



Newsletter

Stonefly Maidens Women's Fly Fishing Club

Pheasant Tail Nymph

Comments by Jim Abbs, in FFF Fly of the Month

Early fly fishing in America was influenced very significantly by English traditions, particularly before 1920. Today, America has its own flies, techniques and equipment, much of it developed on this side of the big pond. However, some English traditions still have a tremendous influence. One of these is the work of George Edward MacKenzie Skues, a solitary bachelor lawyer and master of the famous River Itchen, in the Hampshire of Southern England. Between 1900 and 1939, Skues wrote dozens of articles for British fishing magazines as well as several influential books, almost exclusively on fishing for trout with nymphs. American fly anglers still read Skues for insights and inspiration.

Skues successor as a leader in nymph fishing also was an Englishman, Avon River Keeper Frank Sawyer, who himself wrote widely and developed several very effective nymph patterns. If Skues is the grandfather of modern nymph fishing, Frank Sawyer is the father. Sawyer's most famous and widely heralded fly is the Pheasant Tail (P.T.) nymph.

Today the simple, yet elegant P.T. nymph is a must for any angler wishing to imitate mayfly nymphs and it works from the chalkstreams of Pennsylvania to the freestone rivers and tailwaters of the American west. One of the most striking aspects of this fly is that it is tied exclusively of ring-neck pheasant tail and copper wire. If it is tied correctly, and with smaller hook sizes, only one bunch of pheasant tail fibers is used in the whole fly! Importantly, the Pheasant Tail Nymph is easy to tie in a wide range of sizes, from 10-18, illustrating the range of mayflies it imitates.

(Continued on page 3)

Meeting Information

- November 10, 2004,
6:00 pm Social Hour
7:00 pm Business Meeting and
Speaker
- Iron Horse Restaurant
6034 SE Milwaukie Ave
Portland, Oregon
(503) 232-1826
- Leader: Tilda Runner
Basic Skills: Knot Tying, Wading,
and Fly Identification

This Month with the Stonefly Maidens

This month we are going to focus on some very basic fly-fishing skills. Tilda Runner will be leading the group in learning to tie some knots, talk about wading safety and identify some common flies. We will have materials for tying basic knots like the improved clinch knot, the double surgeons knot and maybe a loop knot.

There will be some flies to identify. The member that identifies the most flies will receive the flies as a prize. Come see how many you can identify.

There is no official fish-a-long this month, but unofficially there may be an opportunity to fish for chum salmon on the Chilchis River. Check out www.bigfishtackle.com/articles/fishing/freshwater/oregon3.html for more specific info on where to go & what equipment and flies to use. This is a fishing trip where sharing equipment is good since it takes two people to land the fish. Get more details at the meeting.

Fly Lines

The year is fast coming to an end. I think that this year has been a good year for the club. It started out with the Oregon Council of the FFF naming the Stonefly Maidens 2004 Club of the Year. What a great honor. Our mission to create opportunities, encourage, educate, and mentor women's participation in the sport of fly fishing was reflected in why we won the award.

This year we created opportunities and encouraged women through our fish-a-longs. We went to some great places like the Crooked River, the Umpqua River, Lost Lake and southeast Oregon. We strengthened our friendships and made new friends.

We encouraged, educated and mentored women's participation in fly fishing through our casting clinic in June when approximately 20 women improved their casting skills with the help of Kathryn Hart. Some of our members were instructors for the Oregon Council's women's fly fishing seminars. Others of us showed Sportsmen Show attendees that women do fly fish.

We also helped to encourage and mentor women who are breast cancer

survivors by donating time and money to Casting for Recovery.

Next year is shaping up to be just as good a year. Take a look at the tentative schedule of speakers and fish-a-longs. Maybe your favorite place is included on the list. If you have a place you want to fish or a speaker you would like to hear or a topic you would like covered, let us know. This is your club; we should do what you want.

We have tried to offer programs that members have asked for such as basic skills programs. This is also going to be over to the newsletter with a special "Name The Fly" contest. Each month there will be a picture of a fly in the newsletter. At the meeting, the members will put their guess of what the fly is in a drawing half a dozen of the fly. We will even discuss what the fly is and how to fish it.

Enough tooting our horn. Let's get together for some good food, some good friends and a little fly fishing education. Tell all your friends.

Tilda Runner



Goings On

Oregon FFF Events

November 6, 2004 Northwest Flyfishers Tyer's Expo Glenn Otto Park - Troutdale

BOW



December 4, 2004 Rod building workshop - Sisters

December 4, 2004 Native American Basket Weaving - Sisters **FULL**

Information on 2004 workshops is available at www.dfw.state.or.us/outdoor_skills/bow.html. If you would like to put your name on the mailing list to receive registration materials, please contact Colleen Foster at 1-800-720-6339, Ext. 76017 (within Oregon only) or 503-947-6017, or e-mail her at colleen.e.foster@state.or.us.

