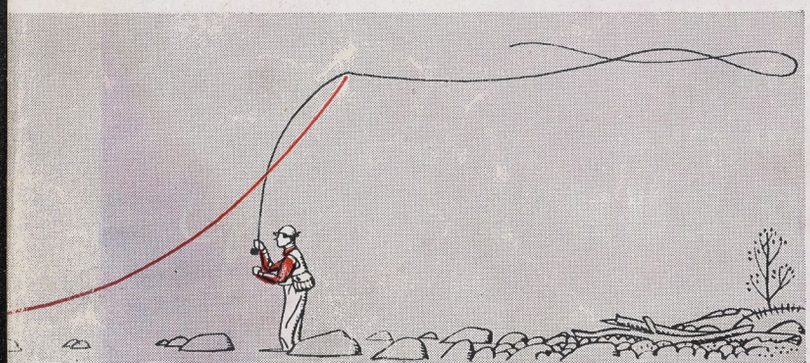
FISHING
A. J. McCLANE, Editor

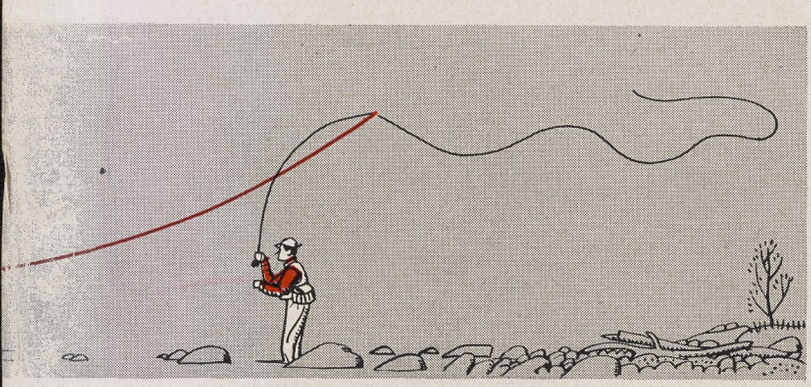
Fly-Line

BACK CAST

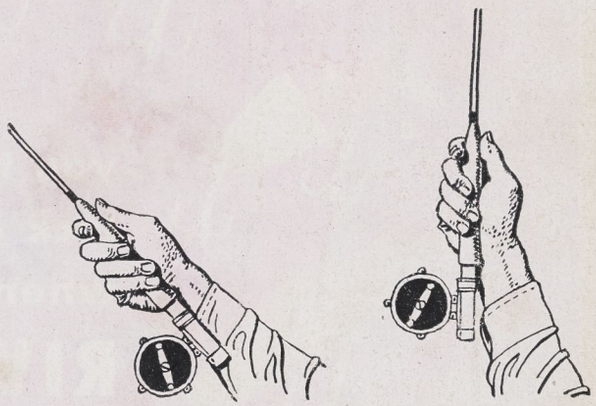


The line that is too heavy for your rod spells trouble. If you're oversize in this department, your pickup is low and sagging. On the back cast, the line tangles around itself and the leader. It's almost impossible to exercise proper control in this situation

The line that is too light for your stick lacks the weight to develop the rod's resistance to bend. Pickup is loose, the cast never gains sufficient speed. Even a skilled caster so handicapped finds himself throwing figure-eight loops back and forth



The wavy back cast—line "hump"—is almost invariably the result of poor casting. Angler fails to blend back and forward strokes, loses speed. Line hump can also be caused by a too-soft rod. Tip is thrown into cast without recovering load of line



GOOD CASTER blocks his wrist almost completely and pivots on his elbow. Rod parallels wrist, moves just slightly away as he goes into action, kicks line high and straight in air

FLY CASTING, like every other occupation under the sun, presents problems to its practitioners. "Why can't I throw a straight line?" my readers ask me as one. "Why can't I cast farther?" "Why can't I cast accurately?" There are many possible answers, of course, but time and experience have taught me that the trouble is usually the result of using the wrong line or the wrong technique. These are the two danger areas in the fly-caster's world; unless they are under control, his future in the sport is bleak.

Fly fishing is meant to give the angler pleasure and complete relaxation, but he can never arrive at this enviable goal until good casting becomes automatic. Reflexive casting is achieved by practice and, to a great extent, by learning from more skilled anglers; the printed word is less valuable as a method of study. Consequently, every beginner looks for an instructor. Chances are, however, that the teacher has developed his own particular style and has weak points in his technique that his student absorbs along with the mechanics. Rod habits are hard to change.

I learned casting from a grand old gent on the Delaware River 25 years ago. He had a habit of turning his wrist on the back cast. As a result, we both had weak and warped rod tips. Instead of keeping the rod guides facing the cast, we threw rod and line out of alignment. At the end of a season's fishing, our tips were dog-legged, and we both believed that the rod maker was at fault. Even after I discovered what the problem was, it took years to break the habit.

For average fishing, i.e., achieving distances up to 40 feet, a good rod, or its bend, to be more precise, should do most of the work. The angler's role is simply to provide the motion necessary to move the rod back and forth, thereby magnifying line speed.

Ever since the advent of spinning, however, we have become a nation of wrist casters. The average angler steeped in the tenets of the threadlining faith is all wrist and no forearm. He picks up slack line with a hard pull instead of sliding it off the water; he progressively lowers his back cast. He is so anxious to

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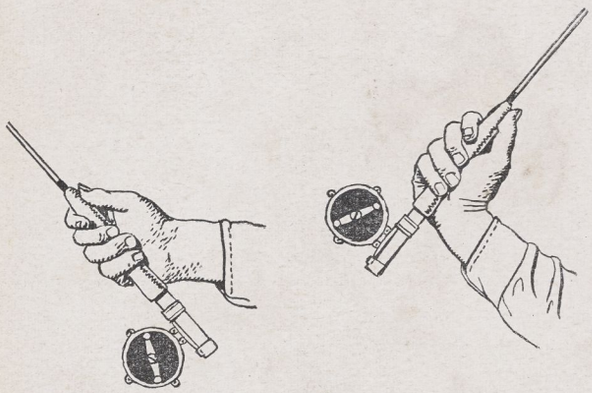
Failure

Tackle problem or casting weakness? You have to spot the trouble before you can lick it. Here's how



BAD CASTER, guided by instinct, pivots solely on wrist. Rod moves away from wrist progressively, reaches horizontal on the back cast. The line continues to drop lower and lower

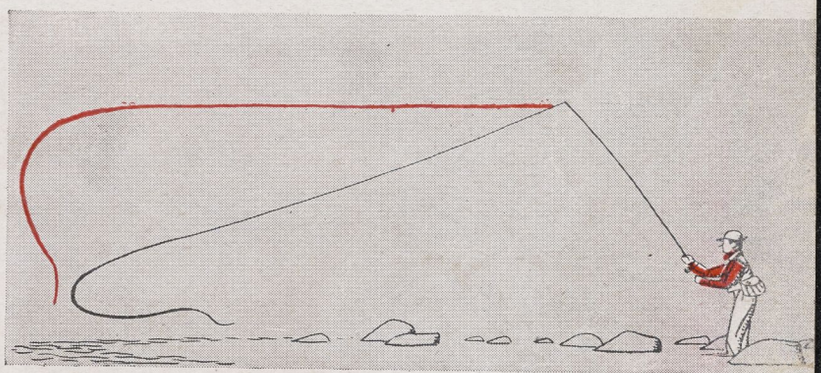
catch fish that he casts by instinct, and instinct tells him to use the wrist as a pivot. If it happens to be a windy day or the trout are rising just a bit farther out than normal range, the wrist bends more and more, with the rod going lower and lower on the back cast. The tackle gets the blame and our angler starts a futile search for a better rod or line.

This is the point at which you must put your elbow on trial. You cannot make a poor back cast if you block your wrist almost completely and pivot on your elbow. A straight-up forearm movement will kick the line high and straight in the air. In one movement, elbow casting will tell you whether you are struggling with a tackle problem or a casting weakness. If there is no immediate difference, then, and only then, can you evaluate the flight of your moving line.

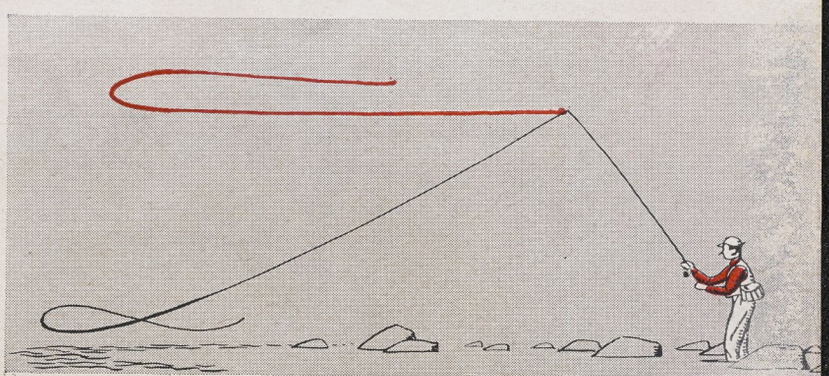
At some time in your career, you have probably owned a line that was too heavy or too light for your rod. The heavy one tangled around itself on the back cast and you were forever unwinding the leader from it. On the forward cast it sometimes lost velocity so quickly that it sagged and hit your rod tip. I once broke a rod this way many years ago. It came forward so hard that it caught the tip above the ferrule and snapped it like a matchstick. The line that was too light wouldn't develop the rod's resistance to bend and you threw figure-eight loops forward and backward. The cast just wouldn't gain speed, and after picking the fly out of your ear two or three times, you were told that a properly made fly line does not sag in the air, but pulls, extends and turns over smoothly, keeping its weight portion off the water until the cast is completed. So the proper fly line must have enough weight to bend the rod and it must be under control at all times.

If we start with the premise that the most effective casting weights are lead sinkers, then any elongation on the projectile, such as a fly line, becomes less and less effective as its length is increased. The sinkers are in a compact mass, but an equivalent weight of fly line must be arranged over 30 or 40 feet of surface

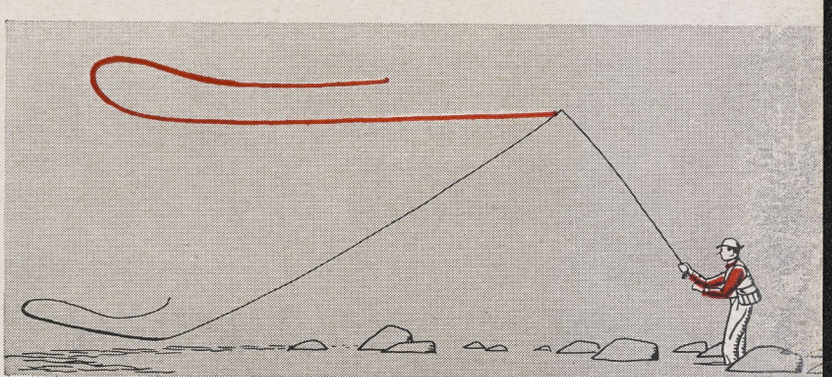
FORWARD CAST



Front taper of a fly line must remain in the unrolling line loop until the very last instant. Then it delivers the final kick to your leader and fly. If front taper's too short, last few feet of line will whip under and slap the water when turnover is completed



A too-long front taper, without enough belly section to provide casting weight, makes it difficult to unroll the loop. Leader falls back next to the line at finish of the cast. Fly falls to the right, left or back over the line—anywhere except on target



If the back taper is too short, the back end of the weight portion will sag and fall on the water ahead of the rest of the line. Like the tail of a kite, the back taper keeps the weight riding true, prevents line from shooting out too fast for delicate presentation

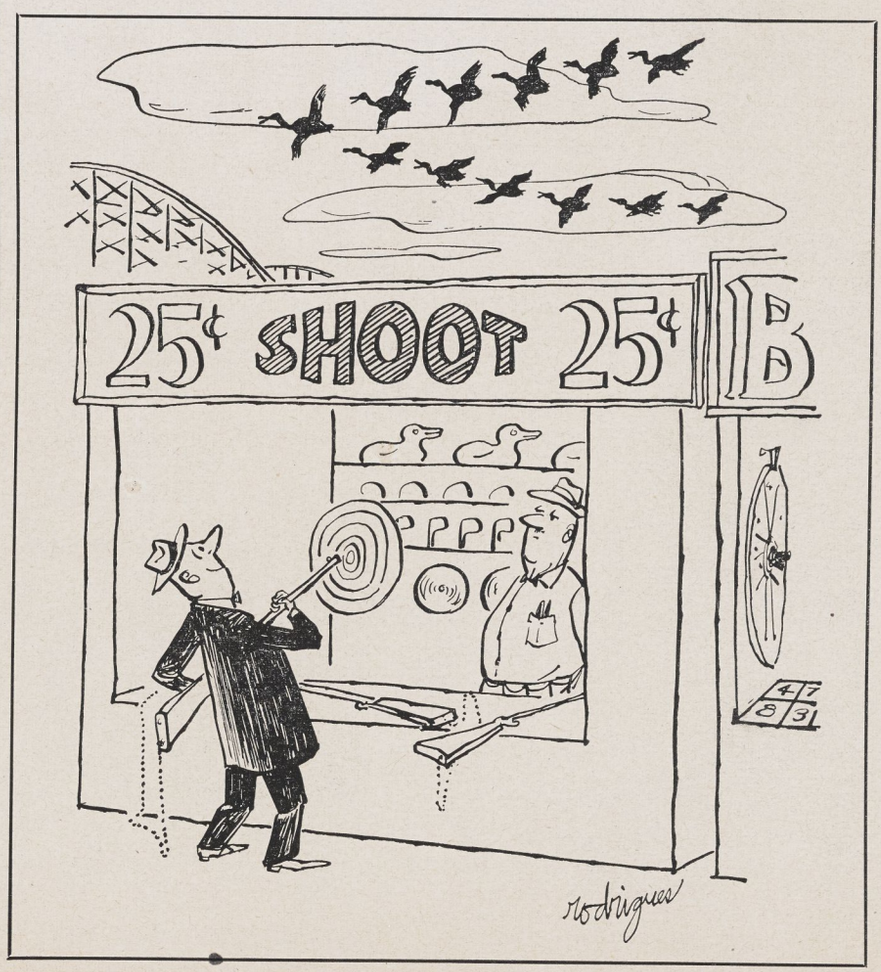
area; thus air friction rapidly absorbs the energy that goes into fly casting. To utilize that energy properly, the weight of a fly line must be arranged in a shape that will maintain velocity for the longest possible time. Once your cast is released, all parts of the line in the air, from your leader to your rod tip, have an identical velocity, but this speed rapidly decreases as the line rolls over and becomes extended.

There are three profiles, or shapes, of fly line: a weight-forward, double-taper and level distribution. From a theoretical and practical standpoint, the weight-forward line is ideal. However, it is also subject to more faults (which I'll go into later), and I always feel safer recommending double-taper lines for beginners. As long as the line puts a working bend in the rod, they can't go too far wrong. Except for bass bugging with heavy rods, level lines are of very limited use.

When you use a level line, air friction absorbs the energy more rapidly than it would with a weight-forward, or torpedo-taper, line. The line of equal weight coming out of the rod guides adds a heavier burden to the declining momentum of the already extended cast. On the other hand, a torpedo taper, with its effective weight in the air, is more nearly comparable to the analagous sinker because it can pull a great length of line through the guides before losing momentum from the inertia and weight of the shooting line. Obviously the slack you are holding in your fist has no velocity to contribute to the cast when you make your shoot. It merely waits to be pulled forward. This is made easier by the fine-diameter shooting line of a torpedo head, but the success of such a line depends on the front taper. It is responsible for completing the turnover of line and leader at the exact instant the line stops shooting, regardless of the speed of the cast. In theory, it is impossible to slap the water with a torpedo head if the front taper is correctly made.

Although the belly section provides casting weight, the front taper must remain in the unrolling line loop until the last instant and then deliver the final kick to your leader and fly. If the front taper is too long you'll have great difficulty unrolling the loop. Your leader will simply fall back next to the line at the finish of a cast. The fly will fall to the right or left or back over the line. With a long front taper you can never turn the leader and fly over against a wind and seldom with it, because your back cast will not straighten. This also happens with double tapers that have too much level line at the point. In contrast, if the front taper is too short, the last few feet of line will whip under and slap the water when the turnover is completed. Bear in mind that torpedo tapers used for bass fishing and sometimes for salmon fishing must turn over a heavy bug or fly, and this requires a shorter front taper than you would want on a line for casting trout flies. A good many people who have never been able to handle three-diameter lines smoothly on a trout stream are actually using the fast-turning bug-type taper that slices a hole in the water unless there's a buckhair frog to hold it back.

There is definitely a difference between a dry-fly torpedo head and a



bugging line. In general, there are two types of weight-forward fly line—one with a long front taper (from 9 to 15 feet), which is designed for dry-fly fishing, and the other with a short taper (from 4 to 6 feet), which is built to cast heavy wind-resistant lures such as bass bugs. Both lines may be the same alphabetical size; that means little or nothing unless you know the length of the front taper, length of the belly and the length of the back taper. Actually, you should also know the weight in grains, but this is something we'll discuss at some future date. Modern-day line building has already reached the point where the manufacturer can alter the weight and specific gravity of a fly line inch for inch without changing the diameter, can produce lines of a GAF weight in an HDF diameter. In fact, I am using such lines now, and it is evident that in another five years we will have a more critical standard of fly-line sizes. Stop and think what this means to the steelhead caster who needs a 2A belly to scratch bottom in high fall streams. The same weight in a size C belly has infinitely less air friction and drag in the water.

The torpedo head used in dry-fly fishing promotes the caster from water slapping to perfection. A smooth elbow pivot will suffice for the pickup, another for the false cast, and away the line goes across the river, turning over in the air, not unrolling on the water. Inasmuch as the function of lines built with all their weight forward is to make that weight immediately available to the cast, you can readily understand that short, stiff rods will throw the same size line as some of the longer and heavier rods. But if the rod is overburdened, the line will touch the water in front and rear when you're making your false cast.

The same effect is created with a double-taper or even a level line, in that there's a point beyond which the rod can no longer lift and speed up the weight of the line already extended. You can recognize the difference when a proper casting weight of level or double-taper is extended; the weight of the line that this casting length will have to pull is out of proportion to the created momentum. Instead of pulling a finer, lighter shooting line, such as the weight-forward taper does, the double taper and level are forced to pull a heavy section of line which quickly retards the speed of the pulling load. I am not one to underestimate the role of the double taper, however. Any double taper is better than a poorly balanced torpedo-head line, and they are superior for roll-casting, which is important to small-stream anglers. To sum up, if the length of the front taper is too long, the fly goes out of control, falling anywhere, right or left or even on top of the leader and line. If too short, the fly and leader will turn under and slap the water.

All casting problems are not essentially the fault of the line, and one of the most annoying symptoms to overcome is the wavy back cast, which is appropriately known as line hump. Line hump is almost invariably caused by poor casting, specifically when the angler's movements are not coordinated. Instead of the smooth blending between back and forward strokes he breaks his rhythm and thereby loses line speed.

Line hump is sometimes caused by using a rod that is too soft for the weight of the line. The tip is thrown into the cast without recovering or shrugging off the load of the line. Being the most active section of a rod and of light construction, the tip bends freely under the line's weight, and unless there is some harmony from the mid-section and butt there is no chance of achieving precision or distance. If the rod tip is too fine in relation to the supporting rod taper, it will vibrate excessively, breaking up the rod curve and transmission of speed. By the same token, with a tip-heavy rod you cannot make the fly travel slowly from rear to front, for the heavy tip gives too much speed to the line with a jerky motion. You have to make short, fast strokes, thus eliminating all hope for effortless casting.

The distance you intend to cast determines the size and length of the belly in a torpedo head, while the length of the front taper is responsible for pulling that weight until the shoot is completed. The back taper, like the tail of a kite, keeps the weight riding true. So actually you can use several sizes of torpedo head on one rod, depending on how far you have to cast. Remember, most trout are caught within a 35-foot to 40-foot radius, and the heavier your line, the less chance you have of doing a proper job at short distances. It is fallacious to believe that the more weight you concentrate in a line the better you will cast. There's a law of diminishing returns in this cast, because as the belly section is made longer or heavier, the forward taper must be made longer, and there's a limit to how much speed you can apply to turn the taper over. But the longer you can delay complete unrolling of the forward loop, the longer the cast will be, provided the belly of the line maintains its velocity.

The back taper of a weight-forward line plays an important role in delaying the loop by acting like the tail on a kite. The theoretical kite would be the belly section upon which the back taper acts as a stabilizer, keeping the line from shooting out too fast. Although the front taper must be just long enough to hold the weight portion up off the water until the cast is completed, you can, by aiming the rod high on a long cast (I aim 10 or 12 feet over the water on an 8-foot pitch), delay the turnover and give a more gradual and prolonged flight to the line. The lower you aim your cast, the more rapidly gravity overtakes the belly section; thus, you lose that extra-long footage provided by momentum.

It is true that many trout can be taken at short distances, but there are always fish who will be feeding out at extreme casting range and you not only have to reach them, but put the fly down delicately. Too, adverse wind conditions demand the same purity of rod work that goes into a long cast, so inevitably you'll have to sit down and evaluate the role of your tackle.

As I have already pointed out, the most common problem is a weakness in casting technique. The second troubled area is usually the line. Although the fly rod is important, it should be apparent that you can cast a line without one and that by using a rod you are applying a lever to magnify your motions. Once you become casting conscious, you can correct your mistakes and set yourself on the path to becoming a reflexive caster.

