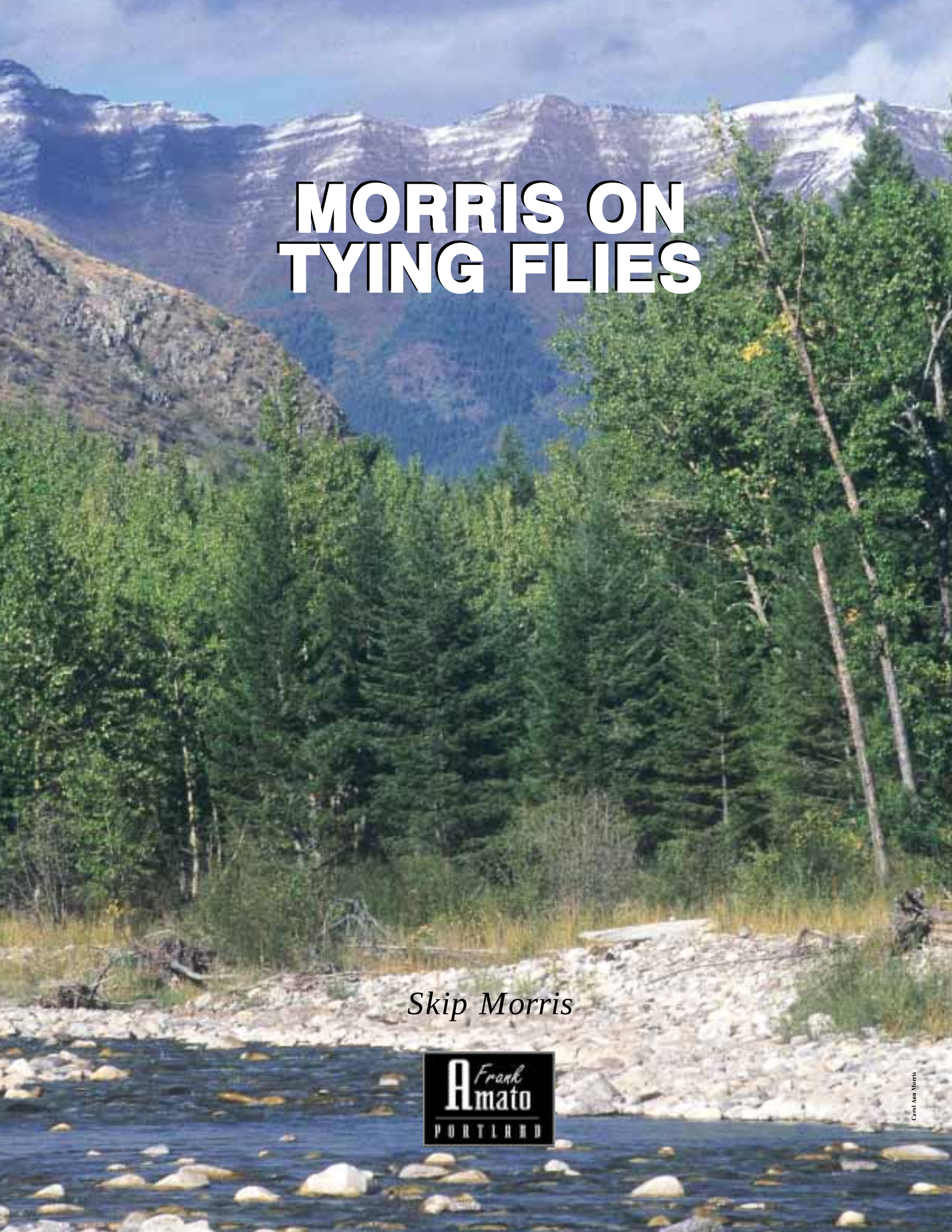

MORRIS ON TYING FLIES

Skip Morris

Frank Amato PORTLAND

Carol Ann Morris

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I asked for and received lots of help with *Morris on Tying Flies*. Thus I offer my thanks to all those whose contributions make this book as good as I—or rather we—could make it.

FOR THEIR HELP WITH THE ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Thanks to my old friend Rick Hafele, the entomologist, for helping me figure out the details of so many of the aquatic insects that some of the flies imitate; to Lefty Kreh for helping me with his Lefty's Deceiver and his and Bob Clouser's Half and Half (and for kick-starting my entire career in fly fishing); to Dave Hughes for all that information on fishing and entomology, and for two decades of friendship; to Brian Chan for his unfailing willingness to share his fly patterns, insights, or both; to guide Mike Seim for testing my own fly designs on his wonderful Yellowstone-area rivers; to Dave Pond for those grand float trips down the Deschutes River and his help in drifting the Brick Back Caddis through miles of trout water; to Al Troth for sharing the details of his many excellent fly patterns over the years; to Peter Morrison for all the fine fishing he's provided Carol and me on his home rivers, for helping me test all sorts of fly patterns there, and simply for his companionship; to Art Scheck for all his ideas about fly patterns, especially his monumental words regarding the imitative properties of the McGinty wet fly; to Jim Kerr for his sage advice regarding egg and sea-run cutthroat flies; to Ken Mitchell for a grand fly-testing adventure in Alaska; to Troy Dettman for introducing me to the John Day River and for his advice on flies for summer steelhead; to Jeffery Delia for all the opportunities he's provided me to refine my fly patterns on his estuary cutthroats; to Bill Demchuck for some great fishing trips and opportunities for fly-testing; to Todd Smith for helping me figure out his Fluttering Salmon Fly and for showing me and Carol some hot—both literally and figuratively—fishing out of Boise, Idaho; to Shawn Bennett for those magnificent salmon and pugnacious rockfish out of Tofino, British Columbia, Canada; to Mike Harves for introducing me to the Madam X (and the *real* Yakima River); to Ken Fujii for help with his deadly Zebra Midge; to Mike Lawson for details on his Partridge Caddis Emerger; to Gordon Honey for details of, and his seasoned perspective on, Canadian lake flies; to Bob Jacklyn, winner of the Federation of Fly Fishers' Buz Buszek tying award, for information on and a sample of his Jacklin's Giant Salmon Fly; to Rod Bringle for help with his Rod's Sculpin; to guide Tom Baltz for a grand tour of the legendary Letort and posing for the camera with all those minscule flies.

FOR THEIR HELP WITH THE BOOK

First, my thanks to Carol Ann Morris, my wonderful wife of eleven years, the veterinarian who surprised everyone—herself, perhaps, most of all—by tackling the camera and paintbrush as she'd tackle a difficult surgery and then producing richer and richer images; she shot many of the photos and painted all the illustrations in this book. Thanks to Tony Amato and Leslie Brannan for their tasteful layout; to Ted Leeson for chasing down questionable commas, dangling constructions, and such; and to Frank Amato, whose considered perspective made *Morris on Tying Flies* better than it would have otherwise been.

TO THE EDITORS

It was the editors who really catalyzed *Morris on Tying Flies*. They did so by telling me to go ahead with so many of my magazine proposals, and thus turned mere intentions into the actual articles that make up this book. Over the years, many editors have come and gone—too many for me to thank here individually. So I offer my broad but sincere thanks to you all.

INTRODUCTION

Within these pages are most of my favorite fly-tying pieces to date. That's saying something, since I figure I've written around two hundred articles for the fly-fishing magazines over the past eighteen years or so. Decades-old standards, new hot fly patterns from celebrity tiers, a whole lot between—they're all here. There are seventy-four patterns in this book, including dry flies; nymphs; streamers and bucktails; emergers; steelhead and Atlantic salmon flies; flies for bass (both largemouth and smallmouth) and pan fish; flies for tropical saltwater fishing and even some flies for salt waters North. Quite a range, eh?

I started this project with pure intentions: to preserve (as much as possible) the original content of these articles. I mean *original* content, just as they looked when my printer first spat them out, before the magazines began kneading and carving them. Oh sure, I allowed myself an adjustment here and there, a yanked comma, an extra photo slipped into a blank space or one in a series reshot—but only when absolutely necessary. I sorted through all the nouns and verbs, colons and commas and dashes, following carefully my noble directive of noninterference. When the deed was all done, I sat smiling at the manuscript on my desk and bathing in the glow of accomplishment, but gradually realized the glow was suffering a brownout, and paused in a frown... Then I said "To hell with it" and rewrote like a madman. I shot a bunch of new photos, too, and put my photographer-wife on assignment. I also served notice on her watercolor skills, and got a pile of new paintings for the book.

The plain truth is, I couldn't resist. I couldn't let those articles, some written more than a decade ago, stand absent information I'd since learned and with prose I could better craft. Now, with my radical renovation completed and the results before me, I feel satisfied that I made the right choice. And that formerly dim glow of accomplishment is up to full wattage.

In the end, we all win—I'm satisfied that I've done my best, you get a better book, and Frank Amato, my publisher, can add this title to his list with pride.

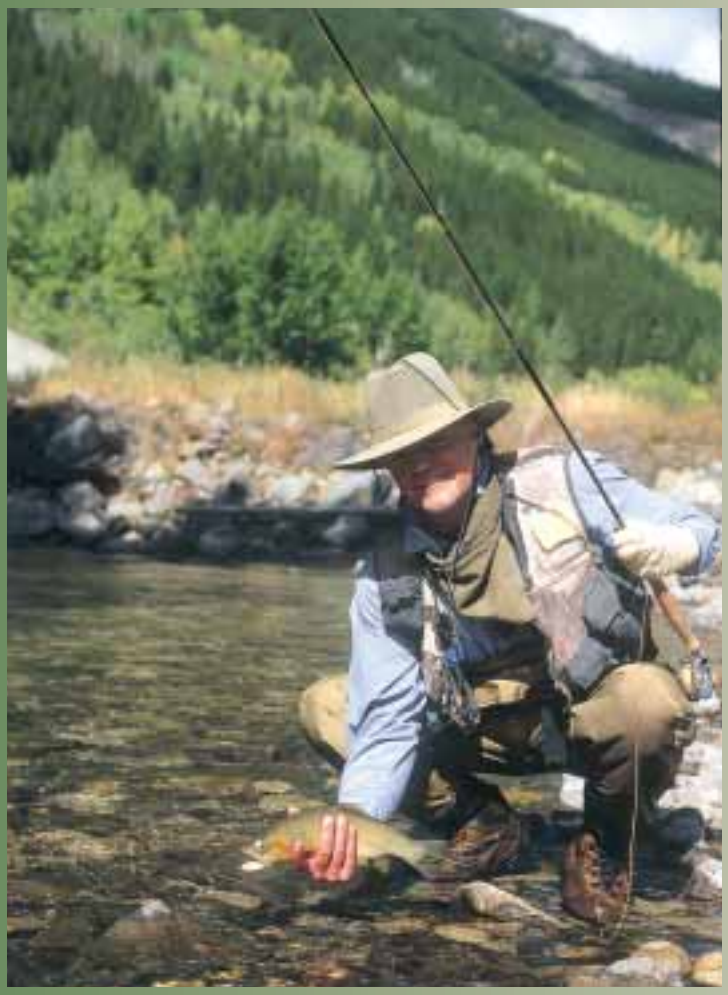
To hell with lofty but misguided intentions about "original content."

So that's the story—why these particular articles are here and why they may seem different (*better*, I hope) than when you might have first seen them in five different magazines. Enough said. I shouldn't and won't take any more of your time on the matter. Better you spend it with the pages that follow.

Happy tying!

Skip Morris

Dry Flies



A wild cutthroat taken on a small dry fly and released.

The famous salmonfly stonefly.

All photos by Carol Ann Morris

Silver Creek in Idaho is a rich spring creek where tiny dry flies are common and trout are magnificently obstinate.

THE KING'S RIVER CADDIS

HOOK: Light wire, standard length to 1X long, sizes 16 to 10.

THREAD: Brown 8/0 or 6/0.

BODY: Raccoon fur or natural or synthetic brown dubbing.

WING: Mottled-brown turkey primary.

HACKLE: Brown.

Named for the California river of its birth, the King's River Caddis is among those flies you want to tie just because it looks so good. Its clean lines and crisply notched wing of cinnamon-and-cream radiate elegance.

It is this distinctive wing that set the King's River Caddis, an otherwise conventional fly, apart from other adult-caddis imitations during the height of its popularity in the 1950s and 60s. (It is, admittedly, a somewhat fragile wing, but a coating of flexible cement can improve that.)

