



The BUFFER

The Newsletter of Buckeye United Fly Fishers, Inc., Cincinnati, OH
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June In-Person Events Cancelled

Dear BUFF members,

Buckeye United Fly Fishers is cancelling all in person club related events and trips for June. This is being done with consideration for the safety of our members and their families. The BOD continues to review what is happening in the reopening of the state and will resume in person activities as soon as it's deemed possible.

We will be holding our monthly general meeting online on Wednesday, June 10th at 7 PM. This will include brief news for the club, a raffle for registered meeting attendees, a kickoff for our online auction and a guest speaker. The speaker is Jon Horn, an OSU biologist, who will discuss Wisconsin's cold-water stream restoration efforts and fishing these waters. A bio for Mr. Horn, and details on registration and participation is on the website and in this BUFFER. Register by the 7th if you want to participate.

Feel free to contact me or any other member of the BOD with any club related questions. This is being done while keeping the best interest and safety of the membership in mind. I apologize for any inconvenience this has caused. I do look forward to the time when we can meet and see each other again.

Jim Vota, President
Buckeye United Fly Fishers

COVID – 19 – Helping Out Our Club

We know these are trying times. The VOA Lodge, where we have our club meetings, remains closed and we have no information on when they may reopen, and what constraints may be in place when they do restart. Similarly, while the Springdale Community Center has reopened, they limit in person activities to 10 people in a room. All late spring and early summer community events where we have participated have been put on hold or cancelled.

Your Board is seeking and inviting comments from our members regarding your thoughts on BUFF Club activities going forward. We'd like to know your thoughts, concerns and suggestions for meetings, possible activities, and classes. Please feel free to reach out to any club officer or board member.

Notes from the President

Another month has gone by and things haven't changed much. Yes, the economy is reopening (sort of). More businesses have opened (not all). How many of you have actually been going out in crowds? Do you feel comfortable doing that? Do you feel safe?

I find that I go out now, but not any more than I did while isolating. Cari and I did try to go to her favorite greenhouse the first weekend that the state was reopening. I made it to the driveway entrance.....and kept going. Their parking lot was overfull! To go in would have been a stupid thing to do. I personally feel that we need to continue to be careful/responsible in our actions.

After much debate and several BOD meetings we have decided that there will be no BUFF in person activities, including trips, in June. The Bryson City area is currently a jumble with everyone trying to figure out how to open up and meet the state's standards. Sunnybrook's management is doing everything that they can to make the facilities safe. From our last discussion with the VOA Park folks, they haven't figured out what the latest state recommendations mean for them, and asked us what we thought! Springdale Community Center has reopened, but limit gatherings to no more than 10 people. There are still lots of questions, so we decided err on the on the side of caution and not push things yet. The BOD will be reviewing what's going on with VOA and Springdale Community Center as well as the state guidelines for group gatherings in order to plan BUFF's path forward. I'm sorry if this has caused any of you any inconvenience. I invite you to reach out to me or others on the board with your comments and questions.

We will be starting online monthly general meetings. These will continue until we can hold in-person meetings again. You will have to provide your own dinner. The meetings will be club news, raffles and then a guest speaker. This month's topic is "the Wisconsin driftless: coldwater stream restoration best explored with flyrod in-hand". Jon Horn will be the presenter. Jon is an avid outdoorsman and biologist, whose love of fly fishing trumps all other pursuits. You can read Jon's bio in the information on the meeting, in the article in this BUFFER.

We will kick off our first silent auction at the meeting. This will be for one of the guided trips that we obtained with our COVID 19 relief project. This project was a small way to help some of our friends in the fly fishing industry. The raffle for the month will include one of the BVK fly rods that were donated by Cabelas this winter. If you have an interest sign up early as the Zoom meeting will only handle 100 attendees. Details on meeting registration will be sent out in an E-blast.

I don't know what you've been doing the past month, but I've been fishing. It's only been on small lakes and ponds as I haven't felt brave enough to venture out into the high waters of the rivers. I guess we'll wish the rain would end until the water is non-existent in August. You can't please anybody. Just to let you know, I'm still using Kreelex flies almost exclusively and have been catching bluegill, crappie and bass in large quantities. These have been chartreuse over white and gold over white tied on size 8 jig hooks. See George Daniel's You Tube channel for the tying video. They take about 2 minutes to tie.

Musky is my favored fish if you didn't know. It's a fickle fish and takes lots of perseverance to be able to fish for them. One thing that helps with them is lots of disturbance. Something to get their attention. I have an article in the BUFFER describing my latest ordeals in tying a fly for these fish. Check it out. Oh, I almost forgot, my boat will get wet this week for the first time, in search of this elusive critter. Should be able to social distance there.

Let us hope for better days ahead. Maybe we'll be able to greet each other in person soon. Until then stay safe and at least get to the pond to keep from going nuts.

