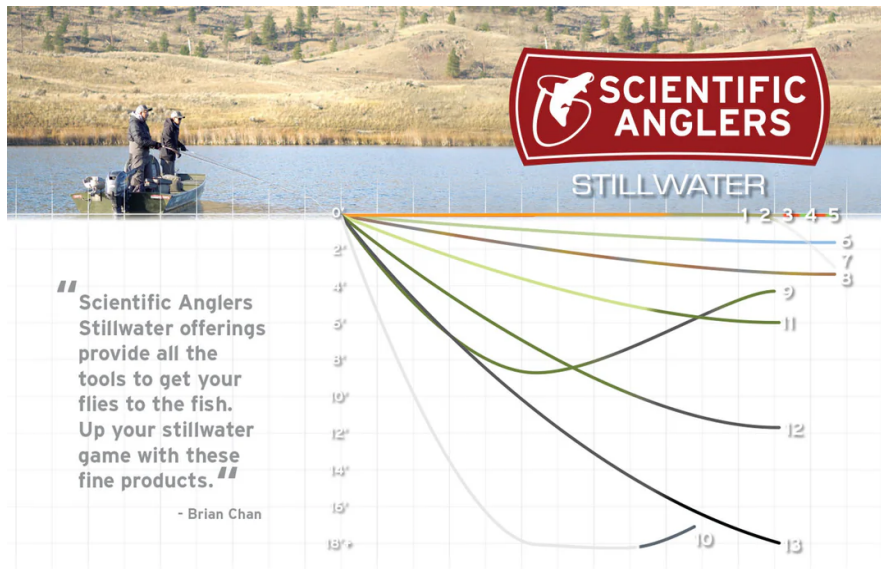


My Favorite Fly Lines For Stillwater Fishing



By Beth Jappay

As I discussed in detail in last month's article, the key to success in stillwater fishing is presenting the fly to the fish at the correct depth. This is achieved by choosing the appropriate line for the situation, something that is learned with experience, and pairing it with an appropriately weighted fly. When I am lake fishing I typically have 3, and occasionally 4 rods strung up with the lines I anticipate I will need. I sometimes also have 2 or 3 spools or reels with me in case I later decide I need a different choice. These are my favorite lines, starting at the top of the water column:

For years my dry fly line of choice was the Scientific Anglers Amplitude MPX. I especially liked how well it can distance cast and shoot line. However the past couple of years I found myself increasingly annoyed by how much this line would form knots after I stripped it back in after long casts. This spring I consulted Mitch at Two Rivers Fly Shop. He recommended the new SA Amplitude Infinity Taper instead, and I love this new line. It has a slightly different coating and seems to have a little less memory, and I like how smoothly it casts as well. This line can both handle small dry flies, and cast nymphs under an indicator. I have it on both my 5 weight and my 6 weight rods. I usually fish my dry fly line with a 12' nylon leader, and I sometimes add another 3' of tippet on top of that. Long leaders are key with spooky lake trout.

I often string up my second 5 weight rod with a Midge Tip line when I am anticipating fishing with midge larva or pupa, or when I want to closely control the depth I am trolling nymphs or leech patterns. I also use this line when fishing for Sea Run Cutthroat, at the suggestion of Jay Nicholas. A Midge Tip line is a floating line with a 7' intermediate tip. It's advantage over a pure

floating line is that it decreases the “hinge” that sinking flies make, creating a better connection to the fly. The depth of the fly is adjusted by changing the weight of the fly and the leader/tippet length. Typically my fly is between 3’ and 6’ deep with this line, but the disadvantage of this line compared to indicator fishing is the inability to know the exact depth the flies are at. Last year I caught a bunch of trout on the lower lake at Hosmer, trolling 3 bead head nymphs ~3 feet apart on this line. I like the idea of fishing multiple different depths at the same time. My Midge Tip line has always been a Rio line, but I think if I had to buy another line I would consult Mitch about alternative makers, as this line has a lot of memory, and I am annoyed at having to stretch it out each time I pull it off of the reel. The leader I use on my midge tip is a 9’ fluorocarbon leader, and my tippet length can be quite variable.

My newest line is the Scientific Anglers Sonar Stillwater Hover line. I call this line my “stealth line”. It is designed to be extremely slow sinking, and therefore “hover” just below the surface of the water. Have you noticed how when stripping a fly on a dry fly line, you can see little waves caused by the surface tension of the water with the line? It’s my belief that the fish can sense this disturbance via their lateral line. I use my Hover line mostly when there is a hatch, and the fish are “looking up” such as stripping an unweighted nymph during a mayfly hatch, or a caddis pattern during an evening hatch. I usually wait a short period after I cast, sometimes stripping a little to get the line under the surface before I start my retrieve. This line is a particularly good choice when there is a cross wind, but the fish are cruising near the surface. I think this line was key to my success with the evening hatch at Rocky Point last year, since the lake’s current was north to south, and the evening breeze was usually south to north. I also put this line on my 7 weight at Pyramid lake, and slow-retrieved midge patterns when it was very windy at the time of the morning or evening hatch. I use a 12’ tapered fluorocarbon leader with this line.

