



The Evening

Hatch

THE NEWSLETTER of the MICHIGAN FLY FISHING CLUB August 2006

How to become a Huron River Hexa-genius

If you've found yourself flummoxed by the Hex hatch on the AuSable or Manistee, a more predictable, more civilized alternative is at your doorstep. That's the word that Huron River guide Dirk Fischbach delivered at the Club's July 12 meeting.

"The Huron's Hex hatch is somewhat different than the one 'up north,'" Fischbach said. "The hatch comes later in the year than on the classic trout streams. Why? It's a great question, but I don't know the answer." Simply stated: It just does. On the Huron that translates to the last week of July through the first week of September.

In a fast-moving, entertaining presentation, Fischbach guided club members through a tour of all things Hex – from the statewide dispersal of the different varieties of hexagenia mayflies (there are four plus one that entomologists have assigned to its own genus) to how to practice "safe Hex."

If the conventional wisdom is that the best time to fish the Hex hatch up north is the day before you get there and the day after you leave, the hatch on the Huron is so regular "you can set your watch by it." According to Fischbach, that is 7:45 p.m.



Corresponding Secretary Doyle Letson (left) and Huron Hexa-genius Dirk Fischbach at our July meeting.

Where to fish? "Downstream from Dexter," Fischbach said. The most prolific hatches are downstream of Mill Creek, he said.

Other bugs? The Huron's Hex hatch overlaps with the early August white fly – ephron lukon – hatch. "Just about every fish that will take an ephron will take a Hex pattern gladly," Fischbach said. This opinion is reinforced by both observation and the writings of western fly fishing author Charles Brooks, who observed, "If there's an abundant food form that's larger than the other food forms available – all things being equal – it will be the preferred food form."

Leader set-up? "I like the Borger nymph leader with a minor modification." Here's the recipe:

- Four (4) feet of .020 mono
- One (1) foot of .013
- Three (3) feet of 2x tippet material
- Ten (10) inches of 3x
- Ten (10) inches of 4x

Continued on page 2

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

August 6

Annual Family Day Picnic
For more info, see back page
Multi-Lakes Conservation Club
Beginning at 1 p.m.



Lake St. Clair specialist Steve Kunnath (right) visited the club in January. He's pictured here with Roger Little (left) and Darryl Parish (center).

August 9

Speaker: Steve Kunnath
Topic: Fly Fishing for Freshwater Bonefish (aka Carp)
Vladimir's, 7:30 p.m.

August 12-19

Montana Trip

Last-minute questions? Contact Al Haxton.



Published monthly

Editor Mike Matuszewski
editor@mffc.org
248-646-4768

Michigan Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 530113
Livonia, MI 48153

2005 – 2006 Officers

President Joe Sprys
president@mffc.org
248-380-6170

Vice President
Pat Brazzil
vp@mffc.org
248-344-7470

Corresponding Secretary
Doyle Letson
248-348-7021

Recording Secretary
Cindy Center
248-363-3861

Treasurer Bill Shannon
treasurer@mffc.org
248-545-0141

Membership Paul DeJohn
membership@mffc.org
734-420-0809

Immediate Past President
Kevin Lipp
734-837-1100

Board of Directors

Scott Freeburg 248-366-6783
Eric Center 248-363-3861
Jeff Parker 248-682-4495

How to become a Huron River Hexa-genius

Continued from front page

A word of advice about the leader:
“When the sun goes down, clip off the 4x and you’re ready to go. And after dark, all bets are off. Go with six feet of 2x,” he said.

Flies? “Except for evening pre-emergence nymphing, you can get away with a spent spinner pattern for 100 percent of your fishing,” he said. During the overlap with the whitefly (ephron) hatch, he advised club members to try a two-fly rig. “Fish the Hex spinner, but tie on some 4x tippet and an ephron pattern as a dropper. The fish will eat one or the other and occasionally you’ll get a double.”

