

Module 4 – Damselfly and Dragonfly Fishing

What Are Damselfly and Dragonflies?

1. You all know what Dragonflies look like, little helicopter shaped insects that fly across the water.
2. Damselflies are similar shaped insects that are about half the length and much slimmer. They are usually light blue or brown in this area.
3. The flying phase that you see is the adult phase, it is not very important for fishing.
4. The Aquatic phase or nymphs are important food items for fish and their imitations are what you want to fish with. Damselfly nymphs:
 - a. Are slender, delicate, and .5 to 1.25 inches long
 - b. They are mainly light olive to olive or brown in colour in this area
 - c. Have bulbous eyes
 - d. A tail that looks three paddles
 - e. Are mainly crawlers that have an awkward, wobbly swimming motion.
5. Dragonfly nymphs:
 - a. Are large thick solid insects, that can grow up to two inches in length
 - b. They are light olive to dark olive, brown or black in colour
 - c. Have bulbous eyes
 - d. Spend most of their time crawling through the weeds eating anything smaller than themselves
 - e. Of the two main species, Darner and Gomphus, only the Darner swims
6. **Pass out Vials and Photos**

What is Damsel and Dragonfly Fishing?

It is fishing with imitations of the nymph phase of either insect

Why do you Fish with Damsel and Dragonfly Patterns?

1. Large fish prefer large food, dragon fly nymphs are among the largest insects available. If you want to catch big trout, fishing with a dragon fly is a good bet.
2. Damsels are smaller, but are still substantial, compared to other aquatic insects.
3. They are available to trout year around and are a trout staple.
4. Damsels have an undulating motion when they swim, which seems to attract trout.

When do you Fish with Damsel and Dragonfly Patterns?

1. The best fishing is when a hatch is occurring
2. The hatch for both damsels and dragonflies occurs when the nymphs travel to shore or the bull rushes, to dry and emerge as adults. You will see their dry casings on reeds and logs sticking out of the water.
3. The heaviest hatches occur later in the spring, usually after the mayfly hatches have started.
4. Smaller hatches will occur throughout the summer and fall, but these are usually of less importance.
5. Early season, late season and the hot months of the summer are good times to try these flies. If there are no other insect hatches occurring, trout will revert back to damsels and dragons as they are a staple.
6. Cloudy and rainy days are usually best, if fishing shallow water.

Where do you fish with Damsel and Dragonfly Patterns?

- 1) If you see evidence of a hatch, fish that area. The shallows near the shore or bullrushes are preferred.
- 2) In the early spring and late fall trout move into the shallows and feed on both species. As the water warms up the trout move into deeper water, but will still feed on damsels and dragons.
- 3) Sometimes during the damsel hatch they can be found swimming all over the lake just below the surface. In this situation, fish shallow.
- 4) If there is no hatch, fish the weed beds.

Fishing equipment needed

1. Fishing Equipment needed:

- I. Fly rod set up with either a floating line, shallow sink or fast sink fly line
- II. Float (strike indicator)
- III. Lots of leader
- IV. Tippet material (6-8lb)
- V. Small swivels
- VI. Small weights to keep your line straight
- VII. Damsel and Dragon patterns. *Some of the more popular patterns are:*
 - a) *Damsels – pumpkin head, micro leech, marabou damsel imitators*
 - b) *Dragons – deer hare dragon, foam dragon*

How do you fish using Damsel and Dragonfly Patterns?

- 1) In the early spring and late fall or during a hatch cast into the shallows with nymphs. Look for fish movement or activity, swirls are a good sign.
- 2) When the water gets too warm for trout, you will have to move into deeper water.

Fishing methods

1. Shallow water fishing

- a. The most common methods are:
 - i. Casting a nymph (damsel or dragon) with a long leader and doing a slow retrieve.
 1. You would use a slow sinking or a floating line for this.
 2. Use a jerky retrieve to make the damsel fly undulate.
 - ii. Suspending a nymph (either species) under a strike indicator (float)
 1. Anchor your boat
 2. Cast the fly
 3. Let it sink to the preferred depth, just off the bottom or weeds
 4. Let it sit still or slowly retrieve it
 - iii. Slowly troll the nymph with a slow sink (types I or II) or floating line through likely areas.
 - iv. If using a floating line, use a small weight or swivel to sink the fly below the surface.

2. Deep Water Fishing

- a. The most common methods are:
 - i. Using a fast sinking fly line and a floating dragon fly nymph with short, stout leader (2-3 feet):
 1. Cast the fly out,

2. Let it sink to the bottom, the floating fly should hover just above the weeds
 3. Let it stay there until you feel a bite.
- ii. Using a fast sinking fly line and a sinking damsel or dragon fly nymph with medium length leader (9 feet):
 1. Cast the fly out,
 2. Let it sink to the bottom using the count-down method
 3. Start your retrieve when it is just above the bottom weeds
 - iii. Using a floating line and strike indicator(float),
 1. Suspend a damsel with a leader just long enough to position the fly just above the bottom or weed bed
 2. Let it sink to the bottom
 3. Fish it motionless, or let it wind drift, or slowly retrieve it

Show rod set ups

Demonstration Equipment needed:

1. Photos of different life stages
2. Vials of sample insects
3. Fly samples
4. Fly rod set up with a floating line, indicator and damsel nymph
5. Fly rod set up with a shallow sink (types I or II) line and a damsel or dragon nymph
6. Fly rod set up with a deep (types 3-7) line and a floating dragon fly nymph
7. Tippet material
8. Leader material
9. Swivels
10. Strike indicators
11. Small weights