

The Flypaper

Carson Fly Fishing Club

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

www.carsonflyfishing.club



Calendar

February 6, Board Meeting,
6:00 pm, Pizza Factory

February 8, Fly Tying @
Empire Ranch 5 pm

February 10, Hickson Slough
Open

February 24, Hickson Slough
Fish-out

February 20, General Meeting,
7:00 pm

President's Letter

Hi all:

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays. Our daughter came in from Florida. Our holidays were special for all of us. Back to business, there will not be a general meeting in January. We'll start February 20th. Our meetings were moved to the 3rd Tuesdays of each month, due to scheduling with the Sheriff's office. Tentatively, our guest speaker is Kris Urquhart Biologist NDOW Mason Valley Wildlife Area. He mentioned that Hinkson Slough is presently drained to fix the outlet structure. We don't know if the opener will happen on February 10th. Our fishout and BBQ on February 24th may change also.

Our first fly tying session for 2024 starts February 8th at Empire Ranch GC. Stan Zuber is our first tier. He plans on instructing how to tie a Muskrat nymph. The program starts at 5:00 PM. The bar and grill will be open prior to our program. Come early and help support our venue. All of our fly tying sessions are scheduled for the second Thursday of each month. Notices will be sent out prior to each session.

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

If you are anxious to get out away from home, this week Jan 18-20 is the International Sheep Show at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. On Saturday the Kids Expo is open to the public. The International Sportsman Expo (ISE) is January 18-21 at Cal Expo, Sacramento Ca. This show has something for everyone who enjoys the outdoors. On February 23-25 is the The Fly Fishing Show in Pleasanton Ca. If you never have been to this show, it's well worth it.

I hope you can make it to our first fly tying session. It was very successful last year.

Tight Lines and be safe,
Ken Briscoe, Preisdent

Fishing Reports:

www.renoflyshop.com

www.sierrabrightdot.com

Nevada Fishing

Regulations:

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

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 February 8 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 Stan Zuber. The fly he'll be tying is a Muskrat Nymph.



How to Find Fish (Part 5): Runs

March 4, 2023 Fly Fishing/How-To/Tips & Techniques 13 mins read



This is the fifth post in our series on how to find fish in any type of water.

By Spencer Durrant

If you've ever seen the cult classic *The Big Lebowski* by the Coen Brothers, you're familiar with The Dude's obsession with getting his rug back from a pair of thieves. He wants the rug back because "it tied the room together!"

Well, if we converted that story to talk about fly fishing, the rug would be a run. We've talked about pools, pocket water, and riffles, but what helps those singular stream features flow together?

You probably guessed it from the title – runs.

Runs are an important piece of fish habitat, but they're also tough to cleanly define like riffles or pools. In this post, we'll take our time walking through the features that separate runs from other water types.

So, get comfortable and ready to learn!

What is a run?

Before we cover this, remember that runs are the link that join disparate water types together. Pools often flow into riffles, which turn into runs as they approach the next pool. Pocket water is often separated by runs. If you keep this picture in your mind, it'll be a lot easier to understand what a run is.

Runs are pieces of water that look *similar* to a riffle, but are different in major ways. First off, runs have a slower current speed than a riffle. Runs are also deeper than riffles, and since they're deeper, there is often little, if any, of the classic surface disturbance we associate with riffles. Finally, runs appear relatively featureless on

first glance, meaning there are few obvious seams or obstructions where trout might hang out to eat.

Why do trout hold here?

Alright, it's time for a pop quiz:

Why do fish hold in any given piece of water?

Fish pick out holding water based on FCC – food, cover, and current.

Luckily for us anglers, fish are simple critters. They want water that has an ample amount of food, not too much current, and plenty of cover from predators. Runs provide almost all of that.

There's an abundance of food in a run for the same reason it exists in [riffles](#). If you'll recall, riffles are the “food factory” of a river:

Basically, riffles create the perfect environment for aquatic insects. The rocks and other detritus littering the riverbed that create a riffle create a good buffer from the main current where aquatic insects can hang out. Bugs like to live in the small gaps between rocks, of which there are tons in a riffle. These small gaps combine with the buffer from the current the rocks provide to form ideal aquatic insect habitat. On top of that, the fact that riffles are shallower than other spots in a river means they get more of an impact from sunlight. That means more aquatic vegetations grows, which is the food source for aquatic insects. All of these factors combine to make a riffle the ideal habitat for bugs – and bugs are the main food source of many trout.

The streambed in runs and riffles is often similar, which means the food availability is high in both water types. Riffles still have more

food than any other water type, though runs are likely a close second.

The current speed in runs is much slower than in a riffle, which makes it ideal holding water. What runs lack, though, is a lot of extra cover. The depth of water in a run acts as cover from aerial predators, but there's often fewer large obstructions in a run that offer cover from aquatic predators.

Where do fish hold in runs?

This is the toughest part to successfully figuring out runs. When looking at them, how do you know where to start fishing?

I'd like to tackle this question by dissecting a run together.



Photo: Bonnie Moreland/Flickr

This is a picture-perfect run. Towards the left edge of the picture, the run terminates in a pool (and you can even see the slight ripples that are quintessentially part of a pool's head). Below the pool, this is a classic run.



On the side nearest the bank with trees, you can see a foam line. This foam line marks the seam between the main current, and the slower current nearest the bank. **Most runs** will feature a seam like this, usually on either bank. That seam is an obvious starting place to look for fish, because we know how much fish love seams.

Moving away from the foam line and into the main part of the run, things get fuzzier. It's a uniform-looking current, and we can't see very many obvious obstructions that will hide fish. To fish this kind of water, your best bet is to cover all of it. The fish will disperse throughout the run in fairly random groupings, and unless they're rising, it's hard to know exactly where they'll hold.

