

Eastern Sierra Focus

By CJ Webb

.....continued from July

“The best imitation you will ever find for a Caddis is made from a mammal that sheds water, is silky to the touch and a fast easy tie”. Can you guess it? Next issue I’ll give you the name and instructions.

This great fly tying material can be found in antique stores, garage sales, and estate sales, junk stores, and for only a few kroners. Running my hands through a soft fiber due to the intended use of the critter, it never occurred to me that gracing trout lips would be better than gracing the shoulders of an evening dress. Yes, it is a Mink and the fly is called the Mini Minx using stole and tails. This caddis imitation is one of the best I have found for several reasons, it’s simple to tie, and only uses undercoat and outside fur, hook and thread. It’s the perfect fly when you are on the move and tying by the waters edge when the need arises. It is a rather strange looking caddis when tied. Using a #14 dry fly hook (your choice), and brownish thread. Make a small dubbed body from the undercoat, wrap up to area just behind the eye leaving enough room to tie in a clump of tail hair stacked so points are equal then secure behind eye so the butts face the bend when folded back to form hackle. Dub area slightly between wing and extended points. Pull hair back to form “hair hackle”. Whip it, cement it, clip butt to extend just past the bend. If you need more specifics drop me a line at vlr@qnet.com.

Weather Conditions

Another Eastern Sierra high-pressure system moved into the area mid-August with temperatures ranging from 48 to 55 in the am and 70 to 76 degrees during the day. There is very little snow at upper elevations except for the highest peaks. Air quality improved when most of the fires were contained and the night sky has been sensational from 10,000 feet.

Windy conditions have prevailed for the last couple days and the weather is supposed to turn sour and then sweeten up the last few days of August. Some predictions are for a dusting at the uppermost elevations.

Lawsuit – For a current update on waters that have not been cleared for Southwestern Flycatcher habitat see DFG web-site for details.

The invasive New Zealand Mud Snail remains a problem and it is imperative that fishers-of-the-fly help prevent the spread by NOT WADING.

UPPER OWENS flow has been consistent at 96cfs and the water is warm so look for cooler channels with undercuts. Try hoppers, caddis and midges for the best action, also prince nymphs #18, BH pheasant tails and #16 Copper Johns, #18 hairs ear, and #20-22 Zebra midges.

ROCK CREEK LAKE has been good, and fish are still taking black, or olive Matukas and large burgundy streamers but some caddis action late in the day. Mosquito Flats run-off finally tapered and the glutinous mosquitoes are getting some great meals. Slower water will show results with ants and hoppers in gargantuan proportions. Black ants are about 3/8 of an inch long and Mack Lake still has that brown which is about 25 to 26” long. This fish will plague me until seasons’ end. Drat him anyway. He was caught and released once this summer. **CROWLEY LAKE** algae is just about gone except for what is trapped in the weed beds and this will continue as long as DWP continues to drop the lake level which is around 6 to 12 inches a day. Stripping streamers will definitely get you into fish using a Gray/black Optimidge #18 under a stimulator.

MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN - Lake Mary and George have been the best probably because the water temperature is stable so try Tentwing

Caddis #14, #16 Parachute Adams, Stimulators, Beetles #14, Prince nymphs #16, and pleasant tails 14-18,

HOT CREEK water conditions are good and flow is 28cfs. Fish early and late on midges, caddis and hoppers. Constant afternoon breezes so be ready to adjust when conditions change. Parachute Adams, Chernobyl ants #8-14, CDC Caddis or ostrich caddis emerger. #18-20 Zebra midges or tiger midge, and #16-18 Flashy scuds in olive and dark olive. Try some big streamers like Doc’s in black.

SAN JOAQUIN water conditions are great for this time of year, and fish are rising to dries and do it after the tram is closed at 5:30pm. Try Stimulators, Humpy’s, Little Yellow Sallies, hare’s ear, BH copper micro mayfly and golden stones. Streamers are spotty and mostly olive flashy buggers in shaded areas and long runs.

JUNE LOOP – Silver Lake was hitting some high notes this past month with the amount of trout they received. Streamers with a dropper, small midges, hare’s ear, and Zug Bugs did well. Probably anything will work that resembles trout food, rainbow Hornbergs, burgundy/black tail woolies, Twin Lake special in rust or black and loads of terrestrial imitations. June and gull both did well using the same methods, except June depth was about 8 to 10 feet lower due to the water temperature. It’s cool, but surface water is warming for a summer dip, if you brought your trunks.

LUNDY LAKE did well most of the month near the inlet using any top water fly, streamers with a blade in orange/grizzly # 10 or 12, also the yellow/brown Pistol Pete did well. Breezy most afternoons with the occasional flat water, but the inlet still held the number one spot for the best action.

VIRGINIA LAKES season tickets for tubers using a nymph under a stimulator or large Caddis were cancelled due to no show. Olive flashy buggers with a black tail and a full sink as the water temp is still consistent down to about 10 feet and it is still getting grabs. Rust or olive Twin Lakes Special, and black gnats, Griffith Gnats, and Rickard’s AP emerger, Grey Hackle Yellow, Yellow Sallies, WD40’s dark olive and Zug bugs. I’ve been using dries or emergers just under the surface, and doing about 12 to 15 fish in about 90 minutes before dark and the darker it gets the bigger the browns.

GREEN CREEK (nothing new) has not been stocked this summer due to the logistics and constant abuse the stock trucks get if the road has not been graded. Will keep you updated if anything changes.

BRIDGEPORT REZ water is clear and heating up like Georgia asphalt and a 2-fly rig will get you into some action. Black/Gray zebra’s, damsels, and PT’s under an indicator will also do well. Stay toward the inlet channels (Buckeye and Robinson) for the coolest water as there is comfort in the feeding zone when fish are contented.

EAST WALKER – Flow currently is at 273cfs (cubic foot per second) and the mosquitoes are dwindling. Try some dries up and down the “mile” and use humpy’s or stimulators, but it’s been slow on dries. Mainly everyone is using the 2 fly rigs with midges and small nymphs without the bushy dry. Pressure is somewhat lower than expected, but any day on the EW is worth haggling for “THE” spot. Generally look and see what’s hanging in the bushes or cruising at 6003 feet. Also try some damsels in the weedy areas. Trust in your basic stream/river nuts and bolts and you’ll improve your chances i.e., where the best oxygen is during peak heat of the day, preparation, equipment to bring, flies suited for time of day and water temperature, etc. Water temp is hanging between 76 to 78 degrees but the fish are in great condition with the extra water. Please take extra time when releasing fish, this is a valuable resource.

WEST WALKER – Water is at 76cfs, and there’s a ton of flat water to fish using a one fly rig with ants, hoppers and dragonfly imitations. If no results, move and use a two-fly setup with any nymph as your trailer and a red humpy as your top fly.

SADDLEBAG LAKE has seen some good action around the north inlet and the dam area using a lot of brightly colored streamers but the staple has been BH dark olive with a black tail.

See you on the water! CJ (10 8)