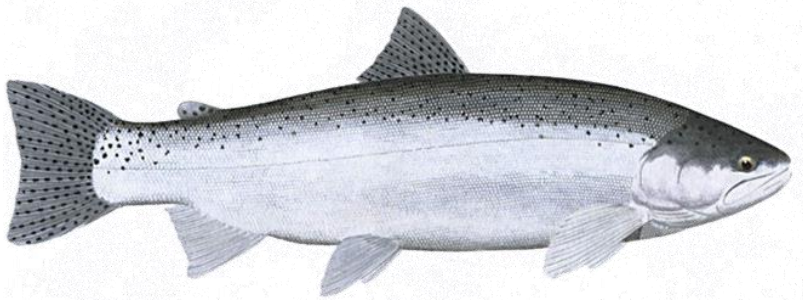




**2025**

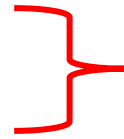
**Ohio Steelhead**

**Trip Report**



# 2025 Ohio Trip Report

- **Brief Overview**



**See previous Trip Reports for Additional Details  
(Fishing / Trip Report Section of web site)**

- **Video**

- **Angler Comments**

*- Lessons Learned, Recommendations, & Things I Wish I'd Know Prior*

# CAVEAT / DISCLAIMER

**Our experiences not indicative of most Steelhead Alley fishing**

**We predominantly fished the small tributaries of the Grand River**

**Because you don't leave fish to find fish . . .**

**. . . and we weren't finding fish anywhere else**





**Madison, Ohio (east of Cleveland)**  
**6.5 hours road time / 7.5 hour drive**  
**SW portion of the “Steelhead Alley”**



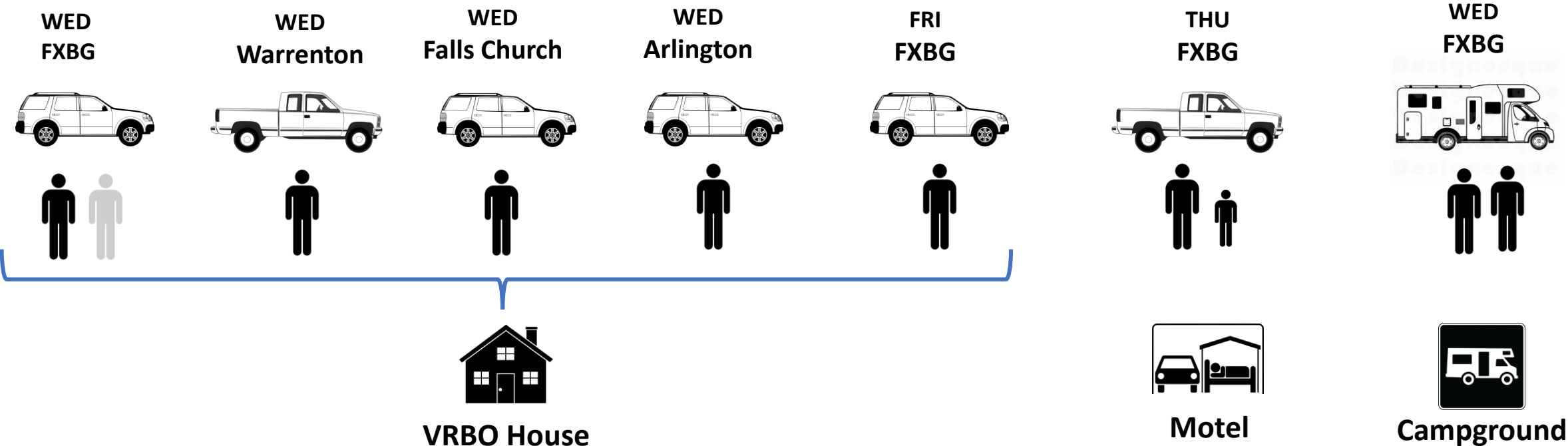
# STEELHEAD ALLEY



## Our Fishing Areas

- ~~Rocky River~~ Cx'd
- ~~2~~ 3 Grand River Tribs
- Ashtabula River
- ~~Conneaut Creek~~ Cx'd
- + Chagrin River

