



Alan Parker's First Trip to Yellowstone and His Beautiful Cutthroat is Fish of the Month #1 for December 2016



Brandon Hakulin with a big North Country Landlocked Salmon is Fish of the Month #2 for December, 2016

Clearwater Currents
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*America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation
Organization
Promoting Habitat for Wild Trout and Salmon
Trout Unlimited Has Been Fighting for Coldwater Fisheries
Conservation for 56 Years*

Join us before each meeting at 6:30pm for a tying demonstration. Meetings begin at 7:30pm, the third Monday of each month (except Banquet month, July and August), at the Albany Ramada located on Watervliet Avenue Extension off Exit 5 of I-90 (Everett Road).

Upcoming Events

Dec 19 Chapter General Meeting – This is our holiday social with pizza and beverages. All flytiers are invited to bring their vises and share some of their tying techniques and favorite patterns. Don't have a vise, materials, or know-how? No worries, we have plenty of benches, materials, and wisdom to share! First time tiers very welcome! 6:30PM at the Ramada Plaza in Albany, NY.

Dec 25 Christmas
Jan 1 New Year's Day 2017

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Clearwater Chapter of TU PO Box 9686 Schenectady, NY 12309
www.ClearwaterTU.org

A Tribute to Gene Webster

Our world lost a fine gentleman and true conservationist with the passing of Gene Webster, and I lost a mentor and friend. Gene taught me how to work with the government professionals by treating them with respect, which was reciprocated. He always established a good rapport with landowners who understood that he was there to improve the resource and not to secure fishing privileges. I recall one day when he guided me on a tour of some of his projects. He first introduced me to the landowner who always received him very warmly.

Gene led an impressive number of volunteer efforts including highway cleanups, tree plantings, and stream construction projects. He was difficult to keep up with. When I first joined "natural stream channel design" was beginning to be the new radically different method of doing things. Gene jumped right in, and I followed him.

Current and future Trout Unlimited volunteers can do no better than to try to emulate Gene Webster.

Art Coleman

Clearwater Chapter General Meeting

The next meeting is our holiday social with pizza and beverages. All flytiers are invited to bring their vises and share some of their tying techniques and favorite patterns. Don't have a vise, materials, or know-how? No worries, we have plenty of benches, materials, and wisdom to share! First time tiers very welcome! 6:30PM at the Ramada Plaza in Albany, NY.

At the Ramada Inn off exit 5 of I-90 Albany. Free of charge and all are welcome.

Fish of the Month 2016 Contest in Full Gear

Mark A Brown

The Chapter's Fish of the Month Contest is already in its sixth year having crowned **Rich Atkinson, Noe Mead, Jim Berry, Bill Bach, Ron Boutin, Brad Mohr, Jim Boyle** and for 2015, **Paul Kalacs** winners in its first eight years.

The contest is open to all members (except me!) and family members of Chapter members and is not necessarily based on the biggest fish, but the quality of the fish, story behind it and picture quality all make up a winning entry. Simply send a photograph to me at my email address at mrbrownie6@gmail.com or contact me via email for my mailing address if you have a Polaroid or 35mm shot. As the entries come I'll publish them in the newsletter and select a winner at the March Banquet when the winner will get a dozen hand tied flies or something else really nice as a prize.

Fish #1 Story:

It was my Dad's first trip to Yellowstone. The weather was a little less than favorable winds and snow and he doesn't fly fish much. After sitting in the car waiting for the weather to break he decided to get out and look for me. I'm dumb I'll fish in any weather and totally lose track of time. As I realized I was out for 3 hours I decided I should go back to the car and check on him. There he was looking over the bank for me. I told him to come down as I spotted some fish for him to cast to. On his third drift ...Bingo his first Yellowstone cutthroat.....

Thanks - Scott Parker

Fish #2 Story:

I was fishing for landlocked salmon in the North Country with fellow member Tom Caffrey when this beautiful male salmon hit my streamer. It jumped several times before we netted and released the fish.

Thanks, Brandon Hakulin

What Has Happened to Lake Ontario's Fishery?

by Malinda Barna, Nov. 2016

In recent decades, the Lake Ontario ecosystem has undergone dramatic changes resulting primarily from the introduction of exotic zebra and quagga mussels. In addition, improvements in wastewater treatment have reduced excessive nutrient concentrations to historic, more natural levels, thereby lowering the productive capacity of the Lake Ontario ecosystem. Epilimnetic zooplankton biomass in Lake Ontario's offshore epilimnion declined by 99% over the last 30 years. In other words Lake Ontario water is getting too clean.

Phytoplankton (an edible type of algae) contain chlorophyll and require sunlight, water and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis to create the carbohydrates that they use for food. In addition, nitrogen, phosphorous and iron are needed for survival. Nitrogen and phosphorous are needed for reproduction; when both of these are not present phytoplankton cannot continue to thrive.

