



---

# *Fly Lines*

---

The Official Publication of the British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers

---

Spring 2004

Volume 5, Number One



---

Brian Chan: Freshwater Fisheries Society • Van Egan: The Haig Brown Terrestrials  
Bob Hooton: Kamchatka Steelhead • Western Canadian Fly Fishing Show  
Gilly Fund At Work • Peter Caverhill: Thoughts on the Thompson

---

## **BCFFF Executive and Directors 2004**

BCFFF PO Box 2442, 349 Georgia St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 3W7

Web site: [www.bcfff.bc.ca](http://www.bcfff.bc.ca) E-mail: [info@bcfff.bc.ca](mailto:info@bcfff.bc.ca)

### **PRESIDENT**

Art Lingren  
3588 West 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6N 2Y1  
Res 604 263 3787  
Email [artlin8@telus.net](mailto:artlin8@telus.net)  
Clubs: Totem Flyfishers  
The Loons Flyfishing Club (Hon.)

### **1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT:**

Peter Caverhill  
1203 Cypress Place  
Port Moody, BC V3H 3Y7  
Res 604 461 4503  
E-mail [pandlcaverhill@shaw.ca](mailto:pandlcaverhill@shaw.ca)  
Club: Osprey Fly Fishers of BC

### **2<sup>nd</sup> VICE PRESIDENT**

Gil Sage  
2505 East 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vancouver, BC V5M 2S2  
Res 604 435 3093  
Bus 604 303 1727  
Fax 604 270 8002  
E-mail [gsage@telus.net](mailto:gsage@telus.net)  
Clubs: Totem Fly Fishers  
Osprey Fly Fishers of BC

### **SECRETARY**

Rob Way - ORC Director  
14310 Greencrest Drive  
S. Surrey, BC V4P 1M1  
Res 604 538 7498  
Bus 604 685 6312  
Fax 604 685 0988  
E-mail [robway@shaw.ca](mailto:robway@shaw.ca)  
Club: The Loons Flyfishing Club

### **TREASURER**

Ken Burgess- Gilly Fund Director  
P.O. Box 43  
Vernon, BC V1T 6M1  
Res 250 545 4012  
E-mail [kburgess@junction.net](mailto:kburgess@junction.net)  
Club: Kalamalka Fly Fishers

### **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**

Brian Saunders  
2880 Seaview Road  
Victoria, BC V8N 1L1

Res 250 721 1104  
Fax 250 721 1104  
Bus 250 727 4152 or 250 658 9311  
E-mail [riverwest@shaw.ca](mailto:riverwest@shaw.ca)  
Club: Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association  
**DIRECTORS:**

### **IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

John Warren - FFF Nat'l Director, Gilly Fund  
Chair  
104 - 245 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
North Vancouver, BC V7M 1S3  
Res 604 986 7116  
Bus 604 986 9668  
Fax 604 990 1766  
Cel 604 833 4688  
E-mail [jararren@telus.net](mailto:jararren@telus.net)  
Club: The Loons Flyfishing Club

### **DIRECT MEMBERS**

Danie Erasmus  
#405- 2090 West 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1G8  
Res 604 732 1552  
UBC 604 822 2468

E-mail [Erasmus@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:Erasmus@interchange.ubc.ca)

### **EDUCATION DIRECTOR**

Wayne Pealo  
2400 Ravenhill Street  
Shawnigan Lake, BC V0R 2W0  
Res 250 743 4569  
Bus 250 753 3245  
E-mail [wpealo@uvic.ca](mailto:wpealo@uvic.ca)  
Club: Cowichan Valley Fly Fishers

### **AGM 2004**

Chris Purcell  
15880 Goggs Avenue  
White Rock, BC V4B 2N9  
Res 604 542 2247  
E-mail [californiastyle@shaw.ca](mailto:californiastyle@shaw.ca)  
Club: Totem Fly Fishers

### **BCFFF MUSEUM**

Marie Allen  
6658 Furrer Road  
Kamloops, BC V2C 4V6  
Res 250 573 4382  
Fax 250 374 6640

E-mail [trout.chaser@shaw.ca](mailto:trout.chaser@shaw.ca)  
Club: Kamloops Women's Fly Fishing Club

Sharon Robertson  
N.E. Corner of Silver Standard Road  
& Edwards Street, Two Mile  
Box 738  
New Hazelton, BC V0J 2J0  
Res 250 842 2177  
Bus 250 847 1389  
Fax 250 847 1860  
E-mail [sharon.robertson@cfcdnadina.ca](mailto:sharon.robertson@cfcdnadina.ca)  
Direct member - Bulkley Valley

Rob Stewart  
Winter Address:  
2135 Bennett Road  
Kelowna, BC V1V 2C2  
Res 250 717 5965  
Fax 250 762 5993  
Summer Address:  
P.O. Box 138  
Hagensborg, BC V0T 1C0  
Res 250 982 2245  
Fax 250 982 2505  
e-mail [rstewart@belco.bc.ca](mailto:rstewart@belco.bc.ca)  
Direct member- Bella Coola

Rob Brown  
4603 Munthe Street  
Terrace, BC V8G 2H5  
Res 250 635 9351  
Fax 250 638 1512  
E-mail [robbrown@monarch.net](mailto:robbrown@monarch.net)  
Direct member - Terrace

Bob Taylor  
#34 - 7355 Blake Street  
Vancouver, BC V6S 3V6  
Res 604 438 8483  
Fax 604 438 8483  
E-mail: [rhtaylor@telus.net](mailto:rhtaylor@telus.net)  
Club: Totem Fly Fishers

