

edition 11 - SPRING

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Wild spring trout: Brandon Smart  
DIY Oman: interview Ray Montoya  
Spring on the Ain: Fred Revel  
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## AUTUMN TRIPS 2022

Denmark: Salmon trip  
Oman: DIY trip

**NEW**



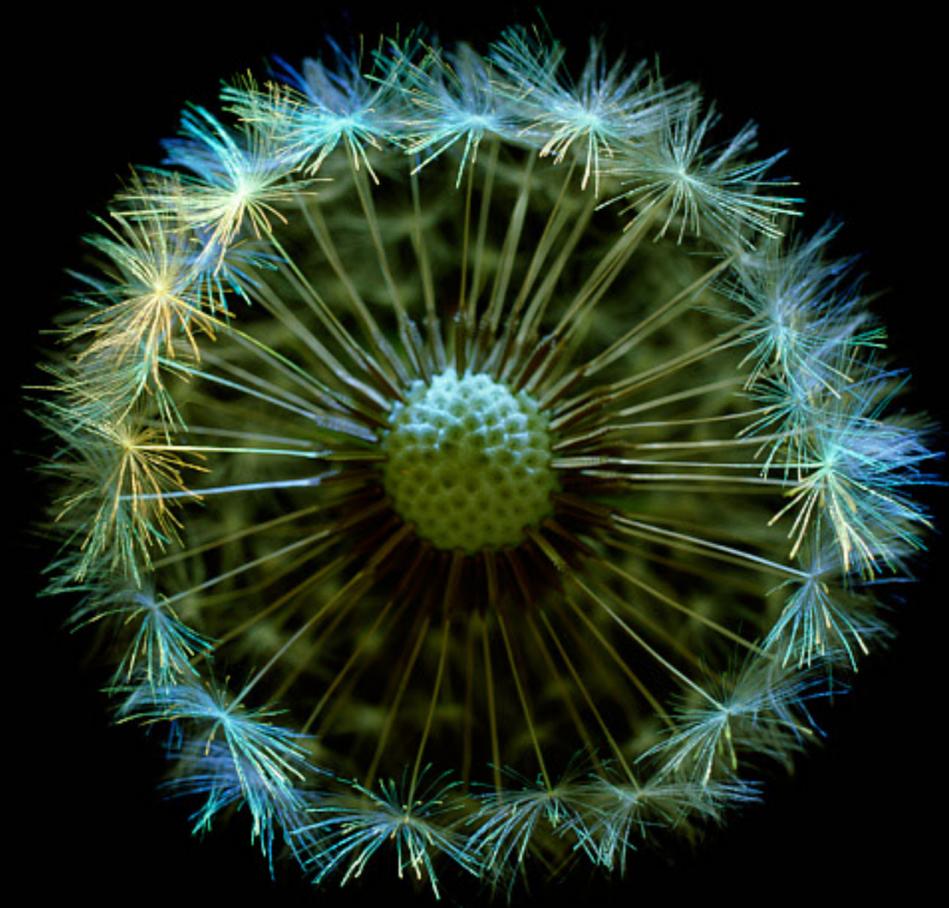
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**Editor:**  
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**Art Director / publisher:**  
Peter Sikking

**Photo:**  
Piet Sikking



# SPRING 2022

Spring, for many fly fishermen the most wonderful time of the year. A time when dreaming about fishing gives way to actually going fishing. We hope to give you a head start with this spring edition of WAFF magazine.

All the best, and tight lines wherever you are.

*Peter Sikking*



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Coastal seatrout with Jesper Lindquist Andersen

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### *Are frozen fingers really worth it*

Many fly anglers look at Iceland with admiring eyes; with its gin clear rivers, mid-night sun and alleged abundance of big fish exciting them the most. But be aware that it is not always sunshine and pure happiness.

 *Elías Petur Vidfjord Thorarinnsson*

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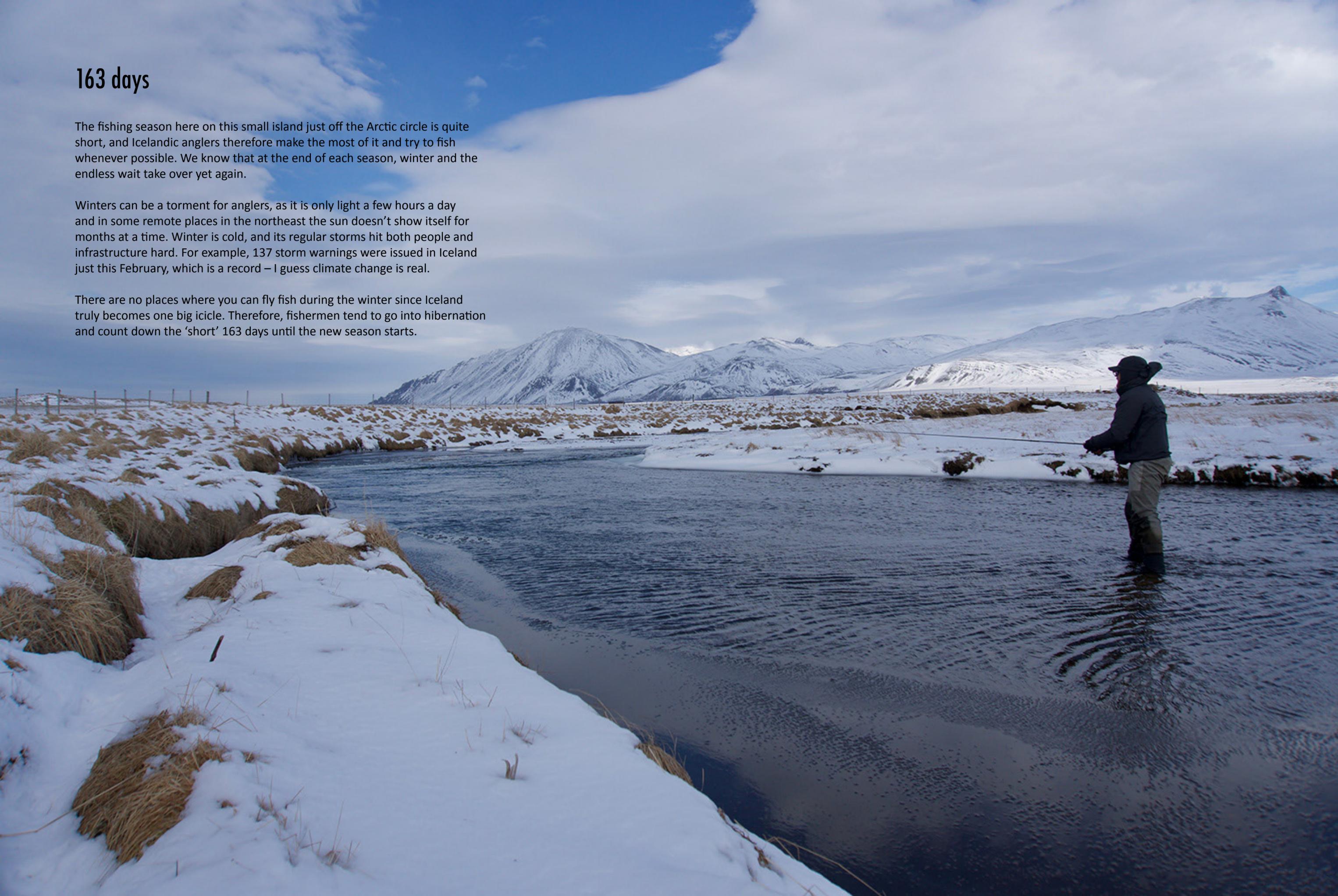


