

# Grayling Gazette



October 2001

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## OFFICERS

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**Treasurer:** *Tom Norton*  
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### Board Members:

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*Tom Early* 457-3577  
*Liana Garbowski* 457-1734  
*Tim Shannon* 457-4335

**Newsletter Editor:** VACANT

### Meetings:

*Held the second Friday of each month, October thru May at the Rivers Edge "Miner Hall", 4200 Boat Street, Fairbanks, AK., 99709*

### Newsletter:

*Deadline is the 25th of each month. Send submissions, articles, etc... to: MSFC Newsletter, PO BOX 81031, Fairbanks, AK., 99708-1031 or [msfsc@ptialaska.net](mailto:msfsc@ptialaska.net).*

### Yearly Membership:

*\$25/yr Family/Individual  
Application can be found on the back of the newsletter.*

## President's Corner



Greetings Everyone,

The time has come to meet again and tell tall tails about the FISH that was unbelievable in size and not a witness to be had. I look forward to hearing about the past fishing season and I hope everyone had a good one. As for me I did manage a few trips, but My time was limited because of a heavy work load. I hope to go to the Anchor River before our next meeting, so maybe I'll have a story or too to tell.

***We have changed the meetings to Fridays*** in the hopes that we can have more of our younger members attend and to make travel easier for our Speakers. The October meeting will be held at the "Miners Hall " (next to the Rivers Edge Restaurant) at 7:00PM. There will be a limited dinner menu and a beverage service available. So please let you're friends know about the change and bring someone new with you.

***I need flytiers for October 14th. at the Bentley Mall for Fish and Wildlife Day. Also November 2nd. and 3rd. for Love Inc. at Alaska Land.*** You don't need to be there for the whole day, anytime you can spare would be a big help.

See everyone at the meeting, remember bring a fly for the box and a kid for the club. Thanks!

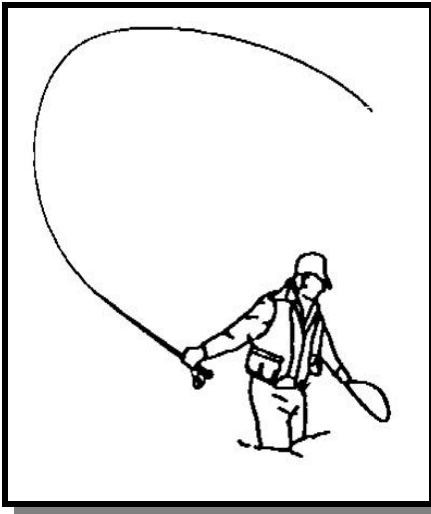
Henry G.

**Hey Members! Feel free to bring in some of your summer fishing pictures for our MSFC Member slide show presentation later in the season. We ask that your pictures are place in an envelope with your name and address printed on the outside, as they will be returned to you. You may leave your Pictures with Henry G. or Jim J.**

## ***TROUT UNLIMITED MEMBERS***

For MSFC members who also belong to Trout Unlimited, they will not be meeting in October. Their first meeting will be in November on the first Thursday of the month at Sophie's Station..

We'll let you know more in November's Gazette.



# ALASKA FLY SHOP

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## *October's guest speaker..*

**Bob Lafferty**, sportfish biologist for the Lower Kuskokwim and Yukon, will be guest speaker for our Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Bob will give a Power Point presentation on Alaska Department of Fish and Game's position of where sportfishers stand after one season of new Federal controls. He will outline how the process has developed between the State and Feds and future affects of Federal proposals now being made.

As we all know, debate over what will happen when Feds take control of waterways on Federal land in Alaska has been bandied about for over 10 years. The process has begun and will affect all people who fish and hunt regardless of where they live.

Bob has been very involved in this developing process and will be arriving from Anchorage to speak with us fresh from a multi-agency meeting addressing the issue. There's a lot of bad information going around. Newspapers haven't been much help in sorting it out. If you plan to fish in the future, particularly to travel and fish our western rivers or the Yukon drainage, you shouldn't miss this meeting.

# Dike Fishing

By  
Jim Johnston

Fishing for Northern Pike isn't something I do much. Considering I never attempted to fish for pike before moving to Alaska, it must have something to do with my early angling choices (see dry fly trout purist). Cultural limitations founded on uppity preconceptions of fishing for the toothy beast were quickly overcome by poverty and someone's offer to pay me to take anglers out to Minto Flats.

