

Cates Turkey – Euro Style

Sunriver Angler's Fly Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



I recently returned from fishing a high desert Eastern Oregon lake with the Sunriver Anglers. The weather out East was markedly different from Sunriver, as spring had arrived in earnest. No frost at night, and warmer. That meant that aquatic insects would be active, and the trout would be hungry. A friend had recommended tying an old standby pattern for this trip, the Cates Turkey. I was familiar with this fly as a very good imitation for Callibaetis nymphs. So, in advance of this trip I tied up a dozen. The first morning of our outing I pulled a Cates Turkey from my box and tied the fly on to my leader and cast to a likely spot on this small lake. Moments later, the indicator went down, and I quickly and firmly reacted to the strike, and promptly broke off a nice rainbow. It was a rookie mistake, or possibly caused by the exuberance of fishing again after a long winter. However, through the rest of that day, I softened my hook set substantially and caught numerous nice rainbows on the Cates Turkey fly pattern, including the 24-inch fatty pictured below.



The Cates Turkey is a fly that has been around for a long time. For this month's column, I adapted the pattern slightly to Euro Style. By Euro style, I mean the fly is tied in a fashion that would make it suitable for Euro Style indicator-less fishing in streams. The Original Cates Turkey pattern is a sparse tie that was designed for fishing Callibaetis nymphs in Lake Davis in the 1960's. I made three modifications to the original pattern: the hook, the bead, and the tail and throat material. For my version of this timeless pattern, I used a Barbless competition jig hook that is paired with a Copper colored slotted tungsten bead. The jig hook fishes inverted, and results more hook-ups in the fish's upper jaw, where the odds of landing the fish are greater. And because the hook is barbless, it enables a very quick release. The bead helps the fly get down quickly to fish in the right zone, an advantage when fishing lakes under an indicator. The final modification was to substitute Coq De Leon for the tail, from lemon wood duck. I like the coloration of Coq De Leon for Callibaetis. I also eliminated the lemon wood duck throat on the fly, as it didn't fit with the inverted nature of the jig hook. The fish didn't seem to care about these changes to the pattern, as they willingly inhaled it throughout the day.

Try this easy-to-tie pattern during summer Callibaetis time on a favorite local lake. Or fish it using euro-style nymphing techniques to imitate Pale Morning Dun nymphs or other small mayfly nymphs on your favorite stream, like the Crooked River or Upper Deschutes.

Materials List: Cates Turkey – Euro Style

Hook: Firehole 516 Jig Hook, Size 14-18
Thread: Veevus 16/0, Black
Bead: 2.0mm Copper Slotted Tungsten
Tail: Whiting Coq De Leon Rooster Saddle, Pardo
Abdomen: Natural Turkey Tail
Rib: Copper Wire, Small
Thorax: Peacock Tail Feather Barb

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/PxbuSalCs7E>

Experiment with this pattern during the Callibaetis Hatch. If you have questions or would like additional information about the Cates Turkey – Euro Style pattern, 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.