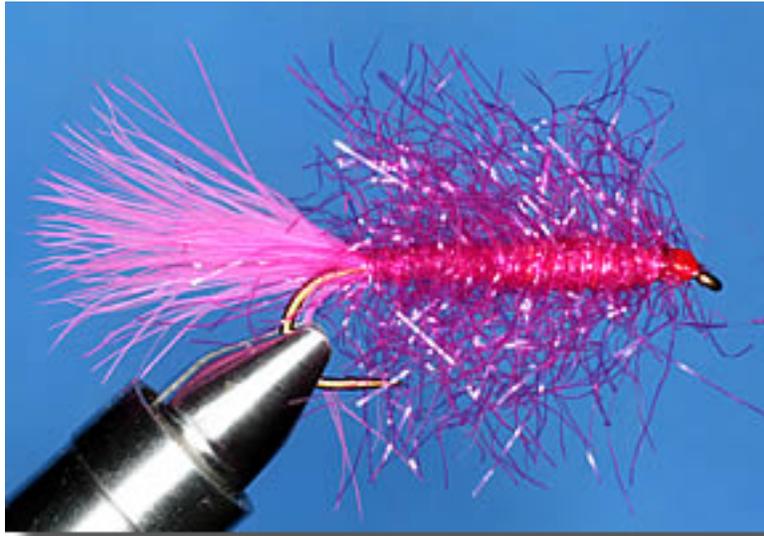


PINK DINK LEECH



By Bob Bates

John Newbury (Buszak 2009 recipient) from Chewelah, WA started experimenting with this pattern in about 2006 or 2007. Like some other tiers he visits yarn shops looking for potential tying material. On one trip he found Aura Trendsetter Yarn that is used for knitting ladies boas (neck scarves). It looked like it might make great flies, so he bought some to try. Pretty soon flies tied with it were catching fish like mad. Thirty and forty fish days in our northeastern Washington lakes were common for him. At the 2009 Washington (FFF Council) Fly Fishing Fair he told several of us about one pattern in particular: the Pink Dink Leech.

He caught many 13- to 17-inch rainbows with it at a hike-in lake on the Little Pend Oreille Game Refuge. It is also a nice place to float around in your float tube or pontoon boat. Sprague Lake along I 90 southwest of Spokane, WA is a different story. There are not so many fish, but they are big: 6- to 7-pound rainbows. They liked the Pink Dink Leech. Some smaller fish liked it also.

I wondered if the Pink Dink Leech would work for me as well as John. I tied a couple and tried them at a Pay to Pay lake in northeastern Washington. Rainbows and Brooks hit on every cast until two of those mean 20 to 24-inch rainbows stole both of my samples. I had to switch over to Purple Leeches, etc., but the action wasn't as fast. (A bunch of Pink Dink Leeches are now in my box.)

This is a wet fly so use a full sinking line to get the fly down where the fish are. Let the line and fly sink, and then use slow to fast retrieves until fish start hitting. It should not take too long. Another way to fish it, especially on big waters, is to mooch it. You can wind drift, kick with fins or row. Most fly anglers avoid (the word) trolling.

Materials list:

Hook: Mustad 79580 size 6

Weight: Lead wire 0.035-inch diameter

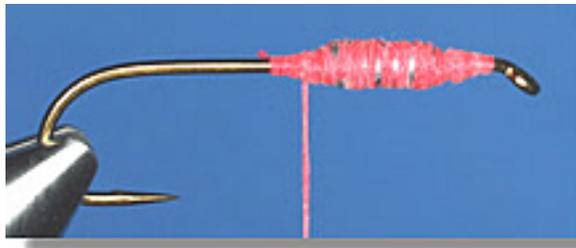
Tail: Marabou, Cerise

Body: Aura Trendsetter yarn, fluorescent cerise or extra hot pink color no. 3161
Polar Chenille from Hairline looks similar.

Tying steps:



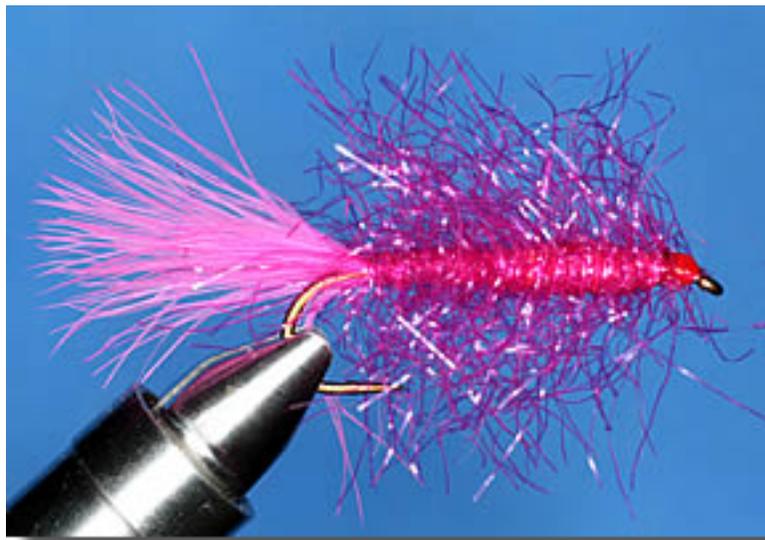
1. Smash the barb with smooth jaw pliers before you start tying. The pattern calls for seven turns of lead wire. The way I put the wire on is to hold the end of the wire in the left hand and the spool in the right hand. Then put five wraps of wire around the shank. Hold the coil and spool tightly and break off the wire. Wrap the wire tag around the shank. It is not as fast as doing seven wraps and cutting off the tag, but there are no little pieces of lead left on the table.



2. Position the lead coil about two eye widths behind the eye. Attach thread between coil and eye. Put a few thread winds in front of the coil and then move to back of the coil and put a few a few thread winds there to keep it from moving rearward. Wind thread back and forth to secure coil. Build a thread ramp at both ends of the coil. Leave thread hanging at back of lead coil.



3. Take one marabou feather, measure a shank length tail and cut off excess at back of lead coil. Secure it on top of shank behind coil. While holding the feather a little on your side of shank wind thread to rear. You can wind the thread back and forth if it suits you, but leave it at the bend.



4. Cut off a piece of Aura yarn or Polar Chenille. If there is any apparent direction to the fibers have them pointing rearward when securing yarn on the hook with the long part to the rear. Wind thread forward to about one eye width behind the eye. Wrap yarn forward stroking fibers rearward on each turn. Secure yarn behind eye and trim excess. Form a head, whip finish and put on a coat of head cement.

Closing Comments: When the head cement is dry, take it out and catch a few fish. If you are not going to keep the fish for dinner please land them quickly and release them carefully so you can play with them another day. This pattern has received so much attention locally that variations are showing up. One is a jointed version for steelhead and another is a balanced version. Balanced patterns are described in February 2006 Fly of the Month. Stay tuned for further reports. If you go to the yarn store have a few friends lined up to help you use the 150-yard ball (\$12 in 2010). Two local fly shops have it in bulk. Fly shops on the internet have Polar Chenille in 5-yard packages.

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