

The FLYpaper

Carson Fly Fishing Club

P.O. Box 3163, Carson City, NV 89702



Calendar

April 11, Tying @ Empire Ranch 5:00 pm

April 13, Tie-A-Thon Sheriff's Office 10am to 2pm

April 16, General Meeting, 7:00 pm

May 7, Board Meeting, 6:00 pm, Pizza Factory

President's Letter

Hi all:

We have several events going on in April and I would like to keep everyone up to date: First, we discussed having a fish out at Topaz Lake April 6th. That event has been cancelled. The weather may effect Saturday with the upcoming storm coming in. No one wants to be out in windy weather.

Second, our fly tying session is Thursday April 11 at Empire Ranch GC Clubhouse. We'll be tying a Griffith's Gnat. An easy dry fly consisting to 2 materials, peacock herl and dry fly hackle. Materials will be provided. Fly tying starts around 500 PM. Come early for dinner and support the venue.

Third, CFFC's Tie A Thon is April 13th at the Carson City Sheriff's Office (same room as our general meetings). Event is 1000 AM - 200 PM. All flies tied will be donated to High Sierra Flycasters for their charity events. Pick your favorite flies and come tie with us. CFFC will provide lunch and a raffle drawing for those who attend.

CFFC Officers & Board

President. Ken Briscoe

Vice President John Walsh

Treasure Dave Conklin

Secretary. Stan Zuber

Board Members:

Ray Achen. Carol Birchill

Ernie Walsh Jim Elie

Bill Hammons

Fishing Reports:

www.renoflyshop.com

www.sierrabrightdot.com

Nevada Fishing

Regulations:

https://www.eregulations.com/nevada/fishing#google_vignette

Fourth, there's a group of us headed to Wildhorse Reservoir the week of April 15th. Wildhorse Reservoir is approximately 6 hours from Reno. The Reservoir is a prime fishing spot to catch Rainbows, Browns and Tiger Trout along with large and smallmouth bass. If you're interested, your welcome to come fish with us. We'll be camping on land operated by the Duckwater Indian Reservation. A camping fee is required and a Nevada State fishing license. The location is the first major bay prior to reaching the Nevada State Park. Any questions about the trip, please give a call at 775 848-4165 or email at kcbriscoe@charter.net.

Hope to see everyone at our fly tying events.
Tight Lines and be safe,
Ken Briscoe

Our next meeting is April 16th 7 PM at the Carson City Sheriff's Office. This month's speaker is Sam Sedillo NDOW Fishery Biologist. He will talk about the Truckee River and local waters. We'll have our general raffle and "fly-flye". For those who aren't familiar with it, bring two flies. One for the general raffle and another for a special drawing for those who brought flies.

CFFC Lets Go Fishing

Is a private group on Facebook for Carson Fly Fishing Club members. Members can post to members. Members will receive an invitation to join the group via email.

FLY TYING AT EMPIRE RANCH GOLF COURSE

On April 11 at 5:00 pm, we will have the monthly, fly tying session at Empire Ranch Golf Course, 1875 Fair Way, Carson City, NV. No experience necessary and materials will be provided. If you want to learn or just come and watch, you're welcome to attend. No equipment! You can use the club's equipment, just let us know so we can have it there.

Empire Ranch Restaurant is staying open for our event. If you would like to join us for dinner arrive at 4:30 pm. Contact Stan Zuber (775) 6712151 if you have any questions or need equipment. See you there.

This month's instructor is Ken Briscoe. The fly he'll be tying is a Griffith's Gnat.



ATTENTION ALL FLY TIERS

Tie-A-Thon April 13, 2024

The Carson Fly Fishing Club is holding a Tie-A-Thon on April 13, 2024. The purpose of this event is to tie flies for the High Sierra Fly Casters to use in their programs. All Fly Tiers are Invited. A sandwich lunch and raffle will take place.

When: Saturday April 13, 2024 10:00am to 2:00pm

Where: Carson City Sheriff's Office, 911 E. Muster St., Carson City, NV

Flies To Tie: Woolly Buggers, Sheep Creek Specials, BH Pheasant Tails Nymphs, BH Midges and Hoppers.
Materials will be on site.

Programs that will use the flies:

Reel Recovery

Reel Vets

Reel Kids

Message From Earl Arnold, President SWCFFI

Last Saturday, about forty to fifty community members gathered at the Tri-County Fairgrounds to attend a meeting hosted by the Eastern Sierra (District 6) California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Local DFW fish biologist Nick Buckmaster spearheaded the presentation to educate the group - which consisted of local guides, marina operators, and concerned citizens. Nick was accompanied by other DFW biologists, Hot Creek Hatchery staff, and District 6 game wardens. The message relayed was generally accepted as a very positive one as to how DFW is addressing concerns of a depleted trout population in the Eastern Sierra – particularly in the case of Crowley Lake. Nick has been made aware of the data provided to DFW by local guides and anglers alike of a consistent dropping of numbers of trout caught in Crowley Lake. DFW has also been collecting data that correlates with numbers others have shared with them. Most guides and recreational anglers will agree that the 2023 fishing season was the worst one seen on Crowley, ever. But, Nick and his staff are taking a proactive approach to addressing the issue.

Buckmaster positively reported that stocking efforts in Crowley are bouncing back to pre-2020 fish stocking levels. Since 2020, the local hatcheries have taken a beaten, mostly in the form of disease outbreaks that have led to the eradication of hundreds of thousands of fish. Nick has reported that the hatcheries are operating with healthy fish at this time, and a lot have already been stocked in waters around the region. Crowley isn't the only benefactor of the uptick in stocking. Lakes like Convict Lake and Twin Lakes and a handful of others have also seen more fish being put into the water. Nick emphasized that the data that DFW does have clearly illustrates that of every species of trout, rainbow trout in particular have had the most constant decline in numbers and therefore stocking efforts are largely being concentrated on rainbow trout. But putting fish in the lake isn't just enough, it is also equally important in tracking the progress of stocking. DFW is looking at new, creative ways to data collect per the health of the fishery.

Eastern Sierra (District 6) fisheries branch will begin to more aggressively collect data from anglers. Data no doubt will drive stocking. There was no discussion of regulation changes at the meeting, the conversation centered around increasing stocking. Remember the angler survey cards in the rusty brown metal boxes? The local DFW department will implement “e-creels” for Crowley Lake this fishing season where every angler fishing on Crowley will be asked to log into a website (details coming later from DFW) and report everyday of angling. Their staff continued that they have the goal to roll this same system of data collection out throughout the Eastern Sierra to other fisheries, hopefully as soon as 2025. Nick elaborated that prizes for such logs as biggest fish or most fish caught will be rewarded. DFW has \$10,000 for rewards. The question was asked how DFW will also incentivize anglers who don’t catch fish to report out also, as this is equally important. He replied that the department is looking into rewards for categories like “hard luck” or “getting skunked.” The department understands it needs a well-balanced reporting system that logs not only fishing being caught but also fish not being caught.

Other questions asked included if the local hatchery will look at stocking in ways that allows fish to escape predator birds that circle the hatchery trucks when fish are being put into the water. The hatchery staff is looking at logistically stocking trout away from feeding birds. Another question was asked if the department can look to the Town of Mammoth Lakes or Visit Mammoth for assistance with funding the stocking of fish considering the millions of dollars spent in Mammoth Lakes that Crowley Lake generates every fishing season. It was pointed out that the Town of Mammoth Lakes collects a noticeable amount of Transient Occupancy Tax from guests who fish Crowley but stay in Mammoth. The question – though be it a good one – was answered that the town most likely won’t financially help DFW directly with DFW stocking efforts.

The general feeling from those in attendance at the meeting is that Nick Buckmaster is leading local stocking and data collecting efforts in the right

direction. It looks like there is solid leadership at the fisheries branch of Division 6 DFW, and fish numbers should rebound. More so, with back-to-back winters which produced healthy snowfall.

2 Ways to Determine the Sex of a Trout

/ POSTED ON [DECEMBER 18, 2023](#) / BY [KENT KLEWEIN](#)



Here are two ways to determine the sex of a trout.

