



## Editor's Eddy

It's been a while since the last issue of the *Single Haul*, I know, but other commitments – including the Forum, producing the 2006 *Double Haul* and work! – have intervened. This has meant that news, such as upcoming club events, has not been getting out in a timely manner. I hope that you've been routinely checking our website for the latest info; and, if you haven't already done so, think about getting us your email address so we can get you on the *Fly'R* distribution (see page \_).

To be sure, spending too much time fishing has *not* been responsible for my diversion from editing duties. It has been a wet spring, with boiling, off-colour, frequently near-flood-level waters. And, on the few occasions I've managed to get out, the wading was tough, the hatches poor, and the fish moody. But, after so many summers of drought and heat, it's difficult to bemoan the rainfall necessary to recharge the groundwater systems. Summer will arrive soon enough and, in the meanwhile, my lawn and the plethora of unattended weeds therein are doing well.

May all have an enjoyable summer, with plenty of successful outings!

*Bob Kuehnbaum, May 22, 2006*

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## Quotable / Notable Quotes

Flyfishing stimulates the brain – also the imagination. But any man who pits his intelligence against a fish and loses has it coming.

– Unknown

## Club News & Events

### 2006 Forum a Huge Success

If you haven't already heard, the success of this year's Forum was almost unprecedented. Not only did we have an excellent turnout – thanks, we believe, in no small part to the Hamilton media attention generated through the efforts of Joy Shikaze – but the speakers were highly praised. This year's show also generated an excellent amount of funding for conservation projects. (A financial report is forthcoming.)

The club – and certainly everyone on the Forum Committee – should give themselves a collective pat on the back. Nothing wrong with that! Here are a couple of responses we've had:

*"Just wanted to say thank you again for a great weekend. The Forum was outstanding as usual. It was great to see everyone again. I finally got around to joining the club. I know I probably won't get to enjoy your activities, but I wanted to join to support your work and to say thank you for being so hospitable to my wife and me. I hope we can do it again next year. Say thank you to everyone for me."*

*Greg Heffner*

*"I have to say, I am quite impressed by the professionalism of the organization and the calibre of fly fishermen I met over there. Quite a fly fishing community! I haven't seen so much passion."*

*Thibaut Millet*

### The *Fly'R*: Email Addresses Needed

In order to ensure that members receive notification of club outings, conservation workdays and other events on time, we encourage you to provide IWFFC with your email address, if not already done so – and if you have one. Our digital mini-newsletter, the *Fly'R*, can be sent to you between issues of the *Single Haul*. Please notify the Editor, Membership Chair Jayne Butler at butlerjl@rogers.com, or Bob Lundy via the website.

And please don't be concerned that your email address will be misused. **We have a strict privacy policy and will not provide your personal information to any other individual or organization.** And we will not supplant your paper copy of the *Single Haul*, if you choose to receive it that way, with the digital version.

## 2006 Coaches' Program

The coaches' program is designed to connect members who describe themselves as "beginners" with experienced members ("coaches") who would be willing to spend a day, or a few hours, in one-on-one instruction – typically while fishing. Each interested coach and beginner should register with the Peter Repath, the new program coordinator at [peter.repath@sympatico.ca](mailto:peter.repath@sympatico.ca) or 905-632-0348), indicating any specific areas of interest, general concerns or restrictions. Peter will then match up beginners and coaches, and provide contact details, while not overloading any one coach. The individual coach and beginner will work out the details, but Peter will be following up to make sure that the program is successful.

## New Positions

Peter Repath has graciously offered to fill the two new roles. His new position as Coaches' Program Coordinator is described in the article above. As New Members Coordinator, Peter will ensure that new members are made to feel welcome and try to address their concerns.

We welcome Peter's enthusiasm.

## Reel Raffle

IWFFC was able to make good use of the credit program offered by Grand River Troutfitters. Anglers are able to apply 3% of whatever they purchase towards an organization of their choice. In this way, IWFFC had accumulated a credit of over \$350 which was used to acquire two reels which will be raffled. Thanks to all who made this possible: to those who chose to benefit IWFFC; and especially to Ken Collins, owner of GRTF, who originated this great idea.