Despite concerns that it's too pretty to be good, too fragile to be useful, the King's River Caddis continues catching trout, just as it has for decades.

Wayne "Buz" Buszek of Visalia, California, for whom the "Buz Buszek" fly-tying award was named, created the King's River Caddis.

1. Start the thread on the hook's shank, and then dub a full body over the rear two thirds of the shank.

2. Snip a section about as wide as the hook's gape from a mottled-brown turkey primary. Trim a notch in the tip of the section. (A light coating of Dave's Flexament increases durability.)

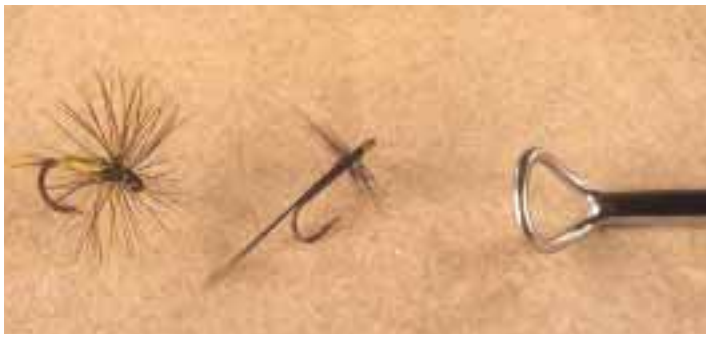
3. Bind the section, by its un-notched butt, atop the front of the dubbed body. The notched end of the section should extend past the end of the body a distance about equal to the hook's gape. Trim off the butt of the section.

4. Strip the soft fibers from the bases of two dry-fly hackles appropriate to the hook's size. Bind the hackles at the front of the wing. Trim the hackles' stems and bind their cut ends. End with the thread hanging just behind the hook's eye.

5. Wind one hackle forward in slightly open spirals; then bind its tip. Wind the second hackle forward through the first; then bind its tip. Trim both tips and then build and complete a thread-head. Coat the head with head cement to complete the King's River Caddis.

A real caddisfly adult—notice any resemblance to the King's River Caddis?

THE MIDGE



HOOK: Standard dry fly (or short shank), sizes 18 to 26.

THREAD: Eight-ought (or even finer), normally in a color to match the body.

TAIL: Hackle fibers, in a color to match the body.

BODY: Dubbing or thread in most any reasonable fly color. Most common are cream, blue dun, black, brown, and olive.

HACKLE: One, in a color to match the body.

The term "midge" gets tossed around by fly fishers in ways often foggy, and sometimes plain confusing. Its several separate meanings aren't always easy to distinguish. They are (1) *any* tiny insect upon which trout feed (2) a specific insect (usually tiny) called a chironomid (3) any fly that imitates a chironomid (4) any fly that imitates *any* tiny insect (5) any one in a series of dry-fly dressings that imitates tiny insects upon which trout feed; the "M" is lowercase for this midge series in general, but capitalized for specific patterns.

So if you hear the word “midge,” listen carefully for the specific meaning the speaker has in mind.

In the midge series of fly patterns (meaning #5) each variation adds a preceding word to identify its particular mix of materials or colors or both. The *Black* Midge, for example, is entirely black; the *Adams* Midge bears the grizzly and brown hackles of the original Adams and is the only well-known, two-hackle midge. Other patterns in the series abound.

But a fly in the midge series will have characteristics other than just the word “Midge” in its name, specifically, a tiny hook, an absence of the usual dry-fly wings (though a few variations have them), and a simple tail-body-hackle form.

Most anglers use the midge series of flies to imitate tiny chironomids and mayflies. Any time you are trout fishing may be a good time for a midge, but winter is especially good. Winter, you see, is when most insects are quiet, so the two insects that most commonly hatch in the cold months become especially attractive to trout. Those two insects are the chironomid (again, also known as the midge) and the mayfly *Baetis*. Both are tiny, and both are fine subjects for imitating with midges—midges, that is, with a capital "M."

1. Start the thread about three quarters up the hook's shank. Strip off some fibers from a hackle and bind them along the top the shank to the hook's bend. The resulting tail should about equal the entire length of the hook.

2. Trim closely the butts of the hackle fibers. Dub a slender body up three quarters of the shank. Use very little dubbing, either natural or synthetic. (I prefer synthetic dubbing in dry flies—it doesn’t absorb water.)

3. Strip the long, soft fibers from the base of a hackle. Bind the hackle by its bare stem to the front of the body. Trim the hackle's stem closely. End with the thread hanging just behind the hook's eye.

4. Wind the hackle forward in three or four close turns. (Tiny flies don’t require much hackle.) Bind the hackle at the eye, trim away the hackle's tip, whip finish the thread, trim it, and coat the whip finish with head cement.

5. Many tiers prefer to form the body of a midge from bare working thread, like the Cream Midge shown here. So little dubbing is used in a midge, to keep the body slender, that they just eliminate it altogether.

Carol Ann Morris

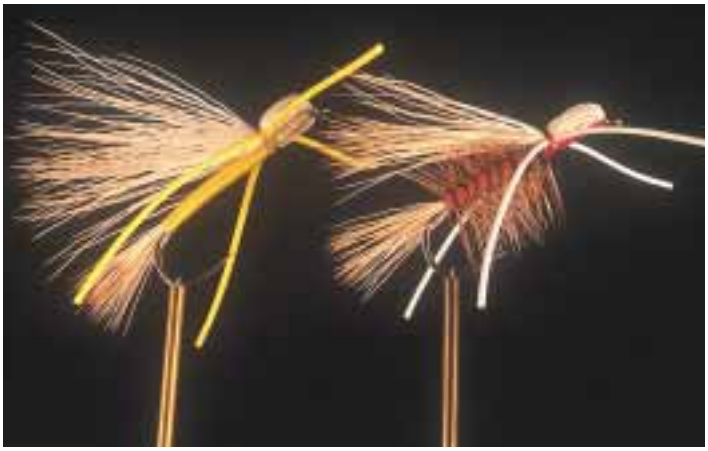
A real midge, specifically, an adult chironomid.

THE MADAM X

HOOK:	Light wire, 2X or 3X long, sizes 8 and 6.
THREAD:	Yellow 3/0.
BODY and TAIL:	Natural deer hair (or elk).
WING and HEAD:	Natural deer hair (but I prefer elk hair, because it makes a tougher head).
LEGS:	Round white rubber-strand.

Not long after the Madam X made its debut in Doug Swisher's videotape, "Tying Attractor Flies," I happened to be standing in a trout stream with a friend who began raving about the deadliness of this peculiar new dry fly. "The fly shop's out of it again," he said, as if to validate his account. Still uncertain I was properly impressed, he added, "They just can't keep it in stock!"

Few flies burst onto the scene with such bravado. I *was* impressed...but, it seemed, so was everyone else. Everyone still seems impressed with the Madam X.



Variations: on the left, a Madam X with an all-floss body (and the yellow legs Skip often substitutes for the standard white); on the right, an orange version with a saddle hackle palmered up the body.

Carol Ann Morris

Undercut banks—a fine place to put a Madam X. But I've seen good trout come right up from the bottom in the middle of a deep pool for this fly, so feel free to try it anywhere.

Just who created the Madam X I'm not sure. Doug Swisher probably developed the fly, and is usually given credit for it, but in his video he never plainly says so.

He does say that he was "almost afraid" to tell anyone about the Madam X for quite a while. It is an alarming trout fly, with its crisscrossed ribs, thick tail, and gangly cross of legs. He finally did tell because the Madam X kept catching trout. Doug says that he usually fishes it along stream banks and back under overhanging grasses and cut banks. He fishes it either dead drift or with twitches. When a trout takes a Madam X, he says, the result is "usually explosive." Its long springy legs may be what sets the Madam X apart from other attractor dry flies; Doug says that because of those legs, the fly "vibrates."

There is nothing particularly delicate or graceful about the Madam X; it has more the coarse bulk of a bass bug than the intricate lightness of most trout flies. Doug completely eradicates any possible resemblance to a normal dry fly by tying it on really big hooks. He explains his choice of hook on the videotape: "Fish like a big bite, not a small bite," he says.

Most popular fly patterns spawn a seemingly endless procession of variations—who hasn't seen a dozen versions of the Woolly Bugger? In general, this is a form of flattery; without question, it signals a fly's popularity. Some of the fly-pattern books in my collection describe Madam Xs with bodies of a solid layer of thread or floss over the deer hair, instead of the original spiraled thread-crosses up a deer-hair body. Others list orange thread as an option to replace the standard yellow. I've even seen a pattern with a brown hackle palmered up the body. My own touch is to use *yellow* rubber-strand legs in place of the standard white.

I'll show you how to tie the Madam X as I tie it, my personal style, though this fly's form largely dictates the method of its tying.

1. Start the thread at the hook's bend; then wind it tightly up two thirds of the hook's shank. Comb and stack a small bunch of deer (or elk) hair. Bind the hair by its butts at the two-thirds-up-the-shank point. The hairs' tips should extend beyond the rear of the shank a distance roughly equal to the hook's gape.

2. Trim the butts closely. Hold the hair down around the shank as you wind the thread down the hair in tight open spirals to the bend. At the bend, add two turns; then spiral the thread back up to the front of the hair. Take a few tight thread-turns at the front of the body to lock the spiraled turns in place. The hair-body should now have a pattern of thread-Xs along it.

3. Comb and stack another small bunch of deer (I use elk) for the head and wing. Hold the hair so that its tips are even with the tips of the tail; then cut the hair's butts straight across about 1/4 inch beyond the hook's eye.

4. Bind the hair, by its butts, from the eye back to the front of the body. The tips of the hair should point forward, over the hook's eye. Try to keep the hair entirely atop the hook's shank as you bind it on.

5. With the thread hanging at the front of the body, stroke the wing-hair up, and then pull it back and down. Bind the hair in place with a few tight thread-turns. You now have a wing and a sort of half bullet-head, both atop the hook. Ideally, the wing's tips should be even with the tail's tips.

6. Bind a short length of rubber-strand along each side of the thread collar with tight thread-turns at the rear of the head. Draw back the legs and whip finish the thread just in front of them. (Doug prefers to whip finish the thread at the hook's eye, in front of the bullet head.) Trim the thread.

7. Trim the legs long—for example, when the rear legs are pressed back against the sides of the fly, they should reach to the tips of the tail, or even slightly beyond. Add head cement to the whip finish.

Carol Ann Morris

THE GULPER SPECIAL

HOOK:	Light wire, standard length to 1X long (standard dry-fly hook), sizes 22 to 12 (size 18 to 24 for *Tricorythodes*).
THREAD:	Eight-ought or 6/0 in a color to blend with the body (brown 8/0 for *Tricorythodes*).
WING:	Poly yarn in white, orange, yellow, or green (or whatever color you can best see).
HACKLE:	Any reasonable mayfly color (grizzly for *Tricorythodes*).
TAIL:	Hackle fibers, same color as the hackle.
BODY:	Synthetic dubbing (dark-brown for *Tricorythodes*).

The simple and logical, bright, and durable Gulper Special is a solid imitation of a mayfly adult. Or to be more accurate, a *near*-adult—it's what fly fishers call a "dun," a mayfly transformed from an underwater creature to a flying creature of the air, yet not fully matured for mating. In various sizes and colors the Gulper Special can suggest duns of many species, but I think of one mayfly in particular when I think of this fly.

That mayfly is the diminutive late-summer- and fall-hatching *Tricorythodes* (long name for a short bug). When it emerges from lazy currents in streams or the still water of lakes in its characteristic abundance, trout often move to the easy feast it presents.

Those trout have plenty of living samples of *Tricorythodes* to compare against the angler's flies, and in such quiet water have plenty of time to inspect what they eat, or refuse. It's a real challenge for the angler—getting the fly to drift right up to a fish, keeping that drift natural and free, and striking and playing fish on the requisite gossamer tippets. Of course none of that matters unless the fly on that tippet is true of size, color, posture, and form.

Carol Ann Morris

A Tricorythodes *dun. The male is dark-brown overall, with three long tails. This is the female. Her abdomen is olive, her thorax dark-brown. Her tails are shorter than those of the male.*

The Gulper Special, tied very small in black or dark-brown, is just such a fly—a match for a "Trico," the nickname for *Tricorythodes*—and is the standard *Tricorythodes* imitation for many keen fly fishers.

