

Fly of the Month Tellico Prince



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TELICO PRINCE



The Tellico Nymph is arguably the most important trout fly to originate in the Southeast. It's exceptionally effective in mountain streams throughout the Appalachians. I can say from personal experience it is effective in the Rocky Mountains as well, but few anglers have heard of it outside of the South.

I have come up with several variations on the Tellico Nymph. The Rubber Leg Tellico Nymph is for bigger flies and the wiggling legs bring it to life. The Tellico Prince or Prince of Tellico as I sometimes refer to it is a smaller beadhead version that crosses a Tellico with another traditional pattern, the Prince Nymph. The Prince Nymph has a long history of success in rivers around the world and its shape lends itself nicely to the color scheme of a Tellico Nymph.

The Tellico Nymph is essentially an imitation of a Golden Stonefly nymph. These aquatic insects are relatively common in the turbulent, well oxygenated streams of the Smoky Mountain region.



The Golden Stonefly has a beautiful and distinct pattern on it's body and head.

I've often heard that the smaller Tellico Nymphs in the #14-#16 range are imitations of Little Yellow Stonefly nymphs or Yellow Sallies, but this is not true. These nymphs are actually quite slim and entirely brown without any yellow whatsoever. On the contrary there are several mayfly nymphs like March Browns in the same general size range with some yellow. It seems far more likely that fly patterns like the Tellico Prince imitate young Golden Stoneflies.

Golden Stoneflies are in the stream for 3 years before they eventually hatch. Like any other animal in nature there are many more young than there are adults. Most fall victim to predation over the seasons and only a fraction survive their full life span. Golden Stonefly nymphs are about #6 -#8 in size just before they hatch at three years old. This makes a size #14 Tellico Nymph highly valuable as in imitation of the more abundant juveniles. The Tellico Prince variation works perfectly as an accurate imitation as well as an attractor. It's colorful body, sparkling bead, and segmented appearance combine to produce a flashy yet buggy



Ian fishes a Tellico Prince on a tight line in a deep, rocky slot in the Smokies

morsel. It will catch the eye of the the greediest fish yet convince even the most jaded trout.

Fishing the Tellico Prince

Stonefly patterns are valuable for Smoky Mountain fly fishers in the winter months. Trout are cold and sluggish and there are few insects that hatch on the surface during the coldest periods.

The biggest factor to finding success with this fly, as well as other stonefly patterns, is fishing it deep. Stoneflies don't swim to the surface like mayflies or caddis so it would be rare for them to drift anywhere near the surface. On the contrary they are most frequently found on rocks and boulders in the swiftest water and most turbulent riffles in a stream, so it's reasonable to assume they lose their footing and get swept away on occasion.

The Tellico Prince and other stonefly nymph patterns are best



Tellico Prince typically produces a nice catch!

fished in pockets of calm water surrounded by inhospitable rough water. Most anglers will recognize the basic pocket where trout prefer to hold in a boulder strewn section of stream, but there are other valuable pockets that are a bit more discreet. Perhaps the best holding water is the spot where a swift riffle turns into deep pool. The swift water coming off of the shallow rapids flows over calmer deep water at the drop. Trout can position themselves here without expending much energy and watch for nymphs tumbling over their heads.

Of course, a weighted fly is important to success, but it's also critical to place the fly correctly. Cast the nymph into the swift riffle so it has time to sink so trout will see it when it comes into the dump. This can be a bit tricky at times since too much weight will cause your fly to snag in the shallow riffle, but not enough will prevent fish from seeing it.

Don't be afraid to tinker with split shot and the depth of your flies under a strike indicator. I often fish without a strike indicator in



Charity fishes a deep slot between large boulders on Little River

the winter because I can control the depth of the nymph much better. This takes a good deal of experience to do well and there's no reason for an angler not to use a strike indicator if they want to. The key is to remain flexible. If you're not getting strikes try to snag bottom. If you're snagging bottom about every fifth cast or more you either need to remove some weight or not fish the fly so deep. After a while you'll be able to a good feel of what will be right just by looking at the water.



