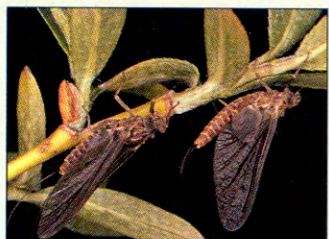




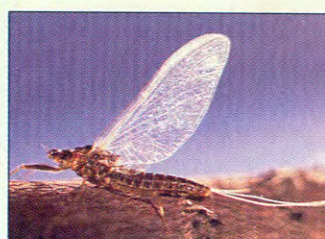
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Meeting Beaverkill Hatches

The Beaverkill River (below) near Roscoe, N.Y. has good hatches of various insects. Pictured above are (left to right) a Hendrickson or Red Quill imitation; a Hendrickson natural; a Blue-winged Olive imitation; a Blue-winged Olive spinner natural; an Isonychia nymph imitation; an emerging Isonychia natural; a dorothea (Pale Evening Dun) imitation; a dorothea natural.

THE BEAVERKILL HAS BEEN—and still is—noted for its hatches. I'm sure the emergences aren't what they were in Theodore Gordon's day, but there are still lots of bugs, and the trout still eat them. The hatch chart provides approximate dates for major mayfly emergences, but keep in mind that seasonal shifts and climatic variations can accelerate or retard hatches. For example, the Hendricksons (*E. subvaria*) were late in 1984 because of cold weather, and were early in 1985 because of an easy winter followed by warm, dry weather in March and April.

Variations from the expected can also occur on a daily basis. Insects apparently have instinctive capabilities for playing the weather. For example, the book on the Hendrickson is that it is an early-afternoon emerger, usually coming off around 2 P.M. However, I've seen warm, wet days when they started popping as early as mid-morning. They love to hatch in the rain. Spinners also time their mating swarms to coincide with favorable conditions. Again using the Hendrickson as an example, I've seen the anticipated early-evening spinner fall delayed until near dark, as the bugs waited for the wind to subside. I've also seen it commence in mid- or late-afternoon on dark, quiet days.

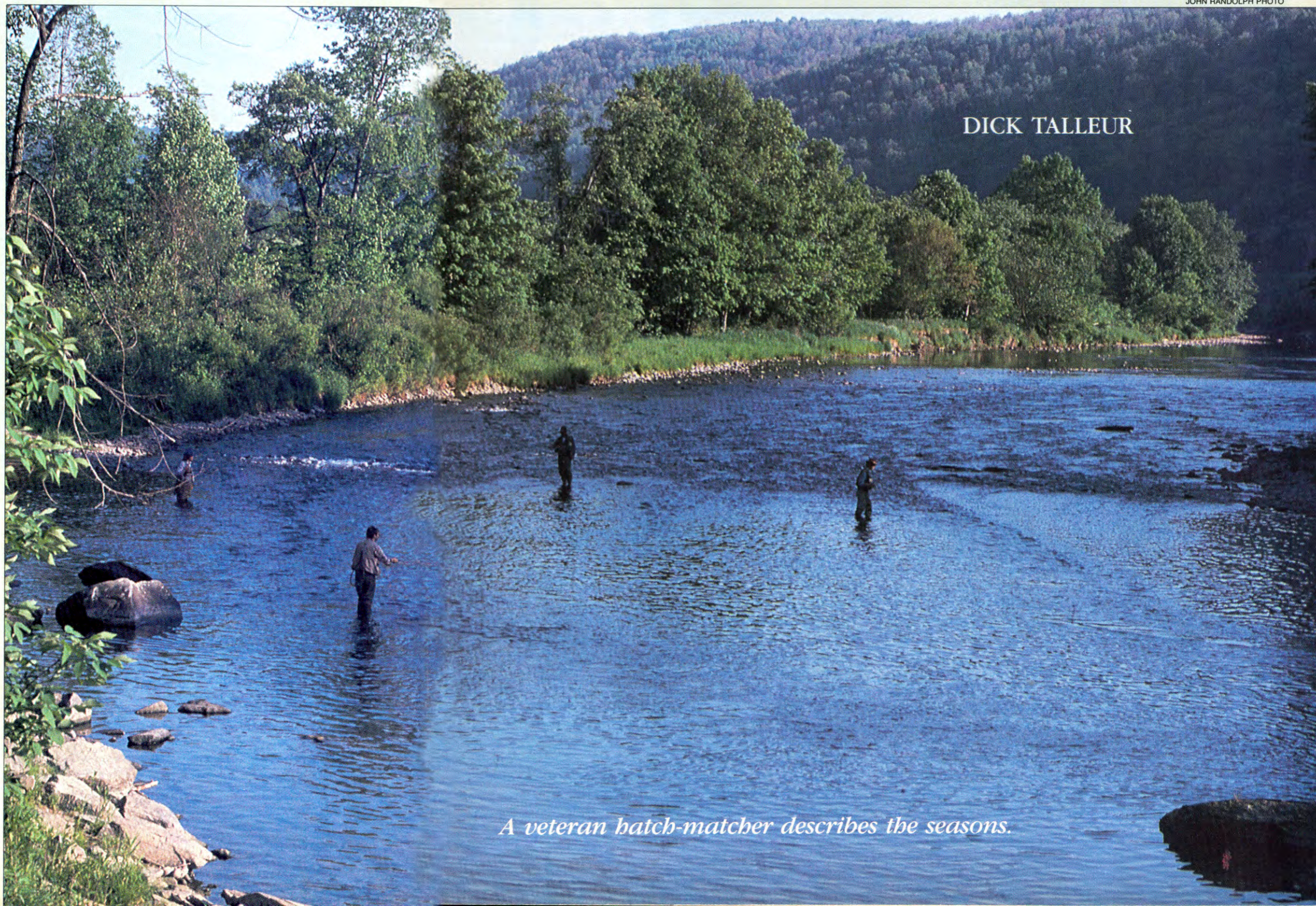
The lesson is: Use hatch data only as guideline information. Try to obtain current status reports from reliable sources, and plan on staying onstream long enough for things to happen.

