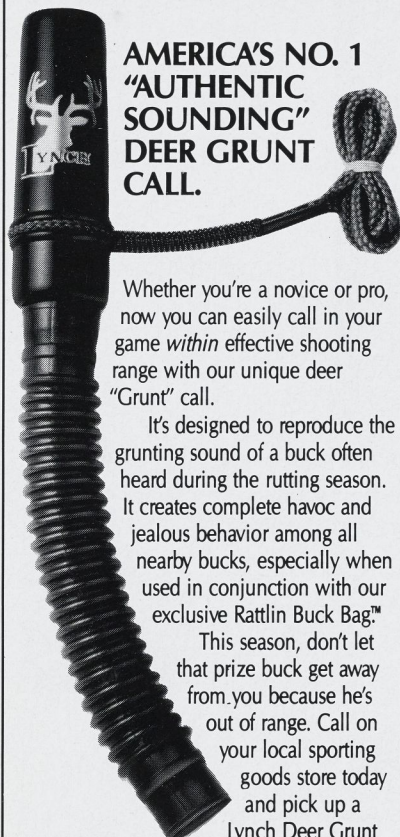


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only one brown over 18 inches allowed and only artificial lures permitted. The present regulation is designed to harvest more smaller browns, so the river can support a greater number of trophy-class trout.

But according to Fredenberg, "Five years of monitoring the Bighorn's brown trout have demonstrated that environmental factors are more important than fishing pressure in controlling population levels. Mortality of age 3 and older brown trout during summer is closely related to water flows. Mortality is high when flows are low, and low when flows are high. The largest decrease in trophy trout occurred when fishing regulations were most restric-

tive. Peak numbers of trophy trout occurred following a period of progressive liberalization of regulations."

## RAINBOWS

Over a quarter million rainbows were stocked in the Bighorn after it became trout habitat, from 1965 until 1983. Various strains were stocked in hopes that a particular variety of rainbow would take hold and spawn. But biologists believe environmental conditions, particularly nitrogen supersaturation (see sidebar), were likely preventing natural reproduction. The heavy hatchery plantings themselves may have also inhibited spawning.

Stocking was ended in 1983, and large

## CATCHING BIGHORN TROUT

(Continued from page 69)

patterns is an imitation not of an insect but of a worm—the San Juan Worm or Rose's more realistic version, called the Gordie's Worm, which is tied with a free-swinging tail and head. These are imitations of an aquatic worm—oligochaetes—that looks virtually identical to its terrestrial counterpart but lives in certain tailwater rivers. Dozens of these worms can be found in a single mat of mosslike weeds hanging on rocks. When they move about, some are washed loose by the current, and the trout quickly eat them.

Bighorn trout are inordinately fond of these worms: Over half the fish I caught had inhaled this offering. The trout struck the Gordie's Worm with a vengeance, often violently jerking the strike indicator a foot upstream on the take. Though other nymphs and wet flies can often be more effective, Rose says the worm imitations are worth trying anytime from June through November.

Casts with both worm flies and nymphs should be made 25 to 50 feet from the boat, angling slightly downstream. Mend the line as you drift, keeping slack minimal yet allowing the fly to float freely, without drag. Set up quickly when the indicator hesitates at all, and you should be able to hook better than half the strikes you get. If the fish are in an aggressive mood, you may well nail two-thirds of those that take. Some anglers like the nymphing so much they simply use this technique all day. Rose says that over a full day's fishing with worms and nymphs, a typical catch would be 30 trout for two anglers. Usually, however, Gordon prefers to have his anglers simply nymph from the drifting boat, then get out to wade-fish prime areas for hatches.

**DRY-FLY FISHING** on the Bighorn is some of the best in the country, with hatches occasionally occurring even during winter, and virtually every day from April through October (see sidebar for hatch

dates). The same outfit used for nymphing can be employed when dry-fly fishing—nine-foot rod, 5- or 6-weight floating line. Lengthen the nine-foot leader to 11 feet or so with an extra section of 5X tippet. Occasionally, for trout in slick backwater eddies, 6X may even be required.

If possible, the best way to rig up for a day on the Bighorn is to have one outfit set up for nymphing and a second rod strictly for dry-fly fishing. That way, you won't have to change the nymph outfit when you stop to fish for risers. In fact, for the more delicate dry-fly fishing, you may want to scale down to an eight- or nine-foot rod for a 3- or 4-weight line.

You'll see some trout rising the entire length of the Bighorn on most days from spring through fall, but Rose pleads with his clients to resist stopping to cast to stray surfacing fish along the way. A more efficient tactic, he says, is to drift with nymphs through most of the river, stopping to concentrate on dry-fly fishing at two or three prime locations where you can get out and wade-fish for an hour or two.

If you pick the precise areas in which the different hatches emerge heaviest, you can usually find stretches where dozens of trout will be rising within casting range from a single spot. Sometimes during heavy hatches such as that of the Tricorythodes, you may see literally hundreds of trout rising at the head of a pool. The fish tend to wad up in packs at this time and become competitive, which can help your chances.

It's best to use a guide when fishing the Bighorn. Having made over 700 trips down the river in five years, Gordon Rose knows where all the choice spots are.

If you'd rather do it yourself, you can rent a boat for about \$50 a day. But the river is not quite as gentle and simple to navigate as it appears. There's no real whitewater, but there are a couple of tricky stretches. Only those with boating experience should float the Bighorn on their own.



trout fishery. Before massive Yellowtail Dam was built at the Bighorn Canyon, the river was a slow-moving, silty flowage holding mostly catfish, burbot and saugers. Fewer than 500 fishing trips were made to the river each year.

"With the completion of Yellowtail Dam," says Wade Fredenberg, "most of the river's silt load was trapped in Bighorn Reservoir. A new clear-water river emerged from Bighorn Canyon. Released from deep below the surface of Bighorn Lake, the river water was much cooler in summer and warmer in winter than it was before dam construction. The river was transformed from a warm, silty prairie river into a cold, clear tailwater, much like a giant spring creek—an ideal habitat for trout."

### THREAT TO TROUT

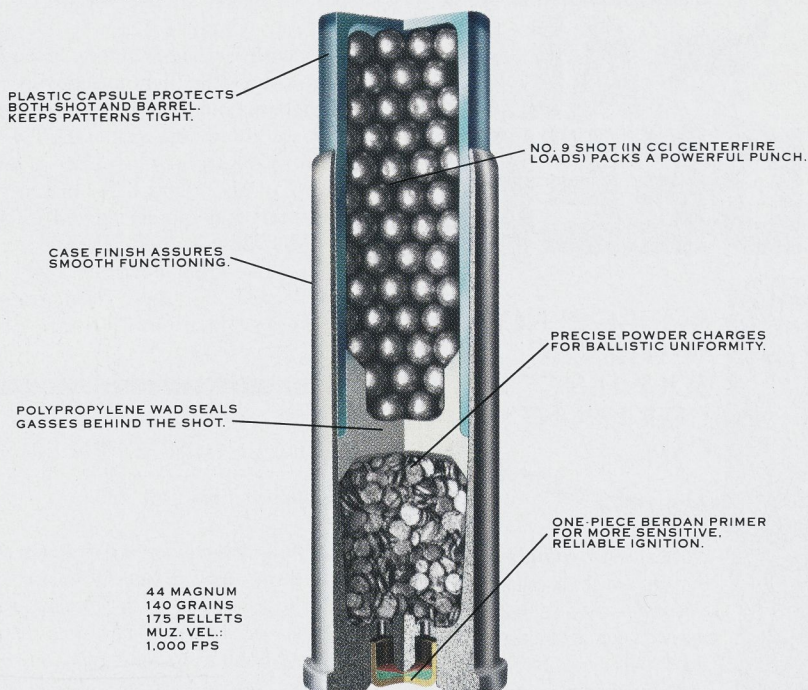
Nitrogen gas supersaturation, which causes gas bubble trauma in trout, can be a significant environmental problem for Bighorn fish populations, according to biologists working on the river. "The problem originates at the Afterbay Dam, and its effects are most severe in the uppermost two miles of the river," says Wade Fredenberg. Ongoing studies suggest that gas bubble trauma has been a significant cause of fish deaths in some years, and it appears that large trout are more severely affected than small ones.

The problem, according to Fredenberg, begins when water pours over the sluiceway and spillway gates at the Afterbay Dam. "Air bubbles are trapped in the water and forced into solution by increased pressure as the water plunges into the stilling basin. Construction of a power plant and bypass system would eliminate the gas supersaturation problem by routing water through penstocks rather than over the dam." Plans are currently under way for such a system, with completion possible by the early 1990s.

Solving the gas supersaturation problem might have other beneficial effects as well. Mountain whitefish—an important food for large brown trout—would become more abundant, and sculpins could likely be successfully introduced as another forage base for the river's browns and rainbows.

Rainbows were planted below the dam, and the Bighorn's reputation immediately vaulted in the eyes of anglers as it began producing trophy trout in incredible quantities. By 1973 the river was receiving as much pressure as the Madison, 13,000 man-days of fishing per year. But the party came to an abrupt halt in 1975 when the Crow Tribe, through whose reservation the river flows, closed the Bighorn to

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fishing for anyone except tribe members. Lengthy legal battles ensued before the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the river was navigable and the state of Montana held title to the streambed. On Thursday, August 20, 1981, the Bighorn reopened to the public for fishing.

The lightly pressured trout were easy pickings in those early years. Too easy. Many trophy trout—including some rainbows weighing up to 12 pounds—were killed by greedy anglers. But the Bighorn is so fecund, so resilient, that it held up to the pressure and saw a decline only in the number of its truly largest trout, fish in the 20- to 28-inch class. Husky browns and

rainbows in the 14- to 19-inch range maintained their high numbers in spite of the intense fishing pressure.

### BROWN TROUT

Although the Bighorn was stocked heavily with rainbows, it's browns—which came from an unknown source—that have become the bread-and-butter catch of anglers. On average, six to eight browns are landed for every rainbow.

Various regulations for managing the browns have been tried. The initial creel limit was three trout per day, with fish between 18 and 22 inches protected. Currently a five-fish limit is in effect, with



# NO-NONSENSE

Brassy South Platte

## FISHING



A. J. McCLANE  
EDITOR

A NAMELESS fisherman introduced me to the deadliest fly I have ever had the privilege of using, and the strange part is that he wasn't even aware of the introduction. We had met on a pool of the South Platte River in Colorado. The fishing was slow, so we stopped and talked, as fishermen will. During the course of our conversation, he showed me a fly pattern that I can't even recall because what really caught my eye was the compartment of

nymphs in his fly box. I asked to see one of the nymphs, and a close examination revealed that the pattern was tied with white floss body, copper wire to give a segmented effect, and a very sparse touch of dark fur at the throat. The head, built up with tying thread, completed the job. The hook size was 16 and I noticed other sizes from 14 to 18.

That night, I proceeded to tie a dozen of these nymphs in sizes 16, 18 and 20. The subsequent success has opened a whole new world of fishing for me.

Over the years, I have searched for the perfect, never-fail pattern, as I believe most fishermen have. I still haven't found it, for this pattern doesn't work too well in high or even medium water, but in low, clear water it has consistently taken trout for me when all else fails. I tie my own flies, so I carry dozens of different patterns in wets, dries, nymphs, streamers, and bucktails, from big No. 2's to tiny No. 20's, yet at times I have gone through all my fly boxes and only the nymphs would produce. The Decker's area of the South Platte is noted for its Blue Quill hatch, and it is not unusual to see the water there come alive with rising trout. Yet when there is a hatch of Blue Quills and the trout are actively feeding on the surface, they will take the nymph almost as readily as the adult fly.

I am not an expert on aquatic life, but I know enough about trout and what trout feed on to know that nymphs similar to this pattern are found in the vast majority of trout waters. It resembles a caddis larva or a maggot, and both of these are irresistible to trout.

I keep a log on all my fishing activities, and a check reveals that the first time I used these nymphs was November 16, 1967. That particular day was spent on Colorado's South Platte River, above Decker's. I landed a total of twenty-four rainbows and browns, the biggest, a rainbow just under 16 inches. By releasing the majority of trout that I land, I don't have to worry about a limit. This has enabled me to spend many days on this river when I have landed anywhere from fifteen to over forty trout in a day. My best day with the nymphs produced fifty-four trout.

The South Platte receives tremendous fishing pressure during most of the year, both from natives and tourists. When I can catch dozens of trout in a day, I feel that a lure has really proved itself.

There are several methods of fishing this nymph. My favorite, and by far the most deadly, is the dead drift. I use a floating tapered line, a 9- to 12-foot tapered

leader, depending on how low the water is, with a 24-inch 2-pound-test tippet. I keep the line and all but the tippet well greased for a good float, because this is the secret of this method. The line, and especially the leader, must be visible to the fisherman, because, in a sense, the leader acts like a bobber, and when a fish takes, there will usually be a very pronounced twitch. I have also discovered that sometimes a trout will take the nymph so gently that the only indication of a strike will be that the leader barely hesitates. When this happens, strike, because the chances are it's a fish.

One reason the dead-drift method of fishing these nymphs is so effective is because of the simplicity of the technique. Several novice fly-fisherman friends have fished the South Platte River with me, and by watching the actual strike when a fish took my nymph, they knew what to look for and were soon catching trout with pleasing regularity.

I have another method I use when it is windy and impossible to follow the drift of the leader because the water is choppy. I use a slow retrieve, either upstream or down, in the quieter water of the pools. This will work for me only when it is windy. I have tried various retrieves on calm water and they don't seem to work.

Another technique I use is for lakes. I discovered it by accident while fishing a small mountain lake. Trout were rising to midges all over the place and I didn't have any midges to match the hatch. On an impulse, I greased my line and leader and dropped a nymph where a trout had just risen. The nymph couldn't have sunk more than a few inches when the telltale twitch of the leader indicated a strike. I set the hook, and to my astonishment a nice brown came out of the water, standing on his tail in protest. I took a half dozen more browns and rainbows before a thunderstorm called a halt to my fishing. Since that time, I have used the nymph under similar circumstances and have caught some nice fish.

Sometimes a sinking nymph will not work unless a little action is added. I found that after waiting a minute or so for the nymph to sink, if I hadn't had a strike, a few gentle twitches of the line would start the nymph toward the surface. Sometimes a trout would hit as the nymph would twitch, or, if the nymph came to the surface, a halt in the retrieve would allow the nymph to start sinking again. Then the sinking nymph would draw a hit. I believe the forward movement attracted the fish and they couldn't resist a helpless tidbit.

I haven't mentioned landing any large trout with this nymph and for a good reason; all the large trout I have hooked with this pattern are either still wearing it for a decoration or sent it back to me with a nice straight hook. On the average, I hook at least one lunker just about every time I fish the South Platte; but maybe because I use too heavy a hand for 2-pound-test tippets, I have yet to land a trout over 17 inches. I've had plenty of lunkers on, but either I've forgotten my net, I strike too hard, or the hook pulls out. The point is, large trout will take this nymph as readily as smaller fish.

This nymph is the simplest pattern I have ever tied and no fancy materials are needed. Copper wire from a lamp cord in varying diameters for different hook sizes can be obtained around (Continued on page 102)



## Books & Flicks

(Continued from page 26)

of pleasant, precise writing tells the reader all he really needs to know to begin enjoying ski touring.

Illustrations by Grace Brigham add to the atmosphere of the work and help the reader understand some of touring's finer points.

Osgood and Hurley don't pretend they have said all there is to be said about ski touring; budding enthusiasts will come up with questions the book doesn't answer. But the writers have said enough and said it well enough to gain fans for the sport and lead them through rewarding first seasons in a pastime that deserves a comeback.—S.C.N.

**HOW THE EXPERTS CATCH TROPHY FISH,** By Heinz Ulrich. Illustrated, 194 pp. Granbury, N.J.: A. S. Barnes & Co., \$6.95.

The best way to learn something is to have an expert teach you. But if you don't know any experts personally, probably the next best way is to read how they do their stuff. This book offers you an opportunity to do just that. The anglers who have shared their knowledge with Mr. Ulrich, and through him with us, are not only dedicated to the pursuit of their favorite species, but they are successfully dedicated to going for the really big ones, the trophies, the record-class fish.

The book has ten divisions: Atlantic salmon, with Don Leyden the expert; bass, with Jimmy Holt; muskellunge, with Arthur and Ruth Lawton; steelhead and salmon, with Dale Ivie; trout, with Harry Darbee; striped bass, with David and Rosa Webb; channel bass, with Bill Dillon; marlin, with Donald Leek; swordfish, with Ed Gruber; and giant bluefin tuna, with Harry Peters. Some of what these experts reveal will be familiar, but I dare say there will be much that you haven't tried or even thought of. Generally, the how's, why's, where's, when's, and what with's that these fishermen hold to be the secrets of their success are given in great detail; so much so, in fact, that at times you might find yourself thinking how much easier it would be if you could just spend a few days on the water with these men. But the point is that you can't, and even secondhand conversations with experts are better than none, which makes a book like this worthwhile for the average angler.

Unfortunately, the publisher apparently did not see fit to have the book copy edited or even proofread, for there are a number of stylistic errors that should not have appeared in print. Although this in no way detracts from the value of the material presented or the expertise of the author and his dedicated anglers, it does make one wonder about the publisher.—M.N.

FIELD & STREAM JANUARY 1970

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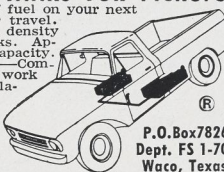
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# NYMPH

BY ED MARSH



Selection of author's "Miracle Nymphs" includes his favorite sizes—16's and 18's. They consist of a white floss body segmented with copper wire and a head built up with black tying thread and cement

There may be no such thing as a never-fail, all-purpose pattern, but we do know that these little creatures are consistent killers on low, clear water





any household. White floss, 4/0 black nylon tying thread, an assortment of hooks from 14 to 20, and head cement are all that are needed. I have found the nymphs will last longer if the entire body is coated with head cement; otherwise the floss will fray after several fish have chewed on it. In addition to protecting the floss, the cement gives a translucent effect that adds a large degree of realism to the nymph.

level and crystal clarity are another bonus in the months containing an R, for there are no sudden summer showers and runoffs.

Another winter river that I rate high is the Yellowstone. In summer it has the reputation of being a rough river to fish; anglers who consistently limit out on the Madison are often skunked on the Yellowstone. The trout are there, all right, but a summer angler has to know how to approach each hole and how to relate his lure to weather conditions and feeding habits. But such conditions begin to retreat with the approach of cold weather, and as soon as snow refuses to melt on my doorstep I pack up and head for the Yellowstone.

My top spot is three miles above Livingston, Montana. This section of the river is home not only for trout but for scores of whitefish too. It is a popular place because of the way the river winds around numerous islands and splits up into many deep-holed channels that are perfect hideaways for lunker fish. But in winter all this potential goes practically unchallenged. The trout are hungry and off their guard; every cast stands a good chance of hooking into one. Here I waive my 10-fish limit and wait until I've got a stringer of husky trout to qualify for the 10-pounds-plus-1-fish requirement.

Now, you'd expect some sort of drawback to cloud this beautiful picture, and you're right, it's there. The drawback is the weather. Not the 20-below-zero cold that you sometimes find in the West, because nobody but a lunatic would fish in such weather. Rather it's the sustained exposure to more moderate winter temperatures. An eight-hour day spent wading through water close to the freezing point and in air in the 20-to-40 degree range is bound to take the starch out of the hardiest angler who is not properly clothed.

Cold-weather clothing should be light, flexible, and warm. Several layers of light clothing make a far better insulator than one heavy garment, and give you more freedom of movement. My get-up usually consists of a layer of waffle-knit underwear covered by quilted insulated underwear. For outerwear I

I have experimented with hook sizes up to No. 8, but have had the most success with No. 16's and No. 18's. Of course, the South Platte trout are noted for their preference for tiny flies, so it is possible that on larger waters, bigger hook sizes would be more productive. I have used this nymph on the Arkansas River in Colorado with mediocre results, but this was because the water was too high. In the summer of

## Fur Bearing Trout

(Continued from page 41)

like medium-weight woolen pants and a heavy wool shirt, crowned by a light, insulated ski parka with a foldaway hood. A plain wool skullcap, large enough to pull down over my ears, is unbeatable. Gloves are sometimes necessary, though they interfere with casting. I always carry them but I generally rely on a pocket hand warmer to keep my fingers flexible.

If you like to wade, you'll have to make a careful selection of clothing to wear under your waders. Remember, your feet get cold first. I find that two layers of woolen socks and a pair of bedroom slippers inside the waders are plenty warm. But a fishing buddy insists that insulated boots that will accept a shoed foot are superior.

Perhaps the greatest comfort of all isn't clothing but a vacuum bottle of hot bouillon or chocolate. Coffee is all right but it doesn't have food value and thus has no lasting effect. You can also replace some of the energy you burn up with candy bars and sandwiches.

It's smart to prepare for the worst by dressing properly and bringing something hot to drink. That way you can handle very cold weather, and should the day warm up you can peel off a layer of clothing. Winter days in the West sometimes are beautiful enough to rival the Florida climate. On a clear, windless day the temperature in the shade may be 20—and 60 or 70 in the bright sunlight reflected off snow at noon. Mornings and evenings are always cold, so the most pleasant fishing is between the hours of 10 and 3. Don't worry about getting up early to fool the fish; they seem to agree that the time to come out and feed is when the sunlight is strongest.

In winter, pay attention to weather forecasts and predicted temperatures. On a windless and sunny day, temperatures between 20 and 40 are plenty tolerable, but on a cloudy or windy day wait for the mercury to get above 40.

In the bitterly cold water of winter, trout are less active than in summer, burn up less energy, hence feed less. They're most active when the sun is on the water but even then they are reluctant to hit with a rod-jarring strike or to follow a lure until they have a chance to take a

1968 I tried these nymphs on the Deschutes River in Oregon and managed to take several 9- to 10-inch rainbows. But the Deschutes is a big, brawling river and not ideal water for tiny flies.

These nymphs are at their best in the low, clear water of early spring and again in late summer and fall. Try them and see if you don't agree with my nickname, "Miracle Nymphs."

swipe at it. Therefore the most tempting presentation is a slow one: a bottom-dredging, measured retrieve of a lure, or a gently bounced, along-the-bottom return of a heavily weighted piece of bait.

The initial strike is more a mouthing than a grabbing, but once you set the hook the fish comes out of the doldrums and is ready to make bulldog runs and to dance along the surface of the water. Winter or summer, mountain trout give you the action you like.

The best winter baits, where legal, are night crawlers and big salmon-fly nymphs. The latter are easily available from the stream you are fishing if you bring along a small piece of screening. Have your partner hold the screen a few feet below a promising-looking rock or small riffle, then stir up the bottom with your feet. A host of acceptable trout tidbits will obligingly float into the screen. Sculpin, or baby bullheads, as they're more commonly called, are another top winter bait. You seldom dress out a big trout without finding a few of these bait fish in their stomachs.

