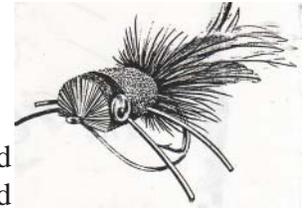


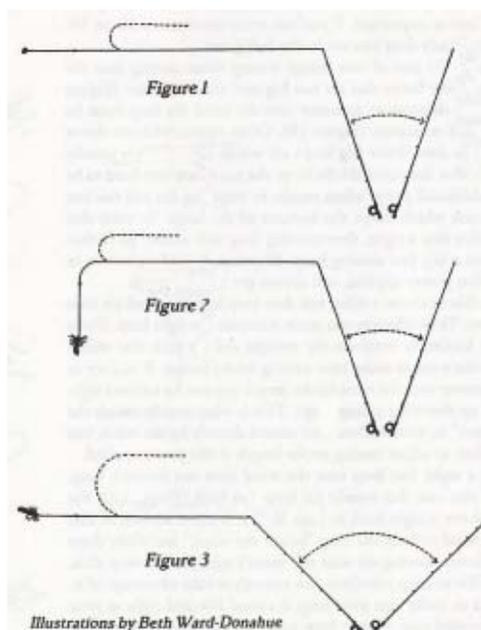
# Casting Big Stuff

## by Bruce Richards



The spring season is upon us, and that often means throwing streamers and weighted nymphs, especially early and late in the day when water temperatures are cool and dry fly activity limited. Although we probably should, most of us don't change rod and line when casting these larger, heavier flies. By making some adjustments to your casting stroke and leader throwing bigger, heavier flies with your light dry fly rod and line can be much more pleasant, and successful.

When throwing dry flies we usually try to cast a rather tight loop, as seen in figure #1. The taper of the fly line and leader effectively dissipate the energy of the cast so that when the loop completely straightens there is no energy left and the fly drops to the water gently. When the same loop is used to throw heavier flies problems often occur.



It takes more energy to throw heavy flies so the caster must increase the amount of power applied to the cast to make sure the fly gets to the target. If this extra power is applied through the same tight loop used with dry flies, the heavier fly will reach the end of the cast with considerable energy left. When this happens the fly will “kick” down forcefully (see figure #2) making it difficult to control your loops or be accurate. This affects not only the delivery cast, but each false cast also making it very difficult to maintain a good smooth casting rhythm. Another problem is that the extra power needed is often applied abruptly which causes tailing loops and wind knots. There is a solution to this problem.

The speed of the fly at the end of the cast can be controlled much better by throwing a larger loop (see figure #3). While we need more power to move the bigger flies, we want the fly going more slowly when the loop opens. By throwing a larger loop fairly hard we can apply enough power to effectively move the fly. The larger loop is more wind resistant and will slow more quickly than a tighter loop. Also, the fly doesn't abruptly change direction at the end of the cast as it does with a tight loop, but more slowly makes a big

radius turn which dramatically reduces the “kick”. While these loops are less efficient than tight loops, they are very effective at reducing the impact of a large, heavy fly on a relatively light line.

Another important thing to consider is your leader. Long, light leaders don't handle large flies well. For best results, leaders with heavier butts and shorter, heavier tippets should be used, especially with streamers. Leader butts should be no lighter than .022". Tippets for streamer fishing can be quite heavy (2X-0X), fish chasing streamers are not usually leader shy. When nymphing, your leaders will often have to be longer, with longer tippets, but don't make them any longer than they need to be, the casting will be much more pleasant.

By adjusting your casting stroke to throw a wider loop and your leader to better handle larger flies you will find throwing the “big stuff” will be much more enjoyable.

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