



## Tying Streamer Flies

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### Objectives

Participating young people and adults will:

1. Practice basic streamer styles
2. Practice streamer tying techniques
3. Practice proportion and order in streamer tying
4. Practice following patterns sequentially
5. Have fun while learning

### Youth Development Objectives

Participating young people will:

1. Practice sequential skills and planning
2. Practice communication skills
3. Enhance ability to observe patterns and apply them
4. Enhance patience and persistence
5. Enhance fine motor skills

### Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders

1. Demonstrate and explain patterns
2. Assist participants as needed
3. Share tying challenges and solutions
4. Provide positive reinforcement for learners
5. Evaluate procedures and skills to support improvement

### Potential Parental Involvement:

1. See "Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders" above.
2. Arrange for or provide teaching location
3. Arrange for or provide materials and/or equipment
4. Arrange for or provide transportation

**Best Time:** Any time after basic bucktails

**Best Location:** Well lighted, comfortable setting

**Time Required:** 60-120 minutes

### Equipment/Materials

tying vice	hackle pliers
tying bobbin	bobbin threader
dubbing needle	black 2/0 or monocord
head cement	4x and 6x long hooks
hackle (white, scarlet, yellow, cree, olive)	
marabou (white, black)	black floss
flat silver tinsel	flat gold tinsel
oval silver tinsel (medium and fine)	
black rabbit strips (zonker strips)	
mottled turkey quill	peacock herl
natural bucktail	black squirrel or bear
woodchuck	bison wool
gold tinsel chenille	medium olive chenille
black chenille	scarlet wool
lacquer (yellow, black)	

### Safety Considerations

No special considerations

### References

See references in introduction

### Evaluation Activities/Suggestions

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5. Arrange for or provide refreshments.
6. Discuss personal experience in fishing

1. Observe, correct and reinforce sequential use of materials
2. Observe, correct and reinforce proportion and technique
3. Observe personal interactions and encourage mutual support
4. Record trouble spots and suggest changes in your lesson plan
5. Positively critique flies for improvement of technique

## Lesson Outline

### Presentation

- I. Streamer flies
  - A. Commonly used for all fish imitations
    1. Formally refers to feather-winged flies
  - B. Pattern elements
    1. Feather wings (usually)
    2. Usually long, slim patterns
    3. Designed to suggest forage fish
- II. Tying the Black Ghost
  - A. Originator - Herbert Welch (Maine)
    1. Excellent pattern for locating big fish
    2. Seems to excite many species
  - B. Pattern
    1. Hook: 4x - 6x long streamer
    2. Thread: black 6/0-2/0
    3. Tail: yellow hackle fibers
    4. Rib: flat silver tinsel
    5. Body: black floss
    6. Wing: 4 matched white saddle hackles
    7. Throat: yellow hackle fibers or bucktail
    8. Head: tying thread
  - C. Tying procedure
    1. Pluck small bunch of yellow hackle
    2. Bind in as a tail
    3. Bind in ribbing tinsel
    4. Carry thread to the shoulder area
    5. Bind in black floss (4 strand suggested)
    6. Apply double wound floss body
      - a. Cover tail tie-down area well
      - b. Taper slightly at both ends
    7. Bind off and trim floss at shoulder
    8. Bind in bucktail underwing if used
      - a. Keep very sparse
      - b. Just longer than hook
    9. Prepare, bind in 4 white saddle hackles
      - a. Pick hackles to have matching curves
      - b. Measure against hook for length
      - c. Strip away excess feather
      - d. Hold hackles together
      - e. Score tie-down area of shafts with

### Application

**DESCRIBE** and **ILLUSTRATE** basic streamer fly components, history and use.

**NOTE** that the Black Ghost is one of the few Maine patterns to find general use. An excellent pattern for brook trout and landlocked salmon, it is also a fine big fish locator.

**PASS** out the materials for the Black Ghost while discussing their use.

**EMPHASIZE** the need to match the hackles for length and curvature.

**BIND** in a small clump of yellow hackle fibers as tail. **TRIM** the butts and wind over them to secure.

**BIND** in the ribbing tinsel and **CARRY** the thread forward to the shoulder area.

**BIND** in a strip of 4-strand floss at the shoulder and **WIND** a double-wound body tapering slightly on both ends.

If desired, **BIND** in a very sparse white bucktail underwing, trimming the butts and winding over them with the thread.

**PREPARE** four matched white saddle hackles by removing the flue from their bases, **HOLD** them with their tips together, and **SCORE** the tie-down area with your thumbnail and fingernail.

thumbnail

- f. Hold tightly in place and bind tightly
- g. Trim hackle butts away neatly
- 10. Bind in yellow hackle throat
- 11. Wind head, whip finish, lacquerD.

