

Newsletter October 2019

President's Message

Searching high and searching low, oh where can they be. I have been to the Rhode Island shores and southern Cape beaches. The tides were right, the moon in the right phases, everything that I was told was aligned. No fishes, stripers, blues or albies. Where's the great migration? Then, there they blitzed, some to the left and some to the right, but alas, poor me with no boat or yak to reach them. Talking to many a weary fisherman, it's just been a weird and wacky year.

We have been working very hard in lining up speakers. That should stimulate your interest and provide both young and old with some fresh viewpoints. We always look to get the best speakers possible and we try to have their presentations be, variously, stimulating, fun & entertaining, and technical or educational.

PLEASE SEE BULLETIN BOARD—PAGE 2—FOR SPEAKER SERIES AND MEETING EVENTS

Please pass the word on to anyone you know that would be interested in attending. Also, if you know of anyone that you would like to hear or would be interested in presenting at one of our meetings, please let me or one of the board members know. These can be guides, well-traveled fishermen, fly tiers, or writers.

Any great fishing photos or stories this summer? Share them with us! We all love them tall tails and tales! Send them to Steve Dewar so he can post them on the web site.

We are always looking for ideas and new members. Invite someone you know or don't know, who might be interested in fly fishing, to a meeting. At the meetings voice your opinions, we need your input. This is your club. Even if you cannot make the meetings, we are very interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas as well.

Tight lines looking forward to seeing you and meeting new members.

Ed



A "BEAR"-RY NICE DAY FOR FISHING!!
Courtesy of Robert Hawthorne/Kennedy News

NEXT MEETING:
Tuesday October 22, 2019
South Foxboro Community Center
382 South St. Foxboro, MA 02035
Time: 630pm to 9pm

2019-2020 SEASON

OCTOBER MEETING

FLY TYING NITE

BRING YOUR TYING GEAR

BRING YOUR SUMMER GOTCHA PICS

BRING YOUR TALL TALES
OF THE ONES THAT YA ALMOST GOT BUT
GOT AWAY.....!!!

The Bulletin Board

Crossroads Speaker Series

October 22nd: Fly Tying Nite

November 26th: Speaker: Rick Little from Shad Creek Flies, whose presentations are informative, fun and great for a wide range of audiences. Comments from past presentations “just a lot of good common sense and information”, “moved along well with a great mix of stories and information” and “real friendly, comfortable presenter who really knows his stuff.”

December 17th: Holiday Party Meeting

January 22nd: Speaker: Scott Travers from the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife Education Office will be presenting on Fly Fishing in Rhode Island. More details to follow.

February 25th: TBD—working on securing a Speaker

March 26th: Joe Cordeiro will be back presenting Flies for Estuaries

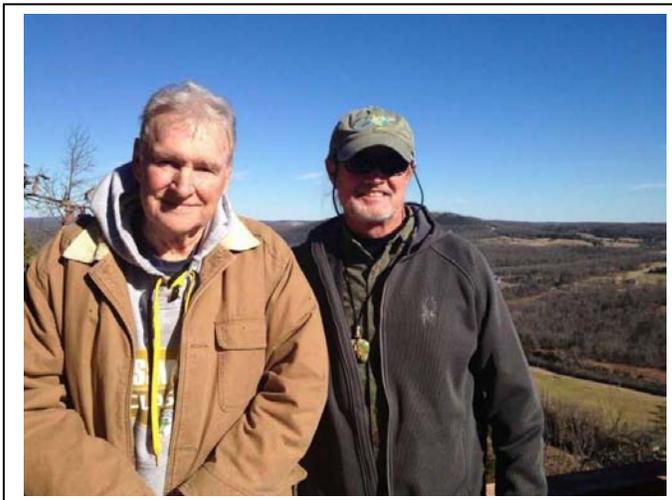
April 23rd: Ken Elmer, Fly Tier and Guide, will be presenting on Central/Western MA rivers and will do a fly-tying demo beforehand (tentative at this time)

May 26th: BBQ Time!!

