

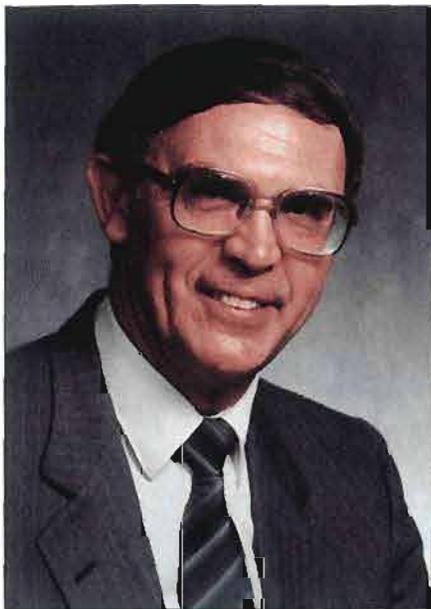
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Pennsylvania
ANGLER
The Keystone State's Official Fishing Magazine



Straight Talk

Regional Cooperation: A Winner for Pennsylvania



Edward R. Miller, P.E.
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish Commission

The Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Resource Agencies consists of 13 states and the District of Columbia. The fish and game agency director in each of these political jurisdictions serves as the voting member of the Association. In addition, six Canadian provinces are eligible for voting memberships, and regional federal fish and wildlife agencies and private fish and wildlife conservation organizations are eligible for affiliate membership.

The Fish and Wildlife Association's principle goals are to promote better understanding and cooperation, provide effective exchange of information, coordinate and integrate programs of mutual concern, and promote a high level of fish and wildlife administration.

The major undertaking of this group is sponsorship of the annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference, which is designed to accomplish the regional goals of the association. The most recent conference, the 46th annual meeting, was held in early April in Nashua, New Hampshire. The conference, which attracts more than 500 participants, brings together five different interest groups that meet concurrently with the agency directors. They exchange information and promote cooperative and integrated fish and wildlife programs for the northeast region.

These groups include the Northeast Division of the American Fisheries Society, Northeast Section of the Wildlife Society, Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, Northeast Society of Conservation Engineers, and the Northeast Conservation Information and Education Association.

The northeast region is unique in the variety of natural resources it contains. It is unique in the many different, complex political structures within the member states and provinces. It is unique in the high level of manmade conflicts that adversely affect the region's environment, and it is unique in its huge resident human population.

Directors from the 14 principal members of the agency association meet annually during the conference, but it has become apparent that the fast-changing needs of the region's fish and wildlife programs require more frequent and active exchange of ideas, information and long-range program directions at the administrative level.

In response, the administrators of each member state have agreed to hold a two-day meeting in late September to concentrate on one of the most pressing administrative concerns shared by all regional agencies—the question of adequate long-range funding to meet mandated responsibilities to the fish and wildlife resources and to the public.

Past efforts of the northeast agencies have been very successful, and the commitment by key regional administrators to expand communications and improve exchanges of information is a major step toward progressive fish and wildlife management programs throughout the entire northeast region in future years. Pennsylvania will continue to benefit by its active participation in these cooperative regional efforts.

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The covers

This issue's front cover, photographed by Wally Eberhart, whets the appetite of summer anglers, especially walleye fishermen. Inside this issue, too, is a feast of great fishing ideas. Trout anglers can taste success by boning up on the stories on pages 4 and 19. Walleye enthusiasts shouldn't miss page 14, and panfishermen can raise their scores on slabsides with the lowdown on page 22. "Must" reading for boaters begins on page 8.

This issue's back cover, photographed by Robert Garman, is all about reminiscing. Turn to pages 11 and 12 for two different stories of this kind. For the icing on the cake, check out page 28 to learn what to do after you've caught those fish.

KeySTONE Tricos

FreeSTONE

by Charles R. Meck

Vince Marinaro, Barry Beck, Dick Mills and I arrived early at the fly stretch on Bowman's Creek near Tunkhannock. Dick and I told Vince the night before about a hatch of small mayflies that appeared daily there from mid-July to late September. He begged us to take him to see and fish the hatch the next morning. Duns of these mayflies usually appear on the surface from 6 to 8 a.m. In a few minutes to an hour or so, these duns turn into mating spinners. These diminutive spinners fall on the surface between 8 and 10 a.m., depending how hot the morning is.

The hatch is common on limestone streams, but this was Vince's first time to fish the hatch on a freestone stream like Bowman's Creek. Although Bowman's Creek is productive, it is considered a typical freestone stream with little or no dissolved substances (such as calcium) and a pH near or just below 7. Limestone streams often have pH readings higher than 7.5.

All of us arrived at the fly stretch on Bowman's at 7:30 a.m. Vince became excited when he entered the riffle at the head of the Barn Pool. Thousands of small mayflies already formed above him in a mating cloud. He knew these spinners would soon mate and fall to the surface. Vince Marinaro was about to experience his first Keystone freestone Trico hatch.

Vince tied on a size 24 cream and dark-brown imitation to copy the female spinner. By the time he had completed the clinch knot on the copy, several trout began feeding on the first spinners to hit the water. For the first half-hour, Vince used an imitation of the female spinner. The last half-hour he changed his pattern to one that copies the male spinner. Female spinners, after mating, lay their eggs and fall to the surface first. Shortly thereafter, male spinners also fall onto the surface spent. Trout continued to feed on the spinners for almost an hour.

Mike O'Brien lands a plump wild brown trout on a hot July afternoon. The Trico hatch has ended, but trout on some of the more productive streams can still be caught.



Charles R. Meck

Vince picked up only three trout during the spinner fall on Bowman that day. But more than that, he had experienced this famous Trico spinner fall on a freestone in Pennsylvania.

Pete Ryan lives in Coudersport. He's a dentist in the town—that is, when he isn't fly fishing somewhere in the state or nation. On his days off he sometimes travels to limestone streams in the Cumberland Valley to fish the Trico hatch.

Several years ago, Pete became frustrated with the Trico hatch, the discriminating feeding habits of the trout, and the unbelievable number of fly fishermen who appear on the streams for the hatch. He and several other expert anglers once fished this hatch on the Letort for an entire morning without any success. The next morning Pete traveled just a few miles from his Coudersport home and fished the same Trico hatch on a Potter County freestone stream. Pete lost count of the fish he caught after his 20th trout—all taken on a Trico pattern on a cold freestone stream—and all wild trout.

Tricorythodes

Many fly fishermen call *Tricos* any one of several small mayflies (3-5 mm) that scientists have grouped under the Genus *Tricorythodes*. Hatches most often appear on streams with little canopy above. This open area above the stream allows the spinners to perform their mating ritual.

Male duns usually appear around dawn. These dark-brown duns fly to a tree or other vegetation and wait for the female duns to appear. Around 7:30 a.m., female duns emerge.

On some occasions, especially on limestone streams, you'll see trout taking emerging nymphs and duns resting on the surface. A pale-olive imitation of the dun works well if you arrive on the stream early.

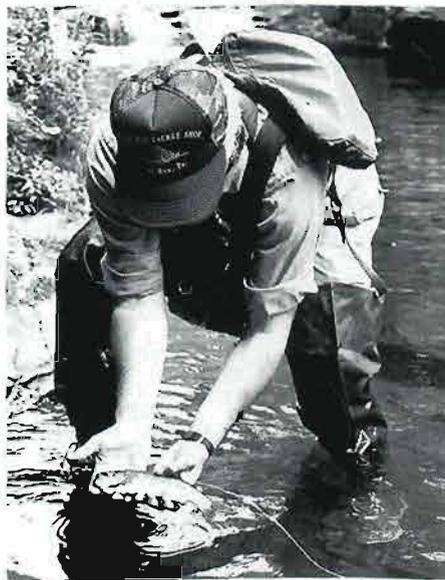
Both male and female duns change to mating spinners and form a ball over the stream. It's often difficult to locate this ball of male spinners because of their size. It helps to locate the mating swarm by looking toward the sun (toward the south or southeast in the morning). The density of the spinner flight can vary from riffle to riffle, so it's important to explore as much of a stream as possible. Females fall first onto the surface followed by many male spinners.

On warm summer days the spinner fall might last for less than a half-hour. On cool mornings in September the spinner fall might not occur until 10 a.m. or later.

Many of us have experienced the Trico

hatch on Falling Springs or one of a dozen or more limestone streams in central Pennsylvania near State College, the Cumberland Valley, or the Lehigh Valley. But until a few years ago, few anglers ever realized that northern Pennsylvania freestones held the Trico hatch. Recently fly fishermen have reported Trico hatches from the Delaware in the northeast to Thompson Creek in the northwest.

Fishing pressure on many freestones that contain Trico hatches is meager. The Trico hatch often doesn't get the respect it deserves on freestones. On an average day on limestone waters like Spring Creek in Centre County or Falling Springs in Franklin County, you might have difficulty locating an area to fish. Not so with most freestones that hold the hatch.



Charles R. Meek

Mid-summer problems

However, fishing the Trico hatch on freestone streams does present some challenging problems in mid-summer. Two immediate concerns are the low water levels and elevated water temperatures you often find that time of year on freestone streams.

For example, the Loyalsock holds a respectable Trico hatch near Hillsgrove. I've fished the hatch on several August mornings with water temperatures near 70 degrees. Occasionally a solitary trout rose, but water temperatures weren't conducive to a great rise to the spinner fall. Had I known that Elk Creek just three miles from the Hillsgrove area and the lower half-mile of Hoagland Branch held the same Trico hatch, I could have fished over trout rising in cooler water.

Mid-summer low water on freestone streams forces anglers to use a 10- or 12-

foot leader with a 5x or 6x tippet. Even with a leader that long you'll scatter many feeding trout on clear, low, mid-summer freestone streams. If the spinner fall is heavy enough and trout feed consistently on the fallen spinners, they'll often be less frightened and easier to catch on an imitation. Don't forget—you'll often have to present a low profile on many of these low-water freestones when the Trico hatch appears.

I've had many anglers tell me they saw fantastic swarms of Trico spinners in the air but never once saw them fall onto the water. Many anglers confuse the Trico hatch with another similar hatch, the Blue Quill, which appears at the same time of year on trout streams. Elk Creek near Millheim in Centre County has a heavy Blue Quill hatch (Genus *Paraleptophlebia*) in July and August. Travel up through the narrows on this limestone stream and you'll likely see thousands of small spinners undulating above the stream and road. This section of the stream holds a fantastic Blue Quill hatch, but no Tricos.

Harvey Trico imitations

George Harvey is the dean of fly fishermen in the United States. George taught fly fishing to more than 50,000 people while he was professor in residence at Penn State University. He has studied and fished Trico hatches for more than 50 years. He tied his first pattern to match the hatch and spinner fall in the early 1930s. He still uses the same pattern to copy the dun that he tied in 1936.

But George is always experimenting with new tying techniques and new patterns. Recently, George created a new imitation for the male and female Trico spinner. Anglers now appropriately call these latest patterns Harvey Trico imitations. The Harvey Trico includes several strands of crystal flash in the spent wings. These shiny wings make the spent spinner much easier to follow on the water.

In another month the Trico will appear on many freestone streams in the state. I've listed 23 such streams that contain hatches that range from sparse to heavy. You'll find many of these streams in the northern half of the state. Check the sidebar on page 6.

Telltale signs

These aren't the only freestone streams that contain the hatch. More are waiting to be found. To find out if your favorite water contains the hatch, visit it on an early August morning. Look for the hatch in the air about 10 to 20 feet above the stream.

Patterns

Trico Dun

Thread: Olive (female);
brown (male)
Tail: Pale olive
Body: Pale olive poly dubbed
(female); dark brown (male)
Legs: Cream
Wings: Pale gray hackle
Hook: Size 24 Mustad 94840

Harvey Trico

Thread: Dark brown
Tail: Moose mane (male); short
cream fibers (female)
Body: Very dark brown fur or
polypropylene (male); three
turns of cream fur or poly in
the rear, then dark brown in
front (female)
Wings: White poly yarn mixed with
several strands of sparkle yarn
and trimmed to size
Hook: Size 24 Mustad 94840

Spider webs at bridges crossing the stream also reveal the hatch, especially if you visit a stream in the afternoon or evening. Several years ago, Dennis Renninger and I visited Hoagland Branch above Hillsgrove one early August evening. As I checked spider webs on the bridges crossing the stream, I noticed a Trico spinner caught in the web.

