

# Hickory NC Trout Unlimited

## June 2018 Newsletter



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### A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT



By now you have heard that the Chapter Board voted to postpone the Fly-Fishing Day Event. There were several issues, but the primary problem is a lack of leadership. We needed someone that could step up and lead the effort since I have been called back to court on a case for a client. We need more members to volunteer. I risk boring some of you since I talked about this just last month, but it is our chapter's greatest problem at the moment. Chapters of Trout Unlimited are built, operated, and succeed because of the efforts put forth by their membership. When members don't come forward the chapters fail and either close or go dormant. Hickory has been dormant until three years ago when enough folks got together and worked to bring it back to life. Many of those folks have been serving on the board the last three years and their terms are expiring at the end of the year. Other board members have had changes in their personal lives and have had to resign recently. Now is the time for some members to step up and help run the chapter for a couple of years. Now is not the time to be apathetic and think someone else will do it. So far no one has stepped up.

The chapter is working on setting up a retreat for the officers, board members and perspective board members, if any, to decide the future of our chapter. We will either decide what two or three things we will focus on for the next couple of years with some new leadership or we will decide when we might be forced to close the chapter. This is how critical the need is for new volunteers and leadership. If you have even the smallest of interest in keeping this chapter thriving and moving forward please attend our next board meeting schedule for Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Peddler Steak House on US 321. Social time, order food & drinks is at 5:30. Meeting starts 6:15. Please make an effort to attend. The chapter needs your input. If you can't attend and would like to learn more or step up, please feel free to contact me or any other officer.

In closing, if any member has any interest in being more involved at any level, or if you have a question or suggestion about Hickory TU, our events, procedures, whatever, please feel free to contact me at [HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com) or 478-284-1224.

Zan Thompson

### NEXT MEETING

**When:** Tuesday, June 19  
**Where:** Peddler Steak House  
1350 U.S. 321  
**Program:** 5:30-6:30 Dinner(Optional)/  
Socializing/Raffle Ticket Sales  
7:30 Raffle/ Door Prizes... Conclusion  
**Topic:** Annual Gear Swap & Sale

Gather up all of that gear you've collected over the years that now just sits there collecting dust. Bring it to the meeting to sell or swap for gear from other members.

### WILD TROUT FISHING IN NC MOUNTAINS

For those of you who made it to the monthly meeting in May, you had a real treat. Kin Hodges from the NCWRC presented a program on wild trout rivers in our region. Delayed harvest ends on June 1 this year and that's the end of trout fishing (at least here in NC) for many of us until next October. That doesn't mean there isn't good trout fishing available. The wild rivers above 3000' provide some good fishing the year around.

The problem is that for many of us well into our senior years the trails can be a bit arduous. With that in mind, I asked Kin to provide us with a list of streams with easier access. He presented several maps of the rivers that he would recommend for seniors. Those maps have been posted on our website on the Helpful Hints page. <http://www.hkynctu.org/helpful-links/wild-trout-streams/> In addition to the maps, Kin provided us with fish surveys on the creeks. The length survey is in centimetres, but you can approximate the inches by dividing the centimeters by 25.

If you are young and agile or would like to see a little more detail on the streams listed, you can use the interactive fishing map listed below. When you access the map you can select any river in the box below "water body" or search by many other things on the web page.

<https://www.ncpaws.org/wrcmapbook/FishingAreas.aspx>

We hope this will give you a little incentive to try out some fishing this summer for the wild trout here in NC. See you on the river.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"Perhaps it was only a trick of the water, a trompe l'oeil of the late summer light, or maybe just one of those hallucinatory visions provoked by hours on end of upstream nymphing. You know the feeling: cast, lift, reach, lift, cast again, over and over, always staring, until the world fades away, sun and bird song and roar of water, until all that's left is the endless downstream dance of the strike indicator"*

.....Robert F. Jones



## 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 now 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](http://www.companycasuals.com/hickorytrout/start.jsp)

## Tight Lines & Road Kill

By Dr. Joel Miller

I dearly love parachute patterns!!! Give me only one fly to take with me anywhere, at any time of day or year, sunny or cloudy, still water, pocket water, or riffles, and I'll choose a size 16 parachute Adams. It looks exactly like nothing, but it looks essentially like a huge percentage of mayflies. The colors come close to the majority of aquatic bugs. The size is pretty much the average for mayflies. With that one fly I'll take my chances on fooling at least a few fish any day and under any circumstances!

