the curves through the length of the cast.

There is only a shade of difference between a natural and unnatural movement imparted to the fly in its drift downstream. On individual rising fish an effort should be made to get a drag-free drift on the first cast. The fly will reach a point in its float when the trout either accepts or rejects it, and presuming the latter case, you must now draw the floater back for a new cast. When working directly down on a fish, this invariably requires pulling it over the fish—a motion which is either going to excite a strike or put the trout down. You will rarely get a second chance as you might in upstream casting when the fly dances away on tippytoes. This is the moment when a fine-line point, long leader (preferably 12 feet), and correctly hackled fly make a critical difference. On slick water in particular, coarse terminal gear is going to create a wake and spoil the whole illusion.

Raise the rod slowly and begin twitching gently, bringing the fly upstream in short, pulsing strokes. If the fly is standing up on its hackles and the fish doesn't respond after it has moved a few feet, lower your rod and let the fly drift near it again. A keen fish sense helps at moments like this, but gradually you will learn to gauge the fly's action according to the response of the trout. Occasionally you might try skimming the fly away at a steady speed. As last-cast reeling has repeatedly proven, a positive and continuous flight often triggers blasting strikes. Although mayfly lore more or less conditions our thinking in terms of delicate ephemeral flutters, the fact is that many other insects, such as grasshoppers, dragonflies, and moths, disturb the surface greatly.

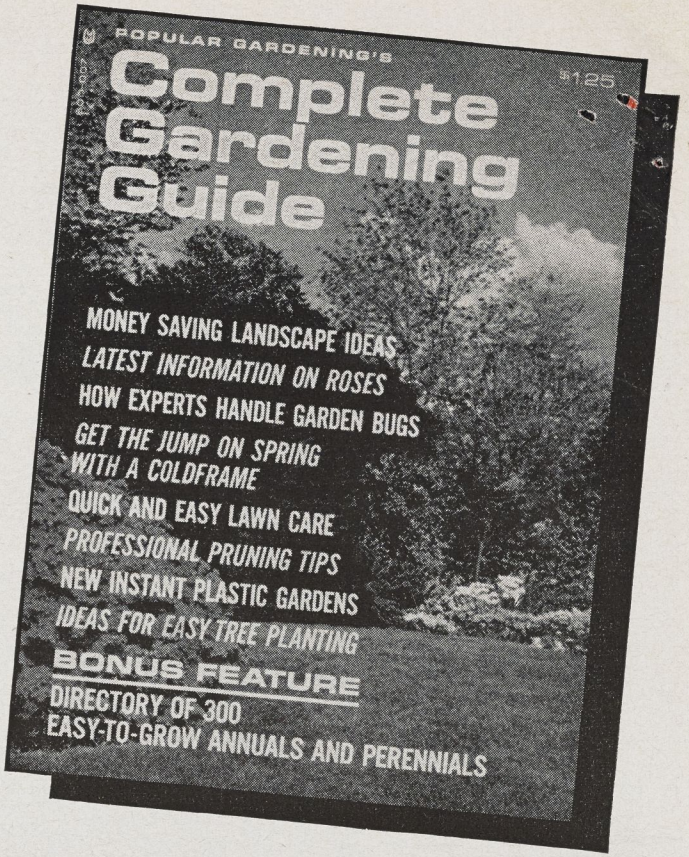
At dusk on July 21st in the year 1916, Dr. W. J. Cook of Fort William, Ontario, hooked a fish, below Rabbit Rapids on the Nipigon River, which after a few heavy surges ran into quiet water and pounded nose down at the bottom. The play didn't last long, and despite the fish's size as his guide heaved it in the boat, the doctor counted it as just another lake trout which they would save for breakfast. In the light of the lantern back at his tent the guide let out a *whoop* that brought the accident-conscious Cook on the run. It was a 14½-pound brook trout which was

about to go under the knife. This rather casually taken trophy has stood as the world's record for fifty-five years. Of all historical catches it seems to be one of the most difficult to top as very few squaretails caught since have even come close to the Nipigon mark.

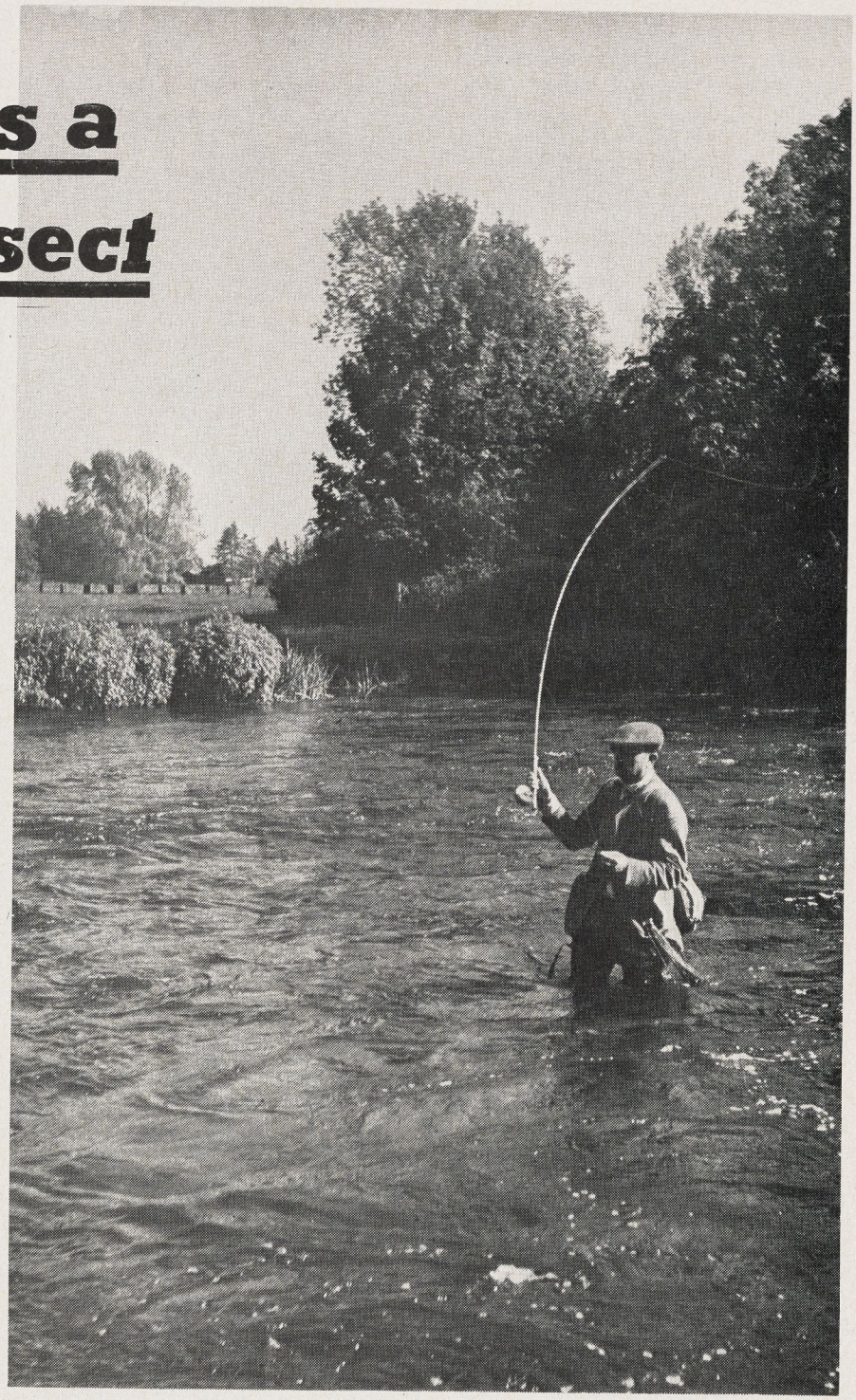
Today, except in the remote river systems of Argentina and Labrador, brook trout of over 5 pounds are comparatively rare and while we don't think of them especially as surface feeders fully 30 percent of the fly-caught FIELD & STREAM entries during the last decade fell to large dry patterns. Streamer flies are more or less traditional fodder for squaretails, yet some of the best brook trout fishing I've enjoyed in Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario, and Maine has been during the early summer mayfly hatches with fat 4- and 5-pounders going for a huge floating Muddler twitched slowly over the surface.

I am a firm believer in matching the hatch. I've failed to take rising fish too many times to think otherwise. However, those nondescript puffballs that clutter the display cases of Western tackle shops represent a lot of common sense fishing. In the last American stronghold of trophy trout it pays to think big.

The Complete Guide to Gardening will help you to make sensible plans that can be fulfilled



Dry fly as a living insect



THE RIVER TEST at Greatbridge—a stronghold of the 'upstream only' school of dry-fly fishing.

RAYMOND ROCHER looks at methods which make Halford seem 'old hat'

THE TITLE of this article is borrowed from a book by the American heretic Leonard M. Wright, Jr. In *Fishing the dry fly as a living insect* Wright brilliantly debunks the hallowed traditions of English and American dry-fly fishing. But it is in his other book *Fly-fishing heresies,* 1975, that he makes a statement that is the clue to his whole approach to fly-fishing.

He wrote: "It stands to reason that the angler will be more successful if his imitation duplicates not only the appearance of a natural insect, but its behaviour pattern as well."

The fly-fishing followers of F. M. Halford still more or less believe in these basic principles: dry-fly fishing should be practised only during a hatch or a fall of fly; the artificials should be imitations of the fly on the water; they should be cast *upstream* to individual fish; they should not drag and they should *drift without any motion.*

Although Halford was not as narrow-minded as some people would have us believe and clearly did advise casting downstream in certain cases, this established dogma of casting only upstream has been firmly adhered to until now by many anglers all over the world, including, of course, chalk-stream anglers.

Halford's technique was borne on the gin-clear placid waters of Hampshire at a time when there was probably more fly-life than there is today, when rod pressure was lighter, and the trout much more free-rising. It was a justified reaction against the abuses of downstream wet-fly fishing with heavy tackle, and perfectly adapted to that type of river.

The upstream dry-fly fashion caught on immediately, not only because it was more fun than the old wet-fly style, but because it extended the fishing season considerably and was, on the whole, far more rewarding on the chalk-streams. But chalk-streams have changed, and while the

technique is still to a large extent justified on them, it is no longer the best method of practising and enjoying dry-fly fishing on other types of streams, let alone most of our heavily-fished public waters.

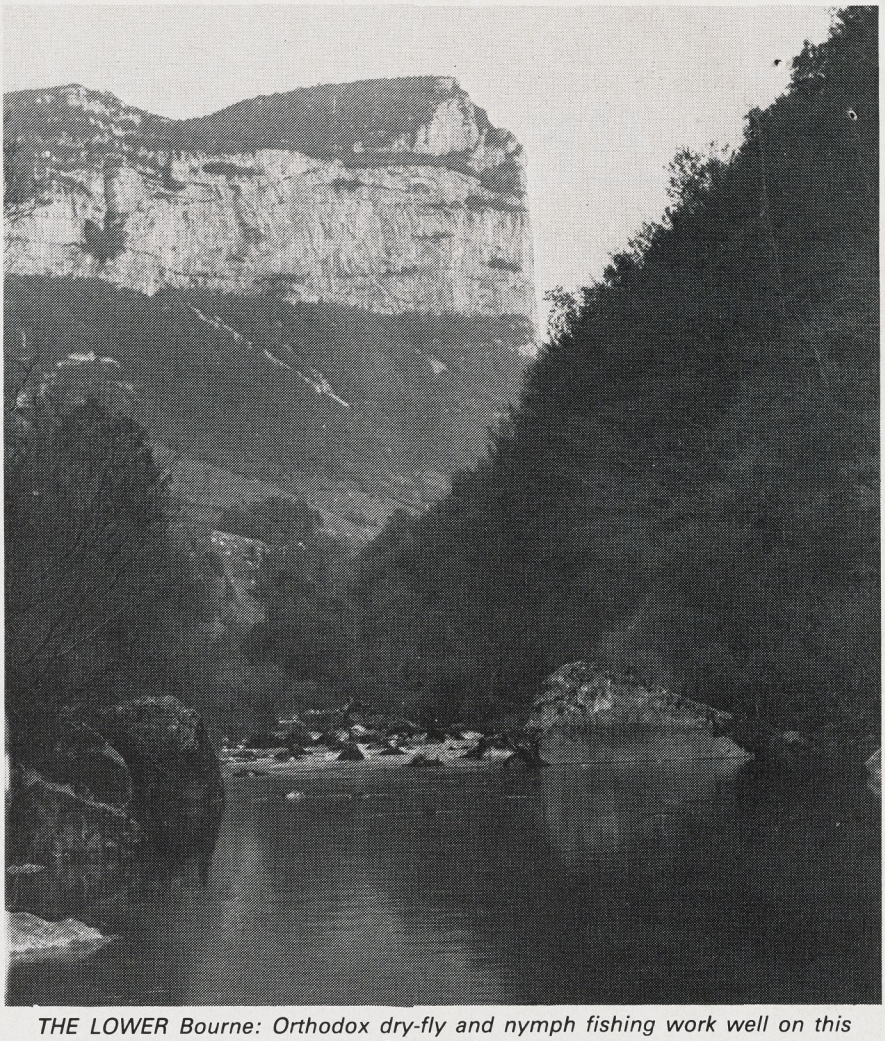
I am totally convinced that some of the "heresies" Len Wright describes in his books would work well on some chalk-streams, and be quite sporting, but it is the other types of river that I have in mind. I always feel guilty when I cast a dry fly across a chalk-stream, let alone when my fly upstream happens to drag downstream inadvertently, because I know that this is not allowed, or that it is not frowned on. Why? Possibly because such practices are not in the book, or perhaps they are too deadly and are banned in order to preserve trout stocks.

But I have used Len's heretical methods with great enjoyment and rewarding results on all other types of rivers, both at home in France and abroad. They are widely known in Germany and Austria.

Len is a great angler, not only because he catches trout and enjoys his fishing, but because his success is due to an exceptionally wide experience of dry-fly fishing. Indeed, I wonder if any angler has explored more rivers than he has, and if there is any decent trout river on both sides of the Atlantic that he has not fished with a fly!

He has fished in France, for example, and particularly the gin-clear rocky or gravel-bottomed mountain rivers of the Cevennes in the south-east. He says the market fishermen of the Cevennes are by far the best fly-fishers he has ever observed. I know they are good, because I have fished with them extensively. While some of them use a team of wet flies cast downstream in the classic manner, especially on the high plateaus, many of them fish a dry fly downstream on a short level line and a longish rod that allows them to control line and fly much better. They fish both the water and the rise. There are some beautiful varied hatches of fly on all good mountain rivers, especially on the limestone type. And many parts of these streams are smooth-flowing and require good imitations when fished in the traditional way, just like their chalk-stream sisters.

Well, these professionals will cast a short line either dead downstream or down and across, either to an individual rising or non-rising fish, or in a likely spot where they have already caught trout. They do not waste much time in quiet pools or slack water, even if they see good trout there. They prefer to fish the currents or the edges.



THE LOWER Bourne: Orthodox dry-fly and nymph fishing work well on this typical French alpine river.

They are agile, cover long distances, and do not try to hide like Indians from their quarry. They will be seen to crouch sometimes and to cast from the most dangerous positions at the top of huge boulders. Their dry fly is big — hook 10-12 and — rough-looking: green body, badger hackle (often clipped); no tail; no greasing; no oiling.

Their secret lies not only in their knowledge of the likely lies, but in the way they skitter the fly upstream on the surface while allowing very little line to float. The dragging of the fly does not alarm trout, but the dragging of the line does. They do not use fine gut and it is simply the 'living behaviour' of their dry fly on the surface that accounts for their regular success on these often heavily-flogged waters.

Sometimes they will drown their fly just under the surface and recover it gently about half an inch under it in the same upstream manner. By casting repeatedly over a likely spot, they will often rise deep-lying trout that would simply have laughed at a dry fly cast upstream and drifted down over them. This technique is what they call *mouche sèche glissée*. And it catches far more trout than wet fly or upstream dry fly, believe me.