Garth Fowler  
4033 Hopesmore Drive  
Victoria, BC V8N 5S8  
Res 250 447 5566  
E-mail [garthd@shaw.ca](mailto:garthd@shaw.ca)  
Club: Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association

## **BCFFF's 2004 Fly Fishing British Columbia Show**

**Vancouver Island's Fly-Fishing Heritage**

**Location: Bastion Hotel, Nanaimo, B.C.**

**Toll free: 1 800 663-1144**

**Date: Saturday, May 1, 2004 Host Club: Island Waters Fly Fishers**

**<http://www.members.shaw.ca/AGM04/>**

**Featuring: Brian Chan, chironomid fly fishing  
and Shawn Bennett, coho salmon fly fishing.**

# Contents

*From the President*  
by Art Lingren.....p.4

*The Lee I Knew*  
by Van Egan ..... p.5

*Another World*  
by Bob Hooton .....p.6

*Haig Brown Terrestrials*  
by Van Egan .....p.10

*Western Canadian Fly Fishing Show*  
by Peter Caverhill .....p.13

*Thoughts on Thompson River Steelhead*  
by Peter Caverhill .....p.14

*Freshwater Fisheries Society*  
by Brian Chan .....p.16

*Cat Stream Project*  
by John Warren .....p.18

*Angling Guide and Classified Waters Review Update*  
by Rob Stewart .....p.19



On our cover...  
The Spirit Fly, dressed by Syd Glasso, and from Blacker's  
*The Art of Fly-Making* published in 1855.



*Fly Lines*, the official publication of the British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers, is published four times a year.

The full colour version can be downloaded and printed as a PDF file from the BCFFF website at <http://www.bcfff.bc.ca>

Members as well as guest writers are invited to submit articles, photographs and artwork related to the pursuit of fly fishing in British Columbia. Send unsolicited material, with a self-addressed stamped envelope for return to:

Editor, *Fly Lines*,  
PO Box 2442, 349 Georgia St.,  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 3W7  
E-mail [info@bcfff.bc.ca](mailto:info@bcfff.bc.ca)

*Fly Lines* assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged material.

© 2004 by the BCFFF and *Fly Lines* contributors. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the expressed written permission of BCFFF.

# From the President

by Art Lingren



Art Lingren, Cheticamp River, Nova Scotia.  
Bill Jollymore photo.

Some years become etched in memory for different reasons and this past year is one such year. I am a member of the Totem Fly Fishers, which I joined in 1983. The Totems were founded in 1968 and I remember the early days of the Totems' founding quite well. For the first two years of married life, (1967 and 1968,) Beverly and I lived in an apartment in Kitsilano and our across-the-hall neighbour was one of the early members in that club. I had more of a broader interest in fishing in those days, but through Bob Sanders I met many of the founding members of the Totems.

I will remember the year just past, 2003, as the year that we lost a number of BC fly fishers who were also Totem members. **Martin Tolley**, Totem's founding president; **Bill Brown**, the self proclaimed world's greatest fly fisherman and yarn teller; and **Lee Straight** have all left us and are now casting to fish on the River Styx with Rod Haig-Brown, the Totems' first honorary member. The old generation of fly fishers is passing. Thankfully, there are others just as passionate about the sport, following in their footsteps, who will keep fly-fishing alive and vibrant.

I will also remember this year past because the return of steelhead to the Thompson River was apparently one of the lowest on record. I have journeyed to the Thompson every season since 1969. Going there to cast my line onto its fabled steelhead waters in search of this British Columbian steelhead icon is one of the things

that has defined my life as a steelhead fly angler. I hope that I don't remember 2003 as the year that ended my Thompson River steelhead adventures.

The past year I will remember as the last year of my three years as BCFFF president. Over the past three years at BCFFF AGMs, I have met many fine fly fishers, young and old, who cast flies to the many different game fish inhabiting British Columbia waters. It has been a pleasure to serve as president and to work with such a committed group of volunteer board members. Many who are not involved with volunteer work have no idea of how many hours a group such as ours devotes to the BCFFF.

Fly fishing has brought me so many rich memories and is so entwined in my psyche that I would feel guilty if I was not involved doing whatever I can for the fish and fly fishing. As I leave the President's job this May, I will not be fading away into the twilight, but will remain involved as past-president, *Fly Lines* editor and chair of the Awards Committee.

Art Lingren  
President



# The Lee I Knew

by Van Egan

When Art Lingren called to inform me that Lee Straight had died on New Year's Eve, it began a refrain of memories, some that go back nearly a half century. Lee was at his peak then, outdoors editor of *The Vancouver Sun*, and I see him at his portable typewriter in a little cabin on Shelter Bay south of Campbell River, pounding out his column that would be phoned into *The Sun*. And I see him too into that once plentiful wild steelhead run of the Quinsam River, which at this time was the key subject of his writing. That was in the spring of 1957.

The previous winter and for several more to follow Lee was the featured speaker at our old Rod and Gun Club meetings, always entertaining with his witty and cogent comments about the fishing around the province (and elsewhere) as he found it. In Campbell River it was our year's most attended meetings.

And then there were the days of late fall, the bushes and low trees dripping wet with rain when, with Barney Rushton, we scoured the hills in the Oyster River watershed for blacktail deer. I recall getting very wet but, more importantly, the fine discussions of rifles and calibers, of deer shot or missed, the quiet advantage of wool over noisy slickers while trodding through the sodden branches, all over an hours rest with tea and sandwiches. The deer were there, though the companionship eclipses all memory of them.

