



The Bobbin

November 2008

Newsletter of the Durban Fly Tyers, PO Box 889, Westville, 3630

Chairman's CHIRP for November 08

Hi Everyone, Great to be back after 2 weeks away in Oz. Unfortunately there was no time for fishing (much to Claire's delight). We stayed in a small village called Druin about 130km east of Melbourne. Countryside lush green pasture interspersed with Gum forests. To the north the mountains are full of crystal clear streams which flow through dense forest. Fishing would be a mission and one would have to wade in the river bed as the verges are impassable. Never the less my mouth was watering. Some pictures below of a small stream in the bush, an old rail bridge over the Thompson river, a relic of the gold mining era, and a view of a typical mountain road through the forest.



Enough about my travels and back to fly tying. A big thanks to Raymond Meneses for tying for us at the last meeting and congratulations to Paul Leisegang for once again taking the honors and to Peter Dippenaar the runner up. Their fly's pictured below.



Paul's Winning Fly



Pete's colourful creation

Cheers for now. See you all Monday evening.
Jay

NEXT MEETING :

Venue: Held at the Westville Library.
Date: Monday 3rd November 2008
Time: 7pm for 7:30pm



From the Editor's Desk..



Greetings to all Fellow Flyfishers,

The windy months are upon us, unsettled weather, dirty rivers and discoloured seas to content with. Well this seems to be the reason that I'm not hearing any news from you guys.

So without further ado; below is a fisher wolf of note. Have no idea which category he / she falls into. However he / she is very good at sight fishing, also note how aware he / she is of danger lurking about.

Remember we need to be just as cautious when we are fishing.



Take care out there!

The Ed MEMBER'S SNIPPETS

Giants Castle – 10 and 11 October 2008

On the weekend of 10-11 October I was fortunate to spend a bit of time fishing with my oldest fishing buddy Grant who now lives in Sydney. We were at Giants and fished several hours on the Bushmans River there. After a long dry winter the fishing was difficult in such thin water and the fish were extremely spooky, although plentiful. Over two sessions we got about 15 brown trout ranging in size from 7cm to about a pound. All we caught on dry flies (Adams, Humpy, Rat faced McDougall etc) although we did also try the nymph on a few pools. In most pools we found fish holding at the tail out of the pool and very difficult to present to without any drag. And because they were so spooky if you didn't get the fish at the tail out it spooked the rest in the pool and if you did get him it also spooked the rest in the pool any way so that was your only chance. The pocket water and riffles proved a bit easier although yielded small fish. In summary we had some of the most challenging and technical stream fishing I have had for a while but satisfying none the less. Below are some pics for your enjoyment.

Paul Leisegang



Prospecting amongst the boulders



Fish on!!



Delightful little brown

Rivers & Lakes

By Peter Dip

Nothing to report back to HQ this month, with the exception of letting you know that no one showed up for the bass outing to the Inanda Dam on the 12th. This is such a pity as Saturday was hot with Sunday being a real stinker. Besides it being a good day out with glorious weather to boot, the water would have been warm & the bass would have been very active & very hungry, especially as they are now starting to spawn.

As there has nothing else forthcoming on the fresh water side, I have included an article that hopefully you will find interesting & be able to add to your armoury.

Article on the Snail & Tying Patterns

By Jeff Morgan

Trout anglers have long ignored the snail, just as they ignored leeches before them, black flies today, and Daphnia well into tomorrow. Even a prominent writer such as Gary Borger, who loves to fish snails himself, has been modest in his endorsement of them.

Despite angler's lacklustre enthusiasm, snails can be a significant food resource for trout in both lakes and streams.

Locally Important

Trout certainly are not the pre-eminent consumer of snails. Carp, suckers, and whitefish (all with downward-facing mouths perfect for plucking snails from the bottom), as well as pumpkinseed sunfish and yellow perch, probably consume snails at a greater clip than do trout.

