THE FORGOTTEN WET FLY

It's underrated, rarely fished—and the most versatile trout fly ever tied. by Anthony Acerrano

Photographed for *Sports Afield* by Amos Chan

Flyfishermen, for reasons that would undoubtedly fascinate a behavioral scientist, seem more vulnerable than most to the gusts, gales and zephyrs of fashion. Let some correct gentleman from England assert that a flyrod must be cast with the elbow tucked firmly to one's ribs, and soon everyone is casting as though to cover for a lack of underarm deodorant. Let the dry fly be declared holy,



Tackle Courtsey Orvis New York

FIXED-FOCUS BINOCULARS

Brand: Bushnell Insta Vision
Description: 7x35 wide angle
Prism Type: Porro
Field of View: 490 ft.
Exit Pupil: 5mm
Weight: 21 oz.
Price: $90.95
Comments: Rubber armoring, belt pack, hand strap.



Brand: Jason Perma Focus 2000 Model 195
Description: 7x35
Prism Type: Porro
Field of View: 578 ft.
Exit Pupil: 5mm
Weight: 23.3 oz.
Price: $148
Comments: Neck strap, carrying case. Jason introduced the first fixed-focus binocular.



Brand: Simmons Focus Free 24151 Wide Angle
Description: 8x40
Prism Type: Porro
Field of View: 448 ft.
Exit Pupil: 5mm
Weight: 23 oz.
Price: $93.95
Comments: Padded case, neck strap, coated lenses.





Brand: Tasco InFocus 891026BC
Description: 10x26 compact
Prism Type: Roof
Field of View: 282 ft.
Exit Pupil: 2.6mm
Weight: 9.3 oz.
Price: $120
Comments: One of a wide line of InFocus models. Neck strap, padded case.

USING FIXED FOCUS

Big-game hunters do a lot of their "hunting" through binoculars. It's common for a hunter to spend hours a day looking for sheep, caribou, bears, elk, moose or deer. Asking the eyes to handle the focusing in this situation is an invitation to a pounding headache.

Then where *are* fixed-focus binoculars appropriate? Spectators at a football or baseball game can use them. The action is distant, and the viewing is for only seconds at a time. Also, in the stadium, binoculars are passed around among friends, and a fixed-focus model doesn't have to be refocused each time. These non-outdoor users are the top buyers of this type of binocular.

Outdoorsmen must match the binocular to the use, and fixed-focus models will work in some situations. A duck or goose hunter glasses birds far away and for brief periods. Fishermen looking for birds on the water do the same. These binocs are particularly popular for use in a hunting vehicle, where glassing is usually quick and at long range. Several hunters I talked to keep a pair in their trucks but use focusing models for extended glassing. The key is to analyze your particular needs. If viewing distances are usually long and glassing time is brief, you may want to choose this kind of optic. Note that some models are set for shorter distances than others. You will have to test them to see how they match up with your ability to focus.

Much depends on your vision. The spokesman at one company said that half the people who talked to him about fixed-focus binoculars loved them. The other half said they couldn't use them at all.

Don't buy a pair on the recommendation of someone else. You should look through them at the store, and spend some time with them. If you can feel eyestrain after a few minutes, you are probably not a good candidate for fixed-focus binocs. If, as happens to some people, the viewing is easy and everything seems to be in focus, plunk down your money and start enjoying your new glasses.

ALTERNATIVES

Many optics companies have stayed out of the fixed-focus market, choosing to emphasize alternatives that afford similar convenience with the versatility and top performance of focusing models. One approach taken by some companies is to offer individual-eye-focus models. Once these are set for the viewer's eyes, they can be used like a fixed-focus model. The advantage is that the barrels can be adjusted for the different vision of the left and the right eye.

Nikon went a different route with its Stay Focus Plus line. After setting the focus for the distance you prefer and the diopter settings for your eyes, you can lock the focus at that setting. Then you have a fixed-focus model with the ability to change the setting at a later time, or use it as a regular-focusing model.

Minolta has a binocular that employs the autofocusing mechanism from its cameras. It's an interesting technology, but some outdoorsmen who have tried them report problems. The focusing mechanism locks onto brush between the viewer and the subject. Also, the binocs are fairly heavy. It's a technology that bears watching, but one that may not be ready for the requirements of hunters and fishermen.

Of course, you could try taping the focus wheel of your binoculars to a setting somewhere between 60 and 100 yards.

The bottom line on fixed-focus binoculars seems to be that they work for some people but not for others. If you are considering getting a pair, try them out first. If they work for you, and they match the kind of viewing you do, they are the ultimate in convenience. SA

and shortly thereafter the submerged fly is considered profane.

Which is more or less what happened with the traditional wet fly. For centuries it was "in," being, as Joe Brooks once said, the daddy of all flies. Then, about midcentury in this country, through a series of whims and events too detailed to review here, the wet fly lost its cachet. "Serious" fly-men devoted themselves to hatch-matching dry flies, and later to nymph fishing—concerns that have persisted to this day, to the point where it's now difficult to find a truly good fisherman who admits to using, say, a Leadwing Coachman or Brown Hackle. For that matter, it's hard to even find traditional "wet-fly" patterns in most flyshops. All of which strikes me as unfortunate. The prevailing assumption seems to be that wet-fly fishing is simplistic and outdated, when in fact it is neither. Quite the contrary. In my view, a good wet-fly pattern is probably the most versatile trout fly anyone can use.

To make sense of that declaration, one must understand some basic wet-fly and aquatic insect theory. The categories into which we divide most artificials are workable, though not crisply logical. It's difficult, for example, to say exactly what distinguishes some nymph patterns from the wet-fly category, and vice versa. Some argue that a "nymph" intends to represent nothing else but an underwater form of a certain aquatic insect (a mayfly or stonefly or caddisfly, for example); whereas a traditional wet fly is more generalist. Most have wings and/or long, soft hackles, and can imitate a host of possibilities, from drowned bug to small minnow. Although this isn't strictly true—you can tie wet flies specifically to represent a particular emerging mayfly, or a drowned bumblebee or a fish egg—it does point to a key reason why wet flies offer such versatility. As a group, they imitate or suggest most kinds of trout food except large baitfish (the province of streamers) or high-floating insects (dry flies). And the majority of individual wet flies are able to appear to a trout as any number of edible goodies, depending on how the fly is presented.

Consider a basic wet fly like the Hairwing (or Western) Coachman, a simple tie made with a green herl body, pheasant tail, soft brown-hackle throat and sparse white-bucktail wing. This fly, depending on how it's fished, can represent: 1) a drowned adult fly, being washed along by the current; 2) a nymph, drifting near bottom; 3) a small baitfish, darting across current or upstream; 4) an insect that has shucked its nymphal case and is moving to the surface to "emerge" into its adult phase; and 5) a female caddisfly that's plunged into the water to deposit her eggs, a so-called "swimming adult" fly.

With that single fly, you can cover virtually the entire water column, from bottom to surface film; you can fish all types of water, from riffles to still pools; and you can imitate a host of food objects. I call that versatility.



Types of Wet Flies

TRADITIONAL WETS: There are literally hundreds of these, many of them gaudy and bright—and forgotten. The classic wet-fly style includes a low-angled wing and a soft-hackled throat, a form that's still highly productive in the following patterns: Leadwing Coachman, Brown Hackle, Hairwing or Western Coachman, Royal Coachman, Black Gnat, White Miller, Wickham's Fancy, Alder, March Brown, Cream Cahill, Western Bee, Ginger Quill and Whirling Blue Dun.

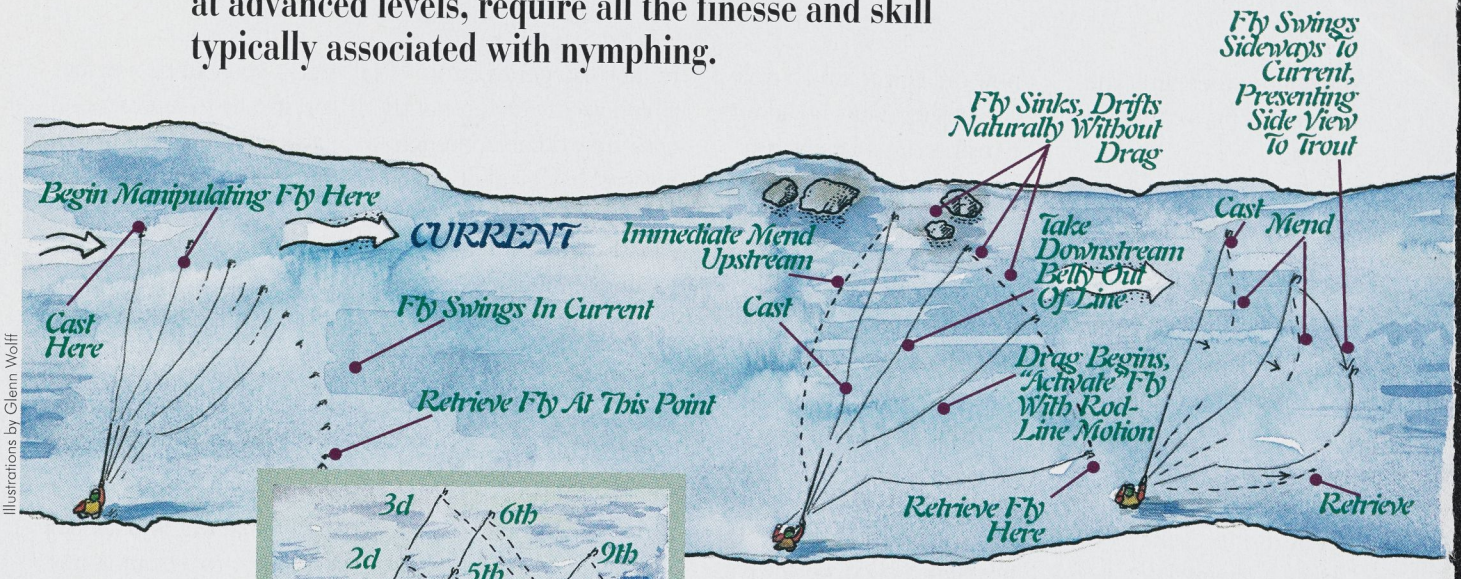
Colorful "brook trout" patterns that work well for that species, or any trout in wilderness waters, include: Parmachene Belle, Brook Fin, Spruce, Red Ibis, Umpqua Special, Chappie and Skykomish Sunrise.

MODERN WETS: These comparatively recent patterns tend toward more specific imitations of trout food. For example, "fly-nymphs," which are a cross between nymphs and wet flies, have no wings but utilize long, soft hackles to present the illusion of a subadult or just-emerging aquatic insect. Another example is the Potts fly, which is tied to represent a swimming adult caddis. Then there are wet flies like the San Juan Worm (or the improved version, Gordie's Worm) that suggest, not insects, but aquatic and/or terrestrial annelids—worms. The Woolly Worm, another extremely effective wet fly, was apparently tied to imitate a caterpillar, though to trout it probably looks more like a stonefly or damselfly nymph or even, in dark colors, a darting sculpin or leech. Unmistakably imitative are the various Egg Flies that are so deadly on rainbow trout and various chars, especially—but not only—in northern (particularly Alaskan) waters.

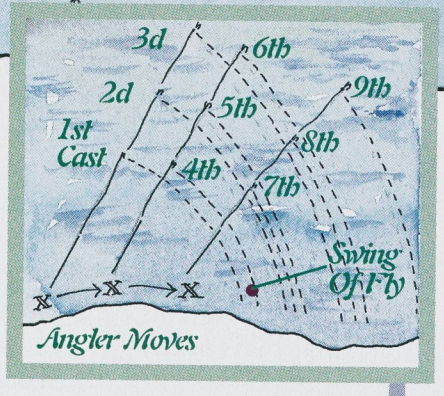
The flybox at left shows a sampling of both old and new wet-fly patterns. Row 1: a variety of Egg Flies. Row 2: black and brown Woolly Worms and two Parmachene Belles. Row 3: two Leadwing Coachmen above a pair of Quill Gordons. Row 4: March Browns (top) and Black Gnats. Row 5: red and orange San Juan Worms; two Royal Coachmen. Row 6: Light Cahills (top) and Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ears.

HOW TO FISH WET FLIES

◆ Wets can be among the easiest flies to use, and they can also, at advanced levels, require all the finesse and skill typically associated with nymphing.



Illustrations by Glenn Wolff



Basic Wet-Fly Method

No one knows exactly when this technique originated; there are hints of it in some classical Roman writings, and certainly it was predominant throughout successive centuries, well into the first half of our own. The fly is simply cast, say, 30 feet across-stream and slightly down. The angler jiggles his rod tip to impart darting, swim-like motions to the fly as it's swept down- and across-stream. Once the line straightens out below, the fly is brought back with quick-strip or hand-twist retrieves that, again, give it a lively, strike-provoking action. The next cast is made on the same angle, only this time the line is lengthened to 35 feet. When this cast is fished out, the next throw is 40 feet, and so on, until all the water is worked. Then the angler takes a few steps downstream and repeats the process, in essence fan-casting so that all possible trout water is covered.

Variation 1

The same basics apply, but as soon as the line hits the water, give it a quick upstream mend, eliminating drag on the fly. This allows it to sink deeper and to drift along for a few feet or yards as though it were a natural nymph or drowned adult insect. (Getting the fly deep can be important in early-season, high-water situations, when trout like to frequent the slow-current zone right on the bottom of the stream.)

Once the inevitable line drag starts pulling the fly across-stream and toward the surface, begin the line-tug, rod-tip jiggles that "activate" it to represent a life form. When the line straightens out, retrieve it back. Don't simply haul the line in unless it's completely out of the fish zone, or you could spook nearby trout.

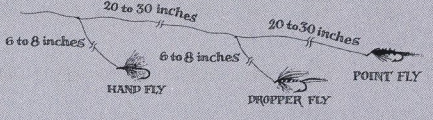
Variation 2

Again, same basics, but this time mend downstream after the line settles, creating instant drag that throws the fly sideways in the current. Let the fly drift a foot or two, then do another downstream mend, and another, until the drift is played out. This technique, also called "stack mending," is especially suited to white- or brown-winged patterns that, darting sideways in the current, can be taken for dace, sculpin or other diminutive baitfish.

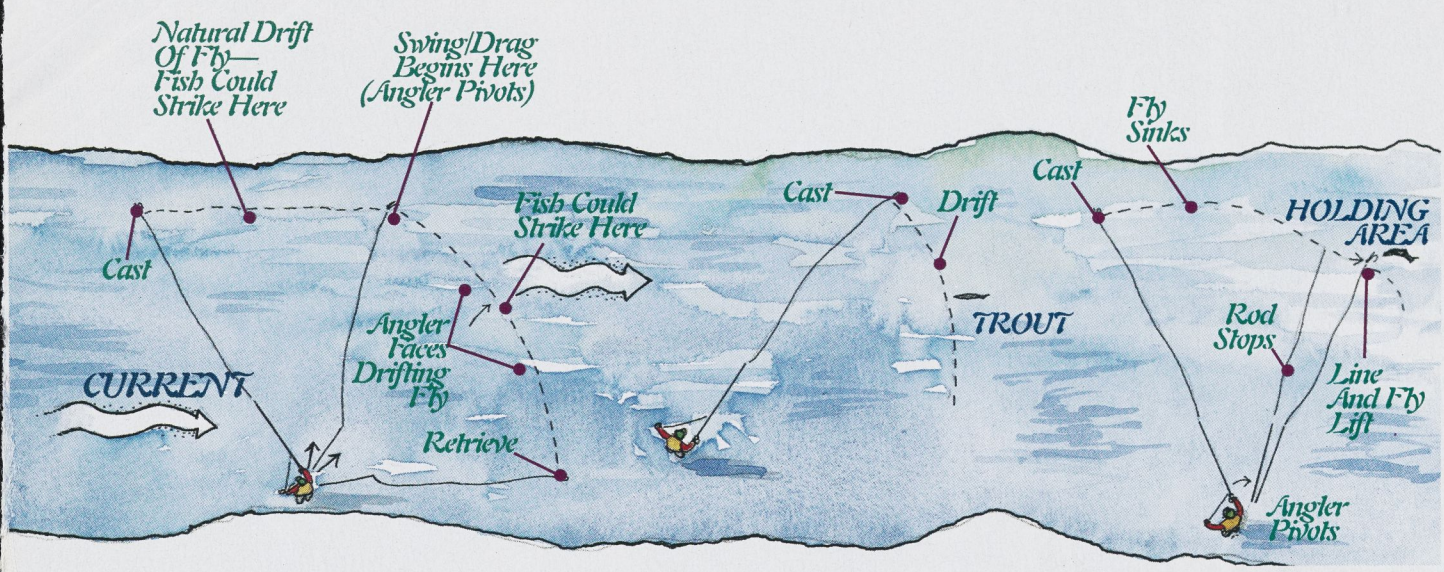
MULTI-FLY METHODS

◆ Consider the advantages of casting more than one fly at a time: 1) You have more "lures" in the water, and thus more likelihood of putting one near the nose of the fish. 2) By using different patterns, you can more quickly find a fly the fish prefer. 3) You not only cover the water more quickly and efficiently than with a single fly, you also cover the various depth zones, from bottom to top. The terminal fly runs deep; the middle fly, riding higher on the line (which, remember, angles upward toward the rod), drifts through the midrange of the water column; while the fly nearest the rod works very near, and sometimes on, the surface.

If you've never thrown a multi-fly leader, it's best to start with a two-fly combo: a terminal, or "point," fly and the "dropper" fly. Normally the heaviest, largest (or fastest-sinking) fly gets the point position; but of course everything depends on the water you're fishing and the effect you wish to achieve. Unless you know that the fish want a particular fly, try to mix up the presentation. Begin with a reliable dark pattern for the point fly and a brighter attractor for the dropper. Mix and experiment from there.



Three-fly leaders take a little more practice to handle, though if tied correctly (see illustration) they cast with surprising ease. (Be sure to finish your forward cast with a good thumb-down snap so that the line unfurls over the tip of the rod and lays itself out neatly onto the water.) Technically, a three-fly rig is composed of a point fly at the terminal end, a dropper fly in the middle and a "hand" fly nearest the rod. My standard practice is to rig a dark, nymph-like pattern at point; a bright attractor fly at dropper; and an "emerger"-style wet (minimal wing and long soft hackle or hackle only) for the hand fly that rides near the water's surface.



Variation 3

First cast the fly upstream, above the main fish zone, giving it a chance to sink deeply and tumble along the bottom, drag-free, for a longer period of time than in Variation 1. This approach extends your strike range if done in suitable water, such as a deepening riffle or the tail-out of a pool. Watch the tip of your line during the upstream portion of the drift; if it darts suddenly upstream, set the hook gently—a fish is on.

Variation 4

This is for casting to a particular fish, one that may be lying still or, better, one that's periodically rising. Carefully position yourself upstream and across from the fish. Cast downstream on a 45- or 55-degree angle, so that the fly lands above, and a few feet in front of, the fish. When this is done correctly, the fly has time to sink before swinging around and rising precisely as it reaches the fish. Presented this way, a wingless or slightly winged, long-hackled fly looks very much like an emerging insect.

This delivery can be simple in slow-moving spring creeks, but in faster freestone streams it may take two or three tries to gauge it right.

Variation 5

This is essentially the famous "Leisenring Lift," designed for working a specific holding area. Position yourself slightly above the lie. Make a short cast upstream, so that the fly sinks while drifting toward the fish zone. As the fly and line drift past and near the holding water, stop the rod, keeping the tip high and pointed downstream. This causes the fly to lift in the water, just as, if you're lucky, it enters a trout's zone of vision.



WET-FLY LEADERS

Use a long (nine- to 12-foot) tapered leader when fishing wet flies with a floating line; and a short (three- to six-foot) leader when using a sink or sink-tip line. A short leader whisks the fly right down into the depths with the sinking line (whereas a sunken line tends to get ahead of a long leader in the current, causing drag). With a floating-line/long-leader combo, the line stays on top, while the thinner leader sinks the fly steadily, without unwanted drag.

Multi-fly leaders are easy to tie. Either use a clinch knot to secure the dropper material to the main leader (just above a leader knot to prevent slipping), or fashion a dropper right from the leader by extending for six to eight inches the heavier tag of your blood or double-surgeon's knots. It's very important that your dropper line be slightly stiffer and/or heavier than the main leader material adjacent to it. This prevents the dropper from wrapping around the main line and tangling.

WET-FLY LINES

Actually, in most stream situations you don't want or need a "wet-fly" line. A floating line and long leader are easier to mend, adjust, and pick up, allowing for more natural, controlled drifts of your fly.

Next best, in terms of overall usefulness, is a wet-tip or sink-tip flyline. Only the forward 10 or 13 feet sink; everything else floats. When you want your fly to drift or work near the bottom—in both lakes and deeper and/or faster streams and rivers—this is a good line to choose.

Ironically, a true "wet-fly" or full-sink line is rarely useful for fishing wet flies on most trout streams. Full-sink lines are sluggish in the current (causing unwanted drag) and are difficult to mend and pick up. There are, however, some extreme deep-water fishing situations, most often in lakes (but also in deep, fast rivers), where a full-sink flyline is good to have on hand.

Some quick rules of thumb for selecting the right line:

Use a floating line with long leader: 1) in low water; 2) for general drift and rising-fly presentations; and 3) with a weighted fly or with twist-on lead when you need a deep-drifting fly but want maximum line control.

Use a sinking or sink-tip line with short leader: 1) in early-season high-water conditions, and 2) with patterns (Egg Flies, for example) you want to keep close to bottom, especially in fast and/or deep currents.

15 Tips For Spring Walleyes

Locations, lures and strategies for the finest first-of-season fishing.
by Mike Bleech



CHAPTER 3

HOW INSECTS BEHAVE

(Almost As Strangely as People)

Face down I was, a long man in the short grass, and about to slide head-first into the Firehole River. Normally I prefer to enter from the booted end: more graceful, you know, and we gentlemen anglers must think of our image.

In this case, my boots were off, and the rest of my clothes with them. On a fine day in late June the Firehole gets warm enough for a swim. That is too warm for the trout. Since they had not been willing to rise, I had descended. The moment I started to paddle around their home, of course, they developed an appetite. I emerged dripping like Europa's bull, only skinnier, and watched two fish grubbing for something in the weeds upstream. Whatever it was, it must have tasted good, to judge from the trouts' indiscrete gustatory noises.

No time to lose. I grabbed my rod, not my clothes, and went fishing. Conclusion: the trout were not feeding on size 16 hare's-ear nymphs. Obvious next step: crawl up near the trout and try to see what was on those weeds. Fortunately, there were no thistles on the way.

There was too much glare to let me see anything on the weeds. I lay on my stomach and wriggled further out.

My position was precarious. I risked eyestrain, sulphurous water up my nose, a sunburn where it hurt most, and my insouciance. All great explorers know these dangers. To reward me, Mother Nature sent a friendly spot of shade, and it helped me see a couple of snails on the waving fronds. Could they have been what the trout were chasing? I squinted more closely.

"Hello," said a snail.

"Hello," I muttered. Then it struck me that I have never managed to talk to snails -- only trout and people, and the trout had vanished. On the other hand, what I had taken to be mere shade was, from a broader perspective, an inspiring reflection on the water.

I twisted my head around as casually as I could manage under the circumstances, trying to create the impression that I was doing one of the things I do best.

"How's the water?" asked the author of the shade. My composure was improved by the fact that she was dressed exactly as I was, and a small group of mixed gender behind her was in an advanced stage of peeling off. Clearly they had mistaken my scientific endeavor for evidence that this was the old swimming hole. I did appear to be dressed (as it were) for bathing.

Now, I was not completely unfamiliar with the old Yellowstone custom of dipping in the hot-springs. Park

employees each summer consist of roughly two-thirds college girls and one-third college boys. For several summers, I had been privileged to make up part of the happy third. In those dear old days, getting a member of the majority to go dipping took a long campaign, usually terminating about 3 a.m. after the consumption of several beers in the throbbing night-spots of West Yellowstone. By that time, none of us had a clear idea of what we were doing. The visibility wasn't so good either.

Here it was 4 p.m. of a sunny summer's day, and until moments earlier I had been concentrating on aquatic biology, an interest difficult to pursue in the presence of suntan lines showing where a bikini used to be. Ah, changing times. I considered my options carefully for half a second. What the hell, the trout were scared by Ms. Shade anyhow.

"Fine," I replied, "come on in."

That's almost all I know about snails. But then this chapter is supposed to be about insects, anyhow.

* * * * * *

Upstream Wets vs. Dries.

Drag more acceptable, — a little — fortunately. (or less perceptible)

Because leader needs to land reasonably straight rather than automatically sloppy, as in dry fly.

Sloppy leader would tangle wets.

Heavier leader flies (total weight) make it possible to land flies first, thereby delaying drag in that way.

Not to keep flies fairly near surface, line somewhat tight, to see rises (not take).

But don't let line, leader, or flies make a "V" on surface film. Usually scares fish.

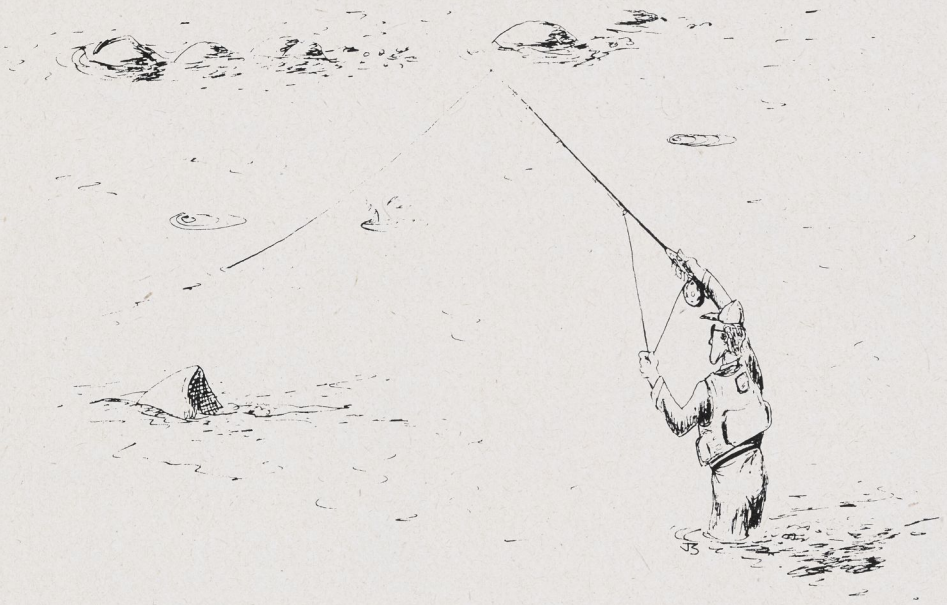
Difference from downstream Wets

Line ~~too~~ not fully tight, so {rises / strikes} seldom felt. Must be seen.

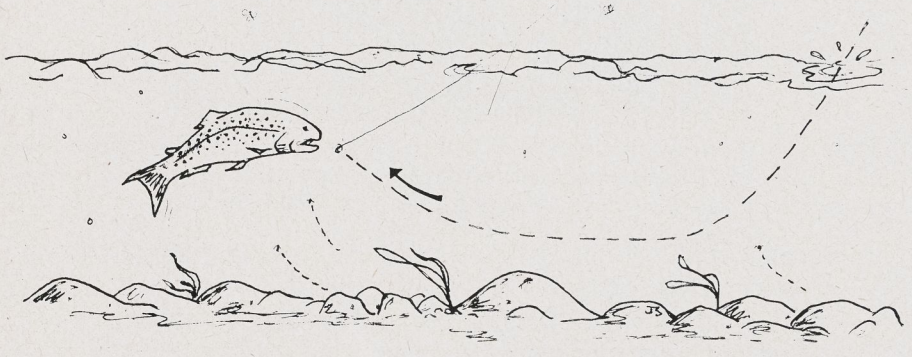
Rises are like aim to imitative flies (dries, nymphs). Not like strike to non-imitative (lures).

The Leisenring Lift

The Leisenring Lift is now fairly well known among fly fishermen, yet I have found that it is often misunderstood. The technique was originated as a simulation of the hatching activity of a wide array of aquatic insects, whose typical scramble to the surface is in preparation for the molt to winged adults. The Lift is especially deadly during caddis hatches, depicting the hapless pupa struggling in the current.



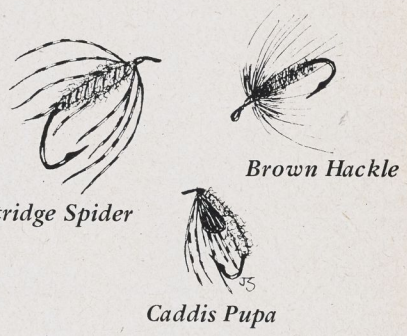
An added benefit of this nymphing technique is that trout are so familiar with the nymphs' rising, undulating behavior that they will take imitations fished in this manner even when a hatch is not in progress. They can even be induced to take imitations of insects that do not hatch in the rising manner, such as stoneflies, which crawl onto streamside rocks and willows to hatch.



Executing the Leisenring Lift is relatively simple once the technique is understood. Most nymph fishermen know the effectiveness of the "swing" at the end of the nymph's drift. The Lift is, in effect, a modification of this, although the swinging motion is more controlled.

First, a feeding or visible fish is chosen, or a likely holding lie selected. The fisherman should then attempt to position himself across and slightly upstream from the spot, making sure not to spook the fish. The fly is cast well upstream to allow for sinking. A floating line is fine; in fact, it is preferable. While the fly is drifting toward the holding spot, it is followed with the tip of the rod, and the line is mended. Just before the fly reaches the lie, the rod is gently raised to tighten the line, and the fly is allowed to rise slowly to the surface. The fish may take at any time during the upward path. Trout usually slash at the fly to avert its potential escape into the air.

Flies for this technique are usually simple ties, but the choice of materials is important. Soft-hackled wet flies are generally the most effective, since the fibers simulate wiggling legs quite well. Try, however, to match your hackle stiffness to the speed of the current you are fishing. A fly tied with partridge or grouse hackle is deadly in moderate current, but swift water has a tendency to pin the fibers against the fly. Rooster hackle would function better in this situation. The partridge spider mentioned at the beginning of this article is my favorite. It is tied with a fuzzy body of fur or synthetic, a gold wire rib, and one to two turns of partridge or grouse for hackle. Body colors in gray, olive, brown, and yellow are all effective, and sparkle yarn simulates the air bubbles in the pupal shuck of a caddis rather well.



Partridge Spider

Brown Hackle

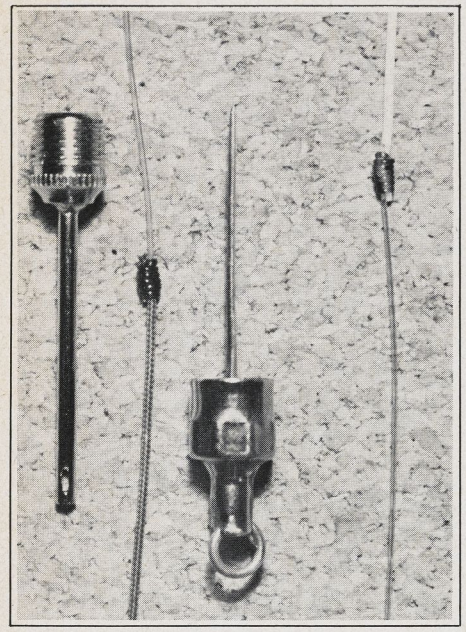
Caddis Pupa

One of Leisenring's favorite flies was the Brown Hackle, tied with a bronze peacock herl body and furnace hackle. During a hatch it is important to use an imitation matched to the appropriate nymph, although usually the motion and action of the fly is more vital than exact imitation. Effective sizes range from No. 12 to No. 18, with emphasis on the smaller patterns. Try to keep the patterns sparse, unless fast currents necessitate weighting.

Armed with a selection of soft-hackled nymphs, fine tippets, and skillful execution of the Leisenring Lift, one should be able to do quite well when faced with nymphing trout. Even when fish cannot be seen, the angler can still do well with a good understanding of holding water and feeding lanes. In this age of revolutionary tactics, new fly patterns, and modern equipment, Jim Leisenring's nymph technique is still a valuable part of the fly fisherman's repertoire.

John L. Scott
Portland, Oregon

Needling the Nail Knot



Aside from painstaking splices involving wrapping thread, epoxy, and remarkable patience – the best method for joining leader to fly line is the standard nail knot. Even this knot is not easy. Tying a uniform nail knot requires the dexterity and determination of a demolition's expert on a bomb squad.

Whenever a problem of construction and function occurs, a designer or technician will suddenly materialize armed with a tool of specific and narrow intent. Thus an anonymous designer provided the idea for a gizmo which looks exactly like the bladder needles used for pumping up basketballs, footballs and the like. This nail knot "hypo" has the addition of an insert pin which fits into the barrel of the instrument and a jump ring for easy attachment to vest.

Without going into a series of analytical details which would torment the writer and thoroughly confuse the reader, suffice it to say that this doo-dad works. It actually does reduce the time and the fumbling ordinarily associated with producing a respectable nail knot.

To my knowledge, this gadget has no trademark and the manufacturer failed to include the price. However, if you are keenly attracted to this simple mechanical aid which is guaranteed to reduce knot tying jitters, regularly scan the gadget rack in your local fly store. Sooner or later this peculiar little instrument is bound to appear.

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This photo shows a diversion which closed a secondary channel. The flow increased, and the bank stabilized, a healthy rainbow population has returned. (Spring creek at Gallatin Gateway, Mt.)

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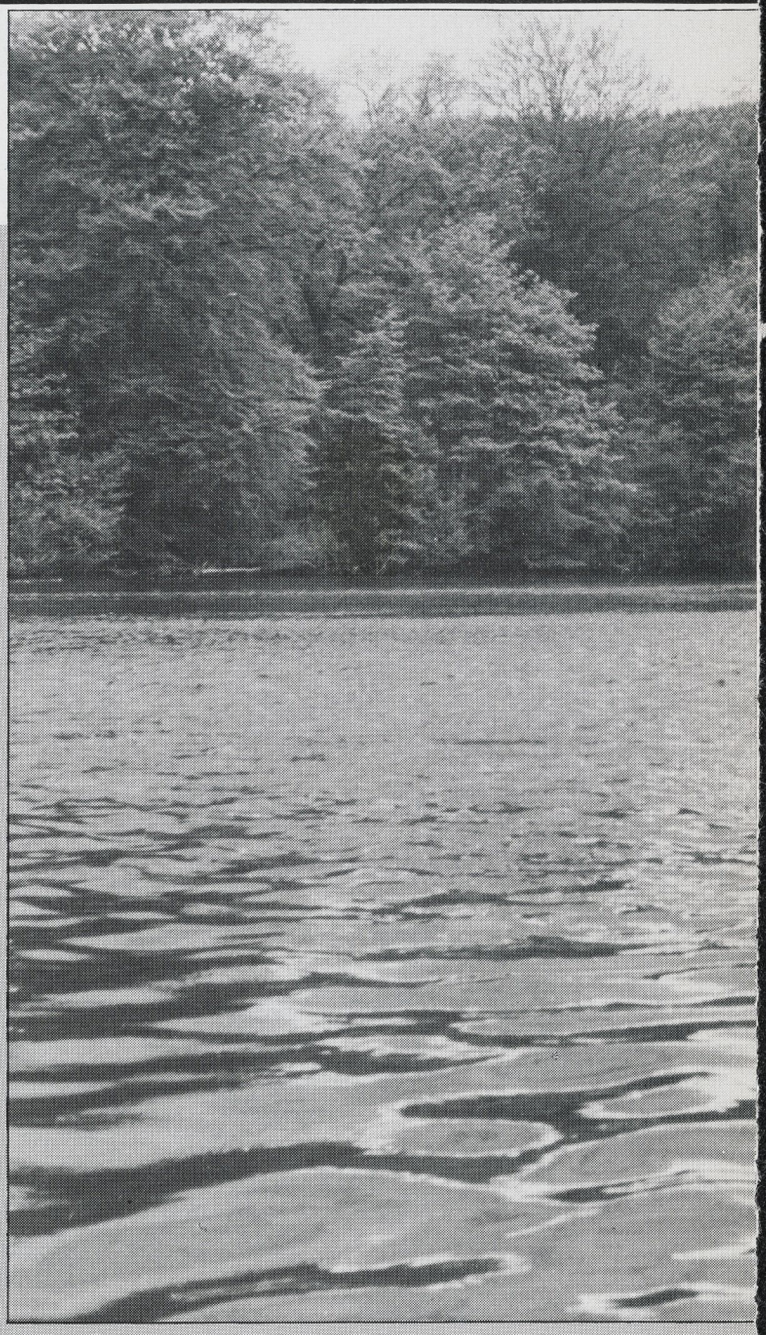
Trout from a

John Donald tells how he sets about catching brownies from the big pools and runs of the mighty Tay



IMAGINE a 60-yard wide pool of clear water faintly tinged with peat from the Grampian mountains, and with rippling reflections of larch and birch and beech disturbed only by the boat harling in the middle. A salmon river? Yes, but it is also a great brown trout river — the Tay.

It is not a river in which trout are necessarily easy to catch, because when Tay trout are dour, they are as difficult to catch as trout anywhere. And when an angler is faced with the sheer size and volume of a river such as the Tay, it is not unnatural for him to feel uncertainty about where and how to catch a trout on fly — but there are clues and pointers if he is willing to spend a little time in preparation.

It is surely a benign providence which guides civil engineers to build their roads in river valleys — more practical anglers will protest that it is commonsense not to take them over the hills! — and the valley of the Tay is no exception. Although from Perth to Caputh it is sometimes necessary to use minor roads to stay close to the river, from Caputh to Loch Tay roads such as the A9, the A984, the B698 and the A827 follow the river and afford the chance to stop and look more closely. Not all parts of the river are available on a daily basis for trout fishing, but many are, and when the Protection Order is detailed, hopefully many others will be available for a modest fee.

What type of water is the trout fisherman looking for? Essentially it is shallower stretches where the current is not too fast and preferably runs into a good, deep holding pool. Speed of current is a subjective phrase, but anglers who have fished strong, fast rivers before will know that hatching flies whisked downstream like speeding yachts seldom attract trout. Walking pace, I suggest, is ideal.

In these shallower runs, which in low water can usually be entered circumspectly in breast-waders, the angler can expect trout to move when flies hatch. Although they may be more difficult to fish, he should not neglect the broad, more steady flows, often hundreds of yards long, where trout lie even when flies are not hatching.

He should walk the bank and assess the river in this general way, but he should be especially vigilant for smaller differences in the water which might be described as streams within rivers. A heavy, rolling rush may shallow into slower water only a foot or so deep which will hold trout intent on feeding. Bigger boulders near the bank sometimes create pockets of slower water well worth trying. A good example of this type of water is along the south bank above Caputh bridge, near and below the Bargie Stone. This is the immortal pool in which Miss Ballantine hooked her 64 lb salmon. Even the runs have deeper hollows which are discovered only by wading. Sometimes the flow splits round an island and one side "shouts" trout while the other is a waste of time except under special conditions.

Importance of wading

The best way really to understand the river is to wade. This proposal may appall anglers accustomed to small rivers, and certainly in some situations, such as when trout are in the shallows near the banks, keeping well back from the bank is essential; but deep wading is nearly always needed if the better trout are to be covered. In many pools the depth will defeat the angler and trout will be out of reach, but in the broad, even flows of waist-deep water careful wading will not disturb the fish. A friend and I are quite happy to follow one another up or down such a Tay stretch. Deep wading reduces a 6 ft angler to a 3 ft dwarf, and he is much less likely to be seen by the fish. That trout sometimes rise within a rod's length proves the point.

If wading is to be slow and careful, not only because of the risk of disturbing trout, but also because of the real danger of a ducking or worse, the angler must not splash ashore with every trout caught. He should deal with the trout wherever it is hooked (having left his bag concealed on the bank) and place it in a strong plastic bag suspended round his neck by tape so that it hangs down inside his chest-waders — or, of course, put the fish back! A light priest is essential (I suggest a combined priest and scoop made from a piece of aluminium tubing weighted at one end) and it should be attached to the fishing waistcoat with a length of cord.

A net which is easily brought into action is a valuable asset. I dislike the folding type and use one with a rigid frame screwed to a duralumin shaft with a comparatively heavy hand-grip. This hangs handle down outside my waders in a loop sling and is very easy to bring into use. It is important also to attach other necessities, such as glasses (again looped round the neck), scissors, and that invaluable aid to dry-fly fishing, a piece of amadou substitute. The angler may look rather like a Christmas tree, but anything dropped in strong, waist-deep water is gone forever. He should be prepared also to spend between one and two hours fishing one pool. Tay pools are big.

Time of year

Time of year dictates to a large extent the time of the hatch, but really to appreciate the potential of a river such as the Tay, it is best to choose a day in April or early May. In spring it is advisable to start about 9.30 am, when the river will almost certainly look as if it holds no trout at all. Nothing will be rising and the expanse of a pool will look like a miniature loch. Just as he had to search for the better parts of the river, so

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THE JOHN NORRIS SPRING COLLECTION PAGE 10



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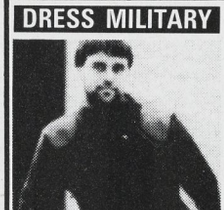

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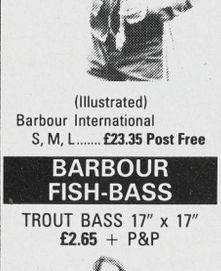

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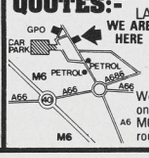

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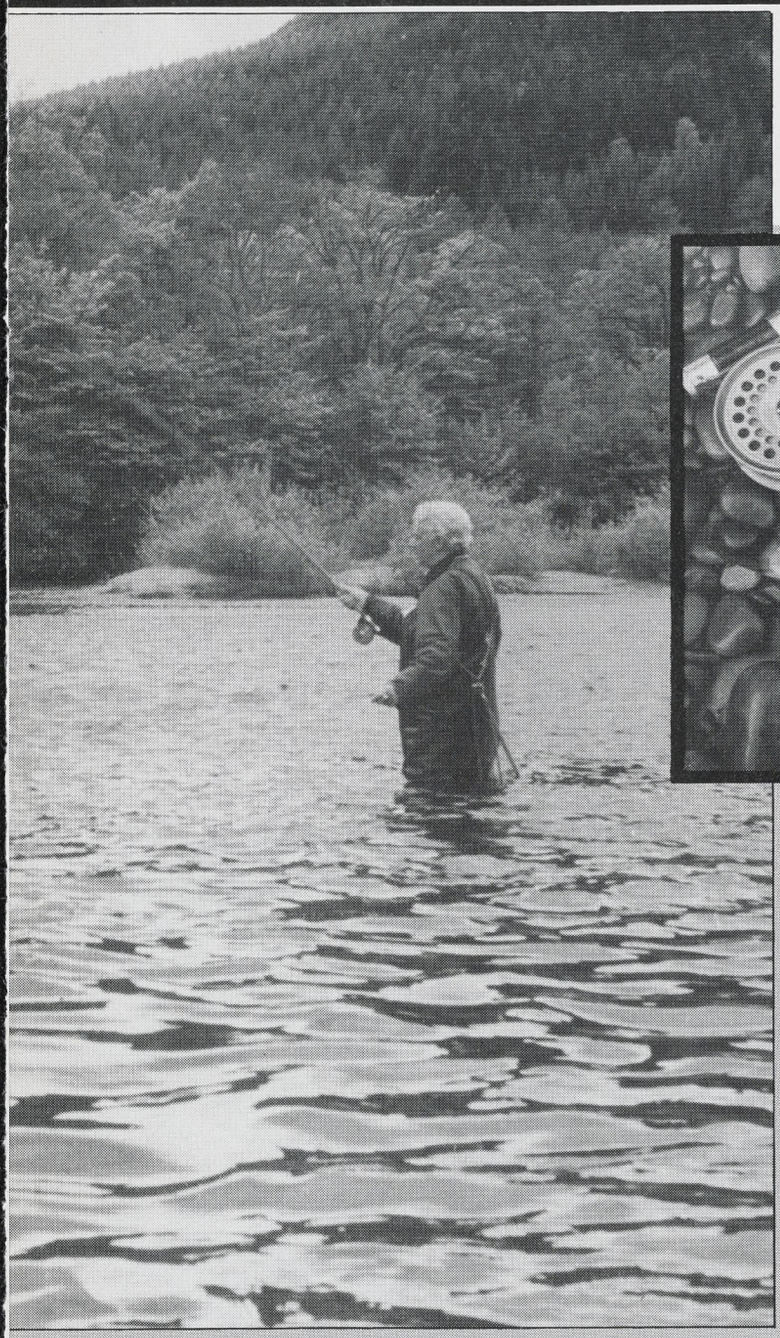
salmon river



Left: Trouting on the Tay at Dunkeld. Deep wading is usually necessary to cover the better trout.

Below: A cracking bag of Tay trout, the best weighing 3 lb 6 oz.



now must the angler seek out the trout.

Because the runs hold so many delightful memories, I tend to start there, using an 11 ft carbon-fibre rod and a reel with at least 100 yds of backing (in a salmon river anything can happen), and four wet-flies or nymphs. The idea of using four wet-flies on a river will be anathema to most anglers, but except perhaps in very windy conditions, which are rarely productive even if flies are hatching, they are easily cast and controlled. Unless the water is high, as it can be all too often in early spring, the back-cast presents no difficulty, because the trees and vegetation are well behind a wading angler. High water is a real problem, and seldom are many fish taken in such conditions. Even inches from the bank the current is fierce, wading is impossible and the few fish caught will be rising trout which can be covered with a short cast upstream.

In normal or low-water conditions at this time of the year, an attempt can be made to attract non-feeding trout. In early spring a size 12 or 10 copper-wire ribbed March Brown with dark hare's-ear body and dark brown partridge or grouse wings is good on the tail. Later a similar fly with a lighter hare's-ear body (still ribbed with copper wire) and with partridge wings will start to take trout. A little lead foil can be used under the hare's ear, but the copper wire helps to sink this tail-fly quite well. It may be taken for a March Brown nymph, but because March Brown hatches tend to be sudden, short and fierce, I believe it is more often taken for a shrimp.

Next to the tail I like to use a fly with a Greenwell body, wings from waterhen secondaries, and a dark blue-dun cockerel hackle on a size 12 hook. After two or three trout have chewed this, it looks so thin that it is difficult to imagine that a trout would touch it, but they do, and with relish.

Above this fly I like to try a Dark Olive, again with waterhen wings, but with a body dubbed with dark olive seal's fur or substitute and ribbed with round gold, and with a dark olive cockerel hackle. As a bob-fly I like to have an ordinary Greenwell or a lighter version of the second fly I have mentioned tied with slightly stiffer hackles, since this is meant to imitate an emerging spring olive. On a bright, warm day the wings of the olives appear lighter, and on a dull overcast day they look a leaden blue-grey.

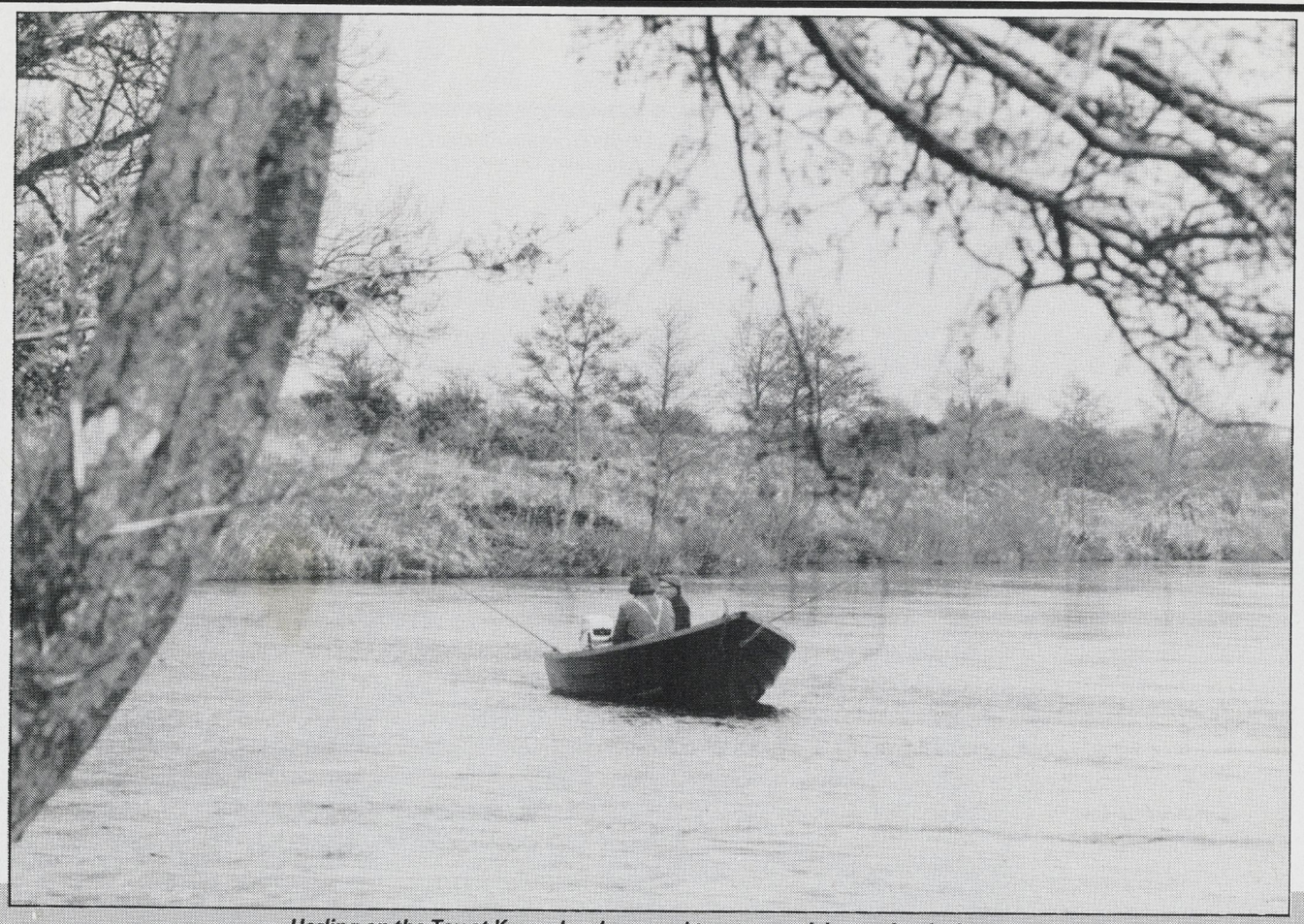
While all these flies can be fished on a floating line, I prefer to cast up and across and to sink them as deeply as possible to begin with, using a Wet-Cel No 1 line. I cover the nearest water of the run first, especially where the current slackens sufficiently to suggest a comfortable lie for trout. Then I go back to the top and cover the next strip out. It is not necessary to work the flies, but I have found an occasional "lift" will produce takes, especially in the broad glides. By working down a run in strips I search as much water as possible with the four flies at different depths. Then I leave the run and try the even flows. These can be surprisingly fast and require the line to be mended to help the flies to sink. A pluck or take as the flies swing round and lift at the end of a drift is a distinct possibility even if they seem to be moving too quickly.

Black-headed gulls

As the day progresses I keep a sharp lookout for black-headed gulls which, seemingly from nowhere, will be wheeling and diving in minutes over any local hatch. In any event I am back at the run by about noon and change to floating line. Then — and don't be too horrified — I change the tail-fly to a dry Dark Olive, size 12 or 14, leave the blue-dun hackle Greenwell and the top-dropper wet-flies, but change the wet Dark Olive to a dry March Brown with an orangy-fawn body, size 10 or 12.

Now I am fishing with two dry-flies interspersed with two wet-flies. The result is that the wet-flies take the nylon under the surface and that bugbear of dry-fly fishing, floating nylon, is eliminated. That is not all the wet-flies do. If, as is often the case, the first rises are not to the floating fly but to nymphs nearing the surface, trout will take the

Trout from a salmon river



Harling on the Tay at Kercock, when good trout were rising under the bank.

drifting wet-flies or nymphs. If the dry-fly moves in an unnatural way, I strike. It is acting as an indicator of underwater takes.

Two dry-flies

Another advantage of having two dry-flies, especially at a distance, is that it is easy to lose sight of a small dark fly on the rippled, dancing water of the run, but easier to see a larger, lighter-coloured one and estimate the position of the other. This is markedly the case if one fly is a big March Brown. In addition, the angler is always aware of the position of the two slightly-sunk wet-flies, and any splash in those areas should be answered by lifting the rod.

Nor should the angler be unduly dismayed if the dry-flies sink because of drag. A dry-fly tumbled in fast water can seemingly look very attractive to a fish. In fact, immediately unavoidable drag starts I sink the dry-flies and finish the drift in wet-fly fashion, with slightly more vigorous pulls on the line. I never use wings on these day-time dry-flies, and the rapid opening and closing of the hackles must look lifelike, because it is surprising how many trout I take on this last part of the action before air-drying the flies and casting again. I use this wet-and-dry method even in the smoother flows and am always pleased when trout prefer the underwater fly during a hatch. A friend, on the other hand, uses a single dry-fly, and this more orthodox method also yields many trout.

As the season advances into May and June, I reduce the diameter of the nylon and use a finer tippet for the tail-fly. I use smaller and lighter-coloured flies to match the hatches of paler and smaller olives, and make longer and more accurate casts. Now my olives are tied with two hackles, a medium olive sometimes with the top hackles cut away after winding followed by a blue-dun hackle interwound. I also like to try the Yellow May Dun. Even if it is not a great favourite of the trout, it does catch fish. Some of the olives now have flesh-coloured bodies and a friend does well with a Tup's Indispensable.

In May my wet-flies also include a Blae and Black, size 14, tied with waterhen wings, black hackle and body, and golden-olive tippets. This possibly imitates the nymphal iron blue, but it is also very like a small black stonefly of which the Tay trout are fond. It should really be fished dry, but I find it is taken readily enough when fished wet high in the water. The Woodcock and Yellow also seems to imitate the nymph of some of the olives. Local anglers use the Malloch's Favourite, but I have not done well with it, probably because the other flies seem adequate and therefore I do not use it often. I have found a stonefly creeper imitation worth trying down the thin water in late May and early June, especially early in the morning before the hatch of ephemera materialises.

Although it is still possible to take rising trout during the day, even in low, clear water and sunshine, it is now more difficult, and the size of the trout is smaller. The better fish take in the evening and on into the dusk, when the evening rise is a revelation — and often a frustration. Sherry spinners can be seen in the air and sometimes are the answer, but all too often in the half-light it is difficult to find out what it is that these choosy trout are taking.

Greyish sedges

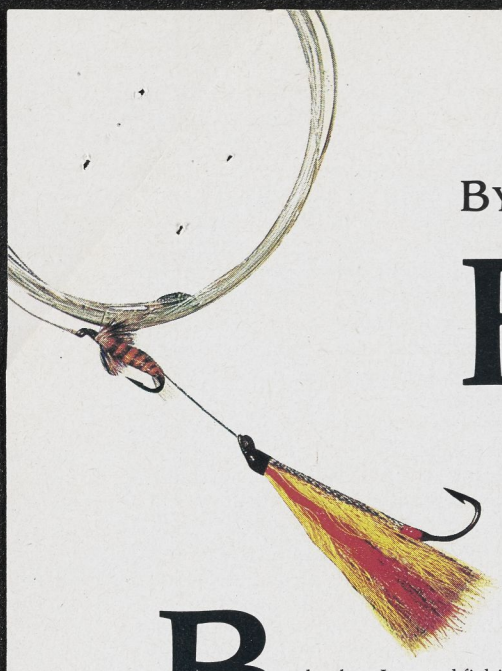
I have occasional good results with greyish sedges as the light fades, and now it is better to use only one or, at most, two flies. Tangles are possible with four, and any delay means missing the best of the humping trout.

I have to confess that I neglect the Tay for most of July and August, when other waters become more attractive, but by September the olives, although smaller than in the spring, are back and, when salmon fishing is slow, the trout rod comes into action by mid-day, with pleasing results. A trout fly is occasionally taken by a salmon. If this does happen the angler will be glad he is using 4 lb nylon and has adequate backing. I have heard of a salmon of about 20 lb taking a dry Olive. Not surprisingly, it was lost. But I do know of a 5 lb sea-trout that was landed after taking a dry March Brown. Some years, even 20 miles from the sea, finnock will take and give a good account of themselves. But the taking of such fish is not covered by a brown trout permit.

March to October

The trout season is from March 15 to October 6, but it may vary and a permit should be checked carefully for conditions. Trout anglers, incidentally, should give way to salmon anglers, who usually will not want to fish where trout can be expected.

Permits for brown trout fishing on various parts of the Tay can be had from: Jamieson's Sports Shop, Dunkeld Street, Aberfeldy (Tel: 0887 20385); R. Scott Miller, Tackle Dealer, Atholl Street, Dunkeld (Tel: 035 02 556); Logerait Pine Lodges, Ballinluig (Tel: 079 682 253); Grandtully Hotel, Strathtay (Tel: 088 74 207); and the Director of Finance, Perth and Kinross District Council, 1 High Street, Perth (Tel: 0738 21161).



