



# LINES AND LEADERS

CFFA

FEBRUARY 1979

Vol. 6 No. 2

Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association

## Announcing:



- PROGRAM:** Guest Speaker Gary LaFontaine
- WHERE:** Tobacco Valley Inn - Dunfey's Tavern  
(Bloomfield Avenue exit off I-91 in Windsor)
- WHEN:** Saturday, February 10, 1979
- TIME:** Cocktail mixer - 6 p.m.  
Dinner - 7 p.m.
- SPECIAL:** Election of Officers for 1979 will be held prior to the festivities.

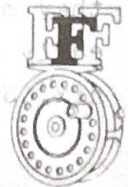
Gary LaFontaine, CFFA member and author of "Challenge of the Trout", will present his program, "New Thoughts on the Caddis." Gary, now residing in the Big Stream Country of Montana, has done extensive study of the Caddis, including scuba diving to study underwater habits. Those who have seen this program have remarked "it shouldn't be missed!" Once again, the CFFA Annual Raffle is now boasting a bonanza of prizes.

## NEW LINES AND LEADERS

by Don Johnston

I wish to take this opportunity to introduce the new look of LINES AND LEADERS for 1979. The artwork for the new heading was drawn by CFFA member Lynn Smith, bringing a fresh look to your newsletter. As in the past, LINES AND LEADERS will endeavor to keep you informed on club matters, and entertained in general. But this is no small task, so I solicit your assistance.

An active member club of the Federation of Fly Fishermen'



# BAIT!

A Study of the Baitfish and it's Imitation

Mark S. Leggitt

## Part II

Spottail Shiner  
*Notropis hudsonius*

This medium sized baitfish is similar to the blacknose dace in its build and size but is somewhat more delicate in nature. It is a native fish to this state and is located primarily in the larger rivers and lakes, notably the Farmington and Housatonic Rivers. It is not fond of vegetation and will be found only over bottoms of sand or gravel.

The spottail presents a greenish or olive color dorsally, is silvery on its sides and is white ventrally. There is a large, black spot at the base of the caudal fin giving this shiner its common name. The eye is large for the relative body size. There is a faint lateral band from the gill plate to the tail.

This shiner spawns in the spring. The breeding males develop tubercles on their snouts but experience no color changes. Lengths of three inches are attained and the spottail is considered a schooling fish, rarely traveling alone.

Common Shiner  
*Notropis cornutus*

The common, or redbfin shiner is one of the states' most prevalent, large sized baitfish. It is a native fish whose range is west to the Rocky Mountains.

This fish is colored olive dorsally, silver laterally and white ventrally. There is a dark mid-dorsal stripe along the back which runs from the gill plate to the tail. Many specimens exhibit dark, scattered scales. The breeding males display reddish toned bodies and often are bluish laterally. The fins change to rosy red during this time.

The habitat is normally the faster flowing waters, although they may inhabit some lakes. Spawning takes place in the spring and early summer. Lengths of eight inches may be reached, the usual being six. Specimens are recorded in most all of this states water systems.

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Bridled Shiner  
*Notropis bifrenatas*

This delicate native is one of the most graceful of Connecticut baitfish. It is a slim and yet proportioned member of the shiner family whose range includes the waters east of the Appalachians, south to Virginia and north into Canada.

The bridled shiner is straw colored dorsally, and has a black band which surrounds the snout area and extends rearward through the tail to the caudal notch. It is colored yellowish-silver below the band and is white ventrally. The banding extends through the mid eye, which is large for the seemingly small head.

This shiner spawns in the spring and the males turn a bright yellow color below the lateral band. Specimens are usually one to one and a half inches long, two inches is considered the upper limit of normal size.

The bridled shiner is located primarily in the ponds and lakes of the northeastern, southeastern, and northwestern sections of our state. Its habitat is the clear, quiet waters and prefers the shallows where there is vegetation over mud or gravel bottoms.

Slimey Sculpin  
*Cottus cognatus*

The sculpin is perhaps the most commonly imitated baitfish in the United States. It is familiar to most as the Muddler Minnow, Sculpin, Miller's Thumb or Bullhead. The fly tied to imitate it is the Muddler Minnow and has proven itself successful. And well so. There are approximately three hundred species of sculpins in the world. The most common to freshwater is the specie *bairdi*. Although Connecticut may encounter this species, the most common to the state is the species *cognatus*, which is very similar.

The slimey sculpin is unusually shaped: the head is grossly large and flat; the eyes are dorsally mounted and predominate. The dorsal spines and fin run together and extend to the tail. The anal fin is long and extended. The pectoral fins are large and angled downward. There are two or three soft saddles (spines) under the pectoral fins.