In the jewelry department any slow-moving but active lure is sure to produce results, particularly when you dangle a worm from the treble. My favorites are the wide-bladed spinners, which have plenty of flashy attraction even when stopped dead in a very slight current.

Myths grow up around any kind of fishing and winter angling has its share. One such myth that I've found to be without merit is that fly-fishing for trout is ineffective in winter. Like many another angler I formerly laid up my fly rod with the approach of the hunting season. But a day on Montana's Gallatin River convinced me I was wrong.

I'd been fishing hard for two hours with average results—four fish around 1 pound each—when I rounded a bend and came on a fly-rodder working the foot of a riffle where the current met after splitting around a small island. He was so absorbed in his drifting line that he failed to notice me, so I unlimbered my camera and sighted through the viewer. I'd no sooner got the picture in focus than he leaned into his rod and I saw a fighting rainbow explode out of the water—a good 4-



***In any list of traditional trout-flies, the Black Pennell is invariably near the top. Stan Headley ponders the reasons for its fish-killing properties and urges a more logical approach to fly-selection***

IN ANY LIST of traditional, straightforward trout-flies the Black Pennell cannot be far from the top. Old H. Cholmondely Pennell knew a good 'un when he saw it.

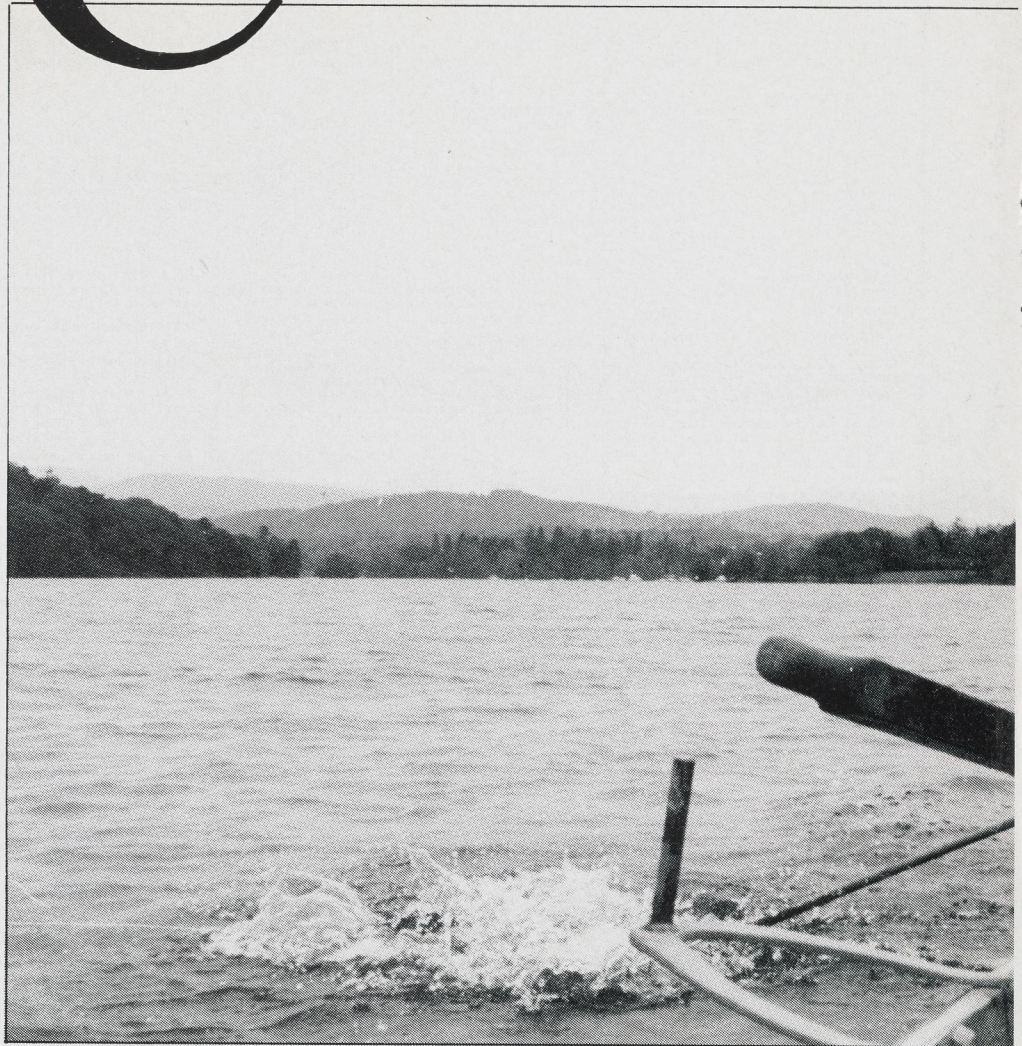
There are few serious contenders for the "Ubiquitous, Omnipresent, Recognised Everywhere Pattern of the Year" Award — the Soldier Palmer springs to mind, as does the Wickham's, Greenwell and Butcher — but who can discount the Pennell as a front-runner?

Don't get me wrong: the Black Pennell is not the cure for all your ills. It has its limitations like all the rest — in my experience, it's either catching everything or nothing, staggeringly good or absolutely bloody useless. But then all the aforementioned patterns have their weak points. There is no fly worse than the Soldier Palmer for raising every fish in the water but still sending the angler home blank on the odd occasion. There are waters where I have never moved a single fish to either the Greenwell's or the Wickham's. And as for the standard Butcher, a more overrated fly is hard to bring to mind, unless it is the Peter Ross!

So, wherein lies the charm of the Black Pennell? Well, I reckon it has many things in its favour. Let's take them one by one.

First, as a non-imitative, vaguely representational pattern, I reckon more fish are taken in a loch-style mode by fly-patterns which contain trigger-feeding reaction by displaying "stimulation" features or characteristics. Students of marine biology have discovered that the incidence of shark-attack increases in direct proportion to the degree of erratic behaviour displayed by a swimming object. Trout are no less the voracious predator than the much-maligned "Jaws" of the silver screen. If the trout's dentition were arranged so that he could bite

# C harm of



lumps out of large objects, there would be a lot fewer anglers trailing their fingers in the water on a hot summer's day, or dangling their feet over the sides of boats! Or to put it another way, if you were a nice, juicy frog, about the size of a 50p piece, would you feel completely happy about a cross-Rutland swim?

So here we have this freshwater shark, with

spots and an adipose fin, waiting for lunch to arrive. Being an active predator, it is in his interests to pay close attention to any living organism crossing his path. Being a creature of high instinct and low intellect, the criteria by which he judges basic edibility differs greatly from the way in which the average human (low instinct and high intellect) would approach the problem.

## Baskets of fish

The average non-fishing public's normal reaction after inspecting the sort of traditional fly which regularly kills baskets of fish, is to decide that trout are stupid. This a total misunderstanding of the facts. Our comprehension of the basic behavioural patterns of trout is so slim that even after hundreds of years of observation and study we cannot answer with any degree of conviction such straightforward questions as "Why do fish jump?" or, more to the point, "Why do trout and salmon consistently accept artificial flies which resemble nothing in Nature, while the close-copy latex creations of the 'artist-flytyer', which are capable of deceiving the educated human eye, are laughed to scorn by the fish?"

So what effect does it have on the trout, when a traditional wet-fly is presented for its inspection? For the sake of argument, let's say that the fly in question is a Black Pennell (yes, we've finally got back to it!) The fish, presumably, looks at the fly as a whole



***A fat victim of the Black Pennell — but what did he take it for?***



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As you probably know cock and hen capes of good quality are now very scarce. We have just had a delivery of twenty thousand prime winter capes of a quality second to none in this era. These have been graded out and we can offer the following from stock which we have on hand.

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Colour	Grade AA	Grade AAA
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Ginger	£3.50	£5.00
Greenwell (Light)	£4.50	£6.75
Greenwell (Med or Dark)	£4.50	£6.75
Furnace	£4.50	£6.50
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White Duck Quills for Coachman ..... 72p doz

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Small white underwing feathers, also available in dyed colours. About 2 to 3 doz feathers per packet. .... 35p pkt  
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50 Mixed Unselected Good ..... £3.25

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Stiffer feathers than above for large flies. Same colours as above.  
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Dozen Mixed Colours ..... £2.50 doz

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Large matched wing quills. Available in white, red, yellow, blue, hot orange, green. .... 75p pair  
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Grey goose nymph body ..... 30p pkt

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Large packet of over 100 hackles. .... 35p

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The full crest contains hundreds of Golden Yellow feathers, most essential for many fly patterns.  
Complete Golden Pheasant Crests ..... £3.10 each  
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Full body skin only with wings, contains all sizes of red, yellow and green plumage plus fine brown speckled and also blue quills only. .... 70p

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Stiff red pointed tail spears, for shrimps and feasters etc.  
Medium Size Spears ..... 85p per 10  
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Long Golden Yellow ..... 20p doz

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Dark with white spots. Used for lures etc. Natural or dyed.  
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Black with white spots. Used for lures and as false hackles on salmon flies. Dyed blue is an excellent substitute for blue jay. In colours as follows, state colour.  
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Selected medium hackles ..... 23p doz  
Selected large hackles ..... 28p doz  
Large pack of one colour. .... 65p  
Extra large pack of all colours ..... £1.25

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Grey speckled ..... 70p doz  
Plain Brown (subs) ..... 85p doz

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Dyed red feathers for tails of Butcher, Alexandra, etc. .... 40p doz

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White	£1.50	£2.25

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White tipped blue quills for Butcher ..... 40p doz

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Real bronze mallard flank, these are now becoming quite expensive but they are the real thing. Pkt. of one doz, matched.  
Small Brown Mallard ..... 65p per 10  
Medium Brown Mallard ..... £1.70 per 10  
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Brown Mallard, Large Shoulder Stiffs; excellent for larger flies. .... 60p per 10

### Bronze Mallard Substitute

Perfectly dyed grey speckled Mallard to imitate the bronze plumage. Just as effective as the natural. Pkt. of one doz.  
Medium Brown Mallard Subs ..... 65p  
Large Brown Mallard Subs ..... 85p  
Extra Large Brown Mallard Subs ..... 95p  
Also in large assorted packet of mixed, small to extra large, about 100 feathers plus per packet. .... 95p

### GREY MALLARD FLANK (Natural)

Good to work with, similar to teal but with lighter markings.  
Grey flank, medium ..... 55p doz  
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Large packet of all sizes, small to very large, over 100 feathers, per packet. .... 70p

### DYED GREY MALLARD FLANK

As above but available in dyed colours, yellow, olive, bronze, mallard brown, cinnamon, golden olive.  
Medium (per colour) ..... 65p doz  
Extra large (per colour) ..... 95p doz  
Large packet of all sizes, over 100 feathers, pack of single colour ..... 90p  
Pack of all colours ..... £1.25

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Perfectly dyed substitute, lemon brown plumage.  
Summer Duck, Medium ..... 65p doz  
Summer Duck, Extra Large ..... 95p doz  
Large packet of all sizes, small to large, over 110 feathers per packet. .... 95p

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Extremely versatile and popular material, soft and fluffy plumage with a good action in the water. Used for gill covers, wings of many fly types, lure wings, etc. Colours as follows:  
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Pack of one doz, per colour ..... 60p  
Assd. colours, pack of one doz ..... 60p  
Big pack mixed colours. .... £1.95  
50 feathers plus ..... £1.95  
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Popular Dubbing for trout flies and nymphs, sandy brown shades. .... 55p pkt  
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Fine dark grey dubbing. .... 65p

### GREY SQUIRREL TAIL

Most popular tail. Large 10" tail — 1 1/2"-2" hair, barred brown with silver grey tips. For all hairwing flies and lures. .... 85p each

### DYED GREY SQUIRREL

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### DYED BLACK SQUIRREL

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A tail with gingery brown bars, 5" to 6" long for smaller hairwings. .... 50p each

### CANADIAN PINE SQUIRREL

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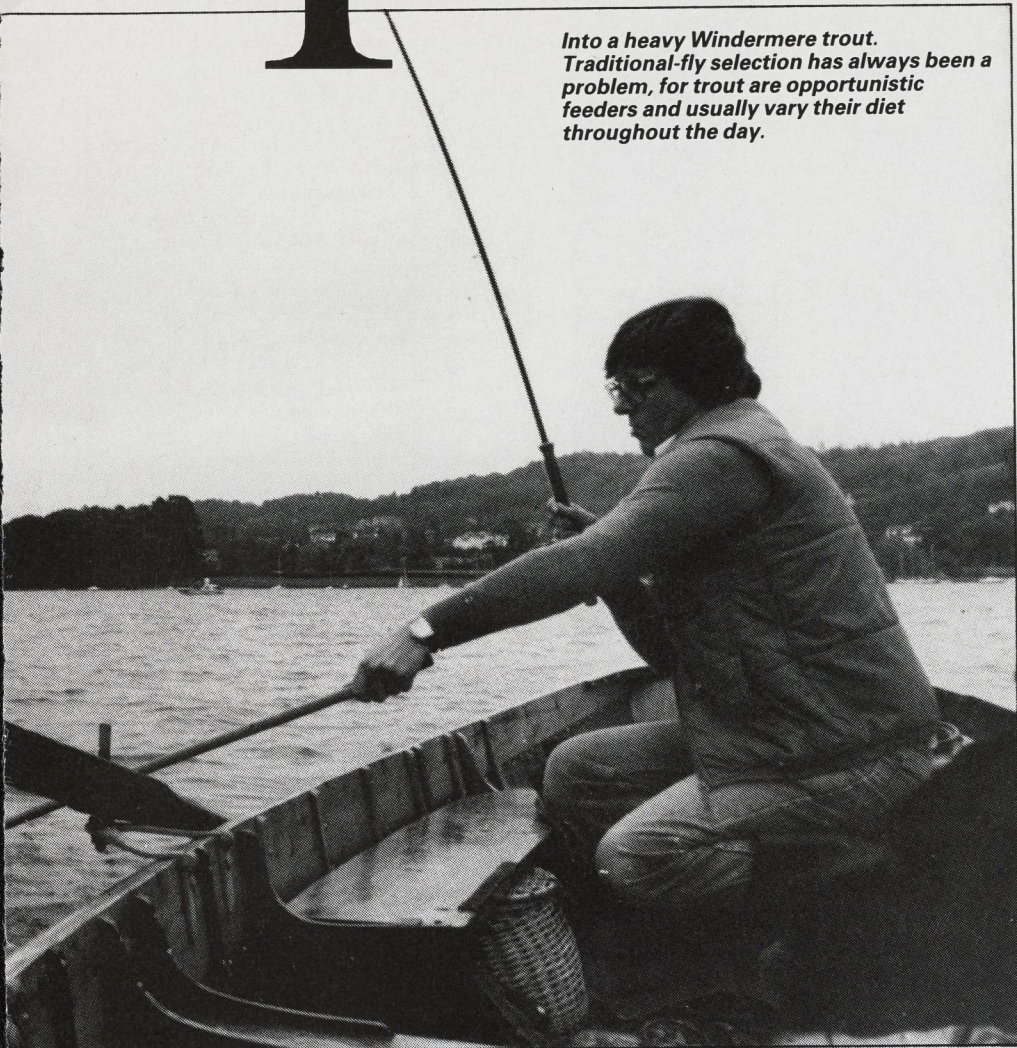
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# the Pennell

*Into a heavy Windermere trout. Traditional-fly selection has always been a problem, for trout are opportunistic feeders and usually vary their diet throughout the day.*



*The Black Pennell, one of the most killing "traditional" trout flies ever devised.*

package and accepts or rejects it as such. But what it is actually looking at is a jigsaw — a number of parts which make up the whole item. If one part is wrong then the overall picture fails. The parts that make up a Black Pennell are, obviously, the tail, the body and the hackle. The tail comprises feather-fibres in which the fly-tyer has a choice without compromising the integrity of the original pattern — fibres from a golden-pheasant tippet feather, a small golden-pheasant crest feather or both, mixed.

One must assume that when old H. Cholmondely was creating this pattern, the fibres he used for the tail were supposed to represent the setae (or more correctly, cerci) which are commonly seen on nymphs or adult aquatic flies. Whatever the reason for their inclusion in the pattern they work well enough, with the angler's preference going for the tippet fibres rather than the crest feather, which one very rarely sees any more.

It is very difficult to be dogmatic about why individual parts of fly-patterns are successful. The tippet-feather tail of the Black Pennell has stood the test of time and is now the popular choice, but is it because the trout regularly see aquatic insects with tails similar to golden-pheasant tippets and this helps to confirm their belief that the fly is alive, therefore edible? Or is it because the orangey-yellowness of the tail offers direct contrast to the dense blackness of the body and hackle, each accentuating the effects of the other and thereby making the overall package more noticeable. Perhaps either, neither, or both!

The body of the Black Pennell is a fairly standard one among traditional trout patterns, salmon flies and modern nymphs and lures — a basic black material, ribbed with silver.

Again we are faced with the same questions. The ribbing gives a very strong segmented effect, and most aquatic insects are markedly segmented, thus reinforcing the theory that trout respond best to familiar characteristics in artificial flies. But what about the "contrast" theory? If all you require is to show segmentation, then surely any colour (apart from black, of course) will do; for instance brown, red or green. Would the fly be as successful with such ribbing? I very much doubt it! No, silver and black are strongly contrasting colours and I think it no coincidence that whenever a fly-innovator designs a pattern with a black body, he almost invariably uses a silver rib when a rib is required. After all, black and silver is a pleasing colour combination to the human eye as well.

As for the hackle, its sole function is to complete the picture of a living organism struggling and kicking in the surface film. The feather fibres, being extremely mobile, reinforce the fish's belief that what it is seeing is a black insect being propelled along by a myriad thrashing appendages.

We come now to the Black Pennell as an imitative fly. Being a staunch, dyed-in-the-wool member of the "traditional flies as vague representations of trout food forms" party, it is very tempting for me to dismiss the argument that the Pennell is in any way imitative of any aquatic life-form. But let's look at the situation from both sides.

## Pro arguments

Trout are inordinately fond of midges in all their varying stages of maturity. Among midge species, black varieties are the most common and constitute a major part of a trout's nutritional requirement, especially in the first and last months of the season. If a Black Pennell resembles anything at all, then I suppose it's pretty close to a midge pupa or

*Neither*



hatching midge. And indeed, it sometimes does very well during midge hatches, or when trout are actively seeking out midge pupae.

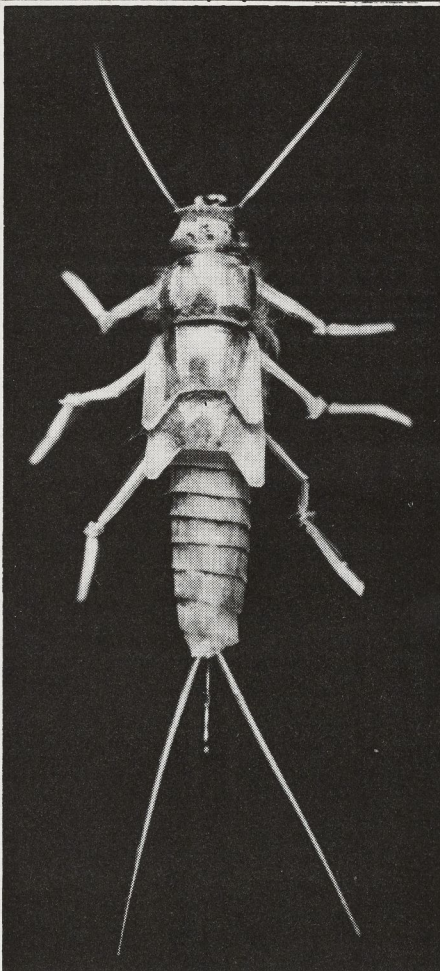
The best argument in favour of the "imitative case" is that when a midge is casting off its shuck in an attempt to change from pupa to adult, what the trout will see is a number of black legs (the hackle), attached to a black segmented body (black floss with a silver rib) attempting to escape from an orangey shuck which is clinging to its nether regions (orangey-yellow tippet tail).

A Black Pennell held just in the surface film should present a very tempting picture to a trout feeding on hatching midge. Traditional-style fly-fishing represents this stage in an aquatic insect's life very well — the act of hatching-out and escaping from that area of extreme peril, the surface film.

### Anti arguments

In any random sampling of stomach-contents throughout a season, it will become evident that trout eat many black food-forms apart from midge pupae and adults. Beetles, nymphs of varying types, adult flies both aquatic and terrestrial can be and often are black, or at least, very dark in colour. In other words, a Black Pennell zipping through the water represents nothing more closely than a small, black living item going about its business, and your average trout makes a handsome living out of clobbering varying types of small black items on a regular basis.

If you make a habit out of sampling trout's stomach contents, as I do, you will have noticed that there is nearly always an odd object or two among the main food item of the day. Trout are opportunistic feeders and usually vary their diet quite considerably on any given day. If they contain only one type of



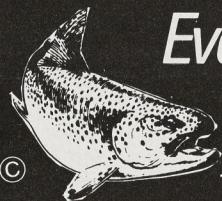
Why are close-copy latex creations of the "artist-fly-tyer" so often laughed to scorn by the fish?

food organism, it is more than likely that this was brought about by the presence of an unusually large number of that food organism causing specialised feeding techniques, rather than a conscious decision by the fish to ignore all other food items.

My final parting shot at the imitative argument goes like this — why is it that the Black Pennell can be such a dismal failure in black-midge hatches? The best fish I've ever taken in a midge hatch was on a longshank Worm Fly, and I've done exceptionally well in these circumstances with mini-Muddlers, Soldier Palmers, leaded shrimps and a variety of patterns which bear not the slightest resemblance to black midges!

Traditional-style fly selection has always been a problem for the individual angler. When the available patterns do not necessarily represent specific items of trout food, choice of fly can become a matter of memory (It worked this time last year, so why not now?); preference (This fly rarely lets me down!); advice (Old Jock says that when the Dow-Jones index is high and the tide is low, try a . . .) or a plain and simple act of faith (What's that hiding in the corner of the fly-box? I'll give it a go!)

By describing the uses and construction of that excellent pattern, the Black Pennell, what I've tried to do in this article is to make more traditional-style anglers include the use of logic and constructive thought in their sport. Nobody knows all the answers. Some of us aren't very sure of the questions, but I'll tell you this: successful fly-selection is not a matter of starting at the top of the fly-box and working your way down until something gets a response. The true art is to sniff the wind, look at the sky, grab a natural as the wind whisks it by, and say, "By Gad, sir, I do believe a size 12 Black Pennell on the bob should do the trick!"



