

The Osprey Fly Box

“The Triple A”

By Darren Smith

This month **Darren Smith** comes to the rescue again with a fly for the back page of the newsletter. As you probably know, Darren spends a lot of time on the waters of the Fraser Valley. Hardly a weekend goes by he’s not out somewhere flinging flies to a quarry of one sort or another, whether it be steelhead, salmon, or his favourite, cutthroat trout. He fishes more locally than most of us working stiffs for sure, and as is to be expected when you anything as much as he fishes for cutties, you get pretty good at it. Following is his description of the fly he uses for imitating the black winter stonefly.

“The black winter stonefly never ceases to amaze me. Fishing a stonefly nymph in the winter months can be productive, but I truly enjoy fishing the adult variation. On a snowy cold winter day between February and April one can observe the peak hatches of “winter stones” hatching along the rivers edge and returning to the water to lay their eggs after mating.”

“On occasion, I’ve cast to cutthroat slurping the adult winter stones off the surface. With limited success I would take a few cutthroat on a streamer pattern from a school comprised of a dozen or so fish. There was times though where I’ve experienced the frustration of finicky cutthroat when these opportunistic trout become quite selective in what they choose to feed on, when they focus solely on the stonefly adult. I first started out fishing a black tom thumb but I found the pattern to be a little too bulky. I needed a fly that had a slim profile, yet would sit high on the water. The spun deer hair body, inspired by the Irresistible Adams kept the fly up high and offered the slim profile. I always have a few “Triple A” patterns tucked away in my flybox along with my nymph patterns.”

“Fellow club member **Terry Robinson** and I headed out early one February morning, the plan was to head east and fish back towards home. Through the course of the day we hit many locations with only sporadic luck, we decided to try one last spot close to home before we called it a day. As we walked along the dike we could see a few cutthroat working a small gravel bar in about three feet of water. As we stood observant on the grassy bank, the swirls became more and more numerous and much to our delight, the cutthroat were rising to black winter stones! I had just the fly for the job and gave Terry a “Triple A” to try. He fired a short up and across cast with one quick mend was immediately into a fish, his first cutthroat trout ever taken on a dry fly! Between Terry and myself, we released more than a dozen cutthroat in just over an hour. It did not last long, as quickly as the cutthroat trout appeared, the rises finally ceased and the fish had moved on in their typical nomadic ways. Terry and I had a great time while it lasted, what a wonderful way to finish off a day “cutthroating” in the Fraser Valley.”

Darren suggests a standard dry fly presentation, fished “dead drift” using casts that keep your fly drag free.

Hook: 80000BR Mustad dry fly hook, size 12-14
Thread: 8/0 black Uni-Thread
Tail: 4-6 strands dyed black deer hair
Body: Dyed black deer hair, spun and clipped to shape
Wings: Dyed grey or natural mallard flank, split
Hackle: Black saddle hackle

