



TVFF Club News

December 2019



Dirty Santa Gift Exchange

TVFF Christmas Social December 19 @ 7 pm

The meeting in December will be replaced with the Club's Christmas Social. We will not have a speaker but will have lots of fish stories and refreshments.

This year there will be a Dirty Santa Gift Exchange (AKA White Elephant). Anyone interested in participating in the exchange should bring a wrapped gift (something related to fly fishing worth up to \$20). Come join the fun. [Click here for details.](#)

The Club will provide drinks and members are encouraged to bring their favorite munchies to share. See you there!

Updated Fishing Reports

[Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#) – Little River Outfitters (Daily)
[White and Norfolk Rivers](#) – Cotter Trout Lodge (Weekly)

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* The keyboard's HOME key returns you to this page

Welcome New Members

Bill Hurd
David Evans

This Month's Activities

- Dec 12 Fly Tying - 7pm Room 201
- Dec 19 Holiday Social 7 pm Rm 201
- Dec 26 No fly tying (Ho!, Ho!, Ho!)



BOD Minutes

BOD minutes are now available for review at the monthly meetings.

Members can read the minutes by simply asking the Club Secretary, David Hatfield.



TVFF Fly Tying Group

Due to the Christmas holiday, there will only be one fly tying session in December. David Mahlik will demonstrate tying a deer hair Christmas tree.

12 December- Featured Tyer: David Mahlik

Cost: \$2.00

Deer Hair Christmas Tree:

There is no hook in this "fly". It won't catch a fish but it makes a great table decoration or Christmas ornament. It also makes a unique and special gift. If you have tied this before then you know it is a lot of fun. If you haven't tied one then join us and find out for yourself.



All are welcomed! Fly tying equipment is available for new tyers. Come and discover the joy of catching fish on a fly you tied or even designed. Join us for 2 hour sessions held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 7 PM.



Catch of the Month

Mr. Dana Beyerle sent this picture of a nice rainbow from the Sipsey Fork.

“Caught and released this Sipsey River stocker recently near Entry Point 6 on a bead-head pheasant tail drifted into the only fast water on the stream at the time, due to low water. My net opening is 15 inches. 4 weight Redington” - Dana Beyerle.

You can e-mail your picture to editor@tvff.info or [Steve Kerkhof](#). Please include the fisherman's name, body of water, approximate date and any other interesting details (the same information that you like to see when you read Catch of the Month).



And check out this trophy caught by April Cunningham on the Madison river near Ennis Montana

2020 Board of Directors (and terms)

- President: Joe Tremblay (2019-2020)**
- Vice President: Connor Baker (2020-2021)**
- Secretary: David Hatfield (2020-2021)**
- Treasurer: David Mahlik (2019-2020)**
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- Education Director: Fred Kaufman (2020-2021)**
- Activities Director: Larry Hice (2019-2020)**
- Conservation Director: Corey Pedigo (2020-2021)**
- Communications Director: Steve Kerkhof (2019-2020)**

Johnny Chamness Award

The Johnny Chamness award is named in honor of a member who exemplified service to TVFF. Debbie Hill was the recipient in 2019. She is shown presenting the 2019 Johnny Chamness award to Ted Krona at the Annual Banquet on Nov. 8, 2019.



 **Madison County Lake**
November 18 at 9:00 AM · 🌐

Less than 2 weeks away 🗓️
#troutfishingcountdown
#madisoncountylake



👍👎👤 84 24 Comments 30 Shares

 Share

Madison County Lake

December 1 – January 31: The lake is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and trout fishing is available for a \$5 daily permit. Fishing for rainbow trout begins the day after Thanksgiving, and trout are stocked again in December and in January. Fish license requirements apply in addition to the daily Madison County Lake permit.

Please call the manager at (256) 776-4905 to verify the schedule before making the trip.

