



A Skagit Head for the Line Nerd in all of us.



NW 2-hand head (Skagit Heads)

Airflo worked with a group of steelhead fanatics to create the best casting Skagit head on the planet. The idea behind the Skagit head was to make casting heavy sink tips with a fly the size of a muskrat as easy as tying your shoes. To achieve this airflo chose to base their design on a shooting head just like the line nerds on the Skagit River intended. The Airflo design allows the user to select a running line that best meets their needs.

At both ends of the floating Skagit head you will find the strongest welded loops in the industry. Included with the Skagit head is a pre-looped level tip that allows the user to custom cut it to their favorite lengths. The head also comes with a sink tip wallet to keep things organized.

Use an airflo Skagit head when success depends on getting your fly down to the fish.

Fish On!!

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their upstream pilgrimage. Similarly perhaps, the Sitkoh Creek silvers seemed to sprint upstream to the lake, stage in the still water for a while, then drop back down to spawn. Hence, the brightest fish were farthest upstream, in the lake.

Bears were around constantly, including one passing within a few feet of Tad, wanting to help him land a salmon. We also had bears passing by the cabin door, using the trail to the outhouse; according to the logbook, other anglers staying there had dealt with bears occasionally breaking cabin windows. The bruins never threatened us, but anglers must keep their cool here.

Sitkoh Creek is well known for its steelhead fishery, which peaks between April and June, with access by boat from the mouth in Sitkoh Bay. The cabin logbook had several entries regarding fishing throughout most of the year for salmon, trout, and steelhead. You can view entries I transcribed, as well as more photos, at www.flyfish-sitka.com. Tad, (907) 738-2737, offers guided trips on these and other waters in Tongass National Forest.

Stark River, Northwest Territories

By Hendrik Breuer

Great Slave Lake in Canada's Northwest Territories is one of the best-known destinations on the planet for anglers seeking double-digit-weight northern pike and lake trout—and with good reason. Fly fishers who cruise the lake can expect to land impressive numbers of these fish.

After a couple of days in a boat, however, more traditionally minded fly anglers may crave wading a stream and casting dry flies to big Arctic grayling. Fortunately for such anglers, the Stark River flows into the east arm of Great Slave Lake near Frontier Fishing Lodge, (877) 465-6843, www.frontierfishinglodge.com.

com, the sole outfitter in the area around the native settlement of Lutsel K'e (Snowdrift).

Virtually all of the lodge's guests, as well as the locals, fish from boats, so the upper parts of the Stark River receive very little fishing pressure. This is most evident in the size and behavior of the grayling. The fish are feisty, beautiful in color, and average 15 inches in length. In fact, out of the first 10 grayling my guide Dan Miguel and I caught on a trip last year, three reached the magic 20-inch mark.

When I visited the Stark River in late August, it was running 100 feet wide and gin clear. Flowing fast and reflecting the light blue of the sky, the river looked like the poster-perfect grayling stream. A little overwhelmed, and probably overexcited, I needed Dan to point me toward the rising grayling. There were just so many feeding fish, I couldn't see the forest for the trees! We counted a dozen rings on the water within casting range. I have to admit that I didn't give any thought to the question of what hatch was currently in season. Hoping these fish saw so few flies that it wouldn't matter what I tied on, I chose a Red Butt fly, mainly because this pattern is easy to spot on the clear, swift river. And the fly worked its magic: my first fish was 17 inches long, a new personal record.

Dan, who is one of the few people who have spent a lot of time fly fish-



ing the Stark, uses Red Butts as well as Adamses and Gold Bead Nymphs all season long. From his experience, it is not so much the fly that makes the difference as the variety of flies fished. "It is wise to switch flies once the action slows because the fish tend to get used to the same fly presented over and over again," he explains. The season runs from mid-June to mid-September, with prime conditions in the final six weeks.

Overall, September may be the very best time to visit the Stark. That's when fly fishers get a shot at huge lake trout in addition to grayling. When lakers move into the river to spawn, anglers can expect to land 20-plus-pound fish. Having missed this run by two weeks or so in 2007, I will definitely be making my way back to the Northwest Territories someday. Huge grayling and massive lake trout—sounds like the ultimate bonanza to me.



PHOTO BY TIM BLOUNT

Clear Lake, ID

By Tim Blount

An immense golden form cruised just under the surface near an incoming spring. The fish continually and deliberately changed direction, perhaps in pursuit of food or from mere curiosity. I cast a Sniper, a marabou-and-guinea creation of mine, 15 feet from the cruising fish. At the splash of the fly, the trout immediately turned and swam toward it. I began an erratic retrieve, and without hesitation the fish moved in for the kill. I saw its huge mouth open and close, and doubt began to creep into my mind. Did this huge fish just take my fly?

With a little trepidation mixed with a dose of disbelief, I raised the rod tip and all hell broke loose. Where once the almost lethargic fish had

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