

# "The Hatching"

My wife of many years and I were spending the summer at a family camp, K20, in the Harriman Park area of Bear Mountain Park, NY. We have been in and on the water for all our lives, and this particular summer, we were canoeing the beautiful lakes of the park. Our children were all grown, and gone out into the world to do their own parenting thing, which gave us the time to enjoy the mountains, lakes, and each other.

It was August, and the night sounds were in full song, with the katey-dids leading the chorus. This time of the year, there are meteor showers to be seen in the night sky, just after dusk. We usually would gather out on the end of the dock, after loading up on Deet laden bug spray, and lay, looking up at the sky. Night in the mountains is a beautiful peaceful time. We would sometime walk the trails, under starlight only.... your night vision rarely gets a chance to kick in the city.



It was just about 9PM, the sky still showed bits of gold from the usual lingering sunset, and we decided to paddle one of the canoes out to the middle of Long Pond lake, and just drift and watch the sky. It was quiet, when out of the corner of my eye, I caught a ripple in the water, heading our way. We both sat perfectly still, when BAM ! we were splashed by a beaver who had approached us to give us a warning-wack of his tail on the waters right next to us. As we continued to sit still, he repeated this ritual several times... WOW, what a thrill !

After a while, we decided to return, and as I began to paddle we became enveloped in clouds of BATS. They were everywhere... flying all around us... I noticed that they seemed to be skipping off the surface of the water?? I had on a broad-brimmed hat and, my wife was lying in the bottom of the canoe, protecting her hair, extremely unhappy with the situation. During this time, not one bat so much as brushed me, as I continued to paddle towards shore. We paddled in and out of several dense clouds of what seemed like thousands of bats, before finally reaching the shore.

Later, while enjoying an evening conversation with the camp's caretaker, an old time trapper, I told him about the adventure we just had. Man, he got all excited... said we had experienced a "hatching"...every fly-fisherman's dream, a time when the water hits a certain temperature, and those bug-eggs lying on the water's bottom pop to the surface... and bring the fish, too.... in his 70 years in the woods, he'd heard of, but never seen such a happening.

We still canoe and kayak, but I have never gotten my brave wife to go out night-paddling ever again.

*Joe Reekie - Floral Park, NY*