

FLY OF THE MONTH FOR OCTOBER

By Todd A. Schotts

It is that time of year once again for Michigan's Steelhead (aka Steelies or Chromer's) to make their migratory trek from the Great Lakes to our beloved rivers. With the start of autumn, most of the hatches are wrapping up. You may find a few Blue Wing Olives, Midges, or the last straggler of a Caddis on the river depending on the water & air temperatures, these are tough fishing for the target of our subject. So what do you use for these migratory steelies? Simple: streamers, eggs (glue or yarn), nymphs, or attractor flies.

With all of those possibilities, I focused this month's fly one of the most effective, and classic, patterns around. This fly produces fish year in and year out. Behold, the PM Caddis. The PM Caddis has many variations, but each variation has one thing in common - it imitates the Rhyacophila Caddis Larvae. This caddis is better known as the Green Rock Worm, or the common net-spinning Caddisfly larvae.

When the Steelhead start dislodging the gravel when they are spawning these tiny morsels are kicked up from the bottom, becoming a feast for the fish, not just in the area, but downstream as well. This fly also works well with weary Trout (but in a smaller size, like a 14) and are also a great fly for spawning salmon for the same reason.

Fish this pattern as a dead drift through the deep holes and "Redds," or strip it in slowly. If you are using the "Chuck & Duck" method make sure you use a "Slinky" for a weight instead of "Bell Sinkers" or "Split Shot." (This will eliminate the noise when the weight bounces or drags across the gravel bottom.) You may have the best looking fly in the river, but if you "scream" it across the bottom, you won't have very many hook ups.

The great thing about the PM Caddis is the pure simplicity of the pattern. For beginners, stick to the basic pattern and you will do fine. However for the brave of heart, "Czech" or "European Nymphing" and realistic purists, this pattern can look from from simplistic to downright artistic. Either way, both varieties of patterns are just as effective. (It's up to you, spend a few minutes to master the basic pattern or hours on a realistic one - the fish won't care - and you can brag to your friends how long it took you to tie the pattern. Either way, my suggested recipe (a nice middle ground in terms of difficulty) is from one of our own: Jeff "Bear" Andrews - "Bear's PM Caddis."

I hope you enjoy this pattern, and if you do venture out in the unpredictable fall weather or snowy cold winter for steelhead, make sure this fly is in your box. Until next month, tight lines and snazzy flies, Todd.

Hook: Dai Riki 135, TMC 2457, Daiichi 1120 or Mustad 37160 - Sizes 6 thru 14

Thread: Tan 6/0 or 140 Denier

Body: Chartreuse Larva Lace or Vinyl Rib

Hackle: Tan or Brown, 3-4 Turns

Head: Hares Ear (Rabbit Dub) or Tan Ostrich Herl

Optional: Bead for Head

Optional: Alternate body style, "Olive Ultra Chenille w/fine wire ribbing.

