

TIGHTLINES

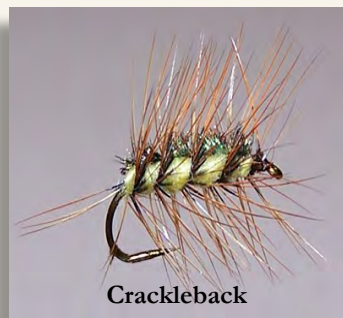
GEARING UP for LENICE LAKE March Outing by Keith Stamm

You'll need to be quite intrepid to tackle Lenice Lake in March. There's the wind off the mountain, the cold, and the hike to the lake dragging something to fish out of. So first things first, bring plenty of warm clothes and your lightest pontoon boat. After that you can think about fishing tackle: fly rod, lines, leaders and flies.

The wind and the cold can be a game breaker. Mike Truax, a pretty tough guy, got so cold last year he's taking a pass this year. Maybe that's because it rained and snowed, and he fished with his feet and legs immersed all day. That's Catch-22. Small pontoon boats and belly boats are easy to transport to the lake, but you could have a hard time staying warm if half your body is in that cold water. Ask Mike. The solution might be extra heavy socks, and doubling up on the long underwear.

When it comes to tackle there are lots of options. Some anglers will think in terms of a 5-weight rod with a sink tip or intermediate sinker to troll woolly buggers and small leech patterns. Then there are guys like Dave Claude who has fished the lake a lot with a 2-weight and a dry line and a fly called the "Crackleback" that most of us have never heard of.

You might think a 2-weight is too light for Lenice, but according to Dave he's never had to overplay a fish using the 2-weight and 4x



Crackleback

The important thing to Dave is to "Fish on my own terms," which is good advice for everyone. Fish the way that you like to fish, and be prepared to experiment. Dave can usually get plenty of fish using only two patterns, the venerable Crackleback



Nyerger Nymph (Ray Gould)

and Nyerger nymph. But if those aren't working he's always prepared to switch to Chironomids.

Jim Hagy has had success with a variety of patterns, although he is very partial to a small #14 damsel pattern called the "Wilcox Rapunzel." You can get it at the *Pacific Fly Fishers* (Mill Creek shop), but Jim has begun to tie his own version, which works about as well. Jim says he has seldom if ever had to tie on a Chironomid. Like Dave, he fishes on his own terms. If the damsel isn't working he'll tie on an olive Willy, or one of Tony Koenig's inventions, a black woolly bugger with red crystal flash in the tail. He says that last year some guys were even taking fish with a white bunny leech.



Wilcox Rapunzel

There are a couple things to bear in mind if you're going to fish patterns like the damsel or woolly bugger. **First, the water is very cold so you'll generally do much better if you move the fly very slowly. At times it can even be more effective to fish flies like damsels and leeches under an indicator rather than trolling or retrieving. Second, the depth of the lake varies considerably. Most of the lake is 8-10 feet deep, but there are also drop-offs to 15 and 20 feet, and a deep 25-30-foot hole in the middle.** Sometimes you might find the fish in that deeper water. That deep hole is a great spot to fish with a #14 Nyerger or hare's ear, according to Brita Fordice at Avid Angler. She also loves to fish a #16 pheasant tail (PT) at Lenice. In fact if you like to fish woolly buggers, you'll get more hookups if you add a PT about 18 inches behind the bugger.



Marabou Damsel & Bomber Chironomid (Keith Stamm)

Rolf Mogster has fished the lake a lot and is very partial to an olive woolly bugger with a red bead fished real slow, but he's always prepared to switch to a Chironomid, especially if he starts to see fish coming up around the edges. Last year he had the most success going all the way down to a #20 Chironomid (black with a silver rib) fished 4-6 feet down under an indicator. Rolf also doesn't hesitate to go down to 5x or even 6x tippet with these smaller bugs.

According to John Paine at Avid Angler it's not usually necessary to go that small. He seldom goes smaller than size 16. Brita says the Chironomids in the early season are often good-sized. She usually starts out with a two-fly setup, the bottom fly a size 12 bloodworm pattern such as a Jim Beam, ice cream cone, or San Juan worm, the top fly a size 16 black Chironomid with silver ribbing.

