# OSPREY FLY BOX

## B.C. Stickleback

*contributed by*

**Terry Bragg**

### *Here is a fly for Cutthroat Enthusiasts!*

Fishing with Bill Lee and Peter Chatt on the Harrison, several years back, I beached a nice Cutthroat and noticed some small minnows coming out of its mouth.

I released the fish and on further examination of the minnows I noticed sharp spikes protruding from the dorsal fin area, which was my first introduction to the B.C. Stickleback.

Stickleback occur in freshwater lakes and streams and in marine waters along northern coastlines of the northern hemisphere. Five species of stickleback are found in Canada.

Canadian sticklebacks are most diverse in the Maritimes but occur in all provinces and territories. Brook and nine spine sticklebacks are common from the prairies to Québec. Three spine sticklebacks, well known in Europe, occur along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts; some populations enter the ocean, while others live only in fresh water a short distance inland. The other 2 species are confined to the East Coast.

Sticklebacks derive their common name from a row of spines along the back and their scientific name from a bony plate beneath the stomach area that supports 2 pelvic spines. In a few areas of their range (particularly in Western Canada), some sticklebacks belonging to 3 species fail to develop pelvic spines. Three spine sticklebacks show a wide diversity of forms. Sticklebacks rarely exceed 8 cm in length and range in colour from green to black, with a silver underbelly.

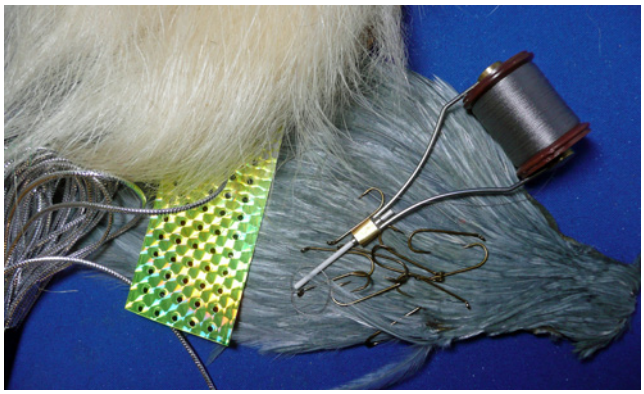


*Three Spine Stickleback*

Despite their spines, which in some situations function to deter predators, sticklebacks can be important in the diet of other fish and birds.

The following is my interpretation of the Stickleback..

## Materials



| | |
|---|---|
| **Hook:** | Mustad 3671<br>Size: #6 |
| **Thread:** | Grey 6/0 |
| **Head:** | Gray Thread - epoxied. |
| **Eyes:** | Stick On Eyes |
| **Tail:** | Extention of Silver Mylar |
| **Body:** | Silver Mylar Tubing |
| **Under Wing:** | Natural Polar Bear |
| **Over Wing:** | 2 Light Blue Dun Hackle Tips |

## Tying Instructions

*Photography by Peter Chatt*




- Debarb the hook.
- Wrap a gray thread base on the hook.
- Pull the center out of the silver mylar tubing.
- Unravel ½ inch of the mylar tubing and pull over the hook.
- Cut to length.
- Tie down at bend of hook and whip finish.

## Tying Instructions *(continued)*




- Tie in the Mylar Tubing behind the eye of the head.
- Build a thread head.




- Tie in a few hairs of natural polar bear as an under wing.
- Clip the excess.




- Tie in two matched Blue dun feathers, left and right, over the polar bear.
- Finish the thread head.




- Flatten the head with smooth pliers.
- Stick an eye on to each side of the head.
- Coat the head with epoxy.




- Put on a drying wheel until epoxy is dry.

*The Finished Fly*




*B.C. Stickleback*

- Stickleback .... a cutthroat staple .... especially before salmon fry begin to emerge.