

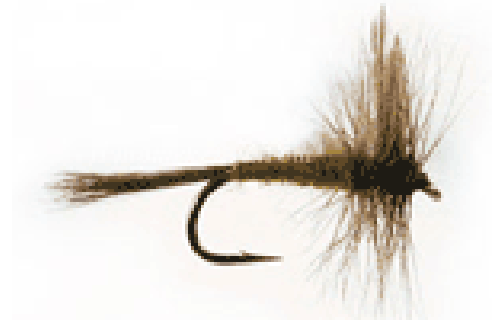
On The Fly

April 2011

"Fly tying is a school from which we never graduate"

PATTERN OF THE MONTH: Black Drake Dun

Hook: Daiichi 1170, standard dry fly, size 10 -8.
Thread: 8-0 black.
Wing: Medium gray dun hen hackle tips.
Tail: Dark dun hackle fibers.
Rib: Gray tying thread.
Abdomen and thorax: Dark dun nylon yarn strand.
Hackle: Dark dun dry fly hackle feather.



Tying Instructions

Step 1 Mash the barb and mount the hook in the vise.

Step 2: Start the thread one eye width behind the eye and lay down an even thread base to a position just above the hook barb. Return the thread to a position 1/3 the shank length behind the eye.

Step 3: Select a matching pair of hen hackle tips, turn them back to back, and even the tip ends. Hold the feathers with your left hand with the tips pointing forward over the hook eye and measure one shank length. Switch the grip to your right hand and pull the fibers below the tie-in point on the center stem toward the rear exposing a bare area of stems. Switch hands again holding the butt fibers rearward and lower the stems over the hanging thread at the wing position. Tie in on top of the hook shank and tie down the stems halfway back to the hook bend. Trim the butts.

Step 4: Select six stiff hackle fibers for the tail, measure them to one shank length, and tie them in on top of the hook shank. Trim the butts so they reach the wing butts and secure with thread wraps.

Step 5: Cut off a length of gray 3-0 thread and tie on in front of the tail for the rib.

Step 6: From the base of the wing to the base of the tail form a nicely tapered thread underbody ending the wraps at the base of the wing.

Step 7: Select a single strand of yarn, tie on top just behind the wing base and tie it down with spiral thread wraps along the top of the shank to the base of the tail. Advance the thread forward to the wing base. Wrap the yarn forward in touching turns to the wing, and take two turns of thread to hold the yarn in position.

Step 8: Pull the wings up and to the rear, perpendicular to the hook shank. With firm thread wraps in front of the wing base, post up the wings 90 degrees. Separate the wings and take a figure eight wrap between the wing stems.

Step 9: Take two more wraps of yarn in front of the wing, tie off and trim. Return the thread to just behind the wing.

Step 10: Wrap the gray thread rib forward in 5 even turns to the wing, tie off and trim.

Step 11: Select a correctly sized hackle feather, strip the fluff from the lower stem, and tie it on top of the hook shank just behind the wing with the stem butt lying between the wings. Advance the thread in front of the wing and tie down the hackle butt with a couple turns of thread and trim.

Step 12: Wrap the hackle in dry fly fashion forward 3 times behind the hook and 4 times in front. Tie off the hackle tip, trim, form a neat little head and cement.

When John Ward asked me to feature a Black Drake pattern for the April column, I had a multitude of patterns to choose from. That became a major problem for me. How do I pick a single pattern for the tiers and fishermen in the club who will be attending the outing to the Williamson in mid May, and of course want to catch their share of the trophy trout found there. After some intensive research and a lot of good advice from the expert anglers, I decided on the surest bet I could wager, the Black Drake Dun developed back in 1933 by the man who put the Williamson River on the map, Polly Rosborough. The fly was featured in his famous book, "Tying and Fishing The Fuzzy Nymphs" published in 1965.

The pattern is versatile in that if the full dry version is not successful, all you have to do is trim off the hackle fibers even with the bottom of the hook shank, and you have the spinner version. He advises to fish the hatch top to bottom, changing the fly version often, until you reach the feeding zone. So I would tie and take along the nymph also. Polly ends the Black Drake section with these convincing words. "It is a fact that the entire series of this drake, nymph, dun, spinner and spent, should be illegal in the hands of our top fly casters, that is unless they were restricted to full barbless hooks. They are that good".

TYING TIPS

By adding a small ball of thread just ahead of the tail tie-in position, the tail fibers will naturally splay and stay when tied down. The reason for using hen neck hackle tips is because the tips are rounded for a natural look. The body color was the hardest to find a match to the natural and Polly's original pattern. I found that with a little color adjustment golden brown yarn worked best. After winding the body you can darken the top half with a dark gray and dark wine permanent maker to achieve the proper natural coloration. The hatch normally lasts about 3-4 weeks and I hope you have a chance to experience it. So tie some up, give them a test flight and let me know how you do.