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Subject: : Stream Reports

Topic: : Valley Creek 2/24/2008

Re: Valley Creek 2/24/2008

Author: : afishinado

Date: : 2008/2/25 9:45:32

URL:

I've done well at Valley fishing a couple of times in the last few weeks on warmer afternoons. They were taking midges – a size #28 black midge. Give midging a try – it's great catching rising fish on top in the winter when you become tired of dredging the bottom and it's not that hard. I couldn't stand watching 10 fish rise in front of me without giving them a try.

Midges are not hard to tie. I use a TMC 2488 hook. It's a wide gap curved hook. Just add a thread body and a few fibers for wings for dries or a wisp of dubbing for pupas:

Hook: TMC 2488 size 20-30

Body: Thread (black, cream, brown, white, olive) to match naturals. I always try to catch a few insects with my net before I select a fly.

Wing: 8-12 CDC fibers, or Z-lon, or Antron yarn.

I like to use 3/0 Uni-Thread for the body. On a size 28 just start the thread on the shank behind the eye and wrap it back to the bend. Wind the Uni-Thread tightly by spinning the bobbin, and wrap it back to just behind the eye. The tightly wound thread gives a segmented appearance and makes it easier to wrap. On a size 28 hook one pass back and forth is enough to build the body. On larger flies several passes are needed. I tie off the 3/0 thread with finer thread to finish the fly. Cut 8-12 CDC fibers (Z-lon or Antron yarn also work) and tie in perpendicular to the body like a spinner. Cross wrap it back and forth a few times and whip finish. Trim the fibers to size to represent wings. That's it – thread and some wisps of CDC or yarn. Don't make the wings too heavy – a sparse wing looks more natural to suggest wings, and adds just enough buoyancy to float the fly in the film like the naturals.

For midge pupa, do the same thing as above for the body, except instead of wings, dub in a small wisp of dubbing fur near the head of the fly. You can also fish a dry and pupa together to see what the fish are taking.

With a size 28 fly, I may go down to a 7X tippet, not so much because of visibility of the tippet by the fish, more for getting a good drift. Heavier tippet tends to drag such a small fly around in the water.

Use a fairly long soft tippet and try to cast some s-curves and slack in your line and tippet to avoid drag. Also, be sure not to cast your leader over the fish. Try to reach mend or curve cast it so the fish see the fly and not your line. Getting a drag-free drift is the key to fooling the fish.

I grease my line down to 1' or so of the fly and watch the tippet for strikes. If I have problems seeing the tippet,

~~I put a pinch of strike putty on the tippet knot for visibility. When you line moves a little on the take, just tighten up and the battle is on.~~

As anyone that has fished Valley before knows that the hardest part of fishing there is trying not to spook the fish. Careful casting and wading (if you must get into the water) is most important. When fishing to rising fish at Valley or any other stream with persnickety fish, I often ease into a casting position and wait until the fish resume rising. Just slow down and try to stay low, and take as few false casts as possible.

On the couple of my recent trips to Valley, I fished one of those long slow pools, you know, the ones with the high brushy banks making it impossible to fish from the bank. I crossed over in the shallow riff below and slowly waded the opposite bank. I sat down next to a tree along the bank. I proceeded to pull out my Wawa shortie and Wawa chocolate milk and began to feast. By the time I was finished, the fish resumed rising and I began to target one fish at time. Don't worry, it's not just a Philly thing, for those in western and central PA, the strategy works just as well with Sheetz MTO hoagies and drinks.

Tying and fishing midges is not really that hard. I look forward to it every winter when I tire of nymphing. I did see maybe 2 or 3 BWOs flying around when I was at Valley in the last two weeks. They should start hatching soon. Good luck.