SHAD RESTORATION MILESTONE

On March 19, 1986, FERC Administrative Law Judge David Harfeld ordered, in an initial decision, that the operators of the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River participate in a program to demonstrate the feasibility of restoring alosids to the Susquehanna River and its drainage. This involves the construction of a new fish lift on the east side of the powerhouse, improvements to the west bank fish lift, and trapping and trucking of all adult shad captured at the expanded and improved Conowingo facilities. This decision was an absolute major breakthrough in the efforts to restore American shad to the Susquehanna River and its drainage. This involves the construction of a new fish lift on the east side of the powerhouse, improvements to the west bank fish lift, and trapping and trucking of all adult shad captured at the expanded and improved Conowingo facilities.

We urged the president of the Philadelphia Electric Company not to file exceptions or appeal—it is not in their interests, and we asked their management to cooperate in the immediate implementation of this initial judge’s decision so that the demonstration can now go forward. However, PECO went ahead and argued that fishlift improvement and expansion is premature and wasteful.

Shad moved into the tailrace at Conowingo during this year’s early spring warm spell, and about 2,200 were moved upstream—above all four dams. Considering that more shad were attracted to Conowingo Dam than ever before, this is really a milestone. Since 1972, the trap catch of adults at Conowingo Dam has averaged only about 385 fish per year.

With a change in water temperatures, a second run came into the tailrace at Conowingo beginning on May 29, and it’s fortunate that these were not spent shad, but still in pre-spawn condition. Before the run ended, about 5,200 shad were taken at Conowingo, with 4,265 of them hauled upstream above the dams. Twenty-six radio transmitters were implanted in the Conowingo fish stocked at Harrisburg, and except for the first batch released in early April, most of these fish began migrating upstream or spent considerable time in the release area.

One fish traveled up to the Beach Haven/Shickshinny area; several reached Sunbury, Selinsgrove, Halifax, and Dauphin; several moved about the Harrisburg area from the Dock Street Dam to the I-81 bridge crossing; and at least five fish were located in the Juniata River. These five covered a 50-mile reach from the mouth of the Juniata to Lewistown.

This is over double the amount of fish that have been moved upstream above Conowingo since 1972. It is quite probable that many of these were the result of eggs hatched and reared several years ago at our Van Dyke facility above Thompsontown. During 1981-1983, we stocked over 11 million shad fry and 163,000 fingerlings in the Juniata River.

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Just as we predicted—it is working. To extrapolate these figures, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources estimates that over 21,000 fish were in the lower sections of the river in 1986, compared to an average of only 7,000 shad during 1981 through 1985. Richard St. Pierre of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, coordinator of the Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Committee, attributes the success to natural reproduction of transplanted adults and fry stocked from the Van Dyke Hatchery in 1982 and 1983.

The Pennsylvania Power and Light Company, Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation, and the York Haven Power Company all signed an agreement of settlement with the license intervenors in December of 1984, and have been cooperating in egg collecting, adult transport from other rivers, and in the expansion of hatching and rearing facilities. The Van Dyke facility is almost doubled in size, and the cooperation from the three upstream utilities has been outstanding.

We have to remind anglers that there is a moratorium on shad fishing in the Susquehanna and its tributaries, and that creeling shad there is illegal. But isn’t it a great feeling that American shad are swimming again in the waters of the Susquehanna and its tributaries, thanks to the persistence of American shad is swimming again in the waters of the Susquehanna and its tributaries, thanks to the persistence of egg collecting, adult transport from other rivers, and in the expansion of hatching and rearing facilities. The Van Dyke facility is almost doubled in size, and the cooperation from the three upstream utilities has been outstanding.

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Controlling the Sea Lamprey by Robert M. Lorantas
The Fish Commission, other state agencies, the federal government, and Canadian authorities are joining forces to beat back this threat to Lake Erie.

Some Thoughts About Pluggin' by Jim Yoder
Plugs and pluggin' have a rich history, and through the years anglers have been most finicky about how they use their plugs.

File a Float Plan by Pete Grossetti
A float plan is a vital part of your fishing trip.

Fly Fishing During the Dog Days by Jeff Mulhollem
Add this information to your vest, score better on the stream.

Crayfish Imitations and Smallmouth Bass Action by Bob Clouser
Smallmouth bass action with these unique offerings can be terrific.

County Features — Wyoming County by Steve Shabbick,
Clinton County by Jay B. Johnston, and Jefferson County by Porter Duvali

Modify Your Trailer into a Drive-on by Darl Black
These trailer changes can turn your rig into an efficient, hassle-free unit.

Finding Your Own Faraway Place May Be Easier than You Think by Bob Wilberding
This advice comes from a guy who's surveyed hundreds of miles of Pennsylvania trout streams.

Pennsylvania’s Biggest Bucketmouths: Where, When, and How Anglers Catch Them by Art Michaels
Want to land Pennsylvania’s largest largemouths? These specifics can point the way.
The sea lamprey is a parasitic anadromous fish that gained access to the Great Lakes above Niagara Falls after construction of the Welland Ship Canal in 1829. The canal linked oceanic and Great Lakes shipping routes by circumventing Niagara Falls, and coincidentally provided the sea lamprey with access to the four Great Lakes above the falls.

The first sea lamprey observed above the falls was reported from central Lake Erie in 1921, 92 years after the opening of the canal. In the 40 years following this first appearance, the sea lamprey rapidly colonized Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, and Lake Erie. Lake trout populations in lakes Huron and Michigan, although stressed by overexploitation, were virtually eliminated by 1950 due to sea lamprey predation.

In Lake Erie, lake trout populations were already at low levels by the early 1900s due to habitat deterioration and overexploitation, so the impact of the sea lamprey was largely imperceptible. In addition, water quality in tributary streams limited the availability of suitable sea lamprey spawning sites.

However, improvements in water quality coupled with the availability of an abundance of prey species in the form of lake trout, Pacific salmon, and steelhead trout have lead to the identification of readily perceptible impacts of sea lamprey in recent years. These impacts were evidenced by the presence of fewer older and larger lake trout in assessment surveys, with a relatively high percentage of these trout (20 to 30 percent) bearing sea lamprey wounds. With the upper lakes sustaining the earliest and most damage from sea lamprey, extensive research and control efforts were focused on these lakes by U.S. and Canadian agencies in the 1950s. This team effort subsequently lead to the formation of the Great Lakes Fishery
In this free-swimming stage they have the capability to become parasitic. Transformation usually takes place in the larval, transformer, parasitic, and adult phase. After emerging from eggs deposited in a crescent-shaped nest, larvae burrow into stream sediment where they live for three to seven years. These juveniles are blind and not physically capable of parasitizing fish. Larvae sustain themselves by filtering algae and other stream drift material.

When larvae reach a length of approximately 6 inches, they begin to develop eyes and a round suction-cup mouth with horny teeth. This transformation usually takes place in the fall or spring. After transformation, transformers leave their stream nursery area and migrate downstream. In this free-swimming stage they have the capability to become parasitic.

Parasitic phase sea lamprey attach to fish with their suctorial mouths, rasp a wound in the fish's flesh with their toothed tongues, and begin feeding on blood and other body fluids of the fish. Sea lamprey spend from 12 to 20 months in the lake parasitizing fish. Laboratory studies indicate that a single sea lamprey can kill 40 or more pounds of fish in that time. Although the primary prey of the sea lamprey are large salmonids, in Lake Erie they have been observed parasitizing walleye, yellow perch, freshwater drum, and other species. After attaining a length of 19 to 20 inches, adults drop off their hosts and ascend tributary streams in the spring to spawn.

Although adult sea lamprey are occasionally sighted in a number of tributaries to Lake Erie in Pennsylvania, only three tributaries support spawning populations. These streams, Conneaut Creek, Crooked Creek, and Raccoon Creek, are located in the extreme northwest corner of the state near the Ohio border. Surveys conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans indicate that densities of larvae in streams in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and Ontario, which flow into Lake Erie, are of sufficient magnitude to require control measures. Conneaut, Crooked, and Raccoon creeks in Pennsylvania, together with streams in New York, Ohio, and Ontario, are scheduled for chemical treatment to kill lamprey in 1986.

This unified control effort is intended to reduce lake-wide populations of sea lamprey and improve survival of lake trout and other salmonids released into the lake. The ultimate goal of sea lamprey control on Lake Erie tributaries is to restore naturally reproducing populations of lake trout. Complete restoration will require many years of hatchery releases when one considers the slow-growing late-maturing characteristics of the fish and the resilience and effectiveness of the sea lamprey as a predator. The most sophisticated treatment measures have not eliminated sea lamprey from the Great Lakes. Most infested streams require regular treatment every three or four years.

**TFM**

Although restoration efforts have been slow on the upper lakes, progress has been steady. In 1958, perhaps the greatest impediment to lake trout restoration was removed when the selective chemical lampricide was discovered. The chemical 3-trifluoromethyl-4-nitrophenol, also known as TFM, was found to be very effective in killing lamprey larvae with minimal effect on other organisms.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission reports that rigorous testing of the chemical demonstrated that it: (1) had no long-term effect on the environment or on forms of life other than the one it is supposed to control, (2) did not leave persistent residues, (3) did not join with other chemicals to form new chemicals with hazardous effects, (4) did not constitute a health hazard to humans working with the chemical, and (5) did not have a long-term effect on human or animal life.

These results lead the EPA to approve TFM for use in the sea lamprey control program. Studies have shown that some invertebrates and fish are sensitive to this chemical and that some of these organisms may die during treatment. However, it has also been shown that recolonization by affected species is usually rapid, because only those portions of streams infested with sea lamprey are treated. Fish in spawning condition, such as trout and salmon in the fall, are sensitive to lampricide treatment and those spawners in poor condition may die during treatment. There is a general consensus, however, that any slight negative impacts are worth the benefits in lake trout and gamefish rehabilitation.

