

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited April 2020 Newsletter



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TO FISH, OR NOT TO FISH



I received this picture of a 20" brown caught on the Catawba River at the Marion Greenway last week. This was from a friend that lives in

Mecklenburg County which is under a "Stay at Home" order. Then this past week Governor Cooper issued that order for the entire state of North Carolina starting at 5PM Monday March 30th. The order does allow outdoor exercise which could be deemed to include fishing, but I'm not going to get into the middle of that debate and will let each of you decide whether it is allowed.

To me, fly fishing our streams provides physical and mental benefits, and the point is that if treated properly under the guidelines of social distancing there is a very small risk of the activity increasing the spread of the Corona Virus. There are, however, some things you should keep in mind if you do this.

1. Areas like Charlotte and Raleigh have many cases of the virus, while most of the more remote counties where our trout streams exist have few or no cases. So if you are traveling from a high risk area, you need to be especially cautious to prevent the spread.
2. The areas where you are traveling to have a large economic dependence on tourism, so while you're there it would be good to support the local economy by purchasing your gas and your lunch at a drive through window. Be sure to carry along some wipes and or hand sanitizer. It would not hurt to wipe your credit card clean before you hand it to a clerk.
3. And of course keep your distance from any other fishermen you encounter on the stream. One thing not often mentioned is that the virus is said to live up to three hours in the air, so covering that cough is very important.

The April stocking of the Delayed Harvest streams is still scheduled to take place the first week of April. That is the start of some of our best fishing of the year. Let's all hope this disappears quickly so that by the May stocking we can all comfortably get back on the creeks

A last note for those wishing to bring home a meal, the Hatchery Supported streams reopen on Saturday, April 4th.

May God keep you safe and healthy during this difficult time and bring us all out soon to a better life.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

The April meeting has been cancelled. We will let you know in the next newsletter about the May meeting.

FLY FISHERMAN COCOONING

In case you haven't heard the term *cocooning*, it is what they are calling isolating yourselves in your home. All of our lives have been turned upside down by the Corona Virus, but we can take advantage of it to improve our trout fishing. When the movie "A River Runs Through It" came out several years ago, it brought a surge of new fly fishermen out to the rivers which today have become quite crowded. We need to start a rumor to take care of that. They speculate that the Corona Virus initiated in a fish market in Wuhan, China. We need to let everyone know that they should stay off the trout streams until it can be confirmed that you cannot get the virus from trout. ***I say that in jest, and please take it as humor and ignore the suggestion.*** Certainly, fly fishing on the rivers is a great recreation that provides the social distancing requirement. But if the weather is bad and God forbid you need to quarantine yourself you can find a great deal of fly fishing on the internet.

Fly Fishing Videos

If you are an Amazon Prime customer (and I assume many are today), go to Amazon Prime and search for "fly fishing shows". This link will get you there.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Prime+fly+fishing+shows&ref=nb_sb_noss

There is an almost endless number of shows there including series by several well-known fishermen and even all 13 episodes of the *Orvis Guide To Fly Fishing*.

If you aren't an Amazon Prime member, check out: <https://www.thenewflyfisher.com/where-to-watch/episodes/> *The New Fly Fisher* is a truly great series and includes the current year and five past seasons. That's over 70 hours of fly fishing to occupy several days. They also have links here to the *Orvis Guide To Fly Fishing* that doesn't require the Amazon Prime membership.

Another great TV series is *Seasons on the Fly*. You can see the current season at

www.seasonsonthefly.com/blog/?page_id=97

And of course don't forget YouTube. Just search for fly fishing and you'll have an unlimited list of videos to watch. There is a private channel on YouTube called Fly TV. This individual has a large number of good videos.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnDj4GODT_OpaemQB4395I9wRwCnZvx6x

Websites & Blogs

You can learn a great deal about fly fishing from websites and blogs on the internet. One of the best websites I've seen is <http://flyangersonline.com/>. This website is one of the older and has been around for over ten years. In that time they have amassed a great deal of fly fishing information. That includes things like fly fishing basics, how to build a wooden fishing net, jigsaw puzzles, cartoons, and one of the best fly tying instructions I have seen anywhere. They even have a page just for the ladies.

Blogs also provide some great entertainment and fly fishing lessons. The two I have found the best are Gink & Gasoline at <https://www.ginkandgasoline.com/blog/> and Troutbitten at <https://troutbitten.com/>.

Fly Tying



And of course, tying flies may be the most productive way for a fly fisherman to cocoon. You can never have too many flies, but if you end up with more than you can carry, you can always tie some up and donate them to your local TU chapter for door prizes.

If you want to become a better fly tyer, the website mentioned above has a great section.

The website <http://flyangersonline.com/> has a section devoted to fly tying and is divided into beginner, intermediate, and advanced flies. When I became a serious tyer several years ago, I started at the beginning and tied flies all the way through the advanced section. There are even several articles describing materials, such as the types of hackles, in detail.

So if you must become cocooned by either your own initiative or from becoming quarantined, don't despair. There is a great deal of fly fishing out there on the internet that can not only entertain you, but make you a better fly fisherman. Relax and enjoy the time.

Editor's Note: At a time when we are thanking people for their service, let's remember to thank our health care workers. Our fly tying column writer Dave Everhart is Executive Director of Nursing Operations at the hospital in Morganton. His contact information is at the end of his column.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Catching the first trout on a fly that you tied is a feeling that you have to experience to understand how it steps up your love of the sport and will be something you always remember."

