

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited February 2019 Newsletter



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A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

HELLBENDERS: THE LAST DRAGONS

This hellbender series has taught me a lot about something that as an angler I should have known more about.



Hellbenders are quite amazing, a little ugly but still amazing. While writing this series my friend Reba Brinkman who is on the State TU Counsel shared her experience about catching a Hellbender. November 30th while fishing a streamer she hooked a Hellbender on the Davidson River in Brevard.

And another friend Josh Bartlebaugh caught a Hellbender on May 26th also on the Davidson River. Both took photos and released their catch unharmed.

I thought it might be good to know how to handle a hellbender if you happen to catch one on a hook. Remember they can bite but usually don't. However, hooks are painful in any situation. So if you catch a hellbender on a hook and line carefully remove the hook if you can do so without harming the animal or cut the line as close as possible and return it to the water. The hook will rust away in just a few weeks. Also, anyone who hooks or just sees a Hellbender is asked to leave it alone but to note the location or GPS coordinates and take a photo if possible. Email that information to lori.williams@ncwildlife.org or call the Wildlife Interaction Helpline at 866 -318 -2401. Be prepared to provide the details. Another number, NCWRC Staff personnel can be reached at 919-707-0050.



The rest of my article is going to be divided into just small segments of facts that I found interesting.

Interesting Fact #1

The female Hellbender's eggs are laid in strands of 200 to 500 eggs held together by a sticky substance that hardens when it meets the water. This keeps the eggs all together like a String of Pearls. My gosh, what a process to go through. Talk about exhausting. She will not lay eggs again for another two to three years. It must take that long for her to rest up, Jeez. The mortality rate is high. A nest of 400 eggs only produces fewer than 90 young Hellbenders.

Interesting fact # 2

Baby Hellbenders or hatchlings at about 18 months old are about 5 to 6 in long and have external gills while they're gill slits located at the base of their throat develop. This is a period of time that a young hellbender may be mistaken for a Mudpuppy. Mudpuppies have external gills their entire life. It is a good way to determine which species you are looking at. If the salamander has external gills on their neck and is over 6 in long it is a Mudpuppy and not a Hellbender. Once the gill slits replace the external gills the young Hellbender is able to absorb oxygen through its skin. Hellbenders are mature at six to eight years of age and are then about 1 foot long.

Interesting Fact #3

Hellbenders in our neck of the woods are known as The Last Dragons because they date back to the days of Dinosaurs. The folds of ruffled skin along their backs set them apart from other salamanders.

Because of the resemblance of the Hellbenders ruffle to the road, US Highway 129 in Deal's Gap in the Nantahala National Forest in Western North Carolina is called the Tail Of The Dragon. This road is known to many motorcycle riders and sports car enthusiast and holds 318 curves in 11 miles. I drove the road myself in my little convertible this past fall and loved it.

Interesting Fact #4

Don't move the rocks! Moving the rocks to build water paths or slides or stacking rocks to build towers destroys the habitat of not only Hellbenders but many other species. A Hellbender's larvae are about as long as your index finger and can be crushed or stepped on fairly easily when people move rocks. So when you see this happening gently tell people about the Hellbenders. Most likely they won't even know they are there or any other species of animals that could be harmed during the process.

Interesting Fact #5

Good news! In the fall of 2018, the Wildlife Diversity Program conducted a snorkel survey here in NC designed to monitor and inventory the Hellbender. The survey conducted over a two-week period during breeding season yielded record-setting results. Over a nine-day span, while snorkeling in 10 different streams they documented at least a hundred and eighteen active adult Hellbenders engaged in breeding activities, fighting, congregating around nesting habitats or adult male den masters defending their nests. Snorkeling

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surveys help to document location and eventually will help to monitor for success and the causes of failure in nesting.

Interesting Fact # 6

It is illegal to kill a Hellbender. It is illegal to harm to collect to harass to transport to take or to sell a Hellbender. It is a class I misdemeanor which can result in a fine and up to a hundred and twenty days in jail.

I hope you have liked this hellbender series and as much as I have enjoyed writing it. I do want to mention to you that especially for small children, it will be exciting to see the Hellbenders on display at the Appalachian Fly Fishing Museum Freshwater Aquarium that is opening this Spring in Bryson City, North Carolina. The Hellbender Tank is being reinforced so that children can actually get underneath the tank to view this elusive creature.

