

RAGHEAD SCULPIN



Published by Bob Bates
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Opening Comments

Stories about the Raghead Sculpin and fish would fill a book if they were all brought together. Since I live in the Northwest most of them are about the north Idaho cutthroat streams, but there are many others. If you search the internet you will find it used by Ozark anglers, also.

Mike Mercer developed it a few years ago. Steve Moran a local guide, rod builder, wood inlay artist and all around good guy found out about it and started spreading the word. Now if you know anything about guides they can tell you some great stories. There is no way to verify the voracity of them. However, there has to be a lot of truth in what he says or his repeat business would drop off. Steve is also a great tier, and I have tried for years to get him to the Washington Fly Fishing Fair, in Ellensburg, Washington. However, he always has guide trips scheduled during that time.

Fortunately, Janet Schimpf, a professional tier, was at the 2012 Washington Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg, WA and she was tying the Raghead Sculpin among other patterns.

Any kind of line can be used with this pattern. It all depends on the depth of water you are fishing and how fast the water is moving. People use full sink, sink tip and floating lines. In one story I was told, the angler knew that fish sometimes stay in relative safety under overhanging branches. In this case the branches touched the water but didn't penetrate. He was using a floating line and cast nearly to the bank up stream of the branches. He knew that the fly would sink just enough to miss the branches. A nice cutthroat thought it was a meal. Sometimes to fish this pattern you will go to the bottom where the real sculpins live. Most of the time I fish on or near the bottom.

Materials list

Hook: Daichi 2421 size 4

Thread: Uni thread 8/0 Camel (Brown, tan or olive)

Eyes: Eye balls, brass, pre-painted

Body and tail: EZE Bug yarn, a very bulky material. Also called Raghead in yarn shops. Janet buys it in tan and marks it with yellow and brown marking pens to give it a mottled look.

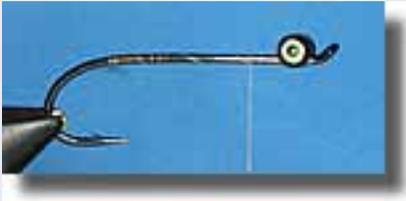
Pectoral fins: Swiss straw from fly shops or craft stores, olive or olive-brown

Tying steps



Step 1

Attach the thread near the back and spiral it to the front. Leave thread near the hook eye.



Step 2

Start with the eyes parallel to the hook shank. Put a few thread winds over the eyes, twist eyes perpendicular to the shank, put a few figure eights thread winds then thread winds behind and in front of the eyes. Make sure the eyes are secure.



Step 3

Secure yarn to shank just in front of the bend to give a shank length tail.



Step 4

Wrap yarn forward in close wraps to make it buggy. Secure it under the hook leaving a little space behind eyes.



Step 5

Open up a piece of Swiss Straw and tear off a ¼-inch wide strip. Hold on side of hook, bind it to shank, pass it under the shank and secure again. Have a good length of Swiss Straw for each side it will be trimmed later.



Step 6

Move the thread forward to near hook eye. Wrap yarn forward to one wrap behind the eyes, one wrap in front of the eyes. Then make one wrap from front to back between the eyes, one wrap from back to front between the eyes and tie off yarn in front of the eyes of the fly and the eye of the hook.



Step 7

Secure yarn trim and whip finish. Take fly out of vise to trim pectoral fins at about mid shank. (Some instructions say to trim the bottom wool at the front to make a flat head.)

Closing Comments

OK you probably cannot see the pectoral fins in the last picture, but remember the fish can see things we can't. Some tiers use tan Rag wool for the tail and back part of the pattern which they wrap up to where the pectoral fins will be and tie it off there (Step 4). After attaching the pectoral fins they switch to olive Rag Wool for the front part of the pattern around the eyes. It is also called Mercer's Rag Sculpin and Rag Wool Sculpin

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.

You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at
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