An old enemy rears its ugly head again!

Today, the greatest enemy to the fisheries of the Commonwealth is pollution. We are spending more time in our efforts to sustain high water quality than on anything else within our operating framework.

In the past six months, the mining interests, responding to the energy crisis which surfaced in 1973, are requesting mining permits wherever coal exists at a rate unmatched since the 1940's. Encouraged by the backlash the oil shortage has created against those who have fought to preserve our resources and environment, and by the proliferation of anti-environmental statements which have emanated from persons in the federal government, these permits could well reverse over a decade of hard work toward the elimination of major mine drainage problems.

To the fishermen of Pennsylvania, and to the Commission itself, this threat represents the single most critical issue that challenges our ability to provide and manage adequate resources to meet future recreational demands. We review hundreds of mine drainage permit applications and I regret to tell you that although we recommend disapproval of approximately two-thirds of these, we are being overridden on at least 70% of those we protest. I predict that this is going to be more and more of a concern to our personnel in the future.

Particular watersheds, such as the Slippery Rock and Mahoning Creek Watersheds, where large investments in "Scarlift Projects" have been made, are again being mined at an unprecedented rate. The most we seem to be able to accomplish is to watch these operations with every possible means of surveillance because it is virtually impossible to guarantee against an occasional mine acid slug which is enough to render a stream aquatically valueless.

Ralph W. Abele,
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Angler
Pennsylvania's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine
Published Monthly by the
PENNSYLVANIA FISH COMMISSION
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Milton J. Shapp, Governor

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Ralph W. Abele, Executive Director

Volume 43 - No. 8 August, 1974

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FRONT COVER: George E. Dolnack, Jr., photographed son Chris and crappie catch from Chester-Octoraro Reservoir. Story appears on page 16.
BACK COVER: The harmless Northern Water Snake. Photo: Tom Fegely.

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James F. Yoder, Editor
It was a warm night, the sky was alive with brilliant stars... the solitude was wonderful. My son and I were fishing the Allegheny River, near the village of President, at a place called Panther Rocks. It was July 28th, 1959. I was using a casting outfit with thirty pound test line. We were anchored in one of the great eddies of the upper river and fishing was slow.

“My bait was a five-inch river chub; I could feel its gentle tugging as it moved slowly over the river bottom — then it stopped. I sensed, rather than felt, that something had picked it up. Cautiously it moved off and I gave slack. After a wait that seemed like an eternity, I picked up the pole and took up the slack line. I had something on — but what? Rearing back, I set the hook. Whatever I had on felt like a Sherman tank!

"Nothing I had ever tangled with behaved like this fish. It bulldogged around the pool with no regard for the restraining line. After a while my arms tired, and I passed the rod to Bill, Jr. He fought the fish for a long time — then passed the rod back to me. After more than one hour of battling the fish, it came close to the boat and we finally got it to the net and into the boat.

"A catfish! And, man, was it ugly! In fact, it was the ugliest, beautiful fish I had ever seen! Now that we had it, what to do with it? We decided to take it home.

“We wrapped it up in some burlap we had in the trunk of the car and hauled it back to Acmetonia, near Pittsburgh. When we got it home, it was still alive. We put it into a pool in a small stream near the house and it swam about. A photographer from the Pittsburgh paper came up and took a picture of it, and within the next few days hundreds of people came to look at it. We decided to give it to the Carnegie Museum. They made a mold of it and cast a perfect reproduction."

This was the story Bill Yates told me back in 1961. Today, that replica is on display at the museum. A FLATHEAD CATFISH, 41 inches long, weighing 45 pounds, and with a girth of 28 inches, caught by William Yates of Indiana and his son William Jr. of Springdale.

Are these flathead catfish still in the river? Certainly! We still have fellows who fish strictly for the big cats in each of the eddies and deep pools of the river, from Schenley to Kinzua — they catch them, too! Big minnows, or any of the river sunfish, are the preferred baits. Ten- to twenty-pounders are the size the flatheads are running now. Besides the Allegheny, we get an occasional report of catches from the Ohio River — and from the Beaver River, in the Rochester area.

Channel catfish, next largest in size, are in just about every one of the watersheds across the state. Old “fork tail” will run up to about 15 pounds in our waters, although much heavier fish have been caught. Unlike the flatheads, channel cats will occasionally hit a slowly...
moving artificial lure. Those who fish strictly for them, swear by shrimp as bait, but this can get pretty costly now. Other baits used are minnows, dead or alive, and gobs of nightcrawlers or garden worms. Put a good-sized wad of these on the hook.

The smaller channel cats, those up to 14 inches, seem to prefer the riffle areas of the larger streams. As they grow in size, they retreat to the deeper holes. The distinctive steely-blue color and the black spots disappear as the fish grow bigger. Except for the forked tail, it then looks like any other catfish.

Catfish don't have to be big to offer good sport. The bullhead catfish, represented in our state by the yellow bullhead, the brown bullhead, and the black bullhead rarely exceed 18 inches in length. Most of these that are caught will average 10 inches. Great for fishing — because they bite well — they're a good fish to start youngsters on.

Bullheads can be caught on just about any bait imaginable. They are nocturnal and night fishing for them is by far the best. Gobs of worms, corn, cheese, doughball and a wide variety of meats, will all catch them. Big hooks, size 6 or larger, are best for catfish. Get the bait down to the bottom and just wait. The catfish rely on the barbels around the mouth, and their keen sense of smell, to locate their food. Many catfishermen prefer a bait that gives off an odor to catch their fish.

All catfish are fine eating. The flesh of the flatheads and the channel cats is snowy white, while in the bullheads it's a pearly grey. Catfish must be skinned before cooking, but this is a simple operation. Cut completely around the body of the fish, just behind the gill cover. Then with a pair of pliers, grasp the skin and pull it off the body. Beware of the sharp spines located in the first ray of the dorsal and pectoral fins; these can inflict a nasty cut if you mishandle the fish.

After you have the skin off, the body structure is similar to that of the basses. It's an easy matter to filet the meat away from the spine and the rib cage. After you have the filets, you can fry, broil, or boil them. Chunks of catfish, boiled lightly, then prepared in a casserole with a white or other type of cream sauce, are a taste-alike substitute for Lobster Thermidor! Next time you're out fishing and you catch some catfish, save them and cook them up. You will soon realize why catfish farming, for table use, is such a big deal down South!

Lake Erie
Treasure Hunting

by Robert L. Steiner
Fish Culturist,
Walnut Creek Station

Much has been written about the recreational impact of the salmon fishing in Lake Erie in the last few years, but recently a new pastime has developed as a direct result of this fishery. This hobby is Treasure Hunting! The "treasure"? Fishing lures — of every conceivable size, shape, color, weight, and value.

My personal interest in treasure hunting is confined to walking the beaches after the "northeasters" and "northwesters" have blown themselves out and rummaging through the driftwood. In the last two years my efforts have been rewarded with no less than fifty fishing lures, besides unique pieces of driftwood, toys, and many other items.

Another aspect of treasure hunting is more of the type one would naturally think of. This involves diving with scuba gear or with just a snorkel and mask.

Dr. E.B. Buckalew of Girard has been diving since 1968 for sunken treasure in the lake off his cottage at the mouth of Godfrey Run. In the years since he started diving, he has accumulated some 500 to 600 lures. The "Doc," 65 years of age, does little or no actual fishing for coho though he readily agrees that they are the reason the "treasure hunting" has picked up in the last few years.

He claims that the shale ledges of the lake bottom are the hot spots and especially fifty yards from shore (the distance of a good, long cast). However, logs, rocks, and other snags are also excellent lure producers.

Visibility is very good to twenty feet on calm days when the sun is shining. During the heat of the salmon run, on any given day, Dr. Buckalew does his treasure hunting. Best diving time is around noon, when the overhead sun aids visibility.

A surprising number of the lures found are homemade. This is probably by necessity, as the local fishermen who donate lures to the lake day in and day out just can't afford to keep buying them!

The next time you travel from "down state" to fish for coho, and find the weather unseasonably warm, get yourself a snorkel, read up on the regulations and try finding some lost "treasure." You never can tell, you just may go home with a smile knowing you bested the doc's record of 99 lures in one day!
LEAKY BOOTS

TIREO OF "BEING PUT DOWN!!"

I would like to relate to you an incident that happened on Saturday, April 13, 1974. My husband, son, two friends and myself were camping along a stream in Driftwood, Cameron County, Pa. A group of men in pickup trucks were there, too. They came in around 3:03 a.m. Saturday morning and hanged truck doors and used loud obscene language. We politely asked them to "keep it down" as we were trying to sleep. It did no good as it was quite evident that they had been drinking.

My girl friend and I fished under a bridge with my nine year old son on opening day. These so-called sportsmen (I) fished above and around us. They used and directed obscene remarks at us the whole time they were there. Earlier, my husband had asked them to please watch their language as there were women and children fishing. They ignored our pleas and kept right on doing it. As though their vulgarity weren't enough, they pitched empty beer cans into the creek before leaving!

I have been fishing for quite a few years and have never seen anything like this before. I got a license plate number and a mill number off of one of the trucks. I know the man that is that owns it but he is not the one who littered the creek. The fellow who did that was from out of state and I didn't get his number. He complained about the price he paid to fish in Pennsylvania but was quick to throw the cans in the water. I would gladly pay that amount to keep his kind out of our state.

I hope these gentlemen are proud of their behavior. Maybe if their licenses were revoked they might think twice about doing it again. I am one woman who is tired of men who think the sports of hunting and fishing belong exclusively to them. I'm not saying all men are like this but there are exceptions to every rule. It's time something be done about it. I pay for my licenses the same as they do and have a right to hunt or fish wherever I please. It's men such as these who give sportsmen a bad name. How would you like to be degraded in front of your child? I don't do such things nor do I expect to have to put up with people who do. I sincerely hope you will publish this letter as I'm sure other women have experienced the same thing. I'm tired of being put down because I happen to be a woman and love the out-of-doors. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I have sent a copy of this letter to a local newspaper in the county in which one of the men lives. Maybe some of these men will read this and recognize themselves as the offenders.

WAYNE T. LEWIS
Horsham

NEED SPECIFIC INFORMATION?

Check the directory on the inside of our back cover; bureau, division, and section titles are self-explanatory, and inquiries directed to these offices will be handled more expeditiously.

Many inquiries are directed to the editor's attention, resulting in a delay until it can be channeled to the department most qualified to supply the information.

"Letters to the editor," regarding the magazine, its content or distribution, are always welcomed. We especially invite our readers to share their fishing and boating experiences, both good and bad, with other readers.

Your district waterways patrolman is best qualified to handle matters of purely local concern. His name, address, and telephone number are listed in both your summaries of Fishing Regulations & Laws and Pleasure Boating Requirements.

WAIT 'TIL YOU HEAR THIS ONE!

Last June my friends and I went fishing for bass at the wonderful Beltzville Reservoir. I was always told about the great muskellunge fishing there, but never gave it a try. I just got finished putting an 11-inch largemouth on my stringer. I threw the stringer back into the water and secured it to a little bridge with my nine year old son on opening day. These so-called sportsmen (I) fished above and around us. They used and directed obscene remarks at us the whole time they were there. Earlier, my husband had asked them to please watch their language as there were women and children fishing. They ignored our pleas and kept right on doing it. As though their vulgarity weren't enough, they pitched empty beer cans into the creek before leaving!

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A MOTHER AND SPORTSWOMAN!

Not only will these men recognize themselves, Mom, but it will probably remind more than a few others to be a bit more considerate while fellow anglers are trying to enjoy their fishing! Although we couldn't have done a thing about their language, had our District Waterways Patrolman or one of his deputies been notified immediately, the throwing of one beer can would have cost those culprits more than the price of a few cases of the brew! Ed.

