

Hickory, Table Rock, High Country Trout Unlimited February 2025 Newsletter

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At the January Blue Ridge TU meeting the speaker talked about heading to the Quetico National Park in Canada's lake country. I realized it has never been discussed in the newsletter and it truly deserves to be on your bucket list. In the lake country you'll mainly be fishing for Northern Pike and Walleye. If you're a dedicated fly fisherman you may be wondering why it should be on your bucket list. The fact is you can fish for both of these fish on a fly rod. It is a fairly normal thing for Northern Pike and while perhaps a bit different can also be done for Walleye. In this newsletter we will talk about planning this vacation and will describe how to flyfish for both of these species.

HIGH COUNTRY TU FEBRUARY MEETING

WHEN: Thursday, February 6th at 6:00 PM
WHERE: Blue Ridge Conservancy Community Center
 416 Aho Road, Blowing Rock
PROGRAM: Upcoming Stream Cleanup Efforts followed by a fly tying night

As we approach spring, and an increase in the recreational usage of local streams, our efforts are needed to assist in cleaning our waterways. There are countless opportunities to help alongside other organizations, however we would like, as a chapter, to identify a stretch of local water needing our help. To start our meeting we would like to discuss and commit to our next group effort.

Following our brief discussion, we are glad to announce we will be hosting a fly tying night for the duration of our evening. Due South Outfitters is sponsoring this event and will be providing vises, tools, and materials. Vises are limited, so we encourage anyone with a vise and materials to bring their own as well. Feel free to bring your own tying beverages.

HICKORY TU FEBRUARY MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, February 18th, 6:00 PM
WHERE: Old Hickory Station
 232 Government Ave SW, Hickory
SPEAKER: Doug Besler
PROGRAM: Status of Hatcheries

Doug is a fisheries biologist with the Wildlife Resources Commission. He will be speaking about the status of the state's hatcheries and the near-term future of stocking of the streams.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tie-a-Thon 2, Saturday February 22nd, Patterson School
 See the details later in the newsletter

Future Cleanups Planned. Mark the dates on your calendar and watch future newsletters for details.

- North Fork of the New River, on 4/12/25 (back up date on 4/19/25)
 - Helton on 3/29/24 with a backup date of 4/5/24
- 45th Annual Blowing Rock Trout Derby April 5, 2025**

NCWRC SUMMER INTERNSHIP

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is offering several summer internship opportunities for 2025. Interns will work closely with our staff, gaining valuable experience in applied management and conservation as well as hands-on skills critical for future employment in the field of natural resources.

All internships will run for a duration of 10 weeks from May 19 through July 25 and will be paid at a rate of \$15/hour. Please note that working hours per week vary by position and housing will not be provided for any listed position. Positions requiring field work will have access to agency vehicles with a valid driver's license. Learn more and apply by January 24th: <https://bit.ly/3DREyTS>

FISHING CLASSES BY NCWRC

February 2025		Volunteer Opportunity
02/5/25	Catfishing Basics -Virtual	
02/6/25	Basic Knots and Rigging - Marion	þ

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com and let us know.

02/08/25	Beginning Fly-tying Workshop – Patterson School - Lenoir	þ
02/12/25	Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual	
02/14/25	Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop - Morganton	
02/15/25	Basic Fly-casting Workshop - Marion	þ
02/19/25	Entomology for Anglers - Virtual	
02/20/25	Fly-fishing Basics: Understanding and Selecting Fly-fishing Equipment - Virtual	
March 2025		Volunteer Opportunity
03/05/25	Soft Plastic Rigging & Presentation - Virtual	
03/08/25	Fly-fishing Basics, Lanyards, Fly-fishing Connections - Patterson School - Lenoir	þ
03/12/25	Fly-fishing Basics: Wading Safety and Etiquette - Virtual	
03/14/25	Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop - Morganton	
03/19/25	Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual	
03/20/25	Volunteer Orientation/Basic Fishing Instructor Training	þ
03/22/25	Basic Fly-Casting Workshop - Patterson	þ
03/26/25	Rod Building Primer - Virtual	
03/28/25	Fly-Fishing Basics: Creating Hand Tied Leaders - Marion	þ
03/29/25	Basic Rod Building Workshop - Marion	þ



so drove up to International Falls and then caught a seaplane out to Dora Lake and dropped off at a cottage on an island and left there for a week to fish on our own.

Unless you are experienced with Northern Pike and Walleye fishing I do not recommend that you head out on your own like we did on our second trip but that you plan at least your first trip with a guide. For that there is the base camp option like we took on our first trip and also there are some lodges that you can fly into and even a few you can drive to.

Trips to Canada can make for a good family vacation. On our trip to Dora Lake my wife and our sons all came along. Fortunately, I married a woman who enjoys fishing, but if you have someone in the family who doesn't enjoy fishing, find a nice lodge where they can spend the day while you are on the water. The lakes are generally warm by midsummer so swimming is an option.

