

Getting Started in Fly Fishing eGuide

*Most Everything You Need
to Know to Get Started
2023*

By Chris L. Sloan



www.wildbearings.com
[Wild Bearings - YouTube](#)
[Wild Bearings \(@wildbearingsco\)](#)

I grew up in Texas and spent countless hours on Lake Palestine as well as a 23-acre private lake next to my uncle's property in the Ben Wheeler area where the crappie were plentiful and the bass big! I learned how to use a bait caster from a dear friend and mentor Bill, that moved into our neighborhood when I was about 12 that had a bass boat the size of Texas. I'd never seen anything like it, and he said before he'd take me out, I had to be able to consistently land my lure in a small brown bucket 20 yards across the yard without a *birds-nest* before he'd waste time with me. That motivated me to get very good with a bait caster and I became a decent bass fisher.

The only fly rod I had ever seen growing up was my grandfather's hanging in his garage. I never saw that fly rod and reel get used, and quite honestly never even asked why he had it or if he had used it and for what. It would be years later... in fact 30 years later... that I met my good friend and co-founder of Wild Bearings, Sam Johnson that the bug would hook me. Now some five years into this sport and here I am writing this guide.

I'm a process guy, so when I got into fly fishing, I noticed there were so many ways to start, but not one place I could find that allowed me a simple entry point. Talk to five fly fishers and you'll get five different answers. I also noticed as I gained in experience newer folks being told to invest heavy dollar-wise into gear and such, and that just didn't sit right with me. And as I got semi-decent at the sport, I found I started becoming the mentor versus the mentee and decided to do my best to pass along the knowledge I had gained to folks new to the sport. I really enjoy teaching and the feedback from our local TU Chapter after receiving this guide has been very positive... even from seasoned experts that stated they learned a little too.

Fly fishing is an amazing sport that one can do for many, many years. Several factors attribute to the appeal of the sport such as the tranquility of standing in the middle of a river on a beautiful fall day false casting to rising trout or building lasting relationships where the fishing stories never end. Maybe it's that bucket list trip to a remote place in the wilderness that allows one to get centered with all thing's life and mother earth. Perhaps you saw Brad Pitt in a River Runs Through It and thought man that's so cool (couldn't resist). Whatever the circumstance, the coolness factor can wear off very quickly when it comes time to get started!

The viewpoints and information gathered and presented in this guide are from the author, Chris Sloan. His focus with this guide is ***to help people new to the sport get started***. This guide isn't about teaching someone how to fly fish, but rather the gear, supplies and tools needed at varying price points especially entry level, to demonstrate for about \$400 you can be in the game having fun. You'll see illustrations gathered from the internet that support different segments of the guide and information from great posts and articles I found helpful, so thanks to those experts for sharing their knowledge too. As you develop and build relationships, you'll find opposing views not only from yourself, but from others and that's great! That's what makes this sport so much fun and it won't be long before you, the rookie, start teaching some of us new and exciting things about fly fishing. Fish On!

Don't forget your state fishing license and understanding regulations where applicable.

Chris Sloan

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<https://tcntoday.com/>



<https://bigflyfishing.com/>



Georgia Wild Trout

<https://www.georgiawildtrout.com/>

Gear

There are a few approaches to this... spend a ton of money and not be in love with it... or spend reasonable money, love it, and then spend time after you understand things to slowly upgrade gear and equipment. The latter path is the one most recommended.

Waders

Prepare for satin's gift to fly fishing. At some point you'll experience leaky waders and inevitably it will be on the coldest day of the year. There are two types of waders on the market: (1) stocking foot and (2) boot-foot. The general rule is you'll be buying a pair of "stocking foot" waders, and then you'll also be purchasing a pair of wading boots to be discussed in the next section. Here's a general guide from entry level to some of the best waders on the market.

Note: the products listed below, where applicable, are available in men's and women's. Also, with seasonal changes and updates to this guide, some specific style names may change, but the point doesn't.

Entry Level

Great entry level waders that will get you at least one if not two seasons of fishing, at a very reasonable price. No frills meaning no hand warmer pockets, but from personal experience I can say they hold up to some very harsh conditions and will become a great pair of backup waders when the devil appears. I've crawled up waterfall sides, fallen down steep embankments, pulled, tugged and crashed through thorn bushes, and still no leaks.



Cabela's Premium Breathable Stocking-Foot Fishing Waders for Men

★★★★☆ 3.9 (167) [Write a review](#)

\$149.99 - \$159.99

ORDER BY 4PM E.T. FOR APR 13 DELIVERY

Color: Tan

Size/Width/Width Alpha

Please choose...

SHOP BELOW

<https://www.cabelas.com/shop/en/cabelas-premium-breathable-stocking-foot-fishing-waders-for-men>

Stepping Up A Level

My current waders as of March 2023 are the Simms Freestone Waders primarily because my Redington Z's sprung multiple leaks after just a few seasons, thus the reason you don't see them listed in this eGuide any longer. I hated to move away from the zipper front, but these Simms are a great deal and given my track record with leaks, I decided to go a little less expensive. So far these have been great waders and I really like the fit. If you are a Korkers wearer, you'll have no problem with the gravel guards fitting over the necks.

<https://www.simmsfishing.com/collections/mens-stockingfoot-waders/products/freestone-stockingfoot-s19>

M's Freestone® Waders - Stockingfoot

\$229.97 \$269.00

★★★★★ Read 237 Reviews or Write a Review

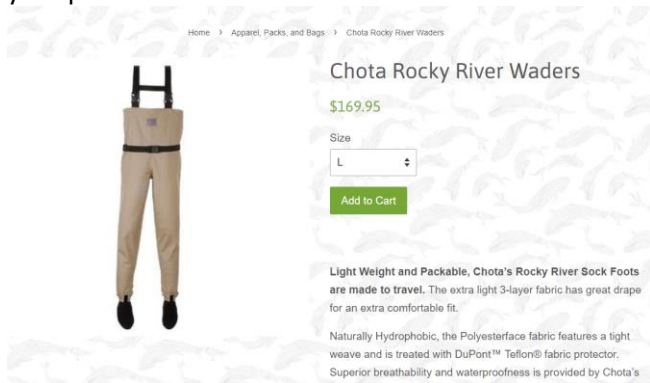
Color: Dark Green

Size: S 31-34

Buttons: S, M, L, XL, XXL

Add to cart - \$229.97

Okay the son-in-law has had these Chota waders since the fall of 2020 and other than a self-inflicted wound that was repairable, these have been excellent for the price. Gravel guards can be a little tight with the Korkers, but it's manageable. Remember anything ordered from www.bigtflyfishing.com use discount code **Wildbearings** for 10% off your purchases.



[Chota Rocky River Waders – Big T Fly Fishing](#)

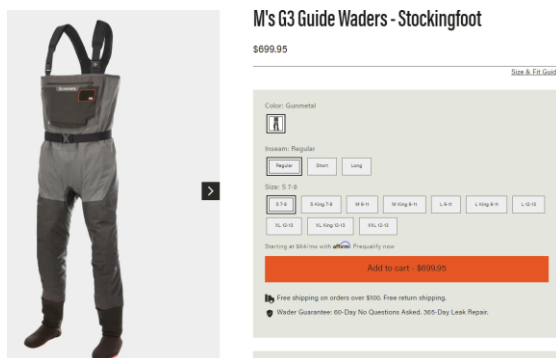
I'm Investing Now

At this level you've figured out that you want more bells and whistles and a heavier ply leg and foot to reduce the possibility of leakage. You're investing now and should expect three to five heavy seasons, if not more, at this price point.

Some of these brands being listed below are not mainstream, but via research and actual ownership I've found some of the top brands from some of the most extreme fishing parts of the country to allow you to do your own research and decide what's best for you.

By the way, I've also found that from a sizing standpoint, because you can't find some of these waders at your local outfitter, taking your measurements and even calling the brand's customer service center will help in making the right choice from the get-go. And I've also found that for the most part an XL is an XL and an XXL is an XXL 😊.

The great Rocky Mountains has the true leader in fly fishing gear and that's Simms. The leader in Gore-Tex wader technology and in waders in general, Simms is what all other companies aspire to be like. Don't look past Simms's entry, mid and top-level waders when you are shopping. You just can't go wrong with Simms.



<https://www.simmsfishing.com/products/g3-guide-stockfoot?nosto=productcategory-nosto-1>

From the great Northwest this is one of the coolest brands on the market. A true direct to consumer model you won't find these waders and gear anywhere else but Dryft and Amazon that I've found thus far. Because there's no middle-man involved you get to experience the best of the best in wader technology and customer service at an extremely affordable price.




Primo Zip GD Wader
★★★★★ (117 customer reviews)
\$599.00
or 4 interest-free payments of \$149.75 with **afterpay**
Free Returns & Exchanges
This product plants one tree.
Size Chart
Size
S M ML LS L LL XLS XL 2XL 3XL

<https://dryftfishing.com/shop/primo-zip-front-wader/>

All said, you just can't go wrong typically with any of these wader brands at any of these levels. Below \$129 just know you most likely won't get longevity out of your waders. Doesn't mean that a \$79 pair can't get you in the game, but by season's end you'll be buying again most likely.

One last note about waders and your safety. Make sure the wading belt is included with your purchase and never fish deeper waters without one... it will save your life! A good upgrade to avoid a twisty wading belt, which most do because of their design with the belts that come with waders, is a thick 2" type tactical belt. When you start hanging things like water bottles and a wading staff off your belt you want one that won't twist and sag. The Smith Creek Heavy Duty Wading Belt is a good purchase to make to avoid this.



Visit the Smith Creek Store
Smith Creek Wading Belt, Universal Size
★★★★★ 26 ratings
Amazon's Choice for "smith creek wading belt"
\$15⁹⁹
Get Fast, Free Shipping with Amazon Prime
FREE Returns
• 100% Denier Nylon
• Imported
• Buckle closure
• Wet Wipe Clean
• Sturdy, 27/50mm wide web belt that stops you from getting into real trout fast. Heavy gauge strap is perfect for hanging gear off of too
• High quality, rugged nylon buckle that won't go soft out on the flats, crack or pop open when you don't want it to

https://www.amazon.com/Smith-Creek-Heavy-Duty-Wading-Belt/dp/B00GM6lCM4/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crd=3EOD1ZK10S8VT&keywords=smith+creek+wading+belt&qid=1681256579&srefix=smith+creek+wading+belt%2Caps%2C236&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFZU1FSRFlPS0hCNzQmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTAwOTUzMDgxR0ZPT0JNMUZLUUtoJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTA0MzgzNDgyUEcyWDhWRExKNzFPJndpZGldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlia1JIZGlyZWNOJmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==

Boots

Now that we've made it through waders, wading boots become a lot simpler to wade through LOL!!! The biggest advice I can give you is making sure you have excellent ankle support and that your boots are comfortable. Many long, eight-hour days will be spent on the water and the last thing you want is your feet giving out. Plus, your ankles will get flat beat up in the rock beds of the river so having good protection is important.

There are essentially two styles of boot: (1) felt and (2) rubber. Without a doubt, felt bottom boots are the best when it comes to working your way through the water. Slippage is a major problem and can be very dangerous. Felt helps increase traction and reduce risks, but there are limitations. Beware also, many states now in the Midwest, Rocky Mountain and Western regions of the country don't allow felt to be used because of the possible transference of invasive species, parasites, and other organisms.

One other key factor in making your decision on boots is easy access rivers and creeks versus rivers and creeks that you may have to hike into. If you think you'll do any type of blue-lining (simply put, blue-lining means looking for blue lines on a map that are typically tributaries that feed a larger body of water and hiking in to see what you can find), which you probably will at some point or another, then a rubber sole boot might be your best option. I've had both and prefer a modified rubber sole boot, which I'll cover below.

I know a lot of guys that fish with Cabela's Men's Ultralight Wading Boots and never complained about comfort and longevity. These particular boots have a great combination of felt with the ability to screw in studs. By screwing in studs, you afford yourself better traction both in the water and off the beaten trail.



Cabela's Ultralight Felt Sole Wading Boots for Men
★★★★ 1,3 (322) \$84.99
ORDER BY APR 8 E.T. FOR APR 13 DELIVERY

Color: Brown/Blue

Size/Width/Height

8/Medium	9/Medium	10/Medium	11/Medium
12/Medium	13/Medium	14/Medium	

<https://www.cabelas.com/shop/en/cabelas-ultralight-felt-sole-wading-boots-for-men>

Once again Simms is an all-around great choice for wading boots and you'll typically find these boots last for years and years.



M's Freestone® Wading Boot - Rubber Soles
\$199.95

Color: Gunmetal

Size: 8

Free shipping on orders over \$100. Free return shipping.
See Simms Guarantee. We'll get you back on the water.

