



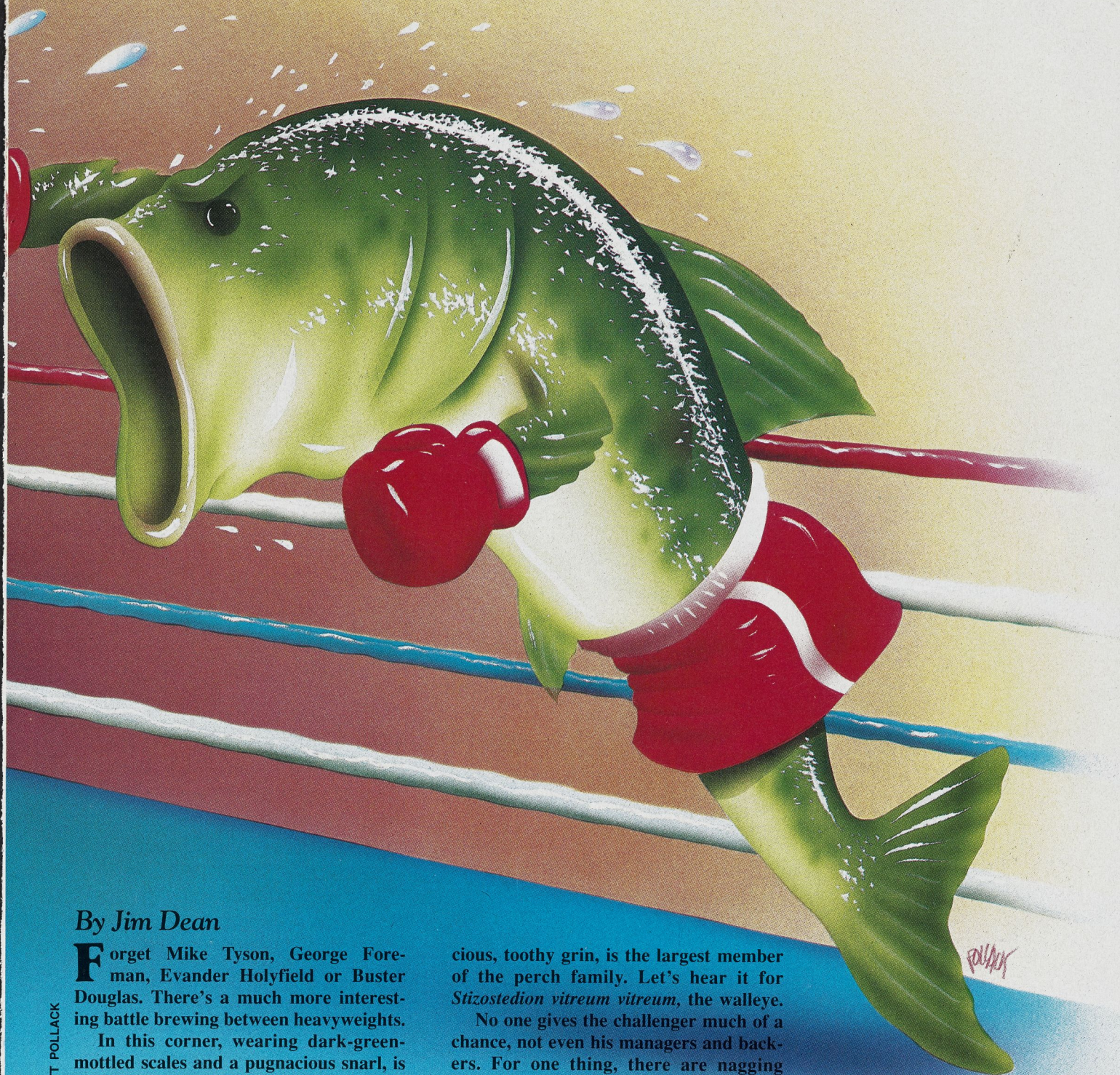
By Jerry Gibbs, Fishing Editor

Well, they're not exactly bobbies, but these new high-tech, European-style floats are part of a sophisticated fishing system that can help you stay on top of the action, whether you're after anything from tarpon to trout, in still water or in fast.

If you'd like to catch more fish than ever before, I have the answer. It's a new old system that has to do with floats—which you might think of as bobbies, but which aren't. As a matter of fact, the only thing that this system has in common with the spring-loaded, red-and-white bobber fishing that you knew as a kid is the intensity of the sport. Remember the times when you sat staring down at a plastic bob floating light as a leaf at the end of a dock? It was exciting to know that a fish could

BOBBERS AT THEIR

PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBORAH DENKER



By Jim Dean

Forget Mike Tyson, George Foreman, Evander Holyfield or Buster Douglas. There's a much more interesting battle brewing between heavyweights.

In this corner, wearing dark-green-mottled scales and a pugnacious snarl, is the burly reigning champ. Unbeaten and uncontested for decades, I give you one of the largest members of the sunfish family, *Micropterus salmoides*, the large-mouth bass.

His challenger, sporting greenish-bronze scales, a baleful glare and a vi-

cious, toothy grin, is the largest member of the perch family. Let's hear it for *Stizostedion vitreum vitreum*, the walleye.

No one gives the challenger much of a chance, not even his managers and backers. For one thing, there are nagging questions about his toughness in an overall North American championship match-up.

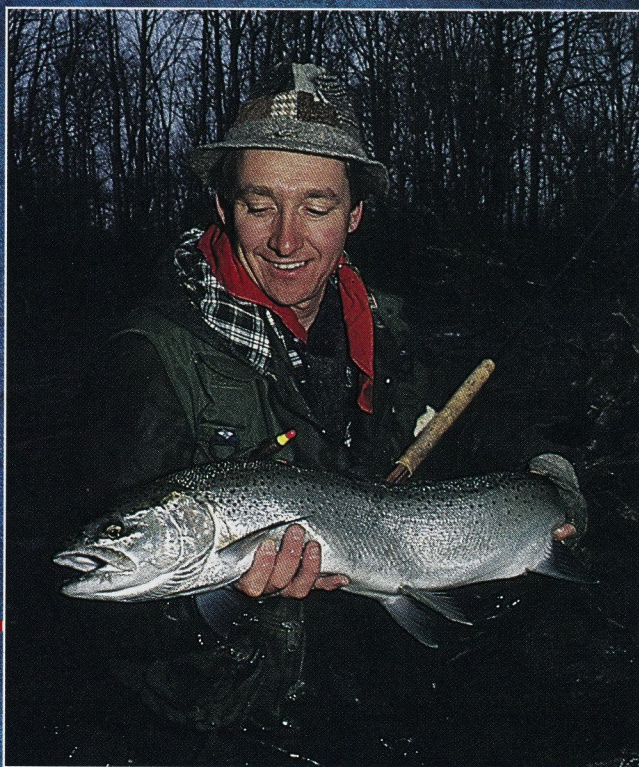
"You couldn't say we're favored, but I think we'll surprise a few people," said Al Lindner, the director of *The In-Fisher*.
continued on page 86



strike at any moment—and sometimes one would. The magic of that anticipation is still there with this new method of float fishing. Some anglers never lost it.

The use of floats to swim 16-ounce-plus live menhaden for 100-pound-plus tarpon, the precise method of using slip
continued on page 80

Drifted floats have a variety of applications, including river steelhead fishing. (See page 80 for float identification.)



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

BEST



Partners And Other Gifts

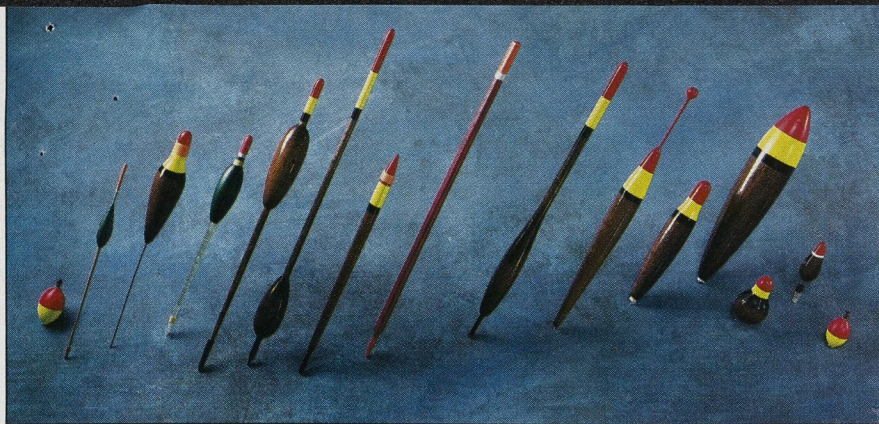
By Jim Moore

When we took the boy deer hunting, we thought we were doing him a favor. But as we watched him grow as a woodsman, we realized we were the ones who should have been thankful.

A hunting partnership is a special thing. It often lies dormant due to time and distance, but these are fragile barriers. It always revives when diminishing sunlight prompts autumn's chorus to promise yet another hunting season. This siren's song arises from the murmur of doves on an Arizona stock tank and the rattle of Indiana cornstalks. Wherever hunters live, some version of it reaches them, setting in motion the planning, excitement and last-minute phone calls. Months, even years, evaporate as hunting partners reunite at a familiar duck

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ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID TAYLOR



As seen at the opening of the story, examples of some of the European-style floats currently available include (from left to right): Thill's Ice 'n Fly Special; Middy's Series Z; Thill's Turbo Master; Middy's Avon; Thill's River Master, TG Bodied Wagglers and Smooth Stream; Middy's Peacock Wagglers; Thill's TG Wagglers, Double Ring Slider, Center Slider, Big Fish Slider, Stream 'n Brook Master, Mini Stealth and Ice 'n Fly Special.

BOBBERS AT THEIR BEST

continued from page 57

bobbers to coax suspended sulking walleyes, and the incorporation of a strike indicator when drifting a nymph for hook-jawed brown trout are not exactly lawn-chair/cane-pole-class fishing techniques.

Yet even as effective as these specialty techniques are, the ways that we've traditionally rigged for them are almost crude compared with the float methods currently used in Europe. Across the Atlantic, years of incredibly intense angling pressure have selected for fish that are as spooky as a sentry crow on a treetop; fish that demand ultra-sensitive terminal setups. Think of it as having to face fish that are always in a post-frontal, turned-off mode.

In the past couple of years, increasingly sophisticated walleye techniques, the use of floats for steelhead, salmon drift-fishing in rivers, and advanced tactics for crappies have forced U.S. tackle makers to start refining products. Already we're seeing some domestic specialty innovations such as the Snap-On Slip Float and the Snap-On Bobber Stop by Wille Products, as well as U.S. Tackle's weighted Totem Pole floats that illuminate for night fishing. Even more exciting is that we're also seeing new ultra-sensitive European-style floats, long rods and accessories

designed for lake or river fishing in sizes to handle North American gamefish and panfish. Top mail-order catalogs now offer a variety of this kind of tackle.

Prime examples of the European rigs are the floats that Mick Thill of Thill Fishing Tackle has developed over the past seven years. Thill is a native of Chicago who grew up in England to become a world match fishing champion. His burning, almost evangelical, goal is to get more American anglers—especially kids—catching more fish. To that end he is adapting European floats and tactics to the North American fishing scene.

Tuned and balanced European-style floats turn novices into experts when it comes to detecting the subtlest bites. These floats can be used to learn bottom contours and makeups in fish-attractive spots without excessive hang-ups and without having to run over the critical spots with a boat. They can also make bank fishermen more effective than ever before.

Thill likes to tell the story of returning to his favorite Lake Michigan perch fishing shore after having spent years in England. He was armed with a pole not much shorter than 20 feet, his bait and some floats. Locals kidded him about there not being any sharks to fish for, but jokes quickly turned to interest as Thill began swinging in fish after fish. Anglers closed in on the hotspot that Thill

had evidently discovered. Shortly, Thill moved from the crowd and quickly made another "hotspot."

Then there was the time that for a TV show, Thill quickly caught a limit of trout on Axehead Lake near O'Hare International Airport after a severe cold front. And there was the demonstration that he gave at the docks of Roland Martin's marina on Florida's Lake Okeechobee, catching more than 90 bluegills in a short time while entertaining onlookers with a nonstop monologue.

Reduced to its essentials, the tuned and balanced float system that makes such catches possible consists of the right size and style floats for specific water types, the proper weighting for those floats, long rods and/or poles of the right action, and—critical in river drifting—a high-quality spinning reel, or even better, a free-spooling float reel.

Float Design

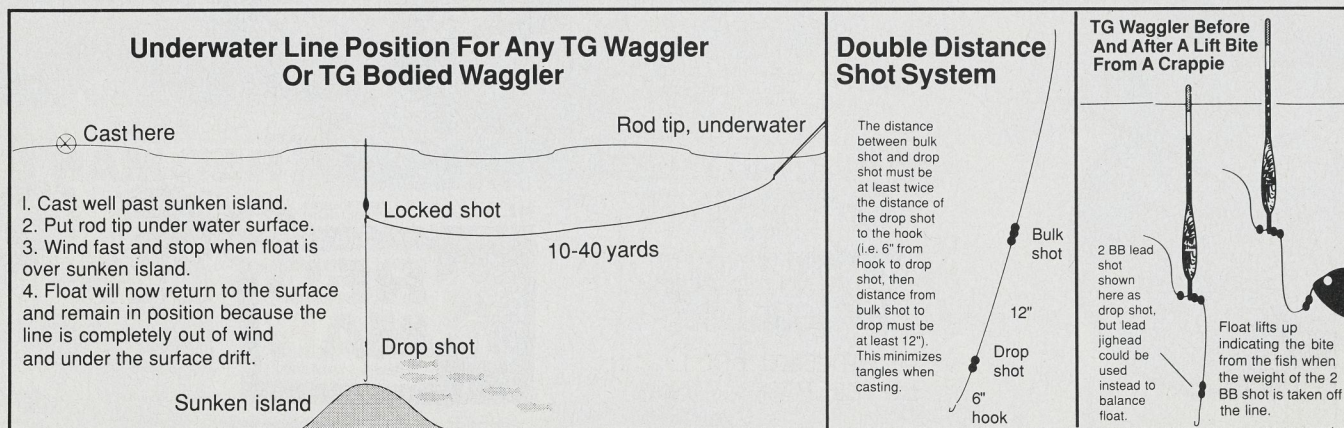
The rule of thumb is to select floats with a low center of gravity for still-water (lake and pond) fishing and a high center of gravity for river and stream angling. Most European-style floats are elongated in shape. The center of gravity is governed by the more bulbous portion of the float. Thus, for river situations you want that thicker section of the float nearer the surface; for still waters, vice versa. (Two models in the Thill Fishing Tackle series—the Shy Bite and Smooth Stream—are ultra-delicate designs that deviate slightly from the norm by having their centers of gravity more toward the center. They are for the gentlest of conditions.)

The premise for a low center of gravity on still-water models is this: With the bulk of its body deep underwater and only its tiny tip above the surface, a low-slung float will not be affected by wind. The theory behind river-style floats is that in river fishing you periodically slow down the drift of your float by checking—holding back—the float to match the slower bottom current where your offering is working. River floats use the smallest possible body, but are stabilized by a long, extended stem. The stabilizing stem of a river float is thin so that the current can easily pass around it and not tip up the float—especially when you check it.

Weighting

Even a clunky air-resistant cork or Styrofoam block would gain performance if it was

Some examples of float drifting techniques and rigging include (from left to right) getting the line underwater in windy conditions; making the distance from the bulk shot to the drop shot double that from the drop shot to the hook in order to avoid the bait swinging down too quickly; and detecting a "lift bite" when the float's second color band appears.



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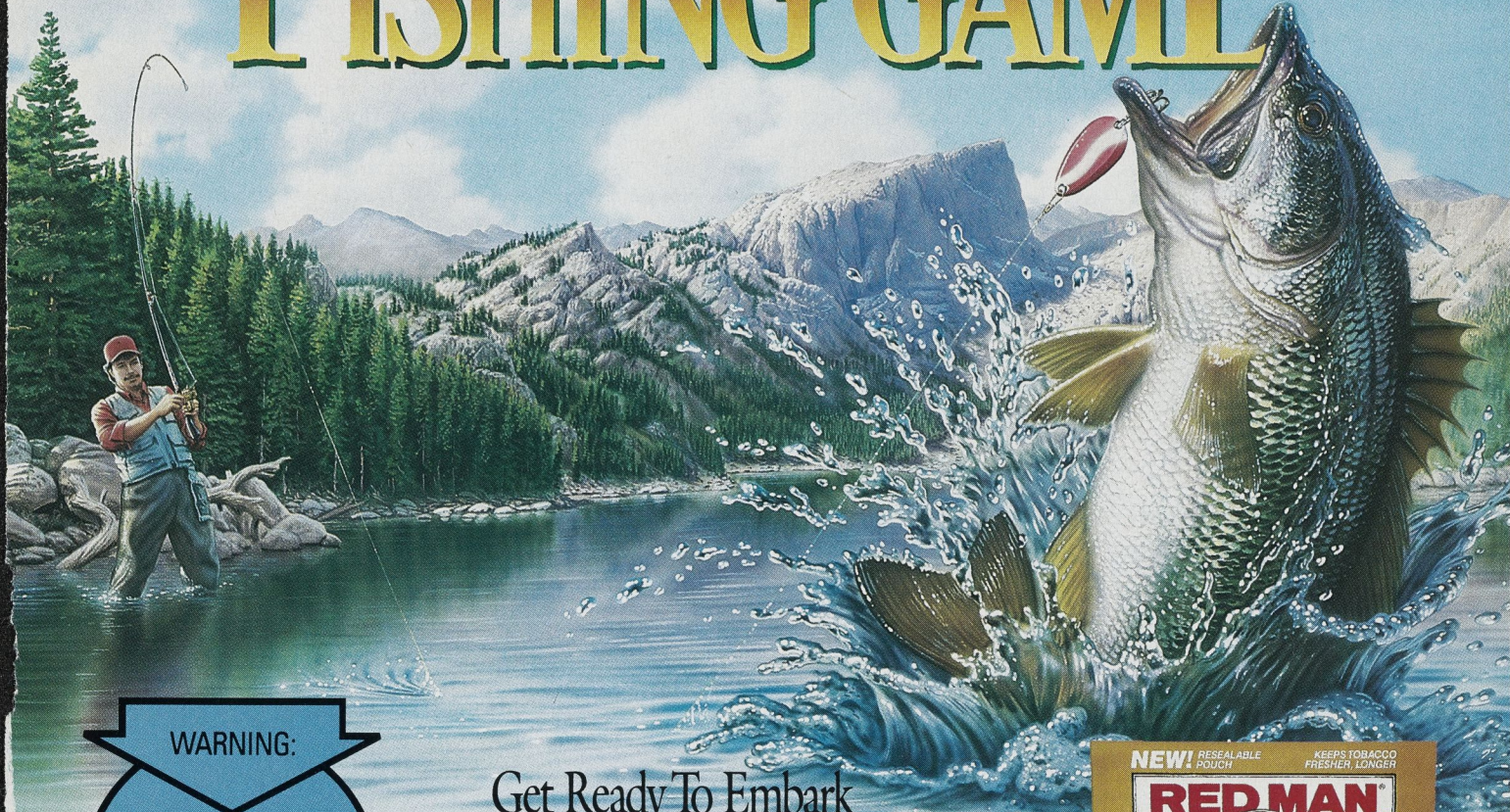


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properly weighted. The idea is to reduce the buoyancy of the float enough so that it is just floating, so that a biting fish feels the least possible resistance from it. However, a weighted but poorly designed float can periodically be pulled out of sight by currents or wave action. The streamlined body of a properly weighted European-style float is not affected by sudden current tugs or rough water. Only a tiny portion of the top or tip antenna remains above water as a strike indicator. Proper weighting increases the stability of a float, almost anchoring it in place in a lake—even in a stiff wind.

Weighting can come from a jig or spoon or the bait itself, and normally, additional split shot are needed. "Each float type takes a certain amount of shot to balance it," Thill said, "and even individual floats of the same model may require slightly different amounts of shot due to variations in balsa density. I recommend coding your floats as to their required weight."

The simplest form of weighting consists of adding enough shot perhaps 18 inches away from the hook so that the float rides with its brightly colored indicator section just emerging from the water surface. This results in the bait or lure descending quickly to the set level. If you are working bottom or very close to it—especially in a swift river or in a lake during a strong wind—a good weighting system to use is one that will keep your offering deeply anchored. This is also the weighting configuration to use on aggressive

fish that you don't want to swallow a small baited hook, as it will get the offering down quickly and won't give the fish a chance to suck the bait in too deeply.

A slightly more sophisticated weighting system consists of a small-size split shot 18 inches from the hook, then, 36 inches farther up the line or leader, enough large-size split shot to balance the float. With this setup, the float will quickly sink to its proper level, but the hook—with only a tiny shot and a long length of monofilament between it and the heavier shot—will sink more slowly. There will also be less weight-induced resistance near the hook, a great advantage if fish are not in an aggressive mood.

"It's vital," Thill said, "that the distance between the heavier, or bulk, shot and the smaller drop shot be twice the distance from the drop shot to the hook. If the two were equidistant, you'd have a bola effect when casting, and end up with a dreadful mess." Experiment by moving the bulk shot higher up the line or leader to get the offering to descend even more slowly.

You could get along quite nicely by using the above two weighting systems exclusively. But anglers are not absolved from the rest of mankind's compulsive pursuit of perfection, and so the quest for the ultimate weighting system has resulted in myriad shot placement patterns. One variation includes several large-size shot closest to the float, followed by fewer medium-size shot and then BB-and-smaller-size shot spaced out going

down to the hook. Benefits of this setup are a long, gently curved leader and straighter line of pull on the strike. This long shotted leader lifts and searches various water column levels when you check the float. You can vary the size of the spaced weight for different current velocities or wind drift conditions. Ultra-small, pinhead-size shot near the hook means even less resistance for wary fish, allows your offering to swim naturally, and produces a cleaner look near the hook. The deeper the water and the slower the flow, the more exacting the weighting pattern should be.

You want to use soft non-eared shot. In decreasing increments, the most popular sizes are SSG (also called swan shot), AAA, BB, 1, 4, 6 and 8 (also called dust shot). One of the assortments of English soft shot from Cabela's will see you through, and Thill Fishing Tackle will soon be offering shot graded in U.S. sizes.

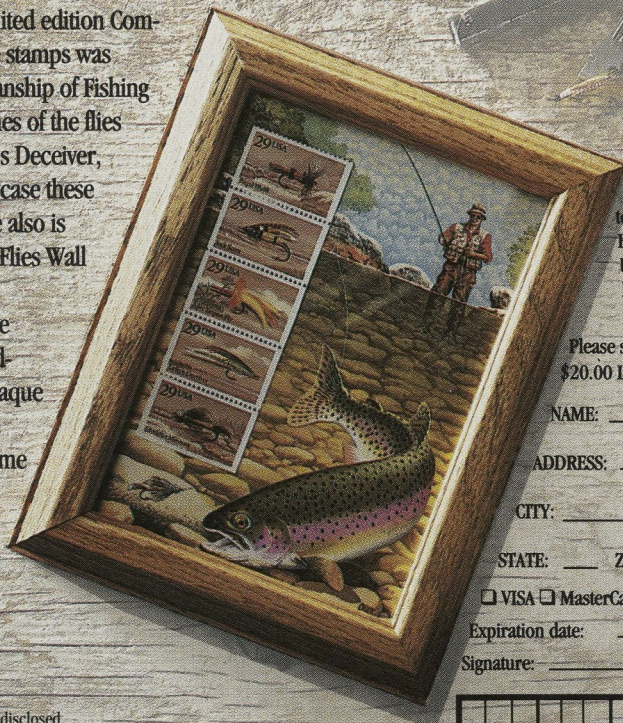
Rigging And Technique

Many models of the European-style floats are attached to your line or leader with silicone rings or sleeves. You thread your line through these little rings and then slip the sleeves around the top and bottom of the float to hold the line in place. This rigging allows for instant switching of float sizes or styles. For use in powerful river currents you should use three sleeves to hold the line in place. Some floats require you to run the line through rings or holes on their bottoms and/

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or sides. These floats can be rigged either fixed or slip-style with your choice of bobber stop on the line. Now let's look at the advantages and rigging for representative still-water and river floats.

The waggler is a typical still-water float (with a lower center of gravity) that can be rigged in a fixed position by clamping split shot to the line on each side of the eye at the float's bottom (see illustration on page 83). These "locking" shot are, in effect, the bulk shot balancing the float. Additional very light shot can then be used farther down the line to adjust the drop rate of the hook.

When the waggler is rigged as a slip float, the line runs through the eye, with bulk shot located only *below* the float. A bobber stop can then be positioned anywhere along the line above the float. Why not just use one of the standard slip floats that walleye anglers have been using for years? Wagglers give you an edge with very selective, nonaggressive fish. With only the thin antenna tip of this float above the surface and its body deep, the waggler will sit on target even in rough water and a stiff wind.

A technique that is easier with this style float, especially in wind, is to cast beyond the target, plunge the rod tip deeply into the water, then quickly crank the float back over target. This trick will get the line below the surface where it will be unaffected by wind (see illustration on page 80). This trick is harder to do with a line-through-center slip float, and you should also note that where the line emerges from the float stem to the point where it enters the water, it will still be exposed.

Lastly, know that the fixed-rigged waggler folds, or hinges, over when you set the hook, and that when striking using a waggler, the angle of the line will make the set closer to a straight pull than it would be with a center-slide slip float. This translates into a couple inches less pull before the hook is set—a subtle difference, but at times very important if you want a quick hook-up. Also note that you should set the hook with a sideways motion of your rod for greatest effect.

In still water, fish sometimes bite while a bait is descending. Most European-style floats are marked with red and yellow bands on the top. A float is balanced when the top color is visible. If you suddenly see the second band of color appearing, it means that the float is rising, probably due to a "lift bite."

The other representative style of float—this one for river fishing—is called the Turbo Master by Thill Fishing Tackle. This float has an extremely high center of gravity, and it utilizes the quick-change silicone sleeve system for line attachment. The Turbo Master's stabilizer is made from thin wire, allowing fast, powerful currents to pass without affecting it when you check the float's drift.

When this float is rigged with bulk shot up high and spaced smaller shot along the leader, checking it accomplishes the following: The long lightly weighted leader slowly rises, searching in the current, and presents your offering at different levels in the water column. When the float is released to drift again, the leader descends and the bait or fly ideally travels down-current ahead of the float. This is a deadly presentation for walleyes, smallmouths, trout, salmon and steelhead.

Bob Jordan of Tughill Outfitters (315-298-3225) in Pulaski, New York, is one pro who is completely sold on the system. Jordan is a drift boat guide on New York's Salmon River. Back in 1984 at the Town Hole in Pulaski, he watched a wading angler take three steelhead on three consecutive casts using a drifted float. Naturally, he wanted to know what was going on. So he found out. And in doing so, not only did he learn about the floats themselves, but he also discovered another deadly element in this fishing system—the single-action float reel. He was then determined to have one, and when he saw Toronto angler Phil Clough (pronounced "cluff") and pals catching fish with the rig in the Salmon, he marched up. "Where can I buy one of those reels?" Jordan demanded. One of the anglers sold him his.

Float reels look something like fly reels.

They offer total free-spooling for drag-free float drifts, as well as the best control for float checking and quick line pickup. They are also great fun to use. My story "The Newest Way To Take Fish" (*Outdoor Life*, September 1989) detailed their use. At the time I wrote that article, the Clough reel, designed by Phil's father, Derek, was not available. It is now, though, and is the finest reel of this type available. Its powerful drag also allows it to double as a downrigger reel.

Other less expensive float reels on the market are good start-up models for those getting into the sport. Spinning reels can also be used, but you usually must hand-strip line off the spool to allow a drag-free drift as you send the float and terminal tackle downriver.

Phil Clough had been catching his fish while wading. When he brought his float drifting system aboard Bob Jordan's boat, an instant success story was born. Recently, Thill, Phil and Derek Clough, Jordan, guide Jim Rives and I again worked the floats for steelhead on the Salmon River. The method is far more productive than standard bottom bouncing without floats. You cover the drifts precisely, and hang bottom rarely. "It's almost sinful how deadly it can be," Phil commented.

Bob Jordan compared the drifted float systems to hot-shotting—the standard method used by most drift boat guides. "With hot-shotting, you're catching the aggressive fish," he said. "With float fishing, the presentation's much more refined. You pick off the neutral fish, and the aggressive ones just nail you."

You can send a drifted fly, yarn or spawn sac on a long-distance drift down a fish-holding lie using a float. Make sure that the float itself is riding upright, except when you check it to make it cock back toward you. If the top or indicator cants to one side, you know you're dragging bottom and must move the float farther down the line.

A wind coming upriver can cause you to lose control of a drift, and this is tough to counteract. Thill does have a technique to counter a downstream wind, however, which

Staying On Top Of Float Fishing

Following are some sources for float-fishing equipment and information.

Akin Tackle & Technologies
(Middy floats, line, hooks, weights, rods, poles, live maggots, accessories)
Box 765
Claremore, OK 74018
(918-341-8383)

Bass Pro Shops
(Poles, floats, weights)
1935 S. Campbell
Springfield, MO 65898
(800-227-7776)

Cabela's
(Rods, poles, floats, weights, float stops)

812 13th Ave.
Sidney, NE 69160
(800-237-8888)

Class Tackle
(Floats, weight, rods, reels, hooks, accessories, Wazp Brand Products)
Box 837
Minden, LA 71058
(318-371-2151)

Clough Sportfishing Enterprises
(Clough float reels)
4000 Steeles Ave. W.
Suite 208

Woodbridge, Ontario, Canada L4L 4V9
(416-856-5955)

Hi-Line Enterprise Inc.
(Floats, Steam Master reels, accessories)
14 Extra St.
Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1H 1Y9
(519-837-3095)

Midwest Direct Live Bait
(Live maggots)
859 Manor Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55432
(612-786-7648)

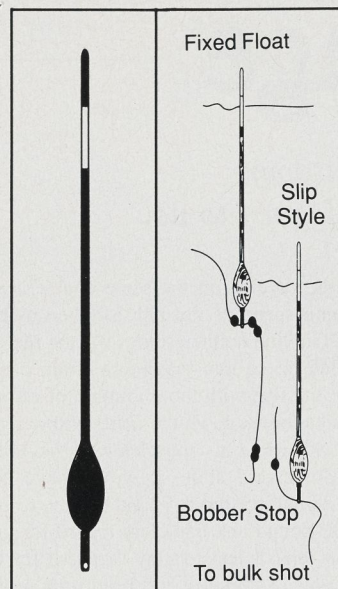
Thill Fishing Tackle
(Mick Thill-developed line of floats,

rods, poles, weights, float stops, accessories)
Box 721
Urbana, IL 61801
(217-586-3545; 217-384-5240)

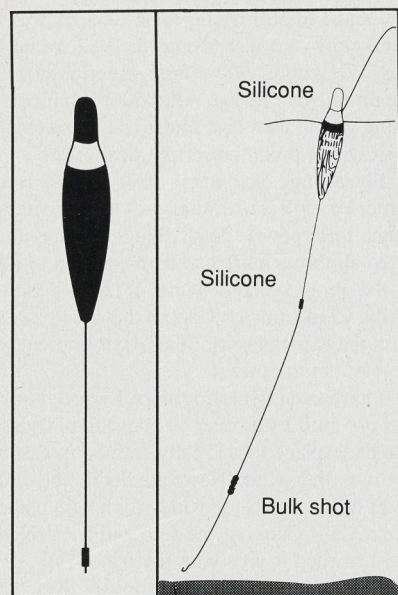
U.S. Tackle Corp.
(non-European-style illuminated modular floats)
2000 Ford Circle
Milford, OH 45150
(513-576-1200; 800-TACKLE-1)

Q&S Mfg./Wille Products
(Snap-On Slip Floats, Snap-On Bobber Stops)
Box 532
Brookfield, WI 53008
(414-544-9528)

TG Bodied Waggler



Turbo Master



Thill Tackle's TG Bodied Waggler (top) is for still water, and can be rigged fixed or slip style. The Turbo Master (bottom) is for river fishing, and isn't affected by current when checked.

can pull the float ahead of your offering. Thill's method is called back-shooting. What you do is add a little split shot to the line a ways above the float. This helps keep the monofilament below the surface and out of the wind's influence. Just don't add so much shot that it adds excessive drag.

River float-fishers use an eight-pound-test main line, usually Daiwa Crystal Clear or Berkley TriMax, to which the float is attached. Knotted to it is a more abrasion-resistant leader, usually of Berkley XT line, in tests from six down to four pounds.

Even with the finely designed river float models, some flows are just too fast and rough for effective float fishing. The perfect

"swim," as Thill calls it, is smooth and steady, with boils and slicks and decent current. Virtually any lake or pond can be fished using this method.

Besides using the sensitive float that revealed the lightest hits, the other part of Thill's secret was chumming with the live maggots he was using for bait. Extra food kept fish in the area and primed to hit, albeit gently. Typical of European match fishermen, Thill used a sling shot (catapult) to fire the bait into his fishing area.

Successful float fishing is not limited to big rivers or lakes; neither are floats designed only for walleyes, bass, salmon, steelhead and panfish. Specialty mini-models include Thill/Fishing Tackle's Ice 'n Fly Special, which is ideal for use through an ice hole. The smallest of these models also make fine fly-fishing strike indicators. Wax worms, grubs and especially live maggots are effective baits on small trout streams, and there's a specialty float from Thill called the Stream 'n Brook Master that's designed to fish these waters. In fact, this float will fish in water as little as four inches deep! It also allows spin-fishermen to work flies effectively.

Nor are saltwater anglers left out of the float-fishing game. Many of the models already discussed make catching wary, delicate-biting fish around docks and piers a snap. They can be used for most species in cuts, channels and holes while boat fishing. Large models such as Thill's Big Fish Slider, which needs a full 1 1/4 ounces of lead just to

balance it, can be used for sharks or even tarpon.

Rods And Poles

For river drifting with floats, rods of 11 to 13 feet in length are best. They give the angler an advantage in many still-water situations, as well. They allow for excellent float control, as well as permit the casting of fixed floats with long shotted leaders, which you cannot spool up on your reel. They also are best for use with the lightest lines. Cabela's Composite Match Rod and Deluxe Match Rod (both 12 feet), as well as the company's Predator spinning model (11 feet) will fill the bill. Walleye tournament anglers mostly find such tools an inconvenience, and stick to rods eight to 8 1/2 feet long.

Long 12 to 19-foot poles are ideal for panfish, but they're also fine for trout, as well as some walleye, bass and saltwater situations for smaller fish. With a long pole you can play a fish, then skim it in over weeds or derrick it up a sharp break and to you.

So there you have the basics. You'll want to obtain catalogs from float manufacturers for detailed information on rigging individual types of floats. As you experiment with the sport using flies, live bait, light jigs and spoons below the floats, you'll not only find your catch rate soaring, but you'll rediscover some of that magic that you knew as that kid who fished with the dime store bobber. And this time you'll hold on to the magic.



SPORTING SPECIALTIES



Weigh In Scale Item #053802

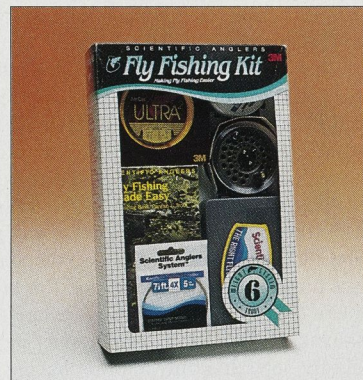
\$54.95

This digital scale can record the weight of a fish up to 50 lbs. It has a tare-weight feature that will not record the weight of an object already placed on the scale before it's turned on, such as a net or bucket in which the fish can be placed once the scale is turned on. The large 1/2" display allows for a photo before releasing the fish. Also available for up to 10 lbs. Item #053803 for \$39.95

Fly Fishing Kit Item #052816

\$129.95

Just the ticket for someone who wants to get into flyfishing. This kit contains a #6 reel with adjustable click drag and exposed spool rims for additional control, along with floating high-visibility sunrise colored Air Cel Ultra² fly line, 20-pound test low-stretch backing and tapered leaders in a rustproof floating fly box. The "Fly Fishing Made Easy" video and a handbook are also included. Just add the appropriate rod and you are ready to go.



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We accept MasterCard and Visa or send a check or money order. Please include \$3.50 for shipping and handling per item. Residents of CA, CT, IL, MA, MI, and NY must include the applicable sales tax. Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery. If you just can't wait, we will ship your order Federal Express® two to three business day delivery for an additional \$8.00. Customer satisfaction is guaranteed.

The Wealth Of Age

No price can be placed on the richness of outdoor experiences. Here in his own words is Lee Wulff's legacy to us.

By Lee Wulff

The fishing world lost a pioneer on April 28 with the death of renowned sport angler Lee Wulff. He was 86 years old.

Wulff's contributions to the world of fly-fishing and, more specifically, Atlantic salmon fishing, revolutionized the sport. Ever the innovator, Wulff is credited with designing the flyfishing vest, the widely used Wulff series of hair-wing dryflies and for popularizing the use of smaller, more manageable fly rods.

Outdoor Life first published "The Wealth Of Age" in March 1983. We feel now as we did then that it is a fitting tribute to a great sportsman.—The Editors.

The wealth of age comes in having past reality to reflect upon instead of future uncertainty to dream about. It lies in knowing firsthand instead of relying on the word of someone else to make decisions. It comes from having done most of the things you really wanted to do at least once and knowing those you enjoy most and want to do again and again. It lies in wisdom, which can only come from experience. Knowledge is something youth may have as well as old-timers. Wisdom comes from testing mere knowledge and being able to use it effectively.

Physical things, too, can be the gift of age. I remember 1938 and a fishing trip in the northern bush. The black flies were as thick and as fierce as I ever remember. The fly dopes of that day were not very effective and in a few days, we ran out of them. My guide said, "Wait long enough, and you'll get used to the bugs like I am."

He was right. I was bitten so much that I grew nauseated and felt physically ill for two days. He called it "fly fever."

Then the miracle happened. After that, I could watch a black fly bite me and feel no pain. The fly would go off leaving a tiny, round, red mark on my flesh. Within a day the red spot would turn black. There was no swelling, and by the third day, even that small black reminder of the fly's visit was gone. That immunity is still with me, though perhaps not to the same degree, and I'm seldom bitten. When others around me are complaining of bites, I'm comfortable and disdain fly dope. It's truly a gift of having lived and experienced.

