

The Osprey Flybox

“T.P. Nymph”

by Dan Cahill

White Lake is well known to those of us who make the yearly pilgrimage to its crystal clear waters every May. For many of our members it's the first lake trip of the new season, and we've tied scores of flies over the long winter in eager anticipation of a greatly successful adventure to kick off a new year of fishing the interior. We concentrate mainly on chironomid patterns we've used successfully on previous trips, flies like Phil's Chromie, Black Sally or the Collaborator, Doug's Corona, the Maroon Chironomid the Stripped Herl Chirbomid. In short we've tied dozens or even fly boxes full of chironomid of every shape, shade and size imaginable being careful not to forget tying them in sizes as small as 18. (Is it me or do the chironomid there seemed to have shrunk over the years?)

As well as chironomid be sure to have a few good mayfly imitations with you. A few years ago we did quite well with the GBPT (Gold Bead Pheasant Tail) but only when fished with fine tippet. Phil and (“2 pound”) Tony were anchored right beside me, we were all using the same flies we tied up the previous evening. They did real well, while I struggled, the only difference is I was using 6 pound tippet, Tony was using 2 pound and Phil was using 3 pound fluorocarbon, lesson learned!

Last year shallow bays would come alive in the afternoons with swarms of mayflies, but the hatches were quite isolated, one bay would see lots of action while the next one down saw no hatches at all. Even while fishing a shoal with a flurry of activity, the feeding rainbows were surprisingly selective, one fisher who did well last year though was **Dan Cahill** who presents us with this month's fly. He didn't have a name for it when he gave it to me, so I convinced him the **T.P. Nymph** was a good one, T for Turkey, P for Pheasant, 2 of the main components of the fly, (what did you think I meant?) Dan says, “It's basically a modified Skip Nymph”, the modifications include making sure the fly has at least two colours with a light shade on bottom with a dark colour on top, and he ties it in sizes 14-18 in shades of brown or green as shown here. When tying it in brown he uses light brown tan dubbing or hare's ear for the body and thorax with bits of shiny materials added for the thorax, then tops it off with a darker brown (natural) pheasant tail. “You have to experiment on going with the light brown ones or the green ones (all 2 tones) depending on lake and time. I almost always stay with that light green /darker green back on White Lake. Alex and I are usually together on White and we experiment with the shades by tying new flies each morning while we're up there; depending on our observations the day before.”

For the thorax of his green fly, Dan uses light green Scintilla 03-Pale Olive Green as the main base which closely matches the colour of the green mottled turkey used for the body. He adds very little of any grey dubbing from seal to antron so long as it's light coloured, and also adds anything that will give you the shiny gold fibres, but keep the thorax small. (For the fly in the pictures I used a base of Ligas 24 Light Green mixed with 21 Light Grey Hareline and a bit of DD049 Diamond Dub.) Dan says, “I can also get the shine in the fly by adding a rib of Pearlescent Krystal Flash rib wound in the same direction as the turkey fibres-- as counter winding it would not be subtle enough. The legs are made from an olive hen saddle patch with good mottling; however olive green dyed partridge or grouse would work just as well, but do not make the front legs too long.”

He recommends fishing this fly like a chironomid, casting it out on a dry line with a long leader, letting it sink, then a s-l-o-w ... s-l-o-w- retrieve. He's also had success with it under a "strike indicator" allowed to dead drift while fishing a chironomid on the other line. “You can also fish it on a retrieve of 3 very short pulls and a pause; I tend to fish it in the lightest shades like a chironomid in the early part of the day, then the other retrieve later with the "darker shades" or when you're casting to rising fish that are keyed on mayflies. Fish it the same place you'd fish a chironomid, damsel or leech, drop-offs, edge of weed beds, channels etc, look at the lake carefully for the hatches and at your depth sounder too.”

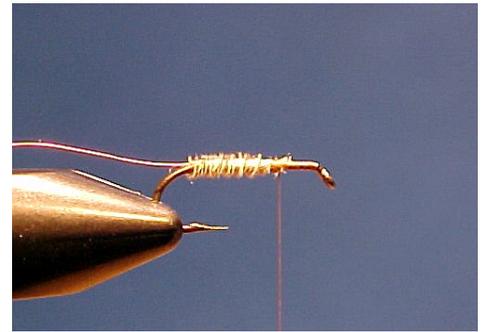
“In my view the key is to get the "match" between the body material [light olive turkey] and the thorax material, same for the tan/brown variation. So when you're in the store it's **that match** that you're seeking out. Once I buy the "match" I keep the materials together sort of like a package for that fly. So, if I have to use those materials for another fly pattern I still put them all back in one pkg. or at least I try to. Otherwise I never seem to remember which materials I had used for it the next time. I'm sure I'm not the only person who has to do this. “