So how do you decide where to go? The obvious first thing to do is to find someone who has been there and can make a recommendation. There is a good chance that if you attend a TU meeting you will find someone who has been there or at least knows someone who has been there that you can talk to. Beyond that, there is the obvious choice of searching the internet and finding some ratings of the places as well.

When should you go. My recommendation would be mid-June through mid-August. You are heading pretty far north and it can be mid-June before weather is consistently warm and around mid August cold fronts often start coming down from the north.

In preparing for your trip it is important that whoever you are chartering with provides you with a thorough list of what is provided and what you need to bring. If you are going to a lodge, you may need nothing more than clothing. For our first trip to Babe Lake, everything was provided except we were asked to bring in live bait. That live bait is going to be in a plastic bag for a while until you get to the lodge. The bait store in Kenora injected pure oxygen into the bag to keep the minnows alive for the journey. For our second trip to Dora Lake, the charter provided both lodging and food for the trip, we needed to provide our fishing gear and bait. For that trip we opted to use leeches, not much fun to put on a hook, but by far the best bait. We also brought along some of the basic lures like red & white Daredevil spoons and some spinner lures.



For clothing, find a weather station closest to the place you will be fishing and check out the long term forecast for the period you will be there, and of course, even if no rain is predicted, take along a raincoat. You will need a fishing license

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Fishing is not an escape from life, but often a deeper immersion into it."Harry Middleton

CANADA FLY-IN FISHING TRIP

At the January BRTU meeting, Joe Mickey talked about fishing in the Quetico National Park in Ontario Canada. It reminded me that a fly-in fishing trip into the Canada lakes area north of International Falls, Minnesota is something that should be on your bucket list.



My first fly in trip was to Babe Lake north of Kenora. My uncle had his own plane back then and we flew into Kenora and then caught a seaplane up to Babe Lake where there was a tent camp with guides for fishing. My second trip into Canada was a bit more of an adventure. We were living in Wisconsin at the time

Is the fishing really that great? YES!! Both trips we caught a lot of fish that included a 9 pound walleye on my first trip and a 14 pound northern pike shown up above. That pike was actually caught on a fly.

Fly fishing for northerns is a common method for catching them. Their prey is minnows, so you need a fly that looks like their food. Red and yellow seem to be colors that attract them so you'll certainly want some in that color, but you should take along a variety. If you want to tie your own, here's a link to an article on how to do it. [Tying Pike Flies.](#)



Fly fishing for Walleye is another matter. Walleye tend to live deep in the water and it can be tough getting the fly down to them, but it can be done. As I mentioned earlier, we used leeches to catch them and that is essentially a wooly bugger, but you'll want to tie it a bit larger than you would for trout and add some weight to the head. Sinking line would be a real plus. If you are a dedicated fly fisherman, read the enclosed article on how to catch walleye.

So if you've never had the experience of a fly-in fishing trip into Canada lakes country, get it on your bucket list. And then start searching for the right trip for you. If you want to catch a lot of fish take along your spinning gear, some good lures, and take some live bait in with you. If you are a die in the wool fly fisherman check out the articles in this newsletter on how best to do it. If you are like my son and I take along both sets of gear to have plenty of fish for the table and try a little fly fishing as well.

Oh, and one last thing. Northern pike have teeth like a barracuda. Take along a set of pliers and keep your fingers out of their mouth.

A Canada trip my son and I have been contemplating for some time is a fly-in to Labrador for brook trout, especially on the rivers. If anyone has done a trip like this we would love to hear from you about it. Contact me at BRNCnewsletter@gmail.com

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ADVICE FROM THE VISE

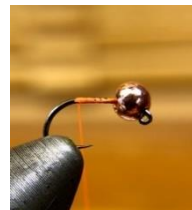
In January I attended my first Tie-A-Thon event hosted by Carolinas Fly Fishing Club and the Southern Fly Tyers Guild. The mission is to tie 2,000 flies in two separate events and the final count of the first event was at 1200 or so. The flies we tied are donated to the Tie-A-Thon organization and then are distributed to fly fishing organizations like Project Mayfly for kids or Project Healing Waters for vets and others that promote the human condition through fly fishing, and that's pretty terrific. The pattern we are tying is Walt's Worm. It's a very simple tie, and an extremely effective nymph. As 20 of us sat there talking and tying, it struck me how an event like this would be a great place for a brand new tyer to learn. If you've ever been "tie curious"- come on out to the event on the 22nd.

There are plenty of us to give one on one instruction, the Guild supplies a vice, tools and materials. Bring nothing but your enthusiasm. By the end of the session, you will be well on your way to mastering this pattern and gaining the foundational skills to tie for yourself. See the article below from Chick for the details.



Walt's Worm is a pattern developed by my fellow Pennsylvanian Walt Young in the mid 80's for fishing the Spring Creek near State College. It represents everything from a scud to a crane fly larvae and has been included in my euro box for years. It's the tabula rasa of jig flies and has spawned more patterns than any other pattern. One of the most popular variants is the Sexy Walt's originally tied Loren Williams as a mainstay of competition flies, and that's the version I'll tie this month for you.