Another region of France where downstream dry fly is the rule is the East, where the large limestone rivers — the Doubs, the Loue, the Ain, and the Ognon — hold a mixed population of trout and grayling. The downstream technique is particularly popular on the lower Ain where the local anglers fish for grayling after the close of the trout season. This is public water and the insect population is fantastic. It is necessary to use very fine tackle, very good imitations, and to present the fly first to the free-rising grayling on a long line.

Although some crafty anglers know all the advantages that they can derive from dragging their dry flies upstream, as do the peasants of the Cevennes, even in very smooth-flowing water — which is where the big grayling will rise — most of these

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fishermen do not impart any movement to their flies. In most places, this is the only way to deceive a fish. Here the main advantage lies in concealing the gut from the grayling.

From a purely ethical point of view, it is no less-sporting a method as the upstream style because it is extremely difficult to cast a long line downstream and to present the fly first to a wary fish. Often, it is a sheer impossibility to adopt a different style in a grayling river where many fish will rise at the tail of a pool where the current is fast and strong and downstream drag inevitable.

There is nothing more natural than our heretical technique because it is based on factual observation. It is natural that we should try and imitate not only the appearance of the insect — where and when necessary — but its movement as well. I am convinced that it is movement — however slight — that distinguishes a natural from an artificial and enables a trout or a grayling to take a living insect in preference to an artificial which drifts downstream without any suggestion of life or in preference to any dead debris floating downstream.

We know that the caddis jumps or skitters on the surface after emergence, as do ovipositing stone flies, especially the big creeper. We all know how effective a dragged sedge can be at night. In fact, most insects, whether land-bred or water-bred, will show some kind of movement on the surface. When they drift downstream, they will sometimes move their wings or make several unsuccessful attempts to take off. Mostly they will try instinctively to move upstream as if to escape destruction. And I think this is what justifies our fishing the dry fly downstream as a living insect. In doing so, we are only imitating nature.

Here is the technique that we use on spate rivers and which roughly corresponds to Len's.

When we have fished a certain stretch with the orthodox upstream dry-fly method, we fish it again downstream. We fish the rise or all likely spots, especially those where our flies were rejected on the way up. We often catch more fish on the way down. We cast slightly down and across, preferably with an upstream curve cast, give our dry fly a few inches 'upstream drag' just before it reaches the rising fish or its likely lie, and then allow the fly to drift without any drag. That is just when the trout will strike. If nothing happens, we let the fly drag further

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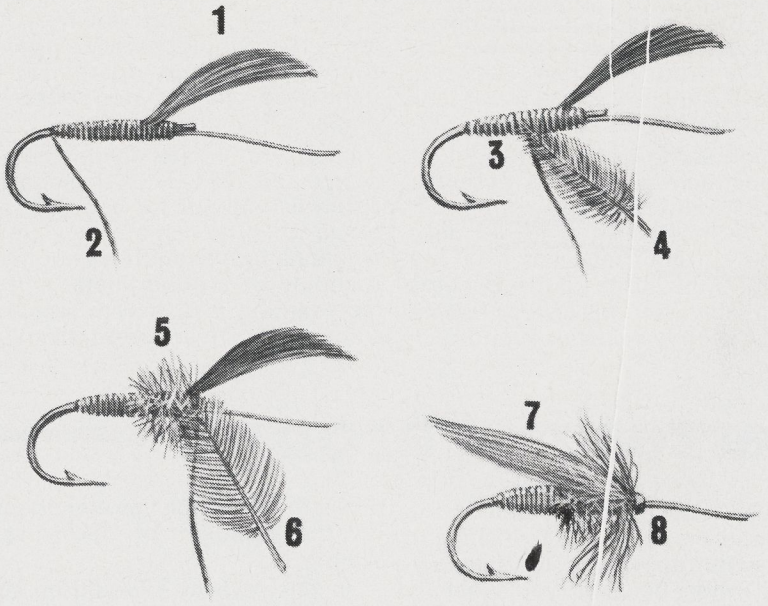
HISTORIC FLIES

THE SUMMER BLACK



Written and illustrated by DONALD OVERFIELD

I WOULD BE prepared to lay a small wager that few have ever heard of this wet-fly pattern; and how many could honestly admit to knowing the Lavender Black, the Russett Fly, the Brandy Palmer or the Stirtling? These are but five patterns from a total of 71 contained in a small book of 16 pages, entitled *Old Bullock's Artificial Trout Flies,* published by J. H. Wood, of Macclesfield, in 1885.

Through the kindness of Ronald Coleby, the highly-respected specialist sporting book-dealer, I have been allowed to read this rare and intriguing book of old patterns. I must confess to never having heard of Bullock, but if we are to believe the writer of the preface, A. E. Parkinson, then the old boy must have been some sort of tear-away, for he says:

"Considering the notoriety gained by the late William Bullock, of Macclesfield, better known as 'Old Bullock', as a fly-fisher and particularly as a fly-maker . . . we decided to publish this little volume . . ."

I wonder what situation it was that caused Bullock to be termed notorious? Perhaps some Macclesfieldian may know about Old Bullock, in which case I would ask them to write forthwith to *Trout and Salmon,* for I am most intrigued about this obviously inventive fly-tyer — so much so that I have resolved to give some of his patterns a fair trial during this fishing season. I suspect they may be capital patterns, especially the Summer Black, which is noted in the book as Bullock's favourite.

I have shown the fly as it would have been tied to gut, using the old pattern hook. The hook size stated is number 1 old numbers, or Redditch Scale 15.

The crimson tying silk is taken for three or four turns down the shank at which point wing slips of starling quill feather are tied in (1). The waste ends are trapped under the silk as you continue even windings down the body (2). Wind the silk back up the body (3) and at the half-way mark tie in a rook quill feather (4). Take the silk forward to the wings, winding the rook feather to form the forward half of the body (5). Tie in a starling neck feather (6). Now pull the wings back over the body and tie down (7). Wind the starling neck feather round the hook and over the wing roots and complete as in figure 8.

Continued from previous page

down, where it is again likely to be taken.

In fast-flowing water, free-rising trout that have obstinately refused to take good imitations on the upstream cast will take almost first cast if the fly is presented downstream and dragged back over the fish. The trout is then easier to approach than in slow water and often hooks itself.

Though some trout are caught on a downstream drag, it is essential that the fly should drag upstream: it is the fly moving at a slower pace than the current that many trout are looking for. A long light rod helps considerably with this style of fishing because with it you can keep much more line off the water.

All artificials can be fished in this way: gnats, fancy flies, duns as well as sedges, and stone-flies. Only spent fly, or small duns on cold days or some evenings when they sit a long time on the surface, should be fished in the orthodox upstream manner — drifting down motionlessly — simply because the flies they imitate are inert. Do not generalise, use common sense — an angler's best ally.

In rivers where fly-hatches are scarce and, for various reasons, free-rising fish few or far between, or at times when no fish are moving, one single pattern should be enough, but it should be a good floater and one representing a dish with which the trout of the river are familiar. And what better pattern than an imitation of the ubiquitous caddis fly?

Already I can hear protests from fellow-anglers — not on ethical grounds — but because many will contend that such methods are simply not practicable on open stretches where they have to fish from the banks and are easily seen by the fish. True enough. This can be partly rectified by crouching or casting a longer line, which, as I said, is not easy. Others will object that most fish will be missed or lost on the strike as there is a tendency to withdraw the hook from the mouth of the fish. True again. To remedy this, you should not be too quick on the strike. Only practice will teach you.

Good luck with the downstream dry fly! It pays and it is great fun!

'Ferreting' around

by JOHN POOLE

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN one of the traditional courtesies of fly-fishing to give a truthful reply to a fellow-angler when he asks you what fly you are using. As a beginner I was taught to observe it, and have continued to do so. Therefore it came as something of a surprise when one day last season a stillwater fishing colleague suggested I had treated a beginner friend of his rather harshly by answering his query with the remark that I was 'ferreting'. I quickly assured my colleague that the statement had no devious intent, and that on almost every occasion I fish a lake or reservoir, I spend a considerable part of the time 'ferreting'. Let me explain.

One of the most irritating problems facing the average stillwater fly-fisher is that of deciding what to fish when there is no visible surface activity to help him to reach a conclusion. He may arrive at the margin carrying a magnificent variety of lures, flies, nymphs and pupae, some imitators, others attractors. All of these he knows how to use, but too often he has no plausible method of separating the 'probables' from the 'possibles'.

He has almost certainly given the matter some consideration either by asking the views of his tackle-dealer (who quite possibly has never set eyes on the fishery) or seeking advice from the nearest angler (who is almost certainly in the same quandary as himself). On the other hand, he may have decided in advance to fish a particular lure because it did well on his last visit, or a specific fly because it has an established success record. The last thing he is likely to do is apply his own thoughts to the problem of deceiving his quarry.

In this respect it would be somewhat presumptuous of him to try to think like a trout, as is often suggested, since the question of whether the creature can think at all is a highly controversial one. However, the idea itself is a step in the right direction, for the angler is free to contemplate what the reactions of the fish, as a predator, may be to situations created by himself.

He knows the trout can be fatally deceived by imitations of food. He also knows it can be induced to attack at its peril lures that bear no resemblance whatever to its food, and that the motivation behind such attacks is generally believed to be anger, curiosity or jealousy, or a combination of these forces. Greed and fear must also be taken into consideration, especially the latter. For what other reason would trout fingerlings and salmon parr attack a lure as large as themselves?

The angler, having thought along these lines, is in a better position to decide what to try on his 'ferreting' leader. He may decide to accept the assumption that only some trout are aggressive, curious or jealous enough to attack attractor lures, whereas all trout must eat, so all get hungry, in which case he will probably lace three food imitators to his leader and start 'ferreting' from near surface to bottom. Alternatively, he may 'ferret' with a combination of attractors and imitators to appeal to both hunger and anger, varying the depth, the retrieve and the lures themselves.

His first fish will almost certainly solve his problem as soon as its stomach contents are examined. There is, of course, always the possibility that the first fish may be bursting with midge pupae, yet ends its career by snatching his Baddow Special. This has happened to me many times, and I now know that the wisest plan is to concentate on the midge pupae, despite the difficulty one has in discarding a lure that has just proved successful.

There is no doubt in my mind that 'ferreting' in stillwater with food imitators is more successful over a season than is the presentation of attractors. At the same time there are occasional periods when the fish appear to refuse all food forms, either because they are satiated or for some other reason, and it is during these periods the attractors produce the best results.

While it is true that all flies and lures used are subject to instant replacement at the whim of the angler, the important difference between the 'ferreting' leader with three up and most other leaders with the same number is that the former is based on a thoroughly practical attempt at selective motivation of the quarry, while the latter is dependent on a form of indiscriminate appeal. This form appears to be practised by most stillwater fly-fishers, yet I suspect its success prospects must be roughly similar to those of a lucky dip.

FISHING

A. J. McCLANE
EDITOR

Walking the Dry Fly

This 4-pound brown trout made a believer out of Bob Hardwicke the first time he tried walking a dry fly. He compares the technique to fishing a bass bug

THERE are certainly more ways of frightening a trout than of catching one, and the experienced angler, despite all his stealth and art, hooks a very small percentage of the fish he covers in the course of a day. This is no small part of the fascination of dry-fly fishing. One of the first things we learn is that the artificial must lie on the surface as the natural flies do. Any sudden movement must be avoided at all costs. Drag, the condition that causes a floating pattern to pull against the current in an unlifelike manner, is the bugbear of the purist. However, like so many rules about angling, it is not applicable all of the time—although one is left with the belief that no alternative exists.

Actually, a dragging fly can be made to look lifelike, and there are times when the technique is effective. The "walking" dry fly won't work in obvious mayfly situations on gentle currents when any indelicacy in presentation will put the fish down. But it is ideal on deep, bouldery rivers when no insects are in evidence—a common dilemma, particularly in the American West.

The lore of dry-fly fishing is full of adjurations to keep the artificial riding high with no hint of movement except that caused by the current. This is the recognized principle and worth remembering. But for all the good it did last summer, I might as well have been fishing in a bathtub.

The weather in the Rocky Mountains was freakishly cold with melting snowdrifts in the peaks until late July. Many of the major trout streams never did reach a level the purist would consider fishable. The celebrated stonefly hatch on the Madison occurred at a time when the river was a raging torrent, and the more acrobatic anglers hooked fish by hanging on to a clump of willows and leaning over the water—but landing a tigerish brownie in those foaming rapids was something else again. There was only one mayfly hatch of any significance on the Green River, and the successive broods petered out before the stream even approached its normal flow. The delayed haying season, which resembled clipping hair from a bald man, didn't expose enough grasshoppers to stir the fish into their usual frenzy.

Despite the constant high water, I had fine dry-fly fishing. I rarely caught less than thirty fish a day, with a smattering of 2- and 3-pounders, and on several trips I released seventy or eighty fish, including three in the 4-pound class. Some days on the New Fork were all a man could hope for; along a short stretch of bank I caught twenty-two trout ranging from 14 to 20 inches, and met my nemesis in a huge brown that lunged at a dry fly from under the willows and broke the leader. Then there was the day Phil Clock struck three big trout, one after another (Ted Trueblood and I could hear the fish hit the water a hundred yards upstream), and I stepped on my own rod tip while trying to release a husky brown that wrapped the leader around my ankles and dashed downstream. But we worked for everything we caught, and in the final analysis it was a season for the unorthodox.

The New Fork River rises as a meadow stream in the foothills of Wyoming's Bridger Wilderness northeast of Pinedale and flows south, gathering the currents of Duck Creek, Pine Creek, Pole Creek, and

or four times, and drained for not more than ten minutes, removing any froth. After draining, the eggs are salted. You use five ounces of very fine-grained salt to each ten pounds of eggs, a 32-to-1 ratio. Immediately afterward, the caviar is placed in a slip-lid tin or a jar, with *no* air left in the container. The caviar must be held under refrigeration at a temperature of 27 to 30 degrees F. It will reach its peak flavor in one week, and should be served within six months, for after that it may lose its delicacy and eye appeal very rapidly.

"The best caviar is generally eaten plain," Beyer continued, "on a thin piece of freshly made toast, without butter. The caviar itself should be fat enough not to require butter. Caviar that is more heavily salted than the best grade can stand a few drops of lemon juice, or may be sprinkled lightly with some finely chopped egg white, egg yolk, onions, or chives.

"The crowning achievement of an epicurean sportsman is to serve caviar with the breast meat of cold roast pheasant minced extremely fine. It must not be ground, but knife-chopped. Each guest heaps as much caviar as he wants on a piece of dry toast or very thin black bread, then sprinkles the minced pheasant meat over the caviar. The meat shouldn't be piled on the caviar—use just the amount that will adhere to the surface."

In an age when caviar brings $3 an ounce, a man who buys in lots of three to fourteen tons is living on the edge of an abyss. Unlike any other food product, its critical storage temperature may vary only 5½ degrees (26.5 to 32 degrees F.). From the time Beyer departs with his shipment from Astrakhan, on the Volga, until he reaches New York—a distance of 8,000 miles by boat, rail, and plane—he lives with thermometer in hand, checking caviar every four hours.

Beyer tapped the lid of an elaborately decorated blue tin well known to gourmets throughout the world. "It has to be packed in slip-lid tins—never sealed. The prime test besides the berries being whole is that each one is glistening in its own fat. The fattest part of the caviar rises to the surface of the can during transport, so a conscientious shipper has to make certain that his tins are turned frequently to keep the fat well distributed. I designed this tin myself, and one thing the Russians didn't notice at first, aside from the fact that I'm a Marine general, is our label."

