

B/C HOPPER



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Opening Comments

It is getting to that time of the year when we should think about grass hoppers. Then we will be ready when the hopper feast, for the fish, comes on. Tom Mead from Idaho Falls, ID was ahead of the game when he demonstrated this pattern at the 19th East Idaho Fly Tying Exposition, Idaho Falls April 20-21, 2012.

Many people say the best time to use hoppers is when there is a strong warm wind blowing. Some of the flying hoppers are blown into the water where the fish can eat them. Also, I have read that sometimes a hopper will get tired as it tries to fly across a body of water and drop into it.

What happens when the hopper lands. Usually it hits with a splash which can attract a fish or two. So forget about the delicate dry fly cast, and put your hopper down with a noisy splash. Now it becomes important to imitate the actions of the hapless hopper. Sometimes they struggle, so wiggle the rod to make the hopper move. Sometimes they do nothing, so a drag free drift is in order. However, one hopper that I saw on the South Fork of the Snake River has me puzzled. It did a frog kick toward shore.

Try several techniques: One person hooked a nice brown with a dead drifting hopper along a small cut bank on the Firehole River in Yellowstone National Park. I am sure a dozen or more anglers walked along that cut bank each day. Another friend who fished small creeks had a different approach. He would wade or walk one bank and throw his hopper across the creek and land it on the opposite bank. Then he would hop it into the water.

Materials list

Hook: Daiiriki 730 size 6

Thread: Black 3/0 Uni thread

Binder strip: A strip of scrap foam, 1/8th inch wide.

Body: Foam, 2mm thick, Orange

Legs: Round rubber, medium, tan

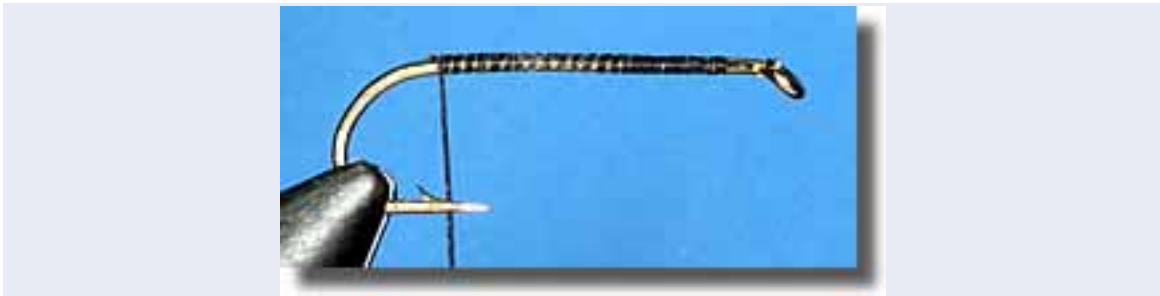
Underwing: Web wing from the fly shop and Crystal Flash