Add to cart \$199.95

<https://www.simmsfishing.com/products/ms-freestone-boot-rubber?nosto=productcategory-nosto-1>

Another great affordable boot that will give you several seasons of wear are the AdamsBuilt Smith River boots. These are comfortable boots and at a great entry price point. Don't forget your discount code **Wildbearings** for 10% off.



AdamsBuilt Smith River Wading Boot
Price \$129.95
Pay in 4 interest-free installments of \$32.48 with shopify
Size 8
ADD TO CART

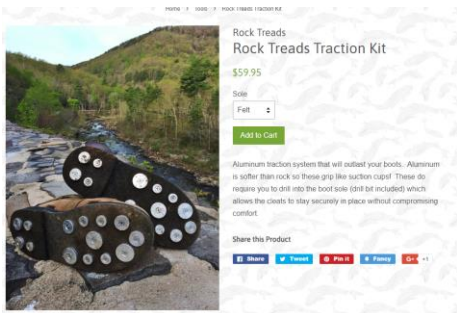
<https://bigflyfishing.com/products/adamsbuilt-smith-river-wading-boot>

BOA versus traditional laces are a great topic of conversation and I can personally say for the last five years I've been overly pleased with my BOA system boots. I initially had concerns about the BOA system breaking down, but I've had very few issues. Advice though, keep an extra BOA system in your kit for those blow outs that can occur. Extra kits are cheap and very easy to replace even on the banks of a stream.



<https://bigtlyfishing.com/products/korkers-boa-m2-replacement-kit>

Over time I found that the tungsten studs you can screw into your rubber sole boots just don't last long at all and quite frankly give you very little traction. To combat this issue without buying a totally new set of boots I found a great product called Rock Treads.



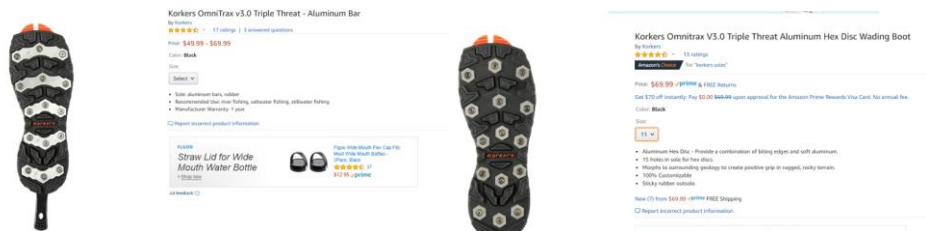
Rock Treads allow you to modify your existing wading boots, either felt or rubber, with aluminum discs that I can say without a doubt provide the greatest traction I've ever experienced in the water. Google or check out this great product www.rocktreads.com

This brings me to my current set of boots and that's Korkers. Providing the flexibility of rubber, felt, and the addition of an aluminum traction system (honestly, I don't know that I'll ever fish again without aluminum treads) these boots give you everything you'll need to tackle whatever conditions you approach.



<https://bigtlyfishing.com/products/korkers-dark-horse-wading-boot>

With your purchase you get both a felt and rubber sole. The great thing is you can take your extra soles and throw them in your pack and then when needed you can swap out very quickly. And as mentioned the aluminum OmniTrax setup creates the ideal traction control system for any wading condition.



Update: After using the aluminum bar system for awhile now, I'm not as pleased with the overall traction when crossing rocks so I switched to the aluminum hex system Korker's offers hoping to better replicate my RockTreads and they seem

to have been the perfect switch! <https://bigtlyfishing.com/products/korkers-omnitrax-triple-threat-aluminum-hex-disc-soles> Remember your discount code **Wildbearings** for 10% off.

Socks

Now that we have waders, boots and a belt, you need to make sure you have a great pair of thick wool socks. I have a few different thicknesses depending on the situation and these can be found at any outfitter, Cabela's, Dick's, Amazon, you name it.

Rods and Reels

For purposes of this guide we can't cover everything about a rod and reel setup. Remember this is a *basics guide* so we'll be focused purely on getting you on the water in a low-cost way that puts a nice rig in your hands. We won't be discussing things like Euro-nymphing, Czech-nymphing, and other advanced fly-fishing techniques that use different rod-reel setups. For now, we'll be dialed into a few rod-reel combo packages that will get the job done. What we do need to discuss at this stage is the weight of your rod-reel combo and conditions that affect the weight you use. The primary condition you'll face in most southeast streams is smaller trout ranging from 6" to 20" with your average size being in the 9" to 12" range. The second condition and with smaller streams is no matter the time of year, a dry fly setup is going to be your go-to approach on the water most of the time (yes, in very cold and very hot conditions a nymph rig will be required to find the fish and yes we'll talk about a dry-dropper setup later in this guide). And a third and major condition especially in north Georgia and even surrounding states is the size of streams typically fished, which range from small to medium for the most part. Lastly, because our streams tend to be on a smaller scale this means heavy tree overhangs, brush, rhododendron, and tighter casting quarters.

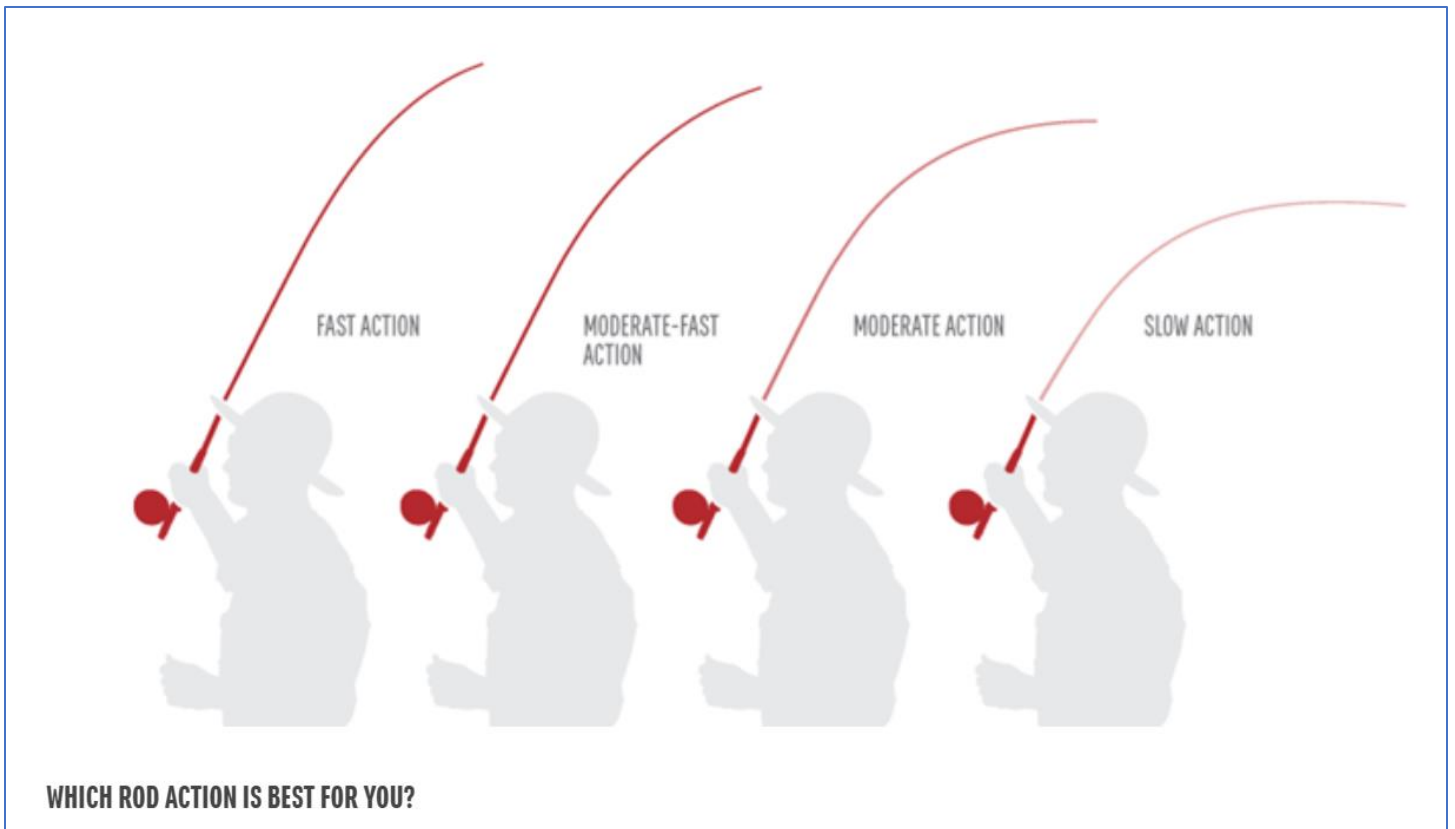
To understand rod and reel weights, I'm including Dan Gates' simple chart here to break this down. Also, for greater

- **1-4:** sunfish and small trout, small streams
- **4-6:** general trout, larger streams and rivers
- **6-8:** bass, carp, light steelhead, salmon, and saltwater
- **8-10:** winter steelhead, salmon, and saltwater
- **10-14:** big game

details about turning line over, rigs over, casting conditions, etc., here is Dan's post <https://www.backcountry.com/explore/how-to-choose-a-fly-rod> that will let you better understand when a 5wt works and how he uses a 4wt.

Quickly, another factor in picking your fly rod is the length of the rod. Most combo kits will be in the 8', 9', or 10' range. But most commonly you'll have a 9' rod, which covers just about all conditions you'll experience starting out. Caution though, on smaller blueline streams, going much above a 7'6" or 8' rod is going to make things difficult when it comes to casting and maneuvering around in your environment. Anything above 9' and you'll struggle, and it's not recommended. For me, my first setup shown below (5wt 9') got me going and got me catching fish. But about 8-months in I was creating my own setup to work better on the smaller streams with a Redington Zero 4wt reel and a White River 7'6" medium action rod.

Another key trait of any fly rod is the "action", which defines how the rod responds to multiple conditions. Here we see a great illustration provided by Redington <http://www.redington.com/rod-actions> that describes each type of action you'll see. Also, and this is very important, you need to find the action that suits you best.



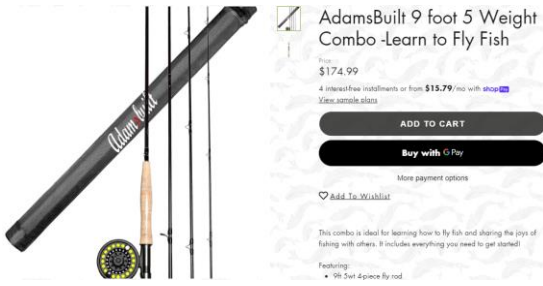
For the most part the rod-reel combos shown here will be medium to medium-fast action rods, which allows the beginner to get a good feel and presentation put together.

Pause for Thought: given that we have small to medium size waters here in north GA and surrounding states and given the size of the average trout we catch and given that a dry or dry-dropper rig is what we'll be using most, a 4wt 8'6" medium or medium-fast action rod is your ideal setup. But because most rod-reel combos don't offer an 8'6" option, and because you will find yourself on bigger waters sometimes throwing heavy nymph rigs, a 5wt 9' option is recommended. This also helps protect you when you do land that 24" hog and you need to fight to get it in. It's in my opinion though that there's no better way to present a dry fly than a 4wt 8'6" setup.

A great 5/9 starter package that will get you on the water and quickly is this AdamsBuilt combo for learning how to fly fish and sharing the joys of fishing with others. It includes everything you need to get started!

Featuring:

- 9ft 5wt 4-piece fly rod
- Lightweight composite 5/6 fly reel
- Quality WF5F fly line and backing pre-loaded on reel
- Hard Rod Case



<https://bigflyfishing.com/products/adamsbuilt-9-foot-5-weight-combo-learn-to-fly-fish>

Stepping up a bit, and one of the strongest brands in the market today, TFO places you right in the sweet spot with a rod/reel combo that elevates your game to intermediate level.



<https://bigflyfishing.com/products/tfo-nxt-black-label-rod-reel-line-combo?variant=39525287100479>

Reminder: use discount code **Wildbearings** for your 10% discount sitewide

Fly Fishing Bamboo

Want to get back to where the sport started, then go to our site www.WildBearings.com, where we have unique collections of items for the free range in you such as our bamboo fly rods and specific flies for fishing southeast waters you'll not find anywhere.



Why fish with a rod made in a factory, when you could fish with a piece of hand-crafted fly fishing artistry proudly Made in the U.S.A? In an economy where time is money and the quest to produce things more cheaply is the rule, there's still a place for things made one at a time. Our rods are hand made one at a time - not mass produced by computer guided machines. Each is a one-of-a-kind creation with a spirit and heritage proven to perform flawlessly for a lifetime.