All TFM applications to streams in Pennsylvania will be made by a team of chemists and biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sea Lamprey Control Laboratory. Pennsylvania Fish Commission personnel will assist in assessments of the abundance of larval sea lamprey during treatment. Actual treatment involves metering TFM into streams at rates necessary to produce a predetermined concentration for 12 to 24 hours.

During treatment, concentrations of the chemical in the stream will be continuously monitored at selected downstream sites. While in the stream, TFM may temporarily color the water a pale yellow. The times and dates of treatments will be made known to the public well in advance of treatment through the news media so that anglers and water users who wish to modify their fishing and water use activities may do so. Prudence would dictate that anglers not consume fish during treatment. Salmon fishermen who fish these streams should view any inconvenience due to treatment as worthwhile, because these efforts will serve to improve fishing in the future.

**How lampreys inflict damage**

To appreciate the control and eradication efforts coordinated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, one must have an understanding of the biology of the sea lamprey and how it inflicts damage. An anadromous fish, it spends its adult life in a large lake or ocean and ascends tributary streams to spawn, after which spawning death ensues. The life cycle of the sea lamprey can be most conveniently described by partitioning it into four rather distinct phases: the larval, transformer, parasitic, and adult phase.

After emerging from eggs deposited in a crescent-shaped nest, larvae burrow into stream sediment where they live for three to seven years. These juveniles are blind and not physically capable of parasitizing fish. Larvae sustain themselves by filtering algae and other stream drift material.

When larvae reach a length of approximately 6 inches, they begin to develop eyes and a round suction-cup mouth with horny teeth. This transformation usually takes place in the fall or spring. After transformation, transformers leave their stream nursery area and migrate downstream. In this free-swimming stage they have the capability to become parasitic.

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Robert M. Lorantias is a fisheries technician in the Commission Lake Erie Research Unit. He holds a bachelor of science degree in biology from Penn State and a masters degree in fisheries from the University of Michigan.
Some Thoughts About Pluggin’

by Jim Yoder

photos by the author

The other night I took down Dad’s old two-piece split bamboo casting rod from its perch between the basement joists. Its half-century accumulation of varnish was blistered even more than I’d remembered, but what memories that rod brought back! I practically grew up “pluggin’” with that rod in my hand on a little pond in Bradford County—Spring Lake, at the time the county’s finest largemouth water, bar none!

I suppose a split bamboo like that was supposed to lend status or authority to its owner, and perhaps my father felt some of that once. It was completely lost on me. As I recall, it was a real bear to use; anything remotely resembling accuracy was an absolute coincidence! It was far from a joy to cast with. It had no action to speak of. It was just five feet of stiff, unyielding bamboo with which you sidearmed a big plug out across the pond, then burned your thumb unmercifully trying to sprag down the reel’s wildly spinning spool before the lure landed in the brush. Its little beady agate guides, now deeply grooved from who knows how many thousand casts, were a sign of the times.

I suppose it was really quite handsome in its day. If so, that was its only redeeming value. Of course, a part of the great ceremony involved in each of these occasional inspections is another promise, as the rod is returned to its perch, to refinish that piece someday... and soon.

With that particular rod, often as not the terminal tackle was a big red and white Bass Oreno—seemed everybody had and used one. My earliest fishing recollections never fail to include that rod and one of those plugs. All that despite the fact that the first largemouth bass ever to fall for an artificial presentation of mine went for a rather nondescript, hollow-faced, generic surface popper that bore no brand name. Naturally, it was on Spring Lake. And with that catch, I might add, a lifelong infatuation with plugs, pluggin’, and the fish that follow them had its beginning. To this day I find no greater pleasure than plugging a stump-filled pond of weeds and spatterdock.

As soon as we purchased any new plug, a twist of the pliers reduced all its treble hooks to “up riding” doubles and as a consequence we brought the lure back to the boat more often than might have been possible otherwise. Even so, we spoiled a good deal of fishing with our plug-salvaging antics, but we never left a lure behind if there was any way on earth to retrieve it. Still, we well knew the time would come when a lure would inevitably be lost. And after a good plug had been snagged and successfully retrieved some unspecified number of times—somehow you just knew when the time arrived—it was “retired” before its luck ran out. You just felt it was too valuable to risk any longer. Never mind that it never caught another fish lying there in the tackle box!

We plug-tossing anglers always were and still are a fortunate lot, given the array of lures set before us. And I’ve enjoyed every minute of it. It wasn’t difficult keeping track of lures and their makers back when I was a kid. Unlike today, there were only a handful. Creek Chub Bait Company, James Heddon’s Sons, South Bend, and Pflueger were some of the very early ones, but only the former three survive of that group. Heddon dates to 1894; I don’t really know when the others had their beginning.

In time, many others were to join their ranks. Arbogast, for example,
came into the lure-making picture a long time ago, though I don't have the beginning cataloged. Their Jitterbug, it would seem, could well have come into existence at the peak of the dance craze bearing the same name—its action supposedly not too unlike some of the dancers of that day. Late 30s? Maybe. If so, that lure is fast approaching a half-century of catching fish... an awful lot of fish! The Jitterbug and a host of other old reliables still remain favorites among a legion of anglers. I've never been without one—don't intend to be.

For that matter, I don't recall ever not owning a Bass Oreno, although today I prefer the Midge Oreno, which is about the same critter sealed down to lighter spinning weight. Then, too, I've never been without an assortment of other oldies and goodies: Creek Club Pikies, Heddon Vamps, Sonies, you name them. Yep, and they're right in there alongside my Bagleys, Bombers, Cotton Cordells, Rapalas, Rebels, and oh, good grief, we could just go on and on! Just when Helin introduced the inimitable Flatfish is another of those elusive dates, but it seemed that all of a sudden they were upon us in a myriad of sizes, colors, and "numbered" patterns that defied description. And each "number" had its following. I recall vividly a particular era in our upstate fishing history when the Flatfish enjoyed a popularity that was the envy of all lure makers.

Somewhere around the time the late 50s were giving way to the 60s, it was the lure of choice among the bass and walleye fishermen on the Susquehanna River in Wyoming.
County. At about the same time down in neighboring Luzerne County, a totally differently sized, colored, and patterned Flatfish than anything used up on the river was hauling up great rainbow trout from the depths of Harveys Lake. Out in northwestern Pennsylvania, muskies and northerns readily took Flatfish.

And still we looked forward to new introductions. Were we looking for some “super” lure? Could be. There was always the threat of gimmickry to be wary of, and when a new plug hit the market—and the water—it was watched anxiously... suspiciously. If it “took hold,” dealers were quickly sold out and you had to wait for their next shipment!

It was inevitable that even a hot lure would give way to a flashy newcomer. Sometimes a newcomer proved to be but a flash in the pan—others were forever.

On the largemouth bass ponds, some Bass Orenos were giving way to the gurgle of the Jitterbugs, then the swishing tails of the Hula Poppers and some converts never went back to their first loves. At one time, not too many anglers ventured forth on the Susquehanna without creations like Pflueger’s Pal-O-Mine Minnow or Heddon's River Runt—the arrival of the Flatfish sent a good many of these to the shelf. Then came the “sealy” Finns, the Rapalas. The Rebels followed closely on their heels (make that tails). Soon even the fabulous Flatfish began to lose favor. Some anglers never took up the old plugs again. The newcomers proved to be great fish takers and that, after all, is the name of the game.

But favorites are still emerging from within the many lines of tackle manufactured today, and it seems that some anglers become enamored more of a plug's composition than its design. There's the “balsa is best” school, the “can't beat cedar” crowd, and the group that feels more comfortable with some sort of space-age plastic.

Personally, I find them all beauts. But however well-conceived, designed, and tested, plugs are no more than imitations, and none is infallible. Some will only perform a percentage of the tricks their makers claim and even fewer claimed by their users. With few exceptions, however, I've owned very few plugs that didn't catch fish. Admittedly, some caught far more than others.

Despite annual attrition to stump roots and other lure-snagging bottom debris, my tackle assortment, with but occasional replenishment, still manages to fill three tackle boxes with the top shelf of an old jelly cupboard in the basement holding my overflow. Some of the lures hanging from the edge of that shelf are no longer “active”... for a variety of reasons, most of which are sentimental. There's that old popper I mentioned earlier. Mercy! You just don't let a plug like that get away from you. Do you?

Then there’s a little flat Rebel... I've long since forgotten its name, but it seems someone once called it a threadfin shad. It had never even as much as met a fish until one day a beautiful little tiger musky tried to do it in! Though little more than a keeper, that fish still outweighed that plug hundreds of times. He flattened hooks that were in the way and nearly completely straightened out the only “branch” of the little size 8 treble that held him. And you want me to risk losing that lure trying to catch another fish!

Then there's Dad's old Heddon Game Fisher. Ever see one? It's got a little Beno, Flatfish, Lazy Ike, and some Swim Whizz in it—although it unquestionably predates all of them—except it's in three sections with two separate joints. Don't ask me why, but I've never fished it... haven't had the nerve. Nor can I recall ever seeing my father tie it on! Beautifully formed and fitted, the cracking of its many coats of enamel with the passing of time only adds to the regal air it casts over the “commoners” at its sides. Now you just do not, repeat: Do not risk sacrificing that plug on some underwater altar just to catch another fish!

I concluded that there was only one antidote for this attack of nostalgia: I went out and bought a brand new Flatfish (sure I've got oodles of old ones, but I didn't have this finish...), a new Jointed Pikie Minnow (I can surely fill an entire Plano with Pikies only, but I didn't have a blue one!), a Midge Oreno in a new finish, and guess what? I'm going to fish them... nothing but them in 1986! This will be the Year of the Oldie!

Besides, my Rebels can use the rest.

Jim Yoder is a freelance writer/photographer. He is formerly editor of Pennsylvania Angler.
Searches for overdue boaters often end in bars. Many boaters finish a day of boating by visiting the local pub. The problem is that they never told anyone where they'd be, and the search goes on and on.