The opening of the Aquarium is part of the Hall of Fame weekend March 29th and 30th. I will definitely be there. It is such a fun weekend and meeting all of the Legends of Fly Fishing, talking and laughing and sharing fish stories is awesome. It comes down to the friends we make and the experiences we have that make fishing so special. We have two amazing men being inducted this year from our area. Squeak Smith from Morganton and Alen Baker from Charlotte. Both seriously well deserving this honor! Please plan to join us for the entire weekend and fish some too while your there.

Last but not least, I want to share a video recently made to inform people about Hellbenders. This video is made here in Western NC and shows part of the snorkeling survey. I hope you like it. <https://vimeo.com/108512185>

The tug is the drug,
Jacqueline Greene
HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com

NEXT MEETING

When: Tuesday, February 19
Where: Market on Main Cellar
Across From 325 1st Avenue SW, Hickory
Time: 5:30 Buffet Dinner (\$10.00)
6:30 Program
7:30 Mini Board Meeting (all welcome)
Program: Drift Fishing the Catawba
Speaker: John Zimmerman
Open to the public

Note: You must park across the street or you may be towed. Only handicap is available at the building.

John's presentation will focus on fishing tactics from a drift boat, general float fishing tips, and the Catawba River fishery in Morganton, NC. Many are not aware we have an excellent year round fishery on the Catawba River below the Lake James dam. Water is released from the bottom of the lake so is relatively cool year around. Several years ago the Wildlife Resources Commission began developing a trophy

brown trout fishing section on this water from Muddy Creek to the water intake in Morganton. This water was recently reclassified as Special Regulation trout waters. Each year 10,000 brown trout are released into the waters. There is very limited shore access to this section of river so drift fishing is the primary method of fishing here. There are reports of excellent fishing with a typical day of 30 brown trout for a two person drift. A 28" brown trout has reportedly been caught there.

John Zimmerman is a co-owner of Upper Creek Angler, a fly-fishing guide and custom tackle service based in Morganton, North Carolina which provides guide service to several rivers including drift fishing on the Catawba below Lake James. John Zimmerman is a native of western North Carolina, having grown up in Morganton. A life member of Trout Unlimited, he grew up fishing Upper Creek and Wilson Creek and many of the waters in Mitchell County under the guidance of his dad and fishing legend Bo Cash. Upon graduating from college and finishing graduate school, John returned home and started teaching English in Morganton (2005) and opened Upper Creek Angler (2010), a guide and custom tackle service. In 2012, John co-founded Casting for Hope with Taylor Sharp, a 501(c)3 nonprofit that works with women and families in western North Carolina battling ovarian and other gynecological cancers through financial assistance and fly fishing retreat programming. In 2015 Zimmerman and Sharp and the Casting for Hope team opened the Casting for Hope Retreat Center in Bakersville, North Carolina where they manage two miles of private trophy water for the women and families they serve through Casting for Hope for retreat. As a teacher, John knows the value of humor to a trapped audience, so make sure you're ready to laugh at least a little in an otherwise informative presentation!

MARCH MEETING



Members of the trout fishing and outdoors communities in North Carolina have become alarmed at the loss of public access to large areas of NC rivers and streams. Many factors seem to contribute to this problem.

On March 19, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., the Hickory Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) will hold an expert panel discussion about how to deal with the loss of public access to trout fisheries. The panel will include Ron Beane, Board Chairman of the Foothills Conservancy; Doug Besler, Mountain Region Fishery Supervisor for the North Carolina Wildlife Resources

Commission (NCWRC); Andy Brown, Southern Appalachian Stream Restoration Manager for TU; Mike Johnson, Commissioner, NCWRC; Mike Mihalas, Council Chairman, North Carolina TU, and Jacob Rash, Coldwater Research Coordinator, NCWRC. The panel will discuss the causes of loss of access and explore possible solutions.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"If all politicians fished instead of spoke publicly, we would be at peace with the world."

....Will Rogers

OUR HICKORY CHAPTER: A FRESH

NEW LOOK! By Bill Long

We were very pleased to have one of our largest groups of attendees at our last meeting on January 15th. Among the attendees was Dr. Ralph Griffith, a professor at Lenoir Rhyne University. He attended along with three of his current students enrolled in one of his classes this semester and they were there with a great purpose.

After the meeting, Dr. Griffith and his students met with members of the Hickory TU Board of Directors to discuss a process of looking internally at our chapter and our present status in all respects. Lynn Marilla, a current board member, told us about how Dr. Griffith used his resources to assist her organization, "Eagle Rock Camp", to suggest improvements to their operation. She was very complimentary of the information that came out of her association when used with Eagle Rock Camp and they have actually begun to look at the recommendations that came out of the process for them.