To All Members: On arrival at meetings, please check-in with IZZY at Membership Table to register for Door Prize!!

Lessons learned from fly fishing

October 7, 2019



By Rick Clunn

Jerry McKinnis has been telling me about a place in Wyoming where he fly fishes and has wanted me to experience it.

I put him off several times, mainly because I would have to use a fly rod and deal with tiny lines and hooks, something I never really understood or appreciated. I used to fly fish for bass as a youngster. I would ride my bike to a lake behind our subdivision and fish for bass before I left for school. My mom worked at the school, would honk the horn signaling it was time to go to school. She'd bring me a change of clothes because I'd be wet and muddy from wading into the creek.

That was the last time I had a fly rod in my hand, probably 60 years ago.

Trout fishing in Wyoming would be an entirely different experience and something I never could comprehend.

Well, Jerry's friend Angie pitched the idea to my wife Melissa, who grew up fly fishing and loves the outdoors. She was thrilled with the notion, and obviously, that meant we were going.

Now, don't get me wrong; I knew this was a beautiful place, and it was. I also respect all types of anglers, but have always thought of fly fishermen as purists with strange practices and ethics.

For example, I was given chest waders to wear the first day for fishing a stream that appeared very shallow and probably only 20 feet across.

When I asked why I needed waders, I was told it was "because you need to look good when fly fishing."

I've always been a 20-pound-plus line guy, so I had to ask for help tying on tiny flies because I couldn't even feel the 4-pound line between my fingers.

Crossroads Anglers Newsletter October 2019

Nor could I grasp the concept of those tiny flies and hooks. We were fishing for 10-pound plus rainbows; I wouldn't even think of trying to catch a big bass on those hooks.

Remarkably, my childhood memories came back to me when I started working the fly rod. It amazed me that I still retained the ability to do that. Oddly enough, I found myself placing the line between my lips as I stripped line and worked the fly.

Experienced fly fishermen finger the line and allow it to fall beneath them, but I was holding it in my mouth, just as I did as a youngster.

I quickly learned to do it the right way.

I also had to learn to not set the hook; I broke off a fish or two and lost a few before I got the hang of it.

I discovered that bass fishermen really don't "fight" big fish; we use heavy tackle and get them in as quickly as possible. When playing a big rainbow on 4-pound line, you better fight it on its terms and let the rod do as it's designed to do.

That became apparent when I hooked a 10-pound rainbow. My arms ached within the first few minutes. That doesn't happen in bass fishing.

When that fish turned and swam past me, my entire attitude about fly fishing changed. My respect elevated for the sport and the fish. Suddenly, I went from wanting to catch that fish to making sure I didn't hurt it.

