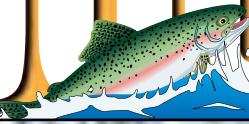


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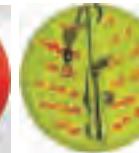
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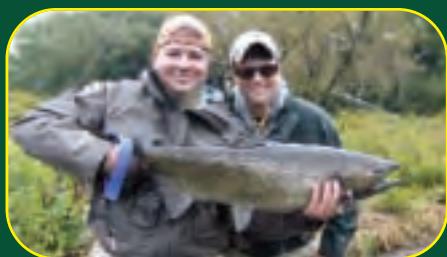
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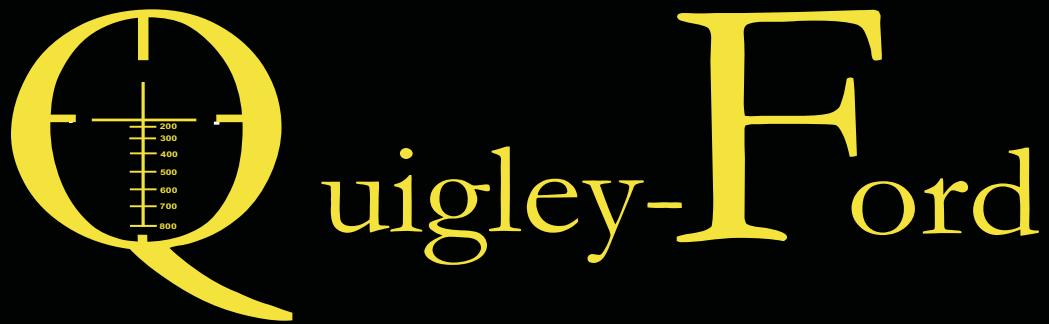
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The Outdoor Sport Resource For The Lake Ontario Region

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Jay Peck on fishing the egg drift for great action in mid-October!



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### ON THE COVER:

Jay Peck admires a beautiful brown trout taken on a Lake Ontario tributary during fall salmon run.  
*Photo courtesy of Jay Peck.*



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# Steering The Course

by Leo Maloney, Editor



## Putting Things In Perspective

Sportsmen, like the rest of society, like to complain when things change or aren't as good as they might be. This is only natural and we should try to improve things whenever possible.

A case in point is the criticism of the DEC policies and the license fee increase of last year. None of us like to pay more money and we all have our opinions on what can be better. But let's put things in perspective: When it comes right down to it we pay less and have more opportunities than many of our counterparts in other states.

Oregon is a great example. Recently, they raised their fees 33% and increased non-resident fees 72% for fishing and 83% for hunting. Additionally, when you look carefully at the Oregon license structure and regulations, you will see that a basic license entitles you to little

more than fishing for sunfish or shooting woodchucks.

By the time you add all of the special permits, tags, and other fees, you would be paying \$208 for a package that is comparable to New York's Sportsman license that costs only \$88. On top of that, you would also have to pay a \$7 aquatic fee if you have a boat over 10 feet long in addition to your regular boating registration. Also, if you want to fish for salmon or steelhead without a boat, that would require an additional stamp at a cost of \$64.50. And the fishing is not nearly as good as it is here in New York State!

Even in Alaska, many areas have experienced declines in fish stocks and have been experiencing poor fishing or even closures of local fisheries. We could go on with other examples, but the point is that our fabulous fishing and hunt-

ing opportunities are the envy of many sportsmen around the country.

### Opportunities Abound

The variety and quality of fishing that we enjoy in the Lake Ontario region and Upstate New York is amazing. At no time is this more evident than in autumn. Even after the salmon make their spawning runs up the Lake Ontario tributaries, there is still good fishing on the lake for trout or immature salmon. Of course, the tributaries offer world class fishing for spawning salmon, steelhead, and brown trout.

Throughout the Upstate and Adirondack regions, fall fishing is often the best time of the year for many species. Competing for the attention of sportsmen are waterfowl, turkey, small game, and deer hunting. Surveys have shown that most sportsmen enjoy participating in a variety of

sports and the content of "Lake Ontario Outdoors" reflects that sentiment.

"Lake Ontario Outdoors" is committed to informing sportsmen and helping them enjoy their sports to the fullest. As New York's premier outdoor magazine for many years, we are continuing to bring you articles written by experts in the field on where and how to better enjoy your sports.

We also realize that there are problems and issues that need to be addressed. By informing you of issues like ethanol, wind farms, VHS, invasive species, fish and wildlife management policies, and others we hope that you will be better prepared to discuss, act, and support appropriate actions.

In the meantime, we urge you to get out and do as much fishing and hunting as you possibly can. Enjoy autumn to the fullest. ♦

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# Curing Eggs for FALL SALMON

by Brian Kelly



**W**hile there is no reasonable explanation as to why spawning salmon strike their own eggs, these moody river monsters will readily engulf properly cured eggs with reckless abandon during their fall mating ritual. Cured eggs provide a unique dynamic including a visual stimulation along with a scent trail that get the salmon fired up enough to ignore everything else around them and focus on hammering a gob of eggs.

## Care for the Eggs

There are a number of commercially-produced cures on the market today and we will focus on the Fire Cure produced by Pautzke Bait Company for this particular egg curing recipe. Before we get to the specifics of the recipe, the first step to fishing with good spawn is getting fresh eggs.

Captain Troy Creasy of High Adventure Guide Service offers his advice when it comes to eggs:

"The eggs found in king or coho salmon at this time of year usually are still in the skein, meaning the eggs are still maturing and connected to the reproductive organs. When you remove the skeins from the fish, wipe as much blood off the eggs



as possible. It helps if you bleed any fish that you intend to harvest immediately by cutting the gills where the jaw connects to the body. This ensures that very little blood gets on the eggs when you clean the fish."

Once the eggs are clean, wrap them in multiple layers of paper towel and keep them cool until it is time to cure them. Do not let them sit for more than 24-hours, since they will soften and break during the process; the object is to get cure on the eggs as soon as possible after harvest to ensure the best possible results.

One last step before starting the curing process is to cut the skeins into fishable size chunks, a step that Troy prefers to do with his eggs: "It is a much cleaner and easier task to cut the skeins prior to the eggs being cured, as handling and cutting cured eggs can be a messy process." Begin at one end of the skein and cut them crosswise into a large chunk, then split that piece in half which typically yields a piece that will be close to a golf ball in diameter when placed on the hook. Another advantage to pre-cutting the skeins is that

the cure will spread evenly and penetrate deeper into the eggs, ensuring a nice even consistency to the eggs with regard to the color and texture.

## Adding the Fire Cure

Pautzkes is famous for its Balls O' Fire jarred salmon eggs that trout anglers have used successfully since the 1950's. But they are more than just a bait processing company; Pautzkes also produces some unique egg cures and scents. Utilizing dried krill (tiny shrimp that salmon feed on in the Pacific Ocean), the Fire Cure and Fire Power additive give eggs



produce a scent trail that fall salmon seem to love. Though long-removed from the Pacific, Lake Ontario Salmon definitely prefer the unique scent and great taste of krill, as evidenced by the number of times the Salmon engulf Fire Cured eggs.

Captain Troy offers his sage advice on the egg curing process:

"With the egg chunks spread out on a cookie sheet covered with a thick layer of paper towel, sprinkle the Fire Cure on the eggs first. Roll the eggs around the cure (be sure to use

latex gloves when doing this) to ensure that the entire chunk is completely coated with the cure. Once all the egg chunks are coated, place the uncovered sheet of eggs in the fridge for an hour or so in order to let the cure soak into the eggs completely."

At this point in time, remove the eggs from the fridge and place them in a sealed plastic bag, then back to the fridge to soak overnight.

"As the eggs go through the curing process over the next 8 to 10 hours, the cure pulls excess moisture from the eggs, making them 'juicy,' says Troy "It is this natural 'juice' produced by the eggs, along with the scent and color provided by the cure that will give off a powerful scent cloud when it's time to fish."

Some anglers prefer to sprinkle the eggs with a scent additive, such as the Fire Power during the curing process. This powder isn't a cure but rather a scent additive that will give the eggs another food source scent that pressured salmon often react favorably to. The longer these eggs are allowed to sit in the bag with the Fire Cure and Fire Power, the better. The eggs will absorb an optimal amount of the krill powder after sitting in it, refrigerated, for a week.

This can make a huge difference in your catch rate when the going gets tough.

Troy offers this last piece of advice:

"I like to carry a few different eggs with me when I'm on the water, as the fish may show a preference to eggs that have been cured longer and enhanced with the Fire Power one day, and on the next day may prefer eggs that are freshly cured. The greater variety you have, the more strikes you will encounter through the course of the day."

### The End Result

While it takes a fair bit of effort to cure eggs properly, the end result can be astonishing when it comes time to fish them on the river. Many guides across our region rely on cured salmon eggs as their "go to" bait day in and day out through the fall run.

Give yourself the same edge this fall by curing your own eggs and don't be afraid to experiment with different colors and scent additives to find your own "secret" formula that puts the edge in your favor. ♦

Brian Kelly has chased steelhead from British Columbia to New York and enjoys teaching others this great outdoor sport as well as testing his skills on new waters.

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## Sodus Point Fishing Reunion

# November to Remember

by Bill Benigni

**I**t was November 18, 2009, and I was almost five hours into the drive from southern Pennsylvania to Sodus Point, NY. After picking up State Route 14 in Watkins Glen, the traffic was non-existent, but the scenery was captivating. The stretch along the west shore of Seneca Lake was especially appealing. With bright blue skies and ample sunshine—and temperatures hovering near 55 degrees—the only hint that shorter days were upon us was the bare-limbed orchards with apples scattered about the ground and golden corn stubble dotting the semi-wooded landscape.

Lake Ontario materialized out of nowhere as I entered the village. Driving down the main drag, I was impressed with the quaintness—one firehouse, one gas station, a couple bars/restaurants, and most other establishments long-since “closed for the season.” I was greeted at the Sodus Point Lodge on Greig Street by owner, Tom Lewis and manager, Mary Emerson. Since I had already been corresponding with Tom about accommodations and steelhead fishing information, and had checked out the Lodge’s Web site, I had no reservations—no pun intended—about my choice of lodging!

The Grand Room at the Lodge was all that a fisherman or outdoor enthusiast could ask for—stunning mounts of fish and game, incredible displays of

fishing gear and tackle, comfortable couches, a pool table, flat screen televisions, and arcade games; it was spacious and very inviting. Tom and Mary immediately made me feel wel-

come and totally at home.

After exchanging pleasantries and stowing away some gear in my room, I headed west on Lake Road. In a few short minutes I pulled into the DEC parking lot

along Maxwell Creek; my anticipation turned “south” in a hurry as I saw only two cars in the parking lot. Hot steelhead fishing spots are usually packed with more cars than the lots can hold,

Steelhead like this made Benigni's Sodus Point Reunion even more special.



Tom Lewis, owner, and Mary Emerson, manager, of Sodus Point Lodge.

especially at this time of year. Could Tom have been throwing me the old curve ball about the fishing?

My spirits improved greatly as David Rakiecki, my close friend and fishing and hunting buddy since seventh grade, pulled into the parking lot. David lives in Grand Junction, Colorado, and he and I had been planning this fishing trip for over a year. As one of the most accomplished and dedicated hunters I know, he has provided me with enough

Continued On Page 37



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**1st Place: Southtowns Tournament**

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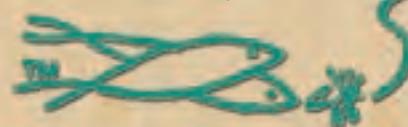


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## Hunting the Central Adirondacks:

# ADIRONDACK DEER HUNTING

by Leo  
Maloney



Gene Manley takes well deserved rest after bringing out his 12 point buck.



Tom VanPelt admires buck shot in Adirondack backcountry.

The morning sun peeks over mountains to the southeast, casting its soft light through the branches of the now barren trees and creating an interesting pattern of shadows. In the distance, the early sunlight glistens off Silver Lake's yet unfrozen surface. The forest starts to stir as squirrels frisk through the crisp leaves, grouse search the forest floor for beech-

nuts, and a pine marten scurries in search of prey. Tracks of deer, including one set of big tracks, give testimony of those that passed through the area under the secure cover of darkness.

These tracks raise the hopes of the hunter, and he returns to this area in late afternoon hoping to see deer, especially the larger one, as they make their rounds at dusk. The late day hours pass uneventfully; and as the after-

noon shadows lengthen, the hunter's attention begins to wander. Suddenly, as if by magic, there appear from the shadows the forms of two deer. The hunter sits motionless as the two does carefully walk by.

Then in the distance, partially shrouded by brush and partially camouflaged by shadows, there appears another, a larger deer. The hunter strains to see it while at the same time

remaining still. As silently as it appeared, the bigger deer fades back into the cover. The hunter doesn't know if it was a buck but that hope and excitement will be the topic of conversation at camp that night and ensure that he will be on watch along that ridge early the next morning.