SOONER OR LATER . . .

I occasionally notice that some readers of the Pennsylvania Angler question whether or not it is proper to have boating articles in "our" magazine since it is supposed to be a fishing magazine and since many people (including myself) do not own a boat.

Ten years ago, no one, but no one, could get me in a boat for love nor money, and I am second to none in my love for fishing — and have been all of my life.

Then, about ten years ago, I let my brother (after many years of trying) finally persuade me to get into his boat, in the Niagara River in Buffalo, New York, where we were living at the time.

Six months later I bought a 14' boat and a second hand 15 horse motor (on the installment plan) and enjoyed my boat for fishing for about three years before I sold it. I still rent one now and then and I still like fishing from the bank and such.

My point is: fishing and boats go together like a ball and bat! In the majority of cases, most fishermen either have fished, or will fish, from a boat!

P. C. CANCELLA
Ridgway

TWO OF A KIND —

A funny thing happened to me shortly after I received my May '74 copy of the Angler. My fishing buddies came up to me and said that my name was in the Angler, but that there was a mistake. I asked them what they were talking about, and they promptly produced a copy of the Angler. And, sure enough, in your Fish Tales section was a picture of a young angler from Washington, Pa., holding a 20¼" largemouth bass. His name is Robert Tarr.
That is also my name. Tarr isn't a very common name and I was very surprised to find someone else with the same name as me. I explained to my buddies that it was possible for someone to have the same name as myself and that it wasn't a mistake. I would like to congratulate the other Robert Tarr on his fine catch, and thank him for adding a bit of spice to my life as I am sure it did to his too. If I am ever as fortunate as he was on his catch, I will be sure to send a picture to the Angler so we both may share the excitement of seeing our names in Pennsylvania's fine fishing magazine.

ROBERT TARR
Philadelphia

SHARE YOUR OUTDOOR TIPS!
If you've got some outdoor tip, whether it involves catching fish, repairing tackle—whatever, send it along and share it with others! That's the purpose of our "Leaky Boots" column. Let's hear them!

PULLING HIS LEG?
I have been trolling in Lake Erie for about 3 1/2 years trying to catch a sturgeon. I have tried many, many ways to catch them. The guys I work with give me different ideas and types of lures to use. I know these guys catch them a lot because whenever I talk about fishing at lunch time, they tell me about all the sturgeon they catch. I have used every lure and idea that my buddies have suggested so far and I have not even got one nibble! I don't like to fish all alone but the guys won't fish with me for sturgeon until I get one all by myself. They say that's a rule of the "Super Sturgeon Club." I asked a fish warden the other day when he was checking my license about catching sturgeon. He said the guys were pulling my leg and that I shouldn't believe them. Well, I don't really think the guys would tell me all the wrong lures to use. But, just to be sure, could you please tell me what lures I should use so that I can see if they are the same kind the guys told me to use?

MILO WASILIEWSKI
Erie

Catching a sturgeon in Lake Erie is something like ordering Kielbasa in a Chinese restaurant, Milo. They've got you by both legs! Although you will find the sturgeon listed as legal prey in Lake Erie in your summary, they have since been put on the "ENDANGERED SPECIES" list. Until they make a comeback, why not try the coho, chinook, walleye, muskies, and bass? Ed.

LITTERING IS A CURSE!
Each of us can help clean up our recreational environment by picking up not only our own trash, but that left behind by others.

GOOD NEWS
In the past few weeks we have had several orders for Champion outboard motor parts due to information in your former question and answer column. This is a great help to the people who have old motors made by Champion, and have not been able to find parts. So often people who love to get out on the water can't find parts for old motors, and can't really afford a new motor.

I am writing to bring your information up to date. We have moved, just outside of Minneapolis, to the address below. Champion made Majestic, B. F. Goodrich, "Sea Flyer", Monarch, and Voyager motors. The last year of Champion Company was 1958. We are the parts factory, and still make some parts for years 1946-1938, and do have some parts back to 1935.

SWANSON OUTBOARD INC.
Route 2, Box 15D
Rogers, Minnesota 55374

SEEKS FIGURES
We would like to know what the Fish Commission put in Somerset Lake and Donegal Lake in Somerset County, how big and what species of fish, and how many. Also, do you stock Bridgeport Dam, Mt. Pleasant, in Westmoreland County? I think that you people do one heckuva job in keeping the public supplied with some darn good fishing in our streams and lakes. We get a lot of northern pike, but they are only 16 to 22 inches long. Why isn't the size lowered? Some people will not cut the leader but hurt the fish and it will die later.

Would you please tell us how to keep salmon eggs, from a salmon caught in Lake Erie, for use for bait in trout season. I also think that the 12- to 16-year olds should buy a license to fish. Thank you very much.

ANDY

P.S. I like the Angler's Notebook; keep it up; also Taking A Closer Look, and Notes from the Streams.

The following fishes (sizes and numbers) were stocked in Somerset Lake and Donegal Lake during fiscal year '72-'73 and are fairly typical of many past stockings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Somerset Lake</th>
<th>Donegal Lake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musky</td>
<td>Fingerlings</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walleye</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Pike</td>
<td>Fingerlings</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walleye</td>
<td>Fry</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walleye</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redear sunfish</td>
<td>Fingerlings</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason "Andy" and friends are catching northern pike which are only 16 to 23 inches in length is that:

(a) They're lousy fishermen.
(b) Northern pike are relatively easy to catch, so much so in many waters, that the legal size fish (24 inches and larger) are cropped off, thus leaving many smaller fish.
(c) I don't know.

Choice (b) is probably most nearly correct.

After asking most of the guys here, it seems that salmon eggs should be placed in a vegetable oil of some sort and stored in a cool place. If this is not correct, choice (c) above is probably most nearly correct.

CLARK N. SMITHERS
Aquatic Biologist

IF YOU'RE MOVING—
Your Angler will be delayed if you fail to advise us in advance. Send us both your old and your new addresses—in that order.

WHEN ORDERING LITERATURE—
The increased costs in both postal rates and paper products have imposed a tremendous burden upon our budget. Therefore, we must request that readers include 25¢, to cover postage and handling, when sending for literature. In remitting, you may use postage stamps.

Additional copies of the Angler may be ordered at the single copy price, plus 25¢, provided your order reaches us within the month of publication. WE DO NOT MAINTAIN A SUPPLY OF BACK ISSUES.

AUGUST—1974
Taking
A Closer Look

by Tom Fegely

During the fall to spring "banquet season," I'm frequently invited to present my "Pennsylvania Out-of-Doors" slide talk to those in attendance. While the ham and apple pie are settling in everyone's craw, a parade of birds, mammals, wildflowers, fish, and other wildlife cross the screen and stimulate questions which, afterwards, I attempt to answer. No single topic seems to bring a bigger response than snakes.

Even though fearful and often misinformed, people tend to have a certain fascination for snakes. Down through the ages various superstitions and fallacies have accumulated, casting a mystic shadow on these legless reptiles. Stories of "hoop snakes," baby snakes that hide in their mother's mouth for protection, poisonous snakes whose venom kills trees — even one that sucks milk from cows — are repeated and believed — especially by youngsters. Although much of this misinformation stems from poisonous snakes, most people have never actually seen one but may think they have. For example, the water snake is often referred to as a "water moccasin," and the beneficial milk snake is often needlessly slaughtered when mistaken for a copperhead. Every true sportsman should take it upon himself to learn more about Pennsylvania's snakes as a step in putting them in their proper psychological and ecological perspective.

Twenty-two species of snakes have been recorded within our state's borders. Of the nineteen harmless (non-poisonous) kinds, about 14 are common enough to be worthy of a "Closer Look".

Pennsylvania anglers most often come across those species that live near water and feed upon toads, frogs, fish and salamanders. The Northern Water Snake (Natrix sipedon) is most frequently seen but is mistaken for the timid Queen Snake (Natrix septemvittata) in some of the non-mountainous counties. The Queen Snake's unusual diet consists primarily of crayfish while the Water Snake feeds on a variety of aquatic life.

Garter Snakes, too, frequent wet habitats. The Eastern Garter Snake (Thamnophis sirtalis) is Pennsylvania's most common reptile and is recognized by practically everyone who crosses paths with it. In northwestern counties it may be confused with the smaller Short-Headed Garter Snake (Thamnophis sirtalis) or the brightly patterned Ribbon Snake (Thamnophis sauritus) which has been recorded in over half of Pennsylvania's counties. Because all three "garters" will take to water to hunt for food, or seek escape, they may at times be confused with water snakes.

On the other hand, the Northern Brown Snake or DeKay's Snake (Storeria dekayi) is frequently mistaken for a Garter Snake, even though it lacks the distinguishing trio of longitudinal stripes. Found in open lots and fields and backyard rock gardens, it feeds on slugs, snails, earthworms, and insects.

Found in similar habitats, the readily-identifiable Northern Ringneck Snake (Diadophis punctatus) and the Northern Red-Bellied Snake (Storeria occipitomaculata) are both black with field marks as described in their names. The Ringneck Snake is found statewide while the Red-Bellied is absent from the entire southeast portion of Pennsylvania.

The Eastern Hog-nose Snake (Heterodon platyrhinos) is sometimes mistaken for a "rattler" due to its coloration and bluffing act. When approached, it hisses, strikes, spreads its neck and tries to discourage anyone coming near. Should this portion of the "show" be unconvincing, the hog-nose will roll over on its back and "play 'possum"! When turned right side up, it once again rolls over and feigns death. Found along sandy beaches and mountain ridges in 27 counties, hog-nose snakes feed on frogs and toads.

Two green-colored snakes live in Pennsylvania, the more common one being the gentle Smooth Green Snake (Opheodrys vernalis) or "grass snake" which is easily captured and successfully kept as a pet. Like the longer and lesser-known Rough Green Snake (Opheodrys aestivus), it feeds mainly on insects.
Above left: The main distinguishing feature of the Eastern Garter Snake is its three longitudinal yellow stripes. The Black Rat Snake, above right, often climbs trees in search of prey.

Below left: The secretive and seldom found Northern Ringneck Snake is easily recognized by its yellow neck ring. The harmless Northern Water Snake, below right, is not a "water moccasin"!

caterpillars and spiders. The rough species is usually found lurking in shrubs, trees or vines and is recorded only in the southernmost counties. The smooth "grass snake" dwells in 50 counties where it patrols fields for crickets and grasshoppers.

Pennsylvania’s longest snake is the Black Rat Snake (Elaphe obsoleta) which can grow to eight feet or more, although it is usually much shorter. Its farmland habitat provides it with a diet of rabbits, birds, frogs, other snakes and rodents. Where woods are present, the black rat snake will climb trees in search of squirrels, chipmunks, birds and bird eggs.

The Northern Black Racer (Coluber constrictor) is the state’s second largest snake. Despite its scientific name, the racer does not truly constrict its prey, but instead pins it to the ground as it is being ingested. Though often confused, the Black Racer’s smooth scale pattern and dark gray belly distinguishes it from the Black Rat Snake and its banded belly and faintly barred back.

The Eastern Milk Snake (Lampropeltis doliiata) feeds upon rodents and other snakes—not on cow’s milk! The false notion that this beautifully-patterned reptile attaches to a cow’s udder and drinks milk has been exaggerated to the point where its name even adds credence to the misbelief.

Despite a vast difference in shape and coloration, this beneficial snake is often mistaken for a "copperhead" and consequently killed. The outstanding differences between the two are the milk snake’s "polished" appearance (and checkered belly) as compared to that of the rough-scaled copperhead.