I was about 45 when I admitted to myself that my muscles would never again be what they once were and that I'd have to start using my head to make up for their failings. I couldn't race full tilt across a bog to intercept a caribou. I couldn't lift and carry as much or more than anyone else in the party and race



Here's Lee Wulff doing one of the things he loved best—preparing for a day of flyfishing.

to be the leader on the trail. Thinking comes harder when good muscles have previously given you a great advantage, but thinking helps you to do your share of the physical things when you grow older.

I had the first light seaplane in Newfoundland and Labrador. Flying a hydroplane let me fish the then-uncharted rivers, and I fished them before the other planes came and today's crowds moved in. As a result, I have a special sense about playing Atlantic salmon that came only with time and long experience. I have caught at least 3,000 salmon, and the total may be 4,000. I can watch one of the old movies of me playing a salmon in the late 1930s and see how much my tactics have changed. I've learned how well angle and pressure changes can be used to control a fish's runs and its position in a pool. I have learned that in playing stream fish, the best position for the angler is downstream of the fish so that it fights not only your pressure, but the flow of the stream as well. I used to race downstream to keep ahead of the fish, relying on my fleetness of foot and balance to get to the right places. With time, I learned to use only light pressures so the fish stayed in the pool, instead of pressuring them into wild, downstream runs, and I brought them in more swiftly than before.

With the big fish of the sea, there was a greater need to use my strength efficiently. I learned to work with static pressure so that

the boat traveled on the same course and at the same speed as the fish as often as possible. The line neither comes off the reel nor is reeled in, so that maximum strain can be put on the fish with the minimum of effort. I learned to break down the fish's will to resist.

At 40, when my muscles were beginning their downward slide, it would have been hard to imagine that at 72 I'd be able to set a new 80-pound-test line-class record for giant bluefin tuna. I had to play that fish for two hours and 15 minutes, and I did it more with my mind or just as much as I did it with my muscles. That 895-pound record fish has been bettered, but as I write this, I'm in my 70s, and I'm still trying for a tuna record. I came close to a new record in 1982, when I was 77, with a 960-pound bluefin tuna I caught in Nova Scotia. After 50 it is an interesting game to see how much you can accomplish with a minimum of physical effort.

Flycasting, like many other things, is a matter of skill and timing—of easy rhythm rather than power. Such things can be enjoyed all through life and perhaps most of all in the more-relaxed years of age. Paddle easily. Climb slowly. Choose the right places from the experience of other days, and enjoy the view to the fullest.

I have been flycasting since I was 9, but it was not until I was over 40 and started flying a light seaplane that I really learned to cast a fly into the wind. Newfoundland, the old pilots told me, was too windy for a light plane like my J-3 Cub, but the Cub and I survived and I learned to live with the wind.

The gales would pour viciously over the mountains and beat down hard on the lakes and bays I had to land on. Watching, I saw that winds are rarely constant. They flowed over the earth like water over a rapid run, gusting along at varying speeds. I used to look down fearfully at the pattern of hard, black squalls in which I was about to risk my airplane and my life. Then it dawned on me that the way to beat the wind was to land into the wind at the tail of one of the black squalls. The wind was strong, and my ground speed was slow when I approached. Then, just as I lit on the water, I'd enter one of the slack wind periods and my plane could settle quickly onto the water.

And that's the best way to cast a fly into the wind. Let the tail of a gust take your line out on a hard backcast, and then, in the lull that follows, drive hard into and through the relatively calm spots behind the gust. Casts should be timed to the wind. Though you can't make as many casts as you can on a calm

TACKLE TEST

The Consumer Resource for the Serious Angler

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OCTOBER 1991

Mitchell's 310UL Spinning Reel: Throw Back This Throwback Model

The ultralight mill is dated, jerky, rough, and, of course, not recommended. Instead, we'd choose models from Shimano or Daiwa, or stick with the reliable Penn 420SS.

The finesse fisherman, who must often present small lures on light line to spooky bass or wall-eyes in clear water, knows to look for certain attributes in a spinning reel. Such a mill must be light weight, have a smooth, positive drag, and not contain nettlesome flaws. It also helps if the reel doesn't cost an arm and a leg.

One model that has exhibited these traits in past tests is the Penn 420SS, a compact, de-featured, reli-

able \$40 reel that has been at the top of our list for more than a year, even when pitted against costly models. For instance, the \$100 Shimano GT1000 and Daiwa's \$90 SS600, the top of those companies' lines, failed to show enough extra smoothness or fish-fighting performance to justify their eye-popping costs, we felt. Though the 420SS has some flaws (it's not eye-catching, and it has left-hand-only retrieve), its combination



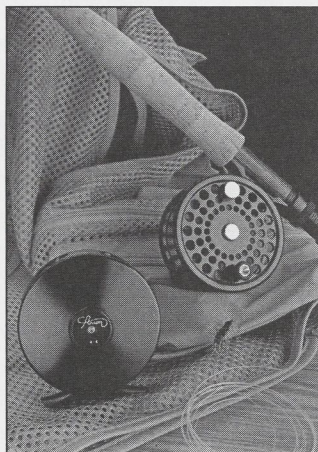
of smooth drag, easy bail operation, low cost, and durability are tough to beat.

But we may have found two reels that equal or surpass the Penn in operation, and one of them beats it on price. From Cabela's, we bought a Daiwa GS600RD for \$69.95. We also tried the Shimano Aero Sidestab SI-1000R, which retails for \$32.99 in the Bass Pro Shops catalog. In field and bench testing, both models edged out the Penn in overall drag operation and weighed slightly less. The budget Shimano, particularly, has a Quick-fire II trigger that speeds casting and a Fightin' Drag lever feature that allows rapid and repeatable drag-setting changes.

Other reels, however, didn't stack up well against the Penn. The Mitchell 310UL, for instance, goes for \$14 (continued on page 3)

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- 7 Si-Tex XJ-2 Loran Scores Win**
Built for midcontinent navigation, it beat Micrologic's Explorer and ML-8000 units.
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This wide-beam model fishes better than its 20-foot cousin—but watch it at speed.
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Cabela's \$50 stick and the Hi Power beat models from Shakespeare and Daiwa.
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It's tops among bearing-protector add-ons.
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Fishing Around...page 10

Don't Shake Hands with Big C

During a blazing-hot midsummer test of crankbait rods, I got a lot of razzing from my bass-equipment testers, who snickered when I showed up at the launch ramp in long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and a wide-brimmed hat. That the clothing was made of a gossamer tropical-weight fabric made no difference in their eyes. I was a damn fool whom they thought would wilt in the 95-degree, 90-percent-humidity conditions.

In my mind, I would be a damn fool for not covering all the skin I could. A good friend of mine, Jane Brust, heads the public affairs office of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. We have talked in the past about the dangers of sunlight exposure, particularly to anglers, who spend a lot of time outdoors and who often wear as little as possible to stay cool.

I remember something she said to me that's as clear as the air of a crisp October day. She had asked how I sunburned the tops of my ears. I replied that I'd been offshore fishing for king mackerel and had worn a baseball cap to shade my face. She looked at me and said, "You're a prime candidate for skin cancer. You ought to wear a brimmed hat and use sunscreen at least."

Here's the bottom line. About 600,000 cases of skin cancer are reported each year, most of which are curable basal cell or squamous cancers. Of these cases, about 8,500 people die from skin-cancer related causes—6,500 from malignant melanomas and the remaining 2,000 from other skin cancers. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta say the death tolls attributed to malignant melanomas jumped 25 percent between 1973 and 1985. Deaths among white men (which I happen to be) in the same period jumped 34 percent.

I don't intend to become one of these statistics, but because of what I do, where I live, what I've done, and what I look like, I've got an increased risk of eventually having a cancer dug out of my neck, ears, face, or hands. Fair-complexioned persons whose skin tends to freckle or burn rather than tan, who live nearer the equator, who spend a lot of time in the sun, and who've had severe sunburns as children show the greatest incidence of skin cancers.

Personally, I'd rather not shake hands with the Big C. It's just a whole lot easier to avoid it than treat it. My personal ritual, as well as covering my trunk, legs, and head with clothing, involves applying a cheap Kmart-brand sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 before I even pull on my pants. I slather the lotion on my neck, ears, ankles, and the backs of my hands, then get dressed. (Note: *Tackle Test* has done only preliminary testing on sunscreens, but found no differences in how they ward off damaging UV rays. At this point we'd recommend you buy the cheapest SPF-15 brand you can find, or pick one whose feel and smell you like.)

You don't have to be obsessive like me, but it can't hurt. My goal—and yours—should be never to see my friend Jane Brust in the antiseptic halls of Houston's leading cancer center.

—Todd Woodard

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Ultralight Reels

(continued from page 1)

less than the 420SS (\$25.99 in Cabe-la's), but costs the angler dearly in performance. Among other problems, the 310UL's drag engages haphazardly, and its bail often doesn't close fully on retrieve. In contrast, we encountered few problems with Browning's \$40 SDX1 ultralight—in fact, it's a smooth, featherlight reel. But an exposed lip on the spool-release button catches small-diameter lines with annoying regularity. Also, Abu Garcia's Platinum Max 2 (\$59.95 in Cabe-la's) turned in a surprisingly poor showing. Testers found fault with the six-ball-bearing model's weight, rough retrieve, and fit-and-finish.

More detailed praise and criticism of each model follows:

Mitchell 310UL Throw It Back

Before we had a chance to fish with it, our testers felt a flood of nostalgia brought on by the 310's old-timey looks. Many members of our team began fishing with Mitchell 308s, and fondly remembered those days of tank hopping for catfish and waiting for crappie to bite.

Any goodwill carried over from

the days of yore quickly evaporated once we were on the water. Despite its having two ball bearings, the Mitchell wasn't smooth on retrieve, especially compared to the two-ball-bearing Shimano. Even more of a problem, the bail didn't open easily, and it tended to close only halfway when the gears were engaged for retrieve. Also, the Mitchell doesn't have a silent anti-reverse-switch position.

These problems were enough to sink the 310 in our evaluation, but we also noted that the front drag (leather and Teflon) didn't hold settings and

Above: The Mitchell 310UL goes for \$14 less than the Shimano, but, in our opinion, costs the angler dearly in performance.

was sticky, especially at start-up. A number of fish broke the Ande Premium 2-pound line immediately after hook-up. Finally, we're not fans of unskirted spools like that found on the Mitchell.

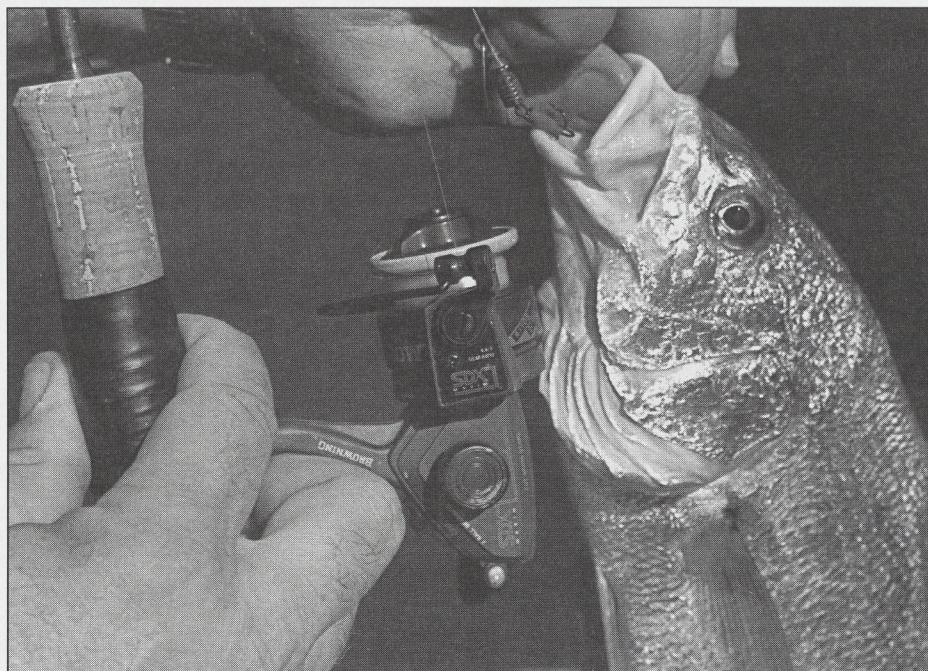
To its credit, the 310UL is reasonably light, has enormous line capacity, has very simple mechanics, is easy to disassemble, and carries a five-year warranty. It's also inexpensive.

Bottom Line: Despite its low price, we don't recommend the Mitchell 310UL spinning reel.

Browning SDX1 Maxim An Annoying Flaw

Not recommending this model was a difficult call for us to make, for the SDX1 is a sweet little reel. Classified as a SuperLight model in the Browning designation scheme, it weighs only 5.5 ounces loaded with 180 yards of 2-pound line. Also, it has a very smooth two-ball-bearing re-

Left: Small-diameter lines catch in a tiny groove on the front of the Browning's spool-release button.



FIELD TEST



Left: We feel the handsome Platinum Max 2 should be sold as a light-action reel suitable for 4- to 8-pound lines, which would be more in keeping with its 11-ounce weight.

But we had one consistently irritating problem with the reel that obviates its Report Card marks (see page 5). Small-diameter 2- and 4-pound lines catch in a tiny groove on the front of the spool-release button. The problem isn't obvious until the line gets a little twist in it, then it begins to snag or wrap around this lip. At first, we thought it might be a problem with a single spool, but we acquired some new spools that exhibited the same snagging.

Bottom Line: Until Browning fixes the line-catching problem on the SDX1 Maxim's spool, we can't recommend it.

trieve, with one stainless-steel ball bearing on the handle and one on the rotating head. Its Teflon/stainless drag releases line without jerks and

hesitation. Also, it has niceties such as a collapsible, reversible handle, Teflon-covered spool lip, and a line clip that make it user-friendly.

Abu Garcia Platinum Max 2 *Too Big to be Called Ultralight*

Like with the Browning, the Platinum

Specifications: Ultralight Spinning Reels

	Daiwa GS600RD Sportline	Shimano Aero Sidelstab SI-1000R	Abu Garcia Platinum Max 2	Browning SDX1 Maxim	Mitchell 310UL
Price	\$69.95 (C)	\$32.99 (B)	\$59.95 (C)	\$45 (M)	\$25.95 (C)
Dimensions					
Weight (mfr.)	Not listed	8.1 oz.	8.8 oz.	5 oz.	6.6 oz.
Actual Weight With Line	8.6 oz.	7.9 oz.	11 oz.	5.5 oz.	7 oz.
Height (foot to housing body)	3-13/16 in.	3-11/16 in.	4-1/8 in.	3-3/16 in.	3-9/16 in.
Spool Diameter	1-7/16 in.	1-7/16 in.	1-9/16 in.	1-11/16 in.	1-5/16 in.
Spool Width	5/8 in.	5/8 in.	5/8 in.	5/16 in.	7/16 in.
Internal Features					
Gear Ratio (mfr.)	5.3:1	5.2:1	5.1:1	4.4:1	5:1
Main Gear Diameter	15/16 in.	1 in.	1-1/8 in.	15/16 in.	1- 5/16 in.
Main/Pinion Material	Zinc Alloy/Brass	S.S./Brass	Zinc Alloy/Brass	Zinc Alloy/Brass	Zinc Alloy/Brass
Number of Gear Teeth: Main/Pinion	33/6	31/6	49/6	35/8	49/10
Ball Bearings	3	2	6	2	1
Anti-Reverse Stops	10	1	6	4	11
Other Features					
Body Composition (mfr.)	Graphite Comp.	Graphite Comp.	Graphite Comp.	Graphite Comp.	Alum. Alloy
Body Color	Black and Silver	Black and Gold	Silver	Black	Black
Drag Type	Rear	Rear + Lever	Front: Greased Felt	Front: S.S./Teflon	Front: Leather/Teflon
Line Capacity (mfr.) Lb.-Test/Yds.	4/155; 6/100	2/270; 4/140	2/300; 4/200	2/180; 4/110	2/320; 4/260; 6/170
		6/110	6/130	6/80	
Line Retrieved per Handle Turn	23 in.	22 in.	22 in.	18 in.	20 in.
Spool Composition	Graphite Comp.	Graphite Comp.	Aluminum	Graphite Comp.	Graphite Comp.
Collapsible Handle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Reversible Handle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Line Clip	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Warranty	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	5 Years

Notes: (C) Cabela's. (B) Bass Pro Shops. (M) Manufacturer suggested retail.

Max 2 performed very well in many categories, but because of problems we experienced with it, we can't fully recommend it.

To begin, we think this size-2 frame is too big to be called an ultralight, even though the company rates it down to 2-pound line. Though we know these line designations are only guidelines for the buyer, we think it's misleading to have the gossamer 2-pound line capacities included. Because of this labeling, an ultralight-tackle customer might mistakenly buy the Max for his delicate rods, and find out, like we did, that the Max's reelfoot didn't fit some ultralight rod reelseats. Thus, we feel this model rightly should be sold as a light-action reel suitable for 4- to 8-pound lines, which would be more in line with its 11-ounce weight.

Besides our disagreement with Garcia's marketing of the Max 2, we were disturbed by a number of fit and function problems. A keeper screw in the plastic bottom plate, which covers two of four Phillips-head screws in the sideplate, had been overtightened, which caused the plastic to crack in two spots. Also, we expected the retrieve to be markedly smoother than any other reels in the test, since Garcia advertises the Max as having six-ball-bearing operation. Our testers said they felt the Max was as noisy and rough as the two-bearing Shimano, and more noisy than the three-bearing Daiwa. Also, Garcia's use of a worm gear to oscillate the long-nose spool forward and backward to ensure proper line winding didn't work that well. The Max 2 tended to pile line at the bottom of the spool. Also, a manual was not included.

Despite these drawbacks, the Garcia reel did some things very well. Its detented front drag, which would be helped with some sort of calibration marks, released line smoothly at start-up and throughout a fight with a fish. It's also a strikingly handsome reel, appointed with a wooden grip, a collapsible, reversible handle, line clip, and an aluminum spool. Inside, we saw stainless steel and brass main and pinion gears, which augur a long life for the reel.

Bottom Line: If you're looking for an ultralight reel, don't buy the Abu Garcia Platinum Max 2. It's too heavy and too clunky to balance properly on many UL rods, and its foot might not fit all rod handles.

Daiwa GS600RD Sportline and Shimano Aero Sidestab SI1000R

Neck and Neck

These two reels were clearly the class of the field, which was somewhat surprising in the Shimano's case because of its comparatively low price.

Remarkably, the rear-drag reels got just one 2 score (the Shimano for roller freedom) in the Field Test, a

trick even the higher-priced Shimano Biomaster and Daiwa Super Sport reels couldn't manage, nor could the Penn 420SS. Furthermore, both notched 4s for retrieve smoothness and drag smoothness. The Shimano alone got 4s for its bail operation—it's fitted with a Quickfire II trigger—and for its rear-drag-lever adjustability. Daiwa got a solo 4 for its free-rolling ball-bearing bail roller, which will minimize line wear, we believe.

On field operation alone, we'd be hard pressed to pick one over the other. And even looking at differentiating features doesn't help much. As well as its ball-bearing bail roller, the Daiwa sports a pushbutton folding handle, a little more line capacity, and slightly better cosmetics. The

Report Card: Ultralight Spinning Reels

	Shimano Aero Sidestab SI-1000R	Daiwa GS600RD Sportline	Abu Garcia Platinum Max 2	Browning SDX1 Maxim	Mitchell 310UL
Aesthetics	3	3	3	2	1
Weight/Heft/Balance	3	3	1	4	3
Size/Handfit	3	3	2	4	3
Casting					
Bail Operation	4	3	3	3	2
Distance	3	3	2	2	2
Accuracy	3	3	3	2	3
Retrieve					
Speed	3	3	3	2	2
Smoothness	4	4	3	4	1
Roller Freedom	2	4	2	2	2
Gear Noise	3	3	2	3	1
Line Capacity	3	3	4	1	3
Drag Operation					
Smoothness	4	4	4	3	2
Adjustability	4	3	2	2	2
Setting Consistency	3	3	3	2	1
Materials/Design					
Gearing	3	2	3	2	3
Component Quality	3	3	4	2	2
Servicing Ease/Cost	2	2	3	3	4
Manual	2	2	0	2	1
Warranty	2	2	2	2	4
Total Points	57	56	49	47	42
Bottom Line Score	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.2

Notes: Points awarded on a 4.0 scale: 0 = poor, 4 = excellent. In most instances, *Tackle Test* does not recommend items with a **Bottom Line** (average) **Score** lower than 2.5

FIELD TEST

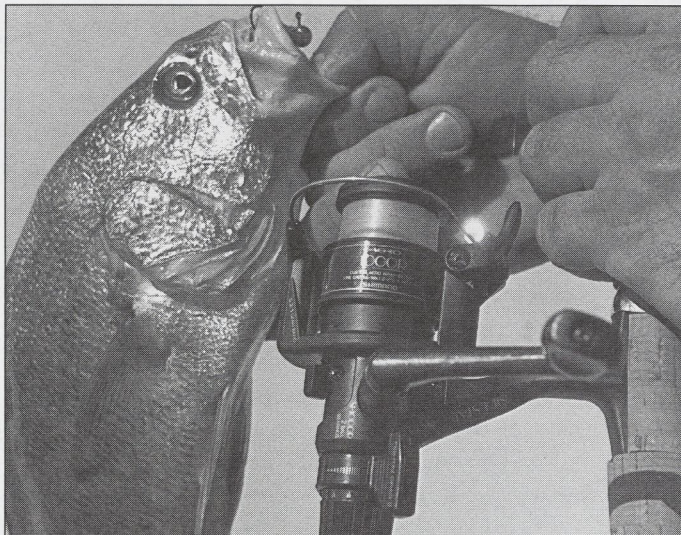
Shimano has the aforementioned trigger bail and Fightin' Drag II features, and costs half as much as the Daiwa.

Bottom Line: We prefer the Shimano Aero Sidestab SI1000R over the

Daiwa GS600RD Sportline because of the Aero's extra fish-fighting features and lower cost. Furthermore, we like the Sidestab better overall than the Penn 420 in outright functionality.

But since we haven't conducted long-term tests to see how it stands up to abuse, we'll have to update you on how the Shimano survives, or craters, in hard use. Likewise, we prefer the Daiwa over the Penn in the testing we've done so far. The Daiwa is slightly smoother in almost all its functions. But as with the Shimano, we need to fish it hard to see if it holds up as well as the 420SS. ■

Right: The Shimano notched 4s for retrieve smoothness, drag smoothness and drag-setting consistency, and bail operation.



Contacts: **Abu Garcia**, 21 Law Dr., Fairfield, NJ 07004; 201/227-7666. **Browning**, Rt. 1, Morgan, UT 84050; 801/876-2711. **Daiwa**, 7421 Chapman Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92641; 714/895-6645. **Mitchell**, 4220 Chambers Hill Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17111; 717/564-5588. **Shimano**, P.O. Box 19615, Irvine, CA 92713-9615; 714/951-5003.

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$\frac{1}{4}$ = 109 gr.

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Mepps #3 - 95 gr.

" $\frac{1}{4}$ oz "red w/lt. wt." - 93 gr.

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sm. minnow tackle - 26 gr.

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red pencil weight - small - 15 gr.

" " " large - 32 gr.

red wh. fly spinner - 27 gr.

Mepps #1 - 61 gr.

fly jake - 23 gr.

Mepps #2 - 75 gr.

~~Bring Car registration papers tomorrow~~

~~Just~~

Ovis sp. - 63 gr. $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

flatfish type lure - 30 gr.

red & white $\frac{3}{8}$ oz wd. - 136 gr.

red & white fly spoon - 27 gr.

Fly alba - 23 gr.

Whis-fur #1 - 80 gr.

Hi-Fr $\frac{1}{8}$ oz - 45 gr.

C.B. Swing Nat 1 - 32 gr.

Dandelion Widge $\frac{3}{16}$ oz - 87 gr.

P & M Celta #1 - 33 gr. $\frac{1}{13}$ oz

#2 - 53 gr. $\frac{1}{8}$ oz

#3 - 77 gr. $\frac{1}{6}$ oz

1 oz. = 437½ gr. ¼ oz. = 109 gr.

⅛ = 55 gr. ⅓ oz. = 1 dram = 27⅓ gr.

No. 0 mepps - 36 gr. No. 1 mepps - 61 gr.
2 " - 75 gr. 3 " - 95 gr.

¼ oz. red & white wt. - 93 gr.

" " yellow " - 97 gr.

Hardy ¾" spin down - 24 gr.

" 1" model fly minnow - 30 gr.

" small minnow tackle - 26 gr.

Doll fly jig - 36 gr.

next largest (⅓ oz) jig - 74 gr.

Rocky jr. fly - 24 gr.

baby minnow - 21

smallest reflex spinner - 27

C. W. Swing #1 - 32

Dartmouth Skeeter - 14

Hol "Dorado" - 105

Crawford Little with summer-salmon tactics for fishermen denied the luxury of classic fly-water

IT WAS LATE on an August afternoon. The soft, steady drizzle of the previous day had finally eased away, and I knew that the spate river that runs at the bottom of the field below our house would still be high but already clearing. However, there was still plenty of time for another cup of tea before I called up my labradors and strolled down to make a start.

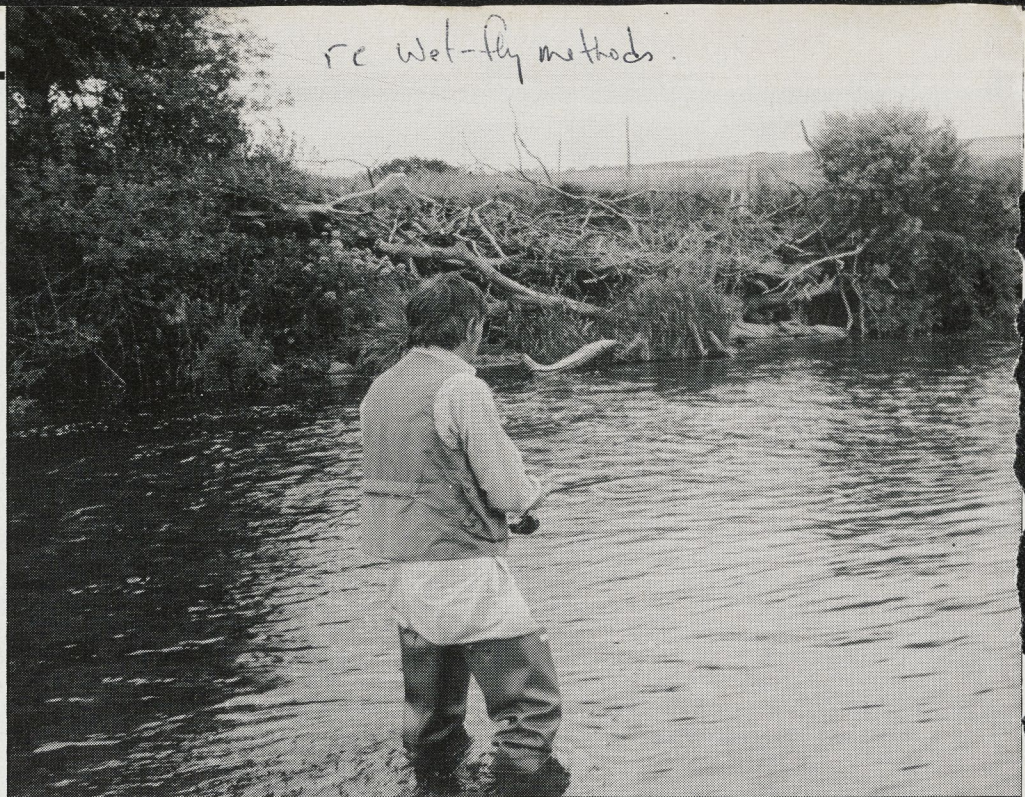
There was a big push of water over the little ford where I crossed to fish the opposite bank. It caught both the dogs unawares and swept them away finally to scramble out many yards downstream. A great, grey shape flopped up from the bank, skimming the alders and teasing the dogs to give chase. I wondered whether the old heron was a good omen or ill, and passed on.

Our destination was a smallish pool with two great advantages for producing a fish in the dusk, the time when salmon are most likely to run. First, it lies just upstream of a great, deep holding dub which offers a place of sanctuary to salmon during the day. Second, it is the last pool of rocky holding-water before a long section of shallow, rough and broken streams. As the light fades, salmon ease up from the dub and into this pool, halting briefly before negotiating the streams.

I crawled over the short skyline leading down to the pool, making for the gap in the trees toward the tail. This is the only possible access, due to the heavy growth of trees and bushes lining the banks. The dogs, being well used to foreshore antics, crouched down on their bellies and slithered after me.

There was hardly time to remove the small Mepps spinner from the butt-ring of the rod when a fish lunged on the surface at the tail of the pool and hard in against the opposite bank. I cast from my kneeling position, aiming the spinner so that it would swing a yard above where the salmon had shown and — bang! — he had it. After a couple of minutes, with a few hair-raising moments as he forced the fight to beneath some trailing branches, a nice little fish of 8 lb came to the net.

I was really quite surprised that he had taken in the tail of the pool. Most fish go straight up into the jumble of boulders and slabs in the necks. I cast upstream, reeling in quite quickly to keep the Mepps swimming just ahead of the current, twinkling over the heads of any fish that might have taken up a brief residence. I glimpsed the spinner as it came opposite my position. And there, within



An upstream spinner will often produce a fish when other tactics fail.

Upstream and

inches of it, followed a tight-mouthed grilse. Then for a few, but oh so long seconds, they were both lost to view downstream.

I watched the line curve round, drawing the spinner into the bank at my feet, the grilse still following. I swung the rod away upstream, giving those few but precious extra inches of travel. The fish took in slow motion, turning back to midstream as I swung the rod back to give him some slack. I could almost see the tiny treble hook being pulled back into the angle of his jaw.

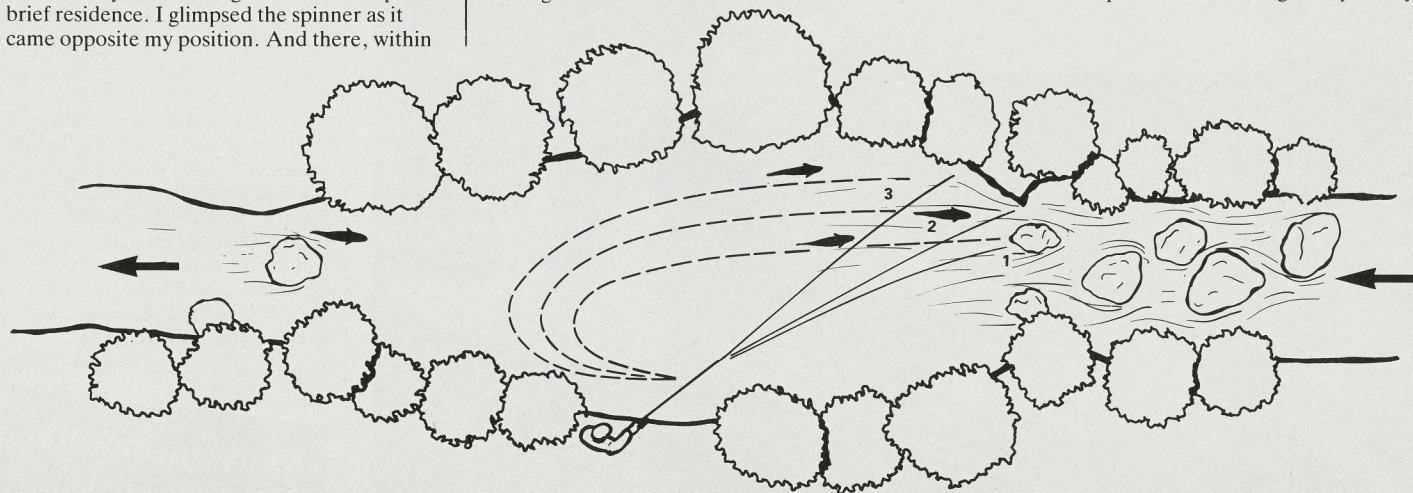
It is awe-inspiring to watch the fight of a fresh-run fish at such close range; the sheer power of the initial runs of even such a small fish straining the light tackle as he sought to take off upstream and down, where I could not follow; then the dogged shaking and the strength slowly ebbing from his body as he came to the surface on his side.

I hope that this little tale serves to illustrate a number of points. Time and again I have found that much of the secret of success in salmon fishing lies in being at the right place at the right time. And this is never more true

than on the smaller spate rivers with their quick rise and fall. Secondly if you want to catch fish, you must be prepared to vary tackle and tactics to suit not only the river, but also the prevailing conditions.

Let me make it clear; I am normally dedicated to the fly. There are certain waters at various times of the year, in certain conditions, where I would regard "spin" and "worm" as four-letter words. I know there are some sportsmen who visibly shudder at the mention of upstream spinning, but I think their experience must be limited and their pronouncements, dare I say it, entirely theoretical.

In practice, I have found the light, upstream spinner to be a skilful and sporting method and often the only solution to fishing small, tree-lined rivers. It also has its place on larger waters when the river shrinks to its bare summer bones and the fly-only man shrugs his shoulders in frustration. Certainly it requires a far greater degree of skill and effort than the taking of a salmon on a well-stocked and clear-banked pool on the floating line, possibly



This is the pool where the writer took two fish in quick succession. Because of the impenetrable trees, except for one small break where the angler is standing, it is only possible to cover the fish in the tail with a downstream cast. A series of upstream casts, as shown, must be used to cover those in the neck.

FISH

Every angler has caught a fish that, for one reason or another, sticks in his memory. We ask some of our major contributors to describe theirs

ON A LOVELY day in May a few years ago I was introducing John Winter, secretary of the Bishop Auckland Club, to a beat on the middle reaches of the River Lune. The water was in fine order, with a sprinkling of salmon and good sea-trout around.

A trickle hatch of medium olives got the wild brown trout moving nicely. I was tempted to put up a light trout rod with a DT4F line and a size 16 dry John Storey on a 2 lb point, and began in the tail of the pool well clear of

John's operations.

After a short spell of excellent sport with the hard-fighting brownies I saw a rise to a dun which gave the distinct impression of a very big specimen on the feed. It was a fairly long cast but the fly dropped suitably and after drifting little more than a foot it was taken with a deliberate, seemingly slow but classic head-and-tail rise. I tightened and instantly the water exploded as a great bar of silver flung itself into the air. My little reel shrieked as the first run took out all the line and a lot of

backing.

John saw what was happening and came running down. I confessed that I had no real hope of subduing such a fish on the tackle I was using, but I was going to do my best. After each of a succession of long runs I managed to recover a lot of line and eventually there was some semblance of a slight degree of control being established. Indeed John got ready with the net in the very shallow water beside the smooth, almost flat, shingle beach where I was standing. Time after

time I got the fish coming towards the net, but then it saw John and set off again at a tremendous pace. Half an hour had now gone by and I said that the only desperate hope was for me to go well back from the water's edge and try to beach the fish with John standing well clear but ready to dash up and grab the fish if I could get it on to its side.

It worked. Triumphant John lifted up a beautiful, fresh-run sea-trout of 4½ lb.

Reg Righy

IT WAS CARNIVAL morning in the village and the place was like an ant-hill as everyone prepared for afternoon. Mother, bless her, had promised a neighbour that little Moc would slip down to the river and get two trout for her. Her little boys were competing in the Biblical Character section of the carnival as the little boy with the two fish and five loaves.

Away I went to fulfil mother's promise. The nearby Brenig river, despite a fair input of raw sewage

and other rubbish was full of fish. Wild fish, too, a fitting quarry for any angler.

The run into the first pool, Pwll Concrete, produce a nice trout of about ten ounces; the next run produced one about eight inches. Too small, I thought, and returned it. What a mistake!

The next few pools produced nothing, and my teenage confidence disappeared. Anxiety replaced it and with it a loss of performance. The very last pool,

normally a cracker, also produced nothing. So I had to fish on private water. I hoped that the lady who owned it and who also owned a loud, raucous voice would forgive me as I was, after all, on a "divine mission!"

The six-inch trout that I hooked there was gratefully accepted and having raced home I was roundly admonished for wasting my time fishing while everybody else had been working.

The little boy with his fish and

loaves did not win a prize, nor did the judge receive the fish for supper as would have been the case had he been efficient. We did not believe in rewarding inefficiency!

Is a six-inch fish a memorable fish? Its capture meant that mother kept her promise to her neighbour, and in those days a promise was a bond that was kept irrespective of the cost and effort required to fulfil it.

Moc Morgan

ASULTRY JUNE evening in 1979. The middle beats on Aberdeenshire Dee were past their salmon-best, but a little evening sea-trouting with light tackle promised fine sport.

By 10.30 I had had some wild, violent scraps with a number of these fierce fish. Two 3-pounders on the grassy bank gleamed silvery in the fading light. Another tell-tale dimpling rise at the tail of the pool was the signal to get busy again.

Now chest-deep I was covering a set of dimples less than 15 yards out. The fly swung round. There was a small turn in the fast water, a gentle pull. I tightened. No fiery acrobatics. "Strange sea-trout, this," I puzzled.

Turning round in the heavy current, I was just starting back the 30 yards to the bank when my "sea-trout" took off like an express train. Off balance, I tripped over a submerged boulder and went down, or rather sank majestically. But, when

Neptune-like I re-emerged, I was still connected.

