

# Hickory, Table Rock, High Country Trout Unlimited March 2025 Newsletter



Delayed harvest stocking begins again this month. When first released they may hit the surface since they were fed with floating pellets, but they will soon realize their main food supply is now on the bottom. If you want to catch fish, nymphing is the number one method. It is estimated that surface feeding makes up a mere 10 percent of a trout's overall diet. Another 10 percent of their feeding occurs just under the surface, but more than 75 percent of their diet is caught at or near the bottom.

Dry fly fishing and nymph fishing have their pros and cons. Dry fly fishing is easier and less complicated than nymph fishing. It is more successful when trout are feeding on the surface. Nymph fishing requires you to read the water three dimensionally, and factor in the depth as well as the surface currents. On average, nymphs are going to be more successful throughout any given time of the year.

So this month we will dedicate the newsletter to nymphing with some articles on how to and some tips on how to improve your game.

## HIGH COUNTRY TU MARCH MEETING

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM

**WHERE:** Lost Province Brewery  
130 N Depot St., Boone

**PROGRAM:** Water Quality Testing and more..

**SPEAKER:** Watauga Riverkeeper

We will have a social hour afterwards to hang out or bring your tying tools and materials!

## HICKORY TU MARCH MEETING

**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM

**WHERE:** Old Hickory Station  
232 Government Ave SW, Hickory

**SPEAKERS:** Tom & Bridget Connelly  
Chick Woodward

**PROGRAM:** Bucket List Fishing Trips

Experiences from some of the best fly fishing adventures for freshwater and saltwater will be presented.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Future Cleanups Planned.** Mark the dates on your calendar and watch future newsletters for more details.

**Hardin Creek Planting, March 1<sup>st</sup> 10AM-5PM.** The New River Conservancy and the Town of Boone will be hosting a volunteer planting day at Hardin Creek on March 1, 2025 (back up date of March 8). Volunteers will meet at Watauga High School at 10:00 am (please park in the parking lot in front of the school) and walk down to the planting site (there will be signs).

We please ask all volunteers to register for this event. Volunteers will need to bring sturdy boots, water, snacks, and work gloves. Lunch will be provided during the event.

This is part of the ongoing restoration of Hardin Creek. This project seeks to restore 1,820 linear feet and ~ 4 acres of floodplain along Hardin Creek where it flows into the South Fork New River in Boone, NC.

For more info: [RESTORE](#) -- [REGISTER HERE](#)  
**South Fork of New River, March 15<sup>th</sup>.** We will focus on the section between Roan Creek and Wagner access. Start time of 10:00 am with the volunteers meeting at Zaloo's. NRC, New River State Park and the county will coordinate about getting a dumpster at Wagoner. NRC will coordinate with the landowner and the county about getting a dumpster at Roan Creek. Keep Ash Beautiful will provide trash pickers, trash bags and gloves.

**WADERS ARE REQUIRED! NRC HAS A LIMITED SUPPLY FOR FOLKS TO BORROW.** We will be floating and the conditions may be cold and challenging. This will be a risky cleanup..

Everyone will meet at **Zaloo's Canoe Rental, 3874 N-16, Jefferson, NC** at 10:00 am and be off the river by 3:00 pm. Zaloo's will provide the shuttle and hopefully a few canoes depending on how many volunteers register. NRC will be able to

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to [HkyNCTU@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com) and let us know.

provide at least one raft and three canoes if needed. Wear good boots and bring rubber boots if you have them. It will be cold, so we'll be looking to stay dry.

Bring your own lunch and water. We look forward to seeing you! [REGISTER HERE](#)

**Helton Creek, March 29<sup>th</sup> 10AM-2PM.** Meet at 1850 Big Helton Rd., Grassy Creek, NC 28631 (Our backup date in case of inclement weather is 4/5/25).

Wear good boots, and bring rubber boots if you have them. It will be cold, so we'll be looking to stay dry. Bring your own lunch and water. We look forward to seeing you!

This cleanup is in partnership with Trout Unlimited, Keep Ashe Beautiful, and Mountain True.

Please register here: [Helton Signup](#)

**Details to be announced**

March 7<sup>th</sup> at Boone Greenway 10am – 2pm

March 22<sup>nd</sup> at North Toe River 9am – 3pm

**North Fork of the New River, on 4/12/25** (back up date on 4/19/25) Watch for details.

**45<sup>th</sup> Annual Blowing Rock Trout Derby April 5, 2025**

[Blowing Rock Trout Derby](#)

