



FRESHWATER SUMMER EDITION 2022

A merry Christmas and a fishy New Year from your council



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FISH A FEST 2022

By Stewart (Taffy) King



Sunset at Omodie's lower house dam picture by Shawn Saunders

Although the 2022 Fish a Fest has come and gone for another year, memories that were made will last for ever. We saw some stunning sunsets and some magical morning rises.



Geoff Barrett was one that concentrated more on the rivers than the dams. On the Saturday he made the trek out to the Donnelly which proved very interesting. Although he missed several fish he was overjoyed and felt his trip was very much worthwhile as his greatest reward was seeing several footprints made by the endangered water rat.

As all players were ready the competition kicked off at dawn on the Saturday. This year saw 16 fish a persons' trying to outwit some very stubborn Trout and Perch. For once the weather forecast wasn't too bad but, recent rains had made the Warren unfishable in many areas which meant several fishers turned their efforts towards the Lefroy and the Donnelly. These fished reasonably well, but stories of the one that got away seemed to be a common thread by many as they returned from their exploits of the day.



Geoff also fished the Lefroy and was rewarded by catching a couple of small rainbows near the hatchery. This stretch of the Lefroy was to prove quite productive with several small fish around the 300mm mark being caught. Geoff fished this stretch again on the Sunday and this time he was rewarded with a nice 350mm Brown trout which turned out to be the only Brown caught over the weekend.

With a prize this year for the largest perch, some members decided to fish for both Trout and Perch over the weekend. This proved an alternative that was to prove a success for more than one fisher as several large perch were caught. Mario had a nice one out of the Eastbourne Brook, while the McConigly family concentrated on their knowledge of the Warren and found areas they could fish and ended up with no Trout but some nice perch for their efforts.



Mario on the Eastbourne



Ryan, Patrick and Sarah having success on the Warren

Mario with a 405mm Perch was piped by Ryan's 415mm Perch. Adding a prize for the largest perch certainly



added option and some extra spice to the competition generally. With the Warren hard work, several players with knowledge of many spots on the Lefroy, found their efforts and patience stretched to the limit as they saw fish but in many cases the fish were not interested. On the left you can just see Steve Agate having a look and on the right



Shawn is thinking shall I or shan't I? In General, even though the weather was not too bad, the wind was sometimes unpredictable one minute it could be in your face the next coming from behind or indeed swirling in front of you. First thing in the morning did seem to be the

time to be on the dams. Shawn, Myself and Stu Bowman fished Omodie's lower dam first up, on both Saturday and Sunday Morning. On Saturday the fish were moving in the shallows pushing through the weeds. High hopes in the air as we started fishing. Stu hooked up and landed a lovely fish of around 330mm. I then missed a fish while Shawn chased a fish in the far corner which seemed to elude him.



Omodie's lower house dam where the fish were sucking midge of the surface

I blanked and ended up taking time out to watch the footy grand final before ending up for an evening session at Knights. I was joined by John Goulding, Adrian Delilio, and his son Alex. With the occasional fish moving, it was still hard work to entice a take. I dropped two nice fish in quick succession but ended up catching 3 nice fat yearlings averaging around 320mm with the best being 360mm. John and Adrian caught one each again all around the 300 plus mark.

Sunday first up saw Shawn, Stu and myself, back at Omodies. As the light increased so did the activity, fish started to rise at regular intervals around the dam. Again, Shawn fished the far



corner and this time with great success in catching two nice rainbows one of which is pictured below.

However, Stu and myself blanked and with the young cattle taking far too much interest in our vehicles I decided to move on to the Borsh dams. This turned out to be a long trip for no return as when I got to the Browns dam the wind was howling and was unpredictable in its direction and made fishing very hard. Having fished for about an hour and having not seen a fish move, I decided to drive back to Pembi and try my luck at the Stirling dams. I tried the house dam first and found fish showing so with great expectation started fishing and on my third cast had a solid hook up I thought, only to see fly spat out. A few casts later again a take but again a miss and then nothing. It was very frustrating as the fish were still moving but not interested in any fly I put out. So, I eventually gave up and moved down to Stirling Lower but again blanked. I decided to take a break and then try Knights again. This time fishing was in fits and starts. I caught 1 fish early in the session then had a long wait before catching 3 fish in about twenty minutes. I eventually caught a total of six fish all between the 320mm – 340mm mark before returning to the cottage to prepare the BBQ.



Paul and Jeff having spent most of the weekend chasing perch. Fished Little bush where Paul hooked into a nice rainbow but to his amah, found that Jeff was way off with his landing net, which was probably the difference in landing and losing this nice fish. And yes, it got off, just before Jeff got there with the net. It was mentioned that its lucky looks can't kill.

The highlight for me was the excitement oozing out of young Max as he told his story on having caught his first trout on a fly. Brilliant.

Shawn had tallied up the score cards. This is how the presentation went:

Fish a Fest 2022

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Winner: | Total length caught: | 3017mm | Stewart (Taffy) King |
| Runner up: | Total length caught: | 1870mm | Shawn Saunders |
| Largest Rainbow | | 420mm | Shawn Saunders |
| Largest Brown | | 350mm | Geoff Barret |
| Largest Perch | | 415mm | Ryan McConigly |

Below is a poem I would like to share with you that has been sent in by Geoff Barrett

The Biggest Brown

An embossed key ring - the Prize, goes to ...
Thank you, Thanks

As I approached the broken weir this morning and saw the dark shape on the bottom,
against the sand, submarine-still and uninterested,
I knew the key ring was mine.

