

Fly Paper

A publication of Rocky Mountain Flycasters affiliated with Trout Unlimited, the Federation of Fly Fishers

Volume 14

May, 1997

Backcast

Wednesday evening, April 9th started out slowly, very few people had showed up for our meeting by 6:30 and it was snowing harder and harder outside. We were worried that there wouldn't be much of a crowd for our featured speaker of the evening, L.A. Garcia or our late addition; our Russian friend Mikhail Skopets. By 7:30 we had about fifty people so we decided to get the show started. First L.A. gave us a presentation about his recent trip to Chile, featuring much about the local culture as well as the great fishing which is to be enjoyed there. L. A. has been lucky enough to fish with such notables as Leon Chandler, Lefty Kreh and Jim and Kelly Watt, in some beautiful places. Mikhail then gave us a short slide show on the fantastic fishing opportunities to be had in extreme eastern Russia, with many pictures of huge fish caught in rivers where the next fisherman is either nonexistent or many miles away. I know that I would love to go and try my luck there!

Jim S.

Donations for April's raffle were made by : Dennis Martin, St. Peters Fly Shop, Rocky Mountain Fly Shop, A.K. Best, Brad Bischoff, Garretsons, Nick Kosmicki and our own chapter.

Thanks to these businesses and individuals. If you have an item that you would wish to donate to our raffle in May please bring it to the meeting.

On this note I would like to thank Jeff Stone for serving as our raffle chairman for the

past year; he also was our banquet chairman for our last banquet which was a huge success. Jeff has moved to Denver where he is the new manager at the Complete Angler. Best of luck to you Jeff!!!!

Forward cast

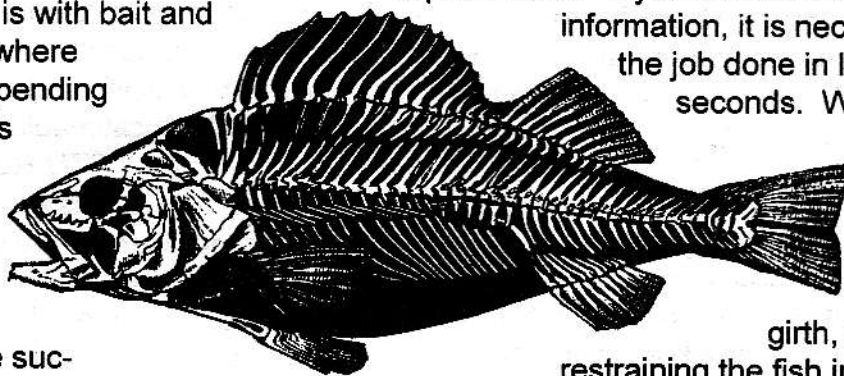
How can it be time for our May meeting already!!! My time does fly. On May 14th we will have the pleasure of welcoming Bob Zuellig to our gathering at the Holiday Inn. Bob will be presenting a program on fishing the high country and in particular Rocky Mountain National Park. Bob runs the guide program for the Estes Angler and has vast amounts of useful information for anyone thinking about a trip to the high country. Our guest flytier for the evening will be Dave Mohr. Please try to attend as this is the last general meeting until September!!

Presidents Beat

The last month has seen some very interesting developments from the state level of TU. As you might have read in the Denver and Ft. Collins newspapers, a joint effort between the Division of Wildlife and certain chapters of TU to stock clean catchables in certain waters was discussed at the CTU Rendevous in Glenwood Springs. The idea is for seed money from the chapters to be matched by the DOW and perhaps local business. Two of the chapters mentioned are in the Gunnison and Salida areas. Somewhere along the line the Estes Park area was also mentioned as a possible site for a trial run. Needless to say, this all came as a surprise to us in our chapter area. Our club did not have a presence at the rendesvous but the Estes chapter did and they are not sure where this rumor started. Miles Blumhart from the Coloradoan newspaper

called me to ask our feelings on this proposal so I first brought it up to our chapter board on the 14th of April. It was the consensus of those board members in attendance that as sketchy as the information was that we had in hand a response could be made. As was printed in the Coloradoan article we decided that our chapter was against spending money for the purchase of catchable trout; clean or not. We believe that putting catchables in our local lakes or streams was not in the best interest or in keeping with the mission statement of TU as we view it. Dr. Eric Pettine wrote an article for the Coloradoan on the 25th of April that sums up my feelings quite well. I have a copy of the article to read if you cant find the newspaper. This whole issue is quite sensitive and as such will be followed very closely by myself and the rest of the board. Please feel free to call me any time to discuss this or other items of interest. Thank you Tom

AIM FOR 100% FISH SURVIVAL (FFF ClubWire). As the long anticipated pleasure of a new season finally approaches, we need to remember that catch and release works only if the fish survive. And released fish only survive if anglers take certain precautions. Here is a summary of some fish mortality studies. While data differ slightly, fish caught with flies on barbless hooks have the best chance of survival (2.9% mortality). By contrast, the highest fish mortality is with bait and barbed hooks, somewhere between 35-50%, depending upon where the fish is hooked. Hooking in the mouth and jaw yield the lowest mortality rate, in all cases, which probably explains the success of flies (3.8%) over lures (4.9%). Of course if a fish is hooked more deeply, it also takes longer to remove the hook, and the fish needs to be handled more, which also increases mortality. Interestingly, a study in Idaho found that



fish caught in fast water tend to take flies and bait more deeply (more aggressively?) and thus have a higher mortality than fish caught in slow or still water. So.. fish slow water with flies and barbless hooks.