## 163 days

The fishing season here on this small island just off the Arctic circle is quite short, and Icelandic anglers therefore make the most of it and try to fish whenever possible. We know that at the end of each season, winter and the endless wait take over yet again.

Winters can be a torment for anglers, as it is only light a few hours a day and in some remote places in the northeast the sun doesn't show itself for months at a time. Winter is cold, and its regular storms hit both people and infrastructure hard. For example, 137 storm warnings were issued in Iceland just this February, which is a record – I guess climate change is real.

There are no places where you can fly fish during the winter since Iceland truly becomes one big icicle. Therefore, fishermen tend to go into hibernation and count down the 'short' 163 days until the new season starts.





## Deranged lunatics

When the season opens, on the first of April, only a few places are accessible, and most rivers and lakes are still covered in ice. This is the time when only the most deranged lunatics go out to fish; my uncontrollable obsession with sea trout unfortunately makes me one of those lunatics. At this time of year the weather and conditions are always a bit of a lottery; you ask yourself questions like: will the river be frozen, can my car even make it, will there be a snowstorm, and do I have enough warm clothes. Everything should be taken into consideration.

*'will the river be frozen, can my car even make it, will there be a snowstorm, and do I have enough warm clothes. Everything should be taken into consideration'*



The time spent on the river during those first days of the season is generally pretty short. You don't want to be the guy that wakes up and starts to fish before sunrise – those types generally won't make it past midday. You want to gently wake up, have a cup of coffee, or even two, and relax, enjoy yourself and thank whatever you believe in for mentally surviving the winter. While you are doing that the temperature should rise a couple of degrees and the river will hopefully shed some of its ice.

Whenever I go out to fish in April I will generally have around 5-7 layers of clothing on, and these are the only times that I'll store my so-called fashion sense on the shelf and use my neoprene waders. It is way more important to be warm than agile and therefore I usually look more like a fully dressed sumo wrestler than a fly fisherman.

*'You don't want to be the guy that wakes up and starts to fish before sunrise, those types generally won't make it past midday'.*



When you are down by the river the first thing you sometimes must do before you even consider tying on a fly is to wade out into the pool and break away the ice covering it. Icelanders tend to have a steel bar with them to help bash pools free of ice, after which they sit in their car for half an hour before starting to fish. It is as ridiculous as it sounds but remember, only the most de-ranged lunatics are out and about anyway.

*- But what a reward -*

During the springtime I tend to only use floating lines, except when the water is really high, in which case an intermediate or sinking line, and big streamers can work like magic. And don't get me wrong, even though spring fishing in Iceland probably sounds terrible after reading this, we actually get some days in between where the weather is quite nice. Those days are invariably followed by high and muddy water, since nice weather usually means thawing conditions.





The most effective method when spring fishing for sea trout in Iceland is definitely nymfing. I tend to use a dropper, a heavy tungsten pheasant tail and then a small midge or even a squirmy wormy, while I'm searching for fish.

The best part about fishing this time of year is that the fishing is generally easier than it is in the summer or autumn. The fish haven't seen flies for a long time and there is a definite lack of food in the river. Therefore, it is more about finding the fish, rather than contemplating what exactly it is that they're eating. You should therefore be on the move, covering ground, trying and fishing as many pools as you can.

*The best part about fishing this time of year is that the fishing is generally easier than it is in the summer or autumn*



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During the early season, we also have to deal with the water freezing in our guides. To deal with this, a trick we've learned is to rub vaseline on your guides, just as we do to our chapped, frozen lips. I wouldn't say it is a perfect method, but it definitely beats having to remove the ice from your guides every other cast.

---





When you finally find these magnificent fish and manage to hook them, you're in for a great fight. Unlike Atlantic salmon, which usually only migrate up the river once or twice, sea trout can live for 20 years, and come up and down the river systems multiple times to spawn. They therefore know the river well, probably even better than you. They know where the big rocks are, where to hide and how to get away from fishermen. It is important to be on your toes because you probably will have to run downstream after them at some point, which can be a bit tricky in 30 pounds of wool clothing and neoprene waders.

