



March 2023
FLY OF THE MONTH
"Ritt's Fighting Crayfish"



Edition: March 2023
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Photographed By: Al Ritt
Creator: Al Ritt

Ritt's Fighting Crayfish

Crayfish are a very important, but sometimes overlooked, food source for many fish species. This pattern was developed to be snag resistant, have a natural look and posture in the water and have maximum motion when fished. Ritt's Fighting Crayfish has proved effective on trout, bass, panfish, catfish, carp, salmon and even bonefish. The pattern is tied in many color variations/combinations, color experimentation and matching your local crayfish are good practices.

Tying Video: [The Weekly Fly - Al Ritt's Fighting Crayfish - YouTube](#)

MATERIALS

Hook: Daiichi 1730 sz 4 - 10

Thread: 70 denier, color to match your fly

Weight: Medium lead dumbbell eyes

Antenna: Krystal Flash (I prefer the UV colors)

Carapace: Thin Skin, color to match your fly

Body: Whitlock's Crawdub, color to match your fly

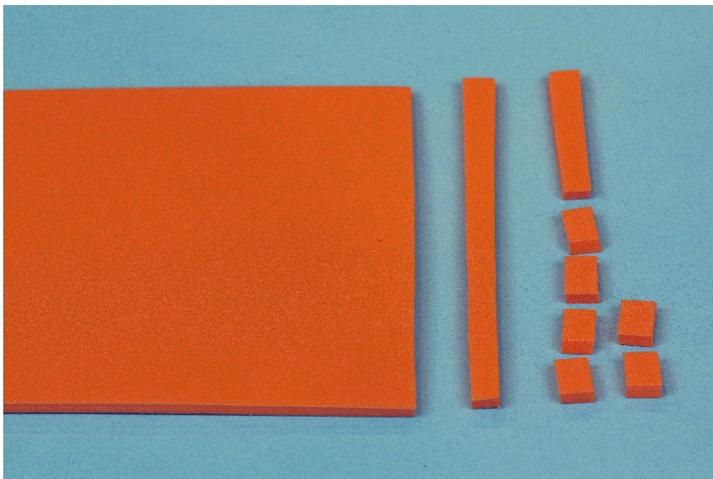
Eye Stalks: Round rubber legs, medium, black

Claws: 2mm Fly Foam mounted on medium round rubber legs, color to match your fly (I make these up in qty before tying the fly)

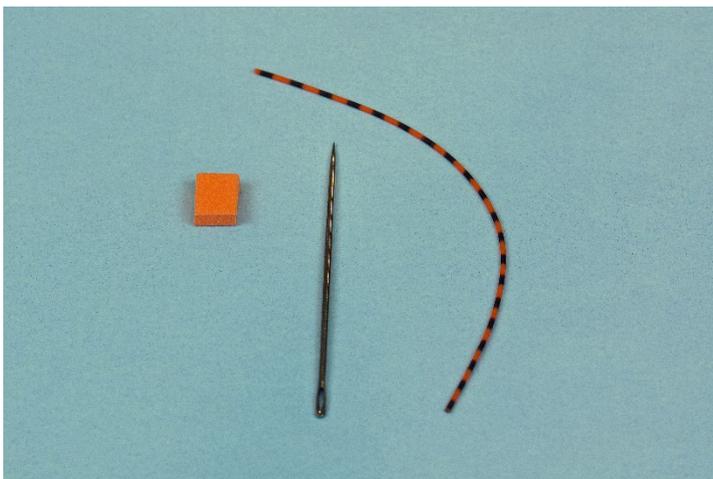
Underbody: Any inexpensive yarn close to the color of the dubbing