For Summer Trout

IN THE lower-water periods ahead, trout are going to be indifferent to ordinary flies and patent methods of presentation. One way to get around those tough days when the stream is lacquered by the sun: get your leader down really fine—from 5X to 8X at the tippet—and use spider-type flies. I prefer leaders from 10 feet to 12 feet long tapered to 6X, but one of my angling friends uses one 15 feet long tapered down to 8X. This may seem excessively fragile, but with a light line and soft rod you can hold a reasonable number of fish at a time when moving any trout at all is otherwise impossible.

Leaders demand considerable study for summer fishing. As a rule, the standard 7½-foot and 9-foot lengths used in high-water periods are not successful right through the season. In wet-fly fishing, for instance, 2X tippets in either length are not going to produce many trout. A No. 12 or No. 14 wet fly is absolutely lifeless in the water because the tippet is too stiff, and the feathers have no movement except when being drawn upstream. A fine tippet, on the other hand, one of 4X or 5X, allows the fly to twist and turn naturally while it drifts. I am inclined to think that the movement made possible by a light tippet is more important in getting strikes than the decreased visibility which is also obtained. As in dry fly work, the best lengths are from 10 feet to 12 feet.

Light leaders can be used with streamer flies and bucktails. Diameter is a relative factor in this instance. You can't safely cast a No. 6 streamer on a 3X tippet, but if you toss midget streamers dressed on No. 10 and even No. 12 hooks, a 3X tippet is not impractical. Personally, I don't favor minnowlike flies under extreme low-water conditions; they seldom take as many trout for me as the spider-type dry fly or nymph, for that matter. The important thing, however, is that you refine your terminal tackle as the season advances. Even though the fish are much more aware of surface disturbances and unnatural movements you can get good sport if you modify tackle and tactics to meet the situation.

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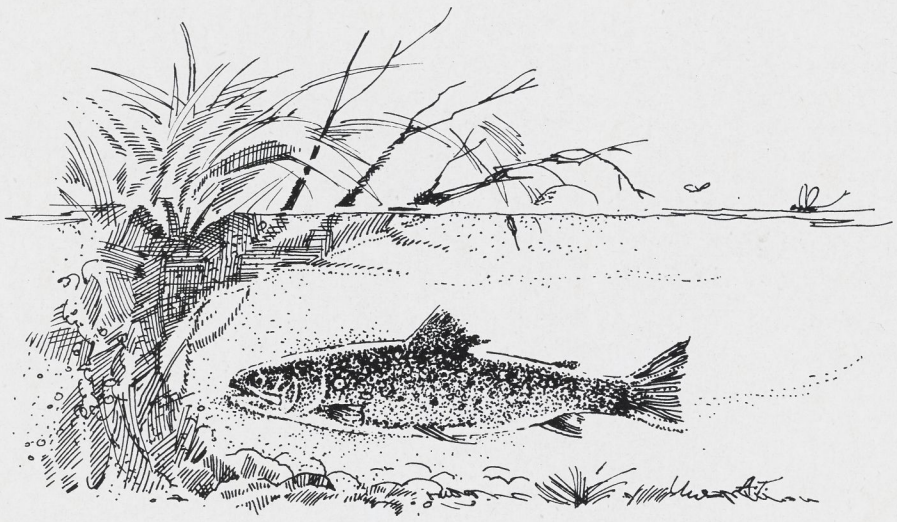
mistake to correct: just be careful. Keep your profile low. Sneak up behind a fish, in its blind spot. False-cast far off to the side or behind, and make every cast count. Above all, don't wade too quickly and never let the ripples set up by your wading reach the place you want to cast. If the ripples get ahead of you, slow down.

After all, trout fishing is supposed to be relaxing. If you have to move too fast you've missed the point.



Pushing the cast

I used to think that letting the tip of the rod come back too far on the backcast was the biggest problem in fly-casting. This seems to be true only in the initial, truly novice stage. Once they get to the stream, most casters realize that a dropped backcast means a fly in the grass or rocks behind you (or in your rear end). Pushing the cast, which makes a trailing, or tailing, loop, is much more insidious. It's also more difficult to correct.

When making a forward cast, we think of throwing the line forward. Novices, instead of casting the line with the rod, begin to try to throw the line like a baseball. In fly-casting, only the line moves back and forth; the arm and rod often move mostly up and down.

On the forward cast, a loop carries the line forward. It's a concave loop with the open end pointing behind you, and when you first start a forward cast the loop is short on the bottom and long on top. As the cast straightens in front of you, both sides of the loop should stay parallel to each other, but the bottom of the loop gets longer until the top of the loop turns over—just before your line and the fly hit the water.

In a forward cast, the tip of your rod goes quickly from the 1 o'clock position to straight out in front of you. To sum it up, it's a brisk downward swipe. Properly done, the rod tip is down out of the way of the line and fly as they come sailing by; then the line gets out of the way of the fly and leader and, finally, the leader gets out of the way of the fly. The top and bottom of the loop flow parallel to each other and everything stays in harmony.

But when you punch forward (throwing the baseball) rather than pulling down on the forward cast, you throw a bulge, almost an extra loop, into the cast, which rolls down the line like a bowling ball. Usually it makes the fly catch on your rod tip, line or leader, but the loop can be so severe that it ties an overhand knot in your leader. (To spare our egos we call these casting knots wind knots. One can weaken your leader by as much as half. A four-pound tippet is transformed into a two-pound tippet, and it all happens so fast you'll never see it.)

The correction is one of those things that is easy for me, standing on the bank, to say but hard for you, with trout rising in front of you, to do. Just make the forward cast a downward rather than a forward/outward motion. Push your thumb down on the grip of the rod. Don't reach out. When you finish a cast, your arm should be bent, with your upper arm hanging straight down comfortably at your side and your forearm about parallel to the water.

If you have trouble looking at it that way, try this: On the forward cast, your elbow should never move forward. Move it straight down and back as you make the forward cast; think of pulling the cast down and around, rather than pushing it forward. You'll have a hard time throwing a wind knot if you can keep your elbow under control.

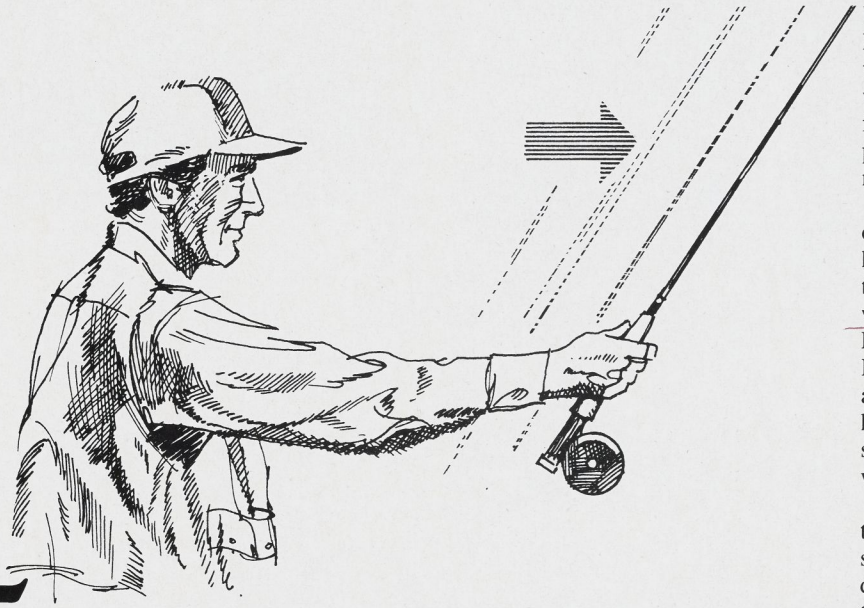


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Illustration by Jim Sollers

Moonshine Over Silver Creek

"One of the best damn fishing trips I've ever had!"

CLAYNE BAKER

Letters

That strange invisible wall

I WAS interested to read Richard Walker's article on the "Invisible wall". With my casting ability I doubt if I would recognise the occurrence, but the explanation, however, is simple.

After sunset, assuming calm conditions and clear or nearly clear skies, the ground will cool more rapidly than the water will due to radiation. This in turn will lead to cooling of the air and an increase of barometric pressure. The air over the water will remain comparatively warm and at a lower density.

As the cooling effect increases there will be a progressive movement of the cold air offshore towards the area of lower pressure, and at some point the temperature difference will become sufficiently marked to establish a miniature frontal system. The warm air will ride up over the cold denser air, this will result in a band of turbulence and an upcurrent in the warm air which will also be deflected towards the shore.

When the fly-line meets this "front" it will be near the end of the cast and so will not have a great deal of velocity left. As it meets the upcurrent and turbulence its momentum is cancelled out, the line loses all energy and so falls in a heap.

This is a brief and general explanation. There will be variations due to local conditions. The principle, however, holds good. I would not expect this to happen on a river.

S. Bainbridge Spring

Tonbridge, Kent

☆ ☆ ☆

IT IS A long time since I studied for my aviation meteorology examinations, but I am sure that Richard Walker's "thick-air" problem (December issue) is caused by what the 'Met' man calls diurnal variation. If Dick can get hold of a copy of *Meteorology for Aviators,* a HMSO publication, it will tell him all about it.

Put simply, the sun's direct heat warms the ground, which in turn warms the surface air. This warmed air rises to be affected by the isobaric wind, which flows along those lines of equal barometric pressure (isobars) which we see on weather charts, and which is not directly influenced by the sun. This gives us a surface wind which is usually less strong than the upper wind, and also, in the northern hemisphere, tends to come from a more anti-clockwise direction, flowing more directly from high pressure towards low, like bath-water going down the plug-hole.

When the sun sets we lose this "surface-mixing effect", and if the isobaric wind is not very strong we will get the calm that we expect at dusk, with the surface wind not getting up again until after sunrise. At these times of diurnal (daytime) variation, particularly at dusk when the surface wind is dying, there may still be a breath of wind a few feet above the ground. Dick has probably been casting a nice line down an almost imperceptible wind which has dropped to nothing at the surface.

In a heavy aeroplane, a decreasing tailwind as one descends can give problems while landing, as momentum can make the aircraft's airspeed increase. But the leader and tip of a fly-line

Letters

have no practical mass, and as they turn over the slight tail-wind in the high overhead cast is lost, to be replaced by a "wall of still air" at the surface.

Another diurnal effect is that when the land is warmed and the surface air ascends, the air over an adjacent area of sea, which has a stable temperature (not being so rapidly warmed or cooled as the land), moves towards the land to replace the heated air. At night the land cools quickly, and the air over the water then becomes warmer, relatively, and the breeze then blows away from the land. These local "sea" and "land" breezes have little to do with the isobaric wind, and they could, conceivably, occur on larger still waters, though I think they are less likely to be the main cause of Dick's frustrations.

Mr Walker seems to be getting warm in his theory about warm air being cooled! But for once his reasoning is not correct, as I have already explained the stabilising effect on air temperature that water has. Nor is there any reason to suspect the water vapour in the air, which is always there, whether it is visible or not, being the culprit. It has no direct effect on the performance of an aircraft, though these are very sensitive to air density, a product of pressure and temperature. However, I doubt whether the steady increase of air density as the surface temperature gradually falls is the cause of the problem.

On a river one seldom has to cast for maximum distance, as may be necessary on still water, so there is usually a reserve of power to push the fly through a bit of still air. One is usually more sheltered, too, and probably side casting to avoid trees and vegetation, so the line remains in the calm surface air. Perhaps here lies the answer to the problem on stillwaters — change to a side cast. Range may suffer, but those fish which are rising at last will then come in closer because of the gentler presentation.

Meteorologists will realise that I have greatly simplified the many odd things that the surface wind does, but I hope that my pilot's-eye view is the "plausible theory" that Dick is looking for. Now I have two posers for him. How do flies fly — when it pours; and why do wagtails — wag?

Graham Swanson

Stourton, Wiltshire

Try the hover-cast

WITH REGARD to Ralph Harkness' suggestion that Pat Russell makes a fly to hover some 15 inches above the surface of the water when he goes damselfly fishing (December issue), I suggest that Pat tries rollcasting a damselfly (which he can do quite well) so that it lands suspended on the sumit of Richard Walker's thick air (page 44, December issue).

Spindleberry, a friend of mine, despite his continual sarcastic remarks to Ewan Clarkson, suggests that Pat uses a bubble float with a suitable length of wire antennae attached thereto and to which the damselfly is then attached so as to be some 15 inches above the water.

However, if Pat cannot achieve the aforementioned recommendations, then I am sure that he will still continue to take his limit on his superb Damselfly Nymphs.

Ken Nicholas

Taunton, Devon

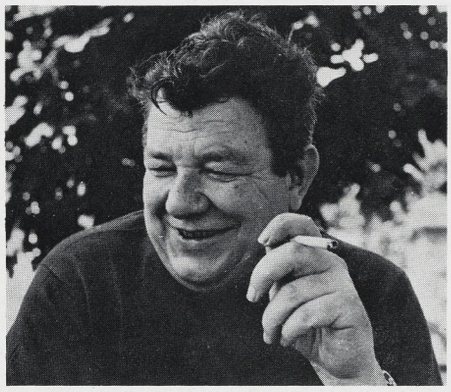
Pegging fly-tying costs

PERHAPS this has been thought of before, but in case not I describe here a device for dispensing fly-tying materials supplied on cards. These cards, while being a convenient method of selling and storing materials, can be a nuisance to use or wasteful if the wrong length of material is cut off.

The device is simple and cheap, consisting of a strip of wood glued to one side of an ordinary wooden clothes peg of the

DIALOGUE AU BORD DE L'EAU

OU L'INITIATION DE LA PECHE A LA MOUCHE



PAR J.L. PELLETIER

Ph. M. — **Nous voici arrivés dans le secteur où l'eau est trop profonde pour y descendre et où les berges sont encombrées de végétation. Comment allez-vous vous débrouiller pour atteindre les truites qui, comme par hasard, sont toutes placées contre la berge en face ?**

J.-L. P. — Effectivement vous ne me simplifiez pas la tâche, mais je vais essayer de les prendre en pratiquant quelques roulés. Mais, tout d'abord, je vais modifier encore une fois mon bas de ligne en remplaçant les pointes fines par une pointe unique de 1 m de 16/100e. Je peux me permettre cela car je suppose qu'en cet endroit les truites sont moins méfiantes qu'ailleurs et puis comme les risques d'accrochage dans les arbres sont à prévoir, je préfère être monté plus gros. Cela me facilitera aussi le travail du poisson qui est moins aisé quand on est coincé dans la verdure que dans un lieu bien dégagé.

Ph. M. — **Une canne de 9 pieds (2,7 m) ne vous gêne pas ? Vous n'auriez pas préféré une 7 pieds (2,1 m) qui passe mieux entre les branches.**

Il faut aussi lancer dans les lieux encombrés

J.-L. P. — Mon cher Mathieu, vous voulez que je vous fasse la démonstration de ce que j'ai affirmé dans « *Plaisirs de la pêche* » n° 190. Peut-être avez-vous trouvé mes explications un peu techniques ?

Ph. M. — **C'est un peu cela et puis, je trouve qu'il n'est pas mauvais de répéter ou reproduire certaines choses sous des formes différentes pour qu'elles soient bien assimilées.**

J.-L. P. — Au lieu de me noyer dans de nouvelles explications qui seraient aussi fumeuses que les précédentes, je préfère procéder par affirmations.

1) Plus la canne est longue, plus le lancer est facilité.

2) Plus la soie est raide et meilleure est sa conduite.

3) Plus la soie flotte bien, glisse bien sur l'eau, plus l'arraché est commode.

4) Plus le bas de ligne est court et gros, et plus le poser est facile.

5) Mieux flotte la mouche (haut sur l'eau), moins elle est submersible et plus il sera aisé de séduire les truites car les posers ne sont pas toujours excellents.

Bien entendu, en fonction de son habileté, on peut transgresser ces règles qui semblent un peu rigides, comme par exemple pour le bas de ligne qui peut être long et fin si l'on est très bon lanceur et aidé par le vent. Dans ces mêmes conditions, on peut également placer n'importe quelle mouche au bout de sa pointe.

Ph. M. — **Je crois que nous avons vu ensemble celle qui gobe près de la branche qui trempe dans l'eau.**

Le coup n'est pas facile...

J.-L. P. — Non seulement il n'est pas facile, mais je le pense irréalisable sans enlever la touffe d'orties qui est là sur ma droite et qui va accrocher la boucle de ma soie. En une dizaine de coups de mon couteau, véritable « Laguiole » affûté comme un rasoir, les orties sont coupées. Allons-y.

Ph. M. — **Comment allez-vous atteindre ce poisson qui est bien à 12 m par les techniques du roulé ?**

J.-L. P. — Je vais allonger ma soie tout à fait en dehors de la fenêtre du poisson par une suite de roulés-arrachés jusqu'à ce que j'ai sorti la longueur de soie suffisante pour atteindre mon poisson. Là, je ferai un roulé supplémentaire toujours en dehors de la vue de la truite et en aval de son poste. Je pratique souvent ce coup, apparemment inutile, pour me faire la main. C'est vraiment un faux lancer d'approche avant le poser final. La soie roule sur l'eau, le bas de ligne se déploie, la mouche se pose... la truite monte... je ferre et je la rate. Une mauvaise ronce que je n'avais pas vue a retenu ma soie et empêché le ferrage de faire son effet. C'est presque une faute de débutant. Ce piège, je le connais pourtant, il m'a fait rater quelques beaux poissons et cependant je viens encore de m'y faire prendre. Ça y est, je vois pourquoi. Quand j'ai légèrement avancé au moment du shoot final, mon pied a libéré une branchette qui retenait cette satanée ronce prisonnière. Ce n'est pas une excuse... mais je préfère quand même cette explication.

Le ferrage manqué a envoyé la soie dans toute la végétation rivulaire, chaque branche, chaque épine, chaque ronce, chaque ortie en tient un petit bout. Et, Ph. Mathieu en profite pour prendre une photo (pourvu qu'elle soit ratée).

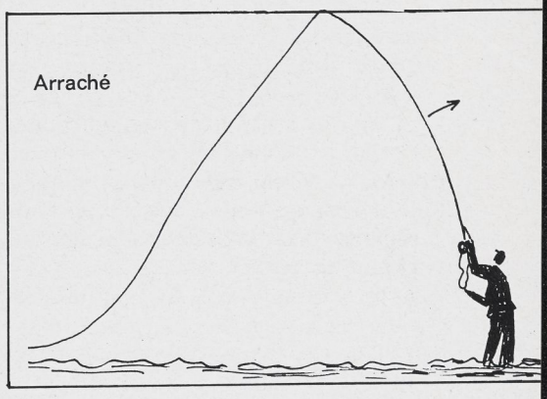
Ph. M. — **Dans 20 m, vous pourrez descendre à l'eau, mais la végétation va se resserrer, ne laissant qu'un petit couloir sans branche au sommet des baliveaux.**

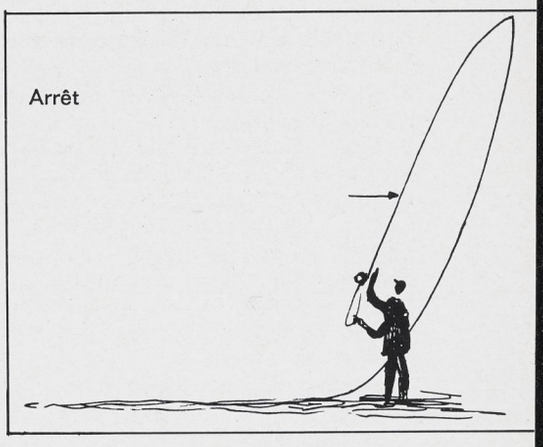
J.-L. P. — C'est le genre de parcours que j'adore, c'est là que je me sens le mieux. Je ne sais pourquoi mais il me paraît que toute cette végétation guide mes lancers.

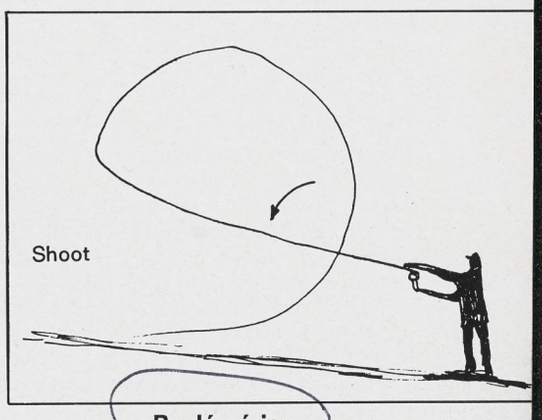
Descendez avec moi, mettez-vous à ma gauche. Grâce au lancer-roulé aérien, je pêche ces lieux en général mieux et plus vite que mes confrères qui pratiquent des lancers classiques. Ce n'est pas dû à une supériorité ou une habileté meilleures, c'est simplement le résultat de la méthode de lancer employée. Tous les amis à qui j'ai montré ce coup (n'est-ce pas Paul ?) font aussi bien que moi, ce n'est donc pas un problème d'homme.

Ce poisson qui est bien à 12 m...