Variations

- 1. Yellow Ghost
  - a. Yellow saddles for wings
  - b. Scarlet throat and tail
- 2. Transvestite Vampire
  - a. Designed at Michigan Workshop
    - 1) Used in progressive story
    - 2) Attributed to Ron Howard
    - 3) Designed and tied for auction
  - b. Pattern
    - 1) Hook: #8 9575 streamer
    - 2) Thread: black 6/0
    - 3) Tail: scarlet hackle fibers
    - 4) Rib: copper tinsel
    - 5) Body: ivory floss
    - 6) Underwing: mauve flashabou
    - 7) Wing: medium blue dun hackle
    - 8) Throat: scarlet hackle fibers
    - 9) Fangs: white duck wing fibers
    - 10) Head: tying thread, lacquered

III. Tying the White Marabou

A. Pattern

- 1. Hook: 4x - 6x long streamer
- 2. Thread: black 6/0-2/0
- 3. Tag: flat silver tinsel
- 4. Tail: red hackle fibers
- 5. Rib: oval silver tinsel
- 6. Body: flat silver tinsel
- 7. Wing: white marabou over sparse bucktail
- 8. Topping: peacock herl
- 9. Throat: red hackle fibers
- 10. Head: tying thread

C. Tying procedure

- 1. Bind in and apply tag tinsel
- 2. Bind in red hackle fiber tail
- 3. Bind in oval tinsel rib
  - a. Leave excess to cover shank
  - b. Wind over tinsel closely to shoulder
- 4. Bind in and apply flat silver tinsel body
  - a. Some tiers prefer embossed tinsel
  - b. Wraps should touch but not overlap
- 5. Wind the rib to the shoulder, bind off
- 6. Bind in sparse white bucktail underwing

**HOLD** them tightly in place and **BIND** them tightly in place, keeping all of them tightly together and centered on the shank. **BIND** in a throat of yellow hackle fibers.

**WIND** a head, **WHIP** finish and **APPLY** head cement.

**NOTE** that these variations are just a few that can be based on the Black Ghost.

*This pattern is included because it was developed at the second national 4-H Sportfishing Workshop in Tustin, Michigan, 1997. Attributed to the author by a participant in a "progressive story" where each member had to use words drawn from a hat in their 15 to 20 second segment of the story, it was tied and auctioned to raise money for the program. A good-looking pattern, it is a proven people-catcher if not a fish catcher. It was based upon the Black Ghost.*

**PASS** out the materials required to tie the White Marabou while discussing their use in the pattern.

**BIND** in a piece of flat silver tinsel at the bend, and **APPLY** about two turns to the rear of the shank.

**BIND** in a small clump of red hackle fibers as a tail, extending straight back from the shank.

**BIND** in a piece of oval tinsel for ribbing material, **BINDING** down the tag end of the tinsel to the base of the shoulder in close, even wraps, making a smooth underbody for the flat tinsel body. [NOTE that the secret to a smooth tinsel body is a smooth underbody.]

**BIND** in flat silver tinsel at the shoulder, forming a double wound body from the base of the tail to the shoulder.

**APPLY** oval tinsel as a rib, **BINDING** off at the shoulder and **TRIMMING** it closely.

If desired, **BIND** in a very sparse underwing of white bucktail.

[This is not needed on smaller flies, but may help with keeping the

7. Bind in white marabou
  - a. Imagine the clump or feather wet
  - b. Will appear to be too much dry
  - c. Align feather to maximize movement
8. Trim butts of marabou closely
9. Apply scarlet hackle fiber throat
  
10. Apply 6-10 peacock herls over marabou
11. Trim peacock herl closely
12. Wind head, whip finish, lacquer

### III. Tying a Muddler Minnow

#### A. Originator - Don Gopen

1. Designed to suggest a sculpin
2. Extremely versatile pattern
  - a. Hopper
  - b. Big stonefly
  - c. Emerging large nymph
  - d. Forage fish imitation

#### B. Pattern

1. Hook: 2x-4x long
2. Thread: black monocord or 2/0
3. Tail: mottled turkey slips
4. Body: flat gold tinsel
5. Underwing: woodchuck guard hairs
6. Wing: mottled turkey slips
7. Collar: deer body hair tips
8. Head: clipped deer hair

#### C. Tying procedure

1. Prepare and bind in tail
  - a. Cut matched slips of mottled turkey
  - b. Bind in as a tail (like wet fly wing)
  - c. Leave butts along shank
2. Carry thread closely to collar area
  - a. Form smooth base for tinsel body
  - b. Leave room for collar and head
3. Attach and apply gold tinsel body
  
4. Bind in sparse woodchuck underwing
  
5. Prepare and attach turkey wings
6. Trim butts closely
  
7. Bind in small bunch of deer body hair
  - a. Allow ends to flare around wing tie-down area
  - b. Tips extend about half way on body
  - c. Butts form first part of head
8. Finish spinning head of deer hair
9. Whip finish and lacquer thread
  
10. Trim head to shape
  - a. Keep scissors flat to shank
  - b. Hold collar out of the way

*wing from wrapping around the shank on larger sizes.]*

**BIND** in one or more white marabou feathers as a wing. [***TIP:** wetting the feather gives you a good idea of the size once the fly is in the water.*] The marabou should be free to pulse in the water for maximum effectiveness.