It was the late 1980s when I last fished with Lee, twice on late April trips to the Bella Coola River. Lee and I floated the river from the Saloompt Bridge down to Walker Island, while Art Lingren and Robert Taylor did the lower drift from Walker Island to Skimlik Creek. I was strongly anticipating this float, having read Lee's account of cutthroat fishing in the *Totem Topics* a year earlier (summer 1986 edition) in which he wrote: "it was one of the finest days I've enjoyed in a lifetime of fishing adventures!" He had walked down from the bridge to a cutbank along the left bank of the river where the flow pooled into a narrow bay. On this day we drifted into it very nicely and fished the water from our feet. It was just as Lee remembered it, but the fry were less abundant and so too the cutthroats. Still, we got half a dozen or more good fish and were quite satisfied with our lot, and we found fish to keep us happy along the way, working the river with due diligence. (Art, by the way, reported a windfall of cutthroats and Dolly Vardens from one pool, 27 in all. I figured Lee's fish just hadn't got back to the Saloompt in the numbers expected.)

Evening dinners at The Cedars, good conversation as a lead-in to withdrawing tired bodies in preparation for another day on the river, the comraderie of hours at and around the junction of the Atnarko and Talchako—these are the beams that stir the floodlights of one's life. Good fish, good flies, with good comrades.

But to return to my first acquaintanceship with Lee at the Rod and Reel Motel on Shelter Bay. It was early April, well before the tourist season got underway. The steelhead fishing in the Quinsam had been superb and Lee had even given up his float rod and reverted to the fly, using my rod. He was more than somewhat astonished at how effective the fly could be on these last of the winter-run fish. Then, with the day's fishing over, relaxing in his cabin between bouts with the typewriter, he confided with me certain persistent thoughts that were worrying his mind. He put it something like this: "I have the perfect job, the perfect life, the perfect wife. But I'm getting old. I see the end of it: I see the end of my life, and it will all be gone." That was 47 years ago this April. Dear Lee, you had it all, and you kept it, far into your future.

Au revoir, my friend,



Van Egan



# Another World

by Bob Hooton



*The mountain shot was taken the day before we went to the river and displays the volcano backdrop so evident in the Petropavlovsk area.*  
*Bob Hooton photo*

Imagine a piece of real estate as long as British Columbia, roughly half its width, and with Deans and Babines and Golds flowing from a volcano festooned central spine to separate oceans on either side. Imagine British Columbia one hundred or more years ago before we “developed” it. How often have we mused about what fishing we’d have had if only we were born a century before? There is still a place where such fantasies can be lived, but probably not for long.

Kamchatka or, more properly, the Kamchatkan Peninsula is a vast piece of Russia some 5000 km across the Pacific from Vancouver. It’s about as far from the center of the Russian universe as it can be and still remain its territory. Remoteness and the cost of getting there is a good part of the reason why there are still rivers and fish populations that are the stuff of dreams. Had it not been for the military significance of a remarkable natural harbour at Petropavlovsk in south eastern Kamchatka, the country would be even less populated and developed than it is.

In October of 2003 I was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in a fisheries management exchange with Russian fisheries workers. The session was organized by the Wild Salmon Center based in Portland Oregon, a group to whom I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to broaden horizons. Look them up on the web and see what a catalyst for ecological awareness and protection of the world’s salmonid treasures they have become. On the request of BCFFF Art Lingren the following observations are shared with *Fly Lines* readers.

Arriving in Petropavlovsk via Seattle and Anchorage were three of us North American managers plus a WSC staffer from Portland. Another of the WSC’s pillars joined us on arrival. We spent almost a week in the company of interpreters, tour guides and a spectrum of fisheries managers representing areas from the now famous Atlantic salmon country of the Kola Peninsula to the sea run taimen waters ten or eleven time zones away to the south east. Information overload hardly describes the circumstances.

Our collective unawareness of what exists on the other side of the Pacific is largely a product of the deep freeze that surrounded the Soviet Union until 1990. Following its collapse, the doors to Kamchatka were thrown open to the world of capitalism. The good news is you and I can go there, albeit not inexpensively. The not-so-good news is the race is on between capitalists, who would exploit Kamchatka's rich mineral, oil and gas reserves in a heart beat, and those who would preserve ecological treasures of global significance. No-where else on the planet are there purely wild salmonid resources of such diversity (and magnitude) in habitats unaffected by anything other than climate and time. The scientific value of such watersheds and stocks is unfathomable, the long term social value probably equally so. We've heard those arguments in North America for decades, and been partially successful at manipulating rates of attrition, but I'm still looking for the first intact watershed where it is carved in stone that fish take precedence over all else. In Kamchatka there is still a chance.



*An upriver overnight camps utilized on multi-day drifts down to the one of the larger lodges.*

*Bob Hooton photo*

More than a decade has passed since the first steelhead "research" groups, organized by life-long steelhead fly fishing aficionado Pete Soverel, descended on some blue ribbon waters of Kamchatka. In retrospect, it was a remarkable achievement that set the stage for everything that has followed. Now there are massive research efforts underway, involving high profile scientists and ecologists from both Russia and North America. and concerted efforts are being made by the major world wide conservation groups to set aside representative watersheds. Russian fisheries managers and tourism operators are now searching out and attempting to apply the best of North America's experiences to their own opportunities. Everything you may have heard about influence peddling and corruption within the Russian system following the demise of the Soviet Union is probably true. However, if that is the only game that can save at least some of what they have, so be it. The debate around political systems and philosophies is secondary to preserving options.