This is the scene that is familiar to many of us who hunt the Central Adirondacks. The number of deer we have taken in that area is not

large, but the memories of them and of all the days spent hunting there are very special. Many of those miles have been shared with my close friend Tom Van Pelt, with whom I have had adventures stretching from the Moose River to the Yukon River.

It has been said by old-time hunters that your first deer should come from the Adirondacks. That was the case with me and the start of a life-long love of hunting the Adirondacks. Times and methods have changed, but the attraction remains deep.

These days we adapt our tactics to the fact that we have fewer hunters in camp and fewer hunters in the Adirondacks. We spend a lot of time sitting on watch, especially in early morning or late afternoons. Deer are most active then, especially in the areas around Big Moose where they rarely encounter any other hunters. Cold weather, snow, or the onset of the rut may cause deer to travel during the middle of the day.

You don't expect to see a lot of deer with this method, partly because deer densities are low and partly because in this country a "deer run" may be a half mile wide. But there are other positive things such as the likelihood of seeing other wildlife such as fisher, marten, or grouse. And of course there is always the hope that the buck you do see will be a trophy.

In the Central Adirondacks there is always the chance that there will be snow, especially by the second week of November. If conditions are right we often still-hunt or track deer during the mid-day hours when deer are less likely to move on their own. When we have a few hunters in camp, a common tactic is to put one or two hunters on likely escape routes while one hunter slowly still-hunts towards them in hopes

of moving deer to the watchers.

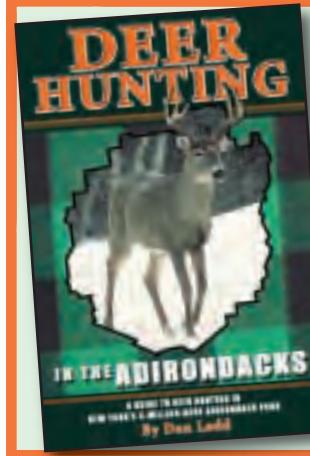
In the old days of Adirondack deer hunting lore, there were big drives covering wide expanses of territory and perhaps a dozen hunters involved. Even through the 1950s and 1960s this was a common tactic, albeit with slightly smaller numbers and drives.

But today there are fewer hunters, mirroring the changes throughout the Adirondacks. The reasons for the change and decline in popularity of Adirondack deer hunting are varied. There are fewer hunters in general throughout New York State and many of the hunting population is aging and finding it more difficult to traverse the swamps, hills, and mountains.

Fewer numbers of deer hunters has affected deer hunting tactics. Although there never were large numbers of hunters tramping through the woods around Big Moose and surrounding areas, there are far fewer today. As a result, deer are rarely moved by other hunters; and you are not as likely to see them except during cold weather, the rut, or periods of low light.

Although it is hard to measure, we usually see fewer deer these days while hunting. It is no secret that deer densities are lower because much of the area is not prime deer habitat. The "Big Blow Down" of the 1950s created a lot of second growth, but that has become mature forest now. There has also been a decrease in logging operations on private land, further resulting in loss of good deer habitat.

As a result of this, we often have to hike further to find suitable areas to hunt. Cedar swamps, the edges of swales or creek bottoms, or the ledges where sunlight hits often create a growth of underbrush, softwoods, or other browse that deer feed on. We often hike a mile or



## Deer Hunting in the Adirondacks

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Florida

more from the nearest road to our favorite hunting spots.

Hiking in isn't necessarily a problem, but coming out with a deer can sometimes be a big problem. But as my buddy Tom is fond of saying, "Just get one first and then we will worry about it." A two person drag harness or a deer cart is essential when you hunt around Big Moose or anywhere in the Adirondacks.

Last year Tom got a nice buck about one mile from the nearest road, all uphill. Four hours later after crossing creeks, swamp, and blowdowns, we finally made it back to the truck. For many years Tom has taken some trophy-sized bucks from remote backcountry. But he smiles and admits that he was a bit younger then and the hills seemed smaller.

A couple of years earlier, late one afternoon, Gene Manley was watching a swamp when he spot-

ted a huge buck emerging from the spruce thickets. Gene took careful aim and dropped the buck, a 12 pointer that would later tip the scales at 225 lbs. Now the work was about to begin. After a long drag that took most of the day, they finally arrived at Big Moose with the trophy buck.

One thing that hasn't changed is the remoteness of the country in much of the Central Adirondacks, whether Big Moose, Inlet, or the Moose River Plains. It is not a place for the unprepared. Today a GPS is a great device to have but it is not a substitute for

Continued On Page 30

Leo Maloney, currently the editor of Lake Ontario Outdoors magazine, has hunted and fished in the Adirondacks and upstate NY area all his life. He is a member and past president of the NYS Outdoor Writers' Association and has written for a number of regional and national publications.

# Locating Fall Turkeys

by Doyle Dietz

**L**ocating turkey flocks in the fall is much more than half of the game, in the opinion of National Wild Turkey Federation Director of Conservation Operations Bob Eriksen. Many hunters who will be pursuing fall turkey this year may have solved the problem of locating birds, if flocks are working in the area where they have been bowhunting. For others, locating birds can be as simple as focusing on both wild food sources and field crops.

"My description of the difference between spring and fall hunting is that in the spring, the birds are easy to find and can be tough to call, whereas in the fall they can be hard to find and easier to call," Eriksen said.

"Check the woods and fields for food sources and the field edges for dusting sites," Eriksen said "If they have produced well, white oaks, beechnuts and wild grapes are magnets for turkeys, and scouting time will be best spent evaluating food sources. If you locate frequently-used dusting bowls, you have found a hot spot. "Additionally, turkeys often use ant hills and other loose soil for dusting. You can also talk to mail carriers and school bus drivers about where they were seeing summer flocks and you'll have an edge on the season," he continued.

Eriksen said one of the best methods for locating fall turkey flocks is to monitor the available

mast. He begins his fall scouting in September and continues through October to check stands of oaks, especially white oaks, to

fall, often in response to a crow, another gobbler or other harsh noises; however, gobbling is much less frequent at this time

sen said. "Fall flocks have been known to move as far as 20 miles, seeking a reliable food source, but such movements are the



gauge the availability of hard mast. It is also wise to check flowering dogwoods, black cherry trees and grape vines for soft mast. When a food source is found, check back for turkey signs in the form of scratching, feathers, and droppings as the season approaches. If there is a poor mast crop, turkeys will take to the fields foraging for insects, seeds, and waste grain, which makes birds easier to find when there is little mast.

Relying on memory – or even landmarks – is not always the best way to mark an area where turkey flocks have been located. For that reason, many hunters carry topographical maps of the areas they plan to hunt, or program the location in their GPS unit. Although preseason calling to gobblers in the spring has the tendency to make birds call-shy, calling is a good way to locate flocks in the fall. Birds will respond to locator calls in the fall, as they do in the spring.

"Turkeys will gobble in the

of year," Eriksen said. "Locator calls will work to a degree in the fall, but pre-season scouting and listening are better bets," he said. Fall flocks of hens and young birds can be quite vocal in the early morning and just before they fly up for the evening. Be sure to check roost sites the birds were using last spring, in open country, and at the glass the edges of the woods. Also, check water sources and listen for the birds getting ready to fly up or fly down."

Because fall turkey hunting can be done the entire day, Eriksen suggests scouting at various times of the day for the most accurate patterning of flock movement. No matter if scouting at daybreak, mid-day, or before dusk, it is possible to hear some very intense turkey talk.

"Wild turkeys move along through the woods at an average of three or four miles per hour, but if they find a good food source, they'll likely slow that speed down considerably," Erik-

exception rather than the rule, and the average is generally less than two miles," he said. "Spend some time locating food sources so you can evaluate how far the birds are likely to move and where they will spend their time. If mast is in short supply, turkeys are more likely to spend time in fields searching for bugs or waste grain," he added. Usually, if a fall flock is holding in an area with a good food source, it will remain there even if it has been hunted. Putting this all together, the equation of a food source and fresh sign usually results in a tagged turkey. ♦

**Doyle Dietz** and his wife Betty reside in Orwigsburg, PA. He recently retired after 36 years as sports and outdoor writer. He currently serves as outdoor editor of the Pottsville Republican & Herald and the Shamokin News-Item. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers' Association and editor of The Browse Line, official publication of the PA Deer Association. Doyle also has a 30-minute weekly radio program "Experience the Outdoors" on WMGH and WLSH.



# Product Reviews by LOO Staff

## Frabill's FXE Stormsuit wins 'BEST APPAREL' at ICAST 2010

Fishing-focused company's new advanced raingear dominates the category.

Las Vegas, NV - Day one at ICAST was a wrap, the Frabill® troops collecting and gathering in their exhibition booth to discuss the next day's strategy. Interrupting in innocent childlike fashion - faces aglow - entered a couple of young representatives from the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) to deliver a letter. Product Development Manager Andy Schmelzer perused it, eyes popping from his sockets. The decree spread like brushfire across the booth and the euphoric crew from Jackson, Wisconsin, was left only knowing they'd won an award...but which one?

The team stood stage-side as ASA CEO and President Mike Nussman announced the winner of the vaunted ICAST BEST NEW APPAREL category. Plain as day, FXE Stormsuit appeared on the screen. Time stood still. Applause rang through the rafters, for the 72 year old fishing-focused company had made history by winning top honors in perhaps ICAST's most prestigious individual category.

Sweat, tears, hard work, research, engineering, testing...and even a little blood went into FXE Stormsuit, the driest, most ergonomically engineered garment in its class-and likely the finest, most advanced rainwear ever designed. So even as a relative newcomer to the raingear category, Frabill entered as a Pro. To voting media members who contributed to the landslide victory, it was clear that a new leader in fishing-focused outerwear was born.

FXE Stormsuit makes landfall online in November of this year. It will appear on hangers at sporting goods dealers nationwide in February 2011. The complete suit retails for \$399. The bibs and jacket are also sold as separates for a customized fit. Colors include the earthy-tan 'Terra' and the bolder and luxurious 'Russet,' a rich and classy red.

FXE Stormsuit is an official member of Frabill's complete lineup of fishing specific apparel that includes, FXE Snosuit, ICESUIT, and numerous articles of premium headwear, handwear, and mid-layer garments.

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## Irish Setter Rubber Hunting Boots Provide Secure, Comfortable Fit ExoFlex Performance Fit System Creates High-Performance Fit

Irish Setter's patent-pending ExoFlex technology brings a welcome change to the rubber boot category – fit. The ExoFlex panel placed in the back of the boot shaft expands to accommodate the back of the foot, offering easy entry into rubber boots. Then the panel contracts for a lock-tight, high-performance fit, creating a great fitting, easy on/off waterproof, scent-proof rubber boot. The new RutMaster and SwampGhost rubber knee boots feature this new performance technology.

The RutMaster boots are offered in several styles to meet most hunters' needs. Hunters who prefer non-insulated boots can choose the Realtree APG Camo version #4870 or the Mossy Oak Break Up Camo version #4871. Hunters in cooler climates can select Rutmasters with 800 grams of Thinsulate Ultra Insulation – Realtree AP Camo (#4872) or Mossy Oak Break Up (#4873). For cold conditions, RutMaster #4874 features 1200 grams of Thinsulate Ultra insulation and Realtree AP Camo. An adjustment strap on the RutMaster also accommodates a wide range of calf sizes.

The new Irish Setter SwampGhost knee boots with rubber/neoprene design offers the ability to fold down the shaft for those who prefer that option. The SwampGhost boots include the ExoFlex technology in a waterproof, scent-free stretch fit rubber construction. It's offered in a non-insulated, Realtree APG Camo version (#4852) and a version with 1000 grams of Thinsulate Ultra insulation in Realtree AP Camo (#4853).

Both the new Irish Setter RutMaster and the SwampGhost 17" knee boots are built on a new last that provides a slim, comfortable profile. The outsole is designed with a performance-enhancing rocker Mud Claw sole with mud releasing cleats. Serrated cleats upfront provide traction on hills. These boots are available in whole sizes from Men's 7-15 and ½ sizes from Men's 8-14.

"Irish Setter decided that if we were going to get into rubber boots, we'd have to develop a game changer," said Kyle Rackiewicz, Irish Setter Product Manager. "After extensive development and testing, our patent-pending ExoFlex definitely brings a new performance feature that hunters will appreciate."

The new RutMaster and SwampGhost rubber boots will be available by the time you read this at leading outdoor retailers. Visit [www.irishsetterboots.com](http://www.irishsetterboots.com) for the retailer nearest you. Suggested retail is from \$129 - \$159, depending upon the insulation level.

For more information about Irish Setter's heritage, products and retailers, visit [www.irishsetterboots.com](http://www.irishsetterboots.com).



# Product Review by LOO Staff

## Salamander Weight System Offers Ease and Versatility

Are you tired of retying weights every time the current or wind conditions change? Many anglers lose out on fish because they don't have the ability to make small weight changes that can make a big difference. For years anglers have looked for one weight that could do it all. The problem has been solved with the new weight system from Salamander sinkers. Not only does this product have unlimited weight tuning ability, the design lends itself to unlimited uses as a snag free sinker.



