

FFF Fly of the Month

ALICE'S DON'T ASK



By Bob Bates

About 15 or 18 years ago Alice Deaver in Rathdrum, Idaho designed this pattern quite by accident. She phoned another fly tier to find out how to tie a certain pattern. Oral descriptions sometimes get a little confused. So when she combined her considerable tying skill with the sketchy notes a new fly emerged. It has everything that a fly should have: a bit of color, a bit of flash and pheasant tail fibers. Pheasant tail fibers are used as wings, legs and beards on proven flies like Doc Spratley, Pheasant Tail Nymph and Halfback; so why not use it for a full hackle. It is a little more tedious to tie, but the results are worth the effort. Alice's Don't Ask has fooled a lot of brook trout and rainbows. It has even interested a few browns.

As for lake fishing techniques, Alice recommends experimenting. She normally uses a full sinking fly line, and depending upon water depth she might dump extra line to reach the fish. Her retrieves are generally an erratic twitch. One or two short pulls might be followed by three short pulls or a long pull. Sometimes a long fast pull (like you were starting another cast) will coax a fish into striking. In a float tube she might move slowly, rapidly, straight line or in curves. (It is called mooching not trolling.) Just don't do the same thing all day, especially when the fish are not biting.

Materials:

Hook: Mustad 9672, Dai-Riki 710, Tiemco 5263, 10-12

Thread: Black

Tail: Pheasant tail

Body: Orange or Burnt Orange, dubbed or wool yarn

Rib: Silver tinsel, fine or medium

Hackle: Pheasant tail fibers

Tying Steps:

1. If you wish, smash the barb with smooth jaw pliers before starting to tie.
2. Select a few fibers from the mottled side of a pheasant tail. Tie them on at the bend to make a gap length tail.
3. Attach a piece of tinsel at the bend and dub some orange material on your tying thread. Wind an even body forward and then spiral the tinsel forward (five wraps are usually enough).
4. Select a few brownish-red fibers from a pheasant tail. Gently attach them on top of the hook, and spread them around the far side. Tie the fibers so they reach past the middle of the tail. Take another bunch, attach them on top and spread them around the near side. Finally, with smaller third and maybe fourth bunches, fill in any large gaps. Alice reminded me a couple of times to make the hackle sparse enough that some orange shows through. You may even leave a gap or two, assuring that some of the orange body is visible.
5. Finish the head and add a little head cement. Alice likes to use a thick head cement.

This has been a very successful pattern for lake fishing. The question usually comes up "What ya usin?" when some guys are catching fish and those around them are not. The answer "Don't Ask" leaves the fellow angler a bit dismayed.

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