It starts out with Standard jig hook and slotted bead. You can tie down to a #20 and up to a #4. Upsize the bead to make a heavier fly, add lead free wire for weight, or tie with a small bead for an excellent dropper. I'm using a 3.5mm bead on a #16 hook to build a point fly with a smaller profile. The rib is 1/69 mirage tinsel and the thread is fluorescent orange. I like my Walt's a bit buggy, and I find Arizona Synthetic dubbing a great choice for this pattern. I like the action it provides that gives it some realism in the water.



Start by dressing the hook from the bead to the bend. If you want to add a few wraps of lead free, I've illustrated that above. Start the thread behind the wire, and build a thread ramp to keep the taper, and then proceed with the next steps. Start by dressing the hook from the bead to the bend. If you want to add a few wraps of lead free, I've illustrated that



above. Start the thread behind the wire, and build a thread ramp to keep the taper, and then proceed with the next steps.

Tie in the tinsel for the rib, and wax the thread for a minimal dubbing noodle. I dub these sparsely and use multiple wraps to form a carrot shaped body.



Rib the body and take a few turns to build up a hotspot, whip finish and it's complete.

Remember, fly tying is limited only by your creativity and this pattern is ripe for modification. Dubbing type and color, ribs, hotspots, and tags can be added to make your version of the pattern. If it catches fish, then it's a winner. Whether you are an experienced tyer, or have never tried- but would like to, I hope you consider coming out and tying with us on the 22nd.

Don't hesitate to contact me at Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com Please check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

COME JOIN THE TIE-A-THON



The first of two tie-a-thon events this year was held at the Patterson School in January with about 25 people attending. The goal of each event is to tie about 1000 flies that will be given to www.tieathon.org. That organization provides them to organizations such as Wounded Warriors and the TU Youth Programs that use fly fishing for therapy or education. Groups from all around

the nation provide about 50,000 flies a year that go to these groups.

The second event will be held at the Patterson School Hickory Hall on Saturday February 22nd. We invite all dedicated fly tiers to attend. In addition to tying at the event, please bring any flies for fresh or salt water that you have but will not be using, as a donation. Also please bring your own tying equipment, including wax.

If you will be attending the event, please register at [Tie-A-Thon Saturday](#) to help us plan for the event.



SATURDAY
JANUARY 18
FEBRUARY 22
AT 9 AM - 3 PM

TIE-A-THON
DAY OF TYING FOR A CAUSE

Join Carolina Fly Fishing Club and Southern Fly Tyers Guild as we tie flies for the Tie-A-Thon. All Materials and lunch will be provided. The Pattern we will be tying is Walt's Worm with a goal of 1000 flies each of the two days.



From the mountains...
...to the sea
A Southeast chapter of FFI

www.carolinaflyfishingclub.org
SOUTHERN FLY TYERS GUILD



LOCATION
PATTERSON SCHOOL FOR BOYS
PATTERSON SCHOOL FOUNDATION
4646 PATTERSON SCHOOL DR,
LENOIR, NC 28645



FLY FISHING FOR PIKE 101: TIPS, TECHNIQUES, AND TACTICS



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Fly fishing for northern pike has become increasingly popular over the last few years. It gives fly anglers a nice change of pace from chasing trout in smaller streams and rivers and gives them a chance to land a big fish, potentially the fish of a lifetime on the fly.

While pike fishing on the fly may seem intimidating to get into, it is not nearly as complicated as people think. Much of the same gear used for fly fishing for trout or salmon can be used to chase pike. Additionally, many of the same

streams and rivers that hold trout can also be home to big pike as well. Throughout this article, we will take a look at where and when to fish for pike and the equipment needed to do so.

Where to Fly Fish for Pike



Pike are an aggressive predator that are great to target on the fly. Photo courtesy of [Ahrex Hooks](#)

In what may be considered a bit surprising, [northern pike](#) are found in the majority of waters anglers fish. They can be found in lakes, rivers, streams and even larger ponds. Within those bodies of water, pike can be found in a variety of places depending on the time of day. In the lower sunlight hours, mainly dusk and dawn, pike can be found in shallow water chasing minnows, fish and small flies. In the middle of the day, pike are mostly found in deeper water, often around drop-offs and in and around weed edges waiting for smaller fish to pass by.

Great Pike Habitat

Pike can live in a variety of locations, but as predatory fish, they prefer spots that allow them to hide. This usually means, rivers with log jams and weed beds, lakes with drop-offs and rock piles and streams with cut banks that provide cover for the pike and allow them to attack unsuspecting prey.

They also like habitat that provides cooler water. Cold water is often more oxygenated water and more oxygenated water provides more terrestrials, nymphs, minnows and other fish for pike. As an apex predator, northern pike will not shy away from an easy meal and the more opportunity for those meals the better, so finding a habitat that provides cover and food will often times produce pike.

Fly Fishing Gear for Pike



Pike can be stalked in skinny water. Photo courtesy of [Ahrex Hooks](#)

Contrary to what many anglers believe, fly fishing for pike does not always require brand new gear. Fly fishers who have chased trout, will be able to use much of that same gear to catch pike. The most basic items needed to chase pike on the fly are [waders](#), a reel, a rod, [fly line](#) and a few large flies. A boat is nice to have in certain situations but is not necessary. Trout anglers who have a drift boat can also utilize that for pike fishing as well.

