



CHICO AREA FLYFISHERS

CAF February 2024 Newsletter www.chicoareaflyfishers.org

Next General Meeting: Thursday, February 15th 6:30pm, Lakeside Pavilion, 2565 California Park, Chico



President's Line February 2024

Hi Folks!

THE CRAB IS BACK!!! Our contact is bringing us the freshest and sweetest crab we have ever had! How fresh? I understand they have a holding tank in the Bay area that holds thousands of gallons of water and crab keeping it fresh until needed. The crab is cooked the day before our dinner; cooled down and separated and cracked the night and morning before our dinner. I'm so excited about this crab we're getting this year for our **Saturday, March 9th dinner!** Tickets at \$60 per person until Jan 31st. You are also put into an early bird drawing which will give you the chance to win a \$250 bundle of raffle prizes. Prizes: rods, reels, trips, and more!

Dinner reservations and memberships can be purchased on our website, or the mail in flyer from this newsletter! Call either John Cowan or Pat Sleeper with any questions or if you would like to register by phone, please.

We still appreciate "your" donations to help with the silent auction, live auction or raffle. Thank you for your support. This all helps us all support our Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing group of disabled American Veterans, Salmon in the Classroom, Almanor Fishing Association, conservation efforts through California Trout and Trout Unlimited, and our gatherings to share our experiences and skills. Just give Pat Sleeper (530-345-1197; psleeper@sbcglobal.net) or John Cowan (530-966-0076; jcowan58@yahoo.com) a call or email. Thank you!!!

I look forward to seeing you at our next General Meeting at Lakeside Pavilion, 2565 California Park Dr. on Thursday, February 15th; leaving Wednesday for Valentines Day with family, and friends. Our speaker for this meeting will be Chelsea Harris Parker with Cast Hope. This organization uses fly fishing as a way to mentor youth. Several of our recent guide speakers (Hogan Brown, Ryan Williams, and others) are actively involved with Cast Hope. We hope to learn how we, as a group, and you, as an individual, might be able to assist Cast Hope. A fly-tying demonstration will be at 6:30pm with the Cast Hope presentation starting at 7:30pm. Our usual raffle following immediately after.

I'm loving this rain, though I find it tough to get out and fish in these conditions. I guess I'm liking those blue bird days more and more. But we can do it! Get out and get your line in the water, then send us the pictures! See you soon!!

Pat Sleeper
President, CAF

Thank you, Ryan Williams

By John Cowan

Our January guest speaker, Guide Ryan Williams, gave an outstanding presentation on this "Float n' Fly" technique to a larger than average audience at the CARD Community Center.

Ryan worked with several individuals during his fly-tying demonstration and answered questions. His presentation was very well put together and he encouraged anyone in the audience to take pictures of any part of his slide show.

Mr. Williams' presentation included a Google Earth map of various parts of Lake Oroville. He keyed in to how to recognize where bass would be found as one fished from a boat or float tube. He showed his gear setup and had some examples to either look at or purchase. Particularly helpful were his videos showing how and where to cast.

Get a hold of Ryan at (707) 365-9891 and check out his website: North Valley Fly Fishing (<https://flyfishcv.com>).

I'm convinced that many of those in attendance are motivated to go out and try Ryan's "Float n' Fly" method. I know I am!



Ryan Williams (left) with specimens acquired during a recent bass competition.

CHICO AREA FLYFISHERS



52nd Annual Fundraiser Dinner
Saturday - March 9th, 2024 @ 4:00
Masonic Center - W. East Ave

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*early bird discount by Jan 31.....\$95.00

Each additional Dinner...\$65.00

*early bird discount by Jan 31.....\$60.00

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PHWFF (Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing)
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DINNER RESERVATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ADDITIONAL NAMES: _____

	NUMBER	COST	TOTAL
Family Membership & One Dinner		\$100.00	\$ _____
Each Additional Dinner		\$65.00	\$ _____
Raffle ticket packets _____\$500.____\$200.		\$ _____	
Raffle ticket packets _____\$100.____\$50.		\$ _____	
Table reservations for 8 people	\$650		\$ _____
	TOTAL.....		\$ _____

Visa # _____

M/C# _____

Signature: _____

Exp. Date & back # _____

PURCHASE YOUR RESERVATIONS BEFORE Jan 31ST
TO BE ENTERED INTO THE EARLY BIRD RAFFLE.....

