

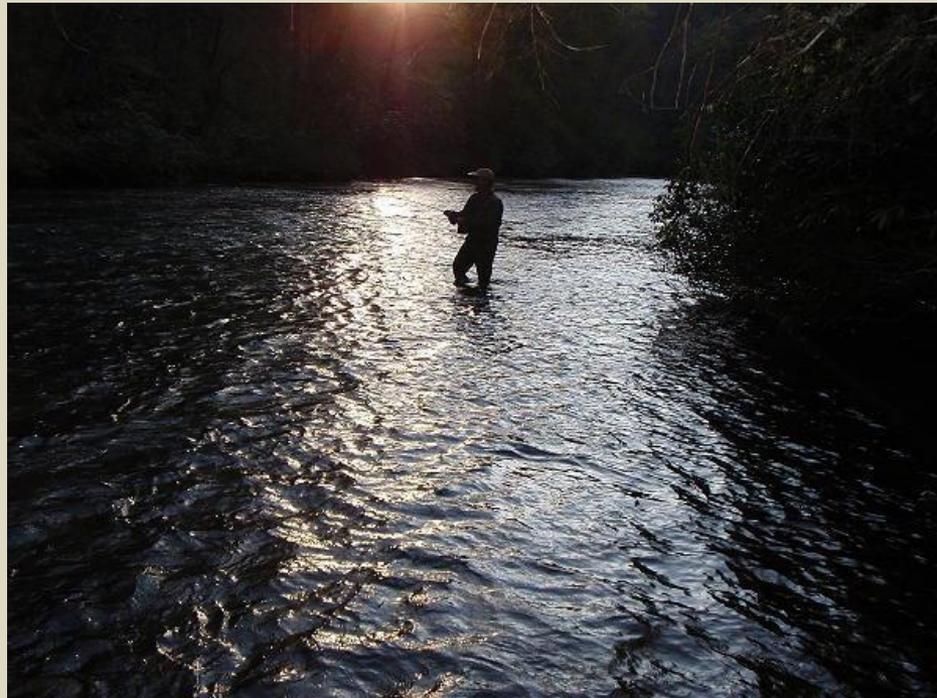
# Dark Thirty Fishing

Pat Hopton

*Dark Thirty Addict and  
Rabun Chapter Past Prez 2012-2014*

# What is “Dark Thirty Fishing”?

- Late evening to after dark fishing.
- In spring, this would be beginning about 7:30 pm and ending around 9:30 pm.



**But wait! Is this even legal??**

**GA trout fishing regulations state that .....**

Fishing 24 hours a day is allowed on all trout streams and impoundments on trout streams except:

- Fishing only from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset on Dockery Lake; Rock Creek Lake; Chattahoochee River from Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek; Conasuaga River; Smith Creek below Unicoi Lake.
- Fishing only from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm EST on Waters Creek.

# Why Fish Dark Thirty?

*Low Fishing Pressure*



# *This is the time of day when Brown Trout start moving and feeding*

## **Diel Movement of Brown Trout in a Southern Appalachian River**

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Radio telemetry was used to monitor the diel movement of 22 brown trout *Salmo trutta* (268–446 mm in total length, TL) in the Chattooga River watershed. Forty-seven diel tracks, locating individuals once per hour for 24 consecutive hours, were collected for four consecutive seasons.

Brown trout were more likely to occur in pool habitat independent of season or period of the day. Hourly movement patterns differed among seasons. During the winter and fall, trout moved only around sunrise; **during the spring, they moved around sunrise, sunset, and intermittently throughout the night.**

