

Phil's Flybox

By Phil Rowley

Marabou Prawn

When it comes to winter steelhead patterns there are few styles as popular as prawn imitations. Favorites such as the General Practitioner and the Squamish Poacher immediately come to mind. Conventional gear fishers know the value of ghost shrimp as bait. On the West Coast many fly fishers use prawn imitations to represent ghost shrimp or "bugs" as there are affectionately called. Tyson Gogel is one such fly fisher. A member of the Totem Fly Fishers and full time employee of Ruddick's fly shop Tyson has devoted himself to the pursuit of the anadromous steelhead. Every year Tyson wields his two handed Spey rods for steelhead on rivers such as the Dean, Squamish, Thompson and those of the Skeena drainage.

As with other innovative steelhead fly fishers Tyson developed his own fly patterns including a number of prawn or ghost shrimp imitations. When I asked for a sample of his work Tyson was quick to reach for his Marabou Prawn. A pattern born out of Tyson's desire for a dark pattern that provided a large silhouette. The Marabou Prawn is a busy design reminiscent of a General Practitioner with a few modern materials thrown in for good measure.

The tail is a mixture of black and purple polar bear. Bucktail makes a great substitute. For added sparkle and glitter Tyson includes a sparse amount of black and pearlescent Krystal Flash. A single yellow Golden Pheasant tail feather tops the tail section providing a traditional touch. The body section is crowded; Tyson stresses not to overdress the pattern despite its complexity, as this tends to kick the fly over onto its side. As with the General Practitioner the body is made up of two identical sections consisting of a dubbed body ribbed with large pearlescent Mylar followed up with a black saddle hackle. Tyson's favorite material for the body is Poul Jorgenson's Purple Haze SLF a bright mixture of many colors. At the mid point on the fly Tyson incorporated dyed orange Golden Pheasant tippet spread around the hook shank. For movement a single clump of black marabou extending back onto the tail forms a mid point wing. Silicone rubber legs provide additional jiggle while adding a touch of nastiness. Tyson prefers a combination of black and purple legs while I like the Halloween look of black and orange. Vary the leg length so the fly pulses throughout. With the rear body complete make an identical second body section. It is critical not to let the rear section go past the halfway point or you'll quickly run out of room. Complete the fly by adding two more pairs of rubber legs, another black marabou wing, and two long strands of pearlescent Krystal Flash for the antenna. Two bright red golden pheasant rump feathers form a finishing hackle. As a bright alternative substitute the black wing for one of burgundy marabou. Tyson's favorite size range runs from #6 through 2/0. As a change from traditional steelhead hooks Tyson also ties the Marabou Prawn using a split body Waddington style and 25-45 millimeter metal tubes. The tube fly version is Tyson's favorite when conditions dictate a fly with a huge silhouette.

Tyson uses a two handed rod for his steelhead fishing in conjunction with 5 to 30 foot Type IV through VI sink tips depending upon conditions. Using a traditional down and across presentation Tyson systematically covers likely looking water in the hopes of dredging up steelhead from their sullen lies. Mend the line as necessary to ensure a thorough deep drift. Swing the fly tight the bank and leave it hang there for a few seconds. Steelhead are known for following a fly right to the shore before striking.

MARABOU PRAWN

Hook:	Tiemco 7999 #6-2/0
Thread:	Black 6/0
Tail:	Black Polar Bear or Bucktail over Purple Polar Bear or Bucktail. Mix in a sparse amount of Black and Pearlescent Krystal Flash. Top with a single Yellow Golden Pheasant Feather
Rear Body Section:	Purple Haze SLF Dubbing ribbed with large pearlescent Mylar and Palmered with a black saddle feather
Mid Body Section:	Dyed Orange Golden Pheasant Tippets fanned around the rear body section. Two Pairs of Silicone legs are tied in on each side of the body.
Mid Wing:	Black or Burgundy Marabou
Front Body Section:	Same combination as the rear body section
Front Legs:	Two pairs of silicone rubber legs (see text for colour)
Front Wing:	Black or Burgundy Marabou
Antenna:	Two long strands of Pearlescent Krystal Flash
Hackle:	Two Large Bright Red Golden Pheasant Rump Feathers

Step 1

Cover the hook with tying thread. Tie in a sparse clump of purple polar bear or bucktail. Follow this clump up with a similar amount of black polar bear or bucktail. Try not to stack the tail hair an uneven tail is more natural looking. Add a few strands of black and pearlescent Krystal Flash. Stagger cut the Krystal Flash so it shimmers throughout the tail. Finally select a yellow Golden Pheasant feather. Stroke the tips together and tie it in as a tail topping. This topping should extend back about halfway along the tail. The finished tail should be shank length.



Step 2

Take a large black saddle feather hold it by the tip with the shiny side facing towards you. Strip the barbules from the left side of the feather. Tie in the prepared saddle hackle tip first followed by a length of pearlescent Mylar. Form a dubbing loop insert the dubbing and twist it tight. Wind the dubbing noodle forward and cover the rear half of the hook. Be careful not to go past the halfway point or a crowd fly will result.



Step 3

Spiral the pearlescent Mylar rib forward in even open turns. Tie it off at the midpoint and trim the excess. Palmer the black saddle feather forwards along the **back** edge of Mylar rib to help protect the fragile feather stem.



Step 4

Take a dyed orange Golden Pheasant tipper feather trim out the tip section and remove the unbarred portions of the lower feather. Tie the feather in place along the top portion of the hook so the tips extend back to the tail if possible. Massage the feather so the tips radiate and encompass the upper half of the fly. Repeat this process tying in a second Golden Pheasant tippet feather along the underside of the hook. Double a silicone rubber leg strand around the tying thread. Slide it into position on the far side of the hook and secure in place. Do the same for the near side pair of legs. Trim the legs so they extend to the rear of the tail.

**Step 5**

Strip a clump of black marabou fibers from a marabou plume and tie them in place as a wing. Chose a bushy marabou feather for the illusion of bulk without volume. Wooly Bugger marabou works great for this.

**Step 6**

Prepare the front body section of dubbing, black saddle and a pearlescent Mylar rib in the same fashion as the rear section. With the front section completed tie in a second wing of black marabou. The tips of the second wing should extend a least halfway up the first wing.

**Step 7**

Double a single strand of pearlescent Krystal Flash around the tying thread and tie it into position on the top of the hook. Trim these Krystal Flash antennae about equal with the end of the tail. Tie in additional silicone rubber legs along each side of the fly in the same manner as those tied in at the mid shank. Let these legs trail back to the end of the tail. The varied leg lengths provides varied movement and life.

**Step 8**

Select two red Golden Pheasant rump feathers. Lay them one on top of each other shiny side to dull side and strip away the flue and fluff from the base of the feathers. Tie the feathers in by their tips to reduce bulk wet fly style with the shiny side of the feathers facing outwards. Wind the hackle 2 to 3 times tie off and trim the excess. Spin the tying thread counter clockwise to untwist it and build a neat head sweeping the hackles back in the process. Whip finish and apply head cement.



**Got a favorite pattern you would like to share with fellow club members? Please let me know and I will feature it in a future issue. -
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