Jim Vota, El Prez.

Jim Vota – vota@zoomtown.com

A CLUB MEETING !!!!!

BUFF June Meeting on Wednesday, June 10th – Virtual Meeting via ZOOM –

As we indicated in last month's BUFFER, the club has been discussing the ability to do a 'virtual meeting online. This month we will attempt this. The meeting date will be June 10th, the second Wednesday in June, and is keeping consistency with our normal evening meeting time. We will do a brief meeting program, and then have a speaker presentation. Participation will be via the ZOOM meeting application which can be accessed on one's computer – with voice and video connection, or on one's phone.

To participate, you **must** register on the BUFF website, just as you would register to attend a regular meeting. As part of registering, you are required to provide an e-mail address to receive instructions on how to access the meeting via ZOOM. This will be provided a day or two prior to the meeting.

June Speaker –

Jon Horn – “The Wisconsin Driftless: Coldwater Stream Restoration Best Explored with Flyrod in Hand”

The Coon Valley in western Wisconsin was the site of one of the first soil and water conservation projects in the U.S. (1930s). Since that first success, the region's spring creeks have been gradually restored, resulting in hundreds of little creeks with 1000's of fish per mile! Even better, many farmers invite you to fish their property! The fishing is consistent all summer long, without crowds or drift boats to contend with, and the terrestrial fishing can be downright incredible! You owe it to yourself to experience it at least once.

Jon is an avid outdoorsman and biologist -whose love of fly fishing trumps all other pursuits. By the age of 10 he had read the entire Hunting and Fishing library, and fell in love with the aesthetics of trout streams. With the help of a few other books, he taught himself (and his older brother) how to fly fish, and then spent summers catching red-sided dace in the creek on his family's farm - pretending they were redband trout! Jon has degrees in biology and environmental science and teaches in the Biology program at Ohio State. He also teaches FlyFishing 101



each term at OSU (KNSFHP 1139.08) and is a board member for Central Ohio Fly Fishers. When not working or teaching, Jon enjoys traveling travels with his family and friends to fish, hunt, bird, hike, taste wines, enjoy craft brews, and is an avid budget-minded explorer.

- **Meeting time is from 7 PM – about 8:30 PM.**
- **Registration deadline is June 7th.**
- **You must register on-line to attend, and provide your e-mail address. Registrants will receive an e-mail with instructions on how to join the Zoom session. If you are not registered, you will not be able to join in.**
- **All registrants will automatically be entered in the raffle. This month the raffle prize is a BVK fly rod which was donated to the club by Cabelas. You must be logged in and attending the meeting to win!**
- **The meeting will also kick-off a silent auction for one of the guided trips obtained by the club as part of our COVID-19 relief project.**

COVID Vendor Relief Effort - Update

The checks to vendors have all been sent and all vendors have provided gift certificates as promised. We will use these as raffle and silent auction items for future BUFF meetings and events, starting with this month's on-line meeting.

Local Fishing Updates

Expiration Date for Indiana Licenses Extended

If you have an Indiana license that was due to expire earlier this year, expiration has been extended to the end of June. You probably need to purchase the license online.

Michigan Fishing License Available to Out-of-State Residents

The Michigan DNR is selling fishing licenses to out of state residents. Out of state sales had been halted earlier. This is not a clearance that things are back to the way they were. If one is thinking of going up to Michigan to do some fishing, it would be wise to check with guides or local shops regarding availability of lodging, restaurants, and what is open an accessible.

Couple of Fishing Photos -

Cari Vota got down to GSM Natl Park and fished this past weekend – a nice wild trout!

Haruko Mizoguchi was fishing at Miami Meadows Park the day after they stocked the lake. She caught over 20 blue gill and crappie fishing along the pond walls. She caught all of these using a fly she came up with which is described as 'fly of the month'.



Phil Pursley's brown trout from Brookville tailwaters.



Adapting to Changing Times

Tim Williamson (willitk@yahoo.com)

Hi there fellow Buffers!

I'm happy to get the chance to share with you a story of a recent fishing trip I had with a club member. The names of the innocent are withheld except for mine. It was a fun day, as all fishing days for me are. I fish not only to catch fish, but to enjoy the time in the outdoors and to test myself. It is always remarkable to me that the test is against an animal that has a brain no bigger than a nickel, yet that fish is as elusive as it is beautiful. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoy remembering it. I also hope you grow to appreciate the life of fishing as a life of continual learning and friendship. Amazement at how God created so many creatures that are so well suited for the water.

So how did this story start? All with a simple email. Jane (not her real name), a relatively new angler in our club, wanted to go fishing for white bass. I first got to know her on one of the BUFF women's where I was teaching, but on this trip, I was the one learning from another.