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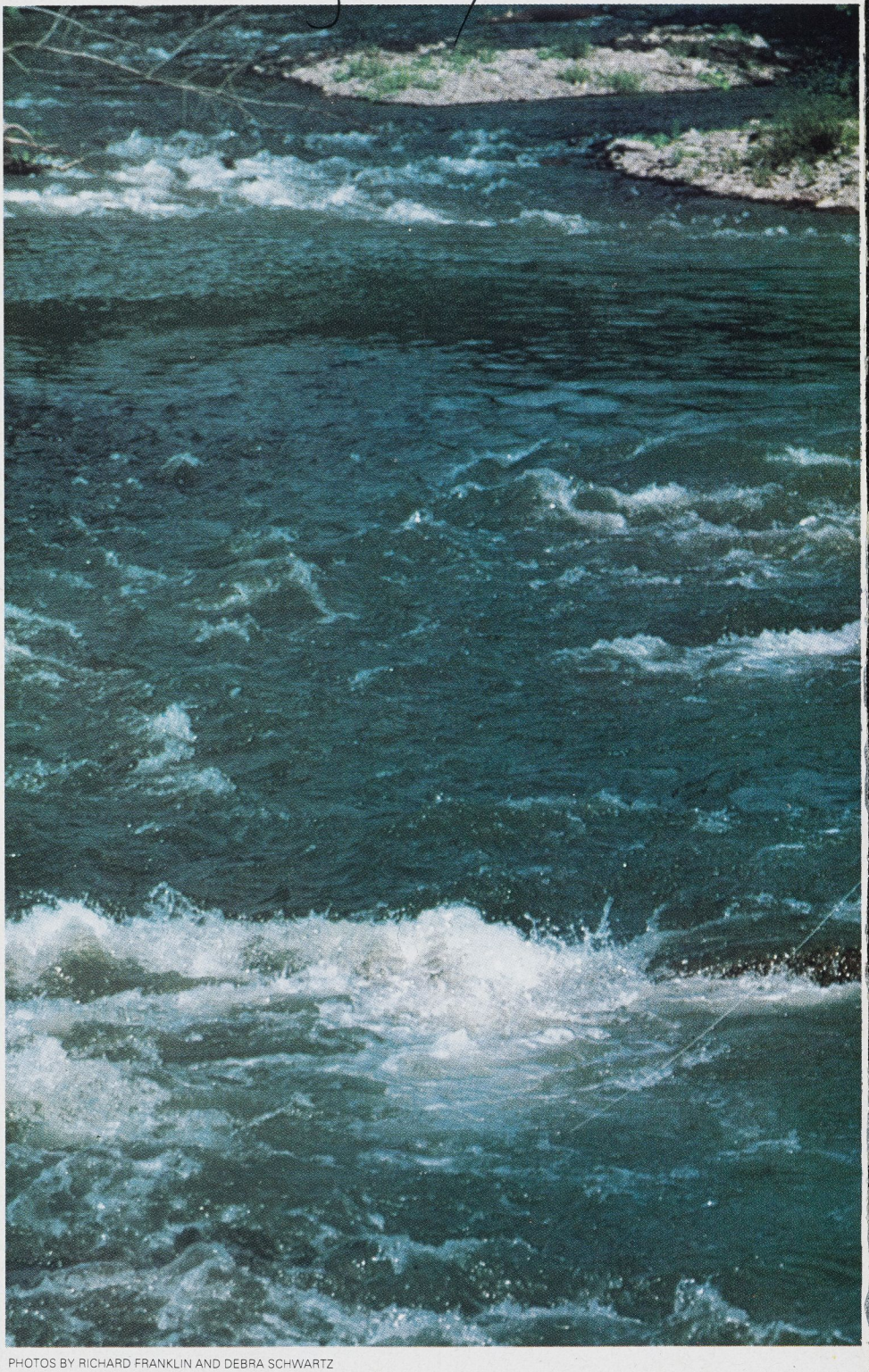


PHOTOS BY RICHARD FRANKLIN AND DEBRA SCHWARTZ

Back when I started fishing for trout, a day astream meant just that: a *full* day. People didn't whisk here and there and back again at 60-plus m.p.h. as they do now. If I could wangle an early-morning ride to a decent trout stream, it meant that I'd be there until dark, when most of my benefactors finally quit.

Large portions of such 12- to 16-hour days—especially in midsummer—were almost a complete waste of time for trout catching. After the morning session one sprawled against a tree trunk, chewed on soggy sandwiches, worked on a sun tan, or dozed until the air freshened in late afternoon.

Most of the trout were taking an easy afternoon, too, but not all of them. Even in hot weather, every 15 to 30 minutes we'd hear the splash of a good trout out in the head or middle of the pool. Apparently, some of the fish were still doing business, even though we'd learned that they wouldn't do any with us.

"Those trout won't look at our flies at this time of day. So what are they jumping for?" I asked the senior sage of our group.

"Well, they're not doing it very often, are they? I'd guess that when a big cranefly—maybe even a stonefly or dragonfly—hovers overhead or bounces up and down on the surface it drives the trout crazy and they slash at it," he said.

That made sense to me, and later observations have tended to confirm his explanation. But it didn't help our afternoon fishing. I simply couldn't figure out any way to imitate a big cranefly yo-yoing up and down over the stream surface.

Many years later, in southcentral France (of all places), I picked up the first clue to solving the problem. My wife and I were picnicking after the morning's fishing on a hot, sunny, summer day when the strangest-looking fisherman I've ever seen appeared suddenly through the bushes.

He was short and scrawny, and he sported a huge pair of baggy black pants, a beret, and a Hitler mustache. At first sight, my wife nicknamed him "Charlie Chap-

owner is, at most, a temporary custodian who will leave a heritage, rich or impoverished, for generations to come. This applies equally to the poor farmer who leaves his land sterile, eroded, and worthless; the logger who devastates a mountainside so the rain runs red into the stream below; and the miner who leaves an unsightly mass of rock, clay, and debris where once was a forest that would have provided lumber, grazing, fish, and game forever.

We drove through a once-rich gold-producing area on our way to the lovely spot where I now write. The scars of placer mining a century ago are still not healed. Trees and grass cannot yet grow on the heaps of cobblestones that were thrown aside in the frantic search for gold.

The miners owned their claims. It was their legal right to wash away the soil and leave a desert of stones. There was no requirement to restore the topsoil after the gold was taken out. The Mining Law of 1872 still rules, but America can no longer afford such a policy of devastation. Yet modern farmers are free to deplete the soil; developers free to cover endless square miles of our limited productive land with concrete, and millions of acres of rich prairie and farm land in the West are destined to be strip-mined for coal with, I fear, inadequate rules for restoration.

Parents who want their sons and daughters to know the precious outdoor heritage we now enjoy must take an active part in preserving the quality of the land. All depends on it. I think more miles of potentially good fishing stream have been degraded by bad farming, logging, and road-building practices than by industrial and domestic sewage. We can have clear lakes and sparkling streams only when we respect the land.

TRUEBLOOD MEMORIALS

Earlier this year, a special tribute was paid to the late Ted Trueblood when a 300-acre wetlands wildlife area at Grand View, Idaho, near the Snake River and about 50 miles south of Boise, was officially renamed the Trueblood Wildlife Area. The area, formerly known as the Grand View Duck Ponds, is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and is managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. It supports thousands of ducks and geese, along with pheasants and quail.

Trueblood's abiding concern for the future of fish, wildlife, and wilderness areas is also being carried on by the Ted Trueblood Conservation Fund, organized with the purpose of supporting grass-roots groups actively working to protect wildlife and fisheries habitat; encourage outdoor sports in future generations; and encourage publication of conservation writings that "actively promote and protect the public interest and access to hunting, fishing, and camping on public lands and waters."

For further information or to contribute to the Ted Trueblood Fund, write Dept. FS, Box 2276, Boise, Idaho 83701.

There are many other facets of our outdoor heritage that, though not so basic, are no less endangered. More rivers must be added to our Wild and Scenic Rivers System so another generation of Americans will have a chance to see the clear, free-flowing water that the first white settlers took for granted.

Our salt marshes and estuaries, vital to the production of shellfish, many kinds of food and game fish, shore birds, and waterfowl, plus our freshwater marshes, vital to the latter two, are being steadily whittled away. This must be stopped.

Our wilderness must be preserved if our children are to have the opportunity to see what this country once was. Our national forest and the western public lands must be retained in public ownership if coming generations are to enjoy the freedom of wandering at will, or hunting or fishing, without asking somebody's permission.

The traditional American right to keep and bear arms must be retained. It is endangered by a steadily growing segment of the population which believes that only law-enforcement officers should be allowed to have firearms. The move is already well underway to outlaw the possession of handguns. Unless sportsmen unite in opposing this, rifles and shotguns will follow. How would you like to stop at the local police armory, check out a shotgun to take pheasant hunting, then check it in on your way home in the evening? If some people get their way, this is exactly what our children will have to do.

Our wildlife technicians now have the knowledge to maintain game populations at their present levels and, in many cases, to increase them. Two good examples are wild turkeys and whitetail deer. Many more states have open seasons on them now than twenty years ago. But the biologists can't do it alone. They can't prevent abusive land use and they can't combat the political clout of the highly vocal minority that would outlaw all hunting. In these two areas, only sportsmen can save the traditional American hunting heritage for our children.

There are a great many sensitive and well-meaning, though poorly informed, people who believe that hunting is morally wrong and that we would soon have an abundance of everything if it were stopped. Nonsense on both counts!

It is no more morally wrong for me to kill a pheasant than it is for a poultry processor to kill a chicken. And too many people fail to realize that killing is but a small part of hunting.

To be afield with dog and gun when the November frost is sparkling on the grass, and the golden leaves, warmed by the first rays of the early sun, are beginning to flutter down—that is the great thing. It is a heritage our children will never know if those who oppose hunting have their way. If we can retain it, no gift we might leave could be more precious.

As to the myth that putting a halt to hunting would insure an abundance of wildlife, it has been proved countless times that this simply isn't true. No bird or animal on the endangered species list is hunted by American sportsmen. Modern sport hunting, with its carefully regulated seasons and bag limits, doesn't jeopardize any game bird or animal population. In fact, there are many well-documented cases in which game—particularly deer populations that have outgrown their food supply—has perished due to the *lack* of hunting.

Is this Christmas gift, our precious outdoor heritage, too much to ask? I think not. Many of my friends, all sportsmen, have given years of their lives to the task of preserving it. But they need help. And I am sure countless outdoorsmen and women would like to help, but are restrained by two worrisome questions:

One, "How can I, a mere individual, accomplish anything?" Two, "How do I begin?"

The answer to the first is that innumerable worthwhile things have been accomplished by individuals. Look up John Muir in your library; Ralph Nader in your daily paper. And there are thousands of unsung heroes who started alone and, through dedication and untiring effort, accomplished more than anyone might have dreamed.

An easier way to begin doing your part toward preserving our outdoor heritage is to join one of the national conservation organizations—preferably one with a chapter in your home town. Some are single purpose, such as Ducks Unlimited. Others, among which the Sierra Club is the shining star, enter any important issue. I belong to many of them, ranging from the National Audubon Society to the National Rifle Association. All work steadfastly for things in which I believe. Some I assist only by paying dues; in others, confronting situations I consider more urgent, I work actively.

Rather than list a few here, which might imply an endorsement of some at the expense of others, I suggest this: Send $17.50 to the National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, for the current *Conservation Directory*. It lists, and gives the addresses of, just about everybody in the world who has anything to do with conservation.

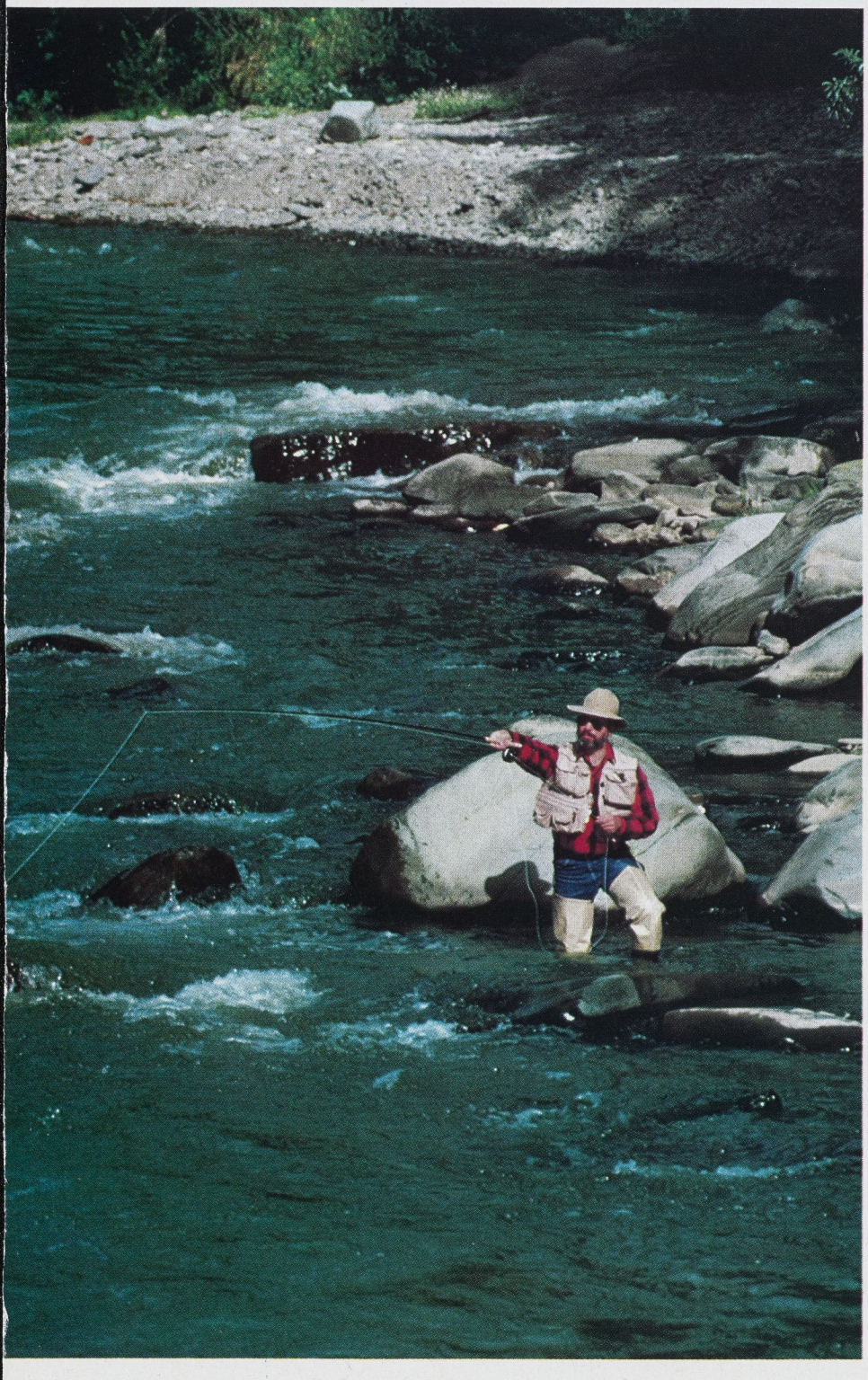
Then take time to write your senators and congressman on important issues, to read the information that will be sent to you by the organization you join, and to help on the projects of the local chapter. You will soon discover, as have many others before, that this is most rewarding. The realization that you are doing all you can to insure for your children and their children the precious, soul-restoring pleasures that you and I now enjoy will repay you manyfold.

With this I wish you a Merry Christmas. The sun is swinging to the west, the trout are rising, and I will go and catch a few for dinner.



REPRINTED FROM DECEMBER 1974 FIELD & STREAM

BOUNCING FLY



Reviving a time-honored but neglected fast-water trout tactic will liven up your between-the-hatch fishing.

lin." Under his arm were several sections of Calcutta cane, each tipped with a heavy brass ferrule. More importantly, hanging on a string from his belt were two fine 1-pound trout.

When he saw our rods leaning against a tree, he walked over to chat. Had we had luck? No, just a few small ones. We were English? No, Americans. We found his river beautiful? Yes, but the beautiful trout were very difficult. Oh no, we just didn't have the proper tackle.

I have never thought of 8-foot Leonards as chopped liver, so I tried to draw him out with rusty, high-school French. He began explaining his method and, sensing the language barrier, started to gesticulate violently to make each point more memorable. The result was one of the greatest acts I have ever seen on stage or off, but I still didn't get his point. He beckoned me to follow him to the river where he would demonstrate.

I had always found this particular stretch of the river difficult. Both banks were tightly lined with dense, bushy willows that leaned out well into the river. I had to bull my way out into midstream to make any sort of cast. The current was slow and even the smallest ripple seemed to put any riser down. Yet here was "Charlie" with dry leather shoes and two lovely trout already to his credit.

He gestured to me to stay a few feet behind him, and he started walking, catlike, up the bank, peering through the willow screen, advancing only about 15 yards over the course of a minute. Suddenly he froze and hissed back at me, "Une belle! Une belle!" Then I saw the spreading circle of ripples about 30 feet upstream, tight up against the edge of an impenetrable tangle of willows.

Instantly, he was into his drill. From his Zouave-like pants, he withdrew a small, plastic box that buzzed like a rattlesnake. Crammed inside *(Continued on page 80)*

The author, an authority on trout, has frequently looked to the past for inspiration.

TIME TO Quit

BY NORMAN STRUNG



PHOTO BY GARY ZAHM

Knowing when to quit is an elusive grace. The athlete, the politician, the entrepreneur, and the gambler must at some point say "enough is enough" or risk losing what they have accomplished, be it reputation, fame, or fortune. And so it is with hunting and fishing. There are times when it is simply right to stop, and recognizing when to pack it in can be an asset as valuable to a day outdoors as the fish you catch and the game you bag.

Quitting is an acquired talent, like fly casting or wingshooting. There was a time when I just didn't know when to quit. My green years were marked by a never-ending quest for fish and game. In the spring, I would awaken at 3:30 in the morning, wolf down a banana, and peddle my bike 9 miles to the nearest trout pool, to be there just as dawn broke. Fall and early winter weekends, I would arise at 2 A.M., swing a pack full of decoys on one shoulder and a cased shotgun on the other, and thumb rides to marshes 60 miles away. The country roads that led to the backwaters of Long Island were as empty of traffic as the black void of space on those cold, starry nights, and I often had to walk between 5 and 7 miles from dropoff point to destination. But no matter the distance, I was rigged and ready long before sunrise.

That kind of dogged and driven dedication marked my every hour, including when it came time to call it a day. Although the sun might have reached its zenith, making trout secretive and sullen, or the ducks had long ceased trading about, so long as I had not reached my limit, I wouldn't haul in my blocks or break down my rod until physical fatigue, mental burnout, or darkness forced an end to my outings.

I continued to pursue fish and game in this relentless manner until my early twenties. I had moved West by then, and was hunting ducks with some friends on a reservoir in *(Continued on page 100)*

Knowing when to call it a day is not an innate ability; it is a talent developed over years of hunting and fishing.

zone. If he sees white flags bobbing away in the distance, it's almost a certainty it was his moving form or some noise he made that alerted the deer, not his scent.

After ten years of intensive research and experimentation with deer scents under almost every conceivable condition, I firmly believe that in most instances gun hunters are wasting their money on scents. They can easily reach out well beyond 100 yards to down a buck, long before the animal has even had a chance to enter the so-called "zone of scent recognition." In fact, it's the rule, not the exception, for rifle hunters to intentionally select vantage points that give them wide-ranging coverage across ravines, looking down from atop high ridges and along lengthy forest edges. In such situations, when any shot is likely to be 100 yards or more, no scent is likely to be of much value.

On the other hand, if the stand is in tight cover and the average shooting distance is much less than 100 yards, or in states where only shotguns are legal, and especially for muzzleloaders or bowhunters, then scents may indeed help tilt the odds in the hunters' favor. But only if they already possess plenty of deer-hunting know-how, use only scents made of natural ingredients, never allow the deer to pinpoint their location, and above all, don't expect miracles.

BOUNCING FLY

(Continued from page 53)

were bees, wasps, hornets, blue bottles, and other large insects that had reached a fever-pitch of anger at their close confinement.

Charlie managed to extract one of these without being stung and, as he impaled it on a size 12 hook, I got my first look at his terminal tackle. Wound around the thinnest section of his disjointed pole was about 10 feet of heavy twine. Attached to the end of the twine were two big split shot. Below the split shot hung only a foot or so of monofilament, at the end of which dangled the hook and unhappy hornet.

He then picked out two more sections of cane and jointed all ferrules together, creating 12 feet of poker-stiff pole. After giving the rod a few turns to wrap the leader, hook, and hornet tightly up against the rod tip, he inched up to a position opposite the trout.

He stood motionless for a minute, assessing the situation, and then started poking his pole slowly through a small opening in the willows. When the rod tip appeared to be over the fish's lie some 10 feet away; he began to rotate the rod slowly. Line spiralled off the rod tip and, like a tired elevator, the hornet began its descent toward the water.

Charlie raised and lowered his rod so the hornet kissed the surface then hovered just above it; he repeated this presentation at frequent, but irregular intervals. During these suspense-filled minutes, he remained motionless, except for the small movement of his hands. Finally, after a couple of minutes of hornet-bouncing, there was a splashy swirl and a fine trout took the bait. Quickly but surely, Charlie counter-rotated the rod, winding the struggling fish's nose up tight against the rod tip. Then he threaded the pole back through the small entry hole in the willows, hand over hand, until the trout came flopping through the bushes.

The simple efficiency of his stone-age tackle now made sense. His leader could be short and stout because the trout never saw it. Ten feet of line was more than adequate, and split shot provided the weight needed to ensure that the line would unwind easily and drop to the water's surface. The extra rod sections meant that he could dap his bait either up close or as far away as 16 feet. And the stoutness of his rod allowed him to snake a sizable trout back through a small opening in the willows. I could do none of this with my fine leader tippets and 4-ounce split bamboo, and I knew I would smash my tackle if I even tried.

I followed Charlie for nearly 2 hours, noting how he approached and handled slightly varying situations. During this period, and despite his stealth, he put down two regular risers and hooked three that managed to kick off before he could thread them back through the willow tangles. But he also captured five, which joined the two already strung below his now-sagging belt.

Here at last, many years after those boyhood summer afternoons, was a solution to the presentation of a hovering fly. Difficult fish could, indeed, be taken with a bouncing fly and even at the unlikeliest time of day. I saw but one flaw; there was no screening thatch of willows at the edge of most of my home rivers. I would need a rod of at least 25 to 30 feet to dap a fly out on the deep pools where our trout took their siestas, and that would be too much rod to handle.

Still, the dapping presentation had proved itself so deadly that, even though I couldn't exactly duplicate it, I was determined at least to approximate it.

Research and memory turned up four techniques, two of which have modern applications. The first, of course, is simple dapping or bouncing an artificial fly directly below the rod tip on the water surface as Charlie had so ably demonstrated with his live bait. This, however, offers severe restrictions—the most important being the shortness of most modern trout rods. Ten feet is about as long as they come, and this sorely limits fishing range. However, there are a few special situations, such as along deeply undercut banks or willow thickets, where classical, vertical dapping can be highly effective.

The second method is the classic dropper fly. On many stretches of river, a single dropper, fished downstream, is an effective trout-getter. A dropper is simply a second fly, attached by a short piece of leader material to the main strand about 3 or 4 feet above the tail fly. Runs, pocket water, and rapid heads of pools—in fact, any place where there is sufficient current to straighten out the line well below you and thus aerialize the dropper—are ideal for this presentation. Dropper flies used to be a standard fly-fishing technique, but since the method hasn't been seen much in recent years, a few of the less obvious points of tackle and manipulation may be worth reviewing.

First, use the longest rod you can lay hands on. A 10-footer should give a range of 30 feet or more downstream for your fly, which should be a safe distance from a fish in crinkled water; the 20-foot range offered by a 7-footer is marginal. Point the rod about 60 degrees above horizontal while fishing and you'll achieve maximum presentation distance.

The lightest line you can cast passably with this rod will be your best choice. If the rod is listed for a 5- or 6-weight line, try a 4-weight. The belly of a heavier line sags more while fishing downcurrent and reduces the distance between you, the fish-frightener, and your fly, the fish-tempter. By going to a lighter line you will be compromising casting accuracy, but you won't be surrendering a critical advantage. Simply stand directly upcurrent of the lie and make some sort of cast diagonally off to one side, measuring the distance, and letting the current bring your flies over the seen or suspected fish. Only after your line is extended directly below you and the dropper is bobbing in and out of the water has your fishing begun.

Your leader, on the other hand, should be on the heavy side. After all, the fish will be striking your fly against a tight line, so pick a leader suitable for streamers. The dropper tippet should be heavy, too; 6- or 8-pound-test is a good choice, since you want it to stand out stiffly away from the leader (if you're manipulating the fly properly, the trout will see only the fly anyway). A dropper tippet that's too long tends to wind around the leader—4 inches is plenty.

Flies should be selected carefully, too. For the fly on the end of your leader, you'll want one that gives solid resistance against the current to help straighten out your line. Bucktails seem to do this better than the slimmer streamers or large wet flies. A size 8 or 6 Mickey Finn, fully dressed, is my usual choice. Think of it as your anchor rather than as your fish-catcher.

For your dropper fly, there's a temptation to use a bushy dry fly that will resist soaking. Don't. A fly that dips in and out of the surface film should have a special life of its own. Pick a size 10 or 12 fly with long, soft hen or gamebird (partridge, grouse, or woodcock) hackles. These feathers will open and close like the arms of an octopus as they enter and leave the surface tension, creating an extra illusion of life.

(Please turn page)

SCENTS

(Continued from page 48)

our dull human senses.

I once performed an experiment to see how far a deer can recognize food scent. On our farm there is a crabapple thicket in a saddle connecting two ridges where deer regularly cross. I scattered a peck of apples on the ground, each apple sliced in half to exude as much aroma as possible, and watched from my camouflaged blind to see what would happen. Not one deer showed any awareness of the apples until they were within 10 *feet* of the food, and then they walked right over and began munching.

An even more revealing result of this experiment with the apples occurred the time I didn't put out real apples, but scattered a number of apple-size rocks on the ground and sprinkled them with an imitation apple scent.

This time, the animals' reaction was entirely different. They apparently detected the artificial apple scent from much farther away—50 to 60 yards—but they were very reluctant to come any closer. With heads held low, they suspiciously skirted the "apples" from downwind and eventually slunk out of sight. Several days later I repeated the experiment with real apples and again the deer wasted no time coming in to enjoy the handout. Still again, several days later, I doctored some more rocks with an apple scent, this time by a different manufacturer, and the deer were again nervous and unwilling to come close.

Although I haven't tested every food scent on the market, these casual experiments have convinced me that deer can readily differentiate between purely natural aromas and those that consist of chemicals.

No matter how good a deer scent may be, it can never take the place of first learning how whitetails live and move and feed and then scouting to find out exactly where they are. The hunter who waits until opening day before first setting foot in the woodlands, then plunks himself down somewhere and splashes some magic elixir on his clothing is deluding himself. Deer scents are not cure-alls for a lack of hunting savvy, nor are they sustitutes for hard work.

It's also important to understand that just because you or a friend took a nice buck while using some lure does not necessarily mean that the scent was responsible for the success.

For those who firmly believe in using deer scents, I strongly recommend purchasing only those brands containing 100 percent natural ingredients. Plan to pay much more, because body oils and fluids, glandular secretions, and natural musk extracts are far more difficult and time-consuming to collect than synthetic compounds are to manufacture. The same applies to natural concentrates such as pine oil, wintergreen, apple, cedar, and the like.

Equally important is to always remember to use a deer scent within its proper context. Too many hunters make the mistake of using an acorn scent miles away from the nearest oak tree, or a grape scent along the edge of a cornfield that butts up against a beech forest. Or they use an estrus doe scent in early October, weeks before the animals are in rut. By using these scents in the wrong place or time, instead of fitting into the habitat, these hunters only draw attention to themselves.

Also get into the habit of making careful mental notes of how deer react to various scents. If a deer snorts and runs away, or refuses to come close, and you can positively rule out the deer having seen or heard you, it's almost certain it became suspicious of something it smelled. A deer holding its head low to the ground, with its tongue protruding laterally from the side of its mouth, is another clear indication of fear or distrust of something the animal has smelled.

Conversely, if a deer holds its head high, with its upper lip curled back (which is known as the Flehman response), the animal is reacting favorably to something it has smelled and would like to find.

One of the greatest myths surrounding the use of masking scents is that in order for them to hide human odor, they must be dabbed on your clothing and sprinkled around your stand site. Indeed, legions of hunters this year will be seen walking with "drag-rags" tied to their boots and sporting felt pads pinned to their coats that reek of one substance or another. A high percentage of these hunters will be disappointed with the results, and again, I believe it's because they are making themselves conspicuous.

It makes more sense to apply a masking scent to vegetation or brush located 20 or 30 yards *upwind* of your hiding location. In this manner, a cloud of scent molecules will drift by your station and overpower your human scent. More important, you yourself will not be the source of some odor a deer may try to home in on.

Another way to put various scents to good use is by placing them wherever you want the animals to pause during the course of their travels. Say, for example, you're sitting on stand watching a long, open alley through dense cover, or perhaps a narrow powerline right-of-way. You've learned from past observations that deer ordinarily come to the edge of the cover, look both ways and then bound across the clearing, never giving you time to take careful aim. By placing a heavy concentration of scent in the opening, you can frequently stop deer in their tracks. But remember, the scent must be made of natural ingredients; if it's a chemical imitation, the animals may clear right out.

Again, keep in mind as well that pheromone (odor) recognition among whitetails is strictly a close-range affair. Deer live in relatively small worlds as far as their noses are concerned. I have observed experiments in fenced compounds where captive does were separated from their fawns for a full day, then returned to the enclosure, which contained not only their own fawns, but numerous others as well. Invariably, it took a brief period of close-range sniffing before the mother and her young one were reunited.

When it comes to mating behavior, this range of olfactory identification is extended over a somewhat greater distance. During midday hours, for example, bucks that are reluctant to leave the security of heavy cover will often "scent-check" their scrapes from as far as 50 yards downwind, rather than openly approach them and expose themselves to danger.

And when it comes to encounters with human beings, the distances at which deer rely on their noses becomes even greater. But don't believe that whitetails can detect human odor from a mile away. Whitetails live within very close proximity of the places where people live and work. If deer spooked every time they got a faint whiff of man-odor a mile away, they'd be running themselves ragged 24 hours a day.

Biologists claim that beyond about 100 to 150 yards, which constitutes a whitetail's so-called "security zone," deer are not likely to react to *any* odor carried by the wind. "React" is the key word here. By the time the odor has carried that distance, its molecular structure has become so diluted it is not capable of triggering the animal's olfactory chemoreceptors, which must be stimulated in order for some behavior response or another to follow. A hunter moving slowly through the woodlands is not likely to have his odor detected until he enters a deer's 100- to 150-yard safety

WHICH SCENT IS BEST OF ALL

■ The confidence many hunters have in deer scents often is rooted in the knowledge that Indians and even our pioneer ancestors were known to rub their bodies with berries and animal tallow prior to embarking upon their hunts. But it must be remembered that these early hunters seldom bathed or washed their clothing. Consequently, anything that helped to cover their stench was a decided advantage.

Modern man, however, is much more concerned about his personal hygiene. As a result, a growing number of expert hunters nowadays believe the best scent is *no* scent at all. The theory is that if you don't do anything to trigger a deer's sense of smell, the animal will have no reason to suspect your presence.

This means bathing every day with a non-perfumed soap, washing clothing regularly, and allowing hunting garments to hang outside in the fresh breezes. It also means always selecting a stand site that is downwind from the direction deer are most likely to approach.



FISHING
A. J. McCLANE, Editor

The Splat

No one method of fishing succeeds all the time. You've got to change pace. Here—two Western tricks that get the brag-size fish

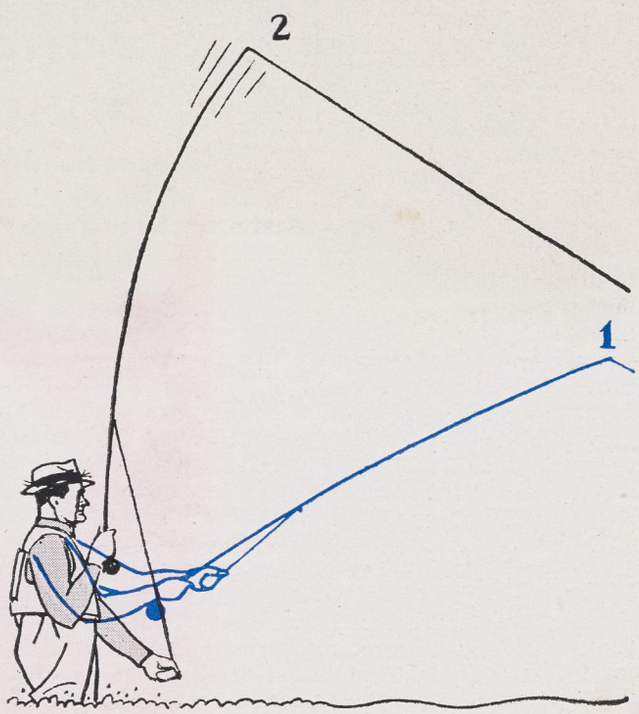


In open, windblown streams trout are conditioned to eating big flies, bugs. Here the splat-fishing technique pays off

BILL BROWNING WAS crouched on the other side of the stream, and I was belly-flat in the reeds watching his trout. There were five of them roaming back and forth and sometimes they swam so close to my blind that I could have touched them. Bill's reflexes were cocked like the shutter on my camera, and I knew the cottony feeling he had in his mouth. The rainbows were big and once or twice the biggest of them made a false pass at his floater, rushing at the fly then turning away at the last instant. Bill made thirty or forty casts with both dry and wet flies before I signalled him to crawl back to the bridge. Ordinarily, I don't go trout fishing on my stomach, but we were both doing a photostory on Montana streams, and the fish in this one were supercautious. At the bridge I suggested a wet-fly trick to Bill, and after explaining my idea we crawled back to our positions.

On his first cast the water erupted as though a mine had exploded. I had just caught the glint of leader in my viewfinder when the big rainbow reared up to fight broadside, not jumping but walrusing all over the creek. You will see the photos one month soon, and behind them is a method of fishing which my camera didn't explain.

Western trout fishing differs from that in other areas in several important respects. For one thing, variations in altitude on one river can be so great that the angler may find heavy fly hatches near the mouth and an almost complete absence of insect life in the headwater section. The thermal variation from lowlands to 7,000 or 8,000 feet is felt by angler and trout. For example, last summer we followed the Big Hole River from Melrose all the way up to its source in Cowbone Lake. At Melrose, the fishing was in prime dry-fly condition, but when we reached 6,000 feet, fly hatches were sporadic and occurred only late in the day. At Cowbone there was no hatch to stimulate surface feeding at all, and we had to fish very deep in what felt like zero weather. A week later, Montana had its first snowfall, which gives you some idea of how compressed the seasons are in the high country. So the fly fisherman must be prepared for extremes. Methods that pay off one day may not be worth considering the next. But the quick-pull is less of a method than a technique, which you will know when to use. If you can see trout and



The quick-pull should be rapid, pulsing, unvaried. Line over finger, strip 2- to 3-foot lengths briskly. Rod travels to the rear at about half the speed that your line is being retrieved

ten attempts. I could stand it no longer —it looked so easy. So he let me try. I believe that spearing fish in the ray of a jacklight, from the bow of a dugout canoe moving slowly down a jungle river, is the hardest thing I ever did in my life. I struck nineteen times from every possible angle before I connected —all the while listening to the derisive remarks of Tex Purvis. Finally I invited him to try. He did. Fifteen minutes and twenty thrusts later, he was still trying.

What equipment does one need in southern Mexico? Guns, fishing tackle, and accessories must be determined by the kind of game or fish you plan on going after. But the little items that make tropical camp life a pleasant experience are very simple. Take along a pair of old, baggy, extremely light pants to lounge around in. A worn-out sports shirt and a pair of lounging slippers are other essentials. And be sure to bring a pair of low shoes with soles strong enough to stand up under the eroding effects of a gravel bar. Soap is a simple but highly prized item. Take plenty. You'll need only one towel. You can launder it—along with your clothing—in the river.

One change of hunting clothes, plus lounging wear, is all that's necessary. Regular shaving and toilet articles that can be crammed in a small kit, a good supply of insect repellent, dark glasses, and a helmet or some other light hat (no felt) will take care of the things you need most. Medicine for every known jungle ill is supplied by the outfitter. Take your camera, a good game bag—or some easy way to carry shells or cartridges on your person—and plenty of stamina. If you are smart, you'll arrange to hike a couple of miles daily for a week before you start.

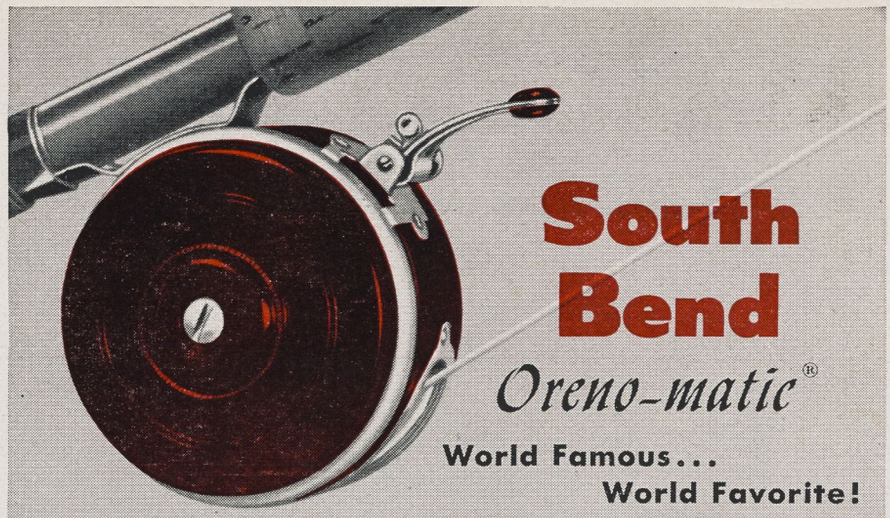
The transportation picture in Mexico is becoming constantly brighter. Mexicana de Aviacion is one of the most cooperative airlines in the world where sportsmen are concerned. It is constantly bringing hitherto unavailable game country within reach of American sportsmen. Roads are being improved slowly; in real out-of-the-way places they are questionable at best. So travel by air wherever air travel is available.

Under present regulations, a nonresident hunter may bring up to four firearms with him and 100 rounds of ammunition for each. Each firearm must be of a different caliber. Pistols or revolvers may be included as one or more of the four firearms. However, full automatics and 7 mm. and .45 caliber firearms are considered military weapons and are prohibited.

The procedure of getting arms into Mexico is based on a letter from your sheriff. You will need seven good passport photographs—the 10-cent-store variety won't do. The sheriff's letter should be addressed to the nearest Mexican consul. It is made in duplicate, the original being retained in the consul's files. In substance this letter states that you are a citizen of the United States and of the county in which the sheriff has jurisdiction, that you are of good moral character and have no criminal record. The sheriff must state that you have signed and affixed a passport photograph of yourself to his letter in his presence.

You carry this letter to the Mexican

(*Continued on page* 112)



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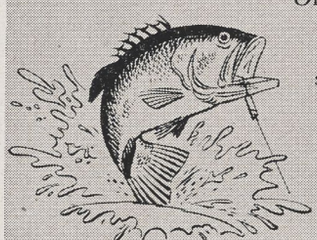

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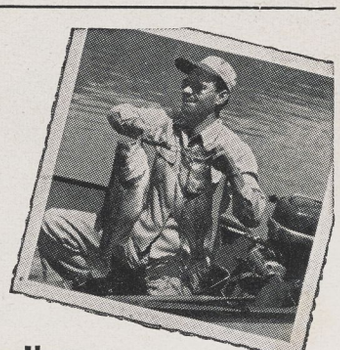
Bass Fishermen will Say I'm Crazy . . . *until they try my method!*



But, after an honest trial, if you're at all like the other men to whom I've told my strange plan, you'll guard it with your last breath.

Don't jump at conclusions. I'm not a manufacturer of any fancy new lure. I have no reels or lines to sell. I'm a professional man and make a good living in my profession. But my all-absorbing hobby is fishing. And, quite by accident, I've discovered how to go to waters that everyone else says are fished out and come in with a limit catch of the biggest bass that you ever saw. The savage old bass that got so big, because they were "wise" to every ordinary way of fishing.

This METHOD is NOT spinning, trolling, casting, fly fishing, trot line fishing, set line fishing, hand line fishing, live bait fishing, jugging, netting, trapping, seining, and does not even faintly resemble any of these standard methods of fishing. No live bait or prepared bait is used. You can carry all of the equipment you need in one hand.

The whole method can be learned in twenty minutes —twenty minutes of fascinating reading. All the extra equipment you need, you can buy locally at a cost of less than a dollar. Yet with it, you can come in after an hour or two of the greatest excitement of your life, with a stringer full. Not one or two miserable 12 or 14 inch over-sized keepers — but five or six real beauties with real poundage behind them. The kind that don't need a word of explanation of the professional skill of the man who caught them. Absolutely legal, too—in every state.

This amazing method was developed by a little group of professional fishermen. Though they are public guides, they rarely divulge their method to their patrons. They use it only when fishing for their own tables. It is probable that no man on your waters has ever **seen it,** ever **heard of it,** or ever **used it.** And when you have given it the first trial, you will be as closed-mouthed as a man who has suddenly discovered a gold mine. Because with this method you can fish within a hundred feet of the best fishermen in the county and pull in ferocious big ones while they come home empty handed. No special skill is required. The method is just as deadly in the hands of a novice as in the hands of an old timer. My method will be disclosed only to those few men in each area who will give me their word of honor not to give the method to anyone else.

Send me your name. Let me tell you how you can try out this deadly method of bringing in big bass from your "fished out" waters. Let me tell you why I let you try out my unusual method for the whole fishing season without risking a penny of your money. Send your name for details of my money-back trial offer. There is no charge for this information, now or at any other time. Just your name is all I need. But I guarantee that the information I send you will make you a complete skeptic—until you decide to try my method! And then, your own catches will fill you with disbelief. Send your name, today. This will be fun.

ERIC G. FARE, Libertyville 20, Illinois

Eric G. Fare, Libertyville 20, Illinois

Dear Mr. Fare: Send me complete information without any charge and without the slightest obligation. Tell me how I can learn your method of catching big bass from "fished out" waters, even when the old timers are reporting "No Luck."

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Zone____ State_____

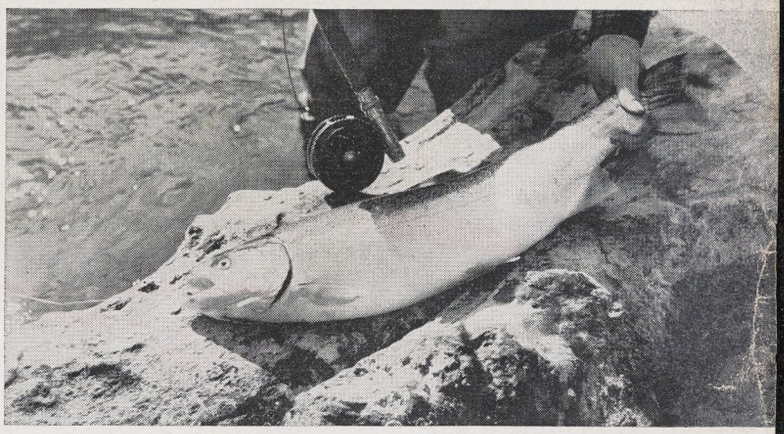
And The Quick-Pull



A glassy, low-water stretch is ideal for the quick-pull retrieve, particularly if the fish aren't feeding actively

they won't strike—that's the time for the quick-pull.

The wet fly has been used ever since fly fishing began. While the dry fly is usually fished upstream and allowed to drift in a natural manner, the wet fly is fished in a number of ways: upstream, down, across, and with or without some motion imparted by the angler. As a rule the angler casts across stream, letting his fly swing down in the current; when the line starts to drag, he brings the fly to life with his rod tip. The line is retrieved in short pulls, and ordinarily a few trout will always find the swimming fly attractive enough to eat. Sometimes the fish respond if your retrieve is very slow, and on other occasions if the return is fast. From my observation, few anglers ever use a very rapid retrieve. By very rapid I mean just as fast as you can pull line in *short* jumps. The difference in net results can be absolutely amazing. I caught a great many big trout last year simply because of my retrieve and the size of the fly.



The quick-pull retrieve knocked over this summer steelhead in short order. Scene of the carnage: California's Trinity River

What I call the quick-pull is neither a hand-twist retrieve nor a fast retrieve. I don't know where it started or even remember when I first used it, but there have been more and more occasions in the past few years when the technique produced large trout in clear streams. Many readers are probably already familiar with this method; the basic idea is to work a small dark wet fly just under the surface in rapid, continuous strokes. The fly must dash about two or three feet forward on each pull, with no obvious pause between movements. This is accomplished by brisk line-stripping combined with a backward movement of the rod. I jiggle the rod at the same time. The rod travels to the rear horizontally, at about half the speed that your line is being retrieved. Unlike the slower, more regular method of sunk-fly fishing, the quick-pull is rapid, pulsing, unvaried, and preferably swimming away from the fish. You must get the fastest possible movement to the fly in short dashes—without pulling the fly from the water, a neat trick that requires a little practice.

I doubt if the quick-pull retrieve imitates anything in prticular. Obviously, the fly might represent a rapidly swimming minnow or some kind of water beetle, but I think that the illusion of something edible *escaping* snaps the trout to attention. The technique has been particularly useful to me when fish are not actively feeding. I located a number of fine trout in a spring hole on the Beaver Head River one bright afternoon. The fish were lying along a ledge on the deep side of the pool and after getting their position marked, I waded out to a gravel bar and began casting in the usual way, letting the fly swing around deep and then twitching it by their hold. They didn't show any interest. I tried hanging the fly over them, pulling it forward in the current, and then letting it drift back. One brownie came up for a look, then returned to the bottom. Knotting on a No. 16 Gray Hackle, I let the fly swing over them again and then began stripping as fast as I could. Nothing happened. On the second cast I had just started my quick-pull when an old soaker smacked the little fly and broke off. But the disappointment was brief. I worked the pool from head to tail and took fifteen trout weighing up to three pounds. Results with the quick-pull are as positive as the blow of an ax.

I have never found any one method of fishing that is successful all the time, and only through continually learning new ones or modifying the old is there any chance of improving my game. The funny thing about the quick-pull retrieve is that I had been doing it unconsciously for a number of years, although I had never developed it to the point where I knew when and how to use it to best advantage. The success of the quick-pull depends on locating the fish and using a long, fine leader and very small wet fly. Dressings on No. 14 and No. 16 hooks are about right. The retrieve isn't worth the effort if you use larger flies; this is a technique for silky, clear-water streams, where large flies are usually poor fish-catchers.

Large wet flies are deadly in broad, turbulent rivers throughout the West. Much more so than in Eastern trouting, and if you look at the list of creations that tab large fish in the Rockies you'll find such delights as the Black Woolly Worm, Gray Nymph, Fledermaus, Joe's Hopper, and, more recently, the Muddler Minnow. Hook sizes No. 6 and No. 8 are probably the most popular on rough rivers, and I have taken some large trout on No. 2's. Traditionalists east of the Mississippi would shudder at these non-mayfly forms, but bear in mind that Western fishing goes to extremes. There are many slick meadow rivers throughout the Rockies where trout won't touch anything but No. 16 to No. 20 dressings. You have on one hand classic dry-fly water, like the Firehold or Lewis Rivers, flowing through forest and canyon country, and open windblown streams like the Snake, Madison, Big Hole, Deschutes, and Yellowstone. Although these streams flow through varied terrain, long portions of them are in sagebrush areas where meaty winged food like grasshoppers are literally whipped into the water. The trout are conditioned to the plop of a bug and smart fly casters work accordingly, getting a nice wet *splat* in their delivery. This, then, is a second important method of Western wet-fly angling; I call it splat-fishing. The idea is to hit the surface with a large, fat-bodied sunk pattern, preferably one that sinks slowly, and merely let it settle with no motion other than that of the current. It is exactly the opposite from quick-pull fishing. You must use a large fly and retrieve it painfully slow, without moving the rod.

Ideally, splat-fishing is a bouncy-water technique. As compared to the quick-pull, this method produces trout more consistently in its own situation —I would estimate that it scores about 80 percent of the time—but to a much less extent on flat clear-water streams. I particularly like to splat-fish when I'm on a float trip. Ordinarily, when you float a big Western river, the boat or raft is moving along at a fair clip and the best you can hope for is to cover likely-looking holds with one cast. The casts are usually made toward shore along deep banks or among boulders, and it seems especially important to get the trout's attention immediately.

The real secret of splat-fishing is using a comparatively long, light leader for the size fly being cast. Although the fly must smack the water, your line should still arrive delicately. I use 2X points with flies as large as No. 2, and the tippet section should be about 30 inches long. A short, heavy leader will bungle the presentation; you'll just get a continuous splash from fly to line.

On float trips, when the boat is moving fairly quick, I also keep plenty of slack off the reel to delay drag. Trout usually hit the fly an instant after the splat, but to make sure the fish has a chance to grab it, I push slack through the guides if the drifting boat is going to cause my line to drag.

One of the best flies for splat-fishing in the West is Dan Bailey's Yellow-Bodied Grayback. This is a rather full-bodied pattern tied with deer hair bound over the back. The underbody is yellow, and the hackle is gray. Both the shape and the material cause it to sink very slowly. I never used the fly until last summer, when Howard Allen and I were floating out of Beartrap Canyon on the lower Madison. We had been rubber-rafting on an expedition that would have made Lewis and Clark look like cub scouts. While I sat in a mess of broken tackle, Howard flicked the one whole rod we had between us. I don't believe that he was casting more than fifteen feet in any direction, but every time he whacked the water and let his fly settle, a big old brown would come banging out of the river. A few days later, Erwin Bauer and I were wading the Madison above Ennis and the Grayback scored a 6-pound rainbow.

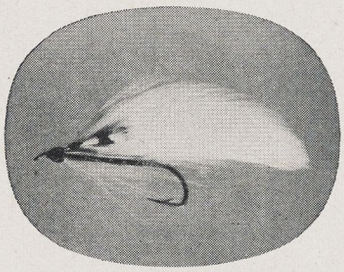
The Madison River, more specifically the lower Madison below Beartrap, is one of the finest pieces of water I've ever fished. Upstream, below Hebgen Dam, the river is turbulent and full of round, slick boulders. Early in July, when irrigation is needed in the valleys, additional water is released from the dam, and this heavy flow continues into September. During the period of high water, dry-fly fishing is tough work. Facing the swift current hour



after hour is not pleasant when there are no rising fish. We worked downstream, casting blind with Graybacks and Muddlers, and although this suggests boredom, every once in a while a brown or rainbow in the 2- to 3-pound class would boil under our flies as they smacked the surface. Toward evening, when the fish began active feeding, we used floaters, but the big wet fly was good for the bright hours.

I don't claim that the quick-pull or splat-fishing techniques are foolproof, but they both have a role in Western wet-fly work and you should experiment with them this season. There is a tendency to use sunken flies in a rather monotonous manner, probably because the fly can't be seen by the angler. But it's possible that in the world of the fish, where hundreds of insects flow by, the trout finds himself scanning the crowd in the tense hope that something ridiculous will appear.

ONE FOR THE BOOK



Tied by Herbert L. Welch

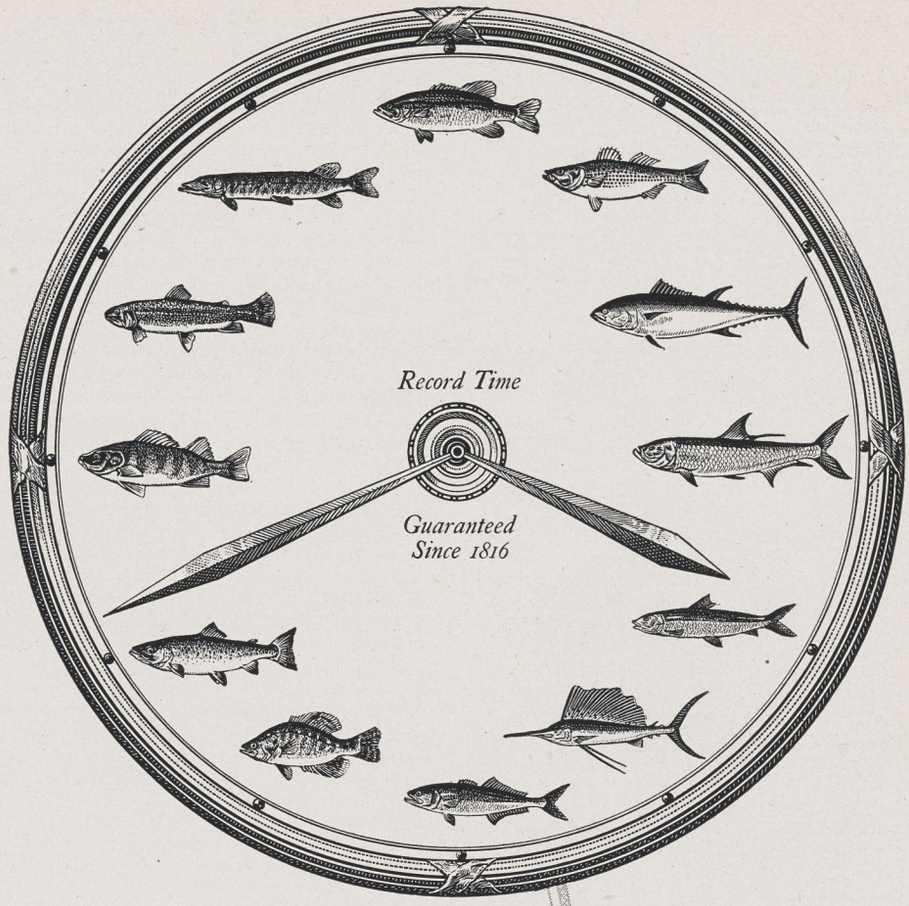
BLACK GHOST

Origin	Eastern
Type	Streamer
Tail	Small bunch of yellow hackle fibers
Body	Black silk wound full with flat silver tinsel ribbing
Wing	Four white saddle hackles
Hackle	Small bunch of yellow hackle fibers
Cheeks	Jungle cock
Head	Black

The Black Ghost was originated by Herb Welch in 1927 at Mooselookmaguntic, Maine, and the effectiveness of this pattern hasn't lessened one bit with the years. It is probably one of the most popular Eastern streamers for trout, landlocked salmon, and smallmouth bass and has accounted for numerous prize winners in the Field & Stream Fishing Contest. This Ghost is not intricately dressed; an amateur can tie it quite readily.

The Black Ghost is not intended to imitate any specific bait fish, but the stark white wings appear to be especially effective in the spring and fall of the year. It is sometimes dressed with bucktail or marabou wings; both materials are productive under certain water conditions. A. J. McC.

No. 91 in a series of original fly patterns



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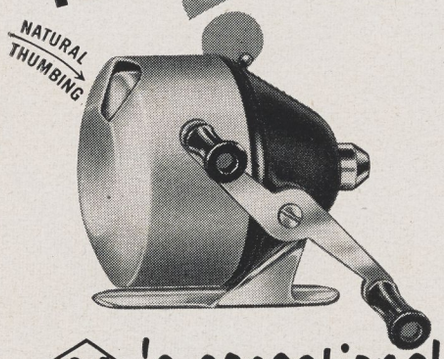

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1—Send in your name for H-I's sensational NEW REEL, with your reasons for selecting it, in 25 words or less. Mail each entry to H-I CONTEST REEL, 20 Whitesboro Street, Utica 2, N. Y.

2—Use a postcard, or regular writing paper. There is **nothing to buy, nothing else to send.** Your sporting goods dealer has it on display **now.** Ask to see **it.**

3—Entries must be postmarked before midnight May 31st, 1956, the date contest closes.

4—Names will be judged on originality, application to the reel, and aptness of thought. Duplicate prizes will be awarded in case of ties. Judges decision final. No entries returned or published. Entries and ideas become property of Horrocks-Ibbotson Company and may be used as they decide.

5—All persons in the United States may enter except employees of Horrocks-Ibbotson Company, its advertising agency and their families.

Contest subject to all federal and state regulations. Winners will be notified by mail approximately six weeks after close of contest. List of winners will be mailed to any person sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



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Beginner's Corner

Back to Fundamentals

Mud minnows and barred killifish are commonly used baits for bass and pickerel. Either species can be kept packed in wet grass and stored in a cool place for as long as forty-eight hours with little effect on its liveliness. A large perforated galvanized bucket with the bait stored in layers will serve nicely. A lump of ice on top will provide the necessary refrigeration for the trip between home and pond.

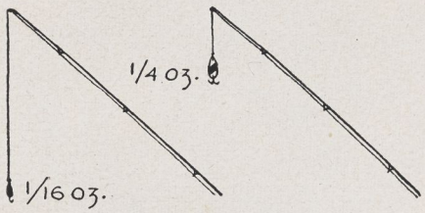
When buying plugs it's a sound plan to make your selection on the basis of action rather than color. There are three major types of plugs: surface, floating-and-diving, and sinking. You should have at least one of each kind before buying additional plugs that serve the same function. An injured minnow, for instance, although a different performer than a popping plug, is still a surface bait, and if you haven't got a sinking plug in your box, it would be more practical to have a deep-runner for bottom-scratching fish.

SPINNERS have long been a stand-by for catching fish under tough conditions, and many an angler has caught his biggest and best trout on them. There are many different varieties, but for use with a fly rod, the lighter a spinner is the better it will cast and the more satisfactorily it will perform in the water. The smallest Colorados may be used on extremely light rods without danger of harming them, provided a modicum of common sense is employed. These little spinners will also catch big trout under conditions when no other artificial lure will deliver.

When fishing lakes with a dry fly, you should start by making as long a cast as possible, if you are not aiming at a rising fish, and let the lure sit for ten or fifteen seconds before retrieving. The retrieve should be made in short, halting steps, giving the fish plenty of time to get off the bottom and look the feathers over. Many anglers work too fast. Often the slightest disturbance will put the big ones down.

The wet fly should be fished in much the same manner, the only difference being that a longer time should be allowed before starting the retrieve so as to get the fly down as deep in the water as possible. You can facilitate sinking by using a good leader-sink preparation. The natural path of insect food in the lake is from bottom to top.

In casting lures of various weights, you will find that the proper distance between the tip of the rod and the lure preparatory to a cast will vary in pro-



portion to the weight used. An ultra-light lure, for example, casts much farther when suspended about 20 inches from the rod tip; the standard ¼-ounce lure will handle best at a point about 6 inches from the tip.

FISHING QUESTIONS

THE ARCTIC CHARR

I am in the Air Force, stationed in the east Canadian Arctic on Baffin Island. A great question has come up among the fellows here. This question concerns the arctic char, a fish that is prevalent in these arctic waters. Can you please give me some information as to whether this fish can be caught fly fishing. I say yes, but my fellow airmen say no. Also, just what is the correct name for the arctic char? I was told that it is the Atlantic salmon.

Would also appreciate any information on the type of fly or fly-fishing lures this fish will take. J. N. D. (A.P.O. New York)

ANS.—Arctic charr, or char (either is proper) are not Atlantic salmon. The arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*), also called alpine trout and arctic trout, is a species of trout found in arctic waters. This fish is distributed from the Gulf of St. Lawrence (where it is rare) to the coast of Labrador and northern Canada, including Hudson Bay, and in Alaska. Numerous local forms have been recognized and named, but only further detailed study will indicate the validity of these so-called subspecies. Farther south, the arctic charr is represented by the Sunapee trout and the blueback trout of Maine. Both sea-run and nonmigratory populations are known. It spawns in fresh water in the fall of the year.