**FISHING CLASSES BY NCWRC**

February 2025		Volunteer Opportunity
02/5/25	<a href="#">Catfishing Basics -Virtual</a>	
02/6/25	<a href="#">Basic Knots and Rigging - Marion</a>	þ
02/08/25	<a href="#">Beginning Fly-tying Workshop – Patterson School - Lenoir</a>	þ
02/12/25	<a href="#">Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual</a>	
02/14/25	<a href="#">Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop - Morganton</a>	
02/15/25	<a href="#">Basic Fly-casting Workshop - Marion</a>	þ
02/19/25	<a href="#">Entomology for Anglers - Virtual</a>	
02/20/25	<a href="#">Fly-fishing Basics: Understanding and Selecting Fly-fishing Equipment - Virtual</a>	
March 2025		Volunteer Opportunity
03/05/25	<a href="#">Soft Plastic Rigging &amp; Presentation - Virtual</a>	
03/08/25	<a href="#">Fly-fishing Basics, Lanyards, Fly-fishing Connections - Patterson School - Lenoir</a>	þ
03/12/25	<a href="#">Fly-fishing Basics: Wading Safety and Etiquette - Virtual</a>	
03/14/25	<a href="#">Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop - Morganton</a>	
03/19/25	<a href="#">Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual</a>	
03/20/25	<a href="#">Volunteer Orientation/Basic Fishing Instructor Training</a>	þ

03/22/25	<a href="#">Basic Fly-Casting Workshop - Patterson</a>	þ
03/26/25	<a href="#">Rod Building Primer - Virtual</a>	
03/28/25	<a href="#">Fly-Fishing Basics: Creating Hand Tied Leaders - Marion</a>	þ
03/29/25	<a href="#">Basic Rod Building Workshop - Marion</a>	þ

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*“Fly fishing is the most beautiful way of trying to catch a fish; not the most efficient, just as ballet is the most beautiful way of moving a body between two points, not the most direct. Fly fishing is to fishing as ballet is to walking.”*

...Howell Raines

**FEBRUARY BRTU CHAPTER MEETING**

By Robbie Abou-Rizk

*Editor’s Note: Be sure to see the Video to see the amazing way the people of the community came together to help everyone in need.*

Kelly McCoy and Renata Dos Santos, the owners of the River Girl Fishing Co, presented to a packed house at the February chapter meeting. We had close to 60 people, with many guests attending to hear them speak. Kelly, better known as The Rivergirl, has served the Ashe/Watauga community for many years as an outfitter. She has been involved in the community helping many conservation groups.

Kelly and Renata showed a documentary on the aftermath of Helene flooding in the valley and its devastating effects. After the storm passed, they set up a command center at their shop for the isolated community. For weeks they ran rescue operations, coordinated relief efforts to people who were cut off now along with many local volunteers. They removed debris from the river, helped clear roads and collected trash from trees until help started arriving as roads opened and power was slowly restored. [See Video](#) Link for the story in the local newspaper: [Newspaper Story](#).

Kelly also talked about the state of the streams, fish and habitat. She noted that it took about 2 weeks after the storm before the waters in the south fork of the new started clearing. However, the river and habitat are resilient as flooding is normal for most streams once or twice a year. Fish insects, and other aquatic life find places to hide to ride the storm. When Kelly floats the river now, life is back as it was, with caddis flies covering the rocks, smallmouth bass visible, and trout are back to biting.

Kelly also volunteers with the Mayfly Project, which puts foster kids with mentors, to take them out fishing once a month. She talked about the impact of the program on the kids and how it brings happiness and excitement to the kids as they fish and play in the river. These are opportunities they can’t get at home. Wynn Parrish, the lead mentor for the Boone program talked about the need for more volunteers to help with kids. He needs 4-5 more volunteers from the Boone area and is asking for our help. Please contact him at [wynn.parrish@gmail.com](mailto:wynn.parrish@gmail.com) or at 336 9180904. [Boone Mayfly Project](#)

Last, but not least, Kelly McCoy has been a friend of Trout Unlimited, especially BRTU for many years. She has helped us with turbidity sampling on Elk Creek, offered her parking for our restoration on Todd Island Park and Elk Creek. She helped the boy scout troop that BRTU works with and opened up her shop for them to sleep on a cold February camping event. She is the type of person that will take the shirt off her back to help others.

Kelly has worked with many other TU chapters over the years. She is a well-known guide and naturalist. Unfortunately, like many in the Todd area, she and Renata lost their warehouse that housed all their equipment from kayaks to bicycles and other gear to the river. They are starting from scratch. They do have a GoFundMe link. BRTU gave their fund a donation to thank them for all their efforts. See the link below or the link on our website blueridgetu.org to their website if you would like to help them out. [Rivergirl GoFundMe](#)

## THE MAYFLY PROJECT



The Mayfly project mentors foster and adopted children with fly fishing as a way to connect with nature and to find a few moments of peace in their very uncertain lives. Children receive free fly-fishing gear including rods/reels, waders, boots, and all on water supplies (leaders, tippet, flies). They are paired with mentors in a structured 5 outing program that introduces them to all the aspects of fly fishing with the intent of giving them the skills to begin to fish on their own. We are looking for 10 new mentors who are willing to share their passion for the sport and to help introduce the next generation to the joy of catching a fish on a fly. No fly-fishing experience required. It is all about connecting foster kids to nature. We will teach mentors all they need to know.

