



MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM

The Hatch

Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers, Inc.
<http://www.mlsff.org/>

December
2009

November Meeting Notes:

Ross Mueller Presentation Notes
By Dick Dragiewicz

Ross Mueller discussed early season trout fishing in Wisconsin's and Iowa's Driftless Area at our November club meeting. He told us about fly patterns, fishing locations, advised us to dress properly, check the weather forecast, he mentioned some of the benefits of fishing during the early season, and at the end of the presentation he answered questions from the audience.

If you weren't in attendance, you missed a great presentation.

Fly patterns for the early season include Baetis, aka Blue Winged Olives, black caddis (nymphs in size 12 in a charcoal gray color; pupa in size 14 with a green body and black thorax; dries are dark gray in size 18), dark colored micro caddis, Hendrickson's (they hatch in the last 3 weeks of April, use a Catskill style fly pattern), midges, black stoneflies, small black leeches, Yellow Fox streamer, ants and beetles tied with foam, San Juan worms (on cloudy days), Fuzzballs and the world famous pink squirrel.



To help determine which fly pattern to use start by looking in and around the stream. Look for bugs that may be hatching, stir up the bottom of the stream and look for the bugs that drift by, etc. With this knowledge pick the patterns from your fly boxes that match up with the insect life you see, and catch some trout. Try midge and nymph fishing. Use a big dry fly as an indicator when fishing midge drop-pers.

There a lot of trout streams to fish in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Some of the streams Ross mentioned were the Rush River, Timber Coulee, Big Green, the Root River and Crooked Creek in Minnesota, and Waterloo Creek in Iowa, etc. Be sure to check each state's DNR website for the full list of trout streams, especially those with early season trout fishing.

Check fishing regulations to make sure you are in compliance, and be sure your fishing license is up

to date!

Fish like to be comfortable, just like the fisherman. So, when fishing the early season go out when it's comfortable...maybe from 11:00 A.M to 3:00 P.M. With some luck the warmer day-time temperatures will increase the water temperatures and encourage the fish to start actively feeding.

Wading is easier due to lack of weeds in the water and along the shorelines. However, if there is snow on the ground it might be difficult to get in and out of the water. During the winter season weeds have been matted down so it's easier to get to the streams and you won't lose as many flies to tall weeds on your back casts.

Check the weather forecast before venturing out to the streams. You don't want to get caught in a big snowstorm or other nasty weather problem.

Many years ago Joe Humphreys made the Tuck Cast popular. Try using the Tuck Cast when fishing nymphs. It works.

Good presentation skills are important. This means we need to practice and improve our casting abilities before getting to the trout streams.



The Fuzzball

Hook: #18-20 TMC 921. (2 extra-short, 1 extra-fine dry fly hook.)

Thread: Rusty dun 8/0 UNI-Thread.

Tail: Wood duck flank fibers.

Abdomen: Olive-gray beaver.

Wing: Snowshoe hare's foot fibers.

Thorax: Same as abdomen.



The Yellow Fox Streamer

Hook: #6, #10, or #14 Daiichi 2220 or TMC 5263.

Thread: Black 6/0 UNI-Thread.

Tail: Yellow marabou.

Overwing: Fox squirrel tail.

Body: Kreinik gold braid (#2000).

Head: Black 8/0 glass bead.

Underwing: Yellow marabou.

After the presentation Ross answered questions about his presentation and his books (Flies That Catch Trout and Fly Fishing Midwestern Spring Creeks). One of the questions was about the changes he would make to the books if he were to write them today. His response, after a moment of contemplation, was that the books contain and cover the necessary trout fishing fundamentals so he wouldn't change them. However, he did say that he would expand and emphasize the need for better casting skills.

Wintertime is good time to study trout fishing skills. There are many books and videos available to help you. Spend some time this winter learning how to improve your fishing skills.

Hope you enjoyed Ross Mueller's presentation and learned a lot about early season trout fishing.

Fly Fishing Entomology *A Loving Look at Scuds* — by Ralph Cutter

Bubba Gump might call them shrimp. Trout simply know them as food.

Eons ago, my good friend John Marcacci and I drove to the Green River for a day's fishing. It was back in the time when it didn't seem remarkable that three days of driving would net only ten hours of fishing. This was before they invented designated drivers and getting there was half the fun.