We met in Oxford, and with Indiana licenses in hand, I led the way to our fishing site on the river near Liberty, IN, and provided suggestions of where to start and where to fish. First tip - I always start with yellow and white Clouser's when fishing here, and usually have several since many will get lost that day. Then I left Jane to try her luck, and that she did, trying the obvious water or log jams that should hold fish, but didn't that day.

Off Jane went, heading upstream. Fishing behind her, I tried one of my favorite spots, but it has been several years since this spot has produced. A big tree that was lying in it had washed away, so several casts yielded no results. Then a momentous thing happened. While stepping over a large tree, I tripped and fell. Face first into the beach and a small puddle, throwing my rods away from me while I flayed about. Afterwards, I was happy that all that broke was my pride and not my two precious fly rods. One I'd already broken at least once, and the other is a replacement for a rod that Orvis no longer makes. Here is my first lesson of the day – 'be humble because s* happens'. Pick yourself up, press on, and always be ready to protect yourself and your gear

On upstream we went, now with me leading and trying to get a feel for what speed the fish wanted the fly presented. So far no luck. Fast little strips with no affect. Swings with the speed of the current. Again no results.

On we pressed with Jane now upstream from me. She fished a hole that Gus always fishes, and a place I've also fished before with other BUFFers. Today it again proved to be a good one. Here I got to watch a relatively new fly fisher out fish me. We were both using the same yellow over white Clouser. I caught a few fish, but nothing like what Jane was doing. We were fishing the same gear for the most part, but she was having much better success than I. But why? So I watched Jane fish. I tried matching the cadence of her stripping motions, and caught some fish, but not nearly as many. So again what was she doing that I was not?

"Aha! A sink tip she has" (said Yoda in my mind). I had a floating line and was counting it down. So, my next lesson – watch your environment. If there are other anglers nearby, watch how they fish and where. It's not just the fly but the depth and speed at which they move the fly. How long are they waiting before giving it motion? How fast is the line sinking? Are they using a sinking line or a sinking

tip? Is there split shot? How many? These insights might help you determine at what depth the fish are holding.

At this point I decided on using the second rod I brought. This one had a Skagit shooting head made for a short rod, which provided me a 9 foot 8 weight equipped with a long sink tip on the front. With my first cast I did something I had not tried yet this day. Cast straight across the stream. Right to that spot that Gus loves so much. Here another lesson was reinforced. Always make sure my fly is as close to the bank as possible on the cast. On this stretch of river, I've caught more fish when the fly kisses the bank. Sometimes smacking the bank itself but always getting all the way to the far side of the stream before swinging it or stripping it back. Even when you don't get it to that far side, **always** fish it back. (That suggestion is my memory of Parker chastising me for not always doing it, and wasting the hole.)

After the cast, I counted to 7. I know this bank has a steep drop and I wanted my fly and line to sink before I began to strip back. But not like most motions fly fishers do. This one is a long slow strip. Each a foot or more and just fast enough to make the fly glide just above the bottom. Like a minnow getting brave enough to swim from the shallows into deep water. Stripping the line just like Parker showed me that day, and wow.... did this technique pan out.

Several casts to this spot produced my two largest fish of the day. Neither was a white bass. None the less, the first fish hooked felt good. A few more strips while I was doing my whoop and holler, and what came to hand was a 13 inch walleye. Shortly after, this catch was followed by a similar length small mouth bass. What followed each of those fish was another reminder for me. One that's happened many times. When taking pictures of the fish, remember that they can't breathe out of water. Its jaws are working because instinctively they open and close to force water over their gills. In air there isn't any water. So leave that fish in the water for a minute or two before taking pictures. My best photos are ones where the fins are out. If the fins aren't out, that fish is probably stressed and you need to get it back in the water. Twice as long in the water for however long it's out. When out, count to twenty and get it back into the water. Also, use a net if you have one especially while leaving the fish in the water.

On Jane and I fished. Me trying mightily to match the numbers Jane was having, but the fishing was slowing so we picked up and walked further upstream to one of my favorite places. At this spot everything I learned this day came into focus. Cast all the way to the bank. Count the fly down. Work the hole twice. Once swinging the fly out. Another stripping it back. Slowly. Fly on the bottom. Caught several more fish. In this hole I got to be the teacher again. Jane was standing in the middle of the stream but in this spot you catch more fish in the middle since it has a steeper drop coming to the shallows and Jane was standing right in the fishing line. And this reminded me of another lesson. Always fish where you plan on standing before you stand there. You'd be surprised at how often you'll catch fish there.

And so ended a day of many memories and lessons relearned. Hope you enjoyed this. For me, it was a fun day.

Tight lines!

