

The Trail to the AURORA TROUT

*The finding of a new species of the gamy Salvelinus,
which has been accepted by science as a new trout*

By W. M. H. RINKENBACH

WE had just emerged from a spring trip into the Timagami, and Stan, Hort and I were spending the hour or two that must elapse until train time in discussing with our casual acquaintance—who seemed to accept us as other than the tourists to come later in the year—the whereabouts and catchability of brook trout.

"You got map?" inquired George, the tall, friendly Indian guide.

Assenting, we rummaged through the duffle and passed to him the one we had used on our jaunt into this land of ever-

the Mattawapika River, over the broad expanse of Lady Evelyn—a lake of a hundred isles—and up and up the river of the same name with its precipitous falls, chains of small lakes, rapids, and many portages of varying degrees of length and difficulty.

At Gamble Lake we must perforce leave the stream whose headwaters we were now nearing and undertake a final portage of more than four arduous miles that led across and down the divide, on the top of which Clearwater Lake lies at an altitude of between fifteen and sixteen hundred feet.

Long before, the others had been informed of what George had said; and once encamped on one of the islands of far-flung Smoothwater, the decision to visit the trout lake was immediate and unanimous. So, taking only an 18-foot canoe, lunch, and our tackle, we

paddled and portaged into it the next morning and found, hidden amidst the hills east of Smoothwater, a narrow lake about three miles in length. As we paddled in we saw a small, rocky island near the outlet, which meandered along the base of a perpendicular granite cliff perhaps three hundred feet in height.

In spite of the glaringly hot and clear weather, we fished near the island and were rewarded with a single brook trout of about one pound.

GEORGE'S say-so was confirmed, but it was in a mood rather skeptical as to the density of the finny population that we slowly trolled to the upper end of the lake.

We passed another larger and densely wooded island en route, but had nary a bit of encouragement in the way of a strike; so landed to eat our lunch. A hot sun, a blinding glare from the water, and a riotous plenitude of huckleberries caused us to linger longer than usual over this; but finally we re-embarked to continue fishing with determination, if not with a

great deal of hope for unusual success.

Idly drifting in the faint breeze while we discussed what might be the best part of the lake to try next, I let out a small trout spoon with Bee fly attached and stripped off about fifty feet of line. The wind was slowly carrying us down the lake at a short distance from the shore, and we were lazily discussing the pros and cons of the question, when there came the shock and thrill that never fail when it is forced upon your notice that a big 'un has gorged the lure.

With a lunge that bent the fly-rod nearly double and took the line under the canoe—so unexpected was the attack—the battle started and all four of us came to life again. And there was need that the angler be very much alive and alert; for with long, bull-like rushes and short, hairpin sprints, that fish made every second mean something. Luckily he did not succeed in tearing loose during the first minute of confusion; and after "A.C." had swung the canoe around, and so freed the line, it was an even fight.

WE all have our hopes and dreams, and what trout-fisherman has not visioned himself in a diffused-focus scene, doing battle with and landing the one that is to put all previous triumphs in the category of trivial things? Within a few minutes came the realization that such a scene was now being enacted and knowledge as certain as though the fish already was gasping in the net that a *Salvelinus fontinalis* of at least three pounds' weight and a strong disinclination to arbitrate had the far end of the line. At the end of five minutes, with the foregoing convictions intensified and a lurking fear of loss dawning, I was moved to announce that if this one escaped it would be a case of justifiable suicide.

And so the fight continued for an unnoted length of time; but finally his troutship could no longer cope with the untiring spring of the rod and the continuous



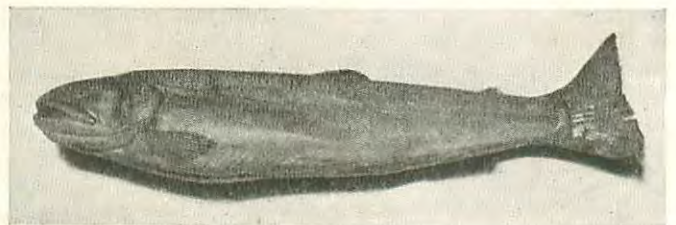
Brook trout photographed after pickling

green forests, lakes, rock-ribbed hills, and picturesque streams. Studying it carefully, George pointed his finger to a small, narrow and unnamed lake far to the north and said briefly, "Trout there."

Remembering that to many of the natives of the Northern woods the term "trout" meant the lake trout, I insinuated that this, of course, was to what he referred; but George staunchly insisted that the trout in that specific lake were "brook trout—speckled trout." Knowing the reputation as guides borne by him and his brothers, I thanked him for the information and promised myself to head for that lake at the first opportunity.

