

The Thames River Angler

"NEWSLETTER OF THE THAMES RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION"

Spring
2003

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



A Chat
with the Pres



Committee
Reports



Techniques
Colour Blindness?



Gear Pig
The 'Skinny'
on Warmth

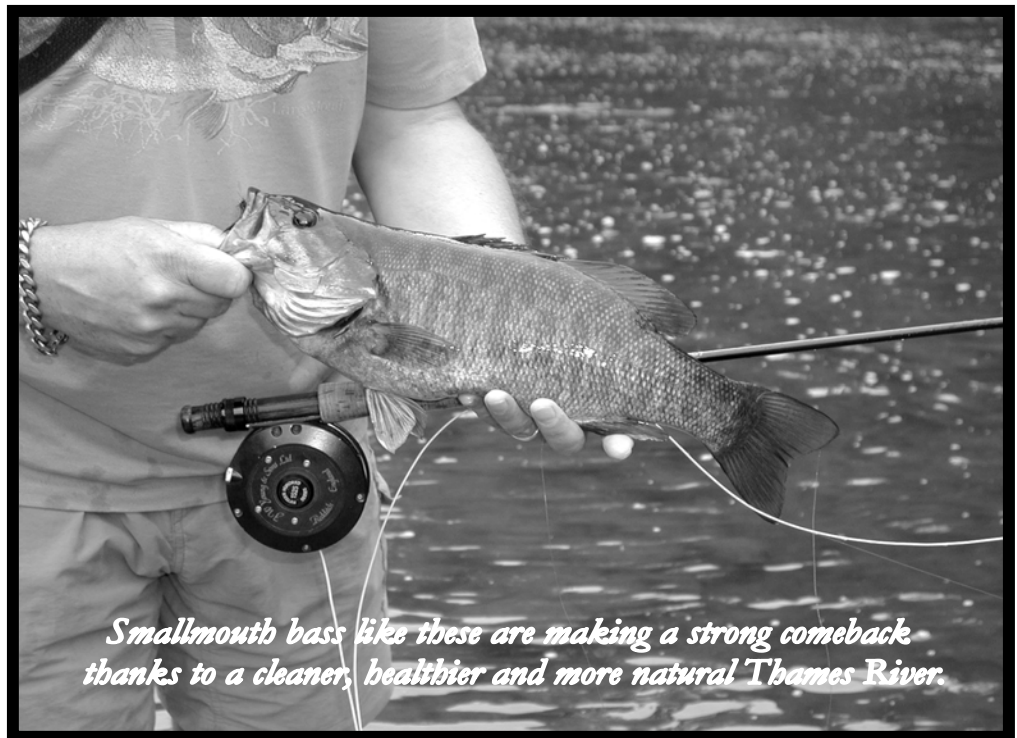


Fly Fishing
Beadhead-it's ...
Are You addicted?



Other Stuff
Good Ol' Days,
Annual General
Meeting & Guest
Speaker Update

WOW, Nice Smallie!



Smallmouth bass like these are making a strong comeback thanks to a cleaner, healthier and more natural Thames River.

Well over a decade ago the Thames River Anglers Association met for the first time. The formation of the TRAA was triggered by a massive fish kill on the North Thames River and as well as the fact that the smallmouth bass population had been steadily declining for a number of years.

A lot of positive changes have occurred since then and the entire Thames River system supports what some describe as a "world-class" smallmouth bass fishery. These changes are the result of combined efforts by the TRAA, the Upper Thames Conservation Authority, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, landowners and other groups & individuals that consider themselves stakeholders in this Canadian Heritage River. Many people travel very long distances just to fish for the Thames

River's feisty smallies.

These fishermen, who travel from other Canadian provinces, the USA and Europe, are amazed that they are connecting with large numbers of smallmouth bass right within our city limits!

Anyone who knows how to fish for these mean green fighting machines can walk up to any accessible bank along the Thames River and begin catching them. The healthy span of year classes will give you sizes ranging from four inches to well over twenty inches. There are three ways to increase the numbers of fish you get into: Hire a guide, befriend someone in the know or spend the time on the water. All three work, but the latter is most satisfying.

Light tackle enthusiasts beware – the Thames River is home to many other species of fish. And they're just as eager to come out and play!

Miss Me?

Editorial by Paul Noble

There's only one thing to say: "It's good to be back." With the publication of the last issue of the *Thames River Angler*, I had decided to take a hard line in regard to this newsletter's content. More and more the articles and other 'filler' items were written largely by one person – me. Many in the TRAA said that this was fine because I was involved, as Secretary, with most TRAA meetings, functions and directions. However, I felt that there were several problems inherent with the way in which the *Thames River Angler* was being brought to publication. All of these problems have been brought up at consecutive General Meetings since the *Thames River Angler* was last published, so I won't bore you with the details. Nevertheless, it must be said that the biggest challenge (submissions) has been answered with submissions from Bill Valberg, Ian Colin James, Rick Ornato and Randy Bailey. Ian, Rick and Randy are not making their first appearances in the *Thames River Angler* and I

thank these fine writers for their continued input. Bill Valberg's first article in the 'Techniques' section is a dandy – we look forward to more from this young upstart!