En remontant la rive droite







Roulé aérien

Ph. M. — **Ah ! oui, j'ai vu, cela n'a pas l'air compliqué, mais c'est assez surprenant, quelle vitesse d'exécution ! Mais, pourquoi montez-vous le bras qui tient la canne ?**

J.-L. P. — Parce que celle-ci est trop courte pour ce genre de pêche, il me manque trente bons centimètres pour pouvoir exécuter ces lancers coude au corps. 10 pieds (3 m) est la longueur minimale qui permet d'obtenir le roulé aérien avec aisance.

Ph. M. — **Mais, quelle différence fondamentale y a-t-il entre ces roulés que vous exécutez actuellement et celui que vous avez conduit tout à l'heure ?**

J.-L. P. — Vous le voyez bien, mais vous avez raison de me poser la question car nos lecteurs ne me voient pas. Dans le roulé normal, la soie roule sur l'eau, dans le roulé aérien, la soie roule dans les airs comme son nom l'indique. Le fait qu'elle ne touche l'eau qu'au moment du poser présente bien des avantages car elle ne se mouille pas. Il en est de même de la mouche qui peut se sécher pendant son voyage dans les airs, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans le roulé normal où notre imitation ne quitte quasiment jamais l'eau.

J'adore le roulé aérien et il m'arrive de le pratiquer en l'absence de toute végétation lorsque je remonte des courant pierreux. C'est le moyen le plus rapide d'attaquer les postes les uns derrière les autres sans procéder à de nombreux shoots en arrière. Bien entendu, cette technique est concurrencée par l'usage de cannes courtes, rapides, équipées parfois de soies un peu lourdes ou décentrées. Chacun pratique, et c'est heureux, la méthode qu'il préfère, toutefois je pense que le lancer aérien est moins fatigant, demande moins d'attention et permet de plus beaux posers que l'usage de la canne courte qui multiplie les faux jets et impose un contrôle de soie permanent.

Ph. M. — **Vous pratiquez d'autres roulés, quels sont-ils ?**

J.-L. P. — Il en existe autant que de coups dérivés du lancer vertical classique que l'on apprend à ses débuts. Les roulés verticaux ont leurs homologues en coup droit, en revers, à grande boucle, à petite boucle, sans parler de tous ceux que l'on exécute et qui n'ont pas de nom. On choisit en fonction de l'espace que nous laisse les obstacles qui nous environnent.

Ph. M. — **Dernière question, il existe bien un petit tour de main particulier qui permet de réussir ces roulés ?**

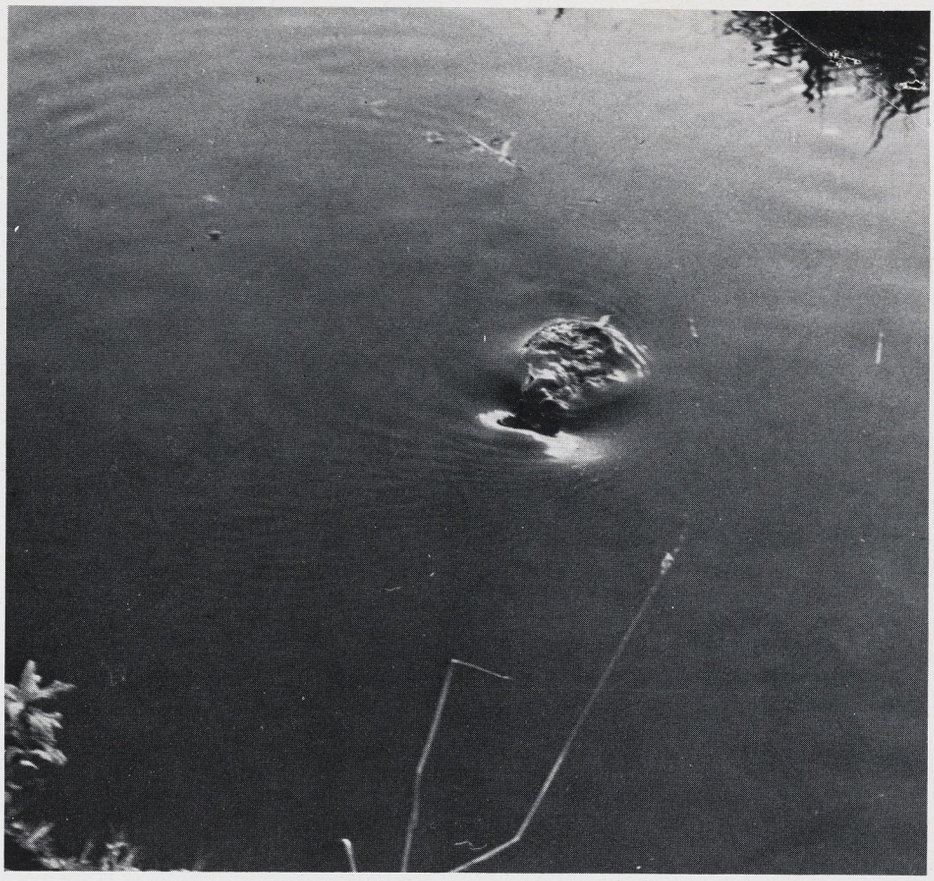
J.-L. P. — Bien sûr, mais dois-je l'indiquer ? Pourquoi est-ce que je ne laisserai pas le lecteur le découvrir ?

Ph. M. — **Vous m'avez promis d'écrire pour les débutants, alors il faut tout leur dire.**

J.-L. P. — Il n'existe pas qu'un tour de main mais avec lui plusieurs petites astuces qui permettent la réussite et qu'il faut répéter.

- Une soie parfaitement graissée mais sans excès afin qu'elle ne colle pas à la canne ou dans les anneaux.
- Un bas de ligne, genre dix brins, flottant parfaitment.
- Une mouche, style palmer ou paysanne, qui ne se noie pas facilement, car elle va beaucoup glisser sur l'eau au cours de la phase préparatoire au roulé. Cette mouche doit, de plus, être solide car elle va être malmenée à chaque lancer au moment où elle va décoller de l'eau pour être projetée en avant.
- Le tour de main ! Nous y voilà, j'ai eu l'occasion de le montrer à de nombreux pêcheurs et élèves des cours T.O.S.

Regardez ce pêcheur qui s'est baissé pour éviter de heurter l'arbuste qui est derrière lui. Que remarquons-nous ? Qu'avant de pratiquer son shoot avant, il a attendu que sa soie pende relativement en arrière de son épaule droite, pour les droitiers (position 2). Cette courbure de la soie est obtenue en renvoyant la canne légèrement en arrière, position 13 à 14 h et en attendant patiemment qu'elle se produise (passage de la position 1 à la position 2). Il ne faut pas trop attendre cependant, mais pratiquer le shoot avant, sitôt qu'elle est formée, bien arrondie, sans mou, comme sur le dessin. Tout le secret d'un bon roulé est là.



Un beau gobage type aspirateur, de ceux que je préfère

Ph. M. — **C'est bon pour le roulé vertical, mais pour les horizontaux, le spiroulé par exemple, comment procède-t-on ?**

J.-L. P. — Alors, mon cher Philippe, je me refuse à vous répondre car il faudrait un super dessinateur pour rendre ces gestes clairs ou encore une série de photos découpant le mouvement en séquences très rapprochées. Ce n'est pas avec ma simple plume que je puis décrire ces coups tout à fait complexes, et je m'en excuse auprès des lecteurs.

Ph. M. — **Et le rôle de la main gauche dans ce type de lancer ?**

J.-L. P. — Absolument primordial. C'est elle qui récupère la soie pendant l'arraché, c'est elle qui tient le fil sur le raide pendant la formation de la boucle derrière l'épaule du pêcheur, c'est elle, enfin, qui lâche la soie au moment où, après le shoot avant, le poser va intervenir. Son rôle réel est bien plus complexe dans le détail que ne le laisse supposer cette brève énumération, mais pour les raisons exposées plus haut je ne me hasarderai pas à le décrire.

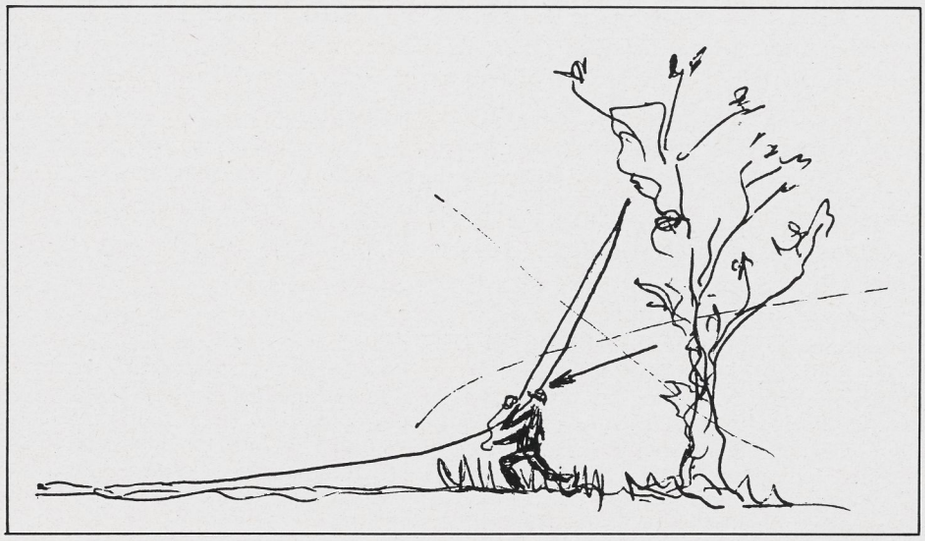
Ph. M. — **Je pensais que nous allions faire un petit bavardage tout simple destiné aux débutants, mais je vois que nous commençons à déborder sur des techniques de plus en plus difficiles. Dois-je penser que le roulé aérien, et lui seul, est accessible aux pêcheurs qui ont peu de pratique ?**

J.-L. P. — Je le pense aussi, mais que ceux-ci se rassurent, s'ils s'astreignent à bien suivre les règles indispensables qui conditionnent la réussite du roulé aérien, bien vite ils auront l'occasion de se baisser, d'orienter leurs cannes à droite ou à gauche, de rechercher une boucle plus petite ; ils rateront quelques lancers, mais s'y mettront sans trop de peine. Il ne faut pas exagérer les difficultés des lancers, tous nos élèves sont parvenus, sans exception, à les maîtriser et sont maintenant capables de les réussir. Alors, pourquoi pas nos lecteurs ?

Ce que je crois indispensable, c'est que les débutants sachent que ces lancers existent, que l'équilibrage du matériel est très important, que l'usage permanent de la main gauche est indispensable, le reste n'est qu'une question de persévérance, alliée au courage d'essayer.

Ph. M. — **Je vous remercie, et si l'on prenait maintenant quelques poissons ?**

J.-L. PELLETIER.



dency of the top half of the body to move.

The trouble with the 'open' stance is that, in a beginner, it encourages round-arm casting with the waste of energy and lack of precision in which this results. Instead of travelling in a straight line the arm tends to move in an arc around the body. It is also further from the body and therefore more difficult to control. The fly-line travels in the same direction and manner as the rod-tip. If the arm travels in an arc, so will the rod-tip and it is this arc transmitted to the line that results in increased air resistance and reduced line speed.

It is rather like the difference between a long round-arm punch as opposed to a short jab to the body. Both, if they connect, may have similar effect, but the latter will be accomplished with less effort and with maximum precision. It is much easier to control the action of your arm when it is closer to your body and has the power of your shoulder directly behind it.

You may apply either the same power with much less effort, or much more power with the same effort. Either way, in casting terms, this has to be an advantage. It is the reason why casting was often taught in the traditional manner by making the pupil hold an object between elbow and body, while casting, to prevent the tendency of the arm to stray away from the body, either out in front, up too high or out to the side, becoming more and more round in its trajectory.

☆ ☆ ☆

To be fair, it needs to be said that an 'open' stance does not actually prevent the execution of a good basic overhead cast. But the important point is that in the case of a beginner it does not encourage it and indeed positively discourages it.

Of course, very many good casters adopt the 'open' stance and apply it to very good effect; indeed to employ a full double-haul technique for long-distance casting it is essential to open up the shoulders on the back cast and an 'open' stance makes this easier.

The difference is that long hours of practice have resulted in development of muscles which allow these experts to move their elbow a long way horizontally without losing direction or control. Added to that fact, the proper use of arm and wrist, the ability to block the rod crisply together with the effective use of the left hand, all contribute to produce tremendous line-speed.

Unfortunately the average learner is not able to achieve either the control or line-speed. The result is he often appears to be expending an enormous amount of energy, often rocking from foot to foot, labouring to make interminable false casts, but producing an end result which falls well below that of anglers who have mastered the execution of the basic overhead cast.

When, and only when, you have perfected the basic overhead technique, then may be the time to 'open' up. Even then it is best done little by little. Some of the best casters I have watched, when reaching out for distance, open up the shoulders on the back cast and allow the elbow to move back a long way, the body turning at the hips, enabling the caster if he wishes to watch the trajectory of his line behind.

For the forward cast, however, as the rod is pushed into the forward power arc, the hips turn sharply bringing hody and shoulder back into the 'square' position. The rod pushes through squarely, close to the shoulder in a straight line towards the target as the elbow reverts to a line relatively close to the body. This method, like the basic overhead cast, is carried out using a 'closed' stance, but can produce casts of very long distance when used by a competent performer.

This is, I believe, the reason that many tournament distance casters stand with the right foot forward — a 'closed' stance.

The 'closed' stance enables the whole body to be behind the forward cast. This not only means that the forward power push can be better regulated and controlled, but also encourages greater accuracy. Most right-handed people will stand to throw a dart with the right foot forward for this reason.

It is, I believe, because of the tendency for most beginners to adopt an 'open' stance that they become round-arm casters. By this method they may obtain reasonably satisfactory results in favourable conditions, particularly in a following wind, but will never be likely to reach the level of all-round competence which they might otherwise acquire. And they will expend a lot more energy.

I firmly believe that beginners should at least learn the basic overhead cast, using a 'closed' stance, before experimenting with a more 'open' style. They should be taught to make their forward cast, keeping the rod as vertical as possible (i.e. in the casting plane), followed through with a straight rather than round-arm push and keeping the elbow relatively close to the body. The elbow may move, indeed it is desirable that it should, but not too far forward, not too high, and not too far out to the side.

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If this technique is perfected, given reasonable conditions, I believe sufficient distance may be reached for any normal reservoir fishing techniques while greater accuracy will result over shorter distances.

Finally it is important to appreciate that it is impossible to reach a high standard by any method or technique unless a tremendous amount of time and effort is spent in practice. So if you do adopt the suggestions made here, don't be surprised if they don't produce immediate results. Anything you try which is new will feel strange at first. However, as a beginner I am sure you will be on the right lines and if you persevere I am certain that in the long run you won't be disappointed.

INTERNATIONAL FLY-FISHING

Centenary win for England

IRELAND'S spell of supremacy in the 'Internationals' ended on a disappointing Loch Leven which, truth to tell, defeated all four competing countries. The winners, England, totalled 17 lb 13 oz (12 fish). Scotland was the host country in recognition of the centenary this year of The Scottish National Angling Clubs Association.

Fishing on the loch had shown improvement recently, but it was short-lived and a few of the contestants did not raise a single fish in three days of practice before the match. To make matters worse, there was barely a cloud in the sky as the four teams of 12 anglers assembled at the pier.

The only sign of confidence came from England's captain John Ketley who, when asked how he felt about the prospects, replied, "I just feel sorry for the other teams!"

England did at least manage to average a trout per rod, but the rest struggled, none more so than the Irish who had won the previous two Internationals but found the absence of fish near the surface too much of a handicap at Loch Leven.

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Cloud cover arrived soon after the start, accompanied by a stiff breeze from the north-west, and this temporarily raised spirits.

Result: England (12 trout) 17 lb 13 oz; Wales (7 trout) 13 lb 0 oz; Scotland (5 trout) 8 lb 7 oz; Ireland (5 trout) 7 lb 1 oz.

The Brown Bowl, awarded for the heaviest individual basket, was won by Welsh angler and International President, Trevor Hirons, with three trout for 6 lb 10 oz. The president also won the H. Emyr Lewis Memorial Trophy for the heaviest trout of the match — 2 lb 14 oz. His boatman was Malcolm Thomson, Scottish ACA secretary, whose suggestion of a size 12 Brown Ke-He resulted in the capture of all three fish.

Best for England was Bill Day's 3 lb 7 oz (2 fish). R. Johnson had 3 lb 9 oz (2 fish) for Scotland, and Ireland's top weight was 2 lb 1 oz by Eamonn Neligan.

The 1981 Internationals are at Draycote on May 30 and a return to Loch Leven on August 22.

David Egan

What stance for casting?

by MIKE DUNSTAN

MANY bad habits acquired in fly-casting stem, I believe, almost from the first time we ever pick up a fly-rod.

The question of stance on its own is not earth-shattering in fly-fishing terms, but it is one which is important to consider at the earliest stage of learning to cast a trout fly if it is not to encourage errors in technique which may be far harder to correct later on.

I should make it clear immediately that I am referring to stance simply from the viewpoint of learning to cast and not in the practical fishing sense. When fishing from an awkward bank on river or reservoir, you may finish up with your feet all over the place, but provided you have learnt to cast with correct form in the early stages, the way you stand in difficult places should have little significance.

When considering the stance for the basic overhead trout fly-cast, there are two possible main alternatives. First, there is what might be termed the 'open' stance, and, second, the 'closed' one.

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The 'open' stance is one which is, I believe, quite wrongly advocated for learners in many guides to basic technique. It involves standing with your feet slightly apart, facing a direction approximately 45 degrees to the right of the intended target area (I address my remarks for the benefit of a right-handed caster). This means your left shoulder is slightly angled towards the direction you mean to cast.

There is one widely-circulated booklet on learning to cast which, probably in common with many other beginners, I read before any other, which recommends learners to 'adopt' the 'open' stance from the start, thereby encouraging faults which could ensure the readers will never be other than mediocre performers.

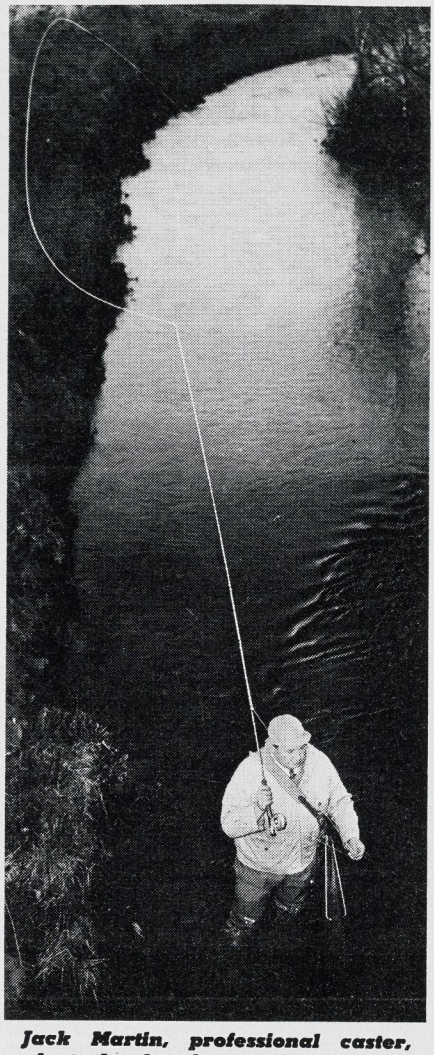
The 'closed' stance involves standing square-on to the target, that is, facing it. To combat the tendency to 'open' up, the stance is best effected with the right foot pointing straight at the target, and the left foot slightly behind, toe pointing out to the left. The feet should be sufficiently apart to allow even body-weight distribution and good balance.

What is it then about the 'open' stance which leads to these potential problems? Well the basic essential in learning to cast is the need to be able to track the rod in, or as near, the vertical plane as possible, straight down the same groove on both back and forward cast. Because of the lack of general control that a beginner is able to impose, this 'grooved' aspect of technique is important to acquire if a reasonably competent level of casting is to be reached at a relatively early stage.

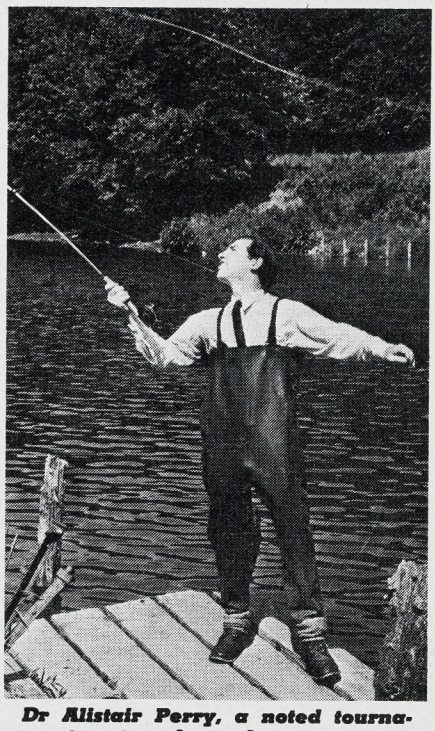
Later, as muscles reach the level of strength and acquire the necessary control, the whole casting motion becomes the gentle, fluid, seemingly effortless action it needs to be. The left hand further assists in speeding and straightening the line and the 'grooving' of the rod, to and fro, becomes slightly less important. But to the beginner it is an essential element if he is to produce reasonable and consistent results.

