

The Salmon Run



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A Publication of the Saco River Salmon Club, P.O. Box 115, Saco, Maine 04072, 207.282.6985

The President's Corner By Dan Bonville

What a busy time of the year this is! Our salmon club has something going on every Wednesday evening of the winter from the first week of January through the third week of April.

Fly tying and rod making sessions are held on the second and fourth Wednesday evenings at 6:30 to 8:30 at the hatchery. The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday and our general meetings and supper are held on the third Wednesday evening.

Thanks go to Don Sicard of Casco Bay Fly Tying Studio for being our first guest tyer in January. Eleven people attended and Don helped us in tying a dry fly in the mosquito pattern. For some of us, it was a first time experience but everybody including the better fly tyers all learned something from Don who is a good teacher and very professional.

Our next three guest tyers will be John Blunt on January 25, RJ Mere on February 8, and Lionel Bouthot on February 22. John will teach us his secrets with the Black Ghost streamer pattern. RJ will show us a great striper fly for the true fly tyers and his "soft-bodied fly" for the non-purist fly tyers. Lionel will show us how to tie an Atlantic salmon fly.

Steve Berry will open his camp to folks who would like to ice fish on Moosehead Lake over the President's Day holiday weekend on February 18 through 20. It would be very helpful if attendees had either a 4-wheeler or snowmobile as Steve can shuttle only a couple of people at a time way out on the lake to his ice house. Call me if you're interested (207-625-7693). That is also a great weekend to chill out and watch the game on Steve's TV at the camp.

March 3 through 5 will once again find a bunch of us ice fishing, fly tying, eating, and shooting the bull up on Great Pond at Bob and Laura Richter's four season camps in Belgrade. We've got room for you so come on up.

Come April 30, the Sunday after our annual banquet, we will once again have a fly casting day, with a hotdog B-B-Q. It's a great time to bring a beginner or to practice the double-haul for the more experienced fly casters. It will be held come rain or shine.

Speaking of the banquet, we sure could use more help! It's time to donate something for our raffle or auction tables. We would like more things like guided trips, restaurant meals, vehicle oil changes, grocery coupons, etc., as well as rods, reels, paintings and prints, and other outdoor and sports equipment donations. It costs us a lot to run our club responsibly and well considering the increased costs we now have to put out our newsletters and other mailings and to run an efficient salmon fry, parr, and smolt state-of-the-art hatchery.

It has been voted by the directors to drop names off our mailing list for those folks who have not paid their dues since 2003. We will put out another notice but because of the increase in the costs of printing and of stamps, we must cut something somewhere. If people would like to receive their newsletter by Email only please call Dan Bonville at 207-625-7693 and let me know.

My wife, Sandy, and Diane Ricciotti and I visited the Fly Rod and Reel Show in Marlborough, Massachusetts this past weekend and had a blast. What a great way to break up the winter and help us prepare for the upcoming spring fishing seasons. Other shows including the fly show in Wilmington, Massachusetts. The Worcester Sportsman's Show and our own shows in the Augusta Civic Center and at Eldredge Brothers' Fly Shop, L.L. Bean's, and Kittery Trading Post Fishing Fest will all be happening over the next three months. I would attend all of them if I could as it's a wonderful way to see and try new fly rods, reels, and products and to watch slideshows, listen to lectures and to get to meet old and new friends who are interested in the same fly fishing experiences that I am.

Our vice-President, Mark Woodruff, will be our guest speaker at our February general meeting. The topic will be his and his helpers work on the streams that we stock our salmon in and his placement and findings with the temperature loggers that they use each summer through fall. Through Mark's work we are able to decide which streams have suitable habitat for our fry and parr, and which waters should not be stocked due to poor water quality and temperatures. Thank you once again to Lynne Jackson for the wonderful meals that she has prepared for each of our monthly general meetings.

Thanks everybody for such a good meeting in January, it was a large turnout to hear Topher Brown's lecture and slideshow on fly fishing for Atlantic salmon in Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Russia. Great Job, Topher! Thank you. Have a good winter everybody, hope to see you soon.

Atlantic Salmon Fishing: From Russia to the Maritimes By Mark Woodruff

Our January social meeting was very well attended. I think an excellent meal prepared by Lynne Jackson of "On the Corner Café" in Biddeford, a raffle of flies tied by Don Sicard, and a presentation by Topher Browne was a winning combination.

I'd like to share, as best I can, some of the highlights of Topher's presentation contrasting the techniques, geography, and management strategies for Atlantic salmon on both sides of the North Atlantic.

His slides first took the audience to countries adjacent to the eastern North Atlantic and home to 75 percent of the world's Atlantic salmon

population. Norway's Gala and Orkla Rivers, though located near the Arctic Circle, have a climate moderated by the end of the warm Gulf Stream current. The widths of the two rivers were similar to that of the Kennebec or the Penobscot. This required anglers to use two-handed Spey casting with 15 foot, 9 weight rods using shooting-head lines. Although large fish can be caught in either river, there is no catch and release ethic to protect the populations.

