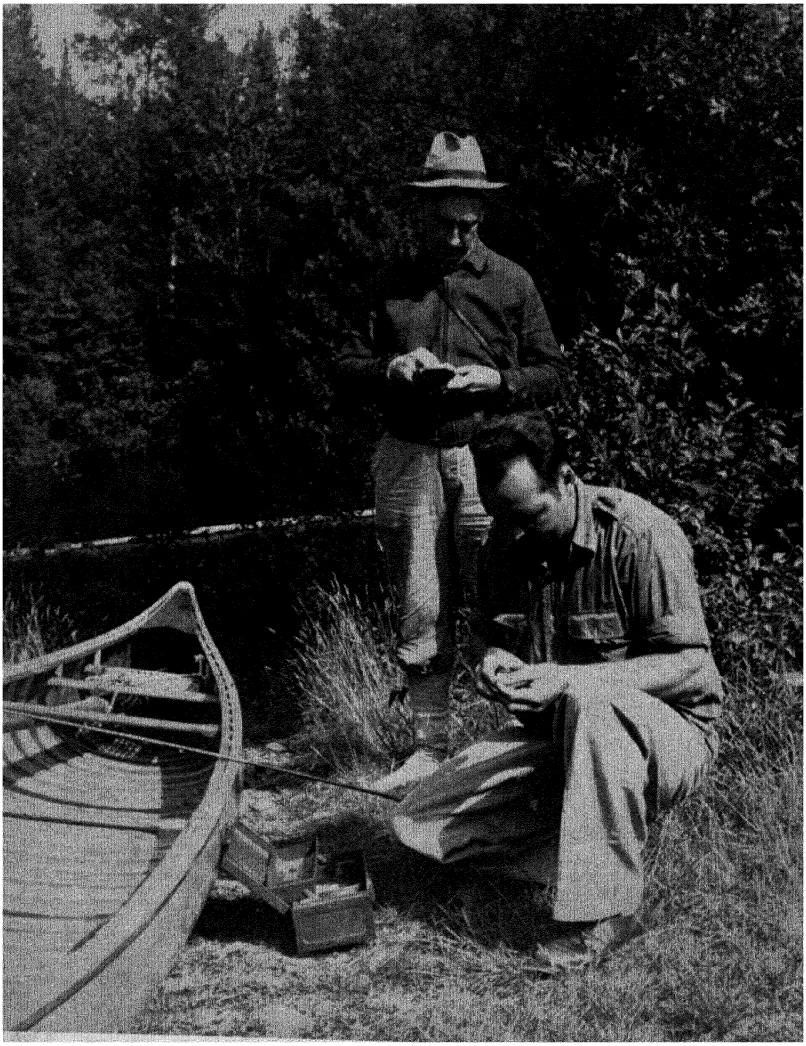
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Pond, Lake and Stream Fishing



The Author (standing), and his guide, holds a piscatorial conference on the banks of a northern river. Serious matters are being discussed, about what to use for those cunning gamesters that await their angling strategies.

Pond, Lake and Stream

FISHING

A BOOK OF GENERAL ADVICE

ON FRESH-WATER FISHING

By

BEN C. ROBINSON

Author of

MUSKELLUNGE FISHING



PHILADELPHIA

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Dedicated to

THE WONDERFUL NORTHERN EVENINGS WHEN WE FISHED IN THE BAY AT BOBY-DOSCHES; THE CABIN UNDER THE PINES, THE LAKE, THE SWAMP AND THE MOONLIGHT ON LAUGHING-WATERS—AND TO BEATRICE WHO KEPT THE LAMPS LIGHTED IN THE CABIN WINDOWS TO GUIDE ME HOME FROM MY LONG TRIPS INTO THE WOODS.

*

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FOREWORD

IN WRITING THIS book the predominating aim of the author has been to offer to the great army of American and Canadian sportsmen, who follow with interest the recreation and pastime of *fishing-for-sport,* a continuity of advice and information on the subject that will satisfy and cover their every need on the details of successful and enjoyable fresh-water sport-angling.

Of course it is impossible to deal with *every* intrinsic phase of the pastime that we have chosen for our piscatorial Decalog, and no one is more aware of that fact than the author himself. For in writing on this intriguing subject of fishing for sport and recreation there has come before the author and narrator, in almost every page of his manuscript, the impractical and impossible temptation to follow out in all its many alluring angles the hundred-and-one little and yet important details of the general subject of how and where and when and what to use in this delightful game of game-fish angling. To do these things, however, would be utterly out of the question, for there would not be a publisher in all creation who could possibly manage to set between covers such a book—although I am fisherman enough at heart and fanatical enough in my interests in the intriguing matter to secretly believe that a book of the proportions of the "*Good Book*" itself would not be out of order in recounting the various details and angles of our beloved and incomparable sport of fishing in the American and Canadian outdoors!

In this, however, as in all things else we must be practical, and we must acknowledge that for the sake of practicability a certain percentage of brevity must be given preference in the writing of our angling deductions and observations. But brevity is a thing that, in the author's own personal opinion, has been greatly overdone in the past in regards to much of our angling writings and offerings, and it is going to be used with open distrust in a great deal of this venture; for it is my own personal belief that the book which I am going to attempt to write for the information and advice of novice, as well as experienced fishing devotees this time will fill a more pleasing and successful role by not trying to include *too much* of this thing that we call *brevity.*

What the average student of scientific and successful modern angling and sport-fishing seems to want most of all right now is complete and detailed advice on the sport of fish, fishing and fishing tackle and equipment. This observation is not just presumptive on the part of the writer, but it has been arrived at by many years of practical and consistent fishing editorial work for some of the most nationally-known sporting magazines in the country, who cater to and are read and sponsored by the real fishermen and sportsmen of the land. In a final summary of my work for these periodicals, in the capacity of Fishing Editor—and there have been several of these, as many of my readers will no doubt recall when they read my by-line under the book's title—I find one outstanding and obvious fact, and that is that the large majority of those *thousands* who have written in to me for personal help and advice during these years of service as their *Angling adviser*—which, after all is as necessary I sometimes feel, as being their *Spiritual* adviser . . . for it is their spiritual self that we are prompting and inciting toward a clean and wholesome good when we teach and aid them in

their angling . . . have asked the one and same thing about fishing, and that was How to Fish, and What to Use for the Various Phases of Fishing, as a sportsman and a real disciple of good old Father Izaak Walton! They were interested in what tackle to use for the different phases of proper and most-enjoyable sport angling for sport fishes, such as trout, bass, pike, pan-fishes and perch, and their inquiries proved conclusively that there must be a crying need for some special and generally directed work that will outline for them the true and modern principles of how to fish, what to use for fishing in the way of tackle and lures and baits, and, *above all other things,* enough good, sound human atmosphere and personal intimacy in the matter to make the reader feel that he is being spoken to by a brother of the arching-rod and the singing-reel rather than some *automaton* that was glibly tripping off a phonographic record of items to use, cryptic lists and charts and all that sort of "rot" —as the writer believes such close-trimmed, boiled-down and impersonal frame-works to be! Therefore, if the following chapters might seem extraordinarily long and detailed, please believe me when I say, in defense of my theories, that I have long felt that it was such a human and personal approach that the fishermen and sportsmen of the country rated in the matter of a book on fresh-water fishing information and advice!

It is the intention of this book also to deal with the fishes that are most commonly angled for and most commonly found in our American and Canadian fishing waters. This applies to ponds, lakes and streams of the interior sections of the country, better known, perhaps, as our Fresh-Waters. If we can deal with these in all their many angles and *piscatorial* phases I feel that we will have done a good job of it and that we will have given to the fishing-public a book that

will be of practical service and use in fishing with live-bait, artificial flies and artificial plugs, spoons and spinners in lake, stream, pond and backwater for the gamesters that we here in America know most about.

In other words it is the hope of myself and my publishers to offer the angling and fishing students something that will be of use and help to them on their future fishing jaunts and that will, as well, help to entertain and incite them toward better fishing and more catching of fish *on the trips of Tomorrow!*

The Author

BOOK I

Generalities for Angling

Chapter 1

LAKE DWELLERS

ALL LAKES DO not contain the same varieties of fish, especially the game kinds, and it is a good idea for the angler to understand the preferences that the various game fish have for certain characteristic waters and water-surroundings, etc. There are some types of lakes that boast not just one or two species of fish in their depths, but that have as many as half a dozen different varieties lurking and feeding in their respective sections. But such lakes are characterized by a varied assortment of shore-lines, bottoms and weed and moss growths. A lake of this kind is always in high demand by the fishermen, and will usually be found to be well patronized by anglers and perhaps a good assortment of resorts and boat landings.

The ideal small-mouth bass lake is one that has a varying depth of water, running from sandy or gravelly bottomed stretches of shore lines and points out to channels of ten, fifteen and twenty feet depth, with small islands dotting its surface and rocky bars and shoals cutting at angles across and into these deeper channels. A good current in a lake also marks it as a favored spot for the small-mouth bass. The small-mouth is partial to rocky bottoms and also to lakes that have long, sloping shallows with bright,

clean sand or rubble that gradually falls off into narrow current channels. A good growth of reeds in these sandy shallow waters makes it all the better. Also there should be beds of underwater vegetation in the channels or closely bordering them that can be seen by a careful inspection from a drifting or slowly propelled boat in clear, calm weather. Lakes of this order should be watched for and when found should be fished with great care, for they will almost surely produce good small-mouth bass. Rocky, low shores and points that slope off into deep blue or green depths with windfalls slanting out from the thicketed or wooded shores are also good small-mouth bass waters.

Muskellunge and wall-eyed pike (called pickerel in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba, Canada) will also be found in lakes that have the character of that mentioned above. The wall-eyed pike is a great lover of sandy and gravelly bottoms and will be found there at the same feeding hours as the bass (perhaps an hour or so later in the evening and an hour or so earlier in the morning) drifting about and feeding from minnow and crayfish schools. The wall-eye will also be found in the midday hours in the weed beds that border these channel waters of such lakes. The muskie, however, will be found mostly in the weedy beds or at the edge of the rushes and near the deeper channels, also working up over the submerged rocky bars of such a lake.

The big-mouth bass does not favor the sandy, gravelly or rocky paved lakes so well. It does not haunt the golden shadows of the riffles and curling eddy places so favorably, but rather prefers a lake or stream that has low, sedgy or marshy shores that slopes to deep bays and where the waters dream over muck and mud bottoms or sand and

muck mixed. Here you will find there are giant specimens of lily pads and splatter-dock growing up from the rich underwater areas, and also grass and moss that can be seen some few feet or inches under the surface. Such places are chosen by the big-mouth bass in preference to the more stoney spots in the lake. They will also haunt those places where windfall logs slant out from shore into four and five foot depths of water and where there are small clusters of pads and grass. Small lakes lying back in the depths of the northern swamps, surrounded with alder and birch and spruce and with sedgy shores dropping off sharply into dark water should bring big-mouth bass, and sometimes wall-eyed pike are found in such lakes. Muskies also like to haunt many of the places that appeal to the big-mouth bass.

It oftentimes happens, especially in Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota and in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec that large lakes will have both the characteristics mentioned above. Such lakes can be depended on to offer a large variety of fishes for the bait caster and the fly fisherman. Also we will find many of the bays along the northern shores of the Great Lakes offering a combination of fishing shelters and haunts. Bluegills, yellow perch and rock bass will school in these lakes with a variety of shore and bottom characteristics, but as a rule the yellow perch will be found where there is bottom covert such as submerged weed beds and along the deeper sections of the bays out from the windfalls. The rock bass also like to shelter in the lily pad areas and along the windfalls where there are splashes of pads, reeds or grass and the bluegills in channels and passes among the surface coverts.

The best locations for muskellunge are those lakes that are grassy and that have rocky shores and lily paved bays,

also in the more sluggish lakes where there are heavy growths of aquatic grass partially closing the long bays and spreading out from the thickety shorelines.

Lake trout are found in an altogether different kind of lake from muskie and pike and bass as a rule. They prefer the rocky shored lakes, with high cliff-walled islands that look down from the rougher sections of the country. Lakes that shelve off sharply or that fall away sheer to great depths and with gravel and rock bottoms are ideal for the lake-trout. If there is a good forest growth around them so much the better. These types of lakes are also preferred by the large square-tailed trout, who are nothing more than speckled or brook trout that have run into deep, heavy waters from wilderness creeks, rivers and brooks. Loch-leven or lake-locked German brown trout also grow to immense sizes in such waters. These types of lakes are not so popular with our warmer-water lake fishes, such as the bass, pike, muskellunge, pickerel and pan fishes, although in the case of the Great Lakes we find a widespread variety of game fish in their waters, ranging from large square-tail brook trout (that are lake run) to the real lake trout and also some of the finest small-mouth bass, pike, pickerel or wall-eyed pike and muskie fishing, as well as pan fishing of any waters. In Lake Erie we find muskie, small and large mouth bass, Great Northern pike, wall-eyed pike and almost every variety of pan-fish from yellow-perch to rock-bass. In Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, as well as Superior we find some of the finest lake trout fishing in the country, as well as the varieties of gamesters we have mentioned above, and in Superior some of the finest "Coaster" (or lake run speckled and brown trouts) fishing imaginable.

The Great Northern pike is perhaps the most dominant

of all our inland gamesters in the northern lakes. This fish shows extreme partiality toward inland lakes and grows to immense size in the more shallow lakes of Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta and the Northwest Territory sections. In Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and through parts of the eastern border states it is paramount as a lake dweller. Mud bottoms and gravel or rock bottomed lakes, with shallow bays and shoals where there are immense pad islands and grassy shores are their favorite lurking places.

Catfish, dogfish, suckers, sheepshead, whitefish, and white bass are also found in almost all the inland lakes in varying numbers. The popular opinion among many anglers is that the catfish is a species of food fish confined primarily to the rivers of the mid-sections of the country, but this is not necessarily the case. We find them in a large percentage of our Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, Minnesota and Ontario and Quebec lakes. The Great Lakes, especially Lake St. Clair (one of the smaller of the chain) holds fine catfish grounds. Sturgeon also are found in good numbers in the majority of the northern lakes, especially the larger ones. Lake St. Clair and Huron are noted for these fish.

Chapter 2

POND FISH

THE BULLHEAD OR bullpout is perhaps the best known of all the pond denizens, and there is scarcely an inland lake in the United States that does not have at least a fair supply of these fish. However, these fish are extremely partial to the smaller bodies of water or meadow and woods ponds where mud bottoms and shallow bays are to be found with pads and grass borders rimming them. Such ponds are veritable bonazas for the bullpout fisherman in the warm summer weeks.

Next in order after the bullpout would come the bluegill and the sunfish as a disciple of the warmish waters of the ponds. They are found by the thousands in ponds scattered all the way from the northern New York state and Michigan and Wisconsin borders down to the Gulf coast, where they are known as bream mostly.

Crappie (the black and silvery varieties) are also pond lovers and some of the finest fishing to be had with fly and rod and light tackle is for these gamey fellows in small meadow and woods ponds.

But it is not only the yellow perch, the crappie, bluegill, rock-bass, bullpout and sunfish that is found in many of our ponds. Some truly delightful big-mouth bass fishing is to

be had in many of these isolated little puddles that we see dreaming under a glistening green and white panoply of pads and reeds out in a farmer's field. Many of these ponds are artificially stocked. Others are stocked through overflow of rivers and fishing lakes. Never look with too much disdain on a flashing little pond of blue-green water riffling under a summery sky. Take your casting rod or your fly rod and try it out first—you might get the pleasant surprise of your life there.

In the eastern and Atlantic coast states one of the most common of the gamesters found in ponds is the Banded Pickerel. This glistening little savage has an inextinguishable fondness for mud and sand bottomed ponds where the lily pad and the pickerel weed flourishes rankest. Some of the most enjoyable fishing days I have ever spent has been on such ponds with a light fly rod and a small spinning bait casting to the edge of the pads and amongst the open water pockets for these slender, savage fishes.

It has also been the author's fortune to hook and land many a fine small-mouth bass and even fairly large muskies out of ponds in the middle western sections, not to mention wall-eyed pike and the inevitable Oswego bass (large mouth) which flourishes in such waters beyond all comparison.

So, please don't look with too much lightness on these small dots of water and weeds when passing along the ribbon like highways on your way to larger and more pretentious waters for your fishing. It is a good idea to be always on the look out for these promising little gems set away in the midst of a swamp or partially hidden perhaps by a growth of cattails in some low bottom pasture lands. Many a wonderful piscatorial prize has been chanced upon by a cagey angler in such places.

Chapter 3

CREEKS

IT IS THE cunning old veteran angler who tells you that a mere winding ribbon of sluggish creek water, half hidden under a leafy mass of kenekenick or birch or willow saplings sometimes has proven to be a veritable Golconda for his artfully cast plug, fly or minnow-baited hook.

I remember hearing a famous old muskellunge fisherman telling once of a remarkable catch of muskies that he chanced upon one autumn season in a small middle-western creek. He was one of those fellows who believed in never overlooking a fishing bet, and in his travels around a river drainage he found a small creek that emptied into the larger stream. There was a farmer's pasture some several miles up this little stream where there was a series of deep pools, half hidden under willow and stately maples. He happened to be talking with the owner of the field and during their conversation the farmer recounted having seen some phenomenally large fish in the pellucid depths of these pools. My friend guessed what they were and asked permission of the owner to set up a camp in the shady borders of the maples. In a week's time he had taken from that small and sluggish creek almost a dozen nice muskies, the largest weighing twenty-five pounds. Thenceforth the creek

was famous. But no such catches were ever recorded from it again. These fish had run up stream from the parent river and found it to their liking. In the cool, placid spring fed place they had found plenty of shiner and chub minnows—and so they had propagated and grown strong and flavorous there. He caught them on artificial minnows and spoon hooks, wading quietly down the riffling stretches over the gleaming sand and cunningly casting his strange lures into the eddying pools at the edge of the leaning brush.

Something of the same order happened to the author one summer in a pastoral setting of equally odd character for big fish. I was camped along a small creek of perhaps half a dozen yards width. I had intended to fish it primarily for rock bass and sunfish and bullheads. One day, however, for want of nothing better to do I decided to catch myself a small bucket of fresh run chubs from a spring run that entered the creek below camp, and try it out for larger fry. Rigging up a nine foot split bamboo fly rod, with enameled line and a long gut leader and No. 2 size hook I donned a pair of faded old wading trousers and attaching my minnow bucket to the belt with a length of fish line I started testing the creek. It was shoulder deep in places. Mostly it was about waist deep. Baiting with a lively four inch chub I started working down stream, casting ahead and permitting my minnow to swim along near the surface until it approached a shady retreat under the willow brush or about an old streamside stump or boulder. Then I noted that in many cases the minnow would start acting panicky and would swim vigorously away from these eddy spots. In such cases I would lift the minnow and recast it directly into these propitious spots, and invariably there would come a peculiar tenseness to the line. The minnow would

disappear and the line would swing widely around the pool for a few moments then dart away under the brush or back of the obstructions. A quick, sharp strike with the rod and I would find myself with a small-mouth bass hooked. The rushing, splashing play of the bass on my light and bending rod gave me more than the ordinary fishing thrill, and at the end of the afternoon's casting I found myself with a half dozen of the best bass I had taken that season from the bigger waters I had been fishing. This almost accidental discovery netted me dozens of the prettiest small-mouth I have taken out of any waters in the following days I camped in the valley—all taken in identically the same manner and with small lively minnows fished with a long, light rod and a loose, unweighted line. I have taken many a nice bass since then in other creeks the same way.

In these small creeks are to be found isolated pools where there are undercut banks, roots shading the eddies and old sweeper logs and trees where heavy drifts have formed partially blocking the eddies and the current. In such places a veritable bonanza can be discovered by the cunning sportsman, for rock-bass (the big red-eye sort), small-mouth and bullheads and channel cats and an occasional wall-eyed pike are almost sure to be found. This is the ideal place for small minnows and nightcrawlers to be used for bait. Old abandoned mill ponds are also found along many of these little creek valleys and where smaller brooks flow in—all excellent fishing places for bass, bullpouts, sunfish, rock-bass, pickerel and in the more mountainous regions brook trout, German brown trout, rainbows and fall-fish and chubs.

Chapter 4

THE WHIMPERING BROOK

WHERE THE *"Fountainhead"* of the real stream begins, is what we call the brooks. These are small, to be sure, but the wonderful fish that sometimes come from them! I must recount the story of a little mountain brook that I fished one spring for trout. We had driven into a mountain section of the eastern trout regions and it was strange country to us. The first night's camp was made on a State Forest Reserve and in the darkness of the cold April night we had little choice to make much of a camp. We managed to get our tent up and the cots placed, but the rough ground made these conveniences such only in name. The blankets slid off us and the cold night air crept in and chilled us to the bone. The grey light of early morning caused us to creep out into the tingling birch thicket where a frosty crust of the barely departing winter lay over dead grass and witch-hazel twigs. As my partner and I stood there looking about there was a rushing retreat from the scrubby old apple orchard that surrounded the thickety spot and a noble buck deer with two female companions burst through the coverts and bouncing across the narrow roadway they bounded up the hillside to the shelter of a pine thicket. There the buck paused and wheeling he

faced us with head thrown back and eyes flashing a savage defiance. I can hear his sharp whistle even now, as he struck the frozen ground hard with his polished hoofs challengingly. It was worth the horrid night's rest just to see that little group huddled there on the frosty slope with the dark pines beyond them.

As the sun arose over the leafless maples and birch of the mountain's lap we cooked a simple breakfast and boiled some coffee with water like ice that I had brought from a tumbling, swirling little river at the base of the orchard slope. Then we went scouting back along the mountain road looking for a better and more agreeable camp site. We found a narrow cove, shut in with young white pines that wound back under the lee of a steep mountain high-road and a small, rushing brook came dancing down through the witchhazel and pines.

There was an old deer hunter's camp site there under some immense pine trees and the brook opened out over a rocky glen forming a nice little pool that was sweet and icy cold. Here we set up a nice camp. The sun came out and warmed the woods until they were very pleasant and that evening we inspected the brook. It ran upward through a wide, wooded and rocky mountain cove. In places it was only a mere thread of dancing water. At other places it was a limpid series of pools that rested languidly under great mossy boulders and roots and the sun angled down upon it through the budding forest trees. We looked it over carefully and the following morning I suggested we try fishing it with small stream-flies. It was a dull and misty morning, but the weather had turned soft. My companion had a rod that was too long and heavy for such fishing and he was in trouble with the brushy thickets that grew wherever there was a bit of marshy shoreline. The

black mud of recently thawed snow and ice spread out and shallow, long pools gleamed under dark stemmed alders. My rod, however, was of the light stream type, only seven-and-a-half feet long and light in weight and action. I could creep up back of a rock or a jelly-like tussock of the little swales along the brook and flick my light No. 14 and 16 flies out on the small pools. I have never had prettier fishing than I had on that steep mountain brook. It began to rain in earnest about eleven o'clock and I had to agree with my discouraged companion that we should quit fishing and go back to our dry, warm camp. My basket was filled with native brook trout, not a fish in the creel over ten inches in length and most of them around seven and eight inches long. But they were beautiful little trout. Dark and vivid and packed with rushing, darting power that made that morning's fishing stand out like a star in the blue sky of my angling memories. We fished the larger streams and rivers thereafter for a week, and the weather turned dry and hot. The morning we were to break camp and leave I made a farewell trip back up the brook. It was a mere thread of water then, with great lush leaved, yellow flowered buttercups growing in the moist dark loam along the alder sprouts. It was a changed brook. The ice had all melted out of the mountain cove and the snow water was gone down to the river in the valley. There wasn't a trout anyplace that I could find. It was a brook of memories—sweet ones, however.

These little brooks that find their sources in the spring woods coves and that flow through narrow, wooded valleys and pastures are good fishing early in the spring, for then there is plenty of water in them and the trout and chubs are there. But as the weather grows warmer and the frost and ice has all run off and whimpered down the

rocky riffles and through the mossy spouts to the greater streams the fish leave them for bigger and more commodious pools. If you can catch these brooks at just the right time, in early spring, when the weather is sunny and there's a south or west wind you will perhaps get some nice fish from them even on a small wet fly. I have even caught trout out of their small, rocky pools with a small, dainty dry or floating fly, cast carefully from concealment with a light rod.

Chapter 5

LITTLE RIVERS

THERE IS SOMETHING to a small mountain river or one that goes stealing darkly and secretively through an alder wilderness and beside great old white canoe birch that somehow makes the fisherman feel that he is in the presence of a divine and gloriously perfumed creature. I have never been able to convince myself that there was not real life and soul to a Little River. They are always so living, so tremulous. Even the buds on the trees around them seem to be trying to whisper warnings to them when one steals through the slender brown birch saplings or pushes a way through the awakening witchhopple clumps. I have fished them for a hundred miles I honestly believe in my time and I have never ceased to wonder at them and to feel that I am committing a sacrilege when I step into their clear, bubbling pools where they slip down out of the rocky notches or where they come delicately whisking from beneath an old lumber bridge of poles with a single tall, feathery pine basking itself aristocratically in the spring or summer sunshine.

There must be a special reason for small rivers to run out of solitary valleys the way they do.

I am sure that a single fish taken from such streams

means more to the real angler than a boatload taken from some more blantant old curmudgeon that rushes brawling down over a falls and into a great high-walled maelstrom where the sound of its mutilated self is like the shrieking of a crowd of demons. At least I feel that way about it and when I fish in these little rivers, regardless of whether it is in the eastern mountain sections where there are trout or in an Ontario muskeg valley amid the old, tall pines, I always feel like the poet Henry Van Dyke, when he said of his "Swiftwater" brook:

"No lily-field of Bermuda could give a fragrance half so magical as the fairy-like odour of these woodland slopes, soft carpeted with the green of glossy vines above whose tiny leaves, in delicate profusion,

"*'The slight Linnaea hangs its twin-born heads.'*"

These are the waters where you find the prettiest of all the speckled trouts. I have taken them from such rivers, both by worm and by fly, that I would not have traded for all of Sheba's treasure. For the waters of these Little Rivers are almost always cold and speckled trout thrive in them. Try and find *your* Little River where it comes down a valley that not many others frequent, where there are old orchards and unpainted houses or a cabin that has fallen partially apart and where the pastures are shrunken with newly born alder and wildcherry and aspen. Where there are dark streamers of spruce at evening time and where the sun goes down heavy with a weary loneliness. Once you find such a valley you are going to find fish there and I would advise you to fish it slowly and carefully with worms in the spring and then as summer steals in and the straggly apple trees in its abandoned orchards come into bloom switch to wet flies. Later on, in July, float your

flies and use them fairly large, with a good strength of leader. In the fall don't bother it with your lures, and if you go there, go when the leaves are just coloring preparatory to falling, and you will get some wonderful fishing stories from it, for the trout will then be coming down again from the "heads" or toward the "fountainheads" where they have been to spawn and on moonlight nights and in the dusky autumn twilights, if you are lucky, you will hear them splashing and piling as they rush downward in the current through the rocks and rubble and into the pools and so on down to the Big River.

Chapter 6

AND THE RIVER

THE LARGER RIVERS are the summer streams, for it is these that hold the upcoming bass—the small-mouth—that are working upstream from even bigger waters and that is where the big trout are then sulking under the heavy rips. The Jack Salmon—the wall-eyed pike—the pickerel (as they call it in various parts of the fishing range) are then in the rivers, where they like to come out at evening time over the bars or to lie in the channels and at the edge of the shady river weeds and wait for food to pass along.

The large rivers should be fished in July and in August. Sometimes, in a season that is early, as they sometimes happen, June is just as good. Fly rods and light silk enamel lines and large flies and long leaders are the pets of these streams. I even find that July brings the red-eyed small-mouth bass close to the surface waters that dimple and play hide-and-seek along the grey sides of the river logs and drifts and then is the time to use the fairy-like "floaters" in your fly box. A White-Miller is what they love then, used with a 9 foot tapered Spanish silk-worm gut leader and a rod that is 9 feet long and properly balanced for dry fly casting. Creep through the river weeds and stalk them as you would a deer at the salt-lick, then flip the cast over

the upward end of the logs and let the fly float down its length and do the same where there are rocks sticking out of the water in the eddies and even in deep currents. The big trout are under the lips of the shelving rocks, in the strong eddies, for it is yet a few weeks too early for them to start their way up the other smaller waters toward the fountainheads and their amorous pools. It is beautiful weather to camp and the rapids and falls are like the murmur of the wind in the pines. This is the time and the place to use the canoe for your fishing. The weeds are springing from the bars. The water is like soft silk. There is foam floating.

For the bait caster this is summer supreme the wall-eyed pike are hungry for the sweetly aerated water that curls down over the rapids and that showers in cool spray from the broken ledges of the old channels. Chutes and old logging works offer excellent opportunities for the caster to reach the very spots where the pickerel or wall-eyed pike are lying at the edge of the outcurving rocks under about three or four feet of surface water. Pick out the rapids and the falls and the lips of the shore formations and cast your artificial minnows and spoons and spinners about these spots. That is wall-eyed pike and pickerel weather and water!

The G. Northern pike are edging into the lakes and you won't find so many except where the rivers broaden out into the lakes.

As for the muskies, they are unpoetic old rascals I fear, for they are not so partial to the river now, and what there are remaining seem to feel it their duty to leave the fisherman's troll or cast—even his live minnow baited hook—alone except when urgency itself causes them to feed on something. They are lazy in the rivers now. Go to the

lakes for them if you can, around the first of the month of July and until the later part of August. Crayfish are magnificent baits at this time I mention in the river. Soft-shell crayfish. Do not pin too much faith to a live minnow in July in the river, for they do not crave them. They want crayfish. They will come far for hellgramites also, the small-mouth bass and he likes them in the eddies just removed from the river weeds and the rollicking rocks at the foot of riffles. They sometimes get you a nice string of bass. Soft-shell crayfish should be used with a fly rod, no sinker, and a large hook. Fish in the eddies and eddy pools. The river is a temperamental friend of the fisherman. In July it is softest and most friendly of all times, except in October perhaps when there is dust and sun to haze it.

Chapter 7

THE BIG RIVER

NOW WE ARE going far, far away from the little ponds and the fountainheads and the creeks—even beyond the allure of the Little Rivers, and we are getting in wide water—deep waters. But there is a time and a season for everything, and the Big River has its season as the sun grows dusty-red, that is the later part of August. Then it begins to say things to the angler. It talks softly, even if it is a big element in the world of big things. August, September—October! They are Big River Days.

The muskies in it start rising around the middle or the 14th of August. I know that it is the right time then. The bass at the foot of the falls and dams rise to the fly then—the dry fly and the cork-bodied bass bugs. The wall-eyed pike like it from then on and the big buffalos (River or Fresh Water Drums) start taking the bait then. The channel cats and the big blue cats and the shovelheads are taken on trot-lines with live minnows in August and September.

The carp that swarm in these Big Rivers, wallowing like hogs in the grey mud of the sand bars, are furious when you cast them a hook baited with fresh sweet corn (Golden Bantam, best), or a skinned crayfish tail. Night fishing is

tops at this time, for bass, for wall-eyed pike and channel cats and carp and buffalo and drums.

The wall-eyed pike like a weighted tandem spinner with red, white-and-black flecked feathers on the hook. The bass will rise to the Royal Coachman, the Reuben Wood and the streamer pattern of wet flies used alone or with a spoon or spinner. The game fish are not lurking very deep in August in the big rivers, but are taken where the water is well aerated, at the foot of dams and falls and rapids where they school at the side of rocks and logs that are submerged. In September they will rise even better near the surface and in the eddies. In October they are also in the mood, but they now like the semi-surface plugs and artificial minnows and spoon hooks and pork rind baits go over big with them. In November they start tapering off some, but the muskie are still lively and the wall-eyed pike will take live baits (large minnows) and artificial trolls and casting plugs until the ice forms.

Chapter 8

CHANNEL AND THOROUGHFARE

CHANNELS THAT CONNECT chains of lakes are usually called "thoroughfares" in the north-woods sections and many of these channels are ideally suited for good hook and line fishing with small minnows or with worms and frogs for perch, crappie, bluegills, sunfish and catfish. Small and large mouth bass also lurk under the snags and about the old piling that one usually finds in their deep waters. Great Northern pike are famously fond of such waters. I recall one such channel that is located in the French River sections of Ontario, where three of us were casting for muskie, bass and pike one August morning. There had been logs driven through it many years before, and many of these sawlogs had upended in the drive and become wedged in the muck of the channel's bottom. One such big pine log slanted out in the center of the thoroughfare and about it had collected a small cluster of pads and red-stem lilies. One of our party cast a Golden Shiner wooden wobbler type of artificial minnow in to that cluster and out from the shadow of the leaning log there darted a long green colored shadowy form. It struck the wiggling plug and there was a ferocious battle staged there in the deep waters. When it was over my friend had a 25 lb. Great Northern

pike for his day's fishing. The minnow was a deep working one and as it dove down toward the shadowy depths the big pike saw it from his place under the leaning log. Thoroughfares are usually fairly narrow and pretty deep and they offer good fishing for the fly caster, the bait caster, the trolling angler and the live bait caster and still-fisherman. If there is a thoroughfare connecting two good fishing lakes about the fishing camp it is a good plan to fish it when the lakes happen to be rough and unfishable due to winds and storm. Many a good catch of fish will result. The pan fisherman, after perch, bluegills, crappie and bullpouts can depend on finding small gamesters there most any time when the weather is at all good.

Chapter 9

WATER LEVELS AND CONDITIONS

A VERY IMPORTANT FEATURE of successful fishing is that of water heights and conditions. Muddy streams are one of the handicaps that the river, creek and brook fisherman always has to consider. As a general thing high and roily streams are not conducive of good catches of game fish. On the other hand, however, the live or dead bait fisherman trying for such fish as channel and mud catfish sometimes find that a rising stream is to their credit. If the catfish angler can catch a river or creek just when it is starting to make its rise and when the water is turning discolored and swelling in stage from a recent heavy rain the chances are that he will find it at its very best for fishing with live minnows, worms, liver and doughballs bait. The veteran catfisherman always tries to get on the stream at such times. A falling stream-stage, on the other hand is not so good for success in fishing, no matter what bait is used. This also applies to carp and sucker and buffalo-sucker fishing.

Low water levels in a river are usually good for muskie, wall-eyed pike and small-mouth bass casting with artificial lures and also for fishing with worms and minnows. Muskie like to rise to lures in a low-water stream when it is clear

and on a "stand" just immediately before there is a heavy or raising rain developing. That is the best time of all for game fishing with artificial lures for these fish. The same thing applies to a lake. Try and catch the pools when they are on the stand, that is when they are prepared to rise in water stage from a heavy and continued series of rains. But as a rule these same pools are at their lowest ebb for good fishing when there is a thunder storm starting or a very heavy summer rain.

I have caught some fine strings of wall-eyed pike and muskie when it was starting to rain and even during a rain, providing it is not a dashing and violent storm. A warm shower is very promising for the fisherman to angle through for all game fish. It breaks the calmness of the surface and causes the fish to rise to a higher level so that your lures are more evident to them.

In trout fishing if the fisherman can catch a river or brook a few hours before there is to be a heavy rain, and when the water is flattened out and on a stand-still he stands every chance of meeting with phenomenal success. Even a shower falling over a good trout pool brings rousing success as a rule. Muddy water on a trout river and a swift rise or a steady rising of the stream kills the chances for a fly fisherman meeting with much success. However, bait fishing in a rising and muddied stream for trout sometimes meets with excellent results to the angler.

A long and continued dry spell with the water level of a lake, pond or stream on the stand, usually offers very disappointing results, regardless of what bait or lure is offered the fish. Try and find the water when it is low, but with a promise of a rise for best results.

A falling stream or a receding lake stage is not to be advised for phenomenal results to the angler, in any sort of

game fish angling. High water in the spring is much more likely to bring the fisherman good catches than in the autumn season. Summer rises of lake or stream should be fished with the fingers crossed also except for the catfish angler. But the instant that the water recedes to its usual stage and clears from its milky or muddy stage fishing can be resumed with fair hopes of success. In streams, especially in the more settled districts where soil erosion is a characteristic or where there are new roads being graded or railroad levels being constructed high waters invariably are accompanied by roily and discolored currents, and this means poor conditions for any game fish angling. In backwoods fishing where there are heavily wooded areas surrounding the watercourses (both tributary and main channels) and where there are wide areas of swale, swamp and thicket a heavy rainfall does not disturb the coloring of the water as a rule. But the stream stage will swell and fill the channels and cover the location of the pools so that fishing is not so practical even to the native angler. However, settled sections are more seriously affected with rainfall, and for this reason plans and programs for a fishing trip are always fraught with more or less uncertainty. It is a good plan for the stranger intending to stage a fishing trip in an unfamiliar region to make some arrangement with a guide or resident to inform him by mail, telephone or telegraph of the current conditions of a river or creek or brook before leaving home for the vacation. It saves many a disappointing and boresome period of idleness for the angler I have found.

Lake fishing because of its more dependable character, and through the fact that even a continued wet-weather spell does not as a rule have much effect on the water levels is much more popular with those who travel far and expect to spend specified periods in angling. For those who have a

specified time and length of time to spend on a fishing vacation the lake fish and lake fishing is to be advised in preference to river or creek fishing. The element of uncertainty about high and roily waters makes stream fishing more adaptable for those that have a day or a few hours each day to spend in their angling within easy driving distance of their homes or for the fisherman-sportsman who has abundance of time and means to devote to his pastime. In other words, the summer "two-weeker," with a scheduled leave of absence on his calendar had better figure on taking his fishing trip to the lakelands rather than to a section where there is only stream fishing at his command.

Chapter 10

WEATHER SUITED FOR GOOD FISHING

It is, of course, impossible for any sportsman to accurately choose his fishing weather. Even the most independent of us have to make concessions to the weather, but for the best game fish angling it is preferable to choose those periods when there is a warm wind fanning the fishing sections and when there is a clear, but hazy sky smiling down on the pools. Such weather is ideal for small-mouth bass fishing and for trout fly casting. Muskies prefer warm, hazy days and dusted sunsets. Wall-eyed pike, lake trout and Great Northern pike also seem to feel more content to laze under the pad leaves and to lurk at the shadowy edges of the grassy borders or just within the cool boundaries of a jutting underwater rock on such days. Windy days when the water is exceptionally rough will bring some results, but the fish it is noticeable at such times have a tendency to be moving about widely and there is not the concentration of the members of any finny school that you find on a hazed, south-wind morning or afternoon. A low curtain of heat haze smudging the pines and the willows is almost always a good sign for action with live-bait, fly or plug. At such times a surface wobbler or plug cast into the immediate neighborhood of a lily cove or at the edge of a windfall or

drift log can be counted on to get results. A slight riffle on the water is also a good fishing condition I have found, better, in fact, than a glassy calm. For pan fish warm and heat hazed days are very preferable. Sunsets with the red globe of the departing day softly sinking into pellucid evening hazes can be counted on to bring rises from trout, bass, pike and muskies. An overcast morning with a soft wind out of the west or south is very prone to bring finny reprisals to the angler who gets to the pool just as day is breaking. On such days the forenoon fishing is pretty sure to be good.

Chapter 11

DIRECTIONS AND TEMPER OF THE WIND

THE WIND IS popularly supposed to have a good deal to do with the success of fishing trips, but there are reasons to sometimes question the fallacy of such matters. The east wind is supposed to hold a potent threat to the rise of the game fish, but, to the adverse of such a statement I can point to one catch of small-mouth bass, in particular, that came to my rod when a cold, chilly autumn wind was blowing directly out of the east. In this case I had undertaken to bring back a tasty mess of game fish for my wife who had just returned from a sojourn to a nearby hospital. The day was bright with a deep, high autumn sky partially filled with great masses of hard, bright clouds. On the stretch of river where I was intending to do my fishing the water riffled and flashed under the sharp force of an east wind. The water was clear, however, and the pools where I was doing my angling were rimmed with rounded shore boulders and coloring water weeds. I was using a bait casting outfit and artificial wooden minnows. That evening when I returned from my afternoon's casting I had five beautifully matched small-mouth bass properly gutted, bled and gilled nestled down in a moist bed of spearmint and moss in the

big willow creel that I had carried. It was one of the prettiest half-day's bass fishing I have ever done. And that was under a typical east wind condition. However, on other occasions I have fished hard and consistently for days at a time with the wind riffling the surface of the lake and stream out of the east with no successes worthy of mention attending my efforts. Then, again I have taken trout, pike, muskie, pickerel and pan-fish when there was a similar wind fanning the pools.

But one thing that I do definitely feel regarding the east wind is that when this condition holds on a fishing pond, lake or stream the game fish in such waters most invariably sink down to lower and more sheltered levels, and for this reason it is advisable to practice the art of casting, still-fishing or trolling with a deeper lure or bait than when the wind is more compromising. The east wind appears to chill the water surfaces more than when coming from the other directions of the compass. Also it seems to be a stronger and more penetrating wind, especially in the sections that lie more closely adjacent to the eastern sea-coast, and it is my honest opinion that this is the really underlying cause for fishing being adversely affected by the condition. Fishing is never so good for game fish when the wind is sharp and penetrating and strongly loaded with moisture I have observed. Easterly winds almost always originate, in the Great Vacation Fishing sections, from storms that are sweeping in from the Atlantic Ocean, and this I presume explains why the fish drop to more sheltered and deeper levels at such times.

The winds, on the other hand, that sweep over the eastern and middle-western sections of our American and Canadian fishing ranges from the south, southwest and westerly directions are quite naturally "friendly" ones. They

have been warmed and softened from passage over highly warmed and drying areas, and this tends, of course, to evaporate much of the chill and moisture from them, so that they ordinarily are dry, light and pressure lifting, thereby tending to raise the level of the game fish in pond, lake and stream, so that better artificial lure fishing is offered under these conditions.

These "friendly" fishing winds, do, however, sometimes meet with "walls" of colder and more moisture laden atmospheres that creep over the ranges from the regions of vast water expanses and I have figured that such conditions cause localized areas of heat compression that in turn causes the game fish to rise toward the surfaces for oxygen supplies, and thereby give rise to unusual feeding activities near the surface waters. This occurs just previous to swift and definite atmospheric condensures—which results in what we might call showers and summer storms. Such periods, and such wind and atmospheric phenomenas, in the author's estimation, create one of the most intriguing and thoughtful phases of game fish sport angling. It also offers the embryonic sportsman-angler an excellent opportunity to turn his mind and his reasonings toward wind, water and geographic understandings and educations that will in time convert him from the mediocre fisherman to the expert and scienced angler that we all hope to achieve in due time.

Winds, in themselves, mean nothing to the successes of a fishing career. They can blow east, west, south or north, but unless we understand their purposes and their character and the character and geographical trend of the regions over which they waft and the courses they are to follow in these travels they will mean little or nothing to our fishing studies and trips. However, by acquainting ourselves with the areas in which we are to do our fishing and by making

sensible deductions on the matter of winds, atmospheric possibilities and surroundings and water distributions we can almost invariably reason out the best times and the best wind conditions under which to essay a fishing trip.

Figuring our position in these matters then as being roughly within the confines of the Great Vacation Fishing areas, extending from Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada, westward and even slightly north-westward all the way to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and southward down the Atlantic Coast, thence west around the Gulf and once more back up the western drainage of the Mississippi River and back through the northern areas of Manitoba and Ontario and Quebec to the Maritimes, we can pretty safely dispose of the matter of friendly fishing winds by considering the southerly, the westerly and even the northwesterly trends as being well adapted to fishing. The north wind, especially in the northern border states and in the Canadian provinces tend to weaken the surface activities of even the most dependable of our gamesters, and the east wind very definitely produces uncertain successes in our angling efforts. Of the two winds, the east and the north winds, I prefer to place best confidence in the easterly trends, and to look upon the cold north wind with least confidence of all. As before stated the east wind will at times produce fishing results. But the north wind most generally depresses our brightest fishing hopes. There are reasons for this, of course. An east wind blowing fresh from an Atlantic storm area I have found definitely stops fishing in even the best of areas. However, when this wind springs from squalls of short duration or at the tag-end of a continued hurricane and loses its forcefulness then I have found that on the change of the wind directions good fishing is sometimes encountered. This, however, seldom happens

with the north wind. The wind, in this later case, must be allowed to "box" itself and take up again its friendly direction. If these matters are worked out in the fisherman's mind they, unquestionably, will bring with their capture better and more dependable fishing successes.

As to the temper of the wind, whatever might be its direction from "friendly" quarters, I have always found that strong blows out of a clearing sky disturb and cause restlessness in game fish of river, pond and lake alike, and for this reason the fish should be "hunted" up by the angler, rather than fished for from a feeding station that they are in the habit of converging upon at specified periods. Also, under such tumultuous water conditions I have found that "pass" fishing is better. By Pass fishing we have reference to those hidden and logical channels that traverse every good game fish lake or river. These passes are formed by current flows, passing through rocky defiles and passageways in the stream or lake bottom, or between the terminal points of sloping sand and mud bars in lakes and rivers. Fishing these spots when there is high wind and when the individual fish or schools of bass, pike and perch are on the move will many times result in excellent catches no matter how high the waves or rough the water. Sometimes these passageways run along the curvatures of the lake shorelines. Sometimes they are formed by long sand and mud bars thrusting out and forming breakwaters against the force of an open lake where fish can come through and into quiet waters. In rivers they are many times controlled by permanent drift logs and by rock ledges and sharply converging riffle barriers. It is a good plan to learn these passes in your lake or river and then fish them in rough-water hours.

The best wind of all for general game fish angling with

either live or artificial bait is a temperate south or west wind that ruffles the surface of the pools and causes the fish to take on an alert and watchful activity for chance or passing foods. These winds are ideal for both lake cove, pond or stream. They make ideal bass fishing conditions and are good winds for wall-eyed pike to work close to the margins of their deep lurking pools where they watch for both surface and underwater foods and also please the muskie and the trout.

Chapter 12

SHORE CONDITIONS

GOOD FISHING WATERS have certain characteristics that one should be able to recognize in order to know where to fish and when to fish these places. In lakes these propitious looking pools are found usually in the deep bays and off the points of land that project out into the waters. Shore lines of lakes are also good guides to the kind and quality of fishing that might be expected there.

As an example we will consider the shore line of a lake that has been recommended by a resident of the regions it occupies or by some friend or adviser who has fished the waters: These shore lines are usually of four definite characteristics, either rocky with medium or deep water falling off into the lake or lake cove, flat and sandy with a good line of beach showing, abrupt and wooded or marshy and fringed with rushes, reeds, pads or a growth of sedge or brush. The best choice in this repertory of shore lines from a practical angling point would be the rocky shore and the sedgy shore. The other two types of shore lines usually are very poorly suited for shore casting or fishing. The wooded shore line, with sandy, loamy or muddy slopes of slides should be avoided as it will be found of little interest to feeding or schooling fish, besides being either dangerous or

wearisome to fish from. The sandy, sloping ones with strips of beach are as a rule shores where waves beat in unrestricted and where continuous water disturbances hamper and discourage weedy beds or eddy pools. Both these types of shore might well be canceled by the fisherman as places to spend any amount of fishing efforts. The rocky shores and the ones bounded by sedge or low brush, however, both hold promise as being frequented by bass, trout, pike, pickerel, wall-eyed pike, muskie and pan-fishes such as perch, crappie, rock-bass and bluegills. There will probably be windfalls sloping off from such shores where pads and grass will spring up in the shallow waters within a few feet of the shore edge. Such places should be approached and fished with extreme attention. And even if they do not hold windfalls or drifts they should be viewed as very promising places, for there will be large boulders jutting out into the water where deep eddies will form and there will be old drift logs, clusters of roots and beds of submerged weeds growing along these shores where game fish will wait for food and shelter. Such places must be studied and fished with close application. Look for those spots where the waters appear to be deeper than usual. This can be recognized by surface appearances. Usually they will appear darker in coloring. It will be evident that there is a hole washed out at such spots and it is in these that the gamesters will invariably lie for the fisherman to tease into rising with his bait.

Ponds have equally definite fishing character, only these are recognized by openings in the fringing pads or grass or where there is a sloping strip of gravel or rock that shelves off quickly with dark water showing close at hand. Or where well anchored old logs run out from the shore a foot or two under the water. Where there's brushy fringes hang-

ing over the water and small indentures with drifts formed at the hinges. All such places form an attraction for the gamesters. Bream (bluegills and sunfish) will be found in close proximity to the logs or beams, also at the edge of the leaning brush and in openings of the pads and grass. Bass, pickerel and pike will lie in the deeper water where there is an open break or cove indenting the shore line. There is no use in fishing the shallow, muddy bars or the flat muddy shore line and sandy beaches unless it happens that there might be a drifted log or fallen tree lying out from the bank into deeper water with driftage or pads and weeds growing around its bole. Then that represents a very strategical place for a school of bream, crappies, bass or some catfish to be lurking—perhaps a pickerel or so or a G. N. pike.

In streams we find the pools pretty easily defined by rapids and riffles breaking into widening, eddying pools. All such places are unfailingly promising for the bait caster, fly caster or live-bait fisherman. If such pools are fished at the "head" or upper parts right below where the current spreads or fans out into swirling eddies the angler should try and place his bait or sink his hook into the backflows and eddies that curl around off the main current. For those are the places where feeding fish invariably come at some time in the day or night.

Rocky shore lines of the rivers and creeks, even if removed from riffle actions should also be fished, for it is a fair bid to say that along them will be picked up a good pike, bass, rock-bass or even a channel catfish. These are good live bait fishing points. Channel cats lie just off these lines where the current runs within easy rod reaching distance. There will be small coves along such places where rock bass will lurk and where small-mouth or even big-mouth bass can be expected. These are lovely places for

summer fishing with a grasshopper or a cricket or a young toad (the last for bass or channel cats) to be fished with a 9 foot rod and a straight line.

Muddy shore lines are to be avoided by the game fish angler. But for those who like to fish for carp, buffalo suckers and "squealer" catfish, don't pass them up. Sweet corn, worms and peeled crayfish tails are always good to fish with along such places using a medium weight sinker and casting out, then squatting down and holding a tight line until something finds it and takes it up for the run.

Wherever there are small brooks flowing into a larger stream is always an eddy that holds some kind of game or food fishes.

Under large river bridges and where there are bridge piers is another good fishing location, for those who cast or still-fish. Trout fishermen always look with excitement on an old logging bridge or a country road crossing the stream over an iron or concrete causeway. The stream will, however, take one side or the other, as a rule, leaving one side of the stream of little fishing possibilities. Take the current side for best success.

Old and abandoned logging chutes and sorting dams and the occasional mill chutes where the water foams into a large pool below are good for game and food fish angling. Fly fishermen prefer them to all others. Bait anglers and bait casters find them to their satisfaction. And power dams and flood-control projects are unfailing sources of good fishing for all modes and styles of angling. But care and caution should be used about these last, as they are usually very dangerous and deep, powerful currents and swirls form below the overflows, so that the amateur angler must be cautious in fishing these spots and not take any undue chances on spillways or catwalks.



Photo by H. Armstrong Roh

Weedy shore lines, such as this, offer the finest of pike, pickerel and muskie fishing for the summer and autumn angler.



Where the G. N. pike, pickerel and muskies like to lurk in summer fishing weather.

Chapter 13

UNDERWATER COVERTS

UNDER THE SURFACE of the lake coves, the ponds and streams lie little worlds of fantastic formations, where the real life of the waters goes on as it does in the streets and country lanes and communities of the human family. Here the real secrets of game and food fish life is extoled, and it is these mystifyingly hidden coverts that the angler must know if he hopes to become an expert and successful sport-fisherman.

One of the most fantastic and little known of these submerged aquatic worlds perhaps is the "weedy island" or "Weed Bed" as the veteran angler and guide knows the places. It is roughly composed of a varigated growth of aquatic vegetation that springs from the sandy and muck-mixed floor of the lake coves, the lake itself or from certain pond and river and throughfare pools. The wise fisherman hunts for such weed beds with all the fervency of a tropical native seeking the moist heaven of an orchid bower. For about such beds and within their jungle-like gloom and intricacies there lurks the fish of our wildest piscatorial dreams. The reason for game fish favoring these aquatic jungles is twofold. They frequent these tangled weedy labyrinths both for the purpose of rest and sleep and for feeding

reasons. In these moss, fern and weed haunted islands of the deep there is an almost uncountable mass of struggling, writhing and wiggling crustacea and minnow life swarming. Yellow perch and sunfish and crappie breed and propagate there, sheltering their young from the ruthless forays of the adult gamesters who prowl about ever on the alert for a "tender morsel" from the schools of spawn. The weak and the helpless are always fair game for the game fish of lake, pond and stream, and the wise and cunning angler understands this and fishes for the pike, trout, bass and perch families with this ever in view.

As one of our best-known fishing students has very aptly put it, "game fish seem to live for but two reasons, that of killing others and keeping from being killed themselves!"

The small pike, muskellunge, bass and pickerel prey on each other. Even the members of their own immediate family of spawn fall into the category of victims and it is not at all uncommon for one single well-fed and thriving individual to emerge from a season's spawn of these game species, providing, however, that nature does not take a hand in the matter and cause floods and sudden high water levels to scatter and dissolve the family of spawn before its weaker members fall victims to the strongest. For this reason it is considered by those who follow the subject of fish propagation and increases a good sign when sudden heavy rainfalls and winds raise and agitate the breeding pools of the game fishes. Underwater growths of moss and aquatic vegetation serve a high purpose in sheltering and protecting the small fry of pike, muskie, trout, perch and bass from the voraciousness of large fish and even from their own immediate members of the clan.

I had a friend tell me of an incident that illustrates the complete voraciousness of these cannibalistic species. A

garden pool had been heavily stocked with gold fish and they were thriving and doing fine, when suddenly, for no apparent reason, the pool's inmates started to disappear. Some mysterious reason seemed to be the cause. There were no dead or sick fish to be found about the pool and yet they continued to grow scarcer right along, until at last there was only a single fish left—and this was recognized at last as being a young member of the Black Bass family. It had devoured every last one of the more docile members of the place, and now, fat and thriving it swam about as complete master of the place. A small hook baited with a juicy garden worm was used to inveigle it into leaving the ill-fated place and the owner had the graciousness to convey it in a pail down to a nearby river, where, no doubt, it continued to ply its savage and selfish attacks on others of its kind until it would eventually become the Lord of all it surveyed.

There is no more savage and pugnacious fish afloat than the small-mouth black bass. The young muskellunge, which is supposed to be a despotic and ruthless vandal of the fresh water pools even takes a secondary place with the black bass in lake, pond or stream pools.

However, the small of the finny families does not always fall so easy a victim to the lurking *gormants* of the pools as might be supposed, and it is largely the fault of the underwater beds of moss, weed and grass that prevents this. Here they can secret themselves in heavy screens of interlaced vegetation, where, they in turn, can feed and promote swift growth on water fleas and various kinds of larva that breed and flourish in such concealments. I have taken many a fine pike, muskellunge and bass from such teeming jungles whose stomachs, when caught, were completely empty of any kind of food. The larger game fishes are not nearly so capable in these concealments as one might suppose. They do a great

deal of dashing about in their moments of hunger and thresh and wallow through the shallow waters where there are shore weeds and pads, but in the main they collect only a comparative few suckers, bream, perch and shiners, and for this reason the artificial bait that has a slow and crippled appearance when worked on the surface of the water appeals to them more strongly than does the underwater bait that is reeled and worked swiftly through the water. However, these congested areas, where weed and pad and moss offer concealment and protection to the smaller members of the finny tribe, never fail to draw the large gamesters who work unflaggingly and consistently for their "daily bread" in such surroundings.

The experienced fisherman understands and appreciates the possibilities of these underwater haunts for small fishes and minnows. And it is here that he invariably finds the best fishing, or around the borders of such spots.

Therefore be on the lookout at all times for weedy growths in pond, lake or stream, and especially where the water shelves off to dark concealments where the big fish can hang about, waiting for those times when the keen pangs of hunger drive them into the weeds and pads for the pursuit of food. At these times a hungry game fish will do almost inconceivably reckless things in chasing and striking the fisherman's fly, plug or underwater minnow, sometimes attacking the bait as much as half a dozen times. I have even seen them dart onto a well armed plug and fasten the hooks in their savage jaws, break away, and come back immediately and take the new cast with utter disregard of consequences. I once knew a muskellunge fisherman to wade out to the edge of such a bed of submerged weeds where a large fish was seen wallowing and feeding on shiners and rise the muskie instantly to his underwater min-

now that he had permitted to drift to the surface for a moment. The fish was a powerful one, weighing around 35 lbs., and in the struggle it broke my friend's line, taking the bait along with it as it plunged off into the deep water. The fisherman immediately attached another similar minnow to his broken line and cast back, permitting the bait to drift up and wiggle on the surface. Again the big muskie dashed out and grabbed the lure, and this time it was outwitted by my friend. When the fish was at last brought in to the shore and subdued with a sharp rap on the head it was found that the first lure was still dangling from its savage jaws. This happens when these big gamesters are on "the feed" and when they are urged to reckless activities by scurrying schools of bait that they are not able to corner and devour. Wall-eyed pike, bass, trout and pike will all practice such frenzied feeding habits at those times when a sudden change of weather is about due to break over the waters and when the natural and instinctive urge of these cannibals prompt them to fill their capacious maws with food against an impending storm or spell of rough, stormy weather. At such times the wise angler looks about for logical feeding grounds and for surface disturbances that tell quite clearly of a fish "on the feed." Quite naturally the best spots then are those where the natural foods of the game fish are congregating for their own protection against the "blitzkrieg" attacks of the larger gamesters, which means that the underwater weed beds and the rush and weed rimmed coves and lily pad islands are always good possibilities for the fisherman to cultivate with his live or artificial baits.

Chapter 14

EDDIES AND RIFFLES

IN STREAM FISHING the haunts of the game fish does not necessarily coincide with weedy fringes, weedy underwater beds and lily pad growths so much as in lake angling. The trout fisherman in the stream is always interested vitally in eddies and riffles (or "rips"), for these are more than ordinarily promising to him. The same thing can be said for the small-mouth and large-mouth bass fisherman.

Wall-eyed pike fishing is also quite a bit dependent on riffles and eddies, and the same thing can be said about muskie haunts in the flowing waters.

There are two kinds of eddies to be concerned over in river and creek fishing, the deep eddies and the shallow eddies. The shallow eddy is more of a bass and trout fisherman's concern, while the deep eddie that springs from the plunge of an extended bar at the foot of a rapids or falls and that forms the head of a large pool is essentially the lurking place for large muskies and big pike.

Those eddies that occur immediately below an ordinary river rapids is perhaps one of the best small-mouth bass haunts to be found. There is usually some foam islands whirling and gyrating on these and, as a rule, there are weedy growths for these eddies to play amongst. Such

places are ideal bass fishing grounds in July and August and the first weeks of a balmy September. For the fly fisherman they are made to order. Also for those who cast with half-ounce weight casting lures, such as underwater artificial minnows, flies and spoon and spinner baits, pork-rind spinning baits and artificial plug models of lures. The half-ounce weight is preferable for such waters, as they are light and do not go down to such depths as to cause bothersome interludes with snagged hooks, on bottom or rocks. They are also good waters for the use of the floating or surface model of plugs and minnows, for the agitated nature of the surface waters in eddies cause these surface baits to take on lively and attractive movements that catch the attention of the bottom-feeding bass.

One of the real reasons for these shallow eddy pools being so effective for good bass fishing is that the bass, by nature, is what we might call a "short-sighted" fish, especially in agitated water. It is the nature of a small-mouth bass especially to feed on or near to the bottom. Crayfish, hellgramites and muddler minnows are great favorites in food for the small-mouth bass. Its eyes are so constructed by nature that the bass tends to note bottom activities more quickly than surface disturbances. In fishing shallow waters this shortcoming of the bass is overcome, and even a surface bait can be seen by the fish and recognized as an item of possible food. In the deep eddies, to the opposite, there is always the possibility that a feeding or lurking bass will not notice or see the lure that plays close to or on the surface. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. Sometimes a school of bass, or a lone bass, will drift out of their deep water haunts and approach the surface waters on the trail of a disturbed or fleeing crayfish, hellgramite or spawn, and in these cases then a lure that is worked close to the

surface even in deep pools will draw the attention and rush of the fish. But, ordinarily speaking, the best opportunities for the bass fisherman who is using artificial attractors is the shallow eddies that average from two to five feet in depth. The same thing applies to the trout family. They also have a tendency to seek near-bottom levels and the artificial lure that is used in this fishing must reach within easy sight of their eyes if one hopes to draw their rush and rise. In the more shallow eddies the best numbers of fish are taken. However, for the live bait caster who intersperses his angling with still-fishing intervals or for the still-fisherman with bait, the deeper pools and heavier eddies are the preferable ones to choose. For in case of still-fishing the bait is usually worked close to bottom anyhow, and in the more shallow eddies we find the live bait fishing methods less practical than in deep eddies. For shallow eddies the live bait fisherman should resort to bait-casting with his lures, using a light sinker, or no sinker at all, and casting them out and slowly retrieving them with a heavy fly rod outfit or a seven to nine foot length of bait fishing rod.

Riffles (or rips) should be fished with an eye open to those small eddie pools or "holes" that occur at the lower side of an obstruction in the water such as a rock or snag or deeply imbedded drift log. Such eddies run from a foot to three and four feet in depth and are ideal for small-mouth bass and trout to hide in. Rock bass and sunfish also haunt these little eddy spots. The lure should be cast into these from the sides and drawn back at an upward angle for best results.

The riffles themselves are good trout fishing waters, providing the fisherman appreciates their nature. All riffles are composed of a series of eddies after all, small ones, to be sure, but eddies nonetheless, and the smaller trout and

bass will patronize them when there are deep eddies closely adjoining where the bigger members of the finny tribe rule the roost and drive them forth to seek more humble surroundings. In these small eddy spots the fish are usually of the fingerling and up to 10 inch sizes. Small lures should be used for them. No. 12 to 14 sized trout flies of the wet or sinking types, for the trout and for the bass that inhabit the shallow eddies of the long riffles the half ounce casting lures and the quarter-ounce spinning and spoon baits should be used. Bass flies of the No. 6 to 10 sizes of both wet and floating types are advisable. Wall-eyed pike sometimes are found along the more quiet borders of the riffle waters where a drift log or a patch of weeds offers shelter for them. The water does not need be more than sixteen to thirty inches for wall-eyes up to a pound and a half weight in such waters. A No. 2 size tandem spinner with red and white and guinea-fowl feather is notoriously effective for these fish in the depths of the summer season when the days are hot and sultry. In the cooler weather of early fall and in the spring months the wall-eye is found in deeper waters.

In rock bass, sunfish and bluegill fishing in the shallow eddies and riffle waters the best bait is a small bass fly used with a fly rod and fished under the surface (wet) at the places where there are ledges of rocks cropping out a foot under the surface. The pan fish like to hide on the current side of such rocks or below old stumps and log drifts where the water is fairly deep. Rock bass and bluegills haunt higher levels than the small-mouth bass in a pool as a general thing.

In the deep eddies below falls and long riffles the real wall-eyed pike, G. N. pike and muskie and large small-mouth bass will be found. Big trout also frequent these

spots. They should be fished for with three-quarter ounce to one ounce weight lures that go down a foot to three feet under the surface (that is the artificial lures) and in the fall season a light sinker can be used with them very effectively, for they like to lie under the surface beyond ordinary eye-sight and if there are large submerged rocks and beams it is safe to presume them hiding in these shadows. Bring the lures over such spots or around the corners and then be ready for a follow of the fish and a "strike" as the bait is rising toward the surface and toward the rod tip.

BOOK II

Live Bait Fishing

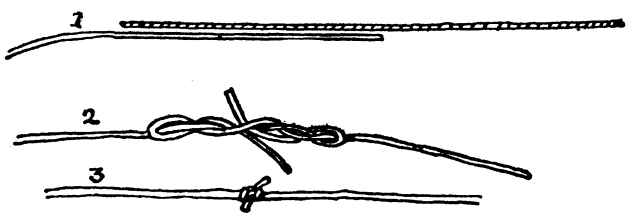
Chapter 15

BASS FISHING TACKLE—STILL-FISHING

LIVE BAIT FISHING for small-mouth and big-mouth bass is one of the most intriguing forms of angling. It is not practiced so commonly as it once was, but there are certain parts of the bass fishing range where still-fishing with live bait is more successful and entertaining than with artificial lures. Georgian Bay, the Kawartha Lakes regions and the south shores of Lake Ontario are among these sections where the live bait fished with a fairly long rod is still one of the most favored and enjoyable of angling systems.

In some parts of the middle west and the east there are rivers that the bass haunt where this method of fishing is heavily resorted to by fishermen. Soft-shell crayfish are the favorite baits in these river sections, used with a 9 foot fly rod, a single action reel and a 35 yard length of good level silk-enameled fly line to which is fastened a gut snelled N. 1/0 bass hook. No sinker is used with these Middle Western River fishing outfits. The soft-shell crayfish is baited to the hook with a short length of fine cotton thread used to lash it securely to the bend of the hook. Then the bait is cast out into the eddies of a fairly deep, rock-bound pool and permitted to slowly sink toward the bottom. A quantity of line is stripped off spindle of reel

and this is coiled on the right side of the rod either in one's fishing hat, on a flat piece of board or a flattened rock, so that it will be easily pulled by a striking fish through the guides of the rod. The rod can be either leaned in a forked stick with the butt held down with a block of wood or a clean stone or it can be held in hand. The bass will pick

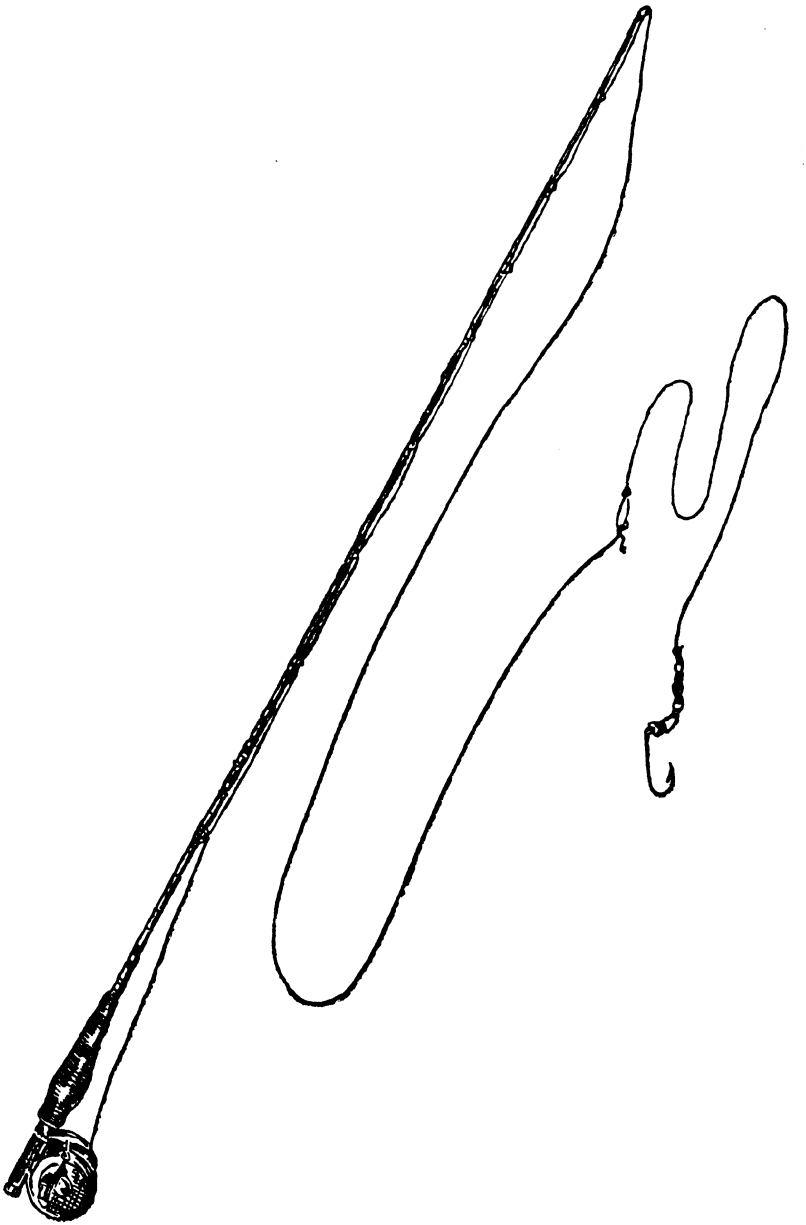


"Chatters" knot for fastening lengths of gut together.

up the soft-shell craw and run with it. The line will strip out without interference and the bass coming to the end of slack line has the craw in its gorge or mouth. The moment it feels the touch of the barb the fish bounces from the water—hooked! It is a delightful form of recreative and exciting bass fishing.

EQUIPMENT

For this form of bass fishing a 9 foot split-bamboo fly rod of approximately 6 ounce weight is best. A single action click reel or an automatic reel for fly rod is best. Either model will work. The line should be size D for such a rod, level-enameled silk. No sinker is used. A single gut snelled No. 1/0 size hook of the Cincinnati Bass model or the O'Shaughnessy or Sproat models are also good. Be sure the hook is honed sharp at the point.