Why are parachutes so good? Lots of reasons. Their shape and profile fit that of mayflies perfectly. They sit low in the water to make that profile readily visible to fish. Despite that low-riding profile, they float beautifully. They rarely fall over like flies with vertical hackle tend to do. One will last all day once you learn not to perch them in trees. It's almost like tying a real live mayfly onto your hook! (Interesting aside: that's what some of the ladies in my former office actually thought I was doing when I tied flies. They thought I caught real bugs and tied them onto hooks!)

Nonetheless, I **profoundly HATE** parachute patterns! Why? Because I tie them! Over the years I had tried many, many different tying techniques for parachutes, but I'd never, ever found one that made me completely happy. The most consistent problem in the past for me had been finishing the fly after getting the hackle in place. Dubbing the portion of the fly ahead of the parachute post is difficult once the hackle is wound. Tying the hackle in place once it's wound is problematic ... where do you tie it down? Whip finishing the head takes a contortionist who can hold the hackle upward while using a whip finish tool. Whip finishing is hard enough on a bare hook!

I recently came across a new method of tying parachutes that, in my opinion, solves all the problems. It's a miracle! It uses UV-cure resin to fix the parachute post and to anchor the hackle after it's wound. It allows you to finish dubbing the front part of the fly before wrapping the hackle. You also whip finish the head before the hackle is wound. It works well on any size, even down to 18s and 20s.

First, a word about UV-cure resin. It may be the greatest substance for fly tiers since birds grew feathers! It goes from an easily manageable liquid to a hard plastic substance by merely shining a UV flashlight on it for several seconds. It makes a beautiful hard, shiny cover for wing cases on nymphs. It can easily create a hard, shiny head for streamers and saltwater flies. In the case of parachutes, it's a phenomenal glue. If you tie flies and don't use it, get some and a UV light ASAP.

This parachute technique is pretty simple. Tie in the tail. Tie in a piece of synthetic yarn (I use Zelon) at the 1/3 point with the two arms of the yarn each being about an inch in length. Make a couple thread wraps behind and in front of the arms to hold them upward. Apply a small drop of resin where the yarn is tied in and a couple millimeters up each arm with your dubbing needle. Pull both arms of the yarn upward and twist them clockwise to form the parachute post. Hit it with several seconds of UV while holding the twist, and you have a sturdy post. Dub the part of the fly behind the post (abdomen). Tie in the appropriate size hackle feather, tip headed rearward and shiny side up, starting at the post and to the bare hook shank ahead of the post. Do not wind the hackle yet, simply pull it upward and out of the way. Dub the part of the fly ahead of the post (thorax) by starting with a turn or two behind the post and moving to the front for several turns. Whip finish the head and apply head cement like usual. Now the magic! Wrap the hackle for 4 or 5 turns clockwise around the post. Don't tie it down at all, simply keep it tight with your hand pulling it toward the tail. While holding it in place, apply a small drop of resin between the last wrap and the post with your dubbing needle and give it a UV blast. After several seconds simply cut the hackle shaft just past the resin drop, trim the post to the right height, and you're finished.

Seeing the technique is always easier. Here's a well-done YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOMr8KLhIU>

Here's a size 16 parachute sulfur I tied with this technique. By far it's the easiest and best parachute technique I've found! Try it and I think you'll like it too.



Drop me an email with critique about the column, questions you might have, or suggestions for future articles: [hkyNCTUtlrk@gmail.com](mailto:hkyNCTUtlrk@gmail.com)

Joel Miller

## JUNE FLY PATTERNS

Reprinted from Carolina Sportsman magazine

June is typically the time to start using a variety of terrestrial patterns such as No. 10 Inchworm, No. 12-10 Beetle, No. 12 black Ant, No. 8 Hopper, No. 10 Caterpillar and No. 10 Cricket.

## GETTING READY FOR THE SEASON

BY Kevin Howell

*{June 1 is the end of our year of Delayed Harvest fishing and most of us will probably not be back in the NC streams until next October 1st when the new season begins. This is the time to prepare all of your gear so that it is ready for next fall.}*

Whether you are a mountain biker, hiker, fly fisherman or any other type of outdoor enthusiast, you rely on your gear to provide a quality experience and keep you safe. As we approach the start of a new season in the great outdoors, it is time to inspect all of our gear and perform routine maintenance to keep things functional for the year to come. Also by inspecting your gear early you can avoid being number 135 in line to get your reel or rod serviced. Not waiting until the last minute will keep you from fighting the hordes of people wanting the same thing done at the same time. Here are the top things to examine when getting your gear ready for the season.