A change in fly and flicking the wrist back and forth fooled him -
all 350mm of him.

The Prize sits now, silver and heavy in its velvet box, on the table between us, among the
spilled beer and wine glasses.
Weathered fingers reach for it, turn it over and hand it to the next admirer.

'If that ... of a trout hadn't spat the hook and rolled down the bank this would have been
mine...' he trailed off.

'Don't care much for your language' says Pas, the big Italian

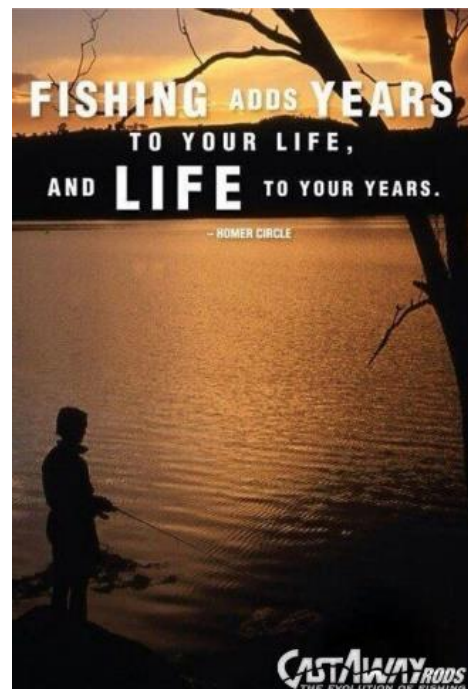
'or your casting', says another helpfully
'or your fly tying...'

Another fine day at Fish a Fest.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all
those that supported this event. Once again it was a
great weekend with a lot of fun thrown in.

John Mc. and I am sure I speak on behalf of all the
guys, I hope you wife's is recovering well after her fall
on the way back from the fish a fest.

Tight lines
Taffy



WHAT MEMORIES ARE MADE FROM By Brad Eccles

The muted buzz from my phone alarm invaded my dreams and dragged me into semi-consciousness. Confused, I found myself staring through the gloom at an unfamiliar ceiling, with a clock ticking loudly in the background. As the darkened room swam into focus and my head regained connection with the here and now, I remembered where I was. As I turned off the alarm, my glowing phone confirmed that it was three thirty in the morning. I was sleeping on a mattress in the lounge of my sister's house.

I lay there for a few minutes, thinking about the day ahead until I couldn't stay still anymore. I slipped out of my sleeping bag and shivered in the pre-dawn chill. Habit kicked in as I padded barefoot around the lounge. Years of early rising had almost ritualized my preparation. Socks first, to keep the noise down, then thermals, trousers, shirt and a fleece. As I packed away my sleeping bag, I did a mental inventory of the car that I had loaded last night. The esky was waiting on the kitchen counter and was packed in minutes.

Wallet and keys in one hand – esky in the other I let myself out of the house. For once the weathermen had got it right and as I laced up my boots I looked into the forecasted drizzle. I hunched my shoulders against the misty rain and made my way to the car waiting on the driveway – ready for a fast getaway. I dropped my esky in the boot, hopped in and was away out the drive by three forty five. The mist was thick and the trees alongside the road looked sombre and eerie in my headlights. Regardless of the weather and the sombre mood outside, I could not have been happier, I was going fishing.

The planning of the trip started some six months previously, in May 2017. Living in Australia and having my whole family in South Africa meant that I tried to get back to see them every three or four years. My dad and I used to fish every two years, but he had been sick for some time and those trips had fallen by the wayside. I had excessive leave that I was told I had to take, so I made the decision to head back to South Africa for a month over their October school holidays.

I reached out to my old flyfishing club – the Fly Fishing Association and was pleasantly surprised to find that the chairman and some of his cronies always headed away for a few days in October! With promises of copious alcohol, purchased with thanks to the strong Australian dollar, I was soon included in the mix and a WhatsApp group was formed to keep in contact and generally take the mickey out of each other. Flights were booked, flies were tied and my tackle was checked over. I was going to fish for around fifteen of the thirty days that I was in South Africa and did not want to be short of the essentials.

This particular trip was destined for a farm in a place called "Impendle" (pronounced Im – Pen – dleh). The farm is called Ivanhoe and it is a massive concern farming both beef and potatoes and is the result of one farmer buying out many of his neighbour's. As it stands now, the farm has thirteen dams and all of them are stocked with trout. As a group, we had decided to concentrate on just four of these dams – or else the choice makes for difficult fishing as you spend vast amounts of time driving from one dam to the next. The farm is that big, that driving time between two dams is often in excess of thirty minutes.

The four dams we had decided to concentrate on were Runnymede, Heatherdon (a brown trout dam), Reggies dam and the one I was headed towards through the drizzle – Calabeni. Named after the native word for the Protea's that crowd the steeply sloping northern bank of the dam – Calabeni is a medium sized water of around twenty acres. For those of you familiar with Omodi's Littlefair

dam, it is of similar size. It has a stream that enters through thick marshland at the top end of the dam, and the wall is placed between a steep bank and rolling farmland. There is also a perennial stream that enters on the northern side. At its deepest I would guess it would be ten meters and the shallows at the top end are just a gradual taper. There is an island as well, formed originally by the river splitting around the roots of a great tree, so it has deep water on both sides that then give way to some beautiful weed beds that support large volumes of insect life.