To sum up, Lenice gives you a lot of options in March due to the diversity of the bug life, which includes damsels, dragons, leeches, mayflies and Chironomids. Productive patterns include woolly buggers, mini-leeches, small (#14) damsel patterns, pheasant tails and hare's ears (#14), and Chironomids from size 12 on down in black, olive and red. Because most of the lake is shallow most anglers use a dry line, but a sink tip or intermediate can be useful in the deeper spots.



SKAGIT SHAKEDOWN CRUISE

Steve Murray We should not have been surprised by snow since it was steelhead fishing, on the Skagit, in January, but OH Well! It was as much a shakedown cruise for the new river raft Mike and I purchased as anything else and since the river was closing early this year due to low run we went for it. It was also our new dog Rowan's first trip in the boat (or on the water for that matter). We had a great time with Jim and he is a great spey caster. Cold or no cold that guy is willing to work the water. Lots of eagles on the river (and eagle watchers) but saw only one other fisherman all day. Great time.



NOT ALL MEMBERS IN HIBERNATION

Keith Stamm

Most of the OFF have nodded off into winter hibernation. They're not fishing, not venturing out. They're like bears in their dens. Except for a few.

Dick Simmons thought about hibernation, reconsidered, and headed to Phoenix where he could wear T-shirts, show off his muscles, and stay comfy. He heard about a lake at the end of a jeep trail way up on top of Superstition Mt. where one can fly fish for Peacock Bass. But he didn't bring a fly rod. Oh well, it might get a bit cold way up there anyway.

Norm Primc, as we all well know, does not enjoy fishing in the cold. And given the numbers of fish he catches the rest of the year, why should he be cold and uncomfortable to catch a few more? Norm's too smart for that. Instead, he went to the Sportsman's Show in Puyallup. There he learned from a Brian Chan video that six basic chironomid patterns are all you need. (In different sizes of course.) So Norm is only in partial hibernation. He wakes up long enough each day to practice tying chironomid patterns. Gummy worms anyone? Ask Norm.

There are a few in the Club who break the mold. One, as you might guess, is Tony Koenig. Tony lives in Snohomish, a stone's throw from Blackman Lake, and fishes there just about every week, always during the middle of the week when he usually has the lake to himself at this time year. And he has been catching fish, some smaller Cutthroat stocked by Fish & Game, and some larger ones stocked by the local sportsman's club. The latter include some up to over 20 inches, such as a 6-pound monster that stretched the tape to 25 inches after putting quite a bend in Tony's fly rod.

How does Tony do it? First off, he knows the lake well from fishing it a lot. He's willing to tell us, fish in deeper water under the power lines along the side of the lake with no houses. Fish are in the deeper water

now because that's where the water is warmest. Second, don't get hung up on fly patterns. Just use a simple #14 black marabou leech pattern on a sinking line, and keep moving around. And if you hook into something really big that doesn't want to move, it just might be a grass carp. Tony's done that too.

Besides Tony there are three guys that have to be the He-Men of the Club; none other than Mike Bunney, Steve Murray and Jim Traner, the usual suspects. They ended up on the Skagit River with



air temperature 32 degrees and water temperature 35 degrees.

Does the Club have a special kind of award for this kind of bravado? Anyway, they didn't go so much to fish as to check out their new rubber raft. As Mike says, "When you have a new piece of equipment you get kind of anxious to check it out." So the three polar bears floated from Marblemount down to Rockport without touching a fish, but thank God the raft does float. We're told Traner did most of the actual fishing because he's the only one who remembered a wading staff, kind of important in high, 35 degree water.

We suspect that Jeff Salisbury is also fishing. He said he'd be going steelhead fishing but didn't say where. He isn't answering his phone or returning calls. He promised photos but none have arrived. We'll have to wait and see. Perhaps he took off to Mexico.



BOGACHIEL CHROME Steve Murray

February 11, 2012. I was fishing on the Bogachiel yesterday (although it was gear fishing) and caught this nice 18lb wild Hen. I will say for the record this is only the second time in 35 years I have fished with bait or gear all the fish we caught were hooked in the corner of the mouth and released unharmed as is the requirement for all the native fish (only clipped hatchery fish can be kept).

In two days of fishing on the Sol Duc and Bogi I landed 7 steelhead with 6 being wild and 1 hatchery (which we did keep and eat that night and it was wonderful! I hooked 10 others I could not get to the boat.