Over the years, I've found that the majority of my clients have a hard time determining whether a trout they catch is a male or female. Below are two ways to quickly identify the sex of a trout.

1. LOOK AT THE MOUTH

One of the best ways to distinguish the sex of a trout is to examine the mouth. Female trout all have a short rounded nose or upper jaw, while male trout have a more elongated snout. If your trout has a lower jaw with a kype, it's a male for sure. Although the mouth of a female trout will grow larger as it ages and increases in size, the mouth will never grow a kype (hooked lower jaw). Upon becoming sexually mature, male trout will begin to grow a pronounced kype. At first, it will just be a tell-tale sign, but as a male trout ages, its kype will become more pronounced. It's important to point out that even for trout that aren't sexually mature, an angler can look at the mouth of a trout and see either a uniform mouth with a short rounded nose (female), or a elongated snout with a slightly longer lower jaw (male).

2. LOOK AT THE ANAL FIN



(Left) Male, (Right) Female

Sexually mature male and female trout for both rainbows and browns have different looking anal fins. A male will have a slight convex anal fin “(“”, while a female trout’s anal fin will be slightly concave “)”)”. I’m not sure if cutthroat trout are in the same boat. I’ll have to depend on the community who regularly catch them, to provide us their insight and confirm this.

IS THERE A THIRD WAY TO IDENTIFY A TROUT'S SEX?

When I was writing this post, I ran across a couple references that claimed a female trout's anus will have a round shape, while a male trout's anus will have a triangular shape. I scoured the internet and my personal book collection for a picture that would show this, but I came up empty handed. If anyone can confirm this theory, please take the time to comment on the post. Next time I'm on the water, I'm going to pay close attention to this.

Being able to determine the sex of a trout will not make you a better fly fisherman but I find it to be really cool knowing how to tell the difference. Have a grand day everyone.

Keep it Reel,

Kent Klewein

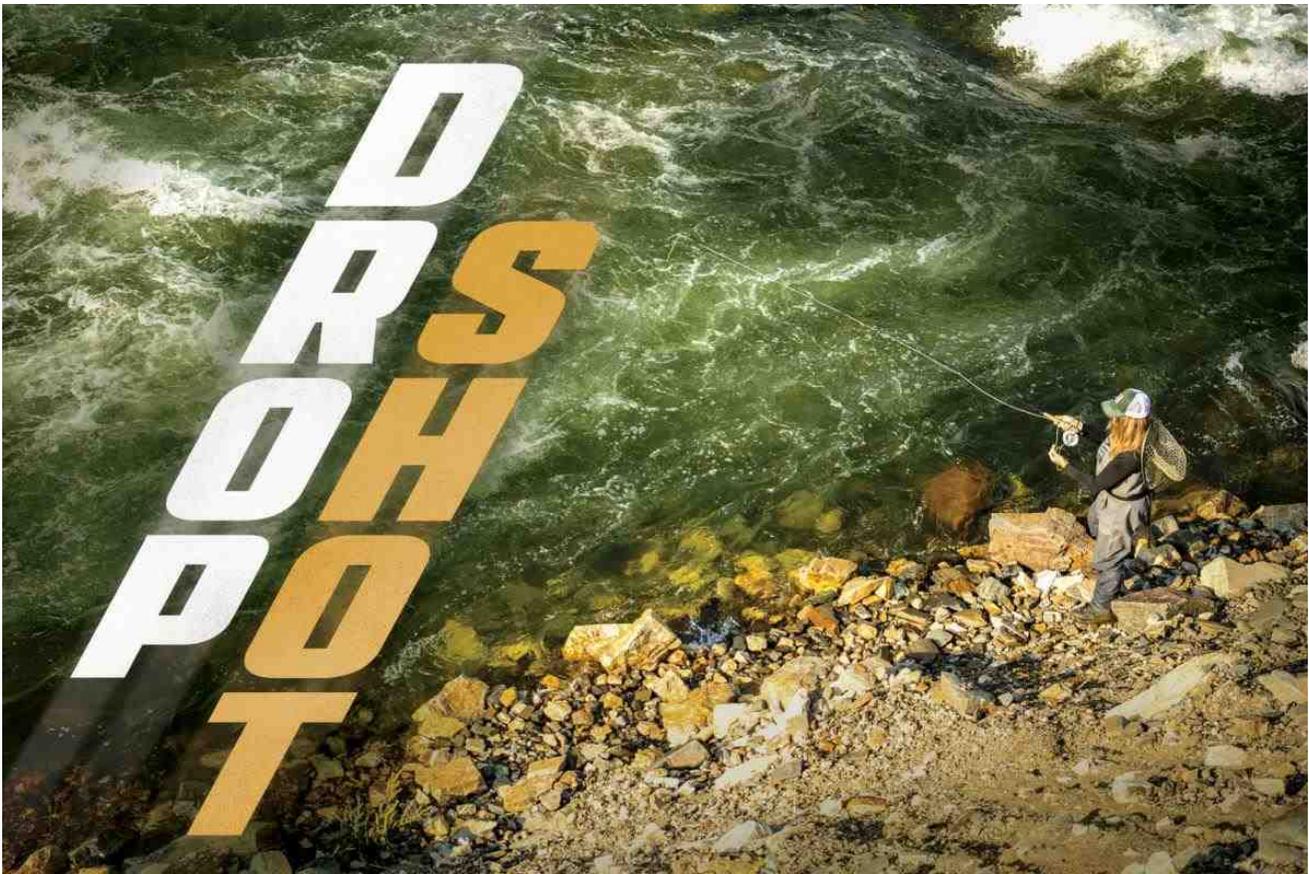
Gink & Gasoline

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Drop Shot Nymphing: Rolling in the Deep

Presenting your flies when nymphing a dynamic range of water types and depths.



There are times when additional weight is needed, in the form of split-shot, to obtain a successful drift where the trout are feeding. (George Daniel photo)

March 06, 2023

By George Daniel

Believe the real estate slogan “location, location, and location” also applies for nymphing presentations. Trout will

not buy into your fly if you don't offer it in the right location. The right location (aka position in the water column) is what nymph fishers always strive for, and the drop-shot approach can position your nymphs in prime real estate.

For nymph fishers, the goal is to present your flies within the strike zone. You can't be a one-trick pony when nymphing a dynamic range of water types and depths.

Trout spend an overwhelming majority of their lives feeding near the stream bottom. In many cases, the use of a dense, European-style beadhead nymph is all the weight you need to achieve the correct depth. These sleek flies coupled with a thin line/leader held above the water allow the patterns to drop quickly into the strike zone. Compared to split-shot rigs, Euro systems tend to tangle less, provide greater connection with nymphs, and are easier to cast. This is why I spend the bulk of my time using European nymphing tactics.

However, I always cringe when I hear other anglers claim that [“Euro nymphing is all you need” to catch trout](#). While Euro tactics succeed in many situations, there are times when I need additional weight, in the form of split-shot, to obtain a successful drift where the trout are feeding.

Euro tactics involve using an “anchor” fly—a weighted nymph tied on the tippet end to drop into the strike zone and take any additional nymphs with it. Using a heavy anchor pattern in deep, fast water is common practice in international fly-fishing competitions, since the use of supplemental weight

such as split-shot is prohibited. In many instances, the sacrificial anchor fly is used to sink a second or even a third pattern. By “sacrificial” I mean the pattern is not likely going to catch a fish. It is used solely as a dead weight to sink the rest of the rig. It often snags the bottom and needs to be replaced.

A heavy anchor fly is necessary when you’re competing at the World Fly Fishing Championships, but it’s usually a waste for most recreational anglers. In some waters, you are legally allowed to use only two flies—so why use one of those patterns as a dead weight? Instead, why not use split-shot in the anchor fly position, and use flies with the correct size and shape to catch trout?

There are times when I can just no longer achieve the right speed and depth using the weight of the flies alone, and I need extra split-shot. It’s at those moments I set up a drop-shot rig.



