

Cutthroat Stalker

essays and musings on fly fishing for native trout



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Nome de Plume

...a rose by any other name...

I've been at this blog thing for a couple of years now. When I first decided to keep a blog I spent some time thinking of a name. What should the name reflect? Should I use a pen name? Would my site have a specific focus? There was a lot to think about. But I was pretty confident about one thing: it had to focus on my first love of angling, cutthroat trout.

I'm not sure when I became a fish "specialist." I guess it's really just been by default. When I started seriously fishing, it was here, in northern Utah where the rivers carry trout. I seem to have an affinity for running water and beautiful natural places devoid of people. This combination has led me ever higher into the mountains. Places where clear, cool water flows through meadows of arrowleaf balsamroot and sage. And after millennia, cutthroat still ply the water.

And I stalk them in their haunts.

Stalker (n):
One moving
stealthily in
search of prey.

Being a stalker takes one to out-of-the-way places. We stalkers are aerobes, and as such we need a good supply of oxygen and well-trained lungs to breathe high mountain air during long, ill-advised arduous adventures.

Wearing the Stalker's boots is no easy task. Not because they're too large to fill, but rather they are uncomfortable and often wet—outside **and** in.

Wear the Stalker Treads

if you dare

The stalker, by nature, spends a lot of time afoot. Cutthroat Stalker is no different. He is no gear

hound, but he has learned, by dint of plantar warts, bunion and blistery burstings, that for some things, it pays to pay top dollar. Last year I replaced this pair of wet waders with new. This year, I replace the two year old wading boots with new. I think I'll opt for Korkers which should provide both wading and walking improvements.





The Stalker's Eye

“

The unblinking eye of a cutthroat, steady and unwavering, like a stalker, is single-minded.

”

Does Size Matter?

Big or little, it's about the experience

Native fish stalkers are a strange breed. Anglers in general are a strange breed, and although brothers all, as with any family, there are variations within the gene pool.

In angling the fly fisher seems the epitome of eccentricity where there is a pantheon of strangeness: from the boutique fly tier specializing in the haute couture of the Atlantic salmon fly to the brownline specialist dredging for carp. Fly fishing caters to the most discriminating tastes or the basest instincts and each piscatorial sibling keeps a running mock feud with the other.

Native fish stalkers are just one branch of this piscatorial family tree. A restless breed by nature, the stalker can be found from big rivers to small streams, or from shoals to shores—wherever the natives are active.

Native fish, like natives of so many other species, have been pushed aside for the more interesting or exotic. The last hold for many of these natives is within pockets of water tucked away here and there. They are hidden from the crowd and the seeker of the big and showy fish. These holds are often in small creeks in the desert or little headwaters in the mountains. They are remote and only the intrepid angler seeks them out.

And what do they find in these little waters? Water they can often cross in a single large stride? Little fish. But fish bearing the fewest marks of man's interference. Small creatures bundled with the purest strains of their ancestral DNA.



It is no fault of theirs that they are so small. But for some reason, when pictures of these pint-sized beauties are seen, the ignorant laugh and scorn.

Size of the water or size of the fish, it really isn't about size. It's about the experience. And that's one of the many nice things about angling, for each angler there is something that draws him to the sport in such a way that each experience is unique to the angler.

The next time you see a picture of an angler on a gutter-sized creek or palming a fingerling-sized fish, get to know the angler and find out about the size of the experience they had before you judge the size of anything else.

(photo above is Gary M on Guano Creek)



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