Salmon fishing on Russia's Kola Peninsula presented some interesting challenges just to get there. Anglers are required to obtain government permissions to travel to the area and must provide their own helicopter flight. However, with no place to land, sports must jump from their low hovering chopper into the river! The remote location makes the fishing spectacular.

The Laxá River exemplified the geography and conservation strategies of Iceland. Like other rivers on the island the Laxá drained a small area. The Iceland government has promoted the catch and release ethic and enhanced the salmon conservation effort through a captive broodstock program. Returning adults are captured in July and transported to a hatchery to be spawned in the fall. The kelt are released the following March. Their offspring are stocked as parr.

Crossing the Atlantic to the Canadian Maritimes and Maine brought us to a similar hodgepodge of management strategies. For a variety of reasons, river populations are smaller in the Canadian Maritimes than in Europe. On the Gaspé Peninsula, salmon populations are smaller because the rivers carry fewer nutrients than those in Europe. As we know, Quebec and New Brunswick strictly regulate by requiring guided fishing only at designated locations. The result is runs of 65,000 and 20,000 on the Restigouche and Miramichi rivers, respectively. Topher recommended fishing the York River with brown and green bombers on a 9 foot, 8-weight. But watch out: 70 percent of the run spawns in two pools with armed guards.

In contrast to the management strategies on the Gaspé, Nova Scotia's rivers are public. The Margaree River on Cape Breton boasts a nice fall run. Topher recommended using interchangeable line to provide the right sinking rate and using tube flies. The river's depth forces anglers to use sinking line resulting in the foul hooking of many fish. Rivers on the Bay of Fundy have experienced a crash in the salmon populations likely due to acid rain.

Thanks Topher for an informative presentation and thanks to our club members who made the preparations for a nice evening.

Mark Your Calendars! *Jim Black*

It's time to mark your calendars....This year our annual banquet and 'GALA EVENT' will be held Saturday, April 29 at Pier 77 in Cape Porpoise (formerly the Seascapes)!

The banquet committee has been busy pulling together the logistics for an evening of fun and excitement. This year we will be expanding the program to make this a night of "friend-raising" and fundraising. In addition to our usual fare of raffles and a live auction we will feature a few special activities and games...did I hear someone shout "Salmon Bingo"? These activities should give us the chance to get to know each other a bit better while having fun and raising money for the club. We hope to get enough donations to develop a silent auction and have a special raffle table exclusively for the ladies...no ladies, it won't be just fishing gear...I promise!

As you can see we have big plans for this evening. However, turning these plans into reality is going to require the support from a few more volunteers. The committee has a wide variety of tasks that can use your time and talent. If you have any special talents in the area of publicity, desk top publishing, or are comfortable requesting donations from folks in the community that you do business with then give me a call. Remember donations this year are not limited to fishing and sporting gear! For example, donations of a gift certificate to Applebee's are as acceptable as donations of gear from Zebco and Zeiss. No donation is too small or too eclectic! All donations are appreciated and will be useful in helping us raise money at this event.

Folks, this will be a night that offers something for everyone. So go over to your calendar right now and mark the date...April 29th. Plan on making this a special "night out" with your spouse or significant other! It'll be a great meal, it's a fantastic venue, and you'll be supporting a great cause all while having FUN with friends. Short of putting a line in the water, this is the best way I can think of to spend an evening alongside the ocean!

FMI or to reserve tickets: Contact Jim Black at (207) 985-4549 ext 202 or email jim@BlackConsulting Group.com. Watch for updates in future newsletters and on the web-site!

Dues Notice – 2006 *By RJMere*

It's that time of year again. Dues and hatchery donations submitted by our generous members cover about forty per cent of our annual expenses. All dues and hatchery donations are tax deductible. If you have prepaid, a '2006' or 'Life' will follow your name. If you missed paying your dues last year just send your 2006 dues. Past dues are voluntary on your part.

Annual rates now range from ten dollars for students and seniors, to twenty dollars for individual memberships, and thirty dollars for students and seniors. Life memberships remain at three hundred dollars.

Hatchery Season Begins *By Mark Woodruff*

The hatchery was turned on during the week of January 9 after we received a surprise notice that the eyed-eggs would be arriving one month early. On January 17, 125,000 eggs were transported from Green Lake National Fish Hatchery to our Biddeford facility by Paul Christman and staff of the Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission.

By the time you read this article, another 450,000 to 550,000 more eggs will have been delivered on January 25. All of this is a much quicker start than we have been used to in past years. As a result, please consider volunteering time at the hatchery to pick what will hopefully be very few eggs. There are also general maintenance projects need to be accomplished during the hatchery season. Please contact Mark Woodruff (929-5300) or call the Hatchery directly (282-6985) for further details.