These pages are hardly the place for a thorough discussion of the fish resources of Kamchatka and all that goes with them. The few brief highlights below do little more than blow dust off the cover of a thick and complex book.

- Kamchatka has all six North American salmon species as well as resident rainbow, Dolly Varden and Arctic char. In addition, they have masu salmon, white spotted char and east Siberian char. (Rivers adjacent to the peninsula on the Russian mainland side contain an even greater diversity of salmonids, including taimen that reach 95 kg and are known to consume adult chum salmon!).
- The large majority of Kamchatka's steelhead rivers and steelhead are on the western side of the peninsula bordered by the Sea of Okhotsk. Strangely, steelhead are rare in rivers draining into the Pacific Ocean despite the fact that most of them contain large, multi-species salmon populations and resident rainbow trout. It is speculated the west Kamchatka stocks may never leave the Sea of Okhotsk. The size and condition factor (weight/length relationship) of some of the west Kamchatka steelhead is reminiscent of selectively bred over fed hatchery fish.
- The multitude of life histories exhibited by rainbow/steelhead trout within and between watersheds in Kamchatka is unknown in modern day British Columbia and probably the rest of North America. The abundance and diversity of some of these populations is equally unique, at least in watersheds that are anywhere near similar to those studied in British Columbia.
- Foreigners who sport fish for steelhead, and most other species, are restricted to catch and release only. The only printed regulations material I could find stated "you can use only two kinds of tackle: a spinning





*The helicopter is the common mode of transport to the rivers of choice.*

*Bob Hooton Photo*

rod and reel using a spoon and a fly rod”.

- There are no trout or steelhead hatcheries in Kamchatka and only very limited salmon production facilities.
- The greatest threat to salmon resources is caviar poaching. It is widely reported to be the number one industry in Kamchatka. In a country where “authorities” are easily bought off, where poverty is ubiquitous, but where a large volume of high value and culturally important product is readily available, the only surprise to me was the scale of the poaching. Moscow is a major market. Harvesting methods appeared to be primitive and highly labour intensive by North American standards, but entirely capable of removing very substantial proportions of immigrating adult salmon. Only the roe is removed from harvesting sites because the value per unit volume of product is high, relatively easy to preserve and because access expense (often helicopters) eliminates all else.
- Aboriginal people are acknowledged to have first priority to fish resources, not unlike what we see closer to home. However, allocation arrangements are less defined in Kamchatka.
- Ocean based commercial fisheries do not appear to be a significant issue in the abundance of Kamchatka steelhead at present although there were tidbits of information suggesting such was not always the case. The history of near shore net fisheries prosecuted by small boats being replaced by offshore “factory” ships was clearly evident in Kamchatka. Steelhead there, as here, were incidentally caught and probably still are in the Sea of Okhotsk whether by Russian origin vessels or others. Fisheries that may impact the small and isolated populations from the Kamchatka streams draining to the Pacific involve drift net vessels originating in Pacific nations south of Russia.

Hands on experience with Kamchatka’s remarkable array of river fisheries was not on our agenda. We did however have the opportunity for a “touch and go” helicopter tour to one premiere trout stream about 150 km north of our meeting center in Petropavlovsk. Some *Fly Lines* readers may already be familiar with the Zhupanova River. It is a Bulkley size stream approximately 300 km in length with not a single road in the entire watershed. A forward thinking and appropriately connected local has now set up a series of three lodges and up to eight satellite camps which accommodate western fly fishers, most of whom I’m told are booked through a California based agent. All clients are transported to, from and even between camps around the watershed by twenty passenger MI8 helicopters. Jet boats are the fishing access method of choice for the larger camps in the lower river while inflatable drift rafts service clients at the outpost camps. The entrepreneur who heads the show has secured exclusive access. The target is resident rainbow trout, many of which top 30 inches. The season was done when we were there and the lodges and camps were in the process of being winterized. A lunch stopover at the main lodge revealed facilities and hospitality much as you would expect at a camp on the Babine or Sustut or Dean.





*The main lodge on the Zhupanova River*

*Bob Hooton Photo*

The Zhupanova experience was significant in that we later spoke at some length (via interpreter) with one of the Russian fishery managers who claimed vociferously the river was a pale shadow of its former self due to overfishing by tourist anglers. The managers contended this was supported by rigorously collected biological data (which we did not see). Despite the catch and release only regulation/policy and the least impact terminal gear (fly fishing only) it seems the catch per day and average size of fish is no longer meeting the expectations of those paying big dollars to be there. It may be that those involved are only beginning to discover there is an upper limit to sustainability of marketable fishing, especially when resident trout are the target. I was unable to get firm numbers on how many anglers would be fishing on any given day or how long the tourist fishing season was, but the size and number of camps and boats suggested full occupancy could reach forty. The season is probably not more than three months, of which I suspect not more than half would be booked fully. It will be interesting to observe how the fishery unfolds in years ahead.

For me, the message from a first and brief exposure to Kamchatka was not just about fishing nirvana. I learned enough to be convinced there is no place on the planet that affords such an array of opportunity. I'm equally convinced the ecological package, at the root of it all, could disappear at a rate disturbing to even us North Americans. Go there if you can, but understand there is no guaranteed future and it will not be Moscow alone that determines it. You may want to hurry.