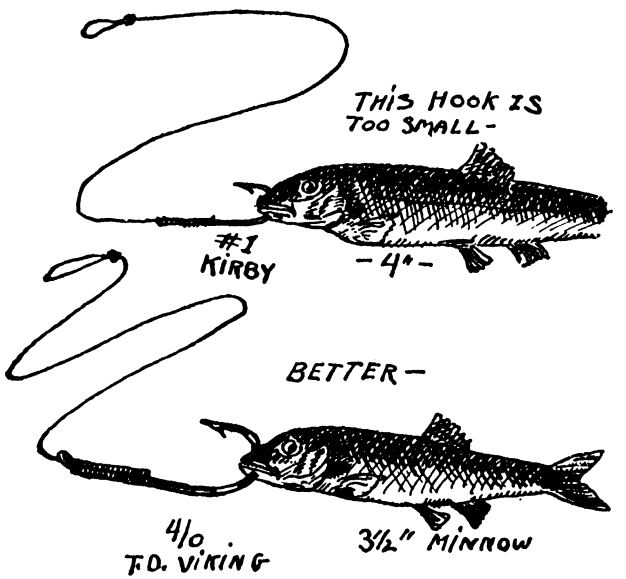


Sketched from one of author's own live-bait outfits.

FOR MINNOW AND FROG

In late July and August and throughout the fall months when water is open the bass fisherman will find live minnows and frogs excellent bass baits. The minnow should be about 3 inches in length, either a lively run chub, a bright shiner or a mud-minnow. These are all three choice baits. Frogs should be of the small bronze-colored variety that are found in the fine grass along muddy river shores and in the small woods marshes. The large vivid green fellows that are known as grass frogs are not so good. Both the big-mouth bass and the small-mouth bass will take the minnow and the frog with avidity. In hot weather the frog is a hard bait to beat. Minnows are also good in hot weather. To fish with these two baits I have found that hooking them through both upper and lower lip by pointing the hook upward from under the lower jaw is best. This gives them freedom and saves them from getting water-logged and ineffective against game fish. Release both of these baits as soon as the hook is properly set and do not hold them for any length of time in the hand. Do not squeeze them too hard when holding them to hook. Cast them out beyond the spot where you believe the fish to be lurking and let them sink down over the spot you wish to fish. A straight line is preferable in fishing with the frog bait. Minnows can be fished from a straight line or cast down the current or across the current and permitted to play far away from the rod tip with a free reel. In fishing with a long line and minnow the bait should be lifted ever so often to make sure it has not gone under a rock or snag on the bottom or along the shore in the weeds. Keep the bait in the water as much as possible so as to prevent them weakening or growing sluggish. Make sure in fishing with

a minnow that the hook does not turn with point facing back over the head of the minnow so that a fish rising to it will swallow the bait and not be stung with point of hook, for, after all, it is this "free" hook point, projecting out to the side of the bait that actually causes the gorging fish to feel the sharp prod and hook itself by its quick reaction. If



the spot that you wish to fish with the bait is too far away for the minnow or frog to swim freely then use a float or "bobber," to hold the bait off bottom and so prevent snagging or dangerous bait-drag when current draws at the sagging line. Be sure that the bait is active when fishing for bass. When it shows signs of laziness or inactivity remove the bait and replace it with a fresh, lively one from the bait bucket or frog box, for there is nothing gained by depending on a loggy bait in this kind of angling. Game fish are

caught by attracting their attention to the bait, and a frog or minnow that darts about and is always active in the pool will arouse the interest of even those fish that are just a shade off feed. The same thing can be said about worm fishing. Keep the bait lively and fresh and do not spend valuable hours on a good pool with a lure that is not appealing to these finny gormants.

EQUIPMENT

The length of the bait fishing rod for bass should run anyplace between seven and nine feet. Rods longer than the maximum figure are usually heavy and awkward in playing the fish, so that a good average for the angler could be said to run around 8 feet. The best type of rod for this phase of sport-fishing is the one that we know as "bait-fishing" models. The reel should be located *above* the hand-grip and it is advisable that the rod be in sections. The materials used for this order of tackle can be any one of the following: Split bamboo, lancewood, greenhart or a good grade of tubular steel rod. Any one of these types will serve the purpose of the bass angler who uses frogs, minnow or worms well. Have it equipped with the new stainless steel guides and tip-top, for they will not break easily and are equally as serviceable with fine silk lines as the older order of agate-lined guides and tip-tops. Three piece construction is very advisable as this permits the rod being taken down and packed for convenient transportation when fishing is over. The rod should be of medium stiffness and will weigh approximately an ounce for each foot of length. A little heavier than that does not matter, for it is the action that counts most, and, besides, for minnow and frog fishing a bit more weight is really an asset rather than a

liability. The rod must be able to pick a bait up from the depths of the pool with a springy ease and at the same time be resilient enough to hold the bait at any particular depth the angler desires or deems best. The reel for the rod should be as good as possible to buy, and hold at least 80 yards of 15 lbs. test waterproofed silk line. A multiplying casting reel with level wind attachment is best. The line as good as you can buy and preferably waterproofed silk, not less than 12 lbs. test and not over 20 lbs. Its color can be black, or black and white or brown and white check—I prefer the latter mentioned coloring. It blends in nicely with the average bass waters of lake, pond or river. A single gut snelled Cincinnati Bass, O'Shaughnessy, Sproat



or Kirby pattern hook, size not less than No. 1 is about what this outfit advises. For sinker a quarter ounce lead weight that can be adjusted easily to any depth on line is best. I personally prefer the sinker with a brass wire coil into which the line can be pulled at each end. This makes sinker adjusting very simple and easy. Split buckshot are also good. If the water is swift and you wish the bait to reach some certain spot in the pool at the soonest possible time use a half ounce sinker, but, ordinarily, a quarter ounce weight is about right.

WORMS, GRUBS, GRASSHOPPERS AND CRICKETS

One of the greatest bass baits that can be advised is the common garden worm, and also the more resplendent night crawler or Dew Worm, as some call the larger variety of this bait. In almost any weather, at almost any season and

in either clear, roiled or intermediate waters the worm is a safe bet for the bass fisherman to use. However, there are certain attentions that should be brought to the front in advising the use of the fishing worm for bass. One of these, in particular, is the advisability of "scouring" this bait properly before placing it on the bass hook. This is accomplished by partially filling a bait container with dampened grass or moss from the swamp, and then placing therein a good supply of worms and permitting them to crawl about through the grass or moss for some time before actually putting the baits to use. This serves to cleanse the worms of all slime and dirt and gives them the bright reddish, sparkling color that goes so far in making them a noticeable and attractive dish for the bass to consider. It does not injure the worms in any way and they will keep lively and fresh in such surroundings for several fishing hours. When the fishing trip is over the worms can be placed back in a container with rich, moist soil or loam and kept in the shade for future uses.

Another point that should be carefully attended to by the worm fisherman is to make sure the hook is properly baited with the worm. For small-mouth and large-mouth bass fishing a single large bright worm, and a good No. 1 size Cincinnati Bass, O'Shaughnessy or Sproat hook with a gut snell attached is used. Take the hook in right hand, between thumb and forefinger and hold the wriggling worm just below the head, then insert the point of hook through the worm at the dark collar band. The head of the worm should be at the top of the hook. Proceed to impale the worm by "sewing" the worm on hook in fairly large loops, running the hook point back and forth through the body of worm until tail section is arrived at and then point hook

into middle of worm's body, leaving about a half inch of worm projecting below point. In the meantime the head of worm has been slid up hook stem and when the operation is complete we find the hook thoroughly covered with a looped and wriggling mass of bait. No part of hook should show. The point must always be covered and a small section permitted to wriggle below or rather above point. Do not keep the bait out of water long. Drop it into the bass haunt just as quickly as possible after this baiting. When a worm has become mangled through the rise of a fish or by the hook becoming snagged on rock or drift, instantly remove it and substitute a new bait. Use the dark red worms of large size whenever possible. They are best. Do not use the small ringed worms that are found in manure piles—called "stink" worms—and those that are dug from black surface soil, under cornstalks or at the edge of chip-yards and hay or straw ricks, where there is a sub-soil of sand or sandy clay are far the best of all others. Worms must be well fed and fat for the finest fishing. Night crawlers are found in certain lawns, golf-courses or in shady maple stands along rivers, where they can be discovered by getting down on hands and knees and inspecting the ground carefully. If small, well-used holes about the diameter of a lead pencil is found dotting the ground or if the sod is bulged and furrowed and there are worm holes in the ground, it is safe to assume that this is a night crawler haunt. Wait until there has been an afternoon shower, or the place has been well moistened with a garden hose or sprinkling pot, then after dark go there with a strong flash light or carbide miners lamp and search for the worms. Night crawlers are nothing more than giant fishworms that come out to feed in the dewy grass after dark. Their habits

are nocturnal, and a strong light is necessary to find them. At first they are hard to see, but by careful scrutiny of the ground, in the short grass (that is why lawns and golf-courses are preferable) they can be seen stretched out in a glistening, dark, red ribbon. One has to act quickly to snatch them up, for they dart with surprising rapidity back into their subterranean retreats and then the chances are the worms will be destroyed in trying to draw them forth. If they retreat head first into their holes it is best to leave them go. If one is spotted with its head and part of the body protruding, snatch it by the head with thumb and finger, press the head strongly, not too hard, and it will release its hold and can be drawn forth and dropped into a large pail partially filled with damp, green grass. Sometimes one finds them entirely out of their holes. Then a lightning snatch with thumb and finger gets the victim cleanly. It takes practice and is really entertaining on a warm, dark summer evening. Keep the worms in a bed of damp grass or swamp moss. They will keep that way for a day's fishing. Sort out the injured and weak ones and cast them aside. These are glorious bass baits. They can be caught in the daylight hours also, by using a formula of one teaspoon of mustard (dry) in 4 oz. of water. Dissolve well and place in bottle. Find a well-used worm hole and pour about a tablespoon of this mixture in the hole. Wait a few moments and out comes Mr. Night Crawler. Rinse the worm off in clear water and drop in a bucket or pail with damp grass. The night crawler (Dew Worm) can be found from late spring until late autumn in sandy-loam soils. Trout are not so partial to the large night crawler as to the smaller red worms found in chipyards and gardens and turned out with a spade or maddoc.

GRUBS

The best grub for bass fishing is the Sod Grub, that is found in pasture and hay fields where it lives by feeding off the roots of meadow grasses. Also those found at the foot of rotted stumps in fields and along streams. It is rather large in body, short and corrugated and a pale pinkish-white in color. This makes good bass bait in creeks and rivers where drifts are found, in mid-summer when the weather is warm. Hook them through the body allowing the bait to wriggle freely at both ends. Use around old streamside stumps and where there are aprons of foam collected against current drifts. Keep them in a bait can with some rotted wood and damp grass. Use with a large split buckshot for sinker, a gut snelled No. 2 size hook and a float or bobber.

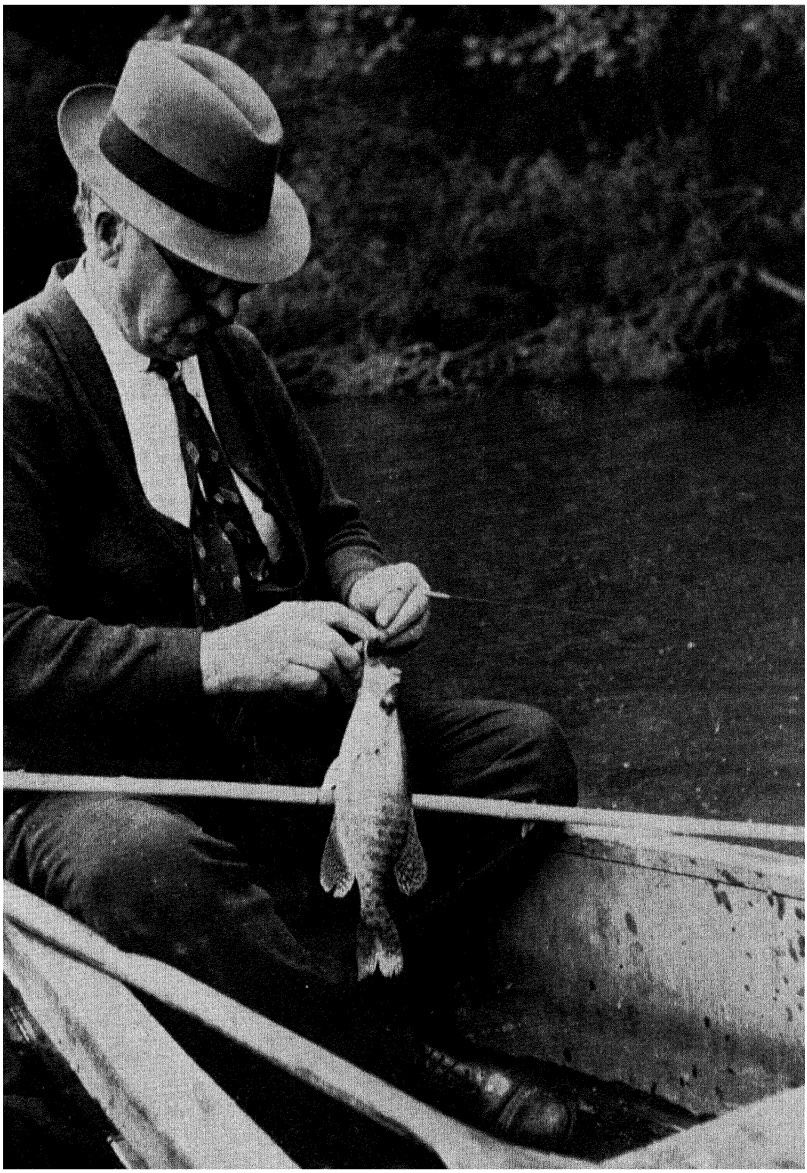
GRASSHOPPERS

In the heat of the summer and when the lake cove pools or the river and creek eddies are at their lowest clear water stage the grasshopper is one of the most killing of baits. The medium large, green and gold and black bodied grasshoppers that fly when approached are best. It takes an active person to get enough of these for a bass fishing trip, for they are delicate and easily destroyed by a bass and, furthermore, are quick victims to the voracious appetites of chubs and worthless minnows in the average bass stream. However, when the water stages are exceedingly low and the temperature of the water is high, this bait sometimes exacts a glorious toll of the small-mouth bass tribe. The best time to use grasshopper is just following the harvesting

of the meadows when this insect is most prolific in cut-over stubbles. This is their natural season in bass fishing. For trout they are in demand in early July and before the harvest season. A heavy paper bag equipped with a rubber band for puckering string is the best container to keep this bait in when fishing. They will not gnaw through such a container and they can be taken from it one at a time. A short length of light silk thread makes a good hooking harness. Hold the "hopper" to the bend of the hook and lash it firmly to this position with a few loops of the thread about the insect's body and bend of hook. There is a special

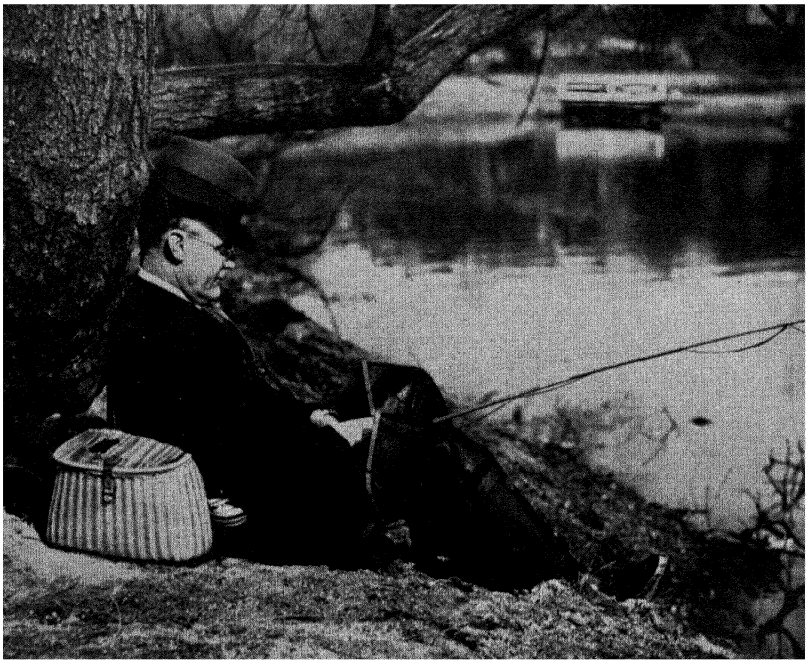


Grasshopper Hook also to be had that works nicely and prevents the bait from being torn and mutilated and unfit for service (a cut of which we use herein). Once a grasshopper is mutilated by the fish it is no longer effective. A fresh bait has to be placed on hook. The grasshopper can be used with a light buckshot sinker and a single gut snelled No. 4 size Bass hook. The sinker goes on the line above snell. In using it as a sinking bait the hopper lasts only a short time, and when it becomes sodden and no longer active it should be removed and a new and lively one replacing it, for this reason a large quantity of the baits must be collected for anything like a successful hopper fishing trip. They can be fished either with a straight line, fishing from boat or shore into bass eddies and at edge of weedy fringes or along the splatter docks or with a float, the hook, in such case, being approximately two-feet below



International News Photos

The bait fisherman finds many a restful hour on the pond's waters with such large crappies.



International News Pho

Spring fever, probably—or, perhaps, just waiting for a bite from a bullpout, perch, sucker or even a trout. Anyhow, it's fun to just get out and bask in the sunlight along some willow-bound pond and soak-a-worm for an afternoon of angling restfulness!

the bobber. They are best when fished rather high above the ordinary feeding level of the bass. They can also be used on a light gut snell and a gut leader without any sinker and floated along the edge of weedy fringes and over feeding bars, something on the order of a floating artificial fly. The large, brown colored hoppers that do not fly are poor bass bait. Use the flying members of the family, with small body and short green and gauzy wings.

CRICKETS

At the edge of lily pad fringes in channels connecting lakes and in ponds where the water drops off to three and four foot depths is a good site for the cricket fisherman. Crickets sometimes do marvelous things where there are smallmouth and bigmouth bass lurking close to pads and splatter dock edges and in the small eddies around the foot of stumps and drifts. This is real cricket fishing water. The large, fat members of the insect family found in oat and wheat shocks and at the edge of hay-cocks in the harvested meadows make the best bait. They are also found by turning over a plank that has rested for some time in a chipyard or lawn. Crickets should be carried in a special bag of light cotton material with a puckering string at top so that one cricket at a time can be permitted to emerge. The best hook for these baits is a small Safety-Pin hook, that permits the insect to be impaled through the lower sections of body and with two light wire hooks cradling it on either side. I have used them on No. 6 size snelled trout hooks by lashing them to the bend with a few turns of dark silk thread and had good success. Use a split BB shot or two for sinker and a very light line and snell to the hook. They are extremely fragile and soft and therefore hard to

keep on the hook after the first strike or rise of fish. For this reason the cricket is a delicate bait to handle. One has to know just when to strike the bass that rises to it. It should be fished with a straight line—and a light line, and the tip should be held firmly when the fish rises. Permit the fish to take it delicately and make a short run, offering tip smoothly to fish, with no slack in line. Only a short run should be allowed, then the snub made, sharp and sure. Great numbers of these baits can be had by taking a galvanized tub or metal corn basket and shaking a sheaf of oats or wheat over it in the harvest field. The insects fall into the metal container and can not climb back out the smooth, concave sides. This way scores of them can be captured for a day's bass fishing. They are, at times, excellent bait, but, usually, the bass are small that are taken with them and for this reason they are seldom used in these times of 9 to 11 inch legal length limits for bass. Perhaps it is as well!

EQUIPMENT

The worm, grub, grasshopper and cricket fisherman should use as light a rod and reel as possible. His line should be of a light size also and light split-shot sinkers that clamp about the leader or line are superior to the heavier moulded sinkers. The single gut snelled hooks of sizes ranging from No. 2 to No. 8 are advisable. The rod is the main item of consideration in this. A split bamboo or light tubular bait-fishing rod of 8 foot length is my preference. The reel an ordinary bait casting one of 80 yard capacity, with level wind attachment. There will be little actual casting with these outfits for bass and the reel does not need be so expensive. The rod, however, should

have plenty of spring to it and be light in weight. A good bobber should be included in this tackle and plenty of snelled hooks. Lines need not be more than 12 lbs. test and a hard-braided waterproofed silk one of brown and white check is my preference.

HELLGRAMITES AND CRAYFISH

There are those who will tell you that for bass fishing in rivers and creeks there is but one great bait—and that it is the unprepossessing and evil appearing hellgramite that we find lurking in mighty colonies under the boulders and rocks on riffles and other rocky and gravelly shallows of the flowing waters.

Why any creature that swims or walks or flies would ever choose to use the almost prehistoric nightmarish looking hellgramite for its food, is more than I have ever been able to understand. For, unquestionably, of all the fearful qualities possessed by those mysterious and half-hidden creatures of the underwater worlds of lake, pond and stream, the leathery appearing, many-legged and essentially vicious hellgramite has them all shaded for pure ugliness of body and spirit.

In the first place the hellgramite is exceedingly painful for the angler to handle. Secondly it is almost impossible to procure, unless one is versed in their odd and intrinsic modes of life, and third they are so revolting to the touch and to the senses of the inexperienced that their use is many times foreshadowed by the natural timidity of the novice to even be about them.

However, they are excellent bass baits. The Black Bass prefers them because they are its natural and most dependable food. I have taken many a fine big Bronze-Back

bass from the northern lakes whose nose and mandibles were literally raw and bleeding from the hard-earned fruits of its pursuit and search for hellgramites under the sharp edged lake rocks and boulders.

No matter how careful the angler might be he is bound to receive many a painful and severe wound from the sharp black pincers of this underwater crawler when reaching into a box of them for a seductive bass allure.

They are tough to the extreme, and for that reason they are a lasting and virile bait to offer the deep lurking summer smallmouth bass. One of them attached to the bass hook will last for a full afternoon and evening bass fishing, providing a keen-eyed smallmouth does not happen to see it squirming and kicking its many legs about in its eddying precincts.

They should never, however, be fished on the bottom or where they can reach any underwater obstructions, for they will instantly revert to their natural inclination to crawl under a rock, a pebble or an old beam and thereby snag the outfit almost irretrievably. The best way to use the hellgramite is with a good float or bobber, and with a line shortened so as to have the bait just sweep over the bottom of the pool a few bare inches. A fairly heavy sinker is good also as this serves to retard the crawler from getting under rock drifts and driftage beneath the surface. The hook should be a single gut snelled one of about No. 1/0 size. The bobber should be carefully watched when fishing and the moment it signifies the least symptoms of the bait striking bottom or a snag the lure should be lifted and re-cast. When the bobber leans over or idles too long that is a safe sign that the bait should be re-cast into the eddies again.

You find them on the shallow riffles mostly where they

lurk under the moss slimed river boulders and beneath flat rocks. The head of the riffle is most propituous for them, where the stream makes its first glassy break. In water about eight inches deep is the best place to work for the hellgramite. In channels and gravelly cut-off's of the river or creek, around old mill-races where they spread into a deep pool below—are all excellent points to look for this bait. They resemble a short length of flat black strap, with a row of short, competent legs on either side of the spatulated body and a pair of formidable looking black pincers at the head. They can and will use these pincers. Every time they nip the fingers of a fisherman they bring the blood. Handle them with light gloves if you do not wish sore hands. They will even fasten themselves on the lips of the doughty black bass that attacks them. But the bass has powerful jaws and one crunching bite at the hellgramite usually grinds it into harmless food for their maws. The best way to catch hellgramites in quantity is to use an ordinary 8 foot minnow sein, with quarter inch mesh. Two men handle this. It is planted a few feet below the break of a riffle, in water eight to ten inches deep. The net is leaned strongly backward. Then a third party goes above some ten feet with a strong hoe or garden rake and starts stirring and upsetting the gravel and rocks on the riffle bed. The fine gravel and small fresh-water muscles (which this crawler must feed largely upon) are carried down into the net, and with them come dozens and scores of little black appearing balls that might be mistaken for dark pebbles. They are the hellgramites that have been dislodged and uncovered when the gravel and rocks are disturbed. These unwind themselves and flatten out on the strands of the net. They are the hellgramites. Merely lift the net when the gravel has been stirred enough, and do not delay it too

long, and carry it to shore where the bait can be caught back of pincers by thumb and finger and transferred to a large pasteboard box that has been covered on the bottom with green elm and willow leaves and twigs. This is for the hellgramites to crawl under and keep from the sun and drying air. Elm branches are best. Dampen them a little. Have the box large and high enough so they can not crawl up the sides and escape. A box about 3 feet high and 2 feet wide across bottom is about right. They can be carried to the fishing pools this way and kept so for many hours. The hook point can be brought under the middle plates of the back and back up, fastening them securely, so that when the bass clamps down firmly on this tricky victim of its voracious appetite in impales itself in the upper lip with the hook point. I have always found this method of hooking the best. The hellgramite squirms and kicks about with plenty of action and in a pool where there are bass, and with necessary caution used to prevent it getting under snags and rocks, this bait is one of the most effective we know to advise.

CRAYFISH

The crayfish, in its average state is only a mediocre bass bait. Some use the tail skinned out and bait this resulting white meat on the bass hook as a troll addition or in connection with a fly. But the real crayfish bait of them all, and the one that smallmouth bass go wild about in the early summer season, is the soft-shell cray or the peeler crayfish. The Peeler is the crayfish at that time when it is about to shed its hard armour that we call the shell. This can be taken off the Peeler with thumb and finger nails. The crayfish is noticeably soft to the touch. By squeezing it in

the hand one can define when this period of molting is on. But the really Soft Shell cray is one that has completely lost its hard outer shell and is in the stage of "moulting," so to speak. It is the finest of bass baits. At this time you will find the soft-shell crayfish hiding away from others of its kind and in surroundings where it has little chance of injuring or hurting itself. It requires but a comparative few days for it to regain a more resistive shell and then its value as a bass bait begins to decrease until it becomes practically of no worth at all when the shell is hard and a bass has little use for it.

In its soft-shell stage the crayfish is found mostly around a large rock where there is a wisp of moss or thick weed or in beds of matted underwater vegetation where it can lie restfully serene from any injuries to its sensitive body. In lake shallows where there are heavy drifts of flat rocks lying about, I have found these impeccable baits that were as large as a strong man's thumb and of an almost blue-black color. Capture of these discloses the fact that they are soft and spongy to the hand grip. At such times they are almost unfailing baits and the best way to attach such a morsel of bass diet to the hook is to take a No. 2/0 snelled bass hook and lay it alongside the cray with the point turned slightly out from its body. Remove the cray's pincers at the first joint and then with a length of soft cotton thread lash it lightly to the hook, so as to keep the hook in its original position. Use this bait without any sinker and toss it out where bass are in the habit of coming to feed of early evening over rocky or gravelly bottoms and just let it lie there lightly for a while. Keep casting it until a bass takes note of its flavour and the best fish in the pool will be yours.

It might be timely at this place to explain that there is no artificial means or methods of making soft shells of

crayfish that have already shed and formed new hard shells. This is a fallacy that for some unexplainable reason has spread around among bait fishermen and each season Angling Editors are deluged with requests for these magical formulas. There are no such formulas to be had we might say for the benefit of all those who listen to such rumors. There are a number of practical methods used whereby the softening of the crayfish can be achieved, but these follow along normal and natural lines. One of these is based on the factual knowledge that swift and forced growth of the crayfish causes it through necessity to shed its original shell so as to permit a natural growth; for the crayfish shell, which protects the creature's body is of an inflexible nature, and when the crustacea reaches a certain growth stage it is just simply forced to shed the old covering and formulate another. For this reason then the "forced fattening" methods are sometimes practiced by those who want to procure a large number of soft shells at a minimum of time and effort. A wooden or metal tank is used and a large number of crayfish are collected and placed therein. The bottom can be lightly covered with gravel and sand, and with a few large blocks of wood or stones to form concealment and protection for the shedding crays. A shallow stream of soft, warmish water is allowed to flow over this. Screens at either end can prevent the crays leaving. The crays should be sorted as to size and the same sized ones placed in each tank. Then a diet of coarsely ground hamburger and corn meal is fed them. They will also devour other items of food such as worms and bits of meat or fruit husks and rinds. They grow swiftly under this feeding and this forces them to shed their original shells quickly. They grow dark colored and the shells will begin to peel. From

the Peeler stage they go quickly into the soft state, when they can be used.

The best method, however, and the most practical one for the angler is to sein crayfish from submerged weed beds and weedy shallows in warm rivers and creeks. Limestone rivers produce the largest and most prolific families of crayfish. The water is very soft and this seems to agree with a crayfish best of all. Use a small minnow sein and have two helpers. Do this seining at night and have two persons haul the sein, with another following along back of bag in sein with a strong flashlight spotted into the center of sein ahead of its course. The disturbance in the weeds causes the crays to dart for the area of light and so they find their way into the net. Lift the sein often and save all the crays until it is time to pause and sort them over, saving the soft shells out and returning the others to the water. These can be packed then in damp moss such as one finds deep in the swamps in the woods or it can be bought from florists who use it for packing and shipping flowers such as American Beauty roses, with a tin container of coarsely cracked ice in the center. As long as they are kept in damp moss and well chilled they will not change their shells or grow hard-shelled again. Some use refrigerators to keep them packed in their deep moss if they are to be kept for any great length of time. They remain semi-dormant and will keep a long time that way. On the stream they should be kept in a wooden box or bucket with cracked ice in a container with holes for leakage and drainage and moss around this. Keep the soft shells covered well and chilled and they will remain that way. They are good bait for channel catfish, rock bass, wall-eyed pike and suckers as well as being a paramount bass bait.

EQUIPMENT

As we have outlined before at the start of this chapter the best tackle to use for crayfish and hellgrammites is the 9 foot, 6 ounce fly rod of steel (tubular steel) or split bamboo. A good fly rod reel and enameled level silk fly line with gut snelled hook. For hellgramites, however, there should be a good float or bobber used to keep the bait off bottom, and also a light sinker. Otherwise the same rod can be used and the same line and reel. In using soft-shell crayfish no sinker is necessary.

Chapter 16

PAN-FISH TACKLE—STILL-FISHING

ROCK BASS

ROCK BASS ARE found usually in places where the tackle has to be of the lightest and most practical sort; and yet there must be a certain good quality and dependability to it. The best fishing for these small members of the *sunfish* family is usually had around stumps and logs that shadow the water and among the lily pad roots of channels and lake coves. I have taken some wonderful specimens of the so called "Red-Eye" Bass, from creeks in the middle west and the eastern sections where there was plenty of shade and where willows, basswood and elms hung over long pools that occurred below sharp little riffles. In fact the Rock Bass is a great devotee of small eddy spots where there are rocky crevices for it to hide in when it is looking for food. Old mill dams, where a shady willow droops over the foamy swirls and where there are old beams in the water are ideal.

The prettiest way to fish for Rock Bass in small rivers and creeks is with a light fly rod and line and a gut-snelled No. 4 Sproat or Carlisle hook. A single large split buckshot pinched to the line just above the snell is usually enough to carry the bait down straight to the lair of the fish. Rock

Bass are not necessarily deep lurking fish. Usually they swim close to the water surface when feeding so that they can pick up anything floating or swimming there. For this reason the straight line, fished with a fairly long rod from boat or shore so that the bait can be dropped right into the eddy or opening where the fish might be expected to wait is best. The line should be reeled up short, with not more than four feet of it outside the tip-top and the eddy or opening to be fished approached much in the same manner as a trout fisherman would go about baiting for brook fish. Do not have too heavy a bait for the Rock Bass. A single garden worm or a small three inch run chub is about as good a choice as can be made. I have had wonderful success in July and August with grasshoppers in fishing for Rockies. Get the bait all ready, and the line shortened so that it is under perfect control. Now choose your opening and proceed to drop the bait lightly down into the water. Do not probe the full depths of the pool the first cast. Rather go at it as one would go about testing for something that is of great value. Lower the bait for six or eight inches if there are pads shading the spot or if there is an old log or beam there with floating foam drifting about. Hold the bait there a moment, swimming it skillfully about, keeping it at one certain level in the water, for the rock bass is notoriously fond of sharing one certain level with its family circle. There might be two families of rock bass in the pool, and one might be below the other, but each clan sticks to one specific level, and if caution is used and the bait is held there each cast almost every fish can be taken. Of course a good sportsman will not take them all, but will sort them carefully and return the smaller members uninjured to rear future schools of the fish. After a minute or so of playing the minnow or worm or grasshopper there then retrieve the bait

and try again. This time lower to another level say ten inches below first trial. Keep this up until you find the fish. The moment you strike the proper level—in creek, river or lake this holds good—the bait will be taken much on the same order as a bass takes it, softly with a running circular movement of the line at water surface. Sometimes the Rock Bass will continue this running in circles and figures-eight for a long time, in which case the angler should not wait too long for the "snub" or set of the hook, for if they run too long they will swallow the hook far down in their gullet where it will injure and destroy a small unkeepable fish. The idea of this running play is that the fish has not felt the sting of the hook point and is merrily enjoying itself with this juicy morsel. It is a sign that you have too large a bait on. At other times the bait will be taken sharply, with two or three short, pungent tugs, then the fish starts to move determinedly away. Then is the time to set the hook, with a light, firm snagging motion of the rod tip. This hooks your fish in the mandible usually, where it is not injured and where it makes a better and prettier play on the light tackle.

Worms, small minnows, grasshoppers, crickets, wasp-grubs, stump or white sod grubs, small frogs, toads (small ones), hellgramites, soft-shell crays, even bees and flies attached to a small hook will be acceptable to the rock bass.

Some like to fish for them with three dropper hooks attached to the line, at various stages. This eliminates the testing process of fishing described above. On the terminal end of line fasten a quarter ounce Dipsey sinker with swivel. Then a few inches above this attach a gut-snelled hook (No. 4 or No. 2 Sproat or Kirby), so that hook slants at a downward angle. Above this another similar snelled hook and still a third one above the second. Bait these with small minnows. They are best for this method. Worms can be

used also or you can use a combination of worms and minnows, a minnow first, then worm and then minnow. This rig is excellent for river fishing where there are many snags and drifted tree tops in water or where there are ledgy shore lines where rock bass might school at varying levels. It is used in lake fishing a great deal also.

EQUIPMENT

A good 9 foot fly rod with single-click reel and a light oiled silk line and gut-snelled No. 2 and No. 4 size Sproat hooks. A few split buckshots for sinkers with single hook rigging, some quarter to half ounce Dipsey sinkers with swivels for lake and river tandem rigging. A float for those spots and eddies too far for straight line fishing. A light bait casting reel can be used in emergencies on this outfit.

BLUEGILLS AND SUNFISH

In the lake sections of the north-country one finds the bluegill angler usually equipped with a long cane pole, a long linen or silk line and a gut-snelled hook and an immense "bobber," attached about three or four feet above the hook. A sinker is used and minnows are mostly offered as bait—small shiners and mud minnows. The fisherman uses a flat-bottomed boat as a rule and fishes spots in the lily pad meadows and bays.

There is a more sporty way than the above mentioned method, however, in my estimation, and one that the doughty little pan fish are more worthy of having used on them. Not that all pan fish are small, in the real sense of the word, for they are not. I have taken Rock Bass with large bass and pike casting plugs from some of the northern

lakes that would measure 13 inches in length, about the same size as the average small-mouth or large-mouth bass we find in the same waters. And the same thing has happened many times to me with bluegills. I have hooked and landed them almost as large when casting with plugs and spinners for Black Bass. They grow to astonishing sizes in certain of the northern lakes, especially in those that are not so frequently fished and where there are good dark water bays with plenty of fringing lily pads and a good clean sand bottom.

The best bait for bluegills is small minnows that can be scooped up with an "umbrella" net from docks and along piers where these baits congregate to feed on table scraps and fruit rinds tossed into the water by careless tourists or campers. Worms are also good, the nightcrawler being their favored worm diet. Insects such as crickets and grasshoppers and grubs will attract their strike also.

There is a peculiarity to the rise of a bluegill or sunfish that one should know to fish for them with best success: They usually school well up in the pool, closer to the surface than some of the pan fishes, and it is not at all unusual to find them rising to a bait within ten inches of the surface if there happens to be concealment on the surface. They are also distinguishable from many others in that they scatter out over a considerable area when feeding, each individual taking a slanting position, with head elevated and holding that position for minutes at a time. This causes them to see the bait quickly, and hence their swift and sporty rises to the properly worked lure. But, as in the case of the Rock Bass, the bait should not be abruptly lowered into their pools. Many times an unsuccessful bluegill fisherman will be found to have fished under the fish where they could not see the baits. Start fishing shallow and work gradually down to

lower levels. The bluegill moves twice or more times when attacking a bait. The stream sunfish does the same, and for this reason it is advisable to place the bait for this order of fish a considerable distance from the covert where the fish are suspicioned as hiding, thereby giving Mr. Bluegill plenty of opportunities to practice his hesitating advance. Their mouth is smaller than the other members of the finny tribe and a smaller hook and smaller baits are very advisable for best success and quickest hooking. A half of the large garden worm works better than a whole one, and results in much faster action. A worm broken in three pieces will work in this fishing, each section raising the fish. Small minnows of one and two inch length are best. A little more time should also be given the bluegill before snubbing the hook home and the float or bobber is therefore very advisable, as this offers the bluegill a better chance to fuss about with the bait and get it safely gorged before the snub is made.

EQUIPMENT

A light, lengthy rod of tubular steel or split-bamboo or even cane materials, a serviceable reel for taking up surplus line, but not necessarily of any large caliber and a bobber and sheaf of snelled-gut hooks, size No. 4 to 6, with a floating minnow bucket for bait or a good worm box and you are ready for these finny fellows.

YELLOW PERCH, CRAPPIE AND WHITE BASS

The same baits and the same order of tackle that the Rock Bass, Sunfish and bluegill fisherman uses is very adaptable

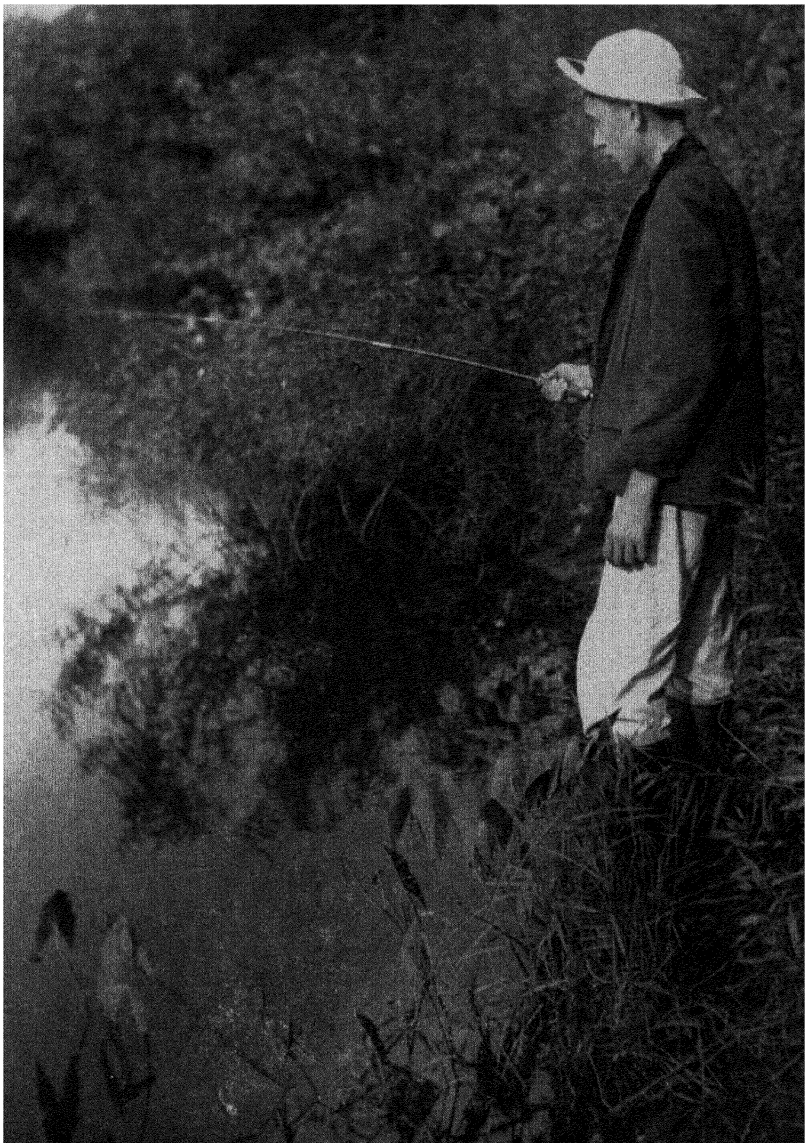


Photo by Ben C. Robinson

Pond fishing for crappies, sunfish and bigmouth bass appeals to the young fisherman, out on his first fishing trips.



International News Photos

Fishing for bream in a cypress swamp pond with live bait, a pleasant little interlude in the life of a fisherman.

for the perch, crappie and white bass fisherman. Perch are spring fish, however, taking the bait better in May and early June, as well as being more palatable for the table, than later in the warm weeks and in fall. For this reason spring should be the perch fishing season for those who enjoy a tasty mess of this delectable table fish. The perch is then solid and free from any worminess and their flavor is delectable.

Perch fishing is best practiced from a good, roomy fishing boat, with a 6 foot tubular steel or split bamboo rod, of either bait casting or the bait fishing types, with reel ahead of hand grip and with a light and whippy action. This same thing is true of summer fishing in the northern lakes for this fish. In the spring, however, the large schools of this fish will be found moving about restlessly, gathering up schools of small minnows and prawn (fresh-water shrimp) at the edge of the submerged weed beds where the water drops off into six and ten foot depths. That is why the boat is advised for this fishing, for the schools of perch move about considerably and the fisherman, in order to meet with success, has to follow them up rather steadily. In the summer they confine their activities more to the interior of the weed beds and in the opening among the weedy islands.

A straight line with about eight feet of line out, and no float or bobber is better for this fishing than with long line and bobber. As one has to find the moving fish and their depths vary considerably. The rise of the perch is readily recognized, once you have experienced their peculiar characteristic of striking the bait with sharp, rattling jerks, running with the bait at the end of perhaps a half dozen strikes, when the hook should be set in their mouth. By using a level silk enameled line of size E or F diameter with a light

gut leader of four or six foot length, and a snelled hook of size 4, held down with a quarter ounce sinker, it is an easy matter to recognize the strike of this fish. The bait will be struck sharply, rattling the enameled line sharply against the metal guides. After a series of these strikes the line will take a sharp run. Lower the tip of the rod to these rushes and follow the perch until it is seen that the run is in earnest, then snub the hook into the fish with a quick, sudden jerk of the rod tip.

Small minnows, lively scoured garden worms, nightcrawlers, grasshopper and cut-bait are all very killing on perch. The cut bait is made by catching a small perch with a worm or minnow, then with a sharp knife cut the fish into small cubes and bait the hook with one of these "chunks." As long as the bait is fresh from a newly caught fish and with plenty of blood-scent attached one can take perch, crappie and white bass with it in good numbers.

Some perch fishermen use a "spreader" rig in their fishing and it is no unusual trick to take a brace of the fish at one run. These *spreaders* are made from steel piano wire. Cut a length of this wire, about 18 inches in length, bend a small loop in middle and attach a swivel. Then at ends bend a small eye or loop for line. Have the two ends curved down at right angle, something on order of an umbrella stay. To the end loops attach a short linen line, twelve inches long, at two terminals of these lines bend a size No. 4 hook. Attach the fishing line to the middle swivel, bait the hooks and attach a Dipsey sinker of half-ounce weight to center of spreader with a short length of line. This rig is used where water is deep and the perch are feeding close to a sandy bottom or around piers and landings. Use cut bait, small minnows or worms for bait.

CRAPPIE

The Crappie is sometimes known as Strawberry Bass or Bream, and it is a delightful little gamester for the angler who wants to take things easy and still have the thrill of a bending rod and a slanting line to carry back to his office or shop after the fishing trip. These small gamesters sometimes get to be as large as an ordinary Black Bass, but the average size is around 6 inches in length and about the size of one's hand in depth and breadth. They bite freely when the schools are found and when the bait is handed to them in a proficient manner. Along the shores of a sandy-bordered lake cove or where the small waves riffle in from the open lake and pulsate the flat green pads of the lilies and red-stemmed pads is a favorite place to look for crappie. Where the water is about five feet deep and if there are a few old logs half submerged in the pool is ideal for them.

The crappie is a fine pond fish, and also shows preferences for small lakes, where fishing can be practiced with a good deal of comfort and quiet enjoyment.

Small minnows of the shiner and chub variety are the best kinds of bait. Small crayfish, worms and grasshoppers work well. They are extremely fond of cut-bait also, which is easiest of all to get and prepare from a freshly caught sunfish or small crappie itself. Use a light gut-snelled No. 4 size hook, of any good grade and shape, from Sneck to Sproat pattern, and a light sinker, light oiled silk line and a good 8 or 9 foot fly rod with simple single action reel.

I once fished a crappie lake with a gentleman who had the most novel of methods for casting his lure. He used a short four foot tubular steel "Bristol" bait casting rod, with a very mediocre casting reel attached and a good silk line. He

used large floating flies and would cast with this outfit by stripping out a good space of line and wadding it firmly in the palm of his left hand. Then he would start whipping his short bait casting rod back and forth as one would a fly rod and letting out a little line at each bend of the rod from the supply in his left hand. It was surprising how far he could lay his flies out on the surface of the riffling lake. He would let his large fly float a while, twitching the line with his rod and giving the lure the appearance of a fluttering insect resting wearily on the water. Ever so often there would come a splashing swirl and a crappie larger than one's hand would strike that concealed hook and fasten itself. My old friend was an expert in fooling those crappies to rise to his offerings, but I observed that it was more his generous patience and smiling enjoyment in the restful pastime he had chosen than his success with that simple outfit that made his fishing so wonderful.

Crappies are known as bream many times in the more southerly of the ranges and they will be found in ponds and small lakes, in fields and hidden away deeply in low swamplands. The water does not have to be so deep for these fish to thrive in a pool. The bottom has not always the clean, clear whiteness of well washed sand, either. I have found them where the muddy shores sloped down to flat, greyish bars and sluggish pools with bits of weed and splatter dock lending a warm green variance to the surroundings, and I have taken them from such places with minnows and with artificial flies, deriving just as much pleasure and satisfaction from my fishing as though I had encountered them in the glorious surroundings of the Far North Woods. In every case, however, fish for them, when using bait, with very small, lively minnows and a small, lightly snelled hook, and use a float where the pools are far away and one has to make

a cast for it, because they prefer a straight line, with the bait moving about a foot off bottom. When they are schooling over sunken brush or under overhanging brush then they should be fished for with only about twenty inches of line from the bobber or with the hook that distance from the surface when "dabbing" for them with a straight line and rather long rod. Use a very light sinker. And strike them rather lightly to set the hook, for their mouth is tender and too hard a snub or too much pressure on the rod tip when playing them in to the net will serve to injure and lose them.

EQUIPMENT

A light, whippy action fly rod of 8 foot length is ideal. Use a single-action reel with about 30 yards of ordinary level silk enameled fly line, size E or F, and try and have it amber colored or green and amber ticked. A four foot gut leader of medium weight, light snelled hooks of No. 6 size and light split-shot sinkers (preferably BB shot sizes). Have a bobber in the tackle kit just in case you have long, shallow, sloping shores to reach out over to get to a pool or eddy where the fish are schooling. A small, light landing net should be used on them. In case you hook a good one of size it might save the prize.

WHITE BASS

This is a gamey fish that many anglers never encounter. However, they are worthy of mention, for they are game and a prized spring and early summer fish in certain southern tributaries to the eastern Great Lakes, where the fish is found in quantities. It runs up to fairly good size, the largest being about the same size as a normal small-mouth bass.

Small minnows and grasshoppers and worms will serve to interest them in the anglers presence. However, they are mostly taken with small nickel-plated spoons and spinner or natural pearl spoons attached to a No. 2 size hook that has been baited with a small shiner, chub or even small sunfish and perch. The tail of a crayfish peeled to the shiny white meat is also good.

EQUIPMENT

A fly rod of medium weight and approximately 8 foot length, with a single-action fly rod reel and 30 yards of ordinary level silk enameled line, green or amber color. Medium weight leader of about 4 foot length and snelled hooks, size 6. Use a float if fishing far out where the bait can not be used without sinking to bottom. A trout size landing net with an elastic cord to fasten to angler's body.

Chapter 17

POND-FISH TACKLE—STILL-FISHING

BULLHEAD, OR BULL-POUT

IN THE THOUSANDS of small lakes and ponds that are found scattered about over the fresh-water fishing ranges of the United States and Canada is to be found some delightful small-fish angling. One of the outstanding members of the finny tribe that is to be fished for in ponds and small lakes is the bull-head or bull-pout catfish. This small member of the catfish family affords delightful opportunities for every one of the fishing fraternity, from the time when the opening buds appear on the alders and willows along the marshy borders of these fishing pools until autumn winds and chilly temperatures send it down deep into the muddy bottoms and under lily pad and rush roots for its winter hibernation.

Worms and small minnows, soft shell crayfish and paste-baits, also cut bait fashioned from raw liver and beef, are its favored foods, and the fisherman who understands how to use these offerings is bound to have material results in bullhead fishing.

In the early spring when the waters are flush and cool fishing-worms are as good a choice of bait for the bullpout as anything to be found. A medium small hook is best to

use. The size No. 2 to 4 is preferable, in Kirby or Carlisle patterns with "Reversed" Bend, so that the bullhead is more sure of being "struck" with the point of hook when picking up the bait from bottom of pond or stream pool. This is especially pertinent because of the fact that large and bulky baits are quite necessary in such fishing. The thinly baited hook is not very highly appreciated by the bullhead cat. A "gob" of worms wriggling and squirming on the mud bottom of the fishing pool will arouse more interest from this fish than one that is baited as for bluegill or trout fishing and held in a tantalizing position several inches above the muck or mud. The eyes of the bullhead catfish it will be easily noted are placed in a position that makes it almost imperative that the bait used in its capture be presented from below, rather than from above, and this in conjunction with the fact that the fish swims close to or almost on the bottom when seeking food explains the reason for fishing directly on the mud or muck for them.

Around old streamside or lake stumps, where the water is four and five feet in depth and where there is mud and sand bottom is perhaps one of the best spots for the bullhead to be captured. The bait should be cast out and permitted to sink down until it rests on the bottom. Use a fairly heavy sinker, otherwise the bullhead will pick up the bait and run with it for the dangerous concealment of the roots under stump and there is a chance of the catch becoming fouled and lost with a good part of the terminal tackle in the strike. This same thing applies also to fishing around lily pad and rush islands where the bullhead is sure to be found in good numbers. A bait fished from a straight line with the sinker resting on the bottom also works well. In this case, however, the sinker should be thoughtfully spaced at least six inches up the line from the hook. The bullpout picks up the

bait for its customary run, and the sinker offering a certain resistance causes the hook point to become engaged in the tough mouth of the little "cat." This results in quicker hooking than by using a light sinker and allowing the fish to run for long distances with the bait before making the snub, and gives the fisherman an advantage that results in more accuracy and sureness in hooking his fish. This is essential in fishing where there are large schools of the fish, for a long running fish, through such schools serves to disturb and scatter its brother members, and so slows down the biting of the bullhead.

The strike should be made on the bullhead just as soon as the line starts off on a swift run, providing the sinker is large enough to have offered resistance and the hook used is one with a good Reverse-bend. A fairly large float works well in this fishing also. It gives the real intimation of the fish when it takes up the bait for the run, and the strike should be made a little later when using a float than when using a straight line. However, these small details (highly important ones, however) can soon be worked out by the fisherman to his own complete success. It takes a keen and watchful eye and an angler who is ever alert and on the job to bring in a good catch of these fish. That is one of the most important requisites of the pastime of bullhead fishing.

PASTE BAIT

Catfish have a habit of following the "scent" of a strong and rancid order of bait, and for this reason those who like to do their fishing in the most restful of manners, at some particularly comfortable spot along pond or lake-side prefer to use cut-baits and those concocted out of rancid cheese and partially decayed meats.

A good paste bait is made as follows:

In an iron kettle, pour one quart of water and bring to a boil. Sift a pint of unbolted meal (corn) into the boiling water by adding a little at a time and stirring generously to keep the meal from sticking. In the process add a small chunk of rancid cheese to give it flavor and permit this to melt thoroughly. A crust will form on bottom of pot. Keep stirring the mush and rolling it about the pot until it is the consistency of rubber and until it refuses to stick to the ladle or wooden stirring stick, then remove it and place on a board that has been previously sprinkled with dry meal to keep the paste from sticking. Start kneading the dough with one hand, and with other hand touch the dough lightly with a wad of cotton-batting. The fluffy cotton is taken up slowly this way by dough and keep this up until the dough is tough and rubbery. Pinch off small pieces and roll them into small balls. These will bounce like rubber when dropped on the floor, and then the paste is ready for use. Be sure the supplies are clean that you use, as dirty meal will not work well. Keep these dough-balls rolled in a dry cloth until cold, but use a damp cloth after the first day. Load the hook with this dough bait and use a light linen line, a No. 4 Carlisle hook, fly rod reel and a good stiff fly rod. It works well for bullhead catfish, buffalo suckers and carp.

LIVER BAIT

Procure a piece of liver from the meat market, and allow it to grow fairly stale, then cut it into strips and cube these with a sharp knife. Use the most juicy portions, so that a faint discoloration appears when the bait is placed in clear

water. A No. 4 sized Carlisle or Kirby hook and a light line with half ounce sinker is good with this bait. Cast it out into muddy bottom pools, at the side of rushes and permit to sink to bottom. Allow it to lie there until the catfish catch its scent and congregate around it for their feast.

MINNOWS

Use lively minnows of most any variety two inches in length. A No. 4 size Kirby or Carlisle hook is best, and a half ounce sinker. Fish the sinker on bottom, this permits the minnow to play about it over the mud or sand and mud bottom. Small minnows are best. Snub as soon as the catfish takes the sinker up and starts running with line in short circles.

WORMS

Use plenty of worms on a size 4 or 2 Kirby or Carlisle hook. Crowd the worms on until they form a round ball, about the size of a large marble. Be sure they are lively and wriggling. Cast out and let lie on bottom, with sinker six to eight inches away. As soon as the fish starts running in circles or pulling strongly, lift the rod tip and snub lightly.

I have seen bullheads taken with a bunch of worms wadded and fastened with a light thread about a stick or switch end. Use a boat and drift over a school of the fish, in a prospective fishing place. Lower end of stick into pool and when bullpouts gather around it and start striking it, lift it gently without any shock and almost invariably from one to two of the voracious little fellows will cling on stubbornly to the bait until they are brought into boat and shaken loose. This is called "stick" fishing.

EQUIPMENT

A 9 foot fly rod and fly rod reel, a 6 thread linen line and half-ounce Dipsey sinker, with a No. 2 or No. 4 size Carlisle or Kirby hook with reverse-bend. This makes a very pleasing and sporty tackle for bullheads. For boat fishing use a five foot length bait casting rod of light steel or split bamboo and same sort of terminal tackle, with a level wind bait casting reel. A more simple bullhead rig can be fashioned with a 12 foot cane pole, a length of linen line with Egg or Dipsey sinker and same hooks as above mentioned. A good minnow bucket is necessary when using small live minnows.

CARP

This fish found so often in ponds and small lakes is not considered a very high-class gamester. Neither is it a good food fish, but there are those who delight in fishing for it. because of its very strong and active proclivities when captured on hook and line.

The best tackle is a regulation bass fly rod, fly line, fly reel and a strong VEC, synthetic or Japanese gut leader of perhaps 6 foot length. Use a small hook—about size 6, and a fairly heavy sinker. With such a rig this fish really does give the angler a handful of action and stubborn and obstinate rushes and lunging runs. The action one gets from hooking a 6 lb. carp on such a rig more than compensates the fisherman for its absolute worthlessness as a food fish for table use.

The best baits are peeled crayfish tails, dough-balls and fresh-cut sweet corn. These are all winners for carp in the spring, summer and early autumn.

August is a banner month for carp fishing. Early September is also good.

Fish for them on mud bottoms and on sandy-mud bottoms in channels where the water is six to eight feet in depth, and at the edge of weed beds and lily pad meadows. Use a half ounce sinker, Egg shape preferable, so that line can run freely through the sinker when carp picks up bait. Have a knot in line or leader six inches from hook to hold sinker above hook in casting. Use a line or leader small enough to run through sinker opening freely. Bait four grains of cut sweet corn on hook and cast out and let it sink to bottom. If using crayfish tails then take a large hard shell crayfish and kill it and twist body off where tail joins and with a dull knife blade peel the covering off the tail. This is ideal for early September fishing. Use a long-shanked hook (Carlisle) and run point into tail of cray and out again so as to have a good nip of the bait. Cast it out while crayfish tail is still active and you will soon get a rise.

Fresh water mussels of the orange-tinted shade opened fresh and cut into cubes are also good carp bait.

Dough-Ball Bait

One half cup flour,
One full cup corn meal,
Enough sugar to sweeten (teaspoon).
Then mix and roll into small balls and boil for 15 minutes.

This is an old and tried recipe and especially good for carp and buffalo suckers.

Carp Bait

½ cup warm water,
3 tablespoons corn meal,
4 tablespoons sugar,
1 teaspoon corn starch.

Soak the meal ten minutes in the warm water, mix other items into a stiff pancake batter with wheat flour and flavor with vanilla extract, then bake on medium hot griddle as a pancake and cut into pieces one-half inch square or larger.

SUCKERS

The common white and red-horse sucker is found many times in ponds and small lakes, and while this fish is not in any sense of the term "game," still I have seen them taken with an artificial fly on the bass-fly fisherman's outfit. I recall, also taking an 8 lb. sucker one blustery northern day out of Night Hawk Lake in the northern part of Ontario on a large artificial wooden minnow. In every case, however, these fish did not actually "strike" the lures I have mentioned, but were taken simply because the hooks of these baits fouled the fish in the tough lips that serve as a mouth. These fish are sluggish and most times clumsy in their actions, and an artificial lure darting through a school of them will many times engage a sharp pointed hook in their only vunerable part, the tough, sucker-like mouth that acts as a type of suction-hose rather than as an opening for the reception of food as we know it on the more game species such as those of the perch, sunfish and pike families. However, I have taken white suckers on small crayfish in the falltime when the waters were cold, and with a fly rod outfit of light weight and had them put up a play equal in swiftness and agility to any small-mouth bass. But this was not because of their natural gameness, but rather because of their inherent timidity. When a sucker is frightened it can move very fast and has a surprising proclivity to rush wildly to the surface and go flying out of the water for a truly noble "leap," into the air. All of which we outline to

give the pond and small lake fisherman some inkling of what might happen when fishing for these fish with really sporty tackle. The fly rod is an excellent type of tackle to use for sucker fishing. It is light and the sucker will almost invariably put up a flashing battle when hooked with a light tip and a thin gut leader and small, sharp hook. Small crayfish, not more than an inch in length, worms and bits of freshly cut mussel are all good baits for them. The bait, however, should be small, and the hook not more than a No. 4 size with a long shank and a straight bend. A Sproat or a Pennell are both good, with extra length shank, such as we buy for use in tying up streamer flies. The worm should be baited sparsely on the hook, directing the point through the middle for best results and leaving at least a quarter inch of the end projecting over the end of hook point. Small crayfish should be baited by directing point of hook through the body from head to tail, leaving point covered, however. This permits the small suction-intake of the sucker that we call its mouth to draw the bait and its hook in with a minimum of time and effort. When the bait is first taken by the sucker there is a slight trembling movement of the line and a vibrating tug at the rod tip. The tip should be sensitive and light for this reason, so as to register all these delicate symptoms of the suckers rise to the bait. Do not strike or snub back at this first emotion from the tackle, but rather hold steady until the fish has sucked the bait in and the hook point is safely inside the mouth cavity. Then the fish will start moving away, possibly moving some distance and settling down for the mastication of the bait. When it moves off is the best time to snub the hook into the victim's tough mandable or lips. A sharp little rap should be offered the running fish to set hook point in tough lips of fish. If this is done neatly so as to

surprise and alarm the fish there will be a sharp, hard rush toward the surface and the sucker will give a good account of itself as a gamester on the rod and line. But if allowed to suck the bait well into the mouth and to start swallowing it then the hook will injure and discourage the fish, so that a very poor result will come of the catch, so far as gameness is concerned.

The sucker is a poor food fish. It is sweet and flavorous so far as that is concerned, but there are so many sheaf-like arrangements of bones in its construction that it is positively dangerous as a food fish. However, by scaling it and cleaning it carefully and then scoring it all the way along the body, deeply, with a sharp knife and then frying the fish in deep, sweet bacon fats it can be made a very nice addition to the camp table. The bones fry out brittle and crisp and it can be eaten without much danger. This is the method used by most old campers who swear it is the best fish afloat for sweetness and flavor. Some run them through a meat chopper then fashion the flesh into croquettes making a very savory and palatable camp dish.

In fishing for the sucker a light rod tip is necessary and the rod should be whippy and limber. Light line and a long gut leader with light split shot sinker and No. 4 hook attached to leader and small sized bait is best. The rod should be "set" for best results, owing to the sensitive and timid nature of the fish, so that when the sucker takes hold of the bait it will not be disturbed and frightened away by any sudden movement. The fisherman should sit close to his rod, in a position so that at the first run of the fish the rod can be picked up and the snub made without any bungling movements. In this respect the sucker is very like the famed salt water tarpon, whose nature is very similar to the fresh water sucker in all these "biting" characteristics.

EEL

Ponds and small lakes, if they are connected with larger rivers and lakes by outlets, and especially if they have reedy, grassy margins and deep, eddy channels where there are stone ledges and pilings or log retaining walls, oftentimes hold good eel beds. This fresh-water food fish is rather a mystery to the average fresh-water fisherman. But with a can of good fishing worms or some cut mussel bait the eel can be taken quite often in bull-pout and sucker waters. The eel has a large mouth and a good sized hook should be used. A No. 1/0 hook baited with cut mussel bait is best to use. A sinker that serves to hold the baited hook down within a few inches of the bottom, but not resting on bottom is best. Use a fairly strong rod. The tubular steel, jointed, bait fishing rod of 7 foot length is ideal for this type of fishing. Use no float, and fish the bait along old log retaining walls, rocky shores and where there are channels lined with reeds and rushes are best places to find eels lurking. They are fairly good food, when skinned like a catfish, and cut into sections, then fried in deep fat with corn meal and salt dip. Three split buckshot makes a good sinker. They put up a twisting, whirling battle that taxes a good angler and rod to the extreme. They will also strike a small live minnow.

PICKEREL

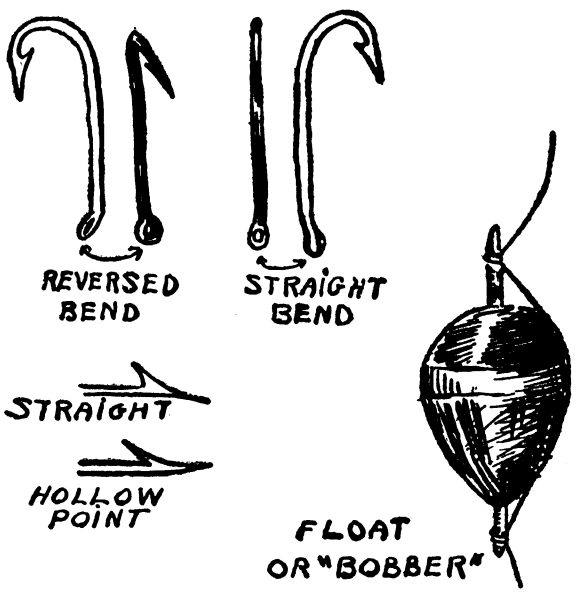
The pond-pickerel is, of course, a very well-known and common gamester of the smaller lakes and ponds. They are found at the edge of the pad islands, along strips of grass and rushes where the water is from two to five feet in depths and in the shadow of drift logs and stumps. The

pickerel is a true member of the Pike family and although not nearly so large as the real Pike, it puts up a good battle on light tackle and is a fair food fish.

Minnows are their natural food. Small frogs and even insects, such as grasshoppers and crickets, exert considerable allure to them. Worms are always good.

A fly rod with considerable stiffness of action is about the best choice in tackle for pickerel fishing. A light enameled line of E size and a fly rod reel and heavy gut leader, with snelled No. 2 size hook and medium weight sinker (two split BB shot), is a very pleasing outfit to use. No sinker is necessary in fishing with minnows or frogs. Simply hook the minnow through the lips and cast it out to the edge of the pads or grass and strip back the line slowly, swimming the bait slowly through the water. A frog can be worked the same way. It is a good plan to use a flat bottomed fishing boat or canoe for this sport. That way one can cast in to the edge of the pads and into the weedy little coves, where the fish like to lie facing out toward open water, and they are sure of seeing the bait. They strike sharply and run for the concealment of the shadowy places, so that the line should be fed back to them gently when they take the minnow, or the frog, lowering the tip, until they have reached some shadowy spot, at the edge of a log or where an old log lies under the water. Then hold them lightly for a second until they have worried the bait about in their mouth and turned it headfirst for gorging, when the tip should be struck lightly upward to set hook. It is a good idea to use a "reversed" bend hook for this fishing, as it does not take so long for the fish to gorge the minnow or frog deep enough for safe hooking when struck. A straight-bend hook sometimes misses these small, quick moving fish, unless the bait is given them for a longer period

of time so that they can get it gorged deeper to make the hook point deadly. In the latter case they are hooked deeper, but more fish are apt to be lost and, besides, the play of a fish hooked in the gullet is not so sharp and lively as one hooked in the lip or corner of mouth. For this reason a re-



verse-bend shape of hook is advisable in live baiting for this fish.

The float can be used when fishing with worms for pickerel. But for minnows and frogs a cast in to the haunts and then a slow retrieve of bait back with line stripped with left hand through guides is best. I have found that a green-tinted synthetic or Japanese gut leader is best to use. The new VEC leader material is very satisfactory for pickerel casting with live bait and a fly rod.

MINNOWS

Fishing for minnows in ponds and small lakes, to use for bait, is a thing that many seem to underestimate in the study of angling and angling tricks. Minnows are not always easy to catch in traps or to sein, especially when one is on a trip back into a little settled region, by himself—or when traveling light on camping trips back of the usual farms and settlements. In the tackle-box or every live-bait angler there should be carried a large cork or an empty line spool, such as line-makers use to wind the bait casting line on. A simple, but effective minnow-fishing rig can be wound on this. It takes up only a minimum of space in the tackle-box, pocket or kit-bag, and when a good lively minnow for bait is wanted it comes in very handy. Use about ten feet of ordinary black cotton sewing thread of size No. 40. A pair of split BB shot pinched to the line six inches from one end will serve to sink it in whatever depth the minnows are found schooling. A small, ringed minnow-size hook, No. 10 attached to end below shot completes the outfit. No float is necessary, although it is not a bad idea to have a small bottle cork attached, just in case one has to fish for the minnows out at some distance from a shallow shore. Bait the hook with a *pinch* of worm, a small cube of fish-belly or even a grasshopper's head or grub, and attach the free end of line to a five foot switch cut from a thicket.

Small brooks that run into larger ponds or streams will be the best places to look for chubs. Find a deep hole where the meadow grass bends over and drop the baited hook down at the head of such a pool and permit the current to carry the baited hook under the grass. Good big chubs stay there, also shiners.

Pond chubs and shiners are found about landings where

camp refuse has been dumped or beneath overhanging brush. If one has his noonday lunch along, just take a part of a sandwich, or a cracker or small rind from some fruit in the package and toss it into the shallows. In a short time it will attract minnows to its vicinity and then one can slip his cast with the minnow rig into the area and get plenty of bait.

Chapter 18

TROUT TACKLE—STILL-FISHING

TROUT FISHING OFFERS the angler a wide variety of fishing practices, and the use of the ordinary garden-worm is perhaps the most common of all other attractors for this fish. In the early spring when the streams are still high and cold the worm is one of the most killing and consistently successful of all baits. Even in the summer season when the brooks and rivers are down to normal levels the worm continues to be effective, when properly fished and presented to this shy and cunning gamester of the brush-bound waterways.

Speckled brook trout, German Brown trout and Rainbow trout will all take the fishing worm throughout the entire fishing season, but there are certain practical methods of using this bait that produces better effects than other more careless and impractical ways.

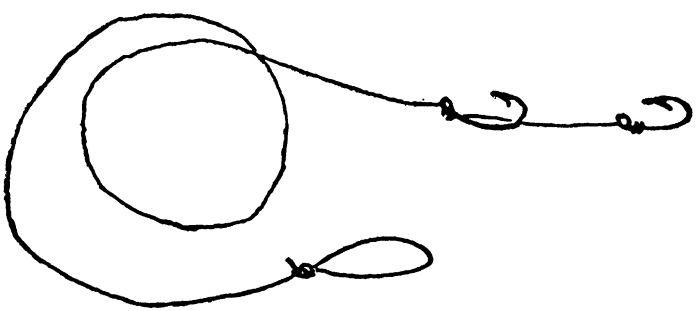
The chief thing to remember in worm-fishing for trout is that the hook must be properly baited for best results. The habit of baiting a hook with a large gob of worms such as we practice in bass and pan-fish angling with bait does not work so well in trout angling. A single good red garden worm of two or three inch length that has been thoroughly "scoured" before placing in the water by keeping it in a can

of dampened moss or grass and then scientifically baited to the hook will catch more trout than one that is carelessly and misunderstandingly placed on the hook. The main idea in worm fishing is to present the bait to our old friend, Mr. Trout, in as natural a manner as possible. This is accomplished by using light and delicately tinted tackle, and by properly fastening the bait to hook.

