



February 14th Meeting Speaker,  
Brian O'Keefe

February 2019

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## Leader Line | Curt Stoner

As Christmas and the New Year become a distant memory, my heart is warmed with the thought of spring right around the corner and all the fishing trips to come. During these winter days, I spend time getting my gear and flies squared away. I look through my fly boxes and determine what I need to tie (or buy) to catch the next big one.

Winter is a great time to brush up on your fly tying and fishing skills. Club volunteers are offering great fly tying classes each week, alternating between Puget Sound Fly Company and Seven Seas in Gig Harbor. Don't miss out on these fun filled events. For more information visit the Club's Calendar page at [www.psff.org](http://www.psff.org).

This time of year is also ideal to explore open uncrowded waters. Year-round lakes are fishing well on nymphs, woolly buggers, leaches, and chironomids. Beaches near your home can be another excellent choice for Resident Coho along with Sea Run Cutthroat. Bring marine worms, shrimp, squid and sculpin patterns with you. Sea Run Cutthroat are bulking up before the spring spawn. I'm starting to get reports from Olympic Peninsula Steelhead fishing. Fishing is good, in between the storms. Bring colorful flies with good size hooks. Get out there, be safe and enjoy the beauty and stillness of winter fishing.

At our last board meeting we voted in Chic Sundahl as a new board member. Thanks to Chic, for stepping up and volunteering his time and energy this coming year. Chic is also responsible for getting the great speakers who share their knowledge experiences at our monthly general meetings. Our club continues to need two additional board members to help us accomplish our mission. If any of you have a desire to serve as a board member please let us know at our next general meeting Thursday February 14th at Tower Lanes.

In 2019 we are continuing to celebrate where we have come from since the Club's inception. We look forward to exploring the future of fly fishing in our region. Our club has a role in the local fly fishing community to promote fly fishing through outreach and education. We do this in partnership with local fly clubs, local fly shops, guide services, conservation agencies and you, our members. We are excited to see what 2019 will bring.



# Upcoming Speakers

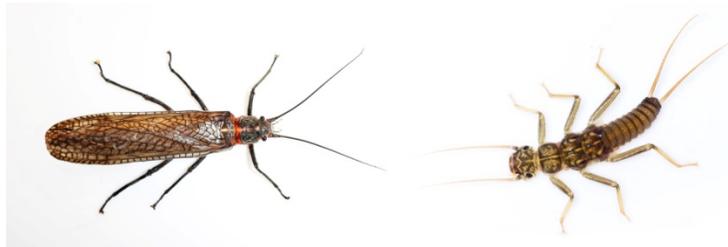
## February Speaker: “Six Northwest Stoneflies” with *Brian O’Keefe*

In the Pacific Northwest we have many clear, cold rivers and streams. That is where stoneflies live, and only where stoneflies live.

From your backyard streams in Washington, then all over Oregon, Idaho and Montana, stoneflies are a very important food for trout. Brian will go into the life cycle of six common, western stoneflies, the imitations, and techniques for fishing stonefly patterns.

You’ll see lots of cool macro photos, big fish photos and great places to fish.

Many in the club know Brian and have heard of his life as a fly fishing adventurer. Many have met, listened in on one of his programs or been entertained by Brian’s photography in most of the major sporting magazines. He has been a guide for decades and is now on The Fly Shop’s pro team as a host for international fly fishing trips. But his home has mostly been in the Northwest and he has studied our fisheries like no other over the last 50 years. You’re in for a real treat this month.



If time allows (he says he can do both in 70 minutes) Brian has offered the following on top of the Six NW Stoneflies program: **Lake Trout Food** – “This program took me 10 years to make. I have been collecting and observing aquatic lake insects all my life. I will show the most common bugs and critters that trout eat. Plus, the fly patterns to imitate them. And, the techniques and tackle and timing to use those fly patterns. You will feel more dangerous as an angler after seeing this show.”



**March Program: Glenn Wilson on Atlantic Salmon Fly tying.**

**April Program: David Dietrich on Coastal Cutthroat Fishing in Puget Sound – not Hood Canal.**

# Outings

by Mike Koslosky

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Every fisherman knows the basic alchemy; you place an offering on a steel point; you throw it in the river; your offering sinks despite the beating of its wings; you feel terrible, yet dare to hope a miracle will take place; then one does; the river converts your meager offering into an unseen power that enters your whole body through your hands. An old metal reel you mistook for tackle starts to shriek like a wounded animal. Your old rod breaks but keeps lunging. Your heart does the same. Then, with no wings at all, native life comes flying up out of the river - and that's when a hook's point pierces *you*. A barbed point, you realize later, because even when the day ends, the change in you does not. By the time you hold the native in your hands it is you who has been caught; you who shines, and feels the silver; you who came, long ago, from water; you who suddenly can't live without this beautiful river.

