

GUN METAL PHEASANT TAIL NYMPH



By Bob Bates

There have been many variations of the Pheasant Tail Nymph since Frank Sawyer, River Keeper on the Avon, first tied it in the early 1900s. Gary Barnes, Rigby, ID, was tying this fish catching version at the 2007 Western Rocky Mountain Council Fly Fishing Exposition, in West Yellowstone, MT June 30, 2007.

Pheasant Tail Nymphs imitate several mayfly nymphs so you want to move the fly through areas where fish might be feeding on them. In shallow moving water I usually use a floating line and throw the fly upstream near shore and then work outward, wading if appropriate. (Too many anglers immediately wade into a stream so they can fish the far bank, and they scare near shore fish.) Let the fly drift drag free. This fly is not heavily weighted so you might need a sink tip line or non-lead weight on the leader to reach some fish.

Lake fishing has its own approaches. Floating, sink tip and full sinking lines are all useful. If you are alone in a boat you can rig up five rods and be ready for a variety situations and water depths. One time a floating line, a pheasant tail nymph and cooperative rainbows made me late for dinner. This version of the Pheasant Tail Nymph might have worked better. Unless the mayflies are hatching you might have to go down for the fish. You want the fly to move just over the weed beds so use a countdown method to control the depth. If you start picking up weeds shorten the time you let the line sink. Also vary the retrieve until you find something the fish like.

There is more information and history on the Pheasant Tail Nymph in the **Fly of the Month** September, 1998.

Materials list:

Hook: DaiRiki 075 #14-16

Bead: Glass gun metal blue bead

Thread: Griffith shear thread 14/0, tan or brown

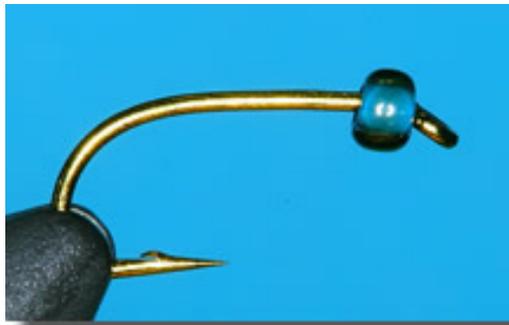
Rib: Brown copper wire

Body: Pheasant tail

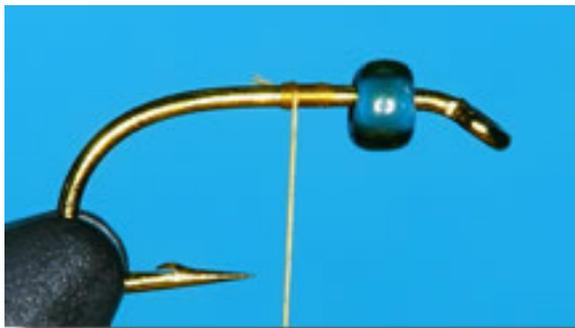
Throat: Peacock herl

Hackle: Whiting Brahma or other soft hackles like partridge or pheasant

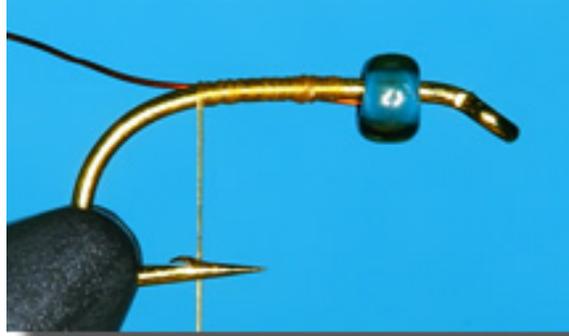
Tying steps:



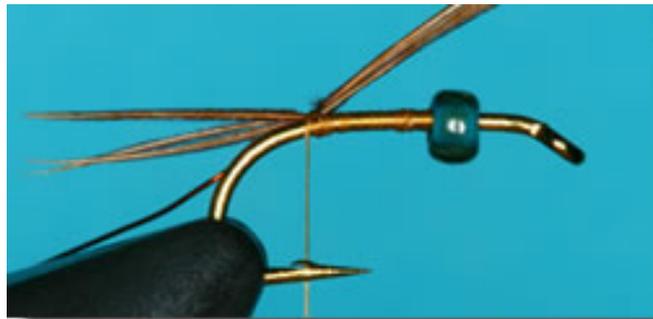
1. Smash the barb down so it will easier to put on the bead and release the fish you hook. Slide bead to front before putting hook into vise. (If your fly shop can't get the beads try a craft store.)



2. Start thread at about the midpoint of hook.



3. Lay the copper wire on side of hook, and wind thread over the wire toward rear of hook. Stop winding just above the barb.



4. Pull four natural pheasant tail fibers straight out from the shaft to match their ends. Cut them off and tie them on hook to give shank length tail.



5. Wind thread forward to a little in front of mid shank. Make first wrap of pheasant tail cover the tie down thread. Wrap remaining pheasant tail forward to thread, secure and trim excess.



6. Take one piece of peacock herl bend it around thread, secure it right at front of body and make a couple of wraps forward to a point that leaves a little space behind the bead. Tie off peacock herl and trim excess.



7. Take one wrap of wire at the tail so the fish's teeth will not damage it, spiral wire forward to front of herl, secure and trim excess. Wind the wire in the same direction as the peacock herl. Do a quick whip finish



8. Push bead back and bring thread in front of it. Hold feather by tip, stroke most of the fibers back and tie it in by the tip.



9. Wrap feather one turn stroking the barbs back as you wrap, secure and trim excess.



10. Form a neat little head, whip finish and trim thread.

Closing comments: This is an easy fly to tie, and Gary says that it catches lots of fish. To me it just looks like a fly that should catch fish. It has the magic of pheasant tail, a little peacock herl and a soft hackle.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.
You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org