Pheasant Tail Nymph

(Continued from page 1)

There are several variations on this pattern, by both American and English fly anglers. Many American fly tiers add legs to the fly, including Al Troth, Ed Zern, and Eric Leiser--- these were not part of Sawyer's original pattern. Another variation is that of hook length. Sawyer tied this on a standard length hook, while some American tiers recommend a hook that is 1X long. In England Arthur Cove modified the Pheasant Tail Nymph for fishing that country's reservoirs by adding a gold body rib and a rabbit fur thorax. This latter fly is called Cove's Pheasant Tail.

Sawyer tied this fly using copper wire rather than thread. The pattern described below uses thread and copper wire, as described by English fly tier and author Mike Dawes in his book, *The Flytier's Manual*. Finally, Sawyer used copper wire to form the bulk of the thorax, with a pheasant tail overlay to form a wing case. While this wire ball thorax is not a standard in America's PT nymphs, it is true to Sawyer's original and included in the pattern described here.

To document the effectiveness of this pattern, let me pass along a story from Gary Borger, (reported in his book *Nymphs*). Gary noted that in 1973 he received Frank Sawyer's book for his birthday and from it tied some P.T. nymphs for use on a Montana spring creek. In his first experience with this fly, he caught 27 fish in 100 feet of stream in 2 hours, all between 1 and 3.5 pounds.

While I make no promises, this anecdote illustrates why you need to add this fly to your nymph selection, if you have not already done so. In American waters, this nymph imitates a number of mayfly nymphs using pheasant tail fibers in their natural color and many small nymphs if one uses pheasant tail that is dyed olive yellow or olive.



MATERIALS

HOOK: Mustad 3906 (or 3906B-1X long), sizes 10-18

THREAD: Brown

TAIL: 3-8 fibers from the tail of a cock ring-neck pheasant (Sawyer recommends 4)

BODY: Fibers from center tail of cock ring-necked pheasant twisted with copper wire

THORAX: A wound-on ball of copper wire

WING CASE: Fibers from pheasant tail

HEAD: Fine copper wire

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

Using fine copper wire (.005 says Al Troth--- about 34-36 gauge), form a ball about occupying 1/5 of the hook shank, about 1/5 of the hook shank back from the eye.

Wrap tying thread at the bend of the hook and tie in tips of tail feather fibers to form the tail of the fly. Fiber tips should extend one hook gap width past the bend. Do not trim butt ends of tail feather fibers.

Tie in a length of the same fine copper wire at the bend and remove thread.

Twist the copper wire and pheasant tail fibers together and wrap up toward the eye of the hook up to the start of the wire ball.

Tie in an additional bunch of pheasant tail fibers for a wing case. Alternatively, if the fibers used for the tail and body are sufficient these can be used for the wing case.

Wrap the fine wire forward to the point in front of the copper ball.

Bring the pheasant tail fibers forward over the copper wire ball to form a wing case and tie off with the copper wire.

Finish the fly with thread for the head, or as Sawyer recommends, tie off with copper wire.



Our mission is to create opportunities, encourage, educate, and mentor women's participation in the sport of fly fishing.

Our goal is to bring women together who share a love of fly fishing and the beauty of nature to create friendships and lasting memories.

Stonefly Maidens Women's Fly Fishing Club

An Oregon Council-Federation of Fly Fishers Member Club

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Calendar

| Date | Meeting (2005 Speakers subject to change) | Fish-a-long Date | Location (2005 locations tentative) |
|----------------|--|--------------------|---|
| November 10 | Members Roundtable, Equipment Swap | None scheduled | |
| December 8 | Christmas Party | None scheduled | |
| January 15 '05 | Mark Bachmann, Winter Steelheading | January 15 | East Fork Lewis River, Winter Steelhead |
| February 9 | Fly-Tying Demonstration | February 12 | Crooked River, Trout |
| March 9 | Video Night | March 12 | MacKenzie River, March Brown hatch for trout |
| April 13 | Members Roundtable: Fly-Fishing Skills | April 16 | Coastal Lake, Trout |
| May 11 | Marty Shepard, Smallmouth Bass on the John Day River | May 14 | John Day River, Smallmouth bass |
| June 8 | Kathryn Hart, Casting Demonstration & Practice | June 11 June 12 | Casting Clinic, Blue Lake Park Clackamas River, Trout |
| July 13 | Michael T Williams, Backcountry Fly-Fishing | July 16 July 23 | Big K Ranch, Smallmouth Bass Merrill Lake, Hexegenia Hatch Bonus |
| August 10 | Andy Pibal, Carp Fishing | July 13 | Carp Fishing |
| September 14 | Patty Barnes, Saltwater Fishing in Mexico | September 16-19 | Skagit River, Pink Salmon |
| October 12 | Judith O'Keefe, Float Tube Fly Fishing | October 15 | Hosmer Lake |
| November 9 | TBA | | None scheduled |
| December 14 | Christmas Party | | None scheduled |