Rib: Medium wire, color to compliment your fly

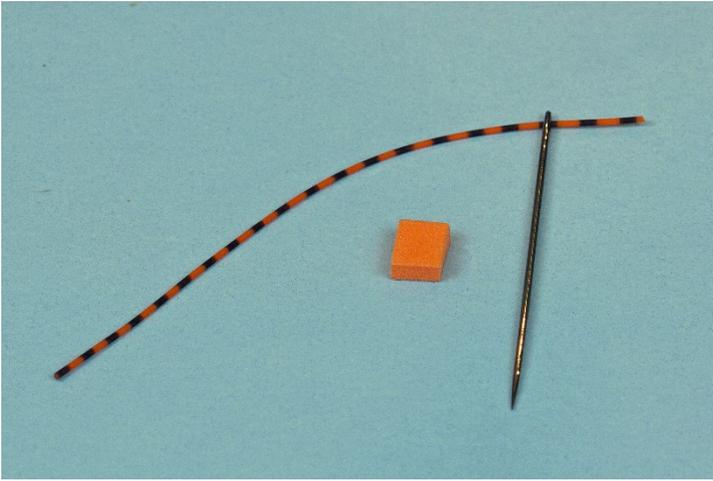
Hackle: Dyed grizzly saddle, color to compliment your fly



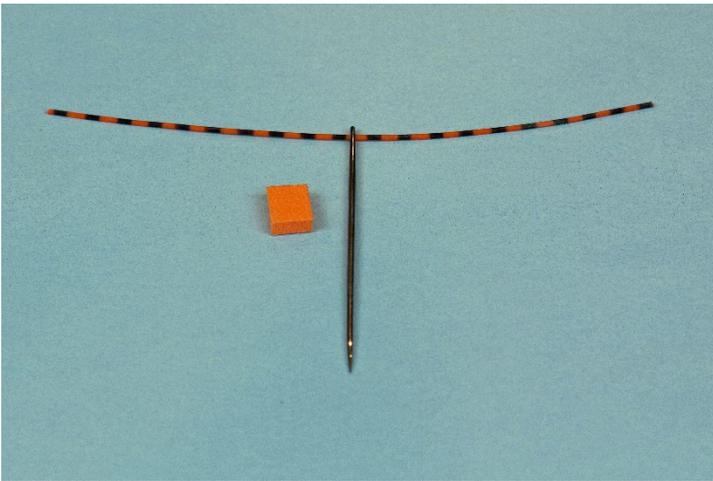
1. Cut strips about 1/4 inch wide from a sheet of foam. Then cut each strip into 1/4 inch squares.



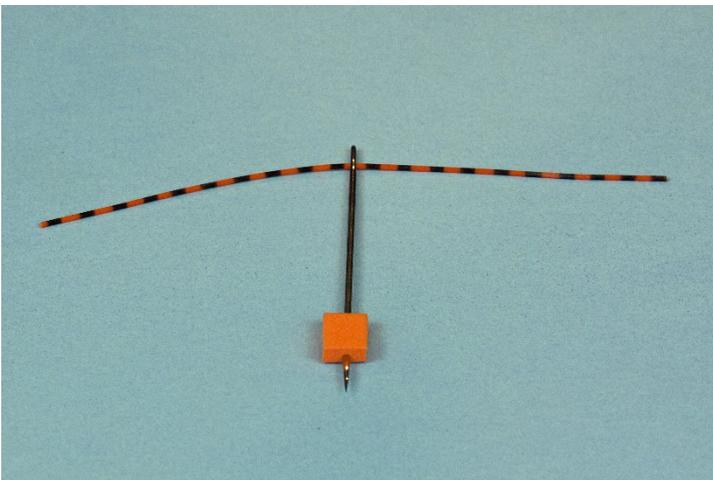
2. Isolate a single round rubber leg, at least three times the length of the hook shank. Locate a needle with an eye large enough to thread the rubber leg through.



