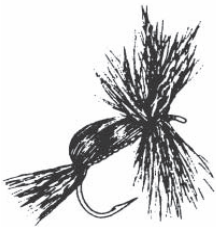


# BULLETIN

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## SKAGIT MAGIC: PUTTING THE NEW SKAGIT LINES TO THE TEST

*By Bob Pauli, Ray Christensen, Tom Keelin*

For Spey casters using sink tips, Spey casting just got easier -- much easier. Using Rio Products' new Skagit Spey lines, an angler can cast any sink tip ranging from almost nothing to hundreds of grains effortlessly, all day. This works with Spey rods from 6-weight 12-foot to 11-weight 16-foot. It works well with slow-action rods, fast-action rods and those in between. It works while wading in water from shallow to deep, and as well as for casting bulky, weighted flies. It works whether an angler prefers to apply power to the forward cast with the top hand, bottom hand or in combination.

Skagit Spey lines are short, heavy floating heads that make sink tip casting a delight. They were developed by Pacific Northwest [PNW] steelhead guides to meet local needs. These included teaching beginning Spey casters to present large flies at modest depths to aggressive steelhead willing to rise from the rocks to attack creations such as weighted articulated leeches and intruders. In addition, PNW rivers often have back cast obstacles that require small D-loops, implying a need to use short heads rather than long-belly traditional Spey lines. To accomplish this purpose short heads and shorter, fast sinking tips were developed.

Typically 27-foot of floating head is looped to a variety of lengths of Rio T-14 sink tip material, or 15-foot sink tips, with a variable length "cheater" floating line between the two. The cheater allows a caster to maintain a constant stroke regardless of sink tip length, a stroke that is essentially effortless and does not readily tear out [cause to jump rearward] anchors. Usually, the longest tips require no cheater. For anglers new to Skagit lines perhaps the most surprising characteristic is the near effortless forward stroke required to cast even heavy sink tips long distances.



*Tom Keelin with a Babine Buck*

*Skagit Magic continued on page 2*

### **The Genesis of Skagit Magic**

*In early 2005 Spey-addicted steelhead fishermen Bob Pauli, Ray Christensen and Tom Keelin discovered Rio Products' new Skagit lines and believed the Spey rod fishing world would be changed forever. No longer would heavy tips require beefy rods and the ease of learning to cast formerly daunting sink tips was astonishing.*

*On March 6, 2005, in the GGACC's pond 3 they began a sink tip test program that spanned more than a year and evaluated sixteen rods from seven manufacturers. Every rod was cast with each of the four available Rio Skagit lines looped to as many as fourteen tips, a total of almost nine hundred rod-line-tip combinations.*

*Bob Pauli is a Mechanical Engineer fascinated by the mechanics of fishing with Spey rods. He became a serious fly fisherman in 1980 and is now dedicated to the twin mistresses of stalking spring creek trout and pursuing steelhead with Spey rods.*

*Ray Christensen has fly fished since 1970 pursuing trout, steelhead, salmon and tarpon worldwide.*

*Tom Keelin is a systems engineer with a strong interest in fly fishing research. He was one of the early spey casters in Pacific Northwest steelheading, having been converted by Scottish anglers on the Kola Peninsula in the early '90s. He also thrives on single-handed-rod fly fishing for trout, bonefish, permit, tarpon, and corbina.*

A central hypothesis of this article is that use of Rio's Skagit Spey lines does not imply a need to cast in today's [2005/2006] narrowly defined Skagit style, in which practitioners cast a modest bit, say up to ten feet, of T-14. We believe an enormous spectrum of opportunity awaits those willing to explore beyond such limited use of these hugely powerful tools.

For example, the authors often find it effective to fish a deeply sunken, neutrally buoyant steelhead fly, implying the need for heavier and longer tips than those commonly associated with today's Skagit practice. We frequently fish rivers with ample back cast room, meaning rod and line length are not restricted per the Skagit model, and we wish to use our existing Spey rods, rather than purchase special-purpose wands. In addition, and very importantly, we want to do this comfortably, in a readily fishable manner and with a level of effort that allows for "all day" casting. Can Rio's new line help? You bet it can!

### **WHAT ARE THE HEAVIEST TIPS A SKAGIT LINE CAN CAST?**

The authors wanted to learn what new capability Skagit lines brought to a wading steelhead angler casting large flies with sink tip lines. Specifically, for a wide variety of rods, what were the heaviest tips comfortably fishable all day and all week long?

#### **THE TOOLS USED WERE:**

- Rio Skagit Spey lines, 120 feet long, with 27-foot heads weighing 450 grains [7/8], 550 grains [8/9], 650 grains [9/10] and 750 grains [10/11], with looped ends.
- Rio Cheater fly lines, 5 and 10 feet long, used between the Skagit head and sink tip, when needed.
- Rio T-14 sink tips in lengths from 8 feet [112 grains] to 30 feet [420 grains]. T-14 weighs 14 grains per foot, and sinks eight to nine inches per second.
- Rio 15 foot, type 8 tips, from 70 to 205 grains.
- Rio Big Boy 24 foot tips, 300, 400 and 500 grains.
- Rio Striper 26 foot tips, 350 and 450 grains.
- Waders. The majority of data collection casts were made wading in approximately two feet [60 cm] of water.
- Long bead head streamers, similar to larger flies used on B.C. steelhead rivers were used on every cast, with hooks removed.
- Sixteen different Spey rods, from seven manufacturers, ranging in action from very slow to very fast.

#### **CASTING TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED WERE:**

- Modern [Simon Gawesworth] using both hands, all top hand, all under hand [Scandinavian], various ratios of top to bottom hand, Skagit.
- Anchors included splash & go, waterborne and sustained including sunken partially and completely.