**TRIM** the butts of the marabou closely.

**APPLY** a small bunch of scarlet hackle fibers at the throat, trimming the butts and winding over them.

**ADD** a few strands of peacock herl over the marabou, trimming the butts of the herl and winding over them to the eye of the hook.

**WIND** a head, whip finish the thread, and apply head cement. [*If desired, you may add eyes or jungle cock nails to the head.*]

The Muddler Minnow is an extremely versatile pattern that can be fished as the originator intended to suggest a sculpin or as an acceptable grasshopper, stonefly or other large nymph.

**PASS** out the materials needed to tie a Muddler Minnow while explaining their use in the pattern.

**DISCUSS** the use of woodchuck guard hairs or bucktail in the pattern.

**PREPARE** a matched set of wing quill slips and **BIND** them in as a tail.

**ALLOW** the butts to lay along the shank, winding over them with thread to form a smooth base for the body materials.

**ALLOW** adequate room for the collar and head before **ATTACHING** and **APPLYING** a double wound gold tinsel body.

**BIND** is a sparse underwing of woodchuck guard hairs (bucktail or squirrel may be used as well).

**PREPARE** a pair of matched mottled turkey wing quill slips, binding them in over the underwing and trimming the butts closely.

**BIND** in a small bunch of deer body hair (fine hair works best here), allowing the natural tips to project rearward over the front half of the body. **PACK** the butts of the hairs tightly, then spin the remainder of the hook full of deer body hair to the eye.

**WIND** and **WHIP** finish a small head at the eye, **APPLYING** a drop of two of lacquer.

**TRIM** the head to shape, keeping the scissors flat to the shank and holding the collar hairs out of the way while trimming the head to a cylindrical shape.

c. Cut to cylinder or cone shape

#### IV. Tying a Black Marabou Muddler

##### A. Pattern

1. Hook: 4 x long streamer
2. Thread: black monocord or 2/0
3. Tail: scarlet hackle fibers
4. Body: gold tinsel chenille
5. Underwing: black squirrel or black bear
6. Wing: black marabou
7. Topping: peacock herl
8. Collar: deer body hair tips
9. Head: spun deer hair cut to shape

##### B. Tying procedure

1. Bind in hackle fiber tail
2. Bind in gold tinsel chenille over tail area
3. Carry thread to the shoulder
4. Wind chenille body to shoulder, bind off
5. Apply sparse underwing
  - a. Tips of hair about to bend
  - b. Hair nearly flat to hook
6. Bind in marabou wing
7. Bind in peacock herl topping
8. Apply natural deer body hair collar
9. Spin natural deer hair head
10. Wind, whip finish and cement head
11. Trim head to shape

##### C. Variations

1. White marabou muddler
2. Yellow marabou muddler
3. Olive marabou muddler
4. Brown marabou muddler
5. Pink marabou muddler

#### V. Tying Ron's Sucker Fry

##### A. Pattern

1. Hook: 4x - 6x long down eye
2. Thread: black
3. Tail: cree hackle fibers
4. Body: bison wool
5. Rib: flat gold tinsel
6. Underwing: natural bucktail
7. Wing: cree hackles
8. Head: generous black thread
9. Eye: yellow/black

##### B. Tying procedure

1. Bind in cree hackle fibers for tail
2. Bind in flat gold tinsel rib
3. Dub a generous body of bison wool
4. Wind ribbing material to head area
5. Apply natural bucktail underwing
  - a. Natural brown
  - b. Reaching to or beyond tail tip
6. Apply cree hackle wings
7. Wind generous head

The Black Marabou Muddler is representative of a series of patterns that combine the action of marabou with the appeal of the muddler style.

**PASS** out the materials required for the pattern while **DISCUSSING** their use in the pattern.

**BIND** in a tail of scarlet hackle fibers.

**ATTACH** gold tinsel chenille over the tail area. **CARRY** the thread forward to the shoulder and **WIND** the chenille to the shoulder area, binding it off and trimming it there.

**APPLY** a sparse underwing of black bear or black squirrel hair with the tips reaching about to the end of the hook.

**BIND** in a black marabou wing over the underwing as above.

**BIND** in several strands of peacock herl over the wing.

**APPLY** a collar of natural deer hair (some use black), and **SPIN** the shank full of deer hair to the eye.

**WIND** a small head, **WHIP** finish and **CEMENT** the head.

**TRIM** the head to shape, being careful not to cut the collar.

**DISCUSS** some of the effective variations on the marabou muddler theme and their utility in your area.

**PASS** out the materials for this pattern while **DISCUSSING** their use.

If bison wool is not available, **USE** another bright, translucent, light brown dubbing material.

