

SSPT Soft Hackle

Sunriver Angler's Fly-Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



I have gotten out to the Fall river a few times in February and early March. I've found solace and social distancing to be abundant during my visits. There is nothing better than casting on a beautiful river with snow on the ground, crisp mountain air and a beautiful blue sky. However, since all this COVID-19 craziness has ramped up, I am electing to stay at home and tie flies. I've heard the river has gotten very busy. Still plenty of room to spread out, but more pressure than this water is designed to handle. I am hoping that things will return to some state of normalcy and allow us to get out fishing more this spring and summer so I can use all these flies coming off my vice.

For this month's Fly Tying Corner, I tied an SSPT Soft Hackle. SSPT is short for squirrel, schlappen and pheasant tail, the main ingredients in this pattern. It is an adaptation of the more common pheasant tail nymph. But this version uses materials that give life and movement to the fly. The soft hackle is tied using a composite dubbing loop technique which blends the squirrel and dyed orange schlappen. Schlappen comes from a rooster and are the long webby feathers just in front of the tail. When blended and tied as a soft hackle, these materials move and pulse in the water, which hungry trout can't resist.



The tying video for this pattern introduces some new tools I've recently begun using for tying flies using a dubbing loop. The composite loop comprises multiple types of materials within a dubbing loop blended to form a composite material, in this case the soft hackle utilizing a Whiting Schlappen and gray squirrel. The technique uses a Swiss CDC Clamp which I obtained recently from the Hook Fly Shop in Sunriver, and a Loon Dubbing Spinner. These tools make spinning materials in a dubbing loop much easier than the former methods I employed. And it creates endless alternatives for marrying materials in composite loops, only limited by the fly tiers imagination. Look at the video to see for yourself (Link below).

The trout have given their stamp of approval to this pattern. I've tested this fly on several big rainbows on the Fall river with excellent results. I have been sight casting to fish in shallow water using a hover line, which sinks very slowly. As the fly approaches the fish, I have let the fly swing, or given short strips to add to the movement of the materials. This beautiful leviathan rainbow took aggressively and ran me around the river for a bit before coming to net.



Fall River Rainbow

SSPT Soft Hackle Materials List:

Hook:	Tiemco 3769 Barbed, or Firehole 609 Barbless, Size 14 - 18
Thread:	Danville 6/0 Flat Waxed, Tobacco Brown
Tail and Abdomen:	Ringneck Pheasant Tail Feather
Rib:	Ultra Copper Wire, Size BR
Thorax:	Natural Peacock Tail Feather
Soft Hackle:	Whiting Schlappen, Dyed Orange Natural Gray Squirrel

Tying instructions and steps are 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/RI8Fd2GECsE> .

Experiment with this the composite dubbing loop technique to build your own creative patterns. If you have questions or would like additional information about the SSPT Soft Hackle, 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.