

Whitlock tells what midging is—
and what it isn't—in one of the most
detailed discussions we've seen of this least
understood of angling pursuits

Midging

DAVE WHITLOCK

IN MY OPINION, MIDGE FISHING IS THE FRONT-RUNNING candidate for the highest office in the land of angling—and you can elect yourself to it. Often thought of as a curse and totally ignored or misunderstood, midging's full potential is seldom explored and perfected by trout fly fishers across this country.

My philosophy of fly-fishing is a subject that I like to define to the anglers I meet as I travel the country. My sermon always includes the thought that fly-fishing is unique among all types of artificial-lure angling in that a fly fisher has the potential to imitate, through fly-tying, *any* food form that *any* fish feeds upon. Such an artificial fly may be cast and fished to in the most natural manner required to imitate the real food form. It is possible to imitate a foot-long baitfish, to cast and swim a fly to huge blue marlin, or to a hatch of the tiniest midge for a tipping-and-sipping postgraduate brownie. That is quite a wide spectrum of possibilities for the average fly fisher, for sure!

Certainly we must alter fly, leader, line, reel and rod to best accommodate the type of fishing we try. Big-game fishing requires some very special flies, leaders and knots, as well as powerful rods and a reel with a super-duper gutsy drag and backing capacity. However, the ultimate in fly-fishing at the "infra" end of the spectrum must truly be midge fishing.

I've always been totally fascinated by trout, for they allow me to refine my tackle and lures to the maximum degree of my skills and talents. Few other fish of such a wide size-range have the feeding, fighting and habitat characteristics that allow us to enjoy the highest degree of angling sophistication and refinements—a lofty plateau most typified by midging!



This Western spring creek is an almost too-perfect setting for what is considered by some as the ultimate challenge in fly-fishing for trout—stalking selective fish with ultra-small flies and gossamer leaders as the author is doing here. Photos and art by Dave Whitlock.

The Naturals

MIDGE IS THE COMMON NAME for a large group of small, two-winged insects—*Chironomid* flies belonging to the *Diptera* order. They have an extremely wide range and their larvae are found in most freshwater lakes, ponds, sloughs, swamps, springs, streams and rivers. Midges are an extremely abundant source of rich food for trout as well as other fish and, in most waters containing them, go through several generations during the year, thus providing an unusual number of opportunities for the fly fisher. They have a complete life cycle—egg, larva, pupa and adult. There are few fly fishermen who have not seen their mating swarms over trout water, backlit by the early-morning or afternoon sun.

Their eggs are laid on the water's surface, soon hatching into tiny midge larvae which live on the bottom or in aquatic vegetation. The worm-like larvae burrow into the bottom or form a cocoon-like case on various un-

derwater structures for transformation into pupae. The pupae, after completing development, free themselves and rise to the surface where they wriggle from their pupal skins and become two-winged adults that immediately leave the surface, returning hours later to lay eggs after swarming and mating.

Species vary widely in size and color. Generally, the most important naturals to the fly fisher are 3–10 mm (#28–14 hooks). Black, olive, tan, red, gray, and cream are the most common colors.

Occasionally the term "midge" is used in fly-fishing literature and by fly fishers to describe other tiny adult insects. Mayflies, especially small ones such as *Tricorythodes* and *Caenis*, are often described as midges. Micro-caddis are also often dismissed as midges. The term "midge fishing" is also often applied to most patterns of size 18 or smaller—even to tiny terrestrials such as jassids, ants and beetles—which adds to the confusion. Such generalizations are fine for choosing tackle *but*—fly patterns to imitate the various insects should be

fished according to the nature of each insect for maximum success with selectively feeding fish. Trout often have very definite preferences when feeding on true midges, and that isn't always true when they're taking other small insects incorrectly identified under the same name.

Without the recognition of these facts most of us will soon find ourselves totally frustrated and fishless when trout start a fantastic feeding spree on some runty insect. Typically, our fly boxes are loaded with #16-and-larger flies when we search for an answer, and then we usually break off the first decent fish that we can interest in some trimmed-down #16.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME presented itself to Frank Brown, Jim Wingfield and me one late October afternoon at a small spring-fed pond in southwestern Montana where the rainbows were reported to be of shark-size proportions. The wind was dying as we rigged for

nymphing and it was so dark at noon that it seemed like evening. The snow-laden clouds were so low and thick that a side-arm cast was almost required to avoid them. Big wet snowflakes splatted against my parka and then stopped as the wind halted and the scene became absolutely still.