Habits of old die hard and I turned off the freeway early to see if one of my old haunts was still in business. A small café catering to truckers and die hard fishermen used to serve acceptable coffee and great pies just outside the town of Howick. I was in luck and with a hot chocolate in one hand and a chicken pie in the other I braved a sudden heavy downpour in the car park to get back on the road.

I took the dirt road to Impendle and gritted my teeth against the corrugations for thirty kilometers before out of the murk I saw the sign to the Ivanhoe primary school. The next turn right would see me on the farm and within spitting distance of the dam. The anticipation ratcheted up a notch as I drove over the ubiquitous cattle grid and down the avenue of mighty oak trees that welcome you to the farm. Halfway down the drive I opened a gate to the right and made my way across the paddock to the waters' edge.

In Zulu, there is a name for it, it is "KwaMphondo zankomo". Literally it means "the horns of the cattle". It is that time of the morning when you can just make out the silhouette of the horns of cattle against the coming dawn sky. I was lakeside at this magical time of the morning and had the place to myself. The drizzle was intermittent as I inflated my float tube and sorted out my gear but stopped magically as I stepped into the water and kicked my tube away from the bank. The dawn chorus was in full swing as I laid out my first cast towards the bank I had just left. The gaps in the cloud let me see the last vestiges of a starry night as a muted rosy glow illuminated the mirror smooth water I was moving across.

It was very, very cold and I would have expected a frost had the rain held off. It was not to be, however and with my beanie pulled low and my jacket collar up high I had to squint through the steam of my breath to make out the island I was headed to. I had fished the dam a few times before and was headed across the open, deep water to the sharp drop-off and weed beds that surround the island. In the early morning, fish will often cruise the drop-offs along the weed and pick off stray insects and small frogs.

I had a single fly rig and was fishing a twelve-foot leader with a six-pound tippet. I had on a large size six hover dragon, which is a green mud-eye imitation with no weight. I fished it very slowly tight into the where I thought the weed bed was. After picking up weed on the hook, I knew I was in the right place and once the sun had been up for a while, I was rewarded with a solid take. The trout took to the air in spectacular fashion as my line whistled through the guides. As it splashed down it bore deep into the channel, and I kicked away from the weed beds feeding line out to the fish to clear my casting apron.

I was quite taken aback by the energy that the fish had as I struggled to bring her close enough to net. Eventually I was able to lift her head and slip the net under her. She was a fat fish, but tired and after a quick photo, I slipped her back into the clear water. With a flick of her tail I saw her descend into the murky depths of the channel. I rinsed my net, tried to shake some feeling into my wet fingers and happily contemplated life as I headed back to have another go.



Beautiful 53cm Rainbow



Looking to the wall and steep bank

The day at Calabeni was a good one, as fishing goes. My friends arrived one after the other. Laurence arrived and enticed me to leave my float tube for the chance to bite into a hunk of freshly baked bread, still warm from the oven and slathered with butter. We joked and caught up over steaming mugs of tea and we all caught fish. The weather got better as the day progressed and I was in my shirt sleeves for the afternoon session. There was no real competition between us and the tally for the day was counted not in fish caught, but in friendships renewed, stories told and in the volume of laughter. While it may not have been a red-letter day in some people's book, in mine, I can think of no better.



ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CATCHING MARRON: TIPS, TRICKS AND TECHNIQUES

Marron are a prized catch for fishing enthusiasts throughout the south west area of Western Australia.

HOW TO CATCH MARRON?

Marron can be caught using three predominate methods, which are using a drop net, scoop, or snare. In rivers fisherman can use drop nets and scoops, whilst in trophy water dams you can only catch marron using a snare.



METHOD 1: DROP NETS

When using a drop net ensure that you have a net that is meant for marron. What I mean by this is a net which has holes and mesh large enough for the smaller undersize marron to escape out of the net (this is mentioned in the recreational marron fishing guide).



Above is an example of a marron drop net (note the difference is mesh size compared to crab nets)

Similar to crab nets, marron drop nets can be purchased from most [tackle stores](#), however these are usually only in stock leading up to the marron season (Starts in January).

WHAT BAITS TO USE WHEN FISHING FOR MARRON WITH A NET?

There are a number of ways to bait marron nets with a number of different baits used to catch Marron. One of the most common methods is to use chook pellets inside a stocking or sock tied to the mesh floor. Although the mesh of the stocking is so fine there still enough of a scent escaping to attract the marron, whilst at the same time the marron are unable to overfeed and move on. Premium chook pellets are definitely a proven bait, other **popular baits used to catch marron include.**

- Chicken necks or wings
- Cow liver
- Mince mushed up with chook pellets
- Meat
- Oily fish
- Spleen
- Kangaroo meat / tail
- Dry dog or cat food



WHERE TO PLACE NETS?

When fishing for marron you want to put the net close to structure and deep enough so it's not too shallow for the marron to get spoked. Below are some good examples of where you could place your nets. ideally you want to look for the areas of the river with little current as this is where the marron will rest up.



If you plan to drop some nets in a new location at night, it's much easier to scout out the riverbanks during the day to find ideal locations.

