

Phil's Flybox

By Phil Rowley

"Stripped Peacock Herl "

It has been said that all good things come to an end and so it is for Phil's Fly Box. It was April of 1996 when the Collaborator signified the beginning of four years worth of featured patterns. My goal was to feature member's flies while covering a diversity of fishing opportunities and species. Hopefully, that goal was met. At times, it was tough as patterns and ideas didn't always come easy but somehow I managed to always sneak in under the editorial wire with some semblance of a column. I thank both Ken and Brian for their patience and understanding as they put up with my constant monthly procrastination. But as my other success's grew so did my workload and it became apparent that my plate was full and was showing no sign of subsiding. It was a problem I always hoped for and now it is here, unfortunately some restructuring, right sizing or whatever had to take place.

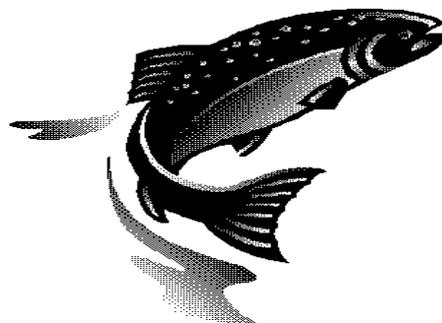
Now who to approach about becoming my successor, one willing to place their own stamp upon this section of the Osprey News? With some coaching, counselling and white lies I managed to coerce Will Wright into taking over. Will's writing and his humorous approach to club events makes for an enjoyable read and I am convinced he will carry the tying torch for us all. Chances are we won't see much in the way of his secret Coho flies but patterns such as Para Hooties may one day become club icons, and then there's Bubba's Chicken!

The Stripped Peacock Chironomid was scheduled for a May release in time for the stillwater kickoff but I felt in lieu of Will's takeover his stalwart pattern would make for a perfect transition. During his initial affiliation with the Osprey's Will was fishing Plateau Lake where he ran into

a fellow angler Simon Albon. Simon was experiencing success using a stripped peacock herl chironomid pattern. Now stripped peacock herl chironomids are no big secret but Will was soon seduced by this design's simple charms. Originally tied with a traditional chironomid wingcase Will soon updated the dressing to include a metal bead and the favoured curved Tiemco 2457 hook. In recent years an "Ice Cream Cone" version featuring the Tiemco 2302 hook has also faired well.

This dressing is a straightforward tie. The most difficult aspect is stripping the peacock herl. At first glance this seems like a crime to deface such a perfect fly tying material. There are a number of ways to strip herl ranging from one's thumbnails to a mild bleach solution. Will's favourite method involves rubbing the herl with a pencil eraser. When planning upon a gross of chironomids batch processing the peacock herl. Not all herl is full of fibers and prudent shoppers can save a lot of time and effort by seeking lower quality peacock herl.

We all have our favourite go to confidence flies that sit in the back corner of the fly box until the bitter end. Not until just about every new fangled concoction has been tried do we opt for our bread and butter pattern, then as if seeing a vision we wonder why we don't reach for the pattern more often as its steady success always seems to save the day. So it is for Will's Stripped Peacock Herl Chironomid. Suspended under an indicator or naked using a leader roughly four feet longer than the water is deep the Stripped Peacock Herl Chironomid has taken trout whenever it has been tossed over the side for a swim.



Stripped Peacock Herl

Hook:	Tiemco 2457#8-#14
Thread:	Black 6/0 or 8/0
Tail:	Sparse White Antron or Sparkle Yarn (Only on Larger Sizes)
Rib:	Fine Copper Wire
Body:	2 to 4 Strands of Stripped Peacock Herl
Thorax:	Peacock Herl
Bead:	Copper Bead
Gills:	White Antron or Sparkle Yarn

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1

Slide a copper bead onto the hook. It's a good idea to pinch down the barb first. At the eye of the hook tie in a short length of white Sparkle Yarn or Antron, whip finish and trim the tying thread. Be careful not to build up too much tying thread.



Step 2

Reattach the tying thread just behind the copper bead. Beginning behind the bead tie in a sparse length of white Sparkle Yarn or Antron to simulate the caudal gills present on some of the larger chironomid species. Trim the caudal gills to a short stub.



Step 3

Tie in a length of fine copper wire along the near side of the hook shank. Tying in the rib in this manner aids the counter winding process later on.



Step 4

Depending upon the size of the pattern tie in 2 to 4 strands of stripped peacock herl by the tips. Tying in by the tips ensures a natural taper.



Step 5

Carefully wind the stripped peacock herl forward to the rear of the bead forming a neat, segmented body.



Step 6

Counter wind the fine wire rib over the body. Tie of the rib behind the copper bead and break off the excess ribbing material.



Step 7

Tie in two strands of peacock herl directly behind the copper bead and wind around the hook shank 2-3 times to form the thorax. Trim off the excess peacock herl.



Step 8

Whip finish the fly at the rear of the copper bead. Trim the gills about equal the length of the copper bead. Apply a coating of Sally Hansen's Hard as nails over the body to provide added durability and shine.



As a fly tier, I have found Phil's Fly Box to be a constant source of entertainment, sometimes comic relief, but always a source of information which made my tying much more efficient and enjoyable. I'm sure you will agree with me when I say his contribution to the Osprey News has been significant. It has taken creativity and determination to produce an article of such detail and relevance each month since 1996. I know in my conversations with Phil that this has always been completed in the midst of an extremely busy life. Somehow, with a family, a job, working on his book, writing magazine articles, preparing and giving courses and working on many other projects, Phil has managed to provide us with Phil's Fly Box. Please join me, at the next opportunity, in thanking Phil Rowley for Phil's Fly Box.

Although we will miss Phil's monthly fly, there is a silver lining. Will Wright has taken the helm, at the urgings of Phil, and possibly outright naiveté. As editor of the News I appreciate this collaboration between Phil and Will, since I do not have to worry about finding a replacement contributor. Will has been busy experimenting with digital photography, lighting, thinking about flies and format. Next month, he will publish his first article. I don't know what it will be nor how the article will be presented, but I do know the lad is losing sleep over it. Join me in encouraging Will and wishing him well. - Brian