For ordinary small creeks and brooks a light mist-colored leader of four foot length is advisable. The line should also be light in caliber. A size E is about right, although an F size can be used with such a leader, providing the rod is not over 5 ounces in weight. The hook should be a good one of No. 2 size, hollow-point and with a fairly deep bend, such as a Sproat, Pennell or Limerick pattern. Be sure it is a hollow-point pattern, for the trout is one of the most cunning biters of all the game fish, and a sharp, swift-hooking bit of steel is very necessary to use in order to fasten the shy and tricky little gamester. I have watched trout of ten to twelve inches in length follow a drifting worm baited to the hook for yards along a stream current, nipping at a worm with all the caution and wariness of a fox circling an appetizingly baited set. Then, suddenly the trout would dart in to make its kill, and if anything went wrong and it was not hooked at the strike it would flash away into the concealment of the streambed. For this reason it is advisable to always have a sharp, properly pointed hook in such fishing.

In setting the worm to the hook it is advisable to have it appear just as natural as though the stream had washed a chance item of food into the trout's domain. This is accomplished by hooking the bait lightly just under the tough outer covering so that it does not hang to the hook, but rather the hook clings to the worm. In order to work this

most skillfully it should be remembered that the deeper a worm is hooked the less life and vitality it is going to show on the steel. Hold a well scoured, flashing and lively worm firmly by the head with left finger and thumb, then with right hand point the hook down and run it under the collar of the worm, approximately an inch below head section. Bring the hook through and slide the worm up the hook stem and anchor it securely where the gut snell is attached to the metal shaft. That holds the head in a position that



permits the worm to stretch and wriggle its upper sections about without hinderance. Now, at a distance down the bait's length a little more than equal that from hook-bend to eye, make another shallow, but sure catch of worm with hook point, and this time just run the hook through to back of bend. Now, the worm is hooked so as not to injure it any, and at the same time the hook clings firmly to the bait, permitting it to wriggle and squirm about in all its natural manner. The tail and head sections are free to twist and coil about, and the hook point, barb and bend is entirely uncovered so that a rising trout is bound to be more easily hooked in some part of mouth or lip. This is the system of worm baiting that most old trout fishermen use. It is especially effective when bank-fishing and also when cast-

ing the worm down into eddy pools from their heads and wading.

In wading and fishing with bait, the angler should be very careful to approach the best pools from above and with a slow, and unhurried caution. If the season is dry and the waters low and clear it is a good plan to quietly stir up as much silt and sand as possible on approaching the head of the pool from a riffle or shallows. This can be done by digging the boot toes into the bottom with a slow, boring movement until the current is discolored and the discoloration flows down into a good area of the head of pool. Sometimes a bit of white clay can be found, or a sod can be uprooted from the banks and this can be quietly immersed in the riffle water a few yards above the pool where trout are known to lie, then with the boots this can be trampled upon and the water will be quickly discolored. When the water is roiled nicely then drop the worm-baited hook down into the head of the pool where the current eddies can play it about. A light buckshot will serve as a sinker. If fishing from a riffle, at the head of a pool keep back far enough that the reflection or shadow of the angler does not fall into the trout's haunts. Permit the bait to swing around and drift out from a slanting line, softly pulling off line from reel, and feeding it just fast enough to allow the bait to probe the edges and margins of the good spots. Keep the bait down under the surface of the water so that it is out of sight of the angler. This is done with proper weighting, and for this reason an assortment of various sized split-shot sinkers are advisable. Have them in a small screw top bottle, where they are easy to find. Use a small pair of plyers to pinch the shot over leader, and to remove others not any longer needed.

Sometimes the trout prefer their food at deeper stages,

and in these cases—also in streams that are more than moderately deep and that run through flat stretches of swamp lands with few gravel or rock riffles for the wading fisherman—bank-fishing is best to resort to for good fish. This is sometimes called, "Indian" fishing, but regardless of what it is called, I want to say that it is usually a real trout-producer and many a large fish basket has been filled by practicing this orthodox method of trouting when other ways have proven uncertain and disappointing.

In bank fishing the line should be dark colored, rather than light tinted. The leader should be darker than usual, and it is a good plan to have the leader and snells almost black, for this fishing. This can be done by soaking the leaders in a solution of ink before going on the stream. Use a worm-baited hook—same as in riffle fishing methods—and a fairly heavy sinker, so that bait is carried swiftly down to its objective. It is surprising how many fine trout haunts can be found by slowly and studiously wending one's way along the brushy margins of his favorite trout stream. In every case, however, approach these spots with care and understanding. Do not stamp up to them and expect to get the response that dreams are woven about, for the trout is one of our most sensitive and wary game fish. The hollow, resonant nature of marshy trout pond and stream surroundings are notorious for their telegraphic structure, and a cunning trout waiting for some item of food to float by will be warned long before the angler can get within effective casting distance, if its area is approached carelessly. However, by crawling forward in slow and considerate caution the fisherman can get within casting range of even the most wary of brook or rainbows. Or, perhaps a detour can be made and the spot can be approached from a direction that will permit easy and safe entry to the pool. In every case use caution. Do

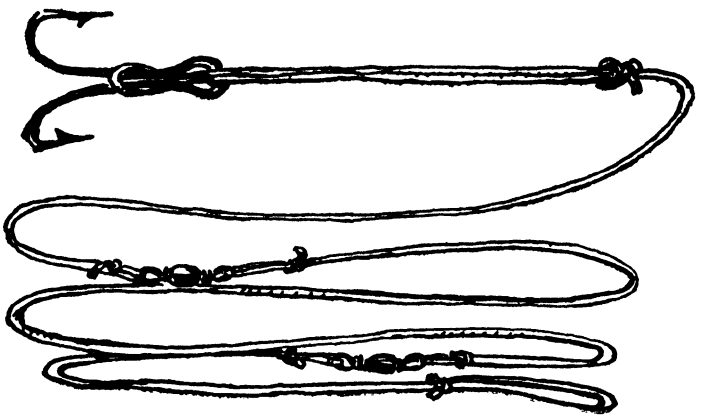
not hurry things. That is what makes trouting with the worm and fly rod such a thrillingly intriguing sport. Every fish caught is a fish that has had to have a new angle of pursuit improvised, and that makes any game worth the playing!

Another interesting mode of fishing for the trout with bait is minnow fishing. Here we strike a resonant note in our trouting. Big trout are taken with minnows. Also small ones. But the average runs large for the expert minnow fisherman. He is the fellow who causes other anglers to view his efforts with respect and a certain amount of human envy. They wonder how he does it! And he is questioned many times as practicing unethical methods—but the good minnow fisherman is a fisherman that gets magical results—unbelievably large trout!

The secret of minnow fishing is the hooking of the bait. And the fishing of this bait where big trout are inclined to lurk, which is usually just below the break of the long riffles, where it suddenly gouges out the sand and gravel and swirls around a rock or eddies along the angling sides of a log or brush sweeper in the pool, is done with the following rig:

A 6 foot salmon gut leader is used. This is cut into 3 sections and two No. 8 size swivels, 5/8 of an inch long, used to connect these together into a six foot casting lead for the minnow. The cut used here is an illustration of the minnow fishing leader and hook. A double hook is used, size 5 to 8 and a loop tied in the end of the leader to run through the eye of this hook. Fastened this way a trout will not fight lose from the hook regardless of whether it takes one of the hooks at the side or both of them at once. The minnow to use for this outfit should be one with red fins. They are the most killing, and the size should be from

two to three inches in length. These minnows must be alive when placed on the hook, otherwise their fins and their fresh, colorful appearance will fade and make the bait of little use. A half dozen such minnows can be carried in a screw-top bottle in the creel or fishing jacket pocket. A shake of the



bottle ever and anon will serve to keep them alive and active. Be sure to find a minnow with red or orange colored fins. These will keep well in a bottle. The minnow is baited on the hook by inserting the end of the leader loop into their mouth and running it down through their body and out the anal opening, then carefully draw the minnow down the length of the leader and rest the body in the cradle of the two double hooks. This causes the bait to wobble and roll when drawn through a pool, much the same as a crippled minnow will do. The head is at the rear and the fish will strike this and get hooked at once. It should be fished by wading down stream on riffles and casting down into the eddy pools a few feet below the drop-off from the rip, then draw the bait back up through pool

and about three to six feet in riffle. Let it drift down again about three feet and pull up against current again, causing the minnow to spin and whirl. The minnow is, of course, dead and its whirling, spinning action is what attracts the rise of the fish. If the current is strong and a sinker is necessary to keep the bait down under surface the best type of weight to use is a strip of soft lead, hammered very thin and about $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch in width. Wrap this in a spiral around the leader a few inches above the bait. It will not catch in the stones like a split shot sinker does. Brown trout are very partial to this lure and large ones will rise to it when other baits such as flies and worms fail to interest them. It is an excellent bait to use in those streams that have large fish that refuse to rise to the other types of bait or fly. The best type of fly rod to use with this lure is the tubular steel, two section, fly rod, that weighs around $5\frac{1}{2}$ ounces and is 8 feet in length. A regular crank style fly rod reel with a capacity for at least 30 yards of size E or D silk enameled line completes the outfit.

Grasshoppers are an excellent trout bait in the very hot seasons of the year and when the streams are low and clear, with a thunder shower threatening. These should be used with a light fly casting rod and a long gut leader with dropper lopps, so that more than one snelled hook can be placed on the lead. A size No. 4 hook is good for "hopper fishing," and the bait can be attached by running the point of hook through the insect or, better yet, by lashing the insect on the hook, with point down, with a short length of cotton sewing thread. The grasshopper is best fished without any sinker, or with just a mere pinch of flattened lead wrapped about the leader, and then "spatting" the hopper on the surface where the trout are "bulging" the water or rising in large pools with meadow shores.

"Water Crickets" are also good trout bait when they are feeding on the deep riffles and in small pools below the riffles. The Water Cricket is found in water-soaked sticks and bits of driftage at the foot of steep riffles and falls, where they collect in quantities on the bottom among the rocks or along the sandy shores of the pools. They are really creeper nymphs and are found in June and July along all trout waters. They resemble small brown colored crickets and should be used on a No. 10 snelled hook, and fished with a light leader and small dab of lead sinker.

Pine Sawyers are a small species of grub that we find in old pine logs that still retain their bark, but that have started to moulder and dry out. The Pine Sawyer is a good trout bait for mountain rivers and should be kept in a screw top bottle with some mouldy wood duff that has been slightly dampened. Have holes in the top of the bait can.

Grubs, ant's eggs, small hellgramites and crayfish and maggots are all good for trout bait when used with a small hook in the hot weeks of the season when streams are low and clear. Keep well hidden and use them to "splat" on the surface and then permit to sink and be carried into trout haunts by the current, with a very little bit of lead bent about the leader as a sinker. Heavy sinkers are not a good idea in using such baits, as they are tender and hard to keep on the hook, but by using small hooks and lashing them in place with light sewing thread they can be used very effectively by the patient and enthusiastic trout fisherman.

NOTE: See Chapter 22 for more bait fishing methods used in trout fishing—*Author.*

Chapter 19

BAIT CONTAINERS AND KEEPING BAIT

ONE OF THE important things about live bait fishing for all game fish of our waters is that the bait is kept fresh and lively for use at all times. This is considerable of a responsibility and does more to turn anglers off the live-bait fishing path perhaps than anything else. However, keeping the bait fishing supply fresh, lively and attractive is not such a trick providing the proper containers are used and the attention necessary for their well-being is given a little careful study.

For minnows used for bass fishing, crappie fishing, pike and muskie fishing and for perch and bluegills, some sort of arrangement must be instigated whereby the baits are kept alive and active. Bass, bluegills, perch, pike and muskie will not consider dead minnows for their diet. Trout will rise to a dead minnow properly hooked and trolled through the pool so as to give the bait a rolling, crippled movement. Pickerel will also strike on a dead minnow hooked so as to wobble and roll when reeled or stripped back through pool. But for bass and perch, as well as most of the pike family, the bait should be alive and active.

A good minnow bucket is a necessary item of every bait fisherman's equipment. The best type is the metal con-

tainer with an inside lining that can be removed when the waters are reached and placed in the running or fresh water of lake or river. This type of bucket comes usually in two and four quart sizes, and will hold enough minnows for any ordinary day's fishing for bass, pike or muskie. It will not, however, keep the minnows alive for any length of time while carrying or conveying them from the brook or lake



BAIT BOX

where they have been caught to the fishing grounds, unless some artificial means is practiced to aerate and invigorate them. The best way to overcome this tendency of the minnows to suffocate and die for want of freshly aerated water is to use cracked ice or a "chunk" of ice for freshening and retaining the oxygen in the water of bucket while on the move. To do this properly fill the minnow bucket full of water after bait has been placed in its compartment, so that water stands on top of perforated top. The top of the bucket must be perforated so that minnows can get air. And the lining or interior receptacle of the minnow bucket must be buoyant so that it will float when taken from the outside pail and placed in a stream or lake. A bucket that sinks to the bottom will not keep minnows well. They will die from suffocation if immersed in too deep a pool or left in the water overnight and a day without any outside air. Therefore be sure that your minnow pail has a metal air-tank in the screened inside-bucket so that it will float with

the upper end on surface when placed in the lake or stream. Be sure that it is shaded when left in the water, otherwise many of the baits will perish. If it is a sinking type of bucket, however, this can be remedied by suspending the pail in the fresh water with a length of strong cord so that the top is just clear of the surface and have it shaded by boat or a bit of brush or weeds. In carrying the minnows any distance, in car or by hand, use a large chunk of hard ice to lay on the perforated top of bucket. This will melt and aerate the water and keep minnows fresh and lively for hours at a time, as long as the ice keeps melting. It also cools the water, and minnows can even be kept in an ordinary tin pail this way for a goodly length of time, so long as the ice melts and injects oxygen into the water.

Another type of minnow bucket is the artificially aerated ones, with a pump that supplies fresh air into bottom of tank and thereby keeps the minnows lively and healthy. This type of bucket is also heavily insulated to keep out heat and to preserve the even temperature of interior. It floats when placed in the water and is an excellent one to have on fishing trips. However, with this bucket I have found that adding a chunk of ice the size of a large ball will help to make the minnows more active and attractive to the game fish.

An ordinary gallon size water or syrup pail, with straight sides and a lip encircling its upper edge can be turned into a good minnow pail, simply by loosely draping a large handkerchief over the top and retaining it there with a cord about the pail just below opening. Fill it to the top with water and the handkerchief settling down into the water permits the minnows shade and to come to surface and suck air through its weave. I have carried minnows for long distances in such a "home-made pail," and by shak-

ing it every few minutes so as to force air through the handkerchief and into the water have kept my baits lively for hours at a time in hot weather. When fresh water is added it should be poured onto the cloth covering from a good height a little at a time, or, better yet, the pail should be placed under a water faucet and the water allowed to drip in a stream about the size of a straw. By keeping the pail under a water faucet with a small drip running on the handkerchief minnows can be kept fresh and lively for days at a time. This is a trick that should be remembered by those who have bait that is to be preserved for a fishing trip a number of hours removed.

Some trout fishermen use live minnows for their single hook fishing rigs and for these anglers a minnow bucket of small size is advisable. Such a bucket can be had, one that holds two-quarts and that is in every way similar to the larger minnow buckets such as bass and pike fishermen use. This container can be carried at the end of a six or eight foot cord, attached to the angler's belt. It is of the floating type and will drift along before the minnow fisherman as he wades down a trout creek or for the bass fisherman using light minnow lures and wading and fishing the riffle pools. The best type of minnows for these smaller buckets are those that are extremely hardy and durable, such as red-finned minnows, mud-minnows and stone-roller suckers, all of which live well in stale and unaerated waters. Muddlers, the small black catfish that are found under stream rocks and that are tough and hardy, can be carried in a screw-top jar in the fisherman's pocket without any apparent injury. Shaking the jar occasionally and opening the top to admit some new air to the water is the only ap-

parent requirement for these baits to retain their lively and vigorous qualities. They are good bass and trout baits.

Chubs, shiners and many of the young white sucker minnows that the bait brooks produce will not live long even in fairly well aerated water it seems, so that it is not advisable to collect them as bait except where there is every opportunity to carry them and keep them on the fishing waters with ice or in artificially aerated minnow buckets.

Worms can be carried for the bait fisherman's hook in a small, curved metal box that will fit to the belt. This box has a perforated lid and hinged cover. It is a good plan to keep such a worm box strapped around the waist or to the creel itself, and it should have about a third of its interior filled with dampened moss or grass for the worms to scour themselves in while the fisherman plies his skill.

Grasshoppers and grubs can be carried in the worm box, but a better arrangement can be fashioned for insect baits, such as hoppers, crickets, toads by taking a small, light wood box and placing some dry grass inside. Then bore a few small holes about the sides so as to give good ventilation for the baits, and over the top tack a piece of old automobile inner tube. In this covering cut a two-inch slit with a sharp knife. When the baits are slipped through this cover opening they can not escape, and are easily and quickly available to the fisherman by merely inserting a thumb and finger and picking out the single bait needed.

Frogs have to have a box with more room, and a good frog-container can be easily made by using a flat wooden dried-fruit box, with a fine screen mesh cover tacked over top and a sliding trap door fashioned at one end, through which hand can be slid when a bait is required. Cover

the bottom of this frog box with damp grass and some moistened lily pad leaves for the frogs to hide under and keep shaded from the sun. Nail a strap handle to the box over center for easy carrying. Hellgramites can be carried in such a case also.

More delicate baits such as ant's eggs, water-crickets, pine-sawyers and various grubs and nymphs can be carried best on the fishing lake or stream when packed in well-rotten duff from a dead tree or dry log in the woods, and dampened by blowing water on the duff from the mouth. A small wooden box of light material such as we oftentimes find at drug stores where drugs have been packed for transportation is best for these. Such a box can be attached to the belt with a small leather "keeper."

Chapter 20

WALL-EYED PIKE TACKLE— STILL-FISHING

NEXT TO THE Black Bass it is safe to say that the Wall-Eyed Pike rates highest with the live-bait fisherman of our American and Canadian fresh waters. However, unlike the bass, the wall-eyed pike gives the fishing worm and the soft-shell crayfish second place in its preference to natural baits, and apparently considers the live minnow as the food most delectable of them all. For this reason the veteran pike fisherman holds strongest to the mud-minnow, the young sucker and the river and run chub in his choice of baits for such fishing.

In the northern lakes and rivers, where the wall-eyed pike is considered one of the chief food fishes to be taken by the vacationist angler from early summer on through until the cold winds makes the sport of fishing out of the question, the live bait angler concentrates almost entirely on good fresh minnows for his pike fishing efforts. Young sucker minnows, river and run chubs and mud-minnows are the choice of the angler. These are fished either from a straight line out of a boat with a regulation bait-casting rod, reel and line and metal snelled hook, with a normally heavy sinker to take the bait down near the bottom, or by casting the bait

out at a distance from the boat or shore into the pike pools and then reeling the bait slowly back to the surface of the water. In the most of the northern lakes, where the wall-eyed pike is found schooling in good families out in the deeper pike "holes" in the hotter parts of the fishing day, the June Bug spinner and the live minnow or a large "gob" of worms are preferred to the straight hook and minnow methods that we find most ordinarily practiced in the middle-western river and creek sections. This first mentioned type of bait fishing takes account of thousands of good fish of this variety each season and is practiced by the sport fisherman according to the following rules:

A bucket of lively mud-minnows, chubs or young suckers is suspended by a strong cord from the side of the fishing boat. One should try and have the bait bucket located on the shady side of the fishing craft, with the top part of the container just floating free of the surface water, and with the wavelets or riffles breaking over top. This insures good, fresh bait. The tackle should consist of a good tubular, solid steel or split bamboo bait casting type of rod, preferably of 5½ to 6 foot length. The best action of rod is the medium-stiff grade, for there is considerable strain placed on the pike rod, through long hours of casting and reeling in of the bait, from varying depths. A good level-wind bait casting reel is also necessary, as the reel of the northern bait fisherman comes in for quite a bit of use, and a waterproofed braided silk casting line of 15 to 18 lbs. test had best be used. No float or "bobber" is necessary. A quarter ounce lead sinker of the adjustable coil-spring type is about what we require for all average depths of the pools. The June Bug Spinner is, in my estimation, the most practical of all terminal tackle requirements for this order of fishing. The hook, a single one, with fairly long shank, should be of size

2/0 with a No. 3 nickel-finish spoon attached above it on a 3½ inch wire leader. Some prefer a spoon with gold-plated underside and nickeled top finish, which is also good. Either finish of spoon, plain or gold and nickel combined, will work well. My preference has always been for the solid nickel finish. The June Bug Spinner should be attached to a 12 inch cable wire leader, with swivel and snap at bottom, for attaching the spinner, and a swivel and ring at top for the line to be fastened. The sinker should go up the line itself a matter of three or four inches, and you are then ready for attaching bait and making cast into the pike hole. Choose a good chub, mud-minnow or sucker minnow, from the bait bucket and hook it from under the lower jaw through both lips and turn loose at once into water. Wait a few moments for the minnow to acclimate itself to the change in surroundings and get its "sea legs" so to speak, then lower rod tip and reel line in until sinker is an inch or so from the tip-top of rod, and make an easy, side-arm cast out into the pike pool. Make a cast that is free running and easy on the bait, and for this reason it is advisable that the reel being used is a modern "Synchronized" action reel that does not overrun and cause sudden tangles or backlashes in the line. Such troubles usually result in the killing or injuring of the bait, and the activities of the minnow on hook is after all the chief rules for a successful cast and retrieve. When cast strikes water it should be allowed to sink down with rod tip held at a slightly high angle. By holding the line lightly with thumb and forefinger of the left hand (presuming the caster is right-handed) one can tell when bait strikes bottom by sudden vibration of line under sinker impact on rocks or sand. Then lift rod tip slightly, to start minnow off bottom and evade snags, and give reel handle a few normal turns. Dip the rod tip down then and reel again a

few times, and keep this up until slant of line tells one that the bait has reached a semivertical position from boat or shore, then reel slowly up, not too fast, until bait is at surface. This slow, lift and reeling of the rig causes the spoon to twirl nicely and the minnow to dart about lively, which is the very thing Mr. Wall-Eyed Pike wants to cause it to rush in and attack its victim. Mud minnows are best to use when the pike are resting deep in the middle of the day or in the hottest part of the afternoon and even in mid-morning hours. They have a tendency to seek the bottom, and keep the allure down where the fish are most likely to be loafing. Suckers do the same thing, but when fish are presumed to be rising and drifting in toward the bars and reefs, which occurs around four o'clock in the evening and when they are going out from bars around 9 A.M., then the chub or surface minnow should be used, as they have a tendency to lift the attraction higher toward surface waters when bait is being manipulated back to boat or shore. In using the June Bug spinner and live minnow it is a good idea to strike the fish very shortly after it has risen to the bait. Do not wait too long! In fishing with this rigging many fine bass will also be taken and occasionally a Northern Pike or a muskellunge, all of them being partial to this order of live minnow fishing.

Another favorite method in the northern lakes is to use a "pike rig" somewhat similar to the June Bug, excepting that a single or a double nickeled spoon is used in connection with the pike hook and that flutters, rather than revolves, as does the June Bug. The ordinary spoon, without the June Bug system of a metal brace from underside of spoon to leader stem, flaps about, taking peculiar and finny-like darts, that some believe to be more alluring to a pike than the revolving *auro* of the June Bug type of spoon. This last mentioned rig is used with minnow as the June Bug, except

that the reeling in is done with long pulls of the rod tip and slow reeling, then permitting bait to flutter down to bottom and reel and pull again until the cast has been worked back to angle of boat or shore where it is reeled in slowly to surface. The sinker should be about half-ounce for the deeper lake pools and for those deep river eddies below rapids, so as to carry the minnow down at sharper angles. Many times the rise of the pike will come when the bait is coming down toward the bottom, spoon flickering lazily. Then the fish usually takes the minnow by the head and the first run of fish should be snubbed with rod tip, so as to set hook. Be sure and use a No. 2/0 hook, with hollow-point hook, sharpened to razor keenness, for this fishing.

The idea of using a rather large hook in all still-fishing for wall-eyed pike is good, for the simple reason that the larger hook gives the point—which after all is the deadly part of the hook—a chance to project well out and catch some part of the gamester's mouth, which gives the incentive for the fish to jerk and so set the hook of its own volition. The mouth of the wall-eye is large and thickly set with small, sharp teeth, but the mandibles and the lips are soft enough for a hook point to set itself rather easily. The rim of the pike's mouth is a poor place to have the point of hook imbed itself, for the reason that it is almost paper thin where it joins the more bony sections of head, and a hook set there will soon wear a large hole under hard play and give the hook the chance of dropping out when the fish gets any slack in play or in landing. For this reason it is always advisable to use a hook with a reverse-bend when possible, as this bend tends to slant the hook toward the mandible, at corner of mouth which is heavy and tough or to have hook set itself in the interior of the mouth, which are the points best intended for safe hooking. In playing the hooked

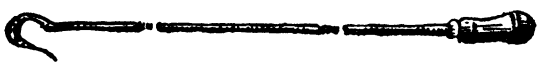
wall-eye one should always strive to keep slack up in the line, and yet not to try "forcing" the fish, as either method will usually result in a lost fish.

In landing the wall-eyed pike care should be taken not to insert the hand in the gills or to get hand too near the mouth of the fish, as gill-rakers and teeth both will do fearful damage to an angler's hand. It is better to land the pike by playing it out completely in the water, with the spring and play of the rod stem, not reeling it in too close before the final play, then working it up to boat or shore waters with caution, and reaching out with a good, long-handled landing net and scooping it head first or from tail, and so capturing it. To try and force a wall-eyed pike up to side of boat or surface waters along shore and then hold it there for its mid-battle struggles is always poor fishing technique. It is better to keep playing it at least twenty feet distant, using the spring of rod to follow its darting, rushing struggle, then when it shows indisputable signs of weakening, lead it in and perform the final landing obsequies. If no net is at hand then a small gaff hook is appropriate, used by lowering the gaff point down to a few inches under water surface, leading the fish close and sharply jerking the gaff point through from under side of jaw and lifting the fish to boat or shore.

In landing the pike by hand lead the weakened fish to within arms reach. Hold the rod with left hand, the thumb blocking reel, and the tip raised so that the line swings close and the fish has the spring of the rod stem to keep it from "rolling" itself off hook. Then with right hand reach out toward head of fish, pulling the fish over on its back with rod, and then grasping it back of gills with open hand, fingers and thumb pressed firmly against back section of head, and gripping tightly raise the fish out of water. The

method described usually works nicely, it seems that the pressure of the fingers and thumb at rear of head serves to paralyze the muscles of fish, rendering it very quiet until dropped into boat or on shore.

There is another method of bait fishing for the pike that is practiced in the middle western rivers and that produces excellent results. This is accomplished without any spoon or spinner combination, and with a size No. 2/0 Sproat or

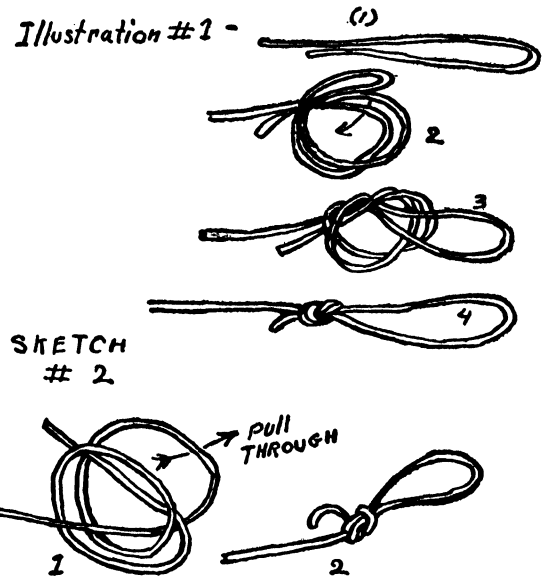


JOINTED GAFF HOOK

Oshaughnessy hook, fairly long stem, and a twelve to eighteen inch cable-wire leader bent to the hook. A swivel at line end of the leader with rig for fastening the line is also a good addition, although I have used with fine success a length of ordinary silvered steel, picture-wire, bent to hook, and with a leader loop fastened at top for attaching line. The line is attached to this "home-made" snell by making a three-inch loop in line end and running end of loop through the metal loop in snell then bringing line loop around and over hook and drawing line taut again. The idea in this fastening, where there is a plain metal wire loop is to prevent line being cut under strain from striking or fighting fish. This is also used in fastening line to artificial lures that have piano-wire leaders and loops.

There are two methods of tying a "leader-loop" in end of line, both of them having the necessary virtues of a non-slip loop that can be used for quick and safe attachment of hooks and lures to the line or the leader ends. The easiest one to tie, and one that is proof against slipping is fashioned by simply bending back the end of line or leader for the necessary distance to form a certain length of loop and then

whipping a simple hard knot into looped line at upper section, as in illustration No. 1. The sketch of No. 2 leader-loop fastening is a bit more complicated, but has the advantage of being more dependable as the line has no chance



to cut through chaffing or strain above the loop-knot. Both styles are used by bait fishermen as well as fly and artificial casting lure anglers.

But to get back to our minnow fishing rig for the middle-western rivers and for those other places where the wall-eyed pike is angled for with a single hook and sinker and without any spoon or spinner fishing additions. This method is a great favorite for the angler who hopes to do his fishing very quietly, and who is content to sit in boat or along shore and connive for the capture of a good basket or stringer of these fishes: The metal-snelled pike hook is attached to line by the loop fastening and eight inches above

the junction of line and leader a quarter ounce sinker is attached. The minnow is used by bringing hook through from under side of jaw in the regulation lip-hooking fashion. Chubs, four to six inches in length, young suckers of same size and sunfish the length of the middle finger of hand are all good baits for this type of fishing. The sunfish, however, should be hooked just under the back dorsal fin, rather than through lips. No float is used and the best location for the fisherman in this fishing is above the eddy or channel in current where the fish are presumed to be lurking or passing along. A choice place for this fishing is at the foot of a river rapids or long riffle, where the stream forms eddies that whirl lazily about stream driftage or submerged rocks. Anchor the fishing boat in the current or close to a rocky point in such surroundings and bait with lively minnow, then cast the bait down current some thirty feet and permit the line to run from reel until bait has found the bottom close about the vicinity of such haunts of the pike. Reel in line until the bait swims freely at varying angles downstream from angler, and wait for the rise of the hungry fish. In fishing from the shore a longer rod is best to use, and the bait is cast out into current and permitted to work down the current, playing over the places where fish are most liable to be located. When minnow gets into shore eddies retrieve it slowly and recast into main current again. This is a very fascinating way to fish for the wall-eyed pike, and in current pools and pools with deep eddies usually produces good results.

WORM FISHING

The ordinary night crawler or garden worm is also very effective against wall-eyed pike, providing it is used as a

casting bait in shallow like streams and streams where there are many submerged rocks and drifts. In such waters the bottom fished bait does not prove effective, for the simple reason that snagged tackle takes up most of the fisherman's efforts and time. A June Bug spinner is best to use in such waters. If the depth of the pools vary sharply from deepish holes to shallow bars, as it so often happens in many of the eastern rivers where the streams are broad and shallow, then the June Bug spinner will not do so well as just an ordinary No. 2 size of nickeled spoon attached to a short metal leader above the pike hook. This last named rig is intended for more shallow fishing, and is therefore recommended for Pennsylvania, New Jersey and many of the New York state wall-eyed pike rivers that are broad and shallow.

The hook for this pike fishing tackle should be not less than a No. 2/0 size, with long shank, and the worms should be crowded on so that they form a heavy, wriggling mass. A very light sinker is used for this outfit, and a rod that is not less than 6 feet in length. One of the most favored rods for this fishing is the 12 foot length cane rods, equipped with guides and tip-top and a simple reel seat, to which is set a regulation bass casting reel holding at least 80 yards of size 12 lbs. test waterproofed silk line. A comparative short length of this line is actually used, for the methods of fishing the worm for pike is more along the trolling style and for such shallow rivers as I have outlined the fisherman wades and fishes.

Channels of three to eight feet in depth are fished carefully, eddy holes that form off gravel and rock bars and still pools at the foot of spreading riffles are all excellent places for the worm and spoon to be fished. Wade down stream, approaching the terminal sections of sand and gravel bars slowly, and strip off a good amount of line from

reel, then with a side arm movement swing the rod so as to send the worm and spinner to the places where you believe pike to be lurking, and strip the line back through the guides, raising rod tip as you swing the bait across or upwards through pool. This is a famous pike fishing strategy when the sun is out fair and when it is approaching evening-time on the shallow rivers where the fish is a native.

Chapter 21

MUSKELLUNGE FISHING TACKLE— STILL-FISHING

MODERN AMERICAN AND Canadian fishermen are showing a tendency to drift away from live-bait fishing for the muskellunge, and perhaps this significant leaning is just as well, for this is really a very killing method of depleting a good muskie pool. If gone about in the proper manner muskellunge fishing with large, lively run chubs and young suckers, especially in the fall season can "riddle" a pool of the biggest and best fish of the species.

I recall an incident that perhaps might bear recounting herein along these lines. Several seasons ago the author discovered a pool in a fairly large river where there was a school of these fish favoring a small area of eddy water below a deep rocky-bar riffle. There was an excellent hiding place at the foot of the pool where a collection of old tree tops and logs had drifted in and sunk into the sandy bottom. Under this rubbish the muskies of the stream were making their home, and in the pool stretching out between the drifts and the rocky bar of the river they did their mid-morning and early afternoon feeding on river chubs, suckers and bream. I had found the fish while casting with artificial baits, and in one morning's time had raised and specifically

tabulated ten distinct members of the family. I managed to interest one of the largest of the family, but lost it in a short, exciting struggle. However, I was content to know that these fish were actually there, and planned to use the pool as a reserve for some of my muskellunge studies. Then, suddenly and mysteriously these fish completely disappeared. I tried to raise them ineffectively a number of times, under varying light and weather conditions, but from that experience I was doomed to failure in raising anything more than a single small specimen. Then, one day I was told by a local fisherman that a famous live-bait angler had also learned of this school of muskies and he had stolen down to the pool on a number of occasions with his bait bucket filled with lively run chubs and had taken the entire family of muskellunge out and carried them off to his home for some famous fish dinners.

For these reasons the northern resort and fishing camp operators have done what they could to discourage the practice of live bait fishing for the noble northern "gamester," the muskellunge. I believe, myself, that it is a good idea, and that live bait fishing for this noble member of the *Esox* tribe should be practiced only with the greatest of consideration for future supplies of the hard-fighting and picturesque *Esox Masquinongy.*

Large red chubs that are found in small meadow and woodland spring brooks offer the best inducement for the Muskellunge to rise to the bait fisherman's hook. Second choice is the large white suckers that are found in thoroughfare and channel and creek. These are choice baits. The green meadow frog is also a good bait for the fish when they are found in marshy lake and river waters. In using the frog, however, a trolling system of fishing for the muskie

should be practiced, using a size 4/0 hook, attached to a No. 3 size of nickeled spoon, a good 20 lbs. test waterproofed silk casting line and a solid-steel or dependable split-bamboo casting rod of medium action, not more than 5½ feet long and a regulation bait casting reel with 80 yards capacity. No sinker is used. The frog is placed on single hook in the approved method of hooking from underside of jaw through both lips, then the canoe or fishing boat is propelled slowly along the borders of the pads, rushes or at the edge of the sedgy shores, where muskie hide, with the bait casting rod held firmly by the angler (a companion or guide should be called into service in this fishing to handle the craft) and about forty feet of line out. Keep click and drag off reel and press the thumb lightly on the spool, so as to give just the right resistance in case of a muskie darting out and striking the troll. If an outboard motor is used have it throttled down to slow-trolling speed and the fisherman should sit on middle thwart. The outboard motor, however, is not generally advised, as many of the northern fishing sections have strict laws prohibiting trolling for fish with an outboard motor. A good canoe and with a good guide or companion at the stern paddle is one of the nicest ways to work this trolling with the frog method. If fishing alone, the angler takes his position at the oars, prepares his troll and makes his cast out to edge of pads or weeds or sedge, then rests the rod tip over stern board of boat and places the rod, with reel handle uppermost, so that it will press against the inside of thigh of angler. Start rowing slowly, so as to keep the spoon twirling and maneuver the boat skillfully around in the little bays amongst the pads and weeds, the troll swimming back of boat, a matter of a foot to two feet under surface. This is one of the prettiest ways I know of fishing for muskie with a live bait. It is sporty and very

entertaining and also excellent exercise for the vacationist fisherman.

Live minnow fishing can also be accomplished very entertainingly this way, using a No. 3 size nickel-finish spoon and a size No. 4/0 hollow-point Sproat or Oshaughnessy hook and a 12 inch metal cable-wire leader with snap and swivel to join the line to the trolling rig. Hook minnow through both lips. Troll slowly.

Another good trolling method for muskellunge is to use a half-pound white sucker or a red creek or run chub of the largest size obtainable. Hook it through both lips. Use a one-eighth ounce sinker on line above the 12 inch metal "snood" or snell that is attached to the hook. Row the fishing boat slowly, little more than drifting speed, DOWN the current of river or with lake current—if there is such a current noticeable, with at least 30 feet of line out. This gives the minnow oceans of freedom and it will swim and play about widely. Keep well out from drifts and pad islands, so that minnow can not get entangled. When a muskie is found the minnow will swim wildly toward the surface and essay to escape. Keep a close watch on the bait and when it shows symptoms of trying to elude something you can know that a fish is being approached or following the bait. Keep on rowing then, slow and easy, and when muskie takes the bait it will do so very softly, with a slow bending down of tip of rod. Then rest the oars in the boat, and pick up rod and release the spool completely. Let the fish run until it comes to a hesitant rest, when it is scaling and swallowing the bait. After a few moments of rest, reel up softly and strike the fish. This method can also be worked with variations when fishing from the shore. A quarter-ounce sinker should be used from shore, however, as the bait must be kept down deeper than in trolling about drift and margi-

nal weed and pad haunts. Wading with hip rubber boots and working the eddies below the sand and gravel bars of lake and river is also very successfully practiced with the minnow and the single, wire snelled hook, for muskies. Worms are of little worth in muskellunge fishing, except when used with a June Bug Spinner, when they occasionally account for a good fish. But for special muskie fishing the frog and the minnow, used as outlined in these preceding paragraphs is most dependable.

EQUIPMENT

The rod for trolling with minnow or frog bait for muskies can be of split bamboo, tubular steel, jointed construction or of solid steel, one piece tip and detachable handle and 5 foot length is a good average. Nothing less than 5 foot is adaptable to general bait fishing and bait trolling, and for best all-around satisfaction I prefer a 5½ foot length. The weight of such a rod is around an ounce for each foot length, which gives one the "medium" action type rod intended for trolling, bank or boat still-fishing. The reel should be a good, standard make of bait-casting model; holding with plenty of ease a fifty-yard spool of 20 lbs. test waterproofed silk casting line, and with level-wind construction built into it. This type reel is found very easily, on the counters of most all fishing supply stores, hardware stores and in catalogues of the fishing tackle supply houses that we find advertising in the sporting magazines and books. The line for general bait casting had best be on the heavy test side, and from 18 to 20 lbs. test, is safest to choose. It should be braided of best Japan silk and thoroughly waterproofed so as to make it easier to work the bait with in deep water and more pleasing to handle in cold and damp weather when

soft braided lines will pick up water and drip a great deal of water into the anglers lap and over his hands. Metal snell hooks can be had quite easily. Gut sneels are not so good for this type of fishing. Hand forged, hollow-point hooks are always preferable to the cheaper japaned-hooks one so often finds displayed for sale in the smaller shops and stores. Keep the hook point sharp with a special carborendum hook-file or stone, and free of rust. Do not use rusted leaders or sneels either. The cable-wire leader hooks should be closely inspected, and do not choose those that are soldered to the hook stem, but rather insist on the cable wire leader being attached by a safe bend and splicing to the eye of the hook itself. A good gaff hook is almost indispensable to the muskellunge fisherman. The point should angle out, for easy striking of fish, and a barb is not advisable on the gaff point. The take-down model is my own special preference, as it can be carried in the tackle kit when going and coming from the waters. A cork handle is also preferable to any gaff, and if the stock number of gaff has a wood handle it can be removed and cork rings used to build a better handle. This allows the gaff to float if it chances to fall or be dropped overboard into water. Never fasten a muskie gaff to the wrist by a thong or cord. Such a practice is highly dangerous to the angler. If boat fishing is done and boat landings are handy, where no long trips afoot are called for by angler, then a large landing-net with deep, wide bag, and made of strong sein twine is the best landing device that the muskie fisherman can use. Use a strong handle on the net and bring the muskie up head first into the net bag when making the swoop to capture the fish. Use a strong length of trotline cording for a stringer and cut with the sharp point of the fishing knife under the jaw of the fish, then insert the end of stringer cord that has

been knotted hard, and bring the end out through mouth of fish and fasten with a good slip knot. String the muskie before dislodging the hook. A good metal disgorger is also a necessary part of the muskie fisherman's outfit, as these fish have sharp, dangerous teeth and hands should be kept clear of its sharp fangs and the equally dangerous "rakers" that protect the muskellunge's gills. Never insert the fingers or hand in the gills of this fish. A pair of spring scales or sliding-sleeve scales weighing up to fifty pounds should also be included, with a tape measure for the tabulating of the catch as soon as it is made.

Chapter 22

"PIRATE" FISHING FOR THE TROUT

IN MANY OF the backwoods sections of the trout fishing country there is a class of fishermen that delight in calling themselves by the mystifying term of "Pirates." These fishermen are not nearly so nefarious as they might appear from the term they use for their system of fishing for the trout of their wilderness streams. In reality they are what we might call "dinner" fishermen, that is they fish the small and hard to fish little trout rivers and ponds of their sections with a cunning and sometimes rather puzzling success that tends to mystify the novice trout student. Their plans for fishing is based on a long and very comprehensive understanding of the sly and retiring character of the family of fishes that inhabit these brushy, swampy and hard-to-approach waterways where the best trout fishing is to be found. A study of their methods and the results that it brings to the educated angler along these lines is in reality a rare and opportune privilege, for the average "pirate" is by nature secretive and most times suspiciously wary of the presence on his trip of strangers. However, it has been the enjoyable privilege of the author to visit the backwoods rivers, brooks and ponds with many of these native anglers and to see their system of "meat" fishing practiced first hand.

The Pirate trout fisherman usually plys his calling back where there is a goodly supply of brook, rainbow or brown trout, and in order to get to them one has to traverse miles of brushy, swampy woods roads and narrow, winding trails that lead back where the tag-alder, the spruce and the pine ranks itself in a somber wall around large beaver ponds, small lakes and in the upper reaches of wilderness valleys where the trout are found under stump, log and rock and in those delightful little rivers where the green aquatic grass wavers over miles of flowing brown currents. This is the true haunt of the Pirate trout fisherman. Usually we find these fishermen most prevalent among trappers and settlers and loggers who are thoroughly familiar with the depths of the mountains, the forests and the vast swamp lands where the trout has an opportunity to live in all its primitive and native glory. For this reason we find that most of the creels of fish that our native anglers bring forth from the woods are native brook or speckled trout. They are usually called, *"fontinalis,"* and the appellation is quite correct, for they are, in almost ninty-percent of cases true native brook trout or, *Salvelinus fontinalis,* deep, heavy fish with strong, vivid markings and with flame colored undersides and fins. There is nothing more beautiful than these glorious forest fish, caught out of brooks and Little Rivers where the water comes direct from cascading or whimpering springs that break into the main channel from the mossy and grassy shores of tag-alder, balsam and soaring white pine. It is indeed a treat worthy of long remembrances to take a trip back into the depths of a good wooded trout region with one of these resident fishermen and to see him ply his artful calling with the common garden worm and his short rod in places where even the most

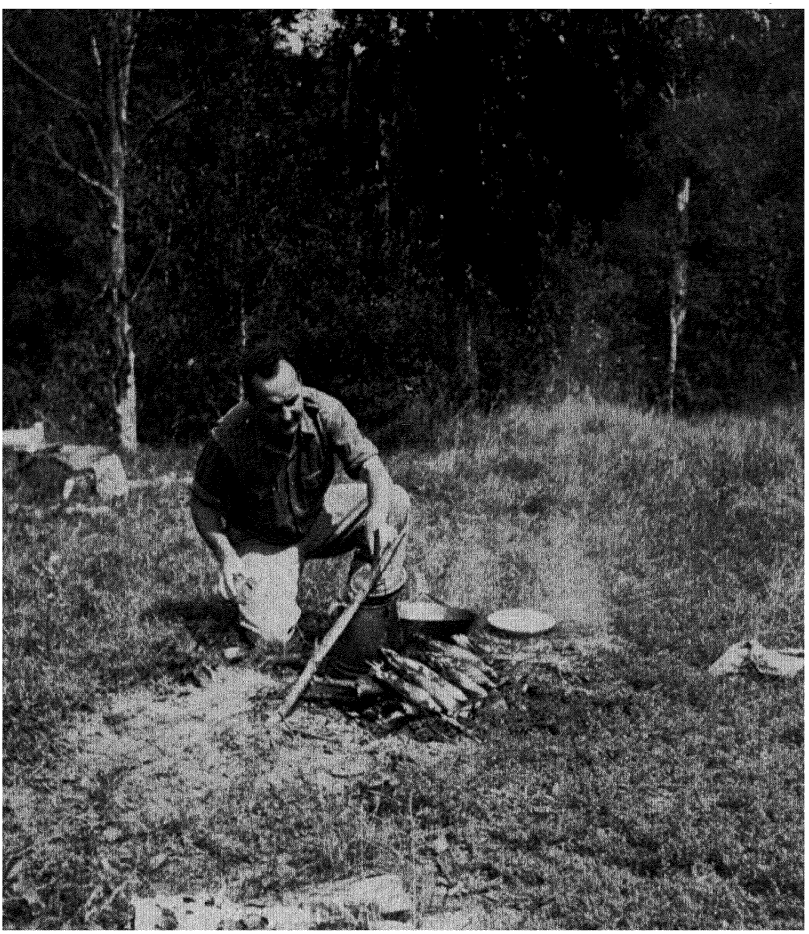


Photo courtesy of Frank Davis

A northern fishing guide prepares the noonday meal in a glade beside the stream . . . one of the unforgetable features of a summer fishing trip.

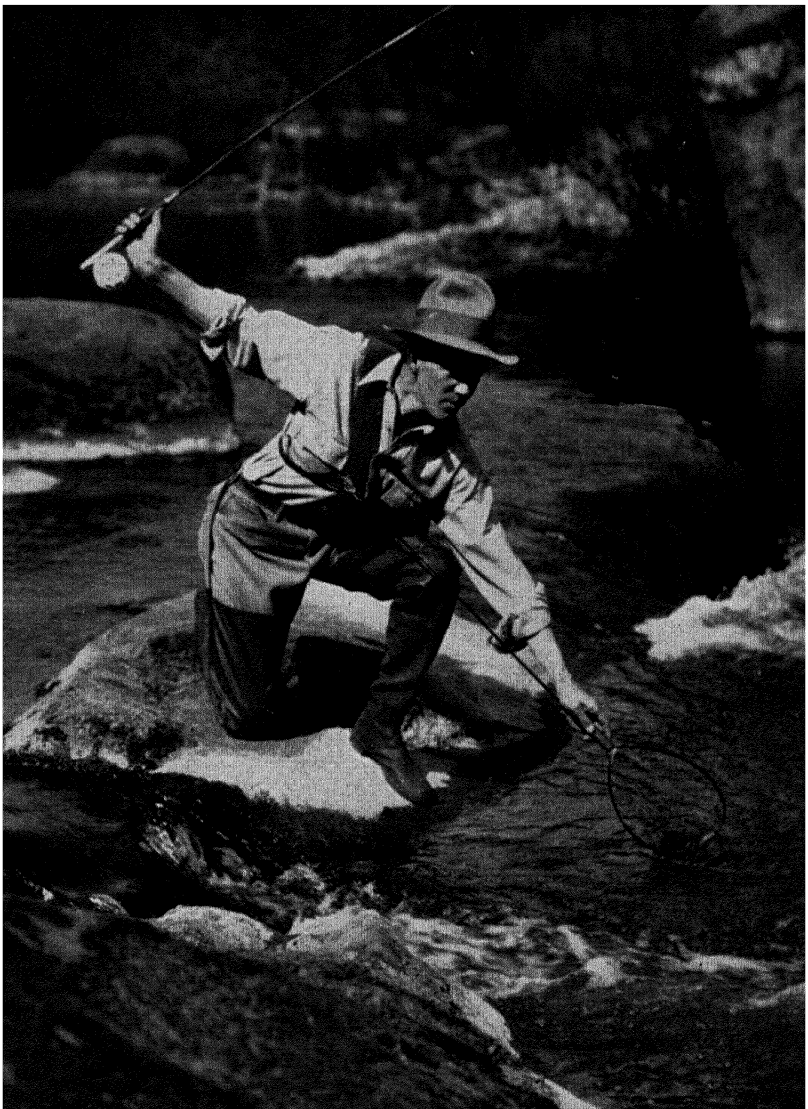


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Fishing from the head of a pool, with wet flies or live bait, allowing the cast to sink well under the surface brings success. Note the position of rod and net for landing the fish.

artful of fly casters finds that it is next to impossible to float his feathers and tinsel lures.

For the sake of diversity in our work and, also to portray more accurately this method of trout fishing it will be the writer's privilege of narrating a trip after *"fontinalis"* with a small party of native or resident trout fishermen one summer afternoon:

It was a cloudy northern afternoon when we started out on the recommendation of a young pulp-wood lumberman that he knew of a particularly fine brook trout section that lay well in from the main traveled country highway and where the brook trout ran heavy in weight and large of size. We drove through a dense forest of balsam, spruce, poplar, birch and pine until we came to a pole bridge that spanned a small, grass-hung, tag-alder shadowed brook, of dark brown water. On a rise just past this stream there was a large open clearing of wild timothy grass and back from the road a few hundred yards a collection of old lumbering shacks with an ancient hay rick showing brown over the somnolent wild hay of the clearing. Here we were directed to turn in by our guide, Phil.

"We get our bait there," he pointed out.

It was a very easy matter we found to procure worms from the rotted margins of the old hay rick. With nothing more than our bare hands we quickly dug a large supply of small, dark, juicy looking fishing worms. These were placed carefully in the tin bait boxes that were worn at the belts of the native anglers, and over them was spread a good supply of damp woods moss. This, as they explained would scour the worms clean and make them "tougher" and more lasting on the hook when we reached the fishing waters. After we had our supply of bait we returned to

the highroad and continued on our way. The country we were passing through, however, was changing from a rolling series of wooded ridges to a flat and marshy world of thick tameracks, stands of young birch and poplar and an occasional clump of balsam, spruce and pin-cherry knolls. Suddenly Phil called out to the driver that he should halt the machine. He pointed out a dim opening at the side of the road. It was nothing more than just a faint trace that led off into the depths of a flat, brushed over country that swam away into the low hung mist clouds that draped the leaden horizon to the north. Marsh grass and scrub willows partially concealed the rough nature of the old wood road that our guide had pointed out. The car was left parked at the side of the country road and we entered the old winter-road after Phil our guide.

My two companions carried very serviceable appearing metal rods. Phil's rod was essentially a sturdy specimen of the bait-casting family, of resilient solid steel construction, with a double-multiplying, level winding reel attached and carrying on its spool a good length of regular black waterproofed bait casting silk line. To the end of the line was attached a quarter-ounce lead sinker, such as one might expect to see on a bass fisherman's live-baiting outfit, and directly adjoining this was a No. 2 size tandem spoon spinner, nickel finish, and a size 2/0 hollow-point reverse bend trout hook. This was indeed a startling deviation from the 8 foot split bamboo, 4½ ounce dry fly trout rod that I carried with its tapered, hollow-cored, size HE enameled silk fly line, its 9 foot, tapered silk-worm gut, 3X leader and the No. 12 spent-wing fly that I was expecting to use on these phenominally big and husky "brookies" that Phil had promised us back there in the depths of the little river's wilderness valley. Bobby, the second member

of our party carried still another "pirate" invention. His rod was a telescopic, tubular steel fly and bait combination rod, that held large agate-lined guides and that was telescoped to a length of only about twenty-one inches. It carried a casting reel of the same sort as Phil's rod with a black waterproofed bait casting line, and at the terminal of this line was a short gut leader with a size 4 long-shank Carlisle hook and pinched on the leader 8 inches above the hook was a single split buckshot. Bobby carried his rod thrust down into the opening of his willow fish basket. Both men had large creels slung about the shoulders and their tin worm boxes fastened to their leather belts. We all wore hip rubber boots, and it was quite evident that they were a very necessary part of the equipment, for the old pole roadbed that we followed, through thick screens of alder and willow and cedar scrub cut straight back into the swamp with icy cold water flowing up almost to our knees at every step. There were plenty of hazards I soon found, such as breaks in the pole trail, treacherous logs that lay cunningly concealed under beds of innocent appearing moss, and with all my caution I soon found myself sprawled in the cold water with my beloved little fly rod buried dangerously under one of my outthrust fists. No harm was done, however, strange to say, but it caused me to somewhat revamp my opinions about my companions' trouting gear, for they waded and thrust their ways ahead with no apparent concern about their tackle in the thick "bush" that we pushed deeper and deeper into as the old pole winter road led us for three long and arduous miles deep into the pine-cherries, the cedars and the tag-alders. Then the trail suddenly swung off to the right, toward a dark stand of slender spruce and pines. The trail was now nothing more than just a deer path, winding over roots, logs

and rocks, with the forest growing dark and somber around us as we ascended to higher ground. It was here that we saw ahead of us the blue mist of a beaver lake, through the soaring pines and spruce, and suddenly Phil called out that there was a bear in the trail ahead. He whistled sharply, and pointed out the bear to me, down the opening of the path, where there was a great, moss-covered rock looming in the pines and spruce, but I failed to see the animal as it scampered through the marsh grass into the shadows of the pines. It was only a cub, Phil explained. I waited, while my companions hurried onward, for now they were approaching the stream and they both showed evident signs of excitement. Even these Pirate fishermen, I could see, were keen about their trout fishing.

The pine and spruce forest beyond the big rock was destitute of any life. No sound of breaking brush. I was wondering how the bear could get through such thick stuff without noise, when suddenly a large dark shape showed clearly moving along the crest of a small knoll perhaps a hundred yards distant, through the dark trees, and I had the thrilling experience of seeing an immense old she black bear clumsily running through the poplars and balsams on her way into a cove of the brook's valley. It was a picture that would have done justice to the brush and pen of a Charles Livingston Bull. One I was glad I had spent the valuable time to discover.

The trail suddenly lost itself in a black stand of spruce and alders where the footing was treacherous with soft black, oozy mud and the musical, cool whimper of the brook falling over the rugged and picturesque dam, of a big beaver cutting faintly heard in the cold, twilight silence of the spot. I picked my way carefully forward and found my companions quickly preparing to start fishing. Phil

was already crawling precariously out over a series of old fallen pine logs to locate himself on a small paddy of dead tamaracks that was surrounded by crystal clear water of five foot depths. As I watched the guide curiously I saw him bait the large hook with several wriggling worms and steal up to the brink of the unstable place and drop his spinner and worm lure over into a dark, black strip that lay under the boggy bank. He cast the bait out with a swing of the rod, about eight feet of line out of the tip of the rod, then he slowly lifted the rod and brought the mass of wriggling worms back, with the two bright metal spoons lazily twirling. I thought this was a queer way to fish for our wary and colorful friend "fontinalis." But I saw Bobby, farther down the dam, standing where a feathery spruce almost concealed him arranging his form of piratical endeavor. He was an exponent of still another form of trout baiting. On the No. 4 long-shank hook he proceeded to first attach a single long worm, by running the hook through it about half an inch from the tail. Then under that he used two more worms baited in large loops, carefully covering the point of the hook. This was his way of "waiting" the trout out. He used a split buckshot, remember, and a short gut leader. His bait arranged to his satisfaction he stole further along the narrow ramparts of the dam until he found a place where a large pine stump sprawled in ten or twelve feet of crystal clear water, then he cast the bait out to the edge of the dark openings of the roots and pulled his telescopic rod out to almost its full length, so that he could flip the bait almost any place he desired within fifteen feet of the dam. He permitted it to sink to the black, slimy bottom of the pond and waited. His theory was that the first worm would crawl about, extending its head, drawing the hook and the other additional juicy and wriggling

offerings slowly over the mucky bottom, until at last the bait would sink into the ooze with just the one worm's head showing. It would then crawl in another direction, the dark head upthrust from the bottom. A trout waiting under the dark concealment of the roots of the stump or beneath one of those many big sunken logs of the pond would see this bit of inviting life and would dart out and investigate. Finding the juicy offering to its approval the trout would proceed to take the bait and run with it, for the concealment of the stumps or undersides of the sunken logs. Here is where the large guides came in handy on the rod, the line could be fed out easily, until the trout had gorged the bait, when a sharp strike and the fish was hooked. Bobby explained that with this adjustable rod he could fish "trout" holes in such tangled places as beaver dam ponds and along the small brooks in the alders and spruce by thrusting the shortened rod through the openings of the brush and then adjusting it to the desired length. When a trout picked the bait up and ran with it Bobby just set the hook and then drawing the line back he stripped the trout up out of the opening in the roots or logs or brush or grass and shortening his telescopic rod lifted it safely to the creel he carried.

As I watched and started to prepare my own fishing outfit I saw Phil make a sudden strike and without any further ado he played a darting, splashing trout out from under the black strip of pond water, and lifted it battling and twisting to the little island where he caught it firmly in his bronzed paw and dropped it into his basket opening. It was done as easy as all of that. A 10½ inch "fontinalis," dark and with a salmon-red belly and beautiful vermilion and blue ringed spots that was caught, creeled and forgotten about by Phil as he stole along quickly toward an-

other propitious looking spot farther down the pond. In the meantime Bobby had also taken a nice trout of 9 inch length. I was ready by now with my well soaked leader, my properly dressed fly line and my waterproofed spent-wing Cahill fly.

Bobby came back to instruct me that I could wade out from the beaver dam safely. The water looked deep and treacherous, but in reality it was a firm gravel and sand bottom once the soft muck of the dam, where the beaver had brought their cargoes of mud and silt to plaster the brush and log barrier slope, was passed. With waders these ponds can be fished very safely by the fly caster. A canoe is utterly useless in fishing beaver ponds, as the shadow of the craft in the clear water frightens the fish off beyond casting distance and they take concealment in intricacies of the log and stump crevices where the fly does not get their attention. The wader system of fishing these ponds is most advisable of all. To try fishing them from the shores or from the dams is a very disappointing method, and only by wading slowly out and working the casts about in the openings between the dead trees and stumps can good trout be taken by the fly caster. Wading does not seem to frighten even the most wary of these wild trout. Therefore I would suggest that for trout ponds in the beaver country a pair of arm-pit high waders is best to use when dry or wet fly fishing.

The bait fisherman, however, does not necessarily need waders to fish these ponds effectively. With an ordinary pair of hip rubber boots the logical spots can be fished very thoroughly. However, my observations have been that the "pirate" trout fisherman has a very practical system of fishing such ponds as I have outlined with live bait, and the telescopic model of trout fishing rod in 9 foot extension length, with a minimum shortening of around 21 inches,

when telescoped, makes a very handy item of tackle for this sport. This type of rod should, however, have large, agate-lined guides so that the line can be run down easily and with little or no commotion when the baited hook is dropped into dark trout holes between roots and logs and under overhang-banks. Also the hook should be attached directly to the line of the bait fisherman's rig, a great many of the veteran bait fishermen believe, eliminating the leader and the buckshot from the rigging, as there is a tendency for the leader to sag and sink slower than the line, many contend, thereby spoiling the illusion that the good bait fisherman always tries to offer to the hiding trout. No sinker and with the baited hook attached to the line direct insures the bait drifting down and crawling slowly about on the silty or rocky bottom of the trout haunt in a manner that affords the trout no opportunity to suspect it being anything but the natural offering. However, the plan that my friend Bobby used, of hooking one worm through tail and permitting the shot weighted leader to draw the hook down so that only the worm's head showed, moving about also seems to be a very effective way of fishing the worm for the shy "native" brookies. The line, in this system of fishing, should be oiled silk or a good waterproofed silk of about 12 lbs. test size. As to the spoon and large hook with the quarter ounce sinker attached directly next to the spoon-shaft, such as my friend Phil used, that also had its good virtues. The flash of the nickel spoons, wavering about, as the bait was slowly retrieved caught the attention of the trout as they lurked under their dark haunts and the wriggling "gob" of worms unquestionably caught the fancy of the aroused fish. The trout is a very greedy fish, we find, and capable of taking a large bait, as well as the smallest of No. 18 size midge flies, when its fancy and appetite is once

aroused, so that there are good and effective arguments to be advanced for all these various modes of fishing for the gamester.

At any rate that afternoon on the Beaver Pond I was convinced that my two Pirate friends had good arguments in favor of their large and apparently crude forms of trout offerings, for as the clouds faded from the northern sky and a glorious red and gold tinged sunset opened over the reflective waters of the pond we once more gathered at the place where the whispering overflow from the pond trickled in cool beauty down the rugged log and brushy walls of the dam. The cold green spruce and pines were growing dark with shadows. Warm sundown shades, however, touched the tag alder and dead tamaracks with an irreproachable glory, and a single brook trout broke the calm surface as it raised to an insect that lay on the pellucid water. Phil had his basket partially filled with nice trout. Bobby had several good ones lying in a bed of cool moss and grass. The largest trout was 11 inches in length. The smallest 9 inches long. All of them were strong, heavy, dark colored fish with salmon colored bellies and vivid spots. Beautiful fish. Native brook trout that had come up with flood waters and taken their abode in the beaver pond many years before, content to stay there always.

"I don't think," said Bobby, as we talked the matter over, "that they ever go back down stream again. I believe that they stay here in the ponds the rest of their lives. That's why plenty of beaver ponds on a stream means bigger and more trout I contend. The spring floods give the small trout a chance to work down. But I believe that these big brookies stay here always—never leave!"

That was Bobby's contention. I can not say about that. But I do think that destroying live beaver ponds is a big

mistake, for in these cold, deep, well protected places the trout have an ideal place to lurk, feed and they can easily work up into the smaller reaches of the rivers for their spawning activities. As many as a half dozen beaver ponds can happen along these rivers, each one a fine and potential fishing spot when big trout are desired, but very hard places for the fly fisherman to work unless he knows the secrets of how to wade and cast them. The bait fisherman finds in them a paradise for his worm or minnow baited hook.

BOOK III

Fly Fishing

Chapter 23

FLY FISHING FOR CRAPPIE AND BLUEGILLS

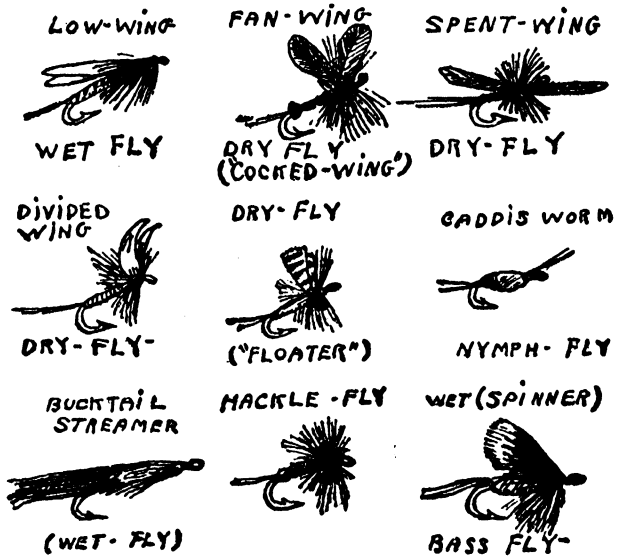
ONE OF THE most delicate and interesting pastimes that could be suggested for the fly-fisherman is crappie and bluegill angling with a light and well-balanced fly casting outfit. Hours of entertaining sport can be had practicing this quiet and yet strenuous pastime. The tackle that should be used needs to be of the most approved dry-fly fishing type, and in every way it is just as delicate and sporty as trout fishing, except, of course, that these fish do not have the speed and flash of the trouts when raised and fastened on the hook. However, it is a pastime that calls for all the finish and equipment that the most particular of trouting enthusiasts might care to use.

I have found that lightness of leader and smooth taper of the gut is essentially necessary for highest success. And after much experimenting and study have found that there is a right and a wrong way of going about its execution. Very long casts are sometimes in order, but the usual cast for crappie and bluegill fishing is around 20 feet of line and leader, and when fishing from the shore this is regulated largely by the nature of the pond or lake surroundings. Usually the shores where these fish are found are brushy,

necessitating short casts that are placed around stumps, log and brush drifts or the edges of lily pad rafts, sunken weed beds and at the edge of moss and weeds that lies just under the surface. These fish can be found by watching the surface of the water closely for rises, for they are notably fond of feeding on any small bugs, flies, moths and worms that might fall from streamside brush or trees on the water, and also such food as small minnows of an inch length, nymphs and creepers that might be rising or swimming about the weedy places in the water. The best type of fly to use is the dry-fly, used with a 7½ foot length of tapered gut leader of the very finest order and tying. Wet flies do not get the same results as the dry pattern or floating fly. My observations have been that the dry-fly is more acceptable to them for the reason that the hackle of this dressing is stronger and longer filaments are used in the floating fly, which gives to the offering a certain natural, swimming and moving action that they favor above all others. The dry fly that is dressed with two good hackles at head is preferable also. And, besides all this, I find that a hackle-dressed fly, with sparse body winding of a light hackle and fairly long tail of the same materials as the hackle is composed of, is more killing than any other type. The Green Insect dry fly and the Royal Coachman, Fan-wing pattern of dry fly are two great "killers." The first named fly is perhaps more effective than anything I have used. This pattern is dressed as follows:

Body, rather slender and of green floss silk, wound sparingly with a thin furnace hackle.

Hackle, two good stiff, polished neck hackles of Blue Dun filaments—and be sure they are stiff, strong ones, and highly polished, as the shine is what makes this dressing more killing. Have these dressed well forward so as to



cause the fly to ride high on the surface when fished dry.

Tail, of the same materials as the hackle, long and a wisp of say half a dozen filaments.

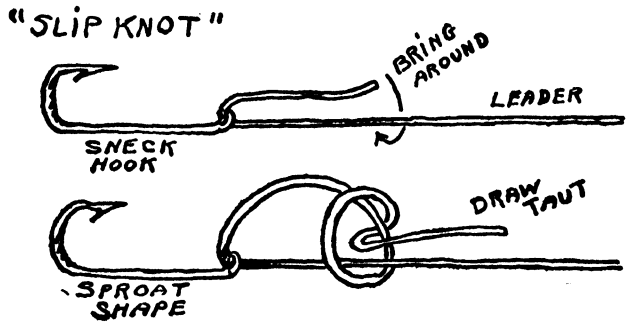
Hook, of the best light bronzed wire in "Perfect" pattern, hollow-point and straight pattern (no reverse bend). No. 14 size is also advisable at times, when water is very low and smooth and small insects are falling.

This fly is preferable to all others for late July, August and early September.

Fish is as follows:

Attach to a 7½ foot tapered silk-worm gut leader of mist color with a "slip-knot" fastening (as illustrated). For long casts from canoe or boat, or when fish are lying far away and slow on their rises, use a 9 foot length leader. The leader, in either case should taper from size "Fina" (.012) to No. 3X or 4X tippet. I have used No. 2X tippet when the water is screened with a light breeze or riffle. But for

flat water use No. 4X for best results. Be sure there is no shine to the leader when fishing sunny, flat waters. Rub the lower sections of the leader with Leader Scour (see formula in another chapter) to remove shine and sparkle of the gut. The leader is, in turn, attached to a size H-E tapered enameled silk fly line, or H-E-H double taper. The



color of line is not important I find, with such leader terminals as mentioned. A good type of rod is the "dry-fly action" fly rod of split bamboo. The new tubular-steel "bamboo-action" fly rods also work nicely in this respect. Length of rod should be 8½ foot and the weight of rod from 4½ to 5½ ounces. The reel should be a good single-action, narrow spool crank model, holding 30 yards of the line suggested. After terminal tackle is arranged then it is a good plan to dress the line well with a waterproof line-dressing of good grade for about 10 yards from terminal. This causes the line to float well. Then with the thumb and finger touch the hackle filaments carefully with a good fly dressing to waterproof the fly. If a winged fly, rub the wings lightly with the dressing. Do not use too much dressing, just enough to cover wing and hackle filaments lightly and keep the fly buoyant. I prefer a dressing of the paste type carried in a flat tin box. Use a round

piece of heavy felt for the line. The middle finger and thumb for the fly itself. Now you are ready for the actual casting of fly.

Fluff the fly a time or so to spread the wings and open the hackles out, then drop it on the water so that it rides like a small fly or bug. If the fish are rising to surface foods this works best. Let the fly ride as long as possible. Twitch the tip of rod lightly to impart a movement to the fly. When the fish rises to it strike sharply, just enough to set hook, but do not "jerk" the fly out of water. If the fly is jerked hard it will leave water and perhaps engage itself in overhanging brush or twigs or shore grass and weeds. Keep casting over all rises of the fish and at those places where surface food would naturally drift. Some days this method works best of all other.

If the fish are feeding, however, on small minnow fry then fish the dry fly under the surface, by laying it out on water, permitting the leader to sink down and eventually submerge the fly. Let the fly sink down a foot or more under surface, then retrieve it slowly by short jerks with the rod tip, imparting to it a swimming, breathing action of wings and hackle that arouses the instant interest of the bigger fish. They will strike it hard and determinedly this way and the strike-back by angler should be made with a sharp, quick turn of the wrist and short flirt of forearm, just enough to set hook point. I have found, generally speaking, that the dry fly fished under the surface as a wet fly, usually gets more fish than the floater, as these little gamesters are mainly minnow feeders. However, both wet and dry methods are good. Shaking a cluster of brush or a leaning sapling along the shores so that bugs and worms fall in the pond or lake cove will help matters for the dry fly fisherman. Worms, caterpillars and bugs fall on the water,

struggle a moment, then there is a sharp rise and the food has disappeared into the maw of one of these greedy little gamesters. The wise fly caster knows their weakness and a well prepared fly whipped out and permitted to float over a submerged root, stump or weedy bed will bring fine results. If they rise slowly to floaters, then let the fly sink and swim it a foot or sixteen inches down through the pool. If you watch the fly carefully you will note that the hackles work just like a set of legs on a sunken insect or bug, and if it is a spent-winged fly it will look like a fly drifting and breathing.