Fish will congregate at the head and tail of a run, as well, so it's worth covering those sections thoroughly. As you might have

noticed throughout this series, we're finding that fish really enjoy holding in places of **transition** – whether it's from fast to slow currents, or shallow to deep water. If you can find any transitions in runs, *fish them!* Chances are high trout are holding there.

How to fish a run

The steps to successfully fish a run are twofold:

- Cast to any rising trout, or trout you can see
- Cover *all* the water

Fishing through a run doesn't require any special line management techniques (like high-sticking in pocket water). In fact, it's a lot like fishing through a riffle. The main difference is that the water is moving slower in a run, so the takes *can* be easier to spot than the takes in a riffle.

So, when you approach a run, try using the following plan to catch as many fish from it as possible.

- **Cast to risers first:** If you see fish rising in a run, cast to them first. This holds true for just about any water type – if fish are rising, *cast to them*.
- **Start at the tail:** If there aren't any fish rising, or you've cast to all of them, the next step is to set up shop at the tail of the run. Make your first casts quartering upstream, no further than you feel comfortable mending your line. Regardless if you're fishing a dry-dropper or a nymph rig, you can cover water the same way. The key here is to cover *all* the water in the run between where you're standing, and the opposite bank. You do that by making a series of drifts. For example, you make your quartering cast upstream and drift your flies through water maybe 10 feet away from you. Once you've drifted your flies

through that water a few times and caught fish – or not moved any – you either take a step towards the opposite bank, or add distance to your cast, to cover water you haven't yet drifted through.

- **Finish at the head:** You want to slowly work your way up the run from the tail to the head. Unless the run is really short, you don't want to cover the whole run with one cast. Break the run into smaller sections and work the water thoroughly to make sure you're putting flies in front of all the fish.

How to Approach a Run?

#1 Cast to Risers First

**#2 Start at the Tail
(Bottom of the Run)**

**#3 Finish at the Head
(Top of the Run)**



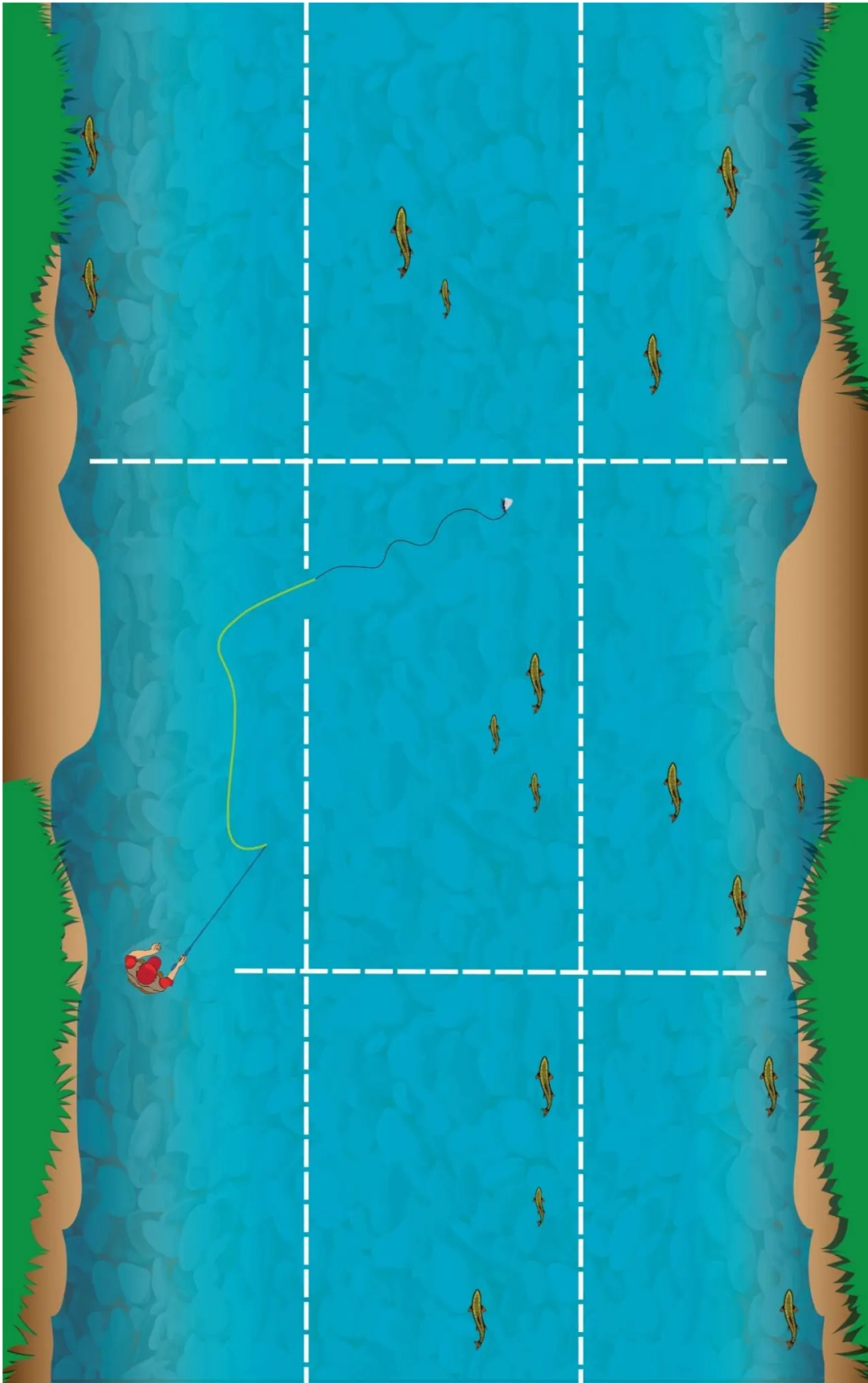
So, let's see how those tactics apply in a real-life example of a run.