One additional note: You may also recognize that we are receiving fewer eggs. Normally we have received over 800,000. Beginning this year eggs from the Penobscot brood stock will be kept at Green Lake to facilitate a smolt-stocking program for the Penobscot River. donation of \$5,000 from L.L. Bean, Inc. On behalf of the membership, I want to thank the company for its continuing support of our salmon restoration program.

This is the fourteenth year that **LL Bean** has made financial donations to the Hatchery. During that time they have assisted us in a variety of other ways including: donations of fishing equipment to our fundraising auction, publicity in their store and on their conservation webpage, invitations to their sportsman's show, and always genuine interest in our accomplishments. The contributions will enable the Club to raise over one-half million salmon fry this year and release them in the Saco River Watershed. Our club has remained focused on this important restoration effort thanks to the support of **LL Bean**.

Hatchery Donations

By RJ Mere

Voluntary donations by members and non-members comprise a vital part of our annual revenue. They come from members, nonmembers, volunteers, organizations, or just plain people who are in tune with our mission and support our unique hatchery operation. With our new supersmolt program, we need your donations more than ever. Each dues payer will receive a membership card and a hatchery decal will be sent to each donor. Will you help us? Prompt payments will help cover our heaviest operating expenses from January through June. Thank you!

A Hole In One

By Mark Fohlin

One of the most memorable experiences, for a golfer, is to get a "hole in one" (unless it is to beat Tiger Woods in a golf match). I would like to equate this to a fishing experience that I had this past summer with Dan Bonville.

We were fishing the Soda Butte in Yellowstone Park. Scott and Tyler Wilson had elected to fish upstream into Ice Box Canyon and Mike Elliot (Dan's Nephew) and I were to fish downstream. The day was beautiful. The sun was out and the temperature was in the 80's. By definition of a perfect day for fishing this was not it. But this was Yellowstone!

Mike and I worked our way downstream. We caught a fish here and there and by some of my past experiences the fishing was great. As I walked down the stream, staying a good distance from the bank, I noticed an undercut in the stream bank that might have held a trout. I decided to walk down stream 50 to 60 feet, cross the stream, and fish the undercut. I had on a foam hopper that imitated the large hoppers in the area. They sounded much like the rattle of a rattlesnake when they flew.

As I was crossing the stream I saw a trout about 30 feet in front of me. I made a cast. The water was crystal clear so I saw everything evolve before me. The trout saw my fly, moved across the stream, and inhaled it. I fought the trout and called to Mike hoping he had a camera to take a picture of my prize. Mike, to my dismay, did not. We did measure the fish because I had a tape. Because it was bowed when we measured it I believe it was a good 18 inch cutthroat. It was a beautiful day, I was with good friends, a solitaire buffalo was grazing nearby, and the scenery could not be more breathtaking. A hole in one!

Of all the trips I have taken with Dan this is the most memorable. The herds of buffalo, elk, wolfs, antelope, deer, many types of birds, prairie dogs, etc. If you have never been to Yellowstone put it on your list of places you must see. I plan to take Stella (my wife) next year. Old

Faithful deserves another view.

SRSC Calendar of Trips

By Dan Bonville

January/February: Ice fishing for smelts.
Call Don Sicard (207-353-9433).

March 3 – 5: Ice fishing at Belgrade Lakes annual weekend at Richter's Camps. Call Dan Bonville.

April 21 – 24: Salmon fishing on the Restigouche and Matapedia Rivers. Call Hotel Restigouche, Pete Dube (877-865-2848).

April 30: Fly Casting Day. BBQ and fly casting lessons. Call Dan Bonville.

May 19 – 21: Fly fishing the Moose River area at Steve Berry's camp. Call Dan Bonville.

June 2 – 4: Fly fishing the Eustis area, staying at Chris Bond's camp. Call Dan Bonville.

June 9 – 11: Fishing the Rangeley Lakes area, staying at Art LeBlanc's camp. Call Dan Bonville.

Early June: Fly fishing on the lower Androscoggin River with Don Sicard.

Early June: Night fishing for stripers with RJ Mere (207-985-4420).

June: Fishing stripers on the Saco River with Steve Berry and Tom DeBruin. Call Dan Bonville.

July 9: Fly fishing Rapid River at Middle Dam. Call Dan Bonville.

August: Smallmouth bass fishing on the Saco River in canoes and kayaks. Call Dan Bonville.

October: Cast and Blast in the Moosehead area. Call Dan Bonville.

Saco River Salmon Club Membership Form

Name:

Address:

City:

State: Zip:

Phone: ()

E-mail address

Dues are annual - January through December

Single \$20 Family \$30 Student \$10 Senior \$10 Life \$300
Donation to hatchery \$

Submit your short article for "The Salmon Run."

General interest stories, recipes for fly tying or foods, comments and suggestions are welcomed. email to rjmere@gwi.net

www.sacosalmon.org Or email us info@sacosalmon.org