He shoved the tin across his desk. Stamped in the scroll is the proud brand name: *Fidelis.*

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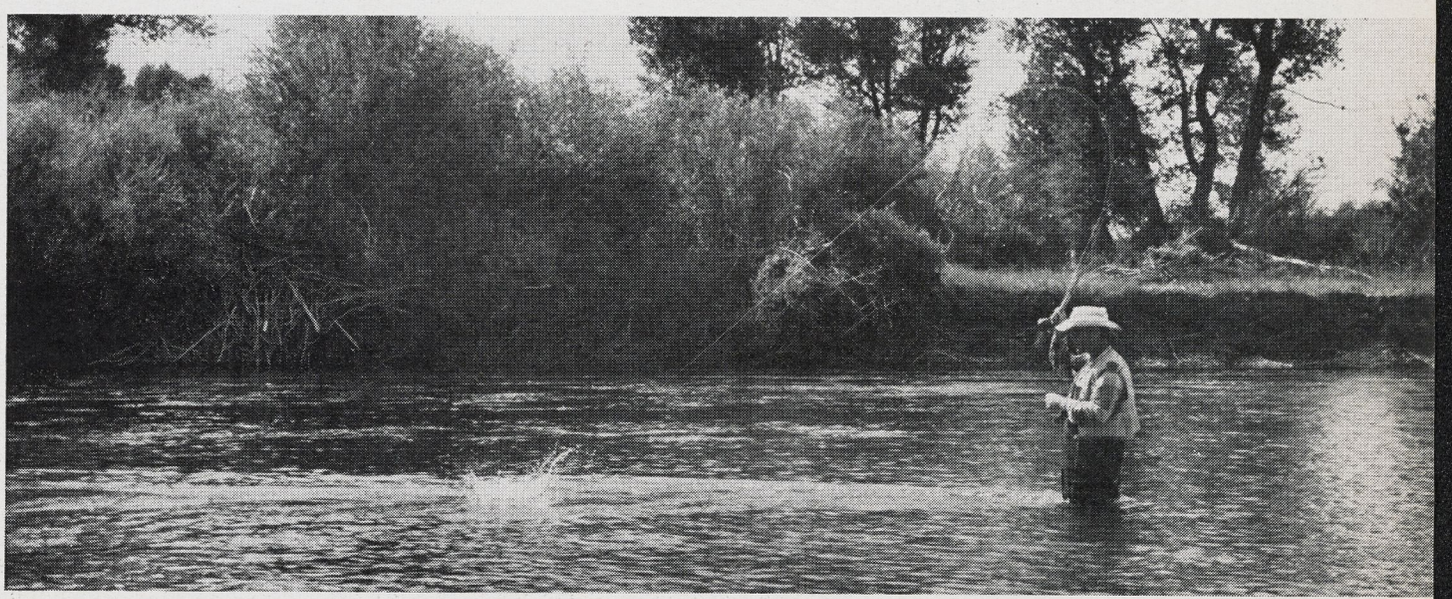
Demonstrating the key to walking a fly, Ted Trueblood holds his rod high to keep as much line as possible out of the water

Wading out to the deeper part of the stream where the fish are likely to be feeding near the bottom, Jimmy Green casts . . .



. . . crosscurrent, quartering upstream, and lets the fly float dragless, then walks it back toward him—*voilà*—a hooked trout

Boulder Creek before turning westerly across a mesa to join the Green River. The part that was made for fly fishing runs from the town of Boulder about twenty miles downstream to the cutoff bridge, where it burrows under willows and bubbles past cottonwoods.

There are two problems in high-water dry-fly fishing. The first is the effort expended by the angler in working upstream, wading against the current and flailing the water ahead with fast casts and quick float backs. The fly is seldom "fishing" for more than two seconds before the line is sucked under in the turbulence, and it takes a powerful amount of casting to get even an hour of actual hook-in-the-water time. There is also the energy saved by the trout; being much less enthusiastic than the angler, the fish is not about to rise from his quiet hold on the bottom through six or eight feet of rushing water to chase a dry fly.

Yet a trout can be made to hit a floater if it's left to dance over his head in a *lifelike* manner. A positive action is the only thing that separates walking a dry fly from letting it drag. Although the textbook definition of drag—a condition that causes a floating fly to pull against the current in an unlifelike manner—is reliable, it does not imply that you have to keep the fly working at the current's speed all the time. The thought of moving a dry fly almost paralyzes the pious hand—yet in high, bouldery water it is the *motion* of surface foods that compels the trout to feed.

Forgetting the lore of the mayfly for a moment, many meaty winged insects such as stoneflies (which are strong, active swimmers even against a current), dragonflies, and grasshoppers are more common to western rivers than the delicate ephemerids. It's reasonable to believe that a 3- or 4-pound brown trout is conditioned to aggressive feeding. With the few mayflies that appeared on the New Fork last summer, the fish would have starved to death. The trick is, of course, to convince a big trout that what he sees is real.

Downstream dry-fly fishing is not the answer. Ordinarily this is accomplished by casting a slack line and letting more line out to delay drag until the fly runs over the fish. But sooner or later the fly is left pulling against the current anyhow. Furthermore, if you are using a forward-taper line or even a medium-weight double-taper, it's difficult to make a retrieve that trout will respond to: the line is practically anchored in the flow once it has been extended.

The better method—and its subtleties can quickly be learned in practice—is to cast quartering upstream, the exact angle depending on the spot to be covered. Wade as deep as prudence dictates opposite the potential lie, and after fishing a normal dragless float (to the length it will drift), raise the rod high and hold as much of the line and leader off the water as possible. Then—and this is where talent will tell—keep the fly "walking" over the current. Catching the resilient hackles in moving water will cause the fly to skip, hop, jump, and generally look alive. You can retrieve slow or fast, and if the stream is fairly deep or swift, stop the retrieve and let the fly drift back to its original position and start again. To a fast-water trout the presence of something that isn't being rushed away with the current is a definite stimulus. The strike is more often a ferocious lunge than the mechanical sip of a mayfly feeder.

I stood next to Bob Hardwicke while he teased an Irresistible over a deep pool that had been thoroughly fished by a number of people earlier in the day. Bob had never walked a dry fly before (at least not intentionally), but he got the hang of it within a few casts. There was a slight upstream breeze, and after the fly made its float and he raised his rod between the eastbound breeze and the westbound current, the fly practically stayed in one spot for a minute, hopping up and down. Bob had just said that it was like fishing a bass bug when a 4-pound brown literally tailwalked marlinlike over the water and slammed the Irresistible. On another occasion, former casting champion Jimmy Green raised the same trout three times before it finally nailed the fly. It goes without elaboration that big fish can't be teased to the top in high water with coarse tackle.

Ideally, walking a fly is best done with the lightest line and longest leader at your disposal. An HEH or IFI joined with a 15-foot 4X leader is perfect. The fly must be tied on a fine hook with stiff hackles so that it bounces buoyantly on the surface; it doesn't matter whether it's a Blond Wulff, Irresistible, Ginger Variant, Blue Upright, Royal Coachman, Adams, Muddler, or Joe's Hopper—it must ride high. A No. 10 is about right for most fishing, because it's large enough to attract big trout, yet small enough to cast and handle easily on a fine leader. With 25- to 30-foot casts, which are practical when you're hip-deep in a turbulent stream, the line will seldom touch the water after you have made the float and raised the rod.

TERRESTRIAL TRICKS FOR LOW-WATER TROUT

George Harvey's late-summer system licks the twin problems of low water and the freestone trout's appetite for terrestrial food

By S. R. SLAYMAKER II

On a stifling hot afternoon in late July, 1975, George Harvey and I were fishing a small trout steam in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains. As we approached a narrow stretch, drought-shrunken to a trickle and interspersed with shallow pocket water, I suggested that we hike downstream to some large pools having less tree cover.

"You go ahead," George said, "I don't want to pass up this stretch."

Far be it from me to argue with an expert fly angler with 60-odd years of experience. But I was annoyed. It seemed a shame to waste time pocket-hopping this beautifully arbored but tough-to-fish tunnel. Still, George was my guest on this feeder of the Brodheads that I had fished for almost 30 years. I felt I had to stay with him.

Before I'd settled myself against a bankside hemlock, George's rod arched and white water spouted along a bankside cut only a dozen feet in front of him. A foot-long brown trout vaulted into a high snap roll and landed on an exposed gravel bed in the stream. The fish quickly hurled itself into the current and started a speedy, erratic run upstream. George surrendered line as the trout rocketed around boulders in a frantic search for fighting space. Some was available, about 30 feet ahead in the form of a riffled glide, but it was very shallow. The trout sped through it, and at the head of the stretch, it jumped again. George blocked its run-back and quickly beached it on a spit of gravel.

While George removed a Japanese beetle imitation from the jaws of this brightly colored, stream-bred brownie I said, "You fooled me," thinking to myself that his catch was a lucky one. But as he released the fish George said, "Sam, this stretch is going to be easy."

This I wanted to see, and I did very quickly. Working from a low crouch, George ducked around boulders and fished pocket water with only 12 to 15 feet of line, being careful to keep his shadow off the water ahead of him. Because the pockets were small, the beetle imitation could float for only a few seconds. So George's method of presentation was more like flicking than casting. He just flicked the leader into a pocket, got the maximum drift, and then lifted it to the next pocket, rarely taking time to extend or retrieve line. The beetle provoked a strike in almost every eddying pocket and gurgling riffle. George covered this unpromising-looking quarter of a mile stretch in about an hour and caught 28 trout.

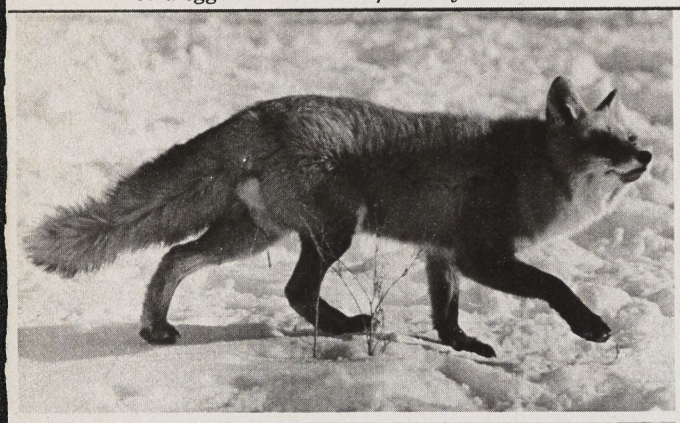
I've seen quite a few virtuoso performances by some of the country's most accomplished fly anglers who have fished this stream, but never one to equal George's when the water was at its lowest. Before moving on to the larger pools we rested, and George explained his low-water strategy.

There was no discernible mayfly activity when we went on stream, but Japanese beetles were abundant. So, George told me, he decided to match them. His imitations seemed to me very realistic, except for their backs. Each was partly painted with fluorescent red lacquer. George explained that years ago he borrowed the idea from his friend, Dr. Ralph Dougherty, a noted surgeon from McKeesport, Pennsylvania, as a means of making small beetle imitations visible in rough water.

Trout feed consistently on terrestrial food (ants, beetles, inchworms, grasshoppers, and crickets) when aquatic fly hatches taper off from mid to late summer. Since most terrestrial

S.R. Slaymaker II of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is a flyfisherman and author of "Tie a Fly, Catch a Trout."

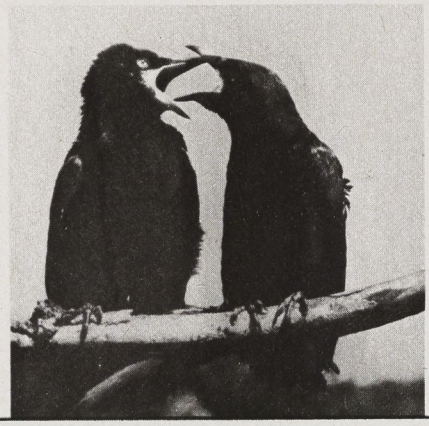
The red fox *takes gamebirds, but it also eats many rodents that eat bird eggs. Too many foxes are bad; too few can be worse. If rodents get out of control, almost all bird eggs will vanish before they hatch*



Great horned owl *hunts mostly at night for mammals. Owls seldom hit a gamebird unless the victim has been disturbed on its roost and is flying about in darkness*

The raccoon *is omnivorous but forages mostly at night in the shallows of ponds and streams. This isn't to say that it doesn't take a few bird eggs now and then*

Snakes, *like many other predators, are two-edged swords. They keep rodents down, but some take a big toll in eggs and young birds. This is a blacksnake, a beneficial species to most observers*



Crows, *the ordinary black bandits, can be a real plague to gamebirds because they are great egg thieves, but sport hunting is usually enough to control their numbers*

Badgers can be *a pest on ranches because of their holes, but they feed almost entirely on small rodents and therefore actually cut down on the number of egg eaters*

The Cooper's is a smaller version of the goshawk. Fierce and relentless, it has long been recognized as the nemesis of the bobwhite quail. Almost 50 years ago, Stoddard wrote this about it: "This species is a true bird-killing hawk and probably is the worst natural enemy of the bobwhite . . . the Cooper's hawk is too violent and bloodthirsty to be willingly tolerated . . . these destructive hawks probably harvest a crop of quail in the aggregate during the course of their 365-day open season comparable to that taken by sportsmen in their much shorter time afield . . . Cooper's hawk is a rare combination of elusive shyness in the vicinity of its nest, and lightninglike rapidity in attacking and carrying off its prey elsewhere, striking here and there when least expected, the bane alike of poultrymen and gamekeeper."

Half a century ago the Cooper's hawk was much more plentiful than it is now.In the Deep South especially, it was tremendously abundant in the winter when those migrating from the North increased the resident population. Today it is far less of a threat to bobwhites than it was in Stoddard's time. And along with the other hawks and owls, Cooper's hawks are now protected by federal law.

Strangely, the man who so soundly castigated the Cooper's hawk also gave it credit for the bobwhite's tendency to hold snugly to a point, or until gunners could walk up and flush a covey or a single. Any quail that left the ground to escape was almost certain to be caught by the faster-flying hawk, so the best means of escape was to flatten itself against the ground in low cover and stay motionless.

In recent years, where the blue darter is scarce and foxes are plentiful, many quail have changed their habits somewhat. The fox, with its keen nose, scents a covey and stalks it, much as a bird dog does. If the covey flattens itself against the earth and remains motionless, the fox is quick to jump in and catch one. After a few passes by a fox, a covey gets wise. When a canine approaches, the birds get up wild before they can be stalked and pinpointed.

Bill Etchells, my hunting partner and a plantation manager, thought this over and decided he'd try a bit of deception on his wild coveys. He bought a hawk call and carried it in the pocket of his hunting jacket. One day, after a few coveys flushed wild in front of his dogs, he pulled out the whistle and when his pointers began to make game he blew it loud. The covey froze, held, and the gunners walked in and had a perfect *(continued on page 110)*

imitations are small (sizes 14 to 22), they are more visible to anglers on the placid surfaces of pastoral, limestone streams than on turbulent freestone mountain streams. So it has become almost habitual for many fly anglers to equate small terrestrials solely with limestone streams.

But most North American trout waters are of the freestone variety. Consequently, many fly anglers unnecessarily forego enjoyable and productive late-season trout fishing by not using terrestrials on freestone water. Many don't fish trout streams at all during the dog days because of the low-water bugaboo. George Harvey, on the contrary, has developed a strategy that capitalizes on low water *and* on freestone trouts' appetite for terrestrial food.

Thanks to that fluorescent lacquer, fishermen see the tops of beetle and ant facsimiles; fish see their more natural-looking undersides. But riffles and boils can cause such lures to turn bottom side up. George overcomes this problem by tying his terrestrials with hollowed-out bottoms. His beetles and ants are made with deer hair. The undersides are clipped flush with the hook's shank. While hair on the top protrudes more, it is clipped sufficiently to prevent imbalance. The splayed legs of beetles and ants, together with the balancing faculty of the hook, tend to keep his imitations right side up.

George firmly believes that the most important component in fishing dries on low, fast water and in all dry-fly situations, is the leader.