Dr. Griffith teaches a course entitled, "Entrepreneurial Capstone" for students in their final class of the degree in Entrepreneurship and only includes upperclassmen graduating in May 2019. There will be three students working with Dr. Griffith at no charge to our chapter to provide insight on possible improvements to the way we operate. The process begins with questions that will be asked of 6 selected board members to reflect on the current state of Hickory TU. These members have been chosen based on their willingness and their varied experience with the chapter to provide a broad look at the way we do business now. The board members will meet on Jan 29 at LRU to begin the process of "opportunity analysis". For the five weeks following, the team will devise plans of action to take corrective measures and to implement new standards for mitigating risk in key areas. After that, seven weeks will be spent working on initiatives for Hickory TU, after board approval, and present the outcomes in their final meeting in early May.

Potential areas of improvement may be areas of increased membership, increased attendance, better fund-raisers and

analysis of community involvement. This is done by Dr. Griffith and his team at no charge to the chapter because of our non-profit designation. We are very appreciative of this opportunity and thank Dr. Griffith for his willingness to provide their assets to our organization.

DELAYED HARVEST

The fall stocking is complete and there will not be another stocking until the first week of March. Be very careful with your releases over the winter as these are all the fish we will have until spring. Especially remember if you are out there when it is below freezing, the gills can freeze very quickly and kill the fish.

HICKORY NC TU LOGO GEAR



The Hickory Chapter has an account at Lands' End for clothing and other items with our logo. There are frequent discounts available that you can sign up for by going to <https://business.landsend.com/>. To access the account go to:

<https://business.landsend.com/store/hkynctu/>

We also have a second option for logo gear that Zan's wife Peggy has set us up with. Check out the following website: www.companycasuals.com/hickorytrout/start.jsp (note: this site requires a minimum of 12 items)

Tight Lines & Road Kill

The Winter of Discontent

The Winter of Discontent refers to a historical period of labor unrest in the UK, but it refers to about every winter in my life. I don't know about you, but having to dress like the Michelin Man to go fishing for a leftover 6-inch stocked fish by chucking lead into a deep run is not my idea of a great day. Then there are the problems of having to undress in the cold for 15 minutes to vent all the coffee you drank on the way, dealing with the shrinkage factor inherent from the chill, and then another quarter hour to reapply all your layers. As bad as all that is, it does make you appreciate having a Y chromosome!

So, I don't fish much in the winter, and a lot less than I used to. Maybe age does impart wisdom. What's an angler to do on those long winter's nights? Let me suggest some things to help you bide some time until the spring thaw.

The most commonly professed winter activity for fly fishers is tying flies. I do that too, but I probably already have enough flies to last me for the rest of my fishing life. If you're in the same boat, let me suggest that spending several evenings organizing your fly boxes will be far more beneficial. Everybody has his own way of sorting flies into boxes, but by

the end of a fishing season, mine are all out of sorts. The time you spend now reestablishing your system will save you a lot of fumbling when you hunt that size 22 chartreuse whatever on the creekbank.

Spend a night giving your rods a good going-over. Wipe all the dried slime off with a damp cloth. Check the fit of your ferrules, and, if appropriate, lubricate them. Most modern rods recommend no ferrule lube, but some older rods need some paraffin applied lightly. Check for any bent guides and be sure none of them have burrs that can snag a line or prevent your double-haul cast from reaching 100 feet. Clean any residue out of the reel seat. A bit of paraffin on the reel seat hardware can help if the mechanism doesn't move smoothly.

Get all your reels out another night. Strip off all the line and check its condition. Fly line lasts a long time, but when the coating starts to crack or become rough, replace it. Wipe it down with a damp cloth – chemical cleaners and lubricants are not recommended for most modern lines. Inspect your backing. If mildewed or frayed, replace it. Clean all the gears and other metal parts. If extremely dirty, you can literally scrub the parts in a tub of warm water and mild soap. Let all the parts dry completely. Apply a light coat of good quality reel grease. Many folks never do this, but it protects your expensive reels and makes them much smoother. Do not lube the disk of your disk drag system, although most disks are now sealed to keep you from making that mistake!

Spend an evening checking the stuff you wear. Empty your vest and launder it – your buddies may appreciate that. Eliminate things you never use like that Captain Midnight Do-Everything Gadget you won at TU. Put things back so you know where to find them instead of where you stuck them in a hurry last time out. Look closely at all surfaces and seams of your waders. Waders can be repaired if small leaks occur, but repairing a damaged area before the leak happens can make an April day on the water much more pleasant (see “shrinkage factor” above). Check your boots. Replace frayed old laces; they only break when you have a long hike back to your put-in spot!

