



Fly Tyers Corner
by Bill Carnazzo

Muir Wulff



Fly and photo by Terry Eggleston

Sometimes the story behind a fly is better than the fly. That may be the case here, although the fly itself is productive under the right circumstances.

It seems that years ago (many years) Terry Eggleston was at the Muir Trail Ranch, which is at around 7,500 feet in elevation in the southern Sierras. One evening after dinner, Terry and others were having a few cold ones and tying flies. The light was dim (the only power at the ranch is a generator and a Pelton wheel), making tying a challenge. Tying Royal Wulffs for the next day, Terry used calftail to make the wing and with the other usual materials completed a half dozen, which were promptly stowed in the fly box.

The next day he reached for one of the fresh Wulffs, only to discover that he had used yellow calftail instead of white for the wing. Now, I'm not sure whether it was the light or the "cold ones," bit it doesn't really matter — the result was the birth of the Muir Wulff. A few modifications have been made over the years, but the basic fly is still the same.

Now, years later, Terry tells the story while providing his photo above [Editor]: As usual, Bill didn't get the story quite straight. He may have had a few cold ones himself. The story is I was tying flies one evening at the lodge and we had the old yellow bug lights. Unbeknownst to me, the yellow lights made the yellow calf tail look white. I put the flies in my box, as Bill said, and went out the next day to fish them. Upon opening the box, I found Royal Wulffs with yellow wings. They showed up great on the choppy water of the upper San Joaquin. This was a late September day, and what I notice along the edges of the river were yellow jackets coming to drink, and many getting washed into the water. So that evening, when I got back to the lodge, I tied up some more flies but using yellow floss for the body instead of the red and yellow wings and it became the Muir Wulff, a very effective fly.

MATERIALS

Hook: Standard dry fly (e.g., Tiemco 100) #12-18

Thread: 6/0 or 8/0 black

Tail: Greyish deer hair

Body: Peacock herl

Center rib: Yellow sparkle yarn or yellow floss

Wing: Yellow calftail or calf body

Hackle: Brown dry fly hackle

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clean and stack a small segment of deer hair for the tail. Tie it in just above the back end of the barb. Tail should be length of shank. Cut butts off at a taper along the shank to avoid ending up with a lump.
2. Move thread forward to a point about 1/3 shank length behind the eye. This will be the wing mounting point. Cut and stack a medium bunch of calf tail. Measure so that wing will be length of shank.
3. Tie wing on with tips of hair out over eye of hook. Hold the hair tightly to keep it from twisting around the hook; it must stay on the top of the hook. Before pulling the wing up, cut butts at a taper, blending it into the deer hair butts from the tail. Now tie butts down.
4. Pull wing up to vertical position, and lay about 5 wraps in front of wing. Now wrap thread around the base of the wing twice, and bring it to the rear, catching the thread in the butts of the wing material; pull straight down and take a wrap. Repeat this procedure. This has the effect of securing the wing in the vertical position without too many wraps in front of it.
5. Divide the wing into two equal parts, and figure -8 between the wings a few times to separate them. Now spiral the thread around the base of each wing. Note: See American Angler, January-February issue for a good article on making wings in this manner.
6. Take thread back to base of tail and tie in two strands of peacock herl. Advance thread to wing. Take 2 or 3 wraps of the herl to form a small butt, and tie it off. Do not cut it just yet.
7. Tie in yellow sparkle yarn or yellow floss (Terry's original material) and take two wraps just in front of peacock herl butt, and tie off. Cut the yarn, and then take several more wraps of the herl ahead of the yarn but stopping short of the base of the wing. Tie off and cut the herl.
8. Tie in a properly sized, stiff brown neck hackle behind the wing, securing the stem in front of the wing. Leave the thread in front of the wing, leaving room for a nice head.
9. Wrap the hackle behind and in front of the wing, and tie it off. The fly should be fully hackled; if necessary, use two hackles or a long saddle hackle.
10. Build a nice small head and whip finish. Fish the fly in pocket water. It should float high and dry. It works best in frothy or choppy water, and especially well on small backcountry waters.

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

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