Callibaetis in Italics ?

Chapter 6: Callibaetis Gray Beauty

Vike Baetis ?

Although the Callibaetis is listed as a pond or stillwater insect, only rarely observed near running water, I was very fortunate to find a hatch of these beautiful creatures on a private spring creek here in the Bozeman Valley ~~during the 28 and 29th of~~ in late August, 1989. I was first attracted to the fly in its spinner stage close to ~~edges of~~ the creek. The fly was quite large, perhaps a ~~thirteen,~~ fourteen or ~~fifteen.~~ The Callibaetis is a very delicate insect with an almost transparent, ghostly quality. The wings ~~on~~ the dun and the spinner are highly speckled which accounts for the common name, speckled dun. Quite a few of them, apparently males, were dancing near the creek, three or four feet in the air, rising and falling no more than 12 inches. Every now and then a female of the species would fly into the the bunch, pick a partner who joined her in mid air, after which the pair plunged wildy downstream.

as it drifted

? banks

slightly smaller

The trout in the creek were rising ~~quite well~~ freely to the insect, but I could not tell if they were duns or spinners or both. The soft-hackled imitation I came up with is as follows:

Hook: 14, 16, light wire.

Hackle: Light hen grizzly, well-marked with narrow bands.

Body: Orvis #21 light gray extra fine poly dubbing.

Tail: A few strands of clear poly shuck material.

The top part of the spring creek (the more popular section) had ~~a lot of~~ many good sized trout rising to the Callibaetis, but I found these fish to be very skittery and almost unaproachable, for whatever reason I cannot say. Downstream a half mile or so, things were different. Trout rose steadily and confidently to the duns and spinners at nearly every bend in the creek, and I was able to get close enough behind them to make fairly short casts.

The first casts with a new pattern are always exciting. The thrill lies in the fact that the trout has never seen the artificial fly before. Will he accept it as the natural? Those first moments after making the cast and watching the fly drift down towards the fish make your heart pound. Will he? Or won't he? With the new Callibaetis soft-hackle there was no hesitation or show of doubt from any of the fish I tried on that first day. I rose six, all rainbows in the 15-17 inch class. Two were landed, two were hooked and got off. And another two broke off on the take at one of the few spots on the creek where it's possible to fish downstream. Let me describe this for you. The creek makes a sharp bend to the left. There is a fairly high bank in the corner of the angle which can hide the angler if he stays down and crouched behind it. False casts are made several feet in front of the fish, then the final reach cast is laid down about a yard in front of him. I should have changed to 4x

tippet as Mottram suggested in the last chapter and perhaps I would not have been broken by those two trout.

Since retiring to Montana six years ago, I have grown to love this kind of fishing. It is the most difficult and challenging of all fly fishing. The water is gin clear and shallow with the trout rising frequently in less than a foot of water. Most of the stream's surface is smooth as glass. There are few trees and very few high banks to hide behind, except the one described above,. Everything, even the wind seems visible. It usually takes several minutes for me to get in position to make the first upstream cast to one of the trout, and sometimes I can blow the whole show on that first cast, or even before.

There is an intimacy in small, spring-creek fishing that one feels no where else. And it takes some time to become accustomed to it, specially when the angler has been fishing the Madison, the Missouri or the Yellowstone. Even the finest angler does not make big bags on spring creeks. Two or three brace in a few hours fishing is average and if you have done that, you can give yourself a pat on the back.

of August

On the 29th, I walked the whole length of the spring creek fishing here and there with the new soft-hackled fly. Wherever I saw a fish rise, I got a confidential reaction to the new fly. But it wasn't until I reached the end of the creek where it flowed into a larger free stone type of river that I had an

outstanding angling experience, and a lesson in ecology.

I approached the confluence pool of the two streams cautiously. I could not see all of it because of a large tree on the left downstream side. The part of the pool I saw clearly was festooned with several circles of varying sizes, some of them with a trout head sticking up in the middle. These were not spring creek fish, but occupants of the larger, more well-known and more commonly fished trout stream relishing the harvest of the spring-creek Callibaetis, which is rarely seen on the bigger river.

There was no way to angle for those fish from above in a downstream mode, so I stayed clear of the pool, walked way around it and approached it from the rear. When I got there, the whole pool lay before me. Trout of varying sizes were scattered throughout, actively feeding on the Callibaetis coming down out of the spring creek. It was an excellent example of the pecking order: the larger rings and bigger trout at the top of the pool getting first crack at the morsels coming down from the spring creek.

Well, I like small trout just as much as big ones, and I started in on the smaller ones at the tail of the pool. They took the soft-hackled Callibaetis avidly, whether the fly caught a little air in the casting and was visible on the surface or whether it started sinking as soon as it hit the water.

I caught 11 rainbows, a brown trout and a whitefish and was now facing the last trout at the head of the pool, which appreared to be the biggest one in it. He was unmindful of what happened below him and went on feeding with the same rhythm and steadfastness as when I first saw him. He also moved around quite a bit, not only from side to side, but upstream in a short dash to intercept another Callibaetis; or downstream in a slow drift backwards trying to keep a single Callibaetis from getting by him. It would be nice if I could finish off the pool by hooking him.

And I did. The second or third cast. I can't remember. What I do recall is the leap up, straight out of the water showing his full length, silver belly and dark back side; and him going back in tail first, almost the same way he came out. One jump, and now he was streaking up the bigger river and nothing was going to stop him.

The fishing in this pool was over. Now, I wanted to see if trout were rising anywhere else on the river, or was the spring creek a Callibaetis cornucopia which offered the only surface food to the trout of the bigger river. I walked upstream and downstream looking for other surface activity and found absolutely none.

Chapter 5: Trico : The Giant Midge

Preliminary plans for this book did not include the Trico. I was afraid of failing before I began. I had the feeling one had to be some kind of wizard with jet pilot's vision to fish the diminutive fly. I suppose I was also scared off by the kind of warnings found in the popular "hatch" books. "Tricorythodes stygiatus requires a #28 or #24 hook size (#28 is best); a #22 will be completely ignored." "Trying to match size-24 spinners over two to four pound selective trout can bewilder the best of fishermen." "It is difficult to find specific tricorythodes patterns in fishing literature." "Fishing tricorythodes imitations is a demanding game..." "Correct imitation size is imperative during the 'trico' activity. The duns are best imitated on a #24 hook, but #26's may be more accurate on some streams."

This is all nonsense, of course, but it goes along with the idea that you are a better fisherman if you can catch large fish on small flies and cob web leaders required because you can't get three or two pound tippet material through the eyes of miniscule hooks. I heard the same gamesmanship dialogue from anglers when I told them I was catching a lot of trout on a size 16 soft-hackled midge. "But, how could you? I never fish anything bigger than a size 24 when I'm fishing the midge," they would reply.

The new soft-hackled trico is a very successful fly tied on a "monster"-size 18 hook, exemplifying my statement in the introduction that many of the new patterns in this book can be fished up to two hook sizes larger than the natural insect, and perhaps, three or four hook sizes larger than the artificials normally recommended and chosen. Nor did I find fishing the trico difficult. The down stream, reach/swing cast already outlined in an earlier chapter took many large rainbows on the Missouri River, not only by me, but by another fishing friend, as well, in late August and September of 1989.

There probably would not be a soft-hackle trico pattern if it had not been for Earl Dorsey, postmaster of Helena, Montana, ~~It was he,~~ who invited me to fish the Missouri with him during that time. The Trico hatches had thinned out a bit, he related on the phone, making the fishing even tougher. The large pods of fish were gone, too, he added, but there were small, sporadic hatches of Trico, which should make fishing the big rainbows of the river interesting and exciting.

I tied the soft-hackled tricos the night before I left. They were based on the general appearance of the fly, in its spinner stage, which is simply a black small body with near-white wings. And here is the soft-hackled ~~Trico~~ dressing:

Hook: 18 (This is a Syl Nemes signature series hook marketed for a time by Tom Widmar, of St. Louis, who now channels

Needed?

Syl: This kind of info is good in an article, but perhaps should not be in the text.

his energies into a quarterly, FLY FISHING HERITAGE. The hook is probably small for its size, measuring a quarter of an inch long from the front of the eye to the outside of the curve. The wire is quite fine. The fly is tied small on the hook.)

Tying thread: Black or dark olive.

Body: Black mole fur dubbed to a little more than half the hook.

Hackle: Dirty-white, or off-white hen hackle, larger than what would normally be used on this size fly. Mole fur dubbing to the eye.

Tail: Poly shuck material, three or four strands only, optional.

Because of its size, the Missouri River is likely to intimidate anglers visiting it for the first time. Most of it is as wide as a foot ball field or wider. From a distance, the river looks deep enough to float a destroyer. Once in the river, however, the angler finds it to be quite shallow and relatively easy to wade. At first, the water looks much the same from one bank to another. And it's only after the angler has waded the river for a time that he notices the giant weed beds and shallow depressions, which create distinct currents, ~~and~~ feeding lanes, and holding places for the rainbows. All of these features make up what the locals call "flats". They can be

several hundred feet long with good fishing all the way down. Our fishing began on just such a flat. Earl, with one of my new tricos on his line, lead the way, quartering downstream to the right of me. I saw him stop, then lean a little for a better look. He started casting, letting out line. 30 feet. 40 feet. I saw the line hit the water. There was a short drift downstream and he had a fish on. It was a pretty good sized rainbow, which he landed and released. He gave me a thumbs up. Not bad, I thought. The new trico is working, and on a downstream cast.

Now, I thought the water in front of me looked better. ~~Yes,~~ indeed, it did, because all of a sudden, I saw the head of a trout ~~stick out~~ as big as my fist. I started casting to him, 35 or 40 feet to my left. The fly was in a drag-free, reach mode when it went over the spot where I thought the fish to be and nothing happened. I heard Earl yelp and turned my head in his direction to see him hooked to another rainbow. That's when I felt a vicious tug at the fly, which was now swinging on a fairly taut line. This surprised me. Big fish are not supposed to take small flies dragging on a swinging line. I reeled up knowing only too well the 6x tippet could not have taken that ~~jar. and c~~ sure enough the fly was gone.

By now, Earl was just landing the rainbow. I waded over to him and saw him release the 16-17 inch fish. "The new Trico looks like it's working for you. I just had one break me off on the swing, I wasn't looking. You're taking yours

downstream" I said.

"I fish emergers like that all the time. I usually cast at about a 45 degree angle slightly upstream of the fish. I mend if I have to, then let the fly swing right over him. Com'n, there's some nice water just below here."

We waded downstream a short distance. Earl stopped and pointed. "There's a little pod working. See them?"

Seven or ~~8~~ right good sized rainbows were rising steadily ~~about~~ a hundred feet below us. "Com'n. But take it slow. They spook easy...even when you think you're a safe distance away."

We eased over to the right of the pod, went another 30 or 40 feet and stopped. Earl motioned for me to have a go. "No. I want to watch you do it."

Earl picked the lead fish, closest to us. He measured the distance with false casts high above the water, and laid the line and the Trico on the water. It was short. He pulled a couple of feet off the reel and tried again. Now, he was casting a full 50 feet, but this time the fly was on the mark and a rainbow took it. The man was a good fisherman and obviously very adept at fishing in this downstream style. And even though it wasn't my fish, I was aglow. In less than ~~1/2~~ a half hour fishing, he had three lovely rainbows, and I was broken off by one—all on a size 18 trico soft-hackle which had never existed before today.

acrobatic

The antics of the rainbow put the pod down. Earl went off towards the center of the river and I proceeded downstream. I got into some weeds and without any fish showing decided I would cast across the weeds into a clear patch of moving water. I made a desultory cast, then another. I had to change my footing in the weeds and took my eyes off the line for a second. And it happened again--the powerful pull at the fly--the abrupt straightening of the line--the boiling commotion at the end of the leader...and the sickening realization that I was hookless again. Twice was enough, I said to myself. I've got to do something to stop this. But what? I couldn't go any heavier than the 6X I was using. (Something I learned later would have permitted a heavier tippet.) I decided to be more watchful of the initial contact, to focus on the floating, white line where it joined the leader. If I saw the line start to straighten, I would give out line toward the fish and try not to set the hook. All I needed was something to ~~alleviate~~ moderate and temper the impact of the take, which is violent and powerful in the downstream, swing style of fishing. characteristically

So, I tied on another, new Trico, took a few more steps and started in again. Now, I was ready. Just let that big rainbow try to steal another fly from me. I'll show him. Three or four casts later, perhaps 10 or 12 feet lower down, it happened. The line went first and I did feel something, I threw the rod tip forward, dropped the line from my left hand and let it go. take a half dull

The fish was thrashing about, the hook already in him. Line was whistling through the guides. That must be enough, I thought, and grabbed the line and tightened. He was on. I wasn't broken. He was coming in, making determined stands here and there. I was winning, then the line went dead. I reeled up anxious to see if I still had the fly. I did, which meant that method of striking a big fish on 6X on a downstream swing can work.

We had waded several hundred feet down the flat and it was time to go back. Earl came up to me. "How do we get out?" I asked.

"We don't. There's a deep channel between us and the bank. Runs for quite a distance. We'll have to wade up the same way we came down." So that's the catch, I thought. It was easy coming down, now there's that long walk back, upstream. Oh well, we can fish our way back. This will be a good chance to fish the new trico upstream to rising trout if we see any.

We each caught one on the return trip, fishing upstream and drag-free, helping to prove the new soft-hackled Trico was effective downstream on a tight line and upstream on a loose one.

