



# FLY FISHING

—Brian Owens Fly Fishing Buyer



## Fishing the Upper Connecticut River.

by **Brian Owens**

This is the second part of an article published in the summer/fall 2001 NCO newsletter. This time we are going to launch under the **Baldwin Bridge** and head north on the river.

Starting on the opposite side of the river directly under the bridge there is an area of riprap that can hold schoolies in the spring and is a good area to try for smaller snapper blues in the summer. On some very hot days we have pulled under the bridge to get some shade from the burning sun only to find hundreds of snapper blues had the same idea. We pulled out the light tackle and had a ball catching the little guys under the shade of our big "beach umbrella."

One of the best early morning spots to check out is the area around **Calves Island**, from the #20 red nun to the #22 day mark. Both bluefish and bass hang around the channel edge along the island and sometimes push bait into the shallows. You can also try fishing around the day mark itself, casting flies or lures into the rocky base. There have been some large bass and bluefish taken from this spot. In the fall I have seen fish in this area even during the middle of the day, but it is mostly a morning /evening spot.

On a higher stage of the tide or when the wind is really blowing you might want to check out the upper end of **Lord Cove**. It doesn't happen often, but when there isn't a lot of bait in the main river, check the shallows up inside the bigger coves like this one. It's a little bit of a pain to get all the way back up inside just to take a quick look due to the fact that you have to go slow. But if you hit it just right when the fish are there, you can have an entire cove full of fish to yourself! Small flies that imitate grass shrimp or baby menhaden will work. If using conventional or spinning tackle use small swimmers or crank baits, or small jigs with plastic trailers.

Continue up the river past **Goose Island** and start looking on your port side. The area is labeled as Watrous Point on a topographic map, but is not named on my river map. Look for the homes that are located fairly close to the water, with the big trees out front. This is one of my favorite spots on the whole river. It doesn't look like much from shore, just a pile of riprap out in front of some homes. It is actually an underwater point, saddle kind of structure. You can find it with your depth finder starting at around ten to eighteen feet dropping off to about thirty in the main channel. Once you are in a drift over the hump, start looking on shore for the house with the big chimney. Just as you come

over the top of the hump and it starts to drop, one of the near shore trees will exactly align with the chimney. Once you get the alignment you can do perfect drifts over the spot time and time again. There are occasionally some eel pot buoys floating on the area over the point. This can also help you locate the point, and reference drifts. Sometimes fish showing on the bottom can be coaxed up to the top with flies or poppers. Other times you will have to fish deep with jigs or bait. The area holds both bluefish and bass. If the fish are there you will see them on the depth finder. If you don't see any fish, keep heading up river, and try back later. The fish are constantly shifting position in the river for whatever reason they deem necessary. Sometime it is a lateral move



across to chase a school of bait that has passed over them, or a longer move up or down a few river miles. No one will ever figure all of it out completely.

My point in saying this is that when reading any fishing report, the hot spot an hour ago, could be ice cold when you arrive. The only thing carved in stone about fishing is located on the Pyramids in Egypt.

**Hayden's Point** is just north of where you are currently

located. Sometimes the fish move back and forth between these two areas. Look for day mark #25 directly out from Hayden's point. Depending on current direction, bass and blues can be above or below the rocky structure. Use your depth finder and keep your lures or flies on the bottom. There is also a rip that sets up in this area. Visit it on both the incoming and outgoing to learn the different angles and how they relate to fish positioning themselves. Don't forget to fish all around the point, and also to take a quick look inside **South Cove** for any schools of bait and their loyal followers, the bass. Remember what I said about the coves!

Lets continue up to **Essex Harbor** and all those moored boats sitting out in front of the marina. For whatever reason this can be an excellent spot to catch both bluefish and bass. Maybe its all the mooring anchors on the bottom forming good structure. It is a good spot to try early in the morning, casting flies, swimming plugs or fishing bait on the bottom. You must be careful casting and drifting among the boats, and keep the noise down because some people may still be sleeping aboard their boats. Bluefish will sometimes push the bait all the way back against the shore behind all the boats. Use your binoculars to check the creeks coming out of the marina.

Time to leave the boats and head up to the #29 green day mark just below **Brockway Island**. This rocky day mark also has a couple of depressions surrounding it. The lower hole has been the most productive and drops to around thirty feet. Drop something like a structure spoon or a hunk of bait down there and see what bites. It may be a bluefish, striper or a big ole channel cat. Again you'll see the fish on your depth finder if they are there.

Next move up to **Brockway Island**. Facing directly across the river from **Hamburg Cove**. Try dunking a chunk of bunker in about twelve to fifteen feet of water on the shelf next to the main river channel, or casting flies or lures over the bar. This is an extremely high traffic area in a fairly narrow portion of the river. This is a weekday spot early or late in the day. The cove that you have been staring at directly across from Brockway Island is called **Hamburg Cove**. At four o'clock on a Sunday afternoon it will look the drive-in movie just got out! The only difference will be that everybody is driving boats!

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