

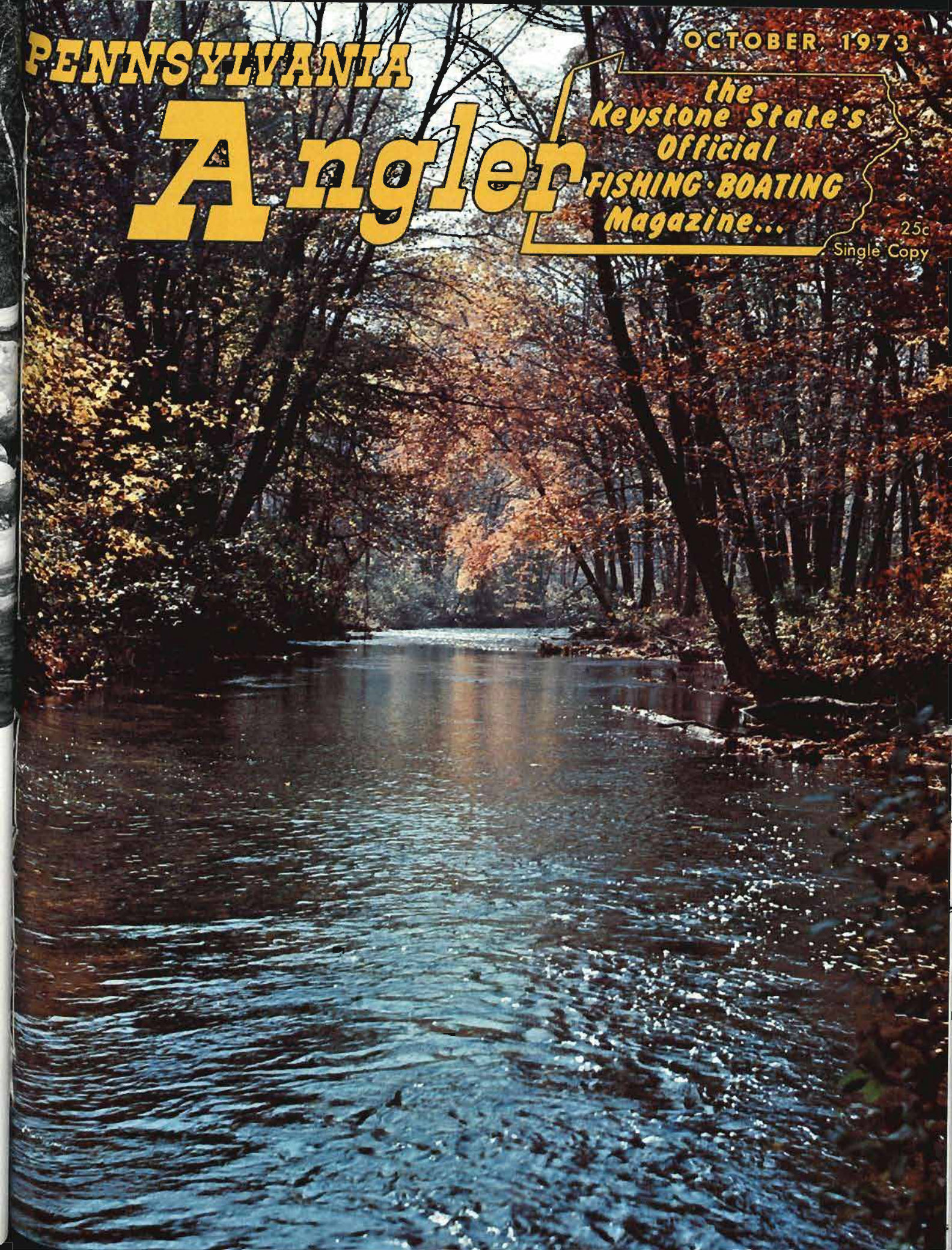
PENNSYLVANIA

# Angler

OCTOBER 1973

the  
Keystone State's  
Official  
FISHING·BOATING  
Magazine...

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# Autumn Fishing



I can remember vividly when the first Spring Gobbler Season was authorized by the Game Commission. After all the lengthy discussions, concerning our apprehensions of holding such a season "out of season," our non-scientific conclusion was that such a departure from our "bringing up" just shouldn't happen!

Even more vivid are the memories of a funny feeling about hunting in the spring. The smells, the sounds . . . the whole atmosphere seemed out of place. Instead of the traditional browns, yellows and reds hanging onto the trees and covering the forest floor, there were pale green vistas, and although there were dead leaves in the duff, there were sprouts of green poking through them.

Furthermore, the thick winter blood in our systems made us tire quicker and succumb more easily to spring fever, to the extent that soon after we had disguised ourselves as a big ball of leaves while we attempted to call in the male of the species—we fell asleep!

If you do this often enough, and long enough, you can change your ways and come to appreciate it as more than a "one season" sport.

It's amazing to me that in the same vein there are fishermen who think only of the elbow-to-elbow trout fishing of mid-April, or the esocids that come around early in May, or the great bronzebacks of the sun-fish family that make bass fishing the favorite sport of so many thousands of Pennsylvanians.

Somewhere in the process of growing up, more fishermen than there should be have become set in their ways to a point that they write off fishing as something that has to end around Labor Day.

Forgive the prejudices that show up now when I suggest that those who do so are really missing something. September, October, and November are a special time of year. A time when the flannel and wool shirts come out . . . when a fire in the fireplace feels good in the evening. But certainly not a time to put away the rod or shove the boat under the garage and cover it with tarps for the winter!

Compared to a few months ago when fish had to be coaxed out of their lethargy to come to hook and net, changing water temperatures put a new thrill into fishing the Commonwealth's waters.

Bass fishing really should be at its greatest now, and there's no question that the pike, muskies, and walleyes are really stirring. Additionally, in over 230 streams in Pennsylvania, the 1973 carry-over of trout is very high—not only because of a higher population this year (which we effected) but aided by the unfavorable weather that plagued Pennsylvania's fishermen in the early part of the season.

May I humbly suggest that if you've never tried it before, '73 ought to be one of the best years of your life for fishing. We have better water quality in more thousands of miles in Pennsylvania this year than at any time in the last 100 years. And in spite of pollution, tropical storms, and man's foolish attempts to undo the "damage" from the accompanying floods, the fishery is better and there are more fish out there to be caught.

Forget tradition, get out of past patterns, get up and get out into a Pennsylvania that has better fishing to offer now than it ever had. See if autumn fishing doesn't make you feel like you want to live forever.

RALPH W. ABELE  
Executive Director

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**ON THE COVER:** Stoney Creek, Dauphin County, one of the many fine trout streams open during the extended season which will close October 31st. From an Ektachrome by the Editor.

THAT PARTICULAR FLAT STRETCH PICTURED on the cover is about a mile, more or less, upstream from the house and for five years now I've vowed to fish it during October! Maybe this will be the year. Upstream from that point, another fifteen miles or so of Stoney Creek winds through as beautiful a piece of State Game Lands as you'll ever see. "Pristine" is a term generally reserved for unspoiled, beautiful, but remote wilderness areas—but pristine it is. And, after you've hiked the first few miles on the old abandoned railroad grade, you're willing to go along with "remote" as well. But actually, it's no more than fifteen miles from downtown Harrisburg to the cable which ends vehicular travel.

As writer Paul Ropp would put it, it's only a short hike until you get "beyond the beer can line," and then you are where it's at! The autumn angler would do well to carry along the bow and quiver—or the shootin' iron, depending on which part of October he spends in areas such as this.

For me, it's been difficult to decide where to fish, once autumn rolls around—Stoney Creek for trout, or the Susquehanna River, about four miles away, for bass, walleyes, and the threat of a musky. Up to now, the river has won out every year. But before reaching that decision, I've got to close my eyes as I run the gauntlet of the archery equipment and the guns. My home, unfortunately, is within 25 feet of the woods, and after a short two hundred yards through some privately owned wood-

land, I'm on the perimeter of more thousands of acres of State Game Lands than you can shake a 16 gauge at! It's difficult, indeed, to remain faithful to my chosen profession. To arrive at some sort of compromise, I limit my hunting to those days when it's raining too hard to fish or my wife's sick.

If there is one month that is made to order for the total outdoorsman, it's October. And the brilliant colors of autumn, though they are more beautiful around each bend in the creek, have nothing to do with it.



We've become accustomed to accepting September as the end of summer but our central Pennsylvania Septembers are still fairly warm—a bit too warm for climbing stream banks and such. But October is just warm enough to make still-fishing comfortable and still not too hot for a good hike back in, away from it all.

Evening fishing, the best of all in my book, is likewise comfortable. My

family and I have spent many evenings watching the sun go down on the Susquehanna. When the fish are cooperating, there's no time for picture taking, but the photo on this page is one we found time to take.

Water temperatures have dropped now to a point comfortable to the fish; they're more active, much more so than in September, I've found. Keeping bait alive and fresh is much less a problem than it was a few months ago. And yet, with all the advantages offered by autumn fishing, you've got to practically coax some anglers to get out the tackle again! Yep, they've already stored it away for the year.

The bait fisherman welcomes October; minnows and nightcrawlers keep well and either will take bass, walleyes and muskies equally well. The latter despite the old fisherman's tale that only an eleven inch sucker will take a musky. They'll even take you-know-what-kind-of cheese!

Hellgrammites and crayfish are likewise easier to hold and lucky is the angler who has an abundant supply. Stonecats are the favorite farther north, on the North Branch of the Susquehanna—you seldom see them used in this area. They make one of the most durable of baits. If action is slow, you can make repeated casts with the same stonecat and he'll be just as healthy as when you first hooked him through both lips. Keeping them from fouling you under a rock on the river bottom is another matter. Watch those spines! I've seen buddies reach into a bucket of stonecats and scoop up a selection, impale him on the hook, and go on about their fishing with no further regard for the feat just performed. I treat them as if I were disarming a bomb—and still get nailed!

Give it just one more try—you're missing half the fun if you haven't tried October fishing.



# FISHING OUTLOOK

By-- Stan Paulakovich

Sixteen year old JOHN H. MILLER displays a fine pair of LAKE WALLENPAUPACK brown trout.

*"There are many more where these came from,"*  
says STAN PAULAKOVICH.

THE BEST trout lake in the state today is Lake Wallenpaupack. And, October is one of its peak fishing months. The skiers, boaters and sailboaters who crowded the lake for several months have hung up their gear and now the fisherman reigns supreme.

When the lake was constructed in 1925, its main feeder stream, Wallenpaupack Creek, and all of its other tributaries had trout in them. Since then, the Fish Commission has managed the lake as trout water. Each fall, thousands of fingerling brown trout, excess stock from our hatcheries, are released in this and other suitable waters across the commonwealth.

While not all of these fingerlings survive the onslaughts of the big predator game fish, enough of them make it to provide a sustaining trout population for the lake. In several years these 4 to 5 inch youngsters grow up to be the thick-bodied, pink-fleshed fighters that will delight many an October fisherman.

Over the last few years, the sportsmen from the lake area, with the able guidance of Waterways Patrolman Joe Bardey have constructed a cooperative nursery near the breast of the dam. Here, they are raising lake-run rainbow trout from Lake Erie stock. Raised for one year, they are then carefully distributed all over the lake. These same kind of fish have grown to gigantic proportions at Lake Erie. Fish over 30 inches long and up to 15 pounds have been caught in the spring spawning run along Erie's shorelines. This program, now in its fourth year, is sure to enhance the already great brown trout fishing in Wallenpaupack.

Wallenpaupack is a beautiful body of water. Its thirteen mile length has numerous coves and several small islands. The 52 mile shoreline is al-

most entirely wooded. Nestled in the mountains of Pike and Wayne counties, it is fed by crystal clear streams and springs. Water temperatures remain cool even in the hottest summer months.

At the time of construction, the deepest portions of the lake were about 90 feet. Since then, the erosive water action has filled in most of these deeper pits and today maximum depth is 60 feet. The bottom of the lake is made up of sand, gravel, shale and stone. Most of the lake is still over 35 feet deep and shorelines drop off quickly, making for good fishing from any point along the waterfront.

The Pennsylvania Power and Light Company which built, owns and maintains the lake, has furnished tremendous access to the water. Almost the entire shoreline is open to public fishing. Boat access and adjoining campgrounds are strategically located around the perimeter of the lake. The Fish Commission has a public access off Rt. 590 just west of Hawley. Campgrounds are open year round and furnish electricity, drinking water, firewood and sanitary facilities. The Lake Superintendent, P.P.&L. Co. Box 122, Hawley, Pa. 18428 will send a brochure of the recreational facilities at the lake on request. Bait shops, restaurants, hotels and motels are also numerous in the area.

When fishing Wallenpaupack in October, bear in mind that, besides the great trout fishing, there are other species that will enliven any outing. Nice fat blue gills, perch and crappies among the pan fishes, make up a good percentage of the lake's residents. Chain pickerel, usually good during ice fishing season at the lake, are just starting to put on the winter feed bag. Large and smallmouth bass are still in a hitting mood and these



are worthy of a quiet afternoon of plugging in some protected bay.

Wallenpaupack has always been noted for its fine walleye fishing. Years ago the "coal crackers" from the Panther Valley and the Scranton-Wilkes Barre area fished it hard and took fine catches of walleye. Trolling was their method. A casting reel, with a big flatfish attached to the line, and a 1/4 ounce sinker a foot or so ahead of the lure was the rig used. Rowing the boat slowly, so that every pulsating throb of the lure could be felt, they covered the drop-offs and the channels and took many a fine fish.

Fishing mainly at night, and with a minimum of 100 feet of line out, the lure just barely crept over the bottom where the big fish lurked. Since outboard motors came into such great prominence, this method of fishing is almost unheard of now; you just don't get the right touch and speed with a motor that is possible in hand rowing.

Now for the trout; if the past two years can be used as an indicator, this should be the pattern: The

continued on page 32





## ONE "SMALL" GRIPE

Your Fish Commission certainly does an outstanding job in all departments. The people of Pennsylvania can be truly proud of this department.

After the hatchery losses of trout from the hurricane, I feel that we (I use this word loosely since I am an out-of-stater) should all pitch in on an increase in license fees to help replace our losses. Since the hurricane, the Fish Commission and other groups have actually improved most of our trout streams. I have noticed more check dams on nearly every stream. Someone deserves credit for a lot of work. This has not only improved water conditions for aquatic insects, but improved the access to certain fish. Someone surely did a beautiful job on the West Branch Clarion F.F.F. area.

Like any normal human-being I have one (I hope in your opinion—small) gripe. I must drive halfway across two states to find the better fishing spots. My question: Is it illegal to sleep in one's car along Pennsylvania trout streams?

I am a dedicated fish for fun, no kill, artificial-match-the-hatch-nut! Therefore, I must spend more time "observing." Which leaves little enough time for fishing. Therefore, if I must spend more time locating state parks or motel lodging on these weekend trips, it would hardly leave me with much time to fish, as well as increasing my cash outlay, which usually runs \$15-\$20 per two-day weekend.

While discussing this problem with other members of Trout Unlimited, Western Reserve Chapter, some members could not believe this could be so. They trout fish Michigan streams and assured me there was parking space available at every fishing access site where anglers could park and sleep overnight or camp several days at no charge—compliments of the Michigan Fish Commission. They assured me this information had to

have been handed out by some person who resented out-of-state fishermen.

As you can see, I'm not much on writing, but my friends encouraged me to write directly to you for the true facts.

Thanking you in advance for your patience.

Yours truly,

G. V. SMITH

948 Brady Avenue

Barberton, Ohio 44203

We want to thank you on behalf of all Fish Commission employees for your kind remarks about our fisheries programs.