Al Troth, who gave us the Troth Pheasant Tail and the ubiquitous Elk Hair Caddis, created the Gulper Special.

Carol Ann Morris

From late summer into fall across North America , the surface of spring creeks—or any cold-water lazy, silty stream, even lakes—will grow matted each morning with masses of hatching Tricorythodes *duns.*

1. Bind a short length of poly yarn (any color that will be easy to see) crossways atop the hook's shank, about three quarters up the shank. Grasp the ends of the yarn and pull firmly, forcing the yarn to the underside of the shank.

2. Draw up the ends of the yarn and bind them together tightly. Wrap a layer of thread lightly up and down the yarn's base.

3. Bind a hackle by its stripped stem up, then back down the bindings at the base of the yarn (you can wrap the thread more tightly than before); then bind the stem back along the shank a little ways. Trim the hackle's stem.

4. Strip some fibers from a large dry-fly hackle and bind them along the shank as a tail. Trim the butts of the fibers, near the yarn-wing. The tails should extend from the hook's bend about one full hook's length. (Though for *Tricorythodes* specifically, you could make the tails longer.)

5. Dub a tapered body from the hook's bend forward to just back from its eye. Make sure you cover everything around the base of the wing with dubbing—this is an easy spot to leave unfinished, with thread showing through gaps.

6. Wind the hackle down the thread-layered base of the poly yarn to the body. Draw back the hackles from the hook's eye and bind the tip of the hackle to the shank, just back from the eye. Trim the hackle-tip away, then complete the usual thread head. Coat that head with head cement.

Trim the wing to a point, just slightly shorter than the hook's full length.

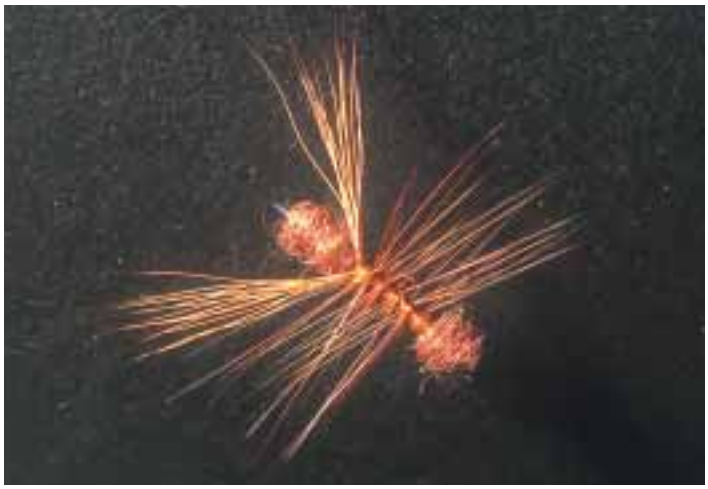
(For more on creating a parachute hackle, see "Standard Variations on Standard Dry Flies.")

Carol Ann Morris

Spider web with Tricos.

THE ANT CAROL

HOOK:	Light wire, standard length to 1X long (standard dry-fly hook), sizes 12 and 10 (smaller or larger for imitating flying ants other than the termite, size 20—even smaller if you dare—up to size 8, though I seldom go smaller than 14 and never larger than 8).
THREAD:	Red 8/0 or 6/0 (for versions other than the red-orange termite, thread-color should echo body-color).
ABDOMEN:	Red-orange synthetic dubbing (or some other ant-color, typically black or brown) poly, Superfine, Antron...
WINGS:	Brown buck tail.
THORAX:	The same as the abdomen.
HACKLE:	One, brown (or whatever color imitates the natural).



Flying ants, though the fishing books and magazines seldom mention them, can be serious business to the fly fisher. I've seen flying ants as tiny as size-24 hooks sprinkled like gray dust over the surface of a Montana lake; and I've caught good trout out in water sixty feet deep that were hunting the surface for flying ants with thick brown bodies. But where I live—on Washington State's Olympic Peninsula—the most important flying ant is the termite. Brown-orange bodied with long brown wings, it begins its nervous flights in the hot evenings of mid-August and continues them into the first part of September. It's big, as trout-food insects go, calling for a size-10 or -12 hook for imitation, and it can hit the lakes in respectable numbers on the best days. I've seen largemouth bass uncharacteristically far out from shore quietly picking termites from the surface like trout. And I'm sure that bluegills and some of the other pan fishes also occasionally focus on termites. But despite that other fishes have a taste for them, termites and all other flying ants I think of as trout food. And though termites and their relatives must drop onto streams, again becoming fare for trout, I nonetheless think of them as trout food of lakes.

My imitation of the termite, the Ant Carol, evolved over two decades of hunting lakes for trout (and sometimes bass) that were themselves hunting termites. It sort of developed on its own, along that oft-mentioned path of least resistance, replacing or revising inefficient aspects of its design and shedding unnecessary parts along the way. Simplicity in a fly pattern (that is, a fly pattern intended for fish rather than for displaying behind glass) must always be a virtue, and the Ant Carol is simple indeed. It's bucktail wings are spare enough to suggest the veined translucent-brown wings of the natural, supple enough to flex and let the hook do its job, stiff enough to hold their shape through the rigors of riding out casts and catching fish. Its body of synthetic dubbing is buoyant (like the wings, when they've been treated with floatant). Its hackle is sparse enough to suggest a few legs. One could start over with a whole new design to improve buoyancy—extend the body and reduce the mass of the hook; make the body of something incapable of absorbing water, like closed-cell foam—but that would make a heavier demand on the tier, and there is no pressing need for great buoyancy in a dry fly that, like the Ant Carol, is only quietly manipulated on standing water. Besides, flying ants seem heavy and their fall to water is usually harsh, so they often wind up a bit low in the surface of the water...about as low in the surface as an Ant Carol lies.

A simple fly for a simple job. But an effective fly, especially when fish are seeking flying ants atop lakes.

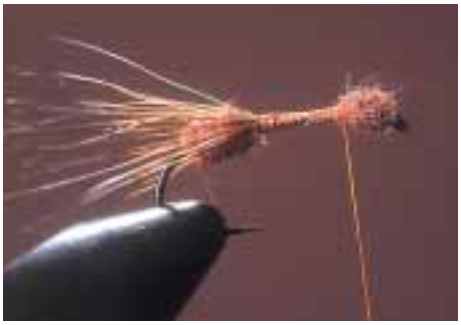
Carol Ann Morris

A termite.

Various colors and sizes.

1. Start the thread at the hook's bend. Dub a full, rounded abdomen over the rear third of the hook's shank. (You can dub down the bend a little, if you like.)

2. Cut a small bunch of hair from the natural-brown area of an undyed buck tail. Use the long stiff hairs, not the short soft ones. Comb out the short hairs and underfur. Stack the hairs in a hair-stacking tool. Bind half the hairs on one side of the abdomen, half on the other. The abdomen should push the two bunches out to the sides in a shallow "V". The length of the wings should equal the full length of the hook, or be *slightly* longer.



3. Bind the butts of the hairs tightly along the shank to just back from the hook's eye. Trim the butts. Build another bulge of dubbing just behind the eye. Build it to only about half to two-thirds the length and diameter of the abdomen. End with the thread *behind* the dubbing.

(An alternate approach for the wings: bind them as a single bunch atop the hook, right back to the abdomen, then split them with crisscrossed turns of thread.)

4. Spiral the thread back to the wings and take a turn or two of thread around each, if needed, to gather them into distinct bunches. Remember that *tight* thread-turns will flare the hair, *firm* turns will gather it.

Select a proper-size hackle from a dry-fly neck or saddle using a hackle gauge. Strip the long, soft fibers from the base of the hackle's stem. Bind the hackle to the shank at the front of the abdomen. Bind the stem along the shank most of the way to the dubbed thorax. Trim the stem closely.

5. Wind the hackle forward in a few open spirals; the result should be sparse. Bind the hackle's tip just short of the thorax. Whip finish the thread behind the thorax, cut it, and add head cement to the whip finish.

You can trim the hackle fibers away underneath, for perhaps a touch more realism, but I haven't yet felt the need.

Carol Ann Morris

STANDARD VARIATIONS ON STANDARD DRY FLIES

BLUE DUN *(traditional style)*

HOOK: Light wire, standard length to 1X long (standard dry-fly hook), sizes 18 to 10.

THREAD: Gray 6/0 or 8/0.

WINGS: Mallard-quill sections.

TAIL: Blue-dun hackle fibers.

BODY: Muskrat fur or medium-gray synthetic dubbing.

HACKLE: Blue dun (a bluish medium-gray).

The Adams, the Cahills, the Pale Evening Dun: these dry-fly patterns, like many others of traditional form, are so close in construction that if you can tie one, you are well on your way to tying them all.

And plenty of tiers just leave it at that. When they tie an Adams, for example, they tie it with paired wings, bunched tail, dense hackle collar—the standard configuration—and haven't a thought of tying it any other way. But there are other ways to tie standard dry flies, good ways, worth knowing.

Left to right: the Blue Dun in traditional style, thorax style, and parachute style.

In traditional dry-fly style there is a tail of bunched hackle fibers, a body made from a quill or of dubbing, wings of hackle tips or wood-duck flank or gray duck-primaries, and a collar formed of two dry-fly hackles. The newer thorax-dun and parachute styles are similar to this overall, but alter the wings and hackle, and sometimes the tail.

But why even consider the new styles when traditional dry flies still catch plenty of trout?—because the new dry-fly styles are better...if you believe their supporting arguments. Here are the best such arguments I've heard. The hackle fibers beneath the traditional dry fly may diminish its chances of turning upright before landing on the water, and may even interfere with the hook point's penetration. The thorax and parachute flies have no fibers below; all is on top, clear of the point and above the center of gravity for a sure bite and an upright landing. And then there's posture—mayflies, which traditional dry flies imitate, do not rest on legs and tails, but traditional dry flies do. (Thoraxes and parachutes rest their bodies flat on the water, which isn't always correct either, but most would argue that it's closer).

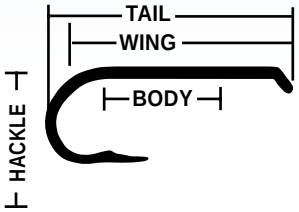
Debate over the advantages of parachute, thorax, and traditional dry flies won't soon go away—the trout, by continuing to take all three, won't let it. But so what? Tying traditional and parachute and thorax dry flies is challenging and fun—and that's reason enough to tie them all.

TRADITIONAL STYLE

The finer points of traditional styling of a dry fly (at least as it generally stands today; what fly tiers call "traditional" is often at odds with history) include a straight line from tail tip to edge of hackle collar, touching the hook's bend between. (Why? Because, I guess, it looks right to traditionalists.) The wings emerge from the hackle collar's center, their tips stretching upright to just past the the hackle fibers' tips.

Tying the traditional dry fly is old news. So we'll move through it in just a few photographs and captions, which leaves us lots of room in which to explore the newer thorax and parachute styles.

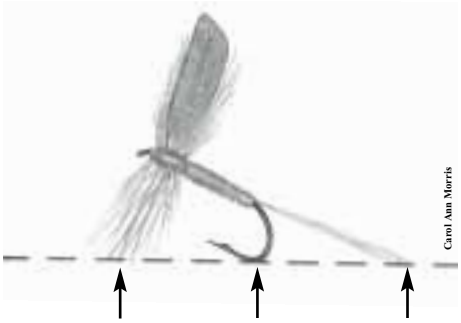
For easy comparison, we'll use just one fly throughout: the Blue Dun.



1. Here is a half-finished standard Blue Dun. The tail is hackle fibers; the body is dubbed; the duck-quill-section wings are bound on already, their taper-cut butts covered by the body's dubbing.

2. The wings are tugged upright, their bases creased with the thumbnail; then tight thread-turns are built against the wings' base to secure their position. Next, a pair of dry-fly hackles (their bases striped to bare stem) are bound on at the front of the body.

3. The stems of the hackles are trimmed and bound, the thread wound forward nearly to the hook's eye, and then the hackles are wound—one at a time—and secured with thread-turns just behind the eye.

