

FLY LINES

Official eJournal of the
BC Federation of Fly Fishers

ISSUE №25-2 | SUMMER

DESTINATION

THE EAST KOOTENAYS

page 40

HISTORY ARTICLE

THE MYSTERY OF THE BLACK O'LINDSAY

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DENIZENS OF THE DEEP

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TODAY IN OUR MISSION

to conserve and protect BC's sport fisheries

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FISHING IN BRITISH
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The BC Federation of Fly Fishers (BCFFF) is a registered, non-profit society whose main objective is to promote the conservation of the fishing environment in British Columbia. By networking with similarly minded clubs, organizations, businesses and individuals, the BCFFF provides a voice that reflects its members' and the public's concern for the future of BC's natural resources.

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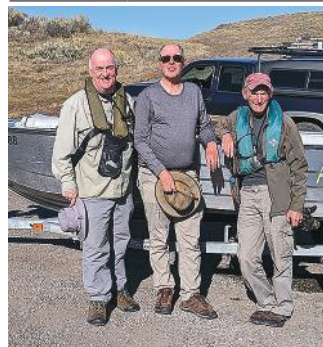
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BCFFF MISSION, VALUES, VISION

Mission: We are a federation of individual anglers and fly-fishing clubs. We advocate cooperatively with governments and other organizations throughout British Columbia for the sustainability of fish, their habitats, and quality angling
Values: We believe that fly fishing increases personal well being, encourages high environmental appreciation and knowledge, and instills commitment to achieving positive conservation outcomes
Vision: Ensuring a future that sustains accessible, quality angling in British Columbia



Cover Photo: "Thompson River wild rainbow"
Photo: Michael Barr

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President's Message

"The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope."

~ John Buchan ~



Myles Armstead

It is officially summer here on Vancouver Island, and that means the pursuit of summer-run steelhead and salmon for our Island members, and trout fishing lakes and streams for our Interior groups. If you practice catch-and-release, remember to "keep them wet" and "handle them gently."

Recently, the BCFFF gave a presentation on the ZEC system in Quebec, which we have adapted into a conservation feature in this issue of Fly Lines. I encourage you to read it and send your comments to us.

Brian and I have been working very hard on this latest Issue of Fly Lines, and we continue to seek new writers, artists, poets and also photographers who would like to

contribute. For both of us this is a labour of love, and while each issue takes up much of our fishing time the results are extremely rewarding. Our goal is to create one of the best digital fly-fishing magazines around, and you can help by contributing to Fly Lines.

As always, new board members are welcomed, and over the next few months we will be working on governance and board renewal. If you have ideas and are interested, now is the perfect time to reach out so we can discuss the opportunities. All of your ideas are welcome as the board grows and continues to serve as British Columbia's voice for conservation-minded anglers.

Our AGM is taking place in August this year. We will be sending out information ahead of time, so please let us know if you don't receive the reports. If any of the clubs would be interested in hosting a physical AGM next year in 2026, please feel free to contact us.

Have a wonderful summer and stay tuned for our Fall issue of Fly Lines, which will feature "Steelhead."

Myles Armstead

President of the BC Federation of Fly Fishers

BCFFF Fly Lines & Ice-off Auction Sponsors 2025



- Freshwater Fisheries BC – Supporting Member 2025
- Michael & Young Fly Shop – Supporting Member 2025

ICE-OFF AUCTION

Gold Sponsor \$3000

RGB Sales & Associates

- 1 x full page ad in Fly Lines x 3 issues
- Have provided 3 x 1/2 page ads for Sage rods
- 1 x online contest in a Fly Lines issue Supporting Member 2025

Silver Sponsor \$1000 plus

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- 1 x full page ad in Fly Lines (done Winter/Spring issue)
- Supporting Member 2025

Rona Prince George

- 1 x full page ad in Fly Lines (done Winter/Spring issue)
- Supporting Member 2025

Islander Reels

- 1 x full page ad in Fly Lines x 1 issue
- Supporting Member 2025

Bronze Sponsor \$500 plus

Sea-Run Fly & Tackle

- (1/2-page ad in Fly Lines x 1 issue)

Bronze Sponsors \$500 plus (just recognition)

1. Osprey Fly Fishers of BC	4. Pat George
2. Polar Coachman Flyfishers	5. Chris Muir
3. Bill McMillan	6. Brian Smith

Recap Recognition Supporting Members for 2025

• Freshwater Fisheries of BC	• Oscar's Fly Shop Smithers BC
• Michael & Young Fly Shop	• Rona Prince George
• RGB Sales & Associates	• Islander Reels

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• Bob Moody	• RGB Sales & Associates
• Jacob Nelson	• Ruben Breitkreutz
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• Chris Muir	
• Bill McMillan	
• Len Piggan Kamloops Fly Fishers	

Editor's Message

Our Summer Issue once again comes to our members with a load of content and, for me, a jolt of sadness with the passing of two of our legends from the BC fly-fishing community, Tom Murray and Pat George. Both of these fine gentlemen contributed much of their time and talent to the well-being of their clubs, and to the BCFFF during their long fly-fishing lives. We are honouring Tom in this summer issue of Fly Lines; Pat will be featured (with his family's permission) in the fall issue.



Brian Smith

It is summer, and the club and direct members are revelling in the fishing opportunities of our great province. For us northern members, it is a refreshing and invigorating time. Many of us, like me, almost hibernate in the seven months of winter we put up with, then go like hell come May through October to get in our "fishing time". Our club feature this issue is Len Piggin, President of Kamloops Fly Fishers and board member of the BCFFF, who discusses the "value of learning", a lifelong event for any fly-fisher.

Youth learning is an important part of the BCFFF's core mandate, and good-on the various school boards in the province that have introduced accredited outdoors fly-fishing programs to its students. There are now classes in Campbell River, Port Moody, Coquitlam, Kamloops and Prince George. The fly clubs and BCFFF members in these cities are often involved in helping the instructors in classroom and outdoor instruction, and our hope is these students will become BCFFF members in the future.

In this issue, we recap our successful Ice-off Auction, and once again are thankful for the support of clubs, direct members, sponsors, donors and BCFFF volunteers for their contributions of merchandise and time to make this a fruitful endeavor for the federation's operating and conservation budgets. Hopefully, the auction will become an annual event.

In our history article, we invite the renowned Steve Raymond, author of a dozen fly-fishing books, many magazine articles, and recipient of numerous literature awards to dispel the myths and origin of the Black O'Lindsay fly pattern. Welcome Steve!

Have you ever considered ocean rockfish a worthy target for the fly

rod? Well, read on, for Rory Glennie does! In our guest feature, he has put together a fascinating discourse of how, when and where to chase these "denizens of the deep", and it could open a whole new world for your sea-worthy blokes who enjoy ocean fishing.

For our fly-tying features over the next few years, I will begin a series of articles on "Designing Dry Flies", beginning with streams and rivers and then leading into still waters, where I will share my thoughts and the patterns I have developed over the past sixty years of fly-fishing. We will continue to welcome other contributors to the fly-tying section of the magazine.

When we "Pick a Fishing Brain", Dr. Katherine Mulski, educator of the Carihi Secondary School program, comes to mind, and we think you will enjoy her thoughts,

jargon and choices of equipment for chasing down the cutties and Cohos in her backyard of Campbell River.

If the East Kootenays beckon you, I offer an old but still relevant chapter from my book "Seasons of a Fly Fisher" that pretty much covers the incredible allure of this area of BC that often gets overlooked and put into the "wishing" category of fly-fishers, but should be a must-do for your bucket list of places-to-go.

For a good read on conservation, your BCFFF board thinks Quebec may have an answer that could easily be applied to BC's dwindling steelhead resources. What it really comes down to is respect, and everyone doing their parts to protect them.

Enjoy your magazine.

Brian Smith,
Editor



BC Federation of Fly Fishers
www.flyfishers.ca

A huge "Thank you" to all companies, clubs and donors who participated in the BCFFF's first-ever Ice-off Silent Auction this April. Also, a big "thank you" to all of the fly-fishers who shared in the bidding processes! And, of course, congratulations to all of the bid winners. It was a huge success. We raised over \$10,000 and after shipping costs, etc. netted over \$9,000, which will help your federation tremendously in its operating and conservation efforts throughout British Columbia.

All of the people who contributed will be honored in the summer edition of Fly Lines magazine. Best regards from the Auction Committee, and we will talk to you again in 2026 about our next Ice-off Auction.

Myles Armstead
Brian Smith
Chris Muir
David Mills

Club News/Reports

TOTEM FLY FISHING CLUB

Report Summer

By Lorenzo Cirillo

The Totems have had a busy spring season and it is only going to get busier as summer approaches. We had our joint fish-out along with the Osprey Fly Fishers back in March on the Squamish River. We had slightly lower than favourable river conditions but the river was very fishable. Unfortunately, no one from either club bumped any fish. As always, we had a great lunch prepared for hungry and cold

anglers by our two outings chair people.

In April, we had a gloriously sunny day on the Harrison for our Jack Vincent Memorial Outing. There were decent numbers of fry around, but no cutthroat to seek out our imitations. Again, a hot pasta lunch and plenty of coffee was a pleasant repast to share stories of better days. The club also held its annual auction in April. Some of the highlight auction items included a couple of old Hardy reels (among them, an older Perfect) as well as some superb fly-tying materials and an assortment of rods. It was a very successful night for the club

and many members and guests left with some great deals.

Early May saw the club on the first of its Interior lakes' forays. A dozen members made their way up to Peterhope Lake for another annual fish-out. Some of the members that spent the week up at the lake took advantage of some

of the more consistent weather and fished their chironomids deep for kokanee. They did well, thinning out the population of this introduced fish. Unfortunately, those of us who were only able to fish on the weekend hit some bad early spring weather, including snow, that upset the fishing for a few days.

June will see the club up on Big Bar Lake for a few days, and a tentative outing has been set for the Thompson in July. The highlight of the summer will be the club's camp on the Dean River. This year marks the club's 50th anniversary of setting up this remote wilderness camp! To commemorate this milestone, BCFFF historian and club member Art Lingren is in the process of compiling a book celebrating our 50 years on the Dean. The theme for the book will feature the various flies that members have swung through the Dean's fabled waters over the years, along the stories and pictures. It will no doubt be another work of Art when it is complete! The club is also producing some beautiful anniversary swag like hats, hoodies and t-shirts to further recognize this huge event for the club. The Totems wish all other clubs a safe and successful summer!



Fish-out Squamish River

POLAR COACHMAN FLYFISHERS

Polar Coachman Report

By Jeff Kormos, President

The Polar Coachman Fly Fishers have been so busy this spring that we had to extend our regular business meetings into June. As we prepare for the last meeting before our well-deserved fishing break, it's always nice to take stock of the activities of the past few months, and recognize just how much the club grew this year — both in members and in community presence. The Board and Executive took on a lot this year, and they delivered! Regular business meetings were well-attended and we hosted a variety of presenters, both well-known regulars, well-connected to the club, and some new friends sharing a range of topics from techniques to conservation.

Our friends from Angler's Atlas visited

to update the club on their publications and citizen science efforts. Prince George's very own author, fly tier, and casting instructor Danie Erasmus presented on nymphing and drop shot techniques. We also learned about, and in some cases, participated in a range of fish habitat, lifecycle and conservation programs from our friends at the University of Northern BC and local provincial government biologists occurring on the region's most important and productive rivers and streams. Club member and biologist John Hagen did an excellent presentation on



Polar Coachman Fishing Forever



the results of on-going studies of arctic grayling in the Parsnip River watershed, and their use of e-dna analysis for the project. Our BCWF sponsored (Fly) Fishing Forever event was a huge success, with about two dozen members of the Canadian Institute for the Blind coming out for the day.

Everyone had a blast this year, and we are forever grateful for the hospitality and use of the Vivian Lake Resort to host this annual event. Members of our club

also volunteered to do fly-tying demonstrations in two local high schools that have dedicated classes for fly-fishing programs. This is a great way to bring new members to the club, while ensuring youth have access to the amazing fly-fishing opportunities in this region. We also had a presence in some community events, including the salmon fry release at the Spruce City Wildlife Association's salmon release party and a parking lot party at local sporting goods store Corlane's. We had members demonstrate a few fly-tying techniques and sign-up new members. At the same time, we had other members do a fly-casting demonstration for some interested prospects and current members, showing both two-handed and single-handed casting techniques.

I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who volunteered this

year and expanded the presence of our club in our community. Well-done everyone. One of our biggest revenue generators has been hosting a screening of Fly Fusion's Fly Fishing Film Festival (IF4). This year we pushed our screening date a little closer to ice-off, and did some more dedicated advertising. We also held a door prize draw with a mix of pre-ordered show swag and donated items from the club.

Our members provided some incredible

draw prizes, and our festival patrons agreed, as we made more money on the draw prizes that at the door. We are looking into hosting the Trout Tour this fall as well, because the film fest was such a success this year. Thanks to Fly Fusion for putting on a great show, and my deepest heartfelt thanks to all who donated prizes, and everyone who bought a ticket. We had a conversation about sustaining our revenues early this year, and the prognosis is much more positive this spring. As we prepare for the final meeting of this season, it's bittersweet. On one hand, we have been busy, growing, volunteering, and really meeting the objectives of our mission — to conserve fish species and habitat, and to increase the number of people accessing the myriads of fly-fishing opportunities in the north. There doesn't seem to be any indication that we are slowing down on that front. On the other hand, our favourite waters are just coming into their prime, and I for one cannot be more excited. Planning is going to have to wait for bit. I'll see you on the water! I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to everyone who stepped into or out of our executive this year. Their dedication to our members is truly inspiring and each one exemplifies the honour and privilege of serving this club. Our planning for the near future includes presenting our photo and club awards ceremony in February, hosting the International Fly-Fishing Film Festival in April, hosting an open house at the clubhouse, and also planning a large gathering and fish-out in May.

Now that the days are getting brighter and longer, we are all eager to pack in as much as we can into "fly-tying" season so we can divert our attention towards the upcoming fly-fishing season, the adventures we will have and the new friends we'll make along the way. I look forward to rejoining the club in-person and participating in its in its endeavours in April, but until then, I'll have to settle for chasing winter steelhead in this most amazing part of our province.

Yarns forthcoming!

OSPREY FLY FISHERS OF BC

Osprey Report

By Bruce Brandhorst, President

The Osprey Fly Fishers manned a booth at the BC Outdoors show, providing fly tying lessons and advice. We also operated the raffle tickets sales table at the wonderful annual Spey Clave event organized by the Michael and Young Fly Shop. Record funds were raised for BCFFF and the Steelhead Society.

Ken Ashley presented the film "Soul of Fraser" and discussed how to protect it. Danie Erasmus talked about nymphing

techniques, emphasizing the utility of drop-shots. Brandon Molzahn presented some of his meticulously tied favourite still water flies. We had presentations on tying foam flies, dubbing techniques, homemade devices, and drogues. We visited the Richard Henly Fish Farm in Langley, operated by a member, that produces sockeye salmon, raising them from eggs in fresh water (as well as rainbow trout).

Instead of winter fish-outs we held fly tying jam sessions. Fish-outs were held on the Squamish River with the Totems, on the Harrison River, and at Corbett and Tunkwa Lakes.

Club News/Reports

KAMLOOPS FLY FISHERS

Report

By Len Piggini

We began the year by contributing fly tying supplies to two schools in Kamloops, with thanks to contributions of \$1,000 each from our Club & BCFFE, and further contribution of supplies from ▶ Sport Fishing on the Fly | SFOTF — Home and ▶ TW Outdoors (Trout Waters) TW OUeg\TDOORS | FISHING & OUTDOORS — TW Outdoors. Both schools really appreciated the donations.

Our Fly Tying 101/Method Sessions started off with ties by Jeff McConnell, Gil Schiller, Dave Ouellette and most recently with Matthew Auger. In February we held our 1st Open House for the public, with club fly Tiers Todd Oishi and Rick Passek present. Mike Doutaz & Richard Bailey also talked about our Rod Building sessions, and finally Richard Bailey talked about the club's annual Bone Fishing trip to the Bahamas. These sessions are held at the Fly Shop at Domenic's, and we have

to thank Brandyn Dixon for this: visit ▶ The Kamloops Fly Shop at Domenic's Marine Kamloops. As well, fly casting lessons were given by our member Drew Alway from Always Fly Casting: visit ▶ Fly Casting Lessons — Always Fly Casting.

Rod Building sessions had 17 participants, including some new members building 20+ fly rods in total (I built 2), and I thank Mike Doutaz and Richard Bailey for conducting these classes. This year Richard Bailey built a custom fly rod for the club, and we raffled it off with the draw being made at our May dinner meeting. The cost to the club was \$200 for parts, tickets sold for \$10 each, and we netted just under \$1,000 for the KFFA! We have another member lined up to build several items for a draw to start in September, with the winning ticket being drawn in December. We anticipate doing draws like this twice a year.

Fish-outs have been or will be held at Edith, Roche, Leighton, Red and Sullivan Lakes. River fishing will be another focus, with Matthew Auger tying flies for the

Thompson River and Todd Oishi presenting them. Our river fish-out is scheduled for July 9th. I believe this is an underutilized resource by our club members, so hopefully these sessions will give them the information they need to give it a try.

Our web page is being redesigned, and we will have our reveal session on June 10th which will include a talk on river fishing by Todd Oishi. Please checkout our website after June 10th and give me some feedback. Note: not everything will be up and running right away as some items will be phased in over time.

Spring is the busiest time of the year for our club as we usually take summer doldrums of July and August off, and we plan to start up again in September with a new webpage. KFFA currently has 81 members. Our membership dues are singles for \$60, family \$75.

I've included links to the groups that have helped make our KFFA a success. Please support them.

Tight lines.

COMOX VALLEY FLYFISHERS

Report

by Dean Hodgson, President

As spring is now heading towards summer our local lakes are fishing well; however, after a seemingly great escapement of fry our sea-run cutthroat catches have been sporadic at best. Probably just shows that we are not spending enough time and effort. We held our final club meeting of the year this week with our usual casting games, a hot dog barbecue and raffle. It was a great turnout with lots of people, prizes and laughs. June 1st will find us tying flies at the Courtenay Fish and Game open house. We will be tying Tom Thumbs and Murray's Rolled muddler, and giving them out to everyone who comes by in honor and recognition of Ralph and Tom.

July will again find us at the Courtenay Fish and Game club conducting a three-

day fly-fishing school for 30 youths who are 12-14 yrs old and part of the overall BC Wildlife Federation Zone 1 Kids Summer Camp. We handle 10 kids per day, and spend the day teaching them fly-tying and casting, and then down to the fish pond at the lake to see if their creations can catch a trout.

Many of our club members are already scattered around the BC Interior at various lakes with lots of us planning to leave soon.

We are anxiously waiting to see if the reports about this being an all-time record pink salmon year will prove out. Coho fishing off the beach has been great the past two years and, with several schools of blueback (immature coho) being seen off the beaches this spring, things bode well for this summer as well.

LOONS FLY FISHING CLUB

Report Summer

By Rick Boswell

The Loons have had outings to the Thompson and Ruddock's Ranch (Onion Lake) in the past month. The Thompson team fought some big winds, but everyone caught fish and the scenery was of course second to none — it's a beautiful area up there.

Speaking of scenery, our next trip is to Alta Lake at Whistler chasing rainbows and elusive monster cutthroat. After that, Frank Vena will be helping us improve our casting techniques, and then we are off to the Skagit and back to the Thompson.