Now, the most important accompaniment for a long winter's night: amber fluid! A couple fingers of your favorite can make the above tasks rather delightful. You'll be amazed by how much fun you have lubricating a reel if you're adequately lubricated yourself. I always clean my reels with Lagavulin!

By Joel Miller

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Tips on Tippet

By Steve Moore
Southern Trout Magazine
October/November 2019



As a new fly angler, you've already learned what tippet is. You know, it's the stuff that breaks when you have a beautiful fish on. Thankfully, once you learn the ins and outs of matching the right type and size to your conditions, you will lose less fish. To understand how to select the perfect tippet, trace the value chain. Many people start the value chain at the wrong end and focus on the rod and reel. Instead, start at the fish and move backward a few steps.

The species of fish, and where it lives, dictates the fly. The fly drives the tippet. The wrong combination of fly and tippet will create drag and produce in unnatural, fish-repelling drift. The quest for the perfect drift might lead you to extremes where you put exceptionally light tippet on a very heavy fly – that is a recipe for break off when casting. Fly and tippet have to be compatible! Your starting point in matching fly to tippet

Tippet Diameter	Tippet Size	Pound Test*	Fly Size
0.003	8x	1.2	24,26,28
0.004	7x	2	20,22,24,26
0.005	6x	3	16,18,20,22
0.006	5x	4	14,16,18
0.007	4x	5	12,14,16
0.008	3x	6	10,12,14
0.009	2x	7	6,8,10
0.01	1x	8.5	2,4,6
0.011	0x	10	1/0,2,4
0.012	x1	12	2/0,1/0,2
0.013	x2	14	3/0,2/0,1/0,2
0.014	x3	16	5/0,4/0,3/0,2/0
0.015	x4	18	6/0,5/0,4/0,3/0

should be the Orvis table for their Superstrong Plus brand. It matches tippet to the fly size to achieve a good drift. Even though the pound test ratings are specific to the Superstrong Plus, the tippet sizes/diameters are industry standard and show the right diameter for the fly size.

As you can see, very light tippet goes with tiny flies. However, judgment comes into play at the edge of the stream. If the water is gin clear with spooky fish, drop down a size. With cloudy or dirty water, you can move up a notch on the scale since the dirt mutes an unnatural drift and you can take advantage of the higher pound test to reduce the chance of a break-off. If you expect to run into stronger fish on very light flies, it's better to reset the drag on your reel and be very gentle when fighting the fish before dropping two sizes to a riskier, more lightweight tippet. The chart shows these situationally driven variations by reflecting the same size fly against different tippet diameters. It is best not to go outside those windows, i.e., do not put 4X tippet on a size 22 fly.

You do not need much tippet – 2 to 4 feet at most. Remember, it attaches to the end of your leader, and the leader provides the standoff from the thick, fish-spooking fly line. Since leaders are expensive, always tie a surgeon's loop at the end of the leader and attach the tippet using another surgeon's loop for a loop to loop connection. Caveat – purists demand you tie the tippet firmly to the leader's surgeon's loop to achieve a better turn-over of the fly. However, as a new

fly angler, the difference in your presentation will be negligible, and it is better to be able to leverage the loop to loop connection to quickly change tippet as the length erodes with each fly change.

One point that always comes up is the expense of tippet. I know, it seems like everything associated with fly fishing has a cost premium. Some folks try and cut costs by using 100-yard spools of monofilament or fluorocarbon. However, while cheaper, it will not perform the same. All you need to do is compare the diameter of the bulk line to the width of equivalent pound test tippet. For example, a \$5.99/110 yard spool of 2 lb test Berkeley Vanish fluorocarbon has a diameter of 0.006 inches which is equal to 5X tippet. Sounds like a bargain at 5 cents per yard! The same diameter Orvis Superstrong Plus breaks at 4.75 lbs (\$5/32.8 yards or \$0.15 per yard) and Rio's Powerflex Plus breaks at 6 lbs (\$10/50 yards or \$0.20 per yard). So, it's a case of buyer beware; don't be lulled into making a decision based on false economy. Go with the strongest tippet you can afford.

So... monofilament or fluorocarbon? First, disregard the idea that fluorocarbon is totally transparent under water. Yes, the refractive index is more closely matched to water than mono, but fish, as well as humans, can still see it according to tests done by many experts. The good news is that, just like the big, nasty hook hanging from the bottom of the fly, fish do not know what tippet is and will hit anything they believe matches real food as they make split second decisions when the current pushes the fly into their field of view. Mono and fluoro both stretch and mono recovers better, allowing it to retain more of its strength. On the other hand, fluoro turns a fly over a little better. What's the bottom line to you as a new angler? Feel free to go with the less expensive mono since the casting performance improvements of fluoro will be lost until your cast improves.