Although arctic charr can be caught on flies, spoons, spinners, and spinning lures are more effective. The feeding habits of this species are very erratic and a method that works well in one area may not work at all in another. In general, small brightly-colored wet flies should produce fish.

A. J. McC.

THE RED TROUT

Is the red trout of Canada a distinct species of trout or is this just another name for the brook trout? M. V. (Connecticut)

ANS.—The red trout is classed as a distinct species (*Salvelinus marstoni*). It is endemic to the Province of Quebec, in the lakes of the Laurentian area. It is also found in Charlevoix County east of Laurentide Park. The name "red trout" is sometimes erroneously applied to the brook trout, however, especially in lakes where the brooks tend toward a reddish coloration. The red trout is characterized by a prominently forked caudal fin, a slender body, and by the very deep red coloration on the lower sides, especially in the spawning male. It seldom weighs more than a pound. It resembles the aurora trout, but the latter has a truncate, or square, tail, while the red trout does not.

A. J. McC.

OFTB BACK NUMBERS

Recently, I took up fly tying and it interests me greatly. I am fourteen years old and I'm an ardent fisherman. One thing I appreciate in FIELD & STREAM is One for the Book. One thing that peeves me though is the lack of patterns that I have. I started collecting them about two years ago, and I have about twenty-five patterns. The article says there are seventy or more patterns. I'd like to ask a favor of you and if there is any cost I'll pay for it. I'd like you to send me copies of all the patterns that have appeared in FIELD & STREAM. S. P. (Connecticut)

ANS.—I'm sorry to report there's no way of getting all the back issues in which One for the Book appeared. For a year or so we tried to fulfill all the requests for tear sheets, but we've long since run out. The only sug-

Manual Magic

FISHING



A. J. McCLANE
EDITOR

BACK in the days when there was only one spinning reel on the market and fewer than a dozen lures, nearly everybody used a spinner called the Preska Perche. There's no harm in mentioning the trade name now, as I haven't seen one around in years. The Preska was a weighted blade with a rubber sleeve over the lead; it seemed highly original at the time, but it quickly became the progenitor of a whole flock of baits, all of which looked similar.

The interesting thing about the Preska was that, unlike its imitations, fish rarely hit it unless you reeled the spinner along at top speed. Spin addicts usually found this out accidentally after getting the lure hung on the bottom or cranking the blade back in disgust after trying all the artsy-craftsy maneuvers we have come to know as skillful retrieving —twitch, pull, hop, speed up, slow down—anything but a fast playback. I don't know why that particular lure excited the fish when it was literally whipped through the water, but the art of working any bait depends to a very large degree on the anglers' experience with it—and his own manual magic.

There are some generalizations that can be made about the correct retrieving speeds for various game fish. For example, it's a safe bet that a moderately fast retrieve will attract chain pickerel, northern pike, and muskellunge, whereas largemouth and smallmouth bass are more frequently caught by reeling slowly. And the slowest retrieves are most productive of pan fish such as yellow perch, bluegill, and crappie. In general, trout are taken at a much slower pace than, say, landlocked salmon or coho salmon, whereas the granddaddy of the family, the chinook salmon, prefers lures that are barely moving. Landlocked salmon are often caught on trolled flies and spoons at speeds of 8 to 10 miles per hour, the coho at 4 to 8 miles per hour, and the chinook at 1 to 2 miles per hour.

In salt water you can hardly retrieve a lure fast enough to catch dolphin, great barracuda, crevalle, roosterfish, and any of the mackerels. These species are often caught at speeds in excess of 12 miles per hour and often up to 20 miles per hour on trolled baits. Yet other salt-water game fish such as the red drum, bonefish, and tarpon favor a lure that dawdles along. Naturally, there are exceptions to every rule, but the experienced angler has at least some idea of what speed range he can operate in and still expect strikes. For instance, how fast should you work a wet fly to catch trout?

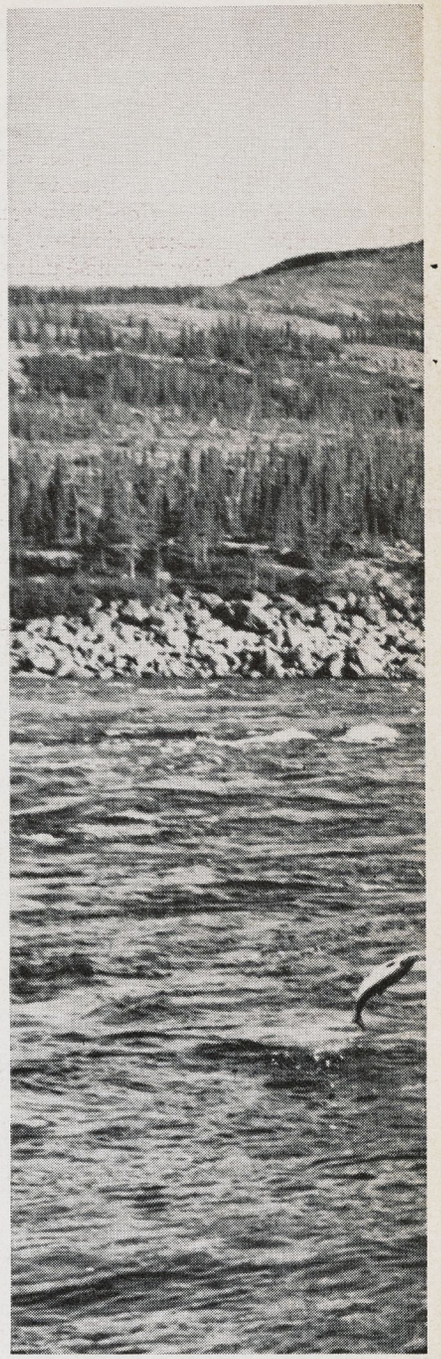
The standard procedure is to cast across or quartering across the stream and let the fly swing around in an arc at the same speed as the current before you start retrieving in short pulls. Sometimes the fish respond if the fly is stripped in slowly, and on other occasions you draw more strikes by moving the fly moderately fast. There is a variation, however, that is amazingly effective at times, particularly in very clear water; it requires a long, light leader and a small, dark wet fly such as a No. 14 Gray Hackle or Black Gnat.

The basic idea is to work the fly just under the surface in rapid, continuous strokes. The fly must dash about a foot forward on each pull, with no real pause between movements. This is accomplished by combining brisk stripping of the line with a backward movement of the rod. The rod should travel to the rear, almost horizontally, at about half the speed your line is being retrieved.

Unlike the orthodox method of wet-fly fishing, the quick-pull is rapid, pulsing, and preferably the fly should be swimming *away* from the fish. If you try to get the fastest possible movement to the fly in short darts—without yanking it from the water—the subtleties of the method will soon become apparent. Although you can make a dead drift first and begin retrieving when the line drags, it's also possible to cast quartering downstream and work the entire reach in quick pulls. The success of this technique depends, of course, on your manual dexterity.

If there's any magic in the motions, it's in keeping the fly lifelike, knowing exactly how much the retrieve can be exaggerated without disturbing the water with your terminal tackle. The long leader helps and so does a fine line point; there's no sense in using a leader of less than 9 feet, nor a line point of more than .035 inch. So as far as retrieving speed with a wet fly is concerned, you can run the gamut from a dead drift to a quick pull, and the same speed range applies to dry flies, streamers, and even nymphs under different circumstances.

The late Lew Oatman was a fine angler who contributed much to the lore of the streamer fly. Many of his



DECEMBER—F.&S.—EDITION 2

Holiday Bass

(*Continued from page 43*)

"Sort of ease them out after they take the lure," advised Pouser. "It would be a shame to lose a really big one by snatching the hook out of his mouth. Fishing for bass with such a short length of line takes some adjustment, but easy does it."

Within a few minutes, using a motion that seemed to be in time with the smooth rhythm of his jigging, Pouser had pulled a largemouth onto the ice. He tossed it into the bottom of his box. This box was of a type carried by most Northeast ice fishermen—one with many uses: seat, holder for tackle, container for fish, and, if the ice should break, a life preserver of sorts.

Gradually a thick ground fog rose to about the height of the fishermen's knees, creating the illusion that a school of legless men was floating on a cloud in the middle of the river. As the morning sun knifed through the subfreezing air, the vapor slowly vanished. But sometimes, said Pouser, the friendly sun doesn't appear, and a thick fog covers the river—obscuring everything for hours.

"Once a wife went fishing out here with her husband and couldn't see him when a fog came up, even though he was only 25 feet away. She called, 'Honey, where are you?' About eight guys answered," said Pouser with a smile. "It's pretty easy to go off in the wrong direction when it fogs up. So the best thing is to sit down calmly and wait for it to clear off. If it doesn't, listen for the sound of the trains—that will guide you toward shore."

In about an hour and a half, both men had limits of five, and some yellow perch and pickerel as well. Walking ashore, Robinson grinned and said, "You were right—these sure are holiday bass. And you can stretch the holidays right into February."

"They'll keep hitting," Pouser agreed. "And when the ice starts to turn spongy, the Cecil County sheriff will ride up and down the river in a sound truck, warning fishermen. The sheriff and his deputies are fishermen themselves. When they say it's time to go—well, the holidays are over."









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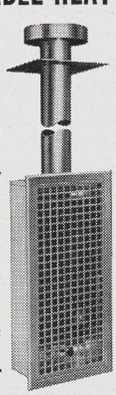

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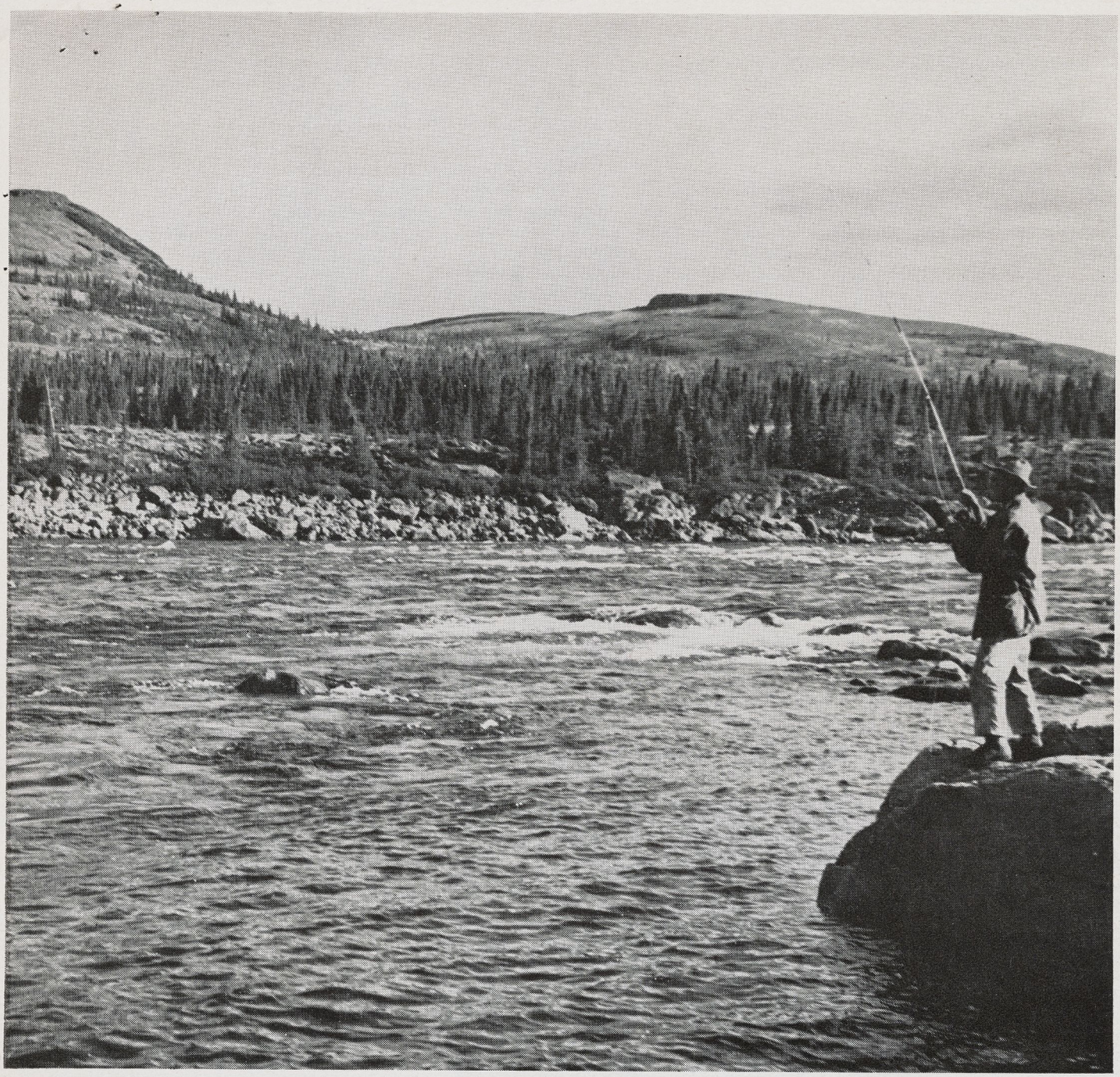

The quick-pull method of retrieving a wet fly can result in very large fish when conditions are right

patterns are quite popular, particularly the Golden Dace. Lew impressed upon me years ago, while we were fishing the Vermont side of the Battenkill, the virtue of a slow retrieve with a streamer. His definition of "slow" was to let the fly sink to the bottom, then pull it along with just the slightest twitching—as though he never really planned to finish the retrieve at all. This trick has been invaluable to me on many occasions, but nowhere did it prove more deadly than on Lake Taupo in New Zealand last March.

During the summer months New Zealand trout anglers are avid night fishermen, and the gang camped at the mouth of the Waihaha River wouldn't even venture out during daylight hours. Our guide Ron Houghton announced that it was purely a waste of time. For me night fishing doesn't hold any appeal. Most of the thrill in fly fishing is visual—from strike to release.

Inevitably, I had the hotspot all to myself. The mountainous countryside is so beautiful that just wading and casting over the crystalline water was attraction enough. As with *boca* fishing in Argentina, the trout lay in deep water just where the stream fans out into the lake. I cast for about an hour, trying various patterns and retrieves. Except for a small, plump brownish bait fish that darted sculpinlike over the stones at my feet, I didn't see another sign of life. This "bully" looked something like the Muddler Minnow pattern, so I tied one on, playing it back the way Lew Oatman would scratch for a Battenkill brown. In other words I stuck the rod under my arm for about five minutes after the cast, then drew the fly back about a foot and waited again.

After two or three pulls at the line, something hit like an express train and went down into my backing before vaulting out of the water. It was a 4-pound rainbow, which by local standards is an average trout. In the hour following I caught three more trout, all larger, up to 6½ pounds. This was my first day at Taupo, and during the week following as we cruised around the 238-square-mile lake, fishing stream mouths such as Chow Creek, the Waihora Stream, and Boulder Creek, the slow draw consistently produced fish that Ron insisted had no reason to be "out in the noonday sun." In the evening and early morning hours, Taupo's trout became active predators feeding mainly on smelt, but for this tourist the real fun was the sledge-hammer blow that whipped the frail bamboo in an arc and the sight of a silvery rainbow flinging himself in a wild leap before jumping belly up, and belly down. I could throw a plug on a bass pond at night and never know the difference.

Plugs probably require more manual dexterity than flies, if only for the reason that most of these baits have a built-in action that often prohibits changing speeds. Let's take the popping plug, for example; when using a popper, let the lure sit for a moment after you make a cast, then give it a sharp jerk, with an upward snap of the rod tip. This movement is solely in the wrist of the hand holding the rod when casting with spinning gear. The other hand should hold the reel crank stationary, so that you can be ready to strike instantly.

Most fish are difficult to hook on a surface popper because they usually knock the lure upward when rushing from below. After another pause, repeat the action. These rod strokes shouldn't be too violent, or the disturbance will make the illusion unnatural. The pauses in between each pop should be long enough to permit the plug to remain motionless. Don't be in a hurry. A good indication of the right speed is in getting at least two pops out of the plug before there's enough slack in your line to require reeling. After taking up the slack, keep repeating the action, but vary the time between pauses.

If fishing is slow, we're all inclined to rush things along, but a popping plug doesn't work worth a hoot when it's literally churned over the surface. For one thing, poppers are not designed for fast retrieves. The slanting, concave face pulls the plug body under, and it will flip end over end or tangle in the line. Secondly, the total effect is complete chaos, creating a noise and a wake but little action.

Of course, the village idiot might splinter it, but you can usually get better results on most game fish by switching to a cigar-shaped plug with propellers fore and aft. The tiny blades churn just enough to attract a hiding largemouth or pickerel, yet the bait can be retrieved at top speed when necessary. To get the *maximum* disturbance at speeds exceeding the popper while still maintaining a fishable action, TVA regulars who specialize in schooling white bass modify their plugs by removing the broad metal dish from the face of one popular surface bait and fastening it to the head of a slender propeller-tailed plug. This results in a surface disturber that wobbles or crawls across the water with its hind end purring.

But aside from the mechanical aspects of fishing lures, both the spin caster and the bait caster have to think in terms of tackle performance before ultimate retrieving speeds can be reached. One reason, for instance, why small reels are a handicap in many phases of salt-water casting is not that they lack the capacity or inherent strength to handle the fish, but rather that they have a minimal rate of line recovery. Your outfit might be perfect on a pike pond, but the gear ratio, cranking radius, and the spool diameter of the reel simply can't move a lure fast enough to trigger a solid strike from, say, a bonito or a ladyfish. There are many species of fish that habitually follow, swat at, and swirl behind an artificial lure without actually striking it—simply because the bait isn't moving fast enough.

A fast-moving plug is sometimes effective during periods when bass aren't feeding. If you ever get in a spot where you can watch a bass's reactions, you'll realize how this works. North Carolina doesn't have many smallmouth streams, but the New River, which the Tarheel State shares with Virginia, produces some nice fishing from time to time; it's typical river-bass angling, with fish running, for the most part, from less than a pound to 2 or 2½ pounds. I located a sizeable school below a bridge on the New River one afternoon, along a ledge on the deep side of a pool.

After marking the fish's position, I climbed down on the rough stone foundation and began casting. They didn't show any interest in the first few casts, but finally a ¼-ounce darting plug brought one bass up for a look. I let the plug rest motionless for a moment, then gave it a slight



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twitch, waited, and twitched again. The bass went back to the bottom. After a minute or so I cast out again, and another fish came to the surface. Instead of twitching it slowly in the conventional manner, I pulled it away so rapidly, he couldn't possibly catch it. Again I waited, and on the third cast two bass moved up behind the plug. I pulled the lure hard, but this time only for a few feet, and a good fish smacked the plastic minnow with a knuckle-rattling jolt. That bass very likely thought the plug was going to get away again.

Fooling around with a nervous bass doesn't prove much, but you may recall Buck Perry and his spoonplug. About ten years ago, Buck went around the country demonstrating his lure, and a day on the water with Mr. Perry left a lot of cynical outdoor scribes in a state of shock. One method he used to locate bass in a strange (to him) lake was to set up a heavy trolling rig with his bait, which looked like a bent shoehorn, then roar around the pond with the motor wide open. It's hard to believe that a bass would even see the lure go by, no less intercept it, but Buck caught strings of fish everywhere he appeared. This doesn't mean that *any* lure could be towed along at top speed and attract bass, but it suggests that the only limit to a potentially effective retrieve is how fast we can manipulate the bait. What would be your best bet with small spinning lures in flowing water, a steady, erratic, slow, or fast retrieve?

As a general rule, in spinning for most game fish the retrieve should never be held at a steady pace. An erratic playback is usually more effective than a constant wobble or spin of the lure. A blade should be maneuvered in such a fashion that it rises and falls, turning and flashing with the slack, then suddenly darting forward again. Yet there are situations in which all those practiced deceptions that make a fish believe a piece of metal is edible can be defeated by a strong current. It requires a sensitive hand to maintain a lifelike retrieve.

On fast rivers, and especially deep ones, the spin-stick artist must constantly relate the speed of the current to the speed of his lure. The usual approach in working a broad run is to cast quartering upstream. As the spoon enters the water the line is slack, but it quickly begins to belly, with the current pulling the lure along. Inevitably, there is some variation in how fast different lure weights and designs sink or swim, but a certain amount of slack is desirable until the bait swings around downstream; it should be just enough to maintain the right depth.

When the lure begins to arc against a tightening line, you may want to slack off once again. This tightening causes the wobbler to rise from the bottom to the top (an attraction in itself), but the angler who has enough manual skill to anticipate the peak of that movement and pay out more line can prolong his retrieve at fish-holding depths. Steady reeling in this cast, or any attempt to pump more action into the retrieve will only result in raising the spoon to the surface, leaving it flapping like an angry pancacke on top. At times, of course, even a churning spoon is effective, but as a rule we get our best results near the gravel in big streams at slow to moderate speeds.

The key to your manual skill in a retrieve depends on how you hold the rod. There is no such thing as one position for all lures or all fish. In tarpon fly fishing, for example, you have to hold the rod so that the tip will be pointed directly at the fish. This would be difficult if the tarpon required a fast-moving lure, but fortunately the silver king is caught on an almost motionless or slow-draw retrieve. By holding the rod down, the angler can make the essentially powerful overhead strike. This is neither desirable nor necessary in trout fishing, where the fly rod is most often at a 45-degree angle and the strike a mere tightening of the line.

In all other forms of casting, the correct rod position for any type of retrieve depends on the lure itself and the length of line extended on the water. If you are using a surface plug designed to skip over the surface, it will be necessary to hold the rod tip high at first when the lure is 40 or 50 yards out. Then it can be gradually lowered as the reel fills and your rate of line recovery becomes greater. The skilled caster automatically compensates for the increasing speed of the lure as he cranks it back, possibly starting with the rod at a 60-degree angle and lowering it to the horizontal or even pointing it at the water to one side to keep a popper working right up to the boat. The important thing is to maintain enough manual control so you can still set the hook. The most difficult position, and the one to be avoided, is holding the rod pointed directly overhead.

The retrieve is a large part of your success in fishing. If there is any magic in an art form that makes a plastic plug look like a frog or a simple metal blade resemble an injured minnow, it only proves that the hand is quicker than the eye.

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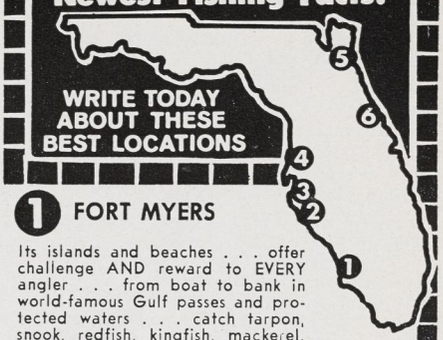

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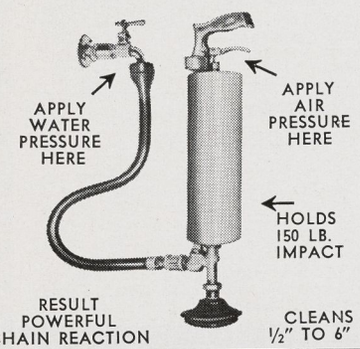

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(*Continued from page 57*)

settled into our pig huts, and I tuned in the riot call, which is usually the best call for early winter hunts. Crows come to it like bees to a honeypot. When crows decide to respond to a call, they'll be on top of you within two or three minutes. That's exactly what happened.

You've got to take crows as they come into range, especially the first one; letting them bunch up never seems to pay off. Crows have a highly developed social order within a roosting population. Only the sentries are allowed to respond to a call. If they pass on it and give an all-clear, the other birds follow to feed or fight. Our first visitor had no sooner sounded the "come and get it" and was dropping in for the fracas than it crossed in front of my 12-gauge. The falling bird almost knocked the papier-mâché owl off the fencepost.

The noise of the shot did not disturb the other crows, and they dived into the opening after only a circle or two. The first birds to arrive are always a little cautious and may circle, checking the ground for unusual movements. This is the crucial time when most hunters goof by looking up. A crow can spot the whites of your eyes or the slightest movement from unbelievable heights. Once they're satisfied that all's clear, they'll start dropping into the decoys to join the fight. A diving or falling crow is one of the toughest and most challenging wing shots there is.

As birds pile in and the action intensifies, they become less and less cautious. After a few minutes, we stopped taking turns, and all three of us were popping birds at the same time. I'm sure several crows got double or even triple doses of lead as they swung over. After the first flight cleared out, the crows retreated to a patch of pine trees on a distant ridge to reorganize.

"What do you think of our pigpen now?" Steve yelled. What could I say? It was fantastic shooting, and we had overcome one of the biggest problems that face crow shooters—good camouflage. Being in a position to get a shot at crows often precludes being well enough hidden so they won't see you. But here we had good shooting positions and were well hidden too.

The crow is probably the wariest of all animals hunted with a gun, except perhaps the wild turkey. Ornithologists claim that it is the most advanced member of the bird family. If the crow hunter understands some of the facts of crow life, he has a better chance of outwitting the black rascals.

First, the crow is a flocking bird and loves the company of other crows. This is the first crow mistake in favor of the hunter. In order to flock at night crows need a roost tree to sleep on. After finding one, the birds will use it night after night, until mating, migration, or hunters move them out. Hunters have little control over mating and migration, but they can manipulate themselves. Once you have found a roost tree, never shoot within a mile of it, or you'll drive the birds away and have to look for their new location.

Though basically a grain feeder, the omnivorous crow will eat anything that doesn't fight back, and a hunter who knows this knows where to look for crows. Always on the search for a free handout, crows can be found gleaning over garbage dumps, pigpens, or any place raw garbage is dumped, as well as along rivers, lakes, and oceans where fish are likely to be washed ashore. They often feed in the fields when crops are about to be harvested or along highways on game killed by automobiles.

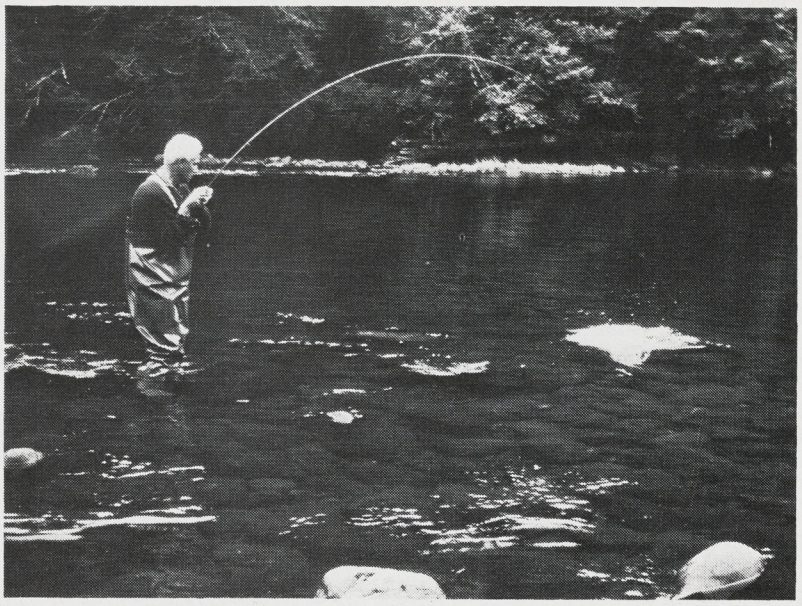
Place yourself or your blind where crows eat regularly, and you'll have crow shooting. Or, you can bait crows, inducing them to eat at your blind, if you don't overdo it. Food for bait can be anything from a dead horse or scraps from the butcher to ruined grains or cereals.

Crows are creatures of habit. When they leave the roost in search of food, the same birds follow the same routes each day. The youngsters leave the roost first and travel farther than the adult birds to find their meals. The birds start off either directly across the land or follow a ridge or shoreline. As they get farther away from home they break into smaller and smaller flocks and eventually are evenly dispersed over the entire range of the roost, but never out of hearing from one another. If one should make a find or become endangered, the others are always near enough to help out. By observing for several days the flight lanes that the birds are using, a hunter can make a blind along several paths and hunt different parts of the flock all the time.

Crows can see better than you can. Eyesight is more acute in birds than

(*Continued on page 126*)

Steelhead — for the Wye?



THE WRITER plays a good fish in a characteristically-clear steelhead river in British Columbia.

Ocean-going rainbows must come here, says RICHARD THORPE

THE STEELHEAD, although predominantly a fish that inhabits the waters of the Pacific Northwest, is now becoming more widely recognised, and the interest that it has aroused in Britain poses the question: How long will it be before this ocean-running trout becomes recognised as a sporting fish within our own waters? These anadromous rainbow trout provide superlative sport in the rivers from northern California to Alaska. It is surely only a matter of time before they are introduced to United Kingdom rivers.

It is now 10 years since I first fished for steelhead trout with a fly. Opinion at that time held strongly that the fish could only be moved by lures or their equivalent fished as deeply as possible. Therefore the only logical way to present the fly was with the heaviest line available. Many of the pundits at the time went even further and considered that any line initially fished downstream was a waste of time. It had to be thrown upstream with plenty of slack to allow as much time as possible for the dead weight of the line to carry the fly close to the bottom. Having spent my early years fishing for Atlantic salmon I considered that this practice was not necessary so I fished for the steelhead in the traditional way, as I would fish for salmon here at home, each cast being made down and across.

Results proved my case to be well founded, especially in times of moderate water and even in high water, but as the season changed to summer and the levels of the rivers dropped it became apparent that a new approach was needed.

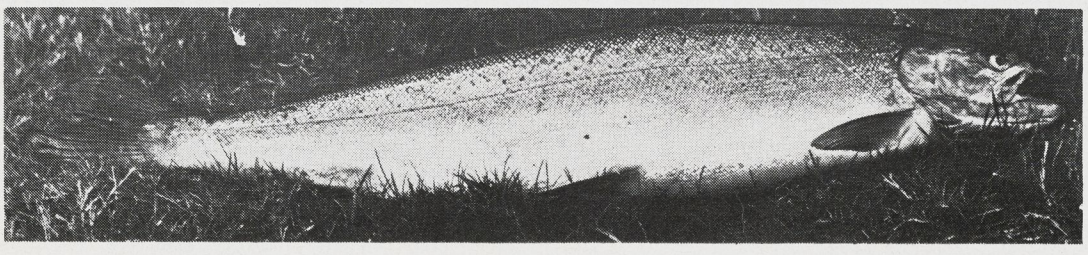
☆ ☆ ☆

The rivers of British Columbia in the main are of the purest nature, gin-clear so that in many of the pools it is possible to see right into their depths. The fish themselves are often visible except when they hold high up in the necks of the pools where the stream flow obliterates reasonable visibility. In addition the season is blessed with a succession of cloudless days that makes a cautious approach essential.

It seemed obvious that small flies and fine tackle would be the answer to the problem. Not only that, why not fish the flies right up in the surface film? I was advised that despite the low-water conditions I would be wasting my time; steelhead were essentially fish that stayed on the bottom and the only way of eliciting a response was to get my fly down to them. Still, it was worth a try and as the days progressed the success of my approach was vindicated.

Since that time it has become apparent that the steelhead will not only rise to the fly fished on a floating line in low water conditions but will also be tempted to take such a fly in times of moderate flow and even when the temperature of the water is near freezing. The beauty of fishing the surface film, besides the lightness of the tackle which can be used, lies in the infinite variations the angler has at his disposal in the actual presentation of the fly. The daunting thing was to apply this principle to steelhead in the many varieties of water that they inhabited. It was all very well to pursue this practice in the smaller streams but when it was applied to some of the larger rivers prospects appeared hopeless.

In recent years I have had the good fortune to fish with an Englishman who has lived these last 20 years in British Columbia. He has taken the process a stage further. He has been so successful in taking steelhead with the floating fly that during the last few



A TYPICAL summer-run steelhead.

seasons he has fished with nothing else.

On the Clearwater several seasons ago he outfished everyone who, because of the heavy flow and the cold temperatures, had taken to the more conventional heavy sinking lines and large flies. As my friend had seen large fish rolling in the enormous pools, he was convinced that his size 7 floating line and size 6 fly would be adequate for the job. He was not mistaken; he was rewarded by rises from six different fish, hooking three and landing two whose combined weights totalled more than 40 lb. All this on a size 2 Koh-i-Noor!

Last season because of unseasonably high water and the heaviest rains on record I decided to turn once again to my sink-tip line. My English friend was not convinced. He stayed with his floating line. The result of 10 days' fishing in appalling conditions was that he consistently rose and hooked more fish than any of us in our party.

Because of the success of the fly fished downstream in the surface film, some anglers decided to carry the presentation a stage further and fish 'on top of the water'. This meant a fairly large hook tied with materials that would sustain its float through the drifts that were required of it. A size 8 low-water hook has proved to be the most useful general-purpose iron. A large bushy tail is important, and the wings are usually bifurcated and point forwards and outwards.

Selected spots in the pool are chosen and the lie is covered thoroughly. The necks of the pools are especially favoured places, hence the importance of a fly that floats and stays that way. Steelhead usually will take in depths of from three to six feet, although there are exceptions to this rule.

It is as well to allow the fly to stay on the water as long as possible as many fish will follow the fly down and take it just as it begins to drag. I have known fish let the fly pass right over them and when it has moved well downstream start to follow it, to take it finally with a lunge and a surging swirl. It takes a steady hand not to draw the fly away at this explosive moment!

The floating presentation has great potential and many possibilities. Within the confines of summer flows it is an exacting and exciting business, and it does seem that on certain occasions it can produce as many fish as, if not more, than those taken by any other means. It has the decided advantage that the fish see the fly and not the fisherman first.

All this has caused me to pause and reflect. Why I wonder has the deeply-sunk fly been considered to be the only reasonable approach to the steelhead? The traditional bait fisherman's technique of 'bumping the bottom' has become so accepted that using heavy lines and sunk flies has become a deep-rooted habit that will die hard.

A few enlightened anglers — pioneered especially by another Englishman, Roderick Haig-Brown — have decided upon a more-open attitude to fishing for steelhead with the fly, an attitude inspired by our own low-water greased-line techniques and those of Hewitt and La Branche. While it has been easy to apply these ideas to catch fish in low-water conditions it has been another proposition altogether to carry them a stage further and employ them on large rivers crrying heavy flows of cold water. Even now but a handful of fishermen adopt a positive approach to the floating line. Most are reluctant to change from the sunk line or, at best, the sink-tip line and try the fly in the surface film. But now, after several seasons, I have seen this approach work so well that I am bound to question all the former well-established methods.

Time will tell whether the more radical and pleasing low-water, light-tackle, ideas will be adopted. Old ways take time to change but in the end the success of added returns will prove the deciding factor.

Way with a wet fly

FISHING rivers with a wet fly for trout or sea-trout can be a matter of repetitive action with an occasional change of fly or flies, but this need not be so if you are prepared to try new ideas or adopt local tactics.

Many years ago, when returning home from Scotland along what is now the M6, I decided on impulse to stay for a night in the Lake District and I headed towards Coniston. It was getting late, and I was beginning to doubt whether there would be hotel accommodation for me, when I came upon a cottage with a "Bed and Breakfast" sign. I decided to make the best of it and stay there.

An elderly couple — both in their seventies — greeted me like the prodigal son and appeared to take me straight to their hearts. Over supper I talked with the old gentleman — to my shame I cannot remember his name although he had been a well-known trout angler and had published at least one book on the subject. The talk naturally turned to fishing and then to the use of the wet fly.

"When your fly is working around, where do you experience most takes?" he asked.

I replied, "On the turn."

"Then why don't you make the fly 'turn' three or four times in every cast?"

As simple as that! I had fished the fly since I was eight or nine years old, and had realised long ago that most takes came 'on the turn', yet I had never before considered the possibility of making the fly turn more than once!

Next day the old man took me to a stretch of river about ten miles from his home where the water was 12 to 18 in deep and ran over fairly large stones causing a ripple. An ideal wet fly water . . .

Instructing me to fish in my normal style, he said he would follow me down with the three- or four-turn method, using an identical fly.

I ended the 150 yard stretch fishless, and turned to watch my companion. He had waded out about 10 ft and was casting across and slightly downstream. He did not allow his rod to follow the line but held it out in the first-cast position.

The fly worked around and made the turn. After holding the fly in position for a couple of seconds, the old man moved the rod top about 2 ft downstream and turned once more. This action was repeated until the rod was pointing downstream.

Fishing the water I had just covered, he ended with three trout. I would swear that I had fished every inch of that water correctly and yet I did not connect. To say I was impressed is putting it mildly.

Since that demonstration I have fished the wet fly as the old man showed me where conditions permitted, and am sure that my bags have been the better for it.

The method is particularly effective when fishing for sea-trout at night. The effect of the short movement of the rod top is to present the fly at a reduced speed and in a natural 'dropping back' manner which is more acceptable to the fish. That, at least, is my theory . . .

Mike Dunn

Wet fly or dry?

Far from his native chalk-streams, DERMOT WILSON learns when one method can be better than the other on the rough streams of the North

AS I DROVE UP the M5 last June, heading for a few days' fishing with Reg Righyni in the North, the weather seemed to be getting warmer every minute. If and when the sun broke through, I thought, it would be very warm indeed.

Then the sun did break through. And my car broke down. As I sat in the heat, waiting for the AA to arrive, I reflected on life's constant unfailing injustices. This was the second time in 1983 that I had forsaken my familiar chalk-streams to try my hand in the North. On the first occasion (described in the October, 1983, issue of *Trout and Salmon*) the April weather had been too cold for man or beast or fly. Now it looked as if we were in for a heat-wave.

And so it turned out. Each day we had high temperatures and cloudless skies, hardly ideal for fishing. Reg Righyni, however, is not one of the most eminent fly-fishermen in the country for nothing. Amazingly enough, he managed to put me in the way of a number of trout, as well as passing on to me some of his enviable knowledge of rain-fed rivers.

This was, in fact, my second lesson from him. During the first, in April, he had taught me how to fish the wet fly. Now I was to learn exactly when to fish it — a truly vital matter.

Reg has a country-wide reputation as a past master of the wet fly, but it is not so generally known that he really prefers fishing dry. He uses the wet fly, he says, only when he knows that conditions suit it best. As a dry-fly addict, though I hope not purist, I was naturally anxious to find out what these conditions were.

I had also been told that on rain-fed rivers the choice between dry fly and wet fly was as important a decision as any the fisherman had to make. It frequently meant choosing between success and failure.

But surely, I thought innocently, it was really very simple. Why all the fuss? If you saw trout rising, you caught them on the dry fly. If not, you searched for them with wet flies.

I should have known that nothing in fishing is very simple. When I mentioned my elementary hypothesis to Reg, he said it was all very well so far as it went, but I am sure I detected in his eye a look as close to scorn as a kind man, an extremely kind man, can ever summon up. He then began to enlighten me.

It depends a great deal on the type of hatch taking place, he told me. And I learned with some surprise that during a 'flush hatch', even though a large number of trout appear to be rising with gusto, the wet fly is usually more successful than the dry.

A 'flush hatch', Reg explained, is the first of the three main categories into which hatches on rain-fed rivers can be divided. It denotes the occasions when a great many fly hatch at the same time in the same spot, but only for twenty minutes or so. Further flush hatches may well occur at intervals later on.

The second main category is the large general hatch, when plenty of fly can be seen spread out over most of the stream for a far longer time, sometimes for three or four hours. The fly are often of several varieties. And the third category of hatch is the 'trickle hatch', which continues for some time like the large general hatch, but which is far sparser and usually consists of one species only.

So far, so good. I still failed to see, however, why the wet fly should be so effective during a flush hatch. Nor was I to find out that day, because Reg said that if we were to fish the evening rise on the Lune, it was time to set off.

So we made our way to the Lune, the home and haven of the finest wild trout in Britain. Reg has for many years preached this as gospel, and a single previous visit on my part had been quite enough to turn me from a sceptic into an excited co-believer. If anyone else is sceptical, I advise him to defer judgment till he has played a Lune trout.

As we walked up the river, Reg pointed out the pools to me. "It's important to understand the anatomy of our pools," he said. "You can see how different our rain-fed rivers are to your chalk-streams. The chalk-streams are pretty even-paced, without many clear-cut pools. But a rain-fed river is often a series of pools, varying tremendously quickly in speed and depth.

"Look at the neck of that pool, the very top of the neck. It's fast and shallow and rough. That's where the nymphs usually hatch. It's healthy for them there and the rough water gives them a bit of extra lift towards the surface. You'll see duns further down where the water's deeper and smoother, but that's not where they've hatched out. They've simply floated there."

We were interrupted then by the beginning of the evening rise. I would dearly like to forget the next hour, but it still haunts my memories. I fished while Reg watched, and to his great credit he never laughed at me. At least, I never heard him laughing at me. Plenty of spinners were on the water and great fish were sipping and boiling all around me. With increasing desperation I tried every likely spinner I knew, then every good evening fly, till darkness eventually and mercifully fell on a fishless and humiliated southerner.

"It sometimes happens", said Reg philosophically.

The next day we fished the Skirfare, which is a delightful little tributary of the Wharfe, as the guests of Denis Riddiough, a charming member of the Kilnsey Club. Denis led us without delay to the one pool where he thought that trout might rise in very hot weather. He proved right.

From this one shaded pool the three of us had a brace of good trout apiece, all well over a pound and all taken on dry fly. There was little activity elsewhere, thanks to the heat. In the pool where we had all our good fortune it seemed to me that there was a 'trickle hatch' of pale wateries.

"That's right," said Reg, "and a trickle hatch is usually a good time for the dry fly".

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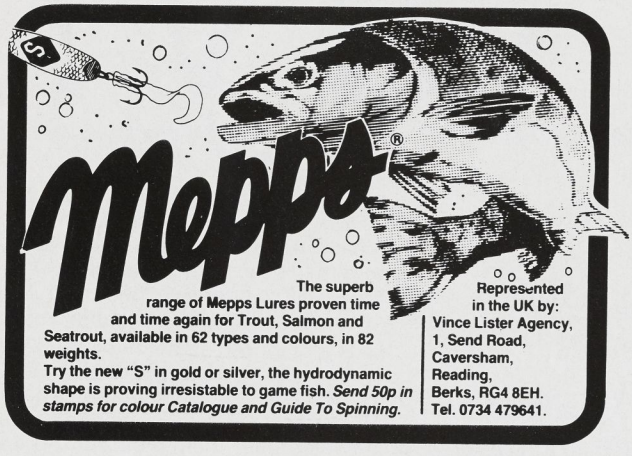

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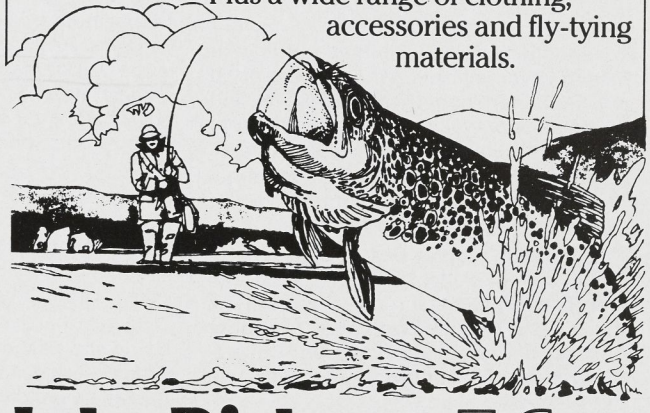

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Denis Riddiough on the Skirfare, a tributary of the Wharfe.

Now I was really out of my depth. While a flush hatch called for the wet fly, it seemed that a trickle hatch called for the dry fly. The logic of it eluded me. But that evening we took a rest from the fishing and Reg had time to go into the whys and wherefores.

"During a flush hatch a great many nymphs hatch in the same confined spots," he said, "but not all over the river, only in isolated places. These will probably be in shallow, rough, pebbly water, like the necks of the pools I showed you yesterday, and if there's a wind they'll choose the more sheltered parts of the river.

"But the hatch will be a short one and the trout aren't fools. They'll go to where the food is concentrated, in fact, to where the nymphs are hatching, and more often than not they'll feed on the hatching nymphs rather than the duns. After all, a nymph in eclosion is utterly helpless. It can't flutter or fly away as a dun can, so it's by far the easier prey.

"The trouble is that to the untrained eye — forgive me, Dermot — the fish may very well seem to be rising to duns. The duns themselves are hard to see on the rough surface of the water, which'll be misleadingly disturbed by lots of wallowing trout. The disturbance made by the tail of a nymphing trout, you know, if it's just below the surface, it can look very like a genuine rise.

"On top of this your own dry fly will be very difficult to see. You may find yourself striking time after time when nothing's taken you. And you won't notice when your fly drags. The thing to do is to fish upstream with wet flies and watch the end of your line. Tighten only when you see it stop or move at all differently to the current."

So there was the logic. It seemed very clear and sensible once expounded.

Reg went on to say that the flies most likely to produce flush hatches are the large dark olive, the iron blue, the b.w.o. at dusk in summer and the olive upright during evenings in the early season.

Then he explained the trickle hatch.

"Remember, it's far sparser," he said, "and there isn't the same concentration of hatching nymphs to attract trout into very fast and shallow water, where they have to work harder to keep their stations. It's easier for them to lie in slower and deeper and smoother water, further down the pools, taking any duns that float over them.

"It's perfect for the dry fly, especially if most of the trout are taking every fly they see. If many are 'oncers', it's a bad sign.

"If conditions are right for the dry fly, it does have certain advantages. However good a wet-fly fisherman you are, for instance, you'll always prick or miss more fish than with a dry fly. And another advantage is that a dry fly allows you to pick out the best trout, provided you have enough experience to know their lies or recognise their rises. You needn't waste time on undersized sprats."

There was plenty of logic here, too. Of the three main categories of hatch that Reg had originally mentioned, only the large general hatch now remained. He told me that during one of these he usually fished the dry fly, largely because of the advantages he'd just touched on, but that he'd switch quickly to wet if it didn't succeed.



On the Lune, and Dermot Wilson connects at last.

I remembered then that he'd once written to me: "There's no room in the North for an ingrained emotional bias towards either dry fly or wet fly, let alone for any 'ethical' nonsense. You just use the method that catches most trout."

My mind was now beginning to be clearer — even though Reg then told me that there were many exceptions and variations to the rules-of-thumb he'd explained.

The most important of these, he said, was caused by summer water which was low and slack and extremely clear. Then the trout can see a sunk fly very distinctly and detect its unnaturalness. But their view of a floating fly is distorted by refraction and surface ripples and is far hazier. So in these conditions a dry fly is more likely to deceive them and has a definite edge over the wet.

Our last day's fishing together was on the Eamont, an attractive and productive tributary of the Eden. When we arrived in mid-morning, however, there was not a rise to be seen.

"What happens during a large general non-hatch?" I asked. "What's the form if nothing rises — do you fish wet or dry?"

"Both," said Reg. "You fish the river, of course, rather than than the rise. Usually you can pick up a fish or two on wet fly from fairly shallow 'popply' runs. And a dry fly often brings up trout in deeper water, especially right in close to the banks, where fish may be waiting for the occasional insect to drop off the vegetation. A slightly larger fly than usual may work well. And it always helps to know exactly where the favourite lies are."

We were just about to put this into practice when the occasional trout started rising. Again it was a trickle hatch, very sparse, consisting of just a few pale wateries. Flies likely to appear in trickle hatches include pale wateries of various kinds, medium olives, the late March Brown and the small dark olive. The trout, as Reg had predicted, were rising in the deeper and smoother parts of the pools.

We each caught several plump trout on dry fly. They averaged about ¾lb. Then we drove over to the Lune to try the evening rise again. My greatest desire was to reverse the earlier defeat inflicted on me by the magnificent Lune trout. Reg left me to pursue this worthy ambition and walked downstream to watch another friend fishing for sea-trout.

Fairly soon a few b.-w.o. came down, and then a dense hatch of them. The water was covered with duns and I could see the trout taking them confidently. So I decided on dry fly. You can guess the result. The trout treated me with contempt. Before long my fly became hard to see among so many naturals. Once or twice I imagined I was taken, but felt nothing when I tightened. Again my failure and my shame were absolute.

The hatch of b.-w.o. stopped as darkness came, but one or two trout were still rising. I put on a Sedge and to my amazement hooked a fish with my first cast. He behaved like a true Lune trout. Time after time he took out an inordinate amount of line. For the next five minutes I had no real idea of where he was at any one moment. Then he jumped two feet in the air, revealing himself to be at least a three-pounder, and threw the fly.

"Well," I thought, as I reeled in, "at any rate I hooked you! And I suppose you deserve your freedom, though I do wish I'd caught you!" It was too dark now for any more fishing and the glow of an approaching torch heralded the arrival of Reg, who heard my sad story with sympathy and patience.

"Well, here's one last hint," he said. "When there's a mass of fly on the water, as there was this evening, the dry fly can be very tricky. With so many naturals around it's hard to keep an eye on your own fly, especially at dusk, and to know if you've been taken. That is, if any trout's mad enough to pick out your artificial from all the real grub.

"But wet flies can work well. The trout may be rising to duns, but they'll still accept something that looks like a hatching nymph. They often seem to prefer it, in fact. Cast up and across and watch the end of your line. Tighten if it moves at all abnormally and you'll find you're into a fish."

I solaced myself with the thought that my education was proceeding. This season, I tell myself hopefully, those Lune trout may be in for a surprise.

Let us all give thanks for the fly line that floats . . . and for the one that gets to the bottom of things.

TROUT FISHING IN DEPTH

Completely wrong info on the "barren middle" of the water. Is this where the myth started?

BY TED TRUEBLOOD



I hold some reservations about progress. I'm not so sure that, in many respects, we aren't like the Dutchman who said, "The faster I run, the behinder I get." I am still irritated, for example, by cars without running boards. Where do these Detroit geniuses expect a fisherman to sit and eat his lunch, anyway?

In some fields I will readily admit that real progress has been made. Consider fly lines. We now have ones that float without dressing. Perhaps there are young anglers who never learned the routine of the Mucilin can and, therefore, are unimpressed with this advancement. Let me brief them.

To float our prewar silk lines, we rubbed on grease. In doing so, we got our fingers greasy. Then, inadvertently, we touched our leaders, which should sink. The result was that we soon found them floating like snakes while our lines and flies, which we wanted to float, sank like rocks. Anybody who did enough dry-fly fishing eventually accepted this sorry state of affairs as inevitable. We shrugged our shoulders and bore our burden and got to the point where we seldom lost our tempers more than twice a day.

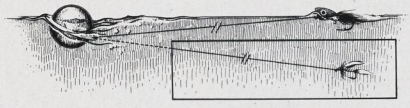
Those times *(Continued on page 130)*

The late Ted Trueblood left a legacy of columns written for Field & Stream *over nearly 30 years. This one, reprinted from April 1962, is part of a series to run intermittently.*

—The Editors

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANCIS GOLDEN

Philpott Lake in Virginia. I had caught several bluegills the evening before by fishing a red-and-white float in front of a popping bug. Switching to the clear bubble seemed like an obvious refinement.



In a catalog, I had seen a similar rig with a nymph trailer behind the popper. Figuring two flies must be twice as good, I devised a similar outfit. A couple of feet in back of the bubble I tied a small white popper. About a foot behind the popper I tied in a size 10 nymph. The nymph was an olive drab of no particular shape.

I was able to keep a close watch on both the popper and nymph in the clear water. After fishing for a while I noticed a consistent pattern in the behavior of the panfish. The bubble or the popper were usually the first to claim their attention. While inspecting these, however, the panfish would notice the nymph and matter-of-factly inhale it as they swam by. About 80 percent of the fish were caught on the trailer.

I then tried the bubble and popper alone and continued to catch fish, but fewer of them. The same went for the bubble and nymph. The popper was functioning as an attractor and as a strike indicator. With both flies attached



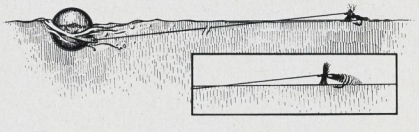
to one leader, the popper would give an early signal to any assault on the nymph.

Not only panfish fall for this rig. That same afternoon, while retrieving the bubble rig over a submerged beech log, I watched a bass suck in the nymph. Since he had both the desire and the strength to offset my light tackle, I reluctantly conceded the bubble and both flies to his efforts.

Dishing up a dry fly. Spin fishermen encounter another type of fly-fishing problem in the National Parks. For example, in the Smoky Mountain or Rocky Mountain National Parks, neither bait nor spinning lures with treble hooks are allowed in most streams. The signs may read, FLY FISHING ONLY. But notice, they say "fly only," not "fly rod only." The approach used on bluegills, with a slight twist, will work on trout. If dry flies are the main course, serve them with a clear bubble.

The clear bubble is a delight on these streams. When the stream is low and clear, water can be removed from the bubble to reduce the landing splash. And you can fish as light a leader and as small a fly as you feel comfortable with.

The bubble may have an additional advantage over fly lines: less drag. Drag occurs when the line pulls the fly at a different speed or in a different direction than the water it's in. If you keep the line slack and out of the water between your rod tip and the bubble, you can virtually



eliminate drag. Your fly and the bubble will usually float the same currents at the same speeds as the currents.

Jerry Craig, who guides trout fishermen over most of northern Colorado, is a firm believer in dry fly/bubble rigs. When going for cutthroat or brook trout in high mountain lakes, or for browns and rainbows in mountain streams, Jerry's sold on these rigs. Not only are they effective, says Jerry, but learning to use them is easy. He tells it like this:

"These rigs are much simpler for kids—or someone who's never fished—to pick up on. Rather than getting them hung up on the mechanics of fly casting, I first like to get them hooking fish and understanding flies.

"Take a Hornberg, size 16 or 18, and connect it to a bubble with a light leader," Jerry *(Continued on page 124)*



Need a fly rod? Haven't got one? Read on.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

BY JIM MIZE

possible. If you can, find out where the available water is located. Canals and rivers offer both water and more cover. The typical canal will have access roads running parallel to it. Driving canal roads has been one of my most productive hunting methods.

Also beneficial would be a scouting trip before the planned hunt. At about dusk, coveys will move together to their roosting spot. Look for the thickest brush or tallest shrubs, or even for groves—all quail motels. When a covey has been spotted going to roost, note the direction from which the birds are coming. Chances are that they will return to the same field the following morning.

Rising well before the sun, as you would for ducks and doves, is not a necessity, but the earlier hours of the morning are better for locating birds. Gambel's quail are less cautious just after sunrise—too busy stretching their legs and eating to worry about much else. As the sun heats things up, the quail seek the shade of brush, decreasing your chances for finding a covey.

Quail, like other wild creatures, are bound by habit. As an area becomes more familiar to you, you will find that the birds stay within definite boundaries. Unless they have been hunted heavily or driven out by agriculture, they will remain within their territory year after year, if not at the exact location, at least close by.

After you have chosen an area and have a rough idea where to begin, get in your car and stay in it until you find a covey. If you are fortunate enough to have a four-wheel-drive vehicle, you can detour up dry washes, but, again, only start hunting after you have seen the birds. All cars should stay on well-defined roads, since they do not mix well with sand.

River bottoms overladen with mesquite will usually have a generous supply of quail, but I avoid them at all cost. Three things can happen when hunting in thick mesquite and all of them are bad. First, you probably will never see a bird; second, even if you see them, you won't get a shot; and third, if you do get a shot and drop a bird, you probably will not find it.

I prefer sparse terrain, broken only occasionally by a large clump of mesquite. Even though the quail are not apt to hold well where it is sparsely vegetated, they can be put into the air more frequently.

While driving, watch for any movement between plants and for any shadowy figures resembling small bowling pins around the base of large shrubs. Periodically, check the sides of the road for tracks. Any area that has fresh tracks should be checked carefully in all directions, since coveys generally remain in a fairly small area.

Once a covey has been sighted, its behavior will determine your next move. If the birds are on the run, size up the situation quickly and decide whether there is ample time to head them off at the pass. They will inevitably be traveling toward the thickest brush around at a high rate of speed, so if you do not see a possibility of intercepting them, drive on. If the covey is not harassed further, it will probably return to the open area in a short while. Check the spot about an hour later.

When it appears that you can block the birds' retreat, fast actions are in order. Even when you think that you have responded swiftly enough, you usually have not. But since you are out of the car and they are nearby, start working the brush slowly, using a zigzag pattern. Some people enjoy running after the birds, but I prefer a more relaxed walk through the desert.

I have followed more than one covey into the most barren looking terrain where I would have sworn they couldn't find a place to hide. My early encounters often left me wandering among the dunes, searching for the entrances to the hideouts I decided they must have dug in the ground. Then I began noticing a certain behavioral trait of theirs, which I refer to as the 5-3-1 syndrome. After the covey's initial flushing, I would be following five quail, then three, then one, and then none.

It took awhile, but I learned that the missing quail were not the fast ones speeding away. Instead, they were merely dropping off to the sides. With a little patience and by walking ever tightening circles where they disappeared, I began getting more shots. As a general rule, upland game birds are hunted by increasing concentric circles, but widening circles have a tendency to keep Gambel's on the run. For this bird, start fairly wide and tighten the circle.

Stragglers will sit tighter, so stop occasionally. This will cause an overly stressful situation for the quail, since they know you are nearby but cannot hear you. When they cannot take the pressure any longer, they will flush. Sometimes they are surprisingly close. Once I worked an area and forced four more birds to flush after it seemed that the covey had disappeared.

Another helpful fact is that you may unexpectedly come upon a covey which for some reason sits tight in brush. The quail will identify themselves by clucking softly while they panic and run back and forth beneath the shrub. This soft clucking may be the only indication that a covey is close at hand.

At times the quail will not appear to be spooked, and then fast, direct movement will be a detriment. Park the car a little farther away, and instead of walking directly toward the birds, make a wide circle to position yourself between them and their briar patch. Then proceed with a zigzag march toward the place they were seen.

The quail will not appreciate being driven away from their home base, so they will either flush back over you toward safety or sit tight on the flanks. Be sure to make your zigzags wide enough. You may see them dashing away and the temptation will be to give chase, but it is a race you will seldom win. Remember, patience will put the birds in your pouch.

If you own a good gun dog, consider yourself fortunate because it will prove to be invaluable. The dog will not be able to chase the quail down anymore than you could, but it will force them to hold better, flush the ones holding, and then retrieve the downed birds. Nothing blends into desert sand more than a downed Gambel's.

Gambel's are tough for their size. I prefer hunting them with 7½'s instead of 8's. And in case you're tempted to shoot them on the ground, save your shells. These quail are nearly impossible to kill on the ground, since a running quail's wings are down protecting its vital breast area.

When you go after Gambel's be sure to bring plenty of water and a comfortable pair of boots. You'll be running around in some pretty dry, rough country. You may wonder if this sport doesn't involve too much work for too little reward, but once you start hunting them you just can't stop. And to keep from getting too frustrated in the process, it's important to remember one thing: the redheads in track shoes will always have the last laugh!

