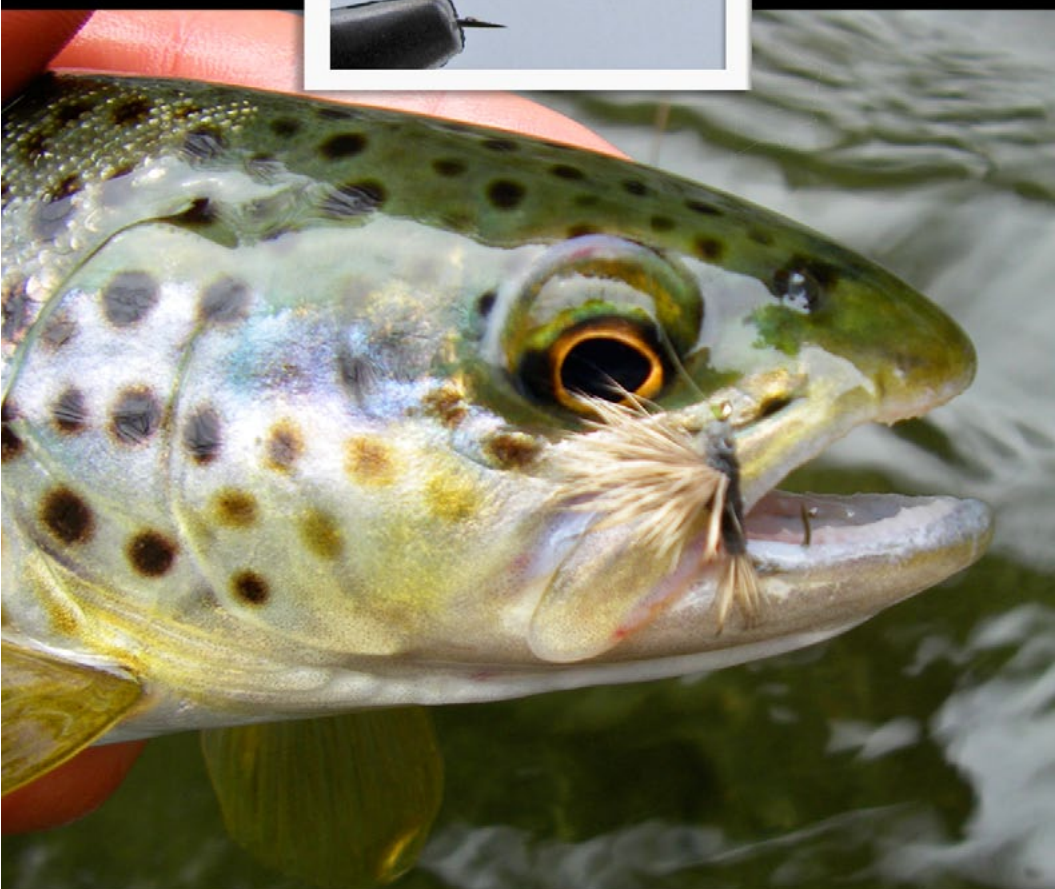


Fly of the Month Haystack



RandRFlyFishing.com



Ian & Charity Rutter

865.448.0467

www.RandRFlyFishing.com

HAYSTACK



March is the first month of the year we consider dry fly fishing to be a consistent method for catching trout in the Smoky Mountains. Blue Wing Olives, Blue Quills, Little Black Caddis, and Early Brown Stoneflies all hatch in March but our favorite insect is the Quill Gordon.

This is one of the longest recognized mayflies and was first mimicked with an artificial fly by Theodore Gordon in the early 1900's. His original imitation used stripped peacock herl for a body, wood duck flank feathers for wings, and dun rooster hackle. The official name of the insect is actually named after the artificial lure created to imitate it. This fly is still effective, but there is another fly that we prefer during the Quill Gordon hatch in the Smokies.

The Haystack is actually an old time fly, but was well ahead of its time. Swisher & Richards introduced the Comparadun in the 1970's in their book *Selective Trout*. It was offered up as an exceptional mayfly imitation that didn't require rooster hackle and had a near perfect profile when viewed from under water. This same blueprint has evolved into the Sparkle Dun and CDC quill bodied imitations that fool even the pickiest trout in the slowest, clearest water. The Haystack was conceived by Fran Betters

www.RandRFlyFishing.com



This wild brown trout took the Haystack from a riffle along Little River.

close to 40 years earlier and is certainly the ancestor of these current stylish fly patterns.