We were having so much fun getting there that, at oh-dark-thirty on a dirt road in the middle of the Utah desert, it didn't seem relevant that we were passing official looking US Government signs suggesting we immediately stop and turn around. It didn't even seem too relevant that a very sturdy gate blocked the road. We simply four wheeled onto some railroad tracks and kept on truckin'. At that point the only thing that mattered was that the ice chest wasn't quite empty and we were heading south towards great fishing. We thought we were going east.

We must have pulled over to take a nap because the next thing I remember I was waking up feeling ill. I blamed it on the (gorgeous) black widow spider that dropped out of my sleeping bag. John was actively getting sick but since he didn't sleep with a spider he could only blame the cheap beer.

The truck was sandwiched between heaps of what looked like rusted missiles with jagged holes blasted out of their sides. Between retches, John suggested they were drones used for navy target practice. Pitched in the sand, skeletal railroad tank cars with ANTHRAX stenciled on their flanks hulked silently as spindrifts of snow and alkaline dust swirled through their rotting carcasses. We were in a military junk yard.

We built a small cooking fire from a pile of eight-foot railroad ties and brewed some much needed coffee. While sipping the joe, we tied flies by the warmth of the fire some forty feet away. We had been told that the only thing Green River trout ate were scuds. Neither of us had ever seen a scud before, but armed with a Herters catalog we copied the pattern from it's dog eared pages.

Just like many modern scud patterns, we bent the hooks, dubbed scraggly bodies, added a few wraps of mallard flank, pulled a strip of plastic over the backs and ribbed them with light wire. After tying a few that looked like the picture our hands were trembling so badly (was it the cold, the beer or the anthrax?) that we couldn't grip the plastic so we omitted that step. Pretty soon we decided since we didn't need to tie down the plastic, we might as well save time and not tie in the wire either.

We finally got to the river and could only stare, goggle eyed, at all the really cool trout, finning in the very cool water just below our extremely cold feet. We kicked over a few rocks and clouds of scuds billowed into the current where the trout eagerly darted to and fro feasting on the bounty. It was just like the wild rumors we had heard in California, except that the fish didn't want our flies.

After a juniper reached out and stole his fly on a back-cast John tied on another scud and suddenly started catching fish. I watched closely and made sure he wasn't dipping his flies in Dr. Juice or tipping his scuds with caddis larvae. He was being uncharacteristically kosher. I asked what he was doing different and he shrugged his shoulders, smiled smugly and said wisely, "I dunno".

Just to be doubly sure he wasn't smearing just a little Powerbait on the fly I offered to help him release his next fish. As we were unhooking the trout we both realized that he had tied on one of the flies without plastic or wire. It was just greenish dubbing with a wrap of duck flank. . .very similar to a Birds Nest, except that we didn't know what those were back then.

I scooped up some of the living scuds and watched as they scurried about in the diminishing puddle of

water in my hand. They nuzzled into the darkness between my fingers and I learned two important lessons about scuds. First of all, swimming scuds, the kind fish are likely to see, are as straight as a needle and only curl up into the typical scud fly profile when they are crawling around on something. The second lesson learned was that I liked these little guys.



Since then I've spent an embarrassing number of hours underwater watching scuds and watching fishermen try to trick fish into eating scuds. For those moments I can't be on the water, we have an aquarium in our kitchen that has become home to countless generations of scuds.

Like crayfish, shrimp, and sowbugs, scuds are Crustaceans. They belong to the order Amphipoda which contains three families. Gammarus and Hyalella are the families of greatest importance to flyfishers. Like insects, scuds periodically shed their exoskeleton but unlike insects, scuds don't have nymph or pupae stages. Baby scuds look like their adult counterpart, only cuter. Scuds require a relatively large amount calcium to support their molts. Scuds are found almost exclusively in alkaline waters and where ever they are found, trout actively seek out these nutrient rich packets of energy. In scud-rich waters such as Eagle Lake, I've seen trout bellies distended by hundreds of scuds. To offset such intense predation, scuds are remarkably prolific.

Scuds populations have been measured as dense as 10,000 creatures per cubic meter of water. A single pair can spawn half a dozen times in a year and produce 20,000 young. The single largest threat to scud populations is the rapid draw-down of tailwaters below dams. On one scud laden Truckee River tributary, it is common to find windrows of dead and dying scuds when the river flow is abruptly cut. These normally light olive scuds turn bright orange when they die and trout in this creek are quite color selective when flow patterns change.