Check all the guides on your rod for nicks and burrs. These small nicks will cut fly lines or leaders and tippets and may cost you the fish of a life time, or force you to buy a new line or leader more frequently. To check for burrs take a small piece of nylon pantyhose and pull it back and forth through your guides. If it tears or hangs, you have a burr or nick and that guide needs to be replaced. You can have guides easily replaced at your local tackle shop or outfitter.

Check all of your ferrules. Look for cracks in epoxy or graphite that may signal some type of fracture in the ferrule. Worn or cracked ferrules will need to be returned to the manufacturer for repair. Lubricate all of your ferrules with the appropriate wax.

Check your fly line. If it is cracked then replace it. The cracks in the line allow water to infiltrate the core and make the line sink. Dirt will also build up in the cracks costing you distance on your cast and making the line sink below the surface, making mending and fly manipulation very difficult. Also, take the time to redo nail knots or loop knots that are over 1 year old to prevent a failure while on the stream. Clean your entire line with mild soap and water and reapply your favorite line dressing. You will be amazed at how much this helps your old line.

Check your reel. Does the line strike have a groove in it that may cut or damage fly lines? If so, it can be filed or sanded out or sent back to the manufacturer for repair. Does it need to be oiled and lubricated (check manufacturers recommendation for your reel) for the season? If it does need to be lubricated then use an appropriate lube like Whale's Spit or Reel Lube. Are all of the screws securely fastened? A small drop of clear fingernail polish behind a screw will help it hold tight for the season. Is it catching or binding anywhere? If so, then either your spindle is bent or you have dented the reel by dropping it on a rock or a similar hard surface. Either way you will do better to have your reel professionally serviced at a local fly shop or return it to the manufacturer.

Check and replace your leaders and tippet. Most monofilament tippet and leaders will breakdown in about 6 months after being exposed to UV (sun) light. If you are like

me and have dropped your tippet in the water, then it is going to be weak and definitely needs to be replaced. When testing tippet, be sure to test the knot strength as this is the first place that tippet tends to show weakness. Nothing is more frustrating than losing fish due to bad tippet. Leaders will dry rot and should always be tested prior to fishing.

Check your waders. Look for any leaks or dry rot that may have occurred over the winter or since the last time you fished. Turn them inside out and fill them with water or get in a dark closet and shine a light down in them and look for leaks or pin holes. You can either patch the leaks you find or take your waders to your local shop and have them patch them. Keep in mind that leaks due to pin holes are easily repaired while leaks due to material decay cannot be repaired and will ultimately have to be replaced. Also, examine your wading boots. Is the felt usable and in good working order? If it is coming unglued or is worn thin this can cause you to fall or not have traction in the water.

Check your flies. Remove flies with rusty hooks that you may have fished or dropped in the water. That rusty hook is a sure indication that the hook will break with a little pressure from the hook set. There is no worse feeling in the world than missing three fish in a row, only to examine your fly and realize that the hook broke off on the first fish,

In addition to your gear, give yourself a tune up. If you have not fished since last spring, a quick casting lesson at the local fly shop or in the back yard may be just what you need to get the year off to a great start. We here at Davidson River Outfitters are always willing to help.

One thing is for sure, while Punxsutawney Phil may have seen his shadow and predicted 6 more weeks of winter weather, spring is just around the corner and with it comes some of the best fishing of the year. Make sure you and your gear are ready for it.

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### FLUOROCARBON VS. NYLON

by Bill Battles

Reprinted from [www.flyfishamerica.com](http://www.flyfishamerica.com)

*It was my intention to include an article about tying your own leaders this month. In researching I came across this article regarding the pros and cons of nylon and fluorocarbon. I found the information in this article enlightening and felt it was important to understand the two materials before beginning a program of tying your own leaders. The reference in the article about biodegradable line sounds fantastic, but it appears that it is no longer available on the market.*

“Monofilament” is a term of art used to describe extruded, single-strand fishing line made from a variety of different plastics. Monofilament leaders and tippets are now made from three distinctly different plastic materials: nylon, fluorocarbon and bioabsorbable polymer. Each material offers advantages and disadvantages compared to the others.

