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De-Mystifying Fly Fishing

By Cameron Larsen

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I remember the first time I saw someone fly fishing. I think I was five years old. My father, my sister and I had back packed to a remote alpine lake. My trusty Zebco with the closed face push button casting reel, cork bobber and jar of Puatzke's, among my gear I couldn't live without. Positioned on a log vigilantly eyeing my bobber for movement, a one-man raft paddled past, and in no time the occupant was making wild movements with the longest fishing pole ever. Mesmerized, I watched his graceful movements like he was a black belt martial arts expert. When my father came to check on me, I asked about him, my dad said he was fly fishing, a couple of other fishermen gathered to discuss this exotic art. All agreed it was a superior art form requiring more time than any one of us had to learn, let alone master. I tried to study my bobber with earnest after that, but it never seemed to hold the same pull it once had.

Fly fishing indeed is beautiful to watch. After all these years I still enjoy watching a caster that is genuinely skilled. I also enjoy watching fly fishers with unorthodox techniques. Some people haven't read all the books or taken lessons, but instead have learned their skills on the water, and some people have truly unique, yet effective habits. Anyway this article is to de-mystify fly fishing for those of you that want to learn, this is a starting point from which your new passion will take off. (OK I am hoping)

Two Basic Types of Fly Fishing

I remember a fly fishing friend said to me "Looks like good dry water, right downstream," as we were floating down the Deschutes River. A fly fishing novice looking downstream said questioning. "Dry water?"

My fly fishing friend was referring to dry fly fishing. There are two basic fly fishing techniques. Dry fly and wet fly. Dry fly refers to fishing your fly on top of the water, traditionally used for trout fly fishing, now most species are being fished with a dry fly of some kind. Dry flies usually imitate adult insects that return to the surface to lay their eggs back into the water. It is at this time they are very vulnerable to being eaten by fish. After mating and depositing their eggs, the insects then die. Commonly called

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'spinner falls' fish tend to lay and gorge themselves during these times. Dry flies are also used during hatches. When the flies are emerging from the water. 'Match the Hatch' refers to fishing an imitation of the predominantly hatching insect of the moment. Dry flies can also be insects that get blown into the water such as grasshoppers or ants. Many bass flies or bass bugs actually imitate drowned rodents or frogs.

Dry fly fishing is what most people think of, when they think of fly fishing. Some fly fishers use many false casts to dry their offerings or to place their offerings directly over a rising fish. It is this technique that I observed all those years ago, also made famous by the movie 'A River Runs Through It.'

Fishing sub-surface involves using heavier flies, that will sink. Often times sinkers are added to the line above the fly to sink your offering quicker. Sub-surface fly fishing involves using nymphs, wet flies, and

streamers. Food that is available to fish below the surface. Flies imitate every bug or nymph available under water. They also imitate worms, leeches, eggs, crabs, virtually everything available to fish to eat.

While dry fly fishing gets all the attention, truth be told, fish consume up to 90% of their diet under the water. So you are apt to catch more fish using 'wet flies', then you are dry fly fishing. Especially if you are just beginning, fishing sub-surface is going to result in more fish being caught. While fish are feeding on the surface they are very skittish, and very selective. Almost any fault in technique, rigging, or fly selection will result in scaring off the fish you are trying to catch.

Equipment

There are some basic pieces of equipment that you must have or borrow to first try fly fishing. The first is a fly rod, (never a pole). The instrument you use to fly fish with is a rod. We have written a whole article on 'Choosing a Fly Rod', that will give you enough basic information to at least be able to ask educated questions when shopping. The second is a fly reel, we also have an article called 'Choosing a Fly Reel'. If it were me, and budget is of concern, (and when you see the prices of fly rods, it probably will become one), scrimp on the reel and not the rod. Casting a quality fly rod is a thing of joy, sometimes I can become so lost in the rhythm of fly casting I actually forget about the fish. I fished for years using a Pflueger Medallist. If you were to poll fly fishers over 40 and I bet over half have owned one of these.

The next thing you will need is the fly line. If you are to purchase just one, get a floating line, you can always add weight to the leader and sink the fly. But it is virtually impossible to float a sinking tip line. Fly line is very thick and it is what you actually cast. Unlike other forms of fishing where the bait and weight are casted. After the fly line come the leader and tippet and finally the fly.

Waders and wading boots are also mandatory, if one is planning on wading. With perhaps the exception of summer, when wet wading can be a relief from the heat. Anymore decent Neoprene waders can be had for around \$60, and felt soled wading shoes for about the same. Although these aren't top of the line, and comfort and performance suffer somewhat, they will be more than adequate.

The idea behind fly fishing is to show the fish what they actually feed on as naturally as possible. The

first time I fly fished, I was amazed at how much more I actually fished. You don't need to reel in and cast out again, just lift up and cast again. More time with your fly in the water equals more opportunity to catch fish. The actual motion of simple fly casting is easy enough to pick up, it is much like the motion of hammering. Accelerating on the downstroke. In an afternoon of practice you could easily master the motion well enough to have a reasonable chance of catching a fish.

There you have it. While fly fishing can become unnecessarily complicated. In its essence I believe it is the simplest form of fishing there is. So basic is its form, and so exact is the role of its instruments, you could call it perfect. And there are times when one can get caught up in the act of exercising this perfection, that the entire world fades away, until it is just you and the

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<Http://www.bigflyco.com/Bigyflyfishingezine.html>

Advantages And Disadvantages of Fly Fishing From A Canoe

By Niall Barco

Some people like to fly fish from their canoe. But there are advantages and disadvantages to this unusual combinations of activities.

People usually fly fish from land, standing still in water or from a larger boat. Fly fishing from a canoe may seem crazy at first, but there are many advantages to be had. There are also disadvantages, but after you overcome them, you are sure to have a wonderful fishing adventure.

Disadvantages

You will have to overcome some disadvantages before you even try to fly fish from a canoe. You might find it hard in the beginning to maintain control of your line since you are closer to the water than usual. If you catch a fish, you might find it difficult to reel in without tipping the canoe. Especially if it is a giant fish! Another disadvantage might be the tendency of the canoe to disturb the water. If you can stay motionless and are accustomed to the boat then disturbing the water will not be a problem. When you get over these few disadvantages, you will experience the best fishing ever!

Advantages

The advantages of fly fishing in a canoe are significant if you can overcome the disadvantages listed above. Being in a canoe lets the fisher go over more water quickly. This is essential for good fly fishing. You can also get into untapped fishing holes that otherwise they would not have been able to reach. Such locations usually do not allow motor boats, so a canoe is excellent! Another advantage is the silence. They do not have loud motors or propellers, only smooth, quiet rowing. This is an essential

factor for fly fishers!

If you have a canoe, you are ready to try fly fishing. It is helpful for you to own the shortest canoe you can get. A shorter boat will make fly fishing a lot easier. Try it sometime. It is relaxing and fun.

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