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HOW TO CATCH TROUT

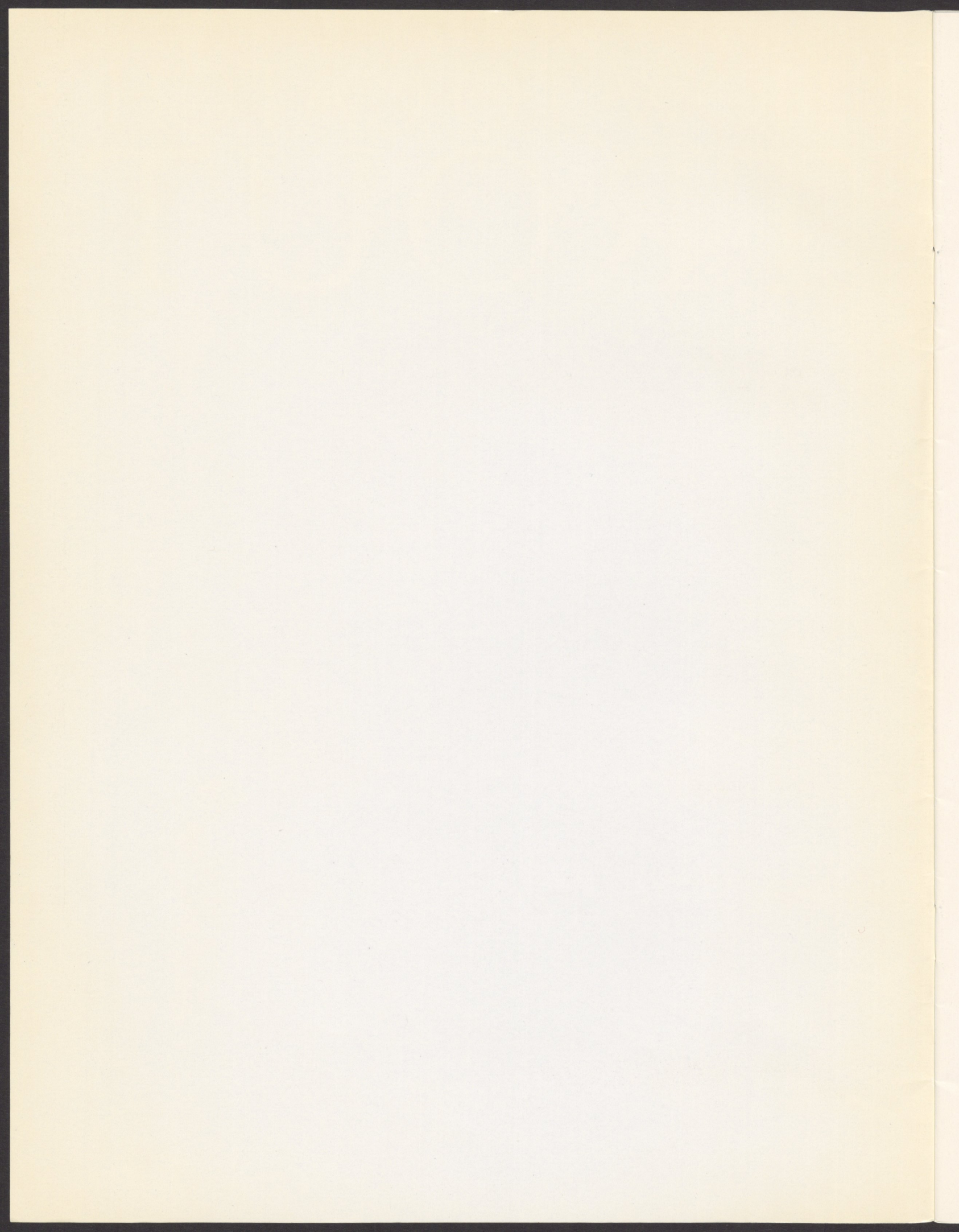


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5-Day License	10.25	18.25
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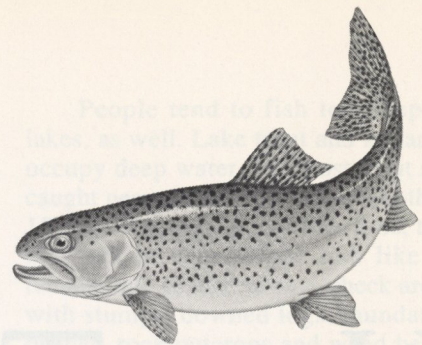
Rifle Falls Hatchery
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Cover trout photo by Dennis Henry

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How To Catch Trout

By *BILL HAGGERTY*

Some say I'm just a jerk on one end of the line, waiting for a jerk on the other end.

They may be right.

Others say I'm just wasting my time.

I know they are wrong.

I believe firmly that days spent fishing will not be deducted from my life! Instead of wasting time, I will grow to the ripe old age of 145, fishing all the way.

I fish for trout for many reasons, besides growing old. I love to get away. I freely admit I fish to escape work, school, the troubled world. At least for a short while.

seen each of these species, but I might if I live to be 145.)

I love the fresh air.

I love to listen to birds singing, water tumbling over rocks in the stream.

I love the ear-shattering silence of Colorado's pristine high mountain lakes.

I love it all.

I got hooked on fishing at a very early age. My father presented me with my first fishing rod when I was 7 years old. Both my brothers got one, too.

We fished the lakes and ponds of Denver, 1960. Sloan's Lake. Highline Canal. The gutters on South Birch Street. (Sure, there were no fish in

Huck Finn Day at Washington Park.

I kept at it, though. I was determined, even when my little brother tried to credit me for a fish he caught because he felt sorry for me. The little creep.

Eventually, I learned a few things about trout fishing in Colorado.

I used spinning gear and soaked salmon eggs on the Flat Tops Wilderness area when I was 16 years old, with some success.

I fiddled with Panther Martins, Daredevils and Mepps spinners when I was in college, playing hooky at Horsetooth Reservoir.

Then in 1973, my old buddy Bernie Stradley taught me how to fly-



Brown trout.

I love the thrill of the jerk on the other end of the line.

I love the river, the rocks and the water, the eddies and the rapids, the rich and diverse plant life which springs from the precious water.

I love the life on the river, the hundreds of different species of wildlife found there. (I don't pretend to have

Highline Canal or in the gutters on South Birch, but who cared? We were fishing.)

We fished the great South Platte River near Deckers. We fished near Fairplay. We fished beautiful beaver ponds near Estes Park.

All that time, I never caught a darn thing. I couldn't even catch fish on

fish. I had just moved to the West Slope of Colorado. I decided then to live to be 145 years old.

I lived on the Eagle River, in a formerly primitive area between Vail and Edwards. Fishing there in the backyard, and on the Colorado River near State Bridge, was great. I began to catch fish . . . occasionally.

I was not yet a fly-fishing purist. In fact, I subsisted on stocked rainbow trout caught on salmon eggs from Fremont Reservoir when I moved to Montrose a few years later.

Eventually, though, I've come to fish the fly only. I do this not out of snobbery. I do this because it's a gas. I get a thrill from finding and tricking a trout, imitating some tiny bug with a piece of fur I found somewhere.

I still get skunked now and then, but I never leave home without my fly rod.

Obviously, it took me a few years to really learn how to fish. Today's angler can learn how to catch trout in Colorado much faster than I did. There are hundreds of good books on fishing for trout. I'm convinced 70 percent of what can be learned about fishing, can be learned from books. The other 30 percent is getting out there and fishing.

Here are a few tips that I hope move you along that educational path toward great fishing. These ideas are not original. Many of them came from the previous edition of *"How to Catch Trout"* by Vic Boccard. Some information came from *"Fishes of Colorado,"* published in 1971 by the Colorado Game, Fish and Parks Division. The remainder of the information probably came from something I once read or from something I observed on the stream.

Trout are creatures of habit guided by instinct. Like humans, they can be totally unpredictable. One thing is certain, though, the average trout is afraid of everything so it spooks at anything.

Trout eat almost every conceivable form of food, but temperature plays an important role. Extreme lows and highs tend to "throw fish off their feed."

Trout time their eating to periods when aquatic insects such as mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies and other foods are easiest to obtain. They have three general feeding periods during the day. An early morning feeding period starts soon after daylight and continues until about 9 a.m. A short midday feeding period lasts from approximately 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The evening period promotes the most surface feeding activity for trout. This continues from dusk into darkness.

In early spring and in fall when the days are shorter, midday is usually the

most productive. This is because cool mornings and evenings limit insect emergence and activity to the warmer part of the day.

It helps to fish during the times of day when the fish are eating. That doesn't mean, of course, that you can't catch trout any time of the day or night. On the contrary, you may be very successful . . . but you have to be pretty observant, pretty good and pretty lucky.

Fish seem to stake out territories in streams and stay nearby. These territories usually provide easy access to three things: feeding areas, resting areas and cover areas. Many people waste too much time fishing deep holes in streams that are primarily resting or cover areas. Feeding trout normally move to the head or foot of a hole to feed in inlet and outlet riffles. That's where the water is directing their food.

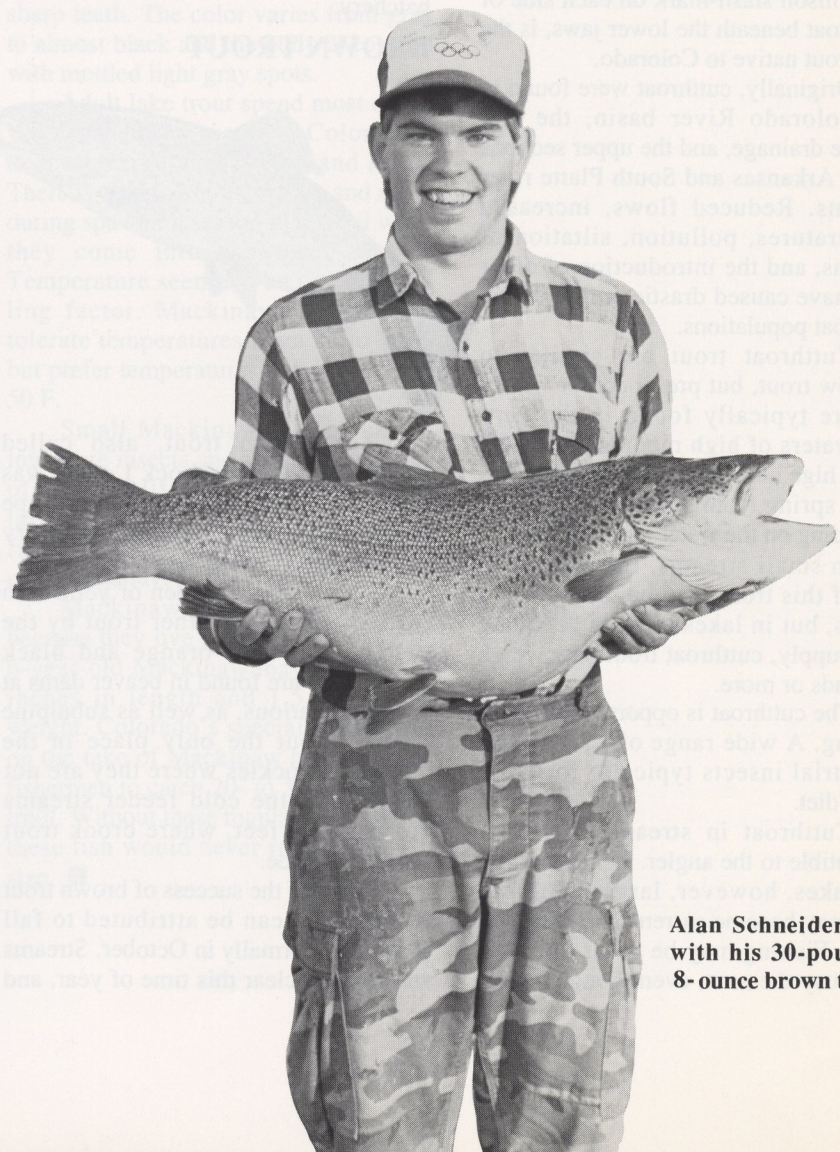
Wintertime is the exception to this deep-water fishing rule. During winter, trout seek deep water to conserve energy. They would exhaust too much energy in faster currents or shallow, colder water.

People tend to fish too deep in lakes, as well. Lake trout and kokanee occupy deep water, but most trout are caught near shore — in water less than 15 feet deep. Again, in wintertime, this may not be true. Since fish like to remain near shelter, always check areas with stumps, downed logs, inundated bushes, rock outcrops and weed beds, regardless of the species you seek.

An avid angler is an interested observer. Try to learn the habits of your quarry by observation and successful fishing experiences.

Keep a log of where you've been so you can repeat successful trips and avoid making the same mistakes twice. Listen to other fishermen. Talk to the people in the local sporting goods stores, and read all you can about trout and trout fishing!

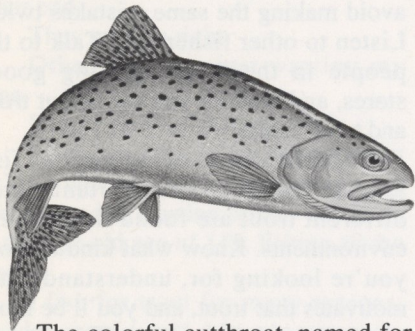
Identification of the various fish species you catch is important, since different trout are found in different environments. Know what kind of trout you're looking for, understand what motivates that trout, and you'll be more successful in your angling. ■



**Alan Schneider
with his 30-pound,
8-ounce brown trout.**

Types Of Trout In Colorado

CUTTHROAT TROUT



The colorful cutthroat, named for the crimson slash-mark on each side of the throat beneath the lower jaws, is the only trout native to Colorado.

Originally, cutthroat were found in the Colorado River basin, the Rio Grande drainage, and the upper sections of the Arkansas and South Platte river systems. Reduced flows, increased temperatures, pollution, siltation of streams, and the introduction of other trout have caused drastic reductions in cutthroat populations.

Cutthroat trout are similar to rainbow trout, but prefer colder waters and are typically found in the very headwaters of high mountain streams and in high mountain lakes. They spawn in the spring from April through June depending on the water temperature.

In small streams, the maximum size of this trout may be only 9 or 10 inches, but in lakes with an adequate food supply, cutthroat trout may weigh 5 pounds or more.

The cutthroat is opportunistic in its feeding. A wide range of aquatic and terrestrial insects typically form the staple diet.

