

# On The Fly

## October 2006

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

### PATTERN OF THE MONTH – Copper Herniator

Hook: TMC 200R or equal, size #4-14.  
Thread: Black 6/0.  
Thorax: Peacock Herl.  
Abdomen: Copper Braid.  
Underwing: Four Peacock herl tips.  
Overwing: Copper Flashabou.  
Hackle: Guinea



### Tying Instructions:

- 1) Start the thread two eye-lengths behind the eye. This is the thread base for the body material and marker for the hackle tie-in point. Wind a thread base back to just between the barb and the point of the hook.
- 2) Tie in the copper braid at the front of the thorax and bind it down the full length of the thorax and abdomen to the end of the thread base. Now, wind the thread forward to the halfway point.
- 3) Wrap the braid forward in tight, close turns to cover the abdomen area. Stop at the hanging thread, then bind off-trim the braid. Now, wrap the thread forward to the tie-in point.
- 4) Select four good fluffy Peacock herls and bind them down on the top of the shank back to the base of the abdomen.
- 5) Take one turn of Peacock herls over the top of the shank then wind the herls two turns counterclockwise around the hanging thread.
- 6) Pinch the herls and thread together and wind it forward in tight turns to just behind the thread tie-in point. Bind off the herls and trim them.
- 7) Tie in what's left of the four herls at the front of the thorax, then tie in about 16 strands of copper flash at this same point. Bind off and then trim the butt ends of the herls and flash to about the hook bend.
- 8) Tie in a guinea feather, with barbs long enough to reach the hook bend, and make two wraps. Bind off, trim, form a neat head, whip finish and cement.

The Copper Herniator is a color variation of the popular and effective fly originated by Bill Geise for the Klamath and Trinity Rivers of Northern California. The original was tied with peacock colored braid and crystal flash. It was named the Herniator because Geise was admitted to the hospital with a hernia the day after the fly was first used. He claimed it was due to the strain of catching so many big steelhead on the new fly.

Variations include size, color and addition of a bead head. When targeting half-pounders, you should drop down to size #10-12. Try many of the new braids made in green, bronze, and purple to change the effectiveness in different light and water conditions. Try your local fabric shop for a good selection of colors. Add bead head in gold or copper to drop the fly quickly or fish deeper in faster water. Even though there are several steps listed, this is a relatively easy tie. So tie some up, give them a test drive locally or in Northern California, and let me know how you do.

### TYING TIPS

Proportions and angles are very important on this pattern. To achieve the proper angle for both wings, you need to form a "ramp" with thread wraps when tying off the herl thorax. You can also tie back on the material to make slight angle corrections. This method is especially effective when applying hackle collars on other steelhead flies. Peacock herl is a proven killer material but very fragile. By winding the herl around the thread you can add durability. By coming over the top of the shank first and winding it counterclockwise around the thread before you wrap, the thread naturally keeps the herl snug. Vary the number of crystal flash strands.