

Fly of the Month – July 2020

Chernobyl Caddis

More and more, I am ditching the strike indicators in favor of Euro-nymphing or Dry-Dropper rigs. While Euro-Nymphing is very productive, I miss traditional casting and dry fly fishing. Dry-Dropper rigs are particularly effective this time of year when all the fish are looking up and there are lots of bugs available. The real key to this system is a very buoyant and visible dry fly. Another consideration is the size. Our waters are all what I consider “pressured” – way more fisherman than fish these days. Down-sizing is critical, but it still has to float well enough to hold up a bead-head nymph or two.

This Chernobyl Caddis is just the ticket. I saw it in on an Instagram post from Kyle of Ludwig Outdoors in Catawissa, MO. (He’s on Etsy if you want to buy some of these or his other flies) It is sparse, floats flush in the water yet is still visible, and is foam-based so it floats well. Even better... it takes just minutes to tie and is very durable. The original pattern was tied in a size 6, but I tie mine in sizes 12 to 16.

Materials

- Hook: Firehole 317 Size 12 to 16 (they do run a size or two big)
- Thread: Veevus 12/0 Brown
- Abdomen: Brown or Pearl Crystal Flash
- Under-Wing: Tan 2mm Foam Strip
- Thorax: Brown SLF Spikey Squirrel Dubbing
- Wing: Light Elk Hair

Tying Steps

1. Secure hook in vise and start thread behind hook eye and advance 1/3rd of the hook shank from hook eye. Tie in one strand of brown crystal flash folded over in half at this point.
2. Using both strands, wrap one layer of crystal flash back to hook bend and then another back to tie in point. Tie off and trim excess.
3. Cut foam strip about 2/3 the hook gap wide and tapered at one end. Tie in tapered end just ahead of abdomen.
4. Dub a shaggy thorax to about three eye-lengths back from the eye covering foam tie in point.
5. Fold over the foam strip so that the fold extends over the hook bend and tie in at the front of thorax.
6. The foam compresses well, so make a neat tie down spot. Trim the excess and wrap down neatly.
7. Trim, clean, and stack a section of elk hair similar to an Elk Hair Caddis. Tie in just behind the eye.
8. Trim butts leaving a flared head. Whip finish and trim thread.



I will fish this fly either alone or as a dry fly for my Dry-Dropper rig. I tie it in a tan/brown, olive, and dark brown to cover the various caddis we have throughout Missouri and Arkansas. I like to treat them with Water-Shed and let dry before stowing them in the box. I also use the dry “shake” products to keep them floating high. I have tried adding white poly yarn on top of the elk hair, but it doesn’t seem to make a difference in either visibility, durability, or floatability. It does look more “Chernobyl-y” though.

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