

Blue Ridge NC Trout Unlimited



September 2023 Newsletter

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Have you ever been driving along the road, seen an animal that was killed by a car, and thought: "that would be nice to have on my fly tying bench." Well, there is a lot of opportunity to use both roadkill and hunted animal pelts for tying your flies. Now before you pick up that animal along the road, be sure to read the game laws provided by the NCWRC later in the newsletter. This month we will discuss what can be used and how it can be prepared.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fall is around the corner and it is time for us to gather again. We will resume our chapter meetings in September at the Sixty-six grill and Tap house. However, we are looking at changing venues for October through the rest of the year. We are looking at going to Little Richards BBQ on Stratford Rd close to five corners. They have a bigger private room and a more varied menu than the other Little Richards restaurants. Once our board meets there next week and approves the transition, we will send you plenty of notices to make sure you are at the right place for our October chapter meeting.

On another note, September / October is a time of transition in our board with members finishing their terms while others are ready to start. One of those is my position as the president of the chapter. After two terms and a lot of hard work, the time has come for me to go back to being just a fisherman with a lot less work or responsibility. I will still be

involved in advocacy some and transitioning my responsibilities to the new president over the next few months. I would like to thank the board and all our members for their support over the last few years. It has been a great ride. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Thank you

Robbie Abou-Rizk

SEPTEMBER MEETING

When: Tuesday, September 19th, 6 PM

Where: Sixty-Six Grill and Tap House
3440 Frontis St, Winston Salem

Who: Barry Parks and Troy Machamer.

What: Fishing the Green River in Utah

We had a few members that had an opportunity to fish the Green River this summer. They caught a lot of large fish and learned some things along the way. Come join us for a causal conversation with Barry Parks and Troy Machamer.

OCTOBER MEETING

At our October chapter meeting, we will have our annual business meeting and elections for new board members. If you wish to nominate someone or wish to volunteer to become a board member, please let us know so we can add to the list of nominees. You can contact us at our website www.blueridgetu.org.

Currently our nominees' are Dana Hall, Alex Jung, Rusty Berrier, Fred Frank

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fly Tying Classes

At 9 AM on Wednesdays Project Healing Waters will host fly tying classes and at 6 PM on Wednesday evenings Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited will host classes. The classes will be held at the South Fork Community Center at 4403 Country Club Road in Winston Salem. The classes are free and all are welcome - from beginners to advanced. No need to sign up, just come join us. If you have specific questions about the evening classes, you can contact, Rusty Berrier at rustyberrier@outlook.com.

BRYSON CITY: October 12 – 15, 2023.

Alarka (Bryson City area) Trip with Rocky River Chapter
<https://www.smokymtnretreat.com/>

Register at [Alarka Trip](#)

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to BRNCNews@gmail.com and let us know.

- **Costs** Food/Tent Camping: \$90 for 3 nights
- Cabin: \$190 for 3 nights, beds are first come first serve, each cabin sleeps 8
- Prices include 3 dinners (Thur/Fri/Sat), 3 breakfasts(Fri/Sat/Sun) and use of the campground.

The Smoky Mountain Outings are held twice a year, Spring and Fall. The event is a 4 day camping/fishing trip to the DH and Wild Western North Carolina streams. We stay at the Smoky Mountain Meadows Campground (hot showers, laundry room, ice on site). The chapter provides most of the meals for the trip for a FEE. The meals range from pizza, catered pulled pork barbecue, and catered fried chicken dinners over the three nights, and continental breakfasts in the mornings.

- Hot Showers, Sheltered Mess Area for Tent Campers
- Meals: Thursday dinner (some early arrivals) Friday breakfast & dinner (many arrive late Friday afternoon due to work schedules) Saturday breakfast & dinner Sunday breakfast (pack up to leave by mid-morning to fish and travel home)
- 2 truckloads of firewood for campfires, tall tales, guide talk from a local fly shop, occasionally a fundraiser raffle, casting competition, One Fly Competition – we always come up with something.
- Countless DH and Wild fishing opportunities within 45 minutes of camp.
- Typically the Weekend following the early-April and early Fall NCWRC stockings on the Nantahala, Fires Creek, Tuckasegee and Big Snowbird.