Zooplankton and other invertebrates such as the shrimplike Diporeia eat phytoplankton. With less phytoplankton there is less food for baitfish.

In an article published about Lake Michigan and Lake Huron in Jan 2012. Tom Nalepa, an emeritus research biologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor, found that the energy density of Lake Huron alewives dropped 23 percent from pre-mussel invasion 1979 to post-invasion 2004, by which time Chinook salmon needed to consume 22% more alewives to attain an ideal size by age 4.

The Alewife is also Lake Ontario's primary baitfish. Alewives naturally contain something called thiaminase. Thiaminase is an enzyme that destroys or inactivates thiamine. Also known as vitamin B1, thiamine is important for the nervous system to function correctly. Thiamine deficiency, most acutely seen by tributary anglers in Steelhead during 2013/2014, can cause nervous system disorders, poor appetite, poor growth, and problems with survival of hatched fry. Mitigation of thiaminase can be achieved by a varied diet. Since Nov 2012 the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) has been trying to do this by reintroducing a native species of bait. The Deepwater Cisco or bloater is a thiamine rich baitfish. According to 2012 DEC Commissioner Joe Martens Lake Ontario's sport fisheries are a significant economic driver in New York State, and were valued at more than \$113 million in 2007. Re-establishing bloaters in Lake Ontario will diversify the fish community, adding stability to the lake's ecosystem and sport fisheries.

So, why doesn't the DEC stock more bait? First, if every Hatchery in NY State raised nothing but baitfish it would be eaten up in Lake Ontario after only 1 week. Also, the lake is in a delicate state with the amount of zooplankton available. It would be easy to tip the balance further than it already is and have a catastrophic collapse.

What can be done to contain or eradicate zebra and quagga mussels?

Unfortunately, there are no known methods to control or eradicate these mussels in the wild. Some fish (like the Round Goby) eat the mussels. Unfortunately, according to the USGS, quagga mussels accumulate organic pollutants within their tissues to levels of more than 300,000 times greater than concentrations in the environment and these pollutants are found in their pseudofeces, which can be passed up the food chain, therefore increasing wildlife exposure to organic pollutants.

So, what can we do?

1. The NYS DEC needs to recognize the Lake Ontario fishery is NO LONGER primarily a LAKE fishery.

According to the NYS DEC Lake Ontario Annual Report 2012 total fishing effort for Lake Ontario (actually fishing out in the lake) was 848,905 angler hours (Section 2 Page 4). The tributaries of Lake Ontario had 1,582,428 angler hours. The Salmon River accounted for 68% of the tributaries total with 1,077,316 angler hours. (Section 11 Page 3)

The Salmon River had more angler hours than the whole NYS Lake Ontario boat fishery! And, according to the NYS 2015 Lake Ontario Fisheries Program Highlights fishing effort directed at trout and salmon (in the lake) has remained relatively stable for more than a decade but was the second lowest on record in 2015.

What does this mean? Lake Ontario TRIBUTARIES are generating more NYS FISHING TOURISM \$ than ever before.

2. Discontinue supplemental stocking of Chinook salmon.

Currently, Lake Ontario's population of Chinook salmon is comprised of 50% naturally reproduced (wild) fish. Stocking a fish that grows from an egg to 25-40lbs in approx. 3 years is an inefficient utilization of the bait remaining in Lake Ontario. Stocking more Steelhead, Brown Trout, and Atlantic salmon, fish that grow from an egg to 6-

12lbs in approx. 3 years allows for a greater quantity of fish to be stocked. The consumption of less bait per predator means more fish to fish for! Also, as a bonus, these fish are a more sought-after sport fish in the tributaries.

3. The most heavily fished tributaries, such as the Salmon River, should be made NO KILL for all Steelhead, Brown trout, and Atlantic salmon.

NO KILL is NOT for reproduction. This is purely a way to allow more fishermen to catch fish for an extended period of time. The NYS DEC Lake Ontario Annual Report 2012 shows that tributary fisherman want this! Higher release rates in recent years (91% in 2011-2012) are due, in part, to increased catch rates and anglers desire to conserve steelhead to maintain the quality of the fishery. (Section 11 Page 33). The same report shows that the Salmon River had 8,608 Steelhead harvested that season and 711 Brown Trout. That's over 9,300 fish that could have been caught again just in this one river! A fish allowed to be caught more than once means jobs for guides, lodges, restaurants, tackle shops, gas stations, and all the people that work in them.

Fishermen want to CATCH FISH! It doesn't matter what the creel limit is; if a fisherman doesn't catch any fish then he/she probably won't come back. If the creel limit is 0 and a fisherman catches 2, 3 or possibly 10 fish common sense says they'll be back.