YOUTH SECTION

Gleneagle Secondary School



By
Lorenzo
Cirillo,
Educator

It has been a very busy semester for the Fly Fishing 11 class at Gleneagle Secondary.

We have had four outings over the course of the term, the last two being at the Harrison River and Whonnock Lake. We were fortunate enough to have a gorgeous spring day on the Harrison. There were a lot of chum fry around, but unfortunately no cutthroat showed up to take advantage of the fry imitations we offered them. This trip affords the students an opportunity to learn about and discuss the significance of this river to First Nations communities, as well as its long and historical legacy as one of the great fly-fishing waters in the province. It also affords the opportunity to discuss the dramatic drop in the various species of fish that inhabit the Harrison. We pondered the debate if this river should get supplemental help with cutthroat from hatchery augmentation.

Our last outing was at Whonnock Lake. Many, many black crappies were caught, as well as some rainbow trout. This was a great opportunity to show the class some fish cleaning skills-to their credit, everyone got their hands dirty! We employed all sorts of watercraft for the outing:

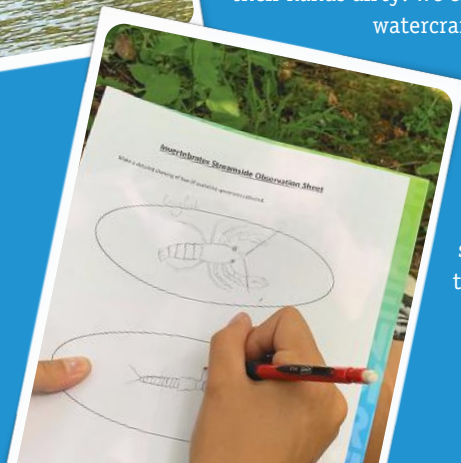
belly boats, canoes and my own car topper. It was great to see such safe and responsible new fly-fishers test their skills. We wrapped up the day with a barbeque

lunch of burgers, chips and cold drinks.

We have enjoyed several guest speakers in the second half of the term. B. C. Conservation Officer Evelyn Robertson spoke to the importance of fishing regulations. Gilly contributing writer Peter Caverhill discussed what it means to be 'A Complete Angler' as he outlines it in his chapter in *The Gilly*. Rudy Morzanowski and Steve Hanson from the Totems and Osprey Fly Fishers demonstrated their excellent tying skills by tying flies for the students. Tom Johannesen, BC Outdoors writer, demonstrated his effective dragon fly nymph for the class. Catherine Laflamme from Michael and Young Fly Shop was our guest speaker after the class completed their Influential Women in Fly Fishing research project.

Just recently, we visited the Kwikwetlem First Nation's new sockeye hatchery, where hatchery operator Rodney Lee gave a great presentation outlining the extirpation of sockeye in the Coquitlam River. He explained how the KFN along with various partners are looking to reestablish this once-vibrant run of fish. We also have fish preparation and smoking techniques coming up this week, where we will be teaching how to smoke sockeye salmon. We have the B. C. Federation of Fly Fishers Conservation Fund along with Real Canadian Superstore to thank for this unique and delicious learning opportunity!

It has been a fabulous term of learning with amazing kids! I can safely say that these kids will represent our fly-fishing future proudly. Have a safe fishing-filled summer!



Youth

YOUTH SECTION

Prince George Secondary School



What a year it has been! A bit strange for me, being in and out of the class, but luckily, we have had some excellent guest speakers from the Polar Coachman fly fishing club and other local experts.

By Kenneth Barwise

Chris Muir has worked with the students on a Pumpkin-head leech, a Vampire balanced leech, and a micro-leech. Gary Harris came to the class a few times to tie nymphs and

caddis flies, and taught the class some essential knots before our first outing to the Nechako River. The trip itself was more about casting than fishing, but with the river so high and murky, even for the Nechako, we caught more from the plant kingdom than the fish family. The sun shone on us all morning while

trying our roll casts and normal casts, so it was still much better than sitting in a classroom.

Local fly-fishing instructor and author Danie Erasmus came to the class to teach about chironomids, and provided an excellent booklet on still water techniques using an indicator, or not, and short and long leaders.

Scott Stewart came to the class to do a "tie and talk". Scott has a local fishing show called Reelistic outdoors. His sponsor Corlane Sports gave the whole class ice-fishing rods, reels and tacklebox combos.

Our only planned ice-fishing trip to Tabor Lake

was unfortunately cancelled due to weather. There were a few inches of standing water on the lake, which would have made for a miserable day.

Our trip to Eena Lake was an excellent example of how to be prepared. We lost flipper in a belly boat that hampered propulsion, and we had a visit from our local Conservation Officer that checked our licenses, which were thankfully up to date. We caught a few fish, and a few more shore alder. For some reason we were lacking leader materials, so we had to pilfer from other rods, another good lesson on pre-trip inspections. The barbeque smokies were still delicious, and the eagle, loons and osprey, gave the students something to watch when they were waiting for the bite to start.

On our Professional Development Day several teachers got together to support their school programs, and to check out marine invertebrates on the shores of an unnamed lake. Close to the put-in spot, approximately 100m away, there was a moose kill which had a huge rack on the front, and a grizzly on its back! This prompted a change of venue, and we finished the day at Hart Lake, where we enjoyed an awesome day with some decent fishing.

The students have had a great year with varied instruction from our local experts. Here are some of their patterns they have tied. The other picture is from a class member who is putting his flies to good use.

THE STUDENTS HAVE HAD A GREAT YEAR WITH VARIED INSTRUCTION FROM OUR LOCAL EXPERTS



YOUTH SECTION

Carihi Report

With the turnover of semesters at the beginning of February this year, the Carihi Fly Fishing program welcomed not just ONE full cohort of keen anglers but TWO, which meant that between two cohorts we have had over 40 new anglers come in through the classroom door to begin their journey of fly-fishing!

By Dr. Katherine Mulski

The initial weeks leading up to Spring Break were filled with a lot of introductory activities and orientation to fly fishing techniques, with a focus turning towards a full season of trout. With the new freshwater licenses renewed on the 1st of April this year, our anglers have been fishing weekly, rain or shine, and will continue to do so up to our last planned fish-outs at the beginning of June, or until water levels indicate a time for rest.

Students have been busy with learning nymph fly patterns, with a heavy emphasis on fry as our local waters are teeming with them. Productive patterns for both resident rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, cuttbow hybrids and coastal cutthroat trout have been the focus for much of our fly-tying endeavours this semester. We continue to

have local tiers Chris and Rand from the Campbell River Fish and Wildlife Association

come by our classroom to teach the art of tying the dry fly!

Our most recent tying event included tying the elk hair caddis, of which many cutthroats have been eating readily on our latest fish outs. It has been so satisfying to watch my students put together the entomological cycle of the caddisfly, while then tying their own version of it and successfully catching and releasing trout with their own flies.

Additionally, with support from local community organizations including the Campbell River Salmon Foundation, The Campbell River Community Foundation, and the BCFFF, we have been able to begin replacing well-worn and worn-out wading gear within our fleet to accommodate over 45 anglers fishing this semester. With the purchase of this new gear, I can provide more access to equipment for these larger numbered groups of anglers, as well as provide waterproofing for our rainy-day fish-outs. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to continue to fund equipment





TEENAGERS CAN BE TOUGH ON GEAR WHILE LEARNING THE BASICS OF FLY CASTING AND HANDLING OF RODS



that is essential to keeping these students out on the water.

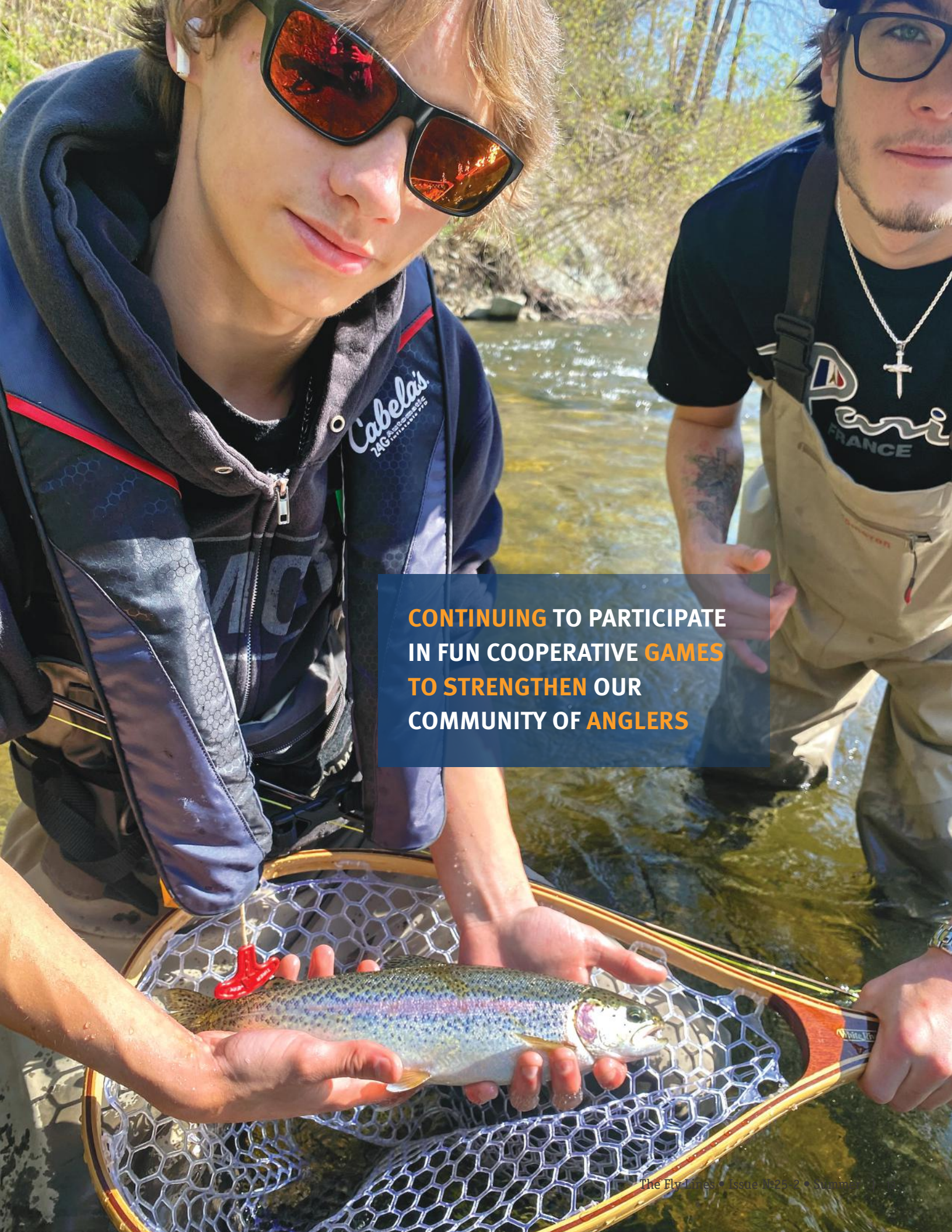
We would also like to thank Cecil Henley for his generous donation of funds raised from a recent sale of a personal boat. Three of our intrepid anglers donated their time to clean up this boat for Cecil to sell, and all the proceeds from the sale went directly back to our program to continue to support ongoing and future anticipated costs. Total raised from the sale was over \$1600.00.

Both of our groups of anglers have had the pleasure

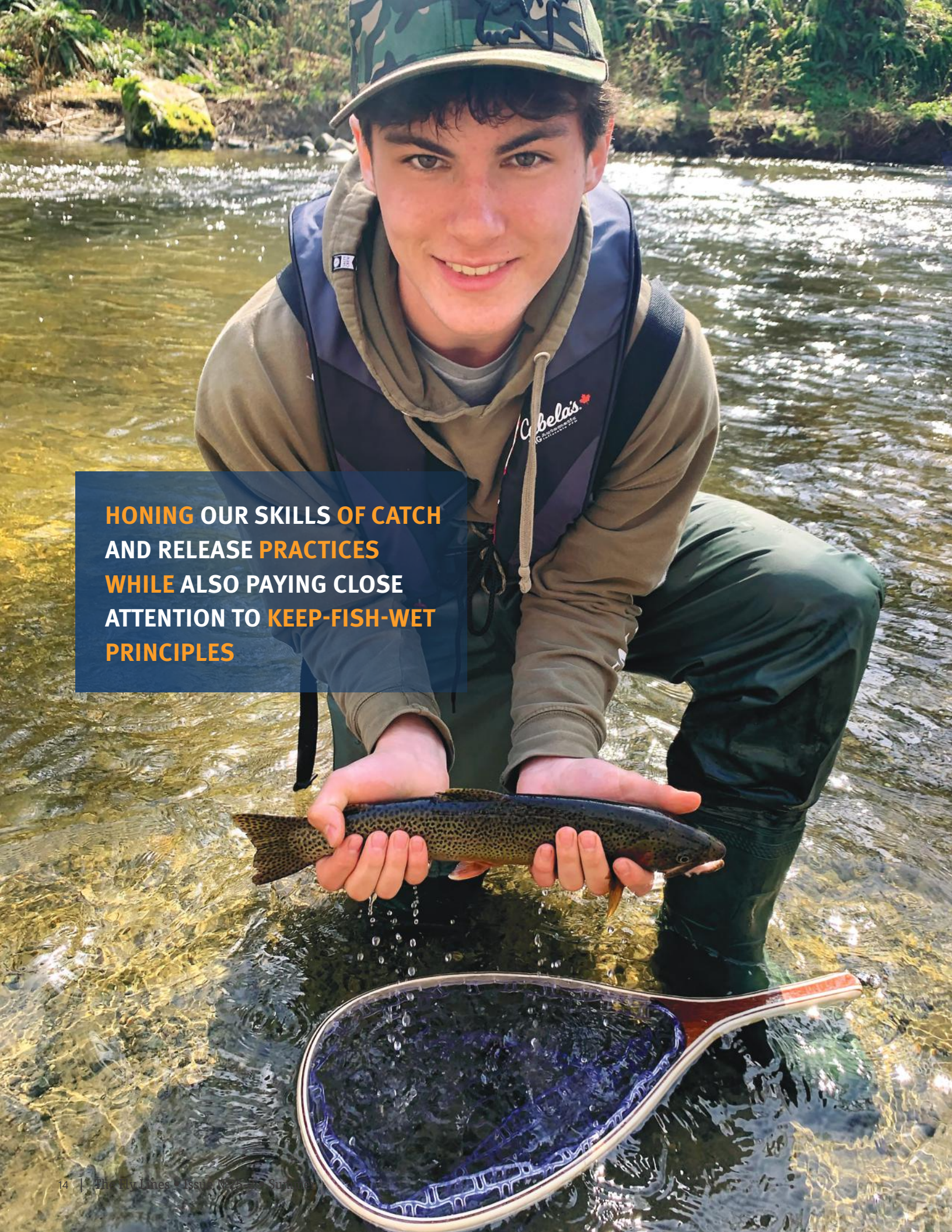
of meeting and talking with Conservation Officer Gord Gudbranson, who came to visit our fish-outs to talk about regulations and good ethical fishing practices. As always, pinch those barbs and know your regs!

Our crew also had a visit from Fisheries Officer Mark Beisel, who came in to tell our crew some great stories to learn from about adhering to your local regulations, and took us up on our competitive card game challenge of "Happy Salmon".

An important goal as an Educator for my student is for them to develop a solid relationship to their Conservation Officers and Fisheries Officers within their own community. Collaboration and understanding how our officers help to support our local waters, with stewardship and conservation in mind, is at the forefront of bridging these relationships on the water together.



**CONTINUING TO PARTICIPATE
IN FUN COOPERATIVE GAMES
TO STRENGTHEN OUR
COMMUNITY OF ANGLERS**



**HONING OUR SKILLS OF CATCH
AND RELEASE PRACTICES
WHILE ALSO PAYING CLOSE
ATTENTION TO KEEP-FISH-WET
PRINCIPLES**



Over the course of the months of February- June, our anglers have been busy learning about several important concepts and skills including (but not limited to):

- The First Peoples concept of interconnectedness as it relates to conservation and our local fisheries here in Campbell River, and the importance of fly-fishing as a land practice through consistent local river cleanups.
- Learning to understand Hydrological impacts that relate to trout habitat.
- Learning and applying how to read and interpret hydrometric graphs that can inform angling practices.
- Honing our skills of catch and release practices while also paying close attention to keep-fish-wet principles
- Continuing to explore trout regulations, including retention and non-retention rules, discussing general fishing ethics, and developing their own ethical considerations as anglers.
- Learning how to nymph for trout, and tying basic nymphs after studying entomological contents of their local rivers.
- Taking part in “bug labs” at the riverside, looking more closely at the world below the water and how this informs us as anglers and stewards.
- Continuing to participate in fun cooperative games to strengthen our community of anglers.
- Learning to successfully identify trout.

As we near the closing of Semester 2 at the end of June, Dr. Mulski looks forward to a tiny bit of respite before the busy Fall season will begin again.

We welcome anyone interested in presenting to our crew of anglers — whether it be a fly-tying demo, fishing stories, a casting clinic, or other possibilities. Remote presentations are welcome as well!

Thank you once again for your continued support! For any inquiries or to express interest in presenting, gear donations, or other educational offerings, please feel free to reach out to me via email.

Tight Lines!

Follow our fly fishing journey on Instagram: @carihiflyfish or on Facebook under Carihi Fly Fishing Program <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61561027829461>





The Black O'Lindsay Classic tied by Brian Smith

HISTORY ARTICLE

The Mystery of the Black O'Lindsay

By Steve Raymond

The first fly I had as a boy learning to fish in the Kamloops trout lakes of British Columbia was a Black O'Lindsay. It was given to me by my father, who didn't tie flies so he had to buy all he had, and as a somewhat thrifty man he was determined to get his money's worth from each. That's why the one he gave me looked rather scruffy, as if lots of trout had taken turns trying to tear it apart. But it looked beautiful to me, and I loved the way its name rippled off my tongue,

apostrophe and all, even though I had no idea what the name meant, or where it had come from.

I also had no clue as to what, if anything, the fly was meant to imitate; I just knew it seemed to work better than any of the few other flies I had, although I suspect that was because I had confidence in it and fished it more than any of the others. It was a sizeable fly, tied on a No. 6 hook, with a tail of dyed-blue hackle, a thick yellow wool body, embossed gold tinsel ribbing, a throat of dyed-blue hackle, a full brown

BIO

Steve Raymond

Steve Raymond, a native of Bellingham, Washington, was born to parents who were both fly fishers, and started him fishing at an early age. He later made friends with three of the great pioneers of Northwest fly fishing: Enos Bradner, Letcher Lambuth and Ralph Wahl, who became his fishing mentors. He also

joined their club, the Washington Fly Fishing Club in Seattle, later serving as its president. He was a charter member of the Federation of Fly Fishermen, editor of its magazine, *The Flyfisher*, and later became an honorary life member of the FFF (now called Fly Fishing International).

A University of Washington graduate, Raymond served as a Navy officer, then embarked on a 30-year-career as a reporter, editor and manager at the *Seattle Times*. He also wrote frequently for other publications, most notably *Sports Illustrated* and *Fly Fisherman*, and his work eventually appeared in at least 24 magazines. He is author of a dozen fly-fishing books, including two award-winning classics, *The Year of the Angler* and *The Year of the Trout*, both celebrating the awe and

hackle tied down as a beard, and a wing of barred mallard breast tied parallel to the hook atop six or eight strands of peacock sword. That's a pretty full dressing for any fly, and I was in my mid-20s before my fly-tying skills reached a point where I could tie a reasonable facsimile.