TROUT

(Continued from page 66)

are gone forever and I have no tears to shed. The floating line is a great thing. But even greater, in my opinion—because it helps me catch more and larger trout from the season's opening until its end—is the sinking line. We now have fly lines that really sink. This, too, is a comparatively recent development and a milestone of progress in the field of angling.

Considering my previous statement on the problems of making a line float, this may seem a little odd. Here, however, is what always happened. Hoping to take trout on dry flies—we always hope to get them that way—we dressed our lines before we started fishing. After a couple of futile hours, we decided that we'd better fish a wet fly or nymph if we hoped to catch anything. So we pulled our lines through our handkerchiefs to take off the dressing, or maybe even rubbed them with mud, and started fishing wet. Inevitably, the same lines that had been sinking miserably only a few minutes before now perversely rode the surface like puffs of down.

We fought this situation for several hours and eventually, usually about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, our lines soaked up enough water to start sinking nicely. What happened then? The trout immediately started rising, that's what!

So we tried to dry our lines and dress

the shoreline until he spotted a nest of beds. Then he picked out the individual bluegill he wanted, adjusted the bobber for the proper depth, and baited the tiny hook. Then he swung the bobber out with the long cane pole and dropped it lightly on the water so as not to spook the fish. If the bluegill didn't take the worm right off, he would nudge the bobber to give the bait a little action. That usually encouraged a strike. In the blink of an eye, the man would bring the fish in, rebait the hook, adjust the bobber, and gently drop his offering in front of another bluegill. Half an hour later, his fish basket held a nice mess of bluegills. I doubt that anyone could have caught those fish faster with any other method.

I'm not about to give up my miracle rods and up-to-date tackle. But somehow it's nice to know that you don't need a lot of fancy gear to catch fish. So if you're having trouble catching fish with your modern rods and reels, or if you're looking for inexpensive, productive tackle for a beginning angler, don't forget about the lowly cane pole.

REDHEADS

(Continued from page 63)

in areas with small human populations accounts for the above statistics. This means that there are plenty of prime Gambel's areas just waiting to be hunted.

Most of my experiences with Gambel's have taken place in the deserts of Southern California and Baja California. Populations in these regions are dependent upon the amount of rainfall; the birds may breed twice during wet years and not at all during dry ones. Recent wet years have produced bumper crops of Gambel's.

For two years, I never returned from Mexico without filling my possession limit. Baja California holds great numbers of birds, and there are far fewer hunters, so limits come easier. The key word here is *easier,* not easy. But inflation has eaten up the money I usually reserve for my Mexican hunting license, so my hunting is now saved for north of the border. Wherever Gambel's are hunted, two things are certain: they will have wide open spaces, and you will have many miles to cover.

I am not the world's best shot, although I like to think so at times, but I always manage to return with birds. I rely on one trick: I never leave the car until I find a covey. When I am familiar with an area I sometimes bend this rule. But despite that, I recommend that the hunter stay in his vehicle until a covey has been sighted.

It is best to know the area which is to be hunted, but this is not always



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them to make them float once more, which is impossible once a silk line has soaked up enough water. At dark they were still sinking and we had enough grease on our leaders to float a grindstone. Aside from the annoyance, the result of this situation was that we didn't fish either a wet or a dry fly properly for more than an hour or two out of the entire day.

The difference between success and failure in fishing, as in many other pursuits, is often slight. Attention to detail, a willingness to exert a little more effort, an hour devoted to thoughtful experimenting in order to turn up the right technique—and tackle that is a help rather than a handicap—all explain why one man catches fish and another doesn't.

Unlike bass, which may gorge for one hour and then refuse all food for the next twelve, the trout in most streams are always hungry. They seldom refuse anything that looks good to eat, *provided* it comes to them in a natural manner and at the depth where they happen to be resting or feeding at the moment.

I sometimes visualize streams as being divided into three distinct zones: the surface, the bottom, and the middle. Most trout, I think, enjoy feeding in the surface zone—the top 3 or 4 inches of water—and relish the food that they find there. This, of course, consists of floating insects and nymphs in the process of changing to the adult form. And it is there that we anglers most enjoy catching them, on dry flies or on nymphs fished barely below the surface with a floating line.

Unfortunately, trout spend only a little of their time there. From the season's beginning until its end, I would guess that not more than one hour out of ten is spent feeding in the surface zone. Even on days when there is a good hatch, two or three hours often span the entire period of surface activity.

Below the surface lies the middle zone. Its thickness depends on the depth of the stream, but it includes all the water from a few inches below the top to a few inches above the bottom. It may be 1 foot or 6 feet thick; whatever it is, it is usually as barren of trout as a snowbank!

This is a basic fact that many anglers overlook. I can't stress too strongly that the middle zone is usually devoid of trout because it is devoid of food. Fishing in it, therefore, is ordinarily a waste of time.

There are exceptions to this statement, though not many. When terrestrial insects blow or tumble into a stream and are carried along by a swift current they may be swept into the middle depths. In this case, the trout will be there taking them. In weedy streams, where snails, nymphs, scuds, and other food cling to the aquatic vegetation, trout find them at all depths. And in small, shallow streams, of course, the surface and bottom zones practically touch each other. A fly anywhere in the water can be seen by any trout, whether it is picking caddis cases off the rocks or mayflies off the surface.

In all other situations, the bottom zone is the rich one. Nymphs, the immature form of aquatic insects that make up a major portion of the diet of the trout in all streams, are bottom dwellers. Some of them burrow in the mud. Others hide in debris or cling to the rocks. Snails crawl over them. Minnows and small fish hide under them. In addition there is terrestrial trout food, such as earthworms, which has found its way to the bottom.

Since trout are usually hungry, it follows logically that they spend most of their time where food is abundant. This means within a few inches of the bottom. There are other reasons why they stay there, too. They feel more secure because the greater thickness of water overhead shields them from their enemies. They find shelter from the swift current behind the stones—in fact, the water does not flow so fast close to the bottom of a rocky stream as it does only a few inches above it.

THUS we come to the conclusion that there are two spots to fish for trout: on the top and on the bottom. When the trout are rising or when conditions appear favorable and we think they might rise, we fish a dry fly with a floating line. At all other times we'll catch more fish, and bigger ones, by getting our flies down into the rich food zone within a few inches of the bottom. This is where the sinking line pays off.

Admittedly, in a shallow stream you can fish a nymph or wet fly on a floating line and catch trout because the eager ones will see it anywhere in the water. And under some conditions an old, well-worn, and undressed silk line is ideal. In still water its slower rate of sinking enables us to fish our flies more slowly, and this is often desirable.

Most of the time on most streams, however, a good sinking fly line is a tremendous advantage in getting more strikes and catching larger trout. I probably did nine-tenths of my trout fishing last season with one, not because I prefer to fish that way but because it usually was more effective. By carrying two lines, one that really sinks and one that really floats, I have eliminated completely all of the oldtime, one-line headaches. I do a better job of fishing, both top and bottom.

I doubt whether the color of a floating line makes much difference because the trout see it only in silhouette. But a sinking line gets down to the level of the fish and they can see it clearly, so I prefer it to be inconspicuous—dark green or brown or some other drab color. I want it to be slick because a smooth line shoots through the guides better and picks up more easily from the water, and I insist upon its being soft and pliable. A hard, wiry line is just abominable to cast.

I usually fish across and downstream with a sinking line, whether I am using a wet fly, bucktail, or nymph. But I never hesitate to cast upstream if swift current and deep water make that maneuver necessary to reach the bottom. Occasionally I cast across, then feed out several yards of slack before starting to retrieve in order to make sure the fly is down.

Sometimes you will wonder whether you are getting deep enough. When you find yourself doing this, it is almost a lead-pipe cinch that you're not. If your fly is down where the trout spend most of their time, you'll feel your line drag over a rock occasionally. Once in a while, too, your leader will pull around a stick caught on the bottom and you'll lose a fly. If this doesn't happen from time to time, angle your casts farther upstream or feed slack to let the line sink deeper. Don't worry about getting too deep; that is impossible.

As a matter of fact, several most rewarding trout were hooked on casts where I permitted the line to sink clear to the bottom and then lie there for some time before starting to retrieve. The fish picked up the fly as it was crawling along the rocks. I saw two of these trout—a good brown and a 6¾-pound rainbow—before I cast to them. Consequently, I knew that they were finding food right on the gravel and it was simple enough to cast ahead of them and make my nymph behave like the naturals they were taking.

In another instance I came away with a brook trout, although initially I had no clue. I felt sure that there must be a good fish present, and by letting the line lie on the bottom, I finally found him.

I was fishing a spot where the stream shot down through a narrow, rocky chute into a big pool. The main current was toward the far side—a long cast away—and there was an eddy on mine. The water was far too deep to wade, but I could cover the entire pool from the bank and I fished it thoroughly. I didn't get a strike.

It hardly seemed possible that there could be no fish in such a spot. I was using a bucktail crawfish on which I had already taken several trout that morning, and finally, more or less in desperation, I made a short cast into the eddy on my side. I then fed slack as the backwater carried it out toward the main current and the sinking line went down rapidly. This is a dangerous practice. I've lost more than one line doing it, but it is often an excellent way to hook a big fish.

When I felt sure the line was on the bottom, I quit feeding slack and waited. Then I began a slow, pull-pause retrieve. I had brought in maybe 30 feet of line, letting it coil on the rock at my feet, when I felt firm resistance. It seemed solid, yet somehow different from a rock or snag, and I set the hook.

Instantly, the line whipped tight and went sizzling through the water. This was no rock! It was, as I discovered in due time, a 4½-pound brook trout, a fish well worth risking a line to catch, and ample proof that depth fishing does pay off.



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I remember the last Salmon Fly I saw. It was the only Salmon Fly I'd ever seen. And I don't mean Salmon Fly hatch, I mean fly. Singular. The large stonefly, a meaty size 4, the one that has been praised in voluminous prose in at least seven magazine articles in the past year, flitted across my car headlights as I headed from Madison Junction to West Yellowstone.

"You're going to catch that hatch perfectly," said my friend Nick, "they're breathtaking." All the magazine articles said I'd see zillions of them. I know, I was in the wrong place, or the wrong time ("nobody looks for salmon flies on the Upper Madison at *that* time"). Never mind. I've missed other famous hatches, like the Green Drakes on Penn's Creek or the Slate Drakes on the Ausable. I was there at prime times, too.

I had great fishing all those times, but if I had been ignorant or illiterate I would have been even happier. My expectations had been raised by stories of blizzard hatches and orgies of trout feeding. Hopping into a plane or car, I've found, expecting to meet a famous hatch at the other end, is about like stepping up to the plate and expecting to hit a home run.

Profuse fly hatches make wonderful stories, but even on disgustingly rich streams like the Henry's Fork they don't happen every day, sometimes not even once a week. On your average freestone streams a hatch worth writing home about (or to *Field & Stream*) might be a twice yearly thing.

The most common scenario on an "average" trout stream in prime time might go something like this: a few caddis in the morning, maybe two or three species dribbling off a pool in ones or twos. A small mayfly hatch at eleven. Some more caddis at noon. The March Brown nymphs drift around and a few hatch. Some ants and beetles fall off a log and into the water in late afternoon. And maybe a decent hatch and spinner fall in the evening. Most of the trout, bless their little pea brains, haven't read the magazines this month so they sample a little bit of everything. (Now I'd better look over my shoulder before I say the next part. In fact I'd better whisper.) There probably isn't even a selective feeder among them.

There are a few small mountain streams in Vermont I fish frequently where I have never seen a decent hatch, nor have I *ever* seen a trout rise to a natural insect. As long as the water temperature is above 55 degrees and the streams aren't too high or muddy I can always get trout to take my dry flies. One of these streams is even a wild brown trout stream, and those of you who have read about browns know that they are always selective and only rise to classic hatches. Baloney.

For this kind of fishing, in fact for any kind of fishing where nothing in particular is hatching, I'll almost always poke around in my fly box for a parachute fly of some type. Parachutes are nothing new. They've come in and out of vogue numerous times since they were first introduced and called "gyros" in the 1930's. A parachute is just a style of fly that gives it a particular profile and behavior, and it is simply a dry fly where the hackle lays parallel to the body of the fly and the water's surface rather than perpendicular to it, as in standard dry flies. They can be tied big and small, in olive and brown and cream or even pink if you choose. In fact, any pattern like the Adams or Light Cahill can be turned into a parachute.

I like parachutes for a number of reasons. They float well. Because parachute hackle presents a large area parallel to the water, it holds a fly in the surface film better than standard hackle, which pokes itself into the water. Parachutes land lightly on the water, which I suppose is obvious and where we get the name parachute. They are a real boon to the novice caster because it's hard to slam a parachute onto the water. I don't know about you, but I appreciate all the help in the delicacy department I can get.

Parachutes also land right side up and stay that way on the water, because of the way the parachute hackle balances them both in the air and on the water. They're easier to see on the water. In fact, they float so well and are so easy to see that my friend Ed Schroeder, a wizard at fishing some difficult wild trout streams near Fresno, California, uses them as strike indicators. He fishes a big Parachute Hare's Ear, threading it onto the next section above his tippet, then adds a four foot tippet of 5x with a Flashabou Nymph on the end. He is as deadly efficient a nymph fisherman as I've ever seen, and on the two days I fished with him, he caught ten trout to my one. Both days.

"Don't they ever take the dry fly, Ed?" I asked him. "Yeah," he said, "but that's O.K. They make mistakes sometimes." I like Ed but sometimes it's hard to swallow someone using my favorite type of dry fly as a bobber.

I think trout like parachutes as well as I do. They have that buggy look, especially those tied with a body of hare's ear fur, like the Olive Parachute Hare's Ear, Natural Parachute Hare's Ear, and the Parachute Caddis. These flies, developed by Ed Schroeder, are new in the Orvis catalog this year and we have high hopes for them. Parachutes float low in the water, with the body riding in the surface film rather than above it. I think this is an advantage in fast water because it allows the trout to see your fly from further away, plus a fly that rides in the surface film may look like an emerged fly, an emerging fly, a spent fly, or even a terrestrial.

These hare's ear designs have another very large advantage in fading light, in rough water, or for people who have trouble seeing flies on the water: big white wings. You can spot those bright calf tail wings bobbing on a riffle sixty feet away. When you can see your fly, you'll miss less strikes, you'll place the fly more accurately, and you'll avoid the perils of unnatural drag. Many times with a dull gray fly in poor light, you can't see the fly so you don't know when it's dragging or when your float looks natural.

I'm going to recommend a very un-scientific, un-vogue way of fishing these flies. Find a piece of water that's medium-to-fast, about knee to waist deep, with a little chop to it – not a smooth, fast flow. Don't even worry about what's hatching. Try either the Parachute Caddis or Parachute Hare's Ear in size 12 if the water is very fast or turbulent, size 16 if it's gently riffled, or size 14 if the velocity is somewhere in between or if you can't follow my subjective labeling of "very fast" or "gently riffled." Dress the fly well with Orvis Nev-R-Sink flotant and pitch it upstream with a 9-foot 4x or 5x leader. You'll catch fish.

Now if you want to get real fancy, check the water to see if either mayflies or caddis flies are hatching and then match them with an appropriate Parachute Elk Wing Caddis or Parachute Mayfly. These two patterns are slightly less bulky than the Parachute Hare's Ear patterns, so I think they work better when you're trying to match a specific insect. Plus their cleaner profiles produce a little better on flat water, which is where you'll see most rising trout. That doesn't mean there aren't trout rising in the riffles, or that they won't come up for your dry fly. They're just harder to spot in broken water.

There are few things in fishing as satisfying as hitting a major hatch on the button, matching the fly with an exact imitation, and catching trophy trout. But that's not all there is to fly fishing. Pounding up some little guys or even medium-sized trout on a freestone riffle isn't a bad day's work. If you have a selection of parachutes in your box you can't miss.

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Ed Schroeder will be holding a special seminar on tying parachute flies on June 18th from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. in our San Francisco store on Maiden Lane. Call Orvis San Francisco for details. 1-415-392-1600.

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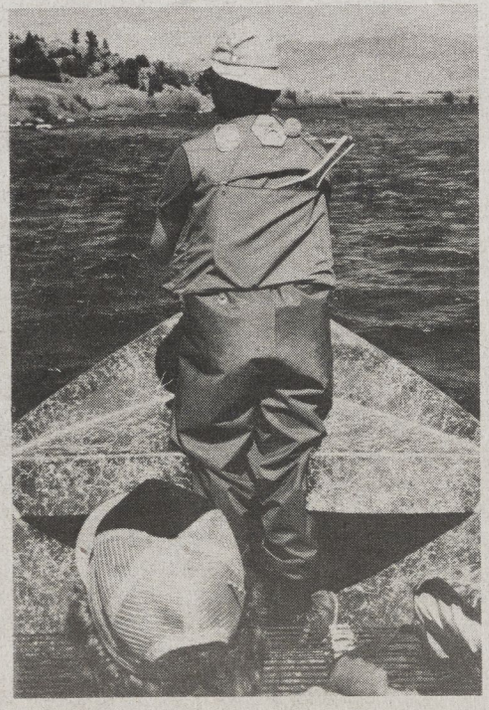



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The best of

James Langan fishes wet and dry together



THE BEST IDEAS are often the simplest; about 15 years ago I first came across a technique which I have used regularly since then. It came to my notice in a secondhand bookshop, in a little book with an unpromising title — *Teach Yourself Fly-Fishing* by Maurice Wiggin.

The idea couldn't be simpler; you fish both wet and dry-fly together. Surprisingly, I have read about it on only one other occasion, though I know several people who use it all the time.

We all know streams which have wet-fly runs interspersed with pools and glides more suited to dry-fly; traditional wet-fly anglers would fish the streamy water and ignore the rest. Nowadays more and more wet-fly fishers use the dry-fly at least occasionally, and with the improvement in modern flotants have found that a dry-fly can be used successfully in faster water.

To fish in this style you simply put your dry-fly on the point of an ungreased cast, and, depending on the water, a nymph or very lightly dressed spider on a short dropper a couple of feet from the point.

Constant changing

Imagine, for a moment, that you are fishing up a stream with mixed wet and dry-fly water. Nothing can be more tedious than the constant changing of casts and flies; with this method you will need to change only one fly or none. You will, of course, be fishing a floating line.

But there are far more tangible benefits than the elimination of all this fiddling about. Let me go back for a moment to Maurice Wiggin. He used the method from a wet-fly perspective, and so do I. By this I mean that he was fishing the water rather than the rise, putting down both a dry-fly and a wet-fly in every likely spot, and giving his trout a choice, so to speak.

Recently I came across another volume in a secondhand bookshop — *Border River Angling* by William H. Lawrie, published in 1939. In this book Mr Lawrie claims to have invented the method while fishing the Tweed. Now, he was fishing a dry-fly at the time, and in desperation tried a nymph on a very short dropper. It worked; the apparently surface-feeding Tweed trout were actually nymphing. Nymphing trout will not usually take on the surface, but of course surface-feeding trout will often take nymphs.

Very short dropper

My point in mentioning the two approaches is that you can treat the method as a variation of either wet-or dry-fly fishing. If you are primarily fishing dry you use a very short dropper — two-three inches, as Lawrie did. In this way you can extend the taking period; by using a nymphal or spider version of the appropriate dry-fly you can take fish when trout are bulging, before the rise proper is on. When the rise starts you continue as before, though now your point fly, the dry pattern, will be more successful.

If, on the other hand, you are fishing fairly fast water where either wet or dry is suitable, you can vary your dropper length to suit the water. The movement of your dry-fly on the surface gives a darting up-and-down motion to the nymph or spider below, making it much more attractive.

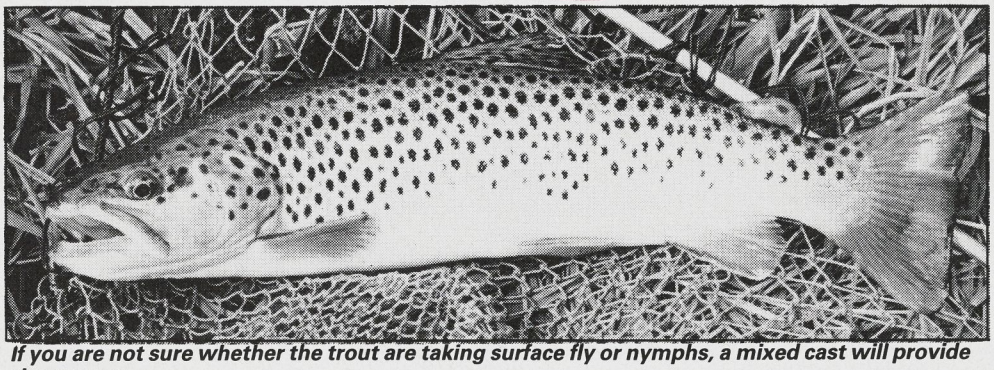
But the greatest advantage of this method is that it vastly improves your chances of successfully hooking your fish. When fishing wet-fly or nymph upstream it can be extremely difficult to know when your flies are taken; using this method you watch the dry-fly — if it pauses or skates or is dragged under you will know instantly that a fish is mouthing the sunk fly. So the chances of detecting those gentle takes are far greater.

The advantage doesn't end there; because your sunk fly is darting vigorously, the take is usually much more decisive. You will often feel a distinct pull — lift the rod and your fish is on. You will definitely increase the proportion of fish hooked. I have often used this method when the dry-fly remained untouched, and, despite having only one sunk fly in the water rather than a team of two or three, done very well indeed.

The basic approach to choice of flies is to choose one pattern and to fish both the dry and nymph or spider version. I use the method mostly on streams where I would otherwise fish wet; my choice would usually be a spider on the dropper, carefully selected, and a dry-fly on the point as close to that pattern as possible. The dry-fly man, with boxes bursting with dry patterns and rather fewer wet ones, would make his selection the other way round.

When in doubt I would start, say, with dry and spider Greenwells. If unsuccessful after a few changes of fly I would always use a Pheasant Tail Nymph on the dropper; in very slow water I usually use a nymph pattern in preference to the wet-fly. Even the spider patterns don't stand up as well to inspection by the trout in such water.

In the evenings you can use a larger, or brighter, dry pattern



If you are not sure whether the trout are taking surface fly or nymphs, a mixed cast will provide the answer.

to suggest chaos

Michael Meddings' day of frustration on the Kennet leads to the development of a killing new Mayfly pattern

MAY 1983 was a close, rain-sodden day with a gusting warm wind — not ideal conditions for a good day with the trout, and certainly not promising weather for a good hatch of mayfly. Despite the inclement conditions, however, and to our surprise, the huge duns made an appearance around 2.30pm and continued unabated until well after 6pm.

During the peak of the hatch I could stand in one spot on the Middle Cut section of the Barton Court water of the Kennet and count at least nine good trout gulping down virtually every dun that passed over their positions. You would, like me, be excused for thinking that a certain limit bag was in prospect. But it was not to be, for though I fished hard and long, I managed only two small fish after five hours of what I thought was well-judged angling, during which time I used all the skill I have gained over 25 years of fly-fishing. I tried every Mayfly pattern I have in my case, all without much interest from the fish but with great patience on my part, though I have to admit I was sorely tested. By 4 pm I had covered a score of times practically every fish on that particular beat but had been rewarded with only three half-hearted offers, one of which resulted in the larger of the two trout with which I eventually ended the day.

It became fairly clear, about an hour into the proceedings, that although the fish appeared to be taking the adult fly regularly, they were more often than not taking the dun just on emergence from the nymphal shuck, and probably were attracted by the struggles of the nymph just before it emerged as an adult. What appeared to be a pre-occupation with one thing was in fact a fascination with another.

I had, of course, seen the behaviour before and knew perfectly well how to deal with it. A well-placed Grey Wulff or one of John Goddard's Nevamis Mayflies would almost invariably do the trick.

Failing that a Terry's Terror would probably score or perhaps a Kennet standby, the French Partridge, which usually could be relied on to save the day. All were treated with derision, so around 7 pm I retired beaten, the laughing stock of my companions, who had fared better than I and were not too sympathetic with their remarks. I did save some face with the help of a suicidal pounder, which charged out and took my last-ditch attempt in the hatch-hole at the top of the Parson's Ditch.

My rod at Barton Court allows me one Sunday a fortnight, so just possibly I might get in another day before the Mayfly was over for the season. A fortnight later I took lunch before one o' clock and made my way to the Middle Cut to be in position before the main hatch, if it occurred, got underway. I had spent the previous few days reviewing my earlier visit to the water and questioning logically what had gone wrong. I concluded that the struggles of the nymph were the factors that attracted the fish. In hindsight, recalling a day some years ago on the Gloucestershire Coln, when the fish had behaved in a similar manner and I had been unable to interest the trout in anything except a half-sunk Grey Wulff, I came to the conclusion that the patterns I had been offering had floated far too high on the water. My premise was that a pattern was needed which would float "half and half" in the surface film. It would need a body made of such materials and construction that would suggest the "chaos" and struggles of the natural insect freeing itself from its nymphal skin. There would need to be the suggestion of wings but they should as far as possible be made to simulate the crumpled look of the wings of the virgin dun prior to their being unfolded to dry. The tail should, if anything, exaggerate the discarded outer skin. There ought to be the merest suggestion of legs but subtle enough not to spoil the whole effect of a "ragged struggle".

I returned to the fly vice somehow inspired and laid a few turns of black silk back from the eye of the hook. The wings would be made of hair and divided in the same way as the Wulff patterns, but they would be softer and shorter than normal. Squirrel tail was the ideal material and I utilised a tail dyed a few years earlier to a pale dirty-olive, almost honey, colour. I caught in a fair bunch of the squirrel tail with two turns of silk, tying it in so that the points suggested the "advanced" wings. A touch of superglue at the roots of the hair secured it and I wound the tying silk over the roots back to the bend of the hook where I tied in a bunch of natural grey squirrel tail to suggest the tails on the discarded shuck. These, too, were glued in and the silk wound forward about one-third of the length of the hookshank. At this stage I paused to decide on the formation of the body. I had in mind the principle employed in the Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear, where the fibres of the hair are used to suggest the legs of the fly. Clearly, however, the fibres in hare's ears were simply not long enough to suggest the legs of the Mayfly, so a longer-fibred fur was needed.

Some years ago I had successfully used rabbit fur from the back, to suggest the commotion caused by large sedges skating across the water, and a quick re-examination of the large piece of rabbit skin I have, made my mind up. I dubbed a good quantity on to the silk and wound it forward to form a body which tapered nicely back from the shoulder. The fact that I used no wax whatsoever made the longer fibres stick out invitingly at all angles as the body was being formed. A badger hackle, rather short in the flue and taken two turns round the hook, provided the front legs of the fly, but before I took the hackle, I made sure to divide the squirrel wing with neat figure-of-eight lashing.

On the Shropshire Worfe the mayfly is usually a good week behind the main rise on the Kennet, so I was able to test my pattern well before our second visit to Berkshire. On an afternoon heavy with rain and a sparse trickle of duns the fly took four Worfe brownies within the space on an hour and a half and ensured me an early visit to the pub. I was naturally overjoyed and awaited my next visit to Barton Court with eagerness. But my waiting was in vain, for when we visited the water again the mayfly was over for the season and I would be forced to wait another twelve months before I could test my work again.

In 1984 the mayfly hatch on the Kennet was not so heavy and our visits coincided with atrocious weather conditions. Yet despite uncomfortable wet weather the new fly attracted the attention of four well-conditioned brownies that had ignored the fully adorned fly. I have had no further opportunities to test the pattern but you can be sure I intend giving it full trial this coming season.

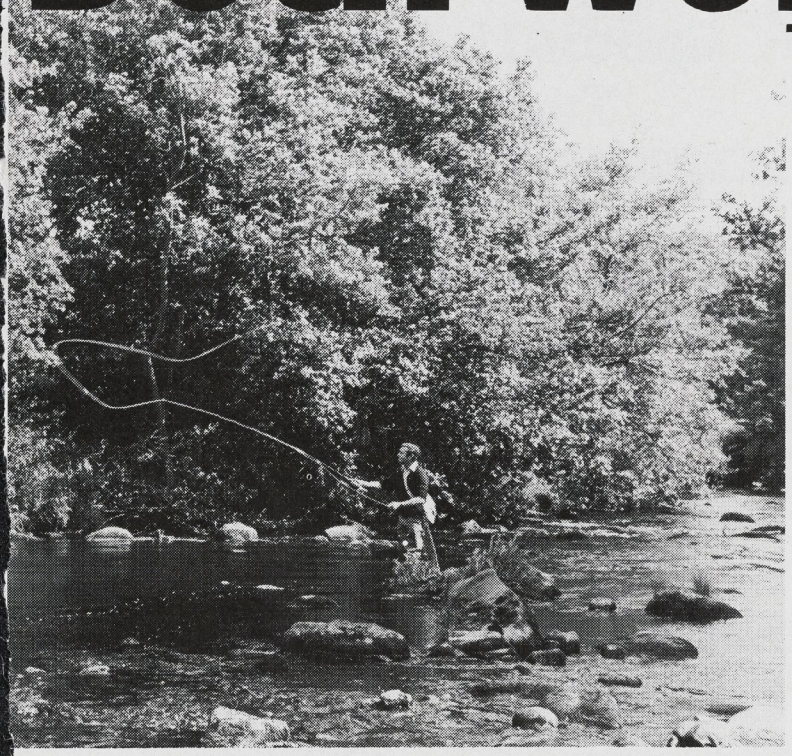
The Rat's Cat



The Rat's Cat, the writer's Mayfly pattern whose rabbit-fur body imitates a struggling, hatching dun.

Hook: Size 10 Partridge standard mayfly.
Tail: Grey squirrel.
Body: Fur from the back of a buck rabbit, long in the fibre and tapered back from the shoulder.
Wings: Tuft of squirrel hair dyed pale dirty-olive, tied forward and divided by figure-of-eight lashing.
Legs: Two turns of badger hackle, short in the flue, and mixed with the body material, which should be well picked out.

both worlds



than normal. This will make it easier to detect takes to the sunk fly in poor light. If you are in the habit, though, of giving movement to dry Sedge patterns at dusk you will have to omit the dropper.

Obviously this is not a method to be used at all times, or on all waters. The wet-fly fisherman will use it more often than his dry-fly counterpart. But it is a very useful extra weapon in your armoury, especially on days when little fly is evident, or on unfamiliar water where you don't know the best lies. When you think about it, there have always been different theories about what the wet-fly represents; is it a drowned dun, an ascending nymph or both? If it represents a nymph at least some of the time then the movement induced by this method adds a whole new dimension.

Deadliest method of nymphing

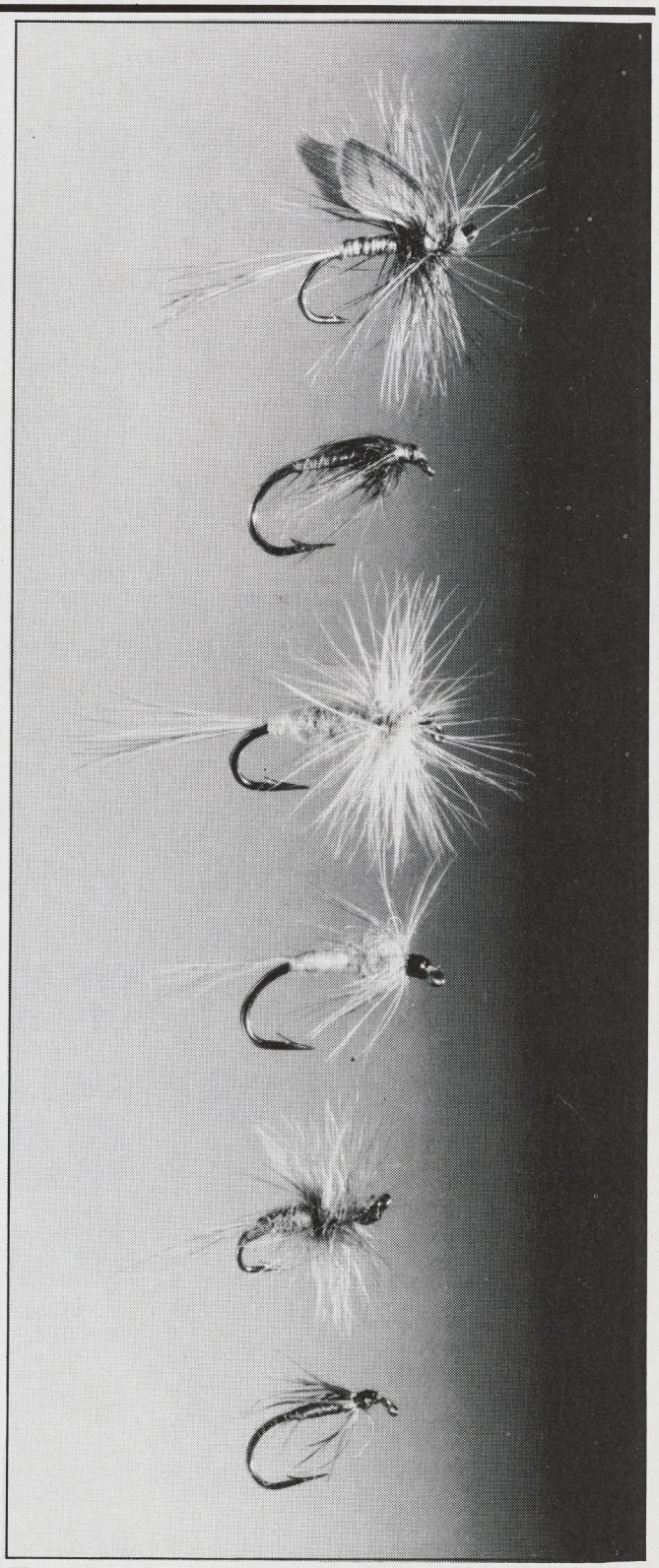
Returning to the two books mentioned, Lawrie says: "In the writer's opinion this is the most deadly of all the available methods of nymphing", and Wiggin, whose temperament tends more towards wet than dry, says: "It makes upstream wet-fly fishing as easy as upstream dry-fly fishing — but much more productive."

Above: Putting down both a dry-fly and a wet-fly in every likely spot gives the trout a choice. This is Yorkshire's River Nidd.

Both books, if you should come across them, are worth browsing through. Do not be put off by the *Teach Yourself* title of Maurice Wiggin's. He has a lovely relaxed style of writing, full of enthusiasm for the sport, and his book has plenty of unconventional ideas such as the one I have described. I am sure it would never have occurred to me had I not read about it, and I would have been the poorer in fish and fun had I not.

William Lawrie's book also describes some unusual approaches to fishing with fly and other methods; among others it includes some huge and ferocious wet-fly patterns for night-fishing.

Extracts from Teach Yourself Fly Fishing, *by Maurice Wiggin, are reprinted by permission of Hodder and Stoughton Limited.* Border River Angling, *by W. H. Lawrie, was published by Oliver and Boyd. It is out of print.*



The writer's killing combinations: Top to bottom — dry Greenwell's and Greenwell's Spider; Dry Tups and Tups nymph; Dry Iron Blue and Snipe and Purple.

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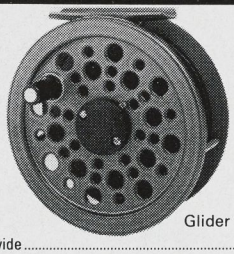

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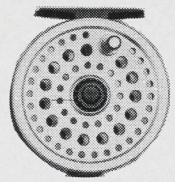

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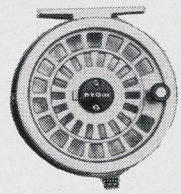

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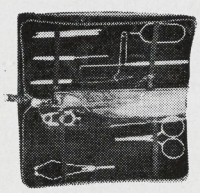

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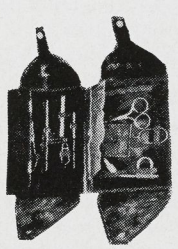

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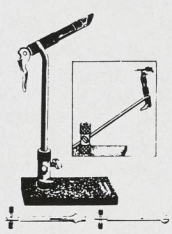

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SPIDERS ON THE STREAMS

After looking at Stewart's deadly series of flies last month, ***MICHAEL SHEPHARD*** *now describes the style of fishing to adopt for maximum success*

STEWART STRESSED the need to use sparsely dressed hackled flies of a kind he called Spiders because, in his opinion, this was the creature his artificials most closely resembled. In my opinion it does not matter what they represent: they work because they appear to be alive and probably edible to hungry trout in streams and rivers deprived of any abundance of natural feed during the early part of the season.

As I have enjoyed equal success when using grizzles and palmers in the same way, on the same waters at the same time of year, it seems likely that the method of presentation is more important than the type of fly. This style of fishing I had discovered all on my own long before I came across *The Practical Angler* and its author's sound advice on fishing the fly upstream.

The angler's approach to any spate river must be dictated by the nature of the stream and the run of the main forces of current — the heaviest flow of water along the sides, where you will almost always catch the biggest and best-conditioned trout except, perhaps, in early morning and certainly towards dusk. Then deep, slow pools often show the monsters they have hidden throughout the daylight hours.

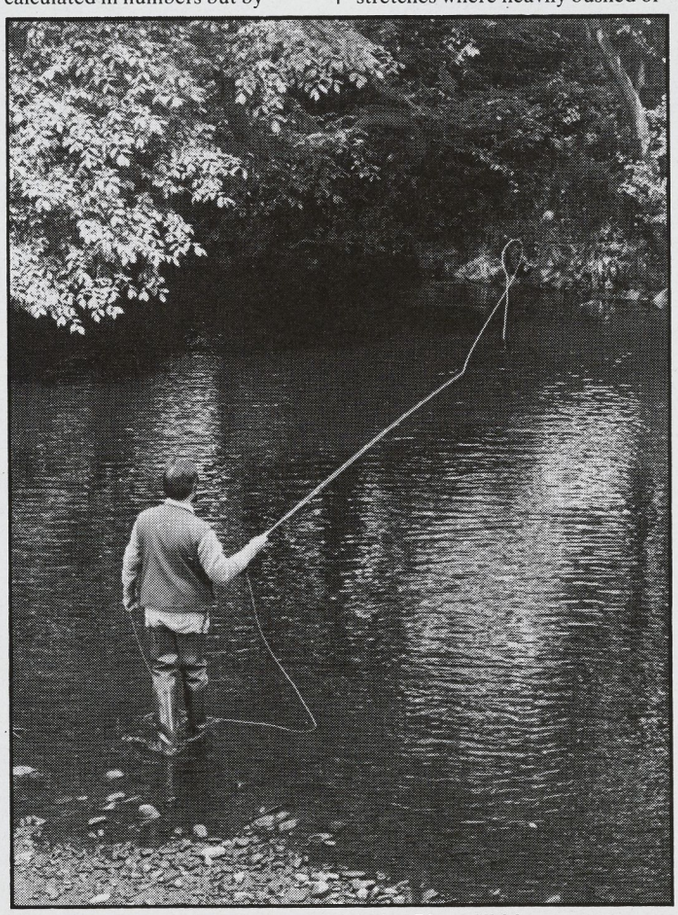
Since the style will see you starting at the bottom of a pool or run, fishing up through it to the top end, you might as well attack the whole beat in the same way and, resisting the ever-green temptation to fish the bridge pool or whichever stretch of river is nearest to the point where tackle assembly took place, walk over the meadows, well away from the fishing, to your starting place.

Approach with caution

From now on you will approach the lower end of each fishable stretch with caution: trout may well lie in the shallows at the head of a stickle where the deeper water of the main pool shelves out. This becomes increasingly likely towards mid-morning and as the season advances. It usually calls for short casting and is a time when I like to have a longish rod in my hand. Once you have searched across this shallow water, first under your own bank and then methodically across to the other side, the time comes to attack the most probable lies of those fish which have moved out from their holts under the bank or rocks — often some distance away — to lie below the likely path of food items carried down to them on the current.

This is the moment when I admit to chickening-out over casts to some obvious trouty places guarded by overhanging branches, trailing twigs, brambles, weeds or whatever. It is important to avoid any disturbance because, like Mr Stewart and those great professionals of some 150 years ago, you are set to catch as many fish as possble. In those days baskets of trout were not calculated in numbers but by weight and, although those days are gone, many rivers can still provide a pretty fair bag of trout even if now we do count them.

So assess the potential of the pool or run before you begin to fish and discard any likely spots which could cause you a spot of bother if things went wrong. As you will see, these are not opportunities lost through their discarding: unless yours is a very lengthy piece of river there ought to be time to change to a shorter rod and, if not already so garbed, put on thigh waders before going back to your beginning and fishing those awkward places and other stretches where heavily bushed or tree-lined banks make a short rod and wading a necessary part of picking up fish which have so far not been fished for.



Searching a likely-looking spot on The River Nidd.

I am very fortunate in that I can use both hands to cast a fly, yet in the main I find a cast across my body with my right arm sufficient to reach most targets from the bank and to put a shepherd's crook into the leader (or part of a long leader), as the line lands across the main current. The Spider carries on more or less at right-angles to fall on the far edge of the current upstream — just precisely what one would try to avoid with a dry-fly because drag will almost immediately take a hand. But fishing something just subsurface in a twisting, boisterous stream so that it is probably moving faster down the edge of the main flow than the current itself does not appear to prevent the fish from showing keen interest: it also results in a trout taking and becoming hooked in the scissors before the angler is conscious of any such interception. The rod is bending and you are playing your trout before you know it.

Any likely spot

Of course, before casting to the far edge of the main flow you will probably have tried any likely spot under your own bank and further out from it. There are holding places all over the rivers I fish, but it is still the edges of the main stream that offer the best chance.

Although many fish will undoubtedly hook themselves in the boil and bustle of a fast-flowing run, there will be other occasions when success will depend upon the co-ordination of eye and wrist as the tell-tale flash of silver or gold from a turning flank or a subtle momentary change in the surface pattern warns that the trout has taken. Some anglers new to fishing spate rivers for the fast-rising wild brownies declare themselves well and truly beaten as the combined efforts of sight and physical reaction fail to set the hook in the fish's jaw, time after time.

Frankly, I have come to the opinion that more often than not an apparently missed rise was no rise at all — at least, the trout rose but did not actually take the fly into its mouth. When even the smallest of little stream trout are really taking and you are offering

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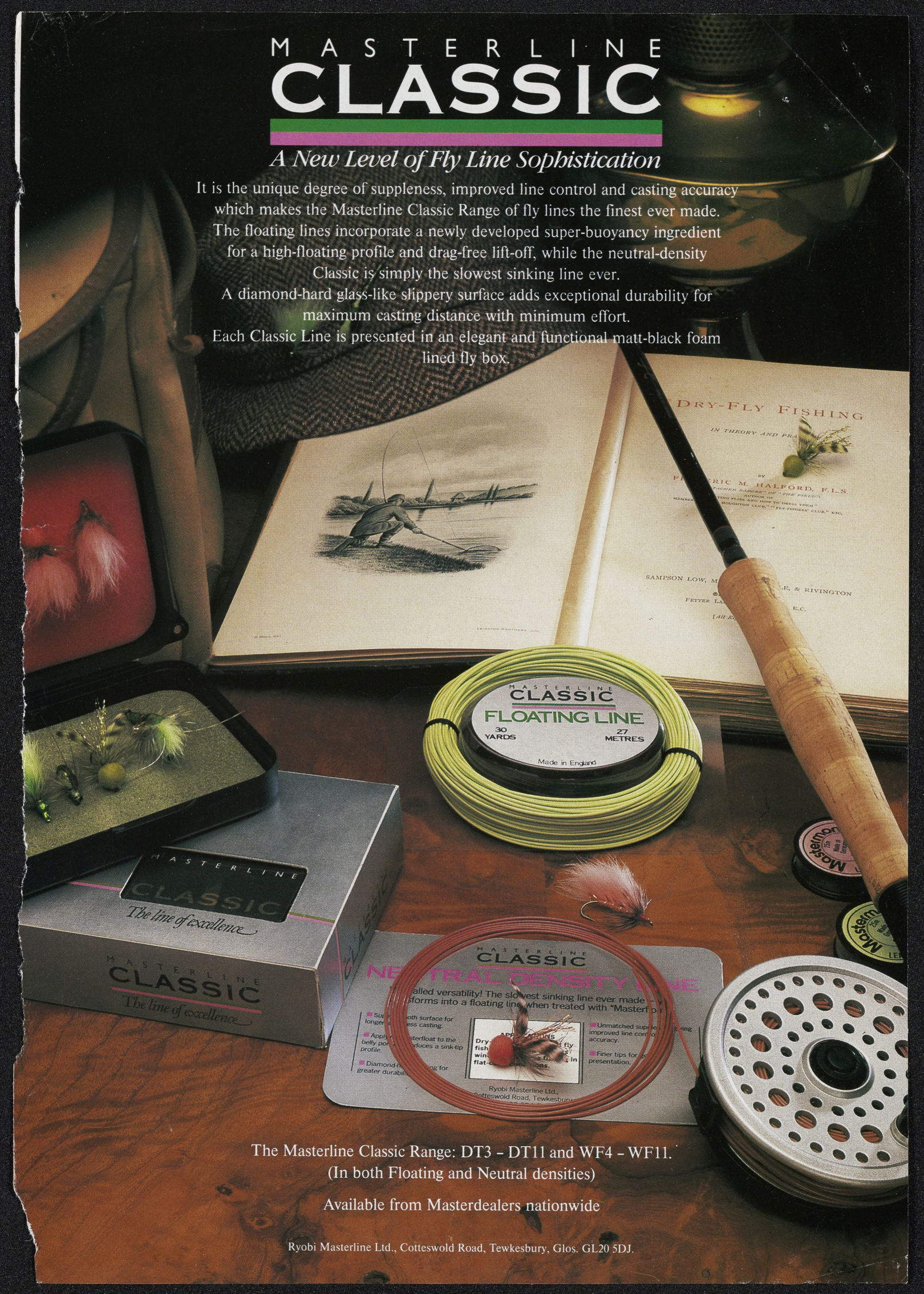

The Masterline Classic Range: DT3 – DT11 and WF4 – WF11.
(In both Floating and Neutral densities)

Available from Masterdealers nationwide

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Left: A good brownie nearly in the net. It is best to fish the open water first and return to the tricky spots later.

them the right alternative to the natural, their speed should not defeat a fisherman, once he has accustomed himself to it.

I first came to stream fishing from limestone and chalk rivers and soon got the hang of things: more lately I find myself alternating (sometimes on the same day) between reservoir rainbows and wild brown trout of minor rivers without undue difficulty in contacting either fish when they rise; but there have certainly been moments . . . and I am pretty sure that on those occasions my choice of artificial or my presentation may have been at fault, but not the speed of my reaction to the rise.

I said earlier that fishing the borders of the fast current is at its best during the hours of full daylight, even on a bright day, and the water one fishes is never the deepest, but often produces the best of the river's trout. The steady, slower runs of deep water nder the bank or areas sheltered erhanging trees or other ge can often provide very ish when shaded from direct

rds to ster

are the places which ariably provide hazards aster — the very disturbance to the is to be avoided when aximum effect . . . to that first tour up the here for the second ding and a short you to fish right up of green light,

where the trees meet overhead. This often provides me with some nice fish — not so many perhaps — and always the chance of an odd sea-trout at the height of summer on the rivers I fish nowadays.

I used to fish a team of three flies on a 10 ft leader, but gradually reduced this — often to a mere 6 ft and just one fly in the spring: returning to something a little longer when I add a Palmer or a Grizzle for dropper and one or another of the many convolutions of Spider referred to in my first article. The Black Spider probably sees more use than any of the others put together, but there are times when a ginger hackle does as well.



Two brace of fat brownies from Devon's River Otter.

It is more than likely that several anglers will consider my judgment at fault when I say that in high summer I may go down to size 16 hooks or as large as 10, even 8. The latter have the advantage of being difficult for small trout or salmon parr to engulf in their greedy little mouths; but on that account this whole method does help you to avoid the unwanted attentions of the small fry, which normally accompanies the across and downstream wet technique.

Inviting attention

I do not want to drop my line over fish, so — having fished up under my own bank to cover all likely spots within, say, ten yards or maybe 15 — I limit my coverage of the rest of the river to the amount of water my length of leader can reach without the line disturbing fish. I withdraw the Spider when it has reached a point in the stream level with me. Never do I fish out the run below, which I have already covered from downstream, nor do I allow the fly to swing round below me, thus inviting attention from the small fry.

After covering the likely-looking water to and across the main run and, without risking any super attempts to cover dangerous spots — no matter how inviting they may be (they will wait) — move up a couple of yards and repeat the process. Obviously the amount of effort required, the number of throws needed to cover any one pool or run depends solely on the size and configuration of the water you are fishing; but when using the Spider it is really worthwhile to spend as much time as the conditions demand of you to show your fly to every fish lying below the surface. On one occasion I enjoyed some great sport as I fished a rapid stretch of the Ottery — about 30 yards in length — and a deepish, boisterous run between shallows. I landed six nice trout by the time I reached the top end; but for some reason unremembered I returned to the tail and fished up again, landing five more . . . despite the commotion immediately prior to my second go. Yes, the Spider fished like this will catch you a lot of fish. You need keep only a few.

WHAT'S NEW

A look at the latest products for game-fishermen

A good 'un for salmon-fishers

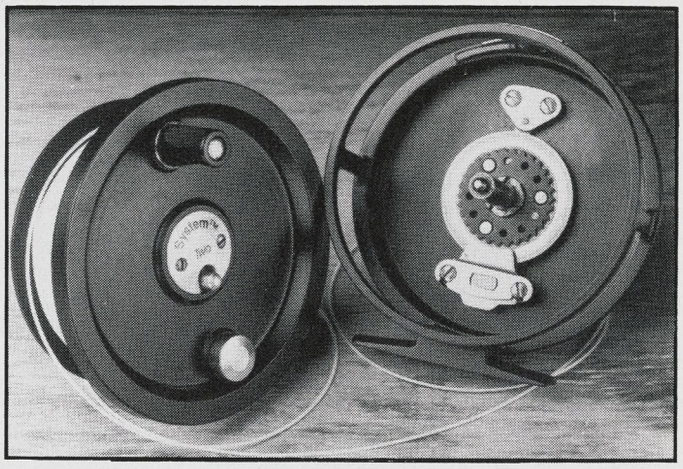
Some salmon fishermen regard a fly reel as nothing more than a store for their line. Others prefer something more sophisticated and are grateful for every bit of help a reel can give them when they hook a fish. For the latter category of fisher, Leeda Tackle have come up with a super reel — robust, good-looking and efficient.

The System Two 1011 model will take a number 10 double-taper fly-line plus 225 yards of 20 lb backing; or a number 11 DT line and 125 yards of backing.

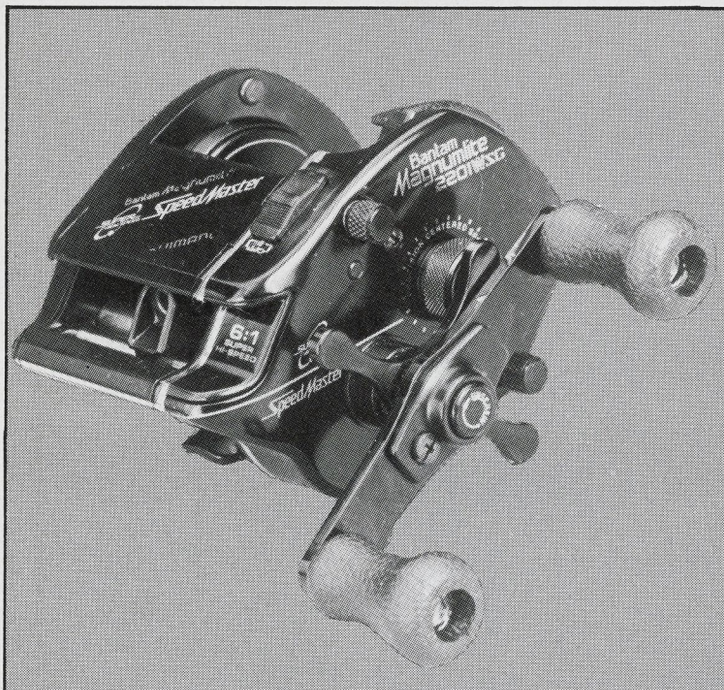
Apart from its tough construction, the most attractive feature of the reel is its stainless-steel disc-brake, which can be adjusted to a multitude of positions to give the exact tension you require to suit the circumstances. Moreover, the check is readily and easily operated, even when playing a fish.

In tests, apparently, a full 200 yards of backing have been stripped off the reel in less than 60 seconds, but the brake stayed cool. Admittedly, this is a test unlikely to be conducted often under fishing conditions, but it is always comforting to know that your reel could cope were it asked to!

For anglers unwilling to pin their faith solely on the brake, the reel's rim is exposed for sensitive finger-control and the handle is counter-balanced to eliminate any risk of "speed wobble" when a fish really takes off.



Salmon fishers who want a tough, reliable reel that will give them better control over a fish should look seriously at this model. It costs £62 and is available from specialist fly-fishing tackle dealers. More details from Leeda Tackle Ltd, 14 Cannon Street, Southampton SO9 2RB. **S.L.**



Left-hand delight

Judging by the number of enquiries *Trout and Salmon* receives from readers anxious to get hold of a multiplier with left-hand wind, Shimano are on to a winner with their new Bantam Magnumlite Speedmaster.

It has always been a mystery to me why reel manufacturers expect us to put up with right-hand-wind multipliers while giving us left-hand-wind fixed-spool reels, for while I always use a fly reel with the handle on the right (no letters, please: we've published enough for the time being!) I do find it more "natural" to use a spinning reel with the handle on the left. For one thing, one doesn't have to change hands after casting and I find it easier to strike or tighten into a fish with my right hand.

The new Shimano reel, therefore, should have a good reception. It is extremely well made, by a compnay that has become famous for its quality engineering, it does all that is demanded of it, and it has a good line capacity, the model under review — the BSM 2201W — taking 235 yds of 12 lb line, 195 yds of 14 lb, or 165 yds of 17 lb.

The gear ratio of 6:1 fairly whips a bait back through the water after the cast has been fished out and the thumb-sized button for disengaging the spool before casting is positive and no-nonsense.

To help smooth casting the reel has both a backlash control, which is adjusted according to the weight of bait you are using, and a magnetic spool control, which helps to prevent overruns, particularly when casting into a strong wind. Anyone who feels competent to cast without either aid can merely set both to the minimum setting, where their effect will be negligible.

One feature that I really like about the Bantam reel is its ability to override the star-drag slipping clutch. If, for example, you have a heavy fish almost beaten, you merely press a button which puts the reel into free spool, though the handle turns. Should the fish make a last-minute lunge, it is a simple matter to apply pressure with your thumb on the spool, without constantly having to fiddle about with the star drag. A ratchet on this free-spool feature would, I feel, be an advantage, for then one could play a fish as on a fly reel, but this notwithstanding it is a very useful feature.

The Shimano Bantam Magnumlite Speedmaster is unashamedly at the "top end" of the reel market and is all the better for that. Available with either left or right-hand wind, it costs £89.90 from selected dealers. For further information write to Shimano, Cross Buildings, 49 Gower Road, Sketty, Swansea. (Tel: 0792 205374).

S.L.

A work of art

While mooching about in the *Trout and Salmon* tent last year's Game Fair, I espied a huddle of grown men in a corner, making noises of delight and approbation. I was immediately intrigued. What could possibly make so many hard-bitten men-of-the-world so indecently expose their soft inner core?

The centre of attention was an advance copy of Taff Price's book — *Fly Patterns: An International Guide*, exquisitely illustrated by George Thompson.

Struggling through the press, I eventually managed to get my sweaty paws upon this excellent tome. A hasty glance, a quick flick through the pages, and it was gone, snatched away by some other acquisitive angler.

Cornering our esteemed editor, I begged, pleaded and cajoled — and it worked — so here I am reviewing one of the most attractive books to hit the angling scene for many a year.

The value of this book is not i
its comprehensive coverage o
day-to-day patterns, nor eve
hunting ground for new patt
although it has merits in bo
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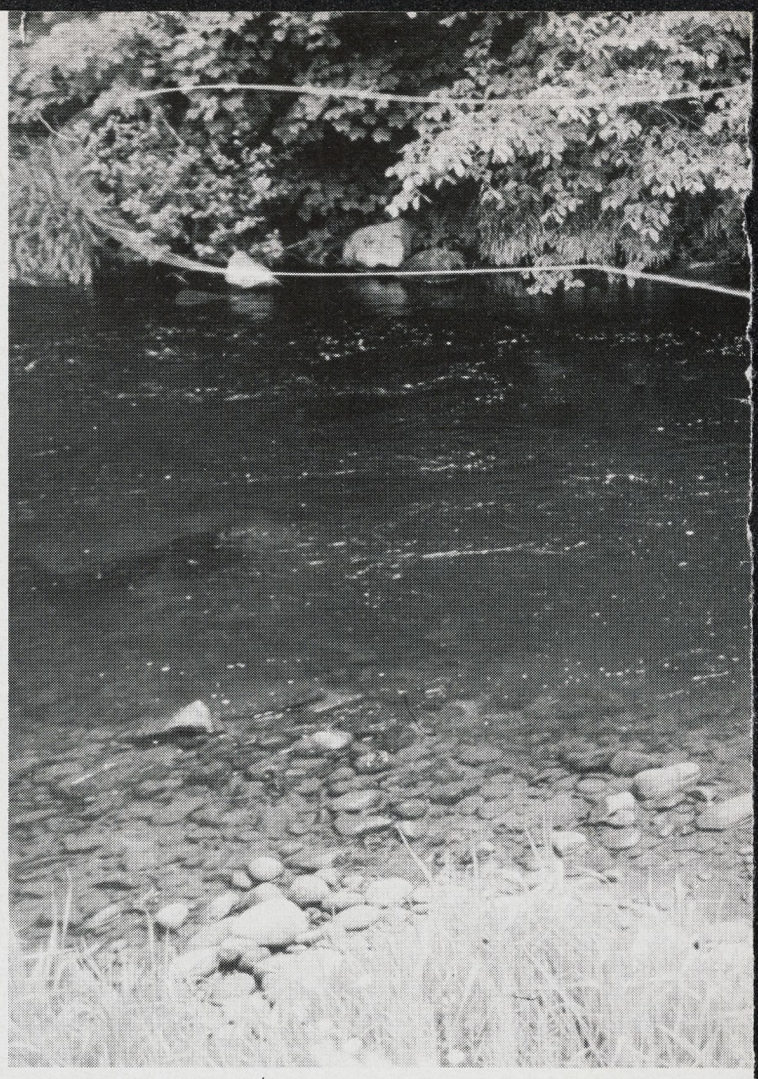
Wry-fly REVOLUTION



Fishing a wet-fly on the point and a dry-fly on the dropper is the deadliest way of fishing rough streams, claims ***NICHOLAS FITTON****, and its applications on stillwaters are exciting, too*

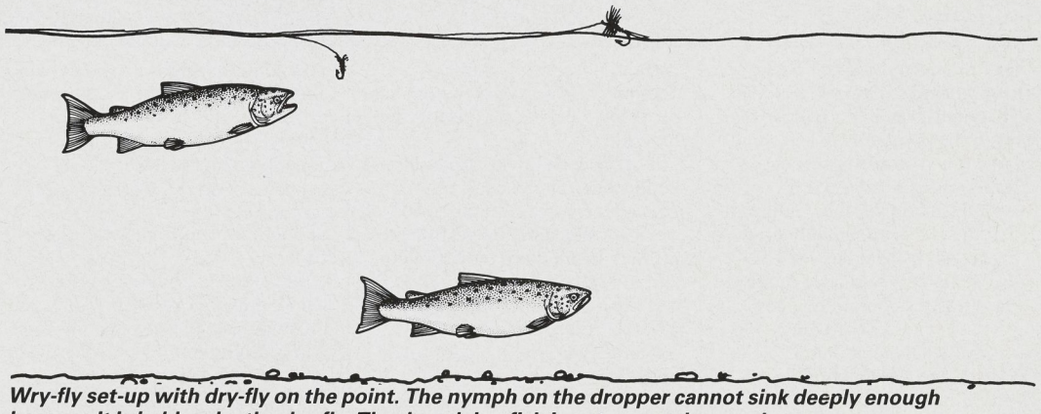
IN AN ARTICLE in June 1986 James Langan wrote about fishing a wet-fly and a dry-fly simultaneously. This is a technique I, too, have used for some years, though my method differs from Mr Langan's.