When you have landed your fish and taken your ego-boosting hero shot, the worst part of the trip begins... the release. There aren't many things more uncomfortable than putting your hands in freezing cold water, especially when the fish is exhausted after the fight. It can take quite some time for them to get back to full strength and every second your hands are in the water feels like forever. I once had the 'unpleasant' experience of landing over 10 fish in freezing temperatures. While releasing the last one I really couldn't feel my hands and I'm pretty sure my fingers were close to being frozen. I was in the middle of nowhere and my gloves were wet and useless. The only solution I could think of was to shove my hand up my mouth to make it thaw. While I sat there on the snow-covered bank with my mouth full of frozen fingers, I thought to myself "Look at you, am I crazy? Why am I doing this? Is this really worth it?"  
Needless to say, I was back on the river a couple of days later.

*Elias Petur Vidford Thorarinsson*



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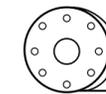
## Ray Montoya an interview with

### Introduction

Ray:

My full name is Raymond Anthony Montoya. I am the oldest of four children. My father was in the US military, so we grew up in many locations. I started fishing with my brother when I was ten years old. We pretty much lived outdoors, from sunup to sundown, coming home just for meals.

I was about 12 years old when we moved to San Antonio, Texas. There, we fished for warm water species like bass and bluegills, with tiny cork poppers. I picked up fly fishing in 1973. My first fly rod was a seven foot Fenwick glass rod, paired with a very old Medalist click pawl reel loaded with a cracked floating line.



*Ray Montoya*





## Introduction

### Peter:

Ray is an absolute explorer when it comes to fly fishing. You could say that Ray was doing things himself before the term do-it-yourself was invented. This way of life provides an enormous treasure trove of stories. Stories that I would love to share with you through this magazine. Maybe in the future :)

In this interview, I'd like to get a sense of Ray Montoya's life as a fly fisherman and an inside look at this (retired) art teacher.



## INTERVIEW

**Peter:**

When I think of New Mexico, your original home, my thoughts often go back to my visit, several years ago, to Santa Fe, and the impact that this visit had on me. Especially after meeting some of the people and artists when strolling through the Santa Fe art market.

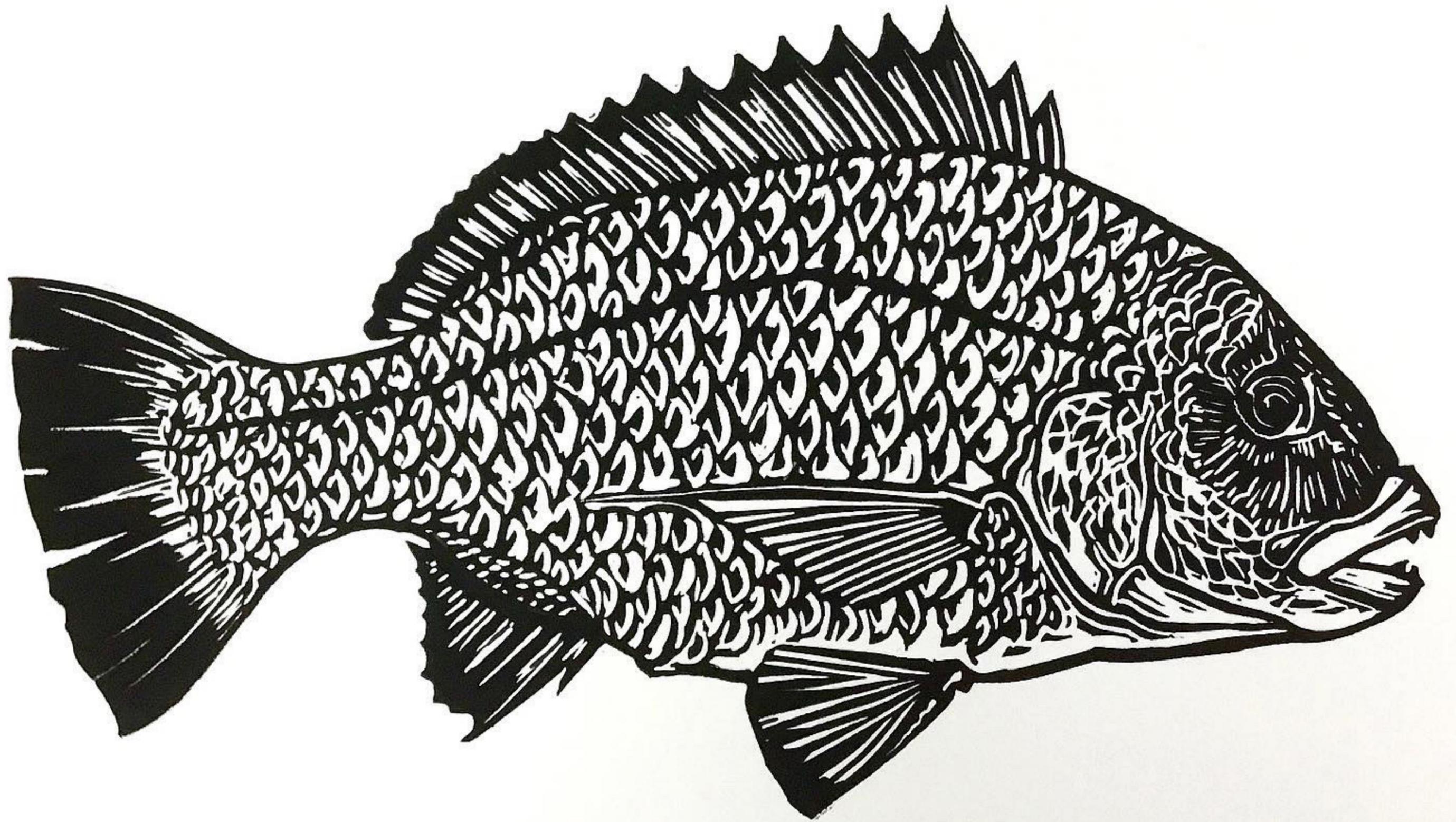
**Ray:**

It is true that New Mexico, my original home, is quite renowned as an art community and is one of the largest art markets in the world. It is well-known that the altitude and desert light has attracted artists from all over the world.