The run we looked at earlier is the holy grail. It has foam lines, distinct transitions, and easy-to-identify holding water. Not all runs are as clean-cut as that. How would you go about fishing a run like this, for example?



In runs like this, it's helpful to break the water up into a grid pattern. In runs, your best bet to find fish is covering as much water as possible, with a variety of rigs.

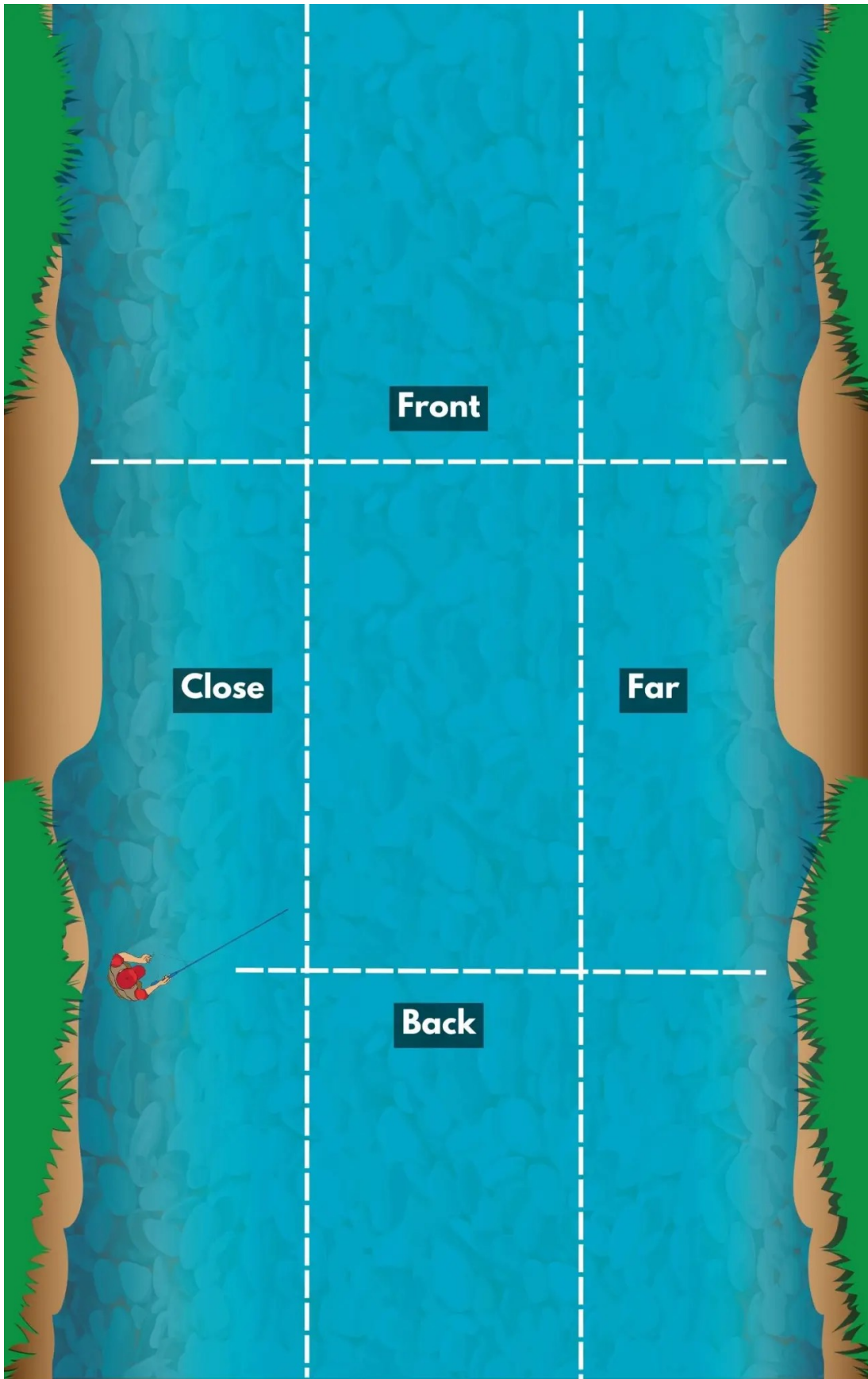
As you can see in this diagram, the fish are distributed randomly throughout the run.



Start by covering the water closest to you first. If you ignore the water closest to you, there's a chance you can spook any holding fish. Those spooked fish can, in turn, spook the rest of the run.

One thing to keep in mind is that you don't need to remain stationary. Move up and down the riverbank to effectively cover all the water.

Work each grid close to far, back to front. Then move onto the next grid.



Breaking the water up into this kind of grid pattern is a helpful way to ensure that you've presented your flies to every fish in the run.

Keep Running

There's a stretch of the creek near my house here in Wyoming that's a picture-perfect run. It's deep and crystal-clear, and I've seen some big brown trout laying on its bottom. I have yet to *catch* one of those fish, but I plan on harassing them come springtime.

There's probably a run just like that on your local river. Head out there as soon as you can and start identifying the runs that you've skipped over, or not thoroughly fished before. Make some plans to tackle them this spring, and get this knowledge into action.

Winter is coming

Five flies to get you through it

by George C Costa - Wednesday, Nov 4th, 2015



Winter on the Madison River (photo: Christopher Daniel).

Winter is coming. These are our words: five flies. That's all I'm giving you for the next 3 months. No dries. Sure, there might be some olives on January 26th when the mercury tips out at a balmy 46. But those trout are lethargic and don't want to spend the energy to rise. So, here you go. Tie some, buy some, steal them from your buddy's box when he's not looking. These are the flies

that'll get you through the tough times when your guides are icy, your knuckles are bleeding and you're really wondering if standing in 42 degree water when it's 23 outside is a wise life choice.

