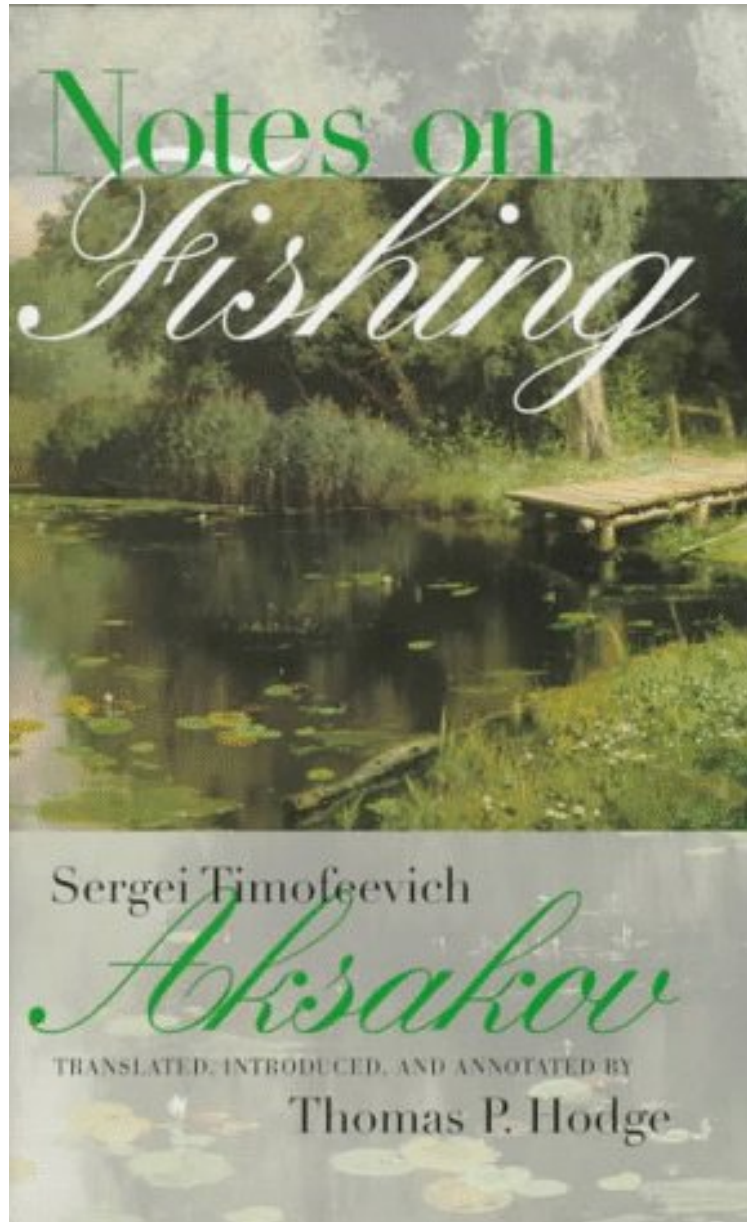


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## Notes on Fishing (Studies in Russian Literature and Theory)

*Sergei Aksakov*

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**Sergei Aksakov : Notes on Fishing (Studies in Russian Literature and Theory)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Notes on Fishing (Studies in Russian Literature and

Theory):

Notes on Fishing was Sergei Aksakov's first book and Russia's first angling treatise. It presents a Russian gentleman's observations on the fishing tackle, angling techniques, and fish species he came to know during five decades of adventure-filled fishing in the vast Russian steppe and the environs of Moscow. But it goes beyond a mere discourse on angling, offering philosophical, literary, linguistic, ethnographic, biological, and conservationist observations. Aksakov has imbued his notes with a deep fondness for the land and an expertly conveyed atmosphere of personal and national nostalgia.

From Library Journal This reviewer must come clean immediately and acknowledge that she knows next to nothing about flyfishing, notwithstanding her having a son who spends most weekends up to his hips in icy New York streams, rod in hand. She does, however, have an enduring interest in things Russian and consequently landed this interesting assignment. Aksakov was a great autobiographical writer of 19th-century Russia, but his first success was with a "sporting trilogy" to which this book belongs. A classic of both Russian and sport literature, known to most enthusiasts, including Montaigne, it was completed in 1846 and expresses Aksakov's passion not only for the sport but for nature in general. After vignette-like discussions of various equipment, the book breaks out into charming discussions of various fish from minnows to burbot that will interest naturalists as well as historically minded flyfishers. Two appendixes include Aksakov's fishing prose and poetry. This won't fit into every popular sports collection, but the prose is perfectly accessible and the book entertaining beyond its obvious historical interest. Montaigne, a former Moscow bureau chief for the Philadelphia Inquirer, has written a book that is less a guide to flyfishing in Russia than a political travelog with his fishing trips as the, ahem, hook. Montaigne determined to flyfish his way across Russia, said to contain in its far reaches some beautiful streams still teeming with fish, but what he encountered repeatedly was bad news for both fish and humans: a countryside despoiled by exploitation and a people so desperate after the fall of communism took away what security they had that many survive by wholesale poaching. Despite some fascinating characters, this is a pretty downbeat trip, which Montaigne himself rarely seemed to enjoy. Probably only readers deeply interested in contemporary Russia will want to go along with him. [Montaigne's book was previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 2/15/98.] A Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal." - A Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal" Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "In Thomas Hodge's beautiful translation, Aksakov brings the same kind of urbanity and insight to rivers, fish, and fishing that Russia's great nineteenth-century novelists brought to her aristocracy, families, misfits, soldiers, and lovers. This book is a classic." --David James Duncan, author of *The River Why* and *The Brothers K*