

Riffles & Pools

Dedicated to the preservation of Nova Scotia's trout

President's Musings....

April 1 brought a cold slow start to the season for most people, but despite the conditions I did manage to walk the woods and wade the drifts to find a piece of open water along the lake. The fishing felt good after a long winter, but the catching was slow that first day. I did release several nice trout on my second trip out, but nearly froze all my appendages in the process. Now, here it is May, water levels are good, the hatches more regular and the trout are on the move. So as that old expression goes "the lyn season is upon us".

I just returned from Dennis & Verlie Grant's Atlantic Fly Fishing School and a weekend fishing with two of my brothers and a nephew. About half of the 15-member class was first time fly fishers (all ages) and the best casters excluding the instructors were a couple of young boys. Now before I get accused of being an elitist fly fisher, most of the class can attest to my less than classic style with a fly rod which is why I was in class, but also it brings me to the point; that TNS was founded in the interests of trout conservation without regard for the equipment members use. One of our new Directors at Large, Lawrence Abraham has taken an interest in the equipment question and I direct you to his interesting article on ways to use spinning gear and fly fishing tactics together. There is also the second installment of Dennis Grant's fly casting article.

I was reminded over the weekend of the many other reasons that we go fishing. To begin with if I had listened to the resident experts that it was "too early" then I would not have had the pleasure of releasing a glistening mid sized brown trout in the last light of the day, or seen the first shad arriving. I would have missed exploring new fishing opportunities and spending time with family. Although I live in a rural community I would also have missed being out there, seeing nature unfold as peepers peeped, barred owls hooted, whistling pairs of ducks flew low and fast overhead or had a chuckle over the snipe making its odd cartoon like swooping song on high. There too were groups of geese just about everywhere we went, osprey, bald eagles, muskrat and beaver. One awesome sight was a yearling bear swimming the river and bounding full tilt across the open meadow for all to see.

It was a fishing experience, filled with observing and learning about life in a healthy watershed. It served to remind me that going fishing and TNS are more than just catching or conserving trout.

So read on and check out the articles on the proposed work on McIntosh Run and the Country Harbour River in Guysborough County. There is a review of the panel discussion "The Future of Trout" and photos from our recent AGM, and Outdoor Show. Also there are comments on the Trout Plan, and regular features like Reg Baird's Q&A and Claude Cochrane's tall tails plus more.

Whether you spin or fly cast make it last and don't forget to introduce someone new to fishing! Remember when you are out on your favorite spot, that the future of trout in Nova Scotia rests in your hands. Have a good season,

Jamie Steeves



photo © James Steeves

The season opening was closer to winter fishing conditions in most areas of the province this year. Ice covered lakes, high water and cold temperatures were typical of April month while May started out wet and cool as well.

Above a Cape Breton river although open is gripped by snow and wintery conditions in late March.



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Trout Plan, draft released!

Along with the spring RFAC meetings came the release of a draft Trout Plan by Inland Fisheries. This was the result of a long awaited initiative by TNS. Although the introduction of the draft was a step in the right direction TNS feels it falls well short of what is needed. The complete 8 page TNS response to Inland Fisheries is available on the TNS website. A few comments from the covering letter are included below.

In essence the present draft is a summary of current conditions and past practices, but does not identify clear goals, objectives, implementation strategies or time frames; all of which are the basic building blocks of any plan. The Directors of TNS hope the existing draft is just a first step and that further consultation with anglers throughout the province will produce a more meaningful Trout Plan that will take us into the future with greater assurances of success.

Excerpts from TNS Response to Draft Trout Plan:

"Upon review, the directors concluded that while the draft provides a good historical and scientific summary of trout within the province, it lacks the most important part-clearly defined goals, objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes. Unless these paramount aspects are included within the plan, Trout Nova Scotia will not support the document.

We feel the most important goal of the plan should be to ensure a healthy and vibrant wild trout population through the protection and enhancement of existing and future wild trout stocks. To achieve this fundamental goal, it is imperative that the first steps be to develop strategies that identify and protect all "Type A" trout waters.

Included as Appendix A is a sample action plan which includes clearly defined goals, objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes based on the first steps of identifying and protecting all "Type A" trout waters. You may wish to consider a similar template when revising the current draft.

In addition, we have provided summarized responses from those who have had an opportunity to review the draft; these are divided into general, specific, and scientific/technical comments."

