

Creel Notes from the



P.O. Box 639, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Website: www.wffc.com



MMXXV No. 3

March, 2025



President's Riffle

Spring, It's Right Around the Corner!

Danferd Henke, President, Washington Fly Fishing Club

Happy Spring (almost), All. The weather has improved, and I suspect that means that all of you have been out fishing. Right? Right?

This Riffle will be somewhat abbreviated this month, but I do want you all to know that the "Change of Venue" committee is actively considering possible new homes. The following questions need to be answered, though, before we narrow the selection.

Many of you have contributed thoughts about actual venues, but these questions concern the format of our meetings, and the answers to them may determine the venue selected. Please take a look at them and email me with your thoughts (danferd.henke@gmail.com).



Is dinner a necessity at our meetings?

If so, how much are you willing spend for dinner? (We currently charge \$40.)

If so, how much should the Club subsidize the price of dinner? (Presently, the Club pays about \$10 on top of the \$40 charged to members.)

If not, should the Club hold its meetings at a venue that would sell meals to individuals? (Perhaps a brewery or tasting room where members could order food if they wished.)

Is alcohol a necessity at our meetings?

Would you be willing to attend meetings where the Club served only coffee/tea and small desserts, contributed by members?

Give these questions some thought and let me know what you think. Your opinions will inform the committee's work.

March Program

Ryan Fortier and Michael Schmuck

WFDW Fisheries Biologists (Eastern WA)



Featured Speakers: **Ryan Fortier**, of the WFDW District 6 North Central Fisheries Biologist and **Michael Schmuck** of WFDW District 5 South Central Fisheries Biologist will be highlighting current information about the excellent fishing opportunities in their responsible areas.



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2025 December Gala Fundraiser

Your Help is Needed Now!

From Suzanne Johnston – 3rd Vice President

Preliminary plans for the club's annual fundraiser, the December Holiday Gala, were presented to the club at the February meeting. ALL club members are asked to **immediately** consider what you personally will donate and what you will solicit from businesses and friends. These items will be designated either for the silent or live auctions, or the raffle. Members are also asked to donate flies to be included in Dick Brening's handmade, wooden fly boxes.



(Thank you, Dick!!) In addition to fly fishing gear, we are each asked to consider giving and getting items such as whiskey from a distillery, wine/wine tours, Pendleton blankets/shirts, camping equipment, restaurant gift certificates, woodworking items (signs, cutting boards, etc.), boat/raft items, fish related artwork, sports tickets, cooking/kitchen items. We need lots of items that everyone will bid high to get! Ask a committee member if you have questions.

Each month, starting at the March meeting, you will be asked to identify what items you will donate or what you have/will solicited. We strongly suggest that members combine contributions; for example, one member will donate use of a raft while another member will lead an outing using that raft. An email has already been sent to the club asking for flies to include in Dick's handmade fly boxes. **We are only limited by our imaginations.**

Please also start to consider which friends, colleagues and family members you will invite to this event. We have a goal of 100 attendees to assure a good pool of bidders and buyers. This annual event is NOT limited to club members – we need to broaden our reach. Mark your calendar and tell others about this event on **Tuesday, December 16 at the Women's University Club.**

Club thanks are extended to Gala committee members: Ben Chadwick, Chelsea Cullen, Kathryn Gravendyk, Suzanne Johnson, Chris Wilder, Raymond Yu and BRAND NEW CLUB MEMBER Stephen Whittaker (thanks for jumping in, Steve). Thanks to all! If you have questions regarding this event, please contact one of us.

With gratitude,
Suzanne Johnston
General Chair

Monthly Meeting Location

In 2024, the Club's monthly meetings will be held at the Seattle Tennis Club, 922 McGilvra Blvd. East, Seattle, WA 98112.

Wet Fly and fly tying commence at 5:30, dinner 6:15, with a program commencing at 7:00.

Please sign up early on the website.