In deep, swift Western waters, it's often impossible to get small flies down to where the fish are without using split-shot. The drop-shot rig gets you down into the strike zone, and the chain of small split-shot tends to snag the bottom less frequently than other setups. (George Daniel photo)

My favorite example of this is when I'm fishing the swift Madison River with small nymphs. I love the ease of using just weighted flies, but there's only so much weight you can build into a small fly. Large, heavily weighted patterns like large rubber-leg stonefly patterns obviously work on the Madison, but I prefer to use #16-20 patterns. Smaller patterns and deeper, fast water may require extra weight, and this is when the drop-shot approach often outperforms Euro-nymphing tactics.

Drop-shot rigs are pure efficiency. They rely on supplemental weight attached to a tippet end to quickly gain depth. You can

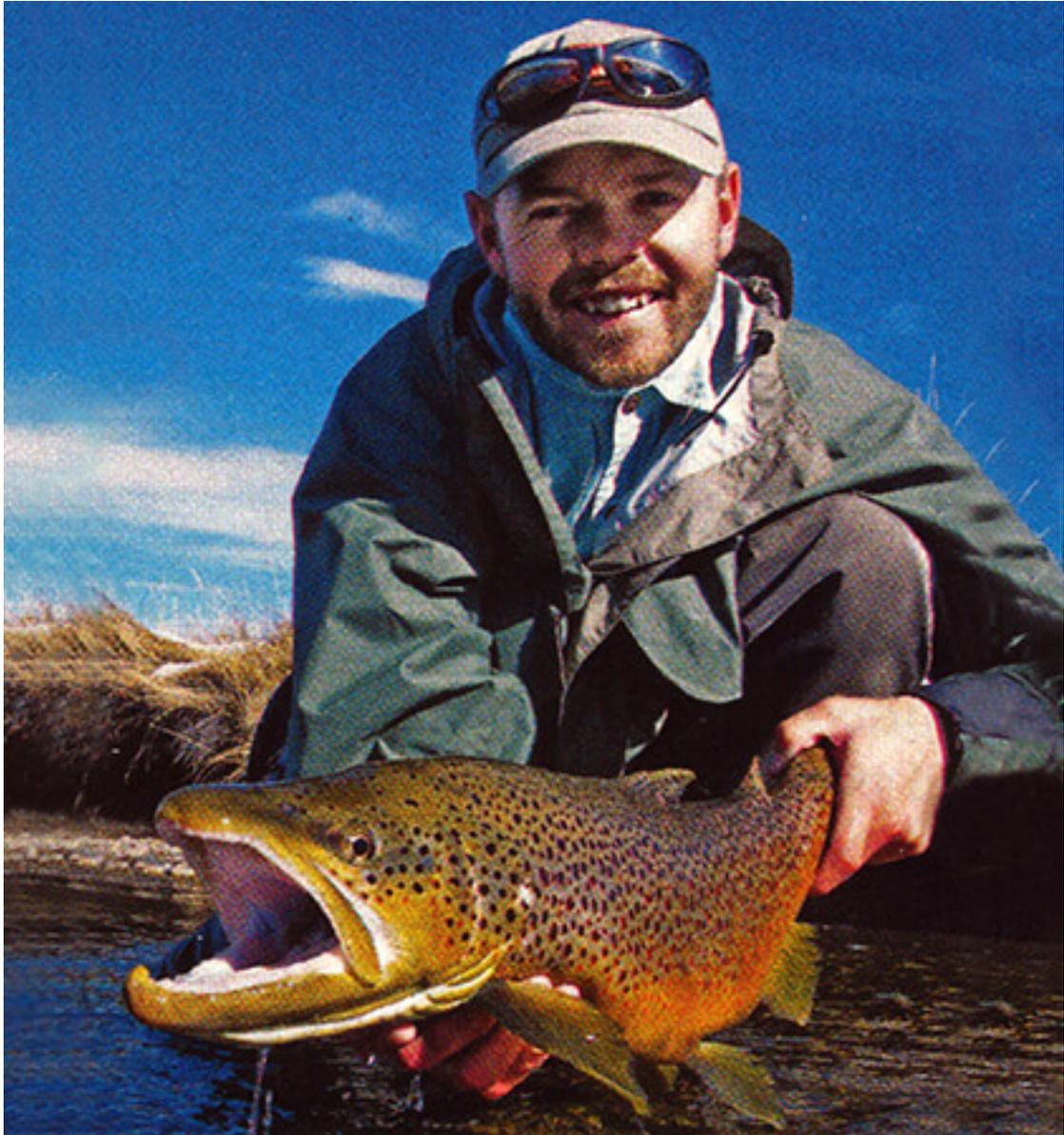
add a nearly unlimited amount of weight to deal with almost any water type, and by adding weight in a series, the weight rolls along the bottom instead of snagging as a single large weight might do. When you do snag the bottom, you lose the split-shot and not valuable flies.

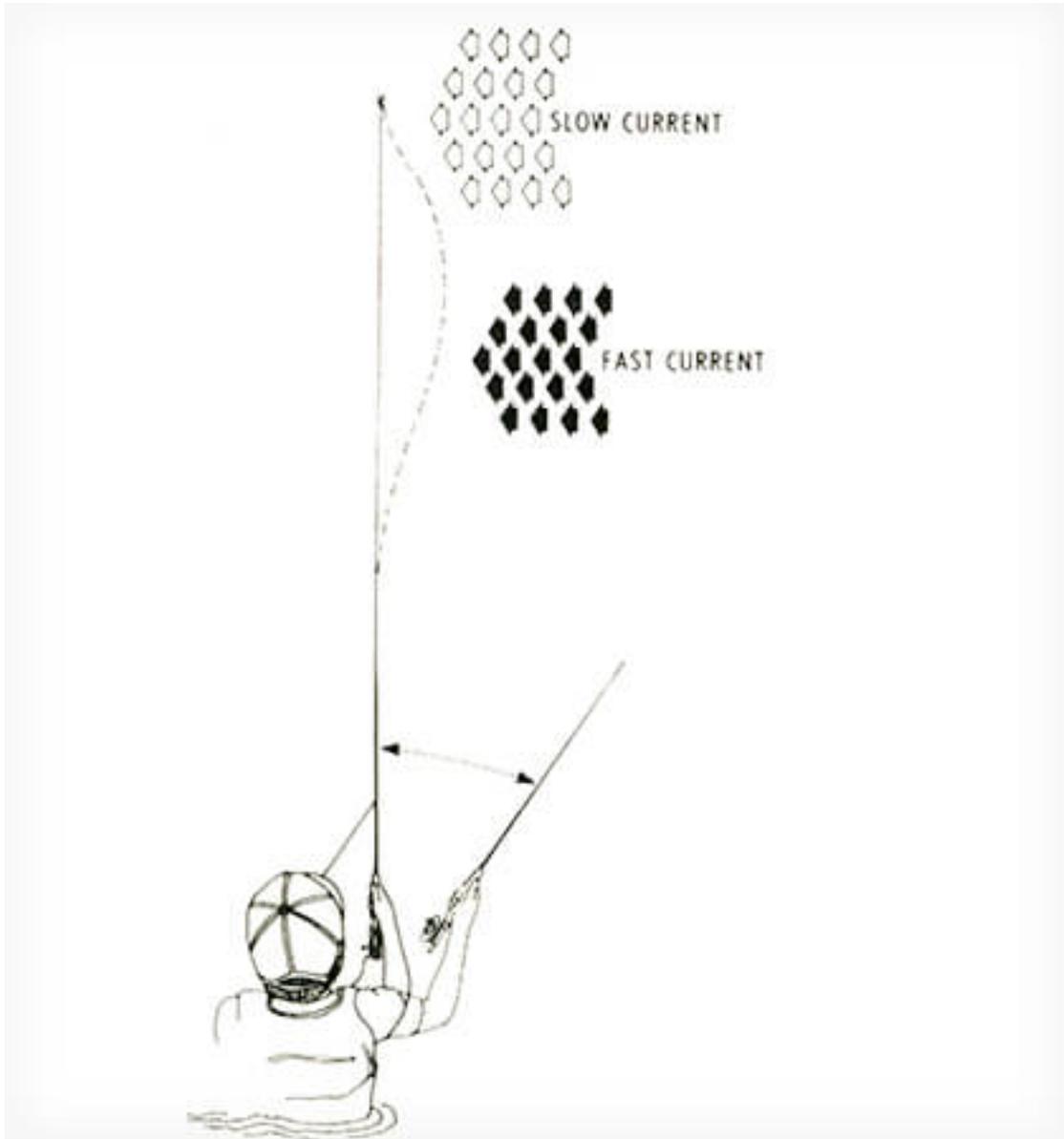
Chain Effect

In a drop-shot rig, you pinch a small chain of split-shot at the tippet end to anchor the entire rig. The main idea is the chain of split-shot will slide or drag along the stream bottom. Spreading the weight over a longer area reduces the chance of the rig snagging.