Now, we were on the bank walking back to the car. I asked Earl for an assessment of the new Trico. "I like it. I can't wait to try it earlier in the year when the hatch is really thick. It should work better at the height of the hatch. There

are so many trics in the air, you can see the shucks raining down. You don't know what to use. A 22 Adams. Or a smaller elk hair trico. Your hook is bigger. I think the fly solves the puzzle of what to use when the tricos are on. I think it'll work on the big pods."

I fished the new trico another three days on the Missouri without the friendship and help of Earl. The natural fly was ~~petering~~ thinning out, but I did enjoy some nice evening fishing with the same Trico soft-hackle ~~fly~~ during the ~~1, 2 and 3rd~~ first three days of September. There was also a pod of brown trout in a very slow, very difficult, practically still piece of backwater where three or four of the large fish took the fly but for one reason or another could not be firmly hooked.

Like Earl, I am anxious to try the new trico in July and August when the hatch is so thick "you get covered with nymphal shucks and spinners blanket the surface." I would also like to try the new fly on the 'gulpers' of Hebgen Lake, just to see if this kind of imitation works on still water. I am pleased, however, with the performance of the pattern because I heard and read over and over that small imitations like the Trico are only taken drag free. And Earl and I proved otherwise. (I have fished for many years in the same manner ~~like that~~ with traditional soft-hackles on many different kinds of rivers with outstanding success.)

The ~~argument or~~ debate on drag has occupied a major part of my thought ever since I began fishing soft-hackled flies more than 30 years ago. On small, intimate spring creeks, no one enjoys upstream, drag-free, dry-fly or nymph fishing more than I do. It has a certain charm. It is more "one-on-one" perhaps than any other kind of fishing. It requires stealth because you must get close to the fish to use the short line required for control. And in many places on small waters, it is the only way to approach feeding fish without spooking them. I've had 6 years of this kind of fishing here in Montana, so I know how evil and disastrous drag can be. Yet, as I've previously said ~~just a little earlier,~~ I've fished soft-hackles downstream for a long time with perhaps more than average success. And now, the almost identical method of fishing is proving successful with a tiny soft-hackled trico imitation for big rainbows on the Missouri.

Why? Let me drift through some random observations and explorations.

First, there must be a visual difference between the drag of a dry fly floating on the surface and drag of a wet, soft hackle in the surface film or even an inch or two below the surface. Drag on the surface ~~leaves~~ cuts highly visible hash marks or wakes resembling something like shattered glass to the trout.

There is no such disturbance from a wet fly or soft hackle (at least any that can be seen or photographed.) And I think the amount of drag and the derogatory effects of it on a wet fly or soft-hackled fly on a tight, downstream line have been

exagerated. (It may also be that the true size of a fly partially or totally submerged could be blurred or hidden to the trout, causing him to accept the larger-than-life, soft-hackled imitations in this book.)

Let's look at a chart I made up, for example, to see how much drag (lateral fly movement) there really is in dowbnstream, tight line fishing. The scale is 1" to 8'. Pretend, we've made a 40 foot cast at a 90-degree angle and we can see that after the same length of line has traveled downstream approximately 16 feet, the fly has moved laterally, or dragged, only 3 feet. This drag has not occurred all at one time, but only an inch at a time. Dry-fly drag, no matter how short, occurs quickly and is highly visible. If the angler knows where the fish is, he can present a soft-hackle or wet fly to him down stream, with so little drag that the fish will not even notice it or alter his decision to take the fly. And, as I have already pointed out, that on large rivers, like the Missouri and the Henry's Fork, one can position one's self so that he will shorten the lateral distance between the fish and his position in the river. The reader can see from the chart that the shorter the lateral distance, the less the amount of drag, so that if the angler were standing up stream in a straight line from the fish, there wouldn't be any drag at all.

All of this theoretical display is, of course, without additional line and without mending. If you mend the line or

feed it (or a combination of both) at a speed just slightly faster than the current, you should be able to fish a blind stretch or known trout lie with a soft-hackle or wet fly ~~with~~ virtually ~~no~~ ~~free~~ drag, and still feel the take even if you don't ~~can't~~ see it.

In connection with this, are some very interesting observations made by J. C. Mottram, in SEA TROUT AND OTHER FISHING STUDIES. The chapter is entitled 'Down Stream Dry Fly Fishing.' I was surprised to find such writing by Mottram, because he was an avowed chalk stream, dry fly fisherman. And I always believed fly fishing on those hallowed waters was not only dry, but up. But, just to make sure, I checked Halford's first two books in which the various parts of the 'code' appear and I could not find the 'regulation' which said that dry-fly fishing downstream was ~~a no-no~~ frowned on. No, indeed. Halford, in FLOATING FLIES, writes: "Where it is impracticable to throw up stream, cast across and slightly up, and, where this is impossible, cast directly across, and lower the hand slowly as the fly floats down, so as not to drag it." And again a little later: "Occasionally, however, it is impossible either owing to natural obstructions on the bank or other causes, to fish a spot excepting by casting directly, or nearly directly, down stream; and in such a position a thoroughly dry fly, floated down 'cocked,' is freqently efficacious; but in case it is not taken, the first throw should be allowed to float without drag well below the fish, and then either be taken off the water in such a direction that the returning motion is invisible to the fish, or, if this be impossible, the line should be drawn in slowly by hand until the

fly is well above the fish, and then taken quietly off the water; otherwise it will certainly set the trout or grayling down. To accomplish this, a good deal more line must be let out than is required to cover the fish, and, in the act of casting, the hand holding the rod must be perceptibly checked so as to pull the fly back and land it on the water with slack line behind it; the hand is then gradually lowered and the fly allowed to 'drift' without drag over the rising place of the fish."

There you have, in 1886, the outline of today's reach cast, even though it is in the ponderous Halford style. Mottram, in a more modern, direct style, (1923), gives the main advantage of dry-fly fishing downstream. "It is that the fly floats down to the fish before the gut. When fish are so shy that they fly for safety even when fine gut falls or passes near them, then the downstream attack may win when all others fail."

Then another: "It has also the advantage of turning a dowstream wind from a hindrance to a help." And, "Downstream fishing has the further great advantage that the line falls on the water well away from the fish, whereas in upstream fishing it must fall near; and this is the chief cause of fish being put down." Again, "Thick gut may be used, because the fly reaches the fish before the gut; and this is of advantage when large fish are being angled for amongst snags and weeds. It is hopeless to cast to such shy fish from below with thick gut, and if thin gut is used the likelihood of a break is very great: 2X

gut may be used downstream when 4X gut is requred for fishing up."

Had I read this book of Mottram (I already had THOUGHTS ON ANGLING and FLY-FISHING; SOME NEW ARTS AND MYSTERIES) before I fished the new Tric on the Missouri, I most certainly would have used 4X (at 5lbs.) instead of 6X (at 2.8 lbs.) with a higher batting average than the one I gave you. Many of Mottram's and Halford's advantages can also be claimed for the reach/swing cast. To perform it, throw the fly about a yard above the fish. Make sure you "check" the travel of the line before it lands, so that it falls on the water in large, easy loops. Keep extra loops of loose line off the reel. Hold the rod tip high and follow the line down with it until it is almost parallel to the water's surface at about which time the fly will start to drag. Time the cast for the fly to be by the trout with or without drag, or both if one or the other method doesn't work. ~~I wished I could say it as well as~~ Mottram states it well: "In fishing upstream, line is recovered as the fly floats down, whereas when fishing down, line must be given or else the fly will drag."

Chapter 1: The Midge — a Small Beginning

The midge was the first fly to emerge in the new, soft-hackled fly imitation series ~~going back to early March of 1987~~. Because it was the first, the midge probably has caught more trout than any of the other new patterns, not only because it has been in use longer, but also because here in Montana, there is so much opportunity to use a ~~fly like this.~~ From early November until ~~the end of~~ late March on most water, the midge is the only surface food available to the trout, and the hatch will occur during the warmest part of the day and with a hot sun shining down on the water.

On the Big Horn it is the major hatch through May. Even after that time, however, the midge continues to appear on rivers and spring creeks, usually late in the day when the sun has gone off the water and the temperatures start to drop~~ping.~~ One way to know trout are feeding on midges (even when you can't see what they're feeding on) is when the fly which has been working ~~for you~~ for hours suddenly stops being effective, even though trout continue to rise. Chances are, if you put on one of these midges you will start taking fish again.

The design of the soft-hackled Midge was based on the Griffith's Gnat, ~~which was~~ the invention of George Griffith, the founder of Trout Unlimited. The original dry-fly design is simple. Peacock-herl body with cock-grizzly hackle, palmered from back to front. No tail. It is a dry fly and floats quite well ~~specially~~ when ~~it is~~ tied with a good quality cock hackle. The fly is fished ~~from~~ in size 16 to ~~perhaps a tiny~~ 24, and can be very effective most of

the time, either as an imitation of the individual insect or as the mating clump. It was the model for soft-hackled midge, as were other well-known and successful dry flies models for many of the new soft-hackled fly imitations.

In a section on Chironomids in A DICTIONARY OF TROUT FLIES by A. Courtney Williams, there is a similar pattern to the Griffith's Gnat. The recipe is: Body: Sisal fibre, or a strand from a swan's feather, dyed emerald green. Legs: A cut grey-haired Plymouth Rock cock hackle tied in at the tail and palmered up the body as a hackle. Wings: Light grey cock hackle points. The swan's fibre or barb would be quite fleshy or meaty much like the peacock herl on the Griffith's Gnat. And what about the Plymouth Rock cock hackle tied palmered? It sounds like the Griffith's Gnat to me but without the wings. I doubt that this is where Mr. Griffith stumbled on to his famous pattern, but it makes no difference, because based on the characteristics of his famous fly, I designed mine, and it has been outstanding.

Here is the dressing for the soft-hackled midge:

Size: 16 Sproat, fairly light wire.

Tying thread: Danville Olive

Body: Peacock herl tied a bit fat, beginning at a point between the point of the hook and the barb.

Hackle: Two turns of a small gray partridge hackle (found just behind the orange head of the bird). It is desirable to

obtain the whole skin of the Hungarian Partridge including as much of the neck and head of the bird as possible to obtain a good supply of these small hackles. The hackle should be approximately 3/8" ~~of an inch~~ across for a size 16 dressing, but the same hackle can be used for smaller sizes without hurting the taking quality of the fly.

I have settled on a size 16 hook for this fly in general use, even though individual chironomids can be several sizes ~~smaller than this~~. It is one of the prime characteristics ~~examples~~ of these new flies, ~~which lets~~ allowing you to get away with a larger-than-life sized imitation. Many fly fishermen insist on tying any midge pattern on very small hooks. In my experience, and from the experiences of many of my friends who have fished the soft-hackled midge, the size 16 works as well as a 22, so why sacrifice the bite and power of the larger hook? ~~One~~ In early March ~~2~~, 1989, on the Yellowstone in Livingston, some large whitefish took a size 14 on a dropper while ~~they~~ ignored the standard size 16 on the tail. Some individual midges are mere specks which can't be realistically imitated on any size hook, so why even try? Also, it is virtually impossible to determine whether the trout is taking this fly for an individual insect or for the mating clump (unless there is only one form present) ~~or the other~~, although clumps seem to be more prevalent during the early part of the year. In February and March I have watched hundreds of them coming down the lower Madison in the area known as the Bear Trap. They can be seen floating ~~right~~ next to large chunks of ice. ~~There can be~~ several midges in the clump, ~~It turns~~ turning this way and that. One or two midges may fly out of the clump, soon to be

replaced by others ~~which~~ That fly into it. It's the lucky insect ~~which~~ That has just flown ~~out~~ "the clump" when a trout has decided to take it. The take of the clump and of individual insects is slow and easy, usually in an eddy ~~where there is~~ with barely any current at all. The rises are just barely discernible at times, resembling tiny rain drops." The trout do not like to expend too much energy at this time of year, and I have seen these "rain drops" in three ~~and~~ or four inches of water, ~~right up against~~ flush to the bank, trout backs sticking out of the water.

That ~~was~~ is what I saw the first time I fished the soft-hackled midge in early March, ~~of~~ 1987, on the catch-and-release trophy water of the Madison River. The exact spot was above Raynolds Pass bridge ~~and~~ getting down to the river was quite a chore because of the ~~amount of~~ deep snow ~~accumulated~~ on the banks. The river at this time of the year is low, cold, and very clear. The area here is fished quite heavily by Idahoans who drive north on a warm chinook day, trying to allevitate their cabin fever, as we, living here in Montana, drive south to the river, trying to alleviate ours.

Upstream some distance from the bridge I found a small, shallow, slow-moving channel ~~which was~~ alive with the "rain drops." Now and then I could see a ~~wet~~ slick, stocky trout nose stick out and take a chironomid clump or individual midge. I thought these were the slowest, laziest trout rises I had ever seen. I greased the soft-hackled midge and started fishing upstream for

the few trout ~~who were~~ feeding in the tail of the channel. ~~thinking that~~ if the new midge ~~was~~ proved successful, I would just work my way up through the fish feeding in the channel. I was excited by the prospect of fishing ~~a~~ the new fly which might fish as well as or better than the famous Griffith's Gnat.

On the second or third cast there was a crinkle under the fly. Was that a rise? It sure was. The fish rose confidently and surely to my new, soft-hackled midge. I tightened and I had him, a rainbow of 14 or 15 inches. But now, to see if it would happen again. I released the trout and went after the next one higher up in the channel and a little over to the right side, in just 6 or 8 inches of water, rising steadily. He too, couldn't resist and took the new midge without hesitation or doubt. I felt victorious. In the next half hour, I rose and landed 9 or 10 browns and rainbows in the channel, and even though they did not fight like strong, summer fish, I thought this was quite a momentous day for soft hackles.