Even so, my faith in the fly remained great and I used it often, usually with at least moderate success. But I still didn't know the origin of its name, who first tied it, or what he had in mind when he did.

That was still true years later when I began writing my first book, *Kamloops: An Angler's Study of the Kamloops Trout*. I knew the book needed to include lots of popular fly patterns and thought the Black O'Lindsay definitely should be among them, so I began trying to track down its history. That's when I learned that trying to trace the origin of a fly pattern, or its purpose, or its original dressing, is probably the most difficult thing a fly-fishing writer or historian can do. Just think:

"Whenever a new fly becomes popular, it seems as if every tyer who tries to duplicate it changes it some way, sometimes because he thinks he has a better idea, or, more likely, because he lacks one or more of the materials needed for the pattern and decides to substitute something else.

Then the next tyer does the same thing, and so on, until almost before you know it the pattern becomes something very different from the original, and its purpose and identity are lost or forgotten."

That was certainly true of the Black O'Lindsay. When I started asking other fly fishers and tyers about it I couldn't find any who knew more than I did, so I began searching the pages of old, dusty books. The first one I found that contained a reference to the Black O'Lindsay was *Fish and Game in British Columbia*, by Arthur Bryan Williams, published in 1935, and all it had to say was that the Black O'Lindsay was "a comparatively new fly, especially good for interior lakes." Of course I already knew that, but Williams' book at least told me the fly had been around since before 1935, though perhaps not much earlier.

Then I consulted Roderick Haig-Brown's 1939 two-volume classic, *The Western Angler*, which I knew had a long list of Kamloops trout fly patterns, and since Brian Williams had mentioned the Black O'Lindsay in 1939 I figured Haig-Brown surely would have said something about it in a book published four years later.

But he hadn't.

Further research — mostly asking old-time Kamloops trout fly fishers if they knew anything — yielded a few vague, hand-me-down stories of doubtful

credibility, which left me with nothing authoritative to say in my book, so I finally ended up saying the following in the first edition (1971): "This fly is virtually unknown outside British Columbia, but within the province it is one of the most effective wet patterns. Little is known about the men who originated this fly except that one was named Black and the other O'Lindsay [I don't remember where that dubious information came from, and I no longer have my notes from the original edition of the book]. Exactly what they had in mind when they devised the pattern is a mystery, but Kamloops trout apparently regard it as any one of several different insects in different seasons.

"The fly was invented about 1930 and immediately gained acceptance in the Kamloops area. It appears that yarn and dyed seal's fur have been used interchangeably to make the body of the fly, but it seems probable that yarn was used in the original. An especially diligent effort was made to trace the original pattern of this fly as it is one of my favorites."

I gave the dressing of the pattern as it appears above, then added: "During the spring, the Black O'Lindsay seems to be taken as

privilege of fishing for beautiful wild fish in beautiful wild places. Other titles include *Steelhead Country*, *The Estuary Flyfisher*, *Rivers of the Heart*, *Blue Upright*, *Nervous Water* and *Trout Quintet*.

After retirement from the *Seattle Times*, Raymond became editor of *Fly Fishing in Salt Waters* magazine until its sale. He received the Roderick Haig-Brown Award for significant contributions to angling literature, the "Angul" Award for "outstanding contributions to the Heritage and Preservation of the Arte and

Science of Fly Fishing in British Columbia" from the BCFFF, the Letcher Lambuth Angling Craftsman and Tommy Brayshaw Awards from the Washington Fly Fishing Club, and the Gil Nyerges Award from the Whidbey Island Fly Fishing Club. He also curated a highly successful exhibit on the history of Northwest fly fishing at the Whatcom Museum of History and Art in his home town of Bellingham.

Though he has fished all over the world, Raymond's first love has always been the trout, steelhead and salmon of

Pacific Northwest waters. He pioneered fly fishing for winter steelhead in the saltwater estuaries of Puget Sound and introduced the now popular tactic of using skated dry flies to catch sea-run cutthroat and coho salmon in those estuaries.

Raymond and his wife, Joan — now a "retired" fly fisher, but a good one! — reside on Whidbey Island in northern Puget Sound.

a maturing dragonfly nymph. If the fly is tied in small sizes, the trout seem to take it as a backswimmer in the fall. But whatever the reason for its appeal, trout take it well and the Black O'Lindsay is one of the most reliable patterns of all, particularly effective in exploring unfamiliar lakes.

"Many variations of the original pattern have appeared. Most common is the use of brown hackle rather than blue for the tail and elimination of the blue throat altogether. Some tyers have substituted black hackle for the brown and occasionally one sees the fly tied with full hackle rather than a beard."

That was all.

By the time a second and thoroughly revised edition of my book was published in 1980, I had learned a little more about the Black O'Lindsay — or, at least, thought I had. Here's what I wrote then:

"This fly is virtually unknown outside British Columbia and even within the province it is not nearly as popular as it once was. But it is one of the oldest and certainly one of the most beautiful Kamloops trout patterns."

"Its history dates back to the days before World War I when it was developed as a grasshopper imitation for trout fishing on the Thompson River. Judge Spencer Black of Lindsay, California, is credited with devising the pattern, which he fished in the Walhachin reach of the Thompson during the late summer months when warm breezes carried the hoppers from the dry, grassy hillsides into the river. The judge's name and home town gave the fly its colorful name." (Again, I don't remember the origin of that information and I no longer have my notes from that edition, either).

"Later the fly was adopted by other anglers for use in the Interior lakes, where it was fished primarily as an attractor pattern. With its colors and its large, bulky silhouette, it turned out to be a very effective stillwater fly. Some anglers have used it as a dragonfly nymph imitation, and its silhouette certainly bears a resemblance to the natural even if its colors do not."

What I didn't say then was that the fly's use as a grasshopper imitation made a lot more sense than a dragonfly nymph, especially with its yellow body and mallard-breast wing. The dressing I listed in the second edition was the same as in the first, although I noted that some tyers had started adding jungle-cock cheeks to the pattern.

I also added this:

"Until the last decade, the Black O'Lindsay still was a common weapon in the arsenal of Kamloops trout fly fishermen, and it probably still resides in the fly boxes of many anglers. But with the advent and success of many new imitative patterns, it is not often used anymore — which seems a pity for such a handsome fly with such a long history."

A third edition of *Kamloops* was published in 1994, again thoroughly revised and updated, and here's what I said then about the Black O'Lindsay:

"Virtually unknown outside British Columbia, it's one of the oldest and certainly one of the most beautiful Kamloops trout patterns. It dates before World War I when it was originally developed as a grasshopper imitation for trout fishing on the Thompson River. Judge Spencer Black is credited with the pattern, which he fished in the Walhachin reach of the Thompson during late summer months when warm breezes carried hoppers from the hillsides onto the river. The judge's name and home town gave the fly its colorful name (this was finally beginning to sound at least somewhat authoritative). The fly was later adopted by other anglers for use in the Interior lakes, where it was fished primarily as an attractor pattern. Some anglers also claimed it was a good dragonfly nymph imitation and its silhouette certainly bears a resemblance to the natural even if its colors do not."

Once again I gave the dressing as it appeared in the original edition, and the same variations mentioned in the second. I didn't say so in the third edition, but by that time I had also discovered the Black O'Lindsay was a perfect imitation of a giant water beetle in at least one Kamloops trout lake. It was the pattern I was using in that little lake when I hooked and landed a splendid seven-pound trout with a swollen stomach full of the huge beetles, some still alive. All had bright yellow bellies and dark wings folded over their backs, a perfect likeness of the Black O'Lindsay.

Unfortunately, I never found those beetles in any other lake.

In 1996 my friend Art Lingren, the fly-fishing historian, published a book titled *Fly Patterns of British Columbia* in which he dated the origin of the Black O'Lindsay to the late 1920s, crediting that information to the late Martin Tolley, long-time B.C. fly fisher with an interest in angling history.

He also said this:

"The fly's originator, Judge Spencer Black, came from a town in California called Lindsay. Thus the name Black of Lindsay or Black O'Lindsay. The judge, because of business connections in the forest



industry, was a regular visitor to British Columbia and he combined business with angling pleasure. When concocting the Black O'Lindsay, the judge hoped to produce a suitable grasshopper imitation for Thompson River trout and tied his prototype on size 6 hooks. With its acceptance in other areas of the interior, the pattern was soon to be dressed in a variety of sizes from 4 to 10."

Well, that was specific and it sure sounded authoritative, so I thought all the questions and mysteries about the Black O'Lindsay and its origins had finally been answered, and I continued to think so for more than the next 20 years, even repeating the same explanation I had used in the last edition of Kamloops in a later book, Rivers of the Heart.

Then one day I received a telephone call from a man with a raspy voice who identified himself as John Nichol, a name unfamiliar to me. Mr. Nichol turned out to be well into his 90s and was deaf as a brick, so it was a difficult conversation and we had trouble understanding one another, but eventually I realized he was trying to tell me that Art Lingren and I both had the history of the Black O'Lindsay all wrong. He also tried to give me the details, but they were so long and complicated I finally asked him to write me a letter instead. After I shouted my address repeatedly, he told me to hold the phone so he could get his wife, who had better hearing, and she took down my address.

Afterward I was a little ashamed of myself because Mr. Nichol's hearing problem had made me impatient and I was a little short with him (I can sympathize with him because now I have the same hearing problem). Also, when someone you don't know calls to tell you got something wrong that will remain in print for all time, it doesn't exactly make your day.

I wondered if I'd hear from Nichol again, but he was as good as his word and his letter soon arrived. Here's what he said:

Dear Mr. Raymond:

This follows along on our telephone conversation of the other day. The Black O'Lindsay fly was originally tied by Harold Spens-Black of 190 Alvarado Road, Berkeley, California.

I know Harold Black well because he was married to my grandmother's sister. Each year he came to British Columbia to go trout fishing with Frank Darling. I think Paul Lake was their favourite water.

Most documents say that Harold Black was a judge and lived in Lindsay, California. Neither of these statements is correct. Harold Black was

not a judge, and not a lawyer for that matter.

I think the confusion arises from the fact that his wife's father, Samuel Bell McKee, was Chief Justice of the State of California. His connection to Lindsay probably arises from the fact that he had investment interests in olive groves located in Lindsay. However, his residence was in Berkeley, California.

I don't want to contradict the good people who have written about Harold Spens-Black but this is something about which I have some personal knowledge.

Please do what you wish with this with this information.

Yours sincerely, John Nichol, C.C

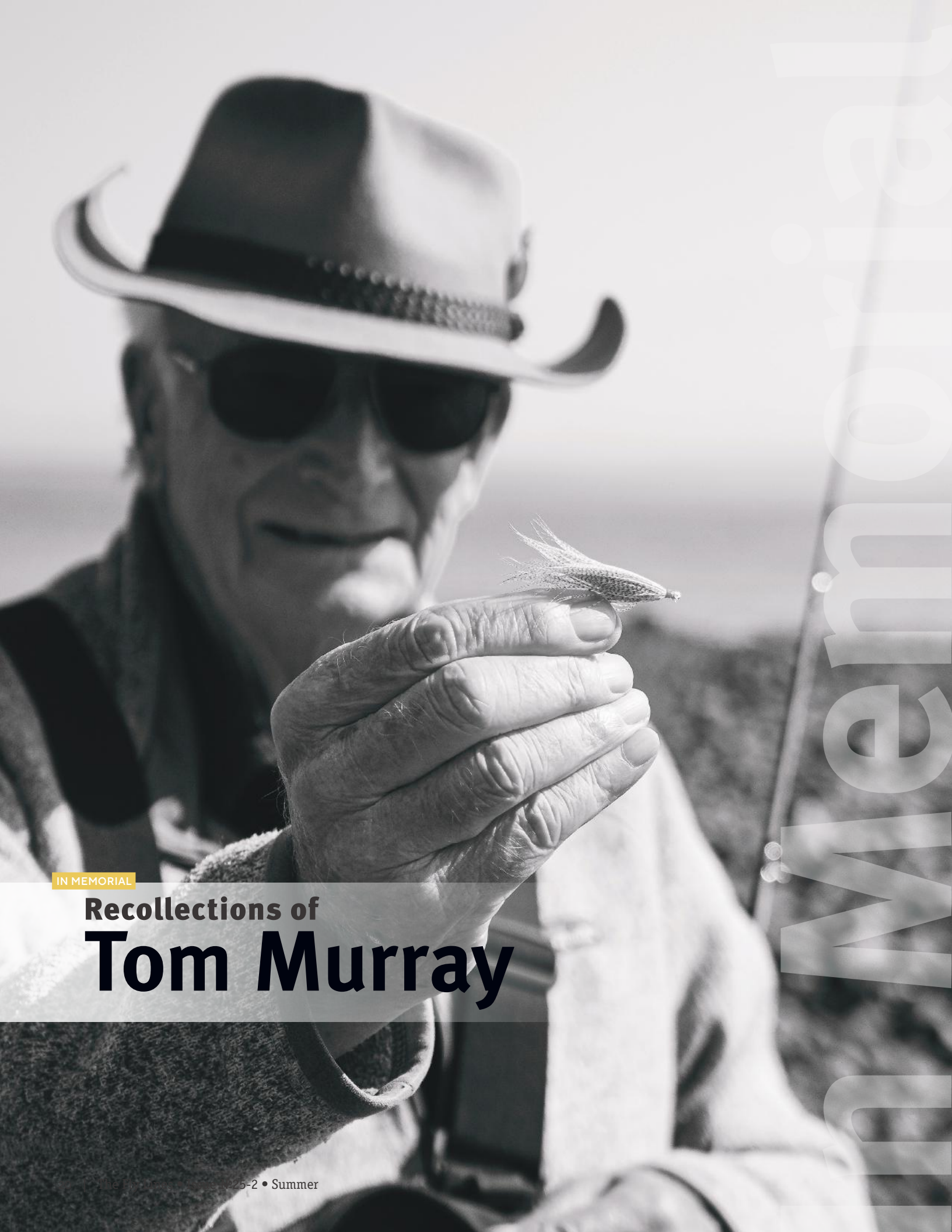
The first thing I did with that information was search the Internet, where I found that Harold Spens-Black's full name was actually Harold Lancelot Spens Black, with no hyphen between the last two names. Spens was the name of a Scottish Lowland clan and Black was born in Scotland.

But I was also curious about the "C.C." following John Nichol's name, so I sent a copy of his letter to Art Lingren and asked if he knew what it meant. This was Art's reply:

"Interesting letter from John Nichol. I wondered about the name as it is familiar and when I saw the 'Hon.' in his letterhead I looked him up and he was a senator for North Vancouver back in the 1960s, appointed by Lester Pearson, one of Canada's better prime ministers. The C. C. is short for Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest level of public service award in the Order of Canada. The fellow is certainly a distinguished Canadian.

"When I started lake fishing back in the late 1960s, the Black O' Lindsay was a favourite fly. Nichol does have a good memory. He mentioned Frank Darling in his letter and I did an article on Darling some years back — he was an ardent fly fisher for trout, steelhead and salmon. My father's cousin's family used to have a place on Pinantan Lake back in the 1930s and they rented boats to fishermen and I believe provided lodging as well. My dad's cousin Jim Carlson was a young guy then and Darling took a shine to him and would write letters to him about his fly fishing exploits. Jim saved those letters and let me copy them. Last night after reading your email I skimmed the letters and did see in an August 1934 letter a reference to the good trout fishing being had on the Thompson at Walachin and that he, Darling, was waiting on his friend Mr. Black from California before he went fishing. I wonder why Nichol waited so long to contact you regarding this."

I can't ask the honorable Mr. Nichol now because he is deceased. Anyway, after all that, I think at last I have the answers to all the mysteries surrounding the Black O'Lindsay. And so do you.



Memorial

IN MEMORIAL

Recollections of
Tom Murray

Fishing with Tom

By: Rory E. Glennie

My first real opportunity to get to know Tom Murray was when a group of like-minded folk gathered to form the Comox Valley Fly Fishers club. Individually, we had all been heavily involved with various fisheries related conservation federations, either at the local, Provincial or National level, and wanted an association where all the tedious work of dealing with bureaucrats would be cast aside in favour of just plain fishing camaraderie.

At that time my only knowledge of Tom was that he could throw a championship cast with a fly rod and had created his Rolled Muddler fly pattern. Through our fly club association Tom became better known to me as an experienced, very knowledgeable, generous mentor to whomever needed a helpful fly fishing hand. Case in point, a couple of years after forming the CVFF club we held an impromptu club fish-out on the Oyster River. About a dozen or so members, mostly those new to fly fishing, attended. We initially gathered at the Oyster River Enhancement Society hatchery facility, then spread out from there. In time I headed up to the Oyster-Little Oyster rivers confluence pool. Tom had the pool well under his command with a couple of newbies emulating his every move. That is when I noticed something a bit different. Tom was wearing a golfer's glove on his rod hand. In due course I sidled up and asked Tom about the glove. He said it facilitated a better grip on the rod handle which in turn helped him make better casts; point taken. Since then I, too, have employed a golf glove and it helps my rod control immensely.... thanks, Tom.

In 1999 a government mandate came down stating all motor boat drivers now require basic competency certification. The local North Island College campus offered a night-school course, conducted over three evenings, to acquire said document. It was the first course to be offered

on Vancouver Island. Much to my surprise Tom and his wife Betsy had also signed up for this training. It was like old home week, the three of us sharing and comparing notes as we sat through the nightly sessions. The culmination was a written exam. I sat to Tom's left, Betsy on his right. On the odd occasion one of us would lift our test paper slightly and point to a question with our pencil. The response would be a corresponding gesture pointing to the answer. We three passed the exam and subsequently were each awarded our Pleasure Craft Operator's Certificate.... thanks, Tom.

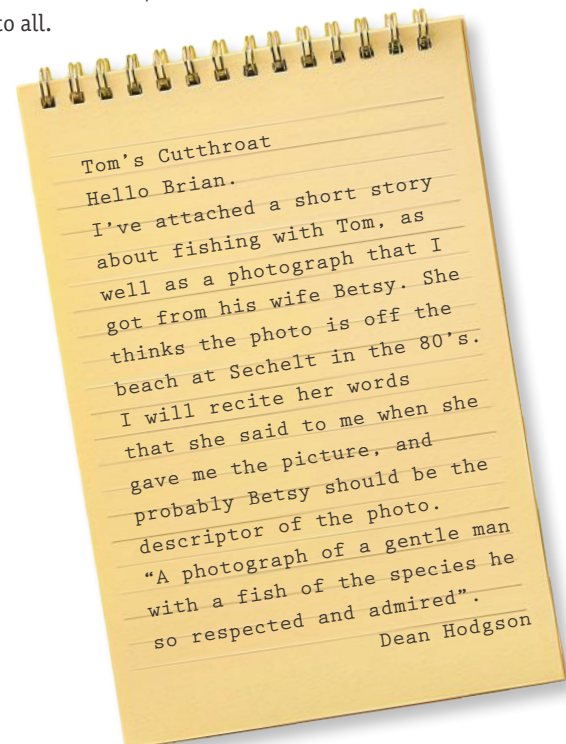
While working as a fishing guide out of Weigh West Marine Resort in Tofino, Tom and Betsy came out on a fishing trip with me. They had purchased the day trip as an auction item at the recent Comox Valley Fly Fishers club annual fundraiser. As I recall, we had a great trip, catching a few fish and touring the amazing sites of scenic Clayoquot Sound. Most memorable for me was what Tom presented to me at the end of their trip; a bottle of The Macallan single malt Scotch whisky. That bottle held pride of place for a couple of weeks on the shelf above the kitchen table at the guide's residence; there it sat gallantly amongst our collection of other guide tip bottles of such exalted elixir as: Talisker, Glenmorangie, Balvennie, Oban.... thanks, Tom.

