

LINES & LEADERS

Newsletter of the Connecticut Fly Fishermen's Association Volume 26, No. 2 October 1998

Organized "To Preserve and Promote the Pleasures and Traditions of Fly Fishing and to Conserve Game-Fish Waters."

OCTOBER MEETING

New England Saltwater Fly Fishing An *In-Depth* Perspective

In the past we have had presenters share experiences fishing exotic places like Montana, the Canadian Rockies and New Zealand. Our presentation in October will show us fishing locations in New England from an entirely different perspective.

Mike Laptew is a professional underwater film maker specializing in saltwater fishing. He has produced two highly praised videos on Striper fishing. He has collaborated with Lefty Kreh, Lou Tabory and Flip Pallot to film from above and below the water. He has written several fascinating articles for fishing magazines. In a recent "On the Water" magazine article he describes an underwater tour of Block Island's fishing grounds. We hope he shares his observations about the effect of water depth on colors and effective flies and retrieval techniques.

Please join us. Bring friends!

PLACE: Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse Sunset Ridge East Hartford, CT

DATE: Wednesday, 14 October TIME: Fly Tying - 7:00 p.m. Program - 7:30 p.m.



From the Vest of the President



Ted Rzepski is going to be taking over for me at the October meeting. I'll be in Maine fishing for landlocks. As a matter of fact, it's the very place that Charlie McCautry's slide show was about last

month, Grand Lake Stream. It's also the same place the crazed raccoon jumped out of the bushes onto my salmon and I ended up kissing the bear. Let's hope nothing like that happens again. (I mean kissing the bear, not Charlie's slide show).

Speaking of Ted Rzepski, he landed his first and second false albacore from shore on the weekend. One was over ten pounds. Then he sat down and wrote a poem about it. Ask him to read it to you at the meeting. Way to go Ted.

Speaking of false Albacore, Roger Plourde was out on the salt for a couple of days with Jerry Wade and Ernie Boutiette and landed a 13 ½ pound false albacore. Largest albie ever landed in Jerry's boat. Believe me, a lot of fish get landed in Jerry's boat. So Roger's record is quite an accomplishment. Way to go Roger.

Since this vest article seems to turning into albacore tales, I landed one too, rather the lobster pot I was hooked to landed it. The fat albert ran around the rope between the pot and a lobster buoy submerged about four feet under the water. Every time we tried to snag the buoy with the boat hook, the wind would push us to the other side of the sunken buoy. So I would have to feed out line and dash to the opposite side of the boat with my rod stuck in the water, so the boat would drift over my fly line. The albie was still on, so every time I fed out line he took off. After about five tries, I was well into my backing and worried about losing my fly line. Jerry finally hooked the buoy and unwrapped my line. Then I reeled in the completely exhausted albacore. We figured that all the time we were trying to get unwrapped, the albie was pulling against the rope and buoy. No wonder he was almost lifeless. Anyway, luck was with the tough fish. He was revived and hurriedly swam

As a fisherman, I'm not happy having to dodge lobster pots while trying to fish. But on occasion I do eat a lobster. I guess what I think about it depends on where I'm sitting, in a restaurant or in a boat.

Charlie



CLUB

NEWS

Rearing Pool - Jack Smola reports there are about 200 rainbows in the pool ready for fall stocking. We are

waiting for the Willi to rise before we stock. We are targeting no later than the first week of Oct. By the time you read this the fish should be in! All fish are in the 12 to 15 inch range.

For Sale - An outstanding opportunity!!! 5 Barrels (30 Gal size) of fur and hair, moth-free tying materials. Will sell as one lot for reasonable offer. Call Walt Telke, 860-628-6055 for Inventory List.

For Sale, Saltwater Fly Rod - Lamiglass 8/9 Wgt, 9 ft. Two piece with an extra (7 or 8 inch) fighting butt that can be replaced with the standard 2 inch butt. \$125. Call Patrick Brady, 203-755-2833.

NOTICE: JOIN ME!

Jack Smola on White River in Arkansas. Call 860-763-1856 for details.



