



# FISHING Q&A

by JOHN MERWIN



**BATTLER:** Small-mouths' habitat makes them strong fighters.



**Q:** Any idea why smallmouth bass fight harder than largemouths of equal size?

—ROSS SCARDINO, WEBSTER, N.Y.

**A:** It's because their fundamental natures are different. Largemouths are often oriented to cover or structure, in areas with no current. To escape from danger they'll bulldog into bushes or weeds. Smallmouths prefer open water, often with current. Fleeing from predators in such surroundings means running hard and jumping.

**Q:** I've heard from a friend that telescoping rods aren't as good quality as regular ones. What's your opinion?

—MARKEY MENDICK, VIA E-MAIL

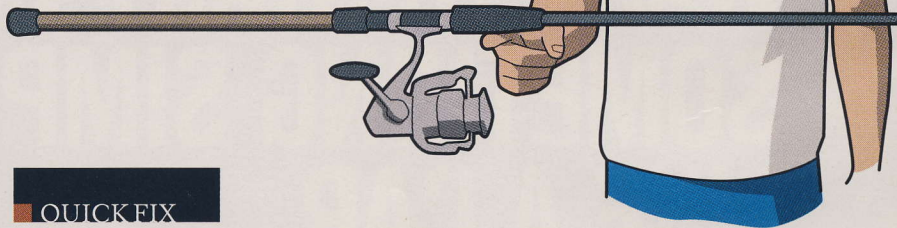
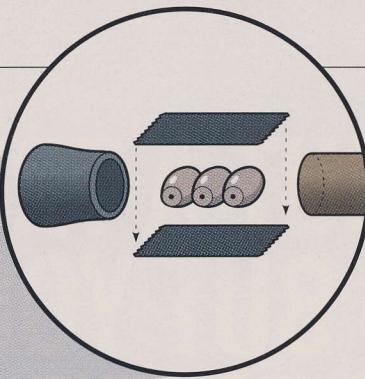
**A:** Your friend is right. If you're serious about fishing, don't buy one. If you do buy one, don't ask me any more questions.

**Q:** I see trout in the small stream behind my house in the spring, but they disappear by summer. How can you tell if a stream is capable of holding trout all year?

—TOM CONLIN, GARDNER, MASS.

**A:** Of all the things trout need—such as cover, water depth, and food—water temperature is often the most limiting factor. If your stream gets much above 70 degrees for weeks on end, it likely won't hold trout year-round. They will move to seek cooler water.

● **SUBMIT QUESTIONS** to fsonline@time4.com. Include your name and hometown.



## QUICKEFIX

### BALANCE YOUR BUTT

How to improve your surf rod's action

■ If you feel as though you've done several hours' worth of bicep curls at the gym after fishing the surf with plugs or crankbaits, your rod could be too tip-heavy. Fix it by adding weight to its butt. With a balanced rod, you'll be able to swim lures more easily and effectively, and catch more fish as a result. Here's how. —TOM KEER

- STEP 1** Take off your rod's butt cap. The interior of the rod blank will be hollow. Measure its diameter.
- STEP 2** Buy several egg sinkers that will fit loosely into the blank.
- STEP 3** With the reel on the rod, insert a sinker into the blank and temporarily replace the butt cap. Attempt to balance the rod across one finger at a spot just forward of the reel foot. Keep adding sinkers until you achieve that balance.
- STEP 4** Remove the butt cap and take out the sinkers, then wrap them in electrician's tape until they form a package that fits snugly within the blank.
- STEP 5** Slide the bundle into the butt of the blank and replace the cap securely.

## INGENIOUS OUTDOORSMAN

### ALL STEAMED UP

Rehabilitate old flies on your stove



Restoring mashed flies to their original operating condition is as simple as boiling water. Just put a teakettle on, and crank up the heat to produce a healthy jet of steam. Grip a fly at the hook bend in a pair of pliers and hold it in the vapor stream, rotating slowly so that the mist penetrates wings, tails, and hackles. Heat and moisture will relax the kinks, massage out the crimps, and return the fly into fishable shape. When it looks refreshed, shake off excess moisture and lay it on a paper towel to dry. —TED LEESON