The system is designed on the tried and true cylinder style sinker. What makes this weight so much better than the traditional is the weight adjustable tubular design. This feature allows anglers to adjust the weight size by adding or removing the lead free steel inserts from the tube.

In addition to ease of use and convenience in changing weights, the Salamander weight system is versatile. It can be used for a wide variety of fishing applications from drifting, trolling, drop-shotting, and more. A diverse group of anglers from trout, walleye, or bass fishermen will find this useful.

Its cylinder style makes it a perfect weight for those drifting salmon and trout in the rivers. Its unobtrusive black color makes this rig a perfect choice for finicky fish on any body of water an angler may fish.

Walleye anglers will definitely adopt the salamander for its bottom bouncer abilities to drift over fish producing shoals snag free.

Trollers take notice, the salamander has swivels on both ends providing a adjustable inline trolling weight. From spring time brown trout and walleyes to shallow water salmon the Salamander will serve you well.

Bass fisherman benefit as well since they finally have a weight for Carolina-style worm hookups able to slither through the nastiest bottom cover the lake has to offer. Salamander Sinkers enhances the Carolina rig by incorporated the best features of the Carolina rig and improved on them to introduce a new fishing system that will catch more fish and save the angler time and money. The traditional egg shape lead sinker is replaced by a snag resistant, lead free, weight adjustable tubular sinker. This design reduces line fray caused by the egg sinker sliding on the pole line.

The uses of the Salamander system are only limited to the imagination of the angler smart enough to give them a try. No matter what style of fishing you enjoy, the Salamander will undoubtedly have a application. Salamanders are not just a sinker but a system.

And remember 'Don't Get Hung Up' use Salamander Sinkers.

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Overall Best of Show at ICAST 2010

# G Loomis NRX Rods

by Capt. Troy A. Creasy

The last time G Loomis introduced a new rod was 16 years ago and it was called the GLX. Well times have changed and this rod changes everything. Its newest creation weighs at least, **15 percent less than similar GLX rods**, plus offers extradurability, making them up to **20 percent stronger** and more impact-resistant. There are 30 new rods in all, eight casting rods with an MSRP of \$450 to \$500, and five spinning rods with a MSRP of \$450 to \$475. They also have three salmon and steelhead fly rods, three, two-hand fly rods, five trout fly rods along with six saltwater model rods. All of these have MSRP's of \$700 to \$855. Contact: John Mazurkiewicz, Catalyst Marketing - 574-289-1331.

#### Electronics - Lowrance-Navico -

##### Lowrance Elite-5 DSi

Contact: Andrew Golden - 617-413-6521; agolden@rushtongregory.com

#### Eyewear - Maui Jim Sunglasses

##### - Guy Harvey Collection

Contact: Cathi Volante - 888-628-4546, cell: 847-542-7332; cvolante@mauijim.com

#### Fishing Accessory - Adventure Products, Inc. - EGO S2 Slider Landing Net

Contact: Grant Corbett - 541-390-5159; grante@adventureproducts.com

#### Giftware - Boating Expressions, Inc. - Fishfenders

Contact: Gene Rascow - 714-650-1606; fishfenders@gmail.com

#### Kids Tackle - Pure Fishing - Pflueger-Spinning Combo-Apprentice

#### Contact - Tom Chopin -

905-327-9095; tom@koppersfishing.com

#### Hard Lure - Shimano American Corporation - Waxwing Sub-Surface Swimming Jig

Contact: John Mazurkiewicz, Catalyst Marketing - 574-289-1331; jpmazurk@ameritech.net

#### Marine - Minn Kota-Johnson Outdoors, Inc. - Talon-Shallow Water Anchor

Contact: Steve Roth, Swanson Russell - 402-437-6418; steveroth@swansonrussell.com

#### Freshwater Reel - Shimano American Corporation - Stella FE

Contact: John Mazurkiewicz, Catalyst Marketing - 574-289-1331; jpmazurk@ameritech.net

#### Saltwater Reel - Shimano American Corporation - Trinidad A

Contact: John Mazurkiewicz, Catalyst Marketing - 574-289-1331; jpmazurk@ameritech.net

#### Freshwater Rod - G.Loomis - NRX

Contact: John Mazurkiewicz, Catalyst Marketing - 574-289-1331; jpmazurk@ameritech.net

#### Saltwater Rod - Shimano American Corporation - Terez

Contact: John Mazurkiewicz, Catalyst Marketing - 574-289-1331; jpmazurk@ameritech.net

#### Tackle Management - HYI, Inc. - Openwater Tackle Backpack

Contact: Adrian Dare - 714-604-8376; adriand@hyiusa.com



#### Terminal Tackle - Sebile Innovative Fishing - Soft Weight System

Contact: Russell Gray - 303-437-8103; rgray@sebile.com

In 2011, ICAST will be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, from July 13-15. ICAST 2012 will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, from July 11-13.

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#### Other Winners:

##### Apparel - Frabill, Inc. - FXE Stormsuit

Contact: Noel Vick, Traditions Media: 612-708-7339; noel@traditionsmedia.com

##### Combo - Ardent/Lamiglas - C400/XC704 Fishouflage

##### Bass

Contact: Michael Brooks - 800-325-9200, x201; mjbroucks@ardentoutdoors.com

Contact: Ron Giudice, Blue Heron Communications - 405-740-2740; ron@blueheroncomm.com

##### Line - Rapala - Sufix 832 Advanced Superline

Contact: Kelly Brockpahler - 612-481-8375; kbrockpahler@rapalausa.com

##### Soft Lure - Koppers Fishing & Tackle Corporation - Live Target Hollow Body Frog

Troy Creasy is owner and operator of High Adventure Charters on Lake Ontario and the Salmon River. He is the former owner and editor of Lake Ontario Outdoors and currently serves as Consulting Editor.

# Fishing The EGG DRIFT

by Jay Peck



Understanding the egg drift is a key to taking steelhead like this beauty.



**M**id October is a busy time for Lake Ontario tributaries, not only for the fishermen, but the fish as well. Mid-October is peak time for the Chinook salmon run. This is when the bulk of the Chinook salmon are in the rivers and spawning.

The salmon will have a big impact on the rivers that they inhabit. At this time of the year the biggest impact will be from spawning and their eggs which are deposited into the river.

Mid-October is also the time when the first of the steelhead and then the brown trout start their spawning run. When these

fish first arrive, the salmon would have been spawning for approximately two weeks by this time. As a result, the river bottom is saturated with eggs. Even though spawning is the prime concern of both steelhead and brown trout, when they are presented with a feeding opportunity of this magnitude they will most certainly

take full advantage of it.

The feeding opportunity that these fish will encounter can rival anything that they have experienced during their time in the lake. This feeding opportunity at times can be so large, that I have observed brown trout that have stopped spawning and gone on the feed. It is not unusual to see

brown trout alternate between feeding and spawning in sections of the river where the egg concentration is unusually heavy.

Steelhead are several months away from spawning. As a result, they do not feel as strong an urge to get to their destination. As with the rest of the fish that are in river at this time, it is not unusual for steelhead to run into a high concentration of eggs. When this happens they will stop running up river and feed for days.

Despite all the salmon in the river at this time of the year, the egg drift is not a river-wide event. But fish can be caught with egg patterns all through the river. The heavy concentrations of eggs are a local event; the fish are keyed into the eggs. The key is to find the heavy concentrations. This is obviously where the salmon are doing the bulk of their spawning. At these locations the salmon will dig up the river bottom and deposit their eggs. And then a new group of a salmon will move in and dig up that same piece of river bottom and repeat the whole spawning process.

Prime gravel beds will have this process repeated several times as fresh groups of salmon come and go. It does not take long for these gravel beds to become saturated with salmon eggs. With all of the spawning activity, salmon digging their spawning beds into the river bottom will cause what I refer to as an egg drift. Surplus eggs knock loose and are sent adrift by spawning salmon.

Understanding what happens during an egg drift will help fishermen be more effective fishing egg flies. An egg drift is much different from a nymph drift that most fishermen are familiar with. The most important thing to remember is that nature designed eggs to be denser than water so that the eggs will sink to the river bottom and stay buried

in the gravel, evenwithstanding a 30-pound salmon digging the eggs out of the river bottom.

On the other hand, nymphs have the same density as water; this enables them to slowly crawl along the river bottom while they find food. Eggs are denser and have a tendency to stay on the river bottom and are less likely to get caught up in the currents and drift down river. An egg drift is best described as a sub-drift; instead of falling with the currents, the eggs have a tendency to roll down river among the rocks.

Locating prime locations for fishing egg patterns can be straightforward. Basically, look for concentrations of spawning fish and then focus the fishing effort in the slots and runs just below the spawning activity. These locations will not only concentrate the eggs, but also the feeding fish. These are spots where fish can be found for weeks after spawning is over. In addition, keep these locations in mind for later in the season. During water fluctuations, high water flows will continue to wash eggs into these locations, making excellent spots to fish during the winter. Both brown trout and steelhead will also be mixed in with spawning salmon. This can make for excellent site fishing opportunities. Locate actively spawning salmon and then study the water around the salmon and see if you can locate any feeding trout.

Understanding what is happening during an egg drift will help us become effective fishermen. An egg drift is much different than what most trout fishermen are familiar with. As I have said before, it is important to keep in mind that eggs are denser than water. This is why they will sink to the river bottom and then stay where they are deposited by the fish. On the other hand,

nymphs have the same density as water, and this allows them to swim and crawl around the rocks to feed. Remember when a nymph gets washed into the current they can be several inches off the bottom as they drift. Since the eggs are heavier they will stay in contact with the river bottom even when they are knocked loose and will drift in the current and continue to roll along the river bottom.

The best presentation for egg flies is to dead drift. We need to keep in mind that there are a few differences between fishing egg flies and nymphs. First of all, we need to drift egg flies much slower and closer to the river bottom than nymphs. We do this by slowing down the drift. The first step should be properly set up. Start with a standard 10 foot, seven or eight-weight fly rod with a weight-forward floating fly line. However, the real secret is in setting-up the leaders and tippets. I like to start with 10-foot tapered leaders and add about three feet of tippets. Using a quality tapered leader helps with casting accuracy. You need to get the fly in the right spot. I keep my weight above my tippet knot, so that the weight is about three feet from the fly. This is close enough to control the drift but far enough away not to bother the fish.

In the last few years I have started using strike indicators

more often when fishing egg patterns. The advantage of using a strike indicator is that we can control our drifts much more easily. That way we can control the depth of our drift and steer the drift to the proper line that we want to fish. If you are fishing a slot or pocket water strike, indicators will help you get the fly where you want it. Setting-up a strike indicator is fairly straightforward. Basically guesstimate how deep the water is that you are fishing and then add a third to that. Keep in mind the distance is from the strike indicator to the weight, not the fly.

You may have to adjust after this guesstimate because it is only a guideline. You are aiming for the strike indicator to show periodic contact with the river bottom. What I tell trout fishermen is that the bottom will look like a

Continued On Page 37

Jay Peck is a fly fishing guide fishing on the Lake Ontario tributaries; fishing the Salmon River in the fall, September through October for salmon, steelhead and brown trout. Fishing Oak Orchard, Lower Genesee and Sandy Creek in Monroe County, from November through December for giant brown trout and steelhead. Contact Jay at Coleman's Fly Shop at 585-352-4775 or e-mail him at [jay@jayeckguides.com](mailto:jay@jayeckguides.com). Website is [www.jayeckguides.com](http://www.jayeckguides.com). He will be fishing steelhead on the Oak Orchard and the Genesee River all winter and the Salmon River in April.

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# Catching That First Muskelunge

by Mike Seymour



**E**xperienced anglers know better than to make any guarantees when it comes to catching a muskellunge. Still, New York State waters offer excellent opportunities for catching your first muskellunge, and there is no better time than right now to make that initial catch.

The fall season sees decreasing daylight hours and dropping water temperatures, and these occurrences signal increased feeding activity on the part of muskellunge. Actively feeding fish give autumn anglers an edge that doesn't exist at other times of the year. Prime places to pursue that first muskellunge are the state's "Big Three", where minimum size lengths vary from 40 to 54 inches. Some of the state's stocked waters and the dozens of other waters are also home to tiger muskellunge.

## Big Three

The St. Lawrence River, Niagara River, and Chautauqua Lake are the Empire State's "Big Three" muskellunge waters. Not only are these large water bodies, but also they are home to monster muskellunge. In fact, each year these waters yield some of the largest muskellunge taken anywhere in the world.

The best approach to hooking a muskellunge on any of the "Big Three" is to hire a guide. When using the expertise of a local

guide, the odds for success skyrocket. These guides have the proper equipment and know-how. They will fish in the best areas and utilize time-proven techniques for that particular water. Don't hesitate to ask

with a heated cabin.