It is disturbing to hear a youngster (or oldster) brag of having stoned or clubbed a snake to death because it happened to be in his path. True, at times removal of poisonous species is necessary. But more often than not, "poisonous" snakes turn out to be misidentified harmless ones.

Fishermen, more than any other type of sportsmen, are likely to cross paths with snakes of several types. If every angler took it upon himself to learn a bit more about Pennsylvania’s snake-life and pass the knowledge along to an impressionable youngster — our beneficial, harmless snakes might someday be given the respect and protection they deserve.

(Editor’s note: The author, Tom Fegely, an environmental education specialist in the East Penn School District, is not a staff member of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Therefore his slide talk, "Pennsylvania Out-of-Doors", is not available from the Commission, but from the author who may be contacted at his home address: Thomas D. Fegely, 838 W. Station Ave., Coopersburg, Pa. 18036.

AUGUST—1974
The sounds of Franklin boro slowly faded away. They were replaced by the gurgling of water as it bubbled through one of the Allegheny River riffles, the click of spin reel bail opening and closing, and the plop of our minnow-spinner baits as they chunked into the water. My partner and I were embarking on a two-day float trip into some of the most scenic, remote and productive fishing in all of Pennsylvania.

The month was August and hot. The humidity was high. The sun could only peek through the cloudy, threatening sky on rare occasions.

But the weather had little meaning to Lawrence and me. We did welcome the whispering sounds of the river, the song bird chorus that came from the tree-lined riverbank, and the opportunity to be outdoors together.

It didn't take long for the fish to cooperate. A small but cool feeder spring was flowing in from the west side of the river. We made sure our little river boat went in close for our float past. On my first cast into the feeder stream hole I was welcomed with a solid strike. My little ultralight rod bent double. The tip throbbed, bounced and danced as the fish on the other end went through its antics, trying to shake the hook free.

It turned out to be a savage northern pike. I slid him into the boat just as the little treble hook fell from his mouth, and amidst his flopping, ascertained that he went 23 inches, an inch under the legal limit!

We figured on returning most of our fish anyway, so I slipped this one over the side. He immediately shot for the depths of the river.

"It's a start," I commented to Lawrence. "Now let's really bear down on 'em and keep a few to fillet for tonight's supper. We can throw the rest back, then tomorrow morning we can catch a few more fresh ones for the breakfast skillet."

I was fishing with my compatriot of many outdoor treks past, Lawrence Cignetti. Lawrence is an ardent outdoorsman of 70 plus years, but he doesn't look it or show it. He still bounds across grouse covers and woodcock tangles with an exuberance that puts most 20-year olds to shame. And for the first six weeks of trout season, he is up long before the sun, almost every day.

Lawrence was the next one to latch onto a fish. It was a river bass that pounced on his minnow. It came out of the water immediately, and I kidded, "It'll never make the 9-inch limit!"

The bass burrowed for the bottom, rose back to surface, shaking his head violently, made one last valiant jump, and Lawrence hoisted him aboard. He has the butt end of his spin rod marked off with measurements of 6, 9, and 15 inches. The smallmouth appeared to be about two inches over the 9-inch mark, fat and healthy; there was no argument about adding this one to the stringer.

We were moving faster now, at the head of a riffle. We
If you like peace and quiet while enjoying beautiful scenery plus a variety of good fishing, then you'll want to try —

An Allegheny River Float Trip

by Nick Sisley

both picked up a paddle, straightened our course, and with an easy stroke, set our speed just a little faster than the current. As we bobbed along through the waves, only an occasional paddle stroke was necessary to keep us moving straight. The swiftest water behind us, I picked up my ultralight, opened the bail, and directed a cast into the slack water to the west side of the eddy.

Wham! It was a walleye this time. He bulldogged and thrashed for long seconds before I hefted him into the boat. He appeared to be about 14 inches long, and was returned to be caught another day.

Our two-day float was over the stretch between Franklin and Kennerdell, Pa., in southern Venango County. We had put into the Allegheny just below the U. S. 322 bridge at the town of Franklin. Here, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission has constructed an access area where fishermen and boaters can park their cars, and easily launch their craft. Except for a lone railroad bridge, nothing crosses the Allegheny all the way to Kennerdell. This stretch is estimated to be about 20 miles in length, and if you look on a road map, you'll note that it's only a stone's throw from the megalopolis of Pittsburgh and suburbs.

From Kennerdell on south there is another remote and reportedly excellent fishing stretch, all the way to Emlenton. I've never fished these waters, but intend to in the near future. It, too, appears to be approximately 20 miles in length, and as with the stretch above Kennerdell, no automobile bridges or roads cross or traverse this section. It's tough to find that type of remote fishing water so close to urban civilization in this day and age.

Both these sections offer ideal distances for two-day floats. Making 20 miles a day by boat or canoe is fine if you plan no fishing. But I like to float rivers because it puts me in prime fishing situations. I want to float my way along from one top notch fishing spot to another, and let the current carry me. I don't want to be fighting any time clock. I want to make my time count — fishing!!

Figure that a mile an hour on a river float is plenty fast enough if you are interested in fishing. If you want to pass up good looking spots; not float back through productive eddies for a second time; not get out of the boat at likely-looking riffles and cast from shore, or while wading — then you can make more mileage. Suffice to say, 8 or 9 miles a day are plenty for me!

Lawrence's rod started throbbing next. "You'll have to throw that one back," I chided again, kidding my fishing companion. He didn't pay any attention to me, just kept constant pressure on the fish and ended up landing him. Measured on Lawrence's crude spin rod measuring rule, he came out to 9 1/2 inches.

Lawrence unhooked him and grabbed hold of the stringer, and I chided him again, "Aren't you going to throw that tiny bass back?"

"Nope. I know how good his fillets are going to taste fresh from the pan," Lawrence responded with a grin. I had to agree with him.
"We beached the boat at an exceptionally 'fishy' looking riffle and 'wet-waded' the most likely looking spots."

There are plenty of Allegheny smallmouth that go right around this 9-inch minimum length. I'd make a guess that 80% or more of the smallmouth that strike in the river range between 7- and 11-inches.

But that shouldn't be on the discredit side. I wasn't the original one to say that smallmouth are, pound for pound, the scrappiest freshwater fish that swim; others have said it before me. I am only in full agreement with them because I get a great deal of pleasure even from the little 7-inchers. Most times they have as much fight as a 10- or 11-incher, and generally favor aerobatics even more.

One of the secrets to getting a great deal of enjoyment out of these relatively small fish is the rod and reel outfit that you tackle them with. Use a flimsy, short, ultralight rod and small spin reel with 3 or 4 pound mono.

Though there are flyrodders who are devotees of smallmouth fishing, most river bass anglers use other fishing methods. At times hair, feather and fur imitations of nymphs, crickets, frogs, tadpoles, minnows, etc., are very productive smallmouth strike producers.

Floating plugs that wiggle under the surface on retrieve are also excellent. Some purists stick with spinners from one end of the season to the other.

Bait fishermen probably do as well on smallmouth as anyone. Hellgrammites, the larva stage of the Dobson fly, are a prime producer throughout the summer. Usually by early July, crayfish start shedding their hard shells. When they do, they are prime targets of all river bass. Properly fished, "soft shells" on the Allegheny (and many other rivers) are tough to beat.

Lawrence and I used minnows, threaded minnows that is, in conjunction with a minnow rig and a small spinner. It's not a new way to fish, but it is one that not too many people know about, and one that I see used infrequently.

Take a short length of monofilament, perhaps 12 inches long, and tie a small swivel on one end. Thread on a Colorado or Indiana spinner. Small sizes work best for us. We vary between gold, silver, brass, and "hammered". Next, thread on a small bead. We then tie a loop of about 1-inch diameter on the other end of this short monofilament section.

The idea now is to "thread" the minnow with a needle, hook the "minnow rig" loop on the end of the needle, and pull it entirely through the bait. Next thread the eye of a size 12, 14, or 16 treble hook with the monofilament loop you have passed through the minnow. Pass the loop around the treble hook and pull it up snug. Now pull the loop back up into the body of the minnow and tuck the treble hook up inside, too.

When bass, or most any other fish species strike a moving minnow, they hit from the side or the rear-Seldom from the front. This is why it is so difficult to hook a bass with a moving minnow hooked through the
But, by using a “spinner-minnow rig,” treble hook toward the tail end of the fish, you don’t miss many strikes.

The spinner-minnow rig is great for many fish species. With it you are both bait fishing and attractor lure fishing at the same time. There is always action involved, and never any need to put your mind in neutral as you sometimes must do when bait fishing from the bank. The turning blade of the spinner attracts the fish for a “look-see.” The minnow provides the “real thing” for the fish to decide to strike.

“I can’t decide whether to crank up the outboard or stay and watch the next riffle, I always like the moving water for smallmouth and walleyes. These dead water stretches have never been too productive in the past,” I went on.

“Yeah, we haven’t had a bite in quite sometime anyway.” Lawrence retorted, as he cranked his spin reel handle faster to hurry his lure out of the water so we could be on our way.

I coaxed the little engine into life with a couple of pulls, and the natural stillness of this remote spot was disturbed with the roar of our little 3 1/2. When I spotted the next riffle, I cut the engine and threaded on a fresh minnow, for I had a feeling this was going to be a productive stretch.

Again Lawrence and I guided our way through the riffle with an occasional paddle stroke. Once through, I shot another cast to the right. My minnow struck in a slack water swirl. I turned the reel handle and, as the boat moved on further downstream, the minnow and spinner moved into the side current of the eddy and I had a jolting strike. The fish stayed deep, but fought with such force that he turned the boat in the current and had line stripping from my screaming spool at an alarming rate.

“Brother, that’s a fish,” Lawrence marvelled, as he gazed in awe at the bend in my rod.

“Sure is. Wonder if it’s a bass or a walleye,” I grunted.

“He’s staying deep like a walleye,” Lawrence encouraged.

“Yeah, but big smallmouth are noted for doing that, too, Lawrence.”

My tiny four pound test mono would only stand so much. I gave the drag a half turn to relieve a little pressure, and continued to hold the rod tip high. For ensuing minutes I gained no line.
"Take the paddle and see if you can manipulate the boat a little so I can get some of this doggone line back, Lawrence," I sang out, a little panicky. I got several winds back on the reel only to have the fish shoot for the top of the water. Out he came, gyrating!

"It's a bass! It's a bass! Gad, what a bass, Lawrence!"

But that was the last we saw of it. With his first jump, the lunker smallmouth tore the hook free from his mouth. I retrieved the line back and inspected the terminal end. The treble hook was still intact. The mono had held. Evidently the hook had just been too small to penetrate and hold in the big bass's jaw. The minnow was a sorry sight — totally pulverized.

I always get an ache in the pit of my stomach when I lose a big fish; I guess everybody does, though. The one consolation I always take from losing a lunker is that they are invariably the fish that I remember most, weeks, months, even years later.

An ideal thing about the float stretch between Franklin and Kennerdell is the series of river islands at just about the half-way point. I had hunted ducks in and around these islands in past years, and had previously planned that Lawrence and I would spend our night on one of them. They offered an ideal campsite, and we would be away from the river bank shrubs that often hold a concentration of biting insects.

In addition to our spin rods and minnow bucket, our river boat also contained a two-man backpcker tent, our sleeping bags, a cooler of grub, and a mini-stove. About 5:00 p.m., we beached the boat on one of these islands, unloaded our gear, and on some high ground back off the river's edge, nestled our tent in the weeds, hoping that the island grass would cushion our beds. We had not included any mattresses with our gear. While Lawrence arranged our sleeping bags in the tent, I filleted the few bass and walleyes that we had kept for the evening meal. I popped them into a bubbling quarter pound of butter, garnished this gourmet table fare with salt and pepper, and in no time we were eating.

