

Module 2 - Chironomid Fishing

What is a Chironomid?

1. Chironomids are aquatic insects that are the largest food source for the trout in our local lakes.
2. There are three 3 stages in their life cycle. Larvae, Pupae and Adult
 - a. Larvae are the first stage. **Pass out Photos and Vials**
 - i. These are small wormlike insects that live in the mud at the bottom of the lake.
 - ii. They are called bloodworms because many of them are blood coloured. They also come in maroon, brown or green.
 - iii. They spend most of their time in the mud, but do emerge at times and swim around. This is usually during windy weather or when they are maturing into Pupae.
 - b. Pupae are the second stage. **Pass out Photos and Vials**
 - i. They look like long segmented grubs
 - ii. At this stage they leave the mud, gather gas from the water to inflate and float to the surface.
 - iii. The inflation makes them look shiny like little balloons.
 - c. Adults are the final stage. **Pass out Photos and Vials**
 - d. They emerge after the pupae reach the surface and split their shell.
 - e. At this point they look like a small mosquito. The adult then flies away to mate and lay eggs.

What is Chironomid Fishing?

Chironomid fishing is the use of chironomid larvae, pupae or adult imitator flies to catch fish.

Why do you Chironomid Fish?

1. After a long winter the trout are hungry, stupid and looking for a food source.
2. Chironomids are the first major food source.
3. When the hatches occur, the trout will concentrate in the hatch areas and feed voraciously- this is when they are easy to catch.

Where do you Chironomid Fish?

1. In the early spring the hatches start in shallow water and gradually move out into deeper water as the water temperature increases.
2. The best way to find them is to tour the lake until you see adults sitting on the surface.
3. After they fly they will leave their shucks (casings) behind on the water surface, which will indicate where they have been hatching, if you get there too late.
4. Watch for feeding flocks of swallows and other insect- eating birds, they often find the hatches before the fishermen.

When do you Chironomid Fish?

1. The chironomid hatch usually starts a week to 4 weeks after the ice comes off the lake in the spring.
2. The heaviest hatches occur during the first few weeks, this is when the best chironomid fishing occurs.
3. There are smaller hatches that occur during the rest of year, but generally they are not as good as the spring hatches because:
 - a. There are often other insects hatching at this time
 - b. The chironomid hatches, are more spotty, smaller and harder to predict,
4. In the spring and fall seasons, most chironomid hatches occur from around midday, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.
5. During the hotter months you will get good hatches in the evening and early morning as well.

Fishing equipment needed

1. **Fishing Equipment needed:**
 - I. Fly rod set up with a floating line
 - II. Float or strike indicator
 - III. Lots of leader
 - IV. Tippet material (6-8lb)
 - V. small swivels
 - VI. Weights to keep your line straight
 - VII. Chironomid fly patterns. *Some of the more popular patterns are:*
 - a) *Pupae – Black Sally, Black and Silver, Static Bag*
 - b) *Larvae - Bloodworm*
 - VIII. A method of measuring water depth- sounder, forceps etc.
 - IX. Throat pump
 - X. Sample jars
 - XI. Magnifying glass

How do you fish using Chironomid Flies?

- 1) Chironomids are poor swimmers, when they emerge from the mud, it might take them a few days before they start their ascent to the surface. During this time they are sitting ducks for the trout. At this time of year there can be clouds of thousands of them gathered in small areas, this can bring on a feeding frenzy with many trout focused on them.
- 2) The best fishing is when you put your fly in these concentrated hatches.
- 3) To locate these hatches you will need:
 - a. To find the adults emerging on the surface.
 - b. Anchor up wind
 - c. Measure the depth to the bottom, most of the time the best feeding zone is within a foot or two of the bottom
2. The most effective way to catch fish is to place your fly (either pupae or larvae) in the feeding zone.
3. If you have a close enough imitation, you should get a bite in short order.

Fishing methods

1. **Indicator (float) fishing** is the most common method. You would use a floating line and either a chironomid Larva or Pupa (preferred).
 - a. **Show indicator set up**
 - b. To fish this way you need to:
 - i. Drop your anchors
 - ii. Cast the fly out to where adults are emerging on the surface,
 - iii. Let the fly sink to the feeding zone

- iv. Keep your line straight
 - v. Watch your float for a strike
 - 1. Sometimes it is better to let the float sit still or wind drift it.
 - 2. Sometimes you have to slowly move or twitch your float and fly to get a strike.
 - 3. When you see the float move, you set the hook and the fight is on.
2. You can also fish without a float(indicator), this is called **fishing naked**,
 - a. **Show naked rod/reel/line set up**
 - b. To fish this way you:
 - i. Cast the fly out to where adults are emerging on the surface,
 - ii. Let the fly sink to the bottom using the count- down method
 - iii. When it has reached he bottom, slowly retrieve it, trying to keep the fly in the feeding zone as long as you can
 - iv. You can also use a slow sinking line and do the same thing.
 - v. You will feel the bite using this method.
 3. If you are fishing at least 20 feet deep, you can just hang the fly directly under your boat with a fast sink fly line. This method is called **deep lining**.
 - a. **Demonstrate deep line technique and set up.**
 4. When you start catching fish it is a good idea to pump the occasional one to see what types of chironomids are hatching so that you can better imitate the hatch.
 5. Almost all chironomid fishing is done with Larvae or pupae patterns, on rare occasions you can catch trout with adult fly patterns with a very small dry fly, if the fish are taking adults on the surface.

Demonstration Equipment needed:

1. Photos of different life stages
2. Vials of sample insects
3. Fly samples
4. Rod set up with a floating line, indicator and the rest
5. Rod set up for naked fishing
6. 2 rods set up with sinking lines, fast and slow
7. Tippet material
8. Leader material
9. Swivels
10. Strike indicators
11. Small weights
12. Depth sounder
13. Forceps
14. Throat pump
15. Sample jar
16. Magnifying glass

