

OSPREY FLY BOX

SPARKLE PHEASANT TAIL NYMPH

contributed by
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Here in beautiful B.C. we are truly blessed with lakes of all shapes, sizes, depths, altitudes – trophy lakes, family lakes, hard lakes and easier ones. But, what I truly want (*and need*) to see in any of our lakes are the shallows. Amazing marl bottoms where with enough stealth you can observe those elusive and overly cautious rainbows doing their thing; and I hoping to do mine, sight fishing.

It was during a mid May outing a couple of years ago that my youngest son Lucas and I decided to go out one early morning to explore a not too familiar lake. As we approached the north end of the lake we could see that it had a good area of shallows with enticing drop offs and those magical marl bottoms. We suddenly saw a very nice size rainbow dart off and disappear at lighting speed. Obviously we weren't paying enough attention so I needed to shift the odds in our favour. First we turned off the electric motor and decided to venture onto the shallows by gently rowing, courtesy of my son which would allow me to stand at the bow and try to see them before they saw us. As we cruised over the shallows we could see fish gently swimming along, some others laying practically motionless at the bottom while others were burrowing their noses along the bottom digging up shrimp along with other food sources and leaving erratic lines on the marl.

We stopped the boat and saw a fish at 2 o'clock and started to cast with as much finesse as possible to not spook the fish. It was just laying there motionless and perfectly visible. First cast



too far to the left, second cast too far to the right, third cast short, my nerves of steel slowly turning into rubber. The excitement and the anticipation of a strike gradually fading away. But then suddenly a bullseye, the fly landed inches

in front of its nose but it barely moved! It just stayed there suspended an inch above the bottom. Another cast and we could see clearly the fly slowly descending almost on top of its head and nothing again. I had never seen anything like it, it didn't spook and barely budged an inch. Then I saw another rainbow but this time it was meandering within casting range and I managed drop the fly within a couple of feet in front of its path but all I managed was a follow (with heart pounding) but unfortunately not interested enough in taking my offering. My son and I then realized after casting to these fish laying still and the others cruising in search of food, that we could divide the trout into sleepers and feeders.

Therefore we gave up on the trout that were napping and

started to search for the feeders. All of a sudden I pointed to my son a gorgeous trout that was swimming as if it were searching for a morsel of food. This trout was cruising from left to right as I prepared to cast it slowly turned around and started to venture from right to left so I dropped the nymph well ahead of its path, a good 10 to 12 feet which was farther than I wanted to (*definitely need the practice*). We both watched the fly land on the water and saw immediately with utter amazement the trout take off at warp speed as if something had frightened the living daylights out of it! But, it went directly to the fly which had sunk barely a couple of inches and slammed the nymph! We couldn't believe our eyes and I was in doubt that it took my offering until I felt that unmistakable tug!



To this day, both my son and I remember with amazing detail the interesting and informative behaviour of trout in the shallows. We witnessed, with delight, how that trout launched itself for that nymph the second it hit the water. To think they can see that distance is mind boggling.

Having witnessed this, we must make the assumption that the fish have seen your fly, especially if the water is gin clear. If you are not getting strikes, they are either not interested in your offering, or your fly is not imitating what is on their menu that day. It is time to switch your flies - another attractor pattern or an imitation of another potential menu item.



The Sparkle Pheasant Tail Nymph with that touch of flash on its thorax has rewarded me many times in the shallows and has given me many great memories! This is a pattern that will always be in my stillwater arsenal.

MATERIALS



- Hook:** Mustad R73-9671 or TMC 5263
Size #10 - #14
- Thread:** Black 8/0
- Tail:** Pheasant Tail
- Body:** Pheasant Tail
- Thorax:** **Peacock Herl**
- Wing Case:** Pheasant Tail & Pearl Tinsel (*large*)
- Legs:** Pheasant Tail

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

Photography by Peter Chatt



- De-barb the hook
- Lay down a thread base along the shank of the hook.
- Select several barbules of Pheasant Tail and tie in the tail. Do not clip the excess as this will be used for the body.
- Wrap the Pheasant Tail forward 2/3rds of the way up the shank forming a tapered body.
- Tie off and clip the excess.
- Tie in the large Pearl Tinsel in front of the body.
- Select 8 barbules of Pheasant Tail and tie in behind the eye of the hook with the tips extending 1/4" beyond the eye of the hook.
- Wrap the thread back to the front of the body.
- Tie in a couple strands of peacock herl in front of the body.
- Form the thorax by wrapping the herl forward to just behind the eye of the hook.
- Ensure that enough room is left to form a small thread head.
- Split the pheasant tips into two equal groups and fold back along each side of the thorax.
- Secure with two or three thread wraps.
- Pull the pheasant tail forward forming the wing case and tie off behind the eye of the hook.
- Clip the excess.
- Pull the Pearl Tinsel forward over the pheasant tail and tie off behind the eye of the hook.
- Clip the excess.
- Form a small thread head.
- Whipfinish and add a drop of head cement.



The Finished Fly



Sparkle Pheasant Tail