

Fly Fishing 101
or
Beginners Workshop for the
Lower Owens
or
Basic Techniques for Rookies
or
Some Other Title

This booklet, workshop and trips are presented by Yash Iseda, Dan Rivett and John Lincoln.



In Memorium: Jeff Sadler... "Thanks for everything Jeff!"

Introduction

Yash Iseda noted a few years ago that the rookies were showing up for our beginners trips with not a clue as to what to bring, how to rig, or even how to dress. So we invented this workshop and this handout to give a very basic introduction to what you need to know when you show up at the river.

This workshop is intended for beginners and is in concert with the LBCC January, February and March trips to the Lower Owens and other Eastern Sierra waters. While we concentrate on the Lower Owens the tips and techniques are useful throughout the West and almost anywhere you find trout.

This workshop and trips are sponsored by Yash Iseda, Dan Rivett and John Lincoln through the Long Beach Casting Club. Together probably more than 50 years of experience in the Eastern Sierra.

This workshop will **NOT** cover:

- ❖ Casting — Take the LBCC Beginning Casting Class, it is as good as you'll find anywhere.
- ❖ Rod Building — Again, a LBCC class.
- ❖ Fly Tying — Although we may touch on a few flies, the LBCC class is superb.
- ❖ Entomology and bug life cycles — Many good books and references cover this—check out **WESTERN HATCHES** by Dave Hughes and Rick Haefle.

What we **CANNOT** teach in the workshop but will be covered on the water during our trips:

- ❖ Reading the water and where fish may be.
- ❖ Basic local casts.
- ❖ Line mending and tending, basic line control.
- ❖ Setting the hook and landing a fish.
- ❖ Looking under rocks.

What this workshop **WILL** cover are:

- ❖ **BISHOP and the LOWER OWENS River**
- ❖ **FISHING EQUIPMENT**
- ❖ **KNOTS**
- ❖ **ROD RIGGING**
- ❖ **TROUT — Rainbows and Browns**
- ❖ **FLIES (and a little entomology)**
- ❖ **CATCH AND RELEASE (Not included)**
- ❖ **STREAM ETIQUETTE and REDDS (Not included)**



General Information

THE LOWER OWENS

"There it is, take it" (William Mulholland)

THE WORKSHOP & PRE-TRIP:

Saturday before the trip weekend 9:00 AM to whenever. This is a three hour scientific, opinionated, comedy routine meant to inform beginners (and some not-so beginners) on everything you need and what to bring to get you from your car in jeans and sweaters to the river in boots and waders. The presenters empty their vests and souls to tell you what you do and do not need.

If you are at all interested in the Owens Valley versus City of L.A., or farmers versus land speculators, or why the San Fernando Valley exists, or the dark side of the history of the DWP; read **CADILLAC DESERT** by Marc Reisner for an acerbic opinion, or **WATER AND POWER** by William Kahn for a straightforward view, or see the movie **CHINATOWN** for an inaccurate but very entertaining treatment. An outstanding description of the whole Eastern Sierra in all aspects is **DEEPEST VALLEY** by Jeff Putnam and Jenny Smith. And, if you don't have the AAA Eastern Sierra road map you really need to get it.

WHERE:

First you have to get to Bishop and to do so you will need to end up going north on US 395. Bishop is 4–6 hours from L.A. depending on your speed, lunch breaks, where you start, and time of day. From where 395 turns left in north Bishop it is 6 miles to the Pleasant Valley turnoff (about 0.1 miles after 395 splits into a divided highway).

Drive over a low hill and past the campground on your right. At the end of the campground is an almost 180° hairpin turn over the river and now the campground is on your right. Just as you approach a cattle guard, and before the road turns to gravel, the footbridge is on your right. Also on your right is the last restroom before the wilderness.

WILD TROUT SECTION:

The Wild Trout section runs from the footbridge in the Pleasant Valley Campground downstream approximately five miles to the last fisherman's survey box and regulation notice. The river meanders through an alluvial meadow and is paralleled by Chalk Bluff Road. The road is washboard gravel; there is no soft lane nor perfect speed for this rattler but it is well maintained. Mostly brown trout, some rainbows and Dan Rivett is the only one ever to catch a bass.

THE RIVER:

Currently running at under 100 cfs. Due to the dam release the river can vary from a low flow of around 100 cfs to a high of 700 cfs.

FINAL REMINDERS:

1. Remember your sunblock and hold hands while crossing the street and do you have your Fishing License?????
2. Free **Subway** sandwich noon on Saturday (only on the January Lower 'O' Trip).
3. Pizza at the **Pizza Factory** Saturday night
4. They are checking licenses and hooks, so beware...
5. Be sure to pinch down barbs from purchased flies (and the ones **you** tied!).

Bishop Lodging, Meals, Shops, Etc.

LODGING: This is an old list so things may have changed (there's always the Pleasant Valley Campground):

Creskide Inn - 725 N. Main Street 800/273-3550 760/872-3044 \$\$\$ Pricey but complete breakfast and soup and cookies at night.