The technique of casting a trout fly relies on the weight built into the fly-line being thrown backwards in smooth fashion, loading the rod with energy. This loading, as we know, results from the deliberate stopping of the rod at or near the vertical (from the side) by blocking the wrist at the appropriate position.

To enable the rod to store the energy of which it is capable, its base must be firmly anchored, that is to say the rod handle must be held steady and must not move or waggle in either the horizontal or vertical plane. Furthermore the movement of the arm must be smooth and straight as it imparts power in both backward and forward directions. The closed stance encourages this, resisting the ten-



Jack Martin, professional caster, adopts the closed stance for accurate upstream work.



Dr Alistair Perry, a noted tournament caster, shows the open stance used when double-hauling.

Land-locked sea-trout

STEPHEN DRUMMOND SEDGWICK'S article on the fishing in North Uist prompts me to tell you of a 'sea-trout' my father caught in a small loch on South Uist. The loch was completely isolated from the sea on the machair lands beside the Loch Druidibeg nature reserve.

We had taken ten trout and a 1½ lb silvery fish. The latter looked surprisingly lean when compared to the brown trout, which were in quite excellent condition. The flesh of the fish was very pink indeed whereas all of the trout had white flesh. When opened the 'sea-trout' had small eggs inside it.

It is possible that this loch had been cut off from a good sea-trout loch owned by the Lochboisdale hotel when the island's road was built. The two lochs are some eight yards apart, with the road in between, and there is, as far as I could see, no way for a fish to enter the small loch.

Have other anglers come across similar cases of land-locked 'sea-trout'. For the record the fish took a size 10 Soldier Palmer, which had taken most of the trout.

Paul Gamba

Glasgow

Grips for fly-fishing

I WAS interested in the article by Mike Dunstan regarding the handshake grip (May issue). I am very much an inexperienced caster but my efforts show some improvement when casting from the side. However, to the question, 'Do you ever knock in a nail with the thumb on top of the hammer shaft?' The answer is 'yes!'

I have recently retired after more than 50 years in wood-working trades and teaching crafts. A craftsman places the thumb on top of the shaft to ensure accurate direction of the blow on large nails and the forefinger on the shaft for small panel pins and similar nails.

The thumb does rest on the side when using a heavy lump hammer. When using a cold chisel some craftsmen, silver-smiths, for example, use the latter grip always.

E. Salt

Sheffield

The ultimate in realism

YOUR CORRESPONDENT Mr D. P. G. Morgan (July issue) asks for the answer to "Daddy, why don't you use a real one?"

For one thing a real prawn is messy and smelly to put on the hook tackle; for another, it so easily breaks off. A sham one has neither fault. But the best answer is that good sportsmanship says 'no' to using a real bait.

Tell Master Morgan to read "It depends what you mean . . . " in *Trout and Salmon*, April 1979. And good luck to D.P.G. with his Prawn fly.

Howard Edgecombe

Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

Not-so-deadly carrot

MY NEWSAGENTS and their delivery boy are to be congratulated on arranging for the August issue of *Trout and Salmon* to appear on my breakfast table at 7.45 am on July 30, and for realising that I should be interested in the contents which included Freddy Dalgetty's article on "Catch with a carrot", because I was on the point of leaving for a day as the guest of my old friend, Eric Webb, on the Somerley (Hampshire) Avon, where it is alleged that the carrot is fished in one way and another.

Therefore, before leaving I hastened into the garden to supply myself with a few suitable carrots and took *Trout and*

Letters

Salmon with me to the river where I duly fished carrot. I regret to say that, although I enjoyed the exercise, on this occasion my fishing proved quite abortive.

I was interested to read the suggestion that the Carrot Pool on the Wye is named after the success of Robert Pashley using that as a bait, because I always understood that the pool was named after the nearby pub "The Bunch of Carrots". As a Herefordian who knew Robert Pashley slightly, I had always understood that he seldom fished anything but fly. Incidentally, I was through Goodrich only a fortnight ago and heard that his delightful old home overlooking the river there is now on the market.

A. W. Taylor

Wallingford, Oxfordshire

The Forgotten Lough

Dear Mr Burrows, my forehead has furrows
Wond'ring what e're is to pass.
We read about Owel, 'bout Ennell and Sheelin
But nowt about Arrow alas!

As news for your readers who digest all your leaders
I live on the shores of this lake.
Of weather conditions, hatch and fall of insecta,
Reports I am ready to make.

The visiting fishers and other well-wishers
Come into my place for a chat.
They discuss their successes, their failures and hopes,
Fly-patterns, hook-sizes — all that.

The fishing this season for many a reason
Is better than elders recall.
The Duckfly, the Mayfly, the Claret did well
And exceeded the hopes of us all.

Now, cunning trout, what are you about?
Eager we are to explore.
Next season warm weather and late-summer days
Should bring sedge and buzzer galore.

The autumn wet fly, as in good days gone by,
On Arrow should also do well.
So anglers from England, from Wales, and the North,
Could do worse than come here for a spell.

Now, Mr Burrows, so much for your furrows,
A Gaelic toast I give out:
To *Trout and Salmon* good luck and success
From all here who fish for the trout!

Jack Meyler

Lough Arrow, Co. Sligo

Letters to the Editor

Letters for publication in these columns are welcomed but readers are asked to keep them as brief as possible. The editor cannot accept responsibility for views expressed; nor does their publication imply that he agrees with them. Original letters must carry the writer's full name and address, although not necessarily for publication. Letters will not be acknowledged by post unless specifically requested, and accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

Letters should be addressed to The Editor, *Trout and Salmon*, 21 Church Walk, Peterborough, PE1 2TW. Readers wishing to write personally to correspondents are asked to address their letters c/o The Editor at the same address. Letters will be forwarded without delay, but correspondents' addresses will not otherwise be divulged.

Letters

(*Oncorynchus* — not *Salmo*), much sought-after in the sea, but of little angling interest to dedicated freshwater fishermen.

Another item, Mr Cary D. Moss's letter, is probably very right in general about the regard in which the brown trout is held in North America. This, however, is not universal. On first coming here I was indignant at hearing a steelhead fisherman say: "Oh, we call them mud trout."

Now, after encountering (and often being broken by) the summer-run steelhead, one has to admit that the strength and violence of this sea-going rainbow do make the large brown trout seem inferior in many ways — not all.

M. S. Gotto

Victoria, British Columbia

Narrow loops in casting

MR FRED MARTIN (January issue) says he is troubled by his line catching up. However, I do not think his lines are at fault, but that he is punching his forward cast, and possibly creeping forward during the pause between the back and forward stroke.

One must blend the pressure into the forward cast. A sudden application of power ducks the line down on itself. I get people out of this habit by telling them they are casting like a little dog. I tell them the timing of their forward cast is like the short yap of a little dog when it should be in the timing of the woof of a large dog, the pressure being on the end of the stroke and not the start. Try it. It works.

Lionel Sweet

Usk, Monmouthshire

☆ ☆ ☆

MR FRED MARTIN asks (January issue) whether any "expert casters" can help him overcome the problem of his fly coming into contact with the line on the narrow loop forward cast. His loop cast is narrow indeed!

Although I am no expert caster, this is one problem which I have now overcome. Assuming that Mr Martin is using the correct weight line for his rod, it would seem that he is using too fine a butt section on his leader. In my experience the butt section should be about one-third of the total length of the leader and as thick as is required to give a continuous, graduated taper from line to fly.

This thick section (in my case at least 15 lb breaking strain on a No 5 line) remains permanently whipped to the line, and thus it is unnecessary when changing the leader to whip it to the line each time. The new leader is simply tied to the butt section with a double blood knot.

Unfortunately, knotted and knotless tapered casts for sale in tackle shops are almost invariably too fine in the butt section, in my experience, and the best plan is to make up your own.

In a strong wind this nuisance can happen to anyone, but I have found that a check on the line with the left hand at the point when it is extended save for the last yard or so, has the effect of pushing the end of the line sharply forward and downward, thus shooting the leader out unimpeded.

Gordon Mackie

Cotham, Bristol 6

The Border Esk's chub

I WAS SOMEWHAT DISGUSTED to read the final paragraph of the Border Esk report by 'Solway Rod' in the December issue. He tells us that some good chub have been taken on the Esk,

Continued on page 27

peaks of 4,000 pochard, 3,000 shelduck, 1,500 teal, 1,400 mallard, 800 tufted duck and 380 pintail.

"Wading birds now number almost as many with peaks of 6,000 dunlin, 1,000 redshank, 250 knots and over 100 wintering ruffs.

"Now for the first time people working and living by the Upper Pool, the Lower Pool, Limehouse, Blackwall and Barking can see these birds in profusion on any winter's day . . ."

On the whole Mr Harrison's remarks seem to deal adequately with the generality and indeed the particularity of Mr Walker's reply, and I am happy to let the matter so rest — except to say that we must bear in mind no aspect of society is perfect and that the individual flaw (River Hiz *et al*) is not always symptomatic of wholesale disease.

W. L. Wilson

Chorleywood, Hertfordshire

A determined trout

AT BLITHFIELD during the latter part of July and the first week or so of August last year, there were numerous complaints from anglers of the fish coming short.

My wife and I experienced this on several occasions. One would get a good pluck at one's fly, tighten the line and find there was no fish on. This happened frequently, and it didn't seem to make any difference whether one fished fast or slowly.

While fishing a team of three nymphs during this period, and retrieving very slowly, I felt a pluck. Thinking it was a short-riser I did nothing, but continued to take in slowly. A second or two later I got a decisive pull and eventually landed a 1½ lb rainbow. Much to my astonishment it had both top dropper nymph and the nymph on the second dropper firmly embedded in its mouth.

Fred M. Mealor

Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire

Back-to-front flies

IN RECENT YEARS we have witnessed the introduction of several new types of dry-fly hook, including the Yorkshire Flybody. For several seasons now I have had success with a fly-tying development of my own which requires no special hook or equipment.

The method and idea are quite simple. The fly is dressed in reverse to the traditional method, resulting in the wings and hackle at the hook bend and the tail towards the eye of the hook. The hackle is now in a position to support and hide the heaviest end of the hook, thus allowing the fly to float in a most natural manner with the tail supported on the surface film. Hooking properties are equal to the traditional fly with the added benefit of less hook in the water.

Has anyone else tried this method?

P. Parke

Stroud, Gloucestershire

Vancouver Island's fishing

ONE OR TWO THINGS in last October's issue may possibly give the wrong impression to a future newcomer or visitor here from the U.K.

First, a tackle advertisement offering a salmon-fishing holiday here as a prize. Second, the mention of the enormously improved salmon run in the Big Qualicum river (about 80 miles up-island).

Of course, the salmon referred to in both is the Pacific salmon

Critical Moment: Your Pickup

Can you, after you've worked out your cast, lift your lure from the surface without panicking all the fish below?

LAST March I was wading the Caleufú River in Argentina. This stream, with long blue pools breaking into bubbling riffles that wash the feet of red-rock hills, is about the prettiest piece of dry-fly water I have ever seen. The morning had been fast. Trout busted my hairwing floaters regularly. Most of the fish were rainbows between 2 and 3 pounds, but a few went 4, and several browns topped 5.

I had probably released over fifty trout when a flight of geese came barreling downstream, headed for the grainfields. My favorite sport, next to fishing, is bird shooting, so naturally I stopped to admire the honkers. I don't know why, but every time I look away from a river—it happens. My line had drifted back in a slack curve when a sneaky trout walloped the Coachman almost under my rod tip. From a fleeting glimpse, I judged that brown at about 10 pounds. I tried to strike, but in the second I lost in moving the slack he dropped the fly. The pace of the fishing, plus the prospect of gunning that afternoon, was some consolation for missing the old soaker—but it somehow gripes a man to fluff on fundamentals.

The correct handling of a fly line after the cast is presented seldom gets much attention from instructors—probably because practice periods are usually held on a lawn. I discovered that, when teaching somebody to cast, one must simultaneously demonstrate the sequence of movements that follow. It's difficult enough to teach a clean delivery, with the cast checked high over the water for a gentle drop, but if you leave the beginner at that point the result is comparable to putting a 400-pound jockey on a winning horse. Your tyro must also learn to recover the slack and be ready for a strike before making a new cast.

It's the last part that usually goes haywire. A pickup can be an underwear-ripping process for the beginner. If he lifts too much line directly from the water, the ensuing *flurp* is enough to scare a deaf trout spotless. If he lifts too little, the fly will simply hover overhead

Ellis Newman demonstrates the "snake" pickup he developed to lift line and lure quietly from water

By waving the rod from side to side he forces a series of S curves into the line and the leader

The progressive curves lift the line; then, as the leader comes free, a back cast flips the bug upward

we'd spotted turned out to be nannies and kids or were located so high on cliff walls that there wasn't daylight left for a climb.

The chamois had come much easier. We had merely slogged up into the Hooker Valley four or five miles to where the frozen Mueller chasm, with its great curtains of glacial ice and pressure-racked snow, opened on the left. There I'd been lucky enough to spot chamois feeding low down. They were on the next to the last slide of the lower Mueller in a spot which Charlie figured we could reach by an hour's scramble behind the crest of a glacial moraine. When I finally pushed the rifle muzzle over the last rock, it was a lead-pipe cinch and I had me a fine buck chamois for the trophy-room wall.

But no such luck on the tahr. Hence the plans with Harry for a last-ditch try. No matter how fine the fare had been on Jap deer, axis deer, wild pigs, fallow deer, great red deer stags or even Taupo trout—and the New Zealand sporting menu is a rich one—I didn't want to go home without those tahr horns.

"Everything is laid on," said Harry, finally untangling his 6-feet-plus from the phone booth at Ohau Lodge that evening. "Gibson is sure the tahr are still there. At first light in the morning I'll fly you and John in the Auster around the range to Dusky Station. Gibson has a landing strip we use in flying rabbit poison and fence posts into his high pastures."

That and past experience with Harry and his flying machines gave me all the clue needed. "Fine and dandy—but none of those Wigley detours. I don't mind flying low and pulling up over every bush. I didn't lose my breakfast kiting around on the peaks and landing up on the snow of the Tasman Glacier. But none of this business of swooping into basins and trying to knock tahr off cliffs with your wingtip. Right?"

"Bloody well right," smiled Harry, and so indeed it was.

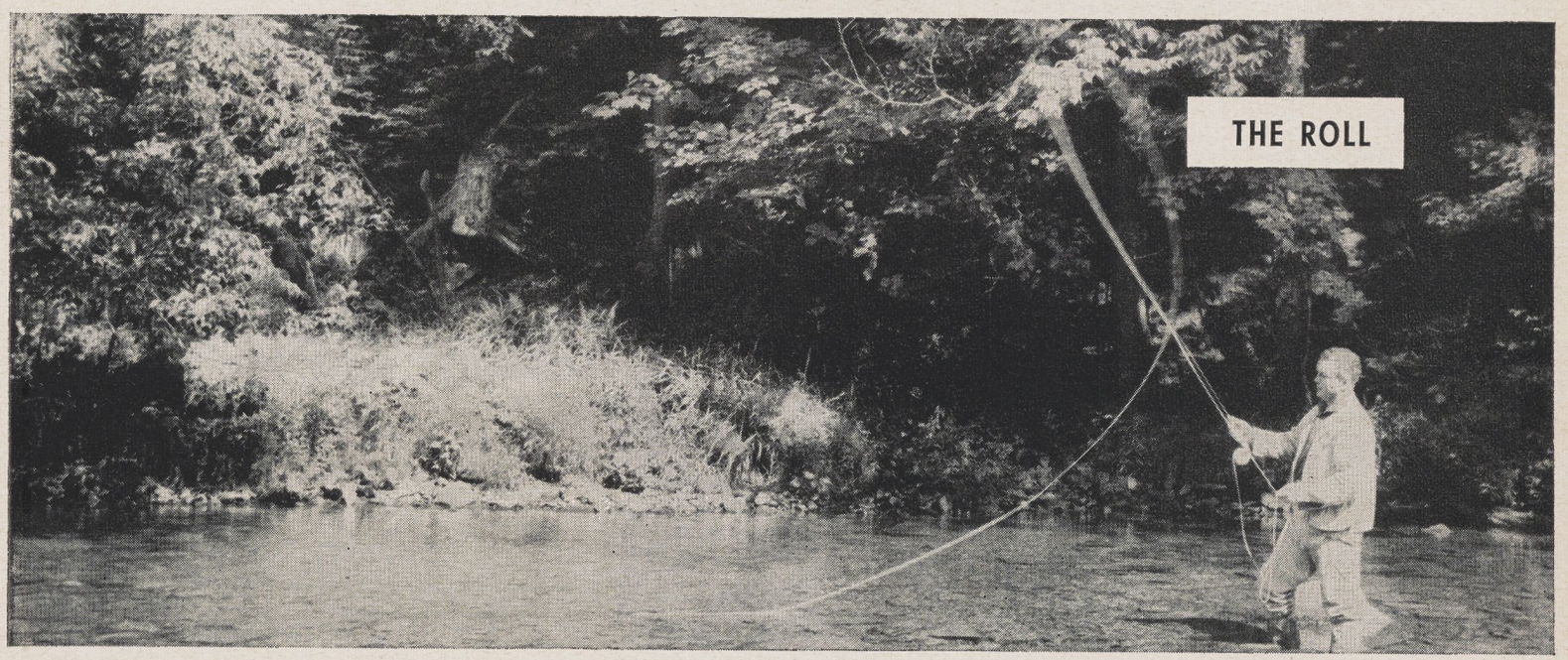
But next dawn, when we skimmed sedately around the range in the Auster, which is something like a Piper Cub with no roof and most of its innards showing, I knew that driving an aerial bus was a strain for him. Not for nothing had Harry spent sinful years as a hot-rock fighter pilot when the lifeline of New Zealand was threatened, bucketing around over Jap-infested Pacific islands in everything from P-40's to F4U's. But this morning we traveled straight and level—at about fifteen feet above the grass—and landed at Dusky on a ranch strip that doubles as a ski slope when they have snow.

Sheepman Gibson indeed had "everything laid on." Waiting were a couple of his herders who had seen the tahr during mustering and horses for everybody save Harry, who demurred at the prospect of climbing so high. As a local guide we had Andy Ross, a professional rabbit exterminator who knew all the back country and, crippled by polio, had taken his saddle horse into areas few men reach on foot.

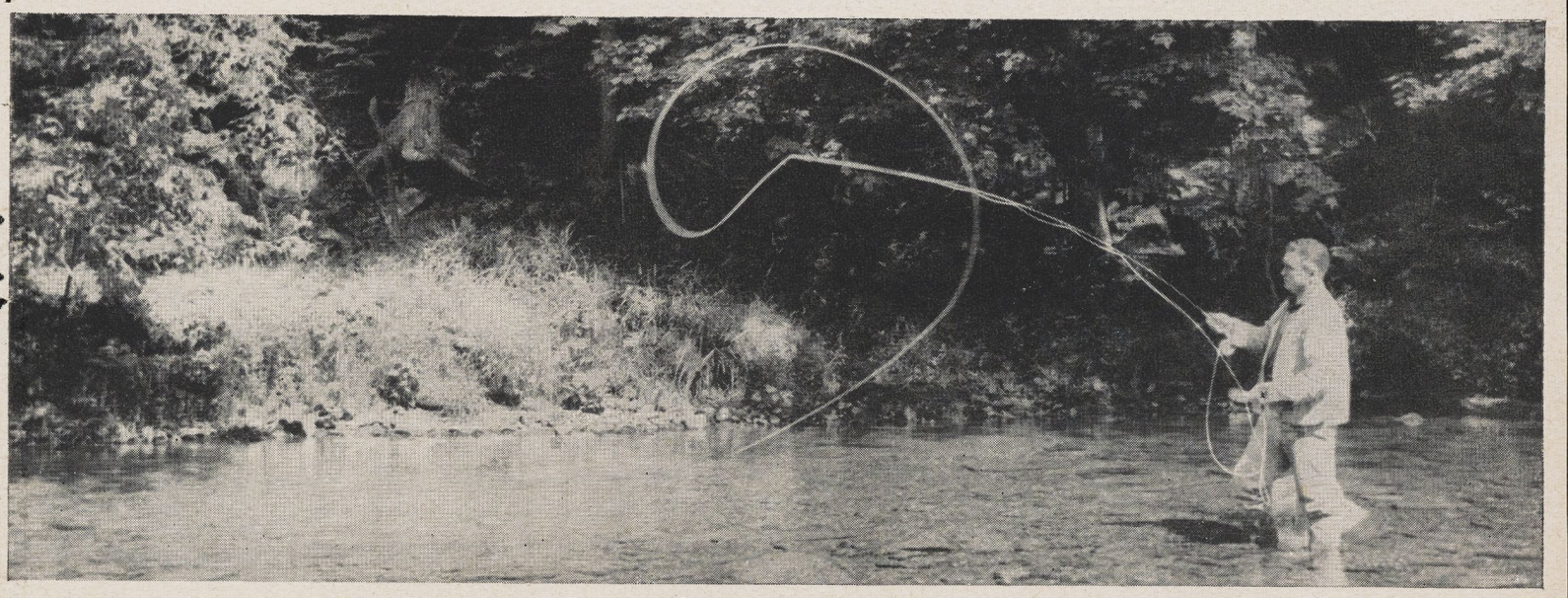
"About two hours above this ridge," he said, pointing beyond the border hills of the Tasman Valley, "we'll have to leave your horses and hike. The musterers saw tahr in a basin another five or six miles up, when they were trying to bring in some sheep that had

(*Continued on page* 130)

To avoid snagging a lure, use the snap pickup. Move rod tip from 10 to 11 o'clock, then snap it back to 10. A moving curve quickly lifts line and lure



Ellis demonstrates the roll pickup, handy in dry-fly fishing. It's an unfinished roll cast in which you snap the tip downward to lift the line . . .