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# Tying the Woolly Bugger

by Tom Rosenbauer

The Woolly Bugger is a fly of many virtues. In Alaska last summer, we found that it would catch rainbows regardless of how we fished it — dead drift, on the swing, hung directly downstream, or retrieved with short strips. Dolly Varden and big grayling also inhaled the Woolly Bugger with abandon, and occasionally a big king salmon would sidle over a few feet from a redd and swat one with all the motion of a horse switching flies with its tail.

What does the Woolly Bugger imitate? Who knows. It could be a leech, a crayfish,

a sculpin, a big beetle larva, damselfly nymph, or a large burrowing mayfly nymph. It's a great utility fly that excites bass, pike, and panfish as well as salmonids. The wiggling marabou tail and pulsating palmer hackle combine the action and appeal of a Woolly Worm with a marabou streamer.

The Woolly Bugger is also very easy to tie. Novice fly tiers can crank them out by the dozens and they'll look as good as those tied by professional tiers. While I was at Bristol Bay Lodge last summer,

three guests who had never tied a single fly before put together very passable Woolly Buggers on their first attempts and went out and caught fish on them the next day. What a great initiation to fly tying!

The original Woolly Bugger called for a peacock herl body and ostrich herl tail, but most tiers now substitute more durable chenille for the peacock herl and fluffier marabou fibers for the tail.

It can be tied in a wide range of colors, from all-black to orange or even bright fluorescent red. The color combination

I've tied here is the pattern that the guides at Bristol Bay Lodge use; for want of a better name I'll call it the Bristol Bay Bugger.

*Tail:* Whole black marabou feather

*Body:* Olive or green chenille

*Palmer Hackle:* Wide, webby grizzly

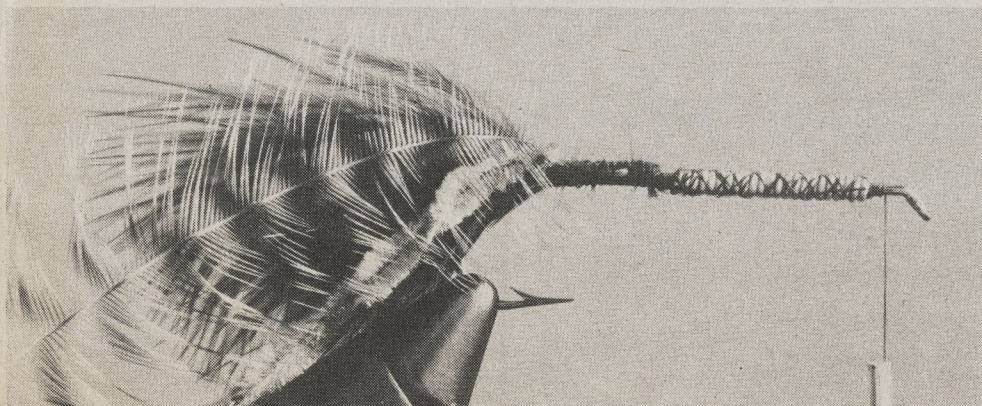
*Thread:* Black pre-waxed monocord

*Hook:* Any 3X or 4X-long streamer hook (mustad 79580, 9672, or 38941), sizes 2 through 12.



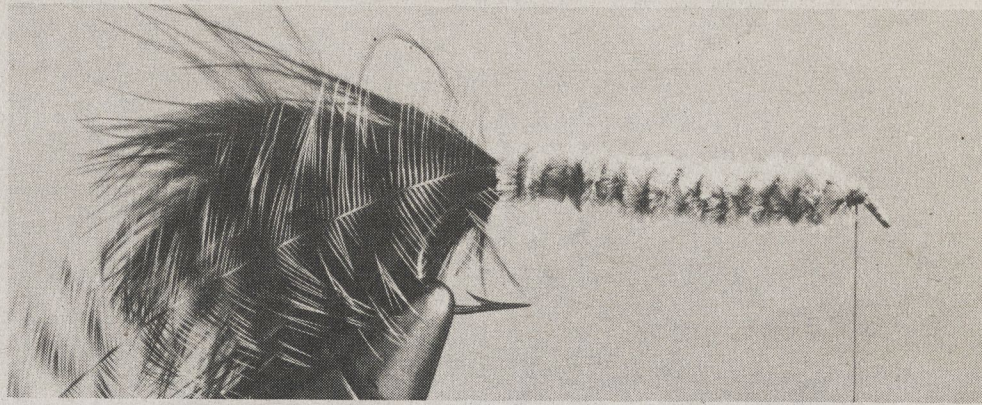
**Step 1:** Wrap lead wire over the forward half of the hook shank (weighting Woolly Buggers in this manner gives them a bobbing action when retrieved). Attach tying thread to the hook just behind the eye of the hook, spiral it back and forth several times over the wire and bring it back to

the bend of the hook. Cut a whole marabou feather so that the butt ends meet the end of the lead wire and the feather extends one hook shank length beyond the bend of the hook. Tie in the marabou and bring the tying thread back to the bend of the hook.



**Step 2:** Tie in a length of olive chenille at the bend of the hook. Select a large grizzly hackle with lots of web that has fibers a little larger than the gape of the hook. Prepare the feather by holding it by the tip and stroking the fibers down

toward the butt so that they stand at 90° angles to the stem. Trim the fibers on each side of the stem about one-half inch down from the tip. Tie in this trimmed piece just behind the chenille.



**Step 3:** Advance the thread forward to the eye of the hook. Wind the chenille to the eye of the hook. Wind the chenille forward in evenly spaced turns so that

each turn touches the previous one. Tie off the chenille with four or five turns of thread and trim closely.



**Step 4:** Grasp the hackle by the butt end with a pair of hackle fibers and wind forward in evenly spaced turns. If you're careful to wind the hackle in between the turns of chenille it will "fold" back-

ward naturally, without wetting the hackle and stroking the fibers back before winding. Tie off the hackle, whip finish and apply a couple of drops of head cement to the head.



tackle . . . wild fish that have survived the unending pressures of natural selection . . . they are the challenges to which we aspire as anglers.

However, there is one major problem: There is a decreasing number of quality fish and an increasing number of anglers seeking quality fishing. Hatchery raised trout are a poor solution to this problem.

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To document the catch and release of a record fish taken on an Orvis Rod, describe to us in a letter the conditions under which the fish was taken. Include a statement by a witness if one was on hand and send a photograph of the fish if you were able to obtain one.



**A. HAMILTON ROWAN, JR.** of New York City is director of Field Trials for The American Kennel Club, but he also shows here that he's a fine hand with a float tube and fly rod. Mr. Rowan caught this beautiful rainbow on a type of green woolly worm known in Nevada as a "Sheep Creek Special," his 18-year old Orvis Madison Bamboo Fly rod, Orvis Madison III reel, Orvis Weight Forward WF6FS line, and Orvis 7½ ft. Knotless Tapered leader.

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water. Grab bend of hook and turn it upside down so point of hook is pointing down toward water; then lift fish partly out of water. Often fish will give a flip and dislodge hook on its own.

Another method is to grasp the lower jaw with thumb and forefinger on one hand and unhook it with other hand.

It is better to clip off a fly and leave it in a fish than to injure the fish trying to dislodge it.

Squeeze down barbs with pliers on large hooks, No. 12's and larger.

**NEVER SQUEEZE A FISH AROUND ITS MIDDLE** and do not hold it by its gills!

- [3] When handling a fish, hold it around its tail and support upper body from underneath.
- [4] Do not let a fish flop around on rocks. To photograph it lay it on wet grass next to your rod.
- [5] Never release a fish back into water until it has completely recuperated from fight. Be prepared to revive a fish in gently flowing water for as long as it took to land it. To revive a fish, hold it in water and push it forward and back slowly until fish is ready to swim strongly on its own.



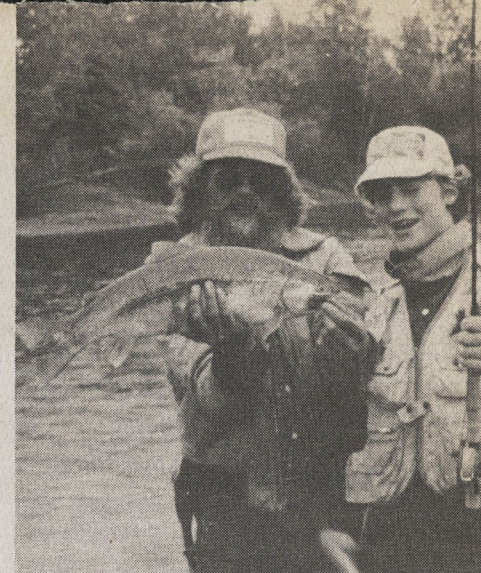
**JUNE SMITH**, an April 1983 graduate of the Orvis Fishing School, is about to release a 17 inch Madison River brown trout that she caught on her Orvis 8 ft. Graphite Trout rod.



**E. BRUCE NELSON** of Cranbury, New Jersey tells us that his Orvis "99" Fly rod was a real traffic stopper. He hooked this beautiful rainbow alongside the road and several drivers stopped to watch him land and release the fish.



**DAN NESTER**, of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, tells us that the delicate tip on his Orvis Graphite Trout rod "proved very useful, for I found that I had more frequent strikes on my dry flies using a 6X tippet." He is shown just prior to releasing a beautiful brown trout back into the Big Horn River.



**SAGE WIGHTMAN, IV** of St. Louis, Missouri took a nice rainbow using his 8½ ft. Orvis Graphite Powerhouse rod in Alaska last summer.

Join the group of serious fishermen who pin the Orvis trout on their fishing hats.



To document a record fish that you caught on an Orvis Rod and released describe to us in a letter the condition under which a fish was taken and the tackle on which it was taken. Include statement by a witness, if one was on hand, or send a photograph of the fish if you were able to obtain one.

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- Ms. June Smith, New York, NY
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- Mr. George C. Ayres, Ft. Worth, Tx.
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- Mr. Bernard F. Hammes, San Diego, Ca.
- Mr. James Jelinski, Redding Ridge, Ct.
- Mr. Jonathan Oettli, Salt Lake City, Ut.





# The Woolly Bugger

*It jigs, breathes, pulsates—and drives fish wild. Everywhere.*

BARRY BECK

SEVENTEEN YEARS HAVE PASSED since Russ Blessing introduced his Woolly Bugger to me. A *Tricorythodes* spinner fall was all but over when Russ pulled out a fly box and selected a well-chewed but still fishable streamer-type fly. It was a large Woolly Worm with a long maribou tail.

He cut back his leader to a 4X tippet, tied on the fly and directly ahead of his clinch knot, attached a size BB split shot. Satisfied that everything was in order, Russ looked up and asked, "Ever see a Woolly Bugger before?"

I strained to keep from laughing. "Woolly Bugger? What a name; it's really ugly."

"Even uglier when it's wet," Russ replied. Dropping his Bugger into the water at my feet, Russ twitched the rod tip up and down. The Bugger acted like a lead-head jig—its long maribou tail pulsating, its hackles breathing. It looked alive.

Russ explained how much he relied on the Woolly Bugger when the hatches were over and the fishing was off. "It makes a great searching fly; I use it on Opposum Lake for the lake rainbows, and it works on bass, too."

"What does it imitate?" I asked.

"A leech or bullhead, maybe a crayfish if it's tied in the right colors," Russ said. "At any rate, it works."

"Okay, so show me." And show me he did. For the next hour I watched Russ patiently work the Bugger along the stream bottom,

searching out likely areas and moving one fish after another.

I was convinced, and since that day on Pennsylvania's Little Lehigh, I've fished the Woolly Bugger across the United States and Canada and have caught practically every species of freshwater fish imaginable.

## Equipment

WOOLLY BUGGERS ARE EFFECTIVE with any tackle that will properly cast a streamer. For trout fishing on small streams, I prefer a rod 6½ or 7 feet long that carries a WF4- or 5-weight line. On larger rivers and lakes, I like a rod 8 to 8½ feet long for 5- or 6-weight lines.

To properly swim the Bugger, I often use a 10-foot, 4X flat-butt leader on small water (marketed by Doug Swisher of Darby, Mont.). For larger rivers and lakes, I use leaders 14 to 15 feet long.

My fly lines always are brightly colored in weight-forward floating and sinking-tip tapers only.

The final necessary item is a container of split-shot in size B and BB.

## Technique

THE MOST IMPORTANT TACTIC in fishing Woolly Buggers is the retrieve. Most anglers fish their streamers across current and retrieve with a six- or eight-inch strip. You can successfully fish the Bugger that way, but the most productive technique is to pump it back with a slow, patient retrieve.

AUTHOR'S PHOTOS

BARRY BECK is a fly-fishing teacher and shop owner who lives in Berwick, Pa.



## Woolly Bugger . . .

This is where the split-shot comes in. By attaching a size B or BB split shot directly ahead of the fly, you can achieve an up-and-down jigging motion. Make an up-and-across cast, mend the line, and allow the Bugger to sink to a desired level. Then start a slow hand-over-hand retrieve accompanied by any up-and-down rod-tip motion. The hand retrieve should draw the Bugger forward three or four inches. In rhythm with this, lift the rod tip four or five inches and drop it back to the starting position. The lift moves the Bugger up and when the rod tip is dropped back, the weight of the split-shot will dive the Bugger.

The up-and-down motion allows the Woolly Bugger's tail to do its thing by "breathing" or pulsating—and driving fish wild.

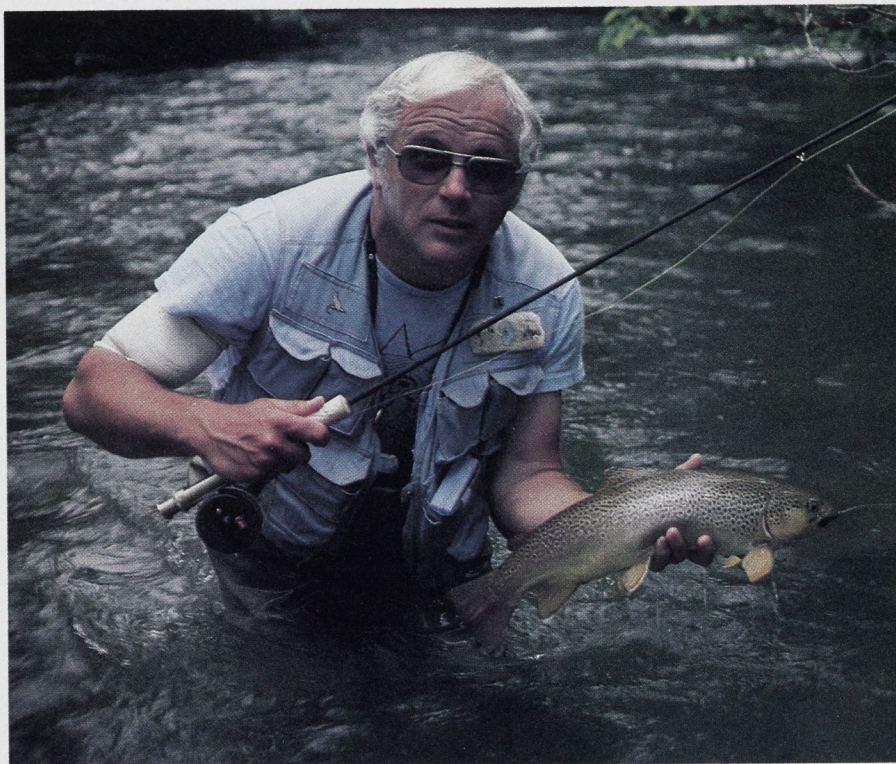
The split-shot ahead of the fly is not the most pleasant thing to cast. You must open up your casting loop and allow the weight of the fly and shot to carry your cast forward. I have a friend who calls this type of casting "dopping", and perhaps he is right. If your backcast is too low, or your front loop too tight, you may find the Bugger attached to your hat, vest or, at worst, yourself.

I mentioned using weight-forward floating and sinking-tip lines but purposely excluded full-sinking lines. At least part of the fly line must float to achieve the jiglike action that I keep stressing. I usually fish with a full-floating line, but in deep water a sinking-tip usually does the trick. Remember, I use a 10- to 15-foot leader and this, with the weight of the shot, will sink quickly to the bottom and help to swim the Bugger naturally.

Highly visible fly-line colors such as yellow, chartreuse and sunrise, are an advantage to my fishing because I usually fish the Woolly Bugger dead drift along the stream bottom before starting a retrieve on the swing. Often good fish take the Bugger on the drift, so I use the end of my line as a strike indicator. If the line stops or shoots forward, I strike accordingly. I recommend a weight-forward line because I do very little false casting with the Woolly Bugger. I rely on the weight-forward's ability to shoot for distance and accuracy.

### Stream Strategy

WHEN FISHING A BUGGER through a pool, I prefer to start at the head, fishing short at first to cover the water directly in front of me. Far too many anglers are in a hurry to cast to the other side when there may be a good fish lying at their feet. Start with a short cast quartering upstream and give the Bugger enough time to sink. Pay attention to the floating-line tip. On the swing, start the hand-over-hand retrieve and rod-tip motion. Keep the rod tip low and to the right of a right-hand swing and the opposite for a left-hand swing to absorb the shock of a strike.



AUTHOR'S PHOTO

*Above, Swisher shows the beautiful markings of a brown taken on one of the Woolly Buggers he tied on the fender of his Land Rover, right.*

If the rod tip is pointed at the fly when a fish takes, it often will break off. After three or four short casts, extend the cast to mid-stream, and then, if necessary, wade into position to properly cover the far bank. Pay extra attention to undercut banks that provide cover and security for big fish. Cast the Bugger tight against the bank, make a short mend to sink the fly and then retrieve.

If a pool is shallow enough to wade, stay in mid-stream and work both banks. Make short casts first, then extend them to the right and left banks. I prefer to cover the water around me and then move downstream about five steps and start over. Cast, mend, retrieve and search—let the Woolly Bugger do the rest.

Low-light times of day are, by far, the best for larger fish on the Bugger. Fish the first two or three hours of daylight and the two hours before and after dark. The Bugger is an excellent choice for a night fly. I can remember a brace of 20-inch plus browns taken on the Bugger on the West Branch of the Delaware River in the darkness of a July night.

### The West

THE WOOLLY BUGGER WAS SLOW to catch on in the East, but through the efforts of author-angler Doug Swisher, it hit the West with a bang. Through his schools and articles, Doug convinced western anglers of the Woolly Bugger's potential as a western fly. Today many western guides and fly shops

recommend it as a top fly for the big fish of the Big Horn River. I've used it successfully on the Madison River's deep channels between weedbeds.

Whenever I think of the west, I think of Bob Jacklin, owner of Jacklin's Fly Shop in West Yellowstone, Mont. He is a very opinionated fisherman and a traditionalist. When I first gave him a Woolly Bugger, he was more than skeptical. But after a float trip on the lower Madison, the fly proved itself, and now a number of bins in Bob's shop are well stocked with Woolly Buggers for sale.

The most productive method of fishing the Bugger from a drift boat is for the angler to position himself in the bow and to use a short line, casting to the bank's edge. Your guide maneuvers the boat in close and controls the drift speed to give you ample time to probe the bank's cover with your Bugger. This technique is usually best used in the daytime hours. But come dusk, the guide probably will tell you to start extending your cast out into the open water for cruising fish.

### Still Water

FOR MORE THAN A WEEK, every evening I watched a large brown trout cruising the spring pond and sipping insects off the surface. The banks were overgrown with brush and small beds of watercress stretched out into the pond. On my knees, I watched the fish cruise by, sometimes so close I could count the red spots on his side. Each evening I offered the fish a variety of flies—Letort





Crickets, hoppers, ants, beetles, midges and small floating nymphs were all refused. I switched from 5X to 6X and then 7X tippets to no avail.

In desperation, I set my alarm for an early morning departure, hoping that dawn would change my luck. Arriving at the pond, I crawled into casting position. A slight mist lay over the pond and I could barely see the 80 feet across to the far bank. All was still; no sign of the big fish. I waited and waited, 10 minutes turned into 30 minutes and still nothing.

As the sun started rising, my knees ached from crouching so long. Apparently the big fish was on the bottom, so why not try a cress bug? On second thought, why not a Woolly Bugger? I opened my Bugger box (it contains only Woolly Buggers of various sizes and colors) and selected a #8 olive-and-black and attached it to a 4X tippet. The split shot carried the Bugger to the edge of the largest cressbed in the pond. I waited for the fly to sink and then started the hand-and-rod-tip retrieve. Nothing happened. Dejected after 12 or more casts, I was prepared to leave. It was time to get to work.

One more cast. There was a small bed of cress to my right where a spring run emptied into the pond. The water was shallow there and I had ignored it. My last cast dropped the Bugger next to the cress bed. I never got to the retrieve. As the Bugger sank, the line shot forward. I set the hook and the water exploded as the big brown shot to the surface. Five minutes later, the fish, all 23 1/2 inches of it, lay spent at my feet. As I carefully released it and as he slowly retreated into the pond's depths, I looked at the bedraggled Woolly Bugger and said a silent thank-you.

## Universal Fly

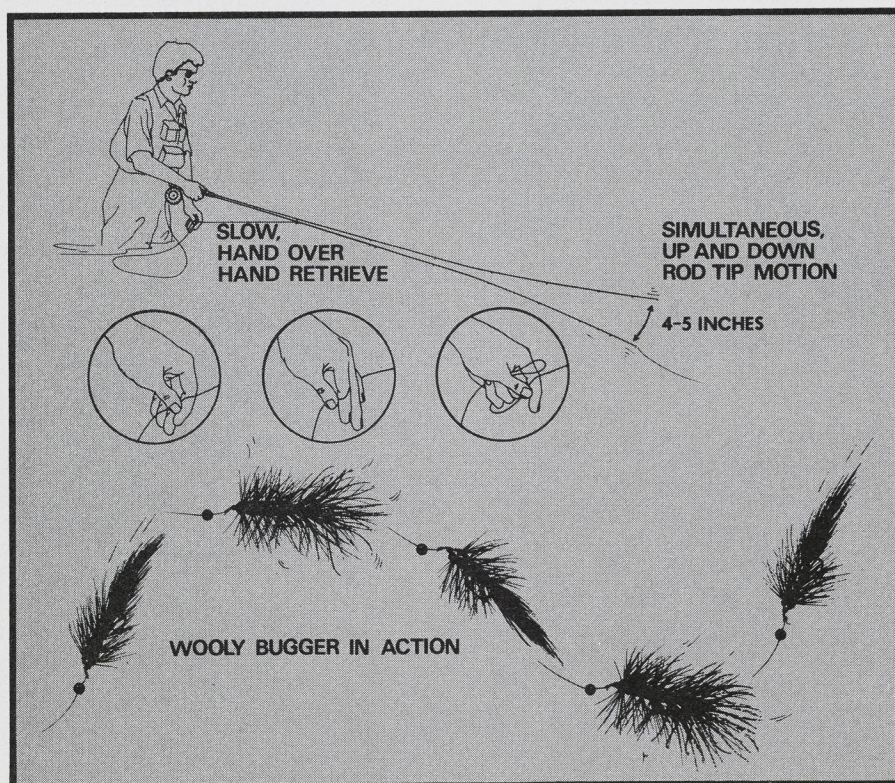
THE WOOLLY BUGGER is an all-purpose fly. On bass rivers such as Pennsylvania's Susquehanna, I use the same tactics I've described for trout streams and rivers. The jig-like retrieve is irresistible to both smallmouth and largemouth bass.

