

Rod Building 109B **Two-Handed or Spey Fly Rods**

By Larry Lee

Previous rod building articles have primarily discussed single-handed casting fly rods: the advantages and disadvantages of use, how to select blanks and components, and the best methods of construction. This is the second of three articles that discuss two-handed fly rods (also called Spey rods). This article will discuss the selection of size, length, and action type. The last article will discuss guides, handles, reel seats, and size selection of reels.

Selection of rod

This is the same question that we first asked ourselves when confronted with choosing a single-handed casting fly rod. As when selecting a single-handed rod, selecting a double-handed fly rod, the builder will have to address many details. One rod will *NOT* be able to fit all situations because of the huge variety of fishing conditions in which one can find oneself. Double-handed rods come in different lengths, number of segments, line weights, rod weights, material stiffness, blank colors, eye sizes (with different colors), reel seat types and colors, handle configurations types, etc. Some basic questions anglers should ask themselves when deciding what type of rod to build are:

- What kind of fish (and what size) do you want to catch (i.e. bass, trout, salmon, striped bass, various salt water varieties, etc.)?
- What type of water are you planning on fishing (i.e. small, medium or large rivers, lakes, ocean etc.)?
- What rod break down size will you need for easy transport to the fishing location?
- What types of flies are going to be used (i.e. how big, weighted, dry or wet)?
- How much money and time are you willing to spend on your rod?

Size and length

These rods are manufactured in lengths from 11'-6" to 16'-0", with 3 or 4 segments for easier transport. Rod weights vary from 5 to 11, with the weights corresponding to that of single-handed casting rods. The table below provides an approximate guide for weights of rods, species of fish, and available lengths.

| Rod Weight | Fish Desired | Available Lengths |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 5 to 6 weight | trout, bass, small saltwater varieties | 11'-6" to 12'-6" |
| 6 to 7 weight | larger trout, steelhead, bass, small saltwater varieties | 11'-6" to 13'6" |
| 7 to 8 weight | steelhead, stripers, salmon, small-medium saltwater varieties | 12'-0" to 14'-0" |
| 8 to 9 weight | steelhead, stripers, salmon, medium saltwater varieties | 13'-0" to 15'-0" |
| 10 to 11 weight | larger stripers and salmon, medium-large saltwater varieties | 14'-0" to 16'0" |

Action of Blank

There are two general actions associated with two-handed rods. They are: (1) a traditional (British Isles) type, and (2) a Scandinavian (European) type. The traditional type tends to act like old Scottish wooden rods: the action is slow to moderate. The Scandinavian type has a much faster action for those that like a faster, quicker rod response. The action is, as always, a personal preference of the angler.

In the final article of this series about two-handed fly rods, we will discuss the selection of guides, handles, reel seats, size of reels, and line selection. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at larrylee@L3rods.com or telephone at (916) 962-0616.