## A PEEK AT THE FINDINGS

Spey casting has indeed become dramatically easier with the introduction of Rio Skagit Spey lines. This is not an exaggeration. With a proper Skagit head, almost any rod can fish an enormously broad length and weight range of sink tips—comfortably, regardless of casting technique. This is confirmation of the McCune principle, which is described later.

Fishermen need no longer fear casting fast sinking tips such T-14 and type-8. Moreover, the dread of BigBoy 24-foot 300 to 500 grain tips will disappear with use of Rio's new Skagit lines.

An angler can go fishing with one rod, for example, a Thomas & Thomas 1307 [13-foot, 7-weight], a 650- or 750-grain Skagit line, a couple of Rio Cheaters, sink tips from 3-foot, 40-grains to 24-foot 500-grains, and fish all day, from shallow slow riffles to the deepest pools. Oh, and bring a floating tip too; they work superbly, and will be the subject of another article.

These remarkable lines were developed by Jim Vincent of Rio Products consulting with Mike McCune and Scott O'Donnell, two Pacific Northwest steelhead guides of long experience and inventive bent.



Kispiox Bucks Bite

### ***THE MCCUNE PRINCIPLE: IT DOESN'T MATTER!***

In 2002, co-author Pauli had the pleasure of fishing with Mike McCune on the coastal rivers of northern Oregon, and was introduced to the concept of sink tip casting with short heavy [Skagit] heads, made from Rio WindCutter bodies. When asked what weight tip to install to match a head, Mike replied, “It doesn’t matter.” What initially was perceived to be facetious, was in reality a precisely correct statement, as is typical from Mike, an intelligent gentleman and analytical thinker. But even Mike, on reading our data, was surprised at how astonishingly correct he had become, seeing sink tip weight ranges of 40 to 500 grains cast comfortably with a 7 weight Spey rod. This has far reaching consequences—think about it.

If one can fish a heavy tip all day with a 7-wt Spey rod, why use a 9-weight or 11-weight? One might answer that certain size fish require a heavier rod, but can't 20-pound steelhead be landed well with a 7-weight? Sure they can. One answer might be distance. However, our tests show lighter rods casting heavy tips similar distances to heavier rods, and plenty far for most fishing needs.

Heavier rods, however, are sometimes useful. Co-author Pauli finds that all day fishing with a BigBoy 500 grain twenty-four foot sink tip is physically easier with a T&T 15-foot 10-weight than with a T&T 13-foot 7-weight. Why? Because it's easier to bring the line to the surface and its additional length provides more leverage on the forward cast.

### **DEFINITIONS USED IN SUMMARY OF DATA**

Prior to analyzing data, subjective adjectives were defined, namely “comfortable, effortless, sweet range, fishing distance and long distance.” These concepts are used to describe the ability of each rod/line combination in this section's data summary.

## DEFINITIONS

- *Comfortable cast*: one that can be executed for the several hundred casts in a full steelhead fishing day, without strain or pain, for several continuous days, by mature anglers.
- *Effortless cast*: one requiring so little effort, that energy expended in the forward cast is comparable to casting trout-weight single hand rods modest distances.
- *Sweet or Sweet range*: the grain weight or minimum/maximum grain range in which a near effortless cast will propel the fly a fishing distance.
- *Fishing distance*: 75 feet or greater.
- *Long distance*: 90 feet or greater.
- *Fishable, with ease, easily & well*: meaning same as comfortable.

## OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

- *All 15' tips* means five Rio type-8, 15-foot sinking tips weighing 129, 150, 166, 190 and 205 grains. In a couple of cases 15' tips as light as 90 grains were included.
- *All T-14 tips* means six T-14 tips from 8' to 25' long, weighing 112 to 350 grains.
- *BB300, BB400 and BB500* refer to Rio BigBoy 24-foot sink tips of 300, 400 & 500 grains.

## RODS TESTED AND SUMMARY OF DATA

### SIX-WEIGHT AND SEVEN-WEIGHT RODS

- Thomas & Thomas 1206-3, a 12' 6-wt, 3-piece medium action rod. Can be fished with 450, 550, and 650 grain Skagit lines; casts all 15' tips and T-14 tips to 15' well. Heaviest cast made comfortably to long distance [90'] was 660 grains [450 Skagit + 15' of T-14 [210 grains] = 660]. Sweet range is 560 to 640 grains.
- Sage 6126-3, a 12'6", 6-wt, 3-piece medium action rod. Similar performance to a Thomas & Thomas 1206-3.
- Thomas & Thomas 1307-3, a 13' 7-wt, 3-piece medium-fast action rod. Can be fished with 450, 550, 650 and 750 grain Skagit lines; casts all 15' tips effortlessly, casts all T-14 tips to 15-foot long effortlessly and comfortably [20' & 25']. Sweet range is 560 to 750 grains. Definitely an all day rod casting a BB300 90-feet, comfortably casts 90-feet with the BB400 and 75-feet with the BB500. Experienced Spey casting fishermen, not tournament competitors, at the GGACC's 2005 Spey-O-Rama cast the BB500 90-feet. Coauthor Pauli's favorite rod, with a Skagit 650 line.
- Sage 7136, a 13'6", 7-wt, 4-piece slow action rod [green color, circa 2001]. Can be fished with 450, 500 and 650 Skagit lines. This often-maligned rod truly comes alive with a Skagit line. Coauthor Keelin used this rod in his "light" setup on the Babine River in October 2005, employing a 550 Skagit head with tips to 225 grains, for fishing distances to 85 feet. With a 650 Skagit will comfortably fish a BB300. Caution against overpowering.