The cocked-winged Royal Coachman is my second choice for this fishing, dressed to a size 12 Perfect model straight hook, with hollow point. This fly is a good July and August choice for crappie and bluegills.

The McGinty is good both floater and sunken fly.

The Cadis Creeper worm (artificial) should be fished with a very light tippet as the dry flies and permitted to sink down along old logs, stumps and brush and then lifted and slightly twitched to make it appear as though it were a living worm working upward toward surface. Set the hook as the fish rises to take the lure. The angler must watch his lure keenly at all times, and many a good fish will be snubbed as it darts forward to make the strike that would otherwise be missed.

Other good wet fly patterns are the Wickham's Fancy, the Yellow Sally, Coachman, Stone Fly, Professor and Reuben Wood. The White Moth sometimes performs noble work on these little fish, when fished dry and drifted across a summer pool in the warm weeks of July and early August. A small landing net is a good addition to the angler's equipment for the larger members of this tribe, for their mouth is tender and they hook themselves very lightly

usually. Their mouths are small and usually they are tenderly hooked, so that they should be played carefully, permitting the spring of the rod to hold them until they have played themselves out and one can lead them in where they can either be lifted out with a little flirt of the rod to the shore or the net placed under them and brought into the boat or safety of the pond-side or lake cove. Just before a stormy period of weather, when the water is riffled with a light screen and when the temperature is around 80 degrees, is the best time to fish with flies for these doughty little silver and golden-green fellows. It is fine sport and one can use the most scientific of fly-fishing tactics and equipment in their capture. The gut leaders should be kept well moistened before attaching them to the line. When the fly is not in use keep it immersed in the shallow water with fly attached and about a third of the rod thrust down in the shallows, to prevent the leader drying out and becoming brittle.

Chapter 24

BIG-MOUTH BASS AND THE FLY ROD

MANY OF OUR best fresh-water fishermen are of the mistaken belief that the largemouth black bass does not take well to the artificial bait. This is a fallacy that should be discounted heavily, for the truth is that the bigmouth bass is one of our best fly-fishing gamesters. I have taken it on artificial flies, with a regular bass-fly fishing rod and reel and line and a six foot heavyweight gut leader all the way from the southern tip of the Florida peninsula to the northern lakes of Ontario, Canada.

One of the greatest bigmouth bass fishing trips with artificial lures that I ever enjoyed was in the center of the Big Cypress Swamp of southern Florida, several years ago. We had been fishing down the West-Coast of the state for tarpon, snapper and robalio, using a large houseboat yacht for our winter fishing accommodations. One of the guides in the party happened to overhear me talking about largemouth bass fishing with a fly rod one day, and he offered the suggestion that if we wanted to enjoy some really wonderful sport that he would be glad to take a party of us back inland on the following morning and show us some tip-top bass angling. This, of course was quickly accepted, for we were growing a bit weary of the

salt-water trolling and casting in the Gulf and its many brackish indentures. Accordingly, the next morning we put off in a guide boat for the upper reaches of a river that was called, the Broad River. If I am not mistaken this river was in reality the Rogers River, and it ran from the Ten-Thousand Islands, on the shores of the Gulf itself, back into a wilderness of palmetto, saw-grass, buttonwood, mangrove and vast prairie lands, which was the real heart of a typical southland swamp country. The river was deep and black with low shores studded with immense buttonwood and palmetto's leaning over the hyacinth covered pools. Just as soon as we had reached the vast prairies that marked the upper reaches where the tide-water did not contaminate the stream we started our fishing, and I have never seen so many bass in all my fishing career as there were in that river. The guide explained to us that it was only recently that these fish had taken up their place in the river. A number of years before there had been a terrific hurricane that had driven the Gulf waters far inland into the Big Swamp country, and this had destroyed untold myriads of these fish. He declared that at one time he had been on this river with a party of anglers when bass of record breaking size had fallen to their casting and trolling baits. However, the bass had once more worked their way into the stream from the outlying lakes in the swamps and now it was again making a bid of becoming an exceptional bass fishing stream. The fish we found there, that morning, however, were small for southern bass. They ran consistently around a pound and pound and a half, but the numbers of these gamey fellows in the river was almost beyond even a fanatical fisherman's wildest dreams. I used a dry-fly action bass fly fishing rod that day with an ordinary single-action fly rod reel and a level enameled line and six-

and jungle-cock shoulders. This, however, is only one of many other good, standard patterns. The Durham Ranger, Silver Doctor and the Jock Scott are good flies also and in the bucktail streamer types of flies, the Coachman. Royal Coachman and the Trude are dependably good flies. In the regular wet-fly models of bass fly, used with a No. 1 size nickel spoon spinner, for deeper fishing around lily pad clumps and alongside sunken logs when the weather is dark, I choose the Royal Coachman, the Reuben Wood, Wickhams Fancy and the Parmachene Belle, in sizes 1/0 to 2/0.

For the darting fly-rod lures the fly-rod size of artificial wooden minnow in pike and white and red head colors are always recommendable, as well as the small metal, wiggling fly rod lures and the metal fish representatives, that wiggle and dart about when retrieved through the pools.

A good, sturdy rod is advisable for this fishing. My choice for largemouth bass fishing is the 8½ foot, dry-fly action split-bamboo rod, weighing around 5 to 5½ ounces. The double-tapered enameled fly line in size HDH, or the single taper in HD and the level fly line in size E to D is to be advised. A good grade of gut leader in medium-weight size or "large bass" size and of 6 to 9 foot length is safe to advise also. Be sure that the gut leader is well soaked before attaching it to line and fly. Use a leader-box with felt pads that have been thoroughly dampened and let the leaders soak at least an hour before putting to use. The reel can be either a good automatic fly reel type or a single-action crank fly reel, and thirty to forty yards of line is enough on its spool. A small, deep-mesh landing net is always to be advised. The flies should be carried in a Pyra-shell compartment box or in a leather fly book. With such an outfit the bass-fly fisherman is equipped for some very pleasant and successful angling.

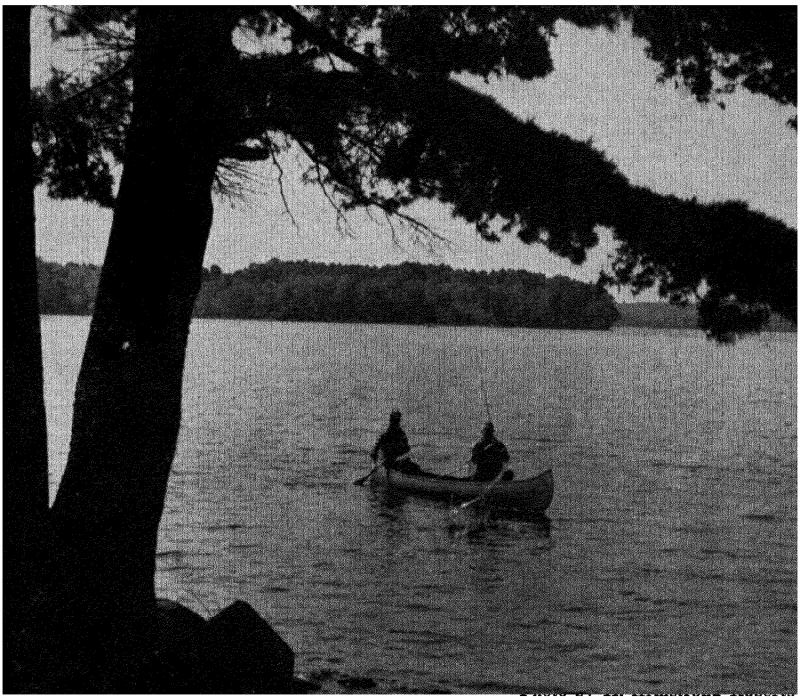
the fly alone attached to a medium-weight six-foot length gut leader, casting the fly out to the edge of sunken logs or at the edge of brush that leans over the pools and drawing it back with short jerks a few inches under the surface. This is a good method to use in large ponds on hot summer days when the fish are lying close to shore or in the concealment of their natural loafing places. One of the best bigmouth bass flies I use is the Salmon-fly pattern of underwater (or wet pattern) Streamer fly. This is a marvelous hot-weather offering for bigmouth bass when they are lying near the surface under weeds, pads and submerged drifts. I have had them rise to this fly, used plain without any spinner or spoon ahead, from five foot depths and smash it with a fury that meant instant hooking. This fly is best to use with a 9 foot bass fly rod, 5 to 5½ ounce weight, and with a tapered enameled fly line of around D size and medium-bass weight of 6 foot leader, fashioned from pure silkworm gut or of the new leader material known by the trade name of "V E C." The fly should be attached to this leader, and only in exceptional cases, where the bass are known to be lurking very deep down under the surface is there need of any sinker being used. In case a sinker is thought practicable by the angler, and in order to sink the fly deep under the surface to attract those fish that might be lurking under a deeply submerged rock, log or weed bed, then nothing more than a single split buckshot or a single BB shot pinched on the leader a few inches above the fly is necessary.

My own particular preference in Streamer flies for the largemouth bass is for those dressed to a No. 4 to 6 long-shank, turn-down eye hook, and one of the best patterns I have ever used is the Soo Rapids pattern, dressed with dark body wound in blue metal tinsel, golden-pheasant tail, white streamer hackle and honey-colored hackle wings

and jungle-cock shoulders. This, however, is only one of many other good, standard patterns. The Durham Ranger, Silver Doctor and the Jock Scott are good flies also and in the bucktail streamer types of flies, the Coachman. Royal Coachman and the Trude are dependably good flies. In the regular wet-fly models of bass fly, used with a No. 1 size nickel spoon spinner, for deeper fishing around lily pad clumps and alongside sunken logs when the weather is dark, I choose the Royal Coachman, the Reuben Wood, Wickhams Fancy and the Parmachene Belle, in sizes 1/0 to 2/0.

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In the morning and late afternoon hours the small-mouth bass, pickerel and trout drift in toward the sloping, rocky and gravelly shores to feed on minnows and underwater crustacea. These are the best times to cast in toward the shore lines from boat or canoe, with fly or bait-casting lures.

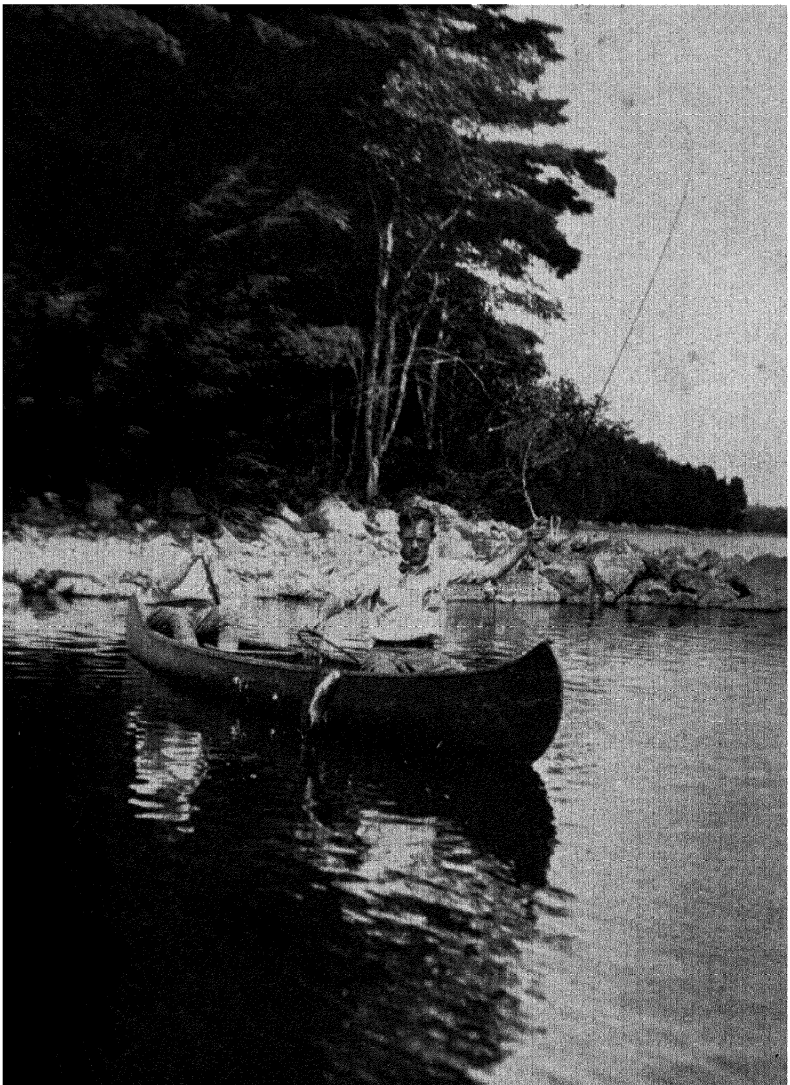


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Fly fishing for the small-mouth bass in typical northern lake waters.

Chapter 25

FLY-FISHING FOR THE SMALL-MOUTH BASS

TO THE VETERAN bass fly fisherman there is one outstanding member of the *Micropterus* family that offers everything a fly angler has to ask of his finny opponent—and that is the well-known "Bronze-Back," or *smallmouth,* of the swift flowing rivers and creeks, and the rocky-shored lakes of the north-country. Here is a fish that is worthy of any fisherman's steel! It takes the fly more avidly perhaps than any other offering that might be offered it from the fisherman's tackle or bait container. It has many times been said that with a fly rod and proper fly fishing lures and methods more bass can be taken from the waters than by any other known angling methods.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the smallmouth bass is its proclivity for feeding on surface foods that are alive and struggling to leave the water. This is also true of such small creatures as frogs, toads, grasshoppers, moths, crickets and locusts that the smallmouth bass might chance to spy struggling in an eddy pool close to some fringing weeds or overhanging brush. Because of these natural inclinations in the matter of food, the smallmouth bass can be fished for with a variety of artificial flies with potential success by the angler.

The smallmouth will rise to a White Moth dry fly, properly laid on the eddying current of a good feeding pool just as quickly as it will dart out from a concealing log or rock and strike a streamer fly that is supposed to represent a member of the minnow tribe flitting through the water. Wet flies, used with a small No. 0 sized nickel spoon before them, will also tempt the smallmouth bass to rise, especially in the waters of early open season, and when the fish are lying down close to the bottom of the pools or near the head of eddy pools below riffles and dams. In the entire list of bass fly fishing items I question very much if there is another artificial bait that accounts for more bass during the open-season fishing in the various types of bass water than does the spoon or spinner accompanied wet bass fly offering.

A small size of nickeled metal spinner is also used with excellent results by many of the lake and river fly fishermen angling for smallmouth bass. This is an exceptionally killing method of fly fishing for bass in shallow rivers where there are rocks and logs in plentiful numbers blocking the natural flow of the stream, and also in lakes where there are shallow, rocky bars along the shores of islands and mainland. In such bass fishing waters the spoon and spinner fisherman is almost sure of rises with a No. 0 to No. 2 size of metal spoon attached ahead of his wet-fly and cast in the same manner as one would use a straight sinking bass fly, then retrieved with a slow stripping in of the line through the rod guides and a gentle lifting of the rod tip as the bait is returned to the anglers rod tip. Such an offering can be worked well down under the surface where the bottom-feeding bass has an opportunity to see the lure, and is most certain to arouse the interest of these fish.

In swift, shallow bass creeks and rivers where the pools are small and not over four or five feet in depth, and where

the bass have plenty of submerged rocks and logs to hide around the *three-fly* bass cast is a good choice for the summer fisherman to use. This method of fly-fishing for the smallmouth bass has the advantage of a varied offering to the fish in one single cast. It is also liable to be interesting not only to a school of feeding smallmouth, but the smaller flies that can be used on such a cast in connection with large sizes of bass patterns many times interest a hungry rock-bass, perch or crappie, and so the extent of the cast in enlarged to include quite a nice variety of varied game fishes of lake, river or pond. In using the three-fly cast the ordinary length and weight of bass fly fishing rod can be depended on to do the job nicely. An 8½ foot, 5½ ounce rod is my own personal choice for this fishing. Either an automatic or a single-action, click fly rod reel is adaptable to the casting outfit described, and for a good line my choice is the level enameled fly casting line in brown or amber coloring. The best leader to use, of course, is one with dropper loops or tags attached. The dropper "loops" are best for gut-snelled trout or bass flies, but for the "eyed" type of bass fly —which now seems to be the most popular styles in use by the bass fly fisherman—the "tag" dropper style of leader is most advisable. Either one of these leaders, constructed of the best of Spanish silkworm gut (fresh stock), joined together in lengths of around 16 inches with a good water or barrel knot, and of approximately 6 to 8 foot lengths (level), can be purchased from the Tackle Supply stores that one finds advertising in the National Sporting magazines, or from a first-class sporting goods store in the larger towns and cities. I would suggest that these leaders be of real Spanish silkworm gut, rather than of synthetic materials, as the real effectiveness of these three-fly casts come from the proper leader materials, as well as the right assortment and sizes of

flies. The end fly (or bottom fly) should be of the orthodox bass-fly size and of a wet-fly pattern. Size 1/0 is a good choice for the end fly in this casting arrangement. The next fly, or first-dropper, should be of size 4 or 5 and the last or third fly on the cast, nearest the line, can well be chosen of sizes 6 to 10, and these will perhaps take the most of your rock bass, smaller members of the smallmouth family and the majority of the crappie and bluegills. If the flies used on this type of cast are to be eyed-types of sinking bass flies, then have the leader equipped with "tags" for the dropper arrangements—and for snelled trout or bass fly patterns have the leader equipped with "dropper" loops.

In fishing with the three-fly bass cast it is advisable to fish down the current or across the current. Of course, the cast can also be made up the current and retrieved down and across from the angler, the end fly swimming through the eddies deeper than the two droppers, which will flicker along at their respective stages and arouse more than ordinary interest to a feeding bass under rock or submerged log and beam. The top dropper fly will usually dip and dabble along on the surface of the water, and this draws many a swift strike from those fish that are watching the surface for their food. The second fly will many times catch the rise of those fish that are first aroused by the flickering surface fly, and in case that does not receive the strike, then the last or end fly will possibly get action. I have had a great deal of success with this three-fly bass cast, and can safely advise it for those that love to wade and cast for smallmouth bass in small, swift rivers and along the shores of islands and rocky points in the northern lake regions where the bass cling close to weedy fringes and to rocky shore lines.

The single-fly bass cast is worked comparatively easy, and is an excellent mode of bass fly fishing in ponds and along

the shores of lake pools where a single, properly executed cast and retrieve is necessary to draw the fire of an unusually good, cunning old smallmouth. This cast calls for accuracy and perfect timing in retrieving and sinking of the fly. It gets the big fish when others fail and is admirably adapted to the fishing with a Streamer type of bass fly. The fly is supposed to simulate the darting, wiggling course of a regular bass length shiner or chub minnow, and for this reason, the retrieve of the fly has a great deal to do with the effectiveness of the casting of the fly. With a good rod, properly balanced with reel and line and leader, casting the sinking fly for bass is one of the most intriguing of pastimes and also one of the most killing of bass fishing methods. Long casts can be accomplished with this single-fly that other methods and arrangements do not permit one to execute neatly. In the larger rivers and in those lakes and ponds where a long length of line is necessary to set the fly down at the edge of a cluster of pads or over a sunken weedbed the single, sinking or wet-fly method of fly fishing for the smallmouth bass is one of the best possible methods of fishing. This single fly used with a six-foot level leader and level enameled fly line is also an excellent bass-getter when smallmouth bass are rising and breaking the surface at distances that the three-fly cast and the fly-and-spinner or spoon method of fishing would not permit one using with effectiveness.

For such casting as we have just finished describing, the 9 foot, dry-fly action, split bamboo fly rod, is my personal preference. Such a rod will weigh in the neighborhood of 5¾ ounces (sometimes as much as 6 ounces) and with a good automatic fly reel, or with a single-action fly reel that holds 45 yards of size E to D enameled fly casting line, has the necessary power and "pick-up" to place a long line out where bass

are feeding on the surface or rising to the top waters before a storm in the hot summer fishing season. This type of rod and equipment is also advisable for streamer flies and for bass-bugs, feather minnows and the various other cork-bodied fly rod lures that the smallmouth bass takes to so well in the warm-weeks of the fly fishing season.

DRY-FLY OUTFIT FOR SMALLMOUTH BASS

While on the subject of fly fishing for the smallmouth bass it would be a sad oversight if we were not to deal with the *dry* or *floating* type of fly that the summer fisherman finds so killing sometimes to use against the river, lake and pond fish. Here is a really wonderful phase of bass fishing and it is also one of the most killing of methods to use when the smallmouth bass is swimming close to the weedy fringes along river and lake shores, or when the Bronze-Back fish is found lurking close to the surface in the pools that lie at the base of rapids and riffles. I have taken many a fine 3 pound smallmouth bass on floating flies when all other methods of fishing for them seemed to be ineffective. The best times of the season for this fishing is in the warm weeks of the summer, from the last part of June until well along in September, when river bass and even the lake-dwelling fish are working into the shallow waters for their food. Just an hour or so before sunset and in the hot parts of the afternoons is perhaps the best time of the day for this fishing. At such times the smallmouth bass will work out of the deeper eddies and rise off the bottom to drift in toward the shore waters where they might pick up a floating bug or a stray grasshopper or bee from the eddies that coil around the river weeds and outcropping rocks in the more shallow currents.

For this fishing I would recommend a fairly stiff fly rod of

split-bamboo or one that is constructed of tubular steel. A good length for the dry fly casting rod is 8½ foot, with a weight of 5 to 5¾ ounces. The whippy rod is not adapted for this fishing so well as those that are a shade on the side of stiff. The line should be a good tapered one, or the new and modern three-dimension style of enameled or oiled fly fishing order. Such a line will cost around $8.00 to $12.00, and is well worth the expenditure of that sum. The length for a good smallmouth line of this order should be from 35 to 45 yards. A good single-action fly rod reel of the "steelhead" or salmon size is best, and the leader should also be a tapered one, running from 7½ to 9 foot in length. A size 5x tip is about right for such a leader. It should taper from .0055 to Marana 1 (.012) and should be of the finest of fresh Spanish silkworm gut constructed by an expert leader tier for the strain that a three pound bass will put on it in swift river water. The tippet of this leader is intended to test around ¾ of a pound, but with proper fishing a three pound bass can be handled very safely with this light tapered end of the leader. However, the fish has to be struck lightly and played with a great deal of understanding in regards to line and arch of the rod. This caution and care that has to be used in rodding a fighting bass on such delicate tackle is one of the things that makes the sport all the more intriguing, and one good smallmouth bass taken by such expert judgment on the dry fly rod, in a favorite river or creek or from a rocky shored lake point, is more prized by the sport-fisherman than a dozen taken under other and more orthodox fishing methods.

The leader must be kept well soaked at all times. It should be kept in a Pyra-shell leader box, between pads of heavily moistened felt for at least an hour before attaching to the line, and when in use on the lake or stream the leader

must not be allowed to dry out in the least, but kept in the water at all times when the fly is not being whipped over the pool. The line for a rod of the order described can be safely chosen from either a HDH—in double taper make—or HCF, or HC20F in the three-dimensional taper, all of which will work neatly with a good dry-fly type of 8½ foot split-bamboo rod of around 5 to 5¾ ounce weight. The dry-fly line to be most effective should have plenty of flexibility to it and in order to attain such flexibility it must be dressed often and liberally with some good and reputable line dressing. Rub the line before you start fishing with a pad of felt saturated with the dressing. Attach the leader to the line with a simple hitch fashioned by first drawing a single knot in the end of line, then doubling a good length of the line back with right thumb and finger, inject this loop into the loop of the leader and bring tippet end of leader through line loop and pull snug, so that the knot in line end is close to leader loop. This is one of the best fastenings that can be used. It is easy to detach from leader at the close of the fishing and will last for an indefinite length of time, not injuring the line end at that station. The leader should not be greased for dry fly casting. The idea is for the line to float as lightly as possible on the water, and the leader should sink under surface. The fly is then fastened to the tippet of the leader by simply running end of tippet through the eye of fly, from above, and bringing end back and around and tucking end through the circle so formed and drawing down close to eye of fly. This is one of the best and most practical of fly and leader fastenings and the one best suited to good dry fly casting and floating of the fly. Now, take the fly between thumb and finger of the left hand and with thumb and finger of other hand rub a nice amount of Dry Fly Dressing (paste waterproofing) on the wings, the hackle and

the tail of the fly. Then make a few short false casts with the fly in the air to fluff the hackles and wings and to remove all unnecessary waterproofing, after which the fly is ready to be cast. When the fly shows symptoms of sinking and getting water logged give it another light dressing with finger and thumb tips, and every few hours go over the line with some waterproof dressing to keep it good and buoyant also. But leave the leader alone and be sure that it sinks when the fly is laid on the water, leaving the fly and the line floating lightly. This makes an ideal dry fly casting fix for the bass fisherman. Cast the floating fly out where there are eddies playing around the weedy fringes, or where a little run of current flows down along an old stream log or drift, or drop the fly at the edge of pads and weedy clumps in the bass pool. Let it float as long as it possibly will stay up, imparting a life-like movement to it by flexing the wrist of the rod hand lightly every few seconds when the fly is on the water, causing small riffles to circle out from the fly. This causes the fly to swim over the surface with a living appearance that will raise a hungry bass as no other method that we can suggest to the angling student. When a bass rises to such a floating lure it usually does so with a savage and determined rush, and then it is that the fisherman must learn to control his instinctive desire to "jerk" his fly hard to hook the fish. Such a careless action will usually result in breaking the leader tip. Instead of jerking hard on the fly when you have a rise from a hungry bass train yourself to instinctively give the fly to the fish, and then strike with a full wrist movement to set the barb of the little hook into the lip of the fish. By using this method of handling rises from large, hard striking fish one can use even the lightest of tippets with safety and seldom, if ever, break the gut on a rising bass. When the fish has felt the sting of the barb it will

make a hard and savage rush. Give line from the tip slowly and evenly, and train yourself to put a great deal of trust in the resilient arch of the rod to play the fish. With some practice one soon finds when to ease the tension on his tackle by offering some line to the fish, and when to take up slack and force the issue with the playing bass. By using calm and considerate judgment it is a comparative easy matter to learn to the fraction of an ounce when to give and when to take from a playing fish. But in no case should the dry-fly angler for bass ever try to force things with a savage and pugnacious *Bronze-Back Battler.* Rather, the fish should be given plenty of consideration and time and with good tackle, even though it is of the most apparent delicacy and fineness, it is surprising what large and hard-fighting gamesters can be brought to the net with comparative ease and safety to the fisherman's equipment! A light, strong wood-frame landing net that can be attached to the fisherman's shoulders with an elastic cord, is very necessary in this type of fishing. It saves many a good fish and is also proper insurance against broken leaders and lost flies.

The fly for smallmouth bass should be of a rather small size, compared to some of the larger sinking or wet models that we have advised for underwater fly manipulations. I have found that the size 8 to 10 is a good dry-fly offering for the river smallmouth and also for lake fish in shallow waters. The hook should be of the finest hand-forged quality, sharp as a needle at the point and, preferably of the Sproat pattern. It is advisable also that it have a Turn Down (T-D) eye and the Fan-Wing, Spent-Wing and Cocked-Wing patterns of floating fly are all admirably adapted to this fishing. A choice of patterns is rather difficult to give, as there are so many elements of natural reasons that inject themselves into the subject that to attempt to lay down a

concrete list of these would be positively futile. As an example of this I recall a little incident that happened to me one August afternoon some seasons back when I was fishing one of my favorite smallmouth bass rivers in the middle-west with the fly rod:

It was a suffocatingly hot day and the river was at a very low stage. I had been fly casting over a particularly good pool where a large school of smallmouth had taken up their abode. However, on this day the wet-fly offerings that I usually had been taken them on, were failing to produce anything more than a few undersized bass. On the opposite shore of the river, however, I had seen several nice bass breaking the surface along a line of yellowish-green river weeds. Being thoroughly familiar with the stream I knew that this fringe of vegetation bordered nothing more promising than a few inches of riffle water that whisked down into a small eddy pool that sucked under a pile of old drift logs that had been piled up along the upper end of a pointed sand spit. The eddy where I suspicioned the rising bass to have worked up from was not more than half a dozen yards in width and perhaps twice that long—a pool that under ordinary conditions I seldom bothered to fish at all. But inasmuch as the day was producing little action I decided that for want of a better place to test my luck I would give this pool a try-out. Wading across the stream above the place where I had seen the bass rising I climbed up the wooded bank and made a detour around the weedy fringe, being careful all the time to keep just close enough to the water so that I was easily discernible from the shallow little bays along the weeds where the fish had been feeding. As I approached the long-drift pool I detoured deeper into the timber so that I was completely hidden from the water. There I quietly looked the situation over and lazily watched the

dark current as it swept by the sunny old logs. It was an ideal looking spot for a dry fly to float along within easy striking distance from the shadowy driftage that had collected over the immense old sunken drift logs. The sun was hot and the wind was filtering out of the brazen southwest, whispering pleasantly in the curling leaves of the maple trees about me. Just the kind of an afternoon when a fisherman's mind takes on those fanciful whimsies that sometimes means the difference between an empty creel and a well-filled one when the sun decides to go down in the west. I sat down on a curling grey root of a maple on the shore and fumbled through my old fly book. In one of the compartments where I kept my dry fly assortment there was a small, flat pasteboard box that bore an Australian cancellation mark, and opening this I quizzically inspected an assortment of flies and bugs that one of my friends in New South Wales had sent me for trial on our American fishing waters. There were slender, elf-like spiders, succulent looking May-flies and tawny island-queens that were concocted from woodcock and a dash of jungle fowl—all of them appealing to the golden gilded waters that went sliding along so invitingly out there beyond the ancient drift of warm logs on the bank. But there was one fly in the assortment that stood out among the many others—a plain white moth tied to a size 12 English hook that somehow struck me as being one of the most colorless and yet delightfully dressed flies that I owned. It was a dressing that was more life-like than anything else in my assortment, and yet the most colorless and inconsistent fly of them all. More through pure whimsy than anything else I picked the little fly out from among its more gaudy fellows and studied it a while. Then it struck me that I would like to see how that plain white-moth would look

floating down that slick, glassy current beyond the shady undercoverts of the drift. Dressing my line with a pad of deer's fat that I carried for the purpose I chose a long, thin tapered gut leader from the soaking box and still feeling that it was just an experiment more than anything else I attached the White Moth and crept slowly forward to a place within nice casting distance of the shimmering slick on the current. The first cast was made at a slight angle up the stream, so that I might watch the little Australian fly drift down on the current. The leader loop reached out tightly and the little fly whipped over, hung a moment poised in the air and then drifted down toward the water. Instantly there was a break in the current and a beautiful big smallmouth bass bounced upward, curled like a spring and snapped the little fly directly out of the sunhot air. I have never seen a more beautiful sight than that, and neither have I ever seen a bass leap so far out of its native element for a fly or insect. The rod tip was depressed instantly and the bass disappeared into the river. A moment later I struck with a turn of the wrist and felt the indescribable thrill of a heavy fish solidly hooked in the lip. I played that bass as I have never worked on another, for I wanted to capture it more than any other bass I have raised, just because it had been so lightning-fast and greedy on that settling White Moth. It darted under the drift, of course, and I barely saved my thin-tipped leader, but as good luck would have it there was an open eddy just below and into this the bass ran, then out into the strong current, where I had an opportunity to give it line as it needed to save the tippet and the leader. That one two-and-a-half pound bass was more than a payment for my afternoon spent there on the hot shores of the bass river I can assure my readers, for it had proven the swiftness and the pug

nacity of the smallmouth river bass when it comes to following and darting upward on its chance insect prey.

The strike with the light dry fly must not be too strong, and yet it must be strong enough to set the hook firmly in the heavy lip of the smallmouth bass, otherwise the fish will toss the fly aside in one of its many broaches and leaps to the surface waters. For this reason I prefer to use a fly of approximately a size 8 in dry fly fishing. The Royal Coachman, Cahill, Brown Hackle, Grey Hackle, and Dusty Miller are all excellent patterns for smallmouth dry fly fishing, with the McGinty, Reuben Wood and the Professor coming in a nice second choice.

Chapter 26

LEADERS AND LINES, FOR BASS-FLY FISHING

WHILE WE HAVE naturally injected considerable advice about the leaders and lines that are used in bass-fly fishing, the subject still has a few trenchant angles that we feel should be outlined before progressing on to other details of this fishing pastime. Among the details that surrounds the matter of proper terminal-tackle for the bass-fly fisherman's gear is the one that deals directly with the proper and most effective line for this sport of bass-fly fishing.

The fly line that the trout fisherman uses in many cases is too small and light for effective and pleasant bass fly angling. This is especially true in the case of wide river and lake pool casting for the large and smallmouth bass, where a strong rod and a spoon or spinner attached fly is being used, or where bass-bugs and feather minnows are part of the anglers requisites. On the other hand, for ordinary dry-fly and straight wet-fly casting for the bass tribe, the line that works well for the rainbow, Brown and brook trout rod, in ordinary trout rivers and lakes will give the fisherman just as pleasing results as any that can be chosen. But for bass-bugs and the heavier order of bass fly rod plugs, wobblers and spinning baits a strong rod and a heavier line must be taken into consideration.

In large waters, such as the northern lakes and the wide middle-western and eastern rivers, where we find the small and largemouth bass family waiting our lures, a rod of not under 5½ ounce weight is perhaps the best one to use. This weight of rod usually calls for a length approximating 9 feet. Some fishermen use a 9½ foot rod for their bass fly casting and these anglers, as a general thing, use almost entirely the No. 0, No. 1 and No. 2 size of metal spoons in the "willow-leaf" or slim-Ely patterns. Back of this fairly large spoon they attach bass flies of No. 2, No. 1/0 and even No. 2/0 sizes. Now, it is obvious, that such weighty terminal tackle calls for more power in the rod and more weight to the line, for comfortable and balanced casting effects than does the smaller and lighter flies and bugs, so, consequently, we must give this type of bass fly casting outfit consideration. Such equipment is mostly put into use in rivers and lakes and they do produce extremely good results, especially in the spring and early summer fishing waters, and in waters that are prone to be roily and discolored. A line of size D diameter is perhaps as good a choice as one can make for such bass casting efforts. The line should be preferably of the "level" order, and of a good enameled or oiled finish. A size E is used in some cases, but for the best general results I would advise a line of size D caliber for rods over and around 9 feet in length and with an approximate weight of 5¾ to 6 ounces. It is also advisable that such a line be of the level-order, that is there is no taper to its construction, and when one end is worn or weakened it can be turned and the fresh end used. As to colorings for these lines, the Chocolate, Amber or Mist-Green ticked are the safest to consider, for lake and river fishing. The same thing applies to ponds and creeks also. Such a line comes usually in 30 and

35 yard lengths, which appears to be sufficiently long for all fishing.

The tapered line and the three-dimensional lines can also be used in bass fly casting. The tapered line being the choice of the dry-fly fisherman and for those that use the straight bass fly and the streamer models, whereas the Three-Dimensional line is the favorite for the Bass-Bug and the feather and cork-bodied minnow casters. The tapered line comes in both the single taper and the double taper styles. There is an object in this that should not be overlooked by those that wish to economize on their lines in the variety of fishing that the bass-fly angler faces, and it is that by using the single-tapered line on his reel the fly caster has at his command both a level line, to use with wet flies, spinner and spoon flies and certain of the bass-bug lures, and as well a tapered line that can be used for dry-fly casting and for the casting of light wet flies and streamer flies for small-mouth and bigmouth bass. In choosing the single-tapered line one has all these things combined in one single line. By reversing the tapered end of the line and substituting the level end the whole range of fishing possibilities is accomplished. On the other hand we have the Double-tapered line, and this is also an economical idea, but it applies strictly to the user of the tapered line and tapered leader for straight dry-fly and light wet fly and streamer fishing efforts. The object in the double-tapered line is that when one end of the line grows weakened and worn with use the line can then be reversed and turned and a new and stronger end is at the fisherman's command. In this way a single line has double use and double wearing possibilities. Even the Three Dimensional types of lines can be pressed into various uses by the owner, as the average Three Dimensional line has, on

one end, the level, taper and level or running line, this last feature extending on through the full length of the line beyond the tapered swell, or "torpedo" sections. By reversing the ordinary "torpedo" or 3-d line we find that we have a very satisfactory and practical level line to use with spinner and spoon and heavy streamer flies. It is, therefore, suggested that for those bass-fly fishermen who feel at all able to stand the financial strain of purchasing a good single-tapered or 3-D (Three Dimensional) tapered line the extra expenditure will be well worth while, as it offers them a practical and effective range of fly fishing lines all in one coil, whereas, with the single level line one is confined strictly to the spoon and spinner wet fly or the heavy streamer or wet fly methods of bass fishing, and can not effectively go out and taste the glories of dropping a floating lure on a pool where the bass happen to be rising to the surface foods. The difference in price, between the level fly line and the tapered orders of lines is not extremely heavy. A good level line will run the angler around $3.25 for 25 to 35 yards, whereas the standard tapered fly line will cost from $8.00 to $10.00 for 30 to 45 yards—and the same prices as last quoted will purchase a "3-D" line suitable for bass-fly fishing.

In matching up the bass-fly leader with the bass-fly line it is a good idea to have some comprehensible understanding of what the various sizes in line and leader dimensions and line and leader tapers are, so that a balance can be attained that will make casting more easy, accurate and effective:

All line manufacturers deviate somewhat we might safely assume from a standard caliberization of weaves and enamels and oiled processes of finishing. However, this seems, by a close comparison, to not run greatly in excess of .002

inches in the diameter of the respective lines that we have used and examined. A size H line for fly fishing (which is approximately the minimum for the practical bass or trout fisherman) runs from .028 to .030 of an inch in diameter, this can safely be applied to the other various sizes in fly lines that we find offered us down to the maximum size of A. The following table will illustrate what we mean:

FLY LINE CHART

Size	*Thickness*	*Diameter in Inches*
H		.028 to .030
G		.030 to .032
F		.035 to .037
E		.039 to .041
D		.044 to .046
C		.050 to .052
B		.054 to .056
A		.058 to .060

Size A is seldom used, perhaps never, by the bass-fly fisherman, and therefore used only to fill out the charts continuity. Level lines above size D are not of interest to the bass fishermen in my own, personal opinion.

The tapered end of the fly line runs for a specified distance back from the terminal end level, then starts to swell until it reaches the maximum of "bulge," after which it takes the course of "running line" of that diameter for the balance of the coil. In the Three-Dimensional or Torpedo style of line this system varies from the simple tapered style of line, and the idea of this is to perfect a so-called "balanced" casting line—one that will carry well into the wind and that

will whip a fly over, at the terminus of the cast and spot it on the water ahead of the line itself, which, if properly executed means, of course, that the fly fisherman will stand a fifty-percent better chance of rising and hooking a feeding or lurking fish than though the line would strike the water first and before the fly and leader. The "bulge" in the "Three Dimensional" casting line gives weight to the line at a scientifically gauged station so that the forward cast is carried out farther and more accurately where it halts and permits the lighter leader and line end to whip forward and over and strike the water with the fly well ahead of the fall of the line itself. That is the principle of the "torpedo" bulge in the bass fly line, and it is really a wonderful addition and advancement over the level or even the tapered lines of past years, bringing more wary fish to the fly we honestly believe and also permitting more accuracy and distance in wind and under other adverse casting conditions on lake, pond or stream. I have observed a definite change for the better in fly-casting in the past several seasons, not only in my own case, but in the casting of my friends, and, unquestionably this has come about through the new and more effective lines, leaders and rods that we are being offered by our American tackle manufacturers.

The level ends of our tapered bass lines runs from 18 inches in the cheaper grades of double-taper to as much as 13 feet in the more expensive grades, and the taper proper varies from 8 to 13 feet, reaching its full size and then completing itself in running line for the balance of the coil in single-taper. The reason for the difference in level ends and in taper lengths is that some lines are built to offer a "quick" taper from the running line to the level ends, whereas other builders figure that with a long, gradual taper there is more harmonious driving-power offered to the ends

and to the leader and that by so constructing they give to the line more accuracy and a softer, more delicate touch of the fly to the water—which is, of course, a thing that is to be sought for when angling with the dry fly for especially cunning and watchful old Hermit fish of the pools. I personally rather hang to the long-taper and believe that with it one can get more delicacy of touch with the fly. However, in casting on windy open lakes and ponds and over large river pools where there is plenty of wind to combat the quick bulge or taper is sometimes a very nice thing to have back of the ends of your tapered line and leader. It is, after all, a subject that simmers down to the practical question of where and under what fishing conditions the line is to be used when making an ultimate choice.

The only accurate and dependable way of arriving at the true dimensions of either a fly line or the fly-line leader is by using a small mechanical gadget known as a Line and Leader Gauge. This permits one to read the diameter in thousandths of an inch and less, and with it one is able to accurately caliper the strands of gut that will best go into the properly built tapered leader for the dry-fly cast for bass. The ends of the tapered bass line for dry-fly fishing are, H, G or F, with H predominating for smallmouth bass dry-fly fishing. The leader that is best suited to such a line for accurate and successful fishing would be the 7½ foot, tapered from Marana-1 to Fina. This is known as the Bass Tapered leader and is of the "heavy" tapered leader class. I have, however, used a greatly lighter leader than this for bright days and for clear, calm water, when the fish positively refused to rise to the above mentioned type of leader. In such cases I have used the Rapid Taper leader, 7½ foot long, tapered from 1X (.095 inches in diameter) to 4X (.006

inches in diameter) and taken with such light gear some astonishingly fine smallmouth bass. However, for the beginner and for those that fish in heavy waters where big bronze-back are known to lurk, rather than pound to pound and a half bass, the first mentioned taper is to be advised. In cases where the waters are very clear and the bass are lying well removed from the angler and casts have to be made over open pools to lurking places for the fish then a 9 foot length of leader, with the same general "long" tapers had best be tried. Twelve foot leaders are about the maximum and these are used only by those anglers who wish to fish "fine and far" for their bass.

In the level leader, for spoon and spinner fly-fishing and for use with the larger streamer and wet bass patterns of flies the 6 foot Imperial (.019 to .020) is a safe choice and for bass bugs where large bass are expected the 4½ foot Imperial grade of leader with special long loops at end for attachment of these lures is best. The 6 foot level Imperial with two "tags" for eyed flies, or with dropper "loops" if snelled flies are to be used as dropper offerings is the right thing to choose. Leaders should be kept well soaked and when through using them it is a good plan to take them from their soaking pads and stretch them lightly in the shaded open to dry, then coil them and place away until needed again. The best grades of leader should always be bought for fine fishing, as this is one of the very important parts of the bass fisherman's tackle, and a poor leader will many times be the cause of a prize fish being lost. The average fly rod will permit only a pound and a half lift, it should be recalled, and, for this reason large and unduly heavy leaders need not always be used, as the best fish in a pool are almost always those that are most wary and shy and that it requires the finest and most delicate of tackle to rise to the

strike. For this reason the angler must bear in mind that cautious and patient play when a bass is hooked is always preferable to excited and panicky strikes and lifting of the fish from the water with the rod and leader alone. Use a good net and play your fish with enjoyment and a clear mind and exacting eye and hand—and you will find that in almost every case delicacy of tackle can be substituted for strength and reckless excitement.

Chapter 27

FLOAT FISHING FOR TROUT AND SALMON

AMONG THE MOST enjoyable of my many fishing trips after game fish I am forced to consider those trips that I have made for trout and salmon in a canoe as the most exciting and entertaining. This is the method that is used on the majority of the larger and more turbulent of the northern rivers and lakes, and unquestionably it is one of the fastest and most successful of all angling methods that can be used in angling for the rainbow, the German-brown and the brook trouts. Salmon fishermen also understand and appreciate the importance of a good canoe, properly handled by a competent riverman or guide, in their pursuit with rod and reel and artificial fly of the gamey Silver Salmon and the Landlocked Salmon of the eastern Maritime provinces and the Northern New England states of our country.

One of the main points, however, of canoe-fishing for trout and salmon, either on the swift rivers that hold these fish or in the lakes of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, is that the sport-fisherman has at his disposal a safe and dependable 16 or 18 foot canoe, equipped with bow and stern seat and good reliable paddle and steel-shod push

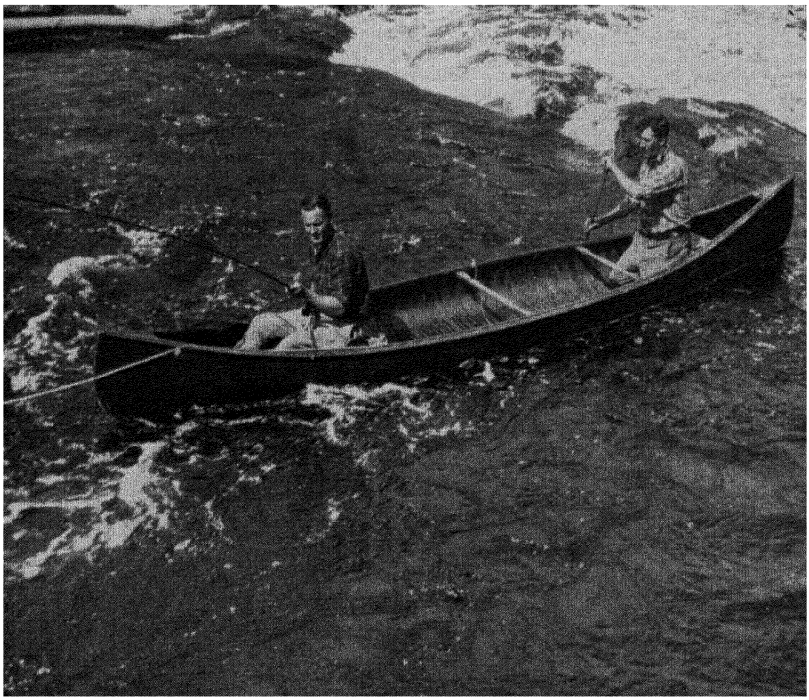


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Fishing for salmon on the powerful rivers of the north calls for a canoe and a good guide—with strong fly rods or a special built salmon fly casting rod, extra heavy salmon line and leaders and specially dressed salmon flies. A reel that holds more than the usual length of fly line is also necessary, for there must be a backing line spliced to the fly line for their long runs in these swift, long pools.

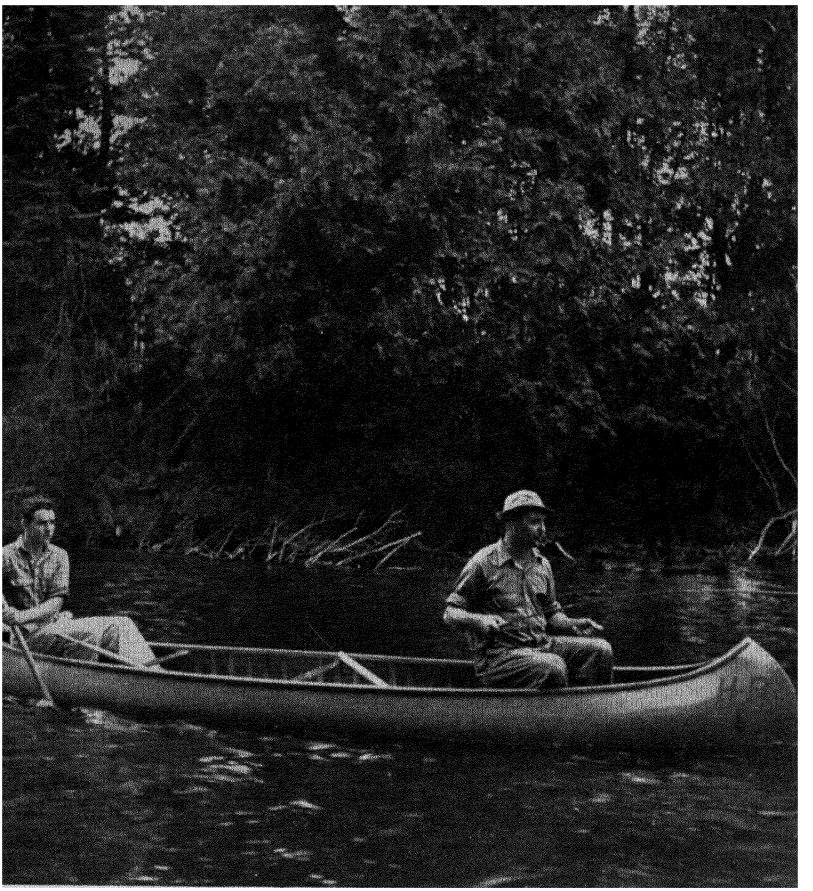


Photo courtesy of Frank Davis, East Michigan Tourist Assoc

The guide sets the steel shod holding pole, while his angler-patron sets the fly in a good trout.

pole (setting pole). In addition to these items there should also be included in the float-fisherman's outfit a large, long-handled trout or salmon landing net, a heavy camp blanket for use on the bottom of the craft when the angler wishes to rest and fish from the bottom of the canoe, and a cane or slat back-rest to be attached to the bow seat for the angler to use on long and arduous river and lake trips. In addition there might also be included a set of Kapox or pneumatic cushions that can be used for the bow and stern seats as well as to insure safety to the occupants of the craft, "just in case" of a mishap in swift or dangerous waters. With an outfit of this order, and with the proper fly-fishing rigging in regards to rod, reel, lines, leaders and flies almost any type and size of fishing river or lake can be properly fished over with comparative safety and comfort to the sportsman.

If at all possible the canoe fisherman should try and have a companion accompany him on his trips. Fishing alone from a swiftly moving canoe is not the sort of adventure that the novice waterman or angler or even the above-average sportsman is capable of performing with success and safety. The experienced and professional fishing guide can usually manage to do both these artful tricks, of guiding the canoe down swift currents and around sharp, wooded bends and cast his flies both at the same time, but the ordinary fisherman and canoeist finds this a puzzling attainment, and for that reason I would not advise the beginner in this sport to try fishing a stream or lake alone.

The guide or riverman should attend to the handling of the canoe. That will prove to be one man's job, even in comparatively calm and easy waters. He can also do some fishing when not employed in steering or paddling or poling the craft and also will look after the sportsman's back-casts, warning his patron when there is danger from leaning

brush or timber or windfalls, and holding the canoe against the current or sliding it back against the strong current with the setting-pole when a careless back-cast has become entangled in the overarching branches of a birch or cedar along the shores. These things happen far less often, however, in a properly handled and arranged float trip than the novice would presume, for casting the fly for game fish from a canoe, glancing down a swift river or floating over an eddying pool is really one of the most naturally successful methods there is of game-fish angling. The man in the bow of the boat does not necessarily get all the good fishing in this plan of angling—as so often happens in boat fishing on bass and pike waters where the pools and eddies are not so plentiful as in trout and salmon angling. On a swift, northern river it is even possible for three rods to keep going nicely from an 18 foot canoe, the steersman making his casts ahead of the bow and to the sides, while the bow-man keeps his flies working well ahead and to the one side, and the third member of the party sitting on a folded blanket midships of the craft can work his casts out to one side and a bit ahead, dropping his fly along the stream-side logs where the current swirls and dimples and where brush and roots form excellent coverage for good sized fish. I have many times fished with three rods going in the same canoe and with no apparent inconvenience to any one of us. However, there is a system of casting that must be understood and generally appreciated by all members of the party and the steersman should be the Captain of the trip in such cases, suggesting changes in the direction of the back-casts and advising sides and directions when there is symptoms of tangled lines appearing. It is surprising though, the effectiveness that can be worked out after the members of the party learn their places on the stream and

how to keep their flies shooting ahead of the craft and out of the way of a companion's offering. The steersman handles the canoe by tucking the paddle under the left arm and gripping it short of the top, "finning" the blade in fast water much the same as a fish would use its tail, and in deep, quiet pools digging the blade into the water with short, sharp strokes that in so light a craft serves to carry the vessel on its way and into the proper currents. In this fishing all the casting is done downstream ahead of the canoe or at the sides. The main thing to learn is to keep the eyes and attention centered ahead of the craft as you dart and glide swiftly down the current. A good riverman, at the steering paddle, in the ordinary northern trout or salmon river will make about three miles per hour, and in the most of this travel he will be able to cast the greater part of the distance, except in those places where the stream is very swift and with rocks projecting out of the water or where the pools are situated among sweepers and angling stream logs. In case of his companion or his own flies becoming caught in streamside brush or windfalls then the paddle must be used to hold the canoe in the current until the setting pole can be substituted and the canoe thrust back against the river to a place where the lure can be detached and tackle rearranged for another attempt.

One of the very necessary items of tackle on such a trip in the more narrow rivers and along the lake shores where submerged weedy beds and fringes serve to hide trout and salmon is the setting-pole, with a good steel shod point that is fashioned in the form of a U. Such a pole is indispensable in detaching flies from the twigs of cedar and spruce or from the heavier branches of brush and alders. The canoe is worked back to a place where the steersman can reach the fouled fly and then inserting the steel U around the

branch or twig back of the fly a single, strong twist will serve to break the holding stem and permit it to fall on the water. This type of shoe for the setting pole is much more practical than one shod with a straight iron spike. Such a shoe for the pole can be manufactured by most any good blacksmith, and set in the foot of the pole with a brass collar or retaining ring to protect it when poling over rocky, gravelly riffles of the stream.

By keeping the eyes and mind on the river ahead of the canoe, anyplace from forty to sixty feet, the float fisherman soon learns to pick out and swiftly appraise the proper places to set his fly down on the water. Much useless casting will be done unless this fact is understood and mastered. Trout have their own particular places to stay, and unless the fly is either dropped there or permitted to drift by such places in a natural and attractive manner even the finest and most productive of streams will yield nothing of importance to the fisherman. The best cast to use in floating is the overhead and the side-overhead cast, keeping the back-cast in sight whenever and wherever possible, and striving to keep the loop in the line just as narrow as possible. When the line loop spreads out too wide there is almost always a branch or twig ready to clutch the fly and cause trouble to not only the fisherman but to the others in the party. If one is fishing from the bow of the canoe and has chosen the right side of the river ahead, then work the back-cast well over the right shoulder, directing it back over and to the left of the steersman, keeping the line-loop as close as possible and glancing back to see that there is proper clearance for the cast behind. The fly can be directed at most any angle from straight ahead in a long, uncurling flight of the lure to a short side cast by the simple expedient of either holding the wrist firm or by permitting it to bend sharply to the right

as the rod is brought forward. If the loop is kept close (in the form of an *elongated* U, rather than a wide-spread, lazy and formless U) the fly will whip over and fall on the eddies and currents lightly and with wings cocked, riding down or through the eddies with all the life-like buoyancy of a real insect scooting across the surface. I have found that the fly that really skims across the water, in such fishing, with speed and airy life, is the one that is taken preferably by the feeding fish. One should also watch the water ahead of the canoe and at the side for rising fish. This is highly important and one of the things that the veteran river or lake fisherman learns to watch for in close connection with his study of the shifting panorama of water, brush and forest that flows toward him as he shoots down rapids, over riffles and through dimpling pools in the canoe. These surface rises are true inklings of feeding fish, and if the fly is placed on the up-stream side of them as quickly as possible there is every chance that the fish will rise again and take the properly floated fly with a vengeance. It should be remembered that trout almost always head up stream and, for this reason, the fly that gets their attention surest is the one that is worked across their line of natural vision, and for that reason the aim of the fly caster must be accurate and sure, otherwise the cast is a lost one. In case of a bad aim with the fly, or through the fault of a poorly uncurled leader and fly, in canoe fishing on swift waters, one has little time to try a repeat cast, and there is where the second rod in the canoe comes in handy, for the canny old fly fishermen working a river together out of the same canoe always try to get two separate casts over a rise, providing the first man has missed his chance.

It is all swift, sharp fishing in this angling. There is no time for mistakes to be corrected and the canoe fisherman

on a swift river where trout and salmon lurk either gets his rise the first cast or stands no further chance of connecting as a general thing. Occasionally, in the case of finding a more quiet pool and where fish are feeding heavily on a big hatch of flies on the surface, one can get in more than the initial cast, in which case then the fish is worked for more consistently. But where the waters are fast and the pools small and separated by sharp riffles and rapids one has to practice accuracy and good control of the fly rod and the line if he hopes to keep up his score with the second man in the canoe.

Dry flies are the most preferable to use for float trips, as they permit the angler more time for his study of the waters ahead and the spotting of rising fish. They can be fished faster than the wet casts and do not require nearly so much effort in retrieving and setting on the water.

Cocked-wing and spent-wing patterns are my preference for this fishing. The Royal Coachman (Fan-Wing) the McGinty spent-wing, Professor spent-wing, Cahill, Wickhams Fancy, Olive Sedge, Brown Hackle, Grey Hackle, the Brown-Bivisible and Grey Bivisible, and the Cabin Coachman and Silver Baldwin in Impali-tail hair dressing, are all steady patterns for trout in the float fishing weeks and when the various hatches are swirling over the water or lifting and falling in the dusky shadows under the shore brush and cedar clumps. One finds the best fishing when the Caddis Fly hatches are on and the Caddis Flies, May Flies and Coachmans are always good patterns at such times.

The best rod for this fishing that I have ever found is the 8 foot length, 4 to 4½ ounce weight, dry-fly action split-bamboo model. Even a lighter rod can be used very nicely in float fishing, although some very heavy trout can be ex-

pected in such fishing, as the angler covers a great deal more water than in wading or shore fishing, and consequently has perhaps seventy-percent more chances of striking a big fish than he does in wading and fishing from the shore waters. Twenty miles of rushing river and eddying pools are not at all uncommon to traverse in fishing this way in a single day's fishing, and in that distance there are hundreds of fine pools and lurking places cast over where both small and large fish are feeding. Therefore, it can be seen, that a good rod and one that will handle a large fish is very important. In salmon fishing on the rivers of Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia the canoe is a greatly favored mode of fly casting. In fishing for salmon, of course, the rod must be more powerful than in the ordinary trout fishing sections of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Michigan and Minnesota and Wisconsin, although many fine salmon are taken each season on ordinary dry-fly action rods fished with a good line and salmon tapered leader and the larger order of salmon or trout flies. The canoe permits the salmon fisherman more range in playing his fish, as well as more freedom and opportunity of finding a particularly fine fish.

The second rod (providing there are two rods fishing from the canoe at the same time) should direct the continuity of the day's casting to a large extent, although an experienced fly caster in the bow makes it almost unnecessary for any advice or suggestions from the sternsman. If the bow rod is casting the right side of the stream or from the right side in lake fishing, the stern rod should, naturally, work to the left side of the advancing waters. This permits the backcasts to alternate in their courses and after an hour or so of fishing together from the canoe a party finds things

working smoothly, and it is astonishing how little interference occurs from tangled lines and snagged flies as the canoe drifts down through the pools, or rushes over the winding riffles and along the alder-hung banks, where the really big trout and salmon are waiting for the fisherman's casts.

Chapter 28

NIGHT-FISHING FOR BIG TROUT

IT IS AN undeniable fact that the largest trout in a stream or lake are to be taken on the fly after darkness has fallen over the woods and shore lines. This is especially true of the wary old German brown and rainbow trouts—the ones that the daylight fisherman finds so hard to rise to his most carefully and scientifically laid flies and underwater casts. For this reason there has grown up, in the more famous trout fishing regions, a class of high-powered fishermen who do the most of their fishing on the shadow-hung waters. The darker the night the better the chances are for the night-fisherman to "hang" one of these "dream fish," which every trouting enthusiast visions as sometime gracing his fern and moss-lined basket. In the Michigan and Maine woods night-fishing for large trout is practiced with considerable preparation and understanding and some of the catches made under these conditions are truly startling. Not only does the large trout of these sections take well to the night-cast fly, but the same successes can be accomplished by the angler of the other trouting regions.

Wading is sometimes practiced in this fishing, and I have oftentimes done good fishing at night from certain properly adapted shore lines, taking brown and rainbow trout of two

and three pound weight where in the daylight hours I would creel nothing over 12 inches in length. However, the best success of the night fisherman is turned in when the casting is done with dry flies from a floating canoe or a flat-bottomed skiff that has been rigged up with a low wooden box for the angler to sit on while manipulating his rod in the bow sections, with a steersman who understands the stream or lake perfectly wielding a short canoe paddle in the stern. This is perhaps one of the most novel and thrilling angling innovations for the novice angler that the fishing sport has to offer.

On some of the large northern rivers a fishing trip under the bewildering cloak of a dense summery night, with the great bull-frogs in the marshes bordering the river bellowing like veritable cows in their pastures, and the myriad chirpings of the night insects beating a musical interlude to the muffled roar of the nearby rapids, is beyond description.

The old riverman guide has the canoe all ready and there is a comfortable seat all arranged in the bow for you. The river is as dark as the inside of a pocket, with the stars standing out over imaginary mountains in the sky, which is nothing more than just the river mists swelling up into the breathless heavens. It is perhaps around midnight when you reach the long series of deep pools where the big rainbow and German brown trout are known to be up on the surface feeding on the hatch of Caddis Flies that everyone has been talking about this past few days.

The alders stand out darkly on both shores, looking rather misty in comparison to the giant wall of the immense old white pines that fill the wilderness beyond. The river is deep and there are tremendous splashes sounding all around the canoe. One wonders if they are muskrats, perhaps the diving of beavers or fishing otters—but they are none of

these, the guide will tell you in a low voice from the darkness in the stern of the canoe where he sits with his paddle, directing the gently floating craft. Those are big rainbows, or giant old German brown trout rising to a floating Caddis Fly that has come bouncing down over the nearby riffle and is now lazily tempting the big trout. You get your rod ready. It is dark, to be sure, but the guide helps you by holding a flashlight for you to see by. You attach a good strong leader of about 9 foot length, and with a very delicate and frail appearing tippet, when you compare it with the terrific plungings and the startling whacks that the big fish are ever and anon creating on the mysterious river that runs so eerily under you. The end of the leader is, however, light and delicate as it must be to float the little No. 10 or No. 8 size of Royal Coachman, Caddis Fly or White-Moth fly that you intend using. It will test only about a half-pound of dead weight, and when you compare those monsters that are swirling and dappling the dark current around you, why you wonder how you could ever handle such battlers on that slender thread of Spanish gut. However, the guide is firm in his contentions that no larger tippet should be used. The leader is tapered and so is the line you are using. You manage to thrust the end of the dampened length of gut through the turned-down eye of that Royal Coachman No. 8 fly (a larger size of fly is best to use than what was used that same day floating down another river fishing for trout. In that case you used a No. 12 and even a "midge" size of dry fly—which would perhaps run around a No. 14 or 16. The same leader is used, remember!) and then you strip off several yards of the line from the reel and pass it back to the guide who quickly and efficiently greases it with a pad of felt that has been soaked in line waterproof dressing. He also dabs a bit of this same dressing on the fly and

straightens the wings out on the little Spent-Wing Coachman. Now you are ready. The guide picks up his paddle and you are left to your own understanding of how to proceed. The flashlight is dimmed and put out. The river is dark as a sheet of ebony about you, and the rapids, way off someplace above, mutter and sigh—and the frogs fill in with their drum-like melodies. A few mosquitoes sing about your ears. But you will soon forget them, for already you are whipping the fly through the air and the little dry-fly rod feels light in your hand. You work out a good length of line, keeping the opening of the sky through the pathway of the wilderness on either side, just back of you and a safe place for that backcast to whisper through. Then, when you feel that you have out a good cast you bring the rod forward sharply and with your left hand release the little coil of line you have been feeding out through the guides. The fly shoots out and you guide it in the direction of that last mighty splash. You are uncertain if it is on the water, or not, until, you feel the line gently toggling at the light tip of your rod, and then you know that the fly has drifted to the place where the current has submerged it. You lift it and whip the rod back with a spring, and again the line shoots forward, and you know, now that the loop in the line above the leader was narrow, for the fly is not to be felt at all. As you cast the whole thing starts coming to you. The dark river is half-to-be-seen now. The rod feels more natural and you can tell by some latent instinct of the fisherman that you are casting the fly properly and that it is falling just about where you want it to fall. Night fishing is becoming easier. You can get so that the fly can be dropped just at the edge of the alders, and the angling shadows that mark the old windfalls and sweeper logs that the guide can see so well and guide the canoe around. The guide is a lot

of help in all this, for he knows every inch of the river, and its shores, having fished and logged it perhaps since a youngster, and he suggests in a low voice that you might be getting your backcast too close to the cedars or the overhanging spruce branches. And all the time the big trout are rising and splashing and dappling the water as they feed on the moths and the drakes and Caddis that the current is carrying down to them. It is a veritable banqueting of the cunning old denizens of the big, deep pools. And then suddenly you experience an odd sensation. The little fly that you have just recently sent out to the edge of the shadowy alders is struck. There is a splash! Something is jerking and pulling at your rod tip. The little rod is being whipped about, and your heart is in your mouth, and you raise the tip and struggle with it awhile, but you are afraid that whatever it is is going to break the delicate tip. The struggling is growing more pronounced and there is a splash and you hear the guide say that you had better give a little line on that fish. You open the reel and the line hums off. Then the line swings and you feel you have to do something, so you start stripping line back, until you can feel the living power of that big fish boring down into the river, under the brush. You lift furiously and wonder how the little leader ever holds, but the guide is telling you it is all right and to hold the trout and let it fight on the surface. You are bringing it closer! And then it swings by the canoe and there is a swift, slithering sound, a splashing as the net misses and then again the trout is gone, but now you are desperate and you hold on and are drenched with spray as it leaps and splashes and you work it back toward the stern of the canoe. Then silence. The guide laughs:

"Got him," he says casually. "He'll weigh around two pounds."

You are startled and a little peeved, for you had thought that the fish would go anyhow seven pounds.

Better luck next time, and a bigger rainbow—for it was a rainbow and he had struck a No. 8 size Royal Coachman on a 9 foot tapered gut leader that had a tippet of 5X size. The line was a tapered HDH size and the rod weighed about 4½ ounces. Your reel was an open style single action trout reel. The guide picks up his outfit now and while you admire the fish by torch light a moment he whips out a few casts himself. He is an old fishing guide and an expert, and he is using a 5½ ounce rod of 9 foot length with a large automatic fly reel and a line similar to your own, with a 9 foot leader, tapered, and a Cahill fly, No. 8 size. He declares that the dark flies are best at night. You like the lighter colored ones best. Both of you are right in your own ways, for a dark colored fly will sometimes get these big rainbows and brown trout at night just as quickly as will a light colored one. My own preference, however, is for a Royal Coachman, Parmachene Belle, Dusty Miller, White Moth, Caddis Fly or a Silver Baldwin. These are all good night fishing flies. Use a light leader, just the same as you do in the daytime and play the fish you rise and hook carefully. It is surprising how soon you grow accustomed to the dim light that conceals the water at night, and how quickly you learn to know just where your fly is and how to instinctively guide the back cast and the forward shoot so that the fly will land where that big trout just raised to a floating bug or insect a few moments before. Remember that the trout face upstream in the night just as they do in the daylight casting and try and get the fly upstream and float it down toward them for best and quickest results.

Night fishing for rainbows and browns is at its best in

early July, mid-July and even on the last hatches of the Caddis Fly and the drakes in late July and early August. However, I would say that late June and early days of July are best of them all for this fishing, providing the water is not too low or too high. A little above normal stage is the best for really good fishing at night with large flies.

A good riverman and guide will take you into this fishing with safety and sureness and insure you the best of sport at such times as I mention.

In shore fishing for big trout at night it is advisable to be acquainted with your stream and pick out those pools that are deep and fairly free from snags and open of brush if possible. However, these advantages are not always to be found, in which case then the fly fisherman must resort to another method of casting than the overhead or side casts. In pools where the brush clings close to the shore and you happen to be fishing from the shore on account of the depths or treacherous nature of the pool the flip-cast has to be used. In performing this you strip off about a half more line than the length of your rod and taking the fly by the bend of the hook, with the point out from your hand, you hold it with left thumb and finger firmly. Then you bend your rod strongly and when the line and leader is taut direct the tip of the rod in the direction of the eddy or current you wish to set the fly down on and let go by opening your thumb and finger on the hook bend. The fly will shoot out and land as nicely as though you had cast it there by the overhand or side, cast methods. This is a good trick where pools are not too wide. It is astonishing, however, how far one can cast a fly with this method with some practice. It is advisable in night fishing to choose the shallow side of a pool where there are big trout. Try and take a position where the rocky ledges are across the stream

or above the position you occupy and cast the fly to these promising spots. Let the fly float just as long as it will. This is a good rule in all dry fly fishing. Do not pick your fly off the water too often, but, rather, make your cast so that the fly will float as long as possible and as lightly as possible without being drawn under by the eddies or currents. Once the fly is under, however, then retrieve it and make a new cast, after drying off the fly. Keep the line well dressed so that it floats lightly on the surface and also waterproof the fly when it shows symptoms of wanting to sink or grow loggy and sodden. A bit of *Amadou* is a good thing to carry along for night fishing—as well as day fishing, with dry flies. This is sold by all large tackle dealers, and is an absorbant pad that dries the fly after being in a fish's mouth or in the water too long, and better and more handy to use at night than by fluffing and drying the fly with false casts through the air, in brushy places where such things are hard to successfully execute.

Large pools that slope off to long shallows with riffles at the head and that can be waded are best fished with a pair of wading boots or waist-high waders at night. Fish them with a long line from the center below. This makes easy night fishing as there is then plenty of room for a backcast in the darkness without danger of getting hung up on twigs or branches in the twilight of the night.