# Ohio Steelhead 2025 Group



**10 Guys - 7 vehicles**

**Lodging at VRBO, Motel, & Campground**

**Meals at lodging & restaurants**

# Gear

Standard 7 and 8 wt rods \*

WFF Line

0x – 2x Leader & Tippet

Full Waders

Studded or Felt soled boots (felt better)



\* Superior Anglers landed fish on a 6wt rod



# What Worked for Us



Egg Patterns



White Death



Olive Buggar



Kreelex

# What Didn't



Stonefly Nymph



Mayfly Nymphs



Red Rocket



A video frame showing a river with a dam or weir structure. Two people in winter gear are standing on the rocky bank. The word "VIDEO" is overlaid in large black letters.

**VIDEO**



# ANGLER'S COMMENTS

Lessons Learned

Recommendations

Things I'd wished I'd known prior



First Steelhead  
First Ohio Trip

Prior Steelhead  
First Ohio Trip

Multiple Ohio Trips

# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip



## BE PREPARED FOR THE WEATHER

- **Layers**
- **Good Gloves, warm socks, knit hat**
- **Extra gloves, hot hands**



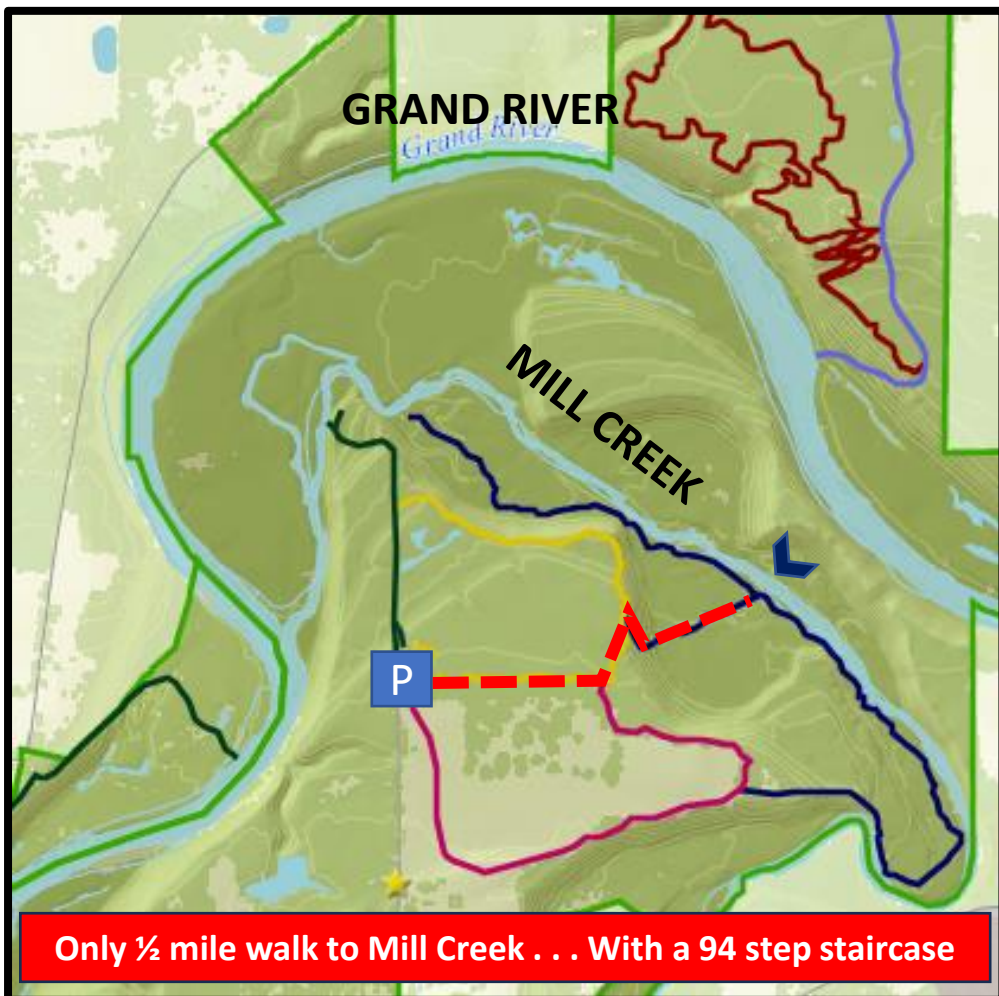
# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip



## CONSIDER DISTANCE TO STREAM

- Carry everything you might need
- May not be feasible to go back to car
- Finding the right balance



Only ½ mile walk to Mill Creek . . . With a 94 step staircase

# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip



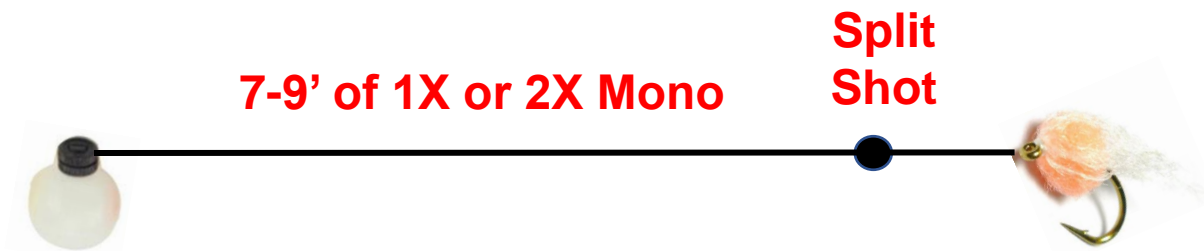
- **Go early to get prime spots**
  - - **Be at the stream at sun rise**



# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip

- **Use one fly rig to mitigate snags & tangles**







# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip

## Nets & Cooperative Netting

- Find the right balance between size and portability



VS



- Be ready and know how to net the fish for your buddy

# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip



- **Remember your cold weather gear**
- **Surprised by the weather changes**

# First Timers Comments



First Ohio & Steelhead Trip



- **Swinging Streamers worked for us**
  - - **Casting down and swinging through**

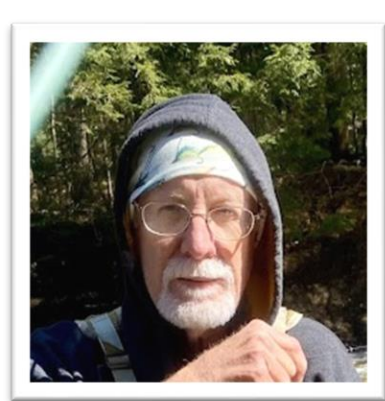






# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip



- **Biggest Surprise: Size of the fish**
  - - Relative to the size of the stream





# First Timers Comments

First Ohio & Steelhead Trip

- **Prepare for the weather . . . and the stairs**
- **It's not rainbow trout fishing, let them run ...**
- **“I want the onion rings, but no onion.”**

# Semi First Timer Comments

Steelhead Experience but First Ohio Trip



- **Be prepared to walk – steep grades & stairs**
- **Constantly adjust indicator to water depth**
- **In low, clear water – watch the fly, not the indicator**