Fishing with Tom

By Dean Hodgson

I first met Tom in 2007, the year I retired and joined the Comox Valley Flyfishers. Tom had organized a beach fish-out for Coho at the Oyster River estuary. Several of the club's experienced anglers had their gear set up on the logs, and spent some time instructing us neophytes on the intricacies of its' use.

It wasn't long before Tom said, "C'mon boys, the water's dropping and the fish will soon be out of reach. Dean, you come with me." I spent that morning alongside Tom, soaking in all the subtle little tricks that I could, from the way he tied on one of his favourite Coho beach patterns, Rory's Pearl Mickey, to the way he cast and the way he moved, or more importantly, didn't move! Tom had one pull on the fly but didn't get a solid hook up before the tide dropped enough that the fish moved off-shore out of range, and we headed back up to the beach logs for lunch with the others. I could not imagine a better introduction to the sport of beach fishing than I received from this kind, gentle, knowledgeable and sharing man who was a founding member and driving force within our club, and a friend to all.



Remembering Tom Murray

By Doug Porter

I first met Tom at one of the Peterhope International Fish Outs in the early 70's. Back then, all the fly clubs in the Pacific Northwest gathered at Peterhope Lake every long weekend in May to meet, greet, compete, and pull a few pranks.

It was always a great gathering of like-minded individuals, intent on their club taking home the trophy. At that time, I was with the Kamloops Fly Fishers, just a fledging club then, and Tom was with the Totems. The camp host and weighmaster were Karl Haufler, a character know to stir the pot now and then. (I dedicated a chapter to Karl in my book "Chucking Flies One Flyfishers Journey). I mention this, because the next time Tom and I crossed paths was at Karl's trailer at Roche Lake. Karl, after retiring, spent the whole summer at Roche Lake with his wife Maxine, meeting and greeting fellow fly-flingers. It was also at Roche Lake that a group of us started the unofficial fly-fishing group, The Oriental Fly Fishers Club, or OFFC for

short. At one of our tequila nights at the lodge on Roche Lake, we initiated Tom into our group. One member of our club reminded me recently that Tom, still feeling the effects of the previous night, showed up at the door of his trailer wearing his red silk pajamas.

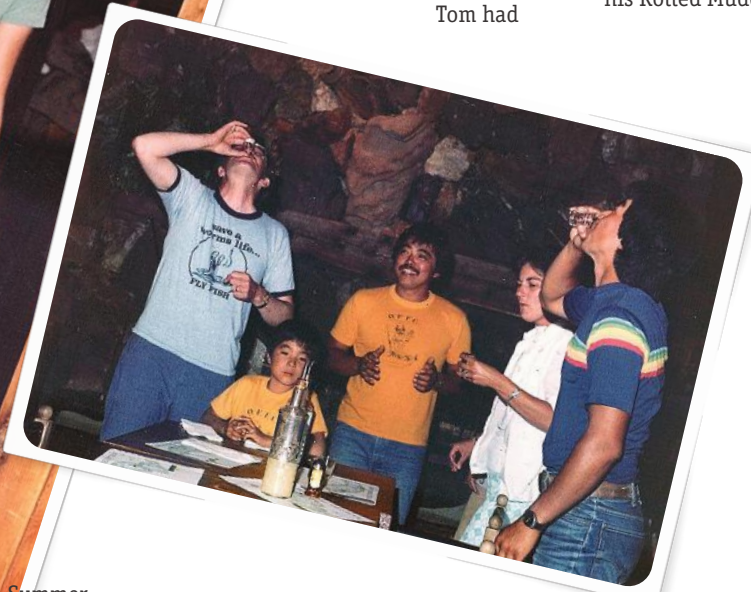
Tom was a regular participant at the OFFC annual gathering at Roche Lake Resort, and then at Sheridan Lake Resort after Roche Lake Resort was sold to an Alberta consortium. Karl was always the grand poohbah every year, with his trailer being the focal point of all the OFFC members and a lot of his long-time friends. Tom and Karl were quite close. I have to mention here that as part of our annual gathering the much-celebrated tequila night and dinner meeting included the yearly awarding of the "Hat". It was an old hat donated by Karl and bronzed and mounted on a base by OFFC member

Patsy Kikegawa, and was presented to the member who demonstrated the ability to have screwed up the most during the previous year. Tom had

built a fine wooden boat and was using it on Sheridan Lake quite effectively one fine summer day. He had his dog Jake in the boat with him while fishing a mayfly hatch near the big island. I have to add here that Jake was a big dog and Tom's boat was great for one person but became crowded with Jake on board. It seems Tom had hooked into a nice rainbow when Jake got excited and knocked his favourite rod overboard. Yep, Tom was awarded the "Hat" the next year, 1989.

I also saw Tom at the annual general meeting of the BCFFE, a great event filled with fishing at Corbett Lake, a fine dinner prepared by Peter McVey, and the odd prank. I know one night Tom made it back to his cabin, maybe slightly inebriated, and tried to get into bed, but found that someone had doubled his sheets up so he couldn't get all the way under the covers. It was the subject of a great laugh the next day as the event was spread amongst the attending members and spouses.

I had always respected Tom for his innovation and creativity, and gave him credit in my book for his contributions to the fly-fishing community of his patterns: the Rolled Muddler and the Tunkwanamid. He was a fine gentleman and always a hoot to be around. He will be sorely missed by the OFFC as he was a regular participant in our annual New Years Eve Zoom calls until he became ill. I hope he is casting his Rolled Muddler to cutties somewhere!



Tom being wheeled back to his trailer courtesy of the famous wheelbarrow, a.k.a. the "Roche Lake Taxi," after an OFFC "tequila night" in 1979

Reflections of Tom Murray

By BCFFF BOD members

MYLES ARMSTEAD

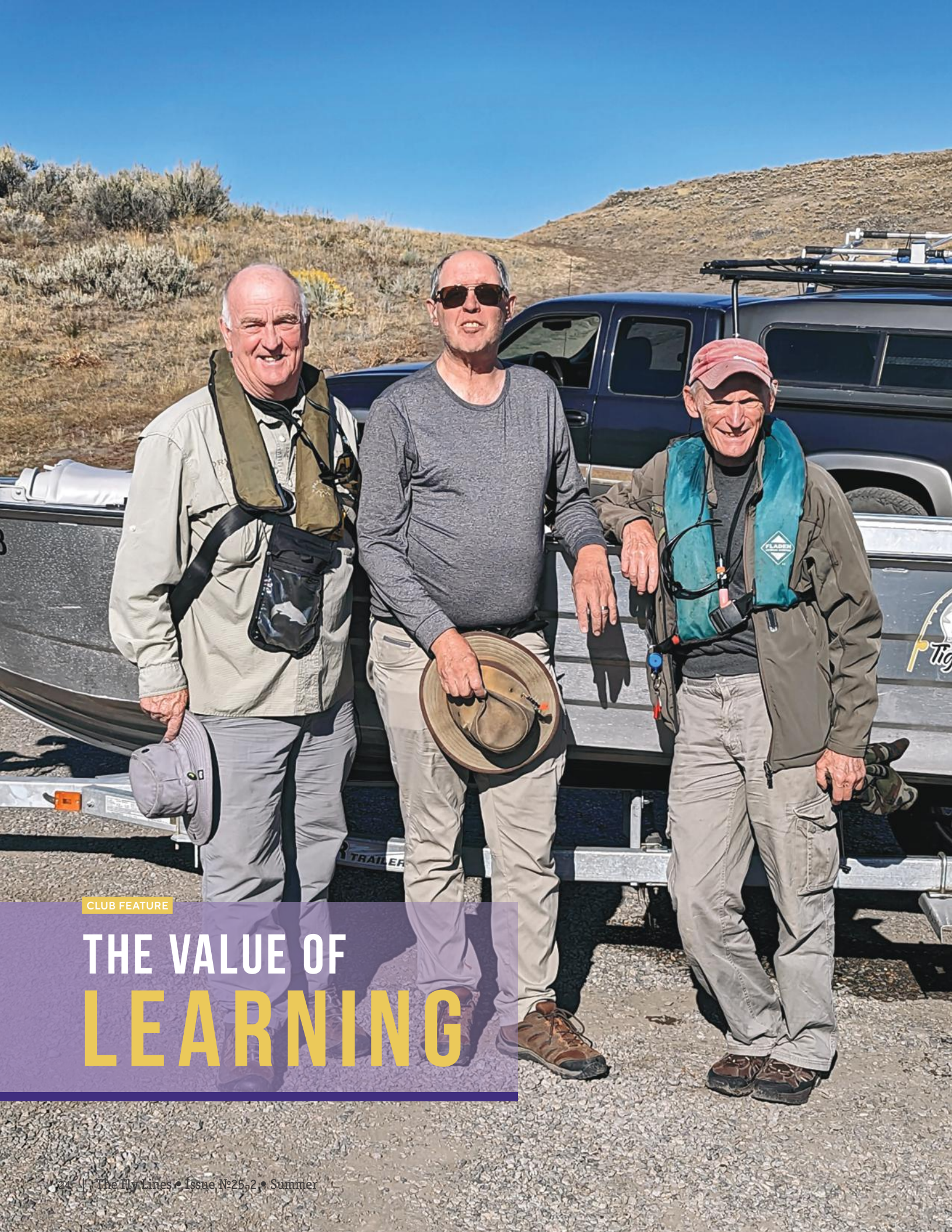
"Hi all some rather sad news from the Comox Valley, and the passing of Tom Murray. Many decades ago, my father took a fly-tying course at night school taught by Don McDermid and Tom Murray. Each day after the course my dad would teach me what he learned, and I spent many hours tying flies in the basement (even using my dog Toggles for materials). The final day of the course was a Saturday, at Ambleside Park, where Don and Tom gave casting instruction to the students. Dad brought me along to watch, introduced me to the two of them, and Tom immediately went back to his camper van and pulled out a 7-foot 3-4 weight and put it in my hands. He then proceeded to give me one-on-one casting instruction for the duration of the event. That was the first time I ever held a fly rod in my hands, and since then there has always been one close at hand."

BRIAN SMITH

"I have never met Tom in person, but began reading his articles and tying Tom's "Rolled Muddler" back in the '70s. His name has been on my lips for over fifty years! It was my pleasure to feature Tom in our fall 2023 issue of Fly Lines. Tom and I spoke on the phone a few times putting it together, and when the article was finalized and published, I knew that I had been introduced to a true legend of the fly-fishing community."

PETER CAVERHILL

"In the 1970's Tom Murray and Don McDermid ran a "fly shop" in North Van out of Don's basement called "The Fly Box". It was mostly tying materials, but they did offer some Winston fly rods and Northern fly lines. When Don moved, Cliff Olson and I helped Don deal and sell-off what was left, which was a big job! Tom, knowing that I had an interest in cars, let me drive one of his classic Ferraris. It wasn't a regular manual gear box and I ground the gears a couple of times (ouch!!), but it was a moment in time that I will always remember."



CLUB FEATURE

THE VALUE OF LEARNING

If you are continually searching for fly fishing knowledge like myself, read on? Have you ever used a guide?

By Leonard P. Piggin,
President KFFA
Director BCFF

I was employed at Wholesale Sports in Kamloops for many years, and because I worked the fishing department counter, customers thought I was an expert on all fishing-related matters. Knowing and connecting with staff in your local fly shop is an excellent way to learn local knowledge, but I also learned a lot from my customers. So, how do we get better as an angler, or should I say how do we learn?

Learning from Experience and Guides

In 2017 Al McLean and I wanted to try a different type of fishing, so we took our first guided trip to the East Kootenay's to fish for Westslope Cutthroat. This was going to be dry-fly fishing at its finest, and we usually fished nymphs in the Kamloops area. We have

both fished the Thompson & Adams rivers, but this was going to be different as we were going to learn river dry-fly fishing! The proper leader length, how to put fly floatant on your fly and what is the best brand are a couple of things we learned from our guides.

First, we did a float trip down the Elk River with Brennan Lund of St. Mary's Angler Fly Shop. After our float trip Al & I fished on our own, but that initial guide trip set us up for success. A drag-free drift of your fly was very important information, as well as putting it in the right location: in and around obstructions and structure such as rocks and logs, and picking up the habit of fishing near shore. You don't need to boom out long casts; rather, they should be placed in the right spots. We also learned techniques, and were provided information regarding other rivers we could fish.

On our most recent trip in 2024 Rueben

**YOU DON'T NEED TO BOOM
OUT LONG CASTS; RATHER,
THEY SHOULD BE PLACED
IN THE RIGHT SPOTS**



◀ Len with Team
England members



▲
**Kamloops FF Method
101 session**

Breitkreutz was our guide, and what a wealth of knowledge! Selecting a top quality fly shop with top notch guides such as Rueben was a great move, and I highly recommend doing so.

Club Learning and Techniques

Surfing the internet through websites, Facebook and You Tube are other ways to gain knowledge, but I've found joining a fly-fishing club such as ours (KamloopsFlyFishers.org) is the best way to get local fishing knowledge, and the bonus is the friendships which I have made for life through the Kamloops Fly Fishers.

I am currently President of the Kamloops Fly Fishers Association. My fishing buddy, the late Gord Bacon was a wealth of information, and more recently I fished with Todd Oishi on Heffley Lake, fishing Loch Style with drogues. Traditionally, we would double-anchor at a location we've been successful at before, or use fish finders or other techniques to locate fish, and then anchor. With this type of fishing, you are casting to the same trout, and if you're not

successful you move to another location. Fish finders are a boon for this type of fishing. With Loch-Style fishing, you are constantly drifting towards active trout, and they are seeing your fly first. You are always casting to different and fresh, new trout. There are two types of drogues, cone and para- drogues.

When you troll a fly with a drogue, you are disturbing the trout with your boat and then your line(s) proceed through the disturbed trout.

Our fly club holds lessons throughout the year. For our Fly-Tying 101/Method Session, you will note we use the numbers "101", because there is no prerequisite: **we are always learning.** These sessions usually use club members to present them, but you don't just learn how to tie the fly, you gain the knowledge on how to fish it, what line to use, where to fish it, and even what lakes the presenter uses it on.

In recent years I've been fishing not only with the standard floating fly line, but also a type one or two sinking fly line. I have been using nymphs such as the Prince Nymph and Hare Ear's to great success. These fly lines allow me to move the nymph right

ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT FISHING IS THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS LEARNING. MY QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE IS NEVER-ENDING AS I AM NOT AN EXPERT, AND I BELIEVE IN OUR “101”

101

along the weeds (actually ticking the weeds), which is just one of the methods that I have learned that makes me a better fisherman. I don't want to sit and watch an indicator all day; there's a time for every type of fishing.

Club Learning and Techniques

Another way to learn is to volunteer your time. I was Sector Judge at Sullivan Lake for the 8th FIPS-Mouche Masters World Fly Fishing Championship. Prior to the Championship I took two members of Team England fishing to Jacko Lake. I found their fishing techniques and styles including their fly selections were very different than mine — another learning curve to follow when needed.

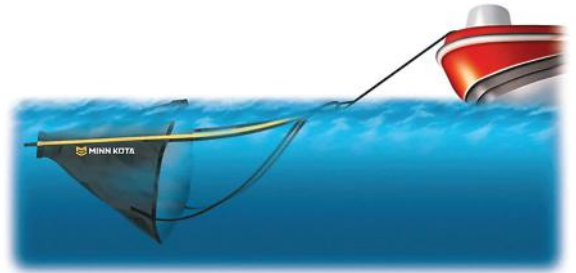
One thing I have learned about fishing is that you are always learning. My quest

for knowledge is never-ending as I am not an expert, and I believe in our “101”.

I recommend joining a club in your area, which can be found by talking to your local fly shop, or by searching the internet. Fishing with different members can boost your learning, as they will have different techniques that will interest you. Taking a guide while on a fishing trip to new water is another excellent way to learn more.

I am always open to learn new fishing techniques.

Tight lines.



The para-drogue is far more popular in the United Kingdom and Europe



A cone shaped drogue is the design that is most commonly used by North American anglers

I'VE FOUND JOINING A FLY-FISHING CLUB SUCH AS OURS (KAMLOOPSFLYFISHERS.ORG) IS THE BEST WAY TO GET LOCAL FISHING KNOWLEDGE

Prologue to “Designing Dry Flies for Streams and Rivers”

By Brian Smith

This preface is the opener and forward in a series of articles for Fly Lines magazine by the author about designing dry flies for freshwater trout and/or grayling fly-fishing in rivers and streams.

Good fly pattern designs are the results of many years of insect observation, research of current and original fly replicas and their materials, experimentation with your own ideas, and then testing them for their usefulness on the water in fishing situations.

I do not pretend to be an expert on the orders, genera and species of insects, nor do I wish to. What I do try to accomplish for the reader is what to look for on your rivers, and then base your fishing tactics on any particular day's outing on what you see hatching — namely the size, shape and colour(s) of emerging insects. There will be days on the rivers when no hatching activity is evident. Those could be the days when you may consider nymph-fishing; however, I guarantee you fish will take adults of the dominant nymphs. Kick over some rocks, see what is present, or about to hatch, and keep hunting with your dry flies. You may catch a few less fish than your buddy who is fishing nymphs, but nothing compares to the satisfaction and delight of a fish surfacing to grab your well-presented dry fly!

With fly-tying, the most important characteristics that you should think about when designing a fly pattern to imitate a hatching/laying insect is to consider:

- 1. The size of the insect, its length, and what hook to use?**
- 2. The overall body shape of the insect. Is it slender, bulky, tapered, curved?**
- 3. The colour(s), and which colour is prominent?**
- 4. The wings of the insect. How do they lay — flat, upright, tented, spent? Length?**
- 5. Lastly, how do I impart lifelike movement? Legs, hackle, buoyancy, sparkle? Or not?**

One added benefit when you design your own patterns, especially if you fish popular rivers, is that the fish are seeing unfamiliar flies which they haven't looked at and refused before; this factor alone can often trigger strikes from sulky and wary big fish who have seen it all.

The hatch charts I have designed are taken from personal observations, experiences and flies which I rely on at these different times of year. The posted times can vary by the rivers' flows, water temperatures, and turbidity. Prime times are indicated by more x's.