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COMING EVENTS

CFFA Board Meeting 7 Oct 98 CFFA Membership Meeting 14 Oct 98 4 Nov 98 CFFA Board Meeting American Museum of Fly Fishing, Dinner 5 Nov 98 Auction, Farmington Marriott, Info: 802-362-3300 CFFA Membership Meeting *Note date Change*

12 Nov 98 Fly Tying Show, NJ Nov 98 The Fly Fishing Show, Garden State 29-31 Jan 99

Exhibit Center, Somerset, NJ

The Fly Fishing Show, Royal Plaza Trade

13-14 Feb 99

Center, Marlborough, MA

20 Feb 99

CFFA Banquet CMTA Fishing Show, Civic Center

25-28 Feb 99

World Fly Fishing Expo, Wilmington, MA 13-14 Mar 99



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On Salem Pond

By Charlie Place

It was the last day of October and I was riding in a station wagon loaded with fishing gear and three expert spin fishermen. Their six fishing rods lay angled over the back seat, all rigged for stripers. I was sitting right behind the driver. A long, scaled, plastic lure dangled from the well-used rod leaning closest to me. It had an ink black back and a creamy white belly that sparkled as it swayed back and forth, caught by a single hook drawn through one of the rod's tarnished guides. Its large dark red eye was scarred from a previous battle and stared lifelessly. We went over a bump and the six rods bounced, filling the wagon with the sound of rattling, razor-sharp, treble hooks.

It spooked me a little. I'm not used to all this hardware. I'm used to the quiet swish of fly rod and a single hook, hidden under colorful feathers. I was spooked all right but not as much as we all would be later.

We were headed for a salt pond on the coast. A call from the driver's friend had told us that Salem Pond was full of hungry stripers. I hadn't fished with these guys before, but they knew me from work and had invited me to go. With names like Catfish, Pennsylvania Slim and Fish Hound (AKA Chow Hound), there was no doubt that these were dedicated fishermen. That's not all. Sea Dog was coming later. Sea Dog was a legend. It was said, if you scratched him on the arm, fish scales would come off.

We were running early, so we stopped at a well-known fast food restaurant. We ordered and found some seats. Except for Chow Hound. He sat alone. I asked. "What's up?"

"You don't want to know," Catfish answered.

"We never let him sit with us because of what he eats," Slim said.

"Why, what did he order?" I asked.

"A pumpkin milkshake and a fish sandwich," Catfish answered. I just continued eating my burger and tried not to think about it.

Dinner was over and we all piled into the wagon. Another thirty minutes and we would be at the pond. Since Chow Hound was in the back seat with me, I was hoping that he wasn't prone to motion sickness.

Catfish's friend met us at the pond and gave us the layout. He told us where the fish were likely to be and where we could wade without getting into trouble. We were fishing an incoming tide. The one place we were told to avoid was a salt marsh. "It looks like flats," he said, "but it's real muddy and more than one fisherman has gotten stuck waist deep in the mud, and drowned when the tide came in. Some have never been found."

"I have to go to work," he said suddenly. "Good luck."

The three spin fishermen were in the water in no time. Since I was a fly fisherman, I was slower getting ready. I had to get my rod out of the case, attach the reel, string up the rod, etc. While I was doing this, a man appeared. He was a tall, slim man wearing a long black tattered trench coat. Underneath the trench coat it looked like he was wearing old time long johns, the ones with the trap door. He smiled a toothless smile. His face was pale gray and leathery looking with deep, dark circles under his eyes. His long gray matted hair hung on his shoulders. He smelled like wood smoke. "Mister?" he said, "Jack Lantern here," in a deep raspy voice.

"Hi," I answered nervously.

"You wouldn't happen to have some matches?" he asked. I rummaged around in my fishing bag and came up with a book of matches. As I passed them to him, my hand brushed his. His hand was cold and rough and gave me a chill. "Thanks, Mister," Jack said as he turned and shuffled away.

"Geez," I thought as I finished getting ready. "Homeless people out here?"

Catfish and Chow Hound had moved way out into the pond. Slim was a lot closer so I decided to wade out and fish with him. Slim and I weren't catching anything, but we could see frightened bait fish leaping out of the water trying to avoid being eaten by the ravenous stripers. They were too far away for a cast and the pond was too deep between them and us. It was a frustrating situation. I asked Slim if he thought Catfish and Chow Hound were catching anything. He said, "No. You would be able to hear Chow Hound yelling, 'Fish on!"

It was only a half hour before dark when Sea Dog arrived. He carried a cooler, a backpack, and an assortment of spinning rods to the edge of the pond. I was hoping there were some adult beverages in his cooler. Sea Dog waded out to where Slim and I were fishing. We asked where he had been. "Everybody knows that striper fishing is night fishing," he said authoritatively. Slim pointed out the stripers that were feeding, but couldn't be reached.

"I'll take care of that," Sea Dog said. "Let me warm up for a while." We split up and fished for another hour or so. It was dark and the feeding stripers had refused to come any closer. Finally Sea Dog marched to shore. "I'll take care of that," he repeated.

While he was on land, I turned to look at the salt marsh. I had no plans to go anywhere near it. I was just curious. There was a soft red glow moving across the forbidden marsh. It pulsated slowly like a coal from a fireplace. I strained my eyes to get a better look. I could see a silhouette of a man. A man wearing a trench coat, seemingly floating slowly across the salt bog, above the sucking mud, holding the glowing coal in front of him as he went. I closed my eyes for a few seconds in disbelief. When I opened them he was gone.