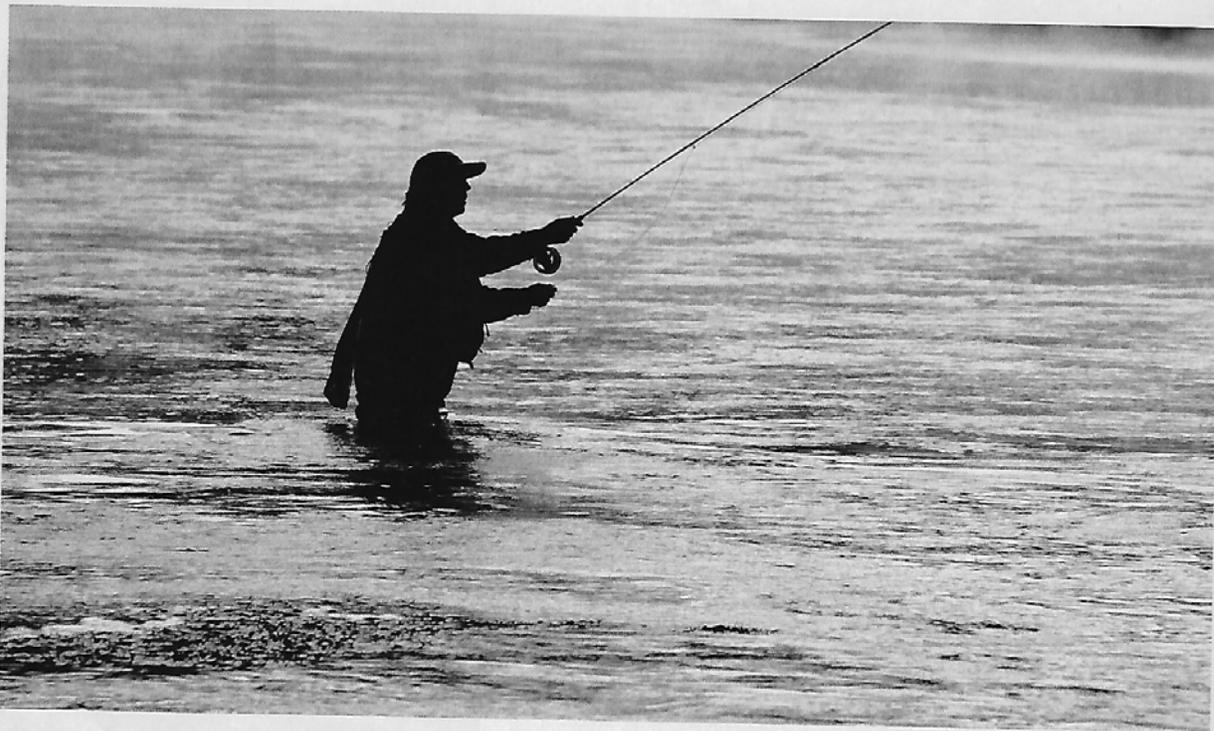
It was that epiphany when I gained an appreciation for fly fishing. My jokes about sissy baits, rods and hooks, and their detailed passion for specific nymphs and larvae, ended.

I now understand.

Fishermen are much like society. We have these circles — like bass fishing or trout fishing — we live in. We have our own languages and understanding of our respective sports. Sadly, if you are not within one of those circles you can't really appreciate what drives that passion.

Melissa understood it. I was mesmerized as I watched her work the rod masterfully as she finessed a fly through the current. She was not only good, but she loved doing it; I felt guilty that I have given her so few opportunities.

Those few days fly fishing in Wyoming not only gave me tremendous respect and admiration for the sport, but it left me looking forward to getting back in a pair of waders.



On a recent soft spring evening, I realized I was no longer soaking in the beauty of the neon-green grass and magical gardens bursting all around me. I'd become obsessed with spotting ticks, the tiny hitchhikers that attach themselves to me as I scuff through the yard. I find them stuck to my ears and neck, sending me skittering to the shower. Oddly, I once admired bugs. Well, not all bugs — just certain ones. At one time, the little creatures were peacemakers in a war between my father and me.

My father was a fly fisherman, which, as it turns out, is all about bugs. In the late winter and early spring, he disappeared for hours on reconnaissance missions with his trusty sidekick, our unhinged poodle. Like military scouts, they traversed the countryside, checking to see how favorite fishing spots had weathered the winter. Was the ice out yet? Had any rocks, boulders, or branches tumbled onto the shore, making a favorite spot inaccessible?

As spring progressed, he started looking for signs of insect activity. What was hatching? Were any fish starting to rise to the surface to feed? What were they feasting on?

Fly-fishing is both an art and a science. The art is learning to gracefully cast the line so it whisks through the air light as a ribbon, and then alights so gently and quickly on the surface of the water that it appears to a fish that an insect has nimbly

landed on the crystalline surface, sending soft rings radiating out toward the shore. Part of the science is divining what the fish are feeding on. And, of course, no matter how good you are at reading what the fish are biting or how gracefully you cast the line, if you aren't fishing where the fish are, well, you just aren't fishing.

