

Tying Bench - Del's Merkin by Paul Sequira

Del's Merkin (aka Del Brown's Permit Crab Fly)

Del Brown (the most successful permit fly fisherman with a record of 513 permit caught on the fly at the time of his death) developed this fly and it is probably the most popular and successful of the crab pattern. It is easy to tie and being easy to cast; avoids the problems associated with hard-bodied crab patterns. It is also very versatile because you can vary the sink rate with the size of the dumbbell eyes and easy to match the color and size crab you are imitating. Del's Merkin is equally effective for bonefish, redfish and any other fish that feeds on crabs.



Del's Merkin tied and photographed by Paul Sequira

Materials:

- Hook: Mustad 3407, 34007 or similar - size 1/0 to 4
- Thread: Chartreuse monochord or 3/0 waxed nylon
- Tail: Tan marabou or soft fur with pearl Krystal Flash or Flashabou
- Claws: Cree neck hackle (or grizzly dyed brown)
- Body: alternating strands of tan and brown sparkle yarn or Aunt Lydia's rug yarn
- Eyes: 1/24 ounce chrome finished dumbbell eyes
- Legs: White rubber hackle - medium

Tying Directions:

1. Place hook in vise in normal position (hook down) and mash down the hook barb.
2. Tie thread in slightly behind the hook eye and form a bump. Place the dumbbell eyes in front of the bump and secure to the hook shank using figure eight wraps. Place a drop of cement on the thread to help lock in the eyes. Spiral the thread down to the hook bend.
3. Tie in a sparse bunch of tan marabou or fur plus four strands of pearl Krystal Flash or Flashabou. The tail should be about the same length as the hook shank and the flash should extend just beyond the tail.
4. Tie in two Cree (or other) neck hackle tips (curving outwards) one pair on each side of and extending slightly beyond the tail material. (Neck hackle is preferred over saddle hackle, which is generally softer and doesn't have the required curvature.)
5. Starting at the tail, tie in alternating strands (about 2 inches long) of tan and brown yarn using the figure eight method to secure the yarn to the hook shank until you reach the dumbbell eyes. Move the thread forward of the dumbbell eyes and whip finish. Cement the head.
6. Trim the yarn into a round or oval shape approximately one inch wide
7. Turn the hook over in the vise (hook point up). Cut 3 or 4 pieces of the rubber leg material into sections approximately 3 inches long. Work a piece of rubber leg material between strands of yarn and attach the rubber to the hook with a square knot. The square knot will set the rubber legs so that they extend to the sides of the fly. (Medium size rubber legs work well for this fly.)
8. Continue adding legs working from the rear towards the front and trim the legs so that they extend approximately ½ inch from the body. Color the tips of the legs with a red waterproof permanent marker.