



Rhody FLY RODDERS

America's Oldest Saltwater Fly Fishing Club

THE CURRENT

"The lifeline of the estuary and knowledge"



Summer Edition

Our third issue of our 2026 Summer Edition is now out. Thank you to everyone who contributed photos, ideas, and feedback. Please send in photos and material for the September Issue.

**"Pass on to all, who
ask, what you learn
here"**



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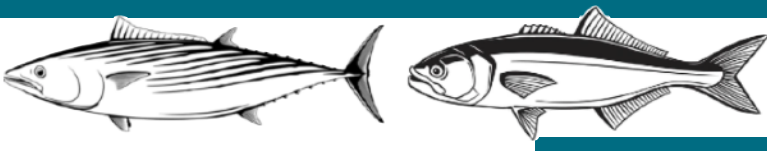
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Summer Edition

August has arrived and that means fishing is improving in RI and beyond. Bonito are back and albies will be here shortly. In northern New England trout fishing will improve as the brookies fatten up for the September spawn. To our east, the cape still has stripers on the flats and in the canal. To our south, NJ and NY have bluefish blitzing just off the beach and Spanish mackerel, albies, and bonito being picked away at. It's a great time to be fly fisher.



Rhody Fly Rodder Happenings

The RFR YouTube Channel is now active! In our first week we posted 7 videos. This includes 1 full length video and 6 shorts. In total we received 7,300 views! But we need more videos. If you have any videos to share please email them to me. If you have videos but do not know how to email them to me, I can help you get the videos sent. Social media is becoming our most potent avenue to get our message out and increase our engagement. You can find the channel here <https://www.youtube.com/@RhodyFlyRodders/videos> and make sure you click on the shorts, which is next to the word videos right above the first video on the page the above link will send you to. Please subscribe to the channel.

The RFR Website is a work in progress. Increasing the speed is our main goal. Once we increase the speed we may look into some improvements. Stay tuned for more details.

Many members are looking for **fishing partners** for upcoming trips to the Cape, Block Island, or to just go out on their boats with them in the Fall. If you are interested in fishing with a fellow RFR member this fall please let us know and we can connect you with a fellow member looking for someone to fish with.

The long format of the **Newsletter** will be back in October. Please contribute to it.

Our **fishing outings** are done until the fall. Stay tuned for the start up of the fall fishing outings.

How Did Fish Become Fish?

The origin story of the fish we catch today is a story of how reproduction, predation, environment, and random chance have coincided to differentiate and eliminate species across millennia. Evolution itself is a soap opera where each episode spans millions of years. The story contains sex, violence, and re-birth. However in this story, the main characters are a species group, not an individual, although individuals do play a role.

The simplest way to think of evolution is to think of it as advantageous genes being passed on to offspring across generations until the offspring differ from the original population enough that they can no longer reproduce successfully with them. Example: A striper and a white perch cannot reproduce successfully (successfully means that if offspring resulted those offspring would have to be able to have babies too), thus they are different species. Although striped bass and white perch are genetically related, neither can be thought of as being in the same family tree. They are not siblings or cousins. Evolution does not act in a one dimensional direct path. Stripers and white perch are related the way chimpanzees and humans are related. You are not inviting a chimpanzee to thanksgiving. Instead evolution acts more like a radiating web shooting out from a common ancestor in the center. In this way all species share some traits, but no two species share all the same traits. The trait every organism shares is being composed of cells. Now to fish!

About 530 million years ago, the earliest vertebrates appeared in a world dominated by oceans. There were no fish as we would recognize them today, no trees or forests, and no animals living on land. The only organisms present were algae, bacteria, bug like creatures called arthropods, soft bodied animals like worms, jellyfish, sponges, and these early vertebrates that hardly resembled a fish. By about 520 million years ago, the first fish like vertebrates were swimming in the oceans. They were small, jawless animals, with pharyngeal slits and primitive gill pouches supported by primitive gill arches, and had no paired fins. This is a long way from the trout, stripers, and tuna we know today. In fact, no animals had jaws at that point. Most prey was small, soft-bodied creatures and these early vertebrates were hardly equipped for the kind of predatory lifestyle we associate with game fish. There was less need for it at the time.

