

On The Fly

March 2008

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH: Mugly Caddis

Hook: Daiichi 1100, wide gape, dry fly hook, size 12-20.
Thread: Tan 6/0.
Abdomen: Long-fiber dubbing, color to match natural.
Underwing: Natural CDC.
Overwing: Natural cow elk body hair.
Thorax: Same as abdomen.



Tying Instructions:

- 1) Start the thread one-eye width behind the eye and wind the thread rearward laying down a thread base to just above the barb.
- 2) Form a dubbing loop, insert dubbing fairly thick, and wind the dubbing loop forward to form the abdomen. Stop winding at $\frac{1}{4}$ shank length from the eye, tie off and clip excess.
- 3) Select two matched CDC feathers and even the tips. Clump them into a bunch, measure to one shank length, and tie in the feathers at the front edge of the abdomen. Clip the butts and tie off.
- 4) Select a small bunch of elk hair. Clean and stack the elk hair, and measure so it is the same length as the CDC underwing. Tie the elk hair in at the base of the CDC and secure it with tight thread wraps. Clip the butts at an angle and cover with smooth thread wraps tapered to just behind the eye.
- 5) Return the thread to the base of the elk hair. Apply dubbing and wrap the dubbing forward to the edge of the hook eye.
- 6) Form a small head, whip-finish and apply cement. Pick out the dubbing on the thorax and abdomen to enhance the halo effect.

At first glance the Mugly Caddis looks like a poorly tied Elk Hair Caddis with a shaggy body and a sparser wing. But those are the exact differences that give this pattern the ability to catch trout when the old stand by just doesn't work. This fly pattern was developed by Charlie Craven in Colorado after a trip to the Henry's Fork. The shaggy dubbing and the CDC underwing provide more movement and better floatation than just elk hair. The pattern could imitate a “stuck in the shuck” caddis, trapped partially in its nymphal shuck. The long fibered dubbing imitates the struggling legs of the natural and the dubbing traps air bubbles to closer mimic the emerging caddis.

This fly can be fished both dry and wet. Charlie says he sometimes lets it swing under at the end of the drift. He also claims the pattern can draw some incredibly aggressive strikes, so keep your rod tip low to avoid breaking the fish off on the strike.

TYING TIPS

Obviously, you can vary the hook size and body color to match the naturals. The key is to select the right type of dubbing. Natural hair works best as long as it has the guard hairs included. When you pick out the guard hairs toward the underside of the fly, the guard hairs will form the legs. The under fur of the dubbing forms the shuck halo effect and traps air bubbles. Dubbing can be picked out with a bodkin, a Velcro stick, or a gun bore cleaning brush. The dubbing loop method consistently gives a looser, buggier look to a body.

This is a moderately easy pattern using common materials. So tie some up and give them a test flight. Let me know how they work. This fly should work very well for the Mother's Day Caddis hatch in late April.