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Subject: : Beginner Forum

Topic: : newbie question

Re: newbie question

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URL:

It can change minute to minute. If you want to fish dry flies, you can do so successfully much of the time. However, there are two things to look for that will tip you off when dries will be the most successful method...

1. Are trout rising?
2. Are there insects floating on the surface, but no trout are rising?

The majority of the time neither of these will be occurring. Conventional wisdom dictates to go subsurface. However:

If 1. is occurring, I will look at several things to determine what fly to use.

Can I see (or catch) one of the bugs? That makes the choice pretty clear cut that I should mimic whatever they are taking.

What kind of rises are the trout making? Splashy? Subtle? This information can tell me what stage of bug they are taking.

If there are duns (see the blog for the different phases of the fly) lazily floating down the stream but the rises are splashy, I will guess the fish are taking the emerging bugs or (likely) caddis.

If the fish seem more relaxed in their take, they are likely taking the duns and you can fish the traditional dry fly styles.

If the rises are very subtle, I would start to consider spinners, or possibly midges.

If 2. is occurring, I will again try to identify the bug and get prepared.

a. It could be the hatch is just getting started and the fish are still keying on a different phase of the bug...but, in short time, will be focused on the dries.

b. It could be the hatch is just ending and many fish are full or the # of bugs is no longer high enough to keep the fish interested. Here, try going into some slack water where the stillborns will end up...and look for some fish feeding on the easy pickins.

c. Lastly, could be that the fish just aren't interested in the dries because the water level is too high so they would have to move too far...or a plethora of other reasons known only to the fish.

Something else to consider is walking a bit. Just because fish aren't rising in front of you, doesn't mean that they aren't rising just around the upstream bend. Different bug inhabit different areas. Some in fast, rocky riffles and some in slow muddy pools...and every environment in between. The trout know to congregate where the insects are more active. You will eventually get to know, "this is blue wing olive water" or "you can usually find some rising to midges in this glide", etc.

Fishing dries to rising fish is the most rewarding aspect of fly fishing for me, but it more the exception than the

~~rule. If you want to catch more fish on a regular basis, you would be wise to learn both nymphing and streamer fishing.~~

This is a simplified answer to a pretty complex question, but hopefully will get you started in the right direction...I'm sure there will be other great advice to follow!