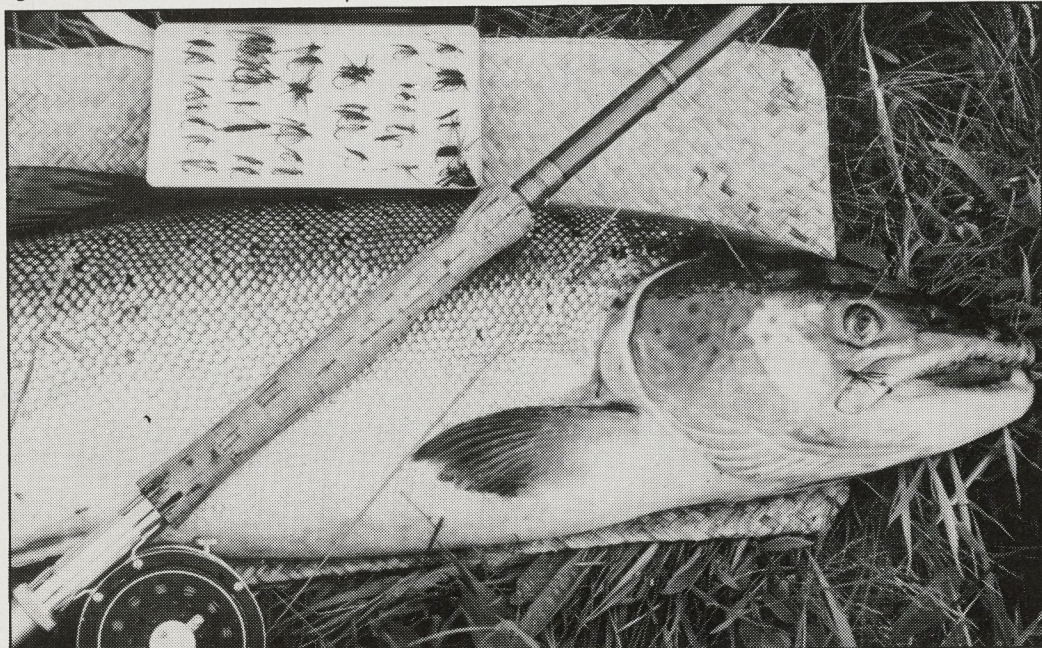
This was the beginning of a battle which lasted until 12.15am. Even with the assistance of another fisher, who had come to my rescue, once more I tripped, sank and surfaced again before reaching the bank. With chest-waders emptied — by means of lying on my back, feet upwards — the contest was on in earnest. The odds heavily favoured this obviously dour and very powerful fish. A leader of 7 lb breaking

strain, a light trout reel — though fortunately one with plenty of monofil backing — and single-handed rod was no match for a big salmon in an equally big pool and heavy water. At each successive reel-screaming run my partner wagged his head and muttered. We both reckoned it was merely a matter of time.

Dame Fortune, however, was smiling. With both the fish and myself utterly exhausted I tried to steer it to where my partner had sunk the net. Still we had not laid an eye on this mystery monster. In the blackness of the moonless night it was invisible. He slowly lifted. There was an almighty thrashing. He had missed. But swift as a ferret, he turned and scooped towards the bank. There was more thrashing. But this time the fish was safely in the net.

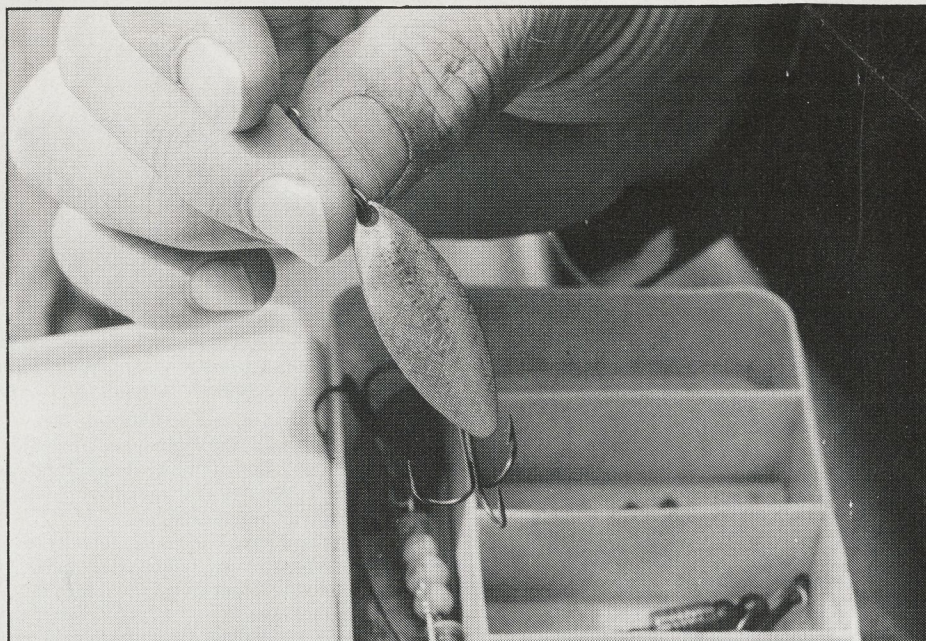
It proved not to be quite the monster we had expected. Though it was long at 44 inches, it tipped the scales at a mere 17 lb. Clearly it was a "resident" cock which had been in the river for many months. But that salmon had tested me to new limits, and proved that it is a good idea to have plenty of backing on your trout reels!

David Shaw



Well worth a ducking: David Shaw's Dee fish.

More memorable fish next month



Mepps spoons are ideal for upstream spinning. The one in the angler's hand would be good in highish water.

d ultra-light

the easiest form of fishing, some would argue.

Of course, it can be used for snagging fish, if heavy tackle is used. But this is surely no more of a criticism than that of fishing the sunk line with a big, heavy fly which, in the wrong hands, is the sniggler's delight. How often do we find that it is the man, rather than the method, who gives a technique a bad name!

The basic outfit for light spinning is a 7 ft or 8 ft rod, a small fixed-spool reel and a monofilament line of about 8 lb breaking-strain. I am lothe to go any lighter than that as there is always the chance of attracting a big fish, and you may have to hold him in a small pool. On many occasions, a cautious increase to 10lb nylon would give me greater confidence, but this is the absolute maximum as we shall have trouble enough in casting the tiny spinners that we shall employ to any useful distance. One hundred yards of line on the reel is ample for most rivers, with 150 yards for bigger flows.

Before considering the baits, I must mention swivels. These are essential in order to avoid kinking the line. If it were possible to obtain a smaller version of the ball-bearing swivel, then this is the one that I would choose. I have to make do with barrel swivels, size 12, with a split shot nipped to a short length of nylon to act as an anti-kink lead. I do not really like this

arrangement, but until it is possible to obtain a smaller ball-bearing swivel, there seems to be little alternative.

The Mepps spinner is my first choice for upstream work, in sizes No.0 and 1 for summer work, and possibly a No. 2 or 3 as water levels increase and autumn approaches. Obviously, the shallower the flow and clearer the water, the smaller the spinner that should be employed.

Think of it in terms of fly-fishing. In summer, when we would normally be fishing our smallest flies, we should use a tiny spinner. If the temperature drops, or the river is falling but still high after a spate, we can increase the size slightly.

The quill minnow is another great favourite. They have been difficult to obtain for some time, and I was delighted to discover that they are once more available. I prefer to rely on the tail treble, and cut off the flying treble. I once lost a fish when the flying treble caught in the outside of my net. I prefer the smallest size, 1½ inches, in brown or sometimes green.

A small metal Devon minnow can be useful in some waters, but I do not use it much. When I have, it was a tiny, one-inch brown-and-gold that proved successful in quite slow water. The problem with Devons is that they have to be recovered a little bit too

quickly in order to set them revolving. As we shall see when we look at technique, this can be a severe disadvantage. I prefer to keep my Devons in reserve for the times when the river is high and still dark after a spate; it is then, cast downstream, that they come into their own.

There; I have just mentioned the downstream cast, and this article was supposed to be about upstream spinning. The point is that, on many occasions, you can't have one without the other.

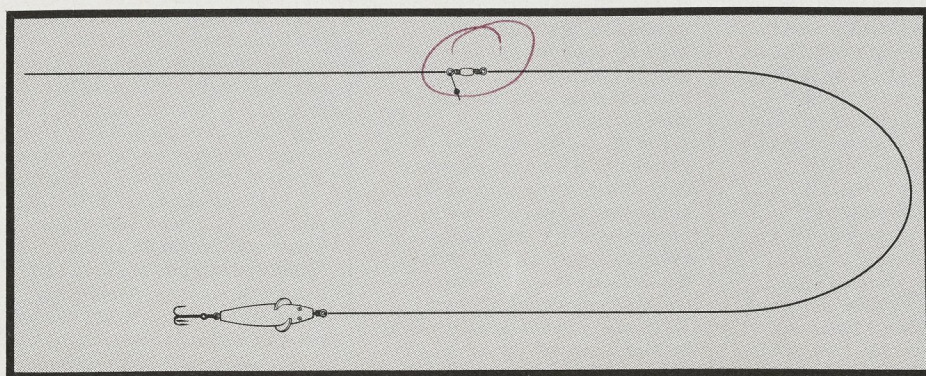
I remember when we moved home to the West Country that I asked a colleague which way he found most successful to fish. His reply was characteristically slow: "Well, boy, I don't rightly know what you mean. Downstream, up or across, they all has their day. It all depends, see."

On returning to the Scottish Borders, I have found this to be just as true as it was on the Dart and Tamar. On the Cairn, which flows past our present home, I am once again faced with a small river and tree-lined banks where it is often a case of finding a gap and casting "around the clock" to cover a pool.

Following a summer flood, the time to start fishing is when it starts to fall. Search out a streamy section, but not too fast, and fish the slack at the side of the current, casting your spinner, say a 1½-inch brown-and-gold Devon, or a yellow-belly, across the stream and allowing the current to lead it down and round. If you recover the bait briskly, expect a sea-trout to come hammering in. However, the salmon prefers to operate at a more sedate pace.

As the spate falls further, it is time to turn to the pools. Start at the tail and work towards the head, casting upstream, across and down in a methodical fashion, searching out the likely water. This article started with a description of fishing a pool that lay below a stretch of fast, broken water where fish might stop for a few moments in order to rest before negotiating the obstacle on their upstream migration. Equally, the pool above such a run, or maybe a waterfall, can also be productive when fish pause to get back their breath.

It is when the river has returned to summer levels that we have to use all the skill, and light tackle, at our disposal. This is the time to employ ultra-fine techniques. Earlier, I mentioned crawling over a short skyline, and that was in fairly high-water conditions. How much more important, then, to make ourselves as unobtrusive as possible when the water is clear and low!



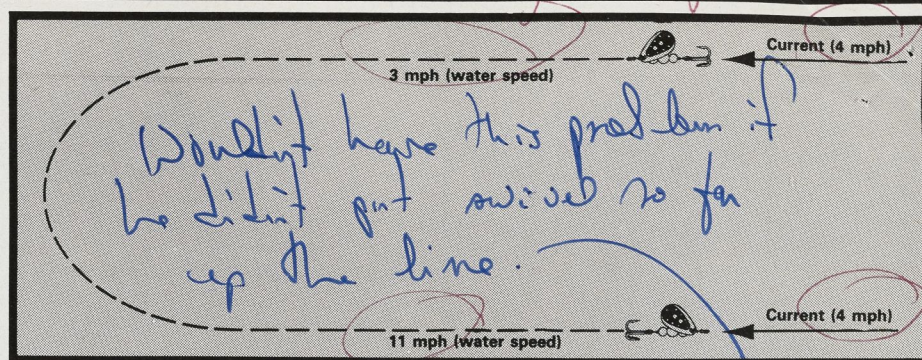
An upstream spinning rig, with 18 inches of line between swivel and spinner. Note the anti-kink shot attached to the end of the swivel nearest the rod.

Careful wading can be an advantage in staying below the skyline, but move like a heron, an inch at a time. A camouflage jacket or other quietly coloured clothing helps us blend into the riverside scene. The time of our operations will be at dusk and dawn, when the sun is off the water, and we shall be fishing right up into the streams at the throats of the pools. This is when the upstream cast comes into its own. Salmon, untemptable by any other means, will turn and snatch at our whisper of a spinner as it flutters past, or may follow it downstream to take as it turns and rises out of the current.

The rate of recovery is vital and, for some, quite hard to master. If you fish the upstream wet-fly for trout, you will instinctively know the speed at which to retrieve, keeping a taut line and drawing the flies down just ahead of the pace of the current. Dry-fly fishermen will have a similar feeling, but not quite the same.

The point to remember is that the spinner must travel back faster than the stream, otherwise it will simply fall to the bottom. Let me give you an example. If we cast upstream over water that is travelling downstream at 4 mph and recover line a 4 mph or less, the spinner will simply flutter to the bottom. If, however, we retrieve it at 5 mph it will offer the equivalent of fishing a retrieve of 1 mph in still water. Equally, we should not recover too quickly, as we are attempting to represent something like a small fish swimming downstream. As such a small creature could not greatly exceed, say, 3 mph in a short burst, we see that in our 4 mph current we have a fairly narrow speed limit between 5 and 7 mph recovery.

Another point is that as the spinner passes below us, turning to face upstream, it would appear unrealistic if we maintained the same rate of recovery. If we had been recovering it



Water-speed alterations if, wrongly, the same speed of recovery (7 mph ground-speed) is maintained as the spinner turns in the current below the angler.

at 7 mph downstream, and kept turning the handle of your reel at the same speed, it would accelerate from 3 mph (7 minus 4) to 11 mph (7 plus 4). So remember that you are a fisherman, not an organ-grinder!

Much of what I have said relates directly to the smaller spate streams, but can be equally well applied to the larger rivers when they fall beyond summer levels.

Here again, we shall be concentrating on the faster, shallower water. Our upstream casts will be aimed right up into the necks of the pools and, once again, dawn and dusk will offer the best chances of sport. We shall be able to employ the same tackle: light lines of about 8 lb nylon, a small fixed-spool to carry 150 yards of line, and a 7 ft rod. I find this length ideal for flicking out the light Mepps and quill minnows employed with this method. Do not be discouraged if you are unable to cast far. Fish tend, in my experience, to concentrate on what is happening above and to the front of them. You may be surprised at how close you can carefully stalk up from behind them.

One final point that I would make is that

although we refer to an upstream cast, it will be made upstream and across. This is tactically important, and makes all the difference in ensuring that the salmon is presented with the spinner first, rather than the line and swivel. Start by searching out the near side of the streams, then gradually fan your casts across. On a wide river this may involve a number of casts before moving upstream three or four paces.

I can only hope that I have now been able to suggest why I regard ultra-light salmon spinning, and upstream spinning, as very skilful and sporting methods of catching salmon. Possibly, if more people were to experience them in practice, they would be awarded the high esteem that they so rightly deserve. I see no reason for the present, pompous attitude adopted by some who, I note, arrange their salmon fishing to coincide with those times, and on those waters, where the fly will score time after time. For the "angler for all seasons", I regard the tiny spinner as a most useful ace up the sleeve, to be played when conditions dictate.

WELSH WHISPERS

Two-day Merthyr match

WELSH ANGLERS will have an excellent opportunity to repay Mr Ted Rowlands, MP for Merthyr Tydfil, for all the hard work he has done on their behalf in Parliament in relation to the Salmon Bill.

Mr Rowlands is promoting an angling competition on the Llwynon Reservoir, near Merthyr, on August 9 and 10, the first day fly-only, the second, any method. There are some valuable prizes, and Mr Rowlands' aim is to raise £2,000 for a local charity.

Licence fee compromise

Licence fees have always been and always will be a bone of contention between the WWA and anglers. The proposed increase of 30 per cent was bitterly opposed. Now the WWA has modified its proposed increase so that it will be phased-in with approximately 10 per cent being added for each of the next three years. It is a pity that the increase in licence fees has come at a time when the stocks of migratory fish are low and anglers believe that they are being asked to pay more and more for less and less.

It is high time that a new scheme was devised to deal with licence increases. This confrontation is bound to do the game-fishing industry untold harm.

Celebrations at Trawsfynydd

The Autumn International Fly Fishing Match is to be held on Llyn Trawsfynydd on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of the atomic power station. The first International Match to be held on Trawsfynydd was also 21 years ago. It is anticipated that the anniversary match will be rather a special occasion. Preparations are in hand for a grand social occasion and the fishery is well stocked with quality brown trout which should provide good sport. The Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association has purchased 30 new outboard motors for the occasion. Once again the Mid-Wales Development Board has been generous with its grant aid.

The team representing Wales will be: Tony Bevan (Captain), Hugh Howells, Derek Thorne, Ken Bowring, Geraint Pritchard, Brian Davies, Mike Bateman, Raymond Jones, Ian Lawson, Dai Gildas Jones, Gwilym Hughes, Colin Welson, Gwennallt Evans, and Vince Gwilym.

Lucky Llandeilo

The brisk traffic in the purchase and selling of fishing rights in the '60s has slowed down, and the market has been rather dormant over the last three years. Yet excellent fishing stretches do come on the market periodically. One which did so recently was on the Towy at Llandeilo. A number of angling clubs were at the auction with their cheque-books at the ready, but unfortunately the bidding went too high for them, and probably the last club in the bidding was Llandeilo itself. Then the stretch was sold to a private individual and gloom descended on the valley because of the loss of a good fishing stretch to the angling community at large. A private purchase of necessity means that the stretch is lost to most local anglers.

But not on this occasion. Llandeilo AC, which had opted out of the bidding some £4,000 below the sale price, had not finished with the sale. To everyone's surprise, the club immediately bought the stretch from the new buyer. Dilwyn Richards, the club secretary, is to be complimented on some excellent negotiations on behalf of his club, but it can be revealed that a certain gentleman named

George Duviau, from Fair Fach, said he would pay the difference between the sale price and the price the club could afford. Mr Duviau, a French gentleman I believe, duly provided the £4,000 and the Llandeilo AC now has the stretch. It is excellent fly water. Already this season Alan Williams, from Cydweli, has taken seven of 9 lb, 8 lb, 7 lb, 6½ lb and 6 lb, and young Michael Hall a salmon of 19½ lb from the stretch. Well done Dilwyn Richards, and well done George Duviau.

Rents over the top

The British Water Board has really hit some of the Welsh angling clubs hard with its drastic increases in the rent for their fishing. It is true that most of the rights owned by the BWB are for coarse fishing, but some stretches are good trout water. The Tawe AC has been subjected to fantastic rent increase, and it would seem that in addition to the rather dictatorial attitude of the Board, there is difficulty in establishing negotiations. The demand of £300 per mile is absurd. No club in Wales can hope to meet such an increase.

Moc Morgan

Trout and Salmon

Sm: Hson: an April 1993

How the snapper gets its name

Worm fishing



Alligator snapper wiggles pink "worm" at end of its tongue to attract curious fish, which it then gobbles up.

Fish must like them!

aquatic scavengers, being able with their powerful beaks, jaws and feet to pull apart virtually any carcass they encounter.

Like other turtles, snappers are equipped with olfactory bulbs. Though conclusive studies are lacking, it is assumed that they are to some extent scent hunters, particularly when foraging in murky waters. In this connection, there is another common snapper story that has become stylized through repetition. It goes more or less as follows: "There used to be this old boy, kind of a hermit, who lived on an island upstream from here and kept a big snapper he'd trained. When the authorities had reason to think there'd been a drowning but couldn't find the body, they'd get this old boy. He'd drilled a hole in the trailing edge of that turtle, and he'd rig him up with a stout leader and line, then reel him out into the water like a kite. If there was a corpse out there, that turtle would find it. My daddy watched them do it more than once."

So far as living prey is concerned, snappers feed principally on insects, crustaceans, amphibians and small trash fish. Claims of sportsmen that they are also frequent and formidable predators on waterfowl are probably exaggerated. In one investigation of snappers' food habits, it was found that less than 2 percent of their diet was made up of birds or mammals that were apparently alive when taken.

Occasionally snappers may directly pursue and capture their prey, but their opportunities and abilities for doing so are limited. Generally they employ ambush tactics, lying motionless in holes and aquatic thickets, waiting to grab unwary edible creatures that approach too closely. On this behavioral note it seems appropriate to return to the alligator snapper. This species is uniquely endowed as a lurking predator. At the end of an alligator snapper's tongue is a fleshy, wormlike growth. Settling into a deep hole, the creature opens its huge mouth and wiggles this appendage, which in these circumstances becomes engorged with blood and turns a pink, meaty color (left). Attracted by the seemingly tasty morsel, foolish fish swim within the jaws of the turtle, which instantly snap shut behind them.

The snapper ranges far and wide

Alligator snappers are occasionally found as far north as southern Illinois or Iowa, but normally they range only between western Florida and eastern Texas and are most common along the lower Mississippi and its tributaries. In contrast, the common snapper is found everywhere east of the High Plains and south of lower Canada, excepting a small area of northern Maine. Subspecies of *C. serpentina* have extended this range at least as far as Ecuador. The consensus among interested herpetologists in the United States is that currently

sized animals. Out of the water they can be quite intimidating, but underwater, Christiansen emphasizes, they are usually very docile. In their range, however, few other members of the fauna have such exaggerated reputations. I think this is probably because they look so awful—that is, ugly and mean. The gnarled shell is usually covered with moss and slime. The tail is thick, fat and spiky. The eyes are cold and penetrating. The creatures lurch along like ill-made robots on splayed legs and wickedly clawed feet. Beyond their reflexive gaping and snapping, they hiss and smell bad.

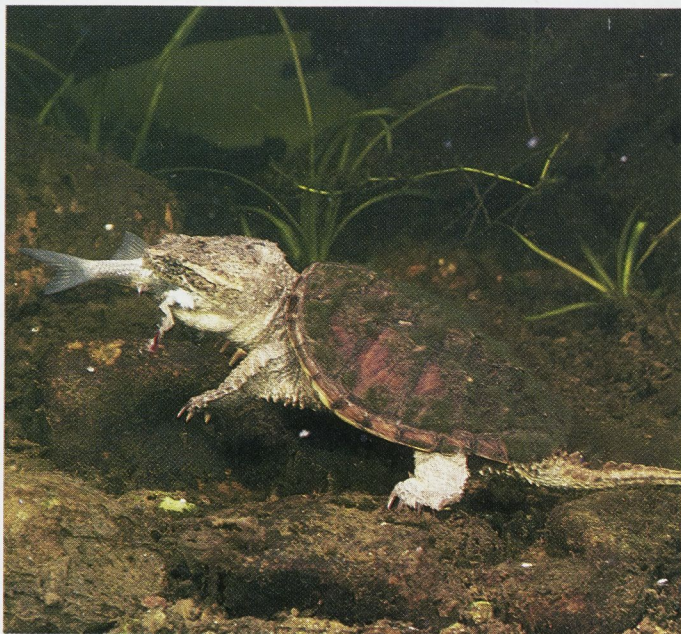
If snappers project a decidedly prehistoric image, there is good reason. Some 250 million years ago, certain amphibians became covered with water-impervious scales and acquired the ability to lay eggs with relatively hard shells. In consequence they could operate, without drying out, on dry land. Those reptiles, now known as cotylosaurs, are thought to be the ancestors of all subsequent vertebrates. Very shortly as such events are measured, some of them developed tough external shells made up of developed bony plates. About 200 million years ago, they became essentially what they are today—turtles. As such, they waited and watched as the great dinosaurs came and went, as birds and mammals appeared, and as some of the latter improved themselves sufficiently to start fires, think about cotylosaurs and operate VCRs.

Among those of us presently here, turtles are the pre-eminent evolutionary conservatives. But while stubbornly retaining their basic chassis they have, somewhat like truck manufacturers, progressively adapted it to function effectively in a wide variety of niches. There are salt-water and freshwater turtles, woodland turtles, prairie and desert species.

Between the carapace and the plastron

The shells of snappers reflect the fact that, to the extent turtles can be, they are generalists who frequent deep and shallow waters and adjacent shorelines, but are also inclined to travel overland, sometimes for as much as a mile, between wettish places. The upper shell, the carapace, is relatively thin. It is made up of plates, with irregular ridges where they meet. It is tough enough to discourage casual terrestrial predators. The undershell, the plastron, has been reduced to a small, cross-shaped plate that leaves fleshy areas of the neck, legs and tail exposed. The effect of this diminished shell mass is to improve buoyancy in the water and agility, again by turtle standards, on land.

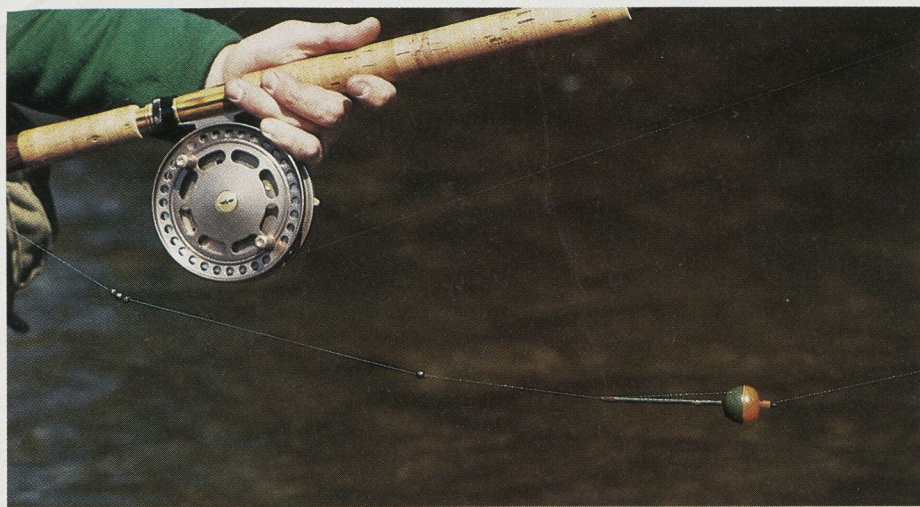
When it comes to eating, snappers like meat but will settle for just about anything. Analyses of stomach contents indicate that about half of their diet is made up of vegetable matter and carrion. In regard to the latter, snappers are among the most useful and effective of



A snapper uses its hooked beak to help secure a fish as its throat enlarges to accommodate size of meal.



Reduced size of shell on snapper's underside enables creature to gain weight and facilitates movement.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

The Newest Way To Take Fish

Float trotting is a European fishing method that may seem strange to some until, that is, everyone watches you catch fish.

By Jerry Gibbs, Fishing Editor

Phillip Clough began retrieving line fast. Ninety feet downstream in the river, an angler nearly exploded from his waders.

"What the *%#!! was that?" the man yelled.

"Sorry," Phil called to him, then turned to me, grinning. "I sometimes get carried away using this system. You can keep your drift going almost indefinitely without drag, you know. Then when you start retrieving, your float's way downriver slipping close to somebody, and when it blasts under the surface it nearly gives him a heart attack. He thinks it's a fish!"

The fish in this case were steelhead on New York's heavily pressured Salmon River. But they could have been walleyes, salmon, trout, bass, catfish or north-erns in any other river or tailwater below a dam. They could have been any of many varied species

in a tidal drift in salt water, too.

"Let me put it this way," Phil said. "The technique works for any gamefish in any place with current. Overall, it's far superior to bottom bouncing or virtually any other presentation."

In the sort of runs where it is best used, the system may be the most unbelievably effective and enjoyable way to catch fish that you'll ever see. In North America, it's called float fishing, but it started out as float trotting.

Developed in England primarily for use on various rough fish species, the method was quietly practiced in some Ontario rivers by a few veteran British and Scottish anglers who emigrated to the Canadian province. Recently, it has been adapted to the demands of contemporary steelheading by a group of young, intense anglers. Phil Clough (pronounced "cluff") is one of them.

Born in Birmingham, England,

the advertising and design specialist describes trotting like this: "It's a way to drift a fly, egg, worm or natural nymph—any light bait—utterly without drag and without resistance when the fish takes. And it presents the offering at the fish's level, or just inches above its nose, so that it will take."

To accomplish all of this, trotters use special floats (not called bobbers) and special soft split shot precisely located on their lines. As the current increases, the shapes of the floats are changed from cigar to teardrop or round—all with a quill or stem through the center. Slow current and barely moving pools call for narrow floats with wire-stabilizing

continued on page 103

The float-trotting rig is an ideal way to catch stream steelhead but it is deadly on other stream or river fish as well.



NEWEST WAY TO TAKE FISH

continued from page 84

stems—the kind used by river fishermen in English match fishing.

The weighting of the line is called shotting. How the line or leader is weighted is a blend of physics and black magic. You want to get your lure or bait down fast to increase the length of effective drift. Equally important, the fly or bait should proceed first down-current so that a fish sees the offering before anything else. Working against you is the swifter current at the surface that wants to carry the float down first.

The trick is to weight the line or leader below the float with heavier shot, going to lighter shot as you approach the lure or bait. Some trotters space shot evenly four to six inches apart all of the way down to 10 or 12 inches away from the offering. That's the closest any shot should be to your hook.

Other anglers have different opinions.

"I prefer ganging the shot in small clusters near the float for a little ways down," said Phil. "That way, I get an instant sink at the head of a run."

In water that's not particularly clear, some anglers place float and shot directly on their six to eight-pound-test main line. The clearer the water becomes, the greater the need for a lighter leader. Some float fishers tie a light leader (four to less than one-pound test) directly to the main line. Others

use a tiny (No. 14) barrel swivel. You can fix the float to the leader at the desired length below this swivel, but it is more popular to put the float on the main line. That way, if you break off, you'll only lose the leader, not the float.

If you put the float on the main line, fix some of the heavier shot on the line below the float, and tie on the swivel. Tie a leader to this swivel. Depending on water clarity and depth, the leader may be two to six or

They were taking steelhead when others could not.

seven feet long. Nothing but rod length prevents it from being longer for deeper holes. A properly weighted line or leader will sink in a parabolically shaped curve from the float to the lure or bait.

Water depth and current speed dictate shot weight. Generally, AAA or BB size shot is used beneath the float, fine No. 6, then even smaller No. 8 shot down near lure or bait. There are dust and micro-size shot available, too, if you get really fanatical about this game. The leader should be weighted enough so that the slightest additional resistance—the lure dragging on a

rock or the gentlest take of a fish—will make the float tilt, twitch, possibly even pull it down. With such finely tuned weighting, the fish will not feel any resistance when it takes.

"Those are the basics," Phil said. "Then you can get into the finesse aspects of the technique, which is great fun and so effective. I'd guess that 80 percent of our local (Woodbridge, Ontario,) steelheaders have switched to float fishing now, and for good reason. On the proper kind of run, your fly or bait floats like a feather a couple of inches over the bottom and the fish just needs to open its mouth. If you use natural bait, it's not going to be torn off as it would if bottom bouncing—sometimes on the first cast."

Phil's father, Derek, and friend Chris Murray, a New York photographer, joined us during this day on the Salmon. Derek was not fishing, and Chris had stopped to listen to the dissertation. Now he made an important point.

"The proper run is vital, for sure," he said. "The perfect run for float fishing is one with a fairly even bottom rather than a fast shoot with lots of snags."

"Right," Phil added, "but you've got to learn individual runs on different rivers, no matter what species of fish you're after. Some people set their fly or bait four feet below the float and leave it there—even if they're fishing a nine-foot hole. The fish

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aren't going to come up."

The two anglers were talking about steelhead, of course, but with any species, learning the drifts and at where and what level the fish are holding is basic.

Both Phil and Chris agreed on the ultimate float-fishing rod. It's a 13-foot Loomis IM6 Model 1562. Others include the 11-foot European Predator or Match Rods (with spinning guides) available from Cabela's, or Class Tackle's 12-foot Float Rod. Phil has used 10 to 10½-foot rods on smaller streams but prefers longer blanks. Some U.S. anglers opt for 10-foot fly-rod blanks fitted with spinning guides. All of these rods have flexible upper sections that absorb the shock of big fish on ultralight leaders. How-

ever, they are not as limber as a noodle rod. Long blanks help control the float, help in the particular flipping-type presentation you make and help in setting the hook at long distances. Their lightness helps reduce stress on the angler.

"You can learn the basics of weighting, balancing and using the floats, then get started fishing with a long float rod even if you start out with a spinning reel," said Chris. "Especially in smaller rivers. But if you fish steelhead or salmon, the spinning reel's got to have an excellent drag. A slightly larger spool diameter helps take in line faster and reduce memory coils."

"But to be most effective—and for the most fun—you'll probably move on to a

true float reel," Phil said. "That's Derek's specialty."

"More action, less talk," Derek Clough suddenly growled. He waved at Chris and his son, and the two anglers obliged, clamping the lid on conversation while wading out into the river. I stayed to hear about the reel that Derek had designed, and about float reels in general. Watching Phil use his, I began to understand.

By the late '70s, I learned, Derek's son, Phil, had enough of watching the success of an elderly British gentleman who had quietly been using float-fishing techniques on Ontario rivers. The man used an old, single-action, center pin Aerial reel from England. Phil obtained two of his own, and as he began mastering the techniques of using them, soon realized their advantages. In short order, he and an angling friend were taking fish—steelhead—where others could not.

"And then he started getting on me to build a better float reel!" Derek said. "Things haven't been peaceful since."

Derek Clough, master aircraft and engine machinist/designer, has a background in float and match fishing in England. He instantly understood his son's idea for a reel. Nine prototypes were quickly created. The reels had incredibly tight tolerances so that even the finest diameter line could not slip between spool and frame. They were machined from solid bar stock aluminum. The finest sealed ball bearings were used. There was much more; things you'd expect in the most expensive fly reel. But these were not fly reels.

Most quality fly reels are single-action. So is a float reel. Both have spools that revolve on a single axle. The similarities end there. The Elite reel that Derek made held approximately 350 yards of eight-pound-test line. Although line is not cranked in, the 4½-inch diameter spool retrieves it fast.

I watched in awe as the younger Clough demonstrated a retrieve by skimming the exposed reel spool rim with the palm of his hand. The spool whirled in line from the water so fast that it seemed to be sucking back into some kind of retracting machine. Long before an angler using a spinning reel could have had his line back in, Phil was making a new cast—a presentation somewhere between a flip, a lob and a flycaster's shoot. It was a study in grace, and I had to watch closely to see the mechanics of it.

First, Phil took two stripping pulls of monofilament line from the reel, letting the coils fall to the water. He stripped gently to avoid a free-spool tangle. As the spool revolved, more line began spilling from the reel and Phil made his swinging cast. I thought that an overrun might develop as the spool kept turning, but instead, the coils of line shot from the water. The spool continued turning on its silky bearings, and the yarn glow bug and shotted leader went out.

Like a fly reel, the float reel is located behind your hand on the rod. Phil held his hand so that his little finger nudged close

→

to the reel rim. As the leader touched down, he moved that finger a couple of millimeters to the reel's exposed rim, preventing overrun, just as you would check a level-wind baitcasting reel with your thumb. Any slack would then be taken up by spinning the spool a bit with the palm of the hand or by coming back with the rod. If it appeared that the float would hit before the terminal rig, the cast could be checked slightly as in bait or spincasting. Phil's casts went as far as one that you'd make if fishing with a spinning reel.

The float reel came into its own as the float drifted downstream. To extend the drift, Phil simply relaxed his little finger, allowing the spool to spin and the line to pay out. With the bail open, line on a spinning reel would often come off in little spurts—not as smoothly—detracting from the natural drift. If the float approached an obstacle, it was a simple matter to avoid it with a touch of the spool with the little finger or by slapping spool to take in line. Coupled with the long rod, it was obvious that the float reel would allow an angler to cover an area more effectively and with less movement than an angler using spinning gear and shorter rod.

The first fish showed me something else about float reels. This one hit just above a bend and a fast riffly run. Phil came back, putting a big sweet bend in the long rod, and the steelie throbbed for midriver. It surged a few times there and then pulled a typical dirty trick, first running back, then running for the angler. Phil did a repeat of the line retrieve movement, slapping his reel spool rim, and the slack line disappeared in a wink. You couldn't have done that with another kind of reel.

Shortly, he was fighting the steelhead directly from the reel, flyfishing style, using his hands as the primary drag, cranking with the reel's knobs and having himself a fine time. Then he won. Phil slid in a bright hen, slipped the yarn egg imitation from its jaw and held it in slower current until it had the strength to swim away.

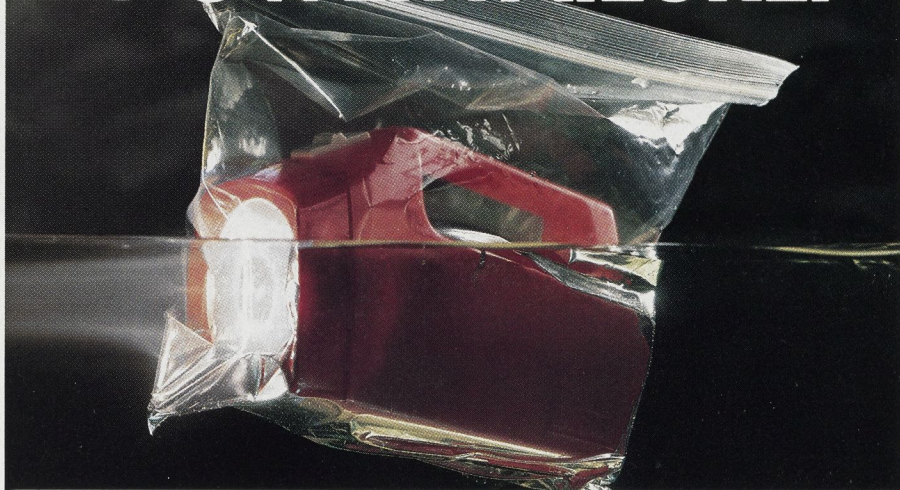
"I tend to seek water that best lends itself to float fishing, even though in certain conditions I might catch more fish elsewhere," Phil said. "It's just so much more fun this way. And over the entire season, much more effective. Your rig's in the water more, snagged less, and you have the sport of playing fish on these reels."

It would be nice to report that you could easily obtain one of the Elite reels that Derek Clough sometimes builds. You might, some months down the road, be able to buy one on a custom-order basis. But the supply of true float reels is severely limited. One source is reliable.

Robert Stirling is the sole U.S. distributor for three models of float reels built by engineer Tom Bryson of Reel Technology Inc. in Ontario. Stirling is one of the young, hard-core float fishermen helping to pioneer this great sport. He's a friend and sometimes angling companion of Phil Clough.

→

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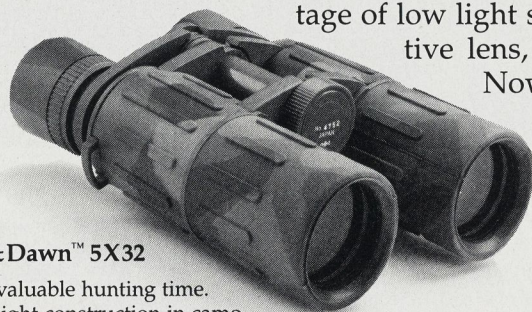
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Tom, the engineer, and his father, Randy, a design and tooling specialist, created The Steelheader and The Steelheader with Drag. Later, Tom purchased another locally designed reel called The Stream Master. These are the three models now available through Bob Stirling.

The Steelheader in classic black has an on/off click, is the most economical of the line and spools about 275 to 300 yards of eight-pound-test line. It is a fine float-fishing reel. The Steelheader with Drag holds an enormous 500 yards of eight-pound-test line or 250 yards of 20-pound test. This makes it ideal for doubling as a salmon-fishing downrigger rod. It could also be used for mooching or straight trolling. The pressure-disk drag can be adjusted to handle two-pound test or break 20-pound test. The Stream Master is widely perceived as the finest production model float reel currently available. It is for the serious float fisher. It has an on/off click, exposed rim and two sealed ball bearings. It spools 250 to 275 yards of eight-pound-test line. It is light, distinctive looking and available in anodized silver color or high-luster gold with machined or rosewood handles.