# Haig Brown Terrestrials

by Van Egan

For rather obscure reasons when I think of fly patterns designed by Roderick Haig-Brown I think first of the Steelhead Bee and Golden Girl for steelhead and the Silver Brown and Silver Lady for cutthroats and fresh-run coho. These are the choice of nearly every west coast fly tier. But there is much more as revealed in that little gem of a book by Art Lingren—*Fly Patterns of Roderick Haig-Brown*. It describes twenty patterns in all and five of these represent stages in the life history of land-based insects, four of which fall under the category of caterpillars. The other is the exquisite adult of the Cedar Borer – a beetle.

Admittedly, I am a bit surprised at a single representative of the beetles, perhaps the most numerous of all animals



*A Swarm of Haig-Brown Terrestrials*

*Art Lingren Photo*

on the face of the earth. Their astounding presence reminds me of a story attributed to the eminent British biologist J.B.S. Haldane, a proclaimed atheist. To the question “What would you say if you were given incontrovertible evidence of the existence of God?” Haldane replied, “I would say He has an inordinate fondness for beetles.” For all their numbers, perhaps beetles don’t find their way into water that much. Or, if some do, they may be few enough to be inconspicuous, at least to fishermen. But one that is most conspicuous is the beautiful Cedar Borer, an inhabitant, if not always a welcome one, of temperate west coast rainforests.

But I welcome a few Cedar Borers in my fly box. If nothing else, they dress up the drabness of browns, grays and olives among my wet flies and nymphs. But it is not just fancy either. On a good warm summer day, with the sun beating down on a stream with cutthroats or rainbows prowling for food, it can be a good tonic for angling success. That’s the way it was on a stifling hot day in the Elk Valley. I was fishing the river with Haig-Brown and catching more trout than I ever thought I could in one day. It was a kind of paradise and I had finally arrived.

During the heat of the day there was little evidence of insect activity other than the hum

of cicada back among the struggling bush. Still, there were trout in the icy mountain water willing to try an appetizer before the sun hid behind the mountains and cooler breezes brought on the best of the dry fly fishing. While the air sizzled, at some point known only to the river gods, I tied on a Cedar Borer and caught a trout. It was a good fish like all the other cutthroats, healthy migrants from Lower Campbell Lake and the now deceased Buttle River (buried beneath the reservoir that lies behind Strathcona Dam). I had used that Cedar Borer on the strength of a whim, but it made for a nice memory.

A more woeful memory occurred years later on a river further north. It was another hot day beneath a torrid sun with dour trout unwilling to grab what I had to offer. In the bewildering muddle of



*The Cedar Borer*



currents, in a run well furnished with large boulders, I was not a little surprised to momentarily have a small trout take my Cedar Borer. A quick pull, a flip on the surface and it was gone. But minutes later, with the line drawn out of its usual serpentine configuration, a sharp pull livened my grip and quickened my wrist. Too quick, I'd say, for in the same instant the pleasant shock disappeared as quickly as a weighted fly on excited water. It had to have been the best fish of the day, and yet there was the tippet of my leader, as barren as it had been while still on the spool of my new Nylorfi material. It was an early experience with Nylorfi, rated then as the strongest for its diameter of any leader material invented. I was finding out that this material's knot strength that melted like ice after 10 or 15 minutes in warm water. It took me a little longer and the loss of several trout and flies to learn that and to eventually shed my vest of all half dozen spools. No wonder fly shops did likewise. So it was back to Maxima!

One thing is for certain. If the day is hot and summery and the Cedar Borers are flying around in search of the perfect cedar tree, should some find their way into the water only a blind fish could miss them.

Along with the emerald Cedar Borers in my fly box is the Black Caterpillar. This vivacious Haig-Brown pattern is rather more refined than a typical caterpillar fly. Haig-Brown lists three caterpillars (Brown, Fiery Brown and Orange) along with the Black Caterpillar and all three modestly attired with a single hackle palmered over a simple body. These flies are very effective, spare of materials and a boon to the beginning fly tier. The Black Caterpillar adds two ribs, one of fine gold tinsel and the other of bronze peacock herl. It is just enough to make you feel that the combination on the hook is deadly. And it can be.

Haig-Brown had a special fondness for the Black Caterpillar, especially when the black carpenter ants came on. It most years it happens once, sometimes twice, but it only lasts a day or two at most. A hot dry day in April or May, following a cool and wet spring, has the big black ants flying or promenading from their wooden belfries. You hope the wood is not your house, but some rotted stump or decomposing alder trunk. Then if you can get away to some river or lake, you find yourself welcoming them. Certainly the trout do. And the fly fisher rejoices in having the trout off their guard for a change.

But it won't last long, perhaps only hours. When it's over, it's over, and the trout get off their feed as sharply as they began. You have to believe their over-indulgence, as with all gluttons, has brought on a bad case of indigestion. On such days I have this persistent vision of every trout lying on its belly against the bottom badly in need of a turn.

Caterpillars, or palmer-type flies, have been in angling literature for over 300 years. They are spoken of quite highly as fish getters. Yet few writers suggest they are indeed taken for caterpillars. A more likely situation is that they are taken as one of the nebulous group we call "general flies". Fish like them whether or not they are taken as "just the moth or butterfly larva I've been looking for". But that's not to say they never are, and I propose we cheer on those trout with catholic tastes.