Questions: 530-345-1197 • Pat Sleeper
 530-966-0076 • John Cowan

MAIL RESERVATION FORMS AND PAYMENT TO:
 CAF- 2796 Beachcomber Cove Chico, 95973
 Or register online www.chicoareaflyfishers.org

*Early bird dinner discount before Jan 31st

*Early bird raffle drawing: \$250 ticket packet: value \$540.00

February Guest Speaker: Chelsea Parker Harris of Cast Hope

By John Cowan

Our General Meeting this month will be on **Thursday, February 15, 2024**, at our usual meeting location at the Lakeside Pavilion at 2565 California Park Drive, Chico. We are meeting on Thursday so that all our members can enjoy Valentine's Day with their families and loved ones. Our special guest is Chelsea Parker Harris of Cast Hope, Inc. She will be giving us an overview of who Cast Hope is and how Chico Area Flyfishers, both the club, and the individual members, can be of assistance to this organization.

Cast Hope is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization looking to provide kids with the gift of the outdoors. As an organization it is our desire to bring kids and mentors together outside through the sport of fly fishing. In this day and era it seems that our lives are constantly bombarded with screens, whether TVs, computers, iPads, iPods, and gaming systems. Here at Cast Hope we want to break that pattern by immersing people into the environment. Through guided fly fishing trips, fishing clinics, fly tying events, camp outs, road trips, and conservation outings we are trying to create a healthy hobby that kids and mentors can do together. We believe if you provide a positive experience for kids where they grow deeper in their relationship with the mentor, learn how to effectively fly fish, receive free necessary equipment, find out that the outdoors has much more to offer than their latest gadget, and learn about how to conserve and sustain our natural resources, then they will naturally want to become outdoor enthusiasts. As an organization it is important for us to provide an environment where kids can become stewards of the outdoors and fly fishing.

Through a collection of generous, caring, and exceptional fly fishing guides and volunteers we are able to give free outdoor experiences to the kids of California and Western Nevada. For Cast Hope guides, guiding is a passion lived out every day. They love connecting with people and sharing their knowledge of fly fishing and the outdoors. Our desire is to empower these kids to make fly fishing a sport they can do on their own while conserving and sustaining our natural resources. We partner with other non-profit youth organizations to help underserved kids and their existing mentors. Some of our current partners are Boys & Girls Club, Wilderness Experience, Youth 4 Change, Environmental Alternative, and Big Brothers and Sisters.



Chico Area Flyfishers Board of Directors Meeting, January 22, 2024

6:17 PM Called to order, Pat Sleeper, President.

Attendance: Pat Hallin, Don Sleeper, John Cowan, Lionel Valley, Elden Hinkle, Eric See, Tom Rosenow, Mike Pickering, David McKinney, Dana Miller, Stan Thomas, Kyle Crowson, and Pat Sleeper.

Absent: Holly Snow and Pete Wiik

Secretary: Minutes approved as posted in the Newsletter

Treasurer's Report: John. We now have SQUARE for CC transactions. Venmo now available.

Bank balances are stable.

Meetings: Next meeting Feb 15 2024; Cast Hope will be presenting a program on their organization, goals and achievements. A film will also be shown.

Committees

1. Fishouts. Nothing new. Lux Lake is upcoming.
2. Project Healing Waters. No report.

New Business.

Dinner: Discussion on the dinner dominated the rest of the evening.

Issues:

Grand Prize: Pat H. Is working on Crane Prairie Lakes in Oregon. Presently trying to find lodging to round out the trip and does include a guide.

Checking at Sportsman Warehouse, as there is a new manager, re donations.

Main course: We are having a crab feed with whole crab which will be fresh. We will also have shrimp and some kind of pasta dish. There is the thought of also having a non-seafood option as well. Sons and Daughters of Italy will be helping again this year. They will supply runners.