Fall Camping Trip

Thursday Nov 2 - Sunday Nov 5

Location: Helton Creek Campground
Grassy Creek, NC

Fall fishing in western NC is wonderful. We will camp, fish, and fellowship for the weekend! The cost is \$10 per person per night for camping. If you prefer you can make reservations to stay in a cabin about 10 minutes away. Click the registration link below for website information to reserve a cabin. [Click here to register.](#)



Topic: Fly Fishing Skill Building

Chapter Event

Sunday, October 22, 2023

Time: 2pm - 5pm

Location: Bolton Park

1590 Bolton St SW, Winston-Salem



Whether you are an experienced fly fisher or a beginner or just curious, come join us for an afternoon of fly fishing fun. We meet at Bolton Park's shelter for a session on fly casting, knots, fly types, and equipment swap. All skill levels are welcome and encouraged!

CASTING CAROLINAS TOURNAMENT

SAVE the DATE!! Sponsor, Fish, or Volunteer for Casting Carolinas' Tie One On Tournament October 21 and 22



8th Annual FLY FISHING TOURNAMENT

SEEKING SPONSORS!

OCTOBER 21 & 22, 2023, CHEROKEE NC

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Benefits Include:

- LOGO/NAME on banner, t-shirt, & on-site
- Extensive multi-month social/digital media impressions & crossover coverage from other sponsors
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- Go to castingcarolinas.com/tournament for more details

HELP WOMEN THRIVE AFTER CANCER

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100% of proceeds support Casting Carolinas.

Casting Carolinas provides free fly fishing retreats for women living life after a cancer diagnosis or treatment in NC and SC

Helping Women
Thrive After Cancer



www.castingcarolinas.com

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MEETING WITH THE DEQ ABOUT THE MITCHELL RIVER

by Robbie Abou-Rizk

On August 17th I met with the DEQ office in Winston Salem to address the sediment run off into the Mitchell from

various sources that is filling up the Mitchell River . I wanted to address the water quality standards for trout streams and the turbidity and mud plaguing the river. I also wanted to share our sediment research with Wake Forest University on isolating the sources of sediment.

At this time the DEQ office noted they have been on the Mitchell River on many locations, inspecting areas of concern. They have found no water quality violations and thus no enforcement is needed.

Recent photos from the Mitchell....



Pine creek at Kapps Mill Rd , Jan 6 2023



Aug 4, 2023 Pine creek



Judsville school road bridge
Mitchell River past the first
parking lot Aug 6 2023



Potters creek at the end of the DH section
on the right going into the Mitchell Aug 7 2023



Mud running of the corn field
in a culvert under Grove
Cockerham road straight
into the Mitchell



Christian creek flowing into
the Mitchell Aug 6 2023

High Rock lake excess nutrient regulation concludes the first phase.

BRTU was involved in the public process that the DEQ/DWR started last September as a stake holder. BRTU participated in the buffer zone Tag committee. The final recommendation that came out of the committee was to establish a 70 foot buffer zone on all streams in the High Rock Lake watershed, which starts in Blowing Rock and runs along the blue ridge parkway east and south to reach High Rock Lake. This will hopefully protect the many trout streams in that watershed. This recommendation moves forward to the steering committee. This is by no means a done deal as there are many hurdles to cross before it

becomes a regulation. However, it is a step in the right direction.

TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

The program has started with 9 schools and 10 aquariums running. Trout Egg orders will go out on August 30th and hopefully they will be delivered to schools in the middle to late September. We can always use more volunteers. Please contact us on our website Blueridgetu.org to volunteer or see Rick Conner at our chapter meetings.

The Lasting Impact of Trout Unlimited's Rivercourse and How it Set Me on a Path to Conservation

By: Spencer Pearson

Education is a very powerful tool, especially when it comes to conservation. However, it must be done right. In my opinion, there is no subject that is better taught in a classroom than in the field. If you want children and young adults to take away the most meaningful experience as possible, you have to let them figure out why its meaningful on their own.