In the heat of a summer afternoon, I concentrate my efforts on deeper channels and runs using an extra-slow retrieve to make the Bugger bump bottom. As evening approaches, I fish the flats and shore areas for cruising fish.

In bass ponds and lakes, I pay particular attention to shorelines in the early morning and late afternoon hours. I look for beds of lily pads and carefully work the edges.

Northern pike and chain pickerel take Woolly Buggers dressed in yellow or red-and-yellow combinations fished over weedbeds with a fast hand-strip retrieve. I've had to resort to heavier tackle for pike fishing, 8 1/2- to 9-foot graphite rods for 8-weight lines will turn over larger #1/0 and #1 Woolly Buggers,

BARBARA LEWIS ILLUSTRATION





## Woolly Bugger . . .

the sizes I prefer for rivers such as Canada's St. Lawrence.

ON HUNTER'S LAKE (a trout lake owned and maintained by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission) I shot the Bugger up along the shore line and worked it back. The next cast I made five to six feet to the right of my first cast, and the next another five to six feet to the right of my second. Finally, I cast toward the center of the lake.

After four such casts I walked up the shoreline and started over again. My stream diary tells me that after three hours of fishing, I hooked and landed the following: one 14-inch bullhead catfish; three perch, one nine inches and two 11 inches; one 16-inch largemouth and seven stocked rainbows from 13 to 17 inches—all on a #10 black-and-olive Woolly Bugger.

An all-white Woolly Bugger tied on a #10 long-shank hook (Mustad 79580) is deadly for bluegills and crappies. I resort to a smaller B split-shot for bluegills, using the same approach I've described for Hunter's Lake but occasionally changing the speed of the retrieve. Bluegills eagerly follow the Bugger on a fast retrieve, but actually take it on a slower retrieve.

For fishing in lily pads and weedbeds, the Bugger can be tied and fished effectively on #1/0 and #2/0 weedless hooks. Look for holes in the lily pads and cast to them. Give the fly time to sink, start your retrieve, and hold on.

For bass fishermen who prefer to fish on top after dark, an all-black Woolly Bugger tied with extra-stiff saddle hackle and fished on the surface without weight will entice big fish.

## Colors, Patterns, and Sizes

WITHOUT A DOUBT, the combination of black and olive (black-maribou tail with black saddle palmered over an olive chenille body) is by far the most productive combination for trout and bass. This was Russ Blessing's original dressing and is still my favorite.

For eastern trout fishing, I use Buggers tied on Mustad #79580 hooks in #8, #10 and #12. In the West a #6 or #8 is about right for such rivers as the Big Horn and the Yellowstone. At times, an all-white Woolly Bugger or an all-black will move fish. To simulate crayfish, use a brown maribou tail with a grizzly saddle hackle dyed brown palmered over a beige chenille body on size #6 or #8 hook. Bump the pattern slowly along the bottom.

If there is any secret to the Woolly Bugger's success besides the jig-like retrieve, it's the length of the maribou tail and the type of saddle hackle used. The maribou tail should be as long as the hook shank and full. When wet, the tail will shrink in size and a sparsely-dressed tail will not produce enough lifelike action. Saddle hackles from a #2 Metz saddle work best. They have just enough web to be a bit soft, which makes the hackles pul-

sate when retrieved. A Metz saddle is also long enough to properly cover the entire length of a 4X long hook.

For bluegills and crappies, the all-white Bugger is still the best but color combinations of white and yellow, white and red, and white and black also work.

## Tying Procedure

HOOK: Mustad 79580 (4X long, TDE)

Trout sizes: #6, #8, #10; Bass: #4, #6, #8; Bluegills: #10, #12.

THREAD: Monocord or 4/0 nylon.

TAIL: Marabou clump.

HACKLE: Saddle, palmered.

BODY: Chenille.

After placing the hook in the vise, attach your tying thread on the hook at the rear of the shank. Select a good, full maribou plume and secure it on the end of the hook shank using the shank's length as a gauge for plume length. Next, tie in the tip of a saddle hackle at the rear of the hook and then tie in a length of chenille for the body. Wind the tying thread forward to the hook eye. Wind the chenille forward to cover the hook shank. Tie off at the eye. Attach your hackle pliers to the extended butt of the saddle hackle and palmer it forward, tying it off at the eye. Whip finish your head and the Woolly Bugger is complete.

I've tried weighting just the front of the hook shank with fuse wire to eliminate the awkwardness of casting a split shot but with poor results. The split-shot works best for the jig-like action.



3. Tie in the tip of a saddle hackle and a length of chenille for the body.



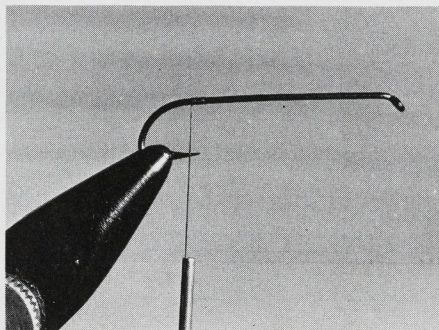
4. Wind the chenille forward to the eye.



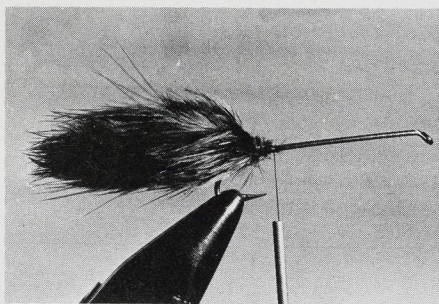
5. Tie off the chenille and clip away excess.



6. Palmer the hackle forward, tie-off and trim. Whip finish the head.



1. Attach your thread at the rear of the hook shank.



2. Secure a full marabou plume, the length of the shank.







GARY LAFONTAINE

# WORMS

**M**y own original fly patterns go into two separate boxes. In one box sit all the dainty insect imitations, dry and wet, and these are the ones shown to anyone who wants to see "LaFontaine" flies. In the other box lie the rest of the innovations, the ones birthed seemingly in the nightmares of a madman—the Marabou Spawn Sack, the Creature, the Bristle Leech, and now a new aberration, the Marabou Worm. These are snuck out of their box only for actual fishing, and then as unobtrusively as possible.

If these fly-tying innovations seem to range from the ridiculous to the sublime, it is because years of fish-stomach samplings have shown clearly that what trout eat also ranges from the ridiculous to the sublime. Many of the food items trout gorge on in sometimes selective gluttony are not being imitated properly by fly fishermen; others are just not being imitated at all.

The diet of a trout can roughly be split into two categories. There is the

staple fare—caddisflies, mayflies, stoneflies, two-winged flies, some terrestrial insects and *Gammarus* scuds—that dominates the menu in most habitats. Few fly fishermen need to be told that they should carry a comprehensive selection of imitations for matching the important stages of these prey items. The second type of food is neither as predictable nor as consistently important. As a matter of fact, part of my fascination with these oddball foods is that, most of the time, imitations are not needed at all. The reason for carrying these patterns, however, is that when they are needed they are usually indispensable.

The Marabou Worm was immediately placed into the second category. During the 1980 season, I met only three occasions (totaling maybe 10 hours of fishing) when trout fed heavily on worms. Each time, the Marabou Worm performed admirably for me. The success of this pattern even converted some of my most skeptical friends. Such experi-

ences, brief but gratifying, indicate the value of the fly.

Although these "incidental" patterns are designed for specific fishing situations, many of them can also be used very successfully as general, searching flies. Maybe some of the more garish creations work as attractors, but a few represent food that is nearly always present in the stream. The fish may have only rare opportunities to gorge on these types of forage, but for some reason, these animals are attacked greedily by trout whenever they become available.

Worms are such critters. They are everpresent, both along the stream and in the stream itself, and trout always seem to recognize them as food. The supply of worms, however, comes from two sources, not one; and this is the key to fishing the Marabou Worm fly successfully.

## *The Steady Supply—Aquatic Worms*

Terrestrial worms, both the night-crawler and the common red worm,



prodigious heave of 186 feet (with tournament-casting lines, of course).

The principal user of graphite fiber is the aerospace industry, which consumes far and away the bulk of what's produced by such companies as Hercules, Celanese and Union Carbide. The defense contractors (whose aircraft must continually meet higher performance standards to satisfy the military) spur on the fiber makers to produce better and better (stiffer, lighter and stronger) graphite. Since graphite went into production, there have been perhaps four notable improvements in the fiber's characteristics. The most recent performance jump, which Sage calls Graphite II, is thus really graphite IV. The improvement, however, from what we might call grade III to grade IV is the greatest single jump yet, and Sage decided to capitalize on it—without having to get into explaining intermediate jumps; hence Graphite II.

The word has gotten around that Sage has "cornered the market in Graphite II," that they've bought out the entire production of it from Hercules, thus shutting out competitors.

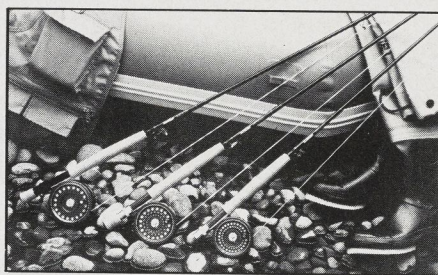
Common sense tells us that a relatively tiny fishing-rod manufacturer, with 25 employees, simply can't afford or use all of *anything* that a giant chemical company can produce. The development costs of a new-generation graphite fiber are so high that the parent company must make and sell tons and tons of it to cover its expenses, never mind make a profit for shareholders. Reportedly, the aerospace companies began, two years ago, to receive from Hercules batches of the new graphite they'd asked for, with its higher strain values. Only recently has Hercules been able to make slightly more new graphite than their prime customers can use (for the moment), and Don Green was able to buy this tiny fraction, all that is available to the civilian market.

For now, Sage does pretty much control Graphite II. Bear in mind, however, that this situation is unstable. Hercules may expand its production capacity; and Hercules's competitors are certainly working on their own versions of next-generation graphite. (Recalling the big flap over boron rods several years ago, it's interesting that—reportedly, anyway—neither boron nor Kevlar are getting any development money now. Apparently, all the commercial interest is in graphite.) Whatever materials advan-

tage Sage may have gained is probably temporary.

In tensile strength, Graphite II represents an improvement over Sage's regular-grade graphite of about 20 to 25 percent (averaging between 600,000 and 700,000 pounds per square inch). Its density—weight—is about 5% less than regular-grade. Most importantly, its *E*, or Modulus of Elasticity, is up to between 42 and 44 million pounds per square inch, an improvement of about 30 percent over "normal" Sage graphite. (In general, high-quality, rod-grade graphite varies from about 30 to 35 million psi throughout the industry.) Appropriately, GII costs 25 to 30 percent more, and Sage pays about \$50 per pound for it.

In terms of putting Graphite II into rod production, the immediate problem was that the strength of the fiber was too great for existing epoxies. Fibers in a rod blank were separating under load, so part of Hercules's development included a new adhesive system. Secondly,



Graphite II RP rods from Sage.

as *E* increases, and graphite begins to approach boron in strength and stiffness, some of the same design handicaps will also begin to appear. Some respected rod designers outside Sage expect that GII will make excellent medium- to heavy-duty fly rods, but that the fiber may be unsuitable for light rods and narrow wall thicknesses in rod blanks. Sage disagrees.

In their excellent new catalog, Sage gives considerable play to the properties of Graphite II, making such statements as "Increased stiffness is going to allow Sage to make a rod that is lighter in weight, smaller in diameter and superior in performance." All well and good, yet farther along in the catalog are pages of charts that present the specifications of Sage's current lines of rods and blanks. Comparing the dimensions for what seem to be the same rods in both conventional graphite and new GII points up an obvious anomaly: Almost without exception, the new rod blanks of GII

weigh more and are thicker at the butt (and thinner at the tip) than the "old" Sage blanks.

Some of Sage's competitors lost little time in pointing out that it's no wonder Graphite II rods achieve higher line speeds and greater casting distances—the butts have been beefed up and the tips reduced, producing "tippy" blanks that could be made in conventional graphite as well.

Don Green may wish he'd never posted these numbers (although this way he can't be accused of trying to hide anything). It turns out that comparisons between old and new rods are meaningless—an apples/oranges situation. The new Graphite II rods are further labelled "RP," for *Reserve Power*. A Sage 686 (8½-foot blank for 6-weight line), for example, is not the same rod in GII as it is in graphite. Length and line are the same, but design, taper, wall thickness, etc. are not. Sage introduced a second variable. We can only assume that rods of RP style—design and flex—would weigh more in normal graphite than they do in Graphite II. Sage has now made several 9-foot, 5-weight rods that are identical except that some are GII; the difference is said to be very noticeable.

All this information, however, amounts to sales mouthwash. The thing to do is pick up one of these GIIRPs, line it, and take it fishing (or at least cast it). That's how you decide a rod is worth buying. That's what we did with the 9-footer for 8-weight line, and we're going to buy it and take it bonefishing. Rather than say it throws a long line, we'll say we can throw a long line with it. (One man's fine fly rod, after all, may be another man's broom handle.) We wouldn't put a Sage RP rod into the hands of a beginning fly caster (who might profit initially by a softer rod's slower action), but a fisherman of moderate skill can learn to use these rods to good advantage.

When you get a copy of Sage's catalog (they're at 9630 NE Lafayette Street, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110), look at the cover photo. Steve Rajeff is casting out of a rubber raft. The stopped position of his rod, the extension of his line and the shape of the front loop are perfect examples of "western" fly-casting. That's what all the talk about stiffness and damping and line speed and control is about. □

SILVIO CALABI is Editor of Rod & Reel.



also exist in some stream bottoms.

proliferate in the moist, soft ground areas of the stream floodplain. But it is not their habit to go swimming voluntarily. They are an infrequent fish food, not a steady supply, appearing in the water in large numbers only during the right type of rainstorm. Otherwise, they are almost totally absent from the stream drift. In waters where terrestrial worms are the sole source of this food type, the Marabou Worm is probably useful only on occasion.

There are worms, however, of the same class (*Oligochaeta*) and frequently of the same appearance as their terrestrial cousins, that spend their entire life cycle underwater. Streams and rivers with some silty areas, but with clear, oxygen-saturated water, provide prime habitat for these aquatic earthworms. Most spring creeks and tailwater rivers, and many freestone waters, fall in this category.

Aquatic worms burrow through and

plings that trout show a general preference, if not a selective one, for aquatic worms.

There is a special time for matching even these aquatic worms. Early in the spring (late February in the East or mid-April in the West), typically there comes a premature warm spell that breaks winter. Because the nights are still so cold, this first warmth does not swell the trout streams to the near-flood stage they reach later, but there is a rise in the water level nevertheless—and along with the rise there is a brown tinge to the flow. There are usually only a few perfect days of “worm-fishing” when the streams increase and color this way. It may be that the worms, still in a period of winter somnolence, are caught unprepared, but they fill the currents then. Any drift sampling during the day captures hundreds of them (along with crane fly larvae, which also seem particularly vulnerable to this first flush of

fisheries. The best waters, twisting and cutting through grassy meadows, have overhanging banks of rich soil. Frequently, one section of the river might be poor for worms, but a different section proves ideal. So often, successful worm-fishing becomes simply a matter of picking the proper stretch of water—at the proper time.

Not all storms drive the worms out of their tunnels. It takes a long, steady rain to soak the dirt; a drizzle, or even a brief cloudburst, is usually not enough to bring them out. How much the soil can absorb, of course, depends partly upon its moisture content at the beginning of the pour. During the spring, the ground stays damp constantly from melting snow and continual precipitation, so a heavy rain floods the worms out fairly quickly. Later, when the ground has been dried out by hot, summer weather, it soaks up and holds a great amount of water. But even during the summer, an

*They don't just live in your garden, you know.  
Trout learn to love them, says this noted writer,  
and his novel streamer may win you over, too*

GARY LAFONTAINE

strain the stream silt. They commonly concentrate along slower current areas, the pool bottoms and weed beds, and bank edges, where dirt and decaying leaves accumulate into the deepest piles. At night, they come out of their holes to mate and feed, crawling around on the bottom. They drift naturally at dusk and dawn but can be washed away if any force, whether a wading cow or a sudden change in the current, stirs up the silt bed.

These aquatic worms are common enough so that trout are exposed to them continuously. Based on the best available information on drift rates, a trout in a river with a good population of aquatic worms sees roughly five to ten of them during a summer day. This is not a lot—certainly not enough for a fish to feed on worms exclusively. But aquatic worms look so unlike most other drifting food that ten of them a day, passing by all summer, can make a strong impression on a trout. It is evident from the numbers found during stomach sam-

higher water). And there are so many worms passing by that the trout, although still sluggish themselves from the cold water, begin feeding heavily around midday and continue until early evening.

#### *The Bonanza—Terrestrial Worms*

When a steady rain saturates the ground, the land-living earthworms escape to the surface and crawl blindly about. This begins an amazing carnage, evident from the dried carcasses on sidewalks and roads the next day. The same natural phenomenon dumps incredible numbers of worms into streams and rivers.

But a fly fisherman cannot take advantage of the resultant feeding binge by the trout unless he arrives at a productive spot at a good time. Not all waters receive the influx of worms. Streams bordered by rocky or sandy soil too infertile to support earthworms might get some food washed into them by the runoff, but such streams are not great rainy-day

all-night downpour creates worm-fishing opportunities for the fly fisherman who does not mind waking up for the prime dawn hours.

Just as important as recognizing the right type of storm, or choosing the proper bit of water, is getting to the stream at an advantageous time. The correct moment for the Marabou Worm occurs when the land, like a cup filled slowly to the edge, begins brimming over. The water collects in narrow runs and cuts and trickles toward the stream. If the earth is well-seeded with grasses and brush, the runoff does not pick up much dirt, but it carries away debris and small, helpless organisms (such as worms). In a properly managed watershed, the good worm-fishing lasts for many hours, the stream becoming tea-colored from the added flow but never turning to brown soup. If there are upstream areas where the runoff can erode bare earth, then the stream does change to a chocolate wash, and fishing becomes less productive as well as less



enjoyable. For waters that tend to muddy, the correct timing means being ready to fish just as the taint begins to spread and mix with the clearer flow. Often the color line between clean and dirty waters serves as a gathering point for trout.

The streams dumping into lakes and ponds create interesting stillwater situations for the Marabou Worm. There, the fisherman seeks just the reverse of what he wants in running water—the muddier the inflow the better. The color blocks sunlight and helps bring trout out of the depths; the muddy water spreads into the clearer lake water, usually remaining in a distinct layer, and drops any heavier particles, including food. The fish congregate at the lip of the tributary drop-off (a bar formed by the deposition of stream silts), and feed typically in two or three feet of water. Any fly, cast into the tributary and retrieved back towards the main lake, tumbles right through these fish. Since they swim in clear water, out of the mud, the trout have no trouble spotting the food—or a fly.

The type of fly an angler uses in these worm-fishing situations is important. The idea that trout, searching hungrily through this sudden abundance of food, will hit anything they can find is wrong. First, they must be able to see the imitation, which explains why darker and larger patterns catch more of these fish; and second, the trout must also be able to distinguish the fly from all the twigs and leaf-bits in the water. The action of a worm imitation is probably as important as size or color, even under muddy conditions. In clear water, there is no doubt that the sinuous, twisting movement of the fly is the primary visual clue for trout. It shouldn't be too hard for most fly fishermen to recall the main rule of their early, bait-fishing beginnings: A live, wriggling worm always does better than a dead one. The same principle applies to the flies used to match such an animated organism as a drifting worm.

#### *The Marabou Worm*

Drop a live worm in water, and it contorts into seemingly impossible shapes. It wriggles so well because it has two types of muscle—one set runs the length of the body and the other set circles the body. And if the water is well-aerated, even a terrestrial worm does not drown because it can breathe

by absorbing gasses through its skin. (In laboratories, worms have lived as long as six months submerged in water.) From the time it plops into the stream until it reaches shore or dies—which might be days or weeks later—a worm is an active target for any fish.

A food type such as the worm is unusual enough to create some real challenges for a fly tyer. No material exists that can mimic realistically the twisting dance of a drifting worm; and no special hook exists that can animate individual parts of a fly during a dead-drift presentation. Simply consider the items used to simulate sinuous organisms—free-hanging marabou fibers or chamois strips for the fly fishermen; pork-rind strips or molded, soft, plastic forms, for the spin fishermen. None of these trailers are recommended for dead-drift fishing because as soft extensions, dangling free off the hook, they don't work by themselves. They collapse into formless, unattractive, dead lumps as they wash downstream.

Soft materials are used as long, trailing extensions only on flies designed for active retrieval. On a streamer, for example, the marabou fibers straighten out and wave enticingly when the fly is pulled through the water. This pattern fishes best when brought back with long, continuous strips; too many pronounced pauses during the retrieve hurt the effectiveness of such a fly. The problem with marabou fibers is that there has to be something pulling on both ends before they will appear to be sinuous and alive. During a retrieve, the force of the water flowing around the fibers achieves this effect for the marabou streamer. But during a true dead-drift presentation, this pull from both directions can't happen.

On the Marabou Worm, a buoyant wooden bead, tied near the end of the long tail, provides counter-pull. The bead floats up and the weighted fly body sinks down; and in between, the soft marabou flexes easily against these weak, contrasting forces. As the fly tumbles downstream with the current, the tail section mimics the weaving dance of the natural worm.

Techniques for fishing the Marabou Worm include the upstream, or up-and-across-stream, cast and dead-drift with a single fly. The weighted pattern, cast into rougher water (maybe the riffle at the head of a pool, or a run against a high bank), looks attractive as it drifts and seems to struggle out of the stronger

flow. It draws strikes in the broken-water areas of the stream that we fish normally, but the larger, earthworm imitation, the pattern developed for rainy-weather fishing, displays its special talents when it rides the edge between fast and slow water. The smaller and lighter aquatic-worm imitation, designed more for streams and rivers with silted bottoms, dances nicely in the slower currents around grassy banks and weed beds.