Wing: Elk natural

Collar: Deer hair, black

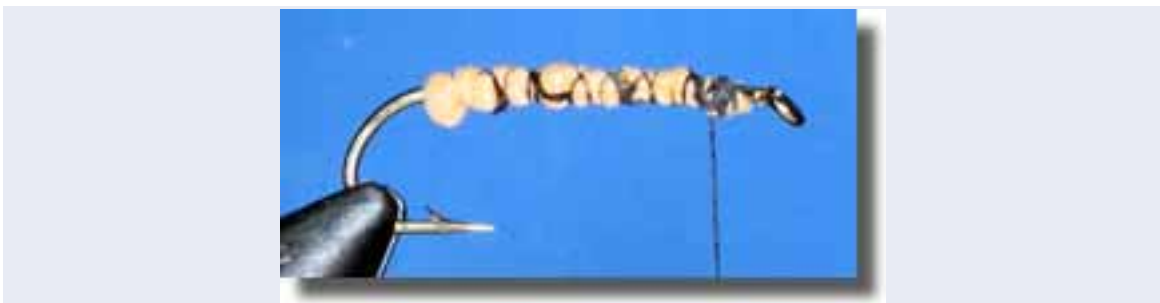
Indicator: McFlylon, pink

Tying Steps



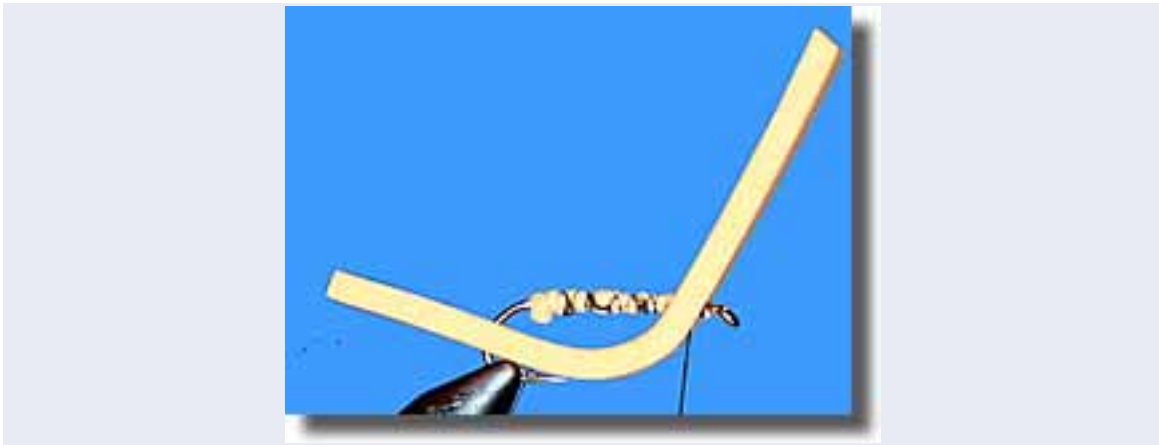
Step 1

Start the thread at the eye and wind rearward to the bend.



Step 2

Put some Zap-A-Gap on the thread winds, and secure the binder strip. Tie it down loosely as you wind from the bend of the hook to the front. Then cinch it down tightly and wind back to the bend. Run the thread to the front of the binder strip and half hitch or whip finish.



Step 3

The main body foam is about 2 and 1/2 times the length of the hook, and width equal to the gape of the hook. Take hook out of vise and measure it the length of the shank. Poke the point through and slide the foam up to where the front will be. Pull the lower piece of foam back and get a visual as to where the end of the body is. Poke the point of the hook through foam again. Put hook back into vise.



Step 4

Put Zap-A-Gap on binder strip and both inside edges of the foam. Fold it over and glue the two parts together. You will probably get the glue on your fingers. The main thing is to keep moving your fingers. From time to time take them completely off the foam. Zap-A-Gap or other superglues can bind you to the fly.



Step 5

Take thread from hook shank over the top of the foam to the far side, and make a segment with two or so thread winds perpendicular to the hook. Move the thread from the first segment over the top of the foam to where the next segment will be. Repeat two or so winds to make the second segment. Repeat for the third segment. Move the thread over the top of the third segment to where the second segment was formed. Make one thread wind there and move thread over the top of the foam to where the first segment was formed.



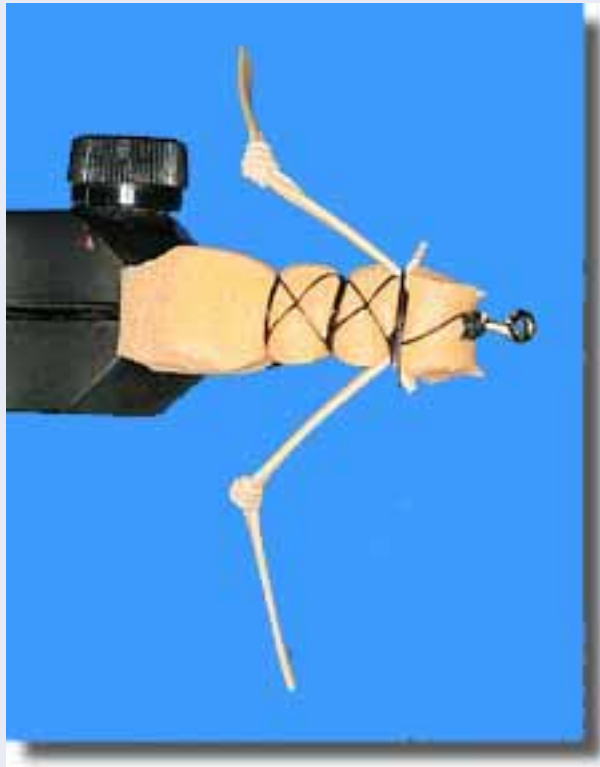
Step 6

Now a little trimming is in order. With a razor blade trim the points in front where the foam was folded back. Be careful to avoid cutting the thread. Carefully with a razor blade trim the back of the foam. Start at top above the back of the hook and trim downward as shown above. With scissors or razor trim the back corners of the foam tapering the body a little. See Step 8 picture.



