

FISHING TIPS 1

STREAMS - RIVERS - LAKES - STILLWATERS

STREAMS AND RIVERS

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The purpose of these articles is to help the new fly fisher on his journey to catching a good trout. It will comprise of two sections; fishing rivers and fishing lakes allowing you to familiarise yourself with the section relevant to your fishing method and site before you begin fishing. This will maximise your chance of success and minimise frustration and disappointment. When we first buy our fly fishing outfit we wander around in the wilderness in a river or lake for months not really knowing what to do. We hope this article assists you achieve your goal of a fighting trout much sooner than some of us did in the past.

STAYING SAFE

Before we begin fly fishing strategies we wish to indicate a few common sense considerations which will ensure you have a safe day.

1. Leave a sheet letting someone at home know all the details about where you will be, contact information and who you are with.
2. Some of the places you fish are the snake capitals of the world so always carry a bandage to wrap around a limb if a snakebite occurs.
3. When wading streams and rivers secure a belt around your middle so your waders do not fill up and place you in a dangerous situation.
4. Fly rods are great conductors of electricity so do not point them at the sky in electric storms. These storms are probably best avoided.
5. In a dangerous situation in the water, save your life before you save your rod: drop it and retrieve it later!

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESS

1. We are going to show you how, when and where to fish in rivers and lakes to maximise your catch but one of the most important elements to success is a rising or steady barometer. When the barometer is falling the trout lie on the bottom because they are uncomfortable rising to a fly. I do not even bother to fly fish when the barometer is crashing: leave it for a better day..
2. Another element of fly fishing which is essential to successful fishing is tying on the right fly which will catch fish at this time on a particular day. "Match the hatch"; do not continue using a fly if there is no interest in it. I reckon an elk hair caddis is a magnificent fly but some days it is not on the menu so try something different. If it doesn't work after five minutes then change the fly and then if necessary change it again until you find the right fly on this day. Then the action begins.
3. The third element is eliminating drag, the greatest enemy of the dry fly fisherman. These are the tiny and micro waves that can follow the fly on it's passage downstream. You may not see some of these but the trout surely does.

A trout will only take an artificial if everything appears genuine and guess what, drag waves are not natural.

We have to master a mend when dry fly fishing and this occurs when we throw a loop upstream and this allows an extended natural passage of the fly downstream. This will be one of the important aspects of casting we shall teach you because your trout catch will rise significantly when you master it. Study any Lefty Krey or Peter Morse book on casting to master this technique

DOING YOUR HOMEWORK

The secret to success in the rivers is a comprehensive study of the whole river and its biomass [living things]. Observe it's water colour, flow, structures and riparian [bank] and midstream plants. The next element of your study is the fly population and their flying and water contact habits.

By doing this you will know where the trout are likely to be and apply the correct imitation of the fly in terms of colour and size. I also study the life cycles of fly species particular in relation to what months and conditions they are around. Termites appear in the last weeks of October and early November and then you can count almost all the trout in the Yarra River: the time for dry fishing really steps up.

Now for the important stuff, understanding trout behaviour and catching trout a trout. A trout has two primary needs, food and security and if it can find good food sources like nymphs, midge, mayflies, ants, caddis flies, grasshoppers and small fish at little risk to their life they will prosper. All living things must take in more energy than what they expend finding it or they will die, so familiarise yourself with river structures.

It is so important to study your river for the likely positions of trout amongst the structures and aquatic plants. This is because that is where the naturals of the river live so we then use artificials of these flies and small fish patterns that abound on this day.

LAKES AND STILLWATERS

LYNTON REID

APPROACHING LAKE

Observe any visible insect life.

Do not walk to edge of lake stand back 6 to 10 metres and observe water for a few minutes for any activity in water

Fish maybe within 1 metre of the waters edge so do not spook them

Look for any visible signs of an active feeding fish as it may be the only chance you get for the day

Different times of the year will result in different terrestrial and aquatic foods being available for fish

YOU NEED TO LEARN WHY ALL OF THESE CAN EFFECT YOUR FISHING

FEATURES OF LAKE

Observe in detail all the features of the lake within 500 metres of you and also generally all the lake you can see from where you are standing
These features could hold or attract fish at some time during the day
Exposed points, rocky outcrops, weed beds, along the edge of weed beds, standing or fallen timber, drop offs, inflows from streams or rivers, rainfall generated flowing channel, sunken rivers or channels, flooded plains or back waters all of these could hold fish at some time during the day. Also wind direction and lanes on the surface.