A few comments on the mayfly hatch chart. I haven't encountered a good Quill Gordon (*Epeorus pleuralis*: April 15 to May 15) hatch on the Beaverkill, although I do see a few each year, and have had a little dry-fly fishing to them. This insect is particularly affected by water purity, and possibly things aren't pristine enough for them these days. You may find the small, dark Baetis more productive in early-season hatch fishing.

Hendrickson: April 15 to May 15

The *subvaria* Hendricksons are *the* hatch of the year on the Beaverkill. The trout seem to love them, particularly when they first appear. It is a hardy insect, often producing good surface fishing in less-than-ideal con-

RICHARD TALLEUR lives near Albany, N.Y. His latest book, *A Fly Tyer's Primer*, was published recently by Nick Lyons Books.

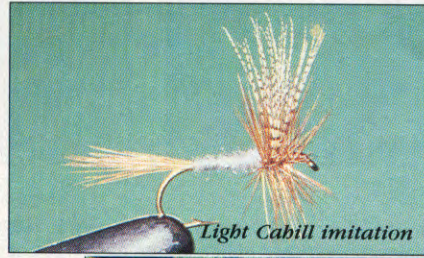


JOHN RANDOLPH PHOTO

DICK TALLEUR

A veteran hatch-matcher describes the seasons.

Beaverkill Hatches . . .



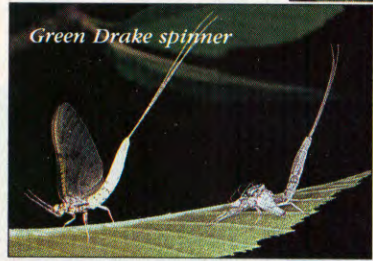
PHILIP HANYOK

Light Cabill imitation



CHARLES MECK

Light Cabill



MATTHEW VINCIGUERRA

Green Drake spinner



INGRID SILS

Trico dun



RICHARD TALLEUR

Extended-body Coffin Fly spinner



RICHARD TALLEUR

Trico dun imitation



MATTHEW VINCIGUERRA

March Brown dun



RICHARD TALLEUR

March Brown imitation



The Willowemoc River

ditions. It is a daytime emerger; even the spinner fall is usually over well before dark.