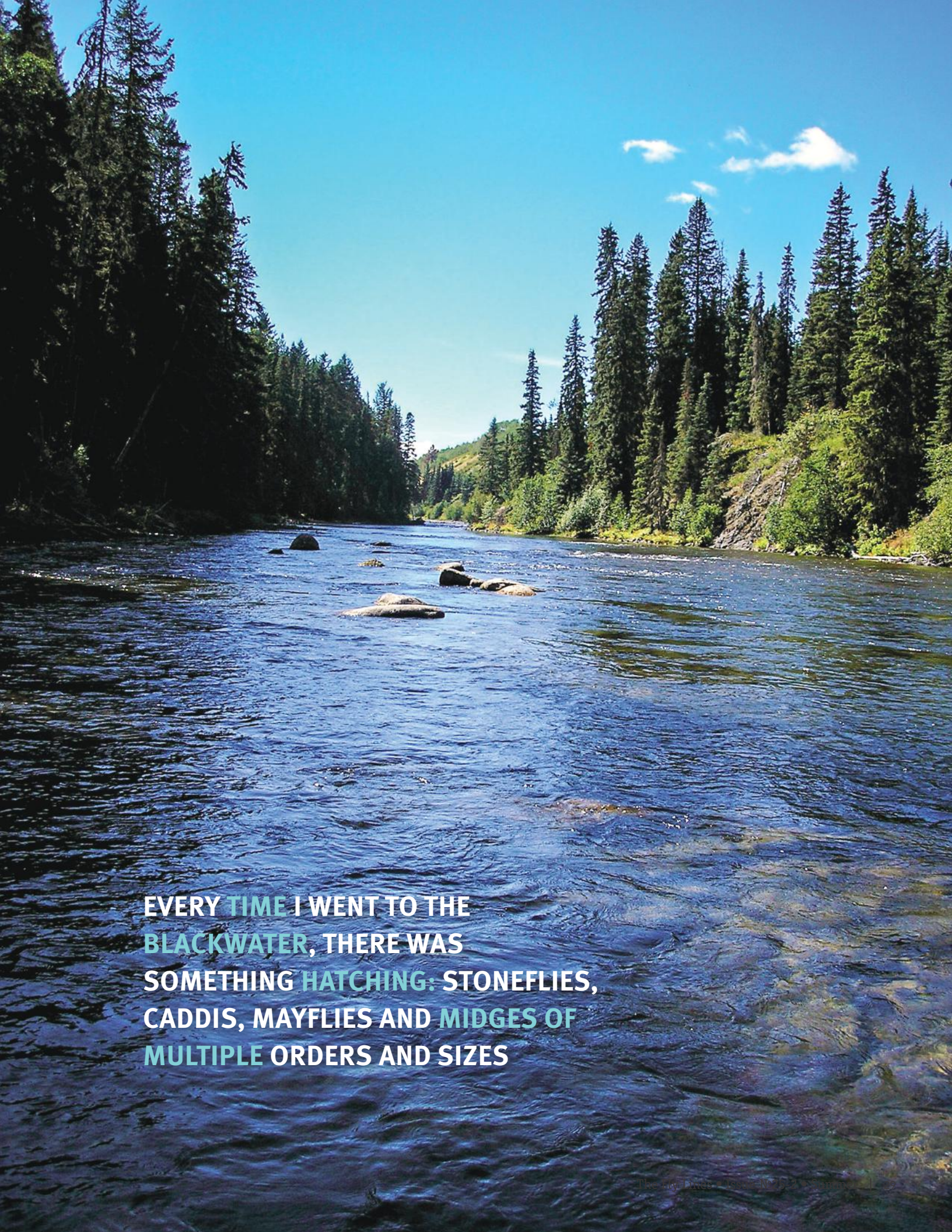
The Blackwater River

The Blackwater, Stellako and Crooked Rivers have absorbed a lot of my time in the last thirty-four years of fishing the Prince George area. First, it was the Blackwater that captured my fancy; it was wild and free, a trek to get to, the perfect size and, in those early days, deeply forested with lodgepole and jack pine mixed with spruce, poplar and fir. The river was pure heaven back in the '90s. I quickly learned the trails and side-roads of the Nazko Road country which surrounds the river, and spent many days wandering the river valley, always searching for the perfect water, always uncovering more and more secrets as I absorbed the moments.

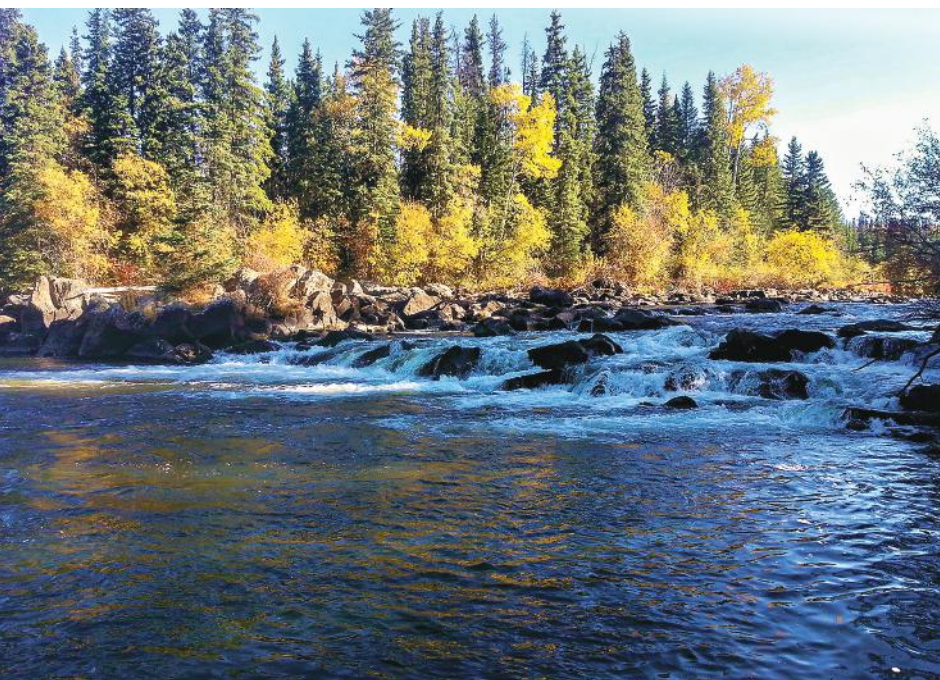
I confess, however, in the early Blackwater years, to being primarily a nymph fisher. The river has glorious rock gardens, producing copious hatches of ginormous black stoneflies of the Salmonfly order, easily needing a size 4 hook to imitate them. Every boulder you turned coughed up a handful! I quickly designed and fished a big black stonefly nymph which proceeded to catch trout by the dozens, always using the floating line and upstream cast-and-drift method.

After a few years of nymph fishing the river, I became bored with this method, and decided I would spend the time it took to become a dry-

▶ **Blackwater River 4 BIS**
Photo: Brian Smith



**EVERY TIME I WENT TO THE
BLACKWATER, THERE WAS
SOMETHING HATCHING: STONEFLIES,
CADDIS, MAYFLIES AND MIDGES OF
MULTIPLE ORDERS AND SIZES**



▲
Blackwater River
Chinee Falls
 Photo Richard Barrie

fly fisher. Every time I went to the Blackwater, there was something hatching: stoneflies, caddis, mayflies and midges of multiple orders and sizes. It was time to give my head a shake, smarten up, and learn to think dry-fly first, which has subsequently opened a whole new world of fly-

fishing and tying to me, one that has become an obsession for over twenty-five years, and now accounts for 80 percent of my catches. I never fish nymphs in trout/grayling rivers any longer.

I began my quest innocently; took a lot of photographs of insects and hatches I came across, researched and tied the proven patterns of the day for each species: stimulators for stones, Adamses for midges and mayflies, elk hair caddis for caddis's, etc. The Blackwater has gobs of all or some of those species hatching sporadically on a daily basis, so it wasn't rocketing science to "match the hatch". The Blackwater also has wild, cannibalistic trout that love to eat from the surface; the higher the fly rode the surface and skated, the more aggressive the attackers would be.

I soon realized that the patterns of the day worked great, but they really were poor replicas of the hatching insects I was seeing. So, I then I began to experiment; working from my photographs, and doing internet research, I realized this was going to be a lifetime project for me — tying flies which resembled what I was seeing. I had some glorious days fishing the

NBC Rivers Hatch Charts

Blackwater River

The posted times can vary by the rivers' flows, water temperatures, and turbidity. Prime times are indicated by more X's.

Insect	Sizes	May			June				July				August				September			
STONEFLIES	Skwala (black/yellow ribs/grey wing)	10-12	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X													
	Salmon (brown/orange ribs/tan wing)	4-6			X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X	X								
	Golden (brown/yellow ribs/tan wing)	6-8					X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X							
	Lime Sally (lime/grey wing)	16-18									X	X	XX	XXX	XX	X				
	Little Olive (olive/grey wing)	14-16									X	X	X	XX	XXX	XX	X			
MAYFLIES	Brown Drake (brown/yellow ribs/tan wing)	10-12								X	X	XX	XXX	XX	X					
	Green Drake (olive/yellow ribs/grey wing)																			
	PMD (brown/grey wing)	14-16								X	X	X	XX	XX	XX	X	X			
	Tan (tan/grey wing)	14-16								X	X	X	X	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	X	X
	BWO (olive/grey wing)	18-20	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X	X										X	XX	XX
CADDIS	Cinnamon/Tan	12-14				X	X	XX	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X				
	Rusty Brown	12-14				X	X	X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	X	X				
	Grey	14-16				X	X	X	XX	XX	XX	XXX	X	X						
HOPPER	Olive/Yellow/Tan wing	6-10								X	X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X			

Blackwater with the new dry flies I was tying. I soon realized, however, that this was only the beginning, and the project was to be never-ending, and still is twenty-five years later as I come across new ideas, concepts and materials.

Unfortunately, the Blackwater landscape was changed by the pine beetle kill of the late 90's, and then ravaged by uncontrollable wildfires in the early 2000's. West of Quesnel millions of acres of pine forest fell to the beetle's rabid appetite; prevailing southwest winds carried the pests north and west until thirty million acres of Northern BC pine disappeared over a ten-year period. The effect on my Blackwater and its tributaries was devastating. With the trees in submission the soil could no longer hold the floods of rainstorms, the rivers blew out easily and often, mud slides occurred readily, and sediment poured down the streams. And then came the forest fires, impossible to control because of all the downed timber laying on the ground. The valleys succumbed, and I could no longer depend on my river to be clean enough to fish, even in August, generally the prime fishing month. I was forced to look elsewhere for my river of dreams.

Now, twenty-five years later, Nature has started to reclaim the Blackwater, and she is beginning to improve for the fly-fisher. But I did, however, move on to make the Crooked and Stellako my home trout rivers.

The Stellako River

Now that I was hooked on dry flies, and my Blackwater was in dormancy, I began to focus on the Stellako, a 2-hour drive west of PG on pavement, which was a nice improvement from the 2-hour dirt and gravel roads to the Blackwater.

The Stellako is the exit river for the 110-km long Francois Lake, 170 km from Prince George, and where I can be in the river in under two hours drive. Draining the big lake, and with no tributaries, the Stellako is always clear and dependable, even during high-water run-off of late May and early June. She is a short river, only 11-km in length, drains into Fraser Lake, has an elevation drop of only 100 metres or so along its route, is friendly for experienced pontoon boat/canoe drifters, and is one of the highest-rated wild trout river fisheries in British Columbia. It is also part of a Nature Conservancy, with no residences (other than cabin pool) along its entire length, and with only two other public access points by

trails downriver after put-in at the Glenannan Bridge. A rough walking trail follows on river-right for about 1-km downriver from the bridge, which accesses many of my favourite runs of the upper section. The regulations are: Class 11 water; open May 15th (new reg. 2025) to November 15th, rainbow trout catch-and-release, no power boats, fly-fishing only from 200m below the Glenannan Bridge to the 4-km marker at Big Eddy.

The Stellako is primarily a caddis and stonefly river, interspersed with random mayfly and midge hatches. Hoppers come into play after mid-July, especially in the upper bridge section. When any of these insect species are not hatching, trout still know what they are, and won't hesitate to rise to a well-presented fly looks edible if they are in the mood.

Persistence is the key to being successful on the Stellako; for me, up to twenty upstream casts over a proven lie is not out of the question, never hesitating to switch to smaller sizes, especially with caddis (down to size 18-20) if "catching" is quiet. Stellako fish do not like flies that drag on the surface, so short, targeted casts, 5-6x tippets and 12- to 14-foot leaders are the order of the day. In the upper river, fish every little seam that looks darker than the prevailing

▼
Stellako Rock Garden
Photo: Brian Smith





▲
Stellako River Goat Run
Photo: Lloyd Gibson

stream bed, as this is where the dominant trout lie, looking upstream for drifting food items.

Insect hatches on the Stellako begin in late April and early May before run-off, which can vary from year to year depending upon winter snow pack on the Nechako Plateau along Francois Lake, but will generally peak late May into mid-June. The dominant early season hatch is Skwala stoneflies with an occasional smidgeon of mayflies, primarily the Blue-winged Olives, and random midges. These will happen through May, and after the Skwalas come the big Salmonfly stones in early June and then the Golden stones in late June and July. I have found trout will take these species of stoneflies throughout the summer months, even without a hatch present, as they are such a morsel to a hungry trout, they cannot pass them up.

Caddisfly hatches begin in early June and continue randomly throughout the summer months right into September. If you tie your caddis patterns in sizes #14 to 18 in the colours tan, cinnamon, olive-brown, black and grey, you will always be able to match the hatch you will be seeing. Size # 16 tan is my favourite, and a size # 20 is also a good bet to have in your arsenal for tricky trout.

Mayflies are the number 3 hatch on the river, and can often make your day when the trout have had their fill of caddis, even using them to show fish something different when they are finicky. I have often gone through a run unsuccessfully with a caddis or stonefly, knowing trout are there from past experiences, and re-fished the run back upstream later in the day with a size # 16 mayfly tan and gleefully clobbered them. The brown drake hatch that happens with the first hot weather of the season in July is something you don't want to miss, as the hatch is mind-blowing for about a two-week period. Many of the largest Stellako trout will migrate above the bridge to mingle with Francois trout for this one, which can be phenomenal, especially during summer evenings when the persistent Francois Lake thermal wind dies down. This hatch can be fished quite handily in the lake shallows and bay at the outlet if you bring your boat along and camp at Nithi.

The Crooked River

The Crooked River parallels Highway 97 North, beginning as the outlet of Summit Lake and continuing northward about 90 km, passing through small several lakes and emptying into

McLeod Lake. It is the beginning of the Arctic watershed 30 km north of Prince George, and is blessed with wild native rainbows, bull trout, Rocky Mountain whitefish, and various coarse species such as Northern Pike Minnows and suckers. It is closed to fishing November 1st to April 30th, closed to fishing April 1st to June 30th downstream of the 200 Road Bridge to protect spawning trout, and rainbow trout release year-round. The months of May and June are prime times for the Crooked; it slows in July and August as the water drops, but is fishable through the entire summer and early fall.

There is very little elevation change along the Interior Plateau north of PG until you meet the Rocky Mountain foothills to the north and east, so the Crooked is a winding, pastoral, willow-infested river along the highway route, also prime habitat

for all manner of ungulate wildlife. Being quite shallow, silty, swampy and mostly soft-bottomed, it also has phenomenal insect hatches, perhaps as prolific as any river in the province, with again, like the Blackwater and Stellako, a variety of stoneflies, midge, caddis and mayflies.

The river can be floated with pontoon boat or canoe from its outlet at Summit Lake or the 100 Bridge downstream, but you must be prepared for a lot of paddling, and have the strength and experience to deal with a fair number of obstructions along the drift, like sections with beaver dams which have to be portaged, and perhaps unnavigable deadfalls that need to be traversed.

The key to fly-fishing the Crooked is to find



▲
Crooked River. David Mills at Harrison Riffles
 Photo: Brian Smith

NBC Rivers Hatch Charts

Stellako River

The posted times can vary by the rivers' flows, water temperatures, and turbidity. Prime times are indicated by more X's.

Insect	Sizes	May			June			July			August			September					
STONEFLIES	Skwala (brown/lt. yellow ribs/tan wing)	10-12	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X												
	Salmon (brown/orange ribs/tan wing)	4-6			XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X	X							
	Golden (brown/golden yellow ribs/tan wing)	6-8					X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X					
	Lime Sally (lime/grey wing)	16-18							X	X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X		
	Little Olive (olive/grey wing)	14-16								X	X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X	X	
	Yellow Sally (yellow/grey wing)	14								X	XX	XXX	XX	XX	X	X	X		
MAYFLIES	BWO (olive-grey/grey wing)	16-18			XXX	XX	XX	XX	X								X	XX	XX
	Brown Drake (brown/yellow ribs/grey wing)	10-12								XXX	XXX								
	PMD (brown/grey wing)	14-16								X	X	X	XX	XXX	XX	X	X		
	Tan (tan/grey wing)	14-16								X	XX	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	X		
	Trico (black/clear wing)	18-22											X	XX	XX	X			
CADDIS	Cinnamon/Tan (tan wing)	14-16					X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X	X	X	X
	Rusty Brown (tan wing)	14-18											X	X	X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX
	Grey (grey wing)	14-16						X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	X	X					
	Black (grey wing)	14-16											X	XX	XXX	XX	XX	X	
	October Caddis (tan wing)	10-12														X	XX	XX	XX
HOPPERS	Olive/Yellow/Tan wing	6-10									X	X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X	X



▲ Crooked River beauty

Photo: Brian Smith

the quicker-flowing rock-bottomed sections and deeper corners of the river where fish will pile up looking for their meals. You can also locate the abundant beaver dams and fish up and downriver of them, a little tricky for footing at times, but also very productive habitat for trout and whitefish. Many fly-fishers scoff at whitefish, but the

way I look at them is “If they take dry flies, I’ll honour them”, and Crooked whitefish rise freely to the dry fly as well as trout do.

The wild Crooked rainbows are the prettiest trout in the North, heavily spotted and red-banded, and are ravenous eaters, never very picky about their prey.



Crooked River Railroad Run

Photo: Brian Smith

NBC Rivers Hatch Charts

Crooked River

The posted times can vary by the rivers’ flows, water temperatures, and turbidity. Prime times are indicated by more X’s.

Insect	Sizes	May		June				July				August				September			
STONEFLIES	Skwala (black/ lt. yellow ribs/black wing)	12-14	XXX	XXX	XX	X													
	Salmon (brown/orange ribs/tan wing)	4-6			XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X	X							
	Golden (brown/golden yellow ribs/tan wing)	6-8					X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X						
	Lime Sally (lime/grey wing)	16-18				X	X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X			
	Little Olive (olive/grey wing)	14-16					X	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X	X				
	Yellow Sally (yellow/grey wing)	14					X	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X	X				
MAYFLIES	BWO (olive-grey/grey wing)	16-18	X	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	X	X							XX	XXX	
	Green Drake (olive/grey wing)	10-12				X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X						
	Flav (olive/grey wing)	14-16							X	XX	XXX	XX	X						
	Slate Drake (dk. Grey/grey wing)	10-12				X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X						
	Brown Drake (brown/yellow ribs/grey wing)	10-12							XX	XXX	XX								
	PMD (brown/grey wing)	14-16			X	X	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	X						
	Tan (tan/grey wing)	14-16				X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X							
	Trico (black/clear wing)	20-22											X	XXX	XXX	X			
CADDIS	Cinnamon/Tan (tan wing)	14-16				X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X	X					
	Rusty Brown (tan wing)	14-18									X	XX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X	
	Grey (grey wing)	14-16				X	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	X							
	Black (grey wing)	14-16					X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	X							
	October Caddis (yellow/orange/tan wing)	10-12													X	XX	XX	XX	
HOPPERS	Olive/Yellow/Tan wing	6-10									X	X	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	X		
MIDGE	Dk. Grey or Olive/grey wing	18-20	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	X	X	X	X	XX	XX

FLY TYING FEATURE

Stoneflies

By Brian Smith

on the dry fly!

