



LINES & LEADERS

Newsletter of the Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association
Volume 19, No. 2
September 1991

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Featuring Art Brodie, Alias "The Black Ghost"

At the meeting Art will have a show on fly fishing in the Northeast. Those of you who attended last year's show will remember his great Fly Fishing Tips Program. Art has published several magazine articles and was once the subject of a Sports Illustrated article.

PLACE: Veteran's Memorial Hall, Sunset Ridge, E. Hartford

DATE: Wednesday, September 11

TIME: Fly Tying - 7:00 pm
Program - 7:30 pm

COMING EVENTS

- CFFA Board of Directors Meeting 4 Sep 91
- Hebron Harvest Fair 5-8 Sept 91
- CFFA Membership Meeting 11 Sept 91
- Fed. of Fly Fishers, NE. Council 13-15 Sept 91
- Conclave, Hershey, PA
- CFFA Board of Directors Meeting 2 Oct 91
- 2nd Annual Fall Festival, E. Hartford 20 Oct
- CFFA Trip, Salmon River, NY 1-2 Nov 91
- CFFA Fly Tying & Rod Building Schools
3, 10, 17, 24, 21 Jan 92, 7 Feb 92
- Worcester Fishing & Outdoor Expo 6-10 Feb 92
- Theodore Gordon Flyfishers Show 9 Mar 92
- CFFA Fly Fishing School 5, 12, 19,
Mar 92, TBD Apr 92, TBD May 92

***DON'T FORGET ...There's still
time to put the **HEBRON
HARVEST FAIR*****



*on your calendar!
September 5 - 8*



*If you would like to help at this
event, please call Larry Johnson at
246-0728.*

From the Vest of the President



Welcome back to another year of CFFA programs and activities. As I'm writing this trout fishing has been pretty slow but several members have reported success with smallmouth bass. Quite a few members have had a chance to do some fishing in places like Maine, Alaska, and Martha's Vineyard and I'm looking forward to hearing some good fish stories and maybe a program or two from their adventures.

The Hebron Harvest Fair (September 5-8) may very well be underway when you receive this, so if you're in the area come to the Fair and drop by our booth. We offered a year's membership in CFFA along with a free enrollment in a fly tying or fly fishing class at last year's Civic Center Fishing Show. The winner drawn at the May meeting was Mr. David Destefano of Middletown. Congratulations Dave. We'll look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings. We plan on having a similar drawing at the Hebron Fair.

Remember that we've moved our Rod Building Class from this September to next January. It seems like a long way off, but it will be here before you know it. Combining rod building with our fly tying schools will give us more time to advertise the class and as a side benefit will also provide a savings on our rental expenses.

I'm pleased to note that our club trip to the Salmon River in November is a sell-out. I hope the fish are as enthusiastic as our members. For those who missed out this time we may be offering another trip next Spring. For those who have some time available to help out the club, we still have a few openings on the Board, and the banquet planning group will be gearing up for the next Annual Banquet. If you are interested, speak to any Board member at the September meeting or give us a call at the numbers listed in this newsletter.

Tight lines,

Larry Johnson



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CFFA is making a donation to the Atlantic Salmon Federation's Lee Wulff Conservation Fund.

The club is also contributing to the East Hartford Park Department for the 2nd Annual Fall Festival at Great River Park on 20 October.

The local media has been carrying reports of "impressive catches of trout" in some area waters. Trout, both rainbow and brown, up to 22¼ inches and four pounds, 9 ounces have been reported. Some of these waters include the West Branch of the Farmington River, Sandy Brook, the Blackberry River and in the Colebrook Reservoir on the West Branch of the Farmington River.

The Salmon River, NY trip sure sold out quickly. Sorry if you weren't able to go. Maybe next time. Rumor has it there may be a late spring or early summer trip. Keep a look out in future issues of the Lines and Leaders.

Members will be working on the Rearing Pool some day in August or September. Contact Dale Matthews if you are interested.

The club will be sending two people to the FFF's Northeastern Council Conclave in Hershey, PA. Ed.



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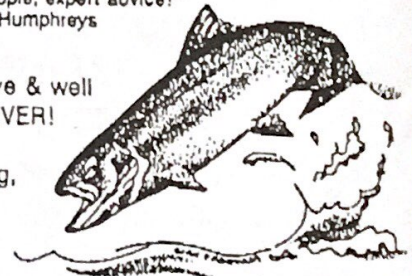
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Bright Flies - Big Salmon

by Fran Verdoliva

It seems that when the spring steelhead season is just over we start thinking about the tremendous run of Pacific salmon, chinook salmon in particular, that will be taking place sooner than we realize in the Salmon River. For those of us who are not actively involved in the summer troll fishery on the lake, and without summer runs of Atlantic salmon or skamania steelhead in the Salmon River, the chinooks offer the next viable fishery to hold us over till the winter run of steelhead.