THE ZEBRA MIDGE

Black and silver. None of that olive or red nonsense. Black and silver. If you're nymphing with more than one fly (and you should be) this is the one on top. Big fish, little fish, red fish, blue fish: every fish eats a midge larva. Sink it down low or get frisky and try it unweighted and just below the surface.

THE FRENCHIE

I know people that hate this fly and refuse to fish it, but not because it doesn't work — because it works so well. They find it unfair. Personally, I like to catch fish. I bet you do to. Tie some up on jig hooks with tungsten heads, put it below that zebra midge as a point fly and go for the gold.

WALT'S WORM

The first time I saw this fly I thought it was a joke. It might be the most boring looking piece of crap fly ever

created. Dressed with no bead or no hot spot it actually looks like a little turd. But I'll be damned if the fish don't go nuts over it. It's kind of a sow bug/cress bug/crane fly larva/caddis/pellet looking thing and just about every trout stream has one or two of those things floating around in it. Maybe trout like eating turds. What do I know?



The five you need. From back to front: zebra midge, frenchie, walt's worm, pheasant tail, glo-bug (photo: George Costa).

THE GLO-BUG

Yep. It's an egg. It's bright orange or yellow or pink or blue or whatever form of obnoxious you want. Those brownies and brookies are spawning in the late fall and winter and eggs are all over. Trout are not going to pass up a quick protein blast if it floats past them. Rainbow trout are particularly fond of them, especially the dumb stocked ones, but I bet you can get a wild brown fish to eat if you drop it on their nose.

THE PHEASANT TAIL

This is the one to have if you only had one and not five. Tie some with bead heads, some sparse, some plump, some more traditional or however you like to tie them. Small. Dark. Mayfly. Nymph. Go size 14-18. I usually start with a 16 and see what happens. Tie some in 6s and 10s and you've got a stonefly. If I had to bet, I'd say more trout have been caught on this fly than any other pattern ever. Maybe.

So there you have it. These are the patterns that'll get you over that seasonal depression. The ones that will work when you're freezing your tail off. The flies that will work in 99% of trout water in both hemispheres during winter's icy grasp.

Forward Cast

Fly Fishing & Fly Casting - Tailing Loops And How To Cure Them

Jun 13, 2023

Fly Casting - How to fix your tailing loops - 2023 revision

While first published in 2021, we've updated this post to incorporate practical teaching observations from Joe Mahler and a couple of his fine illustrations. Enjoy!

Carl says...

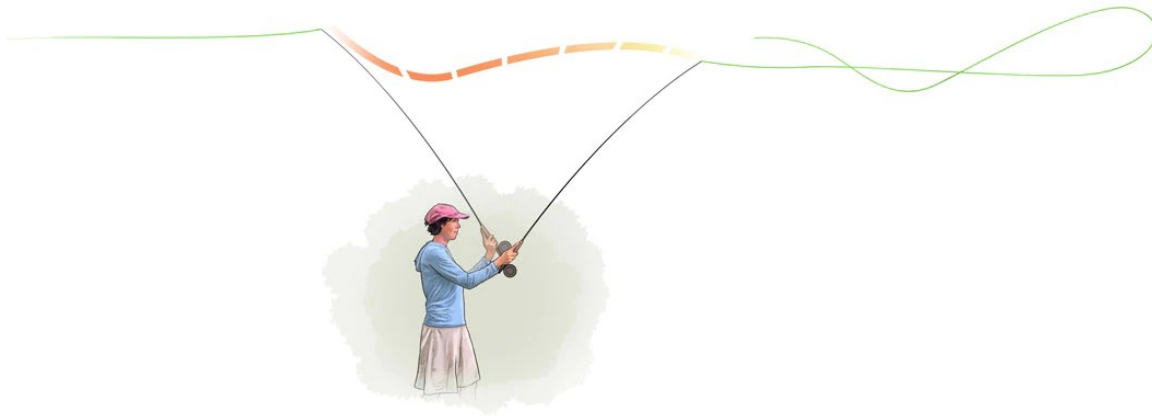
There's been a lot said about tailing loops (often referred to as "**wind knots**") in the past - and more to come I'm sure. Much of it is just wrong and postulated by casters that simply don't know any better. The topic can be an incredibly complex one.

Having seen a few tails and created more than my fair share - most entirely involuntarily - I think it best to keep things simple. After-all, we're all about fly fishing rather than any in-depth analysis of casting physics.

Fly fishing and fly casting are most certainly the sport of exceptions and in order to attempt to explain anything in fly casting you tend to have to generalise - and that's what i'm about to do.

There are all sorts of potential, "Yeah but's" - "What about when's" and "sometimes" that can be thrown into the mix - but most often, and for most of us fly anglers this is the go....

