



Grayling

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Martin and I would share one rod and use Owen's member's privilege tickets for the day (in my fishing record book for the time I still have the ticket stub for this day signed by my Grandfather).

On 2nd November 1972 Owen took us to the river at Bath Street end, just a couple of hundred yards downstream from the main road bridge at Ilkley. We had one inch long Gilt tail worms for bait (dug from Grandfathers compost heap) and used one of his Grayling bob floats. The plan was that Martin and I would take turns and this is what we did. Most of our days didn't go to plan but this one certainly did. It was less than 30 minutes before the first Grayling graced the landing net and my record of the day shows a total of five Grayling caught by myself with the largest at 11.5" and I'm pretty sure that Martin caught a similar number. A real result.... and the start of my lifetime passion for Grayling and Grayling fishing.



The River Wharfe at Ilkley has always provided prolific Grayling fishing and still does. From the 1890's to the 1970's to the 2000's you could and can expect to catch a good bag of Grayling. In half-decent conditions a catch of around 10 to 20 fish can be expected with most of the fish being in the 6oz to 1lb size range. And the Bath Street end run is as good as ever. An inexpensive day ticket is available from the tourist information centre opposite the railway station and in recent years some of Yorkshire's most famous fly fishers have had great sport there with both Grayling and Brownies. Give it a go.

In his Preface to 'How to Catch Grayling' Walbran says: "The present little work has in truth been a labour of love, as there is no fish that swims – no, not even excepting the trout, of which I am so fond as the 'graceful, gliding grayling.'" I agree.

Ed. David is the new Area 2 Secretary

Grayling Selectivity

for Fly Patterns as showed by Diet

Refusals are a typical scenario of the grayling flyfishing by a dry fly... The relationships between grayling feeding activity and successful flies can help us to better understand fishing of graylings by dry flies

Vincenzo Penteriani & Roberto Pragliola

To better understand the reactions of grayling to dry flies, we studied the food preferences of the Slovenian graylings of Unec and Obrtni, Soca and Sava to detect what artificial flies were successful under specific feeding circumstances.

For authorizations necessary to run the present study, for its support and invaluable help in all the various stages of this work we are indebted to Dr. J. Ocvirk (Fisheries Research Institute of Slovenia). Moreover, we would like to thank Mirko Cordigita for his field assistance and Agostino Roncallo (Italy) for his collaboration in our experiments with dry fly patterns. In fact, he made most of the very efficient dry flies that we used during this work (see his splendid and useful book on dry fly patterns on CDC, Maglie in CDC, Ed. Fly Line Ecosistemi Fluviali, on www.flylinemagazine.com/libri.html).

We analysed the diet of graylings of more than 30 cm only ($n = 60$ grayling). We decided to select for size because this would avoid collecting information from the less selective and more inexperienced juvenile individuals. In this way, we obtained information from the most difficult to catch graylings, due to the fact that they had spent more time under fishing pressure than juveniles. Diet description was obtained by analysing the food in the grayling stomachs, collected by a stomach pump just before the fish release.

In the first part of this article, we both present the general features of the grayling diet as obtained from the whole sample and we describe the diet for each of the above-cited Slovenian rivers. Finally, we compare the diet of our sample of 60 caught grayling with the fly that allowed their capture.

The amount of insects collected from a single grayling stomach ranged from 1 to 28, corresponding to a mean of 8.25 ± 6.7 insects for fish. The whole diet (Fig. 1), as well as the different diets for each of the surveyed rivers (Fig.2) both reflect the

importance of upwinged flies (mainly nymphs and emergers), as well as terrestrials, in the diet of grayling. The scarce number of sedges is quite surprising, probably due to local conditions. The different contribution to the diet of the different groups of insects was highly significant ($t_2 = 129.26$, $p = 0.0001$, $df = 5$, $n = 60$; Kruskal-Wallis).

On the basis of our information, some preliminary specific conclusions are possible:

1. Slovenian grayling are confirmed to be "upwinged fly-eaters", mainly specialising in nymphs. Anyway, their interest for emergent and sub-adult/imago insects was very high too;
2. as for flying insects, the highest diet diversity is showed in both Unec and Sava rivers, mainly due to stoneflies and sedges, respectively;
3. terrestrials are especially abundant in the Soca diet, undoubtedly due to the characteristics of the river (mountain to high-mountain grayling waters);
4. upwinged flies represent the most abundant prey in the food samples that we collected for the Obhr river, a water still characterised by impressive hatches of such a group of flies.

As previously reported, the second part of our study on the diet of grayling was related to the successful dry fly under specific feeding conditions. That is, depending on the local situations of food abundance, specific search image during a hatch and so on, we tried to gain information about the selectivity of graylings when faced to a dry fly.

The dry flies that we used were divided into 5 main groups: (1) emergers; (2) duns, (3) stoneflies; (4) terrestrials; and (5) sedges. Figures from 3 to 6 show the relationships between the main groups of insects over which the hooked grayling were feeding and the artificial that allowed their capture.

Duns undoubtedly represented the most "functional" and frequently efficient dry flies, that is the type of fly imitation that best worked in many different situations. In fact, duns were really effective not only during hatches of upwinged flies (i.e. the specific "dun" situation) or when graylings were feeding on nymphs (when also emergers were excellent), but also when grayling were predating on different groups of insects (see Figs. 5 and 6). The situation in which grayling seemed to be most selective was during a dun hatch (Fig. 4). In fact, under such a situation, only duns and emergers showed to be really effective. Finally, terrestrials were another group of flies that proved to be very effective in the flyfishing of grayling by a dry fly, allowing us to catch them in quite all the situations (Figs. 3, 5 and 6), with the exception of upwinged hatches.

