

The Fisherman's Year at Currawong

Late winter and spring are the season of the chironomid; midges are the mainstay of the spring fishery on our three lakes. The trout, both rainbows and browns can be found cruising the ripple lines on the lea shores taking both pupae and adult midges. A small black nymph or green pupal pattern can be cast to moving fish on most days from late July onwards when most other fisheries are closed or at the mercy of the cold southwesterly weather patterns of the Roaring Forties.

Evening offers a chance for the dry fly enthusiast to catch a fish on a small dry such as a Greenwell's or Griffith Gnat size 16 or smaller. This can be some of the most exciting dry fly fishing of the season, trying to control the runs of a large brown in the darkness of a spring twilight as it lunges on the smallest fly and lightest tippet you will use all year. Late spring and warming water temperatures bring the trout into the shallows after scuds and stick caddis, tailing trout are to be found morning and evenings in the shallows and can be caught with a careful approach on nymphs and small wet flies fished static or with a slow retrieve.

Late Spring and Early Summer

The last two weeks of October see the Red Spinner up and on the wing on all the lake margins. The action usually starts at about nine am with the fish actively nymphing in about four feet of water, ten to fifteen meters off shore. At this time you can either fish a nymph pattern or wait forty-five minutes to an hour and fish an emerger pattern as the fish are soon onto the hatching mayflies, at their most vulnerable, and will target the emerger exclusively for the rest of the day, quite often ignoring the duns until later in the day when the hatch slows.

Mid to late afternoon sees the trout on the spinners as the mating flights of the adults take place on the lea shores of the lakes just outside the pin rush line. This fishing of the adult spinner pattern requiring a stealthy approach to close range, quick casting, using a well hackled fly to get the fly in front of the cruising fish is the only way to deal with a fast moving and jumping fish. This is the quintessential fly fishing experience, which has inspired much of the great writing about our sport.

The evening session at this time of year starts at around six pm, allowing the weary angler to grab a late afternoon break around four pm and come out again for the medley of hatches that are the hall mark of the evening rise at this time of year. The evening begins, and can continue until dark and beyond, with a rise to spent spinners in the quiet corners, the sometimes very large trout, appearing like baleen whales to mop up the exhausted dead and dying spinners enjoying the equivalent of a post coital cigarette in the oily slicks formed on the quiet waters by the days wind.

This quiet, almost reverential activity, is sometimes broken by the bustle and activity of a caddis hatch with a cast of millions leaving the angler wondering what to do next? The

answer being to go wet and fish a pupa or damp pattern in the surface slowly with the rod pointed directly at the fly and on feeling the take, pause, lift and hang on.

Later in the Evening comes the mudeye migration calling for the big black and hairy fly rule and a heavier tippet rule to be invoked as this one brings up the lunkers! The dam faces and timber lined shores being the hotspots for this hatch that will continue until midnight and is the best chance of a double figure trout at this time of year.

Thankfully the next days fishing doesn't have to start until ten tomorrow allowing the weary angler to get at least some sleep between the disturbing thoughts about rise forms the size of dustbin lids and sinister aquatic noises out on the dark lake.

Late summer and autumn

After the hectic activity of the main mayfly hatch, late summer can be seen to be the best of the seasons fishing with the trout's attitude to surface food well and truly entrenched, they are now really looking up and expecting to find food, this is the time of the Damsel fly.

This electric blue, red and sometimes green insect brings out the ambush hunting instinct in the trout at Currawong. Whilst the little ones will dash about leaping and expending energy, the big crafty ones will wait in ambush outside the rush margins and in the dead timber, waiting to pounce on the unsuspecting emergers and mating adults.

Your eyes are the best piece of fishing equipment you have to catch these fish. Watch, wait and they will reveal themselves to the patient observant angler, this fishing like the mayfly requires quick close accurate casting from close range.

As summer progresses onto autumn, terrestrial insects and the autumn emergences of mayfly and caddis become very important to the trout that are building condition prior to the rigors of spawning. These emergences, whilst more sedate and leisurely than the spring hatches, see the greatest range of fish of all sizes feeding from the surface and the cooler more settled weather suits lighter weight rods and finer tippets. This can be the most rewarding fishing of the year with clear water, the fish in close, the whole process visible to the angler and if you are not careful, the fish.

February to late April also can see Jassids on the water during warm afternoons along with ants and other terrestrial insects which can continue the rise until darkness and beyond despite falling evening temperatures. Patterns for this rise should sit in the surface film and may require a little twitch to get the trout's attention in the darkness and falling temperatures.

Patterns

Trout are not as fussy as some tackle shops and fly designers would have you believe. It ain't what you fish it's the way that you fish it!

The whole season at Currawong Lakes can be as simple or complex as you wish to make it, suiting the hatch matcher and the impressionist non representationalist angler alike thanks to the diversity of insect life in what is a private fishery managed as a wild fishery. You can however use the following list as a guide.

Wets; Robin, Fur fly, Montana Nymph, Woolly Worm, Woolly Bugger, Muddlers in natural and black deer hair.

Nymphs; brown, green and black.

Dry flies; Red Spinner, Damsel, Red Tag, Midge's, beetle, ant, and Jassid imitations.

The above should range from size 6-12 for wet flies, sizes 10- 18 for nymphs, 10 – 18 for dry flies and the mayflies around size 12-16.