Check out Steve's YouTube channel at [KayakHacksFishing](#) for more on this topic.

FEBRUARY FLY PATTERNS

Reprinted from MIDCURRENT Winter Trout Fishing Tips
November 12, 2014 By: [Philip Monahan](#)

Winter fishing is almost exclusively a nymphing game, with a light leader under an indicator. I have never worried about matching specific patterns, choosing instead to go with generalist nymphs, such as a Hare's Ear, Copper John, Scud, or Pheasant Tail. And because fish aren't willing to move very far to eat your offering, fish a two-fly tandem rig. Two patterns in the water means a better chance of bumping a fish in the nose with one of them. Winter trout usually hold in slower water—deep pools, long runs, and at the base of waterfalls—so you'll want to focus on these areas. Work slowly, making a lot of drifts through each piece of water. It's amazing that you can drift through a spot 20 times without the slightest bump, only to have the indicator dive on the 21st pass.

But don't leave home without a few winter dry flies. About two or three years after I caught that first trout on the Musconetcong, I was fishing Big Flat Brook in the northwestern corner of the Garden State, when I was shocked again by

the sight of several trout rising at the taylor of a pool. These were the first winter risers I'd come across. Luckily, I had a few Griffith's Gnats in my vest, and I managed to take one of the trout by swinging the fly just under the surface. This was another proud moment in my maturation as an angler.

For more information on fly hatches and patterns, visit our website helpful links page at <http://www.hkynctu.org/helpful-links/> and look for the NC Fly Hatch Chart.

FLY CASTING ESSENTIALS...

By Gary Hogue

Gary has been an outdoor educator for over 35 years working as a guide, outfitter and fly casting instructor for various groups including the YMCA, American Camping Association and Sierra Club. Locally, he has started Fish Tales an instructional program in fly casting and fly fishing.

REMEMBER THE LITTLE THINGS...

Steve Culton wrote... "They say that ten percent of the anglers catch ninety percent of the fish. If that's true, it's not because those ten percent are supernatural angling demigods. It's not because they went down to the crossroads and sold their souls. It's not because they are insanely lucky. It's because they do a lot of little things that most other anglers do not."

This month's article is a reminder of some of the "little things" that you can do to be a better fly fisherman and catch more fish:

Sharpen Your Hook... A sharp hook will catch more fish... check your hook points.

Set The Hook... Know what your line and indicator are doing. There are no short strikes.

Knots Can't Be Trusted... It happens to all of us... You tied a lousy knot. Resolve to take more time in tying your knots. Tug on the fly or the leader section.

Look Before You Leap... Stand away from the waters edge and plan how you will fish this section. Where will the trout be and what is the best presentation? Don't just plow right in.

Flies In The Water Catch More Fish... How much time do you spend not fishing and for what reason? Be confident with your pattern, make good casts, move your location. Why are you not catching fish maybe it's because there are no fish where your standing. Develop good trout sense.

Fish Droppers... Fastest way to tell what the fish want because they give the fish a choice of size, color, and life stages. If you're not catching and you're not occasionally getting stuck on the bottom, you're not fishing deep enough. Before you change flies, change your weight or depth.

Set Down Stream When Nymphing... The fish is facing upstream and by setting downstream you are driving the hook point into a larger mass instead of pulling it away into nothing. If you're drift has taken your fly below your

position, set the hook with a sweeping motion to either side.

Wear Good Sunglasses... Polarized glasses will block glare and let you see into the water while reducing eye strain and protection from harmful ultraviolet radiation. There are many lens colors, choose the color that matches your style of fishing. Remember fashion and function.

These are just a few things that will help in developing your fly fishing skills but always remember to be safe and have fun. If you need casting lessons or want to tune up before spring, just contact Fish Tales. Hope to see you on the water...

Fish Tales... Gary

If you have an interest in becoming a better fly caster you can also find several books on the subject in the chapter library. Just go to <http://www.hkynctu.org/library/> and look under the INSTRUCTIONAL category.

TIP OF THE MONTH

THE FLY FISHING HEMOSTAT



The Fly Fishing Hemostat, also known as forceps, is easily one of the most essential pieces of equipment that you can have with you on a day on the water. But if

you are new to the pursuit you might question why this is. So we thought we would share the various ways that we have used them over the years. In fact, we put the list together in the order we typically use our fly fishing hemostats for a typical day on the water.

