

Dedicated to the Memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr.

PLAY

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

SPRING 2001

20 Years of PLAY: PLAY Changes

After 20 years, the PLAY program is undergoing some important changes. PLAY started in 1981 as a way to get information on fish, fishing, conservation and safety in the hands of kids aged 8 to 12. For a \$2 membership fee (in 1981), kids received four newsletters and a patch. The fee was raised to \$3 in the early 1990s.

The Commission has been looking for a way to honor the memory of Commissioner Enoch S. "Inky" Moore Jr., who passed away last fall. Commission Executive Director Peter A. Colangelo looked no further than the PLAY program. Commissioner Moore was very interested in efforts to teach young people about Pennsylvania's water resources. He was also interested in safety and ethical behavior. He worked hard to protect the Commonwealth's resources. He made sure



people knew how to use our resources wisely and safely. It is fitting to dedicate PLAY to Inky's memory.

Subscriptions to the *PLAY Newsletter* will now be free. This way, more kids aged 8 to 12 can get the *PLAY Newsletter*. PLAY patches will still be available for sale at \$2.83 plus tax. If you get the *PLAY Newsletter* through the mail now, you will get a notice

when your current subscription runs out. If you get the *PLAY Newsletter* at school and would like to get it at home, fill out and mail the coupon in this issue. If you know someone else who would like the *PLAY Newsletter*, have that person send in the coupon. Make sure an adult signs the form before sending it in.



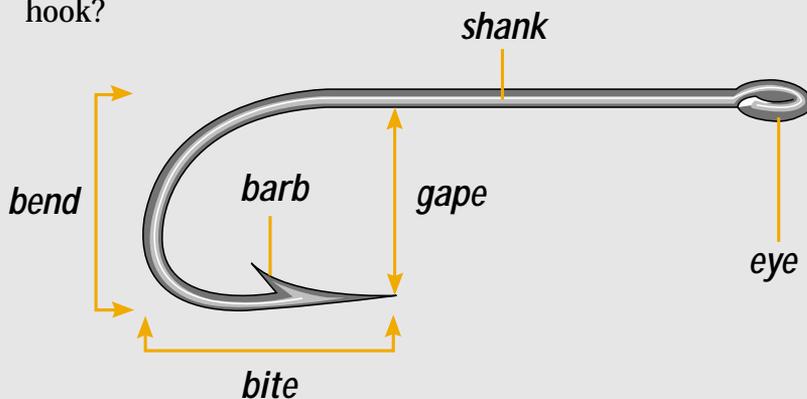
You will notice another change in the *PLAY Newsletter*. The Commission believes the things that were important to Commissioner Moore should live on. Each issue will include even more safety tips, examples of ethical behavior and other quick notes on conservation.



Hook Sharpening: Keep Those Hooks Sharp!

Get the point?

Your first “point” of contact with fish is the point of the hook. If the hook is sharp, you increase the chances of a good hookset. Solid and deep hooksets are critical to hooking and landing fish. Dull hooks take more effort to hit home. Why spend hundreds (or thousands, if you own a boat) of dollars to catch fish, and not do so just because of a dull hook?



Is it sharp?

There is an easy way to determine if a hook is sharp. Gently draw the point of the hook across a fingernail. If the point digs in and leaves a mark, it's sharp. If the hook doesn't leave a mark or won't dig in, it needs to be sharpened.



How to sharpen

There are likely as many gadgets and techniques for sharpening hooks as there are anglers. A small metal finishing file will do fine. In this method, you are filing three surfaces of the hook point.

- ✓ 1. Firmly hold the hook.
- ✓ 2. Draw the file across the barb toward the point. Repeat this stroke several times. Be sure to hold the file at the same angle each time.
- ✓ 3. Repeat these strokes on the other side of the point.
- ✓ 4. Make final strokes on the bottom of the point, forming a triangular point.
- ✓ 5. Test the hook for sharpness.

