



A Big Surprise from the Menominee River

By Dick Dragiewicz

A couple of weekends ago my friend, Bill and I went to the Menominee River for some smallmouth bass fishing. We had made arrangements to fish with Dave Pinczkowski. Dave always seems to know how to get us into plenty of bass when we fish with him. And, he got us into a lot of bass on this trip.

Not knowing what kind of fly pattern would entice the bass we initially rigged up 6 weight rods with foam poppers and 8 weight rods with streamers (Bad Hair Day and a Clouser). In case these patterns didn't produce we had several additional fly boxes filled with various bass catching patterns. We were ready for fast bass fishing action and sometimes we got it and sometimes things slowed down.

On Saturday afternoon, just before stopping for a late lunch, we were fishing a big slow pool with different streamer patterns than we started with that day. Dave told us that this area always has plenty of cooperative big bass that are waiting for our flies. For some reason that we couldn't figure out this spot only produced a couple of small bass.

Then it happened. Bill hooked a small bass (probably 10" or 12") and was bringing it in to the boat so it could be released and encouraged to grow into a 20 inch hog. When the bass got within 25 feet of the boat something happened and the fight got stronger. For several minutes we couldn't figure out what was going on. Did the fish get tangled in some debris that may have been floating underwater? Or was it a bigger fish than we first thought?

A big splash told us that it wasn't a snag or being hooked on any floating debris. It was a fish, a really big fish. We still couldn't tell what it was. Was it a 20+ inch bass, a carp, a pike, or



maybe a sturgeon?

After several minutes the big fish jumped out the water and we realized that it was a musky. A really big musky, the size people hope to catch once in their lifetimes. It appeared to me that the musky had bitten the bass broadside and somehow got hooked on the fly. When the fish was landed the bass wasn't anywhere around and the hook was firmly and fairly attached to the musky's mouth. There are other ideas on how this musky got hooked, but this one seems the most likely to me.

Between the three of us there was plenty of coaching, coaxing, and praying on how to land this trophy sized fish. One of problems we quickly realized was that the smallmouth bass landing net wouldn't contain this big musky, heck it wouldn't even hold the musky's head let alone the entire fish.

Fortunately, Dave had a Boca Grip in the boat. This was going to be the tool that would help land this toothy fish. Dave and Bill had gotten out of the boat and were wading in the shallow water away from the boat in order to make landing this trophy easier. Eventually the fish tired and was landed, measured, revived, and released. It was caught on a size 4, peacock chenille, cone head streamer that had lots of brown micro rubber legs.

This musky of a lifetime measured 44+ inches. Wow!

Where were we fishing? Sorry, I promised Dave P. that I wouldn't tell anyone where we launched the boat or how to find this newly designated secret Menominee River location. However, I think that with some searching you should be able to find this spot before the end of the 21st century, after all, the Menominee River is only a little more than 100 miles long.

Castle Rock Creek

By Greg Schick

The residual effects of the June floods are quite evident in the streams in Southwestern Wisconsin, and the rains fell again not many days prior to the club's July outing. The water was still higher than normal and looking more like coffee with cream than the gin-clear water we're used to.

The fish were still in the stream, but they hid themselves fairly well. There was a fly fishing class of some sort going on by the farmhouse near the junction of the Doc Smith Branch and the main fork of Castle Rock Creek, so I started playing a little farther downstream from there.

I tried a number of caddis pupa patterns that I had hoped would be just the ticket for this stream, but I guess I forgot to tell the trout about them! I worked with one and two fly rigs for about 90 minutes before I gave it up. Not a thing was taking!

I switched to a streamer, figuring maybe a bigger profile in that murky water would help. It did, but only slightly; I got one 14" brown on a "Ralphie" streamer (an olive marabou leech) . I just don't do well with streamers...

Steve Krakow worked the area from the third bridge down to almost the second. He landed two browns — 14" and 16". He said he also swallowed a bunch of gnats, swatted some mosquitoes and generally slipped/slided around on the banks. I had found myself a nice headnet at Gander Mountain and wore a Aussie style cowboy with a larger than normal brim to keep the netting out of my eyes and off my nose — and it worked, too! The gnats didn't get to me!

I think I used up about half a can of Off! to keep the biting flies away, though! Nasty bugs there! The fish will still be there when we get back to the stream again, and maybe they'll be cooperative, too!

Fishing in Wisconsin

The week of July 4th found Al Welch out in the Coon Valley area, trying his hand at the Coulee country streams.

He reported at this time the area was "no country for old men" as the streams were fast and narrow and the bugs annoying.