1. Barb Pinching: We always fish barbless hooks for freshwater species. Most hooks come with a barb. Even hand tied flies often have the barb still on them. We use the smooth surface of our fly fishing forceps to pinch down the barb on the flies we plan to take that day.
2. Fly Organization: Once the flies are barbless we use the hemostats to place the smaller flies into the fly boxes. If you've got fat fingers like we do, this makes the job much easier.
3. Knot Tying: When it comes time to set up your tippet and leader or even attach the fly, we use the closed end of the hemostat to help tie some of our knots. For example: Clinch Knot, Tippet Knot, or Triple Surgeon's Knot. Here is a helpful video on how to do this.
4. Hook Straightening: Usually if a hook on a fly that I am using straightens out or gets bent, I'll replace it. But sometimes the heat is on or maybe it's the last fly I have in a pattern that is kicking butt. If that's the case, then my trusty hemostats save the day by reshaping the hook to it's former self.
5. Catch & Release: This is where a fly fishing clamp really shines. When it comes to catch and release done the right way, removing the hook from a fishes lip as gently as possible is a critical step, especially if you are fishing larger flies

like streamers. The hemostat is simply the best method for getting this done quickly.

6. Errant Fly Extraction: Even the best anglers will eventually hook themselves. Wind, bad casts, and jumping fish that toss flies all put us at risk. If/when it happens. You probably won't want to end your day of fishing to run to the emergency room. If your hook is barbless it's easier. But either way is almost impossible without a good hemostat. However we do recommend you consider this alternative: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNvWououyp4&feature=youtu.be&t=17>

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

Welcome to another edition of Advice from the Vise. This month we will discuss some of the basic materials used for tying. Let's start off on hooks. Big ones, little ones, barbless, nymph, terrestrial, dry fly, jig, emergers, klinkhammer, competition, ...there are hundreds of varieties and manufacturers of those hooks and you can find just about anything in a pretty broad price range. For the beginner, this can be mind boggling. Pick a hook that suits the fly that you want to tie, and once you master the basics, you can branch out to some of the more sophisticated styles. A lot of hook selection is personal choice based on cost and performance. A barbed hook can become barbless with a quick squeeze of the vice on the barb, and like everything else, I think most of us are looking for quality at a good price.

Beads come in countersunk, slotted, brass, tungsten, ceramic, glass, and even plastic and just about every color you can imagine. Every type has its application. Brass gets you down, tungsten gets you down fast and will keep you down, especially useful in tightline or Euro-Nymphing. I tie a mix so I am ready for whatever condition presents on the water on any given day.

Feathers of all sorts are used in tying. The variety is nearly endless, and each feather from different birds has a specific use. From the soft wispy partridge hackle for nymphs to the stiff fibers of dry fly hackle, I will introduce different feathers as we progress through some patterns in future columns. I will introduce different feathers for different uses and patterns.



Dubbing are fibers, either synthetic or natural, that make up the body of many fly patterns. I remember when I started, dubbing was rabbit or muskrat underfur from

animals we harvested ourselves. Now there are simply endless blends and synthetics that can create flies that float high or sink like a stone. I will confess that I am a dubbing junkie. I love using it, and love to try new types that are available, along with still making my own blends. It gives the buggy look to your ties. It's easy to get overwhelmed by the amount and variety available. I will introduce these different types as we progress this year.

Hair is just about as diverse as feathers. Deer, elk squirrel, just to name a few are very useful in creating really effective flies. Different types of hair have specific applications. Deer and Elk hair are hollow and float really well, so they are used on flies that stay on or near the surface, whereas rabbit and squirrel have fibers that are best suited to below surface flies and as we progress with patterns I will introduce those.



There are plenty more materials to cover throughout the year, and we just discussed the basics for this month. One question that always comes up with beginners is what to buy when you walk into the shop or peruse the online catalog. Pick a pattern, wooly bugger, pheasant tail nymph – both good starter patterns and get good with that pattern in different sizes. Then start some variations with adding a hotspot or a bead, maybe some rubber legs or flashback. Then tie some soft hackle versions of the same pattern. In doing that, you perfect the basics, and acquire material as needed- rather than purchase things that don't fit in to what you are tying. I'm excited to bring you this column and hope to be able to get some folks started tying and provide some tips to improve established tiers, and of course learn some things myself along the way. I'm happy to answer any and all questions, so don't hesitate to contact me at jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

By Dave Everhart

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TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

Last year a lot of you signed up with Southern Trout Magazine and helped us win a beautiful Thomas & Thomas fly rod worth over \$800. We are having a raffle for the rod to raise money for TIC. Tickets are \$5/each or 5 for \$20. Bring your checkbook to the meeting to get your tickets.

