



October Meeting:

Trout Fishing in Wisconsin

Notes by Dick Dragiewicz

Mike Miller from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) was the guest speaker at the club's October 9th meeting. His Power Point presentation covered Wisconsin trout fishing. He gave us the names of many great streams, reminded us of the types of insect hatches available, some interesting details on trout feeding habits, what fly patterns to use, and reminded us to be cautious and quiet when fishing so we don't spook those colorful trout. Here is some of the information Mike Miller shared with us.

Trout Streams and their locations

Wisconsin's geologic land forms influence the locations of trout streams. There are five major areas in the state that contain most of the trout streams. They are the Northwest, Northeast, Central, West Central and Southwest. Details on these and many other streams and their locations can be found in the Wisconsin Trout Streams book and the Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations and Guide. These documents are available online on the WDNR website and as print versions.

The primary streams he identified in these geographic locations are:

Northwest Wisconsin has the White River, Eighteen Mile Creek (tributary to White River), and the Namekagon River.

Northeast Wisconsin streams include the Brule River, Brule and Elvov Creeks, Deerskin River, Prairie River, East Branch Eau Claire River, North & South Branch of the Oconto River, and the North Branch of the Pike River.

Central Wisconsin streams are the Little Wolf River, Tomorrow River (also known as the Waupaca River in Waupaca County), West Branch White River, Mecan River, and Lawrence Creek.

West Central Wisconsin (also known as the northwest part of the Driftless region) streams include the Kinnickinnic River, Rush River, Trimbelle River, Cady Creek, Plum Creek, Elk Creek, and Buffalo River.



Mike Miller of Wis. DNR

Aquatic invertebrates (insects) that are abundant in Wisconsin include Caddisflies (Tricoptera), flies and midges (Diptera), Mayflies (Ephemeroptera), and Scuds (Amphipods). A study of invertebrates in a stream located in the Driftless area of southeast Minnesota startled the researchers and the fishermen. Black flies and scuds dominated the insect population on this stream yet the brown trout generally avoided the black flies and favored eating the scuds. So, even though you may see a lot of a particular insect on a stream the fish may favor another insect. Try a new and different fly pattern and your success may improve.

Mike's favorite and successful fly patterns include:

Glass bead head caddis pupae nymph # 14 - #18
Hatching Midge – Theo's Danger Baby # 18 - # 20
Bead head pheasant tail nymph # 12 – # 18
Copper John nymph # 12 – # 16
Blue Winged Olive emerger # 18 - # 20
Parachute Adams dry fly # 12 - # 18
Scuds with an orange tint colored body 3 12 - # 16
Crayfish (weighted) # 10 - # 12
Wooly bugger # 2 - # 12
Elk Hair Caddis # 12 – # 20
Foam Beetle # 12 - # 16

These are common trout fishing patterns. Recipes and tying directions can be found in many fly tying books or online.

In conclusion, Mike reminded us that trout sense danger very quickly. So when you are fishing for them be quiet, cautious, wading softly so you don't spook them.

Have fun exploring these new streams next season.

More Information on DNR Website — www.dnr.state.wi.us:

'Wisconsin Trout Streams book': on-line maps and lists of streams

'Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations and Guide' online maps

WI Trout Stream Classifications

Class 1 — Natural reproduction sustains wild trout at or near stream's capacity.

Class 2 — Some natural reproduction

Class 3 — Marginal trout habitat with no natural reproduction

Listening to the River

By Jim McLennan

Some fly fishers never learn the fundamental truth that it's the fish that run the show. The fish decide what flies and methods are going to work, and our job is not to lead, but to follow. The most important tool a fly fisher can have is an understanding of fish, but too often we base our fishing plans on things other than that. We use a fly and method that worked the last time we fished a place, or we use a fly and a method that worked the last time we fished some other place. This approach often fails because that was then, and this is now. The one immutable rule of trout streams and fly fishing is simple: Things change.

