

Brown Owl... Tom Regina

Photos by: Larry Sisney

The Brown Owl was originally tied by Bob Broad to be fished as a dry fly imitation of a stonefly struggling on the water surface. With a short heavy leader on a sink tip line, I have successfully used the Brown Owl as a streamer to catch landlocked salmon and brook trout on the East Outlet, Kennebec River in Maine. Using the Brown Owl as a streamer has also proven very effective on the Tuckasegee River in North Carolina. I have not used it as a dry fly.

Tying Materials

Hook: Orvis Muddler/Stonefly, 1526, size 8
Thread: 6/0 Brown
Body: Embossed gold tinsel
Underwing: Deer hair
Overwing: Teal flank feather
Thorax: Peacock herl
Throat: Grizzly hackle barbs
Head: 6/0 orange thread



Tying Instructions



1. Tie the thread onto the hook one-fourth hook shank length back from the hook eye. Build a neat thread base with touching thread wraps back to a point on the hook shank directly over the hook barb. Return the thread to the thread tie on point. *Caution: Throughout tying steps 1 through 4 do not encroach the hook eye. Brown thread wraps should not be placed forward of the thread tie on point until step 5.* Cut about a 4-inch length of embossed tinsel from the spool. With the running end of the tinsel extending back over the hook bend, bind the tinsel to the top of the hook with neat touching thread wraps to the point directly above the hook barb. Return the thread to the thread tie on point.

2. In 50-percent overlapping turns, wrap the tinsel forward to a point about 1/8 to 1/6-inch back from the thread tie on point. Tie off and cut away the tinsel tag end. Build a short thread segment at the front of the tinsel body as shown in the photo. This thread segment will serve as the base onto which the butts of the underwing and overwing are to be tied.



3. Rotate or invert the hook in the vise. For the underwing, cut a small quantity of deer hair from the hide. Remove the underhair from the bunch of cut hair and even the hair tips by hand or in a hair stacker. Select a sparse amount of the evened or stacked hair. Tie the butts of this sparse amount of hair to the underside of the thread segment at the front of the tinsel body. *(Note: With the hook inverted, the "underside" is up.)* The underwing should extend back into the hook gap. Cut away excess hair butts and cover the butt ends with a few neat thread wraps. Rotate or invert the hook in the vise to its upright or normal position.

4. Select an appropriate size teal flank feather for the overwing. The finished overwing should extend back over the rear of the hook a distance about equal to the hook gap. Tie the butt end of the wing to the top of the thread segment at the front of the body. Cut away the tag ends of the overwing and bind the ends down with a few neat thread wraps.



5. Select two or three peacock herls and even their tips. As a unit stroke the herls to ruffle the barbs. About 1-inch forward of the herl butts, tie them onto the thread segment at the front of the body. Cut away the 1-inch herl tag ends. Twist the herls into a loose rope and wrap them around the front thread segment to form the thorax. Tie off the thorax and cut away the herl tag ends. Tie off the brown thread with a few half hitch or whip finish thread wraps in the bare hook area between the thorax and hook eye.

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6. Rotate or invert the hook in the vise. Tie on the orange thread in front of the thorax and over the brown thread tie off wraps. Select an appropriate size grizzly feather with barbs greater in length than half the length of the hook shank. Stroke the barbs so they stand out perpendicular to the feather quill. As a unit strip away a bunch barbs from about ½- inch of the quill. Tie the stripped barbs to the underside of the hook in front of and adjacent to the thorax. (Note: With the hook inverted, the "underside" is up.) Cut away the barb butts. Rotate or invert the hook in the vise to its upright or normal position.



7. With the orange thread, build a relatively large neatly tapered head. Half hitch or whip finish the thread head. Cut away the thread. For lasting durability, apply epoxy to the thread head, or as an alternative apply several coats of head cement.

Black Herl Midge.... Tom Regina

Tying Materials

Hook: Mustad Signature R30, size 22
Thread: 8/0 black
Tail: Black hen saddle feather barbs
Body: Fine black ostrich herl



Tying Instructions



1. Start the thread on the hook one hook eye distance back from the hook eye. Lay down a neat thread base back to a point directly above the hook barb. As a unit, strip about 4 or 5 barbs from the quill of a hen saddle feather. Tie the barbs to the top of the hook directly above the hook barb. The tail should be equal in length to the hook shank. Take the thread forward to the thread tie on point while binding the barb butts to the top of the hook.



2. At the thread hang point tie a single ostrich herl to the top of the hook. Bind the herl to the top of the hook back to the base of the tail. Take the thread forward to the thread tie on point.



3. Palmer the ostrich herl forward in neat touching wraps to the thread tie on point. Tie off and cut away the excess herl. Form a neat tapered thread head. Cut away the thread and apply a small amount head cement to the finish thread wrap.