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John Fedorka - March 11, 2020

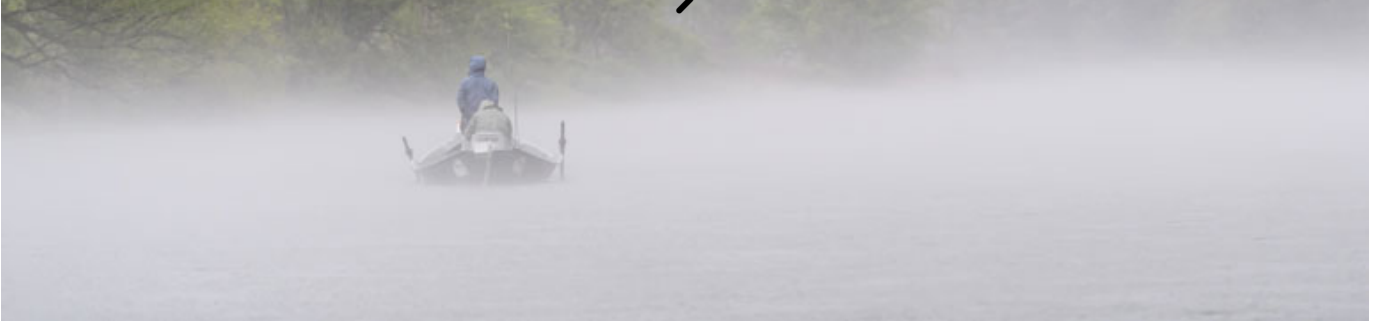
[Trigger Point Trout Flies \(https://www.flyfisherman.com/editorial/trigger-point-trout-flies/372993\)](https://www.flyfisherman.com/editorial/trigger-point-trout-flies/372993)



RECOMMENDED ARTICLES

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Greg Koch photo

This story was originally titled: Six Guides, Six Flies: How How Enrico Puglisi's Trigger Point flies are creating a dry-fly revolution in the Catskills.

I often stop for a coffee in Port Jervis's revitalized downtown in the Foundry 42, just spitting distance from where Dan Cahill worked as a brakeman for the Erie Lackawanna Railroad. Though he resided on the middle river, he is considered one of the great Catskills tiers in the lineage of Theodore Gordon; Roy Steenrod; Walter and Winnie Dette of the famed Dette Fly Shop; Harrie and Elsie Darbee, pillars of today's commercially available genetic hackle; and Lee Wulff.

Just like wild trout, our art, tradition, and romance for the natural world in the Catskills run deep. But as Bob Dylan sang, "The times, they are a changin'." Even here in the Catskills we don't use traditional Catskills dry flies as much as we used to.

Many fly tiers know Enrico Puglisi from his saltwater tying materials, and though he's been in that game since 2004, a few fly fishers also know that it's trout that truly tug at his heart strings. As a result, in 2017 he introduced Trigger Point EP Fibers to fly shops across the country.

As an avid tier, I soon began testing the fibers in my own patterns. At the time, March Browns were about cresting into full swing and so I picked up some of his Trigger Point EP Fibers to spin off some creations. After two days and 20 fish, I had new respect for this synthetic material.

SCROLL TO CONTINUE WITH CONTENT

Unlike natural materials, Trigger Point EP Fibers do not absorb any water. On the first backcast, water snaps right out and the fly is bone dry by the time it hits the water. Nothing sticks to it. On the Delaware in the summer, you have a ton of algae and it can be a nightmare constantly cleaning your fly. With this material, you don't have to worry about that. It's like Teflon.

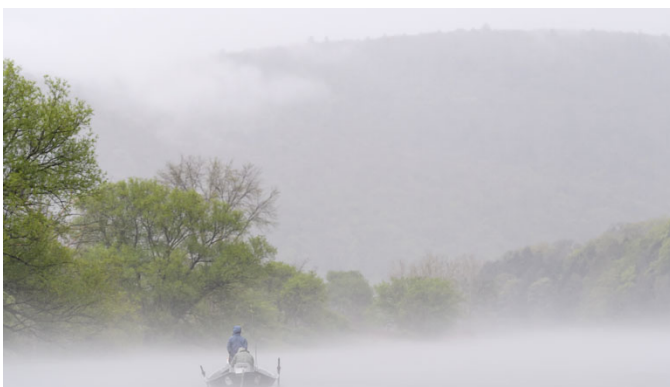


The upper Delaware River is widely regarded as one of the East's most challenging dry-fly rivers because the slow, flat water gives the trout opportunities to closely examine your flies. Trigger Point EP Fibers shed water, moss, and algae, and float through multiple fish without floatant or preening.