With this as an added attraction and opportunity beckoning, only two months later found me again one of a party of four that headed north. Starting from Latchford, Ontario, and thereby saving time in getting beyond the range of the usual tourist, we were towed up the Montreal River by our genial outfitter, Archie King, to where the drainage of the Lady Evelyn watershed empties into the river over the double falls of Mattawapika.

During the next five days, with the handicap of frequent and heavy rains added to the other natural barriers lavishly thrown across our path when the world was young, we steadily pushed ahead in a northwesterly direction with Smoothwater Lake as our goal. Our route took us up the long, sinuous arm of



Aurora trout photographed after pickling

The Trail to the Aurora Trout

drag of the line, and grudgingly but surely was brought near the canoe. Then, coming close to the surface, a gleam of silver flashed through the clear water and terror lent strength to a savage spurt that took out the line again but proved to be his last great effort. Carefully bringing him alongside the canoe, "A.C." netted him and—

BEFORE us lay a trout. Not the giant for which I had fought, but a trout not more than a foot in length. Not the darkly colorful speckled trout with iridescent beauty spots of red and blue I had expected, but a trout whose flanks of silver merged into a gold-speckled bluish-silver on the back and into the white of the belly. Of the usual orange-yellow spots there were none, and of the beauty spots only the faintest of indications at one or two places.

Filled with surprise at the unexpected appearance and with the intensity of the fight still jumbling our thoughts, my startled "But what is it?" met with but a threefold echo. After much exclaiming and scratching of heads, we decided that undoubtedly before us lay a trout that certainly was neither brook nor lake trout and therefore must be another kind. Brown, rainbow and steelhead were suggested in turn, only to be rejected by the cognoscenti of the outfit; we decided that this must be what the natives referred to as "gray trout." Without being able to specify differences, we had at various times heard rangers, trappers and guides insist that such differences exist as to distinguish "gray" and "lake" trout.

The fires of angling enthusiasm now flared madly and we resumed our slow trolling over this part of the lake with a choice assortment of spoons, flies and pork rind trailing in our wake. However, the Bee-fly spinner—the only one in the outfit—seemed to have the call; for within the next hour or so I landed two more, while Sid struck, hooked and dragged three alongside the canoe—only to lose each at the last moment. Finally he hooked another and, with the three of us driving from the rear seat and cheering him on, he managed to bring the largest of all into the net.

It was now late in the afternoon and we started down the lake with our island camp as the goal. However, noticing the mouth of a tiny brook on the west shore and seeing a smaller lake marked but a short distance back on the map, we walked

but a few hundreds of yards over a low hill and saw lying before us in the early shadows a lake in which the trout were breaking water by the hundred as they fed at or near the surface. With regret that we could not take advantage of this fur-

While still in the teens, I was first afflicted by an annual fever that began in the dead of winter and, manifesting itself in tackle-tinkering and a review of all available angling literature, increased in intensity until the climacteric day when the trout season opened. "Trout fever," the despair of mothers and exasperation of wives, seems actually to render the victim happier, hardier, and more impervious to insinuation and reproach, rather than resulting in a weakening and waning.

A few months after our return, my annual attack came on and encountered surprisingly little resistance. Naturally "those trout" were the first point of attack. Resistance was lowered to the vanishing point and a renewed and systematic study of the literature ichthyologic ensued; but the more deeply pursued, the more elusive the fish seemed and the more baffling the results.

CORRESPONDENCE and consultation with Drs. Henn and Kendall, of the Carnegie Museum, and the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries, failed to clear up the matter, the most interesting lead being an opinion from the latter that this might very probably be



We journeyed far up the Lady Evelyn River

ther opportunity, we turned back and headed for camp.

The next day proved to be cold and rainy, but Bill and Sid made a brief excursion to the smaller of the two lakes and returned with two more of the trout that have caught and held some of the color-splendor of the auroral skies. Also, Bill brought back a weird tale of one, the granddaddy of 'em all, which Sid hooked, dragged to the canoe, tried to net, and, catching a hook in the net, shook loose at the very gunwale of the canoe in his efforts to free the net. 'Twas then the latter announced in self-defense: "I'm not an angler—I just fish."

THE following day we must needs head south again, but it was with the hope of once more seeing the hidden lakes and taking more of those trout that we left Smoothwater. Having returned to the city, with a long and fishless winter before us, we each consulted several tomes of fish fable and fact without being able to identify the species we had seen; so we had recourse to our original conclusion that this was the "gray trout," and let it go at that. And so the matter might have rested had it not been for a personal idiosyncrasy.

an entirely new species of trout.

