

# Fly Fisherman



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For Those Snagless Days, Anglers Are Spreading the Keel Fly on Troubled Waters



*Raspberries in the Rain/Ernest Schwiebert*

*The Sipping Rise/Vincent Marinaro*



ANYTHING THAT IS TAKEN close enough to or from the surface of the water by a feeding trout so that his movements disturb the usual appearance of the surface film results in the so-called "rise forms."

These are the telltale evidences, if properly interpreted, which help to determine the kind of insect being eaten by the trout and are, consequently of enormous help in choosing the correct pattern and the correct form of presentation.

The ultimate sophistication in fly fishing is unquestionably the ability to read and interpret the different kinds of rise forms which are employed by a trout while taking surface food, and sub-surface food, too. It is an uncommon skill! But even when a trout is feeding close to the surface and in full view, his performance may still be perplexing and unclear to the anxious fisherman.

One of the real difficulties in trying to describe these revealing disturbances in print is the fact that they are often accompanied by distinctive sounds which are just as important as physical shapes in making a determination.

It is easy enough to describe rise forms as circles, bulges, wrinkles, explosions, or wedges and to make photographs of them, but the sound that often accompanies some of them may be the final conclusive evidence. How do you make such noises for the reader? It is possible, I suppose, to write a musical score to go with the individual descriptions, presuming, of course, that everyone would be able to read it and properly interpret both the shape and noise.

Fortunately, I do not need to make noises in order to describe the particular surface-feeding action which I shall discuss in this article, namely, the Sipping Rise, the most soundless, furtive and inconspicuous act in the entire catalog of a trout's eating habits. Many trout display only this particular surface rise form throughout their entire lives. These are the trout that live in the shadowed eddies which catch and circulate the currents in front of log jams, fallen trees, flotsam and patches of foam. Anything carried by the currents is caught and trapped by the debris and sometimes eddied about for a very long time.

In this way a great variety of insect life is paraded in front of the trout who, "lying upon a fin," can pick and choose any delectable item that suits his fancy. His eating manners are leisurely and graceful enough to arouse the admiration and envy of a Lucullus. There is nothing hurried about his inspection and se-

lection; never any snatching or gulping. When finally he has decided to take something this rise is quiet, deliberate and precise. The gentle "tilting upwards" is often so slow that the movement is almost imperceptible. The rise begins with easy undulations of the body and tail while the head elevates simultaneously with the depression of the tail. When the trout arrives within a fraction of an inch of the insect there is the barest opening of the jaws and the insect vanishes with only the faintest disturbance of the surface calm. Photos #1 and #2 admirably depict the maximum amount of commotion created during the first

By Vincent J. Marinaro

the

## SIPPING RISE

*So fleeting the average angler never notices it, this subtle rise form offers more than meets the eye—unless it's the trained eye of a fly fisherman such as Pennsylvania limestoner Marinaro. Author of the soon-to-be-republished A Dry Fly Code, Marinaro fishes the Letort and other Pennsylvania streams.*

two stages of the Sipping Rise. The third stage, showing the downturn stage (#3), rarely occurs when the Sipping Rise is made by the trout in an eddy. But the downturn, causing a bulge or hump in the water, is characteristic of a trout which makes a sipping rise in mainstream or in the currents.

The third stage is also the source for a great deal of confusion to many who recognize it as being the same motion often made by a nymphing trout. The difference is not easy to detect except where you can see the drifting nymphs or discover that small insects are floating in the surface film. This is the rise form that invariably accompanies the taking of tiny mayflies and minute terrestrials imprisoned in the surface film, which results in the mysterious and very obscure "flush float," scarcely known or appreciated by many fly fishermen.

Recognizing and understanding the implications contained in the Sipping Rise will lead to a greater fly-fishing skill and increase of fishing pleasure—far beyond the normal mayfly season. ●



(1) The Sipping Rise. This series illustrates most graphically the gentle movement and minimal disturbance created by a trout in this type of rise. This trout had his observation post in a dark eddying corner of the Letort, under a pile of debris in the lower right-hand corner. He rose all day long, unnoticed and unmolested by a parade of fishermen. He is rising to a tiny mayfly about to pass over him.

(2) A fantastically lucky and exquisitely timed photograph at the exact moment when the insect is passing over the trout's lower jaw and falling into his mouth.



(3) The turn downward immediately after the insect has been taken. This is a gentle, porpoising kind of movement which causes the surface of the water to bulge and wrinkle, creating a rise form which is very similar to the disturbance and movement of a nymphing trout.

(4) The end of the rise. The trout is slowly settling back to his original position under the debris, while the tiny wrinkles and bulges drift slowly away over his back.