**BIND** in a short, stout clump of cree hackle fibers as a tail.

**BIND** in either flat or oval gold tinsel as a rib.

**DUB** a generous, tapered body of bison wool to the base of the head and **APPLY** the ribbing tinsel.

**BIND** in a sparse underwing of natural brown bucktail, allowing it to reach to or beyond the tip of the tail.

**BIND** in a matched pair of cree hackles as long as the tail and underwings.

**WIND** a generous, tapered head to the turned down eye of the

8. Whip finish and apply head cement
9. Apply yellow eye with black pupil
10. Apply clear epoxy over head

hook, then WHIP finish the thread and APPLY head cement in several layers. Once the cement is dry, PAINT yellow eyes with black pupils. Once the lacquer is

## VI. Tying an Olive Matuka

### A. Pattern

1. Hook: 4 x long streamer
2. Thread: black 6/0 or monocord
3. Body: medium olive dubbing
4. Rib: fine oval silver tinsel
5. Wing: 4 barred olive neck hackles
6. Collar: olive hackle
7. Head: tying thread

### B. Tying procedure

1. Bind in ribbing tinsel at bend
2. Prepare wing materials
  - a. Match hackle tips and shapes
  - b. Measure against hook
    - 1) About 2x longer than shank
    - 2) Locate rear of shank
  - c. Strip underside to rear of shank
3. Dub olive fur to the shoulder
4. Bind in wing materials
5. Spread hackle fibers upward
6. Bind wing to body with ribbing tinsel
  - a. Keep wing centered on body
  - b. Keep wraps of tinsel tight and uniform
  - c. Avoid binding down hackle fibers
7. Bind in tinsel at shoulder and trim end
8. Bind in shoulder hackle
9. Wind 2-3 turns, bind off and trim
10. Pull shoulder hackle back as collar
11. Wind head, whip finish, lacquer
12. Smooth wing fibers back

### C. Variations limited only by imagination

1. Game bird back or covert feathers
2. Neck or saddle hackles
3. Body materials of choice

Matukas represent a tying style for streamers rather than a specific pattern. The style is extremely durable, and it permits the use of a wide variety of materials, including body feathers, for wings.

**PASS** out the materials needed for this pattern while **DISCUSSING** their use.

**BIND** in the ribbing tinsel at the bend of the hook.

**PREPARE** the wing materials by matching 4 hackles to length and shape. **HOLDING** the hackles by the tips, **MEASURE** them against the hook. **STRIP** away hackle barbs until the entire length is about twice the shank length. **STRIP** away the hackle fibers on the underside so the feathers lie atop the shank with full width behind the hook.

**DUB** an olive fur body to the shoulder.

**BIND** in the wing materials at the front of the shoulder, keeping all of the feathers aligned.

**SPREAD** the hackle fibers upward from the end of the shank to the tie-down area.

Keeping the hackles centered on the top of the body, **BIND** them to the body from the bend to the shoulder to **ANCHOR** the wing in place. **DO NOT** tie the hackle fibers down any more than absolutely necessary.

**BIND** off the tinsel at the shoulder and trim the end.

**SMOOTH** the hackle fibers back as much as possible.

**BIND** in a hackle feather at the shoulder and **APPLY** two or three turns. **SMOOTH** the hackles back as a collar and **APPLY** thread to their bases to lean them back.

**WIND** a head, **WHIP** finish and **APPLY** head cement to them.

**SMOOTH** the wing hackles back as much as possible.

**NOTE** that variations on this pattern are limited only by the imagination of the tier, but they should suggest forage species in the area.

Like matukas, zonkers are a tying style or class of flies with similar characteristics. This pattern is leech-like.

**PASS** out the materials needed for the pattern and **DISCUSS** their use. **NOTE** the use of thin strips of rabbit fur as a wing.

## VII. Tying a Black Zonker

### A. Pattern

1. Hook: 4-6x long streamer
2. Thread: 6/0 or monocord, black
3. Body: black dubbing fur
4. Rib: flat silver tinsel
5. Wing: thin strip of black rabbit on skin
6. Collar: black hackle
7. Head: tying thread

### B. Tying procedure

1. Bind in middle of rabbit strip at bend
  - a. About 2x shank length
  - b. Avoid tying down fur too much
2. Bind in ribbing tinsel

Carefully **BIND** in a thin strip of black rabbit fur, avoiding binding down the fur and hair as much as possible. The entire strip should be about twice the shank length with the natural set of the hair back toward the tail.

