

MUSKEGON RIVER HATCH CYCLE



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UPDATED 2017

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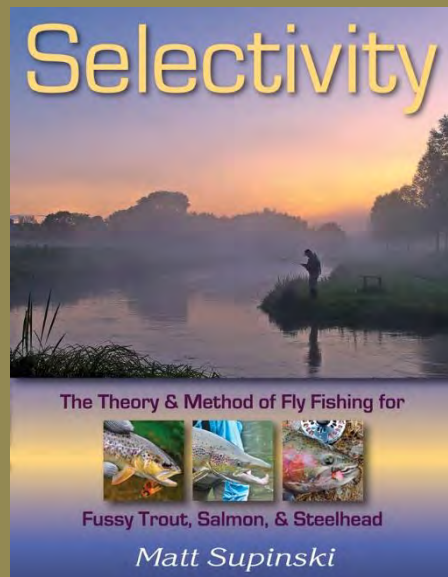
FACEBOOK PAGES :  #Matthew Supinski # Gray Drake and Trout and Eagle # Selectivity TSS

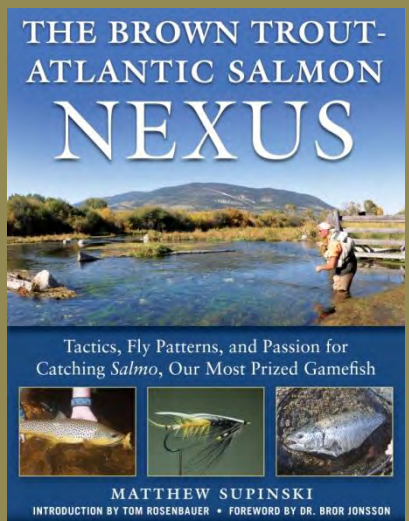
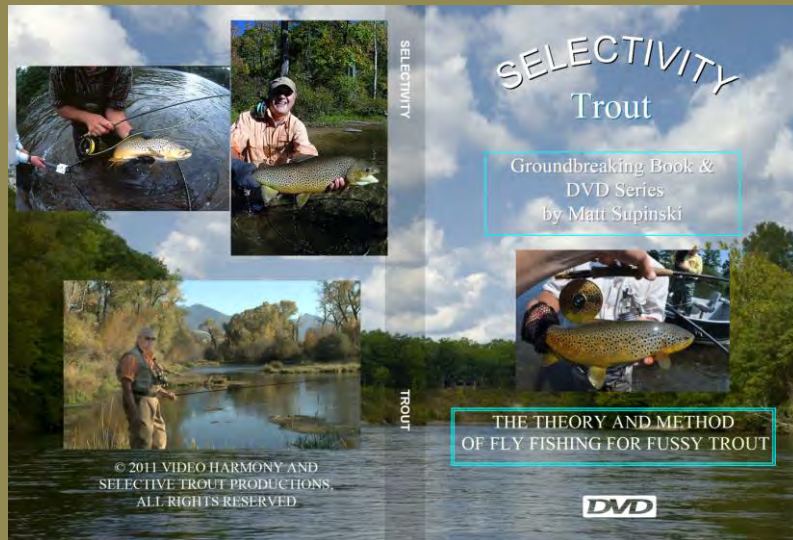
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The Muskegon is a very intricate and complex/ fertile eutrophic aquatic insect system. Its trout can be very selective since the number of hatches and at times densities can be very prolific and year round. Having guided for 20 years on these waters, the hatches are changing and getting more diverse yearly with the changes from the zebra mussels, cool water bubbler and a gradual increase in vegetation which favors clinging mayflies. The zebra mussels are on the decline in a significant way and the water has the traditional peat/tea stain of Michigan Rivers emanating from pine and cedar bogs. The water is quite unusual from other freestone rivers in that it is somewhat more on the alkaline side which favors massive mayfly, stonefly and

caddis growth- also midges, scuds and sow bugs. Caddis thrive in great numbers from the plankton loads of the reservoirs and are the staple food source which give the river's browns and rainbows amazing growth rates in addition to massive bait fish, steelhead, sucker and salmon fry and eggs. I personally am a hatch matching dry fly trout fanatic!

JAN/FEB/MARCH/APRIL

MIDGES/SCUDS

No matter how cold the winter gets, Simulium and chironomid midges hatch with black body midges with grizzly hackle imitating the dries and trout are heavily focused on them. The larva are brass, black and red in color and average between a size 20 and 24. A Black buzzer midge-black body/ silver tinsel, or a brassie with a hares ear thorax and Pearl flash wing case are deadly when nymphed with a scud or tiny green caddis larva. Scuds are pale gray and green and average around a size 18-make sure you have a bronze shell back blood vein on your imitations. The scuds scurry around on warm afternoons along with the midges and dry fly imitations with 7x tippet is necessary.





