

Saturday Fly Tying....Nymphs with Tom Regina

Nymph: According to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary a nymph is "any of various immature insects; esp: a larva of an insect (as a grasshopper, true bug, or mayfly) with incomplete metamorphosis that differs from the imago esp. in size and in its incompletely developed wings and genitalia". For fly anglers this definition is too narrow because we want to "nymph" with other life forms also. To suit our own wants and needs the definition of nymph needs to be expanded. For us a more complete meaning of nymph can be found in the book "Nymphing Strategies" by Larry Tullis, ISBN 1-58574-266, published by The Lyons Press. In his fine book Larry tells us a nymph refers to any subsurface, nymph-like imitation or any fly imitation that is "nymphed". Larry further goes on to define nymphs as subsurface insects and their imitations plus other free-floating, subsurface foods and imitations, such as scuds, sow bugs, aquatic worms, fish eggs, snails, flesh (as in decaying salmon), and leeches. Larry also suggests the use of soft hackle wet flies as nymphs. Thus Larry has given us the definition of nymph that we want. I will add to Larry's list one other category - that being sunken and/or drowned adult terrestrial insects such as ants, beetles, wasps, and bees, etc.

Throughout 2006 we concerned ourselves with tying streamers at our Saturday fly tying clinics. For 2007 we will stay subsurface and concentrate our efforts on tying nymphs at the Saturday clinics. (We will tie a variety of other flies at the Thursday bull sessions). Some of the nymphs we will tie will be quick and easy, others a bit more involved and complex. None however will be beyond the ability of a novice fly dresser. From time to time new materials, tying techniques, and tips will be introduced.

During our nymph tying series reference will be made to the various parts of nymphs. The language used is common *fly speak* and well understood by fly dressers. While not all nymphs contain all the parts to be mentioned, many do. Listed here are elements of a nymph as if it were being tied, starting at the back of the hook and working forward.

Tag - Many nymphs 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 - Nymph tails are tied on at the back of the hook but in front of any tag. Hackle fibers are common tailing material. Other tail material includes peacock sword fibers, duck flank feathers, golden pheasant natural tippet feathers, goose and turkey biots, hair and fur, wool yarn, and strand synthetics.

Underbody - Underbodies are used to shape the body. Many materials can be used to build underbodies. Thread, lead free wire, and yarn are just a few.

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

Body - Nymph bodies are made from Mylar tinsel, floss, thread, nylon scratch thread, wool yarn, chenille, feather herl, biots, dubbing, wire, glass beads, and latex or plastic.

Gills - Some nymphs have gills that are very noticeable to both the angler and the fish. Soft webby feather tufts, afterfeathers, ostrich herl, dubbing, and yarn materials are common items for imitating gills.

Legs - Legs can help imitate and enhance the appearance of subsurface flies. When a flexible material is used for legs it gives the nymph imitation lifelike movement. Nymph legs can be imitated with many fly tying materials such as feather barbs, round rubber strand materials, hair and fur, and dubbing

Wing Case - As a nymph matures and the enclosed wings develop the wing case becomes darker and more pronounced. Wing cases are imitated with whole feathers, feather segments, and synthetic sheet materials such as latex, plastic, and tinsel flash.

Wings - On nymph flies, long wings that lay along the top of the body are called down wings and imitate the wings on sunken adult insects. When short wings are tied on the top or sides of nymph imitations they represent the wings of emerging insects and may be referred to as wing buds. Many materials can be used to make wings. Biots and other feather or feather parts, synthetic sheeting, tinsel, and yarns work well as does some animal hair and fur.

Collar - Hackle wound at the front of the fly is used to form a collar also called a face or facing, or front hackle. Hackle can also be used to hackle the body of some nymph imitations.

Throat - A throat is sometimes tied on the bottom of the hook behind the head. A nymph imitation throat should be short and extend back over the belly about one forth the length of the hook shank. Feather barbs make good throats.

