

### COMMON CHERNOBYL ANT



By Bob Bates

Here is an ant (or beetle) pattern that every fly angler can use. It can be tied on large hooks like the size 4 in these step pictures or on small hooks like the size 20 beetle in the fly box below. It can be painted black, red or two tone red/black. Best of all it uses packing foam that most of us throw away. Tom Berry from Fairfield Bay, Arkansas showed us this pattern at the 2008 FFF Fly Fishing Show and Conclave, Whitefish, Montana.

There are many times when an ant pattern is the best thing to use. It seems that when ants are on the water fish will hit an imitation without hesitation. Some writers say it is because of the taste, but I wouldn't know because I have never eaten an ant, even chocolate covered.

Use floating pattern techniques when fishing it. A drag free float is the starting point in moving or still water. On lakes and ponds let it sit quietly or drift with the wind. Sometimes a slight twitch will trigger a strike. On streams follow the fly with your rod. Or using a reach cast might be the thing: Simply lean your rod and body upstream just before the line lands on the water. Other techniques include S-cast, sloppy cast, throw the line a little high so it will fall with Ss or pull the line back upstream just before it lands. You might think that I am kidding with the sloppy cast, but years ago some cutthroat in a northern Idaho stream taught me that it was the best cast to use.

## Material List:

**Hook:** Any light hook you want

**Thread:** Black, 70 Denier, finer for small hooks

**Body:** Packing foam

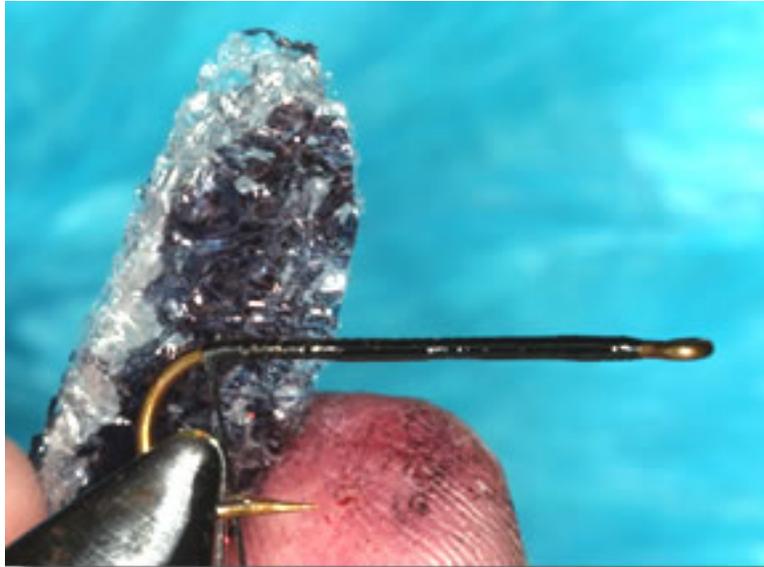
**Legs:** Silicone legs, thread on small flies

**Color:** Black or red waterproof marking pen

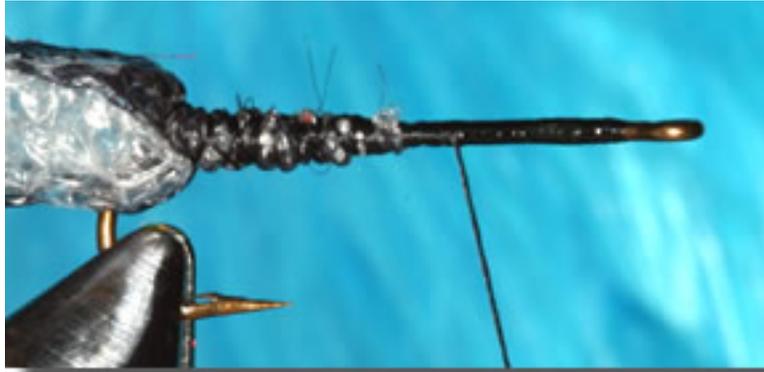
## Tying steps:



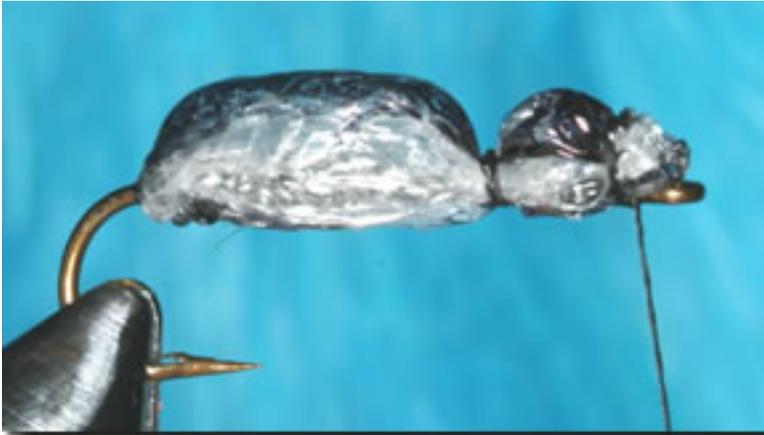
1. Wrap a thread base on full length of hook shank. Leave thread at bend.



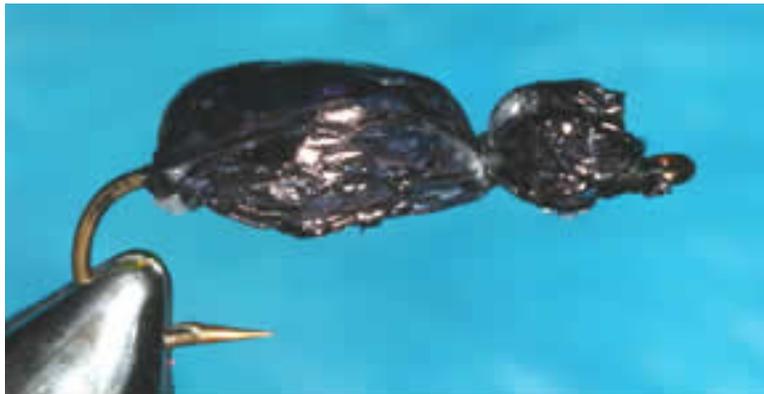
2. Cut a piece of foam about a gap width wide. Taper one end a little. Paint both sides with marker. Put head cement on hook.



3. Tie securely to hook.



4. Move thread forward to where you want make front of rear segment. Pull foam forward and tie it down. Hold up foam and move thread forward to near eye. Tie foam securely and cut off excess.



5. Wind thread over cut foam to smash it down and make a little head on the fly. Whip finish and cut thread. Paint all of the foam with marker.



6. Reattach thread in middle of fly. Fold a piece of leg material over the tying thread and move leg to side of hook. Fold another piece of leg material over the thread, and move the leg to the other side of the hook. Put another thread wind or two to secure the legs pull the front legs back and whip finish in front of legs.



7. Trim the legs to length.



8. (Two steps that he didn't do at the Conclave were: 1. Coat the body with Softex, and let it dry; then 2. Coat it with Sally's Hard as Nails, and let it dry. The Softex makes it more durable, and the Hard as Nails makes it shiny. Softex has acetone in it, and he didn't want to take it on the plane.) The fly box shown below has several finished flies including small beetles on the right side. The smaller one is size 20, and it is just as easy to tie a larger ones.

**Closing comments:** Ants, both wet and dry, have been in my fly box since about 1960. This pattern will join the others soon. It is easy and adaptable. Any color ant can be created, and even beetles of any size and color can be tied. Best of all the body material is something that you would throw away or reuse as packing. You will still have to buy hooks, legs and thread from your friendly fly shop.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.  
You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at [flyofthemoth@fedflyfishers.org](mailto:flyofthemoth@fedflyfishers.org)