Gadsden, AL

1100 pounds of rainbow trout were stocked in Black Creek above Noccalula Falls on Nov 14th. Fishing requires an Alabama fishing license and a permit from Noccalula Falls Park. Permits cost \$9 per day or \$11 for 3 days. Fly rods only, artificial lures, barbless hooks. Catch and release until Feb.

1. More information is available at www.flyfishgadsdenal.com.



Dirty Santa Gift Exchange

Join the fun! Bring a gift wrapped of modest value (\$20 or less), either serious or gag gift, and be prepared to “steal” a more “desirable” gift as the game progresses. Gifts should be suitable for a mixed audience.

The more times a gift is stolen the greater the enjoyment, but remember, after a gift has been stolen 3 times, it's frozen and can no longer be stolen. So there is strategy involved. How to steal the gift you really want on that 3rd and final time?

Each game participant will receive a free ticket for the “Secret Santa” Gift drawing. So come and join us as we celebrate Christmas in a uniquely fly fishing way.

DIRTY SANTA

- Place wrapped gifts in the middle of the circle.
- Each guest draws a number.
- #1 chooses a gift, unwraps it, shows it off, and puts it on display. *Gifts must stay in view at all times and remain in their original packaging.*
- #2 chooses to either steal #1's gift or picks a new one.
- #3 chooses to steal #1 or #2's gift or selects a new gift.
- If #3 steals #1's gift, #1 can either steal #2's gift or choose an unopened gift.
- A gift can not be stolen back during the same turn. Example: If #3 steals #2's gift, #2 can not steal the gift back until the next turn.
- A gift can be stolen up to three times before it is frozen. *The gift is frozen with the fourth owner.*
- If #1 has the same gift they started with, *and no one has stolen from them*, they get to trade with any unfrozen gift.
- This is where the game ends! We hope it was filled with lots of laughter!

Ho! Ho! Ho!



Your Online Fishing Log



Fish Swami is fishing log software that allows you to enter detailed fishing information for each of your fishing trips in a quick and efficient manner. You can enter as little or as much information as you want in your fishing log. Once saved, your fishing logs can be searched, sorted, statistically analyzed, sent to friends, or printed.

[Sign in](#) or [Register](#) to start saving your fishing logs today - it's *free* and *private*!

River Midge Fishing Tactics

When I first started winter fly fishing on rivers, I had a preconceived notion that the rivers lacked winter hatches, so any fishing would have to be done with nymphs or streamers presented down deep to lethargic trout. The thought of insects hatching and trout actively feeding at the surface seemed like a distant memory. Surely no self-respecting insect would hatch when it was 20 degrees outside and the wind was howling. Snowy river banks, iced-up rod eyelets, numb fingers and frozen feet were the name of the game now.

I was surprised when I was introduced to midges and winter midge fishing on rivers for trout. In the middle of winter, trout would be rising to tiny bugs on the surface, even when the wind was ripping across the surface. I found that once good holding spots for trout were located, they could consistently be found feeding subsurface on midge pupa and rising to midge adults on a daily basis. On days when the sun was out, the temperature was in the 30s, and the wind was dormant, fishing could be very good indeed.

The spring season only seemed to amplify the good things from the winter: fish were more active due to warmer water temperature; the midge hatches were stronger; and the warmer air temperature made it a little easier to be outside all day. All I needed were successful tactics for catching these active trout.

Midge Lifecycle in Rivers

The first step in successful midge fishing is understanding basic entomology regarding the insect. Midges in rivers and lakes belong to the family Chironomidae and are also known as "Chironomids," especially to stillwater anglers. The adults look like an adult mosquito, but lack the mosquito's proboscis; thus, midges cannot bite. Midges undergo a complete metamorphosis, meaning they grow from an egg, to a larva, to a pupa, and finally to an adult.

