

## YELLOW EAGLE



By Bob Bates

In at least one sense steelhead anglers have an easier life than trout anglers. They use big attractive flies and don't worry about size 18 to 32 insects. Gary Worden from Byron Center near Grand Rapids, Michigan tied this beautiful fish catching pattern at the 2007 FFF Show and Conclave. It sounded like he mainly fishes for steelhead in the Muskegon River which is not too far from his home. A sink tip line on the swing takes it a little below the surface. Usually there is no question about the take. A pattern like this is also attractive to salmon especially Coho. The rod Gary uses is a 9-foot 8-weight. If a person wanted to they could use a spey rod.

This pattern was developed by Jeff "Bear" Andrews and posted on his website in about 2005. It is supposed to be an off-shoot of the Eagle series of Atlantic Salmon patterns. However, it is a lot fuller than the gold tinsel and red floss bodies on Eagle patterns in one reference. A common factor, both had yellow wings.

### Materials List:

**Hook:** Alec Jackson Spey hook, size 1.5

**Thread:** Gudebrod 8/0, black

**Ribs:** Medium French oval tinsel, gold and silver (Gary frequently orders it from Irish Anglers.)

**Body:** Yellow Angora goat

**Collar:** Blood marabou with 2-inch long barbs

**2<sup>nd</sup> Collar:** Teal flank feather

**Wing:** Goose secondary, yellow

**Drooping:** Jungle cock

## Tying steps:



1. Line hook shank with thread and tie on oval tinsel ribs. Leave at least two eye lengths of bare shank behind eye.



2. Make about a 6-inch long dubbing loop and slip in little patches of yellow Angora Goat. (Gary uses a Pettejean Dubbing Twister. It lets him open the loop, stuff in the patches and then close it to hold them.) Wrap the dubbing forward as far as the first loop will go.



3. Another, shorter, dubbing loop was needed to finish the fly. Wrap the body forward to within two eye widths of the eye.



4. Wrap gold tinsel forward first and then the silver behind. 5 wraps is the standard for salmon and steelhead patterns. Before you tie off the tinsel, pull the covering off the thread core, and tease the core out a bit. This will let you tie it in flat, and it will be easier to cut. Trim excess tinsel.



5. Blood marabou is tied in by tip after cutting off a few barbs to leave a stubble that will help the thread lock in the feather. Trimming also eliminates wild fibers when the feather is tied in. Strip barbs off the side that will be against the hook as the feather is wound.



6. Make one or two wraps for a collar. Moisten fingers a little to pull the barbs back as the feather is wound. The moisture helps control the barbs. Trim excess.



7. The teal collar is usually tied in by tip, but this time the longer fibers are on the wrong side so it was tied in by stem. Strip barbs off the side of feather that will be against the hook. Make sure it is in tight and trim excess.



8. There were a few stray fibers at the head. Gary held his fingers around the fly and burned off the fibers. Then from a matched pair of yellow dyed goose secondary feathers he cut two 3/8-inch wide strips, one from each. Position the far wing so the tip is a little past the end of the hook. Have the dull side of the strip toward the inside, and take one thread wind to hold it in place. Tie on the near wing in a similar fashion. Secure wings and trim excess.



9. Select two long jungle cock feathers. Trim barbs on both feathers to get the proper length. Jungle cock is tied under the head of fly and hook. The drooping is set to point downward a little. (Gary commented that the head was too big because he was using 6/0 thread instead of 8/0) I bet it would still catch steelhead.

**Closing Comments:** This pattern takes a little longer to tie than many flies, but it is sure worth it when the fish start hitting. Gary said that it usually takes him 20 minutes to tie, but he admitted that he doesn't strive for speed. If you have steelhead or salmon, particularly Coho, in your area you will find that having a few of these will be worth the effort.

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