

Tackle bag

Tenkara takeaway

Hemingway's tenkara outfit

This represents a pair of Hemingway's outfits, more or less complete with rod, line, flies, net and sling/pack – all the essentials to get started with tenkara fishing.

Faced with the pieces I found it very easy to join them into a useable fishing outfit. The rod is telescopic with a knotted nylon cord at the tip. Simply loop the 'tapered leader' to the butt of the cord, attach a tippet at the fine end, tie on a fly, and that's it. Nothing unusual or unconventional, or, indeed, new. If you want to read a little of the history of this type of fly fishing in the UK, in fact in Scotland, I suggest you search the internet for the book, *The Angler and the Loop-Rod* by David Webster, I believe published in 1885 (Amazon lists an edition published in 2008).

This is a way of fishing which appeals to me. Way back when the fly-fishing bug had yet to bite me, one of the attractions of fly fishing was a sense of elegant, mobile simplicity. The fly fisher, walking and watching, occasionally flicking the water with a fly, while the bait fisher sits and waits and the spin fisher works his lure through the pool again and again. This was back before we had any need for fly reels with a dozen spare



Practical and simple.

spools and tackle bags the size of Cumbria.

The line fitted to the long tenkara rod is not really a 'tapered leader'. For sure it is tapered but it is much better described as the Casting Line – not a new term, ask Webster. Casting the tenkara outfit I am clearly casting conventionally. The rod loads and unloads against the line (incidentally, we can and do load, i.e. bend, a fly rod against its own inertia). As a

compulsive hauler my non-rod hand really wants something to do while my right hand is casting, so this certainly feels different. My casting range is limited to the length of my line and rod - slightly over 7m with this outfit. I can use, actually fish, in quite a lot of river at that range. This rod is 3.3m long and not as soft as I expected, overhead casting is fine, I'd like a slightly longer line if I'm to be roll casting more. As I got used

MAGNUS ANGUS examines a tenkara outfit; fishing pliers; Hardy Ultralite 5000 reel; and a Loop Cross SI double-hander

to this outfit, maybe I imagined it, but the simplicity seemed to bring a sense of calm; this gear gets rid of so many choices and variables I guess that is understandable.

The slightly more basic version of this outfit retails for £365 and includes: tenkara rod, Padouk wood landing net and magnetic net release, backpack and small chest pack, rod tube, tapered line, half dozen tenkara flies ("include Sekasa Kebari and variation for Europe rivers"). The net looks nice and the rod seems well made. With a spool of tippet this outfit gives me all I need to begin tenkara fishing. I'd add a spool to store my casting line and a nice swing-lid box – which come in a slightly more expensive outfit.

From: Hemingway's stockists
www.fishingwithstyle.co.uk/
www.fly-fishing-tackle.co.uk



The complete package.



Tenkara flies.



Telescopic sections ending in a flexible nylon cord.

Cut and crimp

Stillwater Jaws Pliers

Aluminium levers with hardened steel jaws and tungsten cutting blades. The jaw plates are bolted to the levers and, in theory at least, can be replaced. These slightly predatory jaws are designed for cutting and crimping. In fly fishing that means working with wire traces more than handling monofilament or gripping and extracting hooks.

For setting up a pike leader these are good, and for those saltwater leaders which need protection from serious teeth these are good. In my opinion, these would be ideal for fly fishing if they came with a second set of jaws with flatter surfaces. For heavy saltwater



leaders I like the cutters but I want flat or near flat jaw surfaces when I'm tightening knots in heavy mono.

Slightly predatory jaws for cutting and crimping. Comes with a light, nylon sheath and a coiled safety lanyard.

Comes with a neat, light, nylon sheath and a coiled safety lanyard. The list price for these is £39.99, currently on offer at £29.99 – which seems like something of a bargain to me.
From: Glasgow Angling Centre
Tel: 0871 7161670

User-friendly reel

Hardy Ultralite 5000

Clearly, this is a large arbour reel. Fractionally less obviously, this takes cassette spools. The smaller of two CLS models has the capacity for a WF7 with 70m of backing. At 7.2oz (204g) this is a weighty reel, however, on the butt of a 10ft rod this feels fine and that large diameter arbour stores line in large coils, lets me pick up line fast and makes the drag that bit smoother.

Hardy has opted to link the spool to the frame with a captive nut, nothing wiggles or moves which shouldn't wiggle or move. Remove the spool to reveal the cassette. This has the most user friendly means of getting spools in and out that I have met to date – slide the lock catch to unlock and the spool comes out, slide the catch to



lock and your spool is locked. More complicated to make than the typical o-ring mechanism but so much nicer to use! Switching drag direction is similarly simple, unscrew that brass nut at the centre of the spool and turn

the bearing – no tools, or screws – easy! Look at the edge of the cassette, the designer has set wee holes around the spool, each labelled with a fly-line term for line size and density. Look in the box and you find a

bag of little plastic plugs, which I can use to mark my cassettes. Nice idea, the designer has clearly had that "What line is this?" moment. I will, of course, lose the plugs!