HOW LONG TO LEAVE MARRON NETS IN THE WATER?

Marron requires enough time to pick up the scent of your bait and then move in. It's not often for marron to shy away from the net hence you need to allow enough time for them to first find the bait then move into the centre of the net. Based on my experience wait at least 25-30 minutes before pulling the net.

METHOD 2: SNARING FOR MARRON

Considered the more challenging method, snaring marron is a rewarding way to catch a feed of marron. In waterways classed as trophy waters this is also the only way you can catch them.

There are not many places that sell pre-made snares, hence a lot of people make marron snares out of a bushman's pole using wood with string or other material that is self tightening (I.e. fine electrical wire)



HOW TO CATCH A MARRON WITH A SNARE?

To snare a marron you can follow the below steps:

1. Before dark head out and sprinkle small clumps of chook pellets to attract the marron in from the depths.
2. Once it's dark and the marron are in, locate the marron that you want to catch.
3. Using your hand make a big enough loop within the string of your snare for marron to back into.
4. without spooking the marron reach over and place the snare behind it.
5. then either bring the snare forwards and over the tail of the marron or use your torch to spook the marron into walking backwards.
6. once the tail of the marron is in the loop quickly lift the pole of the snare to tighten the string over the marrons tail.
7. Bingo, you've caught your first marron! (Remember to check its size and to make sure it's not pregnant)

HOW TO ATTRACT THE MARRON IN?

Although you may find the odd marron walking along the river banks or edges of the dam, the best way to attract marron in, is to use chook pellets. So, just before the sun goes down, sprinkle small handfuls of chook pellets roughly 3m apart along the edge of the area you intend to fish

WHERE CAN I BUY A MARRON SNARE IN PERTH?

If you're keen to try the snaring method of catching marron then Diamond Networks in O'Connor stock some great snares (www.diamondnetworks.com.au). They usually sell out quick so try and contact them well before the season starts.

METHOD 3: SCOOPING

Another popular method of catching marron is using a wired scoop net. To catch a marron like this you will need to be in non-trophy waters.

Using a torch, you simply locate the marron and scoop it out of the water. Note, when scooping, always scoop towards the shallow side of the riverbank just in case you miss, you'll be able to have another go.

HELPFUL TIPS WHEN FISHING FOR MARRON

1. KEEP TORCH USE TO A MINIMUM

Like prawns and crayfish, Marron propel themselves backwards when they want to escape or feel threatened. Therefore, when using the torch to look for marron refrain from shining the torch directly on the marron as it will quickly start moving away from you to escape the light.

It's worth noting that this can also be used to your advantage in the sense that if you have the loop setup behind them you can shine the torch in front of them to spook them back into the snare;)

2. CONSIDER A SHOULDER BAG OR FLOATING ESKY

You will need to consider how you're going to store or carry your marron as you catch them. If you're walking along snaring or scooping, then you may like to carry them in a shoulder bag or perhaps have a floating esky setup behind you. Whatever arrangement you have it's best to keep your hands free so you can focus on using the scoop or snare.

3. TORCHES AND HEADLIGHTS

You can never have enough torches and head lights when fishing for marron. An awesome night snaring for marron can quickly come to an end if lights go out so always ensure you have some spare batteries.

4. SHHHHH EVERYONE, YOU'LL SPOOK THE MARRON!

Marron can quite easily spook especially when they come in close to the riverbank. Also ensure you keep noise to a minimum to ensure they don't spook back into the deeper water.

5. MARKING YOUR TERRITORY...

Some fishermen like to mark out an area where they have baited for marron using sticks or flags. (See pics below)



Therefore, if you do come across these it can be considered common courtesy to respect the area they have marked and find another area to fish (assuming the size of the area is within reason and fair to others).

6. CLOTHING: Ensure you're dressed for the occasion. If you're walking along the edge of a river looking for marron then preferably wear clothing head to toe and sometimes put on a pair of waders. Such clothing will ensure you avoid getting scratched by bushes and branches whilst also avoiding bites or stings from insects (not to mention the odd tiger

snake!). Having waders will also allow you to enter the shallow waters without getting wet at night.

7. TAKE SOME BUSHMANS SPRAY: It's amazing how many insects and mosquitoes etc come out at night, especially when you have the torch going, hence, it is always best to cover yourself in some insect repellent before heading out.

WHERE TO CATCH MARRON?

Marron are found amongst many waterways throughout the south west of WA. As they are a freshwater crustacean, they prefer the cool areas with low salinity water. They also like to hide under vegetation and amongst fallen trees, so this is always a good start.

Below are a few popular destinations where you can catch marron in the southwest.

- Harvey Dam
- Waroona Dam
- Wellington Dam (Near Collie)
- Murray River
- Blackwood River
- Donnelly River
- Warren River
- Capel River
- Moore River
- Hutt River
- Preston River



WHEN CAN YOU CATCH MARRON?

Marron can only be caught during the open season which runs for approximately 4-5 weeks at the start of the year. This usually starts in January and finishes in February.

DO YOU NEED A LICENCE TO CATCH MARRON?

Yes, a licence is required to catch Marron unless you are fishing on private land. For more info on the rules and regulations for catching marron visit the [Fisheries](https://www.fisheries.wa.gov.au/) website.