Just the mention of their names will get the adrenaline of any serious fly fisher bubbling, their lips twitching, and their eyes dreamily disappearing into a place that only an ardent fly fisher can understand.

Stoneflies, especially the Salmonfly, early-in-the-year hatching ones, demand special attention because of their sizes, their bustling activity when hatching, and their undying propensity to attract big and wary trout out of their lies in the river. I like to compare the big stoneflies in their nymphal and adult stages to dragonflies of lakes' origins — the largest possible insect meals that any fish can possibly handle! It takes dozens of any other larvae to make up for one of these morsels. And, when they are migrating to shore and hatching? Well, I am going to leave that to your own imagination how big a splash you want it to be...

Research and Patterns


The Stellako River became my laboratory. I began my research into Salmonfly patterns innocently enough, tying old American standards such as the Sofa Pillow, Clark Stonefly, Henry's Fork Salmonfly, and various stimulator patterns with orange abdomens, herls thoraxes and elk and deer hairs for their wings. All of these worked well enough, but when I inspected the Salmonfly adults in their natural states of development on the water, I was convinced I could do better than that when imitating them at the vise. Their abdomens and thoraxes are olive-brown, vividly ribbed with orange highlights, and their wings are brownish-tan and lay flat over the body, extending well past their abdomens and not quite as long as their protruding rear biots. The head is orange on their under and topsides, and

their front antennae are almost as long as their body. (insert insect photo)

Tying the Fly


Let's put all of this information together at the vise. For a hook, I always choose fine wire dry fly hooks. Yes, they can bend if you tend to horse your fish, but they float and hold a fly above the water much better than a standard wire hook. Mustad R43 and Tiemco 5212 are 2x long and good choices for all stoneflies. For the rear biots, I like Icelandic horse hair, which is very coarse and stiff, but you can also substitute hog bristles from a paint brush with confidence. Next onto the hook is a brown saddle hackle, which is eventually palmered behind the ribbing. I like to use inexpensive commercial grade saddles, because they usually have black highlights, and I like my stoneflies to look as ugly and dangerous as possible. Then comes the ribbing, and I use pumpkin orange floss, which can be wrapped up the abdomen and will leave striking orange segments between the abdomen's body colour. For the abdomen and thorax, I use a 50/50 mix of Hareline dubbings, HD24 chocolate and HET 8, which adds some sparkle





STONEFLY,
RAFFIA
BLACK &
YELLOW

STONEFLIES



to the body (I like them to look “wet”). Wings are what separates my stoneflies from the stimulator versions. I like them to look active and lay flat over the body, and I achieve that by introducing a full CDC feather as an under-wing, which allows the insect to look “spread-out” (like a stimulator), and an over-wing of trimmed raffia to

complete the wing. If you wish, you can purchase web-wing material for this step, but I find the raffia suits me just fine, and if I really want to be fussy (which I don’t) I could take a felt marker and put webs on the raffia (which I won’t). The fly is then finished by adding more Icelandic horse hair for antennae and 5–6 turns of that brown/black saddle hackle.

Adapting Patterns

The beauty of this pattern and design is that it can be adapted to all stonefly patterns by simply changing the hook sizes (from size 10 for Skwalas down to size 16 for lime sallies), and the bodies, wings and hackle colours to suit the stonefly that is on the water. I use the chocolate mix for bodies of the big stones (Skwalas, Salmon and Goldens), but olive, yellow, ginger and lime stones with pertinent hackles and grey raffia

wings are easily adapted to this design as well. For the little stoneflies (olive, yellow, lime, ginger) which I tie in sizes 14 and 16, I don’t use a body hackle, and instead of dubbing for the bodies I use Uni-stretch in the appropriate colours, which works like a hot damn for these small, dainty stones. I do, however, maintain the use of the full CDC feather as an under-wing, which creates an illusion of action on the adult’s part. (Insert photos of other stoneflies.)

Emergence and Behavior

The big stoneflies (Skwalas, salmon flies, and goldens) begin their emergences in the fading light of late afternoons, evenings, and early dawn by crawling to shore and finding a suitable platform to cling to for their routines, like big rocks, tree stumps, vegetation and the like. The smaller stonefly orders (olives, sallies, yellows) emerge in the river, and can often be witnessed doing so with their sudden appearances on your fishing garments while wading the currents. They live as adults for several weeks, often mating several times, and can be witnessed returning to the water to lay their eggs, which they achieve by dipping and dobbing their proboscises into the stream to release their seeds. The hatching and egg-laying cycles are what we fly-fishers look for, as quite a ruckus is made on the surface by these impatient spawning actions! Trout notice this activity as well, and begin chasing them with violence on their minds!

The Stonefly (Salmonfly)

By Brian Smith

Pattern Recipe

Hook:	Size #6 2x dry fly fine wire
Thread:	UTC 70 burnt orange
Tail:	Dubbing ball Haretron HD 24/HET 8 1:1 mix and a biot of black Icelandic horse hair on each side. Tip: The bristles of a paint brush are a good sub for Icelandic horse hair.
Ribs:	Orange floss 5-6 turns
Body:	Dubbing mix Haretron, same as above for dubbing ball
Under-wing:	CDC feather, colour CDC041 tan, length of body and biots
Wings (2):	Raffia brown, tied flat over under-wing length of body and biots
Antennae:	Icelandic horse each side of head. Tip: tweak the hair for its curvature before tying them on.
Hackle:	Brown saddle, palmered over body



STONEFLY ADULT,
RAFFIA FALL GINGER

Step 1



START HERE

Tying instructions

- 1 Apply the dubbing ball mix to the rear point of the hook.

Step 2

- 2 Attach first section of body dubbing. Note the slight bevel and slope toward the shank.



Step 3

- 3 Attach the brown saddle hackle, flat side to the eye of the hook, and the orange floss for the ribs.



Step 4

- 4 Dub the body with the Haretron mix, leaving 2 eye-lengths for wings and hackle. I like to use a Velcro brush at this point to comb out the dubbed body evenly.



Step 5

- 5 Wind the floss over the body in 5-6 turns.



Step 6

- 6 Wind the saddle hackles up the shank just behind the floss, again 5-6 turns. Trim the tops of the hackles flat to the top of the body, which will help when laying on the wings.



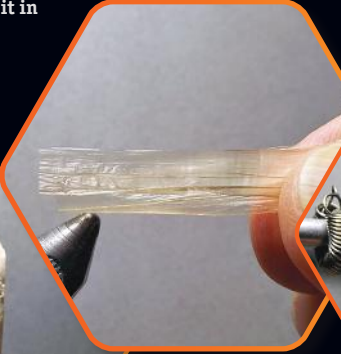
7 Attach the CDC feather, keeping it flat over the body and biots. **Tip:** to keep the feather from rolling, flatten the feather stem with non-serrated pliers.

Step 7



8a Prepare a 1/4-inch x 4-inch raffia section, and fold it in half with a bodkin.

Step 8a



8b Trim the two raffia wings to a rounded shape at the rear, slightly pointed at the front.

Step 8b



Step 8c

8c Lay the raffia wings on top of the body; length of wing section is all of the shank, biots and CDC under-wing.



Step 9

9 Tweak the antennae with your thumbnail and first finger to curve them outward, and tie them on behind the eye. **Tip:** build the head of the fly first, then attach the antennae, so they have a pocket to sit in. Add a drop of super glue to the head section.

Step 10

Step 10 b



10

Attach the hackle into the wet super glue, flat side forward. **Tip:** When attaching hackles of any kind, first trim the butt section of the feather slightly to create an anchor of 4-6 stubs on the stem. Then attach it just behind the already formed eye. Make 3 turns backward to the wing, and then 2-3 turns forward through the hackle to the rear of the eye. This method prevents any dry-fly hackles from jamming the heads of your flies. It only took me fifty years of fly-tying to figure this one out! Trim the body and head hackles flat to the gape of the hook so the fly will ride upright and on the hackles. Spray your dry flies with a silicone boot spray and you are in business!

Step 10c



Top View



Bottom View



**STONEFLY ADULT,
RAFFIA LITTLE
YELLOW**





4+ Kathy's Answers

PICKING A FISHING BRAIN

Picking a Fishing Brain

with Dr. Katherine Mulski, Educator, Carihi Fly Fishing Program

Brain


When I first started on these questions, I thought, "easy enough, just provide some insight to one of..." But, as anglers, we all know where that goes; and I apologize to the readership in advance that this gal has a hard time narrowing down just one answer. It turns out that the multi-faceted world of fly-fishing and the opportunities for multiple fishing techniques and gear are both a gift and a curse, and often take more from my purse than I'd like to admit.

Read on!



1. One PLACE to fish?

Trying to narrow down one place to fish is incredibly hard for me at the moment. Right now, I am very lucky to have the ability to fish local rivers to target rainbow and cutthroat trout after school, and then be able to catch the right tide and chase coastal cutthroat trout at the beach. I call this fishing technique "Mulski-tasking". So, where I am currently lucky to live, teach, and fish here in Campbell River is one of the places I not only call home, but



**NOTICE HOW I CAN'T JUST PICK ONE? GOOD!
NOW GET OUT THERE AND KEEP TRYING ALL
SORTS OF WAYS TO FISH AND FIND WHAT WORKS
BEST FOR YOU! TIGHT LINES OUT THERE!**

more the tenacity of Cutthroat trout. From the hunt to the quick take of the fly, these trout are a ton of fun and the variety of places and times in the year to find them has been plentiful. There's also the variation of their colourings, spots, and the distinctive red colouration under the jaw that make these trout absolute stunners in their own right. The sea-run cutthroat alone has been worth all the work and chases this year; however, trout of any variety are my favourite!

3. One ROD to use?

As you get further down the 'rabbit hole' of fly-fishing and the "need" for rods and reels of all kinds, it becomes harder and harder to determine which of any of the gear you "don't need". I'll be clear (and with humour here) when I say that I need it all, and I know I'm not alone in this collectively financially tough situation where rods and reels sometimes outweigh other purchase decisions. My only other expensive life choice has been my English Bulldog, trout scout, and companion in life, Nora. I regret none of the expenditures associated with either acquisition of fly gear or the pup. However, I digress...

You will be hard-pressed to have me give up my 3-wt-11' and 4-wt-10'6 Redington Strike. These euro nymph rods have both been productivity champs year-round for me. But a close second would be my 5-wt-10' Redington Vice. This rod alone has been a champion on rivers and interior lakes; slayer of trout,

surveyor of dropped indicators, and this rod has been well-traveled.

4. One REEL to use?

For the 3-wt-11' I actually paired a 3/4 Redington Rise that I figured would burn out quickly, but showed that it was way more of a workhorse than previously thought. The 4-wt I pair with a bit of a heavier reel, a 5/6 Sage Spectrum C. While it does not "balance," this set as often wanted for technical reasons with nymphing. It works well for me, and both reels are paired with a RIO Euro Nymph Technical line.

The 5-wt Vice has been paired with the 5/6 Redington Behemoth Reel which has truly lived up to its name over the years of use, and I often pair that reel with either RIO's Trout GOLD XP indicator line if I want to fish chironomids, and dry-fly fish with it in a pinch. Alternatively, the line is swapped out for the RIO Fathom to fish deeper water with sinking line, or the RIO Elite Sub-surface to strip damselflies and coax big trout out of the weeds.

5. One FLY to use?

Nymph: Clint Goyette's 511 Turbo size #12 or 14

Dry: Elk Hair Caddis or Tom Thumb size #10 or 12

All-round winner: hot-head black micro woolly bugger size #10/ 12

Notice how I can't just pick one? Good. Now get out there and keep trying all sorts of ways to fish and find what works best for you! Tight Lines out there!

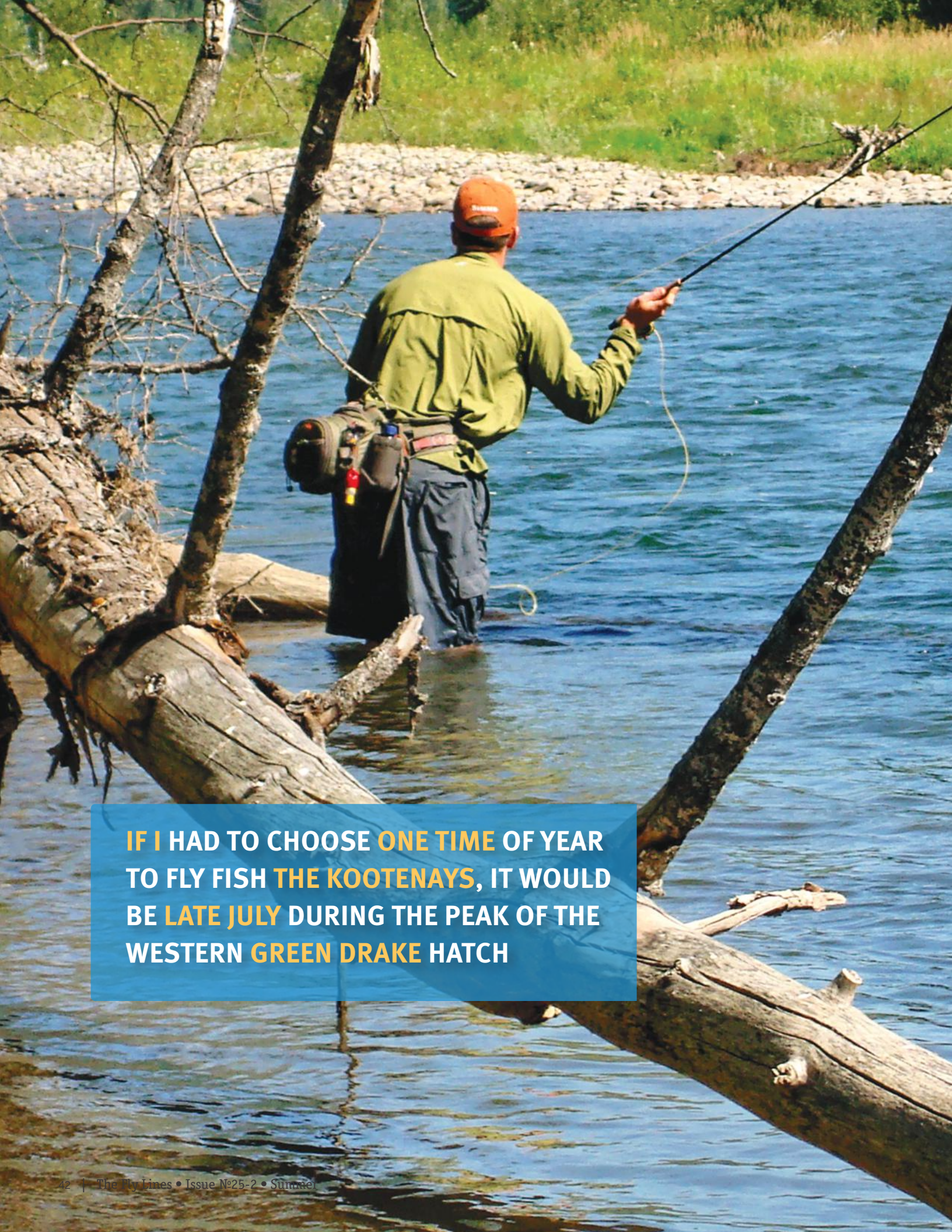
I CALL THIS FISHING TECHNIQUE "MULSKI-TASKING"

where I've been happy to continue to explore and fish 12 months out of the year! Tied with this would be the lakes of Region 3; nothing makes me happier than being out on the lakes and chasing trout of the Thompson-Nicola Region.

2. One FISH to catch?

Over the last year and a half of fishing here on Vancouver Island, I continue to appreciate more and

One Life



IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE TIME OF YEAR TO FLY FISH THE KOOTENAYS, IT WOULD BE LATE JULY DURING THE PEAK OF THE WESTERN GREEN DRAKE HATCH



DESTINATION

The East Kootenays – Endless Creeks and Rivers

Excerpt from book “Seasons of a Fly Fisher”,
Brian Smith 2013

If Lois and I were to pack up our possessions and move somewhere in British Columbia, the Cranbrook-Fernie area of the East Kootenays would get my vote. Blessed with great summer weather, magnificent Rocky Mountain scenery, endless clear freestone rivers, creeks and streams and some of the most pristine lakes in BC, the East Kootenays is a fly-fishing and outdoor paradise.

This fly-fishing mecca is remotely situated in the very southeast corner of British Columbia and, because of its distance from any major centre, remains uncluttered from the wrath of big city greediness. Its local flavor is interrupted only by yearly migrations of outdoor lovers: fly fishers and Alberta golfers and boaters during hot summers, skiing enthusiasts through the short winter months. Locals profess to “being on Kootenay time”, displaying a laid-back flavour to their lifestyles and a general gracious but care-less attitude to intervention in their lives.

Primary industries of this area are coal mining and lumber; good paying jobs that support the quiet lifestyles of its forty thousand people. The region encompasses about ten thousand square kilometres, with a population density of only 3.7 people per square kilometre, giving its residents lots of room to roam and enjoy their gifts of open-air life. Its major business centre is Cranbrook; Fernie and Sparwood are local centres within one hundred kilometres and an hour and half drive from Cranbrook.

It’s the fly fishing for its west slope cutthroat trout we are interested in, arguably best the world has to offer; rivers, creeks, lakes and streams are adorned with the prettiest fish the Lord put on this planet. Kootenays’ cutthroats are the fattest trout I have ever seen, its rivers and creeks perfect factories and ideal habitats for the abundant array of insect life they produce to support the superb growth rates of their fish.

Kevin Smith on the Elk

THIS FLY-FISHING MECCA IS REMOTELY SITUATED IN THE VERY SOUTHEAST CORNER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND, BECAUSE OF ITS DISTANCE FROM ANY MAJOR CENTRE, REMAINS UNCLUTTERED FROM THE WRATH OF BIG CITY GREEDINESS

The west slope cutthroat of British Columbia is an individual species of salmonids, a strain separate from Yellowstone and coastal cutthroats. It's native to our upper Columbia River drainage and northern tributaries of Idaho's Snake River in the United States. Across the Continental Divide, you'll also find them in the North Saskatchewan River and its tributaries, likewise in the headwaters of some northernmost rivers in Montana.

Their beauty is astonishing: heavily spotted, with a greenish hue on their backs; orange-golden flanks, mature fish displaying pinkish bellies; and strong, vibrant orange slashes beneath their jaws. They require protection for survival: pristine habitats; major river systems with smaller tributaries and their branches for spawning and rearing their fry; unpolluted headwaters with clean, cold water; and

safety from invasive hybridization of other species such as the more aggressive rainbow trout, which will devastate a cutthroat fishery within a few years if impregnated with them.

The main stem Elk River is the west slope cutthroat's home ranch, but the Elk's tributaries are their farms: places where mature trout migrate back and forth to spawn and feed; perfect rearing grounds for young fry, which grow hastily in these small native streams without much hindrance. The Elk's tributaries are many, each of them harbouring and nurturing their share of the Elk's cutthroat populations. Their beginnings in creeks flowing from Petain and Nivelles Glaciers at the 3,000-metre level in Elk Lakes Provincial Park, Upper and Lower Elk Lakes are entwined by creeks and valleys, where the Elk River begins its flow southward from Lower Elk Lake. It picks up many small creeks as it races downhill toward the town of Elkford, about 80 km south on the Elk River FSR: Tobermary, Cadorna, Abruzzi, Weary, Forsyth and Crossing Creeks to name a few. All are rich feeder streams to the Elk River system, their cutthroat fishing nothing short of spectacular in a wilderness setting few places on Earth can match.

