
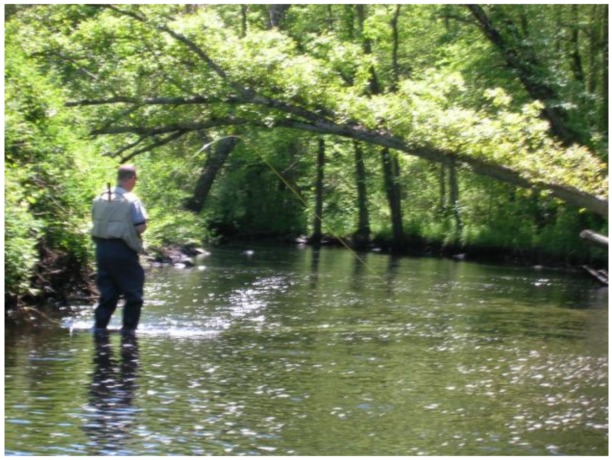


Fly Fishing for the American Shad

INDIAN HEAD RIVER

Hanover and Pembroke Massachusetts

by Joe Danubio

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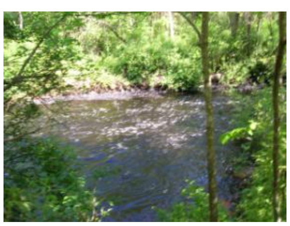
and River History, Dam and Industrial Impacts, River Conservation

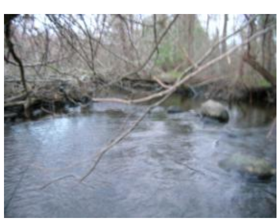


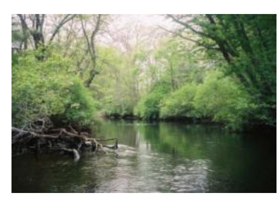








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Fly Fishing for the American Shad at the Indian Head River

Introduction

Every April, various migratory species of fish embark on an expedition from the ocean into the local rivers, brooks, and streams. After traveling through the various ocean tributaries, the migratory species reach their final destination, the spawning grounds, where they complete their reproductive purpose for their existence and insure the survival of future generations.

Some of the most popular migratory species in Massachusetts are the river herring, American shad, American eel, and lamprey eel. The most sought after of these species by the local angler is the American shad. The length of the typical American shad on a spawning run is 17 to 27 inches. The shad typically hang around in groups in one pool in the river during the day. They are most active at night when they commence their travel upstream. There is no mistaking their presence in their river which typically begins around dusk. They are notorious for their zigzagging movements at the surface of a river. If you are wading in the river while angling for shad at night, it is certain that many fish will swim into your legs and bounce off up the river to another pool where they will rest again the following day. Most anglers prefer to fish for them at night when they are most active.

My personal recommendation is to pursue fly fishing for shad during the day when the traffic on the water is much lighter. The primary goal of angling for shad is to know that they are in the river. In early April, people will begin to show up at the rivers to visually see movement that would indicate that the spawning run has commenced.

Fishing in the day requires visually inspecting each isolated pool with polarized glasses to determine if the shad are in the river. Once you have located a pool of shad, gold has been struck, because very few shad move up river during the daylight hours. Once you locate your pool, the shad are there to stay for that day. Even in the days to follow, a new group of shad will replenish the fish that migrated upstream to the next pool, so there is a continuous flux of fish in the river for a six week period.

After you locate the fish, tie on a size 10or 12 bead head pheasant tail nymph or copper john and drift the fly through the pool. Nobody knows why they bite the flies, but they do. For many years, I personally believed catching a shad on a fly rod during the day with a small fly was an urban myth. After I

finally tried it, I began catching the fish and visually seeing them bite the fly to suppress any notion that the fish were being snagged. Visual observation of the fish taking the fly is the key to success.

Hooking a shad on a fly rod is by far one of the most exhilarating local angling experiences that can be encountered at the inland waters of Massachusetts. The shad is a powerful fish and will conduct runs up, down, and across the river that will put smoke in your fly reel unlike any other inland species.

I recommend that all fly fishing anglers make their own attempt to prove that hooking a shad on the fly rod during the day is not an urban myth. Be patient. It could take a few days where you put in a few hours each day before setting a hook on your first fish. Once you get a few fish under your belt and figure out the system, it is possible to hook up with and land three to ten fish in an under an hour.

If a fish that possesses the power to leap a few feet out of the water and into a bush hanging over the bank to regain its freedom does not excite you, I don't know what will. The American shad spawning run only lasts for six weeks at best. Don't let the next season pass you by, because it will be another ten months before the opportunity will present itself again.

The American Shad Reproductive Cycle

The American shad begins their annual spawning cycle when the temperature of a river rises above 40ºF. At this temperature, the shad will move into their spawning estuary to begin their journey to their spawning grounds. Azaleas and shad bushes will be blooming at the same time. Many use these plants as an indicator of the commencement of the annual shad run. If a shad moves into the river at 40ºF and the temperature drops below forty once they are in the river, they have been known to move back towards the ocean until the temperature reaches 40ºF again.

Alosa Sapidissima
American shad

The male fish will return to the rivers before the females. The males are generally smaller than females. The average length of a male is 17 to 20 inches. Females usually range between 20 and 25 inches in length. An adult shad typically weighs between 3 and 8 pounds.

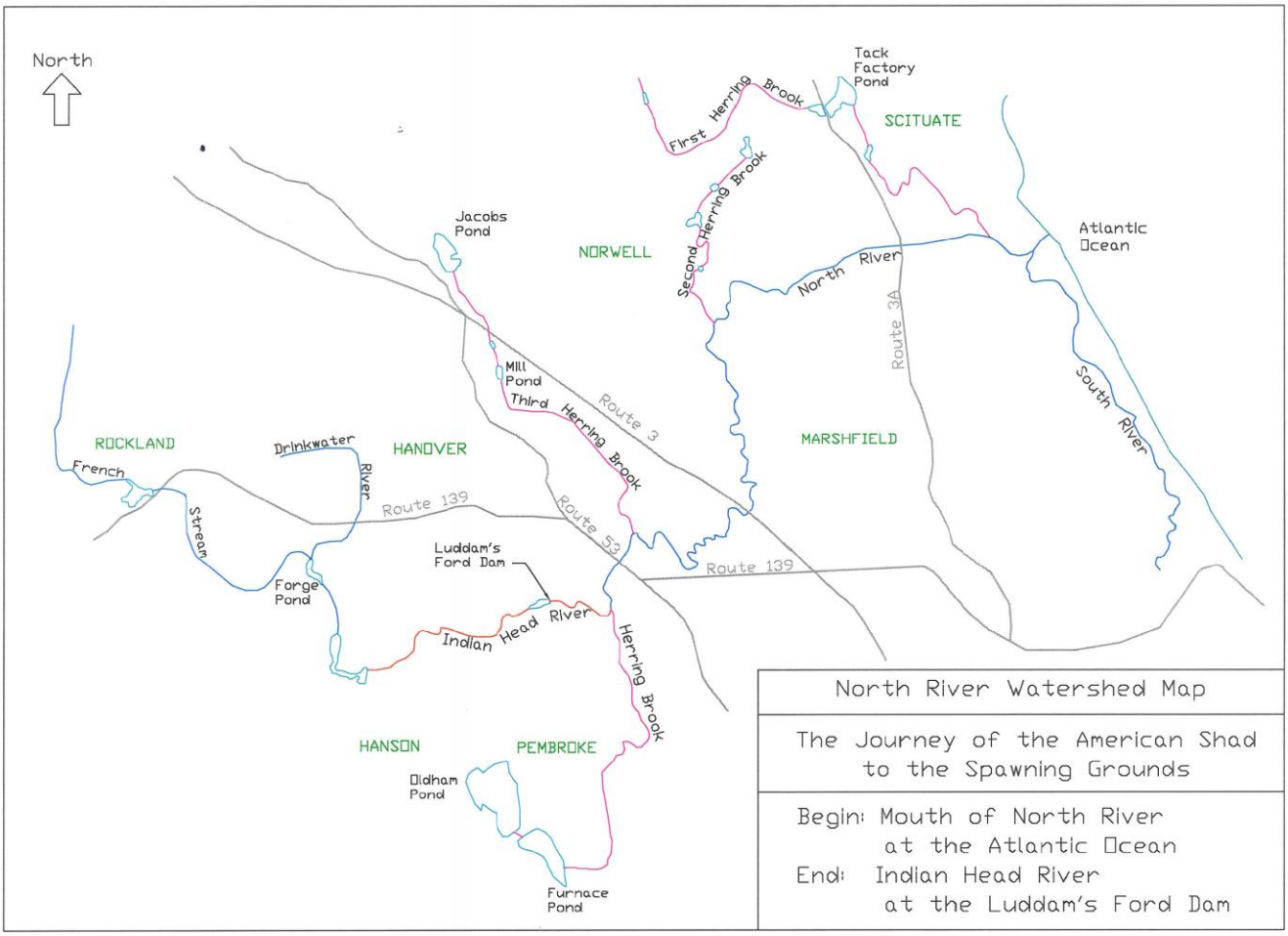
The shad return to rivers to spawn after being in the ocean for four years. Many fish will actually die after spawning because of the energy expended during their travels to the spawning ground as well as the spawning activity and rituals. Others will return to the ocean after they have spawned.