I am first and foremost a teacher, and second to that a self-taught artist. I have taught for 35 years, and began my career teaching science. I was fortunate to get a position teaching high school art when I moved to Oman. For me, art is simply an extension of natural science. I don't think humans have actually developed or created anything in art that doesn't already exist in the natural world. In that sense, as I often tell my students, originality is really just the obscurity of one's resources. In other words, everything we create is borrowed and reworked. The more obscure your resources, the more original and creative people think you are.

As for my own work, I really didn't intend to be a 'fish artist'. I simply enjoy cutting images of fish and natural objects in sheets of linoleum. Printmaking is a subtractive process. You remove negative space to create an image; for that reason it can be very therapeutic. I love colour, but I've never felt I could do it justice, so I only work in black and white.





**Peter:**

I know it is quite a list, but can you let our readers know where you have wet your lines.

**Ray:**

Haha, that's a polite way of putting it, thank you. Wow. So most of North America, including Mexico, Canada and Alaska. I've also fished Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba and Chile. In 1994 I moved my family to South East Asia for work. There, I had opportunities to fish throughout the Philippines, Indonesia, West Papua, Australia, the Cook Islands, Kiribati (Christmas Island) and New Zealand. In 2002 we relocated to Oman. When I arrived, the Arabian coast was still relatively unexplored in terms of fly fishing, or even with conventional tackle for that matter. I've been in Oman for the past 21 years, and have had countless opportunities to explore and fly fish the region, including the United Arab Emirates, and Socotra, Yemen .

**DIY ZONE**



**Peter:**

Could you highlight one of them and maybe tell our readers why.

**Ray:**

Oman by far because I was literally the first person to fly fish here. I've captured dozens of species on the fly, but it was the Indo-Pacific permit (*Trachinotus blochii*) that first put Oman on the fly fishing map. It didn't take long for the rest of the world to take notice once I started posting images on social media. Shortly thereafter, the guides and fishing tour operators began to arrive.



Unfortunately, most of the other inshore species that I used to target have sadly declined due to commercial fishing, but the Arabian permit, because of their solitary nature, have escaped exploitation, and thus can still be found along many of the beaches in southern Oman.

---

**Peter:**

Can you share a certain moment (while on a fly fishing trip) you will never forget.

**Ray:**

DIY exploration in third world countries brings all sorts of unexpected surprises. I've had a near death experience, been chased out of villages, and been marooned a few times. I think my most recent stranding in Socotra, Yemen, when the pandemic hit, stands out as the most unforgettable. Living with the locals for weeks on a remote beach, searching for the first fly-caught Socotran permit, catching it, and then getting rescued by an Emirati Sheik. Yeah, that one stands out.

*Living with the locals for weeks  
on a remote beach...*

A man wearing a white cap, sunglasses, and a light blue shirt is holding a large, flat, silver fish. He has a cigar in his mouth and is standing on a sandy beach with turquoise water and white dunes in the background. A fishing rod is visible behind him.

**Peter:**

You must have met so many people on your journeys. Is there anyone special you remember.

**Ray:**

Again, DIY exploration provides so many opportunities to meet incredible people both on and off the water. I owe a great debt to and have much gratitude for my Omani mate and fishing partner, Kamal. I took Kamal under my wing and taught him everything I knew about fly fishing. Kamal is now a very experienced and accomplished caster and fly fisherman who has caught more Omani permit than anyone I know. He's been by my side for the past 15 years, not only here in Oman, but in Sudan, Yemen, New Mexico, and Kiribati. Kamal is a sweet and generous person. We have this kind of relationship where we both get more excited watching the other catch fish. Kamal has taken many of the photographs I have posted on social media. He has a keen eye for composition and fish.



**Peter:**  
what would you suggest to a novice (tropical saltwater) fly angler that he or she should try at least once in a life-time. Please start with a country or place in a country, fishing for (species), best food, nicest drink... you know, the whole package :)

**Ray:**  
If I had only one day left in my life to fish, I'd want to spend that day on a world class bonefish flat.

Bonefish are the absolute perfect fly rod fish, and are so visually pleasing to sight cast to. They live in some of the most beautiful habitats on the planet, pristine turquoise flats. They tail like crazy and eat flies with abandon, and of course, their speed is legendary.

I think my favorite location for bonefish would have to be Los Roques, Venezuela. The fish there are broad-shouldered, and the archipelago of 40 plus islands where one can fish for them comprises some of the most beautiful beaches in the world.

Then there's the hospitality and food of Gran Roque, the main island, which sports a strong Italian influence. It's also an easy destination to do a mix of guided and DIY exploration. I feel like it has everything for a novice, but also for one last day of fishing.



