



William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Conservation, preservation, and restoration of Michigan's cold-water resources.

Fishing letters

Streamers and Streamer Fishing

by Art Neumann

Over 70% of a trout's food supply is taken below the surface. Minnows form an important part of this underwater diet. Streamers are artificial flies made to imitate these minnows. Properly tied and presented, they are among the most deadly flies ever invented.

When choosing streamers, several things should be taken into consideration. First—pattern. Some streamers are reasonable facsimiles of the real thing, but most fall into the classification of “attractor” flies. They're bright and flashy and “breathe” when correctly manipulated. They excite the fish into striking. The serious streamerman will have an ample assortment of both types. Of equal importance is size. Average size streamers and bucktails are tied on #6 hooks. If they're striking short, try a #10 or attach a #12 or #14 hook to the bend of the larger sizes. Size #4 is most popular and takes the biggest fish. A big fish wants a big meal.

But most important of all is weight. For very shallow streams and for lake fishing, unweighted streamers are satisfactory. But on an average stream where there's a reasonable current, it's almost impossible to get a streamer down to the correct depth—and keep it there—unless it's weighted. There's nothing more irritating than to have a streamer come skittering along the surface as you work it across the current. There are times, of course, when you'll want to do just that—keep it on top. That's called “riffin”. But by and large, you'll want it under the surface. After all, a minnow swims in the water, not on top of it.

Fished almost anywhere, any way, a streamer will catch fish. But, the closer you can simulate the actual irregular, darting motion of a minnow fighting the current, the better your chances. Concentrate on the runs and riffles and especially the spots where fast water meets slow. The streamer is a fast water-fly. Cast across stream and slightly down on a slack line. Let the fly drift without movement until the line has straightened out below you. Then work it across the stream with short jerks. In most instances, the strike will occur just as motion is imparted to the streamer. Use the same technique on small streams. The strike will be vicious, the fish will hook himself and he'll fight like a fool.

Although most anglers consider the streamer most effective in the spring, we find it a killer anytime. When they're not taking 'em dry, try a streamer. Fish it conscientiously. More often than not, there'll be fish in your creel when the day is done. ♦