

Cranmore

Ballinrobe

Co. Mayo

17 Sept 1916

My dear Henderson

Many thanks for yours, I hope you had good sport when at [indistinguishable]. Loch Lomond certainly looks very nice from the dry fly fisherman's point of view but I fancy these Scottish lochs do not hold big fly feeding trout. One [indistinguishable] bring up an occasional pounder, but after these big Irish trout I could not stick it I fancy — I always heard that L Treig held very big trout—it is a very deep lake, with only a narrow strip of fishable foreshore 'twist deep & shallow' except at the lower end where there is a sandy shallow and a part of second lake before it flows out into the river. One should get very big trout trolling. I doubt if one would get them on a fly—What did Pitken say about the run of sea trout this year in the Lochy system?

I didn't write you before because I wanted to wait & see what I did with the ant & let you know—but this was a dismal failure this year. Owing to weather conditions the ant only came out on August

21 - Sept 6 - in afternoon when it was very bright & a wind, practically no shelter except late in the days when on Sept 6th the wind dropped - hardly any fish came on the feed & rose, only took a few ants & went down, I rose 3 but failed to hook them & rose 2 others and broken in them. One was at least 7 or 8 lbs. I saw him plainly and fearing to break in him I struck from the reel with very light check but the gut came across his teeth & we parted company - the water was covered with ants but thousands of gulls covered the whole lake picking them up which may have accounted for the fish not feeding as the gulls settled on the water. One per yard or so and simply scooped them up - quite enough to scare any fish. Gulls are getting a great curse here, they have practically rendered the olives extinct. I always reckoned on good dry fly work on them but I only saw olives rise on one occasion when I got one small fish, 2 ½ pound but very few fish were feeding, and those badly. The moment the ants started to swarm one or two gulls discovered them and then hundreds of gulls hailed coming from N.S.E. and West to the spot until there were thousands of them - & what with [indistinguishable] of gulls, quantities of large dragon flies, which go for the ants on the wing like gulls & devour them. They didn't last very long. The worst ant season I ever saw - and the worst dry fly season.

I have had some wet fly trout but even they are not rising too of course - I have rose some very large ones, one especially last week when I thought I had him. He rose at the end of my cast two or three yards from the boat, just as I lifted the cast off the water, he lunged at it. Head and shoulders, clean out of the water as far as his dorsal fin and he was as near 3 feet long as one could make him and dark mahogany colour. A very unusual colour for a Carra trout, he must have weighed between 15 - 20 lbs. You could see all the spots on his dorsal fin and back. Had he been in the same condition as one I got 3 days ago, whilst trolling for pike, hed have been near 20 lbs. I got one 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch girth. The biggest killed in the lake was 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs some years back but ive seen fish over 3 feet long swimming in the lake on a bright day. A fish supposed to be 20lbs was played for two hours on fly and landed but he went through the net and was lost eventually. He was landed nose first and as these Carra fish have very pointed snouts he went through the net. Another about same size was played on the dap for hours but eventually broke just as he was been landed. I suppose this lake holds the biggest trout in Ireland but I fear it is being sadly poached in spawning season. Where they feed like pigs and 7 & 9 pounders galore.

I have got a new dry fly rod, split cane 9 foot 5 or 4 drams, grand for small flies, nice gut and kind on the strike. I got it from Wickham the past day, I tried it last week.

Hoping your sons are still alright

Yours sincerely

F.B. Kinchcliff