

UPRIGHT STONE

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Illustrated by Dick Nelson

INTRODUCTION

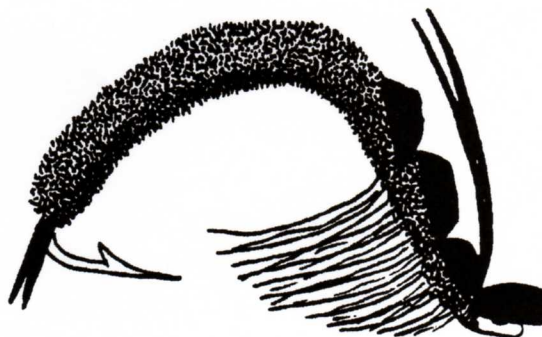
An earlier version of this pattern appeared in the 1990 and 1991 editions of **Patterns of the Masters**. Since then I have made many changes in it. Friends have asked me to write up the most recent version and share the new ideas, so here it is.

The basic concept behind this stonefly pattern is to avoid its drifting upside-down, which Charles E. Brooks felt was a sure way to tell the fish that it was not real. Based on his underwater observations, he believed that the best way to avoid this was to tie large, heavy-water flies "in the round," that is, radially symmetric. I also wanted a fly that looked and acted as realistic as possible, since I feel that trout have excellent underwater vision and respond better to more realistic flies. Joe Humphreys, a noted tyer from Pennsylvania, after his underwater observations, felt that asymmetric, weighted flies have a more realistic action. Dave Whitlock, in his book, **Aquatic Trout Foods**, notes that the characteristics that are important in a fly are size, action, texture, shape, and color, in that order. I have tried to optimize action and texture; size is up to the tyer.

This fly tries to incorporate Charlie Brook's idea that the fly should not drift upside-down and Joe Humphreys' idea that asymmetric flies have a more realistic action. I started by studying live specimens (I have raised *Pteronarcys californica* in my home in an aquarium) and by keeping a preserved specimen on my tying bench. I cannot recommend this technique enough: study live specimens and tie with a preserved specimen on your bench. It will do wonders to your ability to imitate nature if you actually look at a natural! This pattern tries to use ideas from Charlie Brooks, Joe Humphreys, and Dave Whitlock. It does this, in part, by having the wingcases, pronotum, and head made from closed-cell foam. This gives it a more realistic profile and at the same time tends to make the fly float right-side up. Strong currents, will, of course, turn it over, but then it would turn over the real McCoy, too. Weight it for the currents that you will fish, so that it will drift down deep enough. The legs are made of Hungarian partridge, and they move easily in the current, imitating the nymph's attempt to grab onto something. The hook choice presents a profile of a stonefly drifting along, humped up and struggling, yet keeps a wide open gape to hook anything that goes for it.

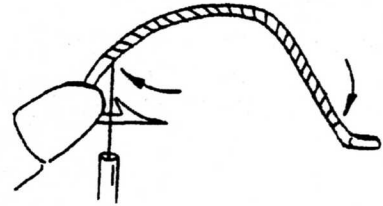
MATERIALS

- HOOK: Mustad 37160 (wide gap, turned up ball eye, bronzed, slightly reversed [point out of plane of the hook]), sizes 2-6
- THREAD: Black 6/0 or 8/0
- WEIGHT: Non-toxic lead wire 0.026"
- TAILS: Black goose biots
- BODY: Small or medium black chenille
- LEGS: Hungarian partridge or black soft hen hackle
- WINGCASE: Black closed-cell foam (Polycelon)
- ANTENNAE: Biots from the leading edge of a dark secondary flight feather
- ZAP-A-GAP

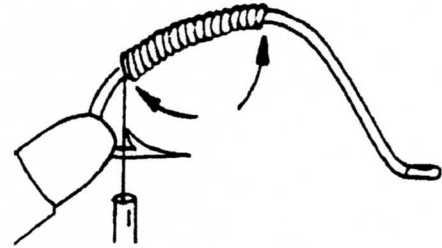


TYING INSTRUCTIONS

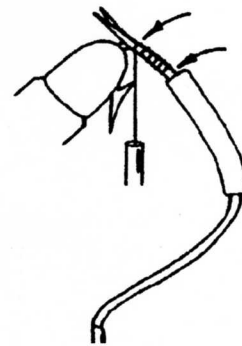
1. Tie in one eye-length back from the eye, and lay a thread base back to what would be, on the usual hook, 1/3 of the way down the bend of the hook, and half-hitch.



