

Tying Bench - Cockroach Fly by Layne Smith

The cockroach fly, in any of the different forms it has taken since it was first introduced by Lefty Kreh in pre-synthetic material time, is one of the premier flies for catching tarpon. It's not too late for Suncoast Fly Fishers to stockpile a few of these crustacean mimics for sight-casting to silver kings when they migrate down our beaches this summer. If you don't get a shot at them off the sand, chunk them at rolling tarpon at Egmont Key because, depending on how you tie it, this fly can be taken for a shrimp or a pass crab.



Materials

Hook: Gamakatsu SL11 3H size 1/0
Thread: Hot Orange Flat Waxed Nylon (or color of choice)
Butt: Hot orange Trilobal Chenille
Claws: Cree or Brown Variant Neck Hackles (3 each side)
Flash: Flashabou or Krystal Flash in Copper or Pearl
Collar: Grey or Bleached Squirrel Tail
Head: Hot Orange Thread over-wrapped (snelled) with 20# Mono

Tying Sequence

Step 1: Pre-assemble squirrel tail in small bunches (See NOTE #1 below)

Step 2: Attach thread to hook above hook point and back wrap to just above barb. Tie in chenille and form a ball above the hook barb. Tie off and cut away remaining chenille. This is a spreader.

Step 3: Select 6 feathers and cut to approx. twice hook shank length and prep for tie in. Tie in three on either side of ball (back wrap to flare feathers).

Step 4: Cut 3 or 4 strands and wrap around bobbin for "V" tie in. Tie in and trim to 1/2 in. longer than feathers. (See NOTE #2)

Step 5: Advance thread to in front of hook point. Start to tie in prepared squirrel tail beginning at bottom (split 1st bunch evenly on either side of hook point then add additional bunches on either side of hook ending on top to make a full collar of squirrel tail. Wrap thread forward with a few loose, then back wrap with tighter wraps with each bunch.

Step 6: Over wrap all at the same time making smooth transition for elongated head. Whip finish and trim thread.

Step 7: Snell with 20# mono using FIRM but not tight wraps. Pull on tag end to finish snell. Trim off excess mono.

NOTE #1: When cutting squirrel fibers from tail, be sure to set them perpendicular to tail. If you are processing whole tail stack in sized bunches. Choose size that would fit or trim to fit (half length of feathers) cement butt ends and set aside to dry.

Note #2: Use this if you are trying to imitate shrimp; if you are trying to imitate a crab, eliminate Step 4. Crabs are dull. They do not shine.