## READER TRIP: DANISH SALMON

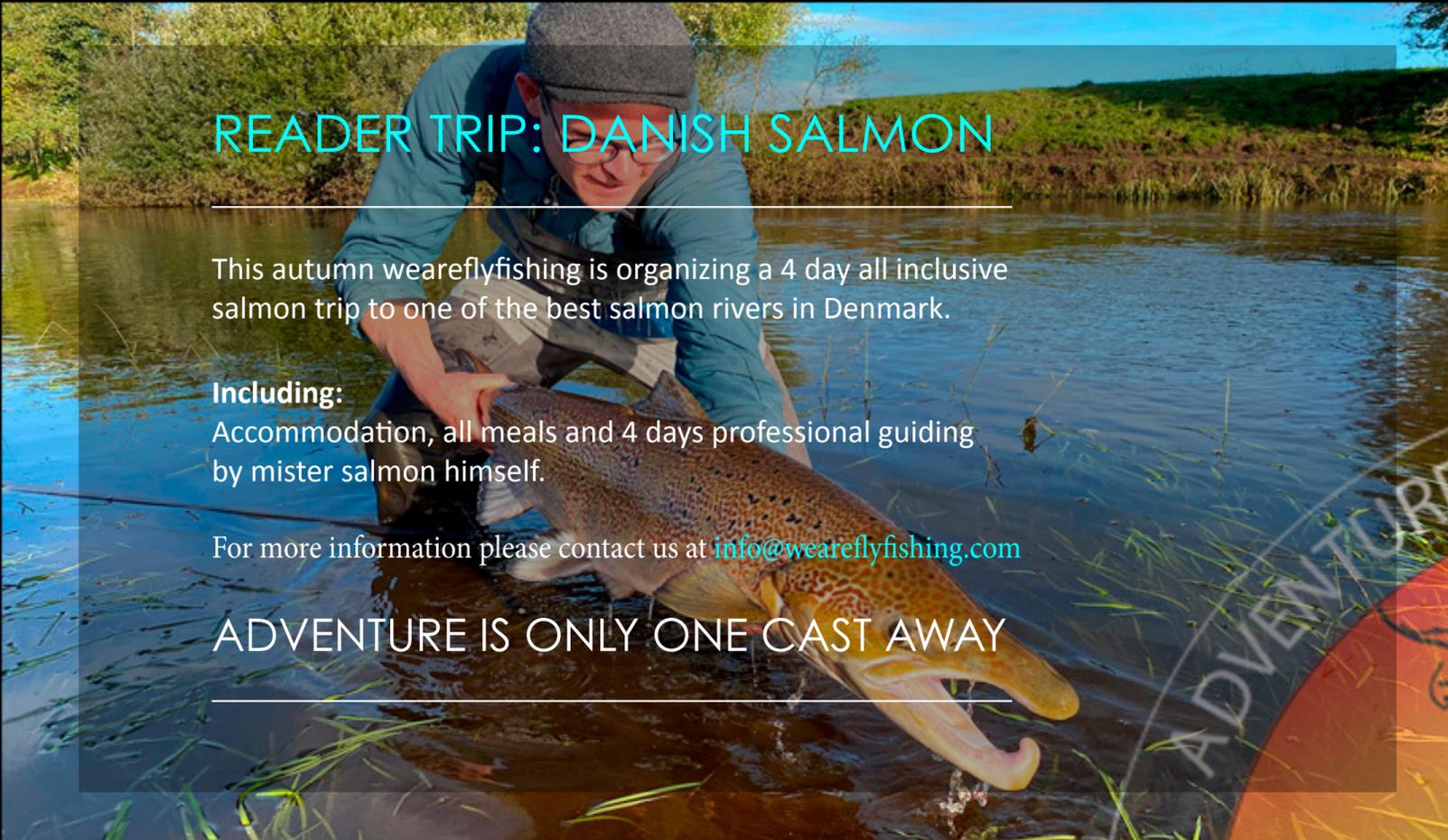
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READER TRIP FOR DANISH SALMON



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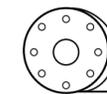
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## Spring fishing: the best reason for the best season

As a student of rivers, I was taught by them that not all trout are created equal. Discovering that many public rivers were stocked with these artificial creatures that nature would be ashamed to be held responsible for. And with that awareness came the urge to discover wild trout, driving me deeper and deeper into the woods with the passing of the years. Different seasons were equally many expeditions, and time suddenly slipped away—with the details of everything in between tied together by the colours of the trout's artistic patterns.

*Having been born and raised in New York, opening day always had a special meaning to me. A crowd of anglers — young and old — competing for the ultimate prize: the best opportunity for their first April trout and the joy of succeeding.*



*Brandon Smart*







This change in mindset, from a previous paradigm to one in sync with nature, has given me a close and enduring connection with the true wild, and a lifetime love. And yet, to catch a trout, only to set it free? Behind the grandeur of the tall trees encircled by creeks, rivers, springs, the bond that's formed between man and fish is one so fragile to mankind's growth.



Nearly a decade has gone by and this dogged fly-fishing habit is now engraved in my spirit, which on the water, reflects the same peacefulness as all of nature—a protector. The river is a place of meditation and makes me the best person I can be in life.



My advice to any angler is to dedicate as much time on the water during the northeast's temporal months of March through May. The spring runoff from the prior year's snow-pack causes great swings in streamflow, increasing my admiration for the trout's natural instinct for evasiveness—gaining back lost winter weight, one bug at a time.



Today, I traverse the forest's arboreal beauty year-round. The mesmeric flows of the river's current mixed with frozen ice outweigh the numb hands and feet. In the cold winter months, the senses are awakened inward, making anyone who dares a stronger angler. This seasonal solitude is one only a passionate fisherman can truly know. With many days stitched together with stories of warmer months ahead.





Being on the water, rod in hand, is all we can hope for these days. Any nymph seems to do the trick, as trout have to relearn how to avoid artificial flies, a knowledge acquired through the fishes' own previous experience, but long since forgotten after the winter break.

Many advanced anglers take full advantage of eagerly feeding spring trout. The result, of course, always proportionate to the skill, keen attention, and patience possessed by the angler. With each drift, comes hope. With spring, comes a lifetime memory of big brown trout. No two alike, each engraved in my memory like it were yesterday.





Wild trout need our help to be protected at all costs. The places they live hold natural beauty greater than words can describe. That's why we, as fly fishermen, all keep coming back to this lifetime hobby. Everyone should take action by donating time or money to local organizations that protect these water systems, as well as larger ecosystems. Wild resources may be something of the past before we know it. So don't take a single day on the water for granted. None of us want to grow old talking about "The good old days."