# Prior Trips Guy Comments

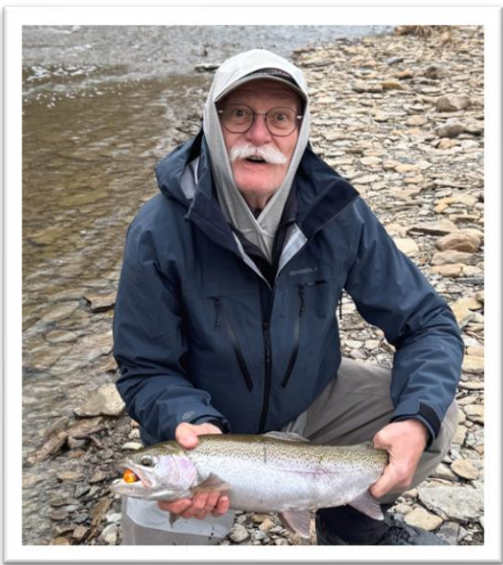
Multiple Ohio Trips



- **Learn to read the water**
- **Don't assume water will be like previous trips**

# Prior Trips Guy Comments

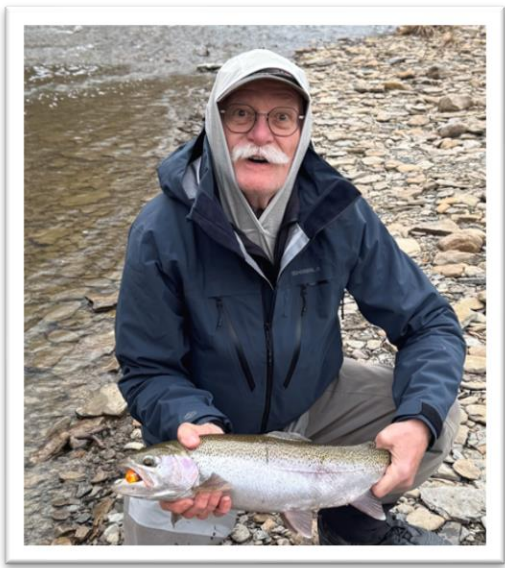
Multiple Ohio Trips



- **Take pre-rigged leaders**
- **Don't waste time untangling leaders; cut it off and re-tie**
- **Carry extra split shot**

# Prior Trips Guy Comments

Multiple Ohio Trips



- If new to Great Lakes steelhead, watch Mad River Outfitters videos







# Prior Trips Guy Comments

Multiple Ohio Trips

## Gear, Rigs, Techniques from prior trips reinforced

**Other Comments on the Standard Rig**

Use White Indicator

- White indicator worked best (in shallow water)
- some negative response to orange & pink
- color didn't matter in deep water (3' +)

Split Shot Sz 1 to AB (x3)

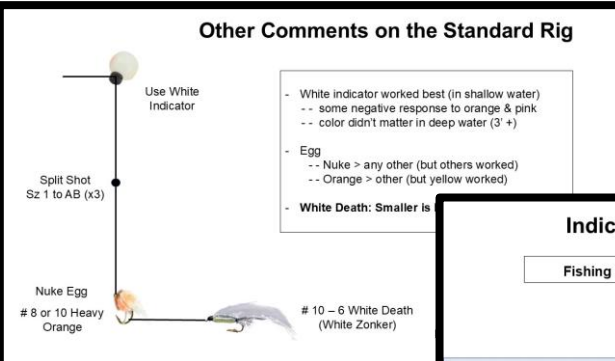
Nuke Egg # 8 or 10 Heavy Orange

# 10 - 6 White Death (White Zonker)

- Egg

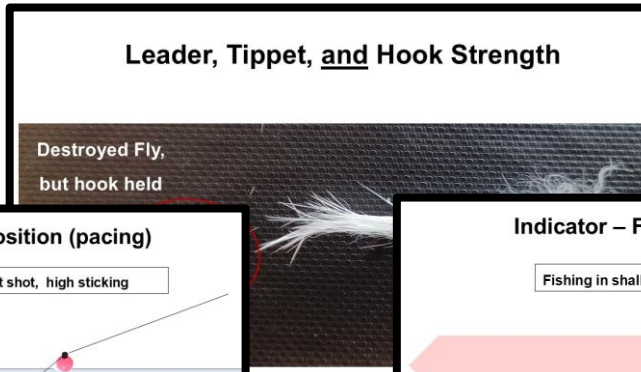
- Nuke > any other (but others worked)
- Orange > other (but yellow worked)