Flyfishing for chinook salmon is still in its infancy and is often disregarded by flyfishermen who do not understand the habits of this species when it enters its natal rivers to spawn. Even in its native habitat on the west coast the chinook until recently was seen as best fished for with spinning and casting gear in conjunction with deep diving plugs, heavy wobbling spoons, and egg sacs the size of golf balls. The fact that these fish were often times found in extremely fast and deep water made the flyfishermen doubt the practicality of attempting to fish for this species. Then a general attitude that this species was maybe a step or two lower on the desirability scale as compared to the Atlantic salmon, steelhead or coho kept some away from the sport.

From practical experience I would rather fish for steelhead, but there is nothing undesirable about fishing for chinook salmon. I can also say from experience that of all the species available in the Salmon River, the chinook is the easiest caught. I do not plan to discuss or debate here the endless controversy that you cannot legitimately catch chinooks except by snagging, or that any salmon caught in the mouth is snagged or lined in the mouth. Simply put, discussions of this sort are hogwash. All fish are capable of being enticed to strike, even if it is not a feeding response.

Why is the chinook the easiest to catch? It's simple mathematics - there are more of them than any other species running the river. If the annual return rate varies between 10 and 18%, and the river is stocked with 600,000 salmon, then you can expect from 60,000 to 108,000 salmon returning. That doesn't count natural reproduced fish and strays returning. Crowd that many salmon into 13 miles of river and you set up conditions that make these fish very aggressive. Just look at a chinook and they look mean. All these fish will become territorial looking for resting and spawning areas, and the males in particular will be very aggressive in obtaining dominance over other males when finding spawning mates.

If you think that catching fish that average 20 lbs (can exceed 40 lbs), that can strip out 200 yards of backing and flyline, and make you feel like you have wrapped your line around the axle of a Mack Truck is exciting, then you should try for chinooks on a fly rod.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Fly rods should be from 9' to 10', for 9/10 weight lines, in conjunction with 15 lb tippets. This is not delicate fishing. My noodle fly rod concept with running lines for steelhead is out of place when it comes to chinooks. Although running lines with split shot can be used effectively to dead drift flies to chinooks, I have had running lines break with chinooks. I therefore prefer recommended rod line weights in floating lines. The casts are not long and split shot is not as much of a nuisance in these casting situations. I also recommend two sinking tip lines for chinook fishing - the Teeny Nymph 5' sink tip for riffle section fishing, and the Teeny Nymph 24' tip for the large deep holes. The floating line with split shot is best for pocket water fishing. Your reel should have capacity for a minimum of 150 yards backing and a strong disc drag system.

Since leader requirements on the Salmon River for sinking lines do not allow for short leaders, 6' minimum requirement, I recommend the Sue Burgess 6' braided sinking leaders in the L16 and L24 range, to attach to the Teeny Nymph Lines. This will keep the fly down with the sink tip.

The most important thing is what fly should you be using for chinooks? My theory is that 90% of your flies should be the biggest, ugliest most fluorescent creations you can come up with, but 5% should consist of dull and natural colored nymphs, and the remaining 5% egg type patterns in various colors. My number one pick is the Comet and Boss style fly. These flies incorporate long tails, long hackles and bead chain eyes to help them sink and also give motion to the fly. Coles Comet, Orange, Black, Fluorescent Pink and Chartreuse Boss, my own creation the Catfish Comet and King Comet all take chinooks consistently in sizes 2 to 8. Large Woolly Buggers and Egg Sucking Leeches with a touch of crystal flash or flashabou in them work great. The Frammus is also a top producer. Large stonefly nymphs, Teeny Nymphs and Nix's Woolly Specials are effective. Egg patterns such as Double Egg Sperm Fly, Glo Bugs and single egg patterns especially take fish on the spawning beds and if you really want to break tradition, add some Anise Oil for scent.

Where and when should you fish? The season starts August 15 on the Salmon River. If water flows are sufficient, bright silver chinooks in the lower stretches can be caught daily. This is excellent pocket water fishing. Look for fish hiding behind boulders and rocks, cast with a quartering, downstream approach, mending the line to allow the fly to reach sufficient depth and swing into the pocket. This is excellent Comet Fly water. If the water is low fish the pools with a floating line, dead drift the fly, and at the end of the drift strip the fly back in a slow retrieve.

