

Lousy weather lures landlocks

As the sun came up, I was sitting in the car with the door wide open, trying to get my chest waders on. The wind pushed the door against my legs, and the rain spat in my face.

I shut the car door, then tromped down to where the brook ran into the lake. The temperature was hovering just above zero, the wind drove the rain in crazy zig-zags, and the river rushed into the lake frantically. It was a cold, wet, windy morning. Perfect for landlocked salmon.

I edged my way into the river mouth. It was actually Fletchers Lake, connecting to Grand Lake in Fall River. That system of lakes, including William, Thomas, Charles and Kinsac, is one of the few homes of landlocked salmon in Nova Scotia. Others are lakes Charlotte and Scraggy in Halifax County, Mushamush in Lunenburg County, Goose Harbour in Guysborough County, Loch Katherine in Antigonish County and Gabarus in Cape Breton.

I snapped on a big Williams Wabler, one of the large spoons I had in my arsenal. I also had a Red Devil, Five of Diamonds, some Rapalas, and extra-large Super Dupers in reserve. Other good presentations for landlocked salmon are willow leaf spinners with minnows or smelt rigged about 15 centimetres below, and for fly fishermen, streamers that imitate smelt or baitfish like the Magog Smelt or Mickey Finn.

I let my spoon sink a bit before reeling it in. In fact, I let it sink too much. I had been using lighter equipment for trout so far this year, and was not used to the heavy lures.



JOE FITZGERALD CHASING PISCES

When I began reeling, I was almost instantly snagged on bottom. I ended up snapping the line. Damn! Seven bucks down the drain.

I had to tie a new swivel onto my line. By the time I had it secured, my finger tips were frozen. I put another spoon on, a Mepps Cyclone, and went back to work. After adjusting to the heavy lures, I got my rhythm and began working the river mouth and shoreline of the lake.

After an hour and no bites, I noticed the rain changing. I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me at first, and then realized it was snowing. Within seconds I couldn't see three metres in front of me. Then a rogue wave thumped me in the chest. That did it. I counted down 10 final casts with no action. Apparently even the landlocked salmon were taking the day off.

I got back to the car and cranked the heat. I gratefully sipped some hot coffee from my Thermos. After the sting of my thawing fingers and toes subsided, I sank into a peaceful silence. I watched the snow melting into the dark restless water, and began planning my next adventure.

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