

# OSPREY FLY BOX

## THE "BIG UGLY"

by Terry Robinson

"It was one of those days that should have been a good day for fish".

The day started with a couple of touches, right then and there you figure that this was going to be one of those days where every cast would bring up something. We have all had days like that on the Skagit River.

Several hundred casts later, two to three miles of river bed and every fly that you thought would work hasn't. Mike Horton and I had put in a long day with very little results.

Not sure of what to use I resorted to using some flies that "what the heck, nothing else was working" I showed him what I was thinking about using and said "Why not?"

The very first cast was unexpected, a fish took the fly and I lost the fish. Several casts went by with a fish on every second or third cast.

Mike stayed with what he was using and I had a great day. In either disgust or contempt, Mike later dubbed the fly the "Big Ugly".

On another trip that I remember .... a club fishout on the Skagit .... Steve Hanson was not having much luck with what he was using. I gave him one of my flies and he was into fish almost right away.

I don't know why it works, but it does.

**Editor's Note:** I've been up to the Skagit River on three club fish-outs. At the end of the day, Terry has consistently caught more fish than anyone else. When asked his secret .... what fly he was using .... his answer was always the same .... The "Big Ugly". So what's the moral of the story ..... we should all have a few "Big Ugliers" in our fly box .... for when nothin' else is workin'.



*Skagit River Rainbow Trout caught on the "Big Ugly".  
(Computer generated watercolour painting by Terry Robinson)*

### MATERIALS & INSTRUCTIONS



Thread: Black

Hook: Mustad 94840, Size #8 or #10

Butt: Anything red in a small portion. Sometimes I just wind thread on the hook. On this fly, I used red polar bear hair.

Body: Peacock herl

Wings: Grizzlie hackle tips.

Collar: Grizzlie Hackle.

**TYING INSTRUCTIONS**



Debarb the hook.  
Wrap the shank of the hook with thread.  
Tie in a small amount of red polar bear hair and clip just beyond the end of the hook.



Tie in two strands of peacock herl.



Wrap the peacock herl forward, leaving room to tie in wings and full collar.



Select two matching grizzlie tips for wings.  
Tie the wings on each side curving out.  
Make the wings a little longer than normal. This helps keep the fly out of the water while the hook end is in the water, "emerger style".



Strip away the barbs from the stem below the mounting point of a couple hackle feathers.  
Clip the butts of the hackle feathers.

*The Finished Fly*



Wrap the hackle forward to the eye of the hook forming a full collar.  
Whip finish and apply a drop of head cement.

*The "Big Ugly"*