The program has five fishing trips planned starting in mid-April and going through September 20<sup>th</sup>. All of these at ponds and streams near Boone. Currently with eight children in the program that means they need 16 adults for the events. It can

take a month to become approved as a mentor after your application so you need to apply soon to be available for that first event. You can make your application at [Application to Mentor](#).

In addition to mentors, the program can always use some more flies. The flies need to be barbless and they generally use the common nymphs, squirmy, and egg flies. You can send them to Wynn Parrish, 3762 Sandalwood Ln, Winston Salem, NC 27106.

For more information about the program you can visit the website at [Mayfly Project](#) or you can contact Wynn at [wynn.parrish@gmail.com](mailto:wynn.parrish@gmail.com) or call him at (336) 918-0904.

## TU EASTERN REGIONAL RENDEZVOUS

We are excited to be coming to West Virginia at the end of April, and I'd like to extend a special invitation to you for the **2025 Eastern Regional Rendezvous**, which will take place from **April 25-27** in **Shepherdstown, WV** (just 1 hour from Dulles International Airport).

### Details & Registration

If you've never attended a Rendezvous before, you won't want to miss this year's event! It's a weekend filled with learning, networking, and fun with over 100 volunteers, TU staff, and partners. This will be an immersive opportunity to connect, learn, and share our collective passion for fly fishing and conservation.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the **National Conservation Training Center**, attendees will have a unique chance to learn and grow as TU leaders. Featured speakers will include **Chris Wood**, TU's President and CEO, who will kick things off on Friday night. On Saturday, we'll have a variety of informative sessions, including legislative updates from our Arlington team, insights from **Keith Curley**, TU Eastern Regional VP, and **Than Hitt**, plus native brook trout project updates, Trout Dissection in the aquatic lab, and more! (see our draft agenda attached)

We'll wrap up the weekend on Sunday with a **brook trout release** (fish dependent), followed by a conservation project at nearby **Morgan's Grove Park**. Fishing will also be available all weekend on the property, which sits right on the Potomac River.

As always, we encourage chapters to support their volunteers by covering or subsidizing the cost of attending and traveling to these events. It's a worthwhile investment in the future of your leadership team. Consider sending an entire team, and be sure to encourage your new, younger, and up-and-coming volunteers to attend for the learning and inspiration!

Thank you for all you do for TU. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

## FAMOUS FLY FISHING QUOTES

*"I thoroughly enjoy getting away from the game and going out fishing because it's so relaxing, so quiet, and peaceful. I mean, there's no noise other than nature... and it's so different from what I do in a tournament situation that it just eases my mind."*  
.....Tiger Woods

## ADVICE FROM THE VISE

By Dave Everhart

March is the great transition month where we can start to see warmer weather/water, hatches begin in earnest and the bugs venture out of their winter mode to start feeding and becoming food. With the months theme around nymphing, I thought I would hatch a pretty simple pattern that is an excellent imitator of a general water bug.



It's a play on a pheasant tail, spiffed up with some straggle legs, latex bug back and a hint of UV resin.

For the hook, a TMC2312BL, has really become my go to nymph hook outside of euro jigs. I'm using orange thread, but suit yourself as to color. I match the wire rib with that theme as well. I'm using UTC Hot Orange for this one. You can tie it weighted, or unweighted, bead head or even beads on the thorax for a really heavy fly.



I'm using .020 lead free wire with 28 wraps (I tie everything in multiples of seven for luck-I don't know why, just seems right)



Next, wrap from the eye back, ensuring the wire gets secure and end with a thread dam at the bend. Tie in-you guessed it- 7 pheasant tail fibers with a few wraps to give it some toughness. Double the fibers back over and secure them in place at the bend in front of the tail.

Tie in the wire rib and begin to wrap the tail fibers forward to the halfway point of the shank. Trim off the tag ends and counter wrap the wire rib, also ending at the halfway point.



Tie in a length of bug back, you could also use some wide flash at this point as well. This will form the wing case over the abdomen.



I wanted to introduce this fairly new material from Semper Fli, called straggle legs. It's a little longer than the straggle string, and it has that same great motion in the water.

Tie the end in and take touching turns to just behind the eye. You can build up the thorax as much as you like, and tie that off at the eye and take some securing wraps.



Now we build the wing case by pulling the bug back slightly taught and securing it in with a few tight wraps. Snip the tag and build up a thread head, stroking any errant legs to the rear. Whip finish, and wow it looks buggy! But.....