Trolling diving plugs is also a popular technique on the Niagara River whether anglers are fishing the Buffalo Harbor, the Upper River, or the Lower River. The Upper River also sees a lot

looks to DEC stockings to maintain a healthy muskellunge population. In 2009, DEC placed over 15,000 fingerlings in the lake. While Chautauqua does yield some big muskellunge, the lake has more of a reputation



questions during the outing. Even if a muskellunge isn't caught, the experience should be a learning one, and it should give you enough know-how to go after muskellunge on your own.

Deep-water trolling is the primary technique on the St. Lawrence River where traditional fish-producing areas can be found along the entire river's length from Cape Vincent to Massena. Setups vary from flat-lining diving plugs from a 14-foot boat to operating multi-rod arrangements on downriggers and planer boards from a craft

of fish taken by casters, while the Lower River is producing an increasing number of fall muskellunge for anglers drifting live suckers.

Both trolling and casting work well on the 13,100-acre Chautauqua, a lake with a deep-water, north basin and a shallow-water, south basin. Unlike the slow, trolling speeds used by St. Lawrence and Niagara river fishers, Chautauqua anglers routinely speed-troll. Also, unlike the two rivers which rely on natural reproduction, Chautauqua Lake

for producing numbers of fish.

## Stocked Waters

A good bet for catching that first muskellunge is to head to the Cassadaga Lakes, Great Chazy River, or Waneta Lake. These are smaller waters that see annual stockings of muskellunge and that lend themselves to do-it-yourself trips, although hiring a guide would certainly up the odds for success. Bass and pike outfits are okay for tossing spinnerbaits, jigs, and surface baits on these waters, but a better bet is to go with a

stouter outfit that will cast Suicks and Mepps Muskie Spinners and will troll crankbaits such as the Swim-Whiz and Depth Raider.

The upper, middle, and lower Cassadaga Lakes cover a combined total of 210 acres so they are excellent spots for small boaters and casters. The lakes are located in Chautauqua County six miles south of Fredonia, and muskellunge here typically are taken from weedy stretches. DEC stocked 1,070 fingerlings here in 2009.

The Great Chazy River, a tributary of Lake Champlain, lies at the opposite end of the state in Clinton County. Both casting and trolling are popular on the river where anglers fish from the river's mouth to the dam at Perry Mills. As a rule, the lower river stretches produce the better fishing. DEC stocked 1,400 fingerlings in the river in 2009.

Located in the Finger Lakes Region of Schuyler County, Waneta Lake covers 780 acres. Prime spots to cast or troll for muskellunge here are the lake's points and deep weed edges. Over 4,000 muskellunge fingerlings were stocked in Waneta in 2009.

### Tiger Muskellunge

Thanks to a robust, tiger muskellunge stocking program, anglers don't have to travel far from home to catch that first muskellunge. The tiger muskellunge is a sterile, hybrid cross between a northern pike and muskellunge, and the DEC annually stocks these tiger muskies in 50 or so waters across the state. For the most part, tigers are stocked in waters that are accessible to small boaters, and the majority of fish are actually taken incidentally by anglers targeting bass. These stocked waters offer do-it-yourself opportunities for

hooking a tiger muskellunge.

Here is a listing by county of the waters that were stocked last year: Albany (Mohawk River), Cattaraugus (Lime Lake), Cayuga (Duck Lake, Lake Como, Seneca River), Chenango (Chenango Lake, Long Pond), Columbia (Kinderhook Lake), Essex (Lincoln Pond), Green (North-South Lake), Hamilton (Lake Durant), Herkimer (First Lake, Mohawk River, Moshier Reservoir, North Lake, State Barge Canal), Jefferson (Grass, Hyde, Moon, and Payne Lakes), Lewis (Soft Maple Reservoir, Whetstone Marsh Pond), Livingston (Cone-sus Lake), Madison (Lake Moraine, Lower Lelands Pond), Oneida (Kayuta Lake, Mohawk River, State Barge Canal), Onondaga (Jamesville Reservoir, Otisco Lake, Seneca River), Otsego (Canadarago Lake), Putnam (Middle Branch Reservoir), Schenectady (Mohawk

River), St. Lawrence (Horse-shoe and Yellow Lakes), Tioga (Oakley Corners Pond), and Washington (Cossayuna Lake).

ern muskellunge angler's practice of CPR: Catch-Photograph-Release. ♦

### CPR

Hooking into that first muskellunge is the ultimate thrill in freshwater angling, a thrill that is matched only by watching the fish swim away after a successful release. The memory of these thrills can be captured by adopting the mod-

Captain Mike Seymour is a licensed Coast Guard and NYS guide who has guided extensively on The St. Lawrence River, Black Lake, and in western Alaska. He is past president of the NYS Outdoor Writers' Association and is an active writer for many publications. In addition to fishing the St. Lawrence River, he is actively fishing Lake Ontario, the Adirondacks, and other waters of the state. Contact him at fishmike@twcny.rr.com.

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**Black River Valley**

# Adventures

by Scott Locorini



September goose hunting action can be fast and furious!

## September Geese

When most folks think about good goose hunting, a sunny warm day is probably not what they recollect. However, in September, this is what you get a lot of the time. Add to that liberal bag limits, and you have the potential for some great hunting!

Last year's season opener was as picture perfect as you could ever hope for. We found some

birds that were working a barley field each morning. On opening day, we drove out to the field and set up our decoys and blinds. For local birds we rarely use more than a couple of dozen decoys. Our "blinds" for the day were foam pads and camouflage "blankets". This system works better in short fields than the layout blinds.

About an hour after legal

shooting light, the geese started to come. At first they flew by us like we weren't even there. That's when we always start second guessing ourselves, looking at our decoys and blinds for anything that might be out of place or shiny. Of course, we were being paranoid, knowing that geese have brains the size of a pea. Finally the birds started committing to the decoys.

What happened next was absolute chaos! Birds were coming in; shotguns were going off; and dead geese fell out of the sky. In just a few minutes, we filled our bag limits.

After the smoke cleared, geese started landing all around us. All we could do is look at each other and laugh. Our limit was already filled and the guns were unloaded. We were just

having fun watching the birds come in. There is nothing that compares to watching a flock of geese commit to a spread of decoys. As they make that final turn, you can watch their feet come down like the landing gear on a plane. You can hear the wind whistle through their cupped wings and their call gets louder and more excited as they approach the ground. On this morning we had hundreds of geese on the ground around us. They were so close we could see their breath as they honked. It really doesn't get any better than that.

September is a great time to get out, polish your shooting skills, and enjoy the warmth. It's also a great time of year to introduce a kid to the sport. So get out in September, find some birds and enjoy the early goose season this year. It's definitely not traditional goose hunting with frigid temperatures and howling winds, but you might find that you like it even more than the regular season.

#### **Canoe and Kayak "Cast and Blast"**

It was just starting to get light as I made my first cast of the day. Mist was rising off the water and it was cold enough that the tippet on my rod was starting to freeze up. After a couple of casts my rod bent over and the drag started to scream. The battle was fierce but short and I soon landed a beautiful bronze-colored wall-eye. As I was about to make my next cast, I heard whistling wings heading upstream and had just enough time to drop the rod and swing my shotgun on a drake mallard. I had been floating for approximately 15 minutes and already had a walleye and mallard to take home.

"Cast and Blast" trips are a great way to have it all in the

fall. Canoes and kayaks are my boats of choice and I have successfully hunted and fished from them for many years. The low profile of paddlecraft makes them ideal hunting craft and, with all the new designs and accessories that are available, they are comfortable, stable and efficient fishing boats. Some of the best new designs are hybrids, a blend of canoe and kayak. *NuCanoe* is my favorite. Their boats are made by sportsmen for sportsmen. You can propel a *NuCanoe* with a motor, oar, or canoe or kayak paddle. It can also be rigged with several custom options like a duck blind or swivel seat.

I like to hunt and fish rivers, allowing the water to do most of the work. When floating rivers, I prefer a boat with a rudder that allows me to "steer" the kayak without using a paddle. Many times I have floated right up to ducks that couldn't figure out what I was until it was too late. It also allows me to drift parallel to shore and cast at the same time without having to put down my rod and pick up the paddle.

There are a few things to think about before heading out to your favorite river for a fall hunting and fishing trip. For starters, the water is starting to get cold and accidents do happen. You should be wearing a life jacket which is required by NYS law between October 1 and May 1. You should also wear synthetic clothing and good rain gear. Synthetic clothing will keep you warm if you get wet, while cotton clothing will drain the heat from your body and make you colder. Finally, know the hazards of the river. If you don't know the river, take a leisurely trip down it in full daylight to see the hazards before you hunt and fish.

There are many things you should avoid, including rapids,

downed trees, and big rocks with water pushing against them. Avoiding rapids out of your comfort range is obvious, but most folks don't realize how dangerous downed trees and rocks can be in a river. Downed trees are known as strainers, and if you get sideways to one, your boat can easily flip. Additionally, once you're out of your boat, the strainer will try to keep you down. The same thing happens with large rocks or rock walls. Over the years flowing water has dug out underneath the rock creating an undercut. If you get sucked in an undercut, the current will try to hold

you there. Rocks and downed trees create great fish cover but are also dangerous under certain conditions.

This fall you can have it all and not have to choose between hunting and fishing. Try a "cast and blast" on your local river. You'll be surprised at how much fun you'll have and how effectively you can hunt and fish from a canoe or kayak. ♦

Scott Locorini is a licensed guide and the owner of Adirondack Exposure and regularly guides hunters and fishermen in the Adirondacks and Upstate NY area. A member of the Kayak Hall of Fame, he also operates kayak fishing and wildlife trips in Florida during the winter



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Destinations:

# The Allure of Nantucket

by Gary & Robin Edwards



Striped bass remain one of the main attractions of Nantucket.

Scenic spots make Nantucket a paradise for camera buffs.



**N**antucket, an Indian name meaning "Faraway Land," aptly describes the feeling one enjoys when visiting this unique,

enchanting island. Although only 30 miles off the mainland coast of Massachusetts, Nantucket has managed to capture and hold an atmosphere of untouched history. Its cobble-

stone streets, seaside cottages, and nearly undisturbed landscapes quickly transport visitors away from the hustle and stress of daily life in the "real world."

For nearly a century, from the

mid-1700's, this small island was the whaling capital of the world. Most of those dangerous voyages lasted from three to five years. For those that were fortunate enough to return home, there

was a thriving and growing community of residents centered on that industry. When petroleum began to take the place of whale oil, commercial shipping gave way to recreational boating. Graceful old steamers brought summer visitors, and it wasn't long before this island was discovered as an idyllic family vacation destination with more than 82 miles of picturesque beaches.

Robin and I have succumbed to the allure of Nantucket, in particular the area of Siasconset, or "Sconset." A recent trip found us taking walks, biking, napping, sauntering to the local market every evening for ice cream, doing a bit of shopping, and generally being content, up until the time someone mentioned the fishing.

There was the potential for some great action on the long submerged sandbar that hooks north and east of Great Point Lighthouse. The bar is really an underwater extension of Nantucket and is the demarcation between Nantucket Sound and the Atlantic. As with most structures, game fish use it to their advantage when it comes to ambushing bait. Captains of "All Hooked Up" Charters, Dale Waine and his son, Mike, hit the falling tide just right. The strong outgoing tide turned the bait into a confused, out of control swirl, battling the force of the current over the bar. In short order, I realized this is a very bad place to be if you're the low fish on the food-chain totem pole. If the bait went with the ever-pulling current, voracious stripers and blues by the thousands were lined up like a giant Super Bowl champion defensive line, waiting to eat them. If they headed for the deep water on the far side of the bar, thousands of gulls and terns were picking them off from the air as they

exposed themselves while crossing the shallow water on top of the unyielding sand bar. Either way, it was a bad place to be a bait fish, but a really great place to be an angler armed with fly rods and light spinning gear.

While Dale kept nosing their 32' Albemarle up to the edge of the bar, Mike, a senior at UNC, kept busy unhooking seven to ten-pound bluefish for me. After about 20 minutes and unnumbered big blues, I asked Mike if he had ever tried fly fishing, as I noticed the boat was fully rigged with top-of-the-line trolling and casting gear. "A couple of times, but I only have this rig," he replied, nodding toward a freshwater trout-type fly rod and reel. "My arm needs a break. Try this rig," I said, as I handed him a nine-foot, nine-weight Thomas & Thomas Horizon Series rod rigged with a sink tip line, an olive and white Clouser minnow streamer, and a J. Ryall reel.

For someone who said he had only fly fished a couple of times, I could tell Mike was a natural. With one strong back cast into the wind and a powerful forward stroke, he let the Clouser fly. Before he had a chance to make two strips of a retrieve, a blue hit his fly, taking it 20 yards into the backing. Five minutes of tug-of-war later, Mike prevailed and the fish came to the net. After landing a few more, Mike suggested we move to another part of the bar where stripers tend to outnumber the bluefish.