AIR LOCK INDICATORS



Have you started using the new Air-Lock strike indicators that have those little nuts on top to hold it to your leader? Do you now have several of the indicators with missing nuts? You can order replacement nuts at this website:

<https://pros.rajeffsports.com/p.../air-lock-spare-locking-nuts>. It might not be a bad idea to pool your order with others. A pack of five nuts is only \$1.00, but the shipping is \$2.66. I'm still looking for a source for the little rubber rings.

TENKARA VIDEO

We'd like to thank Jason Sparks for the outstanding presentation at our January meeting and we'd like to thank all of you who attended. Clearly it's a subject that a lot of people have an interest in as all 48 of you made this an amazing turnout.

Since there seems to be a great interest in Tenkara fly fishing, we have added a Tenkara tab to our Helpful Links page on our website. A video of the presentation has been included on that tab and can be seen at <http://www.hkynctu.org/helpful-links/tenkara/>. We will be adding additional items to this tab as they are discovered so check in periodically for updates.

FLY FISHING MERIT BADGE & MEET UP

The make-up day for catching and cleaning a fish has been rescheduled on Saturday, March 9. The program will start at 10 AM at Betsy's Old Country Store. The boys will catch a fish from the pond, clean it, and cook it to complete their merit badge. Wes & Cathy Starnes are bringing a cooking trailer. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jackie Greene at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com. The first Delayed Harvest spring stocking will take place that week, so show up early or stay late to get a little fishing time for yourself.

FLY FISHING HALL OF FAME WEEKEND

The Fly Fishing Museum of the Southern Appalachians 4th Annual Hall of Fame Luncheon & Induction Ceremony will be held in on Saturday, March 30.

A Friday pre-event evening fundraiser will be held at on March 29 at Nantahala Brewing Company beginning at 7 pm. Each inductee will select a beer to renamed after them during the event, and Nantahala Brewing will donate \$1 per renamed beer sold during the evening. The event will honor the inductees and raise funds for Casting Carolinas, a non-profit organization that utilizes fly fishing as a means of helping patients deal with and recover from various cancers.

On Saturday, March 30 the Hall of Fame luncheon (location TBD) will begin with a 'Meet and Greet' will be held from 11:30 am - noon, when lunch is served. Beau Beasley, well-known author and angler, will emcee the induction ceremony, which will begin at 1:00 pm.

Join us at the Appalachian Rivers Aquarium on Saturday, March 30, from 4-6 pm for a grand opening celebration. 117 Island Street.

RIVERCOURSE

Rivercourse is a high quality experience for boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 15 and takes place in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains at the Lake Logan Event Center near Canton, N.C. This pristine setting includes a section of the West Fork of the Pigeon River, which is privately owned and stocked with trout for the use of the camp.

While fly fishing is the camp's primary activity focus, campers get to enjoy some other unique, often once-in-a-lifetime experience, like releasing a raptor (like a hawk) and catching it when it returns, a campfire, outside games, visits with conservation officials, fish sampling and many others.

During the week, sessions on a variety of topics are mixed into the day. Geology, fish and insect sampling, scientific and natural encounters; all things related to the things in the natural world around us and cultivating a better understanding of them and how precious they are.

And throughout the camp there are plenty of sessions where we just have fun fishing together and getting to know each other and building enduring friendships, gaining a deeper appreciation of the majesty of nature while learning to love a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

If you know of a child who is interested in attending, please have them complete the application at <https://www.rivercourse.org/apply/>. Subsidy for the tuition may be provided on a need basis.

A CLEAN WILSON CREEK



Many of you have met or know of Bruce Gray, the owner of Betsy's Ole Country Store and of his clean-up efforts along Wilson Creek. Bruce has been Mission Control of this clean up effort since 2008 and started the Wilson Creek Clean Up Fund in 2017. It has now been rebranded as **A Clean Wilson Creek**. To learn more about the organization, volunteer, or make a donation you can visit the website at <https://acleanwilsoncreek.org/>.

The organization has planned a two man fly fishing team competition on Saturday March 23rd. The teams will fish and control a 1-day event on the delayed harvest water in Mortimer, NC. For more details and registration visit [https://www.flycomps.com/events/wilsons-creek-clean-up-3-](https://www.flycomps.com/events/wilsons-creek-clean-up-3-23-2019)

[23-2019](https://www.flycomps.com/events/wilsons-creek-clean-up-3-23-2019). Note that while the event currently shows as fully registered, there are frequently cancellations, so get on the waiting list. In addition, they are looking for volunteers to help with the event. If you can help, please contact Brandon Harrison at Brandon@wilkie-const.com.