One of the major objectives of this book is to find alternatives to time-proved dry-fly patterns and methods ~~which~~ that are easier to tie and easier to fish. The soft-hackled midge, like most soft-hackled fly imitations, continues to work even after it is well wetted and does not require thorough drying out or regreasing. You might ask, then: how do you know if and when a trout has taken your fly? At the beginning, the fly can be fished exactly like a dry fly. You see the rise and set the hook. An immediate advantage with the soft hackle will be bet-

ter, surer hooking because of the ranker nature of the fly's design. Later, as the fly absorbs more moisture, it will drop further into the surface film, at which time I look for the signal of the take at the end of the line, which is usually white when I'm fishing the midge. One could fish a tiny indicator the whole time and concentrate on it at all times. I find it a bit more exciting to see the fly being taken than for the line to signal the strike, but I have found that I can't watch both. Which to watch is usually determined by light conditions and or water conditions or how wet and how ~~far~~ deeply submerged ~~your~~ the fly is. Fishing the soft-hackled midge, however, I probably concentrate more on the end of the line than on the fly itself because, as I have already pointed out, the rise to the natural is so indistinct and undefined. Watching the line is not that bad, however, particularly when it starts to move slowly but visibly upstream. That is the surest sign a trout has taken ~~you~~. Another is the line stopping or just sitting there, seeming to be doing nothing. Intuition pays off, too. And whenever you feel something is not right with the flow of the line, leader and fly, just tighten. Often times you will be surprised that a trout has the soft-hackled midge in his mouth.

The success of the soft-hackle midge has also been noted by some of my friends who have tested the pattern not only here in Montana, but in other western states as well. In August ~~of~~ 1988, for example, Buddy Drake, an aquatic biologist here in Bozeman, was fishing a high altitude spring creek in Colorado. Being

private water, the creek has many large brown trout over 25 inches. Buddy told me there was no hatch showing during the entire day he fished the creek, so he and his friends resorted to big streamers fished deep, although they would rather have fished for those beautiful browns with smaller surface imitations.

Towards evening, midges appeared in large numbers causing the big browns to start feeding on the surface. Buddy pulled out a single soft hackle midge I had given him earlier in ~~the~~ a Bozeman ~~IGA~~ parking lot and started fishing it. The first brown of twenty inches plus straightened the tiny midge. Buddy bent it back into shape. He caught another which straightened it. Buddy bent it back into shape again. He did this several times before the hook finally broke.

Another similar story but on the Big Horn here in Montana comes from Jim Criner, owner of Bud Lilly's in West Yellowstone. We had met in Polly's restaurant in Fort Smith where we were having breakfast. This was on April 18, 1989. For whatever reason, I gave him just one copy of the midge and he left with his cronies to put in at three mile access. Sometime later he told me he took 19 browns out of just one or two pods with the fly, fishing it downstream on the swing. He, too, had to reshape the wire many times after it was pulled straight by those tough Big Horn browns, until it broke on number 20.

That fly was tied on a British hook called Perfect Fine 16, sold by Tom Widmar when he was running Derbyshire Rodbuilders in

St. Louis, before he started publishing Fly Fishing Heritage. I tied the midge on that hook the previous evening, April 17, in a motel room I was sharing with Tom Clark, rod collector from Michigan, after a mystifying and frustrating day on the river with him and George Kelly, our guide.

Using the midge tied on a shorter, stouter, heavier 16, I could not interest a single Bighorn fish in the fly at all. Yet, midges were out and trout were feeding non-stop. Tom and George, who was asked to fish along with us, caught a respectible number of them on the Griffith's Gnat, but my new midge went unnoticed time after time over midge feeding trout.

That evening in the motel I tied the fly on the perfect fine 16, at least 20 percent longer in the shank, and of course, much lighter and weaker than the previous hook. By comparison to some hooks, the perfect fine could almost pass for a 14. For some unknown reason, I also changed the leader, from a 12 foot made up Maxima with 3 pound tippet to a 12 foot, 6X Dai Riki, rated at 2.8 pounds.

The next morning, Wednsday, after breakfast when I gave Criner one of the new midges, we put in again at three mile access, and drifted a half mile or so without fishing. It was warm, with a hazy sun, different from yesterday when the sun was very bright. We came to a place where the river broadened considerably. George pulled towards the right bank where a large

arc of half-submerged rocks created a good-sized, slow-moving pool. There were several streams of water coming out of the arc, all of which were occupied by many trout feeding on midges. George and Tom motioned for me to take the middle one. I started at the bottom fishing up stream. On my first cast to the closest riser, the line stopped, then shot forward and I had a fish on. Then I took another 12 browns in some of the fastest, most exciting fishing I've ever had. There were times when I lost sight of the fly and the end of the white fly line, but yet, when I tightened, there was another brown on. I noticed another nice thing. I was getting into the habit, too, of straightening the leader immediately after the cast to ~~aid in the~~ eliminate "telegraphing" ~~of the end of~~ the white line of the fly. It seemed that every time I did ~~this~~, another trout would take the soft-hackled midge right after the line straightened. They must have seen the fly being jerked. Did that goad them into taking the fly once it started its natural drag-free drift downstream? I think so, because that little trick has worked during other midge hatches on other rivers, just as well.

~~Well,~~ after a dozen Bighorn browns, I had enough. I motioned to Tom who was fishing another stream lower down in the river to come up and take my place. He was fishing one of his beloved bamboo rods, a 7 ~~and~~ 1/2 foot Dickerson, with one of the new perfect fine 16 midges and an orange indicator tied into the leader about three feet from the fly. I felt the indicator was too close to the fly, but soon after he started fishing, he was into brown after brown. Even from the bank some distance from him, I could see the orange indicator stop in mid current, or

dash upstream, pulled by another fine Bighorn brown trout.

What happened? Why did the midge tied on one hook and fished on one leader work on a day with a hazy sun when the other tied on another hook and fished on a different leader on a day with a bright sun wouldn't? I can't answer that question ~~positively~~, but I do know that I will be prepared to change hooks, and leaders if ~~it~~ those conditions ever happens ~~that same way~~ again. If there is a lesson here, it ~~might~~ would be ~~that we should~~ to not change fly patterns as frequently as we're ~~prone~~ inclined to do, but perhaps to change leaders, and ~~to~~ tie our favorite patterns bigger or smaller and on different wire sizes.

The midges were still the primary hatch on the Bighorn two weeks later, when I returned to the river with Jack Weiss, a neighbor, who has tested many of the new soft-hackled fly imitations, and who has already caught hundreds of trout on this pattern. We were guided by Victor Colvard, much in demand during the regular season on that river. On this trip, it was Jack who couldn't keep the Bighorn browns off his hook. And I'm merely recounting this story so the reader will know the soft-hackled midge works just as well, (or better at times), on the swing, which Jack likes to do immensely. And what a great method this is! Just reach the trout with the fly and there's a good chance he will take it. I don't know about your skill upstream, but I cannot fish a fly upstream as far as I can across or down. In other words, I can cast further than I can see (which you must be

able to do to set the hook upstream). On the swing, the trout generally hooks himself with a little tightening from the angler. This, as I pointed out in the introduction, is one of the obvious advantages of fishing this fly and other soft-hackled fly imitations.

There is quite an interesting history connected to the soft-hackle midge. I have pointed out it is not a new fly...only the use of it in small sizes, as a midge, might be new...but I have tied it and fished it for quite a few years as a general soft-hackle, even though the fly was not listed in THE SOFT HACKLED FLY, or THE SOFT HACKLED FLY ADDICT. Nor can I find it in angling literature from the north of England. So, It must be an American invention, ~~which~~ that came down to present use through the Gray Hackle Peacock, which was tied with the peacock herl body and a grizzly hackle, cock or hen. Donald Du Bois' book, THE FISHERMAN'S HANDBOOK OF TROUT FLIES lists other similar hackled flies, Gray Hackle Purple, Gray Hackle red, etc., the hackle remaining the same, but with the body changing, according to the whim of the tyer. Some patterns had orange and red tags and gold ribbing. These were all old, famous wet flies. Dan Bailey's shop in Livingston used to sell them by the jillions, John Bailey told me.

Chapter 2: MOTHER'S DAY CADDIS: Variation on a Theme

When I showed the Mother's Day Caddis for the first time to Tedd Ward, associate in this meager book, he said, "But you're violating the soft-hackled fly principle." It's true; it doesn't look like the traditional soft hackle; the difference is that all of the partridge hackle rests on the top of the hook instead of radiating from it at the head of the fly. I acquiesce to the spirit of efficacy. My defense is that the fly is made from traditional soft-hackled fly materials; partridge, peacock herl and mole fur, which we have already seen in the iron blue nymph in the first book. But what a fly it is when caddis are flitting about and fish can be seen feeding on them! I call it the fun fly of the whole new series. Anyone can fish it, experienced or beginner, in any direction, upstream and down, wet or dry. Everyone who has seen a sample of this fly says, "I like it."

The Mother's Day Caddis takes its name from the Mother's Day Hatch on the Yellowstone River, outside of the park. It occurs during the second or third week of May, Mother's Day coming on the third sunday of the month. The hatch is critically keyed to the run-off, which, if it comes early, can wipe out the fishing of the hatch or restrict it to just one or two days. In 1988, the first year I fished it, I fished the caddis hatch three days. Last year, 1989, I had two days, the run-off beginning on the afternoon of the second day. There might be a biological or physiological connection between the hatch and the run-off, although I am not sufficently trained to verify this.

on any river, of any size, anywhere

The hatch is monstrous. I have never seen anything like it. If it came later in the year when the area around Livingston is filled with non-resident anglers, the hatch would be famous world wide. An article about the hatch was written by my friend, Buddy Drake in the September, 1987 issue of FLY FISHERMAN. He labelled the insect as belonging to the family Brachycentridae and there is a photo of one of his friends standing knee deep in insects and holding up a handful of them, perhaps several hundred live, wriggling creatures from just one scoop.

~~In~~ 1988 during my first trip, I stopped the car on a bridge and looked upstream to see perhaps 80 or 90 rising trout and whitefish. ~~After~~ I ~~started~~ began fishing and was amazed there were times when the caddis came down the river in a raft-like carpet 1 to 2 inches thick, 8 to 10 feet across and 15 to 20 feet long. ~~When~~ As these protein barges came down stream the fish actually stopped feeding because they couldn't see daylight! A typical floating carpet must have ~~had~~ consisted of a million insects or more.

During that first day, I fished traditional soft hackles ~~like the~~ (Partridge and Green, the March Brown Spider, and the Pheasant Tail) only with average success. And I fished deer- and elk-hair caddis on the surface with equally frustration. ~~not much better results~~. ~~With~~ so many flies ~~bodies~~ on the surface, it was difficult to know when to strike. You could never tell when your fly was being taken. I was experiencing the same frustration Buddy wrote about, "For some anglers the Mother's Day hatch is extremely frustrating.

They simply become overwhelmed by the number of insects on the water, but they cannot see their floating fly or catch fish."

There was still a little light left when I got back to the car, a hatch back, at the end of that first day in 1988. Caddis were all over the car including the large window at the back. When I raised it, I was now looking at the under sides of 30 or 40 caddis, stuck to the window. I looked closer. I saw the protruding ends of the folded wings; the fat, juicy, segmented bodies; and the prominent heads. The bodies, looked brownish green with a little irredescence, which made me think immediately of peacock herl. I drove the 30 miles back to Bozeman, thinking of this new fly with a ready-made name, although before I sat down at my vice, I didn't know I was going to violate the soft-hackled fly principle by raising all of the barbs of the partridge hackle above the body of the fly and binding them down as a wing. But, that's what I did. and here is the formal dressing of the Mother's Day Caddis.

Sizes: 12, 14, 16, 18

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Peacock herl.

Rib: Yellow silk. (I fish the fly with and without the rib.)

Hackle: Gray or brown partridge hackle. (Depending on the color of the wing of the natural caddis; or dyed gray or other color to match.) The hackle is wound around the front of the hook two or three times. Then, with thumb and forefinger, I lift

~~hook two or three times~~. Then ~~with thumb and forefinger~~ spread the gathered clump over the shank, ~~I~~ lift~~ing~~ all of the barbs ~~of the~~ partridge up and above the hook, ~~and~~ bind~~ing~~ them down with the tying thread.

Head: Natural mole fur ~~or~~ dyed to dark gray~~,~~ dubbed on tying thread and wrapped quite thickly in front of the wing.