Bob Stirling, who distributes a full line of floats (Black Bird), soft shot, spawn mesh material and Spider Thread for tying up spawn bag baits, predicts that float trotting has the potential to create as big an impact as did downriggers or depth sounders.

"Sure, you won't be an expert until after a couple of seasons," Stirling said. "But you'll be catching fish pretty quickly. I give instructions in using the reel and entire system and guarantee that in three hours you'll be able to catch fish."

If you've had some flyfishing experience or have used a baitcasting reel to flip a worm, you should catch on quickly.

Stirling places few limitations on the equipment. He's used it in the Salmon River

"It's just so much more fun this way."

while the force of two turbines quickened the flow and in the swift Niagara River, too. "I don't fish holes more than 15 feet deep, though," he said. "But I have hooked steelhead as far away as 80 yards! Lots of us have caught them to 50 yards. As Phil said, you just keep your drift going."

There are subtle tricks to reading the float as it drifts downstream. In normal current, for example, when a fish facing upstream takes the bait, the float will either begin to cock forward or possibly be drawn under. An increase in the current can change things drastically. A fish may be slightly outside

the normal holding place in the run and be forced to dash out and take your offering while going downstream.

"The only disadvantage of the light leaders is that you can lose more fish that run into fast water," Phil said over his shoulder, while trying to stop a Salmon River steelie from heading into some rapids. "Of course, you get a lot more strikes and hook-ups from the natural and long drifts with the light stuff." He bounced to another rock, never missing a beat in his commentary.

There were lots of anglers on the far bank that day, but only one of them had struck a fish. Phil's was about the third fish hooked on the float reels. There was an ancient, crumbling set of concrete steps from some long-departed building running from the high bank down into the river. The steelhead was tiring. Phil reached the steps. No dramatist could have staged things more perfectly. His every movement totally understated, Phil marched down the steps, rod raised high, reel spinning, taking in line. Deadpan, he spoke with the slight touch of British inflection.

"This is why they call it Stair Step Pool, you see," he said.

He knelt, beached and released the fish. Then he stood. A bow would not have seemed inappropriate. Modesty prevailed.

And then they began coming. They came from across the river, from up and down the banks. They came with questions about

the rods, the reels and the floats. And about why the fish were being caught. The answers came generously.

Float fishing, float trotting—call it what you like. If you want to see your river-fishing-success ratio soar—especially under tough conditions in pressured waters—try it.



Where To Find It

Cabela's
812 13th Ave.
Sydney, NE 69160
(800-237-4444; 308-254-5505)
Various model Match and Predator rods.
Also, some Class Tackle items.

Class Tackle
Box 837
Minden, LA 71055
(318-371-0948)
Floats (check Rough Rider CRR5, CRR7 and small Gazzett); soft shot; rods; hooks.

G. Loomis Company
Box E
Woodland, WA 98674
(206-225-6516)
Float Rod Model 1562 (13-foot); Model 1162 (10½-foot).

Hi-Line Enterprise
14 Extra St.
Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1H 1Y9
Attn: Robert Stirling
(519-837-3095)
Float reels (Steelheader, Stream Master); soft lead; floats; spawn bag tying supplies.

Redwing Tackle
Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M1R 3Z2
Blackbird Floats.

Trotting Out Baits

Float trotters use nymph and leech flies, spawn, individual eggs, yarn eggs (glow bugs), natural nymphs, minnows, grubs, maggots, small worms, leeches—virtually any light bait suitable to the species.

Rather than tying up perfectly round glow bug flies, many steelhead and salmon specialists simply snell a hook, incorporating a shank loop to the end of their leaders. They then tie a snip of bright glow bug yarn beneath the snell loop. One or more colors may be used. Ends of the yarn are trimmed off with scissors. This crude egg impression catches fish, and you can switch colors quickly and easily until you find the hot color of the moment. One source for yarn is the Orvis Company, Manchester, VT 05254.

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BOOMERANG BUCKS

continued from page 81

ger was coming from. When they're scared like that, they'll run in a big circle and usually end up right back where they started." Jim measured the buck's horns with his hand and came up with a rough length of 15 inches.

As we bounced in the truck through the sagebrush to pick up Jeff, Jim told how, during years of hunting antelope, he had noticed that antelope follow a pattern. When antelope are frightened, he said, they will run toward open country because they feel safe when they can see in all directions.

Mike Murphy, an antelope hunting guide and the owner of Bull Mountain Outfitters in Musselshell, Montana, says that it drives antelope crazy when they know that danger is close but cannot see it.

"The antelope that live in the open stands of timber around our ranch are always nervous because they can't see very far through the trees," he said. "If they're spooked, they'll run around in a big circle looking for what scared them. Lots of times, they'll run right in front of you just to see what you are."

Murphy added that when they suspect any danger, it is the nature of antelope to run for open ground so that they can take full advantage of their powerful eyes and hair-trigger feet.

A few years ago, my brother, David, and I were glassing a herd of 40 antelope feeding in a field of winter wheat. We crawled to within 500 yards before the cover of a shallow draw gave out. I told David that I would fetch him a cold soda pop from the truck if he could figure out how to shoot one of the bucks.

David did not want to risk such a long shot, so he left me lying in the short green wheat and made a stooped-over stalk behind a very low hill. Soon, he was crawling on the ground with his bolt-action .250 Savage on his back. He was still a long way from the herd, yet a minute later, I heard a rifle shot.

Four bucks ran out from behind the hill David had used to hide his stalk and caught up with the rest of the running herd. The string of antelope headed toward me, hesitated, then ran into a puzzle of hills.

I stood up and dusted off my clothes and started back for the truck. If I had known then what I know today, I would have exercised a little more patience. I had just opened the pickup's door when I looked back across the field. The antelope were trotting single file back out of the hills into the open—right where I had been lying. They were as safe in that flat field as if they were standing behind a "no hunting" sign.

I drove around to pick up David. He was walking down the road.

"Those four bucks looked pretty good,"

I said.

"There were five," he answered. "The fifth one's dead on the other side of the hill. I guess you owe me a cold drink."

Pronghorns do not just run in circles as if their legs were shorter on one side of their body. They have established avenues for escape from danger and for travel from one pasture to the next.

Pronghorns do not wear distinct trails into the ground like whitetail deer traveling along a river bottom. Instead, antelope follow a general route that might be 100 yards wide.

One at a time, the antelope crossed the fence in the same spot.

Even though pronghorn crossings are not well marked with tracks, it is easy to find them. When I scout new country, I sit on a high point and watch where antelope go. It doesn't take long to figure out the antelope's established pattern. Pronghorns usually do not use low spots in the land—such as creek bottoms—for travel routes, like deer. Instead, antelope choose ridgetops and open valleys because they want an unobstructed view of the country. Remember, antelope equate seeing with safety.

A part-time guide I hunted with in eastern Montana last season said that antelope, like many animal species, let the females run the business of survival. That is why you rarely see a buck leading a band.

One afternoon when I was hunting with the guide, we sat on the spine of a ridge and watched herds of antelope near and far.

Every antelope that walked, trotted or ran by us, from singles to bunches of 10, took the same route through a shallow basin, over a ridge and into the next valley. At the top of the ridge, all of the antelope stopped to take a last look around before they proceeded down the other side.

Earlier that day, a mile farther north, I watched at least 200 antelope use another crossing, and each one stopped on a high point to take a look around before loping down the other side. Perhaps the antelope species picked up the habit from centuries of coyotes dogging their trail.

After I have found an antelope crossing, I find a place to sit that's below the skyline but has a good view. As long as I remain still with my outline broken by a clump of sagebrush, I don't worry about being spotted. I want to see the lopers coming from a distance. That way, I can get ready to shoot, or I can move to a better position to intercept if the band is not going to come within range.

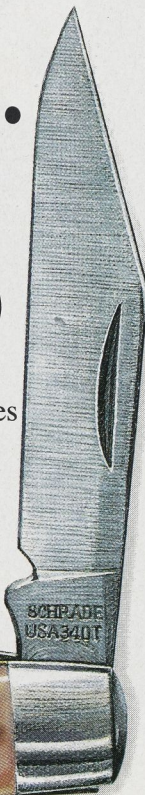
Last season, my wife and I were taking a break on a ridge that antelope used as an

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HOMER CIRCLE

Angling

Amazing Super-Ultralight

For decades I had believed that ultralight fishing was light enough. Then I went fishing with Mick Thill and learned about super-ultralight. Now I am a convert. I believe this method is the deadliest for catching panfish when all other approaches fail.

To me, ultralight meant 2-pound monofilament on a small reel and a very limber rod. I used this rig when the water was superclear and sharp-eyed fish simply shunned lures suspended on 4-pound monofilament.

So when bluegills in my favorite lake became picky last spring, I went the usual ultralight route—shrimp, crickets, red worms, tiny 1/4th-ounce spinners and 1/4th-ounce curly-tail grubs—but still couldn't tempt them into biting.

At that dire interlude Thill phoned to tell me about match fishing in Europe . . . about how lethal it is for small species and why he is striving to get it established in America. European match fishing is the equivalent of bass tournament fishing in the United States; the only difference is that it is done from streambanks with thousands of spectators cheering the competing teams.

As I listened patiently to his veddy British accent, Thill made this statement: "I have been using our match fishing methods for various American species and proved it will catch fish when none of your usual methods are effective."

"Have you by any chance tried it on bluegills in very clear water?" I asked.

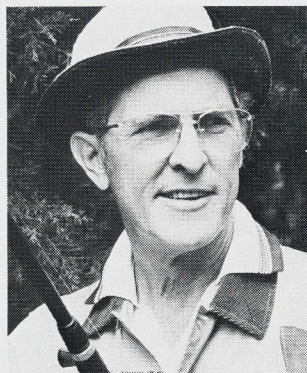
"Oh yes," he replied. "You won't believe what half-pound mono, a No. 16 hook and dyed Eurolarvae can do to catch them when nothing else will."

That did it. We made a date, and I took him to my jaded bluegill hole. I told Thill nothing about the toughness of the situation. Along to observe was Ray Roland, primary pundit of our lake, and he was even more skeptical than I.

While Thill set up his super-ultralight match fishing outfit, I put together my old standby ultralight rig. The 2-pound mono was rigged to a sensitive 10-foot graphite pole. A small bobber suspended a long-shanked No. 8 Aberdeen hook, and a BB-sized split-shot was affixed about a foot above a lively cricket. I was set to challenge the match fishing method.

Thill was oblivious to my preparations. He was too busy rigging his 16-foot graphite pole with half-pound monofilament, which I found difficult to see, let alone tie to a No. 16 Model Perfect hook, as he easily did. About a foot above the hook he added a couple of the tiniest split-shot I've seen. They were the size of this "o!"

And to give you the feeling of the size of his No. 16 hook, look at this number "6." Just straighten the stem, open the



bottom, and it's only slightly smaller than Thill's hook. And when match fishing gets really tough, he sends down a hook as minute as a Size 36—over half as big!

He reached into an insulated chest and brought out a ventilated plastic box. It was filled with what you and I would call very large maggots, about three-quarters of an inch long. Thill called them Eurolarvae. American icefishermen have used similar bait for years and refer to them as spikes, grubs and maggots. But Thill's bait is different. Naturally whitish, some of the Eurolarvae were dyed yellow, some red and some blue; this affects their liveliness not one whit. He

carefully impaled three Eurolarvae—white, yellow and red—on his tiny hook, showing me how to distinguish the head end by the two minute black eyes.

Thill explained that the (let's call 'em grubs) grubs have a tough hide and will stay lively a long time if you are careful to penetrate only the outer skin. Later I did penetrate one too deeply and had a messy, dead grub in my hand.

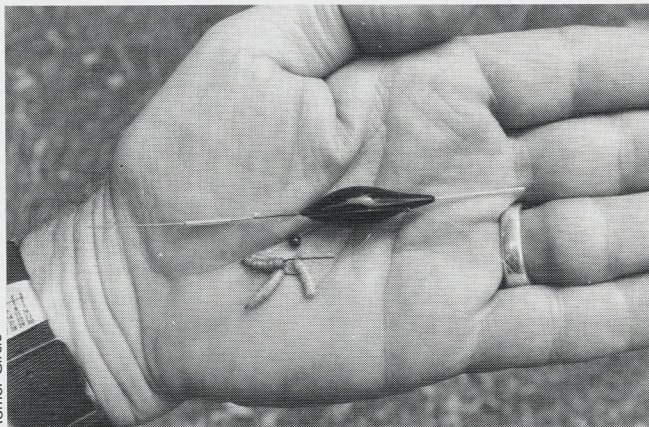
Let's pause here while I detail the key item of Thill's super-ultralight rigging, the bobber. Its slim, epoxied balsa body is about two inches long. From the bottom extends a stainless wire that measures some three inches. The tip of the bobber is a red fluorescent stem about the thickness of pencil lead, approximately two inches long.

The spiderwebbish line is threaded down through a wee eye in the bobber's side, then affixed to the side of the stainless wire with a plastic sleeve. I thought I had seen sensitive bobbers in my career, but this one is the ultimate in translating to an expert's eye whatever minute movement is imparted to the bait by a fish.

By the time Thill eased his triple-grubbed bait into the water, I had been dunking my cricket about five minutes. My tiny bobber had nodded at me one time, indicating a bluegill had just swiped my cricket.

I stopped watching my bobber and observed Thill, who was hawkeyeing his. I saw no movement in his bobber, yet he said "Um-huh!" as he put tension in his pole and let a bluegill set the hook in itself. "How did you know that bluegill had the bait in its mouth?" I asked. "The bobber didn't

continued



Grubs, fine line and hooks, and a sensitive bobber are the keys.

Homer Circle

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bob at all."

"No," Thill said, smiling, "in match fishing you've got to be alert to the nuances. That bluegill just sucked in the larvae from above, nullifying the downward pull of the lead shot, and the bobber rose just enough for a trained eye to detect." He netted a nine-inch bluegill.

Those "trained eyes" detected 12 more bluegills, one well over a pound that I thought was going to pop his wispy line. But he skillfully let it fight the limber rod and then netted it, explaining that the net is abso-

lutely necessary because the line doesn't have lifting strength.

When Thill asked if 13 bluegills would be enough for dinner, Ray and I exchanged smiles and said yes. Then we both acknowledged that just as I had been unable to catch anything on crickets, the experts had not been able to catch enough bluegills to eat from this hole recently, either.

"I'm glad you didn't tell me," Thill replied, grinning. "It might have given me the yips." At dinner he showed me a clipping from a column of

veteran scribe Bob Bledsoe (outdoor editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*), with whom he had fished under adverse conditions on a cold November day. Bledsoe lauded the results of Thill's super-ultralight approach in the Illinois River, where he caught nine species of fish. Other veterans caught zilch!

Whether match fishing ever catches on in America is something only time will tell. But I'm convinced all serious pan-fishermen should try the match fishing methodology not only on bluegills but on perch, trout, catfish, whitefish, gray-

ling and crappies as well.

I've had Thill's grubs in my refrigerator for six weeks, and they're still fishable. I've caught bluegills with them when nothing else would do. I'm impressed with super-ultralight as an extension of one's angling potential. If you have a desire to try it, drop a line to Mick Thill, Wazp Products, Dept. SA, P.O. Box 837, Minden, LA 71055. Our British friend promised to answer all inquiries "post haste!"

Coming Soon: New fishing gear for '88.

GEORGE HARRISON

Nature

Urban Coyotes

Residents of the Agoura Hills suburb of Los Angeles were frightened this summer when coyotes threatened and actually attacked people hiking and riding horses in the Cheeseboro Canyon Recreation Area.

In the most serious of these incidents, Michael Rizzo was riding his horse in the park when he noticed a small coyote walking alongside on a nearby ledge. Suddenly two larger coyotes attacked Rizzo's horse, nipping at its legs and ankles. Then the smaller coyote jumped off the ledge onto Rizzo, scratching and biting his arm. Luckily neither horse nor rider was seriously injured.

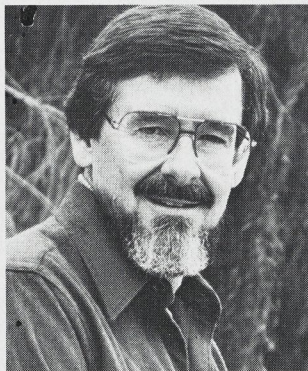
This may sound like an isolated incident, but wildlife biologist Jeffrey Franklin has compiled a long list of attacks by emboldened coyotes living in the suburbs of Los Angeles.

Since 1975 there have been at least 16 such attacks in Los Angeles County, seven of which were on children under the age of 5. One, in 1981, was fatal to a 3-year-old who was attacked while she sat on a curb outside her home.

Coyotes have become more plentiful and more brazen in Los Angeles suburbs, killing dozens of pet cats and dogs, padding nonchalantly down streets, cooling themselves by lawn sprinklers, drinking from swimming pools, raiding garbage cans, and enchanting some with their romantic howlings.

One particularly stealthy coyote killed a dozen cats and dogs in three nights in the community of Westlake Island. Franklin told me, "The whole island went berserk when the residents found out that on two of the nights, the coyote had walked to the island on a bridge, right past armed guards, and on the third night had swum to the island." He believes that such incidents will become more and more frequent throughout the country as coyotes continue to adapt to urban environments.

Franklin, 26, studies coyotes living in the Los Angeles suburbs of Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks and Agoura Hills. "We see evidence of coyotes everywhere and we



hear them at least every other night throughout the year," he reported. "During June and July we may hear them call as often as 30 times in a single night."

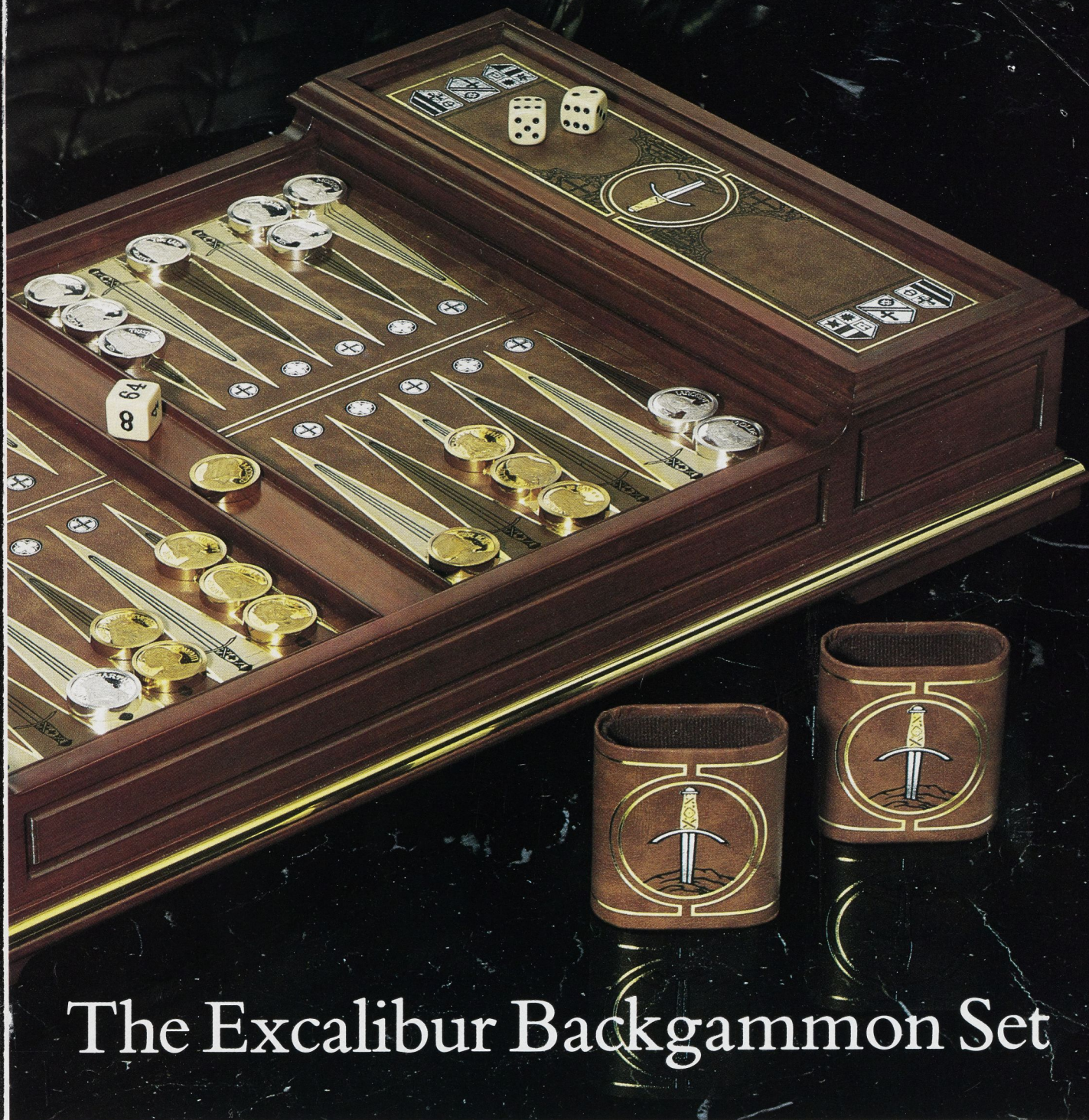
During 1984 Franklin collected and examined 110 coyote scats (droppings) selected at random in the 25-square-mile study area of homes, businesses and roadways. He found that the diet of these coyotes is significantly different from that of their more rural cousins.

Franklin explained that urban coyotes are supreme opportunists. "This area adjacent to the Santa Monica Mountains was dry before people moved

[and brought] water for gardens and landscaping. While they created an Eden for themselves, complete with lush vegetation and fruit-bearing trees, they built an ideal habitat for coyotes as well," he said.

The sample scats revealed that the four-footed urbanites are eating a great deal more fruit (11 percent of their diet was apricots, the highest item) and less live food (such as rodents) than rural coyotes. "Because fruit and garbage are so abundant and accessible, less time and energy are required for urban coyotes to make a living, leaving them more time for courting, reproducing and raising pups," Franklin said. "In addition, the abundance of food produces fitter coyotes living in greater densities (one per square mile) than their rural cousins (one per five square miles). In fact, given a choice of habitats in which to forage, the coyote would readily choose the more urban environment over the rural. On top of all that, some people are feeding coyotes in their backyards, even though

continued



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SPINNERS AND SPRINGERS

Thought and consideration are totally lacking in many fishermen when they pick up a spinning rod, says Crawford Little, who rates depth, speed, and angle of presentation as the keys to early-season success

EARLY MORNING in late February. A soul-biting wind bullies its way up the strath, gusting flurries of snow from a yellow-tinged sky. The waters of the Tay flow cold and sullen. Two shivering "southron" anglers feel that if providence has sent them there, 'twere surely in her anger. A cruel gust catches them like an overseer's whip as they hurry to the boot of their car and the haven of coats and warm clothing. In the few minutes that it takes to struggle into the protective layers, assemble the rods and thread the lines through the rings, their fingers are already growing numb with the cold.

A short, stocky gillie emerges from the fishing hut, pulling down his deerstalker with those blessed ear flaps, and saunters up to our rapidly freezing friends, a lively young springer spaniel following in his wake.

He speaks. "Good morning gentlemen, and welcome to the Tay. Well, I can see you must be fine fishermen to be putting down your fly rods on a day like this. Och yes, we do not get many guests who would cast into the teeth of a gale such as this," he says.

Laughing dog

Only the laughing dog seems to appreciate the joke, as joke it must be to a Tay gillie when he discovers that his fishermen intend to fish the fly at the start of the season in any conditions, let alone with an upstream gale. And the same is true on other rivers. But no matter; after a frustrating morning, not to mention a dangerous one, the fishermen will need little encouragement to take up the spinning rods and get on with covering the water adequately, and without the risk of sinking a big treble hook into a tender part

of their own or the gillie's anatomy.

For a good many years, a growing number of experts and writers have chosen to preach the "fly only" doctrine, and to a certain extent I respect them for it, if only as a personal preference. But I really cannot see any grounds for suggesting that the fly rod is, in some way, a tool of conservation. Certainly there are times when the spinning rod will be most productive for the majority of anglers, but the opposite can equally apply. And surely the object of salmon conservation and management should be to ensure maximum populations and to assess the harvestable surplus, rather than suggesting "dog in a manger" restrictions on how that harvest is to be achieved?

Fine; if you prefer to fish the fly, go ahead, but do not lecture sanctimoniously upon the matter. As for that wretched "lure clause" in the paper tiger called the Salmon Bill, there is a mountain of problems facing salmon

conservation without worrying about whether a fish is grassed with a fly or spinner in its neb!

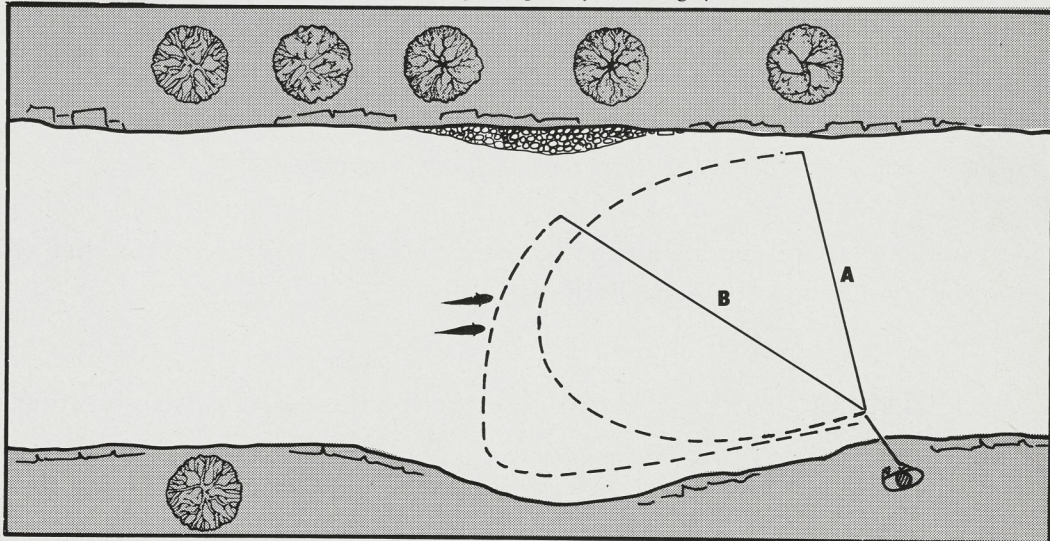
I would be lying if I did not say that, in the general run of things, I prefer to fish the fly but I will fish all legal methods and I have little doubt that, just as the small fly and floating or intermediate line take the majority of my fish from late spring and through the summer months, so the spinner will take the bulk of my catch at the start of the season.

Enough of moralising and politicising. Suffice it to say that, when you read these words, I shall be out on the rivers with both fly and spinning rods, using them as conditions dictate and as the spirit moves me, and very probably damning the eyes of those who would seek to impose their personal judgments on my freedom of choice! Yes, I take a perverted pleasure in rolling out a deeply sunk fly line before punching it out with a double-spey cast, but equally there is pleasure to be gained, if of a different type, from the spinning rod; just so long

Above: When cold hands are soon forgotten. Into a good fish on the lower Spey.

as it is used with thought and consideration.

Thought and consideration are, however, totally lacking in many fishermen when it comes to using a spinning rod. Is it some crazy form of "machismo", that makes so many spin so badly? You must know what I mean. Put a spinning rod into a man's hands and, within minutes, all thoughts of how the lure is fishing are lost. The whole object of the exercise is swung round into some sort of contest to see how far the tackle can be



Futile "machismo" cast A; and fishermen's cast B.





"The river had risen 4ft overnight and it was nowhere to be seen."

Richard Royden

"In August 1985, I was fishing the River Deveron in Aberdeenshire. Having returned home after a successful day's fishing, I remembered that I had left my Barbour jacket on the river bank. However, I decided to leave it there overnight and collect it the following morning.

But to my dismay the river had risen 4ft overnight and my Barbour was nowhere to be seen.

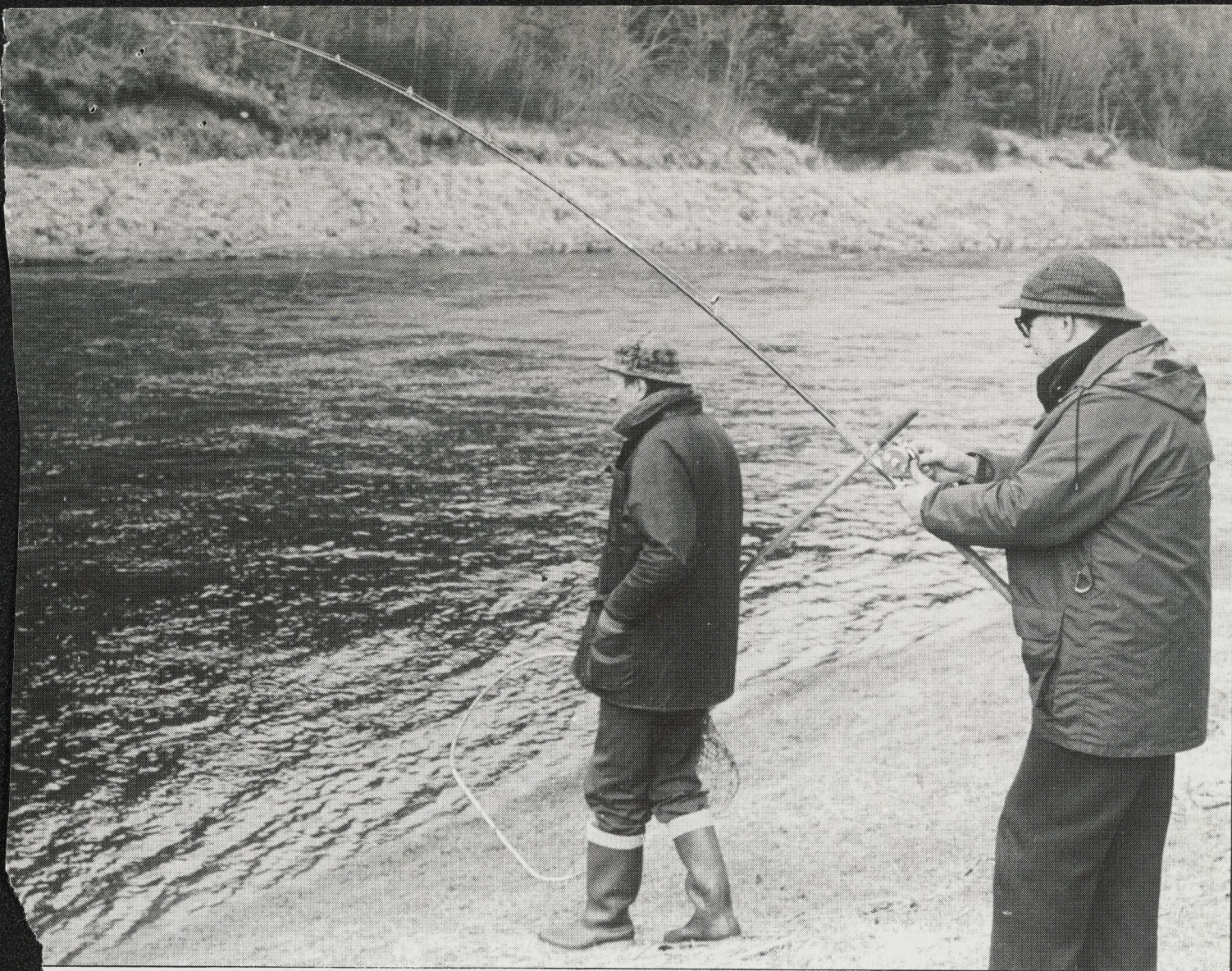
Six months later, the Forglen Estate Ghillie, Mr. George Abel, spotted my Barbour amongst a clump of submerged roots, 1½ miles downstream from where I had left it. He retrieved and dried it off for me and to my amazement it was no different from when I had last worn it, even though it had been under water for about six months – surely a credit to the excellence of Barbour garments!"

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thrown in the direction of the opposite bank. Wheee! Away it goes. Goodness, it's so boring waiting for it to come round. Nobody is looking, a few turns on the reel handle then bring it back up the bank like an express train. Hoorah! Out it goes again!

Possibly if spinning were done with a line of the same visibility as a white, floating fly line, we would all mend the error of our ways. We could not ignore the great belly in the line, and the fast-fishing, shallow-swimming lure. Is it a childish desire for toys and gadgetry, a need to have a better collection than the next boy, that leads us to amass and discuss an enormous range of spinning and wobbling lures while totally ignoring the vital factors that hold the real key to success: the depth,

speed and angle of presentation?

In the cold waters of early spring, it is generally acknowledged that we must fish deep and slow. In fact, the two things should be inseparable. If you fish a sinking line slowly; and monofilament is, after all, just a lightweight sinker; then your lure will fish deep. Concentrate on fishing slowly and depth will look after itself. This also depends on the weight of the lure, but I shall return to that in a moment.

Shallow angle

As any fly-fishermen will tell you, the way to fish slowly when you have no control of the line after the cast is made, is to cast at a relatively shallow angle to the

bank. Forget about trying to bury your lure in the opposite shore. I seldom cast at a greater angle than 45 degrees and, across a strong current, it is a great deal less.

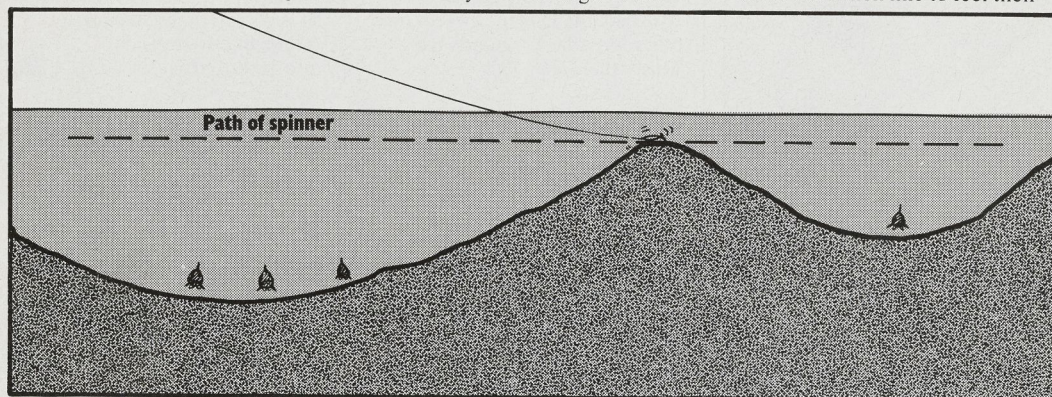
Having made the cast, leave the lure to swim round unaided. The only possible exception that I make to this rule is where the lure is fishing across very varied strengths of current. As it swings across a slacker section, reel in line slowly, but stop as soon as you judge the lure to have swung into a faster section again. The object is to maintain the water speed of the lure. Therefore, if it swings out of a five-knot current into a three-knot current, you might like to start a two-knot retrieve, but don't overdo it.

Many of you will have read that some fishermen like to feel their

spinners bumping and scraping on the river bed as they fish across. Good luck to them, but I cannot see that this implies a good technique. The problem is that we are all too unfamiliar with the river bed on the pools that we fish. Of course, if you have seen the river at its summer low, you may know that a long and shallow bank of shingle runs down the centre of the pool, with deep water on either side, which explains why you feel that bumping and scraping for a brief time as your lure swims across.

Equally, and in regard to high water conditions, it is very important to remember that it is very unlikely that fish will choose to lie out in the full force of the current when can they adopt relatively comfortable stations closer in to the bank. If your spinner is dredging out in the depths, you are going to have to reel in as it swings in to the bank just to keep it off the bottom, but we do not want a fast-moving lure in the spring months while the water is barely above freezing. Probably the slowest lure of all to be fished in the opening months of the season is that which is harled from a boat as it is slowly worked across and downstream. You may not think much of the technique, but it can be wildly productive.

Beside the need to fish our lure slowly, there is something else to be learnt from harling. Think of



Unless you have intimate knowledge of the pool you are fishing, bumping the bottom does not necessarily mean you are fishing as deeply as you think.

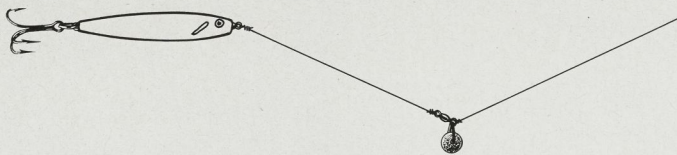
SPINNERS AND SPRINGERS

the most successful lures to be employed with this technique. Rapalas and Kynoch Killers immediately spring to mind. They are both relatively light and, although the line may be fishing slowly, a Kynoch Killer will be dancing and jiggling about at the end of it like a demented bee on heat! This implies the desirability of a lightweight lure that will respond to the vagaries of the stream, rising and falling, weaving and fluttering as it swims across. Regular readers will, I hope, remember what I had to say about fishing light but large flies off fast-sinking lines, in the autumn of last year. Exactly the same is true of spinning.

I christened the heavy line, light fly combination with the name "balloon effect", likening it to a child holding a balloon on a short piece of string in a breeze. The child is the heavy line, the string is a relatively short leader, and the balloon is the light fly.

In spinning, of course, we do not have a heavy line and therefore weight, in the form of lead, has to be added. A weight, separate from the lure, does introduce a "bolas" effect and is not the perfect casting tool but, nevertheless, it is a marvellous fishing tool.

My favourite lightweight spinning lure is the wooden or plastic Devon minnow, in sizes ranging from 2-3 inches. I do not feel the need to go larger than that, possibly because I am so



The spinning bait par excellence: A buoyant Devon minnow and uptrace weight.

insistent on fishing the lure slowly. Indeed, I tend only to use the largest size when fishing big rivers in high water. As to colour, brown and gold takes pride of place in my book, a nice reddish brown and a mellow gold with nothing "brassy" about it. Some have great success with a blue-and-silver Devon at the start of the season, but I do not. However, on a recent visit to MacMillan's in Dumfries, I was shown some blue-and-pearl minnows from Gordon Griffiths and was filled with tales of their success. I shall be trying them out this year.

Ball-bearing swivel

When using the fast-spinning Devon, it is absolutely vital to attach a swivel of the ball-bearing type to the end of the mainline in order to avoid line twist. No other swivel that I know does the job half as well. I attach a two-foot length of nylon of slightly less strength than the mainline to act as my trace, to the end of which I attach the Devon. The knot that I use in each case is a tucked half-blood, which gives me confidence.

