



The Joy of Fishing Lakes

Tom Adamchick

There are some fly fishers who don't like to fish trout lakes for "philosophical" reasons. "The sport's meant for streams-right?" Well if you are fixed into this position – great, it leaves more space out there for those of us who love it. If you would like to try it, then please read on.

There are few sights more daunting to an experienced stream fly fisher than a vast expanse of apparently featureless grey water stretching seamlessly to the horizon. But any lake can be systematically parsed into chunks that make the whole very manageable. A good fly fishing lake offers nearly all the stillwater situations a fly fisherman will encounter anywhere – shallow rocky coves, silt-bottomed coves, rocky shallows around points or islands, a long gravel bar near a deep hole, a cold water inlet and often a rather deep spring hole. This is the structure of fishing a lake.

On a river when a great fish is located in a certain spot, the chances are that spot will produce good fish constantly. When an angler misses a lunker one evening, there's a good chance the fish will be there tomorrow. Not the case in stillwater fishing. Fish are constantly moving except when sulking during the heat of summer as they hang over cooler spring holes. In rivers generally the fish are more sedentary, the water moves bringing the smorgasbord to its predators.

Dry fly fishing separates the beginners from the experienced. You can approach it as if it were a stream. When you see or hear a good fish noisily splash halfway across the cove up comes the anchor. You'll row over powered by adrenaline only to find the fish showing back where you started. Chasing fish is a mistake. Those of us who have made this mistake cover rises only within casting distance. It's a form of fishing I find more intoxicating than fishing over a lie in fast water. Cast to the rise ring. These cruisers are always moving and the cast has to be quick. It's a good idea to have a length of line already waiting on the water or in loose coils about you. When you detect the direction of the trout, the fly needs to be dropped about 6 feet ahead to intercept the fish. Let the fish move to the fly. Leave the fly on the water longer than you initially think necessary. There's little drag except from the odd breeze. Surface feeders are often in schools and they often circle and have the stillwater luxury of time to inspect your feathered fraud perched on the surface. Leave it there! The explosive smash's suddenness is heightened because you really can't anticipate it as much as you can in stream fishing.

The hatches begin with a bang and end just as suddenly. There are numerous predictable mayfly, caddis, damsel, and midge hatches. In his book *Fishing with Simon* the late Charles Lynch recounts the hilarious adventures of timing the clock-like still water hatches of Western Quebec. Ten minutes of rolling brookie airborne mayhem – and then it's quiet. Chasing fish is one mistake but not allowing time for your line to sink is an even bigger problem. Casting a streamer or nymph on a sink tip or sinking line, waiting a few seconds and then retrieving usually works on a stream but please leave it where it belongs. In those situations when you don't see any telltale signs of porpoising trout assume that they're cruising the bottom of the littoral zone of the lake rather than its top. Determining the right depth, transporting the fly down there and keeping it at that level are critical to success. You can cast and use various countdown rates. However, the fly tends to stay in that ideal zone for a short spell at the beginning of your retrieve. The most effective method is to use that five-letter word that some of you may find difficult to utter – troll. Get over it! Nothing more consistently produces lunker brookies, lake trout, small mouth bass and pike than an intelligently designed offering of point fly and dropper.



Here's how. Manoeuvre your watercraft along the shore suspended above the depth where you can no longer make out the bottom. Cast out your full sinking line as far as you can parallel to the shore. Relax – enjoy the chirps of the birds – wait for the line to drag your fly down to the desired depth. As you begin to move your watercraft along the shoreline you will need to play with two variables consistently. The first is speed. Most fly fishers do it too fast. You can't copy a spin

fisher's pace either. Too much speed will cause the rather bulky fly line to plane up out of that productive zone. So easy does it.

The second is the creation of an erratic fly path. Few critters in a lake swim long distances in a straight line. Cut your watercraft into the shore, then change direction and head out toward the deeper water. This simple technique creates a chain reaction that gives you three lunker enticing features. The corners of the zigzag make the fly at the back of the line change directions. But there is also an enticing pause imparted to the fly by the watercraft turning. The fly will sink a bit and then speed up once the turn is complete. I believe that speed up and slight change of depth looks too natural for a fish to resist.

Knowing the right depth to scout can save buckets of wasted effort. Here are some general guidelines that can help you. Blair Dawson in a recent article in *Ontario Out of Doors* noted that most native brookies that hang out in clear unstained deep lakes rarely drop deeper than 40 feet (12m) and generally concentrate at the 15 to 27 ft level (4.5 to 8.2 m). Stocked brook trout in acid-stained smaller lakes are found just below the surface.

