

## Catalpa Worm... Don Lupone

Catalpa worms, also known as catawbias are prized as fish bait. Catalpa worms are the caterpillar stage of the Sphinx moth. Catalpas, like many other caterpillars, spend the winter underground in the pupae stage. As spring arrives and soil temperatures warm the adult moths emerge to mate. Females deposit eggs in mass on the underside of catalpa tree leaves. About a week later, up to 1000 eggs from a single adult can hatch. The newly hatched catalpas feed and grow for about three weeks. During this time many worms fall or are blown from the leaves and branches of trees overhanging water and become a hardy meal for fishes.

The catalpa worm life cycle begins again when the worm drops to the ground and pupates. A typical catalpa life cycle is about six weeks, which means several generations can occur in a single season. Only the last hatch in the fall winters underground.

### Materials

**Hook:** Mustad 79580, 4XL, streamer, size 6  
**Thread:** 6/0 black  
**Tail:** Black goose or turkey biot  
**Abdomen:** Chartreuse and black Ultra Chenille  
**Setae:** Grizzle rooster saddle hackle feather  
**Head:** Black Super Fine dubbing



### Tying Instructions



1. Debarb the hook and place it in the vise. Using a jam knot, tie the thread on one hook eye distance back from the hook eye. Lay down a neat thread base on the hook shank to a point just above the hook barb. Form a bump of thread at this point and move the thread forward about 1/8-inch. Place a black goose biot, concave side up, on top of the shank so it lays on the bump of thread. When tied in, the biot should extend back about 3/4-inch beyond the thread bump. Wrap the thread over the butt of the biot, so it is tight against the bump. This will raise the biot upwards forming a 30 to 45 degree angle to the

shank. Tie in the grizzle hackle feather at the biot "bump". Leave the feather hanging from the shank for later use. Move the thread to a point about 1/4-inch behind the hook eye.



2. Cut 5-inch pieces of chartreuse and black chenille from the skins. At a point about 1/4-inch behind the hook eye, tie on the chartreuse chenille to the FAR side of the hook. Bind the chartreuse chenille to the SIDE of the hook all the way back to the biot tail and the hanging hackle feather. Wrap the thread back to the 1/4-inch starting point and tie on the black chenille to the NEAR side of the hook. Bind the black chenille to the SIDE of the hook all the way back to the biot tail and the hanging hackle feather. Bring the thread back behind the eye and whip finish or half hitch the thread and cut it away.



3. Turn your vise so the hook eye is facing you. Tie a simple overhand knot with the CHARTREUSE chenille going over the BLACK chenille. Note: In this weave the CHARTREUSE chenille ALWAYS goes over the BLACK.

Slip the BLACK chenille loop OVER the hook eye. Note: In this weave the BLACK chenille ALWAYS goes over the hook shank and the CHARTREUSE goes under the hook shank. Manipulate the loose knot to the back of the hook just over the beginning of the biot

## *Catalpa Worm (continued)*



tail. Cinch the knot by pulling both strands of chenille simultaneously outward and perpendicular to the hook shank. Get all the slack out of the knot so it is secure to the hook shank. Note: You want a BLACK stripe on top and a BLACK stripe on each side of the worm. If you cinch the chenille too tight the strips will be distorted. Continue making overhand knots, CHARTREUSE over BLACK, BLACK over hook eye, moving forward and cinching them close to each other on the hook shank until you are about ¼-inch from the

hook eye. Turn your vise back to its original or normal position. Re-attach the thread at the very front of the woven body. Tie off the chenille pieces, cut away the tag ends and bind them down. In about eight evenly spaced turns, spiral wrap the hackle feather forward to form the setae. Tie off the feather in front of the woven body. Cut away the feather butt end and bind down the tag.



4. Apply black dubbing to the thread and build a head about the same circumference as the body. The head should extend forward to a point about one hook eye distance back from the hook eye. Cover the hook space between the front of the head and hook eye with thread. Whip finish or half hitch the finishing thread and cut the thread away. Apply a small amount of cement to the finish thread wraps. Tease out some of the dubbing to add a “fuzzy” or “hairy” appearance to the head of the worm.

## *Southeastern Anglers Report....Dane Law*

What a season so far, and it is a long way from over yet. I think the best is yet to come. Our spring and summer fishing brought some incredible action. Some of the best days we have ever seen, and some of the most difficult. From huge browns tirelessly eating cicadas on top in some places, to minimum flows and warm water in others. I think the next three months are going to get on down to just some good consistent fall fishing – and we are ready. Here’s what we think.

**Hiwassee River** – Hiwassee reservoir is in much better shape going into fall than the previous two years, with a good possibility of September moisture. The lake is near turnover, and the waters should begin cooling soon. Night time ambient temps are 60F or below in the area. We will be fishing the upper river with a mix of floating and maybe some wading. We are currently seeing good holdover which will increase. It should be a good fall for dry fly fishing. Fall is probably going to be better than summer, which is unusual.

**Toccoa River** – We are expecting much better fall fishing here than in years past. Water temps are good and have been all summer. Flows should be good for float trips with a little wading encouraged at the shoal areas. Fish stockings have been heavy here during the summer, and holdover is good. We are excited about the possibility of better regulations on the river next year. Here again, I think we are going to have better fall fishing than is normal.

**Clinch River** – With favorable low flows, this will be some great trout fishing near Knoxville. The water is cold and we are currently having good days here. Mostly nymph fishing with some streamers. We are catching fish within the new protected slot already and some real nice brookies too. It is a lot of fun to catch three species of trout in a tailwater.

**Cumberland River** – We are expecting a repeat of last year’s awesome fall fishing. The largest trout ever caught by an SEA client was caught here last fall. I won’t go into detail, but October/November should be an event. I think the fish will spread out and we will have action down the Burkesville or below. Southeastern Anglers is pleased to announce that Captain Mark Scarborough will be joining us in Kentucky this month. We are working from a new computer. If you receive duplicates please let me know. Southeastern Anglers 423-338-7368. Thanks, Dane.