



# Deadly Dry Flies

By Steve May

There is no more exciting way to catch fish than with a dry fly on the surface. You see your fly, you see the fish and you see the fish take. It is very visual and a spectacle of nature that you will want to experience again and again. The nice thing is that I think it is also one of the easiest ways to get hooked up while fly-fishing.

It is simple to teach people how to fish a dry fly properly. The reason for this is that you can see exactly what your fly is doing through the entire drift. If it is floating at the same speed as the bubbles and foam on the water around it, then you are doing it right.

If you see a motor boat wake behind your fly or it is traveling down the river at a different speed than the bubbles and debris then you need to make improvements to your drift.

There are only a few things that affect the drift. Current can be your friend or the enemy. The current takes your fly naturally to the fish, or it makes your fly skate unnaturally over the fish. You just have to manage this current properly.

One thing that a lot of anglers like to do is make long casts to rising fish. Their philosophy is that this will not spook the fish. Think about it for a second. A long sloppy cast is not as accurate, so you may have your line float over the fish, not your fly. Your long casts probably don't land as softly on the water as a short accurate one does. It may also take several casts to be accurate enough to get your fly right over the fish when you are casting to the next area code. For this reason make short casts. This may require more time to get into position, but it is all part of the experience.

Putting slack into a presentation is easy for beginners because there is usually slack built into every one of your casts! Slack is your friend, but not too much! A cast that lands in a heap will not fool many fish. With a little slack the different currents are absorbed by this

slack line. The fly will float naturally until the slack is pulled out of the line.

There are several ways to work with the current and to get a good dry fly drift. The easiest is to cast upstream and let the fly drift back towards you. This automatically puts slack in your presentation. Across stream presentations are a favorite of many anglers, but different current speeds can make it more challenging to get a long drag free drift. Downstream presentations requires a different type of cast. The most common cast for this presentation is called a pile cast. The line lands in a heap providing a lot of slack line. Yes, you can tell your friends that you made your line land in a pile on purpose.



*A careful dry fly presentation fooled this big old Grand River Brown trout during an Hendrickson hatch.*

With a good presentation and a little observation to determine what bugs the fish are eating you will definitely get hooked up with your share of fish. Who knows, you may not want to fish a nymph or streamer again?



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