The fillets consumed, we backed them up with a warmed can of beef stew, then relaxed for a half hour before starting the evening fishing.

Right in front of our campsite were a series of riffles that provided ideal smallmouth and walleye habitat. Lawrence and I wet waded, casting our spinner-minnow rigs, moving downstream from riffle to riffle.

It was a memorable evening. The smallmouth in particular were cooperative. The weather was warm, but still threatening, and the biting insects were not out on the water.

We fished until we could no longer see to thread our minnow rigs. And, as we terminated our fishing, the moon peaked up over the Allegheny Mountain ridge to the east, breaking through the cloud cover. We hoped that it would be a dry night and fine fishing the following day.

Lawrence was dog tired and went straight to bed. I sat on a streamside river rock, enjoyed the quietude of this remote spot, and forgot all the troubles of daily life.

As luck would have it, that night it did rain. The light nylon tent was intended to be water-resistant, not waterproof, but it mattered little, since the weather was so warm. By dawn, after a series of several thundershowers, our sleeping bags were pretty well soaked through.

We got up, donned our soaking wet trousers that had been sitting out in the rain all night, waded into the river, and caught our breakfast of walleyes and bass, and in no time they were golden brown in our skillet over the little mini-stove.

We augmented the fish fillets with two scrambled eggs apiece, then started to clean and break camp. It must have been 10:00 a.m. until our boat was loaded and we headed on further downstream.

When you are making a float on a relatively large river, I think it is wise to use a boat of reasonable size, and even more important, take along a motor. On some big rivers, there are numerous slack water stretches. Meet an upriver wind on a slack water stretch, and all you end up doing is paddling — no fishing. This is where to crank a little outboard into life and motor out of a non-productive stretch into one more productive. Our boat was 12-foot fiberglass, the motor was a little 3 1/2 horsepower air-cooled job. We found the boat and motor ideal for this stretch of the river.

There were some great riffles between our river island overnight spot and Kennerdell. I remember one in particular that we floated back through three different times and had good success every time we dragged our spinner-minnow rigs through the fishy looking spots. As I recall, it was the very first riffle and eddy below the last series of islands where we had camped.

On both days we ground to a stop on shallow spots. But that was no problem; we'd simply get out of the boat, walk it down through the shallow section, climb back in, and off we'd go again. During August, we expected low water, but there was no problem getting from place to place. All through the summer you can expect varying water levels. Seldom is the Allegheny ever dangerous if you take the proper precautions.

Keep your boat straight as you go through each minor
white water section. Keep on the lookout for large rocks, and avoid them. Personal Flotation Devices are required by law and are good common sense.

By the time we reached our takeout point at Kennedell, both Lawrence and I had taken smallmouth and walleyes. We kept a few for photo taking, but most were returned to the Allegheny River in hopes that they'd grow to lunker size and someday offer even finer sport than they had given Lawrence and me.

I like river floats for several reasons. Number one, it gets me away from the fishing crowd. Sure, you have to carefully pick where you are going to make a river float, but by simply checking a map, you can choose float waters that are away from roads. This, of course, is the key. Secondly, I think that float fishing gives me the opportunity to get into many prime fishing spots in the course of a day's outing; prime fishing spots that haven't been fished by others in the last ten minutes, the last hour, the last day, maybe even in the last week or month. Thirdly, there's something about remote quiet spots — seems I have a need to seek them out — they make me feel content.

If you'd like to find some successful fishing and some solitude, try a float trip. The Allegheny River is a great one to consider, but no matter where you live, there is float fishing nearby. I'm betting there's some doggone good float sport close to your home, and that it hasn't been experienced by many. Why not explore a little? You'll be amazed at the fun, satisfaction, and success you'll encounter.

Utilizing a canoe paddle as a filleting board, the author sets about preparing a riverside fresh fish fry.
A periodic tune-up will do wonders for your outboard motor

There's Still Plenty Of Boating Ahead!

Photos and technical information: courtesy of Evinrude Motors.

Way back in spring, the first warm breeze sent a good many outboarders scurrying to the launch ramp for that first day afloat without giving any more attention to their rig than a check on the fuel supply — hoping Old Betsy would "do her thing," just like last summer. Their enthusiasm is understandable. After all, it was a long winter! The performance of their craft, however, might not have come up to their expectations. "How could she have aged so in those few months?"

Well, the boys up at Evinrude Motors tell us that even a few months of inactivity may make considerable difference in operation, performance, and safety. "Safety?" Right! How'd you like to have your motor conk out in a storm on a large lake or while negotiating a swift upstream current?

Many boaters, however, donned heavy clothing back in cold spring days and gave their outfits a thorough pre-season equipment check and have been having a ball afloat ever since! You can recognize them easily — they're the ones cruising by as you continue to crank the engine while Mom and the kids are paddling!

If, in your enthusiasm to "get with the action," you neglected to give your motor the attention it deserved earlier, don't despair; there's enough of the boating season left to make it worth your while to check it out thoroughly now! The whole project can take less than a day — even doing a thorough job. Start by removing the spark plugs (don't replace them until the rest of the work is completed). If they've only had a "few hours" of operation, they may be cleaned and the gap reset. But if they are at all questionable, replace them with new ones.

Look for cracked or frayed wires. A straying spark might ignite fuel, resulting in an explosion. Use electrician's tape for temporary repairs, but replace the entire wire as soon as possible.

As expensive and in short supply as fuel might be, it's still best to get rid of last year's fuel. It can be used in some lawn mowers; or, used for cleaning off grease — provided it's done out-of-doors and away from your garage or home. Do not, under any circumstances, use it indoors or in poorly ventilated enclosures of any sort. A few tablespoonsfuls, vaporized, can blow you out of the boating business forever if inadvertently ignited by a spark or someone lighting up a smoke — for the last time! Remove and clean your fuel filter; wash it and the bowl in neutral spirits. Any clogged or gummed filters should be replaced.

Change the lubricant in the lower gearcase, checking for any signs of water or metal chips in the old fluid. If the results are positive, have a qualified marine dealer inspect the unit for cracks. When refilling, use the manufacturer's recommended lubricant.

Damaged or misshapen props can mean the difference between achieving rated speed, maintaining maneuverability, and reasonable fuel consumption. A marine dealer is capable of grinding down any nicked prop blades and resetting the pitch. If the dealer recommends a new prop, save the old one for emergency use.

Refer to the owner's manual for the greasing of fittings and connectors and coat the remaining metal surfaces with a light coat of oil. In filling the fuel tank, a recommended additive for performance would be a fuel conditioner which your dealer most certainly has available.

The boat's hull itself (and most importantly, the part you never see because it's always under water: the bottom) also needs annual attention. It may look like no more than a little scum to you, and so it is; but rub your hand over it and compare the "feel" of it to that of the polished deck above. It can cause enough friction to affect a boat's performance — and you thought your motor was losing power! Your boat dealer can recommend any number of compounds suitable for cleaning your hull — seek and heed his advice! While you're about it, check all of your boat's chrome hardware for corrosion and pitting. Polishing up the whole rig will take less than a day and you'd be wise to replace badly damaged fittings. If they're loose, check whether they're "bolted-through" or simply attached with screws. If their location permits, it's a good idea to attach a piece of wood backing underneath the deck or gunwale and bolt them fast.

Your boat's electrical system needs periodic inspection, too; look for worn insulation, check splices, check your battery's charge, and all light bulbs in your running-lights. Dismantling the latter will often reveal corrosion building up as a result of moisture that somehow found its way in — but not back out. Periodic care will result in longer life for all of your boat's accessories.

The steering system should also be given a thorough check. And, if you're not the greatest mechanic ever to come down the river, have a competent boat dealer check this one out. At high speeds, in crowded waters, your steering must be dependable.

In another important area, no expertise is necessary — just good common sense. And that is checking out your Personal Flotation Devices. Fortunately, today's materials are more mildew resistant, and the fabrics are stronger — but wear and tear are inevitable. If yours don't meet the highest standards, replace them! This is the last place to skimp. For the price of an average picnic lunch you can buy a new PFD that might save a life — whose life, isn't important; saving one, is!
Inspect spark plugs for corrosion and proper gap. A new set might be cheap insurance for trouble-free operation.

Check ignition system for loose connections. Replace any wiring with frayed or cracked insulation promptly.

Clean your fuel filter with neutral spirits. Any clogged or gummed filters should be replaced with new ones.

Propeller nicks encountered last season can be ground down by your dealer, but replace badly damaged props.

Using a lube recommended by the manufacturer, install the lower unit until new grease appears in the top hole.
Southeastern Pennsylvania anglers can have a barrel of fun with —

Chester-Octoraro Crappies

by George E. Dolnack, Jr.
photos by the author

Nine year old Pete opened up the minnow bucket and scooped out a shiner with the small net and ran his #6 hook through the back just under the dorsal fin. Then, making sure his small bobber hadn't slipped, he dropped the line into the water. Weighted down by the split shot above the hook, the minnow slowly sank until its downward progress was stopped by the float ten feet above.

Pete lowered his rod and watched the bobber intently. Soon the red and white orb twitched and then rocked before it skittered through the water. When it went under, Pete raised his rod tip firmly but gently and hauled in a flapping white crappie. He looked my way and shouted, "Got another one, Dad! Looks like you're going to be busy!"

I walked over to him, took the fish from his hand and added it to the stringer that was already laden with crappies.

Pete and his brothers Chris and Steve were fishing the 625 acre Chester-Octoraro Reservoir, located off Route 472 near Mount Vernon in Chester County, and owned by the Chester Water Authority.

That trip started the night before when Waterways Patrolman Ray Bednarchik told us that the crappies were hitting at the reservoir. It was August and I had been working out of town so this would be a good opportunity to spend some time with the boys. Besides agreeing to act as their guide for this trip, I also volunteered to clean all the fish that they caught! They delighted in this promise and when morning came they could hardly wait to get started.

After arriving at the reservoir, we made a beeline for fishing headquarters at the bait and tackle shop where Kenneth N. Russel, Sr., custodian of the facility, was preparing for the day. We exchanged fishing talk, bought four dozen minnows, and then headed for the bridge on Spruce Grove Road where all the action was.

Some other anglers were already there and having quite a bit of success. It didn't take long for the boys to start knocking off the crappies. And if there is anything that will keep young anglers from getting bored, it's plenty of fishing action, no matter what's on the other end of the line.

By the time their supply of minnows, lunch, and refreshments were exhausted, the boys had caught 31 crappies, one bullhead and a sunny. I had my work cut out for me when we got home, but it was worth it. The fine flavored white flesh of the crappie makes a unique and delicious eating experience when batter-fried. The crappie, known by at least 55 other names, is a schooling fish, feeds on all forms of aquatic life, and readily devours small minnows. More slender than the black crappie, the white crappie's silvery body is accentuated with broken vertical dark stripes and this fish likes still water.

These soft-mouthed fish are taken in great numbers on small jigs, flies, and spinners during the spring and early summer when they spawn. This is the time when the
H. Claude Miller, above, is one of the regulars at Chester-Octoraro Reservoir. Notice his rod holder and specially made seat, both fit the bridge railing!

Pete Dolnack, below, is unhooking a white crappie. Warm weather crappies run small while those caught during the spring may run up to a pound or better.

— dark vertical bars distinguish whites from blacks.

larger “slabsides” are taken and it’s not uncommon to latch into one-pounders once a school is located.

The Chester-Octoraro Reservoir also holds some impressive lunker size fish that any angler would be pleased to tie into, and the wall is full of photos in the bait and tackle shop to prove it.