Tim

Note from Ken Mandel & Tom Bachey -

Tim shared this article with several others, us included. Tom found an excellent video produced by Orvis with Tom Rosenbauer discussing streamer fishing. A lot of what is suggested in the video are key points Tim discusses in his article. The video is almost 40 min long, so sit back, relax and enjoy. It can be accessed at: https://midcurrent.com/videos/advanced-streamer-fly-fishing/?mc_cid=b6d124eb5f&mc_eid=d6b0365f8f

The Fine Art of Setting the Hook

Tom Bachey – (h2oguy@fuse.net)

Here is a piece from Rob Fightmaster of Fightmaster Flyfishing (www.fightmasterflyfishing.com) in Townsend, TN. Rob published this in his monthly newsletter in 2018. He is a strong supporter and a sponsor of our club, and an excellent guide. If you are thinking or planning a fishing trip to the Smokies, consider getting in touch with Rob.

“Setting the Hook” (<https://fightmasterflyfishing.com/index.php/2018/11/23/setting-the-hook/>)



If you’ve ever spent anytime fishing in the Smokies, you have missed plenty of strikes. And if you’ve ever been fishing with me in the Smokies, you’ve no doubt heard me say that no matter how good you are and how often you fish, you’re going to miss strikes from these fish. I’d say that’s true most anywhere, but in the Smokies, it’s a guarantee. I’ve had the pleasure of fishing for trout all over the United States and I am yet to find trout anywhere that hit and spit a fly quicker than they do in the Smokies! But while nobody is going to hook them all, there are plenty of things you can do to increase the number of fish you hook.

So, what actually happens when a fish hits your fly? It depends on the kind of fly you’re fishing. When you are fishing a streamer (a fly that imitates a baitfish or something else that swims), you are usually stripping it and keeping a tight line. Typically, the trout will chase and/or ambush something they think is a wounded or fleeing baitfish. The strike will usually be rather aggressive and because you have a

tight line, you will feel the strike. When you're swinging wet flies or straight-line nymphing, you usually feel the strike as well, but it's usually more subtle than the often violent strike that comes on a streamer.

But most of the time on a trout stream, most fly fishermen are imitating aquatic insects that are drifting in the water column. Whether adults on the surface or nymphs below the surface, these bugs are drifting helplessly in the current. When trout feed on these natural insects, it's not necessary or efficient for them to swim around ambushing them. Rather, a trout will position facing a current, where the insects will drift down his feeding lane. All he has to do is maneuver slightly up, down, or to the side to pick them off. When a trout feeds in this manner, he's more or less just moving in front of the bug and opening his mouth.



But there are a lot of things coming down the current and some of them, like small twigs or leaves, may look like an insect to a trout. When he takes one of these foreign objects by mistake, he immediately spits it back out. It's what a trout does all day. Real bug = swallow, stream junk that looks like a bug = spit it out. When you drift an artificial fly down the current and the trout hits it, he immediately spits it out because it's not real. So you have that split second between when he eats it and when he spits it to set the hook.

Wild trout, like in the Smokies, are highly instinctive and tend to make this decision pretty quickly. Stocked trout were raised in hatcheries where they were fed daily. They tend to "trust" food a little more. Consequently, they'll hold on to a foreign object (like your fly) a little longer before spitting it out. For that reason, fishermen tend to have a better strike to hook-up ratio on stocked trout vs. wild trout.

In either case, you are rarely going to feel the strike in these scenarios. To avoid drag and present the fly naturally, you will have to have some slack in your line and the fish doesn't have the fly long enough to tighten your line enough for you to feel it. You will need to visually recognize the strike to tell you when to set the hook. With a dry fly, it's fairly obvious because the fish will have to break the surface to eat your fly. As soon as you see that, set the hook. It is incredibly difficult in most situations to see a fish eat your nymph, so we often use a strike indicator positioned on the leader. When the fish eats the nymph, it will move the indicator, providing your visual cue to set the hook. Now, with all of this in mind, here are some tips that may help you connect on a few more fish, particularly when dead-drifting dry flies and nymphs.

- Know that you will probably not feel the strike and trust the visual indication of the strike. Even when streamer fishing when you DO normally feel the strike, there are times when the fish hits between strips when the line is slack. You may not feel it but you'll see the fly line dart forward. Trust what you see!
- Expect a strike every time the fly is on the water and be ready. As silly as it sounds, many strikes are missed because the fisherman just isn't paying attention. Stay focused on what you're

doing. Pay no attention to the next pool up the river. Don't stand there with your hand on your hip. Ignore that bird overhead. Be ready!

- Similar to #2, pay attention to your slack. The cast isn't when your job ends – it's when it starts. Particularly when fishing upstream, be prepared to immediately begin collecting excess slack as it drifts back to you. Many fishermen think that they're missing strikes because they're too slow when, in fact, their reaction time is fine but they have too much slack to pick up to tighten on the fish. Leave just enough slack to achieve a good drift but no more.
- Keep your casts as short as possible. Not only will you be more accurate and probably get more strikes, but you'll have less line to move when setting the hook. In some situations, like slow pools, we are forced to make long casts, but fish from better, closer positions when possible.
- Move the line. Your hook set should be like making a quick backcast. In other words, if you miss the strike, the line should go in the air behind you like a backcast. If you miss a strike and all of your line is still on the water in front of you, you didn't move enough line to set the hook.
- Your hook set should be quick but smooth, and when possible, in an upward motion. A snappy or jerky hook set is a good way to break a tippet. A downward hook setting motion has a tendency to pull the fly out of the fish's mouth, rather than up through the lip.