Elms Motel - 233 E. Elm Street 800/848-9226 - Gives an LBCC discount

Best Western Bishop Holiday Spa Lodge - 1025 N. Main Street 800/528-1234

Bishop Days Inn - 724 West Line Street 760/872-1095

Comfort Inn - 805 Main Street 800/576-4080

Rodeway Inn - 150 E. Elm Street 800/356-3221

Bishop Sierra Gateway - 155 E. Elm Street 760/873-3548

Holiday Inn Express - 636 N. Main St. 877/395-2395

Motel 6 - 1005 N. Main Street 760/873-8426

Outdoorsman Motor Lodge - 651 N. Main Street 760/873-6381

Thunderbird Motel - 190 W. Pine Street 760/873-4215 microwaves

Travelodge Bishop - 155 East Elm Street 760/872-1771

Trees Motel - 796 W. Line Street 760/873-6391

Vagabond Inn - 1030 N. Main Street 760/873-6351 800/522-1555

MEALS: You are on your own except for: (All start at 6:30 PM)

Saturday night at the **Pizza Factory**, Yash sponsors pizza and beer (Around \$10 each).

TRADITIONAL MEALS:

Thursday night at **Amigos** near the movie theater for the pork/mango enchiladas (crowded).

Friday night at **Yamatani's** for Japanese and great martinis.

Jack's is always good for breakfast.

Schat's to take chili cheese bread home.

The **bowling alley** is the best kept secret in town.

FLY SHOPS:

Trout Magnet — on the way out of town after 395 turns left. Fly oriented and very knowledgeable but limited inventory.

Reagan's Sporting Goods — General fishing and hunting stuff but a good inventory of standard fly fishing gear.

HELPFUL WEB SITES:

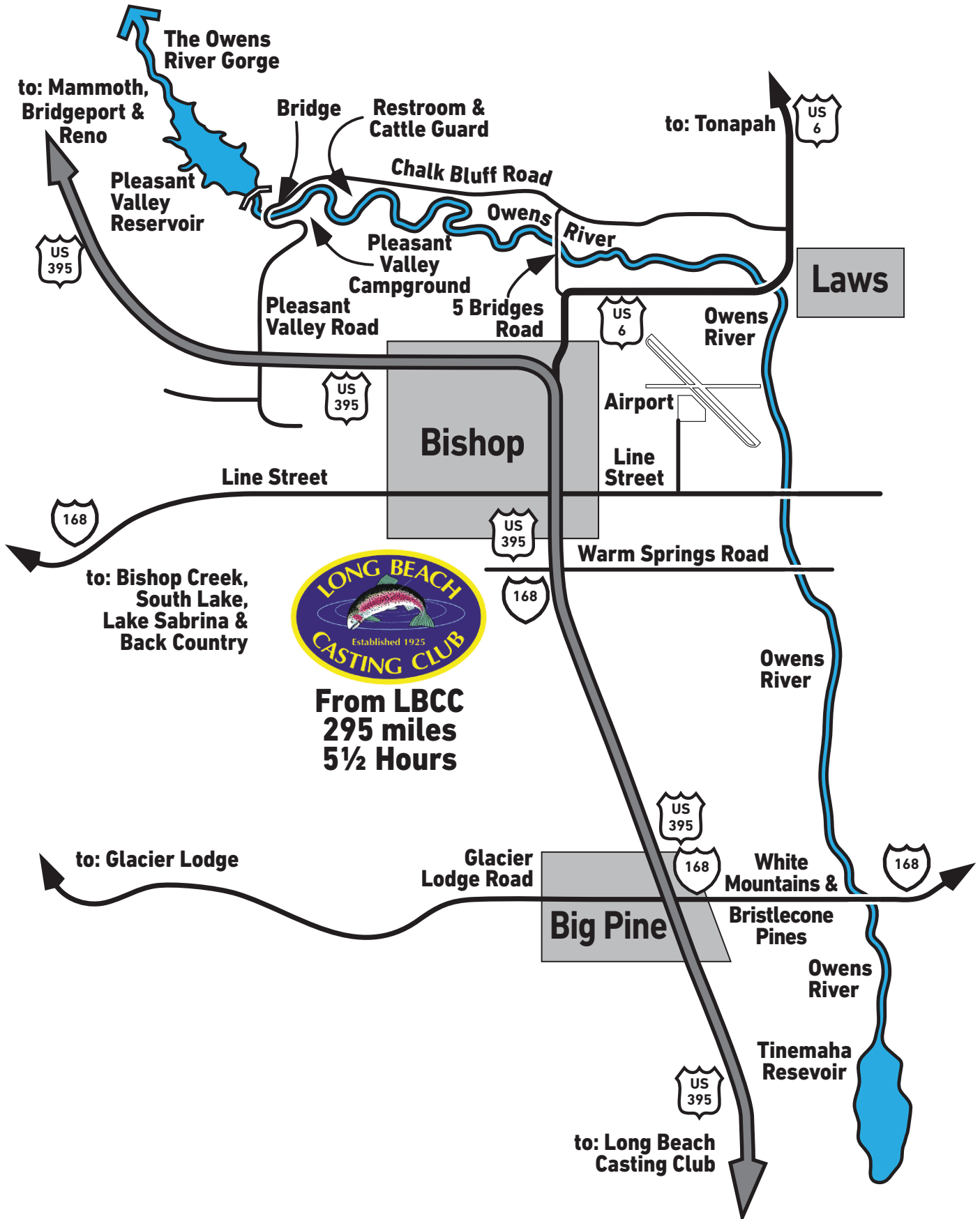
<http://wsoweb.ladwp.com/Aqueduct/realtime/norealtime.htm> **Lower O Flow rates**

