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Photo by David Cannon.

Photo by Joel Daniels.

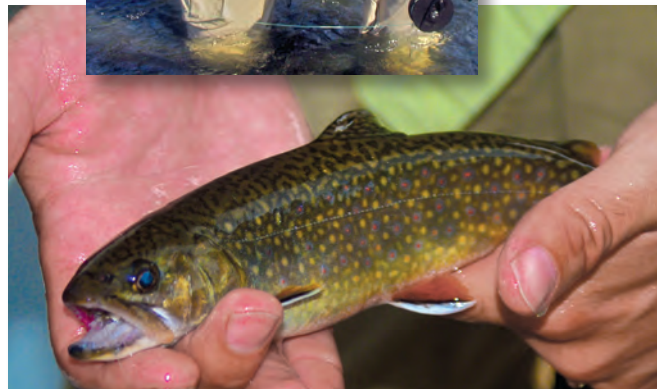


Photo by David Cannon.

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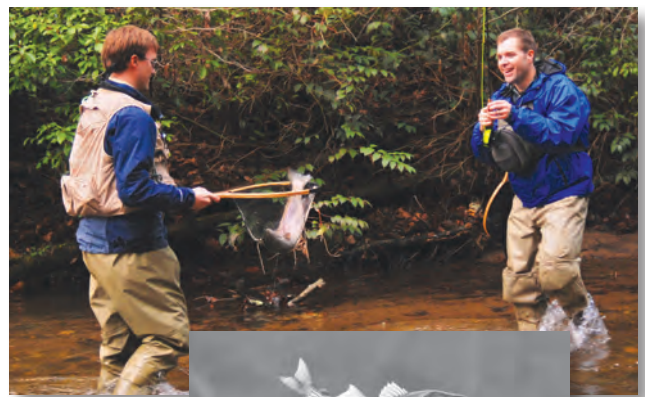


Photo by David Cannon.



Photo by David Cannon.



Photo by David Cannon.



-  Interstate
-  U.S. Highway
-  State Highway
-  Other Roadway
-  Boat Launch
-  Fish Hatchery
-  Campground



- 1 Medlock Bridge
- 2 Jones Bridge Park
- 3 Chattahoochee River Environment Education Center
- 4 Holcomb Bridge
- 5 Garrard Landing
- 6 Island Ford Park Headquarters
- 7 Don White Memorial Park
- 8 Riverside Park 1
- 9 Vickery Creek
- 10 Riverside Park 2
- 11 Chattahoochee Nature Center
- 12 Gold Branch
- 13 Morgan Falls Dam
- 14 Morgan Falls Park

Chattahoochee River Jones Bridge to Morgan Falls Dam



Chattahoochee River

Jones Bridge to Morgan Falls Dam

The year is 1960. It's a dark and nervous night. Three men, all die-hard outdoorsmen and lay-wildlife biologists, quietly wait on the edge of the Chattahoochee River, somewhere not far downstream from Jones Bridge. Yes, the men are technically "legal" as they've obtained permission from a landowner to be here and perform the task at hand. But they'd rather not draw any unwanted attention to themselves. As their hearts pound with the excitement that comes with the possibility of getting caught, a set of headlights appears in the distance.

As the beams grow brighter and nearer, the faint sound of Ray Charles belting one of the biggest hits of the year, "Georgia On My Mind," is barely audible beneath the frothing of aerating water. Ironically, Georgia is on all of their minds, and more specifically, Georgia law enforcement.

The driver sets the brake and chocks a rear tire. His knees are stiff from the long ride from North Carolina. As buckets are handed

Types of Fish

Rainbow and brown trout.

Known Hatches

Caddis, Blue-Winged Olives, Sulphur Mayflies, Yellow Drake Mayflies, Big Golden Stoneflies, Winter Black Stoneflies, Midges, Terrestrials, Craneflies. Forage also includes Scuds, Sowbugs, Crayfish, and Sculpin. Also, if a shad kill occurs during a cold winter, water releases from the dam can send dead shad this far down the river.

Equipment to Use

Rods: 4-5 weights for nymphs and dry flies, 6-7 weights for streamers. Both should be 8½ to 10 feet long.

Reels: Larger fish do reside here, so a reel with a disc drag is appropriate.

Lines: Floating lines to match rod weight when fishing dries or nymphs, intermediate lines to match rod weight when fishing streamers.

Leaders: 9- to 12-foot leaders in either 3X or 4X when fishing floating lines, 5- to 7-foot leaders tapered from 1-3X when fishing intermediate lines.

Wading: Floating in a drift boat, Jon boat, belly boat or pontoon is the best way to see the 'Hooch. However, shoals at certain access points are great for wading while wearing chest waders.

Flies to Use

See the Chattahoochee River Tailwater Hatch Chart to correctly match the hatch.

Continued

*Anglers fishing the Chattahoochee at midday.
Photo by David Cannon.*



*Zach Middlebrooks displaying an amazing 'Hooch brown trout.
Photo by Chris Scalley.*





out, the cover of darkness is briefly surrendered for the sake of lighting a path with Coleman lanterns hooked to branches overhanging the river. “10,000 fingerling rainbow trout?” the driver asks. “Yes sir,” replies the ringleader of the Chattahoochee’s very first bucket brigade. “The boss threw in 2,000 browns at no charge to say thanks for your patronage,” said the driver. And for the next couple of hours, dip nets and strong backs work with the aid of an ample dose of adrenaline.