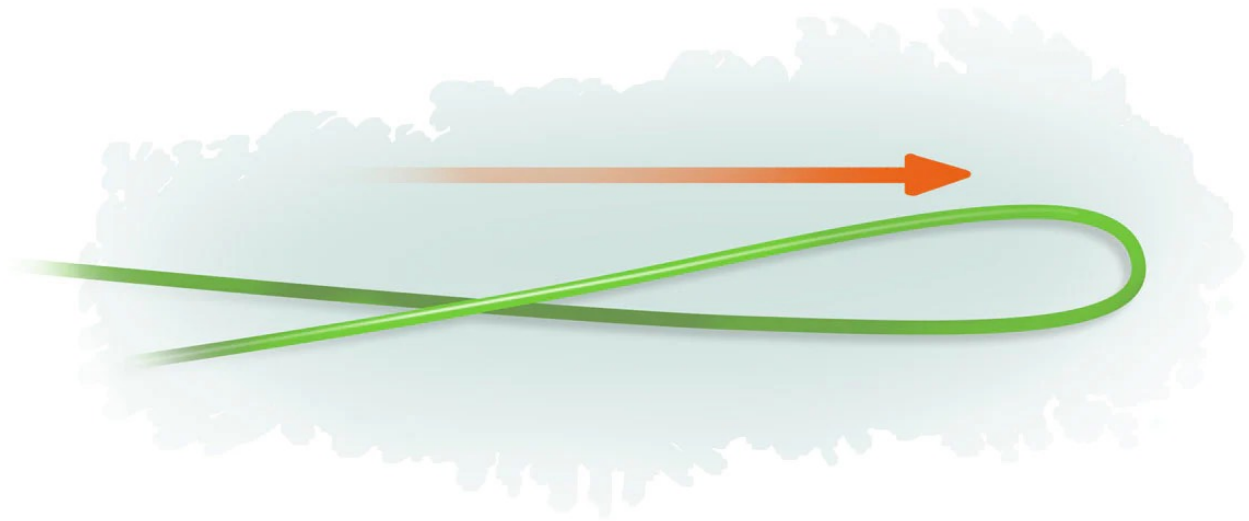
This is a Tailing Loop



What is a tailing Loop?

The FEI definition of a tailing loop and that which seems to be agreed upon by most qualified fly casting instructors is that a tailing loop sees the fly line crossing over itself AND back again. i.e **twice**. **A crossed line is not a tailing loop by definition.** It's all sorts of other things. An underslung loop, a tight loop cast out of plane, a loop commonly seen on spey casters - all sorts - but it's not a tailing loop. See below.

THIS IS NOT A TAILING LOOP



Joe says...

"I have a terrible tailing loop." I've heard those words many times over my years of teaching fly casting. I hear the dread in students' voices, as though they have been given a terminal diagnosis. I rarely use the phrase when teaching. I've heard students call them "Curly Qs" or "Little Twisties," or "Pig Tails," and I think are fitting names. Of course, there are several variations of these "Curly Qs" and those who want to dig into fly casting on a molecular level will be interested in tailing loops, trailing loops and others. But most just want them to go away.

What makes tailing loops.

Simple - it's always the path the rod tip makes. It can't be anything else. And if you doubt that think about the point of control between the fly line, rod and caster - it's the tip of the fly rod. End of story.

Most diagrams you'll see of tip paths depicting the cause of tails are very much exaggerated - including mine here. The effect is subtle,

while you'll certainly see the resultant tail, you'll most likely not actually see the cause in the tip path.

What does the rod tip do to cause a tailing loop?

Simply, the rod tip dips down and then rises back up again. And it needs to do both those things during the casting stroke. Dipping down isn't the issue, the dip then rise is what does the damage. Most often this variance can be extremely subtle and almost impossible to see and can be most anywhere in the casting stroke. In my experience most often either very early - or very late in the stroke.

Joe says...

I think the obsession with casting ultra-tight loops has furthered the cause of the tailing loop. A tailing loop is easier to cure than it is to explain.

It reminds me of a collapsed lung- it just needs air. Too much power, too fast causes the tip of the rod to flex and unless there is increasing speed, the rod tip unbends, forming the infamous tailing loop. You can cast as hard and as fast as you want, if you start the stroke smoothly. Abrupt and early hauls are tantamount to too much power and are often the culprit. The tailing loop most spoken of occurs on the forward stroke, but also possible on a back cast.

What causes a tailing loop or "wind knot"?

Ok, given we've established that a tailing loop is the effect of the rod tip dipping down and **then rising back up again**. There are actually many things that the fly caster can do that will result in a tailing loop, common teaching dogma cites the following as the most common causes:

- Poor power application / abrupt power - shocking the rod at the start of the stroke. Or horsing the rod at the very end (throwing)
- Too narrow a casting arc for the amount of line past rod tip
- Breaking the 180 degree rule (high back cast + high forward cast)

- Creep (too narrow a casting arc and often abrupt power application)
- Finishing the haul too soon

... and just about anything else you can come up with.

In short, **most tailing loops are caused by problems with power application.** e.g, too narrow a casting arc simply means you need to pack all the power and acceleration required to keep the line aerialized into a very short stroke, which would usually result in a tail. Apply the same power over a longer stroke and your tail will disappear.

How to fix your tailing loop problem

Be smooth. If you see tails, smooth out how you apply power. Often, simply buttoning off the power will effect a fix. And / or make a longer stroke.

Much of this stuff is explained in our [fly casing video 'Casts that Catch Fish'](#) - although if I did it again i'd probably explain things a little differently ;-)

Joe says...

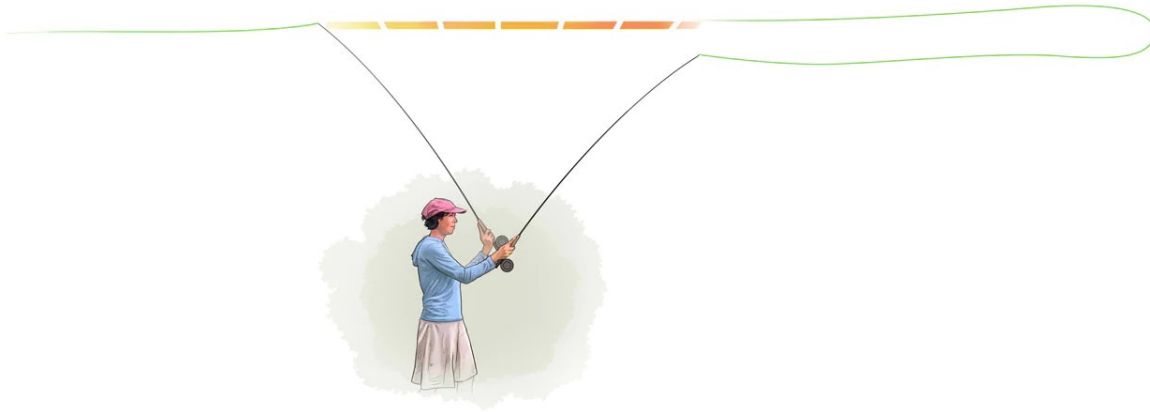
If a tailing loop is the disease, drift is the penicillin. A bit of drift – even a few inches- takes the edge off and efficiently lengthens the stroke.