The UV thick resin adds a load of character to this fly! Tie some of these up and fish them in larger sizes on a couple nymph rig, or smaller as a dropper under a dry. Add some tungsten and they serve as a great point fly under an indicator. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com](mailto:Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com) Please check out some current ties on Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

## 2025 TIE-A-THON EVENTS



The second of two Tie-a-Thon events was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Cap Wiese Fly Fishing Center at Patterson School in Lenoir. The goal this year from the two events was to donate 2000 flies. The final result was a donation of 5300 flies from those tied both at the events and tied at home. They are considering making this a quarterly event.

## 2025 DELAYED HARVEST STOCKING WEEKS

COUNTY	STREAM	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
Ashe	Helton Creek	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Trout Lake	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Big Horse Creek	3-7	1-4	5-9
Caldwell	Wilson Creek	3-7	1-4	5-9
Clay	Fires Creek	3-7	1-4	5-9
Graham	Big Snowbird	3-7	1-4	5-9
Haywood	West Fork Pigeon River	3-7	1-4	5-9
Henderson	North Fork Mills River	3-7	1-4	5-9
Jackson	Tuckasegee River	3-7	1-4	1-2, 5-9
Macon	Nantahala	3-7	1-4	5-9
Madison	Big Laurel Creek	3-7	7-11	1-2
	Shelton Laurel Creek	3-7	7-11	1-2
	Spring Creek	3-7	1-4	1-2
McDowell	Curtis Creek	3-7	7-11	5-9
	Catawba River	3-7	7-11	5-9
Mitchell	Cane Creek	3-7	7-11	5-9
Surry	Ararat River	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Mitchell River	3-7	1-4	1-2
Swain	Tuckasegee River	3-7	7-11	5-9
Transylvania	East Fork French Broad River	3-7	1-4	5-9
	Little River	3-7	1-4	1-2
Watauga	Watauga River	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Lake Coffey	3-7	1-4	1-2
Wilkes	East Prong Roaring River	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Stone Mountain Creek	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Reddies River	3-7	1-4	1-2
	Elk Creek	3-7	1-4	1-2

At the Hickory TU meeting in February, Doug Besler noted that there are currently seven streams that have been declared not yet safe for delayed harvest fishing that are not on the list. He also stated that the dates on the above list are subject to change. You can check to find the latest stocking list and hatchery status by scanning the QR code below.



The Armstrong hatchery was severely damaged by Hurricane Helene and is currently being rebuilt. The Setzer hatchery will undergo major renovations in 2026. Trout stockings will be reduced in 2025, 2026, 2027 and potentially in 2028.

Scan the QR code for more information, including frequently asked questions or visit [ncwildlife.org/setzer](http://ncwildlife.org/setzer).



## FLY FISHING TIPS FOR STOCKED TROUT

NOVEMBER 1, 2023 / BY LOUIS CAHILL



Fly fishing tips for stocked trout. Photo By: Louis Cahill

## MY FIRST MEMORY OF BRINGING A TROUT TO HAND WITH A FLY ROD TOOK PLACE BACK IN THE SPRING OF 1990.

It was on a seasonal trout stream, located 45 minutes north of Atlanta, GA. It was a far cry from a trophy trout at 10-inches, but that freshly stocked rainbow trout, touched my eleven year old fishing soul to the core. I'll never forget the excitement I felt watching that stocker chase down and eat my olive woolly bugger at my feet. It felt really good for a change, not relying on that plastic blue can of worms to get the job done. From that day forward, I never looked back, and I've moved on to become a respectable trout guide in my area and I've fly fished for trout all over the world.

A lot of fly fisherman would laugh at me if I brought that fishing memory up in conversation. Many wouldn't be able to look past the fact that I was fly fishing for stocked trout that weren't naturally born in a stream or river. If you happen to be reading this post and you're one of those fly anglers that I'm referring to, just remember that we aren't all blessed to have easy access to wild trout. For many of us, wild trout populations are so low (because of poor conservation and land management), it's not even feasible for us to strategically target them, and if it wasn't for stocked trout, we'd have no trout at all. If you're fortunate to be blessed with wild trout populations where you live, don't forget how special that is, and please don't make fun or belittle others who take pride in catching stocked trout. You just make yourself look ungrateful and worthy of having wild trout.

Before I get into my fly fishing tips for stocked trout, I'd like to take a moment to mention a couple of reasons I feel stocked fisheries can be good for the sport. For one, they're a great place to introduce kids and newcomers to fly fishing for trout. Timed correctly, an angler with zero experience can have great success catching trout. Secondly, put and take trout waters provide great locations for anglers who like to harvest trout, to do so without having to illegally poach on special regulation or wild trout fisheries.

