

Module 8 – River and Stream Fishing

What is River and Stream Fishing?

It is trying to catch fish in a river or stream with a fly rod and flies.

Why do you Fish Rivers and Streams.

1. Fish will give a better fight, when they have a current to help them.
2. The fight can be more challenging when you have to keep the fish away from rocks, logs, bends in the bank etc.
3. Rivers and streams are more interesting, there is wide variety of structure and different types of water to fish. You have to be able to read the water to be successful.
4. They are more challenging to fish, the dynamics in a river or stream can vary daily with changes in:
 - a. Water depth
 - b. Water clarity
 - c. Weather.
5. Wading in moving water or walking the banks provides more exercise than sitting in a watercraft.
6. Both offer opportunities to fish for salmon, steelhead and trout feeding on salmon eggs.
7. Both offer hatches to fish and dry fly fishing opportunities.

When do you River and Stream Fish?

1. The best fishing is when a hatch is occurring or salmon are running.
2. The best fishing is after high water and before late fall.
3. Most streams and many rivers are closed from Jan 1st to July 1st to allow for spawning to be completed.
4. The largest and most intense insect hatches occur in the June, July and August.
 - a. During July and August some of the best hatches occur late in the evening or at night.
 - b. There are lighter hatches in the spring a fall.
5. Salmon runs occur from early spring until late fall.
 - a. Timing is critical as some runs only last a few weeks.
6. Some steelhead runs are available all winter.

Where do you fish Rivers and Streams?

- 1) Most fishing takes place where there are breaks in the current,:
 - a) pools, quiet water
 - b) eddies, slow spinning water
 - c) back channels, smaller quieter channels
 - d) seams, a split between currents of different speeds
 - e) spots behind large rocks or logs
- 2) Faster water can be productive if there is a hatch going.
- 3) On larger rivers or streams water depth may limit your fishing to the shallower runs near shore.
- 4) When fishing salmon or steelhead:
 - a) The confluence of two rivers can be good.
 - b) On cloudy days or when the river is murky, the salmon travel closer to shore
 - c) If the water is clear and it is sunny, salmon travel in deeper water during mid day.
- 5) Fish the hatch locations, look for the adults sitting on the surface and or flying away.
- 6) Sometimes you can see the fish surface feeding.

Fishing equipment needed

1. Fishing Equipment needed:

- I. Fly rod set up with a floating line
- II. Fly rod set up with a sink tip line
- III. If there is no room for a back cast you may need to use two handed rods, switch or spey rods
- IV. Spare sink tips of different lengths and sink rates
- V. Float (strike indicator)
- VI. Waders
- VII. Wading boots
- VIII. Wading staff
- IX. Lots of leader
- X. Tippet material (6-20lb)
- XI. Trout Fly Patterns. *Some of the more popular patterns are:*
 - a) *Stonefly nymphs and Adults(stimulators)*
 - b) *Mayfly nymphs and adult*
 - i) *Adults –Adams, Tom Thumb*
 - ii) *Nymphs – Hares Ear Nymph, Pheasant tail Nymph*
 - c) *Caddis (sedge) adults*
 - i) *Elk hair caddis*
 - ii) *Mikulak Sedge*
 - d) *Sculpin patterns*
 - i) *Muddler minnow*
 - ii) *Spuddler*
 - e) *Terrestrial patterns*
 - i) *Grasshoppers*
 - ii) *Ants*
 - iii) *beetles*
- XII. *Steelhead and salmon patterns:*
 - a) *Popscicles*
 - b) *Intruders*
 - c) *Egg leeches*

How do you fish Rivers and Streams?

- 1) If fishing for trout during a hatch:
 - a) If the trout are rising
 - i) Put on a floating fly line
 - ii) Put on the fly that best imitates what is hatching
 - iii) Drop your fly just upstream of a rising trout

- iv) Allow your fly to drift without drag
 - v) Set the hook a ½ second after the trout strikes
 - b) If the trout are feeding subsurface:
 - i) Put on a floating or sink tip fly line with a weighted sinking fly
 - ii) Drift your fly through likely looking water
 - iii) Try to keep the fly drifting at the same rate as the current, no drag
 - iv) Set the hook when you feel the strike
- 2) If fishing for trout when there is no hatch:
 - a) With a sink tip line, work likely looking water with a wet fly that replicates what the trout should be feeding on that time of year.
 - b) You can do the same thing with a floating line with or without a strike indicator and weighted wet fly.
 - c) The most common prey species are usually :
 - i) Sculpin
 - ii) Stoneflies
 - iii) Mayflies
 - iv) Caddis
 - v) Egg patterns, if salmon are spawning
- 3) If fishing for Salmon or Steelhead:
 - a) Use heavier equipment, usually an 8 or 9 weight rod.
 - b) Get there when the run is going on.
 - c) Find water that is suitable.
 - d) Cast out with a sink tip line and wet fly (most of the time)
 - e) Work the fly deep (just off the bottom)
 - f) Let it swing across the current
 - g) Set the hook when you feel a bite or see the line stop or slow down.
 - h) Be ready to run downstream as fast as you can

Show rod set ups

Demonstration Equipment needed:

1. Photos of different life stages
2. Vials of sample insects
3. Waders
4. Wading boots
5. Wading staff
6. Fly samples
 - a. Insects,
 - b. Sculpin
 - c. Eggs
 - d. Salmon
 - e. Steelhead
7. Rod set up with a floating line, indicator and weighted fly
8. Rod set up with a floating line and dry fly
9. Rods set up with a sink tip line and wet fly
10. Spey and switch rods set up
11. Tippet material
12. Leader material
13. Strike indicators
14. Small weights