"I've made a lifetime hobby of leader experimentation," he told me, "and I feel that many anglers are too concerned about sinking their leader tippets. I don't care whether the tippet floats or sinks. Also, it's gospel with a lot of fellows that 6 and 7X leader tippets are mandatory in low, clear water, but I don't think they're necessary, particularly in riffled water. Three and 4X are OK so long as you have the right balance to your leader and the right material in the right places."

He noted that pocket water is not conducive to long, drag-free floats of the fly. To delay the onset of drag, he uses leader tippets of softer material than the butts. Lures are delivered on tippets supple enough to alight in a somewhat slack (or, as George puts it, "wavy") condition so that drag is postponed while the tippets unravel in the current.

As a rule, George's leaders are a couple of feet longer than his rod (see box below). He believes that the secret of building effective leaders lies in having the correct amounts of soft nylon adjusted in lengths to correspond to the size, the density of hackle, and the air resistance of the fly being used. You know you've got proper balance when the leader alights in that "wavy" condition, he says.

George believes that heavier leader tippets (3, 4, and 5X as opposed to 6 and 7X) facilitate unsnagging with a minimum of leader breakage.

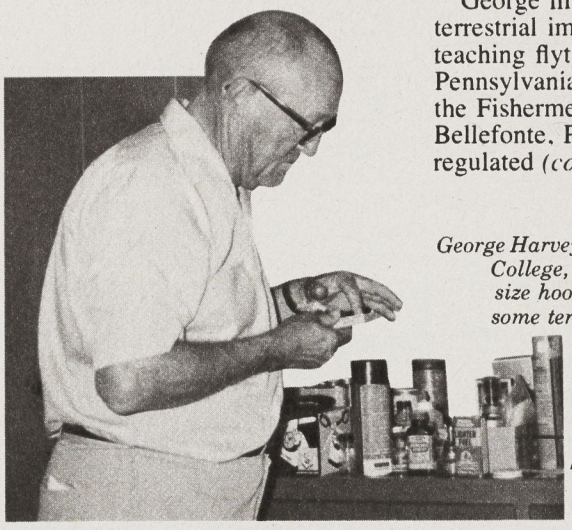
"If you don't snag bankside foliage now and then," he says, "you're not fishing small streams thoroughly."

George caught his first trout on a fly when he was six years old. At 12 he became a proficient flyfisherman of Allegheny mountain runs around his home town, Du Bois, Pennsylvania. A self-taught flyrodder, he soon became a self-taught flytyer.

"The price of imported English wet flies was too steep for me, and so were flytying materials," he told me. "So I hunted around my uncle's butcher shop and panhandled poultry feathers."

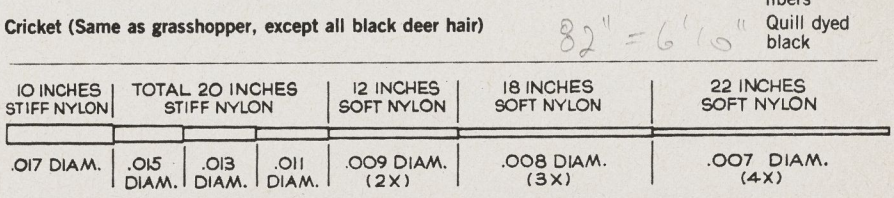
His prowess in catching native brook trout approached legendary proportions among area residents. When barely into his teens, George was sought as a guide by business and professional men, some coming great distances to fish Clearfield County streams. After graduating from Penn State University, George joined the faculty and eventually headed the Department of Required Physical Education. He started the first accredited flytying course there in 1947, and he taught more than 35,000 students until his retirement in 1972. He tied flies for President Eisenhower and fished with him, and also with his brother Milton when he was president of Penn State.

George first tied and fished terrestrial imitations in 1934 while teaching flytying and casting for the Pennsylvania Fish Commission at the Fishermen's Paradise project at Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, the first regulated *(continued on page 155)*



George Harvey, in his fly-tying den in State College, Pennsylvania, ponders what size hook to use as he prepares to tie some terrestrials like those on facing page. Flies shown are: inchworm (deer hair), black ant, cinnamon ant, Japanese beetles, cricket, grasshopper, and inchworm (cork)

	HOOK	BODY	HACKLE	WING	LEGS
Jap Beetle (Harvey)	No. 12 or No. 14	Black deer hair (clipped)		Imitation Jungle cock (cemented as roof)	Black duck or goose quill fibers
Cinnamon Ant	No. 20 or No. 22	Amber or cinnamon horsehair	Any color wound in "wasp waist"	Thorax tie	
Black Ant	No. 20 or No. 22	Black deer hair	Any color wound in "wasp waist"	Thorax tie	
Green inchworm	No. 12 or No. 14	Green deer hair (clipped)			
Grasshopper	No. 8 2X long or No. 10 2X long	Yellow deer hair (clipped)		Deer hair tuft on top	Dyed red duck or goose quill fibers
Cricket (Same as grasshopper, except all black deer hair)					Quill dyed black



Sketch above shows George Harvey's recommended leader for low-water terrestrial fishing. As a rule, his leaders are a couple of feet longer than his rod. Key is to design leader so it lands on the water in a slack, or "wavy" condition

SMALL GAME

24 FACTS THAT'LL HELP YOU BAG MORE SQUIRRELS

Let natural history be your guide to how, where, and when to hunt bushytails

By MARK HICKS

For many kids, first game is a gray squirrel, and the gun is a .22 rifle. Youngsters put meat in the pot that way, and some develop into good bushytail hunters without really being aware of how much they know. But others don't. The squirrels are there, and once in a while, they shoot a few. If you do know the habits of the squirrels, limits come easier and much more often. Mark Hicks, who tells a great deal about how to do it in this story, qualifies as an expert. He's a knowledgeable naturalist from Athens, Ohio, who hunts a great deal. Mark wrote "Late-Season Squirrels" (on second-litter grays) in the November 1976 issue of this magazine.

1 Though gray and fox squirrels often live side by side, they prefer much different environments. Fox squirrels are commonly found in small open woodlots near farms. Grays frequent forests that have an abundance of oak, hickory, and other nut-bearing trees in various stages of growth. Some of the trees may be more than 11 inches in diameter.

In addition, the understory should include numerous fruiting shrubs, such as ironwood, witch hazel, pawpaw, hazelnut, blackberry, and flowering dogwood. Woods that have a clear, deer-park appearance won't have many gray squirrels in them.

2 The most obvious sign that bushytails are actively using an area is the presence of leaf nests—ragged balls of leaves and twigs one to two feet in diameter. The nests are in constant need of repair, and once abandoned they quickly fall apart.

Don't be discouraged if there aren't many such nests on your hunting grounds. If there are den trees, the grays will readily make use of them. The best trees for dens are oaks, maples, walnuts, beeches, gums, and sycamores. They should be at least 15 inches in diameter and have openings that are no larger than four inches across. If a squirrel is using the den, he will chew away the bark along the top of the openings to smooth it.

3 Never underestimate the keenness of a squirrel's eyesight. Squirrels can distinguish fine detail, and their eyes react faster than human eyes. Their eyes also have a yellow filter that may reduce glare and enhance contrast like shooting glasses.

Bushytails are especially adept at sensing movement. Take special pains to move as little as possible when hunting, and to move very slowly when you must. Though it is unlikely that squirrels can distinguish colors, they detect bright hues more readily than drab ones. Therefore, wear dark colors or camouflage clothing, unless a safety color is necessary or required by law.

4 Squirrels have a highly refined sense of hearing. Move with caution, choosing each step carefully to avoid stepping on twigs and branches. Take short steps; put the ball of your foot down first. During mild weather, wear tennis shoes to muffle noise. Try hunting along a creek wash when the woods are very dry and the leaves noisy underfoot. A creek wash is usually free of leaves and lets you hunt quietly over a clean gravel or sandy bottom. Also, since these bottoms are often at a lower elevation than the surrounding woods, they are protected from the wind. When a blustery day makes hunting difficult elsewhere, these areas will be relatively quiet. The squirrels will be more active there and the hunting will be easier.

(continued from page 79)

catch-and-release stretch in the country. After noting the prevalance of green inchworms in streamside vegetation, he began experimenting with imitations. Since the worms were usually taken as they touched the surface, he strove for a lure with optimum floatability. Silk bodies provided no buoyancy, and wool and chenille soon became waterlogged. He finally hit on the idea of making an inchworm from cork. Painted green and lacquered, it floated superbly and was a fantastic trout taker.

At the time, George was teaching his four-year-old daughter Susie to flycast. On a midsummer Saturday, when the Paradise was crowded, he tied one of his green concoctions to Susie's leader and waited gleefully for the fun to begin. Almost immediately she hooked a trout. Shortly after George released it, she had another. As trout continued to seize Susie's inchworm, fishermen edged closer to inquire about the secret weapon. When Susie hooked a 22-inch brown, a crowd gathered. The late Charles French, then executive director of the fish commission, elbowed his way to George to inspect the lure.

"I think Charlie was a little peeved about a four-year-old catching all those fish," George said. "Anyway, my cork inchworm was outlawed on the Paradise, then and there!" In later years he began tying inchworms with deer hair because it enabled him to abide by the Paradise ruling of "fur, feathers, or hair only."

George Harvey has spent more time on trout streams than anyone I know. Sixty years of fishing is no record in itself. But over most of those years he has fished entire seasons, thanks to use of terrestrial imitations during the dog days of late summer when most flyfishermen hang up their waders. That more of them should and could enjoy excellent late-season fishing by adopting these simple Harvey techniques was underscored this year by my experience on the same Pocono stretch on which George had scored so well the year before. Low water again prevailed, as was noted in my fishing diary entry for July 17, 1976.

"Stream very low, but this was a fabulous afternoon thanks to Harvey ties and his methods. A few blue dun-type mayflies hatching but fish were not taking naturals on the surface. Even so, I tried a No. 16 imitation with no results. Then went to a Harvey Japanese beetle and it was really deadly. So were ants. Hooked and lost a 16-inch brown on one of George's grasshoppers. Total: 20 trout in that shallow stretch in little over an hour."

Fly anglers inexperienced in the use of terrestrials on freestone water will probably doubt what I say about trout favoring Japanese beetles over mayflies. But, thanks to an earlier rainstorm and gusty breezes during the afternoon, it's likely that terrestrials were preponderant. So trout were probably more disposed to concentrate on them rather than those sparsely hatching mayflies. Whatever the reason, the vigor with which they attacked the beetles and ants was phenomenal.

When the red-topped beetle first touched down on a shallow slick, three brown trout materialized out of nowhere and lunged at it. The largest smacked the beetle hard, and the other fish disappeared under the right bank. My trout thrashed the slick to a boil.

Shortly after I'd beached and released it, another gobbled the beetle. Several minutes and four fish later I lost the beetle in a tree. My sole remaining one produced as well as its mate until I lost it.

Then I went to George's ants, size 16. I'd successfully fished ants before during summer months on freestone streams. But, in riffled water, there were always frustrating moments when it was hard to keep them in view. Missed strikes resulted. These red-lacquered ants were always clearly visible, and there were few missed strikes.

Around quitting time a large fish rose in a manhole-size pocket upstream along the right bank. For several minutes I watched him finning in the rock-lined, crystalline patch of water. I landed my ant in the current above, but when it floated by him he didn't budge. I delivered it three times. No interest.

Assuming that he might have risen for one of the odd mayflies, I went back to the blue dun imitation. It evoked a slight rise on the first drift and no interest on a few more. Then I replaced it with a Harvey grasshopper. After the first cast he tipped up leisurely and took it.

The fish tried to escape through the rivulet feeding the pocket, but midway up he foundered on the gravel and flopped back into it. There was nothing for him to do but thrash wildly in the pocket while I simply hung onto a taut line. We were so close that I took a splashing

TERRESTRIAL TRICKS

(continued)

full in the face. When he settled down, I crooked the rod under arm and wiped my glasses while the brown regarded me with a baleful eye. The grasshopper appeared securely embedded in the roof of his mouth. So, feeling sorry about his plight, I guessed that I might help him get to wider water upstream and there precipitate a proper fight, without much risk of losing him.

I kicked water to his rear. He flashed forward to the gravel. While he was writhing on it the grasshopper flew free. Back to the pocket he flopped and there regarded me again with a baleful eye. I tipped my hat and headed back to the car.

Like other terrestrial facimiles, grasshoppers and crickets are generally considered to be limestone lures. The best-known patterns are associated with limestone streams. The Letort Hopper and Cricket come immediately to mind. Being larger than beetles and ants, hopper and cricket imitations cannot appear to be very realistic to trout in smooth, slow-flowing water where they have plenty of time to look them over. In riffled and white-water stretches, however, fish often can't get a close look and must make snap decisions. That's why artificial hoppers and crickets can be as effective on freestone streams as on limestone streams, if not more so. True, the naturals are not always abundant around mountain streams, but they are not uncommon in late summer. And, particularly on windy days, trout feed on them voraciously. Even when natural hoppers and crickets are in low supply, artificials are often effective.

Freestone trout are even more prone to make fatal snap decisions about the authenticity of beetles and ants. In agitated water their small size allows for only an impressionistic viewing by the fish. But not by the fisherman, thanks to that flourescent lacquer. The fisherman, then, has a much greater advantage over his quarry in freestone water—as opposed to limestone—when he uses terrestrials, particularly small ones.

There were plenty of Japanese beetles around the stream when George fished that Pocono stretch in 1975. Not as many were about when I fished it in 1976. Yet we both scored well with the artificials. The answer, of course, lies in the twin facts that a variety of beetles look much the same to trout in rapids, riffles, boils, and even in glides when they're fast flowing. So George Harvey ties and fishes Japanese beetle patterns in various sizes so as to represent a cross-section of beetle life.

If you want to fish successfully on freestone streams during the terrestrial season, you'd do well to adopt what I've come to call the Harvey technique. It boils down to these six things:

1. The backs of your imitations should be dubbed with red fluorescent lacquer.

2. Build a leader balanced to suit the fly, and use soft nylon tippet material that will delay the onset of drag.

3. Do everything possible to keep hidden from trout ahead of you. Use boulders and vegetation as shields. Always keep a low profile.

4. Don't shy away from stream obstacles. Try to fish every nook and cranny and be prepared to lose some flies.

5. Keep a short line and dap pocket water. Resist the urge to cast when you don't have to.

6. Keep moving. If small and shallow pockets don't provide action after a couple of daps, chances are the fish were spooked.

The capstone of George Harvey's low-water strategy is showing terrestrials to the maximum number of trout in the minimum amount of time.

JAMES LEISENRING

How to skip and flutter stiff-hackled imitations right into the mouths of waiting trout.

Downstream Dancing Dry

James Leisenring

Late September weather in Montana can be cruel and vicious. We had been gully-washed out of the Gallatin, monsooned on the Madison, frozen stiff on the Firehole and now we were in the process of being blown off the lower Boulder. Gale force gusts of wind ripped down river from Mcleod, resulting in an almost impossible casting situation. Everytime we tried to present dry flies in the typical upstream fashion our lines were blown back into our red chapped faces. This was to be our last day in the Big Sky Country and my brother Mitch and I longed for some surface activity that had so far eluded us.

After half an hour of frustrating and fruitless upstream casting, we concluded that the only feasible approach was to locate some rapid (preferably rock-infested) pocket water and use our dad's shortline, downstream dancing dry fly method. This change in tactics (literally an about face) saved the day and salvaged an otherwise undistinguished fishing venture. The red-spotted, golden-hued residents of the Boulder responded with abandon as several fat, sassy browns were brought to net in the remaining hours.

Although the history of actual documented dry fly fishing is less than 150 years old (*Vade Mecum of Fly Fishing for Trout – 1841)* the sport is replete with dogmas. Perhaps the most prominent doctrine has been that the dry fly *must* be presented with a drag-free drift. One exception to this rule has been the old British practice of blow-line fishing or dapping and Hewitt's skater technique. More recently, Leonard Wright, Jr. (*Fishing the Dry Fly as a Living Insect*) was labelled a heretic for merely suggesting the "sudden inch" or slight movement of the fly to ape a fluttering caddis.