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The coloration is brownish grey dorsally and laterally, and lighter ventrally. The spawning males are darker and the dorsal fin develops an orange edging.

Spawning takes place in the rocky riffles where the male guards the eggs in the nest. The sculpins prefer cold, clear streams and are fond of vegetation. Lengths of four inches are reached.

In Connecticut, sculpin samples have been collected mostly in the northern streams. The east and west branches of the Farmington River and some tributaries of the Housatonic have provided the best samples.

Tessellated Darter  
*Etheostoma olmstedii*

The tessellated darter, a member of the perch family, is a native fish to Connecticut and is found in most streams of the northeastern United States. It is a fish that is familiar to most people who have had their toes nibbled at while wading in the shallows of a rivers larger pools.

This darter is olivaceous dorsally, lighter laterally and yellowish ventrally. There are dark blotches on its sides which may appear "W" shaped. There are two separate dorsal fins; spines are located in the first and anal fins. The head or snout is usually pointed and the pectoral fins are unusually large.

Spawning is in the spring. The male guards the eggs, which are laid on the undersides of rocks. The habitat consists of riffles and the slower reaches of rivers and streams. They are occasionally found in ponds and lakes. They prefer the shallow waters and are considered a non-schooling, evasive fish. Movement is by short "darts" or bursts of rapid swimming, hence the name.

Darters are entirely a bottom species and imitations should be fish as such. Lengths to four inches may be attained and are best imitated with Muddlers fished slow and darted on a full sinking line.

The baitfish which have been discussed are present in adequate populations in this state to insure good fishing. Imitation and knowledge of each is necessary for successful gamefishing. There are, however, several species of foodfish found in Connecticut which are not as heavily populated as those above, but could become

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major food sources in the waters of nearby states. I will describe six species so that identification and imitation will be made easier.

Stoneroller  
*Campostoma anomalum*

The common stoneroller is a species which has been introduced to Connecticut with limited success. It is a medium-large fish that has reached a size of eight inches. It is colored brown dorsally, lighter brown laterally and is whitish ventrally. The adults exhibit dark scales over the back and sides. The snout is long and overhangs the mouth. The immature differ slightly, being brownish overall. The very young have a black lateral band.

Spawning is in the spring. The breeding males exhibit tubercles with fin color changes to orange and black. The sole habitation is the riffled areas of smaller, clear streams.

Bluntnose Minnow  
*Pimephales notatus*

The bluntnose minnow is a smaller native of Connecticut whose primary range is from the Dakotas eastward. It is easily identified by the blunt, squared snout and rounded, slim body. The mouth is small for the seemingly large head.

This minnow's back is olive colored, its sides are lighter olive or silvery and the belly is white. There is usually a dark banding extending from the snout to the base of the tail. A dark caudal spot is evidenced at the base of the tail as with the spot-tail minnow.

The bluntnose spawns from mid-spring through early fall and as such, the young are available for forage almost continually. The eggs are attached to the undersides of rocks and are guarded by the male. Habitat consists of creeks, rivers and ponds and it is felt that the bluntnose can withstand higher degrees of turbidity and pollution than other species. Lengths of three inches are attained.

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Fathead Minnow  
*Pimephales promelas*

The fathead is the popular minnow familiar to anyone who has bought live bait at the local bait shop. Because of this minnow's hearty attitude and its ability to survive in a wide variety of environments, its range is extensive and includes most of North America. Despite this, few have established themselves in Connecticut, where it is an introduced fish.

The fathead is olivaceous dorsally, lighter laterally and a whitish-yellow ventrally. There is a narrow, dark banding at the base of the caudal fin. Many older fish exhibit a purplish tinge. Breeding males are colored golden-copper and have tubercles.

This minnow spawns in the late spring and early summer by attaching the eggs to the undersides of logs and stones. The male then guards the eggs. The fathead reaches lengths of three inches and is uncommon in fast streams or large, deep lakes.

Pearl Dace  
*Semotilus margarita*

The pearl dace is a native to this state and has a broad range including the Northern Great Lakes, Canada and the upper Atlantic Coast. Its habitat is equally as large, as it is at home both in the clear, cold streams associated with trout and the boggy, brown-tinted waters of the large mouth bass.

This minnow is colored olive dorsally, is lighter laterally and is white ventrally with small, dark, irregular blotches on its sides, giving a mottled appearance. The spawning males are red to rosy tinted along their flanks. Spawning is in the spring and, while no nest is built, males guard the breeding territory. A smaller baitfish, lengths of only three or four inches are attained.

