Subject: : Beginner Forum
Topic: : Waders
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I've been a member of the forum for several years and post once in a while, have been in on a couple of fly swaps and in general, really enjoy checking in from time to time. There are alot of great people contributing to these threads to help out the fledgling fly fisher and I've decided to give back a little of what I've learned by starting this topic.

If you've ever poured through the piles of catalogs either on-line or the hard copies, I'm sure you have seen all the availible wader options out there and for the newer folks just getting into the sport there is usually some confusion as to what brand, type and quality level etc. that can get quite frustrating when that same person has just laid out a modest sum just for the fishing tackle, flies, line and leaders needed to catch the fish we are all after. I would tell you that after having fly fished for several years now and spending a good number of days wearing waders both in and out of the water, (because we do have to walk, sometimes far, to get to the water) that all waders are not created equal.

For the flyfisher on a budget I would highly recommend that the first wader purchase he or she makes would be a pair of lightweight, breathable, stockingfoot chest waders. Hodgeman Lakestream streamlite gets the nod from me for this purchase as they can be found in the big box sports retailer for about $60. If taken care of, they will withstand 2 to 3 years of hard abuse before any leaks develop and when you do spring a leak, it's usually in the booty section on one or more of the seams. These types of leaks can be repaired using the proper product sold by the manufacturerer and can by you another season at least. If a person can afford a higher end type wader, then by all means, take a look at them but beware, I've seen and fished with folks who have had $700 waders leak on the first outing that they ever went on and that my friends, can elevate anyones blood pressure. Get a good, comfortable pair of wading shoes but with this purchase, get the best boot you can afford because comfort and fit is paramount to keeping you out on the water and exploring whats up around that next bend in the river.

If you really get into this sport, at some point you are going to get into some cold weather fishing, whether it's Great Lakes Steelheading or fishing for Atlantic Salmon in or near the Artic Circle and your lightweight waders are not going to cut it anymore. For these extreme applications it will serve you well to buy a pair of boot foot neoprene chest waders, a pair that is 5mm thick and has 1000 to 1200 grams of Thinsulate in the boots are going to keep you toasty warm and dry for as long as you want to stay out. These waders are, of course, heavier and more cumbersome but if you try on a pair or two before you buy and make sure they work with your wading pants and wool socks, you will be able to walk and wade quite well without undo fatigue. I got a great pair from Cabelas three years ago that they labled as their "Spring Run" series and they have preformed great for me both here in PA as well as in Michigan and on the North East coast for early spring Striper fishing. I think at the time they cost me $139.00 plus tax., not bad.

Sorry for going long, hope it is helpfull and ask away if you have questions.

JA