Wet flies will also work well on big trout at night, although, I cling to the dry fly myself with most confidence. But I have taken some fine big rainbows and German browns with a three-fly cast of No. 6, 8 and 10 sinking flies in the Royal Coachman, Parmachene Belle, Cahill, Reuben Wood, Dusty Miller and White Moth patterns, and in the *streamer* patterns I have had almost as good results as on the dry fly. The streamer fly in size 6, or even in size 4, is a

great favorite with many of the night fishing trout anglers, in Black Ghost, Green Ghost, Grey Ghost, Mickey Finn, Red and White, Light Tiger and Moose River patterns. I have found that by fishing the streamer flies alone with one fly to the leader I get best results. This is only a personal view of the matter, but I believe for night fishing that it causes less worry and fussing than by trying to use a cast with streamer fly on end and dropper flies of the regular wet fly patterns. The line does not need to be waterproofed with dressing as in dry fly fishing, but should be encouraged to sink instead. A good landing net is very important to have with you as well as a dependable flashlight that can be attached with a bit of elastic to the belt to spot the fish with when it is played in close to shore for the net.

Chapter 29

WADING AND DRY FLY FISHING FOR TROUT

THE MAJORITY OF trout fishermen are wading fishermen. This is especially true in the more shallow mountain streams and in those smaller rivers and ponds of the northern trout sections, where a boat or a canoe can not be transported or handled very easily. The best type of waders to use in the streams that one finds the largest trout in are the waist-high wading pants and boots combined. I have used a variety of these, some of which I liked and some that were both uncomfortable and impractical, and for the ordinary northern trout river or the average mountain stream have found that the new models that have rubber wading boot lowers, attached to waterproofed canvas uppers that come well up under the arms and fasten either with a belt or a pair of suspenders are the most pleasing. The old-style light wading stocking was better intended for those turbulent rivers where the currents are extremely strong and where one was in danger of being swept off the feet and into dangerous undercurrents and eddies. These were intended to be used with extra heavy, warm woolen socks over which was drawn a pair of hobbed and weighted leather or canvas and leather brogues. These

are all right when one does not have to walk far overland to get back to camp or automobile, and where the fishing is done close to the camp. But they are hot and heavy for return trips where the angler tries fishing a mountain brook or a meadow or marsh stream and then finds himself a mile or two from camp and has to return by trail. For this reason I have settled on the lighter and more modern boot-attached waders which combines the ordinary rubber wading boot, with cleat rubber or felt-pad sole, with an upper of waterproofed fabric that fits one like a pair of overalls. With this wader any ordinary trout river or pond can be fished by the angler, and a complete coverage of its eddies and pools can be made with even an angler of average casting abilities. In connection with this outfit I would suggest, however, that the fisherman use a good, steel-shod wading staff, preferably tipped with a sharp, steel U, set in a strong brass or steel ring at the foot of the staff. This is for those pools where the current is strong and there are dangerous holes nearby with slippery rock bottoms.

Felt soled waders are preferable for dangerously slippery rock paved streams with many rapids and riffles, and these can be had in this style I have described of wader instead of rubber cleats.

For mountain brooks and small marshland and meadow brooks the ordinary rubber wading boot that reaches the thigh and is fastened to the belt by snap holders is perhaps the most comfortable of all wading arrangements. A short canvas fly fisherman's jacket with plenty of pockets for fly book, leader pouch or box, oil-dressing bottle, leader-sink bottle, manicure scissors for trimming gut and the other necessary gadgets that the fly caster requires to make his fishing more pleasant and successful is a good covering for the shoulders and upper body. A warm wool shirt worn

under this jacket, a pair of woolen trousers and an old felt hat with a cork band is the accompanying requisites for a good wading-fishing outfit for the dry fly stream or pond angler.

In wading a dry-fly fishing stream for best results one should aim to do the bigger part of his casting upstream against the current. This might seem to be at direct opposites to the advice that has been recently offered in canoe fishing with dry flies, but it must be understood that in fishing from a canoe the angler is drifting down on his fly at a fairly high rate of speed, thereby permitting the dry fly to float without any undue pressure from the current, whereas in fishing on foot the fly rapidly floats ahead of the angler, even should he try to follow it, which is out of the question in most cases, and the current submerges it almost instantly or catches the leader and draws the fly low or under the water. Therefore, wading and dry fly fishing is almost out of the question *downstream.* However, the fly is oftentimes fished quartering to the angler at a downstream angle, and permitted to be swept around by the eddies or current in a semicircular route toward the fisherman. When it reaches a certain angle, however, it is then submerged by the current and the potency of its allure is largely lost—although trout will sometimes rise and strike a fly that is being submerged or that has been submerged and is being drawn back to the surface. In fact I know good dry fly anglers who claim that their preferable choice of positions for the floating fly is when it is fished rather steeply down current and retrieved slowly through the water under the surface. I can not say as much for the sunken dry fly. My experiences have been that the best position for the fly to rise a hungry fish is when it is skidding along over the surface lightly and with wings erect just before the time arrives

when the fly should be lifted from the surface. I never like to permit my dry fly to float to such precarious distances and angles below my position that the current will drag it under the surface, for when this is allowed then there is an unavoidable popping or sucking sound to the fly's retrieve that will startle and disturb a wary and susceptible trout. For this reason then, it is highly preferable that we fish the dry fly upstream and let it drift on the surface, subject to the whimsies of the eddies and currents that play along a log, bit of brush or around a rock in the current or pool until it has swept by the fisherman's position and is on its way downstream, when it should be *lifted,* not *jerked,* from the water with a gentle tightening of the line and a sharp, upward flirt of the rod tip. This, when properly done, brings the fly off the water as neatly as an insect taking wing, and puts the fly in a position for another unhesitating and pleasing cast. There is a lot to the retrieve of the fly from the surface that the fisherman should understand for the best of results in fishing for shy and gamey trout. It is preferable I think that the fly be taken off the water in time to make the act seem the natural efforts of the insect itself than to wait, perhaps for the sake of drifting it before the nose of a waiting fish that has shown itself in a previous rise, until the cast has fallen over and revealed itself to Mr. Trout's sharp eyes as nothing more than just a cheap and tawdry deception.

In fishing up a stream with waders it is a good plan to pick out the places for wading where one does not have to wade and stumble and thresh about too much. Some anglers will tell you that a trout is not disturbed by a wader and that all the falling and floundering about that can be accomplished will not serve to frighten a lurking trout from its hiding place. But I do not feel that way about it, and

I choose to approach my rising fish as carefully and with as much caution and consideration as I would stalk a sharp-eyed grey squirrel with a small-bore rifle, always striving to place the fly where the trout can best see it. The trout, as I have before said, heads upstream, looking for its natural food. It will also see anything that passes from a front-quartering angle, and therefore will follow and sometimes rise to a fly that is drifted down beside its lurking spot below or at the submerged rock, log or drift. To cast below the fish is useless—for it will not see the lure, and if it does chance to suspicion something wrong and turns about it will be too late for anything more than just a "follow." Therefore I always try to do my fishing from the shallow bars and, whenever sun or water conditions permit, cast upward and float my fly down where there are brush ends, angling stream side logs or piers and log cribbings and rocks to conceal the fish.

The sun should be in the face or at a long angle ahead of the fisherman, so as not to cause shadows to fall on the trout's haunts. This is important. And the fly should be trimmed when it falls on the water so that it floats with wings erect or spent, not with one wing submerged and the body heeled over so that it resembles a dead insect. Few good fish are taken on such casts, and the fishing of rises in a river by an angler calls for the fly to float erect and lively above all things. If such appearances are striven for and attained by the dry fly angler, then it is a settled fact that his basket will be filled at the end of a good day spent on a well stocked river. Even fished over rivers and streams with only a light supply of trout will net such an angler good catches.

In order to put life and action in a fly there are important details that must be looked after before the fly is even cast

out. In the first place study each good pool that is encountered on the stream. It is a sad waste of time and effort to start fishing and whip every bit of water that is encountered. Fish do not lurk in every and all parts of a stream or lake. There are certain logical holes and haunts that hold them. These occur where nature has caused some particular food for the fish, or passageway for this food to pass along. Eddies, certain currents, slicks and backwaters and backflows hold these secrets. I have even cast my dry fly down the natural course of a stream and had wonderful luck in rising and hooking several good trout, not because a fly of the dry or floating order can be fished successfully down current, but because I had happened to see that the stream had a back-flow in a certain pool, where the water turned after boiling down from a riffle and flowed back up the opposite side from the main current, thereby causing an ideal place for derelict food to pass along. All these little secrets have to be looked for by the wise angler, and when these food *caches* and food elevators and conveyors are spotted then the thing to do is to make ready to place a fly on them or by them—or just sit down and smoke a pipe and see if your suspicions are not right, when a nice trout breaks the surface after some infinitesimal bug or fly or creeper that has floated down. One can not see all the little things that a trout will rise to feed upon. Sometimes it is a large, struggling moth as big as one thumb, again a fly off the alders, and most times matter that is too small for the eye to catch, but whatever it is, one can be assured that it is alive and struggling, for the trout feeds only on living organism, and when they are seen dappling the surface or rising in bold, circling water founts to the surface, then it is evident that some surface lure will interest them, provided it is permitted to approach them at their favored point or location.

For the above reasons I favor the fishing of the rises, when using dry flies. It pays good dividends I have found, better, in fact than all this haphazard fishing that so many do when fishing a trout pool. One good rise in a pool is worth more to a skillful and studious trout fly angler than a dozen pools that have promising looking eddies and covers but no breaking fish!

Once the trout is definitely spotted then it is a matter of getting the fly to it as nearly as possible where it accepted the living food of a few moments before. In all probabilities the trout will remain there and one does not necessarily need hurry. Take time and consider what color and size of fly to use. If it was a large Caddis Fly that had floated down the current and was gobbled up, then that should be easy. There are half a dozen patterns of flies in the book that should interest the fish. A Royal Coachman will cause it to rise probably, if it is toward the later part of the season, or an Impali-hair coachman pattern, with spent wings, a Cahill, Greenwell's Glory, Partridge Spider, a Dun Upright —and most surely—if it is a large trout—a floating Caddis! The natural food doesn't always have to be exactly imitated, or a fly used that has been dressed especially after that type of insect, moth or bug or spider, but something that has the same general appearance and that is floated ahead of that trout so life-like and appealing that it is taken right off the water by the hungry gormant! I've seen this work out scores of times, and another thing that the dry fly fisherman should appreciate is that a rising fish, especially if a big one, will nine times out of ten follow and eventually rise to accept a dry fly that closely represents some natural food of the season that is cast to it often enough. I can not say why, but this is a failing and weakness of large brown and rainbows. Just keep tempting them with a

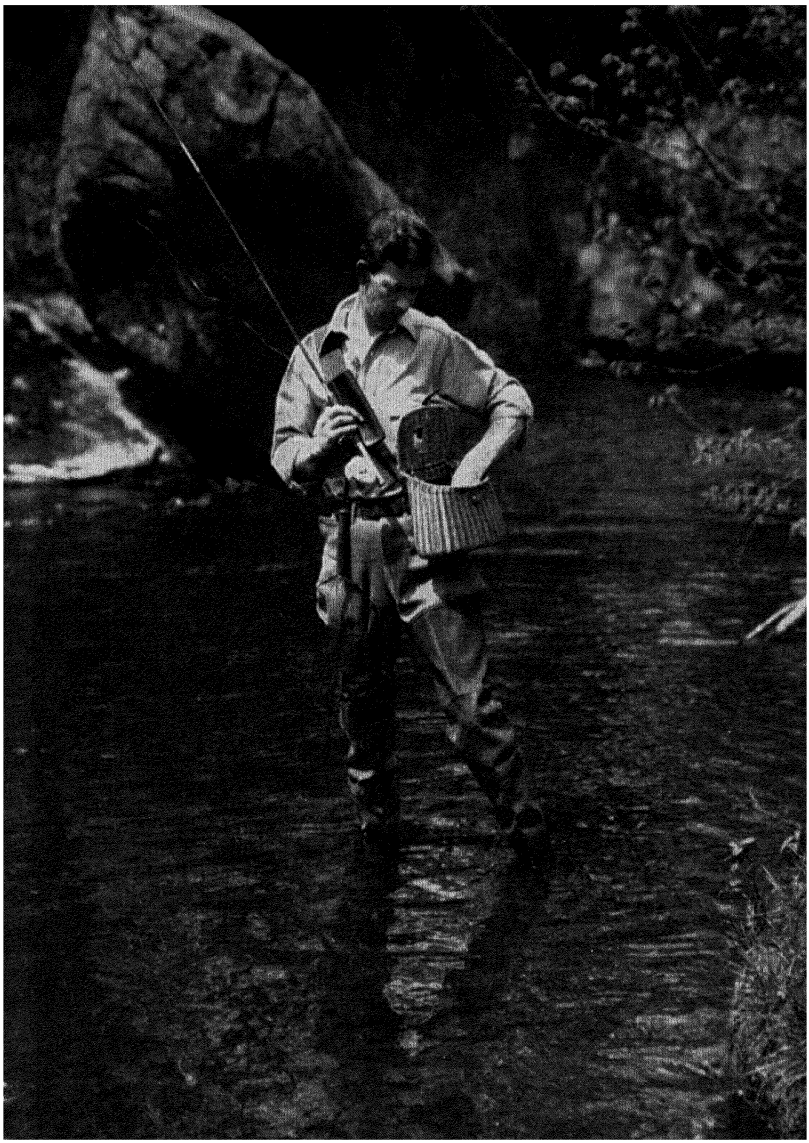


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Make sure that you have everything along for a day's fly casting. Assemble the tackle and fishing gear the evening before.

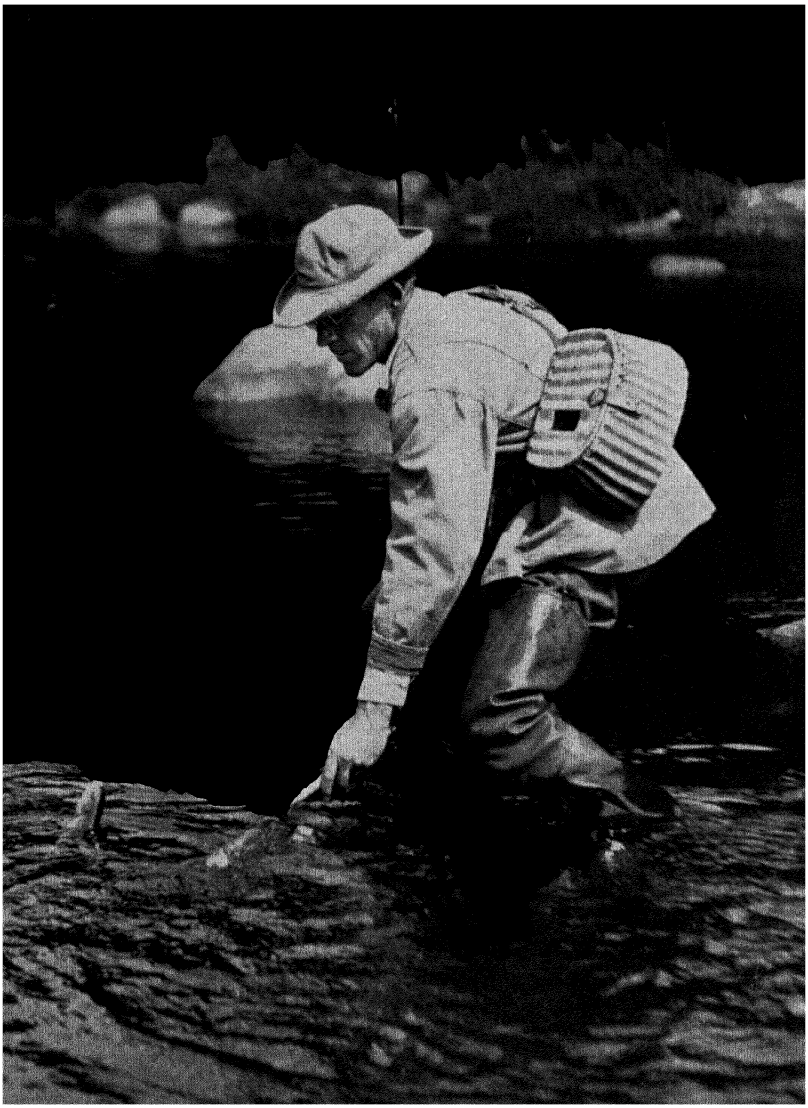


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

At the foot of a short riffle, where the trout lurk near the rocks in the current pools. The final chapter of a trouting episode—bringing a nice fish to the net.

properly dressed and offered fly and presently that fish will take the fly unto himself! I have tried this out many times and some of the best trout I have taken have been fooled and cajoled into rising to a fly that was floated down by their lair time and time again.

The distance that the angler should be from his rising fish to tempt it into striking a dry fly is something that should be gauged by water and stream conditions. Sometimes, in open pools, with the sun in the face and the trout lurking between logs and facing a ledge of submerged rock over which its food was drifting I have taken trout from less than twenty-five feet, and then again I have had to cast across a deep river pool, in order to reach a large and rising fish that would not take the fly offered except when I was crouched along a muddy bank in the lee of a thicket of alders and when I had to roll my cast out and flip a long end and the leader to its log-jamb lurking retreat. If one expects to fish the dry fly effectively on large rivers and small ones, he must make up his mind that he has to learn all the various trick casts that is in the fisherman's repertory. Sometimes, as in the trout that was feeding between the log and the river ledge, one has to cast over a clump of birch or alder. A backcast can be worked under such circumstances only by using the overhead cast, which was the case in that instance, and then there was an opening about the width of a common doorway between a birch and a big balsam for the backcast to pass back and forth through as I got my range for the cast. In other cases a flip cast is all that one can hope to use, and again, perhaps, nothing better than a long side cast with the loop flowing parallel with a brushy shore line, on either the right or left side of the angler is the only hope of getting the fly out to the desired spot where the fish has riffled, and then again only by rolling the line hoop-

wise from off the water ahead of the fisherman's position and flirting the end over with the leader to reach across a brushy pool is one of the problems that confronts the dry fly exponent.

But in every case one should remember that the fly should be fished up and allowed to float down with the current, and that it should not be allowed to drift so far as to submerge, but should be lifted and re-cast and that it should be floated over or before the trout with all the appearances of a lively, escaping insect. In order to keep the fly lively and buoyant it should be dressed at intervals when it shows signs of becoming loggy and dead in the water. But too much dressing should never be applied so as to render the fly heavy and awkward on the water. The hackle should be touched lightly, but individually, and the wings coated the same. I also find it very advisable to use a bit on the tail of the drakes and larger flies. The spiders and duns get the lightest possible dressing. Then lighten them and spread the hackles by false casts before putting the fly down on the water. If it floats well allow it to ride, if not take it up and look it over. Never float an awkward fly by a keenly rising fish. Encourage the leader to sink for several inches at least back of the fly, and dress the line so that it floats lightly on the surface. Keep the line out of sight as much as possible to a feeding fish, and offer it the fly a few feet above where it is headed, drifting it at a sharp angle before the trout's location. This will mean that the line is entirely out of the matter, and only the sunken sections of the leader. Do not slash around with the line in picking up and delivering the fly. A roll-cast sometimes will flirt a leader end and the fly before a feeding trout in the lee of a brushy shore more effectively than a straight overhead cast. All of which leads us to summarize the dry fly up as a subject that should be

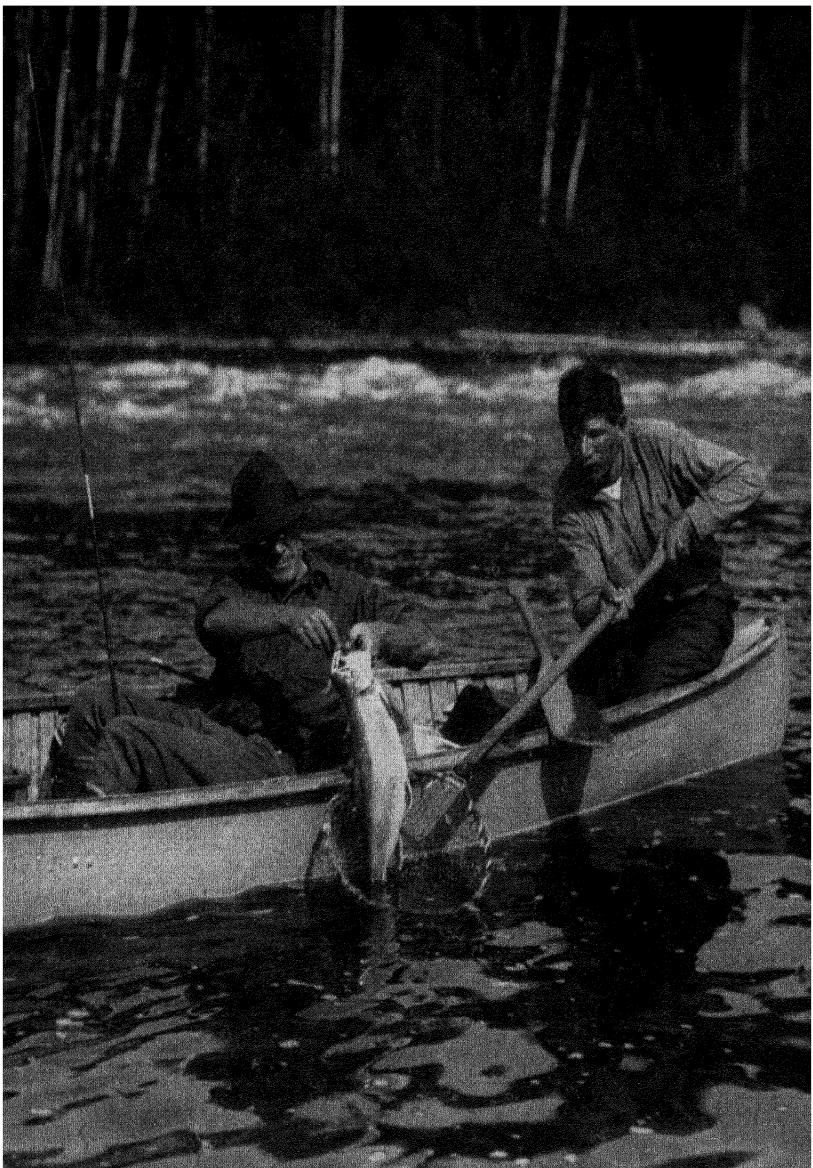
taken quite seriously by the fisherman, and used with every respect and consideration if the best results are expected of it. For unquestionably the dry fly is one of the greatest trout allures that the angler has at his command, and it will take its quota of fish from lake or stream from the later part of June, on through until the season closes in August or September.

Chapter 30

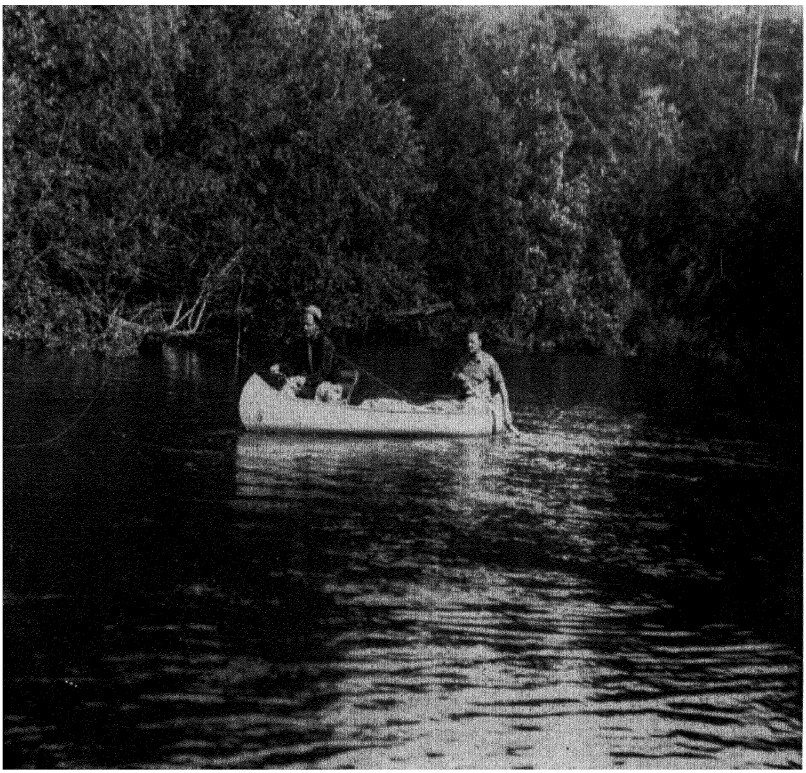
DRY-FLY FISHING THE BROOKS AND SMALLER RIVERS

THERE IS NO question in the mind of the author but what the dry fly is about the most killing of all the lures that an angler can use in fishing for the brook trout. This is also true, in a lesser way, perhaps, about the German Brown and the rainbow trouts. On a good brook trout stream, when the season has advanced beyond the "appleblossom" stage, in late June and early July—when the waters are warming under the summer sun and the insect hatches begin to come out in real swarms to dip and dance over the surfaces, a properly cast and worked dry fly will produce trout for the basket when other flies will fail to get results, and it is for this reason that the Dry Fly is used more often and by more anglers than any other pattern on the market.

In small rivers and brooks the dry fly will work against the trout just as effectively as the wet fly, regardless of the old feeling and fallacy among the older order of fishermen that small meadow and marsh and mountain streams are best fished with the sinking type of artificial fly. However, it is a good idea to understand the limitations and the proper places in such streams where this floating model of fly should be used.



The finish of a piscatorial battle that the angler will not soon forget. A large trout for any fisherman to prize.



Canoe fly-fishing for trout on a famous Michigan River, the South Branch of the Au Sauble.

It is for the reasons outlined above that I have decided to devote a little more space to the matter of dry-fly fishing. In small-stream fly fishing there are many holes and eddies where it is a waste of time and effort to try to work the floating fly, and these places should be understood by the beginner in the fly fishing sport so that more attention can be devoted to those larger and better producing pools that are bound to occur in streams of the character we mention. This is an important feature to brook and small-river fishing, and one that I have noted a large percentage of the beginners in trout fishing do not completely understand.

In the extremely small brooks that occur toward the heads of the rivers we find that there are always some good native brook or speckled trout hiding, and if they are fished for with small, spent-wing and fan-wing patterns of dry flies they can be taken quite readily. This continues to hold good on down the reaches of such watercourses until the stream reaches the river stages. But in streams that *head* deep back in the woods and mountains there is always to be found a large amount of fishing hazards and handicaps that the nature of the dry fly and its manipulation would appear to make too tedious for the fisherman to bother with long. There are miles of tangled alder shores and balsam, spruce, cedar and birch reaching out a third of the way or more across the little, whispering, gurgling branches, with drifts, old windfall logs on the shore and in the currents and roots and rocks and great stretches of wavering, thick water grass choking the centers and even the sides of the streams. To try and cast a dry fly in such places is practically out of the question. The best fly caster in the world can not do a good and pleasant job of fishing the *floater* on such places, and about the only satisfactory way to fish these spots is with minnows and worms or grasshoppers, or with the wet fly.

These methods are practical for such reaches of water, and it should be frankly said, that in waters of this type and condition the largest and finest kind of native brooks usually lurk. In the more open waters of the trout regions the German-brown and the rainbow trout will be found challenging the *prestige* and numbers of the "brookie," and it is obvious that they are more partial to the warmer temperatures and the cleaner stream bottoms than is the native trout that we know as *Fontinalis.* I have also observed that the nearer one gets to the "fountain-head" of the trout rivers, the more prolific grow the trickling whispers of the cold marsh and mountain springs and seepages. In the small, woodsy creeks, shadowed by hemlock and pine and rugged birch, where, in the words of Henry Van Dyke:—

"—there are a few shining pebbles from the bed of the brook, and ferns from the cool, green woods, and wild flowers from the places that you remember."

In "Fisherman's Luck," by Henry Van Dyke.

one finds the secret of the native trout—the red and orange finned beauty that smells of the wild-thyme and that looks to the eye of the heart-hungry man of the outside world like a fragment of cool, sweet heaven.

It is these wilderness avenues, where the brush bends over, and there are dark festoons of roots and mouldering log in the gloomy little caverns of the waist-high banks, that breeds intangible allure to the fisherman that loves to fish for the grandest fish that God ever planted in a rivulet. Here the brook trout flourishes and when the days are warm and the summer has mellowed the woods with soft, humid mornings and golden-moted afternoons the flying ants and the spinner flies and the caddis and the drakes and mosquitoes steal out to dance their futile dervishes in gauzy tinted clouds over the restless dreams of the wild. *An hour or so of life—and*

then the cold sleep, beneath black spruce and pine, until three seasons hence, in life's smallest symphony, they crawl forth to spin another fleeting prayer beneath the mist or sun!—such is the midge flies tragic story, where swims the red-finned trout.

And in this story we find the secret of dry fly and its fishing for best success in the small river and brooks. The natural food of this gaudy gamester of the sun and shadow spots up in the deep woods and mountains is the small insects that hatch in swarms out of the bordering swale grasses and old, mouldering stumps, dead birches and rotting pine logs, the spiders and flies that crawl on the foliage of the alders and willows and the nymphs and creepers from the deeply fashioned muck shores and a hundred other small, creeping, crawling and flying creatures. The native brook or speckled trout is a gormant of the first water. It is little wonder that he is fat and chunky compared to the less fortunate hatchery types of fish of the same species and twice as strong and vividly colored.

Surface foods are the natural fare of this fish. On sultry mornings and before there is a wet spell of weather, when the atmosphere is heavy and dank or when there is a good breeze blowing through the woods is the best time of all to fish these upper waters.

It is hard going, at the best, and a pair of light, hip rubber boots is the best style of wading gear to use. There will be much clambering over spiked logs and crawling through the brush to get along the course of the streams. For these reasons a light, fairly short rod is best to use, with a good tapered oiled, silk finish fly line of HEH size. My preference for this fishing is the 7½ to 8 foot split-bamboo fly rod, built as light as possible, so as to put all possible strength and weight into the stem of the rod where most needed.

The Dry-Fly action rod is, of course, vitally necessary. Have the action of this rod come not lower than the middle of the second or middle joint. Whippy rods with action running all the way down to the butt is not intended for this fishing. The reel seat should be of light, strong wood or plain cork, and the reel bands of strong bakelite or a plastic composition, and the guides tool-hard steel, with the first or stripping guide agate lined. A rod of this order, in 8 foot length (which is a good standard for brook, creek and small-river) will weigh approximately 4½ oz., and makes an ideal dry-fly rod for the fishing we are dealing with. The reel should be a single action, either click or silent type, holding 35 yards of size E level or size HEH double taper fly line. Leaders should be of the lightest order and of the long taper kind, from 9 to 12 feet in length. The 9 foot leader is my own preference, tapering down to a tippet of size 5X, from 1X butts and made up of long-strands of AA Diamond drawn gut, treated to keep them fresh.* This leader should be kept well soaked at all times and the flies to use should be chosen by the angler to compare with the types of natural insect, fly or bug foods that are on the water at the time of the fishing. I have found that in low water the Dun flies are good, and in freshly filled summer and late summer streams, with warm weather predominating, the Cahill is a very sure and dependable fly, with the Professor in spent-wing dressing a good, safe number when the weather is dry and hot and the streams at normal. The Royal Coachman is always good to try out and it should be a pattern with fan-wings, with good hook. The Coachman is also good. The McGinty, the Silver Baldwin and the Dusty Miller, Wickham's Fancy, Lady Beaverkill, Pink Lady, Grey Hackle and Bi-visible brown hackle and the various Spinner and

* See Chapt. 34 for leader preservative.

Red Ant flies. In fact the whole fly book is to be well considered in those mornings and forenoons when the weather is good for rising trout on these little meadow, woods and mountain streams in the summer season. The fly is attached by running the soaked end of the 5X tippet of the leader through the eye of the fly and then making a common slip knot and drawing it close and snug. Grease the fly lightly and keep the fly line well greased so as to have it float as buoyantly as possible. Midge flies and spider flies are also good and at times the variants work nicely. I would suggest the fly book be stocked with the following patterns, among others that the fisherman's own fancy and judgment might dictate:

Pattern	*Dressing*	*Sizes*
Royal Coachman	Fan wing	12 and 14
Coachman	Cocked wing	12 and 14
Lady Beaverkill	Narrow wing	12 and 14
Wickham's Fancy	Cocked wing	12 and 14
Pale Evening Dun	Cocked wing	14 and 16
Cahill	Spent wing	12 and 14
Professor	Spent wing	12 and 16
Mosquito	Spent and cocked wing	12 and 16
Olive Quill	Cocked wing	14
Red Ant	Cocked wing	14 and 16
Reuben Wood	Spent wing	12 and 14
Blue Dun	Cocked wing	12 and 16
Beaverkill (Male)	Cocked wing	12 and 14
Brown Hackle		12 and 14
Cowdung	Cocked wing	12 and 14
Ginger Quill	Cocked wing	12 and 16

Pattern	*Dressing*	*Sizes*
McGinty	Spent wing	12 and 14
Evening Dun	Spent wing	14 and 16
Red Upright	Divided wing	12 and 16
Blue Bottle	Divided wing	12 and 14
Greenwell's Glory	Divided wing	12 and 14
Grey Hackle	Long shank hook	12 and 16
Golden Spinner	Spent wing and divided wing	12 and 16
Seth Green	Divided and spent wing	12 and 16
Alder	Divided wing	12 and 16
Red Tag Palmer or Palmer	Hackle, brown	12 and 14
Brown Upright	Dun body	12 and 16
Madsen	Single cocked wing	12 and 16
Spider		18 and 20
Midge (Dun and Black)		18 and 20
Bi-visible Spider	Ginger	16
Grey Ghost	Palmer and spent wing	14

With the fly book or box stocked with the above assortment the small-stream angler is prepared to fish to most any rise on the woods, mountain or meadow brook or creek. The stream should be fished slowly, and where there is grass in the current I have found it an excellent plan to wade slowly down the current until a good sized pool is sighted. Approach the larger body of water cautiously. Trout will swim ahead in such places and take their place in the eddies or under the brush or about sunken logs or driftage, and by shaking the brush above such places one can usually keep them there. Willow and alder flies and creepers will fall on the water with the leaves and float

over the pool. Long casts in such fishing are not usually so effective as casts of twenty-five to thirty feet distances. Try to get the fly on the water as lightly and naturally as possible and let it float as long as possible, being set for the first signs of a rising trout. Give the tip to the trout and then strike with a snap of the wrist to set the hook. The dry fly can be fished just about as well in these small stream pools from above as from below. The current is usually slow or eddying and by keeping the line well dressed with waterproofing and the fly delicately waterproofed at hackle, wing and tag one can float the offering about where the trout are lurking. Sometimes, if the pool is swift and has a current that does not permit fishing from above, it is necessary to creep up from the shore or from below—sometimes it is more favorable by fishing the fly down from the head of the pool. The main thing is to study it thoughtfully and decide which way the current flows best for your fly to ride longest, and then cast the fly so that it falls lightly and naturally. Do not permit the fly to sink, and, above all things, guard against frightening the trout there by creating any undue disturbance on the surface by jerking the fly through and under the water. Lift it from the pool lightly when making a new cast. And keep a sharp eye out for rising fish whenever these pools are sighted ahead of one's course. More trout can be taken this way, by scouting out the larger pools, at bends and where small branches flow into the main stream, than by trying to fish every hole, log drift and barrier in the brook or creek. The small eddies under logs and around roots should be passed by and the larger and more open pools sought out in this fishing with the floating fly. It is astonishing how many of these will occur even in a mere brook leading from a swale or pond in the woods down through

the alders and meadow lands and thickets to larger waters or beaver ponds, and if these open and fishable spots are approached with caution and quiet and the dry fly placed on their eddies and currents so that it represents a real item of natural insect, bug or creeper food you can rest assured that there will be plenty of "takers" for it. By practicing this system of looking for pools, rather than just struggling about and wearing out patience and tackle on the small eddies and pockets under rocks, logs and banks, the dry-fly fisherman can creel his share of the big trout and the keepers and at the same time will find that some of the most glorious fishing moments of his career will result as well. For like some one hath said in a book on fishing,

"—There lies a deep and darken'd pool
Whose waters are crystal-clear and cool;
It is fed by many a gurgling fount
That trickles from upland pasture and mount,
And where the tree-shadows fall dense and dim,
The glittering trout securely swim."



Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Warm sunlight brings out insect hatches so that a wide choice of lures can be tried. Perhaps a worm, a floating dry fly, or better yet, a cast of wet flies trickled across the pool below the riffles.

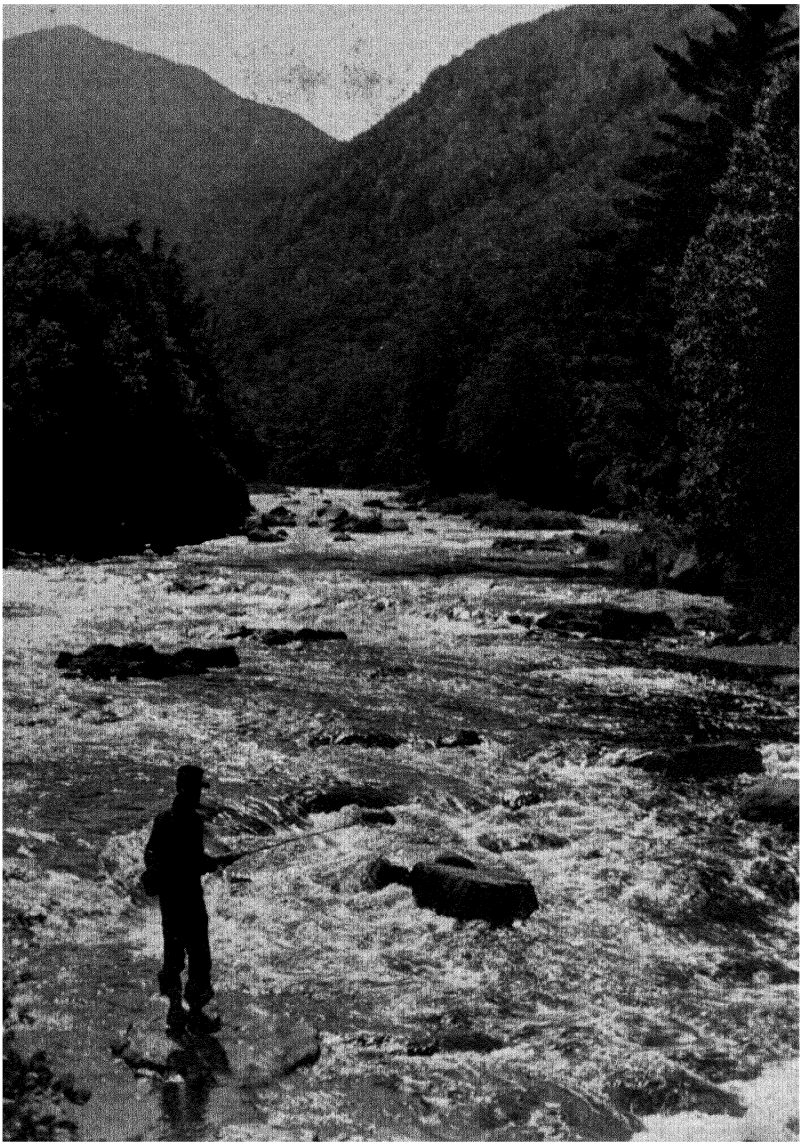


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Heavy "rips" call for wet flies, fished under the surface. The three-fly cast is ideal—fished down stream or across the boiling currents.

Chapter 31

WET-FLIES ON THE MIDDLE REACHES

And now we come to the most familiar of all the trout fishing phases for the veteran angler and the novice who is dreaming of days spent with the speckled brookies, the flashing brown trout and the leaping, broaching rainbows of the wilderness waters. It is the wet-fly that the mountain fisherman of the old school brought to such a high stage of perfection as we so often have learned in our fishing around over the meadows, the upland pastures and the thicket-bordered rivers. Ah, the grand days that we have seen fishing in company with some of those dear old companions and characters of the eastern and the Blue Ridge mountain sections, with this old-time favorite, the sinking fly! If life would only turn a relenting face to us and permit us the satisfaction of fishing once more with some of those great old Masters of the Whippy Rod and the darting low-wing trout allures. Alas! Those days, in many cases, can never return again, and many of those beloved old wet-fly fishing streams that I have fished will know me no more for the reason that those who fished them with me are now gone where the trout swim only in the valleys of the Everlasting Rivers of Peace and Happiness.

But there are other rivers and there are other fishermen, thank God, and it is of those that we must tell our stories around the noonday fires now, and fry our speckled trout over the fragrant flames to the whispering of the summery winds in the pines or the sharp whine of the spring gales in the bare-branched birch and cottonwoods.

I have many times thought that the low-winged trout fly is the real personification of meadow and pasture fishing, where the valleys widen out and the villages and farming lands run down to the sides of the pools.

It is in the middle-reaches of the trouting rivers where this underwater type of trout fly appears to produce its best results. Where the mountains and the thickets shadow the eddies and where fields gradiate away into pleasant panoramas of rural beauty, is the section usually where we find the wet-fly angler most common. There is a good reason for this, of course. In the wilder regions surrounding the heads of the rivers, as we have explained in the past chapter, the natural food for the trout in the summer season is the insect hatches that swarm out of places nature has intended for such *phenomena*, and this also applies to the heavier waters in the extreme lower reaches of the rivers, where the shores are usually marshy and where another increase in insect hatches occurs in the warm weather season. But, on the middle-reaches there is, as a general thing, less of this surface feeding for the simple reason that there is not the amount of insect and fly cover and breeding places, and, consequently, trout in these waters are more prone to find their food in the stream itself and under the surface. Minnows, hellgramites, the *larva* of the stone-fly and other larger insect foods than we find toward the *heads* are a characteristic part of the feeding trout's surroundings in these mid-section regions of the trout streams.

We find the grasshopper more prevalent in the settled and farmed districts that border our trout waters, also the Cowdung flies that sometimes swarm across the pastures and filter upon the wide, languidly eddying pools where the old German-Brown trout and the large, strong brookies and rainbows come to feed to their full capacity. This all means that the larger trout flies are in favor with the trout in such waters for a good part of the fishing season. Starting with the first days of the open season—in mid-April or early May, as the seasons are defined in the various trout fishing states and provinces—we are pretty safe in assuming that the wet fly is particularly good on all reaches of the trout streams, from the distant heads and little brooks and rivulets that flow out of swamp, swale, beaver pond or spring hole, down to where the rivers are wide and flow into the larger lakes or the main rivers where the trout halt their progress. In many cases, however, the trout run all the way down their rivers and the larger fish then drift out and take up their dominions in the lakes. This happens mostly in the sections of the north where the lakes are naturally cold and clear and unpolluted, and in such lakes the best kind of speckled, brown and rainbow trout fishing can be had with wet flies, preferably to the floating flies, in spring and early summer. In the Canadian countries these lake-dwelling fish are mostly known as "Square-Tails," which means that they are large fellows, but, nonetheless true Speckles or heavy, well-fed and proportioned Native Brookies, *Salvelinus fontinalis*. In some cases the lakes will have an infiltration of German Browns, that drift down the rivers as they grow larger and their gastronomic needs urge them out into more prolific waters, and these trout are many times defined by the local resident anglers as Loch Leven trout, but they are pure German-brown (Salmo fario) of

the middle sections of the river drainages. The German-brown is a notorious underwater feeder and a great lover and disciple of minnow and crustacea foods, and for these reasons we find the largest percentages of this fish inhabiting the middle-reaches or the more open-country along the trout rivers and creeks. They will be caught mostly in the long, deep rips or riffles that flash and whimper down through pastures and meadow lands in the shade of the scattered willow and alder clumps, or in the deep, heavy eddy pools that lie along the base of ridges and mountain ranges looking out into farming fields and woodlots. The rainbow, on the other hand, is more prone to be even below these sections, although there will be a few specimens of them around the brown-trout districts, but, as a rule they are below the brown and brook trout sectors, and where the larger insects are more apt to be found floating down on the current. For this reason they are notorious surface risers and they are taken on dry flies more often than on wet patterns.

The larger trout of the lakes and ponds are also more often taken on wet fly casts than with the floating pattern, and this is especially so about the mid-reaches waters of a stream where it flows through old farming districts or through marsh and cultivated fields regions. The brook or speckled trout is down in these same regions, and will be found in the same pools with the brown trout. However, the brook trout of these regions usually seek deeper pools and seem to prefer to lurk around sunken logs and drifts where there is a sandy bottom, whereas the majority of our German browns in such waters will be taken from rock riffles and at the heads of rocky pools where there is gravel and cobble bars. This should all be understood by the wet fly fisherman, as the presentation of the wet fly

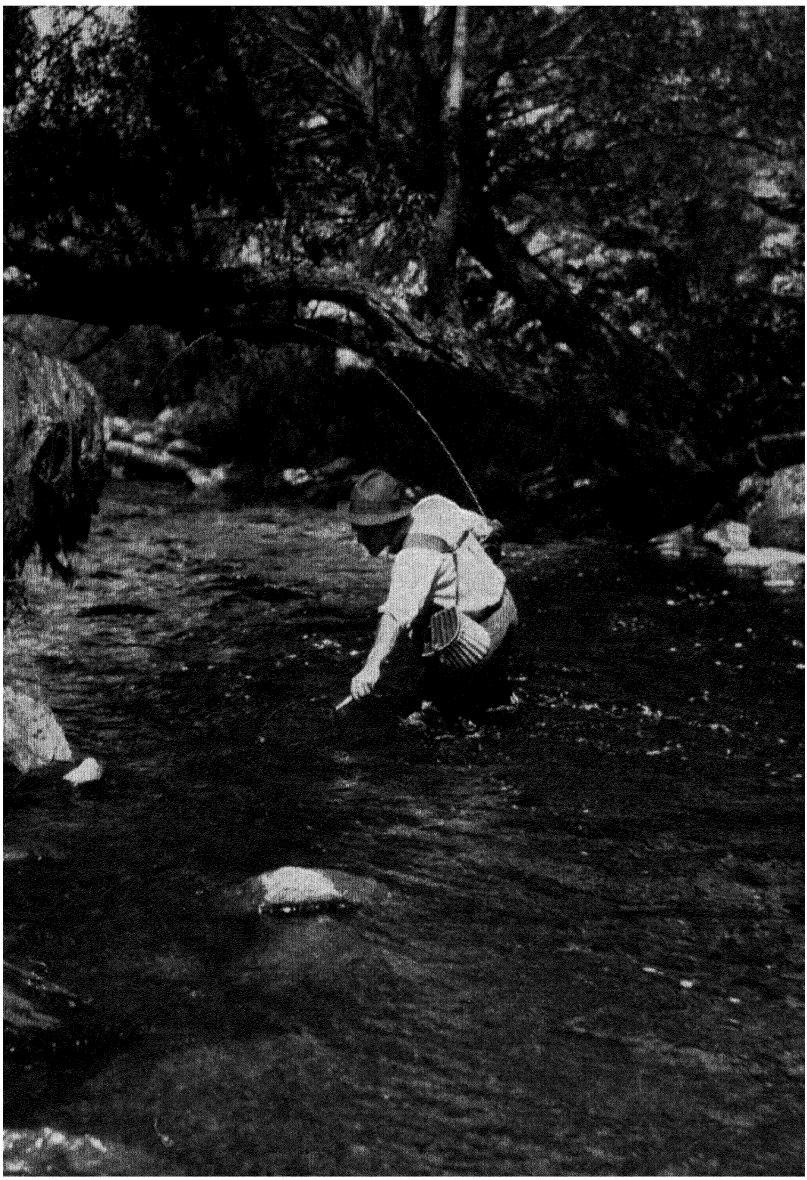


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Deep rips like this hold a wet-fly fisherman's finest hopes.

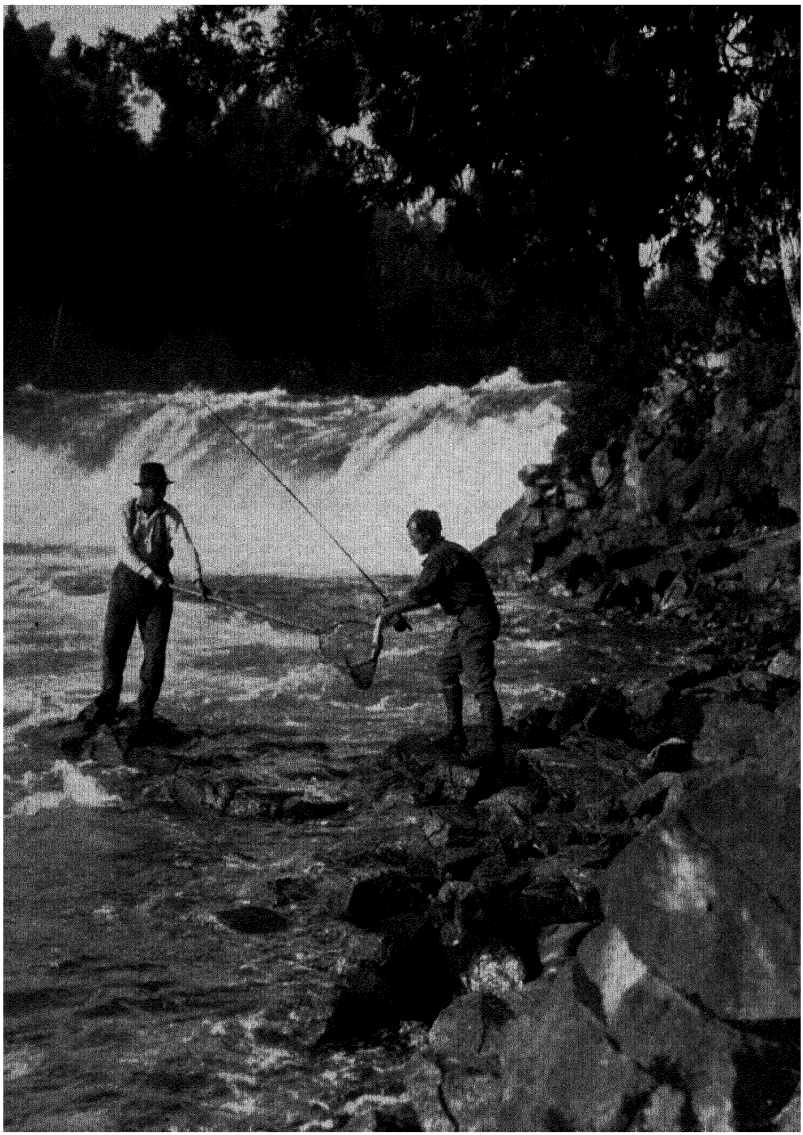


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

Large streamer flies, fished under the surface in these swift, strong pools produce large trout.

cast now takes on the atmosphere of minnow fishing or the presentation of the larger meadow and pasture flies and moths—and the activities of the Stone Fly nymphs and the larva of the Dobson, etc. etc.

This is wet-fly fishing in its true form. The three-fly cast can be used very effectively in almost all cases, the idea being to arrange the flies so that they resemble small minnow foods, *larva* of a particular bottom crustacea, nymph or the sinking, water-logged moth or fly that has fallen into the stream on its flight from the pastures or meadows of cultivated fields.

If one fly is used, then, of course, that should be the streamer type which will represent some particular specimen of minnow that the trout might be presumed to be feeding on at that particular season. Streamer flies are excellent lures to use at the head of the pools, where a strong riffle shoots into the widening eddies, among rocks and across sandy or gravel bars, and they should be fished either down stream, from the top of the bar or riffle-tail or from the sides of such pools and down, across or up stream, casting the fly out and drawing it under the surface with short, gentle jerks of the rod tip, so as to lend it a swimming, darting movement as it passes through the pool. Sometimes, in the case of a strongly eddying pool, and where there is brush hanging over or drifts and rocks against the shore, the fly can be allowed to sink and be carried through the pool by the action of the water, probing into those places where the big trout are waiting. The trout lies headed upstream, and the larger fish, when feeding time is on, are usually ahead of the smaller members, so that the upper end or middle reaches of the pool is more apt to offer a large trout than is the more shallow parts at the tail of the pool. If a three-fly cast is used a No. 10 end fly is advised,

with say a No. 12 snelled fly attached as first dropper and a No. 14 (small-stream fly) pattern as the top dropper. Or, in case one is using a cast of streamer flies then a No. 6, 8 and 10 combination of streamers can be used, as the larger minnows usually seek a lower level than the small minnows. The English-dressed Matuka with silver body is an excellent top fly in such fishing I have found with a Brown-hackle as the next dropper fly and the Cahill, Royal Coachman, Coachman or the Butcher as end fly. These combinations are, of course, difficult to advise, but the idea of outlining them is to give the angler a rough idea of the principle in which these wet fly offerings can be fished. Conditions of the stream, weather and insect activities or the presence of crustacea and larva in the pool all go into the ultimate building up of a wet fly cast for the best fishing and my advice for the choice of flies to use and their arrangement in the cast, either single-cast or three- or two-fly offerings is for the angler to observe closely what happens in the pool and along the shores and then to try and pattern after these natural feeding or rising activities with his trout lures.

Sometimes, even in the very opening of the trout season there will be hatches of insects found along the stream or in the meadows and thickets, and warm winds blowing that will bring many of such hatches over the water. In these cases trout will be found looking for floating and sinking surface foods, and the wet-fly proper will then be at its very best with those patterns that the trout consider as sinking and drowning insects at the top of the list for effectiveness. Then again, there might be cold weather that will discourage insect and fly hatches and when larva life in the stream appears to be absent, in which case the minnow representative order of flies, such as the small, well-

dressed Matuka fly, on a long-shank No. 10 English hook will do the work, or when the big brown trout and brookies are lying well down in the pools below the heads and waiting to be tempted with a low sinking bucktail-streamer or a Trout Devil spinning form of fly. On other occasions larva hatching out on the bottom creates a demand for instant action with Nymph and Creeper types of flies. In the last mentioned cases the trout will be found "boiling" the pools, that is rising close under the surface and disturbing the pools in a manner that leaves the observer without any doubts as to the cause of their boiling and eddying activities. In such cases—which one finds occurring mainly around the first part of July, in normal weather—the fish are feeding ravenously on a hatch of underwater nymphs and larva that is drifting up from the bottom to the surface or toward the rocks in the current and on the shore where the larva of some stream creeper can get to the sun and light to hatch out into fly and bug. On these occasions the nymph and creeper fly fished on a long single-fly gut leader (without leader loops or tags) under the surface in the manner of a nymph or creeper rising from the bottom and drifting along toward the light above, is the best possible lure to use. I have found these occasions arising on trout rivers, especially in the middle-reaches of the stream, on warm mornings when the stream was down to a fairly low stage, when dry flies and wet flies all alike failed to elicit any attention whatever from the many large trout that I could see plainly rushing about and boiling the surface waters. But an underwater nymph or creeper fly attached to a size 5X tippet and a long, tapered leader that has been wet with "spit" or saliva, to cause it to sink under the surface nicely, and drifted slowly through the pool, with a slack line so as to give the fly plenty of freedom will almost invariably

bring rises and strikes from these fish. For this reason then the wet-fly fisherman, angling on the middle reaches, should carry with him a proper and practical assortment of flies, intended for all these occasions, with a small assortment of wet-fly and nymph-fishing leaders, in a pouch or box that is padded with well-dampened felt squares or circles.

It might be a good plan to list herein a class of the various flies and leaders that the angler should have along for his fishing of the middle-reaches of the streams where the various trout activities will be found occurring:

INSECT REPRESENTATIVES

Wet-flies are distinguished from the floating or dry-fly by the following characteristics, which should be understood so as to properly classify and know how, where and when to use:

The wings on the wet-fly are tied down so that they lie low and parallel with the body, also, the hackle is fashioned from the "soft," or dull looking hackle-feathers of a fowl, and they are tied *down* so that the hackle is on the *under* side and in this way serve to sink the fly. (Whereas, on the dry fly we find that the wings are tied so as to stand erect and forward, and the hackle of the dry-fly is of shiny, stiff, long filaments that will cause it to stand up well *on* the water. The dry-fly hackles are tied after the wings are attached and wound so as to stand out both above and under the fly and cause it to float high and like a newly fallen insect.) The idea of having soft hackles for the wet fly instead of the stiff, shiny ones found on a fowl's neck or saddle, is to make the fly appear like an insect with legs, wavering feebly when under the water, and the soft hackle is ideally intended to give this very illusion to the trout, when tied so

that the ends are pointing down and back under the head and body of fly. The body of the wet fly and the dry fly are alike, there is no difference there, and the same can be said about the tail of fly. But the low-depressed wing and the small bunch of hackle sticking backwards under the head and body marks it as a sinking type of fly. Such a fly can not be used for a floating model. It must be fished under the surface and when dressed to a standard hook it represents a feebly drowning insect.

There is, we would like to explain, another type of artificial fly that does work either as a wet-fly or a dry-fly, and this is known as the Divided Wing fly. The hackles on it are soft and slant *backward,* but are wound back of the wings and around all sides of the body, thereby causing it to float closer to the surface, and with a bit of waterproofing will even float on top in a fairly good interpretation of a drifting insect—albeit a very tattered and feeble one that is about ready to give up and be carried under the surface. The wings are erect, however. This fly is used in connection with dry and wet fly models and works wonderfully at times to simulate a weakening insect drifting down into large pools from sharp riffles and eddies and will usually rise a good trout as it approaches the tail of the pool.

The wings of the wet-fly are tied so as to set close together which further impersonates the drowning fly, being carried down or through the pool under the surface.

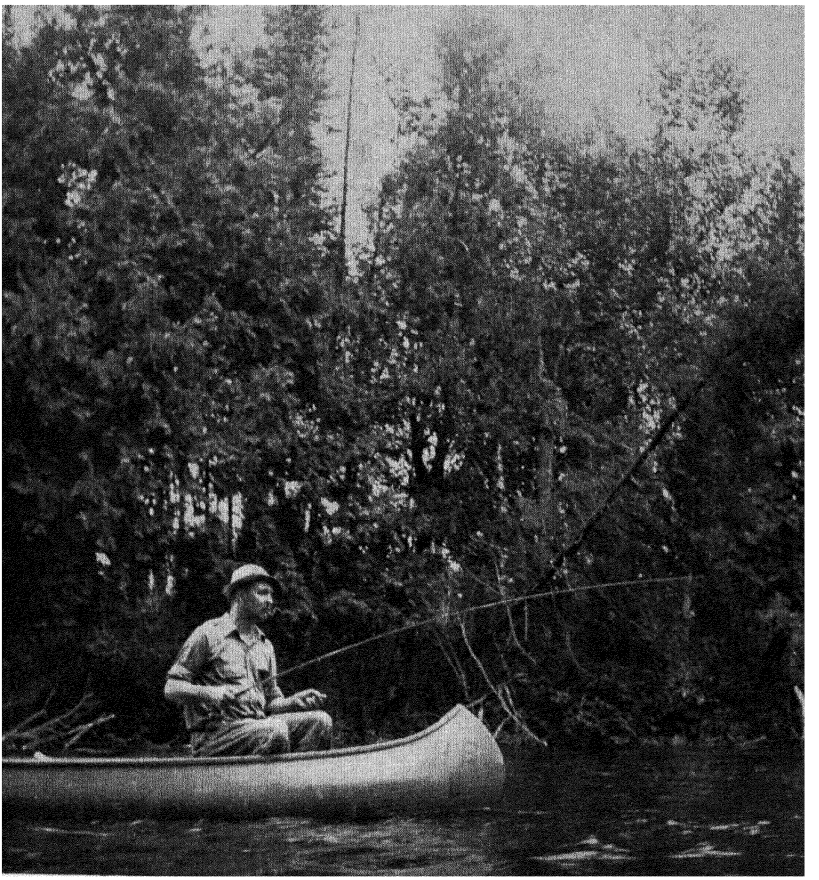
Pattern	*When to Use*
Cowdung Fly	For windy summer days (early season).
Pale Evening Dun	For warm evenings in summer, low water.

Pattern	*When to Use*
March Brown	For all-around season fishing, all waters.
Royal Coachman	For evening and night fishing—dull days.
Coachman	For top dropper and small eddy pools.
Alder	For evening, under brush and by banks.
Beaverkill (Male)	For summer forenoons.
Beaverkill (Female)	For divided-wing offering about noon, summer.
Alexandria	For minnow representing, pulled deep.
Bee	For fishing in shallow rips and eddies.
Black Gnat	For late afternoon and twilight.
Blue Bottle	For brushy places—drifts and head of pools.
Orange Fish Hawk	For brown-trout in deep riffles.
Cahill	For all season when insects are falling.
Caddis	For drake season, June and July, when big shad-flies and caddis-flies swarm.
Brown Hackle	For early spring (good at opening season).
McGinty	For warm weather, forenoons and afternoons.
Montreal	For deep pools, as end fly.
Professor	For brown and brooks at all times.
Parmachene Belle	For all around. Evening and night.

Pattern	*When to Use*
Dusty Miller	For noontime, hot weather, big pools.
Wickhams Fancy	For all around fly for all seasons.
Silver Doctor	For all around fishing times.
Palmer (brown)	For use under trees and bushes, at head of pools and where there is grass.
	STREAMERS
Bucktail Streamers	For night fishing and dull days when trout are deep down.
Rangely Lakes Streamers	For lakes and large trout and salmon.
Squirrel-Tail Streamers	For the deep pools when others fail.
	NYMPHS
Caddis Creeper	For warm summer weather when trout are boiling.
Stone-fly Nymph	For use below rapids in middle and bottom parts of big pools.
Caddis Cased Larva Fly	Fished close to bottom below rapids.
Stone-fly Creeper	For early season.
Caddis Creeper	For bright, warm days.
Flying-ant	For May and early June.
May Nymph	For June and early July.
Water Nymph	For June.

These nymphs, creepers and worms should be used with 9 to 12 foot leader's, tipped with a strand of gut measuring

from 2x to 5X, the first number being for big waters and big trout and the last for ordinary middle-reaches streams and pools where the trout will not run so large perhaps. Use saliva, milk-weed juice or a manufactured leader-sink solution compounded from glycerine and finely powdered pumice for the sinking of the leader at a distance of three strands of gut back from the nymph or fly. This also serves to remove the shine from the leader at those sections, all of which is advisable for the best results. Fish the nymph down stream or across from one's position, and strike with a sharp twist of the wrist to take up the slack and set the hook on the rising fish. It takes attention and watchfulness to set the hook in under-surface trout rising to the nymph, but it can be learned with experience and practice.



Fishing after the Caddis Fly hatch on a cedar and spruce bound river always brings a full basket of fish.

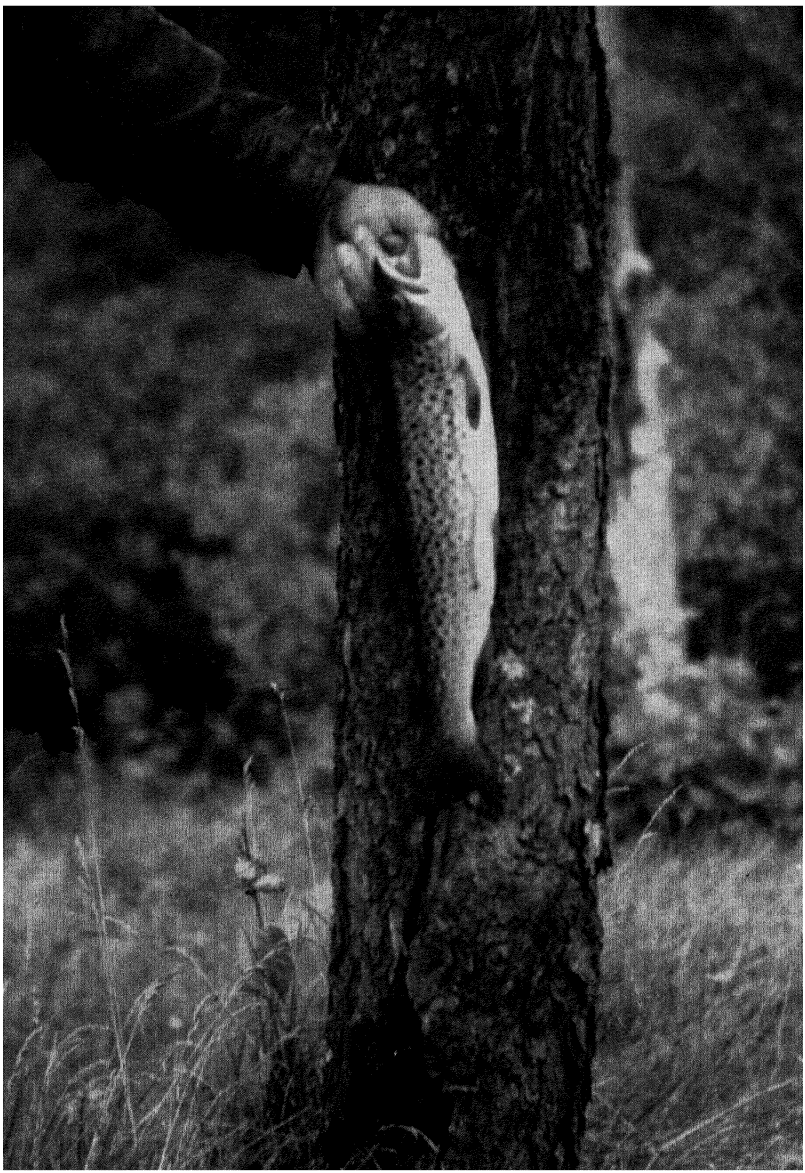


Photo by Ben C. Robinson

A German brown-trout that was feeding on the Caddis-fly hatch.

Chapter 32

FLY-FISHING FOR PIKE, PICKEREL AND MUSKELLUNGE

IT UNQUESTIONABLY WILL seem rather fantastic to say that such *unorthodox* gamesters of the finny tribe can be, and are fished for with the fly rod. Yet, such is the case, and many an expert and veteran angler gets hours of exciting and thrilling sport angling for the heavier of the pikes—as well as the smaller members, the Pickerels—with this apparently "light-tackle."

The pike, however, will rise to a fly and a spoon just as readily as it will to the bait-caster and the live-baiters brand of allures, if not *more* readily. This is a fact that all of the veteran fishermen after the *Esox* family can substantiate. Trolling for muskies and Great Northern pike, as well as wall-eyed pike (not really a member of the *Esox* clan, but in reality a truer individual of the Perch family) and pickerel has been practiced for years with small spoons and luridly tinted flies or the more primitive bit of pork-rind and a raveling of red-wool yarn. This method of taking members of the pike and the pike-perch family from along weedy, shallow shore-lines, from over rocky lake reefs and in eddy pools below river rapids and riffles has long been recognized as one of the most effective of all game fishing ventures. The pike, pickerel and pike-perch

will rise to semi-surface lures with great avidity, and therefore it is only feasible to go one step further in sport-fishing for these gamesters and use the lighter tackle of the fly-rod and its equipment for their capture. In fishing for these fish one has only to use the same principles in casting as those that are employed for the larger trouts and the bass members. However, the fly rod outfit should be arranged with more consideration for leader and line strength than in the aforementioned style of fly rod fishing, and the style of lure that is used with the fly-casting outfit should be the willow-leaf pattern of nickel-finished spoon attached before a good sized Red Ibes or Parmachene Belle of red and white bucktail fly. The size of the fly for muskie and wall-eyed pike—as well as Great Northern pike—should be not under 1/0 size, and on up to size 4/0. The lower size is perhaps the best to recommend, except in cases where extremely large fish of more than ten pounds are expected to be struck.

The new *VEC* or *Nyolin* leader materials make it possible for the heavy-duty fly rod exponent to find fly-rod leaders now that will stand up under the maximum of sharp-toothed, hard fighting contestants of the pike family. This latest introduction in leader-building materials offers the fly fisherman leader strengths that will handle almost any size and type of fresh-water gamester. It can be had in thirty-foot coils in test sizes ranging from a pound or so up to 50 lbs. test, also in continuous coils of 100 yards in the same range of test sizes. If one wishes to use either the VEC or Nyolin leader materials for lines for heavy-game fly fishing it can be done, or the same material can be had made-up with leader loop and snap at end where spoon is attached to the lead in 22 inch lengths. In view of these facts there would be nothing more adaptable to advise for

the heavy-game fly fishing terminal rigging than either of these two materials named. The line for this order of fishing we have outlined should be not less than size D level, and if the rod will stand it a size C can be used very nicely. With a large spool, salmon type of fly reel and a good 9 foot, 6 ounce tubular-steel, two or three piece (either of these can be had in standard manufacture now) rod of the latest "step-down" taper, with tool-steel tip-top and guides the heavy-duty fly rod fisherman finds himself nicely equipped for all pike and pike-perch fly casting. Rods of this order can now be had at reasonable prices, ranging around $20.00 for the rod alone. This sum is about the same, perhaps a little less, than the cost of a split-bamboo rod of dependable and trustworthy manufacture. The split-bamboo type of fly rod, if dependably made, of good straight Tonkin-cane, split into strips, shaped down to the proper taper, by hand working craftsmen, from the under or fiber side of the cane, leaving the strong enameled side of the cane (the top or rind surface) intact and then carefully glued together into a six-strip wand, with taper that gives it the right balance and power, is also a recommendable type for the muskie and pike fly fisherman. This order of rod should run around 9 feet in length and with an approximate weight of 5¾ to 6 ounces. It is not advisable to have over a 9 foot length to rods of this kind and for the use we outline. The action of the heavy-duty split-bamboo fly rod should be of the "wet-fly" order I hold, for best results in muskie and pike fishing with the heavy line, strong leader and the size No. 2/0 to 4/0 Slim-ely or Willow-Leaf metal spoon and size 1/0 to 4/0 bass or wet fly. With an outfit of this sort the fisherman hoping to rise and play muskies and wall-eyed pike, Great-northern pike and pickerel will find himself very pleasingly outfitted.