Using only one large split-shot acts more like an anchor, and tends to grab and hold onto stream bottom. This is even more pronounced on certain types of stream bottoms. For example, many of Pennsylvania's smaller Lake Erie steelhead tributaries have jagged shale bottoms. I've snagged and lost multiple rigs while using just one large split-shot. Switching to a drop-shot rig solved the problem.

This chain effect may not be as important when fishing streams with sandy or pea-gravel bottoms where split-shot is less likely to snag. However, in boulder water, ledgerrock, or any bottom terrain that is highly variable, the weighted chain reduces snags.





Fly Fisherman Throwback: Mend Your Ways

[Read Article](#)





Basic Drop-Shot Rigging

A drop-shot rig is simple. Start with a long and level tippet section below indicator or sighter. When I'm drop-shotting with a modified Euro approach—tight line and no indicator—my tippet length is 1 foot to 2 feet longer than the average water depth. If I'm drop-shotting with an indicator, my tippet is 1.5 to 2 times the average water depth.

For example, if I'm drop-shotting with a modified Euro approach in water that is on average about 4 feet deep, I add 5 feet of 4X tippet below my sighter. I add a single overhand knot at the tippet end to prevent split-shot from sliding off the tippet, but I pinch on the split-shot last.

Next, I add 4-inch to 6-inch dropper tags onto the level tippet using a double or triple surgeon's knot. I usually cut 12 inches of tippet material from the spool to provide ample length to work with when constructing my dropper knots.

Remember, the fly hangs down toward the split-shot, so make sure the knot connection is located on the tippet high enough to maintain 8 to 12 inches between the lower fly and the terminal split-shot.

I trim the upward tag end of the surgeon's knot flush, and use the downward tag end to attach the nymph. You can use longer or shorter droppers, but 4 to 6 inches works best for me. The length allows the fly to move adequately during the drift, and tends to tangle less than longer droppers. With that dropper length, I can make several fly changes if necessary.

Lately, I've found myself using only one dropper fly above the split-shot, but I sometimes add a second dropper tag 16 to 20 inches above the bottom fly, especially if the trout begin feeding higher in the water column.



Start by adding just two small split-shot, and slowly add until you can feel the weights bouncing and rolling along the bottom. If you're using a strike indicator, you should see it tick-tick-ticking as the chain of weights moves along the bottom. The strikes are often savage. (Amidea Daniel photo)

While adding a second fly may double your chances of catching more fish, it also quadruples your chances of getting tangled due to casting errors or while playing fish. Stick to one fly if you rank your casting and fish-playing skills as beginner to intermediate. Otherwise, you'll spend more time untangling or re-rigging than fishing. Even the most experienced anglers sometimes tangle these rigs.

The distance from the bottom fly to the split-shot is determined by the preferred depth you want to fish your flies, but I prefer at least 10 to 12 inches of separation, for three

reasons. First, nymphs don't need to drag right along a stream bottom.

Trout holding near the stream bottom are usually looking up for food. My experience has taught me that a fly riding 10 to 12 inches above the bottom is the optimum distance when the trout are not feeding aggressively.

Second, a fly riding closer to the stream bottom is more likely to snag. I think a prevalent nymphing myth is that you need to roll your nymphs right along the stream bottom. It's not true. With a drop-shot rig, the lead rolls right along the bottom, and the fly is elevated into the strike zone.

Third, tangles between the split-shot and fly occur more often if the distance between them is much shorter than 10 inches.

Of course, you should be aware of how each situation varies, and be ready to adapt to the current situation. For example, if you're fishing in an area with long aquatic plants growing on the bottom, you may need to move the dropper up to avoid snagging the weeds.

If the water is very cold and the fish are unwilling to move, you might need the fly a little closer to the split-shot. And during hatch periods, when the trout are feeding higher in the water column, you should adjust the dropper position upward.

Adding Weight

Add your small split-shot 1 to 2 inches apart, and just above the overhand stopper knot. I use a short string of #4 and #6

split-shot for my home waters, and I use #B and #BB size when fishing larger Western waters like the Madison. The number of split-shot depends entirely on the water depth and speed. Start with two split-shot, and continue adding them until the shot is bouncing off the bottom.

If you are using a tight-line technique, you will feel the weights bouncing on the bottom. With an indicator you will see it tick-tick-ticking as it bounces, and the indicator will move slower than the surface current. If the shot isn't ticking off the stream bottom, you need to add weight.

It's easier to add split-shot than it is to remove it, so add the weight incrementally and make a few drifts after each addition to get a sense if you're getting deep enough.

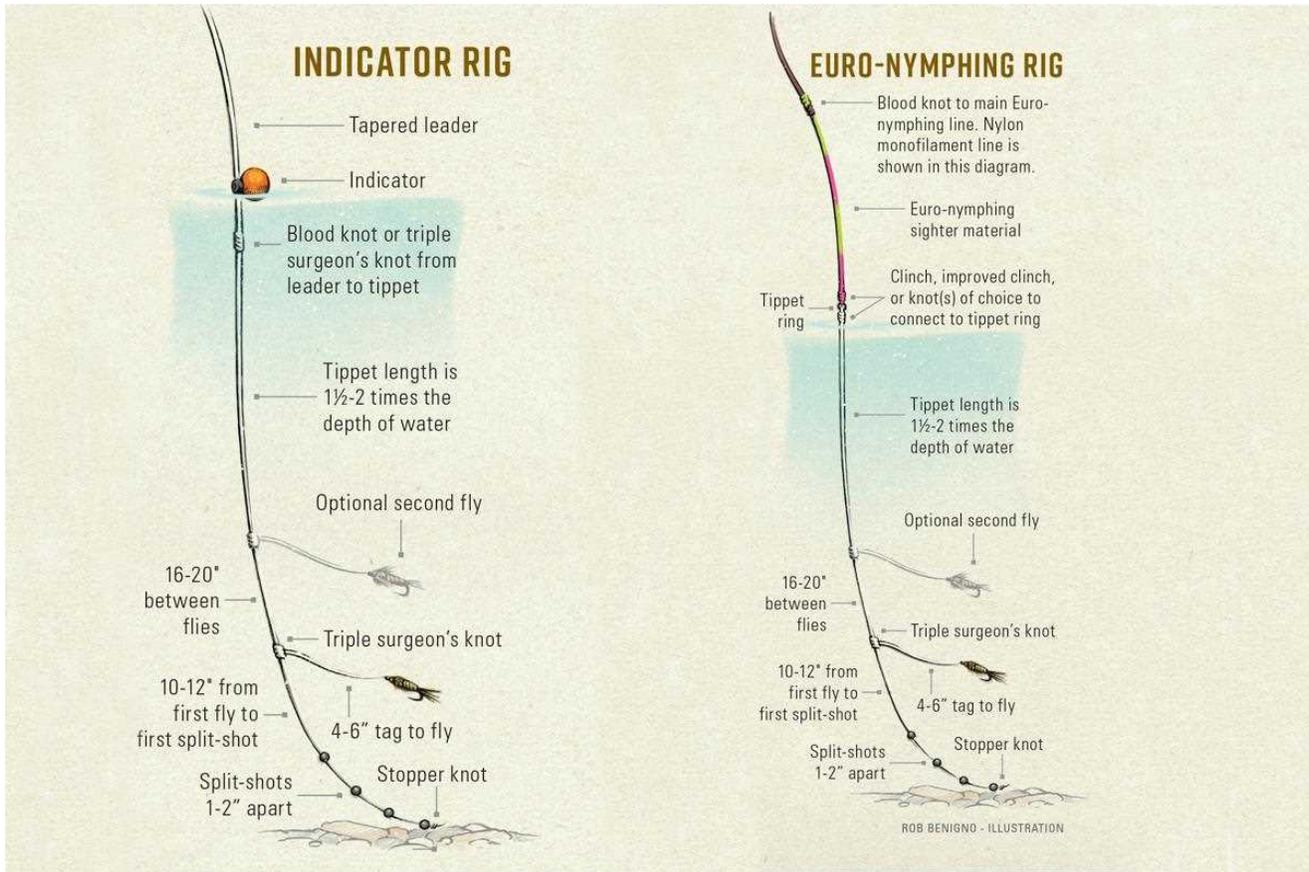
A common mistake is adding too much split-shot at one time, and snagging the bottom. Start with less and add more as you need it.