- White Death: Smaller is

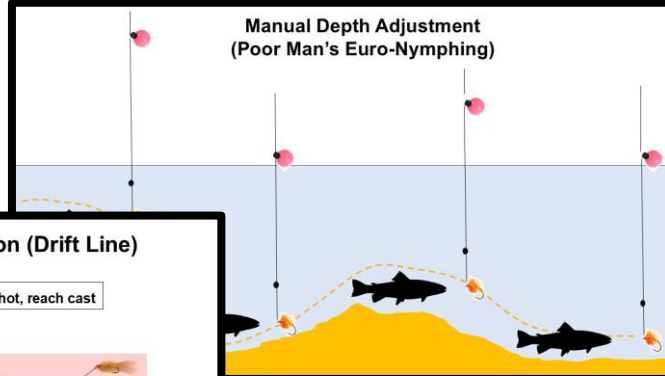


**Leader, Tippet, and Hook Strength**

Destroyed Fly, but hook held



**Manual Depth Adjustment (Poor Man's Euro-Nymphing)**



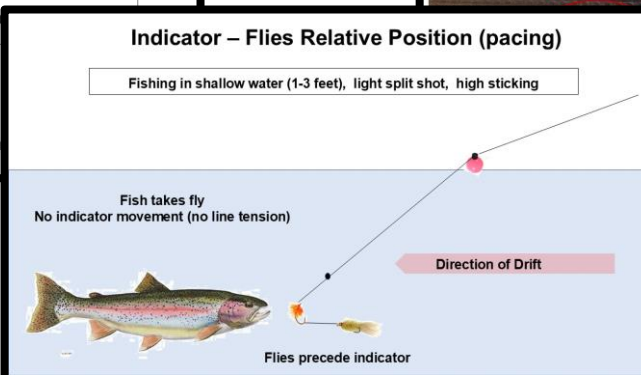
**Indicator - Flies Relative Position (pacing)**

Fishing in shallow water (1-3 feet), light split shot, high sticking

Fish takes fly  
No indicator movement (no line tension)

