

On The Fly

January 2010

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Red Squirrel Nymph

Hook: Daiichi 1710, 2X-long nymph, down eye.
Thread: Black, 6-0.
Weight: Lead wire.
Rib: Fine brass wire.
Tail: Red fox squirrel guard hairs.
Abdomen: Red fox squirrel body belly fur.
Thorax: Red fox squirrel darker back hair w/underfur.
Legs: Dark Hungarian Partridge or Grouse feather.



Tying Instructions

Step 1: Mash the barb and mount the hook in the vise. Start the tying thread one eye width behind the eye and wrap a thread base back to just above the barb of the hook.
Step 2: Wrap lead wire around the shank covering the front 1/3. Over wrap the lead wire with thread to secure and bring the thread back to the hook bend.
Step 3: Select a small bunch of guard hairs off the skin, measure one shank length, and tie in as a tail. Tie down the butts along the shank.
Step 4: Tie in the brass wire to be used as a rib later.
Step 5: Dub the body with the lighter belly fur creating a tapered abdomen. Cover only to the 2/3 point, leaving room for the thorax.
Step 6: Spiral wrap the wire over the abdomen in 5 equal turns. Tie off and trim.
Step 7: Dub the thorax with the darker back fur.
Step 8: Tie in the soft hackle feather and make 2-3 wraps forward creating the legs. Tie off and trim. Form a neat tapered head, whip finish and cement.

This pattern was created about 40 years ago by Dave Whitlock. It was actually his first nymph pattern and still remains his favorite. It is an absolutely excellent fish getter, an awesome pattern for both cold and warm water species. Tied in smaller sizes, it can imitate any light-colored mayfly nymph, caddis emerger, or even a little yellow stonefly nymph. Because the Red Squirrel Nymph resembles numerous aquatic insects without imitating any in particular, it is a true attractor fly. Tie this one in numerous variations. With a bead head, a lead weighted body, weightless in smaller sizes, with hackle or substitute rubber legs in the largest sizes. Fill a whole fly box for any time you need a good nymph. So tie some up, give them a test flight and let me know how you do.