

Little River Chapter

Newsletter

April 2002

Editor Joe Hatton



Next Meeting

The next meeting is the **member with member fishing day** on Saturday **April 20**. Members will meet in the morning at 9:00 A.M. at Metcalf Bottom picnic shelter split-up of into pairs and fish until noon and eat a catered picnic lunch at the shelter, then pair back up and fish the rest of the day. The cost is 10 dollars (fundraiser). This is a great time for the new members to get to know the other members in the chapter and every member to have a chance to fish with somebody they have not fished with before.

Stream Work

May 18 - 19 Quarterly Acid Deposition Sample

May 25 North Carolina Trout Festival (Waynesville, NC)

June 10 - 11 Leconte Creek Brook Trout Sample - brook trout monitoring and evaluation

June 12 - 13 Sams Creek Evaluation - verify removal of all rainbow trout



Fishing Picks

By: Ian Rutter You've waited all winter long and now the season is here. If you haven't gotten out yet you still haven't missed the best, though. Hatches in the mountains have been a little off with the teeter totter weather and high water, but that's sure to change.

So far the best fly patterns for the mountains will represent dark mayflies. Quill Gordons, Blue Quills, and a few Blue Wing Olives are all keeping the trout looking up. Pheasant Tail and Hare's Ear Nymphs will knock'em dead in the pocket water. This is also a great time to experiment with wet fly fishing if you've never tried it. Cast up and across to let the flies sink. Let the line come tight as the flies drift downstream and let them swing below you. Strikes can occur at any time but are most frequent on the swing. Fish probably take them for Quill Gordons that hatch on bottom and swim to the surface.

Tailwater action has been good as well. Due to the heavy rains, Norris Lake is full and the dam is pushing water full time. However, all the other tailwaters have schedules that are favorable for wading. The Hiwassee has been fishing exceptionally well with nymphs. Blue Wing Olive and caddis hatches have been good late in the afternoon into the evening hours. These will only get better and be more consistent throughout the day. (continued on page two)

Fishing Picks (continued from page one)

Schedules are good on the South Holston but you may want to wait about another month or so before taking the longer drive to Johnson City. Hatches will really pick up by then.

Creel Surveys in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park

From John Hammonds

Angler creel surveys in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) help biologists obtain valuable information for management decisions. Creel surveys obtain biological information on fish, such as lengths, weights, and catch and harvest rates. These surveys also provide information about the users of Park fisheries resources such as number of catch and release anglers and hometown locality. In addition to biological and demographic information, creel surveys provide an opportunity for Park staff to give users information about fisheries and resource management activities in the Park and an opportunity for users to ask questions. This can help dispel myths and untruths about Park management plans and goals.

Over the last 20 years, trends in nationwide angler attitudes have changed from fishing for harvest to fishing for relaxation (Duda et al 1998). In the Park, from 1986 to 2001, harvest rates have shown a decline from 0.7 fish/hour to 0.2 fish/hour, which reflects this nationwide change in angler attitude. Catch rates have also shown a decline during the same period from 2.2 fish/hour to 1.3 fish per hour. While the reason for this decline is unknown, it may be attributed to change in angler attitude also. Over the last five years, angler harvest rates have averaged about 0.2 fish/hour while catch rates have averaged about 1.4 fish per hour. About 37% of the local anglers

(< 50 mile radius of Park boundary) harvest fish, while only about 14% of non-local anglers (> 50 mile radius of Park boundary) harvest their catch. Overall, about 60% of the anglers interviewed practice catch and release. This information was gathered from creel surveys taken in GSMNP, which started in the 1950's and have continued through today. Portions of the creel surveys were accomplished by Park fisheries staff, but most of the creel surveys were obtained by GSMNP law enforcement rangers.

Recently, the GSMNP law enforcement division re-organized and budget cutbacks caused downsizing. This divided responsibility onto fewer personnel, which led to less time for interviewing anglers for creel surveys. Therefore, the number of Parkwide angler interviews dropped from 838 in 1997 to only 110 in 2001. In addition, project funding for creel surveys was lost and currently, fisheries personnel cannot devote sufficient time to conduct creel surveys. While creel surveys utilizing law enforcement and fisheries personnel will continue, volunteers from Trout Unlimited (TU) could assist with creel surveys and greatly increase the number of angler interviews. Higher number of interviews makes creel data more representative of the anglers, which helps detect long term trends. In addition to higher interview numbers, more types of questions could be asked during the interview. For example, information about anglers' age and lure type could be obtained. Also, TU volunteers could record their own fishing experiences, which would increase the number of angler interviews and help determine if TU anglers have higher catch rates than the average angler.

(continued on page three)

Creel Surveys (continued from page two)

This type of cooperation is being successfully utilized by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (Reeser, 2001 unpublished) and we feel like it can be used in the GSMNP to greatly enhance the creel program already in place.

