



**INLAND EMPIRE FLY FISHING CLUB  
MARCH MEETING**  
Tuesday, March 8, 2022  
Wet Fly 5:30 Meeting 6:30 PM  
RAMADA INN-AIRPORT  
8909 W Airport Dr, Spokane, WA 99224

**Presidents' Message**  
By  
**Denny Carson**

Another February in the books. While being one of the shortest months of the year, February always seems to take the longest for me. Most of the things that distract us from the short cold days of winter like Christmas and Football are behind us.

Winter fishing is selective at best and February rarely gives up a sunny day. However this year I was lucky enough to be invited to tag along with some members to fish the North Fork on a spectacularly sunny winter day. I started with steamers in the deeper pools but quickly switched to a black stonefly since no takers on the muddler. The silhouette of that dark stonefly against a sunny sky has always been a killer for me. The Cutthroat were awake and cooperating and we all caught some good trout. I had a great day fishing and learning a new section of the river and hopefully picked up some new fishing buddies in the process.

Speaking of new fishing buddies,, my Daughter and her husband welcomed their first child and our first Grandchild into the world this February. I hope everyone has also enjoyed some of the sunny days this winter to get out and wet a line or a net as it were :)

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the club meeting this March. We have a great speaker coming to the Meeting and a great meal lined up as well. Also, please consider volunteering a little time this month to the Big Horn show booth. It is one of our primary member recruiting efforts for the club.

Tightlines!  
Denny

**March Meeting**  
**March 8, 2022**  
**Tyler Balich**  
**Fishing the St. Joe**



**Tyler will be live and in person!**

Tyler Balich grew up in Anchorage, Alaska where, naturally, he learned to hunt and fish. He moved to north Idaho 26 years ago and now manages North 40 Fly Shop in Coeur d'Alene. When not wandering the mountains for elk, or wading rivers for cutthroat trout, or floating down Montana's Clark Fork River, he spends time with his wife and children.

The March presentation will be on "Fishing the St. Joe" and you don't want to miss it.

The presentation will not be on zoom, but we will try to record it so that we can send a YouTube link for those who miss the presentation.



**PLEASE RESPOND TO THE EMAIL IF YOU'LL BE ATTENDING—ACCURATE DINER COUNTS SAVE \$\$\$**

**Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club—Spokane, Washington**

**Thank you, Jon!  
A Magical Presidency  
during a time we needed some sleight of hand**



At the January meeting, President Denny Carson awarded past President Jon Bowne with a trout statue. Jon was available to go through the chairs when we really needed his help. He was instrumental in getting the zoom program up and running during the covid days and, as President, was able to get us back to regular meetings. We appreciate the contributions that he made during his tenure on the Board and his subsequent rise through the chairs. Thank you, Jon, for a job well done.

**Your To-Do List for Right Now**

**Kids Fishing Update:**

It's still uncertain, but if it happens we'll need some volunteers. Floyd will have a sign-up sheet at the March meeting, and we'll reach out for others via email (or you could contact Floyd) if it comes off. Lots of folks want it to happen.....

***If you haven't paid for your 2022 dues:***

Cut a check and send it to IEFEC, P.O. Box 2926, Spokane WA 99220 Right Away!

***If you're coming to the March Meeting:***

RSVP by replying to the email requesting your response

***If you'd like to get on the list for some of Jerry McBride's projects scheduled for summer or fall***

Contact Jerry McBride. (jerry.r.mcbride@gmail.com). He'll put you on the list!

***If you haven't been out fishing yet...***

Lowland lakes in WA open March 1...and streams are okay in this pre-breakup time. Get outside!

**Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club—Spokane, Washington**

## Crawfish Biology - Part 2

By  
Mark Pinch

Let's continue our discussion by trying to better understand the biology of Crawfish and how it pertains to us as fly fishers and tyers. By the way, in a follow up from the last article, two of our fly fishers, Lee Funkhouser and Jerry McBride, have reported seeing Otters at Fourth of July Lake.

