

Dapping an Irresistible

by Carl Haensel

I first tried dapping flies inadvertently. Early in my angling years, tired of catching no trout, I stood at the top of a riffle leading into a long run and pool on my favorite stream. Frustrated by my inability to catch trout, I started to beat the short amount of leader extending from my rod on the riffle and run. To my surprise, I almost immediately caught a nice brown trout. It took several years before I realized that I could turn my frustration into a technique that regularly caught trout.

Dapping flies can produce results using a wide variety of patterns in many types of settings. A good fly to start with is an Adams Irresistible.

Even though the Adams dry fly was first tied for use on the Bordman River in Michigan, the origin of the Irresistible's spun deer-hair body appears to have slipped into the passage of time. Whoever first thought of adding a buoyant "life vest" of deer hair to a dry fly deserves an award. When properly treated with flotant, this fly can be pounded into the water for hours and it will still come up to the surface. The Adams-style coloration allows the fly generically to match many insects on your local trout stream. If fished fast, they'll never get a good look at it, anyway.

The Adams Irresistible includes a size 14 dry-fly hook, a body of spun deer body hair, a wing of grizzly hackle tips, mixed grizzly and brown hackle, and a moose body hair tail. Start your Adams Irresistible by tying in a tail of moose body hair. Next, spin, pack and trim the deer hair body. Then add the hackle tip wings and hackle to finish the fly.

Dapping technique

One of the easiest ways to start dapping is on fast water. Bouncing a fly on the surface of a productive-looking riffle or run avoids fishing to spooky fish in still water. Broken water also keeps trout from getting a good look at the fly.

Stealthily approach your chosen riffle or run from upstream. On smaller streams, keeping to your knees as you get close to the water is a good idea. Extend your rod over the stream with only your leader extending from the rod tip. Dap your Irresistible on the water's surface, letting it drift only a moment before bouncing it off again.

Part of the idea of dapping is that trout never get a good look at the fly. By dapping, you imitate a caddisfly or other streamside insect briefly touching the water's



Adams
Irresistible

photo: Carl Haensel

surface to lay eggs or conduct similar business.

I like to think I'm "teasing" the trout by never giving them a good look at the fly. Dap for several minutes in one area before moving on. Remember to cover all the productive water before shifting, since trout a few feet downstream will not be able to see a fly dapped upstream of them.

Try this technique right at dusk. Not only does it work especially well then, but it avoids long casts, which only get harder as darkness draws near. ☐

About the Contributor

Carl Haensel has been the Commission's Aquatic Resources Program Specialist in the Southeast Region since 2001. Catching fish on the fly since his childhood in Minnesota, Carl has fished throughout the U.S. Before joining the Commission, his background included owning and operating a guided fly-fishing business and managing a fly-fishing retail store.

In "Your Fishing Field Guide," a new column to appear in each issue, Carl will write about fly patterns both new and old. He'll provide tips, tricks and the techniques you need to use these flies. Columns will also include each featured fly's recipe, and in each column, anglers looking for casting pointers will find strategies for "improving their game" on the water.



photo: courtesy of the author