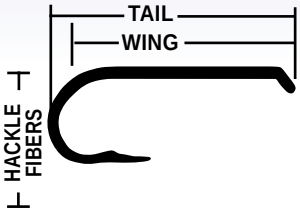


4. The final steps, not shown here, are the trimming of the hackles' tips, the building of a tapered thread head, the whip finishing and trimming of the thread, and the coating of the head with head cement.

Shown above is the classic straight line from tail-tip, touching hook bend, to base of hackle collar.

THORAX STYLE

The original thorax dun was quite different from the versions that followed. Vincent Marinaro, its creator, wasn't too pleased about it, either. Marinaro's fly had precise cut-wings sprouting from a ball of dubbing oddly wrapped with hackle. As you'll soon see, the thorax dun of today lacks these characteristics; nonetheless, most tiers now tie and fish the new version.



1. Create split tails using any of the standard methods (a few hackle fibers on each side of a ball of thread or dubbing). The tails should be a full hook's length.

Dub a tapered abdomen to about mid-shank.

2. Almost any common dry-fly wings can serve on a thorax dun: paired turkey-flat tips, paired hen-saddle hackles, or a single wing of poly yarn (usually in gray) to name but a few.

Bind the wings (or wing) about three quarters up the hook's shank. Set them upright; divide them, if appropriate. I used the single poly yarn wing here.

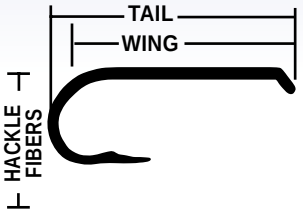
4. Trim away the hackle fibers beneath the fly, leaving them flat or in a shallow "V." That completes the Blue Dun Thorax Dun. Though not radically different than the traditional version, it is nonetheless *significantly* different.

3. Strip the base of a single hackle and bind it at mid-shank. Trim the hackle's stem and dub to just behind the eye. Wind the hackle in four to six open turns to the eye. Bind the hackle's tip there, trim it, and then complete a thread head.

PARACHUTE STYLE

Parachute flies are based on the parachute hackle, which they all possess: a horizontal disc of hackle fibers emanating from the base of one wing, all above the weight of the hook's shank—indeed, a sort of parachute to tip the fly upright.

Normally, parachute flies have a single bunched tail, like the traditional dry fly, but an increasing number of new parachute patterns have split tails.



1. The wing of a parachute fly is normally one bunch of white hair or bright poly yarn (orange, yellow, red...).

We'll create a hair wing in this example. Comb and stack a small bunch of white calf-tail hair. Bind the hair atop the hook's shank about three quarters up it. Trim and bind the butts of the hair; then pull the hair firmly back and crease it upright with your thumb nail.

Strip about a dozen long fibers from a big dry-fly hackle and bind them along the shank as a tail.

2. Lock the wing upright by taking a few firm thread-turns around its base, pulling the thread back firmly and then immediately securing it with a few tight turns around the shank.

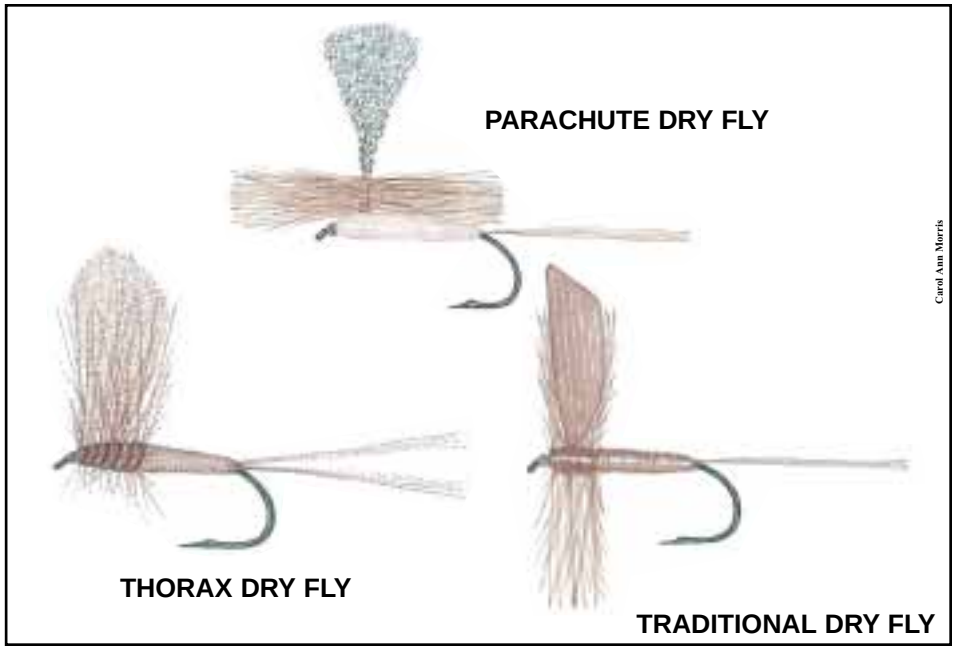
Wind a layer of the thread a little ways up the base of the wing, then back down—using only *light to modest* thread-tension. The base of the wing will still be pretty flexible through this step.

3. Strip the fluffy and overlong fibers from the base of a hackle that your hackle gauge indicates is of proper size for your hook. Hold the hackle upright, against the base of the wing Wind the thread up the hair and hackle stem and then back down.

The *first* turns stiffened the base of the wing—so you can use *firm* thread-tension this time. Pull the stem of the hackle back along the shank and bind it a little ways. Trim off the end of the stem.

4. Dub the full length of the body, ending with the thread at the hook's eye. Wind the hackle down the base of the wing in close, consecutive turns. Bind the hackle's tip at the eye, whip finish and trim the thread, add head cement to the whip finish.

If you are having trouble working a whip finish past the hackle fibers, try instead slipping a few half hitches over the eye with a half-hitch tool.



THE BI-VISIBLE

HOOK: Light wire, regular length to 1X long (a standard dry-fly hook), sizes 18 to 10.

THREAD: Brown 3/0, 6/0, or 8/0.

TAIL: Brown hackle fibers.

BODY: Brown hackles, a single white hackle in front.

The Bi-Visible is such a logical dry fly—lots of buoyant hackle with a buoyant tail, capped with a white face like a beacon to the fisherman's eye. During my teenage years, the 1960s, I preferred simple, practical flies for my simple fishing, and the Bi-Visible met my requirements exactly. It was still a popular fly back then, but its popularity seemed to fade as the 70s approached.

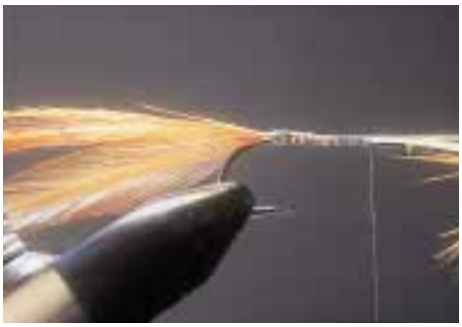
But the Bi-Visible is too good a fly to just fade away; many fly fishers still fish it, and still catch fish on it.

At the peak of the Bi-Visible's popularity came the assortment of variations—hackles and tails of black, ginger, blue dun, and grizzly but the standard, at least in my mind, is the brown. When someone says Bi-Visible, I assume they mean a brown one.

It's difficult to say what trout take a Bi-Visible to be—likely some legged, edible thing they've never before seen. But trout probably eat things all the time that they either have never before seen or can't remember having seen; they are, after all, fish—how good can a fish's memory be?

Fortunately, fly fishers' memories are better, good enough, at least, to remember a dependable fly called the Bi-Visible.

1. Start the thread at about the center of the hook's shank. Bind some hackle fibers along the shank as a tail. Bind the butts of the fibers well up the shank. Trim the butts of the fibers (if they are long). The completed tail should be about a full hook's length.



2. Select three appropriate-size hackles from a dry-fly hackle neck (or perhaps just one long dry-fly saddle hackle). Strip the long, soft fibers from the bases of the hackles, leaving only bare stems. Bind the stems from the hook's bend forward to well up the shank.

3. Trim off the hackles' stems just behind the hook's eye. Wind the thread forward to where it hangs about three quarters up the shank. Wind one of the hackles forward in open spirals up three quarters of the shank. Bind the hackle's tip there.

4. Wind another hackle and bind it, as you did the first; then wind the third hackle and bind its tip in the same manner. The idea is to wind the second and third hackles in the slot left between the spirals of the first hackle's stem. Trim the three hackle tips (there are three here, but one is hidden).

5. Prepare a white hackle and bind it by its bare stem at the front of the brown hackles. Trim off the hackle's stem. Advance the thread to slightly short of the eye.

6. Wind the white hackle in close turns to just short of the eye, and then bind the hackle's tip there. Trim away the tip; then build a tapered thread head, whip finish and trim the thread. Add head cement to the head.

THE FLUTTERING SALMON FLY (OR THE F150)

HOOK:	Light to standard wire, 2X or 3X long shank (Todd prefers a curved-shank hook), sizes 6 and 4.
THREAD:	Orange 8/0 or 6/0.
TAIL:	Moose-body hair.
RIB:	Brown saddle hackle.
BODY:	Burnt-orange Antron yarn.
WING:	Elk, sparse, under root beer Krystal Flash, under moose-body hair.
HEAD:	Moose-body hair.
LEGS:	Black rubber-strand.

It happens every spring on the West Coast, every summer in the Rocky Mountain states: new purpose calls the nymph of the legendary salmonfly to creep shoreward from beneath its swift-water stones, climb from the shallows into the air, split and shed its aquatic husk, and rise to its mating once its now-unfurled wings are rigid and dry. Why anglers all but worship this gargantuan stonefly is no mystery: big trout, normally reluctant to rise, will come right up to close their teeth onto a floating salmonfly adult, and will, of course, do the same for an imitation. Big trout on dry flies—trust me, fly fishers will show up for that.

Many famous western rivers sprout salmonflies: Montana's Madison and Big Hole, Wyoming's Green, Oregon's Deschutes, Colorado's Roaring Fork, Alberta, Canada's Bow.

And Idaho's South Fork of the Boise River, which is both why and where Todd Smith—a young production fly tier who spends part of his time behind the counter at the Stonefly Angler fly shop in Boise—developed his Fluttering Salmon Fly (also known as the F150). It's a predictably huge dry fly, as all salmonfly imitations are, that mimics, specifically, an egg-laying female caught on the water and working her wings to escape. That's why the Fluttering Salmon Fly's wing is splayed. The reason the moose hair in that wing is turned butts-out is to *keep* the wing splayed—Todd found that fine hair-tips, when wet, tend to clump, and destroy the effect. The clean-cut hair-butts in Todd's fly resist clumping *and* create a sharp wing-outline.

Carol Ann Morris

A Salmonfly adult.

The Fluttering Salmon Fly, Todd says, should be fished dead drift near banks, back in the shade under tree limbs and cut-banks on bright days, from afternoon into evening—essentially the standard strategy for fishing any stonefly adult imitation. Halfway through the hatch, however, when spent females fall dying from streamside grasses and tree limbs, Todd takes a different approach. He presses the wing down, flattening and splaying it even further; forgoes floatant; and tries to get the fly sodden, so it will sink or float very low. Then he just tosses it out and lets it drift. The trout see another spent female salmonfly, and...

Bob Jacklin, owner since 1982 of Jacklin's Fly Shop in West Yellowstone, created the Jacklin's Giant Salmon Fly you see above. It is similar enough to Todd Smith's Fluttering Salmon Fly that learning to tie one is learning to tie both. Jacklin's fly, unlike Smith's, has a stub tail (to suggest an egg sack), a rib-hackle of long *fibers (trimmed beneath to about halfway between body and hook point), a body of dubbing or Antron yarn, and a wing of blond elk hair set up at a 45-degree angle (to make the fly easy to spot).*

TYING TACTICS

A slightly complex but generally straightforward fly at the vise, the Fluttering Salmonfly is nonetheless easier to tie with a few pointers in mind. First, bind the tail butts and the butt of the Antron yarn right up three quarters of the hook's shank—if you cut them short, binding them only at the rear of the shank, you'll wind up building a lumpy-ended body over them. For the rib you'll need a high-quality saddle hackle with short fibers—the kind a hackle gauge would say is right for a size-14 or -16 hook. Bind the hackle by its butt, slightly ahead of the tail—just far enough ahead so that the first turn of yarn settles behind the hackle's stem. The second turn lies in front of the stem. And don't get carried away with the wing—elk hair and moose-body hair together can quickly add up to a mountain of wing. Use enough hair to create a full wing, but no more than that. When you add the Krystal Flash atop the elk hair, bind it on a little forward of the hair, and then stroke it back over and a little down around the hair before you wrap the thread back over its butts—this way the Krystal Flash will spread effectively around the elk, rather than sitting bunched atop it. Try to distribute the butts of the bullet-head hair evenly around the shank so that the resulting head is not overweight on one side and undernourished on the other. Stroke the head-hair back firmly, to even it and create a neat head, but don't pull it back so hard that the hair is strained in the finished head—hair already strained to near its breaking point won't last long against trout teeth.