## Beginners' Day A Big Success

**Sunday May 14:** The IWFFC / Upper Credit Trout Club day for IWFFC beginner-level fly fishers was apparently enjoyed by all. Bob Lundy, the organizer of the event, reports:

"Well, it looks like it was a success. Nothing but good smiles, some hearty *well done* comments, and even a few fish caught. Fifteen beginners

showed up, and we had four instructors (plus me) available, which worked out nicely.

"Even my family got into the act with Vicki and the kids coming up about an hour or so behind me to run the BBQs and the clubhouse, and chatting up the participants when it was time to relax."

## Humber Springs Outing

**Sunday May 28:** There will be an outing for IWFFC members at Humber Springs. Casting instruction will be arranged for interested beginner anglers, and Sheldon Seale will tutor on the techniques of midge fishing.

Humber Springs consists of several ponds at the headwaters of the Humber River. There are mostly rainbow trout with a smaller population of brook trout. The ponds can be fished from shore if you don't have a watercraft.

Sheldon Seale has thoughtfully provided a general list of patterns that work at Humber Springs or, for that matter, ponds in our general region. See the **Tips & Trips** section below.

The ponds will be available to us between 10 am and 4 pm, and the cost is \$30 per person. Bring your own food and beverages.

## Island Lake Outing

**Saturday July 8:** This club outing at Island Lake (a.k.a. Orangeville Reservoir) is designed to be a family event. In case of rain, and to facilitate a barbeque, IWFFC has reserved a pavilion for the day. Further information will follow in this newsletter and/or the club website.

Island Lake is a warm-water destination at the headwaters of the Credit River, and hosts smallmouth bass, pike and crappie

## Conservation Corner

### Grand River Update

Allan Cole

The Grand River Tailwater Fisheries Management Plan Implementation Committee was established in the first quarter of 2005. Over the first few months, the primary area of activity was the

development of plans and the establishment of priorities for the "best bets" that had been identified in the Management Plan. This progressed quite well until August when efforts ceased primarily as a result a lack of resources. However, the program is back on track and reasonably detailed action plans should be finalized soon.

There are 23 projects on the list with varying degrees of resource requirements. In November, a research symposium was held to engage the local research community in projects to provide valuable information for the fishery and its future. The symposium was well-attended, and the challenge now is to get some projects underway. The coordination and planning for this conference was the primary reason why the planning activities mentioned above were put on hold.

Another significant activity is the planning and implementation of the aquatic habitat enhancement projects from the low level bridge to the town line road. This is a major undertaking with a significant resource requirement, both financially and in terms of manpower. This appears to be progressing quite well in light of the complexity of the project and it is estimated that the first enhancement project will be put into place in the summer of 2007.

Despite the usual problems encountered with a committee of this type, progress is definitely being made. Steve May, coordinator for this project, is also the coordinator for the entire Grand River FMP, and there are great demands on his time. Consequently he is not able to spend a great deal of time on the tailwater section. But Steve does an excellent job and we are lucky to have him involved in this task.

*(And we are lucky to have Allan represent IWFFC on the committee. Thanks, Allan. – Ed.)*

## Conservation Workday Report

Pat Kelly

**April 23: Annual Sligo area cleanup.** This year's event, sponsored by the Greg Clark Chapter of TUC, was as wet and cold as it has been for the last three years. Nevertheless, 17 bodies turned up, including IWFFC club members Mike Warrian, Brian Greck, Ken O'Brien, and Pat Kelly. Ken and Pat installed new fishing regulation signs from the Forks of the Credit up to Highway 24 while picking up garbage along the way.

It may have been the adverse conditions, but the burgers served up by the DeGiusti's tasted better than ever.

## 2006 Conservation Workday Schedule

A few conservation workday and other dates have already gone by, but please make note of those remaining – and watch for any changes on IWFFC's website or [www.creditvalleycons.com](http://www.creditvalleycons.com) (see CVC's Steward-ship Calendar). It would be particularly good to have volunteers out on workdays sponsored by IWFFC.