Trout Nova Scotia

TNS is the leading advocate for the trout fishery in Nova Scotia. Our volunteers work with government and other organizations towards program and policy development that positively impacts trout, trout habitat and sustainable trout fishing practices. Our purpose is to ensure an improved and sustainable trout fishery in the province of Nova Scotia for future generations.

TNS Supports Classification System: "Type A" Trout Waters

Inland Fisheries is the process of developing a classification system to identify healthy trout habitat in rivers, streams and lakes based on Class A, B and C with "Class A" representing ideal trout habitat. Trout Nova Scotia passed a resolution at the 2004 AGM to encourage Nova Scotia Inland Fisheries to fully develop and implement this classification system to identify all "Class A" trout waters across the province. This identification system will be the first step in protecting and enhancing existing wild trout stocks throughout the province.



photos © Michael Bayer



The Future of Trout in Nova Scotia

L to R: Perry Munroe, Michael Brylinsky, Warren Duncan and moderator Jim Gourlay

A full house, young and old listened intently as the panel moderated by Outdoor Publisher Jim Gourlay discussed the future of trout in Nova Scotia and took questions from the floor.

Sighting the effects of global warming and acid rain, environmental scientist Dr. Michael Brylinsky clearly identified the need to consider the bigger picture when planning for the success of cold water species in Nova Scotia. Master Guide Perry Munroe lamented the loss of sport fishing opportunities for trout in the province sighting declining trout populations as one reason guides must consider other species to extend their season of employment. He sighted the additional costs of equipment to fish species such as bass as more of a liability than a benefit to a guide's business. Renowned tyer and conservationist Warren Duncan shared his colourful insights from well travelled experiences in Europe, the USA and his home province of New Brunswick. His main message: if you kill them they are gone, gone, gone!

To summarize, if we are to have a trout fishing future in Nova Scotia then we must focus on the watersheds and habitat while educating people to accept and practice release fishing at least on our best waters. Members of the audience were heard to say that we need to do more to improve fish



habitat and water quality in this province at the same time we must reduce fishing pressure by releasing fish.

By the end of the evening, the message was clear, it is time for change in Nova Scotia if we are to have a future trout fishery in the province. If we want a quality fishing experience, then we must get busy developing one, one watershed at a time. Without public involvement, supported by government programs and sensible management regulations, success will be limited. People who want a future must be willing and prepared to change how they relate to the resource. Fishing pressure, water quality and habitat, it's time to give something back so the resource will be there in the future.

Thank you to our guest panelists, moderator and audience for their thoughts on the future of trout in Nova Scotia.

“If you want to keep them you have to release them.”

Country Harbour River, Guysborough County & McIntosh Run Watershed

Trout Nova Scotia has requested that Inland Fisheries conduct an assessment of the **Country Harbour River in Guysborough County**. This river still has a relatively healthy sea-run trout population but has seen a drastic decline in the numbers of Atlantic salmon returning to the system. This river has been hit hard over the years by poaching and habitat degradation. In response to our request, Inland Fisheries agreed to include Country Harbour River in their fall 2004 water monitoring program with potential to do a full assessment in 2005. TNS would like to work with local anglers in the area to conduct water quality tests along various sites within the river. Any local anglers interested in participating in this project should contact **Lyle Goldberg at secretary@troutnovascotia.ca**

TNS is working with the **McIntosh Run Watershed Association (MRWA)** to begin the implementation of a community stewardship action plan for this system. The main goal will be to restore historical fish populations of wild brook trout and gaspereau. The McIntosh Run is a unique watershed in that it is the only urban river within the former City of Halifax. A report entitled "Restoring the McIntosh Run: Toward an Action Plan for Community Stewardship" was completed in June 2003 by three Environmental Studies students at Dalhousie University—Jenn Morse, Victoria Sheppard and Heather Arnold. Trout Nova Scotia has approached Inland Fisheries on behalf of MRWA to undertake an assessment of the watershed from Long Lake to the outflow at Herring Cove. Inland Fisheries has agreed to include the McIntosh Run in their fall 2004 water monitoring program. This will be a good start to gathering baseline data for the watershed.

ATV's on the move... by Jamie Steeves

As you probably know by now, the Tory government has extended the deadline for public comments on the Off Highway Vehicle interim report by an unbelievable **FOUR MORE MONTHS!!!** The OHV report was produced by Voluntary Planning with province wide public consultation over a number of months in late 2003.