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

Materials	
Tail:	Olive green pheasant tail
Hook:	Drennan 2x Traditional-Wet, Kamasan –B175 or Mustad 3906B in # 14 or16
Thread:	UTC #70 Olive
Body:	Approx. 4-6 strands of light green mottled Turkey
Rib (optional):	Fine wire in copper or gold
Thorax:	03-pale olive green Scintilla mixed with a little grey dubbing and bits of small gold Flashabou
Legs:	Green hen hackle (better if it has a couple of shades in it that tend towards a darker green or brown)
Shellback:	Olive green pheasant tail

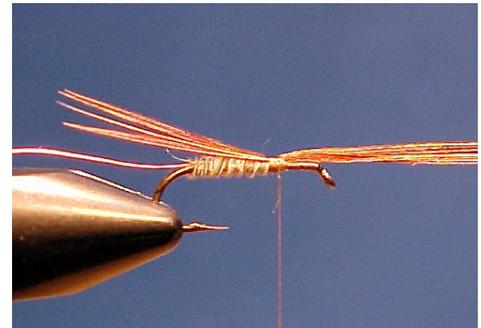
Step 1

Tie in the gold or copper wire rib. Tie in the turkey by the tips at the bend of the hook then wind the turkey forward about 2/3 the length of the hook forming the body.



Step 2

Place 4-6 strands of olive pheasant tail on top of the body with the tail extending past the bend approx. 2/3 the hook length (same as the body length or slightly longer) and lash it down in front of the body. Do not cut off the butts, they will be used to form the wingcase.



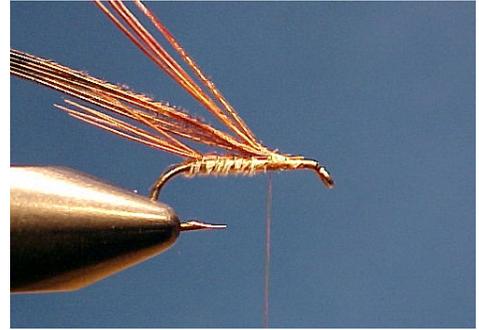
Step 3

Make one turn of the wire rib under the tail then wind it forward fixing the pheasant tail on top of the body. Stop when the rib gets past the front of the butts of the tail and tie off rib in front of the tail material.



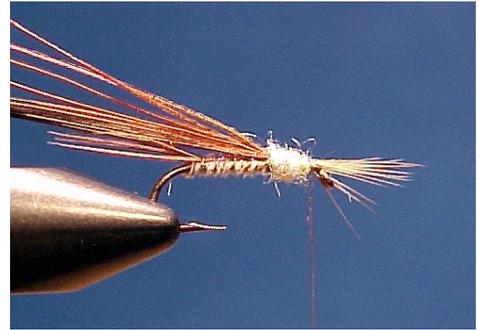
Step 4

Add a few more stands of pheasant tail to the ones used for the back in order to have enough to form the shellback, wrap the wingcase material back slightly onto the body to ensure a smooth transition between the body and the wingcase.



Step 5

Tie in the hen feather fibers so they are facing over the eye of the hook. Make them long enough so that later when you fold them back they will form legs that reach just past the thorax.



Step 6

Wind in the green/grey dubbing mixture and create a small thorax that reaches a little bit back on the body, remember you don't want a big bulbous thorax.

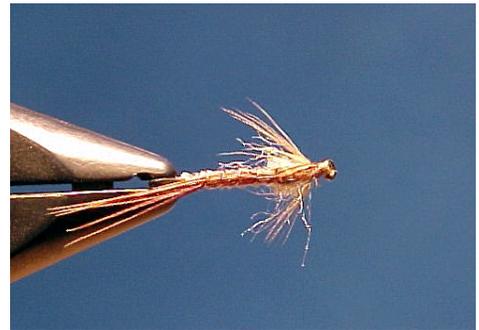
Step 7

Split the hen feathers in two and bring them back along the thorax and tie them off in place with a couple of turns of thread. I find it easier to turn the fly 90 degrees so you can look at it from the top and doing first the far side then the near side.



Step 8

Bring the shellback forward to the hook eye and tie off leaving enough room for a small head. Whip finish and apply a dab of head cement.



Side view of the finished fly.

Stroke the tail with your thumbnail for the classic mayfly look