Creel Notes

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Club Aims and Purposes

The purpose of this club shall be:

1. To improve and increase the sport of Fly Fishing in the State of Washington.
2. To promote and work for the betterment of trout streams and lakes.
3. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout, steelhead, and salmon in state waters.
4. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes or Sound waters of the State of Washington.
5. To encourage and assist others—particularly young persons of high school age—to become fly fishers and true conservationists.



The Quincy Lake Gang

Quincy Lakes Wildlife Area Unit Outing – March 7-9, 2025

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

The Quincy Lake Outing occurred on Friday-Sunday, March 7-9, 2025. We had Jon Waite, Jim Beck, Tim Haser, Mark Pratt, Kyle Lemargie, Kurt & Sheila Peterson and Linda Leum and me in attendance at the Outing.

The weather was warm with daytime temperatures averaging 58-60 degrees. The wind was mostly calm throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday which made for pleasant fishing. We had two roaring fires in the evening that helped to keep us warm in the cool nighttime temperatures. There was a pack of howling coyotes that we could hear each night away from our campsites.

Most of the fly fishers catch rates averaged 4 trout each day and Mark Pratt out fished everyone with double digit trout catch rates. The largest trout were caught by me, a 17” rainbow and by Mark a 15” rainbow. The average size of the rainbow trout caught was 12”.

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bass.

Linda and I did the 1.2 mile round trip hike to Dusty Lake as well as a few other lakes in the area. I did not fish at the hike-in lakes, and I didn't see any fish activity occurring on the water surface. There is some great scenery and fishing in this area and it is one of my favorite places to visit.



Calm Waters on Quincy Lake

Two Upcoming April Outings

Pass Lake Outing – April 5, 2025

From Mike Nolan, Outings Chair

We will be having an Outing at Pass Lake on April 5, as a day trip. Camping is available at Deception Pass State Park, and it is just down the road from the lake. A brat and bun lunch will be served at 1pm along with assorted beverages.

Pass Lake is six miles south of Anacortes, along the northwest side of Highway SR-20. This trophy fly-fishing only, catch-and-release-only lake has a boat launch, but use of motors is prohibited. Fishing opportunities include stocked Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout averaging 15 inches with some up to 28 inches.

Please email me at outings@wffc.com or call/text me at (425) 754-1234 so I know who's going for the food count. FYI, the Pass Lake Outing is not listed on the WFFC website.



The Pass Lake Primer

A contour map from some of our "old club masters" who fished Pass Lake many years ago. I will bet that some of these methods still work and you ought to try them at the outing! - Ed

Ex-Sports' Advice:

Areas 1, 3, 4 and 5 best fished from anchored boat, casting toward shore.

Area 1: Good for both casters and moochers, if they don't get in each other's hair.

Area 4: Not always good early in season, but excellent during May and June.

Area 5: NE and SW of rock bank. Can be a real hot spot in PM, casting to rises.

As a spot check among some of the WFFC's long-time Pass Lake addicts brought these suggestions to opening day there:

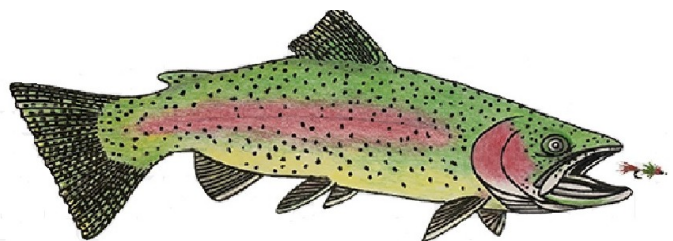
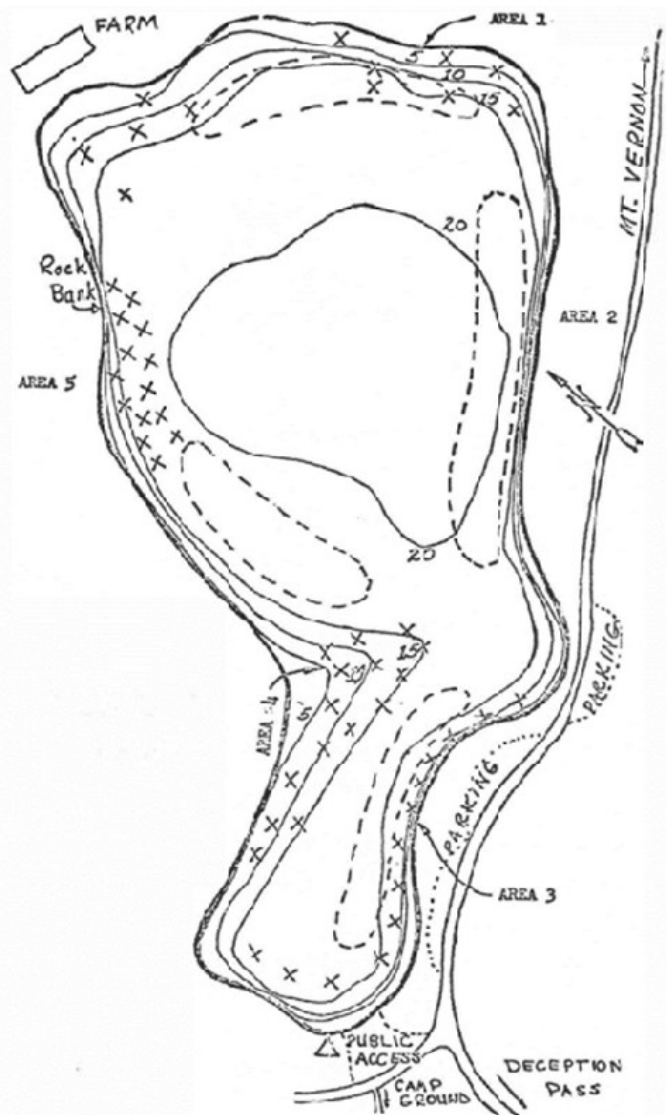
The late Vince Sellen: "It doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference what fly you use on opening day, but after the first several weeks pattern becomes most important." First choice, his "Golden Spider: #10 or #12 long shank, golden pheasant tail, thin red acetate or cellophane body, 1-2 turns of red rump hackle from golden pheasant. Second choice, ordinary Carey Special, silver rib, herl body.

Dick Thompson: TDC (can you imagine this from the originator!) if chironomids are emerging. Blackbody Carey, heavy silver rib, #8 or 10, long shank. Also Golden Spider (see above), Nyerger nymph, Six-Pack.

Steve Raymond: TDC

Frank Headrick: Start with blackbody Carey or Dandy Green Nymph, sizes #8 or 10, long shank, sparse. Also, peacock herl Carey. Then on to anything that works.

Dawn Hdbrook: Any nymph of appropriate size. Chironomid, damsel fly, mayfly - in that sequence, depending upon weather and warmth and how far the season has progressed. Damsel (needle) fly might be best this year. Tie as follows: tail, 4 strands peasantrump; body, stripped peacock herl (quill); pheasant rump hackle sparse; collar of peacock herl, taken from near eye of feather; #8-10 extra-long shank. Fish close to bottom. If you don't pick up weeds you're not down enough. After first pressure, day light to about 9:30, fishing often lulls through midday while fish rest up, then picks up again, 2-4 in afternoon. Method more important than fly pattern. Favorite method: long cast, row about 100 feet let boat drift, then strip line in, drift, then strip line in.



"It is admirable for a man to take his son fishing, but there is a special place in heaven for the father who takes his daughter shopping."