The weather on the first day was to say the least Forks WET!! The second day was Seattle WET. Great water to float and I will be going back to fish it with fly's in a couple weeks. Lots of eagles also and even a few elk on the river. Great time.

HOPPER FISHING IN MARCH

by Scott McCracken

Did I get your attention? Those of you planning on attending the March Lake Lenice outing might want to consider spending a little time on the Yakima River on your way over. From mid-March to early-April, the Yak experiences a Skwala stonefly hatch.



Adult Skwala

While not as large as its cousins, the Golden Stone and Salmon Fly, the grass hopper sized Skwalas provide winter hungry trout with their first hardy insect hatch of the season.

growing into a sizable nymph before making its way to shore, shedding its skin and spreading its wings. The next few weeks

are spent looking for love. You are likely to find them crawling up your sleeve or getting under your collar much like what happens with the other stone fly species. Other than size, the major difference between the Skwala and other stones, is that the hatch isn't nearly as prolific.



Bitterroot Skwala

You may only see a few in an entire day. This is partially due to their drab coloration. Skwalas are typically grayish green to grayish olive in color, and when in the water, drift along with little or no movement.



Bugmeister

explosion. The Yakima hatch varies from year-to-year depending on temperature and run-off conditions. Fishing usually begins in March as the Skwala nymphs begin the exodus to shore and the trout start to notice them. Fishing a nymph pattern under an indicator can be effective even before the adults begin showing. The lower Yakima canyon has the earliest hatches because it's the first section of the river to warm up in the spring.

For nymph fishing, use typical stonefly patterns like the Kauffman Stone with slightly smaller hook sizes, say size 8 to 10. For dry flies, you can go with a Skwala specific pattern like the Bitterroot Skwala, or attractors such as a size 8 Olive Stimulator or Bugmeister.



Olive Stimulator



Kauffman Stone

Washington. While the guys in Idaho and Montana are waiting for the snow to melt, we can be casting dry flies to rising trout.

Hope you can find a little extra time on the way to Lenice, or to just make an early season trip to the Yak. It's one of the great things about living here in

EDUCATION COMMITTEE FLY TIERS ROUNDTABLE 5:00 PM Before The General Meeting March 14, 2012 John Schwartz, Chariman

This is a reminder that we are starting a Tiers Roundtable at 5:00 PM before the regular meeting. We will be tying flies for the **Lake Lenice outing**. Bring your favorites with recipe and instructions if available. Mike Bunney suggested the "**Carlton General**" by Bill McAdow Join us.

- Hook:** Daiichi 2340, 8-12
- Thread:** 8/0 to match body color
- Tail:** Marabou, trimmed square one inch past hook
- Hackle:** Extra long saddle hackle, reversed palmer
- Body:** Wool chenille, peacock herl
- Colors:** Black, Olive, Peacock

NOTICE: For the April Roundtable, contact me with suggestions on what to tie for **Lone Lake outing**.



Carlton General (John Schwartz)

CONSERVATION NEWS

The Elwha: March 2012 Update by Paul Strawn

Imagine a ninety-pound Chinook powering its way up the unencumbered reaches of the Elwha River. Consider a twenty-pound chrome-bright, wild steelhead persistently climbing toward her treasured spawning beds somewhere in the pristine network of tributaries of the 320 square mile Elwha River system. That's the way it was prior to October of 1912 when the Elwha dam was completed.

Fast forward 99 years to September 17, 2011. That is the day the removal of two massive Elwha dams began. We saw the TV footage and rejoiced in the twenty years of dedicated work by Native Americans, environmental organizations, private citizens, state and federal agencies that resulted in this never-before accomplishment of restoring such a river to its free-flowing original state.

As much as we share their joy, the work has only begun. According to Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) experts the massive wild salmon and steelhead restoration project (the largest of its kind in the world) is yet to address 50% of the problem. WFC scientists have long identified four reasons for declining populations of native fish in our rivers: (1) habitat loss, (2) hydro (dams), (3) harvest policies, and (4) hatcheries. Of these "Four H's" the Elwha project has, to this point, addressed only the first two. The latter two are complex issues. Let me address them briefly in a simplified manner.