Confidence, there's a word now, and absolutely vital to the fisherman as confidence leads to

concentration and thoughtful fishing. Certainly I spin confidently, picturing the light Devon rising and fluttering in the stream, enticing a salmon to take.

I must not forget to say a little more about the lead weights. I use only two types: the spiral and the Hillman lead, the latter being nothing more than a pierced bullet with a twist of wire to attach it to the swivel. Always attach the lead to the mainline side of the swivel. The spiral has the great advantage that, when bent into a banana shape, it acts as a very efficient anti-kick vane. I have never suffered any problems when fishing with a ball-bearing swivel and a bent spiral lead.

It is necessary to carry quite a range of weights and sizes of leads. In employing a buoyant lure, the lead weight is the only means of affecting the depth at which it fishes. In relatively shallow water, little weight is required but, if you need to fish deeper water, such as on the dubs of Tweed and those mysterious pools on the Eden, you are going to need something a bit heavier to carry your Devon down to the fish.

I mentioned the need to avoid the "machismo" attitude towards salmon spinning. The weight is employed purely to alter the depth at which the lure is swimming and not to add a few yards to the casting distance. If you are fishing over relatively shallow lies, it is far better to fish a quite short line effectively with little weight than bang out a heavy combination much further, only to find that you have to crank away at the reel handle in order to avoid being caught up on the river bed. Both Hillman and spiral leads can be changed quickly and the little time spent on altering the weight as you fish down a pool through deep and shallow areas, fast and slow currents, is amply rewarded in terms of fish on the bank.

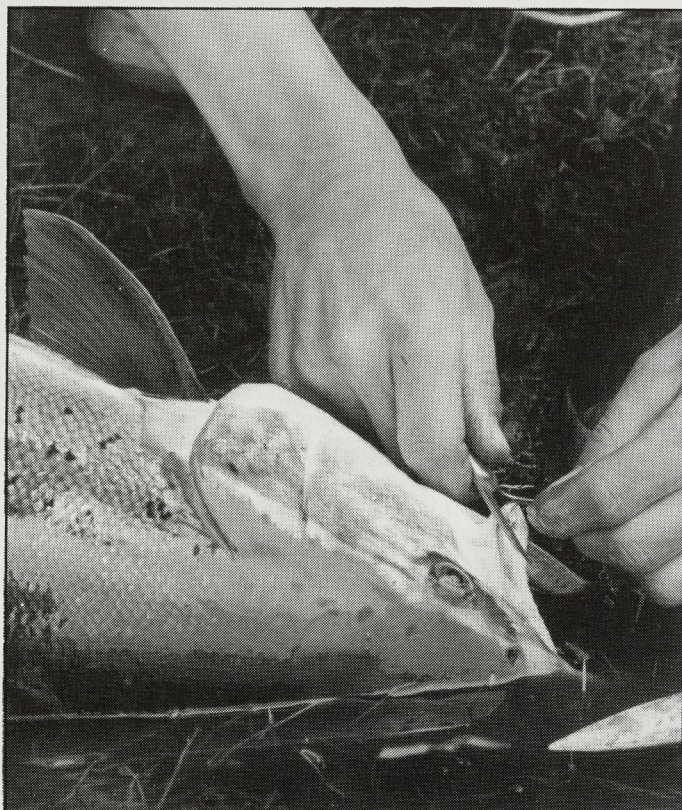
Beside the Devon, there is one other lure that I regularly use. This is the Toby. This

marvellously attractive spoon is near perfect for fishing lies in streamy water, although it is not nearly so productive for me in slower stretches. Many say that they find tremendous problems with hooking fish on the Toby, and this has led to many ingenious adaptations of the standard hooking arrangement. For myself, I am very fortunate not to have suffered in this way. I use the standard arrangement, and have no qualms about it. The Toby comes in two weights or, rather, I should say that it comes in a range of sizes for each of which two weights are offered. For example, my favourite length of 3½ inches in the opening months of the season is offered in weights of 18g and 28g; quite a difference. As with our Devons and lead weights, there is no point in choosing the heavier if this means that we have to crank the reel handle in order to avoid being caught on the river bed. Only the strongest of streams require the heavy version of the Toby. As to colour, I have to say that the Zebra, black with gold bars on the back and gold underneath, is my favourite, but I have also enjoyed good sport with the copper and, to a lesser extent, the silver.

Long Tobies

An interesting fact emerges when fishing the long Tobies, and also with Rapalas and Kynoch Killers. On a number of occasions, I have found the hooks embedded in the outside of the salmon's mouth. Not foul-hooked, you understand, although technically it may be so, but rather suggesting that the salmon has made its attack on the lure from the side, taking it across its length, with the hooks being drawn into the exterior of the mouth.

This leads me into a consideration of the effectiveness of the relatively modern, long-tailed salmon fly patterns such as the Collie Dog. After all, it is not that long ago when we insisted that the wing of a fly should not extend beyond the bend of the hook, and that an abbreviated wing would lead to far better hooking. Today, in the far North, they are happily fishing flies with wings trailing six inches behind the hook. How can this be reconciled with traditional thinking on salmon fly design? This is something I would rather like to consider in a future article.



Unhooking a big springer taken on a Kynoch Killer. However slowly you fish this bait, it will still dance and flutter enticingly.

Christmas crossword

The first three correct entries drawn from a hat came from Mr R. G. Hawthorn, of Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire; Mr M. W. Cooper, of Malton, North Yorkshire; and Mr J. C. Burrows, of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. Each will receive a hamper full of goodies from Will Logan Wine Agencies.

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The work is harder,
and the risks
may be greater—
but the rewards are
oh so sweet!

Fishing Brushy Trout Streams

BY JIM BEDFORD

Jim Bedford's interest in Michigan waters runs deep. An angler and writer, he spends much of his time as a water-analysis chemist



A jumble of elm logs blocked the creek and the tag alders along the bank left only a 5-foot strip of open water. I lobbed my small spinner into the water boiling up from the logs and let it sink before starting my retrieve. The spot seemed perfect for a lunker brown but when I repeated this cast several times, coming within inches of the log, it yielded nothing.

Finally, I made a cast over the mass of logs and retrieved my spinner down toward them knowing that I was sure to get hung up. The spinner seemed to stop a foot or so before it should have on the first log, so I instinctively set the hook. The throb on the other end felt heavy; I was in a real predicament. I slacked off on the trout and scrambled over the logs as fast as I could.

When I tightened back up on the fish I felt nothing, but a flash under the logs told me the trout was still on. Following the line down under with my hand, I managed to free it from the log bark it was snagged on; I was back in business. For some reason, the trout did not try to go downstream through the jam and I finally worked it out of the logs. With an arm wet to the shoulder, I scooped into my net a brilliantly colored 19-inch brown trout.

Large trout in tight situations are the rule rather than the exception in the brushy creeks of my home state, Michigan. The trouting is so good in these streams that I rarely visit the famous trout streams of northern Michigan such as the Au Sable, Manistee, Boardman, etc.

Small, brushy trout streams are underfished all over America because they are thought to contain only small trout and to be impossible to fish with anything but a worm dangled at a rod's length. Both of these assumptions are emphatically false.

Small streams *can* also produce fish of respectable sizes because of the trout's ability to utilize terrestrial insects and other tidbits (*Continued on page 132*)



Spinning.



Fishing brushy trout streams

(Continued from page 54)

from the bank. It is an obvious but often overlooked fact that no matter how big the stream, the amount of food available from the banks remains constant. Thus the smaller the stream the more significant the banks are to the trout's diet.

One of my favorite streams flows scarcely 4 miles before it empties into a warmwater stream. It averages less than 10 feet in width and in many places it almost seems deeper than it is wide. Yet, in the past six years, this stream has produced more lunker browns over 4 pounds for me than any stream that I fish.

So how does one go about fishing these small, brushy streams? The most important rule is that no matter what lure or bait you use, always fish upstream. The advantages of fishing upstream have been expounded many times but they are especially significant in a small stream. Half the battle in catching wary trout is simply keeping them from detecting your presence. The silt and surface ripples that the angler fishing downstream sends out quickly alert those wily browns that something is amiss.

By approaching the trout from behind and keeping a low profile, one stays out of their cone of vision. I make a lot of casts from my knees and it really pays off. It's also important to wade slowly and quietly, especially in the slower stretches of the creek.

Another key is to stay in the water if at all possible. Not only does this make it easier to stay out of the trout's sight, but the vibrations from footfalls on the bank seem to be especially frightening to trout.

My favorite lure for fishing these creeks is the weighted spinner. Although the bait or bubble and fly fisherman will drift their offerings while I retrieve my spinners, the tackle and techniques to be described apply to all lures and baits.

AN ULTRALIGHT rod and a small, fast-retrieve, open-face spinning reel make an ideal outfit for tackling the brush. The rods I use are home-built, 5 to 6 feet long, and quite limber so that light lures can be cast easily. There is enough stiffness in the butt for hook-setting and steering lunker browns out of the snags. Ceramic guides are used instead of stainless or chromed steel guides which groove rapidly with the small diameter monofilaments. The decreased line friction with ceramics also enhances the castability and durability of the line.

Small creek fishing demands a high-quality reel. A sturdy bail mechanism is especially necessary because one makes many, many short casts during each outing. I have broken as many as six bail springs in a

season (about 200 hours of fishing). The new reels with two bail springs, such as the Cardinal 3, are really super for small stream fishing. Not only do the springs break much less frequently, but when one of them does break you can keep on fishing and replace the broken one when you get home rather than trying to do it on the stream bank. Since you are casting upstream and retrieving with the current, a reel with a fast retrieve ratio is also a must.

LINE is a very important part of your equipment since you must be able to cast 1/8-ounce lures yet be able to hold large trout out of the snags. Today's premium line has excellent strength-to-diameter ratios so that one can accurately cast ultralight lures with 6-pound test. Even though brushy creek fishing is tough on line, I prefer to use soft mono instead of the new, tough, abrasion-resistant types because of its superior castability.

As I fish, I continually test the last few feet of line for nicks, abrasions, and weak spots, and will clip and retie my spinner many times in a day's fishing. Fresh line is put on my reel after every third or fourth trip. The first 50 to 60 yards on the spool never get used, so rather than emptying the spool when replacing line I simply add 40 or 50 yards of "working line" to the old inner line.

Even if you use 6-pound test line, it does not take a very big trout to break it if he gets a straight pull on a snag. Many times I've had a 14- or 15-inch trout wrap me around a root or branch and with a quick thrust snap the line.

To compound the difficulty in landing trout in a brushy stream, the larger trout are naturally found in the holes with the most cover. Sometimes you almost have to fool a big brown into the net because there is no way your equipment will keep him out of the brush, especially when he has only a few feet to go to get there. And that is right where those big devils head when hooked.

A typical tight spot yielded my largest brown of the summer a couple of years ago. The stream was about 15 feet wide and half of it was flowing under a stump with a massive root system. The open half of the stream was very shallow and sandy. As the spinner flashed down along side the jungle of roots, a giant form slid out and followed it. After several moments of suspense the monster sucked in the spinner. I set the hook hard and put as much pressure on the fish as possible, keeping it coming toward me. The tactic worked and I ran the big trout aground in about 2 inches of water. After a wild skirmish, with sand and water flying everywhere, I wrestled

a sleek 23½-inch, 5½-pound brown up on the bank.

I will admit that the fight would have been more fun if there had been room for the brown to do her thing, but in tight quarters one must land big trout as quickly as possible.

When that big trout does make it into the snags, it is important to slack off immediately. If you continue to apply pressure the trout will break the line for sure. The line rubbing on the branch will keep it tight even with no rod pressure. Now, as fast but with as little commotion as possible, one must work to free the line. Usually Mr. Brown Trout will sulk when no pressure is applied and give you a second chance.

In that tiny stream I mentioned earlier, I hooked a big brown that really tied me up. Tag alders lined one bank and almost covered the stream, but the other side was open meadow leaving me a narrow run of open water. I was retrieving my spinner down the open side when the big trout glided out from the alders and nailed my spinner. At the sting of the hook the brown charged upstream until it hit a shallow riffle. Making a rapid about-face she charged downstream under and through the tangle of alders.

Realizing I had no chance of pulling her out of the mess, I managed to keep my head and stopped applying pressure. I opened the bail of the reel and fed line until the trout stopped taking it out. Not knowing whether she was still on or not I slowly and quietly worked at freeing my line. I had to pass my whole outfit under several branches to do so, but after several tense minutes I was finally separated from the alder jungle. As I tightened up my line I was greeted with a wonderful throb. The trout, which had been sulking in the pool below, was still on.

PUTTING on as much pressure as possible, I panicked the brown and got her rolling on the surface. As fast as I could I got the net under her and scooped up 4½ pounds of brightly colored brown trout. Lady Luck was definitely on my side, but with some skill and quick thinking you can give yourself a chance to get lucky.

But I'm getting a little ahead of my story. First we have to learn how to get these trout hooked in a small brushy stream before we need to know how to land them.

For obvious reasons, casting accuracy is very important. In a small stream the important thing is not how far you can cast or how close to cover, but making sure your lure hits the water. Of course the further upstream you cast and the closer you get to that brush the better; but in a small stream the trout are used

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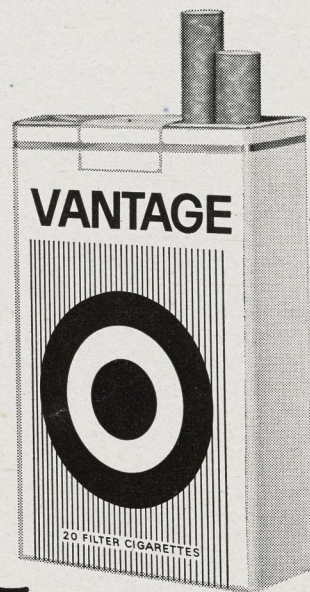
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Peter Accetta
New York City, New York



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to covering the entire width of the creek in search of food. I usually make sure my lure hits the water on the first cast and then on subsequent casts try to get closer to the cover. With practice you will find that you'll be able to drop that first cast fairly tight to the suspected lair.

In order to reach those tight places in the alder tunnels and brush-lined banks, an underhand, pendulum cast is employed. Even in the larger streams there are many times when a cast which keeps the lure at a low trajectory is necessary to deliver the spinner to the right spot. This cast is accomplished by letting the lure hang 3 to 4 feet below the rod tip, swinging it back and then slinging it forward with a strong thrust of the wrist. The cast starts out similar to the doughball fisherman's lob but is snapped forward with much more force so as to line drive the lure, low over the water, to its target. Once you have mastered this cast, you will find it to be more accurate than conventional overhead and side-arm casts because it is easier for the eye to follow the lure. The bait fisherman can also use this cast but will have tempered the snap so as not to fling off his bait.

Where to cast in a small brushy stream is an easy question to answer: *Cover all the water!* Every bit of cover that a trout could hide under, no matter how shallow the water, should not be neglected. The trout tend to be scattered in brushy streams

and their feeding stations are usually different from their resting lairs. This is one of the reasons spinners are such productive lures in these streams. They enable one to cover a lot of water and draw trout out of their hiding places.

It is especially important to cast to all potential feeding stations that are close to a big hole. Big trout like to lie under that small bush or tuft of overhanging grass on the inside of the bend or just upstream from their domicile. Here they can feed more effectively and, when something alarms them, easily glide back to the safety of the big hole.

The fact that Mr. Big is not always at home in his hole is a lesson I have learned the hard way several times. One particularly painful experience occurred in Fish Creek, a stream fairly close to home that I fish often.

A LARGE, dead elm with a cavernous root system stood on the bend of the stream. Another large elm had fallen across the creek just upstream and a magnificent, dark hole had been created. All summer I had carefully approached this hole and fluttered my spinner by the roots with no success.

Then one evening, with darkness falling, I again cast into the hole with great expectation. Nothing. Disappointed, I continued on upstream. Suddenly there was a splash upstream and something making a large wake moved right at me. I

could even feel through my waders the vibrations of his powerful tail as the monster brown swept by me on the way to safety. He had been upstream, feeding, in 10 inches of water under a small bush. I never saw that trout again—I had blown my only chance.

Different types of cover require somewhat different tactics. Undercut banks are favorite trout lairs and usually retrieving your spinner down along beside them will draw the fish out. However, on those days when the trout are reluctant it is important to get back underneath. To accomplish this, cast to the top of the run as close as possible to the bank and let the lure settle. Allow slack line to sweep under the bank and then start your retrieve. The line will draw your lure back under the bank.

Bushes laying out over the water usually do not allow a lure to be swept under them. I try to surround the bush with casts, first at the back, then along the side and finally sweeping in front (the upstream side). If this fails, go ahead and try to sweep under it even though you are sure to snag a branch. Every now and then that branch is going to come to life and you will have the problem of getting a trout out of the bush instead of just your spinner.

Log jams are another favorite holding spot for trout, not only because they provide cover, but they usually cause a hole to be dug out and tend to funnel drifting food.

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First try to seduce that trout out of the back of the log jam since he will be much easier to hook and land here. The tantalizing plop and fluttering to the bottom of the spinner will often be the undoing of a small stream brown because he is used to taking advantage of food that falls in the creek. If dropping that lure tight behind the jam fails, go ahead and cast over it while you are back some distance even though you know that the retrieve will probably result in a snagged lure. If you go up to the log jam, there is a good chance you will spook the trout.

But even after snagging the log, don't give up. Sometimes you can sneak up to the jam, poke your lure off with the tip of your rod, and sweep your lure in front of the jam while standing behind it. The thicker the log jam the more likely this maneuver will produce a bend in your rod.

Even bait fishermen should first try to lure trout from behind a jam. Then, if unsuccessful, lob the bait above the jam and let the current drift it under.

When fishing small streams you will periodically encounter spots where the brush is virtually impenetrable. You just have to keep fishing the perimeters hoping to entice the fish to come out and strike.

It is important to remember, though, that the brushier the stretch is the less wary the trout will be. With all that cover they must "feel

safe" because you can approach much closer without spooking them. Last summer I came upon a bush that completely blocked off the stream. Nothing could be lured out from behind it, so I climbed through the bush and poked my rod and head through the other side and made a five cast to the side and swept the spinner under the branches. A 15-inch brown nailed the spinner at my boots and almost jumped in my waders after I set the hook.

ANOTHER key to successful small stream fishing is keeping your eye on your lure or bait and following it from the end of the cast to the rod tip. During recent underwater filming of largemouth bass fishing, it was found that bass frequently inhale and exhale plastic worms without the angler in the boat being aware of it. Well, the brown trout is also a master at this. He can come out, inhale a retrieved spinner and get rid of it in pretty fair current without sending any signal to the rod of the angler.

When I first started small stream fishing in college, a fellow fisheries student, Ken Wright, related an experience on our way home from fishing. An 18- to 19-inch brown had retrieved his spinner and brought it to his feet. Ken saw the brown but did not realize it had already sucked in his spinner until it was too late. All he got was water when he set the hook.

I have witnessed this many times

over the years, and now I just set the hook when the spinner disappears or when I see that white mouth open and close. When conditions don't permit you to watch the lures, you must sense it as it is retrieved and set the hook when it doesn't feel right. This is easier to do when your lure has natural resistance like the weighted spinner does.

A final tip—wear waders not hip boots. Often you will want to kneel to cast and it is surprising how deep some small streams can be. It doesn't seem possible that a 10-foot wide stream could have 4-foot deep holes, but they do.

While I concentrate on trout in small, brushy streams, these techniques work well on warmwater species such as bass, pike, and various panfishes. The streams I fish for smallmouth bass are generally less brushy than the trout creeks, but the upstream approach and underhand cast still pays dividends.

So the next time you pass that stream that looks like it flows through an alder jungle, stop and give it a try. Most likely it will be a neglected body of water and is probably its brushiest at the bridge because the sun has a full shot at encouraging rich undergrowth. You will probably be cursing me after you've fought brush for 100 yards and haven't been able to straighten up for the last 50. But when that 20-inch brown glides out and nails your spinner, it will all be worth it.



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Field & Stream Reader's Corner

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May, 1979

FIELD & STREAM READER'S CORNER

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Fishing

1. One of the best buys for any fisherman this spring is Garcia's brandnew 1979 Fishing Magazine. It's a handsome publication that contains twenty feature stories on angling all over the world, plus eight full-color pages on Garcia's many fishing products. The price is \$1.65.

2. A bass fisherman without sonar is like a hunter without binoculars. The critters may be there, but he ain't gonna know about it. If you don't enjoy futility, we suggest that you send for Lowrance's 1979 catalog, which gives an excellent description of how its sonar works, and displays the instruments themselves. It's free.

3. Mepps new Fisherman's Guide is loaded with fish pictures, fishing tips, how-to articles, and much more (not to mention the incredibly popular Mepps French Spinners). There's something in it for every angler from beginner to expert, and the price is only 25 cents.

4. Water Gremlin would like you to send for its Fishing Sinker Tip booklet. For only \$1, you get the booklet, an assortment of sinkers, and an embroidered fishing patch.

5. For a complete Scientific Anglers catalog with a step-by-step guide to proper fly line selection and use, send 50 cents for a full-color, 16-page booklet, "The Right Fly Line For You".

6. Heard about Browning's exciting new boron fishing rods? Read all about them in Browning's 156-page full-color catalog featuring the entire array of Browning sporting products. Also included are helpful shooting, fishing, and archery information pages. It's free.

7. And, by all means, do not neglect to send

for Olympic's handsome, full-color catalog, which describes a very full line of reels, and a good line of rods, as well. Included is a handy chart to help you match your rod and reel. It's 50 cents.

8. To receive a Rebel Lure catalog, a Rebel patch, and three naturalized Rebel minnows, send \$6.

9. The new Shakespeare catalog is a must for all fishermen. For your copy, and a jacket patch, simply send 75 cents.



Hunting

10. Charter Arms' catalog describes the company's line of handguns, holsters, grips, and the unusual AR-7 Explorer, a floatable .22 semiauto takedown rifle. There's no charge.

General

11. Vacation time is coming up, which means you're probably going to overload the rear of your car and go for a long drive. Only problem is, overloading can get you killed, among other things. The way around this is to equip your car with a set of unique new progressive-load springs called CarGo Coil. For the complete story, send for a free brochure.

12. The Sportsman's Guide to Ontario is the answer to questions posed by you, the sportsman. This unique, quality publication delivers an abundance of information that will make your Ontario visit a trip of a lifetime. Infor-

mation that can save you money and increase your pleasure. With a special "What To Expect" section, you'll learn about up-to-date customs regulations, hunting and fishing regulations, requirements for boats and much more. Besides enjoying great fishing articles by Al Lindner, you'll see areas of unpublicized lands to hunt moose, bear, and deer. For the canoers and backpackers an abundance of information is available on waterways and hiking trails. The Sportsman's Guide to Ontario is positively a must for the budget minded sportsman planning his Canadian trip. It's \$4.95.



Boating

13. Johnson Outboards' catalog describes fifty-one models, including powerful V-4's and V-6's from 85 to 235 hp; high-performance loopers from 50 to 75 hp; dependable fishing motors from 2 to 35 hp, plus 12- and 24-volt electrics. It's full color, 36 pages, and free.



Camping

14. Is there any one out there who doesn't have the latest Herter's catalog? (What? And you call yourself an outdoorsperson?) It's fully illustrated, is 184 pages, and has a complete line of fishing, hunting, camping, archery, and reloading gear, plus clothing and much more. Some fantastic values, and the price is \$1.

15. What can you say about Eddie Bauer? Great equipment, the best customer service around, and a catalog that is an event. For the latest four-color offering for spring, simply send a request.

WINNING SPINNING TIPS

BY LEFTY KREH, ASSOCIATE FISHING EDITOR



Study these spinning tips and you'll eliminate the mechanical problems that can result in lost fish. Don't let faulty equipment ruin your day.

I watched in horror as the young lady on the Susquehanna River battled what obviously was the biggest bass she had ever hooked. Standing in the boat, she reeled frantically while the smallmouth remained in a fast riffle below her. Every turn of the handle added more twists to her line, but none was recovered as the fish stayed firmly below her.

Like an out-of-control machine, her hand spun furiously as she tried to crank in the bass. Badly twisted, the line finally parted with a snap. "Darn," she said, "I thought the line was strong enough."

She was right. The line had been strong enough, but she had made the mistake many anglers make when they finally hook a trophy on spinning tackle. So long as the fish remains immobile, turning the handle causes the bail to revolve, but no more line is put on the spool. This causes severe twisting and weakening of the line. The only time to turn the handle is after the rod tip has been raised to draw the fish toward you. As the rod is lowered, line is recovered by winding.

Another mistake many spinfishermen make is establishing a drag setting, then leaving it for days or months. Good drags are made from alternate soft and hard washers. The drag functions properly only as long as the softer washers slip against the hard ones as the fish pulls. When you adjust a drag and allow it to set for extended periods of time, the softer washers harden because of extreme compression. There goes a good drag. You should back off your drag at the end of each day.

A good test of a new reel's drag can be made in the store before you buy the reel. Place a full spool of line on the reel. Slip the line under the roller and hold the reel aloft by the line end. Gradually loosen the drag until the weight of the reel causes it to slowly descend. It should drop smoothly. A jerky drag is what breaks line when you're fighting big fish. If you have to bounce the reel

to get it to continue falling against tension, then that reel is going to cost you a big catch.

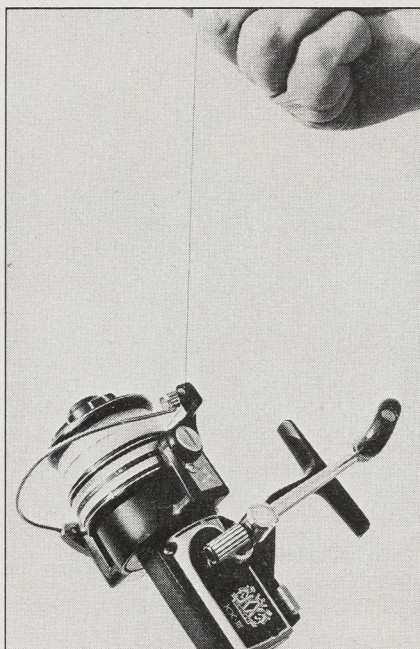
You can make a simple check on the roller, too. Take about a foot of monofilament and slip it around the roller. Then grasp one end in each hand, and make a sawing motion while line exerts pressure on the roller. If it's well designed, the roller will turn. If the roller stops and starts or doesn't turn, it will surely score your line when fighting a large fish. Rollers should always roll, and they do it solely by touching the line. For that reason, never grease a roller. Clean it well and lubricate with light oil.

Spinning reels cast a variety of lures easily—if the spool carries the correct amount of line. As the line crawls up and spirals away toward the target it must rub against the spool flange. This resistance is considerable. If you've

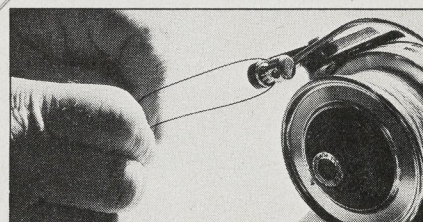
ever tried casting with a half-filled spool of line you know that it's near-impossible to get any distance. When installing new line be sure to get the proper amount on the spool, which should be filled to one-eighth inch from the top. Less line restricts the cast, and overfilling will cause the line to come off in messy tangles that have to be cut off.

One tiny nick in monofilament can reduce the line's strength by as much as 90 percent. It's easy to tell if your line is nicked. Lay it over the inside of your first finger and press your thumbnail against the line and finger. Then draw the line through and if you exert a steady pressure with your thumbnail you can feel the slightest nick in the monofilament.

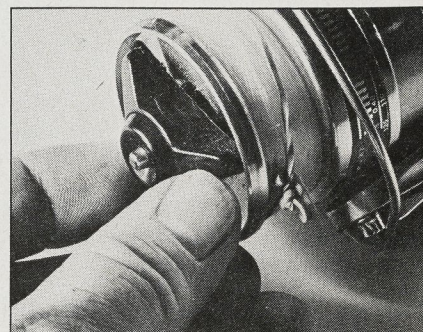
You can get excellent accuracy with open-face spinning reels if you feather the line in flight with the first finger, trapping the line when the lure is over the target. But persons with small hands have difficulty catching the line with the finger—if they hold the outfit as most people do—with the reel staff between the first two fingers. Small-handed fishermen should hold all four fingers, or at least three, in front of the reel staff. The important consideration is that the angler can easily catch the line.



Gradually loosen the drag until the weight of the reel causes it to fall slowly and smoothly. A jerky drag could cost you a lunker.

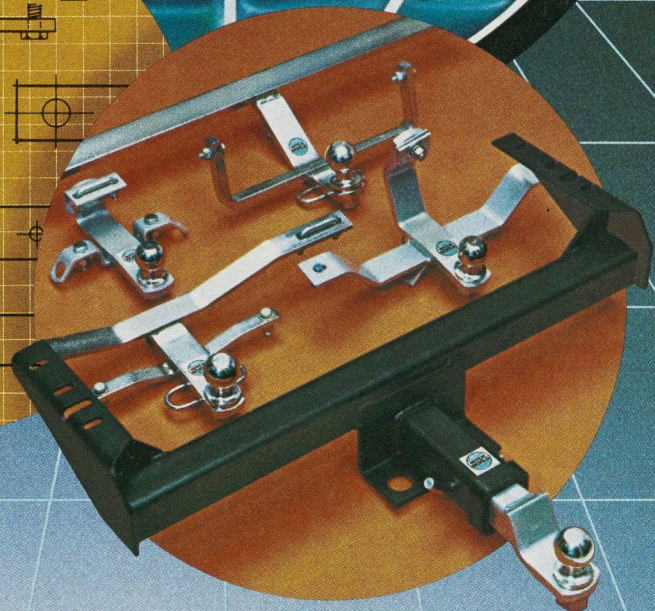
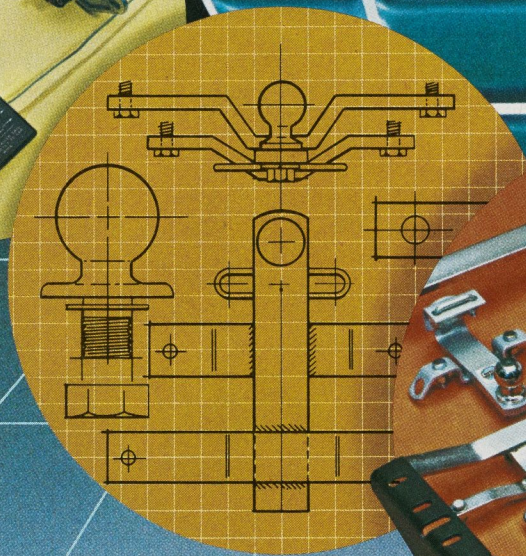


Slip the line under the roller and saw back and forth under pressure with the line. A good roller should turn.



Back off the drag adjustment nut after each day of fishing. Not to do so is to risk malfunctioning.

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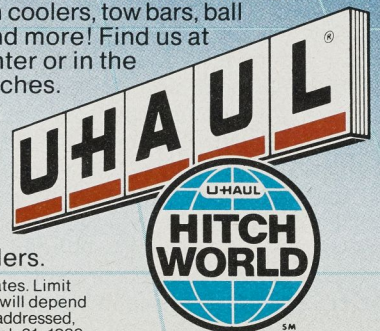
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PAR DANIEL TABOURY

Qu'il soit bien clair, d'entrée de jeu, qu'il ne s'agit pas ici de présenter une étude aboutissant à sélectionner bons et mauvais leurres mais bien plutôt de mettre en évidence l'éventail des possibilités offertes aux acheteurs lanceurs. Si choix il y a, il résulte bien plus de nos expériences personnelles et surtout de la confiance que nous portons à tel ou tel leurre, ce qui détermine nos réussites. IL FAUT, avant tout, CROIRE EN SON OU SES LEURRES pour mieux pêcher et provoquer l'attaque du poisson. Toutes les cuillers — ou presque — peuvent être attractives avec leurs qualités propres et leurs éventuels défauts. La plupart des pêcheurs « ultra-léger », comme beaucoup de moucheurs, collectionnent les leurres, en garnissent leurs boîtes... pour n'utiliser le plus souvent que 2 ou 3 modèles ! En désespoir de cause ou par fantaisie, il leur arrive de remplacer leur cuiller habituelle par un leurre nouveau ou différent (forme, coloration de la palette, etc.)... Le plus souvent, si les salmonidés restent bouche cousue, leur innovation restera sans effet ; il suffit, par contre, que pour une raison « x », les truites deviennent actives soudainement pour que ce leurre nouveau apparaisse à leurs yeux — surtout chez les débutants — comme le leurre miracle !

Il n'existe pas — bien sûr — de leurres miraculeux et bien heureusement !

Il est vrai, cependant, qu'en certaines circonstances et particulièrement dans les centimètres d'eau surpêchés, un leurre inhabituel, moins classique, puisse provoquer des réflexes d'attaques et nous sauver de la bredouille. J'en ai fait la constatation et, en élargissant cette constatation, on peut en tirer quelques conclusions :

Dans les ruisseaux étroits et boisés, en général peu fréquentés par les lanceurs, une cuiller classique reste toujours attractive à la condition qu'elle soit présentée avec un maximum de discrétion et de précision ou ne fasse pas office d'épouvantail ; la truite est un poisson lucifuge, ne l'oublions pas, et les palettes irisées, les effets de miroir, sont autant de repoussoirs qu'il sera judicieux d'éviter. (En opposition, le brochet, la perche, répondent plutôt à ce genre de sollicitations).

En rivière, là où tout le monde peut et lance donc une quantité de leurres classiques, des légers à ultra-légers, on aura intérêt surtout au fur et à mesure que la saison avance, à utiliser la gamme d'appâts moins traditionnelle pour les raisons évoquées plus haut.

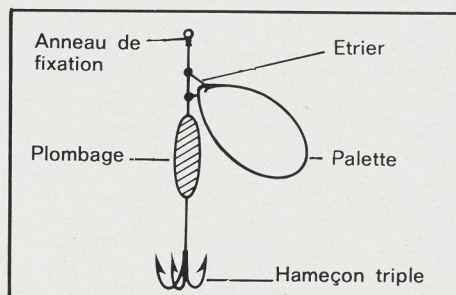
Tout ceci reste schématique, bien entendu ! Je suis pourtant persuadé qu'à partir de ces quelques réflexions globales, on peut éviter certaines erreurs, source de déconvenues.

A cela, je voudrais ajouter, en préambule, que les meilleurs leurres pour la truite seront toujours ceux dont la palette reste discrète. Beaucoup de pêcheurs le savent bien et s'attachent à ternir leurs leurres soit par oxydation soit par contact avec une flamme. A priori, le clinquant, la brillance, séduisent plus que l'inverse. Encore faut-il savoir si nous devons nous comporter comme des amateurs d'objets précieux (et gare au toc !) et tomber dans le piège des éclats et des facettes... ou faire un choix de pêcheur !

Enfin, et pour justifier la présence de telle cuiller et l'absence d'autres leurres, je rappelle qu'il s'agit de parler des ULTRA-LEGERES, c'est-à-dire de leurres dont le poids n'excède pas 3 grammes.

La première partie de cet article étant consacré aux cuillers tournantes, il convient aussi de rappeler ou de préciser rapidement les divers éléments entrant dans la fabrication d'une telle cuiller ; à savoir :

- Un axe terminé par un hameçon, en général triple ; à son autre extrémité, la boucle de fixation.
- Une palette presque toujours fixée sur un étrier.
- Un lest, un plombage sur l'axe et sous la palette.



Il est évident que ces éléments — étrier, plombage, hameçon et palette — diffèrent selon les modèles de leurres.

Le pêcheur semble attacher surtout de l'importance à la palette et encore plus à sa coloration et en oublie en conséquence que taille, poids, forme d'une palette jouent des rôles tout aussi essentiels pour la rotation, les pulsations provoquées et donc le pouvoir attractif de la cuiller.

Il constate qu'une cuiller papillonne et tourne lentement en produisant de fortes vibrations, qu'une autre, dont la rotation s'avère plus rapide, ne s'écarte guère de l'axe central et travaille dans l'eau avec une résistance toute différente.

Peu importe alors la teinte de la

LES LEURRES ULTRA-LÉGER



palette ; ces deux comportements résultent de la forme de la cuiller, la première arrondie, l'autre « en feuille de saule », allongée donc.

Il est **impérieux** de bien connaître le type de rotation d'une cuiller déterminé par la forme de la palette pour fréquenter des eaux qui peuvent présenter des profils variés, du torrent aux cours d'eau moins rapides et plus profonds.

De même — et c'est là la responsabilité du et des fabricants — la plombée axiale semble avoir été calculée pour les leurres légers et non ultra-légers. Il ne suffit pas de réduire la taille d'une palette, d'un hameçon pour transformer un leurre léger en un ultra-léger.

Cette petite mécanique complexe et miniaturisée — dans le cas présent — mériterait un long développement tant il est vrai qu'il y a beaucoup à dire et à écrire, tant il est certain aussi que les lanceurs de leurres se montrent eux-mêmes intarissables sur les mérites comparés des cuillers proposées sur le marché... ou sur celles qui en ont disparu... à tort d'ailleurs, et j'en parlerai dans une 3^e partie, que je ne conçois pas d'ores et déjà comme le musée des leurres introuvables mais l'exemple dont il faut tenir compte pour réaliser sinon le leurre idéal du moins celui s'adaptant le mieux à l'ultra-léger.

Pour l'heure, attardons-nous plutôt sur les différents modèles de cuillers tournantes dont l'achat ne relève pas de la course aux trésors !

CUILLERS MEPPS

Trois types de forme de palette :

- arrondie, très légèrement galbée (Aglia),
- longue, « feuille de saule »,
- plus allongée que l'Aglia, la Comet.

L'AGLIA

Seuls les numéros 0 (2,5 gr) devraient normalement nous intéresser. Les numéros 1 (3,5 gr) sont légèrement au-dessus en poids des modèles ultra-légers. L'Aglia n° 1, trop lourde en plombée axiale, se montre peu discrète en eaux basses. Il faut absolument l'éviter et la réserver pour les débuts de saison transitoires entre le léger et l'ultra-léger.

La n° 0 (comme la n° 1) se distingue par des palettes soit unies (or, argent ou cuivre), soit recouvertes de rouge fluorescent.

Préférence marquée — mais personnelle — pour les palettes or ou cuivre.

L'Aglia n° 0 mériterait d'être allégée au niveau de la plombée axiale et de la palette. Elle ne répond pas systématiquement aux sollicitations immédiates à l'entrée dans l'eau (ce qui est gênant pour une pêche de précision) mais se comporte bien en travail de relâchers, aux différentes impulsions du pêcheur et du moulinet (poignée, mouvements de la canne, vitesse de récupération). Nage plutôt papillonnante.