Experiment with wrist rotation, focus on making the turnover later and later. Maybe the best way to understand tailing loops is learning how to form them.

Try this drill. Make three false casts- the first two as smoothly as possible, then “punch” the third one! Now, untangle your line and do it again.

Try different stroke lengths, too short and you will surely form a tailing loop. Another tip is to make sure that the line between your

line hand and stripping guide is absolutely taught throughout the cast, this alone will slow your cast in a useful way.



Joe Mahler is one of the USA's leading fly casting instructors and author and illustrator of “Essential Knots & Rigs for Trout” and “Essential Knots & Rigs for Salt Water”. You can Book a fly casting lesson with Joe via his website [here](#)

Carl McNeil is a Master Fly Casting Instructor, Founder of Epic Rods, and probably talks too much

Clean Your Fly Line Anytime, Anywhere:

/ POSTED ON [SEPTEMBER 4, 2023](#) / BY [LOUIS CAHILL](#)



By Louis Cahill

It pays to keep your fly line clean.

You can spend \$90 on a fly line, these days. It just makes sense to take care of them and a big part of caring for a fly line is keeping it clean. Removing oils and chemicals, like sun screen and bug spray, will make your line last a whole lot longer. Keeping it free of dirt and river scum will make it float and cast better.

So why wouldn't you clean your line every time you fish?

Because it's a hassle or because you just forget. Well the good news is it's actually really easy and convenient. I keep a hand full of moist towelettes, like you get at BBQ restaurants, in my fishing kit. I only takes a second to clean your fly line with one of these handy wipes. I **buy them by the case** but you can pick them up at the local BBQ joint if you like.

Louis Cahill

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Ty One On



Coldwater Patterns

Favorite Flies for Winter Tailwaters

Temperatures head south but the fishing remains hot. The author opens his fly box to reveal his go-to patterns for fishing during the coldest months of the year.

by Al Ritt

Most of my early fly fishing occurred on Northern California's Hat Creek. One characteristic that makes Hat Creek so special is that it is a spring creek. Water is supplied by an underground aquifer through springs, not snowmelt, rainfall, or tributaries. A spring creek's water is clean and clear, and because it is groundwater, it is consistently cool. These factors create an environment rich in nutrients and insect life, and the relatively stable water temperatures mean a long growing season for resident trout. While the United States has many quality spring creeks, not all anglers live near one, and frankly, our spring creeks couldn't support today's fishing pressure. We have, however, inadvertently created a substitute to spring creeks.

Tailwaters Are Similar to Spring Creeks

As our country developed, the demand for water for municipal and agricultural uses made it beneficial to control the timing and volume of water flowing down many of our rivers and streams. Generating electricity using flowing water also became possible. As a result, many waterways were dammed. A bottom-release dam—one in which the water flows through the base of the structure—creates a river or stream very similar to a spring creek. How?



ARF MIDGE ADULT Hook: Regular dry fly hook, sizes 24 to 16. Thread: Size 10/0 or 8/0 (70 denier). Body: Quills II. Wing: Organza. Shellback and post: Fluorescent fire orange Gator Hair. Hackle: Dry fly hackle. Note: Other than the shellback and post, select materials in colors to match the natural insects you expect to encounter when fishing.

In its simplest form, a dam backs up a stream or river until the water reaches a level higher than the lowest portion of the dam, and then the water flows over the top. On the other hand, a bottom-release dam has an outlet at its base. A bottom-release dam usually emits water stored in the lowest portion of the reservoir, where it stays cool, similar to a spring creek. A dam also slows the velocity of the water, allowing sediment to settle into the reservoir, leaving clear and clean

water to flow into the river below. The stretch of water immediately downstream from a dam is commonly called a tailwater. Due to the influence of the dam, a tailwater exhibits moderated flows of clean and often cool water; not exactly like a spring creek, but similar enough.

Tailwaters have abundant insect life and other sources of food such as invertebrates and annelids. Water temperatures remain cool in the summer and warm enough in the winter that the flow rarely freezes, so growing seasons are long. Even here in the Rocky Mountains, tailwaters are commonly fishable year-round, and you may often find hatches even during the coldest January and February.

Winter Tailwater Fishing Opportunities Abound

Some well-known tailwaters include sections of the Sacramento River, the Colorado River and Lees Ferry, the Bighorn River, the North and South Platte Rivers, the Fryingpan River, the Taylor River, and the White River. These are just a handful of our tailwaters, and there are many more scattered across North America.

Tailwater fisheries vary greatly in character. Some are meadow streams, but others flow through rocky canyons. Water velocity may be fast or slow depending upon the gradient. The bottoms of some tailwaters are gravel while others have boulders, and some are weedy while others are primarily sandy. These different habitats create different food sources.



ARF FOOL'S GOLD STONE Hook: 2X-long nymph hook, sizes 10 to 6.
Thread: Olive 8/0 (70 denier). Underbody: A strip of nontoxic wire tied onto each side of the hook shank. Eyes: Black bead chain. Tail: Sili Legs, pumpkin/black flake. Abdomen: Whitlock SLF Dubbing, red fox squirrel. Rib: Copper wire. Back and wing case: Flashback Sheet, rust. Legs: Barred or speckled brown soft-hackle fibers. Thorax: Whitlock SLF Dubbing, red fox squirrel. Antennae: Sili Legs, pumpkin/black flake. Head: Whitlock SLF Dubbing, red fox squirrel.