Practicing “safe Hex?” He offered these tips:

- “Only wade stretches of the river that you’ve checked out in daylight. After dark is no time to be checking out new water.”
- “If you’re float tubing a lake, make sure you’ve got a personal floatation device.”
- “Get yourself in position. Make sure you’ve got good casting and sight angles all around.”
- “Once you’re in position. Stay put; stick with areas you know.”
- “Plan out a route where you can fight the fish and land the fish.”

For more information, contact Fischbach at Huron River Fly Fishing Adventures, 734-944-1607, or via email at dfischmi@comcast.net. His book, “[The Fly Fisher's Huron: A Practical Guide to Michigan's Blue-Ribbon Smallmouth River](#)” offers a treasure trove of information to anyone wanting to become a Hexa-genius.

Cast from the past: **1981 brought the first MFFC summer picnic**

According to the Summer 1981 edition of *The Evening Hatch*, the club’s first picnic debuted July 25 at what was then known as Delhi Rapids Metropark.

“Early arrivals will have the best crack at the smallmouth bass below the bridge at East Delhi Road. ... A selection of Muddler Minnows and Mickey Finns fished on a #5 to #7 floating line put up against the east bank produce well,” the newsletter advised.

A casting contest was featured. “Don’t be shy about entering, no matter the size of your loop,” readers were cajoled.

“Softball, horseshoes and lie-telling will commence at your pleasure.” Some things don’t change.

For complete information about the 2006 Family Picnic, Pig & Corn Roast, see the back page.



Another bassin’ kind of place ...

Maralynn Tanner displays a nice smallmouth taken at the end of May in the water off Wilderness State Park. Located about 11 miles west of the Mackinac Bridge, the area is dominated by boulders dropped by retreating glaciers. “The rocks are as small as your fist and as big as a Volkswagen. The pools of water are clear and can be of different depths. You can see shadows of the rocks below the water or tops of the rocks above the water, but you rarely see a fish ...until you throw a bass fly at the bottom of the rock and they come out to get it. The fishing area involves a lot of walking to get to the different pools. I’ve been there two years in a row and still haven’t been to all of them. You CAN get lost even if the weather is good, but it’s worth it!”

Huron River II: **It is time to fish the** **“Cros-scut-e-nong sebee”**

By Todd A. Schotts

“Cros-scut-e-nong sebee”

That’s what early Native Americans, the Quendat (Wyandot), called this water basin. Reportedly it means Burnt District River, referring to plains or oak openings in the forest. To French explorers it was *“Riviere aux Hurons.”* English settlers anglicized it: “Huron River.” As the summer months warm up and with those higher gas prices, this watershed offers a unique and local fly fishing outlet within an easy drive of most of our homes.

Thousands of years ago, the ancestor to the Huron sent huge volumes of water to the mighty Mississippi River System. But the Ice Age’s glaciers redesigned the river 16,000 years ago to its current course -- roughly 136 miles of mainstream flowing amid glacier lakes that dot the watershed.

The Huron originates in Big Lake and the Huron Swamp in north central Oakland County and empties into Lake Erie at Pte. Mouillee. The watershed drains about 900 square miles. There are 24 major tributaries that flow into the mainstream; encompassing 367 miles of streams and drains. At its origin at Big Lake and Huron Swamp, its elevation is at 1,018 feet and drops along its course to 572 feet at Pte. Mouillee. The biggest drop in elevation begins around the Dexter area; with 65 percent of the basin’s drainage and drops 195 feet to Rawsonville.

It’s hard to imagine today, but at one time there were 96 dams in the Huron Watershed -- 19 on the mainstream and 77 on the tributaries. The first dams were constructed in the 1820’s.

The watershed offers many different species for the pursuit of fly fishers. More than 90 species of fish that are known as native to this watershed. Within an easy drive you could be

fishing for smallmouth bass in the Hudson Mills Metro Park or below the Flat Rock Dam for steelhead.

Besides the smallies and steelhead, there is the opportunity to catch largemouth bass, northern pike, carp, panfish, suckers, black crappie, white bass, perch, rock bass, channel catfish, chinook salmon, rainbow trout, brown trout, and even walleye.

Access is easily available via the Huron-Clinton Metroparks, State Recreation areas and various roadside pullouts. But be careful, there is a lot of private property along the waterway.