### EIGHT-WEIGHT AND NINE-WEIGHT RODS

- Sage 8150, a 15' 8-wt, 4-piece slow action rod [brown color Graphite III]: can be fished with all four Skagit lines; casts a BB300 a long distance, and then some, with a 650 or 750 Skagit line. Of all rods in this test, this is the easiest to cast a long distance. Whee!
- C. F. Burkheimer 9143, a 14'3", 8/9/10-wt, 3-piece medium action rod circa 2000. Tested with 450 and 550

Skagit Magic continued on page 5



- Skagit lines. Using the Skagit 550 casts all 15' tips with "delight," a subjective special category, a step above sweet, to describe the élan, the elegant enthusiasm, with which this rod casts fishing distances. Casts all T-14 tips easily; casts BB300 more easily than 20 and 25 foot T-14 tips. The BB300 is the dredger line for this setup. Sweet range is 612 to 850 grains.
- o As a full floating line with a 450 Skagit head, a 10 foot cheater and a 15' 150-grain *floating* tip [450+140+150 grains = 740 grains], this rod proved over a four day Atlantic salmon jaunt, to cast, again, with delight, firing perfect single Speys effortlessly. This outfit makes the caster look good!
  - o A second full floating setup proved at GGACC consisted of a Skagit 550 + 5' cheater + 15' 150-grain floating tip. This outfit, cast from a 3-foot wading depth slammed the reel at 90-feet.
  - R. B. Meiser S2H13689MKS [540-830 grains], a 13'6", 8/9-wt, 4-piece medium-fast action rod. The authors congratulate Bob Meiser for placing a grain weight range in easy view on the rod butt. Testing was limited to a Skagit 550 line with a 5' cheater and a 150-grain 15' sink tip cast sweetly [771 grains], as did the BB300 without a cheater [850 grains].
  - Sage 7141-4, a 14'1", 7-wt, 4-piece medium-fast action rod. While labeled a 7-wt, it is in actuality an 8/9-weight rod. Tested with 550 and 650 Skagit lines; 550 is best. Using a 5' cheater casts all 15' tips and T-14 tips easily. Casts 20 & 25' tips more easily without a cheater. Sweet range 680 to 850 grains. Casts BB300, BB400, BB500 and Rio Striper 26' DC tip without cheater. Heaviest weight cast 1050 grains. Note: a Skagit 650 grain head works well with this rod up to a BB300 tip [950 grains]. Owners of a Skagit 650 head need not buy a Skagit 550 unless the majority of fishing is with tips heavier than 300 grains.
  - Redington Red Fly, a 13', 8/9-wt, 3-piece fast action rod. Using a Skagit 650, casts all 15' tips and all T-14 tips with ease. Casts BB300 more easily than 20 or 25' of T-14. BB300 is "sweet" and is the dredger line of choice. Will cast BB400 & BB500. Heaviest weight cast 1150 grains. All casts without cheater. Sweet range 850 to 950 grains.
  - Fly Logic 1409-4, a 14', 9-wt, 4-piece medium-fast action rod. With a Skagit 650 grain head, used 5' cheater with all casts. Casts all 15' tips, all T-14 tips and BB300-500 tips easily. Sweet range 830 to 1000 grains.
  - Thomas & Thomas 1409-3, a 14', 9-wt, 3-piece fast action rod, matches well with Skagit 650. Using 5' cheater casts all 15' tips effortlessly and all T-14 tips with ease. Without a cheater, the BB300 is a sweet "must have" tip, casting long distance effortlessly. In addition, without a cheater the BB400 and the BB500 are comfortable at long distance. An excellent *floating* line setup using a Skagit 550 grain head plus a 10' cheater plus a 150-grain 15-foot long floating tip [total 840 grains], rod is effortless to long distance. With a 10' cheater, this outfit has a 52' head, similar to WindCutter 54' head lengths. Sweet range is 850 to 950 grains.
  - Sage 9141-4, a 14'1", 9-wt, 4-piece medium-fast action rod, matches well with a Skagit 650. Using 5' cheater casts all 15' tips effortlessly and all T-14 tips with ease. Without cheater, BB300 is sweet "must have" tip, casting long distance with ease. Casts BB400 & BB500 comfortably. An excellent *floating* line setup using a Skagit 550 grain head plus a 10' cheater plus a 150-grain 15-foot long floating tip [total 840 grains], rod is effortless to long distance. With a 10' cheater, this outfit has a 52' head, similar to WindCutter 54' head lengths. Sweet range is 850 to 950 grains.
  - Sage 9129-4 TCR, a 12'9", 9-wt, very fast action rod. With a 5' cheater, casts all 15' tips effortlessly and 8' to 15' T-14 tips with ease. Without cheater casts 20, 25, 28 and 30' T-14 tips comfortably. Casts BB300 to BB500 and 26' Striper DC 450 without cheater. To fully examine the capability of this rod, it should be tested with a Skagit 750.

### TEN-WEIGHT AND ELEVEN-WEIGHT RODS

- Sage 10150, 15', 10-wt, 4-piece, Graphite III, brown color, circa 1995, a medium action rod matches well with a Skagit 650. Using a 5' cheater [works better than 10'], casts all 15' tips effortlessly and all T-14 tips with ease. Casts BB300 with little effort, a "must have" line. The 15' length of this rod makes lighter work of the BB400 and 500, compared to shorter rods. Sweet range 820 to 1090 grains.
- Winston 15' 10-wt, 9-1/2 ounces [no other markings] slow action rod. Limited testing. Cast BB300 effortlessly with 750 Skagit. Casting with the Skagit 650 head proved not as easy as with 750. This is a very tip-heavy rod that needs reels heavier than a Tibor Gulfstream or Loop/Danielsson HD 11-fourteen to balance. The authors suggest wrapping the reel spool with T-14 or lead core line to balance the outfit.
- Thomas & Thomas 1611-3, a 16', 11-wt, 3-piece fast action rod, matches well with Skagit 750. Requires 10' [173 grain 10/11/12] cheater for all but BigBoy 24' tips. Casts all 15' tips effortlessly, all T-14 tips with ease; most are cast effortlessly. Without a cheater, the BB300 is near effortless, sweet, to long distance. The BB400 and BB500 are comfortable to long distance. Sweet range is 1020 to 1150 grains. Using a Skagit 650, will cast BB300 very long distance, but feels under loaded.



