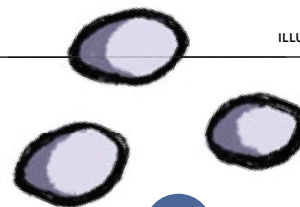


LITTLE WYOMING

Meet the

MAYFLY

Mayflies belong to the insect group Ephemeroptera, which comes from Greek words that mean “short-lived” and “winged.” Mayflies, as winged adults, usually live for only one day! Even though the adults do not live for long, mayflies are extremely important. They are food for fish, birds, bats and predatory insects. There are 97 species of mayflies in Wyoming, and around 3,000 worldwide.



01

Sticky Situation

Mayflies lay their eggs on the surface of clean streams and rivers. The eggs sink to the bottom and stick to plants or rocks. After a few weeks, the eggs hatch and mayfly nymphs emerge.

02

Problematic Pollution

Mayflies can stay in the nymph stage for one to two years. Mayfly nymphs are very sensitive to changes in their environment and cannot survive in polluted waters. If you flip over rocks in a stream and don't find any mayfly nymphs, it could mean that the water is polluted or of poor quality!



Spread Your Wings

Mayflies emerge from the water as winged adults, called the subimago. This emergence occurs in Wyoming from March to November, depending on the location and species. Often, all of the mayflies in a population will emerge at the same time. The subimago stage lasts only a few hours before the mayflies molt into their final adult stage.

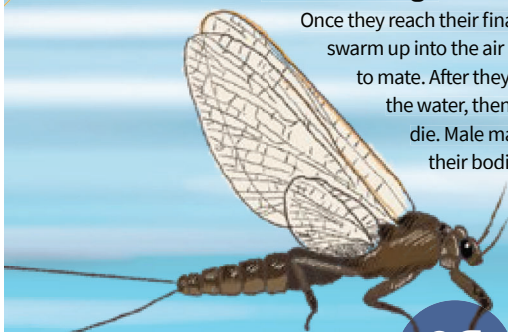
03



04

Socially Short-Lived

Once they reach their final stage, called the imago, males swarm up into the air and females fly into the swarm to mate. After they mate, the females lay eggs in the water, then fall to the water's surface and die. Male mayflies often die over land, where their bodies become fertilizer for the soil.



05

What a Catch!

Mayflies are a favorite bait of trout anglers. That's because mayflies, at every stage of their lives, are appetizing to trout! Many fly fishing “flies” are tied to resemble the stages of mayfly development. Anglers use different names for them; they call subimagos “duns,” and imagos “spinners.” Duns are dull colored with opaque wings, and spinners are brightly colored with translucent wings. Fish rise up to capture both of these stages at or near the water surface. To see what size and color of mayfly fish are feeding on, skim the water surface with a net, then find a fly in your tackle box to match.

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