MEPPS FEUILLE DE SAULE

Modèle spécifique, tournant très près de l'axe. Palette unie or, argent ou cuivre, et n° 0 (2,5 gr). Avantages liés à la rotation dans les lancers « down stream ».

Les irisations blanches ou rouges de la Rainbo et de la Redbo me paraissent

un artifice à proscrire pour les salmonidés (encore que, dernièrement, un ami ne jurait plus que par ces leurres et je sais bien qu'il ne pêche ni en bassins d'élevage ni les salmonidés de repeuplement domestiqués se jetant sur tous les leurres !).

COMET

L'allongement de la palette, d'où une nage moins papillonnante, une légèreté plus grande à numéro égal avec l'Aglia, la coloration de la palette or ou argent, points bleus ou rouges, en font un bon leurre, n° 0, Comet Classique, n° 0 et 1 en Comet Black Fury. Cette dernière appellation — argument commercial aidant — peut faire sourire ; en fait, il s'agit là d'un excellent leurre en eaux claires à cristallines d'altitude (la Comet Black Fury présente une palette noire points jaunes). Fury peut-être ! mais Fury discrète au floc d'impact et sensible aux relâchers.

CUILLERS RUBLEX

LA CELTA MOSAÏQUE

Poids variables en trois numéros :

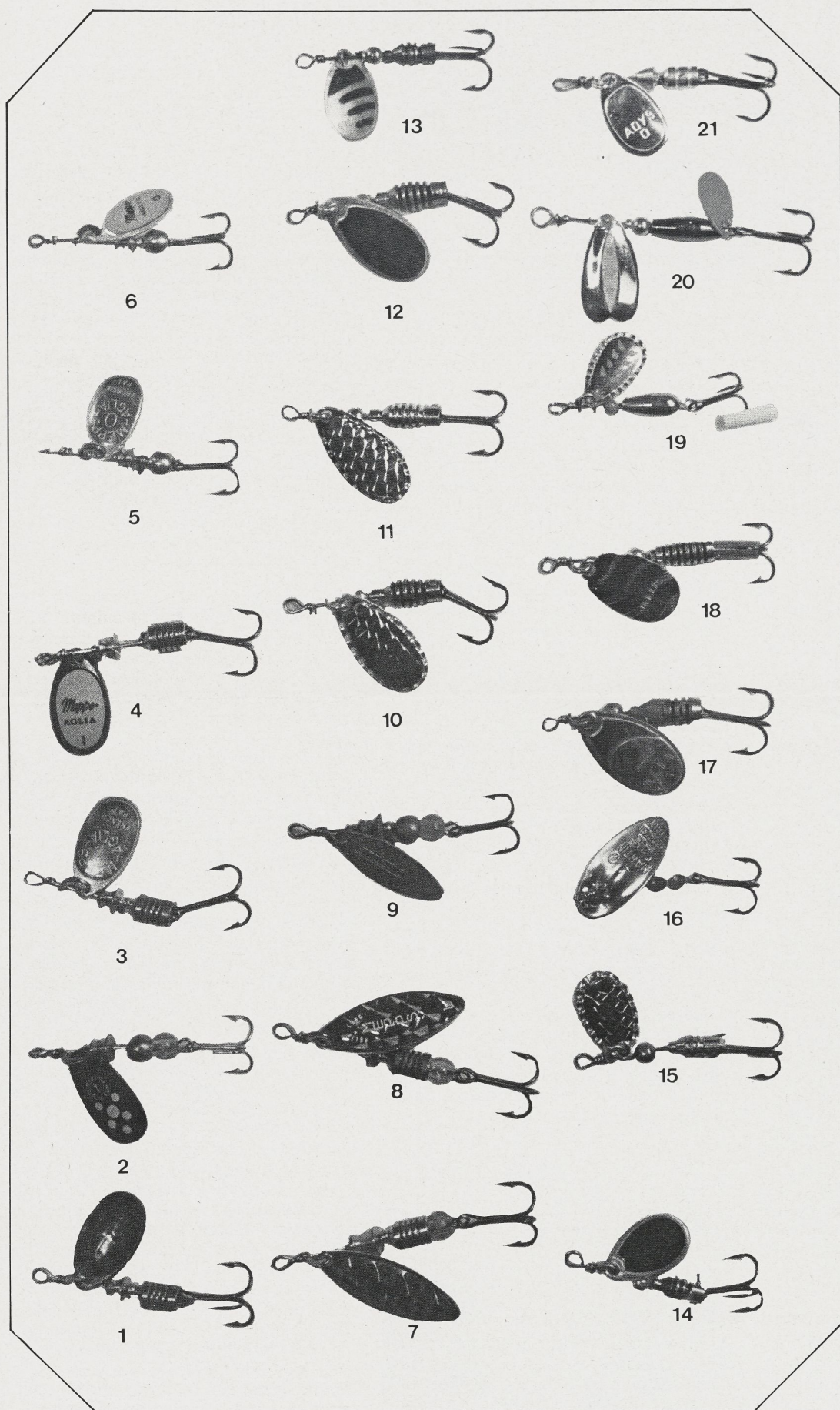
- n° 0 : 1,5 gr,
- n° 1 : 2 gr,
- n° 2 : 3,5 gr (légèrement donc au-dessus de la limite).

Palettes décorées quatre modèles :

- argent mosaïque argentée,
- or mosaïque or,
- argent mosaïque rouge,
- or mosaïque fumée.

J'aime bien ce dernier modèle or mosaïque fumée. Floc assez discret, même la n° 2 ; excellente rotation comme d'ailleurs l'ensemble des cuillers de cette marque.

LES LEURRES ULTRA-LÉGER



- 1 Mepps Aglia non décorée (noir)
- 2 Mepps Black Fury
- 3 Mepps Aglia (or)
- 4 Fluomepps n° 1
- 5 Mepps Aglia (argent)
- 6 Fluomepps n° 0
- 7 Aglia longue Rainbo

- 8 Aglia longue Redbo
- 9 Aglia longue (or)
- 10 Celta Rublex or mosaïque fumé
- 11 Celta Rublex or mosaïque or n° 2
- 12 Celta palette laquée noir n° 2
- 13 Celta palette décorée n° 1
- 14 Celta palette laquée noir n° 1

- 15 Celta Rublex or mosaïque or n° 1
- 16 Panther Martin non décorée
- 17 Alta (noir et or)
- 18 Veltic (décorée)
- 19 Abu Dropen
- 20 Bolo
- 21 Adys

ATTENTION :

Certains modèles de leurres — sur cette planche — sont présentés dans des numéros supérieurs à ceux utilisés pour

l'ultra-léger mais tous ces modèles existent dans la gamme des poids propres à l'ultra-léger. Se reporter aux commentaires de l'article.



CELTA CLASSIQUE

En n° 0 et 1 (soit, je le rappelle, 1,5 et 2 gr), excellents leurres ultra-légers, de préférence palette dorée ou laquée noir ou encore décorée rayée vert/noir sur palettes argent ou or. Les modèles « Mosaïque » sont légèrement plus incurvés à la jonction de la palette à l'étrier. Est-ce pour cela qu'ils répondent mieux à l'entrée dans l'eau ou aux relâchers ?

VELTIC

En n° 1 (poids 2 gr), la Veltic que j'utilisais pour la pêche des « zébrées » dont la palette rappelle la robe, peut aussi faire partie de la panoplie des pêcheurs de salmonidés. Triple mobile ou rigide (gaine en caoutchouc). Attention, d'ailleurs, aux risques d'oxydation de l'hameçon, cette gaine assurant la semi-rigidité mais aussi conservant l'humidité.

En tous les cas, floc discret, bonne nage peu profonde et sensible aux relâchers.

PANTHER MARTIN

La nouveauté 1981. En conséquence absolument pas testée sur les cours d'eau à truites en action de pêche normale. Quelques brefs et « clandestins essais » permettent cependant de constater que ce leurre requiert une récupération rapide, produit de fortes pulsations et que le poids du n° 1 (0,90 gr) et n° 2 (1,80 gr) les prédisposent absolument à l'ultra-léger.

La particularité essentielle tient au montage : plus d'étrier, mais l'axe traversant directement la palette. Cette dernière offre une forme non classique : concave à une extrémité, convexe à l'autre. Enfin, plombage axial moulé.

Divers modèles :

En classique : or, argent, noir zèbre. « Coccinelle » :

- jaune points rouges,
- rouge points jaunes,
- noir points jaunes.

Les plombs — lests — présentent la même coloration que la palette.

Vous, comme moi, n'allons pas man-

quer de tester cette nouvelle cuiller importée des U.S.A. Nous en reparlons donc.

ADDYS

Les n° 0 et 1 (respectivement 2,5 gr et 3 gr). Bonne cuiller assez papillonnante dont le triple en n° 0 dépasse la taille habituelle. La légèreté de la palette n'entrave pas la nage et procure l'avantage d'un posé discret.

Commercialisée en palette unie (doré ou argent) et mouchetée, points rouges ou noirs sur doré, points rouges ou noirs sur argent.

CUILLERS ABU

LA DROPEN

Il s'agit là d'une cuiller présentée comme polyvalente et tentant tous les carnassiers ! Un seul modèle nous intéresse dans le cadre de cet article consacré aux cuillers tournantes pour l'ultra-léger, celle dont le poids est égal à 2 gr.

Deux caractéristiques : lestage sous palette à l'aide d'un plomb goutte d'eau doré et palette aux bords dentelés. Coloris des palettes : blanc, doré, noir, cuivre, avec points de couleurs.

La Dropen ne s'accommode pas d'une récupération lente et reste assez discrète à son entrée dans l'eau. Ne l'ayant que très peu utilisée en pêche ultra-légère, je n'en tirerai que peu de conclusions me réservant d'en parler de nouveau prochainement.



CUILLERS BOLO

Par la forme de sa palette large, la Bolo papillonne énormément et s'accommode d'une très lente récupération. L'action de la palette est doublée par une autre — plus petite — palette en plastique rouge fixée dans l'anneau terminal de l'axe à hauteur du triple.

Palette unie allongée et échancrée symétriquement à sa base avec bande colorée et mouchetée au centre. Leurre plus sophistiqué et... cher. Le double, au moins, d'une cuiller plus traditionnelle. La Bolo m'a personnellement valu de bonnes réussites en début de saison où les salmonidés se montrent moins déterminés à réagir au passage d'un leurre. La lenteur de la récupération, en eaux profondes et peu torrentueuses, permet un travail précis de la cuiller. La Bolo, par contre, me semble beaucoup moins efficace au fur et à mesure que la saison avance et que le niveau des cours d'eau baisse.

Là encore cuiller polyvalente. Un seul numéro, le 1, à retenir pour l'ultra-léger ; poids 1,75 gr.

Conclusion partielle

Je ne reviendrai pas globalement sur les cuillers tournantes (exception faite pour les modèles Panther Martin et Abu Dropen). S'il existe un choix, les divers modèles présentés en témoignent ; on ne peut cependant pas dire que les pêcheurs à l'ultra-léger aient à leur disposition la ou les cuillers tout à fait satisfaisantes qu'ils souhaitaient trouver dans le commerce.

Il reste à en fabriquer, technique bien délicate, même pour le bon bricoleur, ou à s'accommoder des leurres existants. En sachant de toutes les façons que plus une cuiller est légère et en dimensions réduites, plus elle a tendance à tourner difficilement.

De cela, il convient de tenir compte, comme des nombreux avis très partagés, sur la coloration des palettes. Certains lanceurs souhaitent voir, suivre le leurre dans ses évolutions ; d'autres spécialistes préconisent la palette blanche par eaux piquées ; d'autres, et par mêmes eaux teintées, la noire. Il règne donc un certain imbroglio empirique dont bien malin serait celui qui en tirerait des conclusions définitives. Quant à moi, assuré que l'essentiel tient surtout à la discrétion et à la précision, on pourra comprendre quels leurres ont jusqu'alors ma préférence... Si c'est oui et, comme dans la chanson, c'est de l'espérance ; si c'est non... et fi de la chanson, ce sera toujours de l'espérance car n'est bonne — dans la majorité des circonstances — que la cuiller à laquelle on croit contre vents, marées et... auteurs halieutiques.

Daniel TABOURY.



CANAS

lançado ligeiro e ultra- ligeiro

por Carlos Mouro Pereira

EM anteriores números da revista foram analisadas as canas de mar e de rio. Analisaremos em futuros artigos as canas de mosca e de pesca desportiva no alto mar. É agora a vez das canas de lançado ligeiro e ultra-ligeiro. Todo o pescador deve ser cuidadoso ao adquirir uma cana de pesca mas, no que diz respeito a esta modalidade, maior deverá ser o seu cuidado.

Canas

O êxito do lançamento depende da relação que se estabelece entre a grossura do fio, o peso do que se lança e a forma como o fio está disposto no carreto; mas a potência da cana entra no conjunto como um factor essencial. A cana é o único elemento móvel e que efectua um trabalho durante um lançamento. Não existem canas que simultaneamente possam lançar pesos máximos e mínimos, estando cada uma construída dentro de limites precisos da potência para que foram concebidas. Daí que, segundo o tipo de pesca que se pratica e dos vários pesos que há para lançar, haja necessidade de poder dis-

mem prevenido vale por dois», é bom saber concretamente o que é a potência.

Fixando pelo punho uma cana na posição completamente horizontal, ata-se à ponteira um fio forte, 0,40 ou 0,50 ao qual se fixa um peso que fará curvar a ponta. Progressivamente vai-se aumentando o peso até que a ponteira fique numa posição totalmente vertical à linha do punho — num ângulo de 90 graus. O peso necessário para conseguir colocar a ponteira na vertical constitui a potência da cana. Não se pretende dizer com isto que a cana consiga lançar o mesmo peso. Se experimentar-

tência pode lançar um peso ligeiro ou ultra-ligeiro, resultando daí a sua denominação.

As canas de lançado ligeiro e ultra-ligeiro são engenhos que se manipulam com uma só mão, devendo ser curtas, ligeiras e «nervosas». Há-as que bem podem ser comparadas a um florete o que as torna extremamente precisas no lançamento, agradáveis no manejar, flexíveis no fatigar do peixe.

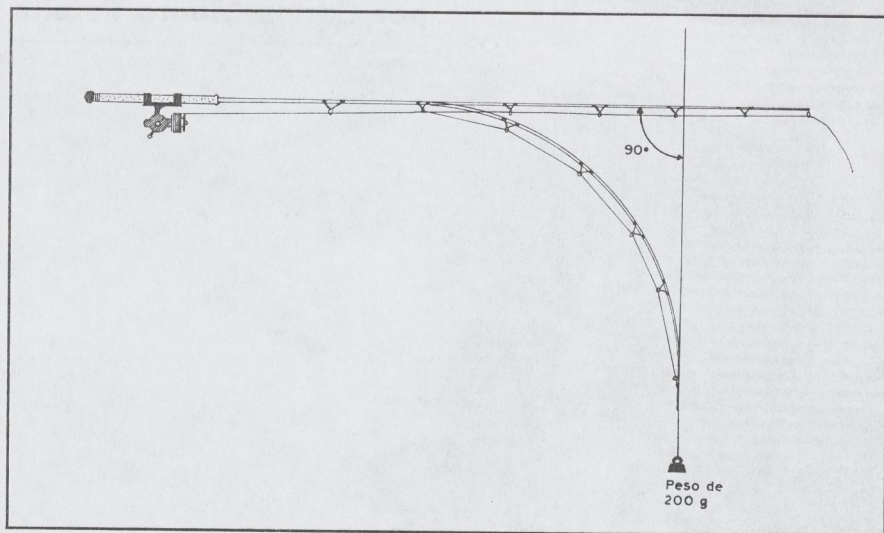
Uma boa cana depende do material de que é feita e da quantidade e correcta colocação das passadeiras. Há canas construídas em bambu sextavado, fibra de vidro ôco e maciço, metal, carbono.

Uma cana construída em bambu é composta por seis triângulos colados com resinas sintéticas, formando um hexágono. São dotadas de uma extraordinária flexibilidade, grande ligeireza e de uma beleza incomparável. Infelizmente, o material natural de que são feitas é oriundo do sul da China, onde desbastes sucessivos têm feito rarear a excepcional qualidade. Por outro lado, a grande quantidade de mão-de-obra necessária para a confecção torna-as caras e inacessíveis à grande maioria das bolsas. As marcas reputadas mundialmente não arriscam inscrever os seus nomes em canas de má ou mesmo regular qualidade.

A fibra de vidro tubular começou a ser aplicada às canas nos Estados Unidos, se bem que tenha sido um francês, Henri Dubois, o inventor da cana de fibra de vidro.

Actualmente, graças ao uso de um computador é possível com uma precisão científica desenhar-se e construir-se canas com variadas acções e perfis.

A massificação das canas de fibra de vidro tornou-as das mais vulgares entre os pescadores de todo o mundo, sendo já raras as canas de fibra de vidro maciço.



Cálculo de potência de uma cana

pôr de mais do que uma cana. Nem sempre isso é possível por não condizer com disponibilidades financeiras de alguns.

O que é a potência de uma cana? É a capacidade que esta tem para lançar pesos desde um mínimo a um máximo. A generalidade dos compradores de canas deste tipo são levados à compra por conselho do vendedor, que, verdade seja dita, não entende lá muito bem o porquê, mas sim, que é um artigo mais ou menos vendável com um preço acessível. Como «ho-

mos fazê-lo podemos vir a partir a cana.

Há que dividir o número que expressa a potência por 50 se se quer saber o máximo peso lançável; por 100 se se quer saber o peso mínimo.

Por exemplo: uma cana com a potência de 600 gramas poderá lançar um mínimo de 6 e um máximo de 12 gramas; uma cana de 200 gramas de potência poderá lançar um mínimo de 2 e um máximo de 3 gramas.

Resulta facilmente visível que uma cana consoante a sua po-

CATCH WITH A CARROT

The 'Whittler's Fancy' has been a deadly lure for salmon since the 1920s, says FREDDIE DALGETY

TO catch a salmon, take a carrot trim to shape, mount a treble at the tail, and present it to the fish . . . This advice, given by the late Eddie Lydon, gillie at the Weir Pool in Galway, is no Irish joke. It works.

Eddie was the last of the well-known Lydon family to gillie on the River Corrib. By the time he gave me the tip about the carrot he would have been helping anglers master the idiosyncrasies of the river for more than 50 years.

Fly was the order of the day when I first visited the Weir Pool, and, when fly failed, the prawn was used. Eddie tied the flies and in the early days we invariably used a Silver Doctor on the tail and a Thunder and Lightning on the dropper in clear bright conditions and reversed the order on dull days when the water was coloured. The same two patterns were always used but the size changed to suit the weight of water.

If a fly deteriorated through being mauled by fish, or, more frequently, ham-fisted casting, it was snipped off and slipped into Eddie's pocket to be retied and resold to us later for one and ninepence.

But by the mid-1950s Eddie had grown to accept several of the flies which visitors from all over the world, including the Americas and Antipodes, had tried with success at Galway. He even allowed me to fish with a bundle of grey squirrel fur I had lashed to a hook. Around 1958 his sight prevented his tying flies and he would look in vain through your box for a creation approaching his own favourite patterns.

The 1960s brought increasing numbers of eccentric fishermen to the Weir Pool; Eddie became used to the French masters of upstream spinning with a small Mepps in low water, the American who caught salmon on a dry fly as high water of a spring tide reversed the pool's currents

A carrot lure carved with a pocket-knife. This one was designed for spinning and was shaped to fish with a slight wobble. The needle used to thread the trace has been pushed back down the middle of the carrot to reinforce it.

(this was after the river-bed had been lowered to allow greater drainage around Lough Corrib), and, at last, he was introduced to the carrot.

I think it was this vegetable which finally convinced Eddie of the salmon's catholic tastes. Once he had confined his offerings to princely creations of feather, fur, silk and tinsel, the prawn resplendant in all its whiskers, the 'Wagtail', 'Golden Sprat', 'Reflex', 'Devon', silver-and-copper spoon, or, shame, the poacher's worm. But clearly home-made spinners, and even a carrot, had a place, too.

☆ ☆ ☆

Galway's Weir Pool is a rather special place. Standing on the road bridge at the foot of the pool, you can see the salmon clearly lying in the river upstream. Two decades ago, they lay there in their battalions, looking for all the world as if some giant had neatly stacked row upon row of enormous wine bottles across the river bed, to cover every inch. One came to know individual fish, and could make a fair analysis of different fishing methods.

The fly always cast on the same length of line and progressing a step at a time downstream, was the easiest and most

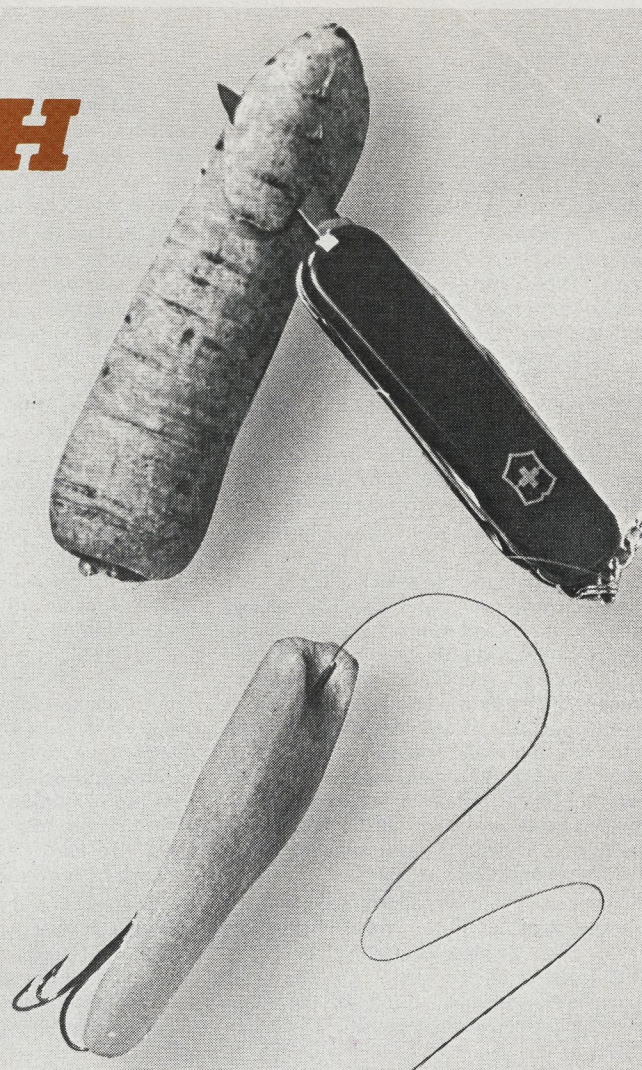
thorough way of covering fish. On days when conditions were right and the salmon in agreement it was also the most killing method, particularly for fresh fish.

Spinners sometimes fished with a longer line and sometimes shorter, depending on the eccentricities of the individual cast, never covered the water so thoroughly but frequently triggered an outburst of action. However, the fish soon became used to standard designs of spinners and flies, ignoring them completely.

It became evident that the use of the unusual, was far more likely to inspire a take from fish that had been up the river a week or more; particularly on days when conditions were not perfect.

Our first experiments with flies of odd shapes, colours and sizes (mainly tubes) were all successful at first but became useless as fish began to accept them as just another standard. We changed to minnows made from a collection of porcupine quills with cellulose fins at odd angles to give eccentric spinning. These were painted all colours and even given feathers to accentuate the freakish action.

Each new bait's initial success would fade as the fish became inured to its passing. Then Eddie introduced me to the



carrot, the success of which had been demonstrated to him by an earlier visitor. This humble vegetable proved to be among the most effective of baits.

There are many ways of fishing the carrot. When spinning, it is best to thread the nylon trace down the centre of the carrot from nose to tail with the aid of a needle, add a bead, and finally a treble hook. While trebles have proved most effective for hooking and holding salmon, those of low quality are often the weakest point in your tackle. After much experimenting, I now use Partridge trebles exclusively. I like the forged Partridge treble and normally use a size four with something a little larger in heavier water and a little smaller in light water — the latter particularly when using a fly rod.

A thin plastic tube, such as one from a can of 'WD 40', may be put down the centre of the carrot to take the trace. This method prolongs the bait's life, allows free spinning, and reduces trace-twisting. For all other methods, tie a treble hook to the trace and, using a needle, thread the trace into the carrot about halfway up its length and out of the centre at the front, whether this is the top or the bottom of the vegetable. The needle, with trace still running through its eye, is pushed down the centre of the carrot as reinforcement while one hook of the treble is stuck into the tail of the bait.

The purist will concentrate on fishing his carrot as a fly, for which it must be small, 'The Garden Foundling', or cut to size from a large root, 'The Whittler's Fancy'. An endless supply of the latter may be created from a handful of mature

vegetables. In section they may be round, ovoid, square, or any other shape to taste. A slab-sided model, tastefully decorated by means of felt pens, is a regular killer. The purist would better concentrate on the 'Garden Foundling', for which you can never have too many carrot beds.

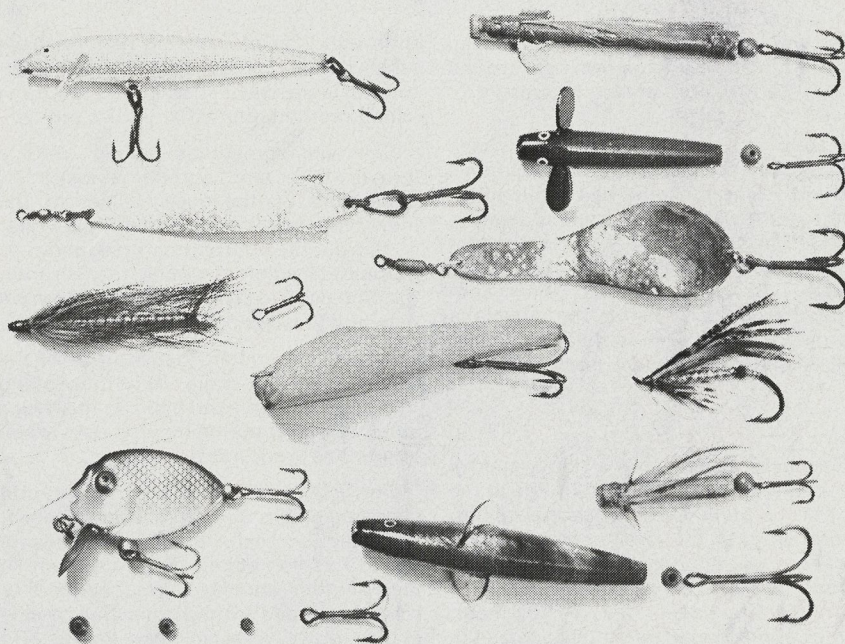
A glance at the river will indicate the size of carrot required. If you do not have carrots of your own, do not be deterred. Your neighbours are sure to welcome a little help with their cultivations; having spotted a likely bed, do your good deed for the day and thin it well. You will be looking for well-coloured roots with a nice proportion of thickness to length.

Carrots are fished nose first. Stems should be trimmed to form an attractive green tail. Gardeners among you will appreciate the perfection of young well-coloured 'St Valery', 'Redcored Chantenay', 'Parisian Rondo', and the like. The less experienced should be careful in their thinning.

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The seasoned gardener will probably be looking for a crop with an inch or two between vegetables, but no doubt he will greatly appreciate any thinning work that you do, providing the gaps are not more than three or four inches. Like most good flies, the carrot fishes well on either a sinking or a floating line.

When spinning very light water, mount the carrot directly to the end of the line. Normally I prefer to use a 24 in trace and 'Wye' lead. I use a bought or home-made 'Wye' lead on almost every occasion that I use a spinning rod to fish for salmon.



A collection of successful lures for salmon — but the best of the lot, and the most versatile, is the 'Carrot Lure' in the centre of the group. It can be trimmed to suit any water, or can be fished as a fly or a spinner. The Heddon Plug (bottom left) has been effective on rivers in the south of England but not in Highland rivers, Freddie Dalgety says. He finds the Rapala lure attracts salmon well but an unacceptable proportion of fish are lost — presumably because a leverage factor affects the hook-hold.

The keel of a Wye lead is one of the most efficient anti-kink devices (kinks more than anything else weaken monofilament lines, cause backlashes on multiplying reels, encourage the line to wrap itself round the rod top, and prevent the line passing freely over snags).

Fixed-spool reels build twists into a line, so it is advisable to have a swivel above the lead. The shop-supplied 'Wye' lead will have a standard swivel fitted. To this I tie the line. Though I normally use lines of between 6 lb and 8 lb breaking strain (only in very heavy water using one of between 12 lb and 15 lb), I have found that the spring link fitted to 'Wye' leads is frequently a weak point. I now throw them away.

Using a copper plated split ring, I fit a ball-bearing swivel to the lower end of the lead and attach the trace to this. The lead "fishes" taughtly from the end of the line, while the bait flips around at the whim of each little eddy giving an action not dissimilar to that of a fly on the end of its cast.

Among those friends I have turned into dedicated carrot-fishers, one will always fish a spinning carrot, another a wobbling model, and a third use the straight sink-and-draw method. I think this is a mistake. All methods catch fish, but I believe that variety of size, shape, action, and even colour, give the greatest success.

The carrot for the simple sink-and-draw method needs no particular shape and with this method I have had most success in very heavy water. The wobbling carrot should have its nose hollowed out and be turned as were the old wooden plugs.

This has proved a killer on the Somerley waters of the Hampshire Avon. The carrot may be caused to spin with a sprat or prawn spinner, but this seems a mistake. The specialised end-tackle prevents the bait sliding up the line when playing a fish and it is a simple matter to carve the carrot with one, two, three or more narrow fins running corkscrew fashion for almost the full length of the body. This results in some odd shapes which look most attractive in the water. The spinning carrot has been a success in England, Ireland, and Scotland.

I had thought the carrot idea of Eddie's tipster, original. However, talking to Mr Drummond Sedgewick I learnt that the 'Carrot Pool' on the Wye is named after the success of Mr Robert Pashley using the vegetable on a Hardy spinning vane during the 1920s. I wonder how much further the idea dates back?

An exchange of information by members of a 'Carrot Club' would be most interesting. My own experiences is that over a given time in reasonable conditions it regularly produces as many or possibly more fish than those taken on any other lure.

It is durable and a single carrot can account for several fish. It can be dug without cost, sown from seed, 'borrowed' from a neighbour, or stored in sand for long periods. In short, the 'Carrot' is a truly unique lure...

CASTING

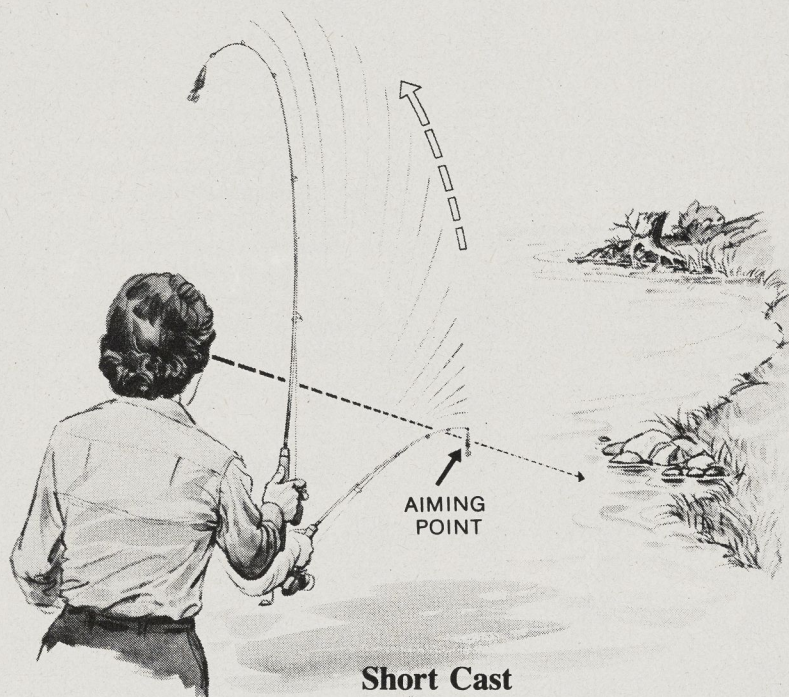
EASY ACCURACY

Use your rod guides as an aid to put that lure in the right spot.

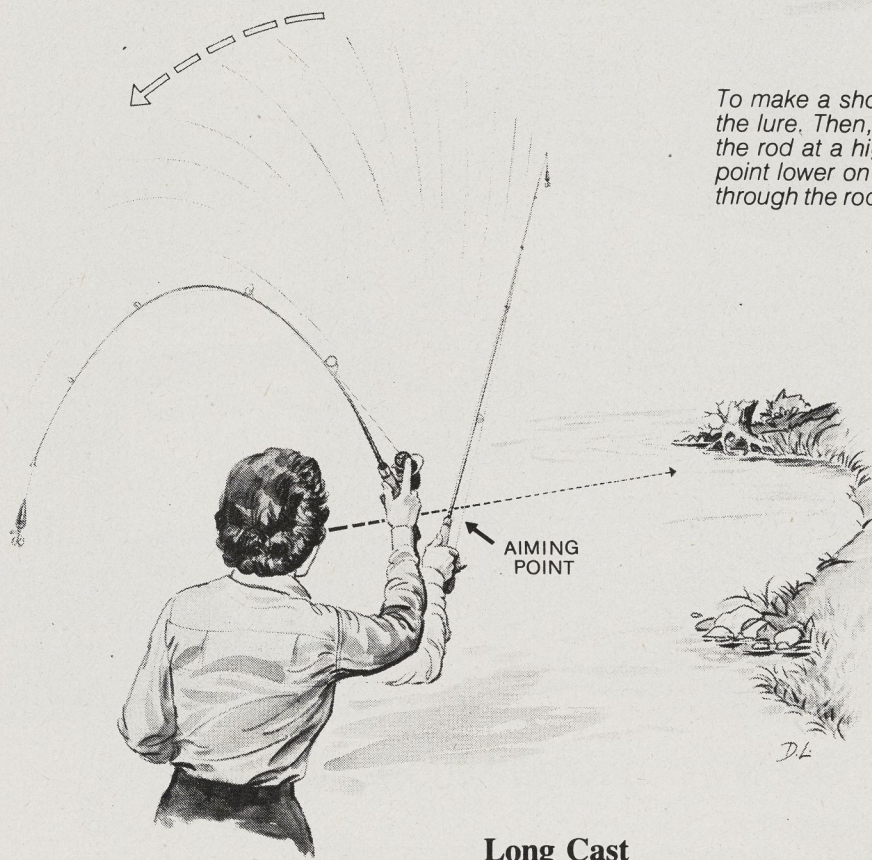
By JOAN WULFF

Many plug and spin-fishermen have trouble with accuracy because they fail to control lure trajectory. To make long casts, some anglers start with the rod tip so low behind them that the lure is released almost straight up, toward the clouds. This may seem to be the way to make long, accurate casts, but it's really not. The key to accurate casting is not to vary the casting arc, but to change instead the point of aim.


To cast accurately, first determine the casting arc for your rod and lure. To do this, swing the lure from side to side in front of you until the rod is properly bent, or loaded. This is the casting arc. Regardless of casting distance, always load the rod to this same casting arc. If you change to a different rod or lure,



To make a short cast, hold the rod low and "aim" through the lure. Then, as you need to make longer casts, hold the rod at a higher starting position and aim through some point lower on the rod. To make the longest casts, sight through the rod just above the handle, as shown at lower left.



you'll need to determine the new casting arc for that particular combination. Incidentally, a short, stiff rod usually requires a long stroke, and a long, limber rod a short stroke.

To make a short cast, "aim" the rod by holding the rod tip in the same line of sight as the target. Then, make the predetermined stroke, stopping the rod when the rod tip and the target are again in line. If the lure lands beyond the target, then aim the tip slightly below the target on the next cast. If the lure falls short of the target, start with a higher point of aim (line up the first guide below the tip with your target, for example). As you cast farther, sight in on your target with the second or third guide from the tip. The base of the rod should be your aiming point for your very farthest casts. As distances increase, you might also need to increase the power in your wrist flick. 

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FIELD & STREAM FEBRUARY 1980

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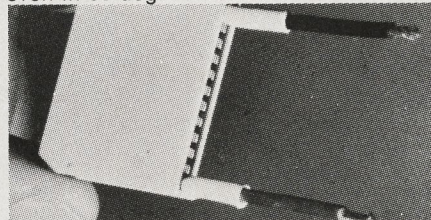
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Ultralight Spinning for BIG TROUT

by Michael Baz

photography by Peter Miller

I still don't know what it is about trout fishing. My father didn't take me in hand at an early age; I don't have the tradition-rich background so common to hard core trout anglers. Wicker creels and hand-polished bamboo rods weren't part of childhood memories, but I do remember coveting the newly introduced Mitchell #300 spinning reel. I guess that was about 1952. I was twelve years old and spent my teenage years chasing pickerel and sunfish around shallow Long Island ponds. I cranked in Mepps spinners and Dardevels to my heart's content, and caught plenty of fish.

One day I threw my lure into a brackish stream that fed into the Great South Bay and I caught a trout. I didn't know it was a trout; a man watching from the streambank told me so. It was about ten-inches long, and weighed maybe 4 ounces. It had a pinkish band running down its side and its back was covered with tiny black spots. The man called it a rainbow.

That was twenty six years ago. I am 38 now, a college graduate, and I should know better. I can read, and I know what Wulff and Schwiebert are talking about. I get my Orvis catalog twice a year, and a lot of other mail that features magazines showing Charles K. Fox on the Letort and Dave Whitlock God-knows-where. A friend of mine who is associated with this magazine forces me to cast nymphs once a year on Michigan's Pere Marquette River. Last spring I took a 16 pound male steelhead there on a Two-Egg Sperm Fly. Geez, I even guide fly fishermen.

Get the picture? I am a spin

fisherman, and the worst kind. I live two hours from the Battenkill, a place where, if you are so inclined, you can mess up a lot of minds in a short period of time. I usually start by sliding into the Orvis store in Manchester.

"Let's get rid of the clichés first, all that stuff about spin fishermen being meat hogs and fly fishermen being purists."