Below Elkford, along Highway 43 to Sparwood,



a distance of 35 km, the Elk gathers major tributaries: the Fording River and Brule and Michel Creeks. Below Sparwood on its journey to Fernie, several small creeks are collected: Lardner, McCool, Hosmer, Labelle, Hartley and Fairy to name a few more. You can't overlook any of these small tributaries when fishing the Elk system, especially for a quick walk-and-wade during the evening hours after you've been in a drift boat all day. Most times, they will give you as much action as the main stem Elk, after it has filled your day with its bounties.

On its passage to Lake Koochanusa, which is about 20 km below Elko, the Elk picks up another major fly-fishing tributary, the fabled Wigwam River. Its name is spoken softly, revered among local fly fishers and tourists as one of the finest of the East Kootenays, a place where bull trout are as long as your cowboy boots and cutthroat are of equal trophy proportions. I haven't fished it, but it's rumoured that the steep access trails to reach Wigwam's rich canyon water are for the sturdy of foot and fly fishers who are part goat; not that I'm not willing to give it a go, and I will someday soon, perhaps after I uncover the secrets of the mysterious Flathead River system a few valleys west of the Elk.

If drift fishing is your game, the Elk River main stem offers the visiting angler an abundance of opportunities. Fly shops in Fernie offer guided trips from June through October, and there are several public access launch sites. The drifts my son Kevin and I have done include: Fording River confluence at Line Road Bridge to Sparwood (ponton boat best); Olson Pit Road to Hosmer; Hosmer to Fernie; and Fernie to Morrissey. Each of these drifts is from 7 to 11 km, and takes a full day to complete. There are many more put-ins along the 80 km or so route from Elkford to the Elk's terminus at Lake Koochanusa.

Tributary creeks are impossible to drift because they are too small, shallow and narrow to afford any sort of safe drifting,

even with a canoe or pontoon boat. Most tribs are only a car lane wide, and are walk-and-wade propositions; vehicle access to get close to most them, however, is usually easy by good gravel roads, or in the case of Michel Creek, right along a paved main highway.

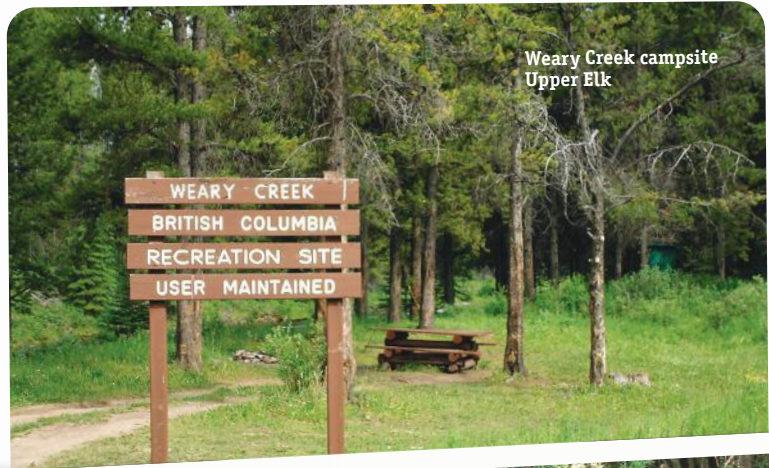
Elk River Main Stem

It's the fourth week of July, always prime time for fly fishing in the Elk River system, a week before tourists descend on the Kootenays for the August long weekend, which features long lines of Albertans scurrying across Highway 3 through the Crowsnest Pass to their summer vacation homes, or the start of their well-

deserved family boating holidays. We camp in Sparwood at Mountain Shadows Campground, smack in the middle of all the best cutty fishing the Elk system offers.

My eldest son Kevin and I have been doing this trip for four years now, each one different than the other because rivers are unpredictable in their welcomes and flows. Sometimes water levels are up, other years they are down; occasionally, after a hot summer day, you'll find them a tad cloudy from snow melt on the glaciers.

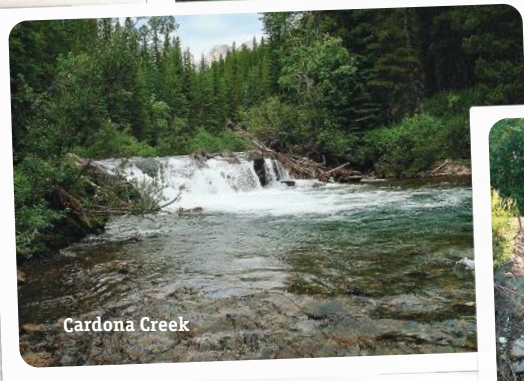
Unlike lake fishing, a river can be greatly affected by storms of wet weather, when a torrent of rain for several days can wipe



Weary Creek campsite
Upper Elk



Forsyth Creek
Photo: Kevin Smith



Cardona Creek



Hosmer launch site

out an otherwise settled river for a week. Ninety percent of the time the Elk is reliable during late July. If you're really unlucky and it does go out, you can usually find one of its tributaries that was unaffected by the storm, and spend a few days reliving your youth bushwhacking along one of these meandering streams deep in the mountains.

Another option in the case of an Elk blowout is to make the quick 30-minute run into Alberta along Highway 3, where you can fish the Crowsnest for its feisty rainbows, or the Oldman and its tributaries for more beautiful west slope cutthroats and cutt-bow hybrids. I've spent a lot of time on these streams also, literary fodder for another chapter in my books.

The put-in for the Hosmer to Fernie drift is a challenge if you're faint of heart and don't have a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The access point is the first road before the Hosmer Bridge: turn right, take the first left for a few hundred metres and then then

left again to the put in entrance above the bridge. It's a steep bank to back your drift boat down, but safe enough if you're careful. Park your trailer and vehicle at the pull off lot beside the bridge.

This section has gorgeous water: quick gravel runs narrowing into slots and bank lined pools, long soft glides that trout love to slip into to feed during hatches; many cutthroat infested corner runs; and several stretches of deep, rip rap bank water along railroad tracks that usually hold the largest trout you'll find on the Elk.

It's technical water. If you park the boat, get out and walk upstream from the main runs. You'll often find a pod of fish lying along the bank that haven't seen a fly fisher for a few

days and, if you approach them carefully, you'll find them eager to take your offering without hesitation.

Kevin and I have found that the best way to fish the Elk is to bomb the banks with a big adult stonefly, stimulator or hopper when we're on moving drifts from pools to runs, and use small patterns like drakes, caddis flies and midges when we stop,



R8

COMPLETE CONTROL

With R8 technology, we enhance that two-way connection from hand to fly and back for greater feel, flow and control.

SAGE



Bob Graham on Upper Elk

basically matching the hatch in progress. Our most productive days are the ones we spend doing a lot of walking.

This July was no exception — sizes 6 and 8 stonefly adults and stimulators on the drift, green drakes and caddisflies sizes 12–14 when parked. The trout were fat, feisty and strong, averaging 40 to 45 cm, a few in the 50–55 cm category, just what we have come to expect on this fabulous trout stream in the Rockies.

Michel Creek

Touted by Elk River Guiding Company in Fernie BC as one of North America's best walk and wade cutthroat fisheries, Michel Creek has seldom proven this statement wrong for us.

It's a small freestone stream with beginnings south of Highway 3 on Michel Ridge above the 2,200-metre level, where it pummels its path over 1,000 m to its confluence with the Elk above Sparwood. As Michel descends to the valley floor, it picks up more tiny creeks and some major tributaries: Leach Creek accessed along the Byron Creek Mine Road and

Alexander Creek from the north side of Highway 3. By the time Michel enters the Elk, it's about a double-lane width.

Don't let Michel Creek's size and moderate flow fool you — this is one hell of a little cutthroat stream, chock full of wild fish representing size ranges from 5 cm nursery fry to 50 cm plus hogs, rare size for a mature cutthroat trout that seldom reaches over 45 cm.

The best thing about Michel is its close proximity to Sparwood, the bridge at Highway 3 only several minutes from downtown. You can drift and fish the Elk during the day, have a leisurely dinner and still catch Michel's best fishing hours from about 8 pm to complete darkness.

Accessed from Highway 3, there are some public campsites scattered along the creek main stem and a few more beside the stream along the Byron Creek Mine Road, its turnoff about 10 km southeast of Sparwood on Highway 3. Mountain Shadows RV Park in Sparwood offers full campsite accommodations but caters to the coal mining crowd as well. During maintenance shutdowns in summer months this campsite can be busy, so

I recommend making reservations.

When the sun goes behind Sparwood Ridge at about 8 pm after a hot summer day, Michel comes alive with insect hatches and returning egg laying adults, especially caddis and drakes that have been hanging in limbo during the sweltering heat of daytime sunshine. Most evenings the emergence is so prolific and there are so many trout rising in the pools and soft runs, you have a hard time focusing on which fish to target! It's truly a glorious time to have a 3-weight rod in your hand.

It's late fall as I write these words; snow is on the ground in Prince George and it looks like a long, hard winter ahead of us before we'll see any sign of spring. It's the memories of fishing some of the best trout streams on Earth, like Michel Creek, that will keep my heart alive and my body and mind strong for next summer's forays into the Elk's tributaries.

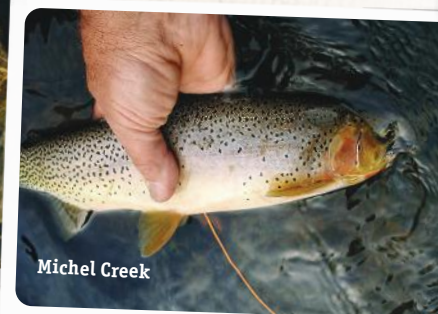
Little Creeks of the Elk Main Stem

I think the Elk's little tributaries are the epitome of quiet creeks which flow from the Rockies. They offer a discerning angler the best of all we wish for when we step into the wilderness:

- absolute solitude (if that's what you hope for);
- unsurpassed mountain scenery;
- good exercise, wading and walking their trails;
- and of course, radiantly beautiful and larger than average trout to whet our fishing appetites.



Michel Creek cutt



Michel Creek



Nice Elk River Cutt
Photo: Brian Smith



Wading boots & a nice young cutt

All of them are excellent trout fishing; the farther you walk the better the action, the more remote your journey...

Small creek fishing is trout exploration at its finest. Every corner has its welcome and intriguing secrets: a fallen log, offering shade and a hiding place; a patch of large boulders, which creates feeding lanes; a long meadow with deep undercut bank, to conceal the wariest of trout; a cluster of willows, foliage that emerging insects cling to. Unlock the corners, and you'll expose the riddles of trout fishing small streams.

When creek fishing, your first cast into a run is the most important one — you must always position yourself to make it your best one, because it sets up the rest of your tactic. As I approach a run or small pool, I imagine myself the largest trout in the pod, and think "Where would I be if I were him?" and then progressively work short casts below that spot, often taking a few trout before, I reach the prime holding spot. If you do take fish on the way to "Walter's" place, lead and play them downstream of the run, so you don't disturb the rest of the trout.

Fishing upstream is usually the ticket — trout face upstream, and can sense every danger, movement and disturbance from well above them, but have few inhibitions about being startled from below as long as you keep your distance and wade quietly. If you can reach runs from the bank, stay out of the water completely. Twenty-foot

casts are usually adequate in small creek situations!

I have often found tributary creeks require one size smaller fly patterns and different styles than their main stem rivers — dropping to sizes 14 and 16 and using parachute models is often a good recipe for success and positive hookups. Reduce your tippets to 5-or 6-X as well, which will allow your smaller patterns to drift more freely and tippets to be less visible on soft currents of little streams.

These creeks have been good to me and my boys — after a few days of drifting the big river, we welcome the opportunity to do some exploring, and we are rarely disappointed. The trout are only slightly smaller than the main stem Elk, averaging 35 to 45 cm, but they make up for it in abundance, setting and tranquility. There is something about small streams that keep you searching back roads and returning to them year after year....the Kootenays is full of them.

The "Bugs"

Trout fishing in the Kootenay's rivers begins opening day June 15th, soon after spring freshet, peaks in late July and lasts until closure October 31st. It's Classified Water, including tributaries, and begins with hatches of big stoneflies: salmon flies through the month of June; golden stones early July through late August; and yellow

and lime sallies appearing in late July and the first three weeks of August.

Caddis flies are the most reliable hatch, always happening, with various species coming off randomly during the day, the heaviest emergences occurring on long summer evenings throughout the entire open water season. Most genera of river caddis flies are found in the Kootenays: Spotted Caddis, all of the time; Northern Case Maker, a very early caddis that hatches randomly throughout the season; October caddis, late August and September; Grannom, hatching in swarms on hot August evenings; and Micro caddis, the littlest buggers of all, which will hatch anytime.

On rivers, I usually find that you don't have to get too cagey to catch trout on caddis flies because fish love them so much. I have found, however, that sizes 8 and 10 large, bushy, buoyant sedge patterns, like Mikulaks, work best during the day and you need to "match the hatch" with smaller patterns as hatches intensify during evenings.

Next up are the mayfly families: Pale Morning and Evening Duns along with the Western Green and Brown Drakes, which begin to come off in early July, peak the third and fourth weeks of July, and begin to wane by the end of August. Then you'll see Red Quills and Blue-Winged Olives, which typically appear late August and hatch until the first frosts of late September.

Hoppers are the Elk's August and September flies when you want to drift the river: always drop them just inches from grass lined meadow banks — cutts are looking for them there, and will grab them in a hurry.

If I had to choose one time of year to fly fish the Kootenays, it would be late July during the peak of the Western Green Drake hatch. Most Elk River veterans plan their vacation times around this hatch, and I do too!

Nymph fishing is also productive. The usual stonefly patterns, pheasant-back mayfly larva and caddis pupae will always catch trout, but who wants to fish nymphs when you can take cutts on dry flies all day long?

Salmon rivers in Québec: a mix of ZEC, wildlife reserve, outfitters, and more...

- 114 Atlantic salmon rivers in Québec, out of those:
 - 2 are article 36-37 rivers
 - 6 are salmon fishing wildlife reserve (+ Anticosti rivers managed by Sépaq)
 - 25 are salmon fishing controlled exploitation zones (ZEC)
 - The rest are either open rivers, managed by outfitters or indigenous communities.
- The “salmon river” status is a legal status that comes from the *Règlement de pêche du Québec*, a federal regulation delegated to the province



CONSERVATION

Quebec's Atlantic Salmon ZECs

A MODEL SPORT-FISHERY

QUEBEC'S ATLANTIC SALMON FISHING REGULATIONS are designed to conserve the species, with rigorous monitoring of both angler participation and salmon populations.

The overall framework is adaptive, and angling pressure on most salmon rivers is managed through limited-entry lotteries.

Catch and kills reporting is mandatory, catch and release reporting is encouraged, and most salmon rivers are restricted to fly fishing.

However, what truly makes Québec's Atlantic salmon fishery a model is its unique Zoned exploitation controlee, commonly known as a ZEC, which alongside rivers managed as wildlife reserves, is how Québec has chosen to blend conservation and access into 22 locally controlled organizations who are both managers of, and champions for some of Québec's most popular and prominent salmon angling destinations.

History

The development of Québec's ZECs arose from the province's desire to democratize access to its recreational resources, particularly Atlantic salmon sport fishing. Prior to the late 1970s, many of Québec's prime salmon rivers were controlled by exclusive fishing clubs, often owned by wealthy non-residents. This led to a perception of inequitable access, sparking public demand for greater public use of these recreational territories. This culminated in "Operation Declubage" (Operation De-clubbing) in 1978, a provincial initiative that revoked many private leases and opened these lands and waters to the general public.

The ZEC system was established as a direct result of this shift. These "Controlled Exploitation Zones" are non-profit organisations managed by local volunteers, whose primary mandate is to manage hunting and fishing activities while also focusing on wildlife conservation. For Atlantic salmon, this meant a radical change in how these iconic rivers were accessed and managed. Instead of exclusive private clubs, rivers like the Bonaventure, Petit Cascapedia, and Rivière Madelaine, among many others, transitioned to ZEC management, offering regulated public access through daily permits, quotas, and registration systems. This provided a more democratic and accessible sport fishing experience for a wider range of anglers, while still ensuring the sustainability of salmon populations.



Conservation-based Targets

Biological reference points (LRPs - Limit Reference Points, and URPs - Upper Stock Reference Points) are used to assess the health of salmon stocks. These points are crucial in determining management decisions and triggering regulations. If returns are lower than biological targets, more restrictive measures, such as mandatory catch and release or closures, will be implemented by the authorities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the salmon resource.

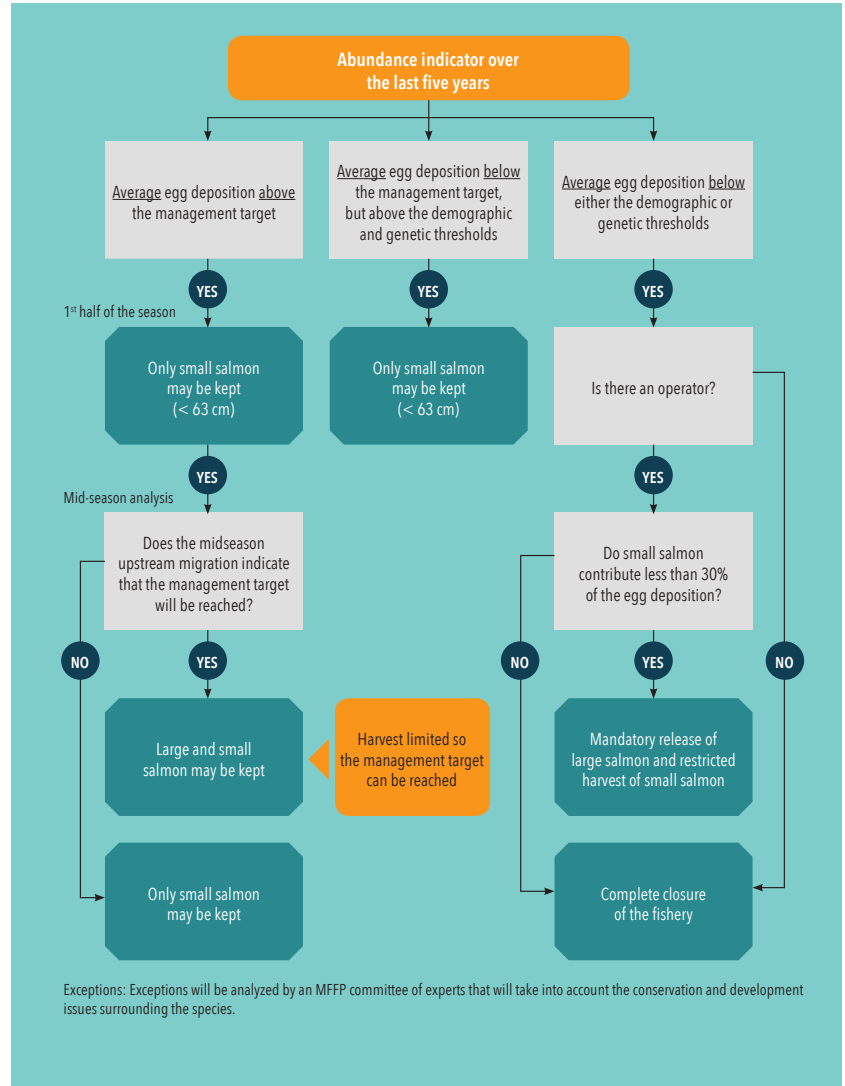
Adaptive Angler Management

Unlike more static regulatory models, the ZECs, in collaboration with the provincial government (Ministere des Forets, de la Faune et des Parcs - MFFP), implement dynamic rules that respond directly to the health of salmon populations and environmental conditions. This “adaptive management” is possible because systems are monitored by local biologists who count salmon runs on approximately 40 rivers, and because anglers must report all catches and releases, providing essential data for real-time adjustments.