The amount of marketing drivel that has been published extolling the virtues of fluorocarbon monofilament over nylon is almost beyond belief. While some of it is undoubtedly true, most is based on the properties of the two materials and their theoretical differences, rather than

practical experience in using them under a wide variety of fishing conditions. The purpose of this article is to bring fly anglers up to speed on just what those advantages and disadvantages really amount to in a “real world” setting.

Nylon and fluorocarbon (polyvinylidene fluoride, or PVDF) monofilament materials have been around for quite a while, but bioabsorbable polymer monofilament is brand new to the fishing industry. Bioabsorbable polymer monofilament was originally developed in the 1970s for use by the medical industry as “dissolving” stitches, and cost over \$5.00 per yard at the time. Bioline, of Portland, Oregon (recently purchased by Denver-based Wright & McGill) started marketing bioabsorbable polymer monofilament fishing line in July, 2008, and the product line is being expanded to include fly-fishing leader and tippet material. If you’re wondering what the big deal is with bioabsorbable polymer monofilament, read on.

### **Environmental Impact**

How many times have you lost a monofilament tippet—or an entire leader—or inadvertently dropped a piece of waste monofilament line into the water? If you’re like the rest of us, the answer is “lots.” Even if you religiously store used monofilament line in a Fishpond PLOpod and dispose of it properly in the trash, it’s still going to wind up back in the ecosystem—either in a landfill or dumped at sea.

First introduced by DuPont in 1939, millions of miles—perhaps tens of millions of miles—of nylon monofilament fishing line have been produced in the last 70 years, and every inch of it is still sitting out there somewhere in the ecosystem . . . and will be for at least the next 530 years. That’s right, whether buried underground or floating around in our rivers, lakes and oceans, nylon monofilament takes 600 years to biodegrade.

Why is this important? Each year, thousands of animals and countless boat propellers become entangled in discarded monofilament line. Shorebirds, bald eagles, sea turtles, and marine mammals can starve to death, lose limbs, or drown because of entanglement in monofilament fishing line. Since it’s usually clear or light in color, monofilament line is difficult for birds and mammals to see, making it easy for them to get wrapped up in the stuff. One in five manatees rescued between 1980 and 1999 were entangled in monofilament line, and God only knows how many others died before they could be rescued. In one study, 38% of green turtles that washed up dead in Florida had eaten monofilament line, and discarded or broken off monofilament fishing line has been identified as one of the leading causes of infant dolphin deaths. Even humans are affected—every year human divers drown as a result of entanglement in monofilament fishing line (usually the heavier commercial-fishing variety).

While it may be difficult to conceive of the havoc that millions of miles of discarded nylon monofilament line will cause over the next 530 years, one can only imagine what those consequences will be over the next 4,000 years. That’s how long it takes for fluorocarbon monofilament to biodegrade. For all practical purposes, fluorocarbon monofilament never biodegrades.

Bioline, on the other hand, fully biodegrades in just five years, and in the process breaks down to nothing more than a minimal quantity of carbon dioxide and water. If there’s a winner here, it’s not nylon or fluorocarbon. The five-year life span of Bioline still has the potential to cause harm, but it certainly pales in comparison to that of nylon and fluorocarbon monofilament.

### **Cost**

Plain old nylon monofilament is the least expensive of the three monofilament leader and tippet materials, and the clear winner on this measure. Thirty- to 33-yard spools of nylon monofilament tippet material run from about \$2.95 to \$5.95, depending on the brand, diameter and where you buy it. The cost for a single knotless, tapered nylon leader falls into the same price range.

Knotless, tapered fluorocarbon leaders go for \$5.99 to \$9.99 each, while 30- to 33-yard spools of fluorocarbon tippet material are priced from \$8.99 to \$15.99.

Bioline tippet material sells for \$9.99 in 30-yard spools, making it price competitive with fluorocarbon. Bioline does not yet offer knotless, tapered leaders, but they do make leader material for tying your own, priced at \$8.99 per 30-yard spool. The good, the bad, and the brand new.

### **Specific Gravity**

It’s been said that the most common reason why even half-smart trout reject a dry-fly offering is because they see the squiggly outline of the leader on the water’s surface. Makes sense to us. Why else would every fly shop be selling those little squeeze bottles of “leader sink” that work for a while before they wash off? It sure would be nice if leaders and tippets sank all by themselves.