One female fish can deposit about 250,000 eggs into a river during one spawning cycle. Some fish will deposit their eggs in the river below the dam. Others will travel upstream at the dam by using the fish ladder and deposit their eggs in the system above the dam. Shad eggs hatch within a few days. They will remain in a larval form for about a month before they turn into fish. Juveniles will grow where they hatch. When the temperature of the river falls below 60ºF, the juveniles will begin their first journey downstream through the river system to the ocean.

There are many rivers that the American shad spawn in that are tributary to the Atlantic Ocean. The Indian Head River is one of the rivers. It is a tributary of the North River located on the Pembroke and Hanover town lines in Southeastern Massachusetts. The major area of focus for American Shad anglers is the section between the Luddam's Ford Dam and the state boat launch on Indian Head Drive. It is a tidal river fifteen to thirty feet wide located approximately ten or fifteen miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The South River, Merrimack River, and Connecticut River and their tributaries also host runs of American shad each spring in Massachusetts. The Neponset and Charles River historically experienced decent runs, but populations have been reduced due to the presence of dams on the rivers. At some point in history, prior to the advent of hydroelectric power generation for industry via the construction of dams, it is probable that most rivers along the Atlantic Coast probably experienced American shad runs.

The Journey to the Indian Head River

The American shad spends the majority of the year in the Atlantic Ocean. When the water temperature of the North River reaches forty degrees, the migratory journey to their spawning grounds begins. To reach the Indian Head River, the shad will swim approximately ten miles up the North River from its confluence with the Atlantic Ocean in Scituate and Marshfield, Massachusetts. It will bypass the First, Second, and Third Herring Brooks in Scituate, Norwell, and Hanover. At the fork of the Herring Brook in Pembroke, the upstream portion of the North River watershed is called the Indian Head River. The fish swim a section of the Indian Head River that is approximately a mile in length before they reach the area of Luddam's Ford Dam where spawning will occur.



The Indian Head River

The state boat launch is located about a half mile upstream from the fork at the Herring Brook in Pembroke on Indian Head Drive in Hanover. The bulk of this section is too deep, marshy, and muddy to wade. The section of river two hundred yards downstream of the boat ramp to the upstream Luddam's Ford Dam is the primary area that anglers focus on in their pursuit of the American shad. The total stretch of river is between a half and three quarters of a mile. The bulk of it is no more than thirty feet wide. A short roll cast will get you to the fish.

Otherwise, the majority of the bank from the dam to the boat ramp consists of thick over hanging under brush. There are a handful of practical access points along the river on the Pembroke side. A canopy of over hanging limbs covers some sections of the river. In the Jungle Pool you will find over hanging limbs above a mess of fallen submerged timber along the bank and lying across the river.

Most of the river bottom consists of gravel and rocks. There are some sections like the Bend Pool that have a sandy bottom. Civilization Pool, just downstream of the Jungle, has a silty, muddy bottom. Anglers must take precautions to prevent sinking down into the organic muck in this area of the river. The area between the Rock Wall Pool and the Bend Pool is very shallow. The lamprey eel and their spawning beds are visible in the middle of the river.

The river provides areas for anglers of differing experience levels to pursue the American shad. Some areas are more open above and beneath the water providing security and ease for a beginner. Other areas are filled with obstacles above and beneath the water for the angler who has a few fish behind them already and desires to push the boundaries further than the casual angler.

Accessing the Indian Head River is not difficult. There is a parking area on the north and south side of the river at the Luddam's Ford Dam with plenty of parking spaces available. The Dam is located on West Elm Street on the Hanover Pembroke town lines. A trail on the south side of the river provides access to the majority of the pools from the dam to the Jungle Pool. The north side of the river is mostly thick brush from the dam to the Jungle Pool.

There is another parking area at the dead end of Indian Head Drive. Indian Head Drive is located across from Luddam Ford's Park on the north side of the river. A state boat launch is located here for canoes and kayaks. This lot provides access to the pools from Civilization Bend down to the Swamp. There is a trail that connects the parking area to the area on the north side of the river beyond the Swamp. Accessing the river here is done mostly by wading through the river.

River Culture - Night Crowd

Indian Head River Night Sky

There are two distinct cultures of shad anglers on the Indian Head River – the night crowd and the day crowd. The night crowd is comprised primarily of spin fishermen casting heavy shad darts with large hooks into the river while the fish are moving quickly and erratically throughout the river. Because there is so much fish movement, the majority of the fish are illegally snagged in the back or tail or some other part of their body. The few fish that are mouth hooked are more than likely snagged as well. The mouth of the fish catches the line and eventually after the fish swims the distance of the remaining line left to the hook, the hook will end up in its mouth. I personally believe this provides night anglers with a false perception that they are legally hooking some of the fish. There are some fly fishermen that frequent the river at night, but very few.

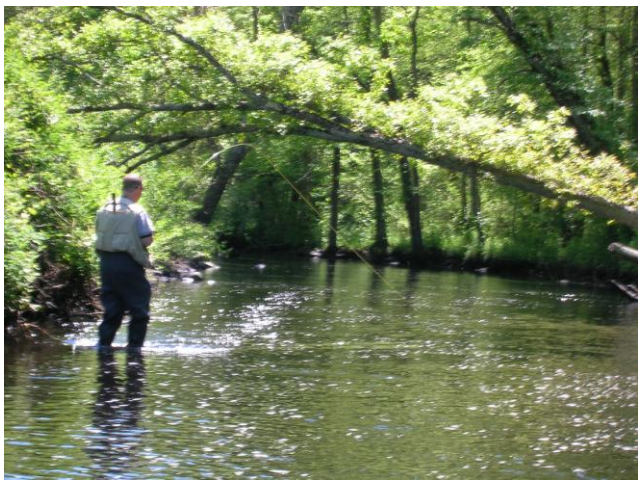
Before the season begins, some people spend time preparing the Straight Shallows pools on the Pembroke side of the river for a season of festivities. This includes clearing some of the brush on the path to the pool and along the river bank. A fire pit is prepared and camp chairs are hauled in for another season of shad. Fires and beers light up the early evening and can extend into the early morning hours for some of the night crowd. You can have a nice cordial chat with some anglers, but there are times when others become territorial about their turf in the river.

