

Poppers, Gurglers and Bangers... and other flies that float

Springtime brings your favorite fish out of their wintertime lairs in the deep so you need to be ready with your favorite top water flies. Almost all of our local fish will take your popper and there is nothing more fun than to see a speck or blue or.....(pick your favorite) crash on it with all her might! Sometimes they miss on the way up and get it on the way down.

Closed-cell foam has changed the way we make our top water flies. Sure, deer hair, cork and balsa poppers work well but they take so long to build, tie and paint - and mine never turn out quite the way I would like. Long after your deer hair bug is water logged and retired for the day your foam popper will still be floating and popping. Foam can be manipulated into just about any shape so let your imagination rule! March tying at the bull session and clinic will be devoted to tying top water flies with foam - poppers, bangers, gurglers, divers, sliders and a new one on me, Blado's Crease Fly with Kevin Cohenour leading the way. Your club will provide materials. Here are some of the ones I like.



These are Gartside Gurglers from the fertile imagination of Jack Gartside, noted tyer and angler. Easy to cast and simple to tie, they have become my favorite top water fly. Bucktail, crystal flash, sheet foam and grizzly and red hackle are the ingredients. Gartside has a new one out that uses marabou for the tail and palmered marabou for the hackle. It really looks alive in the water.



Bob Popovics uses fairly soft foam cylinders for the heads of his "Bob's Bangers". A hot needle through the center makes way for the shank to slide in or out of the head. With heads and streamer flies tied separately, the angler interchange as he likes.



These are more traditional poppers with heads of harder foam epoxied to the hook shank. The top fly has crystal chenille for the body, the lower has hackle. The tails are bucktail and crystal flash. Painting is done with permanent markers. The eyes are decals. If the head of the bottom fly is reversed, the result is a slider.



These traditional poppers are all artificial and thus a bit more durable for our sharp-toothed friends. The tails are super hair which is not as buoyant as bucktail. The foam bodies provide plenty of flotation.