The leader is attached to the line by the same principles as in trout or bass fly fishing—using the knotted end of the line to hold the simple loop fastening of the leader and line terminals. The upper end of the leader should have a strongly fashioned loop in it. I like to use the factory-made VEC or Nyolin casting-leaders for this fishing. The upper end of such leaders are made with a strong, generous loop that is fastened safely with winding-silk wrappings and shellac, the lower end of leader has a strong leader snap attached. Double the knotted end of line back and thrust this loop through that of the leader then bring the snap end of leader through part of the line loop protruding through leader loop, and draw snug with leader loop. This fastening is very simple and easy to make and when desired to loosen all that needs be done is to hold leader loop with left thumb and finger and work the main section of line downward until the fastening opens and line and leader can be separated. The knot in line should be allowed to remain until it wears thin next the line, when a new knot should be made and the worn part cut away.

No sinker is necessary when fishing the muskie and pike fly-and-spoon in its best intended parts of the lake or river. Usually these places are coincident with the lurking places of the muskie, the Great Northern, the wall-eyed pike and the pickerel. Along the shallow edges of the widening river pools, where there are pads, grass or sedgy growths shading water depths of from two to four feet, and where there are submerged rocks sloping off or beds of aquatic moss, muskie-weed and grass—these are the places where the feeding muskie, pike and pickerel are lying, and it is in such pools that the fly and spoon should be cast.

With rods and equipment such as described above the casting of the No. 1/0 and 4/0 flies and their spoons can

be accomplished about as handily as the ordinary bass fly and spoon or the trout fly with its accompanying gear. Of course these flies and spoons are much heavier than the trout fly casts or the bass casts, but then the accompanying rigging and the rods are also harmoniously heavy, so that really the casts are pretty nicely balanced up, and good, accurate casting and playing of the lure can be quite nicely done.

The muskie or pike fly should be retrieved through the water with a strong, even lifting of the rod tip and by stripping the line slowly back through the guides with left thumb and finger as the rod moves the lure and twirls the spoon. It is not necessary that the lure be retrieved fast, but, on the contrary, it is best if it is stripped and lifted back slowly, so the spoon whirls and flutters to attract the attention of the fish. Sometimes a slender, two-inch strip of pork rind added to the hook enhances the chances of a swift, savage rise of the following fish. The fish that strikes this bait can usually be seen making its rush, and it should be struck instantly, with a good, strong sideward stroke of the wrist so as to whip the heavy line and leader into the stroke against the keen pointed hook. After that the slack should be held and the fish snubbed rather strongly, then another safe "snub" made, to further insure setting the hook point in the "hard-mouthed" fish. These fish are much harder in the mouth than trout or bass, and have to have a severe snub. Do not go too far with this, however, and endanger smashing the tip of the rod. Judgment has to be used, and the weight of line and leader is best to whip against the hook point, instead of trying to set the hook purely with the force of the rod tip itself.

Muskies of astonishingly large size can be handled with a fly rod of this order we have outlined and with the gear we advise. Wall-eyed pike can be fished for just off rocky bars

of the lakes and rivers, where they come to feed in the evening hours, and where the water is not over four feet at the most in depth. Also put in plenty of time and effort around drift logs in the currents of the rivers, where roots and branches form eddies, below deep riffles. In such places a fly rod and Red Ibes or Parmachene Belle or a red and white bucktail fly, with a shaving of pork rind added will do great business. Muskies can be taken along pads and pad-islands, under marshy brush shores and at the edge of floating grass and river weeds, also over rocky bars of the lakes and weedy-beds that are under the surface in the lake cove entrances where there are sandy bottoms. Pickerel will be found in the ponds, lurking under the shadow of lily pads and islands of pads and weeds, and around sharply cut shores where there are windfalls and shadowy coves. A good thing to use for this fishing is a canoe, with a reliable companion to handle the stern paddle. Canoe fishing for muskies and pickerel and pike and the heavy-duty fly rod is one of the most interesting and entertaining sports that the outdoors has to offer.

Wading pants or hip-rubber boots also work well in this fishing, permitting the angler to get out where his back-casts will not be caught in brush and grass of the shores, and also permitting the fishing of shore lines, eddy pools below riffles and snags more effectively and pleasingly. A strong gaff-hook should be carried at the belt or, in case of fishing from canoe or boat, a large, long-bagged landing net knit from heavy linen line or staging cord had best be included in the equipment. Do not try landing the "big-fellows" with the hands, unless expert advice or help is around, or one knows just how to accomplish this trick. For these fish are sharp-toothed, savage dispositioned chaps and they are safest when handled in a large landing net when using such tackle.

The best flies and lures to use are the following I have found:

Tandem spinners of the "luminous" type, size No. 1, with red and white and guinea-fowl feather fly or with white and red or brown and white bucktail fly—single hook. The feather fly usually comes in treble-hook style.

Slim or Willow-Leaf patterns of No. 3 size spoons, nickel, silver or brass or gold finish, with No. 2/0 Red Ibes fly, and strip of fresh pork rind.

Tandem or double-standard spoon, nickel, gold, brass or silver finish with a size 1/0 bucktail fly in colors, Pure White, Mixed brown and white, Red and white or red-and-green.*

* This color very killing for wall-eyed pike and muskie.

Chapter 33

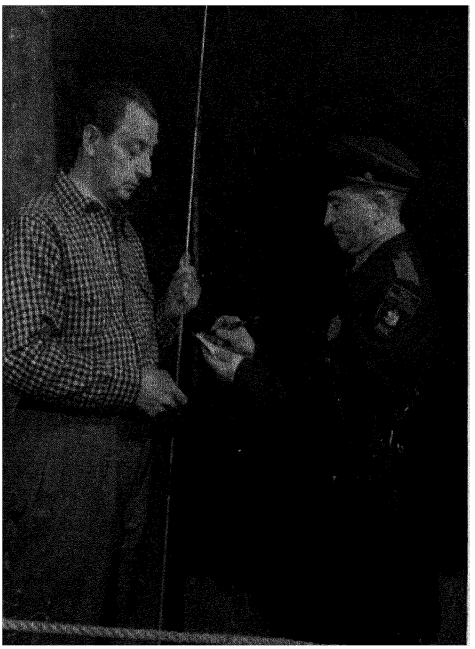
ASSEMBLING A FLY-FISHING OUTFIT

FOR THE BENEFIT of those that wish to assemble a fly-fishing outfit that is as near complete in items of the necessary use as possible, the following list might be helpful:

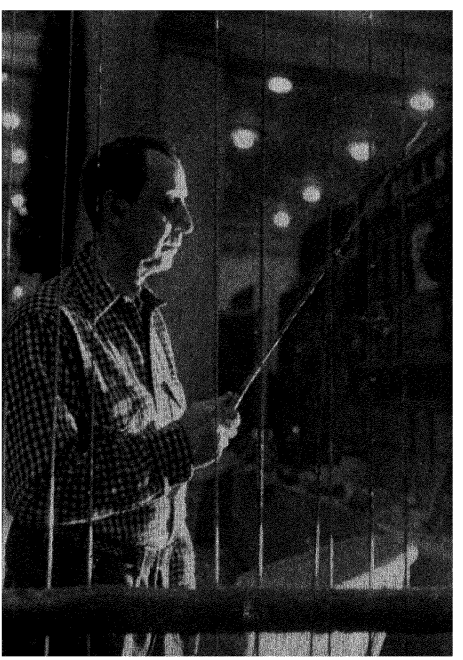
1. The rod.
2. The reel best suited to the rod or the owner's taste.
3. A good fly line—of the kind suited to his casting.
4. Leaders.
5. Flies.
6. Line dressing and fly oil or waterproof dressing.
7. Fly box or book for the fly assortment.
8. Leader soaking pouch or leader box with felt pads.
9. Pair of gut snippers or small manicure scissors.
10. Wooden tube of split-BB shot or Buck-shot split.
11. Landing net—wood (ash) frame and waterproof linen net, good grade.
12. Willow creel or fish basket, with shoulder and breast strap, of about 25 lbs. capacity.
13. Tube of rod-cement for repairing rod on stream.
14. Extra tip for rod—just in case of breakage.
15. Fly-fishing jacket, hat with cork fly band.
16. Pair of waders or hip-rubber wading boots with felt or cleated rubber soles. For waders of stocking-foot



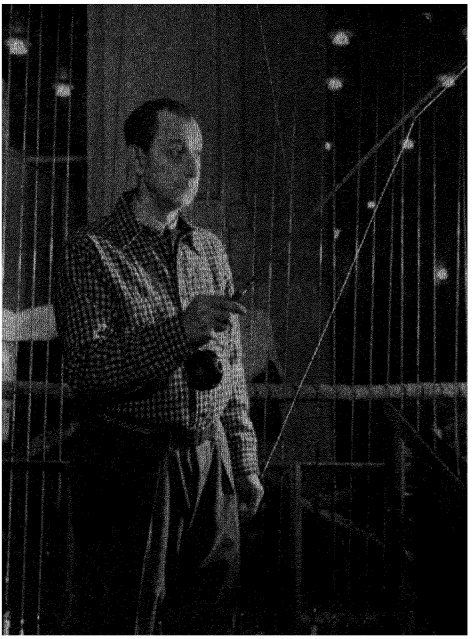
A practical outfit for the angler who wades and fly fishes. It consists of a pair of waterproofed waders (stocking footed), with pair of virgin wool socks to go over outside of wader feet and ankles and pair of felt-soled wading brogues to go over the socks. A serviceable fishing jacket with plenty of pockets for the fisherman's gadgets, oil bottle for waterproofing the flies, can of line dressing and paste for waterproofing the flies, fly casting line, fly reel, stream thermometer, pair of light fish scales, fish billy, fly box with hinged fly compartments for eyed trout, bass or pan-fish flies, leader soaking box, stick of ferrule cement, amadou or line dressing pad, landing net, pigskin fly book for salmon, bass or trout streamer flies and hair lures or cork-bodied bass bugs and trout or bass fly rod. Waders have a pair of strong braces or suspenders attached to hold them up about the angler's body.



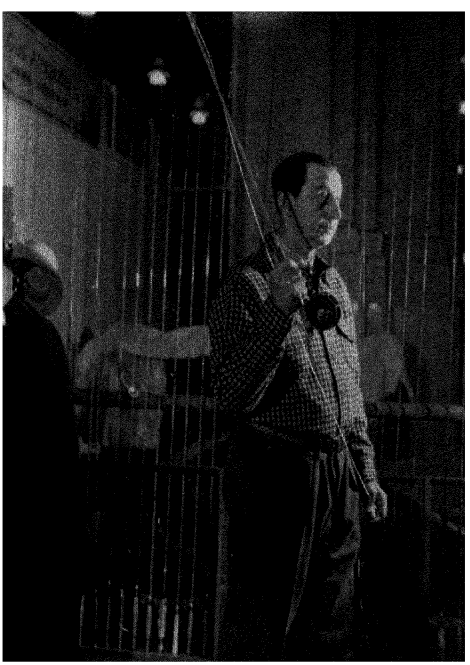
Courtesy and consideration for the officers of the Fishing and Conservation forces always pays big dividends in more fish and better angling conditions. Be sure to buy a fishing license before going on lake or stream with rod and reel, and treat the officers of the Warden Service with the respect and understanding that they deserve from all good sportsmen. They are usually honest, and conscientious friends of the angler.



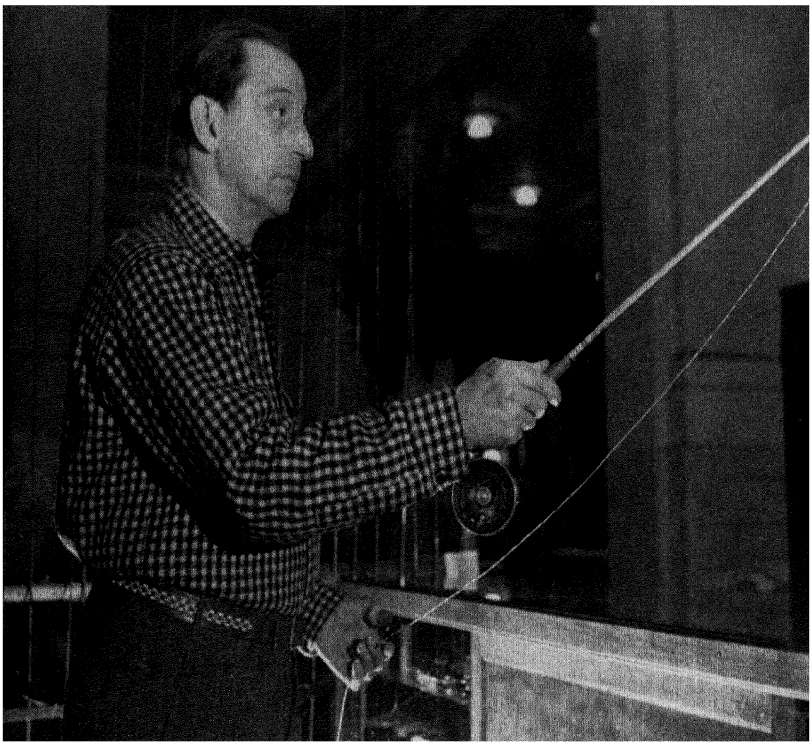
Tackle experts in the large sport-goods stores are always glad to assist the angler in making his choice of a suitable rod and outfit. Testing the action of a fly-fishing rod by whipping it gently as in actual fishing is one of the best methods we know to acquaint the angler with its action and balance.



Good fly casting stance. Eye is fixed on target and left hand takes up slack for the back whip of the rod.



The fly rod is stopped at this place, a moment's pause is held while backcast uncurls behind angler, then the rod is brought sharply forward.



International News Photos

The left hand feeds out line to the rod as cast speeds out to its target.

style include a pair of heavy, all-wool socks, knee length, with strong pair of wading brogues with bob-nail bottoms.* Some of the best of the old-timer trout fishermen use heavy leather cruising or lumberman's cutter boots, half-knee length for their wading, with the soles of heavy oak-tanned leather and studded with strong hobnails. These are worn over thick, virgin-wool white socks, and for hot summer weather are far more preferable than either waders or hip-boots, as they do not endanger the fisherman's feet from blistering and "scalding," as in the case of rubber footwear in rocky, hot weather pools. Woolen lumberman's trousers should be worn with leather wading boots and socks, to prevent one chilling in the mountain streams on a day's fishing. This outfit is the best I have ever used in mountain streams where the wading is rough and over shallow riffles for a good part of the way, with only an occasional deep pool.

17. A tube or bottle of good fly and mosquito repellant, a large red bandana handkerchief for around the neck when flies are bad, and a pair of light, kid gloves, warm, wool shirt, small oilcan with reel oil, some paper drinking cups, a magazine screwdriver, hook file or carborundum stone, knife, small, strong pair of pliers for removing hooks in case of accident, sun glasses, pad of felt for greasing line and a pad of *amadou* for drying the fly when in thick brushy streams.

* See Chapt. 29, on Wading and Dry-Fly Fishing For Trout.

Chapter 34

STORING THE FLY ROD AND OUTFIT FOR WINTER

ALL THE ITEMS of tackle that go into the fly-fishing outfit are expensive and deserve the best of consideration and care from their owner when the season is finished, so that the following "open-day" will find them dependably strong and fresh for another jaunt out into the whispering-stream country. The dry-fly line alone costs from three to twelve dollars, depending on its make and style, and the rod is of priceless value to the devoted owner if it happens to be one that fits and pleases its fortunate possessor. For these reasons, as well as other more sentimental and practical causes, good tackle should be preserved and kept in condition by using consideration and understanding when placing it in winter storage.

Wipe the rod dry with a clean, soft cloth after using and then rub it with a light, protective oil placed on a pad of felt or some soft cloth. Be sure the guides are in good shape and that the stripping guide is not cracked or chipped so as to ruin a good line when it is next set up for casting. Then place it in a wooden form and cloth bag or in the leather rod case and store it in a closet or room that is dry, but unheated, for the winter season. If there are any repairs

to be made do these before putting the rod away. Leave it in the cool, dry room or closet until needed again.

The line should be wiped clean with a pad of felt doubled and lightly coated with some line dressing. Rub it thoroughly, from end to end, until it is as flexible as an old shoestring, and be sure that every bit of dirt is cleared from its length and that it is coated with a good treatment of the deer-fat dressing, then throw it in large, loose coils and hang it from a wooden peg in a cool closet or dry, cool attic or, better yet, spool it on a large wooden storage reel and cover with a pasteboard box and place away on the shelf of the dry, cool tackle-closet or room. A line properly treated and cared for will last for many seasons of fishing. Do not spool and lay away a damp line. Mark the tapered end with a bit of red twine, or the end of line that is badly worn and unfit for use, mark it with a yellow cord or bit of tinsel wrapped about the end. Spool the bad end on spindle of reel for the coming season, so that you have the fresh, strong end to use.

The leaders should have a dressing of leader preservative before being put away. This is a glycerine solution that can be bought at the better tackle stores for a small sum or made by using four ounces of distilled water with an ounce of glycerine added and a quarter of a teaspoon of baking soda. Soak some felt pads with this and lay the leaders away in them for the winter and a fresh solution made up and fresh pads soaked for the leaders to be carried in the following season.

Be sure that leaders are stretched and dried after using and then coiled neatly and put in storage when the season is over.

Boots should be dried and insoles removed then hang them in a cool closet with the tackle for winter. The reel

should be wiped off, taken down and cleaned with gasoline and oiled thoroughly before being placed in its case for winter.

Flies should be gone over, and broken hooks and torn bodies discarded. Repair the heads of those that have become worn too badly with a drop af lacquer or fly-cement dropped on that part with a wooden toothpick. Renew the worst of the dry fly patterns by holding them before the spout of a steaming tea-kettle until the hackles and wings are well steamed and then press the wings back into shape and let dry. This renews old flies until they are like new again. Sort them out according to their sizes and patterns and place them in Pyra-Shell boxes with a little cedar-dust sprinkled over them. If any flies have become touched with moth, wash them in gasoline, dry in open air and then sprinkle with cedar shavings or dust and put away.

Screw the tops on bottles and tubes of fly oil, dressing, mosquito dope and oil cans and place in the creel for storage. It takes only a little time, and the next season one will have his tackle ready and in good shape for the opening-day's fishing.

Chapter 35

PRINCIPLES OF THE FLY ROD

WHEN WE WERE youngsters we inadvertently discovered and practiced the real principles of fly-rod casting and action with our apple-throwing sticks in the mellow old orchards where the June and July apples grew so prolific. Don't you recall how we used to cut a long and limber switch from a nearby hazel thicket and sharpening the smaller end of the wand, impaled a large, juicy green-apple thereon and proceeded to sweep the stick around and send the apple soaring out across the lush meadow grasses? If the apple was heavy then we chose a heavier stick, but one that was about the same, even taper all the way down from where the end was sharpened to the butt that we held in our sunburned little fists; and if the apple was light and small then we found that the switch with the even taper, from tip to butt was not so well adapted for tossing it a-far. Instead, an apple impaled and thrown from such a wand would usually whip down sharply onto the ground ahead of us and roll wildly away. We found that there were two kinds of throwing-sticks necessary for good apple tossing with various weights and sizes of that luscious apple-orchard ammunition, one for the heavy apples and one kind again for the light, small apples. The light apples required a

switch with a strong, heavy like butt and that had a light, whippy tip that tapered suddenly from about mid-ways of the stem to the small end. Such a tapered twig or branch would shoot a light apple farther even than a heavy one could be thrown with a long, evenly tapered stick. And, you couldn't very well throw the heavy apple with this quick-tapered wand as there was danger of the light-apple thrower snapping off under such strain, or simply whacking the apple down at your feet in the sod.

Well, that was the same identical principle that guides the construction of the modern fly casting rod—the old apple-throwing stick that we left lying in the grass of those old, far-away orchard grasses.

The same principles that the apple thrower was based on guides the shaping and the tapering and balancing of a finely made fly casting rod. The sharp-tapered rod is the light fly or dry-fly casting rod, whereas the long, evenly tapered rod, with plenty of extended whippiness and power is the wet-fly caster's type of casting rod. One is known as the dry-fly action or the dry-fly rod, the other the slow-tapered or wet-fly rod, with softer action. One is called the rod of the strong "backbone," and that means it has its power built in where the middle of the rod is located, and is the dry fly casting wand, and the other has plenty of strength and whippiness all the way down to the butt—which means it is the wet-fly fisherman's weapon.

The idea of the whippy rod with gradual taper that extends down into the butt sections is to pick up a heavy line and leader, with from one to three flies attached, out of deeply eddying and riffle currents and bring the darting, swimming little feather deceptions on the leader end and tags back through the pool with the life-like action that its quivering strength permits it to exert, and then to whip the

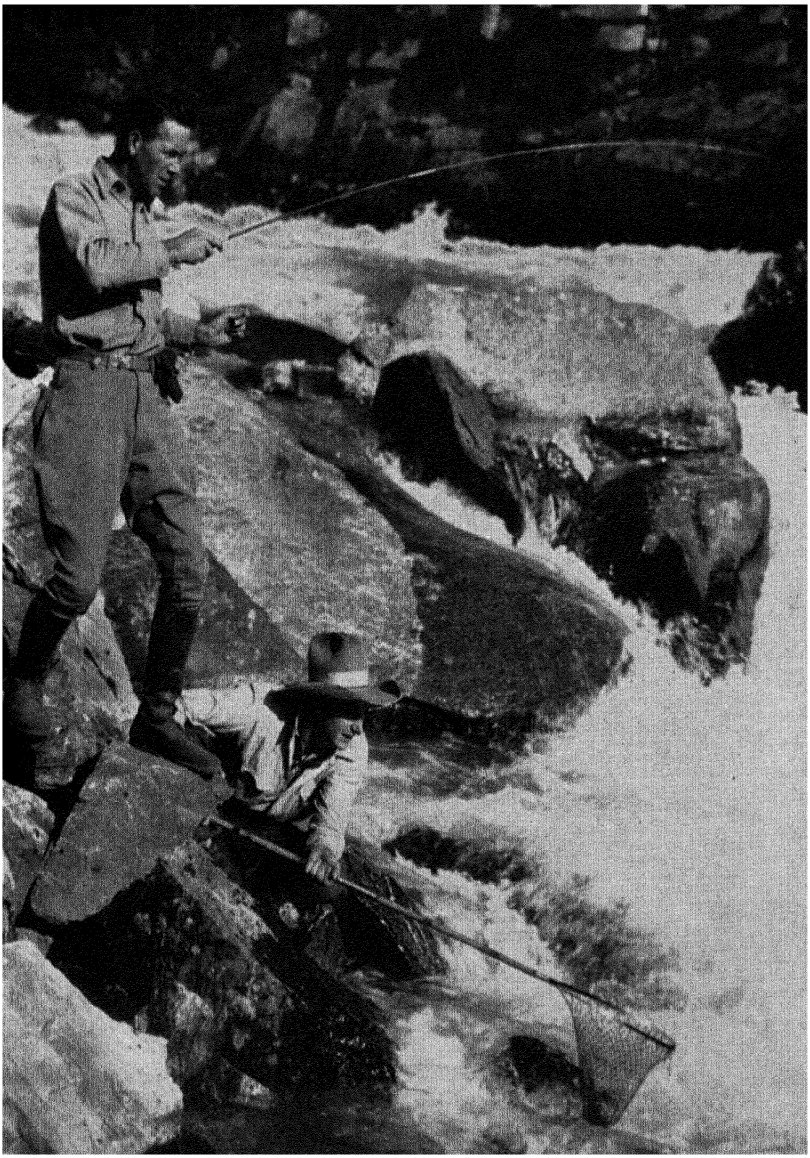
cast back again, without any sudden hesitancy to the eddies. This is made possible only by the slow and harmonious life that flows through the rod at its full distance, and this is why the longer graduated taper of the wet-fly rod is intended for the underwater fly cast.

On the other hand we have the light, single-fly cast that is known as the dry-fly or floating fly method of fishing, and this is too light and delicate for the long-tapered rod construction to pick up off the surface and handle with the snappy efficiency and accuracy that is necessary for control and comfortable casting. To pick up the floating fly the rod should have a short, quick taper built into it around or beyond the middle section. This whippy upper end of the rod has to be backed up by a strength of butt sections extending from middle-way down to the butt, and it is this principle that we find built into the rod that we call the dry-fly action.

It is the same old lesson that we learned with the apple-throwing sticks, and the builder of our modern fly casting rods have inculcated these features into their best products. The taper of any good fly casting rod can be followed with the naked eye. Simply hold the rod up at an eye level, pointing the tip toward a window or the open sky and then sight along the stem from butt to tip. You will be able to follow out the various steps that the builder has fashioned in its construction. There are few plain or evenly graduated surfaces. The rod will have a series of humps and bumps, with more or less bends and miniature crooks along its length, but there will be noticeable the place in the rod's continuity where the real step-down that forms the taper is located, and in a dry-fly model of rod, intended for the purpose of handling a light, floating fly with sureness, accuracy and sharpness, that is so to be seen a little beyond

the center of the rod's length. Usually the real step-down that marks the offset of the rod appears about a foot from the upper end of the second joint, and from that on to the tip the taper is graduated more slowly. This is what gives the dry-fly action rod its sharp, quick pick-up, and the backbone of the rod, that we hear spoken of so often, is, as the term implies about the middle or center of the rod itself. On the other hand, sight along a whippy member of the wet-fly family of rods, and you will not fail to note that this "backbone" is absent, and, instead, the rod is a series of longer graduations that slope from the tip, with possibly a slight and noticeable step-up here and there along its way. This means that the rod you are looking over is a wet-fly construction and that it has "soft" action all the way down its length, with logically and craftily located power-stations at certain intervals along its full length.

All good rod builders follow out a certain definite pattern that they try and build as nearly to in all their products as possible. Of course this can not be accomplished with exact success. For, remember, a good rod is made almost entirely by hand, and the work has to be done by the hands of men, that sometimes falter even though their intentions are of the best. If a certain rod happens to meet with the approval of its owner or of a practiced rod builder, and a copy of it is desired, then it should be *charted* by the builder. A blue-print is made and it is calipered and measured at one inch intervals, and these notations made carefully on the diagram. The stations where power is to be built in by abruptly swelling the rod or by reducing the size and diameter are all found and worked out. Then the builder proceeds to find a stick or length of Tonkin cane that meets with the grade and type evidentially used in the sample rod, after which he splits it into triangular strips and pro-



Heavy, strong water of northern rivers and the western mountain streams calls for considerable strength in the angler's tackle.

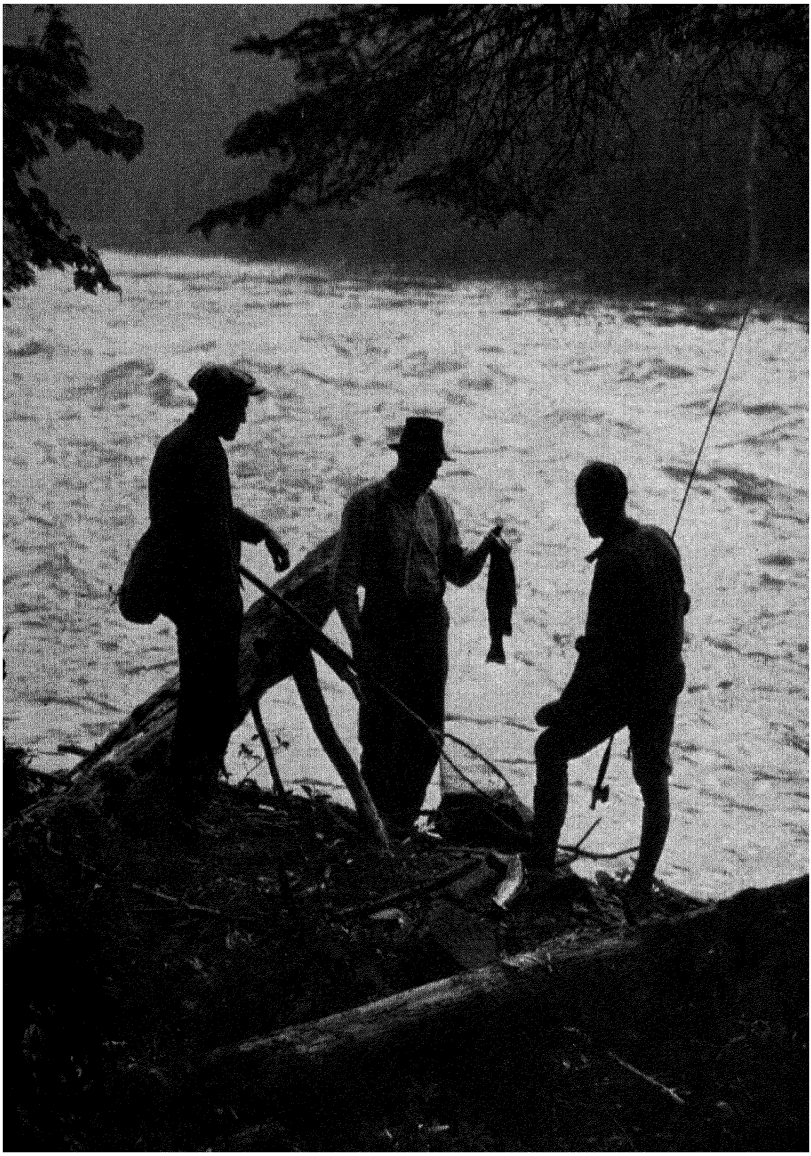


Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

A prize worth fishing for . . . a square-tail Canadian trout taken from the brawling rapids of a wonderful fishing river.

ceeds to fashion it with file, knife and sandpaper down to the required taper, shape and caliperizations that will fit into a completed stem. The rind of the cane is never touched if at all possible. All working on the strips of cane is done from beneath and at the sides in the fibrous wood. It is a meticulous job and only a few can master it in all its tedious and mysterious angles. When the proper taper and fit of the six strips of cane are completed then the rod is glued, each strip separately, and placed together to form the stem, and wrapped with strong twine to hold the sections together. It is next polished and ferrules set in place, after which it is wound with fine silk at ferrules and the guides set in place and attached with winding thread, then given a coat of varnish, rubbed down and given another coat, rubbed again with fine pumice and oil and so on until eventually it emerges as a completed rod, with shining ferrules, vivid windings, gleaming varnish, cork grip and reel seat. Yet, if one looks closely along its stem it will be seen that every inch of its gleaming length has been meticulously worked and studied out so that it will have a certain definite action and response when the angler takes it in his hand and whips his fly out over a brook or river pool. The short, sharp taper that brands it as a dry-fly action rod can be seen and identifies it easier perhaps than any other symbol that can be offered; whereas the long and gradual tapering of the wet-fly model offers the angler concrete evidence of its type and use. By testing the rod one can also arrive at a conclusion as to which order of rods it belongs to. The dry-fly-action rod is easily recognized by the stiffness of the lower or butt sections of the rod, and the flexible, whippy action of the tip and upper parts of the second section. The *whippy*, long and resilient flexibility of the wet-fly rod is quick to appreciate also. By handling

these two types, and flexing them with the rod hand, whipping them gently up and down and sideways, one can arrive at their model and action. These two methods of finding out which is the dry-fly and which the wet-fly rod should be practiced by those that are interested in fly rods and fly-rod fishing.

Chapter 36

LEARNING HOW TO CAST WITH THE FLY-ROD

We come now to the most important of all our studies of the fly-fishing methods of angling—that of learning how to handle the outfit in actual fishing, and while it might seem to the beginner in this mode of fishing a very difficult and intrinsic problem, the facts are that fly-casting is one of the most natural of all fishing methods.

The young fisherman is the most natural fly fisherman of all. This science seems to just come naturally to the person from ten to sixteen years of age, and is the nearest thing to the willow-pole and line way of fishing of any of the fishing phases. It usually takes a youngster only a few lessons to get to the place where he can do a very good fishing job with his fly rod and outfit. Women seem to take to the art very handily also. It is a bit more difficult for the older adult student to get the hang of casting a fishing line out with the fly rod, and for those who have devoted the most of their energies in fishing to the bait-casting and artificial lure methods the more delicate science of casting with fly, leader and enameled line with the fly rod usually takes a noticeably longer time to learn. However, any person with ordinary good eye-sight and physical endowments can learn

to fly cast in a few lessons, so that they can do a very pleasing job of fishing for trout, bass and pan-fish, providing they follow certain practical and fundamental rules that govern the art:

The first requirement is that the student has a good fly rod, and a line that fits the rod. The leader should also be suited to the type of fly that is to be used, and to the line and rod action. We have devoted considerable space in the past chapters to those details of fly-rod and fly-rod fishing that go into the understanding of what should be used in the way of lines, leaders, flies, etc. Also the principles of the fly rod and its actions and what they mean to the angler. By studying these and assembling a balanced outfit, for whatever method of fishing we might choose to practice the matter of proper equipment can be taken care of very nicely.

In no case should the student expect to get best results with a *cheap* outfit, or one that is poorly assembled. I have had many novice anglers come to me for fly-fishing advice, bringing with them rods that cost only a few dollars, or prize-rods and outfits (offered as prizes to them for some slight duty performed in "prize-winning" projects) and it has always been my reply to these misguided persons that it would be useless to try and teach them to cast with outfits of such order. Discouragement is bound to result when using an improper rod and its accessories. The most honest and helpful advice that can be given to the student is that he go to a good, reliable sporting-goods firm and buy a dependably made rod, be it wet-fly or dry-fly action, then get a line that fits the rod's action, and a supply of good, suitable leaders and flies. The reel should fit the rod also, balancing it pleasingly when fastened on the reel seat. This is

important. Too heavy a reel or too small and light a reel should not be chosen, for the reel is something that has to be used with the rod wherever and whenever it is used, and so it should fit and balance up the rest of the outfit. A very simple, but practical plan to use for this is to have the reels under consideration fitted to the rod in the establishment where the outfit is purchased and try them out separately, for balance and fit. When this is all taken care of, then the student is ready for his first lessons.

The best place to take up the initial lessons is right on the fishing waters themselves. Learn to cast under the conditions that will be parts of the fishing thereafter, and it will be found that time and efforts will be saved. If one expects to fish for trout, then go to the stream and proceed to do the practicing there under regular fishing conditions. Fly casting for trout is very similar to the methods that will be necessary to use in fishing for pan fish on a pond or bass fly fishing in rivers and lakes. The casts that are necessary to get the fly under brush, or away from brushy shores on the trout river will be required when fishing for bass or pan fish—so if one learns to cast well for trout he will find that he can fish just as expertly for bass and all other forms of game fish in their respective haunts.

I do not agree with those that preach the theory of learning the first lessons on snow, golf-course grounds or in the back-yard of the home. These casting surroundings are not at all what one finds in actual fishing sections, and a great deal of time is lost by trying to learn the lessons under such foreign surroundings. Go to the bass river, the pan-fish pond or the brooks and rivers where the trout swim and do your preliminary casting work. There the conditions are just what the practical fisherman finds during the balance of

his fishing career. Learn to cast the overhead-style first, then take up the side-arm cast, the back-hand cast and the flip cast, and finish up with mastering the roll-cast. When these are learned, the angler is in a position to do most any kind of practical fishing, under all the various hazards of lake, pond, stream and brook fishing. Other deviations from these primary styles of casts will just naturally work themselves out and become a part of the repertory of the practical fisherman's style and abilities.

Do not try to pattern after each angler that you encounter on the stream and it is a very dangerous policy to permit others to influence and bother you with criticisms that are tinged with egotism and a desire to make one feel that their methods are the only proper ones. Learn the primary casts, such as over-head, side-arm, back-hand, flip and roll casts, and then you will find that from these will be worked out many other practical little variations and individual methods that will come handiest and most suitable for your fishing needs and requirements. Let the other fellow, that you meet on the stream, use his methods, and if there is something in his *repertory* that you feel will be an addition to your basket-of-tricks, why there is no harm in trying it out. But do not permit criticisms and heckling from just-any-old-fisherman you happen to encounter spoil your enjoyment and efficiency in this sport.

The over-head cast can be used where the waters are open and permit a good length of line to be used in the back-cast. The side-arm cast for use from brushy shores where the back-cast can not be handled safely, and the flip-cast for brooks and small pools under leaning trees and brush. The roll-cast is used where a long length of line is necessary to reach a particular eddy or hiding place of fish and the brush or trees do not permit long back-casts of the line.

OVERHEAD CAST

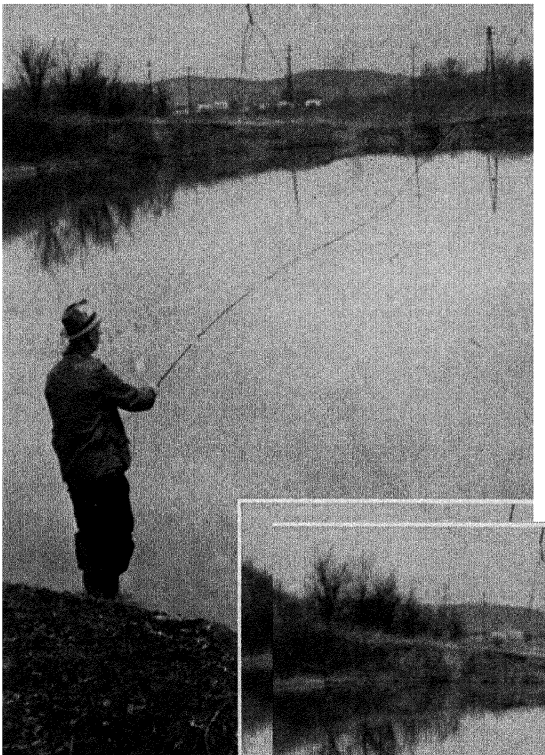
Rig up the rod for casting and strip out the full length of the leader, with about four feet of line included. Take the rod in right hand (providing the angler is right-handed), gripping it firmly at the handle or cork-covered grip, with thumb of hand resting firmly on *top side* of handle and pressing down on the cork. The thumb points toward rod tip. This is *important.* It holds the rod in position and acts as a lever to hand, depressing the rod evenly and to the proper angle when bringing it forward for cast. The reel should be *under* the rod butt for proper casting position, in overhead cast—the guides facing *down* and fingers of hand between line and rod-grip. The tip guide of the rod should also be down.

The first two fingers of the right hand are in position to pick up the line ahead of the reel and lock it against the cork grip when a specified length of line is out, or when playing a fish or drawing the fly through water.

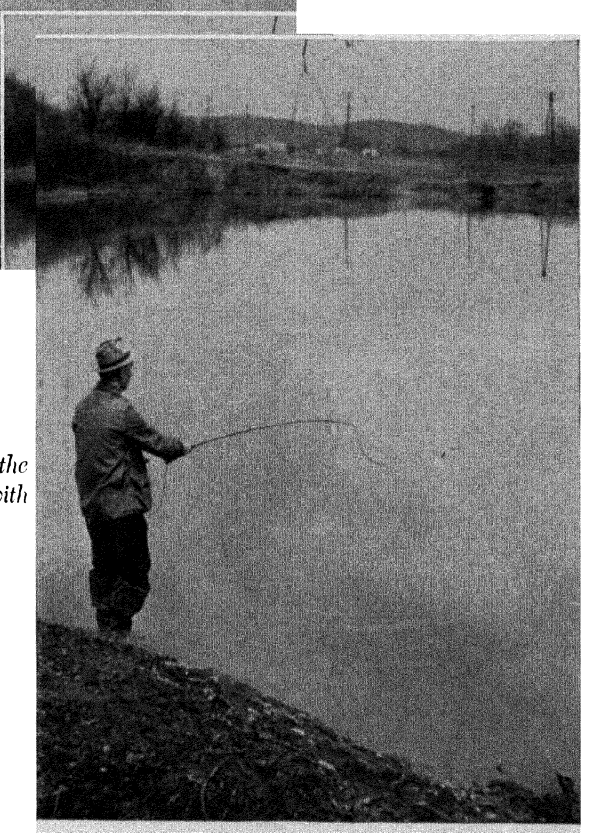
Now we are ready for the real experiment, and the rod should be whipped back and forth so that line is carried through the air in a short loop, the right forearm held at an angle of about forty-five degrees and the elbow held close to the angler's side, the thumb extended along the top of the rod-grip, with front part pressing down on the cork handle.

A book held between the elbow and the body helps to train the arm to stay close to body during the casting, but this is not necessarily essential, for by merely pressing the elbow in against the body and keeping the forearm and thumb in the suggested positions the rod will be automatically manipulated by the sharp, strong action of the fisher-

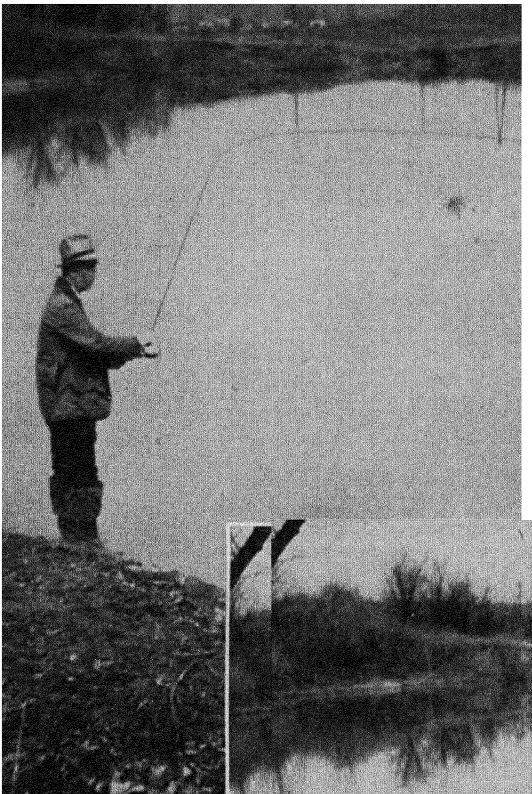
man's wrist. After the line has been whipped over the right shoulder a few times to get the body loose and flexible to the casting then the left hand should be used to catch the line ahead of the reel and strip off a nominal amount of line from the spool. This should be done by catching the line between thumb and finger and straightening the left arm out at a downward angle away from body, and as the rod is whipped back the left hand is brought up and the line fed into the guides, then slid down the line to catch another hold ahead of the reel. The line is fed into the guides and taken up by whipping the rod back and forward until enough line is out in the air to reach, we will say, twenty feet out on the water. When the rod tip is whipped back over the right shoulder the angler's head should be turned to the right and by looking upward and back the elongated "loop" or long U shaped bag in the line can be followed with the eye. This is an important detail in using the overhead cast, and serves to guide the angler in the amount of line he has out and the direction it is going to take the fly. If there is brush back of the fisherman's position it is especially necessary that the line loop be watched. The moment the rod tip is brought forward the loop is drawn forward and the line end then whips the leader sharply backward on a straight line (providing the loop is kept traveling in a straight direction back) and by halting the end of the loop on the backcast one can judge to a fine point the distance back the end of the leader will travel, and so prevent the fly catching in branches at the rear or in brush that lies back of the angler. This is an important feature of overhead casting (or, for that matter any other style of cast) as it gives the fisherman an accurate understanding of where his fly will be when the forward cast takes up the backward flight of the leader.



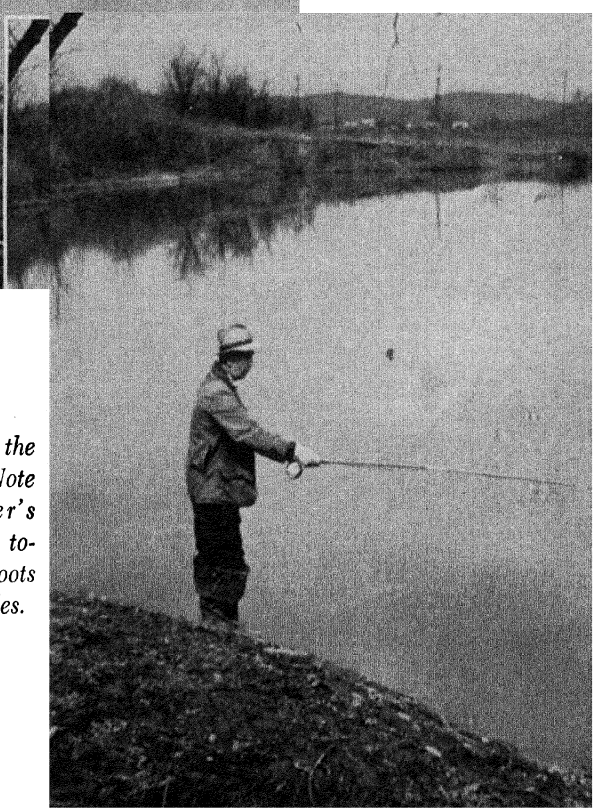
Forward whip of the overhead fly cast. Note bend in the rod as it rolls loop of line forward.



Completion of the overhead cast with fly.



The side-cross cast with fly.



Completion of the side-cross cast. Note both of angler's hands are close together as line shoots out through guides.

Try to keep the loop in the line when traveling back and also when going forward, as close as possible. A wide, arching loop will mean that the fly will be jerked sharply downward into the brush at the rear, and a wide forward speeding loop will mean that the line will slap down on the water before the leader has a chance to whip over and touch the water with its end first—as it should do for proper and most killing fishing technique.

The amount of line to be used for a cast is judged by watching the backcast and also by estimating the distance it reaches on the forward cast. For this reason it is a good idea to not feed too much line into the cast at first, and, if necessary, the line should be kept flowing through the air until in the angler's judgment there is out a sufficient length to reach the target aimed for when the final cast is brought forward. It is a good idea to hold back at least a yard, perhaps two yards of line, in the left hand before making the final effort, feeding just enough of it to the cast that loops and uncurls overhead to keep the line at its proper level, and then as the target-cast is made the body should swing forward, the right arm half straightened and the tip of the rod point aimed at the point where fly is wanted. As the forward loop uncurls the reserve line should be released and "shot" into the cast. This is called "shooting" the line, and it will give impetus to the loop so that not only will the required distance be reached, but the leader will snap over the end of line and strike the water with the fly first.

All of these movements and efforts will seem to be difficult as they are described here, but they are not nearly so hard to perform as one might believe. Short casts should be attempted first, and then as the fisherman gets more familiar with his task longer line will be used and eventually the whole matter will become easy. Good timing in releas-

ing the line to the rod guides and in the forward and backcasts all serve to keep the line flowing easily and in narrow loops. The fly should not be *snapped* when the backcast is completed, and this is overcome by using the right force in making the forward cast with the rod, keeping the elbow in and the forearm in proper position, and also in keeping the thumb uppermost on the rod grip and thereby holding a *narrow* loop. It is the wide, lazy loops in the line, on the backcast and forward casts that causes the fly to snap and break the leader ends at times, or snag the fly in twigs and brush. By practicing good timing in handling the line loops in air, and watching the casts closely, especially the backcast, and learning to feed line with left hand to the rod at the right times one can soon learn to keep the fly out of brush and to place it on the water ahead of line and leader —and those are the points that make for good fly fishing.

When line is stripped from the reel with left hand for extension of the cast it can be thrown into a coil with a simple reaching up and gathering in the line close to stripping guide, and then fed to the rod in a steady, flowing trickle as the cast is worked out. This is better than just jerking off a length of line and letting it slip into the guides at one time, and is an excellent way of obtaining proper and effective timing in the handling of the leader loop overhead.

When retrieving line after cast is made and when working the fly back the line does not need be handled with the reel, but instead can be caught below the stripping guide in coils, held lightly with fingers and thumb of right hand, and then when cast is started again can be fed out as the length of cast overhead widens and lengthens out. I have found this more practical and effective than by respooling the line on reel and trying to strip and feed it back into the guides.

The overhead cast should be mastered first of all. From that the principles of the other casts can be easily worked out.

SIDE CAST

The *side* cast is worked in the same general way as the overhead cast except that the reel is turned to face at an angle to the left and the wrist is turned so that thumb extended along top of rod grip faces to the right of the angler. The line is fed to the rod in the same way as in the first outlined style of casting, and the backcast loop is watched and guided by the angler to protect his fly and insure the same timing of line and leader, but the rod is operated parallel with the surface of the water, rather than vertically. When the forward cast is made it is given an upward direction which causes the leader to sometimes drift and settle with fly ahead in a curving course, and for this reason many anglers will say they can cast "a curve." It is a very effective method of presenting the fly, especially to those fish that are in the habit of shying off from heavily dropped flies. It works well when casting into a head-wind also, and the rod is manipulated from the right side, although casts can be directed ahead and even to the right of a line straight ahead. The elbow is held close to the side in this also. It is a fine cast to use when casting down brushy shore lines or up waters when one does not wish to wade out into the stream. In fishing deep ponds and lake shores it is an almost indispensable brand of cast to have at your command. The "Roll Cast" is executed by keeping the rod tip low, drawing the line to one side and "rolling" a loop over the water, stripping out line and feeding it to the loop to extend the cast where shore brush prevents regular overhead casts.

BACK-HAND OR "CROSS" CAST

Similar to the side-cast except that the right hand is reversed and the rod brought ahead of angler to left side, with thumb on rod grip laying over to the left, reel spool to the right, and rod is really worked from a backward or back-hand position. The line is pulled out with left hand in short lengths and fed into this cast. About the same distances can be cast as in side-cast, but the rod is worked sideways and to the right, the back-cast flowing out to the left. Curves can be cast in this manner by directing the fly upward and permitting it to settle against the wind and ahead of the line and leader butt. This cast is used considerably in brook and meadow fishing where the pools are small and where there are steep banks and very deep pools, also along brushy, deep river shore lines and along ponds and lake shores.

FLIP CAST

This cast is intended for use where there are log jambs and where small pools lie among roots and under brushy thickets. The rod is held with reel facing slightly to the left and line and leader is first stripped off the reel in quantity to stretch to the target. It is not practical for any great distances, as the leader and line length can not measure more than ten feet at the most. The fly is taken by the bend with thumb and finger of left hand, fingers on opposite sides, and the rod is then aimed directly at the target, the body of angler facing at left angle from the target, after which the left thumb and finger draws the fly far back, springing the rod sharply. When the fly is released by opening the

finger and thumb of left hand the fly will shoot out to where the rod tip was originally aimed. It can be accomplished very skillfully, if the rod is aimed true and the left hand released without any jerk, just opening the finger and thumb. The fly will settle first with this cast, and can be very accurately placed. Be sure, however, that the point of hook faces *away* from fingers, otherwise a painful accident can occur. For dry flies this is an excellent short-cast method. Can be worked with wet flies also, but be sure the dropper flies do not swing up and catch the hand or some part of angler's body.

BOOK IV

Bait Casting

Chapter 37

BAIT CASTING LURES, PAST AND PRESENT

THE STORY OF the artificial bait-casting lure goes far back into the beginning of sport-fishing as it has been developed here in *America.* This phase of angling has been raised to a higher standard in the United States and Canada than in any other parts of the fishing-world, and can very appropriately be called *The American Way of Fishing.*

Even so, however, we find recorded in the inimitable works of *Izaak Walton* mentions of, the Artificial Minnow, which is one of the chief items of the American Bait Caster:

"And therefore I have, which I will show to you, an artificial minnow that will catch trout as well as an artificial fly;"

Apparently the Father of Fishing then had one of our favorite bait-casting lures in his tackle-kit, and I have no doubts but what it was some early form of the Phantom Minnow, by his further description of the article. For the Phantom Minnow, constructed of flexible materials, sometimes of leather and others of a waterproofed fabric of silk, was really the original of the artificial-minnow types of angling lures, and used in Europe for trout and salmon and

sometimes for the taking of pike in the weedy ponds and sluggish Continental rivers. This bait was also among the first of the artificial bait-casting lures that invaded the United States and Canada and was used with phenomenal success in the early years of bass and pike fishing in our North American waters. The lure was made to represent, as closely as possible, a natural shiner or chub minnow and was armed with small treble-hooks attached to the main trace of heavy gut by other lighter lengths of gut. It was primarily a revolving and twisting type of bait, used to represent a dead-minnow that had been hooked in the approved manner of fishing dead minnows for trout, and trolled through the pool by use of a rather long rod and with a simple pattern of fishing reel. Even today the *Phantom* is used by many anglers with great success, and it is a very killing lure for smallmouth bass and walleyed pike, when used with a ten or twelve-foot cane rod and drawn through the pools with a long length of line.

From the Phantom Minnow, constructed of a fine grade of kid leather or buckskin, with its several sets of small treble hooks sprangling out from the body on light gut snells, and with its rolling, twisting mode of travel through the eddies and currents, we then arrived at a newer and more satisfactory form of artificial lure, which could be better used with the shortened fishing rod that was gradually coming into vogue with our fishermen. This later model of minnow was made of wood, shaped to represent an ordinary chub minnow and rudely painted to represent the same creature in tints and colors. Glass eyes were next added and the hooks were attached by a more practical method, that of using a screw-eye to which the treble-hooks were fastened and this was then screwed into the soft wood body of the bait. Various types of wood were used at first, but it was found that

white cedar was the most buoyant and the strongest for fishing conditions, and this led to the invention and perfection of what possibly was the first real artificial-minnow casting bait.

All of our old-time bait fishing veterans will recall the time when the "dowagiac" was the identification of bait-casting technique here on our local rivers, lakes and ponds. This was followed, shortly, by another type of fishing allure that was, for want, perhaps of a better name of identification, *dubbed,* the casting-PLUG. The buoyant nature of the excellent wood that the American maker had at his disposal—the magnificent cedars of our northern forests—led to newer and even more astonishing types of game fish angling, the Surface Type of artificial bait. This was arrived at many years agone, in various and sometimes startling models of casting lures. The cedar wood decoys were found to be so pleasingly buoyant that when not in actual action in the water they would immediately float to the top and rest there out of danger of bottom snags and difficulties. This led very shortly to the idea of a type of fishing bait that could be drawn along the surface, thereby offering an intriguing incentive for the game fish that were in the habit of feeding on surface or floating forms of food, such as large beetles, frogs and toads swimming for safety into the rushes and pads, and above all other things, crippled and injured minnows that the average bass, pike and muskie likes so well to pursue and capture with ease. The cedar wood could be whittled into a variety of shapes and styles, owing to its closely interlocked, soft grain, and so the swift and extended invention of a myriad of shapes, sizes, patterns and types of floating, sinking and semi-surface baits quickly began to appear on the market for the attention and uses of the bait-caster. This lent a new and exciting interest to this

particular form of angling technique and, unquestionably, was the primary cause of bait-casting sweeping the country as a sporty new means of men and women getting outdoors and into the game fish regions where picturesque forests rimmed the sparkling, healing waters of northern lakes and wide-flowing middle-western and eastern rivers.

Yankee inventiveness was not slow in appreciating the field that this new form of sport-entertainment had to offer, and quickly there arose in this country many factories and businesses that were devoted entirely to the production of the finest and most appealing kind of bait-casting fishing tackle.

The game fish of our lakes and streams were naturally addicted to the taking of such types of artificial lures as the bait-casting rod and reel had to offer them. Canada, with its great areas of wilderness lakes and eddying rivers, its picturesquely located fishing waters and its easy access from the United States made the sport of bait-casting all the more entertaining and appealing. Within a few hours drive by automobile and over good roads and across pleasing ferries there lay sections where the smallmouth bass, the bigmouth bass, the muskellunge, walleyed pike, Great Northern pike and lake trout swam in myriad numbers, and these were naturally inclined to rise to and strike just the type of bait that was being so intriguingly offered by the American business men and manufacturers. Boom times and a swift segregation of the population into highly-concentrated districts further helped to make the sport of artificial-bait casting and fishing an incentive for men and women to get far a-field and a-stream into the best of fishing waters. As a result of all these features, we find that today, the "Plug fisherman" and the "artificial minnow and spoon and spinner" angler forms one of the greatest groups of outdoor

sportsmen that the world has ever known. For this reason we can safely define Bait Casting with Artificial Lures as the leading sport in the North-American hemisphere.

The bait-caster finds himself able to follow his chosen sport at most all times of the year. He can find lakes, ponds and rivers for his pastime, with game fish readily accessible by boat, canoe or launch—or from the shore and by wading to the foot of riffles and from points of rocky lake bars and points—scattered from the Atlantic Coast, on the east, to the Pacific Coast, on the west, where the salmon, the steel-head trout and the bigmouth bass of the tules and sloughs of the lowland sections out there will rise and strike his offerings, and from the James Bay drainage waters, in the north to the very estuaries of the Gulf of Mexico on the south.

It is no wonder, then, that bait-casting has become the wide-flung pastime that it is!

The wooden-minnow, the wood and *plastic* composition plugs and minnows, the spinning and the spoon forms of artificial casting baits all are adaptable to the bait-casting forms of angling, at some time or some season of the year. The old-styles of artificial lures for the casting rod still persist in holding their own also, we find, as well as many new and more modern shapes and patterns. All of them, however, regardless of their patent-date are greatly improved in finish and in hooking arrangements—even in action—over the pioneer of this style in angling allures.

THE "WOODEN-MINNOW"

One of the members of this family of fishing baits, the Wooden Minnow, continues to hold its *prestige* in the modern bait-caster fisherman's list of killing and dependable game fish offerings on lake, pond and stream. The modern

artificial minnow, however, is now far less dangerously armed for the capture of such fish as bass, pike and muskellunge than was its olden predecessor, and, whereas the first of these lures were armed with from three to five sets of large treble hooks, now the average artificial minnow is equipped with not more than three sets of trebles at the most. In fact the prevailing state and provincial laws regulating the number of hooks that can be used in all game fish angling now permit only a maximum of three hooks or three treble hooks to be used. For this reason it is impractical and also unnecessary for an artificial minnow to carry more than that number of hooks. The same thing, of course, applies to other types of artificial baits. In the majority of cases the wooden-minnow will be found carrying less than the lawful maximum, and one and two hooked lures are more commonly found in use than those with the regulation or lawful three.

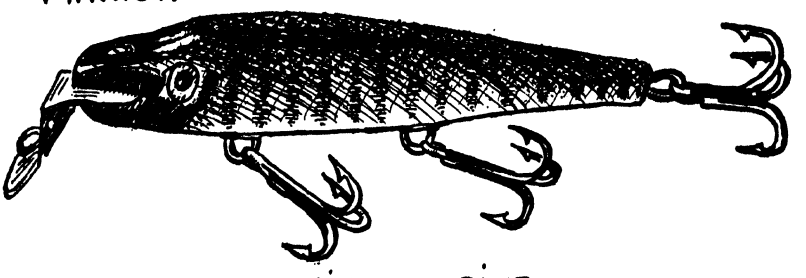
The name "Dowagiac", it is generally thought was applied to the first of the artificial minnow types through the supposition that the first members of this armament came from the little city of Dowagiac, Michigan. Through all the many years of bait-casting popularity and growth there has been in this city a factory catering to the needs of the bait-casting rod, and today we find wooden-minnows bearing the name of the manufacturer that is located in Dowagiac. However, it is a fallacy to believe that all wooden-minnows that are offered the caster comes from this place, for such is not the case, and has not been so for many decades. That was a popular and mistaken belief that has long since been dissipated, yet one will find fisherman even now who speak of using the "Dowagiac" minnow. They are referring to the ordinary wooden-minnow, and using this term only as an antiquated means of defining their meaning. Now we find

this type of casting lure being manufactured in perhaps a dozen different cities throughout the country.

South Bend, Indiana, Garret, Indiana, Dowagiac, Michigan, Chicago, Illinois, Kalamazoo, Michigan, Detroit, Michigan, Akron, Ohio, Utica, New York, Paw-Paw, Michigan and Dayton, Ohio, are a few of the best-known places where these baits are now made. Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin, however, still hold the honors for bait-casting tackle manufacture.

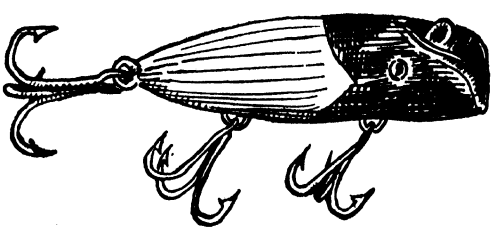
The modern lure of this order offers more than just a half-ounce to an ounce-and-a-quarter of white-cedar, a set of hooks and some glass beads for eyes and two or three coats of elastic varnish, which was about the sum and substance of the wooden-minnow of the dim and distant past. Instead we find the wooden-minnow of the present day's tackle-box trays a product of real beauty, that in most cases can not be distinguished from a perfectly vivid specimen of the "real thing" that it is supposed to represent. It has natural-scale finish that gives it all the characteristics and looks of the live runchub, the shiner and the mullet minnow. The yellow-perch, the muddler minnow, sunfish, bluegill (pumpkin-seed), sucker and the young pipe are all faithfully reproduced in these styles, with an accuracy of tinting, striping and undercolorings and true-to-life action that gives the modern fisherman a bait that is every bit as alluring and attractive to a hungry gamester, hiding in its native element, as though he were carrying along a bait-bucket filled with all the various kinds and varieties of minnow food that the pool might naturally hold. This, as can be readily understood, permits the bait-caster of today to figuratively fish with live-bait, and yet not have to go to the time and trouble of collecting a supply of minnows and going to all the bother and fuss of conveying them along on his trips. This is one of the

ARTIFICIAL (WOOD)
MINNOW



MUSKIE AND PIKE
SIZE -

PLUG



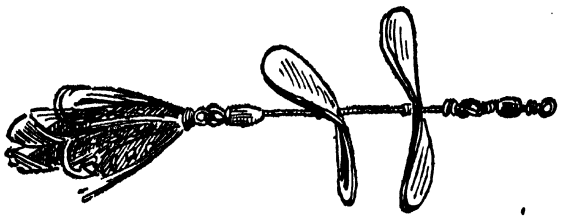
PIKE, BASS, TROUT,
PICKEREL - MUSKIE -

ARTIFICIAL BASS MINNOW



Sketched from bait-casting lures in Author's col-

SPINNER-



ALL GAME FRESH-WATER FISH

SPOON



TROLLING SIZE - FOR MUSKIE, PIKE, LAKE TROUT

WOBBLING-SPOON AND PORK-RIND-





SPINNER-WIGGLER

lection that are proven "killers" on game fish.
(Half size of originals)

primary reasons for the popularity of this form of fishing over the older method of live-baiting, and the cause for many of the devotees of the live and dead minnow casting school to turn from the real thing to the artificial bait.

Moreover, the hooks that decorate these lures are used not for the pure purpose of fastening an unlucky victim in its own reckless thirst for food, but as well for the purpose of balance and the natural action to the minnow. On the modern minnow of wooden and plastic materials we find the hooks bronzed or silvered to harmonize with the natural placements of the fins, acting to further complete the natural illusion that the well-balanced and naturally tinted bit of wood or plastic and metal offers the fish as it is reeled through the eddying pools or alongside of a sunken log or drift or rock. Modern artificial-minnow casting has reached a high point of efficiency where I believe it would not be exaggerating to say that it is on a plane with the very highest form of fly fishing—and many of our modern bait-casters are as worthy of the name "purists," as in the science of dry-fly casting. Only the finest of finely built tackle goes into their equipment, and a good majority of them are fastidious and critical of what goes into the trays of the well-filled tackle-boxes as the angling fly-purist.

Having followed this phase of the sport for better than two decades as a professional and, so called, "expert," I feel proud to say that modern bait-casting is today on one of the highest planes of all our fishing sports.

The action of the artificial minnow is no longer left to the "wooden clothespin" stage. Perfect balance is arrived at by use of only the finest grade of cedar wood, or by elaborate and costly moulds used when the minnow is manufactured out of plastic-like materials. The action of the bait is achieved either by use of metal headpieces or by moulded

head-sections of the bait. When such a bait is finished it is a true and dependable representation of the live minnow in its liveliest and most attractive form.

For lake fishing there is no artificial allure more likely to bring success to the angler than the wooden style of minnow. In river eddies and pools it is a remarkably killing offering and it can be used with equal success in creeks and even in brooks, where there are pools large enough to permit it to be cast and retrieved. The Crippled or Injured Minnow pattern is an excellent one to use in hot weather when the fish are lazy and sluggish, and lurking close to the surface under shady pads, or grass in the coves and along the protecting lines of windfalls and drifts. Smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, walleyed pike, muskellunge, Great Northern pike, large rock bass, pickerel and sometimes even a large crappie will take this offering. For large rainbow and steelhead trout, used with a five-foot length casting rod, casting rod reel and soft-finish silk casting line, the artificial minnow (which I have roughly described as the "wooden-minnow") is one of the most killing of lures, especially in the heavy pools of northern floodwaters and in the large, deep western rivers and Pacific Coast drainage waters. This lure is also a killing one to use for lake trout, when the fish are lying deep in the pools in summer weeks. It should be used on a wire line or with a heavy silk or linen trolling line with a good sinker rig for lake trout in deep pools and trolled from a slowly moving canoe or light boat with a heavy-style casting rod and large reel.

For river fishing where there are walleyed pike, muskie and bass to be found the regular wooden-minnow (made of white-cedar wood) with a bright nickeled or chromium-plated metal headpiece at the front and with two or three treble hooks attached to body of bait is a wonderfully suc-

cessful bait, from the start of the season until its close. The Pike-finish is a good, steady killer in such rivers, also the Yellow-perch, the white-and-red-head, black-with-white-head, rainbow, golden shiner, sucker and the green-crackle-back and mullet patterns. For walleyed pike in eddy pools of rivers, below heavy riffles, and over the bars where the fish are found feeding in the morning hours the white-body with red and black and yellow spots is an excellent bait to try. For muskie, in ponds and lakes the 1-ounce size, "wiggler" model (a heavy, chunky-shaped bait) in a dark-orange color with black spots is hard to beat for midsummer and spring use.

There are two primary shapes of the wooden-minnow in metal-headpiece style, one known as the Semi-surface model, or the Panatela shape, which is about the general shape and size of an ordinary wooden clothespin, and the other a shorter, heavier shape that is known as the Wiggler style. This last shape is more intended for deep-fishing, and has a strong, deeper action than the semi-surface model. The deep-working shape is a good one to use when the fish are believed to be lying deep, in heavy pools where there are weed beds and driftage down under the water at a good distance, or where there is a concave gravel bottom with eight to ten feet of water, and where there are deep pools with rocky bottoms. The weight and the shape of this bait tends to take it down sharply some four feet under the surface, whereas the slim shape travels about three to four feet at the most under the surface, and when reeled easy much closer to the surface. This is good for drift fishing, where there are drifts projecting out of the pools and for the pads and grass and rushes that might line or fringe a deep bay or the center parts of a shallow lake, pond or river pool. The downward dart of the slim shape is less abrupt than that of

the chunkier type. These are features that should be remembered, and profited by when the angler is working a pool of good, hungry fish.

There are other models of this artificial minnow that also get fine results from the game fish of lake and river. The hollow-shell type, of metal or of Pyra Shell, which is good for semi-surface fishing in lakes where there are lily pads and plenty of grass under the water some three or four feet, and the plastic models that are indestructible and can not be broken or scarred by the teeth of the pikes and pickerel. The X-ray type of these last and the Spook construction, which, as the name suggests has a semi-visible appearance in the depths of a pool due to the glassy appearing construction, are both wonderful fish-catchers in spring, summer and fall. There are two types of these last, the sinking model and the floating model. One is intended for fishing under the surface, at depths down as low as eight and ten feet, the other for surface tempting of the bigmouth and the lazy pikes that lie just under the shadow of the pads and the grass. This last is a fine pickerel bait also, and a wonderful choice when the Great Northern Pike and the muskies are lazying around on hot days in the ends of weedy bays and coves of the lake and pond. The sinking model of such lures does not float when the reel handle is quiet or when allowed to rest in the water, and when it is used one should be sure there are few snags or drifts under the surface, otherwise it must be kept moving at all times in order to keep out of trouble with snagged hooks or getting the bait fouled in underwater troubles and hazards.

Most all the headpieces on the artificial minnows are of metal construction. Some of the older models, and the surface types in many of the patterns, have metal collars which serve to give the bait a fast, wiggling or rolling action when

reeled through the pool. The metal headpiece lures can be regulated, to some extent, by bending the headpieces either up or down, to change the depths of the bait's movements. On those minnows that have the headpieces fashioned by sloping the heads or by using an open-mouth pattern the depth that the lure travels is pretty definitely fixed, so that they can not be changed by the owner.

The sizes of these artificial minnows vary, for different species of fish and for varying seasons of the fishing season. The smallest models are those that weigh under half an ounce, in 2½ and 3 inch lengths. These are used principally for bass and for walleyed pike, although there are times when muskellunge and Great Northern pike of twenty-five and thirty pound weights will accept such lures very readily. The medium-sized minnow runs around four to five inch lengths and their weights are approximately ⅝ of an ounce to *one* ounce. This type is the one most commonly used by the average bait-caster for walleyed pike, bass, muskies and G. N. pike—also for the large trout.

For large waters, as in casting for muskies in the Lake Of The Woods regions, and in the wild lakes around Sioux Lookout, Canada, in the heavy French River drainage, and in many of the big inland lakes of Wisconsin, Minnesota and northern Michigan there is a *giant* size of artificial minnow used that is known as the Husky or the Big-game minnow that runs considerably larger and heavier. This is also a favorite artificial minnow for late fall fishing for muskie and big northern pike, and its approximate length is 6 inches and weight of one-and-a-half ounces. There is also an "in-between" minnow that we find in high favor with the inland fishermen for muskie, walleyed pike and large bass in the late summer and fall seasons that is known as the Special or Snook model and this is larger than the 4¼ length and

smaller than the 6 inch length—being approximately 5 inches long and weighing about one-ounce. This gives us, for the sake of clearness, five sizes to consider in the Panatela shape of minnows, as follows:

Midget size artificial minnow..... 2¾ in. long, ¼ ounce
Baby size artificial minnow..... 3¼ in. long, ½ ounce
Standard size artificial minnow..... 4¼ in. long, ¾ ounce
Special size artificial minnow..... 5 in. long, 1 ounce
Giant Muskie size artificial minnow. 6 in. long, 1¼ ounce

These are all intended for the bait-casting rod, used with various lengths and weights of casting rod, and casting line, for spring, summer and fall fishing for bass, pike, muskie and pickerel. There is, of course, a slight difference in these various types of artificial minnow, such as the Standard model, which runs ⅝ ounce in some and ¾ in others, but this usually comes from difference in the weight of hooks—the bronzed hooks being heavier than the silvered ones.