Wild Bearings co-founder, Sam Johnson, learned bamboo rod making years ago from Gary Lacey, one of the top bamboo makers in the world. Since that time Sam's been part of two bamboo rod companies, during which hundreds of rods were built for L.L. Bean, Wright & McGill, and scores of anglers and collectors around the world.

Our rods are 100% hand-crafted using traditional materials and methods that can take 35 to 60 hours to build. Each one starts with top grade Tonkin bamboo, split into strips, straightened, planed to within 1/1000", glued, bound, dried and sanded. The result is a near flawless rod blank made to the client's exact specifications.

If you've never fished bamboo, then you are missing out! To fish with essentially a piece of grass that's traveled 10,000 miles to a shop here in Georgia where its crafted into a functional piece of art is an experience unlike any other. Many of us find fly fishing to be just as much about connecting with ourselves in a place of tranquility as anything else and a bamboo rod just adds to that experience. A bamboo rod loads your line differently than a graphite rod (btw depending on the conditions I/we still fish our graphite rods) and when it comes to properly presenting a dry fly, nothing can compete.

Bamboo fly rods never lose their feel. Bamboo is one of the most durable substances on earth and like anything, if you take care of it a bamboo rod will last for decades unlike many man-made rods. We see rods that are 100 years old that yes may need some touching up, but the bamboo itself is still as strong, supple, and powerful as it was when it was sold new.

Fly Vest and Wading Jackets

There are a multitude of ways to carry all your gear on the water. I'd say the first thing to decide is are you a minimalist or a George Costanza? If the latter, which I was in the beginning, then a traditional fly vest will give you all the space



you'll ever need. This isn't to say those that choose a traditional vest are hoarders as I have many fishing buddies that carry very little in their traditional vest. But more often than not, if you carry a bunch of fly boxes and lots of extra stuff, the traditional is the way to go. I can also say that you can find a traditional vest at a variety of price points from very inexpensive to very expensive.

For purposes of this guide, I'll highlight a few styles of vest. As already mentioned, the traditional vest is a great way to start at a very low entry price point. Another style of vest is a "sling" vest, and the third most common type you'll see is a "chest pack". I can honestly say I've experimented with each style of vest and at last count I think I've gone through no less than 10 vests to

get to the one I use today and am most comfortable with. And comfort is a big piece of choosing what's right for you as you'll be spending many hours on the water during varying types of weather conditions. Lastly, when I say comfort it's not only about fit, but also functionality meaning how you access pockets, how you move on land and in the water, and how you want things like your nippers and tools to hang.

Traditional Vest

A traditional fly vest comes in so many variations you could write a book just on this type of vest. I can honestly say you can spend a little money, a little more money, or a lot of money and be pretty happy. As is always the case though, you get what you pay for. But for starting out you can't go wrong with the little bit of money approach and then decide if a traditional vest is even right for you.



White River Fly Shop Aventur1 Fly Fishing Vest

★★★★ 3.8 (54) [Write a review](#)

\$39.99

ORDER BY 4PM E.T. FOR APR 13 DELIVERY

Color: Brown

Size:

Please choose...

SHOP BELOW

<https://www.cabelas.com/shop/en/white-river-fly-shop-aventur1-fly-vest>

One of my all-time favorite vests is the Henry's Fork vest by Columbia. Even though I haven't worn it in years, I'm doubtful it will ever get tossed. Comfortable and breathable along with Columbia's excellent quality, you just can't go wrong with this traditional vest!



Men's PFG Henry's Fork™ V Vest

\$90.00

★★★★★ (7)

Members get free shipping + 100 Greater Rewards points

Color: Fossil

Size:

Item Runs [True to size](#)

S	M	L	XL
XXL			

ADD TO CART

https://www.columbia.com/p/mens-pfg-henrys-fork-v-vest-FM1441.html?cgid=activity-fishing&dwvar_FM1441_variationColor=160#prefn1=genderGroup&pgsize=72&prefv1=Men's&start=0

Remember, I'm not discriminating against brands, I'm just showing you vests I've had experience with and some different price points.

Sling Vest

The sling vest is a really cool concept and has exploded over the past few years. Lightweight and keeps just the items you need at your fingertips, this vest is great for blue-lining especially on warmer days. Ironically you think you're losing space moving from a traditional vest and you're definitely not. Even the smaller profile sling vests like the Patagonia below has tons of room.

Totes, Slings & Waist Packs > Stealth Sling 10L



Stealth Sling 10L

\$169

★★★★★ [Add Reviews](#)



Add to Bag

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[Shipping & Exchanges](#)

<https://www.patagonia.com/product/stealth-fly-fishing-sling-10-liters/195699383432.html>

Chest Pack

If you haven't had a guided trip, which I'll briefly discuss a little later in this eGuide, you will at some point. And when you do, you'll most likely see your guide wearing a chest pack. Early on I had a \$29.99 Cabela's chest pack, and after a few uses I ditched it. I think primarily because it had a strap that went around the back of my neck making a day on the water very uncomfortable. So, I decided a chest pack wasn't for me. Then as I progressed and really started to be much more minimalistic, I thought I'd give a chest pack another go.

This Umpqua Rock Creek is a great little chest pack... emphasis on little! I really like this pack and for a very tight blue-line kind of day I might pull it back out, but it's on the extreme side of reducing what you carry. Nevertheless, I really like this pack and for the beginner at this price point it'll work just fine.

Recommendation: The key feature for me and one I highly recommend if you choose the chest pack route, is make sure you choose a chest pack that has shoulder straps versus a neck strap. You'll thank me, your neck will thank me, and so will your back!



<https://bigflyfishing.com/products/umpqua-zs2-rock-creek-chest-pack>



<https://fishpondusa.com/cross-current-chest-pack>

As I stated when I started this section I've been through a lot of vests/packs over the past few years. I have other vests I haven't shown because at this point you get the drift that I'm an accomplished fly-fishing vest expert 😊.

The Fishpond Cross-Current Chest Pack is extremely comfortable, holds just the right amount of gear, and is highly functional. The only downside is the built-in net holder can be a real struggle to holster your round-handle type nets. It's the perfect choice for Fish Pond type net handles.

Seeing how I enjoy a chest pack and wanting a little more functionality, I procured the Umpqua ZS2 Overlook 500 Chest Pack/Kit and have been fishing this same pack for about four years now. I like the price point and zero sweep features along with the extra storage on my back and easier net holster. As you can probably guess I'm pretty rough on my gear and fish a lot and this pack has weathered all storms, and the weather too for four years, and it's still going strong so I'm very impressed. It conforms well to your body and is even lighter than the fishpond, though I do miss the magnet closure of the Fishpond.

[Umpqua ZS2 OVERLOOK 500 CHEST PACK – Big T Fly Fishing](#)



<https://bigtflyfishing.com/products/umpqua-zs2-overlook-500-chest-pack>

Wading Jackets

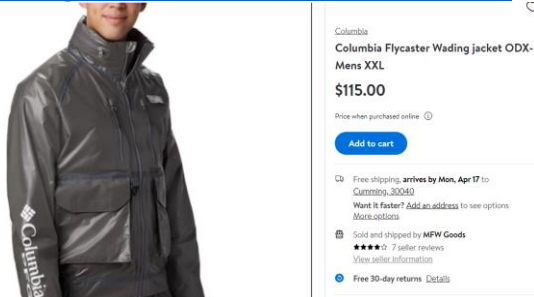
I'll be brief about wading jackets only to say you need one. Make sure it's breathable and stick to the major brands as they've got things figured out. My first wading jacket was a traditional brand L.L. Bean. This is a great jacket and has performed very well. You'll see reviews that the jacket is "short", and my response to that is "absolutely it's short because you don't want your jacket *dragging through the water*". This is a wading jacket, not something to make a fashion statement about.

Pause for Thought: what you must decide is do you want a hood hanging out all the time or do you want an enclosed system? For me, I decided that I wanted an enclosed hood because I didn't want the hood hitting my net. I also didn't want a hood filling with water during a light rain when I didn't want to use the hood function. That's why I chose the Columbia wading jacket as my go-to. And I can say after spending hours in the rain with the Columbia I couldn't be more impressed with this wading jacket!

Emerger II Wading Jacket



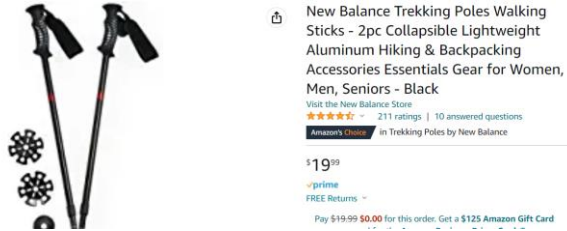
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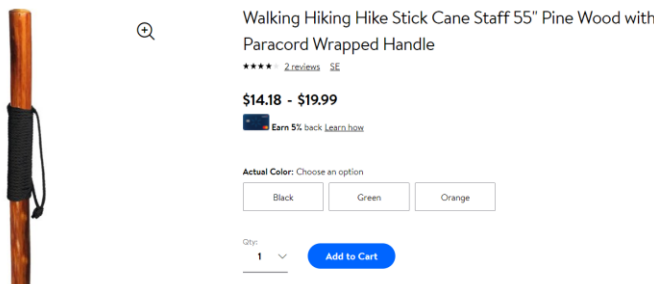
<https://www.walmart.com/ip/Columbia-Flycaster-Wading-jacket-ODX-Mens-XXL/913324711?wmlspartner=wlp&selectedSellerId=101042913>

Wading Staff

Because streams are very slippery, have many different contours and variations, and can be just plain dangerous, it's always recommended to have a wading staff. In this case I have two different styles I use. The current one I use is this aluminum alloy trekking pole. I really like it and tether it directly to my wading belt and prefer it over a wood wading staff (I always have my wood wading staff in my truck for the *just in case I need the old standby* that happens sometimes) because it sinks in the water versus floating around in front of me depending on the direction I'm fishing and the direction of the current. I can tell you this pole takes a real beating and lasts!

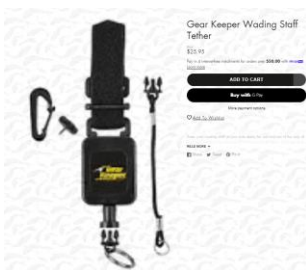


https://www.amazon.com/dp/B089BYTS6K?psc=1&smid=ATVPDKIKXODER&ref=chk_typ_imgToDp



If you look in the camping area in most any Walmart, they'll typically have these or a similar type for under \$20 and they work just great!

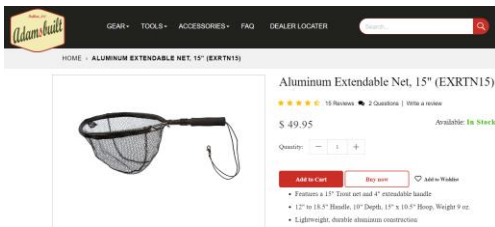
Just remember you'll most likely want some carabiners and even a heavy-duty retractor to keep your wading stick close by.



<https://bigtlyfishing.com/products/gear-keeper-wading-staff-tether>

Net

I'm a big believer in using a net when catching trout. You want to try not to touch the trout too much except for the occasional photo shoot (wet your hand with river/creek water before handling the trout) so as to try and preserve the *slime* on the trout that protects them. I also think it significantly reduces the stress on a trout as it's much easier to net one in far less time than to try and grab one with your hand.



<https://www.adamsbuiltfishing.com/products/aluminum-extendable-net>

I like this net because it extends. And I've found it works really well on bigger fish as it's deep and wide. *Of note here, a small net being used on known big fish creates great stress on the trout, so it's always recommended if your hog hunting to have a deeper, wider net.* Bottom line, there are more net choices than you can imagine so for purposes of time you can explore what works best for you.

Recap

At this point of the eGuide we can pause and agree we've learned a lot already. We're basically outfitted at this point with the key essentials needed to safely wade with a rod and reel in our hands and all for just around \$500... less if you find some great deals! In this next section we'll start getting into some terminology, safety, fly line, leaders, tippet, and the tools and flies needed to fish. I'll also have some links to some great books that will put you on the water where you too can find your favorite waters in the southeast to fish all by yourself.

Safety Note: What is "CFS"? Cubic feet per second (CFS) is a term you'll hear quite often when around more experienced anglers and something you need to pay attention to... especially tailwaters! It's always best to contact your local fly shop or review their website for this important safety information. I can say I've been on medium water and 400 cfs took my feet out from under me and I've been on large water where 700 cfs is just fine. Bottom line don't be afraid to ask.