A few years back I was angling for trout and shad an hour before dusk in mid-April. I was wading the river downstream into the Straight Shallows pools. There were five or six anglers that were fully indoctrinated into the fire, beer, and spinning rod shad cult. One angler moved out of the pool to chug a brew. After he was out of the river for a period of time, it seemed safe to move into the pool. That's the way it seemed anyway. After occupying the pool for a minute or two, this fine angling gentleman dropped the beer, moved into the water, and began casting with a point to make. As a courtesy, even though I knew he was back in the river because I was in his turf and only for that reason, I slowly trickled my way downstream and casted to an area on the other side of a fallen tree that was clearly beyond this angler's domain.

This did not appease the other angler. At least that is what I figured when his shad dart bounced off my shoulder and into the water next to me. For a river jerkoff, he was an accurate caster with the spin rod. I could have suggested he drop the spin rod and attitude and take up fly fishing since he seemed somewhat skilled. Instead I moved downstream to the beginnings of the Jungle Pool. Within a few minutes of escaping the limits of the river turf war zone, I exited the river and packed it in for the night. As I walked the trail back to the dam parking area, the serenity seeking aspect of my being reminded me why I prefer angling for shad during the daylight hours, avoiding the loud, obnoxious, unskilled, fish snagging cult - some of whom actually believe that the shad attacks a shad dart because it thinks it is a salamander.

Shad Fishing Nights

River Culture - Day Crowd



A typical day on the Indian Head River. No crowds. Just you, the river, the fish.

The group of people who fish for the shad during the day is more of a gentlemen's crowd. You could meet a stranger and share a pool even when there is nobody else on the river. The next day or week when you come across that same stranger, they are now your ally and friend, not a territorial combatant. In fact, you will spend more time quibbling over forfeiting rights to your favorite pool as a display of the utmost form of river etiquette. Most day anglers understand the favor will be returned and that it is best in the long run to get along while sharing the river, angling tips, or simple companionship.

The advantage to the day crowd is that there really is no big crowd. A lot of the time you could have the river to yourself. Otherwise, there is usually only another angler or two. Most day anglers are fly fishermen hooking fish legally in the mouth. Some spin anglers will show up during the day using small shad darts for legal hookups as well. Snaggers are a rare sight during the daylight hours. On most days, anglers will have the peace and solitude of the river to themselves with the ability to select any pool to fish in without fear of battling for fishing turf.

Tactics

There are three methods for hooking a shad. The first, snagging, is illegal. The only reason it should be brought up in the conversation is to educate anglers that it has been a widespread occurrence on the Indian Head River for the several decades that I have been exposed to the river. It continues to persist with strong numbers of people doing it as each new migratory season begins and passes.

Many non-anglers believe that fishing for sport is cruel to the fish. There are occasions when I personally battle with this idea. When it comes to angling for sport, there is no sport in snagging a fish. It is one of the most ruthless methods available with rod and line.

Hooking a fish and throwing it back into the water may seem senseless, but allowing the fish to make the decision to bite the presentation is the sporting approach that should be taken. That being said, there are really only two approaches any true sportsman should consider while fly fishing for the American shad; blind fishing and sight fishing.

A Tactical Journey

My earliest recollections of shad angling come from my childhood. My father would take us to the Indian Head River at night. The wall at the Dam Pool would be lined up tight with lanterns and fishermen. For this reason, when I chose to pursue fishing for shad as an adult, I began the journey angling nights. For an hour or so before dusk, I would fish for stocked trout with smaller nymphs and dry flies. When the sun went down, the shad would start their wild movements in the river. This is when I switched from a five weight rod to a seven eight weight. I used a size 10 bead head olive wooly bugger with high hopes of a hooking a shad. I also tied and used several other concoctions that were rumored to catch shad.

Boat Ramp Pool

Based on conversation on the river, the shad fight was epic. On one of my first nights on the river, it appeared as though I had one of these warrior fish on the end of my line. My dead drift that was passing through the lower end of the Boat Ramp Pool was transformed into a solid opposition at the end of the line. As I pulled and pulled, no ground was gained. I thought to myself that the shad surely was a force to be reckoned with. For ten or fifteen seconds I could not budge it an inch. The exhilaration was rushing through my veins. Ten seconds later it was apparent that I had hooked something on the bottom of the river. I let out enough slack line to roll cast the fly loose on the downstream side of the obstruction.

A few outings thereafter, a real fish finally stabbed its lip with my hook. The opposition was more forceful than the typical stocked trout. I believed this could finally be the shad I was seeking, but the fight seemed very under impressive. While pulling the fish in, it occurred to me that if this less than excitable battle was what all the shad talk was about, I might retire from shad angling right there and then because the only rush through my body was a fear of disappointment. The fish ended up being a thirteen inch striped bass.

Two things were accomplished by landing the fish. First, the tales by a sparse few other anglers catching striped bass that far up the river, tales that I believed to be urban myth at the time, were in that moment validated. Second, still shut out by the American shad, my curiosity would persist to eventually coax one onto the end of my line.

Rock Wall Pool

For the next few years, I casually made half-hearted attempts to catch a shad at night in conjunction with my trout angling. These attempts were unsuccessful. In spite of my minimal efforts, in a way I actually moved on and focused on angling for other species.

A few years after my hiatus, my interest in angling for shad was reignited. I cannot recall what inspired me to pursue shad again. I was spending most days angling for trout. There was one occasion where I hooked a shad in the Dam Pool unexpectedly. Believing it was a trout, I pulled it in like it was a typical stocked trout no greater than 12 inches in length. It immediately took off like a bat out of hell and broke my line. Shortly thereafter, I met another fly

fisher angling for shad during the day. After I saw him land one, the game was back on for me. Another urban myth was validated, that you can catch American shad during the day with small flies.

It was an interesting affair. Although in my mind I was attempting to hook a shad, there were trout and shad in all the pools. The trout would typically fall for a size 14 to 20 bead head nymph. After completing the shift in focus, I began using size 10 or 12 bead head brown pheasant tail nymphs to entice the shad. At some point during my journeys on the river, somebody had recommended that this was a good pattern to start with.

After three grueling hot sunny May days spending hours on the river, I finally hooked my first American shad in the mouth and landed it at the Rock Wall Pool. It put up an incredible battle that matched the build up from conversations on the river. When it was all said and done, as exhilarating as it was for those five or more minutes pulling it in, I was mentally exhausted and tapped out. I walked away from the river with my photo of the fish asking myself if I could spend another twelve hours standing in one spot dropping roll cast after roll cast through the same small pool to catch one fish. The few fly fishermen that I had encountered on the river experienced identical results but for some reason appeared to be content with this arrangement. Not me. I cashed out and moved on in my angling season to pursue striped bass, smallmouth, and largemouth bass, as well as the other warm water species that you encounter in the local ponds and lakes.

The following season, I arrived at the river in search of trout. The mental fatigue from hooking my first shad the previous season had significantly diminished. I had some extra time that season to frolic on the river that spring. It was difficult to resist tying on a size 10 bead head head pheasant tail. The first shad I hooked that season leaped completely out of the water at the Bend Pool onto the overhanging brush to escape the hookup. The fire was reignited. It required many hours and days to hook and land the next fish.

A part of me was so inspired by the power and strength of the shad, but the time it took to get a hook set and land one was debilitating to my desire to remain focused and committed to angling for them with so many other opportunities and species around. It was at that point that I asked myself if there was a better way, a method to increase the number of fish caught and decrease the time it took to hook one.