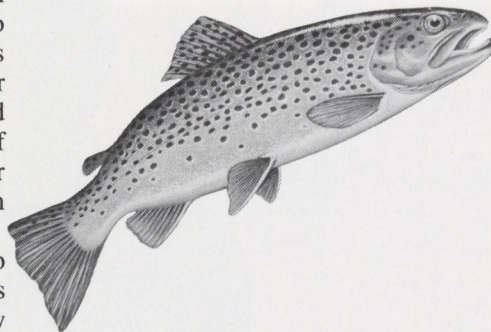
Cutthroat in streams are quite susceptible to the angler. In high mountain lakes, however, larger cutthroat trout may become extremely difficult to catch. Fishing may be great one day, and lousy the next, even though condi-

tions may seem exactly the same each day.

Cutthroat and rainbow trout freely hybridize. The offspring is a colorful trout possessing characteristics of both parent species.

Most high mountain lakes, however, do not have adequate tributary streams for successful spawning. Here, 3- to 4-inch cutthroat trout are dropped into the lakes from a Division of Wildlife airplane. These fish are products of eggs taken from wild populations and hatched in a state fish hatchery.

BROWN TROUT



The brown trout, also called German brown and Lock Leven, was introduced into Colorado from Europe in the 1890s. It is now found in every major drainage in the state.

This slightly golden or yellowish trout differs from other trout by the presence of both orange and black spots. They are found in beaver dams at lower elevations, as well as subalpine lakes. About the only place in the Colorado Rockies where they are not found is in the cold feeder streams above 8,900 feet, where brook trout normally reside.

Much of the success of brown trout in Colorado can be attributed to fall spawning, normally in October. Streams are low and clear this time of year, and

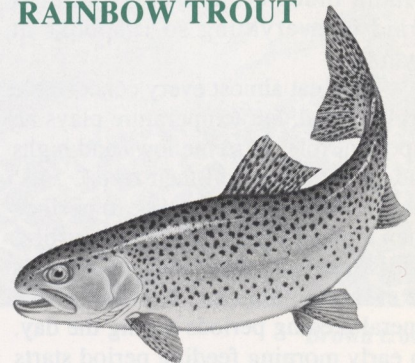
remain so until spring run-off. By the time high and muddy water hits, which can smother trout eggs, young brown trout are ready to emerge from their nest in the gravel of the stream bed. Once free-swimming, the fry can withstand considerable high water.

Brown trout reach a length of about 4 inches in a year, 8 inches in two years, 11 inches in three and 14 inches in four years. Under favorable conditions, brown trout may live well over 10 years and reach weights in excess of 10 pounds in either rivers or lakes. The Colorado record brown trout was caught near Gunnison in 1988. It was 30 pounds!

Insects and crustaceans, such as freshwater shrimp, are the usual staple foods of the brown trout. Bigger browns seek larger food organisms, often fish of suitable size, and may seriously interfere with survival of trout fingerlings.

In most situations, brown trout are harder to catch than rainbow, native or brook trout.

RAINBOW TROUT



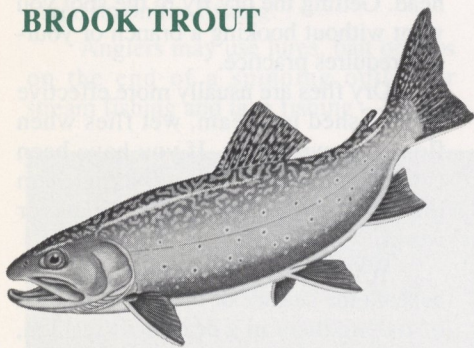
The rainbow trout was introduced from California in 1882 and now is the most common cold-water game fish in Colorado. Rainbows spawn in the spring when they prefer to migrate into streams to build nests and deposit and bury eggs. At a water temperature of 50 F the eggs will hatch in about 30 days.

Rainbows do most of their feeding in early morning and late evening, but can be caught any time during the day. Their diet consists of insects and crustaceans. As rainbows increase in size, however, they may feed on fish half their own size. Anglers should be prepared to change lures and bait frequently until they find the right combination.

Although rainbows can withstand temperatures as high as 85 F for short periods, they prefer water in the 50 to 60 F range. With these temperatures, they reach 8 to 10 inches during their second summer.

Colorado's largest rainbows come from the lower, warmer and richer lakes and rivers. Record rainbows approach 30 pounds, but normally average 8 to 10 inches. These are the ones most stocked by the Division of Wildlife throughout the state. (Rainbows are the most stocked fish because they are easier to raise in a hatchery situation, and they can tolerate a broader range of waters throughout the state.)

BROOK TROUT



Introduced into Colorado in the late 1800s from the East Coast of the United States, brook trout are found in more than 400 lakes and streams in the state.

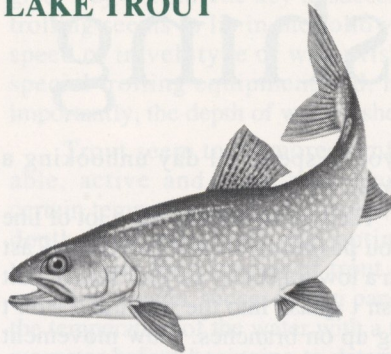
Distribution is primarily controlled by temperature. They prefer temperatures around 55 to 66 F, and flourish in montane and alpine (9,000 to 12,000 feet) waters in Colorado.

Brook trout spawn in fall, usually in October. About 90 percent of all eggs hatched will survive. This means, when you find one brook trout, you'll usually find a whole bunch of them. Because of their numbers, they compete heavily for food. This competition, plus the fact that it takes a long time for fish to grow in such cold water, means brookies rarely get larger than 9 to 11 inches in length. A 6-inch brook trout is consid-

ered pan-size. While the average brookie is small, its fighting ability is marvelous and its eating quality the best.

Brook trout food habits consist mainly of aquatic and terrestrial insects. In lakes, brook trout may also consume considerable quantities of small crustaceans.

LAKE TROUT



The lake trout or Mackinaw is the largest member of the trout and salmon family in North America. It can be distinguished from other trout by its deeply forked tail. The head is large and the mouth is armed with conspicuous, sharp teeth. The color varies from gray to almost black and the body is covered with mottled light gray spots.

Adult lake trout spend most of the year in the deep water of Colorado's deepest, largest reservoirs and lakes. There is a period in the spring and again during spawning season in the fall when they come into shallower waters. Temperature seems to be one controlling factor. Mackinaws are able to tolerate temperatures from 38 to 50 F, but prefer temperatures between 45 and 50 F.

Small Mackinaws eat plankton, immature insects and many other forms of aquatic life. As these fish grow larger, they change to a diet of other fish. That's where those sharp teeth come in handy.

Mackinaw are slow growing because they live in such cold water. A 6-year-old Mackinaw may average 17 inches in length and 1.5 pounds in weight. Colorado's special regulations on the take of Mackinaw have enabled fishermen to catch 20- to 30-pound lake trout. Without these regulations, most of these fish would never reach "trophy" size. ■

Types Of Trout Fishing

Many different methods are used to fish for trout in Colorado. All are successful some of the time.

Poke Fishing: If you lack manual proficiency in manipulating a rod and reel, don't despair. There remains a type of fishing at which you can excel. Any astute beginner can quickly master the technique of "Poke Fishing."

Poke fishing works like this. You sneak up to a lively spot on the stream near a hole at least 4 feet deep, moving slowly and quietly. You must be wary of any shock waves you set off just by walking. Often you crawl. Stop at least a rod's length from the bank. Pause a few seconds. Then, flip your worm or salmon egg into the water — cautiously. If you hook a good trout and it gives you a battle before you reel it in, move on to the next hole. The rest of the fish here are spooked. If you horse a smaller trout out quickly, the spot may be ripe for further action.

Beaver Pond Fishing: If you don't mind getting wet, hassling with willows and battling a few mosquitoes, you'll find beaver pond fishing to be quite productive.

Usually, reaching a beaver pond involves traveling through treacherous potholes, hidden roots, deceptively deep feeder stream bottoms and a solid maze of almost impassable willow jungles. Once you arrive, the trout spook quite easily.

All this, on top of cramped casting room, makes beaver pond fishing very tough. But the rewards are great. Usually you're there all by yourself, and usually there are a lot of fish waiting for you.

Heavy waders really help. Be careful not to make ground tremors when you walk. Keep low on the horizon. Keep your casts under control

or you'll spend all day unhooking a willow.

There is no need to use a lot of line if you position yourself correctly. Cast with a low trajectory so your lure or bait doesn't splash into the water and won't hang up on branches. Slow movement on spinners and lures is usually best.

This is a great place to fish with a fly and bubble on a spinning rod. Place a small, clear bubble on your line just above a swivel. Then tie on about 5 feet of 2-pound test leader to the swivel. Attach a fly to the leader. (I've found imitations of terrestrial insects, such as ants and beetles, work well in these areas.) Again, cast with a low trajectory.

Fly-Fishing: Any type of trout in any type of water, when hooked on a fly, will prove to be a worthy adversary. A trout rarely swallows a fly as it does a worm. Thus, your trout will often be lightly hooked through the lip. One false move and the fish is gone. But,

about 90 percent of a trout's diet comes from tiny aquatic insects, so why not use artificials?

There are four categories of artificial flies: dry flies, wet flies, streamers and nymphs. Dry flies require different techniques than wet flies. Streamer flies must be fished one way, nymphs another.

The dry fly floats on the water. Striking at the very instant a trout sucks it in requires quick reflexes and a cool head. Getting the dry fly to the spot you want without hooking a branch or yourself requires practice.

Dry flies are usually more effective when fished upstream, wet flies when floated downstream. If you have been catching lunker trout by fishing them the other way round, great. Whatever works.

Wet flies are normally fished just beneath the surface of the water. Instead of fishing them in a dead-drift fashion,



Spinner fishing a stream.

many wet flies are fished as if they were swimming.

Nymphs are fished on the bottom of the stream. The trick is to drift the fly as if the water and current turned up a rock and the poor little aquatic bug got kicked off.

Watch your line closely, since you cannot normally see the nymph itself. If your line stops, even for a second, set the hook.

The first streamer was conceived as an artificial imitation of a minnow. Maybe so, but most streamers don't resemble anything, as far as I can tell.

Short quick jerks in retrieving are generally successful. The idea is to make your imitation look like an injured minnow. Streamers fished near the surface seem to work well, casting downstream and across.

Spin fishing: The greatest shot in the arm that trout fishing ever received was the introduction of spin fishing. The principle of casting a fishing line from a fixed spool has brought the fun of angling to millions who would have given up on fly-fishing.

Anglers may use lures, bait or flies on the end of a spinning outfit for stream fishing and lake fishing — and it

doesn't take long to learn how to cast. Still, while this type of fishing has made it easier for millions to enjoy the sport, the skill is still in knowing where to fish, what lure or bait to use, how to keep out of sight and out of hearing, how to set the hook, how to "read" the water and how to play the trout.

Trolling: If you have a boat, this is a great way to fish. The key to successful trolling seems to lie in the following: speed of travel, type of water fished, special trolling equipment and, most importantly, the depth of water fished.

Trout seem to be more comfortable, active and more numerous at certain temperatures. If you troll at the depth that represents the optimum temperature for a species of trout, you will find greater success. You can test the temperature of the water with a thermometer before beginning to determine the ideal depth. Some fishermen now own fish-finders, scopes on the boat that tell the angler where the fish are.

Another important consideration involves the contour of the lake. Try to obtain a geological contour map of your favorite lake. This should improve your trolling results. ■

Finding The Trout

Trout generally eat what they see, so they investigate what's moving and tempting.

Spinners in lakes and streams reflect light, and can catch a trout's eye and spark its curiosity from a considerable distance. The lure doesn't matter, though, as long as the fish grabs it either for food, because it's mad at it, or out of pure curiosity or astonishment.

In streams, trout wait for food to drift to them. Best fishing results occur when bait or artificial flies are carried to the fish by the current as naturally as possible.

In lakes, trout often cruise the shallows when feeding. The best producing method is to attract the fish by movement of the lure from trolling and casting.

Since fishing is a year-round endeavor in Colorado, you need to look for trout in different areas at different times of the year. No matter what time of year, though, the more casts you make into productive water and the longer you keep your lure working through the feeding zone, the more fish you'll fool.

Once you realize this, the only problem is finding those feeding zones, or places where fish eat.

Here are a few places to fish on the river or stream in early spring:

- ◆ Where two currents meet to flow into a pool. Fish the tongue, not the pool.
- ◆ Along flat or slow-moving water running over pebbles, sand or stones and running deep along one bank. Concentrate on the deep side along the bank.
- ◆ Small rapids that appear with high water along the shoreline and which rush between rocks that are usually high and dry all summer. Try the eddies and water behind these rocks.



Fly-fishing a lake.

- ◆ A long, shallow riffle over rocks. Try the foot-deep pockets between these rocks. Many anglers pass these choice spots because they don't believe trout live in such places. Trout do.
- ◆ Long riffles that get plenty of warm sunlight and lead into pools with good cover, such as roots and fallen trees.
- ◆ During the early part of the season, trout seek shelter and vitamins near bushes, roots and branches that touch ground in flooded parts of the stream.

Trout don't inhabit the same places in a stream or lake all seasons of the year. That favorite pool of yours in August may be a complete washout in late May. High water, cold temperature, fast rate of flow, all affect the distribution of early season trout.

Two other facts to consider: Trout don't stay in fast-moving water very long; trout in extremely cold water feed less frequently — sometimes only once every 48 hours.

Now that you know this, don't despair. You can still catch trout in cold water in early spring.

First, remember a trout relies almost entirely upon the current to carry food to him during the early season. It is usually lazy and sluggish. When it does feed, he'll usually pick something off the bottom of the river or stream. Thus, dropping bait or artificial fly into a suitable current and giving it slow play is certainly a step in the right direction. Fishing deep is another. Put the lure or bait right in front of the fish. Make it easy for it.

When fishing in moving water, cast the bait, lure or artificial fly across the upstream into a current tongue that leads into a hole or pool. As the bait sinks, follow its progress by pointing the tip of the rod at the lure as it travels with the current. At the same time, take in any slack line that builds up. Keep the bait tumbling naturally. Gently urge it along by manipulation of the rod and line.

If your line stops or you sense a slight throbbing on the line, keep the line taut, then lightly but steadily increase pressure. If the throbs become more pronounced, set the hook. The trick is to allow enough time for a hesitant trout to get the hook in its mouth, without allowing so much time that it

smartens up and spits it out before you set the hook. No problem! This is where that 30 percent learning emerges — from being out there fishing, and not from reading a book.