Apparel, Hats, Tools and Accessories

Sunglasses and a great Hat

A good pair of polarized sunglasses is key especially when fly fishing. Not only do they protect you from the sun's harmful rays, they also protect you from an errant fly whipping by your face. They also allow you to see into the water and provide a greater level of safety so you can see where you're stepping in the water and where you shouldn't step in the water. Of particular note, a good pair of polarized sunglasses like Costa, Oakley, Smith come in different lens colors specifically for fishing in shady areas and sunny areas. Pay close attention to your normal fishing conditions to make the right choice. For me, I have a pair of Costa, glass, green mirror lenses, which does exceptionally well in sunny, inshore waters and very good on shady streams. I also have a pair of Costa, glass, copper silver mirror lenses, which does extremely well in heavily shaded areas on stream and for sight fishing. I would say though 99% of the time I've got my green mirrors on.

I'm a hat guy and would feel completely naked without one on when fishing. I normally have on my regular Mojo Sportswear Company ball cap.



<https://www.mojosportswearcompany.com/products/bbj-patch-cap?variant=12274563809344>

Apparel

We started partnering with Mojo Sportswear Company about a year ago as we really liked the quality, features and functionality of their apparel. The Wireman X Wild Bearings Outdoors series is an excellent choice anytime of year especially when trying to keep the sun's rays from scorching you on those warm spring, summer, and fall days.



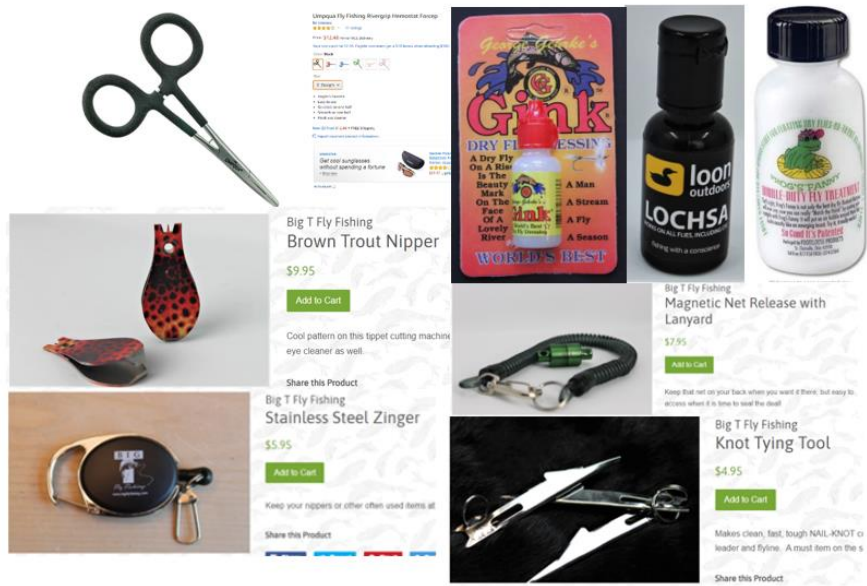
<https://www.mojosportswearcompany.com/collections/wild-bearings>

Save 10% when you use code **WB10** at checkout.

Must Have's

There are a few "must have's" that every angler needs on the water (photos below).

1. Forceps
 - a. Remove hooks
 - b. Close/open split-shot
2. Nippers/cutters
 - a. Cut line
 - b. Clean out eyes of hook
3. Nail knot tying tool
 - a. In case your loop breaks
 - b. If you prefer nail knots over others
4. Split shot
 - a. Required to get your bugs down deep
5. Strike indicators
 - a. For Nymph fishing
 - b. Various styles find what you like
6. Floatants
 - a. Multiple types
 - b. Typically for a dry fly you'll use Gink
 - c. For a dry fly that is made of CDC you'll use something like Loon Lochsa, as Gink will clog the CDC feathers and the fly won't float
 - d. You'll apply Frog's Fanny powder after Gink or Lochsa to keep the bugs floating
7. Fly box(es)
8. Fly patch
9. Magnetic net release with lanyard
10. Zingers
 - a. Allow you to attach tools for easy use and avoid dropping tools in the water



These pictures and most of the products shown here can be found at www.bigflyfishing.com and can be shipped to you within two business days. Big T seems to have some of the best prices around and shipping is fast. You can also visit Big T's store, Soque River Outfitters if you happen to be in north Georgia.



159 Walls Complex Clarkesville Ga 30523 M-f 6:30 Am - 3:00 Pm Sat 6:30 - 12:00

You can also book your guided trip on the famous Soque River

Regarding fly boxes, these are like flies themselves meaning there are more styles and features than you can imagine. So, I'll again narrow this down to what I've had experience with and my minimalistic approach to being on the water.

First, for my very small flies like midges and emergers, I like to use a magnetic box with multiple compartments as it makes it much easier to hold the flies and see what you want.

Then for my main fly box that has my dry flies, wet flies, nymphs, and streamers, I like to use a large box that holds close to 1,000 flies.



I have also used both slim profile and tacky boxes, but for me these two boxes above cover just about all my needs. Note again I used Big T's images, but you can find these boxes at any fly shop, outfitter, Orvis, or on Amazon. I do prefer to buy from our sponsors when I can before heading to Amazon or anyone else.



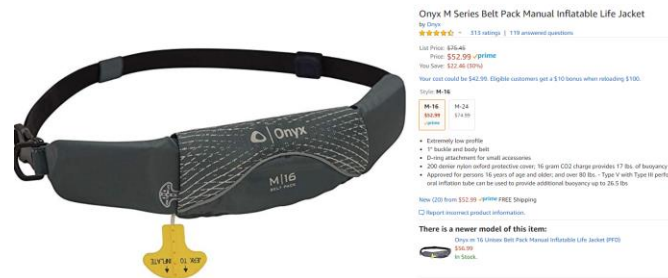
I listed a fly patch and I think it's important to have one somewhere either on your pack, vest, or body. I have two fly patches: one on the front of my chest pack, and one on the suspender of my chest pack. Nowadays I use a magnetic fly patch which is great for holding those smaller flies.



The focus here is to let your flies dry out thoroughly so they maintain good structure and don't rust. Also, and this is key, most of the time you are fishing catch-and-release and you don't want to introduce something like rust into the trout's mouth or blood stream that could cause infection and kill the fish. The last thing you want to do is place wet flies in your fly box as this will create moisture in your fly box that can cause rusting and mildew and ruin your fly box along with your other flies. The other focus is to quickly have a place to place your fly when changing out flies, so you don't lose them on the water. Flies can get expensive pretty quickly so it's a good idea to keep them in a safe place.

Personal Flotation Device (PFD)

Okay your asking yourself why would I need one of these? Well it just so happens that the regulations for the tailwater of the Chattahoochee River below Buford Dam require you to have a PFD to fish. There are several types on the market, but probably one of the lowest profile PFD's you can get for a great price is the Onyx M Series Belt Pack.

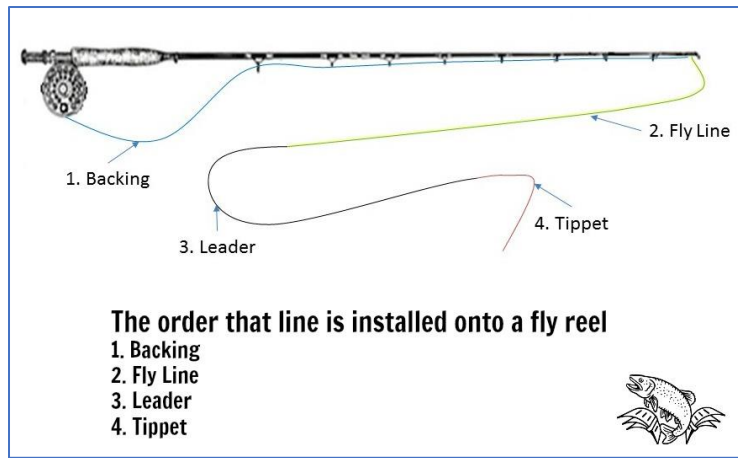


Disclaimer: It is not the author's intent to recommend or endorse the Onyx M Series Belt Pack PFD. It is up to the individual to make the best choice that suits their own personal needs. Please make sure and review all rules and regulations when fishing the Chattahoochee and other waters in general. Fish at your own risk.

Reel and Line Setup

If you purchased a rod and reel combo described above, then most likely you already have backing and fly line installed. I won't be covering how to attach backing to the reel and then how fly line is attached to the backing, but if you decided to build your own rod, reel, backing and fly line combo here is a great video to watch on how to get the backing and fly line on your reel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3mKbkMUs1c&t=437s>.

For this area of the eGuide we'll focus on all the elements of the reel and line setup and how each part works together. I can honestly say this becomes one of the most confusing aspects of fly fishing other than knots so I'll work to keep this as simple as I can. As discussed in the section "Rods and Reels" I included a chart that outlined the proper weight of a rod and reel typically used for trout streams in the southeast. In this case we'll assume an 8' 6" 4wt fly rod with a 4wt reel.



1. Backing

- a. This is required to take up extra space on the arbor and help reel in the fly line quicker and easier
- b. Because you have a limited amount of fly line on the reel, backing acts as an insurance policy when playing a fish that decides to run out your fly line
- c. Multiple colors available
- d. 20# to 30# @ ~90'
 - i. 25 meters = ~82'



Fly Size	Fly Rod - Fly Line Weight												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
28													
26													
24													
22	1												
20		2											
18			3										
16				4									
14					5								
12						6							
10							7						
8								8					
6									9				
4										10			
2											11		
1/0												12	
2/0													12
3/0													
4/0													
5/0													

Backcountrychronicles.com

2. Fly Line

- a. 99.99% of the time, especially as a beginner, you'll be using weight forward fly line
- b. Multiple colors available
- c. Typically, the fly line weight will be the same size as your rod and reel
 - i. So, in this case with our 4wt rod and our 4wt reel we'll be using 4wt fly line also represented as WF4F
- d. Due to technology these days, most fly lines have a welded loop at the end of the line
 - i. As a beginner it's highly recommended to only use fly line that has this welded loop
 - ii. This loop makes it much easier to attach a leader to your fly line and I can say as an experienced person I buy all my fly lines with this loop
- e. The fly line is the actual *weight* that gets your line shooting out to its destination when you cast along with your rod's "dynamics"
 - i. Kind of like a golf swing... try to kill it and your ball doesn't go far
 - ii. But find your rhythm and make a nice, smooth swing, letting the club do what it's designed to do, and the ball shoots off the face

3. Leader

- a. The leader attaches to the end of your fly line and is clear and tapered with the heavier section, or “butt” section, attaching to the end of your fly line and the lighter section attaching to either tippet or a fly
- b. The leader is important because of the clearness so as not to spook trout www.theflyfishingbasics.com
- c. It is recommended in the beginning stages to only buy leaders with a loop for easier on/off to your fly line
- d. Leaders can be purchased in multiple lengths and sizes
 - i. In the case of our WF4F fly line, I’m going to be using either a 4x or 5x leader... recommended would be 5x, but a 4x will work just fine as well especially if working a trophy stream
 - ii. As length goes this gets a little more complicated depending on how you will be fishing and how spooky fish can be
 - 1. For simplicity, we’ll stick with a 9’ leader
- e. Note: as you can see the higher the “X” factor the smaller the line gets
- f. Here’s a great video that shows you how to connect your Leader to your Fly Line with the Loop-to-Loop connection <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjpvhmNVLnl&t=63s>

Tippet Size	Tippet Diameter	Pound Test	Fish Size
03X	.015"	25 lb.	Big Game Species
02X	.013"	20 lb.	Large Salmon
01X	.012"	18.5 lb.	Striped Bass
0X	.011"	15.5 lb.	Salmon, Steelhead
1X	.010"	13.5 lb.	Bonefish, Redfish, Permit
2X	.009"	11.5 lb.	Large & Smallmouth Bass
3X	.008"	8.5 lb.	Bass & Large Trout
4X	.007"	6 lb.	Trout
5X	.006"	4.75 lb.	Trout & Panfish
6X	.005"	3.5 lb.	Trout – Easily Spooked Fish
7X	.004"	2.5 lb.	Trout & Panfish / Delicate Presentations
8X	.003"	1.75 lb.	Trout & Panfish / Small Flies

Pause for Thought: At this point we need to put all this together before we get into the 4th element of our line and that’s tippet. So far, we’ve covered the following:

- 8’6” 4wt Rod
- 4wt Reel
- 20# to 30# Backing at about 90’
- 4wt Weight Forward Fly Line with a welded loop
- 9’ 5x Leader

We can use this same formula with a few adjustments for say a 9’ 5wt with a 5wt reel:

- 9’ 5wt Rod
- 5wt Reel
- 25# to 30# Backing at about 90’
- 5wt Weight Forward Fly Line with a welded loop
- 9’ 4x Leader would be my choice, but 5x would be just fine

Here’s where we pause and start talking situations where we want to protect our Leader and have that Leader last as long as we possibly can (primarily because these are costly and we don’t want to waste a 9’ leader if we don’t have to), which starts our conversation about Tippet. Remember that your Leader is tapered where the butt section is thicker than the tip section. By the time we get to the tip section of the Leader on say a 5x Leader, we are actually at about .006” tippet. When we first hit the water, we may take our 9’ 5x Leader and attach it directly to our first fly... a dry fly... nothing wrong with that at all and is common. But as we fish and realize the fly we picked isn’t working, we start changing flies out, which slowly shortens our Leader with each new knot we tie and before you know it, we are into the thicker sections of our tapered Leader. When this happens, we start to affect the Leaders ability to perform as it was

designed to, and we also affect how the line unfurls impacting our bug presentation to the trout. This is very important as we are trying our hardest to make sure our bugs look and act as natural as possible.

