



THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION N·E·W·S·L·E·T·T·E·R

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WINTER 2016~2017

Flies for Broodstock Atlantic Salmon Fishing: Part II, Tube Flies

By Ben Bilello

[Part I of this series appeared in the Winter 2015 CRSA newsletter.]

In Part I of this series, I listed my five favorite conventional flies for broodstock Atlantic salmon fishing. Part II will round out my top ten with five of my favorite tube flies. Before I delve into the patterns and their uses, I'll explain what a tube fly is and how it benefits the angler.

Simply put, a tube fly is a fly tied on a hollow tube instead of on a hook. The tube can be made out of either plastic or various types of metal (most often aluminum, brass or copper). A hook is not a permanent fixture on a tube fly and is usually added before fishing a particular fly. The hook is added after threading the tippet through the front end of the hollow tube fly. After tying the hook to the tippet, the hook is "attached" to the tube fly. If the inner diameter of a plastic tube is large enough, the hook can be inserted directly into the back end of the fly. If the opening is not large enough, or if we are using a fly tied on a metal tube, the hook is inserted into a small piece of flexible tubing that is applied over the back end of the fly. The flexible hook holder is known as "junction tubing." When a fish is hooked, often times the hook detaches from the junction tubing, which allows the fly to slide up the leader (and away from the fish's teeth). Durability is just one advantage of using tube flies.

Another advantage is the ability to use a large fly with a small, short shanked hook. The smaller hook is beneficial for a few reasons. A short shanked hook is a better fish fighting tool than a long shanked hook, which can use leverage against the angler and work its way free. Also, small hooks are less likely to mortally injure fish which might otherwise be released. We no longer need the extra weight or size of a large hook to create a fly with a large profile. A fly can be as long as the tube, but still use a relatively small hook. Furthermore, should our hook break or dull, we can replace it without replacing the entire fly.

The same size tube fly can be tied in different weights depending in the tubing material used. Plastic is light

(See Flies, page 6)

41st Annual Dinner

Saturday, January 14, 2017

USS Chowder Pot IV

166 Brainard Road, Hartford CT

Social hour & auction preview: 5-6 pm

Live Auction at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner.

Reservation form at ctriversalsalmon.org. \$50 a person



"Classic Atlantic Salmon, A Living Still Life"

2017 Guest Artist: Bill Elliott

CRSA is pleased to announce that the 2017 Guest Sporting Artist is Bill Elliott, whose work is pictured above. For more about Bill Elliott, see p. 7!

2017 Dinner Honoree: Al Sonski

The CRSA will honor Al Sonski at the 2017 dinner. Al is an avid sportsman with a keen sense of humor. He spent 31 years with the DEP and DEEP at the Quinebaug and Kensington hatcheries, and is the honorary father of millions of salmon and trout fry.

The Inland Fisheries Division, in thanking Al, said, "The millions of fish that Al produced over his 31 years undoubtedly have made great fish stories and memories for Connecticut's anglers, helped to raise awareness of trout and salmon for hundreds of thousands of Connecticut's youth... and gave hope for many that Atlantic salmon could one day return to the Connecticut River." Few individuals have been more important to the mission of the CRSA. We are privileged to honor him.

West Greenland Fishery Major Focus of 2016 NASCO Meeting

By Stephen Gephard, US Commissioner to NASCO

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) promotes conservation and sound management of wild Atlantic Salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean. Most nations in the North Atlantic region that have wild salmon stocks in their rivers or harvest salmon off their shores belong to NASCO through a treaty signed by the nations in the 1980s.

NASCO meets annually to seek progress on its goals and this year it met in Bad

Neuenahr-Ahrweiler Germany from June 7–10. Leading the US Delegation was Commissioner Daniel Morris (Deputy Regional Administrator, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NOAA Fisheries). I also attended as a US Commissioner and seven NOAA and State Department staffers and a member of the Maine Aquaculture Association provided invaluable technical support and service.

A major topic this year was the West Greenland fishery. During the past two fishing seasons, Greenland announced its intent to increase landings of salmon and allow the sale of salmon to factories. Such harvest would include US salmon, which are listed as endangered, so the United States would not agree to an increased quota—nor did other parties in the West Greenland Commission. Despite this opposition, Greenland took those actions unilaterally, but pledged new fisheries controls, monitoring, and enforcement. A key US objective for the 2016 meeting was to see progress on those measures. The report from Greenland showed that there was improvement and even though the 2015 fishery exceeded its 45 ton quota by 13 tons, Greenland agreed to subtract that overage from the 2016 fishery quota, now 32 t. While the United States is still not satisfied with the level of harvest in the West Greenland fishery, it feels that such progress can set the stage for better agreements in the future.