Over the sound of the twin screws and the screaming gulls, Mike simply yelled, "Stripers!" to his Dad. Without any need for discussion, Dale turned the boat, hit the throttle and headed northeast, following the Great Point sandbar on the Atlantic side for about a mile. Just as abruptly, he turned the bow into the bar and put the nose in no

more than 2 1/2 feet of water. He yelled to Mike, "Stripers starboard!" From his elevated vantage point on the fly bridge, Dale could clearly see what it took Mike and me a few seconds to discern – hundreds of big stripers punishing bait in the turbulent wash where the water came over the bar.

I let my fly land just over their grey backs and quickly had one on, or thought I did. "Sorry man, you've got another bluefish," said Mike. After a nice fight, Mike unhooked and released my nine-pound blue. I assured him that catching another bluefish was fine with me, but he was intent on my catching a Nantucket stripper on the fly rod. Before I made another cast, Mike gave me a quick lesson in fish positioning relative to the sandbar. Although I was interested, it was hard to pay attention with the thousands of turns and gulls screaming overhead, some so close you could have touched them, and the hundreds of grey shadows darting around the boat.

Dale, who couldn't hear his son educating me on hitting stripers while avoiding blues, yelled down, "Stripers on both sides and behind the boat!" I desperately wanted to get my fly back in the water, but I gave Mike my attention, though not undivided. About a minute later Mike asked, "You got it?" With a quick, "You betcha!" my line was back in the water, the fly swaying back and forth between dozens of light-grey shadows, the stripers, as opposed to the darker grey of the blues. Each time a bluefish made a dash toward my fly, Mike yelled "Bluefish!" and I would yank the fly out of the water and drop it back in near a stripper. His instruction paid off. Almost every attempt rewarded me with a Nantucket stripper.

We fished successfully until the

strong current that pulled the bait over the bar went slack. The bait dispersed, and for a few hours they would be relatively safe – until the earth, moon, and ocean repeated the whole sequence.

Arriving back in Sconset, I found the family sitting under an umbrella at an old weathered picnic table, chatting and enjoying the warm evening. With contented smiles they looked up to greet me, giving the distinct impression they had no idea how much time had elapsed since I left for my adventure. An empty box of "Aunt Leah's Fudge" was lying open on the table revealing not even the smallest piece left over for a hungry fly fisherman. But... I felt quite satisfied myself!

In a future issue, Mike Waine and his brother, Matt, take me on another unforgettable fishing trip - "The Day it Rained Bait in Nantucket!"

### Fishing Checklist

If fly fishing, you'll need the following:

**Rod:** Thomas & Thomas 9' x 9wt.; **Reel:** J. Ryall large arbor, size 10; **Line:** Rio medium sink tip; **Fly:** Clouser minnow & surface popper

For spin fishing, I suggest:

**Rod:** 7 1/2 - 8 1/2 medium action; **Reel:** Your favorite saltwater reel with 200+ yards of 15lb. test capacity; **Lure:** Assorted soft minnow imitations / classic Hopkins ♦

Gary and Robin Edwards have been sharing their experiences in the outdoors for the last 25 years. Together, they have traveled and fished across the country and around the world. Their fishing exploits have been featured in Sports Afield, Field & Stream, Outdoor Life, Fly Fisherman and numerous regional publications, as well as ESPN and PBS. The Edwards offer hosted trips to Mexico, Belize, Patagonia, Wyoming and beyond through their business Vacations on the Fly - [www.vacationsonthefly.com](http://www.vacationsonthefly.com).

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## Deer .....

woodsmanship. Know the lay of the land, have a good map and two compasses when you head into the Adirondack backcountry.

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It is the memories of red woolen jackets drying in camp, a fresh snowfall on the trees around an Adirondack pond, and deer that rarely see human beings. It is deer hunting like it was meant to be. ♦

# The Conservation Column

by Bill Hilts, Sr.

The conservation world continues to be a very busy one for those that enjoy the outdoors in New York State. Hot button issues, include Asian carp in the Great Lakes, bait fish, female hunters, and of course micro-stamping!

## United Nations Seeks Control of Guns

In New York State the micro-stamping bill keeps getting new life and is continually popping up in the legislature in Albany. That is bad enough, but we must now shift our attention over to the United Nations where that anti-gun organization is setting its sights on controlling all of the guns in the world, including personal firearms! Last fall the organization voted to seek an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which would be all-encompassing. On July 23 of this year, it concluded a two-week session in New York City to further develop the ATT agenda. The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) attended that session and its report is not encouraging, especially with the leadership in Washington strongly favoring gun control. The SAF notes... "There appears little doubt that some sort of treaty will be adopted by 2014, if not by 2012. It is anticipated that the final treaty will attempt to register all firearms, require micro-stamping, destroy surplus ammunition on a very set schedule, mandate registration of all firearms, and place restrictions on any transfer of arms, including between private individuals and will include many other restrictions." Last fall the U.S. delegate voted in favor of the ATT.

The SAF notes that there is

division among the delegates as to the scope of the ATT, with some delegates of the opinion that the treaty should deal with nuclear weapons. In much of Europe, and most of Africa, the delegates believe the treaty should cover rifles, shotguns, handguns and ammunition as well. According to the SAF, the ATT agenda is a serious threat to our Second Amendment rights and we must be vigilant and stay informed as to what is happening.

The N.R.A. reminds us that any treaty is likely to be at least two years away and would have to be signed and ratified.

## Asian Carp Threaten Great Lakes

There is great fear that the dreaded Asian carp have successfully breached the control structures in the Illinois River and entered the Great Lakes. If this is true, experts warn that those voracious eaters, which are prolific reproducers, will quickly devastate the natural ecosystem of this great waterway. They must be stopped! The Attorney General of Michigan has filed lawsuits against the Corps of Engineers and the State of Illinois to secure the navigational locks in the Chicago Ship Canal, to block the carp from entering Lake Michigan. So far the Corps has refused to take such action and the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear the case. Government officials are exhibiting little concern over the fact that there is no doubt that the carp will destroy the \$7 billion fishing industry of the Great Lakes.

Now a new bill has been introduced in the U.S. Congress

which would require the Corps of Engineers to accelerate the study and findings on a hydrological separation of the Mississippi River Basin from the Great Lakes system. Called the "Permanent Prevention of Asian Carp Act of 2010," it seeks ways of achieving hydrological separation of those waterways. Companion bills have been introduced in both houses of the legislature, by Senators Stabenow (D-MI) and Durbin (D-IL), and Congressman Dave Camp (R-MI). Contact your members of Congress and urge them to expedite passage of this legislation. Go to: <http://www.contactingthecongress.org>. We are running out of time!!!

## Bait Fish Discussed With DEC

In July, DEC held a series of public meetings around the state dealing with the transportation and use of bait fish in New York waters, especially the Great Lakes. Due to the arrival of the deadly VHS virus, along with several other additional pathogens, fish managers were forced to place strict controls on the use and transport of bait fish in an attempt to control the diseases from spreading.

The angler group was pretty much in agreement that the rules should be relaxed to allow fishermen to transport bait fish from port to port, but not from waterway to waterway. They

suggested that controlled corridors be established and severe penalties be set for any violations of those rules.

## Women Hunters Increase

Grab a bow ladies, you have jumped into the lead of the new hunter sweepstakes. The National Sporting Goods Association notes that between 2008 and 2009, more women than men took up hunting! Despite the fact the total number of hunters declined slightly during that same period of time, the number of female hunters increased by 5.4 percent, netting 163,000 new participants. The statistics showed that women increased their numbers in the muzzleloading sport by 134.6 percent, bow hunting, by 30.7 percent, while hunting with firearms went up by 3.5 percent. The ladies also took the top spot in the target shooting category, by increasing their participation by 4.1 percent.

Denise Wagner, with Wonders of Wildlife museum in Springfield, MO, notes, "Hunting and fishing license sales, combined with special taxes on firearms and ammunition, bows and arrows, and rods and reels, generate about \$100,000 every 30 minutes, totaling more than \$1.75 billion per year for conservation." A lusty tip of the sportsman's cap to our outdoor-minded ladies! ♦

Bill Hilts Sr. is a veteran outdoor writer who has been covering the outdoor beat for nearly 50 years. His credits include several regional and national publications, television and radio. For 39 years he edited the NY State Conservation Council Comments newspaper. He is a founder, charter member and past president of the NY State Outdoor Writers Association, past president of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and active in local, state, national and international conservation groups for most of his life. Currently he is editor of the BEAR Journal, official publication of the North American Bear Foundation. He brings our readers information and comments on conservation issues pertinent to Lake Ontario and New York State.

# Ducks, Dogs & Decoys Television: Frenzy in The Finger Lakes!

by Capt. Bill Saiff III

New York State boasts a unique opportunity for duck and goose hunters. The Empire state is broken into several waterfowl hunting zones. New York sportsmen can effectively pursue ducks or geese from early September until late January every year. One of the great late season hunts consists of pursuing Dabblers, Divers, and Canada Geese in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. In 2010 the second half of the Western-Zone season started on the day after Christmas and ran continuously through January 9th. The Finger Lakes region holds huge numbers of waterfowl late in the season but accessing them can be tricky, especially when the weather turns wild!

In 2009 I received a phone call from Tim Furness, the producer of D3-TV. Tim and Maryland duck hunting expert – Jeff Coats produce their "Ducks, Dogs & Decoys" television program for the Pursuit network. Tim booked two days of early goose hunting during the resident season and one day of late season hunting from our float rigs on Lake Ontario. The goose days were a huge success but gale force winds kept us from enjoying our scheduled late season date. We tentatively made plans to get back together during the Western-Zone season to enjoy some of the great hunting found in the Finger Lakes. When January 2010 arrived, so did a phone call from "Big Tim".



Redheads are just one of several Diving Duck species that inhabit the Finger Lakes region during cold weather.

"Have you got a spot for me?" he asked and "are there any birds?" I answered yes to both questions but explained that vicious weather conditions were prevailing throughout the Finger Lakes region. Temperatures had not topped 15 degrees Fahrenheit in over a week and winds had been in excess of 20 knots over the same time period.

Ducks and geese were flying but getting into a calm spot to gun had proven to be quite a chore! We made our date and Tim informed me that Coats' (aka. The Pit Boss) was tied up with clients and wouldn't be joining in the fun. Furness would be handling all the filming duties and asked if I would

assemble the proper group of hunters to get the job done. I immediately called on some of the hierarchy in New York's duck hunting food chain. Calls went out to my old friends Jamie Abel and Eric Palmer who represent "Bad Medicine" to any duck that flies within 40 yards. Palmer asked if he could bring along his son Zack who is also quite handy with a scattergun. The stage was set, I would seduce migrating flocks of mallards, red heads and geese and the boys would exhibit their shooting prowess for the cameras.

## Another Day of Wild Weather

Early morning at 4:30 am saw us nosing the two 20-foot float

rigs into a freshening northwest wind that held all the promise of a good old-fashioned January snow storm. We motored to the west side of the lake to a prominent point that we knew was holding a good number of both dabblers and divers. The boulder-strewn point would provide an excellent backdrop to hide the boats as well as the D3-TV video cameras. The shallow water surrounding the point made rigging decoys easy, as Abel and Palmer waded to set 120 Bluebills and Redhead decoys. The massive string rig was positioned on the windward side of the point, leaving the area in front of the boats clear for the placement of a long



leader string. The leader string would help funnel passing divers directly to our decoy pod. The downwind side of the point was scattered with small groups of mallard and black duck decoys. It was easy for dabblers to hover and work the weak side of the rig, while large flocks of divers would always pull into the wind as they work the strong side of the dekes. A floating spinning wing was placed among the dabbling ducks and our team made last minute adjustments with gear and dogs. A few minutes remained before legal shooting, so we used the time to discuss the rules of the hunt. We checked in with our cameraman and explained what we thought the birds would do, ensuring that his cameras would be trained in the right location.

Legal shooting time arrived and our group could note the muffled quacks of approaching mallards. Huge flakes of snow and a solid mass of ice-fog kept visibility to no more than 70 yards. A trio of mallards crossed the end of our bluebill string at 50 yards. A chopping series of comeback notes broke the hen from formation and she started her slow arc back to the decoys. A few single positioning quacks helped her line out on the decoys as the two drakes closed - to flank her on each side. With

paddles extended, the two Palmers tumbled the drakes from each side of the hen. A wet dog, wide smiles and the passage of hot coffee signaled the beginning of another great hunting day!

up for a second pass. I told the group "We're only going to take two, so concentrate on the closest drakes." A pair of fully plumed drakes rocked on set wings as their necks craned looking for an open patch of



Through the power of a zoom lens Furness reported the arrival of a huge flock of diving ducks. "They're turning our way," he shouted as gunners sunk into the boats, keeping their profiles as low as possible. The birds appeared low on the left side – a 150 bird flock of red-heads. The lead drakes spied our bluebill string and as they banked towards the decoys, I hissed "Let em' land." Three quarters of the flock pitched the rig as Furness collected fabulous footage of decoying red-heads. The remainder of the flock circled wide as they lined

blue water to crash into. When they crossed the 30-yard mark, Abel and the older Palmer rolled the pair with choreographed precision honed by 30 plus years of shoulder to shoulder gunning. When you burn the images of this type of hunt into the memory of video, solid shooting prowess makes the videotaping go more smoothly.

