



The Women's Angle: Fishing Program

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand where & why a fish will be located in a body of water
2. Understand how to safely access and move around a body of water
3. Learn to put all the components together to choose a fly for each individual situation encountered on any body of water
4. Learn the elements of proper approach, presentation, and line manipulation (mend)
5. Conservation, fish handling, avoiding spawning redds
6. Fish the lower Sac!

Where are the fish and why?

Fish are like us, they need:

- Oxygen
- Food – aquatic and terrestrial
- Shelter from prey – wood, banks, willows
- Economy of Effort – seams, flow, structure and movement in water column

Water temperature preferences for different species of fish

- 45 to 65 degrees for trout
- Trout go into shock at 68 degrees or above
- A constant 52-54 degrees on the lower Sac here, below Shasta Dam
- Stream and lakes

To successfully read the water a fly angler must combine all these factors together with knowledge of the species being sought and information specific to the area that is being explored. Polaroid glasses with help eliminate the glare on the water allowing for direct exploration of the shallower areas. A quick check with a thermometer will reveal water temperature. Assuming that certain special conditions, such as spawning activities, are not in effect, the process of finding fish is basically an exercise in answering these questions:

- Where is the richest oxygen supply and the most food in the species comfort range?
- Where is the most readily available supply of food and easiest access to safety?

Wading the River & The Elements of Presentation

Think well ahead before making the first cast. Many factors are combined together before a final decision is made. The successful fly angler must combine a careful approach with a properly executed cast and drift to bring the fly into the feeding zone of the target.

The angler must now consider:

- where to stand out of the fish's view
- how to approach this ideal standing spot without alerting the fish

The angler should mentally outline the entire process from beginning to end and follow three basic rules that will determine the final standing position:

- use the shortest cast possible - control is more important than distance
- cast across stream and drift down - easiest cast for the beginner to execute
- the first cast is the most important - the fly fishing version of "you don't get a second chance to make a good first impression"

All wild creatures are constantly on the lookout for danger. Fish live underwater but are still very tuned in to the world outside their home. Heavy walking, careless wading will be "heard" by the fish on their lateral line. Moving shadows will send fish scurrying for cover. Movements should be slow, deliberate and quiet. Wading should be done only when necessary, concentrating first on safety and second on causing as little disturbance on the stream bottom

or surface as possible. After arriving at the chosen position and ascertaining the exact spot where a fish may be feeding, it is time to present the fly in a manner that will be appealing to the fish. Water moves faster on the surface and slower as it gets deeper; therefore, the line will often need to be mended during the drift.

Leader and Tippet

The leader is the main clear material that is connected to the end of your fly line. This will be a material that is usually a fairly heavy weight where it attaches to your fly line (the butt section) and will taper down in weight/thickness to the point where the tippet attaches. If you are familiar with conventional fishing methods, the leader is pretty much the same as the fishing monofilament used on your spinning or casting reel. The leader, on average, will be about 9 feet in length. The fly fishing tippet is the lightweight portion of material that you attach on one end to the end of the leader and on the other end to the fly. Using the lightest, yet strongest, tippet possible without having the fish notice it is the key. This is where you can keep the same leader section attached, but change your tippet size depending on the nature of the fishing you are doing and the situation at hand.

Manufacturers use a simple rating system, denoted by the 'X', that describes the breaking strength and diameter of the fly fishing leader and tippet material. The typical scale that these run on are a range from 03X down to 8X, with 03X being the thickest and strongest and 8X being the thinnest and lightest. Typically for trout, we fish between a 3x and 6x leader/ tippet.

Fly Choice

Fly selection can be a very complicated decision. Fly shops are great resources for anyone new to fly fishing or new to an area to help select the proper flies. Choosing the right fly is a process that includes developing a thorough knowledge of what the fish are likely to eat and where in the water column they are likely to eat it.

The Dry Fly

A dry fly is a type of fly that floats on the surface of the water. This makes it exciting because the fish has to come up to the top of the water and eat the fly off from the surface. This gives you a first-hand view of the fish feeding and makes for a very visual presentation. Flies are designed in many different varieties. The most common are those that are created to "match the hatch", or to closely resemble the types of insects on the surface of the water. Species of these types of bugs include the mayflies, caddis, stoneflies, and terrestrials. Additionally attractor patterns are a dry fly option not designed to match any specific type of insect, rather to be flashy and attract the fly in a general way. The most obvious reason to fish a dry fly is when rising fish are prevalent. Before you approach the stream, look for rising fish. If you see feeding trout, fish a dry fly. Observe the type of rise form. If they're splashy, consider fishing a caddis dry fly. If they're subtle or you see a nose or a tail, perhaps they're eating mayfly duns or emerging mayflies. If you don't see rising fish, observe the water. Are insects in the air or on the water? Perhaps insects like salmon flies and grasshoppers are hanging out in the bushes. If enough bugs are on the water, in the air or on riverside structure, keep the floatant handy and fish a dry fly.

The Nymph

The nymph is considered to be the most productive of all of the flies due to the fact that fish, trout specifically, feed approximately 80 percent of the time underwater. And that is just how you fish the nymph, under the surface of the water. The nymph is one of the stages of insects such as the mayfly, caddis, or stonefly. As with most insects, they transform through various different stages until they reach the end of their life-cycle. The nymph is the stage in which the insects live their lives under the surface of the water. As hatches occur, fish may or may not break the surface yet still feed on active nymphs. Since you cannot see the fly as it floats under the water, detecting when the fish takes the fly requires anglers use strike indicators. This is essentially a small float that is attached up on your leader above the fly and floats along the surface as your fly drifts along. When a fish takes the fly, the indicator will either stop, slow down, move upstream, or even some other slightly different action that is not normal.

The Streamer

Streamer flies tend to imitate foods such as leaches, minnows, sculpins, and other types of larger underwater fish foods. A streamer is fished by casting your line out to a likely looking spot in a lake or river and stripping, or pulling, your fly line in in short pulls or longer pulls. This stripping method moves your streamer through the water in short or long bursts. Combine that with the materials used to create these types of flies and you get a fly that looks alive due to the movement underwater from the material. It almost creates a pulsing type of action that most fish simply can't resist. Committing to fishing streamers should be based on a few factors, a primary one being whether you're a good enough caster to handle a heavy fly and often sinking or sink-tip lines. Make sure you use a heavier weight of tippet when fishing these. Most strikes to a streamer tend to be quite aggressive and explosive as the fish attempts to eat the fly as fast and hard as possible so that it doesn't get away.