I knew how it was supposed to be done, I thought. Fish the windward side of the lake. When fishing dries look for shallow coves. Fish the weed beds. Basic stuff. So I tied up some fancy mouse patterns requiring enormous amount of time, what with the whiskers and all, and headed out. Highlights of my first exploratory trip were: 1) being constantly reminded by the guy who flew me out, there was no way to catch a pike on a fly; 2) on my first cast I learned 15 pound mono tippets were not too brutish; 3) also on my first cast, I found one shouldn't spend too much time tying pike flies—especially if you use 15 pound mono; and 4) pike fishing is really fun!

Since then I've spent many days fly fishing for pike on lakes. This year, for the first time, I went north to chase them on a river. What I found was the choice of flies and successful techniques were quite different than lakes, at least so far.

In lakes, the early season before the weed beds begin to develop and the water temperatures are still cool, streamers are the ticket. Dropped near the lake's edge and allowed to sink to the bottom, then quickly stripping the fly up works well. If the truth be known, once the fly reaches the surface unencumbered by the jaws of a pike, letting it sink again often provokes a strike as it drifts down. When the water warms and the weed beds begin to develop, big hair dry flies work.

But in the river, and I only fished it near the end of summer, large heavily weighted (with the emphasis on heavy) streamers patterns worked well. They pro-

vided traditional vicious hits pike are known for. When I tried dry patterns the strikes were oddly tentative regardless of pattern choice.

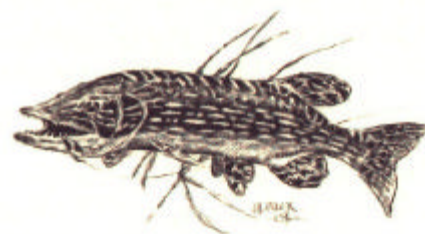
While anchored up at the confluence of a muddy main river and it's clear tributary, I saw feeding patterns usually reserved for salt water fish. Large pods of hundreds of whitefish would boil and blast out of the water as pike chased them to the surface. It was a sight to behold. One that speaks to the wildness of Alaska and unencumbered nature itself. This ain't no Disney movie.

Certainly there are many more things for me to learn about fly fishing for pike in Alaska. Hope I can hear of your experiences sometime soon.

Jim.

## DIKE FISHING TIPS

- 8 weight rods are minimum. 9 weights are a good choice. Not only because of the lifting power required for 30 inch plus fish (7 or 8 pounds), but to handle large or heavy flies.
- White should dominate the colors of streamers. For dries, color doesn't seem to be as important.
- The new types of thin wire leaders work well. While they do kink and need to be replaced every now and again because of that, they rarely break.
- If you are concerned about hanging up on brush, put a mono section (8 to 20 lb test) in between the butt section of your leader and the wire.
- Keep the leader short, 2 to 3 feet. A straight 3 foot shot of 20 pound wire will turn over almost any fly.
- Crimp your barbs for easy release.
- Don't forget long nosed pliers.



## TROUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

by

**Mike Fisher,  
VP of Communications for the FFF.**

It is the great realization one obtains from a life misspent wandering along trout streams in the mountains—the warm emotions we love to project onto nature just don't exist except in our perceptions. Nature just IS. There is fear, but no sense of ominous foretellings; instinct, but not logical thought; loss, but no such a thing as sorrow or mourning. It is a rough world in the mountains, one where the instinctive skills of problem solving are crucial to life, and emotions are an unknown human trait.

A bear cub may stay a long time with its dead mother, and while we may wish to attribute this to mourning, more likely the cub knows nothing else, and sees no options. Food has always come from that now cold, lifeless pile of fur, and until proven otherwise, the best bet seems to be to stay put and wait for dinner. At some point, it will be proven otherwise. In fact, the cub will die if it is unlucky enough not to be of an age where it can survive on its own, unless some caring human discovers it, and carries it “home” to be kept in captivity. Is that a good option? Many will argue no. In the wild, a bear cub is cute only to the human observer. In the mountains it is food, a predator, or a competitor.

Trout suffer the same condition. In a stream, what is, is. If there is food, by God you eat! If there is no food, you better go out and see what can be scrounged up. To fail means death.

Trout go into winter in about their best condition of the year. Brooks and browns lose some of that weight in the fall spawn, and rainbows do the same in spring. For the most part, in winter, little food is required by the trout since as a cold-blooded animal, their body functions slow with the cold. It stays alive because its own system compensates for the lack of available foods due to the coldness of its environment. Do trout feed in winter? The answer is an unequivocal yes. This is especially true when the water temperature is rising. By this I don't mean with the gradual arrival of spring, but even on

a January day, if the water temperature rises a few degrees, some trout may begin to feed.

Certainly a trout will feed on what comes easily during the winter, but for the most part a trout lives on built up body weight from heavy fall feeding, and by spring, has lost much of its weight. The trout that has not built up its body weight in the feeding seasons will be much less likely to survive the winter.