Suddenly my eyes caught a surface disturbance so incredible that I lost all mind of weather. A dark head, dorsal fin and tail of unbelievable size rose from a huge gray-silver ring on the smooth surface about 40 feet away. Within seconds, similar rises patchworked the surface near us.

My shout must have scared the others as they came running while I pointed shakily with red, half-frozen hands. Our nymphs went zipping out dozens of times as the feeding school of fish cruised back and forth in front of us. Some of the big rainbows even rubbed their backs against our floating lines but we got no response at all to our nymphs.

Frank finally noticed some tiny tan flies skating on the water around our waders. He said that the fish were after some sort of little tan midge, then stripped his line and dove for his stock box of flies. Quickly he and two other frustrated nymphers came up with some sort of match-the-hatch offering, although none of our flies seemed the right size, shape and color—to us or to the fish.

We tied and retied, cut, trimmed and cursed for another half hour. Those minutes were some of the most frustrating of my angling life, as now the big rainbows were so intent on feeding that they remained on top with their dorsal fins and tails above the surface, just like sharks.

I don't remember who got the first strike, but of the six or eight fish we finally did hook, only Frank managed to bring one to the net. It was a steelhead-size rainbow that had taken a trimmed-down #20 Red Quill dry fly. Those few we did hook usually smashed our tippets quickly or pulled the hook out. Our tackle, flies and skill were just not right for the job. We had played a typical game of midging for trout and came out low scorers.

What we had experienced was a major emergence of midges and a typical feeding-response of the trout to them. Our inability to take advantage of this was due to a lack of understanding of the midge's life cycle. We also had no patterns to match that cycle and had tackle which wasn't designed to cope with big hard-fighting fish on tiny flies and spider-web tippets.

Let's go back and analyze the situation and I'll try to explain what we should have done to fish this event more successfully. This is based on what I now *know* about midging trout. I mentioned having seen a head, back and tail rise some minutes before Frank detected the first floating flies. Our reaction was to pound away with our nymphs because no general expulsion of air bubbles could be seen after each rise, which would mean that the trout were taking surface food. But our large sinking nymphs were useless.

Actually, there was a mass movement of midge pupae from the moss and silt beds of the pond to the surface. Suspended with arched backs just beneath the slick sur-

face, the midges began their emergence into adults. This takes many seconds or even minutes in such very cold water. Our nymphs were too large and were being swum at the wrong angle even to suggest ascending pupae. Once a significant amount of pupae were at the surface, the big rainbows leveled off and cruised the surface, seining pupae with their mouths.

When we saw the adult flies on the surface we immediately tried to imitate them, since we were ignorant of the masses of subsurface pupae. After about 45 minutes the adults nearly blanketed the still surface, but the fish continued to inhale pupae in what was likely a 25-to-1 ratio to their occasional consumption of adults.



Our poor-floating, chopped-down mayfly patterns were not only the wrong size, shape and color, but they were also seldom in the one- or two-inch-wide feeding path of the big 'bows cruising 40-80 feet away. Those fish we finally hooked hit near the end of the hatch when fewer midge pupae were left and the fish were attracted to the floating late-pickings, probably taking our flies as partially emerged stillborns.

Our tackle and skills were not up to the task of dealing with these lip-hooked 4-12-pound monsters. Little hooks broke or pulled out. Our 6 and 7x tippets snapped, as we were just over-gunned with big rods, heavy fly lines, and leaders knotted with short lengths

of tippet material. We had made several typical errors of fly fishers who have never taken seriously one of angling's most interesting opportunities and greatest challenges.

THE MIDGE HATCH CERTAINLY RANKS among the two or three most significant aquatic insect emergences that the fly fisher can take advantage of. There is nothing truly difficult in accomplishing the skills of a midge fisher. You just have to decide you want to take midge fishing seriously. Nothing new, no magic formulas or secret patterns involved, just time—time to learn to do the right thing at the right time with the right tackle.

So—let's start with the naturals and run through a short course in midge-ology.