My experiences in my second season of day angling for shad taught me that getting a shad to be curious about your fly was not the difficult task. It was getting a hook set. I felt the nip at my fly time and time again. In almost every instance, by the time I felt the nip and tried to set the hook, it was too late. The shad had already spit it out.

Reflections on my first season of day shad angling confirmed this fact. Even while angling for trout, I felt a significant amount of nips at my fly that were uncharacteristic of trout strikes. At this point in my analysis, it became evident that the shad had snapped at my fly at least fifty times before my first hookup. Initially, I had concluded that the shad just did not strike often. The real problem was not that the shad were not striking the fly, it was figuring out a way to set the hook on the other forty-nine fish that were.

As much as I was convinced that this was a great analysis and theory, it would only ring true after confirmation through visual observation. At the end of my second season of angling for shad during the day, I shifted my tactical approach from blind fishing a dead drift to sight fishing a dead drift.

Because many of the pools are too deep to see the shad moving in, I was forced to test my philosophy at the Narrow Hanging Gardens Pool. I drifted my fly

Narrow Hanging Gardens Pool

in the current through visible pods of fish less than ten feet away from my boots. I witnessed a fish suck the fly into its mouth as it drifted by and spit it out without feeling the slightest twitch or tension in my line. I then asked myself, why did you not just set the hook while it was in the fish's mouth?

I moved downstream to the Shallow Straights pools. The sun was beaming brightly over one of the pools and the tide was low. The conditions were perfect for visual observation of the fish. I spent a considerable amount of time wading through this section of the river spotting fish and observing their activity with my fly stuck on the fly holder at the base of my rod. During the day, the fish more or less stay in the same pool and swim around in a pattern from the front of the pool, then to the back, over and over again.

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again with the same result. I felt a little crazy after the observation period when I unhooked the fly from the base of my rod, let out some line, and began roll casting and drifting fifteen feet from the tip of my eye through one of the pools, content to continue observing the movement and patterns of the fish with a marginal hope of hooking one of the fish. I spent more time observing than fishing that day. A part of me maintained a sense of doubt that this single tactic could produce fish. Another part of me felt like it was cheating to pluck a fish ten or fifteen feet away that was smart enough to consistently evade being hooked even when it clearly inhaled the fly into its mouth on a regular basis.

I went back to the river the following day under the same conditions. My attitude changed. The method was repetitive, boring, and frustrating, but the fish were still there, taunting me with every movement throughout the length of the pool. I was both desperate and persistent to catch one of these fish at any cost, short of snagging one. I roll casted a short line over and over and over again as my eyes scrutinized every movement of the fish. Within ten minutes, a shad strayed from its usual maneuvering in the pool and chased the fly. I set the hook a lickity split too late after it took the fly and missed the hookup. There was no way I would allow myself to miss the next one.

I leaned over with my eyes a little closer to the river. I don't know if this was a physical attempt to see clearer through the water or if it was my mind's eye accelerating its attentiveness to warp speed. My right arm was cued with intensity in preparation to pull the rod upwards at the next opportunity. My left hand was buzzing with an intense readiness to pull the line tight so the next fish did not escape. I hooked and landed four fish using the sight fishing approach within the next hour. Considering I took five or more minutes to land each one and there were very few fish in that part of the river near the end of the spawning run, this was a remarkable increase in success.

After unraveling the pattern of the shad's movement in the pool, when the third and fourth fish strayed from their normal behavior, I knew they were in route to nab the fly. This provided an extra second or two to prepare to set the hook. One of the fish even darted out from a log on the bank and travelled over twenty feet to inhale the fly.

The following year, I spotted the first shad in mid-April in the Bend Pool. My first fish was hooked within ten minutes. Every time I visit the river now during the optimal sight fishing conditions, the same results are repeated, demonstrating that there is a better way to hook more than one fish for every three days on the river. I have successfully converted a frustrating affair of fishless days to a glorious encounter of plentiful fish leaping out of the river and carrying out the type of lengthy powerful runs that make a fly fishermen's reel chatter.

Bend Pool

Tactical Summary - Blind Fishing

Blind fishing consists of throwing the line into the river hoping there might be fish around to inhale your fly. Two common blind fishing tactics are the dead drift and the twitch at the end of the end drift.

Based on my own experience and observations combined with conversations and observations of other anglers, the blind fishing approach to angling for shad is by far the most torturous method. For every strike you feel on the dead drift, about two percent of the fish will become hooked. There are probably many other fish that strike that an angler never even feels. Hooking up is next to impossible because the fish nip the fly and spit it out so quickly. By the time you feel it and set the hook, the fish is long gone.

Twitching the line at the end of the drift will entice some fish. Because you are applying a slight pressure to the line with the twitch, one might believe that it would increase hook sets. Think again. The shad possess an unheralded ability to suck a fly into their mouth and spit it out regardless of your blind fishing approach.

If you enjoy self-inflicted torment, go to the river and blindly drift your fly through the current. Most anglers will end up conceding before they ever hook a shad. In 2012, the North and South River Watershed Association held a fly fishing for the American shad clinic at the river. I was asked to provide a discussion of tactical approaches at the clinic. While waiting for the participants to arrive, I wondered what the background of the people who signed up for the clinic would be. I figured there could be a wide array of people – some with little to no fly fishing experience to others that might fly fish for other species. To my surprise, a significant portion of the crowd appeared on the lawn adjacent to the dam with waders on and fly rods ready to go. They had experienced the similar frustrations that I had encountered. They were experienced and successful at catching trout, striped bass, largemouth bass, and other species, but they could not catch a shad regardless of the amount of endless effort they put into it. They all gave up after a while just as I had initially done.

For this reason, for those who can share in the grief of my long journey to hooking my first shad in the mouth on the fly rod during the day, I encourage you to reap the benefits of this journey to unravel the secret to hooking and landing a shad within fifteen minutes of being on the river's edge.

Tactical Summary - Sight Fishing

Sight fishing for shad is the most effective tactic to hook and land a fish. The key to becoming a successful shad angler is the visual observation of the fish chasing down and gobbling the fly. Here is a step by step description of how to approach sight fishing for shad.

Visually locate the fish in a pool with the aid of polarized glasses. Roll cast up or across the river with six or seven feet of leader and three to ten feet of fly line. Allow the line to drift through the pool of fish. Attentively observe the continuity of the movements of the shad through the pool. When you notice a shad display an aberration from the typical pattern of movement, be prepared for a strike. When you see the fish strike, set the hook immediately and get ready for a wild ride up, down, and across the river. If you miss the strike, you will rarely hook the fish. As you become more

This photo illustrates the difficulty of seeing the shad through the water column. This is a 25 inch shad swimming in the pool after it was released. It is located to the left and above of the center of the photo. It is not even at the bottom of the river.

experienced with the routine and understand the fish patterns, the ability to identify a fish that is on its way to strike your fly will increase. There are times when your insight can become disadvantageous because it will be tempting to set the hook too early. Success is about timing. The window of opportunity is slim. Setting the hook too early or too late will both result in not hooking the fish.

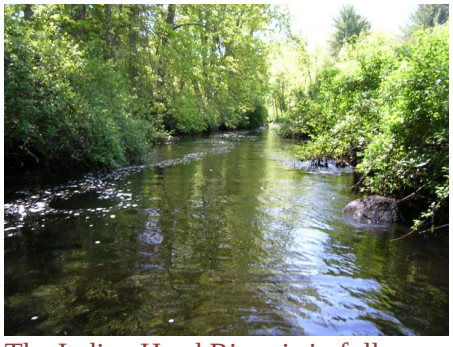
If this happens at first, do not become disillusioned. Keep at it. Stay focused. When you get the hang of it, you will be landing most of the fish that you see chase your fly. Inevitably, no matter how effective you become with this approach, there will always be times when you are daydreaming, swatting a bug away from your head, or casually focused, resulting in a missed opportunity. There may also be times when you do everything right and the fish is just savy enough to escape the hookup.