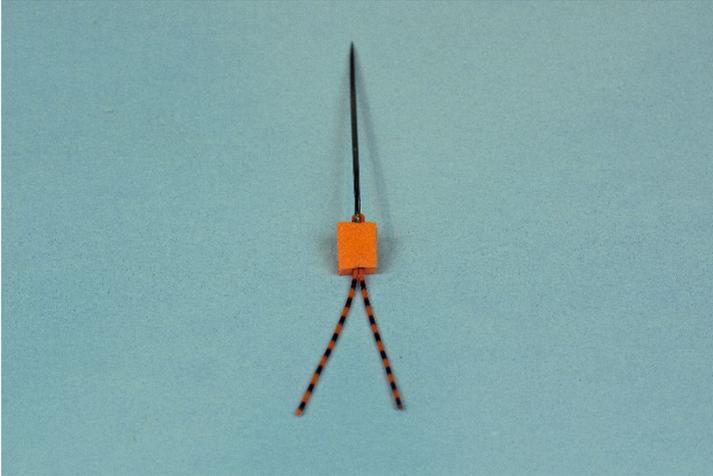
3. Thread the rubber leg through the eye of the needle.



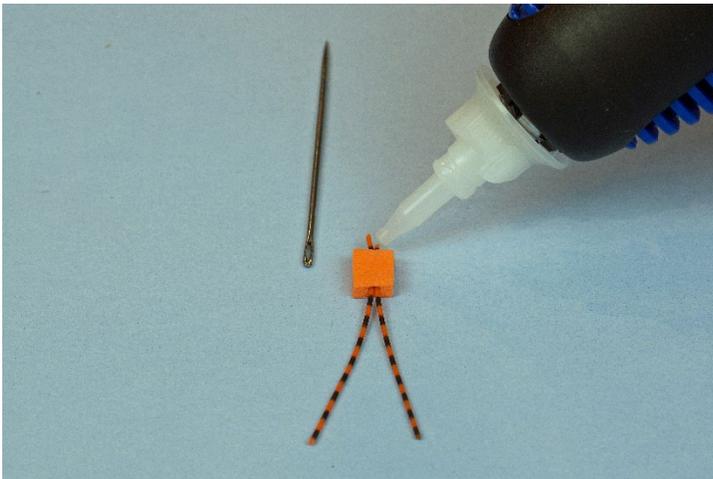
4. Pull the rubber leg through the eye of the needle until the needle is at the midpoint of the rubber leg.



5. Push the needle through a foam square, going from edge to edge.



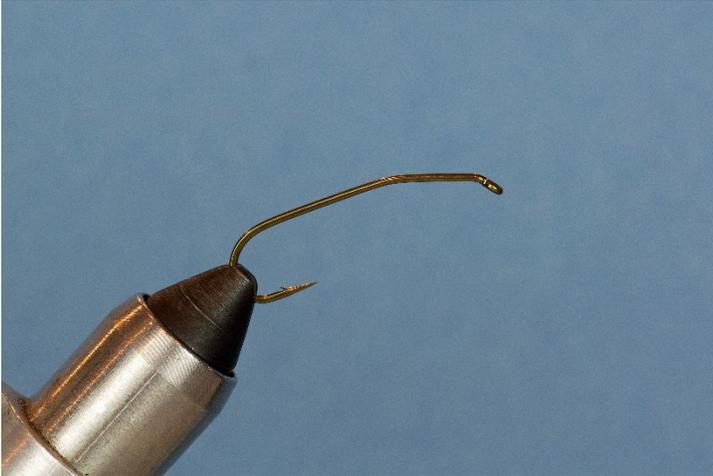
6. Use the needle to pull the rubber leg just barely through the foam square.



