

The Fly Tyer's Corner

Photos and Recipe by Jim Gray

Jim's Big-Eye Popper

Compared to many other fly tiers, I don't tie a lot of different patterns. I have 30 or so "go to" patterns that cover most of my fishing - fresh and salt. It may seem like a lot, but when you think about all the different fish that we target, it's not all that many. In order for me to add a new pattern, it has to be something special. It must be effective, easy to fish, versatile and easy to produce. It also has to look good in my fly box. The Big Eye Popper checks all the boxes. Poppers are great producers on our local rivers, and some of the easiest flies to

fish, and this fly is very versatile. You can tie it in almost any size and color, fishing for all kinds of fish. Finally, the materials list is short and inexpensive.

Materials

Hook - Gamakatsu B10S size 4
Thread - Ultra Thread UTC 140 Denier
Body - 7/16" foam cylinder, shaped
Tail - deer hair
Eyes - 8mm doll eye

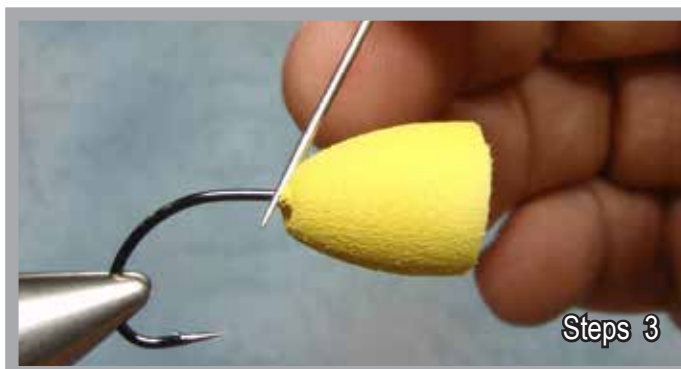
Step 1: Shape the popper body. Most of my poppers are made from shaped closed-cell foam. The popper body in this photo was made from a flip-flop. To shape the poppers, use a dremel tool and an emory board. Use a sanding stone to create a cupped face. If you don't have the tools to create the foam cylinders, you can buy them from most fly shops.



Step 2: Once the body is shaped, use a small dremel sanding stone to create a recess at the back of the fly. This will help you hide where you tie in the tail.



Step 3: Use a bodkin or heavy needle to poke a hole through the center of the popper body. Slide the body onto the hook and determine the best place to tie in the thread base so the tail will be covered by the recess at the rear of the foam body.



Step 4: Tie in the thread base and then tie in a clump of stacked deer hair for the tail. I like a heavy tail, and use a clump a little less than the size of a pencil. Hold the hair in place on top of the hook. You aren't trying to "spin" the hair, you want it to stay in place.



Step 5: Wrap thread over the butts of the deer hair so it will easily fit into the recess at the rear of the popper body.



Fly Tyer Cont.

Step 6: ATo create a good base for the foam to be glued to, tie in a thread base over the hook. I go over the hook 3 or 4 times to make sure the foam body can be secured.



Step 7: Slide the popper body over the hook and rest it on the eye. Coat the thread with Crazy Glue. I also put glue in the foam body recess to make sure the tail is secured. Once you brush on the glue, you only have a few seconds, so be ready to push the popper body back onto the tail as soon as the glue is applied.



Step 8: Apply a small drop of Crazy Glue to the side of the popper body and press on the doll eye. Hold the eye down for 10 seconds to make sure it's secure.



Step 9: You can adjust the hook, foam and eye size to make flies in all different sizes and colors.