Direction of Drift

Flies precede indicator

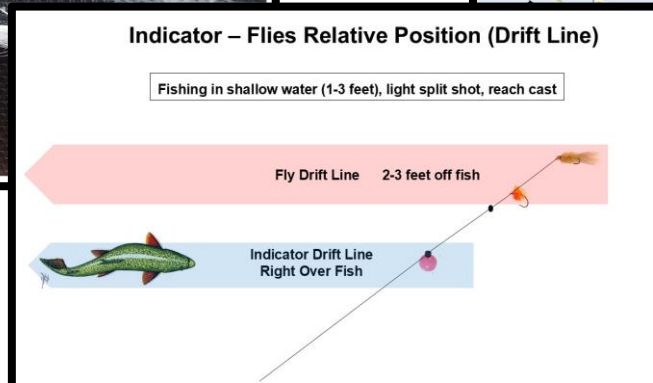


**Indicator - Flies Relative Position (Drift Line)**

Fishing in shallow water (1-3 feet), light split shot, reach cast

Fly Drift Line 2-3 feet off fish

Indicator Drift Line Right Over Fish



***Prior year trip reports & videos have wealth of information  
Check them out if making the trip***

# Prior Trip Guy Comments

## Bad Weather = Good Fishing

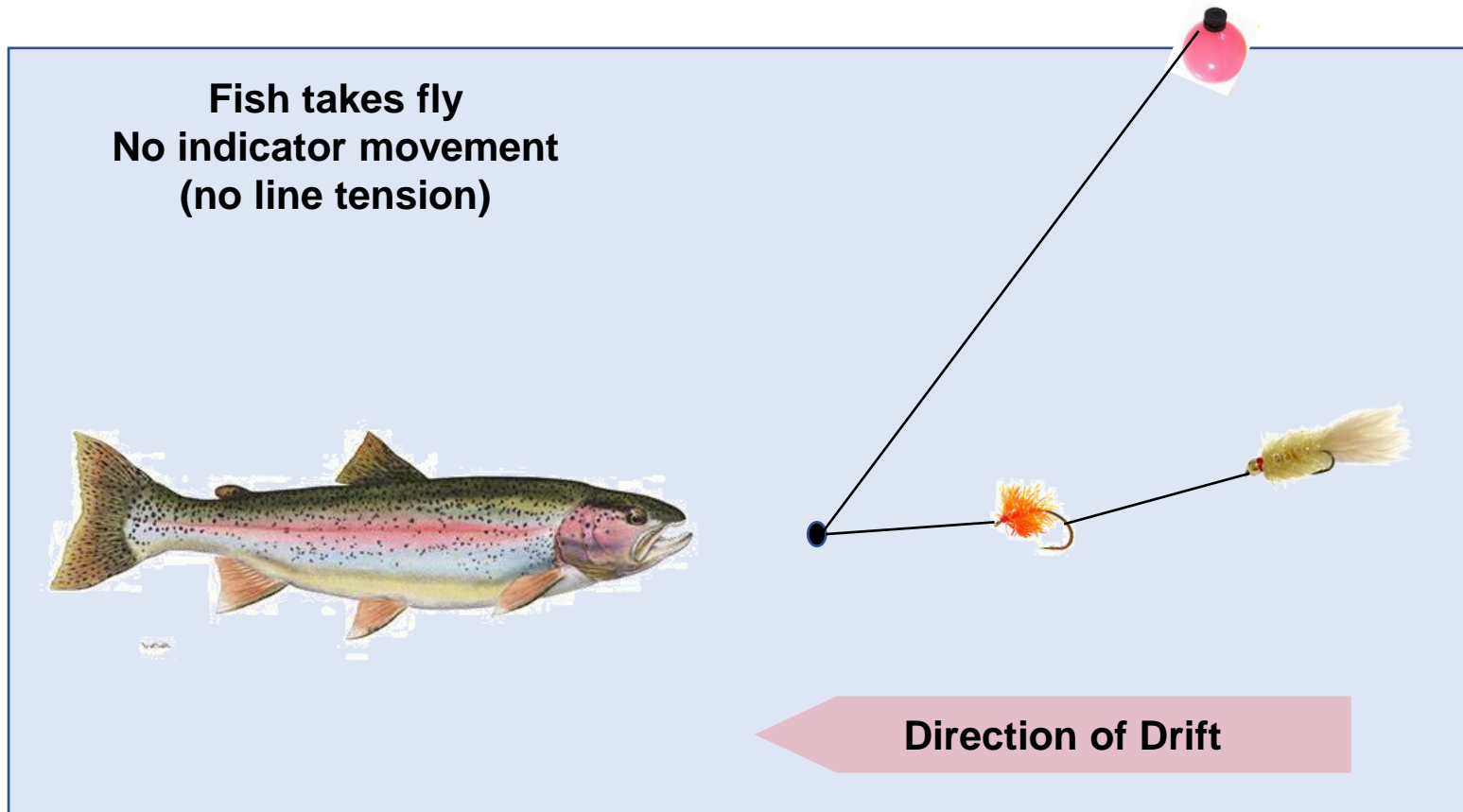


**A little rain, a tad cold = Fewer people & more active fish**

**Our Best Days have been during the worst weather  
(Don't let it scare you off the water)**

# Prior Trips Guy Comments

## Indicator movement vs Steelhead movement



If flies are close, and . . .