Al said he had a fish on but the line came back at him so fast he wasn't able to set the hook. His son was with him and caught four trout. One was using a nymph behind a dry fly at Bohemian Creek. Others he caught using a bead-headed black bugger.

He reported that it's also interesting that Veterans Park in Coon Valley is full of mud and sand along the Creek since the big flood there last August.



Above: A colorful brown trout
Left: Fog rolling in over Coon Valley
Below: Lower Coon Creek



Above: Stream at the cow pasture and Rt: Al looking stylish!

***Inexpensive Wet Flies* by Robert Farrand**

It never ceases to amaze me how much money fly tiers will spend for materials to tie that "hot" new pattern their favorite big-named tier has come up with.

While perusing your local fly shop you can easily drop a C-note and only have a small bag of items to show for your efforts. Fancy blended dubbing in small packages; 2.95 each, natural or poly. Saddle Hackle; \$20 and up specials; super-duper, laser-sharp Signature Series hooks - 3.50 for 25.

I have even seen kits with instructions and just enough hooks and materials to tie three "very special" flies at 6 bucks per kit!

At this rate, a fly-tier can go broke before he even sits down at the vise.

It's not because I haven't blown any money looking for just the right tying materials, it is because I think I have spent my fair share and then some at the local fly tying shop and through online suppliers.

Enough with my rant.....



This is about how to get materials to tie great and productive wet flies without breaking the bank.

Let's begin with the hook. Probably the most expensive part of the fly, and the average price for a good fly-tying hook is around a dime, or less. You can save a few cents a hook and still maintain good quality by buying standard Mustad fly-tying hooks; I like the 3399, which are around \$.05 each. But, I would never advocate tying on bait hooks.

Perform a close visual inspection of the hook, making sure the eye is closed and the point is sharp. Sometimes you will find an open eye or other defect.

The Tail

I like to use Red or other fancy, brightly colored feather segments when I tie a tail on a wet fly; the colors seem to catch the eye of the fish. Red, Yellow, Green or fancy natural colors are my favorite choices. A mixed bag of colored feathers like this can be bought at craft stores for \$1.99. If you purchase a bag it



will be a long time before you ever need another piece of tail (for your wet flies.)

The Body

Peacock Herl may also be purchased at craft stores along with most any color yarn or chenille, but you very likely won't use more than a small piece of yarn to make dozens of flies. I would rummage through Grandma's knitting bag but make sure to ask for permission first! Thread and silk, or natural fur dubbing are great choices also. Try a taxidermist for the fur; or, maybe you are a small game hunter or have a friend who is. And, of course, there's always "road kill" but remember, a small amount goes a long way when tying flies.

Hackle

This is where you may need to know an upland bird hunter, because game birds are a very good source of materials for wet flies; or, if you have a chicken farm where you can just pick some off the ground, but try to stay out of the coop - someone may think you're using illegal scents on your flies.

Keep your eyes open and I'm sure you'll find tying materials for your wet flies and other types of flies where you least expect it.

August Meeting on the Water:

Paradise Springs!

For our last meeting on the water of this summer we're going to head out to the pond at Paradise Springs to see if we can tempt the trout in warm weather!

We've been out to the pond when there's snow on the ground. Now we can cast without worrying about our line freezing in our rod guides!

Join us on **Tuesday, August 12th**. We'll set a start time of 5:00 pm, but you can get there earlier if you like — which is what I'm going to do!!

A map and directions to Paradise Springs can be found in the Maps section on the club website.

August Outing:

Smallmouth on the Milwaukee River

We're returning to the Milwaukee River west of Newburg for some smallmouth fishing for our August outing. We'll be parking at Goeden Park, at the intersection of Hwy 33 and Cty Hwy M. There's a nice hole just upstream of the bridge where Lisa Campbell hauled in a nice 16" smallmouth on our last visit!

When? **Saturday, August 23rd**.

Where? West of Newburg (in Washington County) at Hwy 33 & M

Time? Figure on getting there about 8:00 am!

See the map on the next page for an overview of the area!



Overview of August's outing location between West Bend and Newburg. Hwy's 33 & M

So You Like Small Flies? Try the Trico!

A cult following is something to which few insects can lay claim, but the tiny *Tricorythodes* mayflies certainly qualify. Their widespread, reliable, heavy hatches draw impressive rises of ultra-selective trout which demand the most of a technical dry-fly angler's skills.