Fishing dry and wet at once is an old technique, but one rarely described in books. Those that do mention it concentrate on the system of dry-fly on the point and wet-fly on the dropper. Maurice Wiggin in *Teach Yourself Fly Fishing* does touch on the reverse system, but it is not until you fish with a wet-fly on the point and a dry-fly on the dropper that you really begin to get "the best of both worlds." Indeed, this system is better than merely effective, it is the deadliest way of fishing rough streams that I have yet discovered.

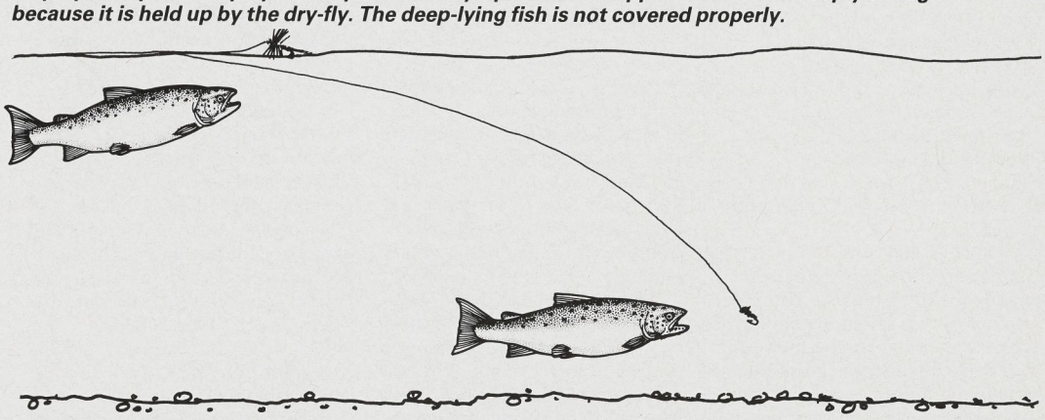
Mr Langan's system is limited because the wet-fly on the dropper never fishes deep at all but merely hangs just below the surface. However, if you put a weighted nymph on the point and a dry-fly on a dropper, about three or four feet up the cast, you will find your two flies fishing in two different sections of the water at once. You will be fishing both at the surface and near the bed of the stream. This gives you a double bite of the cherry as both the surface-feeder and the deep-lying fish come within your compass.

On days when fish are feeding confidently at the surface this style of wet and dry fishing is hardly necessary, but early in the season when little activity can be discerned this method is very useful. From mid-April until the end of May I find it a most deadly practice on the rough streams of the north. On cool mornings in midsummer before the trout have livened up it is again a superb way of getting an early brace while other anglers struggle. For dour and difficult days I also advise this method and recommend it for first visits to unfamiliar rivers.

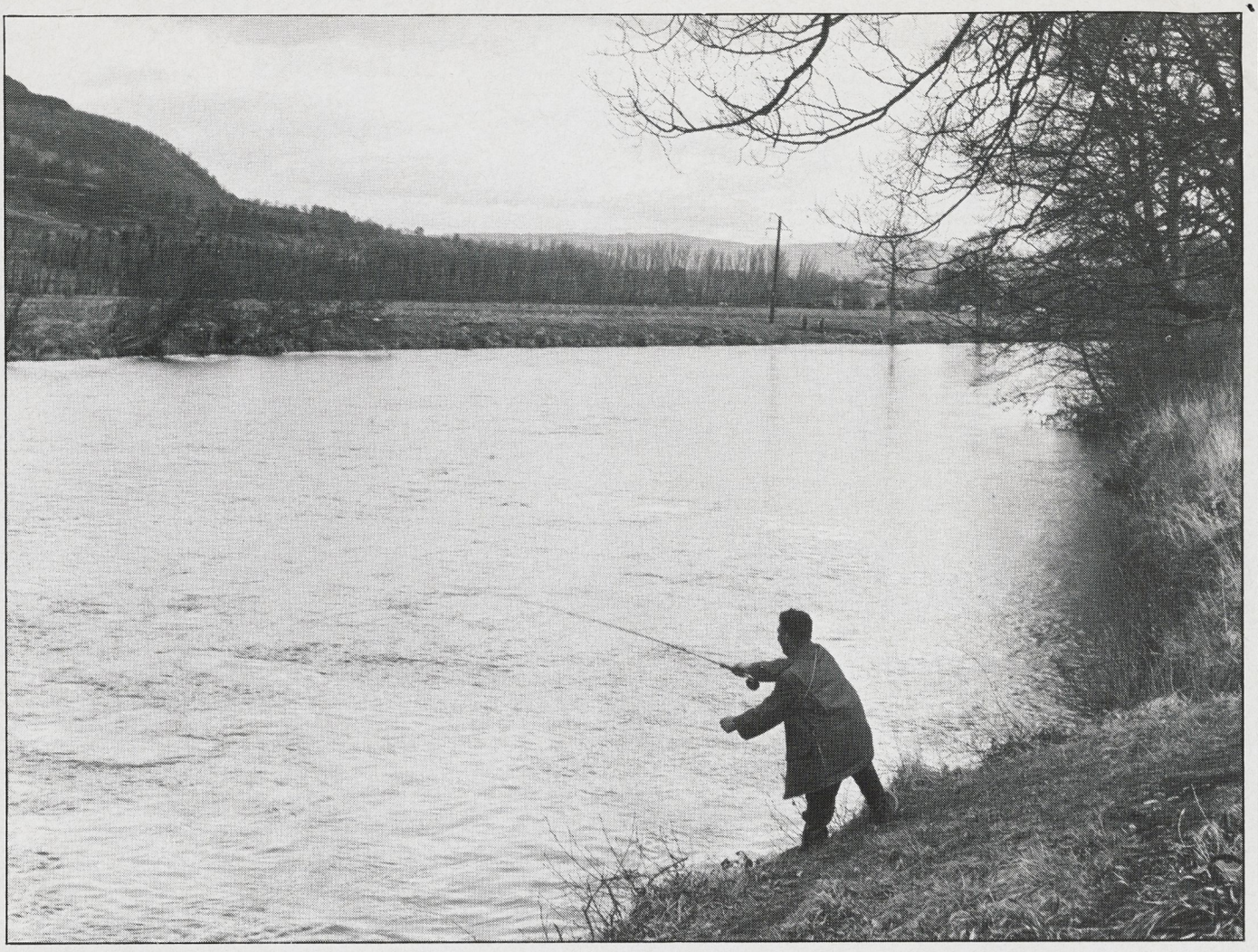
Yet another point in its favour is its particular appeal to grayling. Grayling lie deeper than trout and big ones rarely venture to the surface. With a deep-sunk nymph on the point you will catch grayling that your dry-fly or high nymph would never tempt. Frequently I end the day with a grayling or two in my creel at least twice the size of any trout already there — and these big specimens always take the nymph.



Wry-fly set-up with dry-fly on the point. The nymph on the dropper cannot sink deeply enough because it is held up by the dry-fly. The deep-lying fish is not covered properly.



Wry-fly set-up with nymph on the point. The nymph can swim deeply here, attracting the deep-lying fish, while the dry-fly tempts the surface-feeder. This gives the fisherman a double chance.



Grayling fishing on the Tay, a river that has provided ideal conditions for the spread of the species.

and stream at Abington. By July the pond and stream were "alive with young grayling". During their stay in the pond they provided an attraction for tourists and Mr Hunter of the local inn was pleased to show off the young fish.

At the club's annual dinner in Glasgow in December, 1897, George Anderson placed on the table "a globe containing a few living specimens of grayling artificially hatched out and reared". He was exhibiting a justifiable pride in the achievement.

As a safeguard, a batch of grayling was sent to Matthew Brown of Greenock, who was asked to keep them safe in a Renfrewshire pond and stream. Records do not show what happened to them. Could they have been the nucleus of the stock in the River Gryffe?

It appears that some of the local Clyde anglers became impatient and deliberately breached the zinc screens of the Abington pond on several occasions so that the young fish could all the sooner find their way to the Clyde. As a result, when the pond was drained in November, 1858 only 160 "beautiful young fish in high condition" were captured. They averaged 8½ inches long. The fate of the small number sent to the Tay system in 1858 is not known. The fact that another batch was introduced about 20 years later would suggest that the original attempt must have failed. What is certain, however, is that Scotland's largest river system has provided ideal conditions for "her ladyship".

The Tweed system also holds a good stock. The nucleus of this gained entry to a tributary, the Teviot, when a pond overflowed in 1860. From there they spread and in 1888 it was noted that there had been a remarkable increase in Tweed itself to the extent that grayling were equally plentiful in both rivers.

Came from the Nith

One other major Scottish river, the Annan, has contained grayling for a considerable time. To date I have been unable to discover who was responsible for the original stocking or the source of the fish. My guess would be that they came from the neighbouring Nith or from the Clyde, but that is only a guess.

After the initial enthusiasm, doubts began to creep in. In 1888 a "well-known angler" claimed that the average weight of trout in the Clyde had fallen to below 2 oz, while grayling averaged three to the pound and "went around in shoals so that the solitary trout had no chance whatever".

The same doubts were being expressed in other parts of the country. In 1887 the Abergavenny Fishery Association, after asking for advice on the introduction of grayling to the Usk, announced that the project had been abandoned in the interests of trout. Such doubts were probably responsible for the loss of momentum in the spread of the fish.

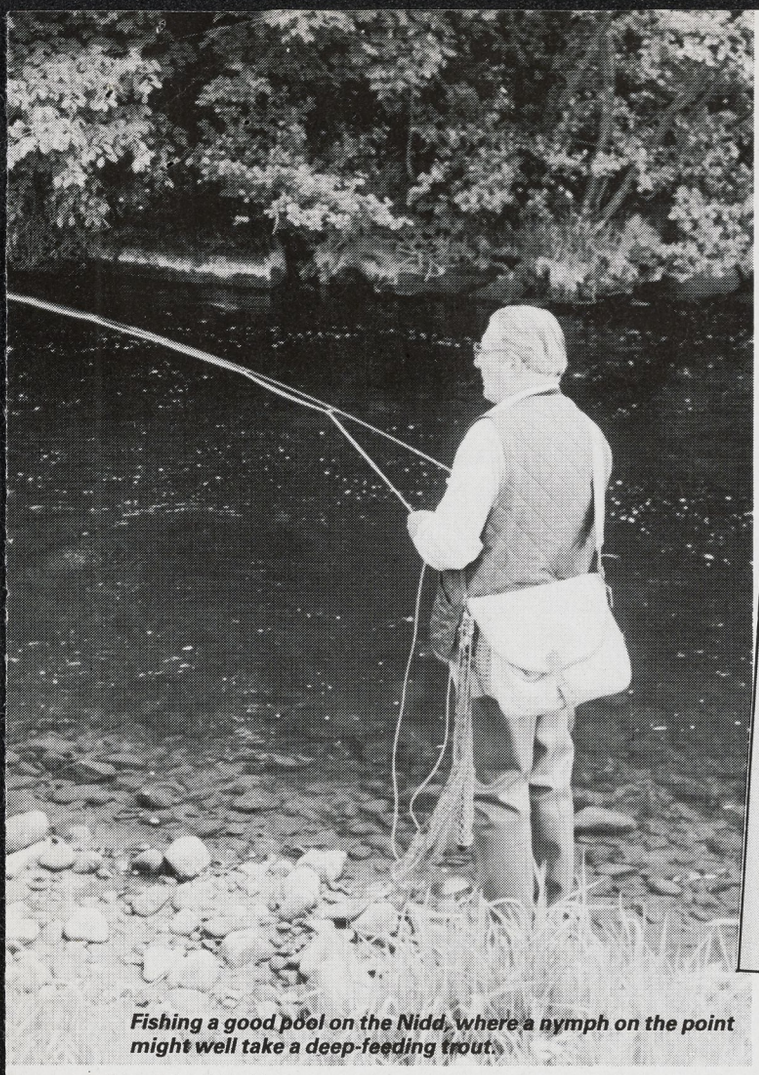
Meantime within river systems where grayling had been introduced they were steadily going about their own business and spreading upstream and downstream from their original stocking points. The rate of colonisation seems to have varied from place to place. Eighty years after the first grayling were introduced to the Clyde they were still absent from the upper reaches of the Avon, one of the Clyde's main feeders. Even today there is at least one tributary of Tweed which appears to have no grayling.

Since the beginning of this century man's part in the progress has been relatively small. In 1926 the United Clyde Angling Protective Association received a request from the Darvel Angling Club that they should be allowed to net grayling. The request was granted, subject to the approval of riparian proprietors. The stock at present in the River Irvine may well be the result of that netting.

Until relatively recently there were no grayling in the watershed of the River Forth. I had always been surprised that her ladyship had missed out Forth on her progress northwards. In recent years, however, and despite regulations controlling such things, grayling have been introduced into at least two tributaries of the Forth. Since these flow into the estuary it is unlikely that the fish will of their own accord spread into the remainder of the watershed.

My own opinion is that they would find a good home and provide good sport in rivers such as the Forth, Teith, Spey and Don. I am familiar with the arguments against the introduction of new species and I know that some will regard my views as heretical, but I would strongly recommend the addition of grayling to such rivers, because of the quality of the sport that can be provided during the close season. Such sport would add to the quality of life of local populations and could be used to extend the tourist season in places such as Callander or Grantown on Spey.

Grayling should not be stocked "on the quiet" as appears to have been done in the Esk and Almond in the Lothians. Expert advice should be sought from freshwater biologists, permission should be obtained and decisions should be taken by anglers who have had "hands on" experience of autumn and winter grayling fishing.



Fishing a good pool on the Nidd, where a nymph on the point might well take a deep-feeding trout.



The writer's favourite wry-fly combination: Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear on the dropper and a Pheasant Tail nymph on the point.

I consider that this method of fishing is so important, and yet also so neglected, that it requires its own special name to give it both respectability and recognition. For some years I have referred to it in my log book as "wry-fly" and I therefore offer the name to the fishing establishment. This is a simple phrase containing a portmanteau word combining "dry" and "wet" and also bearing amusing linguistic connotations suggesting that it is "perverse", "distorted", "crooked" and "not in the right direction." Enough to make a purist smile wryly!

Three at once

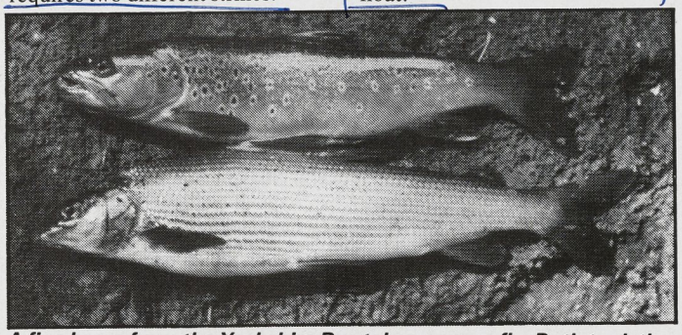
Seriously, though, we often fish with three wet-flies at once; twin dry-fly, too, is respectable as Dr Baigent with his variants has taught us, so why should a wet-fly and a dry-fly not be fished quite legitimately upon one cast? I suspect that this idea has not received much publicity because fly-fishing has tended to divide into two camps, wet and dry, and never the twain shall meet. The application of a little lateral thinking, however, comes up unerringly with this combination.

There are other benefits with wry-fly. Not only does the deep-sunk nymph lure big grayling, but the dry-fly often lures big trout, particularly in early season. Time and time again I have caught the biggest trout of the day on the dropper dry-fly, in cheerless spring weather, when I haven't seen a rise all day unless it was to my fly. Indeed wry-fly is one of the best methods I know of saving a blank, for no matter how dour the day there will always be the odd opportunist fish which cannot resist a bushy morsel bobbing down atop the stream.

Another benefit is that the otherwise difficult problem of detecting the nymph-take is rendered simplicity itself with wry-fly. You suddenly see the dry-fly check or skid upstream or plunge dramatically under and strike at once . . . to discover that a fish has taken the nymph. Indeed, wry-fly may not be appreciated in some circles because it completely demystifies the subleties of nymphing. It is a great "democratiser" for it puts nymphing within the grasp of anglers hitherto flummoxed by its complexities.

Wry-fly does have its drawbacks, though. Firstly, it requires two different strikes. While you have to strike immediately you suspect the nymph has been taken, you may have to delay the strike with the dry-fly, especially in smooth or stillish water. This dual strike does require some discipline to master. Another disadvantage is that if a trout takes the dropper dry-fly the trailing nymph may catch on underwater vegetation or rocks during the fight. This happens once or twice a season to me and is just one of the risks you must accept with the method.

Finally, a fish rising just off the opposite bank cannot be covered with your dry-fly, because your nymph would sail into the vegetation beyond. In such cases it is best to take the nymph off and put on another dry-fly momentarily. Wry-fly is, therefore, limited as a dry-fly method at times. Basically it is upstream wet-fly with a dry-fly float.

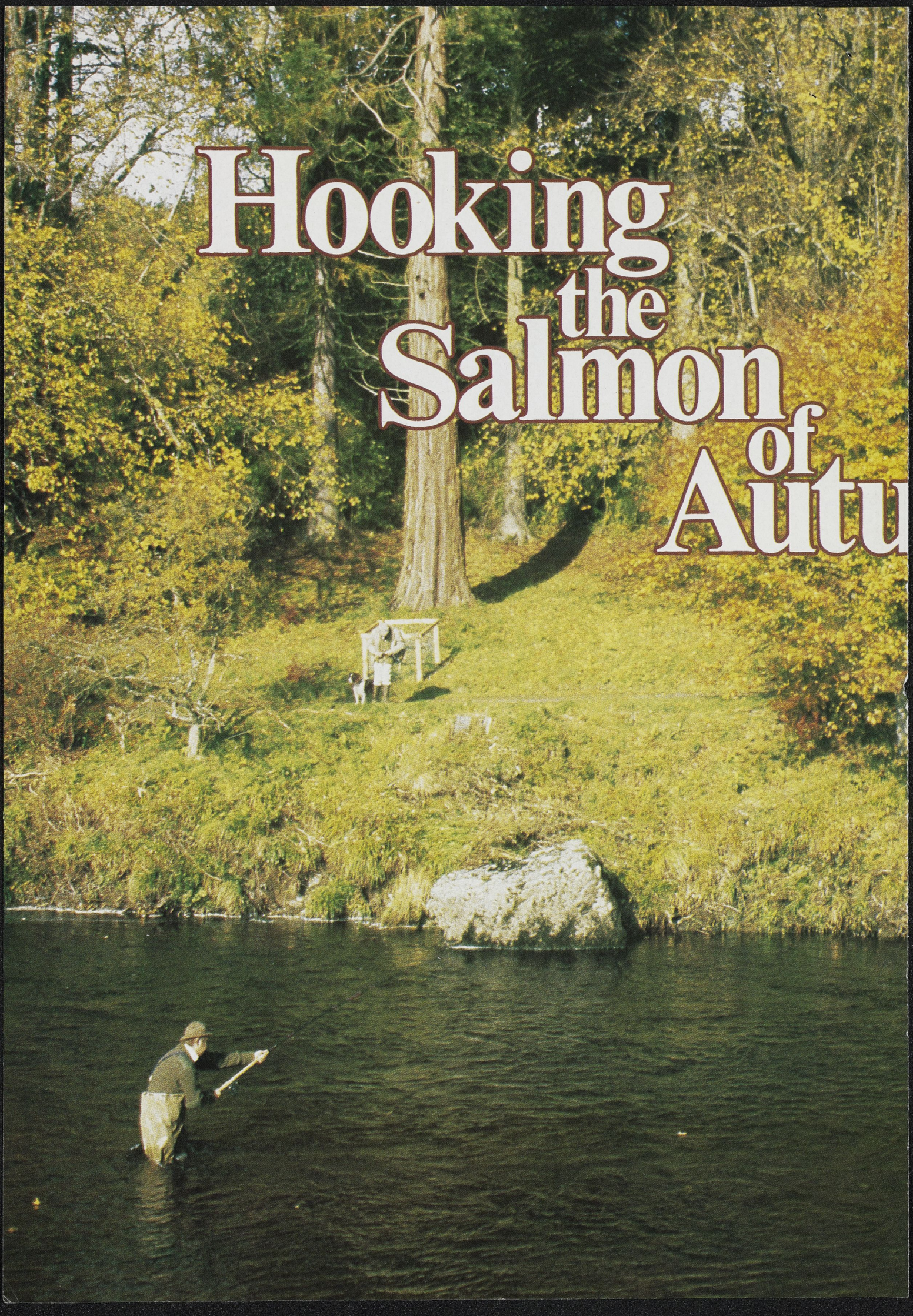


A fine brace from the Yorkshire Rye taken on wry-fly. Both took the point fly — a weighted Copper Nymph. The brownie, at ¾ lb, is above average for the water and the grayling, at 15 oz, even better. Dry-fly failed to lure these fish, but the deep nymph scored.

But the technique does not stop there. Applying lateral thinking still further, it is possible to fish wry-fly with more than two flies. Why not one dry-fly and two wet-flies, particularly good in early spring? Or why not two dry-flies and one wet-fly, often useful in summer. Nor is wry-fly exclusively for river fishing. The implications it has for stillwater techniques are profound. There is scope for long leader experiments, *ie* dry-fly on the surface and a nymph 15 feet beyond and below.

As for flies I would recommend; unquestionably a Pheasant Tail nymph or a Sawyer Killer Bug, which is excellent in deepish streams for the point. Dry-flies: Greenwell's Glory or March Brown early in the season, but later on try an Iron Blue or Black Gnat. My own personal favourite combination is a Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear dry-fly and a Pheasant Tail nymph on the point, both tied on size 12 or 14 hooks.

If you have never tried this method before, I urge you to do so. Wry-fly has revolutionised my fly-fishing and has helped me to treble my baskets. The first season that I began to use wry-fly correctly I caught over 200 wild trout on this one technique alone. In five seasons it has accounted for more than 1,000 fish. I hesitate to unleash such a secret weapon upon unlucky *salmo trutta,* but in the name of progress (and fly-fishing has to progress) I can keep quiet no longer!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WET-FLY LESSONS IN THE NORTH

DERMOT WILSON recounts how, as a chalk-stream dry-fly enthusiast, he 'discovered' the Lune and Eden and overcame his prejudices about style

I AM LUCKY ENOUGH to be able to count that proficient and eminent fisherman Reg Righyni as a good friend, but until recently I had never visited him in his native haunts among the fells and dales of the North. This year, however, I overcame my southern provincialism and accepted his generous invitation to fish with him for a few days in and around his natural habitat.

The big attractions of the invitation were Reg's company and the wild trout of the Lune. For at least a decade he had told me that there wasn't a trout in the country to touch Lune fish for fight, for looks, for taste. So I was eager to meet them, though to avoid disappointment I tempered my eagerness with the cautious thought that even the most honest fishermen sometimes over-enthuse about the trout in their favourite rivers.

I drove north in mid-April at Reg's suggestion. Given normal weather, April can be an excellent month for trout in the North, partly because they are not yet gorging on the 'creepers' which they guzzle so single-mindedly in late May. Creepers are the bottom-living larvae of the stoneflies which abound in northern streams. Since they crawl on to dry land to become adults, they are not of much value to fly-fishermen.

April is too early for the creeper, however, and the trout usually take fly readily. "You'll have to learn how to fish the wet fly properly", said Reg emphatically and sternly. He knew full well that I was a dry-fly fanatic.

But even Reg could hardly foresee last April's weather. Do you remember it? Temperatures were about twice as low as we anticipated and all our thermal underwear and thickest outerwear weren't enough to keep out the cold. I believe that only the copious coffee we brought each day saved us from hypothermia.

The cold must have been enough to make any fly which ventured out seem a lunatic to his fellows. We saw a few lunatics, but not many.

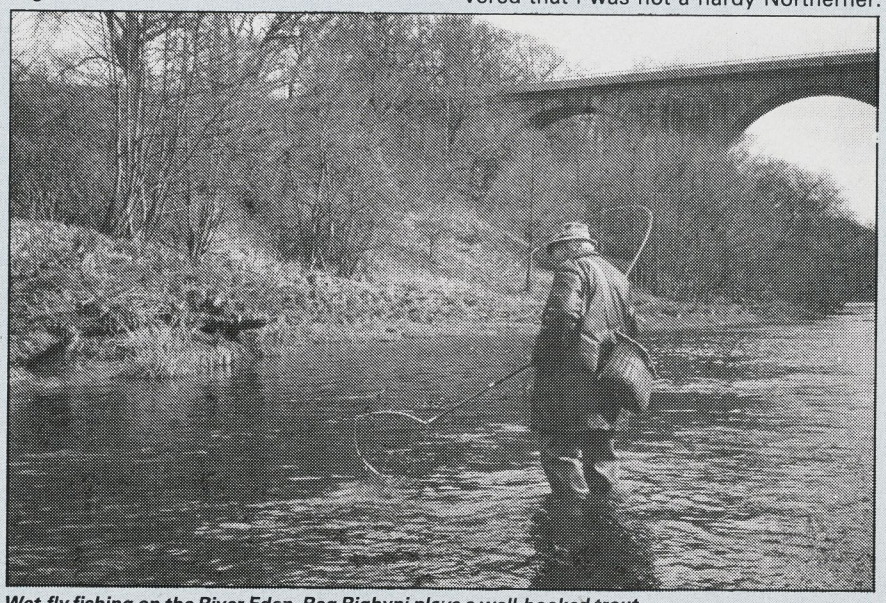
Nevertheless, miraculously enough, we did catch some trout on the Lune, on the Eden, and on one or two other rivers. It is a measure of great rivers that they can produce fish even when conditions are at their worst. Naturally, we caught fewer than usual. Reg said that normally we might be enjoying double-figure catches apiece from the Lune, instead of just two or three fish. But these were enough to keep me quite content. And I was learning some valuable lessons.

First of all, I learned that Reg had not exaggerated one whit in his description of Lune trout. Frankly, they made our southern chalk-stream fish seem like tame game. They averaged over 1 lb and went up to 2½ lb, sometimes more. They were beautifully marked, and if they were over ¾ lb were as pink-fleshed as any gourmet could desire.

But their most remarkable attribute was their strength. Never have I known anything like it. Normally, once I have hooked a trout, I count the contest three-quarters over. Bringing him to the net afterwards is little more than routine. But with a Lune trout the main contest is still to come.

Even a 1 lb fish can take you out to the backing. He seems to be everywhere at once, and you have no control for what feels like an age. The battle takes about three times as long as with a southern trout, and your heart is in your mouth the whole time. It is the nearest thing I have ever experienced in trout fishing to playing a salmon.

This gift of apparent jet-propulsion seems to be unique to the trout of the Lune. At the risk of offending non-Lunar fishermen (to coin a phrase), I must say that I would rather catch one Lune trout than three trout from any other river I have fished. The Eden, for instance, is also a fine trout river, but the trout come in with comparative ease. I may be biased, of course, because I distinguished myself by falling into the Eden twice in a single day, the coldest day of all. I discovered that I was not a hardy Northerner.



Wet-fly fishing on the River Eden. Reg Righyni plays a well-hooked trout.

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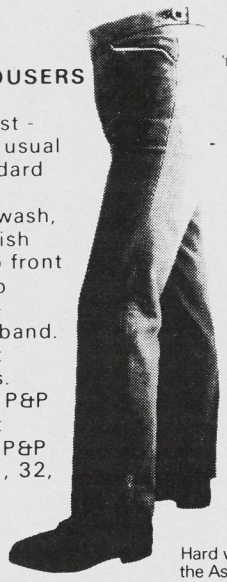
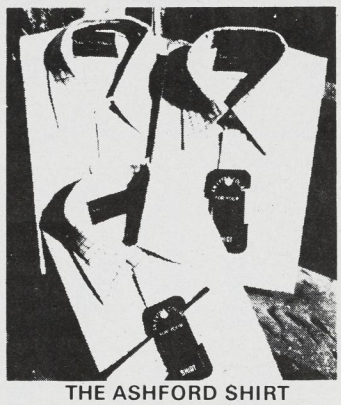
Inside leg 29, 31, 32, 33 inches.





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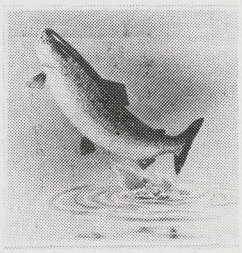
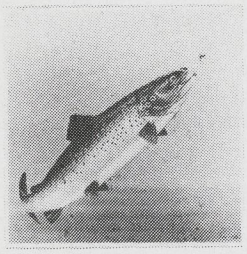


The Rainbow Trout



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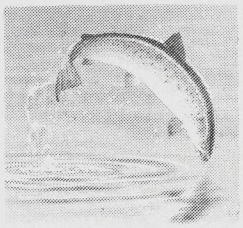
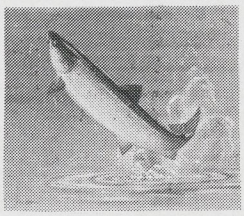


The Seatrout



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Dermot Wilson prepares to land an Eden trout, hooked on a wet fly.

More important than anything else, I learned about efficient wet-fly technique. To my undying shame, my previous notion of wet-fly fishing was that normally you cast a team of flies across and downstream, allowed them to swing round with the current and hoped that a trout would take one of them on the way, obligingly hooking itself without your having even to strike.

"If there's one fellow I can't stand," said Reg as he began his wet-fly lecture to me, "It's the ignorant sort of chap who thinks that wet-fly fishing consists of casting across and downstream, then allowing the flies to swing round with the current and hoping that some idiot fish will hook itself."

I really did not dare look him in the eye. I think I gave a nervous giggle. Then I listened carefully.

"Most people think that a wet fly represents an under-water nymph," Reg went on. "They're wrong. The trout take it for a nymph in the act of emergence, or sometimes for a drowned dun or drowned spinner. Now none of these creatures — not even an underwater nymph — dashes across the current with such frenzied speed as a wet fly fished by an ignorant fisherman

"The whole art of the wet fly is to give the flies as long a natural drift as possible, while covering as much water as possible. Just a little drag doesn't matter too much. It may even help to give the flies a bit of extra life. But a long pronounced drag just won't do."

Just a word about Reg here, in case you don't know the scope of his fishing talents. He is, of course, an acknowledged master of the wet fly for trout. He is also a very successful and knowledgeable fisherman for both sea-trout and salmon, having written two deep-thinking and widely-read books about the latter.

As if this were not enough, he is also the author of the definitive book on grayling fishing. Grayling are his latest passion, and his present amusement is to see from how many British rivers he can take them. His tally now stands at 107 (I sent him a bottle of champagne when he reached his century) and he has by no means finished yet. This, then, was my wet-fly tutor and mentor.

Reg admits that more fish are inevitably pricked on the wet fly than on the dry. But to wait till you feel a "pull" before striking, he says, is one way of making sure that you prick nearly every fish and seldom hook one. You will be far too late. Rather as in nymph-fishing, you have to watch like a hawk until you glimpse the take or see the line stop moving.

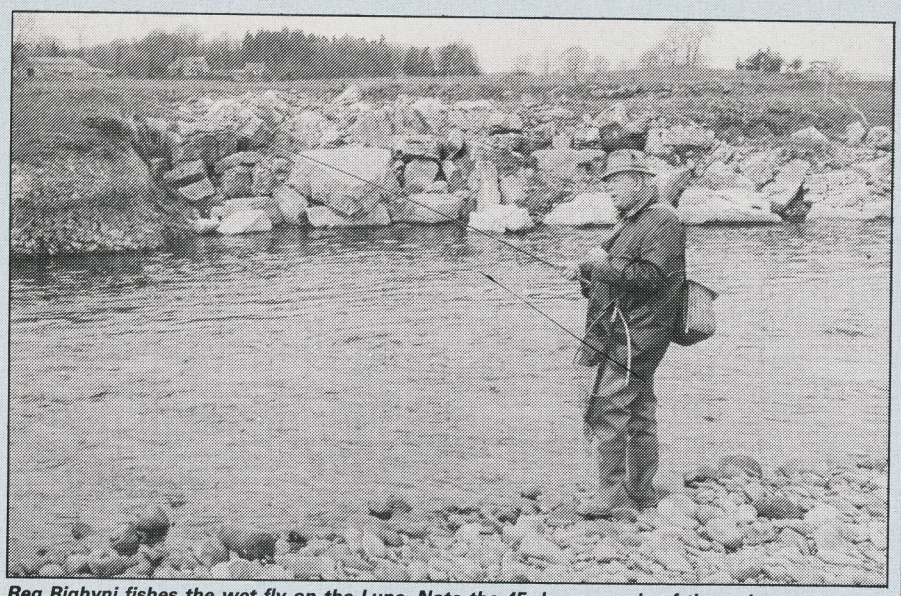
The flies should fish no more than about a couple of inches below the surface. It is a fallacy to imagine that wet flies will catch trout deep down when the fish are disinclined to feed near the top of the water. The trout they catch are interested in those emerging nymphs or in such drowned duns and spinners as are carried along in the surface film. To put shot on the leader, as is not entirely unknown, is simply silly.

Now how do you give your flies a good long natural drift? One way is to fish the "upstream wet fly", casting directly upstream and letting the flies drift towards you, one after the other. Another way is to cast across and up (not across and down), and this is usually more effective wherever it is feasible, because the flies do not follow the same course and therefore you cover more water.

The upstream wet fly is the most useful method on very small rivers or on rivers where bushy banks or rocks above the surface may result in a cross-stream cast becoming caught up.

The flies should then be fished just slightly faster than the current and only a very short cast should be used, so that the take can be seen and so that the bob-fly can be brought skipping along the surface towards you by raising the rod. One good rule of thumb is to have no more line out than the length of your rod, plus, of course, the leader. Trout will sometimes take right at your feet. The advantages of a long rod, for covering extra water and for working the bob-fly successfully, become extremely obvious.

In other circumstances, and particularly ▶



Reg Righyni fishes the wet fly on the Lune. Note the 45 degree angle of the rod.

in wide streams, the up-and-across technique catches more trout. It is by no means easy to carry out, however. Every cast is different and requires individual treatment — here an upstream mend, there a downstream mend — all in aid of keeping those flies drifting naturally. The precise placing of the cast is also important to avoid excessive drag.

So the whole process is far from repetitive — a criticism often levelled at wet-fly fishing by people who know little about it. It is both skilful and exciting, particularly since you often see the trout take the fly. When you fish the upstream wet fly on a short line, you nearly always do.

A long rod is also a great blessing when you are casting up and across. The tip describes a wider arc and so the flies drift longer before drag begins. Mending line is easier with a long rod, too, and needs to be done less frequently.

Again, you should always hold the rod up at an angle of 45 degrees or so, never parallel with the water. The length of the rod then means that as little line as possible is actually on the water and that awkward currents can often be "bridged". The less line on the water, the less chance of drag. And finally, a taking trout will not be alarmed by a heavy length of floating line, which can cause a fish to eject the fly immediately.

The long rod, then, is not primarily a device for casting further. It is a device for fishing each cast better. Reg Righyni says, in fact, "Never make a long cast when a short one will do." A short cast means less line on the water, less chance of drag and considerably more chance of hooking the fish you attract.

How long should the rod actually be? Carbon-fibre, of course, enables a long rod to remain fairly light. Reg himself uses an 11¼ ft carbon rod by Bruce and Walker for all his wet-fly fishing. But for many fishermen, carbon-fibre is still on the expensive side, and they will find a 10½ ft glass rod only marginally less ideal. Both rods, incidentally, should carry a comparatively heavy reel to offset the weight of material beyond it.

Here are two final tips. First, if you wade,do so very, very carefully, without clumping or splashing. Time and again good wet-fly fishermen have shown that this helps to keep fish feeding, whereas careless wading will put them down or even drive them from the pool

Second, never forget to use Fuller's earth or some equally efficient substance on your leader to stop it skimming the surface. This is vital. The man who takes advantage of it will take far more trout than the man without it.

All this I learned at the feet of Reg Righyni. During non-fishing times we indulged in a good deal of pleasant and amicable bickering about the joys and merits of the wet fly *versus* the dry. Reg, it should be said, is no wet-fly purist and uses the dry fly when he believes it more likely to be successful. But he does love the wet fly when circumstances suit it.

In the end, believe it or not, we more or less agreed. My own argument for the dry fly was that the supreme experience of trout fishing was to cast for a rising fish, to see the fly on the surface one moment and to see the fish take it under the next. Reg was sympathetic and concurred that dry-fly fishing was more "entertaining", perhaps.

But wet-fly fishing, he mantained, was more challenging and difficult. In dry-fly fishing the trout shows itself and all that may be needed is simply an accurate cast. Choice of fly and so-on are common to both methods. I could not but agree. I think I probably like dry-fly fishing simply because it is so easy. And now that I know more about the wet-fly as it ought to be fished, I admit that it did indeed seem more challenging and difficult.

Our last day together was spent on the Eden. For about two hours during the afternoon we tried an experiment. I fished consistently with the dry fly. Reg fished consistently with the wet. I had three good trout. Reg had six.

WHEN FLY-FISHERS talk about nymphs *(Figure 1)* the chances are that the types they have in mind are the familiar ephemerid nymphs — Sawyer Pheasant Tails, *etc.* So for the purpose of this discussion, I'll stick to this type, since it is so popular.

Now that we're dealing with the artificial of an actual food form, I feel it's vital to have things right. Trout have pretty good eyesight when viewing things within their own environment. It's not a case now of 'footprints' in the surface, or 'windows', or 'mirrors'. Now it's 'eyeball-to-eyeball'. So, if you have the skills, why not coach yourself to be accurate — at least with these slowly-presented subsurface imitators?

The best thing to do when tying nymph patterns is to obtain some actual specimens. The next trout or grayling you catch will usually oblige. Then do 'a Skues'. Get the marrow scoop out, empty it in the white dish, add a drop of water, give it a quick shake, and then sort out a nice intact specimen to study. Acquire a decent hand lens with, say, 4-6x magnification and make a sketch of the beast, as I do. Weigh up proportions — abdomen length *v* thorax length, tail length *v* overall length, leg length *v* thorax length. Ask yourself whether the abdomen is gently or steeply tapered? Is the thorax much wider than the abdomen? Is the head significant, or not? Fussy? Well, it all depends on your viewpoint. One thing is for sure: when dressing nymphs, it's better to get proportions right than wrong. If you can get proportions wrong quite easily, it should be just as possible to get them right. After all, it's only a question of manipulation and discipline.

Let's consider an olive nymph of the Baetis group as a typical example — and as a nice one to dress. To start with, though, we can dispel one seemingly popular misconception: that nymphs, all nymphs, are fat, juicy things. Ephemerid nymphs aren't and Baetis nymphs definitely aren't. So start thinking 'slim'!

Hooks for ephemerid nymphs do need extra dressing room and special nymph hooks made specifically for this type of nymph pattern are now available. So don't, whatever you do, try cramming all the components of a nymph on a standard shank. It will look awful, and you'll 'pile up' over the eye.

As with the wet fly, start by making full use of the extra shank length, and be sure to lash the tails down right at the very end of the straight — just as the bend starts. The tails should project from a third to half the body length. It's not too critical; let the natural you've just been viewing be your guide. You'll see some artificials, though, with tails as long as, if not longer than, the full hook length!

Now you've got the tails on, look at the rest of the shank and fix those proportions in your mind's eye. The first division you will consider is where the abdomen will end and the thorax start. Here is where many lose proportion, insisting that the thorax and abdomen are 50/50.

I think that we are splitting hairs. This is a matter for individual taste to decide. Hang it! We are cocks of the dunghill, and we can do as we please so long as we are sure of the Purpose. Put Cousin Trout back or leave him to rot, just as you please. The Purpose will look after the rest.

W. QUILLIAM.

FISHING THE GLIDES.

ONE day while comfortably seated in the morning-room of the Flyfishers' Club, I was approached by your amiable but insidious Editor with a request that I should write an article for the forthcoming FLYFISHERS' JOURNAL.

Flattered by this complimentary request I rose to the bait so cleverly presented and found myself *caught*. Not till later did I realise the folly I had so imprudently committed, and I trusted that the promise so hastily given had been forgotten. But, oh dear no, your editor is not that kind of man, after so cleverly hooking his fish he has given him one or two nasty jabs with the butt to make him "come out of the weeds," and now he has fairly landed me.

Now, however, that I have promised, I have to perform, and what the Dickens am I to write about? I unfortunately do not own that facile pen, that *cacoethes scribendi*, which so many fisherman carry, and I must not overlook the fact that the dry-fly purist knows all there is to learn about flyfishing, and a good many other things, and that any observations made by an old wet-fly fisherman are, in his eyes, futile and uninteresting, and (as a Scotchman would describe it) "juist havers."

Well, if this be so, let those who feel that the dry fly is the only method, just skip this article, and regard it as merely padding to fill the necessary space in the journal.

Well, now, to start on my "havers," here is a problem that has often puzzled me, and I shall be glad of a solution. Why do trout under certain conditions of bright sun and low water leave their usual haunts and crowd into the shallow "glides"? I speak here of rivers like the Monnow, Clun, and Coquet, that are fairly rapid, and present a constant succession of pools and streams, and my remarks do not obviously apply to the more even depths and gentler currents of the chalk streams, and by the word "*glides*" I mean the extreme tails of the pools where the smooth shallow breaks off into a dancing stickle.

That the fish do so congregate in these spots is incontestible, though under these conditions they are most difficult to approach, and still harder to catch. The only way is to get into the stickle *some*

distance below and wade up slowly and very quietly until within a long cast of the lips of the glide where it joins the stickle, and then if you have made your approach very carefully and have given no alarm you may still circumvent them. The fish will all be within a few yards of the first break of the stickle, and though you may not see one fish, and probably will not, when you begin to cast, the first time your fly lights in the right place you will see a shadow follow it or a roll in the water, and soon you will be able to identify quite a number of fish.

This style of fishing is the nearest approach to dry-fly tactics that wet-fly fishing can offer. I well remember the first time that I found out for myself this habit of the trout. It was on the Monnow, on what was then the Pandy Club water. My father and my uncle, both excellent fishermen, had gone to the bottom of the club water, which was the best part, and I, a boy of 16, was told to begin at a certain place higher up. The water was rather low, with a blazing sun, and I fished four or five pools of most lovely water without a rise. I then thought I would sit in the shade for a little and watch whether I could see any fish moving. After a few minutes I noticed a few slight dimples on the glide—that was just above me. The rises were so small that I thought they must be caused by minnows, though it struck me as strange that minnows should be lying in such a strong current, so I lowered myself gently into the stream, and, creeping up slowly inch by inch, got within casting distance. I got six good fish off that first glide, and then fishing up and fishing only the glides, I found when I got home that for the first and only time in my life I had beaten both my father and my uncle, who had been fishing the usual spots for fish, as I had at the beginning.

So far as my memory carries me (it is over 50 years ago), I had 52 fish, and they had 60 between them. As the Monnow trout in those days averaged ½lb. and over, these were big bags, but there were more fish then than there are now.

In this style of upstream fishing there is another curious thing that I have again and again noticed. If your fly comes over a fish in *smooth* water, that is, in a glide or pool, *head* first, that is, with the head pointing down stream, they will have none of it, but if you can so manœuvre your line so as to get the slightest drag from upstream, so that it hangs for a moment, and descends tail first, they will dash at it eagerly, and take the same fly that they have previously refused to notice when it came over them head first. Why is this? I cannot tell, but await the solution by some keener observer.

One theory that I venture to submit is, that as the sun raises the temperature of the water, the fish get lazy where they have less trouble in picking up their food, also that they go to the glides when the water is warmer because the current there is stronger and more refreshing, much as we on a blazing hot day enjoy sitting in the cool current of

air from an open window! This theory may seem rather far-fetched, but it is the best I can offer, and I shall be glad to see some suggestions by others with regard to it.

Apropos of this, Mr. Editor, might I suggest that a correspondence column for criticism and suggestions from members on the articles might be a valuable addition to the Journal? I am an old enough fisherman to recognize that the longer one lives the more one learns, especially with regard to fishing matters, but this correspondence column should be under your strict censorship so that no personalities or polemics should be permitted which might mar the good fellowship of the Club.

To return to our muttons, or *glides*. It is possible by casting diagonally up-stream and turning the point of the rod up-stream, so to present the fly, that it hangs for a moment, as if cast from above. It is rather a difficult knack to learn, and still harder to describe, but I have invariably found, that provided the fish have not seen you, the fly when so presented will be *taken*.

I have often carefully watched the duns (*Ephemeridæ*) when floating down-stream: these are generally but not invariably floating down *tail* first, but when they get into an eddy or caught by a sudden puff of air, they twist about *all* ways, but I have not been able definitely to decide that the fish discriminate or take only those that come down tail first, but I am satisfied this is so with the artificial fly.

Of flies and their changes. We have all, no doubt, noticed the subtle and infinite shades of the different flies, especially the duns (*Ephemeridæ*), but not every one knows that with changes of temperature, the same variety of fly changes colour. Take for instance the cockwing dun, called by some the great olive: this fly on a warm day is several degrees lighter in shade than on a dark windy day.

Further, many *amateur* fly tiers (I do not take into consideration *shop tied flies*, as these are either tied to patterns furnished by practical fishermen, or else are fancy flies tied to catch those of their clients who know no better), in imitating the natural insect, copy as nearly as possible the general colour of the body of the fly as seen from *above*. It does not occur to them to turn the fly up and look at it as the fish sees it from *below*, but in most cases the underside of the fly is in strong contrast to the colour of the body as seen from above. Surely, then, we should try to imitate it as the fish sees it *when looking up*, not as we see it *when looking down*.

In this connection I would like to refer to a popular fallacy, that is the use of stained gut for casts, in the belief that it renders the cast less visible. It certainly does render the cast invisible to the *fisherman*, but I maintain that it renders it doubly conspicuous to the *fish*. The matter is capable of easy proof if it be admitted, as I do not see how it can be denied, that fish see our lines and flies from

below against the bright background of the sky. Let anyone take a finger bowl of clear glass and fill it with water, and place in it a link of unstained white gut and a link of gut stained any colour you like (pale blue, olive, or green) and hold the bowl up to the light against the sky, the white gut at once becomes almost invisible, while the dyed gut presents a *dark line*.

While speaking of fly-making I should like to call the attention of amateur fly-makers to a most useful and valuable material for making the bodies of flies, which is usually thrown away and wasted—I refer to the flat refuse ends of a hank of gut. This flat gut, which, by the way, should be thoroughly soaked and made supple before using, can, by wrapping it over the coloured tying silk or floss or fur, as the case may be, imitate with extraordinary exactness the semi-transparent bodies of the *Ephemeridæ* that are so difficult to copy with silk or fur alone without the colour being too crude. Also, the gut greatly protects the body of the fly from the teeth of the trout, and this adds greatly to its durability. This flat gut may also be dyed various colours and used alone.

However, I have run on too long, and once I begin yarning in this way I fear I shall recall the guest in a regimental mess who, being importuned to sing when he did not wish to, struck up a dirge so dismal and wearisome that his hosts in despair, being unable to stop him, fled from his presence! I feel, now that I have started, as if I could go on for ever with many other fishing tips and dodges, but these must remain for stuffing the Journal on some future occasion, if the Editor and my brothers have not had *satis superque* with this first dose!

GLANRHÔS.

MEMORIES AND GLASS CASES.

THERE is probably no sport in the world to vie with fishing of all kinds in which individual achievements, successes, or disappointments are so vividly impressed upon the mind. We cannot, however, materially reproduce our disappointments, but we can our successes.

Having been asked to contribute an article to the FLYFISHERS' JOURNAL, I betook myself to my den in solitude, and looked around me for an inspiration. As I looked, my eyes wandered to the walls, which are almost entirely covered with glass cases containing specimen fish. These gradually fascinated me with the idea that my article should deal with their capture. After all, the presence of the stuffed specimens would absolve me from any attempt at a "fish story."

whose very contrasts give it that fascination which is so dear to all of us.

CHARLES BRAUN.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the FLYFISHERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—It is my privilege, as one of your assistants, to have a "private view" of the Journal before it finally leaves the printing press. This privilege is granted me in order that I may keep a weather eye open to pounce upon any misprints or printer's errors that may have crept in But my attention will not allow itself to be chained to the mere form of such matter as comes before me, and I am tempted, on reading "Glanrhôs'" interesting article, to steal a march upon my fellow-members, and rush furiously into print where "anglers fear to tread." Two questions "Glanrhôs" raises, though I am inclined to think that he is more capable than most of us to answer them himself. The first is, "Why does a fish take the artificial when the line is so manœuvred that the fly reaches the fish tail first," refusing it when presented head first? Surely the answer to this question is that under the former conditions the fly is presented to the fish without the gut cast first covering it.

The next question that "Glanrhôs" raises is that of the colour of the natural flies, especially the *Ephemeridæ*, advancing the theory that they vary in shade according to the temperature. He adds that the olive dun on a warm day is several shades lighter in shade than on a *dark* windy day. I am requesting the printer to put the word *dark* in italics, because herein I fancy lies the answer to the question. We all know and esteem "Glanrhôs" as a careful and accurate observer of nature, but I would ask him, has he captured his various shades of duns under the conditions he describes, brought them to land, and carefully compared their colours? There is nothing so deceptive as the shade of a fly on the water, and I have often seen a dun sailing down upon the stream and passing in alternation from sunlight into shadow, and as often as the stronger light strikes its wings, so often do they appear materially lighter in colour than when passing in the shade of the overhanging branches.

The wings of a dun form a fine refractive medium with their double membrane, and respond very readily to the slightest variation in the light.

"Glanrhôs" also gives some very useful hints to the fly-tier, warning him that it is the ventral and not the dorsal aspect of the fly that he must copy in his artificials. Duns, and more especially spinners, have a considerable degree of transparency, and it has been suggested that to the fish from below the shade presenting itself is not so much the ventral as the combination of the colours of both dorsal and ventral surfaces, the dorsal shade showing through and slightly

modifying the ventral colour as it appears to us. Consequently the ideal method for the fly-tier would be to lay the fly to be imitated upon its back in a receptacle such as a white porcelain dish, which will reflect light from the dorsal up to the ventral surface, the resulting combination being the shade he should endeavour to match.

It is with some diffidence, Mr. Editor, that I have ventured to write what may perhaps be described as a criticism of "Glanrhôs'" able article, and but for his cordial invitation for such criticism and your urgent command for "some rot or other" to fill up page 77, I should have preferred to remain in the humble obscurity of a

PRINTER'S READER.

TROUT FISHING IN CEYLON.

DEAR SIR,—This may be of interest. My father, who has been having some good sport trout fishing in Ceylon, writes as follows:—

"I fish almost every day, and on the whole get very good sport, seldom, if ever, having a blank day. One day I had over 200 trout, fishing with a medium-sized Alexandra. Sixty or more were over 10 inches, and my best was 1¼lbs. I put them all back with the exception of three. The stream was in partial flood, but the water was fairly clear, with a nice breeze blowing. Up to date I have kept 35, caught with worm in the lake. My best was 4¼lbs., next best 3½lbs., a dozen over 2lbs., and the balance about a pound each. The lake fish are absolute beauties, silvery, and game to the last. It took me quite 20 minutes to land the 3½lb. fish."

The climate and scenery at Newara Eliya are both perfect. It stands over 6,000 feet above sea level. Other recreations besides fishing are tennis, cricket, and golf. The golf course is said to be the best in the East, with turf greens, and not sand browns. The hotel accommodation is good: I think the Grand Hotel is about the most comfortable. Besides this, there are any number of furnished bungalows to be rented for the season.

Mr. R. A. G. Festing, a member of the Flyfishers' Club, is, I believe, honorary secretary of the Newara Eliya Fishing Club.

Yours truly,

W. KEITH ROLLO.

A REPLY ON SALMON FLIES.

DEAR SIR,—I am very much obliged to you for your letter. There are only three essentials to a salmon fly:—

1st.—A good hook.

2nd.—Any arrangement of feathers the dresser likes to suit his artistic or inartistic ideas.

3rd.—Always have the fly in the water.

This is my faith, and yet my stock of salmon this season runs into many hundreds

Yours truly,

EDMOND J. POWER.

objects as are of interest to the trout fisher, the flyfisher in particular. It may be possible to arrange in this cabinet, named series of water weeds and water snails, as there is a considerable amount of uncertainty existing as to the correct description of both these adjuncts to the trout fishery, and a record of the right names would be interesting to all fishermen. Perhaps some member would help by presenting a named series, which could be mounted up by the sub-committee and placed in the cabinet. MARTIN E. MOSELY.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"FISHING THE GLIDES."

To the Editor of the FLYFISHERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

DEAR MR. KENT,—The gentleman who so ably criticises my humble article in the last number of the FLYFISHERS' JOURNAL, under the pseudonym of "Printer's Reader," shows that he is no novice, but a past master. His observations and queries are much to the point, but, while it is most ingenious, I cannot quite accept his theory that the reason trout prefer a fly that is presented *tail first* is because they do not see the gut. If this were so the success of the dry-fly man would be small, especially those who fish with dyed leaders, or, as Mr. Marston now advocates, *black gut!* For, as a general rule, there is a coil or so of loose gut floating round the dry-fly, and yet they take it. I do not think myself trout pay much attention to the gut, though, personally, I never use any stained gut when I can avoid it. I am more inclined to think that the reason fish rise eagerly at a fly coming down tail first when they have previously refused the same fly when it came over them *head down stream* is because the slight drag gives the sunk fly a more lifelike and struggling appearance, perhaps of the nymph struggling to emerge from the pupa. It is the instinct of all predatory fish to pursue and attack their prey when in difficulties. We know how fish will rush at a spinning minnow, though they may disregard the presence of a whole shoal of live minnows in the immediate neighbourhood. This, of course, is only my supposition, but it is an interesting point for discussion. As regards the suggestion he makes regarding the actual change of colour in flies according to temperature and weather, that I may have been deceived by the shifting lights of flies passing from sunshine to shade, I can only say that I have, during my 60 years of almost constant fishing, caught and examined many hundreds (I might say thousands) of flies, and I am quite certain of the fact that there is a distinct change of colour and a *darkening* in *cold* weather, and that this is not an effect of reflected light. Indeed, I was under the impression that almost everyone

accepted this as an ascertained fact. The change is more noticeable in the colour of the *body* rather than in the wings. And, after all, why should this not be so when one considers the fragile nature of the *Ephemeridæ?* Does not the angler when he goes out in the winter frost to fish sometimes change the rubicund tinge of his nose to a cerulean blue? Is not the expression "I am blue with cold" a common one? and why should not one of the most delicate and fragile insects in creation be equally susceptible to temperature? However, I venture to put forth my ideas as the result of my own observation, and I am flattered that "Printer's Reader" thinks them worthy of criticism and discussion.

Yours sincerely,

GLANRHÔS.

N.B.—In referring to the change of colour, I limit my observation to the *Ephemeridæ;* I have not noticed the same change in the *Phryganidæ.*

CLUB NOTES.

THE excellent article by G. E. M. Skues in No. 2 of the Club Journal on Fly Tying at the Club has revived this most interesting branch of the art of fishing, and has also induced many novices to try their hand. The fly-tying room at the Club is in continual demand, and the choicest hackles are suffering from the herculanean efforts of many anxious beginners. On November 9th last a most successful fly-tying scrap was held at the Club, preceded by a house dinner at which some 22 members sat down with Sir Desmond O'Callaghan in the chair. Fly-tying commenced about 9 p.m. in the smoking room, which was soon packed to its utmost capacity. Amongst those who gave an interesting exhibition as to 'how to tie a fly,' were such well-known experts as Messrs. G. E. M. Skues, H. St. B. Goldsmith, J. C. Mottram, W. Milner Ratcliff, J. Tosh, H. F. Norris, R. W. Cracroft, and Dr. T. G. M. Hine.

It was interesting to watch the very varied methods of the dressers in their efforts to reproduce a March brown and a blue dun. One member strayed from the path set for him, and turned out a spent pale watery spinner and a shrimp of startling excellence and verisimilitude. Another member brought a cunning little contraption, of equal simplicity and ingenuity, which served at once for a weight on the tying silk when at rest and a holder for winding it on the hook without fraying it. A variety of vices was also produced, and it would not be astonishing if improvements in vices were not an outcome of the meeting. One member used a vice set at a slant in a little metal cup with a flat metal base, which was clamped to the table. A

knows him will suspect him to be guilty of, I was detain'd a little behind you by the music of one of those Larks, whose melody was so charming, that I could not find in my heart to make haste from it. But whilst I was listening to it, my Attention was diverted by a nobler Object, for I heard, from the further corner of this meadow, a Voice, which, though not governed with Skil, did so repair the want of it by its native sweetness, that Art was absent without being miss'd (good old Lindamor !), and I could not but have some Curiosity to see who was the Possessor of so much power to please. Turning then my steps towards that part of the Field whence the Voice came, my Eyes quickly ceas'd to envy my Ears (I am sure Lindamor was the best angler of the lot), for they discover'd kneeling by a Cow, and singing to her whilst she milk'd her, a Person, who, in the habit of a Milk-maid, seem'd to disguise one of those Nymphs that Poets are wont to describe to us."