In the chunkier models of artificial minnow we find the sizes running from

Runt size ..... 2⅝ inches long, ½ ounce weight.
Standard size ..... 3½ inches, ¾ ounce weight.
Husky-Muskie size ..... 6 inches, 1¼ ounce weight.

Minnows made of transparent compositions are a bit heavier than the wood types, but will stand more abuse and attacks from game fish teeth. Their effectiveness, however, I must frankly say, is not noticeably any better than the regulation wooden-minnow construction.

Most any weight of artificial minnow can be found, in all the standard and dependable makes of lures, for the angler's requirements, from ¼ ounce to 1½ ounce. It is not advisable, however, to consider any weight under one-fourth ounce,

and a better minimum of weight would be the one-half ounce weight, which is ideally adapted for summer fishing for bass and pike and an occasional muskie. This bait will cast nicely with a 5½ or 6 foot Feather-weight build of bait-casting rod in either split-bamboo or tubular steel. Whereas the one-and-a-half ounce lure should best be used with a 5 foot, 5½ ounce (medium-weight) casting rod of bamboo or steel.

There is also the *Jointed* model of casting minnow, which is a great favorite with us all at times, and when the fish are on the feed and like a fast moving minnow, scurrying through the pool away from danger. This type is jointed in the middle, and comes in the same lengths and weights as the solid or straight minnow we have listed. Fishing from a boat on float trips, from the shores when the fish are moving in after a school of minnows and when a large fish is to be seen rising are all good times for the jointed-minnow type to be used. It represents a frightened minnow, getting out of the way of a feeding fish, and should be used under circumstances when such an allure is deemed best to offer.

The crippled or flat-sided minnows can be had in either wood or composition materials and also in the Baby, Standard and Giant sizes. This is an excellent bait to use when fish are very lazy and prone to be sunning themselves or lying under the shadow of pads and grass in the lake coves and bays, preferably at the edge of shallow bars. It should be used by casting it out on the water surface, permitting it to lie there a moment, then lifting the rod tip and giving the line a sharp jerk to cause it to riffle the water, then reeling it a few inches and giving another jerk, and so playing the lure around over the pool to represent a badly crippled and dying minnow. This is a very effective way to fish when bass are feeding in shallow coves and in the grass and over weed-

islands under the surface. It also works where logs slant from shores into deep water and along the side of red-stemmed lilies in pools of five to eight foot depths. The lure can also be reeled slowly over and through the water in calm pools of shallow depths with success.

There is another type of wooden-minnow (or composition construction) that is famous as a surface bait—this is the large, chunky shape of bait that has a metal propeller instead of the headpiece, at both front and rear. Some use the propeller only at the front. Both types are good for muskie in the deep summer when the waters are calm and hot with sunlight, and there are lily meadows and weed shore bordering depths of five to eight foot of water. Cast it out and permit it to rest on the water, jerking it lightly to give it the lively effects of a resting minnow or large bug, then reel it slowly over the pool. The propellers churn the water and create considerable surface disturbance which serves to attract the attention of fish from a distance. Muskies are very favorably impressed with such a surface bait. Others of this general type have metal collars attached and are constructed with tail and general shape of a mouse. Such lures are excellent for bass (bigmouth especially), muskies and G. N. pike and pickerel. This is a lure that should be in every bait-caster's tackle box. The white body and red-head pattern and the Green Frog colors are both good choices.

Another form of the artificial minnow that produces good catches in the summer season is the short, chunk-of-wood type of minnow with bucktail hair tail and fins, and metal headpiece. It can be had in both surface and underwater styles and should be used by casting out, permitting to rest a moment then reeling slowly back across or through the pools.

The straight model, the jointed model, the wiggler model and the chunky, short models last mentioned are all used by casting out and reeling back at varying speeds. The surface types should be used by "plunking" or pumping them back to the rod, and so causing surface ripples and splashings.

In the southern bigmouth bass waters the artificial minnow is mostly manipulated with best results by casting the bait out, permitting it to either ride the surface or be drawn under surface, as style of bait requires, and then retrieving the lure with a series of pumping jerks and alternating turns of the reel handle, causing the bait to dart and shimmy through the water. This method is not so successful in the northern lakes and rivers, where the fish seem to like their underwater baits reeled back in a straight course, with plain reeling of the lure and lifting of the rod tip. The southern bigmouth, however, appears to like its bait to dart and dip through the water.

PLUGS

The *plug* is one of the old standby killers of the bait-caster and several representatives of this model will unquestionably be found in every bait-caster's[q] tackle box. This bait is not necessarily representative of any particular species of minnow, frog or shore creature, but, as the name so aptly describes it, is more of a *plug* of varnished and painted wood, sometimes fashioned to suggest a minnow, a beetle, a frog or even nothing at all characteristic of the shore or eddies. The most commonly used of these baits are the types with rounded or squared bodies tapering off to the rear section gradually (as a plug might taper, fashioned out of wood) and with a concave, sloped or undercut form of

head. The line is attached to front or at top above the slope of head by a screw-eye and head sections usually painted red, black or blue with white body. This does not always coincide with the pattern I have laid down, and some manufacturers use the following colorations for their wooden plugs:

Red head, white body
Rainbow color
Imitation frog color
Green scale finish
Natural scale finish
Yellow perch
Natural pike
Dace
Nite-luming finish (rough)
White, red, yellow and black spots
Orange with black spots.

The shape of the head section gives the darting, wobbling and wiggling actions to the bait. It is a fine lure to use when fish are lying hidden and waiting for something with especial interest to pass along. I have found that plug fishing with a five-foot, medium-weight (5 ounce) rod and an 18 lb. test waterproofed silk line is most effective when the weather is hot and the fish are sulking under submerged rock rims or hiding around sunken brush and logs in rivers and lakes. Sometimes when the evening sun is going down and the bass are working out to the edges of the rushes on the lake bars, close to the channels and deeper pools this form of darting, wobbling casting lure will bring swift, hard rises. It is also a fine lure to use for walleyed pike, for the underwater type of lure has a decidedly lazy, wobbling motion when reeled back through the water that appears to be

just what the walleye (or pickerel) likes best of all. I favor casting this type of underwater bait *upstream* and reeling it slowly down current, at the edge of weedy fringes and over sunken rocky reefs. It also works well, used as described, where there are log drifts in pools at the foot or deep riffles, and where there are eddy waters swirling by rocky shores. These places are all intended for *plugging* with the underwater type of wooden, pyra-shell or plastic plugs, and the colorations that I have found most generally dependable are the following ones:

White-body and red head
Rainbow color
White body with red, yellow and black spots
Nite-luming or luminous coloring (which is great for night casting for bass and walleyed pike)
Natural pike
Dace or Natural Scale Finish color.

There is also another type that is extremely deadly to muskie, walleyed pike and bigmouth bass, and this is the wooden or the composition plug that is shaped with a bottle-body, short and quick tapered at rear section and with the front part flattened and turned down at a forty-five degree angle. Many of the *Home-Made Plug* craftsmen devote the greater part of the winter evenings to the manufacture of this style of casting lure, as they are rather easily whittled out with a keen jackknife. However, this bait is better balanced when purchased from a bait manufacturer, as they are able to get a more pleasing and natural tinting and enameling than the home-craftsman can produce. This bait can be used in the smaller styles, approximately half-ounce size for the bass and pike and in the larger muskie size of around one ounce weight. The bait has a sharp,

wiggling action and goes down deep into the pool and is therefore a good lure for the deep, autumn lurking gamesters, or for use in deep gravel pools off bars in the heat of the summer fishing days. One set of trebles, fastened to the under side is usually the best arrangement. White and red-head, white with blue or black head and black-body with white head, solid red and green-mottled are the best colors to use for northern lakes and middle-western bass, pike and muskie rivers.

The manufacture of the wooden plug as it is done in the larger factories is an interesting phase of bait-casting to observe. The white-cedar blocks are shaped roughly in a lathe then finished in sanding machines, which smooths and evens the body of the bait to almost perfect proportions. This is all very important, for the best type of wooden plug is the one that has a perfect balance, to facilitate it traveling through twisting and angling currents and eddies without turning over or skipping to the surface. Even with the most improved of machinery and careful worksmanship badly balanced wooden plugs very often result, and this can not be guarded against, for the simple reason that no two blocks of wood can be found with the exact grain and fiber of wood, which results, of course, in certain samples of any bait being poorly balanced and liable to overturn or skip when in current or eddy waters. There is no remedy for such a faulty plug, and the best thing to do when one gets into the tackle box is to toss it away, for a cunning game fish will hesitate to rise to any such type of lure. The evenly balanced plug should be carefully preserved and respected by its owner, for such plugs are indeed prized possessions, and will catch fish where others fail. For this reason I suggest that old and dependable plugs be used when fishing a good pool rather than preferring to try out new and

brighter models. Test out all new numbers when a good opportunity presents itself and watch the bait closely to see that it wobbles and darts back to the surface in an even and natural manner. If it is a good bait then place it in the tray that is marked, "Proven good ones."

After the plug is shaped properly in the factory it is then sent to the department where a mechanically regulated machine bores seats for the hooks to be located, on under side and at tail section. The hooks are then seated and it goes to a long bench or table where girls operating air-brushes give it the necessary tinting. The scale finish is placed on with a screen and the tinting of back and head is done by expert air-brush operators. When completed the plug is a bright and appealing example of what finely graduated machines and good enamel and colors can do for a piece of white cedar. Eyes are placed in bait and it then passes through the hands of an inspector who tests the hooks, goes over the body for the least faults in enameling or tinting and is passed along to the packing staff, or thrown out into the scrap-pile. Such is the course of an artificial wooden lure in the factory. Every item is closely inspected for faults and mistakes. Bad hooks, air-bubbles in the enamel or mistakes in the brush work, all send it to the scrap bucket. I have, however, taken lures out of the scrap bucket, because of some slight mistake on their wooden bodies, and caught some of the best fish of my bait-casting career—which only proves that even a game fish has certain specifications and ideas that we humans do not always appreciate.

There are scores of styles and shapes of the artificial casting plug offered to the fisherman, new ones appearing each season in tackle catalogues and on tackle counters, but my advice is that the old stand-bys be most seriously consid-

ered, unless, of course, the angler is of an experimental turn of mind, in which case then it is very possible that a new favorite will be found out of many ventures. The most reliable of all these various shades, shapes and patterns, I have found, is the "plug" shaped underwater article in the colorings I have enumerated above, and the floating or surface types that represent frog or large beetle creatures. One of the last named order that I have found most successful is the, so called, Floating Mouse plug. This is a great killer in midland lakes and some of the weedy lakes and river pools and ponds of the northern bass fishing sections. The plug is made to very roughly represent a large mouse, with two sets of treble hooks, black bead eyes and a green body with red and yellow circled spots on it. The tail is a short length of woven black cord. This bait is fine for those muddy-shallows where lily pads and splatter docks dream over spreading pools of two to five foot depths, when the July and August suns are hottest. Bigmouth bass are to be found feeding along such shores in the afternoons and evening, and a frog plug cast out and jerked lazily on the surface will usually get them to rise. It is also a great killer where there are deep bays and shore lines covered with heavy pads and grass and where there are small, bright openings of water, where no other type of casting bait can very handily be used to interest the concealed bass. Such places have been fished by me with success in the Trent River of Ontario, in Florida, Georgia and Texas, in the marshes of Lake St. Clair, on the Ontario side, and in many ponds and lakes deep down in the interior of the Ohio Valley sections as well as a number of artificial lakes in the middle-west where municiple plants and organizations have built up wonderfully fine fishing centers for the bass angler.

Another good type of floating plug for such waters as I

outlined, and especially in weedy ponds and small lakes of the New England and northern-border where there are bigmouth bass, smallmouth bass and pickerel, is the cork-bodied surface floater, with wings. This is known as a "Coaxer" bait, and is intended to coax sluggish bass and pickerel out from under pads and grass to strike. It is one of the early forms of surface attractors and it can be made from cork, or from a light chunk of cedar. A single hook is used mostly, and the body is coated with a heavy enamel. The idea is to plunk this down on the lightly rippling waters of a cove of the pond or lake where lily pads are thickest, in the clear water, or among the pads in small openings, and jerk the rod tip lightly, so as to flutter the lure and make it look like a large beetle or moth lying on the water. I have had bass come up and strike this before it actually rested on the water, with a red-mouthed smash that instantly hooked my fish for me. This is a very exciting and interesting manner of fishing and one that has made many a devoted bait-caster out of the fisherman who had thought there was no such entertainment to be had with the short-rod and the multiplying casting reel.

There are many other good patterns and shapes of both underwater, semi-surface and surface *Plugs* to be found listed on the fishing-tackle pages of catalogues and on the dealers' shelves and glass enclosed cases, and it is a good plan for the angler who is collecting a practical and successful assortment of such baits to look these over. The principles that go into the construction of a killing game fish plug I believe have been outlined herein, and if these fundamentals are borne in mind there is no doubt but what a thoroughly pleasing and effective fishing kit for the surface and underwater casting can be built up.

DEVONS

The Devon Minnow is one of the older and more established of the bait-casting lures. This type of artificial casting lure has been used a great deal in European pike and trout waters and is known and displayed by tackle dealers in most all civilized parts of the world. For fast, rocky waters it is very killing on large rainbow trout and also for Dolly Vardons and Loch Leven trout in the mountainous lakes. It should be used with a 6 foot bait casting rod of the whippy type for such gamesters as listed, but for pike, bass and even muskies it will produce overwhelming successes at times, and in lakes where the spinning sort of lure is the best taker. It is a deep and tricky traveler, however, in any water, and one has to use it with understanding and caution, otherwise the "Bottom will be dug up with it." Shallow casts should not be attempted and do not cast it too far out, or permit it to sink with an idle line, otherwise a new bait and perhaps a good part of the line will go the way of all deep-sinking lures!

I have used these baits that were made from cutting off the base of a 30–.06 Government caliber rifle cartridge, then brazing onto the sides a pair of short, rounded and slightly turned copper wings. Then attaching a No. 4 silvered treble hook to a length of strong steel piano-wire and running this from small end of cartridge through and out the butt sector and bending a swivel and eye to the wire some five inches above I had a very decent sort of home-made Devon. If the fish are side strikers, as bass most times are, and bass are being fished for then a slot cut in the sides of the cartridge case back of the wings permits one to attach two sets of smaller trebles with well-soaked gut or twisted gut snells

to the main trace. This is a remarkably killing bait for casting in deep, abrupt shored rocky lakes back in the wilderness of the North Woods, where wild smallmouth bass and big lake trout are feeding or schooling close to the shores. It goes down deep and will take lake trout in May and bass in the hot weeks of the northern summers.

One does not need go to the trouble and time of making his own Devons, however, for any good English-tackle catalogue will list for the fisherman's attention and patronage a large assortment of these lures, in varying shapes, sizes and styles. They are also sold by many of the older-established tackle houses in the east, and will be found in many of the Canadian tackle stores. The principles of the Devon Minnow is its wobbling style of action, closely following the action of a dead minnow threaded on the shank of a long bait fishing bass or pike hook. It is a favorite for deep, black rivers where the golden-hued "pickerel" (as the Canadian sportsmen like to define the walleyed pike) lurks and will also produce good results in many of the streams of the United States, where the walleyes lie deep and hide under rocky rims and ledges. A good strong line should be used with it and a swivel must be attached to line end or to end of the baits casting trace to prevent it kinking the casting gear.

PHANTOM MINNOWS

We have already touched on this pioneer artificial bait, but for the sake of more familiarity it might be well to outline that the *phantom* is a very widely and successfully used lure in the arsenal of the modern bait-casting fisherman, and there are certain rivers where this bait produces exceptionally fine strings of smallmouth bass and walleyed

pike. For rainbow trout and large brown trout in floodwaters above the large power dams that are so often found and fished for these fish in the Michigan, Wisconsin, New York state and Maine woods, the phantom when used with a whippy, 6 foot bait casting rod is a very killing bait. It can also be used with success in many of the larger rivers of the Pacific Coast side of the Continental Divide, for big cut-throat and steelhead trout.

The Phantom Minnow should be used with a 20 inch synthetic or Japanese gut—also VEC or Nyolin—casting trace, with a swivel-snap end and loop for the line fastening. This makes it an excellent smallmouth bass bait for rocky, swift small rivers and for lake points and rocky shores. A bit of lead should be used on the leader to take the bait down under the surface and make it easier to fish. A large split buckshot is my choice, or a coiled-lead sinker of about an inch length is also good.

The Silver Quill Phantom and the Vici-Phantom are my own personal favorite, in Blended Blue Back with Silver Leaf Belly, Blended Brown Back with Gold Leaf Belly and the Silver Leaf Complete and Silver Leaf with Blue Ribs. The best size for bass is the No. 4, for walleyed pike, the Brown body and Gold Body in size 6. This minnow is almost indestructible and when a game fish is hooked with it there is little chance of it getting away, as the minnow is more or less flexible when used for some time. It is a real fish-getter, and many anglers appear to have overlooked it in their summer fishing preparations.

RUBBER CASTING BAITS

Personally, I have never gone in very strongly for this type of bait casting lure, however, with a special light and

whippy rod of around 5½ foot length and a great deal of perseverance to get it placed and offered to the gamester with proper incentiveness, this type of bait is now becoming quite popular, and there is on the market for the bait-caster at this time some delightful patterns of Rubber Crayfish, frog, minnow and hellgramite patterns that when used from the tail of riffles and cast into the feeding channels at the head of bass and pike pools will bring really great results with smallmouth bass and pickerel.

For this fishing I advise a limber five and a half foot casting rod, with a 12 lbs. test soft-braided silk casting line of white and black check pattern, a green tinted 20 inch bait-casting lead with loop end and snap for bait. Use a large buckshot pinched to the leader some ten inches back from the bait attachment, and then cast the bait into eddies below rapids, falls and riffles where there are gravelly bars some three or four feet under the surface. The rubber casting bait should be used as nearly like the live crustacea, minnow or frog moves when in the water as possible. The Crayfish bait is a good bass offering. It should be cast sideways of the current and permitted to roll down with the current over the bottom, then reeled back slowly through the swift water into the shore eddies. The frog should be used where there are weedy fringes along rocky pools, and the hellgramite fished in eddy pools below long riffles. The minnow should be worked across shallow, rocky feeding bars, reeling slowly, and permitting the bait to crawl around corners of rocks and over open places with more speed. The rubber bait is tough and hard to damage, so that many casters are taking it up as a practical lure to use around stone walled dams and in swift rivers where the heavier and more easily damaged wood and varnished lures quickly

become cracked and chipped and thereby worthless in fishing for the cunning old bass and muskies.

FEATHER MINNOWS

In taking over an Angling Editor's desk some seasons back I found myself swamped with letters of inquiry that had emanated from an article the former department head had written about Feather Minnows for bait casting. It was evidentially one of the most exciting of all subjects to the fishermen, and the reason I decided was because of the fact that it was something out of the ordinary. The usual bait-casting box contains plugs, artificial minnows, some metal wobbler baits and the usual assortment of spinner and spoon-hook lures. A Feather Minnow was new and intriguing to the fancies of the bait-casting fraternity, and so, the interest that was aroused.

Well, a Feather Minnow, as we know the bait is nothing more than a spinner with a tapered metal head and feather body fly attached. The fly is made to represent a small minnow when in the water. The head of the fly is lacquered in various colors—red, yellow, blue, black and white, with eyes painted on sides, and the feathers are usually white hackle or mallard breast feathers dressed around the body of the hook in a sizable quantity and whipped down with vari-colored winding thread back of the metal head. The lure weighs approximately one-half to ⅝ ounce and is an excellent casting bait for bass and pike where there are rocky bottoms or over sandy and gravelly bars. It is a fine river bait, for eddy pools and along rocky shore lines. The spinner is interchangeable and various colors of flies can be used. Cast with a light 12 or 15 lb. test waterproofed line

(silk) and a whippy 5½ foot casting rod and level wind reel it makes an excellent and pleasing bass, walleyed pike, trout and Great Northern fishing offering.

METAL MINNOWS

For general lake and river bait casting for bass, pike and muskies the hollow metal-moulded minnow is a very practical and successful bait. While I have never, personally, had any remarkable catches come to my casts when using this type of artificial casting lure, I feel, nonetheless, that they have their virtues. I have used various makes of this bait for a good many years, and have taken a few bass and pike on them, but, generally speaking, I have never had the good luck with them that I have with the wood, the composition and the fabric minnows.

They are truly delightful baits when it comes to ease and accuracy in casting and in the water they have all the light, natural action of a real live minnow. They travel fairly deep also, and come in an assortment of colors and tints. Gold and Silver colors are the most common, some have tints and True to Nature colorings. I have this to say of them, they are very attractive and fishy looking in the water, and I presume if they are used at the right times and in the right places they would produce good accounts for themselves. But, like so many good lures that we find offered us, those good times just didn't happen to come to me when fishing with these baits.

PYRA SHELL AND CELLULOID MINNOWS

The Pyra Shell minnow is a hollow, light, moulded type of casting lure, the same as the transparent celluloid min-

now is, and both of these models are well received by pike, bass and pickerel in lake coves where there are deep lying weed beds to fish over. They are advisable to use in extremely clear water and when the sun is bright on a fishing pool. For these reasons I rather hold to the opinion that a few of these lures should be included in the bait-box of the lake and stream fisherman, to use for bigmouth bass and for walleyed pike when these fish are feeding on perch and sunfish in the weeds and grass of those waters where there are thick bottom coverts. The pale-green, red head and white body (for late evening and night fishing) and the silvery-rose pink colorings are my preference.

WIGGLER BAITS

The Wiggler baits are those that should have a strip of pork rind attached to the hook and usually are of the wobbling-spoon or the spinner types. The best known of these baits, and also among the most killing for all game fresh water fish, from rock-bass and large bluegills up to the lordly Muskellunge, are those that have a celluloid or plastic body, with a long-shank No. 2/0 or 4/0 Sproat shaped hook attached with screw to the body, and a single-propeller type of spinner above the body. We sometimes find the bodies of this order of lures moulded from metal, which gives more weight to the lure and causes it to sink deeper in the water. This last mentioned type is a wonderful walleyed pike and smallmouth bass lure, for it does its work down where the pike and the bass lurk and hide, under bottom rocks and drifts and where its attractive wiggle and shining spin can be the easier seen by the fish. The hooks are interchangeable and a red and white bucktail fly can be used in place of the plain hook, with

the pork rind added. Usually there is a small knob or pin moulded to the body for the attachment of the pork rind. This is one of the old stand-by river lures and it has taken tons of good game fish since its inception, a couple of decades ago, when bait-casting was just shedding its short dresses and growing into a real lady of the stream and lake.

For best results I have found that the pork rind on this type of lure should be shortened from the original shape and length it comes in for such uses. The bottled pork-rind that we find on sale for use with the Wiggler lures is preferable in my estimation, although I have used the Dry-Pac rind, which is easier to carry and use, very successful. In placing the rind on the spinning lure, the hook point should be inserted in the small slit cut into rind a short distance below the head of rind and the rind worked down back of hook bend, then insert the top slit in rind over the peg or in snap of the lure. After this lay the rind flat on a paddle blade or some part of the tackle box or fishing boat and with the point of a sharp knife cut a V shaped "fish-tail" two inches back of hook bend and lace this at short intervals with point of knife, so that rind has a quickened wiggle when trailing the hook of the cast lure back through the pool. This makes an excellent walleyed pike, muskie and bass attraction.

This type of bait can be cast to maximum distances without adding any sinker to line or leader. Muskies will strike the bait, also G. N. pike, trout, pickerel and walleyed pike and bass, also large pan fish. The white body with red head type of wiggler spinner is good for muskie, bass and pickerel. The metal body with red bucktail fly and pork rind is a real "find" for largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, rock-bass, Great Northern pike and muskies. The plain white bucktail fly and pork rind with nickel-metal body is

one of the finest walleyed pike lures going for rocky, shallow river bars. These lures will all weigh about 5/8 ounce each.

Another very killing pattern of *wiggler* is the spoon wobbler bait with single hook and light spring steel weed guard that permits the lure to be cast and trolled where there are thick weeds and pads without getting the point fouled in the stuff. This form of spoon is known as the "metal wobbler" bait, because of its rolling, wobbling action when being reeled or trolled through the fishing waters. It has a very killing allure to the largemouth bass in particular in those lakes and ponds where there is dark, black water washing under a nice summer's breeze across thick beds of weed, grass and moss. The pork rind should be used with these spoon-wobblers whenever and wherever they are fished. It helps to complete the attractiveness of this bait in the eyes of the gamesters of lake and river. There was a time when I used all shapes and patterns of metal wobblers without the addition of a strip of pork rind, and I found that they were then only "an occasional" fish getter, but in recent seasons I have made it a rule to attach the pork strip or the pork-chunk wherever and whenever I place such a lure on my leader end.

For bigmouth bass and the ordinary size of Great Northern pike and pickerel I hold to the opinion that the wobbler spoons should be fished with a 20 inch, heavy-weight VEC or Nyolin casting leader. This gives the lure even more of that enticing roll and wobble that the fish seem to be attracted to most. The pork rind can be attached either by inserting the point of the hook in the slit at end of rind and then drawing the rind down well on the hook bend and lashing it there firmly with a short length of fine cotton sewing thread, or by attaching it to a small snap that can

be fastened to the upper end of the hook where it is screwed or brazed to the spoon proper. This prevents loss of the rinds in casting, as so often happens if no provisions are made for the rind to be securely fastened to the hook and it is merely drawn down over the point and around bend of hook. There are two types of pork rind that we perhaps should give more attention to here. One of these, and the oldest and most commonly used kind, is that which comes in a preservative and that is white and flexible when taken from the bottle. This type of rind can be carried very nicely in a compartment of the tackle-box, but when fishing "light" and carrying the smallest possible assortment of tackle along, as in shore-casting or in fishing a windy, rough lake from a canoe or small fishing boat, then I advise the dry-pack order of pork rind. The latter is packed in a small, oblong, flat tin container, about the size of a tobacco-tin (or smaller) that contains a dozen dry pork-rinds ready for attaching to the hook This can be carried in a small pocket of the vest or jacket, and the rinds are protected by cellophane envelopes. All one has to do is hook this rind to the lure, soak it a few minutes in the water and it turns a natural white color and is as flexible and practical to use as the first mentioned order of pork rind—in the bottle. These light-kit casting outfits can be made up so that all the necessary items for a day's casting can be carried very handily in the pocket of an ordinary fishing coat, or the trousers pocket. I give such an outfit herewith:

One ⅝ ounce spinner bait with single hook, packed in a small, oblong tin container, with extra hook, the entire box measuring 4″x1¼″x1″.

One ⅝ ounce spinner wiggler bait with red-and-white

bucktail fly hook, No. 1/0—with extra solid-red bucktail fly same size.

One Silver-plated spoon-wobbler, bass and pike size, packed in same sized box.

One gold-plated spoon-wobbler, bass and pike size, packed in box.

One tin container of 1 dozen dry-pork rinds, assorted *regular* and *muskie* sizes, in standard strip size, in frog shape and in pork-chunk shapes.

One cellophane envelope of assorted 22 inch VEC, Nyolin or green tinted synthetic gut casting leaders with snap and loop at ends.

This whole outfit will measure about the size of an ordinary large package of smoking tobacco and can be inserted very nicely into a single pocket of the clothing, or they can be scattered about in the various pockets and one does not know he is carrying along a complete and efficient bait-casting outfit.

A good landing net or small, light gaff hook and tape measure completes the fisherman's outfit when carrying such a "Go-light" outfit.

The choice of metal wobbler spoons that pork-rind strips or pork-rind frog and pork-chunk is used with can be made with a wide latitude of numbers to pick from. The Silver-Minnow is a fine model, and very popular now with bass, pike and muskie anglers. Some prefer the gold finish to this spoon, and it is good for bright, clean waters. There is the plain, open hook type or the weed-guarded type, and if the waters are weedy or have pads in their fishing holes, then the weed-guard should be preferred. The Record, the Drone, Wilson's Wobbler, Dardevle, Trix-Oreno, Striker, New Hawaiian Wiggler, Dixie Wiggler, Mouse Wiggler,

Oriental Wiggler, Sun-Spot and Dizz-E-Minnow are a few of the many good wiggler and wiggler-spoon types that I have personally used and found to be killing on lake, pond and river pools.

WHIRLING SPOONS

This is what has long been known as the, "spoon-hook" type of fishing lure, and is used wherever there are game fish waiting for the bait-caster and the troller's offerings. The best known of all these types of bait-casting lure is the "Skinner" model of spoon bait. This type of spoon bait is intended for bass, muskie, Great Northern pike and pickerel, and it comes in varying sizes, from the smallest of rock-bass and pan fish models to the huge patterns that are used so often in the large northern lake sections where muskies and pike of giant size are encountered. The idea of the whirling-spoon bait is to offer to the fish an "illusion" effect, caused by an oval-shaped nickel or gold-plated, concave metal surface rotating around a strong brass-plated stem, usually with under side enameled in white and red colors, and with a treble fly hook or a bucktail treble hook attached, and swivel attachment for the line fastening. Some models carry two (tandem) spoons, one rotating to the right, one to the left, or alternating. Both styles of spoon are well adapted to fishing where the pools are deep and in strong eddy waters. The sizes most advisable are as follows:

For muskie and large pike.....No. 4 to 7
For bass and walleyed pike.....No. 2 to 4
For rock bass and smallmouth bass....No. 1, 2 and 3

Pork-rind strips are sometimes added to the treble hooks of this lure, and works with even an added interest to the

gamesters that are hiding in weedy beds and under submerged rocks in the lake or stream. A quarter-ounce adjustable sinker can be used with this casting lure to sink it deeper in the pool, as the lure used alone without sinker has a tendency to spin close to the surface of the water.

The small tandem and single spoons in the "Standard" shapes (a rounded end oval) with single hook bass fly of No. 1/0 or 2/0 size makes an ideal lightweight bass casting lure, when used with large buckshot on line, or without any weight, as the nature of the pool requires. This lure will weigh about ½ ounce and is ideal for smallmouth and bigmouth bass in ponds and small, weedy or pad bound lakes where the fish lurks from a foot to five feet under the surface in the concealment of the pad meadows and grass fringes. The best rod to use for this fishing is a 5 to 6 foot, 4½ to 5 ounce split bamboo or tubular steel, jointed casting rod, light bait casting reel and 12 lbs. test line.

For the larger fluted-end spoons like those first outlined for pike and muskie the rod should be 5 feet in length, weighing around 5 to 6 ounces, of tubular steel or solid, rapier steel, with a good level-wind reel and 18 lbs., test waterproofed silk casting line.

Spoons are excellent for late fall fishing, when the water is growing colder and for the muskie and bass lakes of the north country. Also for the large rivers that empty into Lake Huron and Ontario from the north side.

SPINNERS

The spinning bait is an old and deservedly reputable type of artificial lure that has been used for decades on the small, shallow rivers—and the large shallow ones—of the country where smallmouth bass and the "silvery" walleyed pike is

found favoring the small eddy holes below dams, projecting rocks in the currents and at the base of riffle strips. These pools run rather shallow, from three feet to eight feet in depth, and in them the spinner with a red-and-white-and-guinea fowl fly dressed to a single treble hook of size No. 2 gets action when most all other lures fail to produce. This type of artificial bait is used with a long casting rod of medium-weight and a regular level-wind casting reel with a fifty-yard length of size 18 lbs. test waterproofed silk line. A quarter-ounce casting weight attached to the line 8 inches above the spinner completes the rigging for such fishing.

In shallow, swift-running bass rivers where the pools are small and can be approached by wading the spinner and fly is used with delightful success, taking smallmouth bass regularly in the warm weeks of the open season. In such waters the lure is used without any sinker and also used by many anglers with a twelve-foot cane rod, with simple reel and guides and the bait cast from long line and drawn back by lifting rod and stripping in the line as in fly fishing with the wet fly. This is known as "spinning," and a similar method is used in the western rivers for mountain trout and the steelhead and cut-throats using a hook embellished with fresh or preserved salmon eggs as a colorful substitute for the treble-hook fly. This lure is good wherever there are game fish, in river, pond, creek and lake, and will take all our fresh-water game fish, from the pan fishes to the giant western salmon and sea-run trout. The newest types of spinning baits many times are made with a weighted shaft so that additions of lead to the line is not necessary, and this works out very satisfactorily I have found. The spinner-bait can be used best from a boat when fishing in deep pools where there are logs and underwater rocks, as it has a tendency to sink deep and get entangled with underwater

hazards, which means a lost lure. White bucktail flies, either treble hook or single hook style, used with a tandem-blade spinner of No. 1 size, makes a great bass, walleyed pike and muskie bait. Red and green bucktails are immensely attractive for rock-bass and muskies in the marshy pools of northern lake tributaries when cast with a limber five-foot rod with plenty of strength—such as the new tubular, step-down patterns now on the market.

Chapter 38

THE BAIT CASTING ROD AND REEL

THE CHOICE OF a proper bait-casting rod is very important in the future enjoyment and success of any fishing trip or vacation. A poorly chosen rod will never permit the owner to reach the ultimate pinnacles of enjoyment and respect for this branch of outdoor recreation that should be expected, and if the rod has been pleasantly chosen on the other hand it will probably do more than any other item of the tackle in making a trip or a career of sport-fishing the more alluring and interesting.

One of the things that we should bear in mind when performing this task is that there are scores of good fishing rods to be chosen from.

The average fishing-tackle catalogue or fishing-tackle supply store will have for the prospective customer a wide range and assortment of bait-casting models in rods, at varying prices and in varying weights, lengths and grades. It might prove a bit confusing to the beginner to step into all this display of gleaming, beautifully varnished and striking gracefulness of shape and finish, but he should remember that a good casting rod is one that not only looks well, but that also acts and responds well to the fisherman's handling.

For ordinary bait casting with the generally accepted ⅝

to one-ounce weight of artificial minnow, metal wobbler or spoon hook the five-foot length of bait-casting rod is always a safe and dependable one to consider. There are dozens of "rule of thumb" guides that the prospective buyer of a new fishing rod will find offered by his angling and sportsmen friends and acquaintances. Some of them will undoubtedly approach him with the old and *naive* system of buying the rod by its length—which, in this case, will be defined as having the rod measured against the owner standing up, and if it is the same length as the buyer's height, then that is the proper one to decide upon! Well, there are plenty of other important things than just length in purchasing a new casting rod.

Action is one of the important features in a good and serviceable casting rod. This can be arrived at only by handling the rod with reel attached and with line threaded through the guides and a practice-plug attached to the end of the line. Then take the rod into a practice room or out on a clean lawn and try practice casting at a target some thirty or forty feet distant. If the rod bends freely and whips the plug out with an easy, accurate aim the chances are that it is a rod that will prove pleasing and successful in casting artificial plugs, minnows, spoons and spinners.

If the rod is bought from a mail-order or catalogue house then this personal-test system must be discarded, and one should make his choice with a keen consideration of length, action and building.

The 5-foot length of bait-casting rod is perhaps the safest to consider for general, all around bait casting on lake, river and pond. Five-and-a-half-foot lengths are also safe to consider, as a rod of that length will permit one to fish from the shore, from a boat or when wading and insure the owner having a wand that will play most any weight and

size of fish with very successful results. Too short a rod is not to be advised, unless the angler has some specific reason for desiring a rod that can be used in restricted surroundings on the stream or lake, or for the casting of the heavier order of muskellunge and pike lures where the long and whippy action rod would have an undue strain placed upon it and where it would, as well, be dangerous to fishing companions in boat or canoe. For the muskie and pike lures, of an ounce or ounce-and-a-quarter weights the four or the four-and-a-half-foot length rod is more advisable, whereas for the casting of half-ounce bass and pan fish lures the five-and-a-half-foot rod, with whippy, "light" action is much more advisable. For general artificial bait casting, from the ⅜ ounce artificial lure to the one-ounce weight, the five-foot rod with medium-action is to be suggested.

For all around casting uses the five-foot rod is a good choice, and for the fisherman who expects to have but one rod in his arsenal I would advise the five-foot rod, regardless of whether the owner is a tall or a short person. Such a rod will weigh around 5¾ ounces, according to its manufacture, as some makers build heavier butts and lighter tips and some whippy tapers, thereby causing a natural difference of fractions of an ounce in their respective makes. This rod will be had in either a split-bamboo or a tubular metal construction—the weight being approximately the same either way.

The casting rod is not sold according to weight, so much as according to flexibility and ferrule sizes. There are five standard grades of action to pick from:

Heavy action—intended for trolling and heavy casting.
Medium or Regular—intended for straight casting.
Lightweight—for half-ounce lures and casting.

Extra-light or Featherweight—for lures of half-ounce and under in weight.

Accuracy—for practice casting and for the lightest of spinning and spoon-fly baits in pan-fish and small bass casting.

The lengths of the standard casting rod are as follows: 3½ ft., 4 ft., 4½ ft., 5 ft., 5½ ft., 6 ft.

This applies to the split bamboo rod, and that is the rod that is generally accepted as the "wood" rod now. There are few rods for bait casting manufactured anymore of other materials than Tonkin-cane (split bamboo) and steel. The older order of greenheart, lancewood and ash are all out of the picture now so far as modern bait casting is concerned, although the rough sticks can be had in many of these materials from some of the larger importers and these can be made up and fitted with handles, reel seats, guides and tip-top by the man who wants to own such a rod. But split-bamboo or tubular and solid rapier steel rods are now the three types most generally listed and sold.

For canoe fishing when alone in the vessel and for wading in brushy bass streams of small size the 4 foot rod is very practical. Also when large muskie plugs and minnows are to be used the 4 foot rod of Medium action is worthy of consideration. But for general fishing conditions and lures, the 5 and 5½ foot rods are more advisable. For use with medium weight lures, in pike, bass, trout and pickerel and muskie casting the Medium action in a five foot rod is very safe to make. For trolling uses the Heavy action in five or 4½ foot lengths are advisable, and for practice casting and casting small streams and ponds with light spoons and flies and light wiggling and plug lures the "Accuracy" model in 6 foot length is a beautiful choice to make.

So far as materials are concerned there are just three

modern choices to make, i.e., the split-bamboo, the tubular or hollow cored steel and the solid-steel or rapier steel rod. For heavy duty fishing where such gamesters as large muskies, G. N. pike and large lake trout are fished for with good sized plugs and spoons and where a certain amount of trolling will be done in going and coming to and from the pools in canoe or outboard driven boats, also where a rod is expected to lift heavy fish and cast heavy plugs and, in general, "get the works," with a minimum amount of care expended on it at off moments, then I would suggest that the best grades of solid-steel (rapier steel) rod be considered for the fisherman. This is a good type of rod for the Vacationist-fisherman who makes perhaps one trip a year, of a week or fortnight duration, and who expects his rod to do all the things that bait casting for heavy and light fish requires. But for the man who takes a keen pride in his tackle, and who takes the necessary amount of care of his gear to preserve it and protect it, or the person who wishes to get all the fine details of the sport out of his fishing, then the split-bamboo rod of the better grades, and the hollow-cored steel or tubular rod are the best ones to consider.

A good casting rod will cost from $15.00 to $50.00. But, frankly speaking, I think that the higher sum is rather unnecessary, unless one wishes to own and use "only the best," and takes a pride and satisfaction in having a specially high-grade built rod, for I have rods in my collection that have done years of hard and exacting casting for me that cost the maximum of $25.00. I would say that for $25.00 the bait caster will get a thoroughly reliable and dependable split-bamboo, that will look, act and last as well as the higher-priced items in this line. In a steel rod the top figure is around $18.00 for a *De Luxe* model of accurately constructed and tempered hollow-core rod with properly

gradiated and balanced action. Such a rod will cast artificial lures with extreme accuracy and handle the bait on the retrieve with all the pleasing sureness and liveliness of a masterpiece of fishing-rod construction. In 5 foot length a rod of this type will give years of service and the extreme satisfaction that comes from handling a rod that imparts into the artificial bait, in casting it and in its retrieve through the pool, all those intrinsic little actions and trickeries that goes into the fooling of the most cunning of our game fish of the fresh waters.

Many of the tricks that lure game fish to strike the anglers bait-casting offerings come through having a good rod that is resilient and sensitive enough that the bait takes on a life-like movement when in the water, and this is why a good rod should be chosen and then when once possessed the finest of care and attention should be given to it.

The tubular steel rod of modern manufacture has all the outward appearances of a real split-bamboo rod. I have long since made a definite conclusion that the modern steel rod maker is building for the bait caster an article that fills all the needs of our American and Canadian types of game fish angling.

Therefore when a new rod is to be ordered, from a catalogue I would suggest that these details I have outlined should be taken into consideration and the rod chosen should meet as nearly as possible with the various features and details described.

My choice for a pleasing and efficient bait-casting rod would be as follows:

1. Split-bamboo construction, 5 or 5½ foot lengths, *medium action,* cork grip, tenite or metal reel seat, positive-reel locking bands, agate lined guides and tip-top, brown-toned

finish with silk-windings at proper intervals and without finger-hook on reel seat.

2. Five foot tubular steel or Hollow Cored or Step-down steel construction rod with straight-handle (offset handle for those who like the reel at a lower level), positive reel bands, agate lined guides and tip-top, one piece tip and separate handle, cork grip, brown-tone finish in medium-action.

3. For heavy action fishing for muskie and big pike and for trolling with large lures, a 5½ foot medium action, rapier steel rod, with agate lined guides and tip, offset handle, one piece tip and separate handle and the new Speed-lock reel locking device.

The two piece split-bamboo rod, with long tip and short butt length is the most practical and pleasing type of casting rod models for the bait caster. Three piece rods are not so advisable. The one-piece or solid split-bamboo is impractical for the average fisherman to carry about on his trips to lake and stream. An extra tip piece should be had with the split bamboo rod.

Positive reel bands are quite advisable now, as it does away with the old method of wedging the reel in place by a plain metal band, which many times worked loose under strain of fishing and served to annoy, caused losses of the reel sometimes and good fish to get away. The new positive-locking reel band should have a plain keeper band to slip over seat of the reel first, then a threaded band to make it positively locked in place on the reel seat.

Ferrules should be of the best of German silver or chromium plated finishes. The new Speed-lock arrangement for the locking of the reel in the offset-handle types is a wonderful improvement over the screw type of reel lock.

THE REEL

Here again we find that the sport of bait casting has been further improved and advanced by the invention and perfection of several practical models of synchronized-action casting reels with which the fisherman can cast for days without backlashes bothering him or line piling up on the side of the reel spool. With the new version of the modern casting rod reel casting becomes an art that even a beginner can quickly master to the place where the attention can be concentrated almost entirely on the movement of the bait in the water and the proper placement of it for a rising fish.

The days of the old "open type" of casting reel are now pretty well gone, forever! Only at rare intervals do we see these types of casting reel being used. Some of the older devotees of the sport still persist in clinging to the open-type of reel that had neither level-wind device for the spooling of the line automatically and even on the spindle or anti-backlash improvements. The old-style quadruple and double-multiplying casting reel merely served to store up line and the tension that permitted the caster to make long, accurate casts had to be accomplished by the fisherman's thumb alone. Now this is all changed. The new casting reels leave none of these matters to the angler. The line is spooled evenly by a simple mechanical device at the front of the reel and the tension on the line as the bait carries it out on the cast is all taken care of by a system of spool-speed control by using an oversize tail-bearing and an adjustable head and spool cap which permits the caster to send his lures out to the full length of a 50 yard spool of line without any overrun of the line or resulting tangles and backlashes. These reels are now to be had at nominal cost and even the novice caster can fish for hours without any trouble from

the old method of thumbing the line and holding down the length of casts for fear of an overrun of the spool as the bait hung poised in the air over the pool.

For those, however, who still insist on doing their own line spooling and thumbing there are many excellent types of casting reel. These are to be had in the regular Quadruple-multiplying actions, with narrow and medium widths of spool, holding from 80 to 100 yards of size 12 lbs. test silk casting line. The 80 yard capacity reel is a lightweight item and used mostly for the casting of half-ounce bass and trout lures, where speed and smooth action and lightness serve to balance up the "Featherweight" types of split-bamboo bass casting rods.

For those that wish to have their lines spooled automatically there is the plain Level-wind model of reel, with spool capacity of 50 yards of 18, 20 and 25 lb. test waterproofed silk casting lines. This model is most popular with the muskellunge, walleyed pike, pickerel and black bass caster. If a line of lighter weight than those mentioned is used a backing line should be used to build-up the line on the reel so that it is easier to thumb and control. Old and worn line can be used for this, and its quantity, to fill the spool neatly, arrived at by spooling the new line on reel first, then splicing on the backing line and running on line enough to fill the spool to the desired height, after which the line is pulled off and stretched out between two trees or posts and the end with the backing-line attached to spindle and the whole length again wound on the reel, with the strong line on top. Or a cork arbor can be pressed over the reel spindle which builds the spool up and balances the action of reel perfectly, then the line can be fastened on and wound over the arbor to fill the spool.

The Free Spool reel for those that do not care to have

whirling handles in their way when making the cast is obtainable in the open-style of casting reel and also in the level wind and anti-backlash models. Some prefer this model to the reel whose handles spin when the cast is running out. A reel of this type can be had for the nominal sum of $15.00, from many of the tackle manufacturers.

But, regardless of the type or style of reel that is desired by the modern bait-caster one thing should be remembered, and that is that the reel best suited to accurate and easy casting and successful handling of the hooked fish is the one that balances the casting rod up best. Too large a casting reel should not be chosen. This is one of the main causes for so much wrist fatigue and weariness in the arm of the fisherman when he does a long day's angling with artificial baits and casting rod. The reel should be as small as practically possible, with a good, strong set of handles on the crank, for easy holding and quick, positive holds when a heavy gamester strikes the lures and dashes off with several yards of the line. At such times the sure, accurate grip that one places on the reel handle to take up any slack line that might occur will prevent the fish from "throwing" the hook aside and so escaping. A good, smooth acting, 80 yard reel with a length of 50 yards of 15 lbs., test waterproofed casting line spooled to it will make casting with lures under the ⅝ ounce weight a real pleasure and success, and for muskie, pike and pickerel fishermen who cast in large northern river pools and lakes, the 100 yard capacity reel with its spool filled to a comfortable degree with 18 lbs. test line will be equally as agreeable and successful. Cork arbors are a good addition to the larger type of reel, although I prefer to use the full 100 yard length of line instead to fill the spool, as it is my contention that by filling the spool with line one gets better balance to his casts with all reels.

For the modern "synchronized" types of casting reel this is the most practical way of filling the spool, as a good caster will cast off *50 yards* of line with such reels in lake fishing and in river plugging, which is about half of the amount on the spool. When the line becomes worn and weakened from continued casting and playing of fish, then simply reverse the line, end for end and that brings a new, fresh section into play, and so the hundred-yard length on spool is not wasted.

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Chapter 39

THE CASTING LINE

BAIT-CASTING SHOULD always be practiced with a silk line. The use of cotton or linen lines is impractical, as they gather too much moisture and make a cold and messy job of what otherwise will be pure pleasure and enjoyment. Moreover the linen line has a tendency to kink and to swell when it becomes soaked with water, which lends bulk to its diameter so that the reel will become crowded and balky. For this and many other good and practical reasons, the braided-silk type of line has become the standard of bait-casting fishermen.

Only the finest of Japan silk is used and the machines that braid the fine strands of this material into fifty and hundred-yard lengths, for the ordinary casting reel, are veritable marvels of mechanical accuracy and efficiency. Because of these mechanical improvements in line-laying the best grades of silk lines for plug, spoon, spinner and artificial minnow casting can now be had for very reasonable costs. A good fresh line should always be used, although I have seen many a fine muskellunge of 25 lbs. weight taken with a weakened and time-worn line that a good solid jerk in the hands would break apart. But with a good, springy rod and a person who understood how to handle a battling fish these

slender, silky strands will do some truly remarkable feats in our fishing adventures. But, nonetheless, a dependable line should always be carried on the spool of the casting reel, and when one end gets weakened and roughed-up with use, then the line should be reversed and the fresh section put foremost on the spool. In fishing with a good casting line the angler should remember to be watchful and thoughtful of it at all times. It should be dried out thoroughly just as soon as the fishing day is over, and this is best done at the stream or lake before packing the rod and reel away for the trip home or to camp. Drying a line by artificial heat injures the tender silken strands and causes weakness of the whole line, for, remember, a line is only as strong as its weakest part, and one minute spot so weakened or cut might be the cause of a wonderful game fish escaping and the day's sport totally spoiled.

The best way to dry the line, and the easiest also, is to cast the plug, minnow or spoon over the branches of a bush or small tree or branch when shore is reached. Be sure this is in a shaded spot, then when the hooks catch the branches walk on to another distant branch or cluster of branches and stretch the line over them and so onward until some convenient twig permits one to loop the line around its forks, then return to the first spot, unreeling the line all the time as you walk along, by keeping some pressure on the open reel spool. The line will be strung out in an airy place this way, in shade, of course, and the wind and air will quickly dry each part of it, while the angler rests and smokes. When the line is dry wipe the reel off thoroughly with an oiled cloth, and respool line to reel. That ends that part of the day's tackle care. The reel and rod can be placed away in a dry, airy spot and everything will be all right with the tackle.

By keeping the line dried out at all times except when in use it will last many times longer than by careless attention. It will stay strong and dependable for a full season's casting if so attended. Every few trips out hook the lure to a branch, unspool the full line and with a small square of felt coated with a good line dressing rub it from one end to the other, to clean it of sand and grit that will catch in its braids in reeling it through the waters of even a clean northern lake. Like the fishing reel it should be kept clean and dry and thoroughly oiled (dressed in the lines case) for its best results in fishing.

For smallmouth bass fishing in small rivers and in rocky, swift, shallow streams the best line to use with lures under ⅝ ounce weight, is the 12 lbs. test, soft-finish silk casting grade. This is a more flexible line than the waterproofed or oil-saturated type, and will give better action to the small baits. It will not last as long, however, as the oil-saturated grade, unless it is carefully dried and dressed with line grease after using each time.

The waterproofed silk line is saturated in boiled linseed oil of a fine grade, and the best manufacturers have a vacuum impregnating process that they use thereby insuring that each strand of the line gets coated with the water-resisting coating. The waterproofed silk line cuts down deeper in the water also, and for this reason it is best to use where baits are intended to be fished deep and under the surface. The untreated silk braided line, on the other hand, is best to use with the floating or surface types of a bass lure, for they give the baits more freedom and action on the top waters.

For bass fishing with half-ounce to ⅝ ounce baits, plugs, minnows and spinners, the 12 lbs., test line, waterproofed or soft-finish, is a good size to use. For large, lake bass and

for pike and pickerel the 15 lbs. test waterproof line is preferable, as this is light enough that it permits the fish more freedom and thereby offers the angler more action and interest in his playing of the fish. For muskies, large pike and big pickerel the 18 lbs. test line of waterproofed silk is plenty large, although I know there are many fishermen of the old-school who will disagree with me there and claim that tests of line up to 25 lbs. should be used for heavy game fish, but they fail to consider that when a large caliber line is used in hard bait-casting of several days' succession the larger diameter line gets more wear from guides and tip-tops and this friction, even when the best of pure-agate lined guides and tip is used, will fuzz and wear down the surface of the line and weaken it so that it will be less dependable in playing a large fish than the smaller diameter lines.

I have observed many times that the anglers who use large casting lines have more trouble with the life of their line than does the fisherman using medium-test lines of much smaller diameter. The 15 and 18 lbs. test waterproofed casting line is in my estimation the best choice to be had for steady, hard casting and the playing of large, hard-fighting fish. Guides that are lined with agate and tip-tops of the same materials should be watched closely to guard against cracks and chipping, for even a small injury of this sort to the line guides will serve to destroy the best of lines in a jiffy. Lines should not be subjected to excessive strains either, as this has a tendency to stretch and weaken the strands of the delicate fabric that goes into the braid of a good casting line. Pulling and jerking at a snagged lure with a long length of line off the reel sometimes takes the life out of an otherwise good line and causes it to deteriorate very swiftly. Rubbing the line alongside the bottom of fish-

ing boats, or jerking it sharply across projecting branches and logs in casting and retrieving the bait all does the line an injury. These are little things in the life of a fishing line, but they have much to do with the lasting qualities and the dependability of the line when a large game fish is hooked and played, or when a big pike comes up suddenly close to the boat and grabs the lure with a vicious snap and plunge under the surface. If the line is strong, well and good—if weak, then there will be danger of the gamester snapping the line off near the lure.

The new Nylon (a Dupont product that is used for fine and medium fly-casting and bait-casting leaders as well) bait-casting line has some extremely interesting features that the modern angler should understand.

This new type of line that is supposed to take the place of the pure Japan and Italian silk lines, is constructed of coal, water and air, we are informed, and I have used these lines from the first original samples that were put out for test purposes. I have found this line quite practical and very lasting and dependable. The green tinted shade has proven most satisfactory to me, personally, and with it one can get fine casting distances. It is flexible and lasting and has one advantage that the weaker fabrics of the silk line do not offer, and that is the stretch of the strands that permits the fisherman to spring many of his snagged lures loose from surface branches and logs, and even underwater snags by stretching the line and then permitting it to rebound, thereby unseating the hooks of the lure in the snag. If this is done very often with the pure silk line it will weaken and break the finish, but apparently the Nylon line is not injured by such hard usage. It is easy as silk on the guides and plays both the lure and the hooked fish satisfactorily. It does not need drying after using as the pure

silk line does to prevent rotting, and is becoming a very popular line with the present day bait caster.

Color in bait-casting lines has always taken considerable of the fisherman's attention, and it is a subject that unquestionably has a good deal to do with the success of the sport in varying colors of waters. The solid black line is the most commonly used color, good for most all normally clear lakes and river pools. The white or cream-colored line with brown check is a good color to use for late fall when the water is clear and the shores brown tinted, and the black and white check to the opposite is an excellent early spring fishing line. The green color is quite neutral for pond and lake fishing, and a good line to use when the lakes and ponds are "blooming," in late July and August. The Amber colored line is a good one for bright, open lake pools where the sun has a chance to penetrate well under the surface. For dark pools, in the shadow of pines and brush and in the evening and at night when fishing for muskie, pike, bass and pickerel the solid-black is my choice, and, furthermore, I believe it to be a good safe choice for any bait-caster to make for all his fishing trips at all times of day and in all weather and stream conditions. Of course, if one wishes to step up into the higher phases of experimental casting, then the various shades and tints of lines can be used with excellent success and perhaps with a slightly added number of gamesters coming to the stringer or fish basket.

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Chapter 40

BAIT-CASTING FROM START TO FINISH OF CAST

NO MATTER HOW good the tackle might be or how many good fishing eddies and pools there might be around, the angler has to remember that there is a right way and a wrong way to handle the bait-casting rod and outfit. A good, clean cast, accurate and lightly executed is the best rule there is for the catching of game fish with this outfit.

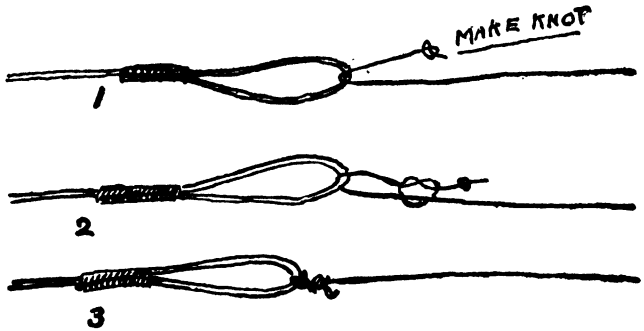
The first thing to take into consideration when learning to cast with a bait-casting outfit is the position and place of the angler in boat, canoe or on the shore. If the fishing is to be done from a boat with companions around—as is usually the case in this order of fishing—then one has to keep in mind the vital fact that the bait-casting lures are always a potential menace to others unless carefully and considerately handled. Serious accidents can very easily occur if any one in a fishing party neglects to practice the necessary care that his rod warrants. Therefore every angler who goes out fishing with others should understand and appreciate the rights of others in the party and his own place and actions. The overhead cast should be perfected by such anglers before they even attempt to go out with a party of other anglers. Also the side-cast from either the "natural" or right

side or from the "backhand" or left side, cast. The underhand cast and the reverse cast are both tricks that should be practiced when fishing alone. Also the flip-cast, which is used when fishing where the brush or rocky cliffs and banks do not permit the fisherman to exert any back-flip to his cast. For good, successful fishing all these variations of casting should be thoroughly understood. However, these all stem from the initial method of *Overhand* or *Overhead* casting with the bait-casting rod and lures. This is the first method to learn, and then when this is understood and perfected the others will come more natural and easy.

THE OVERHEAD CAST

To learn the overhead cast the angler should first rig up his rod for fishing. Place the reel solidly on the rod, with the handle to the right and the reel uppermost on the rod, the line-guide to the front. Have the guides and tip of rod uppermost. The reel always goes ahead of the hand in bait-casting. Make sure the line is spooled so that the end of line points to the guides on rod, with handle in right-side position, and it is always advisable that the line be spooled on to reel spindle by first bringing the spool-end of line through the level-wind line guide, then reeling it on evenly. Do not try to operate a level-wind casting reel by spooling its line on haphazardly then threading the lure end through the line-guide, this will many times result in the line being drawn down into the spool supply and so trouble and a lost bait. Fasten the spool end of line to the spindle with a slip-knot that draws safe against a single knot in the end of the line. Now, with the line properly spooled and the reel set solidly to the reel-seat, pull end of line through line guide and thread it through each guide on rod and the tip-top

guide. Then attach the line end to the lure, either without leader or with leader. If smallmouth bass, pickerel and trout are being cast for I would suggest a short casting leader of synthetic gut or Nylon being attached to line end first, and lure fastened to this with a small metal snap. In fastening the line to leader I have found that the most

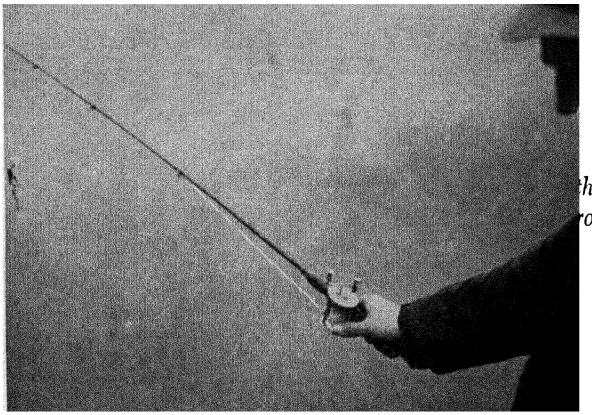


practical method is to use an ordinary slip-knot attachment, which is done by inserting the end of line through leader-loop, then turning a single hard knot in the end of line and bringing the end around line ahead of leader-loop, over and through this coil-loop from leader-loop side and then draw taut, being sure to have the line-knot as close up to the fastening as possible. Draw this close and there you are—ready to attach plug, artificial minnow, spoon or spinner. If large muskie, G. N. pike, big pickerel and heavy bass are fished for the leader can be dispensed with—if desired—and the line is attached to the eye of the bait in the same manner as it was attached to the leader-loop. Now we are ready for the initial casting lesson:

Leave about 8 or 10 inches of line or leader outside the tip-guide, with bait swinging free. Do not use more than that amount of line outside the tip guide. Many casts are spoiled and many snarls and backlashes are resulting from

too long a length of line hanging from the tip at the start of the cast. Now take the rod firmly by grip with all four fingers of right hand, the middle, third and little fingers together holding the grip and with the third finger tip lightly touching the heel of the thumb of hand. These three fingers actually hold the rod—the first finger separated slightly and resting against the reel-seat of rod, directly under the bottom-pillars of the reel with the middle-joint acting as a brace and rest. The thumb is rested solidly with ball on the back pillar of reel and first joint lightly pressed on the spool of line. Now you have your rod under complete control. If there is a finger-hook attached to the rod under reel-seat the first finger can be rested around this. The wrist can be moved freely and the rod will respond to every action. This is a good grip to use when testing the action of a rod with reel and line in place. Hold the elbow lightly against body and the forearm extends straight ahead, parallel with the surface of the pool ahead. Turn the rod hand now so that handle of reel stands uppermost, and rod-guides face to the left from left side of rod—this is *essential!* The rod hand now, when viewed from above, represents a Y, with curving thumb as the left prong, first finger as right prong and wrist as stem of the letter. This is the proper hold to have on rod, and one that insures the overhead cast being properly done and the lure carrying forth on the cast without the least chance of an overrun or backlash.

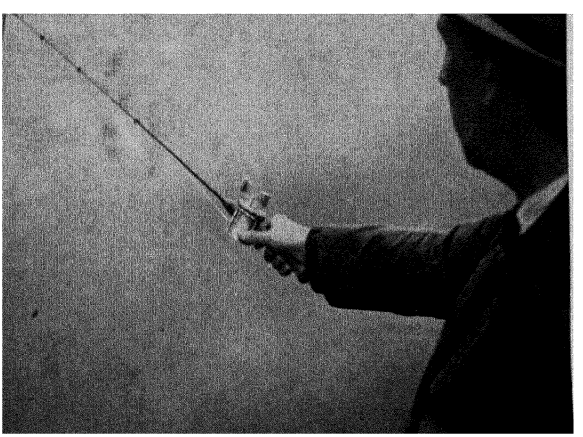
The next phase in the cast is the preliminary whip of rod with right hand and wrist to get the power and spring of rod timed to the flight of the bait. Hold the elbow in and spring the rod back with a strong, sharp action of the wrist so that the rod stem is a little back of vertical, keeping the left arm in a normal hanging position, the left foot slightly advanced and to the left of line of right foot. The poise of



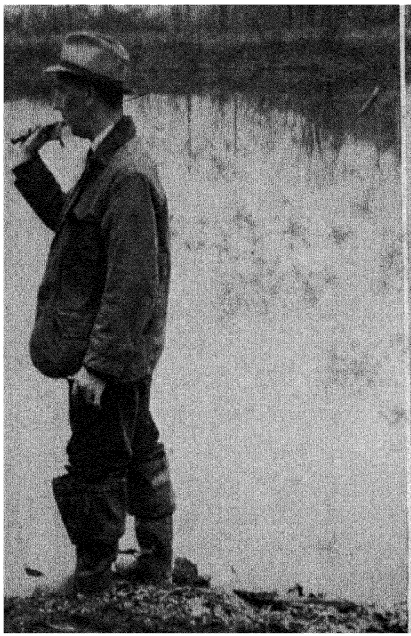
First position of the Bait-Casting rod, reel and lure.

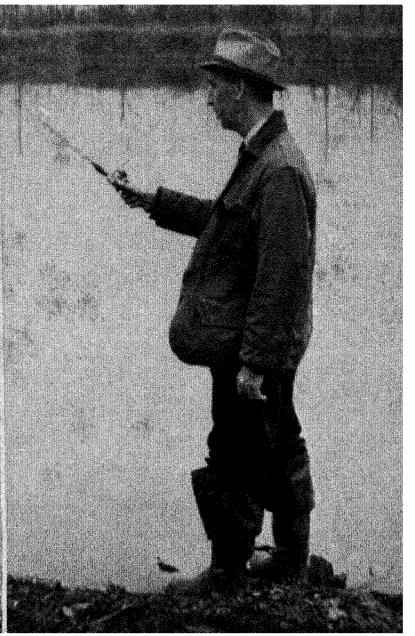
Second position. Rod sprung back over right shoulder, reel handle facing shoulder, thumb lightly touching spool, wrist bent sharply.

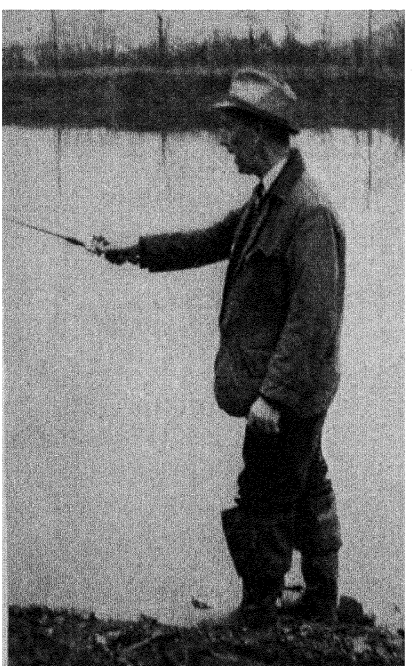




Third—Cast!—Position, reel handle still facing upward, thumb controlling flight of the lure.







1) The Overhand cast . . . rod bent back with lure springing tip. First phase of the actual cast.

2) Second phase of Overhand cast . . . rod sprung forward with straightening of the wrist.

3) Third phase of Overhand cast . . . forearm and wrist straightened. Lure shoots toward target.

the body has much to do with the accuracy and ease of the cast, and it can be accomplished best by having feet in a natural position, left foot advanced and to left, balancing the body lightly on the balls of the feet as though one were going to start running. The whip-back of the lure will be enough now to spring the rod tip and stem strongly, and when the angler feels this he should strive to time his forward whip of the rod so as to catch the lure at its maximum of back-spring. The rod is whipped sharply forward with the wrist, keeping the handle of reel directly up and guides to left side of rod. This forward spring of the rod hand should not be a long-arm motion, but rather a spring of the wrist and forearm muscles. The rod tip should be used to guide the bait forward, and therefore it should be kept at about a forty-five degree angle ahead of angler's shoulder, so that the bait will shoot upward and take a long diagonal course ahead, through the air toward the target. If the target is close the angle of the forward shot can be more sharply directed, if a long cast then the bait should be directed at a slight upward angle to give it trajectory, as in the flight of a bullet. All the time the tip of the thumb is regulating the speed of the revolving spool. Do not clamp down hard on the line on spool, but rather control the tension by gripping the rod strongly with the three fingers of right hand on grip and bearing up firmly with forefinger, which will automatically regulate the tension on the spool, and give the bait just the right amount of freedom to carry it on the full cast, whether close or far, as the real guiding of the bait is done by directing it with the rod position and tip elevation, which is done by gripping the rod with right fingers, as described, and keeping position of rod under control. On the new synchronized types of reel the thumb will be used only to slow the line and regulate the distance the bait

is going, in connection with the grip to hold rod tip precision and direction. When the bait has reached the proper distance to strike target touch the spool firmly, but not too sharply, and the bait will straighten out line and strike water with a diving forward shot that places it on surface in position for the immediate underwater dip or a natural floating position, without too great a displacement or splash of the water. The rod is now ready for the retrieve of the lure:

If it is a floating lure that has been cast the rod can still be retained in the right hand, and the plug moved about by lifting the tip and pulling the lure with short jerks on the surface to arouse the interest of the hiding fish. If we are casting an underwater lure the rod can be held in right hand long enough to give a long, sidewise pull to the lure, thereby drawing it under the surface. This can be learned with practice, so that the completion of the cast and the course of the minnow, plug or spoon can be all done in a single, unhesitating movement that will make the bait assume the darting, swerving motions of a minnow that has broken the surface and then decides to dive under the surface again and take some erratic course into the pool. The rod (assuming the lure is an underwater type) is now transferred to the left hand by bringing the left hand over to the rod and grasping the rod and reel with open palm of left hand. The thumb resting on top reel pillar, the forefinger extended ahead of reel and with first joint pressing under the forward-rod grip and other three fingers gripping rod under reel seat and at front of the casting grip, the palm of the hand holding most of left side-plate of reel. This allows the angler to hold the rod firmly and with the left wrist and forearm acting as a brace and lever, or pivot. The elbow of left arm is held close to body and the right thumb and forefinger takes hold of the reel handle or crank. We are now in a position

to start reeling the lure and working the rod in cooperation so that the bait is instantly taken under control and brought back through the pool in a series of alluring darts, wobbles, jerks and swimming movements as the reel speed is managed to coincide with one's judgment on how fast or how slow to have it move. It permits the angler to impart to the lure just the right amount of action. An astonishing number of little tricks of reeling can be practiced effectively by so holding the rod and reel when reeling.

The tip should be gently elevated so that the rod is slightly arched all the time the bait is under reeling pressure, and if a fish suddenly rises and strikes there is less chance of it breaking the rod tip or releasing itself from the hooks through slack line being given.

The moment a fish is seen to rise or felt to strike the lure the rod should be brought up sharply with a slight twist to the right and a firm holding of the reel handle all at the same time. This is an ideal way to strike the fish. Not with a backward jerk, but rather with a sidewise and upward reflex of the torso, holding the reel handle firm all the time and keeping the left hand firmly cupped over reel end. If there is no strike forthcoming then continue the reeling until bait approaches the surface and lowering the tip and reeling a bit faster to keep the line tense on lure, sweep the rod around to the right, or to the left and reel slowly, pulling the rod sharply so as to bring the lure spinning or wobbling out of the water right at the bank or at the side of the boat, when it should be lifted out of water with as little fuss as possible, and the rod transferred to right hand again and another cast made at a chosen target. This makes bait-casting quick and accurate and smooth, and will produce rising fish when other more desultory tactics fail completely to produce.