EARLY BLACK STONEFLIES

Allopnia and Taeniopteryx little black stones will start migrating in biological drift towards the shorelines by middle February. These little wiggling black stones are very obvious steelhead fishermen on warm sunny days. They call upon the banks, mate and come back as ova positing females on warm sunny afternoons in March and April- I'm colder springs they'll extend to the early part of May. A CDC dun winged adult with black body and palmered grizzly hackle for the head, and Oliver Edwards Black

stones are the ticket for success.





MAY/JUNE

This is the prime mayfly and some caddis emergence timeframe where the trout, after having been gorged on salmonid fry and eggs -- in addition to sucker spawn, are now ready to feed heavily on the surface. Water temperatures in the 50s and 60s are ideal for most of the mayflies.

EARLY QUILLS

The *Leptophlebia cupida*- black quills, and *Epeorus pleralis*-Qill Gordon, are grayish black body segmented size 10-12 mayflies and appear around May 10th and last for two weeks maximum. They are not a big Hatch by no means tend to be found from Carmichael flats down to below Henning park - look for them on the warmer afternoons into early evening as they spin and get above the water.



SULPHERS

The Muskegon's sulfur Hatch can be pretty significant and starts around the third week in May and continues through June. Ephemerella Invaria -a size 16 yellow-green body and light dun wings are usually favored by the trout as emergers, with the rusty spinner happening at dark or early mornings on very hot days. The smaller Ephemerella dorotheas-size 18/20, are not a very big Hatch on this River and usually emerge the first and second week in June.



STENONEMA

This mayfly family has a huge presence on the Muskegon. Stenonema Ithaca/ canadense- the Light Cahill, hatches in June and it will continue well into September. They are a size 14 all-white mayfly and they are easily picked off by the trout and swallows as well. The Stenonema vicarium, the American March Brown, looks like a giant sulfur with mottled wings and Hatches about the same time with this sulphurs being a true size 12. Cottonwood flats and downstream sees the most significant numbers.

DRAKES/HEX

Without doubt the Siphonorus gray drakes can have massive spinner flights at dark and sometimes during cloudy old days and are a true size 10 or 12. They call upon the banks to emerge in the brackish water in the spinner flights occur over the riffles prior to dusk. Colder rainier springs tend to have the best hatches. They start around the third week in May and have been known to go all the way into the third week of July on the cooler summers. The larger trout will target the double and triple mating patterns-tied on a small streamer hook. The Ephemera simulans- the Brown Drake, is gaining in numbers by the years, but is not a consistent Hatch and not enough density.

The Hexaginia Hatch was almost nonexistent when I first started guiding on the River. It is now starting to make a stronghold along the tall silted banks in the upper and lower River and also by the dam where the spinners come out of Croton pond. Croton and Hardy reservoirs and Bigalow creek have massive hex hatches as does the lower river.

ISONYCHIA



The lead-winged coachman- bicolor and sadleri, are the new super Hatch and start around the first week in June and emerge sporadically until September- the late fall Hatch is becoming coming stronger each year. Their meaty bodies wiggle and swim through the water like fast-moving minnows- a down across swinging approach is highly targeted by these large mayflies which emerge with the gray drakes. The large spinner flights will usually be very high up in the air above the gray drakes. On the Muskegon a hatch from the water and do not crawl up on the land

BLUE WINGED OLIVES

The spring sees the Drunella and Baetis olives- #14-18, and the numbers of flies varies from year to year. The larger Drunella starts about the middle of May, and the Baetis will be more prominent in June. When they are on the water they are targeted due to the slow emergence speed.

CADDIS

Hydropsyche bifida- the cinnamon caddis-size 16, start around the second week in May and will have significant afternoons spinner egg laying flights. The micro black caddis can be very heavy and make it

impossible for you to breathe from the mid-May through June at dusk. These tiny size 20 black caddis will lay tiny little green eggs on your waders and oars of your drift boat and the trout stomachs will be packed with them.

CRANE FLIES/MIDGES

Though midges Hatch year round, the yellow Crane flies-size 16, Hatch along with the sulfurs and are often confused as such. The midges still Hatch every day the trout target the larger mayflies.