Best Sight Fishing Conditions

The best conditions for sight fishing at the Indian Head River for American shad are high sunlight and clear water. Both provide the best visibility with polarized glasses to see the fish moving through a pool and taking your fly. The tidal condition is also a very important consideration. Middle to low tide water levels will typically provide an angler with the ability to see the fish through the water hunkering down and swimming around at the bottom of a pool. Remember, the river is tidal. There is approximately a three hour delay in the tide from the mouth of the North River.

Impeding Conditions for Sight Fishing

Shad will return to the Indian Head River as the bushes begin to blossom. The trees will still be barren of leaves.



The Indian Head River is in full bloom at the tail end of the shad run at the end of May.

There are some impediments to sight fishing in the river that reduce visibility through the water column. Heavy rains can cause the water levels to rise significantly. High water levels make it difficult to see the fish at the bottom of the pools. Overcast skies, tea stained water, pollen in the water or air, and white bubbles on the surface of the water can also reduce visibility through the water. The white surface bubbles in the Shallow Straights Pools have gaps between them. It sounds ridiculous, but it is important to cast your fly and drift within the clear gaps. Fish will be lost if your fly is drifting beneath the pockets of white surface bubbles where you cannot see the fly or a fish strike your fly.

Another major visual impediment is the shade of the trees. Shade reduces visibility through the water column. Because of the movement of the sun over the river, it is usually best to fish the Pembroke side of the river in the morning. By the afternoon, the trajectory of the sun has moved across the canopy of the river. The Hanover side will have less shade in the afternoon. This is when it can be productive to focus on the pools on the Hanover side of the river. This includes most of the pools from the Dam Pool downstream to the Bend Pool. In the beginning of the season, there will be few leaves that have budded on a lot of the trees over shadowing the river. By the end of the season, the trees will be in full bloom. The fully blossomed trees will block the sun from penetrating the water column, resulting in less visibility. This can be critical in the Narrow Hanging Garden pool. Near the end of the season, there will be fish stacked up in this pool, but there are very few pockets of sunlight that can penetrate through the canopy. Catching shad in this pool at the end of May can be accomplished, but is a very challenging affair.

Equipment

As far as equipment goes, many anglers use anywhere from a three to eight weight rod. I used various setups over the years, but after I figured out the magic to successfully catching American shad, I settled on my seven and a half foot five weight rod. The river is not very wide, so a long stick is not necessary. A seven and half footer is ample for producing the short roll casts required to reach the fish. For a leader strength, there are a few choices. An 8 lb test leader will give you all the strength you will typically need. A 4 lb test leader will result in some line breaks if you want to play the fish harder or steer it away from submerged trees or brush. I personally recommend a 6 lb test leader. It is happy medium. You will still have to exhibit some caution and let a fish run to avoid line snaps, but it provides some security while steering fish away from submerged obstacles.

Flies

Fly selection is simple. I have known many anglers to use various streamers. Some use white streamers, others use white with a touch of some pink. I cannot speak of high success rates of these anglers. My success has been with size 10 or 12 bead head nymphs. I first used the pheasant tail. Near the end of my first season when I was shorting out on my supply, I elected to try blue and red copper johns. All three flies demonstrated a uniformly high success rate. These are the flies that I recommend anglers use because they will consistently produce under any conditions.

Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph

Hook: TMC 2457 or TMC 200R size 12
Head: Gold Bead
Thread: Brown 6/0
Tail: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers
Body: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers, wrapped herl style
Rib: Copper Wire
Thorax: Peacock Herl
Wingcase: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers
Legs: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers

Bead Head Copper John

Hook: TMC 2457 or TMC 200R size 12
Head: Gold Bead
Thread: Brown 6/0
Tail: Brown Goose Biots or No Tail
Body: Red or Blue Copper Wire
Thorax: Peacock Herl
Wingcase: Pearl Flashback Tinsel
Legs: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers
*Substitute legs for brown soft hackle wrapped wet fly style around hook at head

After Hooking an American Shad

There are a few things to consider after hooking the American shad. First, it is a very powerful fish that will go on long forceful runs. The best thing to do after setting a hook in a shad is to let it run and do its thing. If you attempt to stop this run, be prepared for the disappointment of a line break. You will shake line breaks off after you have a bunch of shad behind you, but if it is you first potential fish, you will be pissed if you do not let it run.

A second tip is to not be alarmed when the fish is steering its path towards overhanging brush. You might be afraid that the fish will get hung up and break the line. I believed this to be true when I hooked my first fish of the season one year. I had already gone through the internal pep talk of letting the fish run. When the fish was darting to the brush at the upper portion of the Bend Pool, I panicked and attempted to steer it back downstream and away from the brush on the opposite bank. It seemed like a good exception to the rule at that time, but the moment I applied extra pressure to stop the run, the line snapped immediately. It was then that I also realized that my leader was 4 lb test. I reminded myself that there was a reason I concluded that 6 lb test was a better option. Two mistakes during one encounter and bye bye fish.

The next time a fish darted for the same brush, I let it ride through it. It did not get hung up. Eventually I steered it back downstream on the fish's timetable and landed it. Lesson learned. Let the fish swim under the overhanging brush and chances are it will not result in a line tangle and lost fish. The only time I lost a fish in the brush is when it leaped out of the water into the brush and shook the hook.

Above all, always be patient with the fish. There should be no rush while pulling in a shad that is hooked. Pulling in a shad should and could take five to fifteen minutes. I have had fish go on a seventy yard run halfway through my backing. After pulling it back upstream, some shad have gone on that same run up to three times. There is a merit to not wearing out the fish unnecessarily, but if they have the energy, let them keep running. The biggest shad I caught was probably weak form the journey and the spawning. There was no reason to stress it out. It came to my net in only a few minutes.

The shad have solid upper lips and soft lower lips. If you hook the shad in the upper lip, there is little chance that the hook will tear through. The lower lip is a different story. Because it is soft, a hook will shred it if too much pressure is applied. This is why I believe it is important to always be cautious with the fish while pulling them in. Often times it will not matter. Being over forceful will almost always result in a ripped lip and lost fish if the shad is hooked in the lower lip. You never can tell what lip is hooked, so I find it best to play it slow to avoid losing fish.

Other Species in the River System

Second Herring Brook at Norris Reservation Pond. Rainbow trout average 13-14". Some stocked fish can be caught up to 19" long.

Second Herring Brook at Norris Reservation Pond. Tiger trout are sometimes stocked here. This fish is 20" long and robust.

There are a few other species of fish in the river. Some of the year round inhabitants are bluegill, largemouth bass, crappie, chain pickerel, and yellow perch. There are rumors of native brook trout in the system, particularly in the Herring Brook in Pembroke, but the majority of the trout are stocked. They include primarily a mix of browns and brookies. Sometimes a few rainbows find their way onto angler's lines. Most of the trout are put and take ranging from 8 to 12 inches in length. Occasionally a 14 to 20 inch fish can be caught in the Indian Head River. Some believe they are holdovers. I personally believe they stock a few bigger fish from time to time to create a little extra excitement for the angler. Any trout that are not taken by fishermen usually fall prey to cormorants, chain pickerel, or striped bass. The remainder of trout that survive their prey will find it difficult to survive the warm temperatures of the river during the summer months.

The other species in the river are what I like to refer to as the migration nation. They enter the river in the spring for the sole purpose of spawning. They include the sucker, the lamprey eel, the river herring, and the American shad. Not too long after spawning, these species swim out of the river and into the ocean. The river is teaming with livelihood in the spring. If you visit the river at the end of the summer and into the fall, it almost seems as if there are no fish in the river from the dam to the state boat ramp.