. . . then pick the fly out of the air and go into an ordinary back cast. With a wet fly, make a short left-hand pull to raise the line before the back cast

like a pesky mosquito until the rod is given more line for flexing. Unfortunately it takes some time for the student to discover that the leader alone won't pull line out of the guides. He becomes the proverbial toothless tiger.

As a general rule, you should have a minimum of 1½ rod lengths of line extended from the tip for an effortless pickup. Now, there are four ways of getting line off the water: you can roll it from the surface, snake it off with a few shakes of the rod, make a snap pickup by throwing slack down the line, or, with a smooth left-hand pull, slide the line directly into a back cast.

Ordinarily, when I'm dry-fly fishing, I use the roll pickup. This is nothing more than an unfinished roll cast in which you snap the tip downward to lift the line, then pick the fly out of the air and go into an ordinary back cast. When fishing with a sunken fly line, using nymphs and wet patterns, I make a short left-hand pull to raise and move the line toward me before making the back cast. I also use the pull followed by a straight lift when casting a very long line, or in places where there's no likelihood of taking fish close to the rod. I suppose these two methods are the most commonly used.

The other two pickups are useful to know, however, particularly when you're fishing fast-water streams where you get varying degrees of slack. They also excel in shallow streams where most of your casting is done in knee-deep water. Frequently you will be working pockets thirty or forty feet away while most of your line is drifting around stones, branches and other obstacles. Making an ordinary pickup or even a roll is difficult, because the line continually snags when drawn *across* the surface.

Obviously, any pickup that lifts line *upward* from the water will escape getting hung. The snap pickup solves that problem. The fly literally jumps out of debris. The snap pickup has the further advantage of permitting you to work the fly right up to your boots. It doesn't make any difference about the slack between tip and fly, even if a fish hits, because one quick wrist movement will set the hook.

Essentially, the snap pickup consists of nothing more than moving your rod from a 10- to an 11-o'clock position, then snapping the tip back to 10 o'clock. The snap motion forms a moving curve that instantly runs down to the leader, lifting line off the water—and, flip, your taper is airborne. I make my normal back cast just at the point when the leader clears the surface. You might be a bit splashy on the first few attempts because there's a tendency to use too much power or use it at the wrong angle. But when the snap pickup is done correctly, there is no splash and the fly flicks off the water as if by magic.

That same snap movement will even set the hook if a fish follows and takes the fly at the last instant. Fact is, a snap pickup is nothing more than a reverse strike, which is one of those rarely practiced tricks that you may need only once in a season. Had I seen my big Caleufú trout coming at the fly, for instance, I could have hooked him with a roll or a snap.

Many years ago a lad in our town caught a huge brown trout on a bass

bug. I think the fish went about 15 pounds, but the important thing was that everybody laughed about it. There was no great run on bass bugs in the hardware store; in fact, I doubt that one bug was sold or used because of what had happened. The capture of a big trout is unique in itself, and wise old heads always agree that it's not likely to happen again. Nevertheless an incident of this sort can lurk in the back of one's mind for a lifetime. It never occurred to me, for instance, that bugs would really take trout until one spring day in Quebec.

We had made a tour of the pond without raising more than a few small brookies. I was fishing with a gent named Ralph Meeker from Canton, Ohio. Meeker had a hand deft enough to pick the pocket of a ticklish kangaroo. He worked from the bow of the canoe, laying out long casts toward shore; I tossed nymphs, streamers and floaters at the lake middle. It was plainly a dull day. The thermometer was up, or the barometer was down—or something.

I don't know how we got on the subject of bugs, except that Ralph is an inveterate bass fisherman and with all the overhangs and shoreline brush piles on our horizon a slow awakening began in both of us. I had some hair-bodied bugs in my tackle box that looked small enough for trout; so we decided to give them a try. Before Justice came stumbling onto the scene, her scales seesawing wildly and her sword upraised, Meeker polished off a handsome pair of squaretails in the 18-inch class. I caught a few modest-sized trout, but on the way home we passed an old beaver dam and from out of the woodwork came a buster sneaking behind my bug. It was one of those hair-raising stalks when a fish comes almost—but not quite—to the lure and waits.

I kept egging this one on with little twitches, my rod arm going higher and higher until pretty soon my hand was straight overhead. The trout smacked the bug not two feet from the canoe. The instinctive thing at that point would have been to pull back, but fortunately the fish took so long in making up his mind that for once I could outthink him. I snapped the rod downward in what would have been a strong roll cast. The line whipped upward with enough impact to set the hook.

Speaking of bass bugs reminds me of the pickup Ellis Newman showed me. He adapted it to bugging after trying for a visual effect in his sport-show routine. This is the snake pickup, and you accomplish it by waving the rod from side to side, thus forcing a series of S curves into the line. With it you can lift a heavy front taper off the water and, just as the leader comes free, flip the bug into a neat back cast without splashing.

Naturally the snake pickup can be done with trout flies also. Hold your rod at the 10-o'clock position and start shaking the line in a side-to-side motion, gradually elevating the rod to 11 o'clock. Don't rush this one, because neat execution depends on getting the S curves running down to the leader to free the line from surface tension. When the pickup is made correctly, the leader snakes out of the water without so much as a ripple.

Before I began writing this morning

I spent several hours on the river watching two gents fly fishing. The water was very low and clear, yet during the time I watched, one man caught seven trout and the other gent scored zero.

A dead calm, with the river standing like an unbroken mirror, is probably the toughest situation we have to cope with in fly fishing. There's no bubbly to screen our casting errors, seldom enough current to animate the feathers, and worse yet, few people can wade flat water without sending ominous waves rolling over the trout. One of the anglers here this morning is a capable caster as far as range is concerned, but when Stanley steps into a quiet run the jig is up. He lurches when he wades and he's equipped with an expanding rumble seat; so the trout accept him as one of the natural hazards of their existence. No amount of neat casting can eradicate the telltale surf he sets in motion.

I saw at least a dozen fish hide under the dam when Stanley began wading. The smaller ones held their positions and would have smacked his offering—except for that pickup. He not only splashes but also makes his lift within a few feet of the fish. This is probably as important a part of our lesson as the mechanics. Never begin a new cast until the last one is fished out—even if it was a bad cast.

Always make your pickup when the fly has drifted back to a point where you can see under it; that means about one rod length away. If the current is very slow, work your fly away from the fish's position at a speed that won't create leader wake. Then roll, lift, snake or snap the fly off the surface. It is axiomatic that you can't correct a bad cast with a new one in the same spot.

One reason I enjoy watching the other, successful chap fish is that he's a fundamentalist. Arnold wades the stream, yet keeps himself unseen, and he senses with a high-strung instinct where the fish are holding. He moves under the shade of the hemlocks and, not being handicapped with a husky rod and weighty line, he depends on casting skill rather than mechanical flimflammery.

There is a trend today toward heavy fly lines—and even chunks of them tied to monofilament. Yet Arnold wisely keeps his leaders fine and his front tapers long. Coming as he did behind Stanley, the taking of seven trout was a considerable feat. But Arnold made delicate casts, fished them down to his rod and finished with a clean pickup. Several times I saw trout rise and follow the fly fifteen or twenty feet downstream before taking. These fish represent a very large percentage of the ones that are ordinarily missed by sloppy line handling.

To sum up: What you do between presenting the fly and picking up line for a new cast bears directly on your success, or lack of it. The fish may accept, reject or just think it over. A neat pickup goes a long way toward good fishing because you won't spook the possibles, and you can get enough line in the air for a new cast without making unnecessary motions. Aside from the straight-pull pickup, you should practice the roll and the snap. Either of the two latter pickups will also hook fish from an awkward position, and that alone is worth remembering!

THE HS/HL CASTING TECHNIQUE

For the first time, the mechanics of correct casting are detailed properly by a world-famed master fly fisherman and caster. This piece, done especially for the *Fishermen's Digest* by Monsieur Ritz in Paris, is not for beginners. It is, instead, classic instruction for even the most experienced casters.

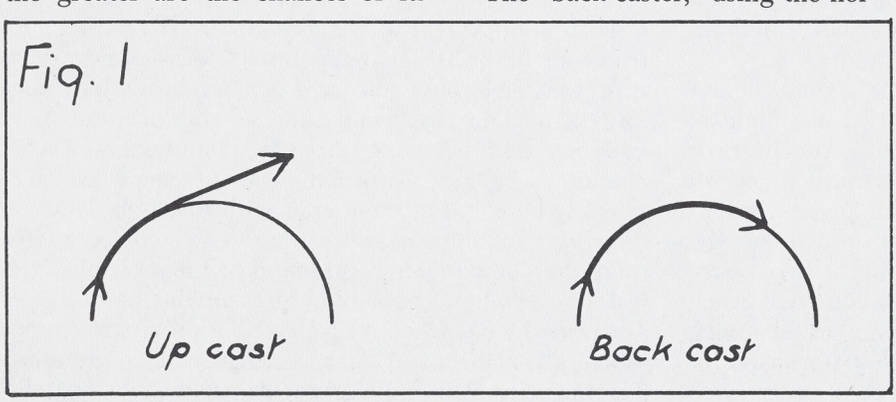
By
CHARLES RITZ

Most fly fishermen are "back-casters." To master HS/HL (High-Speed/High-Line) casting it is necessary to become an "up-caster." The faster and higher the line, the longer it stays high. Only a high back-cast (which should be re-named an up-cast) will deliver with ease a perfect forward cast with a light and delicate fly presentation, even at great speed. A perfect up-cast means a perfect forward cast.

When a fish is rising, the faster the fly reaches its target with an accurate and correct presentation, the greater are the chances of its being accepted. The faster the line travels, the more efficient it becomes in piercing the wind for long casting. A high speed, high line keeps the fly drier.

I have found HS/HL casting particularly effective on lochs, lakes and reservoirs. For instance, I have proved this many times on the Traun in Austria, when drift-fishing from a boat with very small dry flies. HS/HL casting made it possible to reach any rise up to sixty feet in from four to six seconds, using a good forward-tapered line.

The "back-caster," using the normal slow, smooth line pull may well achieve excellent fishing results. But I firmly believe that, if you can master the HS/HL technique, you will find it a tremendous advantage; you will remain relaxed even under difficult conditions (wind, obstacles, etc.) and you will derive great satisfaction and pleasure from it.



Diagrams illustrate differences between "up-cast" and ordinary, falling backcast. Throwing line back high and fast results in perfect forward cast.

"Squeeze-Zic-Block"

A high speed, high line can only be obtained by using a condensed, high-speed lift (*see fig. 2*). The entire muscle power transmitted through the hand must be started, accelerated, blocked and stopped between rod positions of 9:30 and 11:30, and arm positions of 10:00 and 11:00. I find the phrase "*Squeeze-Zic-Block*" helpful in describing the three phases of the operation, which I will explain in detail a little later. Suffice it for the moment to explain that "*Zic*," the total power zone, must be condensed between rod positions of approximately 10:00 and 11:30. This cannot be achieved unless the muscles from the hand to the shoulder are correctly used, and with split-second timing.

Some fly-fishers in the expert

An electronic temperature gauge and depth sounder aided Dalrymple and companion in making this mixed Aransas Bay catch.

through the hull of your boat. If you have a boat large enough to make this worthwhile, and are a good craftsman, you can do it yourself. Otherwise it is best to have a boat repair service place do a pro job. There are also sounders with portable transducers. These you simply let down over the side by hand, using the attached cable. Or, you fix a pipe to the boatside and mount the transducer temporarily in it so it points straight down. In my opinion, it is a good idea on a fair-sized boat for use in large lakes or in salt water, to have a hull-mounted transducer and a portable one also. The sounder unit itself can also be portable, so it may be hooked up to the hull-mounted transducer, but unplugged and carried off the boat when you are through fishing.

Ross Labs. makes a number of sounder models, for various purposes and at various prices. Others I have tested are: Danforth White, 192 Middle St., Portland, Maine; and Raytheon, 319 Roebling Road, South San Francisco. Both are excellent. There are many others. The average cost for a portable sounder will run from $125 to $150. They scale on up from there.

One other item of equipment in this general field I believe should be covered here is the two-way "pocket radio." Hide these from your youngsters, however, or you'll never get to use them! I have found a pair of these communicators extremely useful under various circumstances. On numerous occasions down on the Gulf two groups of us have gone out in two boats, hunting for schools of fish. A good "talkie" will reach out a couple of miles, and on open water much farther. To save batteries, we agree beforehand to synchronize our watches and to check in with each other every half hour, or every fifteen minutes— whatever one desires. The first one to find fish calls the other, and we all get in on the fun.

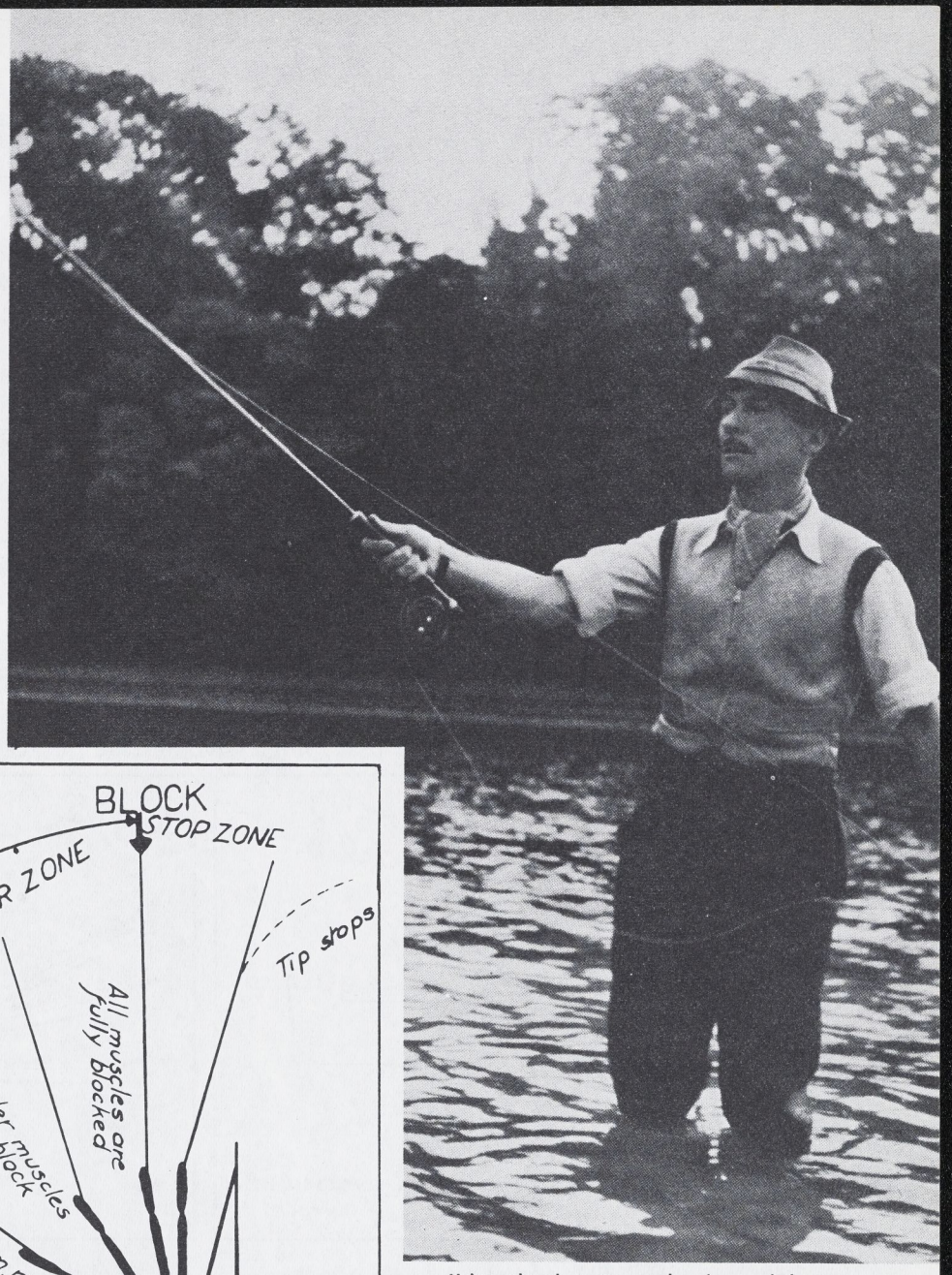
Last year we tried this on a large inland lake, while "jump fishing" for white bass – chasing big schools that surface to butcher shad minnows. By cruising around watching for surface action, and directing the other boat to the scene, we had a lot of fun and all caught more fish.

I have also tried the pocket radio on trout streams when fishing with a partner who was some distance away. On the Madison in Wyoming last year two of us were operating about a half mile apart when I found a tremendous number of mountain whitefish suddenly rising in a certain stretch. I checked in with my partner. No whitefish where he was. He worked on downstream, with me giving him a blow-by-blow account. He did not find any action on the way, but when he arrived the rise was still on and we had a barrel of fun. It does not take much imagination to dope out many other ways in which several fishermen working together may get good use out of these small radios.

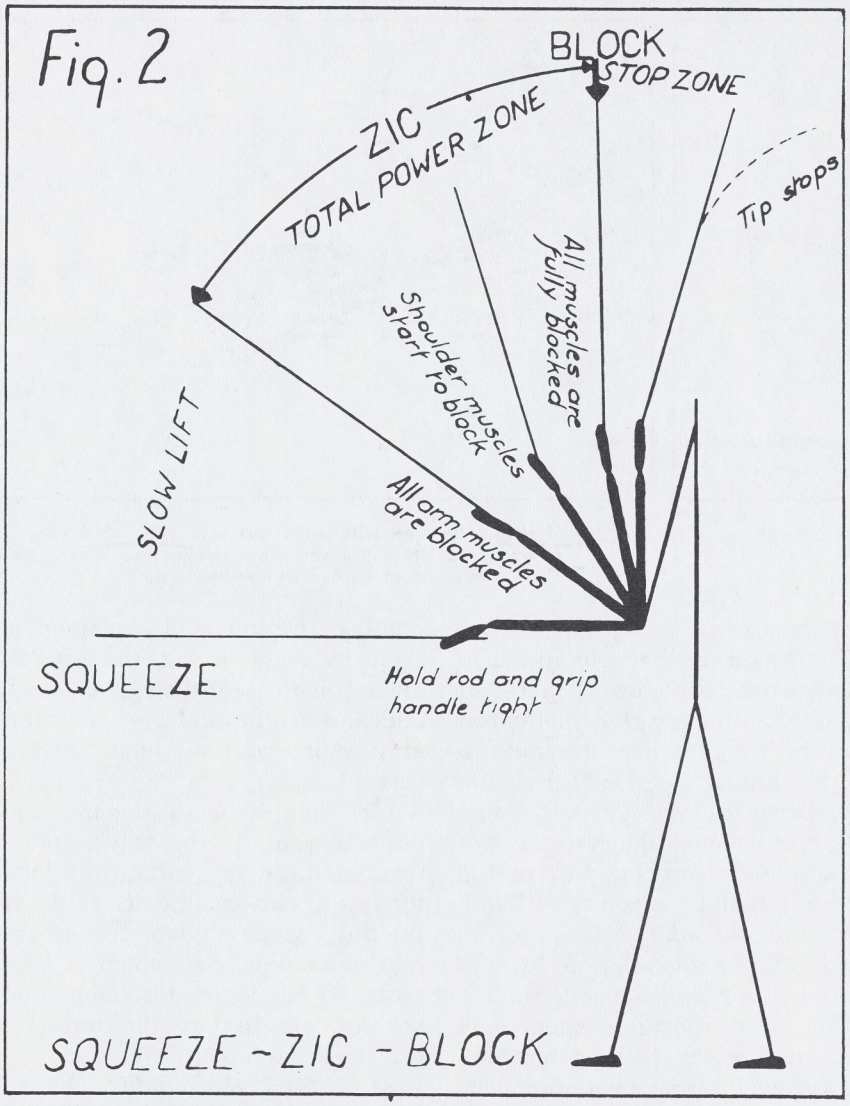
To sum up, this report is intended to show no magic tricks for filling the stringer. But it does hope to illustrate that electronics do have a place in modern angling. Especially by combining several of these new gadgets, that is, using them in conjunction, a vast amount of valuable information about where fish may possibly be is fed to the angler with dispatch. How he interprets his information undoubtedly will count for more than how much information he gleans. But in the last analysis, how expertly he presents his bait or lure, assuming he has located by electronics the precise spot where the fish are – that is what will count most. The majority of these instruments are useful, if intelligently operated. But none, happily, has yet released the sweet savor of gambling out of that heady brew we call fishing.

class perform the *"Squeeze-Zic-Block"* lift or pull subconsciously and cannot explain it with accuracy, because they are instinctive casters and have achieved mastership only after years of hard trial and practice. They succeeded because they were gifted and interested in their casting. They were not hypnotized when they saw a rising fish with the sole idea of catching it. Nearly every caster whom I asked to explain his wrist and forearm movement exactly was unable to do so.

