

## FLY TACKLE FOR PANCHESHWAR

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Located on the border of India and Nepal the confluence of Pancheshwar commemorates a region and a fishery that has changed less with time. This is where the mighty Mahakali is met by the Saryu River – the Mahakali’s most Mahseer friendly tributary.

For years anglers have fished its pre as well as post monsoon migratory Mahseer run with much success. In recent times some of the most significant break-throughs in this fishery have been on fly tackle.

Mahseer take well to Sculpins as well as dragon fly nymphs on the Saryu River. Minnow replicas make effective flies too. These include popper flies like the crease minnow.

While fly fishing for Mahseer on the Saryu River your guides may often expect you to cast a good distance (70 – 90 ft) – often using heavy flies and heavy sink-tips. It is advised that fly-anglers are well acquainted to execute the above using both double as well as single handed fly rods.

Fly fishing for Golden Himalayan Mahseer is not for the faint of heart, and these fisheries are best appreciated by experienced, dedicated anglers. Good presentation skills are required, as is the quality of forbearance.

To our thinking, devotees of notoriously finicky fish like Atlantic salmon, Steelhead, Permit, Tarpon, and Milkfish will bring the right set of expectations to these rivers. More than that, however, we feel anglers are likely to take from an encounter with a Mahseer, even if brief, a complete sense for the accomplishment that such a feat entails.

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## RODS & LINES

We recommend bringing 8 - 9 wt double as well as single handed fly rods for the Saryu River.

Double handed fly rods (8 - 9 wt): Versus the traditional style of Spey casting; we recommend the Scandinavian / Skagit style of Spey casting that uses shooting-head fly-lines with an integrated running line for the Mahseer.

This system allows anglers to carry heavy sink-tips and heavy flies - a must for large rivers like the Saryu. This system also allows you to strip the running line to reach the shooting head, hence moving the fly away from the fish, while also giving it an action - that is found to be effective for Mahseer.



Recommended lines for double-handed fly rods – the RIO Skagit and/or RIO Windcutter and/or other similar fly lines by other fly line manufacturers. An assortment of tips / fly line extensions must be bought with these fly lines. These include floating, intermediate, and assorted sinking-tips that include the heavy RIO type 8 as well as 300 grain tips, aka DC big boy.

Single-handed fly rods: Some of the sections on the Saryu can be fished more efficiently using a single handed fly rod.

In clear water conditions, during the pre-monsoon period, your guide may often ask you to make a few presentations a short distance from the river - hence making a single-handed rod more practical. Single handed fly rods also come in use while fishing in the dark - very early in the morning and after dusk.

An 8 - 9 wt, 9 - 10 ft, fast-action single handed fly rod is recommended for the Saryu River. It offers the right balance between, power and presentation.

It is recommended that you outfit your single handed fly rods with shooting taper / short belly fly lines. These include 250-300 grain sink tips with an integrated running line. Such lines are made by several fly line manufacturers. Similar shooting taper lines with an intermediate sink tip must also be brought along.

Alternatively, you could also buy a RIO Versi-tip fly line that comes with an assortment of tips.



It is also recommended that you bring with you a weight-forward floating line in a subtle color. We recommend the tropical clear-floating manufactured by US based MONIC fly lines.

It is also highly recommended that you bring along an Orvis stripping basket. Although cumbersome to carry – this non collapsible stripping basket can be of great help on these rivers.

### **Flies for the Mahseer**

There is a wide variety of flies & bait fish imitations that are used for the Golden Himalayan Mahseer. Patterns vary from one river to the other, from the spring to the autumn season, and fishing from bad light to high light conditions.

In clear water conditions, those are generally found during the pre monsoon months on the Saryu, the use of natural colors amongst, Sculpin, Damsel, and Dragon fly imitations is productive. These natural colors include olive - other alterations of olive, like golden olive, sculpin olive, yellow olive, and additional variations of olive that you can get your hands on.

Besides olive, other natural shades of black and brown are also used.

We have also found that during the post monsoon months, as well as at night, the Mahseer of the Saryu feed almost exclusively on minnows. Hence surface as well as sub surface minnow imitations are effective. These include the gummy minnow, deceivers, crease flies etc.

Most flies are tied using dumbbell eyes or cone-heads that encourage a jiggling / wobbling action in the fly. Flies that push-water are also very effective in bad light conditions, where in, the Golden Himalayan Mahseer rely on their significant lateral line as their primary sensory organ for detecting possible feeding potential. That said we avoid fishing too large a flies that make loud gurgles. We prefer using a more subtle pop like in the crease fly.

### **Tippet Material**

An assortment of Maxima leader material *Ultragreen* (6 to 20 lb test) may be used. Alternatively, highly abrasion resistant tippet material like the Rio Fluoroflex tippet many also be brought in assorted breaking strains (6 – 30 lb test).

The Mahseer are often leader shy in clear rivers. They are also very hard running fish – hence the right balance between presentation and abrasion resistance is important.

### **WADING**

There is a fair amount of wading involved on this trip, which may include crossings streams, and knee-deep wet wading while fishing.

### **Recommended wading gear**

A good pair of tough ankle-high wading boots is



a must. High-traction soles like felt or the Simms *streamtread* rubber soles are highly recommended.

Neoprene socks with build in gaiters are recommended to keep the gravel out.

### **IMPORTANT TIPS**

Reel covers are also a must to protect your expensive reels from getting sand in them. River-sand is perhaps the finest sand and gets into reels very easily. Reel covers will also help in protecting your reels and lines from getting damaged while transit.