Your question, "Is it illegal to sleep in one's car along Pennsylvania trout streams?" is something which cannot be answered in one simple "Yes-or-No" statement. The land, through which many of our trout streams flow, is, in many cases, privately owned, and permission to park along them overnight would have to be obtained from the individual landowner having jurisdiction thereof. My suggestion would be to select one of your favorite waterways in advance—perhaps devoting one special trip for the purpose—then, seek out the landowner and request his permission to sleep in your car along the stream on his land. Pennsylvanians are quite hospitable and I'll bet even money you'll never be refused, if you seek permission in advance.

Posted at Pennsylvania's "Roadside Rests," maintained by Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation, are specific instructions regarding overnight stays—by whatever name we choose to call them—"parking," "camping," whatever. The same holds true for Fish Commission access areas which are purchased for gaining access (and providing parking for the users) to bodies of water, the shorelines of which were previously privately owned. Similarly, our Pennsylvania Game Commission provides parking lots along roads running through, or alongside, State Game Lands. But, in all of the aforementioned cases, each of the agencies mentioned is content to let "Camping" to the agency specifically designated to provide the same: our Bureau of State Parks, within the Department of Environmental Resources.

Admittedly, this is confusing to anyone who does not completely understand our state's departmental functions, but each of "us" consider our agency as a specialist in an assigned function. Though it may be little consolation to you, each of us in the employ of these very same departments must follow the same guidelines should we journey to one end of the

state or the other. It is expensive, but then, what isn't?

One thing we would like to "make perfectly clear," is that the Pennsylvania Fish Commission—as well as any other Pennsylvania agency—most certainly does not resent out-of-state visitors, for whatever purpose they visit our lands and waters. We welcome you most heartily and trust that you will be able to resolve your "problem" and visit us many times in the days ahead.

Ed.

## DISAGREES WITH PEARCE

Most of Edwin Pearce's article, "Catch More Trout With Less Effort," (May, 1973) was basic, sound, and modern advice. But I'm surprised that he could be so positive of the "always cast upstream" method. With all of his experience in spinning he should have found that this is not the best way of fishing a lure. Spinners (lures) are designed to be drawn *through* water, not washed *down* by water. He recommends the small Mepps, and this is a prime example of a spinner that won't work properly when allowed to wash downstream toward you. The current pushes behind the blade as you work it, and seldom does it spin enticingly until it reaches your feet on its last swing. The same faulty action could hamper most lures.

From the fish's point of view, the upstream cast is also unattractive. A fish will seldom follow a lure downstream before he will work his nose behind it, cross current. So, casting slightly up, but *across* the current, seems to be a better method.

Other than taking issue with this point, I think the other suggestions described in the article will definitely put more trout in your creel. But better yet, if you use the single barbless hook Pearce recommends, you can release more unharmed trout for future sport.

CHARLES FURIMSKY  
McKeesport

## GRATEFUL—

May I thank the Pennsylvania Fish Commission for letting us old timers (Senior Citizens) enjoy the fishing license without an increase.

I hope I can talk for all of us, and again many thanks. Keep up the good work. We are rootin' and tootin' for good old PENNSYLVANIA. We are grateful.

RALPH C. PENNEPACKER  
Pottstown

## THEY'D BETTER!

I would like to congratulate the Pennsylvania Waterways Patrolmen on the excellent job they have been doing. I hope they continue to do so. Thanks.

GREG GITTENS  
Kingston

## NO CHARGE

In your Statewide with the Editor column (May 1973) you printed a letter from Mr. Tom Aaron of Aston, Pa., and, as you stated, his letter is representative of others—myself included—from eastern and southeastern Pennsylvania.

I have not been a subscriber to the Pennsylvania Angler very long (much to my regrets) and I have noticed that many of the wonderful places to fish as discussed in your articles are quite a distance from my area. However, in your reply to Mr. Aaron you did mention something of great interest to me—The Fisherman's Guide—The Boating Guide to Pennsylvania's Waters—and the 1973 Pleasure Boating Requirements. I would like very much to have a copy of each of these. If there is any charge, please advise me as soon as possible with the necessary procedure to obtain same. Thank you.

JOSEPH H. VELEK  
North Wales

These publications are available to all and are free for the asking. Simply send us a post card stating your request. Please print your name, address, and ZIPCODE plainly. Ed.

## WADING—AGAIN!

I was pleased to read the letter by Timothy Kyle, Pittsburgh, Pa., on wading in the "Fish for Fun" areas and the reply in the December issue of Leaky Boots section of the Angler. This is a letter I have long thought about writing.

First a few comments and later a recommendation. Fly fishing is my hobby and my wife is my fishing partner. We had a good season in 1972, mostly on "Fish for Fun" and "Fly Fishing Only" projects. I have been trout fishing for 54 years and fly fishing for 45 years. With the terrific fishing pressure we have today I think the answer is more "Fly Fishing Only" and "Fish for Fun" projects. I would like to compliment

the Fish Commission on the good job they are doing.

As for no "Wading" I am 100% with Mr. Kyle. The old Fisherman's Paradise is OK, wide open on both sides, lots of cross overs, so no problems. I tried the West Branch of the Clarion River and will not go back. Kettle Creek would be beautiful if you could wade it. I might ask why (Wading Permitted) in the "Fish for Fun" project on Yellow Breeches Creek?

I can't buy your rebuttal Mr. Graff. I have met up with most of these characters you speak of and perhaps a few you have not met up with. Fly Fishing 45 years to your 17. However, the point you overlook is the fact I am not seeing these people on the "Fly Fishing Only" projects. Here you have a little different type of fisherman and it is my personal opinion "Wading" would work.

And now for my recommendation. In the two month extended trout season in the Fall, September and October, why not make all "Fly Fishing Only" projects "Fish for Fun" and of course with "Wading."

S. C. RICHARDS  
DuBois

## MUSKIES FOREVER!

I have been a resident of Pennsylvania only a short time, two years, and in this time I have been overwhelmed with the muskie fishing this state offers.

I would like to congratulate the Pennsylvania Fish Commission for doing such an outstanding job on the improvement of the propagation of muskies, your program is without a doubt one of the best in the United States.

I have spoken to many fishermen throughout the U.S. who are considered to be top muskie hunters and they have stated that soon Pennsylvania will rank among the leaders in muskie fishing.

I am strictly a muskie fisherman myself, and I belong to an organization that is probably the only one of its kind toward the improvement of the muskie. It is called the NATIONAL MUSKIE ASSOCIATION. The club is made up of men from many states and the club is dedicated to the improvement of the mighty muskie, as well as conservation and ecology being top priorities.

If any of your readers would like

information on joining our club, I would be more than happy to send them our literature. They may send their request directly to me at the following address:

Mel Bergman  
701 Yardley Commons  
Yardley, Pa. 19067

Again, congratulations on the fine program you have offered to Pennsylvanians, and thanks for the excellent muskie fishing.

MEL BERGMAN  
Yardley

## AT ANY PRICE

Keep up the good work. I think a Pa. fishing license would be a bargain at any price to keep the fishing in Pa. as good as it is now.

VINCENT LIBERTY  
McKeesport

## RESPONSE

I have said all I can say about wading or not wading in fish-for-fun areas so I will stand pat on what I said to Mr. Kyle. If you want to test a small stream fish-for-fun area where wading is permitted, I would recommend the West Branch of Caldwell Creek in Warren County. Also, I have fished the West Branch of the Clarion project a number of times and agree it has some difficult banks and hard to fish areas but it can still be a lot of fun.

Your suggestion that fly-fishing-only streams be converted to modified fish-for-fun areas for the extended trout season in the fall has merit. It might be a bit confusing and perhaps it would be a good compromise to leave them open with fly fishing rules, a nine inch limit and a three fish limit.

In any event, I think this is such a good suggestion that I am referring it to our Chief of Fisheries Management for his staff to consider. In the long run an overall staff evaluation might come up with sound reasons why this is not feasible, but at first glance it looks like a good recommendation. You can be assured we will give it serious consideration.

I respect your right to differ with the Commission's policy on wading in fish-for-fun areas and I thank you for a constructive recommendation on how we can improve our trout management program.

Sincerely yours,  
DELANO R. GRAFF  
Assistant Chief



*The author's combination spin/fly rod case is tied to pack frame and doesn't protrude to snag brush or branches on "pack-in" fishing trips.*

Packing in?  
You'll want to try

## Fishing The Compound Compromise

by Dan Abrams

**A**FTER HIKING for six and one-half hours, the pack on my back felt at least three times heavier than its actual weight of twenty-seven pounds. It was with a sense of relief that I eased the straps off my aching shoulders and leaned the pack against a tree to provide a back-rest. As I slumped back against it I began to realize how tired I really was.

"Well Dan, old boy, this is where you're going to make camp for the night," I whispered to myself.

I was on a little bench of ground in a sparsely-wooded area overlooking a small stream about twenty feet below. The ground was fairly even. The mosquitoes were no worse than usual.

"Really, not a bad place at all for a campsite," I was thinking, when suddenly I saw something that made me forget all about stringing up my tube tent and shaking out my sleeping bag! It even made me forget how tired I was.

About fifty feet upstream, two trout were lazily finning eight inches beneath the surface of the water at the head of a small pool. Occasionally they dimpled the calm of the gin-colored water when they

sucked in another insect as part of their evening meal.

Quickly, I snapped open the lid of the little rod case which was tied to the side of my pack frame and pulled out the four-section fiberglass rod. I was in such a hurry to get the thing together that it turned out to be a minor miracle the line guides were anywhere near aligned.

In no time at all I had the fly reel screwed on the seat, the line through the guides, and asking myself which fly to use.

I had no idea what those trout were feeding on—so using that old maxim, "When in doubt use an Adams," I settled on a #16 Adams dry fly.

"Now!" I thought as I looked at that glass wand in my hand, "This would be the acid test for this baby."

My mind's eye did an instant replay of the scene which took place just four and one-half hours earlier. Using this same rod, I had attached my ultra-light spinning reel. A friendly farmer, whose land paralleled the trail, had given me permission to do some





Dan Abram's backpack fishing equipment: Fenwick SF70-4 combo fly/spin rod; South Bend Ultralight spinning reel; Pflueger 1494 fly reel with Cortland 444 line; assorted flies and lures. Total weight of this compact outfit is just a little over one pound. (Sierra Design pack and frame.)

noontime bass fishing in his beautiful four acre pond.

I tied on a small Rapala lure, and promptly made a miserable twenty foot cast. Since I had been accustomed to a shorter spinning rod, the seven foot length of this combination job threw me for a moment. It took me about five practice casts to get the hang of the thing, but once I did, that rod handled beautifully.

About four casts after all this, I missed a hard strike. Immediately, I cast to the same spot and that slow-learning largemouth struck again. This time I nailed him. I guessed his weight to be about three and one-half pounds. Following a frisky three minute battle, I slid him up on the grassy bank, removed the lure, and eased him back into the pond.

This was the first day of a two-day backpack-fishing trek in the hills of Jefferson County. I was anxious to see how my new combination fly/spin backpack rod would perform. As a spinning rod it had come through with flying colors.

While at that farm pond, I tried several weights of lures ranging from  $\frac{1}{16}$ — $\frac{3}{8}$  oz. With the ultra-light reel and the four pound test line I was using, this outfit did best with lures in the  $\frac{1}{8}$ — $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. range, but

did a satisfactory job at all weights.

"Now, let's see how this little wand does as a fly rod," I thought to myself as I shook a length of double taper line through the guides and onto the water.

The two trout were about fifty feet away—upstream and on the other side of the pool. I made a couple of false casts to measure the distance, but just when I was getting into the real thing, the fly snagged behind me on a small hemlock sprig.

The next attempt was more successful. There was that good "feel" of a balanced outfit when the weight of the line flexed the rod at the start of the forward cast. The line stretched out like a skinny fifty-five foot peach-colored snake on top of the water. The cast was just the right distance, but it put the fly five feet to the right of target.

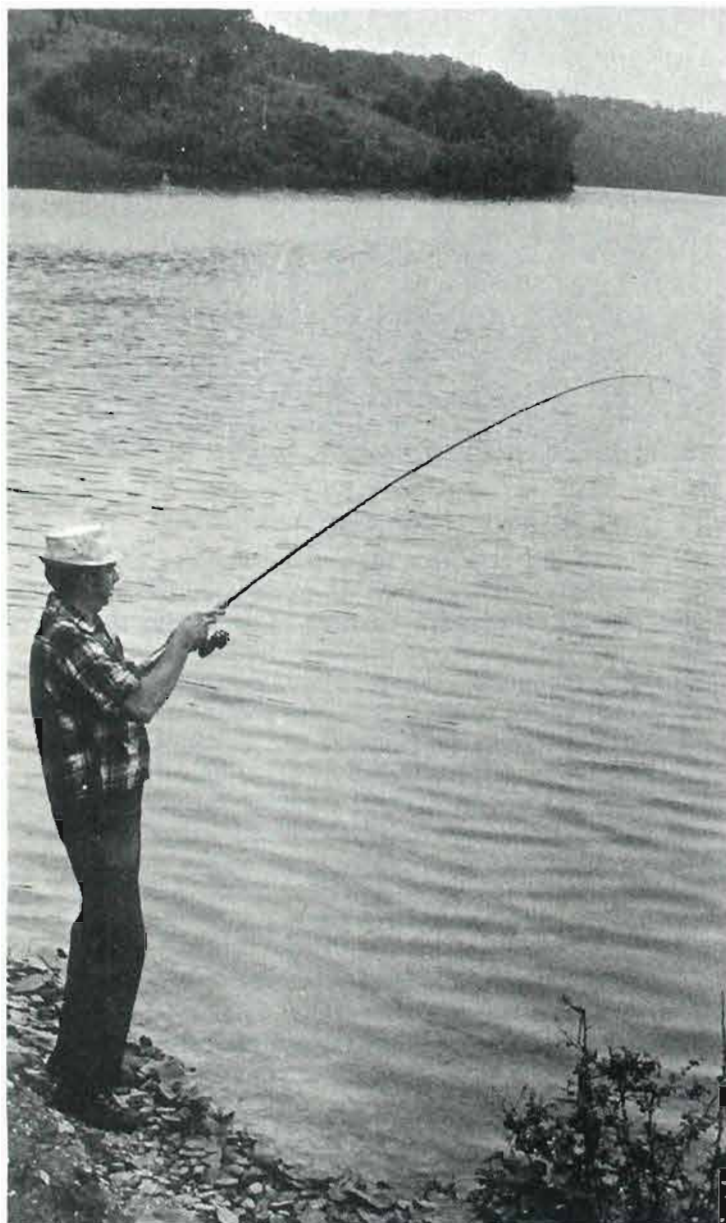
Fortunately, the nearest fish forgave that error. He streaked over, but stopped about ten inches directly under the fly . . . eyed it critically for an eternity of ten seconds . . . then slowly finned to the top and sucked it in.

He thrashed the top of that water to a living froth

continued on next page

# Fishing The Compound Compromise

The author battles a small walleye on Keystone Lake, Armstrong County.



for a few moments, then made two hard dashes toward the riffles at the head of the pool. He bowed the rod into a seven-foot arc as he swept the pool with two bottom-boring circles before he grudgingly came my way. Somehow, the hook, 5x tippet, and my nerves all held as I reached my hand under his belly and flipped him on the bank . . . twelve and one-half inches of brightly-marked brookie.