Spring doesn't come to the high country until May or June, but that's a good time to fish reservoirs since streams are probably too high and muddy. This is also a good time to use a spinning rod with about 6-pound test.

Many anglers use large plugs. Others use large spoons or the largest spinners they can find. Nothing is too big for big fish.

As the ice melts off the lakes, look along the shallow-water bays for trout feeding near the shore. Again, walk softly. Your prey may be right beneath your feet.

As the season progresses, the fish spread out. All types of fishing may work now. Then again, sometimes nothing works. This is when you must think and read the water carefully.

Look for spots on the stream where you think trout would be holding and waiting for the next meal. Remember, they will still be close to cover, feeding areas and holding areas.

Trout actively feed throughout the summer. Most insect hatches occur from late spring to early fall, and trout catch bugs as they rise from the bottom of the stream to hatch and fly away.

Fly-fishing is excellent at this time of year. Use small nymphs and wet flies to imitate these rising aquatic insects. Cast upstream, using some weight on your line.

Try to get the artificial fly down as fast as possible. Let it bounce on the bottom, dead draft, following the fly with your rod tip, lowering the tip as it floats downstream. If you don't attract fish by the time the fly has moved below you, raise the rod tip and strip the fly back to you. This will provide action to the fly as if an aquatic insect was about to hatch. Then, hang on.

If you see trout rising to small flies on the surface, use a dry fly to imitate the size and color of those live flies.

During these productive fishing months, lures and spinners also work well. On the streams, cast slightly upstream, let the lure sink as much as possible, then, make it swim. Give the trout something to attack.

Lakes and reservoirs are productive as well. While the trout may not be on the bottom of the lake, they've got to

be in there somewhere. If you are shore fishing, cast out, count to five, then reel your lure in. If that doesn't work, cast out, count to seven, then reel your lure in. Then try 12 seconds, or 15 seconds. Whatever it takes. The trout will be found in a certain "zone" on the lake. The counting method helps you keep track of where that zone is.

Insect hatches are about gone in the fall, although fly-fishing is still very good. Trout are trying to fatten up for the winter, so they're going after just about any food source they can find.

Spinners and lures still are effective. The brown trout are spawning and aggressive. The spinning blades of a lure may be just enough to attract them. If one color doesn't work, try another. Don't be afraid to change lures, flies or baits. That's true any time of year.

Ice fishing is an option in the dead of winter. There are numerous lakes across the state that offer the avid winter angler plenty of activity. The key to ice fishing is having an auger, to cut through the ice. Once that's done, the angler must again find the right depth by experimenting. Then, if one hole proves unproductive, cut another hole on another part of the lake. Worms, grub worms and salmon eggs all work well through the ice, as do some crappie jigs, jigged up and down just above the bottom of the lake.

Some waters remain open year-round, usually stretches of river below dams where warmer water is released. Just as in early spring, you need to fish slow and deep during the winter. Trout won't move far for food if they can help it. They are in slow motion this time of year, so you must bounce something off their nose if you are to be successful. ■

What Makes Good Fishing?

You may have heard your parents and your grandparents tell you about fishing in the "good old days." They may have told you, perhaps, how they could "limit out" on 20 or 30 fish per day.

Well, if those days ever existed, they're probably gone now. Let's face it. There are more than a million anglers in Colorado today. Because of Colorado's geography and geology, natural trout reproduction cannot supply a fraction of the demand if everyone wanted to take home a "limit."

The Division of Wildlife tries to provide enough fish for those million anglers. They do it through artificial hatching, rearing and stocking of fish; applied research; development of new fishing waters; acquiring access to public fishing waters; improvement of existing waters, and special regulations.

Helping the natural trout supply with periodic stocking of hatchery-reared fish is the only way to keep fishing fairly good in some waters. Hatchery fish are easily caught by anglers, and any one planting of fish on a small stream seldom provides fair fishing for more than a few weeks. This calls for periodic planting during the main part of the fishing season.

Distribution of hatchery fish in the right amount is as important as raising them. The Division's distribution is based on the acreage of water to be stocked, the suitability of the water for fish from biological and physical standpoints, and the degree of fishing pressure.

Hatchery-reared fish are expensive. Stocking is governed by research that shows where it will provide the greatest benefit to anglers.

Regulations are designed to protect the fish, not hinder anglers. Bag limits are set so everyone has an equal chance in fishing.

As the cost of raising fish continues to go up, bag limits may have to become even more conservative in order to protect our fishing resource.

Currently, about 150 miles of Colorado trout streams are under restricted kill regulations. Parts of 18 rivers, which include some of the best fishing in the state, have a possession limit of no more than two fish per person per day.

To put this in perspective, several thousand miles of Colorado trout streams retain the eight-fish-per-day limit.

The purpose of the limited-kill program is to improve fishing. Where catch-and-release fishing is encouraged, the size and number of fish have improved dramatically.

If you plan on releasing your trout, here are a few things to remember: try not to play the fish to total exhaustion; try to keep the fish in the water as much as possible when attempting to remove the hook; don't use dry hands to grab the fish. That slime on the body of the fish has a purpose. It protects the fish from disease. Dry hands can wipe this mucous off the fish, thus exposing it to other hardships.

Don't yank the hook out of a trout's mouth. If it has swallowed the hook, cut the line as close to the hook as possible. The hook will eventually disintegrate.

To keep the trout from going into a frenzy while you try to take the hook out, turn the fish belly-side up. This disorients the fish momentarily, and



Starting young anglers off right is a very important and rewarding part of the Division's work.

keeps it calm enough for you to extract the hook. Once the hook is out, gently hold the fish upright in the water, moving it back and forth until its gills begin to work and its equilibrium is maintained. It will eventually swim away.

In the future, there may be new ways of funding fishing and other wildlife conservation and recreation programs. As for now, your hunting and fishing license dollars and taxes on hunting and fishing equipment pay for the program. Without more funds, there can be no more fish, no more access, no more stream rehabilitation. That means, we must take care of what we have.

Here are a few final tips that will make the fishing experience better for everyone:

- ◆ Respect the environment. Enjoy it and gain from it what you can, but don't destroy it;
- ◆ Respect the territorial rights of fellow anglers. Don't stomp through a portion of stream being fished by another angler. Walk around quietly and don't disrupt his or her fun;
- ◆ Don't crowd in on successful anglers. It seems particularly in lakes, whenever someone starts catching lots of fish from a particular spot, more anglers descend upon that spot. It's rarely the spot that is responsible. It's usually the anglers. The successful angler will move to another spot and continue to take fish, while the intruders will draw a blank;
- ◆ Be careful how and where you cast. Be especially mindful of your back cast. It's much more satisfactory to end up with a trout on your hook instead of part of your earlobe, or the earlobe of someone close by;
- ◆ Don't litter. Trash on the shoreline ruins everyone's trip;
- ◆ If you are going to keep a trout, kill it immediately after landing it. A rap on the head with your knife or against a rock will usually do the job quickly. Not only will it put the fish out of its misery, it will ensure better eating when it ends up as part of your meal.
- ◆ Don't fall in. It muddies up the water, scares the fish, and some other angler must spend time away from the pursuit of his sport to fish you out;
- ◆ Limit your kill. Don't kill your limit.

Where To Go

(Most areas accessible by vehicle)

Boulder Area — Boulder, Gross and Baker (Nederland) reservoirs; Long, Brainard, Rainbow, Red Rock, Jasper and Corona lakes; North Boulder, Middle Boulder, South Boulder, Left Hand and Jim creeks. Principal towns: Boulder, Nederland, Ward and Rollinsville. Area reached via U.S. 36 and Colorado 119 and 72.

Deckers Area — Cheesman Reservoir; West Creek Lake; South Platte River; Goose, West and Trout creeks. Principal town: Deckers. Area reached via U.S. 285 and Colorado 67.

Denver Metro Area — Arvada, Bear Creek, Chatfield, Cherry Creek, Croke, Quincy and Main (Osner) reservoirs; Barr, Webster, Standley, Berkeley, Rocky Mountain, Sloan's, Centennial Park, Washington Park and City Park lakes.

Dillon Area — Dillon, Green Mountain and Williams Fork reservoirs; Officer's Gulch, Lower and Upper Cataract, Slate, Surprise, Eagle's Nest, Rainbow and Eaglesmere lakes; Wheeler and Curtin ponds; Blue River, Snake and Swan creeks. Principal towns: Dillon, Frisco and Breckenridge. Area reached via Interstate 70.

Dolores-Cortez Area — McPhee, Narranguinnep, Miramonte, Totten, Summit, Jackson Gulch, Joe Moore, Groundhog and Trout reservoirs; Mancos and Dolores rivers; Fish Creek. Principal towns: Mancos, Cortez and Dolores. Area reached via U.S. 160 and Colorado 145.

Eagle Area — Deep, Sylvan (Zurcher), Sweetwater, Black and Homestake lakes; Colorado and Eagle rivers; Deep, Sweetwater, Gypsum, Brush, Gore, Derby and Homestake creeks. Principal towns: McCoy, State Bridge, Eagle, Minturn, Gypsum and Dotsero. Area reached via U.S. 6 and 24.

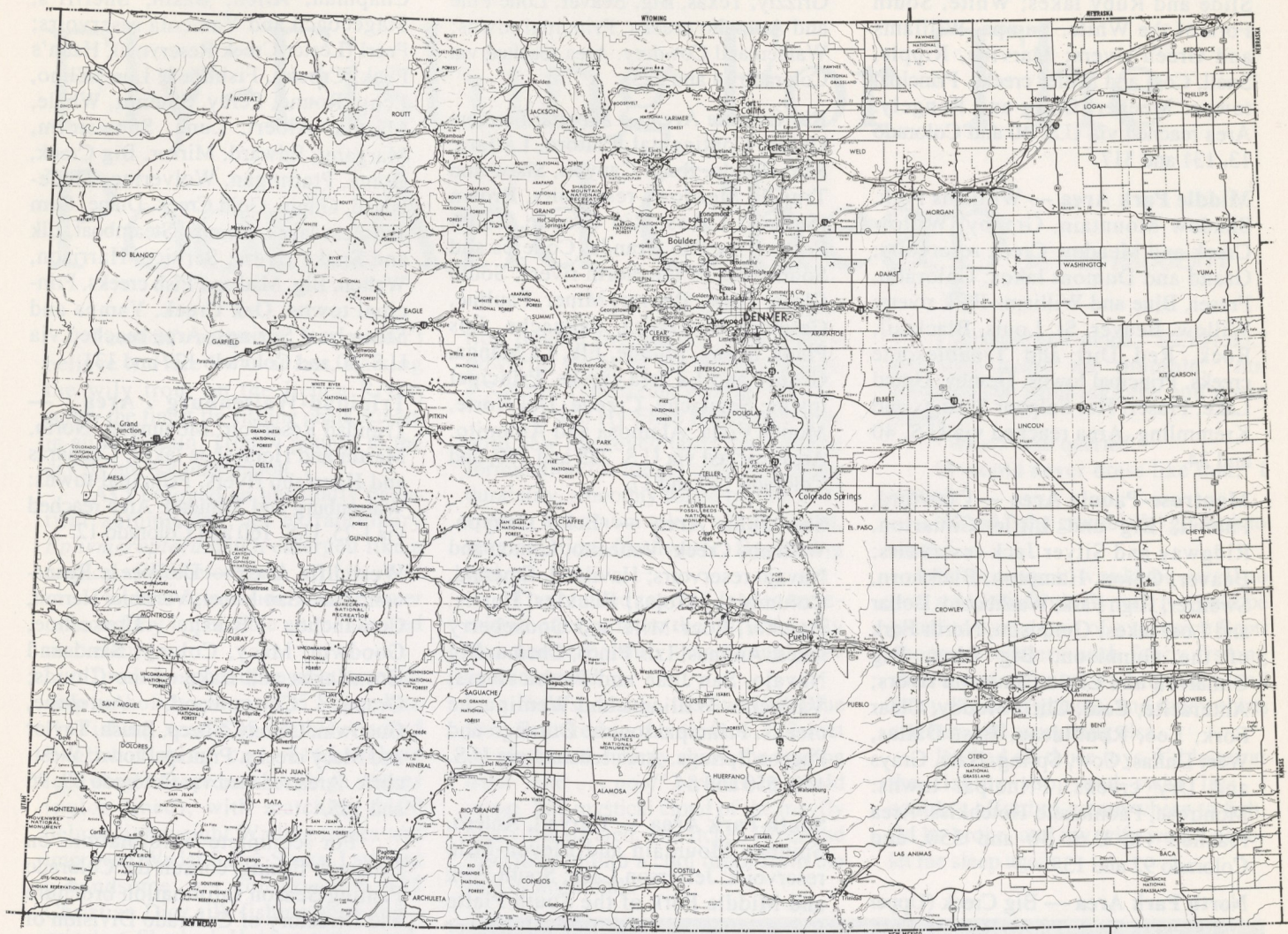
Eastern Colorado Area — Jumbo, Sterling, Prewitt and Jackson reservoirs. Principal town: Sterling. Area reached via I-76. Lake Hasty. Principal town: Lamar. Area reached via U.S. 50. Pueblo Reservoir. Principal town: Pueblo. Area reached via I-25.

Estes Park Area — Lake Estes and Mary's Lake; Barbour Ponds; Carter, Pinewood and Flatiron reservoirs; Big Thompson, North Fork of the Thompson and Fall rivers; North and South St. Vrain and Glacier creeks. Principal towns: Estes Park, Lyons, Loveland and Longmont. Area reached via I-25, U.S. 34 and Colorado 66 and 7.

Evergreen-Bailey Area — Evergreen, Beartracks, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Abyss and Sqauretop lakes; North Fork of the South Platte River; Bear, Deer, Elk, Buffalo, Geneva, Beaver, Craig, Duck and Scott Gomer creeks. Principal towns: Evergreen and Bailey. Area reached via U.S. 285 and Colorado 74 and 75.

Fort Collins Area — Horsetooth and Lon Hagler reservoirs; Chambers, Watson, Laramie, Parvin, Lost, Dowdy, Twin, Bellaire, Hohnholz and Creedmore lakes; Cache la Poudre and Laramie rivers and Big and Little South Forks of the Poudre. Principal town: Fort Collins. Area reached via Colorado 14 and U.S. 287.