But I have another reason in support of the Black Caterpillars that repose in my fly box. In a quite smaller size than that which matches a carpenter ant, I've found them quite deadly on chironomid emergers. It came about quite by accident, when Maxine and I used to put in our cartop boat for a few hours in an evening following the work day. It was April and McIvor Lake came alive with rising trout, and all around swarms of flies had us on our guard. They appeared to be mosquitoes, but were actually gentle little brutes that didn't bite. And neither did the trout.

All that action on the surface and not a floating fly to be seen! Dry flies didn't work, nor did a selection of typical wet flies. It was quite frustrating. Eventually, as one fly after another proved ineffective, I put on a small Black Caterpillar and all that changed. The trout liked it and continued to like it evening after evening. At the time I didn't know why, nor did I much care. But then I didn't know a chironomid from a mosquito either. I was just pleased as punch that Vancouver Island was home to a mosquito that didn't drive its proboscis into my skin and squirt a drop of saliva. The realization of the truth came later, much later, about the existence of emerging chironomids. Damn! Our mosquitoes were like everyone else's.

For a time all was blissful perfection. Six or seven chunky rainbows, free ranging like good chickens, now destined for the frying pan. Who could ask for more?



*The Black Caterpillar*

*Art Lingren Photo*



## Tying the Terrestrials

Many of Haig-Brown's fly patterns call for bodies of seal's fur, which may be substituted with modern synthetic fibers. What he emphasized in making flies was to bring them to life, in part by the textures of the materials he chose to achieve a natural life-like mobility.

### Black Caterpillar

*Thread:* black

*Hook:* 6 or 8 for carpenter ants, smaller for stock flies to be used during other times than the flying ant hatch

*Body:* black seal's fur

*Rib:* fine oval gold tinsel and a strand of bronze peacock herl wound side by side

*Hackle:* black, stripped one side and tied palmer.



*Haig-Brown's Other Caterpillars Art Lingren Photo*

### Other Caterpillars

*Brown:* body olive seal's fur, brown hackle (palmered).

*Fiery Brown:* body fiery brown seal's fur, hackle fiery brown (palmered).

*Orange:* body orange seal's fur, hackle orange (palmered).

*Hook sizes:* 8 to 12 on all: thread to match color of seal's fur (I prefer to add a rib of fine oval gold tinsel on all.)

### Cedar Borer

*Thread:* green

*Hook:* 6 or 8 nymph hook (e.g. Partridge Capt. Hamilton)

*Body:* mixed emerald green (2/3rd) and robin egg's blue (1/3 rd)

*Rib:* fine oval gold tinsel and peacock herl, wound side by side

*Wing:* 5 or 6 strands of peacock sword tied flat (may require clipping the seal's fur along the back of fly)

*Hackle:* pale blue tied ahead of wing.

(I usually finish this fly with a head of bronze peacock herl, if I still have space for it.)

Seal's fur, if you can get it, is difficult to dub. I use James Leisenring's method of spinning the fur between two strands of a looped thread coated with tacky or liquid wax, then carding the yarn for at least 24 hours, to let everything dry. The spinning and drying process is assisted by using a Renzetti dubbing twister, and a stiff cardboard (2- 3 inches wide) with matching cuts on opposite sides will hold the two ends of the yarns while the fur sets.

# Western Canadian Fly Fishing Show, Richmond Jan. 30 to Feb. 1

by Peter Caverhill



L to R: Steve Hanson, Gil Sage, Danie Erasmus & Doug Wright

The BCFFF had a presence at this show, which was the first purely fly-fishing-oriented show in BC. We had a large space with lots of room to tie flies, display our collectables-for-sale, documents, newsletters and a portion of the BCFFF photographic "History Display" that we created for last year's 30th anniversary. We sold a few items (pins, hats, decals, Kilburn book), gave away the whole supply of the History Document and many copies of the latest newsletter. An interesting development was the bundle of fly tying stuff (vices, scissors, hooks and

materials - provided by "SuperFly") that was waiting for the crew at the start of the show on Friday morning. The expectation was that we would use this to "teach kids to tie woolly buggers".

None of the show organisers had mentioned that this was to be our task. The vices were dutifully set up and the kids did come. Some were so excited that they returned for multiple Woolly Bugger tying. Excellent - our team did a great job with the kids and we felt that we were attending to an important BCFFF objective.

Super Kudos go to **Danie Erasmus** (Osprey FF and BCFFF Direct Members director) for organising the booth and its staffing.

Danie was there from start to finish every day!! Also, many thanks to the rest of the team who took turns over the 3 days to

tie flies, give lessons to the kids and answer questions from those who stopped by the booth. Here they are: Doug Wright (Osprey FF); Alex Carr (Osprey FF); Art Lingren (Totem FF); Will Wright (Osprey FF); Gil Sage (Totem and Osprey FF); Steve Hanson (Osprey and Totem FF); Pete Caverhill (Osprey FF); Ken Baker (Osprey FF); Edgar Lau (Osprey FF) and Dan Cahill (Osprey FF). Lightning strike me down if I have neglected anyone!

The cost of the booth was nil, thanks to the show organisers (would have cost \$1200). We did have to rent tables and chairs and pay a bit for printing our hand outs but I think that the total cost came in under \$500 and the rest of it was donated time.



Gil Sage with one of our younger Woolly Bugger fly tiers



Steve Hanson tying a supply of flies for the Dean River

# Thoughts on Thompson River Steelhead

by Peter Caverhill

This year's return of steelhead to the Thompson River appears to be one of the lowest ever. Thompson steelhead seem to be marching to the same drummer as so many other steelhead stocks whose natal streams enter the Georgia Basin. The return trends for these streams are very pessimistic.

