

The Fly Tyer's Corner by Jeff Hoelter

Foxee Redd Minnow

This month, Jack Lehman has allowed me to pinch-hit in his monthly newsletter column, "The Fly Tyer's Corner" so I can describe one of my favorite streamer flies. This is one of the flies featured in Jim Grays' Llano River presentation at the AFF meeting this month. Jack will be back next month.

I love fishing with topwater flies like poppers, hoppers, caddis etc. I love watching the explosive take and even when I'm not paying attention, I can usually hear the alarm when there is a strike. But sometimes the conditions or the results dictate it's time to fish below the surface. When this happens, Bob Clouser's Foxee Redd Minnow is usually my go-to fly.

My technique for tying this fly is just as described in Bob Clouser's great book titled "Clouser's Flies". He suggests using the lighter colored guard hair from the red fox tail for the body of the fly saving the darker guard hair for the upper portion of the fly. When purchasing a fox tail, look for one that has these contrasting colors. Separating the dense underfur from the guard hair is probably the most time consuming part of tying this fly but it's very important to remove as much of the underfur as possible. Cut a generous clump of hair from the tail and grip the tips of the hair tightly with your thumb and forefinger. Most of the underfur can then be removed with the fingers of

your other hand but it's usually easier to use a comb or brush.

Just like the more traditional Clouser Minnows tied with bucktail or synthetic materials, using fox tail or fox body hair can be very versatile depending on how the material is applied. For a baitfish imitation, tie them sparsely and a little longer. If you intend to bounce it along the bottom as a crayfish imitation for carp, try tying them a little smaller, shorter, and fuller. In this case you can substitute softer, finer fox body hair which provides a little more movement in the water than the slightly stiffer hair from the fox's tail. Arctic Fox can also be substituted on the smaller sizes to make a great fly for white bass, crappie and sunfish. Try gray over white, chartreuse over white or pretty much any color combination you can imagine.

I always attach this fly to my tippet using an open loop knot to allow it to move more naturally through the water.

Materials list:

Hook – 3x or 4x long, size 6 thru 12

Thread – 70 or 140 denier, red, orange, or tan

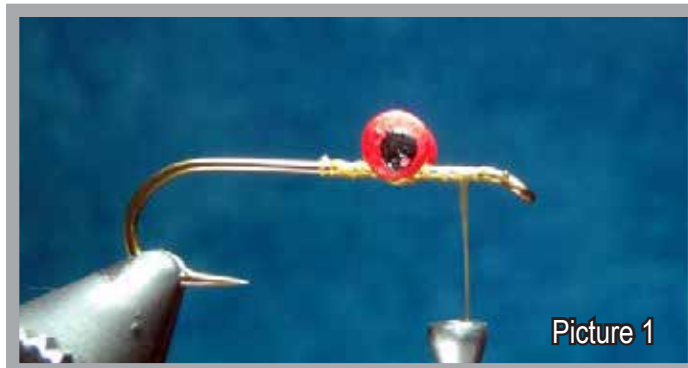
Eyes – Small or x-small dumbbell lead eyes or medium bead chain

Body – Light cream colored guard hair from red fox tail

Flash – Gold Krystal Flash and Bronze Flashabou

Back – Darker reddish brown guard hair from red fox tail

Picture 1: Start the thread and attach the eyes about 1/3 the length of the hook shank back from the hook eye with 10 or 12 diagonal wraps. Follow this with about 6 frapping wraps which are horizontal wraps between the hook shank and the eyes to cinch it down solid. Now move the thread forward about half way between the lead eye and the hook eye as shown. It's a good idea to apply a touch of cement to the lead eyes.



Picture 1

Picture 2: Cut a clump of the light cream colored hair from the fox tail and carefully remove the fuzzies and underhair. Cut the clump to length, usually 1 ½ to 2 times the length of the hook. Position the butts just behind the hook eye and make a couple of soft "gathering" wraps, then wrap tightly moving forward toward the hook eye. Move the thread back under the lead eyes and make several wraps behind the eyes. Now move the thread forward again under the eyes and wrap to just behind the hook eye.



Picture 2

Pictures 3: Invert the hook in the vise or if you have a rotary vise, spin it so the hook point is up. Add a few strands of bronze Flashabou and gold Krystal Flash. Thread should be halfway between the lead eyes and hook eye.



Picture 3

Fly Tyer's Corner Continued

Pictures 4: Cut a clump of the darker hair from the fox tail and remove all the fuzzies and underfur. Cut the butts so this clump is about as long as the previous clump. Again, place the butts just behind the hook eye and make a couple of loose "gathering" wraps followed by firm wraps moving the thread forward. Build up a nice head with the thread and whip finish.



As I mentioned above, this is one of the flies that is recommended in Jim Grays' presentation on the Llano River. Jim will be giving this presentation at the Austin Fly Fishers meeting March 15. I plan to tie a few of these before the meeting so if you have any questions, stop by. —Jeff Hoelter

Picture 5: Tidy up any loose hair and apply a coat of head cement.



Picture 6: Foxee Redd Minnow completed.



Wednesday Night Fly Tying Moves to Living Waters Fly Shop

In the mid to late 1990s, Kevin Hutchison started a fly tyer's round table that met on a weekly basis at Barton Creek Mall. Over the years, the group tried other locations including the Austin Angler, a couple of restaurants and at least one dive bar. Eventually we landed at Dart Bowl. For the last several years, Jack Lehman has been coordinating a talented and enthusiastic group of tiers at this location for Austin Fly Fishers.

The tradition continues but it's time, once again, to change venues. Starting Wednesday March 7, AFF tyers will meet at Living Waters Fly Shop, 309 West Main Street, Round Rock, TX. Beginners are welcome and tyers of all skill levels are encouraged to come and exchange ideas. I'm going to miss the enchiladas at the old bowling alley but Living Waters is a great place for tyin' and lyin'.

For details, contact Jack jklepomis@sbcglobal.net, visit www.livingwatersflyfishing.com or call Chris or Matt at (512) 828-FISH.

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