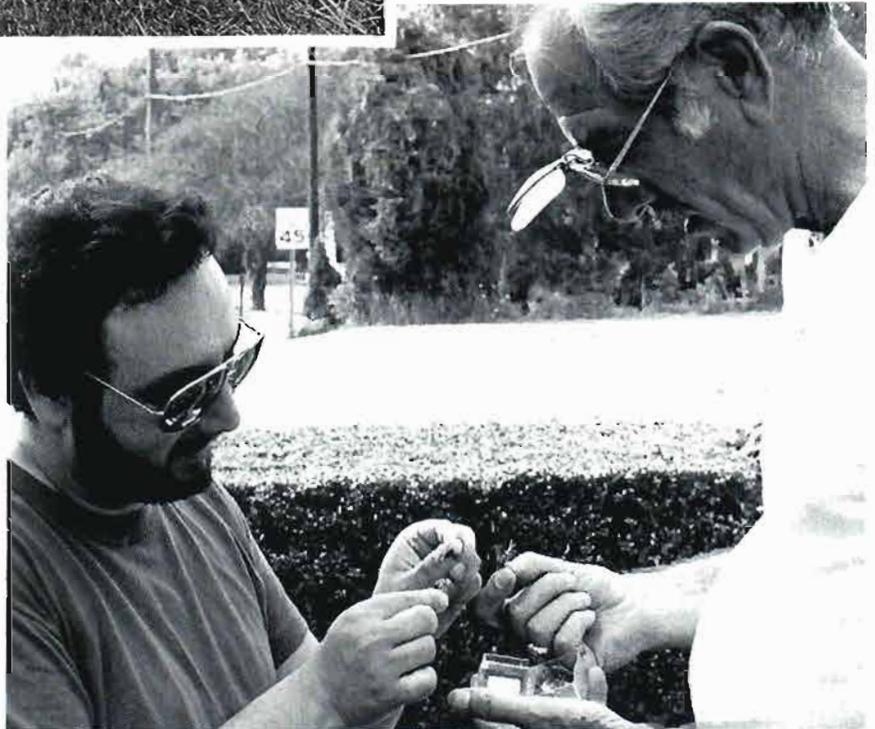
What was this species doing in this mountainous freestone stream? Was it a stray up from the Loyalsock?

I delayed my next-day trip to Wilkes-Barre to see if the hatch truly existed on Hoagland. I arrived a half-mile upstream from Elk Creek at 8 a.m. As I peered upstream in a narrow opening in the canopy, I saw thousands of spinners—on the lower end of Hoagland Branch. Water levels on Hoagland that time of year were extremely low.

I tied on a female Trico spinner and waited at the tail of one of the many 20-foot long, three-foot deep pools formed from water surging through giant rocks. Shortly a few female Trico spinners appeared on the surface. A single brook trout took up a feeding station. Soon another small trout joined the first. A six-inch brook trout took my pattern on the first cast. The second rising trout took the imitation several casts later.

Get ready for the upcoming Trico hatch on freestones this year. Select a stream to fish with cold water and an ample supply of trout. Take along a long leader and a fine tippet. Plan to be on the stream you've selected by 7 a.m. in case the hatch appears early. Schedule your trip in late July, or better yet, in early August when this species appears at its greatest numbers. Make certain you've selected a stream with temperatures in the 60s. Take plenty of imitations with you and sit back and wait for the hatch and spinner fall to begin.

If you follow all these recommendations, you, too, will likely experience a Keystone freestone Trico.



Some Pennsylvania freestone streams with Trico hatches

1. Loyalsock Creek
2. Delaware River
3. Oswayo Creek
4. Allegheny River
5. Slate Run
6. Thompson Creek
7. Caldwell Creek
8. Bowman's Creek
9. Cross Fork Creek
10. Kettle Creek
11. East Fork, Mahoning Creek
12. First Fork, Sinnemahoning Creek
13. Hoagland Branch
14. Elk Creek (Sullivan County)
15. Loyalthanna Creek
16. Lackawaxen River
17. Pine Creek (Lycoming County)
18. Brodhead Creek
19. Cedar Run
20. Fishing Creek (Columbia County) lower half
21. Ninemile Run
22. Bald Eagle Creek (lower end) has some limestone streams entering the main stem
23. Cove Creek (Fulton County) lower half has some limestone entering main stem

Charles R. Meek

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Charles R. Meck

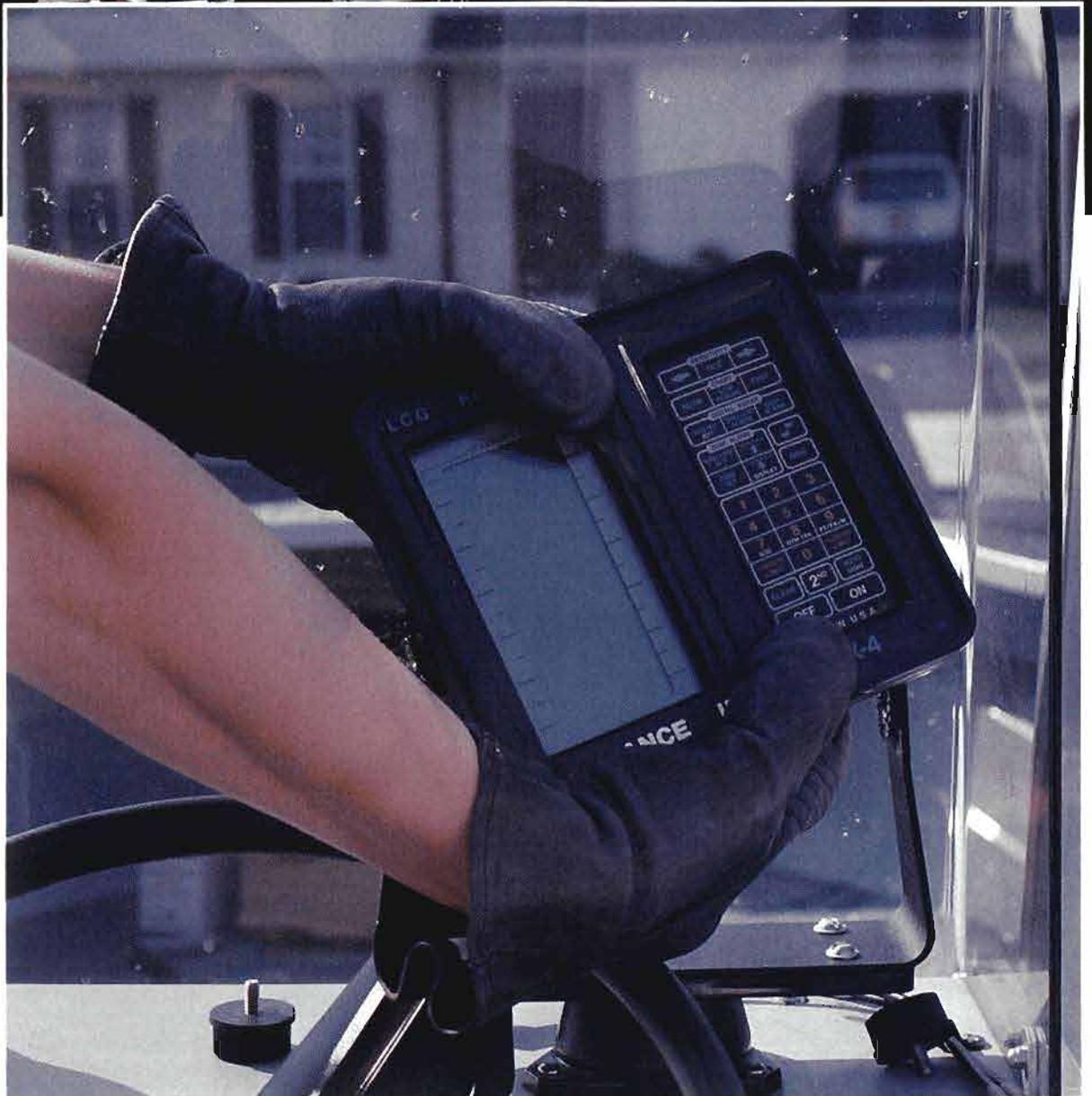
Charles R. Meck

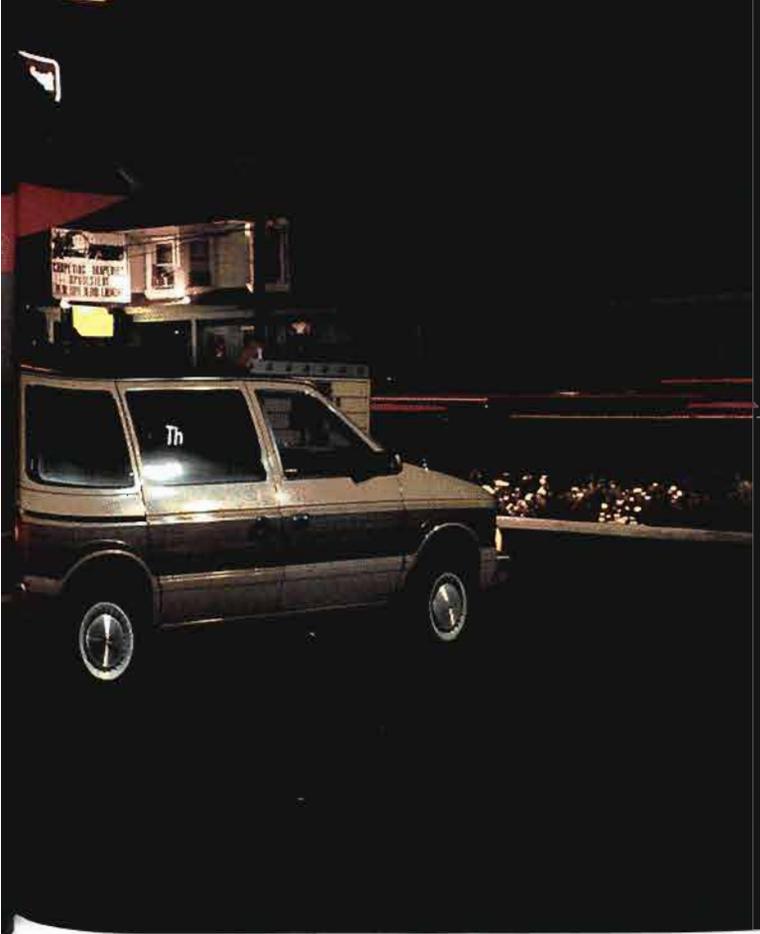
Mid-summer low water on freestone streams forces anglers to use a 10- or 12-foot leader with a 5x or 6x tippet. Even with a leader that long you'll scatter many feeding trout on clear, low, mid-summer freestone streams.



Schedule a trip in late July or early August, and choose a stream with temperatures in the 60s.

Charles R. Meck





Art Michaels

I'll Steal Your Boat

by Art Michaels

If you give me a few minutes, I'll steal your boat, outboard motor, trailer, prop, electronics, fishing tackle and other expensive items.

Let's check your rig and I'll show you what I mean.

First, do you lock the trailer coupler to the tow vehicle's hitch ball when you travel?

No? I wait until you launch your boat during the wee hours of the morning. The launch site is most often deserted. I drive up next to your tow vehicle, lift the trailer coupler off the hitch ball and put it onto mine. Then I drive away scot free with your trailer. It'll be hours, maybe even all day, before you discover the loss and probably longer until you can reach a phone to notify the police. In that time, I'm long gone with your trailer.

Suppose you do lock the coupler to the hitch ball. I'll still steal your rig because most trailer boaters who use coupler locks forget one simple idea. Even with the coupler locked onto the hitch ball, I just use a box wrench to undo the nut that holds the hitch ball on your hitch. Then I put it onto my tow vehicle hitch, lock and all, bolt it tight and I'm off.

I might also undo the bolts that hold the coupler assembly to the trailer tongue. In this way I'll rip off your trailer while you're on the water. But if your rig is sitting in your driveway or some other place, I'll take everything—your boat, motor, trailer, electronics, tackle and everything else aboard.

If you want to make stealing your trailer hard for me, use a coupler lock to secure the coupler closed onto the hitch ball, and tack weld the threads on the end of the hitch ball's bolt. The lock makes lifting the trailer tongue difficult, and I can't easily remove the nut on the hitch ball stem except by grinding off the weld.

You should also tack weld the threads of the bolts that hold the coupler assembly on your trailer tongue. This prevents my removing the coupler assembly and placing it onto another trailer tongue.

Storage

Consider where you store your trailered boat. Do you leave it in an unlighted driveway or in a secluded parking lot? If your rig were lighted from a streetlight or stored in a busy, accessible spot, I might look elsewhere.

On the other hand, if you can store your trailer in your backyard out of plain sight, and perhaps even cover it, I'd probably pass it by.

You could also disable your trailer to prevent my driving away with it. Remove one wheel and prop up the wheel-less axle, or run cable through the wheel rims and around the axle and lock the two cable ends together. This strategy prevents the trailer wheels from moving.

You might also want to store your boat in a commercial storage facility. I can't get at it there as easily as I can elsewhere.