These flies won't absorb silicone floatant either, so don't bother with it. You don't need it. Trigger Point flies are also incredibly durable. You catch fish after fish on the same fly, and you don't have to squeeze and preen or apply floatant.

Photo Gallery

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Perhaps the biggest advantage is that you can easily trim the fibers for slimmer or smaller profiles. When you trim hackle and other natural materials, the fly never looks quite right afterward, but these flies are made to be adjusted. Most commercial Trigger Point flies are maximally dressed, but with scissors you can create the exact profile you need. And as guide John Miller suggests, you can also carry Sharpies to color the flies to match whatever is hatching at the moment.

My own nostalgia for classic patterns still revolves around 100 percent natural materials. However, those classics are now the flies I tie just because they are pretty to look at.

My fly boxes for fishing are now full of Trigger Point trout flies. They require little or no maintenance, and they possess a shaggy, natural bugginess that has trout in one of the nation's most technical dry-fly rivers sipping them with confidence. But don't take my word for it. I have interviewed six upper Delaware River guides to discover their favorite Trigger Point patterns, as well as some tips for tricking some of the world's most discerning wild trout.

Joe Demalderis



Capt. Joe Demalderis has been fishing the Delaware since the mid-1970s and serves on the board of directors of Friends of the Upper Delaware River. In the fall and winter, he spends many days in his center console fishing the New Jersey coast for striped bass, false albacore, and bluefish. He also hosts fly-fishing trips to Patagonia and the Bahamas.

Isonychia Emerger



Hook: #14 Daiichi 1270.

Thread: Red 6/0 Flymaster.

Thorax: DK Hare's Ear EP May Fly Dub.

Wing: DK Dun Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Body: March Brown Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Tail: March Brown Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Presentation, presentation, presentation. Though sometimes that doesn't seem to be enough, it is in fact the key factor in most of our successes. Trout do not have the ability to reason—though we like to pretend they do when we're matching wits in a romantic streamside chess match. It's more along the lines of mindless exercise for them.

“For example, when they see 1,000 snapshots of a predominant stage of hatch float by, whether that's a dun, emerger, cripple, or spinner, they are more likely to focus on that stage and that profile and more likely to ignore another stage; kind of like muscle memory. To play their game, tie on a pattern that mimics the predominant stage with first size, then profile, and then color in mind.

“You see a lot of dorsal/tail rises where the trout are taking something just under the surface. You'll also notice trout occasionally coming clear out of the water. These are all indicators that emergence is the primary stage, so tie on that pattern and get to work. From early June through September, for me that pattern is often the EP Isonychia

Emerger. The other guides tease me about using this fly. It's almost like bait fishing, a real confidence pattern. It can be clear skies with little to no bug activity, and the trout move 5 or 7 feet off their lie to inhale it.”

John Miller



John Miller grew up in the Catskills, tying flies and fly fishing on hallowed waters like the Esopus, Kaaterskill, Plattekill, Beaverkill, and Schoharie rivers. He learned aquatic entomology from Al Caucci and Bob Nastasi, and his insect photos have appeared in many books and magazines, including Fly Fisherman.

Sulphur Emerger



Hook: #16 Daiichi 1130.

Thread: Yellow 6/0 Flymaster.

Thorax: Amber EP May Fly Dub.

Wing: Quick Silver Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Body: Golden Sulphur Trigger Point EP Fibers.

“By the time Sulphurs roll around, flows are typically at summertime lows, with a multitude of tricky microcurrents. The trout have seen countless fly fishers throw countless patterns at them, and many of them have already been fooled a time or two.

“It’s tricky to compete with the natural Sulphurs out there. They come off like clockwork, and they hatch in great numbers so the fish have plenty to choose from.

“It is during this hatch on the Delaware that you’ll see fish rising everywhere, and anglers just scratching their heads and pawing through their fly boxes. Having the right stage, size, and profile is more important during the Sulphur hatch than during any other emergence.

“For me, the EP Sulphur Emerger has been a real confidence fly early in the hatch. If you get three to five well-timed and otherwise flawless drifts over a fish’s head without a take, lengthen your leader and then lighten the tippet. For example, stretch your 11-foot leader to 13 feet by adding 24 inches of 6X. It’s also a good idea to keep a few different

colors of Sharpies with you. In a pinch, you can change that March Brown into an Isonychia or a Sulphur into a Blue-winged Olive. It's an old trick that's saved me more than a handful of times.”