R. B. MARSTON.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

FISHING THE GLIDES.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Again at your request I take up my pen and enter into the friendliest of controversies with "Glanrhôs," the kindliest of opponents. No wish have I to score off him, even though opportunity were there (for "Glanrhôs" is as wary as the trout he fishes, and rarely fails to net). Not often does he make the one false step that leads to dire undoing. But in his letter there are points which clamour for immediate contradiction. Why does he claim that, if my theory be correct, the "success of the dry-fly man should be but small" because under certain conditions (as he suggests), namely, fish feeding in a glide, the fly presented hindmost first is more attractive to the feeding trout? Why does he assume the fact that the dry-fly fisherman must of necessity present his fly head first with the gut cast trailing down over the fish? He must surely be aware that with some shy quarry the deadliest fly is that presented across the stream with just the length of line extended to allow the feathered imitation to float down to the fish but not to pass beyond it. He must surely know that in grayling fishing this method of casting is, where possible, the general practice of the dry-fly man, for the grayling, though he may continue rising, is most suspicious of any gut attachment.

And next we have the statement that "as a general rule there is a coil or so of loose gut floating round the dry fly." "Glanrhôs," "Glanrhôs," how little do you reck what rankling wounds your heedless

words may cause! A coil *or so* of gut!! You might have made it *one* coil, and somewhat softened the blow.

Again, why should a fly, cast up stream (and I feel sure "Glanrhôs" must cast his flies up stream), why should such a fly have a slight drag when travelling down to the fish *tail* first?

Surely such a cast would be the best of all possible casts to prevent that very drag which "Glanrhôs" so ardently desires. For the line cast in such a manner as to allow the fly to present himself posterior first unto the fish must of necessity belly itself up stream, and the force of water would expend itself upon the slack so caused, and allow the fly to travel along his course all undisturbed. But with a straight and up-stream cast, the line between the angler and the glide would be caught up by the stream, and would tear the unhappy fly down through the water at break-neck speed (if the term be permissible). Such a fly would appear in obvious difficulties, and should, if "Glanrhôs'" theory be correct, prove irresistible to the trout. Only it doesn't. Assuming, though, that "Glanrhôs" casts his flies upon the waters down-stream wise, how does he present his fly head first, and thus give the trout the opportunity of refusing it? Even fishing *across* the glide, the trout would only see it's "sideways." I willingly admit, however, that there are some flies which, as *Punch* would have it, possess no "sideways."

Then we come to "the nymph struggling to emerge from the pupa," but this is so obviously a slip that I will take no mean advantage.

And now, Sir, I trust the Journal will go to press free from all embarrassing blanks, and I hope that "Glanrhôs" will accept my assurance that this letter is dictated in no spirit of captious criticism, but with the sole desire of carrying out your urgent instructions and earning the princely salary attached to the office of a

PRINTER'S READER.

"THE QUACK'S" PROGRESS.

DEAR MR. KENT,—Now that the trout season is coming you may like to hear the result of the Quack for last year. It was, of course, an abnormal year, but as you once suggested that I should keep a "Quack Diary," I kept a record of every killable trout taken and the fly that killed or landed it. The total for last year on all waters was 225 killable trout, landed with dry-fly, and they succumbed to the following flies: quack 89, grey quill 43, Greenwell 31 (I confess to some of the Greenwell's being sunk, Skues' fashion, but not many), hare's ear and badger hackle (a quack variety) 8, ginger quill 9, sedges 9, alder 7, red bodied quack 6, red quill 8, another variety of

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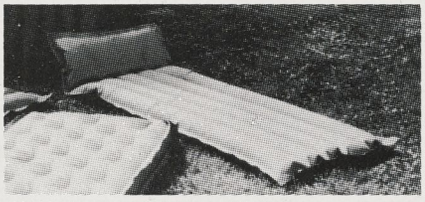

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Tight Lines . . .

twelve feet tall among all anglers. To admit in print, even barring the statute of limitations, the evils that lurk in the heart of ninety-eight percent of us that fish seriously, takes a big, big man. I sincerely hope that his admission will purge once and for all, any past, present or future "Jezebels" that lie within most anglers' souls. If I seem to express my views in the vein of finality, I feel that I have the credentials. I have seen too many 'Jezebels' in the past to know that this was not an isolated instance. You see, gentlemen, I have been a Conservation Officer, and a fly fisherman, in the state of Pennsylvania for the last twenty years. I have an autographed copy of Charlie's *Wonderful World of Trout* and now I don't even have to open the cover to see the name; it just glows through. Thanks, Charlie, and mark it up as another one of your sincere efforts to further dignify the sport of angling among the real anglers of this country.

Paul Antolosky
640 Humes Road
Bellefonte, Penna. 16823

Like upstream spinning.

The "Down-Streamer"

The reason I am writing this letter is to share some post-summer observations. In most writings on fishing with streamers, the recommended method seems to be to cast across, or across and down, and retrieve by stripping the fly in at various speeds. This summer a fellow angler at Connetquot River State Park, Long Island, New York, suggested that I cast up, or up and across, and bring the fly back at a speed slightly faster than the current by flicking the rod downstream and then picking up the slack. It usually only takes a couple of these motions before the fly attracts at least a follow or a flash. I find this method works better than other ways, especially on the native brookies in the upper stretches of the river.

Along with this new method, two streamers now share the number one spot in my fly box. The first is an Olive Matuka, recommended by Doug Swisher; the second is a yellow Maribou Muddler tied with a yellow wool body. Both of these seem to work best slightly weighted and in sizes eight and ten, 4X long.

Peter Mancuso
Brooklyn, New York

Local Legends

I feel compelled to answer the man who said, "For God's sake, and ours, let's stick to trout and salmon, stripers and bones (Feb. '76 Tight Lines)." Such a response

Tight Lines

Maine's Dickey-Lincoln Dam

You are probably aware that activity toward constructing the Dickey-Lincoln Dam on Maine's St. John River has been increasing of late. An Environmental Impact Study is currently being made by the Army Corps of Engineers, and major decisions on the project will be made in the next several months.

We at Bean's are very much opposed to this project. We have traveled on the St. John and we've read much of the material available on the dam project and its proposed benefits. In our opinion, the benefits are speculative at best and do not justify the permanent destruction of one of our country's finest fishing and whitewater canoeing rivers along with the surrounding 88,000 acres of productive timberland and wildlife habitat.

L. L. Bean, Inc. has decided to help the Natural Resources Council of Maine in saving the St. John River Valley. We are displaying material relating to the St. John and the Dickey-Lincoln Dam Project in our Freeport Maine, salesroom; we are soliciting signatures on petitions protesting the project which will be delivered to Governor Longley of Maine and to members of Congress; we are contributing the time and effort of myself, our management team and our employees in order to defeat the project; we are contributing funds to the Natural Resources Council of Maine to assist their efforts in saving the St. John.

We are also asking you to help—in any of the following ways:

—By writing your Congressman and expressing your opposition.

—By writing to the Natural Resources Council of Maine for petition forms in order to get signatures from your friends.

—By making a donation to the Natural Resources Council of Maine, 51 Chapel Street, Augusta, Maine 04330.

Saving the St. John River Valley will be a long and difficult campaign. But the rewards are immeasurable and I sincerely appreciate any help you can give us.

Leon A. Gorman
President, L. L. Bean, Inc.
Freeport, Maine 04033

We're pleased to hear from Mr. Gorman that L. L. Bean has put its full weight behind this effort. The Maine Natural Resources Council could certainly use the help of concerned readers, out-state as well as residents of Maine. Not too incidentally, fly-fishing now has a card-carrying friend in President Carter's cabinet—Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus. Many readers had the chance to hear him speak and meet him personally at the 1976 FFF Conclave in Sun Valley and know that he's one of us. As you realize, all National dam projects are being re-evaluated by the Carter Administration and the Department of the Interior, and Secretary Andrus will be a key figure in these difficult considerations. Of course, Secretary Andrus has a responsibility to the best interests of all the people, and cannot become a "knee-jerk fly fisherman" in his evaluation studies, but we're certain that special attention will be paid to serious and knowledgeable letters directed to him as well as to other involved officials and Congressmen as suggested by Mr. Gorman.

Judging Jezebel

Charlie Fox's "Jezebel", January 1977 issue, was one of the most meaningful, thought-provoking articles I have read in many, many years. Charlie's contributions to the sport of angling will be remembered long after he is gone I'm sure, but, as of now, in my opinion he walks

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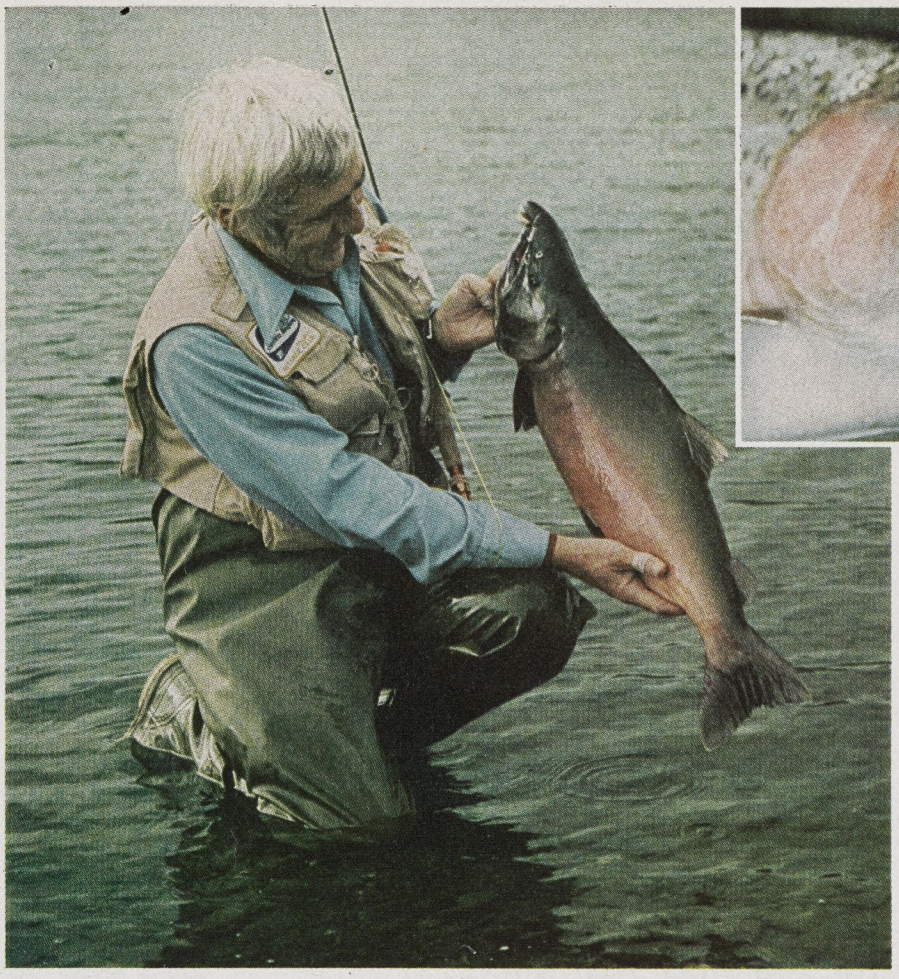




CATCH 'EM WHERE THEY LIVE

Big trout usually lie near bottom. Line and depth control are the keys to catching them

By DAVE WHITLOCK

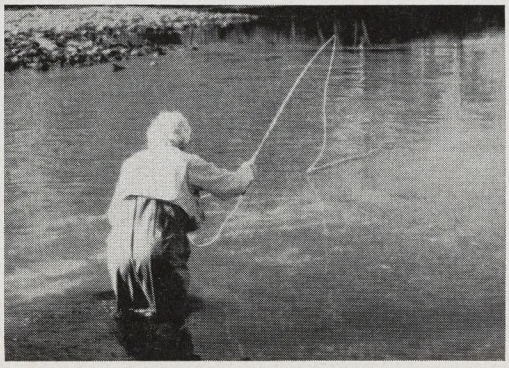
Among all those who use it, anglers know rivers as well as anyone. But except for those who probe out structure with depthfinders, most anglers don't see more than a few inches below the surface. Not many have bothered to get into a river and, like a fish, learn its moods and rhythms, and the interaction of its currents. Some years ago, I did exactly that—and a new world materialized before my eyes.

My interest lay in the upper reaches of a river in Arkansas, in the clear, cold environs of the trout. I bought a scuba-diving outfit, explored the pools, runs, and rapids, and learned many things. Perhaps the most important was that a classic trout stream has four distinct layers, each with a different rate of flow, each presenting the flyfisherman with a different set of problems.

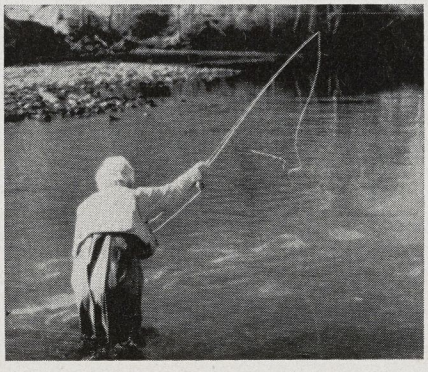
It was like discovering a new dimension to flyfishing, especially wet-fly, streamer, and nymph fishing. Possessing a rather scientific approach to most things, I reasoned that if I could find the key to this new dimension, then trout fishing—especially nymphing—would benefit greatly.

The first important realization was that these four

To fish sinking flies with floating line, first make cast up and across stream with long (10-foot) rod. The fly, leader, and line tip should be stacked at point of fly entry (left)



Long rod is used to lift and mend out initial line drag between rod tip and sinking fly and leader (center). As current carries line downstream past angler, drag develops (right)







"Very few people have the nerve to stand and face a charging bear and still shoot accurately. They'd be better off with a tear-gas gun and a protective dog."

CAP ATWOOD, Colorado bear guide

self downwind of a bear if he's heading that direction. He can't smell you until it's too late. If you are upwind from a bear and it is a long distance away, it wouldn't hurt to let the animal get your scent. In wild areas a bear will usually bolt upon getting a whiff of a human.

Always try to give a bear the option of making a dignified exit. Grizzlies are used to having their way, and it's best to allow them this opportunity if a face-to-face situation presents itself. Bears, like humans, like to save face.

Campers can be harassed by bears if they do not keep an odor-free camp. They shouldn't cook in or near their tent site and should never place food within the sleeping area. A bear will normally investigate food odors. Garbage should be burned or buried well away from the tent, and all foods should be kept a long distance away. It's good advice to erect the tent with the opening near a climbable tree in case of a nocturnal visit.

Under no circumstances should backpackers or hikers sleep outside in bags on the trail. Bears prowl trail areas at night and may stumble upon a sleeping person in a bag. A bear is likely to feel a person in a sleeping bag is an animal and try to kill it.

If bear sign is encountered, it's best to avoid the area. Bear scats, hairs on trees or fences, drag marks of a bear pulling a dead animal, or scratch marks on a tree are sure signs of bruins nearby.

If a bear slowly advances toward you, back away slowly and keep facing the animal. Never turn and run. Some experts advise talking low and slowly to the bear, while others suggest keeping silent. If the bear keeps advancing, back away and give him the trail.

A bear surprised at close range will either bolt, rear up on his hind legs, or charge. The bolting bear is generally no problem unless he's heading your way. A shout may turn him away. A standing bear is usually startled or curious and may rear up to look you over. Stand motionless or back away slowly. Sometimes a bear will drop to all fours and leave once he's satisfied his curiosity.

A curious bear may advance within smelling distance if he's upwind or crosswind from you. If it appears that one is trying to get your scent, back away and drop a packsack or piece of clothing for it to smell. Never make hurried, exaggerated motions. Once a bear smells the dropped item he may turn and flee.

An outright charge is a difficult thing to read under the circumstances. A bear may rush directly at a person and stop about 10 feet away. This is a bluffing charge. It's difficult to stand your ground at times like this, but to turn your back is an invitation to a rear assault. Face the bear but back away slowly.

A determined charge usually comes when a bear bores in past 10 feet with his head down. He may reach up when he's within striking distance or grab an arm or thigh as he rushes by.

If a bear gets within 10 feet and is still coming it's reasonable to assume you're going to be mauled. Lie down quickly on the ground and lock your hands behind your neck. Lie on your stomach. A bear will probably paw or bite you, but a scream or cry is likely to make matters worse. It's important to protect your neck, head, and midsection if possible because a bear often goes for these areas. Play dead and do not move while the bear is nearby. A bear will often maul a person for several seconds and leave the area once it thinks the person is dead. Never fight it once you're down.

If the bear attacks and then leaves, stay motionless for several minutes. There have been cases of bears returning several times to persons to see if they are dead. Once you are sure the animal has left, rise slowly, check around for the bear, and head as quickly as possible for medical attention.

Guns are a part of our national heritage, and so are bears. The outdoorsmen I queried agree that bears cannot be trusted, but many also feel, as I do, that carrying guns in bear country is no guarantee of self-protection against attack, except perhaps in interior and coastal Alaska and some remote areas of western Canada.

"I use a 12-gauge shotgun with an 18 or 20-inch barrel. I put in birdshot for the first two shots, followed by three slugs."

PARK MUNSEY, bear guide, Kodiak, Alaska



layers of current move at progressively faster rates, from bottom to top. For example, when a stream flows into a pool, the top layer may be moving at five miles an hour, but each layer beneath it will be moving at about a mile an hour slower. I wondered how these different currents affected natural food. How did my subsurface flies and nymphs act beneath the surface? How many times had I spooked trout because I had misread the water through which my fly drifted? All sorts of questions began to emerge in my mind.

I soon concluded that, even under the best of situations, my fly was drifting out of control. Even if the line was moving at the same speed as the surface current, my fly was probably traveling four or five times faster than the current in which it rode. Why? Because the line, which was in the top layer, was dragging the fly behind, no matter how quickly I mended it. Since the object of all flyfishing is to present a fly to the fish in the most natural way possible, this situation was obviously intolerable.

The more I experimented, the more I realized that the full sinking line traditionally used in nymph fishing was actually robbing the angler of his ability to control the underwater movement of the fly. Then, I remembered Joe Brooks insisting, in print and in person, that the floating fly line was the line for all seasons and all times. Despite my respect for Joe's wide knowledge, I had always found this simple approach a little hard to accept. But now I was not so sure. At least, I thought, one can *see* the floating line. And so, silently bowing to the late Joe Brooks, I changed over.

But that was only the first step in a long period of adjustment. The right choice of rod, leader, tippet, and fly design—and the correct combination thereof—still lay ahead. Over the years, I had developed my own special nymphing system that had proved very effective. But now, with this new knowledge of current layers, I had to probe deeper. I began by experimenting with different tackle combinations. After countless hours astream, I eventually pieced together all the elements that an angler needs to successfully fish layered currents.

The rod, I learned, should be eight to 10 feet long, graphite or glass, capable of handling light lines between five and seven weights. The tip should be extremely sensitive, yet the action should be slightly stiff. Considering these requirements, graphite has a slight edge over glass. Shorter rods limit the control of the line, and soft tips are too sluggish to move the line briskly when mending.

The reel should be constructed of a light alloy, with a large spool and click drag. Most important, it should have a single action so the angler has a direct effect over the line.

The line should be a light colored No. 5, 6, or 7 full-floater—either weight-forward or double-taper. I use a No. 5 for most situations. I cut off the first 30 or 40 feet of the taper and splice about 100 feet of 30 to 40-pound-test flat monofilament to it. I then splice 150 to 200 yards of braided Dacron backing on to the other end of the mono. This gives me a fine, high-floating shooting head. I much prefer the shooting head, though the weight-forward works well in most situations.

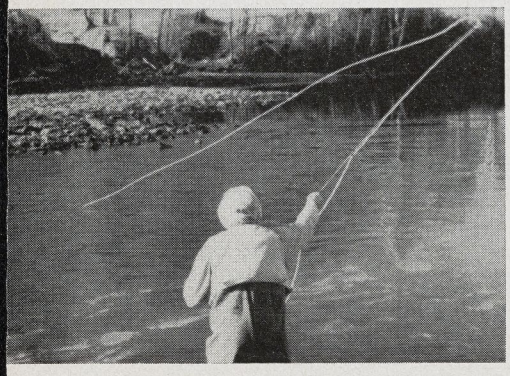
Use a nine-foot knotless-taper leader with a 2X to 4X tip, with no larger than a .018-inch butt. The leader should be as soft as possible. Flatbutt types work best.

The tippet should be of the strongest, smallest diameter, and softest material available. I use Nylorfi or Trilene XL in 3X to 8X sizes. Tippet lengths are critical. Use a 24-incher for moderate depths and slow water, and a 40-incher for deep or fast water. The diameter, flexibility, and length of the tippet greatly influence the fly's sink rate and response to current.

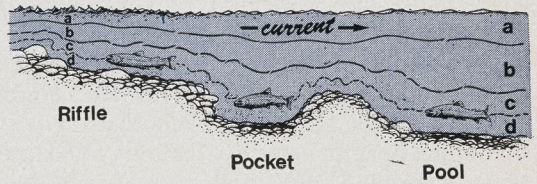
All types of wet, nymph, streamer, shad, salmon, and steelhead patterns designed to offer minimum water resistance are ideal for this fishing system. Bulky muddlers and sculpins are not recommended. If you tie your own flies, heavy or weighted hooks, plus soft, absorbent materials respond well to changing current layers, but heavily dressed or water-repellent materials usually prove difficult.

I know it seems to be a contradiction in terms, but look at it this way. If you dropped a fly in the water it would sink, unencumbered. But, with the addition of the traditional floating line, leader, and tippet, the fly's sink rate is slowed considerably by the drag of the terminal tackle and that part of the line in the water. Now, suppose several trout are feeding on drifting

Long rod smoothly lifts, rolls, and mends main body and tip of flyline off water and restacks slack line tip over and upstream of leader and fly (left). This insures against current-layer drag and helps fly maintain depth, layer speed, and direct downstream lane position. As fly and leader pass below angler (center), long rod controls slack and surface drags on line. Once fly and leader pass angler, lowering rod tip will increase slack and length of drift of fly. Diagram below shows cross section of current layers in stream. A is fastest layer, D is slowest layer



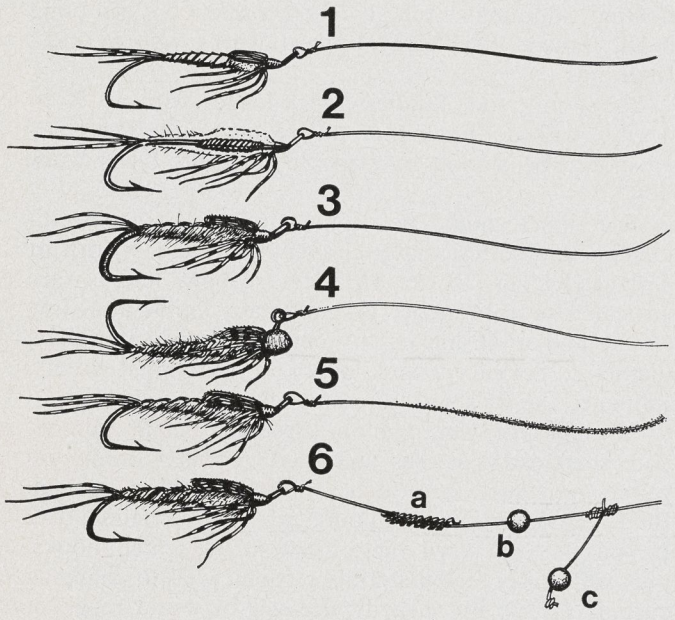




nymphs in the slowest current layer, right next to bottom. Now, here comes your fly zipping past at four times the rate of the natural food. Probably no takers. But, even if one of the trout grabbed your fly, it would feel the heavy drag from the sinking line and instantly reject your offering.

But if you were outfitted with the tackle I just described, and if you used it the way I'm about to explain, you probably would have hooked that fish.

To start, the length of your cast should not exceed the amount of line you can mend easily and efficiently. By mending, I mean the act of lifting the line off the water with the fly rod and re-positioning it slightly upstream—or, away from the bellying drag. This is done by repeatedly rolling the high-floating line a foot or so



Fast-sinking flies are a great help in fishing deep with floating line. Six nymph patterns above will sink quickly in layered currents if they're fished with proper mending. All should be tied to tippet with loop knot for fastest sink rate and most natural action. 1) This nymph is good in low water. It sinks well because it is sparsely tied on the hook. 2) Weight this pattern by wrapping lead on hook shank before tying. 3) Nymph is tied on extra-heavy wire hook to give it more weight. 4) To weight this one, clamp a split-shot on a jig hook, then tie nymph in a standard pattern. 5) Leaded tippet gives this standard-pattern nymph the needed extra weight. 6) Nymphs also can be given extra weight by adding lead to leader tip or tippet. A is weighted with lead wire on tippet, B is weighted with a split-shot on tippet, C is weighted with a split-shot on a bloodknot dropper

at a time, depending on the speed of the surface current and the angle and length of the cast. Mending line is the most direct method of controlling the natural drift of the leader, tippet, and fly or nymph.

As the cast is made upstream, the fly, tippet, and leader should land in a loose pile. Known as the "stacked leader" cast, this technique allows the fly to sink quickly and naturally before you start to mend. Most of us have made thousands of such casts when we didn't want to. Here, the trick is to do it on purpose. Don't worry about the tangle of leader and tippet scaring the trout. The fly is not supposed to be fished until it sinks and travels some distance downstream. The tangles will have straightened themselves out by the time the fly gets to the trout-holding area.

Another consideration concerns the line of drift and the layer of current in which you wish your fly to travel. Usually, I study the water for a while before making an educated guess of how long it will take the fly to reach the area I suspect holds trout. Then, I cast to a predetermined point, well above the trout-holding area. If the cast is accurate and the mending efficient, the fly will ride down to the fish as naturally as a living nymph. Always fish your nymph completely through the area before picking it up and casting again.

By watching the floating line, it is easy to gauge the amount of drag build-up. As you see the drag curve begin to form, raise your rod tip and roll the line in the opposite direction of the curve. One or two mends are almost always necessary to set up the desired free-floating drift. By now the fly will have traveled some 10 to 20 feet downstream—and you probably have an excess of line between the rod tip and the leader butt. To eliminate this slack, extend your rod arm high and lift the line clear of the surface. Now roll-cast the slack line back upstream toward the target point of the original cast. Graphite rods are particularly effective with the roll-cast. What you have done by all this is delay the drift rate of the line, thus allowing the fly to seek the desired level and float downstream into the trout's field of vision.

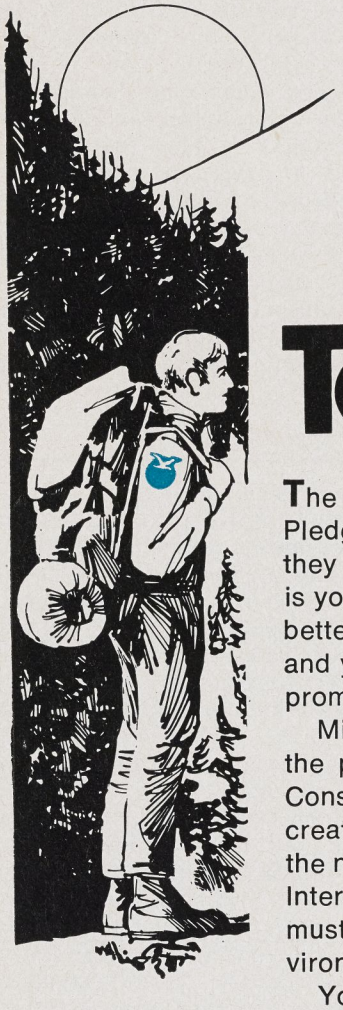
With so much slack line, you may be wondering how it is possible to set the hook. First, this technique demands full concentration. But staring for long periods at a line constantly curling against the shifting colors of a stream can easily dim one's perception. I found the answer to this problem when I used what I call a "visual strike indicator."

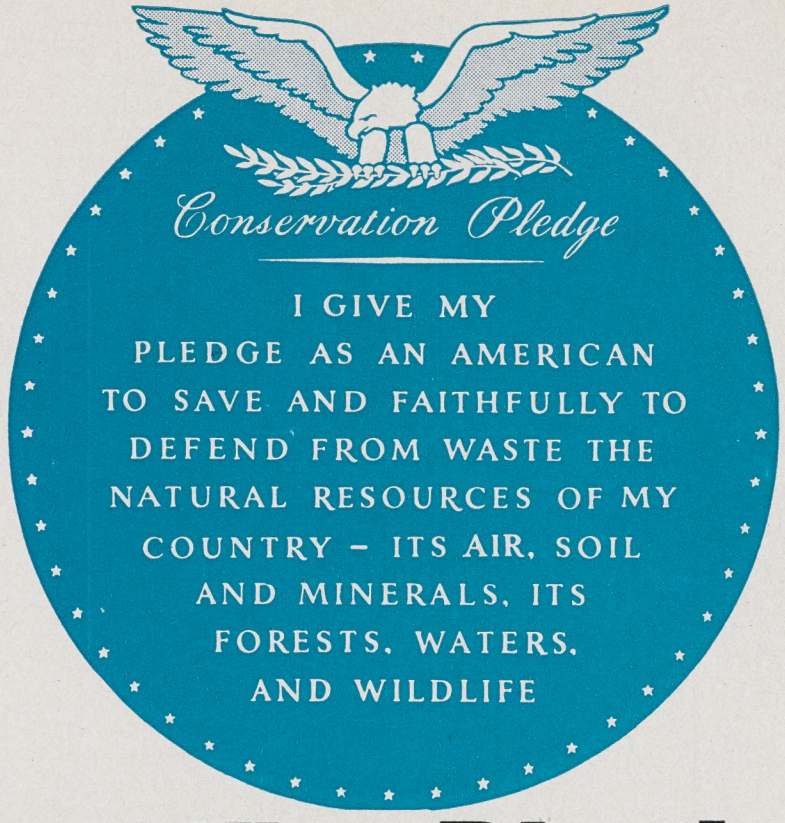
At the point where my line joins the leader, I slip on a one-inch piece of fluorescent-orange floating fly line. I do this by pushing a No. 7 needle through the flyline's core. I push in the needle up to its eye, thread my leader through the eye, and then pull the needle completely through the piece of floating line. Now my visual indicator can be slipped up to the juncture between leader and line. To keep the indicator riding high on the surface, I grease it two and three times a day with a flotant.

When fishing, I watch the indicator for any abnormal twitches. For example, if the indicator slightly pauses or seems to move upstream, I know that something below is hindering the fly or leader's natural drift. If it ducks below the surface, the message is the same—trout or bottom.

When this happens, take no chances. Set the hook immediately by pulling the rod sharply to either side, for a foot or so, while simultaneously stripping in about a foot of line. This quick movement uses the weight of the line being dragged through the water to your benefit, almost always setting the hook firmly. Once the fish is hooked, the combination of light line, long leader, and rod provides the *(continued on page 146)*

GOING PLACES?





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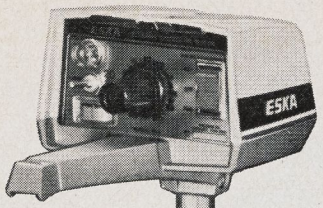
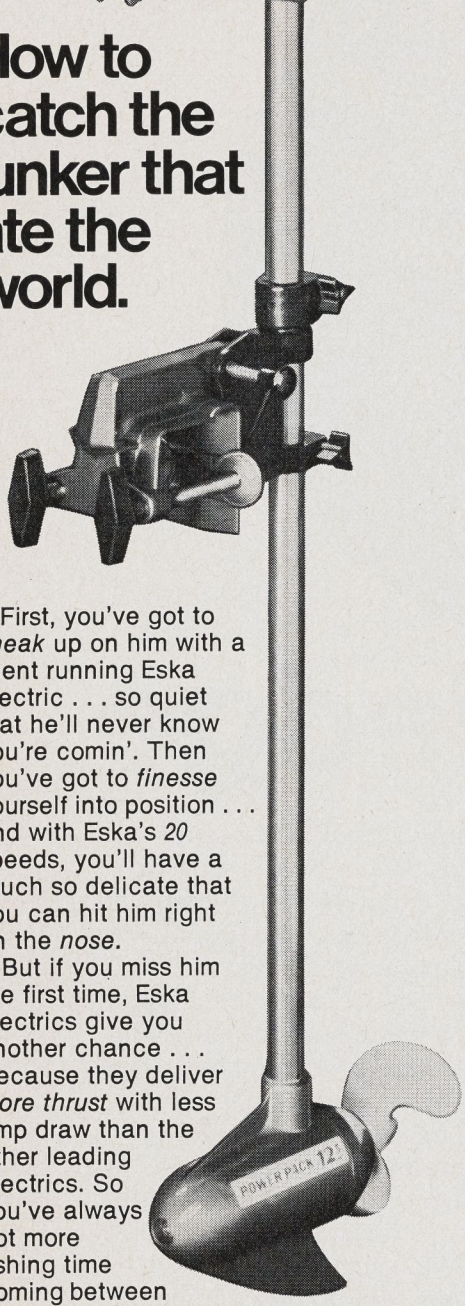


How to catch the lunker that ate the world.



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WILDERNESS MAKES A COMEBACK *(continued)*

sumptive uses of wildlife. They're happier seeing or photographing deer or turkeys than having meat on the table or antlers on the wall. These include about 10 million bird-watchers, four million nature photographers, and burgeoning groups of backpackers, campers, and cross-country skiers. Some of these groups have strong, vocal lobbies in the legislatures. As time goes by, they may attempt to support more and more restrictive laws in response to their sentiments of not sharing wildlife and wildlands with hunters and trappers. And these outdoor enthusiasts are not going to disappear. According to U.S. Department of Interior predictions, "nonconsumptive enjoyment of wildlife species will soon exceed consumptive uses."

Clearly the solution is to devise multiple-use programs for many wild areas. The goal must be for as many people as possible to partake in their sports on the same piece of land at the proper times and seasons. The federal and many state governments are working along these lines. On the Connecticut Hill area, for example, there are now several miles of hiking and cross-country skiing trails, places for nature study, picnic and camping grounds, and archery courses. None of this interferes with the ecology of open land, nor does it hinder sportsmen during hunting season. In fact, it may even enhance their experience.

My friend Ted flew back East the next year with three of his buddies to hunt for two weeks. They set up camp on Connecticut Hill in one of the primitive grounds. Two of the men took their longbows out to the state archery course to practice, and later each shot a spikehorn. Ted repeated his performance of taking a big gobbler not far from the abandoned graveyard. The four of them got two deer, a dozen grouse, three turkeys, and enough small game to cook every night.

I joined them one Sunday and spent an entertaining evening beside their campfire. The four hunters were full of praise and plans.

"You can bet your boots we'll be back next year," they said enthusiastically. "In fact a lot of people in the Midwest and West will probably start taking out nonresident licenses and coming East to hunt."

It wouldn't surprise me at all.

CATCH 'EM WHERE THEY LIVE *(continued from page 78)*

kind of sport that trout fishing was made for.

Since the day I put on my scuba gear and discovered the four layers of current, I began a learning process that remains incomplete. But along the way, I have used my acquired technique to great advantage, fishing difficult places with a level of control unknown to most flyrodders. I could tell you dozens of success stories at the risk of sounding boastful. But, since this is an instructional piece, I'll leave off, hoping that you have understood me, that you will try my technique and enjoy the fine sense of control I now experience when fishing subsurface flies.

But . . . let me tell you one anecdote.

It was spring on a California shad river—a deep, heavy stream where the use of a floating line is considered the height of foolishness. For nearly two days, I had respected local custom and wielded a fast-sinking line, taking far fewer shad than my host had promised. I was beginning to feel a bit frustrated. I contemplated changing my tactics.

All around us, the better spin and flycasters were doing quite well by fishing a particular line of current they called the "groove." But I, new to the waters, was not positioned correctly to fish the groove. Standing on the opposite side of the groove, I would cast my line across it and, only when my fly happened to travel at the right speed and cross the right piece of water, did I get a strike. Since I was using a sinking line, I was powerless to control the heavy drag spurred by the swift surface current. What you can't see, you can't control.

So I broke with tradition and unleashed my floating line with the visual indicator. The surface current was smooth and strong near the tail of the large pool—four to eight feet deep. It held big, powerful sea-run silver shad. The shad I could see seemed to be lying near bottom in layer four but, when they took, they seemed to be on the rise—in layer three. Their flashing silver sides seemed to beckon me.

I waded out as far as my chest-high waders allowed. Then I cast upstream and cross-current at a tight angle so I could run the fly right down the length of the groove by lifting my 10-foot Peak rod, called The Manipulator.

I think it happened on the third cast. As my shad fly came bouncing along on the cannonball-size stones,

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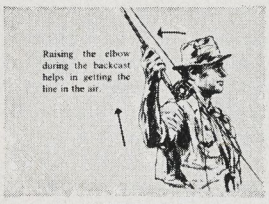

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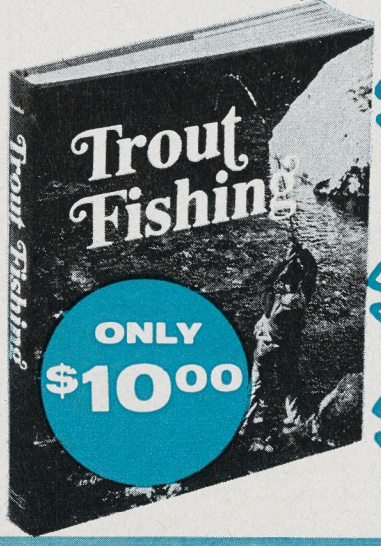

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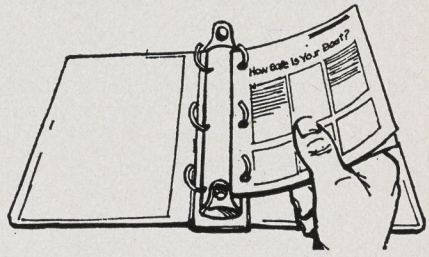
my indicator did a dance right in front of me. I struck immediately, and the silver flash of a shad rolled to the surface, kicking spray in my face. Five minutes later, I released the first of nine shad I was to catch before the sun went down. Since then, I've fished for shad twice, and each time I began with my floating line, my long, soft leader, my 10-foot fly rod and my light-colored indicator. I never had reason to regret my choice.

Clip & Save Your Field Guide



• In this issue we continue our regular feature, the OUTDOOR LIFE Field Guide. Through this column we will be bringing you solid how-to information on a variety of outdoor subjects.

To build your own Field Guide, each month cut the page out of the magazine on the dotted line, fold it once where indicated, and (after punching holes) insert it into a standard loose-leaf binder made for 5½ x 8½-inch filler paper. As the months pass, the Field Guide compilation will become a valuable information source for your personal reference.—Ed.

So often now, when I think of my discovery, what Joe Brooks said comes back to me: "You can fish a floating line anywhere, anytime." As someone else once said—nothing's new. It is just left for each generation to rediscover what was always known, and perhaps enrich that knowledge with an additional twist or two. I hope I've made my contribution.

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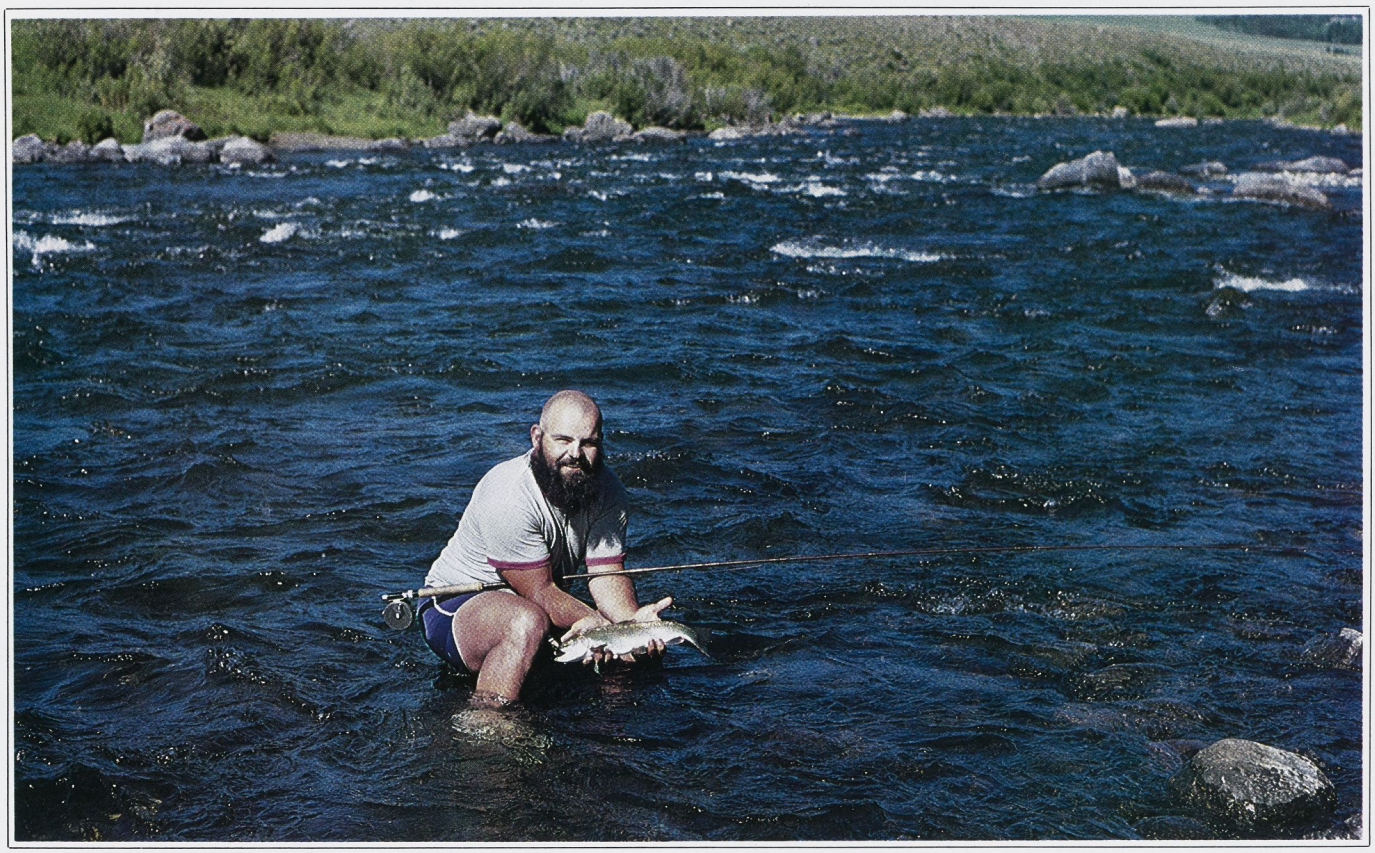
The Brooks Method



JIM LICK

by Jim Lick



rilliant sunlight poured down on Jeanne and me as we stood at the edge of a high terrace overlooking the sparkling waters of the Madison River. A strong, gusty wind pushed firmly against us. It rattled bankside willows and stirred the river into a multitude of tiny whitecaps.

The Madison Range towered to the east, a row of peaks trimmed with spatterings of snow now diminishing in the summer heat. The salmonfly hatch was on and yonder were wild rainbows and browns yet to be met. For a week it was all to be mine. I loosed a happy "yee-hoo" and flashed Jeanne a beaming smile. Her eyes lit up with mirth.

I arrived on the Madison River with a basic understanding of the salmonfly hatch. The hatch begins downstream and progresses upstream, a function of warming water temperatures. ("Balderdash," exclaimed an old hand of the Madison. "There's a lot of factors involved, and I've seen the whole river hatch at the same time.") It is commonly felt that when the naturals are abundant the trout become quickly gorged. Moving them to an artificial is often slow business.

As a local fly shop proprietor in Ennis observed, the best dry fly fishing is behind the peak hatching activity by two or three days. Several days after the feeding orgy, when a few

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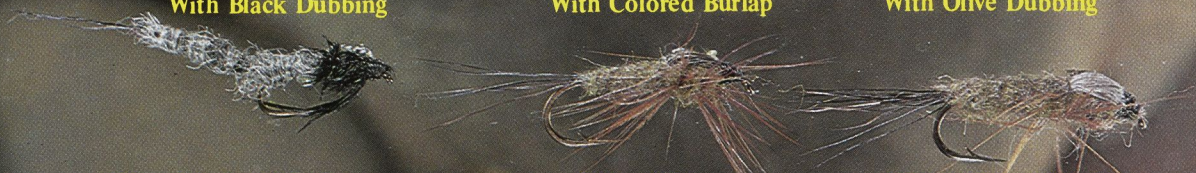


Hinged Body With Gray
Dubbing And Ostrich Thorax

Ribbed Olive
With Brown Hackle

Ribbed Olive With Brown
Hackle Weighted And Flattened



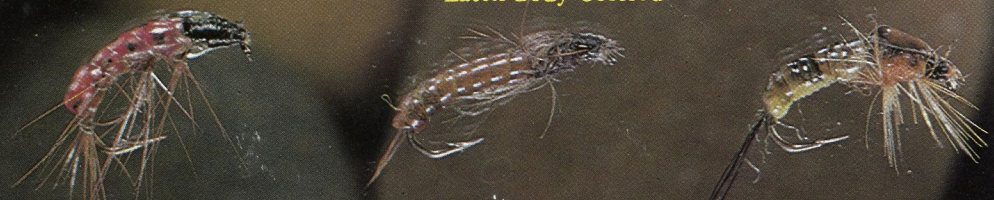
Flattened Gilled Poly

Brown Poly Lacquered

Olive Poly With Black Eyes



Latex Body Colored



Latex Body Colored

Swannundaze With Hackle

Latex Body Colored

Tied by Gary Saindon

Photo by Mike Henley



JIM LICK

naturals are still showing and the memory of those morsels lingers—that is the time for the dry fly. When you see one natural every fifteen minutes, the time is right.

I felt helpless because it was raining salmonflies, plus other stoneflies, caddisflies and a few mayflies. The numbers and varieties of hatches occurring simultaneously was phenomenal. I kept a mental record and tabulated nine distinct species of stoneflies, seven caddisflies and four mayflies. A species of light brown caddis was exceptionally abundant. When the wind calmed down, swarms of them gathered in mating flights over every tree and shrub in sight. They are imitated well by an elk hair pattern. Near the end of my visit, I happened upon an elated fellow from Massachusetts who had enjoyed a 27-fish day on such a pattern on the upper Madison.

For the first four days a hellish wind howled through the valley from the south. Casting a floater and flipping mends with any degree of accuracy or control was nearly impossible. It happened that while sitting on the river bank suffering from anxiety due to the wind, and failing to spot any rising fish, I opted for a different approach. It seemed that with all of these phenomenal hatches taking place there would be a great deal of nymph activity beneath the surface. Perhaps that is where the trout's attention would be focused.

I had read Charles Brooks' book, *Nymph Fishing For Larger Trout,* and among the various methods he discussed was his own, the Brooks Method. I had tried the method halfheartedly in the past, but during this windy week on the Madison I was to fish it almost exclusively. I gained a fondness for the smooth sweep of the deep nymphs. And it seemed to matter little whether I was in the thick of the salmonfly hatch or well ahead of it. I also proved to myself the essence of the title of Mr. Brooks' book. From my streamside surveys (I like to strike up casual conversations with fellow fly flingers on the rivers) the fish I took on deep nymphs were consistently larger than those taken by the dry fly men.

(continued on page 61)



DALE NASH

Gently releasing a Strawberry River brown.

The Brooks Method

continued from page 67

The Brooks Method utilizes sinking heads, short leaders, and large weighted flies. Since this method is best suited for heavy waters, the heads to use are the quick sink and Hi-D types. Depending on the depth and speed of the current the flies may vary from heavy to extra heavy. Large stonefly patterns such as the Montana Nymph and Golden Stone are generally the standard patterns for rivers with dense populations of *Pteronarcys* and *Acroneuria*.

The Muddler and various sculpin imitators such as Brad's Sculpin (a dandy pattern shown to me by Brad Jackson of the Fly Shop in Redding, California) are good patterns for dredging heavy waters. Whichever combination of lines and flies used, one should keep in mind that the purpose is to put the fly on the bottom and to keep it there.

The beauty of the Brooks Method (once you get it) is that it becomes a smooth, graceful form of presentation. That's something considering this rig. One can fish to a likely hold or employ it in a searching manner by systematically covering the long, broad and even flow typical of the Madison. Whichever way you fish it, the method is essentially the same.

The fly fisherman takes a casting position upstream of the water to be fished. In choppy current there is little concern that fish will see you. The cast is made quartering upstream. From the time the fly enters the water until it is straight across, it should have sunk to the bottom. To control the slack line created by the downstream drift the rod is raised. The idea is to keep a droop line connection between the rod tip and the point where it enters the water. As the drift passes downstream, the rod is smoothly lowered, still maintaining the slight droop. From the time the fly hits the water until the drift is complete, the rod tip is always pointed over the spot where the line enters the water. On short casts the rod will be raised only slightly. On the longest casts the rod will be thrust as high as you can reach. In every instance though the line droop must be maintained.

As the fly sweeps to a point just downstream of straight across, one begins the fishing phase. Whereas the rod has been lifted, it is now lowered in a smooth motion geared to the speed of the current. This move maintains a dead drift as the fly swings deep and the line straightens below you. It is the moment one can expect the take to occur. Until the current has straightened the fly below you, there will be a bow at the terminal end of the line. Because of this bow the strike to set the hook should be directly upstream. The resistance of the bow against the current will drive the steel home.

From a single casting position I like to use a series of three casts at each of four distances. For example, I can best control casts between 15 and 30 feet. Thus, I strip line for a 15 foot cast and present the fly three times, then 20, 25 and 30 foot casts drifting each three times before increasing to a longer distance. I then move down or across stream a ways and repeat. Much of the Madison is wadeable from bank to bank and a great deal of water can be covered in this manner.

In casting such a rig you must deny yourself the classic exercise of false cast-

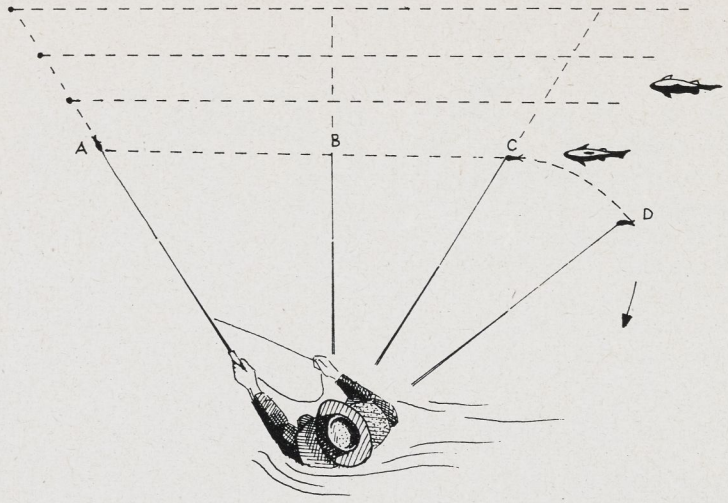


ILLUSTRATION BY JIM LICK

The path of the fly on 15, 20, 25, and 30 foot casts. From A to B the fly sinks to the bottom. The rod is raised to control slack on the downstream drift. From B to C the rod is lowered to match the speed of the current. C to D is where strikes usually occur, though they may come any time after B.

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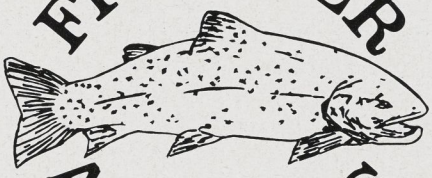

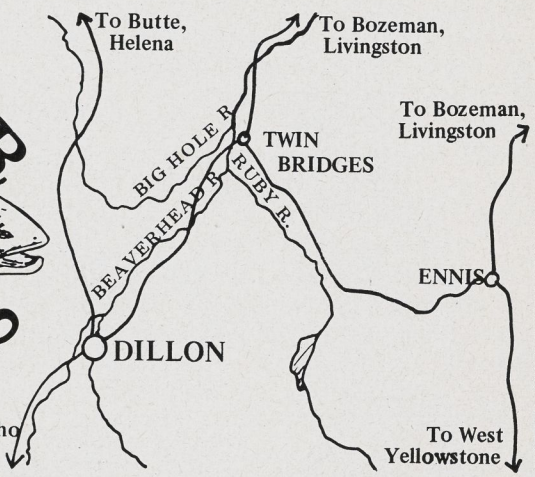

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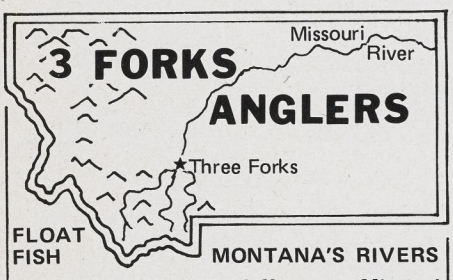
ing and completing neat unfolding loops. No false casting is involved, for practicality's sake as well as your personal safety. False casting these heavyweights may prove harmful to eyes and ears. At the end of each drift the line and fly is allowed to straighten below you. The current will lift the line and fly; essentially the water is used to hold the backcast before delivering the forecast. By holding the rod parallel to the water at shoulder height and simultaneously driving a hard power stroke and hauling with the line hand, the cast is shot upstream in one fluid motion. I can perform the cast equally well with a forehand and backhand shot. It is good to learn both ways.

Clean up on big trout by sweeping the bottom.

Many people shy away from the use of sinking lines because they cannot be efficiently mended. Except for limited applications, using them creates difficulty in achieving the drag free, dead drift. With the limited length of line used in the Brooks Method, however, dragless drifts are possible with the sunken line. The trout, at least, seem to think so.

At first you may overpower the cast or experience difficulty in picking it off the water. But with a little practice the right touch is easily gained. One of the real joys of this method is the acquisition of a relaxed and rhythmic pace. Because there is no false casting, your fly is in the water almost continuously. At the completion of each drift the fly is flipped upstream. Flip ... drift, flip ... drift, flip... drift, thumpizzzzzit. It's fun, smooth, and it catches fish – even when the trout aren't rising to those swarms of salmonflies crawling all over you and the bankside brush.

The Madison River has been famous over the years for producing big fish. But like so many facets of our world today, particularly for the outdoor sportsman, things aren't what they used to be. And so it is with the Madison.



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This is how slack line is controlled on casts of about 30 feet or longer.

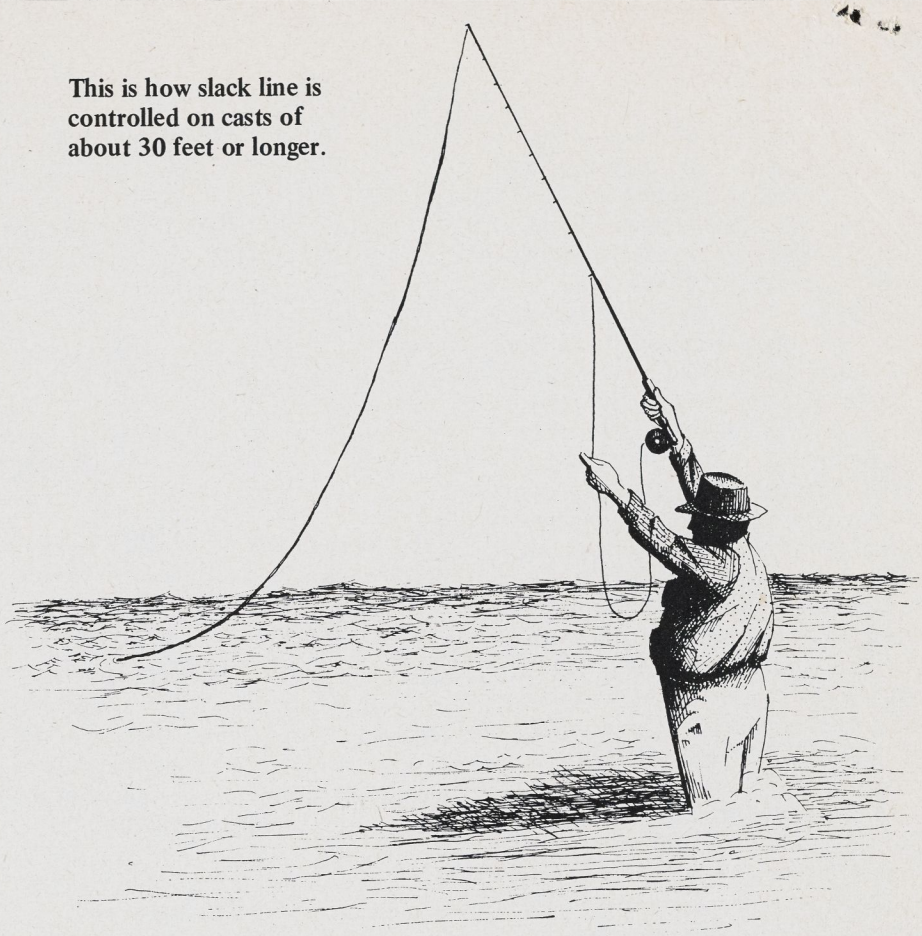


ILLUSTRATION BY JIM LICK

One local veteran lamented, "Used to be a time when we'd horse in the twenty inchers or break 'em off to get at the big fish." The popularity of the river and the heavy fishing pressure in recent years have done an efficient job of harvesting those big fish we all yearn for. Nevertheless, by today's standards, the river is still a fine fishery. There are still twenty inchers going to three and four pounds.

It is gratifying to note that in 1978 the Montana Fish and Game Department imposed catch and release regulations, artificial flies and lures only, from Quake Lake to McAtee Bridge. This move also designated the stretch from Wolf Creek to Squaw Creek as closed to all fishing. Also, you can now drift and fish by boat only in that portion of the river downriver from McAtee Bridge. It is legal to use a boat on the upper river, but you must park it and wade to fish.

It is encouraging that Fish and Game Departments are including more pieces of trout water as catch and release areas. But we should not allow this alone to lull us into a false sense of security that our rivers will automatically sustain themselves as quality fisheries. The real success of such programs is ultimately left up to us, the fishermen. A released fish is not necessarily one that survives. One gentlemanly appearing angler I watched took two minutes to photograph and release his fish, keeping it out of water the entire time. I have my doubts that the fish survived.