*Insect activity increases at Dark Thirty,  
which increases trout feeding*



Yellow Sally and Golden Stonefly



Brown and Slate Mayflies



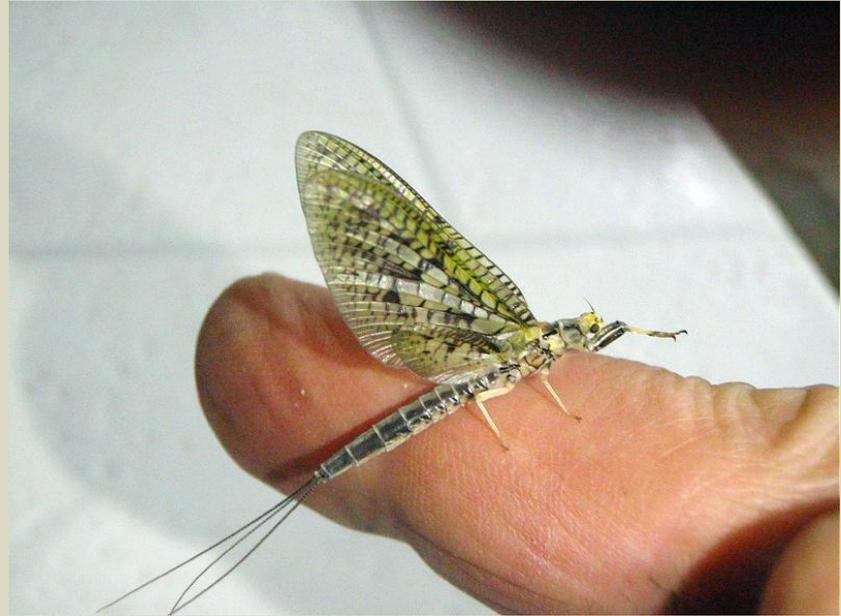
Light Cahill and Sulphur Mayflies



Red Quill Mayflies

# *The Star of the Show!!!*

## Green Drake Mayflies



Green Drake Dun



Green Drake Spinner aka "Coffin Fly"



Be there for the coffin fly spinner fall!!

# When to Fish Dark Thirty

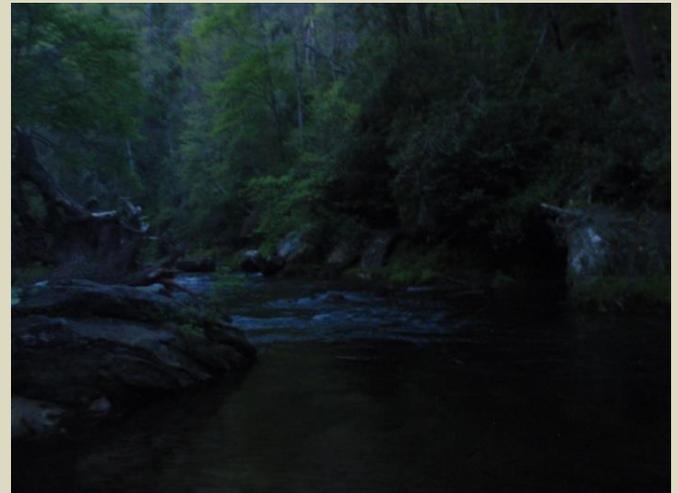
It's most effective in the spring of the year...