One of my favorite methods for adjusting weight is using two smaller split-shot 1 to 2 inches apart for fishing slower/shallower water, and then molding tungsten putty around the split-shot when I need additional weight. The putty also smooths out the chain, and tends to hang up on stream bottom less than split-shot alone.

Reducing Tangles

There's no way around it—the frequency of tangles increases the moment you add split-shot to any nymphing rig. Tangles

are inevitable, but there are things you can do to reduce them.



[SEE PHOTO GALLERY](#)

There are differences between indicator drop-shot nymphing and Euro drop-shot nymphing. (Rob Benigno illustrations)

First, with a drop-shot rig, you can increase the tippet diameter for both the main tippet and the droppers. When you are truly Euro nymphing, you need small-diameter tippets (5X-7X) to slice through the water column faster and get your weighted nymphs in the strike zone. But with a drop-shot rig, the chain of split-shot takes care of that, and gets you deep even when you're using 4X or 3X tippet. This larger-diameter tippet will tangle less, and is easier to untangle and salvage

when things do go south. It will also break off on the bottom less often.

A good question I frequently hear is, “Why not use small-diameter tippet and split-shot for an even greater sink rate?” This is a solid question, as the combination of split-shot and small-diameter tippet would certainly create a rapid sink rate. However, split-shot tends to tangle no matter how cleanly you cast, or how smoothly you play a fish.

Using a larger-diameter tippet may not entirely reduce tangles but it creates workable tangles. Based on my experience, knots in 5X and smaller diameters are rarely reversible. Thicker and stiffer monofilament is less likely to tighten. With a drop-shot rig, I use 3X tippet for many larger Western waters and 4X tippet for most Eastern waters.

To reduce tangles, you should also focus on casting with smooth tension throughout the backcast and forward cast. Using short, jerky casting motions will likely create a collision course between the split-shot and the fly. Using a smooth but wide casting arc keeps the heavy rig moving high over the rod tip rather than through the rod tip. [For more specific information on casting a nymph rig weighted with split-shot, read George Daniel’s story “Loop Control: How to squeeze your loop for sneaky presentations, and open it up for indicators and split-shot” in the Aug-Sep 2022 issue, or online at flyfisherman.com. The Editor.]

To avoid tangles, you should also try to keep a hooked trout from jumping out of the water. That’s easier said than done,

but one of the biggest culprits of drop-shot tangles is an airborne fish or a fish making an alligator roll. Sometimes you need a high rod tip angle to lead fish around obstructions, but lifting on the rod tip also may encourage the fish to jump or roll on the surface.

When possible, try to keep a low rod tip angle when you are playing fish—use side pressure to encourage the fish to stay below the surface. You may have to lift the rod tip at the last moment when you slide fish into the net, but at that point, the fish should be tired, and should track straight into the net.

Just as important, avoid lifting the net out of the water once you've netted the trout. A “fish out of water” thrashes and rolls inside the net, so keep the fish comfortable and in the water while you unhook it. It will reduce tangles and is better for the fish.

Reading the Drift

You want the split-shot to bounce or tick along the bottom during your presentation. If you're using a modified Euro approach, you'll feel the weight ticking along the bottom. When you're using an indicator, you'll see the indicator bobbing at the surface as the chain of split-shot progresses along the bottom. Make sure this ticking occurs when your flies are drifting through your targeted area. If no ticking occurs, you may need to add weight or lengthen the cast to allow some time for the split-shot and flies to sink into the strike zone.

Strikes are easy to register, as the line tension created by the split-shot causes you to feel the pickup, or see the indicator get violently yanked under. The strike often feels savage. There's no doubt when a trout takes a nymph while using the drop-shot approach.

Fly Patterns

When I use a drop-shot rig, I try to use lightweight or completely unweighted patterns. What I enjoy most about this approach is that you don't need tungsten beadhead patterns. In fact, I feel weighted patterns may take away from the overall presentation. With this rig you can use nymphs that more accurately imitate specific food items—no beadhead required.

Nymphs are often active in the water, swimming, moving, and bobbing. The bouncing of the drop-shot rig sends vibrations along the tippet and into the fly, and helps create that illusion of life. Lighter nymphs may have more “hop” in their step, with more movement without the loss of contact.

The drop-shot approach has allowed me to use up many of my forgotten lightweight patterns that won't work when I'm strictly Euro nymphing. In many ways, I feel this approach may be just as effective if not more effective than a true Euro approach, except for the hassles always associated with split-shot.

Quick Fixes

I always hope for the best but plan for the worst. Since some drop-shot tangles are unfixable, I carry one or two spare rigs that are ready to go when disaster strikes. Pre-rigging these time-intensive drop-shot rigs saves you fishing time.

Tangles also frequently happen when you are transporting the rod in your vehicle or just walking to the stream. Dangling split-shot or flies will wrap and tangle if they aren't tied down.



Use of split-shot may be banned in some fly-fishing-only waters. (George Daniel photo)

To combat this, I use small rubber twist ties or elastic orthodontist bands to strap down all the loose ends. Taking precautionary measures like this will save you hours of frustration.

Final Thoughts

We all love casting dry flies to rising trout, but that's often not possible. Drop-shot nymphing may not be pretty, but it gets the job done in the most extreme water types, and when the fish aren't actively feeding. The casting is cumbersome and is prone to tangles, but there's no doubt the drop-shot technique gets your nymphs in the strike zone. I wouldn't want to be without it in my bag of nymphing tricks.

It paid off for my wife Amidea while we were fishing a stream near our home last summer. There is a run there that connects a shallow riffle to a deep, slow pool. The trout feed in the riffle in the night and early morning, and then drop slowly through the run and eventually into the deep hole, where they spend most of the day. That transition area is often a money spot in early mornings during the summer.

It's a deep run—likely 4 to 5 feet with medium current, and the only way to get down that deep with small flies is with a drop-shot rig.

Amidea caught the biggest fish I've seen from that area—and that fish is on the cover of this magazine. It was taken on a drop-shot rig with 6X tippet, two #4 split-shot, and a small black sunken ant as the only dropper. It was proof once again that if you want to get down deep with small flies, a drop-shot rig gets the job done.

George Daniel is the author of Nymph Fishing: New Angles, Tactics, and Techniques (Stackpole, 2018). He is a Fly

Fisherman contributing editor and owner of Livin' on the Fly, an educational/guide company in Pennsylvania. He was a coach for both the U.S. Youth Fly Fishing Team and Fly Fishing Team USA and now teaches fly fishing at Penn State University, following in the footsteps of his predecessors Joe Humphreys and George Harvey.

[@georgedanielflyfishing](#) | livinonthe-fly.com.

Trust The Boo

/ POSTED ON MARCH 8, 2023 / BY LOUIS CAHILL



My 7' 4 Weight, My Favorite Rod Photo by Louis Cahill

I've fished bamboo rods my whole life and I've made my

own for the last twelve years or SO.

I can't tell you how many times I've been asked if I was afraid to fight big fish on a bamboo rod. The answer is no. I've broken my share of rods but only once did I break one fighting a fish and that was totally my fault. I've landed more fish over twenty inches on bamboo than I can count, a few pushing thirty. The two fish pictured were both landed on a seven foot four weight. The tip on that rod measures only thirty thousandths of an inch in diameter but it handled those monsters just fine.

