



The January 2021 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 ([Meetings currently on Zoom](#)) 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 6:00 PM.

The meetings are free and the public is invited.

PRESIDENT’S DRIFT :

I would like to introduce this month's presenter, Jan Boyer AZGF Fish Biologist. Jan is a research fish biologist who works for Arizona Game and Fish on the Colorado River in Glen and Grand Canyons. Prior to moving to Flagstaff 4 years ago, she did fisheries work in excellent trout streams all across the country from the Appalachians to the Rockies to Alaska, although she was often working with other species or habitat restoration rather than directly with the trout populations. For example, she got to tie flies and sample with fly fishing for her Master's research on the Madison River, Montana, but was targeting mountain whitefish instead of rainbows or browns.

This month's presentation: Jan Boyer, AZGF Fish Biologist will discuss Rainbow Trout population dynamics and management at Lees Ferry, how anglers can help AGFD collect length data that can't be obtained any other way, and how we hope to use this information to make better management decisions and help the trout fishery.

If any member has a topic they would like to present, or see presented, please contact me via email: cps1022@msn.com.

In case you missed the meeting invitation, here it is. Copy and paste the https address appearing after the words Join Zoom Meeting into your browser

Topic: Northern Arizona Flycasters Monthly Meeting

Time: Jan 6, 2021 07:00 PM Arizona

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83412522792?pwd=ekVCQnQ1STRFU0lQWk5MZ0pzZVNVQT09>

Meeting ID: 834 1252 2792

Passcode: 951146

One tap mobile

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 834 1252 2792

Passcode: 951146

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kew6BmZv44>

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 –

HOW TO SET THE HOOK ON A DRY FLY

The longer you fly fish, the more you'll hear some variation of the phrase, "Let's see if the fish are looking up today." For fear of asking what that means and, in so doing, sounding too much like a newbie, a beginning angler might only come to glean this phrase's meaning over time.

So, to reduce the learning curve, when fish are "looking up", it means that they are showing an interest in eating bugs on the water's surface.

Since this isn't always the case, and because dry fly action is so exciting and fun when it's happening, learning how to set the hook for a variety of different dry fly takes is essential.

Common dry fly takes include:

THE SIP TAKE

When an aquatic born fly hatch is on, the fly emerges from its nymphal shuck and swims to the surface to dry its wings, now an adult, it is terribly vulnerable to feeding fish.

When there are a multitude of such morsels on the surface, fish will position their body, angled below the surface, with just lips and nose showing above.

In their fly-gorging mindset, perhaps a little less wary of overhead predators, fish will casually "sip" several of these sitting-duck flies, one, or a bunch at a time.

Assuming you've matched the hatch with a good imitation, the sip take can be difficult to detect. This is because there are often so many naturals on the water, it can be tough to see when a fish has selected your fly.

Assuming you're able to keep a sharp eye on your imitation among the regulars, and witness a fish taking it, the natural tendency is to set the hook immediately, with an excited rod tip up-and-back set motion.

While this can work, the quick rod tip upward set is more likely to pull the fly (and hook) right out of the fish's mouth.

Instead, you should employ a brief pause before setting the hook with a downstream or side-current motion.

This short pause allows the fly to dip lower into the fish's mouth, while the angled hook-set makes for a clean and solid hook embed, and, with it, the odds of a netted and photographed trophy!

THE SWIRL TAKE

Known by different names, the dry fly swirl take is easy to spot. This kind of "eat" tends to happen when there are fewer naturals blanketing the surface, but when fish are still looking for juicy winged edibles chillin' on the surface — particularly those who haven't seen the movie, *Jaws*.

The swirl is caused by a determined surface take, which is followed by an immediate and sudden direction change. This kind of dry fly take is rather exciting too, as it often takes place in clear water conditions when the fish's approach can be clearly seen. (Although, if this should happen to you, see if you can keep from soiling yourself from the sheer anticipatory thrill.)

As with the sip take set, the swirl take set produces better results if the angler is able to resist the impulse to initiate the sudden upward rod tip set motion in favor of a momentarily paused and angled hook set.

The good news about the swirl take is that, in darting another direction, the fish has made it easier to establish a good set.

In essence, assuming it hasn't immediately decided to spit the imitation out, the swirling fish has already done most of the setting work for the angler. Thus, a paused but tight set motion on a swirl take will almost always lead to a well-hooked fish.

THE ALL-OUT ATTACK TAKE

I was fishing with my brother in Colorado's South Park one hot summer day. To say this day was kind of slow was like saying the Sahara is kind of dry. We'd arrived early in the morning and hadn't had a sniff the entire day. After lunch, I was fighting a case of the LOIs (lack of interest) with a series of zoned-out, lazy and sloppy casts when, upon spying an upriver riffle swirling around a fallen log on what had been an exceedingly flat stretch of river, I decided to give it one last focused effort. Once in position, I knew I needed to put on something irresistible.

I tied on an Irresistible.

Then, after a couple of false casts, I laid a rather tasty one precisely where I wanted to, just above the outside edge of the log and, within a millisecond, drew one of the most aggressive all-out attack strikes I've ever experienced from a trout — a rather large trout, I might add.