References:

Duda, M.D., S.J. Bissel, and K.C. Young. 1998. Wildlife and the American Mind.

Responsive Management National Office. 804 pages.

Reeser, Stephen J. 2001. Virginia Wild Trout Stream Angler/Creel Survey. Virginia

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries internal report. 16 pages.

Road trips

Cohutta WMA

Right across the state line on highway 411 in Georgia is the Cohutta WMA, contained within its borders is Jacks and Conasauga Rivers two very good trout streams. Access to the best trout water on both streams is in the wilderness area via foot trail. Take in consideration that most people seldom like to wander away from their car including trout fisherman and this can make excellent conditions for a good day on the water.

Conasauga River is paralleled by the Conasauga River Trail through most of the wilderness. Its trailhead is located on FS 64 in Betty Gap. Along the length of the river, three other trails descend from the west off FS 17 to intersect the river trail. From south to north they are the Chestnut Lead (2.0 miles), Tear-bitches Trail (4.0 miles and extremely steep), and Hickory Creek Trail (3.0 miles)

Conasauga River waters teem with wild

rainbow trout and also produce some wild browns. Rainbows up to 20 inches turn up occasionally, and browns to 9 pounds have been recorded over the years.

Jacks River access along the river is via the Jacks River Trail, which follows the old railway bed. Near the midpoint of the trail the river drops over the extremely scenic, 60-foot Jacks River Falls. One of the other ways to access the river is to use the Beech Bottom Trail, a relatively level 3-mile trail that runs from FS 62 in Tennessee, crosses the state boundary, and joins the river trail just upstream of the falls. This is the easiest way to approach the falls. The trail crosses the river about a half mile above the falls. From here up is a good place to sit up camp for those who wish to stay over night. Jacks River Trail crosses the stream 44 times during this ascent, with many crossings up to waist deep. You may see some back packers especially around the falls but few of them come to fish. Both streams are better fished in early spring, then later in the summer.

The Jacks River rivals its sister stream, the Conasauga, in number of fish, and probably produces a larger average fish. Rainbows of 12 to 14 inches turn up regularly. Of equal importance to the angler is the fact that trout of 9 to 11 inches are common. As in the case of the Conasauga, all the fish are wild, since no stocking has taken place on these waters since the 1960s.

Georgia's Fishing License Fees

Non-Resident Fee \$24 - season

\$7 - 7-day

One-day \$3.50

Trout \$13

The Tennessee Brookies

AND

Trout Unlimited

Cookout /Auction

Saturday, May 18th

6:30PM

Heritage Park Pavilion

Townsend, Tennessee

For Information And Tickets

Contact

The Creel 558-6159

Or

Little River Outfitters 445-9459

Field Collectors Needed for ATBI

Once again our chapter members have an opportunity to participate in a very unique and important research project currently underway in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The project is called the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) and is an effort to put together a comprehensive inventory of all life forms within the park. A massive undertaking, considering that some scientists estimate the park to be home to more than 100,000 species, not including bacteria. Once complete, the ATBI will provide park managers with a baseline of information essential for effective, intelligent resource management decisions.

How can we help? Members can help by collecting adult mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies while out enjoying a day of fishing. The specimens will then be handed over to park resource managers for identification. Before collecting there are a few items you will need, a photocopy of the collecting permit, sample vials, and labeling instructions. If you are interested contact Randall Barnes for more information at phone # 977-8108 or email randallbarnes@netscape.net.

Spoons

There are many different ways to fish for trout. Trout Unlimited does not support one type of fishing and as a chapter we are open to all members as long as the members are following the fishing regulations for the area they are fishing. While I fish mainly with a fly rod I have been known to fish with a spinning rod. Spoons are one of my favorite lures especially the Dardevles spoon.

I found these tips from a article written by John Merwin in Outdoor Life.

"There are thick spoons. There are thin spoons. Never the twain shall meet, at least in

trout fishing.

Thick spoons run deep and as such are best for reaching down to early-season trout in fast water. Examples include the Little Cleo and the Krocodile both available in a variety of sizes down to 1/8 ounce or less. These and similar spoons are comparatively thick in proportion to their overall surface area; they cast like rockets and are great lures for covering lots of water in a hurry.

Use the smallest available sizes on small to midsize streams. Go up to 3/8- or even 1/2-ounce models on really big water. Basic colors are silver or gold, often with colored stripes or spots added.

Cast up and across in deep, fast water, but don't use a steady retrieve. The art of trout fishing with spoons is in reeling just fast enough to keep a tight line while pumping the rod tip to give a darting, tumbling action to the lure. A steady retrieve will catch some fish, but an erratic retrieve will catch more. Thinner spoons -- meaning less thick in proportion to their surface area; standard Dardevles are a good example -- don't fish as deeply. They work better later in the spring when the water is shallower, a little warmer, and trout are more aggressive".

Don Kirk's book *Smoky Mountains Trout Fishing Guide* also has a good section on fishing with lures.





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