It's understandable why the teachings of England's Halford were readily embraced by Theodore Gordon, the acknowledged father of dry fly fishing in this country. The Hampshire chalk streams that Halford frequented were not that dissimilar to the relatively placid freestone Catskill waters, relished by the reclusive Gordon. But what about the steep gradient, thundering streams and rivers that plummet off the towering Rocky Mountains? Do the same traditional dogmas apply, or are different techniques more applicable? Water type is always paramount and supersedes tradition. Pragmatists use what works and my father both espoused and exemplified this characteristic.

Harry J. Leisenring's tenure on the various Colorado watersheds spanned a full half century. Being a product of the times, his early days consisted of fishing a brace of snelled wet flies knotted to silkworm gut affixed to level silk line. He initially employed the fluttering dropper technique outlined by Schwiebert in *Trout.* In this method the dropper fly is "hopscotched" along the surface while the lower one is em-

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G. L. STRODTZ

features

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STAFF

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Joyce Findley	Publication Manager
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ployed as a ballast. Frequent use of this tactic revealed the enticing properties of a fly "dancing" on the surface. When lightwire dry flies became readily available, he eliminated the "down" fly. By using an even shorter line the dry fly itself could be danced or fluttered on the surface.

This method is most applicable to rapids and swift water that may appear unfishable to the uninitiated. In the Rockies, particularly in craggy Colorado, you don't have to look far for productive stretches. Even on hard-fished rivers, merely find a spot where no one has made the attempt. Bait fishermen abhor this water type and only crafty shortline nymph connoisseurs like Charles Brooks (*Nymph Fishing for Larger Trout*) find it appealing.

While proceeding downstream, the angler searches for slight slicks between rapids and small, smooth pockets behind boulders and other obstructions. The edges of white water beside and directly below small cascades and waterfalls are excellent holding stations. The fly is cast directly into or slightly downstream of the suspected lair and with a slow lifting of the rod, the surface tension created by the artificial's numerous hackle fibers causes it to bounce and seemingly dance on the surface. When properly executed, the actions of a fluttering, egg-laying caddis are superbly mimicked. Fish are also on the lookout for ovipositing mayflies which invariably move upstream, periodically depressing the surface with extended, egg-laden abdomens.

Trout residing in and/or feeding in fast water are of necessity opportunistic. A suspected edible is available for a fleeting moment; therefore, rises are determined and ferocious. Because the line is taut, it is neither necessary nor prudent to strike; the quarry steadfastly hook themselves. If the angler actually strikes (usually a conditioned reflex resulting from a startle response), a broken leader is frequently assured.

Even though a close proximity downstream approach is utilized, stealth is not a pressing concern. While looking skyward, trout in such turbulent environs perceive only broken, disfigured images. Attempting to peer out of a shattered plate glass window is an analogous situation. Prismatic light is reflected and dispersed in every conceivable direction. However, casting position (often requiring gymnastic wading on large rivers) and being able to read the water is vitally important to achieve consistent success. When the short cast is executed properly, only the artificial and perhaps a small portion of the leader touch the surface.

JAMES LEISENRING

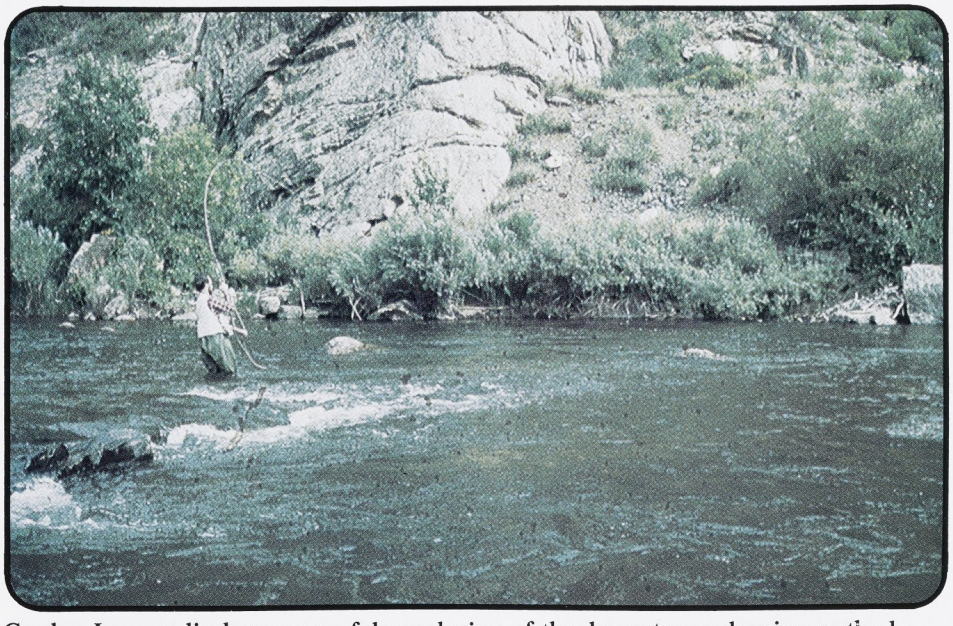
Top row, left to right: Badger Bivisible, Brown Bivisible, Orange Asher
Middle row, left to right: Renegade, Hewitt's Spider, Gray Ugly
Bottom row, left to right: Gray Hackle Yellow, Blue Dun, Flick's Gray Fox Variant

The most productive flies are the various Bivisibles, Renegades and Spider patterns fashioned on lightwire hooks. Surface tension created by the numerous stiff-hackle fibers against strong current and the slow lifting of the rod causes the artificial to dance and flutter enticingly.

The development of long, lightweight graphite rods is a boon to this type of fishing. But "old fashioned" level line and a short 3- or 4-foot monofilament leader is actually preferable to either a weight forward or double tapered line with a long graduated leader. The heavy belly section of a weight forward or double taper constantly pulls the short line down through the guides every time the rod is raised.

Because of the downstream presentation and swift, broken water, leaders can be heavier than usual, as long as the "jitterbug" action of the artificial is not inhibited. When a strong and weighty fish is hooked in the rapids, this extra margin of safety is greatly appreciated.

If you are longing for some exciting dry fly action for surprisingly large trout, follow the advice my father bestowed upon me many seasons ago: "Make that fly dance, Jim; make it dance."



Gordon Ivarson displays successful conclusion of the downstream dancing method.

An Affair

With Lady Caroline

Walter C. Johnson

WALTER C. JOHNSON

Upper right, Walt Johnson's Red Shrimp.

Above, the quarry – a bright steelhead.

At right, from top: Brown Heron, Orange Heron, and Black Heron patterns tied by Syd Glasso.

Feeding Lanes

How the secrets of good presentation can improve your catch rate on bigger trout

FRED ARBONA

MOST FLY-FISHING LITERATURE—magazine or book, usually includes photographs showing fly fishers making long, straight casts *across* one of America's better-known trout streams. While this may make for good pictures, such casts should not serve as fishing models.

After many years of fishing throughout the country, of guiding beginners and advanced fly fishers, and accompanying "experts" on a variety of trout waters, I sincerely believe that most of them remain ill equipped to succeed consistently on our trout streams. The parts most commonly missing are: casting expertise, the knowledge of what constitutes good presentation, and the fact that most fishermen insist on making things harder, not easier, on themselves!

Few of us are tournament casters, able to place a fly 60 feet away, exactly how and where we want it every time with the precise amount of slack (wind or no wind) for a drag-free float. The few fly fisherman who can consistently do such stream feats are rare.

Fortunately, tournament casting prowess is unnecessary to achieve good fly presentation. This is especially true once you learn fishing angles that require no long, trick casts or uncontrollable piles of slack to get drag-free floats.

Good fly presentation—a drag-free float—means nothing more than causing the fly you are using—dry, emerger or nymph—to drift without any line tension. If you can accomplish it, you will meet with success in any trout stream, regardless of the fly you are using.

This fishing step sounds simple enough, but though it is always easy to accomplish in our imagination, a drag-free float is more complex to accomplish onstream.

A fly always develops some drag the minute it lands on the water if it is not accompanied by *some* slack in the fly line and leader. On the other hand, you need to place your fly with some degree of accuracy so it floats as close as possible to where a fish is rising or where you suspect one waits. Success or failure oftentimes is a matter of inches. The problem arises when slack in your cast and fly accuracy fail to complement each other. In fact, the more you accomplish one, the less you tend to have of the other, especially during windy conditions

There are, however, fishing angles tailor-made for short casts, angles that require little slack in your cast, and that offer the easiest positions for fly accuracy and are deadly from a fishing point of view.

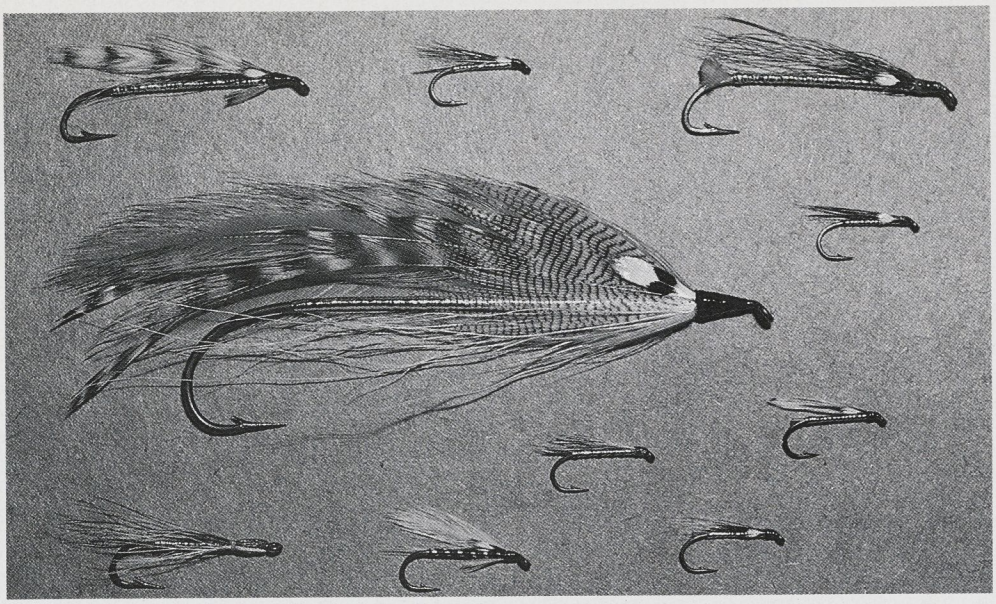
The reader may still not understand why slack—a drag-free float—is so imperative. Most hatches involve insects so small in relation to their aquatic environment that as nymphs they drift helplessly *with* the current when they become dislodged or float caught by the surface film as they turn into duns (at least until their wings dry or they disappear in the swirl of a trout rise). Trout tell the difference between the natural and your imitation not by examining its size, color or number of tails but by checking its *behaviour*, something they can do from three feet away. When your dry fly drags and throws wakes over a fish's head, it's no wonder he streaks for cover.

Why is a drag-free float so difficult to achieve? Let's consider what makes a trout stream flow. A trout stream is a moving chute of water. Its flow, however, is never uniform. At all sections, its current divides into separate tongues of currents, or lanes, the divisions created by stream bottom terrain and by obstacles such as rocks, logs or weedbeds. Current lanes can be as skinny as one foot or as wide as ten feet, and in velocity and character no two lanes are alike. A fly line or leader dropped *across* a number of current lanes (all too common a fishing practice) tries to follow all lanes at once and a fly connected to it will be pulled across the lanes. The fly develops drag.

Why, then, does the most common fishing scenario involve a fly fisherman casting across-stream at a 90-degree angle? This is precisely the angle that assures his fly line and leader will cross the greatest number of current lanes, creating the *shortest* drag-free floats. The only way to get a good fly drift from this 90-degree angle

FRED ARBONA, fisherman, fly tier and author of *The Mayfly and the Angler*, lives in Hailey, Id.

B'KILL PROD — KRIS LEE PHOTOS



B'KILL PROD — KRIS LEE PHOTO

Standard streamer patterns, unusually sparse and/or small, are effective replicas of tiny minnows.

streamers as large as #12 occasionally do the trick, but when I say small, I mean #14 to #20, or flies that represent all the species I lump together as "pinheads." Additionally, these small patterns should be tied on hooks lighter than usual for streamers, since they are pitched with minimum commotion into clear, still shallows.

Appropriate patterns vary from region to region, if not from stream to stream. My experience indicates the exact color of a streamer is less critical to effectiveness than size and silhouette. Indeed, I've found that, given a selection of patterns that approximate in size and shape the natural fry or fingerlings present, I'm usually better off with one *decidedly different* in color from the prevailing naturals. Trout seem more inclined to home on small streamers more dramatic in overall appearance than drab patterns dressed to "match the minnow." Contrasting yellow with black and white, as in tying the Black Ghost, or simply putting in a splash of red, as found in the tail of Keith Fulsher's Silver Tip, are examples of the approach I take in stocking my boxes with young-of-the-year streamers.

Getting Them Tied

TYING FUNCTIONAL STREAMERS in this style isn't difficult. You should create slim silhouettes by putting minimum material into each body (a single layer of tinsel or floss) by using throat hackle only to enhance a pattern's effectiveness (the yellow throat of the Black Ghost, for instance) using a sparing amount of curl-free wing material, such as bucktail or squirrel, or two hackle-tips only, picked from a dry-fly-quality neck; being careful that the wing of each finished fly is low to the hook shank.

To avoid discoloration of single-layered floss bodies when streamers are wet, try enameling your hook shanks white prior to dressing the flies. White (for silver) or yellow (for gold) undercoating also mask sins when tying single-layered, tinsel bodies. To maintain a low wing profile, take care that the tie-in point is lump- and slope-free, or that it is flush to the level of the rest of the body on top of the hook. Winging material, including hackle-tips, should be measured and clipped prior to being tied in. Then, also lacquer sparingly all wing butts of hair and synthetics to compress their overall bulk, as well as to assure that the wing stays in place once it's tied on the hook.

The length of wings on these streamers isn't critical, except concerning how a wing's relative dimensions influence a pattern's appearance in the eyes of the quarry. The problem of short-striking seldom applies to streamers so small, and probably shouldn't concern either tier or angler. I like wings that extend no further back than to the tip of the tail, when a tail is dictated by the dressing, or to the bend of the hook when I'm tying or buying tailless patterns.

Tactics

ALTHOUGH CONVENTIONAL streamer strategy is largely methodical prospecting for random feeders, effectively fishing young-of-the-year imitations means leaving nothing to chance. Your ultimate goal—to turn the tables on a wary predator—is a test of your own predatory attributes, as well as of your fly-fishing skills.

Tailor your technique to the behavior of individual fish. Young-of-the-year predators can be divided into two categories: the *ambusher* and the *stalker*. Although a trout may switch back and forth between categories several times in the course of a hunt, the ambusher lies in wait for minnows to pass within striking range, while the stalker cruises likely spots, actively seeking fry or fingerlings to attack.

The challenges presented by each category of predator-trout are decidedly different. For instance, a well-camouflaged trout lying perfectly still is tough to spot in time to make a proper presentation before the fish spooks. If spotted in time, however, the ambusher is often easy to hook. In presentation your streamer should seem to play right into the predator's hands. A stalker is easier to see by wearing polaroids and keeping the sun at your back, or by watching for the telltale wake a cruising fish makes while moving about in shallow water.

Some minnowing trout can be caught by simply rotating through stretches of stream, working potential hotspots with tiny streamers. There are some problems with this approach, however. It diminishes the quality of

Continued on Page 68

is to make casts that cause the fly to land with a pile of slack around it, a difficult trick. You eliminate variables by selecting fishing angles that allow you to place your fly line, leader and fly all in the *same* current lane. Thus all three travel at the same speed. Fly drag is virtually eliminated.

Fly fishing success, in the words of my good friend Mike Kimball, is a matter of "removing the variables, the reasons a trout will not take your fly." In my experience those reasons include: a fly drift that has drag; using a tippet that is too thick, which often causes imperceptible drag; and fishing the wrong fly. I put the importance of these concepts in the order given. The upstream and downstream options that follow, if followed correctly, will remove the first variable—drag on your fly. Tippet and fly selection are then nothing more than a matter of mechanics—trial and error—but neither comes into play without the first step—a drag-free float.