Trout Perch  
*Percopsis omiscomaycus*

The trout perch is a native foodfish to Connecticut who, as its name implies, resembles both the trout and the perch with its body and fin configuration. There is a large, upright dorsal fin and an adipose fin present.

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The general coloration is pale silver and the identifying characteristics are rows of spots: one row along the dorsal line; one row along the lateral line; and one row between the two on each side.

The habitat includes lakes, ponds and occasionally streams. Typically, the trout perch roams the depths during the day, entering the shallows at dusk to feed. Spawning is in the spring and takes place in the shallows and inlet streams. Lengths of four inches are common.

Banded Killfish  
*Fundulus diaphanus*

The banded killfish enjoys a range on the east coast from Canada to the Carolinas and westward to the Great Lakes. It is colored olive dorsally, is lighter laterally and whitish ventrally. It has a depressed head and elongated snout. It is easily recognized by the dark vertical banding present from the gill plate to the tail. Males exhibit eighteen to twenty two bands and females, fourteen to sixteen bands. Lengths are between three and four inches.

The banded killfish spawns in the summer and is typically a large schooling fish. Its habitat includes the shallows of lakes and ponds and the slower sections of large rivers. It prefers weedy waters and is usually found near the surface rather than the depths.

The final group of baitfish to be discussed are not found in Connecticut waters but are often very common to the systems of other states. Most are populated throughout the eastern and central states and range westward to the Rocky Mountains. Because of their abundance, imitations should be carried by the lake or river angler who is traveling to new waters.

Blacknose Shiner  
*Notropis heterolepis*

The blacknose shiner is a small, silvery colored baitfish who is very similar to the blackchin shiner (which see). It is colored dark green dorsally, silvery laterally and is silvery-white ventrally. There is a dark lateral band which extends around the snout, but

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does not touch the chin. This band is higher than the mid-lateral position. The tail is deeply forked.

The blacknose reaches a maximum size of two and one-half inches. The range includes New England through the Great Lakes and south to Ohio and Indiana. It prefers clear water lakes and slower streams which contain vegetation and is fond of the shallows. Spawning is in the spring and early summer.

Rosyface Shiner  
*Notropis rubellus*

The rosyface shiner is another minnow whose size seldom exceeds two and one-half to three inches. It is a bluish-silver color dorsally, silver laterally and silver-white ventrally. There is a lavender colored lateral band present from the posterior gill plate to the tail. The body displays an overall lavender hue. The snout is pointed and the origin of the dorsal fin is significantly behind the origin of the pelvic fins.

The range of this shiner is from the Great Lakes southward to the Great Plains and eastward to the Hudson River. Its southernmost limit is Virginia.

The rosyface enjoys clear, moderate sized streams which are fast flowing. Clean bottom materials are a requirement. It winters in the deep riffles and pools and spawns in the spring and early summer over sandy gravel bottoms. The males develop tubercles over the entire body during this time, but no color changes are noted.

Bigmouth Shiner  
*Notropis dorsalis*

The bigmouth shiner is a smallish, delicate minnow whose tolerance of a wide variety of habitats makes him a desirable baitfish. His coloration is olive or straw toned dorsally, silvery laterally and whitish ventrally. The head is flattened and the mouth is unusually large, extending to mid-eye. The bigmouth reaches a size of three inches and is common from the Dakotas to the Great Lakes and throughout New York state.

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Hornyhead Chub  
*Ambloplites biguttata*

This larger sized baitfish is colored bluish-olive on its backside, a light olive or yellow-olive on its sides and has a pale yellow or white belly. There is a black spot at the base of the tail. A dark lateral band is present and extends around the snout to the tail. The eye is small for the body size.

The hornyhead ranges from New York to the Rocky Mountains and southward to Alabama. Its habitat is small to medium sized clear water streams. It is found over sandy or gravelly bottoms in the slower sections of the stream. It is fond of vegetation.

Spawning is in the spring. Breeding males develop tubercles over the head area but exhibit little color change. Males guard the nest which they build. Lengths to eight inches are known.

Blackchin Shiner  
*Notropis heterodon*

The blackchin shiner is a small, silvery minnow very much like the blacknose shiner. It is colored dark olive dorsally, silver laterally and is silvery-white ventrally. The dark lateral band extends from the chin to the tail, dissecting the mid eye. The front edge of the lower lip is edged in black, giving the minnow its common name. The fins are fawn colored.

The blackchins range is the same as the blacknose. It reaches a maximum size of two and one half inches. The habitat is weedy lakes and is found over mud and sand bottoms. Spawning is in the late spring. Color changes during this time are minimal.