Glenwood Springs Area — Lost Man, Ruedi and Chapman reservoirs; Maroon, Snowmass, Christine, Dinkle, Thomas and Ivanhoe lakes; Colorado, Fryngpan, Roaring Fork and Crystal rivers; Snowmass, Maroon, Capitol, Woody, Castle, Garfield and East Divide creeks. Principal towns: Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, Aspen and Redstone. Area reached via I-70 and Colorado 82, 104 and 133. Near Rifle, in the northwest portion of



the Glenwood area — Rifle and Harvey Gap reservoirs; Shadow, Blair, Adams and Meadow Creek lakes; Colorado River; East Rifle, Main Rifle and Meadow creeks. Principal town: Rifle. Area reached via I-70 and Colorado 325.

Grand Mesa Area — Reed, Griffith, Bonham, Big Creek, Vega, Waterdog, Long Slough, Bull Creek, Cottonwood, Neversweat, Deep Slough, Granby, Battlement, Wier, Park and Johnson reservoirs; Jumbo, Buttes, Mesa, Island, Barren, Round, Leon, Alexander, Ward, Twin, Eggleston, Trickle Park, Forest, Carp and Mosquito lakes; Ward, Surface, Leroux and Kaiser creeks. Principal towns: Mesa and Cedaredge. Area reached via I-70, U.S. 24 and 50, and Colorado 65 and 92.

Gunnison Area — Blue Mesa, Morrow Point, Taylor, Dome (Upper and Lower) and Needle Creek reservoirs; Lake San Cristobal; Longs, Emerald, Irwin, Spring Creek, Larson, Mirror, Waterdog, Rainbow, Allyn and Deer Creek lakes; Gunnison, East, Taylor and Lake Fork of the Gunnison rivers; Elk, Tomichi, Quartz, Cochetopa, Ohio, Cement, Soap, Gold, State, Brush, Spring, Cebolla, Henson, Pine and Willow creeks. Principal towns: Gunnison, Lake City and Crested Butte. Area reached via U.S. 50 and 24, and Colorado 135 and 149.

Idaho Springs Area — Chicago, Summit, Echo, Clear, Silver Dollar, Chinn's and St. Mary's lakes; Clear, West Fork and South Fork of the Clear, and Fall rivers; Chicago Creek. Prin-

cipal towns: Idaho Springs and Georgetown. Area reached via I-70 and Colorado 103.

Leadville-Canon City Area — O'Haver, Skagway and Clear Creek reservoirs; Twin, Turquoise, Cottonwood, Stout Creek and Bushnell lakes; Arkansas and Little Arkansas rivers; Lake, Cottonwood, Poncha, Chalk, Half Moon, Tennessee, Hayden, Texas and Beaver creeks. Principal towns: Leadville, Buena Vista, Salida and Canon City. Area reached via U.S. 24, 285 and 50.

Meeker-Craig Area — Rio Blanco, Kenney and Ralph White (Fortification) reservoirs; Lake Avery, Trappers, Little Trappers, Vaughn, Sable, Marvine, Skinny Fish, McGinnis, Peltier, Wall,

Guthrie, Rainbow, Lake of the Woods, Slide and Ruby lakes; White, South Fork of the White, Yampa, Williams and Green rivers; Marvine, Ripple, Snell, Coal and Miller creeks. Principal towns: Meeker, Craig and Rangely. Area reached via U.S. 40 and Colorado 13, 131 and 317.

Middle Park Area — Williams Fork, Shadow Mountain, Granby, Willow Creek and Meadow Creek reservoirs; Grand and Dumont lakes; Colorado, Fraser, Blue and Williams Fork rivers; Willow, Beaver, St. Louis, Blacktail, Rock, Red Dirt and Troublesome creeks. Principal towns: Granby, Grand Lake, Fraser, Hot Sulphur Springs and Kremmling. Area reached via U.S. 40 and 34.

Montrose-Paonia Area — Crawford, Paonia, Big and Little Cimarron, Ridgway and Silver Jack reservoirs; Beaver, Onion, Hampton, Buckhorn, Sweitzer, High Park, Washboard, Dollar and Lost lakes; Gunnison, North Fork of the Gunnison, Big Blue, Big Cimarron and Little Cimarron rivers; Anthracite, Coal, Cliff, Muddy, Clear Fork, Lee, Roubideau, East Dallas, West Dallas, Cow, Spring, Nate, Grays and Dry creeks. Principal towns: Montrose, Paonia and Hotchkiss. Area reached via U.S. 50 and 550, and Colorado 92 and 135.

North Park Area — Big Creek (Upper and Lower), Teal, Tiago, Ranger, East, North and South Delaney Butte, Cowdrey, Lost, Blue, Slide, Rainbow, Agnes, Arapaho and North Michigan lakes and Lake John; North Platte, North Fork of the Platte, Michigan, Illi-

nois and Canadian rivers; Big and Little Grizzly, Texas, Big, Beaver, Lone Pine and Arapaho creeks. Principal towns: Walden and Cowdrey. Area reached via Colorado 14 and 125.

Rio Grande Area — Alberta, Farmers Union, Continental, Platoro, La Jara, Rito Hondo, Road Canyon, Shaw and Trujillo Meadows reservoirs; Brown (School) Lakes; Rio Grande, South Fork of the Rio Grande, Conejos and South Fork of the North rivers; South Clear, Trout, Beaver, Miner, Pauline, Carnero, La Garita, Saguache, Los Pinos, Sheep, Middle, Elk, La Manga, Grouse and La Jara creeks. Principal towns: Saguache, Creede, Del Norte, Monte Vista, Alamosa and Antonito. Area reached via U.S. 285 and 160, and Colorado 149 and 17.

San Juan Area — Echo Canyon, Williams Creek, Vallecito, Lemon and Navajo reservoirs; Haviland, Emerald, Columbine, Molas, Buckles, Harris, Hatcher, Four-Mile and Gooseberry lakes; Animas, Los Pinos, Chama, Big Navajo, San Juan and Piedra rivers; Vallecito, Williams and Weminuche creeks. Principal towns: Durango and Pagosa Springs. Area reached via U.S. 160, 550 and 84.

South Park Area — Tarryall, Antero, Spinney Mountain and Eleven-Mile reservoirs; Jefferson Lake; South Fork and Middle Fork of the South Platte River; Jefferson, Lost, Tarryall, Beaver and Four-Mile creeks. Principal town: Fairplay. Area reached via U.S. 24 and 285.

Steamboat Springs Area — Stillwater, Chapman, Allen, Basin, Sheriff's, Stagecoach and Yamcola reservoirs; Pearl (Lester Creek Reservoir), Hahn's Peak, Crosho, Fishhook, Lost, Elmo, Long, Round, Percy, Summit, Whale, Martha, Albert, Luna, Snowstorm, Margaret, Edward, Mirror, Big Creek, Dome, Ptarmigan, Wolverine, Three-Island, Gilpin, Gold Creek, Diane, Gem and Bear lakes; Yampa, Steamboat, Elk and Snake rivers; Service, Harrison, Walton, Big, Mad and Fish creeks. Principal towns: Oak Creek, Yampa and Steamboat Springs. Area reached via U.S. 40 and Colorado 129 and 131.

Trinidad-Walsenburg Area — Trinidad Reservoir; Monument, North, Martin and Horseshoe lakes; Cucharas and Huerfano rivers. Principal towns: Walsenburg and Trinidad. Area reached via I-25, U.S. 160 and Colorado 12.

Westcliffe Area — De Weese Reservoir; Lake San Isabel, Venable, Hermit, Comanche, Brush, Horseshoe, Goodwin, Macy, Colony, Sand and Horn lakes and Lake of the Clouds; Grape, Cottonwood, Antelope, Goodwin, Colony, Sheep, Brush, Taylor and Macy creeks. Principal town: Westcliffe. Area reached via Colorado 69, 96 and 165.

For complete information on Colorado fishing, consult the Colorado Fishing Season Information brochure and Directory of Colorado Division of Wildlife Properties, available from all Division of Wildlife offices and license agents (such as sporting goods stores) free of charge. ■

Fly-Fishing For The Poor And Cheap

By BILL HAGGERTY

I couldn't believe it. Just couldn't believe it. Here I was at last, stalking the wily trout on the Itchen River, surely the finest fly-fishing chalk stream in all of Britain. Trout 4 pounds to the dry fly are not uncommon.

As I enjoyed an unusually beautiful autumn day, an extraordinary *Ephemeroptera* hatch emerged like a magical cloud before me.

I knelt at stream side, and the water reflected my impeccable attire. I looked marvelous.

I was a picture of royal statesmanship on holiday in my \$35 Super-Lux fly-fishing vest, \$25 double-visored English fishing cap, \$165 deluxe lightweight neoprene chest-high waders (nylon lined), with matching \$100 deluxe lightweight Wading Shoes and improved Wader Saver Socks. I sported a handsome, yet conservative, \$75 Christian Dior silk fishing shirt and a priceless Sherlock Holmes-type, hand-carved English smoking pipe.

As I returned the \$59 collapsible wading staff to its holster, I spotted a rising trout through rose-colored, custom-made \$200 Ralph Lauren edition wraparound Polaroid sunglasses.

The trout methodically sipped on *Ephemeroptera*.

Slowly, purposefully, I produced a \$35 gold-plated crush-proof, flat foam-padded fly box from my perfectly designed vest pocket. Maintaining a stealthy gaze toward the rise, 37 feet away under an overhanging alder, I deftly selected a No. 28 Swirling Blue Dun pattern, recently purchased for \$2.65 (American money) at the English Gentleman's Fly-Fishing Shoppe in the heart of Hampshire's chalk stream country. Just as deftly, I tied the fly onto an \$8 braided leader with 7x tippet.

As the alders and tall grasses on the bank gently swayed in the afternoon breeze, I gracefully cast the tiny imita-

tion toward the hungry trout with a powerful stroke of my \$1,300, 8-foot, 4.5-ounce Tonkin cane bamboo fly rod.

The \$40 Hy-Flote fluorescent line, with new improved taper and coating formulation for longer casts and better durability, smoothly rolled off the \$147 special aluminum alloy, silver-plated, single-action, freshwater, fly-fishing reel.

The braided tapered leader transmitted energy from the unfurling fly line more efficiently than I could have ever imagined.

Then suddenly, the Swirling Blue Dun fluttered to the surface, 3.2 feet upstream and directly above the feeding trout. And . . . *poof!* I awoke in a cold sweat. The mystical cloud of the mayfly hatch disappeared. The Itchen River had transformed into a cool drool from the side of my mouth.

I shivered and shook. "\$2,191.65," my wife heard me mumble, "not counting the smoking pipe and plane ticket."

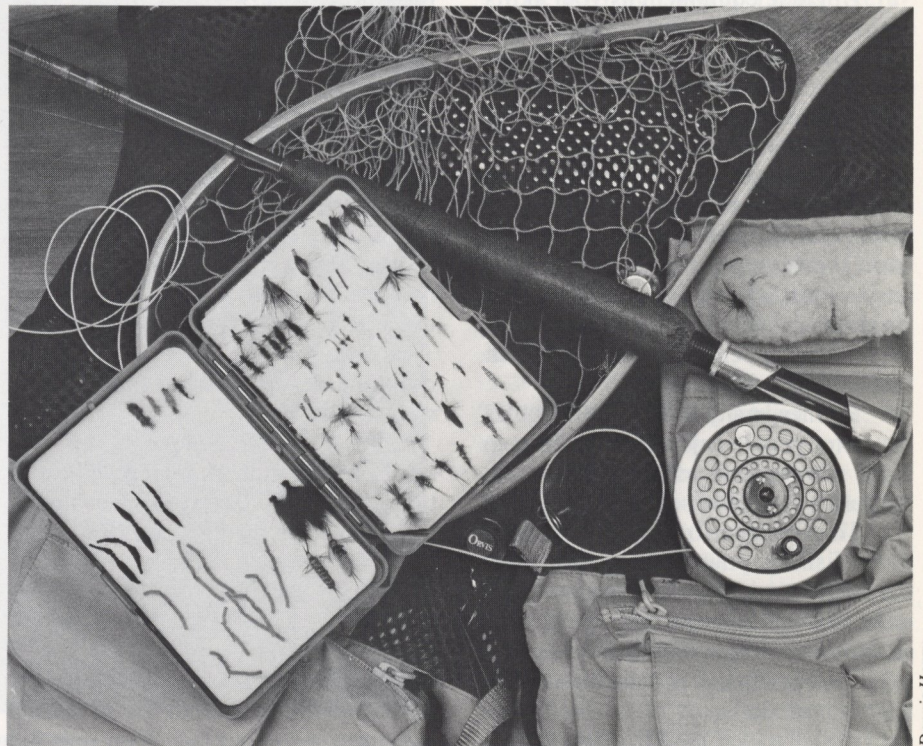
"What?" she queried.

"I would never dress like that," I replied.

"Good," she grumbled, "go back to sleep."

Of course, it would be swell to own a \$1,300 Orvis fly rod. It would be grand to own a pair of expensive Scott neoprene waders with fancy fishing shoes, and a fancy wading stick and fancy Polaroid glasses, and fancy shirts and hats and everything else.

If I had all those toys, I'd loiter at the fishing shop and swap lies. I couldn't afford to go anywhere to fish. I'd be broke, and my wife would never let me sleep again.



Dennis Henry

I'm not rich. I can't afford to partake in the piscatorial philanderings of royalty and country gentlemen. But I can afford to fly-fish! It's not the cheapest endeavor on earth, but it's not the most expensive either. I love it . . . and part of the challenge for me is to do it inexpensively. And I'll tell you how I do it.

It gives me a childlike thrill to fool a dumb fish on an ugly homemade fly, which cost four cents to make, casting that ugly fly from a 427 fiberglass fly rod with more nicks on it than St. Christopher's wading staff.

I then loiter on the bank of the Gunnison River near my home, drink a Coors (instead of smoking a pipe), and snicker at the rich yuppie on the Frypan River (Colorado's answer to the Itchen River) who says: "You know, it's much better to look good than to feel good."

As a highly specialized pursuit, fly-fishing has a special language, special clothing, and more technological gadgets than you can shake an Ugly Stick at. This doesn't mean, however, that you must have a master's degree in fly-fishing and a million dollars to achieve success in the sport.

There are basic pieces of equipment you'll need, of course, starting with the fly. By sticking to the basics, though, you can fly-fish for less than \$165.

Upgrade equipment as your skills and tastes dictate. But, if you don't enjoy this, the finest sport in all the universe, sell your gear and return to worm dunking. I've had bad dreams about that, too!

You may be uneasy, at first, from what seems to be a highly complicated endeavor. This is natural and stems from the fact that fly fishermen you know only speak Latin instead of English — especially around you. When this happens again, remind them that Latin is a dead language.

Further, many specialized hobbies that some people enjoy seem baffling to those who are not yet initiated into its mysteries . . . and miseries.