.....Chick Woodward

WHY YOU SHOULD BEGIN TYING FLIES

I started tying flies many years ago in the 1950s. I suspect I bought a kit of some kind, but I truly don't recall what it was.

I do know my supplies all came from Herters in Minnesota back then and if you saw those prices today you wouldn't believe it. I don't believe I ever paid more than 50 cents for anything I bought there. Those tying materials, however, have changed a lot since then. Back then we didn't have any hybrid chickens that were raised for their saddle hackles and there were no synthetic materials. We tied with much less quality back then.

Looking back over those years there are a lot of reasons that it has made me very happy and I'd like to share that with you in hopes you'll consider taking up tying flies as part of your sport of fly fishing.

Create Memories

Catching the first trout on a fly that you have tied is a feeling that you have to experience to understand how it steps up your love of the sport and will be something you always remember.

I still recall from age 14 when I was on the Manistee River in Michigan, staying at Ted's Cabins with the other men of my family when we experienced one of those massive mayfly hatches. That first night we were all using flies that were designed to look like a mayfly. The fish were boiling all over the river and none of us caught one of them. That night I went back to the cabin and got out my fly tying kit and tied



up what looked like a large white moth. It had white tail fibers, a white chenille body, white hackle, and white quill wings. I went out the next evening and slaughtered the fish. The other men in the family had a repeat of the night before and caught very few if any. My theory is that

there were so many mayflies floating on the surface that providing something that stood out rather than matching the hatch got the attention of the fish.

I have no idea what prompted me to tie up that fly, but the fact that I did created a memory that still remains with me after all these years.

Clean Up The Environment

Joel Miller titled the column he used to share in this newsletter "Tight Lines and Road Kill". There is some reasoning behind using the term Road Kill. Many of the materials we use to tie flies come from animals and a lot of them can be found lying dead on the road. Possum fur makes



a great dubbing material, squirrel tail has great fibers, rabbit face mask has great material for tying the hares ear fly, and of course deer hair is a part of many flies. The truly dedicated fly tyer will stop and pick up these animals to stock the fly tying bench, thus leaving a much

cleaner environment.

Inspire Creativity

As you begin tying flies you will start looking at materials around you and begin thinking of them as a resource for your tying bench. That happened to me one day when I was brushing out our cat Buffy.



In Memory of Buffy

A couple years ago we lost Buffy, our pet and friend of just over 19 years. Several years ago as a lark I tied up a fly from Buffy's fur. It has turned out to be one of the top performing flies in my arsenal and I named it the *Buffy Boy*. It is fortunate that I have put aside a bag of his fur from some of the times I had brushed him so he will be with me on the trout stream for years to come. If you have a buffy colored cat or a friend with one, I recommend you tie up a few *Buffy Boys* and give it a try. Just apply the fur as you would dubbing. I have tried different colors from our other cats, but nothing worked as well. Thank you, Buffy. You will be missed.

Improve your catch

Over several years of fishing you will begin to recognize patterns that seem to work better than others. Early on I discovered that the black gnat with a red tail worked better than the ones with a black tail. I found that the prince nymph with a red neck works well and decided that red seems to be a color that gets the attention of the trout. I've seldom seen flies with red in the fly shop bins. I've started adding some red to many of the fly patterns that I tie and found it successful. The other thing I've discovered recently is that flies with rubber legs are great attractors. My next trial is going to be a red girdle bug.

When you begin tying flies you begin to learn the life cycles of the insects you are tying and get a better understanding of what to use and when you should use it. You'll learn month by month the likelihood of what the trout are looking for and be better able to match the hatch and catch more fish.

Save money



This is a subject that creates a lot of debate. While it will cost you \$3-4 dollars for the typical fly shop fly, the materials in that fly are generally less than 50 cents. Unfortunately, in order to tie that fly you may have to purchase a \$50 neck hackle, a \$6 pack of hooks, a \$3 spool of thread, and \$5 of dubbing and not to mention

a tying kit costing anywhere from \$50 to \$150. If you tie only a very few flies, you're better off at the fly shop. On the other hand if you become a tying fanatic you can probably get that cost per fly to under a dollar apiece. I tie up way more flies

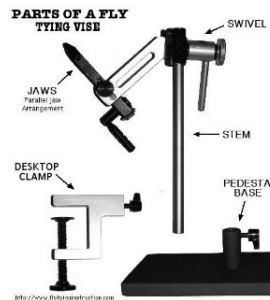
than I need just because I love it. I donate my extra flies to our TU chapter for the monthly raffle.

This is not something you want to get started in to save money, but think of it as a hobby. We generally take up hobbies for the pleasure and entertainment, not to save money. Most of us love fly fishing and fly tying is just an extension of the sport. Sitting at your tying bench on a cold rainy day will start you thinking about that next day on the river and can bring almost as much pleasure as catching that next fish....on a fly that YOU TIED!

FLY TYING FOR BEGINNERS: HOW TO GET STARTED

There are just a few basic tools necessary for fly tying, but as with most tools there are many degrees of quality and options. You can buy the tools individually or buy them as a kit and kits can vary from \$30 to over \$180. My personal recommendation is to start with buying a medium priced kit. This will get you good tools to get started and if you become an avid tyer you will learn what options and quality you would like to advance to.

