

UMBRELLA CALLIBAETIS



By Bob Bates

Now this is a strange looking hook and fly. Unlike some patterns, flies tied on this hook always lands upright. The point is down where it is first thing a fish hits when it strikes. The parachute under the body gives the fly plenty of support to float nicely. We don't have many fishing reports yet. However, one of our club members fished the Yakima River near Ellensburg, Washington in March and "Absolutely Crushed" the fish with his Umbrella Blue Wing Olive. Many times the fish will be hooked in the upper jaw. A lot of tiers around Washington are tying a variety of patterns on these hooks and catching fish with them. We should have more stories to tell later in the year. I haven't proved it yet, but I think that it will impale a fish trying to make a last microsecond refusal sometimes seen on heavily fished quality waters.

The hooks are made of high carbon steel, H80C for you technical types. They are strong and made with very sharp points. There is a choice of barbed or barbless (BL). They come in three sizes large, medium and small. The following size relationships are on the back of the package:

| | |
|--------|---------------|
| Large | #12, #10, #8 |
| Medium | #16, #14, #12 |
| Small | #20, #18, #16 |

The bold numbers above are bold on the package; I assume that it must be relate to the actual gap size. I am told that there is a midge size available for #22, #24 and #26 patterns.

In January, 2006 one of our friends, Stann Grater, set up and ran the Orvis booth at the huge fly fishing show in Somerset, New Jersey. While there, he watched a couple of Japanese fellows tying flies on the Elephant Proof Umbrella hooks. He learned how to tie the flies, was given a finished fly, found out how to order them and brought everything back to Swede's Fly Shop in Spokane, Washington. When Swede, a.k.a. Allen Peterson, saw the hook he immediately sent an e-mail to Japan and ordered a bunch of them. Swede displayed the sample fly in his shop, and put a picture of it on his website, www.swedesflyshop.com. Soon tiers all over Washington wanted the hooks. They are a little pricey, over, 50 cents each, but the umbrella hook idea is attractive enough to make it worthwhile.

These are new hooks and production is infinitesimal by normal standards. They will probably be in short supply for some time. I know Swede works hard to keep them in stock. It is difficult partly because of demand and partly because of the long delivery time.

The pictured fly is based on one of my *Callibaetis* styles. Species of the mayfly Genus *Callibaetis*, also known as "The Speckled Dun" by many anglers, are multibrooded. That is that there are up to three or four hatches each year, and hatches might happen from May to October. *Callibaetis* are most important in stillwaters, but they can be found in slow water stretches of many streams. The mayflies usually become smaller with each succeeding hatch. The common name comes from the distinctly speckle wing markings on the spinner, which makes you wonder about "Dun" in the name. Don't worry, one definition of "dun" is "mayfly."

Use a floating line and fish this pattern drag free in the surface film. Sometimes a little wiggle attracts the fish if they don't hit the drag free float.

Materials List:

Hook: Umbrella large, medium or small

Thread: Un-waxed, similar color to the body 3/0, 6/0 or 8/0

Body and tails: Duck flank or similar feather

Wings: Grizzly hen hackle tips

Hackle: Grizzly or similar feather, saddle hackle preferred

Tying Steps:



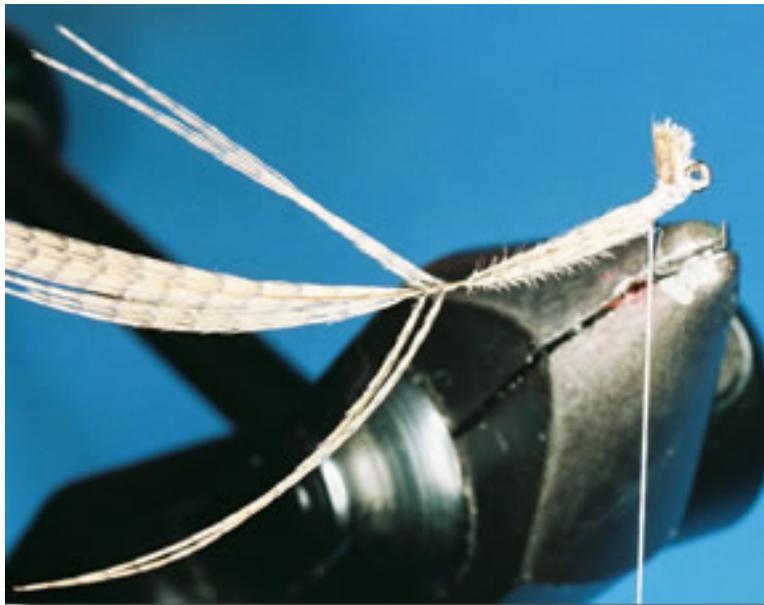
1. Place hook in vise so the part of the hook behind the eye is horizontal. Start thread at bend and wind forward to the eye and return to the bend. Trim tag and wind a small bump at the back of the body. This bump does two things: Helps make the body tip upward and helps stop the thread from moving backward as you pull the body rearward. See Step 4. Leave thread hanging just in front of bump.



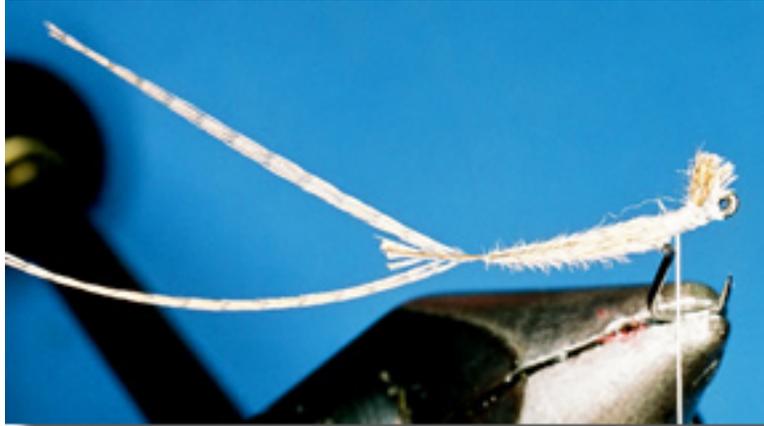
2. Select a duck flank feather and pull off the real fuzzy type stuff. Prepare the feather by holding the tip and stroking most of the barbs away from the tip. Besides separating the parts of the feather it exposes the shaft. Lay feather on hook with exposed shaft at front of thread bump. Put one wind of thread over the exposed shaft and let the bobbin hang.



3. Put a finger on side of hook to hold the one thread wind in place as you pull the feather away from the eye. As the feather slides under the thread the barbs are pulled into a narrow body. (With waxed thread it was more difficult to pull the feather, and I had to hold the thread between my thumb and first finger.) Secure body with thread winds in middle of body. Put a few thread winds under the back and front of the body to help them sweep upward. Leave thread near back of body. Trim excess feather at the eye leaving a little head like an Elk Hair Caddis



4. Separate two tail fibers from each side of the feather tip.



5. Hold tails toward eye as you cut out most of the tip, but leave a little of the tip to make sure the tails stay apart. Stroke the tail fibers back in place.



6. Select two hen hackles, match tips and put dark sides together so they separate at the tips. Place them on body with tips to rear and near the rear of the body. Switch hands holding the feather in place and cut the feathers at the eye. Move hand away from eye slightly and roll fingers back so the cut portion of the feathers separate. Slide feathers over the hook with one feather on each side and secure.



7. Stand up the wings by pushing them forward with your first finger. As you push on the base of the wings they should separate. Bring thread between the wings, and touching the base of a feather pull thread forward carefully to position it. Wind thread once around hook in front of wings. Move thread around back of the other wing, touching the base of the wing, and position it by carefully pulling the thread forward. Wind thread once around hook in front of wings. With a little practice the wings can be positioned with four winds of the thread.



8. Put a half hitch over the body, and take the hook out of the vise. Reposition it with the eye down and the part of the hook under the body horizontal. Move the thread to the now horizontal part of the hook and wind a smooth thread base away from the body to the next bend.