However, the scientific literature reveals some interesting facts. One resource, Dr. Robert Dillon's book *The Ecology of Freshwater Molluscs*, devotes an entire chapter to the importance of molluscs in the diets of trout, sunfish, carp, and other game fish.

There are also professional studies that have found trout streams where molluscs make up almost 40 percent of the trout diet!

Biologist Lynn Kaeding's study of the legendary Firehole River, where anglers worship Baetis and Ephemerella mayflies like minor Hindu gods, aquatic snails were found in 82-86% of the trout sampled and contributed 26-38 percent of the total quantity of food consumed

Snail Habitat

Aquatic snails have a body that even novice anglers can distinguish. With their spiral, coiled shell or spiral-conical shell, and a muscular "foot"(used for transportation) that can be extended or withdrawn into the shell for defence, the aquatic snail has few look-alikes. In addition to its foot, an aquatic snail has two horns, which support the eyes. The colours of aquatic snails are an array of dull quasi-browns, greys, and blacks.

Snail size can range widely, from two to 70 millimetres in length. Size also depends on location, with smaller specimens generally abundant in calm, calcium-rich waters and larger specimens inhabiting the wave-beaten shores of larger lakes.

It's generally accepted that trout don't feed heavily on snails much larger than fifteen millimetres, and this may be due to the fact that trout lack the powerful crushing jaws needed to crack the thicker shells of these big snails.

Where are snails most common? Streams and spring-fed lakes with high calcium carbonate levels can be loaded with snails, as calcium carbonate is the essential mineral needed for shell construction. In this sense, scuds and snails prefer the same types of water, so when you find one in abundance, keep an eye out for the other.

Snails are also rarely found in acidic waters, and almost never where the pH is lower than 6.2. Dissolved oxygen is also a critical factor, with snails and trout both preferring oxygen-saturated waters.

Snails like shallows with a minimum of wave action or swift water. Cobble substrates offer a permanent base for algae growth (unlike sand or small pebbles) and this makes them an ideal habitat for aquatic snails.

On large windswept lakes, snail populations will be much higher on the leeward shoreline, where the winds rarely dislodge the vulnerable creatures. If the winds reverse, however, snails can be dislodged by the millions, floating on the surface with their foot attached to the underside of the meniscus. At other times, snails will hang in this manner while feeding on algae trapped in the meniscus.

Substrate preference is often species-specific, but varies throughout the order. Some species love thick watercress, others can't coexist with it but love mud. Others can't move over mud and prefer large rocks or logs.

It's too complex to document here, but it is important to locate what type of substrate snails prefer on the waters where you fish, as you can, in turn, target similar micro-habitats with your imitations.

Snails as Trout Food

Trout predation on snails is a highly individualistic behaviour. The average component of snails in the trout diet may be around 2-3 percent on a particular stream. But that average may have come about because 85 trout consume no molluscs and fifteen trout eat 30 percent molluscs. This may explain the "boom and bust" productivity that makes anglers reluctant to use snail imitations.

Trout feed on molluscs via two primary methods: grubbing and catastrophe. When "grubbing," trout cruise the bottom--snout down--and simply pluck the snails off the bottom. Grubbing lacks the grace of sipping mayflies, but it gets the job done. This is an easy feeding mechanism to recognize on the stream, but remember that besides molluscs, trout "grub" when targeting black fly larvae, aquatic worms, caddis larvae, scuds, and many other critters. If you find snails in a fish's stomach, yet you aren't sure where the trout ate the snails, look for debris. Often grubbing fish are loaded with gravel and indigestible plant material.

The other way trout consume snails is through a "catastrophe," i.e. when a disruption to the substrate causes a mass dislodgement of snails. The catastrophe situation is important to anglers because a large percentage of the trout population can shift their focus to this food source when it's available.

The most important example of catastrophe-based feeding is when waves crash on the shore of a large lake, stirring up the substrate, and causing floating snails to pepper the surface. Other catastrophe situations might include flood conditions or when anglers, horses, or children trample through the water upstream of your fishing site.