— John Sinor

Lake Hannan Outing – April 19, 2025

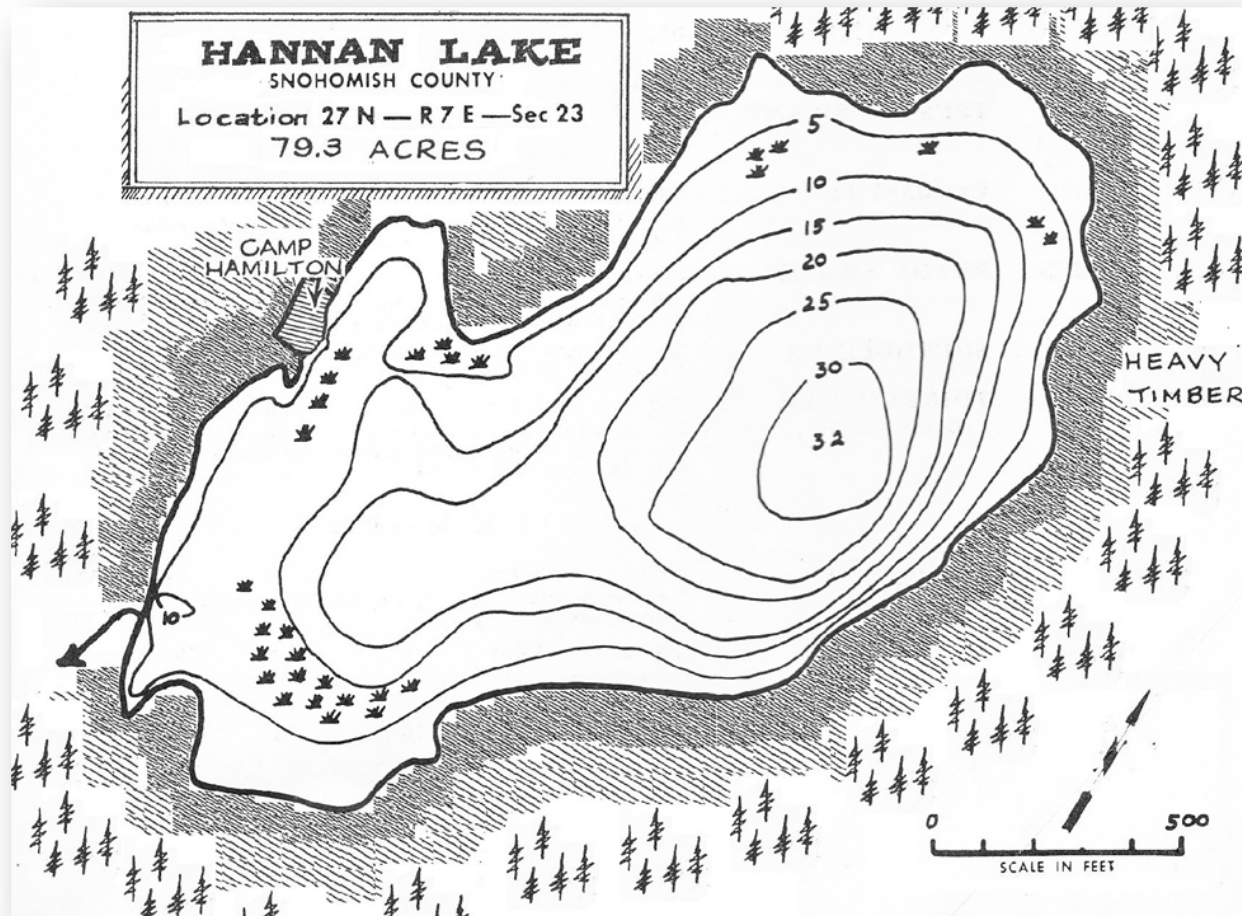
From Mike Nolan, Outings Chair

This close in favorite is open to us and our friends Saturday only, at Lake Hannan from 8:00 to 4:00. This is the lake at Camp Hamilton north and east of the Duvall, Monroe, Carnation Hwy.

