

Dredger's Summer Fly-Flinging Tips

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Seasonal Keys:

- Successful fly anglers key in on water temperatures, streamflows, and shade!
- Opportunistic fly-flingers aim for *more than just trout*.
- It's time for wet-wading, kayaks, and canoes.
- The USGS Real-Time stream gauges are invaluable:
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ga/nwis/rt>
- "How" is more important than "What"

Seasonal Opportunities:

1. Headwater Trout
2. Tailwater Trout
3. Warm Rivers
4. Small Lakes

1) Headwater Trout

a) Flies - "One Small Box"

Dry: #16 tan caddis, parachute adams, light cahill, para-ant, coachman trude – stuff you can SEE in the shade.

1. Wets: If you must, try a 12-18" dropper with a #16 prince or hare's ear, 16 black fur ant, 18 soft hackle pheasant tail, or 14 green weenie.

b) Equipment

Slogan: "a six foot rod and six foot leader." Wet wade with felt soles. Small pack or mesh vest with raincoat, flashlight, and water. Rod no longer than 7.5 feet, heavier tippets (4X) so you won't break off as many flies on overhanging branches. Bring a spool of 5x if they're picky, and some gink, a chamois cloth, and Frogs Fanny to refloat your dries.

c) Technique

Hunt. Stealth is king. Wear olive or camo clothes and stalk the pools and pockets. Roll cast and water-load. Get on your knees to find a casting lane thru the rhododendron tunnel.

d) Locales

Darn near any high elevation, headwater stream on the national forest has wild trout in all pockets and pools with a foot of water. Watersheds: West Fork Chattooga, Little T, Tallulah, Hooch, Cooper, Toccoa, etc. Jimmy Jacobs' book (trout fishing N GA), U.S. Forest Service and WRD maps, and old TU dudes are great guides.

e) Trophy Bonus

"Trophies" are relative. Nine inchers are whoppers in most headwater streams. Find the best habitat to grow fish (deep pools, logjams) and you might find a biggun'. Also, heavy rains spark the "earthworm hatch," so have a San Juan or two tucked in that fly box. Run to Smithgall if there's a storm coming on the radar and toss a big bugger or San Juan on 3X!

2) Tailwater Trout

a) Flies –

1. Dry: #14 Sulphur, 16-20 parachute adams, 16-20 tan caddis, 18-10 griffith's gnat.
2. Wet: Small (16-20) nymphs and soft hackle wets – pheasant tail, hare's ear, caddis larvae, zebra midge
3. When in doubt, call and visit the local fly shops. You're paying for their "advice."

b) Equipment.

Try a long (9-10 foot) and light (3-5 weight) rod for some delicate presentations and drifts.

c) Techniques.

1. Match the hatch with a dry.
2. Dry and long dropper (3-6 feet, with a #6 dinsmore a foot above the wet fly)
3. Double wets under a strike indicator, set at 2X the water depth. These are easy to adjust from spot to spot as your depths vary.

<http://www.basspro.com/Lightning-Strike-Football-Foam-Strike-Indicators/product/52935/>

d) Locales

1. Toccoa at Tammen Park and Curtis Switch Road. Better yet, do a float trip with lots of stops to wade, like the native American fish weirs and other riffle/pool interfaces.
2. Hooch Tailwater at Buford Dam and Jones Bridge. Great maps at Hooch NRA website.
3. **CAUTION**- dam discharges are dangerous. Know the generation schedule.

e) Trophy Bonus

1. During low light and/or rainy days, try stripping big streamers on 6-7 weight rods and aim for trophy browns in heavy cover. Match the hatch with baby brown and rainbow patterns.

3) Cool Rivers

a) Flies

1. Bottom: #4 hairy foddors (black, brown) bounced like a crayfish, #4-8 black or olive woolly buggers or mohair leeches, dead-drifted with an occasional twitch.
2. Mid-column: #4 olive or chartreuse over white clousers, the same woolly buggers (above), stripped. Got some "*Finn Raccoon?*"
3. Top: #4 Kent's Stealth Bomber, medium (4-6) bass poppers, and sliders for bass. Smaller (#10) versions of poppers and rubber spiders for bream. Colors: white, black, and fire tiger. These bugs **GOTTA have rubber legs!** Also, carry a hookless rope fly for gar.

b) Equipment

Use 6-7 weight rods to toss big flies and 5-6 weight rods for smaller ones. Use tippet heavy enough to prevent line twist from helicoptering flies.

c) Technique

Summer anglers can wet-wade, float, or combine the two. For fishing techniques, see the tips under "flies." Wets can be doubled up, so try a small clouser or leech dropped two feet off the back of your big bottom bouncer and strip in after your dead drift. Also try a *popper/dropper* technique by dropping a small bugger or big trout nymph 3-4 feet off the back of your surface bug. On surface bugs, especially during summer low water, cast toward fish cover (tree limbs, boulders, etc) and WAIT. Let the bug dead drift. You can twitch slightly every 10-15 seconds, just enough to wiggle the rubber legs. Don't strip and pop, as you may spook jittery fish in summer shallows as they dodge otters and herons. Also, and please memorize this, aim for **shade and shadows!!!**

d) Locales

Most larger rivers have an abundance of hungry summer predators including bass, bream, stripers, carp, and gar. Try the Coosa, Etowah, Chestatee, Hooch, Morgan Falls, and lower Chattooga.

<https://georgiawildlife.wordpress.com/2014/05/21/upper-chattahoochee-river-fishing-and-public-access-points/>

Some outfitters will even run float trips, or will at least shuttle you and your canoe/kayak.

Examples:

<http://wildwoodoutfitters.com/>

<http://www.canoegeorgia.com/>

e) Trophy Bonus

Schedule rotator cuff surgery first, then toss big flies on heavier rods if you wanna trophy hunt. Stripers also run out of warm reservoirs and into cool rivers for summer thermal refuge (Coosa, Etowah, Morgan Falls, Hooch, a few in Chestatee).

4) Small Lakes

a) Flies, Equipment, and Technique

- a. See the river flies, above. Also remember that the sun is hot on these open waters, so show up for the last two hours before dark and enjoy great fishing in the growing shadows. Check out the GAWRD fishing blog for summer reports and tips

b) Locales

These opportunities are abundant! Some places rent kayaks or canoes. Check out:

1. your neighborhood ponds and city park lakes with public access.
2. city/county water supply lakes, like Cedar Creek Lake in east Hall Co, Lake Zwerner in Dahlonega, and Latham Reservoir in Cherokee Co.
3. GA state park lakes like Unicoi, Black Rock, Yargo, Sweetwater, Vogel, and even Don Carter with its “Kayak Cove.”
4. small U.S. Forest Service lakes like Nancytown, Russell, Winfield Scott, and Conasauga.

c) Trophy Bonus

Small lakes often hold really big bass, so throw some big poppers or rainbow trout-colored streamers (in trout-stocked lakes) if you’d like to swing for a homer. Big sunfish go on the bed, too, so scout the shoreline for those bream beds (two-foot ovals of cleaned gravels on shallow flats) harboring hand-sized bream that will seriously bend your 5-weight rod.

Good luck with summer flyfishing fun for more than just trout. Give some of these other flavors a try and see if you like them as much as we do. In closing, thanks for buying your fishing licenses and GATU brookie car tags! Your dollars help fund our fisheries programs for you.

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WRD Fishing Blog: GeorgiaWildlife.wordpress.com