March Brown: May 10 to June 5

The March Brown hatches were dynamite in 1985 and almost as good in 1986, after several years of relative decline. It's a large, handsome mayfly that can bring the larger trout to the surface. The hatch is unpredictable, so you must hang in for the day and evening to hit the best fishing. Seldom will you see a real flotilla of March Browns on the water. Emergence is usually sporadic—a bug here, two over there. But the

March Brown's size and clumsiness in becoming airborne draws the attention of the trout, and even a modest hatch can create exciting fishing.

Toward the tail end of Hendrickson time, and on into late May and even early June, you may see an emergence of two other *Ephemerellas* that many anglers lump with Hendrickson: The Light Hendrickson or Pale Evening Dun (*E. invaria*—emerges May 1 to June 1) and the Dark Hendrickson or Red Quill (*E. rotunda*—emerges April 20 to May 20). It's an example of how colloquial names can lead to confusion, because the spinner of the *subvaria* Hendrickson is also

called Red Quill, and *E. dorothea* is also called the Pale Evening Dun. *Invaria* can occur late enough in the season to overlap *dorothea*. It is usually a size larger than *dorothea*—#16 versus #18—and is more likely to hatch in late afternoon and early evening, so let that be your guide. *Dorothea* is more of a mid- to late-evening fly. If you are doing well on an early-evening hatch with a pale #16 and suddenly in mid-evening start getting refusals, try dropping down a size. Also, look for spinners in the air because the trout frequently switch to the vulnerable spents when they are present, even while duns are still coming off.

The *rotunda* Hendrickson can also raise havoc with your perceptions, because it sometimes mixes with *subvaria*, and the trout often are selective to the smaller insect, especially if they have been feeding heavily. Carry a few Red Quills in #16 or a conservative #14 for such times.

Dorothea: May 25 to June 20

Ephemerella dorothea is often called the Pale Evening Dun, and sometimes the Sulphur Dun, a name I feel is more appropriately reserved for *Epeorus vitreus* (emerges June 1 to July 1), because Sulphur Dun more accurately describes the coloration of that insect. *Dorothea* is a major hatch, especially on the nearby Willowemoc River (a good *Ephemerella* stream). The *dorotheas* provide superb evening dry-fly fishing in late May and early June. One fly in the ointment: The trout may selectively feed to the emerger, so a few small, pale soft-hackle wet flies in your fly box can save the day. And don't forget the spent-wing patterns.

Green Drake: May 25 to June 17

Around this time—late May to early June—I start looking for the world's most famous, and perhaps over-rated mayfly: the Green Drake (*Ephemera gutturalata*). Just try to find a motel room around the greater Roscoe, N.Y. area a week either side of Memorial Day, such is the popularity of this hatch.

I say the Green Drake hatch is over-rated because the hatch looks a lot more spectacular than it fishes. It is an unpredictable hatch—here tonight, somewhere else tomorrow—and the hatch is limited to certain pools that have the soft, trashy bottoms the burrowing nymphs require. The hatch is brief, coming from mid- to late-evening, and the spinner fall is mostly a last-rays-of-light happening. But the most perplexing and frustrating thing of all is that when you do hit the hatch right, there's no guarantee the trout will feed on it. Many times I've seen trout ignore these huge, succulent mayflies as they float by, struggling to become airborne. It can be maddening fishing, but occasionally everything comes together—the bugs, the weather, the trout's appetite—and marvelous dry-fly fishing for large trout creates the days we dream about.

There is another problem with this hatch—imitation. It's easier to fool trout during a small-fly emergence than when the large naturals are on the water, simply because of visibility. The bigger the natural the more demanding the fly pattern to fool the trout.

Thus it is more difficult to come up with a killing pattern. Recently I've gone to parachute and thorax-style dressings, usually with extended bodies, and I find them far more effective than conventional patterns. Sometimes a large Gray Fox Variant takes fish, if they are really on the feed.

Often trout jump all over the spinner after ignoring the dun, so don't leave early at Green Drake time. There is a remarkable dissimilarity between the Green Drake dun and spinner, so much so that at one time they were thought to be two different insects. The enormous waxy-white spinners, widely known as Coffin Flies, are easier to imitate than the duns. Usually they flutter out of the trees in late evening, which also aids the fisherman in deceiving the fish. (Green Drake emergence in other areas can produce different behavior. There are streams in Pennsylvania, for example, where the hatch is prolific, and the trout seem far less hesitant to feed on it.)