Clearly the out of province industry lobby and the hard-core anti-regulation ATV groups have gone after the provincial Politicians directly. Their tactic will give them more time to organize protests and lobbying efforts. The fact is, less than 10% of Nova Scotians are directly involved with ATV's yet the effect of ATV's on the environment is very widespread in all areas of the province. TNS has gone on record in support of the environmental and safety recommendations contained in the OHV Report. In recognition of the impact these vehicles have on the environment, many countries around the world, limit the ownership and use of ATV's by law and restricted them to farm type uses.

Immediately following the deadline extension announcement it was interesting to note the proliferation of pro ATV advertorials. In my local community paper, for example was a one page attention getting layout with a letter to say how much money ATV groups raise for local good will projects, what good people they are and so on. These are likely un-disputable facts, but one must realize that this is not an issue about the quality of people or how good a citizen you are or whether other issues are doing more to degrade the environment (the popular one is clear cutting) but rather what specifically this equipment is doing to the environment that all of us share an interest in. Three pages later in the same paper was a piece about three teens involved in an accident which sent two to hospital with critical injuries. Too bad the paper's editor choose not to put the two articles side by side.

The provincial politicians allowed unregulated use of OHV's to persist in this province far too long. The past 15 or more years have demonstrated that this is not a self regulating activity and that it is time the wild west came to an end in Eastern Canada for the health and safety of all woodlands users and the environment we all have stewardship over.

Please contact your local MLA and make your views known, let's not have an industry organized lobby determine what impact OHV's will have on the environment of Nova Scotia.

Letter to the Editor (edited)

I recently read the latest edition of Riffles and Pools. It certainly contains a wealth of information and the layout and number of pages must be the envy of many other angling organizations in Nova Scotia. I did want to draw to your attention one item, "Loon & Lead in the news", that requires some amendment.

This initiative was spearheaded by CASA starting in 1996. CASA recognized very early on that they were one of the heavier users of lead and their members are all urged to make use of the available substitutes - for this they should be commended. CASA also recognized that a provincial ban was not workable - the ban would have to be nation-wide in order to be effective. This recognition appears to be close to reality.

CASA, then the Inland Fisheries Advisory Council (comprised of the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, Trout Nova Scotia, Canadian Association of Smallmouth Anglers, Nova Scotia Association of Anglers and Hunters, Fisheries Institute of Nova Scotia, and the Atlantic Salmon Federation), and ultimately the NS Inland Fisheries has been most active on this issue. I would like to think that the planned nation-wide consultative initiative, leading to a ban on lead used in angling, is proof of the effectiveness of the IFAC process.

Although your article states "If enough people demand action from our government this may get attention on the national agenda", this has been done - through our provincial department and now with the start of the consultations nationally by DOE. As a matter of fact, much of what the consultation papers call for seems to have also been taken word for word from CASA's original proposal and timetable - the same process endorsed by IFAC, Inland Fisheries and our Minister.

It would be appreciated if you could pass this up-dated information along to your membership.

Thank you

Michael N. Robinson
Director - Government Liaison
Canadian Association of Smallmouth Anglers
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Voice. 902-542-9110

Renowned tyer Warren Duncan shows his skill at the vice while reciting poetry and verse of the most amusing sort. The flies are so beautiful and thanks for the donation to the live auction!



TNS 2004 AGM & Outdoor Show

photos © Michael Bayer



The Silent auction table at the AGM draws intent bidders.

Thanks to Hon. John Chattaway for being our auctioneer for the live auction.



TNS Booth at the Outdoor Show



Gino Maddalena helps a young tyer with a contest entry



Paul Mariner shows an eye for perfection.



Claude Cochrane recognized for his contributions to TNS

The presentation I made to Claude Cochrane at our TNS AGM was in memory of my father, the late Donald Baird, and the culmination of something I have wanted to do for years. This seemed like the perfect opportunity.

My father was a trout fisherman to the core, never having any desire to fish for other species. He was very good at what he did, his specialty being the stalking and catching of large brook trout. To those who had the privilege of fishing with him, he certainly was the ultimate in a fishing partner. He was an expert canoe man and would pleausurably maneuver a canoe all day in order to afford his partners the best opportunity possible to present their offerings to wary fish. He was an extremely modest man with a great respect for people who work hard, without any thought of compensation or personal gain, for a cause they believe in.

I know he would have approved of and whole heartedly supported Trout Nova Scotia. So in Dad's memory and in keeping with his values, along with a deep appreciation from all of us at TNS, we recognized Claude's untiring efforts on behalf of Nova Scotia's trout and Trout Nova Scotia.