To start out, there is only one native crawfish in our state and in British Columbia, the Signal Crawfish. Their name comes from adults which can exhibit a white marking right at the joint of one or both of the pinchers. Crawfish are widely distributed in our lakes and rivers. All the lakes with rocky shorelines are loaded. The Spokane River and Rufus Woods have healthy populations of Crawfish as well.

Life cycle: While there is some mating in the spring, the majority of mating is in the fall. Mating rituals go on for a month or more, ending when the water temperature drops to 50 degrees. Then comes hibernation. Crawfish bury down in the rocks and mud for the winter. During the winter, the females



Adult Signal Crawfish

develop the eggs attached to their abdomen. In the spring, once water temps are over 50 degrees, the females come out to let the eggs go which quickly hatch into baby crawfish. They molt quite often and are very active. Growth rates depend upon water temperature and length of season. But they will get to an inch or two in a year or two. Crawfish will be active all spring, summer and fall until the water temps drop below the 50 degree mark.

The Takeaway: As you can tell already, the most important number to remember is 50°. Under 50\*, the Crawfish are dormant. Above that they are active. Once water, say 4 to 10 feet, stays above 50° it's game on. So we have to remember that in the spring and fall when water temps are below 50\*, the Crawfish are hibernating. No sense in fishing our Crawfish patterns. Unless of course, you are trying to hook an Otter.

Mating Season: The popular belief is that crawfish are only available to fish right after they molt because they are soft. However, that may not be the case. Science shows that after the molt, they know that they are vulnerable. So they immediately bury themselves in the rocks until they are able to regrow their hard shell.

A more plausible theory is that while the juveniles are often available, the larger Crawfish they are more available during the mating season. Much like the deer rut, they are carelessly scampering around the rocks in a lovefest. This could be a key. However, mating involves the larger Crawfish along with the precocious males. This may be the best time of availability for Otters, but maybe or maybe not for Trout and ourselves. All are hard shelled. So it is hard to tell. Those smaller, precocious males may offer an opportunity for us. They stand their ground making an easy target for Trout if they are small enough. Or if the Trout are large enough. The mating season lasts for about four to six weeks in the

**Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club—Spokane, Washington**

## Crawfish Biology –Part 2 continued

fall. There is a minor mating season in the Spring.

**Color:** Contrary to most of the fly patterns you see, all immature and most mature Crawfish are not orange or any bright color. While coloration varies in different bodies of water much like insects, the majority of Crawfish are the same color as the bottom. We do know that male Crawfish are torn between staying camouflaged as protection from predators vs. bright colors for attraction to females.

Males are brighter than females, especially during the mating season. The older the males, the brighter they can turn. These are not our guys anyway. They are far too large for trout. More importantly, the juveniles and females remain basically dark olive-brown. The smaller, precocious males have a touch of color mostly at the end of their pincers during mating season. They may still be small enough to be Trout food. After the mating season, the males molt, hide, then come out as camouflaged again. At Fourth of July lake, the Otter feces have a definite trace of orange but that is not the dominant color. I'm guessing that the Otters are there in the fall feasting on the mating crawfish, especially the large males.

**The Takeaway:** Most Crawfish patterns are too bright. In designing patterns, we might go with the same color as the bottom. To imitate the precious males, on our slightly larger patterns, we may benefit from just the end of the pincers colored with orange.

**Size of Fly Patterns:** When Crawfish hatch in the spring, they are surprisingly small. They start out about the same size as Mayfly nymphs, like size 16. How cool is that! As juveniles, they stick close to rocks and boulders for cover but they do wander out quite a bit. They are not yet as defensive as the adults. So by far, the juveniles are the most vulnerable, available to Trout. That may be another key. While the larger Crawfish are wily, the smaller ones not so much. Also, the juveniles are just a better bite size for trout. These are all hard shelled animals, not soft shelled.

