

# Valley Angler

## Winter Fishing and Other Stuff

by Bill Thompson

Happy New Year to all and happy opening day of trout season as well. January 1<sup>st</sup> is the opening day for trout on all of the state's rivers and streams. I would guess that there are some who think this is some kind of cruel joke, but if you have a mind to it is legal to break out your favorite rod and head out to your favorite river, should you be able to find a stretch of open water.

It takes a certain kind to venture out with a fly rod this time of year, however it is not an impossible task and it can be fun. The cold can be a factor, but if one is prepared he or she can catch fish. Of course ice fishermen find this ridiculous and are quite content to fish in all kinds of adverse conditions.

I did for many years make it a tradition to fish on New Year's Day. I must admit that I have for the last two years let that one tradition slide. It may be a sign of old age, but I must admit that I have joined the millions of American's who prefer to set in front of their televisions and watch football. I admit that this is a cop-out and venturing out for an hour or two of fishing would be much more rewarding. Perhaps this year, should the day prove to be warm enough, I may give it a go.

In my daily commute between Freedom and North Conway I have noticed several ice fishermen out on Crystal Lake in Eaton. Last weekend there was a whole family, including the dog, out on the ice. They were setting their traps as we were driving by. The dog seemed quite interested in the operation and he seemed to be offering some sound advice as to how best prepare the bait.

Ice fishing is a great sport for a family to do together. The actual fishing plays only a small part. There are so many other great things to do on the ice while fishing. Everyone should be sure to bring their ice skates. Having a small fire to warm up by or to roast a few marshmallows is always a plus. If you are fortunate enough to have a bob house all the better, but there is no need to get fancy. Some of the best times I have had fishing with my son were ice fishing trips.

We all spend too much time inside these days. My advice is to make plans for a day on the ice with the whole family. It may be a chore to drag them away from the TV or the computer, but it will be worth it.

The winter solstice was just a few days ago so already the days are getting longer and spring can't be too far off. My grandmother was fond of saying, "As the days begin to lengthen the cold begins to strengthen". I am willing to bet that you know someone who says that as well. There is something about being a "Yankee" that doesn't allow us to be overly optimistic about anything. As for me I am a "glass half full" kind of guy and prefer to believe that spring is just around the corner and very soon I will be casting flies to rising trout.

See you on the river.