The Vise



You won't get far in fly tying without a vise. You'll never get those wraps onto a fly by holding the hook between your fingers of one hand while trying to wrap with the other. The most important feature of a vise is to keep a tight grip on the hook while you tie. It must be able to do that with a wide variety of hook sizes and they most likely come with adjustable jaws for that. The next feature to look for is how the vise is supported. The two main ways are a heavy pedestal base or a clamp. Either is acceptable.

Finally, there are three types of vises: stationary, rotary, and turning. The stationary vise holds the hook in a single position. The rotary vise allows you to turn the hook to help get more even wraps. The turning vise allows you to just turn the hook to look at the flies from different angles. I tied for many years with a stationary vise and was perfectly happy. I eventually bought a rotary vise and attempted to try rotating the hook to do the wrapping, but I found the thread wraps as well and found it a nuisance. I did find it handy for applying head cement and since it rotates, looking at the fly from different angles to trim the hackle was a great feature. Certainly starting with a stationary vise is fine, but if you can afford it, the rotary vise is best.

Just one last thing you need to know. There is nothing evil about fly tying. This is a VISE not a VICE.

Scissors



There are two features of scissors that are extremely important: they need to be pointed and they must be sharp. The point is needed to get close to the fly to clip the material. They must be sharp to make a clean cut at the fly. There is a third feature that can make them a lot better. When tying you are frequently picking them up and setting them down and if the finger holes are too small they get stuck. Look for a pair with large finger holes.

I find it's also important to have a second pair of scissors. The first pair is used for cutting the soft materials like thread, hackle, etc. The second pair use used for cutting harder items like wire and lead that will dull you scissors.



Something you may want to consider is a pair of "squeeze-scissors". I discovered these a few years ago and fell in love with the simplicity of being able to pick them up, make a snip, and set them back down without having to deal with the finger holes. I use these for the soft materials and my conventional scissors for hard materials to keep them separated.

Bobbin



The bobbin makes it easier to hold the spool of thread and keep even pressure on the wrap. Most bobbins are basically the same except some have a stainless steel tube and some have a ceramic tube. In the literature there seems to be a preference for the ceramic over the stainless. However, I have been tying for over 20 years with the same stainless steel bobbin and have never had any issues. Most moderately priced kits I've seen come with stainless and I'd say for getting started it is just fine.

Hackle Pliers



I actually wrap many of my hackles by hand and it works just fine. In fact often I find the hackle pliers either don't grab well or break the stem. There are times, however that the hackle is a bit short and my fingers are too big to wrap right to the end. When wrapping wire the pliers work well. The ones pictured here come with most kits.



A while ago, however I did discover the pliers shown here that swivel as you wrap and they really do work much better. They wrap the hackle without twisting and are much less likely to break the feather. It's fine to start tying with the pliers that come in the kit, but if you continue, I suggest you look into the swivel style.

Bodkin Needle



The needle shown is typical of what comes in the kits and works perfectly fine. It is used primarily to pull threads from the body of a fly after wrapping on the dubbing and give it a more furry look. I've actually found I use it the most to open up the hook eyes that I constantly seem to tie into. Just poke the bodkin through the eye and use a razor blade against it to cut off the excess material.

Whip Finisher



Not all starter kits come with a whip finisher and you can certainly learn to tie off the head of the fly without it, but in my opinion the whip finisher tool is a must have item. It takes a little practice to learn how to use it, but once you have mastered it, you will wonder how you ever managed without it.

Which Kit To Buy

As I stated at the beginning of this article, I recommend a mid-priced to just get started. The tools will work fine for the beginner and over time you'll be able to learn what you would like to move up to. I am still tying with most of the tools that came with my kit over 20 years ago.

One thing I do recommend, however, is you purchase a kit that includes the materials you need to begin tying. These kits generally come with a DVD that shows you how to get started with a few simple flies and the basic techniques of fly tying. Over time the material stockpile will continue to grow, but this will give you a base to work with.

Where Do I Go From Here

The best way I have found to become an advanced fly tyer is to go to www.flyangleronline.com. There is a tremendous amount of information on the website, but for me the most important are the pages for beginner, intermediate, and advanced tying. When I got serious about fly tying about 20 years ago, I went to the beginner page at <http://flyangleronline.com/flytying/beginners/>, started with the EZ Nymph and continued with every fly on the page. From there I went to the intermediate page and even continued with some of the flies on the advanced page.

What is so great about this website is the detailed step by step instructions and the illustrations. The article starts with the materials you will need to get for the fly and then shows you in detail the procedures and methods used to tie the fly. Once you have completed the beginning and intermediate fly tying pages, you will have a good stock of materials and will be well on your way to becoming a master fly tyer and if you get through the advanced page, you will have arrived. That is you think you will have. Just to bring that ego back down to reality you then need to go to Graham Owens website at <https://www.grahamowengallery.com/index.html> and see how much farther you still have to go.

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

As I mentioned earlier in the newsletter, Dave Everhart works at the Hospital in Morganton and has become totally absorbed by his work lately and was unable to finish his column this month. Since this issue is dedicated to becoming a fly tyer, I have included the recipe for the very first fly listed under beginning fly tying from www.flyangleronline.com. This fly is a simple version of the pheasant tail and has worked quite well for me over the years.