Enough said. Let's tie.

1. Start the thread at the hook's bend. Cut, comb, and stack in a hair stacker a small bunch of moose-body hair. Bind the hair along the hook's shank as a short tail. Bind a short-fibered saddle hackle by its stripped stem at the bend. Bind Antron yarn along the rear three quarters of the shank to the bend. Spiral the thread back up the shank; then wind the Antron up it in close turns. Bind the end of the Antron and then trim it.

2. Spiral the hackle forward up the body in five or six ribs. Secure the tip of the hackle under tight thread-turns, and then trim off its end.

3. Cut, comb, and stack a small bunch of elk hair. Bind it atop the hook at the front of the body. The wing should reach back to about the tip of the tail. Atop the elk, bind about 20 strands of Krystal Flash. Trim the ends of the Krystal Flash to the same length as the wing. Cut and comb a fair-size bunch of moose-body hair; trim the *butts* of the hair to even, and then bind the hair atop the Krystal Flash—by its *tips*.

Trim closely the forward ends of the Krystal Flash and hair.

4. Cut, comb, and *stack* another substantial bunch of moose-body hair. Bind the hair by its *butts* just behind the hook's eye, hair tips projecting forward a distance about equal to half the shank's length. You want the hair fairly evenly distributed around the shank.

5. With the thread back at the front of the body, draw the hair tips firmly back, and then bind them, creating a bullet head and a short hair-tip collar.

Now, or when the fly is completed, trim the collar-fibers away from the underside, so the fish can see the entire body.

6. Bind a short length of rubber-strand on both sides of the thread-collar behind the bullet head. The result should be two wide-spread legs on the near side and two on the far side of the fly. Whip finish the thread at the center of the legs or directly in front of them. Trim the rear leg-strands to reach back to about the tip of the wing, the forelegs about two thirds this length. Trim the thread, and then add head cement to the whip finish. Fluttering Salmon Fly completed.

THE ROYAL COACHMAN AND LIME COACHMAN TRUDES

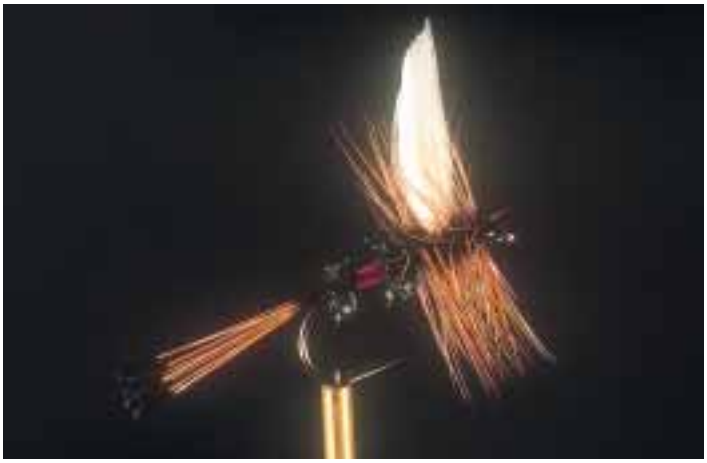
ROYAL COACHMAN TRUDE

HOOK: Standard dry fly, sizes 16 to 8.
THREAD: Black 8/0 or 6/0.
TAIL: Golden-pheasant tippets.
BODY: A band of peacock herl at either end of a band of red floss.
WING: White calf tail.
HACKLE: Brown.

LIME COACHMAN TRUDE

Form the body entirely of lime-green dubbing; otherwise, just follow the pattern above for the Royal Coachman Trude.

The Royal Coachman Trude resulted from a sequence of events and ideas as orderly and interconnected as the links of a chain. Over one hundred years ago was born a fanciful upright-wing dry fly called the Royal Coachman. A few decades later, a man named A. S. Trude (or a friend of Trude's, a former mayor of Chicago named Harold Smedly, or both) developed a fly with a horizontal wing of hair. Flies of this style became known as "Trudes." All this happened around the time fly fishers were discovering that trout, despite the old maxim to the contrary, do take dry flies in quick, broken water. The resulting need for dry flies that would stay afloat in the chop sent many anglers to hair-wing flies, but at first, it was flies with *upright* wings, in standard dry-fly form.



The original Royal Coachman dry fly, father of the Royal Coachman Trude and Lime Coachman Trude, is a fly pattern over one hundred years old.

In the meantime, the Royal Coachman was leaving a trail of questionably legitimate offspring in the wake of its soaring popularity—all sorts of new flies called the "Royal" this or "Coachman" that were popping out onto the scene. Eventually the Royal Coachman sired twin sons that sprouted hair wings: the Hair-Wing Royal Coachman and the Royal Wulff. Still on the prowl, the Royal Coachman turned to the sleek, low-winged Trude-type fly and thus was born the Royal Coachman Trude—as predictable an event, considering what lead to it, as any in the world of trout flies (though, at least as I've told it, a bit sordid).

Anyway, that's how I see it after my research: as a chain of thought and events. Others might see it differently—after all, most of this is hearsay. And perhaps they're right. But the old saying tells us that ignorance is bliss, and coincidently I take great delight in my chain-link story.

In any case the Royal Coachman Trude, sometimes known as the Royal Trude (the *Coachman* Trude is yet another and distinct Coachman relative), is a long-time standard dry fly for fast water. It's easy to see because of its white wing, and that wing is easier to create than one that is upright and split.

All the flies of the Royal Coachman family fall under the standard suspicion of any fly that imitates nothing. Why fish the Coachmans instead of flies that suggest mayflies and caddisflies and other foods familiar to trout? Wouldn't something more natural be better? Are the Coachmans really just designed for anglers, and not for their quarry? Such questions as these began with the first non-imitative flies and continue to this day. They shall continue as long as such flies exist.

I can tell you this: I have many times seen trout insist on a particular form of attractor fly and refuse all else. Makes no sense to me but, you know...truth is truth. And that's the truth.

Debates aside, the Royal Coachman Trude has been trusted and fished by many keen anglers over several decades.

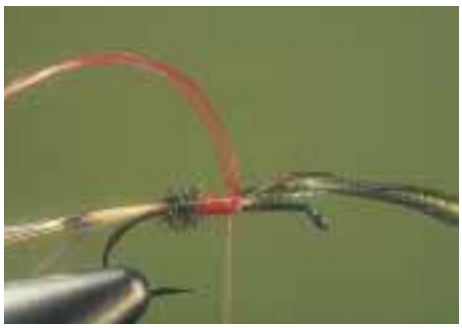
Carol Ann Morris

Fast, tumbling water—an excellent place to fish a buoyant Trude-style dry fly.

1. Start the thread slightly forward of halfway up the hook's shank. Bind atop the shank a small bunch of tippets, their tips even. Wind the thread down the tippets to the hook's bend. The tippets should project from the bend about a full hook-length.

2. Trim the butts of the tippets closely. Bind a couple of full peacock herls to the shank at the bend. Bind the herls up a bit from their fragile tips. Trim the tips closely.

3. Spin the herls around the thread, to toughen them. Wind the resulting herl-thread rope forward in close turns to create a short band. Secure the herls, at the front of the band, with tight thread-turns.



4. Bind the herls up the shank a bit, and then trim their ends. Bind some red floss to the shank at the front of the herl-band. Advance the thread a little way; then wind the floss forward to create a short floss-band. Secure the end of the floss under tight thread-turns and trim the floss.

5. Create another band of herl, as you did the first. Secure the herls under thread-turns and trim the herls closely. This herl-floss-herl body should cover slightly more than half the shank.

6. Comb and stack a small bunch of calf tail. Bind the bunch atop the hook at the front of the body. The calf should project back to about halfway down the tail. Trim the hair's butts to a taper, and then bind them.

7. Using a hackle gauge, find two neck hackles (or one saddle) appropriate to the size of your hook. Strip the long soft fibers from the base of the stems (or stem). Bind the hackles (or hackle) on at the front of the body and trim the stems. Advance the thread to just behind the hook's eye.

Wind one hackle to the eye in slightly open spirals; then secure it with thread-turns. Wrap the second hackle through the first, and then bind its tip. Trim the stems; build and complete a thread head.

8. The Lime Coachman Trude, another Coachman variation, differs from the Royal Coachman Trude only in the body. To tie the Lime Coachman Trude, simply dub a body of lime-colored fur or synthetic dubbing (I prefer the synthetic dubbing—it's more buoyant than fur), and omit the usual Coachman body of bands of floss and herl.

THE TOM THUMB

HOOK:	Light wire, 1X long (standard dry-fly hook), sizes 14 to 8.
THREAD:	Black 8/0 or 6/0 (or flat waxed nylon or 3/0).
TAIL:	Deer or elk hair.
WING and HUMP:	Deer or elk hair.

In a room full of fly tiers, you could easily pick out some of the Canadians just by looking to see who's tying a Tom Thumb—a lot of Canadians tie the Tom Thumb, and fish it, and likely none of the Americans would ever have even heard of it.

If you looked closer at the work of your Canadians, you'd likely discover that despite an overall similarity, their Tom Thumbs varied. Sometimes, there seem to be as many ways to tie this fly as there are tiers who tie it.

The Tom Thumb has been around for several decades, and I'd guess it to be currently the most popular dry fly in Western Canada, at least for fishing trout lakes. There's a lot more weight in that statement than most Americans would assume, because few of them realize that Western Canada is just chock full of trout lakes—tens of thousands of trout lakes in the province of British Columbia alone, according to Canadian fly-fishing author Brian Chan. Fishing trout lakes is consequently very popular, and serious business, up there.

As good as the Tom Thumb can be on lakes, it *should* be just as effective on streams (though I haven't yet given it enough time on them to say for certain that it is). What it does best is skim or twitch across the surface of water, like a scrambling caddisfly or buzzing back swimmer or even a freshly hatched mayfly dun struggling to work its new wings. The Tom Thumb doesn't look much like any of these insects, really, but as long as it's moving, raking a trail across the surface, it looks like a lot of things through the distortion. And a skimming fly should be just as useful on moving water as on still.

That's the whole thing with the Tom Thumb—making it move. It loves to spread its elongated triangle-wake behind it. If tied correctly, with the wing tipped well forward, it is almost *difficult* to sink. It is the only dry fly I've ever trolled, and one of the very few I'd even consider for such a departure from conventional lake-fishing technique.

The Tom Thumb's history is vague. According to Arthur Lindgren, author of *Fly Patterns of British Columbia*, the Tom Thumb probably came into common use around Jasper, a town in the Canadian province of Alberta, during the 1950s. Lindgren says that a guide named Collie Peacock who ran a fishing-tackle store there "recalled meeting a California dentist who was using the fly in Jasper, but he could not recall the origins of the fly, its name, or that of the dentist fishing it, so he pulled the name 'Tom Thumb' out of his hat." We at least know, then, how the fly got its name. But everything else...murky.

Much clearer, however, is the matter of the Tom Thumb's durability: it's poor. The hump over the back becomes shredded after just a trout of two has had it—even casting can sometimes break a few hairs. But it doesn't seem to matter—trout take it clean or shredded with equal enthusiasm.

I hedge my bet, though. Because I prefer that my Tom Thumbs last as long as possible, I tie them from elk hair, not the usual deer. Elk is much tougher than deer. But even with elk, the fly will look tattered in fairly short order.

I generally use heavy thread for Tom Thumbs, 3/0 and sometimes even flat waxed nylon—thick thread covers the butts of the tail-hair quickly and just makes a tougher fly overall. Of course a lot of tiers intentionally *do not* cover the tail-butts with thread, instead just spiraling the thread over them, in which case the spirals from binding on the tail then mix with the spirals from binding on the wing-hump hair and the whole thing becomes rather uneven and unsightly, though the resulting fly fishes just fine. Try tying it both ways if you like. As I said, there are many ways to tie a Tom Thumb, and trout seem to approve of them all.