The *Thames River Angler* also has a new look for 2003. This is mostly because we decided to publish it in a format – Microsoft Word – that would be easy to send as an email attachment and could be opened by most everyone who owns a personal computer. This would also give us many more options when it comes to having the newsletter printed. This should cut our costs in the long run.

Speaking of costs, there will have to be some fundraising efforts to deal with this year's Public Relations budget – part of which is this newsletter.

This year's issues of the *Thames River Angler* will continue to be of this calibre if the support from TRAA members continues. I hope you enjoy this Spring 2003 issue.

A Chat with the Pres'

President's Report Randy Bailey (with Paul Noble)

PN The year 2002 had both high points and low points for the TRAA. What do you think has to be done to build on the high points and minimize those low ones?

RB It's important for the Executive and the Committees to plan short term projects to realize both short term and long term goals. For example, the Trout Committee has launched an ambitious project to improve the source water for the trout hatchery. This is being accomplished with a number of "bite-sized" work days that easily achieve in a short-term goals on the way to a long-term solution. We have learned a lot from the problems of the past and this allows us to be better prepared to take on these more elaborate endeavours.

PN The Annual General Meeting occurs this month, March 12th. Speaking of "long-term", are you interested in continuing in your capacity as President of the TRAA?

RB I'm confident that anyone in the current TRAA Executive would be able to do an admirable job as President. However, I will, if

nominated, stand for re-election to another term.

PN There is a concern that a 'status quo' situation from year to year within the TRAA's governing body leads to stagnancy.

RB We (when I say, "we", I mean this so-called 'status quo' Executive) have addressed this complaint in the past by trying to encourage members to stand for election or to volunteer as a Committee Chairman. This failed on a number of levels. There is a "mentoring" program that has been suggested by member Doug Jarman that would allow 'regular' members to work with current Executives or Committee Chairmen to feel more comfortable with an elected or volunteer position before they are actually thrown into it. This idea will be discussed at an Executive level after the AGM in March.

PN A last comment?

RB Yes. It's vitally important that all members get involved with the election process on March 12th. We need these votes to represent the voices of as many members as possible.

Fun at the 'Bend

Rehabilitation Committee

Mark Biesinger

When people talk about fun at the 'Bend they usually mean Grand Bend, sun, fun and sandy beaches. To a TRAA stream rehab' volunteer, the 'Bend is the Cornfield Bend on Komoka Creek.

The Cornfield Bend has been an ongoing project for the Rehabilitation Committee for many years. Limnoterra out of Kitchener originally drew up the plans for restoration of this badly eroded section about 8 years ago. Since then we have used many techniques to try to move the stream back to its original channel while improving the habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms residing in the stream.

These work parties have involved heavy equipment such as backhoes and 'Bobcats', manual equipment such as shovels, rakes and wheelbarrows and the old standby, the strong backs of TRAA volunteers.

A vast array of materials have made their way into the rebuilding of this area as well. A combination of brush bundles, root wads, broken limestone, logs, boulders, angle-iron and iron re-bar have made their way into the 'structure' of the new bank. Layers of filter cloth, stones and gravel were also used to enhance the natural 'look' of the 'Bend.

The last load of gravel was finished off in January of this year. The general feeling among members is that the 'Bend is finally finished. Some of us would still like to see some topsoil and plantings on the new bank to help stabilize it. Others contend that this will eventually happen naturally and that we should let nature take its course.

We are all in agreement that we have done all of the work that can be done for now on the 'Bend and that it will be interesting to see what happens with this spring's high water events.

The mouth of Komoka Creek seems to be remaining clear of debris after we had removed a number of blockages last year. We will continue to monitor that situation as spring approaches.

A date for a stream walk will be set at the March 12th Annual General Meeting to check Komoka Creek for any major barriers to water flow and to migrating steelhead. Note will also be taken of

areas requiring rehab' work or habitat restoration.

There has also been interest in collecting willow stakes again for planting along vulnerable stream banks to stabilize and help prevent erosion. A date for this will also be decided upon at the March AGM.

Other tree plantings are also being considered.

Later in the summer we hope to replace a fence that was removed last spring. The previous fence had clogged with debris and was blocking the path of migratory steelhead in Komoka Creek. The new fence will be of a design that will be less likely to cause obstructions in the creek.



Work on the 'Bend' in any Season!

Above: Dave 'Uncle Dunk' Jeffries sweats it out over gravel & filter cloth.

Below: Randy Bailey & Paul Noble push Mark Biesinger's truck (full of rock) as Kevin 'Black Jacques' LeMesurier "supervises".