Emerald Shiner  
*Notropis atherinoides*

The emerald shiner is a small, emerald-green colored minnow whose range includes Canada, the mid central and some western states. Its southern ranges include Virginia in the east and Texas in the west.

This minnow has a dark emerald back, is lighter colored on its sides and is silvery below the lateral line. The belly is white. The lateral band is faint and greenish colored. The fins are transparent. Its size rarely exceeds three inches.

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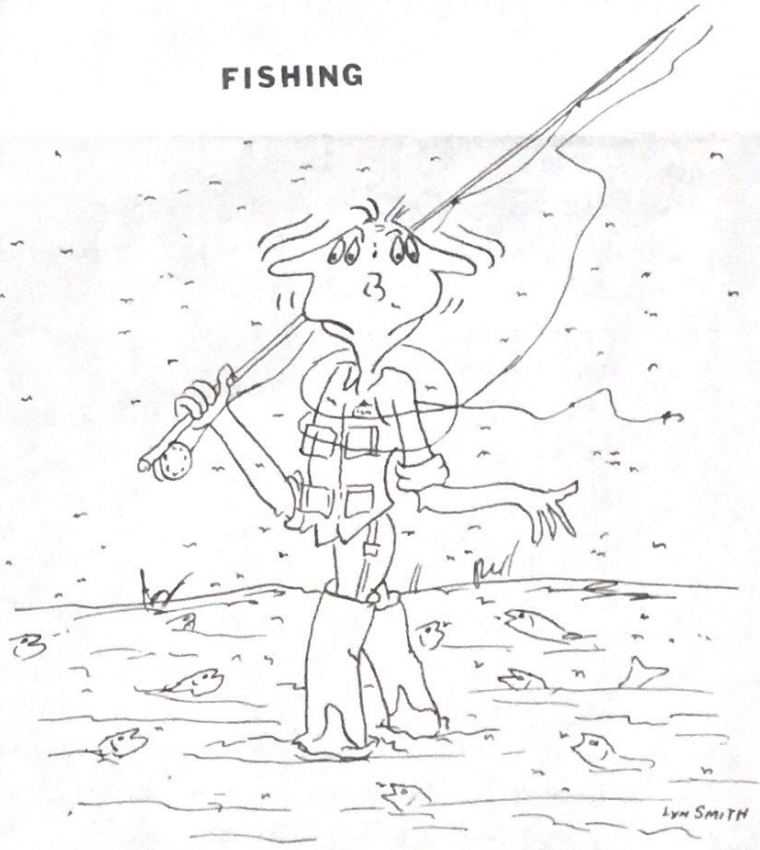
The emerald shiner can be found in clear water ponds and streams where it spends most of the daylight hours submerged to moderate depths, surfacing in large schools at dusk to feed. The adults may move into the fast water tributaries during the fall, although it is unclear as to why. This minnow is known to most as the "canned" minnow sold in jars to the winter ice fishermen. It is an excellent fish to imitate.

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**FISHING**



**THE HATCH IS ON!**

EASTERN COUNCIL CFFA  
INTRODUCTION TO FLY TYING

CLASSES: There will be a six week course designed for those people who wish to learn the fundamental techniques of fly tying. Classes will meet on the following Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. at the Mansfield Middle School, Mansfield, Connecticut.

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>
1	2/21	#12 Burlap; #12 Picket Pin
2	3/7	#10 Moby Dick; #10 Silver Dart
3	3/14	#12 Dark Cahill; #12 Hornberg
4	3/21	#10 Squirrel Tail; #10 Bucktail
5	3/28	#14 Light Cahill; #14 Adams
6	4/4	Open Class: Patterns to be chosen by class

EQUIPMENT: All necessary hooks and materials and equipment will be supplied. Anyone wishing to bring their own vise and related equipment may do so.

CLASS SIZE: Limited to 15 students.

TUITION: \$7.00. A worthwhile investment.

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ECCFFA ENROLLMENT APPLICATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please print required information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Return application to Elmer Latham

79 Northfield Rd. Coventry, Ct. 06238

(MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: E.C.C.F.F.A.)

FEBRUARY 1979 CALENDAR

February 2 CFFA Fly Tying School, Fourth Class  
 February 7 Board of Director's Meeting  
 February 9 CFFA Fly Tying School, Fifth Class  
 February 10 Annual CFFA Banquet, see page 1  
 February 10 Deadline for LINES & LEADERS  
 February 16 CFFA Fly Tying School, Final Class  
 February 21 ECCFFA Fly Tying School, see page 11

February							1979
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28				

COMING EVENTS

March Eastern Council's Tag Sale, watch  
 for details