

Fisherman's Friend

By Lois Ann Dort, Guysborough Journal , July 27, 2016

STILLWATER – Many Journal readers are familiar with the name if not the face of Chris Sinclair of Stillwater. He has been a contributor to this newspaper on behalf of the St. Mary's River Association for the past four summers. Some may have been wondering where his commentary on the river has gone this fishing season. The answer is much further afield.

This spring, after completing a diploma course at Holland College in wildlife conservation, Sinclair headed out to the wilderness of Labrador and Crook's Lake Lodge to work as a fishing guide. After a thrilling six-week contract he's back on the St. Mary's and spoke to The Journal last week about his Labrador experience.

Crook's Lake Lodge is approximately 60 km southeast of Goose Bay, Labrador. And Labrador, for those unfamiliar with the location, is one of the greatest wilderness areas in Canada. Pristine and rugged, the land is not particularly welcoming to inexperienced

strangers but above-average sized fish bring fishermen from all over North America as surely as a Sinclair tied fly will catch a good fish on the St. Mary's River.

Sinclair, whose age belies his experience with the angling life, landed the job at Crook's Lake by simply asking if they had any openings this season. That ask was made easier by the fact that he knew the lodge owner and has a serious social media presence in conservation and fisheries circles. Being known as knowledgeable has its benefits.

The life of a fishing guide is nothing like nine to five. Sinclair got up at six a.m. and was on the water by eight every day. Along with taking clients on the lake he was also responsible for camp chores like supplying fire wood, general maintenance, cleaning of the lodge and occasionally rousting bears from the property. "There is no real end...I



worked and lived in the same breath. It wasn't like a strict hours job...Whenever there was something to do I had to do it."

Another part of his job was tying flies and teaching clients what flies to use in Labrador waters. The brook trout, said Sinclair, are much larger and pickier than their southern brethren and need a bigger fly. "These fish are just spectacular fish and they are totally different than the ones we have in Nova Scotia." Sinclair, as a Nova Scotian, had to learn the ways and preferences of the Labrador fish which he did by consulting a guide who previously worked at the lodge and by keeping a close watch on the hatches that occurred on the lake. "We had some hatches I wasn't prepared for like number 18 black caddis...there were three or four different species in one hatch. It was pretty interesting to run into that."

The most challenging part of the job, said Sinclair, was earning the respect "of people who had been fishing for longer than double the amount of years I have been on this earth. I have only been fishing for seven years and people that have been fishing for 40 found it hard to respect the opinion of a 20-year old...Some did give you a bit of an issue; the age gap was an issue."

Aside from the work experience, Sinclair developed a connection to the land over his time at the lodge and was surprised by how special Labrador became to him. "I am a tree hugger of sorts and that place was spiritual for me. I grew up in the most beautiful area of Nova Scotia, in my opinion. I might be a little bit biased...being up there, I was so grateful to be there in the wilderness. I was surprised by how much it made me appreciate what we have."

Six weeks passed in the blink of an eye but Sinclair plans to do it all again next year—he's secured the fishing guide position at Crook's Lake for the coming season. "The experience will help me be a better guide and better fisherman in general. The life lessons I learned up there will help me be a better person."

Sinclair published an online flip book of his Labrador experience which can be found at <http://online.fliphtml5.com/diio/zjlc/#p=1>.

Emerging Caddis by Chris Sinclair

Of the Emerging Caddis, Chris advises, "This fly works extremely well on all rivers, streams and lakes, but is best fished on North Shore streams. It is fished just as you would any dry fly, but only use dry fly dressing on the wing, doing so makes it ride low on the water with the body just under the water to imitate an emerger. It can also be tied in tan, black, white and chartreuse."

Emerging Caddis

Hook: #8-18 curved caddis/pupae hook, barbless
Thread: UTC 70 Denier, tan
Body: Olive Hare-Tron dubbing
Wing: Light deer Hair
Antennae: 2 strands of pheasant tail
Head: Olive Hare-Tron
dubbing, whip-finish three times and
clear head cement

