



Wall charts

I have a set of five Commission wall charts painted by Tom Duran Jr. Their titles are: Miscellaneous Fishes, Coldwater Games Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Coolwater/Warmwater Game Fishes and Salamanders of Pennsylvania. The posters carry no publication dates, and I am interested in knowing when they were published.

I am aware of the active market for Ned Smith posters and wonder if any similar notoriety is being enjoyed by Mr. Duran's work.

Lastly, I wonder if you have information on what posters are available from the Commission now, and their prices. Your help, particularly with the dates of the fish series I have, would be very much appreciated.—*Robert V. Everest, Yardley.*

The Commission charts you describe have been published and reprinted continuously since the 1970s and 1980s. Our suite includes 10 such charts. I estimate that hundreds of thousands of them are in circulation. The last one we completed, which included Tom Duran's artwork, was "Forage Fishes of Pennsylvania," in the early 1990s.

Mr. Duran's original artwork is highly valued as display and collectible art. Our wall charts continue to be popular items for display and educational purposes. For ordering information, check out the publications order form in the center of this issue, and check out the charts and ordering information on our website at www.fish.state.pa.us. From the main page, just click on "Publications" in the column on the left.—*Ed.*

Fallfish

I moved here a year ago and the locals talk about a fish called "fallfish." Do you know what kind of fish they are talking about? I assume it is a local name for some other species of fish.—*Jerry W. Porter via e-mail at www.fish.state.pa.us.*

In Pennsylvania, there are three members of the minnow family commonly called "chubs"—the creek chub, the pearl dace and the fallfish. The fallfish is the largest native minnow along the East Coast, reaching more than 18 inches long. Fallfish are olive-brown to black on the back, silvery on the sides, with a white belly, and have dark edges to their scales. The tail is forked and the tail fin's lobes are sharply pointed. The fallfish lives in East Coast streams and is in the Susquehanna, Delaware and Potomac River watersheds in Pennsylvania.

Chubs are fish of flowing water. Fallfish use clean, gravelly pools and slower-flow areas of large streams and our bigger trout streams. Surface-feeding chubs, especially the creek chub and fallfish, are often caught by fly fishermen.—*Dan Tredinnick, Press Secretary.*

Rainbow trout question

Last spring I caught a nice rainbow along with a few browns near Marienville. While gutting the rainbow, we came upon what we figured were the eggs—a membrane approximately 2 to 3 inches long filled with small, 1/16-inch-diameter round, soft balls. From my description, were these the eggs? I was under the impression that trout had already spawned for the season. Is this correct, and what is their normal spawning period? Is there a way to determine female versus male trout so I will not do this in the future?—*Ron Barchfeld, via e-mail at www.fish.state.pa.us.*

In female trout, eggs are held within a thin membrane in the body cavity. Trout eggs range from pale-yellow to orange. The size of the eggs depends on the stage of development and the

size of the female (in general, larger trout produce larger eggs). Nonetheless, when a female trout is ready to spawn, the eggs fill much of the free space in the body cavity.

In Pennsylvania, brook and brown trout are fall spawners. Brook trout generally spawn between September and November and brown trout spawn a little later, usually between October and December. By nature, rainbow trout are spring spawners. However, by the process of selection in the hatchery system, this species has been selected to spawn during the late summer and early fall (August or September). Basically, from the time that the eggs hatch, it takes about 16 to 18 months to produce trout of catchable size for stocking (averaging 9 to 11 inches in length). Therefore, this process has allowed us to have relatively uniform-size catchable hatchery trout of all three species during a period when they are in the most demand, during spring.

The older the trout is and the closer to spawning season, the easier it is to distinguish between the sexes. In general, mature male trout develop a kype (a hooked snout on the lower jaw). Male trout also tend to be more laterally compressed than female trout, and during the spawning period they may be brighter in coloration. Female trout tend to have a more rounded snout and body conformation. Of course, the positive way to determine whether a fish is male or female is as you did, to sacrifice the fish and examine for the presence of eggs or sperm.