Some of the top catches include a 24½”, 5¼ lb. brown trout; a 51¼” 27 lb. northern pike; a 47¾” 23 lb. muskie; a 23¾ lb. blue channel catfish and a 6 lb. largemouth bass.

In addition to the availability of a launching and docking facility, a small picnic area is provided near the parking lot.

Boats that can be rented for a nominal fee are placed in the water in mid-April and taken out the last of October. During this time, fishing is permitted in the reservoir from 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Electric motors are allowed on the reservoir, but ice fishing, swimming, bathing, camping, fires, and pets are prohibited.
Netting a fish for someone else can be almost as much fun as catching one yourself. But after I had waited, net in hand, for nearly ten minutes without so much as a glimpse of what was bending Bob Anderson’s rod, it began to get tiresome. I’ve fished with Bob off and on for over thirty years and have yet to see him play a fish more than necessary. Even so, in my impatience to get back to fishing, I was about to tell him to apply the pressure and get it over with when I realized that he knows what he’s doing when it comes to playing a reluctant salmon. Obviously, this was no ordinary salmon!

I respected Bob’s judgment because he has crammed more experience into the six years of Pennsylvania’s salmon runs than most of us could hope for in a lifetime. Spending nearly every September through October dawn on his beloved Lake Erie and catching 40 or so salmon per year puts him in the “super-expert” category!

There aren’t many fishermen in Pennsylvania who can claim real expertise yet with cohos or chinooks, simply because the sport is relatively new. There’s still lots of room at the top and the shortest way up for the beginner is to “pick the brains” of the regulars like Bob. I did — and have caught a few fish — even “limiting out” on one or two occasions before my mentors. But, unless the “down state fisherman” (as we are called by the Lake Erie locals), knows what to expect before he travels to the big lake, he is apt to be disappointed by water too rough to launch a boat on, disgusted by crowds at the hot spots, or frustrated by not knowing where and how to fish such big water.

True, the lake can get roaring rough and stay that way long enough to ruin the trip of a boat fisherman. But, some of the lower reaches of the larger tributary streams have now been opened to fishing so you can at least wet a line in a sheltered place. The crowds can also be bad, particularly on weekends, but the fishermen have adapted their trolling patterns and fishing methods to avoid strife surprisingly well. Besides, it’s a big lake and all the salmon aren’t at the hot spots. And regarding the “where and how”, the beginner can take heart in the fact that all of Pennsylvania’s super salmon fishermen were just like you as recently as 1968. That was when the first jack (immature) cohos returned to the tributaries they had descended to the lake as little smolts only six months before.

I was one of the tyros then who was lured to a deserted creek mouth on the lake shore before dawn by the chance of catching a first salmon. Something stopped the second retrieve of a small spinner and after a short, but lively tussle, I beached a 16” trout-like fish. It was later verified as a coho by a biologist at the Fish Commission’s Access Area at Walnut Creek.

Bob had been skeptical that the 6” smolts released from their upstream rearing pools in the spring would be able to hack it in the lake that he had disgustedly watched deteriorate over the years. But, when I showed him this fish, his curiosity was aroused to the point that he had to see for himself if that salmon of mine, and the few others that had been caught, were the exceptions — or the rule. So he trolled the lake shore near the creek mouths and limited on the 1½ to 2½ lb. jacks nearly every time out. Even the first morning of small game season saw him catch two salmon and one rainbow trout before he took his gun and dogs to the fields. He was hooked for good!

And so was the fish that Bob finally began to pump up to the boat. This one didn’t jump like cohos usually do. It stayed deep, making several line-sizzling runs, so we weren’t surprised to finally see the fish was a big one. Bob fishes with line no heavier than 10 lb. test because he believes salmon shy from a lure towed by heavier line. And the fast runs the salmon is capable of, even when it appears ready to be netted, have taught him to fish with a loosely set drag.

I held the net deep as Bob eased the apparently spent coho over it. I lifted slowly, because they are noted for net-shyness, and swung the flopping fish aboard. It was a
beautifully proportioned female with sides that showed the origin of its other Pacific Coast name of silver salmon. Its weight of 10½ lbs. was the heaviest weighed at the Fish Commission check station scales. It didn’t stand as a “record”, however, because longer and heavier fish since have been checked. Only lengths are considered for official State Records by the Fish Commission because accurate scales aren’t always available for weighing.

As soon as the fish was landed, the boats of Bob’s many friends and acquaintances converged to find out how big it was, and what bait he was using. I’ll bet almost every occupant in the fifty or more boats trolling in that locality knew what it was taken on within ten minutes. What a grapevine! But this candor regarding a successful lure wasn’t always so. I recall the early years of salmoning on Lake Erie when hot lures were closely guarded secrets.

It’s not so much that way today because nearly everyone is familiar with the best lures. Besides, you never can tell what might interest salmon next year, or next week, for that matter. The first year the adult cohos returned it was those narrow-bladed spinners on brass or glass-beaded bodies that consistently turned the trick. They haven’t done much since. Then it was the broad-bladed spinners and wobblers or spoons that were hot. Next it was hairy tails on the spinners. Now the narrow-bladed spinners have made a comeback; but, this time with painted solid bodies and hackle-covered hooks. No one is betting what will interest the fickle salmon next fall!

One thing that doesn’t seem to change is that early morning hours are usually best. Bob is on the lake with his 14-ft. outboard while it’s still necessary to use running lights! Often in early fall the lake is relatively calm at this unearthly hour because offshore winds are the rule at night and early morning when the atmosphere over the still warm lake rises and cooler air from the surrounding land rushes in to replace it. This is a favorable phenomenon for the salmon fisherman because it’s easier to fish and the salmon seem to hit better when the lake surface near shore is calmed.

Bob wouldn’t trade the short pre-sunrise period for the rest of the day and he spends it trolling slowly close to shore where the creeks enter the lake. In this dim light and shallow water, brighter colored and lighter weighted lures that ride high when trolled on a short 50 to 60 foot line seem to work best.

As the morning passes, and more boats and shore fishermen converge, the fish seem to be “put down.” Then, trolling farther from the creek mouths — either close along the shore, or out in deeper water off the creeks — with darker colored lures is worth a try. Usually, the heavier or deep-running spinners, plugs or spoons, fished on longer lines are most productive in deep water — but not always so.

There are days when even the experts are forced to go through their tackle boxes in hopes of coming up with a winning combination of lure, line length and trolling speed. This is a poor time to experiment, however, because it’s already obvious the fish aren’t in a hitting mood.

What makes salmon bite anyway? Their stomachs are always found empty and shriveling when they begin their spawning run. Maybe “attacking” something that resembles their food is just part of their nature. The fact that lures larger than two or three inches long (about the size of the emerald shiners and smelt that proliferate in Lake Erie) don’t seem to work gives some credence to this theory. Likewise, up in Lake Michigan where larger forage species (mostly alewives) are common, salmon are caught on larger lures.

How a salmon strikes can be almost as variable as the lure type and color that he finally decides to hit. Often it’s that unmistakably smashing thing you’ve read about. Nearly as often, however, your line will merely go slack as he picks up the lure and swims forward with it. You’ve really got to be on your toes to hook this fish before he...
can drop the lure. If he drops it before you can strike he may continue to follow and hit again. So be ready.

If you have all day to fish, you can wait until the boats thin out. This reduced disturbance allows some of the salmon to re-congregate and settle down at the creek mouths. Or you can try the less popular tributaries, some of which enter the lake as mere trickles during a dry autumn. Nonetheless, these sometimes host a significant salmon gathering. Look for jumping or porpoising fish anywhere along the shore and try fishing there.

This is a good time to try the bizarre lures. You might find a killer like I did one day in a 2½-inch balsa plug that hasn't worked very good since. I've also seen salmon taken on deep running plugs with paint jobs that resembled no living creature in the lake. Bob is a spinner man, though, and his results have been consistently good enough to prove he might as well stick with them.

The more recently introduced chinook, or king salmon, haven't been Pennsylvania residents long enough to document a definite lure preference. Bob has noticed, however, that cohos like lures with hair or hackles on them, while chinooks seem to prefer them without.

One thing for sure, the kings have lengthened the salmon catching season by showing up around Labor Day, three weeks ahead of the silvers. They have also raised the blood pressure of the anglers lucky enough to hook a big one. Last fall, Bob had the exhilarating experience of playing a yard-long chinook for a full twenty minutes before the disappointment of losing it at the net.

Salmon are also taken by casting from drifting or anchored boats, or from the shore. But, because the trolled lure spends more time in the water and covers a greater area, Bob has found this method most effective. He catches enough fish by trolling to make him give up and go to work on a morning when a "nor'wester" has the lake churned up too much for comfort or safety. He can wait until it calms down; and, he's found that after a storm can be one of the best times of all to take salmon.

But if you have made the long trip to Erie and find the lake is in a mean mood, you may not have time to wait for it to calm. You can try surf casting, which usually turns into a wetting and disappointing experience when a storm is raging. Your best bet is to try your luck in the protected mouths of the larger creeks which have been opened to legal fishing during the past two or three years.

Since creek fishing for salmon after they have started their upstream run is a relatively recent experience, options for experimenting are still open. The same lures that work in the lake also work in the streams until the fish, which are concentrated in a few pools, become lure shy. Natural baits seem more reliable, the most commonly used being salmon eggs, either canned or fresh, and usually fished with bobbers. This bait is apt to coax as many rainbow trout (also on a spawning run) to bite, as salmon. Some of these trout are real "steelhead" trophies and they are difficult to distinguish from salmon by many fishermen, but they are legal to keep and are included in the three fish limit.

It seems that the techniques for catching them are not hard and fast rules. This was made quite clear to me last fall by two fishermen I encountered at Elk Creek.

They were sitting beside a long placid pool, with their rods propped on forked sticks, just like they were fishing for suckers. When I asked what luck they'd had, they proudly lifted stringers with a 10-pound plus chinook on each! And, when I inquired about what they were using for bait, both replied, "Nightcrawlers!"

It was hard for me to believe that such a hyperactive fish as a king salmon would stoop to suck a worm from the bottom, so I hung around until one of them reeled in after missing a hard bite that nearly pulled his rod into the creek. They were telling the truth!

That was proof enough that: a power boat isn't absolutely necessary to enjoy salmon fishing; that the best way to catch them may not have been discovered yet; and, that there are at least two salmon fishermen whom the energy crisis won't affect very much!"
"This is the Captain Speaking"

by Capt. C.E. Leising USCG (Ret)
Director
Bureau of Waterways

One of the more important new regulations recently promulgated under authority of Act No. 400, the "Motor Boat Law," is Regulation 4.12, intended to protect persons carried as "passengers for hire" aboard vessels which carry more than six such passengers on waters which are solely state waters. Such a vessel operating on federal waters — such as most of our large river systems or federal impoundments — is subject to regulation by the U.S. Coast Guard and must be annually inspected and manned by persons certified by the CG as competent. Until Regulation 4.12, the same vessel operating on state waters — which might easily be as dangerous — has been subject to no special regulations at all — except that requiring a CG wearable type PFD for each person on board. The buoyant cushion (Type IV) was not allowed on vessels carrying passengers for hire.

This was recognized a number of years ago as a dangerous gap between federal and state efforts to ensure the safety of those who bought a ticket for a ride confident in the safety of the vessel's hull and machinery history, her maintenance and operating difficulties, etc., cannot conceal these deficiencies long enough to pass inspection and then load the inspector with responsibility for not detecting them in the event of a casualty.