<http://www.sierradrifters.com/index.html> **Fishing reports**

<http://www.thetroutfly.com/fishreport.html> **Fishing reports**

<http://stevenojai.tripod.com> **Good all-around info**

Lower Owens River



Lower Owens Parking Areas

All mileage is from the Cattle Guard at the campground

1. The Tree	.05
2. Big Rock	.08
3. 2 nd Cattle Guard	1.1
4. Mid-Point	1.2
5. Drive Way	1.4
6. House of Rocks	1.5
7. River Tree Bend	1.7
8. WC #1	1.8
9. Hill Climb	2.0
10. In Between Pools	2.2
11. WC #2	2.4
12. In Between Four Rocks	2.6
13. Boulder Base	3.1

Fishing Gear

FISHING GEAR

- ★ Rods
- Rod case
- ★ Reels
- Reel case
- ★ Fly Line
- ★★ Fishing license
- ★ Sunglasses
- ★ Hat(s)
- Hat leash
- Rain jacket
- Hand towel
- ★ Water bottle
- Fishing Case**
- ★ Fly boxes
- ★ Pre-tied Leader rigs & tippets
- ★ Tippet material
- ★ Leaders
- ★ Floatant
- ★ Nippers
- Hemostat
- Sunscreen
- Bug goo
- Line cleaner
- Waders
- Boots
- ★ Wading staff
- Net
- Wader repair
- ★★★ Wading Belt if wearing waders

MISCELLANEOUS

- Back/leg pillow
- Alarm clock
- Binoculars
- Flashlight
- Pillow
- Folding chairs
- Reading material
- Hand warmers
- Gloves/scarves
- Hangers
- Back Pack
- Camera
- Walkie-talkies
- Phone Charger
- Golden AGE card

PERSONAL

- ★★ Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Hand Lotion
- Kleenex
- Aspirin
- Band-aids
- Neosporin
- Personal drugs
- braces, etc.
- Your sense of wonder & humor!***

Trout in the Lower Owens

In the water:
If it looks like silver, it's a rainbow,
If it looks like copper, it's a brown.

Browns are predominate and are wild trout naturally spawning but rainbows tend to be larger and are planted. They are not planted in the Wild Trout section but are downstream in Bishop. They migrate upstream and the hold-overs can be up to 20 inches. Browns can also be large but tend to be 8 to 12 inches.

BROWN TROUT
RAINBOW TROUT



In other streams and lakes in the Eastern Sierra there are Golden, Brook, and Cutthroat trout.



The **FOOLER**: sometimes in the Lower Owens you will see **HUGE** “trout” cruising the bottom. If they have a strongly forked tail they are called carp. We’ve all been fooled by them and you can catch them; occasionally.

Danny Rivett actually caught a smallmouth bass which are more common downstream from Big Pine and farther downstream.

Lower Owens Flies

THE GOOD NEWS: almost any common fly on any section on any day will work.

THE BAD NEWS: you have to figure out the right combination.

The Lower Owens in the winter has a low flow generally under 100 cfs and the weather is cool/warm and clear. All of which is bad news. The low and cold water means the fish are hunkered down on the bottom and are lethargic. Overcast brings out the *Baetis* hatch.

DRY FLIES: The predominant hatch will be midges size 20, 22 and 24 for individual flies and 18–20 for cluster flies like the **Griffiths Gnat**.

With luck you may get a *Baetis* hatch—use **Blue-Winged Olives** size 18–20. Other possibilities are: **Adams, PMD, RS-2**.

It's possible in March to get a Caddis hatch. Use **Elk Hair Caddis** in size 18–20.

Very sparse terrestrials.

SOFT HACKLES: Soft hackled flies are very effective for exploring moving waters and riffles and can be tied in larger sizes like 14's or even 12's. Good possibilities include:

- ❖ **Partridge and Green.**
- ❖ **Kobi Killers**, silver mylar and partridge.
- ❖ **Partridge and Peacock** (herl).
- ❖ **Partridge, Blue and Peacock** (herl)—check with the Sakaguchis and Yash.

ATTRACTORS: Try **Royal Wulffs, Humpys, or Stimulators**, you may be surprised.

STREAMERS: The flows are generally too low for these to be effective but sometimes a **Woolly Bugger** up against a cut bank can be effective.

NYPHS: Nymphs and other sub-surface flies are the predominate form of fishing in the winter as hatches are few and far between. Roll an underwater rock and you will see zillions of caddis larva, midge larva, mayfly larva and even stoneflies and scuds. These are all on the trout's menu.