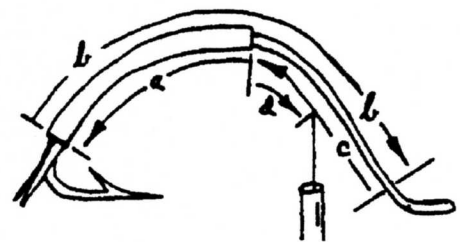
2. Spiral wrap the non-toxic lead. Weight according to your water conditions. I often use 0.026" diameter lead wire wrapped to mid-shank, as shown. Overwrap with thread. Keep the lead on the rear of the hook, don't put the lead on the forward portion of the hook. This will make the fly drift right-side up.



3. Remove the hook and place in vise with the point pointing almost straight down, as shown. Tie in two black goose biots so that they flare away from each other, parallel to the hook shank, not the point. [Be careful of the length. If you are tying a size 4, which corresponds to a nymph of 4.5 cm tip to tip, the tails on a *Pteronarcys californica*, the giant black salmonfly of the West, should be only 5 mm. If you are tying a *Pteronarcys dorsata* (common name: American salmonfly), which is the most common large Pteronarcyidae of the East, the tails are 11 mm. The tails should be fairly slender. Most people make them too long and too fat. This is where it helps to study the natural on the stream and to keep a specimen in alcohol perched on your bench.] Replace the hook in the normal position, with the biots just behind (to the left) of the jaws of the vise. The biots will be pointing straight down at this point, not to the left as you are used to seeing them.

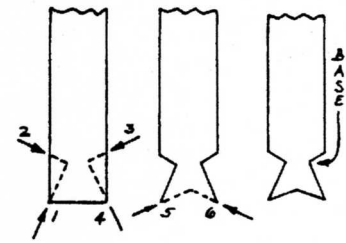


4. Bring your thread one-third of the way from the bend toward the eye and tie in a 14" piece of black small or medium chenille. Make sure the chenille is not flattened from sitting on the card too long. The small diameter chenille takes longer to tie, but will give you a smoother profile. Wind the chenille toward the bend (direction "a" in the drawing), then all the way along the shank to a point one eye-length back of the eye (direction "b" in the drawing), and back to the tie-in point (direction "c"). Continue until you have a smooth profile which is proportioned like the natural. If you vary the way you wrap the chenille, either placing the wraps close together or far apart, you can create a very smoothly-tapered body. It partly depends how much lead you place, and where you place it. It will take more than one layer of chenille, from the tie-in to the head, to make a well-formed body. Bring the thread to approximately 1 cm back from the eye (direction "d").

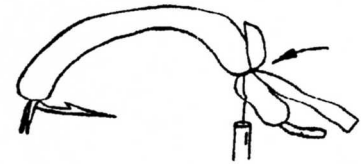


5. The closed-cell foam is next. The material I use is 2mm (3/32") thick. Cut a piece 7 mm wide, the full width of the piece of foam. The two wingcases, the pronotum, and the head will be made from this foam.

Make a rear wingcase with six snips of your fine scissors, as shown. Trim off the sharp, upper edges of the foam to give it a more natural, rounded contour. The shape of the wingcase depends on the species of Pteronarcyidea you are imitating, so check out a natural. Do not cut the rear wingcases off from the foam strip at this time.