Eyes - Eyes for nymph imitations can be made from pre-formed or molded monofilament or plastic, glass or metal beads, bead chain, dumbbell or stick-on eyes, and coneheads. Eyes are used to give nymph patterns a realistic appearance, especially dragonfly and damselfly nymphs.

Bead Heads - Beads, both metal and glass and coneheads can be used to add weight and sparkle to your nymph patterns.

Antennae - The antennae that some nymphs display are imitated with biots, feather stems or quills, horse tail hair, moose mane hair and synthetics such as Microfibrils and monofilament that can be colored with permanent marker pens.

Jim Schollmeyer's book "Nymph Fly-Tying Techniques", ISBN number 1-57188-266-9, published by Frank Amato Publishing, Inc., is an exceptional resource covering nymph fly tying procedures and contains many nymph pat-

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terns with color photos and step-by-step tying instructions. For an in-depth study and information on fishing with nymph imitations I highly recommend the book by Larry Tullis mentioned earlier and the book by Rich Osthoff, "Active Nymphing, Aggressive Strategies for Casting, Rigging, and Moving Nymphs", ISBN 978-0-8117-3255-0, published by Stackpole Books. Your club library also has extensive reference material - books, VCR tapes, and DVDs for tying and angling with nymph imitations. You may also want to counsel with club member Art deTonnancourt about fishing with nymphs. Art is an accomplished and talented nymph angler.

Nymph Ties with Tom Regina...The Teal Baetis Nymph

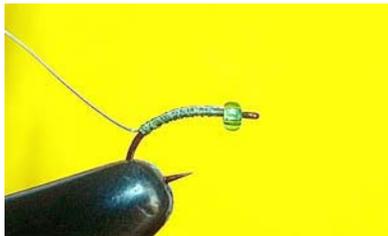
The Teal Baetis Nymph imitation represents a blue wing olive (BWO) nymph. The original fly was tied by Scott Sanchez and is fully described in his book "A New Generation of Trout Flies", ISBN 0-9746427-4-6, published by Wild River Press. The nymph we will tie is an adaptation from the original.

Materials

Hook	Mustad C49S, size 14
Weight	Olive green size 11/0 glass bead
Thread	UNI-Thread 8/0, tan
Tail	Teal flank feather barbs
Abdomen	Teal flank feather barbs
Rib	Fine silver wire
Thorax	Spirit River Depth Advantage dark olive dubbing
Collar	Natural Hungarian partridge feather



Tying Instructions



1. Debarb the hook and put a bead on the hook. Place the hook in the vise. Tie the thread to the hook shank directly in back of the bead and lay down a thread base back to the point on the hook shank directly over the hook barb. Tie in a length of silver rib wire by wrapping the thread forward and back over the wire tag end. Cut away the excess wire tag end.



2. For the tail and abdomen select a good quality teal flank feather with long barbs. Pull about a 1 inch section of the feather barbs perpendicular to the feather stem or quill to align the barb tips. Keeping the tips aligned, pull the barbs down parallel to the feather stem to remove them from the stem. With several tight overlapping thread wraps tie in the teal barbs to the top of the hook at the point directly above the hook barb so the tail extends back over the hook bend a distance equal to the hook shank length. *DO NOT cut away the feather barb butts as they will be used to form the abdomen.* Lift the barb butts out of the way and in spiral turns wrap the thread forward to about 1/16 inch in back of the bead.



3. To make the abdomen, use hackle pliers or other suitable tool to slightly twist the barb butts and wrap them forward in touching turns to the thread hang point. Tie off the abdomen with two or three tight overlapping thread wraps. Cut away the excess barb lengths. Counter wrap the rib wire forward in 5 or 6 evenly spaced spiral turns to the thread hang point. Tie off the wire and cut away the butt. Dub a small thorax that will cover the forward ends of the abdomen and wire.



4. In front of the thorax but in back of the bead tie in a partridge hackle feather by its tip. Hackle the feather between the thorax and bead one and a half turns to form a sparse collar. Tie off and cut away the excess feather stem and barbs. Half hitch or whip finish and cut away the thread. Apply a small amount of head cement to the finished thread wraps using caution not to get cement on the collar fibers.