**River Teeth, *Stories and Writings*, David James Duncan**

## **Fly Fishing Fair**

**Ellensburg, Saturday, Sunday, May 3, 4**

Fly Fishers International will be teaming up with the Washington State Council of FFI once again for their Ellensburg Fly Fishing Fair. Hear guest speakers, meet fly tiers, see new products, sales reps, and connect with old friends. Robert Gerlach will be coordinating a competitive, but fun, fly casting challenge so don't forget to bring your gear. No fish out scheduled but there are a number of nearby ponds suitable for personal flotation devices. Fair details are still being developed so put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

## **Park Lake, Friday to Sunday., May 17, 18, 19**

The Puget Sound Fly Fishers annual event/trip/party/hoedown/git together is once again being held at Laurent's Sun Lakes Resort. Fish Blue Lake, Park Lake, Dry Falls and a number of other high desert scablands waterholes can be a trip to remember. Scenery is dramatic, stars plenty, and the fish are willing to play.

To get to Park Lake, go east on I-90 to the Ephrata Exit (SR 283, exit 151), just past George. Take SR 283 through Ephrata, to the SR 17 junction, turn left and go north through the town of Soap Lake, past Lake Lenore and Blue lake, about 16 miles. Turn right at the north end of Blue Lake and proceed to Laurent's Sun Lakes Resort. (33575 Park Lake Rd NE, Coulee City, WA, (509) 632-5664).

***Contact Laurent's for reservations to camp or rent a room at their facility.***

Be sure to get gas or what ever last minute groceries you may need before you leave Ephrata. Also, The Desert Angler is the local fly shop and a good source of local information.

Saturday evening is the potluck dinner. PSFF provides the entre, and members bring the side dishes and desserts. Please be sure that you sign up for the outing at PSFF meetings between now and the outing so we have a better idea of how much meat to buy. Also indicate whether you will be bringing a salad, side dish, or dessert. Bring your own drinks...adult or other. Paper and plastic service will be available on the table, or bring your own if you prefer. If you have it, a few pieces of firewood will be much appreciated.

# 2019 EVENTS

January 23-27, 2019 - Washington Sportsmen's Show, Washington State Fair Events Center, Puyallup, WA. (Google for website)

February 16 & 17, 2019 - The Fly Fishing Show, Lynnwood Convention Center, Lynnwood, WA. [www.flyfishingshow.com](http://www.flyfishingshow.com)

March 8 & 9, 2019 - NW Fly Tyer Expo, Linn Country Expo Center, Albany, OR., [www.nwexpo.com](http://www.nwexpo.com)

May 3 & 4, 2019 - WSCFFI Ellensburg Fly Fishing Event, Kittitas Valley Event Center County, Ellensburg, WA. [www.wscffi.org](http://www.wscffi.org)

June 23-29, 2019 - NW Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy, Gwinwood Conference Center, Lacey, WA. [www.nwycffa.com](http://www.nwycffa.com)

July 23-27, 2019 - Fly Fishers International Fly Fishing Fest - Bozeman, MT. [www.flyfishersinternational.org](http://www.flyfishersinternational.org)

## February

2019

### PSFF Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Club meeting 6PM	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 PSFF Board Meeting 6PM	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

**2019 NW Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy** – Once again I would like to remind folks of this incredible opportunity for our 12-16 year old boys and girls to learn about our great sport of fly fishing and conservation. Various Fly Fishing Clubs, TU Chapters and individuals will sponsor youth, The Bruce Ferguson fund, managed by PSFF, established in 2011, will sponsor 2 youth along with the Al Harger fund which is managed by SSFF. If you have a grandchild, neighbor, friend, son or daughter that would like to learn our sport, have them write an essay on why they would like to attend and they will need a letter of recommendation from their school counselor or science teacher. The Academy next year is the last full week of June. June 23-29, 2019 at the Grinwood Community Center on Hicks Lake in Lacey WA. We are on Facebook with lots of pictures and applications are on our website – [www.nwycffa.com](http://www.nwycffa.com). Email: [nwycffa@comcast.net](mailto:nwycffa@comcast.net) Please contact: Co-Directors - Jim Brosio @ 360-943-9947 or Mike Clancy @ 360-753-1259.

*We cannot always build the future for our youth,  
but we can always build our youth for future.*

# FOR SALE

Just in time for Spring fishing!  
Many Extras! \$300.00

Contact: Mike Hardouin [hardouin@msn.com](mailto:hardouin@msn.com)



## The Hook Lowdown

### By Justin Waters

I am mentioned in the Q&A that I would be breaking down my thoughts on hook choice. I get this question a lot and I realized there is not a whole lot of information out there about it. I went in deep on the subject and hope you all get something out of it and enjoy the read. It's long, and it's a little bouncy, but I put a lot of thought into it. So without further ado...