Ray's B.C. Beauty

### WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE? IS RIO'S SKAGIT SPEY LINE SUPER OR SUPERFLUOUS?

Definitely not just another toy, Rio's Skagit Spey line is a vital component of almost every Spey rodder's sink tip weapons system, and an absolute must for newer Spey casters.

#### OUR FINDINGS ARE:

- Rio's Skagit Spey lines will effectively fish heavy tips, far heavier than normally associated with a given rod weight or the Skagit style, and do so with a large fly, while wading. It is difficult to comprehend an 1150-grain line, consisting of a Skagit 650 plus a BigBoy 500, plus a large fly, cast with a 9-weight Spey rod, until one does it comfortably, all day long. Coauthor Pauli did just that in April 2005 pursuing steelhead in Alaska's Situk River. This line is for real!
- The term "summer rod" used to describe lighter weight, slower action rods suitable only for floating lines is obsolete. A year of steelhead fishing and casting pond experience proved "summer rods" are well suited for fishing any weight sink tip with a large fly, at distances comparable to their "winter" brethren.

*Skagit Magic continued from page 6*

- The level of effort required to cast heavy sink tips is dramatically reduced, and nearly eliminated in many cases, with these new lines.
- Fishermen who struggle with type-6 and type-8 sink tips, and fear the BigBoy 24-foot 300, 400 and 500 grain tips, will be delighted at the ease of fishing them with Rio's Skagit lines.
- T-14 cut from a spool has no front taper and thus is a bit more challenging to turn over gracefully than 15-foot or BigBoy 24-foot tips that are tapered and density compensated.
- Type-6, type-3, intermediate and floating tips cast as well, or better, than the fast sinking tips used in this test program.
- Skagit Spey line design is a fast moving work in progress. In 2002 Mike McCune set up a T&T 1307 seven-weight rod with a WindCutter based Skagit setup using a 23-foot head weighing 295 grains. The new Rio version for this rod has a 27-foot head weighting 450 grains, and is far more capable. Coauthor Pauli's favorite line with this rod is the 650-grain Skagit head. The use of Skagit lines has out-raced its developers' original goals.
- With the Rio Skagit Spey line's 27-foot belly, it is easier to make consistently good and long casts with a sink tip than it is to make such casts with longer belly lines.
- Jim Vincent, Mike McCune and Scott O'Donnell succeeded in developing a line that shortens the learning curve. If the authors were to open a Spey casting school, Skagit lines would be standard equipment on every rod.

Most importantly to fishermen, Rio's Skagit Spey lines enable anglers fishing *heavy tips*, to use *lighter rods*, to penetrate *greater depths* in a river with *lively unweighted flies*, while casting with an *easy "all-day-long" stroke*, without sacrificing *distance*. There is no down side. Wow! Just do it and see for yourself!

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Bob Porter



*Spey-O-Rama 2006*





The Syrstad Twins and Donna O'Sullivan



George Nikitin

Simon Gawesworth

George Nikitin

# Spey-O-Rama - 2006



Knute Syrstad

George Nikitin



George, Steve and Tim Rajeff

George Nikitin





George Nikitin

Steve Rajeff



George Nikitin

Spey-O-Rama 2006



Bob Porter

Anglers Lodge





*Floyd Dean with a young student*

# *Casting Tips*

*With Floyd Dean*

## *Knots For Fly Fishers*

If you are like many fly fishers you might have had the following problem. During your last fly-fishing trip, several of your favorite flies disconnected a little too easily and fish were lost. Upon close examination of the tippet, you noticed that it had a peculiar curl like a pigs tail. The flies just broke off with out much strain, what was the cause? Did you have faulty tippet material? Maybe your knots were not properly tied? Although you might be new to fly fishing, you were a boy scout, a sea scout and served a hitch in the Navy. You thought you knew knots, what went wrong?

Probably your knot tying experience is like that of most people, mainly with rope, twine, Dacron or hemp. The fly fisher uses a hard or soft nylon monofilament for the leader and tippet material, usually hard for salt water and soft for fresh water. This however is not an absolute, the black bass fly fisher, for example, will need hard nylon to turn over heavy bass flies.

It is important to know that heat is generated in monofilament through friction as the knot tightens. Because of this, one of the cardinal rules in tying fly-fishing knots is ALWAYS WET THE KNOT, THEN CINCH IT DOWN. The reason for the wetting of the knot is that monofilament loses 50% or more of its strength through heat. The wet knot stays cool and slides into place with ease and without weakening the material.

Try this simple experiment. Take 3 feet of 20# test mono, tie it to a doorknob and create a little tension with the left hand. Pinch the mono between the thumb and forefinger of your right hand. Now, slide your thumb and forefinger back and forth on the line using a 6 -inch movement 10 times very slowly. At 2 or 3 completed strokes, you will start to feel heat. At 5 or 6, the line will get hotter. At more than 9 to 10, you'll burn your leader and blister your fingers.