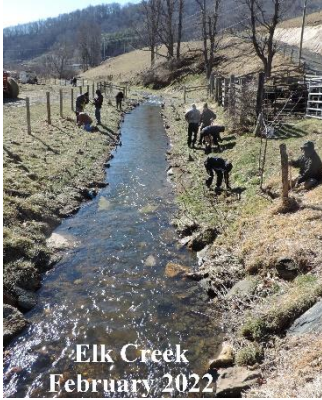
I attended Trout Unlimited's Rivercourse in 2019. Despite fly fishing being a big part of my father's and grandfather's life, I never really picked up on it. I still loved the outdoors and especially fishing, but it just never clicked. That is, until I went to Rivercourse. It really opened my mind to the possibilities and variety of experiences fly fishing can provide. Rivercourse is still one of the most fun things I have ever done and I left wanting more; I wanted to go out and see what else fly fishing had in store for me. It really set me on a path that not only included more fly fishing, but also conservation.

When I attended Rivercourse in 2019, I was a kid who loved to fish. Now, I am someone who not only still loves to fish (quite possibly even more than I did in 2019), but I am also someone who realizes that the resources that provide such experiences are limited and must be taken care of. At its core, fly fishing hinges on the existence of habitats around the world and the fish that inhabit them. From native Brook trout in Appalachian blue line creeks to the bonefish and permit of the lush grass flats of the Florida Keys, sadly, every fishery faces its own uniquely grave problems. Many of these habitats are expiring at an accelerated rate due to human activity. That is why it is important that experiences, such as Rivercourse, plant the seed of conservation in the minds of children and young adults so that new generations can lead the us in a better direction.

I am so glad that Trout Unlimited provides experiences that inspire young adults to follow the path of conservation, just like it did for me. I am happy to remain involved, volunteering every summer at Rivercourse, as a gillie. And I plan to further my involvement with conservation in the future.

ELK CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

In February 2022 on a very cold and blustery day, several members from BRTU and a local Boy Scout troop planted a restoration project along Elk Creek. The efforts are showing a great deal of progress in reduction of siltation in the creek. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and helped out that day.



WILD GAME AND ROADKILL



Last month we talked about beginning fly tying and how to get started. This month we are going to dedicate the newsletter to serious fly tyers and the various materials they use that can often be very expensive. For those brave souls among you there is a less expensive way to stock your tying desk.

There are two great sources for these materials. First you'll find a lot of dead animals along the roads like squirrel, possum, deer, and even skunk that match many of the things on your desk. Another source is if you are a hunter or have a friend who is that may be able to provide you with deer hair, turkey feathers, and more. However, before you start scouring the roads you need to read the rules that Kin Hodges from the NCWRC provided:

"A Possession and Salvage permit is no longer needed to possess most dead wildlife killed accidentally or found dead. However, deer and turkey still require permission to be possessed, and bears may not be possessed at all. So for most things like a roadkill squirrel or groundhog or things of that nature, a permit is not required.

However [endangered, threatened or special concern species](#) and [Migratory Birds](#) require appropriate State and Federal Permits prior to possession. A deer or turkey may be possessed with a permit issued by a law enforcement officer.

The sale of any wildlife resources or wildlife parts found dead is prohibited, except licensed trappers and hunters who may sell the carcasses or pelt of any beaver, coyote, groundhog, mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, otter, raccoon, skunk, weasel or bobcat to a licensed fur dealer if the dead furbearing animal was found during the open season for that species. Licensed trappers and hunters may also sell the carcasses or pelt of any fox to a licensed fur dealer if the dead fox was found during an open fox season and the county in which the fox was found allows for the sale of fox

carcasses and pelts. All tagging requirements apply as described in 15A NCAC 10B .0400.

This should cover most scenarios anyone would run into, however if they still have questions or are interested in required permits for restricted species/ migratory birds, they can call the R.A.P.S. Supervisor Christina Stylianos at 919-707-0062. Most of this info can be found on our website under the "Licensing" tab, then click on "other licenses and permits" and then click "possession and salvage permits"

If that hasn't deterred you from going ahead and starting to collect materials, it's time to help clean up our roads and approach your friends who enjoy hunting. Read on and you'll find a few ideas on how to work with these materials. Only a couple items are included in the newsletter, but if you'll go on-line and do a search, especially on YouTube you'll find a wealth of information from how to skin a possum, how to prepare a squirrel tail, and much more. There was even a source out there that described shaving a possum's belly for dubbing fur.