As in spring creeks, the fish living in tailwaters typically have a lot of sources of food, and the clear water allows them to carefully inspect your fly. As a result, many successful spring creek patterns also work on tailwaters. I feel it's also critical to approach trout carefully to avoid spooking them; strike

indicators may tip off fish that something is amiss. If you're going to use one, try a smaller indicator or one that is a subtle color. Fishing with a dry-dropper rig might be a better bet. Whatever you do, longer casts and more sophisticated mends are often in order.

Trout are still trout, and I find they hold in much of the same water as they do in freestone streams. The head and tailouts of pools are likely spots, but in colder weather when the fish and insects are less active, I often find them in the deeper, slower pools. Breaks behind boulders or logs, as well as the cushions of water above these objects, also hold fish. Riffles, especially when insects are active, are favorite feeding areas. Watch for trout tight against the bank when water flows are fast and fish need a place to rest.

Even though the hatches are not so prolific during the winter, midges do emerge and trout continue rising on many rivers even during the coldest months of the year. The famed tier Craig Mathews has lived in West Yellowstone for 40 years, and he says some of the best dry fly fishing in that area occurs throughout the winter, yet very few anglers take advantage it. This is especially true of tailwaters, where temperatures remain fairly stable: insects, especially midges, keep hatching; the trout keep rising; and yet most fair-weather anglers stay at home.

Bundle up to stay warm, and use the same tackle you do throughout the warmer months. The accompanying selection of flies works throughout the season, and they are among my

favorite when temperatures head south but the fishing stays hot.

Al Ritt lives in Colorado, where he oversees the production of the Peak Vise for Peak Engineering. In his spare time, Al leads trips to some of the very best fly fishing in the world. To learn more, check out his website, www.alrittflies.com.

Tags: trout

ARF RHYACOPHILA LARVA



Hook: Midge larva hook, sizes 18 to 14.

Bead: Black brass bead.

Thread: Black 8/0 (70 denier).

Underbody: Chartreuse 8/0 (70 denier) thread.

Abdomen: D-Rib, light green.

Thorax: Black Semperfli Straggle String.

Hackle: Brown Brahma hen hackle.

DORSEY'S TOP SECRET MIDGE



Hook: Curved shank hook, sizes 22 to 16.

Thread: Dark brown 8/0 (70 denier).

Abdomen: Tying thread.

Rib: White 8/0 (70 denier) tying thread.

Wing: Organza.

Thorax: Mahogany Superfine Dry Fly Dubbing.

BRASSIE



Hook: Regular nymph hook, sizes 22 to 14.

Thread: Black 8/0 (70 denier).

Underbody: Tying thread.

Abdomen: Brass or copper wire.
Thorax: Muskrat dubbing.

MOLE FLY



Hook: Regular dry fly hook, sizes 22 to 16.
Thread: Dun 8/0 (70 denier).
Wing: Organza surrounded by natural cul de canard.
Body: Brown beaver dubbing



ARF RED ROCK WORM

Hook: Alec Jackson Covert Nymph Hook, sizes 17 to 9.

Thread: Red 8/0 (70 denier).

Underbody: Tying thread.

Body: Silver wire inserted in clear hollow tubing wrapped over underbody

RS2



Hook: Regular dry fly hook, sizes 22 to 16.

Thread: Size 8/0 (70 denier).

Tail: Two light dun or white Mayfly Tails tied splayed.

Abdomen: Superfine Dry Fly Dubbing.

Wing: Natural cul de canard.

Thorax: Superfine Dry Fly Dubbing.

Note: Select thread and dubbing in colors to match the real insects.

Blow Up Bobbers

/ POSTED ON [OCTOBER 12, 2023](#) / BY [LOUIS CAHILL](#)

