



Lucky Icefisherman,
Amur River, Russia

Where are the World's Largest Siberian Taimen?

by Rene Limeres

Much of the hype surrounding the mysterious Siberian taimen, *Hucho taimen*, has to do with its reputed size; as the most robust species of huchen, they are potentially the largest and longest lived salmonids in the world, reaching proportions that stagger the imagination of trout and salmon anglers the world over. The historical record, while scant in details and photographic proof, shows that the largest specimens taken in nets during the heyday of Russia's commercial fishing for the species may have approached and exceeded 3 meters in length and weights of 200lbs! Almost all these outsized specimens were taken along the more remote sections of Siberia's vast rivers like the Lena, Yenesei and Amur. These systems all connect to the sea and have abundant and diverse forage with numerous tributaries for spawning.

Most of the attention of the flyfishing world has been focused on the headwater taimen fisheries of Mongolia, which have so far produced many fine specimens but none approaching the potential size that has made the species so famous. So far the largest fish taken on rod and reel in recent times have come from the Russian Far East, on remote tributaries of the lower Amur River and delta. The Amur supports an astonishingly rich and diverse fishery, including the world's largest fall runs of chum salmon. Siberian taimen of the Amur feed on chum salmon and other abundant fishes and so enjoy exceedingly fast growth rates and potential colossal size, if they are lucky enough to evade the nets and hooks of natives and poachers. So far the IGFA All-Tackle Record for the species still stands at 94 pounds for a fish taken there a while back by famous Russian guide Yuri Orlov.

Somewhere in the vast and trackless expanses of Siberia, no doubt, remain fish of legendary size, waiting for the lures and flies of some lucky, adventurous angler willing to brave great odds and expense in hopes of a bout with the world's ultimate coldwater gamefish. Could it be you?