

## Flies and their use – a beginners summer guide

This presentation is designed to aid you in sifting through the multitudes of flies that assault you in the store. They all have their uses and I'm sure will be added to as you fish differing situations and see other recommendations. Generally however, two hopper patterns, the royal and grey wulff, elk hair caddis, royal humpy, a coachman, parachute adams and pheasant tail nymph will be the easiest starting point. There is no need to overcomplicate the situation, when casting and presentation at most stages will be the primary focus of early fly angling.

I have also included a great searching rig (see separate post), and a guide to rise forms (see separate post), to aid in the selection of the type of fly to use on the water. If there are questions the members are more than happy to help.

Below are listed some of my preferred flies, with recommendations of their use on Australian waters. These have been developed in Victorian streams, but are generalists for the mountain region where most of our fishing occurs. There is more detail in a separate post (titled Summer Flies – detail) - (Geoff has obtained these from somewhere, probably <http://www.goulburnvlyflyfishing.com.au/>)

Trout Fishing in Australia, prescribes a selection of flies to commence with, these are:

Dry flies – Size 10 – 12 – 3 of each (I would recommend 5, as the bush will grab quite a few as your casting skills improve.)

Royal Wulff

Red Tag



Geehi Beetle



Highland Duns

Brown Emergers

Nymphs – as above size 12 to 16 – 3 weighted/beadhead – 3 unweighted

Brown Nymph

Black Nymph

Wet Flies – 3 x Mrs Simpson – size 8 – 10



(Please note that I have not addressed wet fly fishing, as I am yet to find the enjoyment of this style and am still learning on the rivers.)

**General sections below are Hoppers, Attractors, Duns/Emergers, Caddis and Nymphs. (There is also a guide to rise forms and the sliding indicator rig.)**

**Hoppers.** There are many varieties to choose from, my favourite is the Knobby Hopper, closely followed by the Rubber Hopper. These are merely examples, and most patterns will be sufficient to entice an aggressive strike. The key to using

hoppers is location and time of year. Hopper season is generally late January to March, with February the prime time. However, grasshoppers have been seen early this season, such that with the rain, the action may start mid-December. Be on the lookout for areas where there are extensive grass banks up to the riverside and upstream of where you are fishing (1/2km or so). As you walk through the grass check for size and colour of the hoppers. If they are around tie on a size 8-10 imitation and throw them into all likely hides and close to cover. Then hold on. This can also be used (but not recommended) as a searching pattern with the sliding indicator rig.

Hopper rises will be slashy often breaking the surface with fishing coming from cover at speed to engorge the fly.

### **Caddis and Attractors (eg Elk Hair Caddis, Wulffs and stimulators).**

These are excellent flies. Fished with the classic rise, occasionally the slashy rise. They are also all appropriate for the indicator fly on the sliding indicator rig, which is the searching rig of choice (Royal Wulff, with Pheasant Tail Nymph) when I'm fishing the local rivers. These should approximate the size of any insects that you see on the river. If no activity is seen, I generally start with a size 14 to cover most bases. Cover the fly with floatant (Gink is good) to ensure buoyancy. Variations include using the humpy/beetle patterns if beetles are present in the area. Often there is a lot of tea tree beetles to be had in summer. These patterns work throughout the season, but come into their own from December when the rivers drop and temperature increases drive an evening hatch. If there is a major hatch on the river, to avoid your fly being lost, give it a twitch as it approaches the lie. This will usually entice a strike.

**Side note:** When choosing wulff and other hackled dry fly patterns, look for flies with less hackle. This generally translates to greater catch success. If these are unavailable, look at some examples and be prepared to trim the hackle on the water. The hackle only needs to be sufficient to support the floating fly and achieve the correct appearance below the water.

**Emergers (shaving brush and parachute adams).** These flies are great during the evening hatch and indicated by the Boil/Bulge rise that doesn't break the surface. The fish are feeding on insects in/just below the surface film. Here these flies excel and can be used also as a tail fly on a tandem rig or indicator on the sliding indicator rig. However, I prefer to fish them singly, to avoid drag. They can be fished any time during the day, but are best as a hatch is about to come on. Here only apply floatant to the top section. Unweighted nymphs can also be used to fish to the boil rise form, simply apply floatant to the back of the fly and fish it as the only fly.

**Nymphs.** The nymphs are used to chase fish holding onto the bottom or feeding on emerging insects deeper in the water column. There is no real rise to support these. All nymphs can be purchased weighted or unweighted, and the weighted versions can be with either lead wire, gold/tungsten beads. The tungsten bead is most important to get the fly's deep at the start and end of season when the rivers are high. These are not really required from Dec – April, and normal beadheads, or unweighted nymphs are sufficient. If there are no rising fish, indicator nymph rigs are the rig of choice, fished upstream.

Whilst the seals fur nymphs are recommended in the book listed above, I would not fish without the pheasant tail, size 14, and it remains my go to fly when starting or if things are slow. I like a gold bead to add a bit of flash and throw it into the head of runs and let it drift right back and past me to the tail of the pool. Do not be in a rush to re-cast, often the fly will be snaffled on at the end of the drift as the current and pull of the line raise it to the surface. Deadly.