Fly fishing is based on the premise of imitating the fish's natural food with our artificial fly, and this is a three-step process. First, we choose a fly that represents the item the fish are currently eating. Then we put the fly in a place where the fish are feeding. Finally we make the fly behave like the natural food item. Each step comes with a question: What are they eating? Where are they eating it? How does it behave?



Consider the clarity of both the water and the sky. Rainbow and brown trout are less nervous about being seen by predators and feed more eagerly if one or the other is cloudy

There is so much of this information available to fly fishers today that there's no reason not to be armed with some of it when you leave home. Buy books and magazines with hatch information for specific waters. Check fishing reports on the internet and in local fly shops to find out what's been working lately. Talk to friends who have fished recently.

The pre-trip research is good and useful, but it is not listening to the river. Listening to the river begins when you are close enough to hear what it's saying. All plans and intentions should be considered starting points only. The river and the fish have the power and right to trump all plans. If the information you got from the internet is a week old, things may have changed by the time you get to the river. Water conditions might be different, or the hatch that gave the internet reporter great fishing may now be over. Or, perish the thought, the internet reporter may have been stretching the truth.

Observation is one of the cornerstones of fly fishing, so when you get to water you haven't seen in

awhile take a moment to look around. What is the water level? Is it high, low, normal? Then, what is the water temperature? I ask this question nearly every time someone tells me about a recent fishing trip, and nearly every time they say they didn't take the temperature. This is odd, first because the water temperature is a huge factor in trout's behavior, and second because I know these guys carry every fly-fishing gadget known to man, including thermometers. When the water temperature is below 40 degrees trout move into slower, deeper water. When the temperature is above 68 degrees they move into faster, broken water where there is a higher level of dissolved oxygen. In the heat of the summer we should fish early in the morning when the water is at its coolest, and in early spring and late fall we should fish in the afternoon when the water is at its warmest.

Also consider the clarity of both the water and the sky. Rainbow and brown trout are less nervous about being seen by predators and feed more eagerly if one or the other is cloudy. If the visibility of the water is less than a foot though, it becomes a handicap to the fly fisher.

Some of the things you observe when you're fishing are obvious – a heavy hatch of big flies, a pod of rising fish. But some are subtle. You might see a swarm of mayfly spinners dancing over a riffle, for instance. The spinners are preparing to lay eggs, after which the females will fall to the surface of the water. So swarms of spinners can be a forecast of rising fish in an hour or so. Or you can see stonefly shucks on the rocks along the edge of the water. This means that both stonefly adults and nymphs are probably current trout foods. You might notice birds active at the surface of the water. Watch one bird closely. If it flies low and occasionally reaches down to pluck something off the surface of the water, there are bugs there. If there are a lot of birds doing this – swallows or gulls most likely – it means there are a lot of bugs on the surface. Guess what other creatures might be taking advantage of a chance for an easy meal?

Noticing these things is good, but seeking them out is better. Shake a few bushes as you walk along the river and watch what falls out and flies away. Look at the spider webs to see what insects are trapped there. Check the radiator of your car to see what kinds of bugs you drove through on the way to the water.



The worst thing to do is stand in one place for hours and repeat something that isn't working

When you're near the stream always keep one eye on the water. You might see a rise that you didn't expect. Also learn to look through the surface and down into the water. Every now and then you'll spot a fish that you would otherwise spook.

When you lay down on the bank to have a nap, keep one ear out for the sound of a rising fish.

Fly-fishing's two eternal questions are "How long should I stay in one spot?" and "When should I change flies?" The short answer to both is this: If what you're doing isn't working, change something fairly quickly. That something can be the fly, the method or the place where you're standing. Or, you can change fish by moving to a completely new spot on the stream. The worst thing to do is to stand in one place for hours and repeat something that isn't working. A big part of listening to the river is realizing when it's telling you to stop doing what you're doing and to try something else.