The Finger Lakes are known for high quality late season gunning and certain duck species will congregate in specific areas on those lakes. For instance, on the big lake of Cayuga, black ducks seem to group most heavily

on the northern half of the lake. mallards like this region as well, but the biggest groups tend to hang towards the southern end. The lake we were hunting had a marked lack of white ducks such as bufflehead and goldeneye. Our foursome was discussing that fact, when our ears caught the tell-tale warbling whistle of wings. That sound could only belong to goldeneye or what we more commonly refer to as whistlers. We were questioning how many, when a single drake appeared on the end of our bluebill string barreling hard towards the pocket in our decoys. It was young Zack's turn and I cautioned him to let the bird fully commit before he stood to shoot. At 15 yards, the bird set wings to decoy and then changed its mind at the last instance. The whistler swung hard to the left as Zack rose to track the big drake with his barrel. The first shot barely missed behind as it seemed to spur the black and white speedster into a higher flight gear. Zack's barrel kept moving as he centered the duck on his second shot. The duck was an easy mark for Thor and soon we were admiring the feather detail in this duck's late season coat of armor. A little cool weather in the Finger

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Lakes was nothing for a duck that's at home in most sub arctic conditions. The whistler's unexpected arrival was an added bonus to an already great duck hunting day.

### A Limit full of Color

Throughout the hours after dawn, Furness burned tape as we systematically filled our sixteen count of drake mallards. We harvested them one at a time or in pairs to maximize our filming opportunities. Our single drake goldeneye meant that we could only take seven drake redheads to round out our limit. We did our best to shoot into the small flocks opting to only film the largest flocks of divers. Thor was retrieving the last redhead when a massive group appeared on the horizon. The skies were beginning to clear a bit and we got the chance to watch the big flock as they

headed straight for our rig. "You're gonna want to film this one," I said as Furness ran for the camera. The big gang swept the dekes and headed back out into the bay to line up for a second pass. This time, paddles dropped

of D3-TV. We all stood up in the boat expecting the redheads to flush. Their heads rose, but only to view us with a questioning eye. We actually had to wade into the water to get the big gang to take flight; amazing!



and 400+ redheads swam fitfully in the decoys. We got to see it in person on a snowy day in January but thousands of viewers will get to see it during this year's season

and appeal of an easy hunt – while fun, never seems to hold the long-term pizzazz!

### Reasons for Success

Great scouting was the primary reason for a successful hunt. Our group had three possible shoots in mind on three different Finger Lakes. The final decision was made based on the weather and the ease of filming. The snowy conditions covered our decoys every 15 minutes. The whole team systematically waded through the rig four times an hour to dunk decoys and keep the spread looking alive. Great meat calling on the mallards is critical in white-out conditions. You can't see the ducks and chances are they can't see you. A steady stream of high volume greeting calls, continuously bent unseen ducks our way.

Once we had them in sight the sweet talk could be used to seal the deal. We were also successful because we were able to withstand the conditions. Proper clothing, heaters and boat loads of the necessary cold weather safety gear gave us the peace of mind to persevere. The ice and slush build up on the boats was incredible. As I cranked the throttle to head across the bay the sluggish response told the tale of just how brutal the conditions had been. It would take a full 24-hours just to thaw the duck boats. Not too long ago, I received a video from *Ducks, Dogs and Decoys* television. The video contained a montage of hunts from across the United States and Canada. Buried in the four disc set was the video of our Finger Lakes hunt. Yep! "It's just as wild as I remember!" ♦



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Capt. Bill Saiff III owns and operates Saiff's Fishing Charters and Seaway Waterfowl Professionals. His clients spend time with him at the Westview Lodge in Henderson Harbor, NY. He can be reached online at [www.BillSaiffOutdoors.com](http://www.BillSaiffOutdoors.com) or by calling 315-771-3514.

## 2010 Lake Ontario

# Pro-Am

by Chris Kenyon

The 2010 Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Team Tournaments (Pro-Am) recorded its first-ever blow off day during the Niagara County event in June and teams battled eight-foot waves during the final leg in Wayne County, held the

298 boats, fishing the four ports. Nearly \$170,000 was paid out in cash and prizes for the prestigious Pro-Am.

### Niagara

The Niagara County Pro-Am Salmon and Trout Team Tournament celebrated 25 years of

year-old record was broken. The teams never left their docks.

Those competitors with the best catches on Saturday ended up the winners during the 2010 tournament held June 5-6 in Olcott, NY. In the Pro Division, *Hot Line*, lead by local Captain Bob Cinelli, led Saturday with a

fish in the box for both days would win the tournament, so I needed at least 12 for Saturday. I made the call to fish close to home, and like I said...I guessed right," he said.

Cinelli and his team, wife Karen, Roy Letcher, and Doug Chaney, went into 500 feet of

Team Cold Steel accepts the Lake Ontario Pro Am Trophy.



third week in July. Orleans and Oswego Counties had a few thunderstorms thrown in the mix. Lake Ontario always offers surprises, however weather never dampened the spirits of the competitors during this year's Pro-Am. The total team tournament series logged in with

competition without a bad weather day extreme enough to cancel action. Although it was a bumpy ride on Lake Ontario for the Saturday's fishing, all teams were able to bring their catches to the official weigh station. Sunday, a violent 'nor'easter' rolled into Niagara County and the 25-

score of 208.64 and Cinelli took home the \$10,000 first place purse without even starting his engines on Sunday because of the blow-off.

He pre-fished Friday to the west of home (Olcott) but was concerned about the weather forecast for Sunday. "I knew 12

water, six miles north of home port Olcott, and set-up right on top of fish. "We had eight kings by eight o'clock...eight by eight," the captain laughed. "My team did a great job on the boat. We only lost three fish. Karen was on fire. She landed 16 of

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them," he continued.

In the Am Division, *Team Wizard*, lead by Larry Goehring won \$1,500 cash plus prizes with his first place score of 165.27. Team scores are calculated by adding one point per pound and 10 points for every fish. Goehring has fished the Pro Am since its inception. "I missed a few tournaments, but have fished most of the 26 years," Goehring said. "We fished straight out from Olcott and found a mixed bag of steelhead, kings, and cohos. We were boxed-out by noon. The fish were hitting spoons and stick-baits," he added.

## Orleans

Next-up on the tournament trail was Orleans County, held June 13-14 out of Point Breeze. Professional team *Top Gun* led by Captain Greg Gehrig of Oswego lived up to its name by setting the pace. They came in with 10 and 11 fish respectively in the two days of competition to win the second event in the series. They scored 375.42 points to narrowly edge out *Screamer/A-Tom-Mik* from Pennsylvania. *Screamer* was the only team to limit out both days of the tournament, but this is an event where size really does matter.

In the Amateur Division, *Fish Nutz*, led both days of the tournament by bringing a nine-fish limit to the scales on day one for a score of 173.22 points, and a six-fish box on day two for a tournament total of 271.91 points. There were 16 amateur teams competing for the top prizes of cash and merchandise among Amateurs. In the West Basin Challenge Cup, *Liquid Plumber* of Pennsylvania combined an 8<sup>th</sup> place Niagara finish with a third place Orleans finish to win the cup at this end of the lake.

## Oswego

Pro-Am boats headed toward the eastern end of the lake July 10-11 for the third leg of the series in Oswego County. *Cold Steel*, led by Captain Tom Burke of Pulaski, came through with two days of nice fish, including some dandy king salmon, to put them over the top to win the Oswego Professional Division with a two-day score of 427.57 points. The Top Amateur Team was *Five More Minutes*, led by Tony Chatt of West Monroe, NY.

For 16 years, Oswego has gained a reputation for some nice boxes of fish coming to the scales, in sometimes difficult weather conditions due to the prevailing winds out of the west. This year, weather wasn't a factor and teams had to decide if they wanted to target the small brown trout or take a chance on going after the bigger king salmon, which were a bit more difficult to locate ... and catch. Coming up with a combination of the two seemed to be the ticket for success – although not by much.

After the first day of action, *Prime Time*, led by Captain Pete Lahosky of Pennsylvania, led the charge by weighing in a limit of 12 brown trout that totaled 92.60 pounds and giving them a total score of 212.60 points. Once again, the first day leader would come up short despite bringing another limit to the scales on day two. Their two-day total of 416.78 points would be just short of another title.

Even though *Cold Steel* and company could only produce 11 fish on the final day, their overall weigh of 105.77 was enough to put them over the top and move in from second place. Third place was *Vision Quest* and Captain Pete Alex of Erie, PA with 391.40; and Dave Antenori's Zip N Zim boat and his team,

*Screamer*, earned fourth with 359.60 points.

In the Amateur Division, *Lat-er-on*, led by Jan Zwirko set the pace with a nine fish amateur limit and a score of 150.15 points after the first day. Once again, the jinx of being in first place came through again. When the leading team came in late, *Five More Minutes* vaulted from fifth to first with a score of 241.56 for the two days. *Spoonfed*, led by Glenn Gervais of West Springfield, Massachusetts, had the single biggest day catch for the amateurs on day two to move from 14<sup>th</sup> place to second with a two-day total of 232.98 points. Third place was Jeff Zimmer's *Cold Water Affair* squad and fourth was Paul Powers and his team, *Fish Nutz*.

## Wayne

Competitive and recreational anglers have terms for fishing inclement weather...especially blowing-related conditions. Nasty, over the top, snarly, bumpy, rocky ride, it's fishable, and "are you serious" are terms that come to mind. The waves during the final day of the 2010 Wayne County Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Team Tournament were ocean-size boilers. Mike Nardone, Captain of Amateur Team *Warship* said that, "there were four-footers, six-footers, and a few seven-footers thrown in for our enjoyment."

Teams that ventured into the deeper water searching for kings reported a few ten-foot swells, however during the awards ceremony at 4 pm, the water flattened out. "That's what fishing Lake Ontario is all about... it's different every hour of the day," mentioned one competing team member.

When the teams came to the official weigh station at Abe's Waterfront in Sodus Point, *Cold*

*Steel* walked away with first place honors in the Pro Division. Led by Captain Tom Burke, from Altmar, NY, *Cold Steel* finished the two-day event with a total score of 391.36.

Burke, with many titles under his belt for the Lake Ontario Pro-Am, and who placed 4<sup>th</sup> after the first day of the July 17-18 event, returned to the same location, fought the waves and came in Sunday with a limit of 12 fish to take the title. The Cold Steel Team took home \$5939 in cash and prizes.

Second Place honors went to *Billy V/Krenzers* with Captain Bill Ruth at the helm. Ruth, who resides in Ithaca, and his team, sponsored by Krenzer's Marine, came under the weigh tent with a total score of 390.76. The team took home \$2,530 in cash and prizes. Third Place was captured by *Oh-Baby*, led by Mathew Leclair with a two-day score of 387.70, which netted the team \$1380 in cash and prizes.

Fourth Place went to Sodus Point Captain Ryan Williamson and his team, *Fishin' Magician*. Fishin' Magician was in 8<sup>th</sup> place after day one and came in with 11 fish on Sunday to give them a two-day score of 375.55. Williamson and his team took home \$1280 in cash and prizes.

In the Amateur Division, Team *Spoonfed* took first place in the Wayne County Pro-Am. Glen Gervais, from West Springfield Mass, managed to ride the waves and brought home \$3,555 in cash and prizes with a two-day total score of 262.89. Second place was awarded to *Fish Hawk*, with team leader Tom Wojslaw, from Central Square, NY, taking home \$2530 in cash and prizes.

In the new Open Recreation Division, Rochester angler Paul Hadcock and his team *Boxed-Out* won 1st place for Saturday

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## Reunion .....

western hunting experiences to last a lifetime. Now it was my time to be his fishing guide for three days.

I must admit that I had been feeling the pressure. All the fishing reports I had heard said the same thing—a few fish are in, but the water is very low and clear. Anglers had been hoping for a heavy rain to bring more fish in from Lake Ontario, but the three-day forecast was not hopeful for any significant precipitation.

My mother always said, “be happy with what you’ve got,” so I decided to think that fishing in this beautiful weather with a life-long friend would be a treat in itself.

It did not take long for Murphy’s Law to rear its ugly head. As I joined the two sections of my 10 ½ foot custom made noodle rod, I quickly noticed that the graphite on the “female” end of the rod was shattered and split into several uneven lengths. I guess when my cooler shifted a quarter-mile from Sodus Point, it did more damage than I had thought; lucky me.

Scampering back to my vehicle, I uncased my eight-weight fly rod and quickly returned to streamside. After sharing leader material, strike indicators, and steelhead flies, we were both in business. Only two other fisher-

men were on the creek and both said the fishing had been okay at daybreak for about an hour, but it had been pretty much dead since that time. A few fish were porpoising, but noontime has never been known as a gang-buster time for steelheading.

David was working a stretch below a large downed tree in the water when I saw his rod pulsating as he set the hook into a large steelhead. Having never used my equipment before, he carefully played the fish and did his best to keep it out of the deadfall. After a long battle he eased it into my net. What a first steelhead for him—28” and all of 12 pounds! We took a few quick photos and then went back to fishing.

