

HENRY'S FORK CALLIBAETIS



By Bob Bates

New fly patterns come about for several reasons. I won't list them all so we can get right to the reason behind this pattern, a need for fishing. On many fishing waters one insect hatch will decline and another overlapping hatch will start. For a time period you don't know what the fish are taking, the old pattern or the new one. Some of the Oregon lakes present this problem to their anglers. The fish are real picky when a Callibaetis mayfly comes off. But when a caddis comes off, a Tom Thumb often works. Norm Domagala of Monroe, Oregon faced this often.

At the FFF 2007 Fly Fishing Show & Conclave he showed us how to tie one solution to the problem. It also has two materials that I had not seen before and one old time item that could be used more. Like most, if not all, patterns this one can be considered a marriage of two other patterns: a mayfly and the Tied Down Caddis, with a little Tom Thumb thrown in.

It is fished using a floating line and nothing on the fly to make it float better. When the fly gets too wet Norm uses drying crystals, or you can simply use a chamois. The fly floats low in the water so it is hard to see if the surface is rough. In the morning if the surface is glassy twitch it a little. If it is a windy day cast somewhat crosswind and let it ride the rough water. Mostly fish take it because it is the right size. Keep a close eye on your line. Try to cast the line so it is straight. Recast or straighten the line when it gets crooked.

Materials List:

Hook: Gamaktsu S10 sizes 14 and 16

Thread: Ultra thread, 70 diner, tan

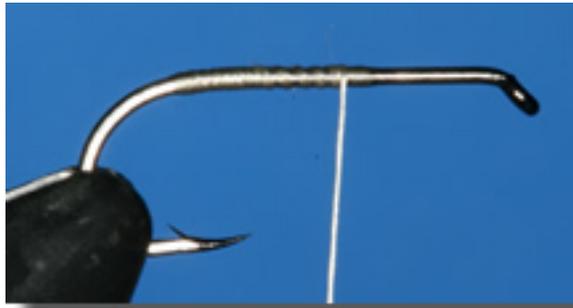
Tail: Horse hair paint brush dyed with brown Rit

Back: Coastal deer hair, Dun

Body: Wonder Wrap from Montana Fly Products, flat rubber, gray

Hackle: Henry's Fork Hackle (CDC) from Montana Fly Products, grey

Tying Steps:



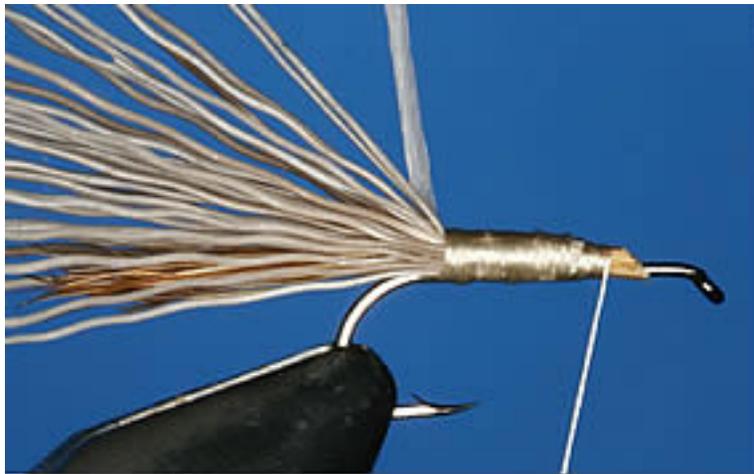
1. Start thread at back of hook and wind a thread base ending at mid shank.



2. Tail is from a horse or boar's hair paint brush. It has to be a high quality paint brush which are expensive, but sometimes they can be found at garage sales. Big brushes can be cut with a hacksaw. Has to be a light color to take the brown Rit dye. You can dye it several times to get the right color. Darker hair is not good quality. Cut a few fibers, stack them and tie them on to make a shank length tail. Cut off the butts at a slight angle



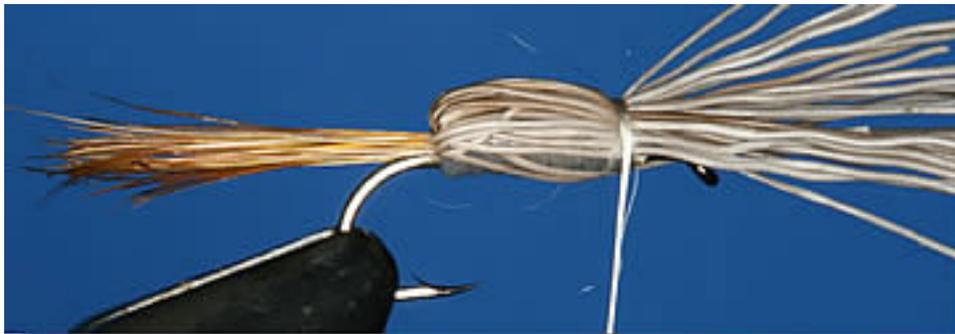
3. Cut a bunch of deer hair. Clean out under fur. Trim tips, hold trimmed hair about mid shank and tie deer hair securely. Tie on with butts facing back. If deer hair flares excessively use less thread tension toward the bend. Make deer hair bunch about twice as long as the tail, so it easier to separate it from the tail. This is dun colored hair, also use nearly white for light colored caddis and very dark for the nearly black caddis like the ones on Hosmer Lake and other waters.



4. Tie on the Wonder Wrap material at back of body. It is the gray strip that Norm is holding up.



5. Pull on the material when wrapping to thin it a little. Wrap forward to about 1/3rd shank length back from the eye. Overlap wraps to get a little segmentation. Stop wrapping at front of deer hair tie down. Tie down securely because it is under tension and will snap out. Leave about a sixteenth of an inch of the body material beyond tie down point for extra security. Put a little glue on it to keep fish from tearing it up. Use a clear lacquer like Sally Hanson which dries quickly.



6. Pull deer hair forward and tie down. Put a little glue like Sally Hanson's on threads.



7. Use Henry's Fork CDC (Cul de Canard or butt of the duck) like hackle. The CDC is on a thread which makes handling it much easier. Capture about 1/16th of an inch of the strand on top body. If you try to grab the tip it will break off.



8. Pull fibers back as you wrap. Make two or three turns around hook to make a little thorax. Tie off and leave about a 1/8th inch post on top to make a little more body. Pull all the fibers back and wrap in front of post. (If spinners start can make two wings out of CDC.)



9. Pull up the deer hair and wrap in front of deer hair to make a small head. Put a little glue on thread and wind it in.



10. Last step cut deer hair at an angle. Trim thread and put glue on threads with a small bodkin so none of the glue gets on the CDC.

Closing Comments

This is a proven pattern for the mixed insect hatches in the Oregon lakes. Try these ideas where you live and one of your problems might be solved. The name might be a confusing when all we talk about is lakes, but it is simply the name of the CDC material. Besides I bet that fish in some streams would hit it.

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