I like to hover over the display cases, grinning at the size 18 dry flies while I fondle the over-sized Rapala secreted in my pocket. Then I try to engage a customer in conversation. By the looks of the license plates in the parking lot, everyone is from out of state, coming to pay homage at the shrine. They're eager to hit the river, but have stopped here to glean the latest bits of information. Strange words and phrases are in the air: "What came off in the morning hatch? . . . spent wing patterns . . . mending lines on short drifts." Strange stuff. One man looks a bit more dazed than most. I'll bet he's been on the river, I think to myself. I sidle up and ask him about his luck. His is a typical Battenkill story: low water, fish rising everywhere, nothing hooked. I tell him I'm on my way to the river. Why doesn't he come along? He looks at my gold earring doubtfully, but when I

tell him I fish the river twice a week he's mine.

As we drive to the river, he asks me what kind of rod I use. He didn't notice the 4½ foot one-piece Fenwick spinning rod resting behind the seats. He asks about patterns, and I mention light, sinking balsa wood. The game is up, but it's too late. We are at the river, and as we slip into waders I know I am about to indoctrinate another fly fisherman into the subtleties of ultralight spin fishing.

I am a dedicated spin fisherman. I've been at it a long time, and the reason I don't fly fish is simple: it just never appealed to me. As time went by I developed a strange rationale. If insects are a natural part of streamlife, and men tie life-like imitations of said insects (I think this is called "matching the hatch"), shouldn't wholesale slaughter result? Shouldn't it be child's play to fool the fish?

Obviously it's not that easy, but I have always clung to the belief that it is more difficult to take trout with hardware, especially in streams that are rich in insect life. In the last few years I have come to realize that a good fisherman — whether using flies or lures — will take trout with a good degree of success, lending some truth to the statement that 10% of the anglers take 90% of the fish. However, lure and fly fishers part ways when it comes to the brutes. The experienced lure fisherman, in his quest for trophy fish, will always out-produce the fly caster. Don't interpret this as an argumentative statement; it's a fact. Let's get rid of the clichés first, all that



Lures should be cast upstream and retrieved with the flow. Cover each section of stream like a grid.

stuff about spin fishermen being meat hogs and fly fishermen being purists. In this case let's assume that we are talking about serious angling.

The greatest advantage the spin fisherman has over the fly caster is the ability to make long casts easily and to reach spots that are inaccessible to the fly. Big trout hold in water that offers the most protection possible, choosing hard-to-get-at cover over easier areas that might offer better feeding possibilities. These are typical situations that every angler has faced: brushy, undercut banks providing no room for a good drift. An accurate cast with a short spinning rod can easily place a lure in a spot like this. Distance is no problem either, as a quarter ounce lure can travel 50 feet with a flick of the wrist. A person who can combine accuracy and distance with a spinning rod is in a position to fish over trout that might never see another angler's offerings in the course of a season.

Examining spin fishing from its beginning point, let's look at the basic equipment. In terms of the rod, ultralight means a rod in one of three lengths: 4½, 5, or 5½ feet.

The length is mostly a matter of personal preference — what feels best. I do think that a 4½ foot rod is best used in the hands of an experienced person. These rods are always one-piece affairs and casts are difficult to control, especially in tight places. A plus for the shortest rod is that a sixteen-inch brown feels like a five-pounder!

The best ultralight spinning rods are made of glass or graphite. I dismissed graphite as a fad until I got one. In a rod this small lightness isn't a factor, but the incredible "give" of

graphite is amazing. The rod seems to flex from butt to tip, and the whole rod seems to absorb the shock when pressure is put on a big fish. I use Fenwicks, but I've tried short rods from other manufacturers and they all appeared equal to the task.

Reels are probably more important than the choice of rods. They must be of the correct weight to give balance to the total outfit. The reel must also have a butter-smooth drag. When you hook a big fish with this kind of equipment you can expect a lot of line-taking by the fish. At the risk of pushing one brand, the Garcia #408 is the perfect ultralight spinning reel. It balances well on the rod, holds plenty of line, and never fails. I have

"The choice of lures can make you crazy. Most are designed to catch fishermen, not fish."

pounded this reel to death and never had it malfunction on the stream. The drag is adjustable to the finest touch, and its location on the top of the spool makes it easy to adjust when fighting a fish.

Don't buy cheap line; it doesn't make sense. Quality monofilament, such as Garcia's Royal Bonnyl or Berkley's Trilene XL, lies flat on the spool and doesn't stretch after constant use. Four pound test is the standard for ultralight work.

The choice of lures can make you crazy. Most are designed to catch fishermen, not fish. There are three basic types of spinning lures:

spinners, spoons, and plugs. Most of the lures on the market are junk, and after many years of experimenting I have narrowed my choice down to one of each type.

In the spinner category, Mepps wins hands-down. It's one of the few lures whose blade doesn't get hung up on the lure shaft, and the Mepps has enough weight for its small mass to get down quickly in high water. The Mepps spinner is especially effective in situations where the water is roily and dirty. The flash from the blade is easily visible, and rainbows in particular seem to take this lure very well.

The critical factor when choosing a spoon (wobbler) is the ability of the lure to flutter when being retrieved. The theory when spoon fishing is that the erratic, wobbling motion of the lure will imitate a frantic or injured minnow. The best of this type is a small gold spoon known as the Thomas Fighting Fish. The lure action is incredible; I've taken at least a hundred trout over 18 inches with this spoon.

In the plug class I am talking about minnow imitators. There is only one worth considering: the Count-Down Rapala. This lure is made of balsa wood, and sinks slowly after hitting the water. A small, concave lip under its head imparts the action — a side-to-side motion that makes the lure look more like a minnow than the real thing. If I were restricted to one lure, this would be my choice.

This is the basic equipment needed for ultralight spinning. Other than the obvious accessories, such as waders and a fishing vest, you're all set. The key now is to use this equipment with the proper stream techniques.

In any kind of fishing, knowing the habits of your quarry and the restrictions of the environment in which the fish lives means everything. Once you step into the water you are in a foreign world; an intruder into the trout's home. Little things that go unnoticed by the angler are often big warning signs to the trout. If you walk downstream, kicking up little spurts of sand and gravel as you go, the fish ahead of you know that something is wrong. Sand doesn't come downstream by itself unless something is disturbing the water. Walking along the banks is a no-no. Strange shadows, especially when moving, put fish down immediately.

The successful spin fisherman moves cautiously and always upstream. The trout are facing into the water flow, facing their food as it comes towards them. Since we are looking for big trout, we'll ignore the smaller fish that are easier to locate and take.

If you are making a transition from

“These fish are carnivores; they’re not interested in miniscule insects. They want meat . . .”

the fly rod to spinning, a whole new set of rules apply. Forget about hatches or spotting an individual fish rising in a feeding station. One of the benefits about spin fishing for big trout is that you are looking for fish with no specific feeding patterns. These fish are carnivores; they’re not interested in miniscule insects. They want meat — minnows, small trout, frogs, anything with bulk that can fill them quickly. Along with the desire for food, big trout also have an attack syndrome. They seem to like to reestablish their dominance whenever possible. When a big trout establishes his area, everything else moves out or gets eaten. Remember those time you’ve carefully fished an especially “fishy” section of stream and gotten no response? Probably the home of a lunker. Not just a temporary home either; the fish will stay until something beyond his control forces him to depart.

Earlier I mentioned that trout are more concerned with protection than with food, and as the fish grows larger this applies even more. This is not to say that a fish will forsake eating for cover, but it will maximize the use of cover and still retain its food taking abilities. Small trout are seen everywhere in the stream; it’s rare to see one of the big boys cruising around. Thus, the basic tactic when fishing for big trout is: fish the difficult-to-reach places. The more difficult the approach, the more likelihood of that particular piece of water holding a good fish. Everyone knows the kind of water I’m talking about: undercut banks, brushy places, any obstruction in the stream. However, besides being tough to reach, most people don’t fish these places properly. You’ve got to be willing to lose lures to take big fish. A cast six inches in front of the bank isn’t good enough; the lure has to hit the bank and fall into the water. I cast into bushes and hope I can flip the lure out. If I can’t, I’ll break the line and move on rather than wade over and retrieve the lure. Why disturb a great spot for a 75¢ lure?

One of the best places for big fish is an undercut bank that has very shallow water right in front. The cut itself might only be a foot deep and two feet long. This is the kind of water fly fishermen can’t drift and spin fishermen never ignore. A case in

point: several years ago I was fishing a small Vermont stream with Jerry Gibbs, **OUTDOOR LIFE’s** Fishing Editor. The stream was so small that we were taking twenty minute turns — one with the rod, the other with the camera. I was fishing, and as we rounded a corner the stream narrowed to almost nothing. A heavy bush grew directly out of the far bank, and the water in front was about three-inches deep. I casted just ahead of the bush, the small spoon landing on bare gravel. As it passed in front of the bush the trout came out, its back fully out of the water. It had to come 20 feet to hit the lure, and at one point the head of the fish was actually out of the water; I could see right into its mouth when it took the lure. It was a great fight, Gibbs got some very unusual shots, and I got a 24 inch brown that weighed four pounds. In addition to almost no water to speak

“At one point the head of the fish was actually out of the water; I could see right into its mouth when it took the lure.”

of, it was a very sunny day; about noon. Most people would say you can’t take big trout under these conditions. But I do it all the time. This only reinforces my belief that big trout will take just about any time the angler can make the correct presentation.

Upstream fishing is critical when working with lures. In addition to the obvious advantage of coming up behind the fish, casting upstream and retrieving the lure back down allows the lure to take full advantage of the water flow. The lure must be maximizing its action when it passes in front of the spot you think holds the fish. If you feel a trout is lying behind a partially submerged log, the cast should be made about twenty feet ahead of the log and at a 45 degree angle to it. This allows the lure to be retrieved in an arc: in an imaginary circle the fish will usually hit at the top of the circle. This is similar to a trout taking a dry fly at the top of the drift,

just at the point where the fly would be even to the line. The problem with downstream fishing with lures is that when you retrieve against the current, the water force makes the lure rise up in the water and gives it an unnatural movement. In heavy water this would actually cause the lure to plane along the surface.

Water temperature is another key factor in spin fishing. 50 degrees F is the pivotal water temperature. Below this, lures lose their effectiveness and it’s time to switch to bait. In most areas of the country low water temperature is usually coupled with high water due to spring runoff, and this combination of factors presents the spin fisherman’s greatest challenge. There are two live baits that will take trout at this time: worms and minnows. Most everyone has fished with worms, but bait fishing to most anglers means heaving a nightcrawler into a deep pool and watching the sinker take the bait immediately to the river bottom. Fish can be taken with this technique: usually freshly stocked six-inch trout and suckers. A live worm pinned to the streambed is about as realistic to a trout as a human going into a steakhouse and seeing a freshly grilled sirloin nailed to the ceiling.

Bait must be fished in the same manner as a lure — moving with the flow of the stream. The big difference in technique is that the fish will move great distances to take a lure, while in cold April water a sluggish fish will move only inches to take the bait and many times will nibble rather than strike.

“A live worm pinned to the streambed is about as realistic to a trout as a human going into a steakhouse and seeing a freshly grilled sirloin nailed to the ceiling.”

In the spring I move up to a little heavier equipment: a six foot rod and

During the great anti-intellectual purge of the late 1950s, the parents of Michael Baz placed their infant child in a reed basket and threw the basket in the Harlem River. Equipped with only minimum survival gear (a spinning rod, a bottle of Beefeater’s gin, and an Israeli passport), the basket was pushed northward to Lake Champlain. The child was rescued by kindly natives, and survived to physical maturity. No longer a ward of the state, Baz ekes out a meager existence as a fishing guide and part-time waiter in a natural food restaurant. He makes his home in Warren, Vermont.

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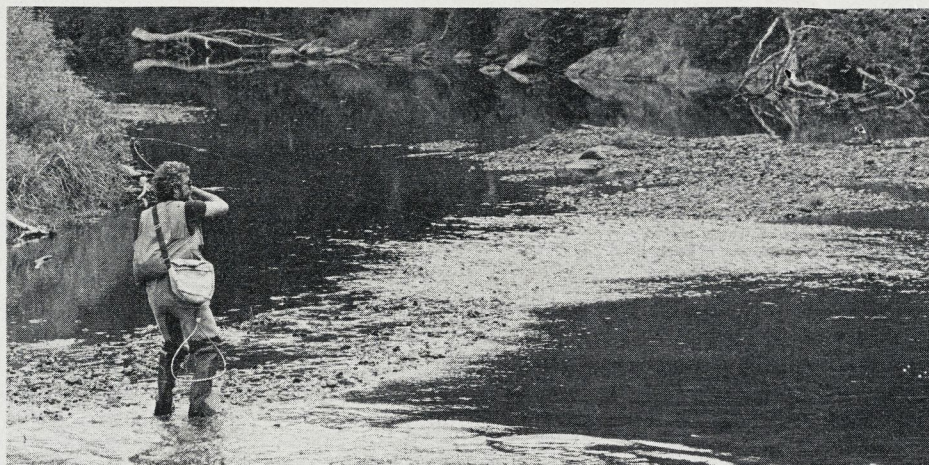


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A basic rule in fishing for big trout is to fish the hard-to-reach places: where other anglers don't. A big trout is interested in safety first, food second.

six pound test line, but I stay with the small reel. While in lure fishing a snap swivel is used to connect the lure to the line, the bait hookup is a little different. The ultimate goal is to allow the bait to move slowly along the river bottom with minimum influence, so that it will be able to move over and around obstructions. This is accomplished with the use of a two-way swivel. The main line (from the reel) is tied to one end of the swivel, with a four-inch piece left dangling after the knot is tied. The leader is affixed to the other end of the swivel; usually six pound test and about 18 inches long. The key is to use just enough split shot to let the bait move freely along the stream bottom. This takes a little experimenting, adding and subtracting until you have the right combination. The split shot is pinched on the extra line left where the main line is tied to the swivel.

The technique is the same used in lure fishing, with one major difference. The fish won't move as quickly in cold water, so your drifts must be very methodical and exacting. Each section of fishable water must be explored carefully. In your mind imagine pieces of the river as grids on a map, and work each section accordingly. If your first drift is tight to the bank, sweep the bait a few times and then work your following drifts a bit farther away. You would be surprised how close you can get to a semi-dormant trout in cold water.

The "worm" school of thought is equally divided as to the use of nightcrawlers or the common garden worm. My feeling is that crawlers are too big. Even large trout inhale a worm rather softly, and you might miss hooking the fish if it can't take the whole bait at once.

Although worms are used more commonly for trout than minnows, minnows are a far superior bait for taking big fish. I enjoyed moderate

success fishing with minnows for a number of years until a friend gave me a tip that changed my minnow-fishing ideas completely. I had always fished the minnows live, casting them upstream and letting them fall back to the fish. I still fish them upstream, but now I fish with only dead minnows. The reason? Live minnows tend to hold themselves upright in the water and they have no flash effect. A dead minnow will tumble with the flow of the water, and its exposed white belly is a great attractor.

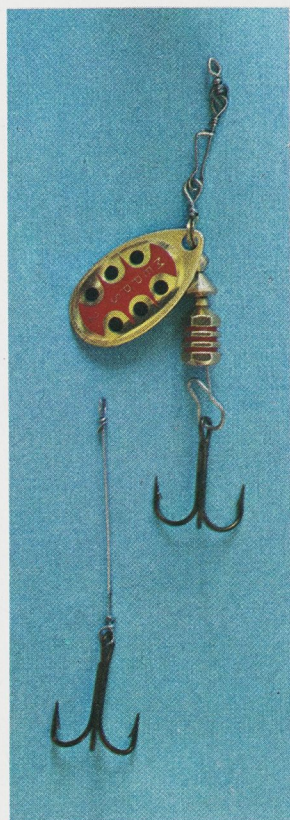
The swivel-leader setup remains the same as with worms, but hooking a minnow effectively is a bit more complicated. You need a darning needle, a double hook, and a steady hand. Loop the end of your leader through the eye of the needle and pass the needle through the mouth of the minnow, drawing it out the anal opening. Then snip the needle off and tie the line to the hook, and draw the hook back into the anal opening so only the barbs are exposed. This is a bit time-consuming, but results in a great tumbling action from the minnow and very few missed strikes.

I would like to make it sound more complicated, but after a lot of years I suppose I'm like most dedicated trout fishermen: the mechanics are easy, almost instinctive. I am always looking for new water and I love to swap stories. Sometimes my mind wanders when I'm on the river, and I think of other things. But then that morning comes when the mist is lifting after a night of rain. The river is a little higher than usual and slightly murky. I can almost feel that trout somewhere upstream that will slash out from under the bank and take my lure. And guess what? More often than not I find myself twisting the lure out of the fish's jaw and sending him on his way. Another myth destroyed.

LA TRUITE A LA CUILLERE VAIRONNÉE

LE FILM DU MOIS
reportage : V. BORLANDELLI

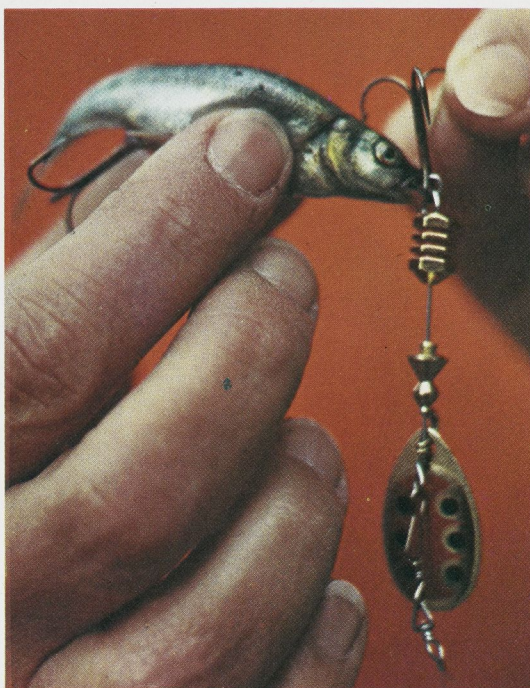
Il ne s'agit pas d'une cuiller derrière laquelle est fixée une imitation de vairon en plastique, mais d'une cuiller à laquelle on attache un vairon frais. La différence est très grande : la première est un leurre, la seconde un appât où la cuiller fait fonction de « teaser », c'est-à-dire qu'elle ne fait qu'attirer l'attention du poisson ou l'agacer. Le tandem cuiller vairon inspire confiance, comme si l'on doublait ses chances (ce qui n'est pas vraiment exact). Cela explique pourquoi ce mode de pêche est si pratiqué dans certaines régions dès l'ouverture, par eaux claires comme par eaux teintées. Pêcher à la cuiller vaironnée ne nécessite pas le coup de main du pêcheur au vairon mort. Il faut pourtant acquérir une certaine technique vite apprise.



La cuiller doit être de taille moyenne (n°2 en général), du type à triple interchangeable (en tirant ou en tournant le corps on libère la boucle de fil d'acier qui retient le triple). La barrette, longue de 4 centimètres environ, se confectionne avec de la corde à piano. Le triple fixé à la barrette est de la même taille que celui de la cuiller.



Le vairon doit être très frais (de préférence tué juste avant d'être monté). L'œillet de la barrette est entré par l'anus de l'appât et ressorti par la bouche.



Après avoir verrouillé la cuiller, le triple d'origine est piqué sur le haut de la tête du vairon.



Puis il est passé dans la boucle qui retient le triple à la cuiller.



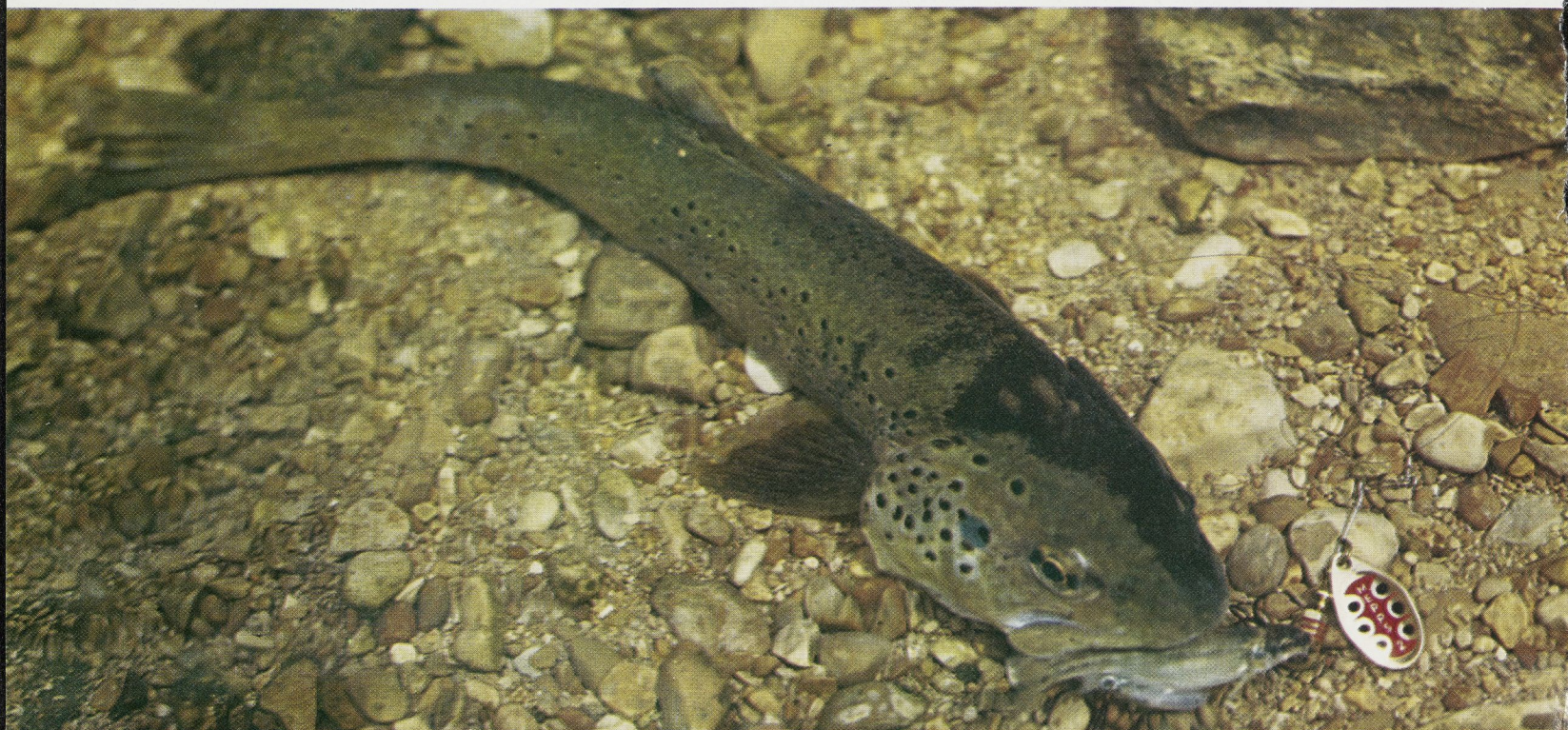
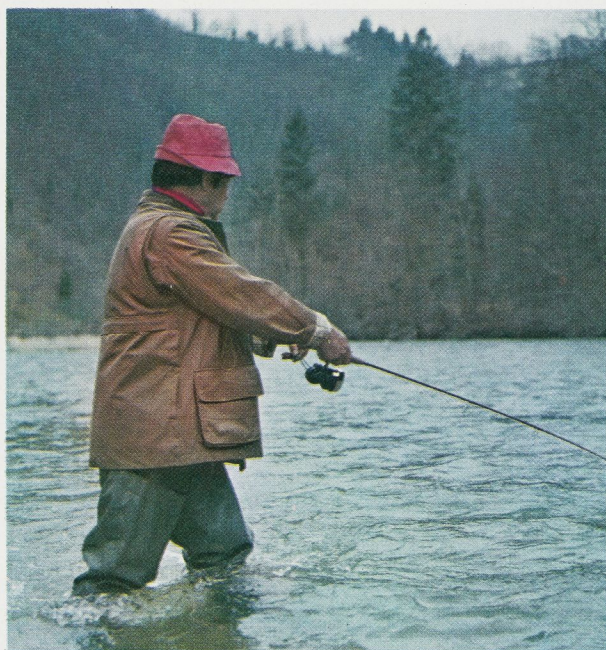
On obtient ainsi un ensemble bien articulé et très pêchant : la cuiller peut tourner normalement tandis que la vairon nage juste derrière la palette, sur le ventre ou à peine sur le côté, quelle que soit la vitesse de récupération.

LA TRUITE A LA CUILLERE VAIRONNEE

L'action de pêche est proche de celle à la cuiller. Il faut lancer trois-quarts amont, laisser le plus longtemps possible le courant entraîner la cuiller vaironnée parallèlement à la berge, en gardant simplement le contact. C'est très souvent en bout de course qu'une truite attaque.

Si ce n'est pas le cas, il faut commencer à récupérer lentement: la cuiller coupe d'abord le courant puis le remonte franchement vers le pêcheur. On opère canne basse pour faire travailler la cuiller le plus profondément possible et lui éviter de ricocher.

Quand une truite attaque, elle le fait si brutalement qu'elle se ferre d'elle-même. Il arrive aussi que la truite, simplement curieuse, se contente de suivre le viron à quelques centimètres. Dans ces cas-là, dès que l'on s'en rend compte, il faut faire un léger relâcher. Si cela ne suffit pas à déclencher l'attaque un relâcher total est souvent payant. Neuf fois sur dix la truite fonce sur le viron lorsqu'il se pose sur le fond.



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Fishing

New compact baitcaster weighs nine ounces; has fast retrieve

□ Garcia's tiny 1500C Ambassador is the reel that will eventually replace the company's 2500C. Other than line capacity, the new model has all the features of the bigger reels in the Ambassador line.

The 1500C has a narrow $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch spool compared with about one inch for the 2500 C. Outside



measurement from end plate to end plate is $2 \frac{3}{16}$ inch for the 1500C. The 2500C stretched to $2 \frac{3}{8}$ inch.

The new model still has the fast 4.7:1 ratio. An improvement in the 1500C is that you need to crank the handle only 180° to re-engage the drive gear. You give up approximately 20 to 25 yards of line with the 1500C compared with the 2500C, but that's really not important.

The palming-size, fast-starting baitcasters are not meant for long-running fish or jigging in deep water. If you need great line capacity you go to the bigger models. Compacts like the 1500C shine for casting light lures or baits on light line. The model I tested handled $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce lures with ease.

The 1500C weighs nine ounces and holds 200 yards of six-pound monofilament, 140 yards of eight-pound, or 110 yards of 10-pound. It costs about \$60.65. Garcia [OL], 329 Alfred Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666).—Jerry Gibbs.

Toothpaste solves the problem of sticky reels

□ Most modern fly reels work

smoothly, but occasionally you do get one that runs a little ragged. An easy way to smooth out a sticky reel is to try the method used by Mike Lawson of Henry's Fork Anglers.

His solution is to dab a little toothpaste onto the reel axle. With use, the mild abrasive in the toothpaste wears the reel smooth again. Remember to remove the toothpaste after the reel is running well. Too much abrasive might wear parts down too much. Replace the toothpaste with normal reel lubricant.—Jerry Gibbs.

Light rain jacket has six pockets, accessory loops

□ If you're a river angler you'll be familiar with this annoying situation. Your vest is snugly protected beneath your rain jacket. Access to equip-



ment in your vest involves the bother of taking off both the waterproof jacket and the vest, and finally reversing their order. Unless your vest is made of some water-repellent material, items that you might not want to get wet may become soaked.

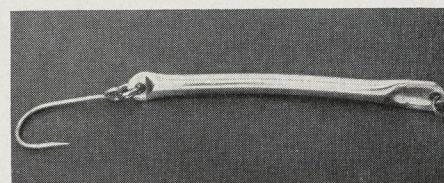
Hank Roberts' new rain jacket will help. Almost a waterproof vest, there are four small and two large equipment pockets on the chest, a sheepskin fly patch, D-ring, accessory snap loop, and snap chest-loop closure. The main closure is a nylon zipper. The two large $9 \frac{1}{2}$ x $5 \frac{1}{4}$ -inch lower pockets are closed with nylon zippers.

This jacket will keep you almost totally dry in a hard rain or a steady drizzle. It's made of nylon for complete water resistance.

Price is about \$24.95. (Hank Roberts [OL], 1035 Walnut Street, Boulder, CO 80302).—Jerry Gibbs.

The kitchen sink lure and how to make it

□ The Kitchen Sink lure shown below casts like a bullet, trolls well, and really does the job when jigged.



To make it, cut a suitable length of tubing. Crimp one end shut. Melt some old sinkers in a can and pour the tube about two thirds full of lead. Pinch the other end shut and round off the corners of the crimps with snips and a file. Drill $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch holes in each end, and fit with split rings and a hook. Change the length to suit the quarry. —A. J. Hand.

BOOKS

How to Build Custom-Made Handcrafted Fishing Rods.

John Emery. Windward Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 371005, Miami, FL 33137. \$3.95. 78 pp. B&W ill.

Step-by-step instruction for producing custom tackle, from fly to big-game fishing. Other books from the company are **Fishing the Florida Keys**, by Stu Apte; **The Shark Book** and **Sportfisherman's Handbook**.

The Complete Book of Fly-Tying.

Eric Leiser. Alfred A. Knopf, 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022. \$12.95. 241 pp. B&W ill. Dry, wet, nymph, bucktail, streamer, popper and other fresh and saltwater flies are described.

OUTDOOR PEOPLE

Bringing Back the Land

□ In 1953, Roger Baumeister of Fulton, Missouri, bought 42 acres of the ugliest land in the state—a barren area of rocky, blackened hills ravaged by years of strip mining. Now, 25 years later, his land is teeming with vegetation, birds, and wildlife.

More than 75,000 pine trees, some 50 feet high, surround a crystal-clear, six-acre lake. The area is inhabited by foxes, wild turkeys, coyotes, deer, wild ducks, rabbits, and raccoons, as well as hawks, owls, and songbirds.

How did he do it?

"After I got the land, I went to the state conservation commission and bought 5,000 trees for a nominal cost," said the 51-year-old Baumeister. "Then I hand-planted them with a tile blade and with the help of my wife and friends. Only a few survived the first two years because of a drought, but they have flourished since."

Most of the trees Baumeister planted were shortleaf, white, Scotch, and jack pine. He planted kudzu vine to cover the charred ground. "It grew 50 to 60 feet a year, even on black coal," he said. "I also used dead

brush to stop soil erosion. Wildlife started appearing after about five years."

Baumeister's successful project has been copied in other strip-mined areas by both federal and state conservation officials. In 1976 the National Wildlife Federation named him as one of 16 people in the United States who have made outstanding individual contributions to conservation.

An insurance agent for Metropolitan Life, he uses his lake as a base for swimming, canoeing, picnicking, and boating. He says he does some hunting on his land, but doesn't open it to the general public. He has tried stocking the lake with fish, but the water's acidity so far has hindered fish survival.

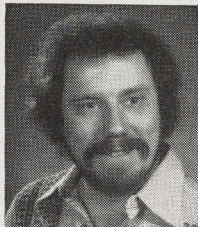
Baumeister emphasizes that he spent very little money on the project. "Conservation can cost a lot, but I succeeded because of hard work," he said.—*Mike Schwanz.*



Roger Baumeister

Getting Down to Basics

□ In an age when some schools still are teaching how little fishies love to romp and play, and biology often is viewed from a distance or through glass, St. Joseph - Ogden



Mike Carter

High School teacher Mike Carter, 28, is using a unique system to teach his biology class about the real world.

Each year during deer-hunting season Carter's students man the deer check station in Vermilion County, Illinois. Before going afield they study how to age, sex, and weigh the animals, and how to record data.

"It's a remarkable first-hand experience," Carter said. "The students work with hunters, park rangers, game biologists, and law-enforcement agents while collecting and tabulating scientific data. By doing it themselves, they learn more about biology in those six days than they would in a year with the books."

The Illinois Department of Conservation pays the students for manning the station. They spend some of the money on cake, coffee, cookies, and chocolate. The food is not for themselves, however. It's primarily for the hunters. And, while the

hunters are relaxing and eating at the check station, the students question them and learn as much from them as possible. The students will field dress and even skin the deer, if permitted, for a chance to study muscle, tissue, and bone.

"Maybe once a day I'll butcher a hunter's deer," Carter said. "Some of the students haven't seen an animal go from hoof to wrapper. It's great anatomy instruction."

With the money left over from refreshment expenses, Mike Carter takes his students on another learning adventure to Horseshoe Lake, just north of Cairo in southern Illinois. There they live in a lodge on an island and spend three days working in a goose-banding program.

None of this could be done without the support of the school. A substitute teacher is provided for other classes while the advanced biology group is afield. And Carter sacrifices a bit as well. He has spent the past four deer seasons at the check station, and not once has he been able to break away and hunt deer on his own. He settles for rabbits and pheasants instead. But the time he puts in is worth it. It's improbable that any of Carter's students will fall for the current "go back to nature" fad without ever touching it.—*Larry Mueller.*

Apache

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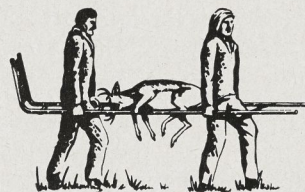
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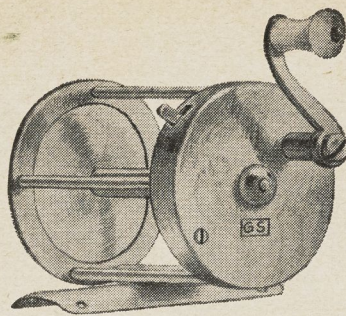
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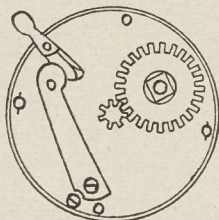
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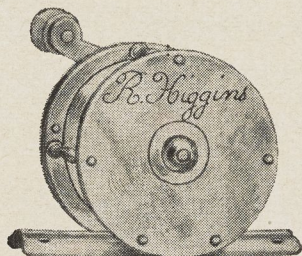
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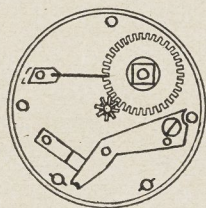
SNYDER REEL, 1810



SNYDER GEARING



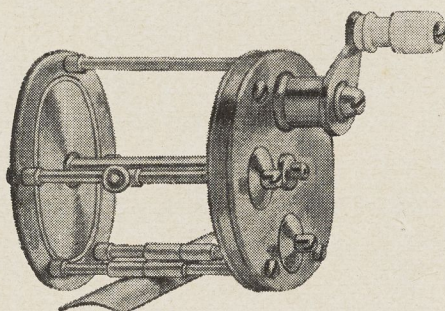
J. F. MEEK REEL, 1840



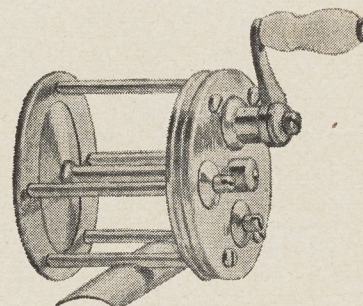
MEEK GEARING



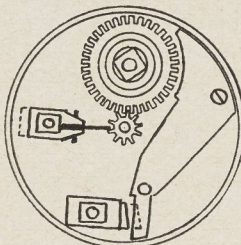
MY OLD KENTUCKY REEL



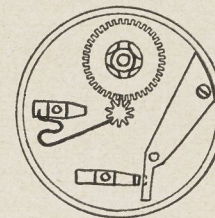
J. W. HARDMAN REEL, 1844



MEEK AND MILAM REEL, 1845



HARDMAN GEARING



MEEK AND MILAM GEARING

Fishing

A. J. McCLANE
Editor

Being a story of watchmakers who never

made watches—and reels that actually made music

THERE was a group of anglers living in Kentucky at the turn of the nineteenth century who were convinced that the road to happiness lay in fishing for black bass. To be precise, this was more than a conviction, because in the same way they were convinced that it was a good idea to eat. They went down in history as the most rabid collection of technicians that ever spooked a fish. At that time, the Kentucky River was a free-flowing stream where the people of Bourbon County dipped their branch water and savoured the crystal melody of a singing reel. The fact that reels could sing had its basis in fact; a feature of one reel was the "bell click," which was made on the same principle as an alarm clock. The bells were tuned in thirds, and when a fish was hooked—sweet music filled the angler's ears. We can presume that the actual music fell short of the reel's ability to make it, but this was tuned to the period in which our hero lived. Enter here the man who revolutionized the sport.

George Snyder migrated from Pennsylvania to Hopewell,

Kentucky, in 1803. He was a watchmaker by profession and, like most honest anglers, seldom concerned with snaring worldly luxuries. In fact, George mended the march of time just to keep Bourbon County anglers on schedule. After trusting him with their watches, they brought reels for repair, and, having a craftsman's pride in the smooth clicking of parts, it was a simple matter to put them in shape. There were only two kinds of bait-casting reels available in that day—the English single-action reel made of brass or the wooden kind, usually made from a discarded sewing spool mounted on a frame by the local tinsmith. The rods used by these pioneer bass fishermen were native woods (bethabara, hickory, Osage orange, etc.) nearly ten feet long, but they were extremely light—weighing from four to six ounces. With a fine raw silk line they could cast live minnows about fifty or sixty feet, provided the wind was right. The "cast" was what we know as strip-casting today. The angler would lay coils of line in the bottom of his boat or, if he was really

ROCKBOUND BOBCAT

(Continued from page 28)

disappear into the darkness and waited.

Wedge into that narrow crevice and facing one of the meanest critters that lives was not my idea of a situation conducive to good health. The dog provided some protection, but in a spot like that, if all three should get tangled up together, friend as well as foe could get clawed and bitten. I've compared the teeth of an average bobcat with those of a 150-pound cougar. The cougar's teeth are bigger and backed up by more powerful jaws, but the wildcat's are just as long and, it seemed to me, sharper.

The report of Vern's pistol sounded feeble and ineffectual through the rocks, and the bedlam of Mike's bawling and Vern's yelling that followed made me wonder whether Vern would come out dragging the cat or the cat would come out dragging Vern. His second shot brought a sudden quiet. I stood it for a moment and yelled: "What happened? You all right?"

He mumbled something unintelligible through the rocks, but it let me know he was still able to talk. Then his feet appeared down in the crevice as he came backing out. A few moments later he threw the cat out at my feet. Mike followed, his right ear dripping blood. He and Jiggs and Duffy mauled the cat around for a few minutes just to make sure it was dead. It was a big old tom, and his full stomach indicated he'd dined well on quail the previous night.

"Damnedest thing I ever saw," Vern said as I questioned him about what had happened. "The cat was laying around a corner from Mike, and all I could see was a front foot and his whiskers. Every little bit he'd reach out and slap at Mike. We were jammed so tight in there I couldn't move around for a good shot. I wanted to be sure and kill him the first shot, 'cause I didn't want any wounded wildcat flying out in my face. There wasn't any place for him to go except through me or Mike."