The thing we like so much about the Haystack is that it sits very low to the water but is still quite visible. All of the deer hair in the wing and tail provide excellent floatation. The choppy trout streams of the Smoky Mountains require a fly to float well or it will surely sink. The bulky wing and bushy tail also give the fly a definite silhouette that trout are sure to see clearly. However, it's slim profile allows this fly to fool trout even in slower runs and pools.

The original pattern was tied with a more scraggly appearance and was dubbed with muskrat underbody fur. I've often thought that the old time fly tiers would have immediately switched to our modern superfine dubbings made of nylon if that was an option for them. Some fly tyers are sticklers for sticking with a recipe, but I'm always looking for a way to make it better. I've even expanded the color selection and added a sulphur version to my fly box to extend the pattern's life when our light mayflies begin to hatch.



Charity fishing a Haystack in a pretty run on Noland Creek.

FISHING THE HAY STACK

The Haystack is really no different to fish than many other dry flies we use here in the Smokies. We fish it on either a 9' or 7'6" leader depending on the size of the stream. Larger streams like Little River, the Oconaluftee River, Abrams Creek, and Hazel Creek we'll use a 9' leader.

We'll step back to a shorter leader on smaller streams when casts will average less than 20'. During the Quill Gordon hatch we fish a #12 Hay Stack to imitate the large mayfly. For that reason we use leaders that taper to either 4X or 5X. We don't recommend anglers use 6X tippet for several reasons. The first is because a bushy fly can cause very light, limp tippet to twist. Second, you are more likely to get a fly back with heavier tippet after you inevitably snag it in streamside brush.

Before we get the fly wet we always dab it with a gel fly floatant like Aquel or Gink. However, after the fly gets wet and has caught a few trout we'll bring it back to life with a powdered floatant like Frog Fanny, Top Ride,



Rainbow trout love the Haystack too!

or Loon Dust. These are desiccants that draw moisture out of the fly and cover it with a layer of water repellent silicone.

In the spring we fish the Haystack in size #12 in its standard color gray. As the season progresses we'll push that back to #14. By May trout are eating yellow mayflies like Light Cahills (another mayfly named for the artificial lure) and Sulphurs and we'll use a Sulphur Haystack in #14 or #16 depending on the size of the bugs on the water.

We would never recommend an angler fish these bushy fly patterns on our local tailwaters, but a few years ago Ian had a customer hook and subsequently break off one of the biggest trout of the year with a Sulphur Haystack on the Clinch River. Ian and his angler watched a hefty brown trout feed on Sulphur mayflies in a slow, shallow current. The fish's big snout would slowly engulf the parade of hatching bugs one at a time. The brown first refused parachutes, then Comparaduns, and even a Sparkle Dun, a fly we always keep in reserve as the "sure thing" when nothing else works. We even put a nymph to him with no result. Fully exasperated, Ian tied on a Haystack even as more of the same treatment was expected.



An impressive fish on a dry fly! This young angler landed a quality wild brown trout on a Haystack in the Smokies.

The two were pleasantly surprised to see nothing but trout tonsils when the fish turned to move about 6" in their direction to inhale the fly. The fish was easily in the range of 20" and broke the leader when it landed on the tippet after its third cartwheeling leap and line screamed off the reel. We would label the Haystack a strong performer in tumbling streams, but clearly it has an even wider appeal.

HOW TO TIE THE HAYSTACK

Hook: #12 - 16 Standard Dry Fly Hook

Wing: Very Fine Deer or Elk Hair, Look for Comparadun Hair

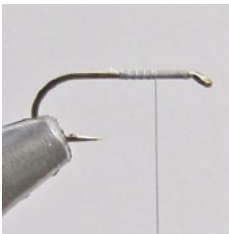
Thread: 6/0 Gray or Yellow to match the color of the dubbing

Tail: Same Deer Hair used for the Wing

Body: Superfine Dry Fly Dubbing in either Adams Gray or Sulphur Yellow

I've always liked the Haystack not only because trout rise to it, but I always thought it was relatively simple to tie. In spite of that I've received a number of comments and emails over the years from anglers who thought the fly was anything but easy. I'm putting extra detail into the tying instructions this month to address problems tyers have with this pattern.

The first step to success is using the appropriate kind of hair. It needs to be extra fine so a clump will contain a good number of fibers. Look for coastal deer hair or elk hock. Most of the time it is relatively easy to find quality hair labeled as "Comparadun Hair".



