

On The Fly

August 2008

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Olive Hairwing Dun

Hook: Daiichi 1170 or equivalent standard dry fly hook, size 12-20.

Thread: Olive 8/0.

Tails: Blue dun hackle fibers, split.

Body: Olive fur or synthetic dubbing.

Hackle: Blue dun.

Wing: Gray-dyed yearling elk or coastal deer hair.



Tying Instructions:

- 1) Start the thread one eye-width back from the eye. Lay down a thread layer to a point just above the barb.
- 2) Twist on a tiny amount of dubbing to form a small knot of fur at the bend of the hook.
- 3) Select two or three hackle barbs for each side of the tail. Tie them in on the back and front side of the shank, in front of the fur knot you just formed. Make a couple of wraps back over the fibers and up against the knot and this will keep the tail fibers splayed outwards. Trim the butts.
- 4) Twist enough dubbing on your thread to form a slender, tapered body and wind the dubbing forward to the midpoint of the hook. Tie-off and trim.
- 5) Select a hackle feather with fibers $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 times as long as the gap of the hook. Strip the webby fibers from the lower portion of the stem. Tie-in the stem, then trim the excess.
- 6) Twist dubbing onto the thread and wind the dubbing forward to form the thorax. Tie-off and trim.
- 7) Wind five evenly spaced turns of hackle forward over the thorax. Tie-off and trim.
- 8) Select a small bunch of elk or deer hair, clean the fuzzy under-fur from the butts, and stack the hair so that the tips are even. Measure so that the tips are equal to the body length and tie the hair on top of the hook just behind the eye. Take eight-ten additional wraps toward the rear, back over the wing while you hold the hair wing out of the way.
- 9) Pull the wing butts back from the hook eye; place a couple of whip finishes behind the eye, clip the thread and apply cement.
- 10) Clip the hair butts straight across just in front of the hook eye. Clip a V-notch out of the bottom of the hackle. You're done.

The whole category of Hairwing Duns was developed by Rene Harrop in the late 1980s. Unlike most mayfly dun imitations with the wing standing straight upright or tilted forward, this style shows a wing silhouette that is held upright but slanted back like the natural. The V-notch cut in the bottom of the hackle makes the fly very versatile. The fly floats flush in the surface film and is very imitative of the mayfly shape on smooth water but with its hackle and hairwing, it is an excellent design for fishing riffles and runs. Dave Hughes was asked, "If you could fish with just one fly, which would it be?" The Hairwing Dun was his choice.

TYING TIPS

- 1) When you apply dubbing to the thorax, make sure to taper it down to the hook eye. This will give the wing the proper angle.
- 2) Size the bunch of hair to be used for the wing in proportion to the hook size. This amount will be determined by "experience by the dozen."
- 3) When you use eight-ten thread wraps between the eye and the wing it gives a gap that keeps the wing from flaring too much.
- 4) If you have a rotary vise, turn the fly over to clip the V-notch in the hackle bottom; if otherwise, take the fly out of your vise and clip it by hand.

Variations are obvious, and size and color of materials will create an imitation that is effective in almost any situation. If you enjoy matching hatches but want to tie only one style of mayfly dun, this would be a good one. So, tie some up, give them a test flight and let me know how you do.