

OSPREY FLY BOX

NORTHERN LIGHTS MUDDLER

contributed by
Sandy McKinlay

This fly was created out of necessity on the club's recent trip to Cluxewe Resort to fish the biennial Pink Salmon run. Unlike the previous two cycles, the numbers weren't as large – the fishing wasn't good "all the time". It was surprising how the fishing could "turn off" and "turn off" seemingly at a moments notice. The Friday Night Special and the Mystery Pink Fly continued to be two of the top producers, but there'd be times when the fish weren't interested in pink flies.

It was during one of these times that Arnold noticed that while most weren't touching a fish, one guy was continuing to land fish after fish. Arnold asked him what he was using and he responded "blue" – he was using blue flies. Arnold tied on one of his blue rolled muddlers for coho and immediately had success. John Harris tied on a Kelsy's Hope and also began getting hits.

Bruce told me that night that a lot of anglers were having success on 'blue'. I looked through my fly boxes and hadn't brought a single blue fly. I had brought a fly tying kit to tie up some big dry flies for Corbett Lake in October. I didn't think I'd be tying any salmon flies, but threw a bunch of materials in a box – just in case. When I went through the box I was surprised at the amount of blue that was in the box – some of which hadn't been used in more than a decade. Why some of these had been thrown in the box, I have no idea – but there they were

Blue fluoro fibre (*bought on my first trip to Cluxewe in 2006*), a turquoise/blue flash material that was in a "sample pack" from Fly Tyers Dungeon (*Blair Thomas and I ordered these almost 20 years ago*), blue ice dubbing, blue krystal flash.

These were the materials that'd go into the creation of a new fly – dubbed the "Northern Lights Muddler" not because we'd been witness to the Northern Lights but because the flash material making up the wing was called Northern Lights.

The folks at Fly Tyer's Dungeon describe Northern Lights as "a unique synthetic flash



material. It features a base tinsel core wrapped with-and-twisted around dyed micro-fibers. When dyed, the core tinsel retains its original metallic look while the micro-fibers absorb the secondary dye color, creating a unique two-tone color effect." (*flytyersdungeon.com - more than 30 colour combinations - \$1.55 US per hank*)

With three or four of these new flies in hand, Bruce and I hit the water the next day. It seemed that the fish would "go off" the pink flies when the current picked up, especially around high tide. When the fish lost interest in the Friday Night Special, I tied on one of the new flies. Second cast and I had a fish on.

The fly worked remarkably well through the balance of the trip – especially in the fast water. Tied to an intermediate or intermediate tip line, it was fished like you'd fish any streamer on a river. Cast across and "downstream", mend and let the fly swing across the current – usually with a slow but steady strip. Often, the take happened at the end of the swing.



Bruce was fishing a pink rolled muddler with much less success. Why the Northern Lights Muddler outperformed is anyone's guess. Perhaps the amount of flash (*ie: all flash*) or the extra movement in the wing? Doesn't really matter because it worked – very well.

Bruce thinks this fly will also be very effective with Coho. Just as the Rolled Muddler comes in an assortment of colours, I suspect that other colours of the Northern Lights Muddler would also work well. As mentioned above the Northern Lights flash comes in more than 30 colours. Tail, underwing and head materials would be substituted to colour coordinate with the wing.

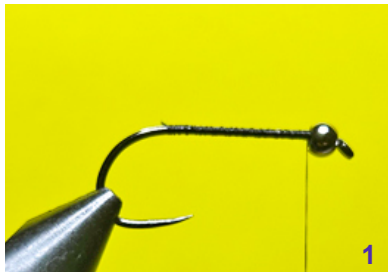


MATERIALS

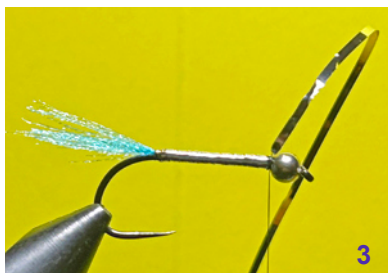


- Hook:** Fresh Water: Sierra Streamer,
Saltwater: Ahrex NS105 Streamer.
Size: #6 - #8
- Bead:** Cyclops, Silver 5/32" or 1/8" based on hook size
- Thread:** Semperflii Nanosilk 12/0 - Black
- Tail:** Fluoro Fibre - Sea Blue (*flymart.ca – Fishinet H2O Fluoro Fibre – Sea Blue*)
- Body:** Flat Silver Tinsel
- Underwing:** Krystal Flash – Light Blue
- Wing:** Northern Lights – Turquoise/Blue
- Mid Line:** Krinkle Mirror Flash - Pink
- Head:** Ice Dub – Blue Steelie