Thompson steelhead are very special and command a large world-wide following of devotees. Few groups of fish evoke as much passion as these do. With a near angling closure on the Thompson in November, this fall has seen emotion explode in a flurry of internet debates and letters of concern to all and sundry. The problem of a frighteningly low steelhead return in 2003, and a downward trend in abundance in recent years, has created a very complex situation (biologically, economically, administratively, and sociologically). Many of the old "boogie men" that fractured the Thompson steelhead angler voice a decade ago have re-emerged. Words like "bait-ban", "fly fishing", "fly only" are again acting as accelerants to the temperature of the rhetoric. These words aren't always polite, but can be excused by the underlying depth of feeling. Gear arguments have been conveniently dubbed the "tackle box". Some of the combatants argue vehemently that the tackle box must be kept out of the discussions. Others push for its more complete airing and resolution.



*Thompson steelhead are very special and command a large world-wide following of devotees.*  
Art Lingren Photo

The contents of the "tackle box" keep falling out, making it difficult for anglers to constructively move toward solutions to steelhead recovery and the maintenance of angling opportunity. Our thought processes and discussions keep getting trapped into tight little boxes from which extrication is difficult. Because of this we really need to deal with the tackle box instead of covering it up. Otherwise, it will keep returning at the most inopportune times to retard progress.

We must step back and look at the simpler and larger picture. We should remember what our most over-riding concerns really are.

## 1) **The fish** (of course this is paramount; a no-brainer)

As one of the groups that impacts Thompson steelhead, anglers do not want to be an instrument that contributes to their demise or hinders their recovery. This concern can make us susceptible to agreeing too quickly to unwarranted changes. We should, however, be willing to accept change, provided it is truly legitimate. If the stock is in critically low condition, where every fish to the spawning ground counts, then we should accept reduced or eliminated angling opportunity. We should also be willing to make a long term commitment to the many other important issues that impact these fish (notably habitat; harvest interception).

## 2) **Angling for steelhead on the Thompson River** (however small this opportunity may have to be)

Angling opportunity on the river means that advocacy for Thompson steelhead is still alive. Without the opportunity to angle, the great fear is that advocacy will die a lingering death. The present political and administrative climate in BC does not favor finding suitable solutions for Thompson steelhead and for those who love to chase these fish. The present capability of the provincial fisheries management agency is hamstrung by staff loss/change, "economic recovery" legislation, and a lack of definitive data. Under this scenario, it is all too easy to use a



“risk averse” rationale and shut river angling down. As angling closures continue to occur and persist, it is very possible that those responsible for managing the fishery may retire or be shifted elsewhere. They may be replaced by others who have little time, understanding or appreciation for steelhead angling on the Thompson. So, ***we must explore all ways and means to keep steelhead angling opportunity alive on the Thompson River.*** And... this is where the heated debate rears its head.

During recent discussions among anglers, a comment was made that angling is a very tiny contributor to the woes of Thompson steelhead or their eventual recovery. Certainly this is true, considering larger issues like watershed habitat issues, ocean conditions and harvest interception. ***However, if angling closures are being suggested there is obviously concern about the impact that angling may have on the fish.*** Therefore, it seems reasonable that we must closely examine and understand our angling impact, so we can find ways to minimize it. Ideally, we'd do this while retaining as much varied angling opportunity as possible. It is under this topic, of maintaining angling opportunity, that the troublesome “tackle box” keeps rattling into view. If, by poking into the tackle box, we can find ways to reduce impact, give some comfort to government fisheries people, and keep angling opportunity—***then why not?*** What is really hard to understand in this debate, is why we are willing to say “close the river” when there are alternatives that could keep it open?

Within the very heated tackle box debate, there are a number of questions that anglers should discuss and decide upon, and then work together on “bigger picture” aspects for Thompson steelhead and angling opportunity:-

1. How reasonable is the data that floats around (and that pops up regularly in our heated discussions)? This is the information that comes from government initiatives (stock abundance and harvest modeling; angler surveys; reviews of release fisheries/steelhead mortality). We seem to agree to disagree on this, and we should do better than that.
2. How good is the data on Thompson steelhead catch and harvest in all fisheries that target or by-catch them? Is the data from angling surveys on the river sufficient to reasonably reflect angler impact? And..... can this data provide insights into gear effectiveness that may relate to steelhead mortality? What about studies that report on the comparative mortality of different gear types – are these results reasonable and can they be applied to the Thompson?
3. Shouldn't we examine our own actions on the river as anglers to see if there are ways that we could tread more lightly on the fish? There have been many comments in this debate about which angler groups potentially do the most damage to the fish. Figures are quoted from studies and angling surveys. We should try to determine what information is valid, and how it could relate to retaining angling opportunity on the river.
4. How important is it that we anglers speak with a strong coordinated voice (as opposed to a fractured voice where factions are at war)?
5. Is it truly reasonable (or prudent) to maintain a rigid position “all gear or none” (angling closure) if we all agree about the importance of maintaining an angling opportunity (and angler advocacy) on the river?
6. What can we learn from similar situations elsewhere? For example, steelhead streams on the east coast of Vancouver Island have had long term angling closures, then tentative relaxation of these closures with special gear restrictions (from closure to fly only). What has been the rationale behind this relaxation in terms of steelhead conservation and angling opportunity? Is this rationale reasonable, and does it have application for the Thompson?
7. What are the implications for Thompson steelhead (or any other steelhead stock) being listed under the new federal SARA (Species at Risk Act)? On one hand, it may be a good thing, as it would require restorative planning and action. However, it could mean the end of angling opportunity for steelhead on the river for a very long time. We will need to be cautious about what we embrace about SARA.