Sea Dog was back, rushing through the water. He had a rod that looked like it was fifteen feet long. I could hear a chain rattling. "What the heck is that," I asked.

"Chain mail," Sea Dog said, in a determined voice. "I'm sending those stripers chain mail." He stopped twenty feet below me. The wake his strong legs made lapped against my waders. He reared back and shot a long cast toward the distant stripers. You could hear the chain mail's eerie rattle as it arched thirty feet beyond unsuspecting linesiders. The longest cast I had ever seen. Sea Dog began reeling, "Got one," he shouted. After a couple of minutes he landed his fish.

"Striper?" I asked.

Sea Dog didn't answer. "Striper?" I called again.

"Half a striper," he answered, in a whisper.

"Half a striper?" I muttered to myself. Then I understood.

Something crashed into my leg. A shill shot up my spine. The hair on my neck stood straight up. "No, no, no," I thought. I stood still. Real still. My widened eyes darted about looking for a telltale fin. I thought about "Shark Week." I thought about my family. I thought about poor Captain Quint sliding slowly down that Great White's throat. Something bumped my leg again. I slowly moved my shaking hand into my vest pocket and clutched my small flashlight. I took a deep breath and turned the light on. A horseshoe crab! "It was a horseshoe crab!" I shouted.

"What?" Sea Dog said.

"Nothing," I answered, laughing with relief.

Catfish and Chow Hound were slowly moving toward us. Slim saw them and was reeling up. I was happy to be getting out of there. We stood in a circle, hip deep in the salt water, discussing our night's fishing. I told them about the glow in the marsh and the homeless guy. Sea Dog told them about the half striper. Despite his eating habits, Chow Hound is the smart one. "What are we standing here for," he said. "Let's get the heck out of this water."

"One more cast," Sea Dog begged.

"Hurry up!" we all yelled at the same time.

Sea Dog shot his chain mail high into the air. "This is like a Stephen King movie," I thought.

"I got a sea gull or something," Sea Dog shouted excitedly.

We all looked at his rod. Sure enough, his line was straight up in the air and skyrocketing all over the place. His reel sang as the apparent gull took out line.

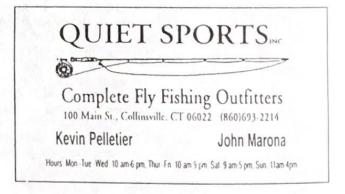
"No way," Catfish said, "Not a sea gull, not at night." We strained to see what it was but it was too dark.

All of a sudden Sea Dog's chain mail dropped out of the blackness making a tremendous splash as it hit the surface of the pond. He began reeling it in.

"Something is still on this line, and it's heavy," he said. We waited anxiously. Sea Dog finished reeling in whatever it was. Then dragged it through the water with his rod until it floated in a heap in front of us. Slim reached down and carefully picked it up.

"It's some kind of a large rag," he said. Four flashlights illuminated the mystery cloth. Slim took the hooks out of it and shook out the water. "Looks like a trench coat," he said.





POSSIBLE FEE INCREASES

Our last month's article, Sportsmen Discuss Possible Fee Increases - Alternatives, generated quite a bit of interest. Most sportsmen are NOT aware of where their license/permit fee moneys go and the article was an eye-opener to many.

Essentially the article stated that 1) ALL license fees are returned dollar for dollar to the DEP; 2) all Permit fees (Deer, Pheasant, Duck, Turkey) including bowhunting permits are retained by the General Fund; 3) that sources of revenue are available (Motorboat Fuel Tax transfer from the Transportation Fund, Interest on the Boating Fund, and allocation of Permit fees to DEP); and that sportsmen should initiate and support legislation to directly allocate "OUR" money to DEP before ANY license fee increase is contemplated.

Not included in the previous article is where a fee increase would be allocated if passed. A not well known law (Sec. 22a-27H, Conservation Fund), passed in 1990, essentially states that all new fees over and above license fees after that date will be deposited in "the Conservation Fund."

"b) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes to the contrary, on and after June 1, 1990. (1) the amount of any fee received by the Department of Environmental Protection which is attributable to the establishment of a new fee or the increase of an existing fee pursuant to the provisions of title 23 or 26 and (2) any fees paid to the department, pursuant to said titles, which are in excess of the total fees paid to the department pursuant to said titles for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1989, shall be deposited directly into the fund established by subsection (a) of this section and credited to the conservation account."

