

## Streamer Ties... Tom Regina

For the past 18 months or more at the Saturday fly tying clinics we have been tying *Quick Ties*. The goal of quick ties was to tie flies that were quick and easy to tie and to introduce new materials and tying techniques and tying tips. It is now time to move on to other fly tying ventures. The other ventures, as you may have guessed from the title of this article is tying streamers.



Throughout 2006 we will concern ourselves with tying streamers at the Saturday fly tying clinics. Some of the streamers will be *quick ties*, most however will be a bit more involved and time consuming. None however will be beyond the ability of a novice fly dresser. We will be working with larger hooks and heavier threads than we did with quick-ties and from time to time new materials, tying techniques and tips will be introduced. We will pluck a few chickens, ducks and turkeys, lob a few tails off some bucks and even skin a rabbit or squirrel.

Throughout our streamer tying series I will refer to some of the various parts of streamers. The nomenclature used is common *fly speak* and well understood by fly dressers. While not all streamers contain all the parts, many do. Listed here are components of a streamer fly as if it were being tied, starting at the back of the hook and working forward.

**Tag** - Many streamers have a tag wrapped on at the back of the hook. A tag is a narrow band usually made of Mylar tinsel, wire, floss, or nylon scratch thread.

**Tail** - Streamer tails are tied on at the back of the hook but in front of the tag. Hackle fibers are the most common tailing material. Other tail material includes peacock sword fibers, duck flank feathers, golden pheasant natural tippet feathers, wool yarn, and long strand synthetics.

**Rib** - As with other types of flies, streamer ribs serve to give the fly a segmented appearance and to make fragile bodies more durable. Streamer ribs can be tied using tinsel, wire, vinyl strand, and other single strand material.

**Body** - Streamer bodies are made from Mylar tinsel, floss, nylon scratch thread, wool yarn, chenille, and feather herl. Dubbing is not often used for streamer bodies.

**Belly** - The belly of a streamer is made from a long length of material tied on the bottom of the hook. The length of the belly is usually equal to the length of the hook shank or longer. Bucktail and peacock herl are common belly materials.

**Throat** - A throat is tied on the bottom of the hook behind the head. A streamer throat is short, extending back over the body or belly about one fourth the length of the hook shank or less. Dyed red duck and turkey quill feather segments make good throats.

**Underwing** - As the name implies, an underwing is tied on under and before the primary wing of a streamer. Bucktail, squirrel tail, other long hairs, and synthetic flash strands are all good underwing material.

**Wing** - The wing is the most dominant part of a streamer. Most streamers are tied as either feather wing or hair wing streamers. Some are tied with both feather and hair for the wing.

**Topping** - A topping is tied on top of the streamer wing. Peacock herl is often used as a topping to imitate the dark or olive colored backs of baitfish.

**Shoulder** - A shoulder is a short, broad bird body feather tied on each side of a feather wing streamer. A shoulder feather should extend back about one-third the length of the primary wing.

**Cheek** - Cheeks are tied on at the sides of the shoulders, primary wing, or along the hook shank just behind the thread head. Cheeks imitate the eyes of baitfish and are usually made of jungle cock feathers.

It is said "Big trout eat big flies" and streamers are big flies. Big trout eat them; small trout also eat big streamers. I am always amazed when I catch a small five inch par marked wild or planted trout on a 6XL size 4 hook streamer. Big trout feed almost exclusively on baitfish and most streamers are tied on long shank hooks to imitate baitfish. Streamers not only attract big trout better than small flies; big streamer hooks also give the angler a better chance of staying hooked to the fish

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once it has taken the bait. Large strong streamer hooks hold fast and the heavy short leaders and tippets normally used for streamer fishing make break-offs less likely.

Some streamers, especially brightly colored ones that attract anglers, do not imitate any baitfish. They instead serve as attractor patterns in the same way nymph, wet and dry fly attractor patterns do. However, these *mardi gras* flies do catch trout. Big trout. Lots of big trout.

Streamers can be tied weighted or un-weighted. They can be fished with floating lines, sink tip lines, or full sinking lines. Streamers can be fished at any level within the water column depending on the weight of the fly, weight added to the leader/tippet (split shot, etc.), and the retrieve rate and technique used.

Because of a streamer's size and weight, when stripped through the water they produce more vibration than smaller subsurface flies thus better attracting Mr. Big Trout. There is however a drawback to streamer size and weight. Because of size, weight, and wind resistance streamers are more difficult to cast than nymphs, wet or dry flies. A big stick (5 or 6 or weight rod) will help the angler cast streamers longer distance with greater accuracy as will casting instruction from a willing and able instructor. Your club has several willing and able casting instructors of which I mention only four: John Brand, Jerry Aldridge, Travis Akins and Bill Locher. All you need do is ask and they will help make you a better caster.

If you have an interest in streamer fishing for big trout or would like to cultivate an interest in streamer fishing for big trout I suggest you read the book *Modern Streamers for Trophy Trout* by Bob Linsenmam and Kelly Galloup, Countryman Press, ISBN 0-88150-466-1.

Your club has set the third Saturday of each month for the Fly Casting and Fly Tying Clinics. The clinics start at 9am and end about noon or later. Your club will provide the fly tying materials, tools, instruction, fly rods, and casting instruction. Come join us for tying and casting. There is time for both. And you will get free beverages (suds, pop and H2O) and a free lunch. Do bring guests as they are always welcome. We will treat our guests as members and welcome them to join us in all our activities.

## October Quick Ties with Tom Regina....Latex Mayfly Nymph

As fly dressers we may spend more time than necessary tying a large assortment of mayfly nymphs. It's not often an angler needs a specific mayfly nymph imitation to match a specific mayfly nymph. Most of the time when trout are feeding on mayfly nymphs they are feeding non selectively on a relatively large array of mayfly nymphs that can be available to them. The Latex Mayfly Nymph is a good subsurface fly for taking trout which are not selectively feeding. Or as Doc Birdwell says, "The fish don't care".

Wrapped latex strips, or Scud Back in this case, makes realistic nymph bodies. Clear and light colored strips can be colored with permanent markers and the color of the thread underbody will show through the strips, both of which can be used by the fly tier to attain an almost infinite range of nymph body colors.

We will tie the Latex Mayfly Nymph unweighted. This mayfly nymph imitation, as with most nymph imitations, can also be tied weighted. The hook shank can be wrapped with non lead wire or a bead can be used for the head. For a heavier quicker sinking fly both wire and a bead can be used together.

### Tying instructions

<b>Hook</b>	Mustad 9671, nymph, 2XL, size 12
<b>Thread</b>	Brown
<b>Tail</b>	Brown grizzly hen saddle hackle fibers
<b>Underbody</b>	6/0 brown thread
<b>Abdomen</b>	1/8-inch tan or clear Scud Back
<b>Wing Case</b>	Scud Back strip from abdomen
<b>Thorax</b>	Brown dubbing, picked out
<b>Head</b>	8/0 brown thread



1. Debarb the hook and mount the hook in the vise. Using a jam knot tie the 6/0 thread on the hook two hook eyes distance back from the hook eye. In close touching turns wrap the thread back to the hook bend. At the hook bend tie in a tail of about 10 or 15 hackle fibers. The tail should extend back over the hook bend about a distance equal to the hook gap. In evenly spaced spiral turns wrap the thread forward over the tail fiber butts to the hook shank mid point. At a shallow angle cut away the remaining tail fiber butts and continue to wrap the thread forward to the thread tie on point.