I sat down on the bank to wait, hoping the other trout would resume its feeding in a few minutes. I felt pleased. Pleased about the fish, but more pleased about the rod. The action seemed to be ever so slightly stiffer than a seven foot two-piece fly rod of the same make which I owned. But the glass stick I held in my hand had turned out to be a *very good* fly rod—to be honest, much better than I had expected.

There is no doubt that the finest handling fly rod or spinning rod would be of one-piece construction . . . just one continuous stretch of split bamboo or fiberglass with no joints or ferrules to cause any "flat" or "dead" spots in the action. Naturally, it would be inconvenient to tote such a critter around (especially when you get into the nine, eight or even seven foot lengths of fly rods). Finding a place to safely store such a rod could pose a problem, too.

Therefore, for convenience sake, most rods are constructed in two, three, or even four sections. But, to a certain extent, we pay for this convenience at the cost of the rod's action. A necessary compromise—but a compromise nonetheless.

Furthermore, I had always been told that no rod could be both a good fly rod and at the same time a good spinning rod. Just as the Good Book says that no man can serve two masters, neither could any single rod serve both a spinning reel and a fly line in an effective manner. In theory, the design of such a dual-use rod would necessitate a compromise in the quality of either its spinning or fly fishing characteristics (or, most probably, both).

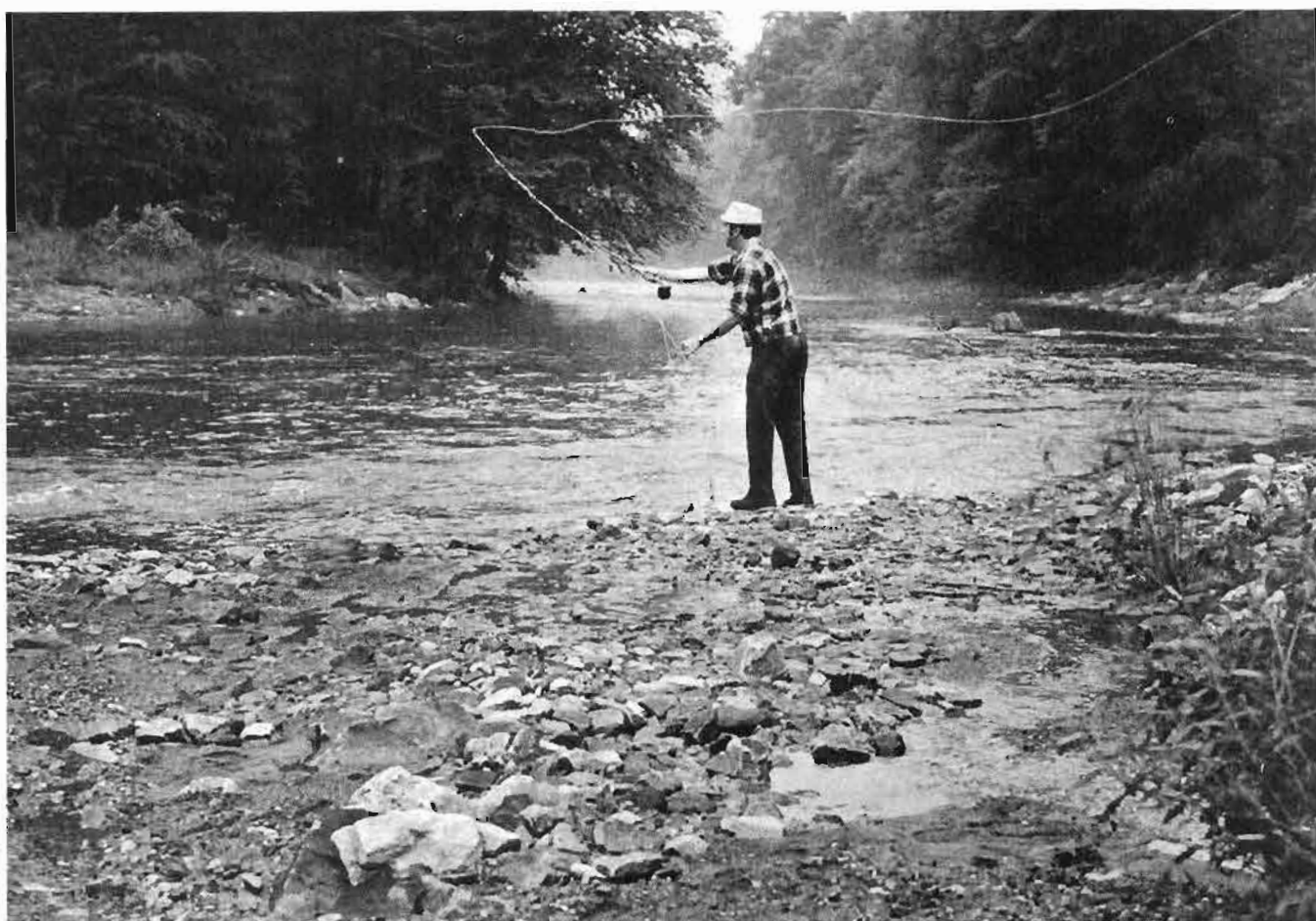
No matter how you looked at it, the books would say that I was fishing with a "*compound compromise*." Happily, new materials and new designs have produced combination pack rods where the compromise is not as great as you might think.

Further tests confirmed my first impressions about the fine qualities of this rod for *both* spinning and fly fishing. Later in the summer that little seven-footer got a real workout as a spinning rod in several bass fishing trips to Armstrong County's Keystone Lake. The FISH-FOR-FUN Project at Brookville's North Fork of Redbank Creek provided the worthy proving ground of its fly fishing effectiveness.

In a word—it did a fine job in both categories.

The combination pack rod that worked so well for me was the Fenwick SF70-4. Its unique "ferrule-less" design did indeed make for a smooth flowing action. The rest of the outfit which balanced it so nicely included a Pflueger Medalist 1494 fly reel, Cortland "444" DT6F line, and a South Bend ultralight spin-





The "Compound Compromise" proved adequate for the North Fork Redbank creek. The author claims that the advantages of the outfit are many.

ning reel with four pound test line. All this, along with an assortment of flies and lures, weighed in at just a little over one pound and a half—an important consideration for the backpacker.

Other companies produce fiberglass combination pack rods and the cost of these rods is in the \$15—45 range. For those who want something a little more luxurious, one offers a beautiful split bamboo outfit for around \$200.

While I was fishing Redbank's North Fork one day, a fellow asked me, "Why bother with a combination outfit? Wouldn't it be better to have two rods which are designed for their own specific uses?"

Well, I do own several fly rods and spinning rods and I use them often. Nevertheless, in many instances it is the combination pack outfit which meets the need best of all.

First, of all, it is a backpacker's dream. It seems as though most backpackers are also fishermen. I have already pointed out how little such an outfit weighs and, with the backpacker, every ounce counts. The combination pack rod also cuts down on bulk. The twenty-one inch length of my Fenwick rod ties neatly onto my pack frame with no protruding ends to snag on brush or branches. With an outfit

such as I have described the hiker is equipped for any fishing situation which Pennsylvania waters offer (with the exception of going for the big muskies). Not much of a compromise there!

Secondly, the man who travels a lot would do well to consider a combination pack outfit. Pack an outfit in your suitcase (*in the space a sweater would take*) and you are set for all types of fresh water fishing wherever you go. This is a real boon to those who travel by plane.

Thirdly, when vacation time rolls around, and after the kid's bikes, your wife's hair dryer, and the doggie bed have taken all the space in the back of the old wagon, sneak one of these combo jobs behind the spare tire. Who knows? You just might get the chance to have a little fun of your own on this year's trip.

Finally, the fellow who would want to limit his lay-out of cash for fishing equipment could do a lot worse than buying one of these versatile rigs. He will be at no disadvantage in either the spinning or fly fishing departments.

Above all, keep an open mind about the casting qualities of these rods, no matter which way you use them. It could be that you won't be making so great a compromise as you might think.





# Aquatic Explosions

by Larry Servais

I DO MOST of my "fishing" in the pages of the outdoor magazines. While a poor substitute for the real thing, it does have certain advantages. One can enjoy the sport in the comfort of an easy chair, with a total absence of mosquitoes, black flies, ticks, clammy waders, and other assorted discomforts.

One can also be practically certain of a magnificent catch, likely on a wilderness stream or lake. There are no birdnest snarls in your nylon spinning line, or, if using a fly, you never hang it up in a tree on the backcast. Neither do you latch onto snag after snag trying to put the lure where you think the fish are.

But odd things do happen on these vicarious expeditions that never occur on one's own humble fishing trips. For example, usually in the first paragraph of these accounts, the water "*explodes*"! Between the covers of these magazines there are probably more aquatic explosions than in the entire history of naval warfare. One writer claimed the water "*boiled*"! He must have been fishing in the thermal area of Yellowstone. One stated that the stream "*erupted*"! It's almost enough to make a man take up golf.

Of course the "explosion" signals that a big fish is hooked, and the reader is presumed to be in like condition. The fish takes off with a couple of wild leaps, and the reel "sings" as the line peels off.

But right at this point the reader is pulled up short. He has to wade through a flashback of how the writer and his two companions came to take this wilderness trip, how they pored over maps the previous winter, with an amount of planning that would make the D-Day landing appear like a "spur-of-the-moment" decision.

For some reason, the reader must also absorb a

specific amount of biography of each member of the party, possibly to show that they are just down-to-earth people as you and I.

"Joe", who originated the idea of the trip, and who first heard of this wonder fishing spot, is a partner in the Peerless Pretzell Company. He started out with the firm years ago as a pretzel bender. He is also vice-president of the national association for this product. His daughter is a baton twirler in the high school band, and his wife's hobby is soap carving.

"Hank", the other member of the party, is employed by the government, is Affirmative Coordinator of the Alphabetical Uplift Commission. In college, he won his letter in Indian wrestling. His hobby, outside of fishing, is collecting telephone insulators, and his youngest son is county yo-yo champion.

The author of the article is an attorney, with the firm of Tort, Tort & Retort. His wintertime diversion is seven-card poker with duces and treys wild. He is president of the local chapter of the Fumbling Fly Flingers Association. He is also the originator of the peanut shell hackle, a fly tied with a half a peanut shell on a number ten hook. He got the idea one afternoon standing on a bridge over a small stream eating peanuts and tossing the shells in the water. A chub rose to one of the shells.

A page or two later, you are back to the scene of the "*explosion*" and the ensuing battle. The writer finally subdues this monstrous trout and nets him. After that he and his two friends go shamelessly on to land trout after trout. As proof there are color photos of enough fish to fill a bathtub.

I surmise that I also peruse the pages of these magazines in the hope of improving my own competence as a fisherman—a kind of yearly correspondence course. But each summer when I get back to the moment of truth, encased in waders, trying to keep my balance in the stream, it takes me five minutes of fumbling to tie on a fly, and my casting resembles a teamster whipping a span of recalcitrant mules.

I hook inanimate things on the bank and in the water, and even myself at times. My line and leader often descend on the water in ungainly loops as I move ponderously along in the stream, frightening anything within casting range and beyond.

Occasionally a rather young and naive trout comes my way, but without much aquatic disturbance. But if the water ever "*explodes*", and I survive the experience, I shall most certainly write a vivid account of the event, along with a bit of biography and hopefully send it to one of the big outdoor magazines.

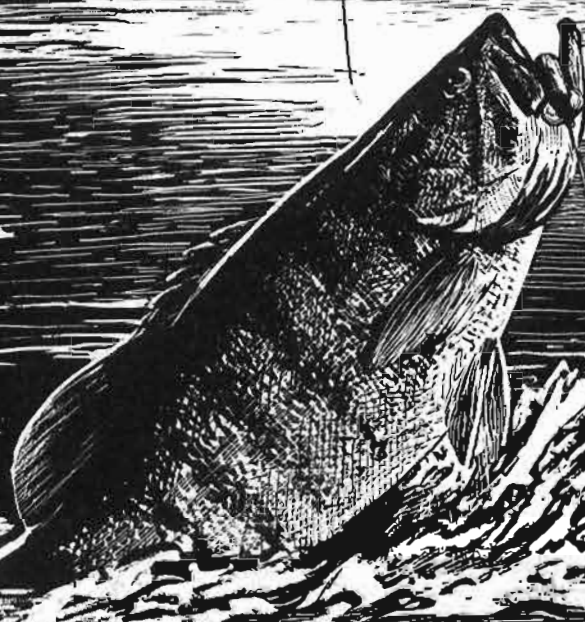
I can practically see the opening sentence: "*My fly drifted past a sunken log, and the water exploded! ! !*"

And now to the flashback. "*In college I was too light for football, so I went out for track. I broke the record for the mile run, wearing riding boots. I . . .*" Nope. I just can't do it, even if I get BLOWN—clear out of the water!

**Night**

***On The Big River***

**by Terry Cunnings**



ANDREWS



THERE IS A magical quality about a big river at night. It comes from things unknown, from things heard and not seen during the pitch black, from a man's imaginings about the night creatures of the river, and from hearing a gigantic splash far across the river which makes you stop and listen in wonderment. A big river's magic also comes from the cool, gentle, river-smelling night air which fills your lungs and helps quiet your "citified" nerves. It comes from a brilliant sky full of stars, close and deep, which holds your eyes for long moments. But the river's sweetest magic is the sound of a jitterbug noisily swimming across the water and the sudden splash of a striking fish. The Allegheny River has all of this magic and more. Let me tell you about some of my nights spent with her.

My father took me night fishing on the Allegheny for the first time when I was still a boy. We fished a section of the river not too far from Franklin. I remember riding through the night on the back roads and then along the railroad tracks which followed the river. When we parked the car it was nearly midnight. There was no moon and the night was black and quiet as we put on our hip boots and rigged our casting rods by the light of our flashlights. We spoke very little and the whispering, sighing, far away roaring noise of the river could be heard through the trees. To a boy who had yet to meet the river, this was an awesome sound.

I remember my father checking the knot I had used to tie a big crazy-crawler to my line. And I remember him telling me that there were fish in this river big enough to test the strength of any line. Then he was leading the way down a path through the woods to the river. Our flashlight beams swung wide as we walked and my father told me of a time years ago when he had come upon a copperhead stretched across this same path. He had not seen it in time and he had nearly stepped on it, only to discover that it had been killed earlier that day by some other fisherman. This part of the Allegheny was still a remote and wild river.

On a truly black night you cannot see your hand six inches in front of your eyes, and the beam of a flashlight is swallowed by the darkness before it reaches halfway across the river. This was such a night. I hoped my father was right when he told me, *"The darker the night, the better the fishing."*

We used our lights as we waded into the river. I shone my light on the bottom and small minnows came up from the moss covered rocks and gathered in the beam. We stopped and my father gave me my instructions once again.

"Never wade deeper than your knees", he said, "and be careful of the stones, they're slippery; never take a step until you feel the bottom through the sole of your boot and test your footing with your weight; take one step and one cast, one step and one cast; listen as you fish, hear the crazy-crawler as it

swims, and when you hear the splash of a strike, set the hook!"

With that said, my father moved upstream and we turned out our lights and started fishing.

When darkness settles in around you on the river it gives you a feeling of detachment. You wade into the darkness and you cast into nothingness. The splash your plug makes as it hits the water often surprises you. And, although you may be close to others, you are hidden by the night and are truly alone with your thoughts.

We fished up along the edge of the river for a long time before I finally heard a splash and my father's shout to me that a fish was on. After the fight, my father shone his light on the fish, a nice bass that gleamed white in the night.

