

## Killing Time

By : Weston Niep



If there was a slow time of year for Colorado outdoorsman it would be right now. Rivers and lakes are ice locked, the hills are covered with a few modest feet of snow, and the heaters in our cars have never been so valuable. So if winter has the outdoorsman in you down, here are a few ways to spend that bit of extra time.

### Indoor Events:

The holiday season offers countless opportunities for outdoorsman, young and old, to escape the cold while keeping the outdoors theme intact. These events almost always have something to entertain the kids and have the potential for you to walk away smiling from ear to ear as well.

### Cabelas (Thornton):

**Sunday Dec 13**

**Live Raptors- 10:00 AM**

Have you or your child ever been curious about falconry? This presentation is a great opportunity for personal edification on the subject, plus you get to see some really amazing animals up close.

**Ice Fishing With Bernie Keefe- 10:00 AM**

Bernie Keefe is a favorite guide of the Wambolt fishing team. He will be speaking on ice fishing techniques, locations, and will focus primarily on lake trout. If you have any plans on pursuing trout under the ice, you need to catch this talk.

### Bass Pro Shops (Denver):

**Saturday Dec 12**

**Ice Fishing Workshop- 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

If you love ice fishing don't miss these talks. Nate Zelinsky, Jack winters, Sam Heckman, and Dennis Hunter are all local fishing experts looking to dial you into your next fish under the ice. From species specific techniques to beginner basics this is the Ice fishing talk of the season.

## Killing time (Continued)

**International Sportsman's Expo 2016: January 14-17**

It's almost here again, the 2016 International Sportsman's Expo. If you haven't been to one of these events, imagine everything great about hunting and fishing smashed into Colorado Convention Center for 4 days. Activities include aquarium presentations, speeches from various outdoor pro staff, kids fishing clinics, equipment demonstrations, and so much more. Check out the schedule on the ISE 2016 web page to plan your outdoorsman's day in.

### Ice Fishing Tournaments 2015-2016:

**January 9, 2016: Chatfield Reservoir**

Round 1 of the Tighline outdoor Ice Addiction Tournament series. Top prize is \$2500. No augers or ice huts.

**January 16-17: Rifle Gap Reservoir**

This is the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Mountain Air Mechanical ice fishing tournament. Kids under 17 are free. Top prize is \$20,000.

**January 23: Boyd Lake**

Round 3 of the Tighline outdoors Ice Addiction Tournament series. Another \$2500 up for grabs.

**January 29-31: Three Lakes Ice Fishing Tournament**

This is the king of Colorado ice fishing tournaments. Ice fisherman from all over will set their sights on Granby, Grand Lake, and Shadow Mountain for this 3 day spectacle. Tons of great prizes will be given away daily.

As you can see, winter doesn't have to be a slow time for us. There are countless opportunities to feed you outdoor obsession. Most importantly this is a great time to share the outdoors with your family. Happy Holidays!



Do you have someone that you'd like to include in the Fly of the Month Club? Please sign up on our website



# December 2015

# Fly Of the Month Club



 *Happy Holidays*

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# Slow & Low: Winter Fishing Tips & Tactics

First introduced to me by a fishing buddy and a transplant from the land of Dixie, the "Slow & Low" is made from a good rye whiskey seeped in orange peel and honey. Taking a nip off your flask when on the water in the winter helps to get the blood flowing in numb fingers and adds some warmth to wind-chapped cheeks. More important than acting as a dose of liquid fortification on a frosty day, the name of this drink acts as a good reminder of where we can expect to find trout in the winter and the best approach to landing sluggish fish.



As the mercury drops each winter and water temps hover just above freezing, trout evacuate their positions among the riffles and fast pocket water, and move to the deepest pools and slowest eddies in the river. Among the boulders and troughs that make up the bottom of the pools and eddies, trout find refuge from the energy-draining flows of the river, and remain almost motionless in an attempt to conserve energy. Not that different from the anglers who pursue them, when it's cold out - the trout move SLOW. This is both a blessing and a curse for the fly fisher. While we get to attack the river with an economy of casts knowing that the fish are stacked up in the few deepest pools and eddies, the challenge is getting your flies deep enough and lining up your drift to get your flies in front of these lazy fish. Using tungsten bead heads and extra weight on your leader will help you to get slow & low, giving you the best chance at some winter action!

## Make it a Double

The factors that typically affect water clarity in the warm months are runoff and the growth of algae in the water column brought on by long sunny days. In the winter, in addition to fish being stacked up on top of each other, winter waters are typically gin clear, making it difficult for the angler to approach the edge of the river, let alone drift their fly in front of a trout with anything less than a perfect cast without spooking the fish.

To combat the skittish nature of winter trout, try extending the length of your leader and paring down the weight. Ten or twelve foot leaders can give you just the right amount of reach to stretch out into these deep holes while remaining in the shadows along the bank, while dropping the weight down to 6x will cast a lighter profile making it less likely you will spook your prey.

## Spark Their Interest

Long past are the days of juicy terrestrials, summer stoneflies, and swarms of caddis flies eclipsing the water. Instead, most of the food available to winter trout are invertebrates freshly emerged from their eggs, best matched by flies in sizes 20-28, and offering few calories to trout in compensation for their efforts to intercept drifting food.

In order to spark the interest of winter trout, try incorporating a heavy mix of attractor patterns into your winter fishing rigs. Flashbacks, fluorescents, metallic or colorful glass beads, and using blues and purples that are visible at greater depths and distances appeal to the predator nature of the trout.

## Find the Hot Spots

While the water in winter tailwaters can be up to 10-15 degrees warmer than downstream portions of the river, being able to locate springs as they enter the river will allow you to find micro hotspots where fish are actively feeding. Unique among habitat types, springs maintain a nearly constant temperature year round. Bubbling up from the bottom of the river or traveling through the gravels of a seemingly dry upland creek bed, a spring can enter the river at an unseasonably warm 50+ degrees

and drive trout to springtime levels of feeding activity. Springs can be most easily identified in the winter as holes in the ice, and areas densely populated with trout. For the hardcore angler, bring a thermometer to the river and check the water temperature as you search for a hotspot.



You don't need to hang up your fly rod just because its winter! So stack on the layers, pack your flask, and head to the water for a little Slow & Low!

# Fly of the

## Fly of the Month

**Pattern:** Rojo Midge

**Color:** Purple

**Size:** 20

**Family Matched:** Midge / Chironomid)

**Life Cycle:** Pupa / Emerger

**Fly Type:** Attractor



Red glass beadhead glowing in the water, bright wire rib, and contrasting white buzzer emerging from a peacock collar, the Rojo Midge looks like something Boy George might tie. This flamboyantly colored attractor pattern is a proven killer when trying to spark the attention of trout as they feed on midge larva or pupa.