## FLY FISHING TIPS FOR STOCKED TROUT

### TIP 1: BIG FLIES AND BRIGHT FLIES ARE GENERALLY THE BEST CHOICE FOR FRESHLY STOCKED TROUT

If I knew I was going to be targeting freshly stocked trout (within a week or less of being stocked) I should really only need three types of patterns. The first would be a big Stimulator dry fly. Since stocked fish are conditioned to eating fish food pellets on the surface in the hatcheries, anglers can regularly take them on the surface with big dry flies. A dead drifted dry works really good, but sometimes, twitching or skating it at the end of the drift will also work. If the stocked trout aren't liking your dry flies, I'd next try stripping a black or olive woolly bugger. A large profiled fly with an erratic action will really get the attention of freshly stocked trout, so much in fact, that they often will swim several feet to eat a big fly like a woolly bugger. And if the woolly bugger isn't working I'd next rig up a tandem nymph rig and tie on a bright san juan worm or egg pattern off the back. Fluorescent colored flies are very hard for stocked trout to pass up, and they're usually the ticket until

most of the stocked trout have been landed on them multiple times. Try these tactics above for freshly stocked trout.

## TIP 2: DON'T MOVE, CHANGE YOUR FLIES FIRST

Don't always think the fun is over after a few fish. Many anglers move on to new water when all they need to do is change out their flies to something different to continue to catch stocked trout. This works really well when you've got crowded water and equally well when you've got kids that aren't very mobile.

## TIP 3: SEARCH OUT THE SLOWER MOVING WATER LIKE POOLS AND DEEPER RUNS



When trout are first stocked they often search out slower moving water. I think most of the time this is because they're trying to match the slow moving water that they grew up in at the hatcheries and it's more comfortable to them. If you know the DNR recently stocked you should first check out the pools and deeper slow moving runs and bypass the fast moving pocket water. These places you should find pods of trout hanging out and easy to catch.

## TIP 4: GO NATURAL WITH FLY CHOICE AFTER THE TROUT HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE

Eventually stocked trout will get conditioned to seeing those big woolly buggers and bright attractor nymphs, and you'll find it much harder to get them to eat them. When that happens, anglers should start fishing fly patterns that are more natural looking and less gaudy and flashy. This is the time that soft-hackles and your traditional nymph patterns (prince nymph, hares ear nymph and pheasant-tail nymphs) really shine. I often will tie on a fast sinking copper john and drop one of the traditional nymphs off the back.

## TIP 5: HIT THE POCKET WATER AND RIFFLES

The longer the stocked trout have been in the stream or river, the more they will start to spread out and move around. This is when I'll leave the big pools and runs for other anglers and focus my attention fly fishing the pocket water and seams of riffles. You'll find the trout here less pressured, easier to catch and you should also be able to find some water to yourself.

## TIP 6: SWING YOUR FLIES

If you're on the water and you can't get the stocked trout to eat your dead drifted flies, try repositioning yourself so you can swing your fly patterns in front of them towards the end of your drift. Sometimes, this can be the most effective way to catch stocked trout that have been in the water for a while.

## TIP 7: GO TINY AND DOWNSIZE YOUR TIPPET

Over the years, I've witnessed and fly fished to stocked trout that were unbelievably difficult to catch. Some of these stocked streams get pounded daily with anglers, and eventually the trout get super spooky and selective. When I see this on the water, it makes me want to round up all those stocked trout haters that think all stockers are a joke to catch and watch each one of them get their egos checked. If you're going to be fly fishing for stocked trout late in the season after they've had lots of education, you should be ready to downsize your tippet, micro-nymph, and fish tiny dry flies if you want to consistently

catch trout. Yes, I'm talking about 6x-7X tippet and fly patterns down to size 24.

That's some of my tips for fly fishing to stocked trout. Please drop me a comment if you have any to add.

Keep it Reel,  
Kent Klewein  
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## NYPH VS DRY FLY: 3 KEY DIFFERENCES EVERY ANGLER SHOULD KNOW

by **Makai Macdonald**

June 4, 2024

Nymph fishing and **dry fly fishing** vary significantly in three main areas: **presentation techniques**, fly design, and **targeted fishing zones**. In **nymph fishing**, the angler must focus on underwater feeding zones using weighted nymphs, often with beadheads, to mimic insect larvae. Conversely, dry fly fishing requires precise casting to drift buoyant flies naturally on the water surface, imitating adult insects. Understanding water currents is vital for both techniques to avoid spooking fish. Mastering these differences enhances an angler's strategic approach. For more advanced insights into these techniques, continue exploring this topic.

### Key Takeaways

- [Nymph fishing](#) targets underwater feeding zones, while dry fly fishing focuses on surface feeding zones.
- Nymphs are weighted for swift submersion; [dry flies](#) use buoyant materials to float.
- Nymph fishing imitates insect larvae drift underwater; dry fly fishing mimics adult insects on the water surface.
- Nymphs are effective in deep, turbulent waters; [dry flies](#) excel in calm water conditions.
- Nymphs represent insect larvae stages; [dry flies](#) mimic adult insects.

### Presentation Techniques

Presentation techniques in fly fishing are essential, with **dry fly and nymph methods** requiring distinct approaches to effectively mimic the behavior of **natural insects**.