The EZ-Nymph

By Al Campbell

As I promised last week, it's time to tie our first fly. First we need to look at the traditional way you will see flies listed in fly tying books. If you know how they are usually presented, it will be easier to pick out the key things you need to know.

First, there is usually a narrative that describes something about the fly and how or when to use it. Next, there is a list of components used in the fly. Then you'll probably see a short list of tying steps, sometimes assuming you know a lot about fly tying. Finally, there is often more narrative about the fly and how it is useful.

Since I tend to be a little less conventional, you might not see this series of events listed this way in my fly tying series. Don't worry, it isn't written in blood anywhere that you must do things the conventional way. Just kick back and enjoy, it's about to get fun.

List of materials:

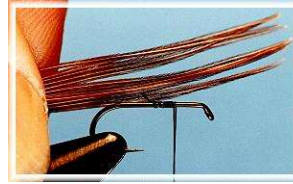
Mustad 3399A or 3906B hook or equivalent Size 10 to 16.

Pheasant tail feather - A long one from the center of the tail, can be dyed.

Black 3/0 or 6/0 thread.

Tying steps:

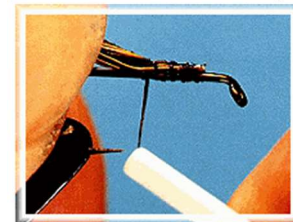
- 1. Start the thread on the hook. You did this last time, so I won't go into detail again.
- 2. Pull about 12 strands of feather fiber from a large pheasant tail feather. Since length is important, be sure to get these fibers from the upper 2/3 of the feather. Trim the base of feather stem material.



- 3. Position the butt ends of the feather fibers about 1/5 of a hook shank back from the hook eye. This leaves room for the head of the fly later. Using two loose wraps, start tying the fibers down to the top of the hook. If you don't start with loose wraps, the fibers will twist around the hook. Once you have the loose wraps in place, you can snug them with downward pressure of the bobbin. This is a rule any time you start tying any material to the hook.



- 4. Use a slight upward lift on the fibers as you wrap them down to the hook. This will prevent twisting of the fibers and keep them on top of the hook. This is also a rule any time you tie in a tail or any other material that will extend over the bend of the hook. Tie the fibers down to the hook bend adding a couple of extra snug wraps of thread at the hook bend end of the fibers to keep them securely in place and prevent twisting. Wrap the thread back to just behind the hook eye.



- 5. Start wrapping the fibers forward toward the hook eye. As you get closer to the hook eye, you'll probably need to use your index finger to hold the fibers in place so you can grab them and continue wrapping. Try to adjust your wraps to cover the hook shank yet leave enough fibers to extend to the hook bend or just beyond it.



- 6. When you reach the place where you started tying the fibers down, tie the fibers off behind the

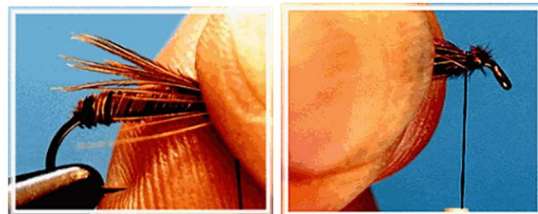
hook eye. Be sure not to crowd the head area just behind the hook eye. This is one problem beginner tyers seem to always have, they crowd the hook eye and don't leave enough room for a proper head on the fly.



□ 7. Tie the fibers down to the hook eye. There should not be any fiber wraps in the head area of the fly, just tied down fibers.



□ 8. Using your thumb and index finger, fold the fibers back toward the hook bend. Grab the fibers with the thumb and index finger of the other hand and pin them to the hook. The fibers should be evenly distributed around the hook, not just on top. Tie the fibers down in the head area of the fly, forming a smooth head. You don't need to make too many thread wraps here, just enough to form a smooth head.



□ 9. Whip finish the head with six to ten wraps of a whip finisher. Since you are tying in the head area of the hook, any whip finisher will do.



□ 10. Cut the thread and cement your wraps with a thin head cement. I've found Griffin Thin head cement to be a good type of cement for this task, but Flexament or any other thin cement will work.



You can add a bead head to this pattern very easily. I often use gold or black beads with this fly to get it down deep.

Hopefully things will settle down and Dave will be back next month. In the meantime you can thank him for his service at jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com

FLY TYING MATERIALS

a short review on what to buy at the beginning...

At the very beginning we're always facing a dilemma of buying proper fly tying materials. One can be easily discouraged and lost among the vast range of different products; especially when lacking experience. I often get messages from people who simply don't know which materials should they choose.

Probably most fly-anglers agree that [fly tying materials](#) are something one collects, buys and gathers for many years. What is more, if one likes to experiment he or she will have plenty of room to display one's talents; not mentioning loads of joy, since there is nothing more satisfying than catching a fish with his or her home-made pattern :)

Fly hooks

We should start from choosing appropriate hooks. As most of you already know, there are divided into two types: barbed and barbless.

If we are going to fish on fisheries, fishing districts or take part in competitions where barbless hooks are required then I suggest to buy them. When you get familiar with towing fish not too loosely there is almost no difference in the number of losing fish off the hook. Such hooks have one very important virtue – both for me and the fish – namely, getting the fish off the hook is quick and it doesn't damage the fish as in the case of the barbed hooks. When we have a small fish hooked, we simply loose the fishing set and this is often enough for the fish to get off the hook by itself. This way is even more pleasant for the fish, since we don't have to take it from water; it's as simple as grabbing the hook and turning it without even touching the fish.

