

Moreau Fly for White Bass

Time again for the annual white bass run. White bass generally are found in our lakes and reservoirs, but the spawn in the spring in moving rivers. Once the water gets warm enough, about 55-66 degrees, the white bass move upriver in large numbers where they are easily targeted by fly fishers. White bass don't build nests, but lay their eggs over sand or gravel bottoms in moving water. Most spawning activity takes place from dusk to dawn, and during the day the fish will either hold in deeper holes or continue moving upstream. Your best chance for success can be finding a deeper hole just below riffles and rapids.

4 to 7 weight rods work well, depending more on wind levels and depth of the water than the size of the fish. You will want to use at least a sink tip line if not a full sinking line. The white bass seem to shy away from the light, so they will be found deeper on bright days, and sometime near the surface on overcast days. Water clarity also makes a difference.

In clear water, use short, erratic strips. Fish your fly a little faster. If the fish are feeding, they will aggressively attack your fly. In colored water, or when the water is colder, allow your fly to sink a little deeper, and make long, slow strips. The fish won't be as aggressive in these conditions.

Keep your rod tip low and pointed at the fly. Sometimes it even seems to help when you stick the rod tip into the water and down near the bottom. Anything you can do to keep the fly deeper.

Unlike many fish that don't feed while spawning, white bass will actively feed. They forage on the small minnows that are common in the rivers and streams where we find them. Use small streamer flies. Size sometimes matters, with larger flies working early in the season, and going smaller as the season progresses. Colors that imitate the naturals work best. Though I don't know where chartreuse comes in. White bass normally feed on shad and shiner minnows in the lakes, so white flies, or flies with white in them, always seem to work.

Because you have to fish for white bass on rocky rivers, and you have to go deep to get consistent results, simple, easy to tie flies are often the way to go. Because they are simple to tie, I have chosen to present two flies this month. The first is an East Texas White Bass favorite, the Moreau Fly. It's nothing more than a jig hook with a factory weight some flash and a couple of thread colors. You can tie up a bunch of these in no time, and not feel bad when you lose one. The fly was created by Andy Moreau of East Texas.

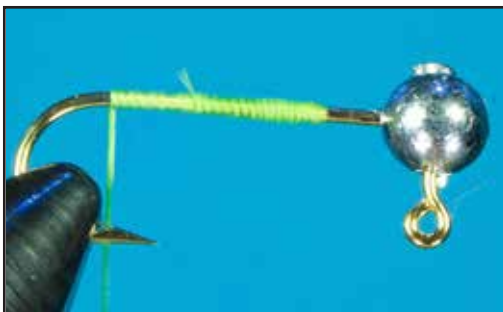
MATERIALS Moreau Fly

Hook: Jig Head, 1/64 oz, size 8

Body Rear: 140 or 3/0 Chartreuse Thread

Tail, Pearl White Saltwater Crystal Flash

Head: 140 or 3/0 Red thread



Step 1: Place the hook in your vice. Start your thread near the weight and make close wraps back the start of the bend. Come back forward to the starting point, again keeping your wraps close together.



Step 2: Take a single, full length piece of the crystal flash, and cut it in half. Wrap one piece around your thread and slide it down the thread to the fly. Position it where you want it, and make a couple of wraps back over it. Do the same with the other piece of crystal flash.



Step 3: Make another set of close wraps back to the rear of the fly, binding down the crystal flash as you go. Return your thread to the front and tie it off. Cut any excess.



Step 4: Start your red thread at the front. Fill in the gap between the char-treuse thread and the ball weight with the red thread. Whip finish and cut off the excess thread. That wasn't too hard, was it?