Don't set the hook on everything you feel or you will constantly snag fish. Chinooks are notoriously light hitters, but the telltale signs of a true take are that the fly will stop, there will be a slight pull like a leaf hitting your line, then a very dramatic head shake with the head coming to the surface, and then turning and making a violent run down stream. Ninety-nine point nine percent (99.9%) of the time if the fish jumps or runs upstream with a strange sound and angle to your line the fish is foul-hooked. Point the rod at the fish and the fly will pull out or break off. There is no need to waste your time trying to pull one in from the tail or side, when there are thousands of other fish to be caught.

As the season progresses you gradually move up river with the fish. I feel the peak of the run is the last of September and beginning of October with the fish then remaining in the river into early November on the beds. You need a rod that can move them. The nice thing about fishing the spawning beds is that there is a good chance of hooking steelhead and brown trout feeding on salmon eggs behind the beds.

THINGS NOT TO DO

Chinooks are very tolerant but you cannot step right on top of them. Avoid crowds, yes it is possible - fish high water and weekdays. Fish early morning and late in the day when fish are anxious to move to the beds. If you have fished a fish to your own exhaustion and it will not hit, move onto other fish. If you keep trying the same fish you may get it to hit, you may spook it, but more likely you will end up foul hooking it. That's a waste of time when there are plenty of other fish available. If you stay a couple hundreds of yards away from the crowds, fishing above or below them, they will send you plenty of fish via their pressure. Above all else, don't let anyone tell you that you can't catch these chinooks legally. The only way you can't catch these fish legally is if you don't fish for them. Catch my drift.

Here are a few recipes for flies. Hooks used are Eagle Claw 1197 Nickle Salmon/Steelhead.
Coles Comet - Tail: Long Fluorescent Yellow Calf

Tail

Egg Sucking Leech - Tail: Black Marabou and Crystal Flash

Sizes 2-4 Body: Black or Purple Estaze

Hackle: Palmered Purple or Black

Head: Fluorescent Orange or Pink Chenille Egg

King Comet - Tail: 6 Strands Fluorescent Green Fishair

Sizes 2-8 Body: Copper Braid

Wing: White Fishair, with Lime Green Lure

Flash or Crystal Flash over the top

Head: Fluorescent Orange Chenille head shaped like muddler head with bead chain eyes tied in.

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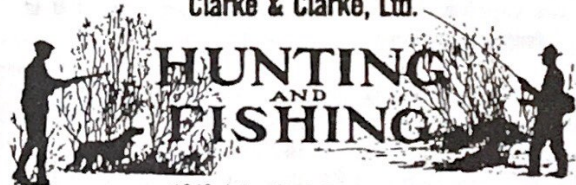
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Palmers, Hackles, and Other Strange Notions

The article here last month had quick response from readers.

One reader was kind enough to let me know the history of the Tellico Nymph that I wrote about in the last issue. Apparently, the Tellico was originated by Rev. Edwin T. Dalstrom for use on the Tellico River in Tennessee.

The reader also advises that Rex Gerlach's 1978 Edition of "Creative Fly Tying and Fly Fishing" lists various versions of the Tellico. For instance, the shellback can be peacock herl, pheasant tail fibers or turkey quill segment. The tail can be brown hackle

barbules, scarlet hackle barbules or Guinea Hen fibers. The body materials may vary as a function of the regional area from yellow floss to yellow yarn (the original?) to yellow chenille. The only items that appear to be common are the peacock herl ribbing and the brown hackle legs (collar).


I've been given a few challenges by the readership. I'll save these for future issues. That gives me time to figure out the answers!

If you have any requests for a specific pattern, tying technique or tying questions in general, I will do my best to answer them in the Lines & Leaders. You may get in touch with me by sending your questions or requests to me, The Royal Footman, c/o Editor - Lines & Leaders.

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The Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association, Inc. is organized "To Preserve and Promote the Pleasures and Tradition of Fly Fishing and to Conserve Game-Fish Waters." CFFA membership meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May. Meetings are held at the Veterans' Memorial Clubhouse, Sunset Ridge Drive, East Hartford, CT.

"Lines and Leaders" is the official publication of the Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association, Inc. and is distributed to its membership and allies of conservation. Business card ads may be placed at a cost of \$5 per ad or \$40 for 9 months. CFFA members may place for-sale or want ads of a non-commercial nature without charge. Newsletter correspondence should be sent to Lynn & Mike Stewart, 10 Bradley Brook, North Granby, CT 06060. Change of address notices should be sent to CFFA, P.O. Box 380260, Silver Lane, East Hartford, CT 06138-0268.

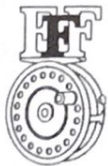
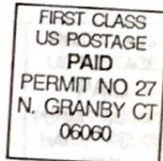


SEPTEMBER MEETING: Art Brodie - September 11

Copy Deadline: Second Wednesday of month previous to publication



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