

Tying Bench - Copper John

The Copper John, designed by John Barr, of Colorado as a dropper fly for his “hopper-dropper” system, has been described as the hottest nymph pattern in the U.S. (for more of his patterns see Barr Flies, Stackpole Books pub. 2007). Here then is the Copper John as tied by Layne “Smitty” Smith

MATERIALS:

- Hook: Standard X long hook i.e. Mustad 9671, TMC 5262 Size 10 - 18 (may also be tied on a scud style hook)
- Bead: Gold or color of choice sized to hook (for #10 hook use 5/32)
- Thread: Black 6/0 or 70 denier flat nylon Ultra thread
- Weight: Lead or other wire, sized to hook (for #10 hook use .020)
- Tail: Dark brown goose biots (or color of choice)
- Abdomen: Copper wire (or color of choice) sized to hook (medium for #10 hook)
- Wing case: One strand of holographic Flashabou (choice of color) over a strip of black Thin Skin, topped with drop of epoxy or Loon Hardhead cement.
- Thorax: peacock herl
- Legs: Brown partridge or similar flank feather fibers

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mash the hook barb. Apply the bead, and then wrap the lead/substitute wire around the shank, covering the front ½ of the shank. Push the wire into the rear opening of the bead. When this is done, the wire should cover less than ½ of the hook shank. Start the thread behind the lead and move it to the point just above the back of the hook barb. Wrap thread back and forth from that point to the lead in a taper. Photo 1
2. Measure two biots to the length equal to 2/3 of the shank, and tie one in on each side of the hook at the same point. Bind the biots down each side slightly overlapping lead so that a smooth transition is formed. Photo 2
3. Tie in a piece of copper wire just behind the bead (on the underside) and wrap back to the tie-in point for the biots. Move the thread forward in a smooth layer to form an even base for winding the copper wire. Photo 2
4. Wind the copper wire forward in tight turns, with each turn hard against the last so as to slightly overlap the lead wire with about two turns. Tie the wire off at that point. Photo 3
5. Tie in a strand of Flashabou dead center on the top of the thorax, followed by a slightly wider piece of Thin Skin. These should both be pointing toward the rear. Photo 4
6. Tie in a half dozen strands of peacock herl at the rear of the thorax area, spin them together with the thread, and wind the rope forward to the bead. Tie off and trim the excess. Photos 5
7. Cut a small bunch of partridge fibers and tie them in on the far side of the hook just behind the bead. Do the same on the close side of the hook. The legs should extend no farther than the midpoint of the abdomen. Photo 6
8. Pull the Thin Skin forward and tie it off behind the bead. Do the same with the Flashabou strand, keeping it dead center on the top of the thorax. Trim the excess on both materials.
9. Whip finish and trim the thread. Put a tiny drop of epoxy or Hardhead cement on top of the thorax, making sure you don't let it spill over and soak into the peacock and/or legs. There should be a bit of a “hump” formed by the epoxy or the cement, so you may have to apply more than one coat. I prefer the Hardhead cement; it holds up just as well as epoxy and is easier to use. Photo 7

For an amazing You Tube video demonstration of a Copper John being tied in 2 minutes, go to : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqXwnQahpX0>

All flies tied by Layne Smith, photos by Paul Sequira