**Sat. May 27<sup>th</sup>:** Peel Region's Children's Water Festival at Heart Lake Conservation Area in Brampton for casting demonstration and fly tying. **IWFFC** has a formal invitation to participate in this one, so it would be nice to get out & promote our activities.

**Sat. May 27<sup>th</sup>:** Rogers Creek online pond remediation at Terra Cotta. Sponsored by CRAA.

**Sat. May 27<sup>th</sup>:** Erin Summer Festival. Help needed to man WeCARE booth and IWFFC mini- booth, and with kid's fly tying.

**Sun. June 4<sup>th</sup>:** Riverfest at Norval. Help needed to man WeCARE booth and IWFFC mini- booth, and with kid's fly tying.

**Sat. June 10<sup>th</sup>:** Tree planting and celebration on the former **Safari Property** (now called the Upper Credit Conservation Area) on the main Credit upstream from Alton. **Sponsored by IWFFC.** The Safari property was a target of the original UCRRRI project (of which IWFFC was an original member), but the landowners were uncooperative. So it is particularly satisfying that the CVC now owns the land and we are involved. Our club is providing significant financial support, so let's have a very strong member turnout to impress the media who will be on hand. The planting starts at 10 am, and there will be a brief ceremony following by a BBQ at 12:30.

**Sat. June 17<sup>th</sup>:** Rogers Creek near Terra Cotta. Baffle installation in the culvert worked on last year. Sponsored by Trout Unlimited Canada. Only a few people needed but they have to be strong.

**Sat. July 8<sup>th</sup>:** Urban fishing Festival at Lake Aquitaine in Mississauga. Help needed to man IWFFC mini- booth, and with kid's fly tying.

**Sat. July 9<sup>th</sup>:** Forks of the Credit log placement. **Sponsored by IWFFC.** Here is a chance for members to create "secret" trout lies.

**Sat August 12<sup>th</sup>:** WeCARE rocky ramp to be built for a perched culvert near Erin. Sponsored by Trout Unlimited.

**Sat. September 16<sup>th</sup>:** WeCARE tree planting near Erin. *Sponsored by IWFFC.*

**Sat. October 7<sup>th</sup>:** Erin Fall Fair. Help needed to man WeCARE booth and IWFFC mini- booth, and with kid's fly tying.

**Sat. Oct 14<sup>th</sup>:** WeCARE Symposium #2. Help needed to organize the event.

**Sat. October 28<sup>th</sup> & Sun. November 5<sup>th</sup>:** Spawning surveys.

Several other events in which we'd like to participate are: Rattray Marsh workdays, Elora-Cataract Trail workdays, the Bruce Trail Spring & Fall hike days at Limehouse, the Inglewood Dandelion Festival (May), Riverfest (June) and the Erin Summer Celebration (June). We'll keep you posted.

For information, contact Pat Kelly at [patckelly@look.ca](mailto:patckelly@look.ca) or 905-277-2505.

## 2006 Conservation Gala

On Thursday, June 22, 2006, the inaugural 2006 Conservation Gala will take place. The event, presented in partnership by Conservation Halton Foundation (CHF), Credit Valley Conservation Foundation (CVCF) and Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC)., is in support of efforts to protect natural lands and waterways, and provide environmental education opportunities in Halton and Peel.

The venue is the Oakville Conference Centre, 3515 Wyecroft Road, Oakville. It starts with a cocktail reception & silent auction at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner & live auction at 7:00 pm. Tickets \$100 per person, or \$900 per table of ten (tax receipt issued for part of ticket price).

For tickets, contact:

CHF: 905-336-1158; [bhobbs@hrca.on.ca](mailto:bhobbs@hrca.on.ca)

CVCF: [foundation@creditvalleycons.com](mailto:foundation@creditvalleycons.com); 905-670-1615;

TUC: 905-333-3264; [kblain@tucanada.org](mailto:kblain@tucanada.org)

## 4th FFC National Fly Fishing Championships & Conservation Symposium

The 4th FFC National Fly Fishing Championships and Conservation Symposium will be held from June 22-25, 2006, on the Grand River, and will be based in Fergus and Elora.

