## **SCUDS**

Scuds--sometimes called "freshwater shrimp" are freshwater crustaceans that range in size from less than an eighth of an inch to over one inch. They are found in a variety of colors including black, tan, brown, green, cream, and white, with tan and green the most common. No matter how you classify them, you should always have a few of them in your box, as they inhabit almost all of our tailwaters in the area especially the South Holston.

Scuds are presented in a manner similar to a nymph, but with a few twists. If you are fishing in a real shallow or other slow-moving water, placement, depth, and presentation are the keys to success.

When looking for likely water, skip any areas with rocky or sandy bottoms and fast-moving water. Instead, focus on slow-moving stretches and deep pockets with extensive vegetation.

Scuds usually burrow into the moss, grass, and weeds in these placid waters and graze on the vegetation. This means they are well-protected from cruising trout, and since scuds do not "emerge" like a mayfly or midge, the opportunity for a trout to feed on these delicacies is limited.

Often, however, trout will create their own buffet by nosing into the vegetation. After rooting around for a bit, they drift back with the sediment cloud to see what morsels they've dislodged. They will quickly snatch up whatever looks good, then return to the weed patch for another nudge. When you find trout exhibiting this behavior, they are probably already feeding on scuds and will be an easy target.

To choose a scud pattern, pull up some weeds and see if you find any of the critters, then choose a fly that matches the size and color of what you've found. Most common colors are grey, olive, pale olive, orange and pink.

To present your fly, use a small strike indicator, either a bit of yarn or a bushy dry fly (run the scud as a dropper), because clear, slow-water trout are often spooky. Set your depth so the fly will pass just over the weed tops, then cast well upstream of the feeding trout. Let your scud drift freely, without drag or movement. The fly needs to drift either through or close to the weed patch to attract the trout's attention, but scuds must taste good, because trout are often willing to move farther for a scud than for a midge.