When I was growing up, my father sometimes asked me to accompany him fishing. By the time I was a teenager, though, he had joined ranks with alcohol. That only served to fuel my teenage angst, leading to fiery skirmishes. However, he rarely drank when he fished, and I desperately wanted to win back the man who had once adored me above all others. So, holding tight to the belief I would be safe from the menaces of his addiction, I went.

As we walked down to the shore in late afternoons, he would stop and watch a hatch erupting nearby. In the stillness, I could see the silvery wings of the newly hatched flies winking in the

sunlight. Then he would bend down and pick up a small rock to see what baby bugs were lurking underneath, about to emerge. He would explain the unique habit of each bug and which fly in his tackle box he would use to mimic it. Later, I sat on the rocks, hypnotized, as his line elegantly swirled over his head and magically avoided the branches behind him, barely making a sound. His long, slender body spooled out the thin line in patient fluid strokes to extend his reach, then precisely dropped the fly near a fish.

I wondered at the delicate wings of the dragonflies as they skittered along the water's edge and the skimmers that raced erratically across the surface like addled speed skaters, both unfazed by my father's presence. I'll never know how someone who had to steady a cup of coffee with two hands had such a firm command of the fishing rod.

While our skirmishes continued throughout his life, fishing provided the occasional détente from the battlefield of his alcoholism that helped us nurture our precarious relationship. Fishing was one of the few things that brought my father pure joy and some sense of peace. Looking back, I can now see how happy we both were in the stillness of the shoreline, searching for bugs.

Susan Kazanas is a writer in Boston. Send comments to connections@globe.com.

CONNECTIONS

Truce

BY SUSAN KAZANAS

TELL YOUR STORY. Email your 650-word essay on a relationship to connections@globe.com. Please note: We do not respond to submissions we won't pursue.

The Most Important Fish in the Sea: Menhaden and America

Book by H. Bruce Franklin

Review by Scott Carlin

The Most Important Fish in the Sea: Menhaden and America (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2007)

In this remarkable book, H. Bruce Franklin explores the fascinating history of Atlantic and Gulf menhaden - "the fish whose oil literally greased the wheels" of manufacturing. Franklin, a Professor of English and American Studies at Rutgers University, plays the role of muckracker for one of the ocean's most unsung heroes. Some annual hauls for "the nation's largest fishery" weighed more than all other finfish combined. Schools of menhaden can "weigh as much as the largest whale," and menhaden are "prime contenders for the global championship in phytoplankton consumption." In chapter after chapter, Franklin transforms his fish facts into meaningful drama, confirming his book title's veracity.

The book opens with a frenzied scene of bluefish slashing at the bodies of menhaden in a "killing frenzy." Franklin describes the menhaden as desperately racing "like a single creature, erratically zigging and zagging, diving and surfacing, pursued relentlessly by fish and birds." Naturalist Gilbert Klingel describes menhaden at the slightest motion breaking into "terror-stricken flight; instantly the mechanisms of fear take hold of the entire school and the hysteria is communicated from one individual to another until the entire mass is transformed into a blurred deluge of frenzied fish."

Menhaden are relatively small, very oily, foul smelling, and full of tiny bones. Atlantic stocks reach a maximum size of approximately fifteen inches. According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's website, these schooling fish are "one of the most abundant species of finfish in estuarine and coastal Atlantic waters. The second most important species harvested in the United States in terms of quantity, it is processed for its oil, protein meal and solubles, and is used as bait for commercial and recreational fishing. Menhaden are consumers of phytoplankton and plant detritus, and, in turn, are fed upon by many predatory fish, mammals and birds."