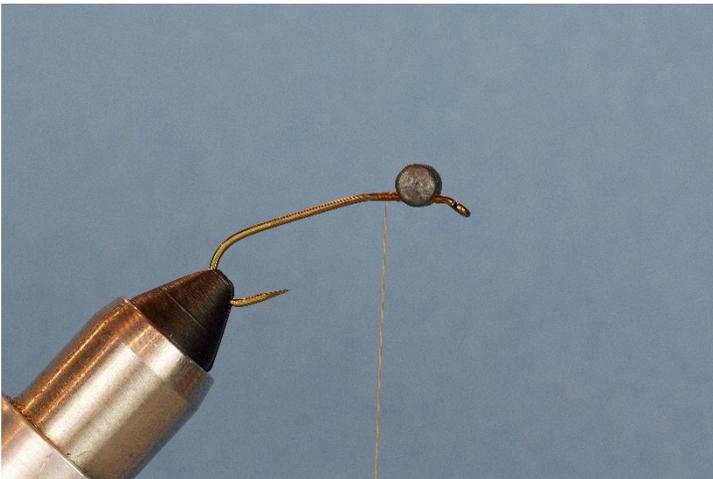
7. Cut the loop of rubber leg going through the eye of the needle to free the needle. Put a small amount of Super Glue on the foam where the rubber leg ends were pulled through.



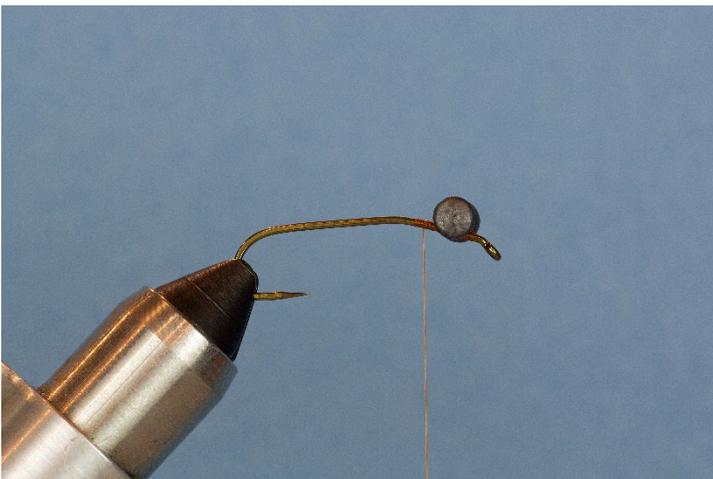
8. Allow the glue to dry overnight. Trim the tag ends of the rubber leg close to the foam. Trim a slight taper to the foam square.



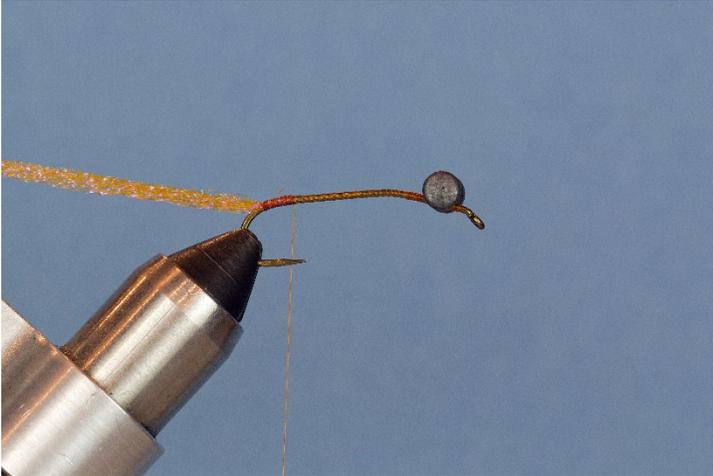
9. Mount the hook in the vise with the forward portion of the shank horizontal.



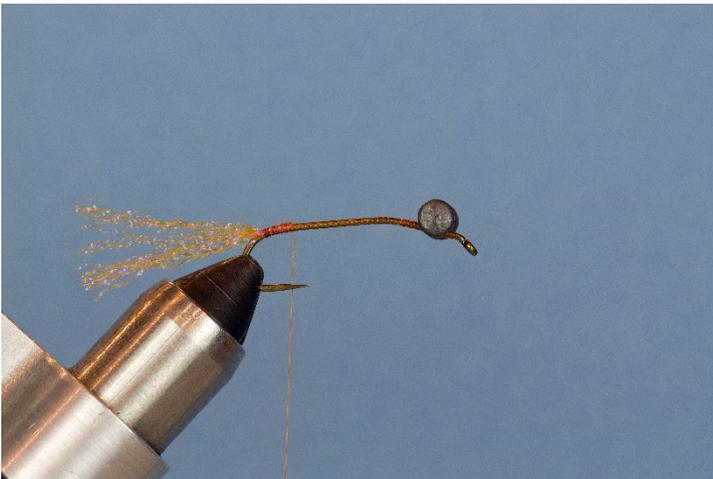
10. Start the thread and cover the horizontal portion of the hook shank. About one-third of the way from the hook eye to the bend in the shank, mount a set of lead dumbbells.



