

Tying Bench – Frank Rhodes Bonefish Crab Tied by Layne (Smitty) Smith

This is a fly that was used by members of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club when fishing for bonefish and permit in Mexico. It seems they weren't catching anything so the guide gave them a couple of these crab flies. One was a darker color. The other was the diamond crab. I'd fish the dark crab in darker, stained water or over turtle grass. I would fish the white one over sand flats. Basically what you do when you fish it you cast it out and strip it a little at a time. Once the fish sees it. STOP. That's what crabs do. Let it drop to the bottom. For reds, you might have to give it a twitch, just enough to get their attention.



Frank Rhodes Bonefish Crab tied by Layne (Smitty) Smith. Be sure to mash down the barb if your wife decides to wear it on her cocktail dress.

Materials

Hook	Gamakatsu S11 3H #2 (For large dark crab) – Mustad C70SD Big Game #4 (For small diamond crab)
Thread	Flat waxed nylon (white or grey)
Eyes	Melted mono eyes bent into “L” shape
Weight	.020 Lead wire
Body	Crinoline (Cut to shape)
Legs/Claws	Hen saddle (cut to shape)
Over coating	Tulip fabric paint (Diamond or Multi)
Finish	UV resin, Epoxy or SHHAN

Preparation

Body Crinoline must be cut into rectangles 1¼” x 7/8” for large and 1” x ¾” for small. Fold in half to maintain longest length; i.e. 1 ¼” for large or 1” for small. Cut into crab shape leaving about ¼” or smaller uncut in center of folded side (when opened out it will look like two crabs connected at the nose; if crabs had noses).

Claws Take hen saddle hackle and spray with fixative (Super 77 or the like; me, I just use my wife’s holding hair spray). Carefully cut tip off feather about ¼” down right at the stem. This will create the opening for the claw; then go down the stem to the size of claw you want and cut only the stem. Continue down the stem and cut the width of legs you want (2 Pair for each crab). They should have a “V” shape.

Eyes Take 20# monofilament line; melt end into small ball then coat with UV resin. Softex, Epoxy or SHHAN. Re-coat until you get size eye you want; make 2 for each crab; set aside to dry. Come down ¼” from eye and bend into “L” shape.

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Tying Bench, continued – Frank Rhodes Bonefish Crab As tied by Layne Smith

Tying Sequence

Step 1. Wrap a 3/8" base of thread in center of hook. Turn hook in vise hook point up.

Step 2. Trim "foot" of eye stem 3/8" long and flatten; remember you can't tie round to round. Tie in both eyes with feet facing each other on side of hook.

Step 3. Wrap on lead wire, about 10 to 12 turns, starting on outside of left eye stem and ending on outside of right eye stem. Proceed to over wrap lead with thread making sure to taper ends and ending with thread at hook bend.

Step 4. Place crab body onto hook making sure one side goes on top and the other side below hook shank and connected "nose" is placed between the eyes. Tie down the top and bottom points at hook bend and half hitch.

Step 5. Run thread between body halves to hook eye and half hitch there. Tie down top and bottom body points. Whip finish and cut thread.

Step 6. Fill cavities with CA cement; i.e. zap-a-gap or crazy glue (I use Loctite gel). Insert claws and legs in body gaps at appropriate places. Use a couple of alligator clips to compress body halves for 10 – 12 seconds to allow CA cement to bond.

Step 7. Remove clips and coat body (both sides) with fabric paint (be sure to fill in any body gaps around the edges.



Step 8. Set aside to dry.

Step 9. (Optional: Place crab in vise hook point up and dot with colored markers.)

Step 10: Once dots are completely dry, overcoat with UV resin, Epoxy or SHHAN.

Step 11. Set aside to dry one last time, if you used SHHAN or place on drying wheel if you used epoxy. Best case scenario ... if you used UV resin, just take it out of the vise and GO FISHING!!!

NOTE: This is a complicated fly. I will demonstrate the tying sequence and answer any questions at the Don Coleman outing in December. I will also be tying this fly for anyone that is interested before the beginning of the "Trash to Treasures" raffle in January.