Chironomid Flies

The larvae are worm-like in shape and movement. They seclude themselves in thick aquatic vegetation, silt beds or rubble bottoms to feed and grow. Their color range is extensive but usually closely matches the pupa and adult. Trout do not usually concentrate on searching for larvae, but do take them casually when they are easy to locate in some moss bed or weed growth in lakes and ponds. Fishing midge-larva imitations is usu-

ally difficult and a waste of time unless the larvae are the only food available to trout, which is seldom the case.

After the larvae are fully developed, the insect pupates in the general areas that the larvae inhabit. Pupa-tion is typified by the construction of cocoon-like sacks by the larvae. During a few days or weeks in these sacks, the larvae undergo the drastic physical transformation from simple worm bodies to the complicated leg, body and wing structure of the adults. At some predestined time, the pupae become active and wriggle to the surface. Their steep angle of ascent strongly suggests a great degree of buoyancy, perhaps from internal gases. At the surface, they begin to shed their pupal shucks and emerge through the surface tension as dry-winged adults. *It is this second stage that most keenly interests trout.* The pupae are easily detected and intercepted by trout as the insects rise to and remain in the surface tension for rather lengthy periods—long seconds to many minutes. I personally estimate that 98 percent of all midges eaten by trout are in this advanced emergent pupa stage. We have throat- and stomach-pumped several hundred midging trout and the ratio is always about 30 or 50 to one, pupa to adult.

Trout usually position themselves at such a level in a lake or in a stream eddy that they can vacuum in the most pupae with the least effort. This position is usually just under the surface. Such feeding often fakes fly fishers into thinking the rise rings are caused by open jaws closing on floating adults. Even if a bubble or two is expelled in the center of the widening rise-ring, it is seldom a direct result of the demise of an adult midge; usually it's just the sloppy feeding technique of smaller fish or the long, hooked jaw of a big fish poking out.

The adult midge flutters and skates across the surface on skinny, stilt-like legs. Their skittering take-off attempts do trigger trout interest and excitement but usually only of smaller fish. Slashing, showy rises are seldom serious adult-trout reactions to adult midges. Most good fish hooked on *floating* midge patterns, particularly hackled patterns such as a small Henryville Special or a Conover Midge, take them for stillborn adults. The exception can be a twitched or skated floater. Crane flies, the elephants of the midge world, are also an exception to this, but this article is principally directed to flies of size 18 and smaller.

Considering these three stages, the pupa is where the midge fisherman should put his maximum effort for maximum results. Oh, if only I'd known that fact just five years ago!

Matching the Midge Phases

Larvae should be tied weighted and be simple. They should be fished deep when no hatching is evident. In streams, use a very long fine leader tippet and keep the larva on the bottom or rolling over the tips of the aquatic vegetation with an absolutely drag-free float. This is pure hell to do with sub-18's in most waters.

If there is a rise to pupae or you soon expect one, use an appropriate-size pupa pattern, usually #18-24. Pupa will usually be one size larger than their adult

Midging. . .

body size. Allow the pupa to sink beneath and then rise to the surface where you can expect action. You are simulating an early-emergence pupa.

Later, when the adults are beginning to pop to the top, grease your leader down to the last few inches and intercept the rises—be it lake or stream. In a stream, apply some drag to the leader so that the pupa, being fished 3–6 inches deep, comes to the top. This mimics the final rise at just the spot where most fish will be holding to take in masses of pupae.



Trout typically cruise near the surface to intercept rising midge pupae by the hundreds.

When the surface is cluttered with adults, it's time to dip the pupa in waterproofer and fish it directly in the surface tension—or else use a Swisher-Richards still-born midge pattern at the same level. A tiny peacock-herl body with palmered grizzly hackle is deadly at the climax of a midge hatch or when working in the surface even an hour or so after most activity has faded.

Tackle for Midging

THE ROD SHOULD CAST a 3–5-weight line and be $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 feet in length with a fairly soft full-length action. It should develop a deep flex without snapping a 6 or 7x tippet or small hook. It should also be able to contend with any trout without pulling a small hook free. Such a paint-brush rod will give you a slower-than-normal line speed when casting and should not be expected to heave line to impractical midging distances beyond 50 feet. Glass seldom approaches the perfection of traditional cane for midging. My pet is a $7\frac{1}{2}$ -foot Orvis, customized by my good friend Dick Held. However, soon graphite will exceed even bamboo for great midging rods. I've tested some new 3M graphites that promise to excel as 4- and 5-weight midge rods in every category—except, of course, for the traditional esthetic appeal of cane.