11. Reposition the hook in the vise so the rear portion of the hook shank is horizontal.



12. Wrap the thread back to about three or four wraps past the beginning of the bend. Tie in the Krystal Flash antennae by the tips.



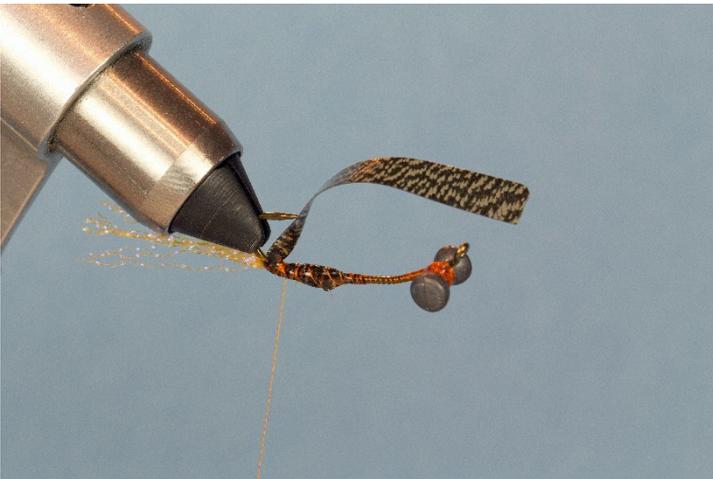
13. Trim the flash the same length as the distance from the dumbbells to the flash tie-in point.



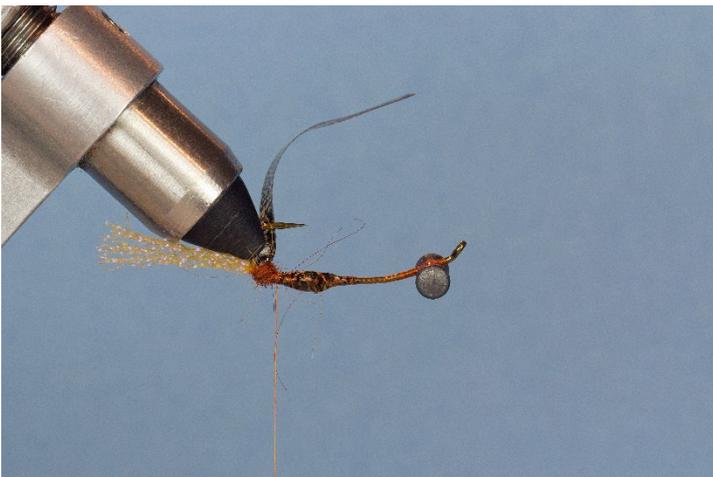
14. Cut a strip of Thin Skin slightly narrower than the width of the hook gap. Trim one end to a point.



15. Turn the fly over. At the midpoint of the rear portion of the bent hook shank, tie in the trimmed tip of the Thin Skin. Keep the Thin Skin as close to centered on the bottom of the hook shank (the bottom is facing up with the hook upside down) as possible. Wrap the edges of the Thin Skin down around the hook shank, and make loose wraps to the flash tie-in point.