Striped bass will also appear in the river in the spring and summer months chasing herring and other baitfish into the North River watershed. Most do not make as far up as the state boat ramp, but you might find one on the end of your line from time to time. Beware of contact with the lamprey eel. They possess nasty teeth that could rip into your flesh if you are wet wading. Their spawning beds are typically located smack dab in the middle of the river and are unmistakable round depressions in the rock bottom. You will usually see the eels on the bottom of the river in or near their spawning bed. I have never personally had an encounter, but it is best to wade on the safe side to avoid contact.

Sucker on the Spawning Run

Some of the dam ponds in the tributaries of the North River Watershed can produce sizeable stocked trout. The pond on the Second Herring Brook at Norris Reservation in Norwell is stocked with small brook trout in the early season. In past years, a second stocking of rainbows occurs. The rainbow trout average approximately 14 inches. Some are as large as 19 inches. Tiger trout have also been stocked in the pond at Norris Reservation. Most of the tigers average 12 inches, but I have personally landed a 20 inch tiger in the pond. Tack Factory Pond on the First Herring Brook in Scituate is also stocked with trout in the spring.

River History, Dam and Industrial Impacts, River Conservation

The Dam History

Dams are one of the most devastating environmental problems that many of our rivers face. They were created to produce hydroelectric power to fuel industry. The most notable and visible dam on the Indian Head River is the Luddam Ford's Dam. Construction of the E.H. Clapp Rubber Mill began at the site of the Luddam's Ford Dam in 1870. It formed a pond above the dam and used the water passing through the dam for hydroelectric power. The company recycled rubber products and manufactured shoes from 1892 to the late 1930s.

Not too far upstream, another dam existed to support the Waterman Tack Factory which is now an old dilapidated building off Water Street. This dam was destroyed by the Hurricane of 1938.

Another chemical company was located on Winter Street in Hanson further upstream. A dam still exists at this location forming a pond behind the familiar Ski Shop. The portion upstream of the Ski Shop dam is known as the Drinkwater River.

Another dam, which remains today, is located in the industrial area off King Street in Hanover. One of the industries that previously existed around this dam was a plant that manufactured cannons during the Revolutionary War. It was later used to forge anchors for the ship industry. There was also a fireworks factory along this portion of the river. A railroad was constructed along the north side of the river to transport goods and materials from Hanover at the current Four Corners through Hanson and into Rockland. It also served as transportation for workers who were employed in the factories and mills along the river. Although tracks have been removed, the berm and cleared path of forest that the railroad was built on is visible along many parts of the river. Portions of it are delineated as a public walking trail.

There are many other dams that are located in some of the tributaries of the Indian Head River and the North River. Most of these dams are not as visible to the public as the Luddam's Ford Dam, but they are there. Some of them become so deeply wedged into the landscape, it is often tempting to be so accustomed to the pond that they create, the fact that they were created by a dam can often be easily forgotten.

Luddam's Ford Dam Then and Now

Top: E.H. Clapp Rubber Mill Buildings sprawling around and across the current Luddam's Ford Dam Site

Right: Recent Aerial Photograph of Luddam's Ford Dam Site. A lawn and park now exists on the site where the mill and buildings previously occupied it.

The historical photo on the left at the bottom of the previous page shows the E.H. Clapp Rubber Mill as it spans the Indian Head River at the Luddam's Ford Dam site. The aerial photograph adjacent to the historical photo of the mill shows the Luddam's Ford Dam site as it exists today. The rubber mill burned down many decades ago. The grass lawn that exists today replaced the area where the buildings of the mill were located. If you visit the dam today, it is a pleasant looking park and conservation area. Without knowing the history of the rubber mill, one might believe that the lawn is the natural historical surface of the area surrounding the dam. After viewing the photo of the rubber mill, it becomes clear that the original landscape was trees and forest around the river. The lawn only exists because the buildings are no longer there. The dam, however, which was created for hydroelectric power, still exists, but there is no power being generated by it. It serves no purpose today.

The Dam Problem

T Dams are created to support various needs of society. Some are constructed for drinking water supply. Others have been constructed locally to hold water for cranberry bod irrigation and harvesting in the fall. In other parts of the state or world, they might be constructed for other agricultural irrigation. In a system like the Indian Head River, most dams are constructed for the hydroelectric power generation.

There are many environmental problems that are created by the construction of dams on rivers. One of the most direct consequences is the blockage of the natural aquatic highway that many species use to travel to their spawning grounds. The future of migratory spawning species in waterways with constructed dams is greatly jeopardized.

There are many cases in which species have been wiped out of rivers as a result of dams. Once this happens, it is very difficult to reestablish a species because the fish are instinctively programmed to return to their original spawning grounds. When no programmed fish are left, the likelihood of reestablishment is almost non-existent. Programs to reintroduce species into rivers have taken place in recent years and decades. In the majority of cases, the stocked fish that are not native to the river do not establish future offspring.

Construction of a fish ladder at a dam is one method that allows dams and fish passage to coexist. The American shad do use the fish ladder at the Luddam's Ford Dam. However, it is my personal opinion that jumping up and over every board in a fish ladder to the next section is an excessive amount of work for the fish and some fish that would otherwise move further up the river are likely deterred when they reach the dam. It is remarkable that some of the fish figure out how to use the fish ladder. To me, it demonstrates the magnitude of their persistence to reach their place of birth to spawn. It is an extraordinary display of survival instinct in the face of extreme opposition.

Luddam's Ford Dam Fish Ladder

Another major problem that dams create is a consequence of their purpose to create hydroelectric power for industry. Before the advent of other power sources in the period after the Industrial Revolution, hydroelectric power was one of the most common methods for fueling industry. The most devastating effect is the increase in the water temperature of a river and the depletion of oxygen. The stagnant water of a pond formed by a dam spikes water temperatures upstream of the dam. The warmer water from the dam pond then spills over the top of the dam increasing water temperatures in the river downstream.

Even in a river as small as the Indian Head River, there are a series of dams upstream of the largest Luddam's Ford Dam. A series of dams only serves to increase the water temperature not only at one point in

the river, but in the entire river between all the dams and downstream from the last dam. This more or less summarizes the situation on the Indian Head River. The entire system is full of dams and the whole river is subsequently impacted by water temperatures that are significantly higher than the natural free flowing river.

When a river warms up, cold water species are forced to search for a habitat in the river where temperatures are cooler and suitable to their existence. When they are trapped by a series of dams, it only makes the task to reach cooler water even more difficult. The cause of the problem becomes an even bigger dilemma and the existence of a native trout that once thrived in a river system and its tributaries becomes threatened. Species are often eradicated from river systems as a result.

The temperature problem can be addressed with a release from the bottom of the dam, the coolest water in the pond that is formed. This can be effective in deep reservoirs that are created for water supplies. A dam with a release from the bottom is often referred to as a tailwater fishery. Some tailwater fisheries are extremely productive and generate enormous healthy fish. This approach would not be effective on a small river like the Indian Head River. The dams are so small and the ponds might be six or seven feet deep. The water temperature in a pond of this depth in the peak of summer is super heated from top to bottom.

Even where a dam bottom release is effective for water temperature control, fish passage for spawning is still blocked. In the situation where a fish ladder is constructed for passage, the temperature problem is not addressed. A reasonable solution would seemingly be a combination of both a dam bottom release and a fish ladder. The problem with this scenario is that dam bottom release is effective for huge expansive dams that are very high and typically constructed for water supply. The fish ladder would have to be a mile or miles in length to maintain accommodating slopes for the fish to travel. The cost and practicality is unachievable.