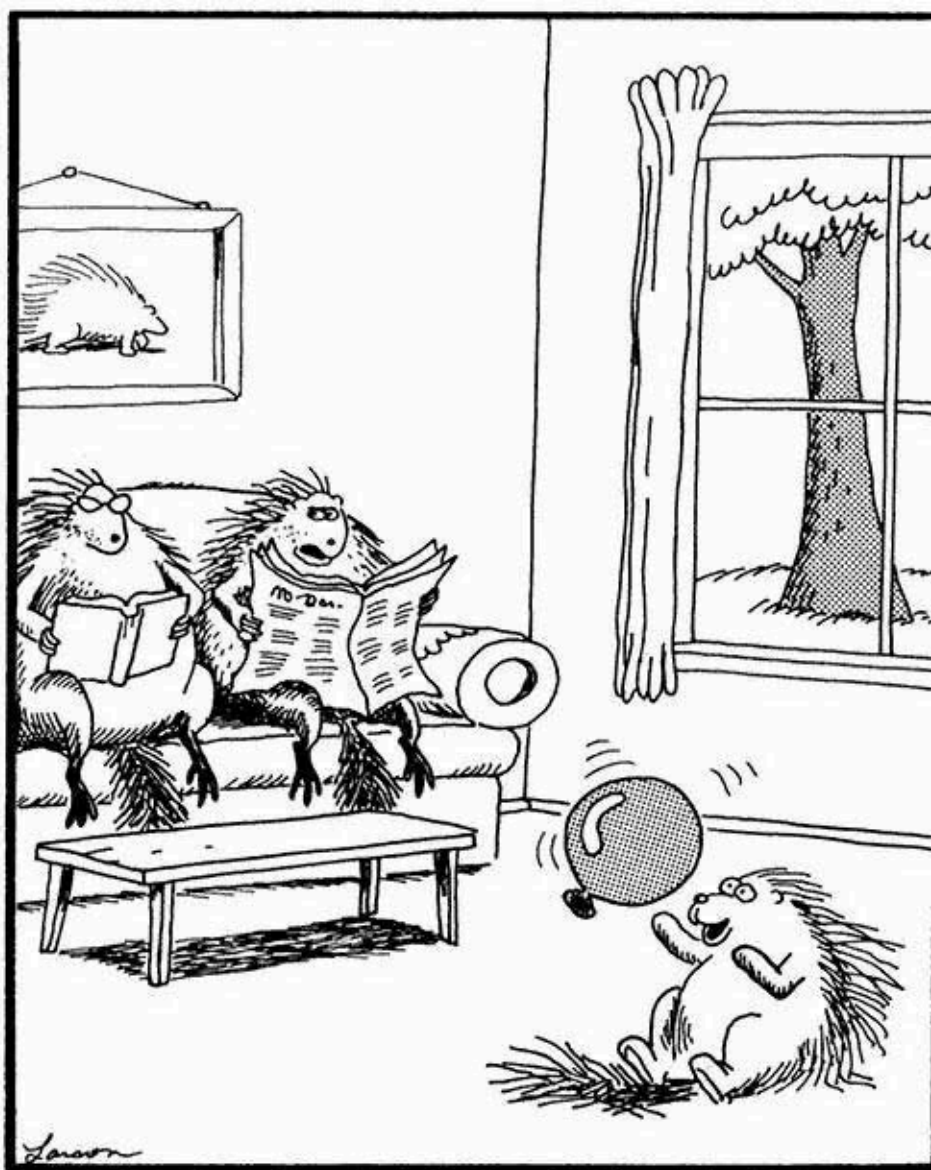


Photo by Justin Pickett

By Justin Pickett

“What the heck kind of indicator is that?”... “it’s a balloon.”

Not too long ago I received a phone call from a good friend of mine asking if I could help with a guide trip for a handful of folks who were on the books. It was a group of five anglers, and the second guide that he had booked fell ill and had to back out. I didn’t have anything on my plate the next day so I gladly agreed to pick up another day on the water.



"Well this shouldn't last too long."

It had rained overnight, which in my eyes is a good thing so long as it isn't one of those earth-carving downpours that blows rivers out to the point "ain't no way in hell I'm going near that water." The right amount of rain will stain the water and raise the flows just enough to get trout feeling frisky, causing them to lose their inhibitions and feed with abandon. For me, the conditions I just described make my stripping hand itch. I reach for the heftier sticks, sinking lines, beefy tippet, and beefier flies. Sex Dungeons and Boogie Men come to mind when I think of days like these. However, when you find yourself on the water with a client, things have to change. You have to play to their strengths, and, on this day, the best plan was to nymph. With the day's conditions, we would be afforded the ability to have our clients throw larger indicators that would float big, gaudy flies without spooking an entire run.

Prepared for a successful day, my fellow guide, Noland, and I discussed the plans for the day and basically split the water in half so we didn't beat all of the

water to death. Fishing was good and soon came lunch. On our way back to the trucks we encountered Noland with his group of anglers and stopped to take a gander and engage in some small talk. As I'm talking with Noland, I noticed something funky about his client's rig. Something just seemed off about it as he picked it up off the water and began his next cast. As this gentleman's flies and indicator hit the water it became a little more obvious as to why I had this impression.

“What the heck kind of indicator is that?” I asked as I turned back towards Noland.

With a smirk on his face, Noland replied with, “it’s a balloon.”

Well I'll just be damned if it wasn't a balloon! I royal blue balloon. I couldn't help but chuckle at the idea that he would use a balloon as an indicator. Sure, there are offshore anglers using balloons to position their bait when fishing for a multitude of species, but as an indicator on a fly rig? No way! Obviously, I had to ask....Why? And the answer was simple. They're cheap and they work.

As a guide, you constantly have to replace things. Clients will break off flies and indicators. Leaders get trashed. Split shot gets slung off into oblivion. I'll salvage a leader as many times as I can, but you can't salvage something you don't have. So to combat the cost of having to replace lost indicators, Noland has turned to small party balloons. First off, they're cheap. A couple bucks will get you one hundred of these little rubber blimps. Second, they actually work really well. You simply tie them on the leader with a quick overhand knot, just as you would tie off any balloon. You can add as much air as you need to float your flies so you don't need to carry multiple sizes. Adjusting depth is a breeze and doesn't kink your leader. A little water or saliva along the leader and balloon knot is all you need to slide the balloon into the desired position. The water/saliva is a must. If you don't lubricate before trying to slide the balloon, then the rubber will grip the leader and cause you some fits. And (one of the coolest things I noticed about using balloons) they don't make a ton of racket or cause a big disturbance when they hit the water. These balloons are very light and land softly, and because they are so light they are easy for clients to cast. So now the only thing left to talk about is a balloon's ability to actually detect a strike. Well, they do the exact same job as a thingamabobber would, and I think that the balloon of a similar size will do a better job simply because they are so much lighter than the actual indicator while maintaining seemingly equal buoyancy. An indicator that weighs less takes less energy to move and/or sink, thus making it more sensitive to strikes. It's the same reason why I have been

such a fan of the New Zealand indicator system. It is super light, yet has the ability to float multiple flies. The one thing I wonder (that I have not experienced) is the incidence of stray hook points and other pointy objects ruining your drift, though I would venture to guess that would certainly not be the norm.

Now, I'm not saying that I have completely ditched indicators for balloons. And I'm certainly not running off the water to the closest Party City when I'm low on supplies, but I will say that these little balloons are one inventive way to solve a problem while also being very cost effective. Your traditional bobber-style indicators aren't cheap, and if you are someone that loses indicators often and you are trying to save some coin, then this might be something to look in to. Heck, they might even be good to just keep in the gear bag as a backup!

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My buddy loves Christmas so much that he decorates trees all year...