(The various parts of this fly ~~could~~ should be ~~changed~~ modified to match either lighter or darker naturals. In tying 16's and 18's, ~~you'll need~~ use the very small hackles which come from the back of the neck ~~of the~~ partridge. ~~I think~~ it's ~~is~~ the profile of the fly ~~which~~ that makes it so effective,)

The next day, on the road to ~~The next day I left~~ early ~~for~~ the Yellowstone, I pray~~ing~~ed ~~on~~ that ~~the way~~ the hatch would last just one more day~~,~~ ~~and~~ I also ~~that~~ hoped the run-off would ~~stay away~~ delay at least another day. From the bridge, I ~~could see my prayers were answered.~~ saw that I still possessed the power to influence natural events. Fish were rising clear up to the head of the riffle, some few hundred feet upstream. The river was low~~,~~ ~~and~~ clear. I walked up on the left side of the river ~~this time~~ thinking that I might escape some of the whitefish ~~I kept getting into~~ that had pestered me yesterday~~,~~ ~~and~~ I ~~walked almost to~~ approached the head of the riffle, ~~past~~ passing three or four fishermen. It was far from crowded~~,~~ ~~and~~ I settled for 75 yards of the river ~~to myself~~ and eventually~~,~~ includ~~ing~~ed the inside of a big bend where I could see many fish rising just this side of the main current. ~~There was~~ a downstream wind add~~ing~~ed some splash to the rises. I greased the new, size 14 Mother's Day Caddis and started fishing up to the closest fish and took a fiesty 11 or 12 inch rainbow. ~~Thank God,~~ Thanking the fates it was not a Whitey. Maybe it was a trout pod. Then I caught

another three or four rainbows, ~~which were~~ the closest ones ~~to me where I was standing thigh deep in the water.~~ The fly was working, ~~but now, it seemed there was~~ nothing ~~left~~ but the fish further out in the current, ~~but~~ when I tried to reach them in an upstream cast, I couldn't quite do it. From ~~a little distance,~~ the Yellowstone ~~fools one, especially~~ at this time of year. Maybe ~~it's~~ the wide, exposed banks ~~of~~ rock-and-gravel with that ~~little~~ ribbon of water running ~~through~~ them. But when you get ~~close to~~ that "little" ribbon of water, you ~~see~~ the river ~~has~~ speed, depth ~~and~~ volume, ~~and they~~ demand respect.

I moved above the fish thinking ~~I might~~ go at them with a downstream, reach cast. The line, fly and leader sailed past the feeding trout and just before the line was fully extended, I jerked the rod back. The fly fell three feet in front of ~~one of~~ the rainbows and when it reached him, he jumped on it. ~~Then~~ I tried a combination reach-and-swing cast, ~~which you will find~~ an indispensible ~~if you begin~~ fishing these new imitations. It starts out as a reach cast ~~and~~ the first part of ~~it~~ presents the fly drag-free. When the current ~~has~~ pulled out all ~~of~~ the line and leader, ~~they~~ will begin to swing towards your bank, the fly following. Unlike drag in an upstream dry-fly cast, the fly in a downstream swing-cast angles only slightly toward the bank, ~~and~~ if you let out line, it will drag hardly at all.

This system really started to work on the trout and before long I had eight ~~of them~~ from that one spot and took several more before ~~the~~ day ~~was over~~. I never had a fish over 13 or 14

inches, but these rainbows were full of spunk, leaping wildly and pulling like fish much ~~bigger~~ larger than they were.

~~After~~ When caddis the hatch was over that first year, I carried the Mother's Day Caddis with me where ever I went. I didn't ~~have to~~ wait long to use it. A week or so later, I drove by Dave Kumlien's Orvis shop on Main street in ? (town) and there on the sign of the little shopping center where his store is located was the message for the whole town to see, "MOTHER'S DAY CADDIS HATCH ON AT THE BEAR TRAP."

Hal Two Mother's Day Caddis Hatches? Yes, as Dave explained to me ~~later~~ they are both called by the same name, although the one on the Yellowstone is usually over by Mother's day, when the one on the Madison might just be getting started. He also thought it was of the same family.

I like this part of the Madison. It's quite broad, but not very deep. There are some large boulders, islands, and smaller rock formations ~~which~~ that create some interesting streams within the stream. As I have already noted in the previous chapter, ~~it~~ The river can be fished very early, and it offers major hatches throughout the year, not only in caddis, but in Mayflies and Stoneflies as well. The river can absorb many, many anglers because of its size, so it never looks crowded, and didn't the next day when ~~I went over there~~ I went fishing armed with my new Mother's Day Caddis. Getting there from Bozeman is also one of the most beautiful drives in the state.

The sign was right. When I ~~got close to~~ neared the river, I could see trout rising everywhere, although not in the quantity ~~of the~~ They appeared on Yellowstone. Nor did I see the gigantic rafts or "carpets" of caddis I saw earlier on that river.

I didn't ~~even bother to~~ fish upstream, ~~but~~ Rather, I went out from the bank 40 or 50 feet and started fishing with that downstream, reach-swing method I started on the Yellowstone. I saw a trout stick his head out of the water to ~~the~~ my right ~~of me~~, and I cast to him, throwing The cast a little wide so that the Mother's Day Caddis would swing in front of him. He took it. Then another one a little further down. And Then closer one in towards the bank. All small rainbows, but what fun.

Now, as I write this, I have fished the Mother's day Caddis for two ~~full~~ years. It has proved effective everywhere there is Caddis, ~~and a lot of~~ enjoined by many testers, ~~have corroborated~~. I have taken it ~~down~~ to size 18 for the micro-caddis hatches on the Henry's Fork. It was on that river during June ~~of~~ 1989, that I introduced Hugh Hasselman, a New Zealander, to the fly and gave him a few to try ~~out.~~ This last Christmas we received a greeting card from him, part of which I quote. "It's a lush green world here just now. We've had a very mild, warm spring. I've just spent a couple of hours this evening fishing the spinner fall and Caddis Hatch on the Matawan river which is just five minutes drive from here. Actually Sly, your Mother's Day Caddis is effective on the swing

here, too. Last week I had an Englishman staying with me to try some fishing. The first evening I took him out, he wasn't having much luck until I gave him that fly. He mainly fished on big ponds in England and was thrilled with the rivers here."

If you take one of several channels of the Madison River downstream from Varney bridge you will come to the pool where the most dramatic fishing happened to me using the Mother's Day Caddis. It was the last three hours of an evening in June, 1989. I worked my way down, fishing rises here and there, without really catching anything big or seeing many fish rising to caddis. I arrived at the pool just as it was getting dark. It was the magic hour because the trout were going a little crazy in the pool, and I could reach most of them from my side of the river. There was a high bank close behind me which prohibited upstream, or even straight-across-stream, casting. It seemed like an ideal place for the reach-swing and that's what I tried. I took one or two rainbows of medium size on a size 14 mother's day caddis and then a little further down, along the line between the choppy chutes and the quiet water, I saw a good fish rise. It was difficult to pinpoint him because of the failing light and because the water seemed to be going in every-which-way around him. He rose again, a heavy, splashy rise showing his total displacement. Now I new the spot and threw the mother's day caddis into the chutes above him. For a moment I didn't know where the fly was, but I didn't need to know because he found it. I landed him in about 6 minutes, a brown, eyeballed at about 18 inches and quickly released.

Chapter 3. PALE MORNING DUN : First of The New

The Pale Morning Dun was the first mayfly developed in the new soft-hackled fly imitation series. Because it was so successful on its first outing on the Bighorn, it became the model for all ~~of the~~ other mayfly patterns, which, of course, are tied bigger or smaller and with different colored hackles and body materials. The Pale Morning Dun is probably the most important mayfly in Montana and Idaho. It certainly is the most wide spread and longest lasting fly on many rivers and spring creeks. The most famous places for the hatch are, ~~of course,~~ the Bighorn River where it starts about July 10 and continues until the first couple weeks in September; the cluster of spring creeks on the Yellowstone where it starts about June 10 and lasts until around the first of September, and the Henry's Fork where it can be found by the first week in June all the way through August.

It was on the Bighorn during mid-August ~~16, 17 and 18 of~~ 1988 that Herb Myer and myself worked out the soft-hackled Pale Morning Dun. We had met earlier that year on the Henry's Fork ~~when,~~ I recall, that then he had used a soft-hackled type of pale morning dun, (the only one he had) which he said he had on his leader for two days, never once losing it or having it break off, and during which time, he had caught more than 100 trout ~~on it.~~ So, his heart was in a good place to be testing a new soft-hackled fly pattern.

As a kind of control or knowing at least what everyone else

was doing, we fished the entire first day, the 16th, between the dam and three mile access with a sparkle dun dry fly which is probably the most popular fly used today during the hatch of the pale morning dun. The fly had a sparkle, poly-tail, yellow-orange dubbing, and deer hair wing tied well ~~back from~~ behind the eye, with more dubbing in front of the wing, even crowding the eye of the hook. The thoracic postion of the wing was suggested by Vince Marinaro in MODERN DRY FLY CODE, (I don't know if he was first) and I think ~~that was~~ of it as one of the milestone observations in modern fly fishing. In Halford's dry fly imitations of mayflies, the wings and hackles were placed too close to the front of the flies. That style of tying was copied over and over in England and later in America. Even my hero, T. E. Pritt, tied his game-bird hackles too close to the front of the fly intended to he represent a mayfly. General-use soft hackles always worked better for me when caddis were on the water, but not as well when I was fishing soft hackles during mayfly hatches. The position of the wings on mayflies and caddisflies is probably the greatest, ~~difference,~~ ~~the~~ most obvious difference between the two families of insects. ? an genus It will be the most noticeable difference between old, general-use soft hackles such as the partridge and orange and this new, specific-use mayfly pattern, the pale morning dun.

Family Genus. Species ?

I cannot complain about the effectiveness of the sparkle dun on that first day. I probably caught more than 20 browns while Herb took even more. The hatch on that river is quite phenomenal. It starts soon after 11 a.m., although it can come

earlier on days that will turn hot in temperature. The hatch will last until about 6 p.m., so every angler will have a long time to figure out what he might be doing wrong. At the height of the hatch one can actually hear the trout feeding sort of like plunk...plonk...plunk...plonk -- a round metallic sound, which I have never heard before.

The next morning on a table outside of Herb's trailer I tied the new, soft-hackled pale morning dun. I had looked at a lot of the naturals closeup the previous day and saw a "clean" delicate fly with yellowy orange body, definite rib markings and larger than average wings set well back over a humped, clearly visible thorax. The wings appeared pale yellow, but with a pale green sheen on the leading edge of the wings. The fly looked to be about an average size 14.

Here is the dressing for the fly.

Size: 12, 14, 16, fairly light wire.

Tying thread: Danville 6/0 Orange.

Tail: Natural, silvery sparkle yarn, thin and cut short.

Body: Pale, yellowy/orange dyed rabbit or similar, fine synthetic dubbing tapered slightly to just past the center of the hook. Not too hairy.

Hackle: Three or four turns of a small feather from a hen neck, which, in England is called white with rusty edge. A cream or ginger-colored hen hackle can also be used. (For quite a few years, I had been buying hen necks from Veniards in England, only

rarely using a feather for some soft-hackled fly or another. The necks are very inexpensive and ~~come in the~~ are supplied white with rusty edge, ginger, white, various shades of brown, black, dun and furnace, badger and grizzly. Many of the necks look ~~like screw ups.~~ literally - foul. They are not pure in color and many of them are flecked with black smudges. The centers of the white-with-rusty edge feathers are more yellow or cream than white, ~~and~~ the "rusty edge" is ~~kind of a~~ nearly gold color ~~which~~ That gives the hackle a definite two-tone look ~~to the hackle~~ after it has been around ~~on to~~ the hook. The rusting, apparently, is caused by the sun according to Roger Woolley in his MODERN TROUT FLY DRESSING. There are ~~a lot of~~ many small but short hackles on these necks ~~which~~ That can take the tyer all the way down to a size 20, ~~with~~ allowing three or four wraps. Both Metz and Hoffman hen necks or sets are available from fly shops in ginger, white/cream and barred ginger.)

Head: Same dubbing as for body to the eye.

I tied 8 of these flies on 12's and 14's, gave half of them to Herb and we left for the river. We floated down from the dam to the same spot where we fished the day before, and anchored the raft in knee deep water. About 11, they started, slowly at first, then becoming a full blown display in half an hour. I heard the trout again..."plunk...plonk...plunk...plonk". The rises were visible from 1/4m clear across the river. I picked one out just 20 feet from me and watched a nice brown rise there three or four times in a row. He was upstream a little and towards the center of the river...an ideal dry fly cast if you ever saw one. I cast the 1/4m

new fly above him and it came floating down in the film perfectly. There was a commotion at the fly. I saw the trout come up, then refuse my new offering. I tried him again and the same thing happened. I thought I had created a monster. "I had two refusals," I yelled to Herb.

"Refusals don't mean anything," he yelled back.

I tried another fish. No refusal this time, but a solid take. "I've got one." I yelled.

"One fish doesn't mean a successful fly." he yelled. And now he had one, too. The fly began to work for both of us and we probably caught 80 fish between us. The size 12 in that particular hook seemed to work better than the size 14. I will admit that most of my fish were caught with the fly in a drag-free mode. And the most takes occurred when I was fishing with a 45-degree downstream reach cast. There were times, however, when I pulled the fly from the trout and they pounced on it anyway.

During the entire afternoon, there were many imperfect, knockdown pale morning duns on the water along with a large number of spinners. Herb felt the new soft hackle looked more like the spinners than the new duns. Perhaps the following description of pale morning dun emergence in MAYFLIES, THE ANGLER AND THE TROUT by Fred L. Arbonna, Jr., might help explain the success of the soft-hackle pale morning dun on the Big Horn. "Because Ephemerella duns take a noticeably long time to raise their wings to the upright position, the folded-winged duns are very

vulnerable on the sufrace. Even when a hatch is at its height, an 'emerging-dun' imitation, fished just like a dry fly, remains the most effective method for catching trout." Substitute the words soft hackle for emerging-dun and the sentence reads, "Even when a hatch is at its height, a soft hackle imitation, fished just like a dry fly, remains the most effective method for catching trout."

The Pale Morning Dun Soft-hackle imitation could be taken for spinners after the regular, daytime hatch is over. This happened on the Henry's Fork on June 23, 1989, when Dave Hall and Frank Bell fished a famous section of that river. Dave Hall was armed with some pale morning dun soft-hackles I had made for him earlier. It was almost dark when they started fishing, each man choosing his particular piece of water. If you have fished the Henry's Fork, you must know that sometimes just a few feet can separate good water from bad. Dave got the good and saw three Henry's Fork respectible rainbows feeding in his lane. He took one, then another, and finally the third with the pale morning soft-hackle, while Frank didn't even have a single fish to cast to.

