

# On The Fly

## October 2007

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

### PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Spade

Hook: Standard salmon/steelhead, size 10-4.  
Thread: 6/0 black.  
Tail: Very fine deer hair.  
Body: 2/3 peacock herl & 1/3 black ostrich herl  
Collar: Soft grizzly hackle.  
Head: Black thread.



#### Tying Instructions:

- 1) Start the thread two eye-widths back and wrap a thread base to just above the hook point.
- 2) Select a small bunch of deer hair for the tail, measure one body-length and tie the deer hair to the top of the hook. Bind down the butts to the shank up to the tie-in point. Tie off and trim the excess.
- 3) Tie on 4-5 peacock herls at the base of the tail, wrap them one turn over the hook shank, then 3-4 turns counter clockwise around the bobbin thread. Wrap this herl rope forward 2/3 the body length. Tie off and trim the excess.
- 4) At this point, tie in 2 herls of ostrich plume, take one turn over the shank, then twist the ostrich plume onto the thread and wind this combination forward the last 1/3 of the body. Tie off and trim the excess.
- 5) Select a soft grizzly hackle feather with barbs long enough to reach the bend of the hook. Tie it on by its tip, fold, and wind 2-3 turns while stroking fibers to the back. Tie off, trim the excess, and tie back on the hackle forcing it back against the ostrich material.
- 6) Form a nice neat head with thread and cement.

The Spade fly was developed by Bob Arnold of Seattle, Washington, during the late 1960s. His purpose was to design a simple, drab, and more buoyant pattern that would not hang up on the bottom thus spooking the steelhead. The fly is relatively easy to tie with common materials. Peacock provides the attraction while the soft hackle provides the movement.

Variations on the original Spade by Alec Jackson were developed in the 1980s using a variety of color and material. He added a fluorescent red butt and a claret guinea hackle for the Spade, Claret Guinea fly. Another version features all-purple materials and is called the Spade, Whaka Blond. All of Alec's flies are made of peacock or ostrich rope. This process takes more time and involves twisting the thread or tinsel with the herl. Maybe the steelhead can't tell the difference if you use chenille, but Alec does. So, tie some up, give them a test flight, and let me know how you did.

#### TYING TIPS

- 1) Be sure to get a thread base under the tail. Deer hair is slippery and turns easily on a bare shank.
- 2) When you twist the herl around the tying thread you add durability to this fragile material. You may also add tinsel to add flash.
- 3) The hackle barbs should end up cocked at a 45-degree angle. The ostrich herl just behind the barbs returns them to this angle as the water current pressure changes.