Try tying another section of mono onto your doorknob. This time, when you add the friction, take 4 squares of TP, (That's right toilet paper), and fold it in half 4 times. Wrap the folded paper around the 20# test mono. Pinch tightly between thumb and forefinger and slide it on the line very fast. The TP will add some insulation for your fingers. It will also add extra friction heat that will melt the mono. At 10 to 20 strokes or so the mono will break. Take note of the burnt curly pigtail end on your mono. This is that same curly end you have seen on your tippet after losing

*Floyd began his journey to Master Fly Casting instructor with childhood summers spent fishing the streams that flow out of the Teton Mountains near Driggs, Idaho. It was there that he first became aware that there was fishing, and then there was fly-fishing: he was not allowed to touch his uncles' fly rods. It would not be until 1989 that Floyd would take up fly-fishing in earnest. And then, through dedicated practice, he moved up the ladder to become one of the top casters in the nation. In addition to the 'dedicated practice', Floyd freely credits his stellar position to the fact that he was taken under the wing of some of the greats in the fly-fishing and casting world. And now he too has become one of the roughly 70 people in the US who has achieved the level of Federation of Fly Fishing Master Fly Casting Instructor.*

*Knots for Fly Fishers continued on page 11*

a fish or fly. Adding more pressure and stroking faster will make the line break faster.

You could set up a competition with your friends and see who can break 40 # test mono the fastest. Since guys will compete at anything, this could become an Olympic event. I can see it now. In the blue corner, from the GGACC wearing red waders, weighing 89 kilos, standing 6'6", The World Champion Mono Breaker Youbustem. In the red corner, from the OCC weighing in at 88 kilos standing 5'1" wearing blue waders the contender, Iloosemfaster. This is a whole new Red and Blue mono bustin' tournament.

Really, fly fishers do sometimes apply gentle friction on tippet material with leather to straighten the line so that the tippet will turn over well. Too much friction, however, will not only straighten, but weaken the line. It's a delicate balance.

Those who always hire guides can, for 350 dollars plus tip, have all their knots tied for them. If, you want to have a more independent experience, here is a start. These knots logically progress from one to the next.

### ***THE CLINCH KNOT***

(Also called the Half-Blood knot and the Stevedore Knot)

The Clinch Knot is an easy and effective knot used to tie flies to tippet material or the leader. To begin, run the tippet through the hook eye, wrap the tag end around the tippet 5 to 6 times. You will notice that you created a loop near the eye, run the tag end through the loop, wet and cinch down. Trim the tag end.



### ***THE IMPROVED CLINCH KNOT***

This is the same as the *Clinch* except that after you pass the tag end through the loop at the eye, you also pass it through the open loop that you created as the tag end traveled through the loop near the eye. Then you wet it and cinch it up. Trim the tag end.



### ***THE BERKLEY TRILENE KNOT***

(Also called the Double-Loop Clinch Knot or Double Jam Knot)

Another relative of the Clinch Knot, developed by the Berkley Tackle Company. The Trilene Knot begins with two passes through the eye of the hook. Then you proceed as in the Clinch, wrapping the tag end around the tippet, and passing the tag end through the two loops near the eye. Wet and cinch down.





### ***THE IMPROVED BERKLEY TRILENE KNOT***

(Also called the Double Loop Improved Clinch Knot)

This is a very strong knot. It uses all the above techniques. In this knot the tag end is passed through the hook eye twice. Then, the line is wrapped 5 to 6 times around the tippet. The tag end then passes through both loops near the eye. Then, the tag travels through the loop created as the tag end traveled through the two loops near the eye. Wet and cinch down.



The *Clinch* is a great knot to tie. However in some cases where the mono size is too small for the wire diameter of the hook, the line will slip out and you'll end up with a pigtail. So, in this case you would move on to The Berkeley Trilene or the Improved Clinch. Putting the tag end back through another loop solves the slipping problem while still providing you with a relatively small and fishable knot. You don't want to tie the Improved Berkley Trilene Knot to a #24 Midge because your knot may be bigger than the fly. Fly size, hook size, tippet size all have a lot to do with the knot you choose to tie on that fly. Use the least amount of knot you can for conditions without sacrificing strength.

My favorite wet or dry fly tie-on knot is the *Improved Clinch*. Practice these knots and they will save you from breaking off flies and fish this summer.

Tight Loops!

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*Lundy Lake before Ice Out*

CJ Webb

## EAST SIERRA FOCUS

By: CJ Webb

*My favorite is a Russ Peak rod that was made for me by his good friend Jesse Terry. I also have Russ's reel that was given to him by Scientific Anglers to test and his silk line. I use it only occasionally, as I don't want anything to happen to it. My second favorite is my 9' boron 4-wt with SA system 2 reel. Third favorite is a 9 foot quantum that was a gift, and it's a dream.*

*I own and operate Virginia Lakes Resort with husband John, (2006 will be 32 summers). I do extensive one-day hikes into the back country looking for large golden trout, and have had great success over the many years in residence. I've hiked every major drainage from Bishop to Hwy. 88 and can tell you a lot about the areas I've hiked.*

*My goal has been to teach everyone how to catch fish regardless the manner. I specialize in getting kids off bait and onto a fly and bubble, and then progress to a fly rod from there. Kids like activity and get bored quickly so it's easy to get them on a fly and bubble as it works so very well. I spend a lot of time drawing diagrams for rigging anything people want to fish with and keep it as inexpensive as possible. Angling opportunity is what makes the sport, and once you get them catching fish, making it easier is the fun part.*

*My dream is to fish New Zealand, and Montana, from stem to stern.*

The Eastern Sierra weather pattern this past winter was similar to 2005 with one minor exception, the snow pack was higher over the crest. We were lulled by the 23 days of warmth from early January into February when the big blast hit the Sierra, and hit again with a record snowfall in March (20 days). April had been unstable with high winds, snow, rain and it finally started warming by the 18<sup>th</sup>, only to get a blast of snowy-rain just before the opener. Warming is in the forecast and I'm ready for spring.