I am not able to sort out the information I get from the "hatch" books on the difference between the inermis and infrequens pale morning duns. But on August 29, 1988, I was fishing on DePuy's spring creek with Dan Tubbs and Mike Langford when either the inermis or the infrequens appeared at around noon

in the area known as the Blue gate. (The spring creek management lists the fly as infrequens.) It was a little smaller than the ~~supposed~~ presumed same fly on the Bighorn with the same delicate, pale yellow wing and the darker leading edge leaning towards green, but with a body of pale olive green. Using the Blue gate picnic table, I quickly tied a couple of soft-hackled pale morning duns on size 16 hooks, substituting Spectrum number 3, a pale olive yellow dubbing for the yellowy orange dubbing, but ~~used~~ using the same hackle I used on the Bighorn. Mike caught a couple of fish immediately with the new soft-hackled pale morning dun, then lost it in the mouth of quite a large fish. I continued to fish mine until the hatch was over at ~~around~~ five o'clock, catching and releasing several browns and rainbows.

The discovery of the white-with-rusty-edge hackle for the pale morning dun, ~~I think,~~ was an important fly tying find. And I have incorporated the same feather in a rusty spinner pattern elsewhere in this book.

Like the soft-hackle midge, the pale morning dun soft-hackled can be fished well-wetted and still remain effective. It can also ~~also~~ be fished successfully in the reach-swing cast method described in the last chapter on the mother's day caddis. Dry or wet, this fly and other new, soft-hackled may fly patterns do a pretty good job of imitating the insect on its way up as a nymph and a dun in emergence; and on its way down as a spinner in egg laying and dying.

Chapter 4: BAETIS AND THE BLUE-WINGED OLIVE; Four Patterns

I used to wonder why T.E. Pritt, Edmonds and Lee, and other earlier fly-fishing writers included more than one artificial to imitate a certain species of trout flies. Pritt had five March browns, four iron blue duns and two sets of two each to imitate other insects. Edmonds and Lee, too, listed two flies each to represent three different insects. Halford, in his first book, FLOATING FLIES AND HOW TO DRESS THEM, really covered the bases for a Baetis fly with 7 patterns. They were the rough olive, India-rubber olive, detached olive, dark olive quill, pale olive quill, and pale olive dun. Except for the detached olive, the patterns look pretty much alike, and it would have to be a very smart trout, indeed, That which could choose one from the other based solely on the visual differences. Halford wasn't too sure about an imitation for the iron blue dun either, because for that insect he listed five artificial patterns, one of which featured "the October tint of iron blue." In later books, the wonderfully allusive but rather indefinite description the father of modern dry fly fishing reduced the number of artificials drastically.

Well, now, after trying to design a new, soft-hackle fly or finding old patterns which were good, wet/dry imitations of the Baetis, I know why those writers and. I'm sure many others included more than one artificial to imitate a certain insect — because in this chapter I have four. And that may not be enough.

Before I show you these four patterns, I would like ~~to try~~ to describe the insects we're imitating in this chapter. ~~I feel~~

descriptive excursion

This is necessary because of the confusion over Baetis and blue-winged olive. Here in Montana, all the Mayflies with olive bodies and leaden, gray, dun wings are called Baetis, including the blue-winged olive, which according to some "hatch" books is not a Baetis, but rather is an Ephemerella. The ~~phrase.~~ description "blue-winged olive" is losing its ~~identity~~ meaning, while Baetis is taking over. In the east and midwest, however, most of the trout flies of the same general coloring in bodies and wings are called Blue-winged olive, while the word, Baetis is not used at all as the most accepted common name. In fact, in HATCHES II, blue-winged olive is listed as the "most accepted common name" for 12 species in the east and midwest, while the word, Baetis, is not shown once as the "most accepted common name". I ~~like~~ prefer the phrase Blue-winged olive ~~better~~, and I like to see it with the hyphen, as the British print it, or even better, as B-w.o.

It's easy to see ~~why there is~~ The source of the confusion ~~over~~ between the two species. The color olive is the dominant body color of most of the species in the Baetis genus. And the body color of the blue-winged olive is, you guessed it, olive. Both the blue-winged olive and the Baetis flies also have dun-colored (lighter or darker) wings, making it even easier to lump them all together in the Baetis group. We are experiencing this kind of difficulty in fly nomenclature because of the trend to call flies by their colloquial/local/descriptive ——— as? scientific names...not their ~~generic~~ names. In England, anglers still call Baetis flies, " olives." And they call the blue-winged olive, "blue-winged olive." In 1986, when fishing ~~I fished~~ the Test

River, when I had a lengthy conversation with the river keeper of the Leckford Club. He said the American anglers he met were using so much Latin in their conversations, he couldn't understand them at all. I feel the scientific names should be left to the taxonomists and we, the anglers should return to the easier, more friendly, generic terms.

Besides size, and color of bodies and wings, there is, of course, another way to identify trout insects: and that is by the time of their appearances. And we can use this method to distinguish between the two flies in this chapter. The true Baetis or olive is the first and last Mayfly you'll see in Montana. It is small (16 and under) and can be fished as early as February and as late as November. The flies seem to like nasty weather, dark, scudding clouds, rain, and even light snow. Tell a fellow angler a certain day was a "Baetis kind of day," and he'll know exactly what you're talking about. "Because hatches can occur in the worst climatic conditions and because there are two yearly generations, the survival of the species is ensured," said Charles Gaidy in his impressive study, EPHEMERAS MAYFLIES NATURALS AND ARTIFICIALS.

The blue-winged olive is basically a summer fly and has three tails while the Baetis have only two. It looks bigger than the Baetis because its wings are overly large for its body. The pattern has a unique history beginning with Halford under that name in FLOATING FLIES. The dressing was as follows: Wings: Pale coot, upright. Body: Peacock quill dyed a medium olive.

Hackle and tail: same medium olive. In Halford's book, the natural fly was to hatch chiefly in the evenings during the latter part of July, August and occasionally even September. In many books ~~that I've read~~ about the fly, the most popular and deadliest pattern to use during the evening rise was the Orange Quill, made popular by Skues. Here is the dressing: Wings: Pale starling. Hackle: Bright red cock. Tail: Same color. Body: Pale condor quill, stripped and dyed hot orange. A hot orange colored fly to imitate the somber, olive body/leaden wing insect? They have got to be kidding! I used to think. Then, recently, in SUNSHINE AND THE DRY FLY, by J. W. Dunne, I read the following: "Late in the evening, in the middle of a furious rise (of blue-winged olives), you will have to abandon fishing, hasten through the darkness to the nearest plank bridge, spear your rod, get out on to the board, and, kneeling there, peer closely and intently at the black water hurrying beneath. Then you will see, gliding swiftly by amid the hatching duns, a spinner with big, flat-spread, oddly whitish-looking wings, between which the red body looks queerly stumpy and diminutive. Red body, did I say? Yes, red---red as any lobster. For your sacrifice of an evening's fishing will have had, at any rate, this little reward: that there, right beneath your eyes, will be the 'orange quill.'"

Now, that's a neat little British twist: fishing the dun with a spinner because they both appear on the water at the same time. But isn't that what Herb Myer and I did on the Big Horn with the pale morning dun soft-hackled ~~fly?~~

I. Baetis Soft-Hackled

It was on the Bighorn again that Hale Harris and Steve Hilbers of the Bighorn Trout Shop in Fort Smith, and I, worked out one of the four Baetis patterns in this chapter. ~~This~~ It was during ~~May 18, 19, 20 and 21, 1988.~~ a four-day stretch in mid-May 1988. Both of these young men are professional guides and fly-tyers and furnish practically all of the flies they sell in their shop. They are also firm believers in the soft-hackled fly and frequently fish the old, general patterns and a lot of new ones they have developed themselves. One of these is the Baetis soft-hackle, dressed as follows:

Hook: 16, 18 light wire.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Danville olive thread built up from the tail into a thin, sloping taper. (Some earlier patterns used brown thread.)

Ribbing: Yellow silk (Thin copper wire on the brown pattern.)

Thorax: Tiny bunch of mole. (On the early brown pattern only.)

Hackle: Starling, three or four wraps. (Include at least one or two wraps of the dull, base side of the hackle.)

It was with the olive and yellow silk-rib fly (sans ~~the~~ thorax) that I started fishing the Baetis hatch on the Bighorn above the three mile access. Once the hatch starts, the browns gather in tight, little pods. The rises are slow, ~~and~~ deliberate, the trout seeming to do a little hula with their bodies when they go back in. (~~Did you ever think~~ they might be showing off?)

Hal.

Syl, you do the same thing when sipping fine wine.)

My
~~The~~ spot ~~I thought I wanted~~ was occupied by a young angler who was flailing away unsuccessfully at the pod of free-rising fish. I found another pod below him, and on the first cast upstream, I took my first brown trout on the new soft-hackled baetis. Then I took another and was feeling magnanimous. I yelled to the young lad, (his name was Brad Bohen) who saw what I was doing. Did he want to try one of the new Baetis? soft-hackled uncharacteristically or merely ~~hackles?~~ Yes! Yes. indeed! (I was not being altruistic--I also wanted a second tester of the new soft-hackle Baetis.) And on his first cast with the fly, he had a brown. Then we took turns hooking and landing these fish until we exhausted our pods and the hatch was over.

I left the Bighorn convinced the soft-hackled Baetis was the best artificial fly ever to come down the stream. And I couldn't wait to try it on my favorite piece of water on the Madison trophy section below Raynold's Pass bridge. The Madison here, too, is famous for its Baetis hatches at this time of year. I chose a day soon after the Bighorn outing that looked like the ideal Baetis day. It was cold and gray with low, fast-moving clouds, threatening rain or snow at any time. The pool I had in mind was not occupied, and the hatch had not started yet. I waited patiently, feeling a little smug because I knew I was going to bedevil? slaughter those fish. Then the hatch started, and the trout joined in. On the water, the Baetis looked just like the Bighorn Baetis, maybe a shade smaller, but I had the Baetis soft-hackled in 18's too. So I put on an 18 and made my first cast. Nothing.

Well, you cant always take a trophy fish on your first cast. So I cast again, the fly passing right over the noses of at least three feeding trout. Again. And again. And nothing, nothing, nothing. Drag free. With drag. A bigger fly. It ~~didn't make any~~ made no difference. Those fish wouldn't take that fly in a million years. I hammered at them for two hours. I couldn't believe it ~~and~~ I finally quit, confirming the age-old belief that ~~thinking~~ there is nothing ~~for~~ certain in fly fishing.

It was that frustrating experience ~~which~~ that made me decide ~~that~~ I could not cover Baetis with only one fly pattern in a written work on new soft hackles. Yet, when ~~that~~ this work started taking shape in 1986, I was sure only one pattern per specie would do, and it was going to be the quintessential soft-hackle fly for the Baetis, pale morning dun, midge, caddis, green drake, or whatever fly I had access to and chose to cover in this book. To be honest, had the Bighorn Baetis worked on the Madison and other Montana waters, I probably would have believed it to be the quintessential pattern, and would have left well-enough alone.

But, it didn't so here is the second Baetis pattern.

Starling and pheasant.

Hook: 16, 18, 20, light or medium wire.

Tying ~~silk~~ thread: Danville olive.

Body: Barbs (three for a 16, two for 18, and one or two for a 20) from the center tail of a rooster pheasant, wound on the hook together with thin copper wire, as in the pheasant tail soft-hackle

~~hackle~~ or traditional nymph.

Hackle: Starling, three or four wraps of the lighter, dun-colored, down base part of the feather.

This fly belongs as much to Paul Brown as it does to me. We designed it sometime before 1983 as a nymph/dun Baetis imitation on the Henry's Fork ~~river~~ in Idaho. The fly is influenced ~~of course~~ by Frank Sawyer's pheasant tail nymph ~~which is~~ one of Paul's favorite sub-surface flies on that river and others where the Baetis prevail. The Sawyer nymph is Paul's sheet anchor, and he often starts fishing this fly when the Baetis are on. Paul says. "Fishing the Sawyer nymph, I thought I was in possesion of the Holy Grail of Baetis imitations. There were times, however, when the fish would not accept it dead-drift and then I would move it slightly when I thought it was close to the fish and this would encourage them to take it. As I think back to Frank's book, NYMPHS AND THE TROUT, he, too, would raise the nymph at a speed he figured was the nymph's swimming speed and this would get the fish to take it."

"There were times when the fish would not take the Sawyer nymph fished either dead-drifted or moved. I couldn't believe that this great fly could ever fail me, and I looked closely into the water to see if there might be another insect present. I never found any and finally reasoned either the fish were taking a drowned Baetis dun underwater or in the film, or they were feeding on submerged egg-laying females (Entomologists have reported female spinners of

Baetis and closely related genera deposit their eggs underwater by crawling down rocks, weeds or whatever) in preference to the duns ~~which~~ that were everywhere in evidence.

"One of my first alterations to the Sawyer nymph was a loosely wound dubbing of medium-dark hare's mask at the thorax and the change from a wet fly hook to a dry fly one. I reasoned the hare's fur represented the wings folded closely along the bodies of the females, ~~and~~ I also wanted the fly to stay fairly close to the surface. Although this fly worked at times below exposed weed beds, it was not the answer I was looking for.