Setting the hook is also very much a timing thing. The more time you spend on the water, the better your timing will be. You may even find that you sometimes anticipate the strike just before it happens. And you may find that you have to adjust the timing of your hook set on different rivers. For instance, you may need to slow down a little when fishing for stockers. You may have to speed up a little when fishing for wild trout.

In either case, you're still going to miss some and that's okay. As far as fishing problems go, missing strikes is a pretty good one. To miss strikes you have to get strikes. And if you're getting strikes, you're doing something right!

Fishing for Trout

Phil Pursley – (phil.pursley@hotmail.com)

This is a true story. I'm not lying this time. Some of you may know that I enjoy an occasional day on the stream. OK the truth is that I am addicted to fishing especially trout fishing. My resolution this year is to only fish on days that have the letter "y" in their name. Thursday afternoon was one of those days when I couldn't refuse the stream. The nearest water that holds trout is the tailwater of Brookville Lake because it is cold water out of the bottom of the dam and it has some measurable flow. Trout prefer water about 57 degrees and not more than 70 degrees.

I told Alice that I had the calling of an out of state trout stream and I was going to Brookville to fish. If the trout weren't biting, I would then go to Liberty Indiana to fish the "white bass run". After arriving in Brookville I got wadered-up and grabbed my rod (never call a rod a pole, so uncouth). I headed to the bridge on Indiana 101 where I could easily walk to the stream. The bridge is actually quite wide, and I noticed a "work truck" broken down on the side of the bridge, or at least it seemed to be broken down.

One of my usual rituals that I do as soon as I go to the river is to pray. A prayer of thanking God for the beautiful water and of course to ask for a little divine assistance in catching these wonderful creatures. Trout are fun for me to catch because the catching is so challenging. After I stepped into the stream and having had my prayer, my next step was to release my line and make my first cast.



Before my cast hit the water, all hell broke loose. It was manna from heaven, or maybe from the trout stocking truck parked on the bridge. The next two minutes or so my full attention was directed towards trout and water falling from heaven, or at least from the deck of the bridge. These fish were so stunned that they weren't interested in most flies that I put in front of them. Every step I took resulted in eight or ten brown trout splaying out from each step with about the same effect as a fireworks explosion.

Right on schedule, these fish were looking for something to eat about 30 minutes later. Any black or orange colored fly produced a fish on the end of my line and eventually in my net. After fishing for a couple of hours my tally was 51 fish in the net. All were gently released as my gift to the next fisherman. Normally, I don't keep a tally of my fish once the number gets above 10. Somehow, I knew today was different, so why 51 fish rather than 50? I simply wanted to be able to say I caught over 50 fish.



My trip home was a little later than I had planned. However, the 23 mile trip to my garage from Brookville sure seemed shorter than the trip from my garage to Brookville.

Phil

A Spring Bug Guide to Put You On More Fish

By Ken Mandel (kengmandel@gmail.com)

I saw the following article, which discusses various fly patterns for spring trout fishing, on the Midcurrent website (www.midcurrent.fliesforsale.com) It was written by Allen from "The Catch and The Hatch" in association with Midcurrent, and we have their permission to reuse the article here. The flies are their suggestions of what works. Hope you find this one interesting.

Fly Selection is Critical in Spring

As spring begins, more and more insects begin to make it on the trout's menu. Knowledge of the top flies for spring and how to use them are a huge in helping you catch more fish, and more consistently. This article discusses the major insect categories you should keep an eye on and related flies that will put you on the most fish for spring. Out of any season that you fly fish, spring is the season that is most dependent on fly selection. Midges, caddis, mayflies and stoneflies are all big players in the fly selection game. Let's quickly go over the major bug activity you're going to see in the spring and then we'll get to the top fishing flies we recommend for anyone to fly fish during the spring.

Major Insect Categories & Hatches

There are some major categories that you need to have in the fore-front of your mind to catch the most fish possible this spring. We'll recommend the top patterns, but everyone has different taste in flies so we understand our exact recommendation may not be your favorite choice. Don't skip over these 4 major areas though as nearly 3/4 of the bug life that happens in the spring is around these categories of insects. If you find it difficult to digest all this info about bugs, we would highly suggest sprucing up on your fly fishing entomology.