Another popular method of nymph-fishing is the two-fly dropper rig. A heavy, larger pattern dangles from the drop leader (about two feet above the tip), and a small, weightless or slightly weighted imitation drifts at the end of the finer tippet section. This technique puts the smaller, more realistic nymph down in deeper or faster water, but the movement of the fly is not hindered by a lead-wrapped hook. Most fish are caught on this smaller, end fly.

The larger, second fly pattern still proves important, however. Often a heavy stonefly nymph serves as the weight, and this is a fine choice in fast, rocky streams with good populations of that insect. But in many tailwater rivers and spring creeks, where stoneflies might be uncommon, a Marabou Worm makes a better dropper fly. A simple change to this pattern typically increases the secondary catch, which consists of fewer trout, but often larger ones.

In lakes, the Marabou Worm crawls beautifully. It seldom snags because the buoyant wooden bead lifts the hook slightly off the bottom. On a quicker, stop-and-go retrieve in open water, the bead drops slightly and the tail folds into an S-curve with every pause. When the fly sinks freely into deeper water, the tail flutters during the entire fall. Apparently this motion excites trout, because they frequently pick up a dropping Marabou Worm. But the fisherman has to watch his line closely to notice the small movement that signals this type of strike.

The Marabou Worm deserves its place in any angler's theory of imitation, but it's one of those oddball creations that seems too unusual in appearance and action to be classified with mayfly and caddisfly nymphs. And if it's not a nymph, and certainly not a streamer, it must be a Worm. This thought alone is usually enough to make any unorthodox fly fisherman—one who might condone or even encourage such worm-fishing even amongst staunch purists—grin in delight. □



## The MARABOU WORM

### Materials

**Hook:** M-V 94840; #8, #10, #12.

**Weight:** Lead wire, wrapped and lacquered.

**Tail:** Free-hanging marabou fibers.

**Wooden Bead:** White wooden bead with a center hole (style 275 beads, made by Westrim Crafts, are available in craft shops).

**Bead Holder:** 3/0 tying thread (same color as the marabou fibers).

**Body:** Marabou fibers.

Note: The main colors are black, off-white, orange and natural gray.

### Tying Directions

#### Weight:

1. Wrap lead wire onto the hook shank.
2. Coat the wire with head cement to prevent discoloration of the fly.

#### Tail:

3. Fasten a clump of marabou fibers (twice as long as the hook shank) at the bend of the hook. Let them extend off the back of the hook.

#### Bead:

4. Moisten the marabou tail fibers. Slide the bead onto the tail.

#### Bead Holder:

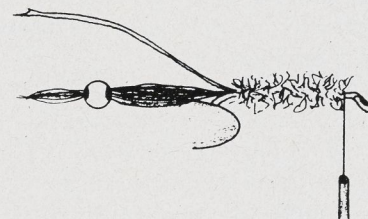
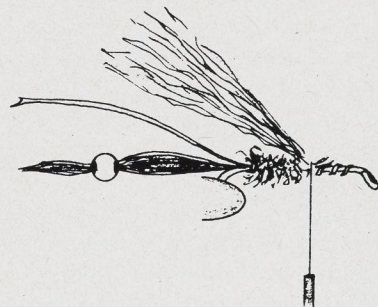
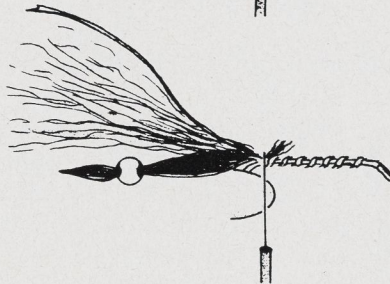
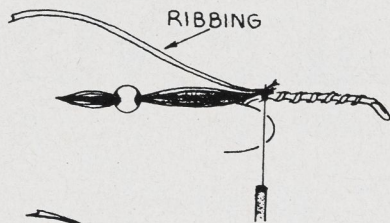
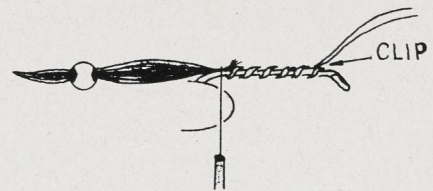
6. Double up an eight-inch length of 3/0 thread, same color as the marabou.
7. Push the looped end of the thread through the bead hole.
8. Bring the two tail ends of the thread through the loop.
9. Tie the tail ends around the marabou fibers with a simple square knot.
10. Bring the tail ends of the thread to the bend of the hook and tie them down.

#### Body:

11. Tie in a clump of marabou fibers (select long fibers).
12. Wrap the fibers around the hook shank to the eye (the drying head cement on the lead wire will help secure the fibers).

#### Optional rib:

13. Wind a rib of tying thread in the reverse direction to strengthen the marabou body.
14. Whip-finish and cement head.



GARY LAFONTAINE is a widely published fly-fishing writer and researcher, as well as a professional fly-fishing instructor and guide. His book *Caddisflies* (Winchester Press) was voted the 1982 Book Of The Year, general category, by the United Fly Tyers. He is now hard at work on a book about fly-fishing for bass.



# Like Manna From Heaven

*Spinners please the fisherman and the fish*

TOM ROSENBAUER

Del Mazza is the reigning don of a productive little limestone stream that I fish less often than I'd like to. His real first name is Fidel, but given the fact that one of his fists is the size of both of mine, and that he drives one of those huge earthmovers for a living, I've never called him by it. Everyone who fishes the little stream knows Del, at least everyone who fishes it more than a couple of times. Secure in his fly-fishing prowess, Del is just as happy sitting on the bank, chewing a cigar and giving orders, as he is fishing. Even though this little stream can't support more than a half-dozen fishermen at a time without disturbing all the trout, I've never seen him snub a newcomer.

Del is not above a practical joke, though. He once had a fake summons issued to a friend for jacking deer. His friend had never hunted deer—didn't even own a rifle—but he saw a lawyer twice and spent an hour searching for a nonexistent courtroom; as far as I know, he still thinks he's running from the law. But Del's most scornful pranks are reserved for fly fishermen who take themselves too seriously, especially entomology nuts.

"When I had my fly shop I used to drive 'em crazy," he says with a chuckle. "My fly cases would be labelled with things like Damian's Nerd Nymph #8, The Pasta Fazzola Fly and the Rigatoni Fly. Then we had the Gray Fox Sorta. That one really got 'em on the Beaverkill—'What fly ya usin?' 'Gray Fox Sorta.'"

Once a year, in early July, his voice booms over 150 miles of telephone wire: "Ya gotta come this week. Those big cream spinners've started." The big spinners, which Del believes are *Ephemera varia* (even though he snorts at Latin names, Del knows his insects—especially their behavior), are a real treat. I look forward to them every year. The neurotic, well-fed browns in Del's stream seem to relish the flies, even though the spinner falls are not very heavy. It's a chance for some easy fishing with dry flies to big brown trout.

The first year I fished this spinner fall we sat on the bank, waiting for the sun to slip beneath the corn fields and apple orchards. A few small trout had been sipping tiny olive duns in late afternoon, and I foolishly tried for them, managing only to put them down before I could get within 60 feet. Del stayed on the bank, lying on his back under a crabapple tree, occasional plumes of cigar smoke the only

sign of life. He either knew he could catch those fish and it wasn't worth the effort, or that he'd put them down just as I had.

When I joined him on the bank, he laid out the game plan: "They'll come in low and fast just as it gets dark. There won't be any clouds of spinners—I don't even know how they get it on, but when they hit the water the fish'll sock every one that comes down. Nobody notices this hatch; they don't see the fish rising or a lot of flies, so they leave early."

"Get in the water, it's almost time."

I took my time getting into the water, as my respect for the trout of this stream has always been high. It took two full years of trying to approach these trout before I was able to capture one. The stream is barely 20 feet wide, shallow, but without riffles. The only features distinguishing it from a ditch are the profuse beds of watercress over clean gravel and the gnarly crabapple trees lining the banks. It's actually an old canal that gathered a number of small streams and subterranean springs; the high, overgrown towpath on one side provides a perfect vantage point.

I entered the water on tiptoes, like a swimmer testing a cold pool. The air began to take on that thickness it has on a balmy July evening, when it seems that you can taste all the smells of the earth at once. Even the birds, except the thrushes and robins, stopped singing. The little green bowling alley was poised and waiting for the spinners.

"Tom!"

I almost jumped out of my waders.

"Don't forget—one step every 20 seconds. No more. You know how you used to spook all these fish, and if you scare a good one now he won't come up later."

I took another step.

"Tom!"

"What?"

"There's a good one behind that limb over there. Sixteen inches. Caught him the other night."

As Del was talking, a couple of the big, cream spinners buzzed past me at about shoulder level, heading upstream with a purpose. And I saw a soft wink where Del's 16-incher was supposed to be.

"TOM!"

"Yes, Del?"

"You catch any of them friggin' rock bass, throw 'em up



etc., use deer-body or caribou hair. For nymphs or other sinking flies use mouse-deer hair, polar bear, squirrel or something of that nature. I have used green polar-bear and tan mouse-deer hair mixed and got some pretty good imitations of dragonfly nymphs.

You can weight the fly with fuse wire. In making it, just tie in the chenille over the bend of the hook, wind forward and tie off. Put on the wing stub and legs, or hackle if you prefer, and that is all there is to it.

After the chenille is tied on it must be barbered to the shape you want. It can be made flat, round, square or any other shape. It will not be hard and will cast easily. Most important, the fish like it; when they take it they hang on long enough to get hooked. I have used it mostly casting upstream like a dry fly. The trout hit it any time; I should say take it because they take gently as a rule.

Fish out the cast; many times they take it right in front of you when you are lifting the fly for another cast. This is an imitation of the natural nymph rising to hatch. I use it to cover rises to natural floaters instead of changing to a dry fly, and it is seldom refused if cast properly.

D. G. R. (Minnesota)

A. It isn't often that a letter inspires me to walk outside and go fishing, but the nymph pattern you sent along looked that enticing. I can report that the fly took three trout in fifteen minutes of casting, which is mighty good for our Home Pool. The water had been worked quite hard, with the fish most reluctant. Your tip on spinning dubbing is a good one, and I'll pass it along to our readers.

A. J. McC.



Do not squeeze the body cavity, as this causes internal injuries that kill fish whether your hand is wet or dry. Obviously, a wet hand is a bit slippery, but with patience and practice your boy can learn to release the fish quickly. I would also advise him to slip his fish back into the water. Although fish are reasonably tough (they are even stocked by being dropped from an airplane), they can easily be injured by the very act of throwing—not to mention landing on some object such as a midstream rock. Barbless hooks unquestionably facilitate releasing fish and are a mark of good sportsmanship. A. J. McC.

### KNOTLESS LEADER

Q. In a recent issue of FIELD & STREAM an Oregon reader asked you a question concerning troublesome leaders. In your answer you specify ways to eliminate his troubles. However, if I interpret your answer correctly, you refer to home-tied leaders only. Here in this part of Pennsylvania we buy knotless tapered leaders that pose the same problems as most tapered leaders, because of the fact that the butts are too light and small in diameter. What is your opinion of these leaders and how would you alter them to promote better casting?

In another issue you say: "Big question and very important—why can't American line manufacturers make an honest H-point fly line, and isn't it about time we had an I-point?" To that question I send along a hearty Amen! It sure is about time.

J. T. B. (Pennsylvania)

A. The knotless tapered leaders with



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## FLY-TYING TIPS

Q. I have never had any faith in nymphs made flat and hard by cement or lacquer, and recently I found a way of tying nymphs so soft and flat that trout actually swallow them. Perhaps they're just about the specific gravity of water, for they can be fished at any depth by simply greasing the leader closer to or farther from the nymph. If you want them to really sink, a little fuse wire on the shank does the trick.

The solution came about when I was tying some grasshoppers. I used mouse-deer hair instead of caribou or deer-body hair, and the darned things wouldn't float. I trimmed the wings off to stubs and tried them as nymphs. They worked; so I tried to improve them and think I have succeeded. Ordinarily a No. 12, 3XL hook is the best. I have tried a number of colors, but the green and tan ones are all I need to catch about all the trout I want.

Some time ago I fished the Kinnikinnick, twenty-five miles from Minneapolis and a million people. This stream is fished so hard that it is almost whipped to foam. I took four or five small trout and released them. I had no creel and didn't plan on keeping any fish. Finally I got a nice rainbow, so kept it. From then on I kept the best fish and got my limit of ten—all nice trout.

I met two other fishermen when I was going back to the car, and neither had a fish. One was fishing worms, the other, who had been fishing the stream for sixty years, used a wet fly upstream. I gave the old Joe two nymphs, but I don't know how he came out.

Reuben Cross sometimes used two threads to spin fur for dubbing. I do the same thing, but somewhat differently because I find it easier. Here's my method: Take a small board, such as a paint stirrer, put a needle through it at one end, and split a notch in the other. Wax a piece of thread, size A nylon, place it in the notch about three inches from the end, run the thread up the board to the needle, around needle and off to the side. Now cut mouse-deer hair and lay it on the thread crossways. Put it on so thick that it is hard to see the thread through it, and apply it as evenly as possible. When the hair is on, bring the other end of the thread over and place it in the same notch, put the hackle pliers on both ends and twist as tight as possible. Then place your finger on the two threads a little way from the notch and carefully remove the threads from the notch. Hold the thread low; as you raise it, it will spin the hair into a chenille.

For grasshoppers, Irresistible, Rat Face,

FIELD & STREAM APRIL 1959



will be found most often in 16's and 18's are needed to imitate occasional hatches of small mayflies.

Most popular dry flies are Adams, Gray Wulff, Brown Wulff, Royal Wulff, Ginger Quill, Michigan Spider, Furnace Spider, Donnelly's Light Variant, Donnelly's Dark Variant and Irresistible. Wet flies: Captain (hairwing), Royal Coachman (hairwing), Mormon Girl, Grizzly King, Red Ant and Rio Grande King.

A few streamers and nymphs will fill out the angler's fly box for stream fishing.

### FLY-FISHING LAKES

The Jackson Hole area contains more than seventy-five major lakes and ponds. They range in size from nameless potholes to Jackson Lake, with a shoreline of fifty-two miles. All contain some variety of trout that can be caught on flies. Here are a few of the best:

Jenny Lake, Leigh Lake, Taggart Lake, Bradley Lake and Phelps Lake are located within the boundaries of Teton National Park, which forms a large portion of Jackson Hole. A park permit is required to fish these waters. All the above-mentioned lakes offer excellent fly fishing from shore or boats, which are available on several of them. There are also lodgings and campsites for tents and trailers in the park. The best fly fishing comes during spring and fall. Fish taken will be mostly cutthroats, plus a very limited number of rainbows.

Lower Slide Lake on the Gros Ventre River is another good spot for the visiting angler to try. Boats can be launched at the east end of the lake after a 45-minute drive from Jackson. Best fishing is in the evening along the north shore and near the inlet. Cutthroats and rainbows will run from 1 to 5 pounds.

Grassy Lake is another good lake and something of a sleeper. This spot is located in the extreme northwest corner of the area. It is reached by

"Good thing my car got me here on time," the sportsman said, "... if they're starting to bite."

## The big one didn't get away from this sportsman!

by Stony Jackson

### sportsman:

When I pack off on a fishing jaunt, I want my car to be as ready to go as I am! That's why I use only Pennzoil with Z-7.

### attendant:

You sound as "nuts" about Pennzoil as all my other sportsmen-customers.

### sportsman:

I am ... for good reasons. My engine used to gum up ... plugs fouled ... mileage fell off. I spent more time and money on gas and oil and tune-up jobs than I did on fishing! Until I switched to Pennzoil with Z-7. And I switched to Pennzoil Outboard Motor Oil for my boat, too.

### attendant:

A perfect pair, friend! If you're as smart about fishing as you are about

motor oil in general and about Pennzoil in particular ... you must catch all the big ones!

### sportsman:

Pennzoil is the biggest and best catch I ever made. Keeps my engine running the way it's supposed to ... clean, smooth and economical. Gives me the best outboard action I ever had, too. Actually, Bud, *Pennzoil is all I need to know about any engine!*

### Author's Note:

Pennzoil is The Tough-Film® motor oil, especially refined from pure 100% Pennsylvania grade crude, the highest quality oil for engines ever discovered. And the makers of Pennzoil are the largest producers of this oil in the world. No other motor oil will protect engines so well. So ask for Pennzoil by name, wherever you go.

The motor oil that makes people mad ... if they don't get it!



MEMBER PENN. GRADE CRUDE OIL ASSN., PERMIT NO. 2, OIL CITY, PA.



ALTHOUGH IT WAS a warm summer night, the cold waters of the limestone stream chilled me. Somewhere in the darkness below where I stood—somewhere in the long, deep pool—there was a sudden watery explosion. In the stillness that followed, the natural night sounds were the only indication of life as I fished for the big trout that had caused the commotion.

That night was a humid August evening during the dark of the moon. The cloud cover added to the pitch darkness, and the low water combined with the other conditions to make it a perfect night for pursuing large browns with a fly. Insects swarmed and hummed in the dark. Water in the riffles gurgled and murmured. Crickets chirped messages of the coming autumn and the end of summer. Instinctively I checked the leader's dropper. I had lost fish with a dropper a mite too short. A five-inch dropper would do.

It was 10:30 P.M. The fish, calmed and ready for feeding with the fall of night, had moved into their feeding lanes. Then, in the darkness of the big pool, the fish again broke water. Waiting until my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I stripped the nail knot through the tip-top and put a pair of 1/0's in motion. Working carefully and deliberately, I fished down through the pool—wading slowly, inch by inch. Browns, I knew, will feed in inches of water and can easily be spooked by careless wading.

I had fished this pool many times before, knew it well and knew the water held good fish. As a night fisherman, it's been my conviction that once you locate a good trout, you should stay with him. His feeding lanes won't change that much, and sooner or later you should be able to move him.

Drifting the rod forward and shortening the power stroke, I cast the big wets under an overhanging hemlock bough. My bulky flies sunk in the current and responded to the action of the rod tip. Suddenly they stopped. I reared back and drove the hook home. A big brown rolled on the surface, and I quickly got an angle on his head to turn him, but the fish had other plans and headed for an underwater brushpile.

*Push the reel spool into your shirt, I told myself. It will give a steady, even drag; now palm the spool.* It was a tip Lefty Kreh had given me, one he used for big saltwater fish, and it worked for me now. Give a trout a chance to rest, and he'll either hang you up or bust your leader up. I turned the trout again, and I could feel him tire. Keeping the pressure on the fish, I shifted the rod to the other side and got another angle on its head. Finally, I turned it for the last time. It was mine—or was it?

Finning weakly before me lay thirty-four inches and nearly sixteen pounds of brown trout. One look at its head told me my net was inadequate, made for spunky fingerlings or chunky two-year-olds, a mistake that

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JOSEPH HUMPHREYS is Angling Professor at Penn State University and lives in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. His last article for FFM, "The Bobbin Half Hitch," appeared in Volume 10, Number 5.

See Flies

*As darkness falls, some fly rodders hear a different call, and the promise of catching a large trout leads them to seek*

# Trophies After Dark

JOSEPH HUMPHREYS

can cost an angler the fish of a lifetime. Beaching him on the rocky shoreline was impossible, however, and I quickly thrust the rod between my knees, pushed both arms under him, and heaved him onto the shore. The quest was over.

WHY WOULD ANY sane fly fisherman jeopardize his personal safety stumbling around a stream on a dark night when he could enjoy catching scrappy trout in lovely surroundings during the day? The answer for me is the opportunity to take a trophy-size brown trout, an opportunity that almost never presents itself during daylight hours.

Unfortunately, large brown trout in many streams no longer sip insects on the surface during daylight hours. Heavy and prolonged fishing pressure has altered their feeding behavior, and many have become night feeders. As a result, on many brown-trout waters angling for the large fish presents special challenges for the fly fisherman and demands a knowledge of techniques seldom associated with the daytime sport.

As darkness falls, large browns leave the deep, river holes and move either to the heads of the pools and into



## Bringing in the Blues

JACK FALLON

WHILE IT IS TRUE that bluefish rate their reputations for striking at almost any moving object that remotely resembles a meal, they have also earned a reputation for speed, wariness, mercurial movement and a preference for deep sand-free water. Persuading bluefish to strike is not nearly so difficult as making sure they will be there when you present your lure.

A preference for deep water seems contradictory for a fish whose trademark is top-water massacres, yet it is the very vividness of this surface violence that creates the association between bluefish and surface or shallow water. Fact is, these observable carnages comprise only a small part of the blue's ravenous existence. Most of its marauding is done down deep, where bait abounds and suspended sand does not irritate its gills. And despite the blue's ferocity, a school will bolt in a matter of microseconds if splashes or shadows or noise should telegraph danger. Obviously, trying to sneak up on big bluefish is not likely to result in many bending fly rods. Which is why I was skeptical about Bill Stone's suggestion that we bring our fly rods along on a plugging trip to an offshore shoal in Nantucket Sound. Bill knew from experience the futility of trying to take bluefish by sneaking up close to them. The one time he succeeded, he was able to hook only one fish before the school sounded. Yet within 10 minutes of dropping our anchor, Bill and I had dozens of bruiser bluefish competing for a crack at every fly we were able to lay in their paths.

Bill's strategy couldn't have been simpler. First, pick a place where blues were sure to be congregated; then, instead of trying to sneak up on them, make them come to us. We knew that big blues would be patrolling alongside shoals with swift currents and tidal turbulences because weak baitfish must expend most of their limited energies


just trying to cope, hence they are easy marks for strong bluefish prowling along the grit-free fringes of these sandy ridges. And we knew also that a popping plug skipped at flank speed across a dropoff would summon these savages like kids to an ice-cream truck.

"So what we do," said Bill, after a half-dozen casts had confirmed the blues's presence and cooperativeness, "is take turns with a fly rod. First you tease them into range with your popper while I try to drop a fly in front of them, then we switch. Fair enough?"

It was fair enough, indeed. Even after longing for years to battle a jumbo bluefish with my fly rod, every other fish was all I could possibly handle. After one of those soaring, sounding, never-say-die donnybrooks, my aching wrists and forearms welcomed the change.

Success, however, was not automatic. Close coordination, split-second timing, precision casts and prompt retrieves were essential. In a bouncing boat and a brisk breeze these were hard enough to come by. Shaking hands and a thumping heart occasionally made them impossible.

Nevertheless, we managed to catch our share of bluefish. In the process, we also learned the following lessons, which will enable us to operate more efficiently next time out.