Fast forward 80 million years (440 million years ago), our fishlike vertebrates have now evolved into jawless fish who lacked paired fins and still lack modern gills. However, the ocean has become a much more competitive place and large arthropods are now patrolling the seas. They are major predators. In turn, our early vertebrates who were soft and squishy are not fairing so well and armored vertebrates are increasing in prevalence. **Continued on next page**

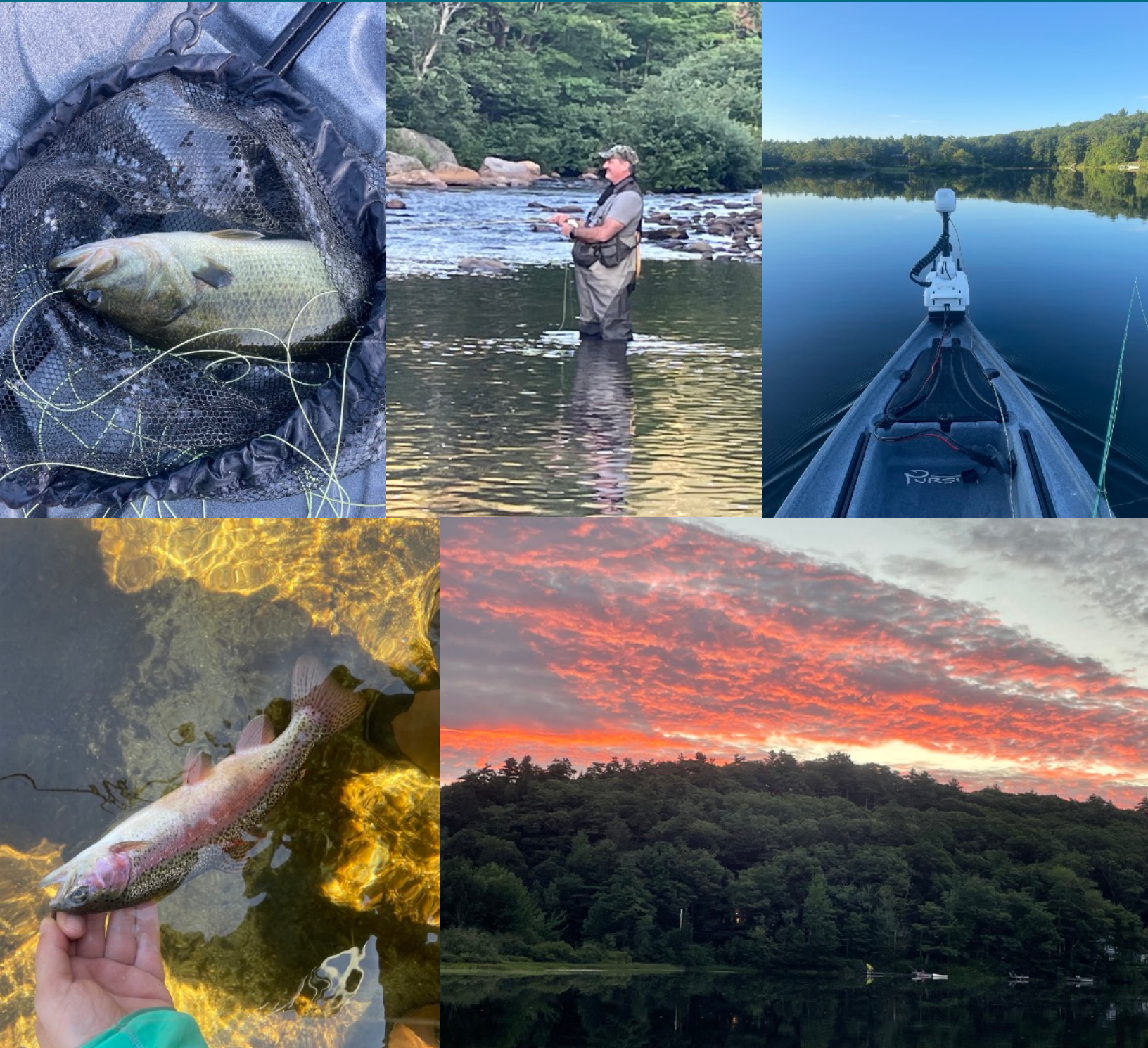
How Did Fish Become Fish?

Jawless fish have been around for millions of years, but they now shared the seas with these increasingly active predators and this growing variety of marine life. It was in this environment that the first jawed fish appeared. This small change would completely transform the evolution of animals on our planet.

More specifically, a genetic mutation likely caused the first gill arch to become the upper and lower jaw elements. The second arch also became associated with supporting the jaw and suspending it from the skull. To be clear, a heritable genetic mutation produced variation in the gill arch which was an existing developmental structure. This occurred over millions of years. There was not a fish without a jaw then a fish born with a jaw the next day. That variation affected survival in the population. Over millions of years, additional mutations and selection pressure produced increasingly different forms and functions of the jaw. Human jaws today, and part of our inner ear, can be traced directly back through this process to fish. Needless to say, the jaw gave fish new abilities to capture prey and consume harder or better protected food. This is one of the most important evolutionary moments in history and directly lead to the development of the filament and lamella gills appearing.