Acknowledgement: <https://madmackie.com.au>

Fly Casting Tips

By: Marshall Cutchin



Simon Gawesworth photo

The Basics

Rod Assembly Always check to be sure that your guides are properly aligned when putting a rod together, that your line has not missed a guide, and that the ferrules are well-snugged-together. Misaligned or missed guides are common when you are rushing to reach the water.

Gripping Fly Rods Grip a fly rod with a slightly extended index finger and with your thumb directly on top, opposite the fly reel. The amount of pressure you need to properly grip the rod will vary from very light with small trout rods to something equal to a strong handshake with 11-weight and larger rods, but always keep your grip as relaxed as possible.

Help Your Fly Line “Forget” All fly lines have “memory” — something most often seen in the form of coils when line is first stripped from a reel, especially stiffer lines made for warmer weather and distance casting. Taking the time to stretch your line in your hands after pulling it off of the reel will improve your casting distance and make it less likely that the loops of your fly line will tangle in the water or the bottom of the boat.

Changing Direction To change the trajectory of your cast merely change the trajectory of your casting hand on your forward or back cast. Line trajectory and hand trajectory are usually the same.

Wind-Resistant Casting To throw tighter, less-wind-resistant loops, concentrate on stopping the rod abruptly at the end of each casting stroke.

Preventing Tailing Loops The best and most consistent way to prevent “tailing” loops and the resultant “wind knots” is to concentrate on casting as smoothly as possible and don’t cast harder/faster than you need to.

Learning to Mend When learning to mend a fly line — throwing the line upstream or downstream after the fly hits the water to eliminate drag — start with your rod tip low and mend with authority, lifting your rod high. You want to move as much line as necessary to reach the point at which the current is pulling your line in the wrong direction.

Reach Before You Mend End any cast that you know you will have to mend with an upstream reach cast, presenting the fly downstream of the line. Perform a reach cast by sweeping the rod either right or left just after delivering the forward cast and before the fly hits the water. Even if the situation doesn't require a mend, the reach cast gives your fly a "head start" on the fly line and delays the onset of drag.

Wrong Wind Direction Wind blowing from the wrong direction? Try presenting your fly by dropping your back cast, or better yet learn to cast over your opposite shoulder.

Dealing with Strong Winds When casting in heavy winds, line speed is the key. Casting with more line than usual out of the rod tip, double hauling, and using water tension to help you load the rod faster and make fewer false casts ("water hauling") are all helpful.

Saltwater Casting Distance Most saltwater fly fishing requires casts of no more than 50 or 60 feet and many fish are hooked when they are 30 feet away. Equally, if not more, important than the distance you can cast: the speed at which you can deliver the fly, your "situational awareness" about the fly line at your feet, and your ability to pick up and make additional casts to the fish if your first cast is off the mark.

Eliminate Lost Motion Try to eliminate all those creators of "lost motion" in your fly fishing: extra false casts, not keeping enough line out of the rod tip, and forgetting to position yourself where you have the best opportunity to make a good presentation.

De-Bugging Your Casts

Watch Your Back cast Having trouble casting? Turn and watch your back cast — it's often the culprit. Common problems are throwing the back cast too low and not waiting for the loop to fully extend before beginning your forward cast.

De-Bugging Roll Casts Roll casts often suffer because the line is not cast in the same plane as the line is lifted. Be sure to align your lifting action and the forward casting stroke.

Line Twist Many casters unknowingly put twist in their fly lines because their back casts are canted to one side, making a fly rod tip travel in a circle as they complete their forward cast. Bulky flies can also spin and add twist. There are two effective ways to remove fly line twist. One is simply to spin the fly line between thumb and forefinger in the opposite direction of the twist. The other is to false cast a number of times while consciously reversing the direction of the circle made by the rod tip (e.g. overhead back cast and sidearm forward cast).

Preparing to Shoot Line When shooting line — either in saltwater or when using shooting tapers for salmon and steelhead — line management is everything. Develop a sixth sense for where your uncast line is.

Over-Lining a Rod You can make a rod's action "slower" by overlining the rod with a fly line rated one size higher. Overlining rods often helps beginners get a better feel for when a rod loads.

Casting Accuracy Most casters naturally can't their casting stroke to the side to help prevent tailing loops, but you will almost always cast more accurately by keeping your rod as perpendicular as possible and by casting with the rod hand more in front of the body to align it with your eyes.

Casting Instructors Good casting instructors are worth far more than they charge. Consider professional golfers, who are constantly coached by private instructors, most of them players with lesser ability but with valuable skills in analysing and correcting mistakes. If you can't find or afford an instructor, try video-taping your casts.

Cool Techniques

Clearing Debris from a Fly Use the "stutter pickup" to rid the fly of hitch-hiking algae, grass or surface scum. On the pickup raise the tip, drop it, and immediately resume the pickup.

Casting Large Flies When casting flies that are heavier or larger than what your line and rod were designed for, try putting a side-arm motion in your back cast and making a straight overhead forward cast. This is sometimes referred to as a "Belgian" cast and can also help when the wind is blowing over the wrong shoulder. Be aware, though, that this style of casting will also put twist in your fly line.

Short- vs. Long-Distance Casting Weight-forward (WF), shooting taper (ST) and double-taper (DT) lines all cast about the same at close range, but WF and ST lines will cast farther for most casters. Once their heavy "head" is out of the rod the small diameter running or shooting line shoots farther and being able to feel when the head is out of the rod tip is a fundamental skill in distance casting.

