



# NOV 2008 Castaways Fly Fishing News

*The Mid-Island Castaways Fly Fishing Club – Parksville & Qualicum Beach, B.C.*

The Mid-Island Castaways Fly Fishing Club is a non-profit society formed in 1996 by a group of anglers in the Parksville/ Qualicum area. The purposes of the Club are;

- to practice & promote the sport of fishing with artificial flies
- to practice and promote the research, conservation and enhancement of all sport fish in British Columbia
- to support and encourage the preservation and enhancement of lakes, streams and beaches and the access thereto for the practice of fishing with artificial flies
- to encourage fellowship, ethics and sportsmanship amongst anglers.

## **Board of Directors For 2008 / 2009**

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More information on Various Volunteers

Please refer to our Website @

[www.midislandcastaways.com](http://www.midislandcastaways.com)



## **November General Meeting**

**Date** Tuesday Nov 18

**PLACE** : Qualicum Civic Center

**LOCATION** : Qualicum Beach

**Doors Open** 7 pm

**Meeting Starts** 7:30 pm

**Speaker**: Peter Morrison A certified fly casting instructor

**Subject**: Showing Fly Casting techniques and Spey Rods



Deadline for Articles in  
next issue is NOV 30



## **Steelhead.**

Sea-run trout. Call them what you want, these silver beasts are among the best fighters you'll ever tussle with in a freshwater stream -- if you can find them. Steelhead are an elusive species because of the harsh winter conditions they thrive in along with the unpredictable cycle of the spawn. Here's a list of five classic

steelhead tips that will help you be more successful when it comes to fishing for these silver bullets:

### **1. Equipment**

If you're fishing for big steelhead, a two-handed rod might be your best bet. But most anglers typically use single-handed rods, going with something that's 9 feet or longer with a line weight of 7-9. Two-handed models can go as long as 12-15 feet. Sinking line is a good option if you're thinking of swinging a streamer, while floating lines can be used for nymphing.

### **2. Fly Patterns**

Traditional salmon streamers will usually work for steelhead, since the fish are closely related to the salmon. Egg patterns and nymphs will also work. Some of the most popular steelhead flies include the woolly bugger, egg-sucking leech and Kaufmanns Stone. The best option, however, is to stop by a local fly shop for an update on patterns, stream conditions and where the fish might be holding. Nobody knows a stream better than a local guide, and you're bound to get some good tips if you pick up a handful of flies at the shop in the process.

### **3. Fish Upstream**

In rivers that run to the ocean, these anadromous fish will begin to enter the streams after the first few major storms of the season. Once the sandbars break free and the fish can access freshwater runs that lead to spawning grounds, they'll begin to make their journey upstream. The smart move is to follow the path of the fish, from the river mouth upstream toward the spawning grounds and back down toward the ocean once the spawn has passed. Fish typically face upstream, so if you're fishing upstream you're less likely to spook fish.

### **4. Keep Moving**

If at first you don't succeed, keep moving. Steelhead typically stick to a certain area in a pool, so if you don't get a hit on your first couple casts, and don't see any signs of fish in a pool or run, keep moving upstream until you find some. Steelhead usually stack up in nearby pools, so once you find one steelie, another could be on the horizon.

## **5. Catch and Release**

Unlike salmon, steelhead often return to the ocean after spawning. Salmon typically die after the spawn, so while it may be OK to harvest salmon in some instances, it's best to release a steelhead immediately and unharmed so they can carry out the spawning cycle and return next season. If you do that, you could help ensure solid steelhead runs for years to come.

## **FLY FISHING IN THE OFF SEASON** **PREPARING FOR FISHING SEASON**

The off season is here and our days on the water are numbered end. Time to pack away the fly rod and count down the days until spring, right? Think again. The off season is the time to head out to your favourite river or stream and scout out runs for the following year. A time when you don't even have to tie on a fly to have one of your most productive "fishing" days of the year. Follow these tips today and you'll set yourself up for a successful season tomorrow:

### **1. Scout It Out**

Adept anglers take advantage of the time of year when rivers are still at their lowest, clearest flows - perfect for taking note of submerged logs, ledges, boulders or other underwater features that are more visible than they are for much of the year. The key is to pay attention and take note of all the fine details of the river. Bring along a small notepad to help map out what you see.

### **2. Study, Study, Study**

Look for anything that strikes you as different, providing habitat for the rainbow trout. Study everything from endless eddies and side channels of your favourites runs, to the foamy edges of the main currents you rarely consider. Look for rising trout. If there's a hatch coming off, but you don't notice any fish, you might not be looking close enough. In the fall and winter, rises are so lazy they barely make a ring. So sit back, and let your eyes do the fishing. Scan for those telltale boils that will only appear today, and will surely hint to good fishing below when the water levels soar in coming months.

### **3. Search the Shallows**

Be sure to search the shallow stretches for any places a trout is likely to feel safe. Some ideal holding spots include undercut banks, beneath and beside logs and below overhanging brush or tree branches. These are prime holding when rivers swell with snowmelt and leave the water stained and fast-moving, forcing trout to hug the banks in search of protection from the strong currents.

### **4. Find Feeding Zones**

Keep an eye out for all the areas that will provide fish with food. Find pockets

(behind boulders or at the bottom of pools) where trout can camp out eat without expending a ton of energy. Trout can start getting sluggish in the off season and aren't willing to go out of their way for food. Find a concentration of these winter whoppers holding in a food-carrying current and you've probably stumbled across that "secret spot" for the rest of the year.

Deep pools are obvious big-fish magnets, but also see plenty of pressure throughout the year. Look past the bottomless holes and seek out other key strike zones that won't catch your eye later in the year. Note seams where strong currents flow into slower, shallow-water riffles.

## **5. Watch the Surface**

Don't limit yourself to reading the river below the surface. The surface is probably the most telling aspect of the river. Dancing pyramids (where slow water meets faster water) can hold nice fish even if cover isn't present. Standing waves mean there are big boulders ahead and big fish hiding out beside them. Eddies are easy giveaways for fish.

Don't forget the importance of boulders and other structure that break that surface given they'll be completely submerged once the runoff begins. Large rocks provide pockets downstream and will continue to provide tail-end cavities all year long. The same goes for large logs, or concrete slabs and other man-made structure that ends up in the river.

## **6. Ready Your Gear**

Another key during the off season is to keep your gear in check. If you're in need of a replacement rod, reel or other key fly fishing accessory, the end of the year is always a good time to find bargains on year-end closeouts of the previous year's models.

The off season is also a good time to repair and clean your gear to make sure it'll hold up for another season.

## **7. Reward Yourself**

Once you've got those stretches scouted, be sure to reward yourself with some time on the water, testing your new spots with your favourite late-season fly. Find a couple holding trout now and you'll be on the inside track for a stellar season next year.

Article Courtesy of <http://flyfishing.about.com/od/findingfish/tp/FallFishTips.htm>