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Subject: : Tips and Tricks

Topic: : Swinging for Pennsylvania Steelhead.

Re: Swinging for Pennsylvania Steelhead.

Author: : JeffK

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URL:

Swinging smaller flies can be effective too, especially when the water gets lower and clearer. I usually use 8s and 10s and know some successful fishermen that go down to 14's. Some of the best flies I have seen are simple soft hackles. A light hackle with a bright red or chartreuse body or a copper body and a black hen hackle for subtle days are small fly options. Some basic salmon flies like Blue Charms and Undertakers seem to work well. BTW, when I first went to Newfoundland for Atlantic salmon fishing I tied up mostly 6s and 8s with some 4s and 10s thrown in for good measure. My guide was shocked at the huge flies I had brought - they mostly used 10s and 12s and caught big salmon.

For me swinging flies is a way to search for big water, but the best steelheader I know swings flies in front of known lies - like certain rocks at the tails of pools or seams- and mends to let them hang a bit. He catches way more than his fair share and I can't duplicate his success. But swinging can be a more focused way to target steelies. However, it takes more skill to steer a fly to a fish and I can rarely do it. I have had my best luck targeting undercut banks on smaller streams. Cast down and across to an undercut, let the fly sink and mend to keep the fly in a sweet spot. Let off line to let the fly drop back a few feet and mend to keep it against the bank. Can cover a long section of undercut this way. Can do something similar to swing a fly under a tree. It was something I learned decades ago from smallie fishermen, and it is the one swinging technique that works for me, probably since I am comfortable doing it.

The one time big flies are an unqualified pattern for me is for the spring drop backs. Those fish are hungry and want a big meal.