- ❖ Midge nymphs: zebras, black and white, green and silver, red and silver, burgundy and silver and my favorite yellow and copper with a bead head.
- ❖ Caddis pupa: green, yellowish green, brown, cased caddis, **Peeking Caddis**. (Danny and I pumped stomachs in January and February and all we found were empty caddis cases)
- ❖ Mayflies: **Pheasant Tail** nymphs, **Hares Ears**.

WEIRD OPTIONS: **Walt's Worm, Copper Johns, San Juan Worms, Brassies, Prince Nymphs, etc.**

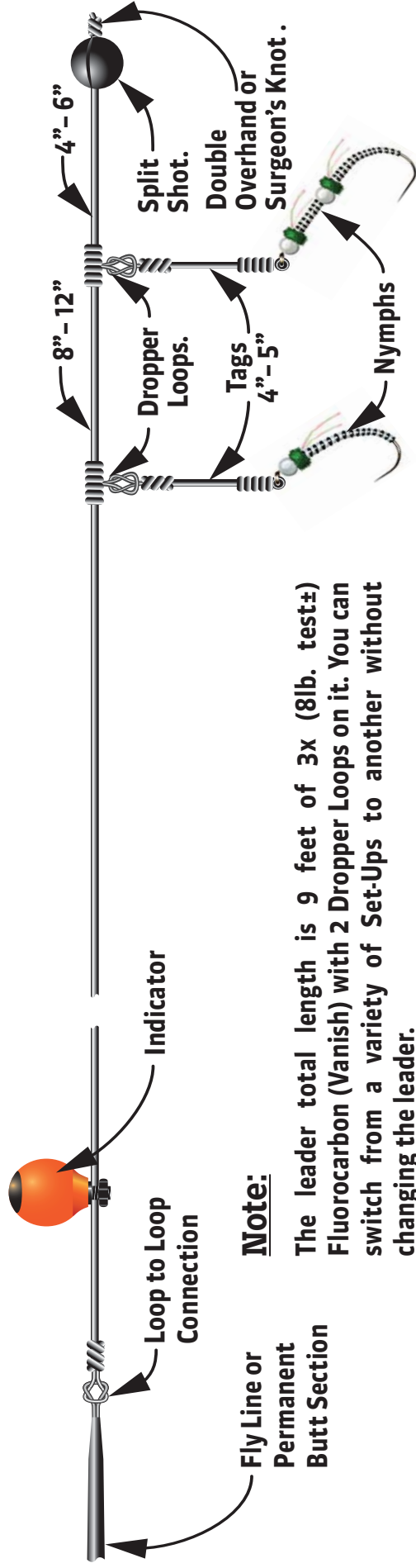
REALLY WEIRD OPTION: Every winter trip I've caught fish using **Yash's Twin Midge**...