Best Lines for Roll Casting Double-taper lines are easier to roll cast at longer distances, since the larger-diameter line "belly" is still in the rod tip. However, weight-forward lines will cast just as well as double-taper lines at short distances, or until you get the head out of the rod tip.

The Slide Pickup If you find yourself with not enough line out of the rod tip as you begin a new cast, try letting a small amount of line slide from your fingers as you start your next backcast, then quickly stop the line from going out so that you can load the rod.

The Roll-Cast Pickup One of the most useful techniques in fly casting. Roll cast to lift your line off of the water, then begin your backcast as the line straightens out in front of you. This technique has multiple uses, including speeding up fly delivery, "aerializing" a long section of fly line to reduce surface tension, and lifting your fly away from debris or obstacles.



Double-hauling gives you more line speed — and therefore more casting accuracy in high-wind conditions. Learn it by laying the fly line down on both the forward and backward casts and pausing between each haul. photo by Zach and Lauren Matthews | www.itinerantangler.com

Learning to Double Haul The easiest way to learn to double haul — which requires hauling on both the forward and backward casts in succession — is to practice a single haul in both directions, letting fly line fall to the water or grass before you start forward or back again. As long as you remember to bring your line-holding hand back to the rod after it “bounces” below your waist, and as long as your fly line lands straight, you should have no problem picking up your line again.

Using a Single Haul A haul is a pull or tug on the line that is normally done during the backcast or the forward cast. It increases the speed of the line, enabling you to make longer casts with less strain on your casting arm. You can also use it during the pickup to ease the line off the water with a shorter stroke than you’d normally need. (See “[Beyond Competence, Part I.](#)”)

High-Sticking The more fly line that touches the water, the greater the chance of drag affecting your fly. That’s why longer rods with longer leaders and “high-sticking” — keeping the rod tip high and extended while fishing close to the target — is a deadly nymphing technique.

Using a Sidearm Cast Most fly fishers only think of the sidearm cast as allowing them to cast under overhanging trees and bushes. But it is also a potent slack-line cast because it lets you put curves and slack in the line. If you overpower the sidearm cast, the fly tends to kick (curve) to the side in the direction in which you are accelerating the rod. (See “[Beyond Competence, Part II.](#)”)

Acknowledgement: <https://midcurrent.com>

Stillwater Fly Fishing & The Mighty Midge



Bobbers and chironomids on Stillwater can make for an epically successful or epically boring day of trout fishing. Staring at an unmoving indicator as the sun beats down, slowly roasting you in the middle of a lake is no fun. I have been there and probably you have been there also if you have fished on lakes or ponds much at all. Most fly fishermen who haven't fished floating lines and indicators in Stillwater think that this type of fly fishing is a tiny step above the guy fishing with the Rainbow Glitter Power bait and a red and white bobber the size of your fist. To be successful there is much more to this fly-fishing technique than dangling a fly under an indicator. Here are a few hints.

Know Your Midge

I am not going to bore you with Class, Order and Family stuff. But I am going to tell you that trout in most lakes eat a lot of these prolific insects. In some cases, over half of their food comes from these little tasty morsels. They live in the mud and underwater foliage within the photosynthesis zone the depth varies depending on water clarity. These little bugs aren't actually that little until they turn into the tiny adults that we see buzzing around in swarms.



Bloodworms are one of the most common larval forms of Chironomidae

Larvae can be up to an inch long and have segmented bodies that appear in various colours from red to olive to brown. Red is the most prevalent in many places. Remember the red larvae because I will come back to it later.

Chironomid pupae tend to look more like an insect, not the squishy worm look of the larvae. They have developed antenna and legs that dangle under a large, round thorax that has a slender body stretching beyond it. Once again colours run the gamut from green, olive, and black to maroon and brown and hues of all these colours. The air that the midge pupae traps around its body to help it ascend to the surface greatly impacts the bug's coloration. After emerging from the water, they transform into the buzzing swarms that are often mistaken for mosquitos.

Bottom to Top

If I could know what was going on under my boat when I put it on the water, I would be a rich man. But I never will, so some assumptions must be made and tested. My first assumption is that there are midge larvae and/or pupae present. I usually look for shucks and adults on the water, if there are some present then it is a pretty good bet that there are some active larvae and pupae below.

The second one is that the larvae are going to be red. Why? Because in my experience, there are Blood Worms (red midge larvae) in the mud of almost every lake. If the bottom is rocky, they tend to lean toward a translucent brown or olive colour. But these are assumptions so the body of water you are fishing might have different coloured chironomids.

The last assumption is if light can't reach the bottom, then there are going to be no midges present or other bugs for that matter. Insects are dependent on plants and plant matter for food, chironomids are no different so light for photosynthesis is a must. My general rule is that if the water is over 25 feet deep then it isn't a prime indicator fishing territory.

Rig Things in Your Favour

Fishing midges are relatively easy, you cast the flies and indicator out and wait for the bobber to go down. The set-up and configuration of your flies is the part that will have a large impact on your success. Patterns don't seem to play as much a role as colour and size do for fly selection. That is why I lean towards the simplest patterns to tie, i.e., the Snow Cone and Randy's Liquid Lace Chironomid are two of my favourites. Slender silhouettes are the main body feature of my flies, not intricate designs with legs and gills.