Anita Coulton



Anita Coulton's love for fishing began at age three when her father sat her on the riverbank with a battered Zebco rod. Her extensive fly-fishing experience now spans over 20 years in both fresh and salt water, and also in competitive events. She is a graduate of Montana's Reel Women Guide School and is an active volunteer with Casting for Recovery.

Green Drake Compara-dun



Hook: #12 Daiichi 1280.

Thread: Olive 6/0 Fly Master.

Thorax: LT Hare's Ear EP May Fly Dub.

Wing: Green Drake Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Body: March Brown Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Tail: March Brown Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Without a doubt, one of my favorite patterns, if not the favorite pattern of the last two seasons has been Enrico's Green Drake Compara-dun.

"We mostly hunt heads on the Delaware, which means we'll find one fish or sometimes a few and then spend time on specific trout until we get them in the net. But one of the things we've done recently on days with clear skies and bright sun is to prospect banks, riffles, current seams, and other trouty transition zones using a size 10 Green Drake and beadhead dropper nymph like a size 14 or 18 Copper John to imitate the river's rich and diverse populations of mayflies. I specifically look for changes in the river depth or current speed, or for holding structure that provides shelter and feeding lanes.

"We get a few trout on the dropper, but trout just confidently eat that Green Drake pattern. Once a few Drakes start trickling through whatever section of river you're on, it doesn't take long for the fish to look for them. And even for a while after they're done hatching, they'll still eat it."

Tim Oliphant



Tim Oliphant has been guiding on the Delaware River since 1998. In the off season he lives and guides in Muskegon, Michigan, where he focuses on two-handed rods and swinging flies for steelhead in Lake Michigan tributaries.

Rusty Spinner



Hook: #14 Daiichi 1170.

Thread: Brown 6/0 Flymaster.

Thorax: Rusty brown EP May Fly Dub.

Wing: Spinner Wing Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Body: Half rust & half March Brown Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Tail: Spinner Wing Trigger Point EP Fibers.

“When the sun is halfway down the Catskills horizon and you look up in the sky and see clouds of mayflies . . . this is what winter dreams are made of. I avoid turning these situations into a nightmare, and cut back my leader a tippet size or even two. I check it over for abrasions or wind knots by running the line through my lips so I don’t lose the fish of a lifetime.

“I look for subtle sips, dimples, and barely visible—sometimes almost imperceptible—rises and then tie on a spentwing pattern like the Rusty Spinner. Think about what is the predominant species that’s been hatching over the past few days, or better yet just look for the spinners above your head, and then tie on the appropriate size Rusty Spinner. Sparsely tied patterns seem to work best for me.

“Later in the evening, some anglers call it quits when they can’t see their fly. That’s when it’s time to ‘Use the Force, Luke’ You can still see the fish rising out there. After casting all day you have a pretty good idea of where your fly lands, so make a quartering downstream reach cast, and when you think your fly is in the general vicinity of a fish

rise, set the hook and hold on tight!”

Ryan Furtak



Ryan Furtak started fly fishing in his early teens and later attended Penn State University, where he honed his skills on waters like Penns Creek, Big Spring, and the Little Juniata. He applies an analytical approach to all his fly fishing, whether it's nymphing, dry-fly fishing, swinging wets, or jamming trophy browns with his favorite streamers.

Tan Caddis



Hook: #16 Daiichi 1170.

Thread: Tan 6/0 Danville Flymaster.

Body: Cinnamon Caddis Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Wing: Cinnamon Caddis Trigger Point EP Fibers.

I've heard a number of fly fishers over the years claim that trout don't eat caddis on the Delaware and other Catskills rivers. I couldn't disagree more. There are more than a dozen important caddis hatches on the upper Delaware River, so I carry a number of boxes dedicated to these bugs. Caddis often save the day for me, especially EP's Tan Caddis.

"Even when the water is covered with mayflies, sometimes you'll notice a splashy take. Often this means a small fish, but sometimes it's a good fish that's keyed on caddis. Hydrospsyche and Glossosoma caddis hatch through much of the season, so I always have size 14 through 18 Tan Caddis on hand.

"One of the things I really like about Enrico's caddis is that sometimes the fish are super focused on spent caddis, and the EP Tan Caddis represents both emerging adult caddis and also dead or dying spent caddis that fall to the water after egg-laying flights. Most other patterns aren't as capable or versatile in this regard."