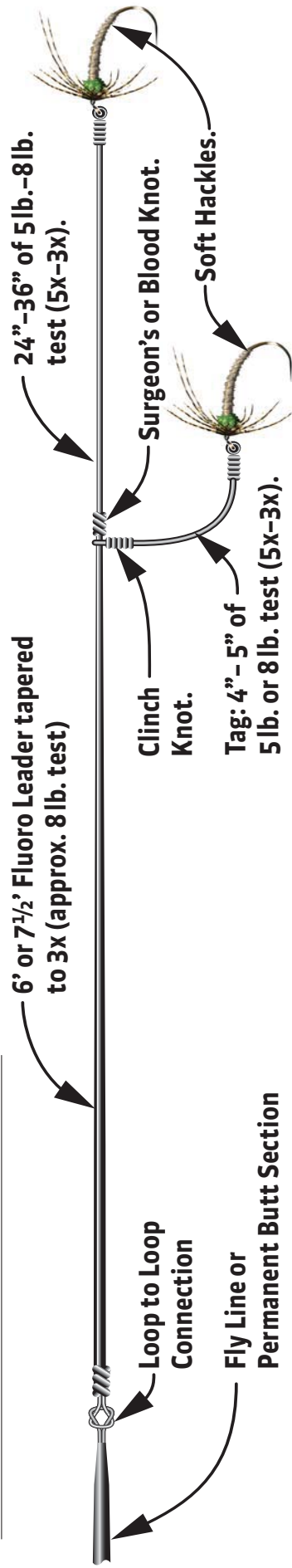
YASH'S TWIN MIDGE

Standard Nymph & Soft Hackle Rig

STANDARD NYMPH RIG

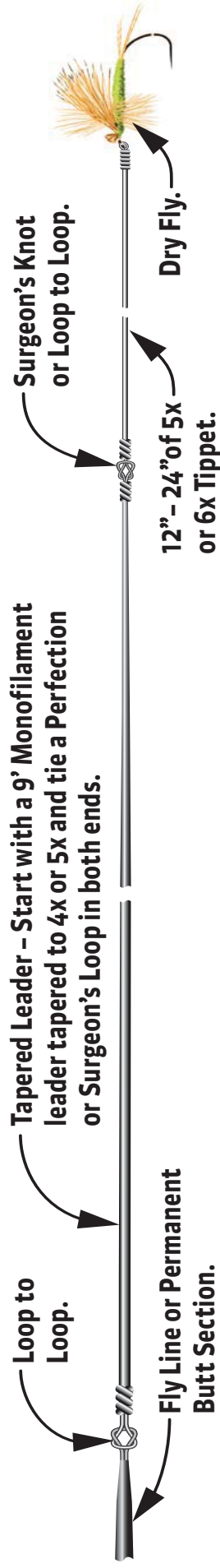


STANDARD SOFT HACKLE RIG

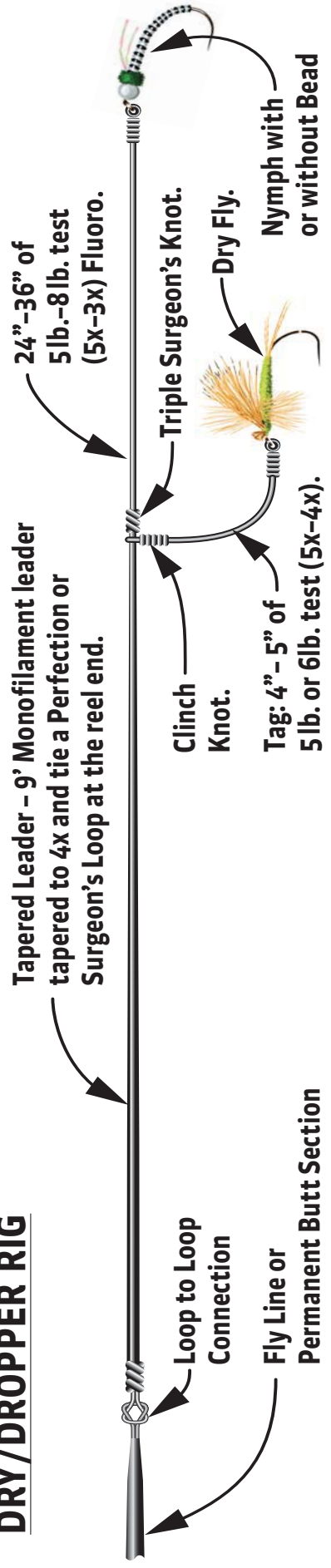


Standard Dry Fly & Dry / Dropper Rig

STANDARD DRY FLY RIG

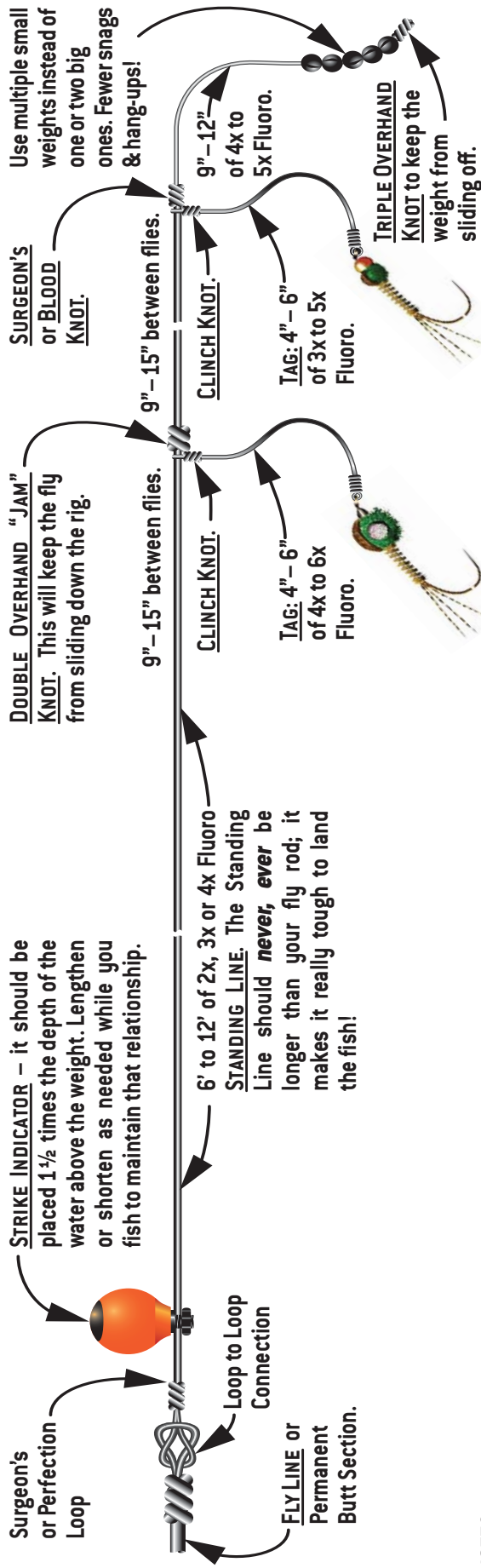


DRY/DROPPER RIG



A Simple Multi-Fly Nymph Rig

Tired of complex multi-fly nymph rigs that take forever to put together and are a pain to fix on the water. Here is a simple setup that requires hardly any time to make and requires only 3 types of simple knots (Clinch, Double/Triple Overhand and a Surgeon's) to tie it.
If you're interested read on...