At the beginning I recommend buying:

- streamer type: if just one, size no. 6; if two no. 4 and 8 (The streamer hook may also be used for tying bigger nymphs, i.e. imitations of stoneflies or caddisflies)

- dry type: with a straight shank no. 12 and 14 – these sizes are perfect for imitating spring mayflies and caddisflies (when you get familiar with tying them, smaller hook sizes will be better)
- nymph type: oval-shaped size no. 8 and no. 12.
- wet type: between 8 and 12 are most often used. If you are going to buy only one hook no. 10 is enough.

Considering barbless hooks I recommend [FMFly models](#) (very good quality-value relation); especially streamer type but also more expensive types, competition hooks Hanak and Dohiku.

Threads



Many fly-tiers underestimate this element – what is a huge mistake. It is significant while tying tiny flies. Many people use dark threads (black or brown), which tend to darken the fly when it gets wet, therefore the intended effect is simply spoilt. That's why I recommend having about a dozen different colours to faithfully achieve the desired effect. In the beginning I recommend buying the following threads:

- black 6/0 is a basic thread for streamers (if we need something even stronger for tying really big flies for pike, trout or sea flies I recommend buying 3/0 thread or UNI BigFly).
- brown 8/0 for nymphs, wet and dry flies will be just fine.
- if you have a bigger budget, it is good to buy 8/0 olive, grey and white (or at least equally bright colour) for dry flies and extremely small flies (not only dry) UNI Trico 17/0 and the **Veevus 16/0** which is – in my opinion – the best thread on the market.

In terms of choosing different brands, for me the best tying threads are made by UNI and UTC – these are very strong threads and I have never had any problems with them.

Feathers



There is a huge variety of different feathers, which can be used to tie practically everything you want. We won't need too many materials in the beginning. As classic basics I'm going to mention:

- [Mallard wings](#) (for dry and wet flies' wings)
- CdC feathers for dry-fly wings and bodies (natural colours: grey, brown, yellow, white)
- Pheasant Center Tail for tails and bodies, the popular Pheasant Tail Nymph is tied from this fly tying material (natural colour, to begin with it so we need to have it)
- Marabou feathers for simple but efficient streamers, imitations of leaches, dragonfly larvas, etc. (it's good to have black and white; later on I recommend buying red, olive, brown and fluorescent colours)
- Peacock feathers (the eye and it's barbs), can be used for many efficient dry and wet flies and nymphs.

When it comes to feathers' quality, there's no rule. The best I encountered and at the same time fairly expensive are products made by English company Veniard. All the rest are repackaged fly tying materials bought “by weight” and of poor quality.

Hackle materials

Definitely most of the fly-tiers use two types of feathers to tie hackles; these are: for dry flies – cock capes and for wet flies, nymphs and streamers – hen capes. However there are also many feathers from different bird parts that many people omit.

• Dry flies

The differences are significant. Cock/rooster feathers are stiffer and not lined with down what makes them resistant to soaking and allows them to stay on surface for longer. Of course they also imitate legs of the fly.

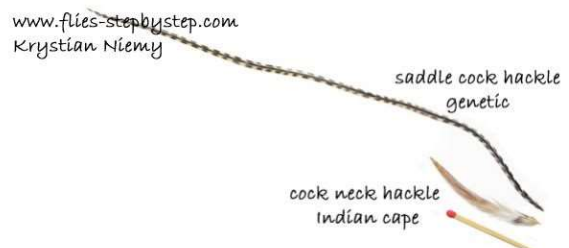
Here I recommend using neck capes (wider variety of feather sizes – including even the smallest ones used for tying midge dry flies) and **saddle capes** (lesser variety of sizes but very efficient). Such feathers are much longer and consist of more regular barbs than their cheap Indian equivalents.



A grizzly color cock from Howard Hackle genetic bird farm – the photo provided by John Howard

As a comparison; we can tie only one hackle from one Indian cape (to make the hackle along the whole body – a so-called palmer – we often have to use more than one feather), however using a feather from genetic cock's saddle we can make even ten hackles/palmers (the length of such a feather is at least 20 cm or even more).

Obviously the caps' and feathers' quality depends on the price.



Comparison of feathers for dry fly hackle

There's an exception to the rule, namely dry fly hackles such as March Brown, but not only. Such a hackle is tied using one feather from cock's cap and one partridge feather (first the partridge then the cock)

Except the cap feathers for tying dry fly hackles we can also use CdC feathers and here's fur, which is stiffer. Such hackles are tied by twisting the material in split thread or by dubbing method in a loop.

- **Wet flies, nymphs and streamers**

Feathers from hen's neck caps are basic material in this case. Such feathers are soft, they easily soak and work well in water.

For bigger wet flies and streamers we can successfully use hens' saddle caps (additionally these feathers are used for classic, Matuka type streamers, where the wing and the tail are made from one or two pairs of these feathers).

It's good to have some partridge feathers in our collection. Mostly we'll be using grey and brown-spotted feathers from neck to tie hackles and tails of many classic patterns. In my opinion it's the second best material (just after hen's neck cap) and you just need to have it.

In many situations we will also use covert feathers of such birds as partridge, woodcock, grouse and beautifully coloured feathers of jay. All of these have interesting patterns and colours therefore I simply advise to make use of them.