Do you rent space at a marina? One of my favorite ploys is simply to tell the watchman that I'm your brother and I need to move the boat. You can prevent my stealing your rig this way by leaving instructions with the storage operation management that only you are allowed aboard the boat or to give orders to move it, and under no circumstances can someone else do this. If someone tries, you should tell the watchman to call you immediately.

Confirm these instructions in writing.

I'll also get your trailered rig by waiting until you break

down on the highway and leave your trailered boat at the side of the road. You might cause a casual thief to think twice about taking your rig if you use a lock that covers the coupler cavity completely. But professionals like me know how to defeat these locks in seconds.

Remember also that one modus operandi is to undo the bolts on either the hitch ball or the coupler assembly. So even if you use a lock, if the bolts on the hitch ball or the coupler assembly aren't welded, I'll still take your rig.

I'll also jury rig my car trunk to accommodate your trailer tongue so that I can get away with your trailer, even though you've locked the coupler cavity and tack welded the bolts.

You could dissuade me from taking your rig at the side of the road by removing one wheel and propping up the axle, or by using cable to lock the wheels.

The best way to prevent my stealing your trailered rig at the side of the road is never to leave the rig unattended. This means always trailer your boat with a partner or two. One of you can get help and direct a tow vehicle operator to your rig's location; the other stays with the trailered boat.

Then, if your tow vehicle breaks down, have the serviceman tow your vehicle by itself to the garage, and then return to get the boat. Towing your car with a trailered boat can be done, but it's dangerous.

Outboards, props

I'll bet I could also rip off your outboard motor, especially if it's smaller than about 15 horsepower. Motors like these are the easiest to steal because they can be carried by one person.

If you think those locks for the clamp brackets keep your motor safe, guess again. On many engines all I do is remove the long bolt that holds the motor to the clamp bracket. Then I just lift the motor and you're left only with the locked bracket.

Look closely at your small outboard and its clamp bracket. See if locking the bracket or the bracket handles actually prevents the motor's theft. If you're not sure, ask your dealer. If I can heist the engine and leave the clamp bracket, I will.

If you don't want me to steal your small outboard, remove it from your boat and take it in your house or put it in a locked garage.

I can also get some good money for your prop, especially if it's stainless steel. In about 30 seconds (and I'm slow) I can remove your prop and be gone.

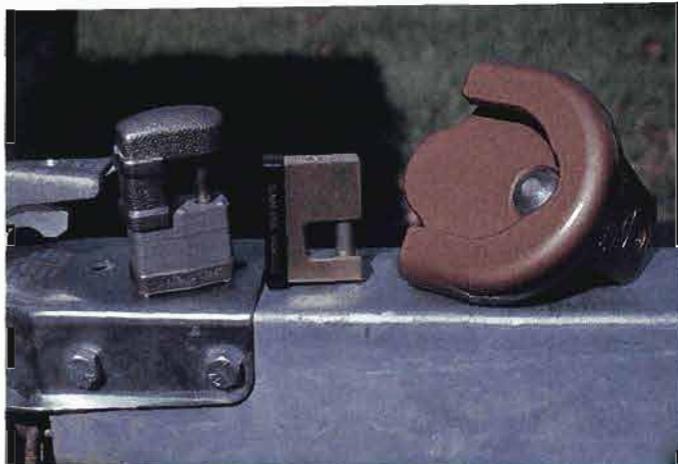
All it takes to prevent my stealing your prop is a simple lock that fits on the engine's propeller shaft. The prop can't be removed without undoing the lock with a key, but you can still run the motor. Similar locks are available for props on inboard/outdrive units.

Electronics

Ripping off your VHF radio, depthsounder, Ioran C, compass and other small, expensive items is easy, too. I wait in the parking lots of fast-food places and other spots where trailer boaters stop. When boaters get breakfast or coffee, leaving no one with their trailered boats, I go to work.

You're easy prey in this situation because it's likely hours until you discover the loss, and in some deserted areas, you surely don't expect me to be lurking. Then you and I are miles apart, and you may not even be sure when or where the theft actually occurred.

Preventing my victimizing you this way is easy. Never



Art Michaels



Art Michaels

These kinds of locks (above) can dissuade a casual thief from heisting your trailer. Know your boat's HIN (left) and all your equipment serial numbers.

leave your trailered rig unattended while on the road—and I mean *never*, not even for the quickest coffee break or fuel stop.

In addition, keep your equipment out of sight while traveling. If your boat has lockable storage, use it. You might also want to leave your electronic gear and other expensive belongings locked in your car trunk until you launch your boat.

Some boat manufacturers now include removable storage boxes in their new models. You mount your electronics in the boxes, and when you leave the boat you remove the boxes. Consider also building similar storage areas in your boat.

If I can't see a compass or depthsounder to steal these items quickly, I'll seek easier prey. I often go elsewhere when heisting an item requires more than a few minutes.

Victims help me a lot, though, in ensuring that law enforcement agencies cannot recover stolen items. You prove again and again that my crimes pay. Without looking at your equipment, in a few minutes can you come up with the serial numbers of your boat, motor, trailer, Ioran C, VHF radio, compass and depthsounder?

Knowing these numbers is vital to getting your gear back. Record these numbers on two lists. Put one in your wallet; leave the other at home. If you ever need these numbers fast, you'll have them.

Many law enforcement agencies will inscribe your electronics and other valuables for free with your name and other identifying marks. If I rip you off, the markings increase the chances of your getting your gear back.

Don't forget your tow vehicle. Lock it every time you leave the vehicle, no matter how brief your stop may be, and keep your valuables out of sight.

Finally, I benefit when you think that it's always the other boater who becomes a victim of theft. You keep believing "It can't happen to me" and I'll get to your boat soon enough.

So much for this free advice. Our chat is over and the truce ends here, too. All in all, implementing these measures probably won't stop a professional thief from ripping you off. But ignoring these ideas is surely asking for trouble. The next time I check out your rig, it might cost you dearly.

Black Moshannon Ghosts

by Jeff Mulhollem

The rain swept across Black Moshannon Lake in angry, hissing sheets that slapped the truck windshield so viciously it left my young son wide-eyed. A jagged blue bolt of lightning pierced the leaden sky and a crash of thunder rocked the vehicle on its stiff, four-wheel-drive springs. We had left the water just in time.

"When will it stop, Dad?" The wet-haired little boy asked, still wincing from the thunder. He peered out at our beached canoe 25 feet away. "Will the boat fill up with rain?"

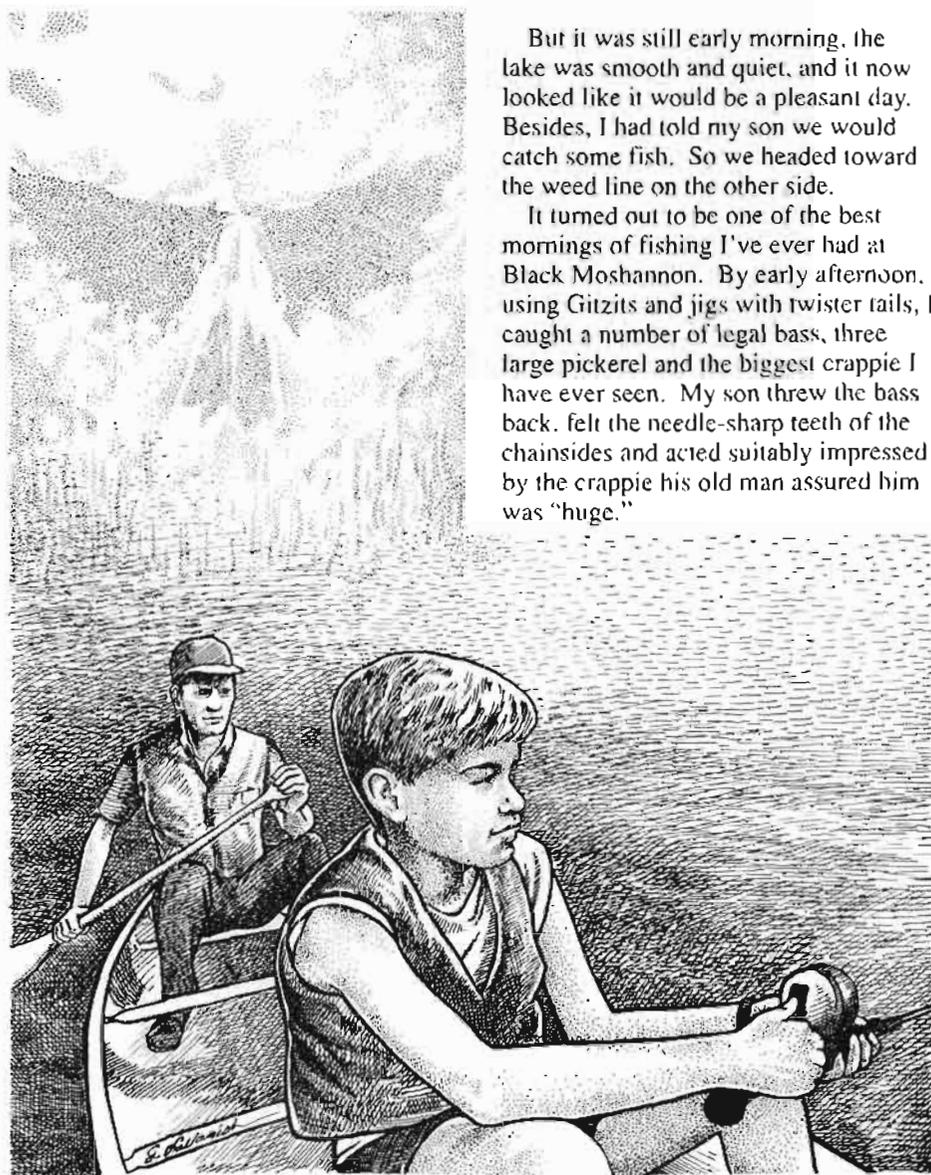
After I told him the rain would probably stop soon and the canoe was fine, he thought for a few minutes before asking, "Do the beavers come out in the rain? Are they afraid of the thunder and lightning, too?"

He had me there. So I said I wasn't sure and turned on the defroster and the radio. We sat there listening to hopeful weather forecasts and music for a half-hour or so, trying to remember what we had left out to get wet and ruined at our state park campsite a mile or so away, and waited for the downpour to let up.

When the rain stopped and the sky lightened, we had to dump several inches of water out of the canoe. While I put the electric motor, battery, tackle box and rods back in, the man who had been fishing for catfish from a nearby dock came over to talk. My son threw rocks into the lake.

The man said he was from Philipsburg, about nine miles away, and had been coming to Black Moshannon for four decades. "It hasn't changed much over the years," he said, looking out over the shallow, weedy lake, which was now partially veiled in mist. "I never catch a lot," he added, "and all my friends ask me why I keep coming back. But I just like it."

As I strapped the brightly colored child's flotation vest on my son, the man watched with what seemed to be disapproval. "Yeah, my brother and his young boy drowned right out here in '54," he said, pointing toward the middle of the lake.



Illustration—George Linsmith

"Oh, I'm sorry," I replied, startled by the abrupt turn in our conversation. "How'd it happen?"

"They were fishing from a canoe, a 15-footer like yours, I believe," he said, matter-of-factly. "They capsized and got tangled up in the weeds when they went in."

His words hit me like a gut punch, although I tried not to show it. As I pushed off out of the shallows with a paddle, I considered turning the canoe around; I no longer felt like fishing in the mysterious black depths.

But it was still early morning, the lake was smooth and quiet, and it now looked like it would be a pleasant day. Besides, I had told my son we would catch some fish. So we headed toward the weed line on the other side.

It turned out to be one of the best mornings of fishing I've ever had at Black Moshannon. By early afternoon, using Gitzits and jigs with twister tails, I caught a number of legal bass, three large pickerel and the biggest crappie I have ever seen. My son threw the bass back, felt the needle-sharp teeth of the chainsides and acted suitably impressed by the crappie his old man assured him was "huge."

We even caught a glimpse of a beaver swimming across the lake, unusual for any time except dusk. My little boy thought that was great! By all accounts, it should have been a perfect morning.

But I didn't enjoy it. I just went through the motions. I kept picturing my son in the dark water, tangled in weeds. My day had been spoiled by the ghosts of a 35-year-old tragedy.

ANGLER

"Fishing's Great, as Always" by Sue Gerard

Let me tell you about a fisherman I grew up with. Actually, I should say "fisherperson," I guess. This fisherman was a woman whose childhood nickname was Billy. Her dad's hired men nicknamed her that because it was the name of her pet goat.

As a farm girl, Billy fished with homemade tackle. Her line was a twine string. Her sinker was a metal washer. She was born during the bent-pin era but had real, store-bought'n hooks. Billy carried several hooks, a couple of washers and a pocket knife in bib overalls.

As she walked through the woods, she'd hunt a dry stick and break off a stub that would float well enough to resist the tug of a 10-inch bullhead or a hand-sized sunfish. She'd tie that stick on the twine, about two feet above the hook. Her dad taught her that "two half hitches will hold the devil," so that's the way she secured the bobber.