For dry fly presentation, anglers must [master precise casting techniques to delicately place the fly](#) on the water's surface, **simulating an insect floating naturally**. This often involves **casting upstream** and allowing the fly to drift downstream in sync with the water current, ensuring minimal disturbance to avoid spooking fish. Proper fly manipulation is critical, as any unnatural movement can alert the fish to the deception.

Conversely, nymph presentation requires a different strategy. Nymphs, representing underwater insect larvae, must be presented using the **dead drift technique**. This entails **casting the nymph upstream** and allowing it to drift freely with the current, **closely mirroring the natural movement** of subaquatic insects. Effective nymph fishing demands acute awareness of water current dynamics and insect behavior, as

improper drift or fly manipulation can result in an unconvincing presentation.

Both techniques necessitate a nuanced understanding of the aquatic environment and the targeted fish species' **feeding patterns**. Mastery of these casting techniques and an in-depth comprehension of water currents and insect behavior are essential for successful fly fishing.

### Fly Design and Appearance

The intricate design and appearance of fly patterns are crucial in [fly fishing](#), with nymphs engineered to sink below the surface to imitate subaquatic larvae, and dry flies crafted to float and mimic adult insects resting on the water. The fundamental differences lie in their construction and intended behavior in the water column.

Nymphs are typically weighted to guarantee swift submersion, often incorporating beadheads or additional weight. This design facilitates a more effective approach to targeting fish feeding beneath the surface. The Nymph benefits are particularly noticeable in turbulent or deep waters where aquatic insects are mainly found. These flies are designed to resemble various stages of insect larvae, presenting a natural and enticing option for fish.

In contrast, dry flies are characterized by their lightweight construction, enabling them to stay afloat. These flies are crafted with buoyant materials to mimic adult insects and are often used in calm water conditions to attract fish rising to the surface. The Dry fly characteristics include a detailed and intricate design that replicates the delicate features of surface-dwelling insects.

### Targeted Fishing Zones

Identifying the precise zones where fish are likely to feed is essential for selecting between nymph and [dry](#) fly techniques. **Nymph fishing** targets underwater zones where fish exhibit feeding behavior on **aquatic insects** or larvae. This method is particularly effective in deeper water depths where fish species, such as trout, exhibit **habitat preferences** for **subsurface feeding**. Nymphs are designed to sink below the water surface, imitating the natural drift of larvae and nymphs in the current.

Conversely, [dry fly fishing](#) focuses on **surface feeding zones** where fish rise to capture insects. This technique is best suited in shallower waters or during hatch events when fish species are more inclined to feed on the water's surface. Dry flies are crafted to float, mimicking the appearance and movement of adult insects.

Understanding these targeted [fishing zones is critical for successful fly](#) selection. For instance, in waters with significant **insect hatches**, fish are more likely to feed on the surface, making dry flies the preferable choice. In contrast, in deeper pools or riffles where subsurface feeding dominates, nymphs are more effective.

Differentiating between [nymph and dry fly fishing](#) zones thus enhances **angling strategies** and increases **catch rates**.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What Is the Difference Between a Nymph and a Dry Fly?

The primary distinction lies in their design and application: nymph patterns imitate underwater larvae and are weighted to sink, whereas dry fly techniques mimic surface insects,

utilizing buoyant materials to float, targeting different feeding behaviors.

#### What Is the Difference Between Streamers Nymphs and Dry Flies?

Streamers, nymphs, and [dry flies differ in fishing](#) techniques and fly selection: streamers sink to mimic baitfish targeting large predators, nymphs imitate larval insects underwater, and dry flies float to replicate adult insects on the surface.

#### What Is the Difference Between a Nymph and a Wet Fly?

Nymphs imitate aquatic larvae and exhibit subsurface behavior, sinking below the water. [Wet flies](#), mimicking insects on or just below the surface, often float or hover near the top, providing visual excitement during fishing.

#### What Is the Difference Between a Nymph and a Midge?

Nymphs represent various life stages of aquatic insects like mayflies, typically mimicking larvae or pupae. Midges are specific small insects found in trout waters, imitated through both dry flies and nymphs, addressing different feeding habits and conditions.

### Conclusion

To conclude, the distinctions between **nymphs** and **dry flies** are crucial for effective angling. **Presentation techniques** differ greatly, with nymphs often requiring deeper water tactics, while dry flies necessitate surface-level approaches.

Fly design and appearance are also specialized, with nymphs mimicking underwater larvae and dry flies replicating surface insects.

Finally, targeted fishing zones vary, with nymphs being most effective in **sub-surface habitats** and [dry flies excelling in areas where fish](#) feed on the water's surface.