The major culprit in harvesting seems to be the international problem of ocean harvesting. Native fish from local river systems come in their saltwater migrations. Fish from the Columbia, Puget Sound, the Fraser River or Vancouver Island are caught in the nets of Alaskan fishermen. The only solution, according to WFC is to greatly curtail or eliminate ocean harvest in favor of harvest at the

mouths of local fisheries. This controversial change in harvest practice is the only way of effectively protecting targeted strains of fish. Needless to say there is great opposition to such effort.

When it comes to hatcheries the problem, according to genetic research, has to do with the effect of "colonization" or the hybridization of native fish with hatchery fish. Evidence from studies of other fisheries seems to be pretty conclusive that the fitness of wild steelhead is put at risk by interbreeding with hatchery fish. In addition the hatchery fish compete with native fish for food, territory and spawning sites and often introduce disease. It should be noted that the Elwha Tribe has recently completed a federally-funded \$16 million hatchery for the purpose of maintaining salmon and steelhead runs in the Elwha system. It should also be noted that hatchery fish were first introduced into the Elwha system as early as 1957 by the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

The latest word on this issue comes from an article in the Seattle Times of February 29, 2012. Lynda Mapes reports that "The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has agreed to hold off planting any non-native hatchery fish in the Elwha and its tributaries this year." The agreement that grew out of a suit filed on Feb. 9th was recorded in U.S. District Court in Tacoma and signed by WFC, The Conservation Angler, the Federation of Fly Fishers Steelhead Committee and the Wild Steelhead Coalition. This agreement is only in effect through the end of 2012, but it opens the door to further dialogue and negotiation with the Elwha Tribe, conservation groups and state and federal agencies. All parties have a huge interest in protecting these native fisheries. Hopefully the whole dam(n) thing will eventually be addressed in a manner that is satisfactory to all parties of interest.

For more information: See TIGHTLINES August 2011, consult the 2011 Wild Fish Journal, visit www.wildfishconservancy.org

OLYMPIC FLY FISHERS OF EDMONDS EVENT SCHEDULE

GENERAL MEETING: Wednesday March 14, 2012

Invited Guest Speakers: WDFW Biologists Christopher Donley, Chad Jackson, Robert Jateff

The March meeting features the return of the "three amigos" biologists from Eastern Washington; Christopher Donley from the Spokane Office, Chad Jackson from Euphrata and Robert Jateff from Twist. These three bring delightful personalities and a wealth of information regarding the fisheries from their respective areas. All three have extensive backgrounds in biology. We are all aware of the quality of the presentation these guys offer so I hope to see you there.

Bob Jateff started working for WDFW in June 1978 after graduating from University of Idaho with a BS degree in Fisheries. He worked as a fish hatchery manager for twenty years, before becoming a fish biologist evaluating hatchery supplementation programs in the Winthrop area. Since 2004, he has been the WDFW district six fish biologist overseeing management of lakes and river fisheries within Okanogan County.

Chris Donley says he was born and raised in the scablands of eastern Washington, confirmed father, husband, trout bum, steelhead harasser and is not afraid of salmon either! Education: BS in Physical Geography and Geology from Eastern WA University and MS in Fluvial Geomorphology from University of Idaho. He has worked for WDFW fish management for 17 years, 11 of those years were as a District Fisheries Biologist In Spokane, Lincoln and Whitman Counties. He was recently promoted to the position of Inland Fish Program Manager.

Chad Jackson has proposed one of the three would like to present the following topic as being especially relevant and I agreed. The topic is about a new statewide initiative the Fish Program has been working on for the past year and a half where they are critically looking at the inland fish program (e.g., lowland and high lakes, trout and warm water, etc.). "Essentially, we are looking at what we currently do across the state to determine what is working, what needs improvement, how to improve certain aspects of the program, and how to best market it to our constituents. We are focusing our current efforts on lowland lake trout stocking and warm water fish. Whoever gives the presentation will still have handouts about SGR/fly fishing only waters and stocking information for members."



GENERAL INFORMATION

The General meeting is held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the South County Senior Center, 220 Railroad Ave. Edmonds, WA. Social hour: 6:00pm Business meetings are 6:00pm on the 4th Wednesday each month at Alf's 4820 196th SW, Lynnwood, WA.

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