**BIND** in ribbing tinsel at the rear of the body.

3. Dub black fur to shoulder
4. Apply flat tinsel rib, bind off and trim
5. Pull fur strip forward snugly and bind in
6. Trim fur strip
7. Bind in hackle
8. Wind 2-3 turns of hackle, bind off, trim
9. Wind head, whip finish, lacquer

#### C. Variations

1. Many possible color combinations
2. Hybrid with matuka - binding fur strip with tinsel

### VIII. Fishing them

#### A. Presentations like forage fish

1. Short , quick, darting retrieve
2. Slow strips
3. Quick, short strips
4. Fast, long strips
5. Hand twist retrieve (deep and slow)
6. Dead drift
7. Pumping rod on retrieve

#### B. Experiment to see what the fish want

**DUB** black fur to the shoulder, making a smoothly tapered body. **APPLY** flat tinsel as a rib to the shoulder, binding it off and trimming.

**PULL** the rabbit strip forward so it lies snugly over the center of the back and **BIND** it in carefully, trimming it closely.

**BIND** in a hackle feather at the tie down area, **WIND** a couple turns of hackle as a collar, **BIND** it off and **TRIM** closely.

**WIND** a tapered head, **WHIP** finish and **APPLY** head cement to the windings.

**NOTE** that numerous combinations of back and body materials can be used to imitate everything from leeches and worms to shrimp and minnows. Some hybrids even bind down the fur strip with the tinsel as with matukas.

**DISCUSS** fishing streamers and streamer fishing techniques.

**EMPHASIZE** experimenting to determine the approach the fish seem to prefer on any given day.

### Summary Activity

Display and critique the flies tied in this session. Lead a discussion of the skills learned and plans for enhancing those skills. Lead participants in a discussion of possible modifications or additional patterns they would like to attempt or test. Lead into the next streamer fly tying lesson as a wrap-up.

### Lesson Narrative

The term “streamer” is often used for all types of flies used to imitate fish. In a formal sense, the term is applied to only the feather-winged patterns and “bucktails” is used for the hair-winged patterns. The patterns are tied on long-shanked hooks for the most part, generally from about 3 or 4 extra long hooks to those in the 6 extra long or 1/2 inch longer than standard hooks. Occasionally they are tied on 8 extra long hooks or on shorter hooks used in tandem. The latter ones are most commonly encountered in flies intended to be trolled rather than cast.

Streamers are commonly designed to suggest or imitate forage fishes or to serve as attractor patterns in a similar long, slender shape. Common pattern elements include: tags, tails, butts, body and rib, throat, wings, cheeks, and collars. The patterns in this lesson are designed to teach basic streamer tying skills and handling of materials commonly used.

### Tying the Black Ghost

The Black Ghost was originated by Herbert Welch of Mooselookmeguntic, Maine, as a pattern to be used for landlocked salmon. Unlike many of the patterns designed for landlocks and “squaretails,” this one has proven itself in both saltwater and fresh for a wide variety of species. It is an excellent searching pattern for large fish, often seeming to excite big fish into slashing strikes. The pattern follows.

Hook: 4x - 6x long streamer

Thread: black 6/0-2/0

Tail: yellow hackle fibers

Rib: flat silver tinsel

Body: black floss

Wing: 4 matched white saddle hackles

Throat: yellow hackle fibers or bucktail

Head: tying thread

The pattern is initiated by binding in a small bunch of yellow hackle fibers as a tail. A strip of flat silver tinsel is bound in at the base of the tail as ribbing material. Next carry the thread forward to the shoulder area of the fly and bind in a strip of four-strand black floss. Carefully wind a double tapered floss body from the shoulder to the tail tie-down area and back, binding it off at the shoulder and trimming away the excess material. Wind the tinsel in open spirals to the shoulder and bind it off. If desired, use a small clump of white bucktail to form an underwing. This is less important in smaller flies than in larger ones, but it may help to keep the wings from fouling the hook during casting. Prepare four matched white saddle hackles by removing the excess hackle fibers from the base of the feather while holding the tips together in matched position. Score the feather shafts slightly by scraping them with the thumbnail on their upper surface. This will cause the quills to curl upward slightly and provide a good tie-down area for the wings. Bind the wings in place with the tips of the hackles extending about half the shank length behind the bend of the hook, applying several turns of thread to lock the wings in place. Trim away the excess feather quill, then bind in a section of yellow hackle as a throat. Trim the butts of the throat hackle. If desired and they are available, consider applying a jungle cock nail on each side of the wing to make it true to the original pattern. If not, do not worry about it, the fly works either way. Wind a smoothly tapered head, whip finish the thread, and apply on or more coats of head cement to finish the fly.

Variations on the pattern are both numerous and effective. The Yellow Ghost simply substitutes yellow saddle hackles for the white ones of the original and replaces the yellow tail and throat with red hackle fibers. In stained water or for fish that seem to prefer yellow, this is an outstanding pattern. This pattern varies also in having scarlet hackles at the tail and throat

Starting as a response to a comment in a progressive story at the Michigan Workshop in 1997, the Transvestite Vampire is also a deliberate modification of the Black Ghost. When a fly of that name was attributed to the author, he developed one to be included in the last evening's auction. Rather than making it simply as a joke, he attempted to make one that was true to the name, but would work. The pattern is included here for historical purposes and in case you might like to try it on local waters.

