

M.A.Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH

Fall 2005



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MAY Club Feature Fish Goldeye

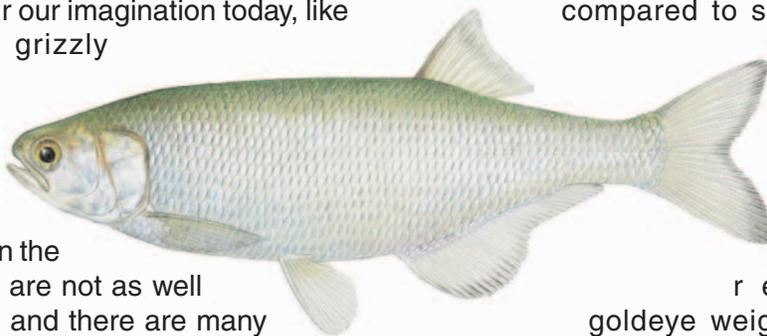
200 years ago, Lewis and Clark were making their way across the land that we now know as Montana. Along their journey, they documented hundreds of new species of plants, animals, birds and fish. They kept very detailed journals describing their travels, including maps and drawings of many of their discoveries. Some of the animals they wrote about still stir our imagination today, like bison, grizzly bears, and cutthroat trout. Other animals in the journals are not as well known, and there are many people in Montana who do not even realize that some of these fascinating animals are even found in the state.

One of the fish they encountered is described in this journal entry, written by Lewis at the mouth of the Marias River near present day Loma Montana:

June 11, 1805, Goodrich who is remarkably fond of fishing caught several dozen fish of two different species precisely the form and about the size of the well known fish called the Hickory Shad or old wife, with the exception of the teeth, a rim of which garnish the outer edge of both the upper and lower jaw the eye of this fish is very

large, and the iris of a silvery colour and wide the latter kind are much the best, and do not inhabit muddy water...

Although it is not perfectly clear which fish Lewis was writing about in this entry, many people think it was one of Montana's native fish – the Goldeye, since it matches parts of this description very well.



Goldeye are small compared to some other Montana fish, and only grow to about a foot in length. The state record

goldeye weighed more than three pounds, and was caught from Nelson Reservoir near Malta in 2000. Spawning in late March through May, a female goldeye may produce as many as 25,000 eggs.

Normally found mainly in the larger river systems of eastern Montana, goldeye prefer warm water temperatures, and can live in places where the water becomes quite cloudy, or turbid. The rivers of eastern Montana fit this description very well and provide excellent habitat, so goldeye numbers are very good in Montana today.

One of the best ways to identify the

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Look Here!

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Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

M.A.Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH



Goldeye

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goldeye can be found in it's name—a large, golden eye. (This is where the description of Lewis gets a little confusing, since he describes his fish as having a silver eye.) Goldeye are colored a bright silver, and are sometimes a greenish-blue color along the back. One of the neatest things about these fish is that it is possible to tell a male from a female by looking at the fins. The anal fin, or fin found on the bottom of the fish just in front of the tail is straight on female fish, and a more rounded shape on male goldeye.

Lewis described his fish as having a mouth full of small teeth, and that description fits a goldeye very well, since both the upper and lower jaws are covered with small teeth. Although they eat a great number of insects, goldeye also eat crustaceans like crawdads, and sometimes smaller fish. Because they are so predacious, they are very aggressive feeders. This can make goldeye easy to catch at times, and anglers report catching hundreds of fish in just a few hours. Goldeye have a lot of small bones, so they are not very popular fish to eat. Tasty or not, goldeye are a native Montana fish with a long history here in the state, and are an important part of what makes Montana such a special place.

Outdoors just for kids: Take care with fish that you release

Let's talk a little bit about catch-and-release fishing.

Catch and release goes on with virtually all fishermen, whether it's someone putting the little ones back, putting the bigger ones back or putting them all back after they catch them.

Some species survive the release process better than others. Bass, carp and catfish are very hearty and release well under almost all conditions. Trout and walleyes are more fragile and aren't as easy to revive, especially the big ones.

Fish released in very cold water that is rich in oxygen stand the best chance of surviving the release process. But when waters get warm, as they are at the peak of summer, the stress of playing a fish, handling a fish and releasing a fish can cause many of them to die.

