

On The Fly

August 2012

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Stillwater Siren

Hook: Daiichi 1530, 2x long wet, size 14 to 20.
Thread: 8-0 red.
Tail: Natural ostrich herl tips.
Body: Natural ostrich herl twisted with fine wire.
Hackle: Partridge dyed brown.



Tying Instructions:

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

Step 2: Start the thread just behind the hook eye and lay down a thread base rearward to the point just above the hook barb.

Step 3: Select 3 ostrich herls, even the tips, measure for one shank length, and tie in as a tail on top of the shank, just above the hook barb. Do not trim the excess ostrich herls

Step 4: Cut a length of fine wire and tie it in on top of the hook at the base of the tail. The excess should be pointing toward the rear.

Step 5: Grab the 3 herls and the wire and take one wrap over the hook shank at the base of the tail then grab the herl tips along with the wire in your hackle pliers and twist them into a loose rope. Wind the rope forward in touching turns to a point one eye width behind the hook eye. Tie off and trim excess.

Step 6: Select a partridge feather with barbs long enough to reach the base of the tail. Prepare the feather and tie it in by the tip. Take two turns stroking the barbs to the rear on each half turn. Secure with thread wraps and trim the excess.

Step 7: Form a neat small head, whip finish, and cement.

My research on the Stillwater Siren did not reveal the inventor of the pattern but did enlighten me about the importance of the aquatic insect it was suppose to imitate, the Callibaetis emerger. There is no insect more important to the western Stillwater angler than the Callibaetis Mayfly and here's why. No bug dominates more stillwaters. It is highly tolerant of ecological extremes and can inhabit the worst of conditions but thrives in the best conditions. The Callibaetis is available 365 days a year and it predictably hatches throughout the entire fishing season. It acts in predictable ways and trout key in on that predictability. It is a member of the Baetidae family of mayflies who are multi brooded which means they mature very fast and several generations will emerge in a single season.

As the majority of nymphs drift up from the weeds and converge on the surface, so do the trout, Here the feeding is easy, and at times gluttonous. The fish disregard the nymphs and duns to feast on the hapless emergers. The emergers can neither swim or fly away and the trout feed at their leisure. This months pattern, the Stillwater Siren, does a great job of imitating this vulnerable stage. The natural has a slender body with three equal length tails that are as long as the body. Gill fringes each flank of the abdomen. The sweeping antennae are over twice as long as the head is wide. Those features describe the Siren very closely and the soft hackle adds life and movement to the deception. The trout don't seem to be too picky when it comes to coloration of the artificial. Matching the bottom's natural hues seems to be universally accepted by even the most finicky fish. The nice thing about fishing emergers is that exact size isn't too important. Just keep this in mind, the naturals get smaller as the summer turns to fall when a size 20 is common.

So the next time you're on your favorite pond or lake and the trout stop hitting on midges or whatever, have some of these babies in the fly box. More than likely there is a Callibaetis hatch happening under the surface and the trout are completely distracted by their favorite meal. The Stillwater Siren is an easy tie using common materials. So tie some up, give them a test flight, and let me know how you do.