Blue-winged Olives: *cornuta*: June 1 to 20; *attenuata*: June 10 to July 10

Around Green Drake and *dorothea* time (late May through mid-June) and for a few weeks thereafter there are several mayfly emergences on the Beaverkill and Willowemoc rivers that go largely unnoticed by casual anglers: Blue-winged Olives, *Ephemerella cornuta* and *attenuata*. They are both morning hatches, often occurring earlier than many fishermen are astream. This is especially true of *E. attenuata*, which hatches well into July, when water temperatures are near summer levels.

I start looking for *cornuta* around the end of May, and *attenuata* a week or two later. The hatches overlap, and while the naturals are similar in appearance, they sometimes prompt selective feeding by the trout. *Attenuata* is slightly smaller and a brighter green than *cornuta*. A #14 is often the right size for *cornuta* and #16 for *attenuata*, but it doesn't hurt to have some #16s and #18s, respectively. *Cornuta* spinner activity can sometimes produce good evening fishing. I use a rusty-bodied spent pattern with translucent wings in #16.

Leadwing Coachman: *sadleri* and *bicolor*: June 7 to July 7

The Leadwing Coachman hatch is actually a combined hatch, because there are two important *Isonychia* mayflies that appear on the Beaverkill—*sadleri* and *bicolor*. They are sufficiently similar in appearance and behavior to be treated as one, so don't sweat the Latin.

While occasionally providing superb dry-fly fishing (particularly on dark, rainy days), the Leadwing hatch is truly a nymph fisherman's dream. The nymphs (which are strong swimmers) are large, abundant and extremely active in the water. They concentrate in rocky sections, because they prefer, like stoneflies, to crawl out of the water before hatching. The action usually begins in late afternoon, but it can occur earlier on cloudy days. I use dark rusty-brownish nymphs,

Beaverkill Hatches . . .

sizes 8, 10 and 12, tied on 2X long hooks. Give them lots of action—the naturals are quick swimmers. It's unfortunate that the Beaverkill has no rainbows, because they find *Isonychia* nymphs irresistible—ask any Esopus Creek fly fisher. I also carry a few large, dark-colored dry flies (the Dun Variant) in case I hit a stormy day.

An assortment of other mayflies can produce occasional action during this period, so I carry some general-purpose patterns in pale shades, such as the Light Cahill or Gray Fox in sizes 8 through 14.

Tricorythodes: late June to fall

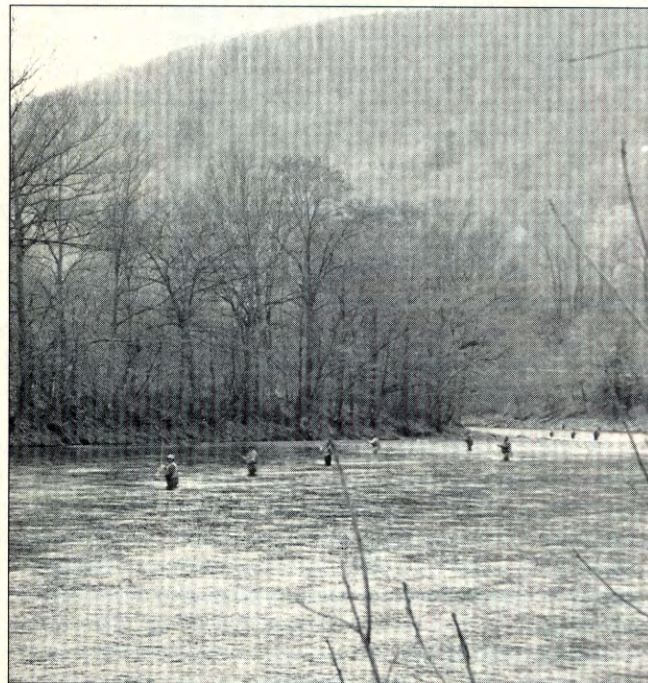
The *Tricorythodes* begin emerging in late June and continue throughout the summer. Small flies are needed: #24 is typical. To fish the Trico hatch you must be astream early, because a typical hatch begins shortly after daybreak in warmer weather.