- Mouth opens
- Fish arches or rolls
- Fly disappears

. . . **Set the hook!**



# Prior Trips Guy Comments

## Beware of Rock Shadows



**What we typically see in the water**



## Beware of Rock Shadows

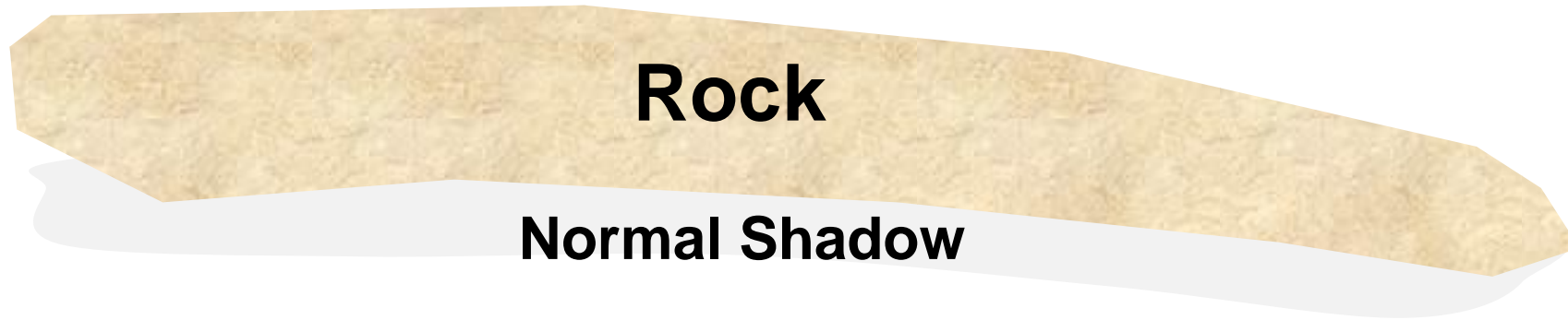


**What we saw this year: Fish 'hiding' in the rock shadow  
(under ledges, even single rock ledges)**



# Prior Trips Guy Comments

## Some Rock Shadows are Fish

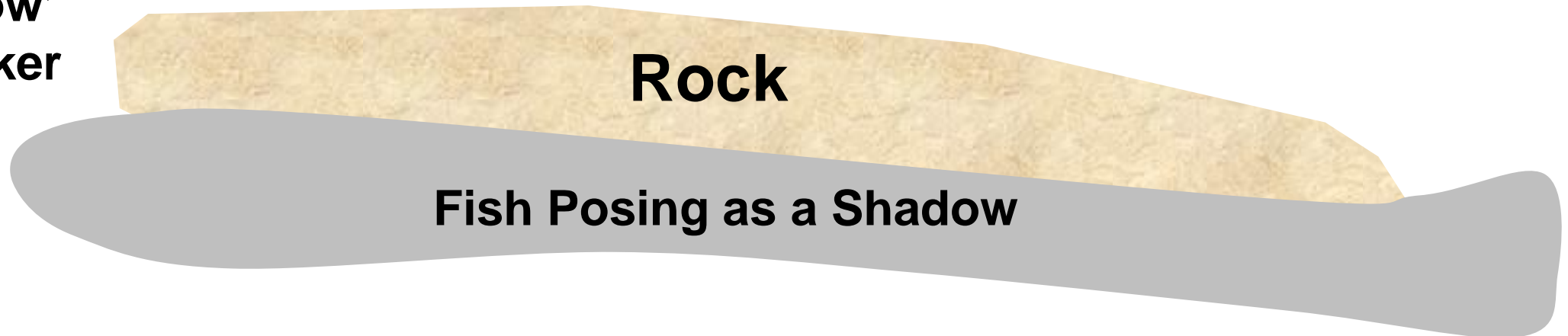


**Rock**

**Normal Shadow**

**Just a rock  
with a shadow**

**But if 'shadow'  
longer & darker**



**Rock**

**Fish Posing as a Shadow**



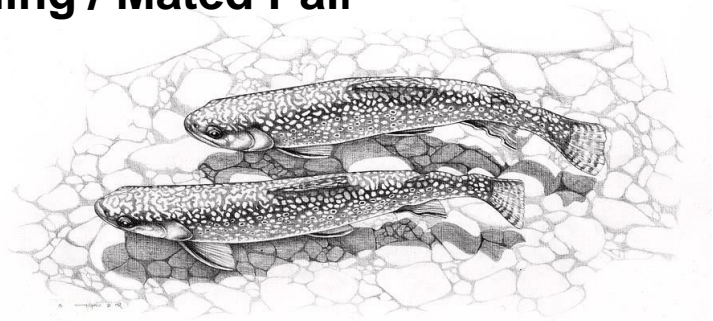
# Prior Trips Guy Comments

**Spawn & Spar Activity = Don't Bother (won't strike)**

**But if you see these**



**Spawning / Mated Pair**

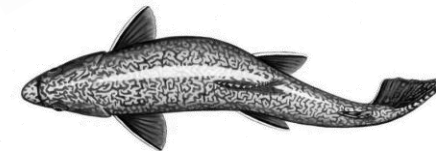
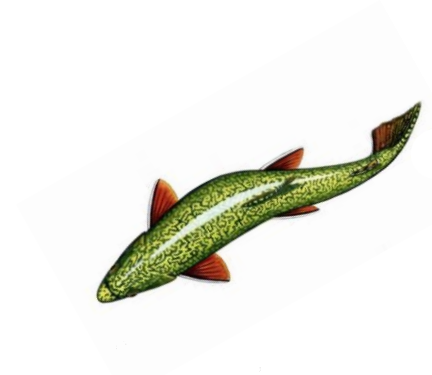