4. Educate.

Isn't it ironic; undersized Atlantic Salmon, referred to as Canadian Coho by some charter boat captains, are being killed out in the lake because of their competition with the Chinook. If these people only understood what is going on in Lake Ontario they might see that the Atlantic salmon (the native species and, once, top predator for Lake Ontario) might just be a better choice for them. A fish that grows more slowly (and therefore eats less bait), historically achieved 40+ lbs. (these fish are much older than Chinook of the same weight) and are an extremely sought-after game fish!

Educate our politicians in Albany about the fishery and its potential for collapse like Lakes Huron and Michigan or its potential for transformation into a high quality Tributary and Lake fishery. Lake Ontario, like all of the other Great Lakes, has many problems that cannot be solved in a short period of time. What we can do that many of the other Great Lakes fisheries did not, is to utilize what we have to its fullest potential!

It's time to get our heads out of the sand! These problems are not going away. We can either have a fishery for only a few more years or a FISHERY FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

Malinda Barna
November 2016
Malinda's Fly & Tackle Shop, Altmar, NY

Whether your a local or a visitor or someone who has never been, this is a fight that needs voices. Please share yours to help the Salmon River!!!

DIRECT EMAIL FOR THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY:
Basil.Seggos@dec.ny.gov
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DEC Announces New Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife

Anthony Wilkinson Appointed to Advance State's Natural Resource Conservation Efforts

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has appointed a seasoned conservation professional with 36 years of experience as a wildlife biologist, zoologist, and researcher to head up its Division of Fish and Wildlife, the agency announced today.

Anthony (Tony) Wilkinson has been appointed to head up the agency's four Fish and Wildlife bureaus and more than 350 employees whose missions are to conserve, improve and protect New York's natural resources.

"Tony Wilkinson brings a deep awareness of the issues that affect our state's environment and our natural resources, and his decades of experience will fit in perfectly with the hundreds of colleagues here who share his passion," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos.

Most recently Wilkinson was the Director for The Nature Conservancy's Eastern NY Program, where he developed and implemented conservation plans for various habitats and species, including migratory fish in the Hudson River Estuary. He previously served as the Director of Operations for the national Natural Heritage Program, and has worked as a biologist and a zoologist for state agencies in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Indiana. Wilkinson has an undergraduate degree in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University and a master's degree in Biological Science from Michigan Technological University. He grew up in southern Pennsylvania and spent much of his youth hunting, fishing and hiking with his father. He is married with two older children and lives in Saratoga County.

"I'm thrilled to be part of the DEC team and look forward to working with the sportsmen and women of New York and our fish and wildlife staff on the sound management of our precious wildlife and fisheries resources," Wilkinson said.

DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife manages conservation of all the diverse wildlife and fish species in the state, overseeing all facets of hunting and recreational and commercial angling in New York, as well as protecting, maintaining, enhancing, and restoring important ecosystems.

Fishing Websites of Interest to Women

While a member of Long Island TU we had **Jen Ripple** from Buffalo Grove, IL as a guest speaker. She is Editor-in-Chief to two on-line fly fishing magazines for and about women and they who can send in articles to be published. Jen@dunMagazine.com

The magazines are:

DunMagazine.com The Women's Fly Fishing Magazine
aTightLoop.com #FlyFishingThe Midwest

Ray Theis

Fly of the Month: Swimming Nymph

I have a couple of dozen swimming nymphs in my fly box and they have been a real fish catcher for me before a hatch especially. I saw this version and thought it was very nicely done by Bram Van Houten of the Netherlands. This fly and all the instructions in living color can be seen on

http://www.rodtrip.com/world_flies/swimming-nymph/ - this site by the way has a lot of other flies and great information from European tiers. Hook: swimming nymph style size 6 – 16; Thread: 6/0 black; Tail: peacock

feathers; Rib: gold wire; Overbody: pheasant; Body: Van Houten's design uses a product called DTF foil, but dubbing, chenille or other material will work fine; Wingcase: Van Houten uses a thin piece of leather, but pheasant or quills would work here; Thorax: Van Houten uses mink hair in a dubbing loop – I would agree on the dubbing loop, but australian opossum and other spiky furs would work also. Mount the hook and tie on the thread to the rear of the hook and tie in the pheasant fibers for the tail. If the are long enough you can use them for the overback, if not cut of the excess. Tie in the rib and add the overback now if the tail wasn't long enough. Tie in the body material and create the body up to the bend in the hook towards the eye. Next pull over the overback and tie off – add the rib next over the overback and body and tie off also. Add the wingcase and then a generous amount of fur in a dubbing loop to create plenty of legs. Wrap the loop to a spot just before the eye and then tie off. Pull the wingcase over and tie off.



From the Entire Editorial Staff at the Clearwater Currents Here's Wishing You and Yours a Most Wonderful and Safe Holiday Season!