- Fluorescent-orange plugs are easiest to track. The hooks may be cut off them to keep the blues from hooking themselves.
- Polarized glasses are invaluable for spotting blues in pursuit of a plug.
- Big bright flies work best, but even well-tied streamers are not likely to survive more than two or three bluefish.
- A three-inch wire leader might complicate casting, but it helps to avoid cutoffs.
- Wire leaders should be attached via black swivels; otherwise bluefish will shear your line while snapping at the silver one on the end of your leader.
- A plug should not be withdrawn until the fly is in the water.
- Blues remain within fly-casting range for only a few seconds, which makes this mode of fly-rod fishing for big bluefish just about the most demanding, frustrating, exasperating but fun kind of fishing around. 

on the other hand, enjoys night feeding, and I have had my best luck with them, on both fly rod and standard gear, long after sundown.

As the striped bass encounters more and more difficulty producing good year classes in estuarine spawning habitat that is shrinking or deteriorating, the bluefish is increasingly responsible for keeping the light-tackle marine sportfishing industry alive in the Northeast.

Occasionally, if you are fortunate, you will encounter Atlantic bonito feeding with bluefish. They are a splendid fly-rod fishing quarry, not only because they are incredibly strong and swift—a typical bonito will take out twice as much line as a blue of similar size—but also because the fly is the best offering I have ever found for them. They are caught on a wide variety of small plugs, spoons and bait, the latter including both sand eels and tinker mackerel, but they seem to favor

the fly above all other artificials. They can be fantastically whimsical and selective. You might catch two fish on two casts with a topwater plug, then flail away the rest of the day without a follow. This is not usually the case when flies are used. It is important to get your fly over breaking fish, perhaps because they move about so rapidly.

A final word of advice—hinted at before—for the saltwater fly rodder: Bring along your conventional or spinning gear when you set forth on a trip, because several days might go by before everything is right for your favorite endeavor, and it is depressing, to me at least, to watch other anglers catch fish while I go empty-handed. One cannot expect to have the earth turn every time one beds down with one's sweetheart or spouse, and apocalyptic pleasures cannot be fully comprehended or savored without an ample ration of simpler delights. 





*Fish such as this one do not fall to the fly often,  
but the author's fish is a Pennsylvania brown-trout record. Photos by Paul Blankenhorn.*





*Some of the author's night-fishing flies. They are designed to move water when fished and move properly through the water. Large fish sense their movement and attack.*

the riffles there, or to the shallows at the tails of the pools. If you are aware of this behavior, you can plan your fishing during daylight hours.

The questions you ask yourself in planning during daylight hours for a nighttime fishing expedition are: How will I fish the currents? How can I wade into casting position safely and with the least disturbance to the fish? Where are the overhanging obstructions to casting the fly, and how can I avoid them come nightfall? Many times heavy foliage masks the best night-fishing pools, and some of them are nearly impossible to fish, even during daylight hours. But these same hard-to-reach pools hold good fish because they are nearly inaccessible to fishermen, and the movement of the large browns out to their extremities as night falls makes them worth the exploration effort. In preparation for night fishing, search out locations that will permit rod movement for short roll-casts. Keep in mind which bank has the best currents, and then plan to work them slowly with short down-and-across casts that swing tight to the bank.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES vary in night fly-fishing. Often when fishing the head of a particular pool, I'll fish the riffles first with a straight downstream cast, letting the flies swing and move in the current. Then I retrieve with a very slow hand-twist of the line and an occasional slight twitch of the rod tip. Remember that night-feeding trout are slow and deliberate in their movements. Seldom will you get a headlong rush or the explosive strike that makes daylight fishing so exciting. Sometimes as you lift your fly in a riffle, a trout

will take it in a hurry, but that is the exception. In most cases night-feeding browns will simply inhale the fly and stop it.

If you're fishing down and across a pool, swing the rod tip with the line. As in nymph-fishing technique, this keeps the belly out of the line, and it maintains a tight line between you and the fly, a necessity if you want to hook fish, and imperative if you want to feel those big wet flies bouncing on the bottom, where they should be. If you want to add movement to your flies, simply lift the rod tip occasionally. Maintain a continuous, but slow, hand-twist retrieve and swing your rod tip with your flies until they straighten out below you. When you feel that the flies have stopped, don't pick them up immediately—a good fish may have followed your fly for some distance. Gradually raise the rod tip until the flies are airborne, ready for the next cast.

Once you have covered an area by working the riffles and pocket water at the head of the pool and the shallow flats at its tail, you may be tempted to move on to another pool. I try to cover no more than three areas in one night, however, and I fish each area thoroughly. I fish through the tail of a pool two or three times, then I sit on a rock and have a cup of coffee or sandwich, resting the water for another run. Oftentimes I have struck good fish in the last pass through a pool.

WATER TEMPERATURES ARE extremely important to trout fishing, whether it's day or night. And night fishermen who are unaware of this temperature effect on angling are limiting their chances of success. Many streams



have marginal temperature regimes for trout, and as the sun warms the water during daylight hours, the trout migrate to find comfort, and in some cases survival. What this means for the night fisherman is that he should find and fish the cool-water spots in the stream or he should work the deep pools where the water stratifies and the deeper water may be ten to twenty degrees colder than the surface.

As night falls the surface-water temperatures cool. On many occasions upon arriving at a stream at 9 P.M. I've found water temperatures at seventy degrees Fahrenheit or higher. But by midnight the water temperature has dropped five degrees and the temperature change has stirred sluggish trout into feeding activity. Seldom have I found large fish feeding at night in water exceeding seventy-five degrees, and if they feed at all, it will be in the riffly water, where they have more oxygen than in still water. Ideal feeding temperatures range from sixty-five to seventy degrees, but the optimum temperatures for feeding trout lie between sixty and sixty-seven degrees. On many night-fishing excursions I have done poorly before midnight, and then after a coffee break, which allowed time for the water temperatures to drop two or three degrees, I caught fish.

DON'T EXPECT INSTANT success when you begin night fishing for the first time. As with other fishing techniques, preparation, practice and experience on the stream are necessary to acquire the skills of the sport. In the end, perseverance—the traditional character strength of all effective fly fishermen—is your best asset. The nights I've gone fishless far outnumber the successful ones.

Looking back over my experience with night fishing, I find that I have had little success when moonlight was on the water. The darkest phase of the moon is best. But if you have to fish on a moonlit night, your best bet is between 3 A.M. and 5 A.M., the period when the moonlight is of lowest intensity. Also, on those moonlit nights I try to fish the heavily shaded patches of water. I've taken fish in moonlight, but it's the exception. Other conditions that seem to turn off the trout at night are cold winds or heavy fogs.

An understanding of how large trout feed is another aspect of behavior that may help you in your night fishing. I've found that when the big trout feed they consume large things, such as ten-inch suckers, eight-inch trout, crayfish the size of young lobsters and other handsome mouthfuls. The feeding spree of a large brown trout may last for only a few minutes, but during that brief frenzy he may grab enough food to keep his stomach contented for a long period. The feeding behavior of the large trout—their preference for large foods—is what makes them vulnerable to large artificials, such as big streamers.

On large streams or rivers it takes time to locate specific feeding zones. For instance, there may be definite characteristics that attract the large trout, such as a particular riffle or a snag at the head or tail of a pool, and you will have to spend time searching for these stream

features, as well as the trout that use them, as part of your night-fishing planning during daylight hours. Study the broken water and the pockets and know how to get to them safely when you cannot see but must feel your way.

This preplanning for night fishing is absolutely essential, both to your success at night and your physical safety. If you don't know the water and surroundings, pitch-black conditions are a poor time for exploration. So wade pools when you can see; get the feel of, and learn, the bottom—where the drop-offs are and what the shorelines are like for night walking. Look at the shorelines and analyze them for casting. Ask yourself how much line you will need to cover an area and how you can position yourself to cover the water most effectively when casting to the feeding lies that you will fish come darkness. Once you have determined where the overhead obstructions are, such as hemlock boughs, ask yourself how tight your casting loop must be to shoot back under them. Notice also the submerged cover that lies close to the currents, for a trout will use the cover for overhead protection during daylight hours, and he will run to it on that first charge after accepting your offering.

Of course, the same lessons in daylight preparation can be applied to your night-fishing equipment. I check my flashlight batteries, fly boxes, terminal tackle and knots. If preparedness is important during daylight fly-fishing, it is doubly so in darkness.

My fly-rod choice for night fishing is a rod long enough (eight to nine feet) and with sufficient backbone to lift a pair of 2/0 wet flies skyward and control an ample length of line for casting. I use an eight-foot graphite and a six-foot leader tapered from .019-inch to a ten-pound-test tippet. At night fish aren't leader shy, so why risk losing a trophy?

As for flies, I've already mentioned that the streamers speak to the large fish. I also believe that if you want the big trout then you need a fly from #4 to 2/0. Experience tells me that the #6 to #8 flies are fine if you want ten-inch trout, but for the big trout you need the big flies at night.

Perhaps as important as the fly size is its design. I build two characteristics into a fly for night fishing. The fly must move water, and it must move properly in water. The reason for these two characteristics in fly design is that fish *feel* movement in water. They are sensitive to the movement through the shockwaves that the fly transmits to the water when it is moved. Once they sense the movement of the artificial, the trout will instinctively move to it. When they see life-like movement through the water, they strike.

The night I took my large brown was the conclusion of a quest for a trophy fish. Perhaps the night-fishing understandings and techniques will lead you on the same quest, and to a similar conclusion. Anyway, they will give you a feeling for the night fisherman's world. Few fly fishermen are called to this aspect of our sport, but for those who try it the trophy fish are their reward.





*An understanding of the damselfly's life cycle can improve  
your angling because trout keep their eyes open for*

# Damsels in Distress

GARY A. BORGER

I REMEMBER HAVING cursed the wind on many past occasions, but now I wanted it to blow. My wish was soon realized; a mountain breeze ruffled the lake and gusted suddenly, causing the pond weed to flutter. I stripped line from the reel and watched. There they were—head and tail rises just beyond the weeds; big trout feeding greedily. I dropped the fly several feet ahead of a rise, and the fish rolled up and was hooked. When the wind stopped, so did the feeding, but with each new gust I took several fine trout on the adult damselfly pattern.

These insects belong to the order Odonata. The oldest order of insects, its members were here to see the rise and fall of those great land leviathans, the dinosaurs. The Odonata, too, were big in those days. Fossils with 27-inch wingspans have been found. Today's versions are much smaller but are still sizable insects. Both damselflies and dragonflies belong to this order. The damselflies are separated and placed in the suborder Zygoptera.

THE LIFE CYCLE of the damselfly is incomplete; that is, there are only nymphal and adult stages. The nymphs are aquatic and are quite easily recognized. Three paddle-shape gills occur at the end of the long, slender abdomen. The short, husky thorax bears the wing pads and long, rangy legs. The head is short, but the bulging compound eyes make it wider than the thorax. Nymphal color is variable, not only from species to species, but to some degree between individuals. The body color

can change somewhat to match more closely the color of the bottom the insect inhabits, but most nymphs are shades of olive, olive brown, tan or purplish brown. Overall size ranges from 15 to 30 millimeters.

Damselflies are denizens of ponds, small lakes and quiet-water areas of streams and large lakes. They are crawlers or swimmers, moving about near aquatic plants and bottom trash in search of food. Damselfly nymphs are not at all as dainty in their feeding habits as their name might suggest. In fact, they are fierce predators, attacking and devouring small species of insects, worms, mollusks and crustaceans.

Most damselflies have a one-year life cycle, but in several prolific subspecies there can be two or more broods per summer. At maturity, the nymphs leave the protection of the vegetation or bottom trash and migrate to shore, swimming along just under the surface. They use the paddlelike gills to aid in propulsion, wiggling their bodies in a most minnowlike fashion. The nymph swims a foot or so, then stops and rests for a few moments before repeating the process. The legs are held out to the sides as the organism swims. The wiggle must be most provocative to the trout, for the fish often roll and splash as they rush to grab the migrating nymphs.

The actual date of hatching varies with the species and with elevation and latitude. Generally speaking, June and July are the prime months to experience the damselfly emergence.

Once they reach shore, or a protruding stump or boulder, they crawl stiff-legged from the water and, in preparation for hatching, fasten their feet to any handy, vertical surface. I've even had them climb out on me and hatch on my vest. As the nymphal husk dries, it

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GARY BORGER is Midwest Division Director of Fenwick's fly-fishing schools. He lives in Wausau, Wisconsin. His last contribution to FFM, "The Hair Leg Woolly Worm," appeared in Volume 10, Number 5.



## ALTERNATIVE NYMPHS

*Tied by Dave McNeese*

### WATER BOATMEN



*Corixid*



*Corixa Bug*



*Diving Water Boatman*



*Water Boatman*

### BACKSWIMMERS



*Notonectid*



*Backswimmer*



*Grouse Winged Backswimmer*

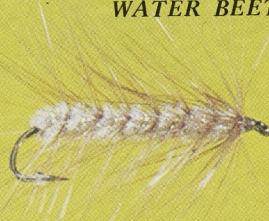


*Diving Notonectid*

### WATER BEETLE LARVAE



*Olive Woolly Worm*



*Tan Woolly Worm*



*Brown Woolly Worm*



*Black Woolly Worm*



*Brown Diving Beetle Larva*



*Black Diving Beetle Larva*



*Olive Diving Beetle Larva*

### LEECHES



*Black Snake*



*Troth's Leech*



*Whitlock Leech*

### SCUDS



*Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear*



*Nyerge's Nymph*



*Jameson Shrimp*



*Trueblood Shrimp*



*Brown Scud*

### SOWBUGS



*Cress Bug (McNeese)*



*Cress Bug (Kaufmann)*



*American Sowbug*



*Cress Bug (Shenk)*



# Limited Edition Print



## SUMMER STEELHEAD

*A painting by Grant Linn*

To those who have hooked one, the steelhead is an unforgettable fish. Washington artist Grant Linn has captured a live Washougal River summer steelhead in a beautiful oil painting. The Washougal River summer steelhead is a symbolic race in that its progeny have been established in Puget Sound, southwest Washington, Oregon and California rivers—many of which never contained summer steelhead before.

Grant Linn is an accomplished fisherman and painter and thus has been able to capture the true subtleties of life, water reflection and color in this most descriptive painting.

Using the finest printing processes available and a canvas-like paper we are reproducing a limited number of quality prints fully capturing the fine details of the original. The image size of the print is sixteen by twenty inches, and there is an additional margin on all sides for framing. Only four hundred prints will be signed, numbered and embossed with a seal by Grant Linn. These collector's pieces are available for thirty dollars each. An additional one thousand six hundred unsigned prints are available for ten dollars each.

Frank W. Amato

☐ Please send me a signed, numbered and seal embossed print for \$30.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling.

☐ Please send me the unsigned print for \$10.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling.

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State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

FRANK AMATO PUBLICATIONS  
P.O. Box 02112, Portland, Oregon 97202

to replenish it. This need, and their feeding habits, confine them to shallow areas in or near vegetation. They will be found along the quiet, weedy margins of streams and the shorelines of lakes. This margin habitat outlines the best places to fish *corixid* imitations. Their oar-like swimming behavior suggests the best manner of presentation: They should be fished with short darts or strips to simulate their natural movements.

*Corixid* colors vary from light to dark tan or green, depending on the color of the predominant streamside cover.

## WATER BOATMAN IMITATIONS

### CORIXID (Hafele and Hughes)

Hook: 3906B, Nos. 16-20.

Thread: Dark olive or tan.

Weight: None; or three to four turns of lead equal in diameter to hook shank.

Body: Loose olive or tan dubbing, with guard hairs.

Head: Dark olive or tan thread.

### CORIXA BUG (Ernest Schwiebert)

Hook: 3906B, Nos. 14-16.

Thread: Dark brown.

Tails: Two short pheasant tail fibers.

Body: Dark brownish-gray hare's mask.

Ribbing: Fine oval silver tinsel.

Thorax: Dark hare's mask with guard hairs.

Wingcases: Mottled brown turkey wing section over body.

Swimmer Legs: Two pheasant tail fibers tied between thorax and body.

Legs: Thorax dubbing guard hairs suggest legs.

Head: Dark brown nylon; amber lacquer on back of head.

## DIVING WATER BOATMAN

(Gary LaFontaine)

Hook: Mustad 94840, Nos. 14-18.

Thread: Brown.

Back: Pheasant tail fibers, pulled over top of entire fly.

Body: Rear 1/3, spun deer hair, clipped short; front 2/3, gold sparkle yarn, dubbed shaggily.

Legs: One pheasant tail fiber on either side.

Weight: 0.011 inch lead wire wrapped over forward 1/2 of hook.

## WATER BOATMAN (Everett Caryl, Sr.)

Hook: 3906B, No. 10.

Tail: Short, sparse, soft brown partridge or turkey feathers.

Body: Dubbed reddish-tan red fox, shaped and tapered over lead wire.

Back: Section from a metallic, blue-black, drake mallard secondary



Entomological oddities take the limelight where  
and when the standard cast of characters fails.

# Invisible Hatches

Rick Hafele and Dave Hughes



Mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies catch the eye of the fly fisherman. They are often visible as he wades a stream or casts to the shoreline of a lake. They are also very visible in fly fishing literature. One who reads about trout fishing might search the bookshelves and peruse the periodicals of angling without finding more than occasional mention of other aquatic insects.

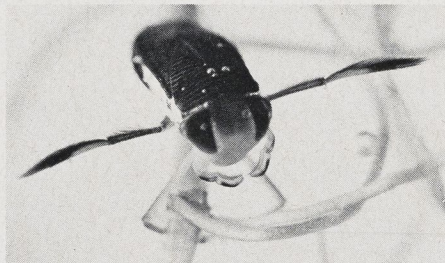
But trout cannot read the books. Nor can they be on a stream or lake only when there are mayflies emerging, caddisflies ovipositing, or stoneflies tumbling clumsily into the water from streamside foliage. They must make their living the year around. When the big three are unavailable they must turn to other forms of feed. The wise angler is aware of these times. He recognizes when the fish are not necessarily "off their feed," but are turning toward less visible organisms to round out their diets.

Some of these minor morsels take on great importance at certain times of the year including the doldrums of summer and the frigid off season. Water bugs (order: *Hemiptera*) overwinter in the adult stages and may well be the dominant feed for pond and lake trout throughout the colder months. The larvae of water beetles (order: *Coleoptera*) are occasionally more available to trout than the better known insects. One who recognizes their characteristics and behavior may catch fish on an otherwise unproductive day. Leeches, the little understood parasites of the underwater world, are often preferred by trout over their primary sources of feed, especially during the dog days of summer. Sowbugs (order: *Isopoda*), the clumsy clamberers which so closely re-

semble their terrestrial namesakes, often provide meals when no other feed is available. Sowbugs are a trout staple in the fall. And the ubiquitous scud (order *Amphipoda*), a crustacean inhabiting almost all of our lakes, impoundments, and slow flowing rivers, is so abundant in many waters that it is a staple in the trout's diet year around. This prolific little comedian, swimming upside down and seemingly directionless, with its myriad of legs paddling furiously, is often the main food source in waters producing some of the largest fish in the West.

These invisible hatches have two things in common. First, they live out their life cycles under water, thus they are more visible to the trout, though less visible to the trouter. Second, they are at times the predominant food form in their underwater community, making them the most available prey for the trout. Often they are taken selectively, at which time the traditional fisherman with his traditional patterns will do well to connect with any fish at all, and will be very puzzled by any stomach analysis he may perform.

## Water Boatmen



"What are those fish doing in the shallows?" we wondered. It was cold; ice-rimmed mud crunched under our hip boots as we walked sagebrush banks of the river. Our breath came in steaming puffs as we puzzled over the trout working in the six-inch deep, weedy water.

"Let's take a look." A small aquarium net was swished through the vegetation.

"Look at those *corixids*. No wonder the trout are working next to shore." The meshes were alive with little dark-olive waterboatmen. It was plain that the trout had been probing the weed beds to dislodge them and feed on the escaping insects.

We trimmed our smallest Zug Bugs so only the peacock herl bodies were left on the hook. The water was clear and we could see the trout cruising furtively in the shallows. We cast the tiny flies well ahead of the fish and began twitching retrieves as the trout approached the flies. Their takes were eager and deliberate. Our makeshift imitations of the waterboatmen fooled many trout before a wind roughed up the water and we could no longer see the foraging fish. We kept two for the frying pan. Their stomachs revealed dozens of the same *corixids* we had collected in the seine.

Waterboatmen (order: *Hemiptera*, family: *Corixidae*) have adapted their three pairs of legs into an efficient and complementary set of appendages. The oar-like hind legs propel the insect under water much as a set of oars propels a boat above water. The middle legs have retained the function granted most aquatic insects — that of grasping whatever stick or plant stem the *corixid* has chosen for a rest. The front legs form a pair of scoops, with which the insect scrapes algae, ooze, and even tiny animal organisms from plants into its mouthparts. A piercing beak also enables the *corixid* to penetrate individual plant cells to suck out the nutrients contained within the cell.

*Corixids* depend on surface air for their supply of oxygen. They take the air under water with them, trapped in a bubble under their shell-like hind wings. As the oxygen is used out of the bubble they are forced to return to the surface





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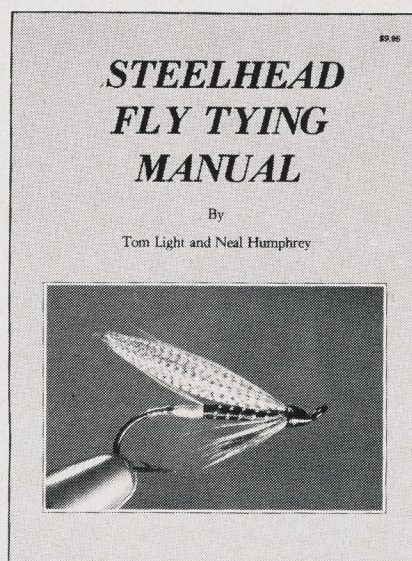
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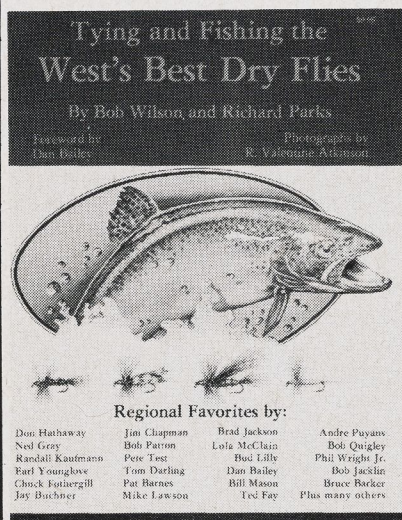
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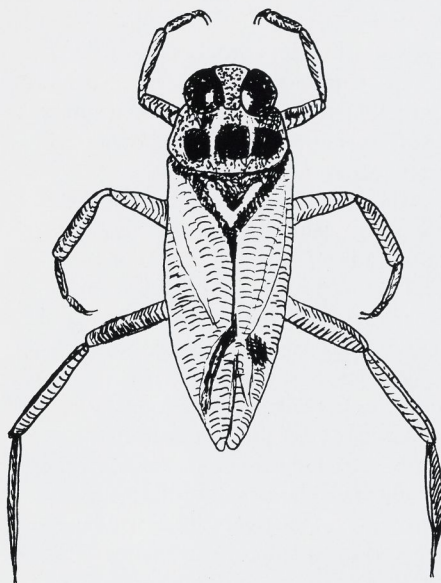
July-August '79 □ 55



wing feather, tied in at tail then pulled forward over body and tied off at head.