The agricultural and industrial dams have a devastating impact on river systems stemming from the deposits of toxins and waste in the waterways. The cranberry bog harvest involves pumping water from a dam pond into the bogs in the fall so the cranberries will float to the surface of the water creating an easier method of harvest when compared to dry harvesting. When the water is released back into the dam pond and eventually into the river system, the chemicals and fertilizers used in the cranberry bog operation are transported along with it. There are some dams on the tributaries of the North River and Indian Head River that were probably created to service the cranberry farming industry. A solution in this scenario is to remove the dam and require a bog operation owner to excavate their own holding pond independent of the river system. This is common practice for new cranberry bog operations. It is often difficult to alter the practice of a bog operation that already uses water from a dammed river pond.

A historical photo shows a dam that existed on Water Street in Hanover at the Waterman Tack Factory. The dam breached in 1938. remnants of the structure exist adjacent to the building, but the river flows free in this section of the Indian Head thanks to a dam collapse.

The dam that forms Forge Pond at King Street on the Drinkwater River upstream of the Indian Head River in Hanover still exists today.

In the case of dams created for industrial power, a similar risk exists. Chemicals and toxic waste vary depending on the type of industry, but prior to developments in environmental regulation, there was very little consideration given to industrial waste stream deposits into rivers. I have stories regarding paper mills that you could tell what color paper they were producing on a given day because that was the color of the river that the mill resided on.

In spite of the progress that has been achieved to prohibit these activities in our current society, the damage from the practices of the past has already been done. Many of the toxins that enter a waterway do not necessarily just disappear. The rubber mill on the Indian Head River has been out of operation for probably sixty to seventy years. None of the other factories upstream have been in operation for probably decades as well, but the river still has dangerous levels of several contaminants. This is evidenced not only by the samples that are evaluated from the river, but also by the signs that are placed along the river with the skull and crossbones picture and the warning to not consume fish from the river.

Native Brook Trout in Tributaries

The combination of increased water temperatures, blockage of passage of fish to spawning grounds and cooler parts of the river system during the summer months, and toxic deposits from industry into the river have proven to be devastating to populations of both migratory species and the native brook trout in the Indian Head River, North River, and the tributaries. In spite of the damaging effects, the resilience of these species is displayed as they continue to migrate and spawn in the river each year. Other local rivers appear to be on the verge of losing some of the populations of migratory species forever.

Brook Trout

I consider the native brook trout to be one of the most remarkable cases of resilience in the river system. For years I have read about and heard stories of native brook trout existing in various parts of the system. Centuries ago, native brook trout probably flourished. I have searched on occasion with my fly rod in a few of the less traveled areas of the Indian Head, the numerous herring brooks, and some of the lesser known tributaries to the herring brooks. Maybe I caught a few natives in the system in the more travelled waters. At times I hoped and imagined the fish were natives, but in most cases they were likely stocked brook trout. I have never pulled any brook trout out of the waters in the distant reaches where the stocking trucks do not dispense their buckets of fish.

A free flowing Third Herring Brook looking downstream on River Street at the Hanover Norwell town line.

In recent years, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has stream shocked and discovered native brook trout populations in one of the tributaries, the Third Herring Brook. They are still reproducing naturally, but they are trapped by a small dam in the brook from passage downstream during the blistering summer months. Removal of all the small dams in the river and the tributaries would greatly enhance the ability of existing native brook trout populations to thrive and regenerate.

Fixing the Dam Problem

The biggest obstacle that is encountered in the quest to fix the dam problem is money. Some of the costs associated with dam removal include wetland delineation, land surveys, engineering plans, environmental impact reports, other engineering reports, restoration plans, and permitting fees. If permits are obtained to remove a dam, construction costs are a huge financial burden.

The most troublesome aspect of the dam removal problem is that in many if not most cases, the creator of the dam is long gone. The dams that were originally created for power generation and the industries associated with them created great financial gain for the entity that constructed the dam. Many of the factories and mills are no longer operating. The dams serve no purpose and should be removed. In my mind, when the businesses on the river became unprofitable or they shifted to other power generation technologies as they were developed, they should have been responsible for removal of the dams at that time.

Unfortunately, the consequences of dams on fisheries and ecosystems was probably not understood at that time to the degree that is today. Even if they were, chances are few business people would have invested in dam removal, a total investment loss. They would have refocused their wealth in places where there would be a return on their investment. In the case of a failing industry, it is unlikely that there were financial resources available after a plant closure to even consider removing a dam.

A dam on Second Herring Brook at Norris Reservation in Norwell. The pond is located in a conservation area. It provides a nice view alongside the walking path and benches in the upper right hand side of the photo. People might not want to see this pond disappear at this location even though it would improve habitat for native and migratory species.

In most cases, the dam problem is passed on to the next land owner. There are some instances where ownership falls into the hands of a town or state. Many dams are still owned by private entities. Regardless of the ownership situation, dam removal is usually at the bottom of any public or private entities financial priority list.

Cost is not the only issue that stands in the path of dam removal. People become accustomed to the ponds and recreation areas that are developed at dam sites. Luddam's Ford Dam is a perfect example of this scenario. Some of the smaller dams are located deep behind the cover of trees and forests. They are unnoticed by most, but they often provide a small pond in a residential area at the rear of a house or a small neighborhood. Homeowners also become accustomed to these ponds for recreational use or something to view while relaxing on their back deck. They can be fearful that removal of a dam and loss of the nice pond in their back yard will devalue their property. As a result, there is often residential opposition to the removal of small dams.

The most common catalyst to dam removal is a dam breach. Structural damage to a dam forces action. Because dam owners are responsible for the dam and the safety associated with it, the decision to remove or rebuild a dam to current safety standards must be made.

The cost to remove most dams is significantly less than rebuilding. Removal is only a one time cost. Rebuilding is not only many times more expensive initially, but there are also potential long term maintenance costs associated with it. Most dam owners typically elect to remove a structurally compromised dam over rebuilding it.

The Dam Future

I believe the future of dams that were created to propel industry via hydroelectric power generation is the removal of all the dams. Few structurally intact dams may only be removed by a public or private ownership and sometimes with the aid of federal or state grant money. Eventually, most dams will face structural failure at some point. Some will fail after a powerful rain storm. Others will experience the inevitable failure of a structure created by human hands that has a limited life span.

Unfortunately, waiting for a structural failure of a dam can result in complete loss of species in river systems. The loss of migratory species that spawn in a river reduces the available food for larger species like bluefish or striped bass. This is one potential impact in the food chain. The list of consequences that run through the river system and beyond is long.

Education about the negative impacts of dams may be one of the most useful tools to maintain progress towards more dam removal. Creating an awareness and shift in people's attitudes about dams puts more pressure on society, legislatures, and land owners to restore our rivers to their natural state.

As each dam is removed, populations of migratory species will regenerate. Cold water species like native trout will also begin to flourish again. As river systems return to their natural state, it is also important to discontinue stocking programs for trout. Studies have shown that stocking native species in a river interferes with genetic strains and is detrimental to native populations. As much as catching brown or rainbow trout in the local rivers is exciting for fishermen, food competition from other similar species can also be a deterrent to the regeneration of the native brook trout.

Current Dam Projects in the Watershed

There are two dams on the Third Herring Brook that are currently being considered for removal. The first is the dam at Mill Pond on the YMCA property in Hanover. The dam breached on one side of the pond in 2010. The existing concrete dam structure on the opposite side of the pond is in disrepair. Water is currently seeping through and around the concrete structure. A major portion of the structure has cracked and toppled. Rather than rebuild the dam, the YMCA is eager to remove it and restore the brook to its natural condition. The site was chosen by the state as a priority habitat for restoration. There is another dam downstream from Mill Pond on Third Herring Brook on the Cardinal Cushing property. Although the dam is structurally intact, the owners desire to remove it.

