

### **Hatchmaster**



By Bob Bates

The history of this pattern isn't well documented. However, an internet search produced the following: "This fly was apparently first developed by Harry Darbee in the late 1930's for use in the Catskills." Several references agree it was popularized in the west by Dick Alf of Sun Valley, Idaho. There it was used in slow moving sections of Idaho's famous and difficult to fish Silver Creek.

Ilene Hirsh, Salem, Oregon was tying the Hatchmaster at the 2009 Northwest Fly Tye Expo in Albany, Oregon. She has been tying and using it for about two years. She found it a good mayfly imitation, easy to tie and its color can be easily changed to match the hatch. She will use it successfully when nothing else is working. For her it works all year not just when the mayflies are hatching. While most stories extol its power in moving water it also works as a Callibaetis spinner imitation in lakes.

Remember that drag free float when fishing any moving water. There are many ways to achieve the needed drag free float. A quick upstream mend before the line hits the water, leaning your body and rod upstream, a wiggle or "S" cast, cast upward a little so the line will land with "S" shapes when it falls to the water or a draw cast. It goes by other names, but I use the draw cast when fishing straight downstream to rising fish. Cast beyond the fish, and draw the rod and line back before it lands. If you have trouble with a drag free float talk to a good caster in your club or spend some time with a FFF Certified Casting Instructor. (See FFF website)

**Materials list:**

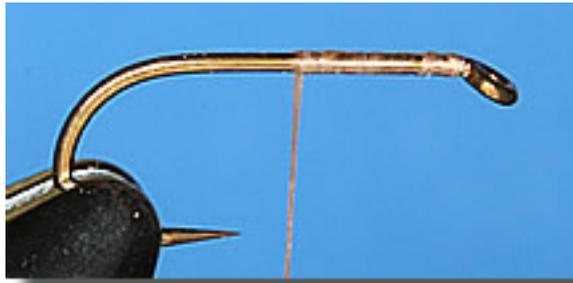
**Hook:** Dry fly, (some recipes specify short shank) #12 – 20 (14 for pictured fly)

**Thread:** Light brown thread, or other color to match hackle

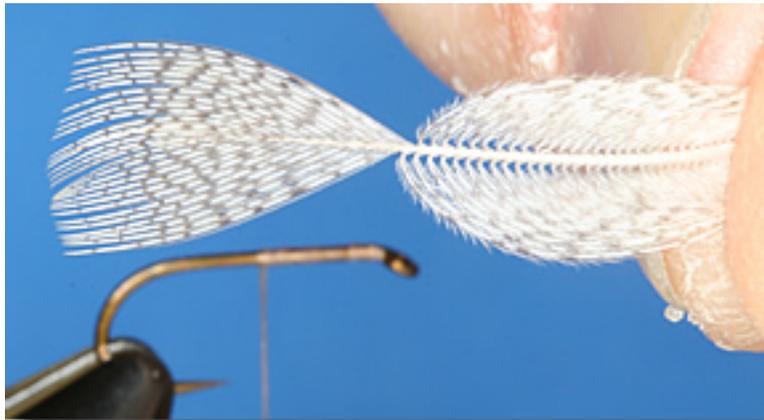
**Tail, body and wing:** Mallard flak feather natural or any color

**Hackle:** Grizzly or color to match the hatch

**Tying steps:**



1. Put thread on hook about mid shank wind to eye and return to mid-shank.



2. Prepare mallard feather by pulling off fuzzy stuff. Hold tip of feather and stroke some of the barbs away from the tip.



3. Hold feather with dull (concave) side up, and tie on to hook at mid-shank so the folded back barbs make the body. Wind forward over the fibers while making sure they stay on top of the hook.



4. Top view.



5. Cut out center of feather to eliminate stem. Stand up the barbs, put a few thread winds in front of the butts, and wind around the base like you were making a parachute post. Leave thread behind the wing.



6. Prepare the hackle by pulling a few fibers off the bottom. Anchor feather on near side in front of body. The stem is anchored from the body to just in front of the wing.



7. Wind hackle forward to in front of wing, anchor the hackle and trim. Put on a few half hitches. Trim off top of post.



8. Cut out center section of mallard feather to make tails



9. Put glue on body, tail and a little on the head. Use any kind of glue, preferably one with brush. Trim hackle on the bottom about even with point of hook.

**Closing comments:**

There are several variations of this basic pattern. The tail, body and wing can be mallard, teal, dyed mallard, pheasant neck hackle or other feather. The hackle can be any color, even black, to match the insect. Some tiers do not trim the bottom of the hackle. Trimming the hackle makes the fly sit lower in the water which I think looks better to the fish. Some tiers put fan type feathers on for regular wings. Tie up a few for your waters, and go fishing.

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](mailto:flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org).