

Fishing – keeping out of sight is so important



Paul Buchanan pictured late last year seeking out trout in one of his regular pools near Livingston. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Paul Buchanan is an international angler and a seasoned campaigner on The Almond around his home in Livingston.

He says we are now in BOOM time and many species of upwing olives are now hatching. The fish are eating them ALL.

Paul added: “Add to that, the terrestrial born Hawthorns and Black Gnats have just turned up so it is feeding frenzy time. The most important thing right now is keeping out of sight so the fish feed without fear and then presenting your fly well.

“Fly size can generally be very closely related to water height. There isn’t a formula but where a size 14 (hook) would normally do in these really low conditions a size 18 is probably best.

“For nymph fishing, I have not had any success on any of my normal heavy nymphs for two reasons, the fish are not right up into the necks of the streams yet and the colder water is keeping them in the slacker areas of the pool.

“Secondly, to get nymphs to sink deep you need big beads, usually 3mm is fine in the River Almond. These are way too big right now for the low flows and 2mm is much better. This smaller bead also needs to be on a much smaller nymph.

“For the dry fly fisherman, these low flows coupled with very cold winds have been very interesting so far this year. The lower water and air temperature is slowing down eclosion, the

process where a nymph that has come from the riverbed hatches into an adult on the surface.

“The fact the nymph is taking longer to get out of its nymphal shuck and the adult is sitting on the surface for longer before flying off is giving the trout a longer window of opportunity to catch its food.

“Even though the sun has been dazzlingly bright over the past wee while this hasn’t put the fish off rising, probably due to the abundance of surface food.

“As soon as this weather system, that is dominated by cold East and North winds, is replaced with our more typical mild, wet Atlantic weather, the best fishing will move from daytime to evening.

“Because the river has been low for so long, the first flush of the spate will be as dirty as you will have ever seen it, basically unfishable. It will clear soon though and the fishing then will be magical on all methods.”