Carol Ann Morris

The author playing a Kamloops rainbow trout hooked, of course, on a Tom Thumb.

1. Start the thread about three quarters up the hook's shank; then wind it tightly down the shank to the hook's bend. Snip a small bunch of elk hair from the hide, comb out the short hairs and fuzz, and then even the tips in a hair stacker. Measure the hair bunch and then bind it along the shank. The tips should project from the bend a full hook's length.

Prepare a second bunch of hair as you did the first; then hold this second bunch over the first. Even the tips of both.

2. Snip the butts of the second hair-bunch straight across right at the front edge of the hook's eye. Hold the cut edge of the second hair bunch down atop the shank, about halfway up the shank. Bind the hair-butts there, then wind the thread tightly down them to the bend.

3. Cover all the hair along the shank with thread wrappings (that is, if you tie it my way; many would just spiral the thread, letting much of the hair show through). End with the thread hanging about 1/16 of an inch back from the eye. Draw up all the hair from the *second*, top, hair-bunch; pull it forward and down; and then bind it just behind the eye with four to six tight thread-turns. The thread-turns near the eye should be piled, resulting in a narrow collar.

4. Draw the hair-tips firmly back and build tight turns of thread against the front of their base. You want the thread-turns to tip the hairs upright and hold them there securely. But don't overdo it—the fan-wing of hair must tip *forward* a bit. If it is straight upright or tipping back, the fly will dive *under* rather than skim *across* the water.

5. Here's a front view of the wing showing its wide, fanned shape. The photo of the finished fly (on the previous page) shows the wing from the side, gathered flatly. These photos show exactly how the wing *should* look—a flat fan, angled forward, a sort of leaning Comparadun wing.

Complete the Tom Thumb by whip finishing the thread, trimming it, and adding head cement to the whip finish.

THE CHERNOBYL ANT

HOOK: Light wire, 2X long, sizes 10 to 4.

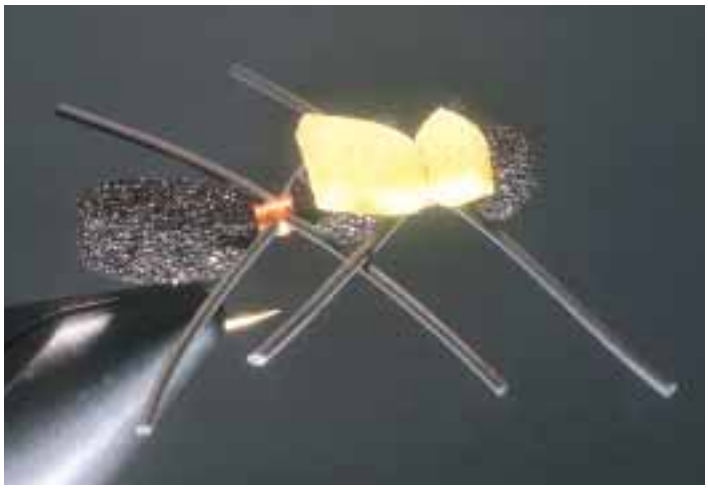
THREAD: Orange 3/0.

BODY: A strip of black closed-cell foam sheeting.

LEGS: Medium-diameter black round rubber-strand.

INDICATOR: A strip of yellow closed-cell foam sheeting.

Carol Ann Morris



Carol Ann Morris

The Chernobyl Ant is a bizarre fly, which, I suppose, is why it's used so often for cutthroat trout—sometimes there's just no making sense of what cutthroats want. However, it's clear to me that they sometimes want a gargantuan ant with crisscrossed legs, which the Chernobyl Ant suggests.

I researched the history of this new fly and most of what little I found came from Jack Dennis's *Tying Flies with Jack Dennis and Friends*. I found that the Chernobyl Ant was created by a guide on Utah's Green River named Allan Woolley, who based his pattern on a fly called the Black Mamba; that Woolley's enormous artificial ant was designed to imitate not an ant at all but a huge western cricket whose numbers explode some years in the grasslands; and that this cricket is called the Mormon cricket, named for its attack on early Mormon crops in Utah.

All well and good, but the Chernobyl Ant, it seems to me, resembles not a cricket but just what its name suggests: an ant, misshapen and absurd in its great bulk—a sort of dark, comic-book mutation resulting from the Russian Chernobyl nuclear tragedy—but an ant nonetheless.

Which brings us back to those cutthroats, whose behavior is often as bizarre as a giant mutant ant. My impression—and that's all it really is—is that the Chernobyl is primarily a cutthroat fly. This impression began during a fishing trip in the fall of 1996.

◆◆◆

Mike and Doug had handed my wife Carol and me each a couple of Chernobyl Ants only minutes after we arrived at Yellowstone Park's Slough Creek. "The Creek is full of cutthroats," Mike told us with the quiet confidence of experience, "and cutthroats hardly ever ignore this fly."

"My God," I said, "what's it supposed to be?"

"I really don't know, and I'm sure the cutts don't either. But even if they don't take it, they almost always come up and look it over; then they seem ready to take something else. But a lot of times they just charge up and grab it, even in the middle of a hatch of little mayflies."

"If they'll take this, won't they just take *anything*?"

"Not really. Sometimes it's the *only* thing they'll take."

I looked at the silly gangly-legged monstrosities as though I were looking at a two-headed dog. Mike knows his Yellowstone fishing, and I knew it...but this?

The cutthroats did ignore the Ant that day, but they ignored every other fly we showed them, too. And we showed them plenty—nymphs, streamers, dry flies, big flies, tiny flies, and flies of all sizes in between. Four of us fished for hours and, though we saw a few fish, caught nothing.

Two years later, my friend Peter Morrison called from his home near Cranbrook, in the Southeastern corner of British Columbia, Canada. He and his friend Bill Demchuck were planning a brief break from their guiding operation, Osprey Fly

Carol Ann Morris

Slough Creek in Yellowstone National Park, where no fly worked for the author and his wife and friends.

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One of the cutthroat rivers in British Columbia, Canada, where the Chernobyl Ant couldn't miss.

Fishing Adventures, to do some...yes, some fishing, of course.

"Brian's coming over at the end of the month to fish with us for a few days; Bill and I thought it would be fun to have you and Carol join us."

"Brian," I knew, meant Brian Chan, my co-author on *Morris & Chan on Fly Fishing Trout Lakes* and as much a fly-fishing luminary in Canada as anyone is in the States. This was too good to miss—good friends and fine fishing. Carol and I would work it out.

When I called Peter back to tell him we were coming, I recalled Mike's comments on Slough Creek about the fly cutthroats "hardly ever ignore" and asked, "Should I bring a lot of Chernobyl Ants?"

"Well, I've heard of the fly, but we've never heard about it doing anything special up here. I wouldn't bother with it."

I tied up a bunch anyway. As I said, Mike knows his fishing, and cutthroats are cutthroats, wherever they are.

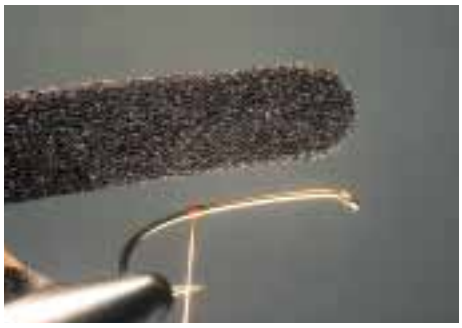
When we got there it was plain hot, shirt-soaking breath-stealing hot. Carol and I soon figured out that the only escape was to wade bare-legged in the cool, cobble-bottomed rivers, and that felt divine.

Shortly after we had arrived at our bed and breakfast, Peter told me over the phone, "We had some guys up here last week who just cleaned up with Chernobyl Ants. Did you bring some?"

"Yea," I replied, "and I brought my tying suitcase too. I'll get to work on 'em." Every morning that week I tied a half to a full dozen Ants. Peter fished them. I fished them. Carol fished them. Brian fished them. Brian's daughter, Carlyn, fished them. Bill fished them. We tried other flies—nymphs, dry flies, big and small—and nothing seemed to draw the cutthroats up through three, six, ten, even twelve feet of streamy, golden flow nearly so consistently as a big, black Chernobyl Ant.

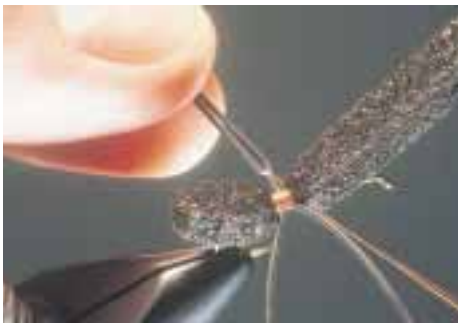
On the third day, eating lunch in the shade, I said, "I just can't believe how these fish go for the Ant—it's weird!"

A faint grin curled the edges of Peter's mouth. "Yea," he said, "that fly I told you not to bother with."



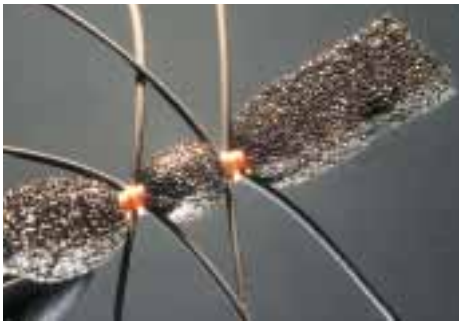
1. Start the thread at the hook's bend. Cut a strip of closed-cell foam sheeting about as wide as half the length of the hook's shank. Trim one end of the strip to rounded.

2. Bind the strip over the bend with a collar of *firm* thread-turns (not tight turns—tight turns can cut foam). The rounded end of the strip should project over and just beyond the bend.

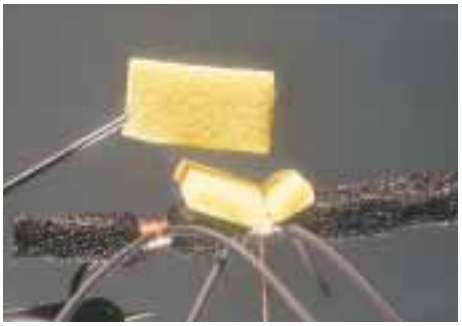


3. Double a length of rubber-strand over the thread; then slide the strand down to the thread collar and bind it there. Bind another strand on the opposite side in this same manner.

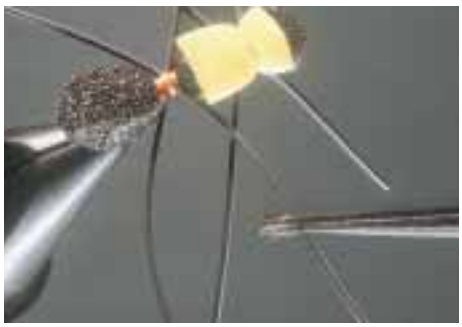
4. Draw back the foam and strands, and then advance the thread up the shank in close, tight turns to about three quarters up the shank.



5. Lower the foam-strip and build another thread collar over it about three quarters up the shank. Bind a short length of rubber-strand on each side as before.



6. Cut a slim strip of yellow foam for a strike indicator. Bind the strip atop the second thread collar. Trim its ends fairly short. The yellow should appear only as two bright stub-ends. Trim the front end of the black foam strip to a short, rounded head, extending past the hook's eye a little.



7. Trim the legs to length, which should be slightly long—at least a full hook-length—to make them appear gangly. That completes this bizarre new fly with which cutthroats seem so taken. (Though friends assure me that browns and rainbows go for it, too.)

Nymphs

A still-alive chironomid pupa, suctioned from the throat of a trout.

Smooth meadow streams like this one can be fine places to fish a nymph.

Skip releases a nymph-caught rainbow.

Brook trout gathered in the corner of a lake.

All photos by Carol Ann Morris

THE FEATHER DUSTER

HOOK:	Heavy wire, 1X or 2X long, sizes 16 to 10.
THREAD:	Brown or olive 6/0 or 8/0.
TAIL:	For size-12 hooks and larger, pheasant-tail fibers. For size-14 hooks and smaller, partridge fibers.
RIB:	Fine copper wire.
BODY:	Natural ostrich herl.
WING CASE and LEGS:	For size-12 hooks and larger, pheasant-tail fibers. For size-14 hooks and smaller, partridge fibers.

