Fishing Midges in Central Oregon Lakes
What is a midge?

- Insect, Diptera (true flies), Chronomidae
- > 2,500 species in NA
- Larva, pupa & adult stages
- Life history
- Midges numerous in stillwaters (10,000 to 50,000/sq yd)
Why fishing midges is important to anglers

- 1st and most prolonged hatch of the fishing season; hatches can occur year round
- Fish like midges - Canadian trout diet composition: Spring 50%, Summer 22%, Fall 23%, Year Round 39%
- Midges common in all CO lakes & reservoirs
Where & When to fish midges

• All CO lakes, reservoirs, and ponds; some better than others
• March – June & Sept. – Oct. are best
Equipment

• Watercraft – Pontoons, prams, and boats are best; be flexible to move
• Need an anchor
• Sonar helpful
• Tackle
  5-6 wt, 9-10’ rod
  Good quality floating line
  Level leaders vs. Tapered leaders
  Fluorocarbon tippets preferred
• Good selection of flies
• Throat pump with sample jars
Fishing Methods

- Strike Indicator
- Naked/ Wind Drift & Strip
- Sinking Line
- Clothes Line
- Dry/Emerger/Dropper
- 2 Rods?
- Always use non-slip loop knots
Fishing Retrieves

- Long, straight casts; play the wind
- No retrieve – let it sit!
- Twitch’n’sit (3, 6” pulls, wait 10 secs)
- Steady retrieve – go slower than slow (5’/2 min)
- Drift flies in the wind; slow retrieve
Determining & Matching the Hatch

• Understand midge biology – Lakes vs. Streams
• Look for midges in lake-side vegetation, bird activity, shucks, and “rings”
• Fish activity & rise forms
• Hatch timing – AM vs. PM; time of year
• Throat pump findings
Fly Patterns – Midge Larva

- Color – Red, Cream, Green
- Size – Size 10-16 (14 best for CO), 3xl
- Profile – Slender, segmented
- Season – Early Spring & Late Fall
- Time – Mid-day is best
- Moon – Days 26-3 (new moon) is best, peaks on Days 8-11, 15-17, 21-23
Midge Lava
Fly Patterns – Midge Pupa

• Color – Bodies – black, green, olive, maroon, gray, brown, silver tinsel; Ribs – silver, gold, copper, red
• Size - 8-16 (14 best for CO); Curved vs. Straight hook
• Profile – Slender, tapered abdomen; bulbous thorax; gills vs. no gills
• Season – Any time; Spring if best, Fall OK
• Time – Early AM, peaks in mid-PM
• Moon – Days 27-7 (new moon) is best; Days 10-12 OK
Midge Pupa
Fly Patterns – Midge Emerger & Adults

• Color – Black, Green, Olive and Brown
• Size – 8-16 (14 is best)
• Profile – Dry Fly and Emerger
Adult Midge
Fishing Strategies – My Approach

- Observed midge activity vs. No activity
- Fishing reports
- Look for boats; COF Channel 5-5
- Past experience & Journal
- Weather conditions & Moon phase
- Water body, depth & bottom composition
- Sonar readings
No Observed Midge Activity (Early AM)

- No visible midge hatch
- No fish feeding on or near the surface
- Shucks may or may not be in surface film
- Little or no bird feeding activity
- Sonar indicates fish near lake bottom
- Midges in throat sample – Maybe
Observed Midge Activity (Mid-Am & PM)

- Midges “popping” & flying
- Fish occasionally feeding on or near the surface
- Shucks visible in water surface
- Birds feeding
- Sonar indicates fish throughout water column
- Midges in throat sample
My Approach – No Observed Midge Activity

Rod 1

• Strike indicator rig
• 2 flies, 18” apart
• Point fly - Bloodworm or black/red wire rib pupa (14) set 18” from bottom
• Dropper – Black/Silver wire pupa (14)

Rod 2

• Naked/wind drift & Strip
• 3 flies, 24” apart
• Point fly – Bloodworm (14); usually weighted
• Dropper 1 (closest to the rod) – Black/Silver rib pupa (14)
• Dropper 2 – Black/Red rib pupa (14)
• Leader length (Fly Line to Point Fly) – 1.25x water depth
My Approach – Observed Midge Activity

Rod 1

• Strike indicator rig
• 2 flies
• Point fly – 18-24” from Lake Bottom – Black/Silver rib pupa (14)
• Dropper – 18-24” from Lake Surface – Chromie (14)

Rod 2

• Dry/Emerger/Dropper
• Dropper – Chromie (14) 12-18” from hook bend
• Dry/Emerger – Boticoon, Ugly Duckling (14) or Tom Thumb (12)
• Leader- Tapered leader, Monofilament tippet

Rod 3

• Clothes Line rig
• 2 or 3 flies, 24” apart
• Droppers – Black/Silver rib pupa; Chromie; Shipman’s Buzzer, or Boticoon
• Point fly – Small Corkie or Boobie Fly
Want to know more about fishing midges?

- Books and DVDs
- Internet
- Talk with experienced anglers
Questions?
Rigs for Lake Midge Fishing

INDICATOR RIG

WF Floating Line → 8# Mono → No. 12 Black Barrel Swivel → Midge #1 → Midge #2

(Place depth of indicator such that Midge #2 is 12-18" from lake bottom)

NAKED RIG

WF Floating Line → 5' Tapered Leader (1X Fluorocarbon) → 2' - 4' 6# Fluorocarbon → Midge #1 → Midge #2 → Midge #3

(Distance from tip of fly line to Midge #3 = 1.25X depth of water)

DEEP WATER RIG

Type 3 Sinking Line → 5' 6# Fluorocarbon → Midge #1 → Midge #2

(Set depth of Midge #2 such that it is 12" from lake bottom)

CLOTHES LINE RIG

WF Floating Line → 4-5' Tapered Leader (1X) → 2' 6# Mono → Midge #1 → Midge #2 → Midge #3

(Corkie Indicator)

5 - 10" 6# Fluorocarbon Droppers