EAGLE ROCK CAMP

The spring retreat fly fishing day has been scheduled for Thursday, May 23. Gary Hogue will be the coordinator for the event so if you would like to participate, please contact him at gamahe@charter.net and let him know. Gary will provide the fly rods for the event, but participants are asked to bring a few panfish and bass flies for the participants to use. Be sure to crush the barbs on the hooks.

CASTING CAROLINAS

RETREAT: The first retreat for 2019 is scheduled for April 12-14 at Lake Logan Center in Canton, NC. To apply for the retreat visit: <https://castingcarolinas.com/retreats/>.

VOLUNTEER: Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. To sign up to help with their programs: <https://castingcarolinas.com/community/volunteer/>

THE HICKORY CHAPTER NEEDS YOU

The revived Hickory Chapter has now been back in existence for almost three years. Many terms on the board of directors are retiring soon and we need new members to step up and help continue our programs to keep the chapter going. If you would like to help out as either an officer of volunteer, please contact President Jackie Greene at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

Be sure to check out our new calendar of events on our website to keep up with what is going on in our area. If you have a fly fishing related event, you can send the information to us at hkyntu@gmail.com.

CHAPTER LIBRARY

Due to lack of interest we have closed the chapter library. Books have been donated to the Eagle Rock Camp library. If you would prefer to have a book you donated returned, please contact Lynn Marilla at lmarella@eaglerockcamp.org. If you have additional books you would like to donate to the camp library, please contact Lynn.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

I'm sure many of you will be taking trips to Montana, Alaska, or many other places this year. Take some great photos, put some words to it and submit it to the newsletter. Your adventure may inspire others to start planning their own

trip for next year. Send it to us at HkyNCTU@gmail.com for consideration of publication.

CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE

When you're sitting in the waiting room for the doctor or in the lounge at the airport waiting for a plane, take a little time to check out the posts on our Facebook page. You'll find the latest status on the Trout In The Classroom and many tips to help improve your fishing. Search for **Hickory NC Trout Unlimited**.

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TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM UPDATE

WEST ALEXANDER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teacher: Ryan Rowe
Principal: Dr. Chad Maynor

Let's give teacher Ryan Rowe a huge count of likes for the effort he has put in to making his TIC program awesome. West Alexander Middle school TIC project is holding strong at 88 trout. We finally have our aquaponics system fully implemented and in the early stages of plant growth. Nitrate levels consistently stay low due to absorption from plant roots and pH has stabilized. Students are enjoying our success this year. This time last year we were around 45 trout. Students are growing mint, basil, and rosemary. Once plants have matured more they will start to harvest part of the plant to take home.



NEWTON-CONNOVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teacher: John Gruber
Principal: Dr. Donna Heavner

The students are really enjoying the trout. They have really started to grow. We have somewhere between 40 -50 and most are over 3 inches. Mr. Gruber reports that the kids have really enjoyed having the trout in the class. They have all learned a great deal about trout and their habitat. We were doing really well with the fish. We had only lost a few. However, during the snow storm we lost about half. Not sure if the power went off or the large ones got hungry. It seems only the small ones died. Anyway, we have about 50 very healthy trout. They are about the size of your little finger.



RIVER BEND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teacher: Stoney Turner

Principal: Chip Cathey

It is much simpler to share information regarding our many swimmers early in the stages of development. It is even easier to report when some unforeseen crisis suddenly arises, plunging the entire project into utter chaos. Fortunately, as a whole, this has not been the case this year at The Bend - other than the chiller catastrophe where Mr. Gary Jones came to the rescue. I would say to date this has been the most successful year since River Bend started 3 or 4 years ago.

Frankly, things have been really easy this year. This year we have only done one 60% water change, only because we wanted to, not because we had to and that included a single set of filters. We contribute most of our success to strict adherence to our feeding routine. These little guys will eat as much as you provide, you just have to learn to resist providing more than they need. In addition, we have discovered that we can double our filter usage by enclosing them in panty hose and with the addition of the student filter, designed and constructed by my first-year group, the water has remained very clean with extremely low turbidity.

Students are looking forward to the trout release trip, and we have introduced a project competition. Students choose from a list of pre-selected topics and produce informative writing about their chosen topics. After the deadline, student submissions are judged by a panel, and the project chosen as best overall receives \$50.00 gift card courtesy of Hickory Chapter Trout Unlimited. So far, the participation has been a positive one and I look forward to sharing the results.