Bar: Will be serving as we did last year, no real changes. We have filed for our liquor license.

Donations: Lionel. So far it has been going good. We are looking into some of the newer restaurants for donations.

Auctioneer: Mike Smith

Eric See will be working on the slide show this year, as he does every year. So, send him pictures of all those big fish. Also, will be working with the guides who are donating so they can put up a promotional slide if they wish.

Security: Stars will provide again.

Meeting Adjourned 8:15 PM

Submitted: David McKinney CAF Secretary.



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Tuesday, February 13, 2024

El Rey Theater (230 W. 2nd St. Chico) • 7:00pm Tickets

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Upcoming General Meeting Speakers 2024

Our General Meetings take place on the second Wednesday during the months of October through May. The other months are for fishing and adventure! We would love to hear from you about your fishing experiences! Send your experience with pictures to John Cowan (jcowan58@yahoo.com; (530) 966-0076) to help build our newsletter. Also, if you have suggestions for who could share or a topic for sharing at the General Meeting, let John know!

Our General Meetings include a fly-tying demonstration (6:30pm) followed by the featured speaker (7:30pm). We also have informal time for chatting with one another and a raffle at the end of the meeting. Lots of fun! If you haven't joined us before, I hope you will consider coming to a meeting soon! All of our meetings are at the Lakeside Pavilion at 2565 California Park Drive, Chico. Here are what we have planned for you so far:

February 13, 2023	Fly Fishing Film Tour	El Rey Theater Tix: https://flyfilmtour.myeventscenter.com/event/Chico-Ca-El-Rey-Theatre-83084?redir=1
February 15, 2024	Cast Hope	Who we are and how you can help. Note: This is on Thursday, February 15, 2023
February 23-25, 2024	Pleasanton Fly Fishing Show	Alameda County Fairgrounds. Vendors, speakers, classes. Info & Tix: https://flyfishingshow.com/pleasanton-ca/
March 9, 2024	52nd Annual Fundraising Dinner	Raffle, Live and Silent Auctions
April 10, 2024	Rob Anderson, Bucket List Fly Fishing	Fly Fishing the Amazon; Pyramid Lake
May 8, 2024	Lance Gray	Getting Ready for the Hex Hatch

LOCAL GUIDES

Mark Antaramian	Mark Antaramian Guide Services	916.705.1207
PJ Bock	Bock Fly Fishing	530.598.4087
Hogan Brown	hgbflyfishing.com	530.514.2453
"Dirty Mike" Elliott	Discover Montana Outfitting	406.890.8735
Tim Fox	Mr. Fox Outfitters	530.949.0239
Lance Gray	Lance Gray & Company Lance Gray Online Store	530.517.2204
Lincoln Gray	Lincoln Gray Fly Fishing Adventures Sierra Stream Outdoors	530.520.6895
Joe Garza	J.A.G. Flyfishing	530.570.0978
Bryan Roccucci	Big Daddy's Guide Service	530.370.1001
Wayne Syn	Orland Outfitters	530.624.4156
Toby Uppinghouse	Edgewater Outfitters	916.505.4773

LOCAL FLY FISHING SHOPS

Fish First!
766 Mangrove Ave
Chico, CA 95926
(343-8300)

Sierra Stream Outdoors
847 W.5th Street
Chico, CA 95926
530-345-4261



Fishing Report

By Various Authors

If any of you have any good fishing experiences, text or email John Cowan (530.966.0076; jcowan58@yahoo.com) or Pat Sleeper (530.228.9197; psleeper@sbcglobal.net). We had great feedback from last month's Fishing Reports and would love to keep that going with your help!

January 3, 2024: Umpqua River by John Burge
Caught three nice steelies, 9, 10, and 12 lbs.



John Burge with one of his nice steelhead on the Umpqua River.



John and another of his fine steelies!

January 12-19, 2024: Lake Picachos, Mexico by Pat Sleeper.