How does this affect sportsmen? Essentially, any new sportsmen's fees would not be returned directly to sportsmen's interests. Rather, they would go into the Conservation Fund which according to the statute,

"a) There is established a fund to be known as the "Conservation Fund" which shall be held by the Treasurer. Within the Conservation Fund, there is established and created an account to be known as the "conservation account." The conservation account shall be used by the Department of Environmental Protection for the administration of the central office and conservation and preservation programs authorized by the general statutes." Emphasis ours.

When this bill was debated in 1990, we objected on the grounds it conflicted with the provisions of sections dealing with federal funding (PR and WB hunting/fishing equipment federal excise tax returns) that "no funds accruing to the state from license fees paid by fishermen [hunters, trappers] shall be diverted for any other purpose than the propagation, preservation and investigation of fish and game and administration of the department relating thereto (Sec. 26-14, 15, 15a). Emphasis ours. And, we were concerned that "our" supposedly dedicated license revenue would be shifted and used for other purposes.

We were rightfully concerned with the broad spectrum wording of "conservation and preservation programs," and particularly "administration of the central office" which we considered a diversion and in direct conflict with the federally related state statutes. Virtually all other environmental groups saw this bill as a benefit to their special interests.

Has "our" money been diverted to other conservation uses or have we benefited from the Conservation Fund? It is difficult to determine with the general reluctance and limited financial data forthcoming from DEP. Since the major revenue sources for conservation programs are sportsmen and park fees, and considering the long-standing problem with keeping parks open, we tend to believe that "our" money is being used for other purposes not directly related to our concerns.

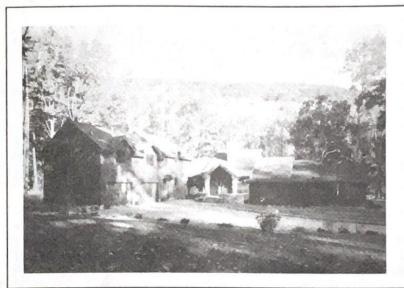
One could argue that ANY reasonable use of "our" funds benefits conservation and wildlife. Supporting Forests and Parks, since we hunt and fish on many of them; law enforcement; the licensing division; or "administration of the central office" all are part of our activities.

But again, we believe the mandatory statutes to collect federal funding are specific in wording and intent. The "propagation, preservation and investigation of fish and game" means studies, habitat manipulation and other special programs, not supporting under-funded tangential efforts; and the "administration of the department relating thereto" means expenses directly related to those specific federal aid programs including a Federal Aid Coordinator, not the hiring of wildlife biologists from federal funding to conduct the studies. Positions and tangential expenses currently funded by sportsmen, not in concert with the statutes, are legitimately General Fund expenses. Sportsmen, the environment and DEP would all benefit were that recognized and changed.

In conclusion, we see little if any benefit to sportsmen from the Conservation Fund and have concern the procedure is in violation of federal funding requirements. Our efforts should be to repeal our portion of the Conservation Fund statute in conjunction with better defining the current uses of federal funding, and to insure "our" money is applied to that which it was intended. It could be said the Conservation Fund is no more than a special fund within a special fund and could lead to a "slush fund" mentality to correct mistakes or short term crises.

DEP has informed us that specific program funding in conjunction with long-range planning will be presented to the legislature next session to document requirements and secure more general funding. With this effort, special dedicated funding such as the Conservation Fund is not needed.

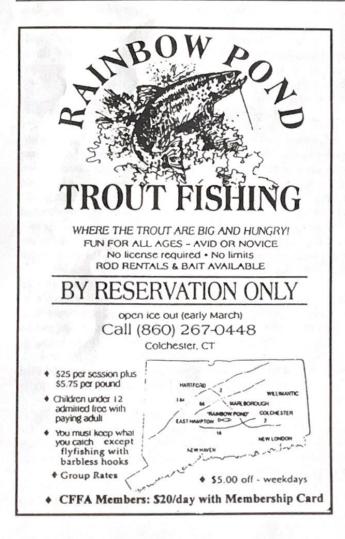
Reprinted from July, 1998 Hook 'n Bullet



WATERFRONT

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NEW MEMBERS!

The CFFA would like to welcome the following new members:

John Wilbur Steve R. Babbitt

Paul Heinz Dave Wirth

You folks are encouraged to participate in all the activities the CFFA has to offer. That way CFFA grows and becomes more vibrant. If you have any questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to approach any of the board members listed on the last page. Your suggestions regarding the Lines & Leaders are most welcomed. Ed.

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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, 215 Loomis Street, North Granby, CT 06060. Change of address notices should be sent to CFFA, P.O. Box 380260, East Hartford, CT 06138-0268.

COPY DEADLINE: Second Wednesday of month previous to publication.

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