The density of a material, compared to that of water, is expressed as its specific gravity. To keep things simple, whoever developed the specific gravity scale—some Englishman, no doubt—assigned water a specific gravity of 1.00. Materials with a specific gravity of less than 1.00 are lighter than water, and will float. Materials having a specific gravity in excess of 1.00 are heavier than water, and will sink . . . theoretically, at least.

The actual blend of polymers used to produce “nylon” varies somewhat, but the nylon formulations used to make monofilament leaders and tippets generally have a specific gravity in the range of 1.05 to 1.10, making them just slightly heavier than water. To put those numbers in perspective, tungsten—used in high-density sink tips—has a specific gravity of 19.25.

Being slightly heavier than water does not mean that nylon monofilament is going to sink, at least not quickly or very well. Surface tension—where the water’s surface behaves like an elastic film—must be broken before an object will sink. A object’s density and contact angle with the water’s surface are the two most significant variables in its ability to break surface tension and sink, and the “just slightly heavier than water” specific gravity and zero contact angle (i.e., laid out flat) of a nylon monofilament leader or tippet are not sufficient to do it most of the time. If pushed or

pulled under the surface by a weighted fly or roiling current, nylon monofilament will sink . . . but very, very slowly.

Fluorocarbon has a specific gravity in the range of 1.75 to 1.90. Tungsten it ain't, but it is significantly more dense than nylon. But is it sufficiently dense to quickly and reliably break surface tension and sink all by itself, even at zero contact angles, and even in the smallest diameters? No, it's not. Our testing reveals that most brands of fluorocarbon tippet material in 0X to 8X diameters are no better than nylon at breaking surface tension and sinking on their own. Larger diameter fluorocarbon materials do demonstrate a slightly better ability to break surface tension without the assistance of current or other external influences, but for practical fishing purposes fluorocarbon has little benefit over nylon on this measure.

### **Water Absorption**

Nylon monofilament is a lot like spaghetti—it absorbs water in copious quantities. Trying to pull a piece of dry spaghetti apart end to end is tough, but as soon as it gets cooked (i.e., it has absorbed a bunch of water) it pulls apart with ease. That's an extreme example, but you get the picture.

In reality, nylon monofilament will absorb up to about 10% of its weight in water. Water absorption is a mixed blessing. On the upside, nylon monofilament that has absorbed water becomes more limp and supple, and makes knot tying easier. On the downside, water-logged nylon monofilament swells, increasing its diameter, reducing its break strength by about 20% (i.e., 10-pound test becomes 8-pound), and increasing its elongation (stretch) by 25% to 30%.

Fluorocarbon monofilament, however, is basically impervious to water. Depending upon the formulation, it absorbs less than 0.05% of its weight in water, with the result that none of its physical properties change after a prolonged soaking. The diameter, break strength and elongation of wet fluorocarbon monofilament remain essentially the same as dry fluorocarbon—but so does its stiffness, resulting in no appreciable reduction in line-coil memory after prolonged use. If you can live with more pronounced memory, fluorocarbon gets the nod here.

### **Ultraviolet Degradation**

Nylon monofilament is particularly susceptible to ultraviolet radiation. The same component of sunlight that causes sunburns, UV radiation quickly degrades nylon—principally through oxidation—resulting in significant loss of strength over time. How much time? As Hamlet would put it, “Ay, there's the rub.”

Tests show that nylon's loss in strength can be as great as 20% of its original strength in the first 100 hours of exposure to UV radiation, with an additional 20% loss in strength over the next 100 hours of exposure. Fluorocarbon, on the other hand, is completely unaffected by UV exposure. And since it's impervious to water as well, there's no chance of compounding the problem with additional degradation due to water absorption.

The 100 hours of daylight fishing it would take to degrade the strength of your nylon monofilament leader or tippet by 20% translates into 12.5 full 8-hour days on the water. The vast majority of tippets don't last a fraction of that time, and tapered leaders with progressively higher break strengths as they are trimmed back are of much less concern, so what's the big deal with UV degradation?

Probably not all that much for most anglers most of the time, but consider this. When you combine a significant loss in strength due to UV degradation with a 20% additional loss of strength due to water absorption, the risk of losing a good fish becomes a real possibility unless you regularly replace old (i.e., UV-exposed) and/or waterlogged nylon monofilament tippets and leaders.

