

FFF Fly of the Month

KINGS RIVER CADDIS



By Bob Bates

In May 2002 the folks in the Kaweah Flyfishers of Visalia, California started a series of newsletter articles about the late Wayne "Buz" Buszek and his innovative fly patterns. They permitted me to quote liberally from the articles by Gene Mathias and Clarence Butzbach and even supplied the pictured fly, tied by Clarence and photographed by Chuck Wilcox.

Buz's contributions to fly tying are remembered in the Federation of Fly Fishers' annual Buz Buszek Memorial Award. It is given to that amateur or professional fly tier who demonstrates outstanding skill, creativity or innovation, and sharing knowledge by teaching or publication. It is truly a prestigious award. Since 1970 an [amazing group](#) of individuals have received it for their significant contributions to the art of fly tying.

One of Buz's many contributions is the Kings River Caddis. Please note there is no apostrophe in Kings, unlike many references that erroneously use one. In the 50's Buz developed this pattern, and in his words (from Mathias' article): "Several seasons ago a population of large rainbows appeared below the new dam on the Kings River. They were heavily fished and soon began refusing every offering. Caddis flies were common on the river, hatching in droves late in the evening. I worked out this pattern to match the hatch and it proved, and still is successful."

Besides solving a problem, he did several things that were different at that time. He tied the brown turkey wing by its tip rather than thicker section near the shaft. This way the

wing did not split apart or flair. The wing was tied long and trimmed later to match the streamside caddis. He undersized the hackle about one hook size so the fly sat low on the water like real caddis, and the wing stayed parallel to the water surface. This was in the days of Indian gamecock hackle, and he preferred the "red game" color.

The Kings River Caddis was successful locally, and soon its fame spread to other parts of the world. In part Buz spread the word nationally through his catalog. Orvis put it their catalog and many fly-book authors listed it. All of this gave it international exposure.

As for fishing technique, let the caddis tell you how to do it. Use a floating line and dead drift if the fish are taking caddis that are floating along. If the fish are going after moving caddis, jiggle your fly a little. However, I haven't figured out how to imitate caddis that spin around in circles before they are recycled into trout.

Materials:

Hook: Standard dry fly; Mustad 94840; Tiemco TMC 100, TMC 5210; Dai-Riki 305; size 12 to 18

Thread: Brown or black 6/0, 8/0

Body: Original dubbing used by Buz was raccoon fur in tan or brown to match the naturals. Some tiers use rabbit.

Wing: Mottled brown turkey wing quill

Hackle: Brown to red game

Tying Steps:

- 1.** If you want barbless hooks for catch and release fishing, smash down barbs with smooth jaw pliers before tying flies or buy barbless hooks.
- 2.** Prepare turkey wing quill by spraying with Grumbacher's Tuffilm, a fixative for charcoal drawings found in most art supply stores. Let it dry.
- 3.** Attach thread and dub a fairly bulky body with raccoon or other fur. Make body about 2/3rds shank length long. Caddis have fatter bodies than many other insects.
- 4.** Cut a slip of turkey, trim tip end a little and tie in on top of the body (not in front of body) by the thinner tip end. Wing should lay flat along body in a tent-like manner. Make wing more than two shank lengths long and clip to shape after it is secure. Leave wing long and cut it shorter to match caddis once you are streamside.
- 5.** Select a good dry fly quality hackle with barbs a little shorter than the "standard" 1-1/2 gap widths. Secure at front of wing and move thread forward to near eye. Wrap hackle to cover all thread wraps used to tie in wing. Tie off hackle and trim excess.
- 6.** Form a small neat head, whip finish and cement well.

The Kings River Caddis has caught fish for half a century, and it will continue to fool them for at least another half century or more. It is one that deserves a place in your fly box.

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

You can direct any questions or comments to flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org