Lake Picachos is a beautiful lake located just outside Mazatlán. At sunrise you will see the cool fog laying on top of this warm lake; and protruding from this lake you'll find old tree tops adorned with all types and colors of birds perched for the night; or spreading their wings to the new warm sun, barely shining through the dense fog. Though I know we're there to fish, it's hard not to notice all the surroundings: from deer swimming out into the open lake to the 6 lb. bass that we managed to land. Every day is a new day and every day had a new story to like. Lionel, how many bass did you catch in one day with a popper? Wow! You'll have to ask him.

Lionel, how large was that bass you won the string game with? Nice bass!! We all managed to catch a fair share of beautiful healthy Florida strain largemouth bass and loved listening to the stories from the fishermen coming in telling "their" experience catching how many bass; how large were they? The twelve of us all ate too much, laughed too much and went home with too many extra pounds, but had a wonderful time and we all look forward to another trip like this!! Thank you, gentlemen!

Oh, the stories? I heard one say he had landed over 42 that day with many were on poppers. I heard another say, she had caught two nice 5.5 and 6 lb. bass one day on leech patterns with a chartreuse bead head.



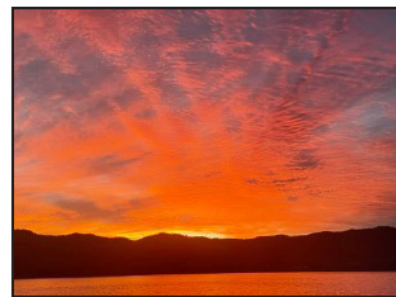
Pat Sleeper with, yet another, largemouth hog!

January 12-19, 2024: Lake Picachos, Mexico by Lionel Valley.

Had a great time at the Anglers Inn located on lake Picacho out of Mazatlán, Mexico last week thanks to Pat's Flyfishing that has put this trip together for us for several years. These are largemouth Florida strain bass that provide a lot of fun, particularly when being caught on poppers with a fly rod. And the abundance and variety of birds was amazing.



Angler's Inn lodging where we stayed.



One of the absolutely stunning sunrises we witnessed each morning.



One of the many Common Egrets perched on a tree.



Lionel with one of his many catches!



Lee Markos with a fine specimen of the Floridian Largemouth Bass!

January 15, 2024: Feather River by Bill Corkery.

Fished the Feather River over by the hatchery with Sparkle callibaetis in size 18 which is a must! Micro midges that are fished with an indicator about 3ft down in colors of olive or brown in May fly patterns, as well. After the rains, use a red San Juan, fox pupa or Alvin. I usually start fishing at about 10:00 am and finish by 2:00 pm.



Bill Corkery's nice steelhead.

California Heritage Trout Challenge

Let us know where you are with the Challenge! Lance Gray may give part of his presentation at our May General Meeting on the California Heritage Trout Challenge. Send me your details and pictures! John Cowan ((530) 966-0076; jcowan58@yahoo.com)

Ed Bruno: Got photos of 4 of the required 6 native trout for Heritage Trout Challenge. Great fun to chase around for these.

- Coastal Rainbow - Various Locations
- Eagle Lake Rainbow - 1 fish in 4 hours
- Warner Lakes Redband - Dismal Creek (Modoc)
- Goose Lake Redband - East Creek (Modoc)

John Cowan: Coastal Rainbow – Lower Sacramento River
Will try to get a Coastal Cutthroat this winter and anyone with info on the most predictable way to find them is appreciated.

(Note: I will be putting a trip together to Big Lagoon and Stone Lagoon north of Patrick's Point to go for the Coastal Cutthroat. They are notoriously hard to catch! – John Cowan) Will fish for McCloud River Redband next spring and maybe Lahontan Cutthroat in upper Truckee. I also know a drive-to spot to get CA Golden Trout in the native drainage and can do that next year. That's a long drive but an easy catch.
Note: Coastal Cutthroat: I plan to be at the Elk Country RV Park starting March 18th for a few days. I fully plan on fishing Stone Lagoon and Dry Lagoon. I haven't caught anything there, yet, but that's not going to stop me from trying!! John Cowan

I know others are in pursuit of the various forms of the California Heritage Trout Challenge! I think it would be cool to see who is making progress on this! Let me know! John Cowan

Chico Area Flyfisher's Fishout Schedule 2024

Here are future outings that Chico Area Flyfishers provide to its membership. These club fishouts are designed to give fly fishers the best opportunity to catch fish and enjoy the outdoors. Our club has many accomplished anglers who are willing to share their skills with others and you are only limited by the willingness to become involved. From selecting promising locations and times, to helping those members new to the sport, we try to make these trips fun, exciting and successful. But, it's up to you to ask for help, if you desire to learn.