Furs



In this case, the basic list isn't that long:

- hare and muskrat fur for tying zonker streamers' wings; it's good to choose the muskrat in it's natural colour – these **furs** are sold as ready-to-use thin stripes (zonkers) or as whole pieces of fur, which need to be cut down with scissors, razor or scalpel to appropriate size.
- Deer fur for tying streamer heads and dry caddisfly imitations of wings

Besides these three fly tying materials listed above, next I suggest to buy hare's mask, which is invaluable material for tying bodies of dry and wet flies and nymphs. From longer hair you may also make imitations of legs and heckles using the "dubbing in a loop" method.

And now it's the time for a fox tail, from which you can tie tails and wings of many streamer patterns. The fox tail is one of the most popular fur for salmon flies. The fluffy lining, which is located just above the skin level can be used to tie bodies of bigger flies.

Dubbing



We simply buy dubbing – when needed – and in time it may change into a collection. Each time I'm buying dubbing I choose something new, since there are differences between particular kinds of dubbing. As the variety of products is huge I suggest buying:

* rabbit, hare dubbing (it's good to buy hare in it's natural colours: grey, olive, brown, etc.) and [squirrel](#)

* several colours of some glossy synthetic, for example Hareline Ice Dub or other synthetic to tie colourful accents near the head of a nymph (thorax).

* It's also good to have a few dubbing colours for tying scuds. Obviously you can tie these imitations using most kinds of dubbings, however from my own experience I can recommend the dubbings, which are specially mixed since they guarantee the best results.

There are also different mixes of natural and synthetic dubbings available, which give quite an interesting effect of slightly glossy body after they get soaked.

Beads/heads



[Beads](#) are used for various fly patterns, in particular for nymphs. In principle, they are divided into three types: made of brass filled with lead, made of [tungsten](#) (almost twice heavier and more expensive – often, however, indispensable) and light, made of plastic used for under surface imitations.

Taking a look at fly collections of many fly-anglers I saw only flies with heads coloured in gold and only. I think it's a mistake. The bead's colour does matter, therefore, using silver, copper or fluo-orange head in many cases settles the effectiveness of the lure. Obviously, there are many colours of beads, however gold, silver, copper, orange and black are worth-having!

There are also heads designed for streamers. Cone Heads – I'm talking about them – are used for imitations, which have to sink fast. Their advantage is that they don't cause the fly to rotate.

Eyes



Eyes can be divided into two types: the ones which can be tied and the ones which can be stuck.

The first type is used mainly for tying small sized streamers or for larger nymphs larvae, for example stoneflies. Here, we can distinguish these which are moulded, for example Twin Eyes (heavy) and eyes in the form of an empty, metal chain – Bead Chain Eyes (light), which need to be cut down in pairs using clippers/pliers and then tied. Personally, since many years, I have preferred the light ones and I've used them for most of the streamer patterns. It doesn't mean however that I don't use the heavy ones at all. They cause the fly to sink faster while fishing on the vast waters in spring.

The second type of eyes look very realistic and may be used for tying all types of streamers – for fresh and salt waters. These eyes are sold in small sheets and even though they have glue attached to their inner side, it is very weak and they need to be stuck with additional amount of quick-drying glue, epoxy or transparent varnish in order to strengthen them up.

Chenille



Brilliant fabric for beginners but not only. In just a few seconds we can tie a neat body of a fly. Available in many kinds and thicknesses.

It's perfect for tying bodies of streamers, wet flies, lake blobs and extended bodies.

Synthetics



new.

In the last few years this has been the most dynamically developing fly material assortment. Many interesting synthetics fly tying materials were introduced and each year producers surprise us with something

Materials for nymph backs

A few years ago these were mainly [Body Stretches](#) and different home-made materials. Recently we may choose various shiny foils (including pearl foils) – which I advice not to omit – braided materials of shining properties and many more. Every nymph-tier should have them in his or her arsenal, since nymphs tied from these materials are very efficient.

In the beginning, I recommend buying the traditional Body Stretch in a few basic colours and the pearl foil, which can be cut down to any size; next, I encourage to try with some other materials since these are also effective.

Flashes



We can use these materials to tie whole wings, tails and also their additives. It mainly applies to tying streamers, however flashes are also used to tie ribs in smaller flies: dry, wet and nymphs.

In the beginning I recommend buying Krystal Flash and Flashabou, pearl colour for first.

Artificial tails for dry flies –



in my opinion these are excellent materials in comparison to traditionally tied tails consisting of feather barbs.

Their biggest advantages are far better fly buoyancy and lesser amount of barbs (3 are enough) needed to tie it – the imitations look more natural in comparison to those, which consist of

natural barbs.

Foams



Flies tied with floating foams are very popular in America, however if you'd like to have a few imitations of beetles, grasshoppers, ants and other similar bugs (excellent lures for chubs, ideo, trouts). I recommend buying several sheets in a few basic colours, beginning with black, green, yellow.

Certainly, the application is much wider than lures

mentioned above, for example caddisflies bodies, which float even in very rapid waters.

Additional information: for foam flies I am using UTC thread, 140 or heavier.

Tinsels and wires



Tinsels are another basic and interesting fly tying material, which in many patterns can make the difference. Components or even whole elements – such as bodies – significantly increase effectiveness of the tied flies.

