

Occasionally, but not often, I come up with an idea that's entirely mine. Although I've been tying flies for a long time, my original patterns seldom make any impact in the tying community but this month's pattern is different and the tying style is one that I have not before seen used.

The R.H. Caddis came to be as a result of two separate events; the first was my need to learn more about caddis flies as it was an area that I struggled with. I spent a lot of time observing and collecting samples at different times of the year and it didn't take long for me to get a real feel for these bugs. From a tying perspective, what I learned was, at all stages of this insect's life, he is gangly, noisy and not very graceful.

The second was just plain old luck. One evening, while tying some steelhead flies with marabou, I had a bunch of loose barbs scattered across my desk. The barbs of a marabou feather have a perfectly progressive taper and the heavy strands near the base become very wispy and hairy with the long barbules. Just for kicks, I dubbed four or five strands onto the thread with the tips up and the results were better than I expected. With a small amount of wax on the thread and a bit on my thumb and forefinger, the material dubbed the thread perfectly. The next fly that I tied was a simple larva, using olive marabou for the body and ostrich herl for the head, and the result was just what I wanted. It was life like and simple with the marabou giving me a near perfect taper with one pass of the material. The whole fly took about two minutes less than my old style but more importantly, it looked far nicer when completed.



It wasn't until I fished it a few days later that I discovered another interesting and very important characteristic of the fly. After being used, the barbules freed themselves from the twists during the dubbing process and the ribbing and now moved about freely around the abdomen making it very buggy and life like. (A process accelerated with a soft bristled dubbing brush after the ribbing process.)



So my new caddis larva became the R.H. Caddis and soon after, it developed into a series of patterns from larva to adult with a pretty little soft hackle to round out the lineup. That soft hackle took about 30 trout on the Bow River on my last visit there which accounted for about 75% of my total. The series has worked everywhere that I fish and meets all of my criteria for the perfect trout fly, that being; simple to tie and adaptable to species and stages of the insect.

For the tying steps, I am showing the Pupae as the photos should suffice for the other patterns.

R.H. Pupae

Hook: 18 to 12 Edward Oliver emerger or equivalent
Thread: Dubbed marabou (color to match species)
Body: Peacock herl
Rib: Fine uni-french steel wire
Wing: Hungarian partridge
Collar: Hungarian partridge

Step 1.

Begin by starting your thread $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch behind the eye. (Depending on the hook size.) Secure a length of wire and wrap the wire under the thread to about the hook point.

Step 2.

Depending on how big you want the body determines the number of marabou barbs you use. Typically, 3 to 6 will suffice for hooks from 18 to 12. Cut off the number required and with the tips pointing up; dub the marabou around the thread. Then wrap the dubbed thread forward to about $\frac{4}{5}$ of the total hook length. Finish the body with your wire and secure it.



Step 3.

Prepare your wing by taking an appropriate size partridge tip and strip off the lower barbs, leaving a good portion of the quill exposed. (Figure 2) Secure the wing with the quill towards the eye with two wraps of your thread, leaving the quill extended out, over the eye. With a pair of tweezers, pull the wing by the quill until it is about half the length of the hook.



Step 4.

For the legs, use a wispy feather of the same partridge and prepare it as shown in figure 3. For nice even legs, insert the quill through the eye and secure the feather to the bottom of the hook with two wraps of your thread then pull the feather by the quill until the tips extend just beyond the body. This ensures that the legs extend from each side without having to secure two separate clumps. Cut off the excess.



Step 5.

Finally, secure a piece of peacock herl at the point that the body ends and wrap it forward to complete the head. Form the head, finish and cement.



The differences are fairly obvious, but the emerger uses two materials not found in the others. CDC plumes make the pupae case and the trailing shuck is antron. I typically tie two versions of the emerger; with and without the trailing shuck. With the shuck, I fish it in the film when the fish start to target the surface and without, I'll fish it deep.

Rob's tip of the month:

One of the most common mistakes when dubbing, no matter the material, is *over* dubbing. For most applications, simply *color* the thread with the material and if you have to, make more than one pass along the hook shank. If the dubbing is sparse on the thread, it makes it much easier to make a clean, symmetrical taper to the body as most flies require.

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