"I began to think about soft-hackles that might duplicate the color of the wings of the natural. ~~when~~ Then the starling came to mind. The feathers were small enough for 20's and 22's, but at first glance they seemed too dark. But wait. At the base of the feather is a downy, filmy kind of marabou like fuzz which comes very close to the color of the wings of the Baetis duns. I tied a few of these wet duns and tried them the first chance I got. My subesequent experience with the Starling and Pheasant is that it is ofen effective when you cannot induce the trout to accept a conventional Sawyer nymph."

~~Addit~~

~~Like Paul~~, I also fished the starling and pheasant for the first time on the Henry's Fork. Big water (as we shall also see later), ~~like~~ that big-water river, is conducive to reach-casting, and reach/swing casting with the new soft-hackled fly imitations because you can move above the fish in almost any direction to

obtain the desired drift. With the starling and pheasant. I must admit that I could fool many Henry's Fork trout. but also never any of the giant rainbows the river is famous for.

The giant fish story with this fly belongs to Pat Daly, who fished the Henry's fork with me during the late fall of 1983. I tied some starling and pheasant 16's in the car and gave him a couple to try out. The next day we were in Yellowstone Park on the Madison. We separated, but ~~were still~~ remained within sight of one another. It was a classic Baetis day again; cold rain, low gray clouds, and leaden sky. In the middle of some of my fishing, I looked down stream and saw him hook a fish. Good, I thought, he didn't get that many. I turned away thinking he would fight it and release it in a short time. The fight lasted longer than usual and he started to make his way across the river toward my bank, the well-traveled one. He's got a nice fish, I thought, but ~~heck~~ the river's full of nice fish at this time of year...and went on fishing. Meanwhile, he kept on coming still holding onto the big fish and nearing the bank, where his wife and mine were now standing cheering him on. I couldn't stand it any longer and got out, ran two hundred yards down to him and saw what he was holding on to. It was a brown, quite subdued, ready for release, perhaps 24 to 26 inches long. Pat was quite subdued too, so I stepped into the water and reached down to remove the fly and saw there one of The? my Starling and pheasants stuck firmly in the scissors of this giant trout.

III. Waterhen-Bloa

The third soft-hackled fly imitation for the Baetis is the Waterhen-Bloa, a very popular baetis imitation throughout Yorkshire and Scotland. It is number 8 in Pritt's list and number 2 in the list of Edmonds and Lee. (~~in case you~~ If you have ~~the~~ this author's THE SOFT-HACKLED FLY ADDICT at your disposal, ~~where~~ you can also find the meaning of the word, bloa.)

My dressing is as follows:

Hook: 16, 18, light wire.

Tying thread: Pearsall's yellow.

Body: A light dusting of muskrat fur on the well-waxed tying thread, tapered slightly toward the front of the fly.

Hackle: Two wraps of a small, pearly gray feather with white tips from the under side the wing of a waterhen, (moorhen or American coot), set well back from the eye of the hook.

Tail: 5 or 6 filaments of clear, crinkly poly, cut short. (Pritt's tie is the same except for the position of the hackle and the tail. Edmonds and Lee's tie specifies mole fur for the dubbing, which is considerably darker than the muskrat. (~~Of two~~ One of other dressings by different authors, mole fur ~~is also suggested~~ suggest ~~once~~ instead of ~~the~~ muskrat.)

Depuy's spring creek near Livingston has excellent hatches of the Baetis and blue-winged olive. The small dark Baetis ~~comes~~ appears ~~as~~ early ~~as~~ March ~~10~~, disappears around the middle of May, and returns around the middle of September (in an even smaller size), and is fishable ~~until way into~~ throughout December. The Blue-winged olive ~~comes~~ appears around the end of June and lasts until around the

middle of October. The hatches come and go like clockwork because of the constancy of the temperature and chemistry of the water. One could not find a more fitting laboratory or testing place for new fly patterns than DePuy's Spring Creek, and one could not find more kindly people than Eva DePuy, her daughter, Betty, and Bob Auger, the river keeper, who gave me frequent permission during my research ~~the last two years~~ to test my new soft-hackled fly imitations on their spring creek.

This fly, the Waterhen-Bloa, has had a very thorough workout on Depuy's and can be fished confidently upstream in a drag-free mode and downstream (sometimes) in the reach/swing manner to browns and rainbows feeding on olive duns. It can also be used successfully in a much larger size than the actual fly on the water, ~~which I feel is~~ one of the main advantages of all of the new, soft-hackled mayfly imitations.

The most memorable experience with the waterhen-bloa occured ~~on~~ in early October ~~4~~, 1989, when I fished Depuy's with Barry Serviente, owner of Anglers Art. It was very cold, with rain and snow showing intermittingly. I was armed with soft-hackle midges, some new Tricos and Waterhen-bloas in 18's, tied not with waterhen hackles, but with blue-dun hen hackles from a newly purchased Hoffman neck. (The fly should be called Hoffman hen bloa). We fished at the blue gate where by 11 AM or so the Baetis really started coming down. The conditions were perfect. ~~It was a good day for me to show off because Barry sells a lot of copies of my books through his mail~~

Wetanken?

~~order book company~~. And ~~that's exactly~~ what I proceeded to do was ~~take trout~~ with the Hoffman hen bloa. No matter where I put it, a trout ~~was~~ took it ~~waiting to take it~~, and I caught several. I was using a Dai-Riki ? reference needed to brand name ? 7X-12 foot leader, and I began to get reckless. In quick succession, I broke off 4 or 5 bloas and finally ran out of the pattern, the hatch in full swing. Now what? Run into Dan Bailey in Livingston and tie more, that's what! I felt strange sitting there with 30 or so women, all of them thinking I might be stealing their jobs ~~from them.~~ One of them found the materials I needed, and in 10 or 15 minutes I tied another 4 Hoffman hen bloas and was back on Montana 89 racing toward Depuy. I found Barry still at the blue gate, slugging away taking a fish now and then, and started below him, where the new fly resumed its outstanding performance.

Barry wrote his own version of this day's fishing in his new catalog, ~~just received~~ (March, 1990): "I watched, in awe, as Syl tested a new soft-hackle pattern on DePuy's Spring Creek near Livingston, MT, this past fall. Using a 3 weight rod he made a 60' cast quatering downstream. The backcast missed the chest-high weeds and the fly landed three feet ahead of the trout feeding in a backwater on the other side of the stream. After such a presentation with a prototype fly there was no way the trout was going to refuse." ~~Aw, gee, shucks Barry.~~ It was the fly not the driver; credit where credit is due.

IV Tedd's BWO

The fourth soft-hackle imitation in this chapter is called simply blue-winged olive and was developed by Tedd Ward who has

fished the fly successfully for three seasons mainly on the Beaverkill. The dressing is:

Hook: 18, 20; medium to light wire.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Barbs from grey goose quill feather.

Rib: Olive silk.

Hackle: Blue dun hen.

The grey goose, herl body with the olive rib looks similar to the lightly dubbed muskrat body in the Waterhen bloa, and provides an alternative to tying the pattern. Tedd has said the fly is not only more effective on the Beaverkill, but can be fished with less fuss than other patterns for the blue-winged olive on the classic eastern rivers. Please see chapter 00 for more information.

Appendix

All of the new fly dressings in this book are repeated here for quick and easy retrieval by the reader. The dressings of the flies for eastern rivers created by Tedd Ward are also included.

1. SYL'S MIDGE

Size: 16 sproat, fairly light wire.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Peacock herl tied a bit fat, beginning at a point between the point of the hook and the barb.

Hackle: Two turns of a small gray partridge hackle.

2. MOTHER'S DAY CADDIS

Sizes: 12, 14, 16, 18. Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Peacock Herl.

Rib: Yellow silk, (optional.)

Hackle: Gray or brown partridge hackle, wound then gathered and set on top of hook.

Head: Mole fur.

3. PALE MORNING DUN

Sizes: 14, 16 Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville 6/0 orange.

Body: Pale, yellowy/orange dyed rabbit or similar, fine, synthetic dubbing tapered slightly to just past the center of the hook. Not too hairy. (Choose body color to match local duns.)

Hackle: White-with-rusty-edge hen feather.

Head: Same dubbing as for body to the eye.

Tail: Clear sparkle poly.

4. BAETIS #1

Sizes: 16, 18, Tiemco 100 or Dai-Riki 305 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Same thread built up from the tail into a thin sloping taper. About 2//3's of the hook.

Rib: Yellow silk.

Hackle: Starling.

Head: Danville olive.

5. BAETIS #2

Sizes: 16, 18, 20 Tiemco 100 or Dai-Riki 305 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville Olive.

Body: Cock pheasant and copper wire.

Hackle: Starling.

6. WATERHEN-BLOA (BAETIS #3)

Sizes: 16, 18 Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Pearsall's yellow.

Body: A light dusting of muskrat fur.

Hackle: Waterhen.

7. BWO (BAETIS #4)

Sizes: 18, 20 Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Grey goose.

Rib: Olive silk.

Hackle: Blue dun hen.

8. TRICO #1

Size: 19 Tiemco 102Y.

Tying thread: Black or dark olive.

Body: Dark mole.

Hackle: Dirty-white hen hackle.

Head: Dark mole.

Tail: Clear, sparkle poly, long.

9. TRICO #2

Size: 19 Tiemco 102Y.

Tying thread: Black or dark olive.

Body: Peacock herl.

Hackle: Grizzly hen.

Tail: Clear, sparkle poly, long.

10. CALLIBAETIS

Size: 14, 15, 16, Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Body: Orvis #21 dubbing.

Hackle: Grizzly hen.

Tail: Clear, sparkle poly.

11. GREEN DRAKE

Size: 10, 12, fine wire, 2x to 4x long.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Hackles: Two olive green dyed partridge and one cock badger or blue dun hackle.

Body: Olive green hare's face or equivalent.

Rib: Olive silk.

Tail: Moose mane or olive sparkle material.

12. RUSTY SPINNER

Size: 15, 17, 19 Tiemco 102Y.

Tying Thread: Orange.

Body: Rusty dubbing.

Ribbing: Gold wire.

Hackle: White-with-rusty-edge.

Head: Rusty dubbing.

13: FRESHWATER SHRIMP

Size: 12, 14, 16 Dai-Riki 070 sproat.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Light olive dubbing.

Back: Clear plastic.

Ribbing: Gold wire.

Hackle: Olive dyed partridge.

Tail: Olive dyed partridge.

14. MAHOGANY DUN (Exprimental)

Size: Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hook to match.

Body: Danville tobacco brown tying thread.

Ribbing: Pearsall's yellow.

Hackle: Medium dun hen.

Tail: Clear sparkle poly.

The following soft-hackled fly imitations were developed by Tedd Ward for use on the Beaverkill, Delaware and other eastern rivers. He has been using general soft hackles since the early 70's when we first met in Yellowstone Park. This series of patterns is a result of 6 years work. Tedd says, "anyone, novice or master, who isn't carrying some soft hackles is missing the boat. The mistake a lot of fishermen have made in the past is ruling out soft hackle designs at the peak of a hatch when trout are super selective. This new book not only provides soft hackle imitator patterns for those occasions, but should motivate more of us to devise our own."

DUN VARIANT (ISONYCHIA BICOLOR) NYMPH

Hook: Partridge K12ST.

Thread: Claret.

Hackle: Quail.

Tail: 3 peacock sword barbs.

Rib: Peacock herl counterwound with black silk.

Body: Sealex #105.

DUN VARIANT EMERGER

Hook: Partridge K12ST.

Thread: Claret.

Hackle: Quail.

Tail: Black marabou tied long to imitate the trailing shuck.

Body: Sealex #105.

Thorax: Muscrat tied heavy.

Tedd uses two patterns to imitate the Hendrickson hatch on the Beaverkill. He says, "The first imitates both the nymph and the emerger and should be used before the hatch. The second imitates the so-called stillborn and works when fish are rising, but don't seem to care for the dun."

HENDRICKSON (EPHEMERELLA SUBVARIA) NYMPH AND EMERGER

Hook: Mustad 94833 #12.

Thread: Unithread dun colored 8/0.

Hackle: Gray partridge.

Tail: 3 or 4 lemon wood duck barbs.

Body: Mixture of 2/3 Sealex #110 and 1/3 Sealex 117.

HENDRICKSON (STILLBORN)

Hook: Mustad 94833 #12.

Thread: Unithread dun colored 8/0.

Hackle: Gray partridge.

Trailing shuck: Gray partridge reverse tied.

Body: Mixture of 2/3 Sealex #110 and 1/3 Sealex #117.

Tedd continues with the March Brown. "My experience on the Beaverkill, has been, along with many others, that the trout work the March Brown nymphs more often than the duns. One day in the Wagon Tracks Pool, duns were hatching out in the still water downstream. While watching them, I noticed trout flashing on or near the bottom in the run in front of me, obviously feeding on the nymph. I found a March Brown Spider soft hackle in my box with gold dyed hare's ear and tried it. Three nice fish took the fly while dead drifting in the surface film. Since then, the pattern has proved successful not only as an imitation of the March Brown nymph, but as imitations of the Gray Fox and Light Cahill nymphs. Here is the tie."

MARCH BROWN NYMPH (STENOMEMA VICARIUM) PLUS GRAY FOX AND LIGHT CAHILL

Hook: Mustad 94833 #10 for March Brown, #12 for Gray Fox and #14 for Light Cahill.

Thread: Brown Unithread 8/0.

Hackle: Gray partridge, or sometimes grouse.

Tail: 3 cock pheasant barbs.

Rib: Fine copper wire.