Why do we rely on a furry rodent to predict our last vestiges of winter? I've purchased a hunting license for "large rodents" and Punky Phil better not show his lard butt next February, because I'll be ready.

Spring run off has started in some places and the flows are up, West Walker, East Walker and Owens are running fairly fast with good clarity. Bridgeport Reservoir is full but release won't increase until full-on thaw starts. There's always a bright side, we'll have high water through most of the summer and fish food will be plentiful.

Bring extra layers of clothing if you plan to fish the Eastern Sierra within the next few weeks, as weather is never predictable up here. The weather has been sensational since opening weekend with temperatures increasing daily putting the big melt on the "polar-cap" areas, with a few thunderstorms around the latter part of May. June is reported to be the same. Never trust Mother Nature, come prepared with 1 gallon of D E E T!

Be safe if you walk in and around snow, it can be crusty in the morning, and overly soft in the afternoon. Take care in your footing around snowy edges of lakes, it can be deceiving. The water is extremely cold this time of year, don't take chances unnecessarily.

Getting better--those annoying little things--reminding us that anglers aren't perfect. Occasionally we make mistakes, and many of us make them over and over again. If we learn to avoid them, we'll be listening to our reels sing more and not wondering what happened. We think like humans and not like trout. Can you imagine laying in a streambed and looking up through the current or "looking through their eyes"? Predators, shadows and vibrations are their major problems and the moment trout detect any of these, their defense takes over. Wear subdued clothing by matching your ensemble with your surroundings, fish with the sun on your side or in your face early and late in the day. Keep a low profile, no acrobatics and try not to impress everyone with your ability to cast into your backing as your success depends on our stealthy not how much time you spend on your bow-flex biceps.



CJ at Upper Frog Lake, Virginia Lakes Canyon

*East Sierra Focus continued on page 14*

### FISHING REPORT

Remember to check the regulations prior to fishing unfamiliar water that you are unsure of as to limits, size, etc.

ROCK CREEK road is clear and the melt is starting. Hard to maneuver around the stream as there is a lot of snow at the upper reaches. Lake is rotten and ice fishing is over for the year.

HOT CREEK water is high and somewhat clear, and temperatures are perfect for bugs. Bring “tons” of flies and be prepared. Flashback PT #18-20, San Juan worms, and tiny zebra midges should get tugs. The breezy afternoons may prevail on and off so come prepared for everything. Please stay out of the water to prevent the spread of the New Zealand mud snail. Cary Kutzke took and released a 28” brown that was estimated just over 10 pounds on a #20 flashback PT with a guide. Cary has my deepest respect.

CROWLEY has been on fire due to the great weather since just before opening. Fish are holding in 10-14 feet along the drop-offs with Leighton, Alligator and Sandy Point being the hot spots. Weed situation is not a consideration. There’s a new guide fly pattern I found in Mammoth called a “gillie”. Stop in and see me during the summer and I’ll save you one.

CONVICT was stocked with some heavyweights and water is up and south shore is always the hot ticket for those seeking behemoths on olive Matukas, woolly buggers and leeches.



Lake Mary on April 27

CJWebb

MAMMOTH BASIN is still under snow and ice and the Lake Mary Road plowing started the 23rd. Lake Mary was showing some water at the outlet and inlet when I drove up there. Prayers needed.

SAN JOAQUIN ROAD should be open by the 24<sup>th</sup> of June due to heavier snow pack.

JUNE LAKE ~ The marina cage culture program has been releasing cutthroats

this month. Tubing has been good now that the water is warmer and a lot of nice fish are being taken on Matukas, olive spruce flies, red throat olive Matukas and olive woolly buggers. Tubing will be short-lived with long hot-chocolate/coffee breaks, and of course bladder breaks.

GULL LAKE is just breaking up around the edges so stay off as it is black.

SILVER LAKE ~ Most of the action is on the shore.

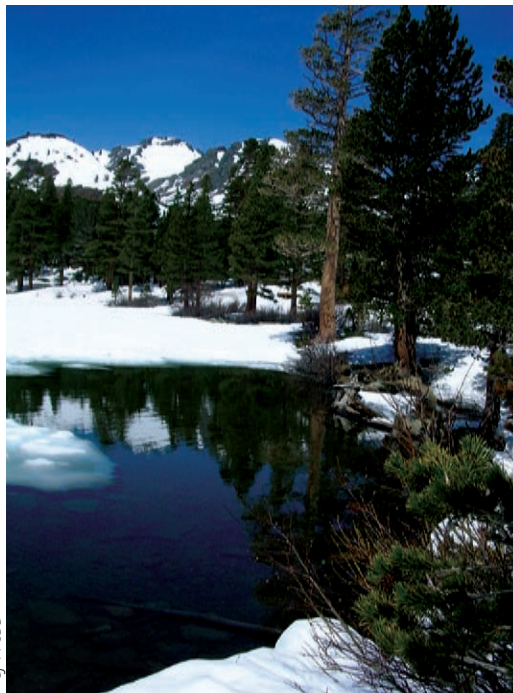
RUSH CREEK has been good using birds nest (olive) or gold ribbed hair’s ear just below the lake. It’s tough, but if you have patience and work it, you’ll see some nice browns.



GRANT LAKE is the fullest I've ever seen. Tubers are doing well on the south shore and around the south end of Alligator point with olive Matukas, olive woolly buggers and some rainbow Hornbergs. Water is warming nicely.