If you have one of those favorite spots that you don't mind sharing with others and would like to lead our fellow CAF members for a day of fishing and fellowship, contact any of the following fish masters: Elden Hinkle (ehinkle1221@yahoo.com; (530) 519-4680); Don Sleeper (dnsleeper@gmail.com; (530) 228-6197); Pat Sleeper (psleeper@sbcglobal.net; (530) 228-9197); Eric See (eric.see@water.ca.gov; (530) 899-1918); and Tom Rosenow (trosenow.chico@gmail.com; (530) 520-3053).

***NOTE: The fishout schedule may be subject to change depending on the fish bite, weather conditions, and or COVID issues.**

Date	Location	Fishout Leader
February 2024 (TBD)	Butte Creek Heritage Trout Challenge	Check website for details
February 2024 (TBD)	Big Chico Creek Heritage Trout Challenge	Check website for details
March 2nd 2024 (TBD)	Yuba River - Timbuctoo Bend - Heritage Trout Challenge (Waiting List)	John Cowan (530) 966-0076
Week of March 18-25th	Coastal Cutthroat Dry and Stone Lagoon, Humboldt County Heritage Trout Challenge	John Cowan (530) 966-0076
Late March 2024 (TBD)	Lewiston Lake	Don Sleeper (530) 228-6197
Late March 2024 (TBD)	Pyramid Lake	Elden Hinkle (530) 518-4680
April 27, 2024	Opening Day for Trout Season	
April 20, 2024	Luk Lake \$50/person Dawn until noon. Lunch included.	Tom Rosenow (530) 520-3053
April 27-28, 2024	Hat Creek Campout Heritage Trout Challenge	Eric See (530) 514-6617
May 2024 (TBD)	Deer Creek Heritage Trout Challenge	John Cowan (530) 966-0076
May 2024 (TBD)	Pingatore Lake	Pat Sleeper (530) 228-9197
June 2024 (TBD)	Coastal Cutthroat Dry and Stone Lagoon, Humboldt County Heritage Trout Challenge	John Cowan (530) 966-0076
June 22, 2024	Hex Hatch BBQ, Fishout Lake Almanor	Pat Hallin (530) 518-5031
June 30, 2024	Pyramid Lake Fishing Season Closes	
Early July 2024 (TBD)	Trinity Alps Backpacking Trip Heritage Trout Challenge	John Cowan (530) 966-0076
August 2024 (TBD)	Golden Trout Wilderness/Kern River/Little Kern River Backpacking Trip Heritage Trout Challenge	John Cowan (530) 966-0076
September 2024 (TBD)	Dorado La Ventana, Mexico (Filling fast!)	Pat Sleeper (530) 228-9197
December 2024 (TBD)	Lake Picachos/El Salto Lake, Mexico	Pat Sleeper (530) 228-9197
January 2025 (TBD)	Lake Picachos	Pat Sleeper (530) 228-9197

Upcoming: We are open to suggestions!!

