

FISHING *Daily* FOR A YEAR

photo-Marilyn Black

by Marilyn Black

Ponder this—What if you could go fishing every day? Tony Sobina, Oil City, Venango County, has been living that fishing dream since April 13, 2020. His brother, Christopher Sobina, asked him, “How come you’re not fishing every day now that you’re retired?” Tony decided to see how long he could keep up the consecutive days. The answer is still pending, because when this article went to press, his more than 3-year fishing streak was still uninterrupted.

Even prior to his retirement as a machinist, Tony Sobina was an avid catch-and-release angler, fishing 4 or 5 days a week. A long-time member of the Keystone Fly Fishers chapter of Fly Fishers International, Sobina helped instruct youth and adults in fly casting and tying flies. Now, age 69, he fishes every day of the week in every season, usually with flies he tied.

“I have a passion for it. I never really get tired of it, because techniques are always changing,” said Sobina. “It’s actually a game of problem-solving and trial and error. I love dry fly fishing, wet fly fishing, streamer fishing, and for the last few years, I have been tightline fishing or Euro nymphing.”



photo-courtesy of Tony Sobina

Tony Sobina, Venango County, caught and released this 27-inch Brown Trout while fishing in Potter County.

Sobina keeps an angler’s calendar tracking weather and water conditions, where he fished and fish caught. “I target trout (I prefer wild trout) 90% of the time, plus steelhead. While fly fishing, I caught steelhead, suckers, trout, Bluegills, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Yellow Perch and lots of chubs,” said Sobina. He doesn’t necessarily catch a fish



photo-Marilyn Black

Tony Sobina caught this Rainbow Trout while fishing Sugar Creek, Venango County, in October.

Sobina describes his average fishing duration as 2 hours. “If the fish are active, I’ll fish down to dusk.” So far, his briefest fishing time (30 minutes) was in February after he hooked an 18-inch Rainbow Trout. While fighting it, his reel fell off. Sobina waded into icy water, retrieved the reel, and caught and released the Rainbow Trout. Having worn knee-high rubber boots, he was soaked to his waist, and he headed home.

Sobina’s daily fishing challenge puts him on local waters such as Oil Creek, Sugar Creek, Neshannock Creek and tributaries of the Allegheny River. Recently, he has been exploring Upper Pine Creek, Potter County, and Spring Creek, Centre County. He looks forward to fishing limestone waters in Cumberland Valley, where there are good Trico hatches.

When local streams are frozen, Sobina concentrates on fishing tailwaters and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only areas. At the ice edge of an eddy, he breaks the ice, has a hot chocolate and then returns to fish using tightline nymphs with stonefly or midge patterns. He advises cold water anglers to use barbless hooks and, with a pair of hemostats, unhook the fish beneath

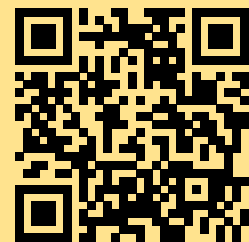
the water surface, so the trout’s gills are not exposed to freezing air.

There was one day when Sobina wasn’t certain he’d go fishing. “I woke up with an extremely painful kidney stone issue. My doctor instructed me to go to the Emergency Room immediately. On the way to the hospital and in pain, I stopped and fished a stream, where I caught one wild Brown Trout and missed two. At the hospital, I was admitted and my physician performed surgery at 3:30 p.m. that afternoon.

I was home by 7:00 p.m. and fished the next morning,” said Sobina.

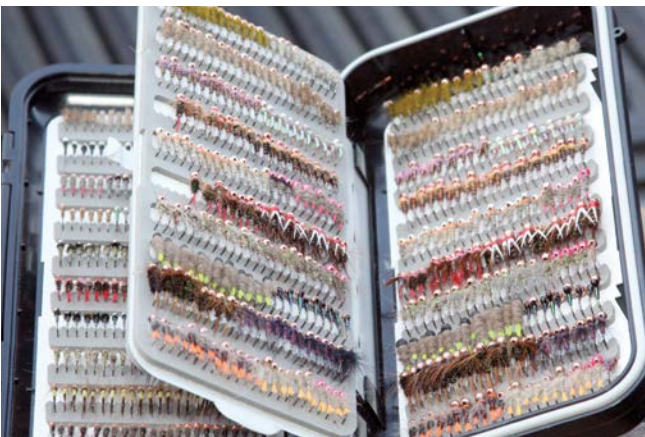
“Every day fishing is an education. Enjoy the good fishing days and laugh at the not so good moments,” said Sobina. ☐

Video interview with Tony and Chris Sobina:



youtube.com/c/PAfishandboat1866

photo-Darl Black



A peek into the fly box Tony Sobina carries with him while fishing for trout.

on every outing. If he had to pick his top three flies for catching trout, those would be the Adams, Prince Nymph and Walt’s Worm.

Sobina fishes by himself most of the time. His brother or a friend may join him occasionally. “My typical fishing partners are eagles, mergansers, herons and otters,” said Sobina.