She'd also cut a "rod" on her way to the creek. She'd choose a straight, green branch four or five feet long and strip it of its side twigs, whip it a time or two to determine where to cut off the limber end and then attach the line behind a bump so it wouldn't slip off the end of the pole. A Prince Albert tobacco can in the rear pocket of her overalls held barnyard earthworms and a little moist dirt. Sometimes the other hip pocket had a similar can, punched with nail holes, holding live grasshoppers or crickets.

In this creek at the back of the farm, only a few holes were deep enough to hide cats and sunnies. On hot summer days, though, she could entice those fish to come out from under big rocks or from beneath heaps where trash had collected around the roots of overhanging trees. That made for lots of hang-ups and a few lost hooks, but she'd say, "There's better fishing where things aren't too perfect."

When Billy was 10, she was permitted to ride her bike down the gravel road two miles to visit her friend Elizabeth. Elizabeth occasionally rode a horse to fish with Billy and they spent some memorable hours fishing together.

At the first catch one girl would cut a flexible branch from a tree—one with a short "Y" branch at its thicker end. She'd strip the leaves off the stick and thread the small end of this improvised stringer past the fish's gill and out its mouth. The "Y" stub kept the fish from getting off the stick. She'd plop this "stringer" and fish into shallow water and put a big rock over the small end of the stick so that the fish couldn't flop loose. The next fish caught would slide down against the first one and so on until there were sometimes eight or 10 fish on the same stick.

After each catch, they'd thread a barnyard worm on the hook, spit on the worm for good luck and toss the line out, ready for the next fish to bite. The girls didn't know if the spit actually worked, but Billy said, "It can't hurt anything," and continued to spit. Like a couple of female Tom Sawyers, Billy and Elizabeth would rough-dress their fish and wash them in the creek. Then Billy's mom would finish the cleaning and the girls would sometimes build a fire in the backyard, fry and eat those fish, whether it was mealtime or not.

That was a long time ago, in the 1920s.

Her line was a twine string. Her sinker was a metal washer. She was born during the bent-pin era but had real, store-bought'n hooks.

The nickname has been forgotten, but not the fishing. Evenings, that old woman sits in a metal lawn chair on the dock at a small lake behind the farm home where she and her husband have lived for most of their 52 years of marriage. Alone, she casts, working a surface lure around patches of moss and weeds in the shallows and near the place where willow tree roots grow into the water. She likes to send a black Jitterbug across the water and let it drop beside a big log that sticks out from shore.

The old gal has no urgency about catching fish. When a strike comes, she often gets as excited as if she'd landed a big one. "Meat on the table!" she yells, to no one in particular; it's just something her favorite uncle used to say when they fished together. But she's in no hurry to set the hook.

The bass that does get snagged is allowed lots of swimming time and freedom to leap and try to throw the hook. She actually smiles when one gets away! "Keeps my hands cleaner," she mutters to herself.

Sometimes, when a fish surfaces to get a bug, she hops out of that chair, winds her line in quickly and re-casts, quite accurately for an old gal, to the spot where the water was disturbed. And sometimes that pays off.

If she snags one that doesn't get off before she nets him, she climbs off the dock, goes down to the water's edge, dips one hand in the water and unhooks the fish. After admiring it for a few moments, guessing its length and weight, she lowers it into the water, gently loosens her grip and watches it slowly discover its freedom and swim into the moss and out of sight.

"When we're fish-hungry," she says, "we go out to eat."

Funny thing is that she's easily distracted. A bass will strike when she's staring at the criss-cross sky streaks of jet planes. Red-winged blackbirds scold



Near the lake is the farm home where she and her husband have lived for most of their 52 years of marriage.

and she talks back to them. Sitting comfortably in that lawn chair, she misses fish by letting the line go limp on the water. Sometimes I suspect she's remembering spitting on those worms to catch mud cats and sunnies.

Sunsets capture her—"God's sweet half-promise of a fair tomorrow," she quotes from her fifth grade reader.

Tonight she was there again, and as usual, had only a rod and one lure. No stringer. No tackle box, no bait. Not even a net. As the sun slipped down behind some clouds on the horizon, frogs echoed their *va-rooms* across to one another. Then it was quiet. Suddenly other frog noises came in screechy, scratchy tones and the fish suddenly came to life. There was a rise to almost every splash of her lure and she was pretty busy for a while.

She stayed until the first stars reflected in the quiet water in the middle of the little lake, out away from the shadows of the willows on shore. Stars were not only "up above the world so high..." but also "down beneath the water so low." Their reflections seemed miles deep. Lightning bugs, like the ones she used to collect in jars, blinked along the shore and in the pastures.

As she left the dock, she etched the scene in her mind: The sky, the water, the lightning bugs. The blackbirds were silent, the willow shadows were gone and the pond was full of those mile-deep stars.

She eyed the steep bank behind her and then turned and slowly climbed it and thought, "It's getting a little steeper, somehow," and slowly walked back to the house.

"How's fishing?" the old man asked. The question snapped her back from reverie.

"The fishing's great, as always," I replied as I hung my rod in its rack behind our living room door.

Summertime Walleye

PRIMER

by Mike Bleech

Most serious walleye anglers say that the best time for walleye fishing is during fall, or during spring, or even during winter. So what happens to walleye during summer? Do they get lockjaw?

No way! In fact, walleye really put on the feed bag during summer. As it is for the rest of nature, summer is a time of plenty for walleye. There is more for them to eat than at any other time. But this is part of the problem. The walleye have plenty of natural food, barring any unusual problems, so your lure or bait has to look pretty good before they will try to eat it. But try to eat it they will, if you make it look good.

I do not believe there is any one method that catches walleye all summer long. Walleye are moody. Sometimes one thing works, sometimes something else works.

Check out this variety of proven summertime walleye fishing methods. At least one of them should help you catch walleye this summer.

Finding fish

The first thing you have to do is find the walleye. There are four ways to do this. You can go where you believe walleye might be. You can just start fishing and keep moving until you hit a walleye. You can look for walleye with your sonar, or you can ask somebody.

Fishing until you catch a walleye is a time-honored method of looking for walleye, and searching with the sonar is the trendy way to do the job. But the first thing I do, if I don't already have some place in mind—and often even if I do—is ask somebody, if I can find somebody to ask. The local bait and tackle shop can probably do more for you than a week of blind searching or scanning with sonar.

There are endless formulas for locating walleye. This has to be confusing to most anglers. You might wonder if outdoor writers are making up things. The truth is that most formulas for locating walleye apply only to certain specific situations. About all you can say in general is that feeding walleye

will be where the food is, within their habitat. Within the confines of walleye habitat, each lake or river has its own rules. Nothing beats local information.

No matter how much help you get, though, at some point you have to put a lure or bait in the water. There are summer fishing patterns that might hold for several weeks. But for now, assume that you are not sure where the walleye are. You need a method that covers a lot of water quickly, and you must trust that this method will alert you when you do pass by walleye. A lure or bait the walleye will not hit is of no use, no matter how fast it is worked.

Trolling

In lakes or in large river pools, walleye might be scattered and roam in a large area during summer. The best way to find them might simply be to cover a lot of water. This calls for trolling or drifting.

You can move fastest when trolling crankbaits. Even many experienced walleye anglers do not realize how fast you can troll for walleye. Using an accurate trolling speedometer, I have caught walleye several times while trolling 5 1/2 mph. But you must use lures that are designed for these speeds.

Walleye really put on the feed bag during summer. Summer is a time of plenty for walleye. Try baits and lures for consistent action.

I prefer lures that are shaped like shiners or shad, because these are the most common natural forage-fish shapes in Pennsylvania waters. The most productive hues are usually shiny natural colors, sometimes with a bit of red or orange. Silver and blue, silver and black, and gold and black are my standards. Sometimes chartreuse is good, though I consider this more of a cool-water color.

More important than color is to have lures that troll at all practical depths. For example, have a few that run in the top five feet, some that run in the five-foot to 10-foot range, some in the 10-foot to 15-foot range, and some that dive to 20 feet. Some lures troll even deeper. Your odds for success improve as your ability to troll precise depths improves.

To troll in water deeper than about 25 feet, my favorite rig is a #13 Rapala or a Jointed Rebel on a 30-inch leader, behind a trolling sinker, such as a Gapen Bait Walker. My walleye trolling rig is spooled with eight-pound line. Lures run shallower as line size increases, but you cannot troll very fast with this trolling sinker rig.

An alternative that allows faster deep trolling is a downrigger. You can buy small, portable downriggers suitable for depths to about 50 feet for under \$75. Use the same lures, but keep in mind that the lures dive below the downrigger weight. Downriggers can be put to great use while drifting, too. Try 'crawler harnesses behind the downrigger, raising and lowering the weight as you watch the sonar.

Walleye often move into shallow water at night to feed. They are quite spooky then, so you have to keep the boat away from them. Planer boards are helpful in this situation. The boards that attach directly to the fishing line and then release free from the line when a fish is hooked are my choice in quiet inland lakes.

I have to retrieve the free planer board, but this board also serves as a marker. I fish behind the board before retrieving it, taking into account how far the lure was



Mike Bierck

behind the board. Many times I can catch another walleye there, maybe a few more.

The old-fashioned nightcrawler harness is hard to beat during summer for either slow trolling—electric motor or back-trolling—or drifting. This rig has one or more spinner blades and a few beads ahead of a two- or three-hook harness. Some anglers make their own, but considering the cost difference between making them or buying them, making them does not make much sense.

'Crawler harnesses

I carry a variety of 'crawler harnesses. Most have Colorado or Indiana spinner blades. The blade sizes range roughly the same as the sizes of my fingernails. My favorite colors are silver, gold, chartreuse, orange and lime-green. Combinations of these colors are good. One idea that encourages me to make my own harnesses is that the leaders are too short on many of the store-bought versions. I like a 30-inch leader that can be attached directly to the trolling sinker.

Hook the 'crawler near the front tip, and again farther back so that the harness hooks spread as far as they can. Attach the harness to the trailing end of a trolling sinker.



Mike Bierck

Worth Hammond (top photo) hefts a husky walleye. Larry Snavely (above) nailed these nice ones at night in about 12 feet of water along a shoreline.

The amount of weight you need depends on your trolling or drifting speed. As a general guide, try 1 1/2 ounces down to 25 feet and two ounces down to 40 feet. Keep the weight at the bottom, and as close to the boat as is practical for maximum control.

Versatility

One of my favorite walleye stories is about a walleye angler I spoke with at Pymatuning. He said he caught a walleye every time he trolled over a particular piece of structure. I asked him why he didn't stop there to fish, and he just gave me a puzzled look.

The gist of this story is that the angler was a troller. That is how he fished for walleye. It didn't even occur to him to fish any other way.

My basic attitude about fishing is that the best angler on the lake is the happiest one. After all, the idea of fishing is to have fun. If your idea of fun is dry fly fishing, motor trolling, or any other single method, then your results will be limited. On the other hand, if catching fish has a lot to do with how much fishing fun you have, then versatility is a key.

If I caught a walleye each time I trolled over a certain place, by the time I caught the second walleye there, I would either drop



anchor or maneuver with the electric motor close by. Then I could cast the same lure that I was trolling into that same water, and I would probably catch walleye a lot faster than I could by trolling. Once you have located a school of walleye, stop looking.

Nevertheless, there are those days when trolling seems to be the only way to catch walleye.

Drifting

Sometimes you can cover as much water drifting as you can trolling, depending on the current or the wind. The advantage of drifting is that it is quieter than trolling, but drifting is not as accurate as trolling.

Sometimes in very clear water, plain bait is better for drift-fishing than a nightcrawler harness. Nightcrawlers, leeches and minnows are all good baits. One simple, effective drifting rig is a sliding sinker ahead of a swivel, and a two-foot leader from the swivel to a single size 6 wide-gap hook. Try a bait-floater, or a floating jig head for the added attraction of color.

You might have noticed that the methods covered so far have been presented in a logical order. I started with the fastest summertime walleye fishing method, and the methods have been getting progressively slower. While I have been losing speed, though, I have been gaining precision, or something else I want in exchange.

Night moves

One of my favorite walleye fishing methods is to work along the shoreline with my electric motor between evening and morning. This is a peaceful time to be on most lakes, while the pleasure boats are at



One of my favorite methods is to work the shoreline between evening and morning. I keep the boat in about six to 12 feet of water and cast ahead, moving quickly.





Mike Beech

You should be able to look at a fishing map and choose areas likely to hold walleye. Knowing how to identify "high-percentage" places boosts your odds of success.

their docks. I keep the boat over the depth I expect the walleye to be in, typically from six feet to 12 feet, and cast ahead, moving quickly.