Midge larvae are worm-like in appearance with no visible legs. While the slender, segmented larvae can be nearly any color, common colors are red, black, olive, and gray. The larvae are bottom-dwelling insects, often either living in tubes they build in silt and mud or living in silk-lined cases they attach to the river bottom. Midge larvae are important to trout (and subsequently anglers) because of what is known as behavioral drift. On a daily basis, the larvae abandon their protective cases and drift with the river's currents to a new location to find food. It is during this time that they are vulnerable to trout. For midge larvae, behavioral drift is highest at dawn and dusk.



Adult midges collect on a snowbank



Midge larva



Midge pupae retain the slender, segmented abdomen of their larval stage, but have large thoraxes and white gills at both their head and their bottom. They are fully-formed adult midges inside of their pupal shucks. Once ready to hatch, the midge pupae slowly swim and float to the water's surface, and are subject to predation the entire journey. The common pupae colors are similar to the common larvae colors: red, black, olive, and gray.

Once at the surface, midge pupae struggle to break through the water's rubbery meniscus. The surface tension traps the pupae momentarily. Once through, the adults hatch onto the water's surface. During a hatch, trout key in on this stage of the emerging midge because of its vulnerability.

The adult midge has two wings, long legs, and a long, slender abdomen. Adults can form mating clusters on the water's surface.

Finding Fish

In the winter, river flows are typically low and slow. Trout congregate in areas where they can minimize expended energy, find safety from predators, and still opportunistically feed. Two ideal places that meet these requirements are pools and deep back eddies. Shallow riffles will also hold trout; the broken water surface affords trout protection and the currents supply trout with food. With each of these water types, the lower water flows allow (and sometimes require) sight fishing to individual fish. Stealthy approaches and presentations may be necessary to successfully fool trout under these conditions.

Pools

Midge-feeding trout in a pool

Pools will likely hold the majority of trout in the winter time. The slow, deep water keeps the lethargic trout safe. A slight current through the pool can act as a conveyor belt of food to the trout, allowing them to feed while expending minimal energy. When trout are feeding on emerging midges and midge adults, they can hold very close to the surface, even in full sun.



Midge-feeding trout in a pool

Back Eddies

Back eddies are places along the river bank where the current flows back upstream along the bank. Trout will sit close to the bank and actually face downstream into the current. The back eddy will collect midge adults, crippled midges, or emerging midges on the surface; trout will sip these casually or swim side to side eating midge larvae and pupae in the water column. Not all back eddies will hold trout, however. If the back eddy is shallow, it needs to be connected to a deeper main channel to provide trout with an escape route should a predator appear. Optimal back eddies are those that are at least 2 feet deep and have a deep trough towards the middle of the river for the trout to retreat to.

Foam

With both pools and back eddies, a layer of foam floating on the water can provide trout with an added sense of security from aerial attackers. If you find a pool with foam collecting on top, watch the pool and wait for breaks or shifts in the foam to reveal any feeding trout sitting just under the water's surface. The foam will also capture midge adults and emerging midges, affording trout an easy, inescapable meal. Look for little dimples or trout noses poking through the foam as a sign of feeding trout.



Foam collecting in a back eddy



Shallow Riffles

Shallow, slow riffles offer trout an excellent feeding location for ascending midge pupae and emerging midge adults. The rippled water surface allows trout to sit in surprisingly shallow water while remaining relatively hidden. Optimum shallow riffles are those that feed into a deeper pool or run, or those that have a deeper main channel where trout can flee to when scared. When feeding, trout will not necessarily hold to the bottom of the river in these riffles because the current is not that strong. To spot fish, look to likely areas and stare at the river bottom for some time. Use polarized glasses to reduce the surface glare, focus on the bottom of the river, and wait for the active trout's movements to reveal the fish's location. The white of an open mouth, a dark silhouette parallel to the water current, or the silver flash of the fish's side are all signs of a fish.

Midge Pattern Setup, Presentations, and Techniques

I almost always use two flies when fishing midge patterns. The patterns are usually small and the trout are less willing to move to feed, so fishing multiple flies allows you to fish two current lanes, two water depths, or two insect stages at once. These methods will need to be adapted if fishing regulations prevent you from fishing multiple flies simultaneously.