Particularly in the last several years, many interesting tinsels has appeared varying in colours (pearl and mylar are especially worth-checking – UNI Mylar is also available in two-colour version so when buying one we actually have two) and sizes so that they can be used for bigger streamers and small wet flies or nymphs.

Of course, gold and silver are the standard tinsel colours and I recommend buying them in the first place. Wires belong to the next group of materials, which – in my opinion – is even more important than tinsels. If we're going to tie nymphs, we should use a lead wire as the base for most of the patterns – we begin by winding it around the hook. The lead wire makes our fly heavier and in order to achieve the proper weight we need to have several types of wires in our inventory – each of different thickness. From 0,4mm to 0,8mm; of course there are also thicker types, however this range should be enough to deal with most of the cases.

Except of lead wires we also have traditional wires in different colours and diameters. They are used to strengthen and segment the bodies of different kinds of flies, attaching fur stripes to zonkers' back or even whole bodies of nymphs and wet flies. The three basic colours are: gold, silver and copper – it's good to have them in the beginning. In time there will be infinite room to manoeuvre with additional colours.

Krystian Niemy

APRIL STOCKING

The Wilson Creek stocking will take place on Thursday, April 2nd.

VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO HELP

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Fishing/documents/Delayed-Harvest-Trout-Waters-Stocking-Dates-Map.pdf>



Hatchery Supported Trout Waters Closed to Fishing Feb. 29 - April 4

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will close approximately 1,000 miles of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters to fishing one-half hour after sunset on Feb. 29 and reopen them at 7 a.m. on April 4. While fishing is closed, Commission personnel will stock all Hatchery Supported Trout Waters in preparation for opening day.

CASTING CAROLINAS 2020 EVENTS

April 3-5 Alumni Staff Retreat, Wildacres Retreat Center **CANCELLED**

(for women who've already attended a regular retreat-contact Starr@castingcarolinas.com)

May 22-24 NC Spring Retreat, Lake Logan Center
PENDING

October 9-11 NC Fall Retreat, Lake Logan Center
October 24 Tie One On Tournament in Cherokee

Casting Carolinas is a free program for women cancer survivors. To apply for a future retreat or to volunteer to help out, sign up at www.castingcarolinas.com.

EAGLE ROCK CAMP RETREAT

CANCELLED

RIVERCOURSE YOUTH CAMP 2020

Rivercourse is a high quality experience for boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 15. While fly fishing is the camp's unique, often once-in-a-lifetime experience, like releasing a raptor (like a hawk) and catching it when it returns, a campfire, outside games, visits with conservation officials, fish sampling and many others. During the week, sessions on a variety of topics are mixed into the day. Geology, fish and insect sampling, scientific and natural encounters; all things related to the things in the natural world around us and cultivating a better understanding of them and how precious they are. Camp this year will be June 21-26. For more information and to sign up, visit <https://www.rivercourse.org/>.

2020 SOUTHEAST REGIONAL RENDEZVOUS

Event Cancelled

HALL OF FAME WEEKEND

Event Delayed

All purchased tickets will be honored when the event takes place.

HIGH COUNTRY FLY FISHING JAMBOREE April 3-5

Event Cancelled

COME VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

Please visit our page at: <https://www.facebook.com/nwctu/> and be sure to like and follow the page so you will be kept up to date on the latest posts.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

Is it getting a little crowded for you at Wilson Creek? There are ten Delayed Harvest rivers within an hour and a half drive of Hickory. There are articles in past newsletters describing these rivers along with maps to help find them. The articles start in April 2017 and run through April 2018. You can find them at <http://www.hkynctu.org/past-newsletters/>.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

If you have a great day on the river, please send us a photo to share at HkyNCTU@gmail.com

If you have success on your trip, please share it with us.

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The Joys of Fly Tying

I can remember back to the day that I began to fly fish. Though I had been fishing my whole life, I had never had an opportunity to do it. I had seen pictures of people doing and had read a few books about it, but had not ventured into the world of fly fishing. I always consider it a "Rich Persons" sport and figured I could never afford the equipment. But one day I was in a big sporting goods store in California and ran across an inexpensive set up and some flies that were packaged together in a little container that you could move the top on, much like that of a split shot container. The store clerk was of no help as he knew less about fly fishing than I did. I bought what I thought I needed (most of it came in the pack), a few containers of flies and out the door I went with a smile on my face. I headed home to put it all together, looked up streams in the area that my boss had told me about so that I could head out to fish the next morning. I had not even cast the setup but I had read books, "how hard can it be?"



The next morning, I was up at the crack of stupid and was headed up the mountains to Deep Creek. Nothing like the creeks back home in Texas. Big boulders lined the creek, making things even harder. I tied on a fly that was quite colorful and started trying to cast as I had read in the books. What a mess I had, in a tangled line right off the bat. I got it straight and cast again only to find the twig growing out of a boulder in the area I was in. Finally, I got my fly into the water with no results. I tried a few more casts and tied on another fly, and then another and another. The last being very similar to an Adams and a little smaller than the last flies that were colorful and big. The fly hit the water and a trout rose and took it. I had finally caught my first fish and after a few more through the day, I lost that one fly that was producing.

