

Fly Tying Corner – UV and Biot Callibaetis Soft Hackle

Article by Phil Fischer

In mid-winter I dream of being on East Lake fly fishing Callibaetis. But since the lake is currently frozen over, and closed, this time of year my dreams are most vivid while at my vice tying up patterns for next summer. Today found me tying a favorite Callibaetis pattern for indicator fishing, or wind drifting East Lake; the **UV and Biot Callibaetis Soft Hackle**.



East Lake is well known for its long Callibaetis hatch starting in late May and extending through September. The weed beds throughout the lake make prime habitat for Callibaetis mayflies, and cruising rainbows, browns, Atlantic salmon, and even kokanee salmon take this pattern. My preferred method of fishing this fly is to float tube along the weed beds casting into the weed bed and slowly stripping the fly back. I rarely fish this fly singly, often preferring to fish in tandem with a wooly bugger, or other pattern. I find the larger size of the wooly bugger attracts fish, but 80-90% of the time the fish takes the smaller Callibaetis. Alternatively, I often fish this pattern under a strike indicator in lakes, and perform a slow hand weave, or a long slow pull to lift the fly and then let it settle in between pulls. Lastly, I also wind drift with this pattern with an intermediate

sink line. This pattern works well in advance of the Callibaetis Mayfly emergence. But I use it any time during the day on lakes where Callibaetis mayflies are prolific.

UV and Biot Callibaetis Softhackle

Hook:	Daiichi 1260, sizes 12-16
Weight:	.015 Lead Wire
Thread:	Tan or Tobacco Brown Danville 70 Denier (6/0)
Tail:	Lemon Wood Duck Fibers
Abdomen:	Wild Turkey Biot from the leading edge of the flight feathers
Rib:	Fine copper, red, olive or bronze wire
Thorax:	UV Callibaetis or Tan Dubbing
Hackle:	Whiting Farms Coq De Leon Hen Saddle Brown Speckled, or a Partridge soft hackle feather

Tying Instructions:

1. Wind 6-8 wraps of lead wire at the thorax. Cut the tag ends of the lead pointing upward on the fly, which leaves an extra half wrap at the front and rear of the wire on the underside of the fly. This helps ensure the fly fishes right side up because of the extra weight on the underside of the fly.
2. Tie in the tail with a tuft of 6-8 fibers of Lemon Wood Duck approximately 1 ¼ to 1 ½ times the gape of the hook
3. Attach wire ribbing with thread wraps from the back of the lead to the tail-set position. Tie in a turkey biot by the tip. The translucent side of the biot should be positioned forward, and the opaque side should be back. Wind the biot forward with 5-7 wraps to create a nice segmented effect on the abdomen. Wind the wire over the Biot trying to follow the dark edges of each wrap. The wire adds strength to the fly and color to correspond to the color of the natural for the lake you are planning to fish. For East Lake I like the darker bronze colored wire.
4. Attach dubbing to the thread and wind forward through the thorax. Use your favorite dubbing method, such as a dubbing loop, pinch method or other. The Callibaetis nymph is generally thin, so your thorax should remain relatively sparse.
5. Take a Whiting Coq De Leon Hen Saddle Hackle or Partridge feather and strip all of the soft fuzzy barbs off the butt end of the feather. Attach hackle pliers to the very tip and stem of the feather. Gently stroke the remaining fibers away from the hackle pliers to expose a small section of the tip of the feather and the stem. Release the pliers and clip the tip, leaving just a short section of the tip and stem; just enough to tie in at the head of the fly. Tie in at the head “Wet Fly” style, dull side toward the rear of the fly and shiny side forward. Reattach the pliers to the

stem at the butt end of the feather. Gently stroke and fold the barbs on the feather back toward the rear of the fly. Wind the hackle twice around the hook and tie off. Trim the excess and tie over the butts of the feather to form a neat head. Whip finish and cement the head.

I particularly like this pattern because of the sparse nature of the tie to match the natural and the soft hackle that pulsates in the water over the thorax with a hint of UV. The soft hackle pulses in the water, and it just works! I can also vary slightly the coloration to match the natural just by substituting differing colors of biots, or colors of wire in the abdomen. The wire also adds tremendous strength and durability to the fly.

Give this pattern a try at your vice, and next summer at East Lake!