With deep (outward) regret I realized that previous plans for a long-deferred visit to the paternal roof must, in the face of pressing scientific duty, be laid aside and the self-immolation of a spring trip in quest of specimens arranged. Of the necessity of this I was firmly convinced, but when the other three were approached they proved interested but fly-shy. However, there was no difficulty in persuading another angling friend, Charley Goulding, to make the foray and the middle of last May found us again in Latchford.

To our disgust, the Montreal was choked with the logs of the spring drive and we were faced with the necessity of a long detour that would require some time; but on a leaden-gray morning we crossed the river and started a two-mile portage. This led through a forest of nothing but silver birch. As the leaves had not as yet even begun to bud, the pall of the dismal sky only emphasized the feeling of being in a lonely graveyard of a thousand tall, gaunt stones. Snow lay in patches along the trail and, when halfway over, a hail-storm beat a tattoo upon our packs; but by the time we had reached the end of the portage at Anamanipissing Lake the sun was shining brightly and an easy paddle

Field and Stream

over beautiful, calm water was before us.

Late afternoon found us near the southern end of the lake. Landing on a small, rocky island that was the site of an extremely dilapidated rangers' cabin, we decided—on a hunch—to stay here and save the labor incidental to pitching camp, although the weather was brightly fair and there were still several hours available for travel. A happy hunch it proved to be, for hardly had we cooked and eaten when a small, black cloud scurried up out of the west, a roaring gale swooped down, and a torrent of cold rain that soon became a heavy snow began to fall.

RETREATING to the poorly chinked and partly roofless cabin, we soon realized the impracticability of making it comfortable and were driven into our blankets by the intense cold. During the night I awakened several times to thrust my head, tortoise-like, from beneath the blankets, find the pillow of duff and clothing nicely covered with snow, and hear the wind howling with such ferocity that I feared our canoe, which had been upturned on the shore, would be lifted right off the island. No, I did not go forth to tie it fast!

The next day was clear but intensely cold and so windy that the high waves and angry whitecaps prevented our departure. By dint of work and some laughable makeshifts, we managed to make ourselves fairly comfortable, so that we were able to find a certain amount of humor in our position. Late in the afternoon the wind subsided somewhat and we did a little casting from the island with a pleasantly surprising result, for after bagging a doré Charley took a three-pound lake trout on a pork rind.

During the next several days we encountered tough going, due to the extremely cold weather and frequent flurries of snow. Paddling over lakes dotted by many islands, with the immediate past and future veiled from view by snow, proved interesting if not entertaining; and we found it advisable to make one of the still vacant ranger cabins our nightly goal when possible.

Arriving at the outlet of the Lady Evelyn River, we proceeded upstream some distance; but now, when we were at last in the brook-trout country, we were confronted with the fact that, due to the al-

most freezing temperature of the water, the trout would not strike at fly, spoon, or live bait. Being cold-blooded, the metabolic processes of trout are suspended almost entirely under these conditions, and, with the driving force of hunger on

time was spent in catching and preserving specimens of the new trout, brook trout, and other minor species in the lake, taking natural-color photographs of the specimens and in general photography.

Visits were exchanged with the two rangers stationed on Smoothwater Lake; from them we learned that these trout had been called rainbow trout and land-locked salmon by the occasional anglers finding their way here, as well as facts concerning their distribution and habits. We also learned that the lake on which we were camped is known by the rangers and trappers as White Pine Lake, although bearing no official map name.



Everything was covered with snow the morning after the storm. And we were trout fishing

the part of the fish gone, the fishing of ice-cold streams is almost hopeless.

Disappointed but not discouraged, we made our way to the cabin of a trapper-friend, one Charley Taylor. Here we stayed for a week in the hope that the weather would moderate. However, the cold, windy weather persisted to the day on which it was necessary that we start for the outside, helping Taylor take out his dogs and furs. Then, as if by magic, the black flies and mosquitos began to appear in swarms, and we knew that our departure was well-timed.

ABARE two months more passed and, the unbearableness of the fly-season being over, we again turned our steps northward and determinedly set out for the far-off lake of unusual lure. Again there were but two of us, the other 50 per cent being Doc, an ichthyologist who had never angled but was willing to try.

After four days of straining effort from Latchford we arrived at the long-anticipated goal. Doc was new to the game and had been more or less unappreciative of what was ahead of him when he started; so the route proved a series of rude shocks to a love of comfort that had earned for him the title of "Duke of Moribundia."

