

## STIMULATOR



By Bob Bates

The Stimulator is a long time favorite for many anglers throughout the world. Its popularity is undoubtedly because of its versatility for many different situations. All that is needed is a change in size, 4 to 18, and color to make fish think that they are going after a huge spring *Pteronarcys californica* stonefly, a summer grasshopper or any season caddis. Even its developer Randall Kaufmann encourages variations in color and size. In *Tying Dry Flies*, 1991 Kaufmann says: “Even a subtle change, like thread color, sometimes seems to make a difference.”

Al Beatty, BT’s Fly Tying Products, <http://www.btsflyfishing.com>, tied this version at the Western Rocky Mountain Council (FFF) Fly Fishing Exposition in West Yellowstone, Montana, June 30, 2007. It is a proven fish getter that can be easily changed for fussy fish by something as simple as changing the color of the Touch Dubbing where it is used. Touch Dubbing, a sparkly Antron material, is available in a dozen colors. See LaFontaine Private Label, Helena, MT 800-874-4171 <http://thebookmailer.com/index.html>. You can make your own by cutting Antron yarn in 1/4-inch pieces and mixing it in a blender. The website claims that their material is “painstakingly prepared by elves.”

Fishing the Stimulator is a wide open opportunity. Use a floating line and cast so the fly drifts drag free. A reach cast sometimes does the trick. At other times a mend will be necessary, but mending should be done carefully so the fly isn’t moved out of a proper line to the fish. If there is no action on the drag free float then a twitch might be in order. Some anglers give the fish a choice of the big floating Stimulator and a nymph hanging below it. The Stimulator becomes a strike indicator so watch it carefully. There will not be the sound of a splash to attract your attention.

## Materials list:

**Hook:** Tiemco 200 R, sizes 4 to 18

**Thread:** 6/0 Brown

**Hackle:** Long saddle, brown or furnace

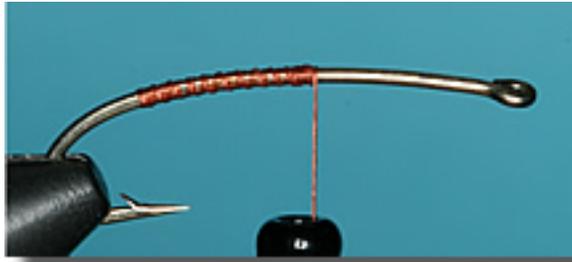
**Tail:** Elk hair

**Abdomen:** Peacock herl

**Highlights:** Touch Dubbing: light green, black or orange

**Wing:** Elk hair

## Tying Steps:



1. Make a thread base between mid shank and a point on the hook just in front of the barb.



2. Move thread to bend and tie on the feather for hackle by the butt. Al likes shiny side forward, but “It is important to make your materials do what you want them to do.” Return thread to mid shank. (While doing this Al talked about using Static Guard when tying with deer or elk hair. Spray it on materials and yourself. It avoids a lot of problems with hair sticking to things that it shouldn’t.) Cut off a bunch of elk hair, remove under fur, stack and place on top of hook so the tail is about 1-1/2 to 2 gap widths long’ Secure at mid shank. Wind thread to rear while holding the elk hair on top of the hook, and return thread to mid shank. Trim butts of elk hair on a slope.



3. Tie In three peacock herls by the tips on top of the elk hair. (Do not twist peacock herls.) Put some tacky dubbing wax on thread then tap the Touch Dubbing ball on the thread. Your fingers never have to touch the tacky thread. Make a dubbing loop, and put herls and thread loop parallel.



4. Since tying thread is at back of the hook bring the thread and feather forward together. Secure feather, and pull it back out of the way.



5. Cut another bunch of elk hair, remove under fur and stack. Place elk hair on hook so it will make a wing that extends to the end of the tail. Put 4 or 5 looser thread turns to control wing then wind tighter.



6. Cut butts of elk hair on a slope and wind thread tightly over the cut area. Leave the thread about an eye width behind the eye.



7. Put a little dubbing wax on thread, apply Touch Dubbing and wind thread rearward to just in front of wing.



8. Bring hackle that had been pulled back out of the way forward. Then advance feather and thread together. Secure feather, trim excess, shape a small head and put on a whip finish. Or you can put two thread winds on a half hitch tool and slip them onto the head. If you do this twice it is as good as a whip finish with a tool. A little head cement as a final touch is always a good idea.

**Closing comments:** Tie up some of these Stimulators to try on your next trip. If it is stonefly time tie big ones, if is hopper time maybe not so big and almost anytime for caddis size flies.

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](mailto:flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org)