Whatever method you use, cast and count down or cast and troll. If you happen to snag and retrieve weeds or twigs, study them. The junk is a gift and by examining it closely you will read from the leaves information about scuds, midge larva, caddis pupae, mayfly and damselfly nymphs. All this and you didn't have to seine or pick up rocks!

Equipment:

Rods: Between 8 ½ to 10 ft. long, line weights 5 to 7 wt.

Lines: Floating: to be used for not only the dries but also nymphs along shoreline, rocky outcrops and weeds. Chironomids and nymphs suspended below a strike indicator work well. Choose a subdued colour – why add unnecessary flash to make matters more difficult?

Intermediate: sinking lines – good for fishing 4 to 5 ft. down with nymphs, streamers, scuds, or woolly buggers. The clear lines are effective at reducing line visibility.

Full Sinking: uniform sink line heavy enough to get down quickly is essential for productive trolling. Sink tips or sinking lines that belly leave you with too much slack in the line to feel soft takes.

Leaders and

Tippets: As a general principle, sinking lines should be relatively short. However, I try to match my leader in the water. Tie a shiny, heavily weighted nymph or streamer on to a spool of tippet. Drop the fly over the side and pay out tippet until the fly can no longer be seen; then add two or three feet as insurance - you've now got a good leader length for that water that day. Tippets rarely need to be lighter than 5x.

Give still water fishing a try. It's a great change of pace when nothing much is happening. During those lulls in fish activity, when everything is quiet, try what you normally do when on a stream in the same situation. Use the interlude to stretch your legs and scout the shoreline for clues about the life teeming in the lake. It will only make you a better fly fisher.

(from 2001 Double Haul)

A Note from the Editors:

Another holiday season has come and passed (for most of us). It's always a time for reflection on the past, and projection for that which lies ahead.

An ancient curse in many of our older cultures is best represented with the simple phrase:

May you live in interesting times

I don't know about anybody else, but for me, I could use a little less interest, given recent events, especially those of the last four months. I know when I sat down with my family for our traditional holiday dinner, we all spoke a few words expressing our hope that the problems behind the recent troubles can finally be worked out, in a civilized manner (for a change).

Hopefully you have all had a great holiday, whether it's Christmas, Hanukah, the December Solstice or whatever, it is the wish of all of the Club Executive, that the upcoming year will provide you with every happiness.

The Spring Fishing show will soon be here. For me this always an indication of 2 things, that we've passed the half-way mark in winter, and that there will be an ice storm on the weekend. Book 14-17 February for this. And as usual, we'll be looking for volunteers to help with the Club booth, and to help out with the Kids' Fly Tying.

The plans for the 2002 Forum are developing. The casting clinic is (almost) booked. And our on-stream meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, 21 May, up at the Credit River. We'll get together at the Charleston Sideroad parking lots. Let's hope for a nice hatch.

As for the rest of the year, who knows, maybe this will be the year for that monster Brown or that record setting Muskie (except for Ke O. – once is enough!), just for a well deserved diversion from so-called reality. Or maybe they'll finally come up with an interesting sport at the Olympics (other than the Biathlon).



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FFF ENDANGERED FISHERIES – ANNOUNCEMENT 2002

2001 was the third year of the Federation's Endangered Fisheries Initiative. Four fisheries were ultimately approved by vote of the Conservation Committee. All of these represented a good cross section of North America's most endangered fisheries. This coming year, we will have another chance at bringing deserved attention to the state of the nation's fisheries resources. What this means is that you will have another opportunity to identify a fishery or fisheries in your Council's region that may be deserving of such recognition. The criteria for such a nomination is as follows:

- It must be a coldwater, warm-water or saltwater habitat that is within the 50 states of the U.S. and its legal coastal boundary and Canada.
- It represents a significant resource to fly fisherman (not net fisherman or conventional tackle fisherman for species that are unavailable to fly fisherman)
- The fishery should be definable in terms, name, location, range (area or stream miles) and species effected.
- There is a definite threat to the fishery which has caused or may cause it to decline from a historical perspective or make it unavailable to fly fisherman.
- The fishery represents a political issue to the local, state or regional community and is being tracked or advocated by FFF members and affiliated FFF organizations.

All nominations must be received by April 30, 2002. A completed form, preferably prepared and transmitted in electronic format to facilitate communication, should be sent to Evelyn Taylor (evelynt@montana.net) at FFF's Bozeman office by April 30. [Please coordinate with the IWFFC Conservation Chair, or any other member of the

IWFFC executive. – Ed.]

All Council's are being asked to participate this coming year by nominating at least one but no more than five fisheries in your Council's region. Nominations can be made by other organizations provided the Council reviews the application and approves its submittal to FFF National.

