

A VISIT WITH LOUIE CORBIN

Wahoo News March 1992

During one of February's snowstorms I visited with Louis Corbin about fishing Pass Lake with chironomid patterns. At that time the lake was just getting ice free after two weeks of very cold weather. Louie had called me earlier in the day to tell me about a book he was reading and all the good information it contained on fishing soft hackled flies. More on that at a later time. The main topic we want to discuss here is fishing with chironomid patterns in Pass Lake.

Louie first fished Pass Lake in 1938. Over the years he has had much success using various fly fishing techniques. The last five to six years he has been perfecting his method of fishing with chironomid patterns which he agreed to share with readers of Wahoo News. While I am sure that most of what you read here has been thought out by Louie, he wants it known that he has received chironomid fish'n knowledge based on experience and information received from Bob Freeman of Arlington.

Louie starts out with two rods (9'), both with floating lines, long (up to 17') leaders and strike indicators. On one outfit he dresses the leader so it floats, on the other so it sinks. That way he can change fishing depth according to where he thinks the fish are feeding. He believes it is very important to have straight leaders and to that end he carries the rods made up so that the leader has only one bend (at the tip) and is under constant light tension.

At the lake he may row around some, looking for signs that indicate to him that fish are present and feeding on chironomids. Traveling against the breeze (if any) he double anchors the boat slightly (5 – 10 degrees) sideways to the wind direction. Louie believes that tippet size is important, using 5x for fishing at depth and 6x or 7x on or near the surface. He uses a standard 9' tapered leader and on that he adds leader to the desired length, the last 16" to 18" the final tippet. The strike indicator is positioned on the knotless tapered leader and can be slid up the leader when landing a fish.

Cast the fly as far as you can see the indicator. Wait five minutes and then start a slow retrieve, 1-2", 6 pulls, then 2-3 second wait, then 6 more 1-2" pulls. After a few pull (stripping to some of you) series, lift the rod 18" (slowly), lower and wait, then start the sequence over. This procedure is perfect when there is a light breeze to ripple the water. He says to take off the indicator and use an intermediate line when the wind is stronger. With the intermediate line, shorten the leader to 9'. Detect the take by watching the line in the guides or where it enters the water, a technique he learned from Fenton Roskelly when fishing an Eastern Washington lake many years ago.

Louie uses various chironomid patterns, depending on what is observed in/on the water. Body colors are usually black, reddish brown or grey. Keep the body "skinny" and any other dressings light (amount, not necessarily color). Size may be as large as #8 – 3x long when fishing deep to as small as #18 when on the surface. He even showed me some #22s he plans to try. His favorite hook is a regular sproat such as a Mustad 3906 B. Mustad 94833 or 94845 hooks are the proper wire size when tying patterns for fishing the film. Swannundaze is an excellent body material for patterns used at depth.

Trout will soon be actively feeding on chironomids. The best fishing will be when the water temperature reaches 42 degrees and continues until it gets above 56 degrees. In 1-2 months, more or less depending on weather conditions, the main chironomid hatch subsides and other methods become more productive. Danny Beatty