The fishing options offered here do take one thing for granted: that you are fishing in waters that offer you the opportunity to wade about. Most trout streams do. Even in unwadeable waters, you usually have a choice of casting angles. Choosing one that lessens the need to cross a multitude of current lanes will put you way ahead of the game.

The Upstream Approach

IF I HAD A CHOICE between fishing upstream (upcurrent) or downstream (downcurrent), I would fish upstream—always. It is a relaxing way to fish that allows for short casting since trout let you approach close to them quietly from behind. The upstream-presentation is nearly mistake-proof in the sense of spooking trout with an overcast. Lastly, because your fly line, leader and fly all land in the same current lane when fishing straight upstream, this fishing approach helps create a drag-free float and successful angling.

Some readers may conclude that I am not suggesting you make casts straight upstream—over the head of trout—but at an angle, so the trout does not see the leader and tippet. Wrong. Make your casts *straight up* the fish's back. Lay the tippet section of your leader between his eyes, causing the fly to land *two feet in front of his nose*, and watch him take the fly when it gets to him.

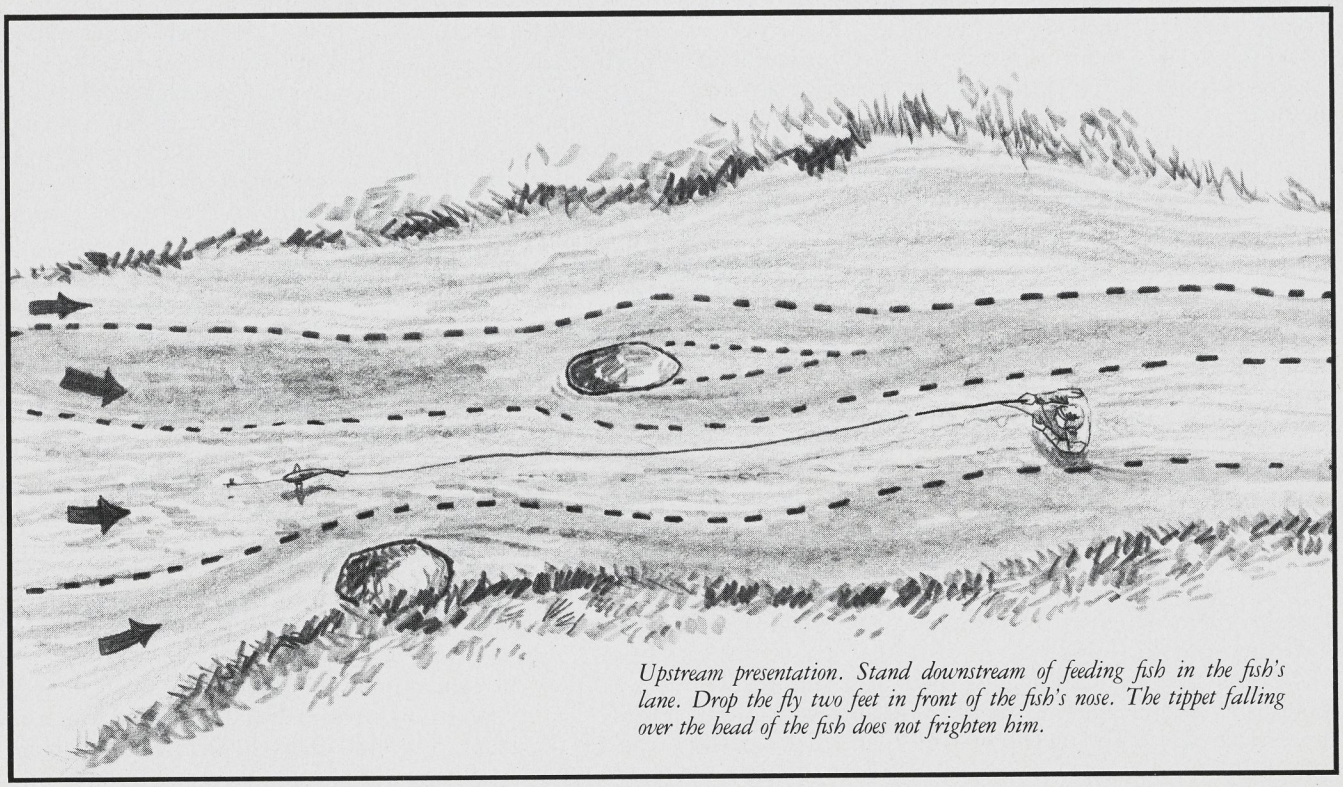
This approach is nothing new to fly fishers who do their fishing in freestone rivers, where the water surface is broken and tends to camouflage a floating leader. Such an approach, however, is rarely considered in crystal-clear spring creeks. Contrary to popular belief, it is a fishing method that works superbly in such clear streams as the Beaverkill, Henry's Fork, Silver Creek, Hat Creek or Fall River. In these streams, inhabited with experienced trout, not one in a hundred fly fishers dares try this approach, believing the trout will not let him get away with it. Believe!

This option in presentation does not work for the fly fisher who assumes he has a license to make sloppy, rough casts over the head of a trout. On the other hand, the upstream presentation, if applied with delicate casts and fine tippets, works with few exceptions.

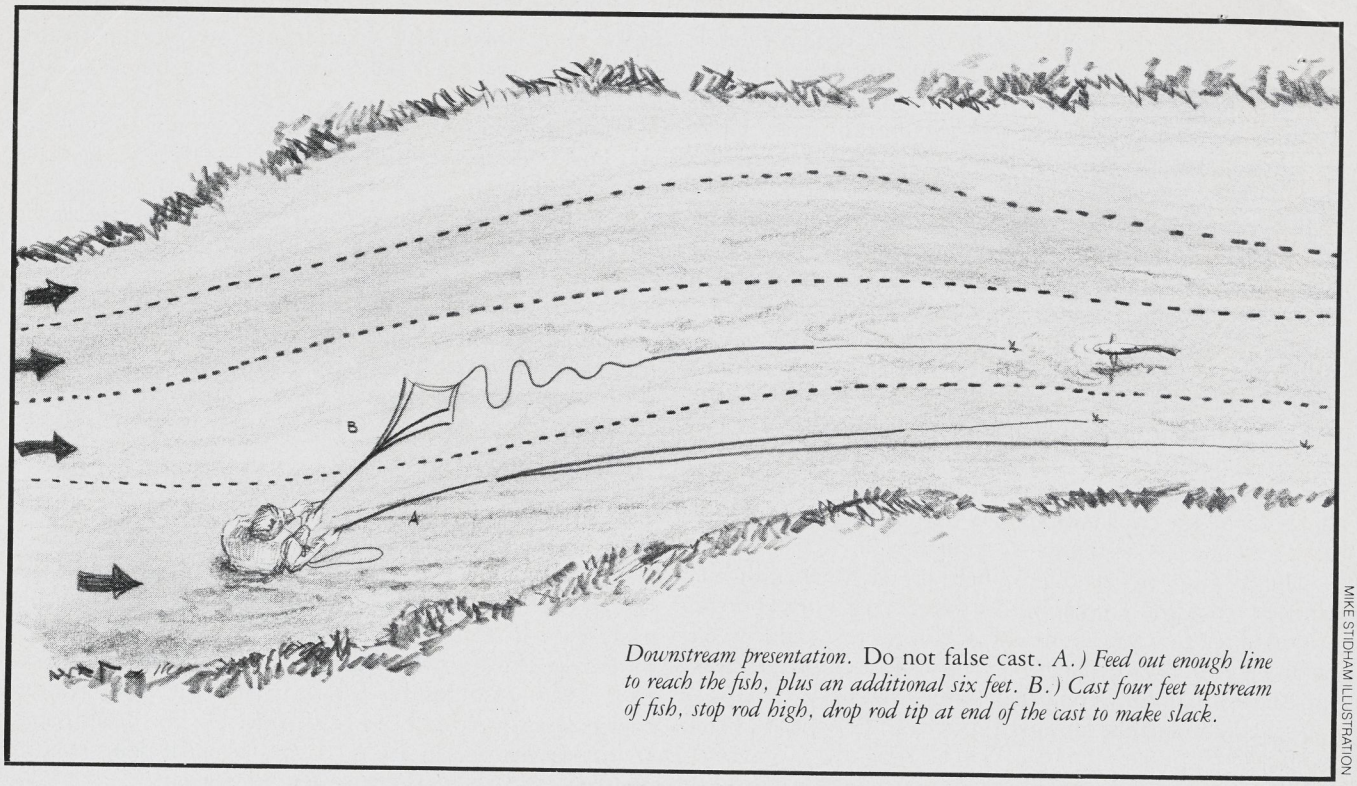
The mechanics of the upstream approach are quite simple.

Your first step is to spot a rising trout from afar. Secondly, step into the *exact* current lane within which it is feeding, approximately 30 feet downcurrent of the fish. This is the time to get your equipment and yourself ready. Strip out your fly line, straighten your leader and make a few practice casts while still away from the trout.

MIKE STIDHAM ILLUSTRATIONS



Upstream presentation. Stand downstream of feeding fish in the fish's lane. Drop the fly two feet in front of the fish's nose. The tippet falling over the head of the fish does not frighten him.



Downstream presentation. Do not false cast. *A.) Feed out enough line to reach the fish, plus an additional six feet. B.) Cast four feet upstream of fish, stop rod high, drop rod tip at end of the cast to make slack.*

MIKE STIDHAM ILLUSTRATION

The practice casts will get you accustomed to the casting distance you can handle under that day's conditions. Once you determined your comfortable range, simply put the rest of the fly line where it belongs—in the reel.

At this point I tie a tippet to my leader. I have found that on darker, overcast days a 5X tippet does not spook a trout, even when dropped over its head. A finer tippet such as 6X is a must during sunny conditions; however, on flat, slow-moving water I often start with 7X and remove that "variable" from the outset. Regardless of tippet diameter, I make sure it is at least three feet long, since it is really only this thin tippet section I place over the fish.

When ready, simply wade upstream to the point at which you can reach the trout with the line you have out of the reel. A conservative approach at this point is best, for you are simply trying to place the fly just two feet in front of the trout's nose. If your cast is too short, do not take more line out of your reel. Just take one step at a time upstream until your fly lands two feet ahead of him.

The cast should be made so it turns over while it is two feet above the water and the fly flutters down to the water. Delicate casts lining the fish with *only* the tippet section of your leader are really the secret of the upstream approach.

The upstream approach is a must when fishing to trout rising behind logs, rocks or weedbeds—places where flies are eddied in and become concentrated.

It is an effective fishing approach when using a nymph, either weighted or unweighted, depending on what the trout are doing.

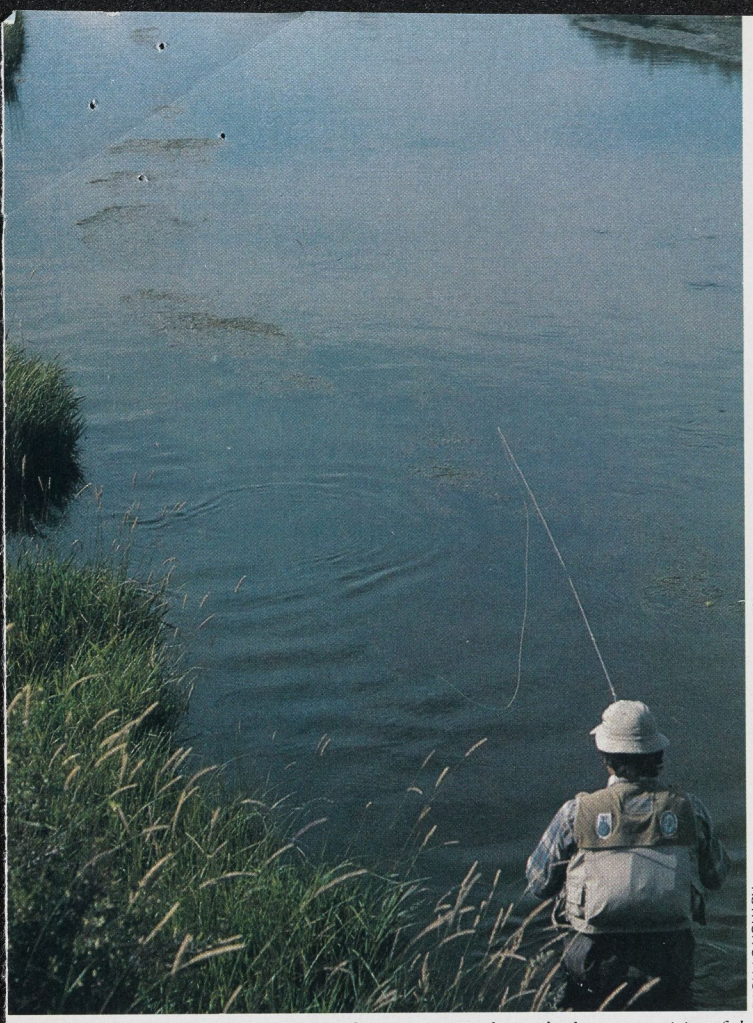
When fish are nymphing just below the surface, you should use an unweighted nymph. Greasing your leader and tippet up to six inches of the fly helps keep the nymph just under the surface. Again, place the nymph barely two feet in front of the fish, as you would a dry fly. When the fish takes, the little wakes made by the tippet as it goes under is your indication to strike. However, of late I have been using a specially constructed nymph leader that has a built-in strike indicator. It makes nymphing upstream just as visual and enjoyable as dry-fly fishing.

Whenever you detect trout flashing deep, usually at the head of a pool, they are feeding actively on nymphs. It's really a "hatch" taking place exclusively under water. Such times are ideal for the upstream approach. In this case, simply use a weighted nymph, attach a small split-shot approximately 18 inches from your fly and a strike indicator to your leader (about four feet above the fly). Make your casts about four feet ahead of where the trout are feeding, to give your fly time to sink to the trouts' level, and watch the indicator for strikes. The merit of nymphing upstream is that it guarantees that your line, leader and fly stay taut. Strikes are then easy to see and feel.

The Downstream Approach

THIS OPTION in presentation is handy under a variety of fishing circumstances. The most obvious is when the wind blows downstream and you are better off having the wind in your favor than trying to cast against it. Sometimes sunlight direction is at such a freakish angle it causes even a piece of a fine tippet section to look like a thin fiber of glittering glass. Light reflections off the tippet often spook a trout if the tippet is cast over its head.

The downstream approach has one reputed advantage. Since the fly floats downstream ahead of the leader, it is the fly the trout sees first. This fly-before-leader issue appears to be of great significance to many fly fishers. I



AUTHOR'S PHOTO

Using the upstream approach, you can wade much closer to a rising fish than you might think. Wading slowly and carefully, close to the fish, is crucial to the success of this technique.

will not argue the point. On rare occasions a fish has taken my fly on the very first drift made downstream. As many as ten perfect drifts are necessary, however, before he takes the fly. The other nine times he saw the fly coming at him and the tippet floating over him, yet he didn't spook. If your presentation is well made, either downstream or upstream, I doubt that a thin floating tippet will spook a good fish.

The downstream presentation is a viable alternative to fishing upstream, but not because of the fly-before-leader advantage. Downstream presentations are an advantage when the wind direction prevents me from fishing upstream, or when my tippet reflects too much light while in the air, a common case during sunny conditions.

Presenting a fly downstream to a feeding trout also involves an understanding of "lanes." Once again you are trying to get into a position (upstream this time) that will make it easy for you to drop your fly line, leader, tippet and fly to *all land in the trout's feeding lane*, the best help for a drag-free float.

Step one: get into casting position. This is best accomplished by wading softly into position from a 30-degree upstream angle. During your approach, never wade in the trout's lane, since the debris you disturb will surely send him packing when it reaches him.