Get out there and get started and you may soon have more materials than your desk can handle.

PROCESSING FLY TYING MATERIALS AT HOME

<https://flyfishingwisconsin.com>

Birds and animals that are useful to the fly tier:

Ruffed and Sharp-tail grouse: Body feathers are good for soft hackle flies. The feathers are on the larger size. The top leading edge of the wings has smaller feathers. The tail feather fibers and be used as a pheasant tail. They also have a nice light colored marabou around their legs.

Hungarian Partridge: Body feathers are good for soft hackle flies. The feathers are smaller than a Ruffed Grouse and are mostly of medium size. Again the top leading edge of the wings has smaller feathers.

Bobwhite Quail: One of the best birds for soft hackle. And don't forget the top leading edge of the wing.

Woodcock: Good soft hackle for wet flies, and the top leading edge of the wings.

Pheasant: Pheasant tails have many uses, and flies are even named after this bird. Pheasant also has some marabou like feathers called philoplumes that are good for fly tying.

Mourning Dove: Some fair soft hackle

Turkeys: The tail feathers have many uses, make a good substitute for pheasant tails. The large wing feathers next to their bodies are of a mottled color and have some iridescent colors. Don't forget about the marabou on the belly.

Ducks: Mallards and wood duck drakes (males) have great breast feathers that have many uses for fly tying. Many other ducks like teal and pintails have nice breast feathers; main the drake has the better-colored breast feathers.

Geese: Biots from the wing feathers. The first few feathers from the tips of the wings are the best biots on a goose. And their CDC feathers are white and usefully on many fly patterns.

Starling: They have some breast feathers that can be a substitute for Jungle Cock feathers.

Sandhill Crane, Blue Heron: While it's not legal to hunt sandhills in Wisconsin, many western states do have a season on them. They have some nice spay hackle on their breast. Don't pass up an opportunity to pick up one of these birds, especially if you're into steelhead fishing.

Spruce Grouse, Sage Hens, Blue Grouse: There are many other western birds that are great for tying. If you hear of a hunter going out west let them know you would like some feathers.

Deer: Hide from the back of a deer is used for many deer hair patterns. Some deer hair is better for spinning than others.

Elk: Hide from the back of an elk is great for Elk Hair Caddis.

Squirrels, Fox, Gray, Pine: Beside the tail, squirrel body hair off the back and sides makes great dubbing. Shave them close to get the under fur which is gray to mix with the multi-hued guard hair. Gray squirrels also come in a black and white phase.

Rabbits, Cottontail, Snowshoe and Jack.: Hairs mask and rabbits foots are called out many fly patterns. Muskrat, Mink, Beaver: Where would the Adams be with out Muskrat dubbing.

Moose: Mosse Main.

Woodchuck: They are a protected species along with the Badger; however, many fly tiers will bend the rules if they find a dead one along the road. The woodchuck caddis fly is a loved by many a brook trout.

There are some uses for the following...
Bobcat, Otter, Fisher, Opossum, Skunk, Fox, Coyote

HOW TO PREPARE A SQUIRREL



Squirrels might be the ultimate critter. They are fun to hunt, taste amazing, and their fur is extremely useful. Squirrel tails and pelts in particular are great for crafts and decorations, but where they really shine is fly tying. Tying flies and jigs with squirrel tails is nothing new. The multicolored fibers have been used for tying streamers and lead jigs for decades. With strokes of gray, brown, black, white, and even red, squirrel tails are a fantastic material for mimicking things fish love to eat, especially minnows and crayfish.

Less appreciated but equally useful is squirrel body fur. Squirrel fur can be used as dubbing material for tying nymphs, dry flies, and more. To make some of the buggiest, best dubbing you've ever used, all you have to do is mix squirrel's fur, hare's mask, and your favorite flash dubbing in an old coffee grinder (see below). This yields a spikey dubbing that rolls on fly tying thread well and imparts a lot of movement and character in the water.