TYING INSTRUCTIONS



1. Slide silver bead on hook. Lay down a thread base.



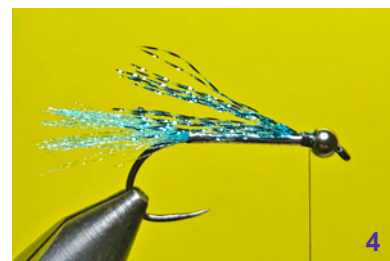
2. Take a half dozen strands of Fluoro Fibre. Fold in half in and cut. Fold around the thread and tie in behind the bead. Make a few tight wraps behind the bead and then wrap down to the bend of the hook ensuring the fibres are on top of shank. Trim fibres so that tail is about the length of shank. Slanted – not square cut.



3. Tie in Silver tinsel behind the bead. Wrap tinsel back to the bend of the hook and then forward to the bead. Tie off and clip the excess.



4. Take 4 or 5 strands of Krystal Flash. Fold in half and cut. Fold around the thread and tie in behind the bead. Make several tight wraps behind the bead forming underwing. Trim the krystal flash strands – slanted cut - half way down the tail.



5. Take a dozen of Northern Lights flash. Fold in half and cut. Fold the flash around the thread and tie in on top of the shank behind the bead forming the wing. Trim the flash – same length as the underwing – again a slanted cut. Slanting the cut creates a natural tapering of the wing.

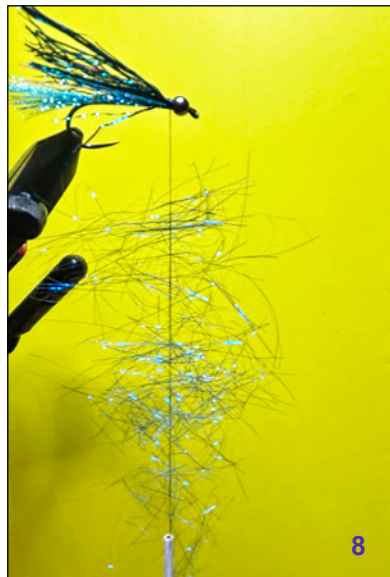


6. Tie two strands of the Pink Mirror Flash down each side forming a fine mid line on the fly.

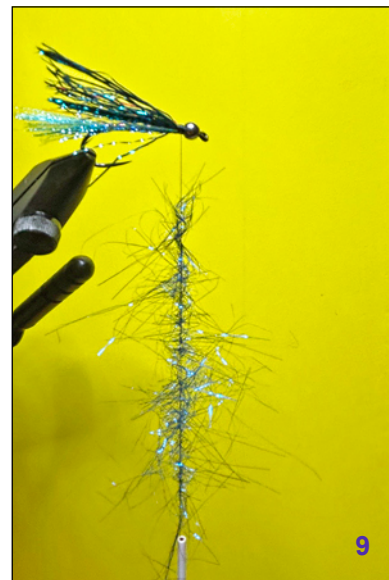


TYING INSTRUCTIONS

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7. Wrap thread back a bit – no more than 1/8 in from bead.
8. Spin the thread counter-clockwise to flatten the thread. Split the thread with a needle and rub with dubbing wax. There is very little, if any “fur” in the Blue Steelie Ice Dubbing so it is difficult to work with. Insert the long Blue Steelie Ice dubbing fibres between the strands as perpendicular as possible to the thread.
9. Spin clockwise to lock the dubbing in.
(Alternatively, a dubbing loop can be used.)



10. Wrap the dubbing forward to the bead, stoking the fibres back with each wrap. Whipfinish and cut the thread.
11. With a “Velcro brush”, brush the dubbing fibres forward over the front of the fly. Try to separate all the dubbing fibres from the wing.



12. Pull dubbing fibres away from shank and trim (as you would if it was deer hair) to form a “muddler head”. Trim the bottom flat against the hook shank. The

Tight Lines & Good Luck!