Bamboo is a remarkable material. When properly heat treated it has amazing strength. Traditional Japanese carpenters use bamboo nails cooked in a wok and high rise construction all over Asia is done on bamboo scaffolding. Do bamboo rods break? Of course they do but a well made rod is much stronger than you would guess and if properly handled and cared for it will take whatever a fish can dish out. I've heard it said that fisherman break rods, not fish, and I think that's true. With that in mind, here are some tips on how to keep that cane rod fishing for many years.

- **Treat it right.** Bamboo doesn't take a lot of maintenance but there are some things you should think about. Rot is a death sentence for a cane rod. Rod makers spend a lot of time on their finish and it can last a lifetime but it's not bulletproof. Never put a rod away wet. This is the most common mistake guys make with their rods. When you put a rod in a tube with an o ring seal any moisture on that rod or it's sock is in there until you open the tube again. That gives moisture plenty of time to work through the finish and into the wood. I set mine out on the mantle in the sock overnight before storing them. The second big finish mistake is leaving the rod in a hot car. If you leave that rod tube in the sun in a hot car the finish will bubble and no longer protect the cane. If you have to leave a rod in the car keep it in the shade and take the cap off for ventilation.

- **Ovoid physical traumas.** A bamboo rod will bend like grass in the wind. What will break it is sudden physical trauma. For example, trying to rip a fly out of tree leaves with a brisk casting stroke, as I watched a good friend do with my rod once, works every time. Running the tip headlong into a tree while hiking in

doesn't help. Hitting the rod with a heavy fly during the cast can nick the cane. Anything that breaks any fibers in the cane will eventually lead to a break. Often the rod seems to have broken over something minor when, in fact, the damage may have been done much earlier. I think this contributes to the idea that bamboo rods are delicate.

- **Play your fish smart.** I've heard people suggest that rolling a rod over during a fight so that it bends the other way will keep the rod from taking a set. This is a bad idea. Reorienting the fibers quickly while the rod is under stress will frequently break the rod. Never move your hand up the rod to support it past the grip. Taking the flex out of the butt section puts stress on the ferrule station which is the weakest spot on the rod. Use tippet that is appropriate for the rod. Don't fish 3X and streamers with your three weight.

Bamboo rods are remarkable tools that are largely misunderstood. They will do some things that graphite can not. There are also applications where graphite is superior. But those cane rods are made to fish and land fish. Generations of anglers put them to good use before graphite came around. If you been considering getting into bamboo or if you already have a cane rod holding down some space in your closet don't let the fear of breaking it keep you from fishing it. Some of them are works of art but they are all made to fish and enjoy and there's nothing you can break that can't be repaired so get that came out and fish it.

Louis Cahill

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Understanding Fly Line Tapers and Diagrams

[7 COMMENTS](#) / POSTED ON [FEBRUARY 23, 2024](#) / BY [LOUIS CAHILL](#)



Photo by Louis Cahill

By Louis Cahill

Buying a fly line doesn't have to be a leap of faith.

For many anglers, fly lines and their characteristics are a huge mystery. They know that different fly lines cast differently and that some suit their needs or casting styles better than others but they have no idea why. What's worse, when it's time to buy a new line they aren't able to make an informed choice. They just go to the fly shop and ask for the best line. Thank God for

knowledgable fly shop guys, but do you really want to rely on someone else's guess at what you will like?

If this sounds like you, I have good news. There is an easy way to get a sense of how a fly line will cast before you ever take it out of the package, and with a little experience you can quickly choose the line that's right for the way you fish.

Fly lines have become really complicated in the last five years or so. Specialty lines have multiplied like rabbits and line companies have created lines to match every species, water condition and casting style. If you're confused, you're not alone. Fortunately, almost every manufacturer publishes line diagrams which show you, in detail, the taper of each line. If you know how to read the diagram, you'll know how the line will cast.

BASICS



WEIGHT FORWARD LINE



DOUBLE TAPER LINE



TRIANGLE TAPER LINE

There are three basic types of line tapers. Weight forward, double taper and triangle taper. Looking at the diagram, it's pretty clear how they get their names. The double taper line is a very traditional style of line which has a long

level belly and a symmetrical taper on each end. Weight forward lines shift the weight to the front of the line and were developed to match modern fast action carbon fiber rods. Triangle tapers are a kind of hybrid of the two.

Think of the diagram as a picture of the fly line in profile with the thickness of the line exaggerated. The thickness of the line indicates two things. Where the weight is and the relative stiffness of the line. Where the line is thicker, it will be heavier. Different line materials have different stiffness, but within a given fly line, the line will be stiffer where it is thicker. Knowing where the weight is in the line will tell you how it loads the rod and the stiffness, as well as the weight, will tell you how it presents the fly.

ANATOMY OF A FLY LINE



To understand the information the diagram gives you, first you have to understand the different parts of the fly line and how they affect the line's performance. Most modern fly lines have five parts. From front to back they are the tip, front taper, belly, rear taper and running line. Each one performs a specific function and its weight and length determine how the line casts.

THE TIP

The tip is the final word in fly presentation. The longer and lighter the tip, the more delicate the presentation. A long light tip will work to your advantage when making soft dry fly presentations on a spring creek. A shorter, more aggressive tip with more weight will have the power to turn over heavy streamers and nymph rigs.

THE FRONT TAPER

The front taper dissipates the energy of the line during the presentation. Even more than the tip, the design of the front taper dictates how much energy is

delivered to the leader and what kind of presentations the line will naturally make. A short front taper is called “aggressive” and delivers a lot of power to the leader. It’s great for turning over heavy flies and straightening leaders out in the wind but will tend to slap the fly down on the water. A longer front taper is called “technical” and will make more delicate presentations, but may require very good casting in high wind or with heavy flies.

THE BELLY

The belly of the line is designed to load the fly rod. It carries the bulk of the fly line’s weight and is designed to match specific rod weights. It also determines how heavy a fly the line will carry. A longer belly will load the rod more gradually and allow the caster to carry more line in the air during false casting. It will also roll cast and Spey cast more easily. A short, fat belly will load the rod quickly for short casts and shoot line aggressively.

THE REAR TAPER

The rear taper is the transition from the belly to the running line. It is the last part of the line which is controllable during casting. A long rear taper offers the caster some control over the line when carrying a lot of line during false casting. A short rear taper offers the caster a quick transition to the running line, allowing them to shoot line more easily.

THE HEAD AND SHOOTING LINE

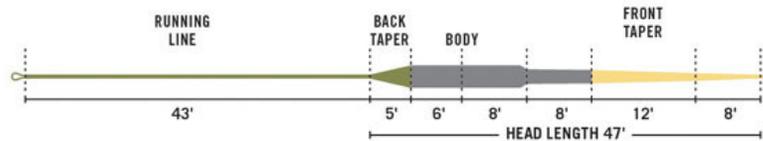
It’s worth mentioning that the front part of the line, (the tip, front taper, belly and rear taper) are often collectively referred to as the “head.” The running line may also be called “shooting line.” These terms come from Spey line designs but are often used in reference to single hand lines.

Some Specific Examples

THE RIO INTOUCH LT

Trout Series / InTouch Trout LT WF

Example: WF-5-F
Overall Length: 90'

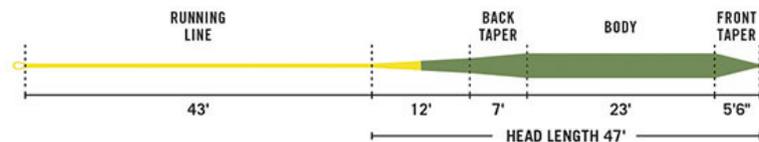


The LT is a delicate presentation trout line. You can see from the diagram that it has a long 8 foot tip. A 20 foot front taper and a short belly. Clearly a very technical line for light presentations.

