

Cane Pole Fly-Fishing with the Grandkids

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November 8, 2017



My two grandsons enjoy sitting on my lap and tying a fly or two with me. That's fun for all of us. The other day the older one, the four-and-a-half-year-old, asked me, "When can we go fishing?" Since then I began looking for an opportunity and a plan to make that happen.

Of course, a full-fledged fly rod and reel are pretty much out of the question for a three-year-old, and his older, but still quite young, brother. Like many, my first experiences of fishing consisted of a cane pole, a green-braided line, a hook, bobber, and some worms dug up in the back yard. It was a lot of fun and we landed some fish. Well, Gander Mountain was going out of business and had some \$4 two-piece cane poles on sale at half price, and not being one to pass up a bargain, two of them ended up in the back of the car.

A second factor was that I have been doing quite a bit of fixed line/Tenkara fly-fishing lately and could see how that would be a good way to get the boys started. However, there was an uneasy feeling in my gut about having them handling the new Iwana rod and I wondered if those cane poles might work as a viable alternative.

The two-piece bamboo poles, when put together, came out to about nine feet in length. So . . . to make them into a two-piece bamboo fixed line rod, a six-foot piece of the running line from the back end of an old five-weight line was looped onto the eye at the end of the cane pole. Then a three-to-four-foot piece of monofilament (3x) attached to the line with a nail knot as the leader/tippet and small foam fly tied to the tippet.

The little cane pole cast a line surprisingly well, easily propelling the fly 15 or 20 feet. Still, the pole was a bit heavy for the boys. So, after I cut a foot or so from the butt end it was a little more user-friendly. A circle of bungee cords made a nice two-foot diameter target for the boys to practice casting with a yarn indicator tied on the end. The older boy took right to it; the younger one... not so much.

After a bit of practice, the boys and I, together with Grandma, walked to the pond behind the house to try out the cane pole fly rods. Nothing happened with the first couple of fly casts, then a few nibbles shook the fly. After a bit, a small bluegill gobbled up the fly and the older boy pulled it in. The fish was examined thoroughly by both boys, a few pictures taken, and then the little gill released back into the pond.

Two more fish were landed on the smaller boy's pole which prompted his brother to say, "I want to fish in that spot," or something like that. Soon, one of them said, "I'm hungry," and that ended the fishing for the day. We all headed back to the house for dinner with big smiles and sparkling eyes.

This was a very inexpensive introduction into the world of fly-fishing for two young boys. We're looking forward to more adventures and more developed fishing gear for future outings. Fishing should be fun . . . and this day it truly was.