

## Nymph Fishing The Hutt

This article has been taken from an early copy of the Hutt Valley Angler newsletter. It covers the subject of nymph fishing on the Hutt River. Interestingly it was written by Selwyn Hodder who was a HVAC member at that time. Although it was written 30 years ago in 1981, much of the information is still applicable. His Blood Knot Jig is going to be of interest to those members who struggle to tie this knot.

Over the past year a different method of fishing the Hutt has increased my catch considerably from 1 fish for approximately 10 outings to almost 1 fish each outing during November - February. This technique has been learned from watching and talking to experienced club members and is well worth trying if you would like to increase your catch.

Nymphal insect life on the Hutt is quite prolific at present and as all fly fishing is related to copying with your imitation fly the hatch, fly, sub-surface life or small fish which is present in any stream it stands to reason that if you copy the most common food of the trout then your chances of a "take" should show improvement.

Normal fly fishing gear with a floating line is required. A tapered leader at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of your rod with a fine tippet of say 15" - 16" of 2 - 3lb nylon is necessary. These leaders may be purchased as tapered leaders or alternatively may be made up by using 2½ feet lengths of say 20lb, 15lb, 7lb and 3lb or similar combinations. Tying these together can be a problem and the blood-knot is the best knot to use. Some people (including myself) have difficulty tying this knot so I have built a machine to assist me. I have detailed this later on for those interested.

By far the most successful fly seems to be the Hare and Copper Nymph in sizes 12 and 14. When tying this fly there are three main points to a successful imitation.

- A short tag (or tail) of say  $\frac{1}{2}$  the length of the shank of a ginger or reddish colour feather (4-5 spikes) is good.
- A body of bronze copper wire (gauge 34 or 36) is formed to a cigar shape.
- Spiky hares fur is dubbed over the copper wire with plenty of roughness making an overall cigar shaped appearance. More spikes at the head work well.
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The copper wire is rewound over the body. These spikes should then be clipped back to a uniform length of say 3-4 mm. Dark fur is best.

Fishing is best in early morning 7:00 - 10:00 a.m. and again at twilight but fish have been caught at almost any time of day. The water needs to be reasonably clear and some slight - fast moving water seems to hold more fish than the still pools. During the warmer months trout generally start the day feeding on the edge of the water and then move into the faster water by mid-day as more oxygen is available to them there. Fishing the faster runs from 9:00 a.m. on can be productive and of course you get a battle on your rod if you have a strike in fast water. However, early morning at the edge of gently moving water is my choice.

As with most nymph fishing the fly is cast directly upstream of the angler who allows the fly to drift down some 3 - 4 ft towards him and then casts it up again. The best method is to stand say 3 feet from the edge then cast up and out at 45 degrees twice, then twice directly ahead. A short cast is all that is necessary and as with most fly fishing those who could win a distance casting competition usually catch the least fish! A gentle drop onto the water is essential for when the line smacks the water ahead, all you often see is the bow-wave of a fast disappearing quarry. After one has made several casts, walk forward 3 paces (quietly!) and repeat the process until you have fished up the pool.

*A good tip to avoid your nymph snagging the bottom is to grease your nylon cast periodically to make it float. This in turn holds your nymph to a set distance below surface. The best grease is "Silicon Mucilin" and the leader should be greased to about 4-5 inches from the Nymph. In deeper water only grease to say 18 inches above the Nymph.*

In many cases you will not see the fish strike so it is essential that you strip the line when watching it float towards you. In other words, with your spare hand pull the line out from above the reel to keep that portion on the water straight. Don't let your fly be "dragged" through the water by getting a belly in your line. What fish looking for a naturally drifting sandwich is going to be fooled by one accelerating past?

Many strikes feel like you have snagged the bottom so be careful when setting the hook. Angling custom states that you should say "God save the Queen," before striking the hook but most fishermen I know seem to forget this nicety and say "Got you, you B!"

Most of the Hutt River is fishable in this manner but more popular places seem to be north and south of Silverstream Bridge, Moonshine, Whakatiki North and also by Harcourt Park.

### **Jig for Tying Blood Knots**

Take two plastic spring pegs, fasten them together about 3/4 inch apart by fixing a nail through both spring holes. File the undulating jaws to a Flat surface and glue strips of soft leather on each jaw.

To operate the device place in both jaws but from opposite sides, the two ends you are going to tie together with an overhang of say 2 inches.

Using a matchstick, place the match between the strands (between the pegs) and using the match wind up the nylon several turns. Bend each free end over and insert through the twists of nylon beside the match. Grasp each end of the line and pull tight onto the match. Release from the pegs, withdraw the match and pull tight.

To finish off, clip the loose ends off and you are in business!