Scuds are generally reported to be herbivores and scavengers. Our pets are vicious predators. They will dart from cover to attack tubefix worms and will even tackle small backswimmers who in themselves are pretty lethal creatures. Scuds can easily overpower Siphonurus mayfly nymphs seven fold their weight and we have witnessed scuds, sometimes in groups, attacking and killing tadpoles.

Though scuds live in the shallowest margins of lakes and streams, they intensely dislike light. They typically hide in deep cover while the sun is shining but quickly come out to forage when the skies dim. I've watched fish boiling through masses of scuds as they rose out of Elodea mats when afternoon cumulous clouds melted shadows across the lake. As soon as the sun broke through the clouds, the scuds would vanish and the melee would cease. Under overcast skies, scud patterns will very often out-fish "normal" nymph and pupa patterns.



This scud is nearly dead, stranded in a puddle created by an abrupt dam shut down. When the dam reopens, the trout in this Truckee River tributary feast on the dead scuds that get swept downstream. At this time the fish won't eat a green scud pattern

Scuds have seven pair of legs, the first two are used for grasping and manipulation while the other five pair propel the bug with synchronous ripples. When swimming they stretch out completely straight (curved scud patterns not only look wrong when stripped through the water, they have poor hooking ability) and the scud bends into its characteristic curled position when it scuttles about along the streambed or among the vegetation.

When scuds swim they become a blur of buzzing legs, whisking antennae and fluttering gills; they travel upside down as often as not. There is no such thing as a good scud imitation. Don't even try to fool an educated fish into believing your hunk of Visqueen and feathers is the real thing. The occasional trout might eat it, but only because he's greedy.

Instead of trying to make a scud imitation, make a scud impression. Give the trout something that moves and twitches and doesn't have an up or a down or a sideways. Give them something simple like a Bird's nest. Something that can be tied with frozen fingers on a military waste site in the morning after a forgotten night.

*Reprinted with permission from Ralph Cutter— owner of California School of Flyfishing
www.flyline.com*

Birds Nest



DESIGNED BY: Cal Bird

Hook: 3761
 Thread: Match body
 Tail: Wood duck
 Rib: Gold wire
 Abdomen: Brown, gray or green Australian opossum
 Legs: Wood duck
 Thorax: Same as abdomen

The birds nest was designed by Cal Bird for catching Truckee River trout. It is my favorite nymph on all western trout rivers and streams. Fish it dead drift in the film or along the bottom with a split shot to mimic a nymph. It can be fished on the swing to imitate an ascending caddis pupae or stripped along the edges of weed beds to simulate a swimming nymph or baitfish. It is deadly when treated with Tite Lines dry fly powder or Orvis' Ultra Float to make it repel water and hold air bubbles. These bubbles look very much like a subsurface ovipositing caddis.



The same birds nest after being rubbed with Tite Line's Dry Fly. Compare this with the air-encrusted egg laying caddis on the right.



~ Ralph Cutter

Fishing Tips:

FISHING WET FLIES

1. Get your fly on the bottom; if you're not losing flies or catching moss, you're not deep enough.
2. Tie a small piece of bright yarn a foot or so from the fly so it's easy to follow (you won't scare fish).
3. Keep your leader almost taught so you can detect the most subtle grab.
4. Most grabs occur at the end of the drift just as the fly swings upward; make "blind" strikes at this point.

2010 Fly Fishing Shows:

January 9, 2010: **Indiana on the Fly Show**

Location: Indianapolis, IN (Indiana State Fairgrounds)

Speakers: Craig Matthews from Blue Ribbon Flies located in West Yellowstone, MT, Kevin Feenstra (Michigan Steelhead Guide), Greg Senyo (Orvis Outfitter from Ohio)

<http://reelwomen.webs.com/indianaflyfishingshow.htm>

January 16, 2010: **Ice Breaker – Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited**

Location: Promega Biotechnology Center, Fitchburg, WI

Speaker: Mike Heck, renowned guide, writer, fly designer, and contributor to Fly Fisherman, American Angler, and other publications.

http://www.swtu.org/pdfs/newsletters/September_2009.pdf

January 29 – 31, 2010: **Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo - Chicago**

Location: St. Charles, IL (suburban Chicago) at Pheasant Run Resort

Speakers: TBA

<http://www.greatwatersflyfishingexpo.com/index.html>

January 30, 2010: **Cabin Fever Day – Fox Valley Trout Unlimited**

Location: Waverly Beach, Menasha, WI

Speaker: Ross Mueller (author of Flies That Catch Trout and Fly Fishing Midwestern Spring Creeks)

http://www.foxvalleytu.org/html/cabin_fever.HTML and <http://www.wisconsintu.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=UY8%2btRAiBRg%3d&tabid=58&mid=381>