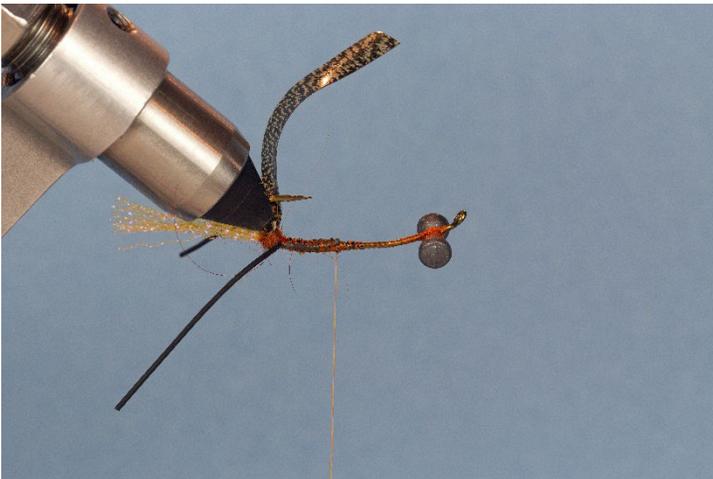
16. Gently pull and rotate the Thin Skin until it is directly on the bottom of the hook shank. Gently snug the thread wraps to secure the Thin Skin.



17. Make a few wraps of dubbing over the wraps, securing the Thin Skin.



18. At the point where the Thin Skin is tied in, tie in the middle of a strand of round rubber. Pull both ends of the round rubber toward the bend of the hook and begin wrapping back on both ends.



19. Hold one strand of round rubber on each side of the hook, and wrap back to the dubbing ball. Then move the thread back to the point where the round rubber was tied in.



20. Tie in a claw on one side of the hook, with the foam equal to or slightly longer than the tips of the flash. Wrap down the rubber portion of the claw all the way to the dumbbells and back to a point halfway between the hook point and the back of the dubbing ball.



21. Repeat Step 12, tying in a second claw on the opposite side of the hook. Move the thread to the dumbbells and tie in a length of yarn.



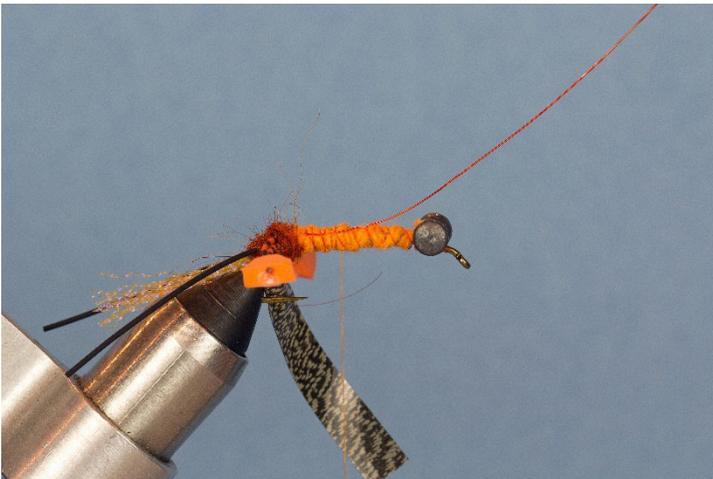
22. Turn the hook over. Wrap the yarn forward past the claws. Make a slightly larger head end, and figure-eight around the base of the claws.



23. Wrap the yarn back to the dumbbells and tie it off.



24. Trim off the excess yarn and move the thread back to the claws. Dub the area between the claws and the eyes and immediately in front of the claws. Figure-eight dubbing around the base of the claws.