**Paddles:** Two flues from leading edge of a Canadian goose wing feather, dressed to flare out on each side slightly.

## Backswimmers



The private, five-acre irrigation pond nestled in a draw on the wind-swept wheat lands above the Deschutes. A thin row of poplars below the earthen dam was not enough to cut the wind. It was January, a bitter cold day. Ice formed in our guides after every few casts. The water's surface was ruffled. As we stood with our hands in our pockets and shoulders hunched against the wind, we could see occasional boils as large trout took something just under the surface.

The rises were sporadic, but their vigor suggested the trout were after something large, something that could escape rapidly. Such rises often indicate the presence of backswimmers, relatives of the peaceful waterboatmen.

The backswimmers (order: *Hemiptera*, family: *Notonectidae*) are very similar in shape to their *corixid* cousins. There are two major differences. First, nature has given them the peculiar habit of swimming upside down. Second, they are highly predacious. Their front legs are designed to grasp prey. Their piercing mouthparts inject enzymes which turn the tissues of their prey into juices, which are then sucked up through the backswimmer's beak. Because they are predacious they are not as closely associated with shorelines as the waterboatmen. They are found occasionally in open water, although their preferred

habitat is the weedy edges inhabited by their prey.

The water of the irrigation pond was murky: We knew that even with the correct pattern the chances of hooking fish would be slim. But we had to find the cause for the rises.

We chose fat patterns to suggest the shape of the backswimmers. We cast dry lines and short leaders to keep them near the surface. It was a matter of making cast after cast, covering the water in disciplined arcs. The flies were brought back with short, quick strips, then shot back into the wind for another retrieve. After several minutes, just before it was time to knock ice out of guides, there was a swirl and determined pull on the fly. The take was solid: the fish hooked itself. After a brief fight, a 15-inch rainbow was landed.

A stomach analysis confirmed our hunch. There were more than fifty olive-green backswimmers packed tightly in the trout's stomach. With the point proven, we retreated to the heated trailer and watched through the window as a January squall lashed the pond. The sporadic rises stopped.

Like waterboatmen, backswimmers depend on surface air and are seldom more than a couple of feet below the

surface. Often we have seen vicious sub-surface swirls in small lakes and ponds; more often than not they have been caused by trout taking backswimmers under the surface film.

Both *corixids* and *notonectids* overwinter as adults and lay their eggs in the spring. Their presence as mature insects, when other orders are in their smaller stages, makes these water bugs very important prototypes for flies during the cold fall, winter, and spring months.

### BACKSWIMMER IMITATIONS

**NOTONECTID** (Hafele and Hughes)

Hook: 3906B, Nos. 16-20.

Thread: Dark olive or white.

Weight: None; or three or four turns of lead wire.

Body: Dark olive or dirty white loose dubbing.

Head: Dark olive or white thread.

**BACKSWIMMER** (Al Troth)

Hook: 7957BX, Nos. 10-14.

Thread: Olive.

Shellback: Brown mottled turkey or substitute.

Legs: Dyed olive turkey quill fibers taken from the back of the flight quill and tied in at each side of body.

Body: Olive tinsel chenille.

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### GROUSE WINGED BACKSWIMMER

(Ernest Schwiebert)

Hook: 3906B, Nos. 12-16.

Thread: Dark brown.

Tails: Two pheasant-tail fibers tied short.

Body: Dark hare's mask roughly dubbed with guard hairs intact, on olive silk.

Wingcases: Dark mottled feather tied in at hook bend and pulled over entire body like a wingcase, with light brown lacquer markings to suggest naturals.

### DIVING NOTONECTID (Dave McNeese)

Hook: 94840, Nos. 14-18.

Thread: Brown.

Underbody: Narrow, clear plastic strip, over white deer hair fibers ribbed with gray thread. These are tied under the hook bend. After body is dubbed, deer hair is pulled forward and ribbed with thread. Then plastic is pulled forward and tied behind hook eye.

Shellback: Dark goose quill section.

Body: Muskrat fur.

Legs: Pheasant tail fibers.

### Water Beetle Larvae



The tiny beaver pond was rimmed by alders and brooding hemlocks. Massive cedar deadfalls lay on the water and provided casting platforms for the few anglers who knew their way to the pond. It was a strange, blustery late-summer day. No insects were hatching. The pond showed no signs of life; no fish dimpled its surface.

There is only one thing to do on a day like this: Cast, retrieve, and cast again. To many people there is only one fly to cast on a day like this: the Olive Woolly Worm. We cast woolly worms into the wind and hand-twist retrieved them above the weed beds and submerged logs. The results were

not of storytelling proportions, but throughout the mid-morning and afternoon there were several sullen tugs at the end of our lines. When we finally decided to quit we had released enough fish to keep us happy and kept enough to keep us fed. The autopsies justified our choice of the Olive Woolly Worm. There were one or two larvae of the beetle family Dytiscidae in each of the trout's stomachs.

Water beetles (order: Coleoptera) are little understood insects. There are over 350 species in the western states. Many species may not even be described or named yet.

The larval stages of the water beetles are usually elongated and tapered at both ends. They range in color from pale green through tan and brown. Sizes vary from too small to accurately match, to some that are over an inch long. Most water beetle larvae clamber about in the sub-aquatic vegetation. While many are grazers, feeding on the plants that hide them, others are fierce predators. The larvae of dytiscids, known as water tigers, lie in wait in the vegetation to trap unsuspecting Callibaetis mayfly nymphs and scuttling scuds.

It is not correct to say that the woolly worm is an imitation of water beetle larvae. It is, however, safe to say that part of the effectiveness of the woolly worm rests in its resemblance to immature beetles. The prevalence of these insects helps make woolly worms great explorer patterns.

Fishing literature has given no mention to the adults of the water beetles. Our own fishing experience, while turning up occasional adults in stomach samples, has shown no situation in which a pattern for an adult water beetle would be a worthwhile addition to our fly boxes. We do not doubt the future may show a need for these patterns.

### WATER BEETLE LARVAE IMITATIONS OLIVE WOOLLY WORM

Hook: 79580, Nos. 8-14.

Thread: Olive.

Hackle: Ginger, palmered.

Rib: Fine gold tinsel.

Body: Olive chenille.

Head: Olive thread.

### TAN WOOLLY WORM

Hook: 79580, Nos. 8-14.

Thread: Tan.

Hackle: Ginger, palmered.

Rib: Fine gold tinsel.

Body: Tan chenille.

Head: Tan thread.



### **BROWN WOOLLY WORM**

Hook: 79580, Nos. 8-14.

Thread: Brown.

Hackle: Brown.

Rib: Fine gold tinsel.

Body: Brown chenille.

Head: Brown thread.

### **BLACK WOOLLY WORM**

Hook: 79580, Nos. 8-14.

Thread: Black.

Hackle: Grizzly, palmered.

Rib: Fine gold tinsel.

Body: Black chenille.

Head: Black thread.

### **BROWN DIVING BEETLE LARVA**

(Ernest Schwiebert)

Hook: 79580, Nos. 10-14.

Thread: Pale olive.

Tails: Two pale olive dyed hackle points, short.

Body: Pale olive fur mixed with muskrat.

Ribbing: Fine oval tinsel.

Thorax: Pale olive fur mixed with muskrat, with a pale olive gray goose quill section tied down over the thorax like a wingcase.

Legs: Pale grayish dun hen hackle tied palmer-style along thorax.

Head: Pale olive thread.

### **BLACK DIVING BEETLE LARVA**

(Ernest Schwiebert)

Hook: 9672, Nos. 12-16.

Thread: Black.

Tails: Two iron-blue dun hackle points, short.

Body: Dark brownish black hare's mask dubbing.

Ribbing: Fine oval silver tinsel.

Thorax: Dark brownish black hare's mask dubbing with a slate-colored goose quill section tied over the thorax like a wingcase.

Legs: Iron-blue dun hen hackles palmered along thorax.

Head: Black thread.

### **OLIVE DIVING BEETLE LARVA**

(Ernest Schwiebert)

Hook: 9672, Nos. 12-14.

Nylon: Dark olive.

Tails: Two dirty olive gray hackle points, short.

Body: Dirty olive gray dubbing on olive silk, ribbed with a roughly dubbed wrapping of hare's mask guard hairs.

Thorax: Dubbed like body with a brown mottled turkey quill section dyed olive tied over the thorax like a wingcase.

Legs: Dirty olive gray hen hackle palmer-tied along thorax.

Head: Dark olive nylon.

### **Leeches**

Leeches are perhaps as attractive to fish as they are unattractive to fishermen. Though their use as blood-letters in the cure of ancient ailments has become a footnote of history, their use as prototypes for flies is on the increase.

There is little about leeches in the literature of fly fishing. One excellent source of information about them is Dr. Robert Pennak's *Fresh Water Invertebrates of the United States*. He notes that there are forty-four known species of leeches (class: *Hirudinea*) in the United States. These inhabit ponds, marshes, lakes, and slow streams. They are found along the shorelines in water from one to six feet deep. Most species are predators or scavengers; only a few are blood suckers.

They feed mostly on snails and fish, and are primarily nocturnal, which is why most fishermen seldom see them. They range in size from a diminutive quarter inch to a scary eighteen inches. Most leeches move on the substrate with a motion similar to that of inch worms, though some are excellent swimmers.

### **LEECH IMITATIONS**

#### **TROTH'S LEECH (Al Troth)**

Hook: 79580, No. 4.

Thread: Black.

Tail: Dark brown marabou.

Body: Dark brown marabou; two to three marabou feathers palmered as hackle, then clipped on top and bottom.

#### **WHITLOCK LEECH (Dave Whitlock)**

Hook: 79580, Nos. 4-6, bent upward.

Thread: Black.

Tail: Black marabou.

Body: Black seal fur, dubbed loosely,

then picked out. Tapered front to back.

### **BLACK SNAKE**

Hook: 9672, Nos. 2-8.

Thread: Black.

Tail: Red hackle fibers.

Body: Black chenille.

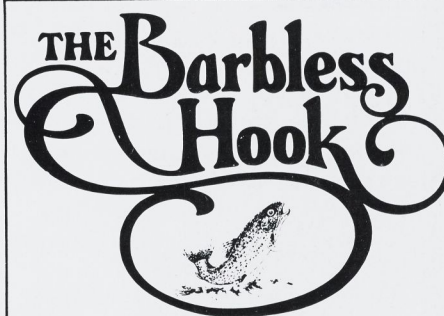
Wing: Black marabou.

Topping: Peacock herl.

### **Scuds**



We dead-drifted the small Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear nymphs teasingly through the weedy, glass-clear currents. It was patient, disciplined fishing as we probed each pocket and holding lie with careful casts and drag free drifts. We could see no trout working, but occasionally one would ghost out of the weed banks to stop our nymphs as they tumbled through their drifts. The thudding



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takes and powerful fights were clearly visible in the crystal waters. We released many trout up to two pounds before deciding to find out what was behind their greedy acceptance of the Hare's Ear.

We held the kick net below a bed of algae trailing in the currents. After shuffling our feet for a few moments we lifted the net and examined its meshes. Hundreds of tan and light green scuds struggled in the net. The tan scuds gave us our answer. The Hare's Ear resembled them closely in size, shape, and color. We washed the net in the currents and watched the scuds pursue their various comical and aimless paths back to the sheltering weed beds.

Scuds (Order: *Amphipoda*) are prolific in alkaline waters. Desert impoundments and arid-country rivers are prime habitat for these crustaceans. They are a favorite feed for trout wherever they exist. In some waters, such as Oregon's Davis Lake, Washington's pot hole lakes, and the Kamloops lakes of British Columbia, they are the primary reason for the rapid growth of the fish. The Railroad Ranch section of the famous Henry's Fork of the Snake River has many demanding insect hatches, yet underlying these is a population of scuds that probably makes up a high percentage of the trout diet.

Scuds are crustaceans. They can be distinguished from insects by the presence of jointed appendages on more than three segments. Insects have legs only on the three thoracic segments. Scuds have legs under the thorax and jointed swimming appendages under the abdominal segments. They are used in a dog-paddling type of motion, with the scud propelled through the water on its side or back. They seem to be rulerless, swimming aimlessly until they bump into something, then either rest-

ing on it or rebounding off in another aimless direction.

Scud patterns should be fished without action in moving water. In lakes and ponds they should be allowed to sink to the level of the weeds and cruising fish, then hand-twist retrieved only fast enough to keep them from fouling in the vegetation.

#### SCUD IMITATIONS

##### GOLD RIBBED HARE'S EAR

(Jack Dennis)

Hook: 3906, Nos. 10-18.

Thread: Tan.

Tail: Guard hair fibers from English hare's ear.

Body: Spun dubbed English hare's ear fur with guard.

Ribbing: Fine gold wire.

Thorax: Thicker and heavier dubbed hare's ear fur.

##### NYERGES' NYMPH (Gil Nyerges)

Hook: 94840, No. 10.

Body: Dark olive chenille.

Hackle: Brown, palmered and trimmed on top and sides.

##### JAMESON SHRIMP (Jameson)

Hook: 9672, Nos. 6-10.

Tail: Tips of deer hair used for shellback.

Body: Medium olive chenille.

Hackle: Brown, palmered, clipped on top and sides.

Shellback: Gray deer hair.

Rib: Black tying thread.

##### TRUEBLOOD SHRIMP

(Ted Trueblood)

Hook: 3906, Nos. 8-12.

Thread: Brown.

Tail: Brown partridge fibers.

Body: Otter and cream seal fur, mixed.

Legs: Brown partridge fibers tied in at throat.

##### BROWN SCUD (Randall Kaufmann)

Hook: 7957BX, Nos. 8-16.

Weight: Four to five turns of lead wire.

Shellback: Clear plastic strip.

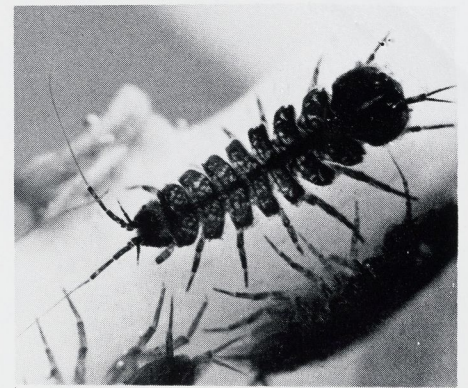
Rib: Copper wire.

Body: Seventy-five percent brown seal, twenty-five percent brown rabbit, mixed.

Beard Hackle: Brown hackle fibers (optional).

#### Sowbugs

The aquatic sowbug is a seldom encountered aquatic crustacean which closely resembles the terrestrial sowbug. It is easily recognized by its seven pairs of lateral legs and flattened, segmented body. It may be found in ponds, weedy rivers, and slow-flowing streams. Where favorable habitat exists the sowbug is



prolific and can be an important staple in the trout diet.

Patterns for sowbugs, also called cress bug, should imitate their clambering movements through the vegetation. Slow hand-twist retrieves just above weed beds are most effective.

#### SOWBUG IMITATIONS

##### CRESS BUG (Dave McNeese)

Hook: 3906, Nos. 10-14.

Thread: Black.

Body: Chopped and loosely dubbed sparkle yarn, clipped top and bottom.

Dorsal Stripe: Black felt pen marker.

##### CRESS BUG (Randall Kaufmann)

Hook: 3906, Nos. 8-14.

Thread: Gray.

Body: Mixture of 25% muskrat, 75% gray seal. Trip top close and taper the sides and underbody. Paint black stripe over the top with black felt marking pen.

##### AMERICAN SOWBUG (Dave Whitlock)

Hook: 3906, Nos. 12-18.

Thread: Gray.

Tail: Gray stripped goose tied very short.

Shellback: Clear plastic.

Rib: Gold wire over shellback and body.

Body: Gray dubbing.

Legs: Pick out dubbing along sides.

##### CRESS BUG (Ed Shenk)

Hook: 3906, Nos. 12-16.

Thread: Gray.

Body: Make a dubbing loop of mixed mink and muskrat fur. Wrap this onto the hook shank, forming a shaggy body. Trim the bottom of the fly flat. Trim the top and sides in a "flat oval," giving the shape of the natural.

Many fishless days can be turned around with a small understanding of these invisible hatches. When none of the well known insects are causing excitement among the fish, these lesser known insects, leeches, and crustaceans may be called upon to work their underwater magic.



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## ***The 'Dixa' in Ireland***

FOLLOWING Alec Pearlman's article "Let's call it the Dixa" (February issue), I would like to pass on some first-hand information. I am the diving officer of Mullingar Sub-Aqua Club and when diving in Lough Owel, a spring-fed lake, I have seen huge hatches of this fly in depths of 60 ft to 12 ft over a mud-bottom and weed. The Dixa season here is from August to September — about five to seven weeks. Judged by our findings over the last four years, fish feed only on the winged adults.

At Lough Sheelin, all fish feed on the pupa. The Dixa hatch is not as good as that at Owel. The fly hatches in water of 4 ft to 16 ft.

Lough Derravaragh: Fish feed on pupa and winged adults. Hatch is confined mostly to 50 ft mark over mud bottom.

Four patterns which kill fish feeding on Dixa are: Peter Ross

***July, 1978***



(February issue) looks both elegant and practical — with one very important exception. As an experienced wader in dangerous rocky streams, I can testify that the V-shaped thumb grip is inadequate and fatiguing. The conventional ski-grip is, up to now, far the best; and it could easily be fitted to Mr Simmond's's staff.

A ski-stick has a loop, about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in long, fastened to the very top of the handle. This loop passes over the back of the wrist, and the hand then grips the two strands of the loop (between the thumb and forefinger) against whatever handle is fitted. This makes a comfortable grip which is slip-proof, and does not tire the fingers. Even if, for whatever reason, the fingers lose their firm grip, the loop's support of the wrist will prevent a fall.

I use a ski-pole because, while hardly rustic in appearance, it is functional (and often available free, if you fish in summer near skiing hills). Mr Simmonds's suggested fitting of a rubber button on the end is good — for minimising underwater sound. But in many waters it would soon be pulled off

***Trout and Salmon***



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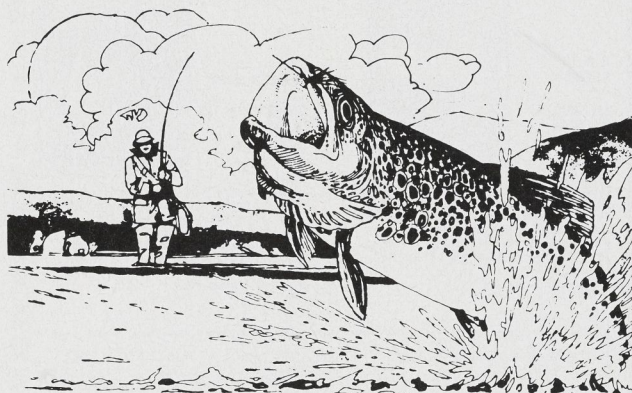
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## Letters

size 12, Sooty Olive 12, Pupa 12, and Grey Duster 10. I enclose some samples of natural fly.

The pupa appears silver grey under-water. I should like to know if Mr Pearlman's limit bags were rainbows. I have caught as many as 30 fish (brown trout) in one evening when fish have been feeding on Dixa.

**John O'Malley**

**Mullingar, Eire**

## So much to fight for . . .

I AM FED UP reading criticism of the Salmon and Trout Association and its embattled secretary, Jack Rose, especially when the same critics end by saying that they would become members if the association would do this or that.

Do these critics realise that without membership the Salmon and Trout Association is unable to do all that it would like to do? It has not got unlimited funds. Its paid staff consists entirely of Jack Rose, John Inglis, the field secretary, and two girl typists. Everything else is done voluntarily, without regard to personal costs.

Join, become active inside the association; criticising from the outside is no good whatever. We have so much to fight for.

**Gerald Stocks,**  
**Organiser, South Yorkshire Salmon**  
**and Trout Association**



coloured section is made on the plastic coating strip, it can be threaded on to the butt section of the leader and secured at the line tip with adhesive. The latex is very flexible and buoyant and passes through the rod-rings with little difficulty.

Keith Pickering

Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough

## Still chewing it over

WE WERE delighted to see Stan Pope's reply — and invitation — in the March issue of *Trout and Salmon*. It's good to feel wanted. One conjures up a mental picture of the entire Board of The Bristol Waterworks Company rubbing their hands with glee at the prospect of having us permanently in their catchment area! Perhaps a job could be found for us; our advice to fellow-anglers would be most beneficial — to the Bristol Waterworks Company! We look forward to our eventual, inevitable move. To conclude:

*Oh! Brother Stanley, we wish that we could do  
As you suggest and pack our bags and move straight down to  
Chew.*

*We're sure we'd catch a fish or two and one thing is for sure,  
You wouldn't get these rotten poems, which must be such a  
bore!*

Judy and Peter Stevens

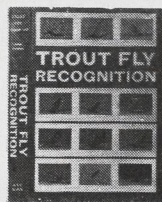
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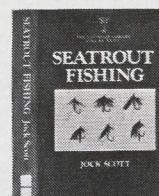


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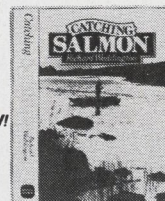


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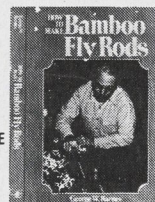


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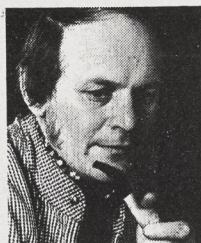
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# The White Mystery

**TAFF PRICE** looks at the life of the natural

IN MAKING my monthly selection of creatures, I have tried this year to choose animals, whether they be insects, molluscs, or crustacea, that have not received the coverage they justly deserve in angling writing. Most of them — with the exception of the alder (April's choice) — are barely given a mention; they are taken for granted with a they-are-there-because they-are-there sort of attitude.

In making my choice for August, this dour fishing month, I have decided to throw some light on an insect that to my knowledge has never been specifically mentioned before in any angling book. This of course could mean it has no angling importance whatsoever, or that nobody before has noticed the insect I have termed the 'White Mystery'.

