

Fly Tying Bench — Soft Hackle Deceiver

Jack Gartside is one of the most innovative fly tyers and his flies all seem to have a simple but elegant beauty. His Soft Hackle Deceiver is no exception. Tied in an all white pattern, it is a favorite of Mark Hays as well as myself and several other members who have fished it. This easy to tie pattern is a very productive streamer and can be tied for fresh or saltwater. If there were one tricky tying procedure in this fly, it would be wrapping the marabou hackle; however, if you follow the directions you will see that this is a simple task. The instructions below are for a one-color streamer but you can tie this streamer in many color combinations.

Materials:

- **Hook:** Mustad 34007 sizes 4 to 2/0 or Eagle Claw 254SS for shorter bodied streamers
- **Thread:** flat waxed nylon or 3/0 color to compliment the fly
- **Flash:** Pearl Flashabou or color to compliment the fly
- **Tail:** 2 to 3 pairs of matched white saddle hackles, concave side inward
- **Body:** Mylar braid or Krystal Flash strands twisted into a rope
- **Hackle:** 1 or more white blood marabou feathers (a 2nd color marabou plume may be used for a contrasting color effect)
- **Collar:** Mallard flank feather wound as hackle. Other feathers i.e. teal or dyed guinea etc. may also be used.



*Top: All white Soft Hackle Deceiver
Bottom: White and chartreuse Soft Hackle Deceiver
Flies and photo by Paul Sequira*

Tying Instructions:

1. Pinch the barb down and secure the hook in the vise in the normal fashion. Attach the thread with a jam knot at the start of the hook bend.
2. Select 2 or 3 pairs of matched saddle hackles, remove the soft fluff from the butts, tail length should be approximately 1½ to 2 times the hook shank length. Place the matched pairs on top of the hook and secure them with several tight wraps. Cut away the excess butt stems leaving about ¼ of the hook shank bare behind the hook eye. Spiral the thread back and add 4 or 5 strands of pearl Flashabou by securing them to the hook shank in the middle and folding them over so that the strands are evenly distributed on either side of the tail.
3. Attach several strands of Krystal Flash at the start of the tail and spiral the thread forward to the end of the butt wraps. Now twist the Krystal Flash into a rope and wrap the hook shank up to the waiting thread with the Krystal Flash to create a body. Tie off and discard the excess Flashabou. Mylar braid may also be used.
4. Select a blood marabou feather with fibers long enough to go slightly beyond the start of the tail. Strip the fibers away from the thicker part of the stem near the base and cut the stem at the point where the stem noticeably changes from thin to thick.
5. Place the feather on top of the hook shank (concave side down) just in front of the body and tie the feather down by the butt -- **not the tip**. Wind the marabou forward around the hook shank, brushing each previous wrap back towards the rear. Do not over wrap a previous wrap. You may add another marabou feather to create a fuller collar or a color change. Inspect for tied down fibers and free them with your dubbing needle.

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It helps to get neat wraps if you moisten your thumb, index and middle finger tips as you fold back the marabou during the wrapping process.

6. Select a mallard flank feather (or other) with a thin stem and fibers long enough to reach back approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of the marabou. Strip the fibers away from the lower thicker part of the stem and tie the feather in at the point where the stem noticeably changes from thick to thin.
7. Once again, tie this feather in at the butt – **not the tip**. Lay the feather flat on top of the marabou concave side down. Cut and discard the excess mallard feather butt. Mallard feathers have a flat stem and you must wind the feather on its flat side; this may require you to twist the feather as you wrap it.
8. Wind and fold the feather as you wrap it so that the fibers flow out over the marabou. You do not want them to stick out wildly. Two or three turns are all you will need to create this mallard collar. Cut and discard the excess mallard butt and tie off
9. Wrap a nice bullet shaped head and give it several coats of head cement to finish the fly.

A note about marabou. This feather no longer comes from the marabou stork; rather it comes from the tail end of white domestic turkeys and is dyed in the various colors we use. Marabou plumes come in various lengths and are usually packaged according to size. The very long (6" or more) are mature feathers and are unsuitable for this streamer. The shorts, or blood feathers (usually 2" to 4" long) are the immature feathers and make excellent streamer wings. We want the longer stemmed bloods, about 4" long. You'll find that the tips or upper 1/3 portion of this feather will have nice straight thin fibers just right for streamer wings. Wrapping the marabou and mallard sounds like a tedious and fussy procedure but once you have done it a time or two, you will see that it is really very easy and creates a very nice and gracefully flowing streamer. Fish this fly with confidence, it is very productive.

Baby Tarpon Flies

An excerpt from a recent article by Capt. Pat Damico found on Capt. Mel's excellent website entitled "Baby Tarpon Flies" is included below in which Pat tells us about some successful patterns. Pat's complete article will be featured in an upcoming newsletter. Many of the patterns listed below have been included in "The Fly Tying Bench" in previous issues of "On The Fly".PS

"My recent article on small Tarpon elicited several questions about not only what flies to use, but also how to use them effectively. Tarpon of any size seem to have their own agenda about what they like to eat at any given time."

"According to Donald Larmouth and Rob Fordyce, authors of 'Tarpon On Fly,' "Baby Tarpon will eat almost anything you would throw at a Snook, size 2 or size 1/0 Lefty's Deceivers, Glass Minnows, Sea-Ducers, Bend Backs, Clouser Deep Minnows, popping bugs, Gurglers, divers, and the like. Downsized standard Tarpon patterns will also work."



Flies and photo by Capt. Pat Damico