



The *Tippet*

December, 2009

Clearwater Fly Casters
www.clearwaterflycasters.com
A Federation of Fly Fishers Club



President's Message

From the stories at our meetings, it is clear that most of the members had a great year of fishing. With the excellent run of steelhead in the nearby rivers, everyone should have had a chance to hook into one or more of these sea-going wonders. In my case, it was one of the best and it is not over yet!

It was good to hear at the November meeting about the fine work Jens Hegg, our current scholarship holder, is doing on migration patterns of Snake River Fall Chinook. I think we can all be proud of helping to sponsor this research.

Our December meeting will feature our annual Christmas Party and gift exchange. Hopefully everyone will participate and bring something to exchange. We have not scheduled a speaker for the meeting in order to allow more time for the gift exchange and also for interaction among the members.

We have several special items that we will put up for a silent auction during the meeting and so if you have something that you think can contribute to the auction, please bring it to the meeting. Proceeds from the silent auction will be added to the Alspach-Engerbretson scholarship fund.

For the business part of the meeting we will continue our discussion of dues payment and the period of the year that the dues actually cover.

The raffle at the December meeting will include two raffle tickets for The Federation of Fly Fishers "Five Rivers Sweepstakes" and the prize of a trip for two to the Five Rivers Lodge in Dillon, Montana or the Grand Prize of a trip to the Cinco Rios Lodge in Chile.

I wish to thank Dave Cuellar from the Fly Shop in Pullman for his contributions throughout the year to our monthly meeting raffles. Dave has been very generous.

The December meeting will be my last as club President and you will be hearing from Paul Agidius as he assumes office. It has been a very interesting and fun year and I have learned a lot from the members and even fished with a few over the year. I hope to see many of the members on the local streams in the coming year.

I want to thank Doug Young for his fine work as Program Chair, and all those who have contributed to the club events. The Board has been invaluable in helping to plan activities and in carrying them out.

Tight lines!

Fred Muehlbauer, President, CFC

Calendar

Dec 9: CFC Christmas Party, Gift Exchange

Dec 17: CFC Fly Tying Night, Moscow Fly Shop, 7-9 PM, Bloody Muffler

Jan 13: CFC Meeting, Red-Gold Video

Jan 21: CFC Fly Tying Night, Moscow Fly Shop, 7-9 PM

Feb 10: CFC Meeting, Pat Devney, "Flyfishing the Central Washington Desert Lakes and Rocky Ford Creek"

Feb 18: CFC Fly Tying Night, Moscow Fly Shop, 7-9 PM

Information

The Tippet is available as a PDF file on our web site. Please submit information to the Newsletter Editor.

Meetings 2nd Wed:

Wet Fly Hour: 5:30 PM

Dinner: 6:30 PM

(buffet, \$16 per person)

Program: 7:30 PM

Backcast to November Meeting: Fishing Reports

Dan Payne fished on the Ronde, and he hooked five and landed four. Kay and Lynn Youngblood fished on the Boise River in Southern Idaho, on the Anderson Dam Ranch, but they caught very few fish. Tim Cavileer reported fishing on the Clearwater near Cherry Lane, where he got one hook-up and experienced a mid-distance release. The fish keeps getting bigger with each remembrance. Also, Tim reported finding a Rooster Tail spinner of Dave Tharp's stuck in a tree where they sheltered from the rain at Kelly Creek, which he returned to Dave at the meeting, bringing a good round of laughs.

Cliff Swanson reported some interesting birds at Spring Valley, including a Bald Eagle and a Common Loon. Gerry Vidergar told the club that there are lots of fish gathering at the mouth of Lapwai Creek, both steelhead and trout. Dave Tharp reported that he had no report. Steve Bush has been fishing Elk River and the Clearwater, without reportable success. Andy Kleinhofs said he caught no fish this week, which was a change. Fred Muehlbauer told that both he and Andy had caught steelhead on the Ronde a week ago, and that the water is now about 42 F. Several club members commented on a report that someone recently was firing an AK47 to scare fly fishermen off a stretch of the Ronde. Rumor has it the sheriff has gotten involved.

Guests

Doug Baldwin introduced a guest Loren Skow. Our speaker Jens Hegg brought two of his lab-mates to the meeting: Marius and Jeff. The club welcomed them all.

November Speaker: Jens Hegg, "Resolving Life History Strategies and Out-Migration Timing of Fall Chinook in the Snake River Drainage"

Jens thanked the club for the Alspach-Engerbretson Scholarship he received last spring. He introduced his talk by saying he would present some preliminary results of his thesis research. The talk would involve two scales: 1) the evolution of salmon related to geology of the region (macro scale), and 2) use of otolith chemistry to chronologically relate fish to their local environments (micro scale).