Choosing a Good Fly Rod For Pike

There are a few different schools of thought when [picking the right fly rod](#) for pike. In certain areas, pike can grow up to 4-5ft and weigh upwards of 45 pounds. In other areas, pike are smaller and grow between 2-3ft. These are obviously very different size fish and require different size rods.

However, most anglers and guides recommend going for a larger rod, rather than being too small.

With that being said, the most common sizes for a pike fly rod is a medium to medium-heavy action 9, 10 or 11 weight rod. If you are fishing for pike in areas that also house musky, lean towards a big rod, like a 10 or 11 weight. If you primarily fish in areas with smaller pike, the 9 weight is the perfect option.

See also: [Northern Pike vs Muskie: Key Differences Explained](#)

Another factor to consider is what type of habitat you will be fishing in. If you are fishing streams, a larger rod will be tougher to cast into tight areas than the smaller ones. If you are [sight fishing](#) big lakes and rivers, smaller rods won't allow you to reach certain spots with your casts so be sure to factor that in when deciding. However, keep in mind that the larger rods require more effort when casting and can exhaust anglers much quicker than the smaller weight rods so plan your trips accordingly.

Fly lines, leaders and tippet for Pike

When determining which fly line, leader and [tippet](#) is best when fly fishing for northern pike, there are a variety of factors that need to be accounted for. Similarly to deciding which rod to use, the location, habitat and size of the fish being targeted are major factors to consider.

Choosing the correct fly line is dependent on the size of the rod and where you are fishing for pike. 9 weight rods will use 9 weight line, 10 with 10 and 11 with 11. Choosing a sinking or floating line is dependent on how/where you are fishing. If you are fishing deeper water, low in the water column you will want a sinking line that brings your fly down. If you are sight fishing for pike on lakes and backwaters (remember your [polarized sunglasses](#)), floating line is best.

When selecting the correct leaders and tippet, remember that northern pike are aggressive predators and as a result, have sharp teeth for attacking smaller fish. With sharp teeth, comes the ability to cut almost all leaders and tippets so having a wire bite leader and tippet is absolutely necessary.

Fly Reels for Pike Fishing

Fly reels can vary quite a bit in the pike fishing world. However, the number one factor in choosing the best reel is to match the weight of your rod. If you have a 9 weight rod, use an 8/9 weight reel. If you have a 10 weight rod, you need a 10 weight reel and so on. This will ensure the rod is balanced properly which helps with both casting and reeling ability.

Once that decision has been made, the next decision is to choose if you will be fishing a floating line or sinking line. If sinking line, picking a slightly lighter reel will help keep the balance of the full set up in check. If using a floating line to throw big flies, a slightly heavier reel will ensure the balance needed for ease of casting and of reeling.

Net, Pliers and Grips

In choosing the proper net, pliers and grips for fishing northern pike, there is a bit more leeway than the other equipment. All that is needed is a net big enough to [scoop up big pike](#) and

will not be cut by their teeth. In terms of pliers, ones that can remove large pike flies and not be damaged by teeth or being dropped will be perfect. Grips are more of a personal preference as many pike anglers grab the fish by the gills when bringing them into the boat. However, if you would like a pair, make sure they have the ability to hold up to 45 pounds.



Choosing the Right Flies for Pike

The best pike flies are bulky bait patterns with lots of movement. Photo courtesy Ahrex Hooks

Just like any type of fly fishing, choosing the correct fly for catching pike takes research and practice. Pike flies can vary in size, color and material, but the most common ones are large deer hair flies that imitate baitfish. The best way to choose the correct fly for your area is to look at the baitfish in the waters you are fishing. Some areas have more minnows and sunfish available while other bodies of water feature perch as a northern pike's main prey.

Once you identify the types of baitfish in your local waters, you can begin your fly selection process. Floating lines with topwater flies are extremely effective in many areas, but in certain deep water lakes, sinking lines with flies that imitate larger baitfish are preferred. Research, along with trial and error will help you pick the best fly patterns for your region.

When to Fly Fish For Pike: Seasons

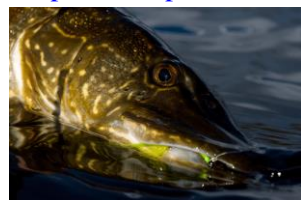
Pike can be caught all throughout the year, but when fly fishing for pike, the best times are late summer through the fall. The cooling temperatures and longer periods of low light lead to more active fish which lead to better chances of landing big pike.



Late summer and fall are best for fly fishing for pike. Photo courtesy of Ahrex Hooks

Best Times of Day to Fish for Pike Fishing

Pike can be caught all throughout the day, but the best times are during periods of low light when pike will use the shadows to ambush their prey. At dusk and dawn, northern pike will oftentimes make their way to shallow water, near shore to target unsuspecting baitfish. They will wait among the rocks or the weed beds for passing fish and when one swims lazily by, this is when they will eat. These low light times are great opportunities for anglers with delicate presentations to get a big eat. (see here for our [preferred polarized sunglasses for these periods](#)).



