

## **Product Review: Bioline Biodegradable Tippet**

**Category : Product Review**

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What an intriguing concept...Biodegradable Tippet material!!! I was actually very excited to try this Bioline tippet. It will break down within 5 years in the environment as opposed to around 600 years for mono...now, think of how many times you lost tippet and leader on snags. And think about how many fish broke the tippet at the leader knot due to a poorly tied knot. Multiply that by how many people you see on the streams doing the same thing. That is a lot of line for nature to get tangled in.

I tested the 5X line. I initially put it through some unscientific knot strength tests. I was impressed...It held up as well or ever better than the Orvis and Frog Hair that I normally use. It was a little greater in diameter, though. The Bioline tippet measures .008" in the 5X compared to .006" in the Orvis SuperStrong and Frog Hair...a difference that is even visible to the naked eye. But how would that affect the fishing?

I put the tippet through the paces in a variety of situations trying to test the limits of the tippet. I started by casting big deer hair poppers and bulky deceivers for bass on Keystone Power Dam with a 7 wt rod. I was amazed at how well it turned over the big flies. Where I normally would have fished a 2X or larger, the 5X showed no sign of being under gunned.

I fished it with dries on the Yough. It handled appropriately sized flies very well. The flies turned over easily. The tippet performed as it should all the way through the drift, as well as when executing reach casts, curve casts, and even slack line casts.

The Yough, being known for some good fishing with micro caddis and midges gave me a good opportunity to fish over some picky risers with a #20 black caddis. Obviously not a situation where you would normally use 5X, but in the name of research, I was willing to try for those fish with the Bioline. I was able to land 1 nice brownie, but the thicker diameter tippet had an obvious affect on the drift. In the past when changing to a smaller dry fly, I would occasionally forgo adding a finer tippet in lieu of getting in an extra cast or two...I would not do that with the Bioline. While it drifts an appropriately sized dry fly nicely, it does begin to affect the drift with smaller flies.

I also used the Bioline in numerous situations tossing streamers and drifting nymphs. This is where I really liked the Bioline tippet. I lose many more flies (and tippet) when fishing underneath, so the ecological advantage would naturally be increased. I lose many fish on the strike when fishing with streamers in the excitement of a vicious hit from a charging trout...the knots held fast. I was also happy to find out that the tippet was very good with abrasion resistance when bouncing nymphs off the rocks. I had some of those big Yough browns take me deep into the structure, rubbing against the rocks and gravel, plus getting clumps of seaweed attached to the tippet, and I had no problem bringing them to hand. I am excited to take some of this to Erie for steelhead this year where it has not been uncommon for me to break off 20+ times in a day.

Looking for more perspectives, the PAFF famous, and gadget guru, "Bruno" was gracious enough to fish with it several times (Yeah, like it was a real stretch to get him to take it out fishing!) He and I hit

Slippery Rock on a beautiful August evening in hopes that White Flies would bring up the stream's hard fighting smallies. We were throwing big bushy flies. I had on an Orvis tapered 7 1/2' 4X leader with about 1 1/2' of Bioline tippet. I found that, because the 5X tippet was a slightly larger diameter than the 4X leader, I was getting twisting on the leader rather than the tippet from casting the size 10 comparadun. So even though the leader had more strength, the extra mass of the tippet, and assumed stiffness, transferred the twisting up into the leader.

An unexpected advantage was astutely noted by Bruno...that the line had a funky color as the light faded which made it easy to see. This really helped when changing flies and tying knots in low light conditions.

**Pros:**

Biodegradable – Obviously the primary selling point for Bioline

Knot Strength – Par with the famous brands

Abrasion Resistance – Held up well against the rocks

Castability – Turned over very nicely, even when fishing large flies or making situational casts

Color – Easy on the eyes when tying knots in low light

**Cons:**

Size – The size difference, when compared with standard tippets, is visible. There is a slight loss in performance when using smaller flies. Also a heavier leader would need to be paired with it to prevent twisting

Stiffness – With the extra diameter size comes a corresponding increase in stiffness compared to other 5X tippet I have used. While this is a detriment when fishing "long and fine" it actually helps in other aspects such as turning the fly over and preventing piling.

Cost - \$9.99 per 30 yard spool – a little more than I normally spend

Longevity per cost – It has a shelf life of 5 years in its sealed package...not bad. After opened, it will hold 100% of its strength for 10-12 months. While I go through a spool of tippet in approximately that time span for my commonly used tippet sizes, the fringe sizes of tippet that I use only in certain circumstances would not be at full strength by the time I got to the end of the spools.

**Overall evaluation:**

Bruno summed it up nicely when he said, "The fact that it degrades in such a short period and its performance has me sold. I keep putting it on the end of the leader- nuff said." The Bioline performed very admirably in all but the extreme circumstances. With the very nice performance, good castability, strength, abrasion resistance, in addition to the environmentally friendly aspect of Bioline, it is a product that is well worth the investment.

Bioline can be found at GreenTackle.com - <http://www.greentackle.com/bioline-fly-fishing-tippet.html>