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HOW TO TIE THE TELLICO PRINCE

Hook: #12 - 16 Mustad 94840, TMC 9300 or other standard hook that takes a bead

Underbody: .015 Lead Free Wire

Thread: 6/0 Dark Brown or Black to match the wings and tail

Tail: Dark Brown or Black Goose Biots

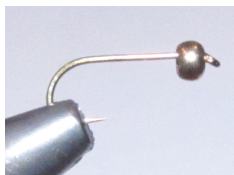
Rib: Two strands of Peacock Herl

Body: Yellow Dubbing or Floss

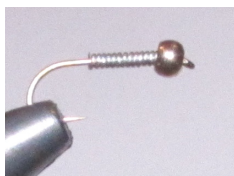
Wings: Dark Brown or Black Goose Biots

Collar: Brown Wet Fly Hackle

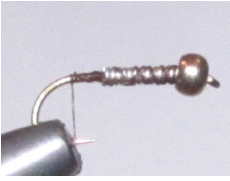
Any tyer who can tie either a Tellico Nymph or Prince Nymph will instantly recognize the method to tie this fly. As is often the case, I don't see the need for precise adherence to any standard so feel free to use the biot colors you like best. You may also prefer a copper or black bead. I do feel strongly that weight on the fly is critical for success. That is an element we see contribute to success every day when we guide. It's also easier to make the fly heavier from the start so you don't have to mess with split shots as often.



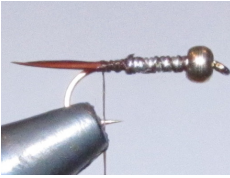
Step 1. Put the bead on the hook and place the hook in the vise. It's often easier to put all your beads on your hooks when tying several flies in a single session.



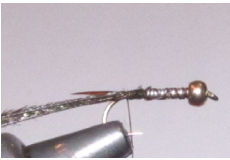
Step 2. Start at the bend of the hook and wrap the lead free wire all the way to the hook. I usually break it with my hands so clipping wire won't dull my scissors. Be sure both ends of the wire are flush and shove the wire up inside the bead. This will give you plenty of weight and leave some space at the rear of the hook for you to tie in materials.



Step 3. Start the thread just behind the wire and wrap to the bend of the hook to get started. Now wrap forward to the bead and come back to the bend of the hook. This will secure the wire in place so it won't shift back and will also prevent it from rotating on the hook after materials are tied on over it.



Step 4. Now clip to goose biots from the feather. Choose two that are adjacent so they are nearly identical in size. The biots will have a natural curvature. Tie them in so the natural bend of the biots curve away from each other. I like the tails to be about half the length of the hook shank on a fly this size.



Step 5. Now tie two pieces of peacock herl. I always clip the weak tips from the feathers and tie them in where I clipped them. The herl is thickest on this part of the feather and it will flare as you wrap it later.



Step 6. Now dub the body. I like to use Wapsi Lifecycle Golden Stonefly, but floss is more traditional and is actually easier to work with. I don't use dubbing wax, but many tyers will find it helps when working with coarse dubbing like this, particularly on a smaller size fly. Try to taper the body as much as possible. It helps if you don't use big wads of dubbing. Wispy strands of dubbing are much easier to work with and form a tighter, prettier body.



Step 7. Twist the two pieces of herl together and wrap them forward to the bead. Look to make about four wraps in the process. This should give you just about the right spacing. You may also want to use a thread reinforcement to strengthen the herl.



Step 8. Clip two more biots and tie them in so their natural curvature bends downward. The tips of the biots should extend to the bend of the hook. Tie them in one at a time so they point off the either side of the fly.



Step 9. Now tie in a hackle. You can use one from a hen neck or a webby feather from a dry fly saddle that you won't use on dry flies.



Step 10. Make one or two turns of hackle, but not more. The hackle should be sparse not bushy. Tie the feather off and clip the excess.



Step 11. Now stroke the hackle fibers back and hold them with your thumb and forefinger. While you're holding the hackle back make a few wraps of thread over it so the fibers sweep back a bit. Finish the fly with a whip finish or a series of half hitches.



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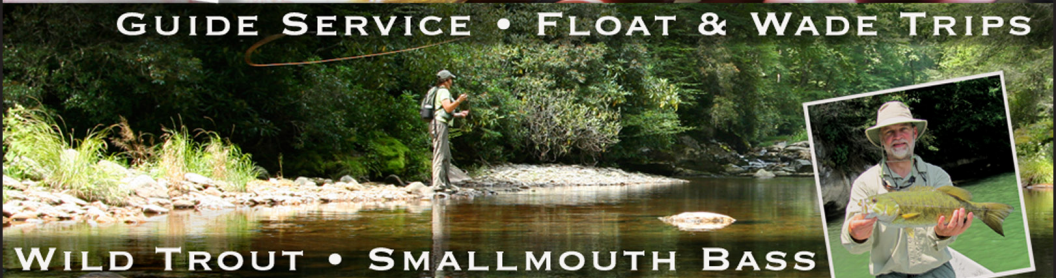
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Ian & Charity live in Townsend, Tennessee where their guide service, R&R Fly Fishing is based. Together they log hundreds of days on the water each year guiding anglers inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park and on tailwater rivers in East Tennessee. 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

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