The schedule of events is:

22 June: Registration and various team/captains meetings. Evening BBQ and opening ceremonies.

23 June: morning and afternoon sessions

24 June: morning and afternoon sessions

25 June: morning session; afternoon conservation symposium; evening parade, banquet and awards ceremony.

Partners working with FFC on this event are the GRCA, FOG, OMNR and the Fergus/Elora Chamber of Commerce. Warren Yerex (GRCA) and Jack Bramm (FFC) are co-chairs of the local organizing committee.

Competitors will fish in teams of five persons, which may consist of official teams representing their province, region or a fishing club; individuals may get together with other singles to form a team, or they can wait to be assigned by the committee.

The events are strictly catch and immediate release. Members of the winning teams will receive gold, silver and bronze medals, and similar medals are presented to the top three individuals. For further information about Fly Fishing Canada visit [www.flyfishingcanada.net](http://www.flyfishingcanada.net) or contact Jack Simpson, Executive Director FFC ([flyfishingcanada@cogeco.ca](mailto:flyfishingcanada@cogeco.ca)) or Jack Bramm, Co-chairman FFC ([jbramm@rogers.com](mailto:jbramm@rogers.com)).

## Tips and Trips

### Fishing at Humber Springs (and Other Ponds)

*Sheldon Seale*

The ponds (actually, small lakes) at Humber Springs are full of life. There are innumerable insects, crustaceans, terrestrials and small fishes. To bring a "complete" set of flies would fill quite a few boxes.

The best approach is to simply look at the forage base and have patterns that match. I won't specify any particular patterns but here are some hints...

**Damsels and Dragons:** There will be dragonfly and damselfly nymphs active in the ponds. I would have patterns to imitate both of those, in olive. In addition, have some black or brown dragonfly nymphs. There are lots of suitable patterns for these.

**Caddis and Mayflies:** While not as prevalent in ponds as rivers, caddis are present. Usually stick and cased caddis so some patterns to imitate them will prove effective. The mayfly nymphs

tend to be darters and swimmers, so slim nymph patterns should work well. Colours are to imitate the bottom and the weeds (greens, olives, tans, browns).

**Crayfish and Scuds:** A crayfish pattern (in dark olive on top and yellow below) would be worthwhile having (a Canadian Hamill's Killer with a dark olive wing is a good bet); nothing too fancy, but weighted to get it down. Scuds and freshwater shrimp patterns, too.

**Midges:** Have midge patterns of all types. Larvae, pupae and adults in colours like black, red and green. You never have enough of these patterns. Bring some indicators so you can control the depth at which you present your flies.

**Aquatic Beetles:** These include Back-swimmers and Water Boatmen as well as several other similar beetles. They all have a characteristic shiny carapace and rowing legs. Black or brown (for the carapaces) and yellow or white undersides do well. Don't forget the legs.

**Fishes:** There will be minnows and fry in the water. Small, bright streamers and wet flies will do a good job of imitating them. I'm reasonably certain there are sunfish or other small food fishes as well (though I honestly don't remember seeing any). Some patterns with a little colour in them, especially yellow, would also be successful, I believe.

**Terrestrials:** It's too early for grasshoppers but there will be crickets, ants, spiders, beetles and the like on the water. Occasionally, these can be very successful (especially if we should get a "hatch" of flying ants). Black, red and orange ants are good. Black and brown for spiders and beetles are good, although bright green has worked well.

**Equipment:** A 5 or 6 weight fly rod will do nicely. I like a 9 foot rod but any length will serve. Floating lines and maybe a sink tip (or sinking type leader or just some split shot) are all the lines you'll need, nothing too fancy. Bring tippet to 4X. There are a few punts and canoes that can get used up quickly so bring a float tube or pontoon boat if you have one. You'll be glad you did.