Hook: Mustad 9575 - size 8  
Thread: black 6/0  
Tail: scarlet hackle fibers  
Rib: copper tinsel  
Body: ivory floss  
Underwing: mauve flashabou  
Wing: medium blue dun hackle  
Throat: scarlet hackle fibers  
Fangs: white duck wing fibers tied in beside the head  
Head: tying thread, lacquered

### **Tying the White Marabou**

The White Marabou is another of the outstanding searching or locating patterns for large salmonids. Even when they are not motivated to strike it, big fish seem to be motivated to chase the pattern at least once. The live, pulsating action of the marabou wing seems to trigger a chasing or striking response in many fish. It is tied in many ways by various fly dressers. Ted Trueblood, for example, tied marabout sparsely around the shank with a few strands of peacock herl over it. He felt the body was superfluous. Others added additional layers of material, eyes or similar items. The pattern follows.

Hook: 4x - 6x long streamer  
Thread: black 6/0-2/0  
Tag: flat silver tinsel  
Tail: red hackle fibers  
Rib: oval silver tinsel  
Body: flat silver tinsel  
Wing: white marabou over sparse bucktail

Topping: peacock herl  
Throat: red hackle fibers  
Head: tying thread

The featured pattern for this fly starts with a two or three turn silver tinsel tag on the upper part of the hook's bend. Many fly dressers leave this pattern element out and feel it makes no difference. Over the base of the tag and at the end of the shank, bind in a clump of scarlet hackle fibers as a tail. Laying enough material along the shank to reach the front of the body, bind oval silver tinsel in place and wind the thread forward in tightly spaced turns to the front of the body. Laying a smooth base is critical to the application of the flat silver tinsel body, so take the time to build a smooth, even base. Bind in the flat silver tinsel at the shoulder, and wind it in even turns to the base of the tail and back forward in even turns to the shoulder, binding it off there. Note that the most uniform body will be laid by having successive turns touch but not overlap. Trim the excess material and apply the oval tinsel rib in open, evenly spaced spirals. Bind it off at the shoulder and trim away the excess material. If desired, apply a sparse white bucktail underwing about shank length. On smaller flies it may be unnecessary. On larger ones it can prevent fouling of the wing on the hook during casting. Bind in one or more white marabou feathers with the overall fibers about half again the hook length. The marabou should be positioned to give the fly maximum movement in the water. Top the marabou with a few strands of peacock herl, and bind in a small bunch of scarlet hackle fibers at the throat. Trim any excess materials away, and wind a smoothly tapered head. If desired add eyes or jungle cock nails to the shoulder area to simulate them. Whip finish the head and add a drop or two of head cement or clear lacquer. If stick on eyes are used, add them after the head is dry and coat the head and eyes with clear epoxy.

### **Tying a Muddler Minnow**

While there are some voices of dissent, the Muddler Minnow is generally agreed to have been originated by Don Gapen as a sculpin imitation. While it does a good job of suggesting a sculpin, it is an extremely versatile pattern that can serve as a grasshopper on the surface, a large emerging nymph, a big stonefly, or another forage fish. The flared collar of deer hair and the spun hair head give it some buoyancy, but it can be fished "scratching the gravel" for sculpin eating fish. The pattern follows.

Hook: 2x-4x long  
Thread: black monocord or 2/0  
Tail: mottled turkey slips  
Body: flat gold tinsel  
Underwing: woodchuck guard hairs  
Wing: mottled turkey slips  
Collar: deer body hair tips  
Head: clipped deer hair

Start with the thread attached at the rear of the shank. Prepare a set of matched mottled turkey wing sections and bind them in as a tail. If adequate material remains to reach about 1/3 of the length of the shank, leave it intact and wind the thread closely over it to that point, trimming away any excess material. Bind in a piece of flat gold tinsel, and wind it smoothly back to cover the base of the tail and back forward again to the shoulder. Trim away any excess tinsel. Bind in a sparse wing of woodchuck guard hairs. The tips of the hair should reach approximately to the tip of the tail. Trim the butts of the hair, and attach a matched set of mottled turkey quill slips as wings. Trim the butts closely and apply one drop of lacquer to help secure them. Clip a small bunch of fine deer hair from close to the hide. Leaving the natural tips to the rear and reaching about 1/2 to 1/3 of the way back on the wing, bind in the hair while allowing it to spin around the shank. The collar should be relatively sparse and uniformly distributed around the shank. Trim the butt ends to a length slightly longer the finished head and pack them tightly to the base of the wing. Add additional small bunches of deer hair, spinning a head that fills the shank to the eye of the hook. Wind a small head, whip finish the thread, and apply a drop or two of head cement to complete the tying process. Remove the hook from the vise and, holding the scissors parallel to the shank, trim the head to a cylinder of the desired diameter. Be sure to hold the collar out of the way when shaping the head..