As the water warms with spring, not only does the trout's system kick into a more active level, requiring that it eat, the aquatic insects which have likewise been dormant become more active. Suddenly food is not so scarce, and just as their body requires it, trout feed freely. Through April and May food is generally plentiful as aquatic insects hatch at their most plentiful rate, but as summer arrives, the relatively frequent hatches of food dwindle and pickings become more sparse. The best trout streams, that is those with the best head of fish for the fisherman, tend to have diptera, two-winged insects which hatch through the summer as a source of food. Terrestrial insects also assume a larger role in summer, but they come in inconsistent numbers and frequency. The trout that is best able to find food is most likely to survive. Part of that formula is the size of the trout and whether it can chase off competition (which may as a result starve or be eaten), the luck of the draw (was it born into a stream with good conditions for insect populations?), and is it audacious? There is no formula for success per se; you either live or die. Food does not come along miraculously in the nick of time to save the poor trout; it just comes along or not.

The fly fisher who comes to see this, has come a long way toward understanding the world of trout in the mountains. He will be more successful in catching fish. He has caught something special and unique, and it is no fish. When you sense it, you know. You only will find it in that life misspent along a stream; you will never find it by searching. Just like nature, it just is.

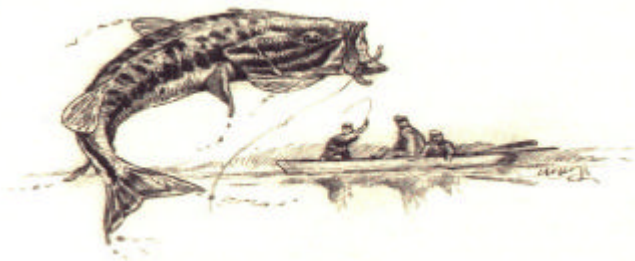


## THE FISH

Once upon a time in Montana a handsome and wise beyond his years fly fisherman was on the mighty Missouri River. Casting his wand, a 1 weight with 6x tippet and a #20 Griffith's Gnat, he probed the dark waters in search of his wary prey. To his dismay, the sun broke through the lightening skies, and all the trout were put down, except one. The trout rose nearly imperceptibly, leaving the water scarcely bulging in its wake. Intent on outwitting his alert quarry, the fly rodder changed tactics, and tied on a clipped #18 Pheasant Tail, the only fly he had vaguely resembling an emerging midge. The fisherman's arms were mighty, his cast strong. The fly reached out in its final arc, as something in the water "clooped!" The fly touched the water with nary a trace, and in seconds, as if in slow motion, the line twitched in the current. The virile young man set the hook, and the rod bowed under the weight of the fish. Slowly, the lined moved, pulsing, throbbing. Gripping the rod like Moses with his staff, the fisherman fought the mighty fish for several trying minutes, taxing both himself and his rod. He lowered his net into the glimmering water and gently landed the fish, while cars and trucks came to a screeching halt to observe the commotion. The fly fisherman hid his fish, half-hanging out of the net, from the prying eyes of his observers. The fish was quickly measured at 24 inches and deftly released.

The fly fisherman smiled as the 8 pound carp swam away, hoping they would both live happily ever after.

(from FFF, by Bruce Yoshioka of the Missouri River Flyfishers of Great Falls, Montana and maker of MT Landing Nets)



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!!

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*Also November 2nd. and 3rd. for Love Inc. at Alaska Land. You don't need to be there for the whole day, anytime you can spare would be a big help. See Henry or Jim J.*

## QUOTE

### FINAL WORDS

An old man in his final breaths called in his family and said, "I must apologize to you all. I suppose I haven't been the perfect father and husband. I shamefully admit that I spent as much of my life as I could in the woods and on the streams. I was rarely at home during the fishing seasons and I'll admit that I spent too much time at the fly shop, and too much money on rods and lines and reels." He paused here to rest for a minute, then continued. "I've been a terrible father and I hope you all forgive me." Then he paused again and looked around. He closed his eyes and smiled and said in a half whisper to himself, "And on the other hand...I have caught a helluva lot of trout."

Anonymous  
(from FFF ClubWire)

**Reminder...**

**MSFC meetings have been changed to the second Friday of each month starting on October 12th. Hope to see you there.**

**Remember to bring a kid and a fly for the fly box.**



**2001 / 2002 MIDNIGHT SUN FLY CASTERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

MSFC is a non-profit group of fly fishers, whose chartered goals include promoting the sport of fly fishing, education, and youth involvement in outdoor activities. Each member will receive our monthly newsletter.

**Membership: Family/Individual \$25/yr.**

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**Renewal •**

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