



The January 2020 NEWSLETTER

**Northern Arizona Flycasters
An active member club of the World Wide organization
“Fly Fishers International”
“Conservation, Restoration, and Education through Fly Fishing”**

We support active involvement in cold water fisheries conservation. We work to insure that Arizona’s habitat is not degraded and in the development and maintenance of fly fishing opportunities.

We support the practice of “catch and release”, the use of barbless hooks, and quick and harmless release practices. Fish should never be kept out of the water for over 60 seconds.

Northern Arizona Flycasters meets the first Wednesday of the month at the Arizona Game and Fish Regional office at 3500 S. Lake Mary Road, Flagstaff. Meetings start at 7 PM with a board meeting at 6 PM.
The meetings are free and the public is invited.

PRESIDENT’S DRIFT : Don't Put Away Your Rods

Tips for Catching Winter Trout

In some ways, winter fly fishing can be more consistent and even easier than fishing for trout in the summer. The rivers are low and the fish are very concentrated, making them easier to locate. Fly selection is usually not complicated and although trout do eat less aggressively in the winter, they still feed predictably.

Every club member is important to the wellbeing of our club and to our local fisheries.

NAF needs your involvement and there are many volunteer venues available such as fishing trips, conservation, writing about club activities, and fund raising. Remember, NAF raises funds to support conservation efforts; we are a non-profit organization. You can sign-up to volunteer on our web site. <http://nazflycasters.com/volunteer/>

EDUCATION

Winter Dry Fly Fishing

It's 35 degrees outside, you have a major hankerin' for some dry fly fishing or just catching fish for that matter. It's been a terrifying 8 days since you've been out on the water and you know if you don't get out soon, you may just lose your mind.

The question is, do you bring your dry fly rod, what even hatches in this frozen tomb of gloom we call winter? Let me share that dry fly fishing is alive and kicking even during the winter, you just have to know where to find it and understand that your chances of finding rising fish is a crap shoot at best.

We're going to go over the following:

- The Winter Hatches including insects, sizes, colors and fly suggestions
- When you can fish dry flies in winter
- How you should fish dry flies during the winter months
- Where you can find rising trout during winter

There is some dry fly fishing, but often fishing dries blind, meaning not to actively feeding fish is not worth the effort. Most times you'll see rising trout and then it's worth throwing dries, otherwise your most productive methods will be nymphing and streamer fishing. If you're going to blind cast dries in winter, griffiths gnats, renegades and other attractor like midge/bwo patterns are you're best bet. Throwing a small, single adult midge when nothing is feeding on top will be hard to induce a strike. Not saying it can't be done, but I wouldn't throw small midge patterns of single midges or BWO's unless I saw fish fishing during the winter months (Nov – Feb)

Unless you live in very warm states (NC doesn't count) then during the winter months, the only dry fly action you will see if any is Midges and BWO Mayflies. The midges are typically white and black and the BWO are olive or dark olive. They all will range from size #18 – #28 though most of us stop around #24 to keep ourselves from going insane. My top midge patterns are Smokejumpers, Sprouts Midges/Thin Pin Midges, Renegades, and Griffiths Gnats. For BWO a parachute BWO with a white or red post does well depending on the lighting on the water (red in flat light to see the fly better) or a thorax shaped BWO fly does pretty well too. Somkejumpers in olive also double as a BWO and a midge.

Typically you can't go too small on winter dry fly patterns as long as you can see them. Fishing a Renegade size 16 in the front and trailing a small smokejumper is a good idea so you can always track and see your flies. Also using small strike indicators that are yarn work well.

The day time temps are really not as important in predicting a hatch. What will cause a hatch is water temps and barometric pressure change (cold fronts and warm fronts and the change between them) The best way to get an idea on water temps is looking at the average between the day time highs and the night time lows. Often a 40 day and a 10 degree night gives you an avg temp of 20. This is less than the freezing temp of water and means the water will likely be cooling and not going up. If you are getting days in the 50's consistently and overnight lows of 30's, you're avg is higher and temps could be going up. You can usually find the water temp using USGS water data, they have the water temps on there if the river has a gauging station. BWO need water temps above 38 degree (40-44 are best) for the hatch to really take off, but midges will hatch anytime and it's really just a matter of their lifecycles which are sporadic. Often 10 – 3 are the times to see a hatch as it's the warmest parts of the day. Focus your efforts around this time for best success.

Sticking to nymphs is your best bet. Getting down deep in the warmest slowest water will produce the most trout time and time again on rivers during winter. Small imitative and small attractor nymphs put together will bring fish to net. I like fishing a rainbow warrior as the first fly and then a small imitative midge like a zebra midge on point below the rainbow warrior. This gets a lot of strikes for me in the winter.

To sum up into something you can remember easily on the river: Only fish dries if you see them rise, otherwise stick to nymphs.

NAF EVENTS SCHEDULE

January 8th- Dr. Jeff Muehlbauer talking about Lees Ferry bug flow results. This is a major test that could dramatically improve fishing at Lees Ferry.

Under discussion by board

Fishing outings to the Williams lakes

Fly casting sessions on a regular basis.

The Board welcomes suggestions from members.

There will additional events so watch this space

NAF CLUB OFFICERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President	Jack Shambaugh
Vice-President	Mike Clementino
Secretary	Mac Mcllwaine
Treasurer	Denise Dean

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