Water, Oxygen & Eggs – Part I

Trout Committee

Randy Bailey

The TRAA's Trout Committee has considered itself quite a success story for over a decade. We had become quite proficient at raising both rainbow and brown trout from eggs. All of the groups that visited the trout hatchery for educational tours of a trout's life cycle were all suitably impressed. Then the 'wheels fell off' in a most unexpected manner.

The last two years have been very challenging times for those of us involved with the trout hatchery. There have been catastrophic losses with the last three batches of eggs before they even hatched. Two of the hatches were brown trout and it was initially thought that the problem was isolated to that species. This idea was dashed with the failure of the rainbow trout allocation of eggs for spring of 2002. The Trout Committee began investigations in earnest after the rainbow trout eggs of 2002 were flushed out of the hatchery system.

After taking stock of the situation during an initial investigation, the Trout Committee determined that the problem appeared to be with the source water and the way in which it was collected and drawn into the hatchery system. These suspicions were proved correct with follow-up analyses of the source water by a third-party laboratory.

The spring water was being collected in a small weir system almost immediately as it came out of the ground. This mode of collection was originally designed to help settle suspended silt and other particles before being introduced into the hatchery source pipe. It worked great for a while but the dissolved oxygen (D.O.) was borderline for trout eggs/fry and the weir system had collected a large amount of decomposing, organic matter. The decomposing of this organic matter had a negative effect on an already low D.O. As time went on, fungus also became prevalent in the weir and was soon introduced into the hatchery system where it attacked the eggs.

After the problems with the weir system were made obvious, the decision was made to dismantle it and start from scratch.

The number one problem with the source water, according to the lab tests was a very low level of D.O. Member Doug Jarman has access to testing equipment and confirmed the lab findings. The source water's D.O. was only 2.2 mg/litre. Halfway down the ravine it still only registered 5.2 mg/litre. The D.O. measured in Komoka Creek was 11.8 mg/litre.

What all this means is we have to increase the level of D.O. in our source water significantly. Ambitious plans have been drawn up to build a number of 'waterfalls', up-welling fountains and other devices to increase the D.O. At a work party in January/03, members built up the spring source area with gravel and inserted a 4" pipe with a 90° elbow to create a small fountain. This little bit of work increased the D.O. level to 8.5 mg/litre at the source! Other devices will be used to cause turbulence in the source water which will in turn increase the water's D.O.

This oxygenated water will then be captured in a newly designed weir built from concrete. This weir will feature a strategically placed drain that will allow quick and thorough cleaning of any collected debris. The unique design will even allow cleaning while the hatchery is in use. A stand pipe similar to the one in the hatchery's circular tank will be used to maintain the desired water level in the weir. The source pipe will draw the water from just below the surface. This will ensure that floating or settled debris will not be introduced into the hatchery system.

A valve to flush out a 'P' trap in the source pipe before it enters the hatchery is also being considered. The Trout Committee has also considered filter systems but they may be subject to clogging.

We will apply for funding for this project and possibly upgrading the tray system inside the hatchery. New stairs and decking for access to the proposed weir will also be included in the application.

Yes, we've had recent setbacks but the future looks exciting and our past successes will serve to strengthen our resolve.

Water, Oxygen & Eggs – Part II

Warmwater Committee Kevin LeMesurier

On January 25, 2003, a Warmwater Committee meeting took place to discuss “Proposed Walleye Hatchery Updates/Retro-fits”. Members met at the dam in Fanshawe Conservation Area, and then proceeded to the walleye hatchery site for a quick tour and a brief review of the operation, as it currently exists. The party then moved to the warmth of the UTRCA boardroom, courtesy of John Schwindt, to continue discussions of future improvements to the walleye hatchery and the manner in which we hatch/maintain/grow/release the walleye. The following points of discussion were presented by Kevin Lemesurier as challenges that we face in realizing the desired goals of the walleye hatchery as originally set by the Warmwater Committee and the TRAA.

Possible Loss of Electrical Service

Challenge: Loss of electrical power to the walleye hatchery’s water pump would lead to catastrophic results. If the eggs are unhatched, a complete loss of that batch would be unavoidable. If the fry have hatched, losses would be heavy within 2 to 3 hours due to critical lowering of water levels.

Discussion: A generator or other type electrical “back-up” system would be prohibitively expensive and would be subject to theft and vandalism. We should ensure that the TRAA is on a UTRCA “call list” that informs stakeholders using the Conservation Area’s electrical grid if there is to be an intentional interruption of power. A solenoid switch incorporating a check valve could be installed to stop the “draw-down” of water in the hatchery system in the event of an electrical power outage.

Action: Kevin Lemesurier will use his contacts within the UTRCA to find out if a “call list” does exist and if so, will make certain that we are on that list. Doug Jarman and/or Ken Armstrong will be looking into sourcing a solenoid switched check valve suitable for the hatchery application.

Future Source(s) of Walleye Eggs

Challenge: The TRAA has no long-term commitment for a reliable source of walleye eggs.