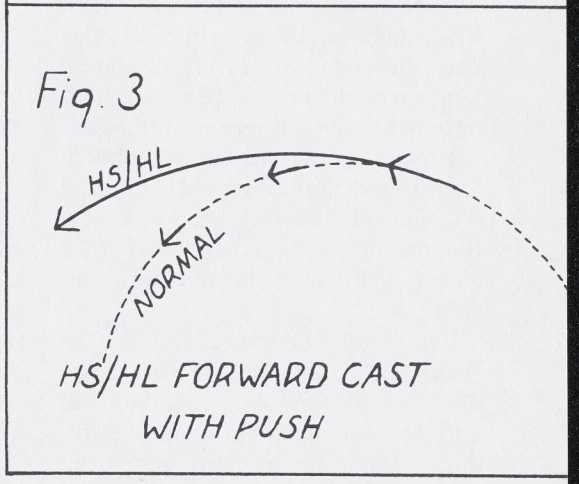
The only reason I am writing this article is because I fear that this HS/HL technique is generally unknown or, as far as I know, has not been explained in a simple and clear way. This I shall try to accomplish as I think it is really very



Using thumb-on-top rod grip, and keeping line properly taut with left hand, author Ritz effortlessly pumps out a long one.



The high speed/high line lift has three stages, Ritz-phrased as the *"Squeeze-Zic-Block"*. Proper rod grip, line lift and pause of rod put power, speed and height into backcast.



Rod tip should not describe an arc (normal) on forward cast or cast will be shortened with line "thrown" at water. Lift of elbow and rod "push" keeps line high, extends forward cast.

simple, whereas many fly-fishermen look at it as an almost unattainable perfection.

When teaching fly fishing (my great hobby) or giving demonstrations, I was usually told that my line had a very great speed. Even my best pupils, after several hours of tuition, were unable to obtain the real HS/HL. I could hold their hand and give them the exact feel of the movement and of the line speed; the moment I let it go the movement remained good but the line speed dropped to normal.

One day in despair I decided to try and find out the exact cause of this failure. It had very little to do with the casting movement. The cause was control of muscle use and timing. Last year, after checking with several of the greatest fly-casters in the world and also carrying out a series of tests with beginners, I had the precise explanation of my numerous failures.

Previously, I had never concentrated my thoughts and attention on the transmission of power by the muscles, and when each muscle had to start to perform and stop.

The common movement is the "back-cast," and this is the cause of most of the trouble beginners and normal casters run into. It induces them to flick the rod back and forth without any defined "power zone," obtaining only a low-line with too much drop.

Muscle power control has very seldom been mentioned in casting chapters. Without its knowledge, it is impossible to concentrate the muscle power into that part of the lift when the rod tip is continuing to go up, thus placing the line on the ideal rear height and angle for HS/HL. Power and speed lose all their efficiency the moment the rod movement stops going up.

Now here is what happens when casting *without* muscle control knowledge; holding the rod in the correct starting position we lift the rod tip up and back following a circular trajectory from say 9:00 o'clock to 2:00. As we start to lift we also start to increase our grip on the rod handle. Start of muscle control and arm movement are simultaneous. Automatically the rod grip is progressive instead of instantaneous.

The result is that the rod grip (or squeeze) becomes 100 per cent tight only after the start of the rod movement and when the rod tip has reached almost 11:00. It is too late, because from the very start of the movement the rod was not an absolutely integral part of the human casting machine (hand, arm and shoulder). Because all power transmission has to be delivered with split-second timing, within a very short movement, only blocked muscles will prevent the "power zone" from overlapping its exact limits. For an infinite fraction of a second there is rod wobble (like a machine with a loose bearing). The result is:

1. Loss of power and speed transmitted to the line.

2. A tendency for power transmission to extend beyond the correct stop limit of 11.30: the rod drops too low, thus causing the very common low back line.

This does not mean that you have made a bad cast and were unable to present a tempting fly. No . . . but you have not obtained the ideal, controlled casting with HS/HL performance.

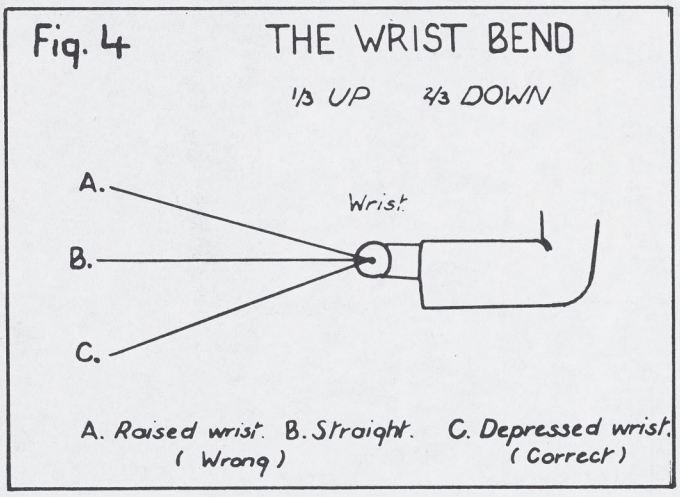
You brought your forearm to the vertical or beyond instead of to 11:00, to compensate for the delay in bringing in the power.

The Squeeze

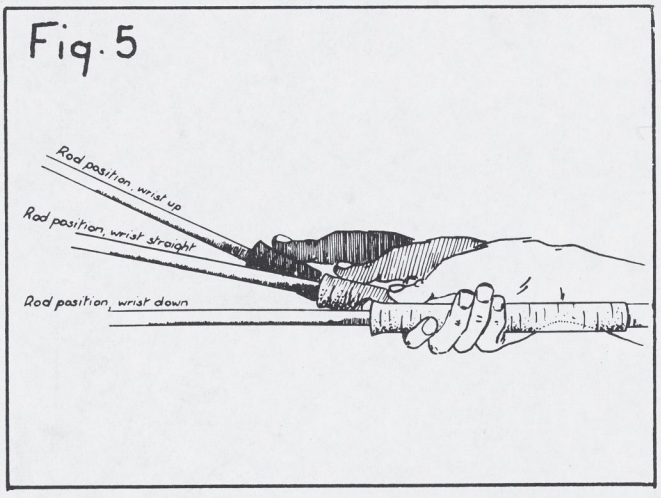
The most important thing is the exact moment of the squeeze (grip on the rod). I can assure you that when, in teaching casting to old hands or beginners, I explained to them its exact timing, they almost always increased their line speed and line height, and also considerably improved their final forward cast.

I no longer heard the old and popular song: "Oh, why can't I straighten out my line on the final forward cast?—maybe its fault of the rod!" Many anglers, if they are told of another rod which is supposed to eliminate this failure, do not hesitate to buy the rod and waste good money.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SQUEEZE THE ROD HANDLE TIGHT BEFORE YOU START TO MOVE THE ROD UPWARDS. Here are the various stages of the



Proper wrist bend (C) at start of line lift makes it possible to get full power into backcast.



Rod should be held with wrist down at start of line lift, moved to straight position as rod goes up. Cast should not be started with rod-wrist up.

HS/HL lift:

Squeeze: 1. Tighten your squeeze on the rod handle to a maximum; this will then bring your arm muscles into play as well.

Zic: 2. Lift the rod slowly with the forearm (wrist down) until the line is straight and moving (approx. 10:00). Here comes the power thrust of the rod when wrist and forearm go into action together to tear the line off the water. If done correctly the fly will zip off the water at high speed.

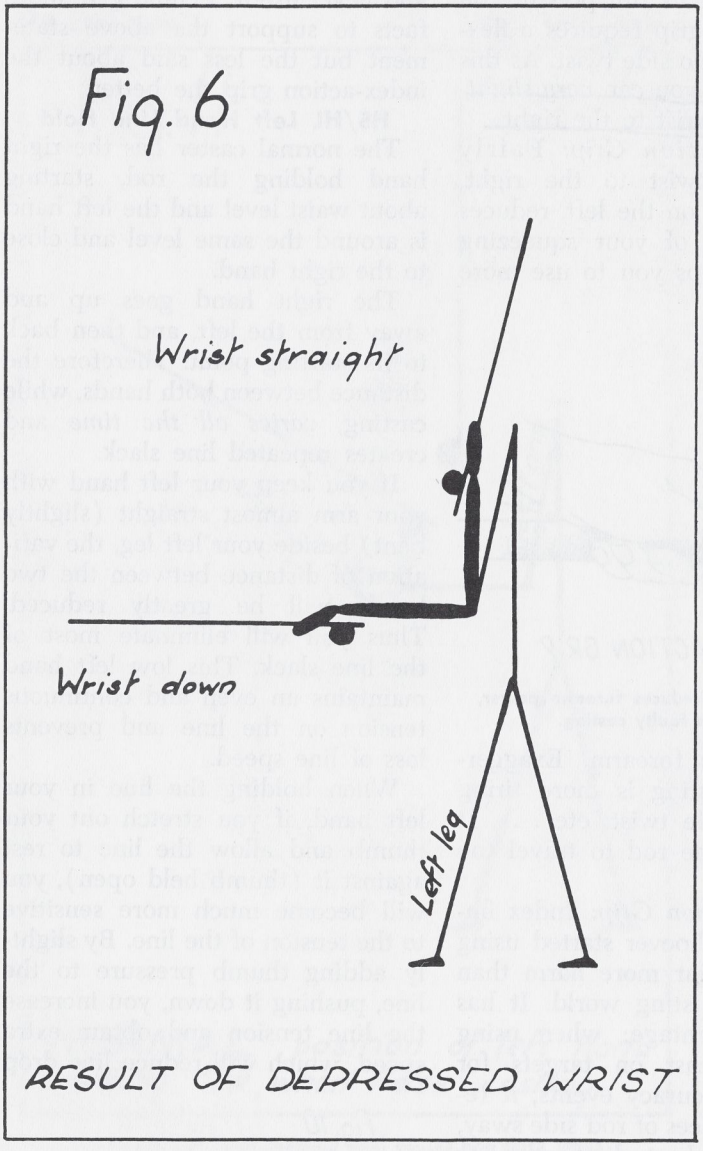
Block: 3. Almost simultaneously with the power thrust tense all the muscles of the upper arm and shoulder. *This will block and stabilize the elbow pivot* and stop the rod dead, preventing it from prolonging the power zone. If the shoulder muscles are used correctly, a jerk will be felt on *the muscles of the back* extending from shoulder down your back right side; when you have learned the HS/HL wet fly lift your false casting will increase in speed and rear height.

Only in this way can you pack so much power and speed into a split second, and obtain so suddenly a perfect and total stop of the rod. The rod will then only form its natural bend when the line starts to pull it back. This perfect stop produces the ideal narrow loop.

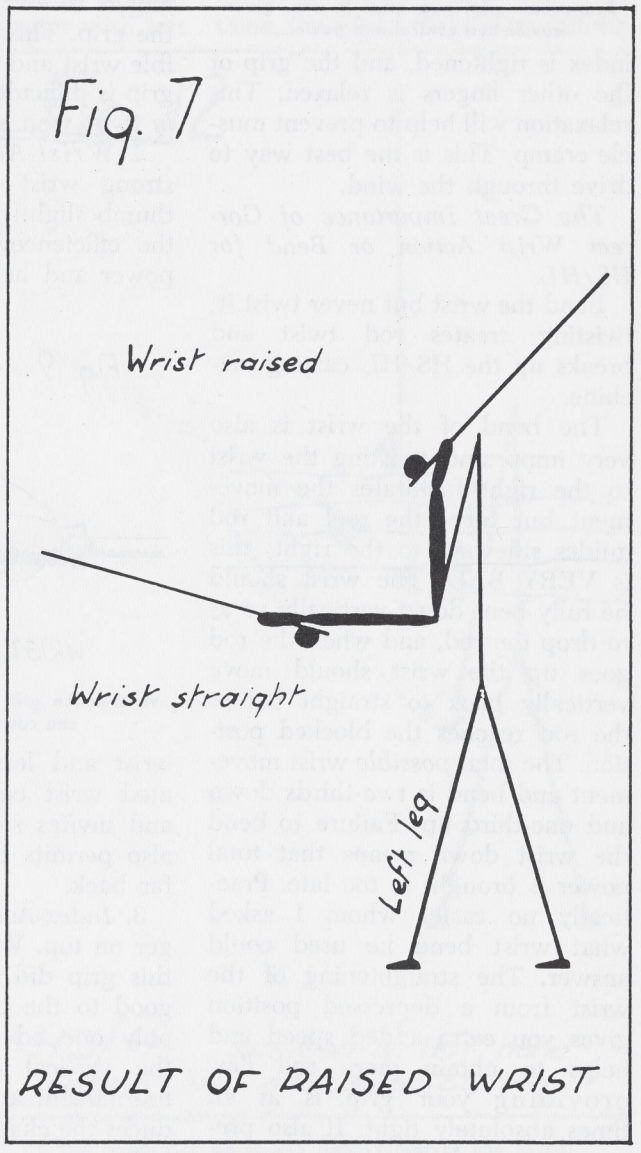
Forward Cast

As soon as you begin to feel the pull of the line on the rod tip, put in the forward power push. If the back power pull has been made correctly, the forward line extension will be well above horizontal and will require only about half the effort involved in the up-cast pull; this forward power stroke will also be smooth.

The movement of the rod tip must not describe an arc. It starts with an arc, then from the vertical the tip is pushed slightly forward (horizontally) by lifting the elbow a little; this lift of elbow is invisible when casting (this lengthens your forward drive and delays the lowering of the rod point.) Finally it goes down under wrist and forearm power (not just wrist), using arm-action grip, hand and forearm moving slightly forward. At this moment the grip of the thumb and

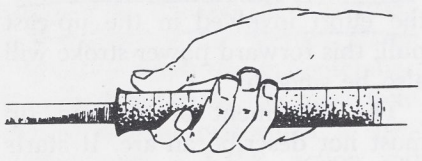


Wrist down, then straight, aids "blocking" as rod reaches vertical and line goes up and back.



Wrong start with wrist straight causes wrist to "break" and rod may pass far beyond vertical, causing backcast to lose speed and drop.

Fig. 8



ARM ACTION GRIP

Arm-action grip, two grips in one, gives caster best control and power.

index is tightened, and the grip of the other fingers is relaxed. This relaxation will help to prevent muscle cramp. This is the best way to drive through the wind.

The Great Importance of Correct Wrist Action or Bend for HS/HL:

Bend the wrist but never twist it; twisting creates rod twist and breaks up the HS/HL casting machine.

The bend of the wrist is also very important; twisting the wrist to the right facilitates the movement but turns the reel and rod guides sideways to the right; this is VERY BAD. The wrist should be fully bent down vertically so as to drop the rod, and when the rod goes up the wrist should move vertically back to straight before the rod reaches the blocked position. The total *possible* wrist movement and bend is two-thirds down and one-third up. Failure to bend the wrist down means that total power is brought in too late. Practically no caster whom I asked what wrist bend he used could answer. The straightening of the wrist from a depressed position gives you extra added speed and helps to obtain more rod flex, providing your grip is at all times absolutely tight. It also prevents too much use of the forearm. It is most important that you check your wrist bend, and find out exactly what you are doing. Twist of wrist forces the rod tip to deviate too much sideways.

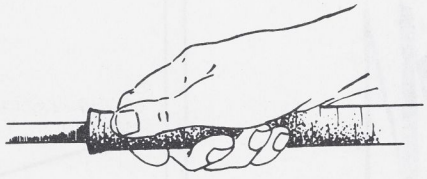
Grip Of the Rod

There are three possible grips:

1. *Arm-Action Grip:* the only one to use for HS/HL because it allows the hand to give you two different grips, together or separately: the "last-three-fingers grip," which fastens the rod to your arm, and the "thumb-on-top-and-index grip," which controls the rod. These two grips together give you the best control. Thumb on top of the butt, wrist working at all times so that the flat of the reel always moves in the same plane as the rod — this is proof that your casting machine is working correctly. Arm-Action Grip allows each of the five fingers to exert its full pressure on the grip. This grip requires a flexible wrist and no side twist. As this grip is difficult you can *very slightly* twist your wrist to the right.

2. *Wrist-Action Grip:* Fairly strong wrist twist to the right, thumb slightly on the left, reduces the efficiencey of your squeezing power and helps you to use more

Fig. 9



WRIST ACTION GRIP

Wrist-action grip reduces forearm power, can cause faulty casting.

wrist and less forearm. Exaggerated wrist casting is more tiring and invites side twist, etc . . . It also permits the rod to travel too far back.

3. *Index-Action Grip:* Index finger on top. Whoever started using this grip did far more harm than good to the casting world. It has only one advantage: when using the vertical cast on targets for tournament accuracy events, it reduces the chances of rod side sway, but only for short distances. For fishing it has little value. Index casters will never obtain HS/HL and become complete casters. This position gives you the weakest rod grip and requires three times longer to develop one. None of the tournament accuracy casters, who are in the 100 per cent class, use the Index-Action Grip.

(At the International Casting Federation's World Championship and the German National 1963 Casting Tournament in NURNBERG, all the Swiss casters, for fly accuracy events, used the *index grip*. But only arm-action grip casters took all the first places.

Jon Tarantino, with the HS/HL, once more won the World Championship).

Pierre Creusevaut, Jon Tarantino, Ben Fontaine and Frank Sawyer join me in disapproval of it and never use it. I could give more facts to support the above statement but the less said about the index-action grip the better.

HS/HL Left Hand Line Hold

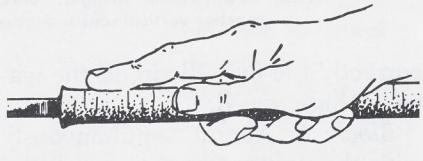
The normal caster has the right hand holding the rod, starting about waist level and the left hand is around the same level and close to the right hand.

The right hand goes up and away from the left, and then back to its starting point. Therefore the distance between both hands, while casting, *varies all the time* and creates repeated line slack.

If you keep your left hand with your arm almost straight (slightly bent) beside your left leg, the variation of distance between the two hands will be greatly reduced. Thus you will eliminate most of the line slack. This low left hand maintains an even and continuous tension on the line and prevents loss of line speed.

When holding the line in your left hand, if you stretch out your thumb and allow the line to rest against it (thumb held open), you will become much more sensitive to the tension of the line. By slightly adding thumb pressure to the line, pushing it down, you increase the line tension and obtain extra speed, which will reduce line drop

Fig. 10



INDEX ACTION GRIP

Sometimes used in casting short, tournament accuracy events, index-action grip is of little use in fishing.

behind. This left hand position, in my opinion, is most important.

How to add speed to the up-cast, besides obtaining it from muscle control:

1. Start up-cast with wrist bent down.

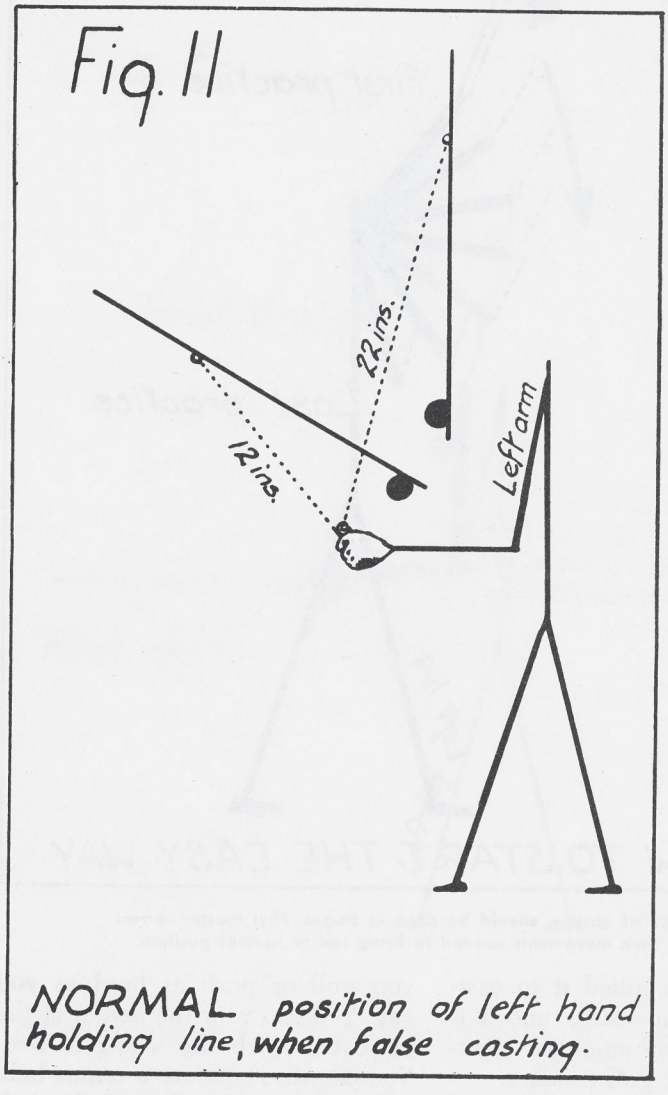
2. Hold the line tight at all times with the low left hand, even adding at times very slight left hand thumb pull on the line.