There were seven other important issues discussed:

1. a special session of aquaculture of Atlantic Salmon.
2. a special session on reporting each Party's Annual Progress Report, which tells how each nation/Party is doing to achieve the salmon conservation/management objectives set forth in their five-year Implementation Plan.
3. expanding and improving the sampling programs for the salmon fisheries in West Greenland,



Steve Gephard, US Commissioner to NASCO

Labrador, and St. Pierre and Miquelon—fisheries where salmon from many places (including the United States) may be caught.

4. expanding research on salmon tracking in the ocean.
5. modifying an existing system for classifying salmon stocks around the North Atlantic so that the status of populations in every river can be better understood.
6. improving transparency and participation by NGOs like the Connecticut River Salmon Association.
7. continuing to plan and develop the governance structure for the International Year of the Salmon, which will extend for more than a year and will culminate in a symposium and other events in 2019. Dan Morris has been a strong advocate for this initiative that will focus on both Atlantic and Pacific salmon, highlighting education, research, and promoting worldwide awareness of the plight of all salmon and their conservation.

NASCO's Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting will be held in Varberg, Sweden from June 6 to June 9, 2017. The 2018 meeting is expected to be held in the United States. ♦

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION

The Connecticut River Salmon Association (CRSA) is a nonstock, nonprofit Connecticut corporation. Our mission is to support Atlantic salmon in the Connecticut River basin.

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Teachers, Schools, Volunteers Honored with CRSA 2016 Awards

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

Jim Carroll was honored with the 2016 President's Award at the 2016 CRSA Dinner for his contributions as secretary, newsletter editor and legislative advocate for Atlantic salmon.

CRSA Education Service awards recognize teachers and schools who have used the Salmon-in-Schools Program for fifteen years and includes teachers who have taken the program from one school to another as they transferred.

Teachers awards were presented to Mary Pat Coburn from Smith School in Glastonbury; Valerie Cournoyer from Amity High School; George Lyman of Nonnewaug High School; and Mary Silverman of the Center School in East Hampton.

The schools receiving recognition were Adelbrook Learning Center in Cromwell; The Sound School in New Haven; and Amity Regional High School in Woodbridge.

Tom Halligan, a retired science teacher at the Timothy Edwards Middle School in South Windsor who served as a CRSA school liaison, received an education service award. Gary Bogli, a retired South Windsor teacher and education consultant, volunteer and liaison with the CRSA for many years, was also honored.

Marjorie Drucker, Garry Feinberg and Dick Bell were given the new CRSA Inspiration Award at the 2016 dinner for their work in launching the Salmon-in-Schools program. Feinberg proposed the program to the CRSA board in 1995. Once it was approved, he enlisted his daughter, Drucker and the principal of the North Haven school. After the trial proved successful, CRSA board member Dick Bell volunteered to manage the award-winning Salmon-in-Schools program. ♦

Why Can't Waders Get Any Respect?

By Ed Ahern

Fly fishing for salmon is a sport full of tradition, with prestigious products and more than a little snobbery. So why is it that waders can't get any respect?

There are waiting lists for reels that cost \$2,000 and rods that can cost almost that much. The antique/aftermarket for tackle works of art lists even more expensive prices. But waders are bought grudgingly, like underwear. How many people, after all, buy used waders?

Waders, even the ones with expensive names and crotch zippers, are rarely bragged about, and get thrown out after a few scuffs and leaks. They're the salmon fisherman's baggy bottom, indistinguishable from a few yards away from all the other grey/brown pants standing in a stream. But a fisherman can tell, even from fifty yards away, that his neighbor is angling with a Bogdan reel and a Leonard bamboo rod.

No one is envious of waterproof leisure pants, breathable, neoprene, fitted or otherwise. It would be like rating the jock straps worn in a locker room. But how good a fisherman feels at the end of a hard day's angling has little to do with the provenance of his tackle, and everything to do with his waders having kept him or her comfortable and warm, still able to feel his toes.



2016 President's Award recipient Jim Carroll, center, with his wife, Margaret and CRSA President Tom Chrosniak at the 2016 Dinner.

Not that the wader manufacturers don't try. Sexy logos, neoprene booties, breathability, the design and features change and are (mostly) improved every couple years. But no one makes a fashion statement in waders, and their basic design and function will be unchanged until anglers grow another leg. If pressed, most will admit that the women in the "Women in Waders" calendar just look swaddled.

