the FLY RODDER

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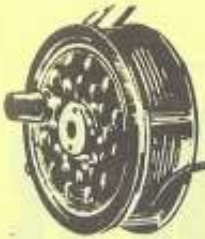

PRESIDENT'S LINE...

by
Gian Padovani

Another month down the drain! Just think about it, only a few weeks away from Opening Day. This gives you all the time to check all of your tackle and equipment, and do last minute check ups on your waders.
I personally wait to fish until the weekend after since on most opening days the streams are like circuses, with evryone out after the winter's hibernation. At best you'll get a lethargic fish but as a consolation you'll get the opportunity to test any of the new goodies you've collected during the winter.
As I mentioned at the meeting, this year we are going to include some lake fishing (or at least one), to the club's fishing trips. Now, I must impose on your help: Do you own or have access to a cartop craft? Some of us have canoes or john boats which are ideal to fish the Bashkill swamps. If your answer is yes, please see me or Dan Van Buskirk.
As most of you are aware, the Connetquot river has opened its doors for fishing in February and, as in the past, one Monday of each month has been reserved for the exclusive use of L.I.F.R. members. As such you can take advantage of fishing this popular river in the sole company of members of the club. Ed Conte is again running this program and you MUST contact him
IF you want to be included. Remember: First come, first served.
As you know, many manufacturers, suppliers and dealers have been particularly generous to our club. Many of the prizes that are awarded at each month's meeting have been donated or sold at cost to us, to everyone's benefit. Check out this month's Fur, Feather & Fin advertisment in the Flyrodder; I know you'll want to take advantage of their offer, conveniently timed just a few days before Opening day.

Since some members seem to forget that our meetings take place on the second Tuesday of every month, beginning with this issue, *the date on the front cover of the FLYRODDER will indicate the night of the meeting.*

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MATCHING THE HATCH

by Gian Padovani

I met a fisherman at the Willowemoc who is a professor of Entmology at a leading university. Since I have a very limited knowledge of insects and I am not particularly fond of them, I am especially thankful to whoever discovered that trout can be caught with artificial imitations, instead of using the real thing. I have often wondered if fly fishing got its name from the practice of sticking hooks through the body of flies, a method which to me appears impractical and disgusting, to say the very least.

Of course, there are exceptions. One day, for example, my brother and I decided to fish for some hefty smallmouths which were known to lurk in a small river upstate. "Gotta use hellgramites" said the local tackle shop owner. At that time I was still an amateur and hadn't even heard the word, so I suspected it to be the brand name of some artificial lure. "Are they manufactured by Shaekespeare or Heddon?" I inquired, trying to sound knowledgeable. The shopkeeper gazed at me as if I was some sort of foreigner (?), and invited me to the back of the store where a large wire meshed cage was located. The inside of this peculiarly constructed aviary was brulicking with menacing, huge, earwig-looking insects. "Best darn bait for bass!", the man stated, "they're the larvae of the Dobson fly." I tried to hide my revulsion but out of politeness and curiousity, I inquired how to use them. (camouflaging my own personal feelings, I almost asked if they killed bass out of fright!)

The shopkeeper, sure of a sale, opened the little door of the cage, boldly inserted his hand and extricated one of the critters from it. "Very easy" he said with a patronizing smirk, "You just place your little hook underneath the collar and.." His piercing yell made me recoil. "The little bastard nipped me!" It was enough for me. I told the man that I solemn vow prevented me to fish with anything but artificials, bought a Sickers candy bar just to appease him, and hurriedly left the store.

This professor told me that a knowledge of aquatic insects and their cycle was important, nay essential, in order to catch trout in a consistent manner. At first he talked about Mayflies, Caddisflies and Midges but as he warmed up, he continued to chant so many scientific names that for a second I thought I was attending a Latin mass! Eventually he calmed down and initiated a conversation on matching the hatch. According to him a twenty two inch brown had fallen victim to a moth imitation of Philosamia giganteae, (or something like that), earlier that morning. I asked if I could see the fly and I must admit that I was

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Gian Padovani, Editor

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MATCHING THE HATCH *CONTINUED*

thoroughly impressed when he produced the imitation, the size of a bow tie. The fly was beautifully tied, a perfect counterfit meticulously patterned down to the last detail, and it must've taken the professor many, many hours of painstaking work. I could not believe that anyone would fish with such a thing, especially with chances of losing it.

It was then that very candidly I asked if it wouldn't have been easy to collect and to put a hook through a real thing and that's when he gave me a look of intense hatred. He began a tirade of imprecations, declaming that the insects were the greatest living creatures and that one day, finally, they would get even with the rotten humanity, and control the earth! I tried to appease him by muttering that I enjoyed honey, but it was a waste of time. I left him ranting in the middle of the stream and for all I know, he is still out there.

A SUMMER DAY AT CONNETQUOT

by Ed Conte

It was Thursday, the day I set aside to go fishing at the Connetquot river State Park. The day dawned beautifully and I got up early to be at the park by 8:30 to sign in. I was sixth on the list.