Techniques for catching pike on the fly

Sinking lines around weed lines can work well. Photo courtesy of Ahrex Hooks

Catching a pike on the fly is an awesome feeling. In some ways it can be even more rewarding than trout or other fish because of how much work goes into finding the correct gear, the correct line, the correct presentation and the correct fly.

Techniques for catching pike on the fly vary depending on the habitat you are fishing. When sight fishing for pike in shallow water, it is frequently done with floating lines and large topwater patterns. In these cases, casting over shallow weed beds with 4 or 5 quick strips into open water can be extremely effective.

When utilizing sink tip lines casting to breaks in the weed lines can induce strikes. Northern pike will cruise weed edges looking for prey that have left the safety of the weed line. To target these fish, cast your fly few feet into the weeds and use 3 to 4 quick, sporadic strips to get the fly back into open water. Once in that open water, fast strips back to the boat or shoreline can produce an eat.

When fishing with sinking line over drop offs or rock piles, large bait fish flies as well as poppers are very effective. Northern pike will often hide in the shadows, lower in the water column and wait for smaller fish to venture out into the open. The best way to get those pike's attention is to cast out over the drop off, let your fly fall, then strip back up towards the shallows. Pike will frequently follow those flies up and [strike](#) as they are stripped up.

Handling & returning pike

When handling and placing the pike back in the water, the main thing to be aware of are a pike's [razor sharp teeth](#). Utilize [pliers](#) to remove the fly so you are avoiding the teeth and before taking the picture, utilize [grips](#) or grab the fish behind the gill so the mouth is completely out of the way.

After taking the picture or showing off your catch, the next step is releasing the pike back into the water. The best way to do that is to place one hand where the tail meets the body and another underneath the fish. This gives you the most control of the fish and allows you to lower the fish, head first into the water. Once the head is in the water slowly push the fish fully into the water and release your second hand. The pike should swim away quickly shortly [after its release](#).

JUST GO FISHING

An excerpt from "Take the Kids Fishing, They're Better Than Worms"

By Roger Pond

The sport of fishing gets more complicated each year. Times have changed since the day I walked into a hardware store to buy my first fly rod.

I was earning fifty cents a week in those days, and Dad agreed to pay me several weeks in advance to put me in the market for a fishing outfit. I hiked down to the hardware store after school and selected an eight-foot fly rod with an automatic reel made by South Bend. Then I bought some E-level line and a bunch of flies with beads on their heads.

There's no question this was the most miserable set of fishing equipment a kid has ever assembled. The line was

much too tight for the rod and those automatic reels were just like a runaway window blind.

I kept the reel as tight as I could get it – and each time I would hit the retrieve lever that reel would guzzle line like an anteater eating spaghetti.

My rod cost \$10 and the reel was about the same, bringing the total for the outfit to around \$20. Looking back I can see the outfit cost me a year's salary – about the same as fishing costs me today.

I caught fish on that rod, though; and the reel would bring them in, too. One squeeze on that retrieve button, and I had a fish with the rod tip halfway to its belly button.

Those were the days before everyone had a bunch of fancy equipment. We just grabbed a pole and a few worms and rode our bikes down to the fishing hole.

Nowadays people spend two days gathering up equipment and drive 300 miles looking for a place to fish – and a dock big enough to land a 20 foot boat. Then we zip around the lake wondering where the fish are.

I can't speak for others, but I've learned a curious thing about fishing. I've noticed the more equipment I get the fewer fish I catch.

I thought this was a coincidence at first; the fishing probably isn't what it used to be. Maybe I'm fishing in the wrong



places.

The fact remains though; the more I get the less I catch.

Finally I think I've solved the puzzle. A person who just jumps on his bike and heads for a fishing hole spends a lot of time fishing, whereas a guy who works 50 hours a week to

pay for his equipment spends a lot of time in his cubicle.

Therefore I've adopted the philosophy of an old Swedish taxidermist my brother met years ago. My brother landed a very nice bass at a lake in Minnesota and took it to the taxidermist for mounting.

As he was leaving, Kenny asked the taxidermist, "How long will it take to get the fish mounted."

"It all depends," the old Swede said. It should be about three months if I don't get too busy."

"If I get too busy it could be forever 'Cause ven I get too busy, I don't do nuthin'. I jyst go fishing."

Flylords

HOW TO FLY FISH FOR WALLEYE

By Scott Smith



When people think of fly fishing, a few species come to mind: trout, bonefish, and maybe bass. Most, however, do not think of walleye. Well, I'm here to tell you

that walleye is a great species to target on the fly. Guides and anglers in the conventional fishing world use flies to catch them in rivers because walleye love flash and the other materials fly tiers use. Most fly anglers catch them by accident while targeting other species, but recently there has been a growing movement of anglers targeting them and having great success. In today's strange times, fly fishermen and women are looking for new species close to home. With these tips, you'll be wondering why it took this long to target them on the fly!