### **Wet Knot Strength**

The only knots that really matter for anglers are the wet ones, and nylon monofilament has a slight edge over fluorocarbon on this measure. Tests with a surgeons knot, lubricated before cinching, and then immersed in freshwater for 20 minutes, demonstrate that nylon monofilament breaks at the knot at an average of about 80% of its rated break strength. Fluorocarbon isn't far behind at an average of about 75% of rated break strength. These numbers will vary somewhat by diameter and brand of material.

While the difference between nylon and fluorocarbon wet-knot break strength may be statistically significant, the “real world” difference is minimal at best. In fact, for most anglers the wet break strength of their knots is more a function of the quality of the knot than the material with which it is tied. Because fluorocarbon is harder than nylon, it is especially important to ensure that fluorocarbon knots are tightly cinched and fully seated.

### **Stretch**

We won't bore you with the science of elasticity and plasticity, but the bottom line here is that dry nylon and dry fluorocarbon monofilaments both stretch under load, and the amount of stretch they exhibit is roughly equal. But that's where the similarities end.

Nylon monofilament is more elastic than fluorocarbon, and as a result it is better able to recover from stretch when the load is removed. For example, a 10-foot length of a particular brand and diameter of nylon monofilament may stretch to a length of 11 feet (10% elongation) under a given load, but when that load is removed it recovers to a length of 10.2 feet, meaning that its permanent elongation, as a percentage of original length, is only 2%.

Being less elastic than nylon, a similar length and diameter of fluorocarbon monofilament may stretch to the same 11-foot length when subjected to the same load, but when the load is removed it only recovers to a length of 10.8 feet, so its permanent elongation is 8%. In essence, fluorocarbon monofilament stretches to nearly the full extent of its permanent elongation upon the first loading, whereas nylon stretches and recovers repeatedly as loads are applied and removed. The relative elasticity of nylon over fluorocarbon may be seen as a benefit in some situations, as it can act as a shock absorber that dissipates the energy of a hook set.

In the examples above the materials were dry, but what happens after they have been thoroughly soaked? The nylon monofilament absorbs up to 10% of its dry weight in water, whereas the fluorocarbon monofilament absorbs almost no water. As a result, the elasticity and plasticity of the fluorocarbon monofilament is essentially unchanged, whereas the nylon material now exhibits even more elongation—both temporary and permanent—when wet than it did when dry. Is this a bad thing? Well, it can be, as the now permanently stretched section of nylon monofilament is significantly smaller in diameter. Put another way, your 6-pound nylon tippet just became a 4-pound tippet, never to become a 6-pound tippet again. Just one more reason to regularly replace used nylon tippets and leaders.

### **Abrasion Resistance**

The surface of fluorocarbon monofilament is harder than that of nylon, making it substantially more resistant to abrasion. For our money, the greatly increased abrasion resistance of fluorocarbon monofilament is its single most valuable attribute. In years of fishing for fresh- and saltwater species all over the world, we've seen countless examples of the abuse that fluorocarbon leaders and tippets can stand up to—jagged rocks, coral heads, sharp gill plates, and lots of teeth. On this measure, the theoretical and the practical come together, and fluorocarbon is the standout winner.

### **Refractive Index**

The refractive index of a material is a measure of how much the speed of light is reduced as it passes through the material. Water has a refractive index of 1.33, meaning that in water light travels about 75% of the speed it does in a vacuum. The average refractive index of nylon monofilaments is about 1.58, meaning that when passing through nylon light travels at about 63% of the speed it does in a vacuum. Fluorocarbon has a refractive index of 1.42, meaning that when passing through fluorocarbon light travels at about 70% of the speed it does in a vacuum. Since the refractive index of fluorocarbon is closer to that of water than is the refractive index of nylon, fluorocarbon is theoretically the less visible material when immersed in water. That's the science, and we hope it does more for you than it does for us.

We've tried for years to come up with a practical test of the comparative visibility of fluorocarbon and nylon monofilaments in water, without any demonstrable success. We've immersed fluorocarbon and nylon tippet materials of similar diameters side by side in water—in water glasses, sinks, aquariums and saltwater shallows—in depths from a couple of inches to over a foot. We've even tried photographing them under water, but we'll be damned if we can see a difference. Both materials appear equally visible against a wide range of backgrounds.

