

Concept: Fishing flies to water conditions. Extracted from the chapter, "Dry Flies Simplified," Page 27.

November 12, 2015 South Fork Boise River (in the Canyon) Winter Dry Fly Fishing Report: 45°/Sunshine/Slight breeze upriver

There is just something extraordinary about being in the middle of a hardy BWO hatch. The tiny mayflies with their sail-boat wings running the gauntlet are trying to shed an exoskeleton and fly before they end up in a fish's belly. The fish are on high alert, totally focused on the surface with one thought in mind: Hunt down, kill, and eat every bug possible in a 3½-hour time slot. It's an age-old war between fish and bugs played out on a battlefield of riffles, back eddies, and slicks. When a new day dawns, both combatants reenter the war zone and recreate the carnage of the previous day. Somehow the bug is always the victor. They bring so many foot soldiers to the conflict that reproduction occurs and the next generation of mayflies lay dormant until next year. Then they rise up and initiate a new war.

And then there is you—the ally to the bug because every fish you hook on an imitation fly decommissions that fish and there is one less fish that will eat 150 mayflies on that day. Well, I will say this—Tony (one of our fly tiers) and I decommissioned a pretty big swath of rainbows today. I could almost hear the BWOs cheering every time we hooked a fish.

The BWOs appeared on their leading edge around 11:30 a.m. and the hatch was at its apex around 1:45 p.m. The fish followed the standard schedule: Sporadic rises across a wide expanse of water to start, lots of fish podding and pushing up in the riffle at full hatch, and then the fish falling back to the slick as the hatch diminished.

Tony and I chased them through every phase. We changed flies to meet water conditions and hooked fish from riffle to slick and everywhere in between. I was very impressed with Tony's ability to wield a dry fly. He is barely out of high school and he acted like he has been doing it for 20 years.

Bug selection in these hatches is paramount because the fish inhabit all zones of water in a hatch run. If you select the right bug for water conditions, the fish are always more receptive to your offering. Let me suggest the following combinations:

- 1) When fish are in the high end of the run in fast water and hard riffle, use the following selections:
 - a. BWO Single Upright Wing #22 or #20*
 - b. BWO Comparadun #22 and #20**

- 2) When fish are in the center of the run in slower chop riffle:
 - a. BWO Hoagie's Cripple #20**

- b. BWO Convertible #22 and #20*
- c. BWO Hatching Emerger #20*
- d. BWO No Hackle #22 and #20*

3) When the fish reach the slick on the lower end of the run:

- a. BWO Colored Emerger #22 and #20*
- b. BWO Spent Spinner #20 or pulling the wing down on the Convertible #22 and #20*

Now you may catch fish using these flies in a different order, but if you stick with the schedule above, I promise you will catch a lot more fish. If you really want the natural BWOs to cheer for you, go enter the war zone on the South Fork!!

Flies that Caught Fish:

- #22 and #20 BWO Colored Emerger*
- #22 BWO Convertible*
- #22 and #20 BWO Dual Wing (Tester Fly)*
- #22 BWO Single Upright-Wing Mayfly*
- #20 BWO Comparadun*
- #20 Black on Black Colored Emerger*
- #22 and #20 BWO No Hackle*