Don't be upset about harvesting the rainbow trout. This fish was most likely an older hatchery trout that had begun to develop eggs for the upcoming season, or possibly it had some old eggs remaining from a previous spawn (eggs that are not expelled are absorbed internally by the fish). It is highly unlikely that this hatchery fish would have successfully spawned with another rainbow trout in the wild in Pennsylvania waters. Although we have a wealth of reproducing wild brook and brown trout populations, only about a dozen streams support reproducing wild rainbow trout fisheries.—*Tom Greene, Coldwater Unit Leader.*

More golden rainbow trout, please

My name is David and I am in fifth grade. I have been fishing since I was 2, and now I am 11 years old. I fish Stony Creek, Dauphin County, because I have a cabin there. Sometimes I fish at the kid's section at Clarks Creek because I like to catch palomino trout.

I was wondering for next year when you stock trout, if you could put some palomino trout in Stony Creek. I would like my older relatives like my Dad and Grandpa to catch a nice palomino. They are the ones who taught me to fish.—*David Ricker, Harrisburg*

The fish you caught were actually golden rainbow trout. They are not a true palomino. Instead, they are a color variation of the normal rainbow trout. Many anglers still refer to the golden rainbow trout as a "palomino" because they are so similar in color.

The fish likely came from a stocking by the Dauphin County Anglers and Conservationists, who operate a cooperative nursery adjacent to the Children's Area on Clarks Creek.

The Commission doesn't stock rainbow trout (including golden rainbow trout) in either Stony or Clarks creeks. These creeks are somewhat acidic and rainbow trout do not do very well. Rainbow trout normally prefer low acidic conditions. Brook and brown trout can tolerate more acidic water, like Stony Creek and Clarks Creek. Thus, brook and brown trout are our preferred species to stock in these waters.

You may wonder why the cooperative nursery can raise and stock rainbow trout in Clarks Creek and the Commission does not. Trout raised at Commission hatcheries are reared in low-acidic spring waters. The trout become used to these low acidic conditions, particularly the rainbow trout. If these trout are stocked into waters with higher acidity, like Stony Creek or Clarks Creek, the rainbow trout will likely move (sometimes long distances) to areas with more favor-

able conditions, or they may eventually perish. The difference in water conditions from the hatchery to Clarks and Stony Creek is just too much for the rainbow trout to handle. On the other hand, the cooperative nursery is able to raise rainbow trout in water partially coming from Clarks Creek. This process seems to allow rainbow trout to become used to conditions already present in Clarks Creek, and they seem to have success raising and stocking rainbow trout in these waters.

If your relatives want to fish for some golden rainbow trout, the Commission stocks them in the lower ends of Powell Creek or Manada Creek between Furnace Road and Orchard Road. Both waterways receive good numbers of trophy-size golden rainbow trout.—*Robert Weber, Coldwater Unit Technician*

Petri articles

I found your article, "Elk County Trout Streams," in the May/June *PA&B* not only quite interesting but most timely. I had Ridgway on my itinerary for several weeks before receiving this latest issue. I've been making two to three trips a year into Elk County and surrounding areas for a few years. My first trip occurred when my older brother came up from San Antonio to shoot in the 1995 national Rifle Silhouette matches at the Ridgway Rifle Club. That was in June and Big Mill Creek was still productive despite the warm weather. That short fly stretch on the West Branch of the Clarion River was even better.

I did wet a line in Bear Creek this time out and found it to be quite generous as well as isolated, as you said in your article. But I'm too far out of shape to do much tramping through those mountain streams anymore.

I've been enjoying your writing in *PA&B* for many years and would hope you continue to provide these interesting, informative and instructive articles for years to come.—*John Bergevin, Dallas, PA*

BACKTALK

Letters

Argue with the Commission. Applaud us. Advise us. The Fish and Boat Commission invites you to write letters to the editor in this space if you have an idea on *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* content; a question or concern about the Commission; something to say about fish and fishing, or boats and boating; or a helpful idea for anglers or boaters. Please hold letters to no more than 200 words. Letters to the Commission become the property of the Commission, and they are edited for clarity and space considerations.

Photographs

Would you like a photograph of you and your catch to appear in *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*? Send a photograph of you and your catch to *PA&B* for publication consideration in the "Cast & Caught" column. Please send only snapshots and prints—no slides and no pictures larger than 8x10. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your picture returned.

Address correspondence to: Art Michaels, Editor, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000; or contact the Commission at its World Wide Web site: www.fish.state.pa.us.

Photo contest

If you'd like to see your photographs appear in more than just our "Cast & Caught" feature, you might want to enter your best of the best in the Commission's new photography contest. The contest will run from January 1, 2000, through December 1, 2000, and will focus on five main subject areas. A panel of judges will determine the winners. For complete details, see page 52 of this issue.