My thanks to Trout Nova Scotia for allowing me to be part of this memorable occasion.

Sincerely, Reg Baird

TAiLS from the waters

by Claude Cochrane

CATCH & RELEASE... ADVANCED METHOD

After developing the all-purpose "Eradicator Fly", I have become increasingly more aware of the consequences should this recipe become public knowledge. As a result I have formulated a product that will help protect the trout by improving catch and release methods. I have developed an adhesive that holds under water but when exposed to the open air loses its adhesive quality in 10 - 15 seconds.

As I anxiously await the start of the trout season to conduct my experiment using live fish, some friends mentioned they had been ice fishing at a lake designated as a winter fishery. I promised myself that after "Fly Fishing Frozen Waters, I would not attempt under ice fishing ever again but the desire to test my product won out, and away I went.

When I reached the lake several anglers were guarding their neatly augered holds and a few nice fish were displayed on the ice surface. I cut two holes with my trusty axe, (I must invest in an auger) approximately 40 feet apart. I had rigged a short rod with an old 95 foot fly line and made two imitation minnows from a piece of rubber matting. After painting these green and bronze, they looked very much like a small bass. I put an "O" ring through the base of the dorsal fin and attached a swivel as a line connector. Then I placed some adhesive on the lure and dropped it 5 to 6 feet below the ice.

Walking backwards and releasing line, I soon reached my friends location. Suddenly, a hard pull on my foot set me down on my rear. A loop of line had fallen around my boot and I was being dragged at break neck speed towards my ice hole. What kind of monster fish was I into. The ice was covered with 2 inches of powdered snow from the night before, and I could see nothing as I was inside this fast moving snow cloud. Suddenly I came to an abrupt stop and was catapulted forward, my heels had caught the lip of the hole, stood me upright, and then face-first beyond the hole.

As the cloud of snow settled, the laughter didn't. I looked around and about this time a huge otter came out of my second ice hole 40 feet away, thrashing and snarling with my lure firmly clinched in his jaws. In a few seconds the glue relaxed its hold and away he went down the hole, still mad as a hatter. After gaining my composure I gathered my gear and explained I had to leave for another commitment. I could still hear the odd snicker from the lake as I reached my car a hundred yards away.

Embarrassment aside, the adhesive preformed perfectly. It has unlimited potential, for example, imagine tying a Mickey Fin Streamer on a match stick body, no hooks, only a tiny swipe of glue before you make your cast. Once on, all you'd have to do is raise the fish's head gently above the surface and in seconds its free.

Yes people, it is environmentally friendly, otherwise, would I use it.

Claude

PS: Watch for this fine product and others at your local Hardware and Fishing Supply Houses under the "ANGRY OTTER" logo.

FLY CASTING TIPS

with Dennis Grant

Selecting the right equipment part 2:

For most fishing using 6 weights and under, the reel quality can be the least consideration. The majority of fish will be brought in by retrieving line with the line hand and not with the reel. So the reel becomes a place to store line.

Most fresh water fishing in Nova Scotia can be accomplished with an 8 ½ foot rod that takes a 7 weight line. For small fish, under a 12 inches (30 cm) the 7 weight is a bit stiff, and for large Atlantics the same rod is a bit light, but if you can have only one rod the 8 ½ foot rod that takes a 7 weight line would be your selection.

The heavier weights that cast 7 to 9 weight lines are the choice of most Atlantic Salmon fishermen. It is this range of rods where I suggest that the primary concern should be the reel. Big and hard hitting fish like the Atlantic Salmon will melt a cheaper reel. A reel with a quality drag system, like the disc drag, will make your fishing of a lifetime a happier experience. The stiffness provided by these rods assists the angler to land larger fish quickly. The shorter the fight with an Atlantic Salmon the better chance that it will successfully recover after release.

I can relate many, many stories on this subject over the last number of years. Fly fishers spend a lot of money making that trip they have always dreamed of, Labrador for salmon, Alberta for the big Rainbow on the Bow, or even Florida for the saltwater Bones and Permit. They choose the rod carefully with the correct line for the job and then try to get away using an inexpensive reel. The trip costs \$4000 and the reel \$75. The experience is disastrous. Shop carefully for the correct reel when fishing for the bigger and faster fish, the fly shops have knowledgeable people when it comes to the correct reel.