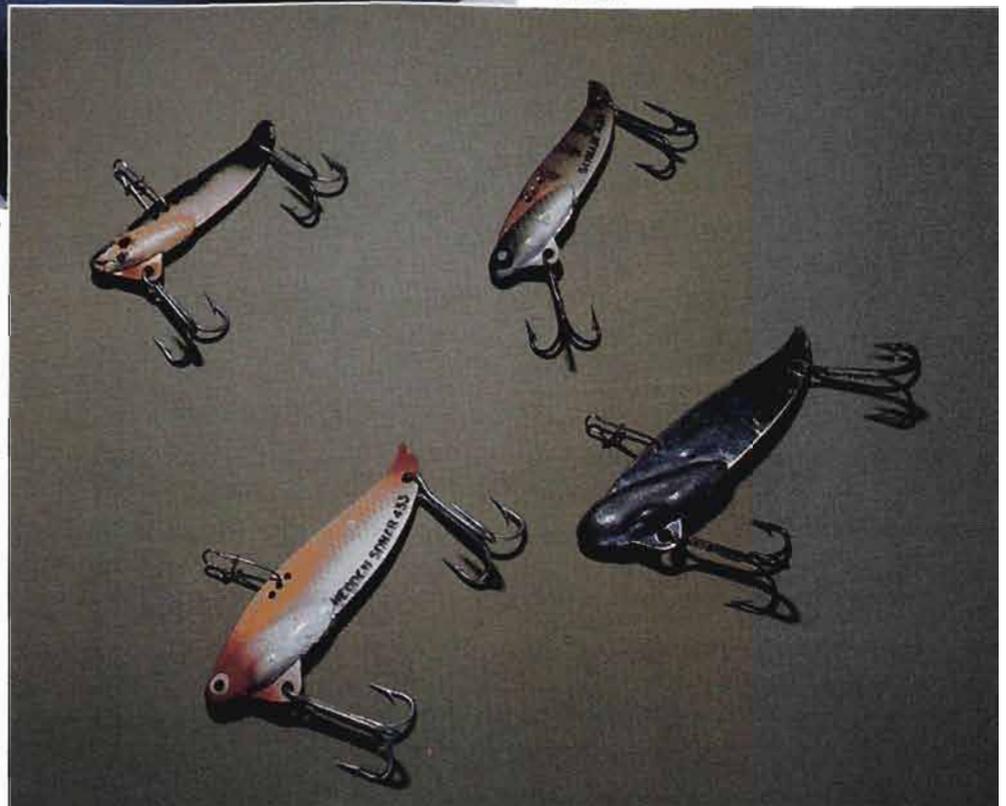
This is a likely time to encounter trophy-size walleye, so I use lures intended for big walleye. I like to use minnow-shaped crankbaits about six inches long in this situation. Try working divers near the bottom in clear, rocky bottom areas, and shallow runners over the tops of weed beds. Some of the best summertime night action occurs around islands, or other mid-lake structure that creates shallow-water situations. Don't be too surprised if you hook a big musky while doing this!

Patterns

Once you have done some serious summertime walleye fishing, you should be able to put together some patterns. You should, for example, have learned a few places in your home waters where there are often active walleye. You should also be able to look at a good fishing map and be able to identify certain areas as likely to hold active walleye. I call these "high-percentage" spots—the places I think are most likely to hold active walleye. Knowing how to identify high-percentage places really boosts your odds of success.

Take advantage of high-percentage places by moving from spot to spot until you catch

Mike Beech



walleye. This calls for what I call "run & gun" fishing methods. I spend a large portion of my walleye fishing time doing exactly this, going from one high-percentage place to another. I generally keep two or three rods rigged while doing this. This way I am ready for all of the situations I will likely encounter, and I can try a few methods at each high-percentage spot.

One of my rods is rigged with a floating minnow lure, such as a Rapala Minnow, Rebel Jointed Minnow, Storm ThunderStick, Bomber Long A, or Bagley Bang-O-Lure. These are some of the best lures when walleye are active. They are good in shallow water, over weeds, and whenever walleye are feeding on minnows close to the surface. These situations are most often encountered during summer at night.

I rig another rod with a jig, or a jig and bait combination. The standard set-up would be a 1/8-ounce banana head jig, or some other snag-resistant design, and either a leech, a minnow or a nightcrawler. Nightcrawlers would not be used where small panfish are a problem. In a weedy lake like Conneaut, I might use an Arkie jig and a leech, flipping through the weed beds as a bass angler would, but staying in the deepest weeds. In any case, the primary job of this rig is bottom-fishing.

Nightcrawler rigs are hard to beat for summertime trolling or drifting.

Waterways for Summertime Walleye Fishing

Waterway	Location	Notes
Northwest		
Pymatuning Res.	Crawford Co.	improved over last few years good numbers and trophies try night fishing mid-lake structure best fishing anywhere for big walleye
Allegheny Res.	Warren Co.	
Allegheny River	northwest	
Lake Arthur	Butler Co.	
Lake Erie	Erie Co.	
Southwest		
Allegheny River	southwest	Pools 4 and 5 below Maxwell Dam McKeesport to Connellsville steep and deep steep and rocky
Monongahela River	southwest	
Youghiogheny River	southwest	
Youghiogheny Res.	Fayette Co.	
High Point Lake	Somerset Co.	
Southeast		
Hanover Lake	York Co.	no night fishing night fishing deep water
Susquehanna River	southwest	
Beltzville Res.	Carbon Co.	
Northeast		
Lake Wallenpaupack	Pike & Wayne Co.	night fish for trophies emerging fishery electric motors Water Gap area shallow night fishing
Glendale Lake	Centre Co.	
Rose Valley Lake	Lycoming Co.	
Delaware River	northeast	
Belmont Lake	Wayne Co.	
Susquehanna River	northeast	

—MB



In deep, steep-sided lakes such as Kinzua (the Allegheny Reservoir), Beltzville Lake or High Point Lake, I want a rod rigged with a deep-diving crankbait. I'd stick with a slender-shaped lure.

If I notice a deep-water pattern, then I keep a rod rigged with a jiggling spoon. Vertical jiggling is about the fastest way to get at active walleye when they are 15 to 20 feet down, and deeper depending on water color.

I would probably keep a rod rigged for nightcrawlers if I were drift-fishing a river or large creek, or whenever the fishing is slow. Nightcrawlers are easy to store, as long as they can be kept cool, and sometimes you can catch a few walleye this way when nothing else works. The rig is generally a size 6 or 8 wide-gap hook, and a medium-size splitshot pinched about two feet up the line. It can be retrieved slowly across the bottom or still-fished. This is about the slowest summer fishing method for walleye.

There are many more summertime walleye fishing methods, but you should be a successful walleye angler if you master these tactics.

Kinzua Dam Tailwaters for Summertime Trout

by Roger Dalo

With silent amazement I watched two anglers pull January rainbow trout from the Kinzua Dam tailwaters. In only a few minutes both anglers caught trout in the seven- to nine-inch range. In a little over a half-hour or so, they had taken and released numerous other rainbows. All but two of the larger trout were released. At first I was a little puzzled to explain the origin of these fish. Then I remembered...

During the summer and fall of 1989, 115,000 rainbow trout fingerlings in the three- to six-inch range were placed by the Fish Commission in Kinzua Dam's outflow. Added to this were 35,000 brown trout fingerlings. It was evident that the trout had found this habitat much to their liking, so much so that I think the seven miles of the Allegheny River from the Dam to Warren will become one of the better summer trout fisheries in the Commonwealth.

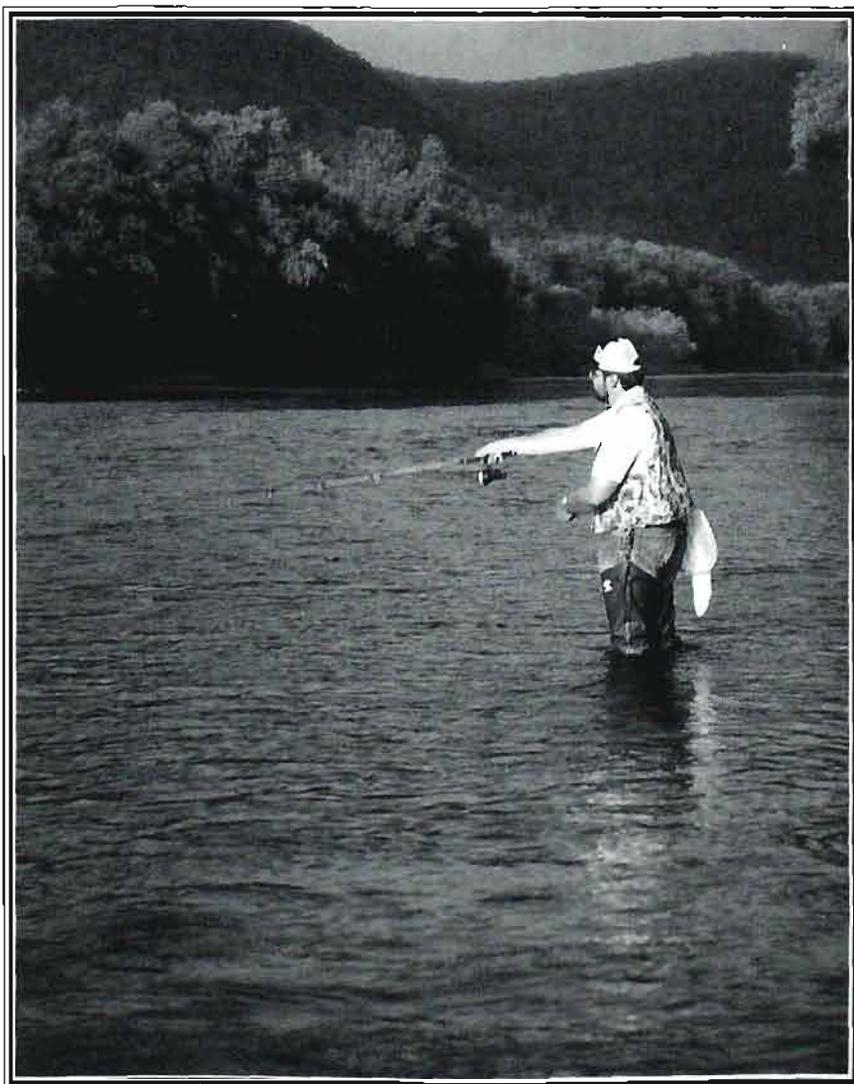
According to Ron Lee, Area 2 Fisheries Manager, the Commission is continuing this experimental fingerling program in 1990. This trial fishery extends from Kinzua Dam downstream seven miles to Browns Run. The target is 17,000 rainbows and 17,000 browns per year, and "any trout stocked above this level will be the result of excess hatchery production," says Lee. If early angler success is any indication, the program will be a trout angler's delight.

But how could three- to six-inch fingerlings grow an average of three to four inches in only a few short months? Bob Hoskin, regional fishery biologist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Kinzua, puts it this way: "It is not unreasonable to expect similar growth rates in fish from both the Allegheny Reservoir and the lower river outflow. The reservoir is highly productive, so it follows that the outflow fishery would mirror its success."

While most Pennsylvania trout streams fall gently to sleep during the summer months, the Allegheny River, with its added population of brown and rainbow trout, promises a colorful time for the hot-weather angler. Here is how to catch these new arrivals to the Allegheny River.

Fishing possibilities

Fly anglers will find these fish steady summer feeders, dining on a wide variety of both aquatic and terrestrial insects. Both ultralight and standard rods to eight feet or so will do just fine. Wet flies often work best, but there is always action for



Roger Dalo

About seven miles of the Allegheny River from the dam to Warren (Warren County) will become one of the better summer trout fisheries in Pennsylvania. Rainbow and brown trout were stocked, and the fish will probably grow quickly.

the dry fly enthusiast. Whether wet or dry, use gray and cream patterns in hook sizes 12 through 16.

Spinfishermen take heart! These Allegheny trout are quite accommodating and won't hesitate to wolf down salmon eggs, minnows, small hard crayfish, nightcrawlers, bright spinners and even an occasional spoon. To ensure success, use line no heavier than six-pound test. You'll also need hip boots or waders because the Allegheny is big water. Furthermore,



Roger Davis

don't hesitate to wear a PFD, especially if you're plying deeper holes between the riffles. A wading staff is also a useful item.

Getting to your favorite spot might require a little downhill trek, but a short hike of 50 yards or so can prove rewarding. Better yet, if you've got a canoe or small flat-bottom boat, a wider sampling of the river is at your disposal. A launch ramp, provided by the Corps in the Big Bend Access area, is available, and a take-out point is located just 50 yards upstream of the Conewango Creek above its confluence with the Allegheny River.

More information is available at any of the bait shops in the area. You will find the owners knowledgeable, friendly and helpful, just like the local anglers.