THE RIO GOLD

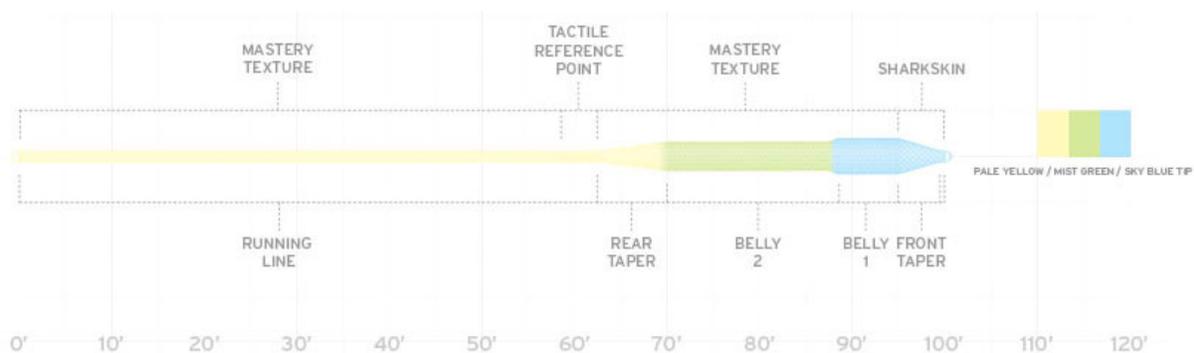
Trout Series / Rio Gold

RIO Gold
Example: WF-5-F
Overall Length: 90'



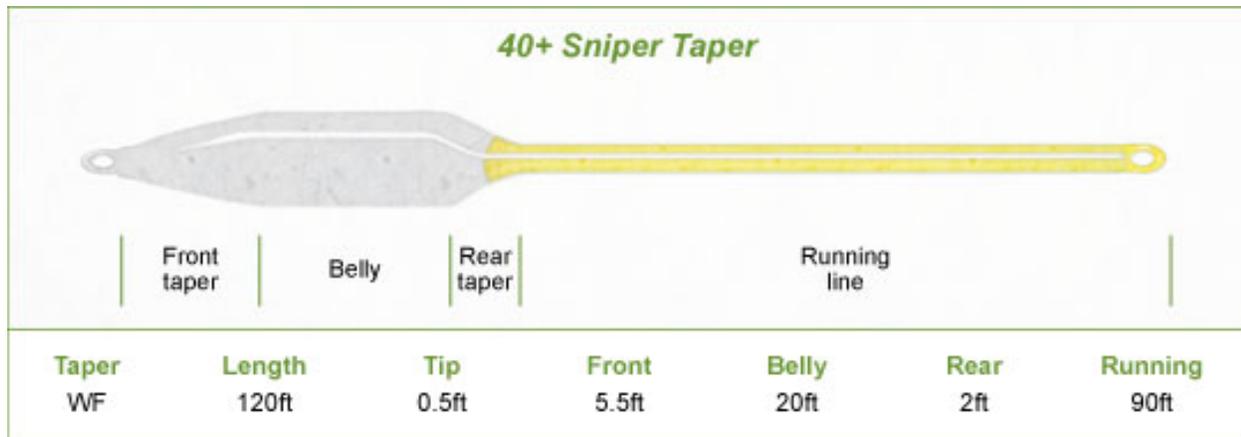
A great all around trout line, the Gold has a much more aggressive taper. No tip to speak of and short 5 1/2 foot front taper. A 22 1/2 foot belly is backed up by a long rear taper. Notice that the head length is the same as the LT but the weight is shifted forward, delivering more power to the leader, loading the rod faster and making it easier to shoot line.

THE SCIENTIFIC ANGLERS TITAN



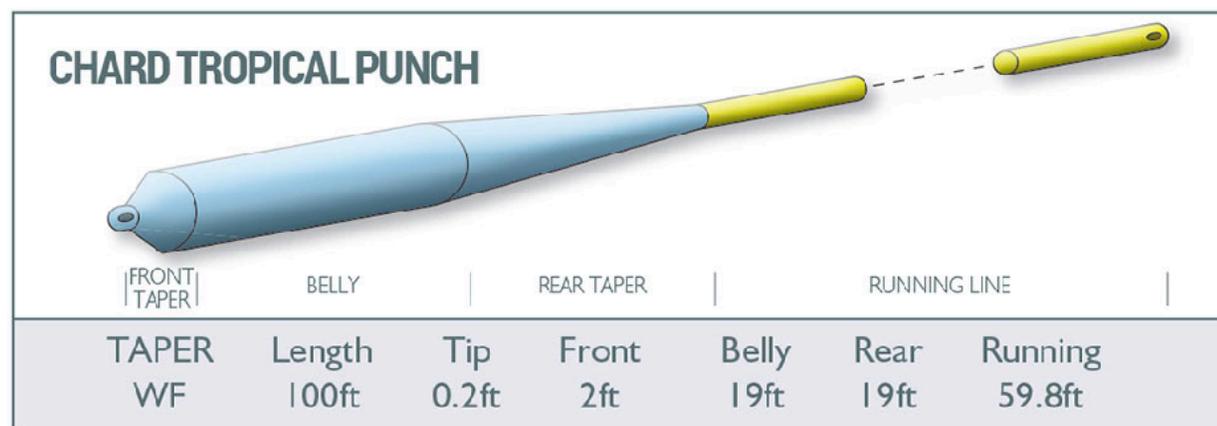
The Titan sports a radical head designed to turn over huge flies with ease. The compact belly and rear taper mean it's a line shooting machine.

THE AIRFLO 40+ SNIPER



The Sniper is a true shooting head design. The short heavy belly and front taper coupled with a virtually nonexistent rear taper will shoot line like a cannon. There's a reason this line has an extra 20 feet of running line.

THE AIRFLO TROPICAL PUNCH



My personal favorite saltwater line, the Tropical Punch combines an aggressive belly and short front taper with an extra long rear taper. This line will punch into the wind but still gives you the line control you need to carry line on a long, precise presentation.

Having the ability to match a special purpose fly line to the type of fishing you do can really improve your performance as an angler. Hopefully this will help you understand how fly lines work and help you make more informed choices when purchasing your next fly line. It may even help you understand the lines you already have.

Louis Cahill

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Ty One On

The color of March

Spring's first hues are its most brilliant

by Johnny Carrol Sain - Tuesday, Mar 9th, 2021



Photo: Johnny Carrol Sain

Though drab grays and browns of winter still cling to the land, shamrock, Kelly, and emerald are the colors everyone thinks of when they think of March. Even where

leaf-out is still weeks away, there's a longing for change in this month that straddles two seasons. This collective anticipation is tinted green. To my eye, though, the tone of these teaser weeks is a bit more vibrant. It's also tinged with yellow.

Between the weakening cold fronts that periodically crash through as winter reluctantly relaxes its grip, southerly zephyrs tickle dead meadow grass. Those Gulf winds, in concert with a few bluebird days pouring sunlight over the land, urge life out of dormancy. You can feel a promise in the humid air. Its manifestation, for me, materializes in the blobular, chartreuse of algae floating in a stock pond.

My feelings about this harbinger are conflicted, though.

I know those snot-like filaments are the result of way too much cow shit in the pond. March's inevitable cold rains will carry this phosphorus overdose out of the pond's spillway, into the creek, and out to the river, compounding (though, infinitesimally by comparison) a poisoning of waters that originated in the nation's bread basket. What I've waited for with the eagerness of a 10-year-old boy waiting on Christmas morning is aiding the slow strangulation of countless waterways including, somewhat ironically, the Gulf of Mexico. Chartreuse is the

shade of death in these places. But for a big puddle in the middle of a pasture, it's the color of life.

There's a pond just across the barbed wire from my front yard that looks an awful lot like a favorite haunt of my formative years. I've been watching it for signs of viridity since mid-February, and it's finally happening.

The pond's greening coincides with the first anuran love songs, it's banks and spillway are a soggy stage for buzzing cricket frogs and piping spring peepers. Frog music on a cool, moonlit March evening is a delightful benefit of having a pond nearby, but it's not tops on my list. The verdant bloom that signals the water's warming also means that male largemouth bass, bucks, will be scouting the hoof-pocked shallows for nesting sites. Not long after, females will move up, too, preparing to spawn. And those big sows will be hungry. My first hawg bass came to hand from such humble waters exactly four decades ago to this month.

In my Polaroid-filtered memories, I feel the baitcaster's spool spin barely under the control of my neophyte thumb and the thump of spinner blades transmitted through the graphite rod. I see the water heave like an elemental come to life as an unseen force turns toward

the chartreuse spinnerbait. She engulfs it with a jolt of wild electricity, searing me to the bone. Both of us are hooked.