Some good rules of thumb to follow when you plan to release a fish, especially at this time of year, is to use heavy enough equipment that you



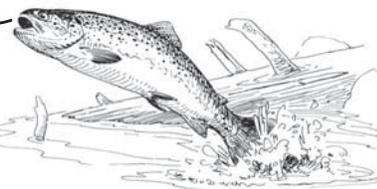
If you are going to release a fish, lift the fish gently out of the water, have someone snap a photo, then follow the tips in this article!

can play them in quickly. Handle them as little as possible and remove the hook as quickly as you can. Don't have them out of the water any longer than you, yourself, can hold your breath. Then keep them in the shallows and hold them upright, moving them forward and back to work water through their gills, until they're able to swim away.

And if you plan to release your fish, when the water temps get real warm, it's sometimes best not to go fishing at all. Even though you're releasing your fish, delayed mortality from stress minutes or hours later might kill many of the fish you release.

- Mark Henckel,
Billings Gazette outdoor editor

Hooked ON FISHING



Hooked on Fishing Field Trip:

The highlight for Hooked on Fishing students is taking a trip to a local pond for a fishing field trip. These Hooked on Fishing students from three classes at Edgerton

Elementary enjoyed a fantastic day of fishing at Snappys Pond in Kalispell. A number of students caught their first fish ever! B.J. Lupton built this pond behind his

sporting goods store to host HOF kids, and weekend kids' fishing days.



This student is hooked on fishing!



Teachers say that the HOF field trips attract more parents and grandparents than almost any other program.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks has an active urban fishing program. Ask your local FWP folks about a kids' fishing pond in your area!



This student was so excited he kissed his rainbow trout!



Students gather around FWP R-1 Supervisor Jim Satterfield who is holding a huge, 8-pound rainbow caught by lucky young angler, Caitlin Smith, pictured to the right of Jim.

Outdoors just for kids: Synthetics make new hoppers

Fly patterns that imitate grasshoppers sure have changed. When you're dads and grandfathers fly fished, there was mostly just one pattern - a Joe's hopper - that everyone used.

It was tied with yellow wool yarn and red floss and brown hackle tied around the head. Everybody had them in their fly box, usually in sizes small, medium and large.



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Join M•A•Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH

- Anyone preschool through elementary can join!
- No meetings to attend, just get great stuff by mail!
- Receive fun newsletters at your home filled with information, tips, & games!
- Get cool fishing tackle and outdoor items you can use right away!
- Learn about fishing and the water environment!
- Write us and share your fishing tips, fishing photos, and fish stories with kids around Montana. (Please write and draw **in pen or in VERY DARK pencil**.)

Mail or drop off your letters or registration to:
M•A•Y Club
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, Montana 59901

KIDS:

If you are getting this newsletter, you are already a member, so share this registration form with a friend who might want to join!

Registration Form

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Synthetics Hoppers

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Then, deer and elk hair became more common as fly-tying materials, mainly because the hair floated so well.

But today, a lot of the "hot" new patterns use a mix of synthetic yarn, hackle and foam of some type. Some, in fact, are all foam.

The reason is simple. Synthetic yarn - polypropylene yarn, for example - doesn't get saturated with water. Foam doesn't get saturated with water, either, at least, the way wool does. Or, if synthetic yarn or foam does get water in it, you simply squeeze the water out, then do a few forward and back casts to completely dry it out.

This allows a fly fisherman to keep fishing with the same fly, even after catching a trout or two on it. It will still float just fine.

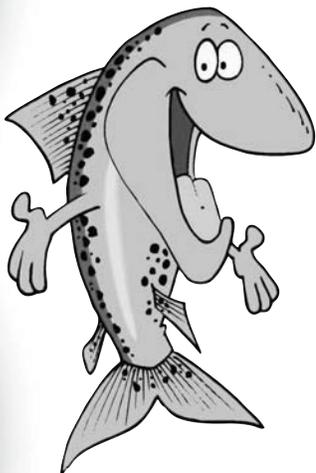
As fly tyers continue to experiment with new materials, we can only imagine what the next generation of hopper flies might look like.

Story by Mark Henckel – Billings Gazette
Art by John Potter – Billings Gazette

M•A•Y Club
NEWSLETTER
is published by



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks



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490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, Montana 59901-3854

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KALISPELL, MT
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