## Lake Fishing in the Kootenays

*Jon Bissett*

Percy and I had arrived at the lake in early June, before the lodge became busy with summer tourists. There was a variety of insect activity on the lakes – including mayflies, caddisflies, early damselflies and dragonflies – in addition to the most



popular hatch at this time of year, chironomids, also known as midges and no-see-ums. Percy was fishing out of his aluminum fishing boat and was rigged up to fish chironomids with a full sinking line (deep-lining), alternating between brassie and snowcone patterns as the hatches progressed. He had anchored in about 10-15m of water, and was doing well. I had been puttering around between the shallow shoals and deeper water out of a pontoon boat with a variety of flies – including Usuals, and leach and damselfly patterns – with moderate success, so I slowly worked over to the area where he was anchored and stationed myself about 40-50 feet away. We were the only two on the lake, and we wanted to take some photos (between sporadic rain and wind that accompanied us for the day). We had both landed some rainbows up to about 21-22 inches and several pounds. Like the rainbows of the Kamloops region, Kootenay rainbows have strong shoulders. After spawning, the fish brighten up and become beautiful, silver torpedoes with a propensity for the air, once hooked.

Once anchored, I switched to a floating line and 24 foot leader to fish chironomids. Following a less-than-optimal cast which a gust of wind interrupted, I noticed a slight 'birds nest' in my leader. I set the rod in the rod holder, and hand-retrieved the leader to the point of the mess, about 2 feet from the end of the fly line. After several futile attempts to untangle the knots, I decided that the best idea was to just cut the knots out and re-tie the leader. Being lazy, I decided not to retrieve the fly, and left it in the water while I performed the operation. Big mistake! Percy was watching with some amusement as I clipped the two ends of the knot, with my chironomid suspended at about 15-20 feet, to remove the tangled mass of monofilament. We continued to chat and tell stories, while I worked

away on the line. Once I had the cut section removed, it would be simple to just retie the knot, and continue fishing. Or so I thought. As I brought the end of the leader attached to the fly toward the other cut end to tie them together, there was tension on the leader. O-Oh!. I looked at Percy and said, "I think that there is a fish on the end!" I must have looked rather comical and perplexed, with one piece of monofilament in each hand and a fish on one of them. Percy laughed hysterically. I came to a sudden realization that I was screwed! After a few expletives and some fast knot-tying (try doing that in a cold rain with shaky hands!), I clipped the free ends from the knot, gently released the leader, removed the rod from the rod holder, and tightened the line. I didn't need to worry about setting the hook – as soon as I applied tension to the line, a 24-inch rainbow, about 5-6 pounds, launched itself straight out of the water, then decided to go straight to the bottom. After several more jumps and runs into the backing, the fish began to tire, and I slowly worked him to the surface so that I could land it.



One of the problems with fishing a 24-foot leader is that, when you need to land the fish, you need to be careful that there isn't anything that will catch in the guides if a fish makes a last run – hence the use of smooth, braided loop connectors or shoe-goed nail knots. The last thing you need is a double overhand knot in the middle of the leader. As I slid the net out underneath the fish, it gave a last surge, took off on a short run, and the knot caught the tip guide. Well, at least the knot was strong – the fly broke off at the tippet knot, and the fish was gone. Maybe (probably not) I learned something from that. We released all but one of the fish that day (some larger, some smaller), but that is one that I'll remember for a long time!

After spending most of that day fishing in the rain – the rain grew heavier and the wind picked up – it was time to head in. I was fishing off a point with a red chironomid/bloodworm pattern, about 500 metres from the launch point. Percy had worked his way to the launch, and signaled to me that we should think about heading in. The fishing had slowed down, but we had each landed about a dozen fish or more, so it had been a good day. Again, being lazy, I decided to leave the line in the water with the rod in the rod holder as I headed back to shore. I had a sinking line on, but I was rowing fast enough to leave a wake, as I powered to the launch.

One of the things veteran chironomid fishermen will tell you is to fish them sl-o-o-o-w! Fish them as slowly as you can, then cut that speed in half again, and you're probably still fishing too fast. Never mind trolling them at Mach 1! As I came past the end of the point, I heard the reel sing and saw a fish explode out of the water at the same time. After my lightning-fast reaction (about 10 seconds) to stop, pick up the rod, and stop the fish from spooling me, I was able to gain some line on the fish and control the retrieve. Again, Percy's laugh echoed across the lake, as he had been watching me with some amusement. He asked what I had hooked it on, and just about fell over when I told him it was a chironomid. After a while, as I slowly approached the launch, I landed the fish – a beautiful rainbow about 7 lb and 24-25 inches long: one of the largest of the day. Our friends had asked us to keep one or two fish for the lodge owner and his wife, so we kept this fish.