Where to Find Walleye:

I think the main reason people don't target them is that these fish are on the move (walleye follow the food) and/or usually retreat to deeper water during the heat of summer. They are, at times, more difficult to catch than other species, because getting flies deep over a structure can be difficult. However, technology advances in electronics and fly lines have made it easier to locate, target, and catch them. The possibility of detecting a bite in 20-30 feet of water is easier than ever.

To be successful in targeting walleye on the fly, understanding their habitat and biology are good but knowing your water body is even more important. It's not as complicated as you may think. Walleye require the same things as other, more familiar, fish: cover, food sources, well-oxygenated water, and have a preferred temperature range.

Leech flies catch walleye. Marcus [@bigbasshead](#)

Lakes vs. Rivers for Walleye

Both have their pros and cons to locate walleye. Lakes are probably more complex or difficult for fly anglers to access than rivers. Most lakes require some sort of watercraft to consistently find walleye. In any case, if you're going to try a lake, look for rocks piles, sand flats, fresh weed lines, transition areas (from sand to rock, rock to sand, weeds to rock/sand, etc.), distinct current seams (wind-blown points are a classic walleye magnet), underwater humps, and in-flowing water from streams or storm drains.

Minnow patterns

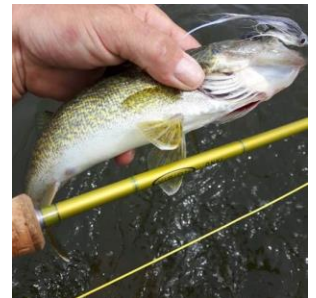
Stephen Crawford

[@Stephen_Crawford_vff](#)

Depending on their size, rivers can be more accessible for the fly angler to get out and target walleye. Similar to any fish in a river, they want to hold in the prime feeding areas with as little work as required. The locations mentioned above for lakes are good starting points, but also look for current seams in large pools, back eddies, dams or current breaks, log jams, and undercut banks.

What Fly Fishing Gear for Walleye:

You probably already own all the gear needed to target walleye, a standard 5wt to 8wt rod is a good start. A floating line and at least one sinking line will be needed. As far as reels go, you can use any of your bass or larger trout reels. It



helps to have a spare spool with a different line spooled, so you can quickly switch between floating and sinking lines. A smooth drag will also be helpful; walleye aren't known for their long runs, but they bulldog and head shake. A large walleye will definitely test your drag. If you're a two-handed fly angler, a Spey or switch rod is a perfect tool to fish rivers and chuck big flies far and to get deep. A 4 to 8wt Spey rod is an excellent choice—it's my preferred way to cover water and find fish in rivers.

River "eyes" and streamers. Marcus, [@bigbasshead](#)



Fly lines are a difficult subject, as deciding which one will depend on how and where you target them. Walleye can be caught on dry flies, streamers, under an indicator, or in 30 feet water or anywhere else in the water column. So, at the very least have one floating line and one sinking line to match your rod. Just like every other technique or style of fly fishing, there is a specific line to match.

Leaders have a purpose and depending on how you fish may differ slightly. Try to keep it simple—a 7.5 to 12ft long leader for floating lines (you can add or subtract tippet as needed). For sinking lines a 3ft long leader is a good start. If you need to keep your fly off the bottom due to potential snags, then a longer leader may be required—up to 6ft. Tippet size is dictated by structure, other species present (like pike) and water clarity. For the most part, a good fluorocarbon in the 6lbs to 12lbs is a good choice, (leaning on the heavier side if possible, as walleye have teeth and if they eat your whole fly, you run the risk of losing them).

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What Flies for Walleye:

This is my favorite part, the flies. You can make it as easy as you want or can tie the most realistic and challenging patterns to catch them. Walleye eat insects, leeches, crawfish, and minnows for the most part and sometimes it varies, but these will get you started.

The stonefly jig. Simon Amyotte, [@SiFlies](#)



- Woolly buggers, Clouser minnow, deceivers, and half/half are all tried and true, walleye-catching flies. Plan to have a variety of weights and colors—such as white, brown, black, purple, and olive. Orange/chart, chart/yellow, black/red, chart/pink, red/white, red/black, and all black are also great colors for catching walleye.

- A balanced leech is an excellent pattern to hang below an indicator. Sculpin patterns in brown, black, and olive are one of my favorites (I am biased though, I landed the Ontario record walleye on a black sculpin a few years back).

Insect flies, both in the nymph stage and the adult dry fly, at times are very effective. So, think of mayflies, Stillwater caddis, and stoneflies, especially in a hatch when the water is exploding with fish everywhere. It is one of those special moments to catch a walleye on a dry fly, who wouldn't love that. Crawfish flies are a fly I find that people don't use enough, especially in the spring during their molting phase when they are orange in color. Great patterns to use are Dave Whitlock's Near Nuff, a Super Bugger, Morlock Craw, all in either tan, brown, olive, or orange.