Wade to a spot 25 feet away from your quarry, this is an optimal distance. Make sure you are close enough to his lane that you can actually *touch the lane with your rod tip*. (This is important.)

Once in position, do not start false casting. Instead, feed out line from your reel and allow the line to float downstream. No need to worry; you will not spook the trout since your line will straighten out in the lane *you* are standing in. (The trout is feeding in another.) Strip enough line from your reel until the fly is parallel to the fish's position. (You now have enough line out to reach him.) Now feed out an additional six feet. The extra line is for slack, and it should be ready, out of the reel, before your first cast to the fish.

The trick now is to cast the fly so it lands barely four feet straight upcurrent of the fish, but with a cast that turns over while in the air so it develops slack before it hits the water. Such a cast is best accomplished by turning your fly line over while holding the rod tip high. The worst thing you can do is to make a cast that straightens out like a flat rope, with the rod tip ending up near the water. You want a cast that lands imperfectly, while the rod tip remains high.

The instant the fly lands on the water immediately drop your rod tip to the surface. If you do so quickly, you will create coils of slack just below the rod tip. These coils are instrumental for the next step. Now, without hesitation, pay out line by quivering the rod tip toward the fish to cause the extra fly line in your left hand to pay out through the rod and fall in front of the rod tip.

Do not stop paying out line until the fly has drifted within a foot of the trout's position; hopefully, at this point you have payed out all the extra line. Stop all motion as the fly drifts over the trout.

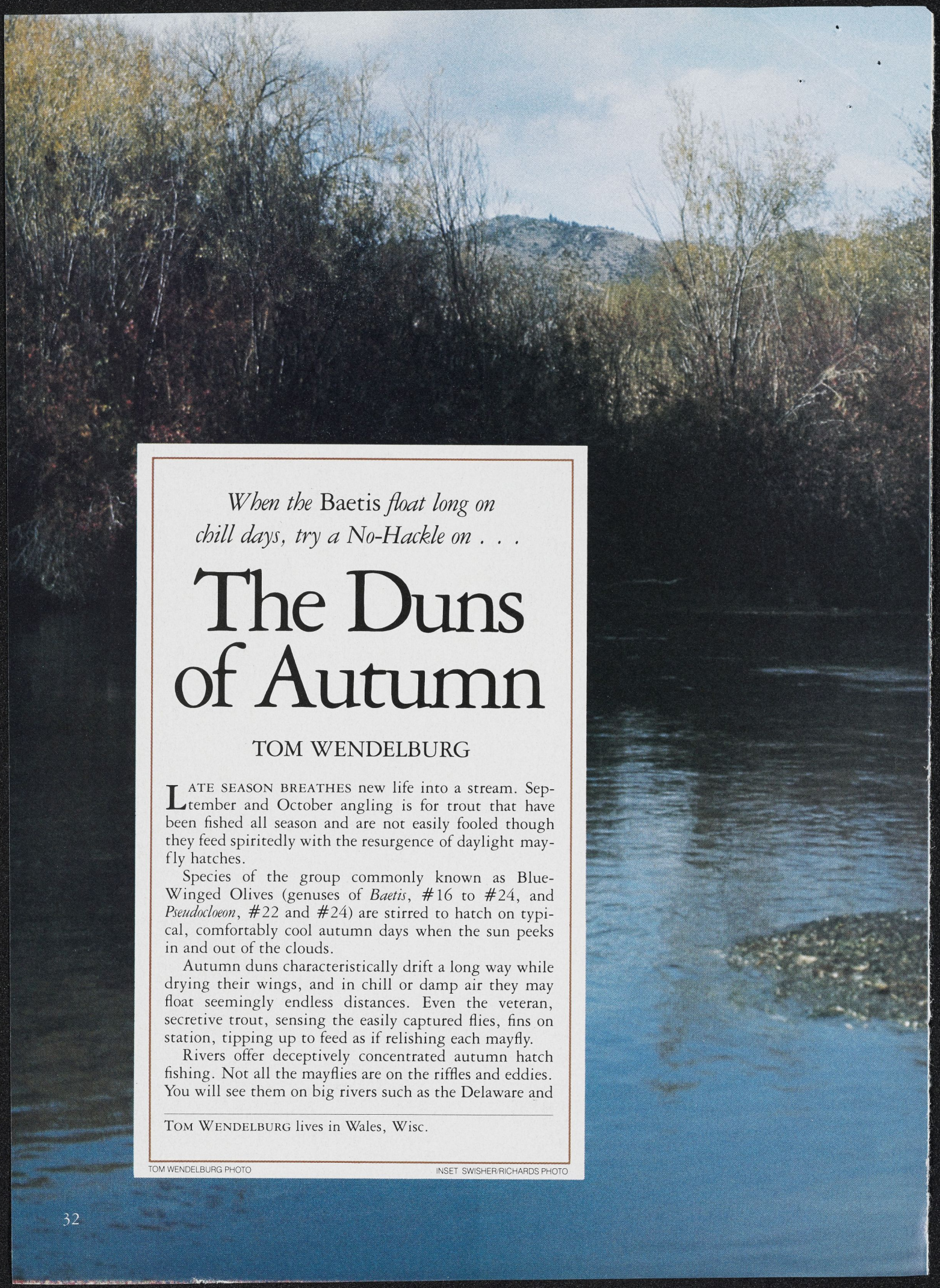
If the trout takes your fly, you need only set the hook: Pick up the slack by raising the rod and simultaneously pull the fly line with your left hand.

If the trout does not take your fly, simply wait until the fly is past him and the fly line straightens out downstream and then start the process over again. Often a few good drifts are necessary before a fish takes your fly.

The reader may be asking himself: How am I supposed to do all this so rapidly? The slack cast, the dropping of the rod tip, and paying out line sequence comes only with practice and only then does it become second nature.

The most common mistake fly fishers make with the downstream presentation is misreading the fish's lane. You learn to recognize current lanes by first becoming aware of them; secondly, by fishing experience. Placing the fly much too far upcurrent of the fish is the second common mistake. When this happens, a perfect drag-free float (usually only five feet long) occurs where it doesn't count, upcurrent of the fish. By the time the fly drifts to the fish, it drags and puts the fish down. The closer you put that fly in front of the fish (three to four feet), the better.

The downstream presentation is not mastered in one day. It is sometimes a must: when a good trout is feeding just upstream of a weedbed or rock, when you are better off casting with the wind instead of against it, and during bright, sunny conditions. It is another tool in a fly fisher's bag of "removing-the-variables" tricks to bring you success in a trout stream.



When the Baetis *float long on chill days, try a No-Hackle on . . .*

The Duns of Autumn

TOM WENDELBURG

LATE SEASON BREATHES new life into a stream. September and October angling is for trout that have been fished all season and are not easily fooled though they feed spiritedly with the resurgence of daylight mayfly hatches.

Species of the group commonly known as Blue-Winged Olives (genuses of *Baetis*, #16 to #24, and *Pseudocloeon*, #22 and #24) are stirred to hatch on typical, comfortably cool autumn days when the sun peeks in and out of the clouds.

Autumn duns characteristically drift a long way while drying their wings, and in chill or damp air they may float seemingly endless distances. Even the veteran, secretive trout, sensing the easily captured flies, fins on station, tipping up to feed as if relishing each mayfly.

Rivers offer deceptively concentrated autumn hatch fishing. Not all the mayflies are on the riffles and eddies. You will see them on big rivers such as the Delaware and

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TOM WENDELBURG lives in Wales, Wisc.

TOM WENDELBURG PHOTO

INSET SWISHER/RICHARDS PHOTO

Shelf-tailing trout: large fish most fly fishers spook or pass by.

Note Some Similarities to my piece in F+S 3/86

Large Trout with Finesse

GARY LAFONTAINE

A FLY FISHERMAN PLANNING his first trip to Montana has expectations. He saves his money and dreams. He plays with a collection of maps and dreams. He ties flies for months and dreams. Tell this angler that he's going to catch trout measuring 10 to 15 inches and he'll bellow in protest. He expects trophy trout from the streams and rivers—the type of fish that fill his dreams.

What are his chances of catching a trophy? It depends on his definition of a big fish. My feeling is that any trout over 18 inches long from running water is an exceptional specimen. But maybe our angler will only be satisfied with fish over 10 inches, 22 inches or 24 inches. Perhaps he wants one of the giant trout he has read about—one more than ten pounds. Any angler with ambitions of ten-pound fish has my sympathies because he will almost certainly be disappointed with his catch.

In the autumn, watch the men on the Missouri River prepare for a day of fishing. They gather in a little knot

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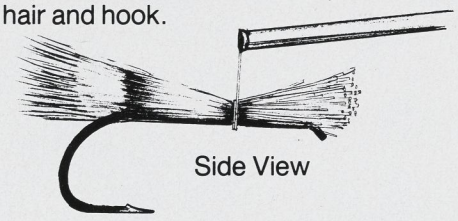
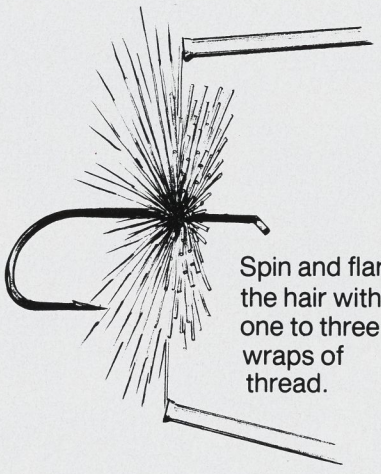
GARY LAFONTAINE is the author of *Caddisflies*.

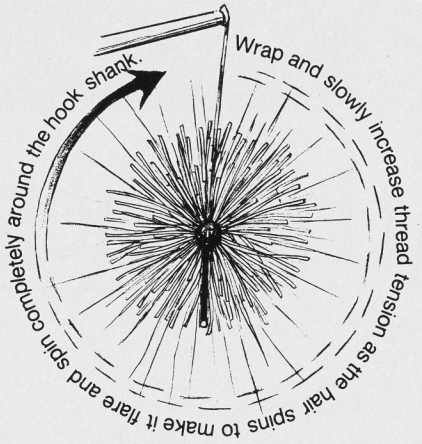
Spinning and Flaring Hair

Step 1 — Clean and straighten a clump of hair.

Step 2 — Place the hair over the hook shank and make two loose thread wraps around the hair and hook.







Step 3 — Begin the third wrap by releasing the hair and slowly increasing the thread pressure on the hair, allowing the hair to torque and spin around the hook with the thread wrap. Make one or two more tightening wraps.

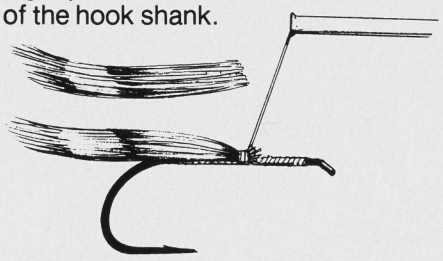
DAVE WHITLOCK PHOTO

Good scissors, a fine-tooth comb and hair-stacking tool are essential for successful deer-hair work.

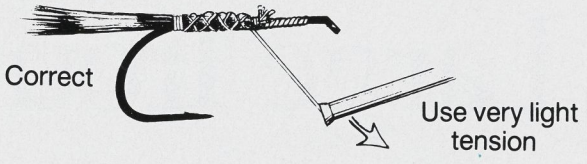
Tying Deer-hair Tails

Step 1 — Clean and align a small bunch of stiff hair tips.

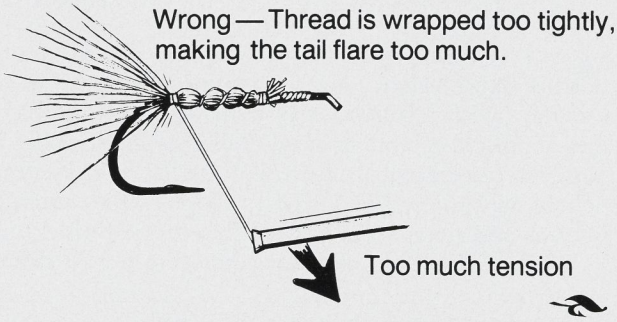
Step 2 — Lightly tie down the butt ends to the top of the hook shank.



Step 3 — While holding and pulling the tips back, carefully spiral thread wraps snugly around the hair, working toward the rear of the hook shank. At the hook bend make several more wraps to form a tightly bunched tail and then wrap the thread back to the starting position.



Wrong — Thread is wrapped too tightly, making the tail flare too much.



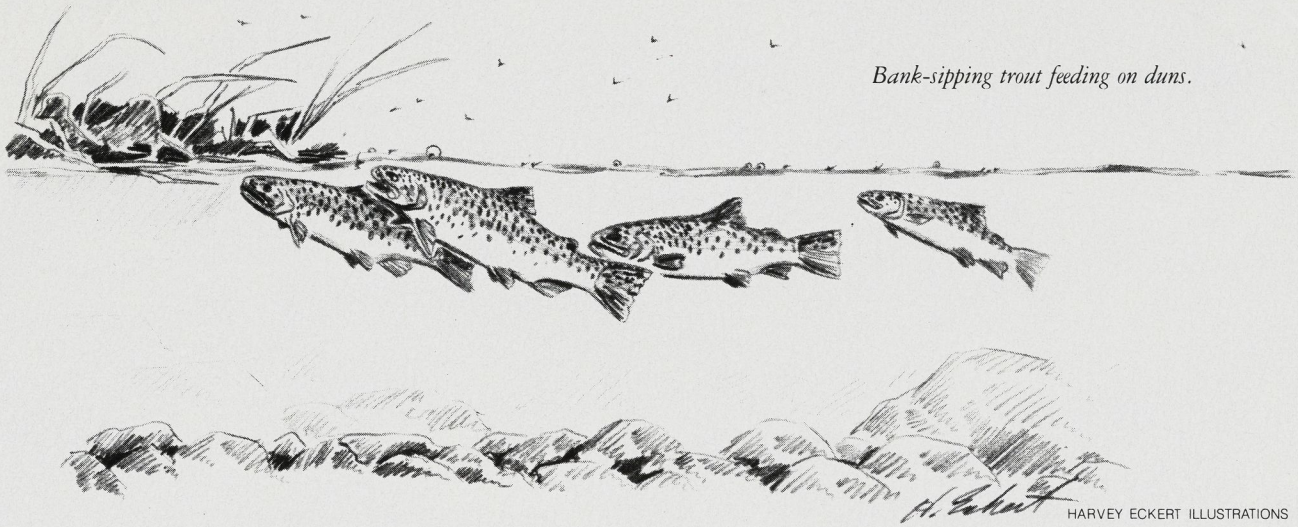
KITTY PEARSON-VINCENT PHOTO

on the stony beach below Beaver Creek. Their breath pushes out mist in the morning cold during the story-telling ritual. Why stories? Everybody has to declare how perfect the conditions are—no matter what the conditions—for a feeding spree. So everybody tells a story about a big trout caught on a day such as this. There are last cups of steaming coffee. The anglers march down to the river with a final burst of shouting that resembles the preparations in a football locker room more than any Waltonian musings about a fishing trip. And there is nothing lyrical about a full day standing waist deep in a strong current thrashing out long casts. But these men have to forget each futile strip and retrieve as soon as it is finished. They have to believe totally in the next one.

Any fisherman who hasn't perfected one of the trophy-hunt methods—pounding out 3/0 streamers with a shooting-taper, running weighted nymphs through heavy rips with a sinking line, retrieving surface disturbers all night over big pools—on his home fisheries shouldn't try to learn such specialized techniques on strange waters. The methods for super-size trout usually mean long hours casting large flies in the hope of hitting the rare moment a giant fish decides to eat something. These trophy games demand a certain state of mind (or meditative mindlessness) from anglers who must have total disregard for the odds.

The alternative to pounding up large trout is refinement. A fly fisherman uses the smaller patterns, #12 to #16 typically, and the familiar methods of his home waters, but catching big, wild trout, so much warier than the reckless 10- to 12-inch scooters in a stream, means changing approach. And that's not easy; not easy at all for someone unused to fooling large trout with finesse.