NOTES:

- ❖ For this handout, I am using a Double & Triple Overhand Knot differently than a Surgeon's. Normally, a Double Overhand and Surgeon's Knot are considered the same knot. Here however, to avoid confusion, the Double & Triple Overhand Knot will refer to tying that knot in only a single strand of line. The Surgeon's Knot refers to joining and connecting two separate lines together. Here a Double Overhand Knot is essentially a Wind Knot that creates a "Jam" or a stop in the Standing Line. It is also much stronger (75-80%) than a Single Overhand Knot (40-50%). Be sure to wet the knot and draw it tight smoothly to make it as strong as possible. In four years of using this rig, I have yet to break the Standing Line on a fish at one of these "wind" knots or have any of my Clinch Knots failed.
- ❖ The section of Fluorocarbon that connects your Weight(s) to the rest of the Rig should be the weakest in strength. This will help to insure that you only lose your Weight(s) instead of your Flies, Tippet Ring and Indicator should you hang up on the bottom. It's a hell of a lot faster to tie on a string of weights than re-do and entire rig. Also, over the last few years I have tried to use less split shot and instead use 1/8" tungsten beads. Two beads weigh the same as a BB sized split shot. Pricey yes but, less lead in the environment and so far I haven't lost any beads on the bottom—only a few hang-ups in the trees behind me!
- ❖ If you can see (or think) that fish are suspended or hanging at the same depth then put a light fly on the bottom and heavy bead (tungsten) fly on top. The heavy fly on top will sink to nearly the same depth as the weight so both flies will be fishing through essentially the same depth side by side and not one atop the other. You can also place a split shot (about 1/2 your bottom weight) above your top fly.
- ❖ You can add as many of the Double Overhand "Jam" Knots as you feel you need. Here I am showing 3 flies and I usually place my flies about 10" apart. If you start there you can easily change it by tying a "Jam" knot in new location.

How to Tie the Simple Multi-Fly Nymph Rig and Not Get Tangled in the Process...

1. Let's start by assuming that you are going to fish with a 9'-0" rod for a 4, 5 or 6 weight line and the fish you will be trying to catch are going to be 12 to 24" in length. For a standard rig, pull off 8'-6" of 3x fluorocarbon—yes, it is okay to measure with a tape measure...
2. Using a Surgeon's Knot or Blood Knot, attach 12 inches of 4x or 5x tippet to one end. Tie a Triple Overhand Knot at about the 9" or 10" point in this 4x or 5x line and cut off the excess. This knot will keep your weight from sliding off. This end of the Standing Line will be where the flies are—the fishing end!
3. In the other end, tie either a Surgeon's Loop or a Perfection Loop to use in attaching this Standing Line to your fly line, a permanent butt or another leader. This end of the Standing Line is the non-fishing end and closest to the rod tip.
4. At a point about 10" above the joint between the 3x Standing Line and 4x or 5x material for the rig's weight, tie a Double Overhand Knot in that single strand of 3x material. Be sure to wet the line and draw it tight slowly and smoothly to make it as strong as possible. This knot is a "Jam" knot and will keep your tag with its fly from sliding down the Standing Line to the weight(s).
5. Now, go another 10" to 12" above the Double Overhand Knot you just tied and tie another Double Overhand Knot. This knot is another "Jam" knot and will keep your tag with its fly from sliding down the Standing Line.
6. You are now roughly set to fish two flies at one time. If you want to fish three flies at one time do the following: Check the regulations of the state or region you are fishing in and make damn sure that it is legal where you are fishing!@!*! Then, go up another 10" to 12" tie another Double Overhand Knot in the Standing Line. Now, on to your fly tags/droppers...
7. Pull off 6" to 8" of 3x or 4x fluorocarbon Tag depending on how big the fish are and how big your fly is going to be. At the bottom most Double Surgeon's Knot(the one closest to where your weights are), attach the 3x or 4x tippet Tag just above the Double Surgeon's Knot using a Clinch Knot. I usually use one size thicker/stronger tag at the bottom of the rig than the ones farther up. Reason is: this fly usually has a bead or weight and the bigger fish are usually closer to the bottom. To this you will tie on your bottom fly. Do not attach the fly yet...by the time you tie it in and do the rest of the Clinch Knot connections and the weights, you will have a very bad tangle and have to start over!!!
8. Pull off 6" to 8" of 4x or 5x fluorocarbon Tag depending on how big the fish are and how big your fly is going to be. Now, go to the upper Double Overhand Knot and, just above the knot, tie this Tag in above it using a Clinch Knot. To this you will tie on your top or top fly. Do not attach the fly yet...by the time you tie it in and do the rest of the Clinch Knot connections and the weights, you will have an even worse tangle and have to start over!!!
9. Using your favorite knot (mine is a simple Clinch Knot) tie on your top fly leaving the Tag length about 4" to 5" long. Stick that fly securely into the fly keeper on your vest, sling bag or other. If you don't have a fly keeper—heaven help you now...
10. With the top fly tied on and securely held in your vest's fly keeper, tie on your bottom fly leaving 4" to 5" of Tag length. Since this bottom fly is likely weighted with lead or a bead, securing it to fly keeper is even more important!
11. Okay, with all of your flies secured in your fly keeper and not floating around in the breeze/wind getting hopelessly tangled we can finally add some weight to the rig. I prefer to use Tungsten Beads to avoid lead pollution but if you are still using split shot then go ahead and add the number you feel is needed for the circumstances to that very first and bottom most section of 4x or 5x Fluorocarbon that you tied in at the outset. The small diameter and weakness of this section is simple to understand—I want to lose the weight, not the flies and the rest of the rig! Sometimes I even use 6x or 7x material to make sure this is what happens. Make sure the split shot is anchored securely so it won't slide off over the knot at the bottom. I prefer to use a number of small shot rather than a BB or larger sized shot. The smaller sizes slide between the rocks more easily and hang up on bottom structure much less often.
12. FINALLY, hold onto the weights and your rod in one hand and with, tension on your line, carefully remove each fly, from bottom to top, from your fly keeper. By doing it this way you avoid most of the tangles that occur. I get more tangles at this point than at any other time and this is the one way I have been able to keep from snapping fly rods in half and drinking myself to sleep at mid-day in my hotel room! Wishing you the best of luck and good fishing...