Discussion: We should form a long-term relationship with an organization that can supply us with a source of walleye eggs. Prospective

sources are or may be: Dunnville Hunters & Anglers Club (current source), OMNR sources, other grassroots anglers clubs, aboriginal groups, commercial entities offering eggs for purchase.

Action: Approach the executive of the Dunnville Hunters & Anglers with the possibility of ensuring a conservative number of eggs (300,000 = one female walleye’s output) for the foreseeable future. Offering something of similar value in return may make it a win-win situation.

Water Quality

Challenge: The source water from the park’s system is now chlorinated.

Discussion: There are water treatment systems, filters, etc. that can eliminate chlorine. Most chlorine in water will “burn off” in 24 hours or less, depending upon water temperature, volume and other variables.

Action: Litmus paper, pool test kits and other methods can be employed to measure the chlorine levels in the hatchery system and in the re-fill water. The hatchery water system can be filled and circulating days before the introduction of walleye eggs to be sure the chlorine has had sufficient time to “burn off”. Water used to top up the hatchery system as required can be stored in large pails ahead of time to be sure that chlorine is at acceptable levels before introduction.

Water Quality

Challenge: Water temperature fluctuates wildly with ambient air temperature and the time of day. Eggs “come off” too quickly and optimal temperature for walleye fry is usually too high.

Discussion: Manual additions of ice have been virtually ineffective.

Blocking the sunlight only helps marginally because the ambient temperature remains unaffected and the breezeway is blocked. Mechanical “chillers” may be available from Lordon Ltd. or from the UWO. These are units that are no longer being used and are just sitting in storage.

Action: Randy Bailey will check with the owner of Lordon and John Schwindt offered to ask the UWO about possibly having a “chiller” donated to the TRAA.

Warmwater Committee Continued

Pump System

Challenge: The walleye fry are being sucked into the pump via the circular tank outlet and are then chewed up by said pump.

Discussion: Putting a fry-proof barrier over the circular tank's outlet would quickly clog with walleye fry, food and other debris.

A pipe that draws the circular tank's water from just under the surface may be feasible because the fry tend to congregate closer to the bottom of the tank.

Action: Construct a pipe that extends the outlet of the circular tank to just under the surface of the water. Water level will have to be closely monitored to be sure that it does not drop below outlet extension.

Aeration of Holding Tank

Challenge: We are not sure if there is sufficient oxygen being introduced into the hatchery system from the circular tank's surface area and the action of the pump system.

Discussion: Are some of our problems with food production and premature fry death partially a dissolved oxygen deficiency? Modification of the Circular tank inlet pipe so that water splashes into tank would ensure a sufficient amount of D/O.

Action: Find out what the optimal level of dissolved oxygen is for zooplankton production and for walleye fry comfort. Test the D/O levels in the walleye hatchery system as it exists. Make changes to inlet if required.

Keeping the Fry Beyond 48 Hours

Challenge: The walleye fry die very shortly after consuming their yolk sacs. We would like to keep them a little longer, growing them to a size that may help their survival rate upon release.

Discussion: The size of the holding tank or pond, as well as the number of fry determines the size to which they may grow.

A large pond(s) is not possible in the short term. These ponds are traditionally very large with aeration systems and can be drawn down to be sure that all walleye have been transferred once they have grown to the desired size.

A proper "recipe" for zooplankton production, based on our system's water volume & temperature, dissolved oxygen, sunlight and the number of fry in a given batch, must be determined.

Action: A "road trip" to the Dunnville Hunters and Anglers Club hatchery facility will be organized. We will offer a free dinner and other shameless

bribes in exchange for information and advice on walleye culture.

We will investigate what other organizations are doing in regard to this challenge by searching the internet, OMNR records and other sources.

We will then attempt to begin a dialogue with these organizations regarding these challenges via email or telephone.

We will continue experimenting on our own. We will carefully document what works, as well as our failures. The TRAA walleye hatchery is already unique in many ways and so it stands to reason that our solutions to keeping and growing walleye may also be unique.

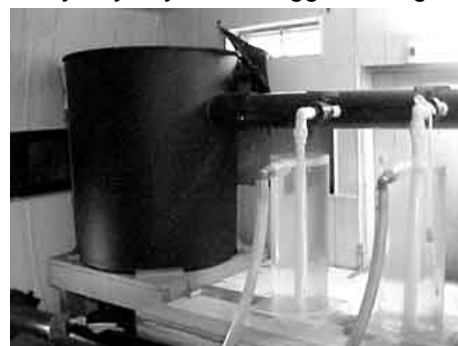
The meeting was concluded with a decision to leave the walleye hatchery trailer in its existing position for at least the 2003 season.

The **Actions** outlined in the above minutes must be accomplished in their entirety before the Annual General Meeting on March 12, 2003 to be effective for this year's allotment of walleye eggs.



Changes are coming to the way in which the water circulates through the circular holding tank (above) and the egg incubation jar system (below).