There is always competition with those guys who get up before dawn to fish the morning AND afternoon sessions, but I thought the chances of getting my favorite spot on the river were pretty good. I spent the few hours before the spots are given out in socializing with the lovely attendants of the park, walking around, admiring the beauty of nature and checking the fishing at the dam.

At 11 a.m. I was back at the booth, anticipating the afternoon's fishing, when I realized that MY spot had been taken by one of the early birds. Swallowing my disappointment, I decided to try my luck at station 26. I had never fished that section and figured I could do my spot on the way back at 4 p.m.

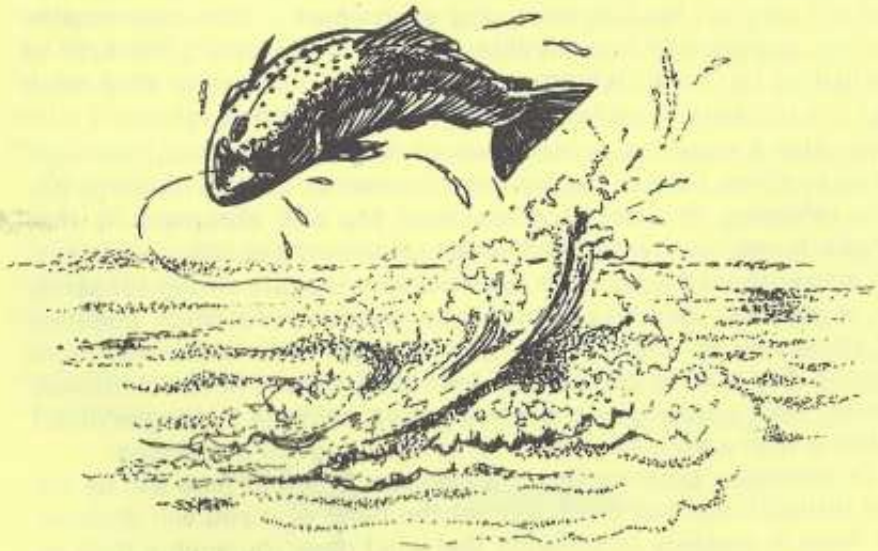
To my surprise station 26 has two good sized holes, one on each side of the platform and each with plenty of trout. I spent a couple of pleasant hours investigating the possibilities and catching some fish, but the few big big trout weren't obliging. I was standing a little north of the platform when, through the polarizing sunglasses, I spotted a big rainbow. The fish was on the far side of the river, hiding under a clump of aquatic grass and I doubt that I would have seen it without the glasses. Since I

CONTINUES ELSEWHERE

A SUMMER DAY *CONTINUED*

prefer to fish with streamers, I began to cast with my favorite; an olive colored marabou which is successful most of the time. However this old timer wasn't buying it. Wet flies and nymphs didn't do anything either, and since the fish didn't budge an inch, I thought maybe it was asleep! I searched into my fly box and finally found it: A wooly worm tied with spun deer hair body that made it unsinkable. I had tied it on a No. 10 hook, a size that I could see as it floated along. I had the correct distance figured out and my first cast was perfect; the fly landed about three feet upstream and close to the clump of grass. As it floated closer to the fish I saw it move. He rose and I could see every move as he opened the mouth to take the fly. When I set the hook, all hell broke loose and before I knew it, the trout was two feet in the air. The fight was on. My first concern was about the fish breaking the 3 lb. test tippet, and that my so called improved clinch knot did not come loose. I prayed as the fish churned downstream, then back upstream, all the while leaping out of the water every ten feet. He roiled that quiet stretch so that it looked like the inside of a washing machine!

After what seemed like forever and with my arms aching, the fish finally slowed down and my heart started beating normally (or almost normally), and it came within reach. The first time I tried to net it, the fish started all over again, but after a minute or so it was at my side. I slowly got the net into position and got it! What a prize. I was surprised that it wasn't as big as I thought, but it was a good size; 20" long and 3½ lbs. of fighting rainbow. That made my day, and I added 26 to my list of good spots.



COVER STORY *BY Gian Padovani*

The main differences between hunting and fishing is that in the former, once you have pressed the trigger the animal is doomed, but with fishing you have the option of releasing the fish alive to fight another day. Why catch and release? Most sportsmen fish for pleasure, enjoying the challenge of using artificial lures and flies; if a fish is landed, the angler has reached his goal. Before I continue let me stress that I have nothing against eating fish. Let's not kid ourselves; in order to live we must eat, be it meat, fish or vegetables. BUT, there is a big difference between eating a fish that you have caught, versus killing fish because you caught them!

When should one practice catch and release? My opinion is that when on a "commercially" stocked stream, I see nothing wrong in keeping the fish the permit entitles you, providing that you (or someone) is going to eat them. The fish on these rivers are stocked as a put-and-take program and you pay a fee for this previlege. These trout were raised for the purpose of being caught! The situation is very different on a relatively wild river; here the fish reproduce naturally in an hostile environment, and a 12" trout is a veteran that had to struggle all of its life, competing for food and cover, and escaping predators. If it falls for a deceptive fly it is because hunger and the skill of the angler have induced it to strike. In short that fish has been tricked, and a SPORTSMAN should make amends for his deception; the fish should be released to fight another day.