*Brandon Smart*



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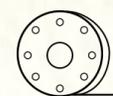
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## Junichi

I started fly fishing 42 years ago under the influence of my father. These days, I work as a freelance reporter for a fly fishing magazine, I also do graphic design work. I wrote a book on fly tying, for which I provided all content, text, photography, and design.

I also teach fly fishing schools and work as a tour guide. I could never have imagined that what started as a simple childhood pastime would become my future career.



*Junichi Nakane*







MIDROOT  
STUDIO  
TAKASHI NAKAZUMI



ALFREDO I  
STUDIO











As a teenager, I wanted to become a painter, but I eventually decided to pursue a career in music production. Three years ago, I received a commission to design and create the cover art for the SMITH Japan product catalog, which inspired me to take up painting again in earnest. As part of that, I decided to draw a picture and post it on Instagram, every day for 366 days. At first, it was just for practice, but then I received a request from someone who wanted to buy my paintings, and now I am working on a way to sell them. For any painting sold during this year, a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to environmental conservation and protection activities.

*Junichi Nakane*



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## The time of the Gammarus on the lower river Ain

The river Ain is one of the most important rivers of the Jura mountains. Its downstream part, before the confluence with the Rhone, is famous for its big zebra trout and its bluefinned grayling.

 Frédéric Revel





## Lower Ain

The lower Ain, flowing across a plains area, is a very wide river, whose bed is frequently modified by floods. Large gravel pits follow one another, separated by sectors of riffles. The trout density is rather low but on the other hand, the average size of the fish is high, with a median size between 45 and 60 cm. These are trout from Mediterranean strains, characterized by stripes and the absence of red spots. Thanks to an abundance of food, these fish grow rapidly.

A wide-angle photograph of a river scene. In the foreground, a large, flat area of smooth, light-colored river stones is partially submerged in shallow water. A fisherman, wearing a cap, a dark jacket, and waders, stands in the water on the right side, holding a fishing rod. The background consists of a dense forest of trees with varying green foliage, some bare branches, and a sandy bank. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

Every spring, as soon as the water drops a little, millions of *Gammarus* scuds gather on the edges of the river, and attract the most beautiful trout. Of course this phenomenon also attracts anglers looking for a trophy fish.

A wide river flows through a landscape of trees with sparse, brownish leaves, suggesting an autumn or winter setting. The water is turbulent, with white foam and rapids. Several large, light-colored rocks protrude from the water, creating points of turbulence. The sky is a clear, pale blue. In the background, a small building is partially visible through the trees.

The *Gammarus* can be so abundant that the trout need only occupy a position with their noses pressed against a rock, and open their mouths to gobble up the passing *Gammarus* without interruption. In these conditions, fishing requires great precision but also absolute discretion; to tempt these fish, a bow and arrow cast often being the only solution.

It is very rewarding to find trout in skinny water and to be able to attack them from a distance with an unweighted *Gammarus*, by anticipating their trajectory.







This sight fishing can be very exciting, but the slightest disturbance of the water can ruin all hopes by dispersing the *Gammarus*.

Spring is the best period to discover the trout of the Basse Rivière d'Ain. Later in the year, with lower flows, warmer waters, canoes and swimmers... it is better to devote oneself to the other species that the river harbours, or to the enjoyment of the remarkable fauna and flora on this sector.

*Frédéric Revel*





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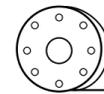
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## Fly fishing on Funen for coastal seatrout

Funen, or Fyn in Danish, is a small island situated in the centre of Denmark, between the Jutland peninsula and Zealand. Funen incorporates many small islands, bays, and fjords, so we can always find a good place to fish.



*Jesper Lindquist Andersen*

---



Springtime is absolutely the best time to fish for sea trout on the Danish coast. The rising temperature makes not only the sea trout, but also the angler more active. Due to an excellent stock of sea trout, this can provide unforgettable fishing days in spring.

The best spring fishing is between March and May. After that period the water gets too warm, and anglers go from day-fishing to evening and night fishing.