Warmwater Chairman Kevin LeMesurier (above) is hoping to gain control of the water temperature & quality as well as a viable feeding regimen to enable the growth of the walleye fry beyond the egg-sac stage.



Whatever Happened to the Good Old Days?

Opinion by Paul Noble

A few TRAA members were having a couple of “pops” after the December General Meeting and the conversation turned to the earlier days of the TRAA.

We all yakked about how everything used to be better in the old days. Lots of good work was accomplished. Lots of good ideas and good times were had cooking up the ideas and doing the work. It seemed that everyone got involved and contributed to making the TRAA one of the most respected environmental groups in this community.

The conversation then turned to all the challenges we now seem to be struggling with: dwindling interest from the general membership, lack of organization at the Committee and Executive level, disagreements within the ranks and an overall atmosphere of apathy.

It's true, things have changed and while change may be inevitable, do the opinions of that post-meeting conversation hold water? All of the perceived points of contention tend to be interconnected.

Many of our active members are at stages in their lives when time is at a premium. They value their leisure times. Tough choices must be made and often the TRAA comes second. They need the events organized for them so that they can just show up when it starts and leave when it ends.

This means the responsibility lies on the Executive and Committee Chairs of the TRAA to do the planning, the prep-work, be involved at the events and then deal with the cleanup and administrative follow-up. These people are just as busy in their private lives as anyone else, so things may not always be as thoroughly organized as some folks would like them to be.

This in turn causes a sense of frustration for those showing up to these events and “wasting their time”. They want more out of their membership experience. Disagreements and dissention become prevalent.

Those at the Committee and Executive levels find it more and more difficult to maintain the interest of a membership not willing to get involved in the day-to-day operations of the TRAA. The general membership ceases to be interested in an organization that appears to be static. Apathy displaces involvement as everyone becomes disenchanted.



Good Old Days?

Tired, freezing & lovin' every minute!

We decided to move the walleye hatchery on the coldest day of the year ... duh.

Then we find ourselves sitting around after a General Meeting pining for the Good Old Days. Well here's a news flash: My Grandfather always talked about his Good Old Days and he went through a Depression and two World Wars! What made it the “Good Old Days” for my Grandfather was the fact that he and those around him had no choice but to work through their problems. This common cause gave them a sense of purpose, comradery and belonging.

It's the same for the TRAA. Ten years ago we had many challenges similar to today's. Our “rose-coloured glasses” tend to filter out some of the really bad times. Remember the floating dock project/fiasco for Sharon Creek Reservoir? How about picking dead trout eggs out of an up-welling box while being showered with sleet in the dead of winter? Remember fighting for credibility with the MNR? Or the landowners adjacent to Komoka Creek? I could go on but I think you're getting the idea.

Those tough times of the TRAA's earlier days were indeed Good Old Days. We made lasting friendships, developed a proud sense of accomplishment and a legacy of which we are proud.

Yes, times have changed. Our personal commitments have changed. We have changed. What hasn't changed is our ability to continue creating tomorrow's memories of the Good Old Days.

The Truth About Lure Colour

Techniques

by Bill Valberg

The debate over the importance of lure colour is probably one of the most controversial in fishing. Pro' anglers (and even biologists) have a difficult time agreeing about the importance of colour. At a recent pro' bass tournament weigh-in I paid close attention to what the pros had used to catch their fish. Three of the top ten finishers had used identical baits and patterns, but each had used very different colours! One used a white bait, the next black, and the other, bubble gum. What possibly can we learn from this? In the final analysis, we might conclude that the significance of lure colour may well be exaggerated. Why then, would lure manufacturers make the same bait in a hundred different colours? Beyond the biz-talk of market competition and profits, we can let the pros argue about nuances of colour because for the average angler, selecting a productive colour is easy if you follow a few basic guidelines. When choosing lure colour the most important factor to consider is water clarity. Certain colours are more visible in differing water conditions and since the name of the game is attracting fish, it is vital that you use bait colours that help. The most visible colours in muddy and stained water are fluorescent reds, oranges and, of course, chartreuse. Many successful anglers will also use dark colours like smoke, black and dark purple in muddy waters because they offer a strong silhouette-even in low light. Try these dark shades at night, too. So if visibility is key, why not use dark colours all the time? In clear water, fish can sometimes see your bait too well, so it's important to disguise your offering to make it look more realistic. Most fish prey are chameleon-like (they change their colour to match their surroundings) to help camouflage themselves from predators. Nature's camouflage can be mimicked by anglers fishing "in the clear" by simply matching bait colour with the bottom colour. If fishing in weeds use green shades, around rock-use smoke, and around wood, use brown tones. It can be that easy. Another strategy in clear water is to check out the baitfish. In very clear water you can sometimes see the fish diet you're trying to replicate. Polarized lenses really make a difference when looking into the water, so invest in a pair and get a closer look at what the fish are eating. Always be scoping for baitfish. Look at the marina when you're launching your boat, and even look inside the mouths of fish you've

caught to see what they've been eating. Then simply match the colour (and more importantly the size) of the lure to what you've observed. "Match the hatch" is a time-tested old angler's creed because it's true! Try it - it really works. To accurately *match the hatch* you have to observe more than just colour. That's right boys, no matter what you've heard, **SIZE MATTERS!!!** Remember that size and lure presentation are far more important than colour choice. So concentrate more on these factors and leave the argument over lure colour to the pros and the biologists.