I have fished only a few major areas in this river but I’m hooked. As someone once told me, fishing the Huron is like a cult following. It only takes once and you have joined the cult. I know one thing, when we go out, it is not uncommon to land at least double digits or more of fish. (Where? Sadly, the memory isn’t what it used to be.)

The flies for fishing this enormous watershed are many and limited only by one’s imagination. But I have actually narrowed my patterns down to a favorite few -- my “Red Headed Prince – Huron Special,” a minnow pattern (my “CT Minnow”) or a “Clouser Minnow,” a sculpin pattern, and the old standby “Woolly Bugger” (olive & black). To fish dry flies, I really love to use an Elk Hair Caddis, but Dirk Fischbach’s “White Paradrake” also works well. Don’t forget to bring along a good hopper pattern, Chris Helm’s version of the “Predator” and the famed “Turks Turantula.” With these patterns, you can have a lot of fun in just a couple of hours or a full day of prowling the Huron.

There’s ample diversity in water type, as well. You could be fishing the faster, more structured water around Delhi or fishing the slower and lake-like water down below Belleville Dam in the Lower Huron Park. In any case, just being out on any water, is always a nice relief from the everyday bump and grind.

If you want to get the current conditions of the river or want to stop in and check out the local fly shops, there is the Golden Drake Flyshop in Pinckney; Colton Bay in Ann Arbor; or Hank’s in Novi. If you want to learn more on the river, Dirk Fischbach’s book “The Fly Fisher’s Huron” is a must to have, read and commit to memory.

Tight lines! I hope that I will see some of you on one of southeast Michigan’s premier fly fishing waters.

LSSU “fish-cam” provides a unique look at the St. Mary’s

An underwater webcam at Lake Superior State University’s Aquatic Research Laboratory is proving to be popular among St. Mary’s River anglers.

Since the “fish-cam” debuted, hits on the aquatic lab’s web page through the LSSU site (www.lssu.edu) have increased exponentially. During the camera’s first week of operation, between 3,000 and 5,000 web-surfers daily were looking at salmon, whitefish, sea lampreys and even the occasional cormorant on their computer screens.

“The webcam enables viewers from all over the world to access real-time images of the river,” said Ashley Moerke, assistant professor of biology at LSSU and co-director of the lab. “Eventually, we are hoping to provide educational information on the different species viewers might see.”

“The camera is really slick,” said Roger Greil, lab manager. “We get a lot of calls from out-of-town fishermen wondering if the salmon have come into the river. Now, if they have an Internet connection, they’ll be able to see it for themselves.”

The camera is mounted behind the aquatic lab, housed in the east end of the Edison Sault Electric Company power plant.

2006 MFFC Family Day Picnic & Pig and Corn Roast

When: Sunday, August 6, Beginning at 1 p.m.

Where: Multi-Lakes Conservation Club, 3860 Newton Rd., Commerce Twp.

What? The 3rd annual Family Day Picnic will be bigger and better. Mark your calendar and cancel your vacation plans so that you won't miss out. We are roasting a 140-pound pig and dozens of ears of corn. There'll be more food than you can imagine and plenty of beverages (of the non-alcohol type). Adult beverages are BYOB.

Cost: This is the best part! It's **free** to members and members' families. All that we ask is that you bring your favorite dish to pass, your fishing gear (if you like) and your smiling faces.

Kids' Activities: There will be games and face painting for the kids.

Grown-Up Activities: There is good fishing off the dock or in float tubes. By the way this is a shooting club, so if you're into skeet or sporting clays the facility will be open to one or all of those activities as well. Call Multi-Lakes @ **248-363-9109** to see what is open to the public on that weekend and what any fees may be.

Remember this is a Family Day picnic; please bring your children and grandchildren to join in the fun. We hope to see everyone; this is a great way to spend a day. Please let Jeff Parker know that you can make it so that enough food and beverages are available for all.

Contact Jeff Parker; 248-682-4495 or via email at park40@aol.com

Michigan Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 530113
Livonia, MI 48153