

A More Realistic Approach

Written by Shawn Britton
Friday, November 14 2008 -

It is my opinion that you can not become a trout fisherman and truly appreciate the sport of fly fishing until you have learned something about aquatic insect life. Over the years the detailed study of aquatic insects along with the age old art of tying flies has become an integral part of fly fishing. These go hand in hand and complete the sport for many trout fishers, including myself. Now, I am not saying



that you need to tie your own flies or hold a master's degree in aquatic entomology. Learning to match the hatch and the ability to contact the local fly shop for the river report should suffice. Besides, I know plenty of great fly anglers who prefer to buy their flies and can catch trout without the constant use of Latin nomenclature.

The more fly fishing for trout that you do, you are going to experience the good times and the bad. Easy times like when the trout are feeding heavy and not quite as selective or when the river has just been stocked. Everyone including the local professor of trout is at attendance. Each of them with a different fly tied on and they are all doing well. Then you will have the frustrating times when the trout will completely ignore whatever you throw at them. Just

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remember there would be no sport if there wasn't the thrill of the challenge, the challenge being the entire angling experience, good or bad.

Matching the hatch simply means we buy or tie a fly pattern that best imitates the hatching insect. Then we get to the water, stand across from where the fish are rising, and then reality hits us. Cast after meticulously executed cast something that started out so simple has now become near impossible. Frustration sets in and you find yourself blaming the guy at the fly shop for selling you the wrong flies. Meanwhile trout continue to rise as they feed on the naturals. Hey, what can I tell you - that's why I like to fish nymphs.

Later on that evening you break up a few ice cubes and pour yourself a full glass of Famous Grouse in a vain attempt to forget the day's failure of fin and feather. Looking at your collection of various written works on the art of fly angling, you quickly pick out the "Fly fisherman's Bible". Soon the pages reveal that you are not the only one to suffer the curse of the selective trout and typical refusal. This is normal and that's why we have thousands of named and unnamed fly patterns out there, so do not get yourself all knotted up inside.

Proper presentation, leader length and size, fly pattern imitations, etc., are imperative. With that being said and those factors considered, the more realistic the fly pattern is when presented to the trout you will improve your catch rate. Being an avid fly fisherman and guide I have taken trout on just about every type of fly. Many of which I would have never expected to catch a fish. But if I want consistency in tough times I make it a point to tie most of my patterns with a realistic approach a manner in which Dave Whitlock describes as a fly pattern that takes on the major characteristics of the insect you are imitating where size, shape, color, and texture are noticed. You will never escape the fact that trout will almost always prefer a natural over an imitation. We can only do our best to fool them into taking our feathered offering.

Tightlines' Shawn

(Image from Flyaddict.com)