

My FIRST FLY ROD

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #151 —

Dad never owned a fly rod; for him catching fish was more about filling the frying pan rather than just having fun. However, from the many fishing stories he told, no one would ever think for a minute that he didn't enjoy fishing. His equipment was simple; a cane or willow pole or an old bait casting outfit suited him just fine. Carp and catfish were often his target species; not particularly what one would call game fish.

But I'm of another generation; for me, catching fish is purely a matter of having fun. In my adult life, there's never been a time that I fished just to get something to eat. So, for me at least, the tools and techniques of fishing are much more important than they were for Dad.

My first fly rod was a Wright & McGill, fiberglass, seven weight that I bought on closeout when a local hardware store was going out of business, about 1970. Also, I bought all of their flies (dry flies), for 10

cents each. The rod was a bit much for the rainbow trout I bought it for, and knowing very little about fly fishing - and having only dry flies - I fished without much success. This was likely to my good fortune, because if I'd caught lots of fish with that fly rod, maybe fishing would have been more important to me than guns and hunting. Who knows what I'd be doing today? It was much later in life that I got a Sage five weight and began to learn how to use it to catch rainbow trout - with reasonable effectiveness.



Properly maintained and stored, a fly rod never wears out; so this is my first fly rod, 46 years after initial purchase. It doesn't have quite the feel of a modern carbon fiber rod, but still catches fish.

Now a fly rod and reel is an interesting piece of equipment; conceived and assembled properly, it can be a piece of art - and sometimes costs as much. Someone once said that fly rods and Purdey shotguns have a lot in common - just holding them is reward enough; you don't actually have to shoot the Purdey or catch fish with the fly rod to enjoy them.

"...for me, catching fish is purely a matter of having fun"

There are a handful of unique casting principles that I've tried to master, to look good when fly fishing. It's all about tightening up the line, lifting it out of the water, throwing it behind you, waiting till it straightens out, then putting it back in the water at the desired location. Sounds simple, and it is; just not necessarily easy. I've always worried about my ears.



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My first fly rod, was this Wright & McGill Trailmaster 7-1/2 foot, 7 weight, made of fiberglass.



In my mind, the reel is not as important as the rod; still, there are some pretty expensive reels out there, so someone must think they are important.