Responsibility There is a giant elephant in the room when debating hook choice. It comes down to a question that we all like to ignore. What is catch and release fishing? We are trying to be effective at stabbing something in the face. Also, we want to grip it by the mouth and drag it through the water. After landing the fish, at best we let it go quickly without removing the fish from the water. At the worst, we toy with it in our hands for a photo before letting it go. Make no mistake about it. There is just no way to catch a fish without the potential to damage or kill the fish. It's like a cage fighter who denies the possibility of someone getting hurt. Unfortunately fish, occasionally are unable to recover from the damages of a fight. It is our responsibility to minimize the damage inflicted on the fish at every opportunity.

#### The 3 Factors Of Choosing A Hook

- The potential to cause unnecessary damage to the fish.
- Compliment the pattern tied on them. In both balance and size.
- Effective holding power.

But if you find those three factors while choosing a hook you will be good to go. However, let's break it down a bit further. That's too small... If you choose a hook too small, the potential goes up dramatically that a fish will swallow it, or get hooked in the gills. Not to mention the sudden



“bad hook up” rate increase. A hook that is too small will fail all 3 factors of choosing a hook. Suddenly it becomes a health risk to the fish by being too easy to take deep into its mouth. It will not compliment the fly by balancing it out or becoming more of a weapon. A hook that is too small won't catch the flesh in the corner of the mouth and be effective at holding the fish. So grabbing a size 8 SC15 might not be a great idea for a bait fish pattern. Bigger Is Not Always Better... Now let's go to the subject of hooks that are too large for bait fish, I don't think “brain hooking” cutthroat is a big issue. I can count on 1 hand how many fish this has happened to over the years. All of them were small fish less than 4 inches. I am not sure this is avoidable while fishing bait fish patterns. So let's talk about why a hook would be too large Brain hooking or eye hooking is obviously a consideration. As is causing unnecessary damage such as ripping big holes in fish or shredding the face of the fish. The other consideration is the hook being too large and blocking the fly from entering the mouth. I do not think brain/eye hooking cutthroat is a big concern when fishing bait fish. However, I do think there are hooks that you should avoid for this risk. Size 2 Ahrex NS172 Gammarus hook has a huge gap that is potentially dangerous to cutthroat. A gap this big stabs through the cheek higher up causing damage to a much thicker portion of the mouth, and potentially could damage the eye of the fish with more frequency. Any thick gage hooks like the Timeco 800s beyond a size 6 is probably too big for cutthroat, causing more damage than necessary. Sea Run Cutthroat are ferocious

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predators, meaning a hook too small could quickly end up in the back of their throat. A large hook could harm them beyond what is acceptable in a sport based on stabbing things in the face. We want to find the sweet spot. That's why we are providing the hook lowdown. Hook Choice Considerations: When considering what hook to choose, ask these questions. consider what is required to tie your fly. What are you trying to accomplish with your fly? what kind of water are you fishing in ? Are you adding weight or relying on the hook itself to keel out? Do the conditions you are fishing in require more hang down, or the hook to ride upright? There are plenty of questions to ask, and here are some things I consider when sitting down to tie a fly: Longer Shanks If you are tying a fly where you have a lot of "wrapping" materials, you might need a longer shank such as a 811s Tiemco or NS110 Ahrex. Both make great hooks for Raccoons or Buggers (notice I said bugger and not squid). I use the latter for a few of my simple baitfish and shrimp patterns. Both hooks work very well for Clouser style flies as well. These are your more standard hooks for most saltwater applications. One that falls into a similar category would be the Diiachi 2546. I think the Diiachi hook falls short on being significant at any particular level. Where the Tiemco is heavy and keels well, the Diiachi light for the gage, and keels okay. The NS110 is ultra sharp and holds fish tight. The Diiachi is pretty sharp and does okay. Shorter Shanks-Wider Gaps When tying bulkier or fuller baitfish flies using a heavier stainless hook helps keel the fly. Keeling the fly essentially means balance the fly out and ensure that it swims well. The Tiemco 800s work great for fuller unweighted patterns that need a bit of help balancing. The Tiemco 800s is heavy for its size and passes our 3 rules with flying colors. The Ahrex NS172's shape will balance out many baitfish patterns that are not super bulky too. The NS172's wide gap moves much of the weight below the fly creating a beautiful keel and a very "grabby" razor sharp hook. My Top Two Baitfish Hooks I like tying many baitfish light, with weight towards the eye of the