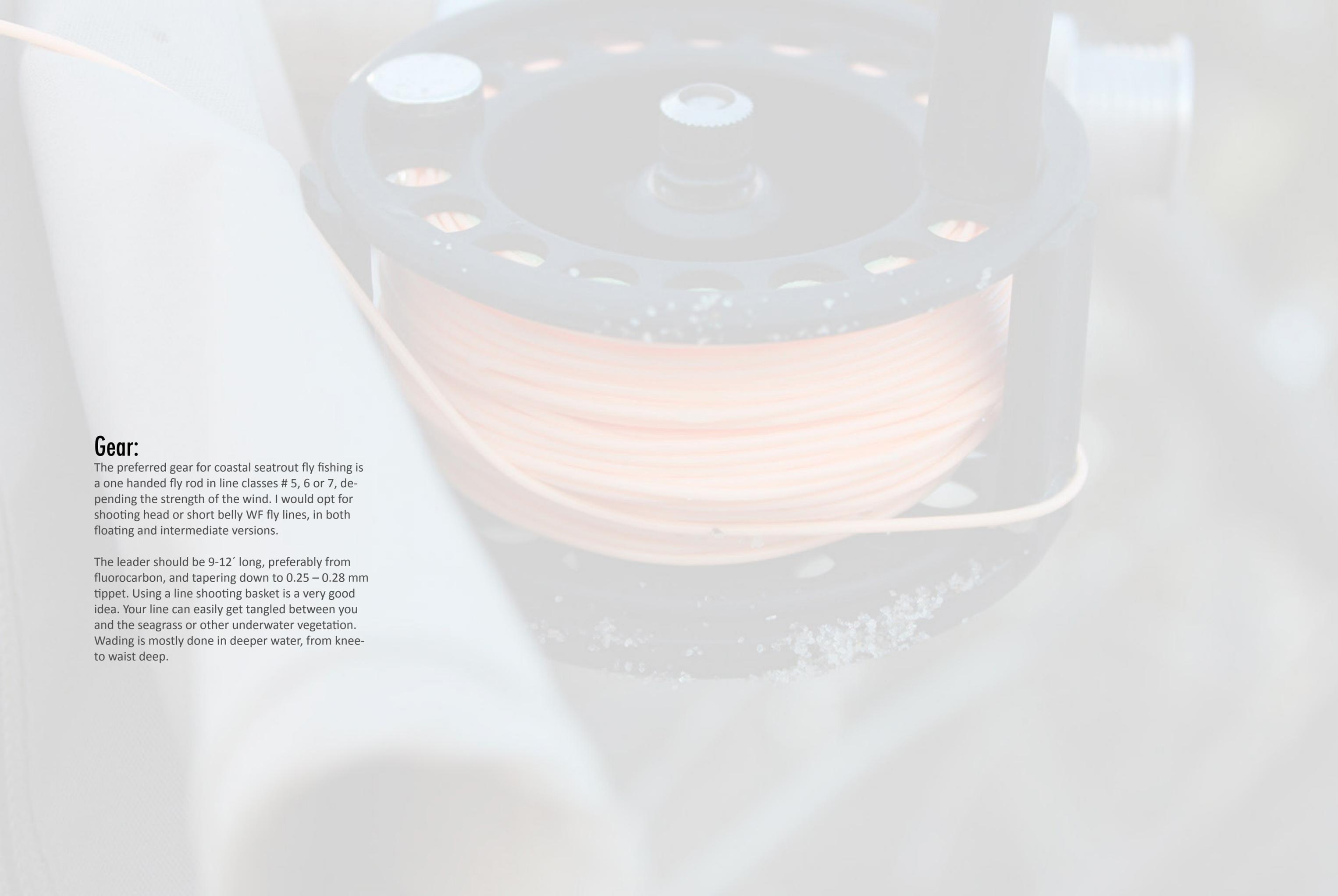


Although early spring days can sometimes feel like summer days, the weather can turn quickly. It is not unusual to experience 3 seasons in a single day. This capricious weather doesn't make the fishing any less successful. Actually it usually does just the opposite. Seatrout like a bit of rough weather.









## **Gear:**

The preferred gear for coastal seatrout fly fishing is a one handed fly rod in line classes # 5, 6 or 7, depending the strength of the wind. I would opt for shooting head or short belly WF fly lines, in both floating and intermediate versions.

The leader should be 9-12' long, preferably from fluorocarbon, and tapering down to 0.25 – 0.28 mm tippet. Using a line shooting basket is a very good idea. Your line can easily get tangled between you and the seagrass or other underwater vegetation. Wading is mostly done in deeper water, from knee- to waist deep.

## Tactics:

When you fish for seatrout on the coasts of Funen, the most important thing is to cover as much water as you can. Never cast multiple casts to the same spot, except if you missed a take or if you spot a fish.

A good way to cover some water is the step - cast - step approach. Always fish the dark areas containing stones or seaweed. Please remember that most of the seatrout will be in shallow water; water between half a meter and a meter and a half deep.



## Flies:

My favorite fly is definitely the 'Pattegrisen', a bright shrimp fly in the colour pink. I also fish this fly in white, especially when the water is very cold, and in more natural colours like tan, when the water gets warmer at the end of spring. I personally always fish with two flies on my cast, a shrimp fly in a size 6 or 4 and a smaller *Gammarus* fly – for example 'the kobberbassen' -in front.

As said I often fish a provocation fly and an imitation fly. If you open my fly box it is mostly filled with shrimp flies and *Gammarus* flies in different sizes and colours. However, one other fly I like to fish in spring is a dark worm imitation. In early spring there can be a lot of worms in the water, and seatrout can get really focused on them. The dark wiggle worm fly is als very good when the water is a bit murky.





### The Pattegrisen

If you want to see how my favorite shrimp fly is tied, please check my tutorial on YouTube:  
<https://youtu.be/gY1rfVIOQO4>



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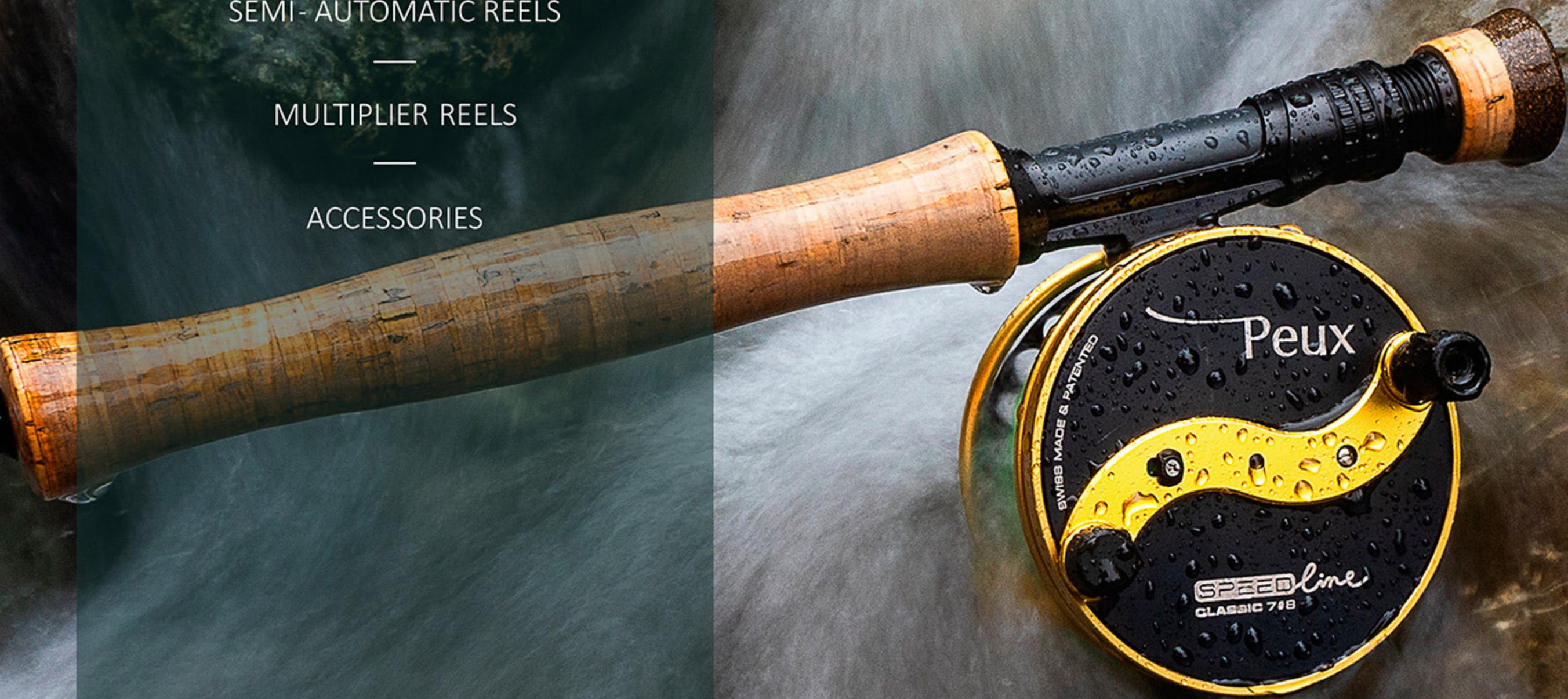
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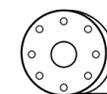