- ***Midges***

Stages: nymphs, emergers, dries

Colors: all colors with a focus on black, olive, and grey

Sizes: focus on small with size # 18 – 22 until late spring when bigger (# 14 – 16) come out

All forms including nymphs, pupa, emerger, and dries are a major staple in the first month or two of spring until the caddis begin to show up and the trout feed on larger flies that are now moving in numbers that warrant their attention. Hatches start mid-morning and can last the entire day if the weather is right. Nymphing during a hatch can be more productive than dry fly fishing and it's always good to try both during a hatch if one or the other isn't working. There are a variety of hatches so it's best to have a bug seine to collect the insects both above and under the water and match the color and size to what's in the river. As the water warms up you'll see what we call a midge-zilla hatch where the midges get downright ginormous and you can throw size #14-16 flies with success. This will be a welcome change to all who are used to fishing size #20 and #22 all winter long.

Top Recommended Midge Patterns for Spring



Zebra Midge

Colors: black, olive, purple, red

Sizes: #16 – 24



Top Secret Midge

Colors: black, red, olive, grey

Sizes: #18 – 24



Smokejumper Midge

Colors: black, red, olive, grey

Sizes: #16 – 22



Renegade

Colors: brown/white, grey/white, black/grey

Sizes: #14 – 18

- **Mayflies**

Stages: nymphs, emergers, dries

Colors: olive brown grey

Sizes: #16 – 22

In the west, the major mayfly of the spring months is the Blue Wing Olive (BWO). BWOs are small to medium sized mayflies with dark wings and a dark olive body. Sizes range from #12 – #20 during spring. These are likely the most common bug you will see on the water throughout the day. Hatches usually happen mid to late morning and mid to late afternoon, though they can vary from location to location. Further east, you'll have Hendricksons, BWOs and March Browns. The Hendrickson is most sought after and BWOs are often overlooked but can produce some great fishing. March browns are sporadic in their behaviors but if you get into them they are a lot of fun. Parachute Adams usually imitate them just fine. Sizes are a bit larger and more manageable in the east ranging from #12-#18, except for BWOs which stay in the #16 – #24 range.

Recommended Mayfly Patterns for Spring



Parachute BWO

Colors: black, olive, purple
Sizes: #16 – 22



Mercury Baetis

Colors: black, olive, purple
Sizes: #18 – 24



Improved Pheasant Tail

Colors: brown, tan
Sizes: #12 – 18



Beadhead Pheasant Tail

Colors: brown, orange, olive
Sizes: #12 – 22



Beadhead Flashback Pheasant Tail

Colors: brown, orange, olive
Sizes: #12 – 22



Parachute Adams

Colors: brown, grey, olive
Sizes: #12 – 24

- **The Big Hairy Stoneflies**

Stages: nymphs

Colors: brown, black, gold, variegated colors recommended

Sizes: #6 – 14

Nymphing with big stoneflies can produce some the most successful and consistent fishing for spring. We believe a Pat's Rubber Leg is the best and top fishing fly for spring when it comes to stoneflies. Fish them deep early in March and April and as the days progress move closer and closer to the banks with less and less weight until you are right on or near the bank before run off. Trail some small midges and baetis behind for a great 2 nymph rig system. There are a couple hatches for stoneflies, but only in certain areas. Little black stones are often mistaken for caddis but are small and black and are usually out when snow is still on the ground. Expect to imitate them with small black Copper Johns and a Hemmingway Caddis in black. Sizes #16 – #22 are typical. After them, the first major hatch begins, the Skwala Stonefly hatch. Though not everywhere, out west in CA and other areas have significant stonefly hatches that are a great way to start off the season.

Epic Stone Flies for Spring



Pat's Rubberleg Stonefly

Colors: black, brown, tan, yellow, purple
Sizes: #6 – 12



Pat's Rubberleg Stonefly



Kaufman's Stone Fly

Colors: brown, black, gold
Sizes: #8 – 12



Kaufman's Stone Fly



Rubber Leg Prince

Colors: peacock, black, purple
Sizes: #10 – 18



Beadhead Rubberleg Hare's Ear

Colors: black, brown, olive
Sizes: #10 – 16

- ***The Mighty Caddis***

Stages: nymphs, emergers, dries

Colors: orange, yellow, black, brown, red, and peacock

Sizes: #12 – 18

My favorite bug because it is the true sign that winter is gone and warm weather is here to stay. Caddis fast become an obsession of spring trout and they gorge themselves on every stage of caddis during the spring months. You won't need these flies for March very often, but you will be kicking yourself if you don't have a good assortment come mid April into May. Fish a dry/adult caddis as the lead fly and drift a nymph or emerger behind it for the best success.

Some of the biggest hatches are springtime caddis. Fish go nuts during these times and it's critical to fish a variety of caddis stages to find what is working. I've had caddis swarming my face and the fish are just eating the nymphs, and other times, nothing on the water and they are coming up to slurp the dries.

We find it's best to fish a dry and an emerger. If that doesn't work, switch the emerger out for a nymph and fish is as a dry/dropper set up.