How to Tan a Squirrel Hide With Borax

[How to Tan a Squirrel Hide For Fly Tying | Field & Stream \(fieldandstream.com\)](http://fieldandstream.com)

The process is simple for preserving a squirrel pelt for [fly tying](#). All you have to do is skin the squirrel, then stretch and pin the skin to a piece of cardboard before curing it for a few weeks. Salt has been a favorite way of preserving skin for fly tying for decades, but borax is far superior for curing hides and feathers. Furs cured with Borax come out much drier, less oily, and less prone to attracting bugs than hides cured with salt. It also leaves the pelt smelling like laundry detergent and not like a dead animal. If you follow the steps below, you'll end up with a clean, dry, pelt and tail that is bug-free and perfect for tying flies. Fur cured this way will last much longer, too, and you can feel good about giving a nice, non-stinky gift to the fly tiers in your life.

1. Skin the squirrel: Cut from the groin to the neck, then along each leg. Peel the skin away from the back legs until you get to the tail. Cut around the base of the tail, then carefully twist until the bone breaks free. Peel the pelt upwards, skinning the body and top legs, then cut the head from the body at the base of the neck.
2. Cut the head from the pelt, then scrape and cut off any remaining fat or flesh.
3. Place the pelt fur-side down on a piece of cardboard, and stretch it out using tacks or pins.
4. Cover all exposed skin with Borax. Make sure to pack some around the base of the tail.
5. Set the pelt in a cool, dry place for a few weeks, and let it cure.

Read Next: [How to Skin and Tan Your Own Bucktails For Fly Tying](#)

How To Make Dubbing From a Squirrel Fur

Once your squirrel pelt is cured, remove the pins and brush off the borax. Shave a patch of fur from the cured pelt using a beard trimmer. Place the shaved squirrel fur in an old coffee grinder with a few pinches of hare's mask fur and a pinch of your favorite sparkle dubbing such as [Hareline Ice Dub](#). Pulse the grinder a few times to blend. You may need to pull some of the fibers apart if they wind too tightly.

MATERIALS TIP

Always carefully inspect any new tying materials for insect infestation before you introduce them to your other materials. If you have the slightest doubt of infestation, place

the materials in a large plastic bag and put the bag in a chest freezer for at least a week or two. Freezing should kill any organisms such as ticks and moths that might be present.

MIX YOUR OWN DUBBING

Making your own or improving store bought dubbing
I recommend that all dubbing be passed through a coffee or spice grinder prior to using. The grinder tends to separate and air out the fibres providing a lighter product than would be normally accomplished by just using the blend out of the bag.

David Allerton

Martin Joergensen

<https://globalflyfisher.com/>



Cutting the fur off the skin and processing it in a coffee grinder yields some very fine dubbing.

I recommend that all dubbing be passed through a coffee or spice grinder prior to using. The grinder tends to separate and air out the fibres providing a lighter product than would be normally accomplished by just using the blend out of the bag.

In addition, dubbing your own allows one to change the chroma to match local conditions. You can vary colour, texture, and any other characteristics as needed. I won't argue for cheaper because it probably isn't cheaper than buying pre-made dubbing unless you tie a lot more than I do.

Methods to blend

1. By hand: just pinch, pull and mix. Pull some yarn or underfur and mix as needed. Continue until the mixture is uniform. The process is pull some material and add to the pile, continue the pull and mix procedure until the desired result is reached.
2. Using carders or brushes. This procedure needs two carders or wire brushes to tear apart the fibres. Just stroke the materials with the carders until a suitable quantity has been gathered. Repeat for additional materials. Just use the pull and mix method with the two implements. This is accomplished by stroking the carders horizontally until the material is blended to suit tastes.
3. By using a coffee or spice grinder: cut yarn or fur into lengths no longer than 1/2 inch. Add to grinder and whirl away. Some tyers will rub the grinder with an anti-static sheet to remove the static electricity which may cause uneven results. Pulse instead of using a continuous grind.