Fishing an Adult and an Emerger

Pools and Back Eddies

When fishing a pool or back eddy where trout are sitting near the surface, fishing a tandem rig of an adult pattern and an emerging pattern can be deadly. The emerging pattern is sometimes invisible on the water's surface due to broken water or high surface glare, so the adult pattern works double duty as both an adult midge and a strike indicator. Fish the combination dead drift in the current, or let it sit motionless along the edge of a pool when trout are cruising and feeding. If you see a rise near your adult, wait briefly to see if your adult disappears. If it does, set the hook!



Midge adult and emerger patterns

I often fish the Griffith's Gnat as my adult pattern. It is a good floating fly, even in small sizes, and represents a cluster of midges on the water's surface. For a midge emerger, I recommend Scott Sanchez's Parachute Midge Emerger or a CDC Loop Tuft Emerger. Both patterns hang vertically in the water, yet are quite visible to the angler because of the tuft that sits above the water's surface. The CDC Loop Tuft Emerger is especially good in slightly broken water or swirling back eddies. The CDC is very buoyant and can bring the pattern back to the surface if it is swamped by a wavelet or pulled under by the tippet. I highly recommend using a product like Frog's Fanny desiccant to dry out the CDC tuft after catching a fish, or after the fly has started to sink.

To assemble the rig, first attach the dry fly to your 5x or smaller tippet. Then, attach an 18" to 24" strand of 5x or smaller tippet to the bend of the dry fly hook using an improved clinch knot. Attach the emerger pattern to the end of this tippet.

Fishing an Adult and a Shallow Nymph

Pools, Back Eddies, and Shallow Riffles

Fishing an adult pattern with a midge nymph pattern as a dropper is the most effective way I've found to fish to active trout feeding on midges. It is also one of the most exciting. The adult pattern catches the occasional fish, but more often than not the midge nymph will be the top producer. When fishing this rig, cast the flies ahead of rising trout or fish feeding in a back eddy or shallow riffle. Watch the dry fly intently – it will often disappear when the flies drift over a feeding trout. When it happens, set the hook!

With this tactic, trout are often partially or wholly visible to the angler during the entire presentation. In slower water, trout have time to take in your nymph pattern, taste it, and spit it back out without your dry fly



ever moving. As your skills progress with this technique, begin setting the hook when you see your targeted trout's mouth open, or you see the fish move to the side a few inches. These activities are signs that the fish has just taken your nymph. Quickly and fluidly set the hook; if the fish isn't on, false cast to the side and re-present your patterns to the fish. Catching a trout based solely on seeing it react to your fly, but never seeing an indication from your strike indicator or dry fly, is as good as it gets for me in fly fishing.



A big rainbow trout that fell for a well-presented shallow zebra midge dropper

Even when a pod of trout are feeding actively on the surface, they are usually very receptive to a sunken midge pupa pattern. I attach a tag of 5x or 6x tippet to the bend of the dry fly hook, then attach the midge nymph to end of the tag. The water depth, fish depth and water current speed dictate the length of the tippet tag. If trout are holding just under the surface in a pool, I will place the dropper 6" to 12" from the adult. If trout are 1' to 2' deep in the pool, or are sitting in a shallow back eddy, I will use a dropper length of 12" to 24". Occasionally, if the fish are suspended in a slow, deep riffle, I will use a dropper of up to 36". Anything deeper than that and I will switch tactics since it's unlikely that the adult midge pattern will be of any use.

My favorite midge larva/pupa pattern is the zebra midge. It is as simple a pattern as any, consisting of a bead head, thread body, and fine wire ribbing. On my local rivers, the predominant color of midge is black or dark olive, so I fish a black zebra midge at least 75% of the time. It is very successful.