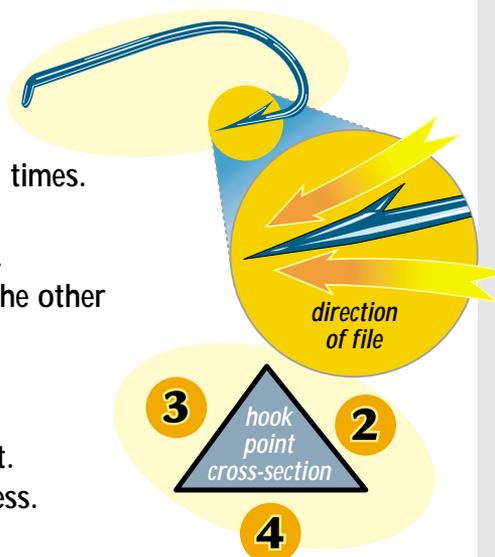


photo-Art Michaels; illustration and graphics-Ted Walke

Hook-sharpening tips:

1. Don't file too much or you will weaken the point.
2. Hooks will rust, so be sure to let them air dry. Don't store damp lures or hooks in tackle boxes.
3. Buy the best-quality hook you can afford. It will be money well-spent.
4. Replace rusted treble hooks.



Pre-Season Warm-up

Athletes warm up before the season starts and before each event. Why shouldn't you before trout season opens? If you haven't fished since last fall, your skills could use some practice.

Practice Plug

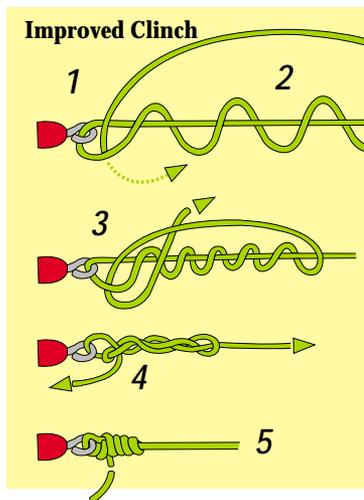
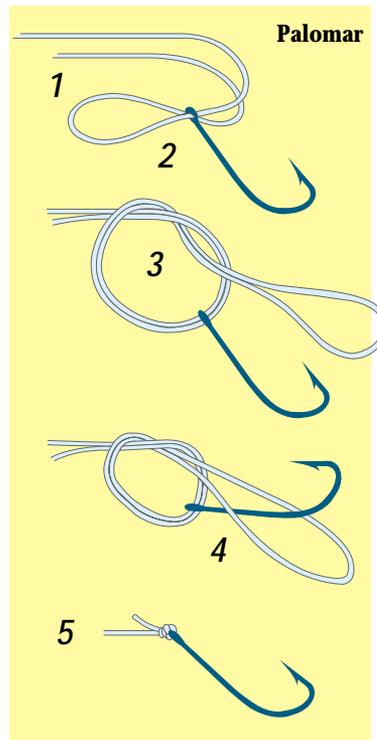
Practice plugs are handy for casting practice. You don't want to throw lures with hooks around the house or in the yard. Most tackle shops sell practice plugs. You can make one of your own.

Knots

A poorly tied knot can weaken the line strength by 50 percent or more. That means a lousy knot tied on 4-pound test is like fishing with 2-pound test. Practice your knots at home using a heavy cord, parachute rope or an old fly line. Your casting plug can do double duty—tie your knots to it. Here are some of the knots commonly used by anglers.