Finesse . . .



Bank-sipping trout feeding on duns.

HARVEY ECKERT ILLUSTRATIONS

Small flies and standard tactics take large trout for a simple reason—these fish feed on the same emerging insects as ordinary trout consume. But there's also a simple reason why a fly fisherman, casting and trudging along his favorite stream, seldom catches such nice trout. The way he approaches specific water dooms him to fish within a certain size range, all of his trout falling within an unintentionally self-imposed slot limit.

It's even possible to watch anglers work a stream and categorize them—that fellow, he's going to catch 8- to 10-inch fish; or that man, his feet have moved the good trout and at best he's going to take 12-inch fish. New understandings about the feeding idiosyncrasies of large trout can raise the average size of fish caught on any stream. And large-trout finesse can be practiced on home waters, perhaps best on home waters, where the fisherman gets to congratulate himself heartily when he begins taking trout two or three inches larger than usual.

Trout switch to a fish-and-crustacean diet when they grow over 12 inches. The change in feeding emphasis doesn't totally exclude insects; as a matter of fact, insects remain a staple even for larger trout. Measure a trout's stomach contents by the weight of each item and one crayfish or minnow balances out many insects, but consider each type of food as a single feeding motion and assign each item equal value and a dozen insects represent a greater chance of catching that trout than one crayfish. How long a fish keeps feeding heavily on insects, to what size, depends on the richness of the stream—in a slow, alkaline environment even a 20-inch trout lines up daily to work the hatches.

The difference between small trout and big trout is that the larger fish must eat a lot more insects without expending much energy. Usually they can do this only during a major hatch. Then, with nymphs or pupae drifting in the flow and adults riding the surface, big trout can choose particular areas in a stream and feed in a quick, rhythmic pattern. These areas are as peculiar as they are particular, not only serving up great quantities of food but protecting these fish from the average angler.

Bank Sippers, Shelf-Tailers

ABNORMALLY LARGE INSECT EATERS work a hatch two ways. One feeding style is fairly well-known; the other is virtually unknown. These trout are called "bank sippers" and "shelf- tailers." The feeding mechanisms are entirely different, although both behaviors achieve that goal of efficiency. One is much more common (and thus more important to fly fishermen).

Bank sippers provide exciting and challenging surface fishing on spring creeks. Why not on freestone streams? On snow- and rain-fed rivers the high flush of run-off scours a gravel edge, and in midsummer the water level drops to expose the stone borders. There are few bank sippers on freestone streams because there are few suitable banks. But on spring creeks, with their constant flow, there are deep slots next to the grassy overhangs.

These bank-side sanctuaries give large trout the chance to sip great numbers of surface insects. Make no mistake—this is dry-fly or emerger fishing at its best. The water against the bank is a buffer zone, a quiet and slow corridor that gathers insects spun off from the main current. In such protected water trout, sometimes in a pack of a half dozen fish, hold comfortably just under the surface and with a nodding motion every few seconds take insects from on or just under the meniscus (the underside of the water's surface).

Good rivers for bank sippers, although not rare, are uncommon enough to attract a loyal following of anglers. Take the Henry's Fork—on any good day there are fly fishermen carefully walking the banks, searching for the best pods of rising fish. And during any of the incredible hatches on that river they find groups of rainbow trout, fish between 16 and 22 inches working snug to the grass.

In contrast, no one looks for shelf-tailers anywhere. These fish are in all streams and rivers, freestone as well as spring flows. How big they are depends on the basic productivity of the water. In a sterile, bouncing stream the tailers might be 9-inch brook trout or in a rich, winding river they might be 22-inch brown trout. But wherever they are they will typically be the biggest insect feeders in that water.

Why are the bank sippers tight to the grass? Why are the shelf-tailers in open water so shallow that it barely wets their backs? These waters give fish easy places to hold and concentrations of insects. Same answer for both—the only way very large trout can afford to feed on insects is in situations providing maximum efficiency.

Shelf-Tailer Feeding

THE SHELF-TAILERS work nothing like the bank sippers. For one thing, they usually feed on nymphs during a hatch, not surface flies. For another, although no more difficult to catch, they are harder for fly fishermen to believe in—a phenomenon anglers don't recognize simply because they don't accept the possibility. These trout are a rich lode, the key to taking large trout with light tackle methods, but so few fly fishermen see them that for most they do not exist.

To have shelf-tailers there has to be a gravel shelf. Fortunately, all streams have such shelves in abundance. Picture a bend in the river—on the outside the current accelerates and digs into the far, steep bank, but on the inside curve, with weak centrifugal force, the water flows evenly over shallow gravel or stones. This shelf slopes slowly down until somewhere on the way to the middle it breaks sharply into deeper water.

For most of the day a shelf area fulfills the dour expectations of anglers—it is totally barren. But once a good hatch begins, the trout slide up like phantoms from the break and squeeze into the shallows. They lie exposed, even on bright days, sidling back and forth, taking nymphs easily from the drift. Seldom do these fish tilt up to suck in an adult. Any slices or bulges in the surface happen when a tail or back creases the current.

Shelf-tailing trout feeding on emerging nymphs.

Why the Shallows?

WHAT BOTHERED ME for a long time about these large trout was a missing explanation. Why are they in the shallows? Why should such fish abandon the break, where hatching nymphs also drift, and come into such a perilous area to feed? The reason is efficiency—bigger fish leave the safer, deeper water because they can't gather nymphs quickly enough there.

Along the deep break, where rising, struggling nymphs or larvae scatter throughout the water column, the food spreads from top to bottom, a vertical distribution of feet. But in the shallows the same number of nymphs concentrate top to bottom in only inches of water. It's this compression of available food that draws trout into the shelves.

Large fish realize how vulnerable they are in the open shallows. Their skittishness, which protects them from airborne predators, also safeguards them from fishermen. At the first indication of a splashing and crashing angler, 30 or more feet away, these fish dart back to the deep water. They are well outside the spook zone of not just clumsy beginners but many true fly-fishing experts.

One friend on a trout-jammed Montana creek certainly wondered about my sudden kneeling and creeping approach. In the rowdy spirit of the day he shouted advice, but at least this once he stayed back from the water, "Don't cast there. What are you casting there for?"

He never saw the fish, a 17-inch rainbow, working in inches of current. Maybe such an incredibly fine nymph fisherman, who could catch so many small trout with blind prospecting, thought that this was a stray when it took the hook. The fish never dissuaded him in the least from his cast-and-move routine.

He bulled upstream, tall beside the water, flailing and wallowing enough to send every decent trout scurrying out of the shallows. He never saw them either—and what should have been a day of 15- to 20-inch trout remained a day of tiddlers. It made me feel like a seeing-eye dog at a blind man's convention.

What chance does a fly fisherman have of taking a trophy specimen with blind tactics? Very little. Unless he can spot and stalk specific fish, he could work a rich river for years without catching a 20-inch trout. But if he can master these skills of seeing and approaching fish he can target and fool 20-inch trout every day on that same water.

Spotting Fish

SPOTTING FISH GETS EASIER with practice—and with polarized sunglasses. So few anglers ever try to see them, though. They stare at the surface, letting glare become a psychological barrier, instead of focusing on the stream bottom. They look for rises, or else they study the currents, both fine ways to figure out a river, but they should scrutinize the patterns of light and dark on the bottom also.

A trout doesn't show as a complete fish—head, tail, and spots. It is a wavering spectre, motion rather than embodiment. An angler recognizes a fish by separating natural shadows from unnatural shadows; and the higher his position, the more directly downward his gaze, the easier it is for him to pierce the surface reflections.

The worst mistake the novice makes is trying to locate trout while he's moving. The good fish spotter walks with a stop-and-go rhythm, searching the water every time just before he steps. He focuses first on the shallowest bottom, letting his eyes adjust, and then scans out toward the deeper areas.

Fish spotting and fish stalking are inseparable skills. An angler never sees trout if he flushes them before they are in visual range. Even in flat water a careful fisherman, moving and casting, should have a spook zone, the distance he can approach working trout from behind, within 15 feet.

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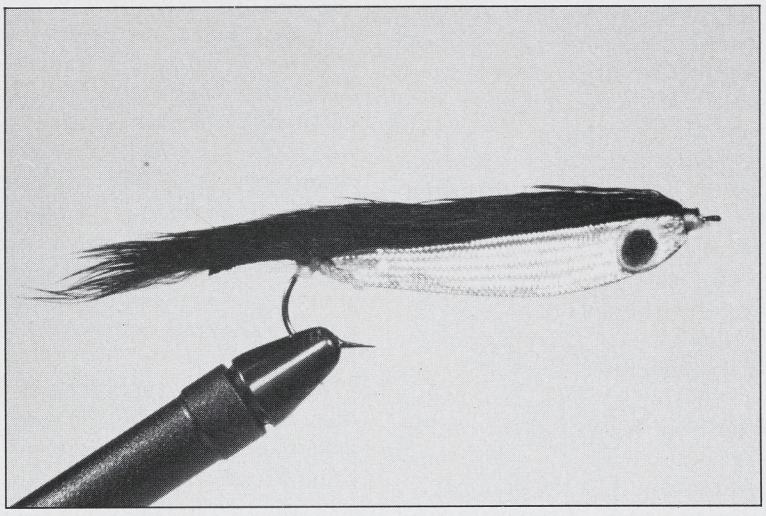
Not in Thompson's

Flies or Lures? Baitfish patterns that take big fish



Heresy at the Vise

LARRY DAHLBERG

ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO, when I first started using Flashabou streamers, I could not convince the fly fisherman I guided to tie gaudy new flies on their lines. "Looks more like a Christmas tree ornament,"or "too much flash," were common reactions. The less polite laughed out loud.

In truth, as the elderly ladies and little kids I guided could testify, sometimes the Flashabou streamers were almost as effective as worms.

When I made my first Dahlberg Divers 15 years ago the reaction was pretty much the same from the old guard. I can remember handing an early Diver to the late Lew Jewett in an attempt to produce some bass for a film we were shooting. His reaction was, "Larry, I believe most of your malarky but if you think I'm going to tie that thing on in front of a camera you're out of your mind!"

Many of the flies I tie are not created to imitate some specific food that fish feed on. Often I am inspired by successful design variations in lures. When I developed the first flies using Flashabou I was simply trying to imitate a Mepps spinner. The first Dahlberg Diver was an attempt to create something I could cast with my fly rod that would duplicate the diving-sliding-resurfacing action of many highly effective musky "jerk-baits" I had made.

What matters most to me is not what the flies look like but whether they catch more fish than the ones I have been previously using. My motto is "Let the fish decide."

LARRY DAHLBERG, originator of the Dahlberg Diver and other successful fly patterns, lives in Grantsburg, Wisc.

Are these creations flies, or are they lures? When fishing with them are you most effective using a fly rod and fly line, or would the results be better with spinning gear? These phoney "minnows" don't fly off on the backcast or hit you in the head more often than any other flies. In fact, unless they are loaded with lead, there's no way they can be cast with anything but a fly rod. They sure aren't insects and they're not tied like old-fashioned streamers, but they're still flies in my book.

Minnow Flies

THE FIRST MINNOW-TYPE FLIES that rose to popularity were the Byford Zonker and the Janssen fry flies. Both flies are tied on relatively long-shanked hooks and use reflective mylar tubing for a body. The Zonker has a rabbit-strip dorsal which tapers back to a short tail. The fry flies are painted to look like specific forage fish. Both are deadly fish catchers.

A year or so ago, while developing flies for Lake Michigan's alewife- and smelt-eating monsters, I began experimenting with various flies to imitate shiny, deep-bodied baitfish. When I attempted to create a four-inch alewife with the largest available mylar tubing, the flies ended up looking more like four-inch-long, chrome pencils. Tubing in as large a diameter as I needed was simply not available.

While the problem of the small tubing and the alewife/smelt flies was on my mind, I received an envelope in the mail from fly materials guru Tom Schmuecker, owner of Wapsi Fly Materials Co., Mountain Home, Ark., (sorry, dealers only), containing some small tubing braided out of pearl rather than silver or gold.

Finesse . . .

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There are basic aspects of good stalking:

Reflections. Tackle that reflects sunlight has no place on a trout stream. Rods with shiny finishes, the flat sides of bamboo, the worst offenders, wave like warning flags. Reels of polished metal flash like hand mirrors, never making up for the fish they frighten, no matter how well the rods are constructed.

Shadows. The angler has to avoid throwing a shadow over the fish. The sudden blockage of the sun, either by body or fly line, sends trout fleeing from attack. Most fishermen know enough to keep their own shadow off the target water, but they forget about the fly line, false cast too much, and send a series of warning streaks over the entire pool.

Color/Camouflage. The actual colors an angler wears are secondary. Trout see enough shades and hues—blue sky, white clouds, green leaves—to accept any addition to the scenery, but a mix of colors, a camouflage pattern, helps hide a fisherman by breaking up the solid outline.

Height. Midgets have a tremendous advantage in fly fishing. People of ordinary height have to get low, as close to the ground or water as possible, by hunching, squatting, kneeling, or crawling on their bellies. They should genuflect anytime they spot a trout, both out of reverence and bashfulness. They should stand behind a bush or tree if they want a high vantage point for spotting fish.

Angler Position. The best way to approach a trout is from directly behind him, in the blind spot, where a careful angler can sneak within a few feet of his fish. From any other direction the fisherman should stay as far away from the trout as possible.

Movement. The fisherman could wear the most garish clothes, throw a body shadow on the water, and sparkle with metal trinkets, but unless he moves he won't spook trout. As long as he stands absolutely still he will be accepted as part of the scenery.

Movement indicates life to fish. Quick movement means attack. For a fisherman stalking trout there has to be a compromise between immobility and haste. The trick is to move smoothly, fading into the natural background of shifting light by avoiding suddenness.

Vibration/Underwater Noise. Smooth, balletlike movement (ever try to look graceful in baggy rubber pants?) is not only less obtrusive along the trout stream but also less noisy. Much more subtle disturbances than rocks scraping under water and ground shaking on the bank alert fish to danger, both by sound, which travels much faster through water than air, and vibration.

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Finesse . . .

A successful stalk, always important for trout success but absolutely critical for shallow-water finesse, means everything—it makes the fishing methods effective. The angler, using an unweighted, matching nymph, creeps as close as possible and flips the fly above the fish—once, twice, three times, lifting the rod high, often with only the leader touching the water. He can drift the nymph precisely down the feeding lane every time, proximity fostering both delicacy and accuracy.

Don't expect to become a hero to all by catching large trout with finesse. Fellow fly fishermen forgive the trophy hunter, with his specialized tactics of huge streamers or fast-sinking lines, clucking with praise over the monstrous trout but understanding also the hours and discomfort that such fish cost, and they can add when describing this type of prowess, "But you have to be crazy to go through all that."

There is nothing mystical about catching large trout with finesse. The separate skills, in proper sequence, simplify the complete task. An angler has to recognize the kinds of hatches that bring big fish into the shallows, but that awareness makes it easier for him to spot trout. Once he sees a fish, the stalk, whether a success or a failure, becomes a training drill; he'll learn by the trout's reaction what does or doesn't flush fish. You gain an advantage over any trout you can approach and cast to at close range.

One way to make a fly-fishing beginner aware of phantom trout is to give him no more than 15 feet of fly line and a nine-foot leader. With his casting restricted to 25 feet he has no choice but to study the close-in water; and that line and fly landing so near to him unconsciously forces delicacy of presentation. The experience trains him to work carefully in every potential holding spot around him instead of spoiling water by over-reaching his visual range.

The same exercise convinces experienced fly fishermen that shallow water feeding is a fact on their favorite rivers. Such trout represent a different philosophy for these anglers—instead of dominating the fishery at a distance they have to accept their place in it. In time they lose that rah-rah mentality of fly fishing and adopt the patient, even idyllic approach (was it just coincidence that Izaak Walton, with no reel for his fishing, was limited to a 25-foot casting area?).