Justin Lyle



Justin Lyle grew up in Alaska, where his family owned a fishing camp on the Bering Sea. He spent weekends fishing for salmon and halibut, and has many fond childhood memories of catching Arctic grayling in the Arolik River. Justin moved to Pennsylvania to further his hockey coaching career, and soon developed a passion for wild Delaware.

Olive Cripple



Hook: #16 Daiichi 1130.

Thread: Olive 6/0 Flymaster.

Thorax: BWO EP May Fly Dub.

Wing: Blue Winged Olive Trigger Point EP Fibers.

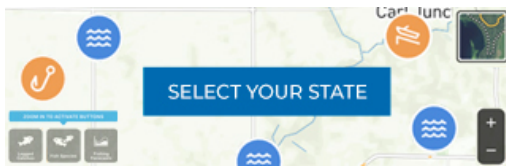
Body: Green Drake Trigger Point EP Fibers.

Tail: March Brown Trigger Point EP Fibers.

“I believe the cripple or knockdown phase is one of the most overlooked elements of match-the-hatch fishing. Fly fishers too often overlook these oddball mayflies, but they are definitely not overlooked by large, lazy browns looking to pack on calories in the most efficient manner possible. They recognize and appreciate these easy pickings.

“Early in the hatch when the river is littered with adults drying off their wings, you’ll notice the distinct dun rise—what I call the Jaws take—where you clearly see the mouth and head of the fish break the surface of the water. This is your cue that the trout are eating adults or duns.

“You might also notice some spinnerlike takes where there is a more subtle disturbance of the water and the telltale rings of a sip. A fish like this might take a dun imitation, but also might be more snobbish than the other fish you see clearly taking duns. If you put five well-timed and flawless drifts over him, you know it’s time to tie on a cripple or knockdown pattern.”

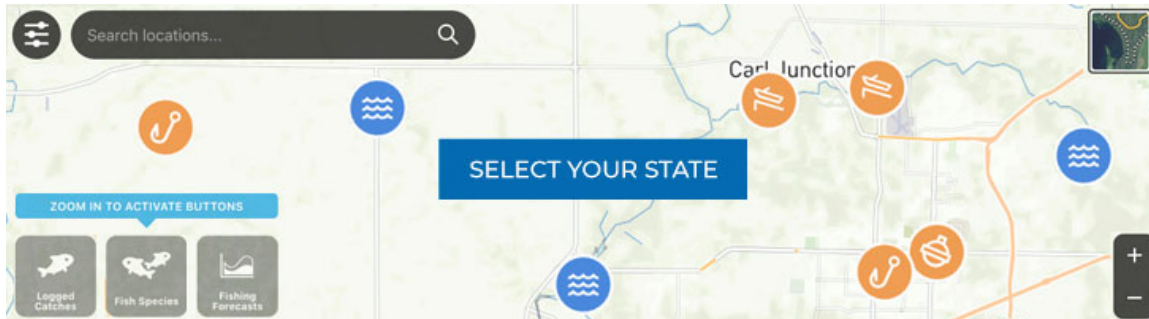


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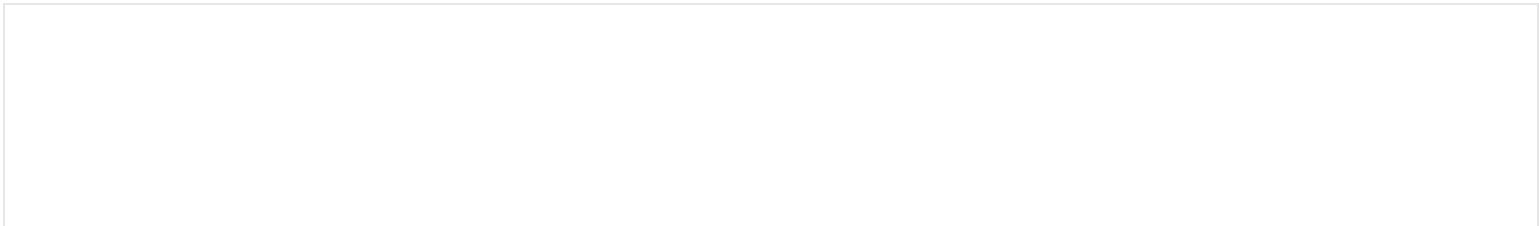
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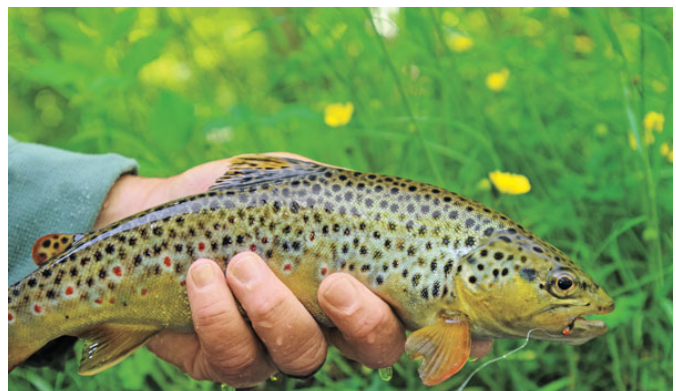