As jaws and their supporting arches began to evolve, the respiratory system was also becoming more specialized. Genetic variation that produced filamentous gills, and eventually the tiny lamellae that greatly increase the surface area for oxygen exchange, provided an advantage to increasingly active fish. This was needed to escape and capture prey that now had jaws. These structures would eventually become the highly efficient gills we see in modern fish.

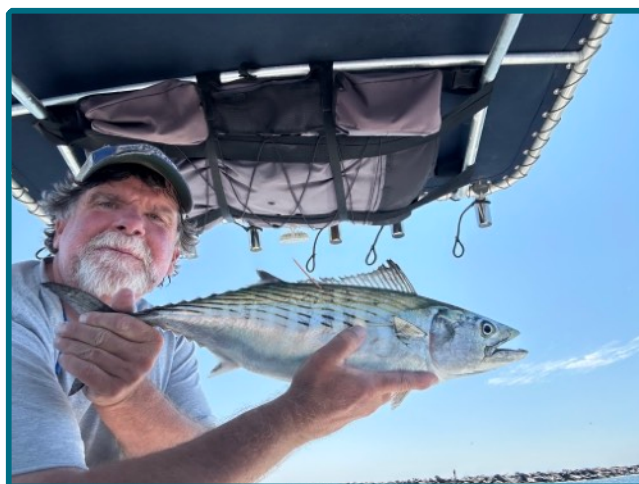
During this same 430 million years ago time period, the first paired fins appeared. The current theory is that fins evolved from lateral folds on the body. Again, at this time the ocean was changing rapidly and predators were beginning to dominate the sea. Paired fins allowed an advantage in escaping active predators through better control and maneuverability. They also allowed active predatory jawed fish to capture prey more efficiently. These early fins were not like the fins of today, but over millions of years they would become a diverse anatomical feature. Eventually these paired fins would lead to the limbs we have today, but we will save that for when we cover further fin evolution next month. Next month we will wrap up evolution and cover the bony/cartilaginous fish split, swim bladders, lungs, lobe fins, and limbs.



From Left to Right: A nice largemouth bass caught in Maine, Bob Tilton fishing NH, Cruising across a lake with a bow mounted trolling motor, A rainbow trout from NH, Sunrise over a bass lake

August Saltwater and Northern Trout

August is a great month to fish, and if I had to choose one place to fish right now it would be right here in RI. Bonito have flooded our coastline. They are a great game fish and decent table fair if bled and eaten the day they are caught. There are some tricks that will help catch you more bonito. First, location and timing matters. Good places to fish for bonito are the West Wall, East Wall, Avenue section of Narragansett, Westerly, Beavertail, Fort Wetherill, Ocean Ave, Sachuest Point, and the break wall in Sakonnet Point. Sunrise and sunset are the best bet, but late afternoon action is not uncommon. Second to increase your chances gear matters. Chose an intermediate or light sinking line like a type 3-5. Use a full 9ft leader and make sure you have a decent reel. Do not show up with your trout reel and plan on being successful. Finally, start with a small white fly with some chartreuse in it. If fish are caught around you and you did not get a bite switch to full chartreuse, full pink, or electric chicken (chartreuse and pink). Switching from a flowy bunny or marabou pattern to a stiffer candy or albie whore can sometimes change your luck too. I prefer to start with a small white bonito bunny variant with chartreuse eyes and minimal flash, but everyone's preference is different.



Other than bonito there are a good number of stripers on the flats in Cape Cod. A trip out there is well worth the \$4.09 per gallon gas. Choose your spot based off of wind and tide. Some sight fishing spots on the cape will fish better at high and some will fish better at low. Any long public beach can be a great choice, but you will have to pay an entry fee and walk a half mile past the swimmers before the fishing begins.

Besides saltwater fishing, late August is a great time to take a trip to Maine, Vermont, or New Hampshire for brook trout. The larger brookies will begin moving out of the lakes and up into the rivers to gorge themselves before spawning. The Rangely region has very good access, accommodations, and large lake run fish. The White Mountains has breath taking scenery, more river than you could fish in a lifetime, more species of trout to catch, but smaller brook trout as it lacks large lake run fish. If you do want to fish for trout up north feel free to give me a call or send us an email as I'd be more than happy to join you for a day or two in some of the spots.

Staying Safe This Summer

Stay Aware on the Water

New England fly fishing means spending time around wildlife, and most encounters are harmless. Still, a little awareness can prevent a bad day on the water. Here are a few things every angler should keep in mind.