As an added incentive, keep in mind that the Allegheny River has been home to a good population of lunker rainbows and browns for years, which migrate out of stocked tributary streams. On arrival, they prosper on the plentiful river forage, often becoming adults in the four- to 10-pound range. Your chances of hooking a trophy fish using the methods outlined

Both shore fishing and boat fishing are possibilities here. The lunker rainbows and browns prosper on plentiful Allegheny River forage, and trout in the four- to 10-pound range can be caught.

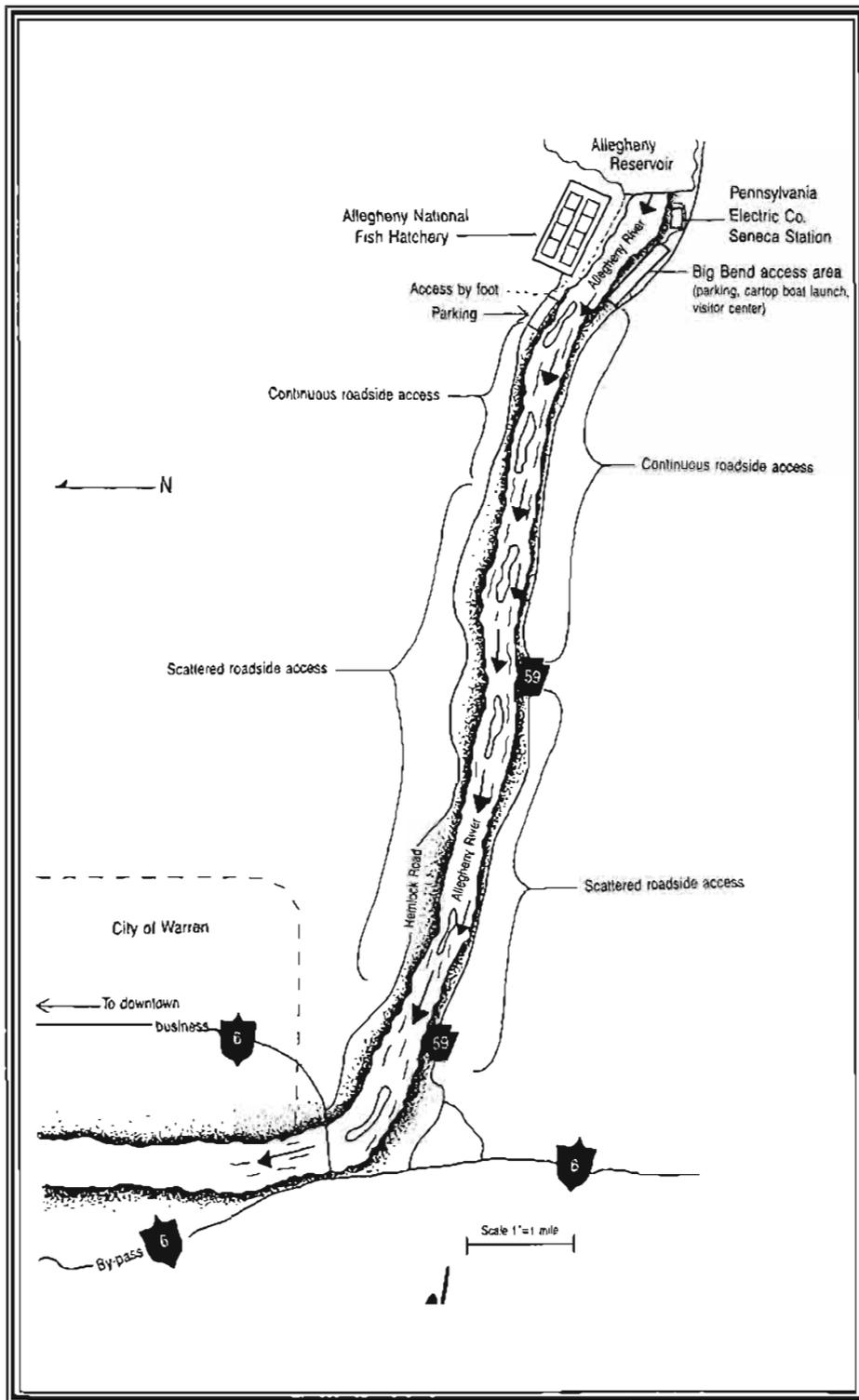
here are not certain, but don't be surprised if you get into a battle royale.

If a lunker is etched in your mind, make sure to use stout tackle and substantial offerings to include large streamers, chubs or four-inch Rapalas.

When the dog days of summer arrive and you can't shake spring's trout fever, just pack up the car and head for Warren County's Allegheny River.

WARREN COUNTY ANGLER

Thanks to Fish Commission Area 2 Fisheries Manager Ron Lee; Bob Hoskin, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers area fisheries biologist at Kinzua, for technical assistance with this article. Thanks also to Warren County WCO George Jones for his special insight and ideas.



map graphics: Kim Gottlieb

The trial stocking will continue in 1990, with some 17,000 rainbows and 17,000 brown trout stocked per year.

Before You Go

River level data

Before you go, give the Corps of Engineers (Kinzua Dam) Fishing Hotline a call at (814) 276-0164. Included in the report are up-to-date fishing success data and Kinzua Dam discharge information. Average summer flows range from 600 to 1,800 cubic feet per second (CFS). If the discharge exceeds 2,200 CFS, you might be better off waiting for lower flows.

Other considerations

Shore anglers are asked to fish those stretches of the Allegheny that allow roadside access. In the other areas, it will require your crossing private property and may not sit well with property owners. While you are angling, leave only your footprints, and take with you fond memories and perhaps a few fish.

Angling information

Holmes Sporting Goods and Bait, 5 Pennsylvania East, Warren, PA 16365; (814) 723-8810.

Field & Stream, 1917 Pennsylvania Avenue West, Warren, PA 16365; (814) 726-1889.

Allegheny Outfitters, Market Street Plaza, Warren, PA 16365; (814) 723-1203.

Accommodations

Travel Northern Alleghenies (TNA), 315 Second Avenue, P.O. Box 804, Warren, PA 16365; 1-800-624-7802.

TNA will provide additional maps and information on family activities, restaurants, lodging and related information to help make your trip an enjoyable one.—RD

Doubleheader for Panfish

by T. C. Flanigan

One of the finest gifts I have ever received was some unique fishing knowledge. In fact, it was the best panfishing tip I have ever learned. The day that "Big Al" showed me how to use the "doubleheader" system, my panfishing enjoyment and success increased greatly. A large part of the fun of fishing is the opportunity to share the experience with a companion. Sharing the fishing fun and some friendly teasing, plus a bit of competition, can make even a fruitless trip enjoyable.

On a gorgeous spring day a few years ago, Al asked if there was any good bluegill fishing in the area. I thought of a local farm with three nice ponds that I knew held some big panfish and largemouth bass. We spoke with the landowner and obtained permission to sample the fishing.

I was equipped with an ultralight spinning rod, some live bait and a few jigs in which I had some faith. Al produced a fly rod and offered to share with me his proven strategy for catching big bluegills, a pastime at which he is an expert.

I watched closely as he tied a strange fly arrangement onto his leader and listened while he explained his system. The rig consisted of a 7 1/2-foot tapered leader with a popper attached, a standard panfish rig. The strange part about it was that there was another lightweight leader attached directly to the hook of the popper. This leader was 2 1/2 feet long and was tipped with a spider-like wet fly with a black chenille body and eight white rubber legs.

The wet fly can be easily manufactured at home. As a matter of fact, Al says he can produce 10 or 12 while watching a football game on TV. All that is needed is a supply of size 8 or 10 hooks, some chenille for the bodies, strong black thread, and some white or yellow rubber legs. Don't spare the head cement because big bluegills can destroy poorly constructed flies. The given name of the fly is "the bream killer." That sounds a bit boastful, but it is actually deadly in fooling those big slab-sided 'gillies.

In short order on that memorable day, Al proved that he could out-fish me at a rate of three fish to one, and he did so without having to pause to rebait his hook. If that is not enough to sell his system, the thrill

of fighting large bluegills on light fly tackle certainly is. They are some of the strongest-fighting freshwater fish. The real bonus though is in the eating. Bluegill fillets are gourmet delights.

Wet fly action

The key to the system is the special wet fly and the action it has because of the way it is rigged to the popper. The short, light leader connecting the two causes the bream killer to rise and fall as the angler moves the popper. Bluegills seem to find this type of action irresistible.

The proper method of fishing this combo rig is to place it on the water and allow several seconds for the wet fly to sink. Then agitate the popper ever so slightly and get ready. A strike on the wet fly can be instantly detected by the rearward movement or sudden disappearance of the popper, while a hit on the popper is, of course, obvious.

The popper serves two purposes. It acts as a monitor or strike indicator for the wet fly, and as an effective lure itself. For this reason, good quality, durable poppers that float well are an absolute must. It is wise to keep several combos rigged and ready in your vest or tackle box. Doing so saves valuable fishing time just in case you snap a wet fly off on a backcast or hang the fly in a tree.

Casting

Casting the double rig can be challenging because the length of the leaders and the two flies are wind-resistant. Although it is fishable with most any fly rod and line combination, a fast-action rod with a float-

ing weight-forward line make the task a pleasure. I have found that my 8 1/2-foot graphite rod and shooting-taper six-weight floating line give me plenty of control and are fun to use.

Ease of casting and fly placement can be enhanced by using a fairly stiff 7 1/2-foot tapered leader of 4-pound test. The wet fly leader should be lightweight and very limp to permit proper action. Three-pound test is sufficient for the dropper leader. Tie it directly to the hook bend.

This is a double-barreled approach to panfishing. I like to call Al's rig the "doubleheader" system because it is not uncommon to take two large bluegills simultaneously, especially if the popping bug gets the initial hit. When this occurs, it is almost certain that another curious fish will grab the wet fly as it trails the hooked fish. What could be better than catching these super panfish on light fly tackle? Taking them two at a time!

I have experienced many successful bluegill excursions since first learning to use the doubleheader rig. Each time, the system has proven to be dependable and effective.

It is certainly not limited to bluegills alone. It is effective for all types of panfish as well as both largemouth and smallmouth bass. Doubles on bass are thrilling and a true test of a fly rodder's fish-handling ability. Often mixed doubles occur when a bass takes the popper and a bluegill inhales the bream killer, or vice versa.

No matter how it happens, it's all great fun. So forget the bait. Give the doubleheader system a try and get in on the fun.



The doubleheader system takes bluegills and other panfish as well as largemouth and smallmouth bass.

T.C. Flanigan



T.C. Flanagan

Bass Love

by Darl Black

"That's gold in them there weeds." That is the rallying cry for a select group of fishermen during the summer. The anticipated bonanza actually refers to black bass—largemouth, to be specific.

Experienced bass anglers know well the connection between largemouths and weeds. A lake without good weeds rarely sustains a strong population of big largemouth bass.

Of course, vegetation alone does not make a great bass lake. Suitable spawning areas and adequate forage for all stages of bass development must also be present. And if the entire lake becomes too congested with vegetation, other problems may arise. But with the right balances of vegetation, largemouth bass will be snug in the weeds.

Beautiful slop

I divide aquatic vegetation into two general categories. First are the weed clumps or weedbeds on the flats usually comprised of one prominent vegetation type. These plants attract a portion of the bass population. Because there is open water above the weeds or between the clumps, these areas may be fished easily with a variety of conventional methods. Most anglers can deal with this weed growth.

The second category is thick vegetation in the shallows. This may be a mixture of pads, grass, moss, reeds and other species. Or it may be a single plant species that forms a surface mat. In either case, this "slop" appears impossible to penetrate.

Even anglers who fish weedlines or weed clumps with a semi-weedless spinnerbait often hesitate to get right into the thick vegetation. If some hardcore bass anglers stay away from the heavy vegetation, what about the majority of fishermen? Yeah, you're right. They avoid it. For this reason, on many waters bass in dense, shallow vegetation are rarely disturbed.

But for anglers who have learned not to cringe at the sight of thick vegetation, there are riches galore in this green salad.

Worth Hammond, one of my fishing companions, views the slop as a smorgasbord for largemouths.

"Bass have everything there they need to survive. Along with sufficient oxygen and cover, in weeds there is plenty for bass to eat—frogs, minnows, insects and insect larva, young-of-the-year sunfish, golden shiners, small snakes—as well as the opportunity to ambush that meal. Unlike open-water gamefish, bass prefer not to run down their forage.

"Most people won't take the effort or time to learn to work the slop. However, if you become competent at this type of fishing, on many lakes you will be able to reach a population of bass that has not been pressured by other anglers. But it's more than just using specialized lures. You must identify the high and low percentage areas."

Thick



Darl Black



A variety of spoons makes great offerings for the thick stuff.