That being said, the only view that counts is the fish-eye view, and in many years of using both nylon and fluorocarbon leaders and tippets in every conceivable fishing situation it is our subjective impression that fluorocarbon produces more hook ups than nylon. That conclusion is based on nothing but observation (albeit, thousands of them) any is completely

lacking in any empirical data. Nonetheless, fluorocarbon appears to be less visible to fish, and for that reason alone it's worth using, at least under certain conditions—like on the flats—where any degree of added stealth is a clear benefit.

### **Relative Break Strength**

This one is going to require a bit of explanation to make the point. Because there is no industry standard on how the break strength of monofilament tippet material is rated, manufacturers express these values in a couple of different ways: “rated” break strength and “average” break strength. Both methods undoubtedly involve testing on the part of the manufacturers, but since none of them distinguish between “wet” and “dry” break strengths we assume that all such testing is performed using dry materials.

It's pretty clear that for any given diameter—and regardless of which rating system is used—dry nylon has a significantly higher break strength than dry fluorocarbon. How much higher? In the case of Climax products (listed as “rated” break strength), the average difference is 13%; for Scientific Anglers products (using “average” break strength), it's 9%. Across both brands and rating systems, the average difference is 11%. Sounds fairly conclusive, huh?

Not really. If you use this stuff for fishing like we do, it's going to get wet. And what happens to nylon monofilament when it gets wet? That's right, it absorbs water . . . lots of water . . . to the tune of 10% of its dry weight, in the process losing up to 20% of its dry break strength. As we've learned, fluorocarbon is essentially impervious to water—absorbing less than 0.05% of its dry weight—with zero effect on its dry break strength. After a half hour or so of fishing, nylon's break-strength advantage has been negated by water absorption, and as immersion time increases, fluorocarbon quickly becomes the front runner.

### **What About Bioline?**

This part of the article was excluded as it appears that Bioline is no longer sold.

### **The Bottom Line**

Until the jury returns its verdict on Bioline, we're left with choosing between nylon and fluorocarbon monofilaments for our leaders and tippets. On most measures, the performance characteristics of both materials are close enough to make a “one-or-the-other” decision equivocal at best.

Both materials are environmental time bombs, and the fact that nylon biodegrades 3,400 years sooner than fluorocarbon does little to forgive its 600-year environmental “shelf life.”

As I tell my wife on a nearly weekly basis, “Any dumb #?\*@&% can spend money,” and considering that nylon monofilament leaders and tippets are priced at roughly half the cost of their fluorocarbon counterparts, nylon is the clear value leader.

Less clear are the relative performance advantages of the two materials. Nylon gets the nod on wet knot strength, but not by much, and demonstrates no clear advantages over fluorocarbon on any other measure. Neither of them sink

very well on their own, and both materials stretch to about the same extent (although in different ways). Nylon has a higher dry break strength, but after a thorough soaking it cedes that advantage to fluorocarbon. Even though we “feel” that our hook-up rates are higher with fluorocarbon, both materials appear equally visible under water. So what’s left?

The three “biggies” for us are water absorption, UV degradation and abrasion resistance, and fluorocarbon holds the high ground on all three measures by a wide margin. Water absorption results in nothing but negative consequences, and fluorocarbon’s zero water absorption avoids them all. Ditto with UV degradation. But our biggest “biggie” is fluorocarbon’s greatly increased resistance to abrasion.

So which material do we use for our leaders and tippets? We use both. For any “mission critical” application where fish absolutely have to be landed for photography, we use fluorocarbon leaders and tippets exclusively—the cost be damned. To do anything else would be a “penny wise and pound foolish” proposition. For general dubbing around on our local trout fisheries, we use nylon with greater frequency.

What it really comes down to is cost-benefit analysis. When you’ve just dropped five grand on a flats-fishing trip to the Yucatan, screw the cost and bring plenty of fluorocarbon. When you’re just out for an evening of throwing dry flies at stocked trout, save a buck or two and go with nylon. After all, any dumb #?\*@&% can spend money.

.....  
Bill Battles is FFA’s executive publisher, and has been known to swear when he breaks off a fish. Real-world testing has shown that he swears less when using fluorocarbon.