My rule of thumb is to go to a longer midge rod of 7–8 feet if distance, line control, or both, are most critical. Shorter rods seem to fit the tiny fly perspectives we have but they do handicap most fly fishers. Rods longer than 8 feet amplify hand movements too much for midging.

A QUALITY SINGLE-ACTION REEL of light alloy construction and with a very smooth click-type drag will make an

ideal midge reel. Tiny silver-dollar-size reels typically promoted as light-rod midging tools are a waste of time and money. Another erroneous concept is that a fly reel should balance against the rod's weight. Actually the reel can be heavier to act as a better balance when the airborne line is at the other end of the rod.

I prefer a $3\frac{1}{4}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch reel spool, not only to hold the line and 100 yards of 18-pound-test Dacron backing, but also because that size spool does not set the fly line into tight half-dollar-size coils during use or storage. A larger reel also retrieves slack line quicker without requiring frantic cranking. Such a reel must give line with an absolute minimum of drag to cope with a little fly, light tippet and a strong-running fish. Pointing the rod more directly than usual at the running fish greatly adds to the efficiency of a good fly reel's drag.

YOU MUST USE SMALL-CALIBER FLOATING FLY LINE for midging. I prefer either a shooting head or a weight-forward design. The shooting head has greater potential for casting, presentation and fighting trout. However, unless you build your own they are hard to obtain. Both shooting head and weight-forward lines cast and handle well up to 40 feet, but the shooting head excels for distance and does not overload that slender little bamboo rod. Fighting a running fish with a shooting head allows me to deny him the tippet-shearing drag of a full fly line. The 30 feet of well-greased line connected to 100 feet of 20-pound-test flat monofilament spins off the reel, slicks through the guides and skates over the water's surface with almost no friction and with less of a threat to the tippet and hook. The head allows me to get very long downstream drag-free floats and also to zing a one-false-cast effort over 60 feet of unwadable water to a midging fish.

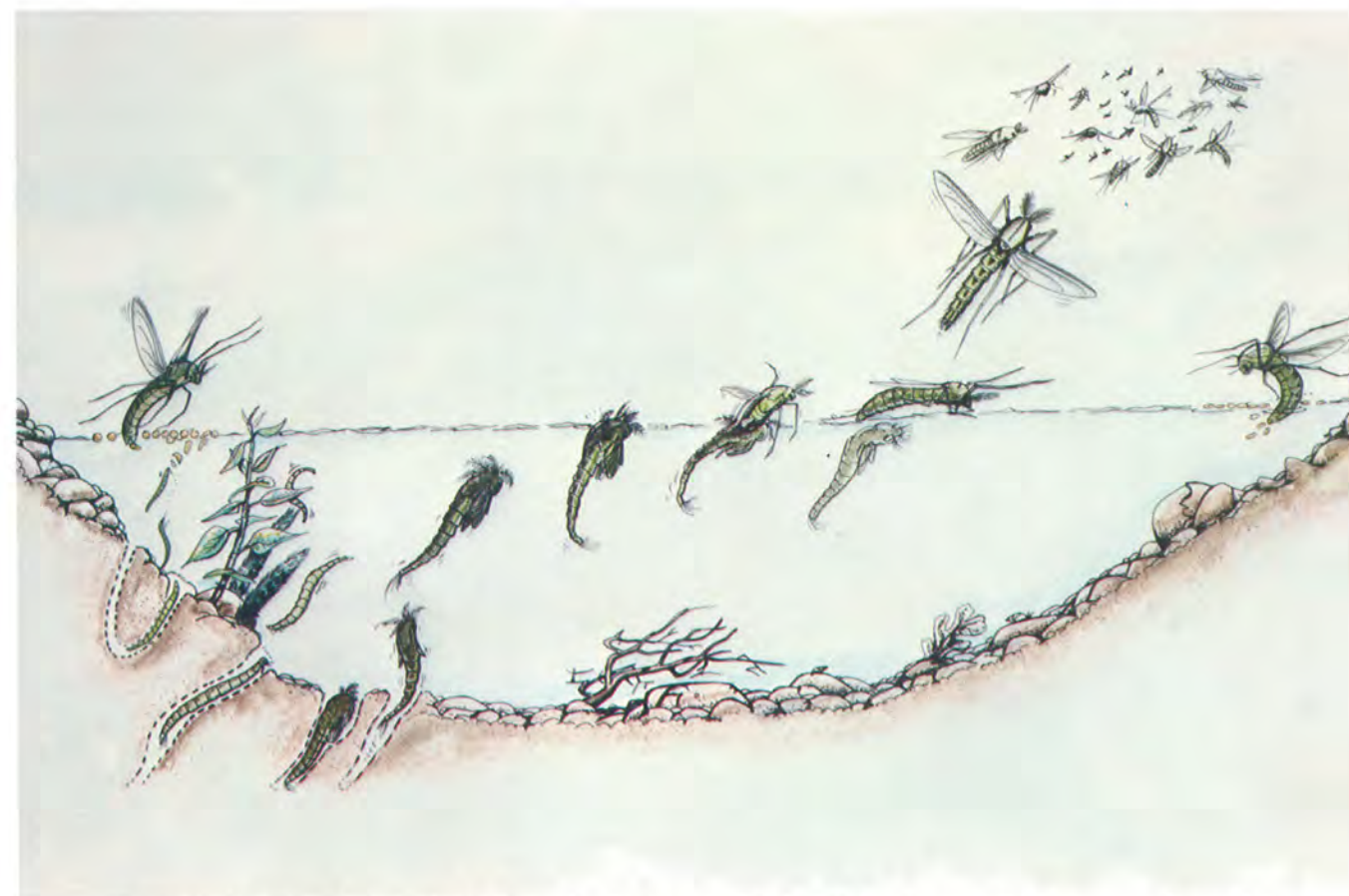
A white or light-pastel fly-line finish gives you better visual contact with the line during casting. It also helps to read the line position on the water and makes critical line mending easier. Fluorescent finishes can also be used to accomplish the same thing, but these offend my eye and the nature of the scene.