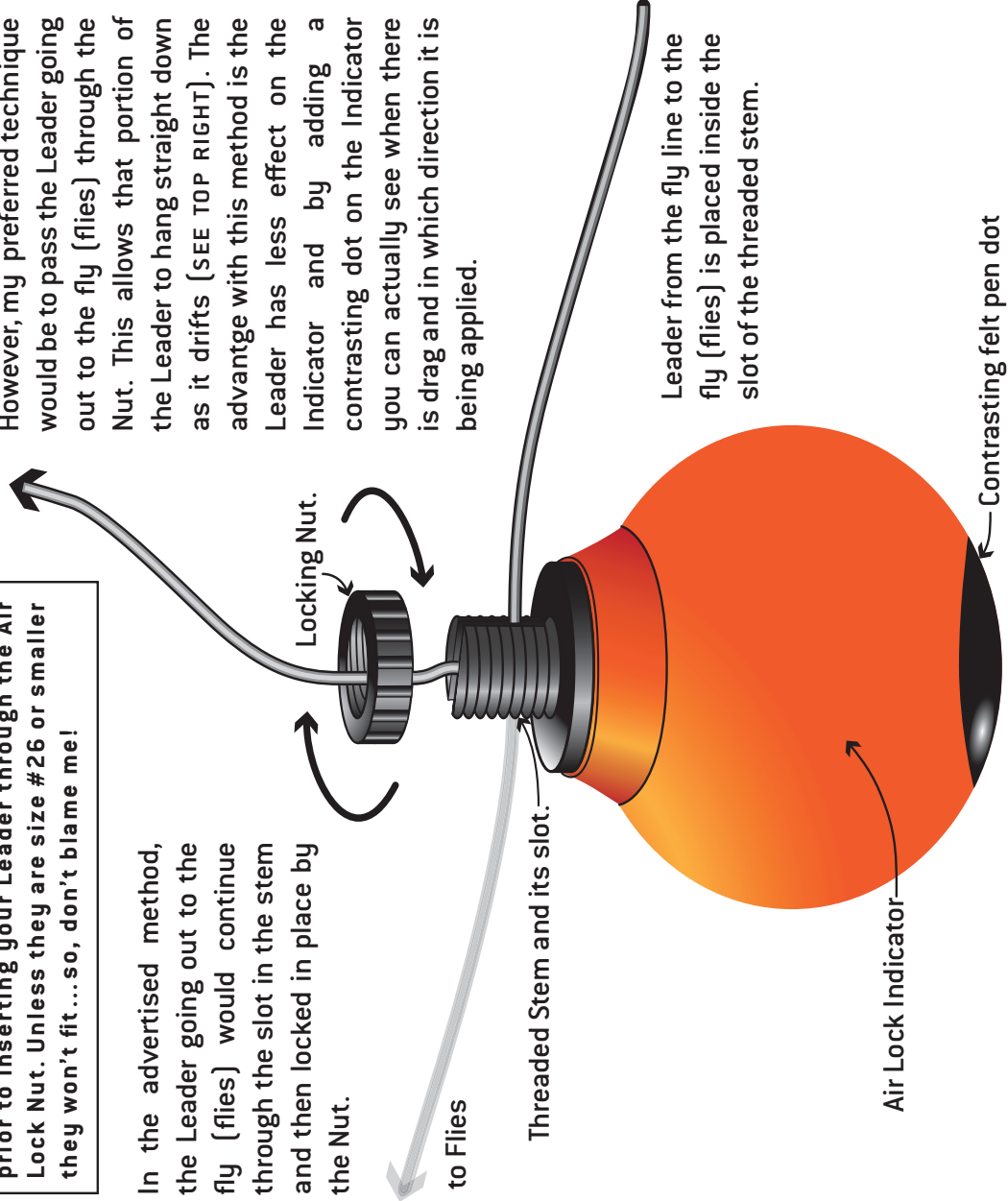
A New Way to Rig an Air Lock Indicator

WARNING!

