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Trout Fisher

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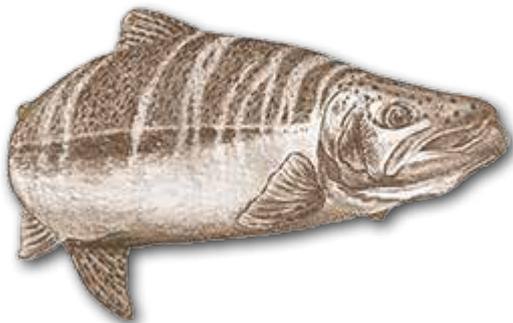
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FRONT Cool (Harry Moores)

HERE Low and clear (Harry Moores)



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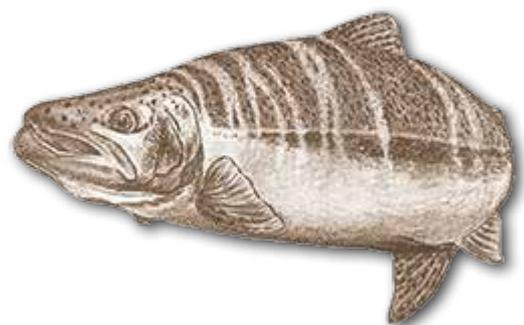
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First big fish of the season . . . 48

By Garrett Evans



Although anything can be swung, and a lot of traditional patterns continue to catch good numbers of trout, having a play around with the many variety of flies that have been created primarily for swinging ultimately adds a new level to the pursuit of catching trout on the swing. Looking at these patterns and then adapting aspects such as the size and colour for them to work well with New Zealand trout is a lot of fun and then of course getting to test them out is even better! At OPST NZ we are pleased to have a close association with Nic and Santillan at Flicking Feathers NZ. These guys really run the vice hot and have some awesome micro patterns tied both on traditional streamer hooks and on shanks with stinger hooks. It's great that Nick offered to share his knowledge and to pass on some great fly tying tips . . .





Micro Intruders tied on shanks and barbless stinger hooks (Nic Stewart)

Autumn nights would not be the same without the incessant chirping of crickets; they can spoil any outdoor dinner. This season, with all our warm nights and heaps of rain, they have hatched out in huge numbers and most nights the sound of their combined chirping is almost deafening.

We even have more than usual of these critters getting into the house. You can imagine the frustration that my wife has in trying to control this invasion. However, our personal issue with crickets is not the issue here.

While I was pondering over doing a fly talk about crickets, I thought that over the last 25 years I must have covered this subject but on checking, that was not the case. The truth is I was influenced by Peter McKinlay of Buxton who put me onto this youtube video that was made by Davie McPhail, UK - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCONSwwRXXo> He is tying a pattern that is really good; it floats well, looks good and just as importantly, it works.

In reality Crickets are seasonal, as are Hoppers but there seems to be less interest for some unknown reason in pattern development and use.

In the past when crickets are on, especially in big numbers, old speckles will feed almost exclusively on them but for some reason not many anglers carry a supply of representations in their fly boxes and as far as I can remember, this has always been the case.

How important are Cricket patterns? Well I have noticed trout move a good metre or so from their station to take one of these black morsels and any bug or fly pattern that can do that must be taken seriously.



Juvenile Male Cricket (Family Gryllidae, around 900 species have been recorded)

Crickets generally hatch out in late spring and grow at a fast rate of knots. They grow up to around an inch or 25mm and normally fade away at the end of summer.

The day to day life of the cricket is one of hide and seek, that is until nightfall when they really come to life. They spend their days hiding under vegetation, logs or in cracks in the ground. Being mostly nocturnal, on evening they become extremely active. The males start chirping not only to attract a female but the louder the chirp the more intense is the message to other males to stay away.

They feed mostly on organic food forms but will eat each other if they feel so inclined. In fact I found one on my footpath that was missing its stomach and it was still alive.

My wife found another dead by the front door and beside it was a small skink that had been chewed in half.

Crickets will mate in late summer and the female will lay their eggs in autumn. The female has a long spear shaped ovipositor which they use to bury their eggs. They usually lay around 2 hundred eggs. This spike is often mistaken as a stinger when in fact crickets are actually harmless.



Mature female Cricket



Male Cricket, perhaps not fully mature but close to this and the McPhail tie

Fishing the Cricket

Trout will take a cricket pattern all day long but the best times are around dusk and on into the night. On a clear night fishing with a cricket can not only be very challenging but rewarding. Fish as you would any hopper pattern; look for your choice areas such as an overhanging bank, or a current seam that is running close to the bank. Don't be afraid to drift your cricket down through a riffle section, especially on a hot day as these areas draw a number of trout seeking the added oxygen that this type of water has to offer.

Cast your fly so that it lands heavily and watch carefully for a rise as it drifts back towards you. Use a leader around 9ft and 6 pound breaking strain and concentrate.