

# On The Fly

February 2004

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

## PATTERN OF THE MONTH – Blue Wing Olive

Hook: 94840 size 16 - 24

Thread: 6-0

Tail: small bunch of medium blue dun hackle fibers.

Body: olive rabbit fur dubbing, dressed thin.

Wing: pair of medium-dun hen hackle tips.

Hackle: blue dun color hackle.



This traditional dubbed-body version has somewhat oversized wings and long tails cocked slightly upward. It doesn't exactly match the published proportion charts but it does match the bug itself. Note that the tying technique for the Adams is identical to that of the BWO. The key techniques are the placement and construction of the upright and divided hackle tips and the proper placement of hackle behind and in front of the wings.

In the RFF January newsletter, Otis Swisher wrote an article about "Dry Flies in Winter." This month's pattern, the Blue Wing Olive (BWO), is a very effective and popular Baetis imitation and a useful winter pattern. There are several mayflies you could call a BWO in just about every western tailwater, spring creek and freestone stream. The BWO pattern has been indiscriminately applied to over twenty mayfly species and has caused much confusion. Most fishermen don't care about the Latin names and are just happy when one pattern works on so many different hatches.

"Trout Bum," Dave Roberts, tells me the BWO hatch should start up again at the Holy Water this month. They will start off small, size 22 at first, and get larger as the weather warms up into spring. Dave's favorite imitation is the quill-body version with a split-fibers tail and dark dun hackle. Other popular styles include the thorax, no hackle, parachute, and Quigley's cripple. Dave's tying tip is to cut the bottom of the hackle in a "V" shape, which allows only a few hackle tips to touch the water for keeping the fly upright.

## TYING TIPS - Neat Heads

For small, smooth, strong, nice-looking heads on your flies, always whip finish with your wraps progressing from the fly body towards the hook eye. When you wrap the thread towards the eye, the first thread wrap to be pulled tight is the one closest to the eye, with subsequent wraps pulled tight as they progress back. The result is a smooth, nicely tapered head with the thread end well protected by each individual wrap.