

## The Great 8

With thousands of patterns available, choosing the perfect fly can prove to be a daunting task for any angler, particularly the beginner. However, unless you're in a situation where trout are selectively feeding on a specific insect that is abundantly hatching, an assortment of well presented attractor patterns will be all you need to catch fish. Every fisherman has a list of favorite flies and over time you will find particular ones with which you are very confident. And that's really the bottom line. If you have confidence in a fly, you will fish it better and ultimately have more success.

Below is a compilation of flies that seem to work everywhere and would likely be found on most fly angler's list of favorites – a perfect place start your fly selection! Whether you call a fly shop in Tennessee, Montana, or New Zealand and ask for recommended flies for the area, somewhere on that list you will likely find most if not all of these patterns. These flies are also available as a packaged selection in the Fightmaster Fly Fishing online store.

### Dry Flies

**1) Parachute Adams:** This is an absolute favorite trout fly. It doesn't look exactly like anything but looks a lot like a lot of things! Carry them in sizes #12-#18 with the smaller versions being ideal for slow water and more finicky trout and the larger being best suited for choppy water where visibility is more important. The traditional grey body is preferred, but a yellow body also does well in the Smokies.

**2) Elk Caddis:** Another great dry fly, carry this one in sizes #12-#18 and with body colors of olive, tan, and yellow. The down wing on this pattern gives it a little different profile than the Adams and the combination of elk hair and hackle make this fly float like a cork.

**3) Griffith's Gnat:** This is a great general purpose small fly. Fished most often in sizes #16-#20, it is a great imitation for adult midges, small mayflies or caddis, and even ants. Many of the most finicky, rising trout that have been caught have been on a Griffith's Gnat.

### Nymphs

**4) Pheasant Tail:** An incredibly universal pattern that looks like almost every nymph you'll find under a submerged rock. While you'll most often fish the bead head version, also carry the traditional version for a more realistic pattern that can more easily be fished in different levels of the water column. Carry both varieties in sizes #12-#18.

**5) Hare's Ear:** For the same reasons as the Pheasant Tail, carry bead head and traditional versions of this fly, and in the same sizes. The big difference in the two nymphs is the Hare's Ear provides an option for a lighter colored nymph and it is a little "buggier" than the Pheasant Tail, providing more movement. Most tend to favor the traditional tan body color but an olive body is also very effective and versatile.

**6) Prince Nymph:** This fly gives you that all important peacock herl factor which trout seem to dig. The white colored goose biots on the back also seems to grab the attention of fish. I'm not sure if anyone knows exactly what it's supposed to imitate but the bottom line is it works! A Zug Bug is a close cousin

to the Prince and would likely make many anglers' favorite fly list. The two are similar and you can't go wrong with either. Carry them in sizes #8-#16.

**7) Zebra Midge:** This fly will cover most of your small nymph needs. It is a simple pattern but extremely effective. Best fished in tailwaters and slow pools in mountain streams, carry it in sizes #18-#22. Most tend to prefer the tungsten bead head versions with black, red, or olive bodies.

### **Streamers**

**8) Wooly Buzzer:** While there are numerous great streamers out there, only one made this list as a must have, probably because of its incredible versatility. The Wooly Buzzer, carried in a variety of colors, can facilitate almost any streamer need. Carry them in black, olive, tan, and white in sizes #4-#10 and you have an effective imitation for small baitfish, leeches, and crayfish. In a pinch, you can even dead drift a Wooly Buzzer as a pretty effective imitation for a stonefly nymph or hellgramite. Whether you choose bead or no bead, flash or no flash, you have a fly capable of catching most any kind of fish in any kind of water.