This fish tale is primarily an exploration of industrialization and why overexploitation spells ecological peril. Franklin begins with the story of Native Americans instructing the Pilgrims and other colonists to fertilize farm fields with menhaden. By the late 19th century, menhaden became an important source of Atlantic wealth. The fishery was the "vanguard" of fishery industrialization in post-Civil War America. It led the way for other fisheries in technological innovation and industrial integration. In 1876, half a billion menhaden were processed in 99 factories. Menhaden was a cheap

substitute for industrial oils, while the remaining dried fish was used as agricultural fertilizer. Menhaden became a major U.S. industry, "far exceeding the whale industry in importance." Menhaden capitalists were "the richest to be found in the provincial towns of New-England and on Long Island," constituting a "bony-fish aristocracy of the country." Later in the century, "hundreds of menhaden factories belched their black smoke and stench." Workmen on Long Island were "almost entirely Virginia Negroes, who return South at the close of the fisheries in autumn."

Chapter five reviews the ideological development of menhaden natural resource management. An 1880 menhaden study by G. Brown Goode was "the first major study of any American fish or fishery." Goode argued that a table of bluefish, swordfish, bass, or cod was "nothing but menhaden." Franklin notes it would be "hard to overstate the importance" of that insight which prefigures "an emerging ecological consciousness." By this time, commercial fishermen were complaining that menhaden boats were wiping out their bait. Conflicts over resource allocation turned ideological; were the ocean's fisheries inexhaustible or in need of conservation? Franklin explores how "the concept of protecting prey in order to conserve predators demanded a revolution in thinking."

World War II brought new technological innovations to the industry; spotter planes were deployed to locate fish schools. The peak harvest for Atlantic menhaden was 712,000 metric tons in 1956. The North Atlantic peak was 98,500 metric tons, also in 1956. The planes' efficiency decimated remaining fish stocks. North Atlantic harvests crashed to 1,800 metric tons in 1966 and zero in 1967. By chapter seven, Franklin describes an industry in ruins - disintegrating fish factories and rotting vessels.

Today's ecologists frame menhaden as keystone marine species. They are a critical food source for many fish; scientists now link declines in menhaden stocks to increased incidence of disease in predator fish. Menhaden are also important filter feeders; they improve the water's clarity and reduce eutrophication in coastal waters. A particularly nasty cycle of degradation involves menhaden being "ground up and fed to the big chicken farms on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Chicken manure from these chicken farms is the dominant source of the nitrogen entering the Chesapeake from the Eastern Shore. The nitrogen triggers the Pfiesteria which then infects the menhaden."

The book concludes with a contemporary story of industrial exploitation. The menhaden industry has gone through many transformations and no longer produces agricultural fertilizer. Today Omega Protein, the only menhaden company left on the Atlantic seaboard, processes menhaden into various products including fish meal and omega-3 nutritional products. Omega Protein was originally a subsidiary of the Zapata Corporation which monopolized the menhaden industry in the 1990s. The company still uses spotter planes to hunt down fish locations. The fish are hauled into boats that can "hold more than a million menhaden."

Crossroads Anglers Newsletter October 2019

Despite tremendous reductions, wild menhaden remain “the nation’s largest fishery in numbers of fish caught” and are second to Alaskan pollock in tonnage. Since the fish has little competition for its phytoplankton food source, its numbers can quickly rebound if stricter limits are imposed on the industry. Franklin complains that fishery councils are notorious for the control that the industry exercises over its own regulation. Their species specific management plans deny “the most elementary understanding of marine ecology.” Yet, many states have already banned menhaden trawlers from state waters. The main exception in the Atlantic is Virginia, which allows Omega Protein to overexploit menhaden in Chesapeake Bay. Omega Protein has facilities in Reedville, VA and wraps “itself in the mantle of the Puritan work ethic, portraying itself as a representative of the working class, and caricaturing recreational fishers as a wealthy elite.”