"I was afraid the bullet might ricochet off the rocks and hit Mike or me. It looked like the cat wasn't going to stick his head out; so I figured there was nothin' to do but shoot him in the foot. Figured that would bring him out, and it sure did. He jumped on Mike and grabbed him by the ear. Bit the hell out of him and then turned loose and scrambled back to where I couldn't see him."

"We weren't gettin' any place the way things were going; so I just reached around the corner of the rock, and when I felt the gun barrel poke into something soft I started shootin'," he explained with a wry grin.

"How come the cat didn't grab you?" I asked.

"He did! Tried to bite off my gun hand, but all he got was a mouthful of these two shirts."

Any cat hunter will tell you it's an unhealthy business to crawl into a skin-tight hole after a wildcat, and Vern will agree with him. "But," as he explained, "I couldn't go off and leave the dog."



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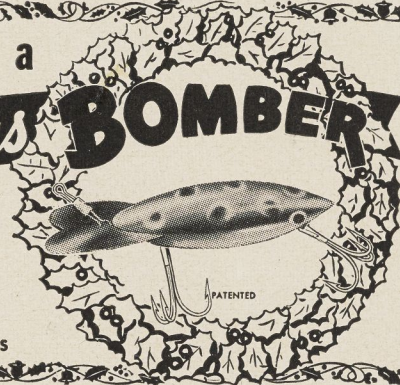
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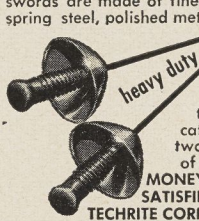
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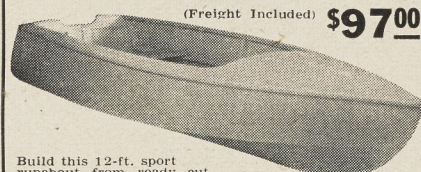
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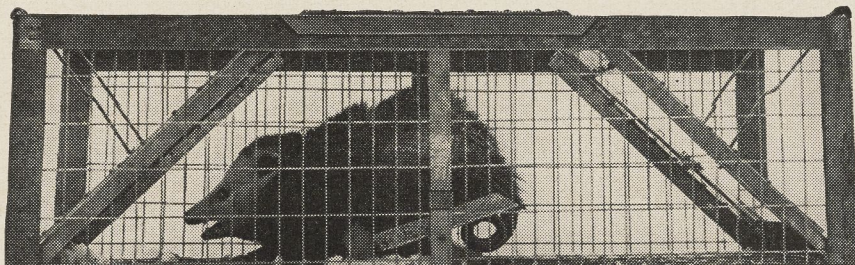
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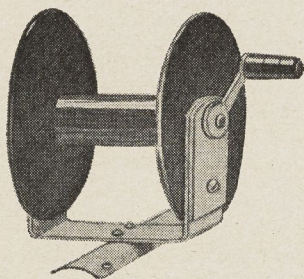
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good, hold them in his hands and propel the bait with a side-swiping motion. The inertia of a heavy single-action spool was too much for the bait to overcome.

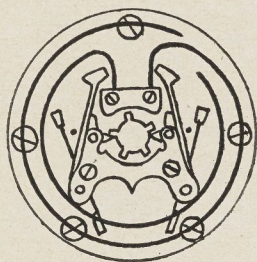
This was nearly one hundred years before James Heddon manufactured the first bass plugs, so Snyder's customers were actually looking for a very sensitive spool with which to cast live baits. Having a watchmaker's knowledge of gearing, one thing became immediately apparent to George—the spool should revolve several times to every turn of the crank handle, not once, the way single-action reels do. That was a waste of mechanical efficiency, so he set out to make things right.

History in the making is seldom more recognizable than a horseman galloping through the park. We might both admire his skill, never realizing that the horse is a runaway and that the rider eventually broke his neck. Thus, different observers come upon the episode admiring his form, or wondering how long he will stay on the saddle, or wondering at the very last where he will land. Being a blue-grass gentleman, George Snyder didn't fall off a horse. Historically speaking, he was seen at a wild gallop. In 1810, he built the Kentucky reel—the first multiplying reel in the world—and although elected president of the Bourbon County Anglers Association, he remained unknown to the angling public.

There was no such thing as mass production in those days, so even though George had won local acclaim in making the greatest reel ever, he could make very few of them. However, more watchmakers were about. You must remember that these men were watchmakers by virtue of their training, but this peculiar history of Kentucky's repairmen happened at a time when the Licking, Elkhorn, Stoner, and dozens of other streams were heavily populated with black bass and walleyes. Some of those timepiece experts would no more repair a watch than write a cycle son-



WOODEN REEL, 1800



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FIELD & STREAM JANUARY 1953

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net on the subject. There was too much fishing to be done, and Snyder's clients were flipping their minnows with telling effect.

In the Snyder reel, the steel ends of the spool shaft were beveled to points, which in turn fitted in beveled recesses of pivots that screwed into the center caps of the outer disc plates of the reel. This compensating measure would take up any wear and the running of the reel could be regulated by a turn of these screw pivots. How sound George's methods were is best shown in the reel he made for the Honorable Brutus Clay in 1821. Seventy years later the same reel was being used by Clay's son! This, like all of his reels, had its pillars riveted to the back plate and projecting through the inner front plate, where they were secured with wire keys. Snyder reels were also quite narrow in spool diameter and long, in accordance with the belief that a long narrow spool runs more rapidly than a short one of greater diameter—all things being equal. On some of his reels he built an oddly shaped flat lever to operate the click spring with a pin working in a curved slot.

There are pivotal characters in any story—those who innocently contribute to the course of events—like Mrs. O'Leary's cow in Chicago or, as in our narrative, Judge Mason Brown in Frankfort, Kentucky. His Honor did nothing more than lose his reel, and finding George too busy to make him a new one, he went to another watchmaker by the name of Jonathan F. Meek. Although Jonathan has often been credited with "inventing" the bait-casting reel, let it be stated here that he had only the improving urge, and because of the rapidity of events that followed, he was often seen riding George's historical horse. Jonathan's reel was an improvement over the Snyder. His best work was probably the reel he made for a customer named Higgins—the one shown in our illustration. There was a collar around the crank shaft; the ends of the spool did not project, and the click and drag springs were operated by sliding buttons, as in the modern reel. He made the reel for Judge Brown in 1832 and continued making reels alone until 1840, when he formed a partnership with his brother, Benjamin F. Meek, who was, of course, a watchmaker. Ben proved so good at building reels that for a while he made all of their production, stamping the side plates "J. F. & B. F. Meek."

I would hesitate to tell you of the gallons of mellowed branch water that passed down the throats of Walton's disciples in the year 1840. But this simple and moral diet was accompanied by platters heaped with chunks of black bass, like warm snowballs flaked with gold, and these foods were not without spiritual profit. The Kentucky rifle had sent a shiver of dread through the savage breast, and in tracking the clay feet of history, we now find our blue-grass pioneers living by the best traditions of Old Isaac. They would fish at the drop of a jug, or, as a popular ballad, "You Get a Jug and I'll Get a Pole," allowed—at the filling of one. These were unquestionably days of inspired merriment. The art of jugging for catfish

had its origin in the picnic parties of their forefathers. Sport fishing was on the march, however, as there are evidences of fly fishing for black bass just six years later and a fantastic demand for Meek reels.

At about this time, still another maker of watches turned to reels, a man named J. W. Hardman of Louisville, Kentucky. His reels were a great improvement on the Snyders and the Meeks. Instead of the 3 to 1 and 3½ to 1 gear ratio popularized by Snyder, Hardman used a 4 to 1 gearing—and as a result he is often credited with making the first quadruple multiplying reel. However, George Snyder had been using the quadruple gearing in his personal reels several years before Hardman began building. Hardman did make a more modern looking reel; he shortened the spool and increased the diameter, affixed the pillars to the disc plates by screws instead of riveting, and added some ornamentation. The use of screws, incidentally, made the Hardman reel the first one having a "take-down" feature. The Hardman reel of 1845 was made of German silver with gold-plated click buttons and screws. But there's another name to contend with—a watchmaker who had visited Hopewell, Kentucky (then called Paris) to see George Snyder.

Benjamin C. Milam was most unique in that he stated flatly that he didn't like the watch repair business. On the streets of Frankfort this pronouncement was probably no more epoch-making than a comment on the weather. Milam joined forces with the Meeks as an apprentice. After the retirement of Jonathan Meek, the firm became known as Meek and Milam, which was in turn dissolved at the end of five years. The partners continued to occupy the same store, Milam devoting himself to making reels while Ben Meek reestablished his watchmaking and jewelry business. All reels made by Mr. Milam continued to be stamped "Meek and Milam" until 1878. Having trained his son to the trade, Milam took him into the business under the firm name of B. C. Milam & Son. How well they succeeded may be seen in the fact that a Milam reel won the international first prize in Chicago in 1893 at the World's Fair, at the Fisheries Exposition in Bergen, Norway, in 1898, and at the World's Exposition in Paris, France, in 1904. Grover Cleveland wrote Milam letters of appreciation for the workmanship in his reels.

The Kentucky reel prior to 1880 was entirely a handmade mechanism. Yet every one of them was made with painstaking exactness. No two screws were alike, and as a result every screw had to be put back in its proper place after the reel was taken apart. The lathe work, fitting, and filing were truly perfect. Reel handles were chopped out of sheet metal with a cold chisel and then filed to shape. The gears were usually slotted on Swiss cutting engines and then filed by hand. The main gear wheel was always made of brass casting or a section of brass rod that was hammered on an anvil, while the small wheel or pinion gear was made of the very best tempered tool steel. This resulted in a gearing that was almost

indestructible. Considering the labor involved, Ben Meek's monthly production, for instance, was about seven reels, and these would sometimes bring sixty or seventy dollars apiece. Customers didn't ask the price in those days—they ordered and were charged what the builder thought it was worth. The best a sporting goods dealer could hope for was a ten per cent discount, and the order was filled when the "manufacturer" was in the mood.

An old reel exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 stamped "Meek and Milam" is shown in the illustrations. This one is of 1844 vintage; the pillars are still of the Snyder plan, as is the narrow spool. The improvements are a collar on the crank, sliding buttons for the click and drag, and, for the first time, a bent or U-shaped click spring formed from a piece of watch spring. With exception of the ornamentation, this reel closely resembles the Hardman in general form.

Ben Meek wearied of his watch trade, and in 1883 he headed for Louisville, Kentucky, where he started a reel business once again. His indecision can probably be explained by the fact that Ben was never an angler. Of all our Kentucky reel-makers, this autocratic master knew little about fishing and couldn't care less. He formed a partnership with his two sons, and together they created a new departure in the gearing of reels, which is called the "spiral gear." This consisted of cutting the teeth of the wheel and pinion diagonally instead of horizontally. The space between the teeth at their base was rounded instead of being made flat or square. But even more significant was the fact that the Meeks started building reels in an organized fashion. Here is what the *Tri-Weekly Kentucky Yeoman* of November 21, 1882, had to say in an article on Benjamin F. Meek.

"He proposes, we learn, to make his reels entirely of wrought metal, no casting or drawn wire being used, and the machinery will be as perfect as that of an astronomical instrument. For this purpose he has provided himself with machinery of the most improved pattern, most of it being invented by himself, and made under his immediate direction at Waltham, Massachusetts, by the American Watch Tool Company. This, which is costly and intricate, will run by a gas engine, which he is now engaged in putting up. But such is the nature of the works that the greater part has to be done by hand, and Mr. Meek says that there will not be a piece that will not receive his touch. . . . He will not be able to turn out reels before the first of February, but after that time he will endeavor to supply the demands. We commend Mr. Meek as in every respect worthy of the respect and confidence of the people of Louisville, and as to his reels, they will commend themselves."

Meek made reels for the next sixteen years, and by the time he died in 1901, he had made some of the most important contributions toward the development of modern bait-casting reels. His use of spiral gears instead of spur gears and the introduction of jeweled pivot bearings reduced wear,

resulting in a smooth-running reel. The tiniest weight would set a Meek spool in motion. E. J. Martin of Rockville, Connecticut, started making braided silk casting lines in 1884, so the delicate sensitivity of Meek reels was brought to full flower. Ben cashed in his chips just as the game ended; bait-casting rods had been growing shorter all the time—now they used five-foot bamboo sticks and cast Dowagiac minnows in "Kalamazoo" style. The overhead, or Kalamazoo, cast was the dawn of a new era, and the end of the Kentucky reel-maker. Bait casting became immensely popular, and mass production methods became absolutely essential.

The Talbots, Gayles, Noels, the Sages, and many other itinerant watchmakers had burned the midnight oil in the back rooms of Kentucky shops. However, none of these men made significant changes in the multiplying reel. A Wisconsin firm, Wheeler and McGregor, made a device for level-winding the line—which Ben Meek perfected for them. Their original design is still embodied in the level-wind devices of today. But the old-time reel-makers would have none of it; the blue-grass artists stuck to their Kentucky pattern right down to the very last. These were great reels, and while none of them are made now, the modern bait-casting reel owes its existence to the watchmakers of Frankfort, Louisville, and Paris, Kentucky. Some of their reels are still being fished with; it's possible that there's one in your attic.

So George Snyder did not declare a war, change a money system, or build

a rocket to the moon. But students of angling who learned to cast before the age of spinning mark his name well. Like sinners in sack cloth we sniff the dry roses of regret—not only has the Kentucky reel vanished, but now a geometrized, streamlined non-revolving cone is dissolving the ranks of bait casters. Things have gotten to a state where a mere stripling of a child can throw a plug to the other side of the lake. There is no more apprenticeship to serve, no more backlashes to philosophize over, no purring of a carefully balanced spool—and these moderns don't even smell of oil. How can they? Few people know where to squirt at the uncannily correct self-contained reels of spinning. But take heart, good friend, my old Kentucky reel was a way of living rather than a manufactured product, and may you and I be granted no worse an inheritance while we walk under the sun.

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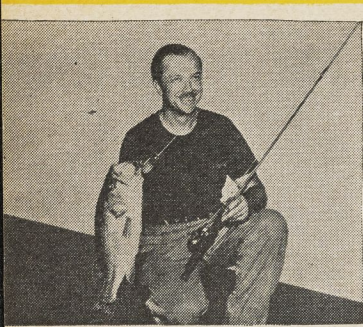
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Sensational

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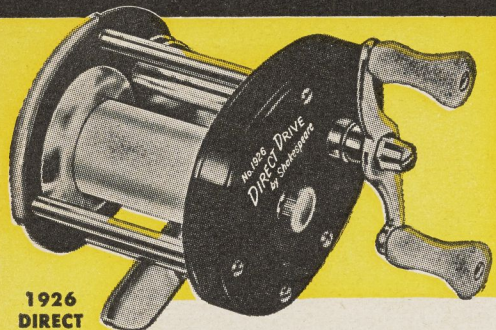
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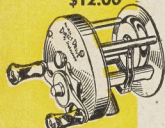
with *LQT* nylon gears, cast better,
last longer than any reels made!



1926
DIRECT
DRIVE

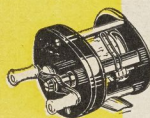
Sporty, light-
weight alu-
minum.

\$12.00



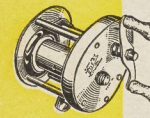
1924 S

Star drag lets
spool slip
while brak-
ing run of big
fish. \$13.50



1973D

"Sportcast"
with Carbo-
loy® Bush-
ings. \$16.50



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"Ideal"
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chromium
steel, resists
corrosion.
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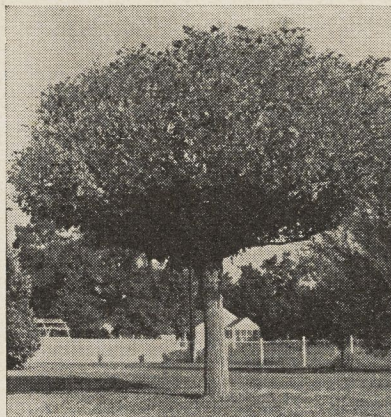
Big Worms For Little Fish

JUST a few years ago, catalpa trees were considered a liability by their not-so-fond owners. Hordes of monster worms, making their annual mid-summer forays, stripped the trees bare of their foliage, leaving unsightly landscapes in their wake. As a result, catalpas were falling to the axe right and left. Not any more. The man fortunate enough to own a pair of the ornamental trees has a source of one

of catalpa worms is announced by the lacework of top and outside leaves. A small tree plays host to hundreds of the two- to three-inch worms, which gorge themselves as long as one leaf remains. Strangely enough, this denuding in no way injures the tree. New leaves soon appear and rapidly cover the bare limbs before the growing season is over.

Some catalpa-worm addicts favor turning the big yellowish-green and black worms inside out by a neat bit of sleight of hand as they are put on the hook. Others thread them on the conventional way. Either method works and the results are likely to prove most amazing to the uninitiated. The worm's skin is smooth and rubbery, staying on the hook long enough to account for several fish before it becomes necessary to re-bait.

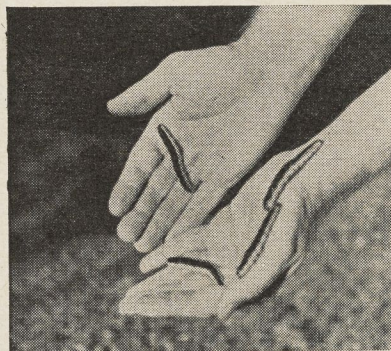
Perhaps one of the most amazing



A small catalpa tree such as this one harbors your panfish bait. In a short period the worms eat the branches bare

of the best bluegill baits, bar none. If he does not use them himself, they are a ready source of hard cash, eagerly paid out by the natural bait boys who have been lucky enough to discover how irresistible the big yellow and black worms are to the bluegill and lesser sunfish tribes.

Catalpa trees, the small ornamental variety, are the umbrella-shaped trees fifteen to twenty feet in height that are frequently used along residential frontage or spotted on lawns. The leaves are delicate green, heart-shaped, and abundant. The presence



Catalpa worms have black back and a yellowish-green underside, should be used on very fine wire No. 8 hooks

things about the catalpa is that a bluegill, even the real huskie, dares attack such an awesome and alien monster. But they do at the drop of a hook and the results can be most entertaining. —George C. Graham

beginner's corner

Back to Fundamentals

Finding the depth at which fish are feeding, whether you can use bait or artificial lures, can mean the difference between success and failure. Water temperature at various levels and the distribution of food are, of course, responsible, but if you catch one fish near the surface, the odds are that you will find more there—for several hours at least. Conversely, if you get a strike near the bottom, you should continue to fish your bait or lure deep. This holds true for practically all species.

Count while your underwater plug is sinking before you start the retrieve so that you can duplicate the cast in case you happen to take a smallmouth, walleye, or even largemouth, which at times run quite deep. Once you

have taken a fish, particularly in lake fishing, you will probably find others at the same depth. By counting at a uniform rate you can make sure the plug sinks to the same level on each cast.

Don't set your tip-ups so your minnow can get into the weeds. He will hide so the fish can't find him, and you will not get any bites. On the other hand, pickerel like weeds, and if you can set your tip-ups near the edge of a weed bed so that the minnow can almost, but not quite, reach them, he will struggle actively for a long time and catch fish.

Tip-ups for perch should be set close together, because once a fish is caught, others may be expected soon in the immediate vicinity. Fast action makes it impossible to run across the ice from one tip-up to another and take care of the bites properly.

Leader weight and length are more important in assembling a balanced fly-casting outfit than many anglers realize. If the leader is too light in the butt it will not straighten out properly

FIELD & STREAM JANUARY 1953

FISHING



Al hops his jig in front of a fish, then lets it rest idly on the bottom. Inflamed by curiosity, the trout grabs it

Bottom Knocking for Trout

Frustrated by fish that ignore your best lures? Or by big, wild trout in a jungle-protected stream? Try McClane's fresh-water jig. You'll get action!



A. J. McCLANE
Fishing Editor

THE POLISHED STREAM BED is quiet in the afternoon. Once in a while a kingfisher whips through the trees leaning from the banks, but otherwise the river reflects nothing more than a passing cloud. I often go there at mid-day across the July meadow, squashing strawberries at every step, then slip into the water through a screen of alders. But it's a run that, because of its depth and steep banks, cannot be fished easily with the fly. I have spooked perhaps fifty trout for every one I've caught here, yet it is a fascinating place.

There are 18- to 20-inch fish under the trailing branches, and periodically I manage to hook a few on a nymph. Until recently I never had much luck in this run with spinning lures. It has been hammered to the extent that resident trout won't even bother to inspect a spinner or a spoon. Furthermore, they hide back under roots and



McClane's leadheads are tied with

you must know the rudiments of piloting—how to read a chart, use a compass, make a fix, and plot a course.

Loop-type RDF's are available in many models and in kit form. A modest set costs about \$150, a kit \$100. RDF's come in one, two, and three bands: beacon band (airway beacons and range stations), regular broadcast band, and marine band (on which marine radiotelephones operate). Buy a set that best suits the stations in your locality.

Citizens Radio. Any boatman over 18 may own and operate a Citizens Radio, a two-way system that is easy to install and is modest in price. It has disadvantages—you can't make a regular call through a telephone-company switchboard, and its range is limited. With it you set up your own boat-to-shore or boat-to-boat system, free of toll charges. Obtaining a license to operate a Class D Citizens Band Radio is simply a matter of filling out a form.

Any imaginative sportsman can think of a dozen uses for two-way Citizens Radio afloat and ashore. You can talk with any other equipped boat within range or any local Citizens Radio station ashore, from boat to marina, from boat to home—anywhere you can make contact with another installation. Members of boat clubs are making package deals for equipment in order to maintain communications when afloat.

The effective range of a Citizens Radio varies according to the quality of the equipment, its sensitivity and efficiency, the type of antenna used, and the lay of the land. It's possible to communicate from ten to thirty miles across open water.

Buyers have a wide selection of Citizens Radio transceivers to choose from; some sixty manufacturers are building sets and kits. They start at \$100 in kit form; completely assembled units begin at \$130. At least two sets are needed to form a system. You

(Continued on page 87)



With radio direction finder a fix can be obtained by checking two signals on land

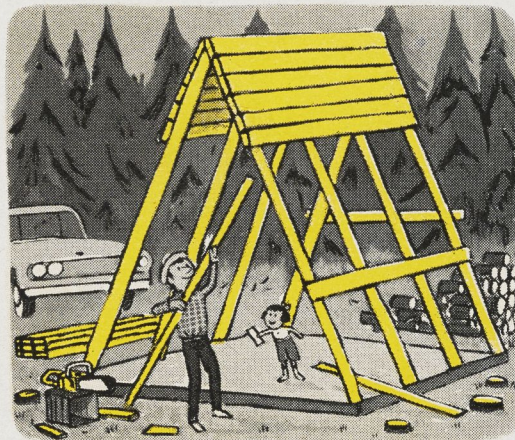
FIELD & STREAM FEBRUARY 1961



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sweepers, so one must present the lure right on the bottom. This is tricky; even with careful fishing the toll in hardware is appalling. Yet today I can, with reasonable regularity, bring one or two lunkers back to camp, because I've developed a technique that is totally different from ordinary spinning.

Broadly speaking, our modern spinning lures fall into three categories: wobbling spoons, spinners, and plugs. All three are presumably minnow imitations, and each works differently. The wobbler can sometimes stir trout into striking even when they are not actively feeding—an ability that I believe the spinner displays to a lesser degree. But a wobbler loses its action or sinks to the bottom and snags unless you retrieve at a fairly good clip. It doesn't fish well in knee-deep water.

The spoon excels on big pools and fast runs. On the other hand, a spinner is at its best in shallow water and on modest-sized rivers where most of your casting is upstream. The blade pulls and holds at a speed slightly faster than the current, and you can steer it over the bottom without getting hung.

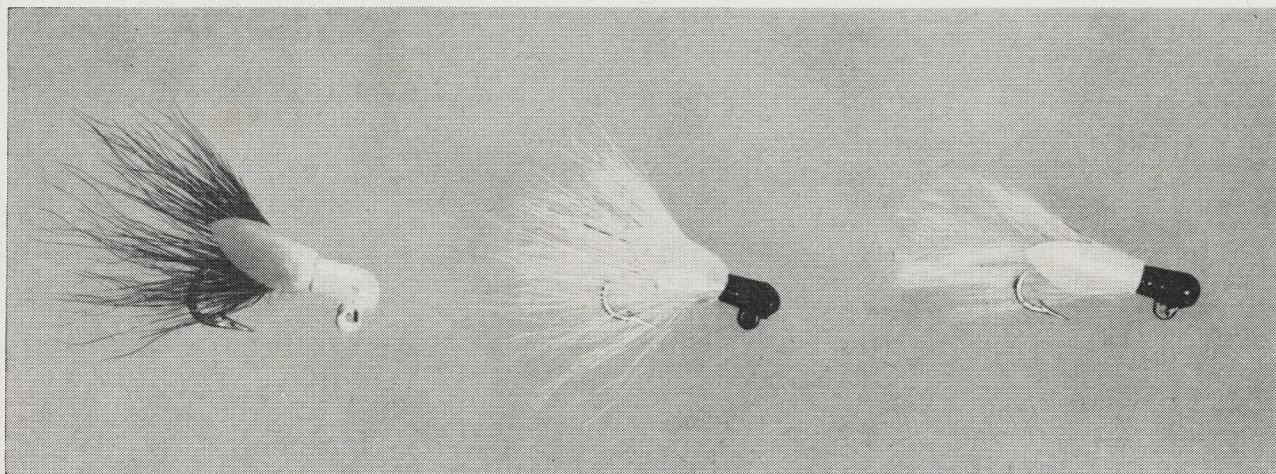
Spinning plugs—and I am thinking now of the miniatures to three inches—offer a change of pace in that some designs can be worked at different speeds and depths. But moving water often inhibits their action. For my part, baby plugs are too specialized for meat-and-potatoes fishing, although I have taken some very large trout with them when conditions were right. However, all three lure types have one thing in common: they have to be in constant motion to attract and hook fish.

Back in 1957, I began playing around with a fourth category of spinning lures—midget jigs. Ordinarily jigs are worked in a vertical path; the leadhead is cast from a boat, or even dropped over the side in deep water, and after it hits bottom it is danced up and down. Gradually the jig is retrieved back to the surface. The method is normally confined to deep-water fishing over bass, wall-eyes, and pan fish.

Now, I could see no reason why a midget jig wouldn't work in shallow water for trout, smallmouths, and any other river species as well, so I tried to develop a technique for handling the lure in a horizontal path. Years of bonefishing had taught me that a bottom-bouncing lead-head would be inhaled even when it was left stationary between hops. The tactic of showing a trout something



Fascinated by the jig, this fish made several passes at it as it hopped—then snatched it right off the bottom



feathers or hair in a variety of color combinations. No patterns are attempted

FISHING HINTS FROM

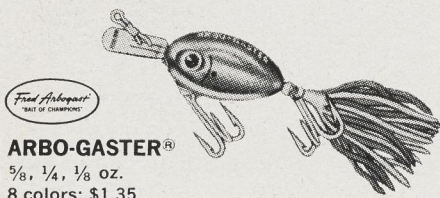


When action drops off, try a fast retrieve



"Jorgie" Jorgeson of Eau Claire, Wisc., with a full stringer of small-mouths all caught on Arbogast lures. "Never had so much fun," says "Jorgie."

Usually, bass hit best when lures are fished slowly. But there are times when a fast retrieve will get smashing strikes. Select your lures carefully though, since many of them lose their "built-in" action when retrieved fast and just scare the fish away. Two Arbogast lures which can be effectively retrieved with speed are the:



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not in constant motion seemed just the ticket for spoon-weary cave-dwellers.

I won't forget the first time I tried a midget jig for trout on one of the piney pools of Basket Brook. I had never hooked an important fish there, although the undercut bank and the rapid that rushes into it always smacked of big natives. Being close to the highway, the spot is worked a great deal. I began spinning the lead-head in a roadside riffle, working up to the pool. A half hour later the idea didn't seem so hot after all. Nothing stirred.

Finally I waded into the shallow run at the tail of the pool and cast the miniature yellow jig close to the bank about twenty yards upstream. It sank immediately. By stroking the rod from horizontal to near-vertical, I got the leadhead hopping back. When the lure came out of the shadows, an excited trout was behind it. I could see his jaws working as he tried to grab the jig in flight. He missed half a dozen times, and when the feather dropped to the bottom he spun around in tight circles as though daring it to jump again. The fish was no more than ten feet away from me when he finally nosed down in the gravel and snatched the sitting jig. I didn't even have to set the hook.

He turned out to be a heavy-bodied brookie 18 inches long and weighed almost 3 pounds. I have never seen one like him before or since in Basket Brook. But every lure has its innings, and eventually, as my collection of leadheads grew and my technique improved, the jig became one of my most reliable baits.

Leadheads are not made like weighted flies, which carry a lead ball behind the hook eye or a lead strip or a copper or brass wire around the shank. A jig emphasizes weight distribution rather than pattern; the hook eye is at the top of the head, and all fly components except the wing are eliminated.

A jig is crude, but it does have action. It can be worked as no other lure can, resting and jumping from pebble to pebble along the stream bottom, because it always sinks nose down and hook up, which makes it snagfree.

I experimented with jigs dressed in regular bucktail, marabou, and hairwing patterns like the Mickey Finn, Gray Ghost, and Parma Belle. You'd expect these old reliables to give some punch to the jig. They didn't. Adding materials simply dulled the action. The leadheads I now use have sparse feather or bucktail wings dressed on Nos. 4, 6, and 8 hooks. They weigh from 1/8 to 1/16

ounce. I stock them in various colors, such as red, white, yellow, green, black, brown, and orange. My most productive colors have been yellow and brown, but that doesn't mean much. The real trick in bottom knocking is how you handle the lure.

Unlike metal spinning baits, which to a large degree are mechanical minnow imitations, the jig, I believe, suggests a variety of forage, such as large nymphs, mad toms, and crayfish. The crayfish is particularly well imitated in its sculling up-and-down backward swim as it seeks refuge between the rocks. When disturbed, the first thing a crawdad looks for is a place to hide. A brown or green jig in the hands of an observant angler can do a pretty fair job of imitating the crazed crab.

There is only one basic action that can be imparted to a jig, but it can be varied in speed and degree according to water conditions. My most productive technique has been to cast quartering upstream and, by pumping the rod tip, to keep the jig bouncing back in erratic hops. On deep rivers I often let the lure drift in an arc with the current after a cross-stream cast; upon reaching the end of its downstream swing I give it a jerky movement by flipping the lure forward, then letting it settle to the bottom.

Of course, a jig can be cast across and quartering down—even directly downstream, depending on the depth and the velocity of the current. I find that my score is improved when working upstream because the jig sinks faster and I'm positioned on the "blind" side of the fish. Leadheads draw uncommonly large trout out of their lairs, and fewer fish are spooked even in low, clear water, provided your approach is correct.

Another advantage of the jig, in low water or high, is that you can worry smart fish into striking. I'm sure you've seen old sockers drift ten or fifteen yards behind a spinner without hitting. They make a few excited passes behind the blade, then swim along behind it until the lure is hanging in the tiptop. If you have a lunker located, try the jig. Hop the lure near his position, and if he comes out to inspect it, let the jig rest on the bottom. Wait until he swims off a few feet, then hop it again. He may be facing the other way, but he'll see it. If he's visibly excited, start retrieving in a series of hops. By this time he should strike, but if he's making false passes, drop the jig on the stones again. You don't have to keep reeling, as you do with other lures, and he's just as likely to scoop the leadhead off the bottom as when it's in flight.

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Many spin casters do not realize that the leadhead is ideal for catching trout in lakes, particularly when the fish are down twenty to forty feet in the spring holes. This requires the same bottom-bouncing technique that we use for warm-water species. Besides the four common trout, I have caught landlocked salmon, whitefish, and goldeye as well. Apparently no fish is immune to the jig. Even carp and channel catfish slurp the leadhead on occasion.

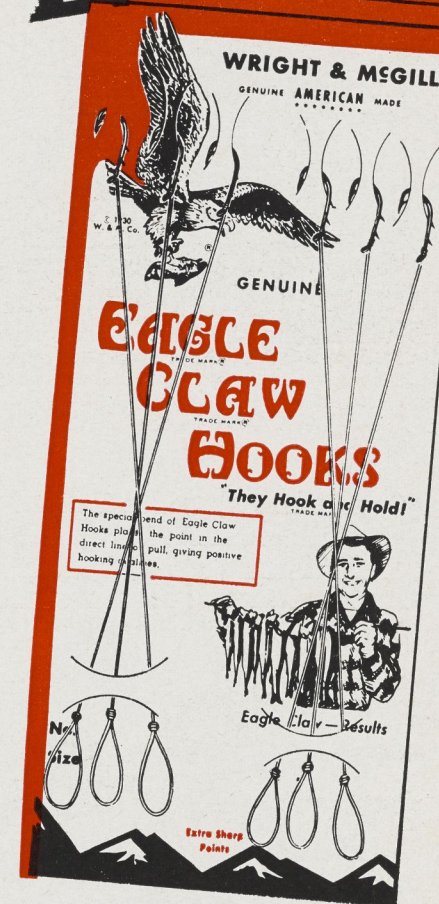
The vertical approach can also be employed on some rivers. One such problem occurred on Two Bridges Brook. Two Bridges is a narrow (twelve to fifteen feet) but deep Adirondack stream that is so overgrown with bushes and brambles that in many places you can't find the water. I invaded the sacred privacy of impossibly placed trout by scrunching along the bank and jigging cracker style, letting the lure drop between branches over deep holes. When it hit bottom I bounced it up and down. There was one nice brown that I had to rescue from the thornbush after elevating him from the water.

My preference in tackle for jig fishing is the same gear I've adopted as standard for nearly all trout spinning. I have been using a 5½-foot, 17/8-ounce hollow glass rod for several years now. More recently I began fishing with a new 6-foot, 1¾-ounce hollow glass rod that is just about ideal. The extra six inches and a shade more stiffness in the butt give me better line control when bouncing the jig. Mechanically, very short rods of 4 to 5 feet lose contact with a leadhead on the pump-stroke retrieve; a longer rod provides more lever length in directing the jig.

The reel, of course, is one of the smallest fixed-spool models. There are four or five on the market today that are perfect for ultralight casting. However, I don't use hairline with jigs, because the technique, consisting of constant rod pumping and bouncing the leadhead along the rocks, is rough on monofilament. Sometimes the jig will hang momentarily between stones; then a jerk of the rod tip would snap a hairline.

I use a pliable 3-pound-test platyl .0059 inches in diameter. This casts beautifully with midget jigs and, for that matter, most other spinning lures. Bear in mind that if the line is stiff or too heavy in diameter you are going to get some overlapping snarls on the reel spool. Much of the reeling that accompanies the hop stroke will be against a slack line. As you jerk the rod up and back the jig jumps

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free, and for several turns of the handle you won't feel the lure weight. As in surface plugging, this requires a soft line that winds evenly without springing loose from the spool. A stiff mono is impossible to keep in place when nothing is pulling against it.

I do not use a swivel with the lead-head, but tie the line directly to the hook eye with an improved clinch knot. Swivels small enough for .0059 mono occasionally spread from too much bottom knocking. I know that somebody is going to tell me that his swivel (and it would have to be a miniature) will stay secure after a 3-pound line has broken, but it just hasn't worked out that way with me.

Of course, small trout will hit jigs as readily as the lunkers. A nice feature of the lure is that it's an effective fish catcher even though it has a

single hook—which makes releasing easy. Treble hooks are traditionally popular on spinning lures, and it's difficult to convince most spin casters that the single can often serve as well. Because of their design, some baits aren't as efficient when mounted with one hook, but this doesn't apply to leadheads. My ratio of missed strikes is no greater than it is with any other kind of lure, and I have released countless jig-caught fish with no apparent harm.

Fortunately leadheads are inexpensive, because you are certain to lose a few between rocks every trip out. If you don't part with one now and then, you are not working the bait correctly. It's a small price to pay when the fish are trying to help you pry the jig loose from the bottom.

The Lower Forty

(Continued from page 15)

anything like them in your life."

The members cut into their birds and munched on the tender flesh with relish. Doc Hall winced and removed a piece of shot from his mouth. He studied it thoughtfully.

"Yes, sir, there's something distinctive about the flavor of sharptail," the judge insisted, rolling a morsel on his tongue with the appreciation of a true epicure. "Probably comes from feeding on that Alberta wheat. You can recognize it every time."

"By the way," Doc inquired, "what size shot were you using out there?"

"Oh, 7½'s," Judge Parker answered casually. "The birds get up pretty far away, so you need to—" His voice trailed and a shadow of doubt crossed his face. "Why do you ask?"

Doc Hall dropped the shot onto his plate with a loud clink. "This looks to me like a 4, or even a 2."

"Must have been a shell I borrowed from Hugh Grey or Ed Zern," the judge faltered, staring at the pellet with growing misgiving.

Colonel Cobb put on his glasses and examined his own bird with interest. "Certainly remarkable how these shotholes are distributed," he commented. "Each about an inch apart."

"That gun of mine throws a very even pattern," Judge Parker said, but his voice had a hollow sound.

"Thing I can't understand," Uncle Perk murmured, inspecting a handful of shot, "is how they're

all so nice an' round an' shiny. Us'ally the lead gets stove up when it hits a bird."

The front door slammed and Patience Parker entered the kitchen. "Enjoying your sharptails, dear?" she asked, patting the judge's cheek affectionately.

Judge Parker shook his head in bewilderment. "But—these birds were meant for you."

"I know, dear, you were sweet to offer them." His wife smiled. "But I decided it wasn't fair to take them, after you'd gone to all that trouble to shoot them. So I found another package of birds down at the bottom of the freezer, and that's what I served at the supper instead." She gazed curiously at the half-finished carcasses on the plates. "Tell me, what do sharptail taste like?"

"Oh, they've got a flavor all their own," Doc Hall said with a sly glance at the judge. "Almost like guinea hen."

"Some folks couldn't tell the difference," Uncle Perk agreed.

Judge Parker bit down on a hard object with one of his four remaining good teeth and uttered a yelp of pain. He removed a Lubaloy-plated BB shot and gazed at it malevolently.

"There's one favor I'd like to ask you," his wife added. "Don't ever mention to the other girls what I did. They all think they were eating sharptails tonight."

"We'll keep it a secret," Colonel Cobb assured her. "Won't we, Judge?"

Judge Parker held his aching jaw and nodded in silence.