Palomar—used for attaching lures or hooks

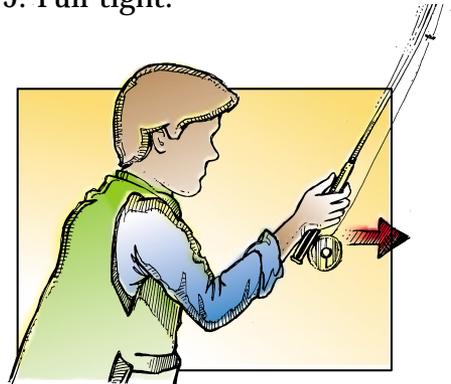
1. Make a loop of 4 inches or so of line.
2. Pull loop through eye.
3. Tie an overhand knot with loop. Hook should dangle from middle of knot.
4. Pull loop over hook.
5. Pull both lines to tighten.



Improved clinch—used for attaching lures or hooks

1. Thread line through eye and double back on line.
2. Wrap loose end around line to reel five times.
3. Thread loose end through first loop above eye.

4. Thread loose end through the big loop made in step #3.
5. Pull tight.



Casting Practice

Practice in your backyard will make you a better caster on the water. Don't mind the funny looks your friends and neighbors give you! Tell yourself (and them) that you will catch more fish than they will. Better yet, get them

practicing with you. Targets include hula hoops, trash can lids or wash tubs.

Scatter your targets around the yard. Practice casting accurately at different distances. With a partner, you can play FISH, a game like HORSE played by basketball players. One caster makes a trick or hard cast and the other tries to make that same cast. The caster missing the target or not making the cast gets a letter from the word FISH. The casters switch who goes first. The first one to get all the letters in the word FISH loses.



Life Jackets and the "Touchdown" Test

Boating is a lot of fun. Being a safe boater lets you have more fun. The most important thing you can do is always wear your life jacket. If you fall out or the boat turns over, a life jacket is designed to keep you afloat.

A life jacket is also called a personal flotation device, or PFD. If you go on boats often, you should have your own PFD. It is your **personal** piece of equipment. Life jackets come in a variety of colors and styles. Newer designs are comfortable to wear. Buy one that you will want to wear, and that is suited for your activities. Make sure your



PFD is the right size. Your PFD should fit snugly so it won't come off in the water.

It's probably been a few months since you last wore your life jacket. Be sure to test the jacket's fit before boating season begins. The best way to test the size is by doing the "touchdown test."

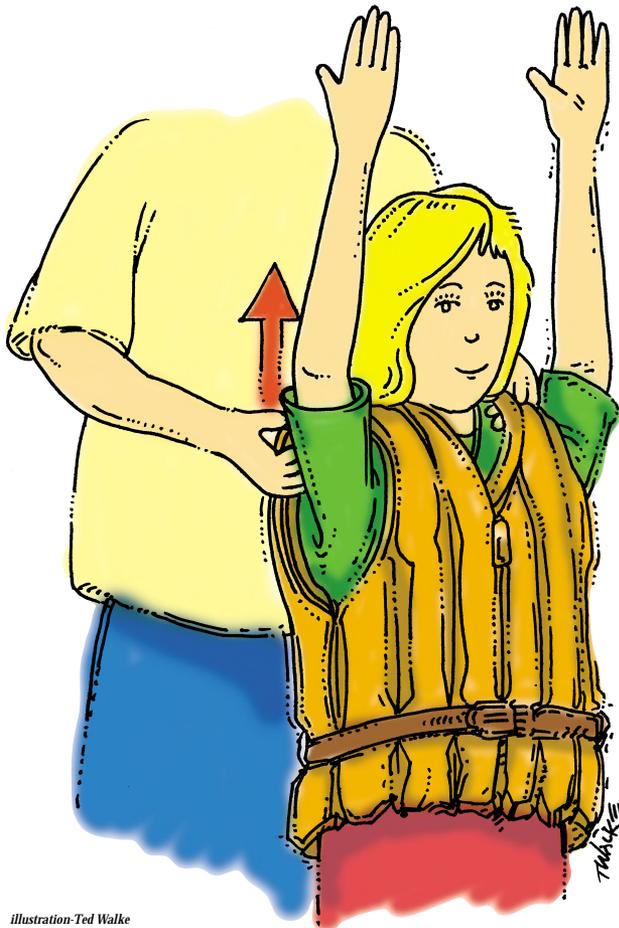


Illustration: Ted Walke

Here's how to do it.