To eliminate some of the mystery in fly-fishing, you need to know what the basic tools are. Before you can indulge in this profound sport, you should have an idea of what it will cost.

Here's a list of basics, with approximate costs:

FISHING LICENSE: Residents —

\$15 plus 25 cents for search and rescue; nonresidents — \$40.25. (Hey, I work for the Division of Wildlife! What did you think I'd put first?)

FLIES: The backbone of fly-fishing, so to speak. \$1 to \$2.25 normally; about 50 cents for flies imported from Taiwan; less than a nickel each if you tie your own.

FLY ROD: \$50. Don't get a \$1,300 rod (yet!) For most waters in Colorado, I'd suggest a two-piece rod, 8 feet long, matched to a six-seven weight line. (Yes, lines are graded. Don't worry, the size line to get is written on the rod.)

Graphite is big right now and graphite rods are quite nice. It is possible to purchase a \$50 graphite rod. You could also get a fiberglass rod at this price. (Most likely, you'll get a glass/graphite mix.)

REEL: Ranges from \$10 to \$200; try to pay \$20 for a simple, single-action reel. Don't get an automatic reel. They're too heavy and have too many parts to screw up. The reel simply holds the line, unless you hook Big Wally. Then, you'll have to play the fish from the reel. Nonetheless, my \$15 Hardy reel works just fine. Make sure your reel matches the rod and the fly line. Ask the dealer if you're not sure.

FLY LINE: \$15 for a good Cortland 333 fly line. The fishing shop should put 20-pound backing on it, so the line will flow easily off the reel. (Also, you'll need more line when you encounter Big Wally.) Start with a double-taper floating line. Both ends of this 35-meter-long line are tapered. When one end of the line wears out in a couple of years, turn it around and use the other end. As long as you keep it clean, the line will float for dry fly fishing. If you fish with wet flies or nymphs under the surface of the water, use a lead weight to get your fly down. Thus, you should order a DT7F line, or double-tapered floating line for a 7-weight rod.

LEADERS: They go on the working end of the line. They're tapered, with the heavy end attaching to the fly line and the light end (the tippet) to the fly. \$1 each. Get a couple. Also, pick up a spool of 4-pound tippet, (\$1.30) for when yours breaks in the tree behind you.

BASEBALL CAP: You already have one. You'll need it. Try to make a statement with your hat. Wear one that

says something like, "CO-OP."

SUNGLASSES: You probably already have these, too, but Polaroid glasses that reduce glare are a must, even if they're just the clip-on type for \$8.

SPEAKER WIRE: Tie your glasses on so you don't lose them. Free (look in the garage).

FINGERNAIL CLIPPERS: This is the most important piece of fly-fishing paraphernalia you can own. You'll use them instead of your teeth dozens of times a day when changing flies. Get new ones. Yours are already dull. Spend 80 cents, and don't use them on your fingernails.

FLY VEST: A vest is necessary to hold "things." In fact, everything. You become a walking creel. You don't have "things" swinging from your side when you cast. Get a vest with sheepskin patches to dry out your used flies, and with as many pockets as you can get for \$20.

FLY BOX: Film cans are free and hold dozens of flies. Be cautioned, however, when the wind blows and you're picking through a film can full of flies, you may create your own hatch. Get at least one "real" fly box, \$6.

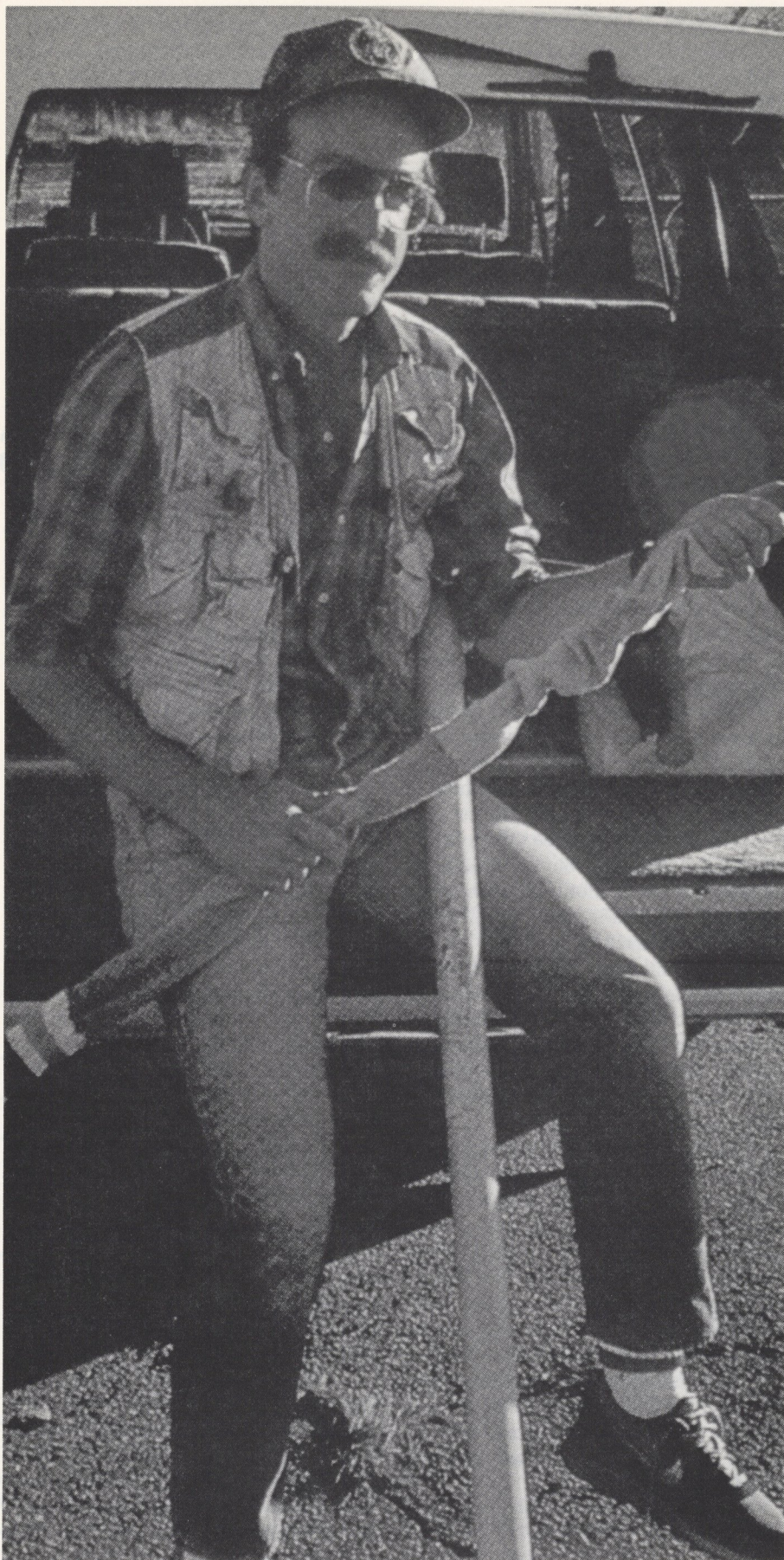
FLY ROD HARD CASE: Many expensive rod cases simply hold the rod when you aren't. They really don't protect it. Why pay \$35 for a cheap case? For \$4.67 at the plumbing supply store, you can make your own super-sturdy rod case from 1.5-inch PVC pipe and two caps.

FLY ROD SOCK: The rod should be stored in a sock, inside the hard case to prevent mildew and bumps that could bend rod ferrules. I have a handsome one made of two old worn-out blue socks and one old white sock, toes cut out and sewn together. They were free. I did, however, wash them first!

REEL CASE: Same thing — an old sock works quite well.

LINE CLEANER: For \$1 it will save your line and, besides, you have plenty of pockets in your new vest to carry it.

ORANGE FLAGGING: Many fishermen don't see fish strike until it's too late. Tie a small strip of orange flagging between line and leader, then clip tight to the line. This acts as a strike indicator. I've purchased disposable strike indicators in fancy plastic containers for \$3. However, I found a piece of orange flagging on a tree in the



The author with his homemade fly rod cover and case.

woods a while back. It should last another four years or so.

FISHING KNIFE: You have to clean the fish you keep, but don't get an expensive knife. You'll just lose it. \$10.

TWIST-ON LEAD SINK: These lead strips come in matchbooks and twist easily onto the leader. They'll get your fly down to where the fish are, on the bottom of the river or lake. Absolutely essential at 50 cents.

BUTTERFINGER: Don't leave home without it. 50 cents.

BUG JUICE: As soon as you sit to eat the Butterfinger, mosquitoes will eat you. Fight back. Nuke 'em with Muskol, \$3.50. Remember, however, to wash your hands well before you tie on another fly. Fish can smell bug poison. It doesn't smell very natural.

ONE BEER: Not for minors, of course, but for that first fish caught. 75 cents. (Splurge!)

SACK LUNCH: Your wife, husband or mother will graciously make this — as long as you don't spend any more money.

OLD, CLEAN RAG: Believe me, toilet paper doesn't stay dry in a fly vest. Free.

RAIN JACKET: This doesn't have to be Gore-Tex, or anything fancy. In fact, it could have holes in it. You'll be wet anyway. Simply carrying this item wards off rain clouds. (Buying a new rain jacket means it will rain!)

RUBBER INNER TUBE: Actually, you need only a small 2-inch-square piece to take the kink out of the leader. Free (check the garage again).

TAPE MEASURE: There are numerous special regulations on Colorado fly-fishing waters. You need to know how long your fish really are, not how long you say they are. Don't pay for a tape measure. Paint marks on your fishing rod or draw a measuring stick on your fly vest.

FISHING SEASON INFORMATION BROCHURE: Also free, at sporting goods stores.

Those are the essentials. That comes to \$160.27. (Package includes 20 handmade flies; or two Taiwan flies; or one American-made fly.)

Naturally, there are hundreds of other items you may need or desire as time goes on. Nothing else, however, is absolutely essential to striking forth into the wilderness to your favorite stream, and whipping it with your new fly line

Rick Schultz

to a white, foamy froth.

Below is a list of optional items:

WADERS: I hate to admit this, especially in front of my wife, but you don't really need waders. One of the greatest fishermen I ever knew, Walt Woodward, once asked a fisherman what he was doing in chest-high waders. "Well, I'm going to wade out in the water and catch fish," replied the confused soul.

"That's where the fish are," Walt retorted. "What do you want to do, scare 'em all away?" Walt then proceeded to catch the most and biggest fish of the day not 5 feet from the bank. He never got his feet wet!

Unfortunately, most anglers aren't as good as Walt. They firmly believe "fishing is always better on the other side of the stream." Thus, most anglers purchase waders.

One axiom covers the purchase of waders: "The water is *always* one inch deeper than the height of your hip boots." If you're going to purchase waders, get chest-highs, not hip boots.

MORE FLIES: You can use — and lose — more flies than your spouse or mother can imagine. When you discover patterns that are successful for you, tie them like mad. Then, trade with the woman down the hall who ties the mean swirling Blue Dun. Another rule of thumb: "Always ask for flies for Christmas."

MORE FLY BOXES: Hey, they're inexpensive and make great stocking stuffers.

TWO GOOD BOOKS: Roughly 70 percent of what can be learned about fly-fishing can be learned from a good book. The other 30 percent is practice on the stream — looking, casting and eating your Butterfinger, then looking and casting some more. Therefore, one book should be a beginner's guide to fly-fishing. I recommend the *Curtis Creek Manifesto*, but there are hundreds of good fly-fishing books on the market. One of the better ones is titled, oddly enough, *First Cast, The Beginner's Guide to Fly-Fishing*.

Your second book should be the latest novel you're reading. This is necessary for one of two reasons: (1) You've caught so many fish you need a break; or (2) You haven't caught any fish and you need a break.

ONE FLY CASTING VIDEO: for \$2 to \$3, you can rent a great fly casting video. It will save you hours, days, years of trial and error.

EXTRA FLY ROD: Kept in the vehicle, you'll need it sooner or later. Trust me.

FISHING NET: It is very useful, if you know how to use it, and you can carry it without snagging every branch between every fishing hole on the entire river. Ask for one for your birthday.

EXTRA CLOTHES: Leave these in the car where they'll stay dry. (Quite frankly, Walt Woodward was the only person I ever met who could stay dry for an entire day of fishing.)

COOLER FOR ONE BEVERAGE (minimum): For the long trip home.

HIDE-A-KEY: You'll need this one too, more times than you're willing to admit.

FLY-TYING KIT: Personally, I feel this is essential since I lose about a half-dozen flies each time I go out. At \$1 to \$2.25 each, that's a lot of beer money.

You don't have to spend a fortune to learn how to tie flies. You can find most of the materials you'll use to tie these little lures . . . dog hair, macrame hangers, bird feathers and rabbit fur.

Fly tying will enhance your knowledge of the sport and your knowledge of aquatic insects. It should also improve your success, and it gives you time to daydream . . . dream about . . .

The Gunnison River. It looked promising as you knelt at stream side, enjoying a cool, soft breeze on a warm summer day. The water was colored, but the fish couldn't see and would strike foolishly at a mayfly hatch being blown upstream by the breeze.

Three casts, slightly upstream, with a No. 12 hairy brown nymph produced nothing. Then, on the fourth cast, as the line swung out and down, you lifted the rod tip slightly, and *wham*, a beautiful 17-inch wild fighting rainbow trout broke the surface in a breathtaking tailspin. Your ugly hand-made fly was firmly imbedded in its lip.

The cool drool now dribbled down your own chin and you realized, *you're* the one who is hooked. And, with a broad, contented smile, you looked simply marvelous! ■

Fly Tying For Beginners

Tie Your Own Flies by Following These Step-by-step Instructions

By TOM HARBOUR

Art by AMY L. PETTY

Few things in a young child's life can match the thrill of tying his or her own flies and then landing a "lunker" — a small trout, a bluegill or even an acrobatic grayling — on this original creation.

Fly tying can be a simple proposition, requiring just a few tools and very little expense. When I was a boy, I made and scrounged many of my tools, using clothespins, tin foil, dog hair, etc. My father patiently taught me how to tie flies using newly purchased, first-class tools . . . which I promptly lost. I must have listened fairly well, despite my inability to walk through a doorway without first caroming off both sides of the doorjamb. Kids sometimes appear dumb when they just have other things on their minds.

At any rate, many fish and fishing flies have come and gone since then. The streams and rivers of Colorado are good for anglers and many a fish yet waits to tip the scales. A willing and able child can learn any skill, and perhaps these instructions will help both children and parents enjoy the positive joys of fishing.