The line that has been my workhorse the past 30 years, and the first line that I would encourage a new stillwater fisherman to buy is a clear/camo intermediate line, which I also call my “slime line”. This is a full sink line, therefore giving a good connection to the fly. Sink rates numbers indicate the number of inches that the line sinks per second, and an intermediate line has a sink rate of 1. With casting and retrieving this line keeps the fly around 2-3’ of depth, but when trolling this line often ends up at a 3-6’ depth, a common depth for fish to hang out. I have a spare spool for this line for both my 5 weight rods and my 6 weight rods, though I favor the latter. I usually fish this line with 2 flies, 2 to 2-1/2’ apart, and the flies I use are usually unweighted. I keep my leader short with this line, usually 4-6’ and lately I have been experimenting with a braided leader. Last year at the Gold Lake outing I used a fish finder on my pontoon for the first time. I found the fish were hanging out around 5’ most of the time, and when I discovered my olive microleech pattern worked well I tried using the same fly on my midge tip line, my slime line, and on my type 3 full sink. Almost all of my 20+ fish that day were caught on the slime line.

My last favorite line is my S.A. Parabolic line. This is a full sink line that has a type 3 sink tip, a type 5 sink belly, and a type 3 sink running line. It also has a change in texture when the fly reaches the “hang” point in the retrieve. I use this line when booby fishing, and I like how it casts. This line can keep flies anywhere from 5’ to 20’ depth and opposed to the standard

sinking line, stripping the fly causes the fly to dive rather than rise. I use this line in the winter and in the heat of the summer, two situations in which fish are hanging out at the bottom of the lake. I usually fish with 2 flies, and my leader can be as short as 2' to as long as 10' depending on how far off the bottom I want my booby or FAB. Most commonly I use a higher-floating booby as my point fly, putting it higher in the water column and using it to keep my less buoyant fly, like a pullover foam-back leech off the bottom. I go into this technique in more detail in my [Booby article](#) and my [Blob article](#) from last fall.

So far I haven't had a lot of experience fishing deeper lakes (though I plan to change that with my upcoming retirement) but I need to mention that with deeper lakes a larger selection of full sink lines is necessary. I have a full sink type 3, type 5, and type 7 line on spare spools for my 6 weight rods. I pull them out for deeper lakes like Detroit, Diamond, and Pyramid (fall fishing).

I am a visual person and I really like the [poster](#) I found on the Scientific Anglers website, which allows better visualization of how these various stillwater lines are used:



SCIENTIFIC ANGLERS

STILLWATER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

“Scientific Anglers Stillwater offerings provide all the tools to get your flies to the fish. Up your stillwater game with these fine products.”

- Brian Chan

AMPLITUDE ANADRO/NYPH 1

- Features AST Plus revolutionary silicone additive for superior shooting ability and increased durability
- Excellent choice for rolling over target indicators and long leaders, while allowing long casts in windy conditions



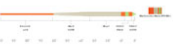
AMPLITUDE INFINITY 2

- Features AST Plus revolutionary silicone additive and featuring for superior shooting ability and increased durability
- At a half size heavy, it's an extremely versatile taper great for fishing dry flies and nymphs without an indicator



AMPLITUDE SMOOTH STILLWATER INDICATOR 3

- Features AST Plus revolutionary silicone additive for superior shooting ability and increased durability
- Most popular indicator fly, featuring a new high-visibility optic green/orange tip color bands



AMPLITUDE SMOOTH TITAN LONG 4

- Features AST Plus revolutionary silicone additive for superior shooting ability and increased durability
- Built two sizes heavy to easily turn over target indicators with long leaders



AMPLITUDE SMOOTH INFINITY 5

- Features AST Plus revolutionary silicone additive for superior shooting ability and increased durability
- At a half size heavy, it's an extremely versatile taper great for fishing dry flies and nymphs without an indicator



SONAR STILLWATER HOVER 6

- Based on the popular MPX taper
- Expensive sinking hover (1.25 lbs) for fishing the fly



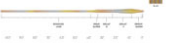
SONAR STILLWATER CLEAR EMERGER TIP 7

- Based on our popular MPX taper with a clear emerger tip
- 5-foot clear intermediate (1.25 lbs) tip helps anchor the fly when fishing it back, in breezy conditions



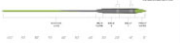
SONAR STILLWATER CLEAR CAMO 8

- Full intermediate (1.25 lbs) fly built over a camo core for the ultimate in stealth
- We take our unique notched camo core and coat it with a super supple clear material for the ultimate in stealth



SONAR STILLWATER PARABOLIC 9

- Features short tapered sections, centered at 10% and 20% for fishing the hang
- Sinking in a U-shaped profile, this fly features a Sink 3 (1.25 lbs) running fly, Sink 5 (5 lbs) head and Sink 3 tip



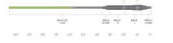
SONAR STILLWATER BOOBY 10

- 17' slip float tip designed to be used with a sinking fly, to keep leader line up off the bottom, clear of debris and weeds
- Especially effective with body and side-whisker flies



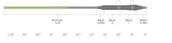
SONAR STILLWATER SD 1/3 11

- Intermediate (1.25 lbs), with a seamless density transition to Sink 3 (1.25 lbs), for ultimate sinking and improve casting
- Features short tapered sections, centered at 10% and 20% for fishing the hang



SONAR STILLWATER SD 3/5 12

- Sink 3 (1.25 lbs), with a seamless density transition to Sink 5 (5 lbs), for ultimate sinking and improve casting
- Features short tapered sections, centered at 10% and 20% for fishing the hang



SONAR STILLWATER SD 5/7 13

- Sink 5 (5 lbs), with a seamless density transition to Sink 7 (7 lbs), for ultimate sinking and improve casting
- Features short tapered sections, centered at 10% and 20% for fishing the hang