The life of the Trico dun is short, sometimes only a half-hour, so it's not unusual to see spinners returning while the hatch is still in progress. My answer to the dun-spinner overlap is to carry a compromise pattern, with the bottom hackles clipped off so it rides flush in the water. The pattern seems to match for both dun and spinner. I don't strive for precise imitation, because I simply haven't found a need to do so. The trout don't get much of a look at these tiny insects. However, it's important to match the size fairly closely.

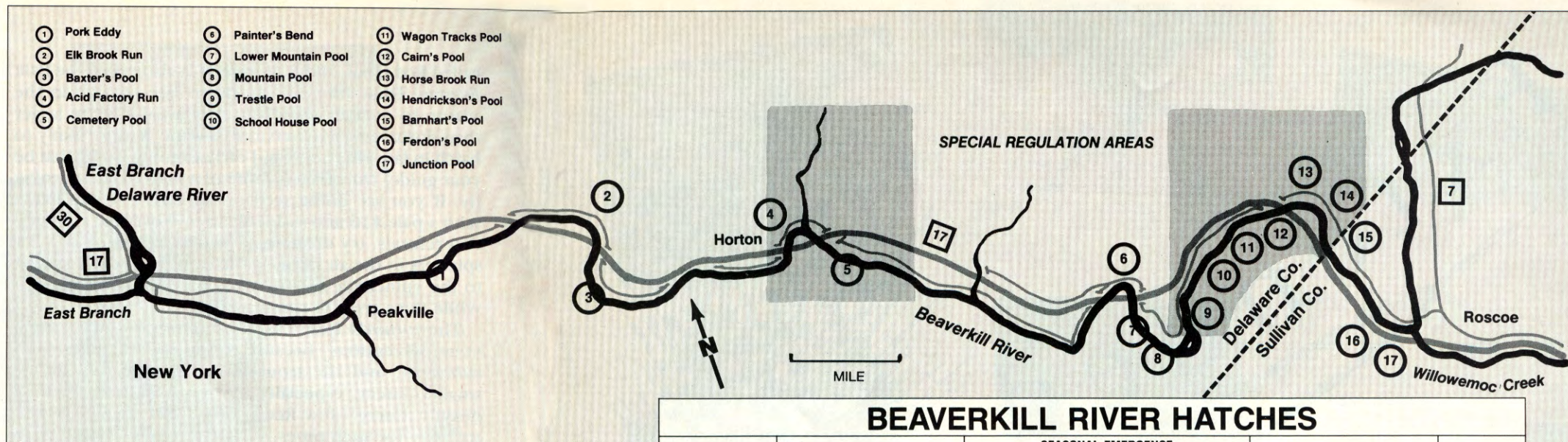
Trico time offers an excellent opportunity for those who may be afraid to fish small flies to rid themselves of paranoia. It's incredible how greedily both the small and large trout feed on this hatch. With today's strong, small-diameter tippet materials, even the neophyte angler can cope with 7X. Give it a try.

Autumn Hatches

SUMMER IS THE DOLDRUMS, except for the early-morning



DALE SPARTAS PHOTO



A group of anglers fish for Beaverkill browns in Cairn's Pool (below left). A map of a portion of the Beaverkill (above) shows seven of the more popular pools and the hatch chart can be used as a guide to selecting the proper pattern.

Trico action, but in September there is a trout-fishing rejuvenation. Hatches are less prolific and dependable than in May and June, but if you are in the right place at the right time, you can have excellent fishing. In the afternoons there are Leadwings and occasional #22 Blue-winged Olives.

There is also the occasional "mystery" fly—a little-known mayfly important to trout only a few times a year. I encountered the hatch last fall in early October. The bug was a gray-winged, amber-bodied #16 mayfly. Unfortunately, I couldn't capture a specimen. Activity began around 3 P.M., and lasted well into evening. The trout preferred the spent spinner, and took a *cornuta* spinner pattern eagerly. I had a ball! I'm still trying to get a positive identification of the insect—any ideas, readers?