Young or old, the average fly fisher spends the long winter months in endless hours of planning and dreaming up new creations to tantalize the fish. Much spare time is devoted to the care of tackle and yearning for the first hatch of the summer. When finished mending and restocking the tackle supply, the true fly fisher does it all over again.

But the winter months don't have to be a time of simple hibernation and nervous activity. Many pleasing and profitable hours can be spent tying your own flies. Even those who can't thread a needle, including the most fumble-fingered child, can produce flies capable of taking the wariest of fish. By using your own flies, you'll get total satisfaction from your efforts. And using your own creations (especially if you've filched a few hairs from the tail of your family dog) adds a new dimension to your fishing pleasure. As your fly tying skill increases, so will your enjoyment both on the stream and at your workbench.

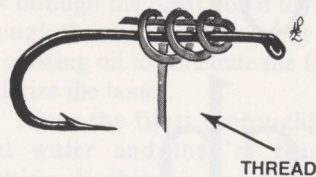
With a little patience and a few simple materials, the beginner can tie fish-taking flies; perhaps not the gaudy variety that catch anglers in the stores, but simple flies that catch fish! A beginner needs only these few minimal supplies:

- ◆ A fly-tying vise. An adequate one can be fashioned from a pair of pliers or vise-grips.
- ◆ Hooks (No. 10 or No. 12 for the beginner).
- ◆ Feathers. Stiff, unwebbed neck hackles for the hackle part of the fly and stiff hairs from the tail or breast section of the bird's skin — be it chicken or pheasant. Some stiff hairs from the tail of the family dog work real well, too.
- ◆ Hackle pliers. Can be made from a clothespin.
- ◆ Thread.
- ◆ Small, sharp scissors.
- ◆ Clothespins. Can be modified for a variety of fly-tying operations, including hackle pliers and thread bobbin.
- ◆ Tin foil. Holds the hackles down while finishing the head of the fly. A clear-finish nail polish protects the head of the finished fly.

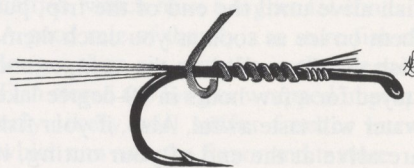
The actual tying can be broken down into six basic steps:

Step 1. Place the hook in your vise so that the eye of the hook faces right. If you're left-handed, place it to face left. Wrapping the thread away from you, wind on a few turns. Then wind back over these turns so that the thread is firmly fixed on the hook and then cut

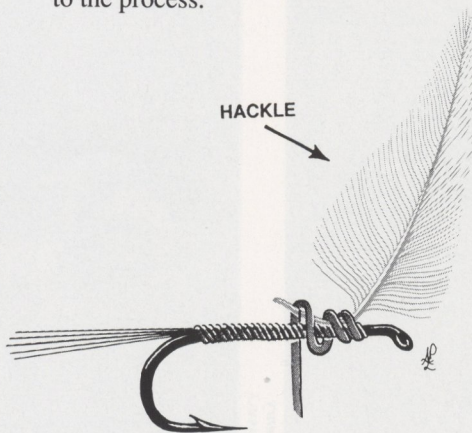
the loose end close to the shank of the hook. Always use your hackle pliers (clothespin) to keep the thread taut and to prevent your thread from unraveling and destroying your fly.



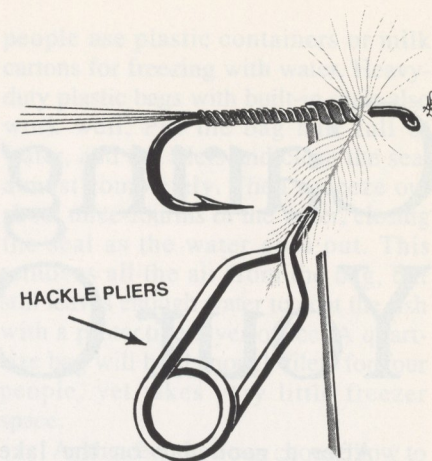
Step 2. To make the tail, cut five or six hairs from your chosen tail material and then lay them along the hook so that a suitable length protrudes from the bend of the hook. Make about six turns around the hairs and then cut off the extra hair. Wind the thread toward the eye, making the body smooth and even, until the thread is about one-quarter inch from the eye. Keep the thread taut and remember — always wind your materials in the same direction!



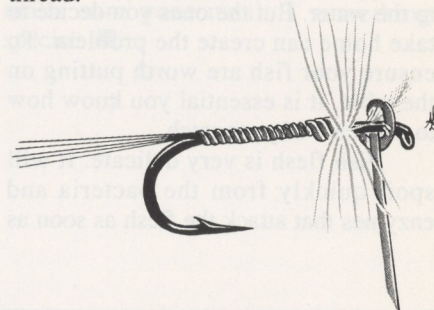
Step 3. Select a hackle about 1 inch long and then strip the hairs from the first quarter inch of the butt end. Smooth the hairs back so that they stand perpendicular to the spine of the hackle. Lay the butt against the hook and make a few turns around it. Then cut off the portion of the butt that's still protruding. The next step is the most difficult to master so more attention must be paid to the process.



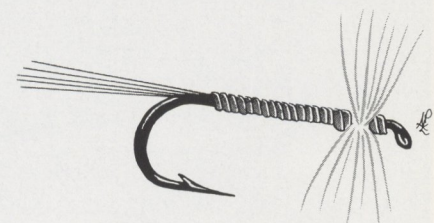
Step 4. Attach the hackle pliers to the tip of the hackle and then slowly wind it around the hook, keeping the turns close together.



Step 5. When only one-half inch of the hackle remains, let the hackle pliers dangle so that the hackle wraps remain tight. Bring the thread forward carefully and wind it over the hackle end with a few turns. At this point, you can use some tin foil to hold the hackle hairs away from the eye of the hook. Then, cut off the hackle end and make a half-hitch around the head. Make another half-hitch, snug it tight and cut off the thread.



Step 6. Now examine your fly and look for mistakes. Try to imagine what the fish see as they watch the food go by. Make a mental note of the mistakes you made on your first fly and try to correct them on your next attempt.



Your first fly probably won't be much to look at but there's no need to worry. After each successive try, you'll find that you've learned something new. By tying your own flies, you not only save money, you take a giant step toward increasing both your knowledge and enjoyment of the many secrets of fishing — not to mention using up some of that dog hair lying around the house! ■

Caring For Your Catch

After a good day on the lake you've caught a nice stringer of fish. Now you're all set to invite friends to that long-promised fish dinner. Well, not quite. You're only halfway there. It's what you do after you catch the fish that will determine if your fish dinner is delectable or disastrous.

Few fishing enthusiasts keep every fish they catch. In fact, a growing number release nearly all of them. Those fish are no problem, as long as they're immediately returned unharmed to the water. But the ones you decide to take home can create the problem. To ensure your fish are worth putting on the table, it is essential you know how to take care of your catch.

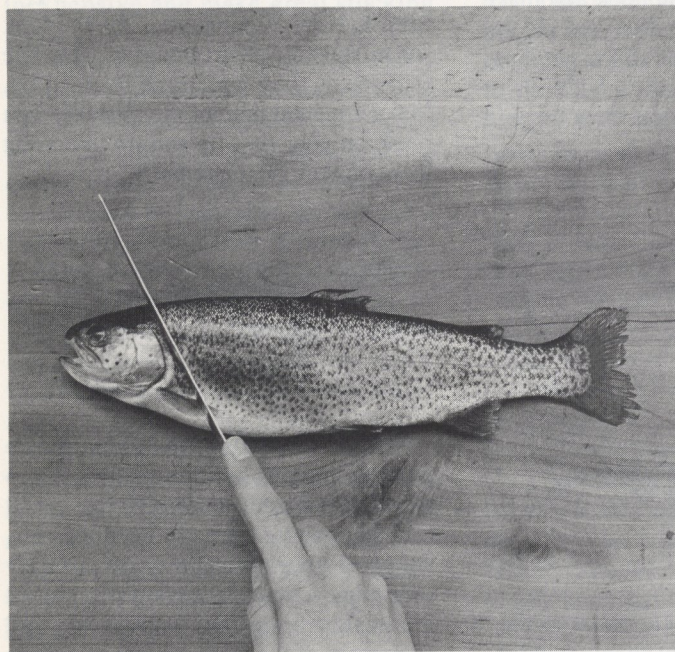
Fish flesh is very delicate. It will spoil quickly from the bacteria and enzymes that attack the flesh as soon as

a fish dies. If possible, fish should be kept alive until they're cleaned. Many anglers put their catch on a stringer — fine for a short trip. Be sure to string the fish through the lips, not the gills, and they will last longer. For an all-day trip, a wire fish basket will do a better job of keeping the fish alive. Boats with live wells are the best for keeping fish alive.

If you don't think you can keep the fish alive until the end of the trip, put them on ice as soon as you catch them. Fish that have died on the stringer and stayed for a few hours in 70-degree lake water will taste awful. Also, if your fish are alive at the end of your outing, it makes no sense to stash them in the car trunk for an hour-long ride home. Ice down the catch if it is longer than 20 minutes before you can clean them, especially in hot weather.

There are several ways to clean fish. Fileting is popular, mainly because what appears on the serving platter is a nice piece of meat with no skin or bones. Filets are appealing and convenient, and avoid the unpleasant task of picking through fish bones. Because fileting removes the skin and bones, it also removes a strong taste from certain types of fish.

Admittedly, it takes time to become proficient at fileting, but after a little practice you'll be able to clean a fish faster than by scaling and gutting it. As your fileting improves, very little meat is wasted. Be sure to use a sharp knife with a thin, flexible blade. Knives specially made for fileting work best. A 6-inch blade is adequate for most fileting. Some people, however, prefer to use electric kitchen knives.



Dennis Henry

1.



Dennis Henry

2.

To start the fileting process, kill the fish with a sharp blow to the head. Lay the fish on its side and get a firm grip on its head. Then, holding the knife at an angle just behind the gills, cut straight down to the backbone, but not through it (fig. 1). Next, turn the blade flat against the backbone and with a slight sawing motion, run the knife toward the tail, cutting through the ribs along the way. Continue to cut until you reach the tail, but stop before cutting through the skin (fig. 2).

Flip the filet over and insert the knife between the skin and meat at the point where the skin attaches to the tail. Hold the blade nearly flat against the skin and run the knife along the entire filet, between the skin and meat. At the same time, pull on the skin with your other hand. This keeps tension on the skin and makes it much easier to separate the meat. Finally, lay the filet flat and cut around the outline of the ribs, removing them all in one piece (fig. 3). Turn the fish over and repeat the process.

You can filet almost any type of fish you catch, despite what you've heard. The process just described is appropriate for bass, bluegill, crappie, sunfish, striper, walleye, drum and even catfish. Trout, carp, suckers and other fish with small bones in the meat can also be fileted, but with different

handling. For these, scrape off the scales and then filet them as described, but without removing the skin. Lay the filets on a flat surface, skin side down. At quarter-inch intervals, make deep cuts through the meat down to, but not through the skin. This scoring allows hot cooking oil to penetrate the filet and tenderize the bones.

Rinse the filets thoroughly with cold water and they're ready for cooking. Nothing is better than fish eaten the same day they're caught. Fish will keep for several days in the refrigerator, but if you must keep them longer than that, freeze them instead.

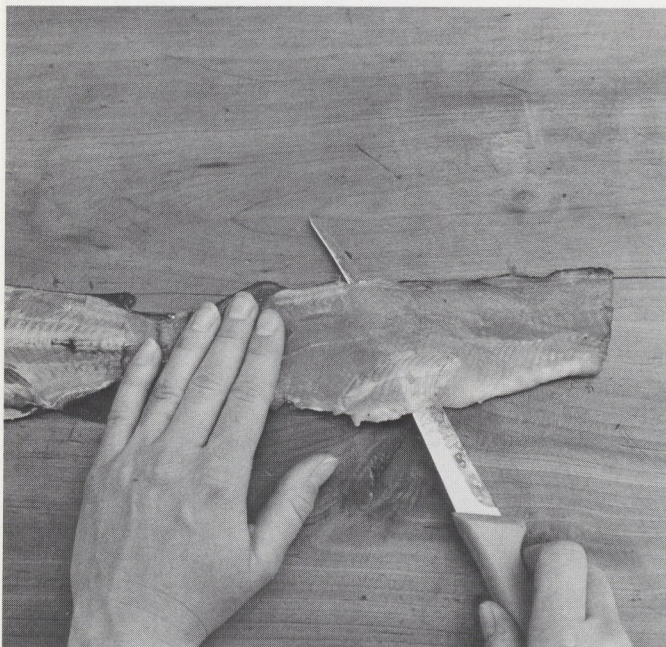
You may freeze fish in aluminum foil or plastic bags for a few months in the freezer. Always use a container or wrapper that keeps air away from filets. Air contact causes the flesh to dehydrate and freezer-burn. Fish low in fat content, such as bass, can withstand freezing for a longer time than fish like catfish, which have a higher fat content. A good rule of thumb is to store fish no longer than six months in the freezer. Fish stored too long or wrapped improperly likely will suffer freezer burn, which can ruin the flavor and texture.

Fish frozen in water are protected from contact with the air and, therefore, from freezer burn. Also, these fish can be kept safely in the freezer much longer than fish packaged dry. Some

people use plastic containers or milk cartons for freezing with water. Heavy-duty plastic bags with built-in seals also work well. Fill the bag half full of water, add the filets and close the seal almost completely. Then squeeze out about three-fourths of the water, closing the seal as the water goes out. This removes all the air from the bag, but still leaves enough water to coat the fish with a protective layer of ice. A quart-size bag will hold enough filets for four people, yet takes very little freezer space.

As the chef, you can choose how to cook your fish. Frying is popular, but fish also are excellent when baked, smoked, broiled or boiled. Check your cookbooks for recipe ideas. The best advice: don't overcook your fish. Tough, dry, tasteless fish probably was either cooked too long or freezer-burned.

How satisfying to serve a meal of fish you've caught yourself! But simply catching fish is no guarantee of good eating. Take that extra effort and care to make sure your meal is something special. ■



3.



4. The final filet.

Managing Colorado's Fishing Resource

By JOHN WOODLING

The purpose of the Colorado Division of Wildlife fishing recreation program is to provide the public with the best fishing and quality experience possible. To achieve this goal, the Division utilizes available waters, the fish raised in state production units and available management practices. There are five major Division activities designed to develop and maintain fishing in Colorado.