In conclusion, it seems very important to exactly know the type of insects on which graylings are feeding to select an imitation with a high probability of success. Evidently, this is not the unique factor that will play a crucial role in a grayling capture, due to the fact that many other elements (e.g. fly presentation and dragging, local conditions of water and stream speed, features of the imitation, individual specific reactions of graylings, etc.) will determine the result of our dry fly. Anyway, our correct understanding of the feeding choice of the graylings that we are fishing will undoubtedly help us to better improve our grayling fishing. This is a further evidence of the importance of a correct interpretation of the local situations in which we are fishing, being flyfishing a unique opportunity to analyse and interpret the aquatic and aerial worlds in which graylings interact.

Fig. 1. Diet of Slovenian graylings (as obtained from the whole sample)

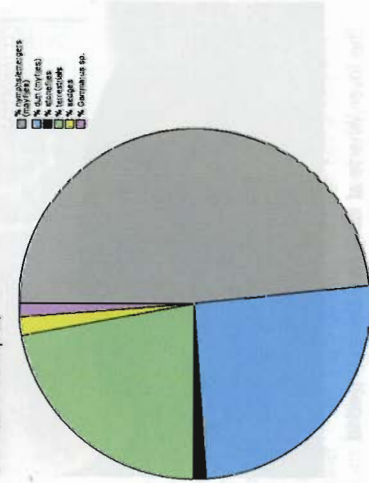


Fig. 2. Diet of Slovenian graylings by river

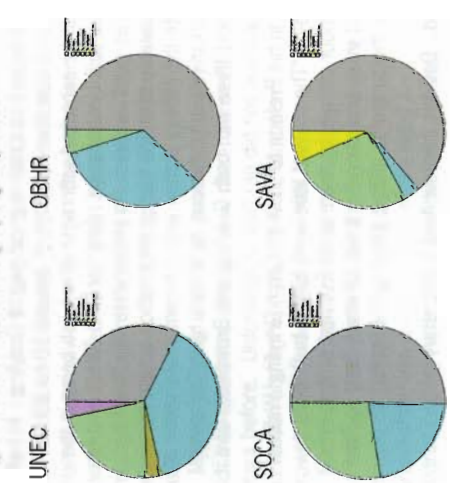


Fig. 3 Types of successful dry flies when grayling were mainly feeding on nymphs

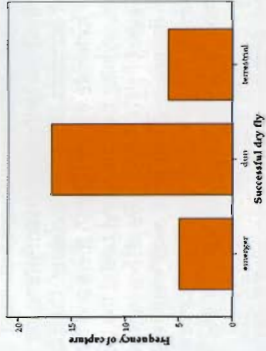


Fig. 4 Types of successful dry flies when grayling were mainly feeding on duns/emergers



Fig. 5 Types of successful dry flies when grayling were mainly feeding on terrestrials

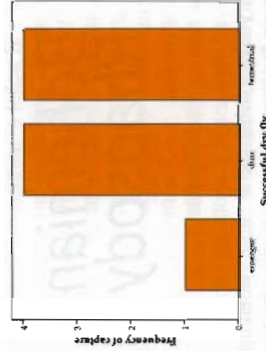
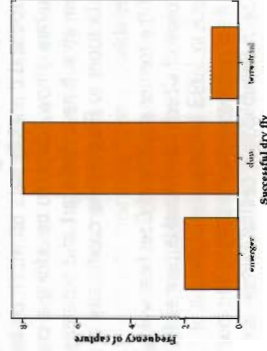


Fig. 6 Types of successful dry flies when grayling were mainly feeding on different types of insects



2nd Teviot Grayling Competition

Alan Ayre

Rab and I had been looking forward with growing anticipation to Saturday 2nd December 2006 when this grandiosely entitled 'Scottish Rotary National Grayling Fishing Competition' was scheduled to take place. Organised by Ian Davis of the Jedburgh Rotary Club it was well advertised, including a mention in 'Grayling' and 'Grayling News', and I had reminded all e-mail equipped Scottish Grayling Society members of it. Costing £10 for the day, fishing was to be over several miles of the Teviot between Denholm and Nisbet. A good turnout was hoped for as all the proceeds (like those of the first competition held in January - see 'Grayling' summer 2006), were to go to help repair fishing boats damaged at Phuket in the tsunami disaster.

We were keen to land one or two of the river's lunkers, and like several other contestants had booked B&B, planning to fish on Friday and Saturday. It was with some trepidation, therefore, that we watched the weather forecasts. Almost daily bouts of rain had kept rivers high for several weeks and our fingers were crossed for a dry window. But despite Friday dawdling dry our hearts sank when the web showed all Scottish grayling rivers were huge and the Teviot was 4.5ft up and rising. Rab reckoned it would be too coloured to fish and opted out. I had promised to provide a Grayling Society display for the evening gettogether so travelled alone, crossing the swollen Teviot on the way to the Pheasant pub RV in Jedburgh where I joined Lawson Devery and Kenny Galt with their respective S&TA and Tweed Trout and Grayling Initiative presentations.

Whilst setting up our displays we heard that Rich Cove had driven from Wales early that morning with George Ashton as his passenger. On seeing the river Rich had about-turned and gone home and George had little option but to go back with him. Noticing our glum looks someone stretched our credulity by reporting that despite the conditions a few hardy souls had caught grayling during the day on both fly and maggots. Not only that, the forecast for the morrow was good so the river would surely drop and we would have a good day. Then George