***Check the Chico Area Flyfishers website for the most up to date fishout information.**

For all your real estate needs contact:

Dana W. Miller 530.570.1184

DRE# 01804191

Frankie Miller 530.717.3884

DRE# 01767902

Find us on Facebook: Chico Miller Home Team



Fly of the Month for February 2024

Black Balanced Leech

By Stan Thomas

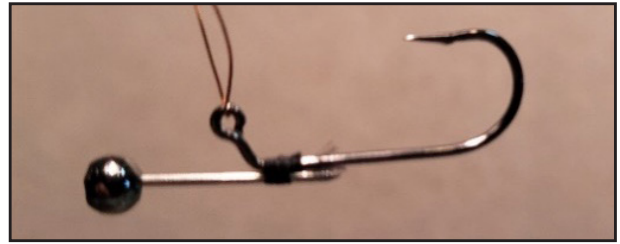
Leeches are a very effective fly pattern for many species and especially for trout. If stripped or trolled the leech swims along in its natural horizontal orientation. Hanging a leech pattern suspended under an indicator causes the fly to hang vertically and not in a natural position. A Balanced leech pattern solves this problem by remaining in a horizontal orientation when suspended. Works especially well with some slow movement due to wind or wave, or even very slow stripping, causing slow swimming action.

- **Hook:** #10 Umpqua U555-JIG.
- **Shank:** Dressmaker's pin.
- **Bead:** Black 1/8" tungsten or standard (regular bead just makes the balance longer)
- **Thread:** Black 6/0 UNI-Thread.
- **Tail:** Black Marabou.
- **Body:** Jay Fair Black Mohair, or other leech yarn.
- **Glue:** Fly Tyers Z-ment.

1. Put a suitable jig fly hook into the vise and form a thread base starting at the eye of the hook.

2. Put a tungsten bead on the pin (cut a dressmaker's pin in half and discard the tip) with the wide hole towards the pin head and lash down the pin with secure wraps. Be careful around the end of the pin as it is sharp and may cut your tying thread. The bead needs to be positioned forward of the hook eye to balance the fly. I usually position the bead about one bead's width forward of the hook eye. Brush Crazy Glue over all thread and wrap secure.

Note: I usually make a pattern by cutting pin in half, loosely



tying pin onto hook shank and tie off, remove from vise, balance the fly on tippet or wire by moving and adjusting pin till hook balances horizontally. This pattern, with pin length adjusted, I set aside to set up sequential flies.

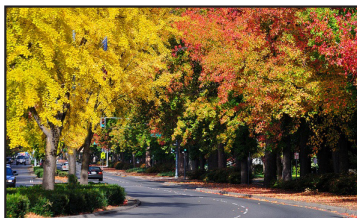
3. Tie in a somewhat sparse clump of marabou to form the tail. The tail should be slightly longer than the hook shank. Lash it down to the end of the pin, then clip off excess.

4. Tie in Mohair/leech hair forward of the tail. Wrap forward, sweeping the fibers back after each wrap. Wrap past the hook eye and all the way to the bead. Wrapping the leech hair should push on the bead a little to help hold it securely against the pin head. Brush it vigorously with a medium-stiff toothbrush to free trapped fibers. Then, trim the fibers all around so that they are shorter than the tail is long.

5. Whip finish.

Also tied in other colors, usually matching bead color to body.

Fall Came



Fall Left



Fall Stayed



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Lessons Learned

By Ray Narbaitz

I have been fly fishing long enough now to consider myself experienced. I do not, and hope I never think of myself as an expert. Being experienced just means that you have spent enough time on the water or behind the vise to have learned some things. And, if you are gregarious enough, you are willing to share that experience. With that thought in mind, my...experience...has taught me some things that I consider to be real truths. If you have been at the game for a long time, you may reduce or exacerbate them, but you will never fully escape them. If you are new to fly fishing, I hope you will be encouraged by the fact that you are not the only one who suffers these tribulations. However, I also hope they do not discourage you.

I was on one of our local, pocket water streams teaching a young lady things such as reading water and wading to get into the right position to present a fly. We were using attractor dries, and she had just lost her third fly in a bankside tree. She turned to me and said, "I'll be glad when I have enough experience so that I don't do that anymore." My response to her was, "You will never get that much experience, because no matter how much you fish, you will occasionally stick your fly in a tree." While it's true, as you spend more time on the water you will check behind you a little more often to see how much room you have. Still, in the excitement of the moment, you will sometimes forget. Other times, you will convince yourself that you can put your back cast right between those two trees. You might even be able to do it a few times, but sooner or later, you're going to stick a tree or bush.

