
Subject: : Beginner Forum

Topic: : A (partial) antidote for tough conditions - dapping in nooks and crannies

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As dc410 [alluded to earlier](#), conditions are tough for the fisherperson right now, in a lot of areas of the state. I found myself in one of those tough conditions this past weekend, as I found myself fishing in some low, clear and cold water conditions.

Over the years, I've adapted some of the techniques I've used during earlier fishing chapters into fly-fishing techniques. This chiefly involved dunking a worm or a salmon egg into tiny plunge pools to target wild brookies. I didn't think much of it at the time; it was what we did, and I didn't have the experience or holistic view of fishing that has grown as years go by to realize that there were many other ways to catch fish, and sometimes, one method was more viable than others. But a couple years ago, I realized that those early tactics worked quite well using a bugger too, and in fact, the conditions I caught the native brookies under years ago were the same types of low and clear conditions I'd find myself encountering in the summer. I came up with a name for this approach, calling it English Muffin fishing, since I was targeting the nooks and crannies that fish hid in during these conditions.

I found this technique worked very well in the winter too, when fish are less active, and not as prone to move for anything, unless it bonks them on the nose. Dapping allows one to just about bonk them on the nose.

It particularly makes sense to use this technique on small streams, especially freestoners. Have you ever fished a stream one time and caught a mess of fish, and gone back in low water and not caught a mess of fish and not even seen any quantity of fish? Chances are, they are still there, hiding out in the nooks and crannies.

I like to use a short (6'6") rod for dapping. I like the rod I have because it is fast-action, which allows for a quick hook set. And I'm often dapping only a few feet in front of me, so the short rod comes in extremely handy; the extra few feet of a 9' rod really get in the way sometimes. My goto dapping rod is actually a Redington spinning rod with a Tennessee grip. I hated it as a spinning rod, because the rings never quite held the reel snug to the grip, leaving a weak hook set. But, with a fly reel attached, it is the perfect setup.

I usually use a size 12 or 14 wooly bugger, in either olive or black, with a beadhead. Size 12 is ideal, because you can dap with it, and in the event you come upon a larger pool, you can also cast it, and strip it like you normally would a bugger.

I often find with dapping that I get two shots at the stream, especially if I park somewhere downstream. I'm able to fish my way upstream, until I decide it is time to turn around. And then, on the return approach, I get a shot at the pools from an upstream position, which often means that fish can't see me when they are lying in the head of the pools, where the little rock ledges are and the water tumbles down.

Unlike dc410, I rarely make that 30' cast in low conditions, spooking no fish, and hooking up with the fish I am

casting too. Dapping is my way to adapt, and perhaps compensate for that. But it is an effective technique for catching otherwise spooky fish in low and clear conditions.

Please make sure you take a temperature reading before fishing in low and clear conditions, as water temperatures often rise when water conditions are such. It never crossed my mind as a 5-year old to do that, and I wonder what the stream temperatures were that I fished in as a little boy. However, I know they were about 54 degrees Saturday.

Here are a few pictures of that outing over the weekend, with the dapping setup. The two largest fish were 12" and 13", and they were not caught dapping, but rather on a typical strip retrieve, in larger pools, from the largest rocks. But as the outing proved again, it pays to dunk a bugger into every little nook and cranny that might hold a fish, because chances are it DOES hold a fish. I didn't break any records with the number of fish I caught, but ten little buttery browns is satisfaction enough.

Non-Flash link:

[https://picasaweb.google.com/108467945 ... 6nh44GSZQ&feat=directlink](https://picasaweb.google.com/108467945...6nh44GSZQ&feat=directlink)

Be alert too; you will be surprised where fish come out from and at times, you will not be expecting them. It happened to me on one tiny 1x3' hole that was at the top of a larger pool where I caught my biggest fish of the day. I caught him on the upstream approach and then dunked into the smaller hole, catching and seeing nothing, although a small trout had darted into that hole as I moved upstream to fish it. The surprise came when I was on my downstream return. I first tried the large rock, to see if I could entice the bigger brownie out again (or any of his brethren) and I missed a ten-inch fish doing that. I then targeted that tiny 1x3' hole and was shocked when a 10" brownie charged out and crushed the bugger. After releasing him, and grabbing a drink, I dunked again, and pooled out a second fish. Therein lies the bonus of fishing a stream on both the upstream and downstream approach, and of try, try again..