One of the most skilled fly fishers anywhere is George Anderson of Livingston, Montana. Just watching George can wear you out. He's constantly on the move and nearly always tinkering with his terminal tackle. If he's nymphing he's adding weight, removing weight, changing flies, changing his position. If he's fishing to rising fish he makes only three or four casts before changing the fly. George is a superb caster and reader of the water, and as a result probably makes perfect presentations six times in eight casts. The rest of us need more chances so we shouldn't change as quickly as he does, but there's still a great lesson in this. If the fish don't take on the first three or four perfect drifts, the next fifty or hundred won't convince it to either.

If fish are rising, but you can't fool them with an imitation of the bug you think they're eating, use a fine screen to take a sample from the surface of the water. Catch some bugs from the same line of current the fish are feeding in and you'll get a close look at what's on the menu. This might surprise you. You might find a different stage of or species of insect than you expected, or there might be something big and obvious on the water along with something small and unnoticeable. It's amazing how often trout prefer small and unnoticeable over big and obvious. Sampling the water is a simple thing, yet few fly fishers do it.

Lest you think I follow my own advice, let me tell you a little story. I fished the Missouri River earlier this summer, and the internet reports said the caddis fishing in the evening was exceptional. About 8:00 pm I parked the van, rigged up with a size 16 CDC caddis and walked up the river. Sure enough there were swarms of caddis buzzing just above the water. I found a fish rising and cast the caddis over him expectantly, but with less than the desired result. I repeated this performance with numerous fish. At one point I did notice that although there were millions of caddis flies in the air, there didn't seem to be any on the water. The fish were feeding on something else, but I didn't change my fly because I was sure the trout had to start eating caddis at any moment. But they didn't. They didn't eat caddis because there were never any caddis on the water. By the time I was ready to accept this fact it was too dark to change flies. The next day I stopped in at the fly shop in Craig and told my



A big part of the satisfaction in fly fishing comes from "breaking the code"

sad tale. “That’s too bad”, the guy behind the counter said. “We went out for an hour after work last night. They weren’t eating caddis, but man did we kill ‘em on rusty spinners.” Oops! I guess I wasn’t listening.

A big part of the satisfaction in fly fishing comes from solving these kind of puzzles (“breaking the code”, as I’ve heard it described by a fly fisher from an earlier era.) It’s fairly easy to learn the mechanical skills of various fly-fishing methods, but the art comes with knowing when to do what. This involves gathering information, observing circumstances and listening to the river. A trout stream speaks quietly – often in riddles, puzzles, and rhetorical questions – but speak it does. Listen.

Antron vs. Zelon

What's the Difference? —by Blue Ribbon Flies

That’s the age-old question -- tiers mistakenly use these two terms interchangeably. The fact is, Antron and Zelon are entirely different materials and should not be confused with each other.

Antron is a synthetic fiber that imitates the natural characteristics of silk and is best thought of in this manner. It has a fuzzy feel and it subtly adds sparkle and sheen to your flies because of this silky nature. It’s primarily used for wet flies and nymphs, as the individual fibers tend to stick to one another and mat when wet.

Antron makes excellent wet fly wings and bodies when you want to add some motion and sheen; in a more limited use it can be used on dry flies in conjunction with other materials that will float the fly. One of our favorite uses for Antron is in the Caddis Sparkle Pupa. Now that you know there's a difference, stock up on pure Antron and Antron yarn for all your tying needs.

Zelon is a synthetic fiber that is made to hold its shape. The individual fibers do not mat when wet, retaining translucency and luster. The fibers also have a tendency to crinkle, making Zelon the best material to use for natural looking shucks and wings. It’s a great dry fly material when tied loosely on the hook, and, it’s a great wet fly material when a tightly wound, segmented body is desired. Check out the Micro Zelon for small flies.

In short, think Antron when you tie bodies and wet fly wings. Think Zelon when you tie shucks, dry fly wings, and on occasions, wet fly wings, or bodies.

All of the Zelon in the world comes from either Umpqua or Blue Ribbon Flies. We dye all of our Zelon right here in West Yellowstone to match more than forty custom colors.