If you plan a special social stop before heading home from the launch ramp or marina (and you don’t mind letting your spouse in on the secret), make sure someone knows about it. A quick phone call can prevent a long, expensive search — and worry by those waiting at home.

Boaters can take a tip from aircraft pilots and possibly save themselves from turning a day of enjoyable boating into a frightening overnight ordeal. A pilot files a flight plan before leaving the ground, and then closes it out at his destination. This gives the Civil Air Patrol or other search units a headstart on determining if an aircraft is missing and where it might be. The same idea can work for boats.

A float plan is much less formal than its airborne equivalent. The elements of a good float plan include locations, times, and gear.

List as complete an itinerary as possible. Start with the launch site and the places you intend to cruise. If it's a fishing trip — and because fish have been known to be uncooperative at times — you might move around or may change your route completely. Often, fishing is better in one location in the morning, another in the early afternoon, and still another around dark. If this is the case, give some clues about your plan of attack.

The boat and equipment you carry should be the most detailed portion of the plans. Start out with the description of the boat. This gives the rescue teams an idea of what they are looking for. But remember that there are a lot of “17-foot outboards” cruising on some waterways. Besides listing the length and engine type, be sure to include the color (both the hull and the trim), construction, registration number, and by all means, the number of people on board. You can make up your own form with blank spaces for the information that varies from trip to trip. This will save you from having to redo the entire plan each time you get under way.

If you own a trailerable boat, you will want to give a description of the car and trailer, including the license number. If they are not at the launch site, the search may be expanded beyond the starting point. The Coast Guard usually completes a telephone harbor or marina check before any search units get under way.

If your boat is equipped with a radio transceiver, list the frequencies on which you can be contacted. Even if you just bring along a transistor AM radio to pick up the ball game or a little Mozart, list the radio station you listen to. Search units often work directly with radio newscasters to contact missing boaters.

The emergency equipment you carry can make a great difference on the type of search carried out. A search for a boat carrying flares, for instance, will surely continue throughout the night. A search for a boat with smoke signals or water dye can be handled by long-range, high-flying aircraft. There’s never too much information you can supply in the float plan.

Unfortunately, the Coast Guard has neither the facilities nor the personnel to accept float plans from the skippers of the estimated 3 million registered boats on the Great Lakes, for example.

Leave your plan with a responsible friend, relative, or neighbor, and be sure to close out the float plan when you return to shore or home. If you're out fishing, you may consider offering your float plan holder a share of the catch. He'll be sure to know you’re home then!
Fly Fishing During the Dog Days
by Jeff Mulhollem

Dog days. As defined by Merriam Webster's dictionary, the term refers to the period between early July and early September when the hot, sultry weather of summer usually occurs.

A second dictionary definition, which may seem especially appropriate for trout fishing during the dog days, calls them a "period marked by a dull lack of progress."

But for a well-prepared fly fisherman, late summer can be a productive, enjoyable time to be astream. There are a few reasons.

First, fishing pressure on most Commonwealth trout streams drops off noticeably after July 4. Many anglers turn their attention to warmwater species, becoming discouraged at their inability to catch trout after the major mayfly hatches conclude.

Secondly, the dog days offer challenging dry fly fishing, and most of us agree we'd rather fish with dries. During the late summer, surface action is nearly continuous with trout taking terrestrials and aquatic insects.
Even when no rises are evident, fish can often be enticed to take a dry fly.

Thirdly, when water levels fall, previously hidden natural features like rock ledges and springs erupting into the stream bed become obvious. The lairs of big trout can more easily be located. Dog days fly fishing for big trout becomes almost like a big game hunt.

But make no mistake — fly fishing during the dog days is demanding, difficult, and often frustrating. Still, with proper preparations, it can also be rewarding. Perhaps by following these suggestions you might eagerly await rather than dread fly fishing during the dog days.

The caddis
Many novice fly fishermen become obsessed with imitating the mayflies that hatch in May and June — Quill Gordons, Hendricksons, and Light Cahills. When trout begin disdaining these offerings in late summer, they become discouraged.

On many streams, the dog days are dominated by hatches of caddises, and common mayfly patterns will not fool trout in August when they are feeding on caddises. Caddis imitations are easy to tie, and during the dog days in Pennsylvania, fly fishermen should carry a selection in hook sizes ranging from 14 to 20.

Effective patterns include fluttering, elk hair, tent wing, and delta wing caddises in a variety of colors. Green, tan, brown, gray, black, and cream caddises are best.

Terrestrials
Late summer is a time when land insects are most active. Wind and gravity combine to make their presence in trout streams common, and trout are continually on the lookout for choice morsels.

Although grasshopper fishing seems to attract the most attention among fly fishermen, if I had just one pattern to use during the dog days, I'd pick a size 18 ant imitation in cinnamon or black. I remain partial to simple patterns using spun fur, but deer hair and cork-bodied McMurray ants are better in some situations. Even fish rising to a hatch of caddises or mayflies often accept a carefully presented ant.

Still, don't venture out without at least a handful of other terrestrial patterns. Beetles, inchworms, crickets, and jassids are all flies that can save a dog day for a smart fly fisherman.

Regarding hoppers, don't be without a few of those, either. A windy late August or September afternoon on a meadow stream stretch can make your hands shake when big trout begin nailing grasshoppers.

Good patterns include a dry muddler, Joe's Hopper, Letort Hopper, and deer hopper. If you find hoppers difficult to tie, buy a few in sizes 8, 10, and 12. Some dog day it will pay off.

Midges and gossamer
Too many long-rodders won't use flies smaller than size 16 or leader tippets lighter than 5X or 6X, saving midge fishing for the "experts." Too bad. When streams drop and become clear in late summer, occasionally a tiny fly on a 7X or even 8X tippet is needed to match a hatch.

It's true that such fine terminal tackle increases the odds in favor of the fish, lessening the chances of a hookup and increasing the odds of a break-off. But the worst thing that can happen is a lost trout. The alternative in some cases is no action at all.

In some areas, it is difficult to buy midges even at a tackle shop. So if you feel you can't tie tiny flies, try mail order or buy a few from a friend. If the thought of tying wings on a size 20 hook is all that's bothering you, tie your midges wingless in cream, black, brown, tan, olive, and gray.

Nobody — not even the "experts" — can see a dark-colored midge on riffled water 30 feet away. Just concentrate on where the fly should be and strike at any hint of disturbance. It could save a dog day.

Stocking schedules
Since the Fish Commission began its Operation FUTURE management program several years ago, one thing has become very clear. Waters stocked with trout latest in the spring provide the best dog day angling. The reason is simple. By late May, many of the truck followers have lost interest in trout fishing, and some of those who haven't don't have the expertise to catch trout stocked into low, clear water.

So find out which streams in your area were visited last by the "White Fleet." You might have a doggone good time on one, casting over more fish than you would have believed.

Don't avoid darkness
If you have a choice of when to fish during the dog days, choose early morning and late evening. Save the afternoons for yard work. During August and until the weather cools in September, hatches usually occur only during the first and last hours of daylight.

The best late summer fishing often occurs at night, long after most anglers head for home. Get in the habit of carrying a small flashlight, or better yet, purchase a pin-on lamp like a Flexlite and keep it attached to your vest. These devices allow easy changes of flies and tippets at night, leaving both hands free.

Plan to fish sections of stream you are familiar with so you don't take a spill wading in the dark.

Nothing is so exciting as hooking a big trout on a dry fly at night. You hear a splash, strike instinctively, and the fight is on. Large wet flies like wooly buggers, streamers like Dave's sculpin, and high-floating dries like humpys or Wulffs are good choices for night fishing.

In August and September, you may have to work a little harder to catch fish, but it's worth it for the action you can enjoy.

Jeff Mulhollem is outdoor editor and an environmental reporter for the Altoona Mirror.

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As I approached a broken pocket of water just below the fast riffle, I cast my crayfish imitation. The fly slowly sank, and as the current swept the fly toward me, the line suddenly went tight. With a sharp lift of the rod tip I was into my first smallmouth bass. With great satisfaction, this was repeated many times during the season.

Crayfish are the most abundant nutritious food source available to many species of Pennsylvania game-
fish, especially the smallmouth bass.

In early spring as the water warms, this coldblooded crustacean comes out of hibernation. At this time, they are stained by the decaying debris in which they have lived. Most are dark in color then, ranging from greenish-blue to mottled black and brown.

In a few weeks, their color changes to light olive, then to a brownish-olive shade. As they grow in size, they go through several molting stages. They burrow in soft mud or decaying debris. The entire crayfish becomes soft and helpless. It's one of the most favorite foods of the smallmouth bass at this developmental stage.

I love to fish for smallmouths with a fly rod, and I also enjoy tying my own flies. A natural outcome was to produce a crayfish pattern that has been deadly. Since the introduction of this pattern, five years ago, I've produced more than 5,000 of them.

Smallmouths gorge themselves on young crayfish. I found smaller size imitations more productive. From one to ½ inches in length they are at their softest texture. As they increase in length, the carapace and abdomen covering become much harder.

**Color and habitat**

Crayfish colors vary. Habitat, such as muddy or clear water, affects a noticeable change. They have a greenish cast if they live in a grassy habitat, brownish shade on a silted bottom, and a blackish-brown mottled color from living in a lava and ironstone environment. It pays to check your favorite stream for the proper sizes and colors that are most abundant.

I use a few color combinations during the season. In early spring, a dark olive back with a very light pale-green underbody is a good choice. In late spring, crayfish carry an orange egg mass under their abdomens, and you can imitate this by using orange dubbing under the abdomen of your imitation. During the summer months, a tan or olive-brown back covering with the pale-green underbody provokes the most strikes.

**Tackle**

Crayfish live on the bottom, so you must weigh your imitation or add weight to your leader and present the fly properly on the bottom. Bottom-bouncing catches many more bass.