As with crayfish and baitfish, larger fish tend to feed on molluscs more than smaller fish. This holds for many species of fish, as larger fish have a stronger digestive tract that can more efficiently break down the hard shell of the snail. Trout also tend to feed on softer-shelled molluscs, having trouble digesting the harder-shelled ilk. These softer-shelled molluscs, as previously mentioned, may also drift further or float better than other snails.

Despite all I've said here, don't get the impression that aquatic snails are critical to the diet of every trout. Several New Zealand studies outlined instances where snails were extremely common in the drift, though rarely ingested by trout. Snails aren't always critical, but in certain circumstances they can be, and as is the case of many other trout foods, they always seem to be important when you are least prepared to deal with them!

The Snail No One Wants

Unfortunately, one of the more common snails in trout waters (and growing even more common daily) is the New Zealand Mud Snail. This tiny, 2-4mm black snail is a grazing feeder and can out compete the Baetis, Epeorus, Glossosoma and other important grazing insects.

While competition is a problem, the fact that trout cannot digest mud snails is an even bigger one. On rivers like the Firehole and upper Madison (and a growing number of streams throughout the West), this snail has decimated Baetis populations in some areas. Rocks once covered with Glossosoma cases are now adorned with these little evil black specks.

Washing your boots between fishing trips will help prevent the spread of this serious threat to our trout streams.

Fly Patterns

"Snails don't move fast." This factoid has been pounded into us all since we are children, right? Why then do some fly tiers construct weighted snail patterns that require a steady retrieve to keep them from hanging up on the bottom?

When fishing snail patterns, the best thing you can do is leave them alone. Often, this calls for buoyant patterns, regardless of whether you are fishing them deep or in the surface film.

The most common snail imitations utilize a single body material-chenille, deer hair, or foam-with a soft hen hackle, to create a simple pattern. There is nothing wrong with simple patterns, especially for snails, but they must be in the right location.

For floating snail imitations, I have found that patterns that hang just under the surface--imitating a snail with its foot in the meniscus and shell hanging down below--are most effective. All-deer hair or all-foam patterns float high, often partially above the surface. But when saturated with water, or after they catch a fish, these patterns slowly sink. I prefer a combination of materials, so one part sinks, and the other part has enough buoyancy to keep the fly tight to the surface film.

There is a time and place for weighted imitation: when trout are clearly grubbing the bottom for snails. When pursuing these kinds of fish, it is important to pick out a fish slowly cruising along the bottom, sucking up all the snails in its path. Cast a pattern about ten feet ahead of a fish, let the fly sink to the bottom, and leave it be. If the trout is actually feeding on snails, then the trout will almost certainly consume your imitation. If the fish isn't feeding on snails, your fly won't even get the dignity of an inspection.

If fish aren't immediately interested, do not twitch or swim your pattern. Besides spooking the fish on that cast--if you saw a snail dart off in six-inch spurts, you may also think it possessed--you will likely make the fish warier to future presentations.

Weighted patterns can be as simple or as complex as you prefer. A simple pattern, like the ppp Raggedy Snail, is created out of a ball of Woolly Chenille over a lead underbody. The chenille provides an excellent segmented shell look, even though it is easy to tie. If you want to add a "foot" to the pattern you could easily superglue one on, though I would assume that a snail remains in the shell when drifting.

Sizes

The snails consumed by fish tend to be smallish, and I rarely fish an imitation larger than a #10. The preferred range is size 12-16. On lakes, a size 12 floating imitation is nearly always my first choice. Only when sight-fishing to trout grubbing along the shoreline substrate will I break out weighted imitations on lakes.