No matter how many times we get burned, we will still rely on weather forecasts to determine what gear we will bring with us on a fishing trip. I don't know how many times I have checked the weather for where I am going fishing the next day, and based on the report decided not to bring my rain jacket because the forecast said no rain. I have had time to think about that as, soaking wet, I tried to determine what the chances were of catching one more fish before hyperthermia set in. Having said that, there is a bit of control you can exercise in this department. While I have no scientific proof, I have noticed a real correlation between rain and rain gear. If there is only a chance of rain, and you don't want to get wet, bring your rain gear. You are almost guaranteed that it will not rain. If, however, you do the opposite, see the above.

I sometimes wonder if flies, most of which try to resemble a bug, are not endowed with a bug like ability to crawl away when they hit the ground. I am sure we have all had the experience of dropping a fly as we were getting ready to attach it to our tippet. We see the fly fall, and we know it has fallen right at our feet. We bend down and look directly at where we saw the fly drop. With naïve confidence, we look intently at where it fell, and, to our amazement, it's not there. Sometimes, if we are lucky, crawling around on the ground for a while will result in our finding it. However, no amount of crawling around will lead to its discovery if it was the last fly of that type you had in your box. This is an attribute shared by hooks, beads, bits of wire and flies around the tying bench. Apparently, all of these things have the ability to change colors and hide on the floor, particularly if your tying area has a rug. You can sometimes get a hook or fly back if you have a toddler or grandchild playing around your tying bench.

The missing item can usually be retrieved from either their feet or knees. Be aware, however, that this method of discovery is sure to incur the wrath of a mother or grandmother.

Speaking of the last fly; we continue to hit the stream with only one of a certain pattern in our box, even though we know we should never leave the house with less than three of a pattern. We will need one to fish with, one to lose in a tree or on the bottom and one to take back home. That one will be needed to copy if we tie ourselves or to show the folks at the shop where we buy our flies. Usually, if we try to tie it ourselves from memory, while it may be close, it won't be the same. And few things are more frustrating than trying to verbally identify a fly to a sales clerk who has never seen it.

While I think there are few absolutes in life, here are a couple I believe qualify. If you wade a lot while fishing streams, you will eventually fall in. If you don't wade while fishing streams, you will find that you are not getting to a lot of good, fishable water. Which of the two scenarios you choose will change many times during the day while you are fishing. Only you can decide if it is worth it to wade across the stream to get to that fish sipping emergers in the little eddy on the other side. If (when) you do fall in, you will have another set of circumstances to consider. Would you want to fall in where your buddies can see you, and hopefully help extricate you from your dilemma? Or would you rather be by yourself, so you don't have to listen to the humorous retelling of the incident at the campfire or lodge, or two years later at a family gathering after it happens?

Knots! In fishing for trout, only about five basic knots are really needed. Those are the knots you tie. There are an infinite number of knots that leaders and tippets form all by themselves. There are, of course, the ever present wind knots. It's amazing that they often happen when there is no wind blowing whatsoever. If you want to see the ultimate in self-tied knots, you can use a rig like those often used on water like the lower Sacramento River. There you are often fishing with two or three flies, split shot, and a bob...uh, indicator. The most inventive Boy Scout to ever earn a merit badge has never come close to divining the number of knots your leader and tippet can come up with all by themselves. These knots usually come in two forms. Once every decade or so, there are the knots that, with a little work, you can undo and continue to fish. The rest of the knots are those that you work on for a while, expand a vocabulary that you probably don't use around the family dinner table, cut the whole mess off, and re-rig.

All of these things can happen when you are out fishing. Certainly not every time you go out, and almost never all on the same trip. My belief is they happen mostly to see if you are really serious about this wonderful pursuit we call fly fishing. Because, if you overcome these "experiences," you will have more times when your back cast does go between the trees, and there is no wind knot, and the fly goes where you want, and the fish you are after takes the fly and after a brief tussle, the fish comes to hand. At that time, whatever trials you had to go through to get there become absolutely irrelevant and the world becomes a little better place.

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