I prefer an 8½-foot to 9-foot rod capable of handling 7-weight or 8-weight fly line. For most conditions, a weight-forward floating line is sufficient. Sink-tip lines with a very short leader get the fly down in deep fast pockets.

I use two special leaders that can be attached to a floating fly line. One is a 10-footer, made from Maxima leader material. It's a four-section leader designed to sink quickly and prevent dragging of the fly.

This leader gives me a faster sink and a few more yards of natural drift. You can make it by using this formula for leader material and lengths: 30 inches of .015-diameter, 30 inches of .012-diameter, 30 inches of .010 diameter, and 30 inches of .009-diameter or 6-pound-test for the tippet.

It is not necessary to have a thick butt on the leader to cast weighted flies. The movements of the weighted fly turns the leader over.

Another leader for shallow, fast water up to 4 feet deep that can be attached to your floating line is one designed by a good friend and smallmouth fly rodder from Maryland, Bill Anderson. This is a sinking leader that can be attached to a floating fly line with a loop connection. Attach to the floating fly line 36 inches of fast-sinking fly line. Match the weight of the sinking line to the weight of the floating line. Attaching 24 inches of leader material completes the leader.

When fishing 4-foot to 10-foot depths, you can modify the rig by using the floating line plus the 3 feet of fast-sinking line, to which is attached 18 inches of 15-pound-test monofilament leader material. Loop to the 15-pound leader 6 or 8 inches of LC-13 (13 grains per foot) lead core line. Finally, loop 20 inches of 6-pound-test or 8-pound-test monofilament to the LC-13, which completes the leader.

This leader is very useful when using wooly buggers, mudders, sculpin, and crayfish imitations.

**Fishing strategies**

Different methods of presentation let you be successful throughout the season with crayfish counterfeits.

The most productive is the dead drift. This is an upstream cast, allowing the fly to sink to the bottom, letting the water flow bring the fly back to you naturally. You must point the fly rod directly at the line where it enters the water and with your line hand retrieve all slack line from the water. This keeps you in contact and control of the fly, and if you get a strike, you instantly see or feel the stopping of the drift. Then you strike immediately.

In the up-and-across method, cast the fly slightly upstream and across. Short casts are easier to control. As the fly starts its downward drift (the fly must bounce bottom to be effective), follow with the rod tip a little ahead of the drifting fly line where it enters the water. Never let the line drift ahead of the rod tip. This causes unnatural drift. As the line drifts past you, slowly lift it from the water by stripping line or by raising the rod tip. Watch the line where it enters the water. When a strike occurs, the line simply stops moving. Sharply lift the rod tip to set the hook.

At times, stripping the fly is needed to provoke strikes. Cast the fly upstream or across and as the fly drops to the water lower the rod tip toward the water, pointing it directly at the fly line. Start a stripping retrieve of about one foot of line with each pull. This causes a darting motion of the fly. When a strike occurs using this method, you feel a hard solid tug. This technique is effective on shallow flats and gravel bars.

When using imitations of bottom-dwelling nymphs, crayfish, hellgrammites, or sculpin, add enough weight to the fly or leader so that it drifts properly near the bottom.

Many rivers and streams in Pennsylvania abound with smallmouth bass. The Susquehanna is top-notch with its many shallow flats, gravel bars, grass beds, riffles, and rock-covered bottom, all of which are prime smallmouth bass habitat. Areas below dams are ideal. The slow, deep water with a mud-silted bottom, which occurs above dams, is not good smallmouth bass habitat.

Here is a list of other streams within reasonable driving distance of the Harrisburg area, where I live. I recommend these waterways highly:

- Juniata River and Shermans Creek flowing through Perry County.
- Swatara Creek in Dauphin and Lebanon counties.
- The Conestoga and Conewago creeks in Lancaster County.

These waterways are only a few of the streams in the state that contain smallmouth bass, so the next time you take a walk along your favorite stream, string up the fly rod, tie on a crayfish imitation, and drift it through a deep pocket or riffle. You could be in for a new fishing experience.
Wyoming County

Wyoming County represents 502 square miles of the Commonwealth's total area, and stands as the "Gateway to the Endless Mountains." Although small in area, it doesn't take a back seat in providing anglers plenty of good fishing. There are cold mountain streams for the trout fisherman, and the North Branch of the Susquehanna and two warmwater streams abound with panfish, bass, walleye, and muskellunge.

If your interest is trout, Wyoming County has eight approved trout streams with almost 76 miles of fishable water. Another 19 tributary streams support native brook trout populations, and rainbows reproduce naturally in one tributary. If you enjoy lake fishing for trout, there are three approved lakes stocked annually by the Commission’s "Great White Fleet." For the purist, year-round fishing is available in an area of Bowmans Creek designated for fly fishing only.

Finding a stream to your liking doesn't pose a problem, considering that within an eight-mile radius of Tunkhannock, the county seat, you'll find a trout stream to test your fishing skill, or let you relax and enjoy the scenery.

North Branch Susquehanna River

The Susquehanna provides 39 miles of fishable water abounding with smallmouth, walleye, muskellunge, and channel catfish. With all the new lures available, hellgrammites and stonecats still produce best from May until November. Later in the year, minnows outproduce other baits. A Fish Commission access area is located about a mile south of Tunkhannock. The Susquehanna in Wyoming County is very good for float fishing, with a few rapids but none that would be considered dangerous.

Tunkhannock Creek

Tunkhannock Creek parallels Route 92 from Tunkhannock to Nicholson. The stream is too small for boats, but canoes can make it downstream. June and July are the best months for smallmouth, walleye, and rock bass. The best baits to use here are spinners, small twister tails, and spinner-worm combinations.

Stevens Lake

This 62-acre Commission-owned lake is located on Route 29, 5 miles north of Tunkhannock. Only electric motors are permitted. Largemouths, pickerel, bluegills, crappies, and bullheads are available in good numbers, and fall fishing produces the best results. Surface plugs worked in the evening and after dark for bass are good. Double-bladed spinners take lots of pickerel, and small white or yellow twister tails work best on crappies.

Lake Carey

This 260-acre lake is located 3 miles north of Tunkhannock on Route 29. Carey is stocked with rainbows and brook trout, and also has good populations of largemouth bass, pickerel, perch, bluegills, and crappies. An 18-inch crappie was caught here in 1985.

The best trout baits are salmon eggs, worms, and minnows, and the best times for trout fishing are spring and winter. A small fee is charged for launching at Frank’s Marina.

Oxbow Lake

This 60-acre lake is located in a primitive area. No boats are allowed, and access is walk-in only. To reach Oxbow Lake, go north out of Tunkhannock on Route 29 for approximately 5 miles. Make a right onto L.R. 65017, and proceed for about 3 miles. The lake is on the right.

Oxbow is stocked with rainbows, palominos, brooks, and browns. The best baits for trout are worms, corn, and small marshmallows. Light lines in 2-pound or 4-pound test seem to produce better. The lake also has good populations of largemouths, perch, and bluegills.

Bowmans Creek

Like many of the larger trout streams in Wyoming County, Bowmans Creek is float-stocked both preseason and inseason with brookies, browns, and rainbows for a distance of 16 miles. Routes 309 and 29 parallel the stream from Tunkhannock south to Noxen. From Noxen, use L.R. 63001 to continue upstream.

Bowmans also has a fly-fishing-only area, located between Evans Falls and Tunkhannock. The area runs for a mile downstream from the bridge on Route 292. Wet flies produce best in this area during the early season. From June to October, dry flies work best, especially March Browns, Light and Dark Cahills, and brown or yellow wooly buggers.

Mehoopyan Creek

Mehoopyan Creek runs along Route 87 west of Mehoopyan to Forkston, then west along L.R. 65046 to the state game lands. Although stocked with brown trout, the headwaters offer good native trout fishing to anglers willing to walk in. Early in the season, worms, spinners, and salmon eggs produce best. Wet and dry flies as well as streamers also take their share of trout.

South Branch Tunkhannock Creek

This stream is stocked from the village of Factoryville to

Lake Winola

Located along Route 307 between Osterhout and Mill City, Winola offers excellent trout fishing as well as good warmwater fishing. The 198-acre lake has an access area and a parking lot near the Winola Inn. The lake is stocked with palominos and rainbows, as well as a few browns and brookies. Night fishing for trout is excellent at Winola. The best baits are small worms, corn, and tiny marshmallows.

Winola also offers good bluegill fishing, as well as some largemouth bass and perch action. The best times to fish are before or after the boating season. During July and August the lake receives heavy motorboating pressure.
For trout fishing action in Wyoming County, give these streams a try: Bowmans Creek, Mehoopany Creek, Meshoppen Creek, and the South Branch of Tunkhannock Creek.

Clinton County
by Jay B. Johnston

Clinton County is a sparsely populated area of 902 square miles. Some 90 percent of the county is forested and 52 percent of it is state-owned. Warmwater fishing is limited to Kettle Creek, 15 miles; Bald Eagle Creek, 12 miles; and Pine Creek, 4 miles in the county from its mouth upstream, where it enters Lycoming County.

Bald Eagle Creek’s 12 miles have fair to good fishing for carp, panfish, smallmouth bass, walleye, and muskies. The best month is October. From Lock Haven to Beech Creek is the best section. The stream parallels Route 150.

Pine Creek’s 4 miles from the mouth upstream offer good smallmouth bass, panfish, and some walleye action.

Alvin R. Bush Dam, 160 acres, is stocked with trout, but has good populations of smallmouth bass, perch, and bullheads. Because they are seldom sought, some very nice smallmouths are caught there each year by those few who specialize in fishing for them.

The county is blessed with trout habitat. Here are some of the favorites.

Bush Dam and Old Kettle Creek Dam
Both waterways are stocked with rainbows and palominos. The favorite methods are trolling wet flies, casting spinners, or still fishing with tiny marshmallows topped with a meal worm or salmon eggs. Camping is available at the lower or upper campgrounds of Kettle Creek State Park. To get there, take Route 120 west from Renovo to Route 4001 at Westport.