If I say the insect I am about to describe is called *Acentropus niveus* it will not convey much to you; it did not to me either until I looked it up. Anyway, let's get on with the story and all will be revealed. August, 1976, was a scorcher. Those of us who were foolish enough to fish had meagre bags indeed. It was as though all the trout had disappeared with the spring rain, so difficult were they to find. Large reservoirs shrank to almost ponds, and forgotten roads, bridges, and buildings, rose like wet phoenix from the forgotten depths in the now-shallow waters.

We were more fortunate than most, for our little lake, which is fed by a small river, also has a couple of springs in the body of the lake so that the level did not drop to disaster level. One evening some of us were pitting our wits with the resident trout, who were concerned with sipping cursed caenis that were falling all over the lake.

If my memory serves me right, one or two fish were caught that night: foolish fish that were tempted to take large flies too grotesque to be mentioned here. I remained fishless, not for want of trying I might add, for I had thrown everything at them — dry flies, nymphs and lures. I was sorely tempted to throw my rod and reel at them, but settled instead for throwing in the towel and made my disgruntled way home.

The next morning I decided to return to the lake to collect some specimens of the spent caenis for photographic purposes. I launched my leaky boat (still haven't mended it yet) but for the life of me I

could not find a single caenis spinner on the lake's surface. I was more than perplexed for the evening before the trout had been preoccupied with hundreds of these little white flies and surely some must have been left to die in peace in the surface film.

The bow of my boat cut through a patch of weed and as it did so three or four white flies fluttered up briefly and returned to the floating weed. "At last," I thought, "some dying caenis spinners!" I dipped my net into the weed and caught a couple; my faith in Nature had been restored.

The 'bug'-hunter capturing the specific insect he is seeking has the same sort of feeling that an angler gets when fishing for a particular fish, and eventually catching it. It can be described as an inner glow of smug satisfaction.

Imagine my surprise as I transferred my little white insects from the net to the collecting jar, to find they were not caenis at all but a small white moth-like creature. These were the insects that the trout had been feeding on the night before. Had they, like me, mistaken them for caenis spinners, or did the trout know them for what they were, a rather common aquatic moth?

Unlike other aquatic pyralid moths

such as the Brown China Mark (*Nymphula nymphaeata*) or the Beautiful China Mark (*N. stagnata*), this insignificant moth has no common name — just the usual scientific mouthful which, in this moth's case is *Acentropus niveus*.

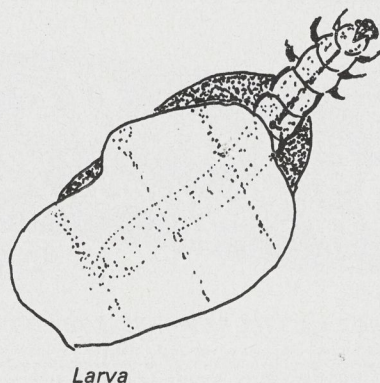
It is a small moth with a wingspan of about 8mm. The body is a yellowy golden-brown and its wings are white. It emerges from July to September and is usually most plentiful in August — it prefers hot weather. Books on moths would describe this insect as being locally abundant. It is found in all parts of the British Isles, on all stillwaters, and in particular those with a reasonable weed-growth.

One of the interesting features of this moth is the fact that it can have two female forms: one winged, and the other wingless. The wingless female, though common, is seldom seen; she prefers to remain below the surface of the water. These moths are able to swim by means of heavily hair-fringed middle and rear legs.

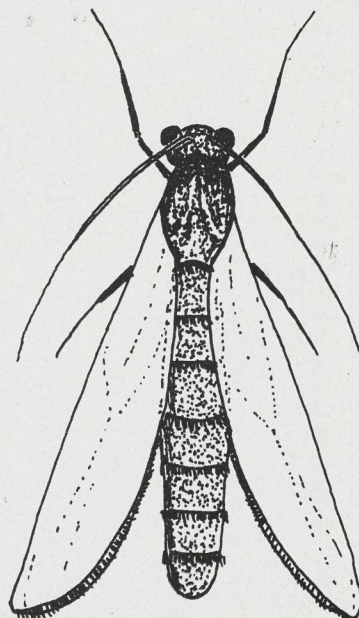
The male moth flies at dusk very close to the water. It tends to fly in small circles, often touching the surface with its feet and causing small wakes. Mating usually takes place on the surface of the water,

*Continued on page 55*

*Acentropus niveus*



Larva



Adult male



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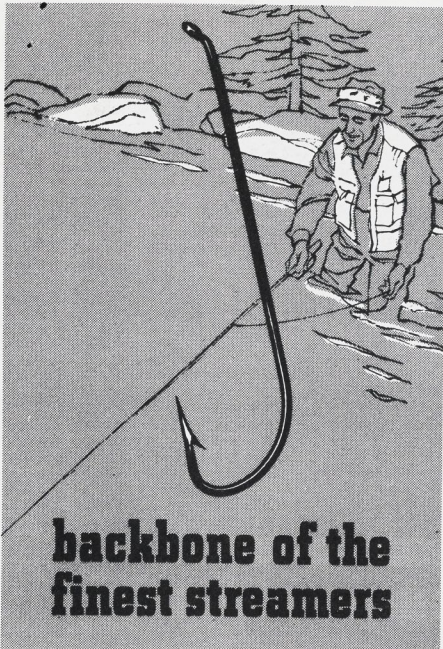
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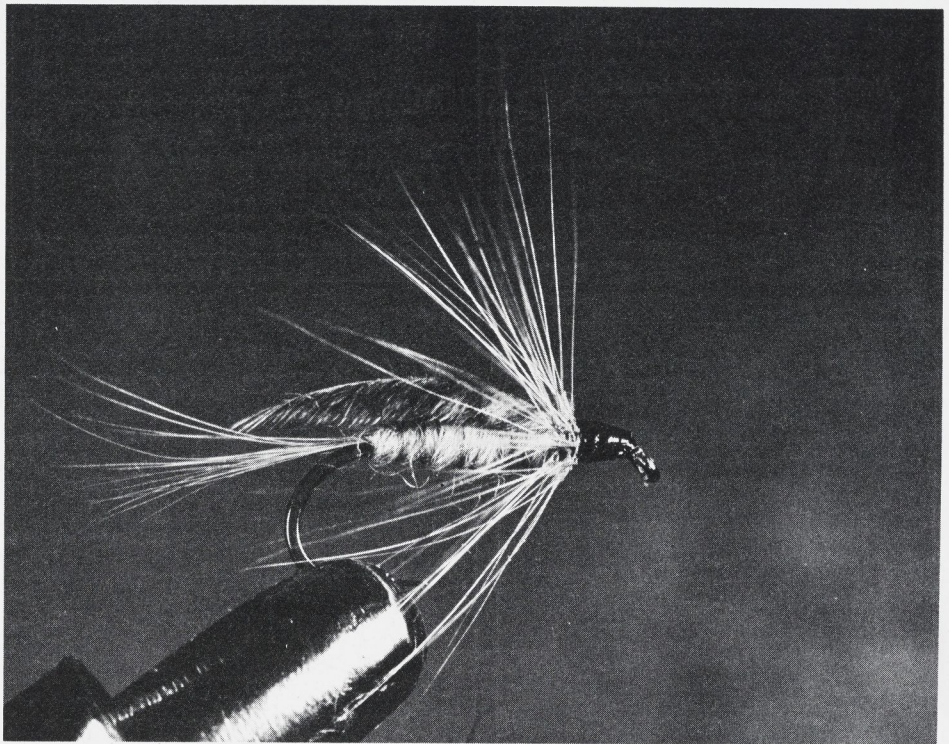
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# Fly Tier's Bench



Universal nymph for trout and panfish; see pages 40-41 for "how to tie" photos

## THE GIMP

Deadly tid-bit for  
nymph-hungry fish

**Larry Myhre**

I WAS STANDING on the bank of a small, north-central Nebraska trout stream admiring the lush growth of maple, walnut and willow trees which lined this small valley at the eastern edge of the semi-arid sandhills country. Brightly colored wild flowers dotted the landscape to add splashes of blue, white and yellow against the fertile green background. As always, I was somewhat awed by the natural beauty along this meandering, clearwater stream.

But the thought of trout fishing jolted me from my pastoral thoughts and I began to look at the stream from a trouting standpoint. A few feet upstream from where I stood the current had undercut a small walnut tree and toppled it into the water, creating a miniature brush pile across half of the stream. It looked like it could harbor a good trout.

The stream was about 30 feet wide at that point and the best way to approach it would be from the downstream side so I began stalking toward it.

At the stream's edge I dropped my fly, a small, grey nymph, into the water and fed out a couple feet of line, letting the dressing absorb water so the fly would sink. Then I began false casting upstream until enough line had been fed out to drop the nymph several feet upstream at the opposite bank.

Luckily, the cast was one of my good ones and the nymph drifted with the current toward the base of the fallen tree. Suddenly a dark form shot out from under the trunk and took the fly.

There was no mistaking this hit on a nymph. The line jerked and the fish came right out of the water in a two-foot leap as I instinctively lifted the rod to set the hook. The fish shot upstream in a short run, then turned zig-zagging between the banks and finally returned to the brush pile.

I cautiously kept a tight line and prodded into the brush until the fish zoomed out from under the snag and swam downstream. A few minutes later I brought him to the net. A hefty fourteen-inch brown and a real trophy for this stream.

Hanging from his jaw was the bedraggled nymph, unimpressively named the Gimp.

During my first season of using the Gimp about 30 per cent of my trout were taken on that fly. That's a fairly good percentage for one pattern for me; because, as an amateur fly tyer, I fish a lot of flies.

Although my fishing with the Gimp has been restricted to Midwestern trout streams, the Black Hills, and farm ponds (where it works equally well for bluegills);



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## THOUGHTS OF AN ENGLISH ANGLER

(Continued from page 34)

What does it all cost? A week in a reasonable hotel from, say, £28 upwards—and, of course, a long way upwards. Troutling, say £1 per day on the river, £3 or £4 per day on a reservoir with a boat. A rod on a good stream, one day a week throughout the season, would cost anywhere between £100 and £250. Salmon fishing can cost anything from £2 or £3 per day upwards—again, a very long way upwards indeed.

If one can rent a stretch of river for the season, or for a number of weeks, at least one knows that sooner or later the salmon will arrive, or the flies will hatch!

Flint's Orchard,  
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## BOOK REVIEWS

(Continued from page 7)

apprentice and master *hotelier* in France and America, as angler and writer, and as an outstanding rod designer. Less an autobiography than a rambling and instructive "gospel of fly fishing according to Ritz," the book is a delight from beginning to end. This edition (\$12.50) includes additional material added from the first edition. Numerous fascinating photographs of angling on exotic streams accompany the text of this large volume.

*Trout Streams* by Paul Needham (\$8.50) is a new edition of a semi-technical book originally published in 1938. Its reprinting is a real service to the fish conservationist and the serious angler who is attempting to become more deeply involved in conserving and rehabilitating our cold-water streams. To many readers Needham and this book are unknown, and we will devote a more definitive review to this important book in a future

issue.

These are only the first of several new angling developments from Winchester Press in New York City of interest to fly fishermen. We suggest that you check the Winchester Press ad elsewhere in this issue and obtain a list of their publications—including their fine arms and shooting books of interest to many of our readers. DDZ.

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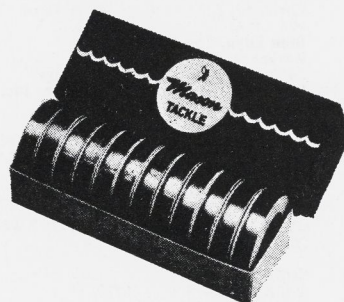
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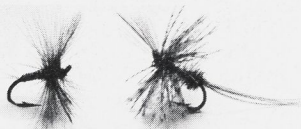
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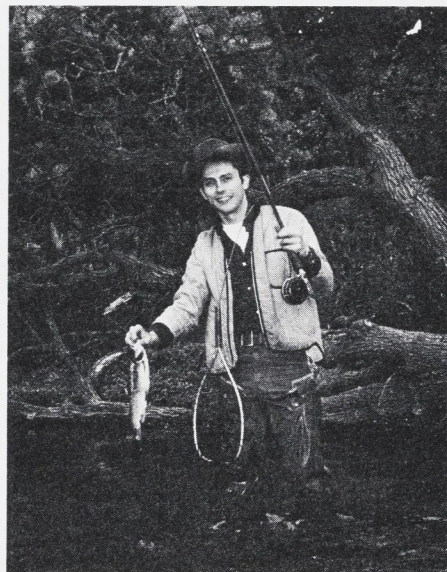
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Portrait of angler-fly tier Myhre and a well-Gimped brownie on Nebraska stream

the man who introduced me to Gimp fishing, Erwin D. Sias, editor of the Sioux City Journal and an outdoor writer, has fished it in other areas and has had reports from other individuals across the United States as well as Alaska. Every report has been favorable.

Originator of the Gimp pattern is professional fly tier and tackle maker Lacey E. Gee of Independence, Iowa. He is, to my knowledge, the only person producing the Gimp commercially at this time.

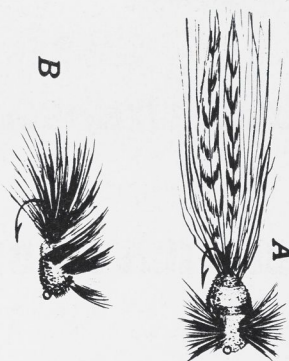
When I find a fly that is a good producer I try to determine why and I think the secret of the Gimp's success lies in not one, but three areas. First, most natural nymphs are flat-backed. Second, most nymphs are rather dark-colored with

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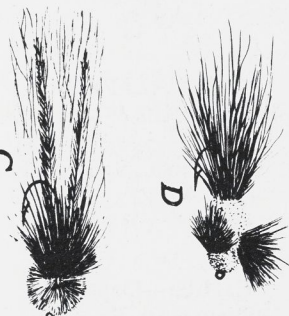
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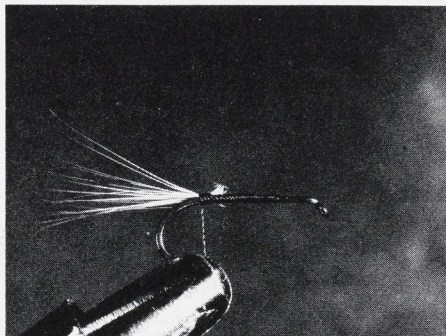
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brown backs and a grayish belly. Third, most of them are small in size. The Gimp fits these categories perfectly.

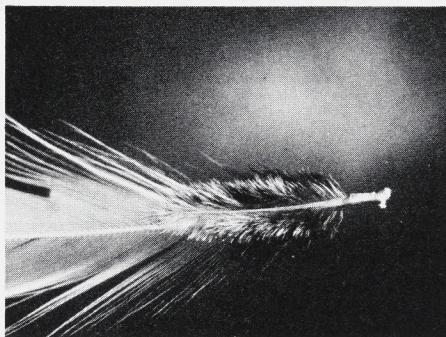
**T**YING THE GIMP is simplicity in itself. The materials are easy to obtain and most tying benches probably have enough on hand to tie several Gimps without purchasing another item. A blue dun or grey dun hackle feather and a strand of grey wool are needed for the tail, body and hackle. The proper feathers for the wings, however, are restricted to only two birds—the Amherst and Golden pheasants.

At the base of each Amherst or Golden pheasant tippet a small feather lies parallel to the quill. This tiny, downy feather is essential to the Gimp pattern. Amherst tippets are more satisfactory for this fly because they tend to be more uniform and broader than those taken from the Golden tippet. However, for flies in the smaller sizes the Golden tippet may be preferred.

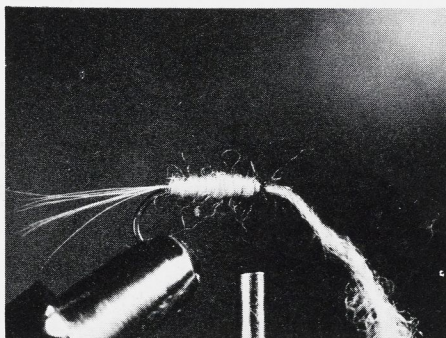
Selecting the proper hook should be a prime consideration in tying any fly and the Gimp is no exception. The hook should be 2X or 3X long shank with light



1. Tying on tail of the Gimp nymph



2. Feather from base of pheasant tippet



3. Wrap on gray wool for the body

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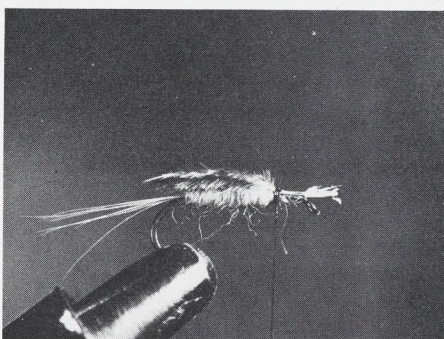
wire or lightweight hooks preferred for  
shallow water fishing as they allow the  
nymph to be fished with the maximum of  
life or action. For deep-water fishing,  
regular-weight wire or stout wire hooks  
are best because they help sink the nymph  
to the bottom where it should be fished.  
In some waters a few wraps of lead wire  
around the hook shank is essential to take  
the nymph to the bottom.

The Gimp should be tied on a hook  
no larger than #10, with 12 or 14 being  
best in streams where natural nymphs are  
small.

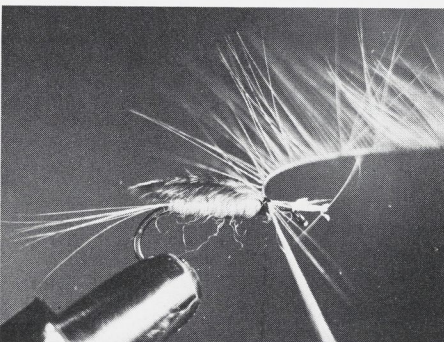
Begin tying the Gimp by wrapping the  
tying thread onto the shank and then  
back over itself to secure the thread to the  
hook. Wrap the thread back to the bend of  
the hook and tie in a few grey dun hackle  
fibers for the tail. Next, tie in a strand of  
grey wool and wrap the thread to the eye  
of the hook. Wind the wool around the  
hook shank, forming the body of the fly.

Place two Gimp feathers flat, one atop  
the other, over the body of the fly and tie  
in place.

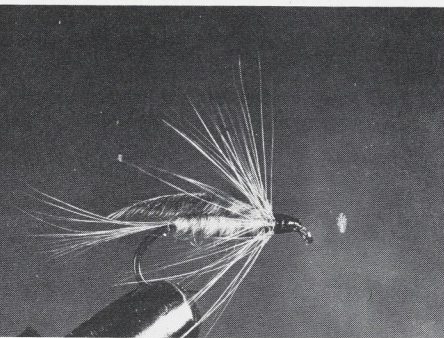
Take a small, grey dun hackle feather  
and tie it in at the head of the fly. Wrap



4. Feathers simulate flat nymph body

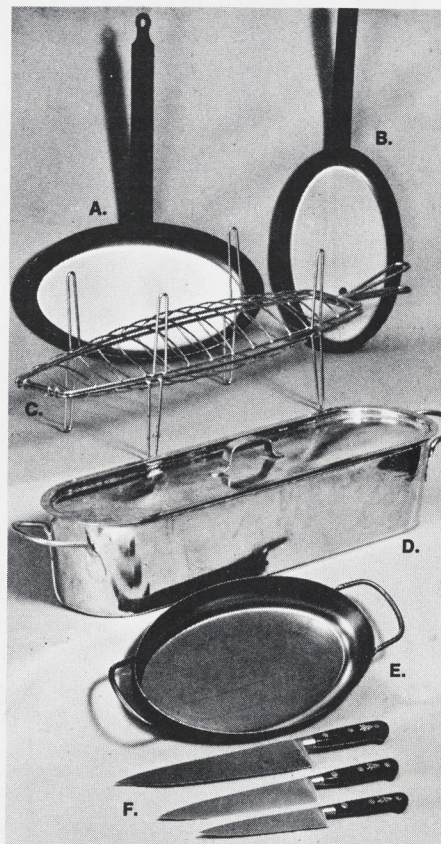


5. Winds of gray hackle complete fly



6. Completed Gimp fly; add water!

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We also suggest that all fly fishermen send today for our free centennial catalog, which gives some interesting history of Hiram L. Leonard, an account of our extensive repair services, and a complete description of our full line of handmade fly rods, reels and other quality angling accessories.

**Fly-Dry  
refreshes tired flies  
—in seconds!**



**Float flies high,  
wide, and handsome  
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What do you do with that soggy mess of feathers that used to be a proud trout fly before some fish gummied it into submission?

Simple. Make it new again—with a Fly-Dry treatment. Here's how it works.

Pour out a pinch of Fly-Dry granules and rub them through the fly. Then blow them away and—presto!—not even an expert could tell the fly from new.

Fly-Dry, packed in an unbreakable plastic bottle with no-lose flip top, is the brainchild of noted angler Mr. Don DuBois, author of the well-known *Fisherman's Handbook of Trout Flies*. It's non-toxic and won't affect delicate rod finishes.

What could be more discouraging than to lay out a delicately cast dry fly to a feeding fish—only to have it sink soggily beneath the surface?

And what could be more unnecessary, now that angler-author Don DuBois has invented UP, the finest fly floatant that ever came down the pike?

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Fee includes comfortable accommodations, excellent cuisine, New York fishing license, plus all instruction. We encourage you to bring your own tackle and gear, although Leonard will have rods, reels and lines available for your use.

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it about two turns and tie it off. Finish the head of the fly, making it rather long as the heads of most natural nymphs are. Whip finish the head and give several coats of fly-tying cement.

For further variation within the pattern you can use a fur-dubbed body or a body of peacock herl, and use black or brown hackle for the tail and hackle. Some of these combinations may work better on a particular stream, but I'm entirely satisfied using grey dun hackle and grey wool.

Fish the Gimp as you would any other nymph. The ruffles are generally good producers as are the edge of a current, underwater rocks, watersoaked logs and debris close to the current and under cut banks. Pockets in fast water are excellent areas for the nymph fisherman.

Cast the nymph across stream and let the current carry it down naturally. When it comes to the end of the drift fish it as you would a wet fly, pulling it in slowly and letting it drift back. Because nymphs are generally most active in the evening the swimming about of the naturals may put trout to feeding and the Gimp fisherman will find his best fishing at that time if that is the case.

Most of the experts agree that considering the whole season, varying stages of water levels, weather and other variables, nymph fishing will out-produce other methods of fly fishing. And it's been my experience that if the fly at the end of your leader is the little attractor nymph called the Gimp, that the experts won't be proved wrong.

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