Body: Gold (yellow) dyed spikey hare's mask tied a little heaver than usual for a soft hackle.

For the West Branch of the Delaware in late summer, Tedd suggests the following Sulpher pattern, fished as a drowned dry fly.

SULPHUR (EPHEMERELLA DOROTHEA)

Hook: Mustad 94833 #14.

Thread: Pearsall's yellow silk.

Tail: 3 gray partridge barbs.

Body: Pearsall's tying thread.

Thorax: Natural kapok.

Appendix

All of the new fly dressings in this book are repeated here for quick and easy retrieval by the reader. The dressings of the flies for eastern rivers created by Tedd Ward are also included.

1. SYL'S MIDGE

Size: 16 sproat, fairly light wire.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Peacock herl tied a bit fat, beginning at a point between the point of the hook and the barb.

Hackle: Two turns of a small gray partridge hackle.

2. MOTHER'S DAY CADDIS

Sizes: 12, 14, 16, 18. Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Peacock Herl.

Rib: Yellow silk, (optional.)

Hackle: Gray or brown partridge hackle, wound then gathered and set on top of hook.

Head: Mole fur.

3. PALE MORNING DUN

Sizes: 14, 16 Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville 6/0 orange.

Body: Pale, yellowy/orange dyed rabbit or similar, fine, synthetic dubbing tapered slightly to just past the center of the hook. Not too hairy. (Choose body color to match local duns.)

Hackle: White-with-rusty-edge hen feather.

Head: Same dubbing as for body to the eye.

Tail: Clear sparkle poly.

4. BAETIS #1

Sizes: 16, 18, Tiemco 100 or Dai-Riki 305 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Same thread built up from the tail into a thin sloping taper. About 2//3's of the hook.

Rib: Yellow silk.

Hackle: Starling.

Head: Danville olive.

5. BAETIS #2

Sizes: 16, 18, 20 Tiemco 100 or Dai-Riki 305 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville Olive.

Body: Cock pheasant and copper wire.

Hackle: Starling.

6. WATERHEN-BLOA (BAETIS #3)

Sizes: 16, 18 Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Pearsall's yellow.

Body: A light dusting of muskrat fur.

Hackle: Waterhen.

7. BWO (BAETIS #4)

Sizes: 18, 20 Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Grey goose.

Rib: Olive silk.

Hackle: Blue dun hen.

8. TRICO #1

Size: 19 Tiemco 102Y.

Tying thread: Black or dark olive.

Body: Dark mole.

Hackle: Dirty-white hen hackle.

Head: Dark mole.

Tail: Clear, sparkle poly, long.

9. TRICO #2

Size: 19 Tiemco 102Y.

Tying thread: Black or dark olive.

Body: Peacock herl.

Hackle: Grizzly hen.

Tail: Clear, sparkle poly, long.

Head: Peacock herl.

10. CALLIBAETIS

Size: 14, 15, 16, Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hooks.

Body: Orvis #21 dubbing.

Hackle: Grizzly hen.

Tail: Clear, sparkle poly.

11. GREEN DRAKE

Size: 10, 12, fine wire, 2x to 4x long.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Hackles: Two olive green dyed partridge and one cock badger or blue dun hackle.

Body: Olive green hare's face or equivalent.

Rib: Olive silk.

Tail: Moose mane or olive sparkle material.

12. RUSTY SPINNER

Size: 15, 17, 19 Tiemco 102Y.

Tying Thread: Orange.

Body: Rusty dubbing.

Ribbing: Gold wire.

Hackle: White-with-rusty-edge.

Head: Rusty dubbing.

13: FRESHWATER SHRIMP

Size: 12, 14, 16 Dai-Riki 070 sproat.

Tying thread: Danville olive.

Body: Light olive dubbing.

Back: Clear plastic.

Ribbing: Gold wire.

Hackle: Olive dyed partridge.

Tail: Olive dyed partridge.

14. MAHOGANY DUN (Exprimental)

Size: Dai-Riki 305 or Tiemco 100 dry fly hook to match.

Body: Danville tobacco brown tying thread.

Ribbing: Pearsall's yellow.

Hackle: Medium dun hen.

Tail: Clear sparkle poly.

The following soft-hackled fly imitations were developed by Tedd Ward for use on the Beaverkill, Delaware and other eastern rivers. He has been using general soft hackles since the early 70's when we first met in Yellowstone Park. This series of patterns is a result of 6 years work. Tedd says, "anyone, novice or master, who isn't carrying some soft hackles is missing the boat. The mistake a lot of fishermen have made in the past is ruling out soft hackle designs at the peak of a hatch when trout are super selective. This new book not only provides soft hackle imitator patterns for those occasions, but should motivate more of us to devise our own."

DUN VARIANT (ISONYCHIA BICOLOR) NYMPH

Hook: Partridge K12ST.

Thread: Claret.

Hackle: Quail.

Tail: 3 peacock sword barbs.

Rib: Peacock herl counterwound with black silk.

Body: Sealex #105.

DUN VARIANT EMERGER

Hook: Partridge K12ST.

Thread: Claret.

Hackle: Quail.

Tail: Black marabou tied long to imitate the trailing shuck.

Body: Sealex #105.

Thorax: Muscrat tied heavy.

Tedd uses two patterns to imitate the Hendrickson hatch on the Beaverkill. He says, "The first imitates both the nymph and the emerger and should be used before the hatch. The second imitates the so-called stillborn and works when fish are rising, but don't seem to care for the dun."

HENDRICKSON (EPHEMERELLA SUBVARIA) NYMPH AND EMERGER

Hook: Mustad 94833 #12.

Thread: Unithread dun colored 8/0.

Hackle: Gray partridge.

Tail: 3 or 4 lemon wood duck barbs.

Body: Mixture of 2/3 Sealex #110 and 1/3 Sealex 117.

HENDRICKSON (STILLBORN)

Hook: Mustad 94833 #12.

Thread: Unithread dun colored 8/0.

Hackle: Gray partridge.

Trailing shuck: Gray partridge reverse tied.

Body: Mixture of 2/3 Sealex #110 and 1/3 Sealex #117.

Tedd continues with the March Brown. "My experience on the Beaverkill, has been, along with many others, that the trout work the March Brown nymphs more often than the duns. One day in the Wagon Tracks Pool, duns were hatching out in the still water downstream. While watching them, I noticed trout flashing on or near the bottom in the run in front of me, obviously feeding on the nymph. I found a March Brown Spider soft hackle in my box with gold dyed hare's ear and tried it. Three nice fish took the fly while dead drifting in the surface film. Since then, the pattern has proved successful not only as an imitation of the March Brown nymph, but as imitations of the Gray Fox and Light Cahill nymphs. Here is the tie."

MARCH BROWN NYMPH (STENOMEMA VICARIUM) PLUS GRAY FOX AND LIGHT

CAHILL

Hook: Mustad 94833 #10 for March Brown, #12 for Gray Fox and #14 for Light Cahill.

Thread: Brown Unithread 8/0.

Hackle: Gray partridge, or sometimes grouse.

Tail: 3 cock pheasant barbs.

Rib: Fine copper wire.

Body: Gold (yellow) dyed spikey hare's mask tied a little heaver than usual for a soft hackle.

For the West Branch of the Delaware in late summer, Tedd suggests the following Sulpher pattern, fished as a drowned dry fly.

SULPHUR (EPHEMERELLA DOROTHEA)

Hook: Mustad 94833 #14.

Thread: Pearsall's yellow silk.

Tail: 3 gray partridge barbs.

Body: Pearsall's tying thread.

Thorax: Natural kapok.

INTRODUCTION

I have never concealed my admiration for Sylvester Nemes's first two works, THE SOFT-HACKLED FLY and its sequel, THE SOFT-HACKLED FLY ADDICT. They were written in clean tight prose, each about a single, simple subject. Each illuminated its subject in such a way that I was able to grasp it and enlist it into instant use where it's most practical and also most fun: out on trout streams.

I now take a high percentage of my fish, season after season, on soft-hackled wet flies.

Since meeting and fishing with Sylvester, I've acquired a similar admiration for the man--with some envy added. He's energetic, enthusiastic about his favorite subject, has a quick sense of humor. He's also retired now and living in Montana. He casts his soft-hackled flies on some of the most beautiful and productive trout streams on earth. His opportunities for education, in a school where the instructors scold with cold, disdainful noses, are limitless.

My fishing partners and I have encountered many difficult situations in recent years, over trout selective to specific insects, and solved them with soft-hackled fly patterns. The brawling Deschutes has gentle backeddies where great dark forms arise to sip distressed mayflies from the foam. A soft-hackle awash in the film is about the only thing that fools them. The

gentle Bighorn has extensive slick-topped flats where browns set up rise rhythms and accept only the occasional natural out of parades of them floating by. Again, a greased soft-hackle is at times the only fly that will coax them into making a mistake.

I have long hoped that Sylvester would write a book about these situtations: fishing soft-hackles when hatches are happening and trout are selective. But he needed lots of time for research; such a book could arise only out of his retirement to Montana.

Now, we've got it.

Like Sylvester's earlier works, SOFT-HACKLED FLY IMITATIONS takes a single subject--fishing hatches with soft-hackles--and shines clear, instructive prose on it. It doesn't cover all of the hatches; no book could. But it covers those most of us will encounter in a season astream.

This new book can be seen in one light as a treatise on the most important hatches; how to match them with soft-hackles, how to fish those flies and take trout in this new way. It's an important book in that respect alone. But it can also be seen as a method: as a departure point for learning to recognize your own hatches, and learning to construct your own soft-hackled magic to match them.

You'll learn from this beautiful creation of Syl's. You'll also enjoy it.

Dave Hughes

Astoria, OR, 1990.

(with -) soft-hackled flies
(without -) soft hackles

SOFT-HACKLED FLY IMITATIONS

By Sylvester Nemes

PREFACE

With this book, SOFT-HACKLED FLY IMITATIONS, I have come full circle ~~during~~ in my long romance of and literary involvement with the soft-hackled fly. The circle began with the publication of THE SOFT-HACKLED FLY in 1975. It re-introduced American fly fishers to a simple, wingless and tailless, two-part wet fly; the body of silk, dubbing or herl and the hackle from game birds such as partridge, grouse or snipe and other birds such as starling and, the English bird, Jackdaw. There were only 14 patterns in the first book (I recall one publisher's refusal, "We can't publish a whole book on just one kind of fly.") and only one simple way to fish them (-) across and down. The book's message was: trout are simple, wild creatures, not nearly possessing the brain power most match-the-hatch advocates attribute ~~allude~~ to them. The message continued: trout would take a sparsely dressed artifical below the surface even when it was 'dragging' in front of them.

In the first book, soft-hackles were 'hunch' flies. One started out with his favorite color, (orange, yellow or greeen) and switched to another if the first didn't produce. The elimination process was accelerated ~~grew faster~~ by fishing a contrasting dropper, a fly of a different color or material or size in order to arrive quicker at the taking pattern. It was also suggested that one should fish a

soft-hackle in size and color ~~which came~~ closest to the fly or flies being taken by trout or seen on the water. This was a simple and elementary approach to fly fishing, reserved by many experienced anglers for their wives, sweethearts and young ~~sons~~ children. There was very little science. It was too easy. And for ~~many advanced angling precisions~~ those harboring advanced angling persuasions, it wasn't enough.

The middle book of what ~~is~~ has become now a trilogy was THE SOFT-HACKLED FLY ADDICT, which published ~~by me~~ in 1981, in Chicago. In the six-year interim from the first book, I obtained some original Yorkshire soft-hackled flies and was amazed at their skimpiness. Where I was still tying my bodies with floss, these were tied merely with the tying silk. Also, late in the interim, I finally found and purchased NORTH COUNTRY FLIES by T. E. Pritt and BROOK AND RIVER TROUTING by Edmonds and Lee, considered by angling historians to be milestones in the literature of soft hackles. And I agreed. The books were eye-openers. The colored fly plates in both books showed soft-hackled flies that were far more sparse and imitative of trout insects than any I had tied and used. There were also many more patterns. And the attempt was made, particularly in BROOK AND RIVER TROUTING, to key patterns to actual trout insects, or, at least in many cases, to the broader insect orders.

I was very happy to have these two books. They were helping me ~~to grow in~~ deepen my appreciation for and knowledge of the soft-hackled fly. I desired that readers interested in this fly should grow

with me, so I included all of the plates and patterns of NORTH-COUNTRY FLIES and all of the patterns and a color plate of BROOK AND RIVER TROUTING in the new book. The ADDICT was far more advanced than the first book. The reader needed some knowledge of entomology, and he needed to understand the differeent~~ent~~nce between across-and-down casting with drag and upstream casting without it. The book certainly could not be recommended for beginners.

The Soft Hackled Fly (1975) and Soft-Hackled Fly Addict (1981)

~~Books one and two~~ were thought of and written when I was living near or in Chicago. I was a typical non-resident angler, fishing several weekends a year in Michigan and Wisconsin and perhaps one or two weeks annually in Montana and Yellowstone Park. I feel the nature of the first two books did not require any more experience or special skills than that. Like Arnold Gingrich, I was fishing more in libraries than on rivers. And the most beautiful place for me to 'fish' during that time was the Newberry Library in Chicago, where along with the world's largest collection of manuscripts and memorabilia of Herman Melville, there was also a pretty good collection of fly fishing literature which included such things as YORKSHIRE TROUT FLIES, rare predecessor NORTH-COUNTRY FLIES, (the only copy I have ever seen,) and books by Jackson, Theakston, Ronalds, Walbran and many others pertaining to the soft-hackled fly.

Syl: check spelling!