It is highly suggested that you do NOT, under any circumstances, tie on your fly or flies prior to inserting your Leader through the Air Lock Nut. Unless they are size #26 or smaller they won't fit...so, don't blame me!

In the advertised method, the Leader going out to the fly (flies) would continue through the slot in the stem and then locked in place by the Nut.

However, my preferred technique would be to pass the Leader going out to the fly (flies) through the Nut. This allows that portion of the Leader to hang straight down as it drifts [SEE TOP RIGHT]. The advantage with this method is the Leader has less effect on the Indicator and by adding a contrasting dot on the Indicator you can actually see when there is drag and in which direction it is being applied.



On the Water

If your Indicator looks like this ...

PERFECT!

You're catching fish!

If your Indicator looks like this ...

NOPE – The Indicator is dragging the fly (flies)!

MEND RIGHT

If your Indicator looks like this ...

NOPE – The Fly (flies) is now dragging the Indicator!

MEND LEFT

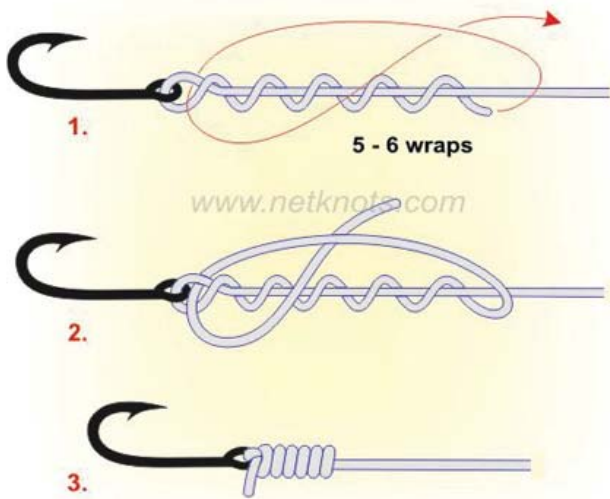
Knots

There are a zillion knots but we will concentrate on those you will use on the river. These websites have animated tying sequences:

http://www.netknots.com/fishing_knots/

<http://www.animatedknots.com>

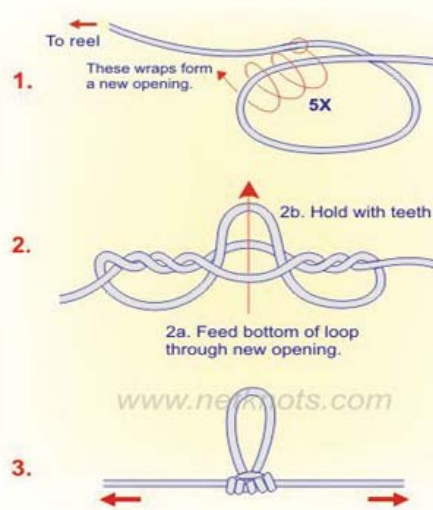
IMPROVED CLINCH KNOT



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www.netknots.com

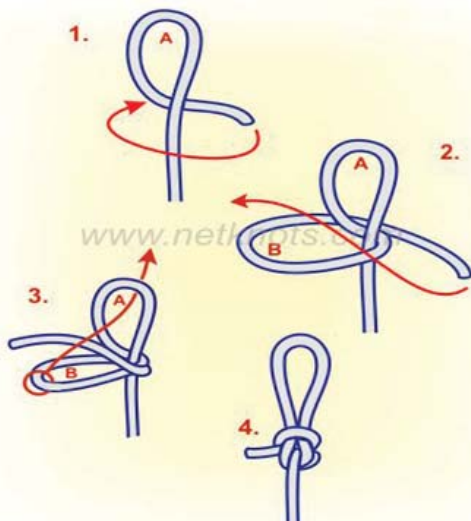
DROPPER LOOP



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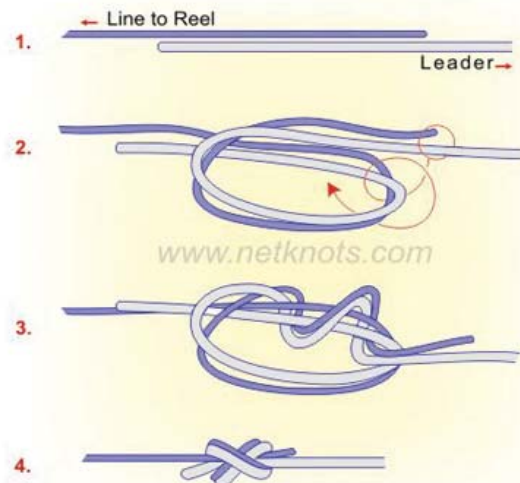
PERFECTION LOOP



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SURGEON'S KNOT



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