The routine of our fishing began again. We could hear each other casting and once or twice I set my hooks into the empty river when I mistook the splash of my father's plug landing on the water for a bass striking at mine. And, as is usual at night, when my first fish struck—it surprised me! I had just made what felt like a long cast and I heard the plug land on the water when there was another splash not quite as loud. After a second's hesitation I felt a tug at the line. I set the hook and was onto a fish. I called to my father and he yelled back warning me not to hurry the fish or I would lose it. It fought frantically in the current and seemed to take a long while to bring in. I tried to imagine what this fish looked like swimming out there in the dark water. When I had it close, I switched on my light and saw it lying there, working its gills steadily in the green water. I reached my hand cautiously toward it and made a quick grab and had it. I can remember telling my father all about it there in the darkness. My first fish on the river at night was a firm, strong, twelve inch Allegheny River smallmouth.

Although I fished hard the rest of that night, I didn't get another strike. But the memory of that first fish was enough to draw me back to the river time and again.

There was a night years later along the river at Emlenton when my father and I, and our friend Howard Horner, were wading through the slick rocks and casting black jointed jitterbugs. Even on the blackest night this part of the river is always lit by the refinery in Emlenton which lets its waste natural gas burn through the night like giant torches along the river. The light from these fires shines off the water and enables you to follow your jitterbug as it gurgles and swims across the surface. This evening the river was alive with fish. We each had caught several nice bass and had seen and missed more. I was casting onto the river at a place where it was shallow and fast. I could see my jitterbug swimming and making a wide "V" across the surface as I reeled. I watched it as it neared a long golden reflec-

continued on next page

## Night on the Big River

continued from preceding page

tion of a burning gas torch on the far bank. Just as it entered the glitter a bass came from the bottom and erupted into the air taking my plug. I shall remember forever the sight of that fish suspended above the golden sheen of the river—surrounded by darkness. That fish was the biggest of the night for me and I beached him among the rocks a little ways downstream. I added the beautiful fifteen inch river smallmouth to my stringer.

It was that same evening that we had another adventure which brought us back to Emlenton many times. Howard had been fishing further downstream on a boulder which slanted into the water. He caught a small bass and had walked down to the edge of the water to release it when there was a loud splash. It was so loud that I thought he had fallen into the river. I hurried down to him and found him kneeling



on the boulder. He explained that when he had reached into the water to release the bass he had frightened a big fish which must have been resting next to the rock. The fish had made the big splash and showered him with water as it bolted away. We stood there in the night and talked of what a great fish that one must be.

The next weekend we returned to Emlenton and started fishing just as the sun was going down. I walked far downstream to the beginning of a long slow pool in the river and cast out a red and white jitterbug. There was a smooth current here at the head of the pool and the jitterbug swung at the end of a tight line at just the right speed without my having to reel. It was getting dark as I made another cast. I turned my head upstream to check where my father and Howard were fishing and the moment I looked away I had a strike. It was a strike such as I had never had before and have never experienced

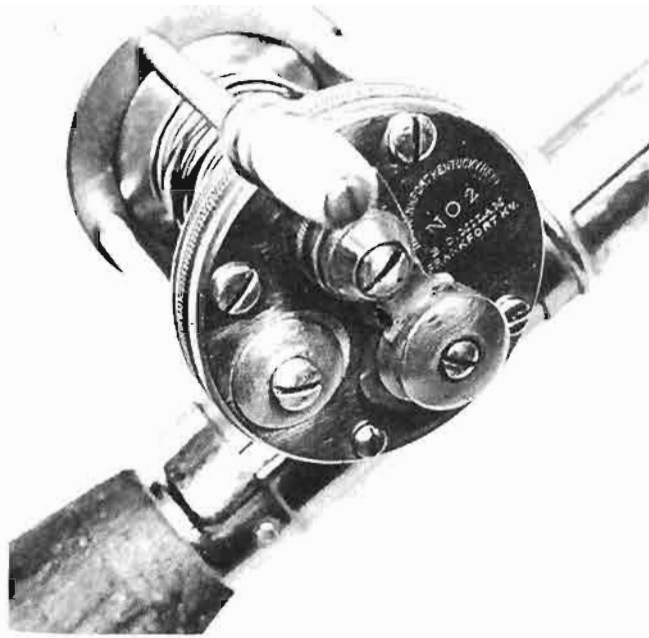
since. I was holding the rod tip high using both hands when I turned my head and the force and the violence of the strike ran through my arms and shoulders like an electric shock. It surprised me that the line held. I called upriver for help. This fish was big and I knew I would need it! The fish ran strongly downstream and took line against the drag. I could feel it turning, darting, and bulldogging its way to the deepest water in the pool. I kept a steady pressure on it. After a while it began to come to me. Then it turned shaking its head and trying to throw the plug as it took back the line I had gained. I was wading to the tops of my hip boots now on the slippery rocks. I knew I would have to beach this fish if I was going to catch it, so I took a chance and looked behind me to check the distance to the shore. I could hear my father running over the rocks toward me. Suddenly I lost my balance. My legs spread wide as I slipped and sat down in the river. I thrust the rod high with one hand to keep the line tight and used the other hand to help in a frantic attempt to get my feet. When I finally did stand I found the miracle had happened. The fish was still there. My father was yelling encouragement to me now from the shore. I turned and tried to ease toward him. It felt as if I could begin to lead the fish now and it slowly came my way with the extra pressure. I could feel how heavy it was against the line. It was close now—I might get this fish yet. Suddenly, it turned to make that last desperate attempt at escape, and that was all there was. I guess almost every fisherman has known, at least once, that helpless, sickening feeling when the line goes slack and the fish is gone. My line had broken at the knot. For a moment I stood quiet, then I whipped my rod once through the air striking out at the night sky. I turned and said, "I lost it."

It was later that summer in the same spot that I found a fish lying in the shallows resting through the heat of the day. It was a muskellunge about forty-five inches long. It was just lying there resting and staring at me. I saw it often that summer, resting and swimming near the shore, and I spent many hours trying to catch it, but it was always too smart for me. I like to think of it now, still swimming the night waters of the river, getting bigger and stronger. And I like to think that it was my fish and that some dark night we will meet again.

There are many other memories of nights along the Allegheny. There were the bittersweet nights as my father and I fished near Franklin while the rest of the family slept at our camp in the woods along the river. That was the week before I went away to the army. Then there are the smiling memories of fishing at Oil City and catching little rock bass as they took my plug with little kissing sounds in the darkness. And when dawn came I went to the truck parked on a side street in town and cooked the little fish on a Coleman stove. That was my first rock bass breakfast.

There is a magical quality about a big river at night. It comes from sweet memories.





The Milam "Frankfort Kentucky" reel as manufactured about 1898.

# B. C. Milam, "Reelsmith"

by Warren Shepard

**M**OST SPORTSMEN are aware of the fact that the slim, lovely "Kentucky Rifle" was actually a product of south-central Pennsylvania. In fact, some arms historians have tried, unsuccessfully, to introduce the term "Pennsylvania Flintlock," for this historic ancestor of the American sporting rifle. The misnomer, "Kentucky Rifle," however, has stuck.

The term, "Kentucky Reel," however, is no misnomer. This ancestral bait casting reel was born, bred and developed in the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky. About the year 1810, skilled jeweler, George Snyder of Hopewell, Kentucky, built the first quadruple multiplying, or bait casting, reel.

Snyder's 1810 reel was made entirely of brass. The

line spool was 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide by 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter. Garnet jewelled bearings were used on the shaft ends. There were eight teeth on the shaft gear, thirty-two teeth on the crank handle (or "cog"), giving the four to one ratio still used on bait casting reels today. The reel also had a brass lock spring (to lock the spool when reel was stored) and a silver "alarm" or click spring which engaged the cog.

About the year 1835, Benjamin C. Milam went to work for Beverly Noel, a watchmaker. Noel's brother, Theodore, had made some reels on the Snyder pattern. Theodore Noel's reels stirred Milam's interest, and in 1836, he visited Snyder to see his reels. Milam quit Noel in 1836, and apprenticed for J. F. and B. F. Meek, also jewelers and clockmakers. The Meeks had made a few reels, probably as early as 1833. Milam took over the second floor of the shop and there, with Ben Meek, began making fine reels for anglers. Milam remained in that same shop, making reels for the rest of his life. The business finally failed during the depression.

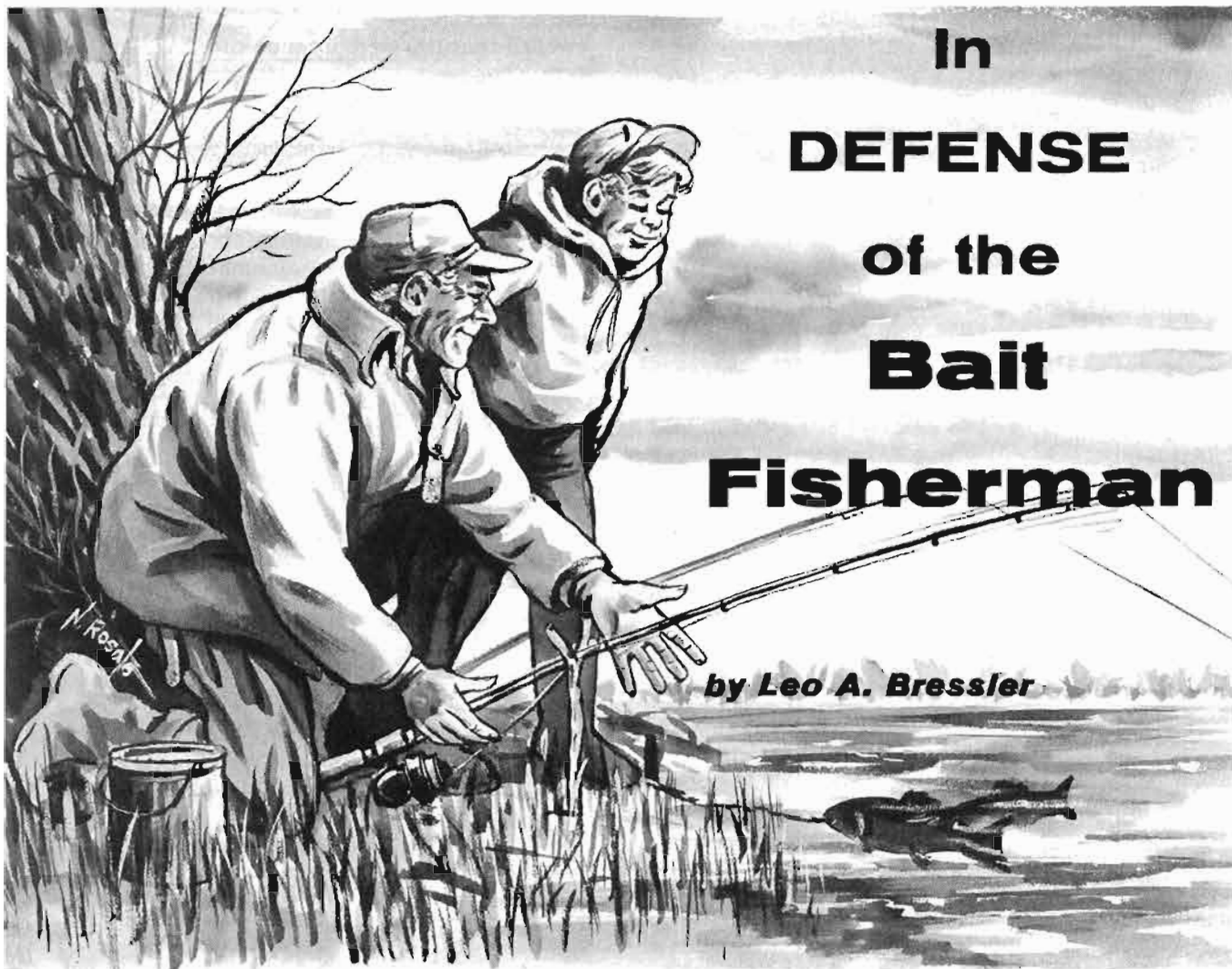
Reels made by B. C. Milam are all (at least all that the author has seen) of the bait casting persuasion. All, even those made in the 1920's, are very similar to the original Snyder reel, i.e. the true "Kentucky" reel style. Minor refinements, like the balance handle, were added over the years. But Milam's reels were always free running, with no level-wind or self-thumbing attachments found on reels of other makes.

Milam's reels were variously stamped. From 1836 to 1851, when he was apprenticed to the Meeks, reels were marked "J. F. & B. F. Meek". In 1851, J. F. Meek left the firm, and B. F. Meek and B. C. Milam formed a partnership. Reels were then stamped: "Meek & Milam." The partnership was dissolved about 1855, though Milam continued the same stamping on his reels for some time. After the Civil War, his reels were stamped "B. C. Milam, Frankfort Ky." Milam's reels became known as the "Frankfort Kentucky" reel and he began so stamping them about 1898. Sometime after 1900 he added "& Son" to the stamping on his reels.

Milam's reels were known throughout America, and to some extent in Europe, as fine dependable anglers' tools. Grover Cleveland was presented a Milam reel by the angler-actor, Joe Jefferson. In 1887, Cleveland said:

"I have received the beautiful reel which you have sent me and I beg of you to accept my sincere thanks for same. I think it is the finest piece of work I have ever seen. . . ."

Milam's reels are pretty much collectors' items today (though the author occasionally fishes his "Milam & Son" No. 2 reel, and will have to say it works as well as any). However, the influence of Milam's quality and styling can be seen in reels of modern manufacture. Careful examination of this illustration will show that the "Kentucky Reel" has, indeed, changed little in a century and a half.



ONE OF THE oldest arguments among anglers has been concerned with the respective virtues of fishing with bait and fishing with artificial lures. Perhaps a resurrection of this debate will achieve little or nothing, but I believe something more needs to be said in defense of the fisherman who prefers natural baits to artificials.

The bait fisherman, for a variety of reasons, is often regarded as something less than a true sportsman, almost a pariah. It is the purist, especially, the fly-fishing purist, who occupies the loftiest rung on the social ladder of angling. Articles and books on the making and use of flies, plugs, spinners, and other artificial lures are legion. Often there is a subtle implication that anyone who would stoop to the use of a worm or a minnow rather than a bunch of feathers, a piece of enameled wood, or a metal gadget is guilty of something almost sinful. There is even a tendency to equate the bait fisherman with the "meat hog."

This concept of bait-fishing is both warped and un-

just. The devoted, successful bait fisherman approaches his sport with as much knowledge and skill as the user of artificials—and he probably enjoys as many thrills. A sloppily presented bait will be no more attractive to fish than a sloppily presented fly or plug. Knowledge of the habits of fish, the character of streams, the proper tackle, etc., is as important to the bait man as to the purist. The nervous tension engendered by a wary bass tentatively playing with a minnow after a short run is as great as that created by a trout swirling under a fly. Certainly, the long, determined run of a pike or bass taking a minnow to his private dining spot or the faint, tantalizing tugs of a suspicious or fastidious trout will accelerate the heart as much as the sudden strike on an artificial lure.

The suspicion that the bait fisherman is only after meat has no factual or rational basis. It seems absurd to conclude that a fly or plug fisherman cares less about catching fish or that he will keep fewer fish



than the bait fisherman. The character of a man can hardly be judged by whether he wears a hat embellished with trout flies or whether he carries a minnow bucket. And the fact that artificial lures often bristle with so many hooks that they have to be handled gingerly hardly suggests that the plug fisherman cares less about catching fish than the minnow fisherman. The simple truth is that most fishermen, no matter what the tools of their trade, want to catch fish, as many and as large as possible. Their methods, in general, are dictated by temperament, economics, experience, and locale, not by the degree of their humanity or sportsmanship. The charge is sometimes made that it is easier to unhook fish and release them into the water unharmed if artificial lures are employed. There is some truth to this, especially with respect to flies; however, some artificial lures are as lethal as any natural baits. I have seen fish caught on certain plugs fitted with four sets of treble hooks which were embedded not only in the jaw but in the gill cover and the head. Many an eight-inch bass has found itself hopelessly impaled on the grappling hooks of one of these lures.