For stream snails, I have settled on a size 16 imitation, usually tied in olive, brown, or black. The colour may not be a critical key, but I have found that some colours fish better than others at times. Size 16 imitations are good to cover your bases: if the snails are about that size, you're in business and if the trout prefer large ones they are more forgiving of smaller imitations than overly large ones. Snail imitations in streams are best fished dead-drift below wading anglers, who dislodge them while walking around.

What Role?

How big of a role do snails play in my fly boxes? They surely are not in the starting line-up. On lakes, I may carry a half-dozen each of four patterns, unless I am fishing a lake with trout known to key in on snails, when I would carry more. On rivers, this would be reduced a couple each of a weighted and un-weighted pattern.

Consider having a handful of snail, crayfish, aquatic worms, daphnia, black flies, cicadas, and other seemingly "random" food source patterns. This only takes up half of a small fly box.

While that box may only be opened a half dozen times a season, it may account for a half dozen situations where you conquered a problem that befuddled the rest of the anglers on the water.

Raggedy Snail



Uses

Imitates a snail, either floating or on the bottom, depending on the dressing. This pattern works in either rivers or lakes and doubles as a viable imitation of stockier versions of dragonfly larvae.

- Trout can be selective on snails when large numbers of them are available.

Variations

Tied with a foam body for buoyancy, this pattern can be used near the surface or suspending near weed beds. (See instructions below)

Materials

- Hook:** Dai Riki 300, size 12-16
Under body: Black dubbing to give bulk, add lead for sinking version (**Optional**)
Body: Foam strip (**Floating version**)
Body: Olive, brown, or black woolly chenille
Hackle: Soft brown hen hackle

Tying Instructions

1. De-barb hook, place hook in vise, and start thread.
2. Wrap hook shank with lead wire (**optional, for sinking version**).
3. Tie in foam strip (**Floating version**)
4. Tie in woolly chenille
5. Wrap foam around shank, tie off.
6. Wrap woolly chenille over foam under body.
7. Tie in hackle, wrap hackle tie off.
8. Whip finish and cement head.

How to Fish

Pick out a fish slowly cruising along the bottom, feeding on snails (or so you surmise). Cast about ten feet ahead of the fish, let the fly sink to the bottom, and leave it be; it should rest in one place and not drift with the current or rod action. If the trout is actually feeding on snails, it will probably consume your imitation. If the fish isn't feeding on snails, your fly won't even get the dignity of an inspection. Obviously, this all works best when you're sight fishing. If fish aren't immediately interested, **DO NOT** twitch or swim your pattern; you'll only spook the fish.

When using a floating version, present with the *“chuck & sit”* presentation, or use a full sinking line and cast near weed beds for a static, *“suspending snail”* presentation.

Saltwater Feedback

By Graeme Neary

With the lousy weather lately I don't think too much fishing has been done by too many & I'm also suffering from very serious case of writers block this month.

Haydn & I went down to Casino Beach two weeks ago; however we found that no channels or holes had formed. We flogged the water for a while with our only rewards being two wave garrick for Haydn & one for me.

This past Sunday I accompanied a friend of mine on a little jaunt down to a spot on the South Coast near Green Point called "Errol Hayes". This is a very popular with the rock & surf boys, the spot offers east & west fishing depending on wind direction. There is also a beach on the south side but this was very steep due to there being a big shore break. Unfortunately no takers but a spot I'd like to try out again.

I have managed to put in some fresh water time lately & have managed to get in a lot of fly tying for myself & a friend.

I have been invited as a guest of the FFA to join them on a weekend trip on 1st /2nd November. We are to be hosted by the South Coast Fly Fishing Club whose home waters are Port Shepstone. They have arranged to put us up for the weekend as well as put us on the waters of the Mpejati Reserve which is a few kms away from Port Edward.

This has a nice estuary for which we will be using kick boats etc, as well as a long surf zone. Hopefully I will be able to report back at the November meeting, with some good news & pictures as proof that we do manage to catch fish for a change.

Until the meet on the 3rd November, keep those vises busy and bobbin articles coming.

Tight lines

Ye Olde Salty Bugger.