1. Put on your life jacket.
2. Raise your arms over your head as if you were signaling a touchdown.
3. Have someone lift your life jacket straight up by the shoulders.
4. The jacket should stay in place.

If the zipper touches your nose or almost comes off, the jacket is too loose.

Pugnose Minnow

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has identified the first known occurrence of the pugnose minnow in Commonwealth waters. This adds a new species to the list of fish found here. As part of a water quality study, Commission Fisheries Biologist Rick Spear and PA Dept. of Environmental Protection Water Pollution Biologists Ray Hasse and Joe Brancato conducted a fisheries survey September 23, 2000, on Cussewago Creek, Crawford County, in the Allegheny River Watershed. They collected 19 fish species, including two minnows captured by Spear that he'd never seen before.

"I knew that I had something different. And I knew what I thought it might be, but I couldn't be certain until we were able to take it back to the lab. What I didn't know at the time was that this minnow species had never been found in Pennsylvania before," said Spear.



Spear's identification was confirmed by Dr. Jay Stauffer of Penn State University.

The pugnose minnow is about 2 1/2 inches long. It has a compressed body, small head and blunt snout with an almost vertical mouth. It occurs in sluggish, clear, vegetated waters over muddy or silty bottoms. The pugnose minnow occurs in the Mississippi River Watershed and ranges from Ohio south to Louisiana. Future surveys will be conducted to determine population size and geographic distribution in Pennsylvania.



photos-Tim Stecko, Penn State

The Science of Stocking Trout

Each year, the Commission raises and stocks millions of trout. These fish are put in our waters just for us to catch. But they aren't stocked without rhyme or reason. For example, trout aren't stocked in streams that have lots of wild trout. Wild trout are those that are spawned and grow in the wild. If there are enough wild trout naturally occurring in a waterway to support fishing pressure, then that waterway isn't stocked. The Commission calls these stream sections "Class A Wild Trout Waters." There are more than 1,000 miles of stream sections considered Class A. Waters that have some wild trout, but not enough to support high fishing pressure, are good candidates for stocking.



the amount of parking near the stream, the stream's closeness to roads, and who owns the land surrounding the stream.

All of this information is collected and analyzed. The number of fish stocked (if at all) is based on the analysis of the stream. Streams stocked

at the highest rates (streams that get the most fish) include those that have the following characteristics:

- low to moderate population of wild trout.
- water temperatures that don't exceed 75 degrees in the summer.
- pH of at least 6.0.
- width between 16 and 66 feet.
- public ownership or cooperative landowners willing to open their property.
- nearness to lots of people.
- plenty of places for anglers to park.
- easy for anglers to access.

Streams that fit this ideal receive up to 475 trout per acre per year. The number of trout stocked decreases as conditions move away from the ideal.

The fewest number of trout stocked per acre per year is 50.

You can see that there is a lot of work that goes in to stocking trout. All this work is well worth it so you can have a good day on the water.

Cut out the trout identification card at left, fold over on dotted line and keep in your fishing vest pocket to help identify your catch.

Trout



Brook trout
Salvelinus fontinalis
PA's Official State Fish



Brown trout
Salmo trutta



Rainbow trout
Oncorhynchus mykiss



Golden rainbow trout
Oncorhynchus mykiss



Lake trout
Salvelinus namaycush

Identification



Brook trout has red spots with bluish halos.



Worm-like pattern (vermiculation) on back.



Front edge of fins white or lighter in color.



Brown trout has dark spots, few or none on tail.



Rainbow trout has dark spots, especially on tail, and a pink lateral stripe.



Golden rainbow trout has deep-yellow or orange coloration. Some have darker gold stripe.



Lake trout has light spots over entire body. Tail deeply forked.



Illustration: Ted Walke