

On The Fly

June 2012

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Thunder Creek Minnow

Hook: Daiichi 1750, Mustad 9674, 4x long streamer, straight eye.
Thread: 6-0 white.
Body: Silver or pearlescent Mylar.
Under wing: Pearlescent Crystal Flash.
Belly: White bucktail.
Wing: Olive bucktail.
Gills: Tying thread.
Eyes: Stick-on.



Tying Instructions:

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

Step 2: Start the thread behind the eye and lay down a smooth thread layer to the front 1/4 of the hook shank. Tie in the body material just behind the hook eye and wind it rearward covering the shank to the hook bend. Reverse direction and wind the body material forward to the original tie-in point. Tie off and trim the excess.

Step 3: Select a few strands of the Crystal Flash, stagger cut to varied lengths, and tie them in at the 1/4 point down the hook shank. The longest strand should be no more than 1 1/2 the shank length. Trim the excess.

Step 4: Select a small clump of olive bucktail, clean out the short fibers, and stack to even the tips. Grasp the clump with the tips facing forward over the hook eye and measure for 1 1/2 times the shank length. Tie in on top of the shank just behind the eye, trim butt at the 1/4 shank position, and cover the butts evenly with tying thread.

Step 5: Prepare a second clump of white bucktail in the same manner. Measure and tie in on the underside of the hook. Trim the butts at the same point and cover with thread.

Step 6: Fold the olive wing back over the top of the shank and secure at the 1/4 position with firm thread wraps. Excessive thread tension will cause unwanted flairing. Use your thumb nail to spread the bucktail fibers to evenly cover the top half of the fly.

Step 7: Fold the white belly hair back under the shank, secure at the same position, and spread the fibers evenly around the bottom half of the hook.

Step 8: Use a red permanent marker to color the tying thread. Build a slim red collar to suggest gills. Whip finish and cement.

Step 9: Apply small stick-on eyes to the sides of the bullet head. Apply epoxy or similar finish of the entire head of the fly. To give your streamer the distinct parr markings, mottle and stripe the olive wing.

The Thunder Creek Minnow series was created by Keith Fulsher of Wisconsin in the early sixties. He was not satisfied with the minnow patterns of his day, and was looking for a simple, sparse, slender design that better imitated the larger head and eyes of the naturals he observed. The pattern was named after Thunder Creek, Wisconsin where the prototypes were tested and perfected.

Thunder Creek Minnows feature a prominent head formed by pulling or reversing the wing and belly materials over the hook shank and tying place. There are unlimited numbers of materials that can be substituted for bucktail. Hair, such as calf tail, squirrel, kid goat, polar bear. Synthetics abound, with new products being introduced monthly it seems. Even marabou works well and gives good animation.

Body material is optional but adds the glow through the belly and wing materials suggesting the translucent nature of small baitfish. Holographic and braided Mylar are excellent choices to create this affect. The narrow thread collar gives the hint of the gill slit. The bulging eyes are a prominent feature on most superior baitfish patterns.

This is truly a versatile streamer pattern. Learn the concept then change the size, material and color to imitate any baitfish in your favorite rivers or Stillwater.

Tying Tips

Keep materials sparse for a realistic profile. Vary the length of each Crystal Flash strand for a shimmering appearance throughout the fly. Keep the wing clump and belly clump separated until they are pulled back over the shank. This can be accomplished by wetting the tips or adding some dubbing wax to the hair tips. Coloring the thread with a marker eliminates the need to switch threads. Using super glue is a good bet for durability instead of head cement. This is an easy tie, fish well and match any forage base.

So tie some up, give them a test flight, and let me know how you do.