Check to make sure that the fibres do not tangle in the blade and that the synthetics are not melting in the process. This will be seen as little nits of fused plastic throughout the dub. Do not grind for long periods and without continual monitoring. One may want to scrape the sides periodically to aid in the blending process if the materials have vastly different textures.

By using water and a blender - Blenders are not ideal for blending dry materials. Water should be added prior to running. Just immerse the materials to be blended in water and use the blender in a pulse mode. When the materials have been mixed suitably, let the mixture dry. It doesn't hurt to run the dried mixture through a grinder to fluff it out. This method is ideal for materials that might melt when blended dry or mixtures where the materials vary widely in consistency. The water also minimizes the effects of static on the ingredients.

5. Blending by hand using water: Just immerse materials in a container with water and stir to mix. Allow to dry and then fluff.

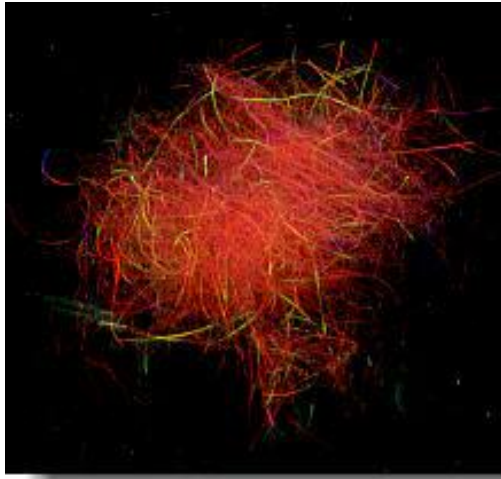
One last note: These methods are not mutually exclusive and several may be used in conjunction to produce the desired results.

Using soap water

Here's an alternative, cheap and a bit more time consuming and low tech way to mix dubbing: pluck or cut the fur you want to mix into a lidded glass or large neck bottle. Mix as you wish: underfur, spiky cover hairs, antron, flash etc. and add water and a bit of dish washing soap or shampoo. Put on the lid and shake violently for half a minute or less. Drain the water through a sieve or coffee filter, put the now wet and sorry looking lump of fur into the glass again and rinse in clean water. Repeat the rinse process until there is no more foam when you shake the glass. A couple of times is normally enough. Pour out the fur on a coffee filter, spread it out a bit and let it dry for a day or so. You can now pick it out and put it in a bag and you will have a dubbing that is well mixed and normally easy to apply.

Suggested dubbing mixes





These mixes are both made from natural rabbit and SLF - on top gray and pearl and below red rabbit and sparkling red SLF.

Here are some good and useful dubbings:

1. Plain rabbit - Cut the hair off plain natural or dyed rabbit skin and mix. Most suited for the coffee grinder. The dubbing will become very dense and easy to apply. The underfur is long and soft and will adhere well to almost any thread.
2. Rabbit and deer hair - Mix some fine deer hair into the above mix. Approx 1/10-1/5th of the amount of rabbit. The deer hair should not be too long - approx 2/5" (1 cm). I have used surplus from muddlers with luck. Some of the deer hair will be lost when using the dubbing, but the result will still be excellent.
3. Rabbit and SLF - Cut natural rabbit off the skin and remove as many guard hairs as possible. The remaining underfur is normally a dull gray. Mix into this SLF in one or several colors. The SLF must be cut into pieces no longer than 1/2" (1.5 cm). I like a combination of bright red, dark olive and off white. I take 1/3 of each adding up to approx 1/4 of the whole portion.
4. Squirrel and Antron - Cut the hair off a natural or dyed squirrel skin using scissors. You might want to remove some of the guard hair. Mix with approx. 1/3 white, sparkling antron yarn cut into 2/5" (1 cm) pieces in a coffee grinder.

Marabou - This is one of the best and most underrated types of dubbing I know. It consists of all the surplus from almost any kind of feathers. 'Genuine' marabou can be used too, of course. I prefer to keep colors and types separated, but you can mix according to taste. While working with the feathers, you normally strip the 'webby' - plumulaceous - part of the feather by pulling off the barbs. Instead you should cut them with scissors into a container or bag. After gathering a sufficient amount, just drop it into a coffee grinder and run it for a few seconds. Static electricity will be a problem with the very light and fluffy material - but believe me: it's worth the trouble.