Although I do more fly-fishing for trout than any other kind of fishing, I have always resented the vaguely snobbish attitude of the purist. Even the patron saint of angling, Izaak Walton, did not disdain the use of natural baits. Occasionally he would reject such favorite artificials as the "May-fly," "Oak-fly," or "Hawthorn-fly" in favor of a "dew-worm," loach, or grasshopper. I have reason to believe that many modern would-be Waltons have no private scruples about using bait. Secreted in the pockets of many fancy fishing vests are jars of salmon eggs, cans of worms, or boxes of crickets. I have even observed an expensively outfitted fisherman surreptitiously slipping a salmon egg on the point of a fly hook on what I assume was a frustrating day on a fish-for-fun stretch of water.

Actually, it can be argued that the purist is in a sense less "pure" than the bait fisherman. The word *pure* connotes what is natural and simple. In this sense, the boy with a willow pole is more of a purist than the man supplied with all the equipment that modern technology can provide. The ultimate purist, of course, was the American Indian, catching his fish with instruments created by his own hands from materials provided by nature—sinew, bone, reeds, and wood. I can think of nothing less puristic than the fisherman equipped with all that scientific skill can devise—finely made rods and reels, lines that float or sink, almost invisible leaders, needle-sharp hooks, depth-finders, "fish-locaters," lunar tables, lures constructed to attract by sight, sound, motion, and even smell! The number and refinement of devices designed to fill the ice box are limited only by the fisherman's pocketbook.

There is another aspect of bait-fishing which both

gives it a clearly different character from fishing with artificial lures and also marks perhaps its greatest virtue. This is the fact that bait fishing is generally more relaxed, less intense and frenetic. Instead of puncturing all the water around him with cast after cast of a plug or constantly whipping the air with a fly rod, the bait fisherman goes about his business in a much more leisurely fashion. If he is a bank fisherman, he may get his line into the water, rest his rod on a forked stick, and then settle back on a log or against a tree and wait for some action. Even if he catches no fish, his day is by no means wasted. His eyes catch the blue flash of a kingfisher, the play of sun on water, the changing pattern of clouds; there are the sounds of murmuring water, whispering wind, and bird songs; the rich smell of the wet stream bank mingles with the aroma of evergreens. He has time to relax, to observe the world about him, to reflect, and to dream. If we really believe that one of the greatest rewards of fishing is that it provides escape from dull routine and tension, that it can rejuvenate and heal, that it affords a man a chance to think and to become reacquainted with himself, then the bait fisherman probably has the greatest opportunity to benefit from this therapy.

At any rate, the man who feels a sense of superiority because he uses only artificial lures or scorns anything but the dry fly for trout might do well to reexamine his assumptions. Does the purist really get a fuller enjoyment from his sport? Is he more of a sportsman because he rejects bait in favor of all the resources of Abercrombie and Fitch? Is the contest in which he prides himself between man and fish or between technology and fish? Doesn't the man who uses the simplest basic equipment and natural bait make fishing a more natural process—a contest between man's skill and wit and the elusiveness of the fish?

I have sometimes felt that it is an insult to confront fish with some of the monstrosities created by the lure manufacturers. Many of the grotesque, gaudily painted hunks of wood and metal seem to have no place in streams and lakes. Using them strikes me as kind of mechanical pollution of our aquatic environment—almost a desecration of nature.

All this may appear to be an exaggerated, over-sensitive, perhaps even sanctimonious, condemnation of fisherman who put their faith in artificial lures. This is not the intent or spirit in which this is written; it would be foolish to condemn the use of artificial lures or to deny the sport they provide. I am not immune to the bewildering displays of the tackle shops with their annual innovations in "guaranteed fish-getters"; and, as I have noted, I am a confirmed fly fisherman. My intention is simply to make some overdue entries on the right side of the bait fisherman's ledger and to point out that the purist has no monopoly on either the ethics or the sport of fishing.



# It's the "*Action*" that counts!

by Keith C. Schuyler





SID DALLAS had a habit of taking his problems fishing and leaving them there. Anyone knowing him would have assumed that he would be fishing for quite a spell had they seen him trudging down to the river that chilly but sunny October day.

His well tanned and close to handsome profile was weighted between the upturned collar of his ragged jacket by the knowledge that Beth had really meant business when she practically threw him out of the house a short time before. Sid had never thought that a few little old fish could come between him and his young wife. But, they had. And there was more than a fair chance that this time the rift would be permanent.

Sid's fishing itself had become the problem rather than the cure.

It took the starch right out of Sid. His shoulders sagged more from a weight of genuine grief than from his casting rod and tackle box as he shuffled through the sand of the river road. Even his old sedan, parked at the top of the river bank, wouldn't pull through this dry powder.

Evidence of car tracks stirred slight interest in him despite his deep concern with marital problems. Probably a jeep with four-wheel drive. Nothing else could pull out of that stuff. But he didn't remember seeing those tracks when he started down the road.

Sid had never heard Beth take on so before. "I don't care if you're the best fisherman in ten states," she had flung at him. "We can't live on fish! I'm sick of fish. Yes, and I'm sick of you!"

That last part hurt. Man, man! And the way Beth used to like her fishing, too. Sid had turned pretty pale after she said that. He stalked out of the house without a word. Beth had looked a little scared when he took off, but then she recovered enough to let out a, "And don't come back!" Slammed the door so hard that Sid knew from the tinkle of glass he was out another \$4.50. He wondered where it would come from.

When he got laid off at the mill that noon, it hardly seemed worth while to fiddle around trying to find a job anymore the same day. Anyway, he had been promising to whittle out one of his famous bass plunkers for Ollie Eaton down at the bank. And, one of the line guides on his own casting rod needed replacing.

Beth had been getting touchier and



... but then she recovered enough to let out a, "And don't come back!" Slammed the door so hard that ...

touchier about this fishing business lately. So, Sid just mentioned sort of casual-like, when the plug was finished and the rod was repaired, that he'd, "mosey down to the river and give 'em both a little test."

That did it!

Sid's pap had always told him that whatever he chose to do in life, whether it was just digging ditches or playing politics, he should try to be the best in his field. Sid had a fair start toward becoming a good fisherman when he heard this for the first time at the age of ten. So he concentrated on becoming the best fisherman around. His current reputation took in quite a sizable territory... enough to make the old man right proud of him had he been living.

But Beth took the realistic approach. She had pointed out all too frequently in their second year of married life that, aside from the fact that it was illegal to sell game fish in the state, there were likely few who would pay admission just to see Sid take bass when everybody else was getting licked. In short, his chosen profession had a somewhat limited financial future. The plug he had just whittled for Ollie in two hours would bring \$1.50, less the cost of two treble hooks and a couple screw-eyes.

He had thought once of going back and trying to make up with Beth. But she'd be blubbing at full speed with her pretty face down on her arms like always, long black hair curled around her head like fast water pushing past a rock, pretty shoulders shaking like a balky outboard motor. No, Sid couldn't take that again. It hurt clear down deep inside of him when Beth cried. It hurt just thinking about it.

Being a master in a profession without a future certainly had its drawbacks. Beth's prediction that the patience and skill he displayed in outwitting fish would pay off in the business world simply hadn't come to pass. But she said it was because he spent too much time at fishing and too little time at business. Being a fine fellow of good habits and a normally gentle nature made him popular with people. But it hadn't endeared him to the dollar sign.

The tracks in the road ended abruptly around the bend at the point where a blue coupe with out-of-state license plates was up to its axle in sand. Probably some visitor had brought one of the local belles out for a night view of the river. None of the local talent would be foolish enough to drive down this road. Still, it struck Sid odd that some effort hadn't been made to get the car out by this time.

Normally the road was passable in fall and spring at a time when the sand was neither too wet nor too dry. But rain was late giving up this fall. The road bed hadn't firmed yet. It meant a walk of several hundred feet from the old black top down to the boat landing unless you came straight down the bank. Most people fished up near the bridge that joined the village Sid lived in with the big town across the river. But Sid preferred this part of the stream.

He took his outboard from the shed above the high water line and clamped it to the back of his boat without enthusiasm. "I'm sick of fish. Yes, and I'm sick of you!" Beth probably didn't really mean it that way. Yet, this had been building up for a long time. For the first time Sid had a feeling that he might be developing

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a reputation that wouldn't meet his father's approval.

With the five-horse outboard purring in perfect tune a few minutes later, he was forced to give the river more of his attention. He felt a little better. Sid knew every dangerous underwater rock and he skillfully worked the boat into deep water. Across the river he could see another boat moving along shore, and it pointed his way.

He watched it curiously a moment; thought he saw someone wave. Sid throttled back, saw the prow of the other boat lift as more power was turned on. Then he recognized the craft as that owned by Hal Levering. Hal was waving.

Levering and Sid were good friends even though the former jokingly accused him of ruining his sporting goods business with his homemade plugs and flies. "If you'd quit fooling around and really go to work making those lures, you and I could both coin some money on them," Levering had told him more than once. But, Sid didn't have the capital to get started.

The boats drew together and Sid grabbed the rope tossed to him. There was a rather heavy-set and pleasant looking stranger with Hal.

"Called your house when I couldn't get you at the mill," Hal explained. "Your wife said I'd find you on the river. I have a little favor to ask of you. Too bad about your job."

"How'd she sound," Sid asked with a feeble attempt at a smile.

"Oh, fine, fine," Hal answered with such obvious fakery that Sid grimaced inwardly. "Sidney, I want you to meet Mr. Chisholm."

Even with Sid holding the boats together, Hal's nearly shipped water as the portly Mr. Chisholm leaned over to take Sid's hand. But, the ruddy-faced stranger had a hand-clasp that transmitted a vigor from a time previous to his expanding waistline.

"Hal's been telling me a lot about you, Mr. Dallas," he offered pleasantly.

"Mr. Chisholm is president of Northern Bait and Tackle Company, Sid," Hal explained. "He has been promising to come up here for some fishing for a long time. And, darned if he didn't catch me at a bad time. I've got to be in Centerport at four o'clock this afternoon. So, even though Mr. Chisholm will be here



Mr. Chisholm was preparing himself for a risky transfer from one boat to the other . . .

tomorrow, I thought maybe you could show him around the river this afternoon."

"Sure. Be glad to," Sid returned lightly. But inside he was a ball of excitement. Northern Bait and Tackle Company! Biggest in the business. And, here was the top man in the organization getting ready to fish with him.

"Show him how you do it," Hal grinned, reading Sid's thoughts.

Mr. Chisholm was preparing himself for a risky transfer from one boat to the other and made no comment. The exchange was accomplished without incident as both Hal and Sid lent every effort to ensure a safe operation. The new host gulped as his past middle-age guest plopped rather heavily on the front seat. Sid had constructed it when his thoughts were chiefly on Beth's 114 pounds.

The seat bellied dangerously, but held. However, the outboard motor's propeller was lifted with the stern of the boat until it was barely in the water. Hal had moved off.

"Confidentially," Chisholm winked as Sid turned expectantly to him for instructions, "I came up here to try out a couple new plugs we're thinking about putting into production." He reached into the big tackle box that he had brought with him and came up with two gaudy creations, one of wood and another of plastic. Mr. Chisholm passed them to Sid. "What do you think of them?"

Sid's pap had also taught him to be honest. He gave the plugs a minute appraisal.

"Course, you never can tell, Mr. Chisholm. But I don't think they'll take bass in this river. Too much paint, for one thing." He passed them back to the now unsmiling head of Northern Bait and Tackle Company.

"A rather quick decision, Mr. Dallas. The fellow who made these for us has turned out some excellent lures."

Sid flushed, stumbled out in half apology, "Well now, sir, I said you can never tell. We'll put them over some bass and find out. I sure hope they work."

He turned to the outboard to hide his confusion and wished he could hide his head. They had drifted some distance down the river. Sid headed back up to where the water ran deep along rock ledges. While still some distance out, he cut the motor and picked up the oars.

"It is still a little early, but you might do something with an underwater plug along these rocks, he offered.

An hour later, during which Chisholm had alternately tried his new plugs, not one fish had accepted. Sid declined to fish and concentrated on holding the boat where the best casts could be made. His guest had demonstrated expert ability with the casting rod. Finally he rested a while and contemplated the big assortment of lures in his tackle box. Occasionally he shifted his gaze between the water and the lures.

"This one of the better spots for bass?" There was a slight hint of challenge in his voice.

"At this time of day it is," Sid hesitated a moment. "If you don't mind the suggestion, sir, I believe you'd do better with one of your Northern Nuggets."

Mr. Chisholm cogitated briefly between the probable compliment to one of his old standbys and the obvious lack of respect for his new lures.

"We generally consider the Nugget best for later in the evening. But, I'll try it."



On the first cast the Nugget brought in a fair-sized bass.

"They work pretty good earlier in the day this time of year . . . sometimes," Sid explained almost apologetically as Mr. Chisholm thoughtfully and carefully released the fish.

The next fifteen minutes produced nothing. At Mr. Chisholm's urging Sid prepared to cast too. He snapped on a battered plug manufactured by Chisholm's company and left by a careless angler in Sid's boat some months before. With the bait man's eyes on his first cast, Sid heaved too hard and ended up with a wicked backlash. It was a veritable bird's nest which took the next ten minutes to untangle.

From the looks Sid was getting, he knew that Mr. Chisholm was comparing what Hal had told him with what he was seeing. It would do no good to explain that he hadn't had a backlash like that in two years. The sun was getting close to the horizon. To that moment the fishing trip was a complete flop in more ways than one. Sid was genuinely ashamed and disgusted. He had a little boy's urge to run off somewhere and hide.

"Well, I believe that is enough for one day," Mr. Chisholm tried to make it sound casual as he reeled in his plug, but his actions were disturbingly final. "Frankly, I'm a little disappointed in this river."

And in me, too, Sid thought. Nothing much mattered now. Sid suddenly thought of Beth and became desperate. He reached into his tackle box and came up with an odd chunk of wood that resembled a fishing plug only in the fact that it was adorned with two shiny treble hooks.

"Mr. Chisholm, I want you to try one of these before we quit. It's one I made myself."

The tackle manufacturer looked at the plug and couldn't suppress a smile. "Don't you paint them?"

"Well, sometimes. But not usually. Toward evening it don't seem to make much difference."

"Where do you want to fish now?"

Sid knew that Chisholm expected him to head for his favorite fishing ground to prove the plug. He made it sound casual as possible when he answered before starting the motor.

"Oh, reckon we might as well go over the same water."

On the next ten casts, Mrs. Chisholm hooked five fish and landed four of them. Two of them were three-pound smallmouth bass. On the eleventh cast, a heavy fish hit the plug and was in some underwater brush before the angler could stop it. Both fish and plug were lost.

"Sorry about that plug, Mr. Dallas," Chisholm said. Then he declined another sorry looking blob of wood. "I want to try something."

Chisholm went back to his new lures. Sid fished behind him with the rejected plug and caught two small bass while the new lures failed to produce a strike. At last the bait man reeled in and definitely called it quits.

"You've got something there, son," he finally admitted, "but it would need paint to put it on the market."

Suddenly Sid was burning. Here he had demonstrated without question that his lure was definitely a fish getter. And the fat man wouldn't accept the obvious. Paint!