One long and painful story short, despite the monster take and my undoubtedly surprise-compromised set, I played the fish for what seemed like a half-hour before, with my brother's help,

we managed to break it off at the moment of truth. Cue the heavy sigh, slumped shoulders, and, okay, the tears.

The all-out attack take is usually how a fish hits a luscious attractor, terrestrial or meaty mouse pattern.

Call it a fleeting opportunity to have a big cheeseburger for lunch, this kind of take is, in a word, thrilling. As vividly illustrated above, it can also be incredibly startling to the person on the other end of the rod, which often leads to spazzy, and, thus, poorly-executed sets.

Despite that, the all-out attack take most often results in a well-hooked fish, regardless of the hook-setting technique used. In this case, a quick and spiffy upward rod tip set motion is the generally accepted best practice, however, an angled, down- or cross-current set will typically seal the deal just the same.

Tearing a page out of my experience journal: always come equipped with an adequate net and reliable line, leader and tippet or, like me, you'll have your "big one that got away" story etched into your hard drive... forever.

HOW TO SET THE HOOK WHILE NYMPHING

In a subsurface way, nymph takes are similar to how fish take surface dry flies. Sometimes they casually slurp them in as they drift by their noses. Other times they swim a small distance to eat them and then swirl-dart back into their feeding lane. Sometimes, they even attack nymph imitations with the all-out ferocity of this kind of take's on-surface cousin.

With similar line, current and hook dynamics at play, the nymph takes listed above manifest via the action of the floating strike indicator.

In the first scenario, your indicator might hesitate, tick to the side, or dip slightly.

In the swirl-like take scenario, your indicator will produce the same motions as a more subtle nymph take but in a more obvious and pronounced way.

In the third scenario, your strike indicator might dart ten feet hard left, right, up, down or, in some cases, will come clear out of the water, just below or above the angry fish that, already hooked, has breached the surface in an angry thrash or ticked-off tail dance.

In every case of subsurface nymph takes noted above, the most effective way to set the hook is an immediate cross- or down-current rod set motion. A skyward set motion will generally work well too, but, since a strike indicator's move usually lags behind the take by a split-second or two, no pause is needed or advised.

Rather, when you see the indicator move, set the hook instantly.

Many such sets will come up empty, but quite a few will produce the telltale fish-on wriggle every angler loves.

HOW TO SET THE HOOK WHEN STREAMER FISHING

There are a variety of streamer fishing techniques that most every angler enjoys the opportunity to practice.

From stripping Woolly Buggers up the banks in runoff situations, to combing river's edge from a drift boat with hefty leaders and big articulated patterns, fishing with streamers is among the most exciting ways to catch fish on a fly.

Why?

Because fish almost always hit a well-presented streamer with crocodile-like speed and savagery.

To the beginner, this may say, "easy-to-set," but that isn't always the case. Without getting too deeply into technique, streamers are typically fished with rod tip way down (near or even below the surface) as the angler "strips" line, leader and streamer in toward the rod tip.

Although I have never claimed to know what a fish is thinking as one of these odd-looking entities wriggles on by, strike behavior suggests that they are as ticked off as they are innately predatory.

In fact, though I've certainly experienced single-strike takes on a streamer, it's more common for a fish to bump the streamer a time or two before it actually decides to attack and eat it.

Most of the leading fish psychologists agree that this bumping behavior is a larger fish's way of telling a smaller fish (your streamer) to "Hit the bricks, pal! This is my beat!"

To the angler at the other end, these bumps feel a whole heckuva lot like a hard and sudden strike. Conditioned as we are, our first, yes, spastic, reaction is to immediately set the hook, rather than to recognize the bump for what it is, leave our streamer offering in place, strip it again and wait for the true strike to come.

Therefore, the best way to set the hook when a fish has bumped your streamer is *not to*. Instead, if you can maintain a steady head, dry undies, and a low rod tip, react to the bump with another quick strip or two, and enjoy the electrifying attack that almost always follows.

When such a strike happens, the best way to set your streamer hook is with another strip. That said, one of the previously mentioned hook-setting techniques will usually work too.

FINAL TAKE

Learning how to properly set the hook when fly fishing is yet another one of the joys of becoming a better, more versatile angler and, with that, having a lot more success and fun along the way.

Harkening back to the immortal and profound words of Ron Swanson, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Don’t teach a man how to fish and you feed yourself. He’s a grown man, fishing’s not that hard.”

What’s my point? If you find yourself getting frustrated as you miss take after take for a while, realize that you’re getting in some great practice on how not to set a hook when fly fishing. And, take heart, the odds will turn in your favor, you’ll start hooking more fish and, eventually, you’ll even stop staggering awkwardly backward... In the river, that is.

Tight Lines!



MATT BUCHENAU FLYFISHIGFIX.COM

NAF EVENTS SCHEDULE

On hold due to the X#%&*@x Virus.

Under discussion by board

Fishing outings to local lakes

Fly casting sessions on a regular basis.

Zoom meetings

The Board welcomes suggestions from members.

NAF CLUB OFFICERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President	Charles Simpson
Vice-President	Tom Hudnall
Secretary	Mac McIlwaine
Treasurer	Denise Dean

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