Fishing a crystal meth fly pattern, I stuck it to a fish after my strike indicator barely nudged. It swam directly into shore and made a small splash; at first I thought it was just a small one, but soon it rocketed downstream, stripping line from my fly reel.

An older gentleman next to me swore it was a big king salmon as it made several desperate attempts to take me into and under the tree in the water. Each time, I gathered line and hosed it upstream and away from getting hung up. Soon I caught a glimpse of the fish, and knew I was into an incredible steelhead.

Gaining line and getting it closer and closer to shore, the big buck steelhead repeatedly took off at the sight of the net.

Eventually it tired and I was able to hoist it into the net. Measuring 34” and weighing 17 ½ pounds, it was the biggest steelhead I had ever caught. It was only one-half hour into our fishing trip and we both scored monster steelheads.

We fished until dark, landing a few more steelheads, two browns, and a nice coho salmon. A beautiful day, surprisingly good fishing, and great friendship—it doesn’t get any better than that!

Sodus Point in November was so peaceful and relaxing. We had our key to the lodge and we were their only guests. The streets were virtually deserted, except during meal times when Captain Jack’s bustled with business. It was evident that the locals comprised a large percentage of the clientele and a lot of the people appeared to know each other.

Even so, the staff and patrons were cordial, accommodating, and very engaging. The food was great and the prices were extremely reasonable. We never felt like outsiders or visitors during our stay.

Wanting to cover all bases with our fishing, I asked Tom if he knew of any charter boat captains who still had their boats on the lake. After a couple of phone calls, Tom told us that Captain Lee Geibel of Reeltime Fishing Charters was about to pull his boat out of the lake for the winter, but would be glad to accommodate us.

We booked the trip for a half-

day on our second day in Sodus Point. Captain Lee was very professional and knowledgeable and we enjoyed sharing archery hunting stories as much as catching fish! His vivid description of gunning for ducks and geese on the lakeshore captivated us between fishing action on the boat. We had many hookups and landed an incredible northern pike and several brown trout.

I have fished Lake Ontario tributaries for well over thirty years and many of the waters from Rochester to Pulaski. However, I have never had a trip that compared to the relaxation, hospitality, and just plain fun we had in Sodus Point.

David and I fished together for a few hours on our last day, then he packed up for his return to Colorado, and I hit the road for the drive back to Everett, Pennsylvania. Before our departure, we both vowed to make the return trip to Maxwell Creek and Sodus Point next year. ♦

Bill Benigni is an accomplished salmon, trout, and steelhead fisherman who grew up in Kane, Pennsylvania, and has hunted and fished throughout the United States for over fifty years. He has had articles published in *SalmonTrout-Steelheader Magazine*, *Bow & Arrow Hunting Magazine*, *Real Hunting Magazine*, and the *PA Game News Magazine*. He has also written numerous articles about hunting and fishing for the *Altoona Mirror* and *Bedford Daily Gazette* newspapers.

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## Drift .....

trout tapping on the fly. When the strike indicator makes a two foot jolt to the side, assume it is a fish and set the hook.

Fly design can make a big

difference, especially during the low water flows of fall. I like to keep my fly boxes simple, especially with egg flies. During the fall my favorite egg pattern is the nuclear row bug. I use these in three basic colors, Oregon cheese, chartreuse, and orange. The sizes I use range from size twelve to size

eight. Most of the time, I am fishing with the larger size in eight. I have found that glow bugs do not work as well in the lower water flows that are common during the fall. I still carry a few in the same colors as above. As I said earlier, I like to keep the egg fly box simple.

On those days that I find the

fish to be unusually fussy, I will reduce the size of a fly and stick with the natural colors. After that, pay particular attention to your presentation. Over the years I’ve learned that it is not always the fly, but how you show the fly to the fish that makes a difference. ♦

# Destination: Presque Isle and Erie, PA

# Outdoor Opportunities Abound

by Bill Hilts, Jr.

**T**iming is everything. A simple introduction through a mutual friend resulted in two worlds colliding – and an opportunity to experience an outdoor Mecca that previously had been unknown to me. When my then-girlfriend Sandy suggested a day-trip to Presque Isle

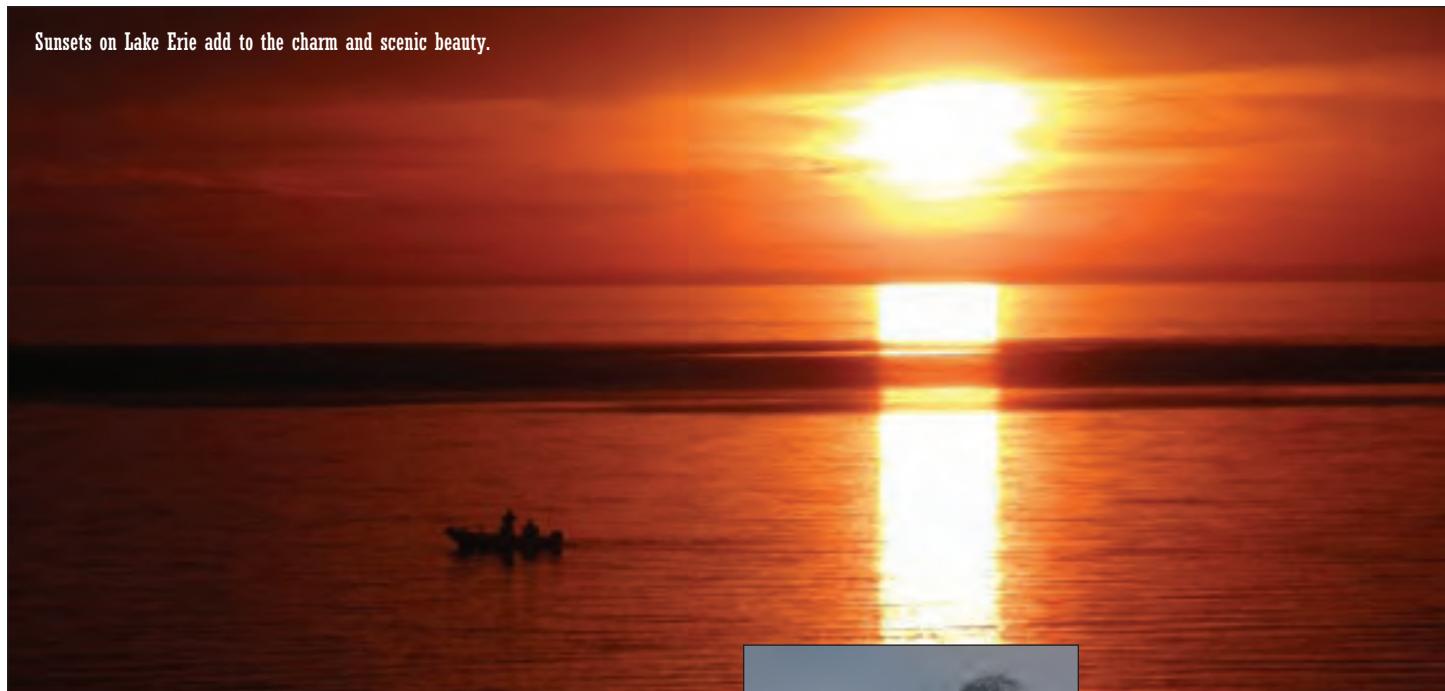
accommodations at Lakeview On The Lake ([www.LakeView-Erie.com](http://www.LakeView-Erie.com); 888-558-VIEW), a site rich in history that is tabbed as Erie's only lakefront resort. Situated on the bluffs overlooking this Great Lake, we checked in just in time to experience one of the things this area is noted for – its spectacular sunsets. For the

fall to spring. If you enjoy tributary fishing for trout, this is a great spot to whet a line. To the west of Erie, Walnut and Elk creeks top the list. To the east, 20-Mile and 16-Mile creeks lead the way.

Alex has two specialties on the lake – walleye and steelhead. I've had the pleasure of

fishing with the master for eyes and we limited out in short order by trolling spoons and worm harnesses in the trench and around the "mountain." We also enjoyed reeling in a few acrobatic steelies to get our hearts pumping. The bass fishing can also be good around these parts so your list of available game fish is a

Sunsets on Lake Erie add to the charm and scenic beauty.

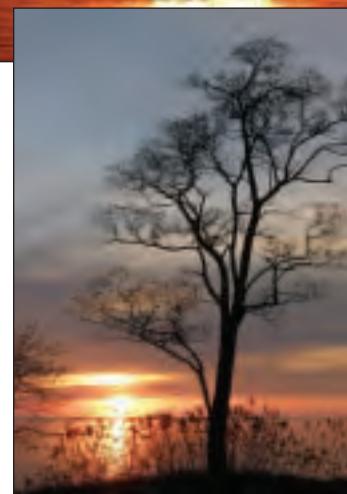


along Lake Erie in the western extreme of the Keystone State, the experience was better than I could ever have imagined. In less than two hours from Buffalo, we encountered this 3,200 acre sandy peninsula that could better be compared to Assateague Island, the Outer Banks or St. Augustine, Florida (based upon my own personal experiences).

It started with first-rate

two of us, it was a magical time as we became better acquainted with our likes and interests.

Erie, PA and the surrounding water is also a first rate destination for sportfishing enthusiasts. Captain Pete Alex of Erie runs a very professional "Vision Quest Sport Fishing" operation from spring to fall. He will also guide in the streams when trout succumb to the natural urges from



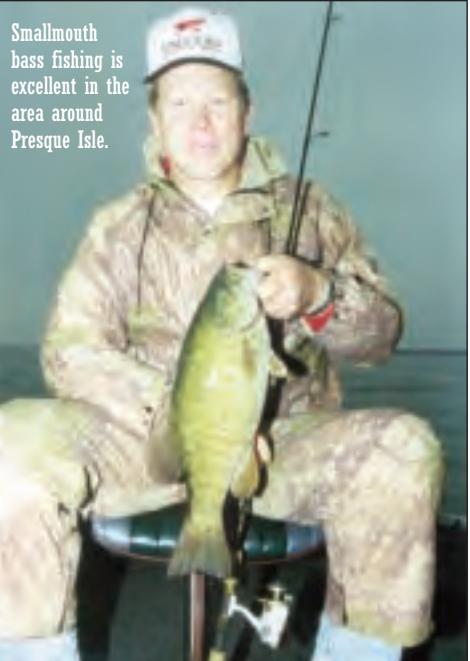
long one and year-round to boot.

"In August and September, we can combine walleye with steelhead for an exciting trip," says Alex, who owns and operates a 37-foot Tiara and a 27-foot Tiara Pursuit. "Walleye action should remain great until the end of September and steelhead fishing should be very good offshore as well until we receive rain and winds. I usually pull my big boat



out at the end of October and the smaller boat on Thanksgiving weekend," he added.

The next jaunt on our journey took us to Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania's only "seashore," of sorts. As we toured this pristine area, I was amazed that this outdoor jewel was so close to us – and relatively undiscovered by the masses. We visited the day after Labor Day and we virtually had the place to ourselves. This national natural land-



Smallmouth bass fishing is excellent in the area around Presque Isle.

mark offers up everything from hiking and biking to boating and fishing. If you want to just relax and have a picnic on the beach and go swimming, go for it. Its many unique habitats make it a birders paradise. In fact, there is no other area this size in the state that possesses as many of the Keystone State's endangered, threatened or rare species.

The gateway into the park is the Tom Ridge Environmental Center ([www.trecpi.org](http://www.trecpi.org)), a must see upon your arrival. This environmental state-of-the-art facility will help to educate and promote this natural wonder – complete with a 75-foot high observation tower.

For a 30-minute video on Presque Isle State Park, check out [www.pcntv.com/statelparks.html](http://www.pcntv.com/statelparks.html). For more information on the park itself, check out <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/presqueisle.aspx>. This link will help to provide any information you would need from boat launches to picnic areas.

This is also the extreme western end of the 518-mile scenic driving route known as the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. While many

know of this recreational byway in New York, not everyone realizes that this continues into Pennsylvania. For more information on the Lake Erie Region of Pennsylvania, contact the VisitErie Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-524-ERIE or visit their website at [www.visiterie.com](http://www.visiterie.com). Wineries, walleye and water wonders abound – just a short cast from New York State and Lake

Ontario. It's worth the trip!

And the story didn't end there. Sandy and I were married in August 2010, in part because of the magic of the area. It will always be a special place. We'll never know if it was the sunsets, the sand or the steelies... or a combination of all of the above! ♦

**Bill Hilts, Jr.** is Niagara County Sportfishing Promotion person and Outdoor Sports Specialist for Niagara Tourism & Convention Corp. He is currently president of Lake Ontario Sportfishing Council and past president of New York State Outdoor Writers' Association (NYSOWA). He is an active member of Outdoor Writers' Association of America, Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers, Professional Media Association, NYSOWA, and NRA. E-mail: BHiltsjr69@cs.com.