But there are other variables. Overall, fish mortality is likely to a problem (greater than 10%) if (1) the fish is kept out of water more than 15-20 seconds, (2) your hands are dry, (3) your net is nylon or other hard material that removes fish protective coating, (4) the fish is held by the gills or with any significant pressure on internal organs, or (5) the fish is "played" to exhaustion and not properly revived. These also variables add up. For example, one study reported that 37% of fish played to exhaustion died, even if they were kept out of water only 30 seconds. That mortality rate increased to a huge 72% after 60 seconds of exposure. Another factor, especially for trout, is water temperature. For fish caught in water exceeding 70 degrees, mortality increases substantially. Fish caught in water over 80 degrees have an almost 100% mortality.

A final issue in fish mortality is the recent popularity of making multiple measures of your fish (length, girth) and taking a picture, so as to estimate fish weight and/or to get a plastic replica made. If you want to obtain all of this information, it is necessary to get the job done in less than 30 seconds. With a lively fish (not exhausted), it is rather difficult to measure fish girth, without either restraining the fish improperly or without a second pair of hands. A related issue is to make sure the tape measure does not abrade the scales or skin. So we while hope that while you catch a lot of fish this season, please put them back in good shape for the rest of us.

FLY FISHING GEAR - NEED A NEW REEL FOR THOSE BIG FISH THIS SUMMER?

(FFF ClubWire). When most of us started fly fishing we were told that a fly reel is "just a place to store line." In those early days of our passion, we spent most of our fly fishing dollars on the best rod and line we could afford. The reel was an after thought. These choices worked well for small trout and bluegill.

But for those who step up to big fish, things can get a bit more complicated. For many it is big spring creek or tailwater trout that keep breaking us off, even after we got them on the reel. Why? When you go after bigger fish, be it tarpon in salt water, northern pike in warmwater, steelhead in big rivers or tailwater trout, your reel has to be more than just a line holder. The first problem we run into with an inexpensive reel is the quality of the drag system. Remember, drag is intended to slow down or tire a hard running or strong fish, while giving way very smoothly and just enough to protect the weakest point in

your terminal tackle, the tippet. For leader-shy fish in insect rich tailwaters, we face a well-conditioned five pound trout in fast current with a 7X tippet. Even with a 2X or 3X tippet for a steelhead, after nicks and scratches on logs and rocks, is likely to break when the pressure is on. So to minimize break-off, when the hooked fish really takes off, the optimal drag is smooth as silk, with minimal start-up resistance. But.. this kind of ideal drag tends to cost more money.

And there is more to a big fish reel. Another factor (to some maybe the most important) is reel weight. Everything else being equal, the lighter the reel (and the rod) the better. If you

are going to make long distance casts all day, a few ounces can make a difference. A heavy reel is just like wearing too-heavy hiking boots on a long trail. Now-a-days, with wonderful alloys, a large reel can weigh as light as a smaller reel of lower price and poorer engineering. Also, on a bigger rod a heavier reel is more acceptable. Here the goal is to have the reel weight balance the weight of the rod. This balance is because the weight of the rod is mostly forward of your hand, while the weight of the reel is behind. A longer (or heavier) rod (because of the lever-fulcrum effect) will offset a heavier reel. So if you hold the rod properly, the reel does not tip the rod back, or vice versa. The only sure way to determine rod-reel balance is to try them together and see how they feel.

A final factor is reel diameter. Diameter influences how much line your reel holds and how fast you can retrieve the line. With a deeper reel, you can carry more backing for

those far-running, hard fighting fish, certainly a consideration. However, a factor that is also worth considering is the size of the arbor (inner core of the spool). The size of the arbor determines how fast you can bring

in line. It takes about 400 turns of the average reel to bring in 100 yards of backing. With some of the new large arbor (or loop) reels, this is reduced by as much as 25%. With a big fish coming right at you, some feel this difference is significant. But, there is a trade-off here as well; faster retrieve reels carry less backing.

So if you buy a new reel for big fish this season, take a look at all the critical factors: Weight, drag, line capacity and line retrieval rate. The selection is very impressive and you will find that these high performance reels are more than a place to store your line.



Calendar of Events

General Meetings Wednesday, May 14
after Summer recess the next meeting
will be on September 10th

Board Meetings May 21 (Special day
this once)

General Meetings are always at the
University Park Holiday Inn at 6:30 PM
the second Wednesday of the month.

Board Meetings are held at the County
Cork at 7:30PM on the Monday follow-
ing the general meeting. The Board
meeting is open to all members.

If you have any suggestions for the next
newsletter please contact Ken Eis.

Rocky Mountain Flycasters Board of Directors.

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Planning: Needs Volunteer

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