

The Chinook Observer

**“Waiter, there’s a fly
in my chowder”**

Finding perfect Northwest fly Has Never been easier

By Damian Mulinix

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SEAVIEW - Ever go out to a local stream or lake, fly rod in hand, and wonder which fly to tie onto your line for the most success? The Rainland Fly Casters, a local chapter of the Federation of Fly Fishers, has the answer for you - in fact, many of them.

“Northwest Fly Patterns and Tying Guide”, an 83 page book, published by Amato Publishing in Portland, covers a wide variety of feather clad bait, designed to catch a wide variety of local fish. The guide gives a good representation of the most productive flies for local waters, as well as the secrets of some of the finest local fly fishermen.

The book, over a year in the making, is broken into chapters that are colored coded on the page edges for easy referencing. The first chapter details what some deem the only true way to fly fish - using a dry fly.

The dry fly gets the name from the fact that when it is cast, it lands and floats on the surface of the water in order to imitate a water insect landing. One of the strong points of the book are the explanations and advice given at the beginning of each chapter.

For dry flies, RFC member Tony Robnett tells of his experience and gives his advice for fishing the dry fly on a stream.

“My earliest fly-fishing memories are of following my father up dozens of Eastern Oregon Streams,” he starts out. “Although my dad didn’t pause for too many lessons, being too busy fishing, he imparted the belief that the only proper way to angle for trout was the upstream cast with a dry fly.”

He goes on to give some tips as to where to cast the fly on the water and a general idea of which flies to use at which times of the year.

Once you get past the introductions in each chapter you find the real treasure, which is the flies themselves. There are over 200 flies represented in full color photos with descriptions of what they are made of and for what type of fish they are used to catch.

Some of the dry flies shown include three different Elk Hair Caddis patterns, the Humpy, the Royal Coachman and the Renegade. Some are tied and named after their creators or the place they originated from, including the Young’s River Special, tied by RFC member Henry Hoffman. Listed as “a local favorite” for catching trout, the Young’s River Special is dressed with gold wool yarn, deer hair and brown hackle feathers.

Hoffman also has the distinction of opening the next chapter, which addresses the use of wet flies - patterns that are fished from under the surface of the water.

"In order to have a successful fishing trip, I encourage you to try fishing with a wet fly," Hoffman advises. "The thing you should consider while trying these flies are: when to fish, where to fish, what to fish and how to fish."

For the better part of the page, Hoffman goes on to explain all of those things.

Examples of the wet flies take up the largest portion of the book, nine pages featuring 62 different wet patterns. Many of the wet flies are designed for fishing a variety of local fish, including sea-run cutthroat trout steelhead and salmon.

Many are also dressed with wild colors and flowing feathers including the Cabellero, made of the bright pink hackle chartreuse chenille and pearl UNI-Glow tinsel, a favorite of the Peninsula fly-tier Chuck Cameron. There are also several imitation shrimp patterns including the Helm's Sea-Run Shrimp, Poulsen's Red-Eye Shrimp, Ron's Shrimp and Chuck's Pink Shrimp, created by Chuck Cameron.

Joe Miltenberger writes in detail about the use of nymph patterns at the start of chapter three. A nymph is the stage of an aquatic insect as it hatches and starts to grow under water. Miltenberger gives good instruction on his favorite way to fish with nymph patterns.

"Most fishing books claim that sub-surface feeding accounts for approximately 90 percent of fish's diet," he states. "With that in mind, why not put the fly where the chance of catching fish is more in your favor?"

Eighteen patterns are detailed, including the Chickabou Dragon Nymph, Driskill's Golden Stone March and the Trueblood Shrimp Nymph, tied by Miltenberger.

Chapter four addresses the use of terrestrial imitation flies, those flying insects that may land accidentally on the water, including grasshoppers, bees and beetles.

"Whether they are blown into the water, or accidentally fall in, a well-tied imitation of these terrestrials will catch fish," explains Jeff Mac Lean in his introduction to the chapter.

Hank's Hopper, Mathew's Foam Beetle and the True Woolly Worm - listed as being used when fishing near brushy overhangs for trout - are a few patterns detailed in the chapter.

Streamers are the next chapter and are made of long, flowing feathers and hair. These are used under the water to attract fish as they imitate such things as leeches and minnows.

The final style-specific chapter addresses the practice of fly fishing in saltwater, including the ocean.

"Unlike saltwater fly fishing off the Atlantic seaboard of America, fly fishing the Pacific from Oregon and Washington ports is still an evolving science," says Dioniscio "Don" Y. Abing in his introduction.

Abing goes on to talk about Cameron, who is recognized as a pioneer in saltwater fly fishing the Pacific Ocean waters of the Northwest. Cameron has pulled in his share of salmon on the ocean with a fly, but he has also done well with catching black rock cod and albacore tuna.

Cameron tells of his experience of how he came to fish from the North Jetty, as well as his secret for catching salmon from there.

“I thought I should be able to fish using a fly rod, instead of a spinning rod,” he says. “Armed with new knowledge ... I was able to catch salmon from the jetty and have been successful ever since.”

Perhaps the best part of the book is chapter eight, which features individual members' favorite flies and the stories behind them. Don Abing, Chuck Cameron, Lee Clark, Colleen Hansen, Henry Hoffman, Joe Miltenberger, Bob Holman and Dave Hughes share several patterns they have come to love in fishing local waters. There is also a handy hatch chart that give the best time of year to use certain imitation patterns.

The book ends with a few funny “fish stories”, not surprising based on the authors. Perhaps the most entertaining is the “Story of the Twenty Dollar Fly,” as told by Rick Newton.

Newton tells of a fishing trip with a friend in southern Oregon when he tied on a Clark's Stonefly, invented by club member Lee Clark. His friend scoffed at his choice of bait.

“Telling Ron I have a “new fly” on, he gives me a few words of encouragement. ‘There might be a poor, blind and crippled trout that doesn’t know any better than to bite that,” Newton says.

But after hooking several trout, while his partner came up empty, Newton’s friend asked if he could have one of those successful flies.

“As I hooked another fish Ron says, ‘I really would like to try one of those flies,’” Newton says. “It’s not often in business that you can have the right product, in the right place, at the right time. Since those three things seem to have come together here for me today, I think \$20 would be a fair price for one of those flies.”

Twenty dollars is also a fair price for the book, available in soft cover for \$19.95. The book succeeds in giving perhaps some new ideas to those who already tie flies, and has some good instruction for those new to fishing in this manner. However, those who are new to tying probably wouldn’t get what they need from this book.

But those interested in learning more about tying flies are welcome to contact Chuck Cameron at his fly-fishing shop in Seaview, which is also where you can find a copy of the “Northwest Fly Patterns and Tying Guide”. Chuck’s Fly Shop is located at 1206 36th St. in Seaview and is open most days. But Cameron does suggest that people call before they stop by - you never know when he may be out fishing. You can contact Cameron at 360-642-2589.