For more information or questions please contact any member of the IWFFC executive.

Forum 2002 Update

Members of the Forum Committee continue their preparation for this year's 26th Anniversary Edition.

They continue to develop innovative programme for all areas of experience and expertise.

If you have a friend or acquaintance that has even a passing interest in fly fishing, this year's Canadian Fly Fishing Forum would provide a great opportunity for them to begin to develop that interest. We will once again offer a Beginner's Package, matching up eager neophytes with some of our more able member-instructors. Of course, there will be the Beginner and Intermediate Fly Tying, along with the usual assortment of seminars.

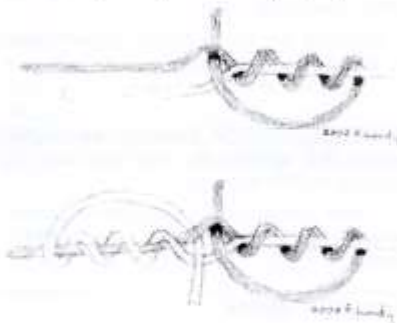
As the Forum comes closer, we encourage all members to sign up to help run the show. Like the Club itself, the Forum runs exclusively on the generosity of the members who man the various booths, organise the speakers, and so on. For more information, please contact Eli Robillard, or any other member of the Forum Committee, or Club Executive. You can even use email: forum@iwffc.ca.

Roll-Your-Own Leaders (part deux)

Last issue, we followed up on Don Moore's presentation about rolling your own leaders. That article included some instructions on forming the Perfection Loop, which is key for "loop-to-loop" connections.

This issue, I'd like to show the 2 *bends* that are used for joining the sections of mono.

The Blood Knot is the classic knot for this. It presents a nice compact knot, which is sufficiently strong when tied properly.



A couple of points to remember:

- Two or three turns in each direction are sufficient.

- Study the picture and see how the turns form a (more or less) continuous spiral.
- The tag ends should exit that opening the middle, in opposite directions.

The Blood Knot does suffer from a reputation for being difficult to tie, especially in those tense, on-water moments when the fish are rising, the sun has gone down and you've just destroyed your last ready-made leader on that &%"@ cedar "back there".

A good substitute for the Blood Knot is the Double Surgeon's Knot. It is essentially a Half Knot tied with the 2 pieces of material overlapping each other.



Start the knot off by holding the back end of your tippet alongside the end of your leader. Tie a simple overhand knot with the doubled line. Then pass the doubled line through the loop another two or three times.

The result is a bit more bulky than the Blood Knot, but its ease of tying makes up for it.

As I recall, Don suggested using the Blood Knot for most of the bends in your leader, using the Double Surgeon's Knot for the finer material, particularly for attaching that last bit of tippet.

In either case, these produce a reasonably small barrel-shaped knot. Draw the knot to its final shape, slowly, keeping all of the various parts under control. Remember to lubricate the knot (with saliva) as you draw it up tight, and carefully trim the tag ends to finish it off.

SEEKING PROFESSIONAL WOMEN - FFF

Fanny Krieger at the FFF is assembling a list of professional women in the fly fishing industry: guides, instructors, fly shop owners, lodge owners, artists, writers, etc. If you'd like to add to Fanny's list, you can contact her directly at: krieger@aimnet.com

A REMINDER FOR THE WINTER FLY FISHER: FLY FISHING IN THE COLD CAN BE DEADLY (FFF ClubWire)

Perhaps there is nothing more solitary or special than getting out to fly fish on a winter day, whether it is a Midwestern spring creek, a wild western steelhead river or mid-south tailwater. But there is a danger in this activity that you must think about, even before it happens.

That peril is hypothermia and it is THE NUMBER ONE KILLER OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONALISTS. Basically if your body cools off too much (just 3-4 degrees from the normal 98.6) [that's 2 or 3 C° below the normal 37°C - Ed], it will start a sequence of events that can easily be fatal. The fundamental "Catch 22" with hypothermia is as follows: If your core body temperature goes too low, brain function becomes impaired and then as a result you will lose the ability to take proper corrective actions.

This is especially serious if you alone and some distance away from shelter or a source of external heat. For example, if due to hypothermia-related confusion you take the wrong trail, or try to get back by crossing the river at a dangerous spot or simply get more lost, your situation may have a very bad end. Before your next winter outing consider learning about (1) proper actions to avoid hypothermia, (2) the early critical signs and (3) what actions to take immediately when those signs are experienced. Here is a short course on those three topics that may save your life.