To argue about whether or not the line shows to the trout, either in the air or water, is an academic exercise. The ever-changing variables of light angle and intensity plus water and trout position make most of the popular line-color theories worthless, I feel. A good trout will always plan his presentation to minimize a sun-flashed line or a line floating directly over the trout's window if the fish are holding or rising in shallow water.

Once the line is on the water, high floats, smooth mends and crisp pickups with small-diameter floating lines are best accomplished with a well-greased and polished line surface. No modern floating line fishes as well untreated as it does with regular dressing, properly applied and polished.

Leaders are Critical

A KNOTLESS TAPERED LEADER of $7\frac{1}{2}$ –9 feet is the starting point. The butt end should be .017–.019" to match most 3–5-weight line points. I prefer either flat butt or very soft round nylon leaders. The leader is attached to the



A typical midge life-cycle. Imitation by the angler of all stages will take fish, but the most effective are ascending and emerging pupa imitations which represent those phases which stimulate the greatest trout activity.

line point with either a very smooth needle knot (tied best with a flat-butt leader) or a smooth knotless epoxy joint to eliminate hang-up problems.

The knotless 7–9 feet of leader further helps eliminate the breaks common to compound-knotted tapered leaders. Not even the best-conditioned arm or super-sensitive rod can compensate for the shock a good fish can register on a tippet when one of those two-eared blood knots slips into a sliver of sunken tree limb or under a rock. Fish, leader, line and backing must all clear underwater obstacles at the same rate to avoid ripped-out hooks or shattered tippets. *This is the major refinement needed to offset the light tackle necessary to fish midges successfully.* A 10-pound lip-hooked fish may be subdued on a 7x tippet and a #28 hook if he cannot develop ample resistance between himself and you.

Most modern knotless tapered leaders are of acid-etched-taper construction which makes them very reasonable in cost but which leaves them with undependable tippet points. Cut off 6–10 inches of a new one, then, using an improved surgeon's knot, add 8–10 inches for a "wear-section." This section should be equal to or no more than .002" smaller than the diameter of the remaining leader tip. To this wear-section, with a second improved surgeon's knot, attach 24–30" of the best tippet material you can buy. The wear-section prolongs the tapered leader's lifetime, because tying on tippets directly will soon chew up the valuable

tip of the knotless leader. The two tiny, well-trimmed improved surgeon's knots do not collect moss or stick in crevices under most conditions.