We had another two days of great fishing on this and other lakes. At one point, the five of us (a local fishing guide, his wife, and another friend/guide had joined us) had eight fish on, and Pete had two of them wrapped around his anchor rope (he landed both), and lots of funny stories. On the last (and only sunny) day of the trip, we had fun fishing small *Callibaetis* mayfly and caddis dry fly patterns for cruising rainbows.

Chironomids are by far the fly of choice for lake fishermen in the Kootenays. Like most western trout lakes, they are the most abundant food item, and come in a variety of sizes. Unlike many of the chironomid patterns I had fished in Kamloops though (up to size 10), the most popular sizes were similar to those I had fished in ponds back east – 14-20. Popular patterns include the Snowcone and Brassie, but traditional chironomid patterns are also effective. Maurice How's one-a-minute buzzers have worked well. Most of the lakes in the Kootenays, like those in the Kamloops region, do

not have any other fish besides the trout, so the majority of the fish are insect feeders. But they can grow very large, up to 15-20 lb in some lakes, and are typically very stocky. The lakes are of moderate to great depths – many up to 40-50 feet, some into the hundreds of feet – and have characteristics similar to many classic trout lakes. The water is very clear (slight glacial till colour sometimes), the fish can be spooky, and the lakes are generally productive until you get into the alpine zone above the tree line.

Early in the season after ice-out in April, larger flies such as leaches, woolly buggers and scuds (and Usuals) will catch fish. Once the chironomid hatches start (mid-late April through to July), 'Chrono' fishing can be deadly – I have watched people have 30-60 fish days – and the fishing activity increases quickly once the word gets out. There are numerous lakes in the area (at least a dozen within 20 minutes of my house, for example), and it's relatively easy to find areas that aren't too crowded. *Callibaetis* hatches begin in mid-late May, and provide some exciting nymphing and dry fly fishing. Unlike the Kamloops region, there are relatively few lakes that have caddis hatches, particularly the large traveling sedges (#8-10). When you do find them, though, watch out; in lake fishing for trout, there isn't much that's more exciting than watching a 24-inch rainbow creating a surface V-wake in 3 feet of water as the fish chases a skittered #8 or #10 caddis or stimulator pattern. Sight fishing for rainbows in May and June, when the fish are feeding in 5-10 feet of water, is about as good (and sometimes as tough) as it gets, with damselfly, dragon fly, and leach patterns. As water temperatures warm in late June – July, fish move into deeper water and the fishing slows. Many of the lake fishermen move to other species/pursuits, and the fish are generally more difficult to catch. Fall provides some excellent fishing, again with larger flies as the fish fatten up for the winter. From the angler's standpoint, it can be great because many of the spring anglers are hunting and the lakes are relatively quiet. For me, the lake season runs from ice-out (April) to freeze-up in November; there are many people who ice fish the lakes, but I find it difficult to cast in a 100-foot-long, two-foot-wide trench (just kidding). I do enjoy the elk smokies and the scotch, though.

As a devout river fisherman, the lakes help extend my fly fishing season to 8-10 months, and provide a nice diversion for the times when I can't be on the river. Many of the lakes also winter-kill, so taking the odd rainbow from these put-and-take lakes is an added bonus, especially since most of

the fish feed on a diet of aquatic insects and scuds, and have brilliant red flesh. The other lakes which don't winter-kill provide excellent catch & release opportunities for trophy rainbow (and brook) trout, and many are managed as trophy lakes with harvest restrictions (i.e. 1 fish over 50-cm). Many of the lakes are stocked annually or bi-annually, and the stocking information is available on the BC Ministry of the Environment website. For the lake angler, opportunities for trout on the fly (with some opportunities for bass, too) in some of the prettiest settings in the country make the Kootenays a fly fisher's paradise.