Sharks

Pay attention to what's happening around you, especially when wading but also on a boat. If you see seals in an area, avoid fishing nearby. In known shark hotspots, don't wade deeper than you must and fish with a buddy. When you hook a fish, get it in and released quickly. From a boat, use a net when possible instead of reaching into the water. If you do reach in, make it quick. Get it back in the water and away from the boat as quickly as you can.

Sea Urchins

Urchins have become less common in New England, but are concern when wading rocky shorelines. Their spines can go straight through a thin sole and can cause a painful injury. A good pair of wading boots helps, but don't rely on them to protect you from everything. Take a second to look before putting your foot down.

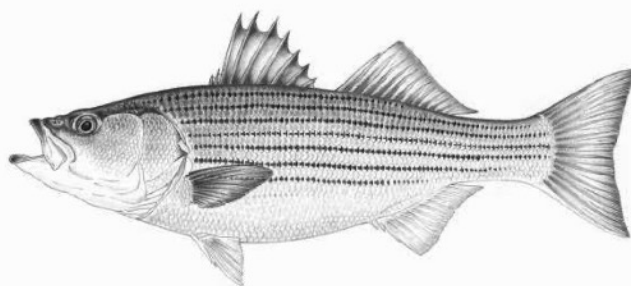
Jellyfish

Always wear quick dry fishing pants if you know jellyfish are present. Also keep an eye on your line and stripping basket. Jellyfish can end up tangled in your line or sitting in your basket. Don't grab one with your bare hands. Use your gear to move it away safely.

Ticks & Mosquitoes

Don't forget about ticks and mosquitoes. Both are statistically more likely to cause you suffering than anything else on this list. Use insect repellent, cover up when practical, and check yourself for ticks after fishing.

The best rule is simple: pay attention. Know what's around you, give wildlife some space, and don't let a great day of fishing turn into an avoidable problem.



We Need Your Help!

Did you read a good fishing book or go on a trip somewhere? Do you want to share your knowledge of a **well known** spot with members new to the area or new to fly fishing? How about just some pictures of the fish you catch? ***U dun't hav 2 worry about gramma or speling***, we can fix it! Let us know and we will include it in the next issue.

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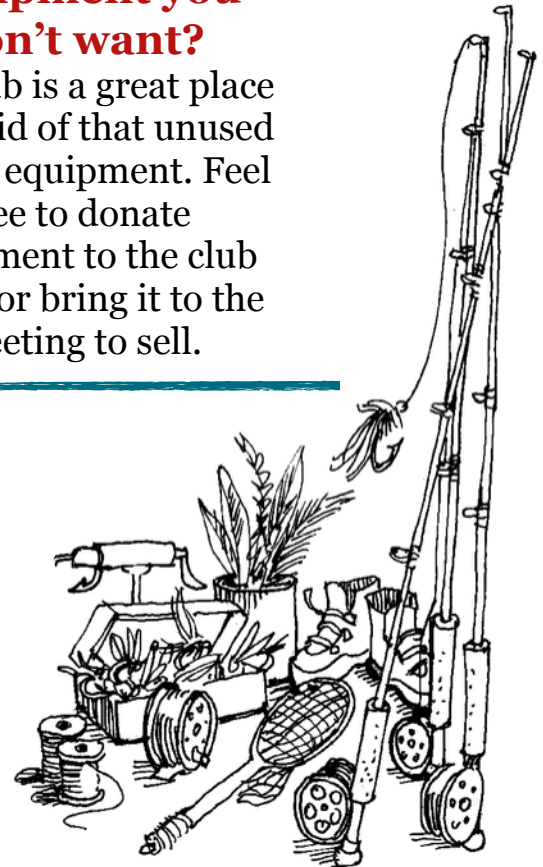
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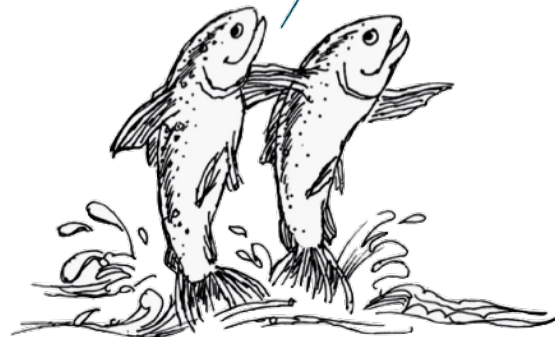
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Do you have unused fishing equipment you don't want?

Our club is a great place to get rid of that unused fishing equipment. Feel free to donate equipment to the club raffle, or bring it to the meeting to sell.



Good Times!



Artwork by: **Peter Nilsen**