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Subject: : Tips and Tricks

Topic: : Flies in trees

Re: Flies in trees

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I do pay attention to scientific studies. The thing is, they tend to outline the average. Which includes people of all skill levels, people who fish with hooks of all sizes, etc. For instance, it may be that there's a huge advantage for the fish in large hook sizes, and a tiny one at small hook sizes.

It's the same with bait fishermen. On average, absolutely, more fish swallow the hook and the mortality is considerably higher. They swallow it because the technique allows the fishermen to let it happen, with live bait, the fish will comply. But the fishermen doesn't HAVE to let it happen. Lots of bait fishermen keep tight lines, and strike immediately, and their deep hooking/mortality rate is likely not much worse than us fly fishermen. Others fish under bobbers, or set the rod on a stick, or just plain purposely let the fish take it a while to ensure they don't "miss" the fish. And they will deep hook dang near 100%. Taken as 1 group averaged together, the mortality rate is indeed considerably worse than fly fishermen, but that doesn't mean you can say that bait fishing automatically leads to higher mortality. It's just that fly fishing is more idiot proof in this regard, you either strike right away or the fish spits it out. With bait, you either strike right away, or the fish takes it deep.

Anyway, while I use barbless, there are times I have forgotten to pinch it down. Mostly on bought flies that I bought shortly before fishing them, which tends to be match the hatch flies that I ran short of, and they tend to be smaller bugs, i.e. smaller hooks and smaller barbs, where I'm using light tippet and losing my share to Murphy's Law. And as a personal observation, the hooks aren't really ANY more difficult to take out of a fish's mouth than my barbless hooks. The only time I've ever really had an issue with barbs and fish were with streamers and big stonefly nymphs.