The fish illustrated on the Catch & Release emblem is symbolic, representing all species. Catch and release is not a concept to be carryed out only on trout streams, but everywhere. I have seen marine species, supposedly inexaustible, dwindle into nothing because of overfishing by "meat fishermen" for the sake of showing off a catch that probably ended up in the garbage.

No catch & release discussion would be complete without the mention of barbless hooks. They are as effective as those with barbs but make releasing fish an effortless task. My only complaint is that manufacturers have restricted this design to only a couple of patterns. This also surprise me because most hook makers are strong conservation supporters. Barbless hooks have sharper penetration qualities and some rely on a serpentine point design to hold the fish more securely. The truth is that any fish lost to a barbless hook would have escaped from a barbed one; the fish got off because the angler didn't control it with a tight or loose line, as the situation demanded.

To conclude; practice Catch & Release. The first time will be the most difficult one, but once you get the hang of it you will discover that there is pleasure in knowing that what gave you such a thrill today, may be there tomorrow for more excitment.

ON LANDING NETS

by Gian Padovani

Everyone will agree that in order to catch trout you should have a rod, reel, line, leaders and flies. If you decide to use bait, you must include hooks and split shots. You go to your favorite stream, catch a sizable trout and that's when you realize that you needed a net to land it. You could beach it, if the bank has a suitable area and if it is only a few steps away. You could also try to grasp the fish with your hands and possibly do some Charlie Chaplin imitations! I have seen such a spectacle and the unlucky angler went into the brink where he lost both the fish and the forward tip of his rod. He was lucky; he could have lost his life in the rushing water.

Contrary to popular belief, a landing net was not designed to get tangled on every branch along the stream or to get between your legs while you're wading; it was designed to land fish. You can buy a serviceable net for a couple of dollars or spend a week's salary for a handcrafted museum's showpiece that will do the same thing. The frame of a landing net can be made from a variety of materials, including solid wood, laminated wood, graphite or aluminum. Obviously some of these materials will float, while the others will sink. Metal frames are also made rigid or folding, telescoping and collapsable, for easier storage. Some of these are supposed to snap into operable position with a flick of the wrist. Most frames have a snap hook or a French clip at the handle for carrying and quick access, but the cheaper aluminum models have an elastic lanyard built in. Each fisherman develops his preference on how to carry a net; some will place the lanyard around the neck and shoulder, others will attach it on a retracting reel pinned on the back of the vest, while still others will simply stick the handle under the belt, against their backs. Whatever the method to carry it, we must admit that a net is an inconvenience to carry, albeit a necessity.

When purchasing a net the primary consideration should be given to the adult size of the fish one hopes to land with it. Those ultra-slim, pretty miniatures which can handle a ten inch fish, are obviously useless for anything larger. Don't smile, I have seen the look of horror on anglers' faces when trying to land a steelhead with a standard trout net. In a situation like this, the long handled, sturdy net generally associated with salt water boat fishing, is the ideal choice. The only drawback is that it requires a companion to do the netting, since it is

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ON LANDING NETS *CONTINUED*

too cumbersome to carry on the person. An alternative to a large landing net is the tailing device which Atlantic salmon fishermen use.

Up to now we have discussed the frame of a landing net but not the most important part, the netting material itself. This too can be fashioned from different materials, such as cotton, nylon, dacron or plastic monofilament. The last material is utilized on the cheapest models and it is not worth having. Many anglers are not aware that a landing net, like a tennis racket, can be "re-strung" and replacements are sold at most large tackle shops. When purchasing a net, or a netting replacement, the angler must consider the type of fishing and where he intends to use it. I will never forget my embarassment and the amusing look on watching fishermen when I landed a small trout and it promptly went right through the net! Obviously the mesh was perfect for flounder but too large for trout. A mesh that is too fine will collect every small debris and it can be inconvenient in waters where small floating plants are present.

To conclude, when landing a fish, never try to catch it with your net (don'y laugh, I've seen it done!); gently lead it, head first, into the submerged net.

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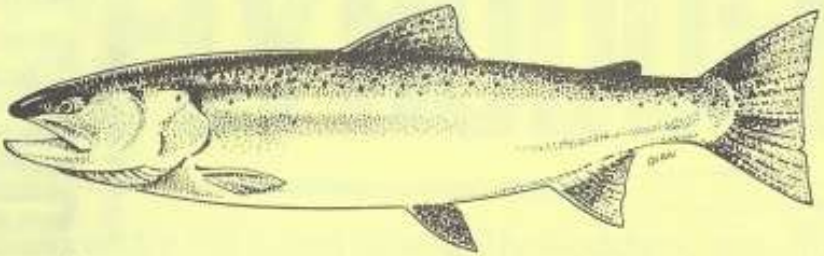

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