

# On Dry Fly Fishing

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A lot of us are getting turned on by fishing dries. This is often seen as the ultimate in catching trout. In addition to straight fishing a dry, a dry fly with a nymph dropper is often deadly. Recently, some of us have found really fun dry fly fishing in our backyard waters of the Salt River, and dries often work on Becker Lake, Carnero Lake, the San Juan, and even Silver Creek. Its challenging but rewarding.

There is too much about fishing dries to cover quickly, but I believe there are several priority considerations:

1. What dry fly rig? Not easy to answer, but it seems to distill into several choices. One: use a dry as an attractant/ indicator with emphasis on a dropper (nymph), two: match the hatch with the dry and have a nymph dropper as an adjunct to act as an emerger riding just below the surface, three: fish two dry flies, and four : go with a single dry fly. This last option will present the least drag and less likely to spook very picky trout.
2. Matching the hatch. Prepare to go down the rabbit hole. Much lore and Mumbo-jumbo to get deep into if you wish, but I think it really centers on size and color. Try to observe what is hatching or flying around. Watch closely and you will begin to see this. Primary colors will be grays, olives, light beige, and blacks. Sizes are rarely more than 16's; often much smaller. MUCH smaller. At times, an ant or hopper pattern are good choices for the top fly, regardless of what is hatching. If the trout are refusing your fly, go smaller, change color, or try a finer tippet. Dry fly fishing exposes your tippet, so think 5X to even 7X tippets.
3. Single or tandem. Old eyes have trouble seeing flies smaller than, say, 18's. When smaller dries are needed, fish two dries, with a larger "sighter" tied 6-10 inches above the tiny bug. Watch for takes around the larger fly, and strike. Rarely will the presence of the larger fly spook the fish, and they may even hit the top fly.

4. Keeping the fly floating. This, along with a delicate presentation, is a primary concern. You need tools to keep dries on top. After reviewing many articles, here are my takes on the matter: A: treat your dries with a gel based floatant before fishing, preferably a day or so before fishing. Rub the fly with a small bit of gel, and leave the flies open to the air at least over night, then B: use a dry floatant just before and while fishing the flies. Which? It seems that the best options are Loon Lochsa gel and Shimazake dry powder. When more floatant is needed, particularly after catching a fish, swirl the fly in the water, blow on it, remove remaining moisture using an Amadou pad ( a weird fungus thing that works wonders ), and treat it with powder.

5. Starter set of dries. These will generally work in waters we fish. Blue winged olives in 18-22 (24's for San Juan). Ants in 14-18. Griffiths Gnats in 18-22. Dead chickens in 10-16. Hoppers in 12-16. Adams in 16-20. Mosquitos in 18-20. When fishing deep, optionally use air lock indicators rather than the peg and float ones. To do this you need a tapered leader. Set the air lock at the desired depth, then tighten the screw only to resistance. When a fish hits, retrieve the line right up to where the indicator hits your top guide. At this point, the indicator should slide back down to the smaller diameters of the taper and slide down towards the fly.