- If you like to use intricate patterns, look no further than the sex dungeon, swimmy jimmy, chunky dunker, and articulated leech.



Chucking streamers. Cody Ludwig, [@codyludwig](#)

Walleye on the fly used to be an unheard-of thing. But as people try new things and learn more about their local waters, they are finding more and

more ways to target them. The gap between conventional fishing and fly fishing for walleye is closing. After all, we are all doing the same thing for the same reasons, just in a different way or using another tool in the box.

For more information about targeting walleye, check out this YouTube video: [Introduction to Walleye on the Fly](#).

MITCHELL RIVER PRESERVE

By Piedmont Land Conservancy

Piedmont Land Conservancy has officially acquired 311 acres along the pristine Mitchell River near historic Kapp's Mill in Surry County. The land begins just at Kapps Mill Road (just below the old dam) and continues downstream. This significant land purchase will become the future Mitchell River Preserve, safeguarding beautiful land and offering public hiking trails in the coming years.

"This land is exactly what we're always working to protect," said Kevin Redding, PLC's Executive Director. "It's a large tract of undeveloped land next to a significant river. Creating a nature preserve here will protect a vital habitat while benefiting the river, wildlife, and nearby communities."

The land includes beautiful natural features - bubbling streams, small cascades, rhododendron canopies, and 180-foot bluffs that overlook the Mitchell River. The preserve borders over 0.6 miles along the Mitchell River and protects additional tributary streams, safeguarding clean water and critical habitats for rare and common species.



While large sections of the land will remain untouched to preserve its ecological integrity, PLC plans to create public

hiking trails in areas suitable for safe access. We cannot yet provide a date for the opening of the Mitchell River Preserve, but are hopeful it will be within the next few years.

Read more about the upcoming preserve here: www.piedmontland.org/mitchellriverpreserve/

TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM UPDATE

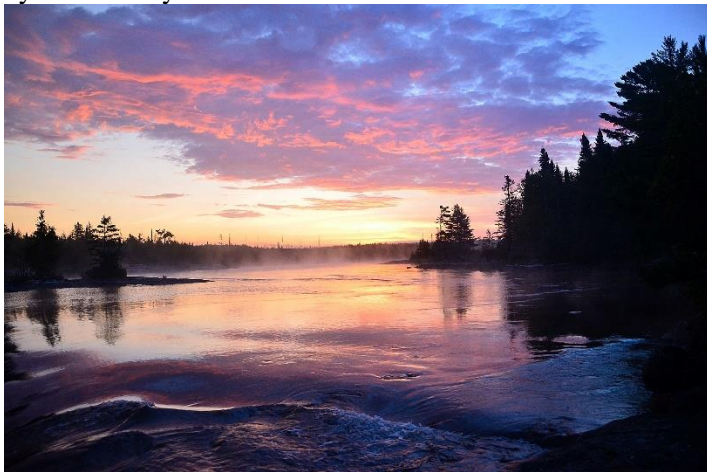


The Trout in the Classroom program got a late start in November this year due to hurricane Helene, but is coming along well. Krystal Luce at Riverbend Middle School sent her a few photos of her fish.

This photo is very close up to give you a good shot of the fry. The photo of the tank shows a bunch of toothpick size fish swimming around. Thank you to all of our teachers for the outstanding work they do for the program.

CANOE CAMPING & FISHING IN QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK, ONTARIO, CANADA

by Joe Mickey 1/27/25



Quetico Provincial Park, 1.2 million acres, is an internationally renowned wilderness paddling and fishing destination (<https://queticoprovincialpark.com/>). It is also designated as an “International Dark Sky Park” by the International Dark Sky Association. My first trip to Quetico Provincial Park was 1996 with Pastor Rick Sides of Home Moravian Church. I took my son for his 18th birthday and during that trip I fell in love with this magical canoe wilderness and fishing paradise. Since 1986 I have made 6 more trips into Quetico. I prefer Quetico over its sister park, the US Boundary Waters because Canada limits access to 20,000 folks per year. The US Boundary Waters has about 180,000 visitors a year.

A trip to Quetico requires advance planning since camping permits, a remote border crossing pass and fishing licenses are all needed prior to arrival. It is recommended that these be obtained three months before your trip. We have always used Seagull Outfitters ([seagulloutfitters](http://seagulloutfitters.com)) located at the end of the Gunflint Trail in Minnesota to help with

planning our trips and with supplying all the camping gear, maps and canoes. All we bring is our personal items and fishing gear.

Our trips into Quetico require a motor boat trip from Seagull Outfitters to Hook Island where we are dropped off with canoes and all our gear. From Hook Island it is a 1-1.5 hour paddle to the remote Cache Bay Ranger Station to check in. The Ranger reminds us that from this point on you are 100% on your own and whatever happens to you is your responsibility. If you get injured or sick no help will arrive until you come back to the Ranger Station. With no cell towers, motorized boats, vehicles or lodges, it's just you and your canoe/kayak. As a wilderness park the portages and campsites



are unmarked but with a good map (a necessity) you can find your way in the park. With so many lakes, islands and portages, a map reading error can leave you in a maze of confusion, searching for a particular lake, portage or camp site. Camp sites are primitive and portage trails are only kept open by use.