Kettle Creek
This stream is stocked from Bush Dam 13 miles upstream to and beyond the Potter/Clinton county line. Although big water, this freestone stream is noted for its ease of fishing and excellent fly hatches. Early in the season,
Clinton County's specially regulated trout waters deserve a try: Young Woman's Creek has some 5.5 miles of fly-fishing-only, and 5 miles of Fishing Creek is a trophy trout project. Be sure to heed posted regulations.

Young Woman's Creek
Young Woman's Creek offers 10.7 miles of freestone fishing. It is stocked preseason above and below the 5.9-mile fly-fishing-only area. The FFO area is a wild trout fishery. To get there, take Route 120 to North Bend, and then take township route 579 north.

Young Woman's Creek Left Branch provides 8.4 miles of fishing, and it is stocked preseason and in season. This stream also has a wild trout population. Flies, spinners, and bait are all good here, and fishing is productive right through summer. A forestry road parallels the stream.

Hyner Run, Hyner Run Right and Left branches
These waterways are stocked preseason and in season, and they also have wild trout. Hyner Run State Park is great for camping. Take Route 120 to Hyner, and then follow S.R. 1014 to the park entrance. A forestry road parallels the stream for easy access.

Long Run
Long Run is 4.7 miles long, and is stocked preseason and in season with brook trout. It, too, has wild brook and brown trout. The waterway is paralleled by Route 477. To get there, take exit 27 of I-80 at Loganton to Route 477 north. The stream is stocked from below the old CCC Dam to the town of Rote. Its fairly fast water will challenge fly and bait fishermen alike.
For smallmouth bass action in Clinton County, try Bald Eagle Creek, Kettle Creek Lake, Kettle Creek, and for the best action, Pine Creek.
Fishing Creek

This limestone stream has it all — stocked trout from the mouth of Cedar Run downstream about 4 miles through the town of Mill Hall. It contains some good holdover and wild browns in this section. Minnows, worms, or flies are the best offerings for the wild browns. Those baits plus spinners and salmon eggs are good for the stockies. To get there, get off exit 27 of I-80 to Route 220 west to Route 64, which parallels the stream.

About 10 miles upstream from the mouth of Cedar Run at Salona to Flemings Bridge, Fishing Creek is a wild trout fishery. There is little fishing pressure, but the stream contains some nice wild browns, and brook trout appear as you near Clintondale. The angler who can match what the fish like will do well here. Muddlers, minnows, flies, worms, and crawlers are the favorites. A road parallels the stream for convenient access.

About 5.5 miles from Flemings Bridge upstream to the Commission’s Tylersville Hatchery is a special regulation area for trophy trout. Consult your summary and posted signs if you fish here. Still, here you’ll find probably some of the best wild brook and brown trout fishing around. The area is also known as the “Narrows.” Some of the trophy trout area is posted “No Sunday Fishing,” so be sure to observe these regulations.

For those who can handle artificial lures or flies, spinning and fly gear is permitted here, and it is a must. The waterway can be reached via exit 25 off I-80, then west to Lamar. About a quarter-mile from the Lamar Post Office, turn left on S.R. 2002, and follow this road about two miles and you’ll cross Fishing Creek.

There is good fishing here all year. From the trophy area upstream 8.7 miles to the vicinity of Carroll (Exit 28, I-80), Fishing Creek is managed as a wild trout fishery. General regulations prevail, and most normal trout fishing methods work.

Some parts of this stream (above Cedar Run) sink below the stream bed during the summer months. Don’t be discouraged — just go up or downstream a ways and you will find running water. The trophy area flows year-round.

Other stocked streams include Cooks Run for four miles, Route 120 to the forestry road. About 11.5 miles west of Renovo, fish above the Rock Run confluence (polluted below). Baker Run is off Route 120 west of Lock Haven and offers about 17.5 miles of good fishing. Rauchtown Creek, another good bet, can be reached off exit 28 (I-80) at Carroll, then 880 north to Ravensburg State Park.

There are 10 wilderness trout streams in the county. These streams are not stocked and have few access points. If you don’t mind climbing down or up mountainsides, don’t mind not seeing people, and don’t mind finishing your day with nickel-sized blisters on your feet and most often trout less than 9 inches, these would be just the ticket for you. Two good ones are Lick Run (10.5 miles between roads), between Haneyville and Farrandsville (Route 44), and Cherry Run (7 miles between roads), which enters Fishing Creek at the Porter Township — Logan Township line.

Jay B. Johnston is the Clinton County waterways conservation officer.

Jefferson County
by Porter Duvall

As with most mountainous Pennsylvania counties, Jefferson County carries its own unique brand of beauty. Rolling foothills to short ridges make the frame for its many miles of streams, which range from small native brook trout waters that you can step across to rivers such as the Clarion. Due to the geology of the area, all the streams are basically freestone. The primary wood of its heavily forested hills and valleys is oak, while the streams are for the most part lined with hemlock.

This is basically the start of the county’s trout country as one heads north from the Pittsburgh area into the northcentral area of the state. While the hatches coming off our trout streams may not be as heavy as those on limestone waters, they are no less important.

From April on, the persistent fly fisherman can find trout feeding almost every day until ice over. In spite of the terrible effects of acid rain deposition, our streams have been able to withstand man’s intrusion, and with some help of the Fish Commission’s Operation FUTURE provide excellent recreational opportunities for all.
Cloed Dam
This waterway is 30 acres of cold, deep water tucked away north of Punxsutawney. It provides not only a good park-type fishing area. On those stormy, flooded first days, sometimes it is the only place to fish. Basically a rainbow trout fishery, it provides excellent fishing throughout the year. During the warm summer months, many trout fall prey to deep-run Christmas rigs at night. Fall provides some excellent trophy fishing as those big trout cruise the shorelines.

North Fork of Redbank Creek
For most of the local fishermen, this stream represents just what a trout stream should be. It starts on game lands high up west of Brockway and travels through some scenic areas. Brook trout are the most predominant species. More and more fishermen report brown trout holding over and increased insect hatching. The bottom two miles of the stream are a delayed-harvest fly-fishing-only area to Route 322 in Brookville. Many areas of the North Fork are walk-in due to limited access. The Moore Bridge access provided by the Fish Commission is an excellent starting point.

Redbank Creek
This waterway is an excellent float heavily used from Brookville, Baxter, and Heathville, which are used as starts for short float trips. It's good brown trout water, but don't be surprised if you tie into a norther or two, or once in a while a decent bass. Redbank Creek is fished heavily as it flows through Brookville and Summerville.

Little Sandy Creek
This creek is one of our few farm area streams. The entire valley is gravel as is the stream, just recently recovering from too much mining in its watershed. It is an excellent fly stream, but baifishermen, particularly those adept at rigging minnows, have a field day here, too.

Big Run
Big Run is small, offers good access, and is brush-lined. This trib of Little Sandy also has been severely degraded by mining, and it is still plagued with mud and some acid. In spite of those setbacks, it provides a fine small stream experience just north of Punxsutawney.

East Branch of Mahoning Creek
This stream begins on the western slopes of the continental divide, like all waters in Jefferson County. This stream is stocked from Clearfield County to its mouth outside of the town of Big Run. At one time it was a premier stream for this area. Today, it still manages to provide some good trout fishing, but mining has sadly affected its ability to do so.

Pekin Run
Pekin Run is one of the few streams in the area that supports not only a native brook trout population, but also maintains a reproducing brown trout population. It also is stocked, and provides an excellent small stream experience. It bisects Route 968 north of Brookville.

Wolf Run
This stream has excellent access off Route 219 south of Brockway. This stream is small with excellent stone fly hatches, and also is stocked, with a good population of fish holding through June.

Rattlesnake Creek, Rattlesnake Run, Big Run (trib of Mahoning Creek), Walburn Run, Callen Run
All these waterways are small streams, all are stocked, and all contain some natural reproduction. They offer varied good trout fishing, and maintain good cold water flows throughout the year with good to excellent insect hatches.

Cathers Run, Clear Creek
Both streams are moderate in size, both feed the Clarion River, both have about the same water quality, and both are basically brook trout waters. Cathers flows through game lands, while Clear Creek flows through the state park bearing its name. These streams are cold and pristine, surrounded by beautiful mountains with excellent scenery and wildlife. They are located in northwest Jefferson County.

Claron River
The Clarion River is not just a trout river, but probably one of the finest big-water experiences a fisherman has available east of the Rockies. It's big, it's flat, and it's filled with many tumbling chutes, long riffles, and a host of long, deep pools. It flows some 20 miles through Jefferson County.

The Fish Commission stocks the river, but only with fingerling trout. Those fish caught there all grew up there or migrated in. Trophy fishing is beginning to show results, and now fishermen are beginning to refer to many of their catches by pound weight rather than inches.

Canoe trips on the Clarion are common, and its wild scenery coupled with moderate canoe waters attracts thousands. The better fishing is in the Elk/Jefferson county area around Belltown, through Clear Creek State Park just past Clarington. Good fishing is also present through Cooks Forest State Park, but you must fish early and late to get away from the armada of canoes that assaults the river through midday.

Kyle Dam
This waterway was recently reclaimed and renovated by the Fish Commission. Its 129 acres of warmwater fishery shall in the future carry the connotation of a trophy area, designated by the Commission as a conservation area. The special sizes and creel limits imposed coupled with the habitat improvement and management should provide excellent warmwater fishing by 1988.

Mahoning Creek
Downstream from Punxsutawney, Mahoning Creek provides a real smorgasbord of fishing. Northerns, walleye, smallmouth, crappies, and even a few trout show up in creels. It's also an excellent place for the bowman who likes to go after carp and suckers.

Porter DuVal is the Jefferson County waterways conservation officer.