During all midge-fishing situations, keep your leader absolutely curl-free and straight. This will vastly improve the chances of good turn-over and accurate presentation, important factors in midging.

THE TIPPET IS THE FINAL LINK between you and the fly and is extremely important in presenting midges properly. It is also the most vulnerable link between you and the fish. Fortunately, advances in modern nylon monofilament have made midging a practical method of taking trout on very small flies.

There are few situations when less than 24" of tippet is practical. Most midge situations demand 5–8x tippets which should have high knot-strength, a good diameter-to-pound-test ratio, and the stretch and suppleness to absorb shock. The Nylorfi nylon tippet is my favorite but Orvis and Berkley tippets are also good choices. Due to Nylorfi's unusually good diameter-to-pound-test ratio, 8x is a very practical tippet diameter and we should soon see this on the market.

For big fish on hooks smaller than size 22, a 30–40-inch tippet of 7 or 8x is the best choice. This tippet length plus a "stack" cast will often also solve the impossible drag situations where fish hang in slow eddies across the stream next to banks or below big floating



A collection of the author's midging tackle. Note the short section of fly line slipped onto the leader to act as a strike-and-drift indicator, a real asset when fishing with very small patterns. Polarized glasses also help visibility.

moss beds or downed timber (a stack cast is one in which a very long tippet is cast to fall or stack on itself, giving the fly greater holding time in an eddy or pocket.).

I use an improved turtle knot to attach the tippet to either a turned-down or turned-up hook eye. Straight or ringed eyes call for an improved clinch knot, or better yet, the uni- or Australian knot. Do not fail to re-knot immediately if wind knots form somewhere in the tippet. Also take the time to re-tippet your leader after a good take.

Putting It All Together

A COUPLE OF YEARS after my previously described midging fiasco, I had a mid-August afternoon opportunity to fish Armstrong Spring Creek above Livingston, Montana. For some reason, probably the heat and wind, no duns were coming off and only a few 8–12-inch browns and rainbows took my shrimp, sowbugs and Squirrel-Hair Nymph patterns. Finally at about 5:30 I quietly waded into the upper slough. The water was extremely clear, with just a few wind gusts frosting the mirror-like surface. Several respectable fish were moving at the far end.

I slipped each foot forward as quietly as possible until

I was almost in casting range, then stopped and watched. Three fine browns were crisscrossing the weed-and-sand bottom taking something—invisible to me—at random levels in the 12–18 inches of water. I looked closely at the surface and finally saw several dark olive adult midges here and there. Using a little aquarium net, I soon captured a half-dozen squirmy pupae, about size 24–26. These had a reddish-brown thorax and a distinctly olive-green abdomen. From a special box of several hundred midge patterns, I picked an almost perfect fake—a size 26 that Bill Monoham had tied for me of Poly II, reddish-brown and olive. I put it on the 30-inch 7x tippet and looked up to locate a nearby cruiser.

A 16-inch brown was swimming right at me about 30 feet to my left. The first cast fell too far to the side and he moved past that point, now beginning a wide circle away from my position. When he was 10 or 15 feet past the fly, I lifted it off the water and side-armed a left-curve cast about 10 feet in front of the trout. A wind gust ruffled the surface as the brown came in sight of the hanging pupa. I couldn't see him take the fly but his up-tilted pause and flared fins made me willing to gamble on that *slow, deliberate* soft pull-strike absolutely essential in midge-hook setting. Five minutes later I had him at hand and released him. I had kept him quiet and al-

lowed him to run out of the slough's end to avoid flushing the other midging fish.

I waded back, convinced that I had the right fly and tackle to deal with one or two more fish before sundown. I was about to cast to a 12-inch fish when my eye caught a small silver ring to my right in the deeply shadowed water next to the bushy bank. A really fine fish had started to feed.

I held off a very long minute or two until the second ring came and I had his form in sight in the shadows. A soft 30-foot cast put the pupa 8 or 10 feet ahead of his cruise line. On he came, looking bigger every second. He swam right to the pupa, came up a bit for a closer look and then started away. I desperately gave the fly a tiny twitch. That was all it needed—he tilted, came over and his back broke the surface as he took the pupa. He looked a yard long!