Once purchased, waders are taken for granted until they leak, at which point they're cursed. This despite the leakage usually being the angler's fault—often a branch poked through the butt of the wader while sliding down an embankment. Or splitting out the crotch while stumbling into a boat. Or letting sweat and toe jam render the waders uninhabitable.

Waders are considered nuisance necessities, like Depends sanitary products. If they could, fishermen would wade wet, without the overpants, and would pay a great deal for a second skin to do so. Like getting hair or dental implants.

Because waders have no glamor and little cachet, they're stacked in the back of fly shops, one box atop another, and one step away from the trash bin. The boxes are mostly uncolored cardboard, and could as well hold medical supplies

(See Waders, page 5)

The CRSA “Salmon-in-Schools” Program

The Salmon-in-Schools Program: Chilling Out in 2017

By Dick Bell, CRSA Vice President and Education Chair

In 2015-16, our Salmon -in-Schools Program encountered serious fungus attacks on our incubating salmon eggs. Almost a quarter of our sixty-two schools experienced significant die off from this infection, with a few schools suffering total losses.

Some schools were able to limit the infection by very hard work. They changed out the water, sanitized the chiller coil, gravel and all other equipment, and ruthlessly eliminated even marginally suspicious eggs.

The attacks were random and puzzling, with one school's tank badly contaminated, while another tank remained untouched. Equally puzzling were reports from the stockings—of wildly varying fry development within a tank, bearing no relation to the calculated development index, and the frequent occurrence of deformities.

Eventually most of these difficulties were traced to a defective chiller at the Kensington Hatchery, the source of our eggs. Early in the year the main chiller failed. The incubation process proceeded without it, using unchilled water to circulate through the rearing trays. The DEEP's production of eggs for stocking was severely limited. The problem was the warmth and fluctuation of the temperature of the circulating well water throughout a relatively mild winter. These conditions produced weak and compromised embryos, erratic development, and deformed spinal structures.

I reported these findings to our teachers as our program wound down after stockings in the Spring of 1916, noting the “good news” side to the story. The DEEP last spring acquired a new and more powerful replacement chiller for Kensington. The UTC Carrier unit cost \$23,000, and has been successfully installed and tested. It will bring the Kensington well water (at an average of about 51°F) and cool it down to a constant 41°F for circulation through the incubating trays.

Kensington is expected to produce about 225,000 eyed eggs for stocking in 2017, including ours. It is also expected that we will not experience the difficulties we encountered last year! We all hope so.

In October we held our annual training program for new and veteran teachers and interested members of the environmental community. Thirty-four persons including representatives from seventeen schools attended the event, held once again at the Eversource offices. We're grateful for their support, and the use of their facility. The ample parking, excellent audio visual capabilities and cafeteria were much appreciated.

Presenters included Steve Gephard and Tim Wildman of the CT DEEP; CRSA directors Dick Bell and Jim Carroll; educational consultant Gary Bogli; and three veteran teachers—Deborah Costolnick of the Hartland School, Rick Rossi of Bennet Academy and Sean Laydon of North Haven Middle School. ♦



CRSA Vice President and Education Chairman Dick Bell

A Salmon-in-Schools Vo-Tech First

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

CRSA Educational consultant Gary Bogli came in from a successful day of trout fishing and encountered students from the Groton-based Ella T. Grasso Bioscience & Environmental Technology VoTech School, led by instructor Christopher McVeigh. Gary and Christopher talked about the Salmon-in-Schools Program.

Because of that chance meeting, the CT state VoTech schools consultant, Hank Weiner, McVeigh and Sarah Wilby from Hartford's Prince Tech High School decided to attend the recent CRSA Salmon-in-Schools Teachers Orientation.

They decided to participate, and CRSA will have its first Connecticut VoTech students as part of the 2016-2017 Salmon-in-Schools Program. Thanks Gary. ♦

Waders (from page 3)

or dried animal parts. The descriptions and sizes are printed on the box in type small enough to discourage the visually impaired, and generally are not the size one needs.

These piscatorial condoms after all are ugly, and fall into the “Do I really have to buy them” category. They’re just plain utilitarian. But often not designed to be useful. Why, for example is the inside pouch rarely large enough to hold a spare reel or fly box? Or the waist of the waders adjustable to accommodate middle aged bellies? Why not a color-coordinated rain top? Why are the straps almost always uncomfortable? Because they are just work pants, water trousers.

And even if the angler pops for \$700 waders with logo and zippers and unpronounceable technology and butt pads suitable for twerking, the wader life expectancy is little longer than the bargain basement rubber pair purchased for \$70.

