

OSPREY FLY BOX

BUNNY SCULPIN

contributed by

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I had dropped into SeaRun's Annual Sale which was the day before the annual joint fish-out on the Squamish River with the totems. I had seen the Sculpin Helmet before and thought they looked kind of neat. Brian had told me that they were quite popular with anglers targeting bull trout.

At 20% off, I figured "Why not - let's give it a try." I bought a packages - googled Sculpin Patterns on the internet - and sat down at the tying bench.



The Sculpin Helmet was designed with a realistic, flat and broad profile to imitate various types of bottom-dwelling fish species such as sculpins, gobies, salamanders and baby catfish. The Sculpin Helmet is heavy ... so that it will sink quickly in fast moving rivers and fish deeper near the bottom where Sculpins typically live. It comes in three sizes - Mini (0.55 grams) for hook sizes #8 through #2; Small (1.38 grams) for hook sizes #6 through #1; and Large (2.98 grams) for hook sizes #2 through #2/0.



Flies tied with the Sculpin Helmet™ are designed to fish deep with the hook riding in the "hook up" position to avoid getting caught on the bottom. Therefore, the Sculpin Helmet is made so that 70% of it's weight and the center-of-gravity is situated below the shank of the hook. This heavily weight "keel" or bottom gives a "dumbbell effect" to the fly which means it will always ride in the hook up position and track straight.

MATERIALS



Hook:	TMC 9394 - Size #4
Thread:	Black 6/0
Tail:	Rabbit Zonker - Two tone - Olive/Black
Flash:	Olive Polar Flash #2016
Body:	Cross Strip Rabbit - Olive
Gill Plate:	Webby Grizzly Hackle (trimmed)
Throat:	Red Flashabou
Head:	Mini Sculpin Helmet - Olive
Other:	Zap a Gap

When I googled "sculpin head fly patterns", the images of dozens of patterns flashed across my screen - some articulated - some on single hooks - but the majority seemed to be using rabbit strips for the tail and often the body as well.

In light of the fact that I only had an hour to tie up a few flies, I didn't want to anything too complicated, let's go with a single streamer hook, rabbit strips and a bit of flash. I'd bought two colours of sculpin helmets - olive and silver - so I tied up a couple sculpin patterns in each colour.



As "visions of bulltrout and steelhead danced through my head", I tied on an Olive Bunny Sculpin and we headed

for river. In the upper Squamish, I had never had the pleasure of landing a fish but then, I don't fish it that often. We were on Rudy's favourite run. He dropped in and I would fish behind him.

I started off in the tail-out which was fairly heavy water. I'd cast out and let the fly swing, then slowly strip the fly in. On the third cast, something grabbed my hook ... not a rock, this thing's moving then a flash of silver as it turned in the river. A fish on



and Henri hadn't even got to the river yet.

Unfortunately, when I grabbed the fish by the tail for the "grip and grin photo", the hook came out of the fish's mouth. A quick lung and the fish skittered

away through the rocks. A large Rainbow, in Rudy's opinion; Rick thought it was probably a Steelhead. Let's go with Steelhead!

TYING INSTRUCTIONS



The Finished Fly

Bunny Sculpin

- Debarb the hook.
- Lay a thread base down along the entire length of the hook.
- Prepare a short piece of Olive Rabbit Zonker. Pierce with point of hook and slide on - fur down as this fly rides hook up in the water.
- Tie the zonker strip in above the point of the hook.



- Tie in a two or three strands of Olive Polar Flash on each side of the tail.
- Prepare a length of cross strip rabbit fur and tie in at rear of hook.
- Wind the thread forward to the tie off point.

NOTE: the tie off point will be approximately 1/4" behind the eye of the hook. Room must be left for the Sculpin Helmet.

- Wind the rabbit strip forward to the tie off point. Stroke the fur back with each turn, insuring that there is no overlap. Clip the excess.
- Tie in a two or three strands of Olive Polar Flash on each side of the body.
- Select a pair of short (*the shorter and uglier, the better*) webby olive grizzly hackle feathers. Strip off the base and trim so that you have rounded top.

- Tie one feather (*shiny side in*) on each side of the body. Note this is opposite to the way you'd normally tie feathers in. Ideally, these feathers will flare out as the fly swims in the water.
- Tie in several strands of red flashabou for the throat. **NOTE:** These are tied on top of the hook, as the point rides up when being fished.
- Build the head up with thread. Slide the sculpin helmet on to ensure it is snug. If loose, continue to build the head up until you have a snug fit.

- Whip finish and clip the thread.
- Add a couple drops of Zap-a-Gap to the thread head and slide the Sculpin Helmet back on.
- Re-attach the thread and build up in front of the Sculpin Helmut. Whipfinish and clip thread.
- In the Sculpin Helmet, there are indentations for the eyes. Paint these indentations with Zap-a-Gap.
- Place an eye (*they are included with the Sculpin Helmets*) in each indentation.
- Set aside until the Zap-a-Gap has completely dried.

Tight Lines & Good Fishing