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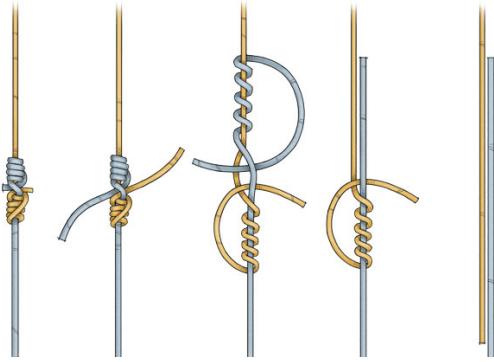


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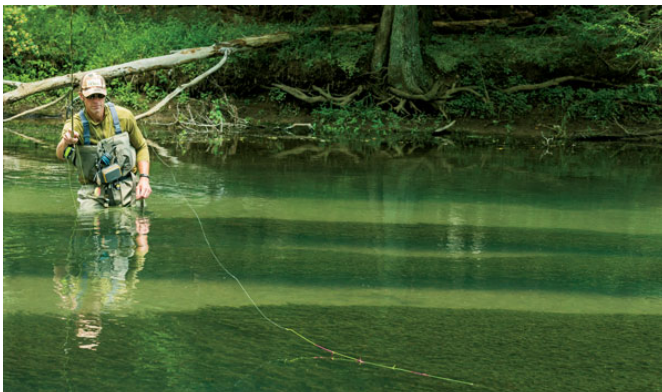
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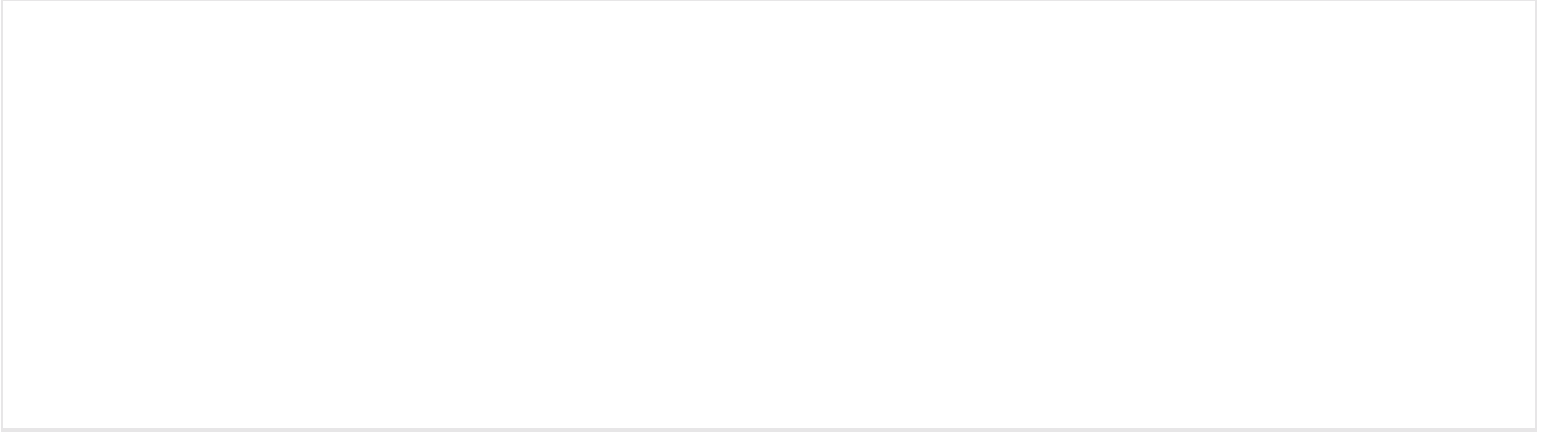
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