

BUCKTAIL DECEIVER

Recently I read an excellent article by SFF member and local fishing guide Capt. Pat Damico on Capt. Mel's website <http://www.capmel.com/> entitled "Baby Tarpon Flies". Among other flies, Pat recommended Lefty's Deceivers. This didn't surprise me since I have used that fly for more than 40 years very successfully for many saltwater game fish. The article included a photo of the recommended flies but the Deceiver was not the standard hackle fly; rather it was completely made of bucktail. Now my Northeastern fishing pals and I have used Bucktail Deceivers for years, but this fly didn't look like the ones I have tied and used all those years. A little research cleared up the mystery for me.

Bob Popovics, a well-known northeast fly fisherman, innovative fly designer and tier designed this new Bucktail Deceiver (BTD) and Lefty Kreh has said that it is one of the most effective streamer flies he has fished in the last ten years. The BTD can be tied in various lengths to match the size of predominant baitfish and can be tied to sink or suspend by varying the amount and length of the hook and materials.



Bucktail Deceivers Photo & Flies by Paul Sequira

Top Grey & White, Bottom Olive & White

MATERIALS:

- **Hook:** Mustad 34007 or equivalent, size 2 through 3/0. For flies over 3½ inches long used 34011. Use a lighter wire hook if you want the fly to swim closer to the surface and a heavier gauge hook if you want it to sink deeper.
- **Thread:** 3/0 or flat waxed nylon
- **Tail and Body:** bucktail (colors your choice)
- **Flash:** Flashabou or Krystal Flash

TYING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pinch down the hook barb and secure in the vise in the normal fashion. Tie in the thread with a jam knot at the start of the hook bend.
2. Select some bucktail (length determined by the size fly you wish to make but at least the length of the hook) and tie it in just ahead of the hook bend.
3. Tie in 4 or 5 strands of flash using the center tie method at the same tie-in point. (Color to compliment the fly being tied.) Cut the ends of the flash equal to the length of the tail but cut them unevenly. Secure the thread with several half hitches. You may add a drop of head cement at this and all tie-off points to make a more durable fly.

Fly Tying Bench *BTD continued by Paul Sequira*

4. Move the thread forward and tie in a second bunch of bucktail with the ends about half the length of the first batch. This second bunch must surround the hook. This can be accomplished by making a couple of slightly loose turns of thread around the bucktail and coaxing the bucktail around the hook with your fingers and then tightening the wraps. Take several more tight wraps to secure the material. This process is very important as it gives the fly a round baitfish shape especially on the retrieve. You may add some more flash at this point if you wish.
 5. Move the thread forward again and continue this process until the hook shank is completely covered. Each batch of hair must be slightly shorter than the preceding batch. A standard length hook will take 2 batches of bucktail ahead of the tail and a long shank hook will take at least 4. If you want a multi-color BTD, change to a second color when you get to the hook's mid-point.
 6. At this point add a second color of contrasting bucktail on top of the final batch of hair (collar) as a topping. This topping should extend slightly beyond the collar.
 7. If you wish, you may add a small batch of bright red Krystal Flash at the head of the fly under the hook as a throat to simulate gills.
 8. Wrap a neat bullet shaped head and secure with a whip finish. Coat the head with head cement.
- If desired, you may apply stick-on mylar eyes or paint them on. As a final step, coat the head and eyes with epoxy.

Note: This can be a fussy fly to tie especially in the smaller sizes. Use the hair from the half of the bucktail nearest the tip. This hair will lay flatter and help create the desired baitfish shape. The hair from the lower part of the tail is more like hollow body hair and will flair when under tension creating an undesirable bushy streamer fly. When attaching the mid-shank batches of hair, you may wind up with a blank spot; just add a little hair to that space to fill it in. Also, measure and cut the batches of hair to the proper length before you attach it to the hook. It is very difficult to trim the hair once it has encircled the hook shank.

A word about using epoxies. Avoid using quick curing epoxy such as 5, 6 or 12-minute epoxy as it has a tendency to turn brown with age. Slow cure epoxies such as 30-minute or 2-hour epoxy maintains a clear finish much longer. I have found that rod wrapping finish is superior to any other epoxy, as it stays clear permanently. This is a bit of a chore since the finishing epoxy (or any slow cure epoxy) takes a couple of hours to set and several more hours to cure. I deal with this by tying a bunch of flies, mix up a small batch of epoxy, coat all the flies and put them on my electric turning wheel for at least two hours and then cure overnight.

When mixing epoxy, it is critical to get equal amounts of hardener and resin; this is especially critical when mixing small amounts. I use a set of inexpensive steel kitchen measuring spoons to accurately measure both parts of epoxy. Clean the spoon with isopropyl alcohol between measuring each part of the mix. Mix your epoxy on a piece of aluminum foil and let it sit there a minute or so to allow any air bubbles to escape and then apply the mix to the fly heads with your dubbing needle. The epoxy is much easier to manage this way. Place the finished flies on your turning wheel and let them turn for two or three hours. If your finish is slightly sticky (because of an unequal mix) after an over-night dry, give it a coat of Sally Hansen Hard as Nails and let it dry. You'll have a nice smooth hard finish.

Perhaps next month I will cover the standard hackle Lefty's Deceiver and the Bucktail Deceiver we used in New England and Long Island in years past.PS