



## HOMAGE

BY GORDON MORRISON



# The tall tale

When the true story needs a bit more spice

**H**UNTERS AND ANGLERS dream of big-trophy moments on glorious days in idyllic settings, complete with perfect shots and perfect casts. The lucky and talented among us have even experienced the real thing. And when those big moments happen, the seeds of great campfire yarns are planted. But when they don't, we'll seize on just about anything to provide storytime fodder—and that's when the line between fact and fiction becomes most blurred. Enter the tall tale.

A man from Haida Gwaii once told me, for example, that he saw a bald eagle swoop down, latch onto a fawn and power away like an opportunistic pterodactyl. I was in awe over his description of the sound of giant wings displacing air in the struggle against gravity. I also remember thinking, *You must have been dreaming, buddy.* “No dreaming, man,” he said, as if interpreting my furrowed brow. “These eyes watched it.”

Well, my eyes have seen some dreamy events, too, like the time my grandfather and I had a double-header just as the sandwiches, chips and sodas were coming out of the cooler. By the time the salmon were landed, the sodas were sloshing around the tacklebox in a soup of chip crumbs and egg salad. And the fish? Of course, they were giants. Another of my favourite stories is the time when, as a 12-year-old, I retrieved a herring strip from the stomach of a freshly gutted coho and reattached the bait to the hooks to catch another fish. And yes, it was a giant.

Sure, such stories deserve a healthy measure of scepticism, but a version of them usually did occur. In the outdoors, after all, reality and dreams are intimate companions—and one of the reasons we so look forward to our next adventure. **©**

**GORDON MORRISON** WROTE ABOUT FISHING ON THE ROAD TO THE VANCOUVER WINTER OLYMPICS IN OUR WINTER 2009 ISSUE.

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