November 2008

Day	High	Low	High	Low	High	Moon	Sunrise	Sunset
Sat 1	4:55 AM	10:55 AM	5:03 PM	11:17 PM			5:01 AM	6:17 PM
Sun 2	5:24 AM	11:24 AM	5:30 PM	11:45 PM			5:00 AM	6:18 PM
Mon 3	5:56 AM	11:56 AM	6:00 PM				4:59 AM	6:19 PM
Tue 4		12:18 AM	6:35 AM	12:36 PM	6:37 PM		4:58 AM	6:20 PM
Wed 5		1:00 AM	7:32 AM	1:41 PM	7:37 PM		4:58 AM	6:21 PM
Thu 6		2:12 AM	9:13 AM	3:48 PM	9:41 PM	First Quarter	4:57 AM	6:21 PM
Fri 7		4:10 AM	11:08 AM	5:41 PM	11:33 PM		4:56 AM	6:22 PM
Sat 8		5:40 AM	12:14 PM	6:38 PM			4:55 AM	6:23 PM
Sun 9	12:34 AM	6:36 AM	1:00 PM	7:20 PM			4:55 AM	6:24 PM
Mon 10	1:19 AM	7:21 AM	1:40 PM	7:57 PM			4:54 AM	6:25 PM
Tue 11	1:59 AM	8:01 AM	2:18 PM	8:33 PM			4:54 AM	6:26 PM
Wed 12	2:37 AM	8:41 AM	2:55 PM	9:10 PM			4:53 AM	6:26 PM
Thu 13	3:16 AM	9:20 AM	3:33 PM	9:48 PM		Full Moon	4:52 AM	6:27 PM
Fri 14	3:56 AM	10:00 AM	4:11 PM	10:26 PM			4:52 AM	6:28 PM
Sat 15	4:36 AM	10:41 AM	4:51 PM	11:07 PM			4:51 AM	6:29 PM
Sun 16	5:19 AM	11:24 AM	5:32 PM	11:50 PM			4:51 AM	6:30 PM
Mon 17	6:06 AM	12:12 PM	6:18 PM				4:50 AM	6:31 PM
Tue 18		12:37 AM	7:00 AM	1:08 PM	7:12 PM		4:50 AM	6:31 PM
Wed 19		1:35 AM	8:08 AM	2:25 PM	8:27 PM	Last Quarter	4:50 AM	6:32 PM
Thu 20		2:52 AM	9:39 AM	4:09 PM	10:09 PM		4:49 AM	6:33 PM
Fri 21		4:28 AM	11:12 AM	5:43 PM	11:43 PM		4:49 AM	6:34 PM
Sat 22		5:49 AM	12:20 PM	6:45 PM			4:48 AM	6:35 PM
Sun 23	12:46 AM	6:46 AM	1:08 PM	7:30 PM			4:48 AM	6:36 PM
Mon 24	1:31 AM	7:30 AM	1:47 PM	8:06 PM			4:48 AM	6:36 PM
Tue 25	2:09 AM	8:07 AM	2:22 PM	8:39 PM			4:48 AM	6:37 PM
Wed 26	2:42 AM	8:41 AM	2:53 PM	9:10 PM			4:47 AM	6:38 PM
Thu 27	3:14 AM	9:13 AM	3:24 PM	9:40 PM		New Moon	4:47 AM	6:39 PM
Fri 28	3:46 AM	9:45 AM	3:54 PM	10:10 PM			4:47 AM	6:40 PM
Sat 29	4:17 AM	10:17 AM	4:25 PM	10:40 PM			4:47 AM	6:41 PM
Sun 30	4:49 AM	10:49 AM	4:55 PM	11:10 PM			4:47 AM	6:41 PM

	Neap Tides	Spring Tides
Moon Phases:	First Quarter – 6 th	Full Moon – 13 th
	Last Quarter – 19 th	New Moon – 27 th

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