"That's the trouble with you fellows. You paint them plugs up so bright that they scare the fish. They don't need all that paint. It's the action that counts."

Mr. Chisholm's lower lip slowly moved ahead.

"Mister Dallas, Northern Bait and

Tackle Company didn't get where it is by not knowing its business. Fishermen won't buy a plug that isn't painted. We want plugs that will catch fish, of course, but *they've got to have paint!* A car will run just as good without paint, but it won't sell without paint. You have to paint 'em!" Mr. Chisholm's voice was rising.

Sid cut off his guest by pulling the starter on the outboard. "Go ahead and paint 'em, then," he said to the churning wake of the motor.

Suddenly Sid wished that he was with Beth, even if she was bawling. He'd had enough of this fat man. The big slob wasn't interested in people catching fish. He just wanted to sell them gaudy trinkets. And yet, here might have been the big opportunity Sid was hoping for. He had muffed it . . . badly.

He ran the boat full speed among the rocks, dodging this way and that until Mr. Chisholm was holding on with both hands. With so much weight in the front, the motor was churning near the surface with a roar that made conversation impossible. Suited Sid, too.

He was mildly curious to see a tall, thin man standing at the boat landing dressed in street clothing, and his curiosity grew as the prow of the boat slid into the shallows after the motor had been cut in deeper water. The man was a complete stranger who gave them half a smile and nodded. He wore a thin moustache that was almost hidden in at least two days' growth of beard.

Sid nodded back as he stepped into the water to push the boat onto the sandy beach. Then he remembered. The car. This joker probably wanted help to get his car out of the sand. But that would be a job for a wrecker or a team of horses.

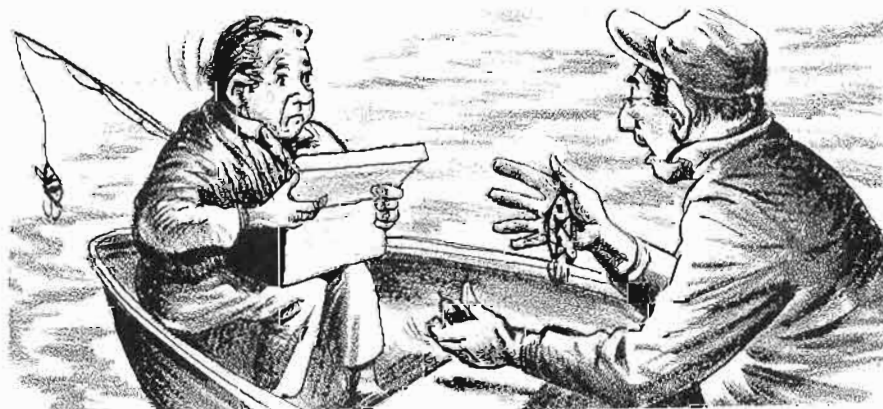
"Never mind pushing any farther."

The instructions had come from the man on the bank. Sid's head jerked up questioningly. The first thing that met his eyes was the end of a .32 automatic pistol. To Sid it looked like a six-inch cannon.

"I'd like to borrow your boat a little while," the man said pleasantly enough. But there was nothing pleasing about the way he kept the gun pointed at Sid. His voice turned to Mr. Chisholm. "Hurry it up there, fatty, and pay as you leave. Both of you leave your wallets on the seat. Any noise will be fatal. They found

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" . . . I don't think they'll take bass in this river. Too much paint, for one thing."



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my car up there," the stranger jerked his head in the direction of the river road, "and they may be back any minute."

Even as he spoke, there was a screech of brakes on the highway which paralleled the dirt road less than one hundred yards up the bank. The stranger tensed, and Sid's stomach turned a cartwheel. He grabbed his rod and tackle box from the boat with one hand and steadied the craft with the other for Mr. Chisholm who was fumbling for his wallet.

Mr. Chisholm's face was a few shades paler but registered contempt as he scooped up his tackle box and rod and stepped manfully into the shallow water. Sid laid his battered billfold beside the bulging wallet on the seat. Then he looked up for further instructions.

The stranger had one hand on the prow of the boat, and he stepped lightly into it, being careful to keep his gun pointed at Sid. His smile was gone.

"All right son, now shove me out. easy. No tricks. No tricks!" He emphasized his point the second time with the gun barrel.

"Just turn the boat around and give her a shove."

Sid eased the boat around with his free hand until the stern was pointed at the bank, then he gave a gentle push. The stranger, who was now on the rear seat, scowled. Sid's shove only carried him a few yards away. But nothing could be done about it. At least he was over deep water.

Stepping ashore, Sid dropped his tackle box. His casting rod still had the plug dangling from it. He turned toward the boat. The light was bad for what he had in mind, but it would work to the disadvantage of the man with the gun, too, if he failed. Sound of voices in the direction of the stranger's car gave him added courage.

He waited until the kneeling man in the now drifting boat had his attention and one hand on the starter rope of the outboard.

Sid made his overhand cast at the moment the stranger pulled on the rope. In the growing darkness, the man's gun hand was a dim and tiny target at fifty feet.

Three sounds split the silence almost simultaneously. The outboard roared, the stranger yelped and the gun went off. The first shot slapped the water half way between shore and

the boat and ricocheted past Sid and up the bank. Mr. Chisholm hit the sand.

It gave Sid a feeling of real elation when he felt the hooks sink home in the stranger's wrist. He struck hard, taking a step backward to hold in the slack. The gun came up and Sid struck again. Another bullet whizzed past him into the river bank.

The stranger dropped the gun in the boat and grabbed desperately for the line with his free hand. He caught it, made a quick turn around his wrist and gave a mighty heave to break the cord. That was a mistake. Sid was fast running out of line and it would have been comparatively simple to break it when it hit the end on the reel.



"You know . . . I do believe we could use a man who handles a rod like that, Sid."

Sid caught the move. When the stranger heaved, Sid relaxed thumb pressure on the reel. The gunman was thrown completely off balance and went overboard with a grand splash, carrying the line clear of the rapidly moving boat.

Sid reeled in the slack as Mr. Chisholm appeared beside him. Behind him he could hear excited voices and running feet.

"What pound test are you using?" inquired Mr. Chisholm with a big grin.

"Never use over twelve for bass," Sid answered as he kept reeling and wondering if he'd ever get his boat back. He could hear it roaring down the river, though it seemed to be heading back into shore. But then the thrashing weight on the end of his line took all his attention. The stranger had to swim and his chance to break the line without a direct pull on his injured hand was gone. Each time he tried to take line, Sid prodded him with the hooks.

"Now don't force him too hard," Mr. Chisholm advised excitedly. "My, you've really got a whopper on. This may set a record."

He continued a stream of advice, getting more interested by the moment. When he could, the swimmer swore viciously.

Two state policemen were spectators now, and they held powerful flashlights on the swimming figure. That took all the fight out of the quarry. Sid simply kept reeling in the slack.

A short time later they had Sid's catch on the bank. Everybody was laughing but the bedraggled gunman. "Get me to a doctor," he groaned as Sid unsnapped the leader from his plug.

"This boy's wanted for murder," one of the cops said. "And, I think there is a price on his head. We just checked up on his license number back at the station."

Suddenly the distant background noise of the errant boat ceased abruptly. Sid grinned, "She's grounded."

"You know," Mr. Chisholm had been thinking, "I do believe we could use a man who handles a rod like that, Sid." He hesitated a moment. "Might even be able to sell that plug of yours the way it is . . . with a couple coats of clear varnish."

**Editor's note:**

Although most fishing stories contain a considerable amount of fiction, authors seldom, if ever, admit it.

Mr. Schuyler's story of a day in the life of Sid Dallas is one of the very few articles, purely fictional, ever printed in the Angler.

We trust that you enjoyed it as much as we did.



# KEYSTONE CAMPING

by Thad Bukowski

FOR A COUPLE of fishermen, one of the simplest ways to go camping is by using the station wagon. It is conveniently designed for only one other companion, however, so you have the option of choice if you own the vehicle.

A preference might be a father-son situation, or a camping-angler who fishes worse than yourself. Then he won't be able to brag too much about how he outdid you! Of considerable importance is that both people want to camp at the same spots, since such camping usually involves hop-scotch fishing at a number of places.

The use of the station wagon lends itself well to roaming trips over the countryside even on weekends. One might travel the course of a big river valley, an extensive watershed, or knock around in the Pennsylvania hills, seeking native trout or smallmouth bass.

Such trips are particularly good in the springtime and late fall when heavier camping vehicles might have problems in the mud. In the spring is the time to explore new trout streams. In the fall, when leaves are in their glory, the smallmouth bass are gorging themselves on minnows in the rivers before they begin to lay low for the winter.

I have taken three-day wagon trips to such areas as the Tionesta, Kettle and Sinnemahoning watersheds for trout and the Allegheny for both bass and trout, depending on what part of the river I was interested in.

A good added piece of equipment atop the wagon is a canoe to fish big eddies or pools along certain rivers, or float sections if you can manage a ride back. I have both a 14 foot square-back 59 pounder and 29 pound 12 footer for these endeavors.

Probably, most important is that my wagon also carries radial tires for safety on the back roads.

Packing a wagon is a problem. Simplicity is the key, and the simpler the better. On our first trip we loaded the back so heavily with every imaginable item we thought we needed that we ended up snoozing at the sides of the car in our sleeping bags

along the edge of a stream, rather than try to rearrange equipment! On the second trip I began the packing by stretching out the sleeping bags with pad underneath and pillows as the first operation. Then other necessary items were placed atop these.

Styrofoam boxes are excellent as containers to keep even temperatures. One for foodstuffs such as bread, cheese, luncheon meats, peanut butter and jelly, salt and pepper. Another for limited kitchen utensils and staples. Don't forget "grease" if you want to fry fish. A couple of smaller containers for minnows also, since this is a great bait both for springtime rainbow trout and fall smallmouth.

Items that might also be important include boots for the fishing; two rods, usually an ultra-light spinning and a fly rod; fishing jacket with minimum equipment, an insulated jacket, sharp knives, paper plates and plastic spoons and forks; can opener, coffee, with a small pot to heat water, charcoal and wire grill-cover only from a grill. On our last trip, we forgot our grill but still succeeded in having eminently satisfying steaks at the Cherry Spring campground cooked right on the coals of our wood-charcoal.

A half-gallon jug of water becomes more important as the day wears on. A few aspirin, throat lozenges, plus Kaopectate and Pepto-Bismal might be advisable but usually the camper is healthier on such trips than at home, although more rugged-looking as the trip-time progresses. I remember only two occasions over the years when we had problems: once the dog was along and got sick from eating too well and needed the Pepto (according to phoned instructions from a vet) and the other time I got the "Montezuma's Revenge" and shortened a trip by a day.

Station-wagon camping includes a considerable amount of "knocking around." A substantial variety of wildlife can sometimes be observed in hitting the back roads and if one is a "birder," too, he gets added enjoyment if he brings binoculars. On our

last trip we were encouraged to encounter a number of hawks in the hills which might indicate that the predatory birds are coming back on the wildlife scene better than expected.

One of the problems associated with back road traveling is to know the roads. Very helpful are guides to the back roads in the counties in which you might camp. Fish Commission Maps are very helpful here, as are local county or regional outdoors maps if they are available. Don't leave without a state map, either. I also religiously use the *Pennsylvania Outdoor Fun Guide\** which shows the Legislative Route numbers for most back roads in the state.

Another problem associated with such trips is taking proper terminal tackle for the fishing in the area you visit. On one trout stint this year, squaretails were only hitting Hendricksons and quill flies in the area we visited, and I had very few along. If one is a fly-tyer, taking the vise along usually is helpful.

A station-wagon trip is more enjoyable if it is a "circle" route, going in one direction and coming back in another. The wagon is also accommodated at DER camping areas as camping headquarters informed us that our vehicle was acceptable as a camping vehicle at a recent stop we made. I wanted to stay at the park because of the greater safety associated with the accommodations and because I had a dozen strikes on dries that evening at a nearby trout stream.

On that trip, I learned to eat a new sandwich. As we were getting ready to squeeze into our sleeping bags, two hefty fellows in the back of the wagon, I expressed the opinion that I was hungry. My companion, who was cook for the day, reached into the staples now on the front seat and made both of us sandwiches in the dark, of peanut butter, jelly and baloney.

"I eat these all the time," he laughed, when I expressed surprise at the mixed flavors.

The next morning, however, I found a little restaurant along the road a few miles from Galeton and had a hot breakfast. The meal almost tasted like Mom used to cook back home when I was a kid.

\*(Available at a cost of \$3.50 from Outdoor People, 610 Beatty Road, Monroeville, Pa., 15146.)



## "HELP"

The following is one of the many phone calls my wife had the pleasure of answering during the opening day of Trout Season—while I was out on patrol.

"Hello . . . Mrs. Hartle? I was driving down Rt. 74, south of Red Lion, when a jeep passed me going the other way and threw a rock through my windshield. I did not recognize the driver, and I do not know what color the jeep was; also, he was going too fast to get his license number, but I would recognize that jeep anywhere!"

He went on to say that he knew that this was not within the Waterways Patrolman's jurisdiction, but since this was the first day of Trout Season, he knew I would be out and around the country and if I saw that Jeep—would I let him know?

William F. Hartle  
Waterways Patrolman  
York County

## BLAIR COUNTY HOT SPOT

The response to the stocking of 6,000 legal rainbow trout in the new Canoe Creek Dam in Blair County has been nothing short of amazing. On the first day of trout season there were at least 50 boats on the 155 acre lake and somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 people. It has been very easy to find at least 30 cars parked in the parking lot almost every evening that I have been there. Many limits of very nice rainbows running up to 21" have been taken. All in all, everyone I have talked to has been very pleased with the Fish Commission's efforts to provide quality trout fishing in the first lake to be built in Blair County. A special tip of the hat goes to our BIG SPRINGS HATCHERY for providing a really great load of trout for the lake!

Walter A. Rosser  
Waterways Patrolman  
Blair County

## EVERY PENNY COUNTS!

The Fish Commission has a reputation of being "penny-wise"; they don't spend any money unless they have to. But I never knew how much this was practiced until I heard the following story from another WATERWAYS PATROLMAN. It seems that this patrolman put 11 stamps on an envelope to mail and gave it to his wife. She took it to the Post Office and found out that it took only 10 stamps. However, the Postmaster told her that the extra stamp could not come off without ruining the stamp. But, you guessed it, this Patrolman's wife removed the extra stamp to be used again! How's that for being "money-wise"?

James Ansell  
Waterways Patrolman  
Mercer County

## LIVE HIGH DIVE ACT!

While checking around Nessmuk Lake one day, I observed an Osprey circling overhead. I had only seen an Osprey dive for fish once before, so I quietly watched. The Osprey made one dive and came up with nothing. The bird circled a few times and then made a second dive. This time he came up with what looked to be about a five inch fish. Ken Schlicker of the Wellsboro Recreation Commission also saw the performance. This was a first for him.

Raymond Hoover  
Waterways Patrolman  
Tioga County

## "CORN" MUSKY TALE!

Each spring during the spawning season we have many large muskies caught at Pymatuning, and by some very unusual methods. Most of the fish are caught from the shoreline and on bait such as small crappie minnows, nightcrawlers, doughballs, etc. But this year I heard of two muskies caught on something a little more unusual: KERNELS OF CORN! And both were caught along the

shore near the Causeway on the same day! Wonder what will be next, maybe dogfood, or hamburger . . . who knows?