### KEEP A BACKUP NYMPH RIG READY

by Kent Klewein



Having a completely different pre-rigged tandem nymph rig ready helped me catch this beauty. Photo: Louis Cahill

**Changing out flies on the water takes time but is often necessary to catch trout consistently all day.**

Keeping a pre-rigged tandem nymph rig ready to go, will allow you to quickly change out your flies from one hole to the next and save you critical time when your fishing time is limited. They're great to have when you find your hot fly has turned cold, when you break your rig off on a snag or find yourself with a nasty tangled mess. Let's face it, we often find ourselves in question on the water, particularly in the first hour after we've wet our line. It can take some time to figure out what the trout want for the day, and by having a couple different pre-rigged tandem nymph rigs on hand, you'll find it much more efficient to try multiple fly patterns and rigs out, and that should help you dial-in quicker and start catching trout.

Sometimes the tandem nymph rig you just caught trout with in the hole downstream, may fail to get the attention of the trout in the next hole you fish. This isn't always the case, but sometimes for sure. In fact, this happened to me just the other day. My client had landed a fish out of the first three holes we fished in the morning with a woolly bugger lead fly and a micro san juan worm dropper. As my client worked the fourth hole of the day, the bites abruptly stopped, despite him making several great presentations and drifts. Knowing there were fish in the hole, I snipped off the rig and tied on one of my different pre-rigged nymph rigs. First cast, my client landed a trout, and he went on to catch another fish after that. If I would have stuck with the first rig, thinking the flies were fine because they worked in the previous holes, we probably wouldn't have landed those two fish. There is no doubt there are times when trout will key in on a specific aquatic insect and become selective feeders. However, some days, when there isn't a hatch or specific food source they are keying in on, I think trout often create their own specific food menu for the day. When this is the case, and you're not having success, often all you need to do to get trout to bite, is show them something different. Humans are no different. If we eat the same thing for lunch a couple days in a row, we're ready for a change.

So before my guide trips these days, I've got in the routine of tying up a few different tandem nymph rig combinations, and stow them in either my pack foam patch or organize them neatly in my Orvis Dropper Rig Fly Box. I'll have one big fly and bright attractor nymph rig, one heavy medium-sized lead fly nymph with a soft-hackle rig and last, I'll have a small tungsten nymph with a tiny baetis or midge dropper rig. Between these three rigs, I'll usually find one that works for the water I'm fly fishing. Give this tip a try next time you're out trout fishing.



Orvis Dropper Fly Box

**Update:** Orvis is Currently Selling the Dropper Fly Box. Click the link or photo above to visit the product page on the Orvis website.

Keep it Reel,  
**Gink & Gasoline**  
[www.ginkandgasoline.com](http://www.ginkandgasoline.com)  
[hookups@ginkandgasoline.com](mailto:hookups@ginkandgasoline.com)



## KNOW YOUR INDICATOR

A guide to strike indicators, their best uses and setup  
*by George C Costa - Monday, Feb 13th, 2017*

*The Air-Lock strike indicator (photo: Chad Shmukler).*



The modern indicator has become ubiquitous. Despite that technical-sounding name, let's face the facts, an indicator is little more than a bobber. You can call it an indicator, a flotation device, or a nymph sus-

pender. Hell, you can call it Suzanne for all I care. But, in the end, it's just a bobber—just like the one you had on the Barbie pole that you took fishing for bluegills when you were six. Not that there's anything wrong with that, let's just be honest with ourselves. If you want to successfully nymph and don't have the patience to learn to tight-line, these little floating delights will serve as your window to the underwater world and help you "see" when trout eat your bugs.

Let's break down a bunch of modern indicators, look at some of the pros and cons of each and dissect when and where you should be using them.

### THE THINGAMABOBBER

It's probably the most popular indicator out there today. It was the first truly closed celled balloon type indicator on the market. Thingamabobbers come in four different sizes and multiple colors to match any angling situation. Smaller 1/2" sizes are best for most trout streams. Move up to the larger 1" and 1 1/2" ones for bigger water and heavier nymphs (e.g. when dredging egg patterns and 3 lbs of lead for Great Lakes steelhead).

#### Pros

- Good buoyancy
- Easy to See
- Multiple colors and sizes

#### Cons

- Relatively hard to adjust its placement on leader
- They tend to slide on thinner sections of tippet
- Kinks the leader
- Hard to turn over in windy conditions
- Hits the water hard
- Hard to lift off the water

#### Best For

Faster, broken water and heavy nymphs, fishing from a drift boat.



## AIR-LOCKS

Introduced several years ago, the Air-Lock indicator (pictured at top) improves on the Thingamabobber through its use of a plastic nut to attach to the leader. This allows for quick and easy adjustment of its placement on the leader: just loosen the nut and slide it up or down to your desired location depending on water depth. You can also thread the leader through the nut to achieve a true “90-degree” bend in the leader.

### Pros

Good buoyancy  
Easy to See  
Holds fast to leader regardless of tippet diameter  
Multiple colors and sizes  
Easy to adjust placement on leader  
Won't kink the leader

### Cons

Easy to lose the nut or washer that locks it down  
Hard to turn over in windy conditions  
Hits the water hard  
Hard to lift off the water

### Best For

Faster, broken water and heavy nymphs, fishing from a drift boat.