So how do we add to our Leader and get back down to that .006" or smaller diameter line... **we add Tippet.**

4. Tippet

- a. There are two types of Tippet
 - i. Monofilament
 1. Less expensive
 2. Tends to be stretchy
 3. Doesn't sink as fast
 - ii. Fluorocarbon
 1. More expensive
 2. Less stretch and maintains its structural properties
 3. Smaller diameter than monofilament
 4. Higher abrasion resistance
 5. Low visibility
 6. Better sensitivity
- b. **Recommendation:** Fluorocarbon
 - i. Fluoro also becomes extremely important when we get into wet fly, emerger, and nymph fishing when we get below the surface of the water
- c. Size
 - i. The Tippet size you select becomes dependent on several factors such as:
 1. Leader size... 3x, 4x, 5x, etc.
 2. Am I fishing on the surface or below the surface?
 3. Are the fish overly spooky?
 4. Is the water colluded or crystal clear?
 5. The depth of the water
 6. Fly size

Fly Size	Tippet Size									
28	9X									
26		8X								
24			7X							
22				6X						
20					5X					
18						4X				
16							3X			
14								2X		
12									1X	
10										0X
8										
6										
4										
2										
1/0										

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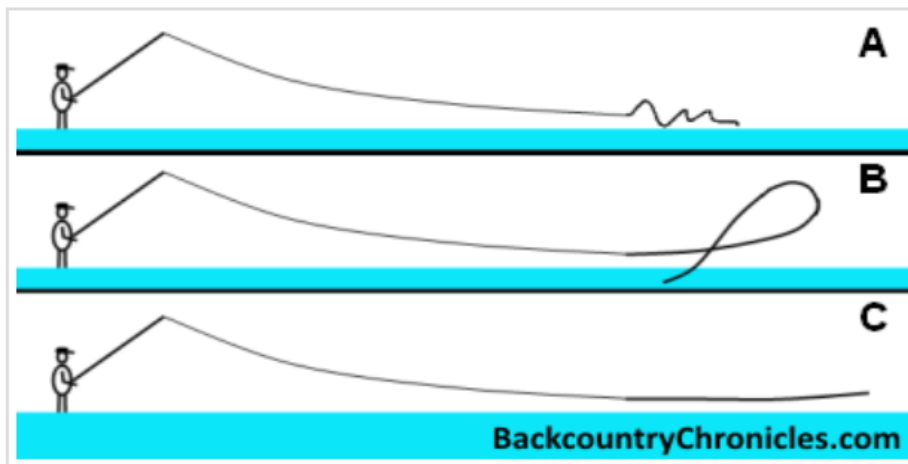


Figure 1. Example A: Leader too Short or too Light, B: Leader too Long or too Heavy and C: Leader Just Right.

In recapping here, we now know the Fly Line size, the Leader size, and now the Tippet size we need to use with our rod and reel setup. We covered the most common length of Leader to use at 9', but how long is the Tippet we add when rebuilding our Leader? What if we want to add a second dry fly, drop a wet fly, emerger, or bead head nymph off our first fly? How much Tippet do I use for each scenario? What happens when I add all this line and I don't get it right as far as size of Tippet and length? Here is a great illustration to use when starting out that I cut and laminated and still have in my vest today.

Pause for Thought: Given that I typically fish with my 8'6" 4wt rod and 4wt reel, with 4wt fly line, I'm usually going to have a 9' 5x leader attached. In my chest pack, I'll then have 5x, 6x and 7x tippet. If I have my 9' 5wt rod and 5wt reel,

with 5wt fly line, then I'm still using 5x, 6x and 7x tippet, but I may have moved to a 4x leader. Then, let's say I'm blue-lining in very tight quarters, I may have my 7'6" 4wt rod and 4wt reel, with 4wt fly line, then I'm still using 5x, 6x and 7x tippet, but I've probably put on a 7'6" 5x leader. This is my preference per situation, and you'll find yours too. The key idea to follow as a beginner is in most circumstances, you'll only really have two sizes of leader and three sizes of tippet. And to be honest, I rarely use 7x tippet because your breakoffs increase, and I just find 6x covers most of my needs.

As a general rule of thumb, here are some of the approaches I take when my Leader gets short, I want to add more flies, and I want a better presentation.

1. Rebuilding my Leader
 - a. When my 9' 5x Leader gets to about 8' or less, then I'm adding about a foot to a foot and a half of 6x tippet
 - b. Don't worry about being exact as a lot of highly skilled fly casters may be using 12' leaders
2. Adding a second dry fly
 - a. If my 9' 5x leader has a dry fly on as my first fly and I want to add a second dry fly, then I'm running out about 18" of 6x tippet knowing that once I tie my knot and add my second fly on this new piece of tippet, I'll be netting out about a 12" to 14" drop off my first fly
3. Adding an emerger or another subsurface fly
 - a. Let's say my first fly is a dry fly and I want to add an emerger or soft hackle wet fly off my dry, I'm usually going to shoot for a net result of between 20" and 24" off that dry fly using 6x tippet
 - i. However, if I'm presenting say a size 20 to 26 size fly, and the fish are overly spooky, then you'll see me use 7x versus 6x tippet
 - b. Now let's say I want to add a weighted fly off my dry fly, then again, I'm going to be shooting for about 20" to 24" off my dry fly with 6x tippet dependent upon the size of the fly I choose

This *Pause for Thought* provides some examples that can help you determine what starts to work best for you. Remember when we started this eGuide our objective was to get you outfitted and start to introduce you to the different terminology and concepts of fly fishing. There are so many scenarios to cover that it's best done in person with a Mentor.

Special Note: When it comes to Leaders and Tippet, there are so many brands on the market you must find what's right for you. What I've found to be the case is fluorocarbon tippet usually runs between \$9.99 and \$14.99 (55 yards). At \$24.99 you start to get into top tier tippet like Trout Hunter. For leaders it's generally about \$15.99 for a 3-pack of Umpqua, which I find to be excellent quality. If you looked in my vest today, you'd see I basically have Umpqua and Big T leaders (honestly I pretty much just use Big T leaders these days... can't beat the quality or the price) and Hanak and Trout Hunter tippet. I like the half-sizes Trout Hunter offers, but really like the quality and value of Hanak, so its become my go-to tippet.

Knots

Tying knots is probably one of the hardest things to figure out when you first start fly fishing. Ask five people what knots they use, and you'll probably end up with a plethora of knots and a whole lot of confusion to muddle through. I know when I first started, I spent countless hours trying to figure out what to tie, when to tie it, and why. I'm not here to walk into the fray of what's right or wrong when it comes to each step of the knot tying universe as you'll get more opinions than raisins on raisin toast. But if I've learned anything with fly fishing it's that confidence does a few things for you: speeds things up, takes the guessing out of the process, and lets you spend more time fishing and less time frustrated.

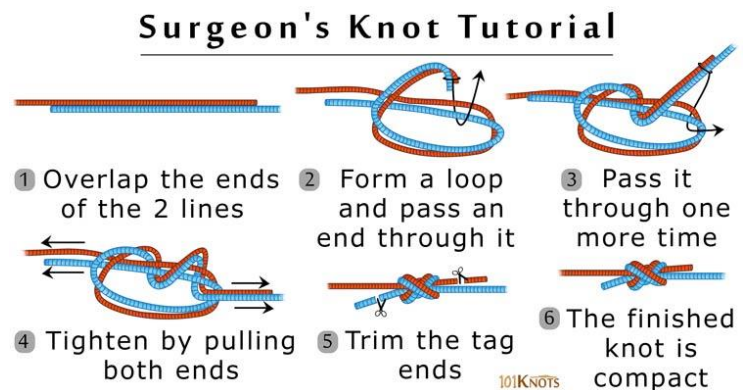
So, let's get to the part of attaching a fly to your line with a simple and effective knot... the **Clinch Knot**. I've been asked a few times about some of the tools I use and one that is my absolute favorite is the THREE-in-One Knot Tying Tool. This handy little tool ties something like 14 different knots (I use it for one and that's the Clinch). Easy to use, fast, and consistent I just don't hit the water



without it. And let me say on those extremely cold winter days when your fingers are numb, the nymphs are small, and your joints just don't want to cooperate, this tool is about as cozy as it gets. Here's a great link to a video on the THREE-in-One that shows you the Clinch, the Improved Clinch and I believe even a Surgeons
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxZUptwiZgg>. https://www.amazon.com/Lake-Products-THREE-Tying-Fishing/dp/B006FCHC2Q/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=three-in-one+knot&qid=1588346803&sr=8-1

When adding tippet to my leader, I use either a **Double or Triple surgeon's knot** and more often than not it's just a double. This a simple knot to tie and works flawlessly.

Remember in step one of this illustration to **moisten** (stick in your mouth) your overlap and this will help keep the lines together as you start to manipulate them.



So again, for me the two knots above... Clinch and Surgeons... just flat take care of business. Now, there are exceptions to all rules and in those situations, I may need to use two more knots the Perfection Loop or a Nail Knot. The Perfection loop might be used if I happen to buy a leader that doesn't have a loop at the butt section, and I need one. Or maybe for some reason my welded loop on my fly line breaks or gets cut. Here is a great video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL26t2SWT3U> on how to tie a Perfection Loop. Lastly, there are cases where I may **not** want a loop-to-loop connection and this is where the Nail Knot comes in handy. The Nail Knot is a sleek knot that creates an almost seamless connection in your line that flows easily through the snake eyes of your rod. If you recall above under "Tools and Accessories - Must Haves", you see the "Knot Tying Tool" shown and this tool is used for Nail Knots. Though the picture of the Nail Knot tool above looks a little different than what's shown on this video, the concept is exactly the same <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgdr4h0-9TI> (of note, the THREE-in-One Knot Tying Tool we just discussed has a Nail Knot feature on one end of the tool).

Hopefully this helps you find confidence and speeds things up on the water. More time fishing is a lot more fun than time playing with knots! But as you gain knowledge, don't be afraid to experiment with other knots as there are truly some great ones that can affect the action of your flies.

Time Saver: Undoubtedly there is one absolute in fly fishing and that's the dreaded bird's nest <https://www.ginkandgasoline.com/fly-fishing-tips-technique/sunday-classic-how-to-stop-the-dreaded-fly-fishing-birds-nest/>. This link speaks to ways on how to reduce the possibilities of achieving *drama* awards on the water and speaking many unknown languages but be prepared, this is normal. I've achieved **first place** in this category many times and sometimes standing in the parking lot after limbering up my rod. It Happens!

The first thing to avoid is hard pulling, yanking, and overreacting. Many times, if you look at the "nest" and start making it "bigger" by slowly pulling line apart you'll find a way to straighten things out. You can also use the hook point of another fly to start pulling line apart. But if you have something like this picture, get your nippers out and start cutting.



This is especially true if you have more than one bug on your line as in a dry-dropper setup. You'll spend a heck of a lot less time rebuilding your rig than trying to untangle such a mess.

Strike Indicators

There are many types of strike indicators on the market and each person you fish with will have their opinion on what to use and when to use it *when fishing subsurface*. You'll hear some say a plastic thingamabobber is too heavy and will scare the fish. I've heard this about AirLock's and others too. Funny thing is, if the fish are so scared, then why do they come up and strike the indicator sometimes? Others use the New Zealand Strike indicator system, which is a great system, but for me I don't want to carry another tool on the water to use this method. Whatever you choose it needs to be visible, easily adjustable, and capable of supporting a heavy nymph setup.

Pause for Thought: A lot of folks you'll fish with consistently fish a dry-dropper setup... meaning a dry fly as their first fly and then dropping another bug or even two off the dry fly. The dry fly, if buoyant enough, can carry quite a bit of weight under it and give you the indication needed when a strike happens subsurface. For me I've become one of those folks given the types of water typically fished here in the southeast. My viewpoint, and I think that of many, is why miss out on an opportunity to catch a fish that might be more interested in surface than subsurface. The point here is don't be afraid to take this approach.

For this setup to work make sure your dry fly has the visibility and horsepower to carry the subsurface load. A large caddis type fly will do the trick. I'm fortunate I tie, so for me I usually have a CDC Caddis #12 or #14 (pictured right), which is Big T's MacDaddy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBW1gREH_Tc.

