



Spring Creek Flycraft and Guide Service

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Fly Tyers Corner August, 2012 Dark Lord Nymph

by Bill Carnazzo

Last month, while discussing the addition of a soft hackle to my short line rig, I mentioned that the Dark Lord is one of the flies that I use a lot as the dropper fly on the rig. For me it is a "go to" pattern especially when things get tough and the fish seem to have lockjaw. The Dark Lord will often produce results when nothing else works. About 6 weeks ago I was fishing on the Upper McCloud, trying to determine whether or not to take my next day's guide clients there. I fished through the morning with fairly good results using a Golden Stonefly nymph as a point fly, and a Prince Nymph on the dropper, but most of the fish were small resident trout, 8-12" in length. I resisted the urge to change to a dry fly despite the fact that fish were rising sporadically throughout the reach I was fishing—I was doing fine with the nymphs so there was no reason to mess with success. During a drift in a particularly lovely spot, my fly got caught on an Elephant Ear sprout. When I reached down to unfasten it, I noticed that there were small black stonefly nymphs on the stems of many of the Elephant Ear sprouts. Bingo!! I replaced the Prince Nymph with a size 14 Dark Lord, and added a Dark Lord tied soft hackle style as a trailer (3rd fly). For the next two hours I hooked and landed trout on every 2nd or 3rd cast, a good number of which were over 16"—all of them on either the dropper or the soft hackle. I took pictures of the most colorful and largest specimens, and decided to call it good at around 4:00 p.m. On the trail back to the car I met up with two friends from Dunsmuir, who had been fishing downstream of where I was. Their experience was similar to my morning results. When they asked how I'd done, I let the pictures speak for themselves. They immediately recognized the fly stuck in the jaw of some of the fish, and muttered something about wishing they'd thought of that. Just in case, I handed them a couple of extras, and bid them adieu.

There are many lessons buried in that little vignette. A couple of the more obvious ones: First, be very observant when you are on the stream. Things can change as the day progresses; fish eager to take, say, a Red John in the morning may not give it the time of day in the afternoon, or even a few minutes later. Abrupt changes like that are a red flag—something is going on beneath the surface. Look on and under the rocks, watch for surface activity, shake streamside bushes, drag a stick out of the water—in other words, think outside the fly box and don't stick with the "usuals." Practice awareness as a tool and it will, over time, become a ticket to success. Second, be willing to change when you recognize something is going on with the fish—even if you don't know what that something is. Change something—add weight, back off a bit, use a finer tippet, change flies, whatever. Third, even if you see surface activity don't assume that the fish are taking adult insects from the surface. Chances are they are not doing that—rather, they are taking nymphs, emergers or cripples in or just below the surface film. You will generally catch far more fish if you resist the urge to tie on a dry fly, and stick to nymphs and soft hackle flies.

So, let's look at how to tie the Dark Lord. Incidentally, this pattern was originated by Ron Hart, a long-time Upper Sacramento and McCloud River guide, and a practical, inventive tyer. Instead of laying out the list of materials, detailing the tying steps, and taking the tying-step pictures, this month I'm going to simply refer you to a Web page written by Dave Sloane, whom many of you likely know. Dave is an excellent guide and fly designer.

Here's the URL from American Fly Fishing (it has photos which can be enlarged):
http://www.americanflyfishing.com/retail/common/tieit/pattern.asp?store_id=212&id=118

Enjoy, and see ya on the creek...!!!

Materials:

- [Tiemco TMC 3761 Hooks](#)
- [Spirit River Brite Beads](#)
- [Uni 6/0 Tying Thread](#)
- [Wapsi Antron Sparkle Dubbing](#)
- [Goose Biots, Stripped](#)
- [Wapsi Ultra Wire](#)
- [Wapsi Hen Saddle Patches](#)

Hart's Dark Lord

By [Dave Sloan](#)

Compliments of American Fly Fishing

http://www.americanflyfishing.com/retail/common/tieit/pattern.asp?store_id=212&id=118

This is a great general attractor pattern that imitates a lot of everything but nothing in particular. It has a similar look to the Prince Nymph but is definitely a different bug. Instead of peacock a very dark brown, almost black dubbing was chosen, the white wings of the Prince were replaced with ginger wings, and the stiff hackled legs of the Prince were replaced with a softer black hen saddle. I have had many days where the fish were all over Dark Lords, but nothing else, including the Prince Nymph. It is fished best on the dead drift and my favorite sizes are 10-18.



Step 1 Slide the bead on the hook and start your thread. Move the thread back to the bend of the hook and grab just a wisp of dubbing. Use this to dub a very small dubbing ball at the bend of the hook.



Step 2 Take two dark brown goose biots and tie them in on each side of the hook. The biots will have a natural curve to them and this curve should be going towards the hook. The tails should be no longer than 1 ½ times the gap of the hook.



Step 3 Tie in some gold wire at the base of the dubbing ball for your ribbing.



Step 4 Dub a smoothly tapered body all the way up to the bead. At its largest point it should be the diameter of the Bead itself.



Step 5 In 4-5 evenly spaced wraps rib the body and tie the ribbing off just before the base of the bead.



Step 6 Now grab two Ginger biots and tie them in on top of the body. It is easiest to tie them in at the same time. Their tips should extend slightly beyond the end of the body and again they should curve back into the fly. Once tied in, fold the butts of the biots back toward the bend of the hook and make a couple of thread wraps over them. This will help secure them better and make it easier to cut the butts off cleanly.



Step 7 Using the Hen Saddle tie in a set of legs on each side of the fly. They should extend the entire length of the body.



Step 8 Dub a small collar to cover up your thread work and whip finish directly behind the bead.