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Topic: : A fishing story... It is all of those things.

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I wrote this little story. I always hating writing but as I age it does'nt seem so much like work especially if it is about fishing.

Hope you can enjoy it.

It is all of those things...

My fly fishing career is still in its nascent stages but I have since learned to recognize a good thing when I see it. Or better yet live it. The game of fly fishing is much like the game of life I am coming to understand. There are extra special events that don't come around much and when you do get a chance to participate the memories can permeate through a lifetime. For some, that might mean the birth of a child, marriage or the corner office. However; for this guy it is catching fish on the fly. Or at least the fleeting chance to fish with friends with life's albatrosses bestowed upon them.

We all have been there and heard stories from our friends and mentors about great hatches and how many fish were fooled. Ahhh, the good times! As they say, the good times never last. In fly fishing I am coming to realize that these good times are far and few. The weeks before a hatch or fishing trip, there are those constant thoughts of promise. For some that is a mix of anxiety and anticipation. The ones were you read several books or search the sites on-line to squeeze as much intel out as possible. After all this is going to be great and I don't want to mess this thing up.

Pretty sure this started back in February/March when some articles surfaced to remind us that the 17 year cicada was due to emerge after it seemingly impossible long sleep. You know the stories of how great this hatch is going to be or at least how good it could be. At a minimum, it gets you out to purchase materials or the shop flies tied by the resident experts. Then there were the maps of the emergence of the elusive "rip van winkle" fly. Many counties in central Pennsylvania were displayed with the dark red color signaling the heaviest of the emergence. The emergence seems to be right in the sweet spot of the famous limestone spring creeks of central Pennsylvania. Things were looking good for this twice or three in a lifetime event- maybe more for those with good genes and diet.

The months moved on and spring was gaining a foothold which brought us "addicts" the BWO's and Grannoms. It was about the time the Grannoms started that my thoughts turned to building an ark. Could have probably floated an ark down Penns Creek for most of May. May in Pennsylvania is the month. You

name it and it is hatching somewhere in the commonwealth except this year. Rain and rain and more rain. Hatches along with fly fishermen and their annual trips were put off or postponed all together. On the positive side all the rain might mean a promise an extended fishing season well into summer.

My fly fishing fantasies for most of May centered on sulphurs. Arguably the most prolific and widespread of the PA hatches. The rain did put a damper on the hatch for me personally and with the price of gas at \$4 a gallon it was harder to take the poke and hope approach to fishing a hatch. Once the rain did finally subside, I did manage to fish the sulphurs on several occasions albeit tempered to my expectations and memory.

The cicada hatch was very far out on the periphery of my all consuming thoughts on fishing. I mean I have never even met anyone who has fished this emergence. Have you? My expectations were on the low side and the fishing season rolled on. Truthfully, my fly fishing prowess has markedly improved and so did my fishing success in terms of landing trout. There is only one way to go when you're at the bottom. So in retrospect I have been pretty content with the season so far. It was one day in late May on the Little Juniata when I first saw the almost prehistoric looking bug.

Didn't see more than one or two big bugs on that trip but enough to reenter my conciseness. Did take a few fishing excursions on home waters in southwestern PA in early June while the cicadas were continuing to emerge and practice their symphonies. By mid-June some reports that anglers were catching a few on cicadas made their way through fly shops and the typical "I know a friend of mine talked to a guy who" talk. Still there were others who stated "I fished there, didn't see a one." You know the good cop bad cop routine.

Well, it was almost July about the time where this "hatch" was supposed to be winding down that I figured it was about time give it a try. Based on my recent forays I was cautiously optimistic on the big bug. Even if this 17 year event was a bust, I was headed to Spring Creek were steady hatches and wild trout abound. Time on Spring Creek is time well spent in any event.

On a Tuesday morning in late June I set out on my 3 hour drive to Spring Creek. Several coffees and bathroom breaks later found me at Fly Fisherman's Paradise fly shop. I remember a guy fretting over the purchase of a new reel since his was still sitting on his desk from last night's tune up some 200 miles away. I found the cicada patterns on the counter- no need to comingle those with all the other useless patterns at that time. Purchased a couple big bugs and headed over to the creek. Just drove along the creek till I heard them. That was the advice I was given. So nice to not worry about waiting till dark to tie some size #16 or smaller fly. So with that I tied on a 1x leader and punched in on the clock.

Cast for a while and to my dismay- nothing. No risers and not more than a few cicadas in the water. Fly fishing the big lie- or was that cocaine? Anyway, I moved downstream a ways and ran into another angler. He mentioned he had just caught 2 on cicadas. I thought to myself "What is he doing that I am not?" or is he an "expert" just adding to my level of confusion and anxiety? To borrow a line from Bad Company "from then it didn't take him long" about 20 minutes later as I cast the big boy toward the banks. BAM! The first above average brown trout was hooked and landed- for me at least. The within minutes other browns in the 14-18 inch range were landed.

There was a point in the day were I caught 3 fish on 3 consecutive casts. I had entered uncharted territory here with this level of success. I am well aware of my total mediocrity but yet success in spite of myself. Caught some brush with your cast no problem? Just rip it out of there with your 1x. When have you used same fly

pattern all day and never a thought of having to switch flies or method? The answer to this question was fishing cicada 08.

My cautious optimism grew into glee that bordered on total satisfaction. The summer sun high in the sky was now becoming obscured by the hillsides and after many trout were landed my contentment directed me back home. In the following days, I was fortunate enough to fish the event again with a long time friend who does get out much. Two children under the age of four will do that to a guy. We gave it a go on the Little Juniata with similar results. Had more fun watching him hook into and land several nice trout rather than myself. And there was much rejoicing as per Monty Python.

The cicadas of 08 were all of those things I have come to know about fly fishing. The anticipation, the hours of wondering thoughts of disappointment, and possible missed opportunities that come so frequently were temporarily abated with success. The car ride home on those days was fun and the goofy smile on my face must have been curious to those motorists that passed me by. With my recent success digested I am ready for another slice humble pie served up on a Pennsylvania stream.

Story by Paul aka acristickid