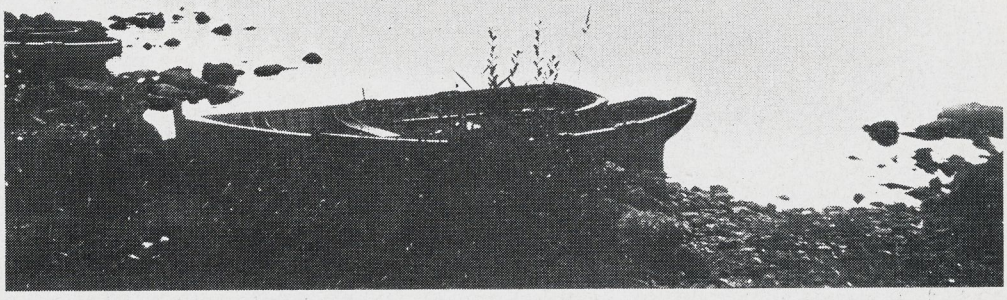
I have seen too many instances of improperly handled fish. It is wise to flatten the barbs on flies and to use forceps to remove them from the fish. If one handles fish, hold them gently about the middle after thoroughly wetting the hands. If a fly is deeply imbedded and difficult to remove, snip the leader and leave the fly. It is a small loss if it increases the trout's chance of survival. Give a tired fish a hand. Hold it gently in the water, moving it back and forth. Allow it to catch its breath until it can swim away on its own power.

The Madison River is a marvelous trout stream. The insect population is astonishing and the wild trout are a thrill to take on flies. If we do our part in accordance to wise ethics, the Madison will long be a source of angling distraction.

Whether trout are hooked on the surface or gouged up from the bottom, Charley Brooks' style, more and larger fish increase our odds for the future.

At break of dawn . . .





Lough Sheelin, Co. Cavan, with a dawn mist still shrouding the water.

A GLORIOUS AUGUST evening and a grand rise, and three fish in succession had thrown the hook . . . I drove into Monaghan to console myself with a pint and left almost as soon as I had come because the local bravos were singing songs of blood and revenge. On the way back to my camp I met Anthony. It had been the echoing calls of his pet peacocks which had lent an exotic atmosphere to my fishing earlier on. Anthony took me into his farmhouse and his wife fed me tea, stout and grilled salmon steaks.

Refusing to believe that my job was to teach school subjects to adults, the couple made me teach them then and there. They sat with arms folded on upright chairs in front of the range, and by the time I had retreated Napoleon from Moscow it was 4 am.

On my way back to Emy Lough, a fine misty rain and a chill breeze soon extracted the warmth of the farmhouse kitchen from my bones. I found the tent-flaps open and my sleeping-bag soaked; there would be no sleep now. I put up my rod and pushed out the boat, just as the first light appeared.

Vigorous pulling on the oars soon restored my circulation. A buzzer whined past my ear. I shipped the oars and a few moments later trout were moving all over the lough. By 7.30 am I had four well-made trout on the scuppers. The rise ceased, and as I rowed in I heard the dull roar of a helicopter patrolling the Border a couple of miles away. I bundled the tent into the boot and drove north.

The Aughnacloy Army check-point deserves its reputation for being the most thorough on the Irish Border. Inevitably, the soldier found the fish.

"Four beauties — where did you get them, mate?"

"Emyvale, five miles down the road."

It might as well have been a thousand miles away as far as he was concerned. His eyes misted over momentarily. Was he thinking of Chew? Blagdon? Hanningfield? Grafham? I could not make out his cap badge.

"When did you get them?"

"At dawn."

"Dawn's the best time, mate; on you go."

In summer, dawn can be the best time. From late May onwards there are regular rises to buzzers on all but the most acid stillwaters just as the first light comes. The varieties are bewildering, but I feel adequately equipped with black, grey and dark green pupae imitations tied on size 12 hooks. This buzzer fishing lasts for an hour at most, but in June and July caenis may also be on the water until the sun is over the trees. The large green midge and the sedges, so important during the late summer evening rise, are usually absent at dawn.

The morning buzzer rises tail off after the first week in September, but it is from then on that big brown trout gather in the shallows. At dawn they take savagely, though no fly is on the water, showing a marked preference for a Claret and Mallard. If you are very fortunate, you may also hit on a fall of 'daddies' at this time.

☆ ☆ ☆

On rivers I have found dawn fishing for brown trout to be at its best from mid-June to late July. August is disappointing, and for some reason the rises are more regular on big streamy rivers than on small limestone brooks. In late June I begin about 3 am, and instead of starting at the head of a run, as I would in the evening, I first cast my wet fly across the slow pools and work my way up to the faster water as the sky begins to brighten. Fly-life is not impressive, but there are enough olives to set the trout feeding. Stimulated perhaps by the cooling of the water through the night, the fish seem to take more positively at dawn than at dusk.

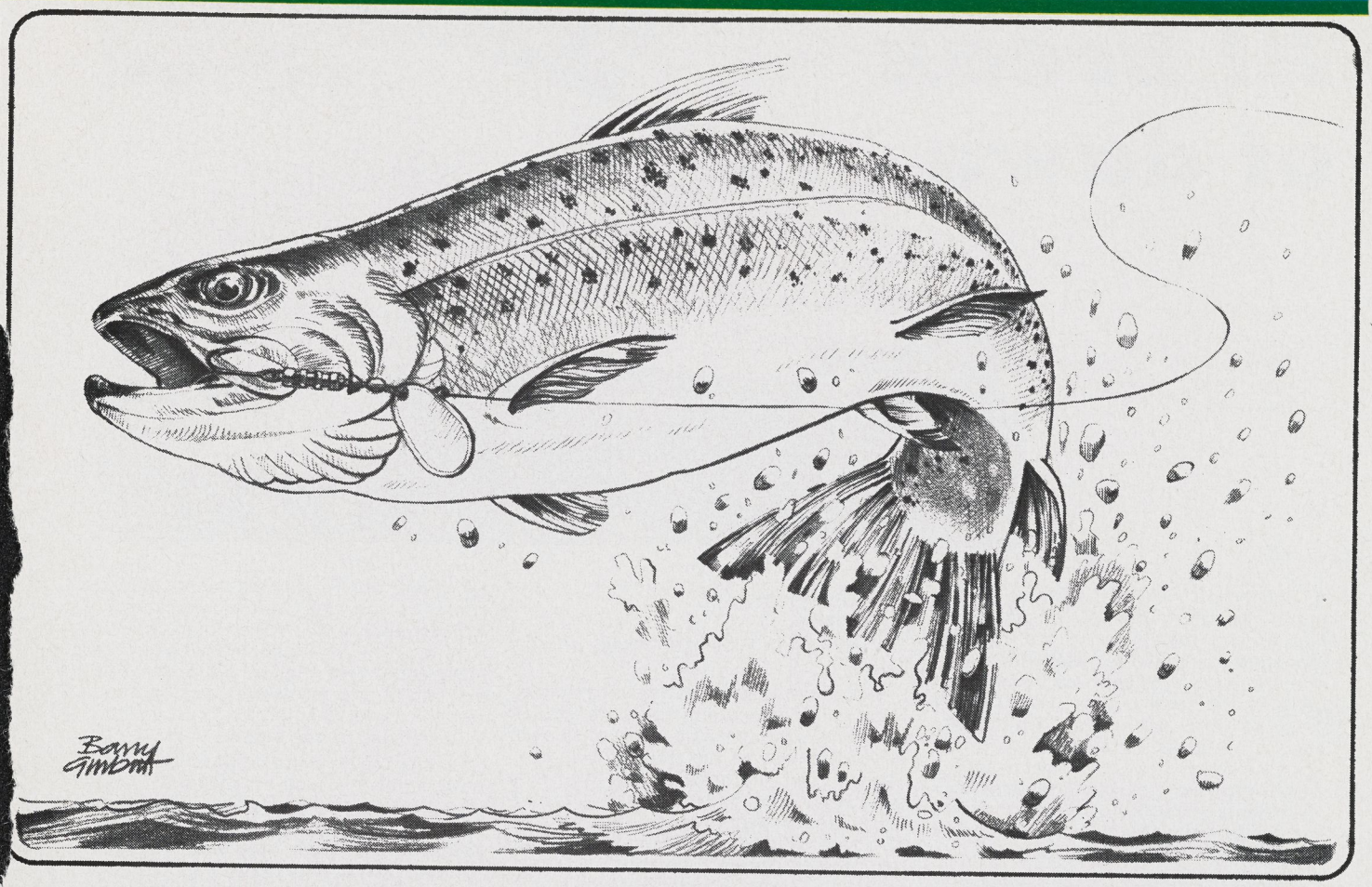
By about 4 am the trout can see too well for this across-and-down wet-fly fishing to remain successful. Off comes the small Greenwell and now is the time for a tiny dry fly, for the caenis should soon be on the water. Fascinating, exhausting and often unproductive work it is, too. The most uneducated trout are fussy about presentation and patterns as they sip in one caenis after another, and will not move to an artifical cast as little as six inches to one side of them.

I prefer dawn to any other time for sea-trout, if only because it is then that I have the pick of the pools on association waters. From the very first hint of light, sea-trout will often take well near the surface, just as they do during the evening rise. When the sky is clear this fishing may last no longer than forty-five minutes, but cloud or a sharp breeze can give you an extra half-hour. Mist, so often fatal to fishing in the evening, can provide valuable cover at dawn after the first brightening — perhaps because the water is already as cold as the mist. A bright moon, on the other hand, always means an empty bag for me.

When the trees on the opposite bank have turned from black to dark green, I replace my leader with a long strand of 3 lb nylon. If the breeze is downstream, I fish the pools across-and-down with a single size 16 fly; any lightly-hackled black fly will do. Provided the breeze keeps up, I can fish this way until the sun is on the water. If the breeze is upstream, or there is no wind, I prefer a dry Tups knotted to a long leader. In hot, low-water conditions the dry fly can be deadly if fished with infinite care.

The great value of dawn fishing for trout and sea-trout is that in hot, windless weather effective angling time can be doubled. Fishing need not be restricted to an hour or two at dusk. And there is that special beauty, that unique solitude which first light in summer brings. A last point; only six salmon have fallen to my rod in my angling career. Five of these were caught on different summer mornings between 4.30 am and 7.30 am; the exception was landed at 9.30 am in March.

Jonathan Bardon



became marvellously hectic for a while. I stumbled down after him and managed to get below him; then I used the rod hard and in he came, wallowing into the amber shallows, a lovely shining sea-trout. I beached him without any problems, and reckoned he'd be about 5 lb. Life was beautiful once more.

Ten minutes later my rod jarred again as another nice fish took hold of the spoon. He played strongly and I beached him 50 yds downstream of the taking place, easing him over the slippery pebbles. Another sea-trout, about 4 lb.

The rain was belting down hard again now, and the river was rising quickly. It was now about four o'clock and I was feeling rather tired but well satisfied with my brace of sewin. I walked back up to the car, stowed the fish in the boot, and got into the vehicle — a battered old Austin 1100 of some 11 summers but still ready and willing to take me fishing and to stop and start when required. I was surprised at the loudness of the rain drumming on the roof as I drank two cups of powerful, dark-brown tea and ate an apple, a lump of cheese, and too much home-made whole-meal bread: I'm pretty strong on *haute cuisine.*

Well, fatigue and the continuing rain urged me to call it a day, but I thought of all that lovely high water, the invisible flotillas of sea-trout and the possibility of a fresh grilse; and the muscles in my casting arm started twitching for the feel of a spinning-rod. And then I was out of the car, once more a man possessed, and striding eagerly down beside the old railway line that led directly to the pool. A heron croaked somewhere, and a single bird sang ecstatically from the middle of a tree. A blackcap or willow-warbler, I thought vaguely.

Back at the pool I found two other fishermen; one of them had had a nice 4 lb sea-trout on a spinner. The water was now even higher, spilling over on to the nettly shingle, and the jagged branch of a tree near the opposite bank which roughly marked the centre of what seemed to be the most fruitful run, had almost disappeared.

I put on my favourite lure for sewin and grilse in the upper reaches of the Towy: a size 2 long Mepps, copper. The little grey hone in my vest (please forgive) did its normal duty — I'm forever touching up the points of my hooks, and I suppose you may almost say that I catch most of my fish on a small block of silicon carbide or whatever it is. And out went the spoon for the first glorious cast, accompanied by a ball-bearing swivel and a couple of heavy shot on a projecting end of nylon — a lethal combination. Down went the rod top and soon a splendid golden trout of nearly 1 lb came splashing in. I decided to keep it, the sewin notwithstanding.

A few casts later the water erupted in pink and silver, and about 10 somersaults later a nice three-pounder was drawn ashore. In the course of the next hour I got two more — one about 2½ lb and a silver school sewin of 1 lb. I missed one fish which must have been either a salmon or a really heavy sea-trout: the take nearly jarred the rod out of my hand.

It was about 6.30 pm now, and no doubt if I had stayed on I should have caught more. The sewin were certainly hitting that copper spoon with passion. The fever was still upon me, of course, but I was pretty well played out myself, and the squally showers were beginning to lose a little of their appeal. I packed up, leaving the other two fishermen there flicking out their lures into that splendid brown stream.

At home, suitably impressed, my mother, my son, Bev, and his charming girl watched me weigh the sewin: 5 lb, 4¼ lb, 2 lb 14 oz, 2½ lb, and 1¼ lb. The plump gold red-stippled brown trout went 15 oz. It had been one of my better days.

It never rains but it pours, thank goodness. The old proverb was apt for once. And there are people who not only do not go fishing, I'm told, but also take their holidays in places thousands of miles from the vale of the Towy where rain is forbidden and the midday sun worshipped. 'Tis a puzzlement.

SPEED IS THE KEY

ABOUT TWENTY YEARS ago an article in one of our angling journals advocated the excellence of fishing the upstream wet fly for sewin in the streams of west Wales. Not long afterwards I met a party of anglers who had read and were slavishly following its advice. They had experienced a series of blanks, while local anglers had been taking about a dozen sewin nightly. I was able to persuade them to revert to the traditional downstream wet fly, and over the remaining two nights they did quite well.

Upstream fishing at night is not really the best way of taking sewin. Indeed, there are times and locations at which it is useless.

Mending the line can mean many missed fish, warns Moc Morgan.

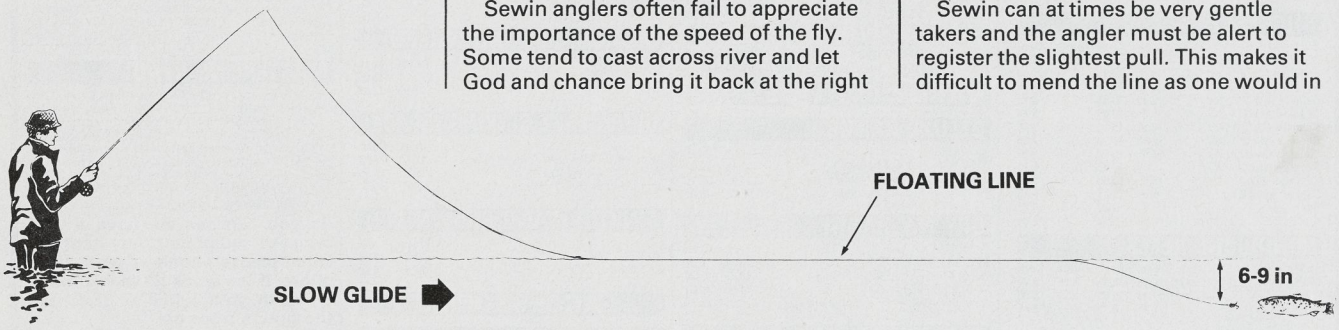
In daytime it is entirely a different matter. Then the up-and-across approach can be rewarding. In all forms of fly-fishing for sewin the stealthy approach is important, and by working upriver the angler can make a better approach and employ shorter casts. At night, approach is still important, but it would seem the downriver style is tops.

I love fishing wet fly upriver, but would honestly advise every angler not to neglect the downriver style, though a lot depends on the level of the water.

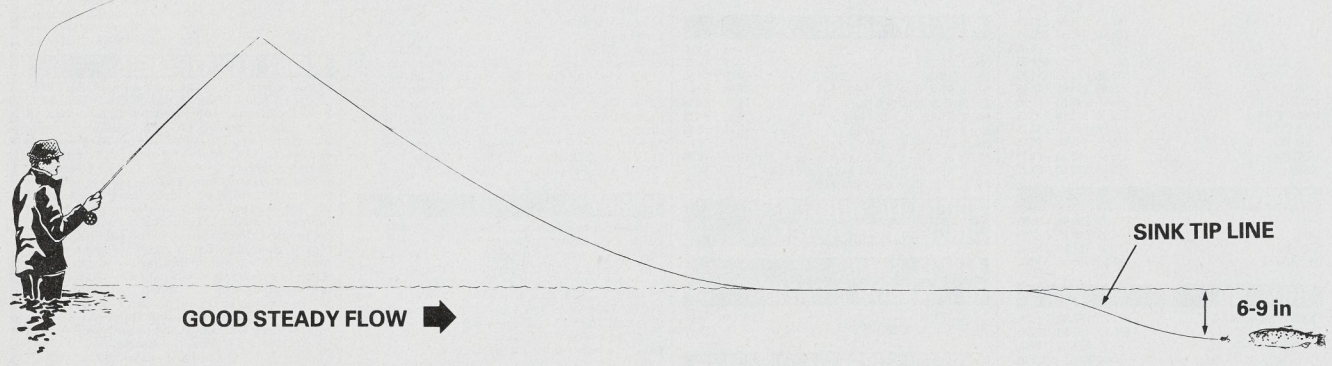
Sewin anglers often fail to appreciate the importance of the speed of the fly. Some tend to cast across river and let God and chance bring it back at the right speed. Then the method really is reduced to "chuck-and-chance". If the current is strong, it is important that the fly is slowed down and is presented to the sewin in an acceptable manner. It purports to represent a small fish, and that small fish would have to be on a motor-bike to be travelling as fast as some of the flies.

Some anglers achieve this slowing-down of the flies by moving out from the bank into the water, where the depth allows them, thus reducing the pulling effect of the current. From this vantage point they cast a long line. As the sewin often lie in deep glides pouring out from pools, this technique is not always possible. So other slowing-down processes must be acquired.

Sewin can at times be very gentle takers and the angler must be alert to register the slightest pull. This makes it difficult to mend the line as one would in



The combination of floating line and slow glide.



The same depth is gained with a sink tip on a steady flow.



A slow to quick sinking line is needed in a very strong run.

PRINCE RANGE

	Terms	Cash	Terms	Cash
3in No. 5/6	46.50	**41.85**	21.30	**19.17**
3 1/4in No. 7/8	47.45	**42.70**	21.75	**19.57**
Ocean 3 7/8in	103.40	**93.06**	25.80	**23.22**
Flyweight 2 1/2in	39.60	**35.64**	16.65	**14.98**
Featherweight 2 7/8in	42.80	**38.52**	17.10	**15.39**
L.R.H. Lightweight 3 3/16	43.45	**39.10**	17.50	**15.75**
Princess 3 1/2in	44.65	**40.18**	17.95	**16.15**
St Aidan 3 3/4in	45.45	**40.90**	18.35	**16.51**

MARQUIS RANGE

	Terms	Cash	Terms	Cash
2 1/2in No. 2/3	34.40	**30.96**	16.05	**14.53**
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3in No. 5	36.55	**32.89**	17.10	**15.39**
3 1/4in No. 6	37.15	**33.43**	17.70	**15.93**
3 7/16in No. 7	37.75	**33.97**	18.65	**16.78**
3 5/8in No. 8/9	38.40	**34.56**	20.70	**18.63**
3 3/4in No. 10	40.45	**36.40**	21.55	**19.39**
3 7/8in Salmon 1	47.85	**43.06**	23.10	**20.79**
4 1/8in Salmon 2	48.55	**43.69**	23.45	**21.10**
4 1/4in Salmon 3	50.30	**45.27**	23.80	**21.42**
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3 5/8in No. 8/9	46.90	**42.21**	13.55	**12.19**

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3 7/8in Salmon 1 (S.C.)	48.55	**43.69**	24.40	**21.96**
4 1/8in Salmon 2 (S.C.)	48.55	**43.69**	24.40	**21.96**
4 1/4in Salmon 3 (S.C.)	48.55	**43.69**	24.40	**21.96**

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	Terms	Cash	Terms	Cash
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Speedex Mk 2 3 1/2in	19.75	**16.75**	5.45	**4.60**
Speedex Mk 2 3 1/2W	19.95	**16.95**	5.55	**4.70**
Beaulite Mk 2 3 1/2in	15.95	**13.55**	7.25	**6.15**
Beaulite Mk 2 3 1/2W	16.25	**13.80**	7.35	**6.24**
Beaulite Mk 2 4 1/4in	18.50	**15.70**	8.55	**7.25**
Beaulite Mk 2 4 1/4W	18.95	**16.10**	9.00	**7.65**
Supercondex 3 1/2in	12.95	**10.99**	5.90	**5.00**
Supercondex 3 1/2W	13.50	**11.45**	6.00	**5.10**
Supercondex 4 1/4W	15.95	**13.50**	7.35	**6.24**
Supercondex 4 1/4in	15.50	**13.15**	7.25	**6.15**
Omni 6oz	8.95	**7.60**	1.00	**0.85**
Alpha 3oz	6.95	**5.90**	2.40	**2.04**

SUNDRIDGE REELS

	Terms	Cash	Terms	Cash
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Skorpio	7.95	**6.75**	4.95	**3.85**

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6500C	£59.95	**£48.95**	**£9.95**
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Mag 1 Plus	£57.50	**£48.50**	**£13.75**
5600 Plus	£59.95	**£49.50**	**£9.25**
4600 Plus	£59.95	**£49.50**	**£9.25**
5500C	£53.95	**£45.50**	**£9.25**

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6HM	£59.99	**£50.99**	**£11.00**
6RM	£54.99	**£46.75**	**£11.00**
PMF 55H	£72.99	**£61.99**	**£10.50**
PT 15E (computer)	£182.95	**£155.50**	**POA**

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Bantam Mag 350SG	£72.40	**£62.90**	**POA**
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Brown (DT5S-DT9S) Fast Sink	29.00	**24.65**
Brown (DT6S-DT12S) Extra Fast Sink	29.00	**24.65**
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Brown (WF5S-WF11S) Fast Sink	29.00	**24.65**
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	Terms	Cash
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	Terms	Cash
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(DT10N-DT11N) (WF10N-WF11N)	19.95	**17.95**

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	Terms	Cash
(DT5S-DT9S) (WF6S-9S)	17.55	**15.95**
(DT10S-DT11S) (WF10S-WF11S)	19.95	**17.95**

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HARDY

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By reducing the angle of the rod and moving from A to B the flies will fish more slowly across the current.

salmon fishing. So while some anglers resort to mending the line, there is no doubt that it can cause the angler to miss the take of a fish. Throwing an upriver bend is comparatively an easy way to slow the pull on the line, giving the fly more time to fish through good holding spots, and with more anglers using longer rods, up to 11ft, it leads to greater line control.

I recall fishing one particular river on the west coast of Ireland. There was a good flow, and it was virtually impossible to hold the flies beyond the current, where a nice shoal of fresh sewin was lying. The problem was overcome by taking a couple of paces downriver after the line had settled in the water. A friend overcame the problem by letting out more line. This technique demands excellent control and sensitivity, so that the fly is kept fishing slowly without being swept at the rate of knots through the lie of the sewin.

At other times, putting a bend into the line is good fishing technique. The few yards when the fly is being pulled around the corner in a steady curve is known as coffin corner. It is aptly-named, and both at night time and during the day many fish are taken in this area.

Remember that big flies can be moved slightly more quickly than the small patterns. A big fly — say, a size 4 Black and Squirrel — represents a small fish which in top gear can manage only some three miles an hour. In the current out of a pool the water can be travelling at about 6 mph, so the small fish is going flat out, but is still drifting downstream at 3 mph. The logic of slowing then becomes obvious.

Another factor to bear in mind is that different lines have different speeds. What is normal for a double-tapered line is not so for a forward-tapered line. Each angler must study the action of the current on his line, so that he can evaluate the speed at which it will take his flies across the water.

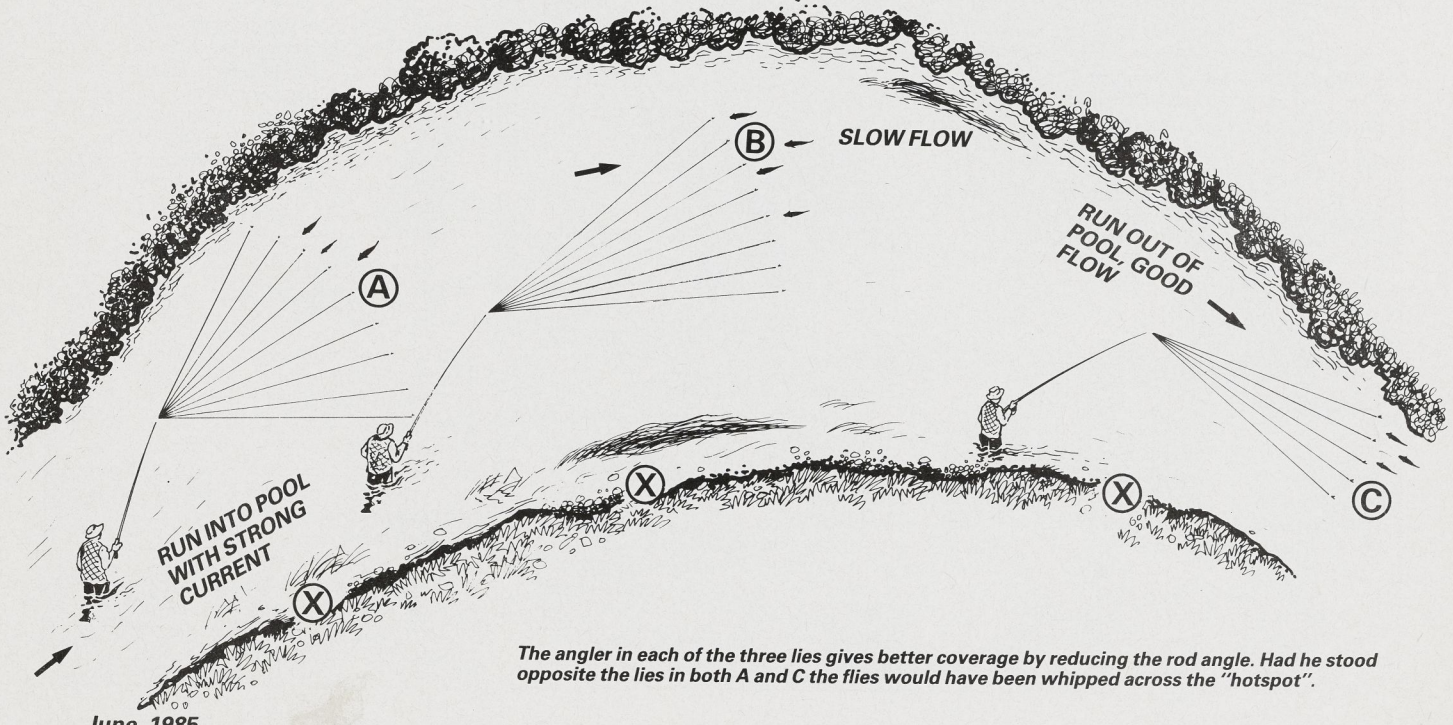
The next important factor in sewin fishing is depth. Many of us cut our sewin teeth on silk lines. These were super lines in that after a good greasing they would keep the flies at around the necessary 6-inch depth for about 90 minutes. In those days I always kept a fresh silk line for the dawn period, as it really took a few hours to dry out a line after it was really wet.

The neutral density line is a boon for anglers. AFTM 6-9 double-tapered lines will keep the flies at the required depth for hours. Forward-tapered lines tend to take the fly down a little too deep, especially weights 8-9.

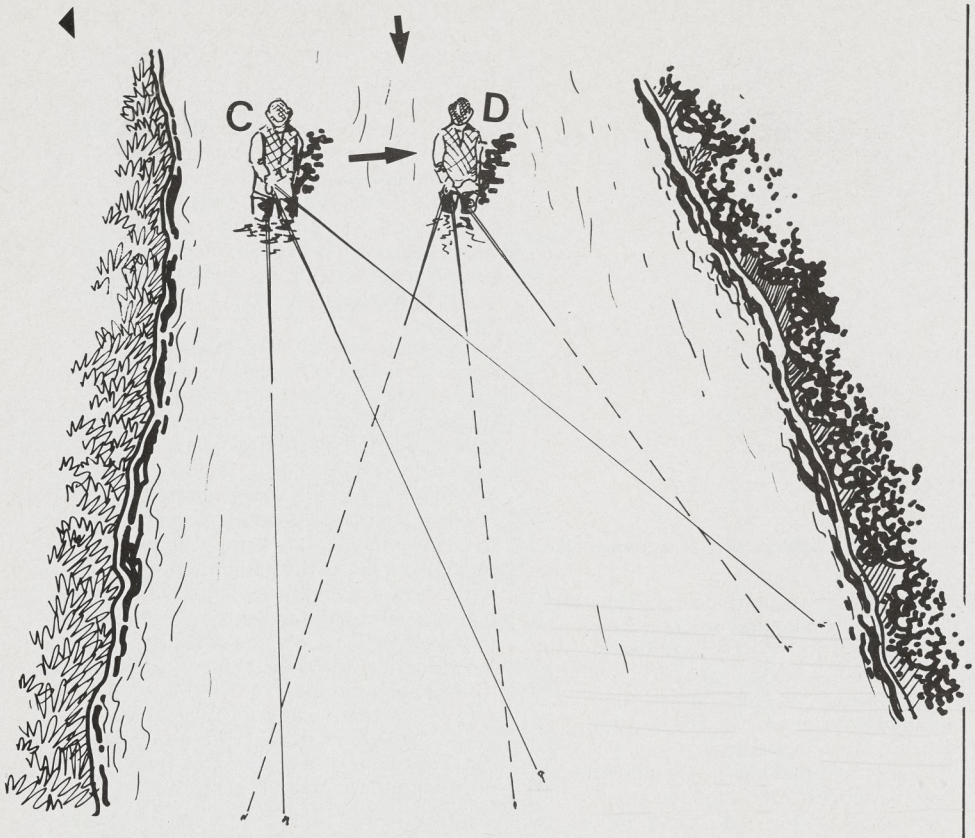
While any serious sewin angler will have assessed his presentation of his flies to all the known lies in a pool, allowance must be made for the variation during high and low water flows. The taking places can move a few yards, either up- or downriver. This change of taking location means that the angler must vary his base of attack.

I fish one particular pool on a good sewin river which has a depth-gauge on the far bank. As the water of the river is used for generating purposes, the water-level can be up or down like a Yo-yo. When the water-level is between three and four on the gauge, the taking hot-spot is just 2 yds behind a big stone. It may be that after considerable experience of fishing the place I now fish that little harder or better when the water gets to this level, with the result that I do much better.

On most deep pools the problem is often that the centre section is in a corner shape, and the angler has to take his sewin from that elbow. This typical pool demands a very special approach. It is customary to fish it from the open side



The angler in each of the three lies gives better coverage by reducing the rod angle. Had he stood opposite the lies in both A and C the flies would have been whipped across the "hotspot".



The angler at C works his flies quickly across the current while the angler at D reduces the angle and therefore cuts down the effect of the current.

and cast the flies into the corner and let the current swing them out. A more imaginative approach is to move upriver and cast into the corner from directly above. A quick-sinking line fished from the deep bank can bring success. The tactic here is to cast into the slack water and bring the fly into the current and hold it suspended just off the bottom of the river. Bringing the rod up to 60 degrees, and then dropping it slowly to 30 degrees, will give the fly just sufficient movement to interest the sewin.

One such ploy on the Towy enabled me to hook a very good sewin. Unfortunately, he wanted to get back to the sea whence he came and was in quite a hurry about it. Trees prevented my passage downriver and I could do nothing but wait for the inevitable. I did think about jumping into the pool and swimming to the other side, but I thought better of that.

Fortunately, as in all good stories, rescue came in the nick of time in the shape of another angler. Between us, me on the upriver side of the trees and my helper on the downriver side, we eventually got the fish into his net. As it was a joint effort, I decided that we'd toss up for the fish, and he won! Perhaps that was only fair. Without my helper I would not have had that fish anyway. In similar circumstances in America, the court had to decide who was to have the fish, the hooker or the netter. There, too, it was the netter who was lucky!

Welsh Salmon & Trout Association News

The Welsh miracle

THE RECOVERY by some of South Wales' rivers from the black open ditches of 30 years ago to clean, trout sustaining waters of today is little short of a miraculous achievement by the Welsh Water Authority.

Confident of the future, angling clubs are now busy stocking and indeed fishing on what hitherto were long dead rivers. This transformation has brought with it a higher setting water quality "sights" and now every small pollution is now regarded as a disaster.

Keen to keep everyone on his toes, the Association's Pollution Officer Phil Jones is preparing a handbook which advises anglers on exactly how to act when they discover a pollution.

Convincing the Tourist Board

THE WELSH TOURIST Board has in the past come in for considerable flak from the Association because of its indifferenced to the problems confronting angling clubs.

Noises have been made by the Association which wants the Board to help the clubs with grants so that they can make their fisheries more attractive to tourists. And, with changes in the Board's set up, it does seem that the appeals have borne fruit.



The next task, if the Welsh have their way, wil be to fix the tag.

It has been a long hard struggle to convince the Tourist Board that anglers will visit a fishery if the fishing is first class even if the accommodation is fifth rate, but not the other way about. So the priorities being decided, we can hope that the grants will, from now on be given to the fisheries, and not to people wanting to enhance tourist accommodation.

The price is wrong

DESPITE THE DECLINE in the quality of fishing on many Welsh rivers it would appear that the prices and rentals for the fishing is still showing an upward trend.

The association is sad to learn that prices are being paid which are totally out of keeping with the real value of the fisheries. Clubs looking at new waters would do well to make sure that a grant is available. Happily, grant aiding is still possible, despite the economic climate.

Welsh tagging scheme?

IT IS NOW accepted that the salmon tagging scheme which would have proved a real thorn in the poachers side is to fall by the wayside.

Most of the objections to the scheme came from Scotland, but there is strong feeling in Wales that perhaps they should go it alone after all.

The Association's new fishery committee, guided by Ian Jones, is considering this move and hopes to work with the Welsh Water Authority in a joint endeavour to get the Welsh Office to give the tagging scheme the green light.

Maestro of the becks

Norman Roose with fond memories of Tommy Howe, fly-fisher supreme on the upper Eden and its tributaries

A WATCH REPAIRER by trade, a Freeman of the Royal and Ancient Borough of Appleby, who as a youngster fought at the Relief of Mafeking, Tommy Howe was surely one of the all-time fly-fishing greats on the upper Eden and its becks.

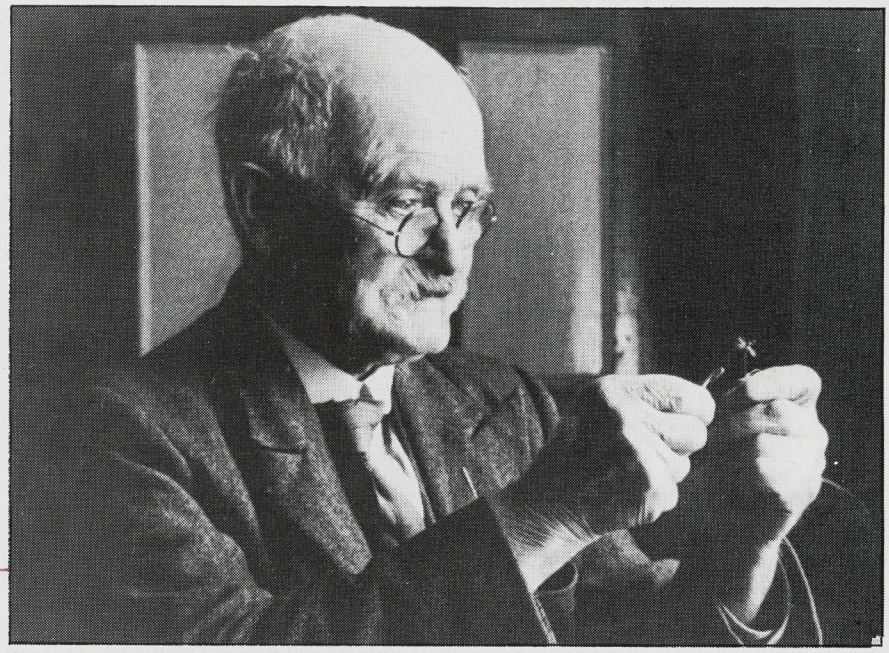
Short of stature but stocky of build, with a grey moustache and twinkling eyes, Tommy, like many dalesmen of his time could be quick to take offence and slow to forgive, but treated with the respect he deserved he could be a generous and helpful friend.

He had an intense dislike of spinning with a fixed-spool reel, which many years earlier, Holden Illingworth developed on the Eden, a few miles downstream near Temple-Sowerby. He said its use was nothing but slaughter, and at times it was certainly deadly when used with a 1¼ inch quill minnow.

He was also critical of those visiting anglers who, when fishing a cast of three wet-flies at dusk, tipped their flies with maggots. Not that Tommy was averse to filling his creel. He told me that his best day ever with fly was seventy trout, killed on Hoff Beck when there was "A bit of water on, tinged with a milky colour". He attached great importance to a milky tinge on the becks.

His flies, roughly dressed without the aid of a vice, were killers. I sometimes fished with him on the Home Farm water, behind Appleby church, and when conditions were favourable he always fished a fairly short line upstream, casting quickly first to one side then the other, and when he hooked either a trout or a grayling, brought the fish quickly downstream into his net. When fishing for grayling, Tommy fished upstream exactly as he did for trout and just as successfully, whereas most anglers, including myself, do better fishing wet-fly for grayling across and down.

One lovely September day the Eden was in grand condition for wet-fly, dropping after a spate with water the colour of light ale. In the early afternoon I was at Ormside and began fishing, from the right bank, the long slow-flowing pool below Clint Rock. On the left bank, towards, which the water deepened, there were trees and bushes. There was no rise to speak of and no noticeable hatch of fly. I was using my favourite wet-fly cast for coloured water with a tinselled Red Partridge on the point, Brown Owl on the first dropper and a Crimson Waterhen on the top dropper. Offers continued all the way down the pool. They were all underwater and not visible to me, but there was no mistaking the definite pull, usually when the flies were about 45 deg downstream.



Tommy Howe tied all his flies without a vice.



Early summer on a lovely stretch of the upper Eden.

By the time I had fished out the pool, I had killed two trout and a grayling, lost a good trout at the net, and missed 20 or more offers. I walked out disappointed at the missed opportunity to make a good catch, which I put down to the fish "coming short".

Just as I was wading out, Tommy Howe came downstream to the top of the pool. I waved him in and walked up to sit down and watch him. In no time, fishing downstream, he had three or four fish in his creel. I watched closely but could see nothing — no rise, no tightening of the line — only every now and again a quick lift of the wrist and forearm and nearly each time the rod bent and a struggling fish broke the surface of the water. One or two fish came off but by the time he waded out he had killed a dozen or more trout and grayling.

The phrase "coming short" originated from my boyhood days on the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey when the then Duke of Devonshire's agent, an experienced wet-fly fisherman I sometimes accompanied on the river, used to say they were coming a bit short if he found fish difficult to hook. After this experience with Tommy Howe, I questioned the validity of this excuse and wondered how could the fish be coming short, when I felt the tug at my fly. When they made an offer at Tommy's flies I suspect he hooked them after I felt them, which was often too late. In his case I suspect it was an instinctive intuition coupled with a split-hair reaction and intense concentration. In my case I fear it

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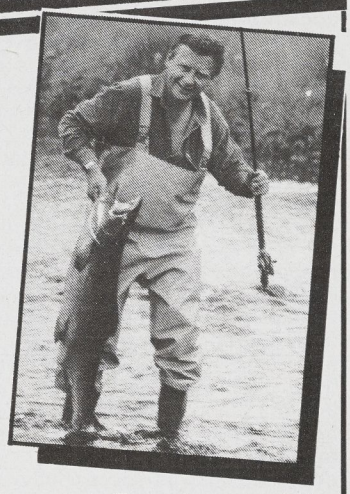

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was not the fish that were at fault, but the fisherman. Anglers like Tommy Howe are born, not made.

I am satisfied, however, that when fishing the dry-fly for grayling there are times when the fish do come short. Perhaps they are suspicious of the fly at the last moment, or are being merely playful, or whatever, but often when they have risen to my fly and I have found it difficult to hook them I have refrained from striking and the fly, though within the circles of the rise, has never disappeared but floated on without interruption.

When the dry-fly first became prevalent on the upper Eden, I do not know, but Tommy had assimilated it and was a deadly fisherman with the dry-fly before I first knew him. It was in 1946 that he first introduced me to the Treacle Parkin, which he fished dry.

His favourite dry pattern for trout, especially when the medium olive was on, was a fly of his own invention. It had a tail of ginger cock fibres, a body of yellow silk, well waxed to an olive shade with a turn or two of hare's ear close up to the two hackles, the rear one being ginger cock, and the front one a small feather from the underside of a woodcock's wing. This fly was very successful and became so popular with other fishermen that they named it "Howe's Special". I found the fly quite good for trout and grayling on the Wharfe. And while it kills well when the medium olives and pale wateries are on, it is also a very useful general fly.

Tommy used to help out as a waiter at the Tufton Arms, and wore a winged collar with a bow tie and frock coat. One Saturday evening when the small dining-room was full, he walked across to my table, placed in a row in front of me five or six partridge feathers, and demanded in a loud voice to know which was the correct feather for the Orange Partridge. A hush fell over the room as the other diners turned to see what was going on. I pointed to the only brown mottled feather among them, the others being barred, and Tommy, with a look of triumphant satisfaction, picked the feathers up and walked out into the bar. It transpired later that some local anglers had with them a brace of partridges and Tommy, who was collecting some drinks, overheard one say he would bet that I didn't know the correct feathers. Tommy accepted the challenge, and they selected some feathers from the birds.

After the war I spent many happy evenings with Tommy recording the patterns he used on the rivers and fell becks. He was most particular that my notes were correct, especially as to which feathers to use. It was fascinating to watch him at the age of 80 put a fly together so quickly without the aid of a vice. Many were well-known North Country patterns but some I doubt have ever been seen in print before. □

DRESSINGS

Light Snipe

Wings: Hackled with a feather from the underside of a snipe's wing. The best feathers are the two on each wing next to the body.
Body: Yellow silk.

Snipe and Orange

Wings: The same feather as the fly above.
Body: Orange silk.

Snipe and Purple

Wings: A white tipped feather from the outer side of a snipe's wing.
Body: Purple silk.

Snipe and Hare's Ear

Wings: Hackled with a feather from a snipe's rump.
Body: Tangerine silk with the last two or three turns next to the hackle dubbed thickly with hare's ear fur.

Brown Snipe

Wings: A feather tipped with brown from the outside of a snipe's wing.
Body: Tangerine silk. This is a good early-season fly.

Black Gnat



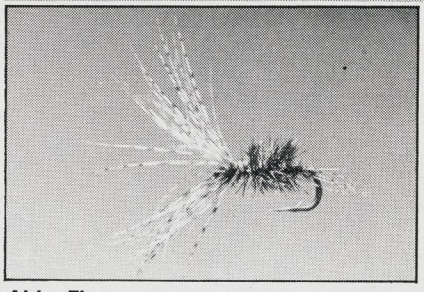
Black Gnat.
Wings: Hackled with a feather from the outer side of a cock starling's wing. The dull half of the feather should be stripped away leaving only the half with the dark green sheen.
Body: Brown silk with a twist of peacock herl next to the hackle.

Orange Partridge

Wings: Hackled with a dark mottled feather from a partridge's back between the shoulders.
Body: Orange silk.

The yellow and red versions of this pattern used the same feather with the appropriately coloured silk body.

Alder Fly



Alder Fly.
Wings: Hackled with a dark mottled feather from a partridge's back between the shoulders.
Body: Peacock herl over red silk.

Dark Needle

Wings: Hackled with a feather from the outer side of a starling wing where the wing joins the body.
Body: Orange silk or orange silk mixed with the herl from a hleasant tail.

Brown Owl

Wings: Hackled with a feather from the outer side of a brown owl's wing.
Body: Orange silk.
Head: Peacock herl.

Woodcock

Wings: A feather from the underside of a woodcock wing.
Body: Light yellow silk well waxed to a greenish olive hue with a twist of peacock herl next to the hackle.

Woodcock and Hare's Lug

Hackle: A feather from the underside of a woodcock's wing.
Body: Pale yellow silk well waxed to a greenish olive shade with a twist of hare's ear fur dubbed on next to the hackle.

Starling and Orange

Wings: Hackled with a feather from the underside of a young starling's wing. An old starling feather is too dark for this fly.
Body: Orange silk.

Light Starling

Hackled with the same feather as the above pattern.
Body: Yellow silk.

Wings: Hackled with the red and black feather from a Barnwelder fowl.
Body: Yellow silk well waxed and ribbed with round gold tinsel.

Waterhen and Red

Wings: Hackled with a feather from the underside of a waterhen's wing.
Body: Red silk.

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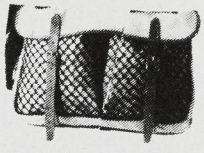

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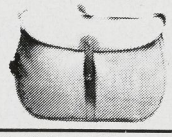

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Famous salmon anglers

Those 'giants' of the past had some lessons for today, says TONY GEORGE

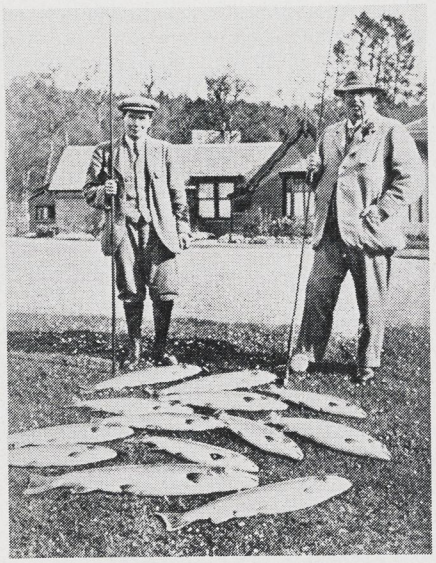
IT USED TO BE fashionable, or at least not unfashionable, for the exploits of famous sportsmen to be made public one way or another. When Charles Ackroyd killed 20 spring salmon in the day, or shot 70 brace of grouse at one session, it was not considered anything to be reticent about. When he and his father together caught 1,022 trout in three days not only was the good news published, but the catch was used in later life as the basis for disparaging comment on the poverty of the catches that merited reporting in the sporting press.

It is true not all Ackroyd's more famous contemporaries were possessed of his ebulliently Edwardian personality, but they still permitted, even encouraged, publication of their catches, though sensibly via a reliable amanuensis. Today we hear little of the big killers. To a degree they still exist, but on a much more modest scale. There are several reasons for this (quite apart from the fact that the vaunting of great bags is no longer quite *de rigueur*).

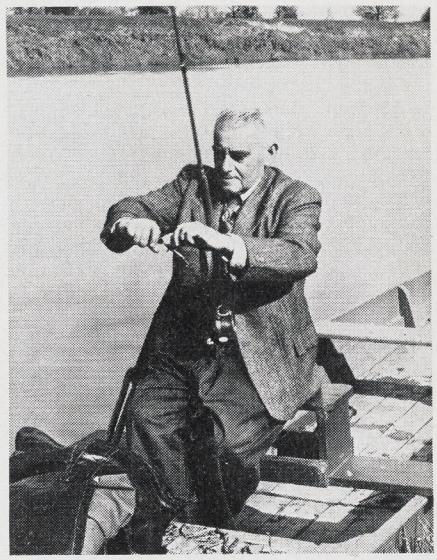
At one time landed and otherwise monied gentlemen might spend most of the season fishing, either their own water, or water leased long-term, or both. Today few people indeed in this country can afford to lease good beats for their exclusive personal use over an entire season, year after year. Even large landowners are pressurised by labour and running costs to such an extent that their surplus over costs is much smaller in real purchasing power than it was even 40 years ago, and instead of fishing their own waters they rent them out to maximise income.

In the 1920s the then Duke of Roxburghe paid £17,000 a year for the rental of salmon fishings. The general purchasing power equivalent of this sum today must be well over £100,000. Of course, the largely Anglo-Saxon-Celtic cultures from which salmon-fishers are drawn still contain wealthy men who can afford expensive fisheries, but such men no longer have the time. Most wealthy men these days are industrial-commercial moguls who have to devote nearly all the hours God sends to maintaining their wealth. Such people often do fish — indeed they are numerous — but not by the season, by the week or the fortnight at a time. Rarely, in consequence, do they knock up big scores. The Duke of Roxburghe had the time!

Still, the breed has not quite died out, even in this country, and I know anglers personally, and have reliable information of others, who annually usually catch between 100 and 300 British salmon. Rather unnervingly, they are mostly men who would tell you that their favourite sport is shooting. But the total catches of few if any of them can be compared with those of the giants of the past, the likes of whom will never again be seen. In reviewing a selection of these timeless names I have eschewed those whose reputations were largely made in Norway, as the famous Norwegian anglers would need a special article to themselves to do them justice.



Arthur Wood evolved a style to suit his fine beat on the Aberdeenshire Dee where he himself caught 3,490 salmon.



Robert Pashley caught more than 10,000 Wye salmon but the fly-fishing lesson he taught was not heeded.

Arthur Wood is usually credited with the introduction of the greased-line method of fly-fishing for salmon. He was certainly the first to popularise it via his many friends and correspondents, but whether he can be called the father of greased-line fishing must be a matter for doubt. In the end it all comes down to a question of semantics: what exactly is or was greased-line fishing, and how were the rules drawn to qualify?

☆ ☆ ☆

The fact is that Percy Laming claimed to wax his fly-line long before Wood did, and was certainly fishing in the spring with a light line and fine gut back into last century. His reception by his gillie on the Aberdeenshire Dee in 1897 was: "What have you come for — trooting?"

At first he waxed all but the last two yards of his line and fished this style only in very low water, but gradually he acquired the habit of carrying two fly-rods with him at all times in the later spring, the one being fully floating. He completely disagreed with Wood in the matter of drag, and maintained it was controlled drag that created the attraction of the fly for the salmon, in which opinion he was undoubtedly correct.

Laming is believed to have caught more than 5,000 salmon, most of them from the Spey and the Aberdeenshire Dee. Fishing an average of less than a month a year on the Dee over nearly 30 years he caught 2,203 fish, and his average of three fish a day is a remarkable achievement. His best daily bag was 21, and he had 45 daily catches on the Dee alone of 8-10 fish as well as a number of others between 11 and 21.

Wood, of Glassel's contention that he fished his greased-line fly completely without drag, that is "floating down like a dead insect" in the words of his biographer Jock Scott, gave rise to the greatest non-debate in angling history. His claim was, in fact, a contradiction in terms and hence an absurdity. He gave the lie himself in describing how to hook fish rising to the fly "on the dangle", since the fly could only have reached such a position by way of drag.

It is difficult to be sure whether this song and dance about nothing was largely the result of self-deception on the part of Wood, or partly also the desire of Jock Scott to set his hero up on a pedestal by pretending to an originality which the facts could not sustain.

Nonetheless, Arthur Wood caught a great head of salmon. He was a skilled and knowledgeable angler, and had the best beat on the Aberdeenshire Dee during the cream of the spring cycle. His fish were new and eager and it was consequently unnecessary for him to fish the slower or quicker fly (that is, both needing heavier drag) which has frequently to be offered in order to move fish longer in the river. Therefore he evolved a style to suit his beat, a style which certainly would not have suited the majority of beats on the majority of rivers. His fish were so eager they would rise and take bits of twig thrown on to the lies!

Continued overleaf

During his tenancy of Cairnton from 1913 to 1934 he caught 3,490 salmon. He was a generous-hearted man and liked to invite all his friends to fish, and for them, too, to catch plenty, otherwise he would have killed even more himself.

George Mortimer Kelson was something of a prodigy in his time. He was a fine athlete and cricketer (captain of Kent), a good shot, a noted musician, angling editor of *Land and Water,* a fly-dresser with an international reputation, a casting champion, and an indefatigable fisherman. He caught between 3,000 and 4,000 salmon, virtually all on the fly, and he was just as successful at the other branches of fresh-water angling.

In one and the same year he caught a pike of 24 lb, a trout of 10¼ lb with bait, another of 9¼ lb with fly, a 6¾ lb chub, and a barbel of 11 lb. He killed his first salmon in 1844 and fished to the end of his long life in 1920. He always fished in a bowler hat "carefully waterproofed with size and Acme black", round which he wound his casts.

Kelson was a famous, in fact notorious, theoretician and controversialist on the nature of the salmon fly; suffice it to say most though not all of his opinions are now discredited. Unfortunately, he was both a ponderous writer (*The Salmon Fly* is barely readable) and an exasperating dogmatist in debate, his traditional line being the unanswerable gambit: "You say I am wrong, but on such and such a date I caught 12 salmon when no other rod moved a fin, and I did it by carrying out this theory" (the parody is by Jock Scott).

Nobody was allowed to get the better of him whatever the context. When someone made a heavy catch of grilse and claimed it as a record Kelson was ready and, moreover, in such crushing terms that no-one ever again was likely to claim a record: "Some thirty years ago (in the 'sixties) I remember Craven (keeper to Lord Arbuthnot) holding a little croft beside the Bridge of Feuch on the Aberdeenshire Dee. It was he who killed no fewer than 50 grilse at the foot of the falls in one day".

So intransigently were his views maintained and delivered that he was held up to ridicule in the sporting press, though it is only right to say he was not without supporters. It is therefore perhaps all the more surprising to find that Kelson was a good friend, a cheerful companion, an entertaining conversationalist and raconteur and, above all, a supremely successful angler.

The early part of this century witnessed a considerable number of distinguished anglers reaching maturity on the banks of the river Wye, including de Winton, Hutton, Crosfield, and, of course, Pashley, who outshone them all, whether on the Wye or anywhere else. Pashley's catches have been written about before, but they need repeating because his way of fishing the sub-surface fly, kept on the move by hand-lining, is still the most underrated method of fly-fishing for salmon in modern times.

His concept of fishing for summer salmon as though they were trout is as revolutionary in its implications today as it was 50 years ago because, despite his enormous and incomparable success, the lesson taught has never been learned. Unfortunately, the best type of line for this form of summer fishing, ungreased Kingfisher silk lines in sizes 1 and 2, are no longer available

☆ ☆ ☆

I have myself fished Pashley's water at Hill Court and Goodrich Castle below Ross and, although located in beautiful countryside, it is the most uninspiring stretch of salmon river imaginable, without a bit of the rough water so beloved of the fly-fisher, just an occasional glide here and there. One is always tempted to think there must have been more fish in those days but, as Gilbert said: "Pashley has shared his beat with others, and none of those who shared the water, no mean fishermen themselves, have ever killed more than very, very ordinary bags."

Gilbert described him as "a genius unlike other men", and any salmon angler who has not read Gilbert's chapter "The Magician and his Ways" in his book *The Tale of a Wye Fisherman* (1952 edition) has not only not completed his fishing education but is missing an experience, as it is pure poetry.

Pashley killed his first Wye salmon in 1897 and fished regularly from 1906 to 1951 except for the period of the Great War. In spite of illness in later years limiting his fishing, he caught more than 10,000 Wye salmon, of which no fewer than 29 weighed over 40 lb. In his best year, 1936, he killed 678 averaging over 16 lb out of a total river rod-catch of 5,916.

In 1926, his next best year, when he killed 535 out of a rod-catch of 4,335, 401 of the 535 were taken with the fly, and this on a river where some salmon anglers fish through a lifetime without ever using a fly-rod, and many others put up the fly tackle occasionally as a polite gesture.

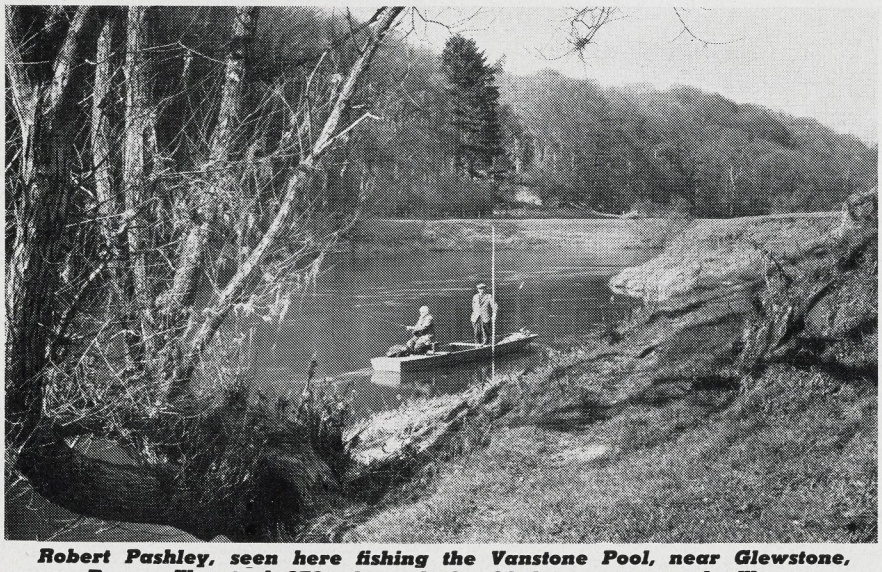
That Pashley should make his great catch largely with the fly, and with a trout rod, in such a river is a completely unique achievement in the annals of salmon fishing, and a blinding revelation of the yawning chasm that separates the supremely skilled angler from the rest. Indeed it is difficult to think of competition anywhere, and the only man who comes to mind is G. F. McCorquodale, of Dalchroy, who also killed more than 10,000 salmon, about 9,000 of them from the Spey.

McCorquodale first fished the Spey in 1891 and continued without missing a season up to his death in 1936. His best year was 1920 when he killed 492 fish. He had several 40-pounders, including one on the trout rod. He was a great fly-fisher and would permit no other lure except in very high water.

It may surprise readers that all these outstandingly successful salmon anglers made their great catches with the fly. As Gilbert said in comparing the fly with other lures: "A fly is a deadly lure but the gains come slower. You may not catch so many in any one day but eventually more will be caught than if you tease, frighten and educate the fish with baits . . . But first you must learn how to use it, and fly-fishing, as many have discovered, is an art not easy to learn." In other words you have to serve an apprenticeship — but when you have finished it you are a craftsman.

Personally, I cannot wait for the day when fishing for salmon throughout Britain is restricted by law to the fly, with strictly limited exceptions during the early spring season for special rivers such as the Tay or the Wye, all bait fishing everywhere to cease on April 15. There is no reason on earth why rivers like the Spey and Aberdeenshire Dee should not be fly-only from the opening to the closing day of the season. By this means a premium would be placed on personal skill, the quality that is so conspicuously missing in modern salmon fishing, with all its fandangling mechanical rubbish.