YOU NEED TO LEARN WHAT ATTRACTS FISH TO THESE FEATURES

POLAROIDING

Polaroid glasses are essential to assist in locating fish
Polaroiding is best done on blue sky days with no reflections of white clouds on the water although shadows of trees or dark overcast clouds will take reflections of the water and assist, slanting your head at an angle can also assist
The best times are between 9.30 and 4.30 with the sun behind you and not reflected off the water
Even when not polaroiding the glasses are a big advantage as they take the glare off the water and help you to see and read very slight fishy signs

FISHING THE FLY

Dry or floating flies on floating line

Are generally used when there signs of fish rising and cast within 1 to 2 metres of a rising fish
You will need to watch the fish closely and try to work out in which direction the fish is moving and cast in that direction
Otherwise cast around the area in which the fish last rose
Wet or sinking flies can also be used on a floating line when fish are rising but this often depends on the rise form, a fish will sometimes take a sunk dry fly.
Wet or sinking flies on sink tip or floating line
Both floating and sink tip lines can be used to fish wet flies and control the fishing depth of the fly
Generally wet flies are used to prospect for fish where a fish has been sighted or when there are no signs of moving fish but fish should be in the area
The flies need to imitate the foods that the fish may be feeding on in that particular area at that particular time

STRIPPING TECHNIQUES

These vary depending on which type of line you are using and the type of food you are trying to imitate and are generally used when fishing wet flies, but sometimes a slight strip or skate of a dry will induce a take.

FAST STRIP

This is achieved by drawing the line sharply through your stripping fingers from 75mm to 450mm or a combination of these strips which can imitate fleeing food such as smelt or yabbies

SLOW STRIP

This can be small slow strips 50mm to 150mm or combinations of these to imitate midge, stick caddis, muddeyes, damsel nymphs, snails, scud or mayfly nymphs

HAND TWIST OR FIGURE 8 RETRIEVE

This method can be slow or fast to control the depth at which you want the fly to swim and the action of the food type you wish to imitate such as nymphs or caddis

SINK AND RISE METHOD

The sink and rise method can be fished with both floating and sink tip lines by letting the fly sink to the depth at which you wish to fish it and then drawing the line either fast or slow or a combination of both from 150 to 600mm to cause the fly to rise towards the surface of the water

YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFERENT FOODS MOVE AND HATCH IN THE WATER WHEN STRIPPING FLIES TO IMITATE A FOOD

RISEFORMS OF FISH

TAILING

This is when a fish is standing on its head feeding on the bottom on nymphs or scud in shallow water waving its tail at you

FINNING

Occurs when a fish is feeding in very shallow water often showing its dorsal fin and part of its tail fin as it cruises around often looking for frogs or nymphs

PORPOISING

Is exactly what it says and indicates the fish is feeding on emergers

BULGING

Fish are sitting just below the surface taking emergers

SWIRLING

Fish are feeding just below the surface to a depth of 450mm often on emergers and nymphs

SLASHING

Fish are taking fast moving mayflies or damsel flies at the surface of the water

SIPPING AND HOOVERING

Fish taking stationary insects sitting in the surface film of the water such as midge, mayflies, spinners and caddis

SMELTING

Fish are charging around often breaking the surface taking small fish or smelt

LEAPING

Fish are taking damsel flies or dragon flies and sometimes mayflies or caddis moths flying above and close to the surface of the water

YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT EACH RISEFORM MEANS AND HOW TO FISH EACH ONE

The Yarra Valley Fly Fishers Inc has a comprehensive library consisting of books and DVDs so borrow regularly to familiarise yourself with the areas of our magnificent, sweet science you are working on at the time. Begin with books on casting, fly

patterns and your special interests. Welcome to our club and good luck with your fly fishing in rivers and lakes.