I got back home and to work the next week and began to talk to a friend named Lee that I worked with. He was from Montana and had been fly fishing his whole life. He looked over my setup and said let me help you with a few things. The next day he brought me in an older rod but it was much better than the one I had, some tippet and some flies. Nothing like what I was using, these were nice and nothing like what I had seen in the stores. I asked him where he got those and he told me that he tied his own. My eyes lit up and like Christmas when he told me that he would show me how to tie. The next day, I met him for lunch, he brought me in an old inexpensive vise that he had, an old beginning set of fly tying tools, some materials to get me started.

He started showing me how to tie and explained a few things to me. After an extended lunch hour, I finally had tied my first fly. It was ugly and a little lopsided on the wings but he was kind and told me that I would get better over time and that it would catch fish. The next day we tied a few more and we worked on my casting some in an area on the campus where we worked. He gave me some tips and said he would go with me the next coming Saturday and would help me creek side and show me a few more things.



Saturday finally came (although it seemed like forever) as I was excited to try all I had learned. I climbed out onto the boulder and began casting, watching my fly drift along with no takers. I turned to see Lee needled down behind a boulder and making a cast. Before I could ask why he was doing that, I heard a splash and saw a nice trout on the end of his line. He smiled, said "this is what it is all about", he released the fish and made another cast crouched down again. The fly barely hit the water and he had another fish on. I on the other hand looked like I was swatting mosquitoes or something while standing on top of the big boulder. At deep creek, there are a lot of boulders to fish off of with not many places to wade into the water in. The whole creek is not like this but most of the areas I fished that held nice fish in pools and such were like this.



Lee called me over and explained about the vision that fish had and how well they could see us. He showed me how to be stealthy and how to cast even laying down on top of the boulder. We talked about the flies and presentation and how each differed. So I went back over to the area I fished, I tied on the first fly that I ever tied and that looked like it had already been hit by several fish. I put some dry fly dressing that Lee had given me, crouched down behind the boulder peering over at where the fish were. I stripped out some line and made a cast that was not too shabby. The fly floated for a moment and a saw the fish rise, inhale it and the fight was on. I brought it in as if it were 10lbs, but realistically it was more like 10 inches. None the less, it was

my first fish on my first home made fly. I was hooked from then on.

Through time, my tying got better and my flies began to look like something they were supposed to look like. The excitement of catching fish on something I tied lasted forever. I still enjoy tying flies to this day, despite the fact that my eyesight is not what it was once and my old fingers do not want to work like they did when I was young. I learned a lot through the years, not only fishing but tying and have never been more thankful that I got into something, besides fishing with spinning reels and bait casters, that would last a lifetime. I am thankful for Lee who took his time to work with me and the people along the way that have helped as well. It is something that I have never forgotten and will always do the same thing for as many people as I can during my lifetime.

Fly tying and fly fishing is an art and a bit of poetry mixed in together. It is something that will give you satisfaction your whole life and will change how you think about fishing always.

"On The Line with Charlie Walker"

A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Up On the Creek

If I were of a negative nature, I would say something like " this world has gone to Hell in a handbasket". But I know that's not true. This world is struggling and our country struggling more than most. It seems apparent that there are citizens of the good old USA that feel rules or regulations are imposing on their freedoms. It is sad to say in the least.

I for one have been social distancing from my camper on the creek for the last couple of weeks. Being there through the week while things are quiet and as close to Heaven on earth, I watch the majestic river that runs through the gorge in awe. The river itself is faring well even though we worried about it after the floods of last Fall.

The trout that live there.... not so much.

We started off our season with an unusual heat with water temperatures that killed the fish so we have fewer fish this year. The last stocking was early March so I was excited to get here to have a more abundance of fish. Although there are fish in the creek numbers have already seriously declined.

And here is another testimony to why.

This week I have watched several people who live with those same principles as it may apply to you but it doesn't apply to me. I watch people fishing a hole that I had previously seen quite a few fish and wanted to fish myself. As I watched from the bridge I noticed what I thought was a struggling dying fish only to realize it was a stringer of struggling dying fish. Again it's sad. Then I'm fishing downstream from Betsy's and around the corner. I've had to walk a long way down to an area that's shallow enough for me to cross the river. I finally get there and start to fish when a Dad with three teenage kids blatantly ignore the no trespassing sign and begin throwing spinners with power bait. So I point at the sign directly above his head and say. Do you realize that sign above your head says posted? " I know it," he says while obviously teaching his children a life lesson here.

Again it's sad.

This beautiful Saturday morning I am having coffee on my deck when a downstream neighbor pulls up in a golf cart totally upset. After all, he's driven a long way to share the news. He lives down by the welcome center and has witnessed eleven people fishing illegally in front of the Welcome Center. He tells them the season is closed but they answer they don't care.

Again it's sad.

These are just a few examples. The witness of similar experiences is daily. Being up here these last couple of weeks have opened my eyes to just how much people don't care. Have we raised an entitled generation?

Yes, it's sad.

These are just a few of the stories I could tell you in such a short amount of time. It seems every day I am watching what is definitely blatant disregard for the law.

We have on many occasions cried out to Wildlife to try to correct the situation, but they are seriously spread too thin. So that doesn't work. My only suggestion at this time is to lobby to get fines raised to an amount that might make people who don't care....care a little more. Maybe that should be our goal it seems we have tried everything else.

It is again sad.



On the bright side amidst all of everything that goes on that is just wrong there are those things that make us believe in mankind again. These moments are few and far between. So to help you believe in tomorrow.....to help you believe in what we do, to give you hope.....this father is teaching his young son right.

From up on the creek,
Jackie Greene