When salmon abundance is low, or environmental conditions become stressful for fish, ZECs increase restrictions. For instance, during periods of low water levels or when river temperatures are high ZECs can introduce measures such as:

- **Mandatory catch-and-release:** All salmon caught must be immediately released, regardless of size or previous retention limits.
- **Closures of specific sectors or entire rivers:** If conditions are critical, certain pools, stretches of river, or even entire rivers may be temporarily closed to angling to protect vulnerable salmon. While historically Quebec lacked a legal tool for ZECs to universally close rivers due to warm water, efforts are continuously made to integrate such protocols. Anglers are strongly advised to limit fight time with fish in warm water to minimise stress, even if fishing is permitted.
- **Reduced/increased daily or seasonal quotas:** The number of salmon an angler can retain or even hook may be reduced or set to zero if stock assessments indicate a decline or increase based on abundance. In some instances the ZEC has chosen not to allow harvest even in times of abundance.

Almost all of Quebec’s 100+ officially designated Atlantic salmon rivers, whether they are open-access or managed by ZECs, outfitters, or wildlife reserves, mandate fly fishing only. This rule is crucial for minimising stress on released fish and



Decision Tree used to determinate the fishing modalities specific to given river

preserving a traditional angling experience. Many rivers also enforce single or double barbless hooks and specific fly line regulations, like 'floating-line-only' in certain sections.

While official regulations allow a daily catch-and-release limit of three salmon, many ZECs, including those on the Bonaventure and Matapedia rivers, promote stricter codes of ethics or strong recommendations to limit hookups to two releases per day. This proactive measure reduces cumulative stress on individual salmon, improving their survival chances. This emphasis on responsible angling beyond legal requirements is a unique element of Quebec’s ZEC system, fostering a culture of conservation within the salmon fishing community.

Atlantic Salmon ZECs

Currently, there are 22 ZECs that manage salmon streams in Quebec. Among the popular rivers managed by ZECs are the Bonaventure River,



renowned for its crystal-clear waters and sight-fishing opportunities, and the York River, famous for its large salmon and consistent runs. These rivers often feature a mix of publicly accessible sectors and more restricted, quota-based areas. Lesser-known, but equally important, rivers like the Mitis River and the Riviere Nouvelle also fall under ZEC management.

ZECs employ various angler management systems to regulate fishing pressure and promote conservation. A primary system involves access rights, where anglers purchase permits for specific fishing days and sectors. Many ZECs utilise a sector-based approach, dividing the river into sections, some with unlimited access and others with restricted access, often governed by a draw (lottery) system for highly sought-after spots. This ensures fair access while limiting pressure on sensitive areas.

Economic Advantages of Quebec's Model Sport Fishery

Overall, the rec fishing in Quebec generates \$60 million in economic output. ZECs such as the Riviere Sainte Marguerite offer a significant economic contribution to a small rural region. More broadly, Atlantic salmon-related spending across Eastern Canada (including Quebec) has been estimated to create almost 3,873 full-time equivalent jobs and \$128 million worth of income. These figures highlight the substantial economic footprint of the Atlantic salmon fishery, much of which is underpinned by the ZEC system in Quebec.

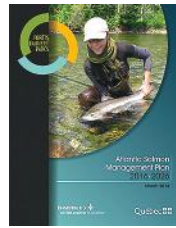
The ZEC model offers significant advantages in terms of jobs created for anglers, lodge owners, and community members:

While guides aren't mandatory in ZECs, the system often encourages their use, particularly for non-local anglers seeking expertise on specific rivers and sectors. This creates employment opportunities for skilled local guides who know the river's pools, conditions, and salmon behaviour. The demand for daily permits and sector access within ZECs means a consistent flow of anglers, thus supporting a market for guiding services.

ZECs often have or work in conjunction with local lodges and accommodations. The predictable access and reputation for well-managed fisheries attract anglers who require lodging, stimulating business for these establishments. Many ZECs themselves offer ready-to-camp or cabin rentals within their territories, directly creating jobs in hospitality and maintenance.

Federated co-management

The province's Ministry of the Environment is the manager, and is responsible for developing



<https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/faune/documents/gestion-especes/Plans-gestion/plan-gestion-saumon-atlantique-en.pdf>

the Atlantic Salmon Management Plan. However, the Non-profit organisations who manage ZEC's, their members, commercial enterprises associated with wildlife preserves or section 36/37 rivers, and Federation Quebecoise pour le Saumon Atlantique all co-manage salmon during the season, adjusting regulations and access as is warranted by the season's returns and environmental conditions

Quality Angling with conservation focus

The ZEC system in Quebec stands as a model for sport fisheries due to its commitment to both quality angling experiences and robust conservation efforts. By democratising access to prime salmon rivers while implementing adaptive management strategies, ZECs ensure the sustainability of fish populations. This is achieved through rigorous monitoring, mandatory catch reporting, and flexible regulations that respond to environmental conditions and fish abundance, guaranteeing a high-quality fishing experience for current and future generations of anglers.

Potential in British Columbia? The Thompson River

Is it possible that a ZEC style approach be used in British Columbia? Perhaps the Thompson River could be a candidate? I think most of us would be concerned about a "shotgun" approach being used should the conservation threshold trigger an opening with no catch and release limits. Why not take some of the ideas above and create a fishery that is tightly controlled for conservation, quality angling, create an opportunity for local FN's and non indigenous communities to benefit economically and be part of the decision making around the river through a profitable BC ZEC? Steelhead management in the province needs to change and a BC ZEC style approach could provide that opportunity.

WHEN WE LOOK AT ALL THE DIFFERENT THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN TRIED BY MANAGERS ON STEELHEAD STREAMS, WHY NOT TRY SOMETHING NEW LIKE A ZEC STYLE APPROACH FOR THREE YEARS. WE MAY BE SURPRISED BY THE RESULTS

GUEST FEATURE

Denizens of the DEEP

By Rory E. Glennie

” Orange is the colour, my son, if you want to get coppers and quillbacks; yellow for Chinas; chartreuse for blackies; a touch of red somewhere in there too, helps.” That was my remembrance of our chance meeting.

Funny, I can't recall his name or his face even though we chatted for over an hour about my new-found passion; he the sensei, I the young grasshopper. I'm sure there was more salient information that I should have retained, but I didn't. Just those four short passages. They became my Rockfish mantra.



Fish-On at the Surf Line

Tell anyone that you plan on casting a fly to Scorpionfish and they will look at you as if you are from another planet. Mention pursuing *Ophiodon elongatus* or *Hexagrammos decagrammus* with a fly rod and they will chalk-up your befuddled speech impediment to early-onset dementia. No matter, the fun is in fishing for Rockfish, not in explaining.

Saltwater Denizens Defined.

For the most part, traditional fly fishers chase after various salmon and sea-run trout while out on the briny. Non-traditionalists, iconoclasts if we can call them that, take delight in teasing-up all those other

fishes co-habiting with the salmonids. Most often those species are the various Rockfishes; Black, China, Yelloweye, Copper, Quillback et al.; as well as some relatives of those Scorpionfish previously mentioned, such as Kelp Greenling, Cabezon and Lingcod. Pacific Halibut are actively pursued with the fly rod in California, but here around Vancouver Island they remain a rare incidental catch, mostly because of the greater depths they inhabit. Sea Urchins, Dungeness Crabs and Sea-stars do not really qualify as a legitimate catch, but are often encountered while plumbing the depths for some free-swimming toothy fish. Even though they do not put up much of a fight, hauling up one of those



ORANGE IS THE COLOUR, MY SON, IF YOU WANT TO GET COPPERS AND QUILLBACKS; YELLOW FOR CHINAS; CHARTREUSE FOR BLACKIES; A TOUCH OF RED SOMEWHERE IN THERE TOO, HELPS

bottom-dwelling critters gives assurance that your fly is getting down into the taking zone.

Location, Location, Location.

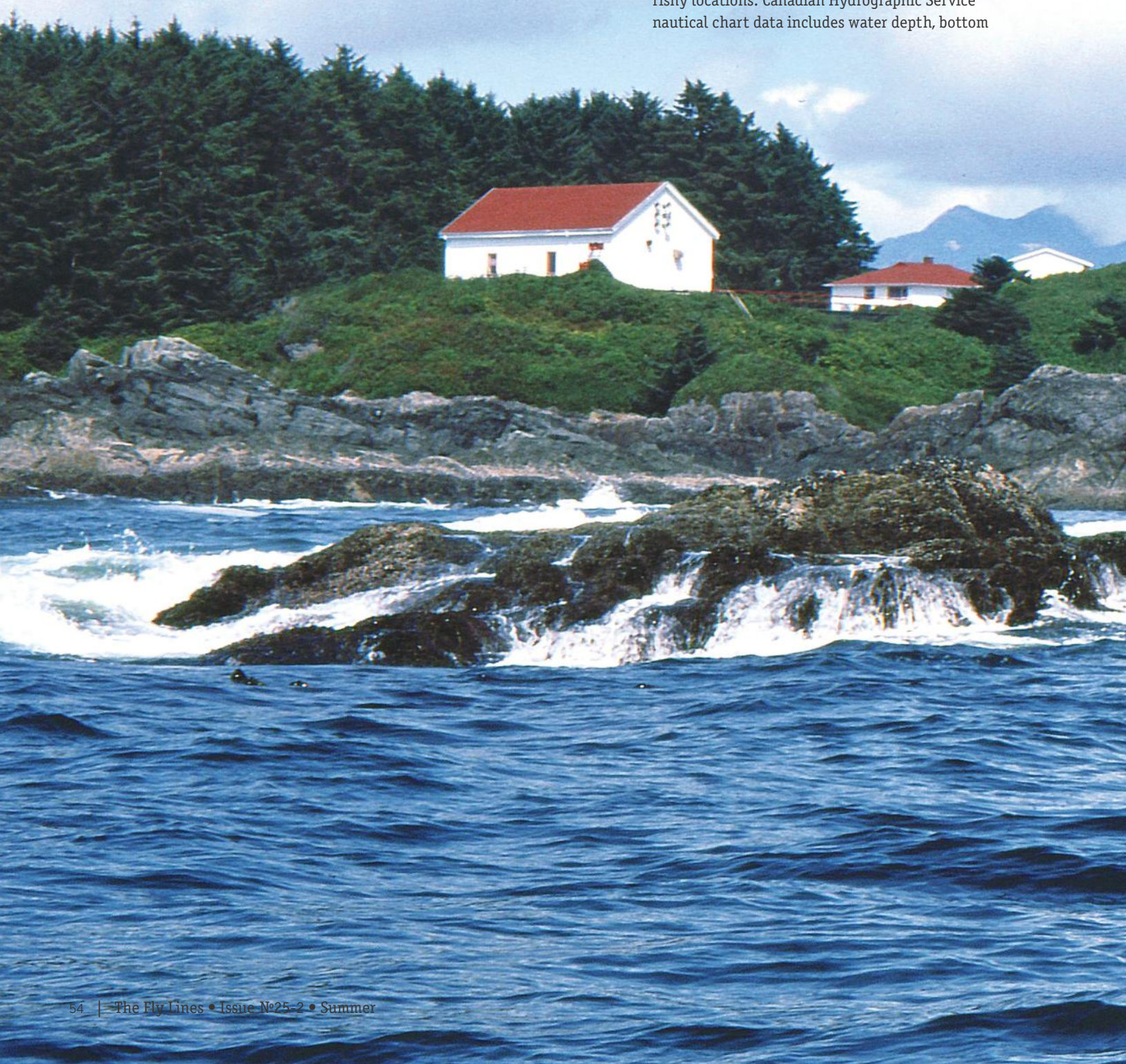
The realtor's mantra holds true for saltwater fly fishers. Cruising around the surf-line kelp beds is a good place to start. Many of those weed beds flourish in amongst the frothing whitewater crashing over wave pummeled wash-rocks. These underwater forests harbour food fishes



A good reference book for identifying Rockfish can be found at: <https://www.ubcpres.ca/guide-to-northeast-pacific-rockfishes>

and attract the larger predators fly fishers seek. At times, areas of open water amidst patches of kelp erupt in a near-surface feeding frenzy when Rockfish bust upward through bait-balls. Mostly, the denizens prowl through the roots and rocks well below those surface waving fronds.

Less obvious are the subsurface hot-spots; reefs, pinnacles, humps and other submerged anomalies. Studying a nautical chart of the locale and careful deciphering data given will point out promising fishy locations. Canadian Hydrographic Service nautical chart data includes water depth, bottom



composition, current speed and a whole host of other useful information. Near-shore areas are logical places to start, but a surprising number of good rock piles lie well out in open water. The key is to concentrate on those locations offering a water depth from about thirty to fifty feet. Beyond that depth, due largely to ocean currents, line control is adversely affected and honest “fly fishing” is pretty much a myth.

Tidal Influence.

Current speed and direction often dictates which side of the anomaly holds fish. Downstream eddies swirl bait fish into tight packs which offer our quarry opportunity



Nautical charts may be accessed through the CHS website at: <https://www.charts.gc.ca/charts-cartes/index-eng.html>



Tide charts and other information may be accessed through this website: <https://tides.gc.ca/>

for a snack. Again, nautical charts show current direction and speed. Some places fish best on a rising tide while others are ebb tide hot-spots. Only experience will give you that information; i.e. your own hard won intel or anecdotal stories gleaned from other fly-fishers. Obviously, low tide means there is less water between you and the rock pile. Although making it easier to probe the bottom with your fly, low slack tide tends to disperse the fish.

Tackle and Technique.

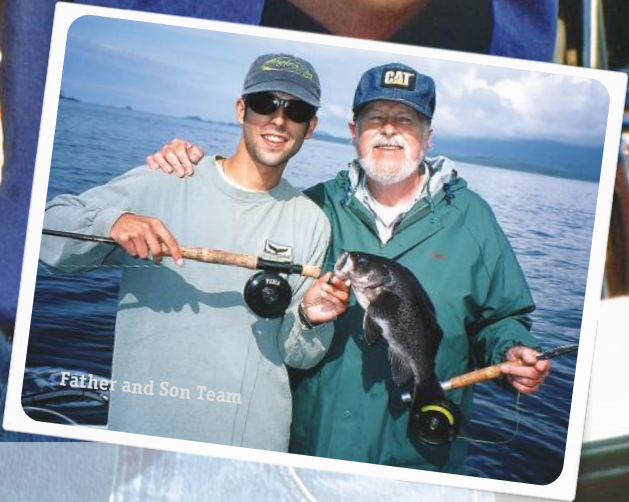
A sea-worthy boat with a reliable engine of course and a combination GPS/depth sounder to get you out to a submerged rock pile are the main big-ticket items. Although, these days, kayaks are making inroads as suitable vessels for traversing the surf line.

The basic fishing kit includes nine-foot long fly rods in the eight-weight and up category, with backbone enough to lever up a stubborn fish trying to wedge itself in the bottom rubble, and corrosion resistant fly reels holding fly line and a lot of backing.



Hook:	Mustad 34007, size #2 - 2/0. De-barb and sharpen.
Thread:	Uni-thread, colour to match or contrast with body materials.
Tail:	Two rabbit fur Zonker strips, skin side together.
Body:	Continuance of rabbit fur strips wound onto shank.
Wings:	Flashabou™ or similar material.
Eyes:	Large or extra-large size lead-eyes, with pupils.
Head:	Tying thread, lacquered.
Note:	Combine colours as suits your whim. Overall fly length should be four to six inches. Eyes should be prominent.

Yelloweye Rockfish
is a Prize Catch



Fly lines range from heavy 400–500 grain sink-tips, to full-sinking tungsten impregnated deep divers, to shooting heads comprised of various lengths of LC-13 lead-core trolling line. A second rod rigged with a floating line comes in handy on those occasions when you can cover an eruption of Rockfish with a surface popper; much like chugging a frog for Smallmouth bass in a pond. Straight monofilament leaders, four or five feet long, start at ten pound test. Abrasion resistance takes priority over suppleness and these fish are not leader shy, so no need to use expensive fluorocarbon.

Casting these heavy-weights is a matter of slowing your rhythm, opening your loops, follow through and



practice. Simply layout the line as best you can to straighten the leader, then hand-feed line as it plunges to the bottom. We are concerned with vertical, not lateral, distance. When you can no longer stand the suspense, and a fish has not grabbed your fly on the way down, start a jerk-strip line retrieve with pauses and drop-backs. Keep doing that until you can clearly see your fly. Often an interested fish will follow nearly to the surface. Paying attention may give you the opportunity to quickly drop your rod tip and offer one last



An Average Sized Black Rockfish



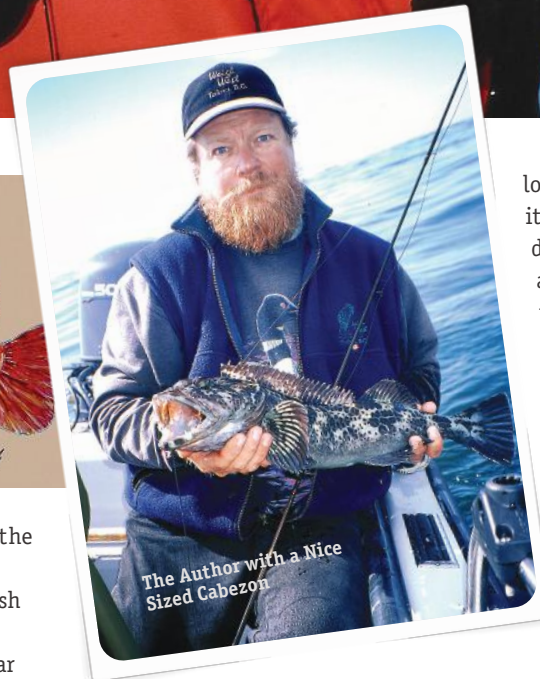
Even Small Rockfish Bring Big Smiles



chance for a hook-up. It is much like fishing the hang in still-water trout fishing. Then again, you might pick up a "hitch-hiker"; a larger fish which gloms onto the smaller fish you have hooked. Most often the freeloader lets go near the surface, but it can be fun while it lasts.

Fly Patterns.

Bottom dwellers will attack just about anything. Give them a fly meaty enough to attract their attention, i.e. one with a lot of mobility and flash and heavy enough to drop quickly into their feeding zone. Durable materials make for better longevity, hence less down time changing flies. Stout wire hooks reduce deformation and fish



loss while prying up a biggun' from its holt. Many patterns originally developed for Northern Pike and Muskie come to mind. As well, make up some foam bodied surface poppers exhibiting flash and lively appendages, for those times when rockies are thrashing at the surface. This is the time to let your fly tying creativity run amok.

Follow the Rules

Fisheries and Oceans Canada issues a list of angling regulations pertaining to recreational salt water fishing. Be sure to understand and comply with all regulations issued for the particular area in which you will be fishing. There are some Rockfish conservation areas which are off limits but most of the coast is wide open year 'round.



A listing of current angling regulations, including closed areas, quotas and tackle restrictions can be found on the DFO website at: <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/index-eng.html>



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