Perhaps the only salvation for waders is to make them blatant advertising vehicles, like the jackets worn by Nascar drivers of pro bass fishermen. “Use Stomachoswello waders” across the chest, or “Comfortease posterior padding” across the derriere. Or designer waders with Luis Vuitton-like initials all over them. This would hopefully keep prices down and give anglers rubber pants to brag about. ♦

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Without the support of the following organizations and individuals, our fundraising dinner and many of our activities would not be possible. Our thanks to each for their contribution and their support of Atlantic salmon restoration.

Visit www.ctriversalsalmon.org for a preview of terrific auction items for 2017 from these and other generous donors!

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Flies (from page 1)

and buoyant. It works well for flies to be fished on or near the surface. Aluminum is only slightly heavier than plastic and will sink a fly just under the surface. Brass, copper and tungsten are much denser than either plastic or aluminum and will sink a fly much deeper and faster. A good selection of tube flies (tied in various weights) will prepare the angler for nearly any situation.

There are many other reasons to use tube flies, but not enough space to list them all in this article. As the weather gets cooler and the river rises, I use tube flies more often than conventional flies. Tube flies can be a good “change of pace” tactic when conventional flies and presentations aren’t working. Below are my five most effective tube flies for broodstock Atlantic salmon.

1. *Ally’s Shrimp*: Originally tied on a hook, Ally’s Shrimp is one of the most effective Atlantic salmon flies ever created. I have altered the dressing a bit to convert it into a tube fly. The tube version has three stiff hackle stems tied into the top of the tail. When leaves are floating in the water, I invert my single hook to point upwards and the hackle stems act as a sort of “leaf guard.” It’s not 100% effective at blocking leaves, but it hooks a lot fewer of them than a fly tied on a conventional, downward pointing hook.

2. *Sunray Shadow/Bismo*: The Sunray Shadow is a very simple fly, most commonly tied on plastic and metal tubes. I fish both. I fish the plastic Sunray with a riffling hitch to skate it over the surface. A medium sized (3” total length) hitched Sunray doesn’t hook many salmon for me, but it can locate salmon who are potential “players” (causing them to follow or rise for the fly). One of my favorite tactics to use on stubborn salmon is to strip a large, non-hitched Sunray Shadow as fast as possible. The takes are usually very violent. I have found this tactic most effective in normal-to-high water. A great Sunray derivative is the Icelandic tube fly called the Bismo. With grizzly hackles on the side, a pearl braid body and prismatic eyes, the Bismo is a more dressed up version of its predecessor. I tie the Bismo on a 1”-1.25” aluminum tube and fish it similar to a Sunray tied on a metal tube.

3. *Snaelda*: This odd Icelandic fly most often tied on short, heavy tubes (copper or brass). I use a Snaelda with a total length of 3”-4” in cold water. I fish small Snaeldas, total length of 1.5”-2”, in low, warm water as a “last resort” fly. Small Snaeldas are deadly when the salmon are holding in fast water at the top of the pools. I cast upstream, let the fly sink, and swing it into the pockets. My favorite colors for the Snaelda are a combination of yellow, orange and black and all black.

4. *Willie Gunn*: The Willie Gunn is one of the most effective tube flies in the UK. Both the black bodied and gold bodied Willie Gunns have been excellent producers for me in high, cold water, fast moving water. I tie mine on 1.5”-2” copper tubes. In my experience, a gold bodied Willie Gunn is a terrific big fish tube fly on the Naugatuck.

5. *Long Winged/Hackled Plastic Tube Flies*: I have a few flies which fit into this category. One is the Undertaker, a popular hairwing salmon fly, converted to a tube fly. Instead of the conventional wing, I tie soft fur (i.e. arctic fox) 360° around the tube body for a “collar hackle” effect. A second fly that fits the bill is the Grape, which is a pink, purple, and black marabou fly tied in the style of a Popsicle. Another good choice is a Picasse tied on a plastic tube. Very popular in Quebec, the Picasse is a hairwing wet fly with a long, spey fly-type hackle collar. All three of these flies have excellent movement in the water. When the water is cold, salmon tend to nip at the rear end of flies instead of taking them with early season gusto. To counteract this, I use a long piece of junction tubing to hold my hook beyond the ends of the material. Fished on a sinking Scandinavian head, these plastic tube flies are deadly. The sinking head keeps the fly in front of the fish, the action of the materials creates interest in the fly, and the far rearward hook keeps them on the line.

