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Subject: : Beginner Forum

Topic: : Dry Fly Fishing Tips

Dry Fly Fishing Tips

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Date: : 2010/3/29 13:39:51

URL:

I thought this would be good place to post a small discussion on fishing Dry Flies. I am not a dry fly fishing expert by any stretch of the imagination, but over the last several years I have put together a brief list of observations that have helped me catch more trout on dries and bigger ones.

I will start by saying that regardless of your experience level, if you spend enough days on the water, you will experience a day where conditions are ideal and a hatch will have numerous trout looking upward. This usually happens on wild trout streams, but it can happen on stocked waters if the fish have acclimated to the point where they are eating nature's forage rather than man's. The question that all fly fisherman have to deal with in this situation is how to approach all of these willing trout.

My first suggestion is to use you powers of observation. Look at the insect activity and ask questions such as, am I looking at a mayfly hatch or a caddis hatch? Do I know what kind of bug is hatching and if not can I identify the color and size of the bug. All these are important questions and can lead to success or failure.

I would also suggest not to limit you observations to the insect activity itself, but also look at the trout. Determine where they are rising. A lot of times this is obvious, but do not be fooled by the numerous fish that appear in the center of a nice run or towards the tail out of a pool. These fish are usually very willing and most of the time are the easiest fish to catch, but I consider these fish to be a sort of alarm system for the biggest fish rising in a given area.

I have found that if you slow down and simply watch the entire area of stream that you are fishing, then often a larger fish will appear in some unlikely places. Often, these places are tucked right against the bank in very shallow water, or in an obscure back eddy that does not become apparent unless you are really looking for it. Regardless, if you have patience and use your observation skills, the bigger fish will present themselves.

Finally, I would say that identifying rise forms is very important in locating larger class fish and identifying what a fish is actually feeding upon. As I learned at the Somerset fly fishing show, a fish is not actually taking surface flies unless a bubble materializes out of the rise form. Often a fish will appear to be taking dries because it is disturbing the water surface, but it is actually taking emergers just below the surface. I look for a nice head and tail rise when searching for larger trout. This is not an exact science because rise forms can be very deceiving. A small rise form can often equal a large trout.

I hope that this provides some basic information on fishing a hatch and I invite the more experienced members of this board to add to this discussion.