

Why I Fish - Rob Crowley

I first heard about the Bob Dwyer Fishing Club (BDFC) from my great friend, Tim. The club is steeped in tradition, built on the camaraderie of men who cherish the outdoors. It's about more than just fishing; it's about respect, caring, sportsmanship, laughter, and sharing stories. Make no bones about it, the BDFC catches trout.

My fishing sensei had specific ideals to become a club member. Be prepared, ready to learn, and practice. This idea included, "no fishing, the first day is observation on a local stream". He taught me gear essentials and how to carry it, how to move through the bush with purpose and care, as even the smallest disturbance can send vibrations through the water. Learn the holes, watch the waterflow, stream bends, tree roots, rocks, and more. Understand how to "hunt" the fish and learn the underhand cast.

Let's go

First stop, Woodland Valley Creek, Catskill Mountains. With an old lightweight rod and reel that had been gathering dust and a supply of corkscrewed line, (It turns out, fishing line can develop memory) it was time to hit the stream. Woodland Valley had rocks and elevation change and just about everything you needed, except where was the water?

Tim and I fished hopscotch, a partner-style of fishing which involves alternating sides and jumping ahead. Marching upstream, I stumbled over rocks, tripping and splashing, certainly not sneaking up on anything. How could there be fish in such shallow pools? Feeling frustrated, I carried on, wondering what lesson I was supposed to learn. Then I looked ahead and saw my

partner pulling in a beautiful trout and hope springs eternal! He pointed out a small eddy near a rock. “That’s a good target,” he said. I bounced the lure a little upstream but was able to guide it just to the upside of the flow around the rock and Boom !— a little brown. Wow!

The lesson? You must “know” that the fish are there. Never give up on a cast. Even a poor one can be saved. Watch it all the way in. You can really see structure when the water is low. Be quieter.

Let’s go again.

We decided to hit the road for a bit of reconnaissance. Tim had a specific spot in mind, but I couldn’t stop marveling at the scenery—mountains, valleys, rolling hills, barns, and the wide expanse of blue sky overhead. As we gained elevation, the streams wound through farmland, crisscrossed by small bridges. After figuring out our entry, exit, and where to park, we arrived at East Brook—and it had water! We were ready. Let’s go again.

The conditions were perfect for a two-bank hopscotch scenario. We passed more small bridges, winding streams with high banks, willow trees, and fields of farmland. The fishing was off a bit, but I did get plenty of casting practice! Tim was a bit ahead when he tried to get my attention. As I looked upstream, a mama duck and her little ducklings came scurrying down the water. Absolutely beautiful, even though that stretch was pooched.

No big deal. Tim moved ahead to scout the next good spot while I stayed back, “refining” my casting. Then, as I continued upstream, I noticed I had passed a perfect hole beneath a tree’s overhang. “Oh well,” I thought, “I’ll fish it from downstream.” I cast backward, and my lure landed perfectly under the overhang. Then it happened—lightning struck.

The moment my lure hit the water, an electric jolt shot up the line, through the rod, and straight

to my heart. I had hooked a monster.

I remember yelling—well, more like squealing—“Tim, I got one!” He turned to offer advice, but when he saw the bend in my rod, he dropped everything and sprinted to the stream. “Keep the rod up, reel it in easily, don’t yank it!” he shouted. I followed his instructions as the fish fought hard. The weight was immense, my heart was racing, and adrenaline pumped through my veins. Tim, net in hand, swooped in, securing the fish. The fight was intense, and when it was over, all I could say was, “Wow, wow, wow!” For the record, that beautiful 22-inch brown trout wouldn’t have qualified as a trophy catch—after all, it wasn’t self-netted. And at the time, I wasn’t yet a member of the Bob Dwyer Fishing Club. But you can probably guess what happened next.

So, Why Do I Fish?

Because fishing is everything.