TIOGA PASS ~ in 2005 the snow depth at the gate was 12 feet, same time this year, it's 22 feet. So don't look for them to get this finished too soon. CalTrans took two snow blowers and have been instructed to stop at little blue slide. More CalTrans equipment was taken in so don't look for them to get this finished too soon, but The Park Service is working from their side, and watching conditions.

LUNDY ~ Road is open, water is the highest I've ever seen, and the anglers are shoulder to shoulder, so tubers take a number and grab your favorite woolly bugger and don't forget the long underwear. Brrrr, that water looks cold.



CJ Webb

Little Virginia Lake on May 17

VIRGINIA LAKES road is open to the Trumbull Lake campground and ice fishing is over on Little Virginia and Trumbull, as it looks like a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces, but for those daring enough to venture onto the ice on Big Virginia, early am is the best time. Little Virginia has water showing at the inlet and outlets. Trumbull is getting really dark and very unsafe.

EAST WALKER is slated to get approximately 15,000 fingerling browns in the 3" range this summer so there will be enough food for those hungry "boys" with the hopes that a majority of them live to grow up and hit your fly. Flows hit the 822 mark, and weighted nymphs are your best bet with the heavy flows, and use a San Juan worm over a crystal tiger midge. I scouted the area and found

bugs, hugging the bushes; with "no-see-ums" galore. Does anyone know how to tie a #40 adult midge? Weighted nymphs should be used to get your bugs down, and "show your stuff". Some dries should work in the afternoon for the dry fly addicts who have waited all winter. Wear a cap with bug spray to keep the piranha out of your hair.

BRIDGEPORT RESERVOIR water is high and off color due to run-off. Season started off slow but those willing to endure the breezy conditions found great results near Buckeye Bay. Water has been stocked heavily with sub-catchable DFG bows from '05 and recently with trophy DFG and Alpers to test your tippets.

WEST WALKER flows are 3220 cfs and great conditions for white water kayaking,

*East Sierra Focus continued from page 15*

and it will get higher in late May when night temperatures really start to crank. Use the same strategy in getting your bugs down to the bottom; they are getting gorged with food so your best skills are needed to entice them to your offering.

SONORA PASS road opened on the 24<sup>th</sup> with fanfare.

CARMEN (Kirman) was stocked last fall with 5000-8000 fingerling brookies to help revive the brook population.

MONITOR PASS is open and very little snow at the top. Heenan is ice free and waiting for the September crowd.

*See you on the water, CJ*

## **THE BAJA PIRATES OF LA PAZ**

*By Bob Rosas*

This past January, after I renewed my GGACC membership, a couple of my friends joined up as new members and we took ourselves off to the San Mateo Rod and Boat Show to find the booth of the Baja Pirates of La Paz ([bajapirateoflapaz.com](http://bajapirateoflapaz.com)) to book a week of relaxation and fishing on the Sea of Cortez in La Paz, Mexico.

We had booked with this firm the previous year and, with the exception of the travel from and back to the Bay Area (which was a nightmare) we had a great time. So we thought we'd see what kind of deal they could offer us this year.

Baja Pirates have made major improvements to the way they are getting their Northern California clients to Baja. We would fly direct from SFO to Cabo on United and be met by one of the "Pirate crew" for the ride North to La Paz and our hotel. A very picturesque ride I might add, albeit a couple of hours duration.

La Paz is a charming small town, still untouched by the glitz and tourist time-share hype that has subsumed Cabo--not to mention Spring Break which was going full tilt in Cabo when we arrived, but has yet to reach up so far North to La Paz. La Paz also has excellent small local restaurants, many serving brilliantly fresh sea food dishes and all at very reasonable prices.

Our arrangements consisted of two days for travel, three days for fishing, and two days free time, including round trip air fare SFO to Cabo, land transportation to and from Cabo to La Paz, six nights at the Hotel Marina, coupons for complimentary box lunches on fishing days, and buffet breakfast on non-fishing days. All in all a very reasonable and attractive package.

Hotel Marina is comfortable and includes a luxury boat marina. It is located at the Southern end of the town of La Paz and has a couple of very nice bars and a pleasant restaurant. The rooms are generous in size and the marble lined shower is nearly big



*West Walker River at 800 cfs*

*CJ Webb*

*Bob Rosas is new to fly fishing. He enjoys providing support in the kitchen for the various dinners at the Lodge.*

*He also provides editorial support for the Bulletin.*

*Baja Pirates continued on page 17*

enough for a game of racquet ball.

Last year we went in late April. This year we decided to try and avoid the high temperatures and go in early March. Since, even in April, fishing in a dead calm under a 90+ degree sun was too enervating for folks our age. We found the weather in March to be much more tolerable, with highs in the low to mid 80's. But your trade-off is some wind on the water which can challenge anyone who is fly casting.

In March yellowtail are the predominant catch, running from 20 to 40 pounds. Also out there are amberjack, rooster fish, barrilla and the ever present needle fish which seem to be there no matter the time of year.

If you want to go after the big game, marlin, sail, dorado; you have to come down in the summer months: June, July, August, but the temps will be running North of 110 every day. If the high temps are not a problem for you and you want to go after the "big boys" with light tackle, then come down in the teeth of the heat; you won't be disappointed.

Our three days of fishing on the Sea of Cortez pretty much covered the gamut of the fishing experience--whether it be salt, fresh, or whatever--an old Country Western song captures the essence of it: *Some Days are Diamonds, Some Days are Stones*.

**Day One** - not a diamond, but not a stone either: We are picked up at the hotel at 6:20 a.m. for the 20 minute drive South to the panga harbor. The four of us divide up into groups of two, choose a panga and head out. But before we can run out to the fishing grounds we must stop to buy bait. Now, I know, if you are going out with light tackle and flies, you are saying, "But I don't need to buy bait." Be that as it may here follows an instructional and perhaps apocryphal tale...