hook. This eliminates the need for a heavy keel, to correct the fly in the water. My preference has become the Ahrex NS110 for skinny profile baitfish, and the Ahrex NS172 for shorter or bulkier baitfish. Both are razor sharp and have a great hook gap for what I am using them for. The whole "Nordic Salt" series of hooks are extremely impressive. Surface Flies When I tie topwater flies I prefer the Ahrex NS122 over anything else. The gap hangs down low increasing hook-ups whether sipped or slashed. Of all the hook choices that I have mentioned, this one is the most noticeable. When cutthroat hit the surface, your hook needs to be as available as possible. This hook design is the best choice on the market. I'll be completely honest in saying, I just don't have a second option anymore for this particular application. Moving up and down in size depending on my pattern, my rule is to have the hook riding as deep in the water as I can, while keeping the fly as buoyant as possible. The shape of the NS122 is the best hook I have found for this job. From Gurglers, Disco Shrimp, Surface Fry, if it floats, this hook is what it is tied on. Before finding the Ahrex NS122 I was using the Gamakatsu SS15. The SS15 is a great hook for surface flies because it is light and razor sharp. While it is great, I still find the Ahrex to be so far ahead of their competition that nothing compares. A Trailing Note: One of the things I am often asked about is why I do not use a "stinger" or "trailing hooks" off the back of my flies. My answer is the simple and direct, they are unnecessary for our fishery. From my experience with trailing hooks our "foul" hooked fish numbers increase astronomically. Fish that are almost never handled out of the net go up dramatically due to deeper hook sets and/or offset hooks. All that foul hooking/extra handling is just unnecessary. Cutthroat just do not require the use of stingers because they CRUSH a fly. You don't pull the emergency break at every red light right? Why would you when you have antilock breaks right next to the gas peddle. Why would you fiddle around with a trailing hook when it is completely unnecessary. Another thing that goes up with





Massive Cutthroat on a SL12 SZ 2. This is the largest hook I would use, however no one can claim this hook is to big for the fly/fish.

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trailing hooks is the amount of tangles the average angler experiences which directly results in less time fishing. As with the SC15, you simply won't see a trailer hook on my boat... Did I mention the SC15? Gamakatsu SC15 take a hike... Obviously, there are good quality of the SC15, or Gamakatsu would not sell any. Personally, I cannot figure out what those qualities are. They are too light of a hook to balance most flies, they are too brittle to withstand any abuse, and they are too small to catch the corner of the mouth during an aggressive take. The Gamakatsu SC15 in a size 6-8 hook is too small for a baitfish fly. That is just plain ol' fact. Sea Run Cutthroat eat a stripped bait fish too aggressively to fish such a small, light hook. The hook is small and light enough to miss the corner of the mouth and catch gills, throat, or the tongue of the fish. Will this happen every time? No, of course not. However, it will happen significantly more with this hook than a Gamakatsu SS15 or a Ahrex NS110. I also think the shape of a SC15 in 6-4, once you pinch the barb, has no gripping power. Which was what first encouraged me to move away from these hooks. Then Brita started talking about using the hook to keel flies, which changed my opinion on fly tying completely. The SC15 might be the worst saltwater hook ever made for helping balance a bait fish pattern.

### **Almost done with the SC15.**

For little krill/euphasiid patterns a tiny lightweight hook like the SC15 might be more appropriate. The reason it's more appropriate is all in the way a cutthroat eats euphasiids verses the way it eats other fish. Think of an eagle catches a fish (violently snatching) vs. chowing on dead chum (lazily grazing) ... However the Ahrex NS172 is the better option. This covers all three factors in choosing a hook.

Captain Justin Waters

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## **Puget Sound Fly Fishers**

Club was founded in 1956 and has a long and proud history of involvement, action, camaraderie, and fun. The club's website is located at [www.psff.org](http://www.psff.org)

Aims and Purposes of the Club are:

1. To improve and encourage the sport of fly fishing by social, educational and political means.
2. To encourage fly fishing as a means of conservation and increasing fishing opportunity.
3. To encourage the conservation, enhancement and quality of sport fishing.
4. To promote both "Fellowship" and "Sportsmanship" in all aspects of club and individual activity.
5. To actively assist and encourage the public to become fly fishers, and to adopt the club's mission and philosophies.

General Membership Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month (except August). These meetings are for social, entertainment and educational purposes.

Educational Activities: The club offers classes and instruction in fly fishing, fly-tying, fly-casting and rod building. The club has an extensive library of books and videos.

Outings: The club organizes monthly outings to various lakes, rivers, and estuaries. Experienced gillies provide expert information and instruction on how, when and where to fish.

Conservation Activities: The club has a long and proud history of encouraging flyfishing (and other selective fishing techniques) as a means of conserving and increasing fishing opportunities. The club is active in many of the important conservation issues of the day and in helping to fund local conservation projects.

Membership / Dues: Membership is open to anyone 18 or over. Dues are \$45 per household per year plus a one time (\$15 Initiation Fee) per member nametag.

Affiliations: The club is an active member of the Washington State Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers

# Officers and Servants

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