If you haven't been there before, it's pretty easy. Take the Woodinville/Duvall Road to the end, turn north on the Hwy. out of town, and go past the first Cherry Valley Road, a couple miles, to the second Cherry Valley Road that slants up hill on the right. Follow the road east toward Lake Fontal, a few miles, and watch for the sign to camp Hamilton. Go through a yellow gate and follow the road to the launch area at Hannan. This is a private lake owned by the Catholic church, who have given us permission for a day of fishing. Please respect their strict NO ALCOHOL policy. The Club provides cooked chili and will provide nonalcoholic beverages. Please bring appetizers, chili "fixings, baked cornbread, desserts, and side dishes to share! Please sign up so I know who's going for the food count. <https://wffc.com/event/lake-hannan-outing-april-19-2025/>

The fishing is pretty easy, with intermediate lines working small leech patterns being the go-to flies. There is an on again off again mayfly hatch among some chironomids if the weather warms, and damselfly in the shoreline weeds account for most of the brookies. The lake has a healthy population of native cutthroat, and some hybrid cutt-bows as a result of stocking over the years. This is a healthy, undeveloped, west side low-land lake. A rare treat for fly anglers.

Members, if you can take another member in your boat to fish on Lake Hannan, please acknowledge this in the "I will Assist With" sign-up, so that we can organize members to fish with you.



2025 Outings

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair
WFFC 2025 Outings Schedule



- April 5 Pass Lake
- April 19 Lake Hannan
- May 23-26 Lake Chopaka - *Danferd Henke*
- June 21-22 Leech Lake
- July 19 Cooper Lake
- September TBD Hood Canal - *Jay Deeds*
- October 4-5 Big Twin Lake
- November 1 Penrose Point Wet Buns



Fly Tyers' Corner Book Review

The Flies That Trout Prefer: Why they work and how to tie and fish them

by Peter Hayes and Don Stazicker,
Coch y Bondhu Books (2025)

From Danferd Henke, President

This is a provocative book, in the manner of a hand grenade tossed into a huddle of dry fly purists. Read it and your beliefs about fly fishing, if not your person, will get blown up. It's also a very good book, one of the best I've read about tying and fishing, and I've read a lot of those books. Spoiler alert! The gist of the book is that the perfectly tied and elegant imitations of dry flies to which we all aspire as tyers are pretty much a waste of time, at least when tied for purposes of fishing. That beautiful tie will be taken by a trout, but not preferentially. They probably are not being taken as dries in the first place, as bits of them always extend below the surface. (No, those

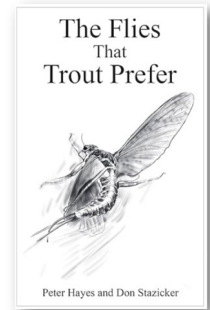
hackle tips don't merely dimple the surface, they extend below it.) Instead, those "dries" are taken as emergers, failed hatchers, cripples, or dead bugs, but are poor imitations of all of those. Why wouldn't one wish to tie and fish a better imitation of what the fish actually are taking?

Hayes and Stazicker move through the reasons for a dry fly's relative failure: the trout's inherent desire to avoid expending energy on something that will fly away; the trout's poor vision for anything above the film; the invisibility of the dry fly until it is in a very small window above the trout. A trout will move quite a distance to pick off a nymph (it can see below the surface for a considerable way), a good distance to hit an emerging nymph, but almost not at all to take a natural dun. That dun has to be in the feeding lane and only a short distance up current from the trout.

Their section on trout vision was really interesting. New software designed to determine the visual acuity of mammals and birds now has been applied to trout. The results, at any distance greater than twelve inches, the trout can only perceive silhouette and size, it is not until six inches that the trout can perceive segmentation and even then that is a blur, only at three inches can the trout determine color, and within three inches the trout can't see a thing, thanks to the placement of its eyes. It follows that tying a realistic fly may not be worth the effort.

The two authors go on to describe quite innovative fly patterns that they have found more effective at enticing trout to hit the rising nymph, the emerging nymph, the failed hatcher, the crippled bug, and the spinner. They view the most critical part of the fly, perhaps the only critical part, as the abdomen/thorax. That is what the trout sees of every natural, regardless of condition, and sets those initial keys of silhouette and size. All of their flies are pretty scraggly looking, no fine lines or elegance here.

