

Valley Angler

Good Fishing For The Long Weekend

by Bill Thompson

Here it is already, the second week of July and the fishing in the Valley is still excellent. We did have a short interruption a few days ago with the high water, but as of now things couldn't be much better.

The thunder storms may have been a minor deterrent, but the extra water generated was much needed. At the moment water temperatures on the Saco are running around 60 degrees. Good flows and cool temperatures equal good fishing.

Some of the best fishing we have seen in a long time has been happening on the Ellis River. For a couple of years the fishing on the Ellis seemed to be on the decline. This season we have seen a definite turnaround.

The hatches this season have been nothing short of amazing. The big evening gray Drake spinner falls are on the wane, although there are still a few some evenings. The primary mayfly hatches now are the smaller varieties of *invaria*, commonly known as Pale Evening Duns and Leptophlebiidae, known as Mahogany Duns. The front door of the shop is always good indicator of what has happened the night before on the river. Each morning when we come we check the door out for bugs before opening up. Small spinner patterns and Klinkhamers have been producing very well.

There are lots of good caddis hatches going on as well. We have been having great results with E. C. Caddis and Henryville Specials.

Those who fish ponds should be on the lookout for the *Hexagenia* hatches. These large mayflies should be happening just about now. If you are fortunate to catch it, and have the right fly, you could be in for one of the best nights' fishing ever.

Terrestrials are starting to become important. Large ant patterns have been producing well. I personally prefer parachute patterns because I can see them on the water. Speaking of large ant patterns, try a Chernobyl Ant. These outlandish flies will often attract fish when nothing is working. Most fishermen look at these things and just shake their heads; the fish, however, think they are strawberry shortcake.

Being an ardent fly-fisher I often forget about spin fishermen; nothing personal, I assure you. The lower Saco River, below Artist Falls Brook, can produce some very large fish. Should you be taking a canoe trip on the river be sure to bring a rod with you. If it is a spinning rod just keep it cased until you get past Artist Falls Brook as the brook marks the end of the fly fishing only section. There are a great many deep undercut banks protected by log jams in this portion of the river. Try fishing a Mepps spinner through these holes. You may lose a lure or two to hang ups,

but you may also be rewarded with a very large Brown Trout.

The Swift River is another great place to fish with spin gear. It's not a bad place to fish with fly gear as either. A lot of people think that this water is too skinny and will not hold trout. Nothing could be further from the truth. Drifting a worm or a small spinner through the pockets can be deadly. The Swift, like the Saco, is a popular destination for swimmers. Popular swimming holes, like Rocky Gorge, hold some big fish. The trick is to get there early enough, before the swimmers arrive, or later in the evening when they have gone.

If trout fishing is not your cup of tea and bass fishing is, Conway Lake is one of the best bass fishing locations in the area. You will need some kind of water craft in order to fish the lake properly. It is not necessary to have a 600 HP bass boat to do it right any small car top boat will do just fine. There is an unimproved canoe launch at the southern end of the lake that will put you on some pretty good bass water without a lot of effort. Should you feel the need, boats may be rented at the Cove Campground.

Whatever type of fishing you are looking for we have it. And even better the fishing right now is at its best. Please remember to respect landowners and pick up after yourself. No one likes to find a bunch of empty leader packages or empty worm containers littering their favorite fishing spot.

See you on the river.