

# OSPREY FLY BOX

## NORTHERN B.C. COPPER JOHN

contributed by  
Danie Erasmus

The Copper John fly is the brainchild of John Barr, well-known fly designer for Umpqua merchants. The first time I saw this fly in an issue of Fly Fisherman I immediately realized its potential. This fly has a number of attributes that make it a successful nymph imitation - it is uncomplicated and it sinks fast into the feeding zone of trout.

The fast sinking is due to the tungsten bead head, the lead wire in the thorax and the use of copper wire instead of lighter weight materials such as dubbing for the abdomen. This fly also has an overall smooth appearance that causes it to sink faster. Flies with a 'buggy' appearance where the fibres from dubbed bodies are sticking out have extra resistance causing it to sink slower.

I have changed this fly slightly to suit a few of my own needs. In the original design a straight shank hook is used. I changed

this to a curved hook. A curved hook will drift point upwards when weighted and tied to tippet with a knot that allows the fly to move freely. A non-slip loop knot is good for this. The main advantage of a hook point riding upwards is that you will have fewer bottom snags and therefore losing fewer flies. I also changed the materials for the legs. The original design calls for Hungarian Partridge feathers for legs, I switched to goose biots as I believe that this will also allow the fly to sink faster as they cut through the water and provide less resistance. I also use metal tinsel for the shellback instead of Thinskin or Scud back and I do not add epoxy.

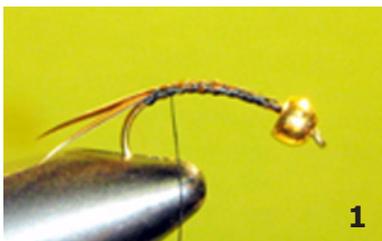
This fly has been very effective for both rainbow trout and mountain whitefish in rivers like the Stellako and Blackwater. It is most effective when dead drifted using either long line or short line nymphing methods. I typically tie this fly on size 10 to 16 hooks in a variety of colours.

### MATERIALS



- Hook:** Tiemco 2487 or equivalent - #10 to #16
- Thread:** Black - 6/0
- Weight:** 1/8 Tungsten gold bead and 0.025 lead wire. Down size the bead and lead wire for smaller hooks.
- Tail:** Two dark brown goose biots
- Abdomen:** Medium wine coloured copper wire. Use size small wire for flies tied onto size 12-16 hooks.
- Thorax:** Three strands of peacock herl
- Shellback:** Gold Tinsel
- Legs:** Two dark brown goose biots.

### TYING INSTRUCTIONS



- Pinch barb of the hook and slide on the gold bead.
- Tie in two dark brown goose biots for the tail. The tail should be approximately 1/2 hook shank length long.

- Wrap 0.025 lead wire around the front 1/3 of the hook shank to form the thorax.
- Tie in medium wine coloured copper wire on the back 2/3 of the shank.

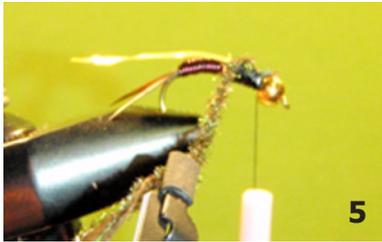


**TYING INSTRUCTIONS** *(continued)*



- Wrap copper wire around hook shank to form abdomen.
- Tie off and clip of excess copper wire.

- Tie in the gold tinsel for the shellback.



- Tie in three strands of peacock herl.
- Attach hackle pliers to the three strands and twist to form a peacock herl rope.

- Wrap the peacock herl around the thorax, tie off and clip the excess.



- Tie in two dark brown goose biots. One on each side of the fly. The legs should extend back about halfway down the fly.
- Tie off and clip the tag ends.

- Fold the gold tinsel forward to form the shellback.
- Tie off and clip the excess.



*The Finished Fly*



*Northern B.C. Copper John*

- Whip finish and add a drop of head cement.