As Crawfish get really large, they tend to occupy deeper water. The size of those mating crawfish is 3 inches to 6 inches. That might be a wonderful meal for an otter but not for a trout. They are in their full hard shell until just after the mating season. However it turns out that precocious males are out trying to get in the game too. They are 1.25 to 2.5 inches.

**The Takeaway:** Most Crawfish fly patterns are too large. For us to create smaller fly patterns may make more sense. Crawfish are very small in the spring, like half an inch, growing to a max of 1.5 inches by late fall. Accordingly, maybe we should have a variety of sizes, fishing small patterns early in the season, progressing to larger patterns as the season progresses

**Availability to Trout;** Most Crawfish prefer low light. Except for the juveniles, Crawfish tend to be active early and late in the day. They are also more active in darkly shaded areas. Remember the larger



Juvenile Signal Crawfish

## Crawfish Biology –Part 2 continued

piles of Otter feces on the south shore of Fourth of July Lake? Tall cliffs? Big shadows? Could be a great clue on where and when to fish. As Crawfish mature, they become more nocturnal.

The takeaway: We may want to design two basic patterns. One simple pattern, probably the most important fly, for the fleeing Crawfish. They are surprisingly streamlined. Maybe we should be tying a simple pattern with some trailing effects. The second pattern for the standing males might be designed with claws pronounced and upright, but not complicated. Most Crawfish patterns are way too complicated.

Predators: Their only major predators are fish when they are small and Otters when they are large, well, that is except for Guy Gregory's major Crawfish Boil and Beer. Try to get an invitation but stay the hell out of his way on the lake. I hear a rumor that Guy uses trout guts in his Crawfish traps.

The Takeaway: I can't even imagine. I do wish someone would explain to Guy that the emphasis here is to understand Crawfish to catch Trout, not to understand how to use Trout to catch Crawfish.  
*(Note: As usual, don't believe everything you read.— besides, you can't beat sunfish for crawdad bait-the Editor)*

Part 3– stay tuned to the Flyleaf!

## Conservation Committee Update on Projects and Grants 2022 By Jerry McBride

At the January 2022 board meeting the IEFFC board of directors approved a budget of \$1,670 for 2022 Projects and Grants.

We recently sent out \$150 grants that were included in the budget to:

The Lands Council

Spokane River Keeper

Friends of the Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge

An additional informational sign at the Medical Lake city park looks like it will happen this year. The WDFW enforcement people and the City of Medical are very enthusiastic about adding this sign. At this point, I am waiting to get information back from the Washington State Correctional Industries Print Shop who will be making the sign.

In September we will be fin clipping at the Spokane hatchery and will be going up to Bayley Lake to clean out the spawning channel.

I have contacted Randy Osbourne and Dan Dziekan at the local WDFW office to see if they have any additional projects they would like to see done, but so far they have not gotten back to me with any project ideas.

**2022 Club Dues are due! \$50 per year...**  
**Send a check to IEFFC, P.O. Box 2926, Spokane, WA 99220**

**Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club—Spokane, Washington**

## February's Valentine Meeting

February's meeting was a lot of fun. As has become a club Valentine's Day tradition, spouses and others attended and enjoyed a sociable event. The evening began with beverages and great conversation. We had a terrific meal and a super presentation on angling the Bitterroot River by Eddie Olwell. The evening closed with our guests drawing for raffle prizes selected and assembled by President Denny Carson's wife.



Mark Pinch and Staci looking cool ...

Members Merlin Heintz and Charlie Flagler and their wives looking sharp! Go Cougs!



The McBride and Funkhouser families enjoy conversation before the presentation, no doubt discussing the benefits of the balanced leech.