Caddis Hatches All Season

ALMOST FROM OPENING DAY onward there are caddis hatches on the Beaverkill and Willowemoc rivers. They often get no respect, perhaps because they lack the distinctiveness that characterizes many mayflies. Today's well-read angler can easily distinguish a Hendrickson from a March Brown from a Green Drake, but can he tell such caddis as *Brachycentrus* or *Rhyacophila* from a *Psilotreta*? Probably not. Few caddis have nicknames. In fact, the only one in the Beaverkill/Willowemoc (Beamoc) watershed that does have a popular name is *Brachycentrus numerosus*, which has two popular names: Grannom and Shad Fly. (*Brachycentrus* emerges at about the time the shad run in the Delaware River.)

Caddis earn disfavor among fly fishers because of

their behavior. Imitating caddis behavior with a fly, line and rod is difficult, particularly for the dry-fly addict. The adults seldom ride the water like a nice, civilized Hendrickson or March Brown. They often shoot up through the water like a missile launched by a submarine. Or, they may dance on the surface like tiny, winged Barishnikovs, driving trout and angler crazy.

Caddis fishing techniques are worth learning, however, because fish eat tons of naturals each year. There is a seasonal cycle, although not as defined as the mayfly cycles. Knowing the caddis cycles can tell us when a particular caddis is due to emerge, and when its subsurface forms (larva and pupa) are prominent. Much of the best caddis fishing is subsurface, so if you become familiar with the appearance and behavior of the more significant caddis worms and pupae you stand a good chance of catching fish.

An in-depth dissertation on caddis would be beyond the range of this article, but here are a couple of importance. The Shad Fly makes its appearance in early to mid-May (even in late April, following a mild winter). Hatches usually occur in early afternoon, but morning hatches are also common in pleasant weather.

A soft-hackle wet fly (olive body with grouse hackle)

is tied on a #12 hook takes trout at Shad Fly time. I work it through gravelly runs and the heads of pools. If things are quiet, I use a little weight to get it down, but if adults are coming off I fish it unweighted, letting it swing downstream into a rise and lifting a bit as it enters the feeding area.

Even when a subsurface fly might still be the better producer, I prefer fishing dries to rising trout. Shad Flies make for good dry-fly fishing because they remain on the water long enough to provide the trout opportunity. They twitch, jump and skitter, however, and often a fly fished in that manner is killing. I prefer high floaters like the Henryville Special, the Goddard Caddis, various hair-winged patterns and the murderous Dorato Hare's Ear—which does not look much like a caddis but works. I believe in a mottled, tweedy appearance, obtained from materials like hare's ear dubbing, woodchuck guard hair and barred rock and cree hackle. The pattern is a large caddis—hook sizes 14 and 16 for the down-winged style and 12 and 14 for the Henryville and Dorato.

Psilotreta labida is a caddis that appears in Beaverkill waters around the first of June. About the

Continued on page 68

BEAVERKILL RIVER HATCHES

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	SEASONAL EMERGENCE								HATCH TIME	SIZE
		April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.			
Blue-winged Olive	<i>Baetis vagans</i>									midday	16-18
	<i>B. cingulatus</i>									midday	16-18
Quill Gordon	<i>Epeorus pleuralis</i>									midday	12-14
Hendrickson	<i>Ephemerella subvaria</i>									early afternoon	12-14
	<i>E. invaria</i>									early afternoon	14-16
	<i>E. rotunda</i>									early afternoon	14-16
March Brown	<i>Stenonema vicarium</i>									sporadic	8-10
Pale Evening Dun	<i>Ephemerella dorothea</i>									evening	16-18
Green Drake	<i>Ephemera guttulata</i>									evening	6-8
Leadwing Coachman	<i>Isonychia sadleri</i>									mid afternoon-evening	8-10
	<i>I. bicolor</i>									mid afternoon-evening	8-10
Blue-winged Olive	<i>Ephemerella cornuta</i>									early-mid afternoon	14
	<i>E. attenuata</i>									early-mid afternoon	16-18
Light Cahill	<i>Stenonema canadense</i>									evening	12-14
Trico	<i>Tricorythodes atratus</i>									early-mid morning	22-26
	<i>T. stygiatus</i>									early-mid morning	22-26
Blue-winged Olive	<i>Pseudocloeon carolina</i>									afternoon	20-24
	<i>P. dubium</i>									afternoon	20-24

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Beaverkill Hatches . . .