Pitching camp upon the tiny, rocky islet near the outlet of the lake, we remained here for the better part of a week. This

BY the time we had collected, photographed and explored sufficiently, the margin of our available time was small; so we started on the back-track at a hurried pace.

At length we emerged, with our specimens, into the land of soda-pop and safety razors, and called it a trip.

There still remained considerable to be done in the way of analysis, search of literature, and comparison with other little-known trout species; but the data obtained showed that we had found a brand-new and gamy species.

Impressed by the striking yet harmonious color-scheme of this fish, which is found in a region whose skies are frequently illuminated by the glories of the Northern lights, it has been given the common name of aurora trout; while the locality in which it is found and the fact that it belongs to the same genus as the brook trout—the charrs—is indicated by its scientific name, *Salvelinus timagamiensis*. As such it has been reported in the annals of the Carnegie Museum.

From our observations and information gathered from the rangers, the following general facts concerning the new species can be given:

Apparently the aurora trout is confined to the limited area of the Smoothwater Lake drainage of the Timagami region, which consists of about ten lakes and streams and forms the headwaters of the East Branch of the Montreal River. It is found up to three pounds in weight and in the same lakes as brook trout of the same size.

While not equaling its speckled cousin in beauty, it is truly magnificent in appearance. (Continued on page 60)

The home of the Aurora trout. White Pine Lake from Look-out Hill



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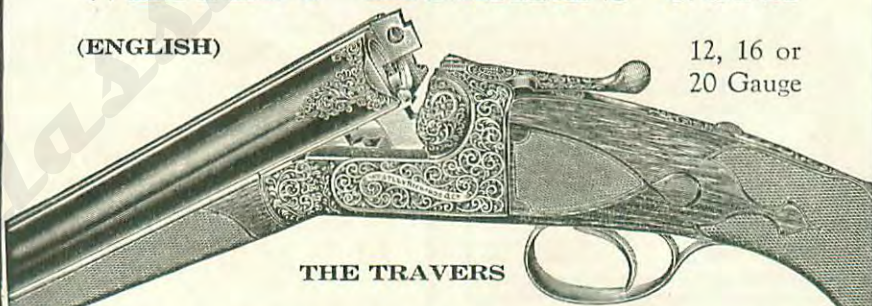
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Yours very truly,
E. F. WARNER,
Publisher.

ANOTHER RECORD SMASHED

(Continued from page 15)

4. Hand-lining the double line or use of a boatman's handline snapped on or in any way attached to the double line or leader.
5. Failure to have lines tested and rods measured and weighed before using.
6. Failure to comply with tackle specifications.
7. Shooting a fish.
8. Throwing gaff at fish before leader is within reach of boatman.
9. Use of harpoon, lance or lily iron.
10. Use of gaff over 8 feet over all in length.
11. Anyone other than angler and one gaffer assisting in gaffing or killing a fish.
12. Use of more than two hooks attached to leader at any one time or use of clusters of hooks (two or more) fastened together in any manner.

Mr. Gillespie used a hickory rod weighing fifteen ounces with which to catch his world record broadbill, and his line tested at sixty-three pounds breaking strength. The great fish measures 12 feet 9 inches from tip of sword to spread of tail, has a girth of sixty inches (quite a nice waist measure), and the bill itself is four feet in length.

The world record catch will be mounted and presented by Mr. Gillespie to the Tuna Club. The Harry Mallen broadbill which was brought in last season now hangs on the wall of the Tuna Club and is the cynosure of all eyes, a beautiful specimen of perfect preservation.

THE TRAIL TO THE AURORA TROUT

(Continued from page 20)

ance. The unvernicated, rich bluish-silver or plum color of its back and upper sides, flecked with single scales that have a golden gleam, shade into the gleaming silver of its flanks, through which show occasionally the rudiments of beauty spots of red and blue similar to those found in the brook and brown trouts. The belly is of creamy white and the white-edged fins are a solid madder-red, lacking the wavy striations of green and black found in the brook trout.

Like the brook trout, when handled or killed, the brilliancy of the colors quickly fades. One dead specimen, kept in the water, was attacked by a leech and almost entirely bleached in a short time. A peculiarity noticed was that to almost every specimen of the aurora trout taken on the last trip were attached a number of copepods, a species of small white parasite.

In habits the aurora trout is very similar to those of the other members of its family. A rare fighter, its equality or superiority to the brook trout is a narrowly debatable question. It is both a bottom and surface feeder, depending upon conditions of weather and time.