In 1984, I was able, finally, to reverse that trend by moving in retirement to Bozeman, Montana, where I could, indeed, fish more in rivers than in libraries. (I was a 'resident' fisherman for the first time in my life.) I had already begun to

experiment with soft-hackles which were designed as specific imitations of certain trout flies: a large, olive-green dyed partridge fly for the Green Drake; a white silk-bodied fly with a light grey partridge hackle and peacock herl head for emerging EPEORUS on the lower Madison; a small starling and pheasant tail body fly for BAETIS on the Henry's Fork; and several partridge flies with varying colored silk bodies for CADDIS on the Yellowstone, Gallatin and the Madison. With more time on the rivers and spring creeks, I was now seeing hatches of insects (particularly small may flies) which, quite frankly, were not covered by existing soft-hackled fly designs. I had also read somewhere that experienced anglers were not using soft-hackled flies and that the use of soft-hackles was not growing because my two books ~~instructed them to fish~~ dictated that soft-hackles must be fished downstream, on a tight line only. These ~~two occurences~~ disclosures started me thinking about a series of new, soft-hackled flies ~~which were~~ intended to imitate more closely, individual species of trout insects; and which were intended to be fished more like nymphs or dry flies, up in the traditional dry fly mode or down (stream) in the modern "reach" cast mode now practiced by ~~a large percentage~~ the majority of dry fly fishermen. The result of that developmental work, begun in March, 1987, is this book, the ~~end~~ Coda of the trilogy, SOFT-HACKLED FLY IMITATIONS, most certainly, the most advanced and demanding book ~~in it.~~ of the three.

Obviously, this kind of book could never have been written by anyone living in Chicago, Detroit or Cleveland. Unless he had unlimited time, money, and his own jet. One wonders how Richards

and Swisher researched and published their great book, SELECTIVE TROUT. Swisher had plastic to sell and Richards had crowns to make and cavities to fill. (They did have the Rouge River nearby, however, which produced many of the hatches featured in their book.) And think also about CADDISFLIES, by Gary LaFontaine. Five years to make with a virtual army of experimenters trying this pattern and that and poor Gary, actually diving into the depths of cold trout streams to witness, first-hand, the transformation of the caddis pupa into the caddis fly.

Sq!: a bitchy tone creeps in here, Sq!: you want that?

at last, I had the essential elements of every endeavor: means, opportunity and motivation.

I'm not looking for pity. I had the rivers (probably the finest collection in the world for this kind of research), the time, and the desire to do the work, and, hopefully, enough talent and experience to make the book successful. a significant addition to the literature. Besides, one can't really call this "work."

?

Work on the new flies was conducted empirically. I was guided by practical experience, not theory. I took each fly as it came in the season (seasons), chased it from one river or spring creek to another, offering the feeding trout my new concoctions until they worked (or didn't) which sent me back frequently to the tying table. Each soft-hackled fly imitation is based on the general appearance of the insect it tries to suggest. For example, the Trico imitation is based on a small, black insect with dirty white wings; the Baetis imitation is patterned after a medium-sized, dark-bodied fly with dominant, grey wings; and the Green Drake resembles a large, dark green insect with a long tail and big wings. Not all the patterns are

new. Some are old soft-hackled patterns, which are newly designated to imitate a certain species. The imitations are sexless. Live insects were captured in a small dip net and studied cursorily with a low-power magnifying glass. There is only one artificial per insect. I was not able to come up with the nymph, emerger, or spinner of a given bug, nor did I want to.

There are ___ flies in this book. They cannot be called dry flies, nor wet flies. They are fished half-in and half-out of the water, sometimes visible on the surface, or in the film. Like the traditional use of dry flies, they are meant to be fished during "sight" fishing conditions: that is, when the angler can see trout feeding and when he can see (or know by the season or conditions) what the trout is feeding on.

Many of the new flies make use of traditional soft-hackle materials; furs (real and synthetic), herls, silks and feathers from game and pest birds. One major, new wrinkle is the use of small, hen hackles, which are and always have been 'soft-hackles' and which, I feel, have thus far been ignored in the designs of imitative type flies; dry or wet. There still are no wings on any of the new fly patterns. The hackle is used to represent both the wings and the legs of the natural, keeping the new flies as simple and easy to tie as any soft-hackle. Almost all of the mayfly patterns now have tails made from sparkle-poly material (an appendage missing from the traditional soft-hackles).

Soon after I started working on these flies, it occurred to me that some of my fellow anglers could help out in the testing of them. In fact, when some of them found out what I was trying to do, they insisted they be permitted to join me; either with me or by themselves on different rivers. I must have tied more than a thousand flies which I handed out gladly to anyone willing to give them a try, even perfect strangers having a tough time during a good hatch on various rivers. The testers reported to me by notes, by telephone or in person. Those last encounters were the most exciting, particularly when the experimenter had a fabulous day fishing new patterns. I could never write down what they were saying fast enough, and the subsequent, slower repeat always seemed pale by comparison. Some persons never responded at all, but they did have my flies which I assumed they used at one time or another. A large body of testers is important to any research program, but more important than sheer numbers is the fact that the flies worked for them on different water and under different conditions of time and weather, and using different technics, equipment, lines and leaders. (Changing a leader made a great deal of difference in the testing of one of the new imitations on the Big Horn.)

So, I wish to thank the following people (in alphabetical order) for whatever assistance they provided in the research of the new flies for this book. Jim Adams, Bob Auger, Frank Bell, Dennis Bitton, Judith Bowman, Larry Bradshaw, David Brameld, Neil

Brown, Paul Brown, Ron Brown, Caesar Carnaghi, Mike Caswell, Calvin Chin, Sandy Colvard, Victor Colvard, Tom Clark, Tom Conway, Lynn Corson, Jim Criner, Pat Daly, Dom DeMeola, Earl Dorsey, Vivian Dorsey, Buddy Drake, Buddy Faught, Dave Freeman, Eric Gustafson, Dave Hall, Tom Hargrove, Hale Harris, Hugh Hasselman, Hisatsugu Haneda, Steve Hilbers, Dave Hughes, Gary Kaplan, Naoki Kawamura, Lisa Keckeissen, Dave Kumlien, Mike Langford, Wayne Luallen, Grahame E. Maisey, Frank Mattarelli, Sheri Merica, Maggie Merriman, Herb Meyr, Larry Miller, Tom Morgan, Diane Orr, Datus Proper, Victor Ramon, Bob Roberts, George Roberts, Tom Roberts, Jack Sayers, Ron Schockley, Dave Schultz, Barry Serviente, Drew Spanogle, Dale Spartas, Keith Stonebreaker, Ed Story, Eric Swedman, Lee Trapp, Tom Travis, Dan Tubbs, Jo Anne Tubbs, Charlie Vanerka, Doug Vanerka, Tedd Ward, Jack Weiss, Tom Widmar, Dean Yannias, and Tom Young. I'm sure I've forgotten someone, and if I have, please accept my apology.

check spelling

Research for the new flies was conducted on the following rivers and streams: The Yellowstone River (in Montana and Yellowstone National Park.) The Gallatin River (in Montana and Yellowstone National Park.) The Madison River (in Montana and Yellowstone National Park.) The Missouri River, The Big Horn River, the Big Hole River, The Firehole River. The East Gallatin River, The Henry's Fork and Fall River in Idaho and Nelson and DePuy's spring creeks and other private spring creeks near Bozeman and Belgrade, Montana. I want to give a special thanks to Eva DePuy for permission to test my new patterns on the

lovely spring creek near Livingston which bears her name, and Bob Auger, river keeper at DePuy's, for his help and assistance in researching some of the new flies. I also want to thank Stan, Tom and Grace Milesnick for giving me access to their ranch and spring creek.

One thing remains before getting into the patterns. And that is to try to justify the appearance of yet another book on fly fishing ~~—~~ and perhaps, even ~~worse~~ more puzzling to some ...yet another book on soft-hackled flies. I ~~never~~ started writing THE SOFT HACKLED FLY, the first book, ~~t~~ thinking I would write a second, and then a third. ~~That was a development that~~ came out of itself and out of personal ~~things~~ reasons which have nothing to do with fly fishing, but which move the person...the fly fisher...closer or further from the magnetism of fly fishing.

Let me apologize only by admitting that the books evolved - took on a life of their own along with my fishing.

But, SOFT-HACKLED FLY IMITATIONS, has freed me from the dict~~ums~~, confines and cultism of dry fly fishing. Now, I can live and fish without absolutely stiff, lip-piercing dry fly hackles on my imitations. I ~~don't~~ have to worry ~~any more~~ about drag, wings ~~cocking~~, flies floating, false casting, floatants, size and the ephemeral stages, emerger, dun, or spinner. I can concentrate more on the fun of fly fishing, the end...not the mechanics...not the means...which was the promise of the first book on soft hackles and is the major promise of this book, too.

During the nearly three years of "working" on this book, I have uncovered some very interesting phenomenon which will remain so because I simply can't explain why they occurred. They do present some distinct advantages over traditional dry fly fishing and they are:

1. The use of larger, artificial flies (up to two sizes larger than the insect represented).

2. Even though the reader is instructed to fish many of the flies in a drag-free mode, drag is not detrimental to the performance of the artificial. Indeed, at times, drag seems to reverse the situation and 'turn on' a recalcitrant fish.

3. Surer, deeper hooking with a soft-hackled fly imitation.

4. The choice of observing the take at the point of the artificial or at the point of a strike indicater or line.

Eastern fly fishers may claim that the research in this book is too one-sided, that it ignores the singular hatches of the Catskills and other eastern fly fishing areas. Fortunately, I have a friend who has fished soft hackles for a very long time and who lives most of the year not very far from streams of the Catskills. Using traditional materials and having years of experience fishing general soft hackles, Tedd Ward has worked out four soft-hackled fly imitations for use on Eastern waters, which

Chapter 1: Syl's Midge

Drag, for instance, which is supposed to be so terrible on an upstream cast with a dry fly, sometimes seems to serve as an added attraction to a midge that's floating on or in the surface film. When you see your fly starting to drag, give it an occasional six-inch twitch and you're more likely than not to produce an answering explosion.

THE WELL-TEMPERED ANGLER, by Arnold Gingrich. 1965

Chapter 2: Mother's Day Caddis

Adult caddis look nothing at all like ninety-nine percent of our dry flies because the latter are patterned after mayflies.

FLY-FISHING HERESIES, by Leonard M. Wright, Jr. 1975

Chapter 3: SH Pale Morning Dun

This popular name was given to this species by Doug Swisher and Carl Richards in their fine book, SELECTIVE TROUT, and it is such an appropriate description that I wish I had thought ot it myself.

NYMPHS, by Ernest Schweibert. 1973

Chapter 4: SH Baetis

The tallest tale in fly-fishing is, as it should be, not about a fish but about a fly. Its name is the green drake. It is said to exist as an insect in nature, and so it does in the telling. The question, inescapable but never resolved is whether the green drake is an imaginary being.

QUILL GORDON, By John McDonald. 1972

Chapter 8: SH Spinner

It's very possible to fish a spinnner fall successfully without ever getting a look at the bug you're imitating so carefully.

SEX, DEATH, AND FLY-FISHING, By John Gierach, 1990

Chapter 9: SH Shrimp

...indeed, the shrimp is a pest of the watercress growers, not because it does much harm, since it only eats the decaying leaves, but because people do not like to find shrimps in their cress;...

THOUGHTS ON ANGLING, By J. C. Mottram, ND

Because of their small size, Baetis are often overlooked by fishermen. Fish seldom make the same mistake. Many writers have noted that trout prefer to eat certain insects. When a hatch of tiny Baetis occurs simultaneously with that of a larger insect, trout may ignore the bigger meal and become selective to the Baetis.

WESTERN HATCHES, By Rick Hafele and Dave Hughes. 1981

Chapter 5: SH Trico

Tricorythodes activity is not for the occasional angler who ventures forth to the stream, indifferent, with a "bakers dozen" of assorted traditional patterns.

HATCHES II, By Al Caucci & Bob Nastasi. 1986, 1975

Chapter 6: SH Callibaetis

And, after all, a fly that is flush with the water is perilously close to the edge of wet.

MINOR TACTICS OF THE CHALK STREAM. By G. E. M. Skues. 1914, 1910

Chapter 7: SH Green Drake

SYLVESTER NEMES
PO BOX 3782
BOZEMAN, MT 59772

November 1, 1990

Dear Dean:

Here are the chapter quotes which I called you about.

I think they will be interesting, even though they took about three days.

If you have Hills' HISTORY OF TROUT FIHSING WITH A FLY, you can see what I have in mind.

Thanks again. We had a pretty good snow today, so there may be no more trips to the park.

Sincerely,

Syl

Syl

P.S. I like the last one!

CONTENTS

INDEX

For the show in Seattle

Books - 1 - one box Soft Hackled Fly
~~2B~~ four limited editions (2 each)
2 Caddisflies

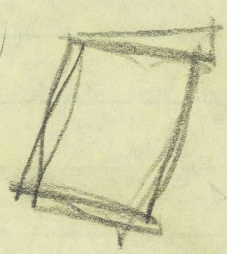
~~signs~~

Partridge skins - 20
lamps? — lamps? yes
table? — table yes.

Avid Angler 206-362 4030
Tom. — A. Avid Angler
11714 15th NE.
Seattle Wa
98125

~~Order~~ ~~Soft Hackle~~ fly Invitations

Announcing [redacted]



Soft Hackled Fly Imitations
by Syl Nemes

* 20 ~~new~~ Soft Hackles ~~F~~
~~the major~~

~~Cards~~