Hayes and Stazicker back up their observations with links to both subsurface and surface video and photos. I highly recommend their book.



*When stalking a very large trout in a clear stream you
need stay as calm as a 'Hindu Cow'*

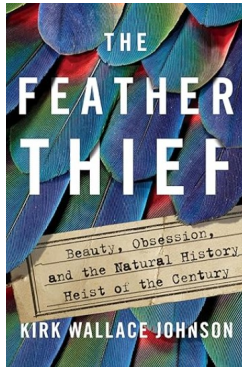
Another Good Book

The Feather Thief

by Kirk Wallace Johnson

“Absorbing . . . Though it's non-fiction, *The Feather Thief* contains many of the elements of a classic thriller.” —Maureen Corrigan, NPR's *Fresh Air*

“One of the most peculiar and memorable true-crime books ever.” —*Christian Science Monitor*



This book is about Johnson's investigation into the theft of 299 rare bird skins from a British natural history museum. While bird skins might sound like (ahem) dry reading, Johnson knows just how to fascinate the reader, plunging with vigor into exotic bird exploration, the crack-down on rare bird trafficking, and the insular world of fly-tying enthusiasts, all of which lead, almost inevitably, to the theft from the Tring Museum.

The most likely receivers of these stolen goods? Fly-tiers!, with an unquenchable thirst for feathers from blue chatters, the resplendent quetzal, and birds of paradise so they can re-create outlandish Victorian-era salmon flies. Although the thief is caught, Johnson decides to investigate himself what happened to the 106 never-recovered bird skins, pulling the reader even deeper into the thief's bizarre world. Clever, informative, and sometimes endearingly bumbling, this mix of natural history and crime opens up new worlds. You'll never look at a stuffed bird the same way again.

WFFC Fly Casting Class

WFFC Fly Casting Training Thursday, March 27, 2025



WFFC will be holding 2025 beginning casting classes beginning Thursday, March 27th

This will be a 5 class session. Classes will be held at Luther Burbank Park, 2040 84th Ave SE, Mercer Island. Start time will be 6:00 pm. Each class will be a minimum of one hour. You will learn the PickUp and Laydown

Staying Healthy While Fishing

Can your Waders Kill You?

From *Fly Rod & Reel*

by Ted Leeson

A tragedy occurred on New York's Beaverkill River a few years ago when a fly fisherman drowned in the famous--and very deep--Junction Pool. News reports said the fact that the man was wearing unbelted chest waders played a large role in his death. In fact, one of them quoted a local official as saying that when waders fill with water, "it's like wearing an anchor."

However, I clearly remember reading that the late Lee Wulff once jumped off a bridge wearing waders in order to disprove the "anchor" theory. And I've also heard that wearing a wading belt can be dangerous because it can trap air in your waders, and if you fall in, those air-filled waders will act like a balloon to float your legs and submerge your head. What's the truth? Will water-filled waders drag me under, or not? And is a wading belt more likely to save my life, or kill me?



Good questions, since the misperceptions behind them have had an astonishing longevity. First, water-filled waders won't drag you to the bottom, much less "like an anchor." The water inside your waders has the same density as the water outside; it doesn't magically get heavier and pull you under. From the standpoint of buoyancy, it's neutral, not negative.

But, as I can attest from personal experience, there is certainly an "anchor sensation," a feeling of sinking in swamped waders. The combined weight, bulk and water resistance of filled waders, boots, vest and

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clothing drastically decreases your mobility. The simple arm and leg movements that would normally help you keep your head above the surface (treading water, for instance) become less effective and more tiring. Throw in some water turbulence, waves washing over your head, exhaustion and a little panic, and you can feel as though you're going down, especially if you're of a body type that doesn't float very well to begin with. But your waders aren't dragging you under.