As he went down I began to slowly lift my rod in a smooth hook-set. That incredible wild brown in the next 20 minutes did everything possible to me and the tackle except fly away like a mallard. Jumping, bottom rubbing, running—he must have been in or under every foot of cover in the slough. Finally he cut down the middle and out to the main stream. The trip took too much out of him and I was able to slide him over a moss bed and into my trembling hand—nearly 20 inches of incredibly beautiful male spring-creek brown. The tiny midge pupa was still buried deep in front of his upper jaw. After a few portrait shots I put him back—a good ending to the day for both of us.

I couldn't help then and now being especially satisfied and thrilled that my midge tackle had done a flawless job on a really tough large fish—a drastic change from my past experience in midging. Going to a stream ready to fish midges with the right tackle and flies had provided me with one of my greatest moments of angling thrills and satisfaction.

STILL-WATER MIDGE FISHING MEANS INTERCEPTING cruising fish with a waiting pupa—still fished or twitched. Currents are a different story. Fish in streams are usually holding or covering only a small territory in an eddy or pocket. Although the upstream-and-across cast is the classic for surface or surface-film free-floating imitations, it is tough to midge-fish in that manner.

I have had my most consistent results with pupa and adult imitations by casting across and downstream with a slack-line "reach cast" (described in *Fly-Fishing Strategy* by Doug Swisher and Carl Richards; Crown Pub.). I present the pupa some distance directly above the fish's position, according to current speed and conditions. The pupa should come to the trout in the surface film or rise to the surface in front of his waiting nose. A slight rod lift or drag will create this "natural" live action.

If the pupa is ignored, immediately swing the rod to the side and the current will move the fly and line away from his position. You can make several presentations to him using this technique. Remember, your pupa may be only one of dozens per second he has to choose from in a feeding lane merely several inches wide.

Because of the size of midge flies—especially sub-surface pupa—they are extremely hard to see when

they hit the water or to locate on the water even when 20–30 feet away. A valuable aid is a half-inch section of white or orange fly line strung on the "wear" or the tippet section. It not only helps in locating the position of the midge but also helps turn over a long, thin leader. It never seems to interfere with or scare fish away from the little pattern, even when only a few inches away from it.

The Strike and Striking

THIS BRINGS ME TO THE DETECTION of the strike and striking. If a fish moves to the fly in the spot you think your midge is located, either wait a short second for a leader twitch or begin a slow rod-tip lift, as if you were tightening your leader to a fly hung on a spider web so as not to break it. This also allows the fish time to close his mouth and turn. The tiny sharp hook penetrates the skin immediately with the least bit of drag. In fact, most trout can be hooked by just beginning to gently strip in line. This is the most critical few seconds of catching trout on midge tackle.

If the fish is hooked, do not hold its head up and allow it to wallow on the surface. The water will hold the hook in the flesh while you let him move down with minimum tension—especially if he's big. Most beginning midgers overreact and break the fish off before it even knows it's hooked.

Backing off a good fish once it's hooked allows you to set yourself and reel in your slack. You do not want to panic any fish that can physically break the tippet. The larger the trout the more you let him go uninhibited. When he runs, hold your arm high and point the rod at him; this keeps the line high and greatly reduces line drag on your reel, rod and water. Finesse is your game with a tackle system designed to follow and worry a fish—not control and retrieve him with muscle.

A fish that is not panicked will still fight well, but it can be controlled and coaxed into submission by your skill and tackle almost as fast as you can overcome one by sheer physical effort. Dealing with a big trout on midge tackle even allows me to sense its individual intelligence and personality—consider that!

FISHING OTHER TINY FLOATING INSECTS, particularly terrestrials, can be as rewarding as midge pupa fishing. A tiny ant, beetle or jassid is an extremely interesting and effective pattern with which to explore shade lines along the streambank at midday. It is often very rewarding when the stream *seems* to be in full-noon siesta. Such terrestrial midging often extends good fishing into fall.

Most productive trout waters have good hatches of various midge species. I can't recall one that doesn't. Sometimes they overlap hatches of larger flies or aren't taken seriously. Rivers like the Yellowstone in Montana and the White River in Arkansas have major hatches throughout the winter also.

Wherever you fly-fish for trout, if you ignore or avoid the times when midge flies are coming to the surface you are missing fly-angling's most challenging opportunity. ➔

Fly Fisherman

LATE SEASON • 1976
Volume 7 • Number Seven
Price \$1.50