Actions to avoid hypothermia: Dress for warmth, dryness and wind protection. Carry windproof and waterproof outerwear protection. Stay dry by putting on raingear before getting wet. Wet clothes lose 90% of their insulating value and the wind can make the cooling off much worse. Pack energy snacks, with sugar for quick conversion to energy and other nutrients for a longer-lasting effect. Keep active to generate heat. Remember, hypothermia can happen at 30-40 degrees [0 to 5°C - Ed]. It does not have to be frigid.

Identify the early signs: As soon as you start to shiver, even in one part of your body, you must recognize such shivering as an early sign of hypothermia. This includes chattering

teeth or uncontrollable momentary shivering of one arm or leg. If something is not done at this point, death can result within 90 minutes of that first sign of shivering. Other tell-tale signs include changes in speech, lapses in memory, inability to think clearly, clumsy hands, stumbling, and a feeling of exhaustion.

Immediate steps: Get out of the wind and rain. Get into dry clothes and a warm place (a dry sleeping bag, a car) as soon as possible. Drawing warmth from another person is often helpful. Drink warm (but not hot) fluids. Avoid alcohol. If your hypothermia worsens, you will be unable to help yourself, so try to tell someone about your problem as soon as possible. Perhaps a related consideration is to fish with a partner in the winter. If you are unsuccessful in correcting this problem in the early stages (when you are conscious and able), it simply will be too late.

Next Meetings

15 January

Atlantic Salmon Update – Ken Cornelisse

The IWFFC has been a participant in the studies over the past several years to try to bring back Atlantics to the local rivers. Let's find out how it's going.

05 February

Fly Tying

- Guest Tyer: Dave Massey - Production Tying
- Intermediate table: Bob Lundy - Double Bunny (Pike Fly)
- Beginners' table: Blair Williams (TBD)

19 February

Humber River Update – Mike Wheaton

Curious about "the other river" in the West End? Find out about the restoration work, and the nature of the fishery.

05 March

Fly Tying

At press time, all positions were still to be confirmed. But as usual, it will be another great evening.

19 March

Forever Chasing Trout - Len Yust

Highlights chasing trout with Len over 30 years. Travel with him to destinations throughout Canada and the U.S. He has

many special memories he will share with you

Volunteering – UN Celebrates International Year of the Volunteer

The year we have just finished was many things to all of us. One brighter aspect of 2001 was that the UN had selected the first year of the new millennium to be recognised globally as the International Year of the Volunteer (IYV).

Volunteering is nothing new to members of the Izaak Walton club. We should all be proud of the work we do both in the areas of conservation (tree planting, rock rolling, and so on), and in the areas of public education.



The organisation Volunteer Canada describes volunteering on their website (www.volunteer.ca):

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. Volunteers impact virtually every aspect of society, including health, education, social services, youth, culture, sports and recreation, the arts, and the environment. While their contribution is undeniable, volunteers are rarely recognized for their deeds — usually the first to stay behind the scenes. It is time to push volunteers into the well-deserved spotlight. By celebrating the efforts of volunteers we create opportunities to raise awareness about the vital contribution they have made and continue to make to Canadian communities and society as a whole.

Without volunteers, many organisations, including the Izaak Walton Fly Fishing Club would cease to exist.

Obviously we all joined the club for our own reasons. Most of us wanted to learn more about fly fishing. We all certainly enjoy sharing our own experiences with this great

sport. Whether it's making a formal presentation or *stretching the point* at the pub after a meeting, we are sharing our own stories, and the rest of us are getting something out of it. Or perhaps we submit a story to be published in the Single Haul. Or perhaps we just enjoy reading it.

Of course, we also get out and mingle with the public. Those of us who take the time to help teach little kids their first Woolly Worm, or who take a shift at the club booth at the Spring Fishing Show know the satisfaction (and, yes, perhaps a little bit of frustration) that comes from joining in.

And then there's our Conservation efforts. If you haven't spent a day cleaning up a river, planting trees, rolling rocks or counting redds, you've missed a great opportunity for some real satisfaction. And fun. You haven't laughed hard enough until you've seen a member of the club executive slide down the bank, floating the hat, but keeping that little Cedar tree above the water.

As we enter 2002, with the IYV behind us, we are presented the challenge of coming to volunteering with a renewed vigour. More than ever, the efforts of the individuals are being recognised as critical. 2002 is being advertised as the Year of Action.

For more information on how you can help your club, just contact any member of the club executive, or keep an eye on the Single haul, and the website.

Notable – Quotable

"Time flies so fast after youth is past that we cannot accomplish one-half the many things we have in mind, or indeed one-half our duties. The only safe and sensible plan is to make other things give way to the essentials, and the first of these is fly fishing."

- Theodore Gordon

Contacting IWFFC

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