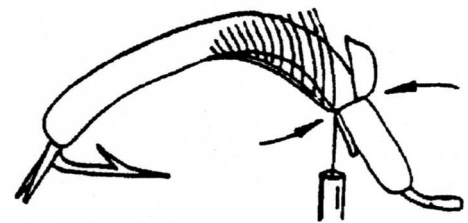


The *Pteronarcys californica* has short (2mm) pointed wingcases, and the *Pteronarcys dorsata* has larger (4mm), fuller, and more rounded wingcases. Again, do not trim the wingcases off the foam strip just yet.



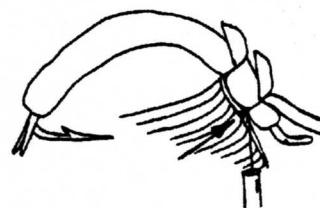
6. Tie in the foam rear wingcase on top of the thorax area, with the wingcase facing to the rear. It should be placed at a point about a centimeter back from the eye, with a few wraps of thread, at the base (see illustration from Step 5, on right) of the wingcase. Trim off the excess foam.

Deciding the tie-in point is the hardest part for me. Good judgement helps, and good judgement usually comes from experience. Experience often comes from bad judgement, so I keep a few of my mistakes (bad judgement) around the tying bench, just to remind myself where to tie in the wingcase. Here is how I plan it: ignore the distance from the tail and measure with your eye the distance back from the eye of the hook. How much space will you need to fit the pronotum (the thoracic segment between the head and the forward wingcase) and the two wingcases? I lay the wingcase along the top of the hook, slide it back and forth, adjusting it with my eye until I think that the rest will fit. (After I tie in the first wingcase, I just **make** the rest fit!) In real nymphs the wingcases and pronotum take up about 2/5 of the length. Make sure of this measurement, because everything that follows depends on it.

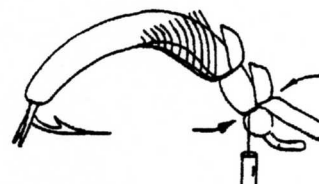


7. Select a dark soft-hackle feather and remove all of the fluff. (Shortly after being tied in, this feather is going to be bent back upon itself, and therefore the stem immediately below the barbs must be "prepared".) Crush the stem just below, and in the plane of, the barbs. Keeping the thread at the same level, tie in the soft hackle, on the underside of the hook, by the butt, shaft parallel to the hook shank. The butt should be facing to the right and the tip to the left. Have the top (shiny) side of the feather facing down. Trim excess stem. Move the thread forward about 2 mm.

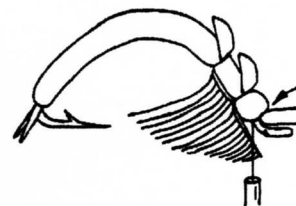
8. Cut out another piece of foam, as in Step 5, for the forward wingcase. Tie in just forward of the last wingcase, but **DO NOT TRIM OFF** the excess. Plan the placement of the tie-in point to allow you to form a pronotum by tying off just behind the eye, and allowing the head to protrude over the eye.



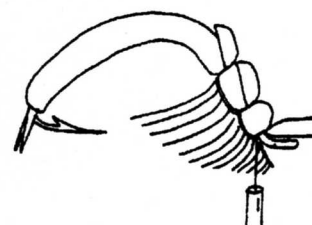
9. Keeping the thread at the same level, fold the soft hackle forward, keeping it in midline below the hook, and place a few wraps around it. Be careful not to catch some of the barbs with the thread and inadvertently tie them down. You want them to wave freely in the current, simulating struggling legs. Move the thread to just behind the eye.



10. Take a few wraps of thread over the untrimmed area of the foam, just behind the eye. This will form a pronotum. It should be about 4-6 mm in length. **DO NOT TRIM OFF THE FOAM.**



11. Bring the hackle forward (still below the hook) and tie it down with a few wraps. Avoid trapping any barbs. Free any trapped barbs with a bodkin. Trim the end. Place a half-hitch.



12. Trim the foam with three snips of your fine scissors to form a head. In the diagram, the fly would be down, the end of the foam strip would be up. Note from the prior diagram that the head projects out over the eye.



