

## The Midge

### By Kevin Brennen

It does not sound intimidating. It does not sound aggravating. It sounds like something that is cute (and microscopic). But, if you have ever fished in the winter in a tail water or any western stream, you need to know how to fish it. It can be the most productive pattern at certain times of the year and a good pattern the rest.

The reason the midge is so popular with the fish is they are always there. At any given time you can go to a river and find large numbers there and available to the fish. You might be asking yourself, "How can a twenty-inch rainbow get filled up eating size 20 or 22 midges?" I will put it this way. Have you ever eaten popcorn? It's not that much, if you only eat one piece, but after a bowl or two, you should be full. The same holds true for the Midge and they are there by the bowl full.

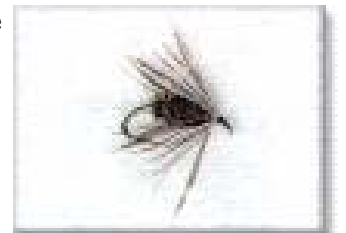
The hardest part of fishing the Midge is tying the damn thing on. Past that, it is as simple to fish as anything else that you would throw. If you are going to fish it sub-surface, a strike indicator (bobber) is a must, unless you are fishing a micro-stream (less than 10 feet wide). If you are going to fish the midge dry and your eye sight is not what it used to be, there are two options. First, place a sight fly in front of the midge. Anything that you can see will work. But

try to keep it as small as you can so as not to spook the fish, but still big enough that you can see it. If you see a rise behind your first fly, set the hook. The second method is easier for me. I just cast out the fly in a line as straight as possible and, if I see a rise within six foot circle of where I think my fish is, I set the hook. I get to practice my casting (a lot).

As far as your equipment, you can fish a midge on any rod that you would usually fish trout. It's nice if you have the option to fish it on a slow 2, 3, or 4 weight, but you don't have to have one. When I fish out west, I fish a 9 foot 6 weight (fast). I will run a nymph rig with a midge as a dropper. And, for the record, I pick up most of my fish on the midge. The first fly usually gets the fish's attention, then comes the piece of popcorn, and it's time to eat. Once again, you might be asking yourself, "Self, how in the world can that little number 20 hold that monster twenty-plus fish?" Well, how many of us have been walked around the house by our mother holding on to our ear lobe? If you get a hold of a good handle, you can hold on to anything. The hooks are small enough that they usually don't hook up until they are on the way out. Which gives you a bunch of hook-ups in the corner of the mouth where there is plenty of good skin.

One thing that you will need to pick up is a couple of spools of tippet that are completely useless for anything else other than fishing these micro flies. I would be carrying 6x 7x and yes, even 8x.

If you have never even entertained the idea of fishing the midge, you need to try it. You will learn to appreciate the Stonefly and Salmon fly hatches. But more than that, it will help you catch fish when nothing else seems to work.



Examples of several midge patterns

