

The Osprey Fly Box

by Will Wright

“Cutthroat/Coho Spider”

If you're an observant reader you might notice a subtle change in the name of this portion of the newsletter this month. This was done to reflect what I had in mind for this page, a place where club members can share tales of successful patterns with others in the club. Everyone has at least a few favourite flies and as seasons change I'll be calling upon you to submit something as the subject for “The Osprey Fly Box”. When nothing comes up I'll look for ideas elsewhere, including 30 years worth of newsletters, but if everyone gave just one pattern, we'd have enough for five years worth of newsletters, so how bout it folks?

Having not had a whole lot of luck in the pursuit of the elusive coho salmon, I got this month's pattern from **Peter Caverhill** who's shown it to us before at tying sessions. It's a fly he's had great success with over the years, here's his **Cutthroat/Coho Spider**.

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| Hook: | Tiemco 2312 |
| Thread: | To match body and sub collar |
| Body: | Rear 60% - silver or gold tinsel Front 20% - fine ultra chenille |
| Sub Collar: | Polypropylene (orange, yellow or chartreuse.) |
| Main Collar: | Mallard or wood duck flank or breast feather. |
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This fly is patterned roughly after the spider flies developed decades ago for cutthroat trout by the late Al Knudsen. Peter prefers to use holographic silver tinsel for the body and likes to tie it in various colours including yellow, orange and chartreuse, having had the best luck with the first two. He ties them mostly in sizes 6 and 8 and feels you shouldn't be afraid to use the smaller size for coho, the important thing is to watch the fly's proportions. Peter feels the key to the success of this pattern is the sub collar, which prevents the main collar from conforming to the body when stripped so the hackle pulsates as the fly is stripped toward the expectant angler.

Peter offers some advice for the first time tier of this pattern. The sub-collar should be half the body length, tie in an appropriate clump and spin it around the hook as you would spin deer hair. The polypropylene does not compress well so don't use too much or you'll end up with a big ugly fat head or end up crowding the hook eye not leaving enough room for a nicely tapered head. The hackle is then tied in by the tip and wound “spider” fashion by stroking the fibers so that their natural curvature cups around the hook and the materials that you've already tied in.

It's getting hard to find chartreuse and bright orange poly yarn in fishing stores. Department and craft stores sell it as Phentex, but either they don't sell those colours or it's not made any more. If you ever come across it, be sure to snap it up and save some for me!

Pete says, “*I have fished this fly very effectively in fairly slack water conditions in both rivers and in marine estuaries or beaches on an intermediate sink line (such as a S.A. Stillwater) and floating lines. The retrieve should be experimented with, however, most of my success has been with short fairly rapid pulls.*”

I guess my most memorable experience with this fly was during a foray to hard to get to (but not far away) estuary in November. We couldn't effectively reach the rolling coho salmon from the beach so we employed our good old float tubes to sneak within casting range of the fish. For several days, at just the right stage of the up-tide, we caught and released dozens of coho from several to nearly 10 pounds! Most of these were bright screamers. It was hard to disguise our continuously bent rods from the prying eyes of drivers making their way along the local road just above the beach. Almost all of this success was on this graceful spider pattern.”