Warren L. Beaver  
Waterways Patrolman  
Crawford County

## WASTED WATERS!

On the opening day of pickerel and pike season this year, SWP Hollister and I were patrolling in my new district—Wayne County. Located in Wayne County are many of the finest walleye and pickerel waters in north-eastern Pennsylvania. To name a few: Miller and White Oak Ponds, for Pickerel; Prompton Dam and Lower Woods Pond for walleye.

Much to my surprise (and disappointment) only nine fishermen were fishing on all of these waters! Lower Woods and Miller Pond: "0," White Oak: "1," and Prompton Dam: "8." To confirm that the fishing is good, those fishermen on Prompton Dam that we could get close enough to talk with, were very near "limiting-out" with walleyes; the largest being 24½ inches in length.

Michael Badner  
Waterways Patrolman  
Wayne County

## POOR SPORTSMANSHIP!

Every year, at stocking time, we meet some poor sportsmen. This year, it was no different; some started fishing by casting into the buckets as they were being emptied! In another incident, officer Wilbur Williams, from neighboring McKean County, was nearly run down by an excited fisherman parking his car. This same man left the car motor running, locked the car and hurried down to the stream. I was told that it was still running—two hours later.

Paul R. Sowers  
Waterways Patrolman  
Warren County

## FORGET IT!

During the annual shad run in the Delaware, an avid fisherman from Bethlehem had a slight problem with his boots. It seemed that after catching and landing a 22 inch, 6 pound smallmouth bass, all concern for those leaky boots was forgotten. Without a doubt, this gentleman was the happiest fisherman in the state of Pennsylvania.

John W. Weaver  
Waterways Patrolman  
Northampton County



## "BUG" IN HIS EAR!

Every year I get information about "So and So has killed three hundred trout this year," and, "another angler has killed three hundred and fifty so far." I haven't been able to see why this is so important. Why does an angler have to kill a certain number of trout. What is so important about catching your limit each time you go fishing? I would think that the anglers would return all fish but what they can use themselves and return the rest for tomorrow or for the next angler who enjoys catching and returning his fish—to catch again another day.

Ted Oertly and Robert Hulick, of Emporium, had caught about 60 fish each and had killed only three or four each. Think of how much fishing recreation this will bring later on. I would like to see the practice spread to more anglers.

I checked two Ohio anglers on the Driftwood Branch one sunny May afternoon. They remarked of how good the fishing was and I expected to see two limits on fish, but instead, one angler had five trout and the other three. The older, a distinguished looking gentleman, asked if I had ever seen a 56 year old angler with a "fly" in his ear. Sure enough, as big as life, there was a fly hanging from his right ear! I looked over the ear and found the fly hanging by a thread of skin so I convinced him to let me remove it. It only took a very slight pressure and the fly came loose. Leaving a very relieved fisherman, I jokingly told him he would receive my "bill" by mail. They call the Waterways Patrolman lots of things . . . we may as well be Doctors too!

Stanley G. Hastings  
Waterways Patrolman  
Cameron County

## BIG BROWNIE— FROM THE CLARION!

Every year we conduct many "Fishing Schools" across the Commonwealth, and quite often, we who are instructing, get a few tips from the participants. At all of the sessions here in Clarion County, I always tell of how great the fishing is getting to be in the Clarion River, and encourage the students to give it a try. On a Monday morning, April 30th, Porter Duvall and I put on a Fishing Clinic at Clarion State College, and,

as usual, we talked of the fishing in the Clarion River. That evening, Glenn Duncan of Clarion, a student at the college, came to my home and told me of how he decided to take me up on fishing in the Clarion River. Glenn was quite shook up, and with good reason. On his first cast, just a little more than an hour earlier, he hooked and landed a 22¼ inch Brown Trout that weighed 3¾ pounds! He was using a spinning outfit and a live minnow for bait. Glenn has joined the ranks as a "disciple" and is now telling all of the wonders of fishing the Clarion. Welcome aboard, Glenn!

Robert J. Cortez  
Waterways Patrolman  
Clarion County

## NEVER CARRY 'EM!

An elderly lady, fishing across the creek from this fisherman, hollered, "Do you have a pair of pliers to pinch these split shot on?" The fellow across from her said, "No, use your teeth like I do." She replied, "I can't, they're up in the truck!"

Bernard D. Ambrose  
Waterways Patrolman  
Elk County

## SORRY ABOUT THAT!

A young man called my home recently, stating that he had caught a trout from North Park Lake, after March 14th, and wanted to know if he was violating the law—as his friends were telling him.

I stated that the season was closed for trout and that North Park was also closed to fishing. As I continued to talk to the young man, I asked, "What is your name and address?" After a short pause, a soft chuckle was heard, and the young man said, "Oh, I live down here in Pittsburgh. I'm sorry about that fish, good-bye"!!!

James R. Smith  
Waterways Patrolman  
Allegheny County

## FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS —CATCHES FISH TOO!

Fred Crompton, from Monongahela, Pennsylvania, spent several weeks last fall fishing from the Walnut Creek Access Area East Pier. Fred managed to catch his limit of Coho Salmon in about two hours of fishing each day. Naturally, the fishermen observing him fishing wanted

to find out his secret to this daily catch of fish and observed him carefully. When Fred would appear at the Pier about daylight, he would remove his Bible from his pocket and read a few passages and then start fishing. After he caught his limit, he would loan the lure he was using to the other fishermen and instruct them how to retrieve the lure, but no one could get the lures to perform and produce the fish that Fred was catching! A number of fishermen even borrowed Fred's Bible to read the scripture. This may have helped some, but still no one could out-fish Fred! Fred would tell them they had to be a "firm believer" to make it work. He was back last Spring and caught a 26 inch rainbow and two more coho, fishing from this Pier.

Norman E. Ely  
Water Safety Coordinator  
Lake Erie

## WOULD YOU BELIEVE "2.8"?

Brothers Joe and Ed Crognale, of Airport Marine, and I were talking one day and the subject of MOTOR-BOAT CAPACITY PLATES came up. After kicking the related problems around a while, Ed said, "do you want to see a real good one about capacity plates?" I replied, "Sure." So Joe and I accompanied Ed from the office to the sales area. And there, sure as God made little green apples, was an aluminum boat with a capacity plate which read "CAPACITY: 2.8 persons at 150 lbs."

Richard Owens  
Supervisor  
Region VI

## SHARP INDEED!

During a presentation to a Scout group recently, one of the topics covered was identifying the spiny-rayed fish. I explained that the rays of these fish were stiff and very sharp. A short time later I received letters from each of the children expressing their interest and appreciation. One of these letters was brief and to the point, but it carried a rather strong message. It was signed "Donald," and said simply, "Dear Mr. Perry: I touched a Spiny-Rayed fish!"

Robert J. Perry  
Assistant Supervisor  
Region III

# The Marabou Popper

by Chauncy K. Lively

*photos by the author*

RARELY ARE bass selective in their feeding habits, at least to the degree of fussiness normally associated with trout. Occasionally encountered exceptions are when flying ants are on the water in quantity or when the bass find a sizable mayfly hatch to their liking. Generally they are open-minded as well as open-mouthed, ready to take on all comers, and anything that reasonably suggests living food is fair game.

The best materials for bass bugs are those which themselves are possessed of life-like qualities or those capable of simulating life when manipulated by the angler. Marabou meets both requirements handily. Indeed, few materials in nature can match the sinewy, seductive action of these downy plumes in the water. Marabou streamers of many descriptions have been around for a long time, and effective they are for all manner of game fish, but it took a keen fly-rodder in the person of George Aiken, of Pittsburgh, to combine the slithery, breathing movement of marabou with the "come-and-get-me" voice of the cork popper. Surface feeding bass, both largemouth and smallmouth, find the combination irresistible.

One of the most enjoyable mornings I have ever spent on bass water was one in which I didn't make a



George Aiken works his Marabou Popper for Allegheny River smallmouth.

single cast. It was quite a few years ago at Edinboro Lake in August, at the height of the vacation season. A veritable beehive of activity on the lake precluded any serious fishing on the main body, at least during the day, so one morning George Aiken and I turned out at dawn to fish a winding, sheltered inlet. A toss of the coin designated me to handle the boat first, while George fished, and we slowly made our way into the mouth of the inlet. The water was smooth as glass and a cool mist shrouded the surface. George attached a black Marabou Popper to his leader and went to work, methodically placing his bug close to the shoreline, where it would lie quietly until the rings subsided. Then he would gently twitch his rod tip, making the popper nod and the marabou dance. It was an action too enticing for the bass to decline. Sometimes they would quietly engulf the bug before it was moved and occasionally a bass would bulge under it, only to come roaring back for the kill after the first "pop." After catching three or four bass, George insisted that he take the oars and I fish but I was far too fascinated with his performance and intrigued with the little dancer at the end of his leader. When we had reached the end of the inlet George had caught and released a baker's dozen of fine largemouth bass. Then a fast-approaching thunderstorm sent us on a beeline to the home dock and fishing was done for the morning. But it had been an im-

pressive show and I was glad I had been on hand as a spectator.

Although the illustrations show the tying sequence for a black Marabou Popper, other colors or combinations may be substituted. White marabou and white body with black spots; and yellow marabou with red-spotted yellow body are effective alternatives. Hook sizes may range from #8 to #2 but relative proportions should be maintained in marabou and body dimensions. The cork body shown for the size #4 bug is 11/16" by 1/4". There should be no concern about the long overhang of the marabou behind the hook because short strikes simply do not occur; bass invariably take the whole bug in a single gulp. The short clump of stiff deer hair under the base of the marabou serves to hold the tail in position, preventing it from wrapping around the bend of the hook during casting.

If there can be a cardinal principle in bass bugging it should be: *FISH SLOWLY!* Despite good intent, most of us fish a bug as if we must cover every inch of the lake's surface by sundown. With the Marabou Popper the pace should be super-slow. In fact, when the water is choppy it is beneficial to allow the bug to float over a likely spot for long periods without imparting any motion from the rod. The wave action alone is sufficient to send the marabou into its dance and many a bass has been lured to the Marabou Popper with little help from the angler. What more could one ask?



## TYING THE MARABOU POPPER

A. Materials necessary: marabou plumes, ► light and dark lacquer or enamel, deer body hair, strong tying thread, cellulose cement, hump-shanked hook (preferably long) and slotted cork body.



◀ B. Clamp hook in vise (shown is Herter's #993DH "S" hump shank, size #4) and tie in black thread behind eye. Spiral thread back beyond rear hump, then forward again to eye. Whip-finish and cut thread.

C. Squeeze cement into cork body's ► slot and press body onto hook. Tie in thread behind body and half-hitch.

◀ D. Cut a small bunch of black-dyed deer body hair and bind butts to hook behind body. Hair should be about as long as hook shank.

E. Bind paired black marabou plumes ► to hook over hair windings. Marabou is 1½ times length of shank.

◀ F. Whip-finish thread at rear of body (or half-hitch several times) and cut off excess. Generously apply cement to windings, both at rear and eye.

G. Paint cork body with black lacquer ► or enamel, then apply yellow spots and eyes with nail-head. This completes the Marabou Popper.



# CO-OP NEWS

by Bill Porter

A monthly feature devoted exclusively  
to Pennsylvania's Cooperative Nurseries—

*Cooperative Nurseries are fish rearing facilities  
built and maintained by organized sportsmen  
... at their own expense.  
Fingerling fish provided by the Pennsylvania Fish  
Commission are reared and released in public  
waters of the sportsmen's choice  
in accordance with policies prescribed by the  
Fisheries Division's Cooperative Nursery Branch,  
Robert H. Brown, Chief.*

## The "Bear" Facts and the

### FARNSWORTH TROUT CLUB

THERE ARE not too many cooperative nurseries that have a ready-made nursery simply waiting to be taken over and worked. Such was the fortune of the Farnsworth Trout Club when they became the operators of an abandoned federal hatchery in Warren County's section of the Allegheny Forest. However, there is much more to the story than that.

To a degree, the tale begins with the 3-C-U Cooperative complex in Erie sometime in 1970. Carl Guerin, president of that group at that time, talked to some Warren County sportsmen about the advantages of a co-op project and the help that 3-C-U would provide should the lads want to start one. Interest quickened and wheels were put into motion.

The discontinued federal hatchery at Farnsworth was the ideal site if permission could be secured to use it and it could be restored to workable order. Both issues ended in a positive manner for the newly christened Farnsworth Trout Club, headquartered in Clarendon.

Cooperation was required from two federal agencies, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife. The big hurdle was jumped on March 15, 1971, when the Forest Service issued a permit to occupy the facilities. Norman Kohler, the Forest Ranger from the Sheffield District, assisted the club, representing the Forest Service.

Bob Brown, Chief, Cooperative Nursery Program, worked with the group and gave them the "official

blessing." The red tape had been cut—there was nothing to do but raise and stock trout for the general fishing public who fish the local waters.

The "nothing" actually was "something." The old ponds and raceways had been filled with gravel to preserve the cement walls and reduce accidents to visitors at the site. So considerable restoration had to be done, including checking and repairing the plumbing. Club members and volunteers from the plumbers union, Local 580, did the job. And by March 28, the facility was ready for its first cooperative program trout. As time progressed, 1000 "steelhead" fingerlings arrived from the 3-C-U club. Later, the Farnsworth club purchased some of their own, and eventually Fish Commission fingerlings were residents. The Farnsworth Trout Club was in business.

As proof of the fact, the club stocked its first fish—500 steelhead trout—in Whiskey Run, a tributary of the Allegheny Reservoir, on October 10, 1971. For the 1972 season, the Farnsworth sportsmen stocked 6,300 trout and an increase is expected for the current 1973 season. The club is well and growing.

This growth has not been particularly easy. Extensive back-breaking labor was needed to get the former federal hatchery into useable form. Once this task was accomplished and trout installed, there was the question of regular feeding and maintenance. This was an obvious necessity, but the 7.5 miles of the forested Farnsworth road were not so obvious to outsiders. The road is not maintained by the Forest Service in winter, and spring thaws make it dangerous and difficult. So hardy souls with four-wheeled vehicles have been handling the feeding chores through the severe winter months.

John Sleeman, currently secretary-treasurer, told us of another problem

that most nurseries do not face. The problem in a single word is *bears*. As many as three at a time have been observed prowling the nursery; two actually dragged off some road-kill deer dropped off by Game Commission officers with the resultant loss of some good trout food; and a single bear—or maybe several, one at a time—have acquired a taste for trout. One of the bruins was observed sitting in the raceway on one occasion, cooling himself and enjoying a meal of fresh trout in the process. Although the feeders seem to take this in stride, they seem to face a bit of a challenge in what, for most nurseries, is a routine task.

Aside from the bruins, the club has another unusual problem. The main raceway of the original federal hatchery is divided and only the righthand side, facing downstream, was useable at the time of our visit. Seepage from runoff water has produced a quality problem for the left side of the raceway. Tests have been made and plans developed so full utilization of the raceway can be made.

In the meantime, fishermen in the Allegheny Forest around Farnsworth and Clarendon are finding more fish available through the efforts of the Farnsworth Trout Club. The efforts of the club are particularly noticeable in Farnsworth Creek; Brown, Hatch, Six Mile and Four Mile Runs; and in a modest but growing degree, in the greater Allegheny Reservoir.

Sleeman summed up the success of the project by indicating that, in spite of problems, doubts, and expenses, it worked well because there was a common cause of interest to the Forest Service, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries, the Fish Commission, the 3-C-U Cooperative, the sportsmen, labor forces, industrial and individual contributors, and the club members themselves.



