

On The Fly

November 2011

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Picket Pin

Hook: Daiichi 1720, 3X-Long Nymph, size 8-14.
Thread: 6-0 black.
Tail: Brown hackle barbs.
Rib: Fine gold wire.
Body: Peacock herl.
Hackle: Brown hackle palmered over body.
Wing: Grey squirrel tail.
Head: Peacock herl.



Tying Instructions:

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

Step 2: Start the thread one eye width behind the eye and lay down an even thread base to a position just above the hook barb.

Step 3: Select a small bunch of brown hackle barbs, measure them one body length, and tie them on top of the shank above the barb. Tie down the tail butts on top of the shank with spiral thread turns forward towards the eye.

Step 4: Tie on a section of gold wire on top of the shank just behind the eye.

Step 5: Select 6-7 peacock herls and tie them in on top behind the eye. Secure them, along with the rib to the top of the shank with spiral thread wraps to the base of the tail. Leave the wire rib hang to the rear for use later.

Step 6: Grab the herl strands and make one wrap over the shank and then counter clockwise around the tying thread. Grasp the herl and thread together and wind the herl rope forward in touching turns covering the body. Leave a little over 1/8 inch between the front of the body and the eye of the hook. Tie off the herl and trim the excess.

Step 7: Select a soft brown hackle feather with barbs just longer than the gape of the hook, tie it in by the butt at the front of the body, and palmer it rearward 5 turns to the base of the tail. Tie off with the rib wire and trim.

Step 8: Now take the ribbing wire and wrap it forward over the herl body and through the hackle in 5 evenly spaced turns. Tie off and trim.

Step 9: Select a small bunch of squirrel tail. Measure it 1 1/3 the body length, and tie it on top of the front of the body. Tie off with several tight wraps and trim excess.

Step 10: Select two peacock herls, tie them on at the base of the wing, take one turn over the shank, wrap them around the hanging thread, and wrap forward 3-4 turns covering the thread wraps and forming a head. Tie off and trim excess. Leave a small amount of room before the eye for a whip finish and cement.

We have to go way back to the year 1915 to dig up the history of the Picket Pin pattern and the tier, Jack Boehme. Jack has been referred to as the founding father of Montana trout fishing with a fly. He also was a character of sorts and the owner a tavern in Missoula called "The Turf Bar & Grill". In a cramped corner he ran a tackle and fly business where he developed other famous creations such as "Boehme's Fancy" for the Madison River and the "Cutthroat" and the "Big Trout" for the Rogue and Klamath Rivers. He tied commercially, on a home-made vise made from old gun parts, for the early Bob Wards Tackle Shop. Jack had a national reputation as a tournament fly caster.

Interestingly enough the fly pattern got its name from the material originally used for the wing. The cowboys of the area had nicknamed the gophers Picket Pin because when sitting upright on the prairie they looked like the pin used to picket out their horses. Since Jack used these gopher tails for his hair wing, the name was derived. Now, 96 years later the pattern is still famous and just as effective as ever. It can be tied in wet, dry, and streamer variation by changing hook size and material selection. Lead wire or bead heads could be used for a faster and deeper sink. The Picket Pin is deadly throughout the seasons for trout and steelhead.

Tying Tips

The method of palmering the hackle to the rear and using the rib to reinforce that hackle is a technique used in many wet fly patterns. The fragile herl body also benefits from the wire rib which adds extra segmentation. Note that the wing is tied on top of the body and not in front. This is vital to keep the wing at a low angle over the body in true wet fly fashion. For steelhead tie the pattern sparse on a steelhead hook. For a streamer style use a 4X long hook.

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