In the final part of this series, I will offer a more in-depth look at fishing strategies and how they relate to the flies we use. ♦

For more information, please visit: www.benbillello.com/salmonflies or www.theleaper.blogspot.com



Top, Conehead Ally’s Tubes. Bottom, Undertaker
[Photo: Ben Billello]

Bill Elliott: Coming Full Circle

By Bill Elliott

On May 6th of this year, I reached the age of 71. Now that might not mean very much to most people but for me, I find it hard to believe that so much time has passed in such a short time.

I was very fortunate at such an early age to know what I wanted to be doing for my living; it was always to be an artist. I graduated from Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn, NY, and went on to study art at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. The school later became part of NYU.

After graduation I served three years in the Army and was stationed in Alaska, where I held the position of Post Illustrator. This time period gave me the direction that I would follow for the rest of my life. Upon leaving the service, I returned to the New York area where I fell into the greatest job a wildlife artist could ever hope for. I became the Art Director of the New York Zoological Society (Bronx Zoo).

There was but one other thing that called to me as much as my artwork and that was Fly Fishing. For me these two things have opened more doors and offered me the chance to travel around the world catching and recording so many species of fish and getting to meet and become friends with the legends of our sport. It all started with Angus Cameron, who was the vice president of Knopf Publishing and more like a grandfather to me.

Angus took me under his wing and guided me through the very tough world of illustrating for the major magazines and book publishers. Looking back now, that number of books stands at 38, with many two more to come. Over the five years that I worked for the Zoo, my work became a regular in *Outdoor Life*, *Field and Stream*, *Sports Afield*, and *Fly Fisherman* magazines.

One of the many people I soon called friend was Ted Niemeyer and often when my work brought me into the city, we would meet for lunch. On one of those occasions Ted introduced me to a wonderful, talented man—Bill Cushner. Bill was the owner of Gallery 19 and the creator of what would be called shadowbox framing. He was a wonderful, open man who showed me how he created some of the most beautiful additions to help tell the story of the sport we love.

Bill left us many years ago, but through his guidance I still do some specialty shadowbox framing on very involved pieces.

As I stated earlier, time can get away for you and so it was with me, between 1998 and 2008, I traveled to so many won-



Bill Elliott with a 12-lb. brown trout. [Photo: Bill Elliott]

derful places that I filled two passports. All of these were to allow me to capture on paper the huge number of species of fish that will take a fly.

In those ten years, I made 38 trips to the Amazon and caught and recorded more than 100 different species—and the Amazon was just one of the many locations I visited. The world is changing faster than we can keep up with it, and after 28 years of living in South Florida and fishing for all it had to offer, my wife and I decided it was once again a time for a change.

In 2013, we sold our home and made what will be our last move. Florida was getting way too crowded, and we needed to return to a place where we could be more at peace in a less

crowded environment. A very long time ago I stopped trying to figure out life and just went with what made us both happy. North Carolina was the answer.

There are so many more things I would love to tell you about but for that, the book I have written just might be what you will want to read. I made it this far with no true expectations but to always do my best work every time. Last year in October, I was inducted into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame, an honor that was never expected.

I am once again painting and drawing the subjects that got me started on this journey almost 50 years ago, so life may truly come full circle. Back where I started doing trout and salmon with as much excitement and passion for my art and fly fishing as the first day I picked up a pencil or rod.

Fly Fishing is a way of life, not a sport or hobby. I would change nothing. ♦

The CRSA is happy to announce that Bill Elliott, a classical artist with modern touches, is our 2017 Guest Sporting Artist.

Bill spent five years as Art Director at the Bronx Zoo before moving on to notably illustrate magazines and books. Bill drew on his experiences trout fishing and upland game hunting to produce a sold-out series of lithographs depicting upland game and fresh and salt water fish. The artist then spent a quarter century in Florida drawing salt water fish that could be taken on a fly. Most recently, Bill has circled back to painting scenes of hunting dogs and trout and salmon. His art is notable for its appealing realism. Bill has recently been inducted into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame.

Support our friends! Partner fishery organizations have these upcoming events:

*CFFA: Annual Expo and Banquet, February 4, 2017. Maneely's Banquet Facility. 65 Rye St., South Windsor, CT.
Reservations: Phil Apruzzese tel. 860-489-4319*

*Farmington River Anglers Association: March 24, 2017. Chatterly's Banquet Facility 371 Pinewoods Rd. Torrington. For
reservations: Tom Karpeichik, 860-309-5510*

Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited: March 24, 2017. Chowder Pot IV 165 Brainard Rd. Hartford, CT

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