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Modify Your Trailer into a Drive-On

A typical small boat trailer — lots of loading headaches.

Lowering keel rollers and installing a second set of bunks set closer together will make boat loading much easier.

Engineering of side rails is critical and must be individually designed for your trailer. Here Bob Hornstrom measures a 14' fiberglass boat for correct side rail height.

by Darl Black
photos by the author

Everyone who has waited impatiently in line at a ramp while someone struggles to get the boat on the trailer, raise your hand and keep it up. Now, everyone who has held up ramp traffic while fighting to get the boat on the trailer properly, raise your hand. Mmm, seems like everyone has a hand in the air.

There is nothing more frustrating than waiting for a boat to be loaded on a troublesome trailer, except when you're the one attempting the loading. Even though boat design has undergone drastic changes in recent years, the instrument that carries the craft to and from the waterway has remained basically the same.

I vividly recall fishing trips as a youngster with my father and uncle when loading the 15-foot MFG runabout was a major chore. Hip boots were donned by one of the party so he could wade into the water to push and pull on the stern of the boat. A second person, usually yours truly, had to pull on the bow rope while perched precariously on the tongue of the trailer. The third person remained at the wheel of the car to back or pull forward a little bit to position the trailer. It's no wonder at that age I enjoyed stream and pond fishing more than a trip to a "big water."

According to a survey of Pennsylvania Angler readers, the most popular fishing crafts in the state today are 12-foot to 14-foot aluminum boats. Although we have seen the introduction of factory-ready drive-on trailers for big bass boats, the average angler with a small boat and
limited funds has had to make do with the same old trailer design.

In the last 12 years, I have owned and trailered every type of fishing craft, including john boats, V-hulls and tri-hulls. With two or four trips to the water each week, I quickly decided I was not about to waste time at the ramp. I observed the problems of small boat trailers with angling friends and examined various attempts by others to make loading easier.

**Standard trailer problems**

The standard low-budget trailer is built with two rear cradle bunks, two or three center keel rollers attached to the cross members of the frame, and usually one keel roller on the tongue.

I don't have to tell you the problems that typically occur when trying to load your boat. It is difficult to align the keel on the rollers. Even when you have the bow started properly, the rollers lift the front section of the boat, and without additional support from the bunks, which are not touching the hull at this point, the next thing you know the keel has slipped off the rollers. This is when the hull may be gouged by the sharp edges of the roller brackets. And add a breeze! Need I say more about keeping the boat aligned when loading?

When you have had enough aggravation and decide to do something about it, you can create a drive-on model from any trailer with several simple modifications. The steps are: (1) lowering the center keel rollers, (2) adding two additional cradle bunks, and (3) adding a set of side rails.

Total cost of parts, excluding labor for welding, should be under $50. Now that is a remarkable savings when you consider that a drive-on trailer carries a minimum price tag of about $1,000.

**Basic requirements**

Before detailing the modifications, it is important to cover some basic trailer requirements. An inexpensive model should not be translated into a "cheap" one. Drive-on modifications do not make up for an inadequate trailer.

First, be sure that the trailer you select is rated to haul the total weight of your rig. This vehicle weight figure includes the combined weight of the hull, outboard motor, gas tank with fuel, batteries, and other equipment. Gross axle weight also includes the weight of the trailer itself. Second, the trailer must be long enough to support the critical transom area of the boat with cradle bunks. If you think you are saving money by buying a less than adequate trailer, you will pay for it down the road when a spring or axle breaks, the frame cracks from stress, or the hull is damaged from lack of support.

Once you have chosen a trailer with sufficient weight capacity and length support for your rig, you can begin the modifications to make a drive-on.

1. Loosen the center keel rollers and drop them several inches so that the hull is resting solely on the rear bunks. Retighten the roller brackets.

If the rollers are already set as low as possible, you will need to raise the...
The side rail guides should fit the hull close enough to keep the boat straight, but not so tight that they rub the boat. Bob Hornstrom and Worth Hammond check out the fit.

Do not weld directly to the trailer frame unless you can be sure it will not weaken the structural integrity of the trailer. Trailers are subject to a lot of vibration. In this case the side rail supports are welded to a fender bracket which is bolted to the trailer frame.

Two examples of customized drive-on trailers with extra set of bunks and side rail guides. The one on the left is for the author's 14' tri-hull; the one on the right for a 14' aluminum V-hull.

cradle bunks several inches. This adjustment is best accomplished with the boat off the trailer, so run it down to the local ramp.

If you are not near a launch ramp where you can drop the boat into the water, the cradle supports can be raised by using two screw or hydraulic jacks under the loosened brackets to push up the bunks while the boat is still on the trailer.

Once the first step is completed, the keel rollers should only serve to keep the deep bow of a V-hull or tri-hull from hitting the frame as you drive it on the trailer. If they are too high when you drive on, the bow will rise, wobble, and likely slip off the roller entirely.

2

Install a second set of cradle bunks about halfway up the trailer starting where the rear bunks stop. The bunks should be at least 4 feet, or longer if necessary to bridge the forward cross members of the frame. These bunks should be set closer together than the rear bunks. The chief purpose is to catch the bow and lock it in on track as you drive on. These new bunks also provide critical support because the keel rollers have been lowered.

On a V-hull, the second set of cradle bunks should be only 12 to 24 inches apart. However, with a tri-hull, these bunks should be set to support the flat area of the hull between the keel and the side sponsons.

It is best to install the second set of cradle bunks while the boat is sitting on the trailer. Again, jacks are needed to push the bunks snug against the hull.

Some trailers have pre-drilled holes in the right position to install the new bunks; on others you need to drill the holes yourself.

Check to see that the V-bow does not strike the tongue of the trailer when loading or unloading. To prevent this, raise all four cradle bunks or try to position the tongue roller guide to protect the bow in this area. But keep an eye on the tongue roller guide; its bracket may still be the culprit in scratching the hull.

If the bow does not ride the tongue roller guide properly, make a short pair of carpeted mini-bunks (12 to 16 inches in length) to replace the roller.

The brackets for the bunks may be obtained where you purchased the trailer, or have the dealer order them
from the trailer manufacturer. Depending on the type of bracket, the cost may run from $2.50 to $5 each. When buying 2x4s for the bunks, be sure to purchase treated lumber, which prevents premature rotting when subjected to moisture. An eight-foot treated 2x4 should run about $3. Carpet the 2x4s with a tough rubber-backed outdoor carpet.

The most complicated modification is the addition of side rails. Side rails are important in keeping the boat aligned under breezy conditions, as well as preventing the stern from swinging left or right while driving on under the power of the outboard.

The rail guides should fit the side of the hull close enough to keep the boat straight but not so tight that they are rubbing the side of the boat. The rail guides should be between 3 and 4 feet long.

You can purchase a set of adjustable side rails from a trailer company and pay three to four times the money you can make them for. But working within a budget is what this is all about, so I assume you will make them yourself or with the help of friends.

The needed box tubing and plate can usually be picked up at a scrap yard for under $10. As with the cradle bunks, use treated 2x4s covered with quality outdoor carpet for the side bunks.

Engineering of the side rails is critical and must be individually designed for your trailer. With some trailers, the side rail supports can be welded directly to the trailer frame; on others it should be bolted on so they don't create metal fatigue. A lot depends on the size and quality of the trailer frame and the scrap metal you have available. If you have any doubts, be sure to get the advice of a reliable welder.

Draw up the design for your particular hull/trailer combination, cut the metal to the desired specifications, and clean off old paint and rust. Next, drill the necessary holes for attachment of bunks. Also drill the holes for mounting if your plan calls for bolting to the frame.

Now you are ready for the welding. If you are a welder, or can arrange the services of one through barter, you will be saving a chunk of money. Otherwise, plan at least another $50 investment.

Be sure you have gussets or braces at critical stress points. Do not weld directly to the trailer frame unless the welder can assure you that it will not weaken the structural integrity of the trailer.

When the welding is done, it is time to get a primer coat of paint on as quickly as possible. Mask off the trailer and use a quick-drying primer. Follow up with a finish enamel. Once everything is dry, screw the carpeted bunks onto the rail supports with lag screws.

Presto! With the above modifications to your budget trailer, you now have a slick drive-on model. No more embarrassment at the ramp. Your buddy backs the trailer into the water, you drive the boat on, connect the winch, and the rig is pulled from the water. Simple as 1-2-3 and you don't get your feet wet.
Finding Your Own Faraway Place May Be Easier Than You Think

by Bob Wilberding

How many times have you heard anglers talk about secret fishing places where nobody goes or remote trout streams far away from everywhere? Of course, they never mention the names of these isolated places, only that they're out of the way and that they always produce fish.

I don't claim to be an expert angler, but I do fish “now and again,” and my job as a fisheries technician with the Fish Commission has allowed me to participate in electrofishing at least 100 northcentral Pennsylvania trout streams. This still doesn't qualify me as an expert, and there are hundreds more streams to inventory, but I've seen a lot of trout, talked with dozens of anglers, and would like to share some of my experiences.

Small streams
During the summer of 1983 and 1984, Area Fisheries Manager Bruce Hollender, I, and an assistant electrofished 40 small, inaccessible headwater trout streams to determine their resources. To summarize our findings briefly, only about half of these remote streams had class “A” trout populations. A few, to our surprise, had few or no trout at all.

While surveying these streams, we also noticed that judging from the campfire rings, paths along streams, and occasional hook wrappers and bait containers, that almost all these streams appeared to get at least some angling pressure. This does not mean you should stop looking for waters off the beaten path (some of the ones we examined were excellent). My point is that maybe you should stop looking for hard to reach places and concentrate on waters closer to home.

Let me give you two examples.
One opening day about six years ago, I noticed an angler carrying a trout out of a place I never considered fishing. Sure, the small stream looked fishable, but I knew it almost dried up in summer. Besides, its location (between two lanes of an interstate highway), didn't add to its appeal.