Lure Colour Quiz



*It's Midnight on a muggy August night.
The moon is just coming over the trees and
there's not a single ripple on the water.
You can almost sense the largemouth bass
lurking by the pencil reeds. Which Hula Popper
from the above photo should you chose to tie
on? Yes, it's a black & white picture,
but you can still make the right decision.
Now that's a big-time hint!*

To Bead or Not to Bead

Fly Fishing by Ian James

To bead or not to bead? That is the question. If Sir Willie had been a fly fisherman, he might have penned those words. Over the past two decades I think you would be hard pressed to come up with a more influential fly tying item than the humble beadhead. Many fly fishing authorities believe they were developed in Austria for fishing in the fast flowing, mountain rivers of Europe, while others give credit to UK anglers. Personally I give my vote to the Austrian's, as they gave the world several other good things like the Alpine horn (surpassed only by the bagpipes for its warmth, tone and musical qualities), yodelling and Arnold "I'll Be Back" Schwarzenegger. There is little doubt beadhead flies catch fish – in some situations they could be a necessity – but are they creating an addiction in the sport? Are they the soft drug, which opens the door to harder things like lead dumbbell eyes, coneheads and eventually 1/4-ounce jig heads (barbless of course) delivered in an unmarked, brown package from Bubba's Bait & Ammo Emporium? I suspect the beadhead is creating a dependency in fly fishermen which, when all is said and done, might not be healthy. I hope the outbreak of beadheaditis can be held in check before our riverbanks are littered with beadhead junkies, and therapist's offices are knee-deep in fly fishing vests.

I must confess that I use beadheads, but only in moderation and only under the strict supervision of an angling buddy – perhaps a recovering beadaholic himself – who knows when to tell me to quit. I only use beadhead Pheasant Tail and Hare's Ear Nymphs, sizes 12 to 16, which I only use and only in fast water for steelheading. In my boxes, beadheads have a very specific job, for a very specific species and in very specific situations. Well, hmmm, except when I need to get deep when fishing carp, redhorse, gizzard shad, white bass, smallmouth bass, quillback, sheephead, salmon, splake, lake trout, brook trout, brown trout or goby. Yes goby (fantastic sport on a less-than-zero weight rod) will take small nymphs, but I can't see them attaining the status of an Ontario game fish until Beelzebub heads to a Canadian Tire store to buy a snowsuit.

Have you ever seen an angler wading into a two foot deep riffle and chucking out a

beadhead, as obviously there is no other way to get the fly down two feet. It's amazing to think that anglers caught fish in the pre beadhead wilderness. Of course, those fishermen had to develop angling traits like reading the water, mending the line and actually working on their fly presentation.

All too often, using a beadhead is a bit of a no brainer – a quick fix – which I believe can lead to the under development, or stunting, of some basic angling skills. Not that there is anything wrong with that, as it leaves more fish for other anglers. However, if the Ministry of Natural Resources decided to ban the use of beadheads, or even worse, if the Canadian Beadhead Cartel (CBC) jack up the prices and hold back supply, what then? If it were illegal to fish a beadhead, or if they were priced at \$500.00 for a pack of six, where would you turn for angling fun? Don't panic, the overworked boys at the MNR are not planning on banning beadheads, and unless there are some massive crop failures there will be no shortage of fresh beads in the foreseeable future. Rumour has it Agriculture Canada has stockpiled freezers full of them in underground bunkers. Plus they are encouraging farmers to grow beadheads instead of tobacco.

Breaking the beadhead habit is not easy. The dependence can be as powerful as any narcotic. If you don't believe me, check through your fly boxes to see how many beadheads have wormed their way into the foam. They are addictive because they are simple to use and they work. You go to the river and set about plopping in beadheads until something takes a whack at the fly. It's as simple as that. This is a very effective angling technique. After all, the fly *is* bouncing on the bottom, and 9 times out of 10, that's where the fish are located. However when the system fails to produce – and it will – many anglers are left wandering around like a wide-eyed bunny in a set of Halogens. We have all asked a successful angler what they were using, and most of the time they will spill the beans. However, here is something, which I am beginning to see with increased regularity. After swearing that matching the hatch has been the key to his success, the chap hands you the killing pattern – a beadhead hendrickson nymph.