The Indian Head River at the former Waterman Tack Factory. Remnants of the concrete dam are seen adjacent to the building foundation.

A historical picture of the Indian Head River flowing over the Waterman Tack Factory Dam before it breached.

Mill Pond Breached Dam

Mill Pond Dam in disrepair

Fish and Conserve

The American shad isn't the sexiest looking fish on the planet, but it has unlimited spunk and pizazz that makes up for its lack of beauty when compared to a salmon. In fact, that is why it is commonly referred to by many as the "Poor Man's Salmon." It is a plain Jane type of fish. There is little that is remarkable about its appearance. It is more or less a supersized river herring. Honestly, I do not even know why the American shad even exists. It sounds like a miserable and meaningless existence, but its only purpose seems to be a food source for bigger fish. In the grander scheme of things, this is actually a huge role. The fish that we do eat get plump on fish like the American shad.

From an angling perspective, the adult shad is as fierce and powerful as a salmon. One of the many Indian Head River urban myths is that there once was a presence of salmon spawning in the river decades or even centuries ago. Since the salmon run is no more, most likely due to the dams and industrial pollution, the American shad run is a luxury that every angler should experience.

If you want to feel the exhilaration of an American shad putting smoke in your reel as it races downstream on one of its epic runs, you must visit the Indian Head River from the middle of April to the end of May. Follow my tactical advice and you will be into a shad in no time at all.

The more you are exposed to the Indian Head River and other rivers with migratory species, the more aware you will become of their significance and the importance of restoring the rivers to their original habitats. As this process unfolds for you as an individual, get involved. Trout Unlimited and The North and South River Watershed Association are local organizations committed to the restoration of the watershed. Go to their websites and talk to a member to see how you can assist in the effort. If you are from another area, find your local organization and get involved in your own backyard.

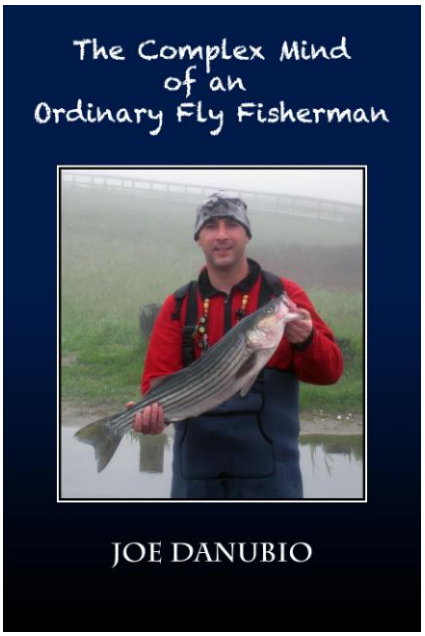
References: Images of America HANOVER, Barbara U. Barker and Leslie J. Molyneaux, Published 2004 by Acadia Publishing

Fly Fishing for the American Shad at the Indian Head River

River Cheat Sheet

*Stick it in the visor of your vehicle or your fishing vest pocket for tips at the river's edge

Time of Year:	Middle of April to end of May Fish run when river temperatures reach 40ºF and shad bushes and azaleas start to bloom.
Access:	West Elm Street parking areas at Luddam's Ford Dam on both the Hanover and Pembroke sides of river State Boat Launch at dead end of Indian Head Drive in Hanover
Best Tidal Conditions:	Middle to low tide Indian Head River tide is delayed 3 hours from the mouth of North River
Rod:	7.5 to 9 foot, 3 to 8 weight Recommended: 7.5 foot 5 weight
Leader:	8 lb test – extra security for pansies 6 lb test – good enough (recommended) 4 lb test – get ready for line breaks
Flies:	Size 10 or 12 Bead Head Brown Pheasant Tail Nymph Size 10 or 12 Red or Metallic Blue Bead Head Copper John
Tactics:	Sight Fishing 1.Visually locate fish in a pool with the aid of polarized glasses 2.Roll cast up or across stream with six or seven feet of leader and three to ten feet of fly line 3.Drift 4.Watch for fish approaching fly to strike 5.Set hook as you see fish strike 6.If you miss the strike, you will not catch the fish
Best Sight Fishing Conditions:	Clear water, middle to low tide, high sunlight, no shade from trees
Sight Fishing Conditions to Avoid:	Rain raises water level making it difficult to see fish at bottom of pools, tea stained water, shady areas of rivers, overcast skies, pollen in water or air, white bubbles on surface of water, steamy late May days fog up glasses
After Hooking American Shad:	Let it run or line will likely break. Let it swim into the brush and bushes, rocks and fallen trees. They will usually not get hung up. Be patient pulling the fish in. Shad upper lips are solid and will hold the hook. The lower lip is soft. Forcefully pulling in a fish will cause ripped lips and lost fish.
Other Migratory Species in River:	River Herring, Sucker, American Eel, Sea Lamprey Eel
Other Species in River:	Bluegill, Black Crappie, Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed, Largemouth Bass, Chain Pickerel, Snapper Turtle, Painter Turtle
Stocked Species in River:	Brown Trout, Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout



The Complex Mind of an Ordinary Fly Fisherman

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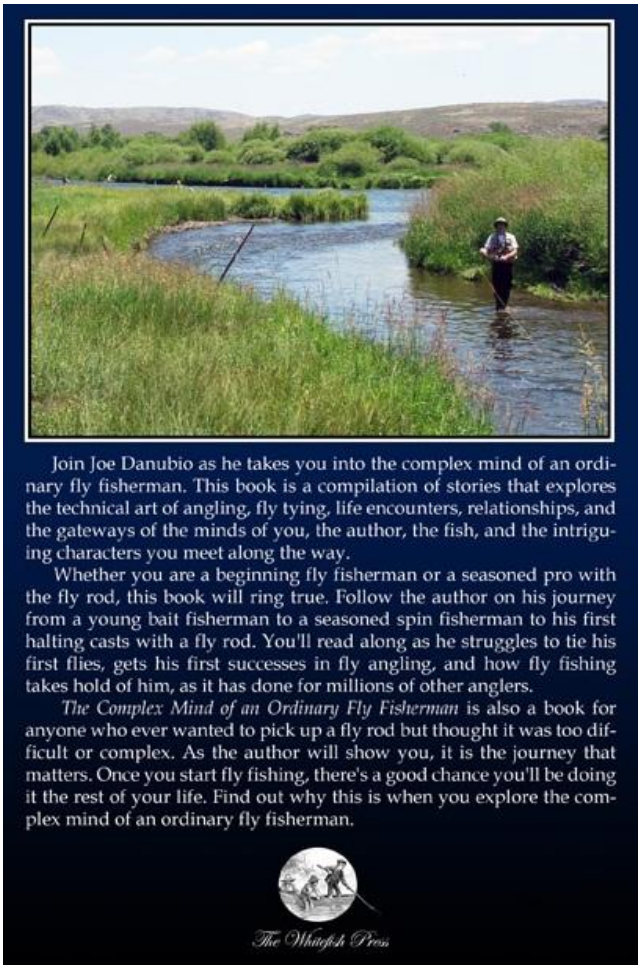

Whether you were at the Chicago Lakes in Colorado, the Connecticut River, or the never named ponds in and around Pembroke, Massachusetts, the image you created continually put me on the water right near you. – Pedro Quint

I enjoyed your book. I only recently started fly fishing. I began fishing as a spin caster. The book provided me with some great tips on my new pursuit of fly fishing.
– Rick Brown

Joe Danubio is a resident of Southeastern Massachusetts. He is an avid fly fisherman and fly tyer focusing his angling pursuits on striped bass, trout, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, American shad, and any other fish that swims.