Getting plenty of "body-English" (as a billiard player might say) into the cast and retrieve is a good plan, for by using the body as a spring and pivot it will be found that more of those little tricks and sharply executed bits of retrieving work with the lure can be offered, and that is what brings swift rises from shore fish and from fish lurking out in the pool under driftage and submerged rocks.

Some anglers have a habit of pointing the rod tip at the target and aiming over the tip at the place where the bait is presumed to go, then bringing the elbow back and whipping the cast out with a short, sharp movement of the wrist and forearm. This is a very good plan to use also, and results in some quite accurate and sharply slanted, bee-line drives with the plug or wooden minnow. It is a good idea to always try and make the cast sharp and accurate, and to do away with as much arching of the bait as possible, as a spoon or spinner when cast quick and with bee-line direction will strike the surface spinning and so improve the natural illusion of it being a live minnow darting into the water. The same is true also of the plug and minnow. The cast has much to do with the instant action of the bait when it goes into the water, or the quivering fall of the surface plug or minnow on the water before the shadowy dooryard of the lurking bass or muskie.

The overhead cast is the best for the boat fisherman to use when fishing either alone or with companions. If the angler happens to be located in the center of the craft he will need use this style of cast at all times to insure the safety of the others. Casting the overhead way from a sitting position is done in the same way as when standing, except that the feet do not have to be considered. If sitting on a middle thwart the angler should "straddle it" for better and easier casting, resting his feet firmly on the bottom of boat, and bringing

his rod tip directly back over the shoulder on right side and otherwise executing the same system as in standing casts. Some of the veteran bait-casters perfect a left-handed casting technique, which is performed in the same general manner as the right-handed overhead cast, except that by practicing this left-handed method it does away with the necessity of transferring the rod from right to left hand for the retrieving of the bait at completion of cast, and many argue that this facilitates the smooth and natural action of a bait on its course through the pool. Some of the best bait casting anglers I have ever fished with in the Canadian pike waters have used this method altogether and they seemed to have phenomenal success in catching fish with it.

FLIP CAST

The flip-cast is used when an angler wishes to get his bait out at a good distance without resorting to any overhead or side-arm backcast. The rod is held in right or left hand with elbow close to side and tip of rod level before the angler and pointed directly at the target. Then the thumb pressed lightly on spool and the line caught at bait and pulled down until same amount of line is out as length of rod when bait is caught with left thumb and finger and pulled back with left hand until rod stem is sprung like a bow. Opening the fingers of the left hand sharply the bait darts out at the target. It is surprising how far one can cast with this method and it soon gets to be one of the favorite casts when the overhead or side casts are wearying the arm on a long day's fishing. This cast can be used when fishing along in front of high banks or thick, brushy shore lines where even a side-cast is impossible and in fishing from crowded piers and off unstable logs that run out into deep

pools where a "ducking" might occur with too much swing on the part of the caster.

THE REVERSE CAST

This is in reality a back-cast, as the fisherman stands facing the shore or thickly brushed bank, wherever there might be hazards at his rear for the back-flip to get tangled in, and holding the rod so that reel handle stands straight upward and about 18 inches of line depending from the tip he presses the elbow in lightly to body and slants the rod a trifle from straight before him. Then with thumb touching the spool lightly he brings the rod straight back with a sharp flirt, over right or left shoulder, releasing the thumb pressure as lure shoots upward and back. As soon as the bait has started its course back and upward the thumb eases down on the line on spool and then blocks it completely. Casts of considerable distance can be made very easily this way and result in good fishing many times, where the banks are treacherous with brush and weeds back of the caster. It is not necessarily a trick cast either, but can be used in a day's fishing to break the monotony and also to call into play new muscles and so rest the ones that ordinarily are put to such strenuous strain in casting all the time from the same positions.

UNDERHAND OR FLIRT-CAST

For quick, easy casting where speed in getting the bait out and back is thought essential when a muskellunge or big bass happens to be seen rushing around and feeding on a school of minnows in a small cove pool amidst the reeds and rushes and pads, the flirt-cast is indispensable, and

should be learned and used by all the bait-casting fishermen.

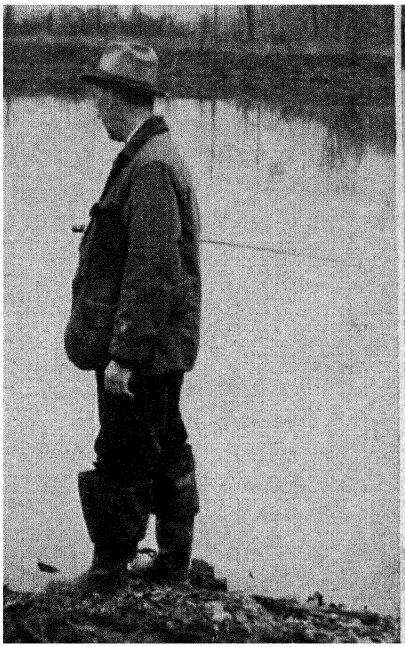
It is done best with a 4½ foot or even a 5 foot rod. It can also be executed either from the right or the left side of angler as he holds his rod with the right hand. It calls for the spring of the rod more than anything else and is also valuable to teach and train the caster to depend more and more on the natural spring of his rod to place his casts with than by mere arm-power and body strength.

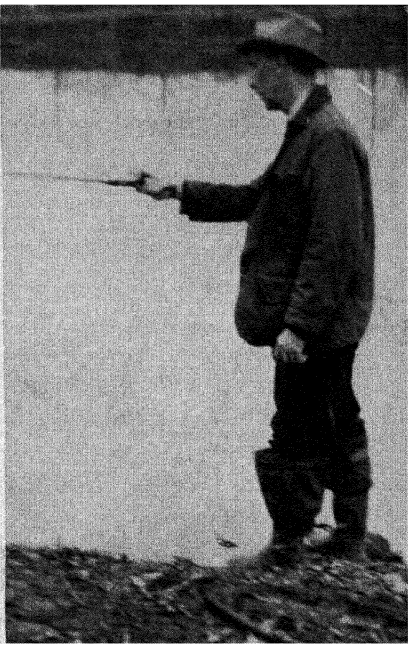
Reel the lure up within a few inches of tip, and bring the arm well up against body, with elbow close in, then turn the handle of reel to right and angling downward, with rod pointed at a stiff downward angle. Bend the wrist to right and downward, and execute a figure 8 with the bait to get timing for the cast, then elevate the tip sharply and flirt the bait out with a sharp snap of wrist. It is surprising how far the bait will soar over the water. If the bait is to cast to right at a sharp angle then hold elbow of right arm well out from body and as highly elevated as possible, bringing the right hand across just under angler's heart, with reel handle pointing upward and to left. Work short figure 8's with the lure until timing is properly adjusted and then sweep the rod tip upward with a backhand action, sending the lure soaring out in the direction desired. Very fast fishing can be done in this way, covering a small pool with casts in less time than by any other way, and when a fish is feeding or when one has followed the lure in and refuses to take it, but is known to be lurking around close by this is a fine scheme to work to get it to rise again. It is also an excellent cast to use when a large, cunning gamester has followed the bait in toward boat or shore, but for some reason has not struck, and has been seen to drift back and turn in the pool, watching the place where the bait was last seen. If one tries the

ordinary cast the chances are that the action will alarm and frighten the fish off, but by using the flirt-cast little or no movement of the body will be displayed and the fish can very likely be tempted or tormented into striking one of these short, fast casts and retrieves of the bait.

SIDE-CASTS

We have all heard the bait-casting expression, "bailing the old bait out." Well this applies to the side-arm or *windmill* cast, and it is usually seen most in practice where a beginner in bait-casting is performing his science. However, this is a very practical and useful method of casting the heavily hooked artificial bait for pike and muskie and bass. It is especially useful for the fisherman who is located in one end of the fishing boat, while others are fishing or rowing the craft. The rod is held with reel handle up and the rod shaft is parallel or nearly parallel with the water surface so that bait hangs a few inches from the tip. The elbow of rod hand is held close to body and the body twisted to get the proper impetus as well as to permit the eye to follow the rod tip back, at a sharp angle back of the side, then the tip is brought around sharply with a side-wise stroke and the bait shoots out across the water. Long casts can be made by elevating the tip slightly as the rod is brought around, and it is an excellent cast while sitting down on the front or back seat of boat. It can also be executed as a back-hand cast when casting from the left to the right or from left angle to a front cast, by simply bringing the rod across in front of the chest, spreading the elbow outward and bending the right wrist—keeping the reel handle uppermost all the time, and sweeping the tip around to the front and releasing the pressure of thumb on spool.

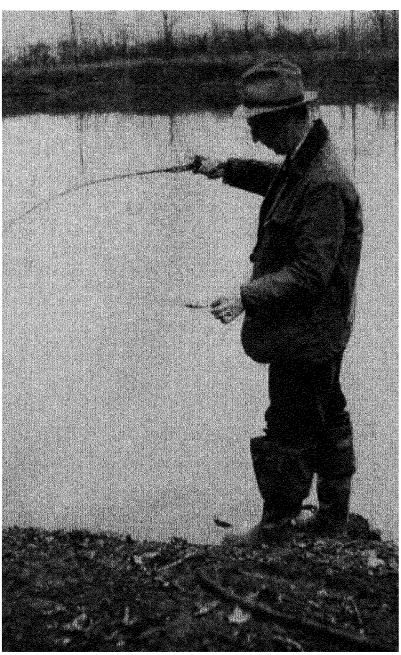




1) Start of the Side Cast.

2) Completion of the Side Cast.

3) The "Flip" Cast.



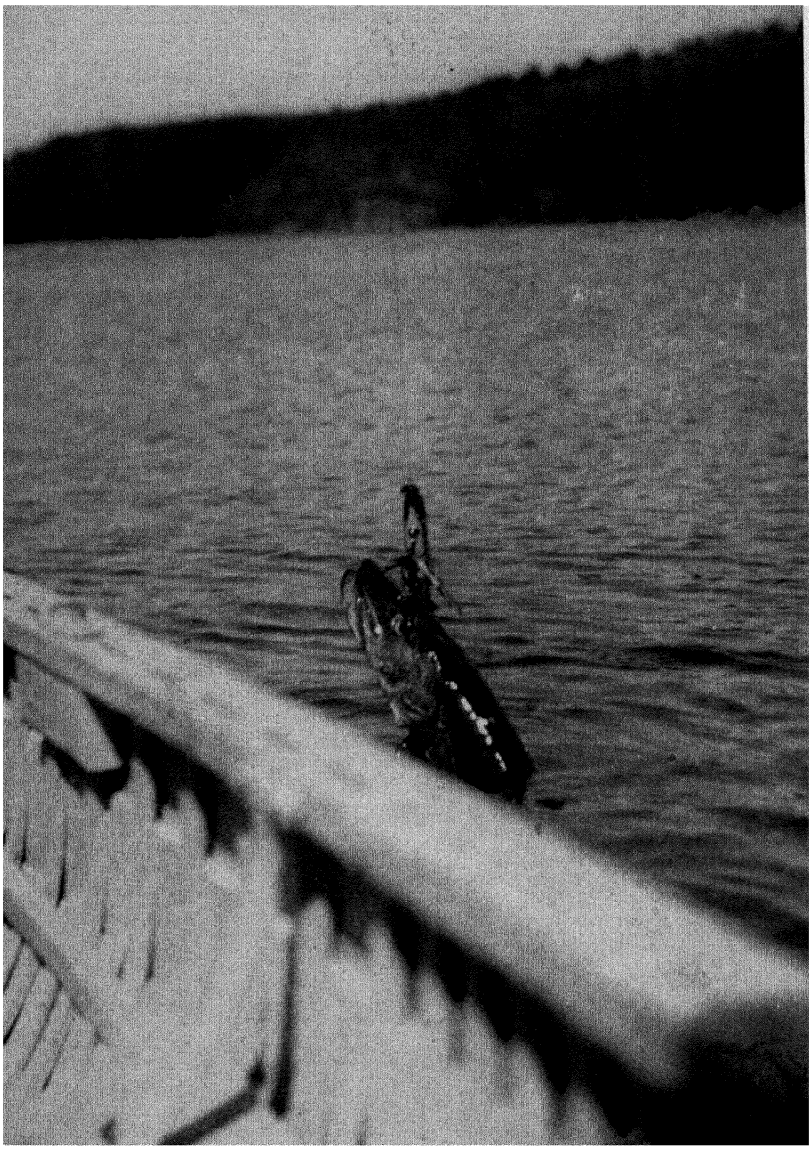


Photo by Ben C. Robinson

A mean old customer, the Great Northern Pike, hooked on a large wooden artificial minnow, from the weedy bottom of a lake.

All these casts are made with an *open* reel (with the click off and no drag) and with the right hand normally. They can be made, however, with the left hand just as well, by merely reversing the position of the reel handle from up to down in most cases to insure the reel spool running freely and in harmony with the pull of the lure on line end.

Keep the casting reel well oiled at all times. See that the level-wind guide and its screw are oiled properly, and make sure that there are no cracked guides or sharp projections of any kind on rod stem or at tip to cut or fray the line. Also be careful not to permit the line to loop around the rod tip and thereby cause a sudden jerk on the delicate strands of the silk—and casting will soon become an easy, effortless pastime that will make bait casting the sport *Supreme!*

Chapter 41

THE TECHNIQUE OF ACTUAL FISHING WITH BAIT-CASTING OUTFIT

After the various details of tackle and learning to handle the bait-casting rod and reel have been completed, then we find that there is the actual fishing with these items to be considered. Here we will find that many of the chapters that lie back of us in this book will come in handy to shed a practical and helpful light on stream and lake and pond conditions, pool and eddy characteristics, etc., etc. All of which enters into the matter of using the bait-casting rod and its outfit with the maximum of effectiveness against our game fishes.

One of the first things to learn in this study is where to find our fish and how to fish for them in their respective classes. If it is a bass pool that we are approaching we should recognize that fact before we make the first cast with our outfit, or if a pike pool we should know the same—or perhaps it might be a combination of the two, and then we should know the best way to fish it so as to not miss interesting species that could be lurking therein.

In the Big North Woods sections of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Northern Michigan, Ontario and a small part of western Quebec we find that there are many delightful fishing

sections where a variety of game fish are to be encountered in the same lake, bay or river system—such as Great Northern pike (which are common in both Ontario and Quebec provinces), largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, muskellunge and walleyed pike (or pickerel, as they are commonly called in the provinces of Canada and along the U. S. and Canadian border waters). There are also large rock-bass and crappies that will rise and strike the smaller members of the artificial minnow and the spoons and spinners in these sections, therefore, we can expect to use lures and methods that will work equally well upon all such members of the Finny tribe when we go fishing in their territories.

In other sections, especially in the more southerly parts of the Big-Woods of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York State and the New England sections we will find that our most abundant game fish are the bigmouth bass, the smallmouth bass, pickerel and walleyed pike, in the same waters. The walleyed pike is not so liable to be found in the same waters with the other mentioned species either, as we work farther south in the fishing ranges, and in the middle-western rivers and ponds and lakes we find that the bass stay pretty definitely to themselves and the muskie and walleyed pike keep to their respective pools. The Great Northern pike fades out of the fishing picture as we work southward from the Big North Woods lakes, beginning to taper off when we pass northern Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan, on the west and New York State's northern border waters on the east, and eventually disappearing almost entirely from a practical fishing point of view in the southern sections of these ranges and in the great middle-western casting waters. In the east, along the Atlantic Seaboard drainages we find the small and slender Eastern Pickerel taking the place of the rugged old Northern pike,

and this slopes off as we get down past New Jersey, until we have mostly bass and a few walleyed pike, with some scattered muskie ranges in parts of the Atlantic Coast mountain slopes in western N. Carolina and eastern Tennessee. In the deep south we find that the bigmouth bass is the chief incentive for the bait-caster, in deep, dark rivers and swamp-hung lakes and ponds of the vast Glade-land countries of Florida, Georgia and across to the sparkling lakes of inland Texas. The western countries, comprising the Great Divide of the Rocky Mountains is best known to the angling tribe for their trout fishing, stream trout such as the Black Spotted mountain trout, the Dolly Vardon, Cutthroat, rainbow and golden trouts, with Mackinaw or grey lake trout in the lakes and *above* the power dams. Over in the far west of the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada mountains we find more trout fishing, with rainbows and the hard-fighting steelheads in predominance, but many good lakes in Idaho, Washington and a part of Oregon, have small-mouth bass in their waters. On the Pacific Slope the rivers and streams are famed for the steelhead trout and the Silver and great Chinook salmons. All of these fish, however, excepting, perhaps the smaller stream trouts of the high Rockies and the Sierras and the eastern and northern wood's streams, will rise and strike the artificial casting-rod lures. Many of the prize-winning salmon of the past few seasons have been captured with artificial bait-casting plugs and minnows, and some of the greatest and most thrilling fish-battles of the years are staged on the big rainbows and steelheads in the mountain rivers of Montana, Idaho, Utah and New Mexico. So, we can feel pretty well assured that the bait-casting rod and reel and outfit will produce piscatorial pleasures in almost every section of the United States and Canada, and the fresh-water fisherman's territories therein.

MUSKIE CASTING

This is unquestionably the sport *Supreme* for the veteran bait caster. Here the ultimate dreams of the artificial minnow and plug fisherman comes true, and to cast from a fishing boat or a lightly drifting canoe in one of the famed northern muskellunge lakes of Ontario, mid-Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, the Northern Peninsula of Michigan, the northwestern end of Pennsylvania, the Chataqua regions of New York and Northern New York's ancient St. Lawrence River and Thousand Islands regions, with the proper gear for such angling is a privilege that no sportsman can ever forget or neglect.

The muskellunge is essentially an artificial-bait taking fish. Its pugnacious and savage disposition classifies it as a fair opponent for even the most skilled of anglers and the tackle that is used in its capture has to be good and dependable, for the battle of the muskellunge on bait-casting tackle is notoriously strong, tricky and savage.

The best pools for this fishing with the artificial bait and the casting rod are those that lie adjacent to rocky shore lines in the lakes and the deeper northern channels, where lily pads and weeds offer a concealing fringe, also in those sluggish, weedy lakes that contain mucky bottoms and reddish colored waters where sedge and tamarack shoulders close to deep, dark, quiet pools. In fact for the best of muskie casting the angler must study closely the range of this mighty fish, and try to pick out those lake-chains and rivers where nature has, for various reasons, encouraged and preserved the species. This is not so difficult any more. The waters that hold these fish are pretty definitely understood and all the various states and provinces where the fish is found have tabulated their respective localities and by

writing in to the Fish and Game or Conservation Bureaus at their capital cities these locations can be had by any angler in detail.

The five-foot bait casting rod, of medium-action, is the most generally used rod for muskie casting. Some anglers still insist on using the heavy-action rod, but this is not necessary, as the medium-action rod will handle even the largest of these fish with safety providing the angler keeps his head and plays his fish with judgment and caution and learns that by striking the hooks deeply into the gamester when it rises and attacks the bait with a strong, lifting movement of the rod arm and the body it can be handled just about as easily as a large bass or walleyed pike. The lighter weight rod, reel and line also permits the angler to attain more science to his enticement in arousing the muskie's attention and attack on the bait.

Fishing from a boat or a canoe is almost imperative in the majority of the northern lakes and the larger rivers where the wild shore conditions makes bank-casting impractical except from rocky points and along boulder-strewn shore-lines where travel and approach to the open water can be negotiated. The rocky islands with their weedy fringes shadowing sloping and boulder-infested coves and beaches are always potential muskie fishing grounds, as well as the wide, deep coves where the lily pads and the floating weeds curve softly around to fashion feeding and lurking lairs. If there are old windfall logs slanting off into deep water in such coves it can be safely presumed that close to these there will be large fish of the species waiting for the properly cast and retrieved artificial minnow, underwater plug or the floating bait, and these places are best fished from a quietly paddled canoe or from a fishing boat that is rowed slowly and with care parallel to their con-

cealment and about seventy-feet outside of the line of weeds or pads. The best casting is to be done from the front of the boat or canoe, and the bait should be cast in toward the lurking places at the edges of the weeds and pads, reeling the bait back from them toward the open water. This is always preferable and even in casting from a rocky or a sandy beach the bait will be more likely to get results if it is cast at an angle to right or left and reeled along these places, rather than offered out into the deeper water. However, if there are sunken-weed beds out in the cove or pool or, as sometimes happens, if there are large beds of submerged weed and grass located out in the lake or pond, then it is advisable that the lure be cast that way, but always with the hopes of getting the bait to strike the water just outside the shadowed edge of surface covers or sunken shelters, for the muskie is a notorious "skulker" and it will be found either lying in wait for its victim just inside the shelter of log drifts, brushy water coverts or weeds and pads, or—as on windy days when the water is agitated deeply, slowly swimming around at the fringes of such places on the lookout for a stray minow or perch. In casting for this voracious chap it is a good idea to keep in mind that the fish most likely to attack the wiggling or wobbling or spinning bait is the one that is active and not the ones that are resting or sleeping in the thick jungles of weeds or brush or pads, and for this reason it is a good plan oftentimes to make plenty of commotion with the plug when casting it, and to reel it with speed and flash, then alternate by tempting the ones that might have been aroused to the presence of something out of the ordinary with a cast that is slipped in neatly to the water at the edge of the coverts and reeled back with all the lazy, unhurried actions of a nice chub or perch just taking it easy. I have even tried routing them out of thick

weedy islands under the hot, calm of an August afternoon by running the fishing boat through the pad-meadows and around the open pools with an outboard motor hooked into full speed, then after cutting the water up thoroughly shut off the motor, tilt it over the stern and proceed to start casting and reeling with all speed possible, and toning down the casts to slower ones and more lazy like retrieves. This sometimes gets the sluggish fish out of their deep hiding places and will excite them so that they dart around and a bait crossing their line of vision will be snapped up with an instinctive vigor of attack. Then, at other times, when the fish are feeding and on the move and one has been seen to swirl the surface waters, or plunge viciously at a fleeing perch or school of shiners I have worked the same waters as cautiously and as keenly as I knew how to do with my casting rod and plug or minnow, and it would not be long until the great, shadowy form of a fish would be seen following my wobbling lure as it came through the water, or I would feel that thrilling and exciting force, deep under the surface halt the bait, and then see the line swimming away on another course, when the strike would be made with force and alertness. One can never tell about the muskie. The best way is to study them closely, and if one is known to be located in a certain deep bay along the shore or around a submerged weed bed, go there at every trip out and cast for it with the idea in mind that it is perhaps ranging around for food. If this does not work then try arousing them. I have changed lures as much as a dozen times, using first the regular underwater minnow, then the semi-surface bait, and the surface baits, and if these all failed me then I would perhaps resort to a large, flashy spoon that I would cast wildly around and reel in to

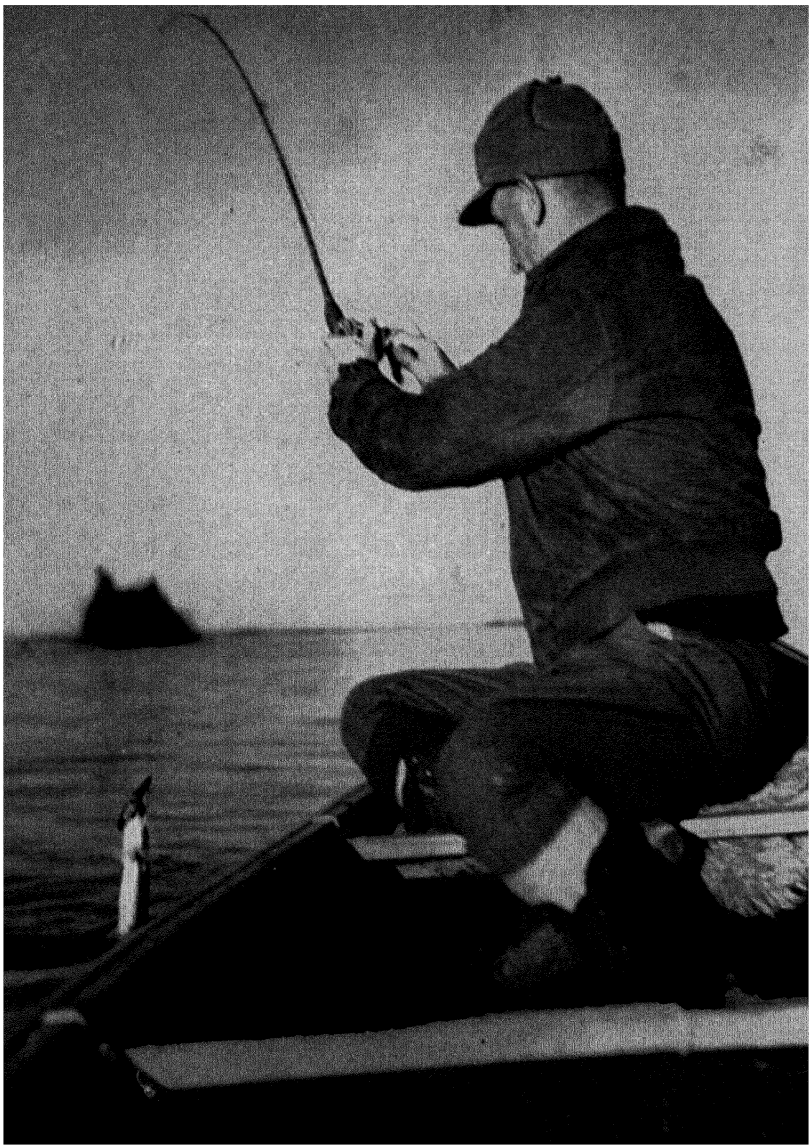
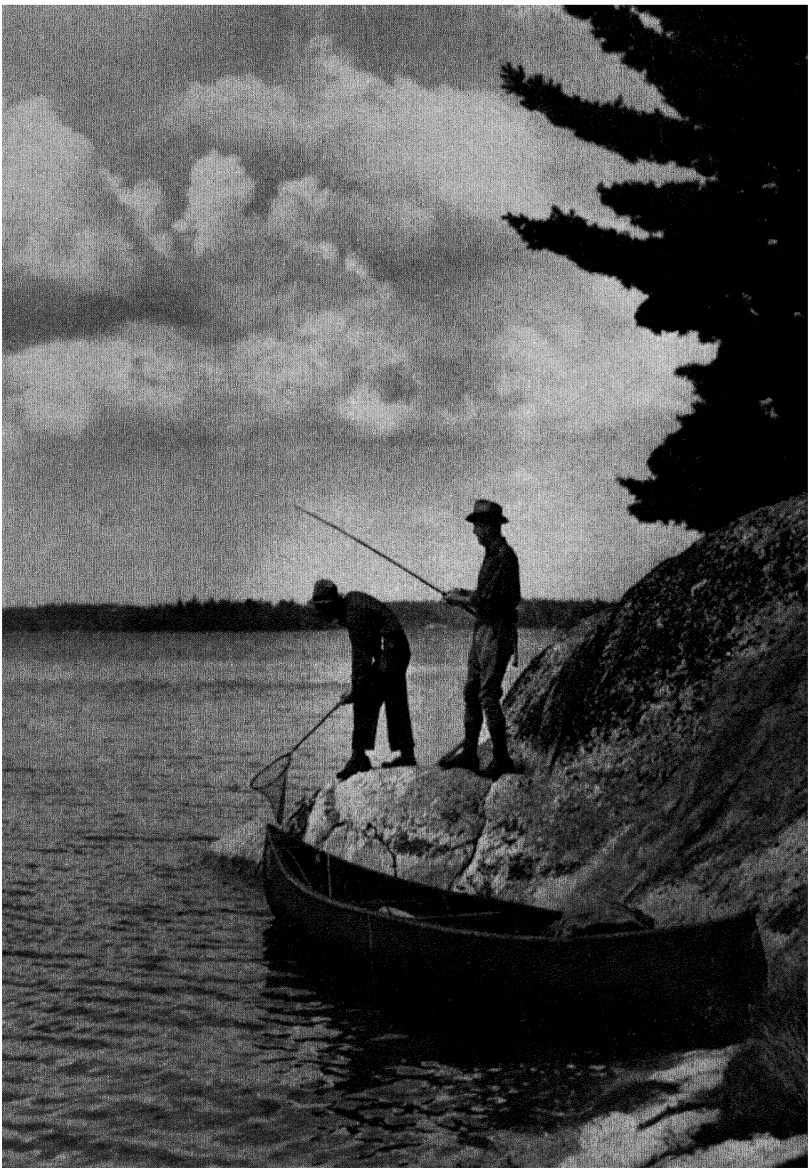


Photo by Ben C. Robinson

A northern Ontario pickerel makes the mistake of striking a brightly dressed artificial minnow of the jointed type, cast into the lake eddies.



Wall-eyed pike waters, where the bait caster on his summer vacation finds relaxation and sport a-plenty.

get the old chap aroused and excited. This sometimes works to the great joy of the angler.

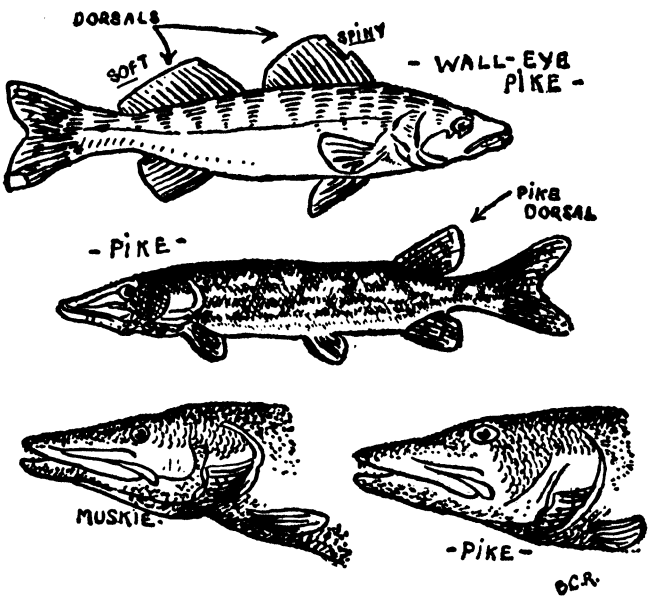
In fishing the large river pools the best places to make the casts for muskies are those spots where the water is most heavily activated, by rapids, falls or riffles. The pools that occur just below such barriers in a muskie river usually have something to offer the angler. These can be cast from the shore with great success, or from a boat held at the lower sectors and the bait cast into the deep pockets along shore and where the stream boils and eddies over rocky bars and reefs where the muskie likes to drift up and charge into a school of rock bass, yellow perch or suckers. The Yellow-Perch, Golden Shiner, Sucker (white or black), white and red-head, Pike and scaled-finish Dace patterns of underwater wigglers and wobbler lures are best to use in all these places, and the large, floating wood minnow with propeller at the head and tail, in white and red head pattern is my choice for the hot days of summer when the muskie is lurking in weedy streams and at large bends of a river where there are scattered docks and pads and over the sunken weed beds in the wide lake coves where rock-bass, yellow perch, crappies, bluegills and shiner and chub minnows are in the habit of schooling. These are the logical places for minnow and small-fish food to congregate and that is where you will most likely find the *Esox-masquinongy* prowling around on the outskirts of the covert and abodes of the smaller fry.

WALLEYED PIKE CASTING

The walleyed pike is a deep lurker in the fishing pool, usually feeding on minnows that it sneaks up on from be-

neath, and the artificial bait caster should keep this characteristic in mind when fishing for this species. If casting over a weedy island out in a lake cove where the water is from ten to fifteen feet in depths, and where there are rock-bass, perch, shiners and chubs and suckers hiding and schooling, the caster should try to remove himself at a distance of fifty to seventy feet from the center of the plot, then make the casts over the sunken jungles, rather than at the sides, for the pike likes to prowl along through the weeds and any minnow that tries escaping upwards from it will instantly be followed and devoured. The best baits to use in this case are the semi-surface models, such as the pork-rind wigglers, the red-and-white wooden plug and the perch and pike colored underwater minnows that travel along some three feet under the surface. If there is a slight screen on the water it is all the better, for agitated weed beds cause the pike to go into action and if there is a slight shower of rain in the summer season it makes for good wall-eyed pike fishing over such feeding spots. The bait should be reeled rather slow for the best walleyed fishing. Make long casts and reel with a slow turning of the reel handle. Strike the fish just as soon as its touch is registered and then catch up on it with the reel at once, for a slack line is the one thing that a walleye likes best to twist and squirm its way off the hook. The rush of the walleyed pike when hooked is usually deep. It very seldom breaks water of its own volition and if it is fished for in a running stream the run will mostly be down the current. The pike also has a habit of coming in to the urge of the reel rather meekly, and then when close to the rod it will dart to the surface where it will twist and turn and if the rod is held too high or the pressure on the reel handle be too strongly exerted by the angler it will thrust its head and part of its body out and

perform some tricky capers that many times serves to unseat the hook. It is therefore best to not try to force this fish too close to the boat or shore when it is first hooked, but rather to let it play its battle well out at the distance where it was first hooked, keeping the rod tip fairly low and being



Wall-eyed pike dorsals. Cheek and gill-covert scales on muskie and pike.

sure to keep just enough tension on line and tip to follow its runs, but not to encourage it too keenly to come toward the angler. When it starts weakening then try to bring the play in to the rod with a steady, sure timing to keep the fish under the surface, until ready to land, when the rod should be lifted, the line reeled taut and the fish either lifted into the boat or on shore with the spring of rod, or

if too large a fish for such actions, then slide the gaff or net down where the fish can be led into its bag or the point of gaff slid under its jaw and with a sharp upward jerk and lift insure its capture. It is a tricky fish at all times and should be handled accordingly by the angler.

In river casting for the walleye the foot of rapids and dams and falls is always a good place to cast with the underwater type of lure. It has a notorious habit of following the bait in toward the shore or boat closely and there smashing at it with a force that sometimes snaps the rod tip or almost breaks the angler's reel fingers by spinning the handle along the knuckles. In this respect it is a great deal like the smallmouth bass. And understanding this trick of the walleye, should teach one to be watchful when the bait is being reeled in close to shore or boat. It is a good idea to give the bait a little extra action also when the cast is coming out of the water, by springing the rod tip more and giving a little flurry of reeling to the lure, which speeds it up and causes many a following pike to take a chance on striking. This also makes for better landing, as the fish will then usually dart out into deeper water when fastened on the plug or minnow or spoon and there it will play deeper than usual, and so permit the angler to gain control over it and so insure better and safer landing.

In eddies where there are rocks under the surface and where the water is heavy and strong are the best possible places to trick a walleyed pike into striking the bait. Cast out beyond these places and reel the bait through them at a fairly fast rate of speed, to cause the lure to wiggle and twist more. For this reason better walleyed fishing is found in swift water than in slow, sluggish water. Old drifts that are in the deep currents and where swirls and pockets are formed by the current always offer a good walleyed pike

pocket. I have taken as many as a half dozen four to six pound fish from such places, and when a fish is hooked in so promising a place the best thing to do is to force it away from there as soon as possible and play it down or above this spot, then the others there will quickly drift back to feed and take an interest in other casts. The walleye also likes to lurk under the shade of river weeds, but these weeds or pads should cover a sandy, gravelly or rocky bottom. Mud bottoms are not significant of this species of fish.

BIGMOUTH BASS CASTING

Muddy bottoms and shore lines that are low and swampy with old moss-covered logs under the surface and along the weedy lines where the lake shoals off to a muck bottom is usually the best location for the bigmouth bass of the lakes. In the rivers they also prefer the more sluggish pools, where there are deep, slow currents and powerful eddies and a smattering of docks, pads or aquatic grass for the fish to hide under. The bigmouth will take an artificial surface bait perhaps quicker than any other species of lake or stream game fish, excepting the muskie.

In ponds this fish is right in its glory and it will prosper and do well in the same type ponds where crappies, bluegills and suckers or carp thrive, providing there are weeds, pads or grassy margins where it can feed and spawn by fanning out the mud to the gravel undersoil.

One of the best bass casting outfits that can be chosen for bigmouth is the five-foot tubular-steel rod with a level-wind reel and a 15 lbs. test waterproofed silk line. For lures the pike colored minnow in the straight-model can't be beat. The white body and red-head plug is also very killing on it, and the Frog-finish or mouse surface baits are good for

those times when these fish are schooling close to shore or about pads in the center bars of the lake.

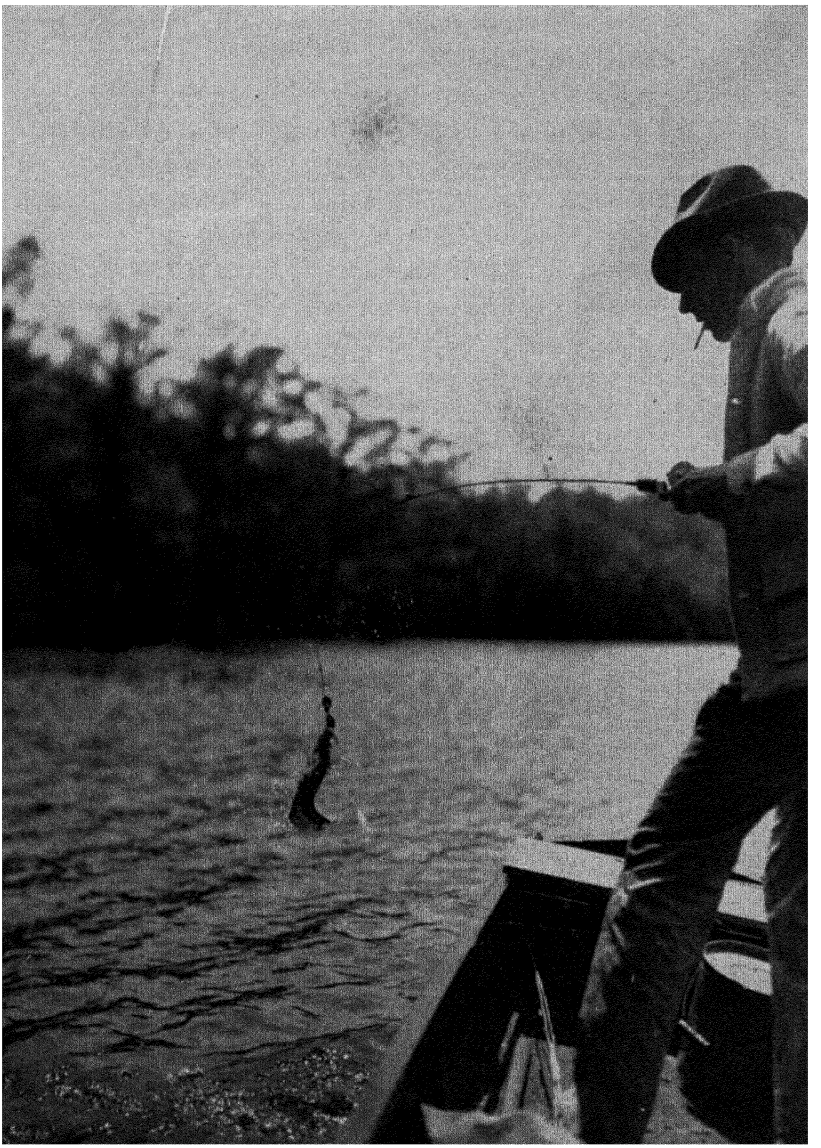
Another good bait for the northern lakes where there are perch schools is the Yellow-Perch pattern of jointed underwater bait. This should be cast out to the edge of the pads or grass and permitted to lie there a moment, then dipped under with a sharp lift of the rod and the bait reeled slowly back through the pool. The bass will sometimes be seen to drift up and lie a moment inspecting the bait then it will grab the lure and rush for the concealment of the aquatic vegetation. A large bass of this species puts up a strong, hard fight. They will quite often break the surface water, making a splashing, spectacular play with their vividly green sides, silvery-yellow belly and gaping red mouth opened and gills extended, to form one of the most thrilling pictures a bait-caster would ever want to see.

Sometimes the same lakes that hold smallmouth bass will also contain the bigmouth, the only difference being that the largemouth fish will usually be found along those sectors where there are marshy shore lines, pad-rimmed islands or in deep coves where the logs and brush slant off into the water. In such places they can be fished for from a boat with excellent success and some of the finest days of the summer vacation can be spent along such places. Small, wilderness bound lakes of the north that lie back in the midst of the marshy spruce and tamarack choked lowlands, where the old-tote road and the settlers' trails lead one, and where, perhaps, only a leaky old John-boat or a makeshift cedar raft is available for a tour of the shore lines and lily meadows, offer the best inducements for the bigmouth bass devotee. Windy, dark days when the black waters of such lakes roll and toss the great spades of the green pads and

lift the white, creamy lotus flowers to the sharp sky will bring good bigmouth bass casting. At such times a Silver Spoon used with a pork rind flickering from its hook and a spring weed guard protecting the hooks is one of the best lures I know to suggest. They are also good risers on calm, hot days when the border of the pad meadows and islands can be fished with best success by using a Coaxer bait, a Surface Mouse or a wooden "chunking" plug with a piece of pork-chunk attached to the hook to make it even more enticing for the old Line-Sides to strike.

PICKEREL CASTING

When we mention the Pickerel, we have reference in this case to the Chain or Eastern Pickerel, a small, slim, sharp-fanged fish of the *Esox* family that is found mainly in the sections that lie east of the Appalachian Mountains and along the Seaboard Drainage. These fish are mainly pond fish, sometimes found as well in the sluggish, warmish currents of the tide-water streams where they flow through cedar and spruce swales and where there is marsh grass growing heavy on their currents and in the eddies along the shore. Under this grass is a favored place for the Eastern pickerel fish to lurk, waiting for a minnow or a frog to pass so that it might glide swiftly out and trap it in its sharp, savage little jaws. I have had the best luck fishing for them with a bait fishing rod using the Oriental Wiggler type of bait, with a short, slender pork rind attached to the hook. This bait is a semi-surface one and casts well and far and is easy to reel at varying speeds. The body is of strong bakelite and the best model I know is the one with white and red coloring. There is a single No. 2/0 hook, and a



Bass fishing with a bait-casting rod, reel and line and an artificial metal spoon bait offers some thrilling moments to the angler.

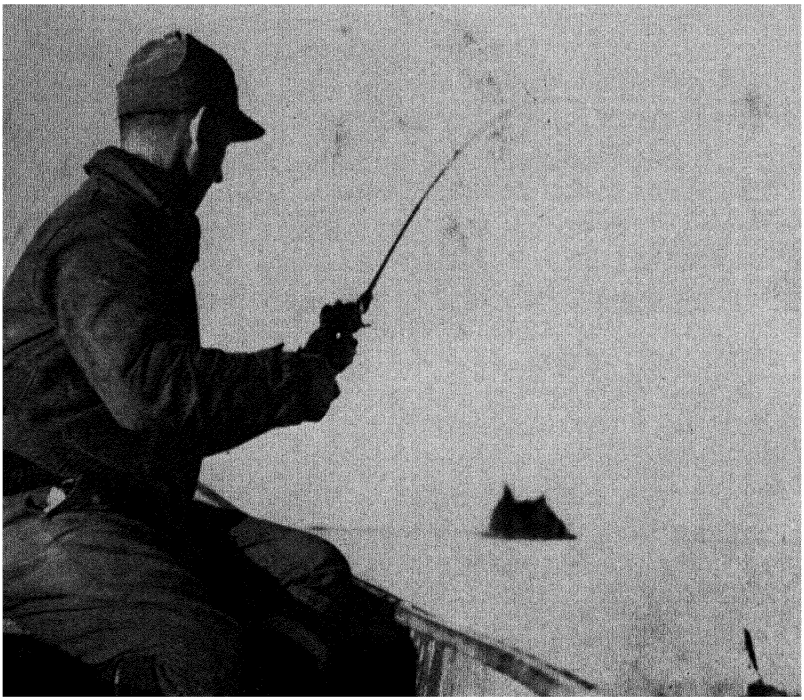


Photo by Ben C. Robinson

See the resilient split-bamboo bait casting rod bend as the gamey fish rushes about the canoe on the tail-hook of a jointed wooden pike bait! Sport that is hard to beat.

with an 80 yard capacity multiplying casting reel. My preference is for the level-wind type of reel, although there are those who declare in favor of the Open Order of reel, without either level-wind or anti-backlash gadgets attached. Either type of reel can be chosen by the novice and he will not go wrong. If the Open Reel is used then one has to learn to spool the line evenly with the thumb of the left hand or with finger and thumb as the line is reeled in. This is not hard to learn. The line should be of not more than 15 lbs. test and 12 lbs. test is even more pleasant to cast with, using half-ounce to ⅝ ounce baits of the underwater, deep-diving or the surface types, as the smallmouth will be found in waters where all three of these produce the required results. This gamester is by nature a bottom feeder, swimming close to the rocky and gravelly bottoms and feeding on crayfish, hellgramites and minnows. In deep pools the deep-diving wooden minnow or plug can be used. Spinners with a red and white fly weighted with a quarter ounce of sinker or tandem-spoons of medium small size with a white or white and red bucktail fly attached will all produce strikes when the bait is reeled fairly slow through such waters. When fishing along rocky shore lines and in gravel bottomed pools below riffles where the depths run around five to eight feet a semi-surface spoon, spinner or plug can be used quite successfully, as the fish can see the flash of this type of lure for some distance on bright or even cloudy-bright days. When it is found in shallow, rocky places along weedy shore lines then it will rise to the surface plug or coaxer nicely. But, ordinarily speaking, the jointed half-ounce wooden or the plastic minnow, in red and white, pike coloring or perch coloring will be about as good a general purpose bass bait as any we know about. In lakes

we find this fish haunting the weedy shallows around islands and on rocky bars out in the middle or in the deep coves, and also swimming in at the feeding hours to the rocky shore points and shore lines. Windy mornings are fine for bait casting for smallmouth bass in the summer season. In the evening find a point of rocky land where the bass will come in about two hours before sundown to feed on crayfish that hide under the rocks on the gravel bottom. In the mid-day season fish the deeper channels of the lakes where there are weed beds and rushy islands, and fish with a deep diving wooden minnow or plug for them. They are also found in submerged weed beds at times, where they can be taken with such baits as the spinning and porkrind wiggler types of baits, with the hooks turned up to slip more easily through the entanglements of weed, grass and pad, or the kind of baits with light spring-steel weed guards protecting the points of the hooks. Reel the baits through the weeds. In casting the weedy shore lines and in pad bound coves where there are smallmouth bass the bait should be cast directly into the weeds and drawn through them. One of the finest smallmouth bass lures that can be used is the old-style Crab-Crawler baits, made of cedar wood to represent a large, fat crayfish wiggling along backwards through the water. This has always been a good smallmouth bait in small lakes and in creeks. In rivers where the fish lurk about snags and drifts the plain wooden plug with a concaved head section, painted to represent a Pike minnow is a great success. The bait should be reeled at ordinary speed for smallmouth. A light rod and a long-handled landing net with strong linen mesh makes up the bass-outfit that will bring hours of entertaining and restful sport. Every business man or shop worker should know the benefits of being a devoted bass caster, for there is no sport

of the outdoors that does more to tone up and interest the nerve-fagged and the brain-weary than this gentlemanly pastime that we call, BASS FISHING!

GREAT NORTHERN PIKE CASTING

To tho average summer vacationist and fisherman there is no fish more interesting and prized than the Great Northern Pike. It is a good food or pan fish, when taken from clean, cold waters, and when prepared and cooked as it deserves to be, but when taken from sluggish, weedy waters it is prone to be tasteless and soft of nature, that causes it many times to be looked upon with scorn by the Big-Game Fresh Water Fishermen. But, let those same critics hook on to a 25 lb. Great Northern in the deep channels of the French River, the North Channel of Lake Huron, or in the famed Lake Of The Woods sections, and I assure you there will be more respect accorded it thereafter. For this fellow really can fight, when hooked on ordinary bait-casting tackle and played from boat, canoe or shore. I have seen good fishermen strive for long periods to bring one of these rusty old chaps in where their companions could set the gaff under its vicious and sharp-fanged jaws. The Great Northern pike will take most all types of artificial lures, but the greatest killer of them all is a metal wobbling spoon in red and white colorings.

The Concave Metal Spoon type is one that every G. N. pike caster should know about, as this is one of the most killing models of lure that can be used for bays of the Great Lakes regions, and for the deep lakes of the north-woods sections of the United States and Canada. This spoon weighs about 1 ounce in the standard size and the best pattern according to my own personal views is the red with

white wavering stripe, and nickel underside. In some waters the black color with white stripe is better for muskie and pike. It casts nicely, sailing through the air and darting down deep. Has a treble hook at end and is a bait that most any caster can operate nicely, on a medium-action steel or bamboo rod, with an 18 lbs. test waterproofed silk casting line and a cable-wire casting leader of around 19 inches for protection against sharp teeth.

The large pike-colored ounce-and-a-half artificial minnows are also great killers, preferably in the broken or jointed types. The Silver-Flash model of this large minnow is also good in jointed style. The plain wooden plug with concave head piece is another killing lure in ⅞ ounce weight. All these baits will arouse the pugnacity of this savage northern gamester, and the casting should be done from a boat or from the shore. I have found that when fishing with the artificial lure for G. N. pike one should work the small, weedy pockets along rocky shore lines and the shallow bays where a marsh debouches into the lake or river through a thick meadow of ancient lily pads and where the water is about ten or twelve feet deep and darkly eddying. The pike likes fairly deep water, and the larger members of the family will invariably be found in such water, and in the currents and eddies of old logging canals connecting marshy and weedy lakes.

For the best kind of pike fishing I have found that it is a good plan to seek out a Chain-Of-Lakes drainage and then use a light fishing boat that can be taken over pad meadows easily, and hunt up the lurking places of the fish. Cast around the weedy islands and detached pad beds, placing the lure at the edge of the shadowy vegetation and letting it sink down slowly, then reeling in slowly. Or, if an artificial plug or minnow is used, pick out a floating type, and

let it rest for a few moments on the surface, then reel it slowly across the pool. If a sinking wood plug or minnow is used, do not cast it out to the weeds or pads and stumps of such deep water places and start it to darting under the water at once. This sometimes causes the pike to miss seeing it. It is better to make the cast and let the minnow lie on the surface a while, *plunking* it up and down in the water by jerking the slackened line lightly, then if the pike rises and lies in sight of the angler, give the bait a quick, sharp pull under the surface and start to reel. When the fish charges the bait and touches the hooks, slack the line, just a fraction, and then strike with a hard turn of wrist and set of shoulder to set the hooks deep in its rubbery mouth. A big pike will plunge and splash around in a spectacular battle on the hook. They will leap and somersault and are extremely treacherous to play, but by keeping the rod arched strongly they can be followed very nicely. Do not let them get too much slack line! Neither should the angler ever try playing this fish with the rod tip down at the surface of the water, for this gives the fish an advantage and a broken line will result. When they are ready for landing, be on the alert, for this is when they do a good deal of line "bustin'" as a rule. They have a habit of shaking their large heads savagely, and the line is broken like a sewing thread, if one does not know their tricks. When a pike comes in and thrusts its big head out of the water, keep the slack up and tension on the tip, but do not block the reel. Let the thumb rest lightly and when the fish shakes or plunges, the line will run free and offer it no resistance. Play the fish until it is willing to be led in in a swimming position, then slip gaff under the lower jaw and lift sharply and bring the fish into boat or on shore, and place the hand firmly on its head, just back of the gill openings and press

down hard. This serves to subdue them. Do not try to remove the hooks of the lure from a pike's mouth or lip without pincers or disgorger. Many a fisherman has taken back with him a badly mangled hand by so doing. Carry along a pair of strong pliers for this work, and catching the hook firmly give a quick, strong pull or twist and so remove the hooks from the fish without any pain to it. Do not permit a pike to thresh around in the boat with plug, artificial minnow or spoon hook attached to its jaws or gills. It is dangerous to the extreme to all aboard. Keep a small, heavy Fish Billy of some good type handy and when fish shows a tendency to become too mean tap it sharply on the head and settle matters in the logical and safe way, then remove hooks, string the fish and drop it over the side of boat. The Great Northern pike is a real antagonist for any bait-caster and it will offer many days and hours of rip-roaring sport and fishing thrills to the summer fisherman. But, be careful of old *Esox lucius*, for he has always been a *bad-hombre* and from the tip of his mean snout to the slimy, pungent aroma of the whitish-spotted old heathen, he is still bad and a fish that should be fished for and handled with care!

LAKE TROUT BAIT-CASTING

In the spring season, around the middle of May and until warm weather spreads its glorious robes of sunshine and green foliage over the birches and the maples of the Canadian north-woods, there occurs a time when the lake trout will be susceptible to the blandishments of a bait-casting rod and artificial lure. At this season the trout are in the more shallow waters and along the rocky reefs and shoals,

where in the hot mid-summer season they will be noticeably absent.

The bait caster can have some wonderful sport in this early summer fishing for trout. Lakers up to eight and ten pounds will rise to the underwater artificial minnow at these times, and a good wooden plug with a quarter ounce sinker attached to the heavy gut casting leader will take the bait down where the trout will notice it. The wooden plug in red and white and in rainbow colors will take these fish very nicely. The pike-colored underwater minnow and the Silver-Flash minnow, the metal-spoon in silver finish with a bit of pork rind attached will also allure them. The casting should be done from rocky points where the water is from ten to fifteen feet in depth, and from shore lines where there are rocky shelves sloping off into the deepest of the pools. In the late morning is a good time to do this casting, and there are times when the fish will rise to the very surface for the bait. Below falls and rapids in the rocky, deep rivers that run into such lakes as Basswood and Timagami in the Ontario hinterlands and on the border-lakes of northern Minnesota is an excellent place for an early lake trout plug and bait-casting rod fishing trip. The weather is cold and invigorating then, and a wilderness camp along such waters offers the fisherman something that will always be remembered with pleasure and excitement. A strong, long-handled landing net and a tackle-box filled with deep working spoons, wooden plugs and minnows and spinners should be included with the five-foot rod, the level wind pike or bass reel and the 18 lbs. test waterproofed silk casting line and gut casting leaders. This is a sport that many bait-casters who await with restlessness for the opening of the bass and muskie season should know about and take advantage of.

Walleyed pike and G. N. pike are found in the same localities as the lake trout, and are also in season at this time in the northern woods sections of Ontario.

ROCK-BASS CASTING

Many of the thoroughfares and channels that connect the bass, pike and muskie fishing lakes and river pools of the North Woods sections of Canada and northern United States has an excellent brand of bait casting sport to offer those that like to fish with the light bass casting rod and half-ounce casting lures. This sport is centered around the myriads of pan fish that swarm in the underwater weed islands and beds of such northern channels and lakes coves. These gamesters will rise to a small wooden wobbler plug or underwater minnow with surprising vigor. I have taken them up to 13 inches in length on lures as large as the ⅝ ounce jointed scale-finished plugs and with the one-half ounce wiggler lures; using a very small pork rind and a No. 1 size hook I have taken wondrous catches. The line to use for this phase of casting should be light. A 12 lbs. test waterproofed silk line is best. Use a 20 inch gut casting lead and fish for them under lily pad rafts, around old piling and derelict sawlogs in the old logging channels of the lake country. The bait is cast out and reeled in the same way one would cast for smallmouth bass. They strike deep under the surface, however, and for this reason it is a good plan to reel a trifle slower than for bass. The play of these fish is about the same as that of a largemouth bass, and I have had them break the surface in their attempts to escape. The small Bass Oreno type of plug in red and white color has proven very effective in the early summer season where the fish were schooling in the shallow lake coves of bass and

pike lakes, and for summer fishing I have had excellent success with the white and red-head single hook spinner bait. A great deal of enjoyable sport can be found in this fishing. Yellow perch will also take a casting rod lure, providing it is fished deep. The weighted casting spinner with a Red and Yellow fly has proven the best producer in my experiments in the northern perch lakes in warm weather.

Chapter 42

ACCESSORIES FOR THE BAIT-CASTER'S KIT

BESIDES THE CASTING rod, reel, line and the list of artificial lures the bait-caster will find that he must equip himself with other necessary items for a successful and pleasing trip.

One factor that he must consider especially is the bait-carrying kit. This can be either a metal tackle-box or a simple waterproofed canvas kit-bag, lined with flannel and fastening with a zipper at the top. For a small supply of lures and casting leaders, oil can, line dressing pad and tube, fish-stringer and pliers, scales and tape measure and a small tin container with adhesive tape and some antiseptic for cuts and snags, the canvas kit-bag does very nicely. One can carry this in the end of a canoe or in the pockets of a hunting coat, and when on the stream or lake shore it is easy to park it on a rock or hang it from a nearby branch. It is light and yet practical for the purpose of keeping the equipment together and ready for use when needed. The lures when carried in this bag should be kept in their original pasteboard or metal boxes, and thereby the sharp hooks are in no danger to the interior of the bag or the person of the angler. The baits can be consolidated in

many cases, two or more fitting easily into the one box.

But for the longer and more extended casting trips of a week or fortnight's duration, and where the tackle is carried in boat or canoe almost all the time, or where portages are to be made, then the standard metal tackle-box is the best settlement to make. This should be of the cantilever-type, which opens and spreads the trays automatically so that each bait and the bottom compartment is open for inspection when the lid is opened. It locks and has a good carrying handle. The box should be of copper, strong enough to withstand hard knocks and the weight of heavy duffle when on the canoe or wilderness tote road trails. The trays should be lined with cork to prevent the fine finish of the lures from being dulled and broken in rattling around against metal surfaces. This is very important. If metal trays are used the lures should be wrapped in soft outing flannel covers when placed in the trays.

There can be a strong and positively locking fish stringer included with the box. This can be of the "safety-pin" fastening, chain style or a good strong braided cord stringer with brass cross bar and needle for stringing through the lips of the fish and keeping them alive when placed in the water. This is preferable to having dead fish lying around in the boat or on the shore rocks.

A tape measure of the steel-tape sort, with an extension of around eight feet, and a pair of tested spring scales weighing up to 30 lbs., pair of good dependable pliers for removing hooks and cutting steel wire, disgorger, box of sinkers (assorted sizes), box of extra assorted hooks and treble hooks, carborundum stone and hook file, tube of line dressing and square of thick felt for cleaning lines, collapsible drinking cup, box of swivels and snaps, coil of steel piano wire, some ball cord, tube of mosquito dope, bottle

of mercurochrome, roll of narrow bandage, small tube of antiseptic-salve, waterproof match box filled, small oiler with reel oil, small screw driver for reel, spool of winding thread (silk), bar of rod cement and an extra rod tip, small bottle of rod varnish, small bottle of powdered pumice and small roll of fine sandpaper. These items are very necessary and will fit into a section of the bottom compartment of the tackle-box. A small fish-billy, a two-piece, gaff-hook with screw joint and a collapsible steel-frame landing net with detachable, two piece handle that fits into the long lower compartment should also be included. An extra casting line on its spool and some casting leaders will complete the outfit. This whole kit will go into a standard sized tackle-box and can be kept dry and where it will be safe and ready for emergencies or use in this way.

Chapter 43

TROLLING

THERE IS ONE final phase of our fresh-water fishing discussion that rates inclusion here, and that is the art of trolling for the larger game fishes of pond, lake and stream. This method of fresh-water fishing has long been an important one, and many of the summer vacationists and northern piscatorial-pilgrims that *trek* into the great lake regions of the Ontario and Border-states sections each year for lake trout, muskellunge, walleyed pike, G. N. pike and bass resort almost entirely to this phase of artificial bait use for their catches.

The best method for the lake-trout fisherman who goes into the deep-lake regions and bays of the north-country in the warm weeks of July and August, when the lake trout is schooling at low, cold levels in the lakes, is the canoe-trolling method. This is the approved style of fishing for these fish by the Canadian and Border-Lakes guides and outfitters. The canoe is easy to handle in the lakes where we find the lake trout, and permits the fisherman more comfort and a more practical position for his fishing than does the fishing boat. A 16 foot canoe is usually the choice for trout trolling, equipped with a seat and back-rest for fishing when the lake is calm and the angler wishes to sit up where he can see

what is going on. The back-rest, however, should be in the front of the craft, so that the fisherman faces toward the wake of the vessel. In the larger and rougher lakes the canoe is many times equipped with a pair of folded camp blankets, doubled and spread on the bottom and over the front thwart so that the sportsman can sit with his back resting against the front thwart, his elbows on the gunwales and facing the steersman who does the paddling and the directing of the canoe's course about the lake-trout pools. This is a comfortable position, and gives the fisherman a plain view of the water at the rear.

Lake-trout pools are usually to be found near the entrance to the larger and deeper bays of a lake, where rocky bars and shelves of the lake bottom offer the fish an opportunity to feed on minnows and other bottom foods. These bars in the trolling weeks of July and August, when the trout sinks down to low levels where the food is found and where the water temperatures remain cold and icy, are from twenty to a hundred feet under the surface. This necessitates the use of a deep sinking bait and a long, weighted line. The best line to use is the Monel-metal one. The older fashion was to use the soft braided or a plain copper line. But the fault that was found in using such lines was that they had a bad habit of kinking, and wherever these kinks occurred there was bound to be a weakness, so that when a large, hard-striking fish struck many of them were lost by the line breaking. The plain copper wire line was also hard to spool on the large Skeleton trolling reels and the braided lines although more flexible were still hard to handle. This brought into service a new type of line, that was originated, we believe, according to our information, by the professional and commercial Mackinaw-trout fishermen of northeastern Lake Michigan shores, where this type of

fishing has become one of the leading summer pastimes for those anglers who like deep-sea thrills in their fresh-water angling. Off the northwest points of the lower peninsula of the state of Michigan is one of the greatest Mackinaw-trout trolling grounds in the country, and we also find this recreation consistently practiced with the aid of commercial-fishermen as guides and outfitters, on the south shores of Lake Superior, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and off the north shores of Superior in the wild and little frequented sections that extend westward as far as Batchawana Bay west of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, also eastward from Fort Francis, on the west end of the North shore country as far as the Orient Bay country south of Nipigon. The Thunder Bay regions of Michigan on Lake Huron, and the Georgian Bay sections across from Thunder Bay, in Ontario are all favored lake trout fishing sections. The Algonquin Park waters of Ontario, the Timagami Lake regions and the Lake Of The Woods country—all of these are popular with the fishermen who like to troll their artificial lures for this great grey-trout of the fresh-water lakes of the north.

The Monel-metal line is a steel line, chromium plated, and stiff enough to prevent kinks, yet flexible in a way that makes it very useful for the working of deep, underwater lures. It can be had in smaller calibers than the soft copper wire lines, and is ideal for this sport we deal with. The rod that is most satisfactory for such trolling is the tubular or solid steel models of five and five-and-a-half foot lengths, or the new Power-Master models of double-handle, tubular-steel rods with Speed-Lock reel seat fastenings, and off-set handles, that are intended for two-handed casting or trolling uses. The reel can be either a large capacity salt-water type or the regulation Skeleton Lake Trout trolling reel model, that will take several hundred feet of metal line on

their spools. The guides should be of agate or tool-proof steel, as the wear of the metal line is quite considerable and a hard guide and tip is necessary. Some lake trout fishermen use the "heavy-action" split bamboo muskie or pike casting rods and they work very successfully.

The best lures for this fishing are the spoon and spinner models, although many very expert lake trout trollers use nothing but wooden and composition bass and pike casting plugs and underwater minnows and have great success in catching the trout with them. The Minnow-Spinner has been for many years one of the great lake trout trolling lures in the Ontario North Woods. This is a spinning, wobbling type of bait, with a steel needle on which a minnow is baited or a pork rind used, with a scissor-like clamp that fastens the bait by the head section, and has small treble hooks attached by heavy gut snells. It is a deep traveling bait that needs no sinker when used with metal line and will sink to the lowest possible stages in the trout lakes. It is also a fine lure for large square-tail and Loch Leven trout in the big lakes, trout that have drifted into the heavy, deep waters from the woods streams and grown big and powerful. The Square-Tail trout is nothing more than a lake-locked brook trout, that has grown large and strong and whose caudal or tail fin has become almost square across ends with vigorous and healthy growth and deep swimming. These are many times taken in conjunction with lake trout when trolling from the canoe in the north.

Other good baits for the lake trout troll are Pearl Wobblers, Metal Spoons and Flasher Spoon types that are used with either a small minnow or a pork rind attached to the end treble hook or used alone without any of these additions. I have used the flasher spoons with great success and one of

the best baits I ever tried in the Algonquin Park waters was a wobbling, nickel-plated type of spoon that was made out on the Pacific Coast, for steelhead and salmon trolling with a strong, single hook brazed to its concave surface at rear sections and with a red and white bucktail fly dressed to the hook shaft. This bait proved to be our greatest killer on that trip for summer trout in the deep pools of the large lakes. The Tandem Spinning bait can also be used, and the half-ounce Underwater-Minnow models of composition material as well as the wooden minnow with metal headpiece have all proved good in some lakes and at certain seasons.

The idea to remember and follow is to have a bait that sinks down deep under the pull of the metal line and that either wiggles or wobbles through the water like a minnow swimming along. For the lake trout are feeders on underwater minnows of various species that swim deep under the surface of these northern lakes. The best trout lakes are those with rocky shores and cliffs and that drop off sharply into great depths of as much as two hundred feet of cold, clear, clean water. The more shallow, sandy-shored lakes are not so promising, and the fish in them are found only at a distance from shore and then, usually, over bottoms that are impossible to troll because of logs and brush that have collected there through lumbering operations. I do not subscribe very strongly to the use of linen or silk lines in this trolling, and the necessary use of sinker rigs and specially attached metal troll-rigs at line ends. All of which is too complicated for easy and practical trolling and that can be so easily discontinued through the plain use of a monel-metal line, a large caliber reel and a good, strong rod, without any sinkers necessary.

The fisherman takes his position facing to the stern in the

canoe or boat, with his rod rigged up and the bait attached. The guide strips off enough of the metal line from the rod tip to permit the lure to sink down some twenty feet or more, then lifting and dipping his paddle he guides the canoe slowly out to the area where the trout are known to congregate for feeding, or where a large fish has been spotted. The reel is permitted to run free until enough line is out to insure the bait traveling at the depths the fish are presumed to be using. Usually thirty or forty feet, in the average woods lake is about right. One can tell best by making a circuit of the pool, and if no strikes are registered then it is conclusive evidence that there is not enough line out, and more can be run off. This is continued, lengthening or shortening the troll until the fish begin to strike. After that the line should be marked so as to permit the fisherman to let out a specified length of line and sink the lure down to the level where the school of trout are feeding or traveling. This will work for quite a while, and then the fish will either move or seek another level, and so the experiment to get out proper depth of line has to be tried again. In the meantime the canoe or boat will be navigated in a wide circle to keep in the vicinity of the school of trout, until the fish move on or go into deeper water. Many times a big fellow will be encountered all by himself, and at other times a school of large trout is found lurking where one would not expect trout at all. I have fished for them in forty feet of water and caught several good fish, then portaging the canoe to another lake, perhaps at a higher level on the uplands we would find that half the amount of line out would take even larger trout, so, as in all trolling for game fish, it is a good deal a matter of experimenting until the right length of line and the proper bait is found for the fish to accept.

MUSKIE TROLLING

In trolling for the muskellunge the heavy-action split-bamboo or the tubular or solid steel casting rod of five-and-a-half-foot length is used. A good, strong rod is quite necessary, as this fish will strike a terrific blow at times when it rises from shallow waters. The outboard-motor-driven fishing boat is used quite often in some sections, setting the speed at a mere crawl, and swinging around the deep shore coves and over the rocky reefs and submerged weed beds with the angler sitting on the middle thwart. This method of trolling, however, is not so popular as the canoe and guide method. The canoe is handled by an experienced guide and the angler sits on a folded blanket on bottom with back resting against forward thwart, and handles the rod, letting out perhaps a hundred feet of 30 lbs. test waterproofed silk bait casting line with a large wooden minnow, a wooden plug or a spinning bait. In the Wisconsin and Minnesota muskie sections a round-bottomed fishing boat is used principally, with guide or companion rowing and the angler sitting in the stern where he can follow the best locations along the edge of the pads, the sedgy shores and over the weedy islands in the bays, using a semi-surface wooden minnow or plug as the lure, with a sinker attached to take it down into the deeper pools and eddies, and a 30 lbs. test waterproofed silk casting line. The muskie should be struck with the rod the moment it is seen to rise or the strike is felt, with a strong, unhesitating pull of the rod hand. If the rod is permitted to slack before the snub is made it mostly permits the fish to escape.

Trolling for muskies can be done by the angler alone in a light fishing boat, by sitting on the middle or rowing seat with the rod clamped between the knees, the reel handle

resting against the heavy part of the upper leg to prevent the line flowing out too easily when the strain of the lure is strongest or when weeds are encountered, and the tip resting easily over the side of the gunwale of the boat, pointing at a sharp angle backward to the wake. The oars should be used very lightly, lifting the boat along at a slow, easy speed, making as little noise as possible and maneuvering the stern of the boat so that it guides the troll around in a wavering, swinging course. The distance for the best trolling from rod tip to lure should be around seventy-five feet and when the fish strikes the oars should be dropped and the rod picked up immediately and the snub made with a strong, free swing of the shoulders in the direction opposite the gamester's location. A pair of U-shaped oar locks that permits the oars plenty of freedom, pinched in at top to prevent the oars sliding out and into the water when not in the angler's hands, and with leather thole seat for silent rowing is the best trolling rig. This permits the angler to feather his oars and give the boat all the light, quick movements that tend to bring the trolling bait darting, wobbling and diving over those places where the big fish are lurking. This is one of the most killing trolling methods I have ever used. Other game fish will be encountered in such fishing, besides the muskie. Walleyed pike, pickerel, G. N. pike and the big and smallmouth bass are all quite ready to strike the troller's artificial baits. It is a very intriguing and restful way of fishing for sport and for recreation, and like all the other pastimes we practice with rod and reel on the fresh-waters it lends a quiet, soothing change to the spirit and the mind of the vacationist and sportsman.

THE END