# BOATING

## Questions & Answers

by Capt. Jack Ross

From G. M. W., Port Vue:

"After talking with a number of dealers, we are utterly confused regarding what boat we should buy. We are an older couple, and want a trailered boat for river and lake cruising, which could also be used occasionally by our son and his family for water skiing. What size boat and motor should we have?"

—For a first boat, I would recommend a 15 to 17-foot outboard hull, either fiberglass or aluminum, from one of the established manufacturers. The engine should be from 45 to 65 hp., of any of the major names. The most important factor is to buy the rig from a dealer near your home who will set it up completely and give you an in-the-water trial of the outfit. A substantial boat, motor and trailer suited to your needs will cost from \$2,500 to \$3,000, and should give you many years of enjoyment.

From V. R. H., Philadelphia:

"We have been pricing used fiberglass sailboats, and most of the nicer ones seem to cost nearly as much as they did new. How can we be sure that we are not being cheated on the price?"

—Assuming that the used boat is in good condition, it is not unusual for a fiberglass sailboat several years old to be priced at nearly the same level as the boat originally sold new. This is because this type of boat does not ordinarily receive much wear, and because the cost of new boats is rising like most other things in these inflationary times. To be certain you get a fair deal, you should retain a competent marine surveyor to inspect and appraise the boat before you buy.

From W. S., Pittsburgh:

"What is the difference between a marine battery and an ordinary automobile battery?"

—There are two major differences; first, the word "Marine" displayed on

the battery case, and second, the price.

From J. D., Downingtown:

"My round-bottom wood fishing dory is very heavy, and does not run very fast with the present 10 hp. motor. How much additional speed would I get with a 25 hp. engine?"

—Probably very little, since a displacement hull simply cannot skim over the water like a planing hull. The probable limit for your hull, like all hulls of this type, is one and one-third times the square root of the waterline length. Thus, an 18-foot boat such as yours would have a limiting speed of about six miles per hour, regardless of the power applied.

From R. L., Pittsburgh:

"I was recently stopped by a Waterways Patrolman and told that the bow numbers on my 18-foot fiberglass runabout were not legal. These numbers are large and plainly visible, but are not exactly of block design. The numbers are plastic, and have been fastened to the hull with epoxy glue, and removing them would undoubtedly damage the gel coat. What can I do?"

—My suggestion would be to purchase a set of stick-on vinyl numbers of the proper design, apply these aft of the other set, and either "paint over" the original numbers or obliterate them in some suitable fashion. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to write a regulation that will provide for reasonable exceptions while maintaining the desired standard of performance. The rules for bow numbers have been enforced rather strictly because of the endless variety of styles of numbers on the market, many of which are not really readable at any distance. This problem is compounded by the fact that some dealers have been selling expensive and ornate numbers that do not conform to the regulations.

From C. W. N., Pittsburgh:

"Would you recommend a jon boat or a bow-ended skiff for general fishing use on Pennsylvania waters?"

—If your fishing will all be done on sheltered waters, the jon boat is hard to beat. The square, raked bow adds greatly to the stability and roominess of this design, and it pushes through the water with less resistance than any other hull form. On the other hand, if you sometimes venture offshore, or even onto Lake Erie, I would recommend a model-bow (sharp-ended) boat with some vee in the bottom and rounded rather than sharp chines. This hull form is much better suited to rough waters, and will run comfortably in a chop that would pound a jon boat unmercifully. Some of the cathedral hulls are a compromise between the two basic forms, and the better of these perform very well under most conditions. One good thing to remember is that a capable rough-water boat will always perform well in easy conditions, but the reverse is not always true. Pick a boat that will take the worst you might give her, and chances are you'll always get home safely.

From J. B. E., Clarion:

"What is a marine league?"

—This is an antiquated measure of distance equal to three statute miles. The term is still used in some coastal states, which exercise, or claim, jurisdiction for one or more leagues offshore; hence, the three-mile limit.

From N. V., Middletown:

"What is the difference between a dock, a berth, a pier and a wharf?"

—Dock and berth both refer to a space in the water occupied by a boat, usually alongside a pier or wharf, which are structures built out over the water for mooring vessels.

A FISHING FEATURE FOR FISHERMEN-FROM FISHERMEN

# FISH TALES



CAMERON WALKER, of Bellefonte, landed this 45½-inch, 28-pound musky last January while fishing along Bald Eagle Creek in Centre County. It earned him membership in the Husky Musky Club.



DAVID DESKEVICH, 9, of Ebensburg, caught his nice 12½-inch yellow perch from Gleendale Dam in Cambria County using spinning gear and a worm. He received a Junior Citation for his catch.



TOOD HASBROUCK, 8, of North East, holds his beauty—a 19-inch, 2½ pound brown trout caught in Caldwell Creek. Grandfather Garland Archer, a noted musky fisherman, is just as proud.



CHARLES ODATO, JR., was fishing Virgin Run Lake in Fayette County in April '72 when he caught his 18½-inch, 3½-pound brook trout. He was using a Mepps Black Fury and spinning gear.



This young angler, THOMAS KIEFER, 10, of Bethlehem proudly holds his 22¼-inch, 4-pound channel catfish taken from Monocacy Creek in May. He received a Junior Citation for this catch.



A Sharon fisherman, CLYDE FLEET, caught this 40¼-inch, 16½-pound northern pike on a sucker from Shenango Reservoir last November '72. He earned a Senior Citation for this one.



A musky fisherman, PAUL BOHINSKY, from Ambridge, holds his 47-inch, 34-pound musky from Pymatuning Lake. It won him membership in the Husky Musky Club and a Senior Citation.





A Youngstown, Ohio youth, DAVID RICHARD holds his 47-inch, 36-pound musky also caught in Pymatuning Lake last March. He used spinning gear and a nightcrawler.



GERALDINE LESNIAK, of New Cumberland, landed this 36-inch, 3½-pound eel from Pinchot State Park Lake late one night in October '72. She made the catch using a nightcrawler.



Young FRANK BROWN, 12, of Philadelphia, caught this 25-inch, 8½-pound carp in April from the Delaware River in Bucks County. He used spinning gear and corn and earned a Junior Citation.



GARY CARR, 13, of Sunbury, caught his 23¼-inch, 4¼-pound walleye last January from the Susquehanna River in Northumberland County. He used spinning gear and earned a Junior Citation.



14 year old SCOTT FULTZ, of Wormleysburg, caught his nice 23-inch, 6½-pound channel catfish while fishing the Susquehanna River. He was using spinning equipment and a nightcrawler.



Another musky fisherman, JOHN PE-TRUNA, of St. Marys, holds his 42-inch, 19-pound musky taken from Kinzua Dam in Warren County last October '72. He became a Husky Musky Club member.



PERCY BEATTY, a musky fisherman from Newport, caught his 45-inch, 21-pound musky in the Juniata River, Perry Co. He received a Senior Citation and membership in the Husky Musky Club.

## Fishing Outlook

continued from page 3

brownies will now be preparing themselves for the November spawning ritual. They will have moved out of the summer depths and up closer to the surface and nearer to the shore. Ever cruising, they will feed heavily on the "young-of-the-year" of last summer's crop of fishes and on the hordes of night-hatching stone

flies that come off the lake's surface.

When fishing with shallow-running lures, small rebels in the 3 inch class; the #2 mepps spinner in silver; pearl killers and the twisting minnie are all good. Fish these lures slowly, just fast enough to impart action, and just off shore. Concentrate on waters that are between 10 and 30 feet deep.

Wet fly fishing is great now. A 333 floating line, with a 9 foot leader and a three fly hookup, is ideal. Use at

least four pound test tippets as these fish hit hard. Flies should be sparsely tied in various shades of tan and brown. Quill bodies, fur and wool bodies, on size 10 or 12 hooks, are most effective. Move flies ever so slightly after casting. Allow them to settle a foot or so then retrieve very quietly, hand over hand, with an occasional twitch. Watch for feeding fish and attempt to cast ahead of them. All in all, it looks like it will be a great year on Wallenpaupack.

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## It's later than you think!

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## THE ANGLER'S NOTEBOOK

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by Richard F. Williamson

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**Autumn fish like action in baits and lures.** Bait should be alive and active, and the best lures are flashing spoons, popping surface lures, wriggling plugs, and crazily darting streamer flies and bucktails.

**Fish are "high-in-the-water"** in the fall. They do not have to sulk in deep pools in search of water with a cool, comfortable temperature.

**Pike are hungry or in a bad mood** most of the time, so they often strike when other species are not interested in baits or lures.

**Tap the bottom with the sinker,** then reel in about a foot of line and wait for action when fishing deep with bait for walleyes. Don't make the fish stoop down for their meals.

**Don't worry if that hair frog or hair mouse gets soggy.** It will take fish even when it sinks an inch or two beneath the surface of the water. Anyway, once a hair lure gets wet it's almost impossible to make it float high, even by greasing it thoroughly.

**Too much drag on a spinning or casting reel can prove disastrous.** The

drag should be set as lightly—not as hard—as possible, with just enough tension to help control a fighting fish.

**Paint a bobber with fluorescent enamel** to make it easier to see. Orange and yellow are the best colors.

**Put a little "meat" on a spoon or jig** to make it more attractive to bass, walleyes, and pike. The "meat" can be a worm, a minnow, or pork rind strung on the hook of the lure.

**Drift fishing enables an angler to** cover a lot of water by boat. Lures and bait may be cast in all directions around the boat as it floats with the current or under the impetus of a light breeze.

**Trying to cast a plug into the next** county is wasted effort. The water within a range of 50 or 60 feet of an angler deserves his best efforts.

**Hair bass bugs for surface fishing** should have thick, bushy tails and wings, especially the wings. A bug may be big when it is dry, but after it is used for a time, the wings and tail will soften and the hairs will mat together.

**Beware of a knot in a leader.** It is a weak spot where the leader may break

when a sudden or hard strain is put on it.

**A swimming frog does not suddenly** appear on the water 20 or 30 feet from shore. Usually it falls off a shoreline object to the surface of the water and swims around. So, the next time you use fly-rod surface lures that imitate a frog, cast the lure on shore or on a log, stump, or rock, and then gently twitch it off into the water.

**All popular patterns of bucktails and** streamers used in trout fishing also are excellent lures for smallmouth bass.

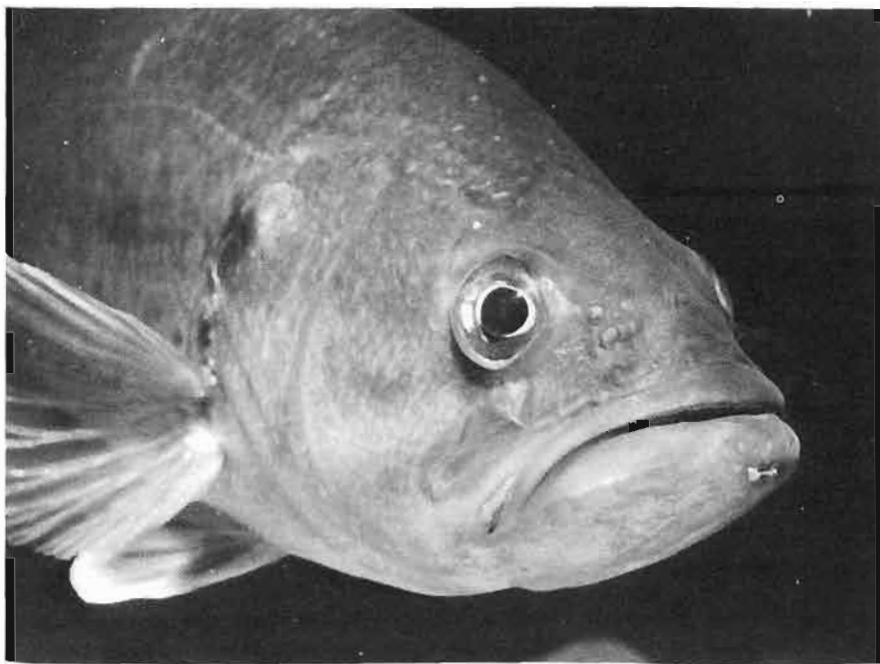
**Vary your speed in trolling.** At times fish are hungry and active and respond to lures moving slowly through the water, but at other times they are lethargic or not hungry, and it takes a lure that is really moving and flashing to attract their attention.

**Try "doodlesocking" for bass.** It's a good technique when fishing from a boat. Lower a spoon over the side, directly beside the boat, until it touches bottom. Then lift it sharply upward and allow it to flutter back down to the bottom. Work the water all around the boat. The system works best in deep water.



# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

by Tom Fegeley



A close look at this bass's mouth helps in understanding why it is fished with large plugs.

## MISTER BIGMOUTH

WHERE DID YOU first meet the largemouth bass? Was it in the pad-covered backwaters of a Pennsylvania lake or along a fallen log in a mountain reservoir? Or perhaps it was on the end of a crawler-rigged hook in a Keystone farm pond.

Any of these meeting places are possible, for "Mister Bigmouth" dwells wherever clean water, adequate food and proper spawning conditions permit. Although frequently found in the same waters as his smallmouth cousin, the largemouth is more tolerant of warmer temperatures and is therefore at home under a wide variety of habitat conditions.

Most anglers are somewhat surprised to learn that neither the largemouth or smallmouth are classified as "bass" but are actually members of the sunfish family. Even the scientific name of the largemouth is far from descriptive. Liberally translated, *Micropterus salmoides* means, "salmon-like with a small fin". Being far removed from the salmon clan and having no fins that can be termed

small, the largemouth is still nicknamed "trout," above all things, in some Southern states!

Unlike the smallmouth which requires gravelly or rocky bottoms, the largemouth builds his nest among vegetation on most any type bottom except loose silt. Construction is triggered when the water temperature reaches 60 degrees. The male excavates a saucer-like depression, two feet or so in diameter, to which he entices one or more females. A female largemouth may contain two to seven thousand eggs per pound of body weight. As they ripen they are laid in the nests of several males and immediately fertilized.

In a week to ten days, depending on water temperature, the eggs hatch. These fry remain at the nest, closely guarded by the male, until the yolk sac is absorbed. They then school and move into the shallows to feed on microscopic plants and animals. When they reach two inches in length the small bass begin to prey on the fry of other sunfishes and minnows in their vicinity.

As with all fish, the largemouth's growth rate depends upon various

environmental factors such as water temperatures and food supply. In the North a bass may grow to about six inches the first year and reach a twenty inch length in seven or eight years.

Wildlife artists frequently portray the largemouth breaking water trying to shake a plug or lurking beneath a lily pad eyeing up a frog or vagabond duckling. The adult bass is an efficient predator, including in its diet crayfish, insects, minnows, fingerlings (its own as well as others) and practically anything else it can catch or swallow.

The fact that largemouth can be taken by a child with a nightcrawler or an expert with a fly, spinner, plug, or rubber imitation makes it the popular gamefish that it is. The more one fishes for largemouth, the more he learns about their habits and the methods that entice the trophy lunners.

Pennsylvania's top largemouth was taken in Stillwater Lake in 1936 by Stanley Pastula of Shenandoah. It measured 29 inches and weighed 8 pounds, 8 ounces. Typically much larger in the South, the world record caught in Georgia in 1932 measured only 3½ inches longer than the Keystone "champ" but more than doubled its weight at 22 pounds, 4 ounces.

The feeding rate of the largemouth drops off in late fall and winter although a hungry wanderer is occasionally taken through the ice. But as temperatures rise, heavy feeding once again resumes and Mr. Bigmouth moves from the deeper waters to once again patrol the shorelines and pads.

The largemouth is the first real gamefish that young anglers can take, especially in a well-stocked farm pond.





Pymatuning Lake

Photo by EDWARD T. GRAY

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