STOCKING OF FISH

Colorado's population boom, coupled with the public's ever-increasing desire to participate in outdoor activities, has created great fishing pressure throughout the state. Thus, natural reproduction in many streams, rivers and lakes doesn't result in enough fish to meet public demand.

Periodic stocking, or planting, of hatchery-reared fish is one way to maintain good fishing in these waters. To produce fish for stocking programs, the Colorado Division of Wildlife currently operates 15 fish production units and one research hatchery. In addition, two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service units also allocate trout to state waters. Current plans call for Division of Wildlife units to produce and stock more than 5.3 million catchable-size trout (averaging 10 inches in length) each year. According to the same production goals, 13.8 million fingerling trout and more than 82.5 million warm-water fish are stocked annually.

Federal hatcheries are expected to contribute a combined total of 1.24 million catchable-size and fingerling trout. Hatcheries located outside Colorado make large numbers of warm-water species available each year. Large numbers of channel catfish, saugeye and tiger muskie from these out-of-state sources are imported for planting in warm-water reservoirs. Colorado

hatcheries hatch and stock more than 70 million walleye fry annually.

REGULATIONS

Application of different fishing regulations to different bodies of water is a fundamental management tool used by fisheries biologists. Some waters are more productive than others; they can produce a larger number of fish for harvest. Regulations used to balance productivity and harvest result in healthy and viable fish populations. Bag limits, tackle restrictions, catch-and-release practices, and slot limits are examples of regulations currently applied to Colorado waters.

A slot limit is a regulation that requires fish in a certain length range to be returned immediately to the water if caught. The regulation is designed to

protect fish that have reached their peak reproductive capacity. Bag limits and slot limits are often employed to help protect native fish populations by encouraging natural reproduction. Regulations such as flies and lures only, or catch-and-release designations, place emphasis on the sport of fishing and not on the desire to fill bag limits.

In the past few years, more and more anglers have adopted a catch-and-release philosophy with emphasis on the aesthetic aspects of fishing. The Colorado Division of Wildlife, through the use of different regulations on different stream segments, is attempting to not only please the catch-and-release anglers, but to provide other anglers with a chance to take home a nice stringer of fish for the table.



Stocking a mountain stream.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

The number of fish found in many Colorado waters is limited by habitat deficiencies and not by water quality or quantity. Many irrigation reservoirs are flat, shallow bodies of water lacking any type of underwater structure. Streams and rivers have been channelized in the past.

The Division currently has an active program aimed at improving fish habitat throughout Colorado. Artificial reefs, made of old tires, clay pipe, brush or any other submersible material, are being constructed in some warm-water reservoirs throughout the state. Deflector dams, check dams and other diversion structures made of logs or large stones also have been constructed in cold-water streams and rivers. In some cases, artificial breeding substrates are introduced into specific waters that lack suitable breeding areas.

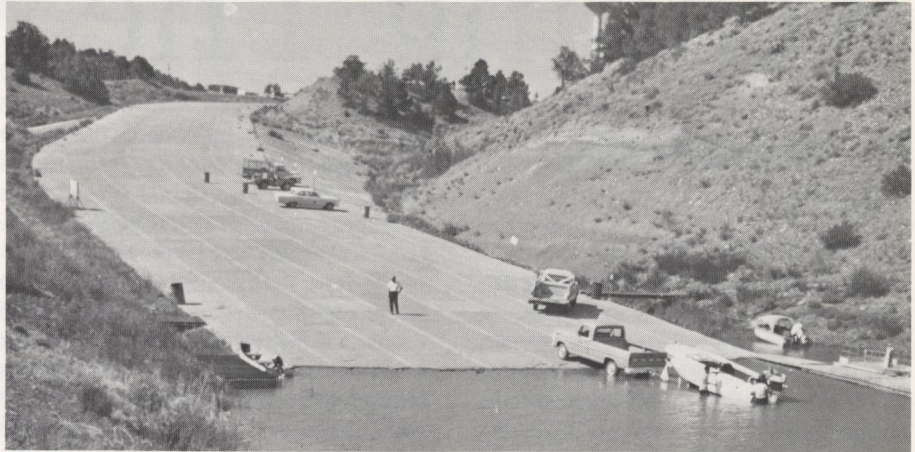
The object of these habitat improvement projects is to increase holding areas, resting areas, feeding stations and spawning habitat, thus concentrating and/or increasing fish populations. Many of these projects are performed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, in conjunction with other governmental agencies and private entities.



Example of an artificial reef.

ACCESS

Some of Colorado's best fishing waters are on private land and closed to public access. The Division of Wildlife works with public and private land managers to maintain and enhance access to fishery habitats to benefit public use. Access can take many forms: motorboat access on a variety of



Boat ramp at Navajo State Recreation Area.

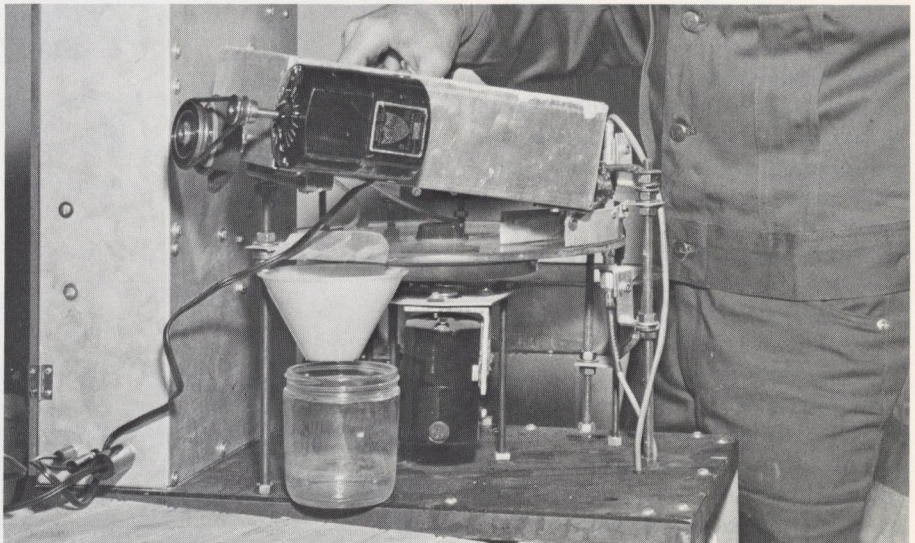
RESEARCH

The Division of Wildlife carries on an extensive research program aimed at providing new information to support and improve the above described programs. Research projects are diverse and far-ranging. They include studies on water quality; dynamics of game fish and endangered and threatened fish populations in streams, cold-water and warm-water lakes; impacts of habitat manipulation; effects of regulations on fish populations, and maintenance of

waters; lease, easement or purchase of angler access to lakes and streams; and maintenance or improvement of access facilities at existing properties. Overall, the term "access" is defined as those activities that result in maintaining or improving the availability of quality fishing opportunity to the angling public.

statewide creel survey and stream improvement databases.

These Division of Wildlife programs are vital and important, but they can't be justified without one other element — public information. Anglers should know the regulations and the reasons behind Division policy and management endeavors. Income from fishing license fees totals several million dollars each year. Anglers who supply the money should know where it goes. ■



Electronic fish egg separator.

Reading The Waters

How to Read Flowing Waters

By JOHN WOODLING

A long time ago on a river far away, an old man watched with mounting frustration as a boy made a full dozen false casts with a fly rod. "You can't catch fish unless your fly's in the water," he growled. "And you won't catch fish unless the fly is where the fish is."

Maybe it really wasn't so long ago, but the advice still is true. Fish in moving waters don't move around a great deal themselves. When they are on a feeding station, fish may only move a short distance to accept food as it floats downstream. The object of fishing is straightforward: put the lure or bait where the fish are on the first cast. To be successful, anglers should spend some time and effort learning how to "read" water. It makes no sense to stand where fish are — or were — and cast to a stream segment where there are no fish.

Even the initial approach to a stream or river is important. Fish in flowing water always orient themselves facing upstream. So, approach the area from below, or downstream. If the sun is behind the angler, so much the better. Once on the stream, there are so many places to find fish.

Undercut banks provide shelter for many fish. These banks may be formed under rock imbedded in the stream bank. The best example is a stream in a meadow where currents have eroded the bank under the roots of grass and shrubs to form a refuge. Presenting the bait or lure as close as possible to the undercut bank is best.

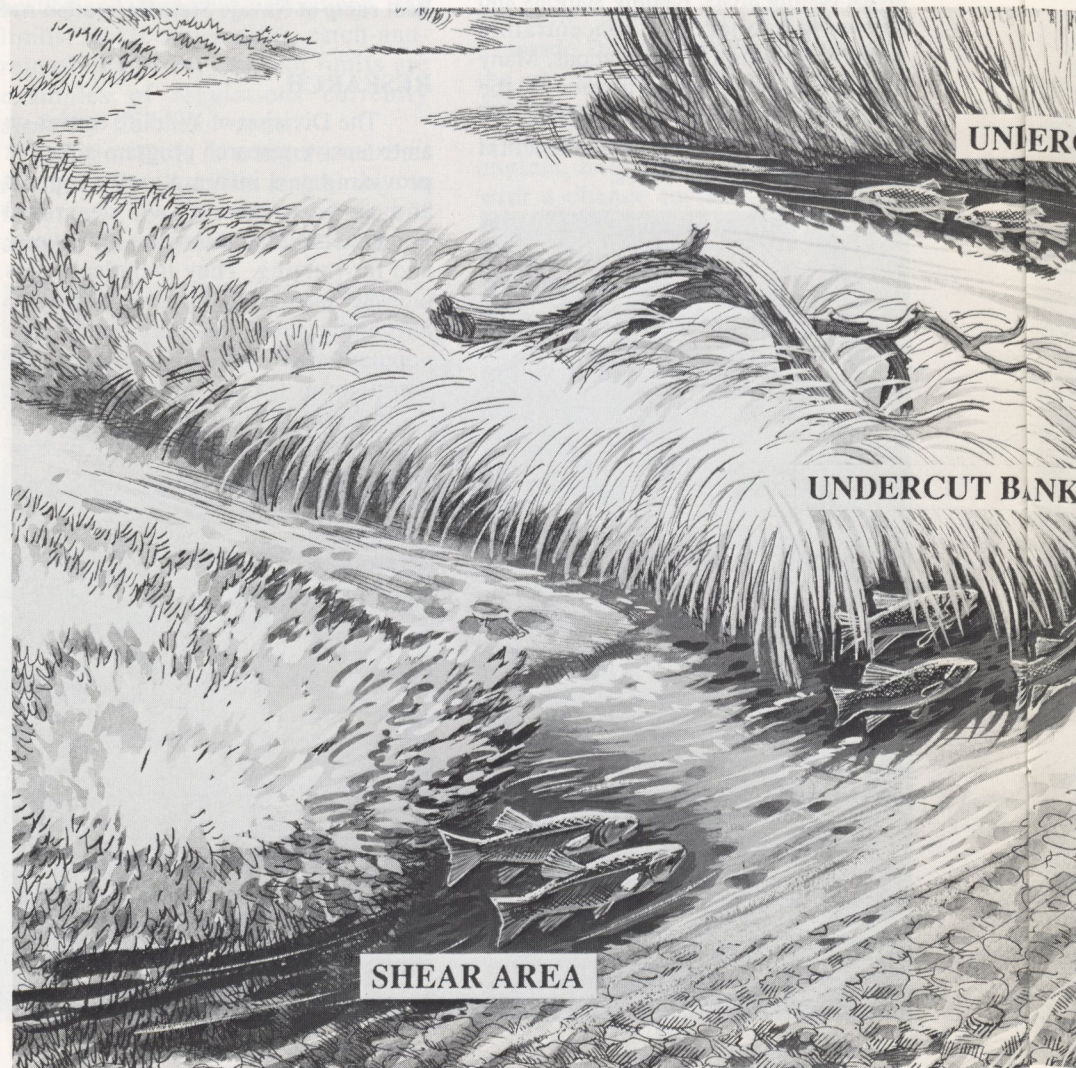
Logs, shrubs or branches that have fallen into water and become lodged along the bank provide shelter for

various species. Again, place the lure or bait close to the submerged material to tempt the fish. The larger the submerged logs or driftwood pile, the more likely fish will be present.

Large rocks and boulders in the stream or riverbed are other locations worthy of an angler's attention. Slack water behind the rocks may hold fish, as may undercut areas between the rock and substrate. Some fish may even be

found on the frontside of the rocks where water breaks before flowing around boulders.

Bottoms of pools and eddies can be holding waters for fish. Bait anglers often concentrate in stream sections where pools abound. Cutthroat trout often may be found feeding at the downstream edge of pools where the water depth is decreasing while current velocity is increasing. Brook trout often



are found in the deepest portion of pools in small streams. In many cases, forage fish are commonly taken along with sport fish in these circumstances. In winter, some sport species such as mountain whitefish will "school up" in pool areas.

Another likely location might be termed a "shear area," which is any place where water currents of different velocities run together. Fish will often lay in the water of slower velocity and dart out into the water of faster velocity to capture prey drifting downstream. In such circumstances, the angler should make a cast so that the hook slides in the faster water along the edge of the shear, perhaps drifting into the slack water area.

You need time and practice, of course, to become adept at recognizing good fishing water and habitat types. Two exercises will help you find sites likely to hold fish. For the first, simply get above a small, clear river or stream

on a hill or cliff. Wearing polarized glasses, look down into the water. After a few moments, if there are fish present, they should be visible. Watch both movements and feeding patterns. The idea is to determine what type of presentation would succeed in catching fish, and what angle of approach is needed.

The other technique is to return in the fall to water fished earlier in the year. Low water may expose features that were under water earlier. Clues may exist that tell why fish were absent or, more important, present. This knowledge will help in subsequent seasons.

