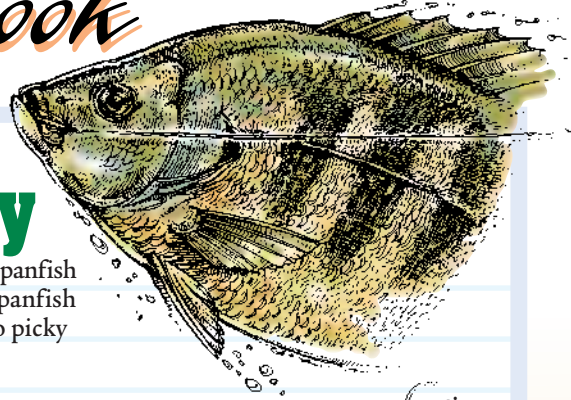


SMART

Angler's Notebook

by Carl Richardson

illustrated by Ted Walkke



Panfish on the Fly

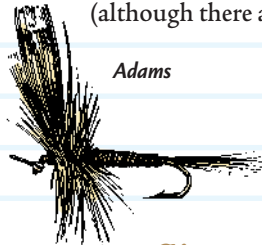
Insects and other small invertebrates are a big part of many panfish diets. Often, when they are keyed in on these prey items, panfish will take only flies. Unlike trout, though, they aren't too picky (although there are rare exceptions).



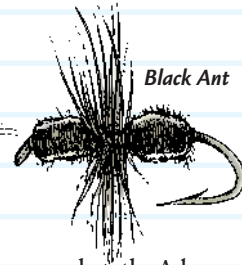
Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear



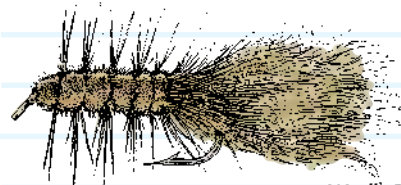
Beadhead



Adams



Black Ant



Woolly Bugger

Wet flies

Woolly Bugger. No angler should be without this fly in size 6 and smaller. Color selection should include brown, black, olive, purple and even chartreuse. Panfish will eagerly take this buggy-looking fly. They probably think it is an immature nymph or larva, or a small baitfish.

Nymphs. Patterns such as the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear, beadheads, or any nymph that looks buggy will take panfish. Carry these patterns in size 12 and smaller.

Traditional wet flies. Panfish can't resist a wet fly swimming toward the water's surface, especially during a hatch of bugs. These patterns should be in everyone's box. Try them in size 12 and smaller in a variety of light and dark colors.

Dry flies

Traditional patterns such as the Adams, Light Cahill and Elk Hair Caddis are all that's needed to match the hatch for panfish. These patterns in sizes 12, 14 and 16 should cover most of the important bugs.

Terrestrials. One of the best flies for bluegills is the sponge-bodied spider. The sponge body floats well, and the rubber legs drive the fish crazy. Carry these flies in sizes 12 and 14 in white, green and yellow. Black ants and crickets also take panfish.

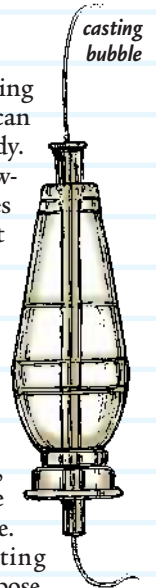
Poppers

These flies have bodies made of cork, foam or spun deer hair. The popping and splashing grab the attention of nearby fish, and usually they can't resist. Who cares what the fish think they are—they catch fish! You should carry at least white and black poppers, but colors such as green, yellow and brown also catch fish.

Fishing tackle

Lightweight fly rods, casting 2-weight to 4-weight lines, can be fun, except when it's windy. Most of the time, rods throwing 4-weight to 6-weight lines are the best. Leaders don't have to be long and thin, about 7 feet tapering to 2X or 3X should do it.

Spinning or spincast gear can also be used to throw flies. Clip a small (3/4-inch) bobber about 6 inches to a foot above the fly. Actually, you are casting the bobber—the fly just goes along for the ride. There are a couple of casting bubbles made just for this purpose. They work even better.



casting bubble

