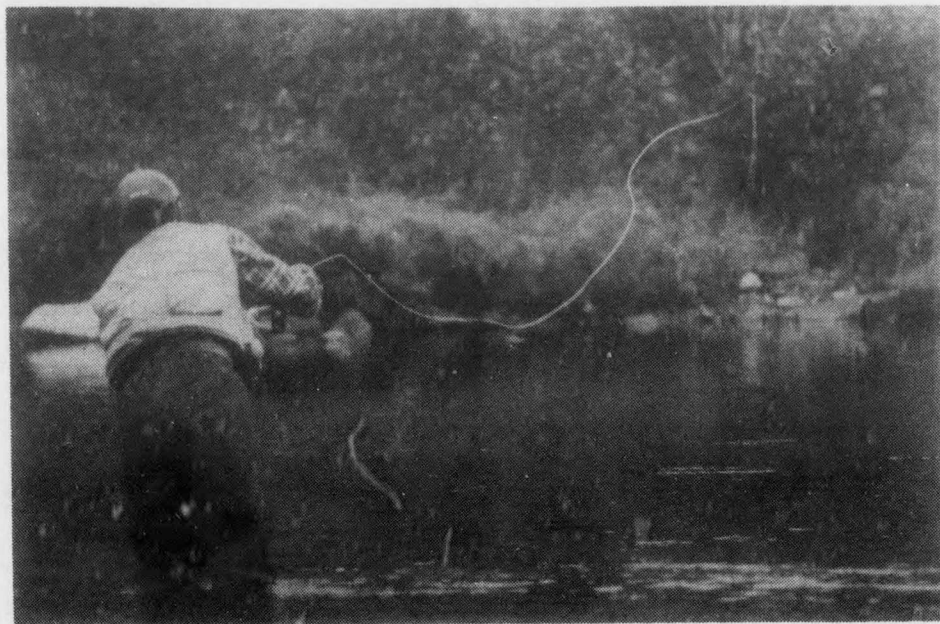


STEPPING OUT

WITH MARK ROBICHAUD



Green Machines and Rising Rivers.

Style and Grace

I've decided to not disclose exactly where I went on this long weekend. I did finally get my mountain bike together, but that's not what I'm going to write about. I cleaned up my room, I'm sure no one wants to hear about dirty socks and my rustic sleeping arrangements. Fly fishing on the Renous River, in search of the spawning Atlantic salmon - artistic casts into eddies of deep pools is where I went this weekend. Although I didn't actually fly fish this weekend and I've never fly fished before, it looks graceful and refined. I do own a fly rod, it's my end of a deal for a Grateful Dead t-shirt, but not much use without a reel, some line, license

and know-how. The fine folks that took me under their fins had all of the knowledge, gear and skills to land an Atlantic salmon. I'm glad that I left my rod at home, I learned more by watching than I would have fishing.

At the pool where we fished, the salmon were leaping, displaying red and white flashes of underbelly, they played skipping rope with Cams line and smoothly rolled to display black fins when breaching the river surface. Believe me, with the size of some of these sea monsters, breaching does come to mind. I could tell you tales of four foot fish cranking out of the water



Success With the Atlantic Salmon

to move up the river, or stories of Quarryville and twenty fly fishermen, ten feet apart, all casting into the same large pool on the Miramichi (plenty of fish leaping to keep everyone entertained). But a little further off the Miramichi and up the Renous River - I saw ten different people, one was me, five were the kind fisher folk (who showed me this fine art of fly fishing), and four others. This is the way to fish. No crowds, no waiting for position on the pool, no one pulling out your salmon. I had a blast and after the first day everyone forgot about my camera and did what they came to do, they all created picture perfect photos. If only *The Bruns* used colour prints.

The thing about salmon fishing is that you need more than knowledge, gear or skill to get a strike from the king of sport fish. I watched hundreds of casts over Sunday and Monday, but I only saw two actually work. From what I gathered, after a couple of days on the Renous river, salmon are mighty fish. Mighty fickle if you ask me. Mind you this conclusion was derived from watching and asking stupid questions like:

"Why do you fly fish?"

"What's that?"

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Can you piggy back me to the other side?"

I also, occasionally, kept my mouth shut (finger poised on the shutter button). Regardless of my inflicted impediments, the folks managed to bring home a beautiful fish and I learned how the river and salmon thrive from each other; how the fly fishing industry seems to be healthy in regard to the numbers of fish and fishing folk; how the art of the cast can be a translation, or an extension of the person articulating the cast. Almost transcribing their personal nature into the progression of their arm.

I loved the various components of fly fishing. Even though many different casts were made in all parts of the pool, with a blanket of various flies (although the Green Machine seemed to be the crowd favourite) by plenty of fly fisher folk, the salmon continued to leap out of the water, heading up river to spawn. Apparently salmon do not feed while making the charge from the Atlantic to their birth place, but have copulation on the brain. So in order to catch a salmon, one wordy friend told me, you have to put something in the

water that the salmon may perceive as a threat. Me? I don't know. One of the other fisher folk believed that to catch a salmon you must present your fly properly. Presentation is anything you do with your line and fly to entice the salmon to strike, be it fly choice, cast style or placement of the leader. Presentation seems to be the completion of all the fundamental components of fly fishing. The fisher folk create an art with their presentation, pictures painted with fly line and green machines.

The kind fisher folk are planning to try their luck again this weekend and although I would like to tell you where the Mossy Rock Pool is, I can't. Nor can I tell you the location of the 10 A.M. Pool because I would feel responsible if this beautiful spot became crowded. The kind fisher folk prefer to fish where the salmon are plenty and the people are few. Great things happen here. Mr. Donovan offered us the use of his sons fishing camp if it got too cold or it began to rain. We stayed



Fly Knots and Salmon Jumping

outside, sipped some fine beverages and talked fish. Perhaps a few too many beverages were sampled because the crack of dawn plan of fish attack was delayed until... well, around noon if you want the truth. One of the things that I thought was great about fly fishing is not only are salmon tasty but it's an all weather sport, actually overcast days are preferred, and the salmon jump like crazy when it starts to rain. The choice times to fly fish are dawn and dusk. Plus you cruise around the river with hip waders! What a hoot, an unrestricted stroll in the river.

So I won't tell you exactly where I went. If you wish to see fly fishing and lots of salmon, you can head up to Quarryville. Drive to the north side of Fredericton and follow the signs for Newcastle (Provincial Highway #8 north), and cruise for about an hour and a half until you get to Renous. Take the right onto highway #108 and drive in toward Quarryville. Stay right and you will end up on the river road, follow this until you meet up with a line up of cars and people, just south of the train bridge. The best spots are on the gravel deposit directly across from the trailer campground.

How long is the season open this year? Still undecided (Department of Fisheries and Oceans).

I do know that this weekend may be the last, but I've heard rumors of the Miramichi being held open for another couple of weeks.



Thanksgiving Supper



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