

# Valley Angler Urban Rivers by Bill Thompson

Despite being past the middle of November there is still some very good trout fishing to be had in New Hampshire. I know that I am quite prejudiced in that I am of the opinion that anywhere south of Ossipee is nothing more than a suburb of Boston. Of course I would have to admit that Conway is quite urban and has long since lost its small town appeal. When someone suggests fishing someplace in southern New Hampshire I envision concrete jungles and crowded warm water streams not fit for trout. Of course I would be very wrong in my assumption and there are indeed some very nice trout streams in the southern half of our fair state.

When my good friend Nate Hill asked me if I would like to join him for a day of fishing on the Isinglass River, last week, I must admit I was a little reluctant to fish river so near a big city like Rochester. On the other hand there is not a lot of river fishing available this time of year and I had heard some good things about the Isinglass and so I agreed without too much protest.

Several of the coastal rivers in New Hampshire are managed for fall and winter trout fishing, the Isinglass being one. Several years ago a group of enthusiastic fly fishermen banded together and formed a group known as The Three Rivers Stocking Association. Their objective was to enhance the quality of the late season trout fishing in the Lamprey, Cocheco and Isinglass rivers. The group was able to get cooperation with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to help with the project. Special regulations were put in place to insure the success of the endeavor. First off the season was extended to year round and from October 31 to the fourth Saturday of April catch and release only is permitted. In addition only single barbless artificial flies and lures may be used. The result has been a resounding success.

Nate, having attended the University of New Hampshire, is quite familiar with these rivers having found refuge from the rigors of his studies on them quite often during his college years. And so last Wednesday, with Nate acting as guide, I found myself on the Isinglass.

Access to the Isinglass can be found at Gonic Trails in Rochester; just a short distance off Route 125 in Gonic. Despite my predilection for southern New Hampshire rivers the Isinglass is a very pretty river. With only the occasional sound of traffic and a few "McMansions" set back from the river you would think you were on a remote trout stream. The Gonic Trails provides access not only for fishing, but access for hiking, bird watching, snow shoeing, cross country skiing and dog walking as well. For an area so well known by the angling community it was delightfully uncrowded. When we arrived there were already several cars in the lot. Two fishermen were finishing rigging up and headed up the trail as we pulled in. Once we had hiked the short trail to the river we found only a few other anglers; considering that last Wednesday was a holiday you would have thought that the river would have been overloaded.

For a mid November day the temperature was quite mild and only a light fleece jacket was required. I wore only blue jeans under my waders and was comfortable all day. Not only was the weather cooperative the trout were too. It didn't take long for both Nate and I to hook up. We used a variety of different tactics. Dead drifting nymphs proved to be very effective. Nate had some good action on his famous leech pattern. My best fish of the day was a very strong brown trout, who found my Black

Ghost to be irresistible. Unfortunately he gave a mighty leap and threw the hook just as I reached for my net. I don't care what anyone says I am still counting him. Latter in the afternoon I trekked back up river to find Nate standing on a rather large boulder doing his best Brad Pitt imitation. He was casting a good sized Royal Wulff upstream. A fellow angler approached me and commented that the "Kid" had caught several fish on a dry fly. I said that I knew the "Kid" and that all and all he was a fairly good fisherman.

Should the weather continue to be as good as it has been and we find the time Nate has agreed to show me some spots on the Coheco and Lamprey. Now that I have a new found appreciation for southern rivers I am looking forward to it.

See you on the river.