February 6, 2010: **Spring Opener – Badger Fly Fishers**

Location: Madison, WI at the Radisson Hotel (West)

Speaker: Mike Mercer from The Fly Shop in Redding, California

<http://www.badgerflyfishers.org/>

February 19-21, 2010: **Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association**

Location: Cedar Rapids, IA at the Clarion Inn

Speakers: Craig Matthews Blue Ribbon Flies West Yellowstone, MT, Kevin Feenstra (Michigan steelhead guide) and Tim Landwehr (Wisconsin smallmouth bass fishing guru)

<http://www.hawkeyeflyfishing.com/>

February 27, 2010: **Troutfest '10 – Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited**

Location: Winneconne, WI at the Fin 'N Feather

Speakers: 10 mini-seminars, fly tying, raffles, vendors

<http://cwtu.org/events/index.html>

February 26 - 28, 2010: **Madison Fishing Expo**

Location: Madison, WI at the Alliant Energy Center

Speakers and Programs: TBA

<http://www.madfishexpo.com/>

December Meeting!!

Annual Officer and Board Elections:

The first part of our meeting will be the election of Officers and Board members for the 2010 season. **We also need to talk about what you, the members, want of the club for the coming year and beyond.**

We're also looking for folks interested in joining the "inner workings of the club". We always have room for people who want to help make the club bigger and better.

If you're interested in running for one of the Officer positions — President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasury — or as one of the Board members at large, contact Peter Alba (alba59@sbcglobal.net) or Ron Wojack (Wojaxx@wi.rr.com).

Fly Tying & Knot Demonstrations:

For the remainder of our December meeting we will have some of our members demonstrating their favorite fish catching flies!

Do you tie your own flies? Have a special fly you're willing to share? Bring your vice, tools and materials and join in on the fun!

You've heard about the success some of our members have had with the Shop Vac out west, and other flies like it. Now you can learn how to tie it yourself! There are sure to be other patterns you'll want to know about so plan on attending on **December 8th at Yester Years starting at 7:00 pm!!**

Help Wanted!

Program Chairman

The club position of Program Committee Chairman will soon be vacant. We are seeking a new volunteer for this position. The assignment includes planning and coordinating the monthly meetings.

Call Greg Schick or Dick Dragiewicz for more information on this position.

January Outing:

Come and Enjoy the "Umpteenth Annual" New Years Day Outing at Paradise Springs!

January 1st will find us teasing the trout at Paradise Springs just outside of Eagle (assuming the temperature is around 20 degrees or above, that is). Of course, most of the times the fish tease US, but that's never stopped us before! Maybe that's why we also call it our "Wine & Cheese Party with a little fishing thrown in"!

We generally meet in the parking lot there around 8:30 a.m. and fish until we get cold— or thirsty — and then adjourn back to the lot for refreshments. The area has a "Daily Use" fee so remember to bring along \$7.00 to pay for parking, or \$25.00 if you want to buy an Annual Pass.

More information can be had at the December 8th membership meeting!



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MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM FLY FISHERS

2009 / 2010 CALENDAR

	December	January	February
Meeting	8th @ Yester Years Pub & Grill	12th @ Yester Years Pub & Grill	9th @ Yester Years Pub & Grill

Fly Tying	9th only	13th and 27th	10th and 24th
Special Event	Holiday Brunch 13th (Reservations Required)	Paradise Springs Opener! Jan. 1st	Madison road trip to Badger Fly Fishers' "Spring Opener" 6th

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:	Gander Mountain, 27th St. & Rawson Ave, 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>

Send correspondence to:
Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers,
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Submit contributions for **The Hatch** by the 20th of the month to:
Greg Schick, Editor
at: gaschick@wi.rr.com

"Angling may be said to be so like the mathematics, that it can never be fully learnt."

~by Izaak Walton, 1653~

"Bass fishermen watch Monday night football, drink beer, drive pickup trucks and prefer noisy women with big breasts. Trout fishermen watch MacNeil-Lehrer, drink white wine, drive foreign cars with passenger-side air bags and hardly think about women at all. This last characteristic may have something to do with the fact that trout fishermen spend most of the time immersed up to the thighs in ice-cold water."

~Author Unknown~