

# On The Fly

## March 2004

“Fly tying is a school from which we never graduate”

### **PATTERN OF THE MONTH: Hare's-Ear Soft Hackle**

Hook: Tiemco 200R, sizes 12 to 18  
Thread: Brown 8-0  
Body: Dark hare's-ear dubbing, starting above the barb & tapering forward.  
Rib: Fine copper wire  
Thorax: Dark hare's-ear dubbing  
Hackle: 2 to 3 turns of brown Hungarian partridge flank, swept back.



The Hare's-Ear Soft Hackle is one of the great generic bug patterns. In many sizes it can be used as an emerging mayfly in rivers, or a Callibaetis emerger and damselfly nymph in lakes, or just a good general search pattern by itself or as a dropper. Most often it is thought of as a caddis emerger because of its fine, impressionistic copy of an emerging caddis pupa.

The easiest and simplest way to tie one is to use a Tiemco 200R hook and tie a short, carrot-shaped body of hare's mask dubbing with a rib of copper wire or flat gold tinsel on larger sizes. Start the body above the hook barb, taper it, rib it, and then tie it in a slightly fatter thorax. Ahead of that is a sparse, oversized soft hackle of brown partridge or brown hen neck hackle on larger sizes. When the fly is wet the hackles should lie back past the hook bend. Size 18 & 20 are unweighted but on size 16 and above I put a few turns of skinny lead wire under the thorax.

Caddis pupae can be pretty hefty, big-headed bugs, especially the large ones, so a variation called the Bead-Chain Hare's Ear Soft Hackle can be tied for this imitation. It's the same pattern except dark bead-chain eyes with figure eight wraps of hare's mask dubbing through them, are used for the head. The silhouette is more like the real caddis pupa and the eyes give just enough weight to sink the fly an inch or two under the surface in current. This variation can be tied size 16 through 12.

### **TYING TIPS - Making variegated chenille**

Many times finding a source for that special color variegated chenille may be difficult or even impossible. You can make your own easily by twisting together a strand of each color needed to make instant variegated chenille that stays together even when the twisting pressure is released. Another bonus is that twisted chenille makes a much tighter full body. Your inventory problem is also solved. Simply buy the basic colors to make any combination desired.