Because the planning and implementation of a program which was bound to increase the workload of our "thin green line" of waterways patrolmen takes considerable staff work, and since the safety record of the approximately 25 "carriers" who would be affected was perfect, we kept our fingers crossed, hoping for its continuation. Yet we knew that the state would be badly embarrassed by the absence of any protective regulations — in the event of a tragedy. It is the sad truth that all too many operators take no regulations seriously and ask themselves, "What's the worst that can happen?" Such considerations are not among the good health and eyesight. This Operator's Certificate shall be displayed on the vessel where it can be seen by passengers and shall indicate its current validity by the current year Inspection decal placed there by the inspector.

(3) Vessel is to be at all times under control of a person holding a valid Certificate to Operate issued by the Waterways Patrolman after a professional examination and presentation of a doctor's certification as to good health and eyesight. This Operator's Certificate shall be mounted alongside the Certificate of Inspection and have attached a photograph of the operator.

Recognizing the problems associated with instituting a new program, we are allowing owners of "existing vessels," i.e., those which operated during 1973 on the same route, until May 15, 1976 to qualify. A "new" vessel going into the trade for the first time is not given any delay waiver. By July 1, 1974 both the Certificate of Inspection and the Operator's Certificate should be posted where all passengers can see them and enjoy their cruise with the added enjoyment that somebody cares enough about their safety to have done something about it. As you put your wife and kids aboard, you will now be able to check whether the boat and operator have been checked!
CO-OP NEWS
by Bill Porter

The honors, or the “Purple Hearts”, go this month to the Upper Dauphin County Conservation Club from Dauphin County, obviously. Over the years in this feature, we’ve given a number of nicknames and accolades to a variety of clubs for a variety of reasons — in many instances they have related to a club’s ability to overcome a particular problem or adversity. Then we ran into the Upper Dauphin outfit and found a history of incredible hardships and perseverance, and we also found we had run out of adjectives to fit the situation. So read the following facts, take a look at the pictures, and select your own appropriate vocabulary.

Initially, the club formed in early 1969 to improve Rattling Creek for trout fishing and the cooperative nursery came later. Float boxes were the first project for better distribution of pre-season Fish Commission trout that year. In May of the same year, the club began a series of stream improvement devices and by September had installed six major units. So far so good.

It was also about this time that the Upper Dauphin County Conservation Club decided to get into the cooperative nursery business. Several sites were examined with water tests, access, and other issues considered. Approval received, the club began construction in June of 1970. The raceway was a good one of poured cement and block walls, 30’ x 6’, and total screening over-all areas containing fish. The first fish arrived in August of the same year. Interest was high; the nursery had a name, the RATTLING CREEK TROUT NURSERY; and things looked very good.

Then in December, disaster struck. (By the way, we have adjectives here but can’t use them — read on; you’ll see what we mean.) The 3,000 brown trout had been deliberately poisoned! Tests proved later that the material used was some type of caustic soda, or some type of cesspool cleaner. It was deliberate vandalism that caused the club a lot of mental anguish. The case is still unsolved, but that doesn’t mean the boys have forgotten!

Physical support for the problem came from the Potter County Anglers, who donated some of their fish to the Dauphin County lads to keep them in business for the moment. Four additional stream improvement devices were made and installed; to this was added by July 1971, ten units were in operation. Things started to look good once more.

Again, a major blow occurred when a runoff of mountain water, high in tannic acid, wiped out half of the 1971 population. Things went from bad to worse: the intake pipe froze on one occasion, requiring the building of fires, maintaining them, and the use of blow torches to keep the water flowing through a severe cold snap.

The spring of 1972 started well with plans to improve the intake system, increase the length of the raceway, and add more to the scenic quality of the nursery already set in a very picturesque location along Rattling Creek as it tumbled down to Lykens.

And “tumble” it did — right into Lykens as Agnes hit in all her fury. The nursery was completely destroyed. The creek became a raging torrent that rolled boulders along like pebbles. The raceway was filled with the debris; the intake shack was smashed and shoved downstream to end in a tangled mess of junk in the roots of an upturned tree. As the flood waters dropped, we visited the site. The whole narrow valley was a jumble of rocks, upturned trees, and debris of all sorts. Not a grain of topsoil could be seen and the vegetation gave testimony to the height and fury of the raging waters. It seemed the end — just how much could the sportsmen take, keeping in mind the more immediate problems of flooded homes, roads, and businesses?

Well, apparently they could take quite a bit. In August of 1972, the nursery was back in operation with the original 30’ being cleared of debris and repaired! Two visits to the nursery, one in the early part of 1974 and another in early May showed more improvements.

Raceway of Rattling Creek Nursery was filled with boulders after Agnes.

Again, materials have been stockpiled for the 75’ extension that had been “somewhat delayed.” Topsoil has been added and grass planted. Shrub and young trees were placed at varying vantage points; and a dike thrown up to prevent normal high water from coming into the nursery. The intake system was rebuilt and new pipes were laid. The outlet was set in below the extension area, using a sturdy steel drain pipe well-anchored. There is also a new storage building of sturdy construction not unlike a vintage radio-shack unit of some bygone war. Anyway it’s there and very useful.

Now it’s time for some kudos: a lot of the heavy work, requiring machines as well as men came from the A. and R. Construction Company, Pine Grove, who were working on the reservoir and pipe lines that were damaged by the same Agnes. Club members and other volunteers assisted the cleanup, repair and restoration. And, of course, the project had to be refunded, which it was in a variety of ways, showing the support of the area residents, still suffering their own losses. Members of the National Guard, as their assignments permitted, also loaned several helping hands.

For a few names of fellows met on our various trips, here are some of the prime movers: Paul Foster, nursery manager; Dale Wolfe, feeder; Lee Jones, club president; Paul Travis, vice president; Harry Dietrich, secretary; Herman Hand, treasurer; Bill Reindinger, past president; and Ron Deibert, another active member.

Let’s hear it for the Upper Dauphin County Conservation Club and the RATTLING CREEK TROUT NURSERY!
KIDS SAY THE DARNEST THINGS!

During a fishing school at Center Township High School, we “plugged” the Angler and mentioned the new technique of “sniffing” plastic worms to be sure of selecting only those that smelled like licorice. At the second session, a small boy came into the room all excited and said, “Mr. Parrish, I brought two bucks to sign up for the ‘Wrangler’ magazine.” Still another lad approached Special Waterways Patrolman Denzil Curtright and offered, “I was down at the store the other day sniffing worms when a bunch of my friends came up and asked what I was doing. When I told them, they laughed for fifteen minutes!” Also, during this school, we showed a slide with several different species of fish being compared to a yard stick. I said, “You’ll never believe where these fish come from.” To this, a boy yelled, “The Ohio River!” “How did you know that?” I inquired. Proudly the lad said, “I was here last year!”

D. F. Parrish
Waterways Patrolman
Beaver County

WEAR THEM!

Does TV have any influence on the public and does the movie industry have any influence on the public? These questions have been asked by important people before but now we have proof that they do. Bill Shaver was talking with some young girls that had come down the Delaware River by canoe to Luckawaken and they were from New York City. Their statement was that they had seen the movie “Deliverance” and they decided to try the river in a canoe. They loved it and said that we could expect a lot more people this year if they see that movie. I just hope they know enough to wear their PFD’s. A lot of people believe the things they see on a screen and don’t take the proper precautions.

Joseph E. Bartley
Waterways Patrolman
Pike County

WOULDN’T BELIEVE IT!

If anyone would have told me about the fishing pressure that I was going to have on the Fish-For-Fun area at Kettle Creek, I wouldn’t have believed it. The pressure was terrific and the comments from the fishermen were excellent.

I’ve had a number of trophy trout taken last spring that were over twenty inches. A 21¼” brown trout was caught by Ernie Getz, of Renovo, on a streamer. What got me was to see fishermen on this stretch of water last spring before the ice went out! They were doing their fishing in the open water at the head of the pools, in the riffles. These people must have had a “wire edge” to wear off before the regular trout season opened on April 14th.

Kenneth Aley
Waterways Patrolman
Potter County

HE TOLD ‘EM SO!

On April 19, 1974 I observed a canoe on Bowman’s creek with one adult and two youngsters and two cushion type preservers. I had just stocked the stream this day so the canoeist faced two hazards — cold water temperatures, and rate fisherman! So I took the youngsters into my car and took them to the house they were visiting. I advised the adult member of the party that it would be a very good idea to have the youngsters wear the preservers, rather than cushions.

On April 21 I received a phone call from the adult canoeist who stated, “Mr. Shabbick, I thought I’d best report to you, before some fisherman does, that I upset my canoe in Bowman’s Creek as the canoe is tangled up in some driftwood and still in the creek. No one hurt, just our pride!”

Stephen A. Shabbick
Waterways Patrolman
Wyoming County

LOST & FOUND

While at the Northeast Region Headquarters, the secretary, with a sort of bewildered expression, asked me if I would handle a strange phone call. I took the phone and asked the caller if I could be of any help to him. He informed me that while he was fishing along the Susquehanna River, in West Nanticoke, he had found a six-foot python snake and he wanted to know if we would like to have it. More out of curiosity I told him I would come to his home and pick the snake up. When I got to the caller’s residence, he did, in fact, present me with one six-foot python snake! The only catch was, the snake was dead. It was still in very good shape and could not have been dead very long!

Claude M. Neifer
Waterways Patrolman
Luzerne County

FISHING & BOATING

At the stocking of Lizard Creek, Pohopoco Creek, and Mahoning Creek, students from the Carbon County High School assisted. On two of the stockings, senior students, mostly girls, from the Jim Thorpe H.S. Biology classes came along to help watch. Especially so, when 90% of the students from Jim Thorpe were female, outfitted in hip-boots, who were eager to go right into the creek, spreading the fish, right down the center of the creek. One of the girls was outstanding in assistance to the driver, on the truck, learning how to dip out of the tanks, etc.

An anecdote from a student in our pleasure boating course: After the first session, while at home, doing his homework on the review questions, he had his wife asking the questions. She asked #7: “For safety, must a boat and motor match?” He answered correctly, “Yes.” Thereupon, she informed him that they were in trouble! Her exact quotation was, “I believe, “But Honey, we’re in trouble: we have a white boat and a black motor.”

Frederick W. Ohlsen
Waterways Patrolman
Carbon County

BORN FREE—

Recently while on patrol I observed an individual fishing without a fishing license. As I watched, it became evident that he (or she) was quite serious about fishing—not just fishing for something to do. The longer I watched this individual at his task, the more aware I became of the grace and beauty which were so much a part of his technique. Also, I couldn’t help but notice the growing inner feeling that I had that this individual’s right to fish was granted by a much higher power than any given by man’s fishing license. You see, this fisherman was an Osprey, one of the most beautiful creatures in nature.

Larry Boor
Waterways Patrolman
Franklin County

PENNSYLVANIA ANGLER
PORKY PROBLEMS

Almost everyone has seen or heard about porcupine damage, especially around camps and outhouses. I have even heard lumbermen in the area talk about porcupines chewing up bulldozer seats and fan belts. But recently, I saw a panel truck parked along Four Mile Run with chicken wire encasing the undercarriage of the truck. I heard lumbermen in the area talk about porcupines chewing up bulldozer seats and fan belts. But recently, I saw a panel truck parked along Four Mile Run with chicken wire encasing the undercarriage of the truck. I heard lumbermen in the area talk about porcupines chewing up bulldozer seats and fan belts.

WON'T THAT HURT THE FISH?

While I'm in the field, my wife is the chief "in charge" of answering the telephone. On a day when a stocking is scheduled, she is prepared for an unusually busy day with the phone. One of the normal questions asked, especially on a rainy day, is "Are they still going to stock the fish?" Her reply is, "Yes," giving the time and place. The usual second question is, "Won't that be harmful to the fish?" Her reply is, "I don't imagine it will, because the fish should be accustomed to water by now!"