Several opening days passed before I got to try the stream. Yes, I had the place to myself and there were trout there: two beautiful brown trout of 14 ⅜ and 14 ¾ inches to be exact. Far different fishing from the crowded stocked trout stream I'd fished earlier and the trout I'd caught there.

On another occasion, I drove past hundreds of anglers on a stocked stream to fish an unstocked stream near a small factory. Aesthetically, the two streams may not have been the same. But I encountered only one other angler that morning, and caught four nice trout. The two streams were only about a mile apart.

Electrofishing results
Electrofishing in a variety of trout streams has proven two things to me. First, as many observers of Fish Commission surveys have found out, there are often more trout in streams than people think. Second, if the habitat is suitable, there are more trout in populated areas than people think.

Rich Faler in the article, “Hidden Trout,” (October 1984 Angler) perhaps described the situation best when he wrote, “the hardest concept to grasp is that trout water doesn’t have to look like trout water.”

I particularly remember a summer 1979 survey on Young Womans Creek. As many or more legal-sized trout were found in the town of North Bend than at similar length sites on the Left Branch Young Womans Creek on state forest land upstream. Since that survey I've seen this happen frequently.

Big brown trout
I'm continually surprised where I find large brown trout, both
professionally and as an angler. Because of their stable water temperatures and abundant food supplies, I've become accustomed to finding an occasional brown of 18 inches or longer during a survey of a limestone stream. However, some of the largest trout I've seen have been on freestone streams.

It is remarkable that these large fish are able to survive to such an old age, despite their environment and angling pressure. Logjams, large pools, and under bridges are the most common locations for most large fish that we find while electrofishing. However, we found one under a culvert leading from a small tributary into a main stream. The largest brown trout we found during our 1985 inventory season was captured while we were conducting a study for smallmouth bass. Its location? Just outside Emporium, the most populated area in Cameron County.

**Locations**

How does someone go about finding his own secret spot? Trial and error is probably the best way. Select nearby waters from a topo map or other source such as the county features articles. Pay particular attention to areas above and below approved trout waters and any tributaries that enter these waters. One of the best times to look for a hotspot is in the summer or fall when the water is low. If trout are present in the stream at that time, it's almost assured that fish will be there in the spring. In northcentral Pennsylvania, streams that are bank full in April may be dry in July or August.

For those of you still unconvinced and still wishing to hike into a remote stream, let me offer one more word of advice. If the stream you desire to fish has a well-marked trail alongside, other anglers are probably already visiting it. So enjoy the scenery and don't be disappointed if you don't have the place to yourself. And if you see someone fishing along a road or somewhere you've never considered fishing before, don't neglect the possibility that he may know something you don't.

Remember that if the habitat is suitable, trout usually live there, no matter where the location is.

Bob Wilberding is a Commission fisheries technician assigned to Area 3 (Northcentral Region). He's surveyed hundreds of miles of trout streams.
In 1985, some 219 Senior and Junior Angler's Awards were offered for largemouth bass catches. The application details are a gold mine of information on where these big bass were caught, when anglers made their catches, and with what offerings the fish were fooled.

If you want to catch the Commonwealth's biggest largemouth bass, let this information point the way to your success.

When to fish
Largemouth bass eligible to earn an angler an award must be 5 pounds for a Senior Angler's Award and 4 pounds for a Junior Angler's Award. Largemouths were caught in all 12 months of 1985. Catches in January, February, and December were through the ice.

Here is the number of fish caught in each month of 1985:

January, 2.
February, 2.
March, 10.
April, 10.
May, 7.
June, 38.
July, 40.
August, 35.
September, 31.
October, 18.
November, 7.
December, 19.
Baits and lures

Live baits accounted for 68 bass; lures accounted for 138 fish. Awards were made to 13 anglers whose offerings were unknown.

For live baits, shiners took the most fish — 33. Worms caught 19, minnows accounted for 9 bass, and crayfish took 4. A grasshopper, a sucker, and a bluegill each fooled one bass.

For lures, the offering that accounted for the most fish was a spinner — 39. The spinner accounted for the most number of largemouth bass for all kinds of baits and lures, fooling about 18 percent of all award-winning largemouths.

Some kind of diving crankbait accounted for 35 bass, and 29 were fooled with a plastic worm. Jigs, including traditional jigs and spinnerbaits, took 9 fish, and surface lures, including buzzbaits, accounted for 21 bass.

In the category of surface lures, 12 of the 21 bass were caught specifically on a Jitterbug.

Spoons took 3 bass, and fly rod poppers took 2.

Unfortunately, no information is available on the color or size of specific lures.

Where to fish

Anglers caught eligible largemouth bass in some 80 waterways in 43 Pennsylvania counties. Here listed by county are the specific waterways where bass were caught and how many largemouths were taken at each spot.

Adams County, farm pond, 1.
Adams County, state game lands, 1.
Armstrong County, Keystone Lake, 1.
Beaver County, Hereford Manor Lakes, 2.
Beaver County, Sterling Lake, 1.
Bedford County, Shawnee Lake, 1.
Berks County, Hopewell Lake, 3.
Berks County, Ontelaunee Creek, 3.
Berks County, Schuylkill River, 1.
Bradford County, farm pond, 1.
Bucks County, Delaware River, 2.
Bucks County, Lake Galena, 1.
Bucks County, Nockamixon Lake, 5.
Bucks County, Churchville Reservoir, 1.
Butler County, Lake Arthur, 75.
Cambria County, Ebensburg Reservoir, 1.
Cambria County, Glendele Lake, 12.
Carbon County, Mauch Chunk Lake, 5.
Carbon County, Tippets Swamp, 2.
Centre County, Black Moshannon, 2.
Chester County, Marsh Creek Dam, 2.
Clearfield County, Curwensville Dam, 1.
Crawford County, Hartstown Marsh, 2.
Crawford County, Pymatuning Lake, 1.
Crawford County, Tamarack Lake, 7.
Cumberland County, Opossum Lake, 2.
Cumberland County, game lands pond, 1.
Dauphin County, Lyetls Pond, 2.
Elk County, Ridgway Reservoir, 1.
Erie County, Albion Reservoir, 1.
Erie County, Edinboro Lake, 2.
Erie County, Lake Erie, 2.
Fayette County, Virgin Run Dam, 1.
Forest County, Buzzard Swamp, 1.
Franklin County, Shirleys Lake, 1.
Huntingdon County, Raystown Lake, 1.
Indiana County, Yellow Creek Lake, 1.
Lancaster County, Octararo Creek, 2.
Lebanon County, Memorial Lake, 4.
Lehigh County, farm pond, 1.
Lehigh County, Jordan Creek, 1.
Luzerne County, Francis Slocum Lake, 1.
Luzerne County, Lake Jean, 1.
Luzerne County, Lily Lake, 2.
Luzerne County, Moon Lake, 1.
Luzerne County, Mountain Lake, 1.
Luzerne County, Sylvan Lake, 1.
Lycoming County, Beaver Lake, 1.
Lycoming County, Rose Valley Lake, 1.
Mercer County, Lake Wilhelm, 2.
Monroe County, Gouldsboro Lake, 1.
Monroe County, Hidden Lake, 1.
Northampton County, Delaware River, 1.
Northampton County, Minsi Lake, 4.
Northumberland County, Susquehanna River, 2.
Pike County, Pecks Pond, 3.
Pike County, Promised Land Lake, 3.
Pike County, Shohola Lake, 1.
Pike County, White Deer Lake, 1.
Schuylkill County, Locust Lake, 2.
Schuylkill County, Sweet Arrow Lake, 1.
Snyder County, Hassingers Pond, 1.
Snyder County, Middle Creek Lake, 1.
Snyder County, Walker Lake, 5.
Somerset County, Cranberry Lake, 1.
Somerset County, Lake Somerset, 1.
Sullivan County, Hunters Lake, 1.
Sullivan County, farm pond, 1.
Sullivan County, Lake Jean, 1.
Union County, game lands pond, 1.
Union County, Walker Lake, 1.
Warren County, Spring Creek, 1.
Warren County, Sugar Grove Swamp, 1.
Washington County, Ten Mile Creek, 1.
Westmoreland County, Lake Donegal, 1.
York County, farm pond, 1.
York County, Conewago Creek, 3.
York County, game lands pond, 3.
York County, Lake Marburg, 1.
York County, Lake Radman, 2.
York County, Pinchot Lake, 1.
York County, Susquehanna River, 1.

Angler’s Award Pamphlet

For the complete details on the Commission’s Angler’s Awards program, the Commission has available an updated and revised pamphlet. The publication includes a list of current Pennsylvania state record fish, minimum weights for eligible species, and applications for Senior and Junior Angler’s Awards, 50+ Husky Musky Club, and state record fish. Please include a business-sized self-addressed, stamped envelope with requests. Contact: Publications Section, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673.
I was flipping through your December issue recently and of course dwelled for some time on your “Mail” column because the contributors are usually my kind of people. While browsing about the rest of the issue, my mind kept coming back to one of the letters in the “Mail” section; the one from the “transplanted Pennsylvanian” who missed the “good ole Keystone State fishing.”

His recollections were pages out of my past; but how could he have compared the fishing in Pennsylvania to what he experienced in the Ozarks and around the Santa Barbara offshore oil platforms, where you first fish for bait, and then you use the bait to fish for larger fish?

I went back to the letter and read it again, and then I understood. I experienced the same things the author did. In Pennsylvania you work for your fish and have to outsmart them. Each one on the stringer is earned. It is not just a matter of dropping the line over the boat. It has been over 10 years since I really fished Keystone State waters; mostly because my fishing buddy moved away. I guess one day we’ll get together again and “lay back in a rowboat and drift across Presque Isle and Oregon, I have seen firsthand the trout fishing programs developed by “out-of-doors” states. I would like you to know that in my eyes your program compares more than favorably.