**(These comments and opinions are mine alone and do not represent the opinions of any organization that I belong to)**

# *An Introduction to the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C.*

by Brian Chan



*The Society stocks approximately nine million fish a year Art Lingren photo*

A new era for provincial fish stocking programs and related services began with the announcement, last April 2003, of the formation of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of British Columbia (FFSBC). This “new” entity is a not-for-profit organization that will now deliver all the services formerly provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection’s Fish Culture Program. This change was brought about by a provincial government decision to find alternative sources of funding for the management of the fish hatchery and stocking program and other related services. The mandate of the new society is “To conserve and enhance freshwater fish resources of British Columbia for the benefit of the public”. B.C.’s five provincial hatcheries stock approximately nine million fish annually, including rainbow, kokanee,

cutthroat and brook trout into about 1000 lakes and a selected number of rivers throughout the province. Angler economic surveys indicate that just over half of the freshwater fishing effort in the province is spent on stocked lakes. Freshwater sport fishing generates about \$500 million annually to the provincial economy.

The FFSBC will be funded directly by anglers. Approx. 70% of fishing licence fees which currently is about 7 million dollars/year, will be turned over to the society to conduct its business. The remaining 30% of licence fees will be held in a special account within the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) and spent only on services directly related to recreational fisheries management. The FFSBC will work in partnership with WLAP fisheries management staff. Regional biologists and technicians will continue to manage the recreational fisheries including development of stocking requests for various strains or stocks of fish. Fisheries Society staff will provide those fish and also assist in the ongoing evaluation of stocking programs to ensure the right stock and/or numbers of fish are being released into a particular water body so that fisheries management goals are being achieved.

Other services provided by the society will include fish health diagnostics, fisheries engineering, information and education programs and ongoing commitment of fish culture expertise to support species recovery initiatives related to steelhead and White Sturgeon.



*Fly fishers on one of the many hundreds of lakes stocked with trout. Art Lingren Photo*

The society is also responsible for promoting and marketing freshwater recreational fishing as well as informing and educating the public about fish and fisheries resources. A Society website [WWW.GOFISHBC.COM](http://WWW.GOFISHBC.COM) provides detailed information on the society structure and funding agreements as well as individual sections covering fisheries science, fish culture and sport fishing. Anglers will find the latest stocking reports for each region of the province, information on fish hatchery processes, sturgeon recovery initiatives, articles on fishing tactics, lake of the month features and much more. The website will undergo further development over the next few months so that more interactive features can be incorporated.

In order to flourish, the society will need to conduct business in an efficient manner which should be easier to do now that it is outside of government. Increasing the participation rates in fishing, and ultimately the sale of more fishing licences, will help ensure the longevity of the society. Having the ability to promote and market freshwater fishing in the province is something that was never an option while in government. Attracting new anglers could be as simple as increasing access to fishing areas by establishing fishing piers, stocking of urban lakes and creating fisheries on currently fishless lakes. The Society's Director of Sport Fishing Development will work with regional WLAP fisheries staff to promote the use of recreational fisheries that are currently underutilized or ones that can sustain more angling effort. The communication abilities of the Society can also be used to better inform the angler about current fisheries management topics or issues of concern.

There are now opportunities to partner with the corporate sector, those businesses that have an interest in all aspects of sport fishing. The society will strive to develop partnerships with various conservation groups who have similar goals such as seeing more people and specifically children out fishing.

Further information about the society can be obtained by calling Brian Chan, Director of Sport Fishing Development at 250 371-6250 or [brian.chan@gofishbc.com](mailto:brian.chan@gofishbc.com)



*Some hatchery stocked trout grow to trophy size  
Art Lingren Photo*





# Angling Guide & Classified Waters Review Update

By Rob Stewart

I am pleased to report that the Angling Guide & Classified Waters Review has finally wrapped up. The next time the group meets we should be meeting as a Classified Waters Board rather than a review committee. There are still many details to work out but thanks to the strong leadership provided by new Director Al Martin; we made more progress in this one meeting than we have in the past five years. There are several action items on our agenda and small committees have been tasked to work on the following issues with finite timelines:

1. Terms of Reference for local, regional, and provincial groups; three months.
2. Refine Angling Management Plans; two months.
3. Draft Toolbox for AMPs; 2 months.
4. Test AMP template, two months.
5. Finalize decision on how many Classifications of Waters we need; one month.
6. River Guardian Program Link, three months.
7. Data Collection: Guides reporting, two months, Compliance and Enforcement, three months.

All of these committees will subject to group review so I think we will be very busy for the next few months. No date has been set for our next meeting but I expect it will follow completion of the above tasks.



Please mail your dues to:

P.O. Box 2442 Stn. Main  
349 Georgia Street West  
Vancouver, BC V6B 3W7

**Thanks for your support!**

## IT'S TIME TO...

## RENEW YOUR DUES FOR 2004!

### 2004 Membership

- Direct \$15
- Supporting \$100
- Donation

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

- New Member
- Renewal

Yes, I/we want to become involved; please sign me/us up!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
Province/State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code/Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Facsimile

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

Are you interested/available to assist the BCFFF?

- yes
- no
- personally
- professionally