Crinkled Zelon:

You’ve read about it for years, tied with it, fished with it, and know what a difference it makes in your angling success. We use Zelon more than any other material in developing new, more effective patterns. This fine-fibered sparkle yarn is ideal to work with and we use it all the time for shucks, bodies, wings, underwings, etc. Since we do all our own dying, we can offer the following tremendous range of colors.

Micro Zelon:

We have discovered the best small fly material yet. It’s an extremely fine fibered Zelon that is perfect for tying smaller flies (size 16/18 down to 26). We are using it on our Sparkle Duns, X and Iris caddis,

Midge adults and emergers, and small parachute posts. It also makes very fine bodies when wrapped, as on small Serendipities. One of the real strong features of this material is its very slight crinkle — just enough to make a fine looking wing or shuck. This, as all fly tiers know, is an absolute boon when working in the smaller hook sizes.

Straight Zelon:

Many of you have been asking us to offer straight Zelon as well as the crinkled variety we have sold for years. We are happy to do so, after finding an economical way of keeping the Zelon straight during the dying procedure. You will find this wonderful material to work with, especially for small mayfly and caddis shucks, spinner and dun wings, etc. We highly recommend this in addition to the crinkled Zelon.

November Meeting:

Wader Care and Repair by Joseph Meyer.

Joseph is the owner/operator of One More Cast fly shop, located in suburban Chicago. Joseph is going to educate us on how to take care of our waders and how to patch those leaks that always appear at the wrong time.

Joseph Meyer is an excellent fly caster and on his way to becoming a FFF Certified Instructor. Joseph arranges fishing trips and fishing schools. A description of one of his smallmouth bass fishing trips was published in the September issue of the Hatch. It was called “The Smallmouth Trip From Hell”. He’s an overall experienced and helpful person that likes to help others in the fly fishing world. dream about.

Join us on **Tuesday, November 13th** at **YesterYears Pub**, 9427 W. Greenfield.
The meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Or, get there at 6:00 pm for a burger, a beer and some fish stories!

Board Elections:

Just a reminder that we will conduct elections of Board members and Officers for the next year just before the presentation begins. The list of nominees will be available to attendees at the meeting.

If you’re interested in being on the board for 2008, please contact Peter Alba or Ron Wojack before November 6th!

November Outing:

Fishing on the Root River

Join us on **Saturday, November 24th** for a day of fishing on the Root River at Colonial Park in Racine. We haven’t fished the Root for a club event for a few years and it’s time to see what the river has in store for us! Carpool and caravan plans will be announced before the outing.



"I'm making a presentation you can't refuse."

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MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM FLY FISHERS 2007-08 CALENDAR

| | November | December | January |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|---|
| Meeting | 13th | 11th | 8th |
| Outing | 24th | None | 1st Paradise Springs "Opener" |
| Fly Tying | 14th and 28th | 12th Only | 9th and 23rd |
| Notes | | | Annual Paradise Springs Wine & Cheese Fest |

| | February | March | April |
|-----------|---|---------------|--------------|
| Meeting | 12th | 11th | 8th |
| Outing | 10th Great Waters Expo In Chicago! | 22nd | 19th |
| Fly Tying | 13th and 27th | 12th and 26th | 9th and 23rd |
| Notes | Daytrip to Fly Show! Carpool or Caravan! | | |

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| Meeting: | 7 pm Yesteryears Pub & Grill 9427 W. Greenfield |
| Outing: | Meet at 6:30 am at Park & Rides lots. See Hatch for details. |
| Fly Tying: | Sportsmen's Warehouse (I-43 & Mooreland Rd.) from 6:00 - 8:30 pm. |
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The Hatch is the monthly newsletter of the Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers, an incorporated nonprofit organization affiliated with the Federation of Fly Fishers.

Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers meets the 2nd **Tuesday** of each month at 7 p.m. at **Yester-Years Pub & Grill, 9427 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI**

Meetings **May through August** are on the water. Read **The Hatch** for locations or go to our website

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Submit contributions for **The Hatch** by the 20th of the month to:

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