Continued from page 37

same size as *Brachycentrus*, but dark gray with a dirty-green cast to its body, its style of emergence is simply to pop through the surface and fly off. Its emergence behavior accounts for spectacular riseforms. The trout dash after the rapidly-escaping emergers, and what you see is the spectacular follow-through. It's an ideal time to fish a pupal imitation—a soft-hackle wet with a dark greenish-gray body and dark dun hackle is a good choice. Keep it moving, lifting and swimming the fly to simulate the upward migration of the natural.

Dry-fly fishing to this caddis can be frustrating but possible. Often the emergent caddis can't quite fly away on the first try, so it lands on the water briefly and prepares for a second take-off. If a trout is waiting there, a well-placed dry fly can bring an immediate and vicious rise. The key is to drop the fly precisely and emphatically right on the riseform—not above it. This tactic can be deadly any time there are over-active caddis about, not just when fishing to *Psilotreta*.

There are other important caddis hatches on the Beaverkill. Read *Caddis Flies* by Gary Lafontaine and *Caddis And The Angler* by Larry Solomon and Eric Leiser. The Solomon-Leiser book is Beaverkill-oriented.

Hatch Alternatives

HOW ELSE CAN YOU FISH the Beaverkill? There are many ways. It's one of the joys of freestone-stream fishing: You can fish creatively and make things happen. There are always nymphs down there, and imitations fished deep and carefully work when there are no rises. Fish wets as you would a worm. My favorite patterns include the Muskrat, Hare's Ear, Pheasant Tail and Atherton Dark nymphs, Breadcrust, Zug Bug, Montana nymph in black and brown and my own *Perlidae* Stonefly nymph. There are stoneflies in the Beaverkill, lots of them. While they rarely produce surface action, nymphal imitations can be murderous. Read Leiser and Bob Boyle's *Stoneflies For The Angler*.

Terrestrials are often important on the Beaverkill, and vastly under-fished. Beetles and ants produce between-the-hatches fishing and they sometimes fool trout that won't take a hatch-matcher. The green leafworm can be a killer in June, as can a Japanese beetle pattern occasionally. I've never done much with hopper patterns, but I haven't tried them extensively.

Streamer fishing can be superb at times, and it is a method few fishermen use anymore. Traditional bucktails such

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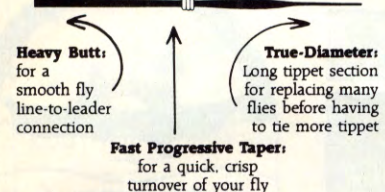
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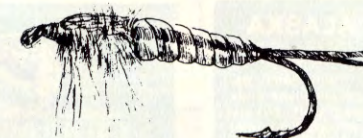
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as the Blacknosed Dace still work, and the Thunder Creek style is excellent. The Muddler takes fish, as will brown and olive Matuka patterns. And if you want to extemporize, try Maribou patterns such as the Woolly Bugger and Jack Gartside's Soft-hackle Streamer. Black is usually best, but if the water is off-color, try something wild, like yellow, orange or hot pink. I will never forget seeing Ralph Graves hook two enormous brown trout in quick succession in Wagontracks Pool following a thunderstorm. These flies should be kept moving. Strip them fast, and cover water.

I realize the previous paragraph may have offended the Beaverkill and Willowemoc purist contingent. My apologies—but I enjoy variety in my fly fishing. I also like to catch trout, and I try to maximize my chances of doing so. Like most of you, I don't get to spend



VALERIE BAKER ILLUSTRATION

nearly as much time on the water as I want, so when I can be there, I don't sit around waiting for a fantastic rise of trout. It might not happen.

The great renaissance of fly fishing over the last quarter-century has brought multitudes onstream. Many of them are well-studied in trout-lore, thanks to the vast library of angling literature now available. I notice that a large percentage of today's fly fishers fish exactly alike—they read the same books, attend the same seminars, have the same data base. This is fine—there's nothing like understanding—but there is a time for innovation and flexibility.

