

Osprey Flybox

"Bionic Worm"

By Bob Bates and Ron Pantzar

Many years ago Ron Pantzar of Spokane, Washington examined the weeds on his anchor and found several 1- to 1-1/2-inch long bloodworms. The largest he had ever seen. That evening he tied something to look like them. The next day an unbelievable number of fish fell for the new creation. It was astounding since the trout in this Central Washington quality lake were pretty fussy. Naturally Ron and his three friends kept quiet about the new pattern as they improved it.

After a decade or more the name Bionic Worm leaked out, and the question "Do you know how to tie the Bionic Worm?" was asked often in the fly shops. Finally the pattern came out in a magazine, but it was attributed erroneously to another tier. It was also published in *Flies of the Northwest*, 1998, by the Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club. Now the rest of us knew what it looked like and how to tie it.

Early versions of the fly were tied on an English bait hook or scud hook. Improvements flourished: A bead was added to make it sink faster, a gold hook was used to add a glow or sparkle, a fluorescent bead was used and finally a gold rib was added. Whatever the variation it caught fish in lakes and in rivers. Many of us are still using the original pattern as well as several of the variations. Frequently the Bionic Worm was responsible for fooling the larger fish.

Enough history, how do you fish it? Most people use a floating line, strike indicator and enough tippet to suspend the fly near the bottom or weeds. Using a loop knot such as the Duncan Loop to attach the fly will let the fly move more freely. Varying the depth is always a good tactic. A little chop on the water makes the fly move and the offset in the hook makes it twist a little. Any movement will give action to the marabou tail. Once the fly is down it is an important for the angler to watch the bobber (sorry strike indicator). Set the hook when the strike indicator goes down or moves in any strange way. If your attention wanders to watch a bird, talk to a friend or pour a cup of coffee, the strike indicator will be coming up when you look back at it.

The original rule on this type of fishing was to throw directly down wind and don't move the fly. Now that best anglers say to vary the cast direction relative to the wind, but do a little mending from time to time to reduce the bow in the line. If it is a dead calm situation use a slow irregular hand twist retrieve.

Ron tied the flies for the pictures.

Materials & Equipment:

Hook: Gold Kahle hook, Eagle Claw 143G, sizes 10 and 12

Bead: Gold, 1/8-inch, optional

Thread: Red 6/0

Tail: Marabou, red, pink or maroon

Body: Red V-rib (transparent) medium or small

Rib: Gold wire, optional

Step 1: Debarb hook to make threading on the bead easier. If the bead has a larger hole on one side than the other have the smaller hole toward the hook eye.



Step 2: Attach thread a little behind the barb. Tie in a small clump of marabou for the tail.



Step 3: Trim the V-rib to a sharp point with a razor blade and a block of wood.



Step 4: Nice sharp point on V-rib



Step 5: Attach V-rib to hook securely by the point. Stretch the V-rib as you are doing this. If it breaks, trim and tie on a new piece. Tie in gold rib if you wish. Spiral the thread forward to the bead. Let as much of the gold hook show as possible.



Step 6: Pull on V-rib, wrap it forward to bead, secure and trim excess. If a gold rib was attached, wrap it forward between each wrap of V-rib, secure and trim. Wind a small head behind the bead, whip finish, trim thread and cement.



Orange and other colors of V-rib have been used, but red seems to be the most successful. Also other bead colors including fluorescent orange have been used. This fly has caught so many fish for me that I am reluctant to add it to the FFF Fly of the Month. So please carefully release the fish you hook so they can grow up and play with you or some other angler another day.

(Pattern courtesy FFF Website, with permission from Bob Bates of the Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club, Spokane Washington)

If you have a pattern you'd like to share with club members, let us know and we'll put it in a future issue. Call Doug at 604-930-1112 or email him at dougwright@telus.net