

On The Fly

May 2012

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Improved Sofa Pillow

Hook - TMC 200R, size 4 - 8.
Thread - Orange 6/0.
Tail - Elk or fox squirrel tail.
Rib - Orange thread or gold wire.
Body - Burnt orange yarn or dubbing.
Body Hackle - Brown or furnace.
Wing - Elk or fox squirrel tail.
Hackle - Brown or furnace.



Tying Instructions:

- 1) Start by wrapping a thread base on the hook shank to a point above the barb.
- 2) Tie in the tail hair 1/3 the length of the hook shank.
- 3) Tie in the gold wire for the rib and tie in the saddle hackle at the rear of the hook just forward of the tail.
- 4) Tie in the body material and wrap it forward 2/3 of the hook shank.
- 5) Wrap the hackle forward - use tight evenly spaced palmering wraps.
- 6) Wind the rib forward over the body creating a segmented abdomen.
- 7) Select a bunch of hair for the wing (length should be 2/3 hook shank) and tie it on the top of the hook.
- 8) Select a saddle hackle 1 1/2 the hook gap length. Tie it in and palmer it forward in tight, even wraps.
- 9) Trim, whip finish, and apply head cement.

This month's pattern, the Improved Sofa Pillow, is a popular variation of the Sofa Pillow, originated by Pat Barnes of West Yellowstone, Montana in the 1940s. It imitates the adult form of the legendary salmonfly also known as the giant stonefly. The salmonfly hatch, for a select time window of a week to ten days, can create some spectacular fishing. The problem is trying to schedule your trip to the river because water conditions determine the exact timing and it varies from year to year. These critters spend 3 years maturing in the stream as nymphs and then when the conditions are right they crawl up on the bank, hatch out, and start looking for a mate. After mating, near dusk, the females take to the air and deposit their fertilized eggs back into the stream. It is at this stage that they are most vulnerable to feeding fish.

A standard dry fly presentation is usually used, however because of the popularity of this hatch, the fish get pounded and become wary. Under these circumstances a down stream presentation often works best. Also try a skating presentation, especially in windy areas. The real insect requires a big fly to imitate it, often a size 4 or even a size 2 hook. On a smaller hook and with a golden body, this same pattern can be tied to imitate a golden stonefly adult.

The salmonfly hatch will be here soon. Tie some up. Give them a test flight, and let me know how you do.

TYING TIPS - Moose Mane

Moose mane is one of the most versatile fly-tying materials. It is readily available, durable, flexible under water, and long enough for almost any use. Just a few of these uses include: tails, feelers, bodies, wing cases and legs on small nymphs and hoppers. You can knot bundles of this hair for legs on larger flies, stonefly nymphs for example. To make the knot in the leg, use either your dubbing needle or a very small crochet hook.