POCONO PICKEREL ARE TOUGH!

SWP Ben Overholts reports that white ice fishing on February 3, 1973 at White Heron Lake with Jack Wint, Bill Detweiler, and Joe Bator, one tip-up spool was pulled through one of the holes and disappeared. On March 9, 1973, while fishing the same lake by boat, the lost spool was observed floating and was retrieved. After unsnagging the line from several sunken stumps, it was discovered that Mr. Pickerel was still hooked. The fish was landed and found to be none the worse after five weeks of being held captive on approximately five feet of free line! This pickerel measured 28 inches and was returned to the lake in apparently good, but hungry condition. Reports have it at White Heron Lake that for several days after March 9th, many small fish were observed breaking water in frenzied effort to escape being eaten by "something".

NEW "TROUT"?

Recently while Assistant Supervisor Murawski and I were presenting a Fishing School at Portage, in Cambria County, a gentleman asked about "a new kind of trout" we were stocking in area streams. It seems that he was told by some buddies that we were stocking a cross between a rainbow trout and a brook trout. He said that he had been told that this was called a "Splake". I told him that he was probably referring to the "Splake" which is a brook trout - rainbow trout cross. Some Splake had been stocked occasionally in local streams. He insisted that the fish he was referring to was called a "Sprite". I can only assume that his buddies were pulling his leg or he had started stocking soft drinks! Unfortunately we do see quite a few brands of soft drink cans "stocked" along the banks of our waterways. I am sure that the brand he referred to and all others are well represented.

"TRACKING"

One youngster called me on the phone to find out if I had stocked a certain stream. I told him that we had. He said that he was down to check the stream over and could find no tracks. I told him that the trout stay in the water and do not track up the bank. He said, "No, not fish tracks, men's tracks — from stocking the fish." I told him to go there the first day, put some bait on his hook, and enjoy his fishing and not to worry where the exact stocking of the fish took place, since they swim up and down stream anyway!

MORE TO IT THAN MEETS THE EYE!

"Skip" Leeper of the Lewistown Kiwanis Club invited me to present a program at a recent meeting. I must say it was one of the most enjoyable evenings I have spent. I used a selective tray of slides dealing with funding, activity, and Fish Commission organizational structure. The response was just great.

You know, it's amazing how many people are totally unaware of our various activities and the recreational and economical impact these have on the overall well-being of an area.
For low water, late season angling,

Try the \textit{"Spider\textquotedblquote}

by John F. Busch, Jr.

Looking upstream, you cast a wary eye at the first couple of pools and labor at stringing the line through the guides. The stringing job finally completed, you debate and then decide to cut off yesterday's 7X tippet and retie with a fresh one a foot or fifteen inches in length. To this you affix the fly and take a halfhearted stab at straightening the nine or ten foot leader. Your hand wraps around the smooth cork grip of the rod and once again, as hundreds of times before, a feeling of intense satisfaction wells up at the perfectly balanced equipment that projects to a fine point in front of you. Next comes a moment or two to grease the fly and then the scramble down a medium high bank at the water's edge, carefully holding rod high so no harm shall befall it.

It's a beautiful late summer day and the next few unhurried hours will live in your memory for many seasons to come. You begin to place one boot foot in front of the other up that first shallow riffle, watching a narrowed section of the stream where a deep, fast riffle runs along the bank on your right, thirty feet ahead and shadowed by a huge hemlock. The water is low and clear and the stream bottom is clean, exposing boulders of various size. The false casting begins... the line flows smoothly because your timing and precision have become second nature through the early spring season. The large, sparsely-hackled dry fly drifts gently to the tail of the riffle, cocks upright like its counterpart, the thistledown, and begins a four or five foot float toward you.

This is the beginning of an afternoon in late season with the \textit{Spider} dry fly. You carefully work the riffle, moving up a step or two at a time but no fish is attracted to your offering. Disappointment never enters your mind because above this riffle a fairly large, flat pool hatches in the warmth of the overhead sun, and you spot the first trout of the day. His lie is at the tail end of the pool, in water no more than a foot deep, and with the help of polaroid glasses you see him quite easily. The slow moving water allows the fish, facing upstream, to rest comfortably without movement.

From your vantage point, twenty-five or thirty feet downstream and just to the left, you're in perfect position to present the fly. If you were directly downstream your cast would "line" the fish, and a position further to the left might result in scaring him before the first cast is made. Strict attention is necessary, however, as it is imperative that the fish be not alarmed by the fly, leader or line crossing his line of vision. Right now you're in his "blind spot". His lying in sunlight is to your distinct advantage because the trout's pupil cannot contract to bright sunlight as can yours and mine.

The \textit{Spider} is allowed to alight on the surface of the water only a foot or two ahead and slightly to the left of the fish. Your luck holds, the fish is not alarmed. A flick of the tail starts his upward movement. From your position you mentally measure him at about a foot in length and probably a brown.

Without hesitation the fish intercepts the drifting imitation and a quick but gentle lifting of line off the water results in a satisfying solid strike. This is truly the climax so sought after. The fish makes a fast run for the right bank where the top of a fallen tree lies partly submerged. This works to your advantage as the run of the fish and your stripping of the slack line turns him downstream and into the fast riffle you have just worked. The playing of the fish, however, is of relative importance; does it matter that he gains his freedom if so accomplished? He has already provided his finest attribute, but after bringing him to hand you marvel at this highly colored, well conditioned, late season brown. He measures 13 inches. The prospects of a fine day astream are infinite as you carefully remove the hook and replace this fine specimen in the slow water beside the riffle. Perhaps next week or next year you'll find him in the same position at the tail of the pool and a repeat performance will take place.
This is the kind of late season angling that can be had on our low, clear water, freestone streams. It's in the heat of day, when the sun is high and it taxes your ability and patience to the utmost but it's worth the effort. Perhaps in the mountain areas a few stone flies remain, such as the Yellow Sally; but, for the most part, the aquatic insects have called it a season. The fish, however, continue to surface feed to terrestrials; the land-born insects comprising the ants, spiders, beetles and grass-hoppers. In some of our Pennsylvania streams there may be relatively few fish left, but these are usually good fish which have avoided being taken. Since there are fewer fish, one's chances of coming upon them when they are rising to these insects are often remote. It then becomes necessary to induce them to rise with a tantalizing imitation, if one is to find sport. This is the forte of the Spider: an imitation that "brings up fish", if there ever was one, when rises are not in evidence.

Much has been written about "skating" the Spider. Edward R. Hewitt told of "jumping" many big fish on his Neversink, by skating the fly across the surface of the water on the tips of its hackle. Reasonably good-sized water is needed for this technique, however, and this procedure does not provide the same results in the smaller headwater streams. This writer prefers a dead float, relying on spotting the fish in open water and presenting the fly in the usual manner, allowing it to drift with the current, however slow. The trout seem to act in an unpredictable manner; sometimes smashing the fly, slapping at it or jumping clear over it. On occasion a very respectable trout will race toward the fly like a bullet from six or eight feet away, stop abruptly within an inch or two, and then daintily sink in the imitation.

This hot, midday fishing offers an excitement that is not encountered during the high water, springtime, aquatic hatches. This is true partly because many of the fish that are cast over are positioned in shallow water — often no more than a foot deep and less. The rise to the fly much of the time is more on a horizontal plane than vertical (as earlier in the season) and in many instances accounts for the explosion-type rise. The surface of the water seems to bulge at the take and the immediate after-play in shallow water can be fierce. Naturally, the fish's only recourse is to make a long run for cover.

Just how do you create the Spider? It is tied in many variations; with or without tail, with a variety of body materials, including fur, quill and tinsel, and various hackle combinations. A favorite is on size 16 or 18 hook, 3X fine, with tail to help it float and cock upright on the water. A few ginger hackle barbules are tied in for the tail and two or three turns of gold tinsel for the body. A grizzly and a ginger hackle tip are then tied in, with the grizzly wrapped first. The best grade hackle obtainable should be used and wound on very sparsely. The diameter of the hackle of the finished fly is between the size of a quarter and a half dollar. A disadvantage in casting the fly is its wind resistance. Like the fan wing and spent-wing fly it tends to twist the leader, especially 7X (.0041), but this can be eliminated by cutting back the tippet and by keeping the false casting to a minimum. An advantage of the fly is its ethereal qualities and the fact that it dries out quickly with a false cast or two.

The fly certainly is not new and I do not present it here as a cure-all for low, clear water. But not all of our stream banks are heavily inhabited with grasshoppers, for example, and the imitation ant is difficult to see, even if you are fortunate enough to come upon a fair number of rising fish in a day's fishing. It would be foolish to attempt to fish an ant "to the water", but not so the Spider.

My stream notes for the past few seasons indicate that the serious trout fisherman is missing some fine days astream if he thinks the latter half of the season is for golf or gardening, rather than the pursuit of his favorite sport: A tabulation of fish caught and released on the Spider during July and August of one year totals 46 but does not indicate the many more rises and fish seen during this same two-month period. The notes establish that a fair number of these fish were of twelve to fourteen inches in length, with particularly good catches on August 11th and 16th. This past latter half season was no exception and included two fine sixteen-inch brown trout. These are good fish for our small streams, considering they are taken on the dry fly, using short, light rods of six and six and one-half feet in length. Add to this the fact that the trout move upstream into the smaller, cooler headwaters in late season and one frequently finds himself in some pretty tight casting situations.

This late season fishing offers unhurried moments when one rarely finds another fisherman on the stream. I can only recommend that you sample some of the sport that is available in late season with the light rod, well conditioned fish...and the Spider.
Keystone Camping

by Thad Bukowski

If there is a "most picturesque" campground in the Allegheny National Forest, it has to be CHAPMAN DAM, just southwest of Clarendon, off U.S. Rt. 6, in Warren County.

Actually, CHAPMAN DAM is part of CHAPMAN STATE PARK, an 803 acre area, surrounded by the vast 467,000 acre Allegheny National and some State Game Lands.

The 68 acre lake, nestled among the surrounding hills is the focal point of the area. The lake harbors trout, as well as bass and other warm water fish, is open to rowboating and canoeing, and has a good-sized sandy beach for swimming on the west shore just below the camping area.

During the early trout season, fishermen crowd the shores of the lake and one of the hottest trout spots is the moving water just above the dam.

Over the past season, Chapman itself was stocked with 3,400 brookies and browns on April 10th, but many other areas nearby are also outstanding for trout angling. Farnsworth Creek, for instance, just outside the park area, is regularly stocked with fish from a Federal hatchery during the summer. A big sportsmen's trout cooperative nursery is also located in the area.

The west branch of the Tionesta is the water source for Chapman and the stream also gets its share of brookies. 1,800 were planted last March 28th, and another 800 on April 10th.

Other very important trout streams of the area include the main branch of the Tionesta, which gets over 22,000 per season, and the Big and Little Brokenstraw, which together had 17,300 stocked in two shots on March 21st and April 2nd. Many other trout streams course through the forest for the trout angler and most of these are hardly fished during the peak of the summer.

In addition, the lower Tionesta, downstream from Kelletville, is a big boat and muskie fishing area of almost seven miles length as part of the Tionesta Dam. Closer by, and less than 20 miles away, is the mammoth 27-mile long Kinzua Dam. Sightsseeing is an important activity at the dam, particularly at mountain sites such as Jake's Rock and Rim Rock.

Boat rentals are available at the Wolf Run Marina at Kinzua, and a bait shop is located there also. Across the road from the Marina is an outstanding beach and picnic site.