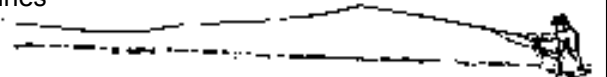
Rods that cast lines in the 10 to 12 weight range are used for the big fish in Salt water. The rods that handle these lines are very stiff, made for casting in windy conditions on big open water. It is amazing the size of fish you can land with these rods. Noted fly angler Billy Pate is the holder of a fly rod world record with a 188-pound Tarpon caught using a 16-pound tippet on May 13, 1982.

There is no question that the reel, rod and the line are all prime considerations when the sport gets to this level. If you plan to cast this size of rod make sure your casting arm is up to it. A few weeks before the trip, tune up your casting technique and muscles, as well as the equipment.

Fly fishing is catching on, learn to let go....

Tight Lines

Dennis





Q. What is the best technique for taking trout?

A. Trout streams undergo dramatic changes over the course of a year, therefore no single technique can be expected to work all season. For example in the early spring, when heavy rains and snow melt causes streams to run high and muddy, a sinking line and weighted nymphs are the order of the day for fly fishermen. The bait and lure fishermen are usually successful under these conditions as heavy lures and spinnered baits will go deep where the trout are holding. When subsiding waters clear and water temperatures rise above 10c, many aquatic insects will start to hatch and fish will begin actively feeding at the surface. For the fly fishermen floating lines and dry flies will

then replace the sinking lines and nymphs. As a general rule the bait and lure fishermen have very limited success when trout are actively surface feeding.

Q. What is a subimago?

A. When a mayfly nymph matures, it swims to the surface, its skin splits down the back and a "subimago" or "dun" emerges.

Q. Can I safely release a deep-hooked trout?

A. In a recent Wisconsin study, 56 percent of deep-hooked trout survived when the leader was cut and the hook left in the fish. Only 11 percent survived when the hook was removed. When fishing in catch and release areas or if you intend to release most of your catch, pinching down the barbs on your hooks will allow you to safely release most fish.

Fishing Flies with Spinning Gear

by Lawrence Abraham

Long before the advent of the fly-rod, records show that fishermen were attaching wool and fabric to hooks in an attempt to imitate flies and, by "chucking" them into lakes and streams, they were able to catch trout.

Latter day fly-fishing techniques use weights placed on the line above a fly in order to sink it to the level of the fish. Some flies also have weighted hooks that help to keep the fly just under the surface in fast water.

Spin fisherman can copy and use these techniques, and as a result improve their ability to catch trout. Once a fly is in the water the trout do not care if the fly is being manipulated by a spinning rod or fly rod - what they want is the fly.

In this article I will outline a few simple methods that spin fisherman can use, with traditional flies, to assist them in their fishing. In fact, most experienced spin fisherman will recognize the techniques as variations on suspended baits and spinner retrieval. With the use of the weight(s), usually split shot, the flies can be set up to cast in a normal manner using the spinning rod.

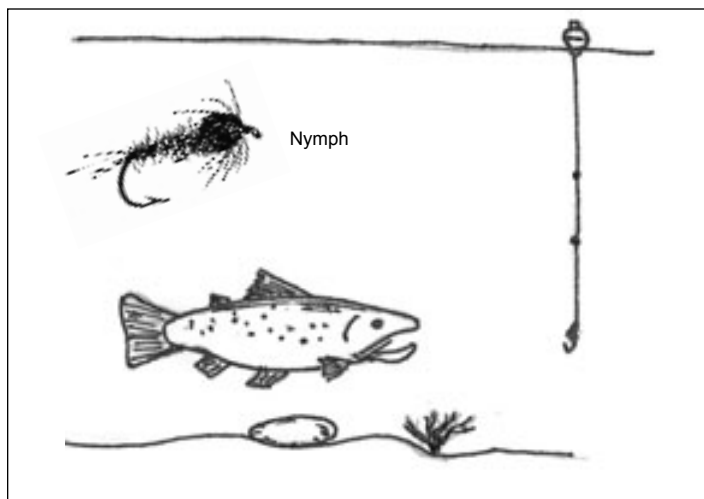
The practice of catch-and-release works well with these methods because the flies are not taken deep into the trout's mouth and throat (as sometimes happens with live bait).