## ***FLY OF THE MONTH***

**Little Black Stone Dry**

**March, 2022**

**Tim Flagler**

There's tons of stonefly patterns. Beyond being a fish catcher, this one is a quick tie, with a great silhouette, and made of a CDC body, which is easy to color up to simulate everything from Skwalas to Yellow Sallys. This Wonder Wing technique is easy, uses some of your lower quality feathers, and adapts well to smaller size stones. Check out the video of Tim tying this fly on his Tightlines Video YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfhFGzSBFk>.

Hook: Dai-Riki #300 (1XL Dry Fly) size 16  
Thread: Black 70 denier  
Body: Slate Grey CDC  
Main Wing: well marked hen hackle feather. (pheasant is nice)  
Hackle: Grizzly, a bit oversize

Tie in a thread base on your hook from about 1/3 the shank length back to the beginning of the bend. Gather a long CDC feather, pulling all the fibers to the tip. Grab the tip and tie it in at the end of your base., anchoring well...CDC can be slippery. Using hackle pliers, twist the CDC slightly to form a bundle, and wrap forward to the tie in point for a slightly segmented look.

Prep the Wonder Wing. Get a hen hackle feather, strip the fuzz from the bottom. Now, about a 1/2 inch or so above the good fibers, split the fibers as shown, exposing a gap. There should be about an equal amount of fibers on each side of the gap. Tie in this feather at this gap with a couple wraps, with the tips of the hackle toward the bend of the hook and the stem facing forward.

Pull on the tips of the feather, dragging the stem end under the wraps until the gap is about 1/2 a shank length behind the bend. Tie in securely at the tie in point, trim at the tie in point, and snip the wing feather at the gap.

Wrap a dry fly quality grizzly feather for the hackle and whip finish. Trim the hackle fibers off flat below the hook as this fly should float in the surface film, try to leave all the remaining CDC fibers on the body as it assists in keeping this fly floating, and looking leggy.



## My clam gun is named March Brown Clam Season Is Back!

Below are the approved and tentative dates for razor clam digs, along with low tides and beaches. Most successful digging occurs between one and two hours before the listed time of low tide. All dates are tentative pending final marine toxin testing, which usually occurs about a week or less prior to each set of openings.

### APPROVED DATES P.M. TIDES ONLY:

Feb. 28, Monday, 5:06 PM; -0.8 feet; Long Beach  
March 1, Tuesday, 5:50 PM; -0.9 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks  
March 2, Wednesday, 6:30 PM; -0.8 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis  
March 3, Thursday, 7:07 PM; -0.5 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks  
March 4, Friday, 7:42 PM 0.0 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis

### TENTATIVE DATES, PENDING TESTS:

Digging is not allowed before noon for March digs where low tide occurs in the evening: March 16, Wednesday, 6:35 PM; 0.0 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks  
March 17, Thursday, 7:08 PM; 0.0 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis  
Ocean Shores Razor Clam Festival: March 18, Friday, 7:41 PM; +0.2 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks  
March 19, Saturday, 8:14 PM; +0.5 feet; Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis

And others later in March...

**SEE WDFW WEBSITE FOR MORE DATES AND REQUIREMENTS IF YOU'VE GOT A DE-**

## IEFFC Officers and Board of Directors

President: Denny Carson  
Vice President: Lee Funkhouser  
Treasurer: Bob Johnson  
Secretary: Jerry Harms  
Jim Athearn (2024)  
Doug Brossoit (2022)  
Bob Schmidt (2023)

Membership Committee Chair: Steve Dixon

Contact information for all Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs are in the 2020/2021 Roster. If you've inquiries, email [flyleaf.ieffc@gmail.com](mailto:flyleaf.ieffc@gmail.com)

## FLYLEAF CONTRIBUTIONS

**Your input is welcome! If you have articles to contribute to the Fly Leaf, make sure you send them to the newsletter email: [flyleaf.ieffc@gmail.com](mailto:flyleaf.ieffc@gmail.com) before the last Friday of the Month! Lee and Guy will get your story, your fly of the month, whatever, into the next issue...**

**Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club—Spokane, Washington**