Many variations of the muddler are useful. Some of them are simple color variations, like using brown deer hair dyed yellow for the collar and head and dyed yellow turkey quill for the wings and tail. Others, like the next pattern use different types of wing material or body material to achieve a different purpose.

### **Tying a Black Marabou Muddler**

The black marabou muddler is a hybrid of a marabou streamer and the muddler. It retains the muddler head and collar, but uses a different tail, body and wing. In small sizes it may resemble a leech, madtom or a large dark nymph. The pattern follows.

Hook: 4 x long streamer  
Thread: black monocord or 2/0  
Tail: scarlet hackle fibers  
Body: gold tinsel chenille  
Underwing: black squirrel or black bear  
Wing: black marabou  
Topping: peacock herl  
Collar: deer body hair tips  
Head: spun deer hair cut to shape

Bind in a scarlet hackle fiber tail. Attach a piece of gold tinsel chenille over the tie down area for the tail and carry the thread forward to the shoulder area. Wind the tinsel chenille forward as a body and bind it off, trimming away the excess material. If desired, bind in a sparse underwing of black bear, black squirrel or black bucktail over the chenille. This is not necessary, but it may reduce fouling of the wing during casting. Bind in a marabou wing reaching beyond the tail. Add a few strands of peacock herl over the marabou as a topping, trimming away the excess material. Apply a small bunch of natural deer body hair as a collar, allowing the natural tips to project back about half way on the wing and body. Trim the butt ends of the hair a bit longer than necessary for the final head size. Pack the material back against the wing base, and fill the remainder of the shank to the eye with spun deer hair to the hook's eye. Whip finish the thread at the eye and apply a drop of two of head cement. Remove the hook from the vise and trim the head to a cylindrical shape of the desired size.

Numerous variations on the marabou muddler are useful. Simply changing the color of the tinsel or ice chenille and the color of the wing permits you to tie white, yellow, olive, brown, or pink marabou muddlers. All of them are useful in some fishing situations, from bonefish to bluegills.

### **Tying Ron's Sucker Fry**

Ron's Sucker Fry is useful in situations where sucker fry are abundant and significant parts of the forage base for game fish. The pattern follows.

Hook: 4x - 6x long down eye  
Thread: black  
Tail: cree hackle fibers  
Body: bison wool  
Rib: flat gold tinsel  
Underwing: natural bucktail  
Wing: cree hackles  
Head: generous black thread  
Eye: yellow/black

Start tying the fly by binding in a clump of cree hackle fibers for a tail. Bind in a strip of flat gold tinsel as a rib and dub a generous body of bison wool to the base of the wing tie-down area. If bison wool is not available, any bright, translucent, light brown dubbing material may be substituted. Wind the gold tinsel over the body, binding it in and trimming away the excess material. Apply a sparse underwing of natural bucktail, reaching to the tip of the tail. Bind in a pair of cree hackles over the bucktail underwing. If desired, wind a turn of two of cree hackle as a collar. Wind a rather generous head tapering to the eye of the hook. Whip finish the thread and apply head cement. Once the head cement has dried, use a nail and a

toothpick to apply a lacquer eye, yellow with a black pupil. Cover the head with a thin coat of clear epoxy or several coats of clear lacquer.

### **Tying an Olive Matuka**

Matukas represent a tying style with many patterns formed on it. They allow the fly tier to use nearly any feather, including hackles and game bird body feathers to tie an effective fly. The pattern listed here is olive, but it is merely an example of the type. Variations are limited only by your imagination.

Hook: 4 x long streamer  
Thread: black 6/0 or monocord  
Body: medium olive dubbing  
Rib: fine oval silver tinsel  
Wing: 4 barred olive neck hackles  
Collar: olive hackle  
Head: tying thread

The tying procedure for this pattern starts with binding in the ribbing tinsel (wire in smaller patterns) at the rear of the shank. Dub or wind a body to the wing tie-down area and let the thread hang. Prepare wing materials by selecting four feathers for their length and shape. Measure them against the hook, looking for feathers with about twice the shank length of useful feather. Measuring the wing material against the shank, remove the excess material from the butt and strip away the fibers on the underside to the rear of the shank. Holding the hackles together, bind in the wings over the body. Holding the tips of the hackles, spread the feather fibers upward so they stand at right angles to the shaft. Wind the ribbing tinsel or wire through the hackles trying to avoid binding down the fibers and binding the feather shafts to the body. Keep the wing centered on the back of the body while doing so. Once the tinsel has reached the base of the wings, bind it off and trim the excess. Bind in a hackle feather and wind two or three turns of hackle around the shank. Bind it off, sweep the hackles back, and wind over the bases to slant them back toward the hook point slightly. Wind a smoothly tapered head, whip finish the thread, and apply a drop or two of head cement. Smooth the fibers on the upper part of the wing back toward the tail as effectively as possible.