Last year, it is said, a group of fly casters headed out for a day on the water. Their panga captain stopped by the boat of the man who sells bait fish to the outgoing pangas. The fly fishermen said they didn't need any bait because, well, we don't need bait. The panga captain tried to get them to understand it would be a very good idea to give the man \$20 dollars for his bait. But, no, the fly fishermen declined to purchase what they felt they did not need. Two hours later, out on the water, their panga was stopped by Mexican Federales demanding to see their licenses to fish. So, a word to the wise: give the man \$20 for the bait that you are never going to use and have a nice day. The captain of the panga will use it for his bait fishing.



*The author attempting to scare fish*

Wind is part of the trade-off for lower temps in the earlier part of the year.

Day One was windy. Windy conditions on open water are immaterial to bait casters, but they present an impediment to a fly caster. Also a panga is not well set up to accommodate fly casting ,what with constrained space, bimini top, radio antennae and additional bait fishing rods sticking up here and there; space for overhand casting is tight.

By agreement, my bait casting friends took to the back of the panga and I had the front to myself. But given the conditions--even with the captain keeping the panga on the leeward side of a large desert island to minimize wind gusts--the only cast that was usable was what Floyd Dean describes as the Open Hand or Side Cast.

The saltwater gear I took down to the Sea of Cortez consisted of: rod - TFO, 10wt, 9ft, 4pc.; reel - Okuma 10/11 Integrity large arbor reel; line - Jim Teeny 10wt line, 300 grain, Sinking Tip T Series, and flies - a set which included a Skipping Bug, Chris's Bipolar Baitfish in blue and olive, and a range of multi colored Gummy Minnows. The minnows were the most successful of the flies used. They look very very much like baitfish and have an extremely naturalistic movement when in the water.

We thought that Day One fishing , was on the slow side. We had a number of hits which broke off, but we ended the day with a 14 lb. Sierra, and 5 yellow tails ranging from 15 to 25 lbs. On balance Day One was a decent day on the water.



**Day Two** - a diamond: much lighter wind this day. The panga captain found the leeward side of a large island where the sea was literally boiling with yellowtails in a feeding frenzy. The yellowtails had hit upon a massive school of bait fish. So great were the numbers of yellowtail and so large was the number of bait fish that they were actually beaching themselves on the shores of the island in a vain attempt to escape their predators. But time and again you would see pools of churning water where yellowtail had encircled their prey and were engaged in a feeding frenzy. Simply casting into the midst of a broil resulted almost instantly in a serious strike. By the end of the day, we had two Sierra in the 15 lb. range and 6 yellowtails—with the largest tipping the scales at 40 lbs. Everyone returned exhausted from the repeated hits and fights. By any measure, Day Two was truly a diamond.



Heading out on the Sea of Cortez

A word here about catch and release: The panga captains rely in part on their catch each outing to supplement their family's food as well as household income. When they fish it is always to catch. The idea of catch and release is an alien concept in Mexico

and so your panga captains are very quick with the gaff. If you wish to catch and release you should talk with the guide who delivers you to the panga harbor each morning and ask him to walk your captain through the concept and establish a set of mutually understood signals for when you wish to keep or release a catch.

**Day Three** - a stone: Winds were up again and we ranged from the very edge of the deep blue game fish water riding some impressive swells to the hidden alcoves of sandstone islands with the most delicate lace eroded trceries in an effort to find fish. All to no avail. The entire day resulted in two needlefish hits and a couple of tugs. But that said, cruising among those raw, beautifully eroded, desert islands with their inlets, beaches and rookeries is an E Ticket ride even without ever seeing a fish.

All in all it was a fun and relaxing seven-day get-away to a picturesque and relatively unspoiled part of Baja. I know my friends and I will return the same time next year.

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There is an initiation fee of \$10, for each type of membership, plus annual dues. Regular members pay \$30 per year per person. A Family membership is available at \$36 per year. Junior membership dues are \$6 for persons 18 years of age or younger. **The Bulletin** subscription runs from January through December. If you do not receive **The Bulletin**, please contact the membership chair to check your membership status.

#### JUNE

- |       |                     |   |
|-------|---------------------|---|
| 8     | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting            |
| 10    | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 N   | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds |
| 23-25 | 1:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. | Sugar Creek Ranch Fish-out                  |

#### JULY

- |    |                      |   |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 8  | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 a.m. | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds |
| 13 | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.  | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting            |

#### AUGUST

- |     |                     |   |
|-----|---------------------|---|
| 4-6 | 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. | High Sierra Golden Trout Fish-Out           |
| 10  | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting            |
| 12  | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 N   | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds |

#### SEPTEMBER

- |    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 9  | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 N   | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds |
| 14 | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting            |

#### OCTOBER

- |    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 7  | 9:00 a.m.           | Casting Tournament - Trout, Bass, 1/4 oz., Open Plug, Angler's Fly, 1/4 oz. Dist. |
| 8  | 9:00 a.m.           | Casting Tournament - Dry, Wet, 3/8 oz., 5/8 oz., 5/8 oz. Team                     |
| 12 | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting  |
| 14 | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 N   | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds                                       |

#### NOVEMBER

- |    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 9  | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting            |
| 11 | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 N   | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds |

#### DECEMBER

- |    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 9  | 9:30 a.m.-12:00 N   | Free Casting Lessons at GGACC Anglers Ponds |
| 14 | 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. | GGACC Board of Directors Meeting            |

*Board of Directors Meetings are held at Anglers Lodge on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 6:30 p.m.*

*Free casting lessons for the public will be held on the second Saturday of each month 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.*

*Please register with John Till, Casting Chair*

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