Evolution of salmon is related to the geology of their regions. Little has happened in recent geological time on the US East Coast, and there is only one species of salmon present, with little variability. On the contrary, the West Coast has seen tremendous changes in recent geological time, resulting in many salmon species, and much variability within species. For example, there are Fall Chinook and Spring Chinook, and there are strains where most of the juveniles out-migrate to the ocean in their first year, and there are others where most of the juveniles spend the first year in the river.

In the Pacific Northwest, a number of geological happenings have dramatically impacted salmon evolution over the past 25 million years. There has been accretion, where off-shore islands in the Pacific have become part of the mainland, due to plate tectonics. There has been volcanism on a large scale, with associated uplift of mountain ranges. And, probably most significant, there has been major glaciation in the region. These events resulted in changes in river courses and natures, blockages of river systems, etc. At times, salmon could only survive in coastal rivers. At other times, they could re-colonize major inland river systems, particularly since the last glacial period.

In adapting to geologic changes in the landscape, salmon have adapted in different ways. For example, in the Snake River System, the Fall Chinook and Spring Chinook are not closely related genetically. It appears that they evolved in different places and were brought into the same river system through re-colonization, with the fittest strains surviving. Snake River Fall Chinook had an estimated historic abundance of 500,000 fish. Over 80 % of their habitat was lost when the Hells Canyon Dam was put in. They are characterized by spawning in large rivers and by having large body size. The juvenile fish historically went immediately to the ocean. Now, they are sticking around, with many out-migrating in their second year. Is this change due to the dams?

There are many questions to answer. Where do the yearlings come from? How do changes in the landscape effect the numbers? How do you examine the life history variability in the wild population? One way is through otolith micro-chemistry. Otoliths are small bone-like structures through which fish "hear" sounds transmitted through the water. They

are made of calcium, but have small traces of strontium in their structures, due to naturally-occurring strontium in the streams in which they reside. Every stream in the Snake River System has a slight different strontium content, and Jens and colleagues have shown that this content can be related to the geology of the area through which a stream flows.

The otoliths have daily growth rings, and using equipment at WSU, they have been able to analyze these rings using “core to rim ablation”, combined with special mass spectrometry, to develop an historic environmental profile for individual fish, from birth, through out-migration, to return to the Lyons Ferry Hatchery. They can tell where the juveniles were born and how long they spent in various parts of the system prior to out-migration. They have captured juveniles at various points in the system, analyzed their otoliths, and shown that their interpretations are correct.

The methods are working well, but their original hypothesis that cold water dumped from dams like Dworshak were resulting in slower growth and lingering of the juveniles has not proven to hold up. For example, a large percentage of Salmon River out-migrants belong in the lingering category, and this river has not seen changes in recent times. Jens and his colleagues are now looking at alternative hypotheses and more research to try to solve the mystery. There may need to be new management strategies to help the lingering juveniles get out during periods when they were not thought to migrate historically.

This research is on-going, and it is a collaboration between UI fisheries researchers, NOAA-Seattle personnel, University of Michigan researchers, and equipment and techniques available at WSU. Jens’ direct funding comes from NOAA. He hopes to present further results to club members in the future.

The Bloody Muddler Minnow

This is the fly that will be featured at the Thursday night fly tying at the Moscow Fly Shop, 7-9 PM, on December 17. Cliff Swanson put this material together and provided it for the newsletter. He will be at the gathering to show other members and guests how to tie this beautiful pattern.

Hook: Any nymph hook 2x to 4x Original called for a Mustad 9672

Thread: Black

Tail: White calf tail

Body: Gold flat tinsel

Underwing: Red calf tail fibers

Overwing: Grizzly hackle tips, tied dull side together

Head: Trimmed natural deer or elk body hair

Directions: Dress the hook with tying thread. Stack and then tie in the white calf tail approximately equal in length to the width of the gap of the hook. Tie in the tinsel and wrap it forward. Stack and tie in the red calf tail so that the tips extend to the middle of the white calf tail. Then lay in the grizzle hackles dull side to dull side so that they extend to the end of the white calf tail. Using a clump of hair lay it on the far side of the hook so that the tips almost reach the end of the red calf tail. Wrap two loops of thread around the clump of hair loosely. Then pull straight down on the hair. Do not spin this hair. Taking another clump of hair repeat the process on the near side of the fly. Using another clump of hair spin it in front of the other two pieces of hair. Whip finish the head and then trim the last clump of hair to form a muddler head.



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Clearwater Fly Casters

December, 2009

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CFC membership dues are \$20/yr for individuals, \$30/yr for families, \$10/yr for students, \$50/yr sustaining, \$300/lifetime. Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday, September through May, at the Best Western University Inn, 1516 Pullman Rd, Moscow, Idaho. Wet Fly Hour 5:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM and Program at 7:30 PM.