

Carey Special

Sunriver Angler's Fly-Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



I really like rediscovering old patterns. These flies worked many years ago and are still very effective today. The Carey Special is just such a fly. This pattern was originally tied for still waters in British Columbia in 1925 by Dr. Lloyd Day from Quesnel, British Columbia. It was popularized by Coronel Thomas Carey, and the pattern was named in his honor. I don't know who or when the fly pattern was introduced to Central Oregon, but today it is a staple in many of our fly boxes for Crane Prairie, East Lake, and other of area lakes.

The fly design is straight-forward. It consists of a peacock herl body and a pheasant back or rump feather for the hackle and tail. The fly imitates many insects found in our area lakes, from dragonflies to water boatman and others. The subtleties I add to the Carey's in my box really make it a very versatile and effective pattern. I often weight the pattern differently for different waters. I'll add more weight to the fly for East Lake and fish it deeper than perhaps I would at Crane Prairie. I can also vary how deep the fly is fished with the fly line I use. For shallow waters I may opt for a hover line with a very slow sink rate, or I may use it on an intermediate line to get down deeper. The key to fishing this pattern it to vary the retrieve. I like an erratic, wonky retrieve that imitates a dragonfly nymph. But vary your retrieve based on whatever the fish seem to prefer on any given day.

I recently tied up a fresh batch of Carey Specials and took them out to Crane Prairie one afternoon. I used the electric motor to move quietly around an area until I started seeing fish and then anchored in very shallow water. I rigged up a Carey Special at the end of 16 feet of 3X tippet on a Hover line and began sight casting to these fish. On the second cast I felt that abrupt stop and set the hook to a 21" rainbow. At the beginning of this article, I stated I loved rediscovering old patterns; a 21" rainbow really sealed the deal for me that day. Try this pattern during summer and early fall on your favorite local lake.

Materials List: Carey Special

Hook: Daiichi 1710, Size 8-14

Thread: Danville 6/0 Flat Waxed in Olive Brown

Weight: 6-12 wraps of .015 Lead Wire

Tail: Whiting Freshwater Streamer Hen Cape in Mottled Gray or Brown, or Ringneck Pheasant Rump Hackle

Abdomen: Peacock

Rib: Medium Copper Wire

Hackle: Whiting Freshwater Streamer Hen Cape in Mottled Gray or Brown, or Ringneck Pheasant Rump or Back Hackle

Tying instructions and steps are being published in video form, and can be found on the Sunriver Anglers Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SunriverAnglers/>, or at the following YouTube URL: <https://youtu.be/Viilj5gprwI>

Experiment with this pattern to imitate the dragonfly nymph or other aquatic insects. If you have questions or would like additional information about the Carey Special, please don't hesitate to email me. Or if you have suggestions on future patterns to feature in this column, I welcome your input. I can be reached at Philfischer@sbcglobal.net.