### **Tying a Black Zonker**

Like the matuka, this pattern really reflects a class of patterns - flies made with narrow strips of tanned rabbit fur as the wing and tail. While some tiers use a matuka style on them, most zonkers differ from matukas in having the fur strip tied down at only the back of the shank and at the head. The pattern outlined here could be a good leech pattern or madtom pattern in smaller sizes.

Hook: 4-6x long streamer  
Thread: 6/0 or monocord, black  
Body: black dubbing fur  
Rib: flat silver tinsel  
Wing: thin strip of black rabbit on skin  
Collar: black hackle  
Head: tying thread

Zonker procedure starts with binding in the midpoint of the rabbit strip (it should be about twice the length of the shank) at the rear of the shank. Try to avoid tying down too much fur when the materials are bound in. Bind in a strip of silver tinsel at the rear of the shank, and dub a black fur body to the shoulder. Apply the rib in open turns to the shoulder, binding it off and trimming away the excess. Pull the forward end of the fur strip forward and bind it down at the shoulder. Trim the end of the fur strip cleanly. Bind in a hackle feather at the shoulder, winding a two to three turn collar. Bind it off and trim the ends, sweeping them back toward the tail and winding over their bases to set the angle back toward the tail. Wind a smoothly tapered head, whip finish the thread, and apply a drop or two of head cement.

### **Fishing Them**

In moving waters, the downstream and across cast permits much more diverse fly manipulation than does the upstream or quartering upstream cast. The same applies in tidal currents, but the upstream or quartering casts can get the flies deeper and mimic helpless prey being swept along by the currents. The primary objective is to make the fly mimic the behavior of a baitfish the predatory fish are eating. Retrieves should be varied until a pattern that attracts strikes is determined. A short, quick, darting retrieve may be the ticket with the fly moving only inches but quickly. Sometimes moving the fly in slow strips or even using a hand twist retrieve to crawl it along will produce strikes. Rapid short strips, long fast strips, or even a dead drift can be useful. The key is to experiment to find what works on that day and in that location.

### **Exhibit or Sharing Suggestions**

1. Prepare a poster, models or photographs to show the steps in tying a selected streamer fly.
2. Study tying books and magazines to locate some types of streamer flies that might be useful in your area. Share your results with other interested people.
3. Prepare a method demonstration on tying a streamer fly of your choice and present that demonstration in an appropriate setting.
4. Prepare a photographic exhibit of tying a selected pattern from the beginning to using the fly in fishing.
5. Make a series of streamers and pattern cards that can be exhibited at a fair or similar gathering.
6. Try variations of some of these patterns to see if you can develop something that works well in your area. Record your results in a fishing journal and share them with your group.

### **Community Service and "Giving Back" Activities**

1. Consider ways of helping other young people learn how to tie flies, setting up tying clinics or instructional programs for interested people.
2. Tie a set of flies that can be used as auction items or door prizes in community events or fundraisers.
3. Donate flies to a local fishing program.
4. Participate in a National Hunting and Fishing Day presentation or demonstration or a similar activity.

### **Extensions or Ways of Learning More**

1. Observe fish feeding on forage fish in your local waters. Practice techniques of fishing streamers to imitate the actions of those bait fishes. Record the results in your fishing journal.
2. Attempt to develop a streamer fly that will successfully elicit strikes from the fish in your area. Share your pattern with others.
3. Sample the forage fish in your area and observe those located in the stomachs of fish kept. Prepare a series of flies to imitate or suggest the species and sizes you have observed.
4. Study the food habits of fishes in your area through books, articles and other research sources. Observe them directly and attempt to discover how, when and why they feed on certain forage bases.

### **Links to Other Programs**

The link to the rest of the sportfishing program is obvious. Fly tying is a natural link to fly fishing as well as to crafting other types of tackle. Rod building can be a means of having an excellent fly rod at a lower cost. The feathers, furs and other materials needed by a fly tier can lead to interests in hunting, trapping, waterfowl, poultry science or other seemingly unrelated fields. Understanding aquatic ecology as well as keen observation skills are important to success in both tying and fishing flies. This can provide entry into the sciences, either as a future vocation or as an avocational activity. Fishing flies can lead to an interest in several fields of engineering from basic physics to materials science and related fields. Tying flies can be a great introduction to economics and marketing for young entrepreneurs. The hobby of tying flies is both craft and art. It can lead into many other areas of activity from writing and photography to science.

Observation of fishes and other organisms in the wild can become an entry point into the biological sciences, ethology (behavior), ecology, population dynamics, or the applied end of those sciences in fishery biology and related fields. Recording your observations could lead to careers in writing or other forms of communication as well as to careers in guiding or outfitting others in sportfishing.