Reading water not only improves fishing skills, it also expands awareness and knowledge of the river and stream ecosystem. The more you know about the sport, the more you will be aware of programs and activities needed to maintain fishing opportunities throughout Colorado. ■

How to Read Standing Waters

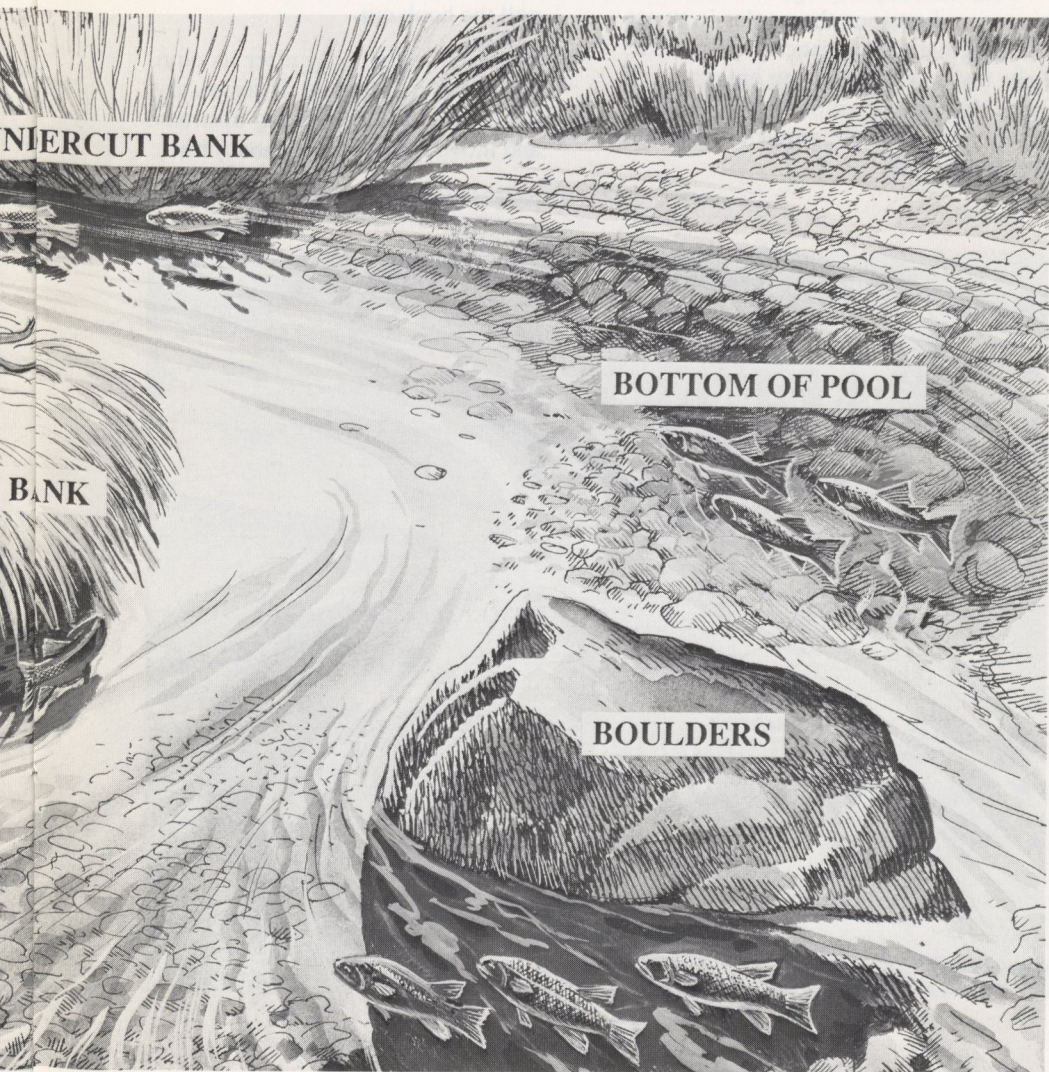
By JOHN WOODLING

Every body of water — whether it is a lake or reservoir — is different. Each water may contain different types of fish and will have varying physical characteristics. As a result of these differences, the successful angler must modify techniques according to locale, time of year, type of fish sought and other factors. The more tips you can pick up from looking at a water and then guessing what sport fish may be present, the greater the possibility of success.

Lakes and reservoirs in Colorado are of two basic types — mountain impoundments and plains impoundments. Lakes and reservoirs of the mountains generally are trout and salmon fisheries. Impoundments on the plains or in lower elevation canyons typically are warm-water fisheries, though catchable-sized rainbow trout may be planted in the early spring before the water warms. The physical characteristics of each of Colorado's reservoirs, if used properly, can increase an angler's catch. By looking at an impoundment and knowing some basic facts about fish, you can decide where to fish.

The inlet portion of a lake can give you easier access to some species during specific times of the year. Many species migrate from lakes to inlet streams to spawn. If you concentrate time and effort in the inlet area where current speed entering an impoundment slows to a stop during the run period of a stream-spawning fish, a greater catch rate may result. In mountain waters, brown trout and brook trout run in the late fall. Kokanee salmon school up and run in the fall. In warm-water reservoirs, white bass run in the spring. As mature fish pass through these inlets during spawning season, the chance is greater to catch a large trophy fish.

Many impoundments have flat, shallow areas along the shoreline. Fishing in such areas may prove fruitless in many cases. Fish usually don't stay in these locations if little cover is present. Mud flats don't often attract large fish. However, sometimes a large predator will move into such shallows prowling for forage. Large cutthroats in alpine lakes are a prime example of this



behavior. A walk around these areas in an alpine setting can be an exciting event. The fishing becomes both a "hunt and a stalk," with a large cutthroat as a potential reward.

Sunfish and bass are examples of fish that move into shallow areas of warm-water reservoirs to spawn in the spring. Bluegill sunfish will congregate in a spawning area building nests next to each other. The males of these species are susceptible to anglers during this period. Northern pike also move into the shallows in the early spring. As pike cruise along looking for plant material for spawning, the angler has a chance of finding a large trophy.

"Structure" in a lake is generally considered prime fishing. Rocks and brush along the shore provide shelter for many fish. When some reservoirs on the plains were constructed, tree stumps, shrubbery and rock piles were left in place. These submerged structures act as fish attractors. Knowing that fish congregate around structures is a definite plus to the angler who knows the location of the attractors. It is worth your time to visit irrigation reservoirs in the fall during low water to locate habitat features.

The topography of the reservoir or lake bottom plays a part in fishing.

Rapid falls and drop-offs of the lake bottom are good places to fish, as is any location where the bottom rapidly fluctuates. Sport fish tend to congregate at the point of drop-off. Topographic maps of the region before a reservoir was built or an on-boat depth finder are both tools that allow anglers to exploit this knowledge.

Areas of heavy aquatic vegetation also provide fish shelter. Fishing along the face of vegetation beds where the water opens up can produce results. Bass fishers often use snag-free lures through areas of vegetation.

Many anglers also favor one other location — the rubble area along dams. The rubble acts as shelter for some species and a spawning area for others. In the spring, walleye move onto the rubble areas to spawn. Because the walleye is close enough to the shore, bank anglers stand a reasonable chance of hooking this large predator species.

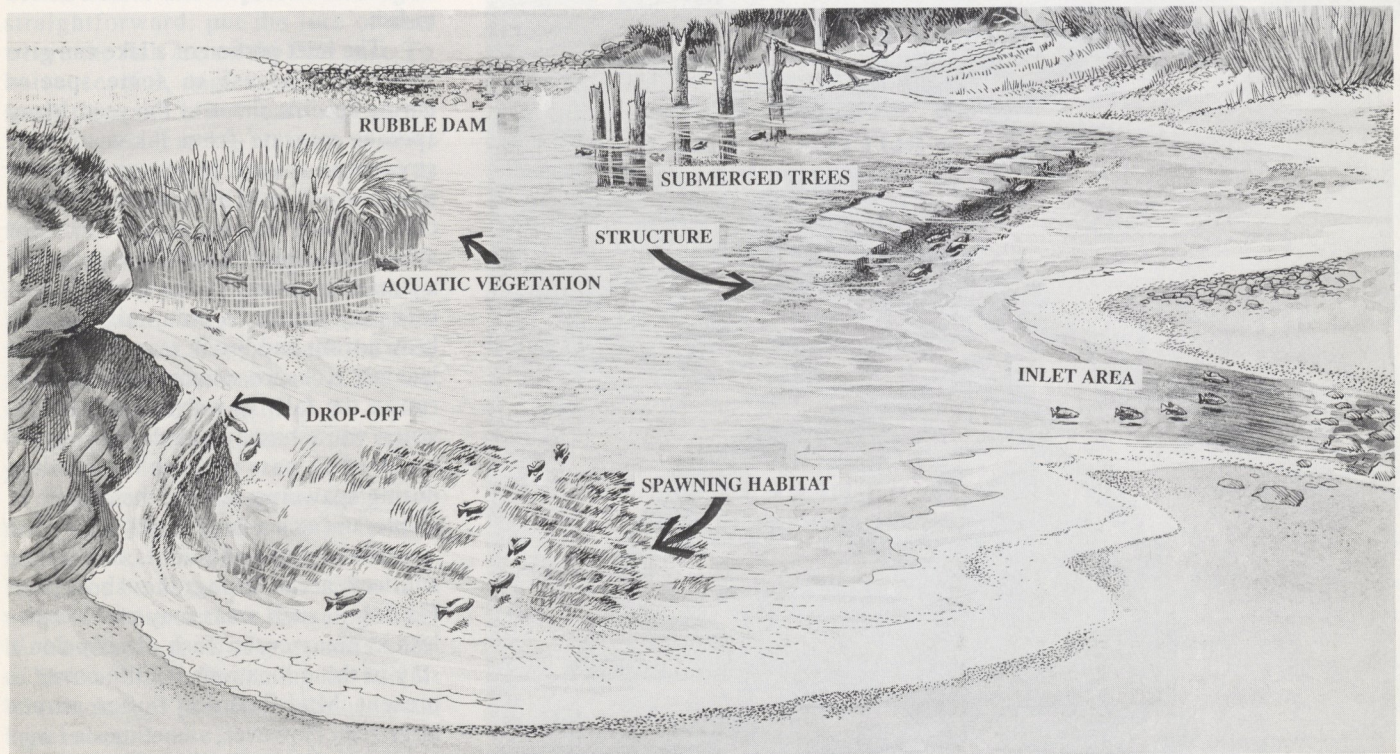
As with any fishing, the more techniques and options the angler is aware of, the greater the chances for success. Lake and reservoir fishing entails much more than is presented in this section. Study and personal experience is the best teacher. ■

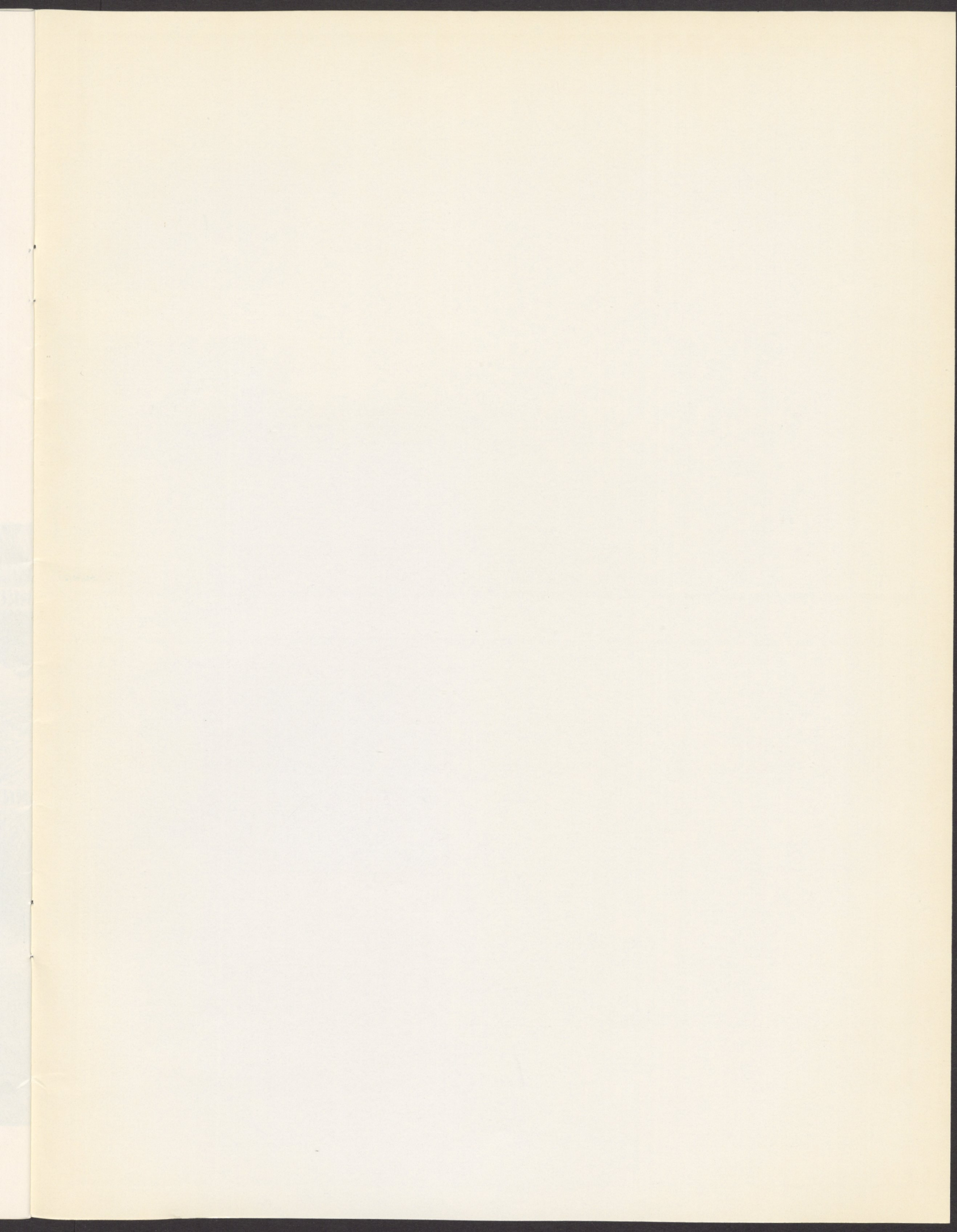


Put them back alive . . .

The following steps will insure that a released fish has the best chance for survival:

1. Don't play any fish to total exhaustion.
2. Keep the fish in the water as much as possible when handling and removing the hook.
3. Remove the hook gently. Don't squeeze the fish or put your fingers in the gills.
4. If deeply hooked, cut the line. Don't pull the hook out.
5. Release the fish only after its equilibrium is maintained. If necessary, gently hold the fish facing upstream and move it slowly back and forth.
6. Release the fish in quiet water.







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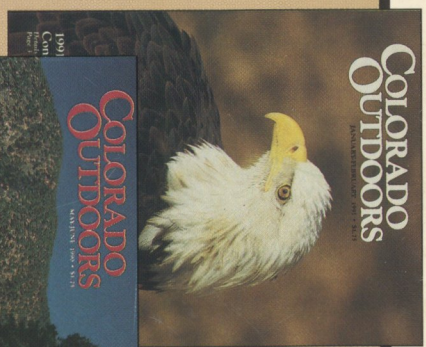
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