

CHERNOBYL ANT, IMPROVED



Comments:

Chernobyl Ant: It catches fish, but there are a couple of problems with it. If it isn't tied perfectly the foam will rotate around the hook and the legs will slip out. Fish don't seem to mind if the foam is a little crooked. However, the fly tier does. Losing legs is another story. Jerry McBride, from Deer Lake, WA demonstrated an easy way to make the foam and legs stay in place at the 2011 Washington Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg, WA.

Jerry made these improvements some time ago, and the improved Chernobyl Ant has been in his arsenal ever since. It is useful in moving or still water. In lakes or ponds it is usually cast out and permitted to drift on the surface. Any wind or breeze will move it, and that movement will flex the legs to attract the fish.

In moving water the key is a "drag free float." Sometimes a drag free float can be achieved using a reach cast; that is by mending upstream and leaning your rod and body upstream before the line lands on the water. Once everything is on the water additional mends move the fly for me. After the fly passes additional line can be fed out to extend the drift. Jerry uses this pattern on the Westslope Cutthroat streams of northern Idaho where fishing conditions are usually pretty good during July through September. 20-inch cutthroats are rumored, but the largest one we caught during a tagging research project in 2003 was named NQ19 because it was "not quite 19 inches long." Jerry has measured 18-inch cutthroat.

Materials list:

Hook: Tiemco 5212 Size 10

Thread: Danville's Waxed Monocord 3/0

Underbody: Large dry fly hackle, trimmed

Body cutter: River Road Creations Beavertail-Style Foam Body Cutter Size 10-12

Body: Wapsi PF1100 Thin Fly Foam, 2 mm, Black

Legs: Spirit River Round Rubber Fine, Black

Indicator: Hareline Dubbin Para Post Wing PPW-142, Florescent Yellow

Tying steps:



1. Two things you can do before you put a hook in the vise are cut rubber legs in 2.5-inch pieces and cut out the foam bodies. Put an overhand knot in the middle of each rubber leg. Line hook with thread.



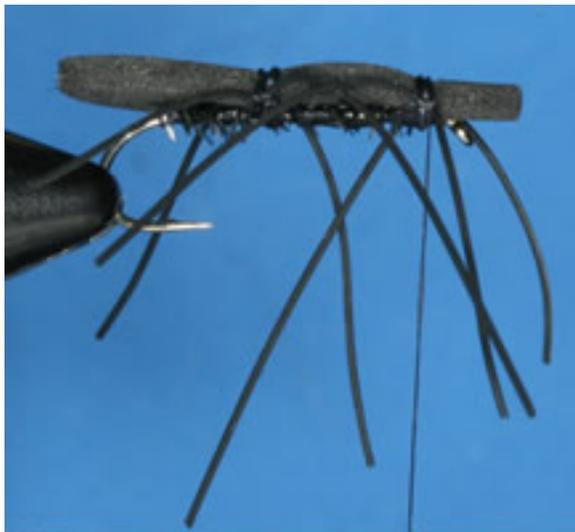
2. Pick a big hackle from a neck. It is one of the feathers that you would normally throw away. It doesn't make any difference if it is webby. Tie it on by the butt, run the thread forward, and then closely palmer the hackle forward and secure.



3. Trim it to look like a bottle brush.



4. Move thread to a point that is about 2/3rds shank length back from the eye. Brush plenty of super glue on the hook, position the foam so the tapered end is a little beyond the end of the hook. Push it down into the super glue, hold in place to let the super glue set a little. Put a loose wrap around the foam and hook and then two tighter wraps. Move the thread forward to a point about 2 or 3 eye lengths back from the eye. Put on a loose thread wrap followed by two tighter wraps and move it to the rear again.



5. Now come the legs. Take a leg fold it around the thread and move it to far side of hook. Put a thread wrap on each side of the knot. Repeat with near side leg. Move thread forward to first segment and repeat the steps with each front leg.



6. Trim legs to final length. Split poly yarn. Fold a one-inch piece of yellow poly around the thread, position it on top of body and put a few thread wraps around the base to bring the two halves together.



7. Put a couple more thread wraps at first segment, build a small head behind the eye, whip finish and trim thread. Trim indicator post to about 5/16-inch. Put head cement on head, under post indicator, under entire fly pay attention to thread wraps at each segment. Caution: If you use superglue for this do not get it on the legs! It will harden them and they will break off!

Closing comments: Here is a super Chernobyl Ant. It will last for catching many fish. If you practice catch and release like many of us do please land them quickly, keep them in the water and release them carefully. Then you or somebody else can play with them another day.

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