I never knew “chartreuse” was used to describe the color of anything except bass lures until I was nearly 20 years old, so as an homage to that unforgettable March afternoon and my Southern bassin’ roots I tie a few wooly buggers on the tacky side. I even try to figure out a way to put spinners on them, thinking the 9-weight can handle the extra heft, though I’ll have to strip maniacally to keep the blades spinning and the bugger off of the bottom. But then I might as well go back to the Ambassador and Lightnin’ Rod. There’s no need to reinvent the wheel—and poorly at that.

So I just tie them a little bigger than my smallmouth offerings, choosing purple thread as a nod to the “fire tiger” pattern of another favorite bucketmouth bait from what seems a lifetime ago. I have not a doubt that the buggers will catch bass. Chartreuse always catches bass. And the magic of chartreuse aside, pickins are slim in a late-winter stock pond.

With a front moving in after four days of sunshine and mid-60s temperatures, I decide a closer look at the pond’s

goings-on is needed, fly rod in hand. Rich smells of manure, mud, and coming rain hang heavy in the air as ankle-deep muck sucks at my rubber boots. The torpedo “V” of a small male bass darts from the cattails. But just a few yards to the left and tight to the bank, heavy swirls undulate the olive waters. She’s there, as she likely has been for nearly a decade and as others of her kind are in small ponds across the rural South every year at just this time.

Two false casts and I’m lined up, dropping the bugger 10 feet beyond her lair. On the first strip the waters agitate. A growing bulge tracks the fly. Suddenly, 40 years evaporates in the soft breeze of a March afternoon.

Fish refused your fly? Hurry up and wait.

Resist the urge to quickly recast to feeding fish

by Chris Hunt - Tuesday, Sep 26th, 2023



Photo: Chad Shmukler

The rock face across the river stood sentry over what, from my limited Atlantic salmon experience, looked like the perfect stretch of fishy water. The river, fresh from a manic tumble over a frothy cascade, fell into an emerald green pool that hugged the basalt wall like a kindergartner clinging to his mother on the first day of school.

I flipped the Sun Ray tube fly into the head of the deep water and let it flutter downstream, where it kind of

hovered over the modest school of late-run salmon thanks to an invisible upwelling that refused to let the bug gain depth. Then, the river's current seized the fly and sent it on a swing through the tailout.

That's when I saw the wake. A V-shaped arrow emerged from the pool with the purpose of a guided torpedo, and it closed on the fly. I waited in anticipation as the big fish closed the distance on the streamer.

This was happening. My first day on Iceland's beautiful and remote Holkna River, and I was about to seal the deal on an elusive September salmon. I was ready. Tense. Aware.

"Eat it," I whispered. "Eat it. Come on."

The current pulled the fly from deeper water, and the wake disappeared. No love for the Sun Ray. Frustrated, I lifted the rod and immediately recast to the head of the pool. I had a player. But I needed to feed it again.

"That was probably a mistake," Guðmundur Guðlaugsson explained later that evening after I relayed the episode to him. Simply nicknamed Goomy, because the American tongue doesn't wrap around Icelandic names very well,

our guide for three days on the Holkna was quick to provide blunt advice. "That's when you wait a bit, and let the fish get back and get settled. If you cast again too fast, it won't be ready. And it might spook the whole pool."

It was good advice, and not just for salmon. Think about it. When just about any game fish with a predator's curiosity takes the time to inspect your offering, and then refuses it, it pays to understand that the fish left its comfortable holding water to consider taking a swipe at something. A quick cast back to the "scene of the crime" is very likely to produce absolutely nothing.

Curious trout, bass, pike or char need to settle in again by returning to its holding water or hiding place. And that may take time.

By putting another cast right back on the water without giving the disturbed fish a chance to return and get comfortable, you could be casting to an empty spot. Or, as Goomy explained, with spooky fish like Atlantic salmon or spring-creek trout, your quick recast could put other potential targets on edge and possibly spook several fish.

The key, of course, is to just hurry up and wait. Take a quick breather. Count to 30. Give the fish time to get back

into its routine, and give other nearby fish the chance to acclimate to the small bit of chaos that just occurred.

Another thought: the fish expressed interest. That's a good thing. But it didn't express enough interest to actually eat. Maybe, while you "let the pool" settle, as a good Atlantic salmon guide might say, consider changing flies and giving the interested fish something new to look at.

If you've ever fished with a guide, you know this move. You've cast over some really great holding water, or perhaps you've watched a fish or two move over to look at a dry fly or (perish the thought!) a nymph, only to refuse the bug. Your guide might tap you on the shoulder and say, "Hey man, let's switch that fly out for something else."

The fly switch *might* be necessary, but likely just as important is the time it takes — to clip off the existing fly, sift through a fly box, find a replacement pattern, and then tie it to the tippet — which gives the fish you're after a chance to reset and settle back into its rhythm.

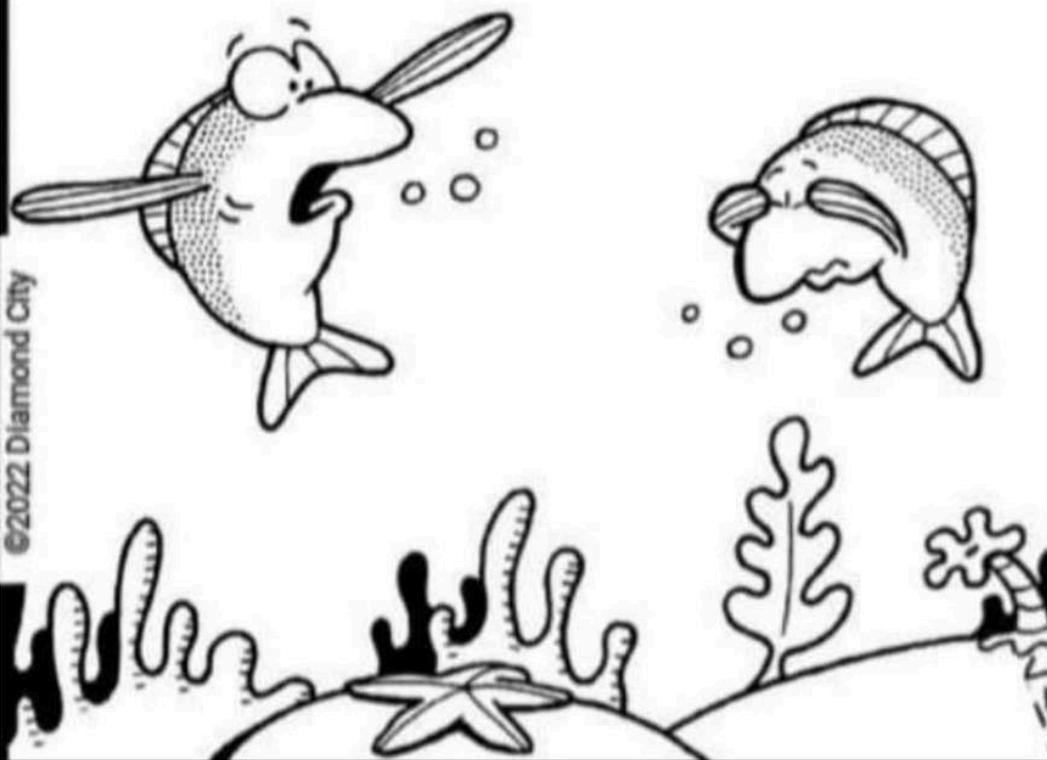
As my Icelandic friend noted, in situations where fish leave their "happy place" to pursue something to eat (or,

in the case of that Atlantic salmon on the Holkna, something to punish for invading its space), it makes sense to allow the fish some time to regroup and get back to some semblance of comfort. And, if the fish is part of a group holding in the same water, it'll reduce the chances of spooking the entire pool.

“Fish want to be happy,” Goomy said that evening after fishing. “Do whatever you can do to keep them happy. If they're not happy, they're not going to eat. If they're happy, they're going to eat.”

Simple, right?

HONEY, I DON'T CARE WHAT THAT
FISHERMAN TOLD EVERYONE...
YOU'RE NOT **THIS BIG!**



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