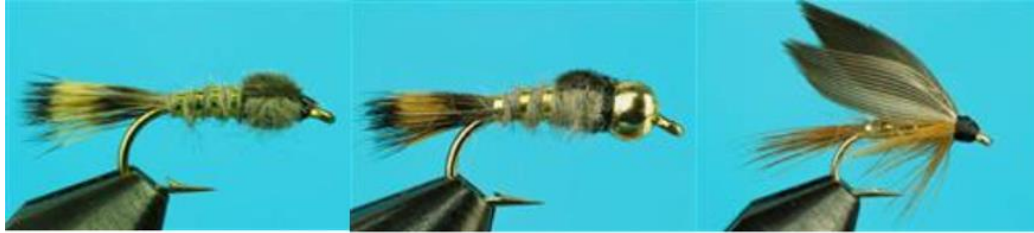


Fly Basics

This section will only cover a handful of flies deemed most important to have on oneself at all times while fly fishing. It would be impossible to try and cover every type of fly as there are thousands of them. We'll also be focused just on the southeast and what tends to work in most fishing situations. First, let's start with a few basics:

1. Fly size
 - a. Smaller the number, the bigger the fly
 - i. Size 8 is a big fly
 - ii. Size 26 is a very, very small fly
 - b. Most common size range is
 - i. **8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26+**
2. Fly types
 - a. Dry
 - i. Fished on the surface
 - ii. Can be categorized as
 1. Attractors
 2. Terrestrials
 3. *Matching the Hatch* meaning bugs that are hatching from the nymph (subsurface) stage of life trying to take flight
 - iii. Size 14 is always a good standard
 - b. Nymph/Wet

- i. Fished below the surface
- ii. Trout feed 80% of the time subsurface so it's a good idea to get good at nymph fishing
- iii. May or may not have a "bead head", which is used to sink the fly quickly
- iv. Wet flies and nymphs are fished pretty interchangeably these days
 - 1. Biggest difference you'll see with a wet fly is they'll have a pronounced wing
 - 2. Can be a little larger than a standard nymph pattern
 - 3. Might be fished with a little extra action meaning stripping actions
- v. Size 14 and 16 are good standards



Hare's Ear

| Hare's Ear-Beadhead

Hare's Ear Wet Fly

c. Emerger

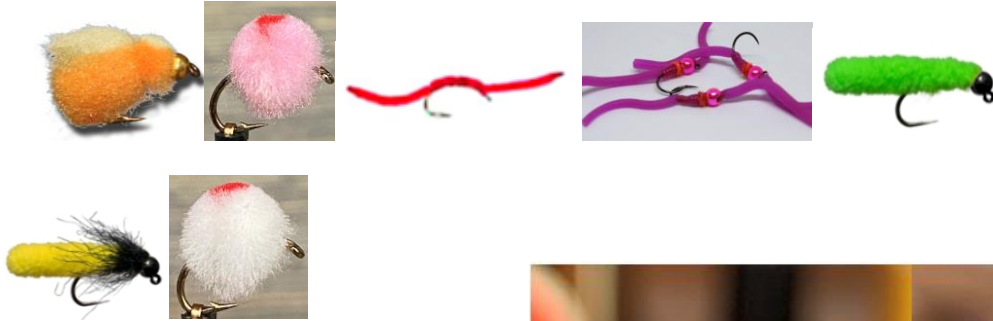
- i. Fished multiple ways about 12" to 18" below your dry fly... maybe below another nymph
 - 1. In the "tension" film meaning the barrier between subsurface and surface of the water
 - 2. Can be weighted moving up and down within the water current/column
- ii. Will naturally sink some as the bug gets wet if not weighted
- iii. When fished on the "swing" it creates a natural sensation for the trout meaning bugs floating up from the bottom to the surface
- iv. When bugs are trying to emerge from their nymph stage of life and break the surface to take flight, they struggle to break free first from their shuck, then the surface
- v. Soft hackle flies make excellent Emergers... when the hackle gets wet and wraps around the body of the fly, it looks like the nymphal shuck being shed by the emerging nymph
- vi. Zebra midge variations with or without a bead are excellent Emerger imitations
- vii. Size 18 and 20 are good standards

d. Streamer

- i. Subsurface looking to imitate bait fish
- ii. Closest thing in fly fishing to bait caster fishing and the closest resemblance to standard lures used in bait casting
- iii. Fished on an active retrieve (stripping line in), jigged, swung
- iv. Great surveyors on big water or tailwaters or when the trout are sitting in bottom water columns
- v. Big trout eat little fish
- vi. Can be bigger flies
- vii. Think Woolly Bugger, Leech, Muddler Minnow, Mickey Finn, Sculpins
- viii. Size 8 to 12 are good standards with 8 and 10 being most common

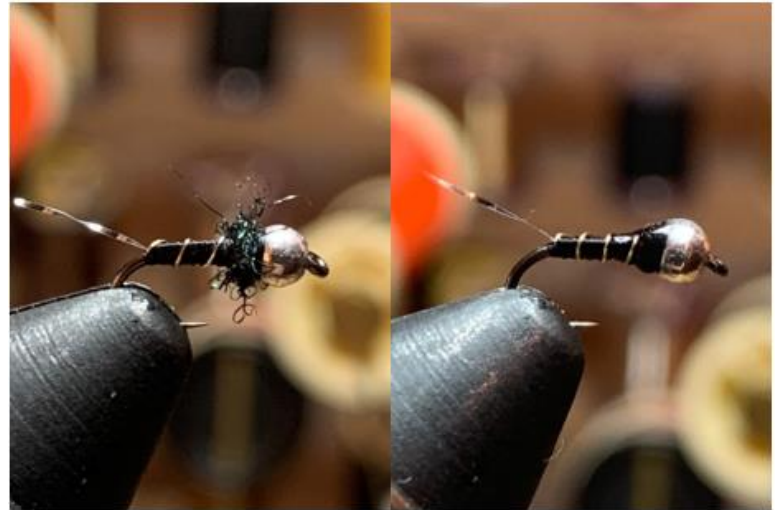
Special Note: Okay, early on when I started fly fishing, I had a buddy tell me that fishing things like eggs, squirmy worms, Y2K's and the such was a sin to the traditionalists of fly fishing... in other words the old guard and purist of the sport. So, I took that to heart, and you'd have never seen such critters in my fly box even though fish eat what... eggs and worms! About a year later I'm on the water with good friend, and excellent guide Big T, and I see he's got a squirmy worm on the line and he hands me one and says, "lace this up!" So, I ask Big T about the whole purist thing and junk bugs and Big T kinda cocks his head, pauses, and says "you wanna catch fish, don't you?" I put on the white squirmy and caught fish.

My point in bringing this up is you typically won't see me start with these type bugs, but when nothing else seems to be working or it's spawning time of year, I'll be grabbing what I can to catch fish.



e. Midge

- i. I highlight Midges because they fall into multiple categories and are a must have
 1. Dry, like a poly-winged midge or Griffith's gnat
 2. Nymph, in the larvae stage
 3. Emerger, in the pupa and hatching stage
- ii. Can make up **at least 50% of a trout's diet... HINT, HINT, HINT!**
- iii. Size 16 to 26 are good to have
- iv. If sizes smaller than 20 get tricky, no problem as you'll find 16 to 20 gets the job done in most cases
- v. Fished below surface most times
- vi. Size 18 and 20 are good standards to have for subsurface or emerger imitators



Sloan's D2 Improved Midge

Jake's Improved Midge



Remember on fly size standards mentioned, these are sizes that will get you into the game. Depending on water type, weather and skill, you'll need to adjust accordingly. For instance, if I'm on the Davidson, say early November fishing above the hatchery road bridge where the water can be crystal clear and the fish have seen just about every bug that exists because of fishing pressure, I may be fishing a dry-dropper rig where I have a 14 dry fly (CDC Caddis), then a size 18 dry fly (Cream Midge), then a size 20 soft hackle (Hares Ear soft hackle). But then if I fish at the bridge on the Davidson, where the water is deeper and the fish hold within multiple columns or get into a rising hatch, I may take off the soft hackle and put on a size 20 (RS2 emerger) or a size 18 to 22 (Jake's Improved Midge or Sloan's D2 Improved Midge). Then on the same water if the weather turns cloudy and wet, I may take off the third fly and replace my second fly with a size 18 or 20 BWO dry fly.

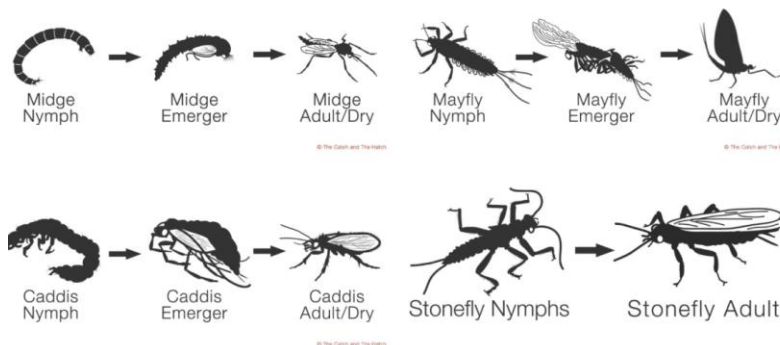
Fishing the Hooch below the Dam at Bowman's Island, I've had on a size 14 CDC Caddis and then about 12" off the dry a size 18 Jake's Improved Midge or Sloan's D2 Improved Midge in shallower waters, and then off the improved midge a size 18 or 20 black zebra midge in deeper runs. This brown was sitting in a nice run and attacked the Jake's Midge. But as conditions change so must your bugs. Just two days later, on the same water, I had to replace the black zebra midge with a red zebra midge, size 18, before the fish started taking.

Special Note: I'm not an expert when it comes to why fish do what they do, and many things are best learned on the water and gaining your own experience. But there are a few "bug" and eating pattern observations I'll make since we are talking bugs right now.

1. Pay attention to the water and if you see "sippers" meaning trout rising to sip bugs off the surface or just below the surface, then I'm thinking it's time for some type of emerger and small like size 20+ range
2. If I see smaller fish shooting into the air, I'm thinking hatch is happening and either bugs are skirting across the surface or bugs are leaving the bottom and moving to the surface in a hatch situation so I'm in midge/emergent mode again... small bugs again 18 to 20+... I might try a dry to see if that's on their menu
3. When I catch a fish **subsurface**, I'm looking for where the bug is in the trout's mouth
 - a. Top of the mouth means that fish most likely came up from its holding position and attacked that bug, which could replicate a bug rising from the bottom to the surface
 - i. As you can see in the picture above with this brown, the silver tungsten bead of the improved midge is around the nose on this dry-dropper setup
 - ii. I'm also tying my midge in this situation fairly short off my dry fly... about 12" to 18" so as the dry fly gets pulled along by the current it's creating a natural emerging action of my bug
 - iii. Depending on water depth, I'll either have one midge or two midges dropping to find the proper feeding depth
 - b. If the side of the mouth, this most likely means you've placed your bug at the proper depth where fish are holding and feeding in the water column
 - i. In other words, the trout moved laterally to feed

A Bugs Life

I love these illustrations to get a visual of a bug's life stages. You've got so much coming at you just trying to figure out how to get to the water and then you're standing in the fly shop looking at all these bugs and asking yourself "where do I start?" Early on I would print illustrations like this and laminate them and put them in my vest as a reference point.



<https://thecatchandthehatch.com/entomology-course-introduction/>

Bottom line, as you start to build your bug collection, this image above sets the stage for "matching the hatch" and having bug patterns that replicate these stages of the bugs life cycle.

