

Wet Fly Workshop

**Featuring Traditional Wet Fly and
Soft Hackle Wet Fly Tying and Instruction**

Saturday February 9, 2019

Sponsored by Potomac Valley Fly Fishers



Guidance in Tying Wet Flies (and Artificial Flies in General)

- Think proportions when tying in any materials.
 - Examples: the tail of a wet fly should not be longer than the hook shank and the wing of a traditional winged wet fly should not extend beyond the hook bend.
- Order of importance in tying any fly:
 - #1 Presentation – the fly that you tie needs to be presented to the fish in a manner that the fish would normally experience the natural fly, e.g. rising in the current, drifting with the current, crossing the current
 - #2 Size – tie each fly in a series of sizes which most closely match the size of the naturals. As an example tie a March Brown wet fly in sizes 12 & 14. Tie Pheasant Tail wet fly in 12, 14, & 16.
 - #3 Color – if trying to imitate a natural insect choose muted colors; brown, black, grey, or olive for insects that hatch during winter and spring months. Then use brighter colors to tie imitations for flies that hatch progressively spring through summer; tan, yellow, crème, or white. For attractor wet flies (e.g. Royal Coachmen) choose brighter colors to get attention of the fish; incorporate red, pink, chartreuse, or white into the patterns. There are hundreds of wet fly patterns that use these colors. (** FYI, it is commonly thought that attractor patterns work because fish don't recognize the fly as part of its normal diet and they inhale the fly because they can't discriminate whether it is food or not.*)
- In tying almost any fly (particularly wet flies) it is not so important that you use the same, identical materials that were used by the originator of the fly. As an example, if the original fly listed snipe feathers and crimson silk, you can substitute black hen, blackbird flank or dark red or reddish purple thread.
- When considering what color thread should be used for tying a wet fly, traditionally dark brown or black will suffice since essentially all of the wrapping thread is covered by the body materials. Perhaps the exception to this generality is when tying a light colored wet fly. In this case select a wrapping thread color which will not mute the color of the abdomen, e.g. yellow thread with a yellow body.
- When you are tying a particular pattern (e.g. partridge and orange) also tie the same pattern with slight modifications in color of either the body or the soft hackle material.
- While any soft hackle can be tied only with an abdomen, consider tying some with a thorax which is represented by the dubbing ball that sits immediately behind the soft hackle feather. This variant of the pattern is more realistic of the form of the natural insect, but also the dubbing ball provides support to the hackle fibers while exhibiting a life-like quality to the fly.
- Lastly, don't be afraid to be creative. Fly tying is an art (in itself) giving each one of us the opportunity to be an artist. "Beauty of the fly is in the eye of the beholder". There have been hundreds of 'ugly' fly patterns that have been used to catch fish.
- Don't be afraid to ask for advice or critique. All accomplished fly tyers are willing to share his/her knowledge with others. Have fun! We never stop learning, particularly when it comes to tying artificial flies.

D.F. February 2019.

Soft Hackle Flies (by Sylvester Nemes)

- Partridge and Orange
- Partridge and Green
- Partridge and Yellow
- Tup's Indispensible
- Iron Blue Dun
- Snipe and purple
- Pheasant Tail
- Snipe and Yellow
- March brown spider
- Grouse and orange
- Starling and herl
- Cumberland
- Brown Drake
- Professor

Materials for Soft Hackle (Wet) Flies

Fly	Thread	Tail	Body	Thorax	Rib	Hackle	Wing	Hook size/Other
Partridge and Orange	Orange or light brown	none	Orange silk floss		None or fine copper	Brown partridge	none	12-16
Partridge and Green	Brown, black	none	Green silk floss		None or fine silver	Grey partridge	none	12-16
Partridge and Yellow	Yellow, Brown,	none	Yellow silk floss		None or fine silver	Brown or grey partridge	none	12-16
Tup's Indispensible	Yellow	none	2/3 yellow silk floss	Light pink and orange fur	None	Light partridge	None	
Iron Blue Dun	Light grey or blue	4-5 white hen fibers	Mole's fur spun on red silk thread		none	Starling (black hen hackle)	None	Tag of Red tying silk/thread
Snipe and purple	Dark grey, black	none	Purple silk floss		none	Starling (black hen hackle)	None	12-16
Pheasant tail	Brown		2-3 herls from center tail wrapped together		Fine gold/copper wire	Brown or grey partridge		
Snipe and yellow	Yellow	none	Yellow silk floss			Starling (black hen hackle)	None	
Grouse and Orange	Orange, brown	None	Orange silk floss			Black and orange grouse or woodcock	None	
March Brown Spider	Orange	none	Mixed hair from rabbit face (Hare's ear dubbing)		Narrow gold	Brown partridge	None	Size 12

Starling and Herl	black		Peacock herl			Starling (black hen hackle)	None	
Cumberland	Red, orange	None	Red or orange silk floss		Narrow gold	Medium partridge	None	
Brown Drake	Brown		Dark brown floss	Darkest Hare's face		Dark brown partridge	None	
Black Spider	Black	None	Black silk			Black Hen	None	12-18
Red Tag	Black	Red wool	Peacock herl		none	red	None	Tag is red wool
Pink lady	Black	Speckled hen hackle	Pink wool		none	Speckled hen hackle	None	8-10
Professor	brown	none	Yellow floss silk			Fine red or black hackle	Brown mallard	

Wet flies for Maryland, Tennessee and Kentucky (William A. Orenchain)

- Coachman*
- Royal Coachman
- Professor
- Gray Drake
- Brown Hackle
- Black Hackle
- March Brown
- Chantrey

Wet flies for Virginia and West Virginia (James Bumgardner, Jr. , F.R. Webb & Neil Robinson & Ed Bowly)

- Queen of the Waters
- Coachman
- Black Gnat
- White Miller
- Cow Dung
- Montreal
- Scarlet

Wet Flies for Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware (J.B. Chandler, M.E. Doyle, C.A. Babcock, J.C. Biddle and J.M. Anderson, H.H. Lane)

- Red Fox
- Stone fly
- Cow Dung
- Black Gnat
- Queen of the Waters
- Coachman
- Grizzly king
- Great Dun
- White Miller
- Silver Doctor
- Yellow Sally
- Montreal
- Polka
- Royal Coachman
- Hamlin
- Grizzly King

*Note flies printed in red are popular for use across the Mid-Atlantic States.