And with that, one of the finest trout fisheries in the Southeast was born. Over the coming decades, the river would evolve into something that its first “volunteers” could have only hoped—viable waters for the state to manage both with stocked- and self-sustaining populations of browns and rainbows.

The part of the Chattahoochee flowing from the ruins of the old Jones Bridge down to Morgan Falls Dam, according to long-time guide and river expert Chris Scalley, is a trout stream worthy of blue ribbon status. While it still benefits from the cold releases of water from the bottom of Lake Sidney Lanier, the not-so-positive effects of the releases such as scouring of vegetation and discoloration from lake turnover aren’t felt quite as much. With plenty of aquatic vegetation, prolific bug life, and clear water, this section could be described as a spring creek with a hydroelectric dam as its source.

Going after the trout along this run is a bit different from chasing them upstream of Jones Bridge or below Morgan Falls Dam. The abundance of food and the presence of plenty of wild browns can make for some challenging fishing at times. On the other hand, presenting a fly that is a close imitation of what the trout are keyed in on at the right time can yield the catching of great numbers of fat, healthy fish.

To keep it simple, work the obvious fish lies in the river. Seams of water between fast currents and slack water, woody debris lining the banks and holding thousands of cased caddis, gravel bars, and vegetated areas will all attract and hold trout. If you spot a weed bed in the river, cast your fly to it and work the area thoroughly. Aquatic insects will be clinging to the vegetation, and where there are aquatic insects, the trout won’t be far behind. And when that trout latches onto your fly, be thankful for the bravery of three men who risked their good names for the sake of fishing.



A nice fall brown that fell to a Scalley’s Electric Bugger stripped upstream. Photo by David Cannon.

Flies to Use (continued)

Dry Flies: #14-20 X-Caddis, #4-20 Elk Hair Caddis, #12-24 Adams, #12-24 Adams Parachute, #6-24 Royal Wulff, #14-20 Scalley’s Crippled Caddis, #14-24 Comparadun, #14-24 Sparkle Dun, #6-16 Schroeder’s Hopper, #4-16 Stimulator, #4-16 Royal Trude, #16-24 Griffith’s Gnat, #16-24 Fitzsimmon’s Midge, #16-24 Bett’s Emerger, #6-16 Jack Dennis Cranefly, #6-16 Scalley’s Daddy Long-leg, #6-24 Para Ant, #6-12 Foam Beetle, #6-14 Dave’s Hopper, #12-14 Blue Humpy.

Nymphs: #14-20 LaFontaine Pupa, #6-20 Hare’s Ear Nymph, #14-24, Prince Nymph, #14-20 Z-Wing Caddis, #6-24 Scalley’s CDC Pheasant Tail Nymph, #14-24 Zug Bug, #14-24 Barr’s Emerger, #4-16 Anytime-Anywhere, #4-16 Kaufmann’s Stone, #16-24 Brassie, #16-24 Serendipity, #6-16 Peacock Simulator, #14-18 Kaufmann’s Scud, #14-18 Epoxy Scud, #12-20 Hardbody Ant, #6-14 Woolly Worm, #10-14 Pfitzer Special, #6-12 Borger Crayfish, #14 Kyle’s Copperhead, #16-18 Kyle’s Hoochee Caddis, #16-20 Blue Assassin, #14-18 Rooks’s Berry Nymph, #16-20 Lightning Bug, #16-20 Rainbow Warrior, #14-18 Scalley’s Miracle Nymph, #14 San Juan Worm, #14 Y2K Bug, #10 Hurless Nymph.

Streamers: #6-10 Krystal Bugger, #6-10 Woolly Bugger, #6-10 Muddler Minnow, #8 White Beadhead Flash Zonker, #8 Zonker, #6-10 Mickey Finn, #6-10 Black-nosed Dace, #8-12 Scalley’s Buggy-Shad, #6-12 Scalley’s Electric Bugger, #8-12 Clouser Minnow, #8-12 Brer Rabbit, #8-12 Whitlock’s Sculpin, #8-12 Woolhead Sculpin.

When to Fish

This is great water from January through December.

Seasons & Limits

This run can be fished all year and falls under general regulations. Visit GoFishGeorgia.com for complete regulations.

Nearby Fly Fishing

On the other side of Buford Dam, Lake Sidney Lanier holds some big strippers and spotted bass, both of which will take flies. Or, head upstream to fish the Buford Dam to Jones Bridge section.

Accommodations & Services

Several fly shops service this area including The Orvis Store in Norcross, the White River Fly Shop inside of Bass Pro Shops in Lawrenceville, The Fish Hawk and The Orvis Store in Buckhead and Fly Box Outfitters in Kennesaw. The River Through Atlanta Guide Service operates on this stretch.

Helpful Information

RiverThroughAtlanta.com
Orvis.com
BassPro.com
nps.gov/chat

Buford Dam Water Release Schedule:
water.sam.usace.army.mil
 Or call (770) 945-1466.

Rating

It’s a tailwater with the qualities of a spring creek. That sounds like a 10 to me.