### **TIP OF THE MONTH-Fish More Often**

Well of course if you fish more you catch more, but there’s a lot more to it than that. Read this article to find out what this can do for you:

<https://troutbitten.com/2017/07/31/fifty-fly-fishing-tips-1-fish/>

### **CHAPTER LIBRARY**

We have created a Hickory Chapter library of fly fishing books. The listing is available on the Chapter website at <http://www.hkynctu.org/library/>. You will make your withdrawal request on the website and then pick up and return your books at the Chapter meetings. We will initially start with book donations from our members and if the activity warrants it we may purchase additional books. Susan Anderson has graciously agreed to serve as our Chapter Librarian. If you have any books that you would like to lend or donate to the library, please bring them to the chapter meeting. Please indicate in the book whether you are donating or loaning it to the library.

### **EAGLE ROCK CAMP**

Eagle Rock Camp is dedicated to support veteran families. If you would like to learn more about Eagle Rock Camp or make a donation, you can visit their website at <http://www.eaglerockcamp.org/>

### **GRANDPARENTS TROUT FISHING DAY**



In celebration of National Grandparents Day and State Parks’ 2018 theme of Fishing Fun, we invite the senior anglers to bring out their grandkids and try trout fishing together. Have you ever wanted to try

fishing but don’t want to invest in all the equipment? You can borrow ours! Meet a ranger down at the Riverwalk Trail behind the Old Rock Cafe to learn the basics of fishing and try your hand at pulling some trout out of the Rocky Broad River. All supplies will be provided. All ages welcome.

**Date:** Sunday, September 9, 2018 - 1:00pm to 2:00pm

**Start Location:** Old Rock Cafe

### **CHAPTER WEBSITE**

If you haven’t yet visited our chapter website, you need to check it out. All of our past newsletters are stored on the website. At the end of the newsletter this month is an index of the featured articles for each month. When you get a little time, check it out at [www.hkynctu.org](http://www.hkynctu.org).

### **NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED**

I’m sure many of you will be taking trips to Montana, Alaska, or many other places this summer. 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](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com) for consideration of publication.

### **PHOTO OF THE MONTH CONTEST**

*As of this writing there have been no submissions for the contest this month, perhaps due to the rainy weather keeping us all off the rivers. So even if you hit a mountain stream and catch a 6” trout, send in your catch and maybe you’ll win a free steak dinner.*

Our host at The Peddler Steakhouse, Mark Scruggs, has graciously agreed to award a steak dinner at the montly meeting for the largest trout caught. Here’s how the contest works:

- The fish must be caught in the period between meetings.
- The fish must have been caught in North Carolina on a public stream.
- You must measure your fish and report it to the nearest ¼ inch, not just guess at the size.

- Submit a photo of you and your fish to [hkynctu@gmail.com](mailto:hkynctu@gmail.com). Include the length of the fish, where it was caught, what you caught it on, and any other information about the catch you think is interesting.
- The selection will be made the Sunday before the monthly meeting and you will be notified if you are the winner.
- The winner must attend the meeting to receive the award.
- In case of a tie the winner will be determined by “rock, paper, scissors” at the meeting.

Photos of fish will be posted in the monthly newsletter. A photo of the winning fish and fisherman will be on display at the restaurant.

### GET WELL SOON, SKIP!

Let's all wish Skip a Big Get Well soon as he recovers from heart surgery. Keep him in everyone's thoughts and prayers. If you'd like to send him a card his address is:

David Pearce  
3626 10<sup>th</sup> Street Drive NE  
Hickory, NC 28601

### 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. The next board of directors meeting is on Tuesday, June 5 at 5:30 PM at Peddler's Steak House. If you are able join us to help keep the chapter active, please take the time to come to the meeting.

### HICKORY NC TU OFFICERS



Zan Thompson... Pres	<a href="mailto:HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com">HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com</a>
Jackie Greene... Veep	<a href="mailto:HkyNCTUveep@gmail.com">HkyNCTUveep@gmail.com</a>
Holly Cole...Sec	<a href="mailto:HkyNCTUsec@gmail.com">HkyNCTUsec@gmail.com</a>
Gerry Johnson... Trea	<a href="mailto:HkyNCTUtreas@gmail.com">HkyNCTUtreas@gmail.com</a>
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## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

Special thanks to David Hise for his support of our chapter.




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2427 North Center St.  
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1350 Highway 321 NW  
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HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA 28601


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Zan Thompson, LLC

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M-F 08:00 AM-06:00 PM  
Sat 09:00 AM-05:00 PM  
Sun Closed