In the frame, behind that brass nut, Hardy has put a neat wee drag mechanism, based around a couple of Rulon drag washers, the result is smooth and more than adequate.

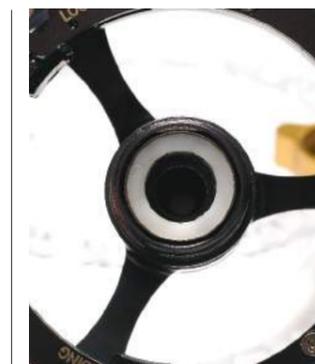
This reel is well designed. The guys behind this see the issue they are addressing very clearly and solve the problem, and then make it easy for the owner and user of the reel to use – which is more unusual than it should be. Very well made and finished, a good looking, functional reel. Price: £199.00 (comes with three cassette spools, extra spools are £9.99 each) From: Hardy stockists.



Set for a #7 intermediate line.



Simple clear lock mechanism holds the cassette spool in place.



Unscrew to reveal clutch bearing. Flip over to change drag direction.

Attention grabber

Loop Cross S1 14ft #9

First impressions count, a bit at least, and just pulling the butt section from the bag the Cross S1 had my attention. That reel seat is very striking indeed. As the sections emerge and are assembled, however, it seems more conventional. OK, it's made using Powerlux, a state of the art composite from 3M ... and ... yes, OK, these are nano-sized silical particles in the resin ... but the sections are still taped tubes and I still push them together in the usual way.

From the first swish this is clearly a very light rod. Fit a reel in that striking up-locking seat and the outfit still feels light. That sounds obvious but as I started playing around with the Cross S1 I began wondering if the reel position, pushed farther from my lower hand than it would be in a down-locking seat, meant less of my

SPECIFICATIONS

LOOP CROSS S1

Sections: 4

Weight: 258g

Rings: Large Recoil snakes, two Recoil butt rings

Cork quality: High quality cork

Reel seat: Custom aluminium

Blank: Satin grey

Thread: Black

Build quality: High

Rod bag: Canvas

Rod tube: Aluminium

Price: £839.00

From: Loop stockists

effort moving the rod was consumed moving the reel. In my opinion the more traditional down-locker has functional advantages, less chance of jamming the reel in the seat, less chance of the reel foot being damaged (i.e. bent) – but none of those points say one word about the balance of the outfit and casting. I remain to be convinced but the way this rod handles with a reel fitted certainly got me thinking.

Casting, I'd describe the rod's action as smooth and in the middle of the blank. That in itself is unusual. Using broad strokes, double handed fly rods have tended to be either tippy or deeper and more through in the way they bend. Tippiest rods were associated with shooting heads and so-called Scandi casting styles, whereas deeper bending, more through-actioned rods were regarded by some as more traditional, more for full lines than shooting heads.

Casting the S1, the action seems light, very controllable, I have a little of the feel of a full flex rod with the easy and accurate leverage of a tippy rod. I don't really want to dull this down with a great long heavy head, I want to match it with a medium to short head, shooting head if you like.

I found the grip length fine, friends (and better double-handed casters) found the length of the grip on this rod inhibiting. I think they were looking for more power and more ambitious distance. My only reservation about the grip

length is that the rod and reel balance on the blank, if I want to fish the fly around with the rod balanced in one hand I am holding the blank.

The reel seat is attractive and holds my reels securely. I like that the cowl sliding onto the foot of my reel can't turn, far less chance of the cowl sticking and less wear on my reel. I like the broad well knurled locking rings. Top and bottom of the fitting are linked by three solid metal rods which exposes the blank below – normally that section of the blank is hidden, often protected by a wooden spacer. I have to wonder how long it will be before mud, grass and general grot get in and around those rods – a minor point, but just one of those issues.

The designer has opted for very restrained cosmetics, almost plain until you notice the components which are partly there for function, but they are also indicative of a high-end rod – I am speaking about a full set of Recoil guides, very high grade cork grips and that custom made reel seat.

I like the lightness of the S1 action, I really like the sense, the feel in my hands, of the rod working the line as I cast. Thinking back to the double-handed rods I've handled over the past couple of years this rod feels quite different. I don't think 'lightness and accuracy of a tippy rod, feel of a through actioned rod' really captures that difference but it'll have to do for now. Well worth a cast if you get a chance.



Cool understated looks.



Recoil butt rings, these look simple but are expensive.



Good looking seat, works very well.



High grade cork, protected at the wear point with tough cork-composite trims.