This would also be the best way to deal with the vexed question of the angling fish-dealer, so prevalent on so many rivers (including some expensive ones), rather than attempting, as primary measures, to restrict the daily catch or the right to sell, both of which alternatives are difficult if not impossible to implement in the face of a methodical conspiracy to evade.



Robert Pashley, seen here fishing the Vanstone Pool, near Glewstone, Ross-on-Wye, took 678 salmon during his best season on the Wye.

Letters

The choice of a hook

GRAHAM SWANSON'S letter (September) raises two interesting points, both broadly to do with conservation. Barbless hooks are no doubt kind to fish — but are they less kind to the angler? I would certainly prefer a barbless hook to one with an oversize barb. The first requirement is, after all, penetration — but having penetrated, various other performance criteria become important! One certainly doesn't want the hook falling out again.

I use mostly the standard Bernard Sealey hooks sold by Veniard's, both up- and down-eyes. They are flat-forged, and strong enough to warrant 4 lb or 5 lb points with size 12 or 14 hooks. One well-known hook appears to be made from case-hardened fuse-wire dipped in gravy browning.

I nip down the already-small barbs on my hooks with square-ended tweezers, to leave a tiny, but positive, barb. This aids penetration and, I hope, still serves to keep the hook in when fish get weeded or airborne.

I fish the same chalk-stream club waters as Graham, and his point about returning fish is a good one. The fish stocks of even some hard-flogged stretches of the Wylye are astonishingly high, and can be kept that way.

There are other benefits, too. Returning fish educates them and makes for 'wild fish' which are satisfying to tempt. A size-limit of 10 in can produce, paradoxically, more sport. I can have a lot of fun catching 10-11 in trout when I can find none bigger — which I often cannot — but I don't want to take too many fish of that size home.

So for many reasons Graham's 'Limit your kill' message makes a lot of sense.

Chris James

Croscombe, Wells, Somerset

Fair credit to Wood

IN HIS ARTICLE "Famous Salmon Anglers" (*Trout and Salmon*, September, 1979) Tony George refers to Arthur Wood of Cairnton in a manner derogatory to Wood and offensive to those who knew him and fished with him.

To suggest that Wood was not the first to introduce the greased-line method of fishing for salmon because someone had waxed a line before him betrays an ignorance of the method. The method involves much more than simply making the line float. Wood manipulated the line in a unique manner so that the fly simulated a living creature (nymph or small fry?) which salmon took with confidence and were hooked in the scissors in 80 per cent of cases.

To suggest also that Wood deceived himself and a hero-worshipping biographer, Jock Scott, into thinking that he fished his fly "like a dead insect" completely without drag, and that Wood himself gave the show away when he spoke of fishing 'at the dangle', a position which could be obtained only by drag, shows that Tony George has not done his homework.

Wood defined drag as 'when the current pulled the line through the rings' of his rod. He used the phrase "like a dead leaf" but he pointed out, as we knew, that even a dead leaf was lively in the brisk streams of Cairnton. Indeed he insisted on

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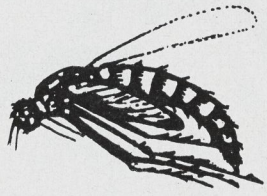

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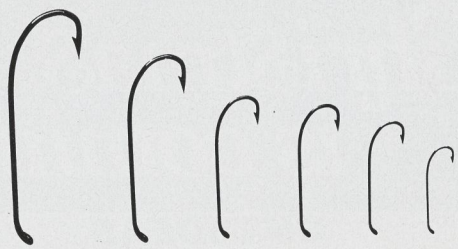

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Letters

"life" and deliberately induced drag if he thought his fly was going too slowly or if a fish followed without taking.

In speaking of the fly 'at the dangle' he was describing how he tried to hook a salmon in that most difficult of all lies — close to one's own bank and behind a jetty. Drag does not enter into it. One casts down on to the fish on a short line with the rod held almost vertical. Whenever the salmon rises, drop everything and hope that the current pulls the fly back into the mouth.

Many famous anglers were Wood's friends and all held him in great respect and affection. Hewitt, the greatest of them all on both sides of the Atlantic, adopted Wood's technique and described Wood (in his book *A Trout and Salmon Fisherman*, 1948) as by far the best salmon-fisherman in Britain. Anthony Crossley, who introduced Wood's method against the giant sea-trout of the Swedish Em with spectacular results, gives the best account of Wood in his book, *The Floating Line for Salmon and Sea-trout* (1939).

J. R. W. Hay

Perth, Perthshire

The facts about drift-netting

AFTER SPENDING 14 years as an ocean-going trawler officer, I resigned as chief engineer in one of Scotland's largest and most sophisticated fishing vessels at the end of last year, and left the industry. I did so in disgust after the owners were forced by political and economic sanctions, to divert the ship from distant waters to take part in the murderous Cornish mackerel fishery. By doing so, I reduced my potential annual earnings by some £4,000, so it cannot be said that I hold any brief for those who make money by plundering our natural resources, by legal means or otherwise.

Nevertheless, as a regular reader of this magazine, I must point out that many of the allegations that have been made about commercial fishermen in editorials, articles, and letters, in this and other publications, have been either quite unfounded, or highly exaggerated.

At the height of what can only be described as the hysteria of last summer, it was suggested that "whole migrations of salmon" were being caught by commercial fishers, and either landed in foreign ports, or transhipped at sea to foreign vessels. This is ridiculous; transactions of this nature and scale could not possibly take place without detection. These ships carry crews, and crewmen talk. They are required by law to carry detailed logbooks which are regularly inspected by the D.T.I., and must be produced on demand to officers of the fishery patrols.

Entry to a foreign port, however small or remote, entails customs procedures at both ends of the voyage, and the transfer of large amounts of money involves yet another set of procedures. Neither of these can be easily circumvented.

The transfer of fish at sea is a very hazardous business at any time, but to do this on a scale which would justify the risk of damaging both vessels, which in the circumstances would not be covered by insurance, and the risk of detection which incurs the penalities of a fine of up to £50,000, confiscation of valuable gear, and possible loss of both vessels' licences, is a prospect which no sane commercial owner would even contemplate.

Yet your recent correspondent, Mr R. J. Warner, insists not only that this practice takes place, but that the authorities have known about it for years. What he is in fact suggesting is either the fisherman are some sort of magicians, or that the fisheries authorities are fools. In common with the others who have repeated this tale, Mr Warner does not support his allegations with one scrap of hard factual evidence.

I do not deny that poaching takes place, indeed I live in one

Matapédia . . .

The water was clear and bright, the wind still in the north and kicking up shreds of spray in the center of the pool. After wading out as far as I dared in the strong current, I laid out one carefully controlled cast after another and worked my way down through the pool. A big fish surfaced on the far side of the river, and one of the canoes up-anchored and moved above it. After half an hour or so something moved on the surface directly below me, just a brief glimpse of sunlight on silver. I cast above the rise and let my line swing. Nothing. Then again, and again. Still nothing.

Big fish, big fly, I thought. Perhaps the flies I have been using have been too small and too sparsely dressed. Something big and juicy, a real mouthful, might turn the trick. I searched through three boxes and finally extracted an ancient #2 Lady Caroline. Tattered from age, seldom used and still virginal as far as taking fish, its drooping heron hackles and drab appearance were a far cry from the slender, hairwing patterns I had been using. At least it's different, I thought, and tied it on and began to strip out line.

On my second cast the line tightened and my heart seemed to stop beating. I raised my rod slowly, got the slack line under control and waited for that bull-like first run I knew must follow. But it didn't come off. A silver-bright grilse shot high in the air then quickly ripped off a dozen yards of line before executing a series of troutlike aerial acrobatics. Six clear leaps and five minutes later I slid it up on the gravel and knocked it on the head. Hardly a 40-pounder, but at least I had broken the ice.

As the morning progressed I fished through the pool a second time, had my permit and license checked by a sharply uniformed *gardien*, then crossed the covered bridge to the east side of the river. I sat on a sun-warmed boulder and ate a modest lunch. The pool was quiet; the canoe fishermen were gone. A few small brook trout skimmed the still water near shore for midges. I curled up out of the wind and was soon asleep.

WHEN I AWAKENED CLOUDS had covered the sun, and I was cold and stiff. I pulled on a rain jacket, zipped it tight around my neck and surveyed the now dark and ominous-looking water. One canoe had returned and was anchored above me.

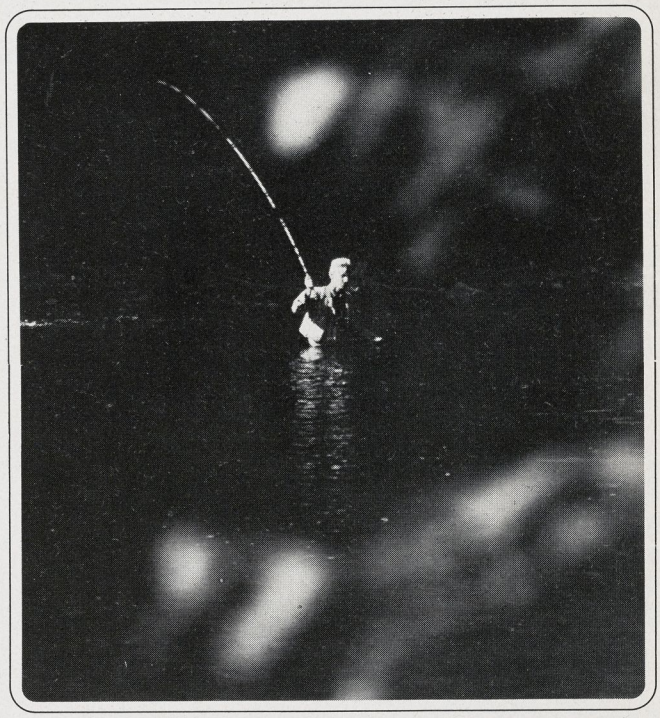
"Anything moving?" I called to its occupants.

"Nothing doing here, but there's one damn big fish rolling and splashing right out in front of you. Can't understand why the son of a bitch didn't get you awake."

I glanced at the ratty-looking Lady Caroline still on the end of my leader. Should I change to something more conventional? Well, at least she did get me a grilse. Better give the old girl another chance.

I slid into the dark water and felt the cold penetrate my waders. I stripped line off my reel and began carefully measured casts across and down, the heavy, wind-resistant fly becoming increasingly more difficult to control in the strong down-river wind. After a dozen casts I saw a large swirl about 20 feet below and slightly to the right of my fly. Quickly yanking off more line, I made a false cast or two, then managed a long, looping cast so the Lady Caroline would swing without drag directly over where I had spotted the rising fish.

I watched the light-green line swing taut and true in the dark water as I followed the angle of its drift with my rod tip. The big fly passed through the spot where the fish had risen, then hung for a moment in the cold currents directly below me. I thought of the woman in the canoe with the red bandana and began to jiggle my rod tip. Then suddenly and unbelievably my line tightened, and I felt a strong, steady pull and saw the water surface swell and erupt.



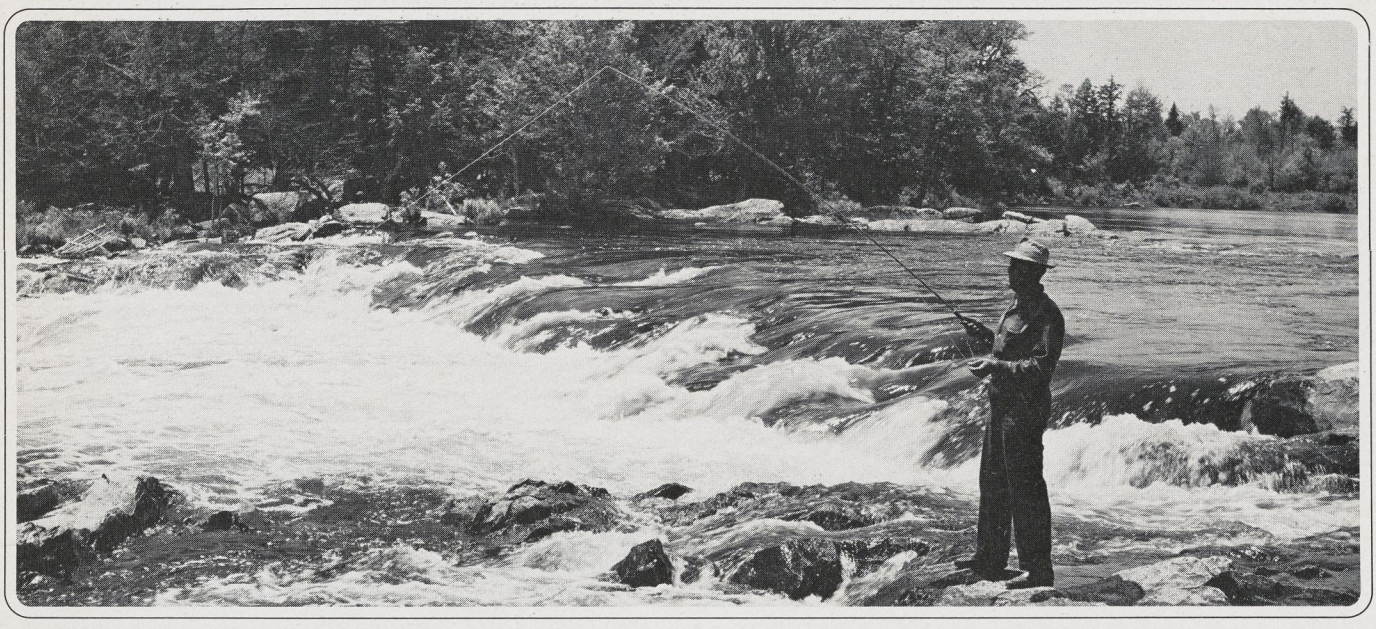
Then for a few long seconds nothing much happened. I tried to clear the few feet of slack line I held in my left hand and get it on the reel when I realized the fish was swimming directly toward me. Like a startled crayfish I frantically backed away, slipping and stumbling over the detritus-covered river bottom.

But soon I managed to establish a secure stance among the rocks and got the fish on the reel. The sun broke out from behind the clouds, and, as if in reaction to this cosmic signal, the salmon boiled ponderously at the surface, then tore off across river, stripping all my line and much of the backing from my reel.

I heard a shout and looked behind me to see Pierre Affre standing on the road embankment above me. Camera in hand and a broad grin on his face, he slid down to the edge of the pool.

"You see, I am just in time," he said. "I think perhaps you have hooked one very good fish and will no doubt need help in getting it ashore. When the time comes I will tail it for you if you wish me to." He un-

Photo Courtesy of the Tourist Branch of the Government of Québec.



I said. "But it does seem to me that if anyone is going to take a fish, it will be you. You really know how to handle that big double-grip rod, something I've never been able to learn."

"Well, as you can see it is really not difficult at all, once you learn to let the rod do most of the work for you, just a matter of coordination and timing." He took a couple of false casts, then shot his heavy line out some 25 yards and let it arc through the current. A salmon rolled heavily at his fly but didn't take.

Later, after the sun went down and darkness settled over the river, we sat in the high grass by the edge of the pool, swatting mosquitoes and no-see-ums. I learned that my companion was Pierre Affre, a veterinarian from Paris who spent as much time as he could spare from his work traveling over the world in pursuit of Atlantic salmon and trout. Before long we discovered that we had a number of mutual friends and had fished some of the same rivers in North America and Europe. Affre, it turned out, was the two-handed rod champion of Europe and has devoted much time and effort to salmon restoration in his native France.

It was cold on Monday, my third day on the river. The sky was a hard, clear blue and a sharp wind from the north keened over the river. I was up early, watched the mob at Fosse Heppel jockey for position, spent a fruitless hour at Bas Matalik and walked into Fosse Monnick only to find the small pool preempted by four Vermonters. The dark, boulder-strewn waters of Fosse Alice looked promising, and I slithered down the shaley spoil-bank to cast for a few harried moments before being driven off by the dust and clatter of nearby road construction.

Pont-Couvert is the last pool down river in the unreserved sector. It is perhaps a quarter of a mile long, quite wide and uniformly shallow with a strong, brisk current throughout its length. At the lower end is a large, gray, covered bridge that leads from the main road to the tiny hamlet of Routhierville, now headquarters for the seemingly endless road construction that plagues the otherwise lovely valley of the Matapédia.

Two canoes swung at anchor near midpool, their occupants letting their lines trail in the current, breaking the routine every five or ten minutes to make another cast.

A red-faced fisherman with "CAT" emblazoned across the front of his black cap stepped out of the pool as I crossed the bridge and walked down to the river. He sat on an overturned canoe and, with large white teeth, bit through his heavy leader, carefully placed his large wet fly in a box and unjointed his rod.

"I guess that's about enough for me for one day," he said. "This is the slipperiest damn river I ever did see. I got a bad back, and what with that current and them big rocks, I just can't stand too much of it anymore."

"Did you do any good? Any fish moving?"

"Well, no, not today anyway. But you see that woman out there in that canoe, the one with the red bandana tied around her head? Well, she's from Fort Kent, and a couple of weeks ago she took a forty-pounder right out there where she's fishing now. I seen it weighed. Damndest big fish I ever saw. Soon as she hooked it she tried to hold it from running out of the pool, and it broke the handle clean off her new Pflueger reel, clean off, not even a stub left. She had to hand-line it in." He stood up, winced as he adjusted his wader suspenders and limped off up the hill.

As I walked up the gravel beach toward the head of the pool my eyes were on the lady with the red bandana. Propped up on pillows in the bow of the canoe, she let her line hang in the current, her rod tip jiggling in an uninterrupted rhythm. A 40-pounder, I thought. My God, I've never managed to take a salmon over 20. I was distressed to think that such a fish could be taken by such an undemanding, mindless technique.

Nova Scotia Information Service photo.

Searching the Waters

In the first of a new series, ***JEREMY LUCAS*** *traces the development of stillwater fly-fishing and looks at the "second generation" styles so deadly today*

I CAN REMEMBER that long, thrilling summer in northern Scotland as if it were yesterday — those months when a passion for fishing for trout and sea-trout became something even greater. There was no single instance responsible; rather, I gradually became enmeshed in the whole glorious ethos of the sport. What had, for me, been a passion became lifeblood.

Another wild-blown morning rushed in with storm clouds over Loch Hope. Was there another world beyond that essentially Sutherland landscape, another place worth being? It seemed unlikely unless it was beneath Slioch's cliffs and eagle-flown slopes, at Maree in Wester Ross.

And was there another smell to match that of the wet wind through the heather, another light so glaringly beautiful as the dawn across Strath More, or fish so potently savage and exciting as the migrants running ths loch's mysterious waters? Was there ever a man so happy as he who pushed the old wooden boat into the fresh waves of a new day on such a loch?

One day merged with the next, and then into the night as sea-trout moved in on the tides of Torrisdale Bay, where the Naver and Borgie, sister rivers, meet to confuse the home-bound fish. Sutherland was magnificent; a big, wild country — the last in Europe.

I lived for fishing. I paused only to tie flies, gulp coffee and bolt food. Salmon were moving up the Naver, brownies wolfed down sedge in those high moorland lochs far from any human habitation and, best of all, the magnificent sea-trout danced through the waves on Loch Hope.

Targets were met and surpassed; a goodly salmon, a sea-trout of over 6lb, and a bag of beautiful brownies from a loch that had hardly ever been fished, and never before with English nymphing techniques.

I remember being very impressed by several other fishermen out on the big lochs. They came up from Loch Leven to exercise their considerable skill in shortlining for what were far less demanding fish than native brownies. I can still see their graceful poise, their stillness and control, the way they hung their top droppers in the surface, stroking them along so slowly. They had a very definite style; one which some suspected could easily die out. Their spidery Pennells and grouse-hackled clarets were a generation ahead of anything I had seen. Their style was not so much difficult to perform as rare and refined.

On one day I shared a boat on Maree with one of these Leven



On waters such as Rutland, it is now normal to find the majority of boats drifting broadside.



The River Glass in more tranquil mood. When in flood fish can be taken from the normally-dry shingle, favoured by oyster catchers.

geometrical theorem. I digested the stories avidly; of how the author had fished a pool carefully with several famous patterns of flies without success, and finally tied on a pattern of his own invention. A tail of an extinct bird, tinsel from his grandmother's wedding gown and some feathers from the wing of the Angel Gabriel! This worked, of course, and a fish was soon on the bank.

Over the past 50 years similar tales have been told over and over again. Couched in different terms, enacted on different rivers, written by different authors, but still with the same basic theme of failure followed by success. Yes, I have raised a fish to a particular fly that he wouldn't take, changed to a different pattern and caught him. But I also remember putting a fly over the nose of a grilse which I could clearly see in the water and there was no response until my *fourteenth* cast. Yes I repeat, the *fourteenth* cast, each of which I varied from slow to a fast retrieve and then, for no apparent reason, the fish moved and took. Had I changed the fly during this sequence of casts I would have sworn that the change had done the trick.

I was fishing that day with Ian Wood, a former editor of *Trout and Salmon*. He was most intrigued by the episode as there were eight fish lying side by side along this rock ledge and only the one I have mentioned displayed any reaction as my fly traversed across them. The remaining seven fish didn't move as I played the only foolish member of their party, and Ian then tried every trick in his repertoire to catch one of them, but failed to get any response. This little episode showed us both that all salmon are *not* potential takers!

There was a period during these 50 years when I thought I knew all there was to know about catching salmon. I seem to remember that it was about ten years after I had caught my first fish. By then I had taken fish on fly, spinning baits, prawns, shrimps and worms. I wrote a few articles in the old *Fishing Gazette,* and the earlier issues of *Trout and Salmon*. I still have three old articles, and the dogmatism that I propounded in them makes me shudder today! I asserted then that, under a given set of circumstances, such-and-such a fly or bait should be used, that yellow flies were essential for the Welsh Dee, that a spinning bait *must* bump the river-bed in spring, that fish would never take when thunder was around, and so on. All these theories have since been convincingly contradicted and now, 50 years on, I have come to realise that I still have an awful lot to learn!

I have caught salmon when, according to all the circumstances, it was seemingly a waste of time even to try for one and, conversely, I have been on a good beat in perfect conditions and have fished for hours without a touch. I am now certain of only one thing, and that is that whatever the conditions one should have a go: there is always a fish that hasn't read the rules! In drought conditions there may be the odd fast, well-oxygenated run that could hold a taking fish and, on those rivers where there are no restrictions on the use of natural baits, there are always pools where a shrimp or a bunch of worms will save a blank day. Even in a raging flood, when riverside bushes are swaying in the current and all the named pools have lost their identity, there will somewhere be an area of quiet water; probably covering an area of gravel where you recently walked dry-shod.

First salmon

I remember such a flood one October day on the River Glass when I had two friends who wanted to catch their first salmon. Trying to teach them casting with a double-handed rod in a force-ten gale and torrential rain was both ineffective and hazardous and, after removing a 2/0 fly from my coat collar, I left them to it! I went upstream to see if there was any place in this torrent where a fish could find refuge, and came upon a stretch which was normally dry, flat shingle favoured by oyster-catchers as a nesting site.

That day it was covered with 3 ft of water but, being to the side of the main stream, the flow was even and quite gentle. I cast my fly no more than 10 yd out and it was immediately seized by a small fish, which I soon beached. I fetched my friends and, as it had to be "ladies first", Julia managed a reasonable cast and hooked her first salmon. She was almost petrified by this unexpected pull and clamped her hand on the reel "to stop it getting away"! The result was inevitable -- the cast parted with a twang and the poor girl was reduced to tears. Another fly, some more words of advice from me, another short cast out into the current and another fish was on. This one was landed, after which husband Hamish took the rod and repeated the performance. We had nine fish from that one place, which was no larger than a tennis court.

Because I was instructing beginners I had used only a number of very old single-hooked and moth-eaten patterns that had come out of my "scrap box" and were labelled "for tuition only", yet they were taken with avidity!

I hope that modern scientific appliances never disclose all the secrets of movement and behaviour that the salmon has every right to keep to itself. Pioneered on the Aberdeenshire Dee, the fitting of micro-tags to salmon in the estuary has enabled researchers to monitor the movements of an individual salmon all the way to its journey's end on the spawning grounds. Similar experiments are now being conducted on other rivers and, in a year or two, by feeding into the computer data of river flows, temperatures, dissolved oxygen, *etc,* we will know just where fish will be in a particular river system.

As a retired fishery man (but not yet retired fisherman) I am fascinated by this research as it answers many of the questions that have puzzled me for years. As an angler, however, I'm not so sure that I want to know, for much of the mystique of the sport has already disappeared. After all, if we knew how a conjuror achieved his illusions we should no longer want to watch his performance! Most school terms last only 10-12 weeks. My term in the school of fishing has already run to 50 years, yet I have still not learned enough to pass a stiff exam!

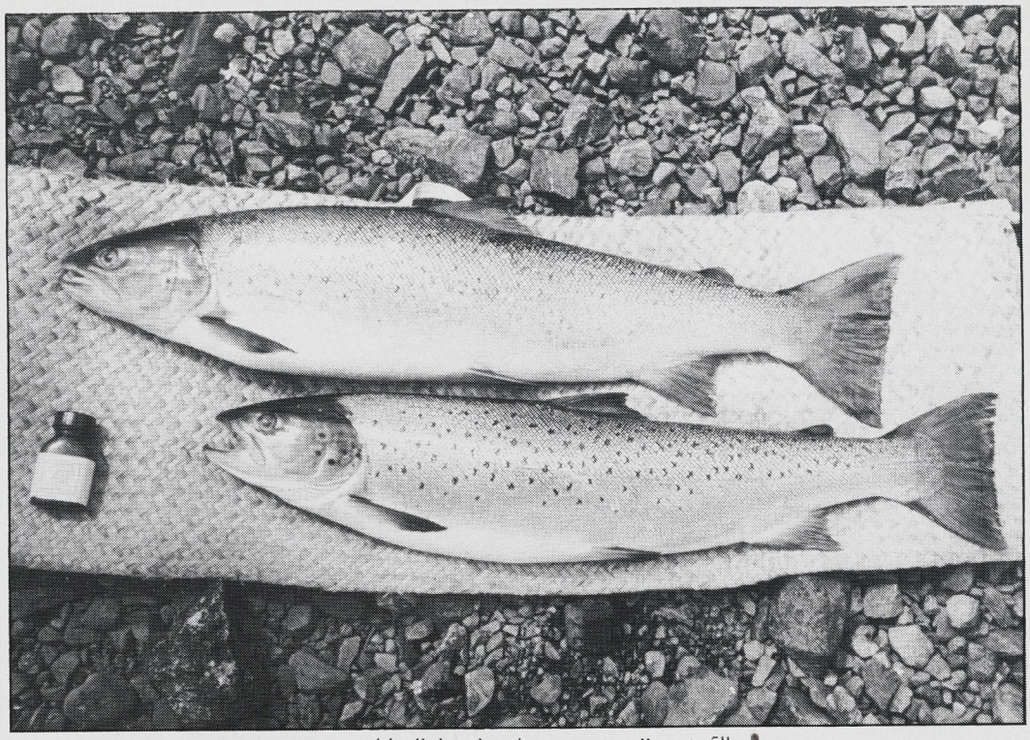
men. It was his second season on the loch, while it was my fifth. He was quiet and purposeful, very deliberate in his actions, though unhurried. He had fished for Scotland. By this time I knew some of the best lies on the Kinlochewe water, and it had been suggested that I show them to my Leven colleague.

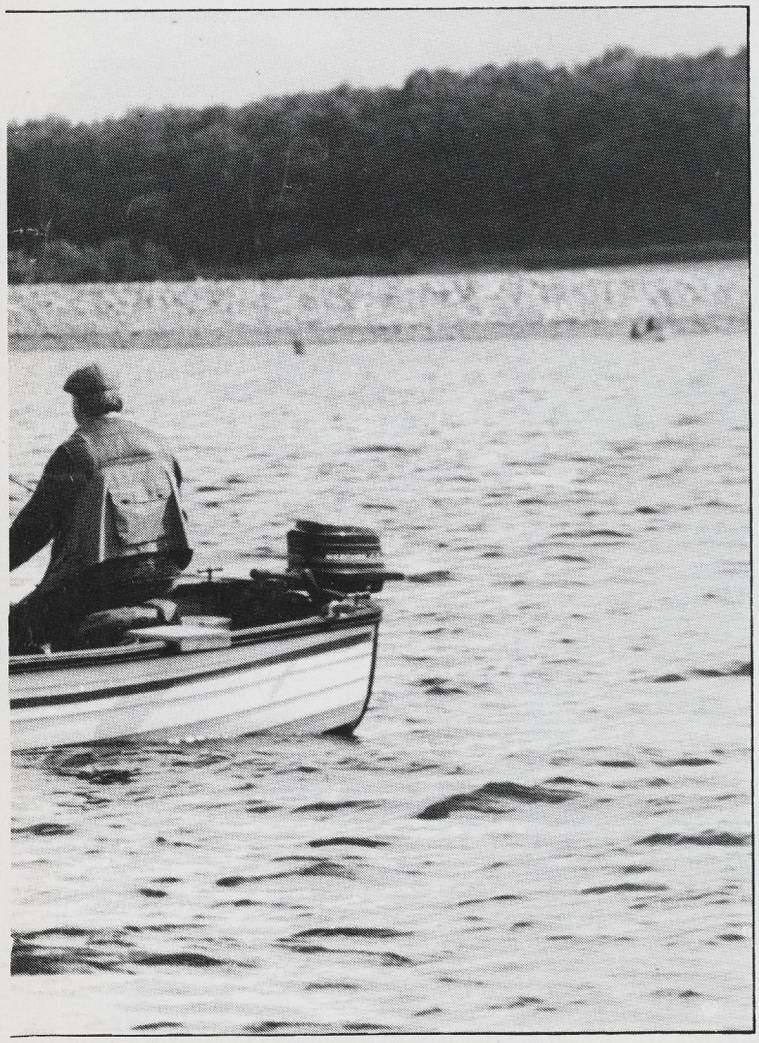
The Kinlochewe water totals about ten miles along two shores, and the head of the loch where the Kinlochewe river enters. Much of the water is very deep and does not hold sea-trout, but there are areas in the shallows which are noted as good holding water. Some of these are small and very difficult to find. The late Charles C. McLaren, author of *The Art of Sea-trout Fishing,* who then lived in Altnaharra and knew Maree better than anyone, had described some of these areas to me. Peter Macdonald, of Kinlochewe, who then ran the fishing — now organised by his son, Rory, and the Kinlochewe Hotel — had pinpointed others. Some I had found for myself.

Loch Maree is a noted dapping water, and it is this method which dominates most anglers' approach. It is not a method I particularly admire, and I was then, as now, far more interested in the loch-style fishing. Thus, when my Leven partner arrived at our boat, *Salar,* with a long rod, a silk line and a team of four flies, I was delighted.

"I don't think we need bother with all that dapping nonsense," he muttered, "let's see if we can draw them to the flee. Take me to them, laddie!"

Two lovely sea-trout — 7½ lb and 6 lb — from Loch Maree, a water on which the writer learned some early lessons about loch-style fishing.





This I did, while he took me to new heights in loch-style expertise. My English background had led me to cast long distances from a drifting boat, ever eager to reach the fish quickly, pulling through fast as if for daphnia-feeding rainbows. I moved a lot more sea-trout than I hooked, bringing them up 25 yards away, where I had little control. My partner cast a mere eight or nine yards, his flies very slight and sparse compared with the monstrous traditional salmon and sea-trout patterns most anglers sported for Maree. His rod was held high as soon as the flies were delivered, his retrieve very slow. He was in control every moment of the cast and retrieve.

His top dropper, a Claret Pennell, never sank, even though he did not grease it, but seemed permanently hanging in and on the waves, its long hackles stroking the water like the gangly legs of a crane fly. I thought it the most seductively presented fly I had ever seen. Over a long zig-zagging drift, from White Stone to Pine Bay (along the north shore), that fly brought up four trout. Every one came as a purposeful boil, the fly disappearing in the epicentre of the rise. My friend barely moved, but just continued the retrieve and gradually tightened into those fierce sea-trout. He boated all four and they weighed between 2lb and 5lb.

I, meanwhile, had raised six trout. They came all over the place, as the flies landed at the extreme of my cast: a boil behind the tail fly on the retrieve, or a slash at a dropper on the lift-off. On that drift I boated one two-pounder. The chief difference between my companion and me was control. His poise and team construction ensured absolute control virtually all the time. My haste, my obsession with distance, and a slight imbalance in the team, robbed me of that control for much of each cast. I moved more fish, but I could not inspire in them the confidence to take.

A great secret in shortlining was revealed to me that day when I asked my companion why he used four flies, and different patterns at that. Nearly every fish he caught came to the top dropper.

"Ach, those other flees are there just to let me fish the bob flee properly," he confided. And so they did. It was all so beautifully obvious when you saw it. The three flies below his top dropper were "stretching" his cast, acting like mini sea-anchors and, in effect, allowing him to hold the top dropper at the perfect angle and position of presentation for a considerable period of each retrieve. His team, if you like, was "dynamically" balanced.

Every sport performed at its best is a joy to watch. Those Leven men were, then, the best, especially against the truly wild backdrop of the north and west

Searching the Waters

coast lochs. It was odd, but having been brought up on roach fishing, then on the little trout streams of western Britain, the image which first so startlingly dominated my ideas of perfection in style was of the quiet drift-fishers from Leven.

Yet, back home on Grafham the following year, I was to have that dominance threatened by something which also was beautiful and rare. I was a student in those days, and poor. In Scotland I could make my way and manage to fish even the famous waters, but on Grafham I was usually bank-bound. That was no hardship, but it meant one had to redefine one's approach.

Now the imagery was of light, white lines, aerialised in tight loops and shot 30 yards. Arthur Cove's long leaders and slowly worked nymphs, especially the Pheasant Tail, startled us all with their simplicity and overwhelming effectiveness. Here, too, was refined style and something worth developing and protecting.

Out in the boats another revolution was taking place, though I did not appreciate it at the time. Innovative anglers such as Bob Church, Dick Shrive and Tom Ivens were pioneering radical styles which, though lacking the considerable elegance of long-lined nymph fishing from the bank, were a milestone in the history of our sport.

All this information and excitement battered the senses of a young enthusiast. There was no time to investigate the mysteries of the long line and deeply sunk nymph, and then to drift cold northern waters with a fundamentally different approach. One could not say which was the more skilful or which gave the greatest pleasure in performing well.

A nymph fished close along the lily beds of a high loch, where only the buzzard watched, seemed the most magical thing in the world. But when the lilies became the silk weed mats of Grafham, and a wind-stirred band of yellow clay replaced the peaty stain, or when hard-hitting brownies became hard-running rainbows, a ¾ lb wild beast became 3 lb of steely, writhing flesh, the thrill was just as intense. At its best it was all magical.

The 1960s and 1970s brought new stylists to the fore, and yet the 1980s have been just as exciting. It can be argued that this decade has introduced the most dramatic stage of development in British fly-fishing. Broadside drifting has been largely responsible for bringing about this development. Instead of seeing very definite styles being performed, such as traditional shortlining or point-down drifting, we see the drift fisherman engaged in a variation on all themes.

Suddenly, everyone appears to have discovered the joy of broadside drifting. It is not just the drastic increase in interest in competitive fly-fishing, where broadside is usually the rule, though this must be contributory. Nowadays on Bewl, Chew, Grafham and Rutland, and any other major stillwater in Britain, it is normal to find the majority of boats drifting broadside. Only a few years ago anchored boats or point-down drifters considerably outnumbered broadside drifting boats, at least on the reservoirs. It is more than just a fashion.

The modern drift fisherman's approach consists of what I call "second generation" styles. He has a range of possibilities available, from long-lined nymph to controlled top dropper, from static dry-fly and semi-dry to skated disturbance patterns and from deep-sunk nymph and lure at all depths and angles to "draw and hang" and "pull through".

These second-generation styles have evolved from more fundamental techniques. So it is with the flies: nymph fishing has become more generalised, now including static, free-sinking or drawn flies. Traditional patterns are less rigorously adhered to, adapted and improved to meet the high-performance demands of modern drifting. This calls for a combination of all the skills of the individual styles, but there is the same beauty and worth as with the fundamental approach of the old Leven drift-fishermen.

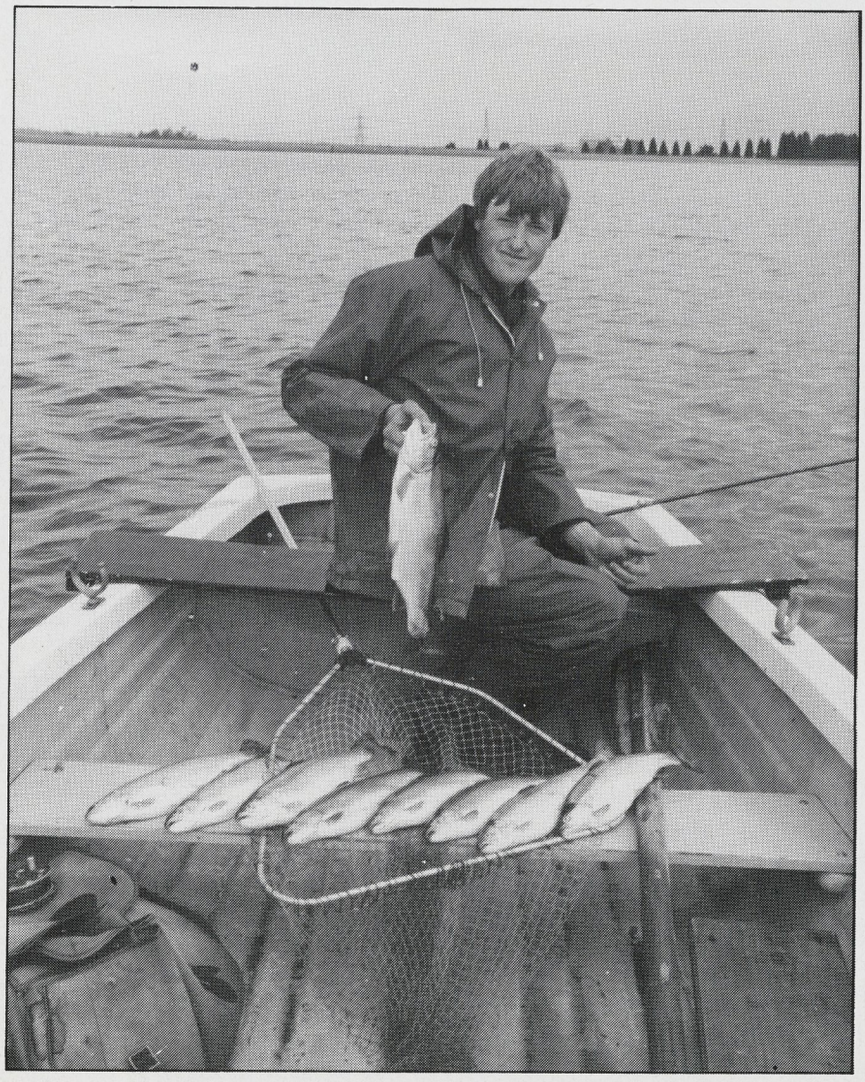
Today's masters have not only developed a high command of one style, they are all-rounders, proficient at all styles and, most important of all, know when to change from one to another.

Examples abound and their numbers increase all the time. Chris Ogborne, John Horsey and most of the other Bristol Reservoirs' competitive fishers might rightly be regarded as the great stylists of our times. In the Midlands, Brian Leadbetter, Dave Shipman and Brian Thomas can leave you breathless at their regular success.

On my home patch, Bewl Water in Kent, I have watched the fastest and most astonishing development among fishermen. Within five years a school of anglers has emerged which has a depth of skill to match even the Bristol fishermen and the Midlanders. To see great local anglers — John White fishing the dry-fly on the drift, or Robert Barden with his "killer" nymphs and subtle figure-of-eight retrieve with his rod held peculiarly close to his chest, or Peter Firth with his deadly floating fry — is to see today the styles and flies everyone will be using tomorrow.

Though nostalgia takes me back to those special summers in Scotland and then through Grafham's outstanding early seasons and the personalities I met along the way, more recent memory is just as special. The sport is still being shaped, and further styles developed. While we have fisheries such as Rutland and Bewl, and clean, wild waters supporting healthy stocks of trout, we will always have evolution in our sport.

While searching the waters of Britain I have discovered all manner of things, and gained an insight into the sport and its participants. In these articles I hope to pass on some of it and to describe the second-generation styles in action on the waters where they were developed by the new masters of fly-fishing.



A nice basket of Hanningfield rainbows.

The Silver Wilkinson

ONE OF THE most popular salmon flies invented on Tweedside was the Silver Wilkinson, or the Wilkinson as it has become more widely known. It has been a favourite pattern there for more than a century, and it is still a fly to be found frequently on the tippets of anglers. Its popularity is not restricted to the Tweed though. It has proved itself a fly that fishes well anywhere and it has been heartily endorsed by expert anglers worldwide.

When considering the four most deadly flies for salmon fishing, Sir Edward Grey (*Fly Fishing,* 1899) rated the Wilkinson second only to the Jock Scott. Sir Herbert Maxwell, the celebrated British angler and author, made the Wilkinson his first choice, preferring it to 50 other noted patterns *(Salmon and Sea Trout, 1898).* Thomas E. Pryce-Tannatt *(How to Dress Salmon Flies, 1914)* includes it in his comprehensive list of useful patterns, and the American author, Mary Orvis Marbury *(Favourite Flies and Their Histories, 1892),* also subscribes to its singular qualities.

The endorsements supporting the reliability of this old fly are endless. Remarkably, the Wilkinson may be the first silver-bodied salmon fly invented!

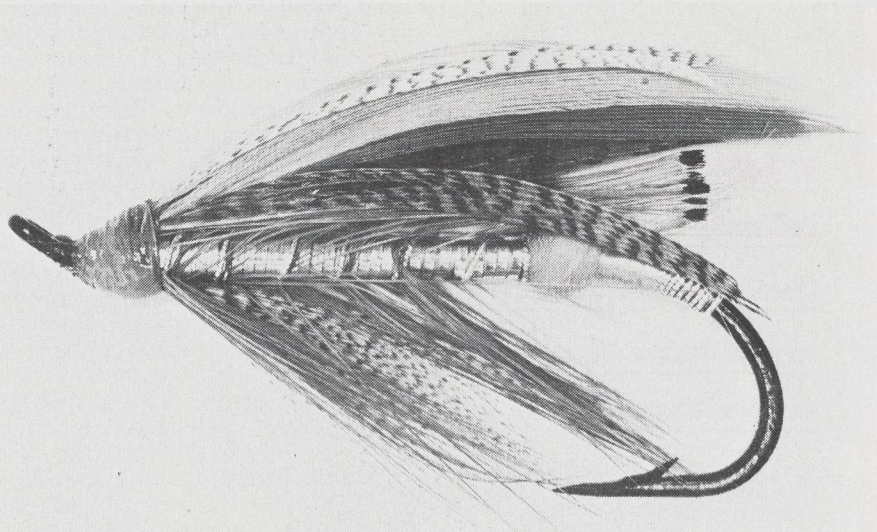
☆ ☆ ☆

The pattern was created by Mr P. S. Wilkinson, a fishing companion to Mr William Henderson, the author of that refreshing and attractive book, *My Life as an Angler, 1883.* Mr Henderson tells us that the Wilkinson owes its origin to a pattern he devised "with white silk body, golden-crest wings, blue chatterer shoulders, and grey tippet."

He goes on to say: "Here was a fly that certainly did show startingly in black water, and the result was that on the morrow I took eight grilse and rose eight more fish, while no other angler in the neighbourhood captured more than a couple. It was still more remarkable that on none of my later fishings had I any great success with this fly except the 'William Henderson'.

"Some years afterwards the idea of a white-bodied fly was improved upon by both Mr W. Greenwell and Mr P. S. Wilkinson. The former invented a fly whose chief characteristic was a pale blue silk and silver body whilst the latter boldly struck out into the notion of a body of silver tinsel. These flies are now acknowledged to be among the best used on the river, if not the best."

I should think that if Mr Wilkinson was indeed the first fly-dresser to conceive and use a silver-bodied fly, then he certainly is deserving of a statue to his memory. The tinsel-body fly, either gold or silver, has proved important in salmon fishing, and the Wilkinson is as famous as any of this kind. And it is an attractive fly from the angler's viewpoint, one which fly-dressers derive great pleasure in preparing.



The Silver Wilkinson, as tied by Geoffrey Bucknall.

The dressing

Tag: Silver tinsel.

Tail: G.P. topping and short tippet-feathers.

Butt: Scarlet pigswool.

Body: Silver tinsel ribbed with silver oval or twist.

Hackles: Light blue at shoulder with magenta over it.

Wing: Under, two strips of Canadian wood-duck feather, barred, and a few fibres of red macaw; two long jungle cock feathers and two short; three G.P. toppings; a short tippet-feather tied in whole (not as a hackle) over all.

Cheeks: Blue chatterer.

Horns: Blue and yellow macaw.

Head: Black ostrich.

No two people dress the Wilkinson alike. In fact, it appears to me at times that there are as many variants of the Wilkinson as there are fly-dressers! However, after considerable thought I decided to present the version documented in Mr H. Cholmondley-Pennell's minor classic *Fishing: Salmon and Trout, 1885* because it appears to be more authentic than the others. It is given in the panel *(alongside).*

Mr Cholmondley-Pennell also records an interesting second fly which he refers to as a "Silver Wilkinson (Duke of Beaufort's Pattern)". This has a tag of silver thread, tail of topping and ibis, butt of red wool, an added dark blue hackle at shoulder with wings composed of bustard, red and mauve, dyed swan; G.P. tail and tippett; wood duck (not barred), white turkey, and two long, two short jungle cock feathers with topping overall. The head is black wool.

The Wilkinson is one of the few British classic patterns which has not been replaced by a modern hairwing substitute, and I for one hope that it will remain so. The original, standard pattern is relatively easy to prepare as well as being infinitely more beautiful than the beast-like specimens we term hairwings.

WATERHEN BLOA: WET F

BARRY LLOYD pays tribute to a pattern that scores wherever trout take the large dark olive

THE START of the new season sees many fishermen venturing forth with renewed vigour after the long and enforced rest of winter. Away from the chalk-streams, wet-fly fishing, the traditional method, seems most favoured by anglers during the first part of the season; and, given reasonable weather, a very effective method it is, too.

The different patterns of flies from which to make your choice is truly vast, and this can be a trifle disconcerting to those who have not already discovered their own firm favourites. To such anglers I suggest they give extra consideration to a pattern of fly often used in the north-country — the Waterhen Bloa. I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that, as a wet fly, this pattern is supreme all over the country whenever the large dark olive is hatching.

I know some consider the use of a wet fly as simply lure-fishing, but I am writing this for the benefit of those who have progressed beyond this simplistic stage and appreciate the importance of imitative patterns. It is within this latter category that the Waterhen Bloa works most efficiently when employed in the conventional across-and-downstream manner, as it now imitates quite closely the mature nymph of the large dark olive swimming up to hatch.

Most authorities who give a dressing for this fly usually state how particular you should be in the choice of material. The following is a typical example although unfortunately the source is unknown.

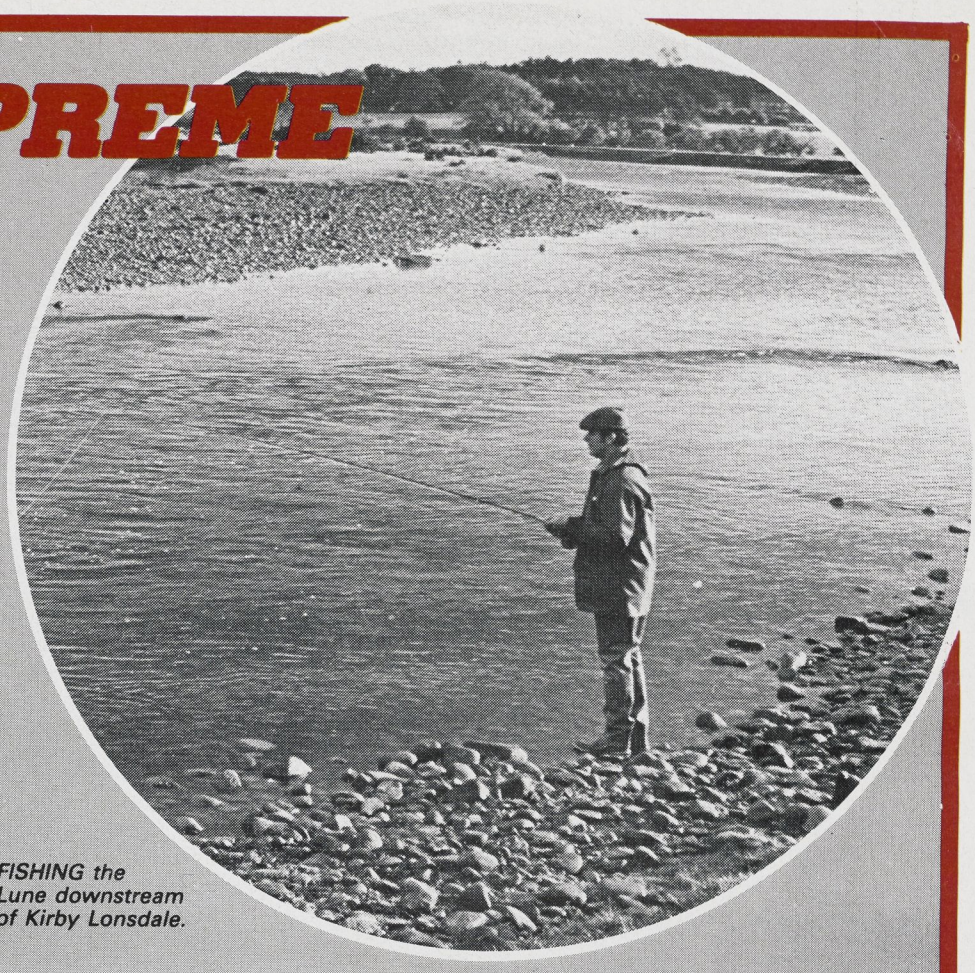
Wings: Hackled, using the smokey-grey undercovert feather found on the second row from the top edge of a waterhen wing.

Body: Pearsall's No 4 yellow silk, sparsely dubbed with the fur from a mole or water rat.

Hook: 14.



T FLY SUPREME



FISHING the Lune downstream of Kirby Lonsdale.

Such a precise dressing as this implies that there is little room for any personal variation.

Indeed, many people would say that this is how it should be. However, I cannot quite go along with this statement, as style plays an important part and the natural fly itself varies in both size and colour.

By style I refer mainly to the amount of hackle used. Most shop-bought flies are heavily over-hackled which indicates an ignorance of the purpose of these patterns. A maximum of three turns is all that is needed and the fibres should be set pointing slightly to the rear. In this way the soft and mobile hackle wavers and enfolds the body whenever the fly heads into the flow of the current and simulates the movement, outline and overall tone of the swimming nymph. Too much hackle prevents this and also masks the colour of the body.

You have only to observe closely the hatched duns to realise just how much colour may alter. The first duns which have struggled to hatch on a cold day early in the season may have bodies of such a dark olive as to be almost black. The wings, too, are very dark. Conversely, the pale yellow-olive body and light grey wings of a specimen captured on a warm day in mid-May could easily be mistaken for a medium olive.

In a similar fashion the colour of the nymphs vary and so it appears to me that the dressing for the artificial should be adjusted to cover all situations. This is quite simply done by altering the shade of the feather chosen as a hackle and by the amount of fur incorporated in the body dressing.

In addition, the size of hook can be altered too from the standard 14. The length of many of the nymphs in spring could correspond more to a size 12 or 13 hook, while the second generation of large dark olives encountered in the autumn may require a 15 or 16.

If you would like to try this fly, then how best is it used? The classic and traditional view propounded from Stewart onwards is that of upstream wet-fly fishing while most anglers, with that healthy British disregard for the experts, cheerfully fish downstream on the 'dangle'. In my view, the most effective way to use the fly is somewhere in between the two methods as, more often than not, we are attempting to match the swimming nymph and so the fly must head into the current at a feasible speed.

The large dark olive nymphs prefer to hatch in the fast and streamy water at the head of the pool and so this is where we must use the artificial. Some anglers prefer a sunk line in the mistaken belief that in such fast water they are getting well down to the fish. Unless a very heavy, fast-sinking line is used, then the force of the current will prevent any worthwhile depth being achieved and such equipment is highly inefficient in itself in terms of control over the drift of the line and responding to the take.

A floating line and a light one at that, say a size 3 or 4 — possibly a 5 in a strong wind — is preferable in every way because it permits far superior control; it is critical to influence the relative speed of the fly against the current. At all times you have to bear in mind that you are trying to achieve an impression of a tiny insect struggling against the flow, so you should not make the fly head unrealistically into a heavy mass of water.

If the fly can be made to 'fish' at a speed just a fraction slower than that of the current, then more offers will result and you should be in a better position to respond quickly. Some of these offers will, inevitably, be in the

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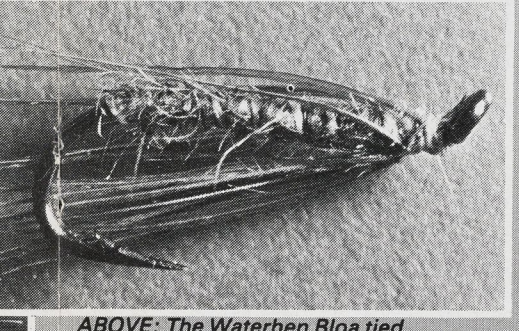

ABOVE: The Waterhen Bloa tied in traditional North-country style.

LEFT: An inviting run for the wet-fly angler — the Eamont near Penrith.

Continued from previous page

form of a tug about which it is too late to do anything — either you have the fish or you have not — but the more correctly you are fishing, then the less resistance is felt by the fish and so you have a split-second in which to respond. When a short, light line is used on a rod of about 10 ft, held well up from the horizontal, offers take more of a visual than a tactile form.

Some fishermen have suggested using a small, dark version of the Waterhen Bloa to imitate the iron blue nymph but here a much better pattern would be the Dark Watchet which was specifically designed for the job. The other important, but relatively little-known, use of the Waterhen Bloa is to match the nymph of the olive upright, *Rhithrogena semicolorata.*

For some strange reason this fly has been much neglected even though it is quite common on all spate rivers with a stoney base. Most of our angler/entomologists seem to fish the chalk-streams where this fly is infrequently seen, hence it has received much less attention than it deserves. Certainly there is no such excuse for those of us who fish elsewhere as this fly often fills that important gap between the end of the large dark olive hatches in mid-May and the start of the blue-winged olive in mid-June. Nor is it an insignificant fly either, or easily confused, and consequently I am puzzled by its being ignored for so long.

Just as you are thinking of taking a belated lunch after the large dark olive has ceased hatching in the mid-afternoon on a fine day in May, you may notice a trickle-hatch of a fly drifting down the current. A cursory glance could lead you into mistaking them for a delayed hatch of large dark olives and, if fish start rising again, you may well continue to use the Waterhen Bloa which was successful before. However, you are in for a surprise as you are unlikely to have even a single offer to the wet fly, but a suitable dry fly would do well.

The situation you are encountering serves as a perfect illustration of how an angler with some interest in entomology may at times score over his less-dedicated brethren. The reason is this: the flattened, stone-cling nymphs of the olive upright belong to one of the few species which prefer glides to streamy water. So the duns which you saw floating along the current have been carried down from the glide above, and that is where the nymphs will be active — hence your lack of success in the runs.

Once recognised, these flies are seldom confused again as they are mid-way in size between the large dark olive and the false March Brown; the wings of light blue-grey are carried well sloped back over a pale yellow-white body and the legs are paler still. Any uncertainty is soon dispelled by a close examination of the top segment of the legs which carry the distinctive spot of all *Rhithrogena* sp., easily seen with the naked eye.

If such a fly is not matched by any of the dry-fly Olive patterns you have seen you should not be surprised. As I explained this fly has been neglected over the years, but you can soon devise a realistic pattern of your own.

As the greatest concentration of activity takes place in the glides, then this is where where you should try your dry pattern despite all the difficulties associated with fishing such water. Still, the problems are nothing to those encountered with the wet fly fished to imitate the nymph. Fortunately for fishermen, the olive upright will tolerate those places where the river bed drops only slightly between pools, so the glide mingles with the run below over a long distance and this gives a stretch of water on which you can come to terms with the fish more easily.

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Now the Waterhen Bloa becomes very effective again if used in sizes 12-13 and, with a body darker than usual. It is then an excellent imitation in this type of water of the slow-swimming olive upright nymphs which progress by means of an undulating movement of the body in a vertical plane.

As well as prolonging the day by providing sport after the large dark olive has finished, the obliging olive upright will often hatch in vast amounts at dusk, so giving an evening rise three to four weeks before the blue-winged olive is due. What is more, the fish are very fond of this fly with the result that, on my own rivers at least, trout of a size never seen at any other time of the year rise freely and may continue rising after dark. The wet fly is then lethal. The fisherman who can recognise the situation when it arises, and pick the most suitable water to fish, should have an evening never to be fortgotten.

Modern fly-dressings

SPOTTED DICK

THIS PATTERN was developed from a tying method that I believe originated in New Zealand. It involves some care in selecting feathers, but is otherwise quite easy to tie. This is how you do it:

Attach the tying silk where the hook-bend commences and tie in a generous bunch of hot-orange cock hackle fibres to make a tail. Also tie in at this point, a strand of orange wool. Wind the silk on towards the hook eye for a distance of about a quarter the length of the shank. Wind the wool in touching turns to this point and secure.

Select six grey partridge hackles, two small, two medium and two large. Strip the fluff from their roots. Take the smallest pair and tie these in by their roots, convex side outwards, one on each side of the hook-shank. Be sure they are equal in size and project the same distance.

Next, wind the silk on for another quarter of the shank length, over the feather roots; take the wool on also and secure. Attach the two middle-sized partridge feathers as before. Then another quarter of silk and wool, followed by the two biggest partridge feathers. Finish the head as usual and your fly is made. I should add that with wool bodies it is wise to give the hook shank a preliminary coat of clear varnish, polyurethane or 'Vycoat', to prevent rusting and iron mould staining.



Flies tied on this principle have the advantage that nothing gets caught round the hook-bend in casting, as so often happens with more conventional lure-type patterns. The action in the water is also attractive. Size 6 or 8 long shank hooks are suitable.

Readers who dress their own flies will immediately realise that all sorts of different patterns can be evolved on the same principle. For example, you can use barred teal feathers, brown partridge, grouse and woodcock plumage, or black hen hackles or breast feathers, to mention but a few. I think that soft, mobile feathers are preferable for patterns made by this system. However, the grey partridge version here described has been proven successful.

Richard Walker