25. Tie in a length of wire, with the long end of the wire extending forward past the eye.



26. Fold back the wire so the excess extends past the bend, and wrap back over the wire.



27. Tie in a hackle, then move the thread to the dumbbells.



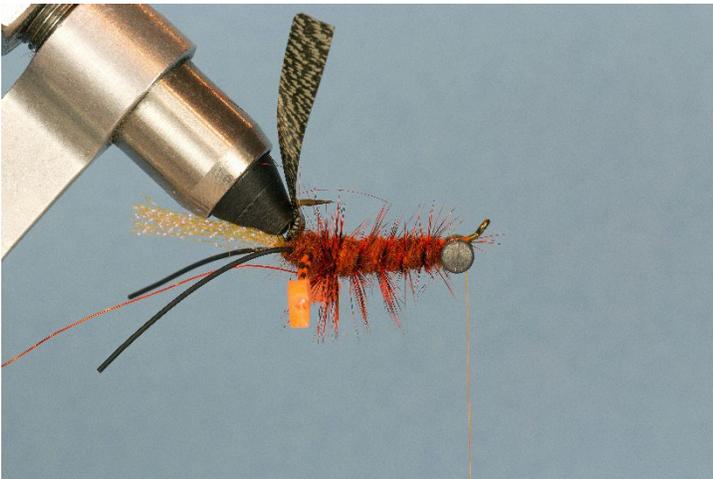
28. Dub the remainder of the body, ending with the thread at the dumbbells.



29. Palmer the hackle to the dumbbells and tie it off. Move the thread in front of the dumbbells.



30. Trim the excess hackle.



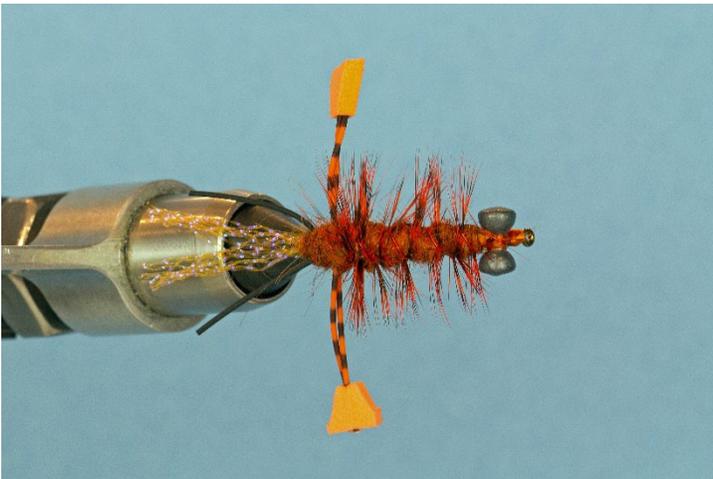
31. Turn the hook over.



32. Trim the hackle off the bottom of the hook (now facing up). Pull the Thin Skin forward over the body. Make sure the sides of the Thin Skin wrap down around the body, stretch slightly, and tie down in front of the dumbbells.



33. Trim the excess Thin Skin. Reverse wrap the wire; make the first wrap immediately in front of the claws. Tie off the wire and remove the excess. Make a neat thread head and whip-finish.



34. Trim the round rubber eyes just shorter than the antennae. Trim the hackle off the top of the hook beginning at the dumbbells and stopping halfway back.



35. Use a plastic-bristle dubbing brush to comb out the dubbing on the sides and top of the fly. Allow the brushed-out dubbing to mix with the hackle.



Ritt's Fighting Crayfish is effective in both still-waters and moving water. I've even used it successfully on the salt flats. It can be dead drifted, crawled or stripped. Experiment with your retrieve until you find what the fish will respond to.

Editors Notes: Comments from the editor.

Fly of the Month: Do you know someone who you think should be featured in the Fly of the Month? If so, feel free to refer them. If you have a camera and computer, you can write a Fly of the Month article to honor your favorite tier tying their best creation. For details contact the Fly Tying Group at ftg@flyfishersinternational.org.

Please note: The demonstration you are viewing makes no claim, implied or otherwise, that the presenter or demonstrator of the fly pattern was the original creator of the fly. This is the guest tier's version of this fly and it may differ from the creator's or other versions and variations.

Please Credit FFI Website or FFI Fly Tying Group Fly of the Month with any use of the pattern. You can direct any questions or comments to ftg@flyfishersinternational.org.