Your $20 nonresident license fee is reasonable. The fish you stock are the neicest by several inches of any stocked trout I have seen. WCO Steve Shab-bick is patient and helpful with the questions and needs of an interested tourist.

Many thanks for making what I expected to be a very quiet month into the working vacation of my life! I certainly look forward to telling my friends of the fishing opportunities in Pennsylvania.—Willis H. Wamsley, Jr., Herndon, VA

I’d like to take the time to say thank you for making your publications available to the anglers and boaters of Pennsylvania. I am 13 years old, and since I was about 8 I have kept a great interest in fishing. I feel that the publications available will truly help me become a better angler. I go fishing whenever I can in the summertime, and I enjoy the great fishing in my town. I usually go to the Lehigh Canal where there is great fishing for panfish, trout, bass, pickerel, and catfish. It’s a nice place to fish with beautiful scenery. In the summertime, I love it when a father takes his child fishing and the child catches his first fish. He treats it like a trophy, at least that’s how I acted when I caught my first fish. But what I enjoy the most is when the trout season opens and people line the canal hoping for a good trout. I have to say luck was on my side because I caught two brown trout. One was the biggest fish I have caught so far—a 16-inch beauty. My dad was proud of me, and I was proud of myself.—James Gower, Lehighton, PA

The fishing in northwestern Pennsylvania has risen to new high standards. The Oil Creek Valley is an easily accessible trout stream for many of the younger fishermen, and will also supply them with an opportunity to catch a number of different species of trout.

I found a beautiful stretch of water beginning at Drake Well Park through to Petroleum Center, near Oil City. It is easy to reach because of a bicycle trail that runs along the creek; it was developed mainly for use by bicyclists and is a very nice ride.

It is paved and there are several access roads crossing it and several places to park.

This stretch is also great fishing for the trophy-getters. Each year, when the Commission stocks, it puts in some brood trout. Every year, some survive the onslaught of fishermen, and they get to be even better size. I have caught some from 21 inches and up, and local fishermen have caught ones from 28 inches to 30 inches long.

I think that many fishermen would greatly enjoy the experience of fishing in Oil Creek, as I do.—Heath Boddorf, Titusville, PA
by Virgil Chambers

In the rush to launch a boat, many boaters forget to place the boat plug into the drain hole. The problem, although usually not tragic, can certainly be embarrassing. Simply, what occurs is that water starts to fill the boat. With johnboats and utility craft, taking on water is quickly recognized and the boat can be retrailered, drained, and plugged. Depending on the amount of water taken in, the plug can be inserted and the water bailed without retrailer the craft.

However, usually not so fortunate is the boat with a deck over the bilge. The absence of the plug again causes water to enter the craft, but this time, detection of that water may not be as quick. The embarrassment of merely forgetting the plug can soon become something more serious.

The boater, when out on the lake or river, shortly realizes that something is wrong and whether it's the drag in power or the presence of water reaching a noticeable level, the extra weight and loose water affects the boat's stability. Although some boats will still float to some extent when full of water, the expense and inconvenience in recovering a flooded boat is great. So if you perceive that you are taking on water, don't panic, but don your PFD and head for shore. The chances of returning safely are in your favor. In fact, if you can attain sufficient forward speed, the boat may actually self-bail, leaving you only to insert the plug.

Launching a boat need not be a complicated procedure, but forget the drain plug and it could very well turn into one. Remember that before you launch, check and double check the drain plug.

Boaters sometimes forget to place the drain plug or boat plug in a boat before launching. To remind boaters of this simple yet important task, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission’s Boating Safety Education Section is distributing a weatherproof sticker that can be placed near your boat's bow eye (or any other location where you would notice it before placing the boat in the water). For a free sticker, send requests to: Boating, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. Include a stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope with requests.

Virgil Chambers is chief of the Commission Bureau of Waterways Boating Safety Education Section.

✓ Trailering Checklist

Like a pilot of an aircraft, the skipper of an outboard boat should go through a checklist before trailering his boat on the highway.

Here is one such list, supplied by the makers of Mercury outboard motors:

✓ Is the trailer hitch securely fastened to your tow vehicle?
✓ Is the coupler firmly locked on the hitch ball? Try to lift the trailer tongue to make sure (use your legs, not your back, when you lift).
✓ Are the safety chains crisscrossed under the trailer tongue and securely fastened to both hitch and trailer tongue?
✓ Have someone stand behind the rig while you work the brake pedal and turn signal to verify that all the lights are functioning.
✓ Is the trailer winch locked?
✓ The boat's bow should be held firmly against the bow stop by means of the winch line. Is the hull resting firmly on the supports? If not, adjust them so that boat weight is evenly distributed.
✓ Is the secondary winch line secure? (Never rely solely on the winch cable.)
✓ Examine the wheels. Are the lug nuts tight? Are the tires properly inflated?
✓ If your trailer has its own brakes, are they working?
✓ If you are carrying any gear in the boat, is it lashed down securely?
✓ Is your outboard motor in the vertical position? If you have to tilt it out for road clearance, does the outboard have sufficient supplementary support? In the case of a small outboard, this support might take the form of a block of wood between the clamp and swivel brackets; a big outboard can be supported by means of a rod between the boat's lower unit and the boat trailer.
✓ Are all tie-downs properly placed and tight?
Pennsylvania Student Wins Poster Contest

Bradley Allen Heeter of Knox has won Third Place in the Junior Division of the 1986 National Hunting and Fishing (NHF) Day Poster Contest. Bradley, an eighth-grade student at Keystone Jr.-Sr. High School, will receive a $100 U.S. Savings Bond. His entry in the NHF Day Poster Contest was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs.

His poster was among thousands entered by students in local NHF Day Poster Contests sponsored by schools, youth groups, sportsmen's clubs, and conservation organizations across the country. Entries were judged on how well the students illustrated the contest theme, "Sportsmen and Conservation — Working Together for Wildlife," and on their artistic merit and originality.

Information on how to sponsor or enter the 1987 National Hunting and Fishing Day Poster Contest is available free from NHF Day Headquarters, P.O. Box 1075, Riverside, CT 06878.

Anglers Notebook
by Dave Wonderlich

If you are still going fishless after trying several different lures, flies, or bait, change your presentation. Try drifting your offering from the opposite bank, fish downstream instead of up, work the offering slower or faster, deeper or shallower. Make a change, enough of a difference may make the fish hit.

If you are angling for a trophy and wish to keep only heavyweight fish, ensure the survival of the smaller fish that will be released by handling and weighing them with care. Land the fish with a net, unhook the specimen, and then while holding the net handle grasp the bag with the hook on the portable scale and pick up the fish and net bag. If the fish is not the lunker you want, it can be lowered and released from the net without ever being touched.

Even in the summer hypothermia can strike. If you wade wet, or have gotten wet while fishing, the drying process lowers your body temperature. This may feel good in the middle of the afternoon, but in the evening after the sun is down and temperatures begin to drop, it can be deadly. If you get wet, dry quickly and get back into warm, dry clothing.

Monofilament line deteriorates quickly when exposed to the elements; replace old line with new line often.

August is noted for low water and tough fishing; it can also produce some of the hottest action after a rain when the water is on the rise. Try your favorite bait; you can get away with larger lures and flies.

After an August rain, try the lower ends of tributaries of larger trout streams. Small tributaries that held few fish can experience a dramatic rise in trout populations after the waters rise.

For good fishing action on hot August days try limestone streams. Their colder water allows the fish to feed actively throughout the day.

Save the ashes from a cigar or cigarette in a 35mm film container. Rubbing some ash on the blade of your lure between your fingers will have the metal shining again.

Try fishing your favorite surface bass lures at night in trout water. Many large trout are caught by bass fishermen as the fish prowl for dinner after dark.
The Law and You
by Bill Hartle

Q. I enjoy fall fishing for trout. Where can I legally harvest trout at this time of year?
A. The extended trout season in Pennsylvania runs from the day after Labor Day to midnight on the last day of February the following year. The areas where trout can legally be harvested include all approved trout streams plus lakes and ponds, and all specially regulated areas.

Q. Is it legal to take bait from specially regulated areas?
A. No. The taking of baitfish or fishbait is prohibited at all times from these areas.

Q. Are frogs legal for bait?
A. Yes. Unless purchased, bullfrogs and green frogs have a season from July 1 to October 31 with a daily limit of 15. All others, unless on the threatened and endangered species list, have an open season with a daily limit and possession limit of 2 per each species.

Q. While fishing for bass the other day, I noticed a man using an 8-inch rainbow trout, drift fishing for muskies. Is this legal?
A. Yes. Any fish taken by legal means and of legal size may be used for bait. Also, if it's purchased from a live bait dealer, it's also legal.

Q. Does Pennsylvania have any regulations on reptiles?
A. Yes. Although there is no closed season, there is a daily limit and possession limit of two for each species.

Q. Is it legal to sell snapping turtles?
A. Yes. No other reptile or amphibian, whether dead or alive, in whole or in parts, that was taken, caught, or killed in the Commonwealth, may be sold or offered for sale.

Two New State Records: American Shad, Crappie

On April 29, 1986, Anthony Mecca, of Peckville, PA, was casting a shad dart into the Pike County waters of the Delaware River. A 9-pound, 9-ounce shad took the dart, and Mecca fought and landed a new state record American shad. The new state record bests the old mark by only 2 ounces. That shad was 25 ¼ inches long with a girth of 17 ½ inches.

The day after Mecca made his state record catch, Ernest Podleyon, of West Middlesex, PA, caught a new state record crappie in Shenango Reservoir, in Mercer County. Podleyon's crappie weighed 3 pounds, 12 ounces, and measured 17 inches in length. He caught the fish on a jig with a plastic action tail. The old state record crappie was a 3-pound, 6-ounce fish that John J. Phillips, of Croydon, PA, caught in the Bucks County portion of the Delaware River. This record has stood since 1983.
You have a fishing friend in Pennsylvania