

## Federation of Fly Fishers Fly of the Month

### November, 1999 - THE WONDER FLY---HUMPY, GOOFUS BUG OR HORNER'S DEER HAIR?



#### Comments by Jim Abbs

Quite a while back---about 60 years ago claimed the legendary Charlie Brooks---some California trout anglers ran out of their favorite clipped deer hair fly, the rat-faced McDougall while fishing California's Hat Creek-Rising River area. As many know, the Rat-faced McDougall has a body of clipped deer hair and it floats like a cork in big western water. These particular California anglers were described as having limited fly tying skill and were unable to duplicate the clipped deer hair body of the store-bought McDougalls. To get the desired floatability, they devised a way of folding the buoyant deer hair over the hook---fore to aft---creating what has now become called the Humpy.

Actually at one time or another, this fly was called the Goofus Bug by Dan Bailey of Livingston Montana and the Horner Deer Hair Fly in California---after famous California tier Jack Horner. This fly apparently was first called a Humpy---or Wonder Fly--- in the waters around Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Speaking from experience, the Humpy is simply is deadly on big western waters, seemingly due to its high profile and because it is virtually unsinkable. Anyone visiting fly shops in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho will find the Humpy available in many colors and sizes, from #10 down to #18. Its effectiveness also is demonstrated by the fact that it is given high marks in many serious books on western trout fishing, by Brooks, by Dennis, by Matthews, by Fong and others, and because there are a number of variations on the basic humpy theme, including Royal Humpy, Yellow Humpy, a Black Humpy, Humpy Trude, Poly Humpy, etc.

In addition, this fly is not limited in its use for big western trout, but also works well on both bass and panfish. Dave Whitlock in his book on Fly Fishing for Bass, specifically includes the Humpy in his fly box selection.

A final reason for adding the Humpy to the FFF Fly of the Month patterns is that it is relatively easy to tie and does not require super expensive materials.

#### **MATERIALS**

**Hook:** Standard dry fly hook-Mustad 94840 (some suggest a heavier hook for bigger flies like the Mustad 7957B).

**Thread:** Monocord, in red, yellow or green

**Tail:** Natural deer hair, although a western version of the fly by Dennis uses elk leg or moose body hair

**Body:** Deer hair or elk hair

**Wing:** The tips of the hair used for the body are tied forward and back for the wing

**Hackle:** Brown and grizzly mixed.

## **TYING INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Lay a base of thread on the hook shank. Tie in the deer hair or moose body fibers for the tail, with the butt of the fibers extending to the mid-point from the eye to the hook bend and a tail length the same as the hook shank. End with your thread at the middle of the hook shank.
2. Select a clump of deer hair with a cross-sectional thickness of a wooden matchstick (for a # 12 fly) and line up the tips with a hair stacker. The deer hair should be long enough to extend from the middle of the hook shank beyond the tail (remember that this clump of hair is both the body and the wings when folded back).
3. Trim the butts of the deer hair clump to make sure they are exactly at the center of the hook shank and tie them with increasing tension back and forth from the middle of the shank to the bend of the hook. Continue this back and forth wrapping until there is no remaining deer hair showing. End with your thread at the middle of the hook shank.
4. Grab the tips of the deer hair clump and bring it forward, yielding the hump of the humpy. Twist the clump of hair slightly to bring the fibers together and tie them down just beyond the point where the butts are secured. Take 2-3 turns to secure the hair well.
5. Fold the tips of the deer hair backward to a vertical position and wrap thread in front to keep them upright.
6. Using a figure eight criss-cross pattern with your tying thread, divide the hair tip wings.
7. Tie in two hackles, a brown and a grizzly of appropriate size and wrap them both in back of and in front of the wing. Tie off, cement and head toward some big water in Montana or Wyoming.

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