## Spring

I was born and raised near the Österdalälven river in Sweden, and I've been fishing that river and its tributaries since I was a kid. One day my father put a fly rod in my little hand and I've kinda held on to it ever since. Today I own a fly shop and a guide service on that very same river, so I guess you can say that the long and winding path of my life, in a way, ended up where it all started.

Text: Stefan Larsson

Photography: Stefan Larsson, Morten Valeur, @coastfly, Ulf Börjesson



*Stefan Larsson*





We are quite used to long, ice cold winters and deep snow, which refuses to give in. Sometimes the wait for spring can be a real struggle, but when it finally arrives, you realize it was all worth the wait. Up here, when you're a fly angler, springtime usually peeps around the corner in the month of May, when the tiny but brave *Baetis* begin to hatch.





The feeling of those first days of spring, when you're walking along a river, casting tiny dries to rising trout and grayling, is hard to describe. You hardly notice that the water is still very cold and the grass on the banks is still yellow. This is the time when all that has been asleep for so long awakens anew; and I guess that includes us as well.







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*Dry fly fishing for spooky trout is what it's mainly about for me, though I do hook up with a grayling or two now and then. Most of the time in the exquisite company of a trout dog called Simms.*



Early spring days are not always about catching fish, sometimes it's more about being there and being a part of something that is bigger than ourselves. By all means, catching that first fish of the season is always very happy and exciting, but I believe that sometimes the sounds and scents of spring just actually might beat that.

When you can sit on the bank calmly, watching trout rise, with a big smile on your face. And that's probably why we love beautiful miss Spring so much.

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[weareflyfishing.com](http://weareflyfishing.com)

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Artist: Junichi Nakane

Spring time in Sweden: Stefan Larsson

Frozen fingers: Elias Petur Vidfjord Thorarinsson

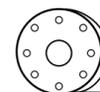
Early Spring in Northern England: Matt Eastham

**SPRING  
ISSUE**





**Spring in Northern England**



*Matthew Eastham*

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It's early spring in Northern England, and the countryside has been teetering on the brink of the new season for a few weeks now, with cold days belonging to the last knockings of winter punctuated by brief moments of hope: the barely perceptible change in the quality of light as the sun reaches higher in the sky each day; and at dusk on quiet evenings, blackbirds are singing from the uppermost branches of roadside hawthorn bushes.



A wide river flows through a lush, green landscape. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding foliage. In the foreground, the water is covered with numerous small, white, winged insects, likely mayflies, which are scattered across the surface. In the background, a line of dark, rounded rocks or boulders stretches across the river, with a few small, dark objects (possibly olives) visible on the rocks. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting with a focus on the water and the insects.

I've been visiting the river and watching. Around noon each day a few large dark olives appear, riding the oily currents like tiny schooners. Some days I can count on one hand the number of them I see, but occasionally, the pathetic trickle shows signs of building into something substantial and the little flies begin to jostle into back eddies where they cluster, flexing their wings, waiting to make good their escape into bankside undergrowth. Trout however remain unimpressed and steadfastly refuse to show themselves.



Daytime temperatures creep upwards and with lesser celandine in flower and the first heads of butterbur breaking through the sandy banks, the large dark olives are joined by the first of the March browns – darkly mottled flies which look huge as they heave themselves through the surface film. It's still cold though, and as the 15th March passes and I begin to think about bringing my rod with me to the river, I haven't yet seen the rings of a rising fish.

MARCH BROWN





A few days later and I'm back at the river. Nothing has changed. The air is cool and the trees are struggling into leaf at a snail's pace. The water carries that blue look of frigid sterility. I sit at a favourite pool and watch.... well, nothing. After a while the first of the olives appear, a full hour later than I expected, and as I hawk the surface for signs of activity, I finally hear it: an unmistakable watery smack from somewhere just upstream. A fish.



The trout rises again, then twice more; and at the fourth rise, I finally see it – a momentary flattening of the popply water away on the far side of the main current. With that, I breathe again. My river has once more survived the winter. Of course, I knew it would, but still, irrationally, the doubt is there, every year. I unhook the foam dun from the butt ring of my nine-footer and tentatively take my first steps into the water. The whole season is ahead of me. Everything awaits.











Matt Eastham  
Preston, Lancashire

# BEEF SOCIAL



Photo by Peter Sikking

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