PTERONARCYS STONES

The giant black stoneflies can be seen sporadically hatching on June evenings but are not a major Hatch. Fishing large stoneflies after dark is effective on all Michigan Rivers since it is a meaty piece of food like the Hellgrammites.

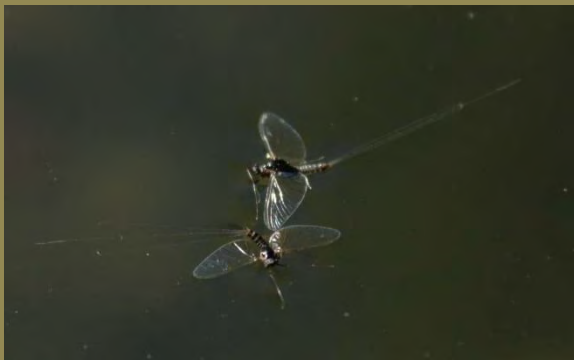
GOLDEN STONES

This hatch has really been gaining momentum over the years and significant numbers are occurring from mid-June through the summer months- they are late night and early morning mating and emerging stones. They are true size 12-14 in their best imitated with amber yellow stonefly nymph patterns

JULY/AUGUST /SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

TRICORYTHODES

The trico hatch really exploded last summer on early mornings from the dam down to Henning Park and the trout targeted them in a big way since the night time release of the bottom draw bubbler had the most significant impact at first light. They are a true size #24 – fish double patterns for the lazy and well fed Muskegon trout.(AS OF 2016!- THIS HAS BECOME A SUPER HATCH ON THE MUSKEGON)



BLUE WINGED OLIVES

Summer and well into November sees the massive hatches of Pseudocleon tiny bwo's- size 24-26. They are evening emergers and spinners and stack up by the thousands in the backwater reverse current Eddys of the deep silted pools along the River. Trout will sit there and sip them all evening. 7X Tippet is important- the spinners are a dark rusty color and the trout get very educated to them- especially in August and September.

STENONEMA

As mentioned the light Cahill's will emerge throughout the summer and as the trout feed to the tiny blue-winged-olives in the lower river and the caddis upper, when the Cahill's emerge, they switch over to them immediately. They are a heavy hatch in Late August/ September/early October in the lower river

Isonychias- We have started to see a significant hatch of Iso's from late August through early October- especially on lower Muskegon from Thornapple down.

CADDIS

The Muskegon is known for its world renowned caddis hatches that peak from mid July through early October.- particularly in the upper two miles below the dam where the highest plankton load is. July sees the tiny green caddis-Cheumatopsyche speciosa-size 18-20, and August through October sees the 50/50 mix of the cinnamon Hydropsyche and tiny greens- each night they show a significant preference for one or the other. You start off by using 6X Tippet but by later in the summer you'll be down to 7X to be successful. Egg laying adults and the pupae will be on the water at the same time -- a quad wing spinners occur at dusk and are heavily fed on.

Early mornings from Thornapple down sees the giant zebra caddis, *Macronema zebratum*, emerging throughout July. October also sees the Giant Autumn sedge-Limnephilidae, the explosive rises you occasionally see are not salmon porpoising in the pools but big trout hammering the sedges. The October hatches of Hydropsyche can be significant and trout will move from feeding behind salmon for their eggs to taking caddis in the afternoons and evenings-always bring a five weight when salmon fishing. Late evenings in September and October sees the ultra fast flying and mating white miller caddis -just at dark and the larger trout will switch from the cinnamon and green caddis to focus on these little meaty size 14 diving caddis which can bring up some the biggest trout in the River.

FLYING BROWN ANTS

By the middle of August through mid-September, the massive mating flights of the Brown flying ants occur in the hot afternoons- size 16 through 22. The Trout will go berserk for them and will favor the ants over the caddis. But the caddis always prevails in the end at dark.

MISC. INSECTS

Callibaetis occurs where there is slow flat pools and backwater sloughs along the river but aren't significant The white Ephron hatch occurs on Hardy and Croton ponds by the millions but not on the

main Muskegon trout water-the lower river has some significant Ephrons but it is well out of the trout water.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

BLUE WINGS AND MIDGES

Some of the most significant tiny bwo's emerge in the late afternoons till the first snow flies and the black Simulium midges start around mid December- the trout will target both rigorously.



NOTE: ALL SPRING AND SUMMER WE ARE OFFERING A SPECIAL 'HATCH MATCHERS' LATE AFTERNOON TO DUSK SPECIAL IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FINICKY TROUT OF THE MUSKEGON.....

SEE OUR WEB SITE....www.graydrake.com

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blog/Facebook/Twitter**