How to start learning HS/HL the easy way:

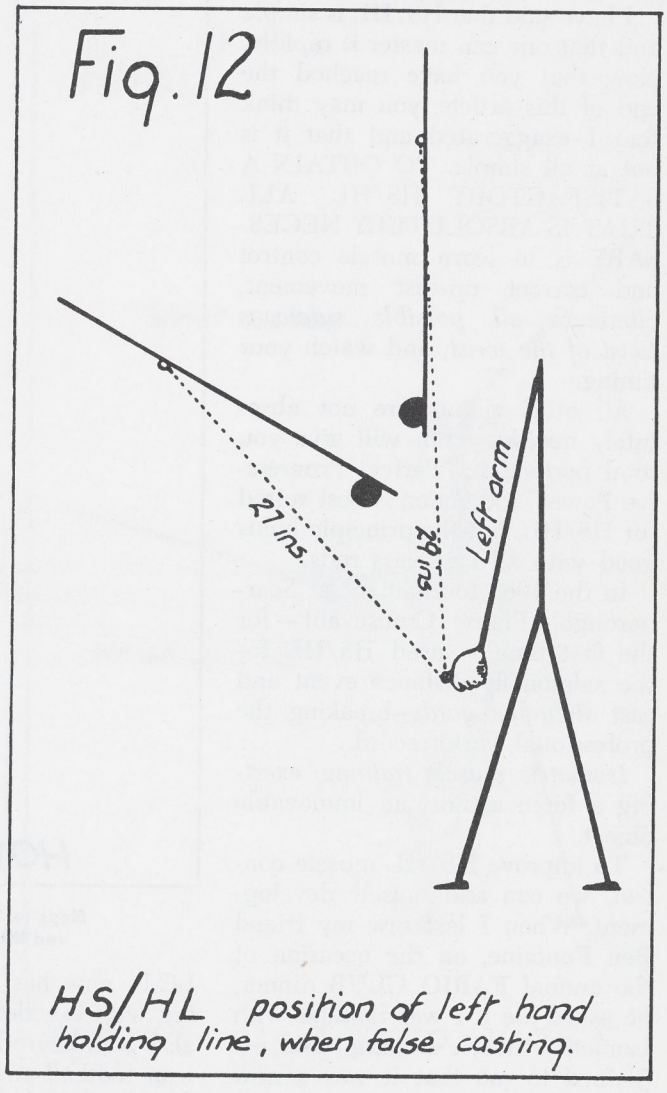
Instead of using the normal arm position you will up-cast, using full sky cast movement, raising your arm as high as your head and with an almost stiff wrist and forearm, using HS/HL muscle control. Keep your left hand in your pocket and hold the line in your right hand. When you have started to master this upraised arm movement properly and are able to up-cast and reach over fifty feet with ease, confidence and regularity, and also have the correct feel of the rod and line, then start in various stages to shorten your arm movement until you come back to the normal position. I would say this would require ten half-hours of practice, each time holding your arm a little lower, and trying a few false casts at each position. The next step is to wet fly cast straight back and down on water with left hand holding the line: (this is an essential step before trying to false cast as it will develop correct timing and rhythm) and finally false casting with left hand holding the line. I also suggest that you practice *low left hand line hold* (concentrating one practice on it) to get used to keeping your left hand low and prevent it from instinctively going up.

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE UP-CAST LINE HEIGHT AND SPEED. DON'T LOOK IN FRONT, ONLY LOOK BEHIND.

I have discussed HS/HL technique many times with Pierre Creusevaut, professional World Champion, John Tarantino, amateur World Champion (and probably today's greatest and most complete caster), and Ben Fontaine, President of the International Casting Federation. We all came to the same conclusion: HS/HL is the ideal and perfection in fly casting. I finally decided to try to describe HS/HL technique after taking slow-motion pictures of Tarantino casting at the World Championships in ZURICH in 1960. (I realized then that he was using HS/HL technique adapted to tournament casting). However, I



Elevated left hand (holding line) causes line slack when false casting, some loss of speed and power.



Low hand hold keeps line tight, conserves line speed.

wanted to find out how he would cast when fishing, so I took him to the River Risle in Normandy, where I have fished for over twenty-five years on Mr. Vernes' water.

It was a windy day in September. I made Jon fish in the most difficult spots. He performed to perfection with a P.P.P. action rod and a light forward-tapered line; and I had absolute proof that he was using the HS/HL technique.

Conclusion

I have said that HS/HL is simple and that one can master it rapidly. Now that you have reached the end of this article, you may think that I exaggerated and that it is not at all simple. TO OBTAIN A SATISFACTORY HS/HL, ALL THAT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY is to learn muscle control and correct up-cast movement, *eliminate all possible sideways twist of the wrist,* and watch your timing.

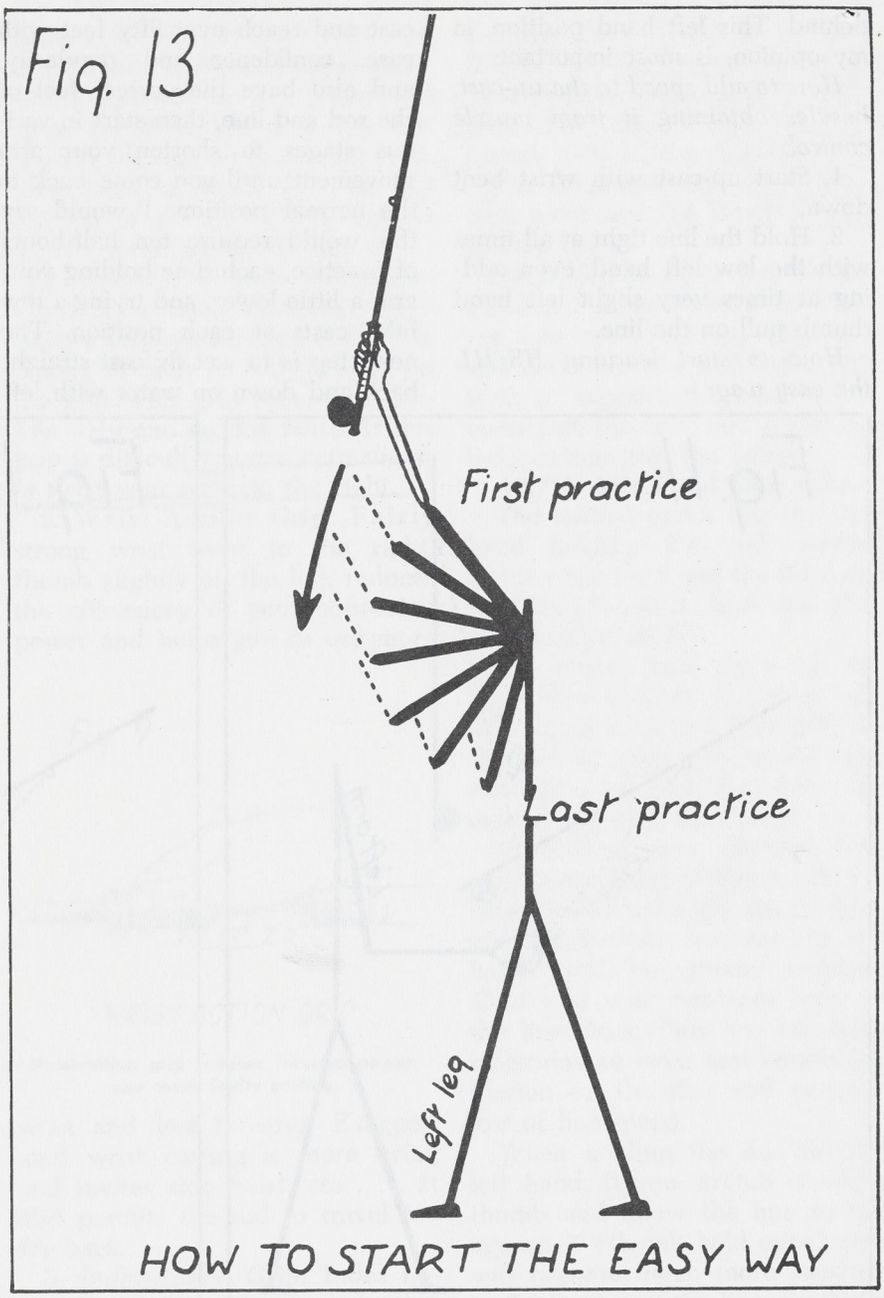
All other points are not absolutely necessary but will give you total perfection. "Perfect Progressive Power" rod action is best suited for HS/HL, but the principle holds good with all first-class rods.

In the 1963 tournament at Scarborough, Pierre Creusevaut — for the first time — used HS/HL for the salmon fly distance event and cast *sixty-five yards*—breaking the professional world record.

Isometric muscle training: exerting a force against an immovable object.

To improve HS/HL muscle control, we can add muscle development. When I last saw my friend Ben Fontaine, on the occasion of the annual FARIO CLUB dinner, he asked me if I was familiar with Isometric muscle training, and explained to me that it was a new method being used in America to train athletes and increase their muscle efficiency and muscle memory.

He claims that muscles trained by the Isometric Method have a tendency to perform automatically at the right moment. To obtain 100 per cent efficiency, you must contract your muscles to the maximum, which forces them to work and perform beyond what they are used to doing. He said that the I.C.F. now has applied it to casting with excellent results, and it is also popular today amongst American football and golf coaches.



Steps to HS/HL casting should be done in stages. First master correct rod lift, then movements needed to bring rod to normal position.

The method used for aid in casting is extremely simple: you take a stick, tie a piece of string to the end of it and fasten the string to a hook in the wall at approximately the height of your eye. Every day for six seconds and six times you exercise the lift cast and also the forward cast, facing the wall and then with your back to it. For six seconds you hold your stick as tight as possible, you contract all your muscles to the maximum and you pull or push as hard as you can. You can vary the height of the hook to which the string is tied. You can also squeeze a tennis ball, pushing your thumb into the ball as deeply as possible and holding it there for six seconds to develop the thumb and index grip.

I leave it to you to decide whether the opinions of world casting champions on the HS/HL technique is worth considering. I hope that I have been able to help my friends of the fly fishing world. My greatest reward will be to discover that many of you have become HS/HL casters.

A well-known casting instructor offers some tips on how to keep your line and leader from colliding in mid-cast

Tame Those Tailing Loops!

LEFTY KREH

DRAWINGS BY BARBARA LEWIS

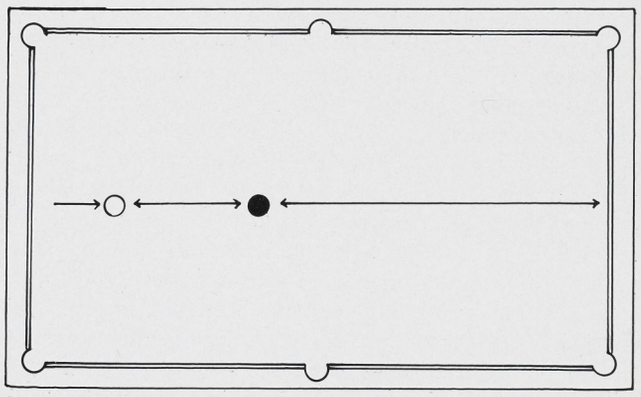
WIND KNOTS ARE SELDOM CAUSED BY THE WIND. More often, the fly-caster is doing the wind's job for it—by throwing a "tailing loop."

The tailing loop results in a poor presentation—at best—and, more commonly, in a fly hung up on the leader or on the line itself. What happened? The line-leader combination "ran into itself" at the end of the cast.

In conducting various casting clinics over the years, as well as acting as an informal casting coach for thousands of anglers—not all of them beginners—I've isolated at least *seven basic reasons* why a leader crashes into itself or into the line at the end of a cast. And almost all of these problems stem from an improperly applied power stroke. When the seemingly obvious, and really very simple, dynamics of this forward power thrust are understood, an angler can usually correct his own faults without personal instruction.

To understand the basic problem, let's change the scene for a moment and step up to the billiard table, wondering all the while what the heck *this* has to do with casting. No, I'm not recommending that you give up fly-fishing for the pool hall—just be a believer for a moment. We chalk up our cue—like we dress our floating line—than sight in the white cue ball on that elusive and solitary eight-ball that we're temporarily "behind." We make our shot—the cue ball strikes the target eight-ball head-on and drives it *straight ahead.* The eight-ball moves forward as the cue ball stops dead, strikes the cushion, returns, and, if we're right on, strikes the cue ball itself in a gentle "kiss," as the experts call it.

But—in fly-casting, this can be the "kiss of death". For that particular billiard shot, we *wanted* the eight-ball to move forward in a straight line, bounce off the cushion and return in the same straight line to strike the cue ball. But in making our forward cast of the line, leader and fly, this is the *last* thing we want but too often the *first* thing we do wrong.



Let's look at our cast again. The line is straight out on the water in front of us. We make our line pickup directly up and over our head, then start our forward cast at the proper time, bringing it back overhead in the same "line of flight" as our backcast. Looks good on paper, but only luck—or a modification of your "picture-book" technique—can ward off disaster.

For what we're doing is directing our *forward stroke in the same plane as our backcast.* Seen from directly above, our line-pickup from the water becomes the initial strike of the cue ball. As we start our forward cast, as in the case of the head-on strike of the cue ball against the eight-ball, the rod-end of our fly line starts to move straight ahead. And, just as the eight-ball bounced off the cushion and began its reverse return, so does the business end of our line-leader-and-fly combination begin its "return" toward the target ahead.

And nine times out of ten, using our "straight-forward approach," the leader and the line *collide* in the classic and frustrating "hang-up" which all of us have experienced at one time or another.

Of course, the problem is obvious, the solution a bit less so, but we can do something about that rather

Fly-fishing requires a better knowledge of the trout's environment, and more respect for it. But should we require all fishermen to fish this way?

request for fly-fishing-only on some stream or streams in Montana." Good grief, why? Because Montanans are cussed individualists and resist restrictions? Bud Lilly, high priest of catch-and-release, is a Montanan. But he knows, bluntly, that if you take them out they will not be there; if you kill the big fish you will have no big fish.

One old Montana guide boasted to me of having stacked four- and five-pound trout from the Madison in carts like cordwood forty years ago. There are still four- and five-pound trout in the Madison, but friends of mine who have fished it for twenty-five years say there are far fewer today; next year there will be fewer still, especially if people keep extracting the best of them — when they are most vulnerable — on live salmon flies. Then no one will have anything.

Montana, like any thoughtful state, is first concerned with habitat. Whitney says, rightly, that his state is chiefly vigilant that they "can save enough habitat so that our grandchildren will still be able to catch wild trout." Of course. This must take precedence over all other actions. But most fish and game departments respond in other respects directly to the will of the fishermen. If enough fishermen *want* fly-fishing-only, and big wild trout instead of ten-inch hatchery-catchables, the fish and game departments will comply. Not enough of us realize that this is what we want nor have we made our will known on this issue — and the cost and effort of it is minimal. It is not a question of habitat *or* restrictions; we imperatively need both.

THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE debate, in FLY FISHERMAN and elsewhere, about whether a river really profits from no-kill regulations. The argument includes statistics on stunted growth, damaged fish, and natural death (which could have provided food for someone). The single problem with the no-kill section of the Beaverkill is not that there are a few damaged fish but that it is *too popular*. One doesn't have to be a fisheries biologist, and I'm not one, to see this. Too many fly fishermen want to fish quality water with big fish. (I rarely fish that section of the Beaverkill any more simply because it's too crowded and I like solitude.) The only solution is to make more of it.

The Amawalk River provided splendid fishing when it was no-kill. The trophy-fishing regulations did not prevent stunted growth as they set out to do, they (and poaching) destroyed the little river. Rivers will regulate themselves; let hungry fish vacation in the reservoir into which the Amawalk flows, let natural attrition thin populations. Many years ago, when smallmouths inundated the lower Schoharie, Art Flick arranged with the conservation department to catch them out (with the help of some friends), put them in live-boxes, and stock them in nearby lakes. Couldn't this be done, under supervision, in those few places where stunting actually occurred?

WHAT DO I RECOMMEND? I would say: "Let's have more fly-only no-kill *now*. Let's put another thousand miles of river under such regulations as soon as possible. Let's have more quality fishing and not dicker with this any longer." We could start by putting a portion of *every trout river in America* under such regulations. The least result would be more big wild fish for the entire river. People can fish in that section or not, as they choose; I suspect fly fishermen will flock to it, and soon demand even more.

We haven't got time. The rivers and their bounty continue to shrink. Hand in hand with every move to improve and protect the habitat for trout in America, we, the fly fishermen, must boldly demand our *right* to fish over wild, respectable trout.

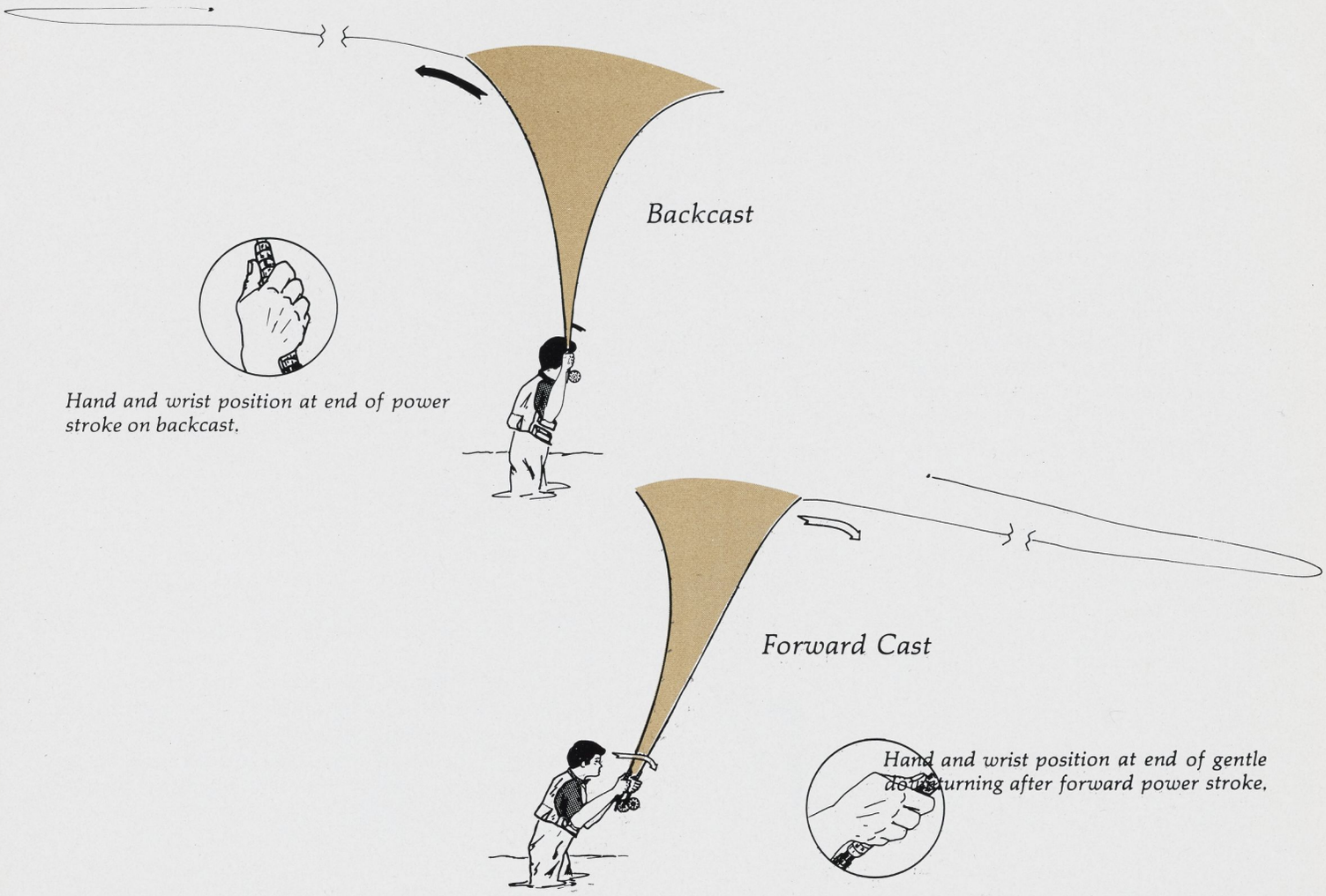
But while we are shouting, even before one more regulation goes into effect, we must also stop killing. Even if every one around us is taking fish, even if our "reputations" and pride demand that we bring some back, we must restrict ourselves. It's also contagious. Watch the effect on others when you release a big fish and say, simply, "I don't keep them anymore." Maybe it will even spread to bass fishing and to salt water, where I recently witnessed what will be the systematic destruction of sailfish on live bait suspended from a kite: the method — with the line *above* the water and the bait skittering at the surface — is too deadly, and only occasionally can these magnificent gamefish be released when hooked on a rig that usually yanks their gullets out.

I was discussing all this with Phil Wright, who pushes catch-and-release on the rivers he floats, and he turned to me and said bluntly: "If every time you made love to a girl you killed her, what would happen? Soon you would have no more love."

It's a sobering thought.

And though no-kill may be the salvation of chronic liars, it is also a must if we are to achieve quality fishing. Start yourself. All great movements begin with individuals. Start by exercising your *right* to promote quality fishing. Release your trout, particularly the large ones. Encourage your friends to release theirs. Then let's tell the fish and game departments what we really want.

In effect, Joe's friend's fishing destroys ours; ours will only improve his. And who knows, maybe he'll be converted to fly-fishing before too long. It's happened before. I know. And such conversions could even start a new tradition.



easily. With one segment of the line traveling in one direction — and in the same plane as the other segment of line that was traveling in the opposite direction — the laws of geometry and common sense took over. The two sections of line met in mid-air, with the inevitable result. I don't know what *you* call it, but I've cleaned it up a bit. I call it the "tailing loop," and let's get rid of it!

