

## Fishing Wee Wets - Part-2

Last year we published an article on fishing 'Wee Wets'. This is a very successful style of fishing that is steeped in tradition. If you haven't tried this fishing method or are not succeeding with nymph or dry fly then give it a go.

Here is another article on the subject of fishing wee wets. We thank 'NZ Fishing News' magazine and the author Aaron West for allowing us to publish this article.

Have you ever nymphed through a nice section of water without much success, only to get a strike as the nymphs swing around at the end of the drift through water you have just fished? Or have you had fish rising around you and thrown different dries at them, only to get far more refusals than strikes? If so, it may be worth exploring the option of 'wee wets'.

Wet-fly fishing is a very simplistic technique that's often overlooked by many anglers who prefer the more technical methods of nymph and dry fly. Simplicity is the main reason for its success, making it a great way for beginners and kids to get into the sport. There is no need to strive for the perfect, drag-free drift, or try to work out when to strike — the flies are simply cast out and left to the mercy of the currents as they swing around below the angler. It's then just a matter of repeating this until a fish is tempted to grab the offering.

Of course, like most things, it is not quite that straightforward, and there are a few tricks to improve your chances of success. This technique is designed to imitate emerging insects rising up to the surface to hatch. Trout find these irresistible at times, and yet this stage of the life cycle is often not actively targeted by anglers.

Either a floating or intermediate line can be used with up to three small flies ranging from size 16 up to size 10, with size 14-12 being the norm. The flies are mainly unweighted, although when fishing faster or deeper water a small bead-head can help work the flies deeper and straighten out the leader on the cast.

Having some form of taper to the leader can also help it turn over, and the tippet wants to be as fine as you can realistically use, especially when using smaller flies. I use down to 2kg tippet, but often 2.5-3 kg tippet will be okay.

Get in position upstream of the area to be targeted, and then cast downstream on an angle across the current. The trick is to do a parachute or tuck cast to get some controlled slack in the line. This is done by stopping the rod early on the forward cast, or lifting the rod back up before the flies hit the water. The rod is then lowered as the flies drift away downstream. This gives the flies and leader a chance to drift down with the current and sink before tightening up, causing the flies to swing and lift.

The speed of the flies during the swing can have a big bearing on success. In slow water, casting directly across the river will be fine, and even a slight action can be imparted to the flies using a figure-of-eight retrieve. In faster water it is often better to cast more directly down the river and immediately throw a mend into the line to avoid a large bow forming, which inevitably forces the flies to swing too fast.

Ideally, the flies should be working their way across the current below the fly line, rather than getting pulled across by it. This will also allow the angler to focus on certain spots that look fishy in order to entice a response. Retrieving or simply twitching the line can help, although it will speed up the swing. Strikes can vary from a steady tightening to a savage hit that wakes you up from your daydreaming.

There is usually no need to set the hook, unless the strike is slow. Many anglers prefer to point the rod directly to where the flies are during the swing, however, this increases the risk of busting fish off on the strike, so I prefer to have the rod on at least a slight angle to act as a buffer.

Fish will often follow the flies and hit them as they slow down and waft at the end of the cast, so rather than ripping them out in a hurry to make another cast, give them a bit of action before letting them sit for an extra second or more. Then lift the rod to bring the flies right to the surface, and pause again before casting, as this is one of the prime times for strikes.

Another trick is to lower the rod momentarily to allow the fly to drift back down towards any interested fish before tightening back up on it.

The best flies are often simple suggestive patterns in browns and blacks. However, it often pays to have at least one with a bright hotspot or a small amount of flash to act as an attractor. My favourite fly, and the one I almost always have on the very end of the leader, is a small size 14 March Brown spider. There's nothing much to it: a slim hare's fur body ribbed with copper wire, a few partridge fibres for the tail, and a couple of turns of partridge hackle at the head. It potentially imitates many food items which trout feed on.

Summer is a great time to try this technique, since good numbers of insects will be hatching. The next time you are out and fish are taking emergers or rising, give it a go, as you may be pleasantly surprised. This method is good for targeting late-evening caddis hatches and, for those who are keen, allows you to fish well after dark. Good luck!

