

Several years ago, I ordered a fly tying and fly fishing book for bass and bream. It sounded like an interesting book and I hoped it might contain a few new patterns I could tie and use in my search for panfish. The book, "Fly Tying and Fishing for Panfish & Bass", by Tom Kith, contained some very useful information on patterns and "how to" fish for these species. In particular, one pattern which caught my attention was the "Deer Hair Popper" tied in sizes 8 to 12 for panfish.

I took this idea of a small "bass bug" style popper and tied some up for an upcoming trip to a local Jacksonville river, with former FCFF president Danny Knesek. We were going to wade fish and cast to some hopefully hungry bream. I was armed with an arsenal of mini poppers tied in a variety of colors including: all natural deer hair, "bumble bee" colored in yellow and black dyed deer hair, yellow and red dyed deer hair, and olive and white dyed deer hair. Danny said he had the magic pattern (also know as a Round Dinny, sometimes available from Wal-Mart) in a variety of colors.

We began casting across the small river tight to the bank on the far shore. We each began catching fish after fish. At the end of the couple hours fishing period we each had over 20 bream caught and released. The deer hair mini popper was a success! On other trips the popper proved itself similarly, sometimes out fishing the purchased Round Dinny's by a good margin (but not always...Danny is a great fisher and can wrest a bream from some tough spots), and sometimes just matching.

My preferred color is natural deer hair. Sometimes I will add a stripe by using either white or dyed deer hair for a bundle between the other bundles of natural. I do tie them in the "bumble bee" colors, yellow, olive, purple, and even some all black. These all seem to be effective at various times. Sizes are best in 8 to 12. This allows them to get into the bream's small mouth. I prefer the bigger sizes as they tend not to get sucked in as deeply. Keep your hemostats handy to help get the hook out quickly. The hooks I generally use are Mustad 3906B, with a 1XL shank and heavy wire (which does not affect the floatability of the fly). The deer hair floats well, and if you treat it with floatant will stay on the surface even after several fish. I generally tie mine using Uni thread 6/0 thread. It is very strong and I seldom have a thread breakage problem. If you like you could use a little larger thread such as the Orvis size "G".

Don't be surprised if instead of a panfish you have a small bass inhale your mini popper. I have caught several 2 to 3 lb bass while fishing for bluegill. Cast the fly near shore (if fishing from a boat or canoe) or near some cover. Let it sit as long as you can stand it (maybe even a minute or so) and give it a slight twitch. Often the strike will come immediately. You can retrieve it with a slight popping action to give the legs good movement. The panfish seem to find it irresistible. So, if you enjoy some exciting panfish action, get out the vise and spin some mini poppers. They are fairly quick, fun to tie, and even more fun to fish. Tying directions are on page 3

**Thanks from the Fly Fishers of Northwest Florida to
Academy Sports &Outdoors, 8102 North Davis Highway**

For your generous donation of a \$50 gift card that was used to purchase a Crystal River rod, reel and line that we will use in classes we teach at PJC, scout camp and our own monthly casting clinics.

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BULL SESSION - 2ND THURSDAY, 6:30 PM
CLINIC - 3RD SATURDAY, 9 AM
BOARD MEETING-4TH TUESDAY, 6:30PM
FISHING TRIPS - AS SCHEDULED**

**Meetings at Miraflores Park, 17th
Avenue between Belmont and LaRua
St**

Newsletter Editor - Jerry Aldridge