Best Caddis Fly Patterns for Spring Fishing



Beadhead Caddis Larva

Colors: brown, tan, orange, olive
Sizes: #12 – 16



Elk Hair Caddis

Colors: tan, orange, olive, peacock
Sizes: #12 – 18



Missing Link Caddis

Colors: tan, olive
Sizes: #14 – 18



CDC Caddis Emerger

Colors: tan, olive, brown, grey
Sizes: #12 – 18



CDC Elk Hair Caddis

Colors: tan, olive, brown, orange
Sizes: #12 – 18

- **Meaty Streamers**

Stages: uh.... What? Single & articulated

Colors: olives, browns, golds, white, orange, purples

Sizes: #2 – 12

I often get so excited to see fish rise after a long winter, I forget all about the streamers and the simple fact that rainbows and cutthroats are spawning and are prone to aggression. Streamers work great during the spring for hungry browns and pissed-off rainbows and cutties. For those who just have to huck some meat and go for the biggest fish in the river, spring is a great time to land that trophy rainbow in that run that only you know about. We recommend having some heavy and light streamers in your box to cover a variety of depths. Using sink tip line and floating line are both useful in the right settings if you can afford an extra spool to switch out. If you have to choose, I'd

do a floating line with a sink tip. Heavier streamers give you more options than lighter streamers so have more of those than the light ones.

Top Streamers for Spring Fishing



Beadhead Woolly Buzzer

Colors: black, olive, brown, white, purple
Sizes: #2 – 12



Beadhead Bouface Streamer

Colors: black, rusty brown, olive
Sizes: #6 – 12



Slumpbuster

Colors: olive, tan, brown, orange
Sizes: #2 – 12

The Search for Water Pushing Heads for Large Predator Flies

By Jim Vota

I do lots of musky fly fishing (at least relative to your typical fly fisher). They are a fish that take lots of fortitude to fish for. There are days you will see 5 and days you will see none. Then there are days you will catch fish, not many typically. It's the only fish I know of that fishermen get excited about just because they saw fish. It was a good day that you had lots of follows. I don't think that's good enough. The follows need to be converted to eats. That's why I've been on a quest for something extra to get them excited and eat more often. It's possible that I've found that new trick. Foam disk heads.



With lots of time during the COVID 19 pandemic, I have watched lots of fishing videos. I found one from a guy in Sweden, Niklaus Bauer, who fishes a lot for big pike. He had been looking for something to

attract the pike similar to a casting lure called the Miuras Mouse. This lure resembles a fly; it is jointed with lots of segments, made with fur and a hard water pushing head. It is not something you would want to cast on a fly rod. He wound up using thin foam disks to stiffen the head in order to push water. It's kind of like a popper head but thin enough it doesn't float.

I said why not try this? Niklaus had a weedless fly pattern that I thought I'd try. I've tied similar flies before and had really good luck with them for pike in heavy wooded areas. The problem with my flies was how to make them bigger to use for musky. His pattern with a detachable tail and a long shank at the front solved that. With a 5/0 Mustad Ultra Point worm hook, a 35 mm shank and dragon tail I've got a 12" fly. I made a change to his pattern and used the foam disk ahead of a bulkhead tie to get the water push. The tails are interchangeable and gives you a lot of opportunities to customize the fly.

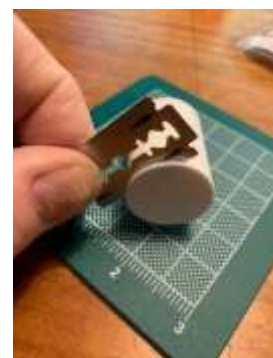


Next up was trying the fly. How would it cast with the foam disk head? How would this monster configuration cast with the big tail and lots of metal pieces? Actually, it's not too bad. Even with the big hook, wire to hold the tail and the shank it's not too heavy. The disk is small enough that it doesn't create much drag. The tail is the drag factor. It flops and twists in the air, putting on the air brakes. However, it is not much different than using a couple long large schlappen feathers. I was able to make 70 ft with the cast.

Now, how did it swim? At the first pull it made an enormous gulp like a very large popper. It didn't float, but ran under the surface at whatever depth you wanted to fish it at. It pulled like a Mack truck and had a bow wake that was noticeable even though the fly was submerged a couple feet. By giving the fly a little slack at the end of the pull it would move in an erratic motion, up/down/left/right. Changing the tail will alter how that works. Bigger, longer tails will keep the fly on a straighter path.

Overall, I'm excited. I've been out on Lake St. Clair near Detroit watching the trollers and casters use things that resemble bricks covered with hooks. They create huge amounts of disturbance and catch fish. This might just work.