A river with severe hydraulics--i.e. whitewater, is a different story, however. Water plunging over boulders or ledges actually has a downward component to its velocity. Were you to fall in and be drawn over, say, even a low dam or weir, the current at the bottom of the drop could easily force you under water and hold you there long enough to drown. And if the water is highly aerated with bubbles, it's less dense than ordinary water, less "solid" to push against with your arms and legs. Swimming motions are less effective in helping you escape. But this, of course, is being pushed under, not pulled by the weight of your waders.

Second, under any conceivably realistic wading circumstances, air doesn't get trapped in your waders if you fall in. As you step into a river, water pressure collapses the waders against your legs, squeezing out the air. The deeper you wade, the less air is contained inside. I suppose if you inflated your waders, cinched a belt tightly around your waist, and deliberately took a header off a bridge, you might trap some air inside. But even then, I strongly doubt it would be enough to actually invert you. And if it did, most people would probably think you got what you deserved.

There's no question in my mind that a wading belt increases safety. If you fall in, a belt slows water entry into your waders, which can give you time to regain your footing before your waders fill up, turning a potentially dangerous situation into a merely uncomfortable one. A belt also helps corral excess wader fabric, which reduces the amount of water that can enter your waders and streamlines your profile--both of which aid mobility if you find yourself in the drink.

*Lighting and a graphite rod
God is deciding its your time*

March Fly of the Month

Bent Hook Mayfly Emerger



Materials

Hook: Size #14 Mustad 3906, forward third bent upward

Thread: Brown, size 8/0

Tail: Small amount of zelon and woodduck flank barbs

Body: (bottom two-thirds of hook) Pheasant tail

Ribbing: Brown thread

Collar: Brown dubbing (Australian Opossum) at 2/3 bend location

Hackle: Cream (upper third of hook) – trimmed flush on bottom

Wings/Shuck: Antron fibers, white

Head: Light brown or salmon

About the Fly:

This winter I have been thinking a lot about the silhouette of an emerging mayfly as it tries to escape it's nymphal shuck. One pattern I have used in the past is the parachute emerger with the wing standing straight up and the hackle wrapped around the wing. I have also used Sparkle comparaduns to mimic the emerging mayfly duns. Although these are effective patterns I have never really been satisfied with the wing silhouette, which I feel should slant back towards the tail of the fly, not straight up into the air.

If you ever see a photo of an emerging mayfly you should notice the nymphal body is hanging in the film and the emerging dun's wing is slanted back over the surface of the water. So recently I started bending the front 1/3 of the hook up about 30 degrees or slightly more and tying the hackle and



Recipe of the Month

Soy Maple Salmon

From www.foodnetwork.com



Ingredients:

2 tbsps. low-sodium soy sauce 2 tbsps. maple syrup
1 tbsp. fresh orange juice 3 cloves garlic, smashed
4 5 -oz. skinless center-cut salmon fillets (preferably wild)
4 cups cauliflower florets (from 1 small head)
1/4 cup fat-free low-sodium chicken broth (or use water)
Cooking spray Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil 2 tablespoons dried cranberries
2 tbsps. chopped pistachios or almonds 1 tsp. grated orange zest
2 tbsps. chopped fresh parsley

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Mix the soy sauce, maple syrup, orange juice, 2 garlic cloves and 2 tablespoons water in a large bowl; add the salmon and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, put the cauliflower and broth in a microwave-safe bowl; cover loosely with plastic wrap and microwave until tender, 6 minutes.
3. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Drain the fish, season with salt and pepper and place on the prepared baking sheet.
Bake until slightly golden around the edges, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil and remaining garlic clove in a large skillet over medium-high heat; cook, breaking up the garlic with a spoon, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the cauliflower and broth, the cranberries, pistachios, orange zest, parsley, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper to taste and stir to heat through. Serve with the fish..

(Continued from page 9) Fly of Month

wing on the bent up portion of the hook. This forces the wing to slant backwards over the body and its appearance does a better job of resembling the real mayflies as they emerge.

I have tried floating them in a large bowl of water and the fly sits perfectly with the body hanging in the film. the ultimate test will be this Spring with the trout.

-John Simonson



Yellowstone River, Montana