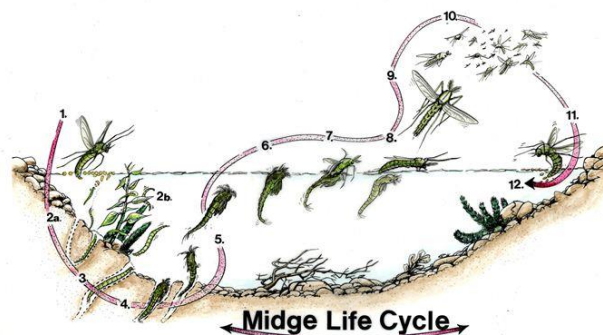
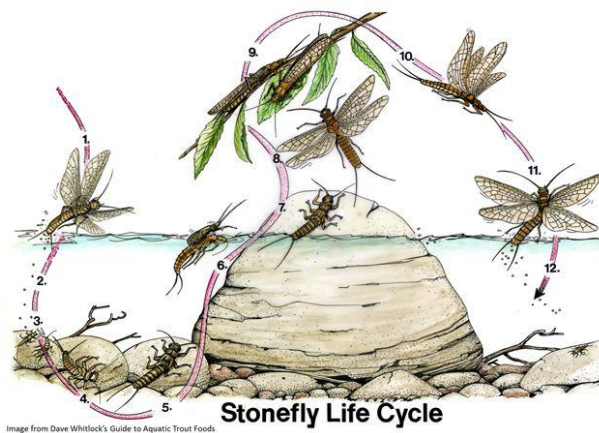
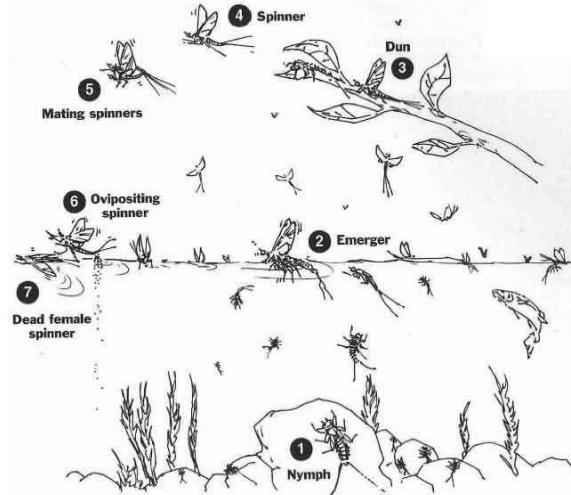
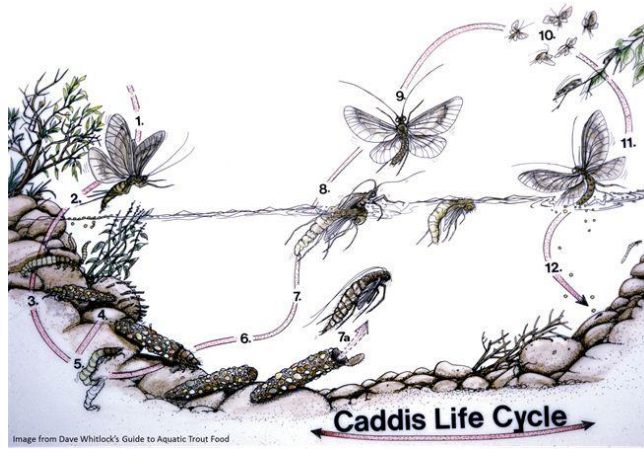


Image from Dave Whitlock's Guide to Aquatic Trout Food



Flies

Finally, we've made it to the section of the eGuide about "what I need to have in my fly box". I would say these flies are pretty much standard requirement in the beginning and something to build on as you gain experience. In your bug collection life cycle, you'll start out with a handful of bugs, you'll expand your fly box with new patterns, and eventually you'll find yourself back at the beginning with just a handful of bugs that catch fish. And truly you'll find that the bugs listed below will be staples you never detour from along the way because they just catch fish.

Elk Hair Caddis - size 14 - black, tan, olive - dry fly - Possibly the most popular dry fly known to fly fishers. Considered a searching type pattern as it resembles the general form of adult caddis flies or small stoneflies - it's effective when adult Caddis are present or not. Great when approaching a stream for the first time and especially on a small to medium size mountain stream like you'll experience in North Georgia. Common sizes you'll want to have in your fly box are #12-20. Should be fished when fish are rising or you're not quite sure what to use. A great "active" indicator over a dropper. Pay attention to "live" bugs around you to pick up on color of choice. If not sure, start with a black body. Remember a little floatant like Gink every now and then to keep the Caddis skipping across the water. [Season: Fall, Spring, Summer](#)

Adams – The Adams is a very versatile and traditional searching pattern that imitates an adult mayfly, flying caddis or midge. Can be used as a starter fly when you don't know for sure what the trout are feeding on. Sits high in the water and is easy to see in riffles and rough water. Can also be fished over a dropper pattern and used as an "active" indicator. [Common sizes are #12 - #18. Season: Fall, Spring, Summer](#)

Parachute Adams – Also tied to imitate mayflies, the parachute version of this fly uses a vertical light-colored wing for increased visibility. It's another good searching pattern when you are not sure what to start with. Sits high in the water and is easy to see in riffles and rough water. Can also be fished over a dropper pattern and used as "active" indicator. [Common sizes are #10 - #22. Season: Fall, Spring, Summer](#)

Hare's Ear – A very traditional and effective "fuzzy" nymph pattern designed to imitate May fly nymphs, as well as several other aquatic insects such as Caddis larvae, Scuds and Sow Bugs. May be tied with a bead head for weight, or just by itself. Fished by itself with additional weight, as well as a dropper under any surface fly indicator. Can be stripped to gain even more attention. [Common sizes are #14 - #18. Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter \(non-bead head for winter\)](#)

Soft Hackle Hare's Ear – A simple and classic pattern, representing both caddis and may fly nymphs, fished before, during, and after a hatch, this fly has both a bead and non-bead head version. Non-bead head versions work exceptionally well as emergers in sizes #18 - #22. A common mistake by new fly fisherman is not having these in their box. Don't be that guy or gal! [Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter](#)

My favorite and most used fly is one I created called a Stinger Soft Hackle Hare's Ear. Typically fished in size #16, this is one of the most prolific bugs in my box.



Zebra Midge – This pattern is designed to imitate a Midge larva. A simple thread body with wire ribs over the general shape of the hook is all there is to this pattern. Comes in a variety of body colors including black, red, rust, purple, green and yellow, with various colors of ribs. Can be fished alone in fast water with weight, as well as dropped under a surface fly indicator. Probably one of the most versatile flies ever developed. [Common sizes are #16 - #22. Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter](#)

Wooly Booger – This is a standard searching pattern that every fly box should have. Designed to imitate a variety of bugs, but most often the adult stonefly. Great for fishing as streamer in fast water or weighting down to dredge the

depths of a slow and deep pool. It can attract big fish. Comes in a variety of colors, with black and olive being the most popular. [Common sizes are #10 - #18. Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter](#)

Prince Nymph – Plain and bead head versions make it a versatile fly. In a larger size #10, it works great as a stonefly imitation or even as a streamer and can be fished deep and aggressively to attract trout. You can even cast it upstream and use your retrieve to imitate a minnow coming back downstream. This is where a heavy bead head works really well. In a smaller size #14-#16, the Prince Nymph makes a great dropper imitating a blue wing olive nymph (Baetis) or a Caddis nymph. You'll probably want to go to a brass bead or drop the bead altogether the smaller the fly gets. [Common sizes are #12 - #16. Season: Spring, Summer, Fall](#)

Pheasant Tail – This imitation of a May Fly nymph is one of the oldest nymph patterns that originally came over from Europe. May Fly nymphs are adaptable as they can live in fast, turbulent water, or in slow or still water environments. Probably the closest replication of what trout eat, and when compared to a Blue Winged Olive (BWO) nymph you will notice that it is an excellent match for its profile and color. The nymph is intended to sink fast when presented upstream to a subsurface feeding trout. Works efficiently while in moving water as well as still water. It's one of the most popular fly-fishing flies used. Various kinds of may flies appear all year long, and the nymph stage is the easiest one for trout to search out consistently. Always have a selection of bead and non-bead versions. When the fish aren't biting, throw a Pheasant Tail on! [Common sizes are #14 - #22. Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter](#)

Pheasant Tail Soft Hackle – For all the same reasons as a pheasant tail or Hare's Ear Soft Hackle.

Stonefly Nymph – This nymph pattern comes in a few colors and a fly box would be lacking if it didn't have black, olive and brown imitators in its slots. Not sure what color to fish... pick up a stream rock and turn it over and you'll see stoneflies scurrying around and your color selection will quickly reveal itself as well as the size. Living in well oxygenated fast-moving streams, stoneflies will die in still waters. Living in rivers up to three years, they tend to migrate as they grow for a larger habitat. Behavioral drifts occur heavily from mid-September through May and as such stoneflies get caught up in the currents and carried downstream to a waiting audience of trout. It's not uncommon during winter months to see stoneflies exiting the water to hatch. Trout love these guys with common sizes being between #8 - #16. [Common sizes here in the southeast range between #12-#16. Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter](#)

Egg Pattern – As fall approaches and spawning season starts, trout love to eat eggs period! Packed with protein eggs will make up a healthy part of a trout's diet. A standard nymph rig might consist of two or three eggs below some weight. The brighter, and larger, egg is typically tied on first with a smaller fly trailing behind. One of the best trailing flies is a single egg in orange, pink, or cream color. Because they are so light, even with weight above the point fly the single egg plays in the current in an almost weightless manner. Eggs can be fished nearly year-round but know that brown trout spawn October through December and Rainbows start February and go through May. Know these timelines and you'll know when to fish eggs. Both bead and non-bead versions are good choices. [Common sizes are #14 - #18.](#)

Sulphur – I'm going to spend extra time outlining Sulphurs due to the multiple opportunities with these bugs. Anyone that has grown up from Texas to the Eastern shorelines has experienced mayflies. Many species exist and they are most commonly yellow, yellow with a green or orange body. From about late-May through August it can be a field day on the water for the fly fisherman. Typically, it's an evening hatch starting around 7 to 7:30 and going to dark. On a cloudy day, they can also hatch in the afternoon. When the nymph is mature it rises to the surface, where the nymphal shucks split open. Soft hackle wet flies are ideal for imitating the nymph moving up the column of water to the surface. Emerger flies like Klinkhammers, Shipman's buzzer or Suspender buzzers make good choices for Sulphur nymphs hatching. The Sulphur sits on the water surface for a few seconds after hatching to enable the blood to pump up its wings and for them to dry. The colder the weather the longer this takes. If the drifting newly emerged Sulphurs have not been eaten by a fish during this vulnerable time, they fly off and hide on the surrounding vegetation. Within 24 hours the duns molt into spinners and are ready to mate. Mating swarms are formed by the males to attract females. When a female flies into the swarm she mates with a male. The males fall onto the water spent and drown. The females return to the riverside vegetation for a short period whilst the eggs mature. When the eggs are ready the females fly out over the

water, dip into the water, lay their eggs and then fall into the water spent. [Most common sizes are #16, but don't be afraid to go a little bigger say #14 or #12 during a hatch.](#)

Blue Wing Olive (BWO) – Starting in early spring BWO hatches can be the most prolific lasting late into the fall and depending on water conditions will happen during the winter as well. One of the key triggers for a BWO hatch is inclement weather... cloudy, wet days where water temps are above 40F can produce an abundance of opportunities. Great swimmers, or swimmer nymphs, that lose this ability as they reach the surface, they tend to dead-drift using gas bubbles or other debris to get to the surface where they struggle to break the water's film. Slow to moderate runs will hold the greatest numbers of BWO's. Both nymph and dry patterns are important to have in colors brown to olive for the nymph stage and olive bodies with a hackle collar for dry fly versions. [Common sizes are #16 - #20.](#)

Terrestrials – Terrestrials pretty much speak for themselves. Grasshoppers, crickets, spiders, inch worms, you name it, trout love them. Prolific during spring, summer, and ending going into cooler evenings, these flies can pack a real punch of protein for trout. Probably one of the best dry fly terrestrial imitations you can have is ants, which become very important as it heats up from July through August. [For bugs like grasshoppers you'll be using a size #10 to #14 and with ants you'll be in the most common range of #16 to #18.](#)

So, there you have it, 15 bug patterns that should get you catching fish. If someone asked me to rank these 15 bugs, I don't think I could. But if they pinned me down and said pick your top three and that's all you can fish with for the day then I'd have: (1) Elk Hair Caddis #14, (2) Soft Hackle Hares Ear #16 (Stinger with bead) beaded and non-beaded, and a (3) Zebra Midge, black, #20.

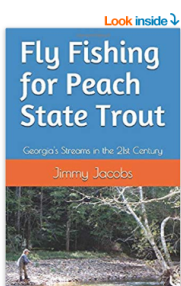
Lastly, if you know you are taking a trip to fish a particular water you are unfamiliar with or it's a season change, find the local online fly shop for the area before you go and see what they recommend. I always check what the local guides are fishing when I can, even when I've had success on their waters to see if anything's changed or if I've never fished that water at a particular time of year.

Recap

At this point we are ready to fish. We look good in our new gear, we have our tools, a nice rod and reel and we know how to tie knots and what flies to use. There are just two more things to briefly cover and that's having a fishing buddy (mentor) and knowing where to fish. When I got into the sport my best buddy Sam helped me understand what to get, but more importantly he spent countless hours showing me different waters to fish. And then as I gained knowledge, Sam started introducing me to other mentors to round out my education process, which really never ends. As fun as fishing is, you'll learn quickly that the best part of fishing is sharing your experiences on the water with others. So, make sure if you don't have a mentor to find one. No question, comment, or thought is too basic to ask.