I have a theory about our heavily-fished eastern waters, or for that matter, heavily-fished waters anywhere—and this particularly applies to the Beaverkill. I have a feeling that the trout are seeing so much of the same flies they often don't respond as anticipated, even to the "right" fly, properly presented. I am finding that things which have worked for me in the past are no longer dependable. Beaverkill and Willowemoc trout aren't as free-rising as they once were, and sometimes refrain from eating naturals. Perhaps they've gotten fed up with us flailing away, littering the water with fur, feathers, steel and plastic. Perhaps that's why I often do better on these days with flies like the Dorato Hare's Ear and the Soft-hackle Streamer. Perhaps the time has come to show the trout something different.

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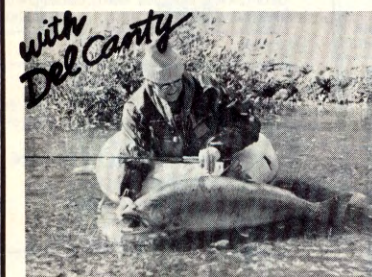
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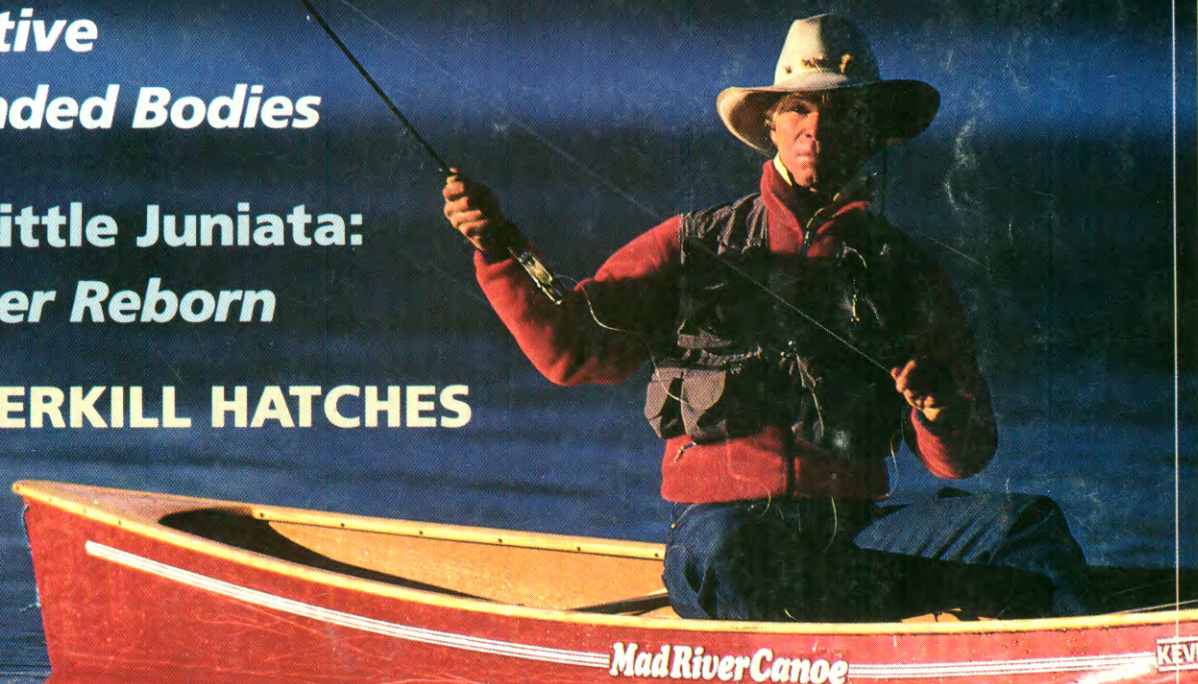
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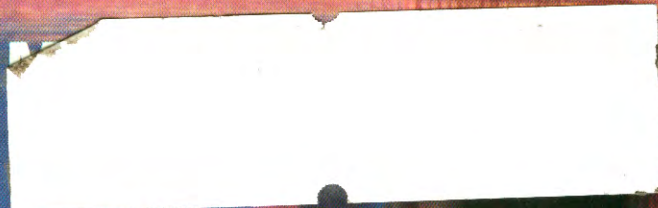
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