You'd think a professional writer, one who has pored over dictionaries, style guides, thesauruses, and works of the acknowledged literary masters of prose, all in pursuit of the right word, could give a new fly a good name. But, alas, I'm lousy at it.

Which is why I'm always impressed with a name that rises, from among the tangle of featureless gray fly names, and sparkles. I'm impressed with the name "Feather Duster"; it sparkles. Vividly it captures its object's essence.

The Feather Duster itself does not sparkle. It is a fuzzy gray-brown nymph composed of what appear to be the same fuzzy gray-brown fibers used in an actual household feather duster.

Wally Eagle created the Feather Duster, and gave the fly its herl body because, according to *Fly Patterns of Yellowstone*, by Mathews and Juracek, he "has never liked to dub."

The book describes the Feather Duster as an imitation of a mayfly nymph, but adds that it "can also suggest damselfly, dragonfly, and little stonefly nymphs."

It is, in a nutshell, a distinctive nymph with a fine record for persuading western trout.

And, of course, it's got one of those infuriatingly fresh, expressive names that seem always just beyond my grasp.

1. Start the thread on the hook's shank. Wind some lead wire over the front half of the shank, cut the ends of the lead, and then bind it. Build a little dubbing of any kind at both ends of the lead.

Bind on a few pheasant-tail or partridge fibers at the hook's bend. Bind on some copper wire at the bend. Trim the ends of both the fibers and wire.

2. Snip off the very tips of three to five ostrich herls. Bind the herls by their cut tips at the hook's bend.

Cut a thin section of pheasant-tail or partridge-flank fibers and keep the tips of the fibers even. Bind the fibers atop the center of the shank. The fibers should project back a full hook's length. Trim and bind the fibers' butts.

3. Bind the tips of the wing-case fibers at the hook's eye with a couple of light thread-turns. Wind the herls forward to the wing-case fibers. Back off the turns of thread holding down the fibers. Tug the fibers back and continue winding the herls to just behind the hook's eye. Secure them there with tight thread-turns and then trim the butts closely.

4. Wind the copper wire forward in seven to ten open spirals to the hook's eye. Secure the wire there with tight thread-turns; then trim the wire closely.

5. Draw the wing-case fibers forward and down. Bind them there just behind the eye.

6. Draw three to five fiber-tips back along each side of the hook and bind them there. Trim away any remaining fiber-tips. Build and complete a thread head.

THE ZEBRA MIDGE

HOOK:	Heavy wire, 2X long (Ken prefers a hook with a humped shank), sizes 20 to 10.
THREAD:	Black 8/0 or 6/0.
ABDOMEN:	Two strands of fly-line backing—one strand is colored black, red, or gray; the other is left its original white. Another combination is a yellow strand with a black one.
THORAX:	Black dubbing (any kind).

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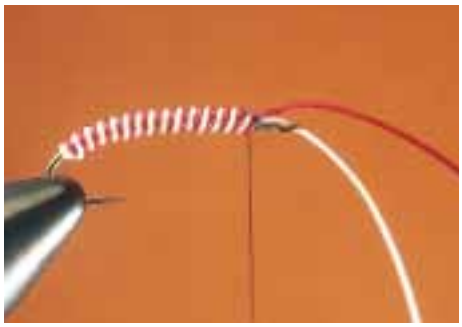
My friend Ken Fujii, a trout-lake fisherman of the first order, created the Zebra Midge. He lets it sink deep under its own weight, below a strike indicator and a floating line, and then gives the fly plenty of rest and only an occasional slow, short draw.

Chironomids are a standard feed for trout in most lakes, and the Zebra imitates the chironomid's "pupal" stage, that form of the insect that leaves the bottom-muck, and then rises in its awkward squirming to the surface. Soon it leaves the water in its winged, adult stage. Rivers have lots of chironomids too, and the Zebra should be just as effective on them as it is on lakes. There is never a bad time to fish an imitation chironomid in any trout water—the real ones hatch year round.

I've fished a slow, deep Zebra Midge to some very difficult trout in a hard-fished private pond, a pond that had proved to be an acid test for any trout fly. It passed that test, repeatedly.

1. Snip two sections from some fly-line backing, each a few inches long. Color one strand with a permanent marking pen; leave the other white.

2. Start the thread about 1/8-inch back from the hook's eye. There, bind the ends of the two strands of fly-line backing. Spiral the thread tightly down the backing and the hook's shank to partway down its bend. Spiral the thread back up to its starting point.



3. Trim the ends of the backing, if necessary. Wind the two strands of backing together up the shank to about 1/8-inch back from the hook's eye. The strands should lie flat, their colors staggered in a tight candy-cane pattern. Bind the ends of the strands and then trim them.

4. Dub a short, full thorax.

5. Build a small thread-head, whip finish and trim the thread, and add head cement to complete the Zebra Midge.

6. This photo shows two Zebra Midges, one small, one large, each lying on the strands from which its abdomen was formed. The strands for the small Zebra are size-A rod-winding thread. Use whatever strand material forms a slim body on the hook size you've chosen.

BIRD'S STONEFLY NYMPH

HOOK:	Heavy wire, 3X long, sizes 10 to 4.
THREAD:	Orange 8/0, 6/0, or 3/0.
WEIGHT:	Lead wire.
TAILS:	Brown-dyed goose biots.
RIB:	Orange floss or heavy thread.
ABDOMEN:	Brown muskrat fur or brown-dyed rabbit fur.
WING CASE:	Dark mottled turkey primary or brown-dyed teal.
LEGS:	A furnace or brown saddle hackle.
THORAX:	Peacock herl.

If Terry Hellekson's comments on page 73 of his book *Popular Fly Patterns* formed your introduction to the Bird's Stonefly Nymph, you might have the wrong impression. Hellekson's book was published in 1976, and in it he describes this fly as an "old" pattern. It would be easy to assume that by 1996 the Bird's Stonefly Nymph had become but a memory.

Simply not so. Age, it seems, has little effect on some fly patterns, and the Bird's Stonefly Nymph proves it by continuing to appear in the catalogs of fly companies, the bins of fly shops, anglers' fly boxes, and the mouths of stonefly-seeking trout.

It should surprise no one familiar with the Bird's Stonefly Nymph that it has held its own all these years—it's just the sort of good-looking fly that fly fishers like to see in their boxes, and its orange rib, peacock thorax, and neatly split tails make it a fine imitation of the nymph of the huge western stonefly commonly known as the salmonfly.

A word of caution, the name is often shortened to Bird's Stonefly or just Bird's Stone. Since there is also a dry fly called Bird's Stonefly Adult or Bird's Stonefly Dry, the shortened title for the nymph can cause confusion.

The "Bird's" in Bird's Stonefly Nymph refers to its creator Cal Bird, a commercial artist living in California when he developed the fly in the early 1960s.

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A real salmonfly nymph.

Carol Ann Morris

Carol Ann Morris

1. Start the thread near the hook's bend and then bind a goose biot on each side of the shank—these biot tails should be at least as long as the hook's gape is wide. Wrap lead wire from one third up the shank to 1/8-inch short of the hook's eye. Trim the ends of the wire, bind the wire with thread-turns, and then taper its ends with a little dubbing.

2. Bind some floss or heavy thread at the rear of the shank, for the rib (I use two strands of flat waxed nylon). Dub a full, tapered abdomen to slightly past halfway up the shank.

3. Wind the floss or thread up the abdomen in five to seven ribs. (I use two strands of flat waxed nylon and twist them together before wrapping them as a rib.) Bind the rib at the front of the abdomen with tight thread-turns and then trim off the end of the rib material.

4. Bind a section of turkey primary over the thorax area, projecting back over the abdomen. The section should be about as wide as the hook's gape.

5. Bind a hackle by its tip or butt (both are acceptable but create different effects) at the rear of the thorax area. Bind three to five full peacock herls at the same place.

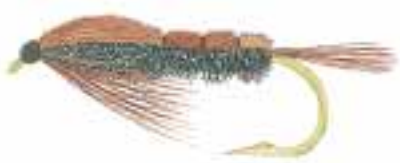
6. Spin the herls lightly around the thread. Wind this thread-herl rope up the thorax-area to just back from the hook's eye. Separate out the ends of the the herl and bind them there tightly. Trim off the ends of the herl.

7. Wind the hackle up the herl-thorax in four to six open spirals. Secure the end of the hackle just back from the hook's eye with tight thread-turns. Trim the hackle's stem closely.

8. Either trim the hackle fibers from the top of the thorax or draw those fibers down the sides of the thorax. Draw the turkey section up and forward; then bind it just behind the hook's eye. Trim the end of the section closely, build a tapered thread head, whip finish the thread, trim the thread, and then add head cement to the head.

THE HALFBACK

HOOK:	Heavy wire, 1X to 3X long, sizes 12 to 8.
THREAD:	Black 6/0 or 8/0.
TAIL:	Pheasant-rump or pheasant-tail fibers.
ABDOMEN:	Peacock herl.
WING CASE and LEGS:	The same kind of fibers used in the tail.
THORAX:	Peacock herl.



The Fullback

Carol Ann Morris

They are a set, so close in form that one can always substitute for the other. They are the Canadian nymphs, the Fullback and the Halfback. The difference between them is slight—some feather fibers over the abdomen of the Fullback, none on the Halfback.

Though the Halfback and Fullback are considered lake flies, they would certainly be good in streams. But my impression is that Canadians seldom give them a chance there.

Few Canadian fly fishers would go to a trout lake without a couple of Halfbacks and Fullbacks on hand, at least a couple. If not a full dozen.

1. These are two types of pheasant fibers you can use for the tail in the Halfback: pheasant *tail* (on the left) and pheasant *rump* (on the right).

2. Start the thread on the hook's shank, and then bind on four to eight pheasant fibers at the hook's bend. The resulting tail should be one half to two thirds the shank's length. Bind three to five peacock herls at the hook's bend. Twist the herls and thread together, and then wind the resulting herl-rope halfway up the shank.

3. Separate out the herls and thread. Bind the herls there, and then trim their ends off. Even the tips of another bunch of pheasant. Bind the fibers at mid-shank, tips back. The fibers should extend back, from where they are bound, about one full hook's length. Trim the butts of the fibers.

4. Bind on and wrap a few more herls, as before. Bind and trim the herls just slightly back from the hook's eye—no further back then the length of the eye itself.

5. Pull the pheasant fibers forward and down. Bind them firmly behind the eye.

6. Pull the fibers' tips down and back and bind them there, beneath the hook.

I prefer to divide the tips to the sides, and then bind them there. The completed fly at the top of this page has the fiber-tip legs arranged as I like them.

THE GRAY NYMPH

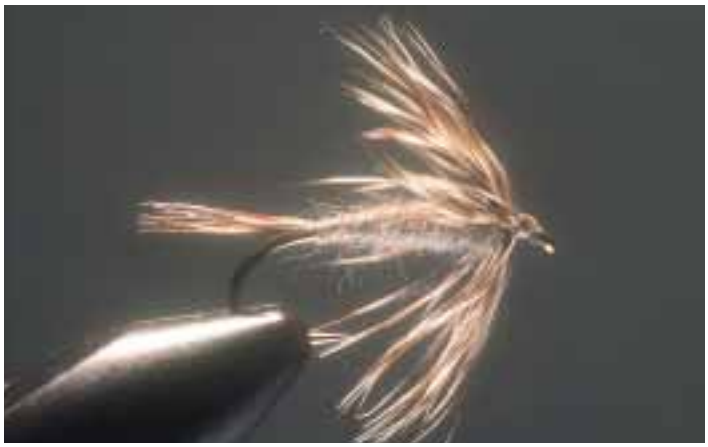
HOOK: Heavy wire, regular shank or 1X long, sizes 16 to 6.

THREAD: Gray 8/0 or 6/0.

TAIL: Same fibers as used for the hackle.

BODY: Muskrat.

HACKLE: Grizzly hen-saddle or hen-neck hackle.



"Gray Nymph," the man replied. But you'd have to know the question that preceded his answer to understand why I was—why we all were—listening closely. This was the question: "What fly are you using?" It might also help you to know that while the Gray Nymph man was catching trout after trout from the small Central Oregon lake, the three of us were catching nothing. Then the man with the Gray Nymphs passed a few around. We tied them to our tippets, cast them out on full-sinking lines, and were soon busy catching fish of our own...with a new respect for this venerable old fly pattern.

