

# ENTOMOLOGY EXPOSED

## PART I – THE FLIES OF MARCH AND APRIL

We've acquired Pettiford Brook; what next? Well, none of us know at the moment, but we can make some well informed guesses. In part one I will deal with flies that are evident in March and/or April with my expectations of their likely existence on our water.

We'll begin with the "Mayflies", the upwing flies or, to give them their scientific name, the "Ephemeroptera". This literally means "short time on the wing", due to the fact that they live only a day as fully developed flies. This order is characterised by two large upright wings, two small hindwings in most species and either two or three tails. The general outline is as shown in fig 1.

The first fly I would expect would be the large dark or spring olive (*Baëtis Rhodani*). This has an olive coloured body, large grey forewings, and two small oval hindwings with a prominent spur (fig 2). These are common flies and are on the wing during March and April and again in September and October. The best imitation I know is Skues Rough Olive. A good alternative is the Olive Quill. These patterns can be very useful as one of the most common flies, the olive upright (*Rhithrogena Semicolorata*), which shows from late April to the end of July is very similar. Check this fly by looking for the little brown streak in the middle of the top section of the foreleg.

The next fly I will mention is the March Brown (*Rhithrogena Haarupi*). This is on the wing from mid March to mid May. However, it is a rather uncommon species and favours large stony rivers. It is unlikely to be found on Pettiford brook but as there are any number of brown speckled bugs, insects and the like in streams its imitations can be very useful, especially fished as a wet fly. The best way to identify it is to look for an upwing fly with mottled brown wings and the brown mark in the middle of the top section of the foreleg. This is the mark of the *Rhithrogena* species, only two of which occur in Britain.

The other member of this order of flies that hatches in March or April is the Large Brook Dun (*Ecdyonurus Torrentis*). This hatches on small stony streams but I feel it is not likely to occur on Pettiford Brook. However, it is very similar to the march Brown without the leg mark, and a March Brown pattern will suffice.

Terrestrial flies that can be seen on the water at this time are the Black Gnat (*Bibio Johannis*) and Hawthorn (*Bibio Marci*). The black gnat of the angler is really a number of species which are similar. It is a common fly which can be blown onto the water on breezy days. The Hawthorn (Fig 3) is like a large black gnat with trailing legs. Although there are specific patterns for the hawthorn, a black gnat pattern will prove effective.



Fig 1



Fig 2



In addition to the above there will be freshwater shrimp (*Gammarus Pulex*) in the water. These can form a large part of the fishes' diet and there are many patterns to imitate it, one of which is included at the end.

Beetles will form part of the trout's food but as there are so many species it would not be practical to bother about individual species. A general pattern of some repute is Eric's Beetle.

There may well be a number of stoneflies (fig 4), two patterns being sufficient. These will cover the yellow sally (*Isoperla Grammatica*) which is very common and can be recognised as it flutters across the water with its bright yellow body and wings, and "the other species", which are similar to one another except in size. These "other species" are predominately brown and vary from 5mm to 25 mm in length.

Sedge flies, which are common on most rivers are strangely absent at this time of the year.

The patterns:

	<b>Rough Olive</b>	<b>Olive Quill</b>	<b>March Brown (wet)</b>
<b>Hook:</b>	14UE	14UE	12DE
<b>Tails:</b>	Dark olive cock fibres	Medium olive cock	Speckled partridge
<b>Body:</b>	Olive Heron herl	Olive stripped peacock	Hare's fur, dubbed
<b>Rib:</b>	Fine gold wire	None	Yellow silk or gold wire
<b>Wings:</b>	Dark starling	Dark starling	Hen pheasant wing
<b>Hackle:</b>	Dark olive cock	Medium olive cock	Brown partridge
	<b>Black Gnat</b>	<b>Eric's Beetle</b>	<b>Shrimp</b>
<b>Hook:</b>	16UE	12DE	12DE
<b>Tails:</b>	None	Yellow body floss showing	None
<b>Body:</b>	Black floss silk	Peacock over yellow floss	Orange floro floss
<b>Rib:</b>	Black tying silk	None	Silver wire
<b>Wings:</b>	Starling sloping back	None	None
<b>Hackle:</b>	Black cock	Black hen (2 turns)	Ginger cock
	<b>Stonefly</b>		<b>Yellow Sally</b>
<b>Hook:</b>	12UE		14UE
<b>Tails:</b>	None		None
<b>Body:</b>	Dark hare & yellow seal		Pale yellow wool
<b>Rib:</b>	Yellow tying silk		Primrose tying silk
<b>Wings:</b>	Hen pheasant tied low over body		None
<b>Hackle:</b>	Black cock		Pale yellow or ginger

In part II we will look at the flies of May – an abundant time of the year!

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