



# Be a Better Angler

By Steve May

Many people stall in their development as a fly angler. They get discouraged when they don't catch as many or as big a fish as they would like. Part of this is because they are experiencing a new way of trying to fool fish and there is definitely a lot to learn.

Do you remember learning how to use a red and white bobber or work a jig? It took a bit of practice to become accomplished with these angling methods. Fly fishing is no different. With practice you will get better, but there are ways to fast track to being more effective with a fly rod.

One of the easiest ways to get better is to fish with accomplished anglers. A good place to start your search for an experienced fly fishing partner is your local fly fishing club. People that stick with the sport for a long time and join a club are usually willing to help out a beginner. Many great friendships have been formed through fly fishing clubs. I highly recommend joining one if there is a local group nearby.

Clubs generally have outings and instructional meetings to help you improve your skills under the supervision of people who have "been there...done that". Some clubs even host fly-fishing "forums" where experienced anglers gather to socialize and to share knowledge through seminars and hands on sessions. These forums are something many fly anglers look forward to each season.

If you don't have a local club to hook up with there are other great ways to gain knowledge about fly fishing. There is no shortage of information out there. I still read anything I can get my hands on and fortunately there are magazines, web sites and countless books about fly fishing. In this electronic age there are also DVD's, CD-ROM's and videos to watch that will help you with everything from tricking trout to tackling tarpon.

Probably the most efficient way to get better though is to hire a guide or instructor. I still like fishing with guides because I always seem to learn something. I find when exploring new waters with a guide, I learn more about the area, the fish and discover new ways to catch them.

As with any athletic endeavor, fly fishing is something you can get better at through practice. Some people practice their casting in the backyard. It certainly helps to be a good caster, but there is much more to learn to fool fish with a fly consistently.



*If you share your fly fishing experience with an accomplished angler you will get to take fish pictures like this!*

When you do get time on the water make it count. Even if the fish are small treat them like big wily fish. I practice stalking small fish carefully and casting to them accurately. Pay attention to what they may be feeding on and imitating it as best you can. Being serious about fooling small fish is great practice. Who knows when the next gently dimpling fish will turn out to be a monster!

Once you gain confidence make sure you share the love of fly fishing. This way of enjoying the outdoors is something special that should not be kept to yourself. If you share your fly fishing knowledge you will have friends to share fishing trips and tell stories with for years to come.



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