ONLY BY SEPARATING the planes that the forward and backward casts make as they slice through the air can you prevent the leader and line from running into themselves. This can be done by a *simple modification of your forward and backward power strokes.*

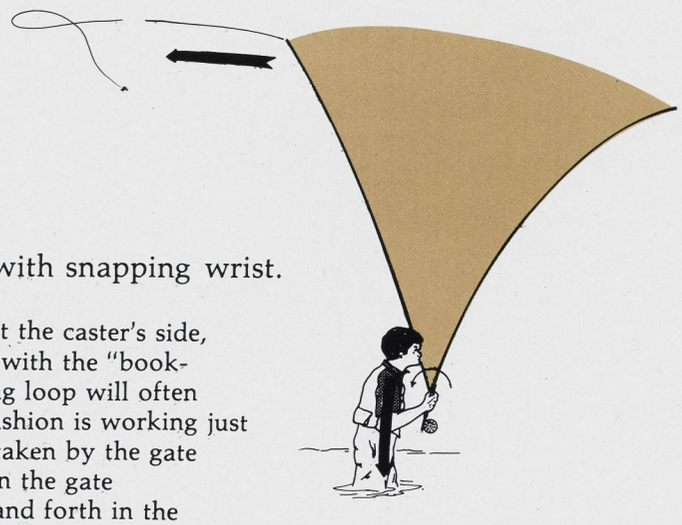
So — let's begin by taking a look at the way in which a correct power stroke is made. Then, with the visual help of an artist friend of mine, I'll try to illustrate each of the seven common causes of tailing loops and demonstrate how they can be corrected. (With typical artist's license, my illustrator has given the caster *two* right arms to demonstrate more clearly the hand and arm positions during the casts.)

If you study the drawings of the correct backward and forward strokes, you'll see that the thumb and wrist do not travel to the rear beyond the point shown in the drawing of the backcast. Note also that the elbow has been elevated a few inches as the rod travels backward.

On the forward cast, the angler drops his elbow slightly (it need be only two or three inches) and, as he comes forward, the shoulders will drop, too, helping to separate the paths taken by the line.

At the end of the forward power stroke, the wrist is straight and the thumb is pointing upward. At the absolute instant the power stroke is finished, the thumb and knuckles should be gently tilted slightly downward. This motion drops the rod and lower portion of the loop slightly, so that the upper portion of the loop coming forward misses it. If the thumb and knuckles are tilted downward too far, or with any force, the loop will open too wide (remember, you want the rod hand to turn slightly down without any power or thrust).

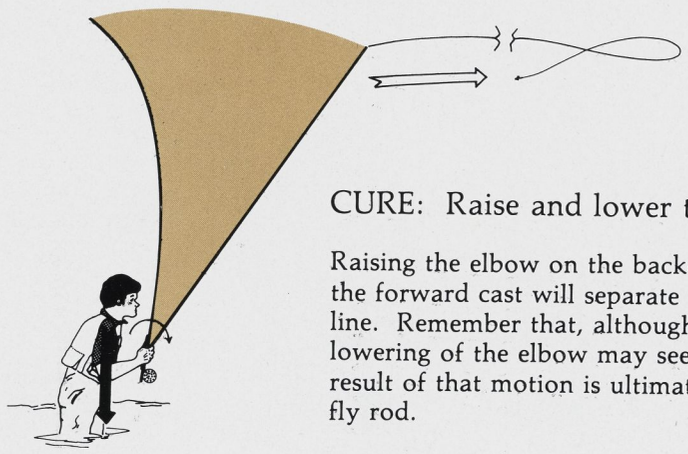
With a basic understanding of the correct procedure, let's look at seven common causes of tailing loops, and the ways in which these faults can be cured.



Fault 1

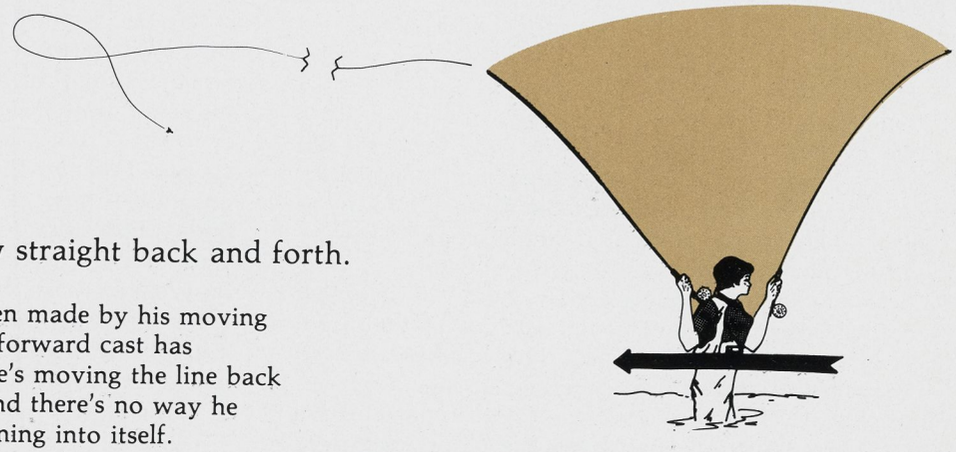
FAULT: Stationary elbow with snapping wrist.

If the elbow is kept locked against the caster's side, as so many old-timers advocated with the "book-under-the-arm" technique, a tailing loop will often occur. A person casting in that fashion is working just like a gate on a hinge—the path taken by the gate as it opens is the same taken when the gate closes. The line will travel back and forth in the same plane and strike itself.



CURE: Raise and lower the elbow.

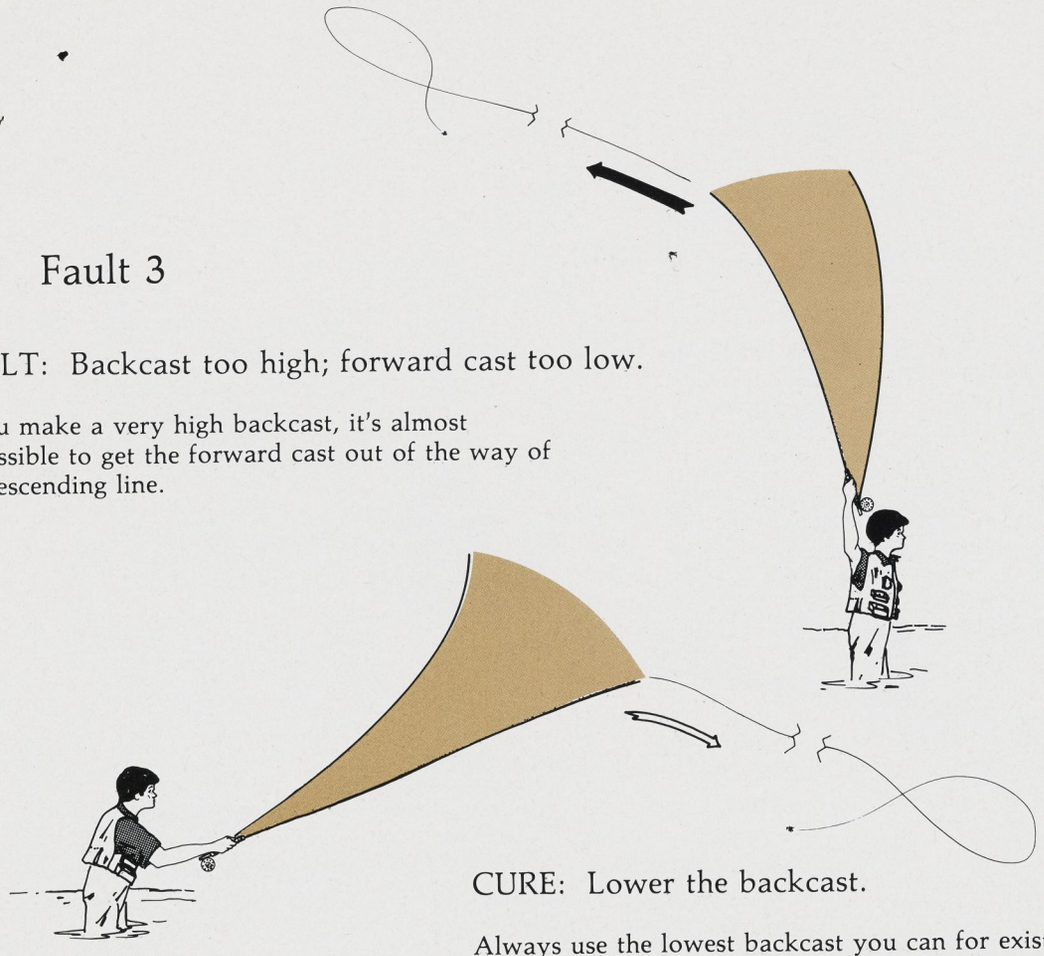
Raising the elbow on the backcast and lowering it on the forward cast will separate the paths taken by the line. Remember that, although a slight raising or lowering of the elbow may seem insignificant, the net result of that motion is ultimately magnified by a long fly rod.



Fault 2

FAULT: Carrying elbow straight back and forth.

This angler's backcast has been made by his moving his elbow straight back. His forward cast has been made straight ahead. He's moving the line back and forth in a straight line, and there's no way he can prevent the line from running into itself.



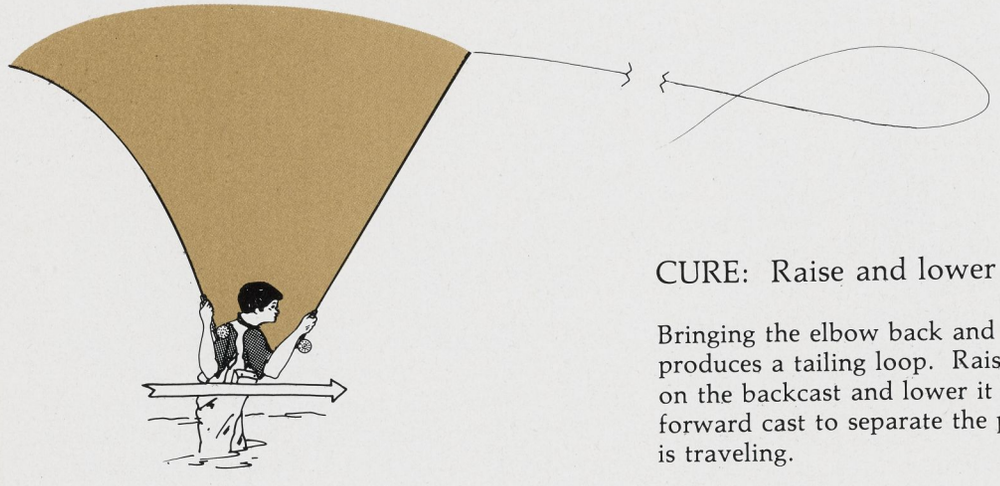
Fault 3

FAULT: Backcast too high; forward cast too low.

If you make a very high backcast, it's almost impossible to get the forward cast out of the way of the descending line.

CURE: Lower the backcast.

Always use the lowest backcast you can for existing fishing conditions. If you are forced to make a high backcast, concentrate on bringing the *lower* portion of the line under the *upper* section on the forward power stroke in order to separate the paths taken by dropping the line. This can often be accomplished by dropping the elbow more than normal as you bring the rod forward.



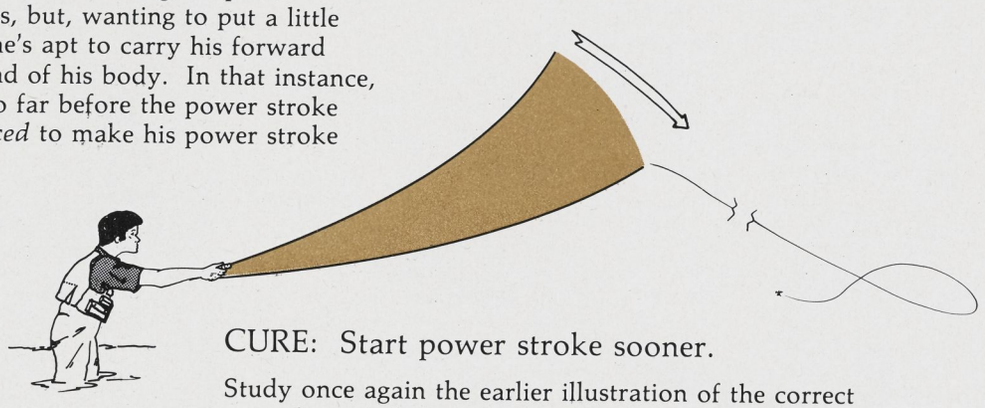
CURE: Raise and lower the elbow.

Bringing the elbow back and forth in a straight line produces a tailing loop. Raise the elbow slightly on the backcast and lower it slightly on the forward cast to separate the planes in which the line is traveling.

Fault 4

FAULT: Forward power stroke started too late.

Whenever an angler tells me that he doesn't have tailing-loop problems during false-casting, but may have one on his final delivery, I'm almost certain what his problem is. He will make good power strokes as he false casts, but, wanting to put a little extra in the delivery, he's apt to carry his forward hand-motion well ahead of his body. In that instance, the rod comes down so far before the power stroke is begun that he is *forced* to make his power stroke straight ahead.



CURE: Start power stroke sooner.

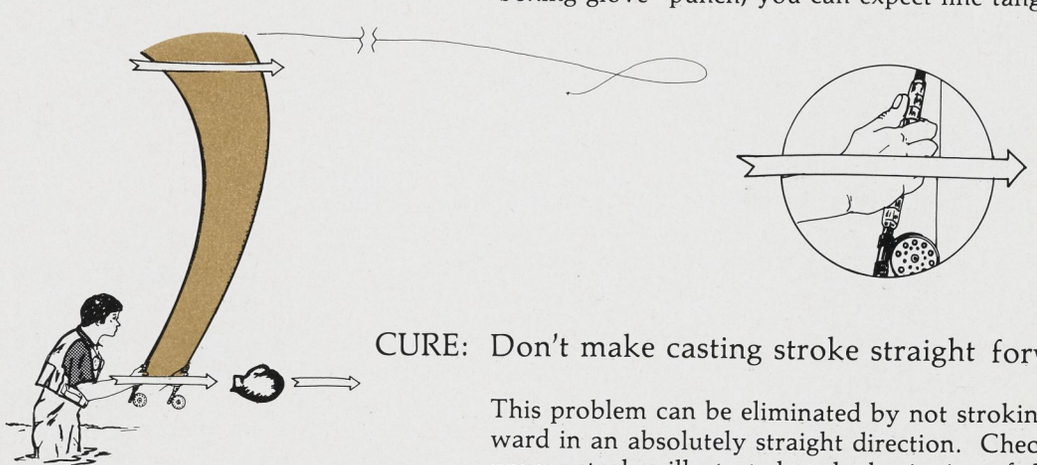
Study once again the earlier illustration of the correct procedure. When casting, you should be looking at the target, and making the forward power stroke as soon as your rod hand can be seen within your peripheral (side) vision.

Fault 5

FAULT: Punching the cast.

This is perhaps the most common fault of anglers who get a tailing loop. The fisherman who makes a power stroke directly forward radically increases his chances of a line-leader collision.

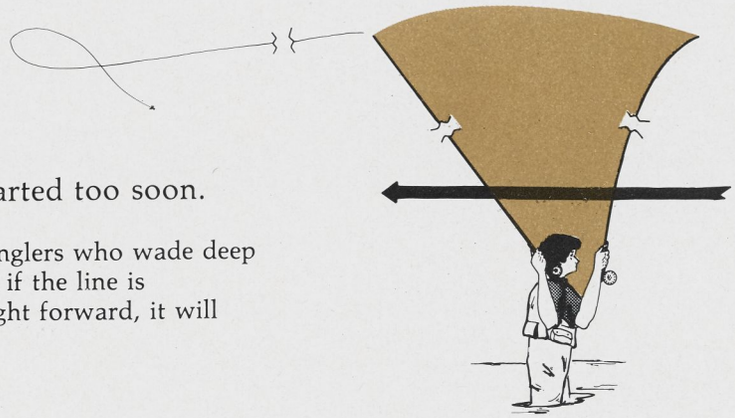
Remember that all backcasts, no matter how fast they travel, are like bullets fired from a gun—they begin falling immediately. Whey your backcast is falling and you come forward with a straight "boxing-glove" punch, you can expect line tangles.



CURE: Don't make casting stroke straight forward.

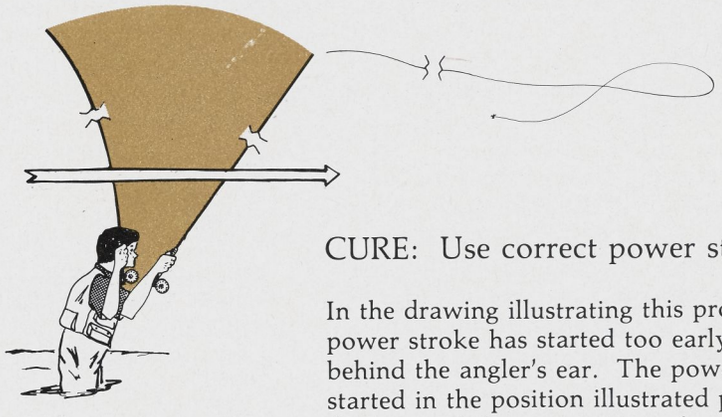
This problem can be eliminated by not stroking forward in an absolutely straight direction. Check the proper strokes illustrated at the beginning of the article, and remember to end your forward power stroke with a slight down-turning of the rod hand.

Fault 6



FAULT: Power stroke started too soon.

This is a common fault with anglers who wade deep and throw a long line. Again, if the line is carried straight back and straight forward, it will run into itself.



CURE: Use correct power stroke.

In the drawing illustrating this problem, note that the power stroke has started too early, considerably behind the angler's ear. The power stroke should be started in the position illustrated previously in the drawings of the correct procedure at the beginning of this article.

Fault 7

FAULT: Overpowering the forward stroke.

I don't have an illustration of this but a tailing-loop may result when too much force is used in the forward power stroke with a very quick stop at the end of the power application. What happens is exactly the same thing as a roll cast—the tip folds over violently at the end of the cast, forming a rolling loop that travels down the line and upsets the leader, producing a tangle.

CURE: Simply use less force.

Late-season fly-fishing for trout in low water offers tremendous rewards, but only if you modify your tackle and tactics to suit the season

Tackle and Tactics for Low-Water Trout

DAVE ENGERBRETSON
Rocky Mountain Field Editor

LATE-SEASON FISHING often presents the angler with low-water situations that require special tactics and considerable forethought, both before and after arriving at the area he's planned to fish. In the drought-afflicted West, this factor will be especially influential this summer and fall. Low-water angling can be tough, but it is a situation the fly rod can measure up to — and actually take advantage of.

As a result of widespread near-drought conditions, most of the rivers of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states should be abnormally low and clear this summer and fall. The fish may tend to concentrate in smaller areas, making them more accessible to the fly fisherman. In addition, the cleaner water should provide opportunities for better fishing in some of the larger rivers where normal discoloration is usually a handicap. These same conditions, however, will make the fish extremely wary and super-selective. Thus, the paradox: fish will be more available in the waters which remain, but they'll be more difficult to catch.

For the sophisticated fly fisherman, the situation should provide an exciting challenge; unfortunately, those with less experience might face a great deal of difficulty and frustration unless care is taken to modify tackle, technique and strategy to meet these more demanding conditions.

A CHANGE FROM WHAT MAY BE your usual tackle, while not absolutely essential, can improve your ability to fish effectively under low-water conditions.

While the short midge rod still has many advocates, and can be a joy to use under the appropriate circumstances, longer rods — 8-9½ feet or even longer — are enjoying a well-deserved resurgence of popularity, and are ideally suited to the problems confronting the low-water angler. Such rods help to avoid drag by permitting more line to be held off the water during the fly's drift. They permit longer casts with less effort, and they also allow you to keep your backcast high — important considerations at times of low water. At the same time, the rod, while longer, should be balanced for a lightweight line. A #4 or 5 line will simply produce less disturbance on the water than a #7 or 8; the difference can be significant when casting to spooky trout.

The final link in the system, the leader, also requires modification. Most anglers are aware of the need for longer leaders when fishing for wary trout in clear water, and leaders of 12-14 feet are commonly used under these conditions. A leader properly tapered for such lengths will turn over every bit as easily as one of 7½-9 feet. To accommodate the smaller flies generally used during low water, leaders should be tapered to at least 5x, and smaller when possible.

The accompanying table shows a standard formula for a satisfactory low-water leader, and also another excellent low-water leader designed by George Harvey, the well-known Pennsylvania angler, for use in his state's fabled limestone spring creeks. The "Harvey Leader" departs radically from traditional freshwater designs in that it begins with a very light butt section. While such a taper requires a little more "punch" on the cast, it falls to the water in a beautiful series of serpentine curves, producing slack that can help reduce drag on the fly. It is extremely effective under the most difficult conditions.

The same basic fly patterns that are used under more normal conditions will usually be effective in low water,

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[*The author's suggestions for low-water fishing apply, of course, to late-season waters all over the country, but have a special pertinence to Rocky Mountain and Western waters where the expected continuation of drought conditions should produce trout fishing that is at once demanding and productive this summer and fall. We asked several authoritative anglers in those regions most affected to provide us with specific reports on their respective areas for the summer and fall months. Those reports accompany this article. Readers who may be fishing the Western states will find still further information included in this issue's Stream Watcher's Log.* THE EDITORS.]