*Jon was an IWFFC member until he moved to BC in the mid-late 1990s. During his former eastern existence, he was an MNR biologist whose responsibilities included the Credit River where he loved to fish. Jon gave a talk on this subject at the 2006 Forum. – Ed.*

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## Success

*Daryl Crowley, West Michigan Hacklers*

I have friend that lives in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina who is a habitual fish counter. At the end of the day he can tell you exactly how many fish he caught. Now this is usually a pretty easy task for me, as it doesn't take a lot to stick the number two or three in my head. But if the number gets much over five, I'm usually lost. Granted I'm getting old but I never set out at the beginning of the day with the intent of keeping a score on how many fish I've caught. My hillbilly buddy on the other hand can have a fantastic day and will reveal at the end of the day that he caught exactly fifty-seven fish. I do have to admire the fact that he can actually keep that straight. Don't get me wrong; he's not a fishmonger. He's a great fly fisherman and an avid catch-and-release angler, but

he still has the vestiges of that “ruler of success” that we all were brought up on.

We all learned to measure success in quantity, inches, and pounds. These were the rulers by which we compared one day to another, one river to another, as well as our prowess as anglers. After all if we were racking up numbers, we were having a successful day. These can still be valid measures of success. Who can argue that those rare days when fish are coming on every other cast are not successful days? But how many fish does it take to have a successful day? Ten? Twenty? Does it depend on species, or on the river? Certainly ten fish on a hot summer day on a local river that gets a lot of pressure is pretty good, but does that same number equate to a bad day on a remote Alaskan stream? A three-pound beauty from heavily fished local waters might constitute a successful day but would that same three-pound fish make your day on a western spring creek?

It becomes obvious that there is no formula into which we can plug numbers, inches, or pounds and pull out an answer that either equates to a successful day or not. For me a successful day is probably any day I don't fall in, or drop an open box of flies into a fast riffle. Certainly doing either of those things could be the catalyst for an unsuccessful day. If you catch fifty fish but break your leg a mile from the car then that certainly would equate to an unsuccessful day. So it seems evident that numbers of fish alone cannot be used as a ruler for success. Quality is a tenuous benchmark also. While a five mile hike and eight hours of hard fishing with one five-pound trout to show for it might be success, how would that compare to catching ten two-pound fish with a walk of only few yards? How do you compare the success of twenty fish caught in a miserable cold freezing rain vs. ten fish on warm spring day when the air smells sweet?

A lot factors go into our own personal formula for success and as we get older it seems that the quantity and quality of the fish become

smaller variables in the equation. This becomes self-evident when you stop fishing in the middle of a good hatch just to watch the fish taking flies. Their success becomes your success. Lying on a grassy bank and feeling the first warm rays of early summer, or watching big snowflakes falling on a December steelhead stream could certainly be a formula for success. Sharing a hot cup of coffee with a good friend while admiring the autumn leaves and the cool nip of an approaching winter can also make for a successful outing. Fighting but loosing a large steelhead from a dark run on snowy winter's day can also be called a successful day.

One thing that becomes apparent is that how many fish you catch in a day is not *the* measure of success. While the task at hand is to catch fish it is not the only goal. A day of fishing is a package deal. It's a trip to the river; a hike; the changing of seasons; wildlife; a shore lunch shared with a friend; maybe even a fish or two. In the end it doesn't really matter how many fish you catch. Whether you catch a lot of fish or get blanked, at the end of the day it is the sum of *all* the factors that will dictate whether the day was successful or not. If fish were the sole measure of success then dynamite would be the tackle of choice. But most of us would quickly agree that would not be very satisfying and that certainly is an indication that success is not purely in numbers. If we were just after fish we could *buy* a lot more fish with the money we spend on this sport than we could every catch with all our fancy gear. Perhaps there is more to this game than just catching a lot fish.

Henry David Thoreau summed it up pretty well: *“Some men fish all their lives and never realize that it wasn't fish they were after.”* To fall under the edict of that quote would be a sad thing indeed, to waste a whole life chasing the wrong goal.

In case you're wondering how many fish I caught the last time out; let's just say it was a real successful day.

*Courtesy FFF ClubWire newswire service*

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