You can get foam cylinders from some fly shops or JoAnn's Fabrics. You need a good sharp razor blade to cut the disks



Making the disks easy, and there are several ways to do it. I've made the disks from foam sheets that I use for Gurglers. I purchased foam cylinders from a couple sources and cut disk pieces with a razor blade. Niklaus recommended a thickness of 2 mm. That's pretty thin. Mine were about an 1/8 of an inch thick or more like 4 mm. If you make them too thick the fly will act more like a popper and ride high. You can color the disk any color you like or any pattern as well. You attach the disk by using 5 minute epoxy. You also need to coat the disk with a thin coat of epoxy to make it durable. It's all described in Niklaus Bauer's video for the water pushing pike fly (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVzgHiUVqI4>).

This might not be something that you would use in a smaller size for large trout as they are mainly sight feeders. I don't think it would hurt either just adding an extra dimension to the fly. There was an interesting article in Gink and Gasoline talking about this subject of more water push. Check that out on their site. There are so many possibilities when you are creating flies. Don't be afraid to try new things. You might find something that works for you.

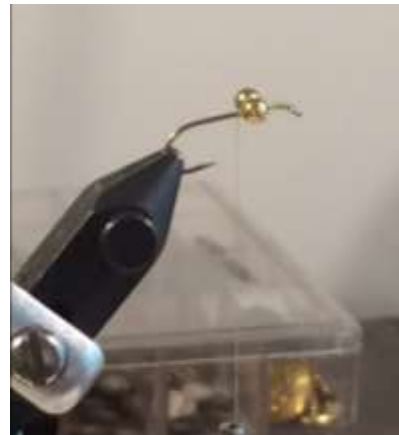
Fly of the Month – “Haruko’s Blue Gill Bait”

Haruko Mizoguchi (mizoguchiharuko@gmail.com)

This is a simple fly that I have played with. Sort of a mix of 'blue gill candy' that Brent Miller has shared with me and a wooly bugger pattern. Whatever it is, this spring it has been my go to fishing for blue gill, crappie, and whatever else is hungry in local ponds.

Hook: 2XL nymph with round bend, such as a Daiichi 1270 (down eye) or 1260 (straight eye)
Eyes: Bead chain in gold or silver
Weight: 0.015" wire
Tail: Maribou feather, olive, brown, black, or a mixture of colors
Thread: 6-0 Uni-Thread in appropriate color for fly
Body: Pearl Chenille (small size works for a #12 hook)
Legs Rubber leg material. A single length of rubber leg material cut into thirds is adequate for the entire fly.

1. Crush barb and mount hook in vise. For this pattern, I used a size 12 down-eye hook from Stockard (their equivalent of the Daiichi 1270), but I do not think size is very important, you can go bigger or smaller. You can also consider using a 3XL hook to give more spacing between the legs.
2. Start thread behind the eye and take some wraps back to about 2-eye-lengths along the shank. It is important need to leave enough space in front of the bead eyes for a single wrap of the chenille body material and to build a small thread head without crowding the hook eye. Tie in the bead chain



eyes on top of the shank using a mix of cross-over wraps and a few wraps beneath the eyes but on top of the hook shank to pull wraps taught.

3. For additional weight, I put about 5 wraps of wire on the hook immediately behind the eyes. Wrap thread over the wire. Build a taper behind the wire with a few thread wraps so the chenille body will have a smooth appearance when it come over the wire.

Take thread wraps to the bend of the hook.

4. A tail, about 1-hook shank in length, is formed from a maribou feather. For this fly I used an olive color. Tie in on top of the hook shank at the bend, taking thread wraps forward, trim excess, and return thread to the tie in point.

You can add a bit of contrast to the tail by tying in an additional smaller bit of maribou on top of the first feather. For this fly I added a small piece of white barred maribou as a contrast.

5. Tie in a length of pearl chenille at the tie-in point for the tail. The chenille needs to be long enough to wrap the body, take a couple of wraps over the bead chain eyes and a single wrap in front of the eyes. For this fly I used a chartreuse pearl chenille. Any 'buggy' small size chenille should work, in this or other colors.



6. Take a single piece of rubber leg material and cut it into thirds. Move the thread forward about 1/3 the way along the shank between the tie in point and the eyes. Tie in one piece of the leg material by its center on the far side of the shank, and a second on the near side. You should have two legs on each side of the hook.

7. Move thread forward another 1/3 length of the shank. Tie in the third piece of the leg material by its center on the top of the hook shank to form the third set of legs.



The finished fly has six legs – three on each side.

The photo shows the fly with the chenille and the three pairs of legs in place.

8. Take a few thread wraps to move thread to in front of the eyes. Wrap the chenille forward in touching wraps taking care not to trap the leg material. Take a wrap or two over the eyes to cover the thread wraps. Finally take a single wrap in front of the eyes, tie it off, and trim excess.
9. Build a small thread head between the hook eye and the chenille. Whip finish and cut the thread. You can use a bit of head cement if desired. Trim legs to desired length and you have it!



Finished Fly

On the Lighter Side