Step 1. Begin wrapping your thread just behind the eye of the hook and wrap it to about the half way point on the hook shank. Then wrap forward to about 1/3 of the shank behind the eye. A base of thread will prevent the hair from turning on the hook.



Step 2. Using the appropriate amount of hair for the wing is tricky and varies with the hook size. Too much hair creates unnecessary bulk and too little hair diminishes the fly's buoyancy. Clean under fur from the clump of hair and stack it.



Step 3. Measure the clump of hair against the hook shank so the wing will be as tall as the shank is long. Tie the hair down with two firm wraps but don't bear down until the third wrap. Each successive wrap of thread should be very tight and brought slightly behind the previous wrap. Clip the excess hair at an angle and wrap thread over the butts. This should lock the wing in place and clean up any mess.



Step 4. The clump of hair used for the tail should be much smaller than the one used for the wing. This prevents the hair from flaring too much and reduces bulk. Clear any under fur from the hair and stack it.



Step 5. I usually make the tail about half the length of the hook shank. Tie the clump of hair in just above the bend of the hook, but don't bear down too tightly with the thread. This will cause the tail to flare. Make firm wraps with the thread over the hair up the hook shank and stop just short of where the wing was tied in. The idea is to clip the butts so they don't go over the top of the wing butts. The tail should fit in nicely against the wing after the butts have been trimmed. Wrap over the butts and continue to wrap back to the bend of the hook. Again, use firm wraps but don't bear down too tightly which will flare the tail.



Step 6. Since the hair has laid the foundation for the body, only a sparse amount of dubbing is required. Wrap it tightly to the thread and be sure to create a tapered body as you approach the wing.



Step 7. Pull the wing back and build a dam of dubbing against the front side. This will hold the wing up. You will need to make a few wraps behind the wing to prevent a gap in the body under the wing. Be sure not to dub tightly against the back of the wing. Finish dubbing the body in front of the wing and tie it off with a couple of half hitches or a whip finish.



Step 8. At this point there is nothing else to tie on or dub, but the fly isn't quite finished. The wing needs a little help before it can be considered done.



Step 9. Carefully spread the hair in the wing so it creates a semicircle. This ensures the fly will float upright and creates the perfect outrigger silhouette of an emerging mayfly. Now go catch a trout!



SMOKY MOUNTAIN FLIES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

R&R

FLY FISHING

Ian & Charity Rutter

Townsend, Tennessee

FLIES • LEADERS • TIPPET

BOOKS • MAPS • VIDEOS • TRAVEL

GUIDE SERVICE • FLOAT & WADE TRIPS

WILD TROUT • SMALLMOUTH BASS

www.RandRFlyFishing.com

865-448-0467

It's All About The Experience!



Written & Photographed by Ian & Charity Rutter
R&R Fly Fishing and Media
Graphic Design and Layout by Charity Rutter

© 2013 Ian & Charity Rutter

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any means (printed or electronic) without the written consent of Ian and Charity Rutter, except in the case of brief excerpts in critical reviews.

Ian and Charity Rutter retain all distribution rights (electronic and otherwise) to this document and all images found therein.

All inquiries should be addressed to
Ian and Charity Rutter, PO Box 60, Townsend, TN 37882 USA
or send via email to info@RandRFlyFishing.com



Thunderhead Press is a division of
R&R Fly Fishing/R&R Media
Post Office Box 60, Townsend, TN 37882





Ian & Charity live in Townsend, Tennessee where their guide service, R&R Fly Fishing is based. Together they log hundreds of days on the water each year guiding anglers inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park and on tailwater rivers in East Tennessee. They are avid anglers who travel extensively outside of the Southern Appalachians to fly fish. They regularly host groups of fly fishers in Yellowstone Country on the legendary Henry's Fork River in Idaho and Montana's Madison River, as well as the Turneffe Atoll in Belize.

Ian & Charity keep a busy schedule speaking at fly fishing expos and groups around the country. They have appeared in New Jersey, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. Anyone can keep up with their fishing report and weblog on their website; www.RandRFlyFishing.com

Other Titles by Ian & Charity Rutter

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Angler's Companion

Tennessee Trout Waters - A Blue Ribbon Guide

*Rise Rings & Rhododendron - Fly Fishing the Streams
& Tailwaters of Southern Appalachia*

*Fly Fishing for Brook Trout in Great Smoky Mountains
National Park - Advice from the Guides*

Fly Fishing with Streamers - Advice from the Guides

Fly Fishing Eastern Freestone Streams DVD series