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## Pro-Am .....

and Sunday. Saturday's payout was \$350 and Sunday's was \$300. The team also won \$300 in Northern King lures. Second Place went to Wolcott resident, Mike McCoy, who took home \$410 for his two-day standing.

The Open Recreation Division was created in 2009 to accommodate interested anglers that have the desire to fish competitively, but are a bit intimidated with the Pro and Am teams. Open rules are very simple; fish when you want, where you want, one or two days, and no observer (Spotter) is required. The only requirement is to bring your catch to the official weigh station by noon of each day. The new division has been well received among new anglers from all four ports in the Pro-Am Series.

The prestigious Lake Ontario Pro-Am Challenge Cup was also awarded during the Wayne County event. The Cup is designed to determine the most consistent fisherman on the lake. By paying a separate entry fee and committing teams to fish all four (Niagara, Orleans, Oswego, and Wayne Counties.) of the Pro-Am Tournaments on Lake Ontario, they compete for the ultimate fishing title.

The "Best of the West" Pro Division Cup went to Tom Burke's team, *Cold Steel* with a total score of 602. In second Place was *Top Gun* with Captain Greg Gehrig leading his team with 538 points. Amateur team, *Spoon-fed* won the "Best of the West" with 584 points and second place was *Coldwater Affair*.

The Lakewide Challenge Cup for the pros went to Tom Burke's team, *Cold Steel*, with a total score of 1092, which was only

ten points above the Second Place team, *Top Gun*. A ten point separation could easily be calculated as one fish...that's the intensity associated with the Cup.

Glen Gervais and his team, *Spoon-fed*, took the amateur Lakewide Cup with a total score of 1152 points for his four port total. Second Place went to Paul Powers' team *Fish Nutz*, with a score of 1134.

During the entire 2010 Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Team Tournament Series, there was a flurry of activity surrounding the competitors and spectators. The television crews were everywhere - filming the ceremonies, on the boats during actual fishing, and walking around each port, looking for excitement. The camera crews were part of the "Angling the Great Lakes" television show which airs on The Sportsmen's Channel. The entire Pro-Am Series will be featured on the program, with four installments featuring each port.

With all that tremendous footage from Lake Ontario competing teams in the Pro-Am, Brian Smith and his "Angling the Great Lakes" crew are proposing another venture. If enough sponsors come on board, the Pro-Am could become a 13-week reality television show. The time has come to take the Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Team Tournament Series to the next level. Complete Pro-Am results and a list of all the sponsors are on the web at: [www.lakeontario-proam.net](http://www.lakeontario-proam.net)

Thanks to Bill Hilts Jr. for contributing to this article. ♦

**Chris Kenyon** is an Outdoor Columnist for The Sodus Record-Sun and the Finger Lakes Times. He is a member of NYSOWA and AGLOW. He is also The Outdoor Recreational Coordinator for Wayne County Tourism. He freelances for several outdoor publications.

VHS:

# The Little Known Threat

by Doug Fuegel

I would suspect nothing in this world is pure and free from contaminates. The Great Lake System is no exception. A few years ago fish die-offs in the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario revealed the presence of viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus more commonly known as VHS. The fish disease was first discovered in Lake St. Clair in 2003. Since then the virus has been documented in the entire great lake system, most recently (2009) in Lake Superior.

The disease, not harmful to humans, attacks organs of fish causing hemorrhaging and death. Why worry about this fish disease? In New York this non-treatable fish pathogen is a constant threat to our sport fishing industry which contributes \$1.4 billion annually to this state's economy.

An example of the problem this virus can cause to this state's economy was the massive die-off in 2005 of giant muskellunge in the St. Lawrence River. Prior to the die-off charter captains were averaging one muskellunge for approximately every 12 to 15 hours of trolling. Success dropped dramatically after the die off to the point that one successful charter captain, Bob Walters of Water Wolf Charters, made the decision in 2008 after a disastrous season of catching only two fish to suspend his operation and cease taking out paying customers. However, in 2009 while fishing for himself and family, his success jumped to approximately ten fish for the entire season. One can only

assume the fish are building immunity to the virus and may in time rebuild their populations to what they once were.

Since the discovery, the eight states bordering the Great Lakes have been scrambling to enact measures to stop the spread of the virus to other bodies of water and protect their natural resources. According to DEC's Steve LaPan, Lake Ontario Unit Leader at the Cape Vincent Research Station, the first priority when the disease was discovered was an attempt to "protect the resource." Skimpy measures, to say the least, were quickly put in place.

New York was the first to enact any measures to restrict the disease spread. Although the DEC's jumpstart on attempting to control the spread was noble, there was no interaction or uniformity of control measures with the other seven states or the Province of Ontario. Investigation along the lake system reveals conflicting control measures that allow many loopholes in the disease control effort.

One example is the use of salmon eggs for bait. In New York you are allowed one quart in possession that can be used on any body of water or stream. In Michigan spawn must be certified and used only on specified bodies of water. All bait in that state must be certified VHS free and can be held and used up to 14 days of purchase. In New York all purchased minnow bait fish must be certified VHS free and can only be held and used for 10 days from the date

of purchase. Uncertified bait fish in both states must be used in the waters from where it was collected. However, in Michigan uncertified bait fish can only be used three days from date of purchase. New York has no time limit on uncertified bait fish.

According to LaPan, efforts are being made to have uniform laws regarding the use and transfer of bait fish both certified and uncertified throughout the Great Lakes system. The Province of Ontario has zone restrictions on the purchase, collection, and transfer of bait fish and bodies of waters where its use is allowed. As LaPan stated, "It is a monumental task gathering the biologists of eight states and the Ontario Province to a consensus of what's best to control this pathogen."

In spite of the fish die-offs and the constant testing over the years, very little is known of the VHS disease, where it came from, how it spreads and of course there is no known cure. After several documented fish die offs during and around the middle of this decade, there have been no documented VHS-related fish kills in Lake Ontario in the last three years. However, Lake Ontario fish, like those of the other Great Lakes, still have the VHS pathogen DNA. One theory is that those fish already exposed may have developed an immunity.

Another mystery surrounding the VHS virus concerns the testing of more than 180 bodies of water in New York that revealed Oneida and Chautauqua lakes VHS free.

Additionally, New York's hatchery systems remain VHS free, including the Salmon River Hatchery, the hatchery that ensures the tremendous fishing in Lake Ontario. The DEC and Cornell University have developed a disinfectant that will treat the eggs taken from wild fish

The fact that no VHS related die off of fish has been documented does not necessarily mean there have been none. At least two reports of dead floating fish have been reported in the St. Lawrence River during the spring and summer of 2010, however no known cause of death has been established. According to Frank Flack, DEC Region 6 Fishery Manager, in order to confirm the exact cause of death, the species must be submitted immediately upon death or better yet in a floundering condition. The fish die offs that were reported were fish that had died and sank to the bottom and then floated back up to the surface. In these cases a firm cause of death is impossible, according to Flack.

As of now there is no definite light at the end of the tunnel concerning this virus relative to controlling its spread, finding a cure, or understanding its dormancy for the last couple of years. Until answers to these unknown questions are satisfied, the best anglers can do is be very aware of the virus, follow the laws in place, use common sense when dealing with any form of live bait and always remember it is also your resource to protect. ♦

# Brad Berlin's From The Vise



## ESTAZ EGG SACK



**HOOK:** Mustad 37132 or equivalent size 10/8/6/4

**THREAD:** Monofil 004

**WEIGHTED:** Tungston or gold/black bead head

**BODY:** Estaz

**EGG SACK:** Dyed pearl diamond braid

### TYING INSTRUCTIONS

1) Wrap mono to rear of hook.

2) Tie in Estaz and make one wrap and let hang.

3) Tie in the Diamond Braid on top of the hook.

4) Make a small loop with the Diamond Braid and secure with one wrap of mono.

5) Repeat last step three or four times.

(Do not make the loops too big and keep them close together. Remember, you're imitating an egg sack. It is important to stagger the loops. One on top, one to the left, one to the right and so on.)

6) Tie off the last loop and secure.

7) Take the Estaz you left

hanging and come under the egg loops and make two or three wraps in front of the egg loops toward the eye. (Remember not to crowd the eye.)

8) Tie off and secure.

**Note: If you want to weight this fly you can use a tungston or lead bead head**

I used Blue Estaz and Pink Diamond Braid for the pictured fly. Estaz comes in every color imaginable.

The Diamond Braid comes in pink, salmon, and chartreuse. I'm sure they have other colors available but, these are the colors I have seen and used. Try different color combinations like pink Estaz and chartreuse Diamond Braid. I know I have said this before but, experiment with different color combinations and then pick the ones that produce the fish.

Like the original Estaz Egg, this one works for browns, steelhead, salmon and trout.

Fish it the same as the Estaz Egg. Get your weight right so the

egg is rolling along or just off the bottom. The most important key to fishing egg patterns effectively is a **Drag Free Drift**. Your line should follow the current or flow. Add or remove weight on your leader to achieve a **Drag Free Drift**.

Once you get the drift right, any time your line hesitates, stops or moves differently, set the hook.

The slightest hesitation of your line on the water could be a strike from that trophy fish you have been searching for. Remember, get the Egg down and rolling along the bottom with a drag free drift. Once you get the hang of it you will increase your fish catching average by, well I better not estimate that one.

This variation to the original

Estaz Egg just might get that fish not eager to take the Estaz egg he has seen pass him by 1000 times before. It gives him something different to look at.

It's a very simple fly to tie after you get the hang of making the loops and tying them off. So, add some to your egg box and when the Estaz Egg isn't producing, tie on one of these and give them a try.

*Tight lines, Brad Berlin*

Brad has been tying flies and fly fishing many of the local streams in Northeast and Central Pa. for over 20 years. He guides on area streams and the Susquehanna River. Brad teaches classes in fly tying and casting. He currently serves as Vice President of Columbia County Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

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## What your boat transports up here, could sink schools of fish down there.

Stop your boat from spreading fish disease. Be responsible. Clean it out. Wash it down.



**Viral hemorrhagic septicemia** (VHS) is a severe disease of freshwater and marine fish recently found in the Great Lakes. It can be spread by infected fish, contaminated water sources or contaminated objects.

**Ensure the virus does not spread to additional locations by taking these steps:**

- Thoroughly clean and dry your boat and trailer before using again
- Empty all water from equipment before transporting
- Remove all mud, plants, and aquatic life from equipment
- Do not move fish or plants from one body of water to another



[www.focusonfishhealth.org](http://www.focusonfishhealth.org)

# "Toast" and Roast

By Shelley Creasy  
& Our Readers



**Readers:** Have a special recipe you want to share? Send it to Shelley@Lakeontariooutdoors.com and we may use it in a future issue.

Salmon Tomato Soup  
By LOO Staff

2 tablespoons butter  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1 jalapeno, diced (optional)  
3 cups fish stock  
1 cup chicken stock  
1 16 oz. can crushed tomatoes  
1/2 teaspoon sugar  
1/8 teaspoon thyme  
2 potatoes, cubed  
2 carrots, diced  
1/2 cup celery, diced  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
12-oz salmon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

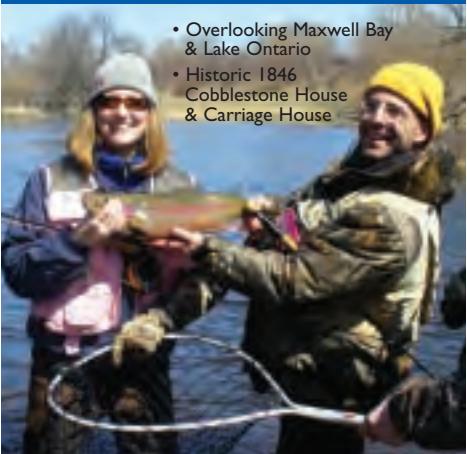
Sauté onion in butter in a 4-5 quart saucepan over medium heat for 5 to 6 minutes. Stir in



garlic and jalapeno and cook about 1 minute longer. Add fish stock, chicken stock, tomatoes, sugar and thyme. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Add potatoes, carrots, celery, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Cook covered, until potatoes are tender, about 10 - 15 minutes. Stir salmon into soup and cook until fish flakes easily, about 3 to 4 minutes. Sprinkle with cilantro. Serves 4 ♦

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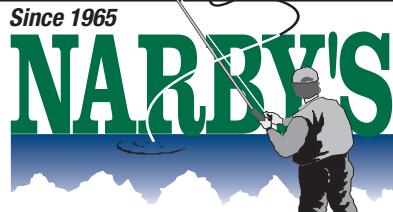
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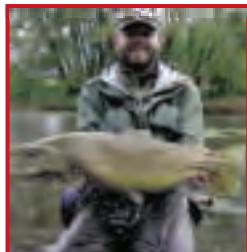
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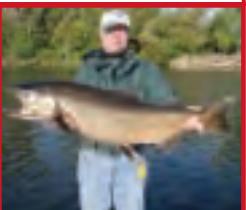
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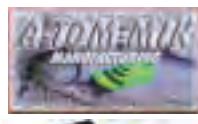
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