At Clarendon, just a stone's throw away from Chapman campsite, one can rent canoes for a trip down the Allegheny River if he so desires. The outflow of Kinzua Dam has been revamped to accommodate such boaters at their entry point, with a road going to the water's edge. The trip down the river to nearby Warren is about 10 miles, but one can go much farther if he has the inclination.

Chapman has 40 tent and trailer sites, and a boat rental concession, plus a snack bar near the swimming beach. Hiking trails provide added enjoyment for your stay during the summer and a small nature center with a variety of wildlife of the area represented is also part of the park scene. Ski and snowmobile trails course through the park for winter activity and winter trout fishing is also enjoyed on the lake.

Further information about the park is available by calling 814-723-5030 or by writing to Chapman State Park, RD 1, Clarendon, Pa., 16313.
FISH FACT: Brown trout, which most anglers agree are the hardest to catch on flies, do most of their feeding at dawn and in the evening. During the full daylight hours, they are inclined to hide for safety.

Final weeks of the trout fishing season are tough ones, but keep this fact in mind: Mayflies hatch during the entire season, and excellent imitations of various species of mayflies are the Quill Gordon, Hendrickson, and Light Cahill.

Steady, darting retrieves are not the only ways to fish with a streamer fly. Try moving it around in the water in little bursts of activity. Also, allow it to flutter down into such cover as rocks, stumps, and depressions in a stream or lake bottom.

Don’t quit too early in a day spent in trout fishing. Wait for the evening rise, which can make a trout stream come alive with feeding fish. At dusk, use a visible dry fly, which will be easier to see on the water.

Bass and big trout that are chasing minnows in the shallows are excellent targets, since they are obviously on a spree of active feeding.

Flies that are drab in color are good bets when the water is low and clear. That is because, in crystal clear water, trout cannot so easily detect the fraud in a drab-colored fly as they can in one of the more colorful patterns.

Low-hanging trees, bushes, and other vegetation along shorelines are fish cafeterias. Insects fall or hop off into the water. With a long line, light tackle, and a delicate hand, the skilled angler can make his flies imitate these delicacies.

Remember that most panfish feed a foot or so off the bottom. Bait that is held too high in the water will not bring consistent strikes.

Use a light wire hook, and a leader to match, at least 7-1/2 feet long, in fishing with grasshoppers. Toss the ‘hopper lightly on the surface of the water and let it float naturally with the current.

Stumps and rocks not far under the surface of the water are an invitation to bass fishermen, because bass or pike are likely to be hiding in the deeper water in the area, and a lure worked carefully over the sunken obstructions is very likely to attract their attention.

Keep that flashlight in your pocket while you are fishing at night. Its beam can put down fish over a wide expanse of water. Hooking and fighting a fish in darkness is one of the charms (or penalties) of night fishing.

Bright days and clear water call for jigs of light colors, even white. For dark days and murky water, black, brown, and dark orange are good colors.

Sunset is the witching hour of the day. The wind usually falls, and the water calms. There is no bright glare of light in the sky or on the water. Fading light seems to give the fish a sense of greater security, and they often begin feeding. That is why fishing from sunset into darkness is a good tactic.

Working a surface bassbug too fast will discourage strikes. A good rule is to cast the bug, let it lie motionless for a count of 15 or 20, then twitch it very gently. If there is no strike, retrieve the bug a few feet and repeat the light twitch. Continue this method until the lure has been retrieved all the way.

In fly fishing for bluegills, wet flies are preferred because these fish do most of their feeding beneath the surface of the water. Small streamers also are effective, and so is a fly and spinner combination. Brightly colored flies are best.

BOATER’S TIP — "Saddle Bag" Tool Kit!

If you’ve ever wanted to change a plug or replace a shear pin and found that you left the tools at home, you might want to look into one of these. They’re made of gas and oil-resistant vinyl and should become a permanent part of your rig. You won’t have to ask, "Where are the tools?" each time you get underway. If your favorite dealer doesn’t have them in stock, he might be able to order one for you.
Beginning with this issue, Gene Winters joins us as a regular contributor. A native of Hershey, Pennsylvania, Gene is employed as chief announcer at Radio Station WLBR, Lebanon, where twice each week (Tuesday & Thursdays, at 6:35 p.m.) he presents an up-to-the-minute fishing program appropriately entitled: "Angling With Gene."

Active in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Gene is presently Commander of Flotilla 53, Harrisburg. One of the Flotilla's teachers of the Auxiliary's 12-week Basic Boating Course, Gene specializes in: Aids to Navigation, Rules of the Road, Weather Reading, and Engine Operation & Maintenance. Gene's 14- and 21-footers have ferried him across some of the major waterways across the country and the bits of wisdom he has picked up from his experiences should provide Angler readers with much informative and enjoyable reading.

Sooner or later, you'll meet him! It may not be today, tomorrow, or even next year—but, sooner or later, you'll meet him face-to-face or bow-to-bow! You'll recognize him...you've seen him before. He's the one seated next to you at your favorite watering hole, almost knocking you off your stool twenty times during the downing of one twelve-ouncer! He's the plebeian who knifed into line against the traffic lined up at the gas pumps during the "shortage." And he's the live wire who will scare ten years off your life when you meet him on or around the water!

He's the same guy who hasn't learned to compensate for the fact that a boat has no brakes; the same character who still doesn't know where the pivot point is on his boat (or even what it is); and that a swinging stern can be a dangerous weapon. And how he loves to stake a claim of eminent domain to the courtesy dock, intended only for loading and unloading, while he goes ashore for a two-hour siesta!

You can't educate him; you can't even get him into a classroom. Heaven knows the Pennsylvania Fish Commission has extended numerous invitations to a Safe Boating Course—ditto the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Power Squadron, and Red Cross. You can't effectively legislate him—he's the same person who is still driving on your city streets with a suspended driver's license. You can't shame him, for he feels no pangs of conscience. To make matters worse, all his bad traits have had years to become ingrained into his nature since the day he first scooped up all the jacks and marbles from the smaller kids on the playground.

At best, you are down to two defenses against him: neither of which, unfortunately, is guaranteed to work, but it may be all you have going for you. Maybe, just maybe, you can bring him around by setting an example. A dash of common sense and a sprinkle of courtesy are often infectious. Capitalize on his unending need to be liked, to be accepted; his personality demands it.

Your second choice is to adopt the highway safety axiom of "driving defensively" by boating defensively! Give him an abundance of room on the water; keep him off your stern, away from your bow. In fact, isolate him as much as possible on the water. To him, Rules of the Road sounds like a new game from some toy manufacturer. Don't get behind him when he leaves the dock—the "rooster tail" and wake he leaves will engulf you! His throttle has only two positions: STOP and WIDE OPEN! And, for Heaven's sake, don't let your children near him at the launching ramp. He can manipulate that trailer rig to the water's edge blindfolded—and he might as well be. He's not a newcomer, you know, he's been boating for years. And that may be most of his trouble.

Those days of boating and fishing for hours on end without meeting another person are just about gone forever. The tremendous increase in boaters has created a whole new ball game with different rules, and those who don't follow the rules should be thrown out of the park. Recreational boating doesn't demand professional sailors, but it does insist on courtesy, common sense, and safe boating practices. Add some boating education, and you can put the game in your back pocket. But there is no more room for a "nut behind the wheel" of a power boat than one of Detroit's four-wheelers!

If you're going to set an example for him, it must start the moment you leave the driveway at home. Follow the rules of the road on the highways as well. Adapt and allow for the trailer and boat tagging behind you. Apply as many of the heavy truck operator's driving techniques as you know (the better ones, that is!). If you've got a heavy rig and traffic is piling up behind you, find a safe spot and pull over to let them by.

When you arrive at the water, have the youngsters don their PFDs (personal flotation devices) as soon as they alight from the car. It's not only common sense, but a moral, if not legal, obligation. Protect your offspring before they plant one foot on the dock, or playfully kick the first pebble into the water to become mesmerized by the expanding circle of ripples.

Trailer boating has opened wide new horizons, but brought with it problems of its own: parking problems, bottlenecks, and rush hours, compounded by the fact that the average car-boat-trailer combination takes the equivalent parking space of three average size autos. Courtesy in the parking lot can minimize frustration, prudence on the ramps brings its own rewards.

Set an example by taking care of all possible chores before you move to the ramp. Install the drain plug, remove all tie-downs except the winch line, remove the trailer lights (when possible) or disconnect the trailer wiring plug. Tilt the motor or raise the lower unit. Store all gear properly and get boat hooks, paddles, and fenders "at the ready." Check navigation lights, blower.
Move off the ramp so others may use it. The parking area, not the ramp, is the place to tie her down.

Back up slowly as you approach the ramp, proceed with reasonable speed, but be deliberate and thoughtful. Know what you are doing and why. If possible, have someone guide you to make sure the course behind you is clear. After you roll her off, try to have a family member or friend park the car and trailer while you tend the boat. Engage the blower (if you have one), fire up the engine, glance at the instruments, check forward and reverse gears (at idle speed only) and move to the dock. If there’s no loading dock, pull the boat away from the ramp so others can use it and beach the boat out of the way to wait for your passengers.

When you come back in, move briskly, but carefully, to get the car and trailer back to the ramp for retrieving. Remember, even in these days of “Women’s Liberation,” your wife or girlfriend is probably still the one who’ll get waterlogged trying to hold that stern. Get it winched smartly on the trailer, tilt the motor and move off the ramp so others may use it. The parking area, not the ramp, is the place to tie her down for the road, remove the drain plug, stow the gear, reconnect the trailer lights, etc. Courtesy and consideration of others at the ramp is even more necessary at day’s end. Everyone tries to get out at the same time, usually just before the last ray of sunshine flickers and goes out.

Don’t stare, but glance over your shoulder. Notice that fellow you were destined to meet? Would you believe it, he’s got his shoulder to the bow and helping that newcomer roll his boat off the trailer! Judging by the smile on his face, don’t you get the feeling he’s actually enjoying being on the same side of law and order for a change? He might have picked it up from you — while you were simply displaying caution, courtesy, and common sense.

...your wife or girlfriend is probably still the one who’ll get waterlogged trying to hold that stern.
Angler JOHN SCHEIB, of Harrisburg, holds the 20-1/2-inch, 5 pound smallmouth bass caught in the Susquehanna River, York County, last March.

FRANK WOLF, of Allentown, was fishing the Delaware River, Northampton Co., last April when he caught his 26-3/4-inch, 7-3/4-pound Shad.

SCOTT ERVIN, 11, of Nazareth, caught two largemouth bass at Promised Land Lake, Pike Co. The 21-3/4-inch, 6-pound bass earned him a Citation.

Another young fisherman, CHRISTOPHER GROSS, 11, of York Haven, caught his 26-3/4-inch, 4-7/8-pound walleye in the Susquehanna River, York County.

JOHN SWINTON, of State College, shows the 25-1/2-inch, 4-pound chain pickerel taken from Stone Valley Lake, Huntingdon County, last February.

JAMES DAVIDSON, 11, of Bethlehem, shows his 18-inch, 2-pound brown trout caught on opening day fishing Monocacy Creek, Northampton County.

Just one week later, GEORGIE KAUP, 12, of Tyrone, caught this nice 22-1/2-inch, 3-1/2-pound brown trout from Blair County's Juniata River.

Little KAREN BRATTON, 5, of Millersburg, holds her large 26-1/2-inch, 10-pound carp taken from Wisconsin Creek in Dauphin County.

EDWIN TAYLOR, of Youngstown, Ohio, was fishing Shenango River, Mercer County, when he landed this 39-1/2-inch, 15-pound northern pike.

BILL WISEN, of Sharon, also caught a northern pike in the Shenango Dam, Mercer County. It measured 37-1/2-inches and weighed 11-1/2-pounds.
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