I fish three flies at a time. The fly closest to the lake bottom is always, no exaggeration, a #8 or #10 red Snow Cone.



Red Snow Cones can be used for chironomids in larval and pupal stages

This is because of its similarity to a Blood Worm and most pupae are red or black as they begin their journey to the surface to emerge. I try to fish this fly no more than 6 inches off the bottom.

The distance between my flies depends on the depth and temperature of the water I am fishing. As a rule, I start with my flies about two and a half feet apart. **Fluorocarbon leader and tippet** material are a must-have for chironomid fishing for a multitude of reasons. Using fluorocarbon will improve your fishing dramatically because it sinks, you can use a much thinner diameter than traditional monofilament and it is much less visible to the fish because of how it refracts light.

The second, or middle fly, is usually a #14 black, olive or bronze with red ribbing to start. This is where trial and error starts to come into play....

Hit or Miss..

The top fly of my daisy chain of chironomids is the wild card. If I am fishing in over 12' of water, it will be a #14 bronze or brown Snow Cone. The fly will usually have some sort of flashy material tied to the body to give it the glow naturals have as the gases in their translucent thorax cavities accumulate as they rise towards the surface.

This is my starting point. There are some days when the underwater swarms of midges are in a different colour phase or phases. Often it takes multiple fly changes to find the appropriate patterns and sizes that work consistently. The only rule I have is that the #10 red Snow Cone that I fish at the bottom is always the last to be changed. This is because there are always bloodworms in that water strata.

Now you have the basics of the bugs and some setup info but there are a bunch of little things that will increase your success or at least seemed to have helped mine. Most of them are common sense, some not so common and some are just quirky things that I do that seem to work for me. As with all fly fishing, there are some basic rules, but don't be afraid to experiment. So here is a very random list of gear, techniques, and hints (in no particular order).

A Short List of Chironomid Fishing Gear, Techniques, and Random Stuff

- **Be Observant**

– If you see no adult midges or shucks on the water's surface when you hit the water then you might want to rethink your strategy.

- **Slip Strike Indicators**

– Use one! There are two reasons. The first is that it is easier to set the depth of your flies than with other indicators. The second reason is simple; it makes landing a fish on a 15-foot leader possible



Slip Indicators – Don't leave home without them!

because the bobber slides to your top fly when you set the hook. This makes landing and a fighting fish better for the fish and angler, particularly if you are fishing from a pontoon or float tube.

- **Bobber Colour**

– Dark red or dark orange is what I suggest. You can lose light or fluorescent hues in the glare on the water from the sun. I also like to colour the bottom of my bobbers black. This may or may not help keep from spooking skittish fish, but I still do it.

- **Go Light**

– I have seen trout swim up to a chironomid fly and stare at it for 15 seconds and then swim away. This is not moving water, fish don't have a millisecond to decide if they are going to eat your fly, they have literally all day. I never go heavier than 4x fluoro but usually use 5 and 6x leader and tippet material. In my opinion, this is one of the most important things for success.

- **Know Your Depth**

– In some bodies of water, you can set your flies at random depths, and it works sometimes but not in most cases. Fish eat chironomids usually near the bottom. That is why I like my bottom fly, the big red Snow Cone, no more than a foot off the bottom. This means long, long leaders and a slip bobber. To find the bottom take a pair of forceps and clip them to your bottom fly. Lower them into the water until your leader goes limp and then peg your indicator 6"-12" towards your flies. Simple.

- **Keep Moving**

– I put a clock on my flies when they are in the water. If I go more than 15 minutes without my bobber going down, then I move. Midges hatch in clusters under the water. If you aren't getting hit, then there are probably no bugs present. Try that spot later.

- **Know Your Water**

– Armies don't go to battle without good maps or scouting the terrain. The same goes for fishing with midges. Knowing the geography of the land under the water's surface of where you are fishing will influence your success more than anything. Midges like mud and foliage. Trout like cool water with plentiful food sources. Think like the bugs and fish and the lake will be less formidable. Marking a good spot on your GPS or by landmark is very important.

- **Change Your Fly**

– I also put a timer on how long I fish flies. If I go 5 minutes without a take-down I will change one of my flies. Usually, I change my middle fly from black with a red rib to bronze with a copper rib #12 or #14. This varies a bit from lake to lake but not much. Vary your depth also. I always leave a red Snow Cone near the bottom. But start moving the middle and top flies up if nothing else is working.

- **Everyone Is Different**

– Everyone starts with different flies in my boat, except of course the bottom one. If someone is more successful than the others, then we can change accordingly.

- **Chop, Chop**

– Hatching Chironomids don't bounce up and down underwater, they only go one direction – up. That is why chop and waves on the lake's surface are detrimental to using an indicator and chironomids. Calm weather periods will be more successful for the most part but think about fishing in the lea of the boat if fishing in windy conditions. I have even taken #3 split shot and used them to anchor my bottom fly with a small indicator when the water has gotten rough. If you try this make sure the

indicator is just under the water beneath the troughs of the waves. It can be an effective drastic measure.



- **Anchor Up or**

Not

– If you are anchoring make sure your craft doesn't swing in the wind. There is nothing more frustrating than the boat dragging your lines around as it swings. This reduces productivity considerably.