Franklin’s story of marine ecology and industrial exploitation is a cautionary tale about our world. The menhaden crisis is unfolding during a period of unprecedented oceanic and global ecological catastrophe. Industrialized fisheries are decimating global fish stocks yet they continue to benefit from their tremendous power as lobbyists, employers, commodity producers, and advertisers.

One solution is to form broad-based political coalitions. Franklin is a recreational fisher. He notes that recreational anglers are “among the very first to notice” collapsing fish stocks and are the “largest constituency” concerned about coastal waters. But can “meat fishermen” and “uncompromising” animal rights activists work together? Yes, they all have an interest in “limiting, or maybe even abolishing, the [menhaden] reduction industry.” Franklin recounts the transformative effect that Greenpeace had on a Chesapeake Bay demonstration in 2005; they proved adept at uniting “anglers, watermen, scientists and environmentalists.” This suggests “the potential for an alliance that could change the course not just for menhaden but for the whole marine environment—and maybe even beyond.”

Franklin does not sufficiently explore this potential for new and transformative alliances, but he writes with intelligence and passion. This book is packed, page after page, with informative stories and geographic references about this small fish and the industries that sprang up along the Atlantic and Gulf Coast to exploit it. Franklin helps us rediscover an unsung marine species deserving of our attention and conservation.

Courtesy Joel Kessler and [sdonline](#)



In case y'all missed the Bear in Page 1 pic:



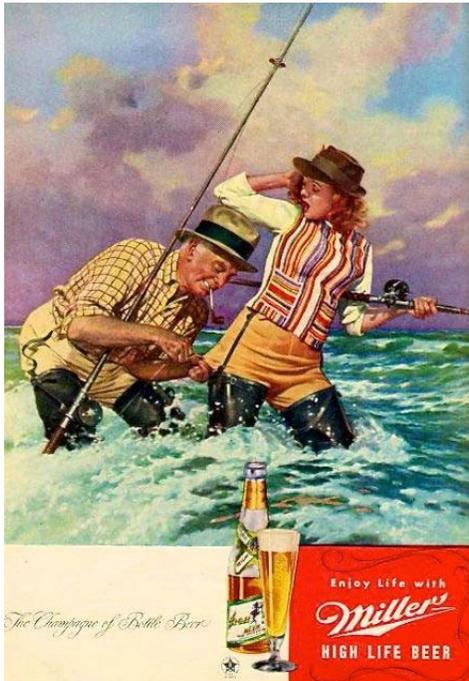
A shocking photo of a pair of unsuspecting fisherman being closely eyed by a large grizzly bear has gone viral in a stunning portrait of coexistence between nature and man.

The shot was taken at Katmai National Park in Alaska in late July by wildlife photographer [Robert Hawthorne](#), who tells PEOPLE he's photographed bears many times before. Because of his experience with the animals, Hawthorne, 21, knew that the coastal brown bear lurking behind the men wasn't looking to attack them, but was instead focused on possibly catching itself a salmon dinner in the creek below.

"Knowing from experience there that it isn't a threat in how it was playing out, I had time to take a photo before letting this guy know that he had a bear behind him," he says. "And believe it or not, his reaction was simply [that he] looked over his shoulder and continued fishing."

Hawthorne says that bears in the park regularly walk up and down the riverbank searching for food, and will dive into the water dozens of times per day as soon as they spot something.

Courtesy of PEOPLE Magazine



2019 Crossroads Anglers Officers

- Ed Rosenbloom.....President
- Steve Dewar.....Vice President
- Izzy Bettencourt.....Membership Chair
- Sumner Levine.....Treasurer
- Steve Dewar.....Webmaster
- Dan Deneault.....Newsletter Editor
- Armand Courchaine...Advising Board Member
- Joel Kessler.....Advising Board Member
- Bob Dewar.....RaffleMaster

This is our monthly newsletter for the 2019-2020 season. Hope Everyone had a Great Summer!
Time now to gather together and discuss what we like to do best: Flyfish! See you at the
Monthly Meetings. *Editor*