Fly Fishing

Continued

I'm not an entomologist, but I've never seen hendrickson nymphs swimming around festooned with large, shiny helmets. Similarly you won't see too many beadhead caddis nymphs, beadhead scuds or the ever-popular beadhead isonicia nymph scurrying around. A good case can be made that the chap was, in fact, using an attractor pattern rather than an imitative pattern. This is an obvious indication of his complete denial of a beadhead addiction. Far be it from me to start anything, but I am only stating the obvious. Is there a need to tie the perfect scud or march brown imitation if you're going to add a big chunk of metal to the head of the fly? I'm just giving you something to ponder.

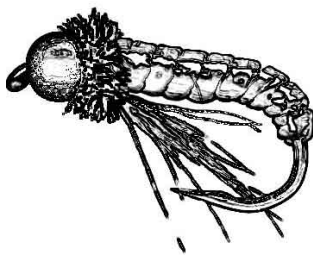
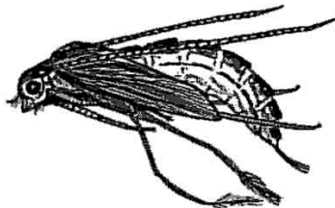
Here's how you can 'Break the Cycle' of beadhead dependency. Why not put all of your beadheads in one box and only deploy them as a searching fly. When you pick up a hit, put the box away, remove the beadhead and try to find success with the same pattern, minus the bead. You know, go back to some of the basics of the sport, like reading the water, perfecting a drift or mending the line. Now for those of you who can't do this, I am working on a new breed

of beadheads. They are almost transparent so the fish can't see them, made from a metal which is heavier than tungsten (ultra-fast sinking) and they are impregnated with a slow-release fish attractant. They will be available in a wide range of sizes from a 38 to the saltwater 10/0 which weighs 2 lb. Yup, that 'salty dog' is going to go where no fly has gone before. Naturally there will be a dry fly series made from a lighter material. I am looking forward to introducing a conehead Dahlberg Diver in a size 26, a fully dressed Jock Scott with lead dumbbell eyes or a size 18 tungsten beadhead Royal Wulff. The possibilities are endless.

In closing, beadheads can be a useful tool, but should be used sparingly. For the record, they are not farmed but are, in fact, a by-product of the pharmaceutical industry. I can't pull the wool (or any other part of the sheep - unless your tying up a few Tup's) over the eyes of the folks at the TRAA, no Siree Bob.

For the record: My seeming dependence on using ludicrous amounts of split shot has no relation whatsoever to the obviously more serious addictive tendencies of beadhead users.

P.S. My new beadheads are available on my website at www.ianjames.on.ca. No kidding.



Paul Noble Drawings

One drawing directly to the left represents an actual caddis pupa and the other is a beadhead version of a popular imitative fly called a 'Fire Pupa'.

Take a moment to decide, and then circle the one that you think is the 'Fire Pupa' imitation and put an X through the one that you think is the real thing. Turn the page clockwise and read below to see how well you know your caddis pupae.

If you picked the drawing on the top, congratulations, you're smarter than a fish. Was the beadhead the giveaway, or was it the steel, pointy thing hanging out of its butt?

If you picked the other, don't worry, you probably have more pressing concerns, like evolving.

It's Sad When You're Blue, So Warm Up!

Gear Pig by Rick Ornato

Many fisherpersons put away their gear in the fall when the old mercury begins to register in the teens. A few of the more hardy persist with some fall steelheading but the majority head home and dream of spring when the season starts anew. Who can blame them? It's certainly no fun fishing when your teeth are chattering and your fingers are turning blue.

The length of the fishing season in Southern Ontario is dependant on one factor – temperature. While certain fish are out of season there are still a few species available to us. Of course, when the temperature gets to the point where you have to clean the ice from your guides every third cast, then it's time to pack it in. Until then, the only thing that keeps us out of the river is our own comfort. In order to enjoy this 'second season' we need to make sure we dress appropriately.

"Dress In Layers"

Everyone has probably heard this phrase but what does it mean? In order to understand this we need a little background on how your body maintains its temperature. Let's say its summer and you're going for a little jog (ok, ok, it's only hypothetical). When you exert yourself, you raise your core body temperature. In order to deal with this the pores of the skin open and release water on the skin and cool the body externally. The water eventually evaporates and your core temperature stabilizes. But what if the water doesn't evaporate? Your body will continue to cool and eventually your core temperature will drop. At this point the body starts to shiver (exert itself) until the core temperature is stabilized again. Any one who has been outside with wet clothes knows that until their skin is dry they aren't getting warm no matter what they are wearing.

"The First Layer"

The most important and often overlooked layer is the first layer. The purpose of the first layer is to remove moisture from the skin. What is required here is something with 'wicking' properties. Certain materials, such as polypropylene, possess the ability to 'wick' moisture away from the skin. **DO NOT WEAR COTTON.** This is the absolute worst material for a first layer. Places such as Mark's Work Warehouse sell inexpensive long underwear made of polypropylene. I prefer the two-piece long underwear sets. It provides better access ('nuff said).