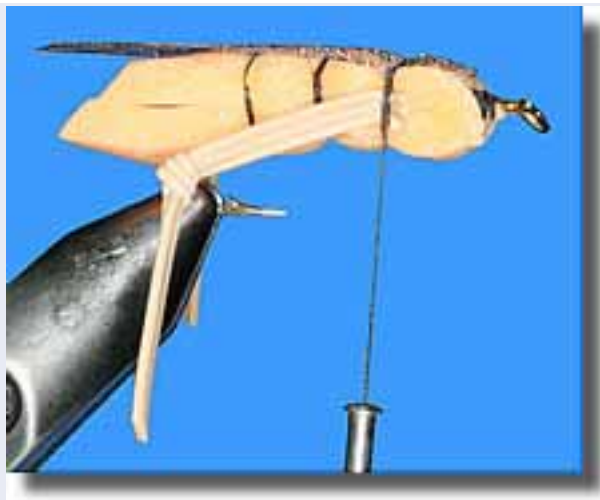
Step 7

Remove three strands of rubber together and put an overhand knot in them. Sometimes you get a right leg and other times you get a left leg, so tie a bunch. Put the knot just past the rear segment. (The thread should be where the first segment was formed.) Put one thread wind to hold one leg while you get the other one ready. Tie on the second leg. Pull on thread to lock in legs. Trim excess rubber in front.



Step 8

Top view of Step 7.



Step 9

Tie a gray web wing on this orange body fly. Make the width about 1 and 1/2 times the gape of the hook so it rolls over on the sides. Have the length about to the rear end of the body. Tie it on top of the hook at the segment where the legs were tied in.



Step 10

Choose two or three strands of Crystal Flash, double over thread and secure. Make them longer than the body.



Step 11

Select a bunch of elk. Yearling is especially good. Clean out under fur and stack. Clean it a second time to make sure it is clean. Put bunch on top and hold with a loose wind, then a tighter one and then the tightest one the thread permits. Wind thread through the butts but hang onto the bunch so it doesn't spin. Then trim all the butts. Go back over the butts again with thread.



Step 12

Move thread forward and build up a thread base behind the eye. Leave thread at front of body. Stack and clean deer hair for collar. Measure the deer hair to 3/4ths shank length, then hold it tightly by the tips and cut excess with sharp scissors. Slide cut ends over the eye making sure it is around hook. Put one loose thread wind over deer hair. Tighten a little, then put another tighter wind around and finally the tightest wind. Get the hair bound in tightly between the body and the eye. Leave the thread at front of body. Tom says to finesse the hair back as evenly as possible. Then put thread winds around deer hair to form bullet head and collar.



Step 13

Take two pieces of rubber about 1 1/2 inches long and loosely tie them on top of the hook. Pull one set of legs to the far side of the hook and pull the other legs to the near side of hook. Put a couple of tight thread winds to set the legs. This makes them flair outward.



Step 14

Tie on the indicator piece. Put on a couple half hitches, and then clip off the collar hair under the fly to expose the body. Use a Sharpe or other waterproof pen and mark up the legs. Just put dots or lines on them. There are three pieces of rubber on each rear leg. Pick one that points down and cut off the other two. For the last step, put a drop of superglue on top to lock the thread in.

Closing Comments

Tom ties this in colors other than orange: Yellow body with a yellow deer hair collar and tan body with a natural deer collar. These are the most productive colors for him in southern Idaho and portions of Montana. Some people tie a green body hopper, so check your hoppers and tie to match them. I found Flyon in my local fly shop. It had the shop label on it, but it looks and feels the same as what Tom used on the hopper.

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.