If your goal is to spend most of your time fishing, I recommend locating a remote campsite with a scenic view. From this camp site you can do day trips to other lakes reached by portages. Portaging can be a mini-adventure consisting of hiking, wading, mucking and balancing on wet rocks and boulders. If your goal is to go deeper into the park then moving to a new camp site each day might be for you. I've done this twice and it's nice to go deeper into the park to see different scenery and lakes. However, you're doing a

lot of paddling and not much fishing. You will have time to fish but will pass up a lot of nice looking spots while you are traveling from one campsite to the next one. One of my favorite routes is the “Falls Chain” because of the scenery and falls on this route (Silver Falls, largest in the park, Bald Rock, Koko and Kennebas, just to name a few). It's a challenging route with some of the toughest portages I've done but the scenery at each falls is worth the effort. This area offers excellent fishing for smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike. However, there is no “bad” fishing in Quetico!



When fishing, all hooks must be barbless and no lead jigs can be used. Smallmouth bass is our target species, they are large, abundant and willing to strike at almost anything. In addition to smallmouth bass, northern pike and walleye are

also abundant. My favorite lure is a 6" olive or green lizard with a jighead, the smallmouth just can't seem to resist this lure. In addition to the lizard, large brightly colored spinners and diving plugs are productive. Small-mouth are found in all habitats while walleye hang in deeper water. Northern



pike seems to prefer downed trees and areas with lots of aquatic vegetation. We catch and release fish all day and then about 30 minutes before supper we keep a

few smallmouth or walleye for the evening meal. We've never gone without fresh fish for supper!

This quote from Sigurd F. Olsen's book **The Lonely Land** sums up why I love Quetico. "The movement of a canoe is like a reed in the wind. Silence is part of it, and the sounds of lapping water, bird songs, and wind in the trees. It is the medium through which it floats, the sky, the water, and the shores. A man is part of his canoe and therefore part of all it knows. The instant he dips his paddle, he flows as it flows, the canoe yielding to his slightest touch and responsive to his every whim and thought . . . There is magic in the feel of a paddle and the movement of a canoe, a magic compounded of distance, adventure, solitude and peace. The way of a canoe is the way of the wilderness and of a freedom almost forgotten, the open door to waterways of ages past and a way of life with profound and abiding satisfactions."

There's a good book about a canoe trip into Canada in the early 1900s called "The Tent Dwellers". You can get it free at [The Tent Dwellers](#) to read on line or download as a PDF and read it on Kindle.

YOU MIGHT BE A FLY FISHERMAN, IF

by Al Campbell

Have you reached a summit in the sport of fly fishing? Are you qualified to call yourself a "fly fisherman"? If you're not sure, I've developed a simple test you can take to find out if you qualify for this title. Take a moment to complete this short test. You might be surprised by the results.

- If your buddy tells you your fly is open and you have to ask if there is another way to attach the wings, you might be a fly fisherman.
- If the map is describing an off ramp to the freeway, and the only loop you're familiar with is in your back cast, you just might be a fly fisherman.
- If the only indicators you know how to use have the word "strike" in front of them, you might be a fly fisherman.
- When your friend who's been taking flying lessons mentioned he finally got his wings, if you asked if he tied them upright or swept, you might be a fly fisherman.

- If the only royalty you read about has the word "Wulff" attached to it, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - When your geometry teacher asked if anyone could describe a triangle, if you spent the next fifteen minutes describing a fly line taper, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - During a recent job interview when the potential employer asked if you had any bad vices, if you told him you gave that vice to your son and purchased a new rotary one that really holds a hook, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - If your definition of a downrigger is a bead on the head of a nymph to get it down fast, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - If the only Latin you're familiar with has something to do with the names of bugs, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - You just might be a fly fisherman if your favorite winter jacket has lots of pockets and a fly patch.
 - During a recent history exam, when the question read "What is the historical significance of Siberia?" If your answer was "big fish that haven't seen a fly before", you might be a fly fisherman.
 - If your idea of a cultural exchange is a fly swap, you just might be a fly fisherman.
 - If your favorite shirt has a rod holder tab, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - If your vacation pictures have more fish, water and bugs in them than people, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - When your wife was cooking a turkey and sent you to the store for some sage for the dressing, if you returned with a Sage fly rod, you might be a fly fisherman.
 - You might be a fly fisherman if your favorite boat has the word "drift" in its description.
- On the other hand, if you're spending your time reading this, you just might be a fly fisherman.

From the Watauga Riverkeeper:

Watauga County residents: the county has released a self-reporting form for citizens to report the location of damage to waterways, including debris, erosion, landslides, and rerouted streams - bit.ly/42D0qTM

If you see storm debris, erosion, landslides, &/or rerouted streams, report here: forms.gle/hunzEX3xaDXJd9QD8

DON'T FORGET THE FLY FISHING SHOW THIS WEEKEND



[Atlanta, GA | The Fly Fishing Show](#)

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