**No Interest in any flies**

**Find these**



**Opportunistic Males**



**Will strike (often violently)**

# Prior Trips Guy Comments

## Remember 1<sup>st</sup> Rule of Successful Fly Fishing

**“You gotta use...”**



Stonefly Nymphs



#12 Nymphs



Black streamers  
(white won't work)



Only big, flashy  
streamers will work



Counter-weighted  
stinger eggs



**“The only Park fishing well  
is Chagrin River Park.”**



**“The bridge at Paine Creek  
is filthy with fish.”**



**“There’s no fish; ice dams  
only cleared 2 weeks ago.”**



**“Don’t bother with Mills.”**



**“The Tribs, Ashtabula and  
Conneaut are your best bets.”**



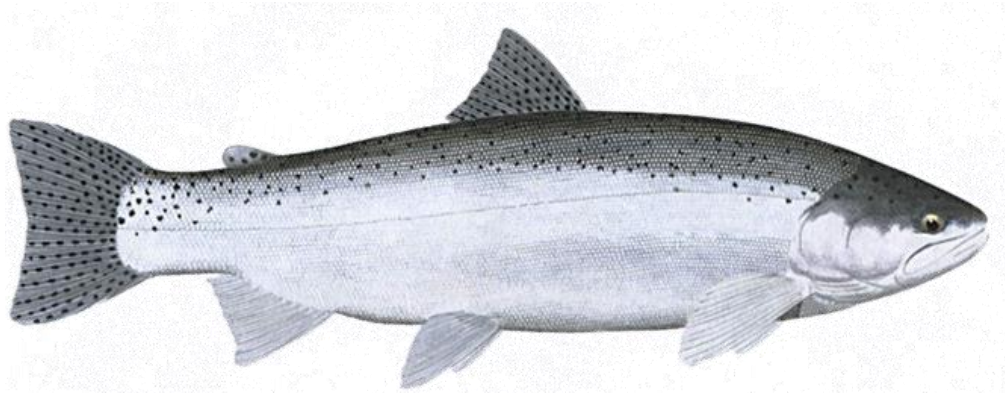


**Next Trip**

**March 2026**

**(and maybe a late Fall 2025 trip)**





**2025  
Ohio Steelhead  
Trip Report**

**Questions  
&  
Comments**