An alternative way to fish a shallow midge larva or pupa pattern is to not use a dry fly at all, instead fishing one sunken fly and using a pinch-on float or strike putty on the leader to control the fly depth and determine strikes. It is easier to add a tiny splitshot to the tippet with this method to help sink the nymph, since the float will not sink with the added weight.

Fishing Two Shallow Midge Nymphs

Pools, Back Eddies, and Riffles

When fish aren't feeding at the surface or just underneath it, fishing a tandem midge nymph rig is an effective way to cover deeper water and catch active fish. This is an effective technique for covering riffles where fish can't be spotted, fishing to spotted fish that are sitting deep in a back eddy or pool, or blindly nymphing likely fish holding water. One of the benefits of this method of fishing is being able to vary pattern size and color to find a trout's preference.



Midge adult and emerger patterns

When rigging for this setup, I attach the first fly to the tippet, then attach a tag end of tippet to the eye of the first fly. I attach a second midge nymph 18" to 24" from the first fly. A pinch-on float attached to the leader above the first fly acts as both a strike indicator and a water depth regulator. I vary the location of the float based on the water depth, fish depth, and water current speed. When trout are actively feeding on midge pupa, I find that trout don't necessarily hold to the bottom of the river, so fishing the flies at or near the bottom isn't the best bet. I try to suspend the flies in the water column. If the current is fast enough, I'll add small splitshot to the leader 6" to 8" above the first fly. If I'm snagging the bottom or the indicator keeps twitching because the nymphs are bouncing along the bottom, I'll move the float closer to the first fly to keep the nymphs suspended.

I use zebra midges and disco zebra midgelings for most of my tandem midge nymphing. The disco zebra midgeling is more of an attractor midge pattern compared to the more-realistic zebra midge, and it can be deadly.

I have fished zebra midges to spotted, actively-feeding fish before that have snubbed multiple quality drifts. After changing flies to a disco zebra midgeling, the trout have moved a foot-plus out of their feeding lanes to aggressively take the pattern! It doesn't work all the time, but it's a pattern I wouldn't go fishing without.



Black and red are my standard colors for the pattern, but surprisingly a light blue disco zebra midgeling has proven very effective on multiple occasions.

Deep Nymphing

Deep Back Eddies, Faster Riffles

Deep nymphing with a midge nymph can be a useful fishing tactic. It is not one of my favorite tactics to employ when midge fishing simply because fish cannot be spotted and fished to individually. However, it can be more effective than the other tactics early or late in the day or when midges aren't hatching or active. For rivers with good stonefly populations, the large stonefly nymphs will be a trout staple during the winter and spring months when mayfly and caddis nymphs are either still eggs or microscopic in size. Try fishing a small zebra midge or disco zebra midgeling as a dropper 12" to 18" off a large stonefly nymph.

Midge Fishing Tips and Tricks

Adult midge patterns don't always float all that well. Nymph patterns used as a dropper off the adult can sink the adult, and swirling microcurrents in pools and back eddies can swamp the adult by pulling the leader under. I often attach a pinch-on float a couple feet up the leader from the adult. The float acts as an indicator for spotting your tiny dry fly as it floats in foam or riffles, and also keeps the leader from sinking and pulling the adult under.

When trout are rising under foam mats, two problems present significant obstacles to catching fish: presenting a fly that the fish can see, and presenting a fly that the angler can see. I often fish midge emerger patterns in these situations, like the parachute midge emerger or CDC loop-tuft emerger. Because these patterns ride vertically in the water, they will hang down below the surface of the water and foam, making an easy target to fish. One key is to cast your fly into breaks in the foam – if the fly lands on top of the foam, it will likely not be visible at all to the trout. Do not cast until you can present your fly on a patch of open water. The second obstacle is that once you've cast, it's nearly impossible to see your fly amid all of the foam and floating debris. I solve this by adding a small ball of strike putty a short distance up from the emerger pattern. The strike putty sticks out nicely against the mess, and provides a strike indicator if the fish takes the emerger without me seeing it.