- **Fish Close**

– Some takes are very subtle, and some aren't but if you are fishing 60' from your boat or tube getting the hook set can be difficult. Fishing within 30' from the boat or tube makes getting the hook set much easier and makes casting 3 flies on a 15' leader with a bobber much more manageable. This is particularly true if you are using a medium to soft fly rod because of the light tippet. I suggest a Winston Bllx LS or a glass rod like the Butter Stick, although I fish my old Sage 490 LL most of the time.

- **Experiment**

– Try new things. I try a new pattern almost every time I go midge fishing. The split-shot anchor technique came out of experimentation (and desperation).

The list ended up not being so short but there is a lot to think about when fishing chironomids. Learning to fish midges in still water effectively takes time and patience. It can be dull with a heavy dose of boring when you aren't catching. After you master fishing the Chironomid, slow times will be few and far between. Just remember that upwards of 50% of most trout diets in lakes are midges and have fun from there.

Acknowledgment: <https://alwaysagoodday.com>

FLY TYING

LaFontaine's Buzzball - A Step by Step Guide



In the book *Trout Flies: Proven Patterns* by Gary LaFontaine, he states that he developed this fly for the great winter midge hatches on the Missouri River here in MT. I have found that this simple and effective little fly does a great job mimicking midge clusters wherever they are found.

Being the endless experimenter that I am, I've taken the Buzzball all over Montana and used it on a variety of waters. I've tested it on everything from the freestone rivers and Georgetown Lake, to stocked borrow pits and high alpine lakes. I've also experimented with the recipe. The variable here is the orange hackle used in the original pattern. If you use brown or black instead of the orange, you can cover a variety of lighting and hatch situations. I've also found that substituting a cream-coloured hackle for the orange can be extremely effective

The Buzzball is ridiculously simple to tie, easy to see on the water, and *extremely* effective in a variety of situations. In my book, that is what makes a good fly! Here's the recipe for the original and step-by-step instruction.

Hook: Size 18-12 dry fly hook (16 is my favourite)

Thread: 8/0 burnt orange

Hackle: 1 grizzly hackle in the appropriate size (approx. 1 1/2 gap length); 1 light dun hackle (smaller, but size doesn't matter); 1 orange hackle (smaller, but size doesn't matter)

Step 1:

Wrap the hook shank thoroughly and evenly.



Step 2:

Tie in the grizzly hackle in a size appropriate to the hook.



Step 3: Tie in the orange hackle (size is not important because this is going to get cut).



Step 4: Tie in the light dun hackle (again, size is not important because this going to be cut) and the advance thread to front of the hook.

Step 5: Palmer both the orange and light dun hackles to the front of the hook.



Step 6: Cut the orange and light dun hackles to about hook gap length all around the hook so that it resembles a bottle brush.

Step 7: Palmer the grizzly hackle forward and then whip finish.



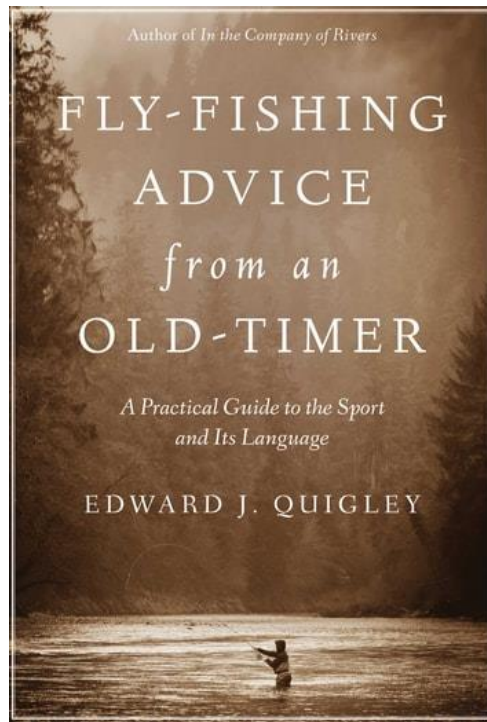
Step 8:

Cut the grizzly hackle flush to the orange and light dun on the top and bottom of the fly *only*.

You're done!

Acknowledgement: <http://redboatmarkchronicles.blogspot.com>

BOOK REVIEW



Fly-Fishing Advice from an Old-Timer

A Practical Guide to the Sport and Its Language
by **Ed Quigley**

With decades of fly-fishing experience, Ed Quigley is the perfect candidate to provide fly-fishing know-how to prospective Flyfishers.

For those new to fly fishing as well as for experienced anglers looking to add some “secrets” to their own bags of tricks, *Fly-Fishing Advice from an Old-Timer* will illuminate the fly-fishing world. Richly illustrated and clearly written, Quigley includes down-to-earth explanations of the basics, detailed discussions of advanced topics, and ingenious tips and compelling anecdotes from his own years of experience fly fishing streams from Labrador to Costa Rica and beyond. Readers will discover:

- When to use emergers, caddis flies, midges, and cripples
- How to create flies literally on the fly” right on the stream
- How to choose the best rods, reels, lines, waders, and leaders
- The real secret to playing a fish
- The lowdown on winter fishing
- And much more!

Along with his own personal advice, Quigley provides answers on where to find more information on each topic: websites, articles, DVDs, and books. His must-read list of fly-fishing books with his own comments on the most useful information in each tie together one of the most comprehensive fly-fishing books ever written.



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