Where to Fish

Probably one of the greatest challenges is knowing what good trout water is and where the heck is it? Well, we are truly blessed to be in North Georgia with almost 4,000 miles of fishable trout waters, but even more exciting is we are so close to Tennessee, South Carolina, and probably the best, Western North Carolina. One of the best ways to find fishable waters in these states is to invest in a few books. Some of these are:



Fly Fishing for Peach State Trout: Georgia's Streams in the 21st Century Paperback – April 21, 2019

by Jimmy Jacobs (Author)

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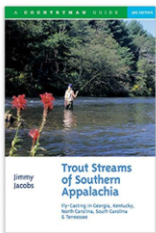
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Trout Streams of Southern Appalachia: Fly-Casting in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina & Tennessee (Third Edition) (Trout Streams) Paperback – April 20, 2009

by Jimmy Jacobs (Author)
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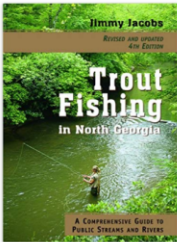
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by Jimmy Jacobs (Author)
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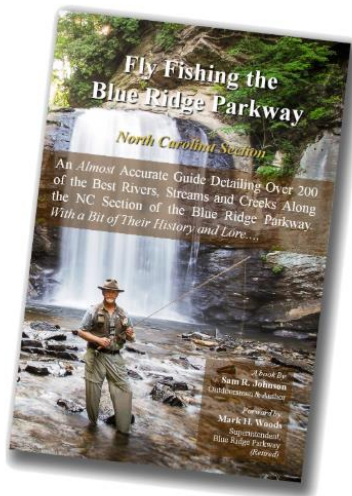
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Fly Fishing the Blue Ridge Parkway

A "First of Class" book by outdoorsman, fly fisher and author, **Sam R. Johnson** – Forward by Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway (Retired), **Mark H. Woods** – Published by **Mountain Arbor Press**



Trout Don't Live In Ugly Places...

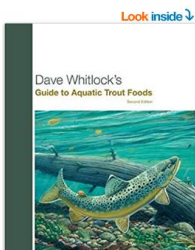
Lifelong trout angler and Blue Ridge Parkway aficionado Sam R. Johnson's much anticipated book about the trout waters along the 252 miles of the North Carolina Section of the Blue Ridge Parkway is now available. For the first time in one publication, the Author has captured in a 308 page full color book with more than 130 images, an incredible "bucket list" of over 200 of the most productive places to chase trout along the Parkway in NC. His attention to detail and clarity, presented with his tongue-in-cheek writing style, makes the book informative as well as entertaining to read.

"A lifetime of living with my safety clicked off – boots on the ground – and lines in the water experiences, offer anglers "almost accurate" descriptions and insights to some of the best rivers, streams and creeks along the NC Section – with just enough history and lore to keep it interesting" said the Author. He goes on to say, "And if I live long enough, I'll get my thoughts down about the 217 miles in the Virginia Section too."

Sam groups the 200 plus watersheds into four – sixty-three mile sections. He provides descriptions of the flows in each watershed including first hand observations and "At a Glance" insights such as: Sam's ranking, fishing pressure, mouth & source GPS fixes, size of flow, trout species, gradients and best access points. Then, each flow is summarized in a source to mouth overview, and finally with a highly detailed mouth to source description. Descriptions are also provided for each flow's fishable tributaries and feeders. Some of these watersheds include as many as ten or more flows. *"This guide to some of the best Parkway watersheds is an invaluable resource for any fly angler. Sam's ability to organize and describe each watershed's key characteristics will help you find streams some only dream about,"* asserted **Monte Seehorn, Regional Fisheries Biologist / US Forest Service Region 8** (retired).

Order	Table of Contents	Sample Chapter
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I'm throwing in Dave Whitlock's Guide to Aquatic... book here because the illustrations are perfect and it adds a lot of value to your education (link below to his site in the reference section).



Dave Whitlock's Guide to Aquatic Trout Foods, Second Edition Paperback – June 1, 2007

by Whitlock (Author)
★★★★☆ 15 ratings

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An indispensable guide filled with practical observations on all of the major aquatic trout foods of importance to the fly fisherman.

Report incorrect product information.

All of these can be found on Amazon and in many cases local fly shops. Sam's book can also be purchased at <https://wildbearings.com/>. I can honestly say these books are a fly fisherman's best friend as they have size of water, GPS points, history, species of trout, and specific directions and markers to look for when heading to the water. They can also help you on your journey, so don't leave them at home.

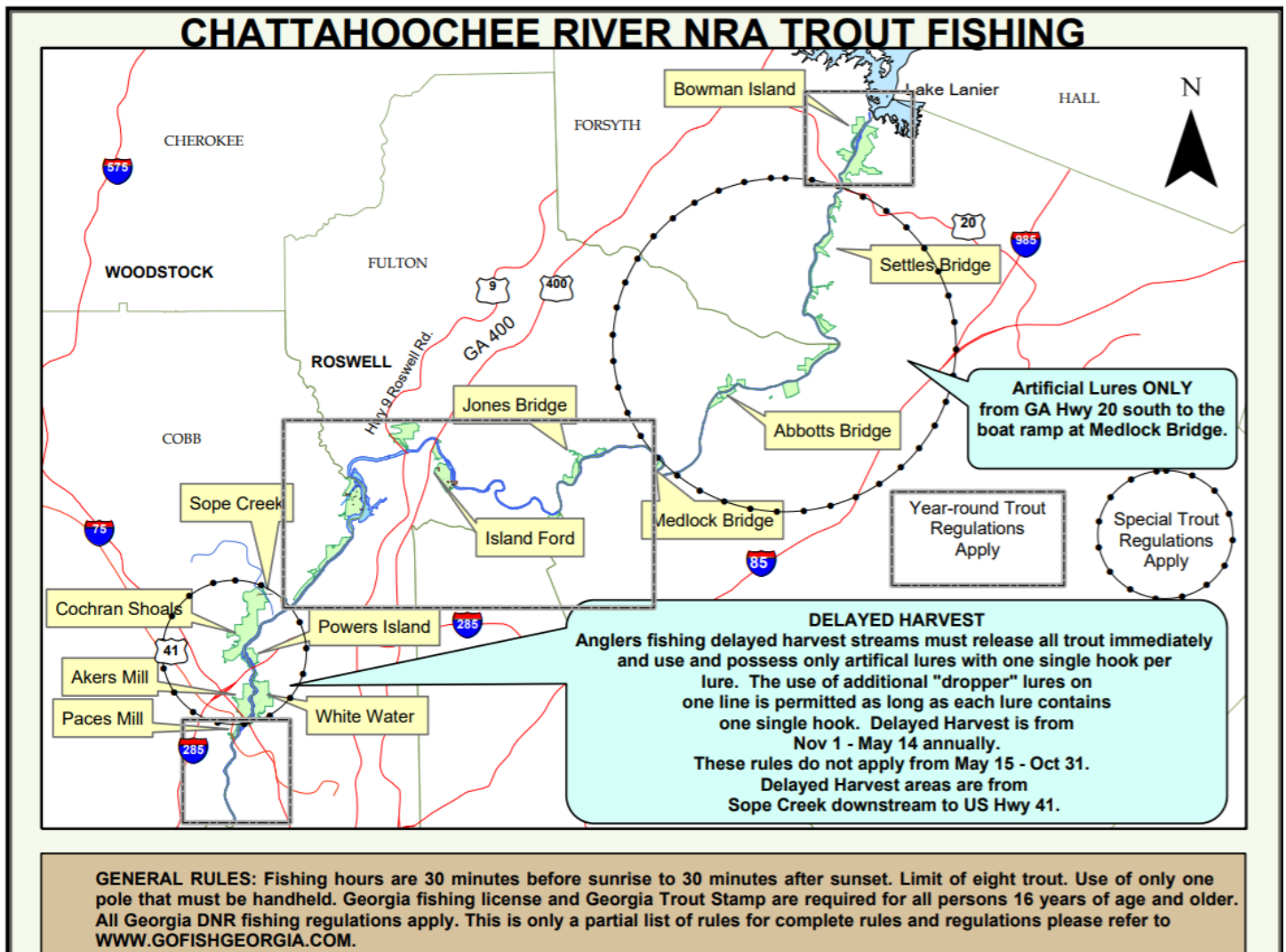
Other good references to aid in your exploration are maps... yes, maps! In fact, ***you should never get off into the mountains without a good, old style, foldable set of maps.*** These are available at fly shops and even Walmart. In fact,

Walmart has the good ones sometimes that are wipeable and don't easily tear. Just make sure the map shows you the trout waters and forest service roads.

I say have good maps with you not only to find those trout waters, but for safety reasons. Most **definitely** your cell service will drop out and be careful as your GPS can have you taking right turns to Albuquerque when you should have been taking a left turn to Helen. Trust me, there is no sicker feeling in your stomach when the suns going down, you're a few thousand feet up, and all you see is forest service road ahead of you and deep gorges to your right and left.

You can also find great maps online to print out like the one below as well as Georgia's DNR Wildlife Fishing site.

<https://gadnrwrd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=af50967627004b178ccd7264124fe5fd>



<https://www.nps.gov/chat/planyourvisit/upload/Chattahoochee-Trout-Fishing-Map-2011.pdf>

Conclusion

I truly hope this eGuide has been beneficial and as fun to go through as it has been to put together. More importantly I hope it helps you make good buying decisions and has quickly increased your learning curve. The sole objective is to get you ready for the water and having fun. And remember, you'll need a good mentor to walk you through casting

techniques, reading water, and how and when to fish what. If this eGuide helps in that endeavor, then it warms my heart immensely.

As I stated in the beginning, I'm no expert and you'll have a chance to run into plenty of those along your fly-fishing journey. Some who truly are, and some who are not. Some that will have you dropping some serious coin and some that take a more conservative approach to keeping your wallet in a happy place (experience speaking here). With that, here are a few more "parting knowledge" things you'll hear and definitions to help on your journey.

Parting Knowledge:

1. Tailwater - refers to waters located immediately downstream from a hydraulic structure, such as a dam.
2. Tributary - a freshwater stream that feeds into a larger stream or river.
3. Blue lining - involves finding those little blue lines on a map that mark obscure (and hopefully, unfished or lightly fished) small streams—and then figuring out how to get there.
4. DH – Delayed Harvest sections of water designated as catch and release only... in other words you aren't competing with the corn-boys or live bait fisherman.
5. Wet wading – this is wading during warmer months when you don't actually use waders but still may use your wading boots.
6. Guided trips – one of the absolute best ways to learn how to fly fish and learn how to catch trout is with a professional guide.
 - a. My advice is experience at least three guided trips from three different guides on three different types of water and you're overall fly-fishing knowledge will explode.
 - b. Do not focus purely on trophy streams... work some wild stuff into the mix.
 - c. Recommended North GA Guides:
 - i. Big T at www.bigflyfishing.com
 1. One of the most knowledgeable I know when it comes to tailwater, trophy water and wild waters
 - ii. Tad Murdoch at www.georgiawildtrout.com
 1. Very knowledgeable with emphasis on wading wild trout streams
 2. You won't find another guide that fishes North GA streams like Tad does
7. Casting
 - a. False casting like Brad Pitt isn't normal
 - b. What is normal is working your line 10' to 40' in front of you as this is where most fish are caught
 - c. Extreme false casting may result in spooking the fish... one to two falsies should do the trick
 - d. Learn the roll-cast in the southeast... it will be your friend
 - e. Casting a heavy nymph rig will feel like casting with a wet noodle... it's normal until you get your timing and rhythm down
 - f. When taking your line off the water it's a slow action, not a ripping action... ripping the line off the water will scare the fish and you'll also get odd looks from folks around you
8. Barbed vs. barbless hooks
 - a. Most streams require *no-barb* fishing so mash your barb with your forceps
 - b. It protects the fish and makes it easier to get the fish off the hook
 - c. It also makes it more difficult to land the fish, but you'll figure it out
9. Good Trout Release Practices
 - a. Be careful not to play the trout too long as it will kill the fish especially in warmer weather
 - b. Get the trout landed as soon as possible
 - c. Use a net to land the fish
 - d. Keep the fish in the water as much as possible when unhooking, facing upstream
 - e. Taking photos of you holding the trout is great, but be quick about it
 - f. If you go to release the fish and it goes belly up, then you need to get it out of **nap time** by grabbing it just in front of its tail with one hand and with your other hand behind its pectoral fins face it upstream gently moving the trout back and forth until it wakes up or finds the energy to swim away

- g. Trout have a natural slime on them that keep algae and bacteria from attacking them so try and wet your hand before handling... or again use your net to do the handling
- h. <https://midcurrent.com/experts/good-trout-release-practices/>

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<http://davewhitlock.com/shop/books/dave-whitlocks-guide-to-aquatic-trout-foods-by-dave-whitlock/>

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ClS_v.3_4/1/2023