Stuff



Darl Black

The right spots

What appears as an impenetrable mass to the angler isn't always impenetrable to bass. Plants that provide overhead shelter and relative open water under the surface are sites where bass stay for extended periods. Weeds that grow very close to the bottom do not provide cover that bass like. The good cover weeds house bass every day from June through late summer.

Pad-type vegetation that features large, floating leaves is one case in point. This includes plants such as spatterdock, water lily and watershield. If the water is clear, don't expect too much in the way of bass in this cover. However, when other vegetation is intermixed with a pad bed and the water is stained, hold on to your rod tightly!

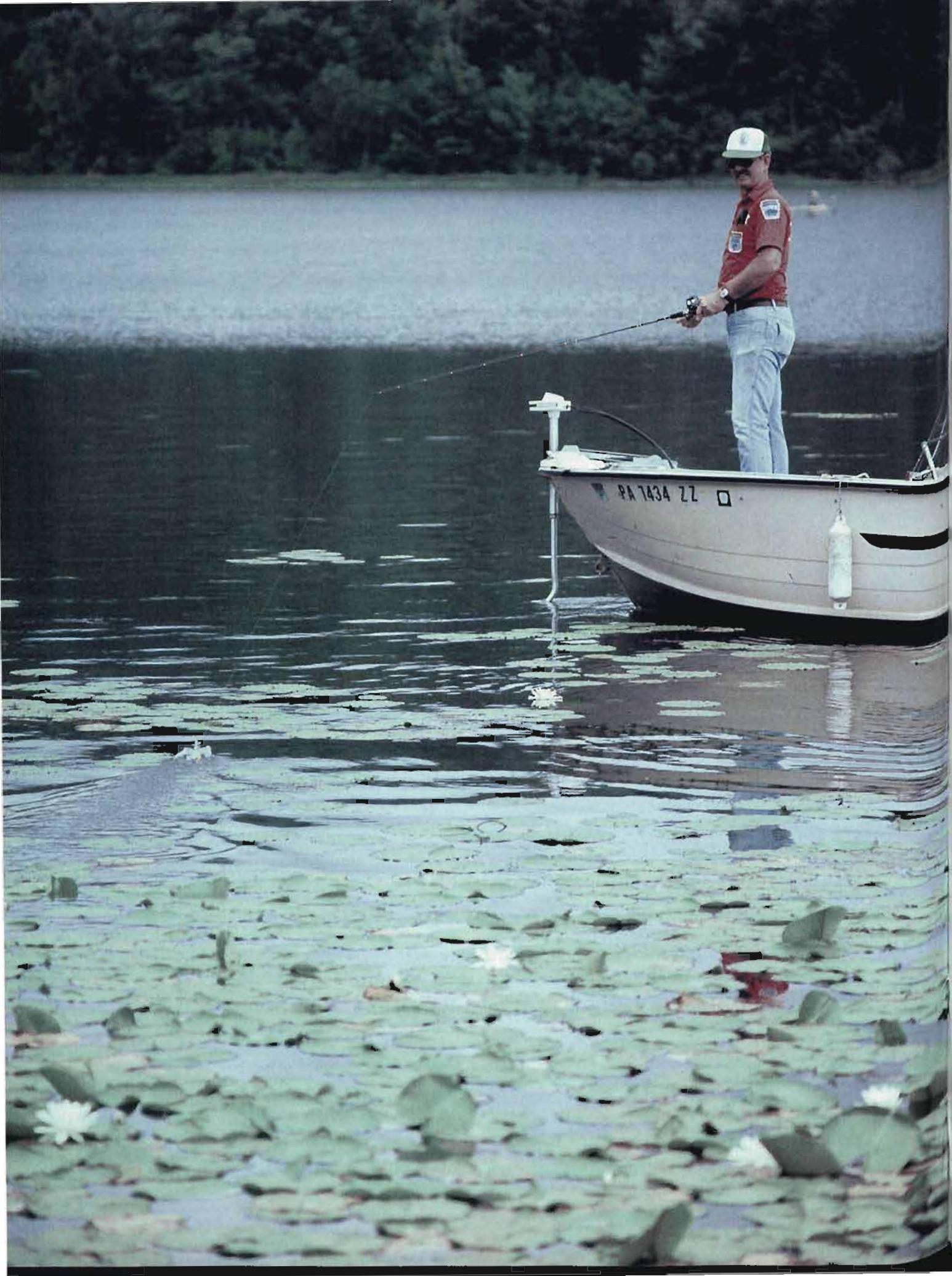
Another situation is the milfoil or coontail mat. In some instances, these species of submerged plants reach the surface and spread across the surface forming a mat. Looking at the top, it appears that the vegetation is entirely too thick to let bass ma-

Large plastic worms (above) are productive offerings for fooling bass in heavy cover. Jiggle the worm or jump it a few times when it hits the bottom.

neuver. But if you pushed the top mat apart, you would discover plenty of room under the surface.

Of course, slop is not limited to these examples. Any combination of vegetation that affords overhead shelter and underwater openings for ambush has the potential for holding bass.

Are there slop situations that are unproductive? Sure. One area to avoid is filamentous algae. Usually referred to as pond scum, these disgusting-looking mats of stringy algae do not attract bass. However, do not confuse filamentous algae with the tiny floating plant referred to as duckweed. Moved about by the wind and current, duckweed often forms green carpets on the surface. Bass



are not turned off by duckweed, and they often seek sanctuary under the carpet.

At some point during the summer or early fall, shallow vegetation starts to die. The decaying process uses up oxygen, releasing hydrogen sulfide gas. When this happens en masse, bass and baitfish leave the immediate area. However, a few brown or dying weeds do not force an evacuation. In some lakes in Pennsylvania, bass remain in the sloop through early September.

Techniques

If you suspect that bass are in the sloop, how do you go after them? The most successful anglers use a combination approach.

Initial lure presentation attempts to entice bass from the cover with a surface disturbance. Weedless surface spoons, poppers and frogs are skimmed across the top of the vegetation. If a hungry bass sees the disturbance, an exploding attack will be instantaneous.

But too often the bass are inactive and not interested in charging after a meal. The angler must take the lure right to the fish by penetrating the vegetation cover.

Rob Genter, another fishing friend, is a specialist when it comes to thick vegetation. Like most sloop anglers, he takes the two-step approach.

"I like surface sloop baits such as a Moss Boss or Snag Proof Popper for aggressive fish," Rob says. "With the Moss Boss, it is necessary to keep the lure moving to work it properly on the surface. The angler must reel steadily, slowly dragging or twitching the lure across the vegetation. The Snag Proof Popper can be worked slower with jiggles and pops."

Because bass do not have a clear view of the offering plodding across the surface vegetation, the fish frequently miss the lure on the first strike. It is important to continue working the lure back to the boat after a miss. "It's not uncommon for a bass to attack a surface sloop bait several times on a single cast before actually grabbing the lure," Rob says.

Worth engages in a similar game of locating active fish in the thick stuff, but he uses weedless spoons that may be fished underwater as well as on top. He often chooses the Johnson Silver Minnow or Timber King Spoon. The Timber King Spoon comes equipped with a rubber skirt for attraction. A pork rind or piece of plastic worm is always added to the Johnson Spoon to provide added action.

This type of lure may be dragged across the thick vegetation to an opening, then allowed to flutter down. These spoons wobble side-to-side in an enticing manner as they fall, and they exhibit a similar action when retrieved slowly underwater. Because these spoons twist line, be sure to use a quality ball-bearing swivel.

When bass are particularly tight-lipped, these lures draw few strikes. Then it is time to switch to a worm or jig.

"I prefer to fish a slow-falling worm," Rob says. "I use a small worm and fish it with very little weight, usually only 1/16-ounce."

To achieve distance and reach almost inaccessible pockets of open water, Rob uses a short spinning rod to skip the worm across the surface much like skipping a stone.

"To minimize hang-ups on vegetation, I hide the weight inside the worm. You can do this by wrapping a piece of solder around the top of the hook shank immediately below the eye. The worm is then rigged Texas style with the hook eye, weight and the hook point inside the worm body."

Worth takes a different approach. "I pitch or flip a seven- or eight-inch worm on a 7 1/2-foot flipping rod. If there are open

pockets to drop the worm through, fine. But if the mat is solid, I break through using a heavy sinker. Usually a 1/2-ounce worm weight does it, but I have used as much as one ounce. It is important to peg the weight so it doesn't slide on the line.

"The quickly dropping bait might scare some fish, but it must also attract other bass because this technique has been very successful for me. Once the worm settles to the bottom, I jiggle it or jump it a few times before making the next flip."

The worm presentations discussed by both Worth and Rob are successful, but when it comes to looking for a trophy largemouth in the sloop, I vote for the jig-and-pig. There is something about a chunk of fluttering pork on a dancing rubber skirt that seems to attract bigger bass.

Tackle

Don't attempt sloop fishing with a wimpy rod and line. Except for the skipping technique, long rods are preferred for casting and flipping. Long rods provide better line control when maneuvering baits through and around vegetation. The rod must be powerful to produce a solid hookset with sloop baits that have a heavy duty hook, as well as aid in horsing out bass when they try to bury themselves deep in the cover.

For this jungle warfare, 14-pound-test line is as light as you should consider using. Seventeen and 20-pound are better choices, and 25-pound line isn't too heavy. Because the line is in constant contact with vegetation, use a line with a high abrasion resistance.

Tough going

Fishing areas of thick vegetation isn't easy, but the real challenge is getting a boat through the weeds. Very often when the average angler attempts to run his electric trolling motor through heavy weeds, little progress is made, the angler becomes disgusted and he gives up. The following considerations enhance electric motor use for sloop fishing.

First, the electric motor must have an efficient weedless prop that throws off vegetation rather than wrapping it around the prop. Weedless props now come standard on motors, but if you have an older electric motor, it may not be so equipped. A replacement weedless prop may be available. If not, consider buying a new motor.

Second, the pounds thrust of the motor must be enough to power your way through the vegetation. Twenty-eight pounds of thrust is the minimum recommendation. Run the motor at high speed. Operation at lower speeds is usually stopped cold in thick weeds.

Next, adjust the shaft setting on the electric motor so the prop draws just enough water to run at high speed without blowing out. The shaft most often bogs down in vegetation, even though the blades on the motor are clear of weeds. The lower the motor sets in the water, the more shaft is available to collect weeds.

Finally, tilt your outboard motor so that just the skeg sits in the water. A little bit of the outboard in the water acts as a keel for better steering control with a bow-mounted trolling motor, but too much outboard simply gathers more strands of vegetation.

Even following these recommendations, at some point your boat probably will become trapped in vegetation. That is when you break out the sloop fisherman's best friend—a long-handled push pole.

Fishing the thick stuff—it ain't easy, but it sure is exciting, and the rewards are greater than the inconvenience.



Kids Page!

by Steve Ulsh

You've Caught a Fish! What's Your Next Move?

The first three things you have to consider when you catch a fish are what kind of fish you have, is it in season, and is it long enough? All good anglers should be able to identify fish, and know when you can keep them and minimum size lengths of each species.

The fourth most important and greatest decision you have to make is to keep it or release it. The decision to keep it is easy. You either put it in your fishing vest, creel, fishing basket or on your stringer.

You may have decided to take the fish home and eat it, but releasing it can also be an easy decision. If the hook is in the lip, you simply push the hook back over the barb and release the fish to bite again.

Releasing can be a problem, too. If the hook is deeply embedded in the mouth or throat cavity, you must act quickly and correctly to remove the hook. Improper handling of a fish while doing this kills the fish.

To remove a deeply embedded hook, you should have a hook disgorger in your tackle box. This long, slender tool lets you reach farther into a fish's mouth than you can with your fingers. The tool also eliminates tearing the tender flesh inside the fish's mouth.

If you don't have a hook disgorger, a pair of long or needle-nose pliers will work. Try to find the longest-nosed pliers possible. Some tackle companies

make pliers especially for fishing. But those made for electricians work just as well. You can sometimes find second-hand pliers at flea markets.



A hook deeply embedded in the throat cavity poses a danger to a fish. If the point is turned upward, removing the hook could puncture the air bladder or kidneys. If the point is downward, it could puncture the heart.

In cases where the hook is embedded in the throat and you want to release the fish, the best thing to do is cut the line. In time, the hook will either work free or dissolve. Try to cut the line as far into the fish's mouth as you can without hurting the fish. Here, a pair of fingernail clippers will do the job. You can also use a pocketknife that has a small pair of scissors as part of its blade system.

Catching fish is fun. It's the most exciting part of fishing. Releasing fish you don't want to eat is satisfying. To know you've carefully, kindly and humanely

returned a fish to its environment to swim again and perhaps breed others for future anglers is one big step to becoming a good steward of the earth.

