

The Osprey Flybox

“Alberta Stone”

Thanks to **Phil Rowley** for sharing the pattern he had success with at the December fish out on the Harrison, sorry I missed it!

“There are times when the “matching the hatch” philosophy is not working or perhaps even not recommended. Such was the case at our last club fish out on the Harrison River. After scrambling down the hill to the base of the bridge that crosses the Harrison we were soon upon one of my favourite spots on this river, the boom sticks or dolphins northeast of the bridge. No sooner had guest Dave Marshall, son Brandon and myself begun taking our first steps upstream towards French Creek when a familiar soft ring caught my eye, cutthroat! After studying the rise for a few minutes it was soon followed by a second. We soon spread ourselves along the muddy bank and began working our flies towards these fish. On about the second cast I felt a delicate almost non-confident pluck at my tied down minnow pattern. The minnow pattern had made sense as there were abundant schools of small stickleback and chub fry milling about the shallows. Buoyed somewhat by the half-hearted take I continued to methodically work the water but with each cast I began to lose confidence in my choice of fly. It was time for a change.

Besides an abundant baitfish population the Harrison also has a plentiful population of Golden Stones. The relatively large predaceous nymphs of this family scurry amongst the deadfall remnants from years of logging operations. Turning over logs near shore often reveals a number of these mottled yellow and brown nymphs wedged into the cracks and crevices in a vain attempt to hide from view. Golden Stone nymphs are also common inhabitants throughout the main stem Fraser and should be considered as a primary pattern consideration for any serious Fraser Valley cutthroat fly fisher.

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| Hook: | Mustad R 74 #6-#10 |
| Thread: | Brown Gudebrod 8/0 |
| Tail: | Brown Goose Biots |
| Rib: | Fine Copper Wire |
| Shellback: | Brown Pheasant Tail |
| Body, Thorax: | Mustard Yellow Seal's Fur |
| Wingcase: | Brown Pheasant Tail (Left over remnants from shellback) |
| Legs: | Golden Brown Super Floss |
| Head: | Gold Bead |





Auditing my fly box my eyes fell upon a recent addition to its ranks, the Alberta Stone. I first saw this pattern in a recent edition of Northwest Fly Fishing. Noted Alberta author Jim McLennan had provided an interesting article on Alberta's Oldman River and his Alberta Stone was the featured pattern. I immediately liked the simplicity of his design along with its creative use of Super Floss for the legs. So when it came time to restock my Cutthroat box it only made sense to add a compliment of Alberta Stones. Not being one to let well enough alone I had to make a few modifications based upon my own personal preferences and material availability. First of all, the pattern just begged for a gold bead for added attraction and weight. I substituted the mottled turkey shellback and wing case for one of brown pheasant tail, simply because it was within easy reach on my fly bench. The yellow antron dubbing was also replaced with mustard yellow seal's fur and when used in conjunction with the brown tying thread created a golden brown hue common to the nymphs I have observed. Finally I swapped the yellow Super Floss legs for golden brown Super Floss, again feeling that they better complimented the overall colour scheme I was after.

Within a few casts of knotting on a number eight Alberta Stone my cast was interrupted mid swing by an aggressive jolt of a late December Cutthroat. This success carried on for the balance of the morning as I caught and released three more Cutthroat. Our strategy was simple, look for active rising fish and every time I drifted or stripped the Alberta Stone through their ranks I was rewarded with a confident take. I guess it pays sometimes break ranks and dare to be different."