Midge Patterns

I use the following patterns with regular success on my local tailwaters and freestone streams that feature good midge hatches in the winter and spring months. Modify the pattern colors to match local hatches. The light blue Disco Zebra Midgeling is a surprisingly effective attractor pattern at times. Tying instructions for the Disco Zebra Midgeling can be found [here](#).





COMPASS 360

TVFF welcomes our newest sponsor Compass 360, a local company that produces Outerwear, Rainwear and Wade wear products for the U.S. Outdoor, Sporting Goods and Power Sports markets.

Compass 360 also has their own brand available on their website with a whopping 25% discount for TVFF members. You'll find quality waders, wading boots, rain gear and accessories and free shipping on orders over \$50.

For a limited time, Compass 360 is selling last year's models and overstocked merchandise at ridiculously low prices at their Huntsville location on [Short Pike Rd.](#) Wading boots for \$20, waders from \$40 to \$100, rain gear from \$5 are some examples. **(Discount does not apply to sale items)*

Don't delay, this sale wont last long.



Fill-A-Box

Faith Presbyterian Church sponsors this program to assist seniors in our community that are identified as food insecure. Please help TVFF support this worthwhile activity by bringing one item from the list below to the next meeting.

- 1 box of low-sugar, high fiber CEREAL
- 1-2 boxes of instant OATMEAL
- 1-2 boxes of BREAKFAST BARS
- 4-5 cans of TUNA, HAM, CHICKEN
- 6-8 cans of low-sugar FRUIT
- 6-8 cans of SOUP
- 6-8 cans of low-salt VEGTABLES
- 3-5 boxes of LOW-PREP MEALS (Hamburger Helper, Mac n Cheese)
- 2-3 bottles/jars of Condiments (mayo, ketchup, oil, etc.)
- 1 jar of PEANUT BUTTER
- 1-2 packs of SNACKS/DESSERT



Fill-A-Box



TVFF Job Jar YOU CAN HELP!

Click on a Job listed below and send an email to volunteer or to obtain additional information.

This is your opportunity to support TVFF without signing up for a long term commitment.

Your help is needed and greatly appreciated.

[Manage the TVFF Job Jar](#) - Update this page monthly and coordinate requests.

[Provide flies for the TVFF Casting for Recovery \(CfR\) Fly Box](#) – Tie or purchase 14 flies of the same pattern for the TVFF CfR Fly Box. Contact the [TVFF program manager](#) prior to selecting the pattern to avoid duplicates. Fly boxes will be donated annually.

CfR provides free healing retreats for women breast cancer survivors in various stages of treatment and recovery. CfR's retreats offer women opportunities to find inspiration, discover renewed energy for life, and experience healing connections with other women and nature.

[Club News Contributor](#) - Provide the Communication Director content of interest geared toward our members such as activities, articles, trip reports, etc.

[Official TVFF Photographer\(s\)](#) - Photograph TVFF events and email photos to the Communication Director.

[Safety Pin Flies](#) - Tie some safety pin flies to be given to visitors at TVFF outreach activities. This simple to tie pattern is very popular with younger visitors. Demand is always great and outstrips our supply; we never have enough.

[Manage TVFF Calendar](#) - Update TVFF Google Calendar with events provided by BOD.

Decembrrr Holidays

Alabama Day

December 14th

Alabama Day is a holiday celebrated on December 14. It commemorates Alabama's admission to the Union as the 22nd state on December 14, 1819. The Alabama Legislature adopted a resolution calling for the observance of the day in 1923, at the urging of the Alabama Department of Education and Alabama Department of Archives and History.



Answer the Phone Like

Buddy the Elf Day

December 18th

This comes from the movie Elf starring Will Ferrell as Buddy the elf. In the movie he answers the phone "Buddy the elf, what's your favorite color? "

This is the time of year when you are likely to see the movie on TV. Check it out and if you like it then answer the phone like Buddy on December 18th.



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