## PINCH ON'S/PALSAS/MIDGICATORS



The good old sticker. I have to confess, I love these things, although I feel my carbon footprint is the size of Rhode Island due to the amount of them I burn through. Easy to cast, they land softly and you can use two of them in tandem to create a “line” in your indicator

to determine the angle and position of your flies. These are my favorite for low and slow water and for nymphing with smaller, lighter flies.

### Pros

Multiple colors and sizes  
Won't kink the leader  
Lands softly  
Easy to cast and turn over

### Cons

One trick pony, once it's used it trashed - you'll need a new one if you need to adjust its placement on the leader  
They can leave a sticky residue on your leader that will drive you nuts if you suffer from OCD like I do

They can be hard to see in faster more broken water because of their size and tendency to ride a bit lower in the water

### Best for

Shallow riffles and skinny water with lighter and smaller nymphs.

## THE FOOTBALL/RUBBER BAND JOB/TOOTHPICK SITUATION



These football-shaped indicators are what you probably first reached for back in '97 when you started swinging the fly rod. Nothing fancy here, just small pieces of slotted colored Styrofoam. They attach to the leader via rubber band or toothpick, easy enough to

adjust placement these lil' fellas on your leader.

### Pros

Just about every gas station, diner and flophouse in Oswego County sells them  
Easy to See  
Multiple colors and sizes  
Easy to adjust placement on leader (for the most part)  
You can use the toothpick for getting that jerky from between your molars

### Cons

Hits the water hard  
Hard to pick up off the water  
The rubber band/toothpick thingy will eventually get lost or break

### Best for

Faster, more broken water and heavier nymphs, fishing from a drift boat.

## YARNS/NEW ZEALAND STYLE



These are my go-to indicator for gin clear water and super spooky fish, much like the where the New Zealand-style indicators were developed—on the crystal clear rivers and streams of New Zealand where the trout spook when you step off the plane

in Christchurch. Super light and super easy to cast, yarn indicators are a must for skittish trout because they lay down on the water like a whisper.

Pro tip: Green Mucilin works wonders on yarn indicators and will give you street cred with the bamboo and tweed crowd when you pull it out of your fancy new sling pack.

### Pros

Easy to See  
Multiple colors and sizes  
Easy turnover and pickup  
Lays down quietly on water

### Cons

Need to dress them with floatant  
Can get dragged down in faster currents

### Best for

Clear, skinny water, small to medium weighted nymphs and high strung trout.

## PINCH ON INDICATOR PUTTY



Loon Outdoor produces its very popular BioStrike floating putty, a great alternative to carrying multiple sizes of indicators as you can adjust the size and amount of putty for the perfect size indicator. One of the most useful putty colors is the glow-in-the-dark for when you are night fishing

with dry flies or nymphs. Often you have to guess when fish take in the dark but using a small dab of bio-glow a few feet above your fly will give you a visual cue without adding a lot of weight to your leader.

#### Pros

Easy to See

Multiple colors and infinitely adjustable sizes

Easy to adjust placement on leader

Won't kink your leader

Biodegradable

#### Cons

Tends to fall off on occasion, especially if a big dumb stocky tries to eat it

Not super buoyant and can get dragged down in faster currents

A bit heavy and hard to turn over large amounts

Can leave a sticky residue on leader and fingers

#### Best for

Small to medium nymphs in slower currents, riffles and runs, night fishing.

### **NOTES ON COLOR SELECTION AND SETUP**

Almost all indicators come in a wide range of colors. I generally carry multiple colors and base my decision on time of day and clarity of the water. White and clear indicators are generally your best choice as they blend into bubble lines and are less likely to spook trout. Use brighter indicator colors depending on sun glare and how fast the water is moving. If you can't see it, what's the point?

Generally, your indicator should be placed approximately one and a half times the depth of the water up your leader from the bottom fly. So, if you're fishing a run around three feet deep, place your indicator around four and a half feet up from your fly. A common mistake I see a lot of people make is placing the indicator much too far up the leader. This not only results in your nymph likely drifting where you don't intend it to, but also causes more of a delay in transmitting the take to the indicator and you missing more hooksets.

## **A QUICK WAY TO TIE ON A DROPPER**

[Quick Dropper Video](#)

### **MITCHELL RIVER PRESERVE**

Wildlife Resources contacted us this week regarding the new Mitchell River Preserve recently obtained by Piedmont Land Conservancy. PLC shares our interest in promoting fishing alongside the property, but they're not yet far enough along in the planning process to know what types of trails they'll be able to build. They're currently in the process of hiring a preserve manager, and once that position is filled, they'll start the trail planning process. We will continue to monitor the progress and let you know more as it develops.

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