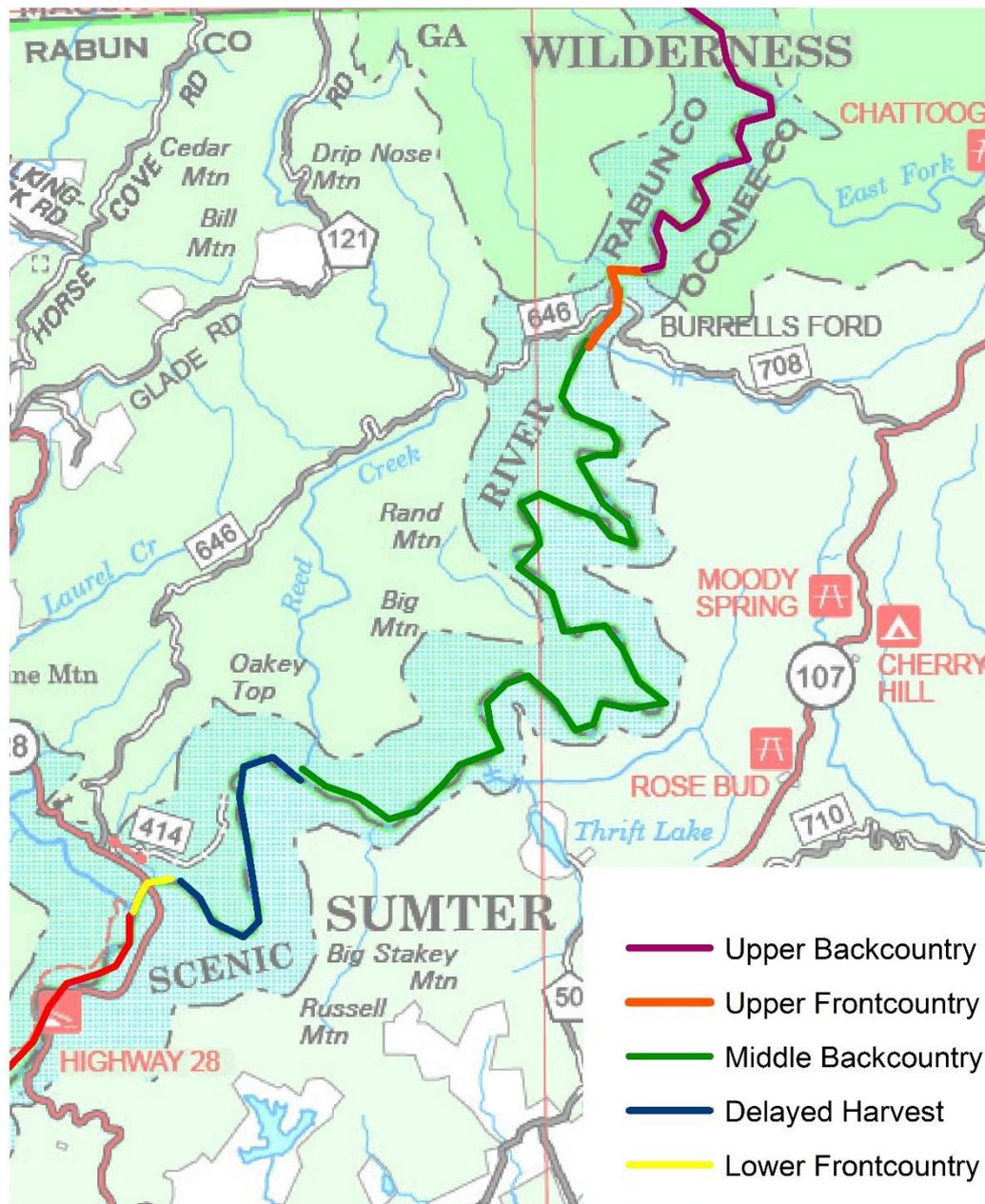
- Daylight has increased to 10-12 hours per day
- Water temperatures are 56-66 degrees
- Water levels are moderate
- Insect activity is at it's peak for the year



# Where to Fish at Dark Thirty?

- Chattooga River
- Davidson River
- Lower Nantahala River
- Deep Creek
- Hazel Creek
- Others?





- Upper Backcountry
- Upper Frontcountry
- Middle Backcountry
- Delayed Harvest
- Lower Frontcountry
- Lower Backcountry

# How to Fish Dark Thirty

- Have the right equipment

Flashlights! Used to walk out in the dark

- Be safety conscious

Take a buddy or let someone know where you'll be fishing

- Be comfortable

Dress appropriately

Have food, water



- Fish where the fish are...

The tail-outs of pools after dark!





Day Time Hideout area

Dark Thirty Feeding area

- Get into position while there is still light.
- Make a few casts to gauge distances, overhanging branches, backcast hazards, etc.
- Now wait! As it gets dark, listen and watch for riseforms in the reflections of the water.
- Don't cast to the first rise you see. Wait until the action gets started and then pick the fish off, starting at the downstream rise.
- Don't be tempted to use a headlight. Let your eyes adjust. Use the ambient light or moonlight.

- If you have to re-tie knots or tie on a new fly, turn away from the river to use your headlight. Avoid shining the light across the water. Let your eyes re-adjust when finished.
- Having trouble seeing your fly on the water? Here's some tips:
  - Don't even try to see your fly at all times. Just mentally gauge where your fly is at and set the hook any time you either see or hear a rise near where you think your fly is.
  - Often a larger or lighter color fly will work just as well.

- Try using two flies: one large, more visible fly with a trailing fly that more closely imitates the insect you are trying to match. Set the hook any time you see or hear a rise near the larger fly.
- A bright yellow yarn-type strike indicator can be used to help detect strikes.
- Often some action on the drift of the fly will entice strikes. Skittering a fly on the surface with a fairly tight line can be used to help in feel strikes.
- Use your intuition. Hook sets are free.

- Make every cast your first cast. Don't flog the water.
- Slow down. Fish like a heron.
- Remember: ***Dark Thirty fishing is all about catching that one quality fish... it's not about numbers of fish.***



Fishing at Dark Thirty can seem uncomfortable and frustrating at first, but keep at it. You will soon find that your senses of feel, sight and hearing will increase to compensate for the low level light conditions.

Yee Haa!!!!





**Questions?**