ANGLER

Illustration: Ross Beegle

Art Michaels

Fines Raised for 1990

A recent amendment to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Code has updated the fine structure for violations of fishing and boating laws and regulations. House bill 650 was signed into law as Act 1989-102. The new law, which passed with strong support of Pennsylvania sportsmen, means that those breaking the law will pay stiffer fines in 1990.

Here are the highlights of the bill:

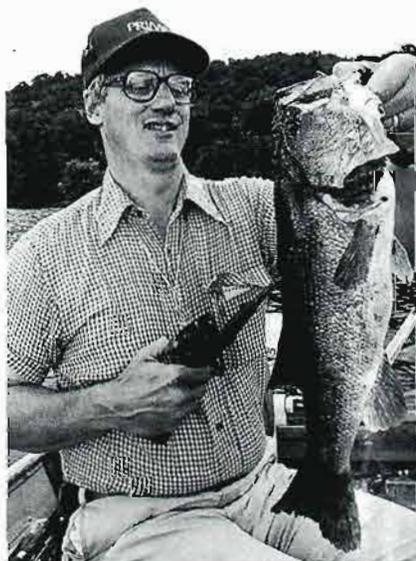
- Misuse of waters and property, both private and Commission-owned—an increased fine from \$25 to \$50.
- Littering—an increase from \$25 to \$25 plus \$10 per item.
- A new fine for household refuse—\$50 plus \$10 per item.
- Fishing without a license—\$25 plus twice the cost of the license. For example, a resident license is \$12, so the fine would be \$25 plus \$24.
- Pollution, stream disturbances, boating under the influence and reckless operation of a watercraft—\$250 to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment not to exceed 90 days.
- Repeat offender apprehended a second time in a single year—the fine is doubled.
- Fleecing or cluding an officer—\$100 fine.
- Giving false identification—\$50 fine.
- Homicide by watercraft—not less than \$2,500 or more than \$10,000 and/or imprisonment not to exceed five years.
- Stealing hatchery fish—\$250 to \$5,000.



Pennsylvania Angler was named 1989-90 "Conservation Communicator of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation at the organization's annual Conservation Achievement Awards Banquet last April. The award recognizes individuals and organizations in Pennsylvania that contribute significantly to the conservation of Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Pictured is the team that produces Pennsylvania Angler. Seated are (left to right) Eleanor Mutch, Cheryl Riley and Ted Walke. Standing (left to right) are Patti Copp, Charlene Glisan, Rose Ann Bartal and Art Michaels.

Eleanor Mutch oversees Circulation. Cheryl Riley directs the Bureau of Education and Information. Ted Walke is Art Director. Patti Copp works in Circulation. Charlene Glisan and Rose Ann Bartal are staff assistants, and Art Michaels is editor.



← C. Boyd Pfeiffer won the Mason-Dixon Outdoor Writers Association (MDOWA) 1989 Pete Greer Memorial Award for Best Published Photo with his picture on page 23 of the November 1988 Angler. Pfeiffer is formerly president of both the Outdoor Writers Association of America and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association.

Outdoor writer-photographer Bill Ignizio recently won the 1989 Outdoor Writers of Ohio (OWO) Best Published Photograph, Black-and-White Division, for his action picture on page 4 of the June 1989 issue. Ignizio won the Lew Klewer Award last year, OWO's highest honor, and he has written hundreds of fishing articles for more than three dozen magazines. →



Don't Use Automotive Parts in Your Boat

Some marine engine parts seem very expensive compared to their automotive equivalents, but there are major differences in the environments in which they are designed to operate. Some automotive fuel components release

fuel and vapor into the engine area, and some automotive electrical parts emit sparks. Fuel vapors do not accumulate beneath the hood of a car, but they quickly reach explosive levels in the engine area of a boat.

These parts include:

- Alternators
- Distributors
- Starters, generators, and acces-

sory motors (hydraulic pump, tilt drive, and so forth)

- Starter solenoids
- Carburetors
- Fuel pumps

Using automotive components may seem like a bargain when you repair or replace parts on your boat, but be sure to look at the value on human life when you tune your marine engine.



Dedicated to the sound conservation of our aquatic resources, the protection and management of the state's diversified fisheries, and the ideals of safe boating and optimum boating opportunities.

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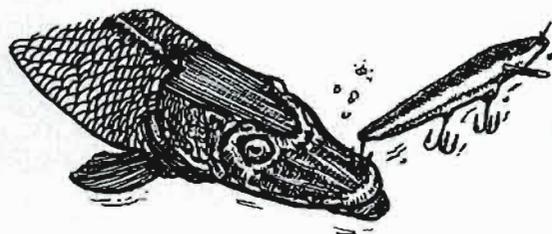
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Angler's Notebook *by C. Boyd Pfeiffer*



Pike and pickerel are less able to turn and ambush prey than largemouth bass. When fishing for pike and pickerel, use lures that track straight so that pike can home in on them. Wide-ranging and wobbling lures often cause missed strikes.

To impart a different type of action to your flies when all else fails, try the salmon angler's riffling hitch. Use this on streamers or wet flies to make them skim the surface. Tie the fly on normally, and then wrap over the head with two half hitches, pulling them up tight to one side.

Watch your timing when fly casting. The loop of fly line on the back cast must be straightened out before making the forward cast. The pause between back and forward casts becomes longer and longer as the amount of line out increases.

When fishing for big fish where you must use your reel's drag, set the drag to about one-fourth to one-third of the line test. You can always increase drag by raising the rod for additional line/rod-guide friction.

If a fish makes a long run, loosen the drag. The friction of the line in the water adds a lot of drag. Tighten the drag slightly as you regain line. An exception to this is if the fish heads for a snag that might break off the fish.

To add drag to a fly reel or spinning reel without changing the reel setting, hold the spool and allow the spool to turn against the friction of your hand or palm. For this reason, many fly reels are made with exposed "palming spools."

Small leaders are often difficult to tie to small lures and flies, and become more so as we get older. For aid in tying knots, get a pair of reading glasses of the right diopter from a variety or general store. Take a leader and fly or lure with you when you make the purchase so that you get the best glasses for the distance at which you tie knots.

Do not use oils and greases interchangeably when lubricating reels. Greases are only for gears and gear boxes in reels and for level-wind gearing in casting reels. Oils are for all lighter lube spots such as handles, bail rollers and bail hinges.

One way to keep leader and tippet spools is to thread them together onto a loop of light rope. Arrange the spools in order from lightest to heaviest test and make sure that the spools have some way to hold the mono in place.

Mono casts best when wet. To make your first casts of the day easy, remove the spool from your spinning reel and soak it in water for a few minutes. For casting reels, splash the line spool with water before heading for the lake.

Take care when handling catfish because they have sharp spines on the dorsal and both pectoral fins. Grasp them by the belly with one finger on each side of the pectoral fin to hold them securely and without danger.

Illustration: Rose Boegh

On the Water

ON THE WATER

with Dave Wolf

Usually I find the water calming, a place to seek solitude and relief from the rigors of daily life. Whether casting a fly or paddling a canoe, the effect is the same. For the pleasure is not in the pursuit, but rather in the arena in which it takes place.

Last spring the arena became an ugly place, and the water that had been so tranquil now carried death in its currents. Globes of burnt crude oil floated by like giant jellyfish and a sheen covered the water. Sodium hydroxide flowed by with little visible evidence except for the fish that turned belly-up. The stream had booms strung from shore to shore, belled in the currents like restraining ropes in state park swimming areas.

The river and the air smelled foul and there was no tranquility here; none of the feelings I associated with the water and the fish was present. A train had derailed at the tail end of Earth Day, and fire crews fought the burning tanker and coal cars that had left the tracks. I am not here to blame, for that is someone else's job. The total number of fish lost is still being calculated at this time. Damage to water quality in the stream and the surrounding area is still being assessed. I point no fingers; instead, I shove my hands in my pockets, hunch my shoulders and answer questions from the curious press.

There are definite priorities at times like these. Tragic events are placed in perspective and the first order of business is concern for public safety, then the drinking water of those living in the area, and finally, the environment and an innocent river that just happened to flow past the wrong place at the wrong time.

Scouring the banks for signs of pollution and dead fish was not a pleasurable task, and it certainly wasn't a pretty site. The effects of the pollution were repulsive to anyone who respects flowing water and the pleasure it provides. As if dead fish and floating crude oil were not enough, the litter that lined the banks only added insult to injury.

State and federal agencies worked round the clock to collect samples and monitor water quality. People were evacuated from their homes and tired firefighters came and went from the firehouse where the state agencies gathered to address needs and concerns.

Unfortunately, the stream suffered—as did those who use the resource. Many homeowners went through the hassle of evacuation, while others' homes suffered physical damage. It was only one accident—one pollution. But pollution reports come across my desk daily—some severe, others only mild. In most cases fish die, as does part of the resource.

The problem is that modern-day chemicals and hazardous waste increase the possibility of death to streams and all aquatic life, and it happens far too often. The problem goes beyond the loss of recreation and our water resources; it creates human health hazards as well. Stream pollutions no longer simply kill fish—they can endanger human lives as well.

It would be idealistic to think that pollutions can be stopped; yet, everyone must be concerned with the dangers they pose and try to prevent them. The deaths of streams are not everlasting;

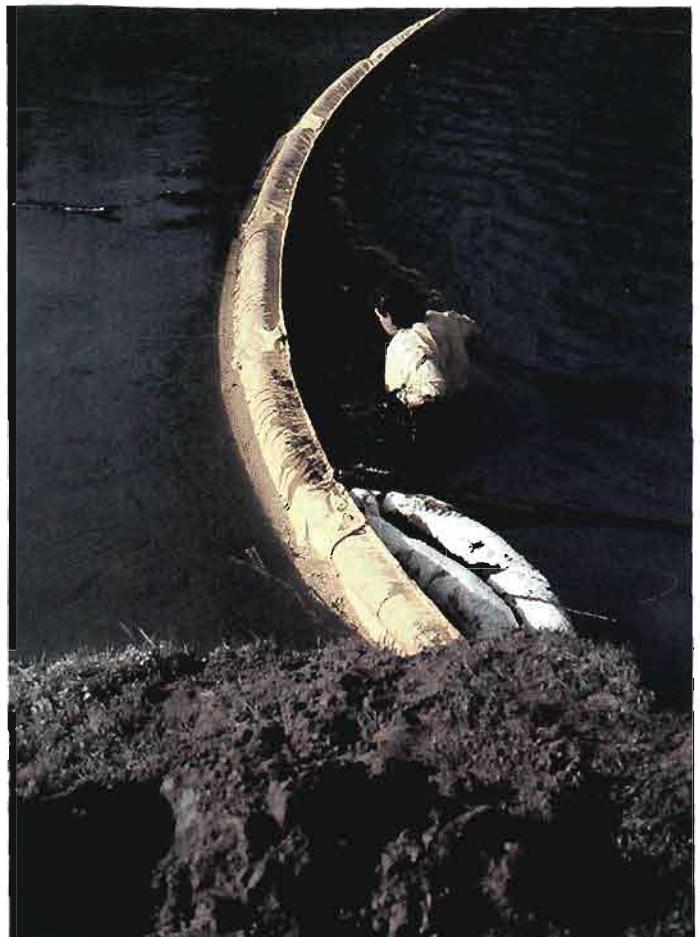
It Isn't Always Pretty



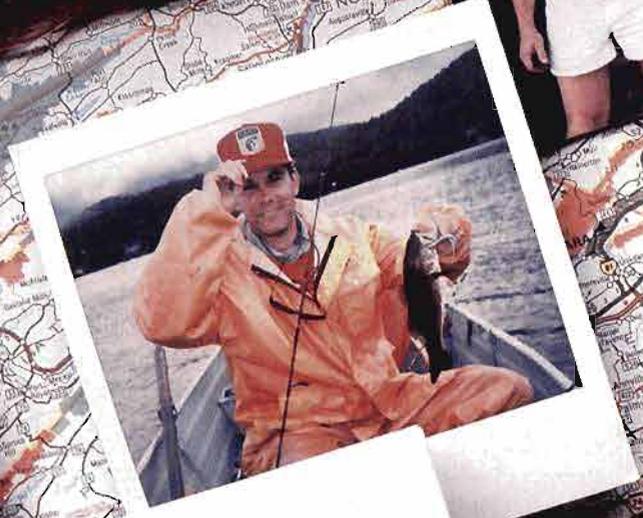
Dave Wolf

they can be brought back, but they are not like the cat with the proverbial nine lives—some may be lost, or at least degraded, forever.

After three long days at the scene of the pollution, I returned home. I sat in my front yard looking down the hill to the lake and stream. Anglers had ringed the lake and others probed the stream in search of trout. A feeling of tranquility returned; but I realized that although I was removed from the pollution site, I wasn't removed from the possibility that it could occur here, even in my own backyard. The thought left a hollow feeling in the pit of my stomach, and I was left with a lingering memory that being on the water isn't always pretty.



Dave Wolf



1989

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