There isn't much to the Gray Nymph—a tail, a hackle, a fuzzy body—but it's a good bet fished dead drift along a streambed; twitched in front of trout rising in streams or lakes; and, of course, fished on a sinking line well down in trout lakes.

The Gray Nymph was created by Dee Vissing.

1. Start the thread on the hook's shank; then strip some fibers from the side of a grizzly hackle and bind them as a tail. This tail should be about half to three quarters the length of the shank.

2. Wind some lead or lead-substitute wire over the forward half of the shank; (leave some space behind the hook's eye, as shown). Cut the ends of the wire closely. Bind the wire with tight thread-turns.

3. Dub a full, tapered body of muskrat fur up about three quarters of the shank.

4. Strip the long, fluffy fibers from the base of a grizzly hackle. Bind the hackle by its stem just behind the eye. Wind the thread back over the stem to the front of the body, a distance of only about 1/16 of an inch. Trim off the hackle's stem.

5. Clamp the tip of the hackle in hackle pliers; then wind the hackle back towards the body in three or four turns. Let the pliers hang. Spiral the thread tightly forward through the hackle to the eye. Find and trim out the hackle's tip.

6. Draw back the hackle fibers. Build a tapered thread head; then whip finish the thread, trim its end, and coat the head with head cement to complete the Gray Nymph.

THE ROYAL FLUSH

HOOK:	Heavy wire, 1X long (standard nymph hook), humped shank is optional, sizes 16 to 10.
BEAD:	Gold metal, 3/32-inch for size-16 hooks, 7/64-inch for size-14, and 1/8-inch for size-12 and -10.
WEIGHT:	Lead or lead-substitute wire, 0.015-inch (could go larger on the bigger hooks). Lead is optional.
THREAD:	Black or red 6/0 or 8/0. (Try the red sometime—kicks up the brightness factor a solid notch.)
TAIL:	Golden pheasant tippets.
RIB:	Fine red copper wire over red Flashabou.
ABDOMEN:	Two or three peacock herls.
WING CASE:	Clear Stretch Flex, Scud Back, or Medallion sheeting, 1/8-inch wide (this clear strip is optional), over white duck primary, goose shoulder, or any white feather-section.
THROAX:	Same peacock herl used for the abdomen.
HACKLE:	Brown hen neck, as a half-collar.

The Royal Coachman dry fly stands as the flagship for all "attractor" fly patterns, flies designed not so much to imitate fish food as to satisfy flights of the imagination. Some would argue that no one fly that can represent all the attractors with their broad range from elegant to quirky, but if there is one, it must be the Royal Coachman. It tops the list in many respects. It's as plush as any fly: a body composed of two shining collars of peacock herl separated by a band of rich red floss, chestnut hackle, snowy white wings, and the most intriguing tail of pheasant tippets—a bundle of orange-gold stalks tipped like cattails with velvety black fuzz. And the Royal Coachman is well known to any serious fly fisher, a fly with (my impression) an unmatched record of popularity and (fact) a record of over a hundred years of catching trout. So I had no qualms about using it as a the model for my Royal Flush nymph.

The two, however, are different flies indeed. For starters, one floats, one sinks. And there are other differences. After some experimentation I eliminated the Coachman's floss band altogether from my fly, but echoed it with a red rib of brilliant Flashabou reinforced with red copper wire—the banded effect was just too unnatural for my sensibilities. Then there's that great, round golden bead on the head of my nymph—no Royal Coachman in the pattern's century-long reign ever sported such a thing.

But otherwise, the Royal Coachman's influence on my Royal Flush is consistent: brown hackle, pheasant-tippet tail, and even an outlandish white wing case in place of the Coachman's outlandish white wings.

Fanciful as it clearly is, the Royal Flush is arguably not entirely unnatural. The mayfly *Ameletus's* three nymphal tails are tipped with contrasting color along the lines of the Royal Flush's golden pheasant tippet, though the pattern is reversed in the mayfly—dark shafts with light tips. And the white wing case in my fly could remind trout of a whitish nymph having just shed an exoskeleton, as mayflies do numerous times throughout their underwater lives. The dark and shining herl body is a long-proven approach to artificial nymph design, as is the brown hackle half-collar. Still, nothing is going to explain away that golden bead.

But probably nothing should. Nymphs with gold beads catch a lot of trout, as do fanciful attractor flies in general. Perhaps attractor flies work precisely *because* they look unlike anything a fish ever ate. No one knows for sure. But attractors do work, sometimes far better than solid imitations.

To date, I've fished my Royal Flush strictly in streams—and it's often a real producer there. Technique is nothing special—the fly riding deep, dead-drifted below a strike indicator, a full-floating line behind that. Sometimes I use my nymph when there is no hatch to unify the trout's purpose, and sometimes on the whim that a bright, plush, shining little fly the fish have never before seen will pique their interest.

The Royal Flush should be a solid attractor fly in trout lakes, but I have yet to test that theory.

The name Royal Flush comes from a winning hand in poker (the "Royal" serving also as a tip of the hat to its ancestor). Seemed appropriate.

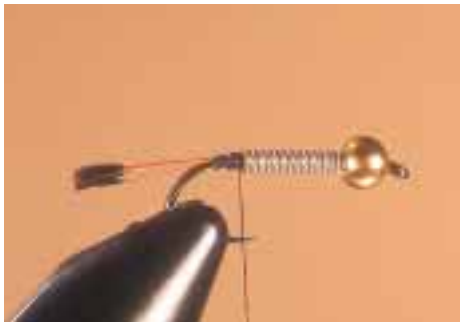
The Royal Flush and its ancestor, the Royal Coachman dry fly.

TYING STRATEGIES

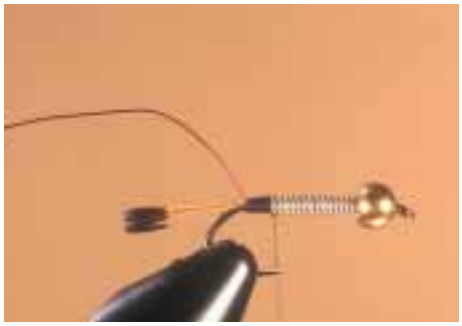
I like to double a strand of the Flashabou so that *two* ends project from the hook's bend—Flashabou is tough enough for a temporary rib (it is soon reinforced with wire), but a heavy hand or a swipe across the hook's point can part it; the second end is a back-up. Nowadays it is common to strengthen peacock-herl bodies by twisting the herls with the thread. Not necessary with the Royal Flush, though—the counter-wrapped wire rib gives the herl plenty of reinforcement.

An alternate way to tie the Royal Flush is to dub tightly against the rear of the wing-case materials with just a *little* dubbing (then dub a little out into the thorax to smooth things out) so the materials stand straight up. Then bind on the herls at the bead, wind the herls down the full length of the hook's shank to the bend, and then secure the herls by wrapping the Flashabou all the way up to the bead in ribs. Right away, wind the copper wire over the Flashabou and up the body; then everything is secure. This is a tricky approach because the wing-case materials may not be all that keen on staying upright, and the Flashabou is a bit fragile for securing all the herls, even temporarily. But once you get the hang of this method you'll find it fast and neat. Try it.

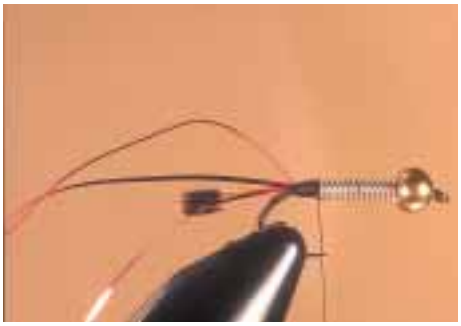
1. Slide the bead, small end of the hole forward, up the hook's shank to its eye. Mount the hook in your vise, and then wrap a layer of lead (if you want lead) up the full length of the shank. Cut the ends of the lead close. Push the lead up firmly into the rear of the bead. The lead and bead will now cover about two thirds to three quarters of the shank.



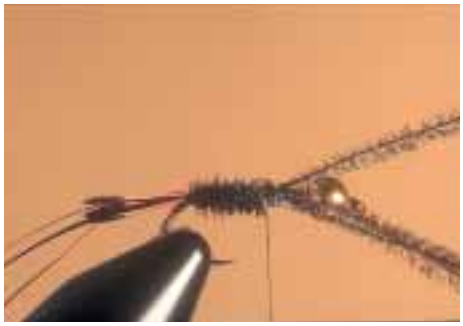
2. Start the thread directly behind the lead windings. Bind a small bunch of pheasant tippets atop the shank, at the hook's bend, as a tail. The tail should be half to two thirds the length of the shank. Wind the thread up the fibers and shank to the rear of the lead. Trim off the butts of the fibers closely, so they lie right up against the lead.



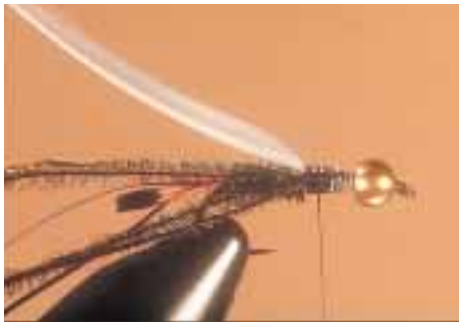
3. Bind some fine red copper wire from the rear of the lead windings to the bend. Trim off the stub-end of the wire, if necessary. (You are trying to fill the gap behind the lead for a smooth under-body, so try to keep your materials bound right behind the lead but up *against* the lead.)



4. Double a full length of red Flashabou over the thread. Bind the doubled end against the rear of the lead and then down to the tail.



5. Trim the last half-inch or so off the tips of three peacock herls (you can use two for small hooks). Bind the herls by their cut tips in the space behind the lead windings (remember—fill the gap, smooth things out). Spiral the thread to *slightly* past halfway to the rear of the bead. Wind the three herls together halfway up the shank—toward you over the top and away from you beneath the hook, the opposite of the usual direction—and then bind them there, but don't cut them.



6. Advance the thread over the ends of the herls a couple of turns; then pull the butts of the herls firmly back along one side of the hook and bind them. (As an alternate, you could just trim off the herls now, and then bind new ones on later for the thorax. You'll soon see what I mean.) At the middle of the shank between the rear of the bead and the tail, bind a strip of clear Stretch Flex or the like. Atop the clear strip bind a section of white duck primary or such. The section should be slightly slimmer than the hook's gape. Trim the butts of these wing-case materials and then bind them thoroughly.

7. Spiral the thread to the rear of the bead. Wind the remaining herl to the rear of the bead (in reverse direction, again). Bind the herl there. Trim the ends of the herl closely.

8. Pull the wing-case materials up and forward; then bind them (temporarily) with one or two light turns of thread. Wind the Flashabou in three to five turns to the rear of the wing-case materials—in the normal direction, away from you over the top and towards you below. Back off the thread to release the wing case stuff, and then continue winding the Flashabou to the bead in two or three turns.

9. Bind the end of the Flashabou; then trim it off. If all went well, trim off the second, back-up, strand at the bend.

Bind the wing-case materials temporarily again. Wind the wire over the Flashabou, tightly, right in its tracks, to the wing case. Free the wing-case materials and then continue the wire up to the rear of the bead. Bind the wire. Trim the ends of both wire and Flashabou.

10. Find a hen hackle appropriate to the size of your hook using a hackle gauge. Strip the hackle's base, and then bind the hackle by its bare stem up against the rear of the bead. The body of the hackle should project forward, off the hook's eye. Wind the thread back in about three close turns. Trim off the hackle's stem.

11. Wind the hackle back in three close turns, then wind the thread *forward*, *through* the fibers to the bead. This makes a very strong hackle collar—its stem is crossed and reinforced by thread three times.

12. Pinch down the hackle fibers firmly, so they sweep back.

13. Part the hackle fibers on top, and then pull the white duck-section forward and down. Bind the section against the rear of the bead. Pull the Stretch Flex strip forward and down atop the duck, and then bind it atop the duck. Trim the ends of the duck and Stretch Flex closely. Whip finish and trim the thread. Add head cement to the whip finish to complete the Royal Flush.