9. Prepare a hackle by cutting or stripping a few barbs off the stem. Hold the hackle with the dull side toward the hook, and the bare stem along the hook. Leave a little bare stem showing before the first thread wind securing the hackle. Wind thread over stem toward the body, and let it hang next to the body.



10. Pull the feather toward the body to put a kink in the stem, wrap feather around hook to the body and hold feather tightly as you secure it to the hook with several winds of thread. Half hitch thread at eye. A half hitch tool is handy since you are half hitching under the front of the body. Now you are ready to go fishing. Or if you want tie a few different patterns. See below.

UMBRELLA MIDGE



Midges or chironomids are prolific in most waters so you need to be ready when fish are feeding on them. Midges range in size from 12 to about 28, but usually I tie them in sizes 16 and 18. I guess the umbrella version should be tied in the same sizes. The body here is made a little wider by pulling the feather through my fingers instead of the thread loop, and then tied onto the hook. The tip was clipped off, so there are no long tails. A piece of Krystal Flash was tied on top of the hook so it will be in line with the center of the hackle when it is wrapped. Its two ends were pulled up together and posted to make them look like a single wing.

Materials List:

Hook: Umbrella hook medium or small.

Thread: Color to match body

Body: Duck flank or similar feather.

Wing: Krystal Flash, Hi-Viz or Antron, any color you can see.

Hackle: Grizzly, cream, dun, etc.

UMBRELLA HANK OF HAIR



This pattern is so easy to tie that you won't see it in a regular Fly of the Month article. I learned about the Hank of Hair in 1992 from Dr. Timothy Bywater (Then Dean, Division of Humanities & Social Sciences, Dixie College, St. George, Utah) while resting beside the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. Most important items in our two-hour conversation were about the Hank of Hair and its developer the late William (Bill) Cowen of Afton, Wyoming. (He died in 1985.) Bill was a discerning fly fisherman and developer of several flies that are similar to present day "must have" patterns. He told his friends about them, but he usually didn't promote them to the outside world.

Bill Cowen wrote an article about the Hank of Hair for the *Flyfisher* (Fall, 1971). He was trying to make a quick, easy-to-tie Muddler Minnow. However, with his first Hank of Hair, he recognized its potential as a dry fly, and decided to compare its effectiveness to that of the best popular flies with normal hackles. After one fishing season (1969) - about 150 days - Bill and his friends found that 75 percent of the time it hooked more fish.

When there wasn't a heavy hatch, the Hank of Hair was about the same as standard patterns. During a heavy hatch of larger flies, sizes 10 to 12, it was better at least 75 percent of the time. It was always superior when size 14 and smaller flies were hatching. The fly's most outstanding success came when it was tied sparsely and fished in the surface film or just sub-surface like a free floating nymph. The takes were solid and he had no problem hooking fish on size 18 and 20 flies.

Tying the Umbrella or original versions of the pattern I apply cement to hook and wind thread through it. Cut a small bunch of deer hair, clean out underfur and short hair, stack it if you want. Hold hair firmly on top of hook and wind thread around hook and hair. Pull thread tightly before releasing hair. Don't let it spin. Secure with a half hitch, apply cement to thread and half hitch again. Trim front hair.

This pattern is so effective and so easy to tie that it could put writers of fly tying articles, demonstration tiers at FFF Conclaves, commercial tiers and fly shops out of business. Fortunately most anglers prefer using more complicated patterns.

Hook: Umbrella large to small

Thread: Black, 6/0

Wing/Head: Deer body hair

14 UMBRELLA BLUE WING OLIVE

Tied by Leonard Gross



This is a copy of the fly that Leonard used on the Yakima River.

Hook: Umbrella, medium or small

Thread: Olive

Tails: Olive Microfibetts

Body: Dark olive thread

Wings: Coastal deer hair

Thorax: Medium olive dubbing

Hackle: Dyed light olive

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.
You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at flyofthemoth@fedflyfishers.org