One example of how Fly-Fishing and Spin-Fishing can work together was illustrated to me while fishing at the Eel Weir in Kejimikujik Park. I observed two brothers fishing for trout, both appeared to be accomplished fisherman and both were successful in catching and releasing fish. One brother was using a fly rod and the other was using a spinning rod. The spin fisherman was using a combination of small crank baits and weighted flies to catch fish. Once he cast the flies into the river he retrieved them like he was working a spinner or crank bait, and he was able to catch trout.

Many of our best Nova Scotia anglers, who release hundreds of fish annually, believe the pinched barb hook is the best choice.



He often changed flies and crank baits and he had a wide range of techniques to try and was not limited to spinners. He appeared to be having a great time, and when I talked to him he said that he was having a very successful day.



Method 1. Suspension of a Nymph below a Strike Indicator (Bobber).

This method is virtually identical to dangling a worm under a bobber except in this case it is a nymph imitation (a nymph is an aquatic insect that trout love to eat).

It is important to place the split shot, or weight, at a level above the nymph imitation (usually between six and eighteen inches) that allows it to hang below the bobber in a manner that appears natural. The bobber can be adjusted to set the depth of the nymph. A good all-round nymph imitation such as the Hares Ear Nymph in a variety of sizes and colours can be used in most cases.

continued on page #8

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Yes, I want to be a member of Trout Nova Scotia and help insure an improved and sustainable trout fishery in the province for future generations. For membership information or to send in your membership contact:

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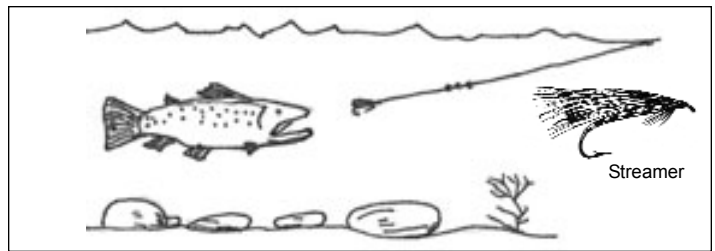
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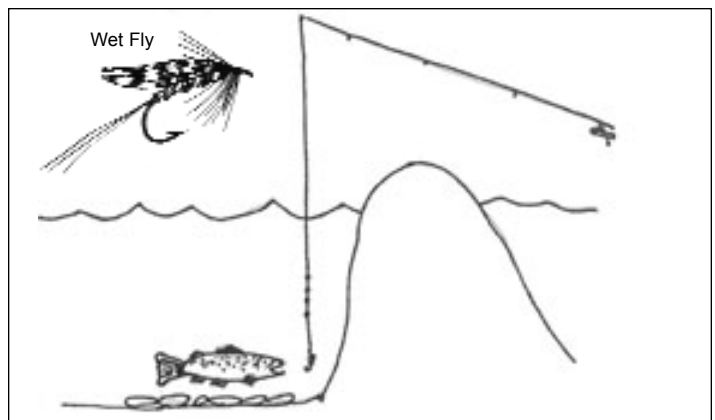
Fishing Flies with Spinning Gear continued from pg. # 7



Method 2. Placement of a Weight in front of a Streamer.

This method is similar to casting and retrieving a spinner and worm combination, except that in this case a weight is placed in front of a streamer (a streamer is an imitation of a baitfish). One of the advantages of this method is that it allows for the use of a wide variety of streamer types with various sizes, and colours. Popular streamers are the Grey Ghost, Black Ghost, Mickey Finn and the Light and Dark Edson Tigers.

Another popular and successful method is to place a split shot in front of a Woolly Buzzer (a furry fly that imitates a wide range of swimming aquatic food for trout) and retrieving it in an erratic, jig-like manner. It imitates a variety of injured nymphs and baitfish, and as a result can be successful when the trout get fussy.



Method 3. High Sticking a Nymph or Wet Fly

This is a simple method that is used in pockets of fast water. It involves holding your rod high and dangling a nymph or wet fly (imitates a drowned insect or injured minnow) in the river or stream. This usually requires more weight, and you need to get close to the fish, a good set of waders comes in handy when using this method.

Nymphs in a variety of colours and sizes can be used. Once again the Hares Ear Nymph is a good all-round nymph to use. For a wet fly the Dark Montreal (a popular Eastern pattern) in a variety of sizes is a good all-round fly.

These three simple methods of applying the use of flies to augment your spin fishing will increase your ability to catch and release trout in a variety of situations.

I have seen all of the flies that I have mentioned in this article for sale in the Fishing Section of large department stores. They should also be available at your local tackle shop.

Lawrence