"Second Layer"

The purpose of the second layer is to provide insulation. Any material that traps air will do. I

prefer fleece for its comfort and low 'weight to warmth' ratio but down or wool would be suitable. Fleece also keeps its insulating qualities when wet and can be purchased at Wal-Mart for less than \$20. I wear a fleece sweater and a fleece jacket over top on really cold days.

"Third Layer"

The purpose of the third layer is to block wind and/or provide more insulation. Without this layer the wind will quickly cool the trapped air in the second layer. A lot of fuss has been made about 'breathability'. The point behind breathability is to prevent the body from overheating during exertion creating more sweat than the first layer can wick away. Although these products are great they are not a necessity and can be quite expensive. For the fisherman, simply opening and closing the zipper of your jacket will accomplish the same ends. I use a wading jacket that I splurged on. It is waterproof and breathable and cost \$85.00. It also has a hood that I can pull over any hat I'm wearing for extra windproof-ness.

"Head & Nose, Fingers & Toes"

The last things to consider are the extremities; these being the hands, feet and head. Once again, a little background on how our body works will give us a better understanding of what's needed. Anyone who has sat with their legs dangling in a pool on a hot day knows that it is a good way to cool down. This effect works against us in cold weather. Keeping the extremities warm is essential to keeping our bodies warm.

For a hat, wool caps or any hat with insulating capabilities is fine. I use a fleece product known as a "hothead". It is a combination hat/scarf/balaclava. Canadian tire sells them for about \$15. I will often pull my jacket hood up when the wind starts to blow.

Gloves are a must. Fingerless gloves are ideal. Mine are fleece and they cost \$17. I'd have bought them if they cost \$50. They stay warm when they are wet because they have wicking qualities and are windproof. They also have flaps that Velcro back out of the way. You'll pay almost as much for lesser products. Mine are made by "Wind River" and are available at some of the fly shops in London.

Keeping your feet warm is very difficult. For one, they are in very cold water. Secondly, the act of standing inhibits the flow of blood through the feet (you are standing and thusly squashing flat the blood vessels on the bottom of your feet).

Thirdly, you'll have to find a balance of adequate

Gear Pig Continued

insulation without constricting the blood flow in the rest of your foot as most of the main blood vessels are close to the surface. Here you will have to experiment on what works best for you. This is what works best for me.

I use "smart wool" socks and they are expensive at \$17. I have wide feet and I am limited to how thick my socks can be. When I purchased my waders I deliberately bought a pair that the neoprene boot was a size too large. I did the same with my wading boots to get the extra width. This gives my foot plenty of wiggle room. This 'wiggle' room is a trick I learned from an army friend and I'll pass it on. In the military they spend a lot of time standing in formation. They are taught to wiggle their toes as this acts as a pumping motion and helps circulate the blood and in doing so helps keep the feet warm. Well, that wraps it up (pun intended). Dressing appropriately for the cold weather will let you extend your fishing season a little longer and make winter seem that much shorter.



*Is she blushing
because of my
outdoorsy,
rugged looks or
is she flushed
from the warmth
of her sensible
undergarments?*

*I think his undies
have been too
warm for too
long; either that
or the pheasants
have been
hanging there
way too long!*

Annual General Meeting

March 12, 2003

Once a year TRAA members gather to select those intrepid leaders that guide us through the next twelve months.

The following Executive positions are electoral and are all up for grabs:

President – Incumbent: Randy Bailey
Vice President – Incumbent: Tim Jokela
Chairman – Incumbent: Rick Ornato
Treasurer – Incumbent: Archie Graham
Secretary – Incumbent: Paul Noble

The volunteer position of Chairman for various Committees will be decided upon at the AGM. Current Chairmen are:

Rehabilitation: Mark Biesinger
Trout: Randy Bailey
Warmwater: Kevin LeMesurier
Public Relations: Paul Noble/Rick Ornato
Social: Dave Jeffries/Randy Bailey
Memberships: Archie Graham

If you are interested in any of the above positions, please try to attend the AGM. If you wish to nominate another member, you may want to discuss whether they may stand for election if nominated or if they are interested in a volunteer position. This will save time at the AGM.

Guest Speakers

The TRAA has General Meetings every second Wednesday of every month. We meet at Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road in London, Ontario. During the months of July and August we will be having an "angling meeting" on the water with some of our "finny" members. Besides the necessary business that must be taken care of, the TRAA likes to invite people smarter and/or more entertaining than we are to liven up the meetings.

April 9, 2003

Len Perdic of Shimano Canada will be speaking to us about carp angling techniques. Match-style angling is becoming a popular facet of sport fishing and Len is a pro'!

May 14, 2003

Ian James makes his living guiding, tying flies, and teaching folks to cast a fly. We have no idea what he's going to talk about but anyone who's sat in on his classes knows it'll be entertaining!

Just a Gentle Reminder: If you haven't paid your 2003 TRAA Membership dues ...

They're Due!!!

(See insert for new members)