In the spring it can be taken with flies,

and at other times with small and medium spoons, crawfish, minnows and worms. In the stomach of one of those first caught was found a recently swallowed wood mouse!

The forests, lakes, streams and natural life of the land, air and water of the Timagami have already contributed much to the pleasure of those fortunate enough to have visited this region. With the added lure of a new, gamy and beautiful fish, the already great reward of angling satisfaction can only be increased for those with the necessary time and energy to make the long and arduous trip to the secluded home of the aurora trout.

IN PANAMAN JUNGLES

(Continued from page 25)

brook mumbled on our left, with a lapping sound now and then that to our sensitized perceptions was the sound of an animal drinking. A neque turned inquiring eyes on our lights and fled with a startled squeak. The darkness held a touch of the unreal, a sort of goblin-haunted-wood impression that lent the shadows grotesque, fitting forms.

While indulging these pleasant fancies I was recalled to reality with a suddenness that was disconcerting. As we rounded the debris of a giant fallen tree, the form of a full-grown jaguar stood revealed by our lights, his eyes turned on us with green malignity, his tail moving from side to side with a series of sudden jerks. He was standing over the carcass of a partly devoured deer, and was evidently loath to desert his kill. As I raised my rifle he gave a snarl of rage, ending in a throaty rumble that was the concentrated essence of boding evil.

Why not be frank? I had no quarrel with that jaguar, and he was so much madder than I was that his rage emanations seemed to flow into and through me and interfere with my respiration and circulation. How I appreciated the companionship of blessed Frank, standing beside me unmoved—probably lost in admiration of the crouching grace of that sparkling dynamo of malevolence.

THERE was not much time for introspection or prolonged soul searching; so I aimed at the neck and slowly squeezed the trigger. The cat went backward and down, with a great hind paw beating the air. I fired again at the shoulder. In an instant he was up, in a staggering charge toward us. Frank was ready with the shotgun, but did not want to ruin the hide.

Suddenly the jaguar dropped forward and out of sight. We advanced cautiously, with guns ready. A dry quebrada leading away from the stream had afforded a chance of temporary concealment and retreat, and he had taken it.

We followed the quebrada, searching out the thickets with our lights. There were splashes and dribbles of blood every few feet, but no sound ahead. Hiding places were numerous and we did not dare advance too hastily for fear of a charge at close quarters.

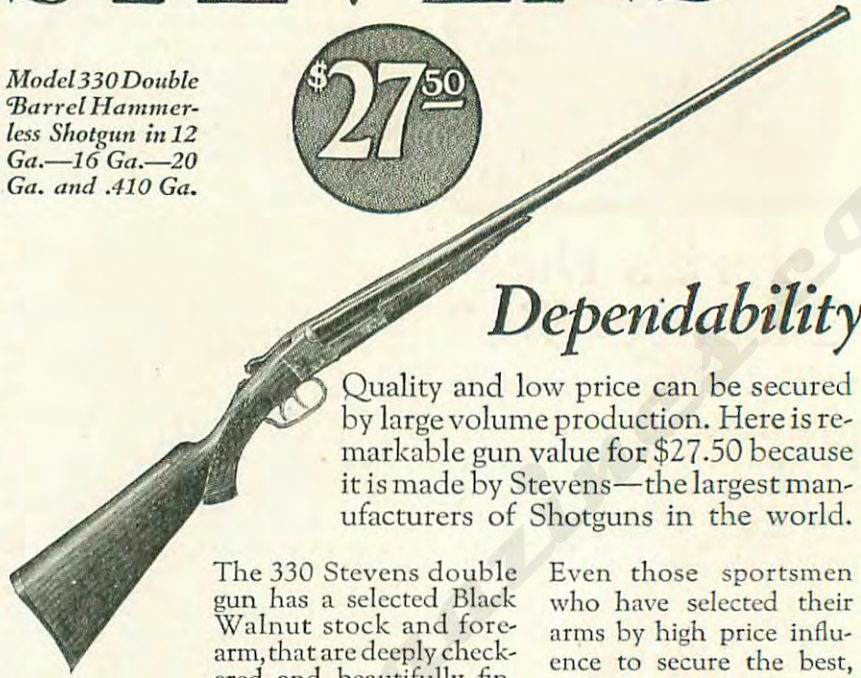
After a couple of hundred yards we realized the animal was traveling much faster than we were. Frank cursed the fact that he had held fire when he had a chance to finish the business, hide or no hide. The trail of blood now left the quebrada and led up a slope toward higher country. The marks were less frequent and we had to work carefully at times to find them.

Pushing through some low shrubs, we bumped into a wasps' nest and stirred a

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