Where & When

The *Tricorythodes* hatch is remarkable in duration on the best streams; its species are multibrooded (Multibrooded: Producing more than one generation in a single year. *Baetis* mayflies are a classic example. Insects which produce a single generation with two distinct peaks (like the June and September hatches of *Isonychia bicolor* mayflies) are not multibrooded, because the fall insects are offspring from the previous fall instead of the current year's spring.) and may provide consistent morning fishing from July through October, rather than emerging for a few weeks and moving on to different waters.

The literature about the distribution of *Tricorythodes* species is a bit confusing, but the general impression is that *Tricorythodes stygiatus* is the most important in the East, followed by *Tricorythodes allectus* and then *Tricorythodes minutus*. Because of the difficulty of identification and wide variation within species, there is no need to learn to identify them. Instead, check with local fly shops for the preferred hook size on your rivers.

Hatching Behavior

Trico action tends to be more intense during the heat of summer, when the flies must finish their business early before the hot sun dries them out. Later in the season their deadline is less strict and they become sporadically active through most of the morning.

Male Tricos emerge throughout the night and are not known to be important as duns. They molt into spinners and await the hatching of their mates.

The little olive females emerge in the morning. In the summer this happens at first light, but it occurs later in the day as the weather cools down. Female duns can be important to trout, as can the nymphs as they rise to emerge. The female emergence can be fun to fish, but its action rarely compares to the spinner fall. Swisher and Richards claim in "*Selective Trout*" that the duns are more important in the West than in the East.

Spinner Behavior

Tricos return as spinners soon after emerging, sometimes within a few minutes and sometimes a few

hours. The mating spinners gather in very tight swarms rather than roaming the full width of the river. Fred Arbona describes it in *"Mayflies, the Angler, and the Trout"*: "From far away they resemble a slow-moving white cloud of dust."

After mating, the males fall spent and the females fly to shore to rest while squeezing little green balls of eggs from their abdomens. They return in about half an hour and fall on the water to drop the eggs. They can fall spent (Spent: The wing position of many aquatic insects when they fall on the water after mating. The wings of both sides lay flat on the water. The word may be used to describe insects with their wings in that position, as well as the position itself.) or take off again for another round.

Some books have spread the misconception that Tricos duns molt into spinners in mid-air. This is a physical impossibility. They must land to molt, but some of them take off again before the dun shuck has completely detached from their tails. This give the impression of a mid-air molt.

Nymph Biology

The nymphs are terrible swimmers, and trout eat them in good numbers as they struggle toward the surface to emerge. Opinions of Trico nymph fishing vary between authors, with some stressing its importance and others saying to favor the adult stages. I lean toward the latter group.

Current Speed: Slow to medium
Substrate: Silt, sand, gravel, vegetation
Environmental Tolerance: Require cool water; intolerant of pollution

On large freestone rivers, Trico nymphs are often most abundant where silt has gathered near the tails of deep, slow pools.

Trico Fly Fishing Tips

When imitating such small insects, it is extremely important to get the hook size right. The trout's impressions are governed not by millimeters but by relative percentages. They don't see a 4mm imitation as "just a millimeter" different from a 3mm insect; they see it as 30% larger, a freak, a giant compared to the flies they're eating by the hundreds. One hook size makes all the difference in the world.

Such small flies are especially susceptible to microdrag so some experts propose making short casts and using full-hackled patterns to mitigate this problem. They also recommend using hooks with up-turned eyes, which have a larger gap in the tiny sizes, although some anglers complain of low hooking success with these hooks.

Trico spinner falls can be so thick that it's necessary to track a rising trout's feeding rhythm and deliver the fly at just the right moment so it has some hope of being picked from among the thousands of naturals. Sometimes trout eat more than one Trico with a single gulp, and inventive anglers tie imitations of two spinners on one hook. Such flies offer the trout a better mouthful and are less susceptible to drag.



Trico Spinner

Hook: Standard Dry fly, size 20-24

Thread: Black 8/0 or smaller

Body: Black dubbing

Tail: White or light dun micro-fibetts

Wing: White Z-Ion or white CDC (cul de canard) or white hackle, clipped top and bottom



"I Know, I know... it doesn't make sense. But sometimes the fish just won't take a dry fly."

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MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM FLY FISHERS

2008 CALENDAR

	August	September	October
Meeting	12th Meeting on the Water at Paradise Springs!	9th	14th
Outing	23rd Milwaukee R. at Goeden Park near Newburg	20th	25th
Fly Tying	None — It time to fish!	10th (Only)	15th and 29th
Notes			

Meeting:	September through April: 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.

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 at: <http://www.mlsff.org>

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Submit contributions for **The Hatch** by the
20th of the month to:
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The man who coined the phrase
"Money can't buy happiness"
never bought himself a good fly rod!