POSSUM DUBBING

Yeah, not illegal to shave a sleeping opossum, most seem to like it, or at least they keep up the dead act, maybe out of fright.

The white belly hair takes a dye really well and makes a good dubbing if you're looking for a soft base with long, slightly spikey guard hairs.

Usually, when I'm lucky enough to have the same possum show up several times throughout the year, I find the underfur has grown back much fuller and thicker with fewer guard hairs and makes a much finer dubbing than from the first shave.

SELECTING DEER HAIR

Chris Helm

www.globalflyfisher.com

Choosing the right hair will make your deer hair flies - Comparaduns, EHC's, Muddlers, bass bugs



Deer hair

Martin Joergensen

The North American Whitetail Deer

The whitetail deer provides the fly tier with a variety of hair for many different fly patterns for both fresh and saltwater fishing. It is easily obtainable and relatively inexpensive in cost.

The two major species of deer in North America are the whitetail (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and the mule deer (*O. hemionus*). Worldwide there are 30 subspecies of whitetail of which 17 are found in North America. Mule deer comprises of 11 subspecies of which eight live in North America. This is important to the fly tier because some species of whitetail have hair that is much more suitable for fly tying than others.

Different regions of North America have different subspecies and each of these deer have their own hair characteristics. The subspecies which inhabit the northern states and southern Canada generally possess the best overall hair quality for a variety of tying requirements. The hair which is used in tying is obtained from the "winter coat" (blue coat) of the whitetail. The term "blue coat" is of the roots of the hair which grow through the skin before the hair has grown to its full length. Once the hair has grown out completely the inside of the skin is creamy white. The summer coat (red coat) lacks the qualities necessary to make good tying hair. It is solid in texture, much

more tapered, and wirey in texture. The majority of the winter coat is kinky to wavy in appearance, and is described as "hollow". This is not a completely accurate description of the winter hair as it is not hollow like a drink straw, but rather each hair is filled with hundreds of tiny air pockets which serve as the insulation for the deer in cold climatic conditions. This "hollow" quality is also the reason the hair floats.

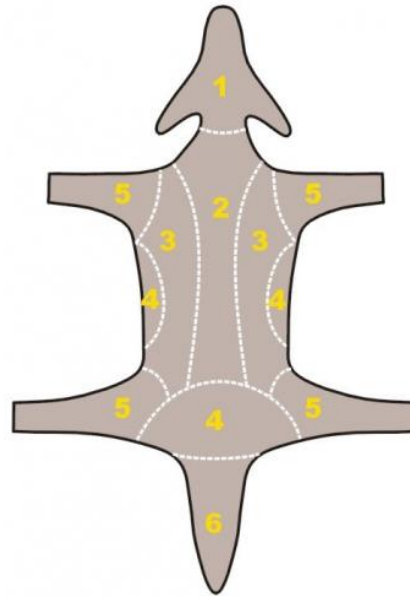
Molting

The whitetail goes through two molting processes each year. The most important molting period to the fly tier is the fall molt. This process begins in late August or early September, depending on the latitude. The new winter coat pushes out the summer coat in varying parts of the body until the entire hair coat has been replaced with winter coat. This hair is very short as it begins much like grass seed that just begins to sprout in a new lawn. The hair grows very rapidly and will reach about 1- 1 1/4" in 30 days. This short time is when to obtain hair which is ideal for Comparaduns, Caddis patterns, and Muddlers, just to name a few. In the northern states such as Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, the ideal hair for the patterns mentioned above is best obtained during the second and third week of October. This may vary slightly for deer found farther south. Because this is bow season it may be difficult to obtain any large number of hides, but for a single tier attempting to obtain one hide, the task shouldn't be impossible.

No two hides are the same

By mid to late November the hair length will have reached its maximum length which is 2 to 2 1/4", with some hair being slightly longer on a few deer. When the hair has reached its maximum length, it is well suited to spinning and stacking for use in bass bugs. Refer to the deer hair chart to identify the various parts of the hide which produce hair for specific tying purposes. Not two deer hides are exactly the same in color and texture. The quality of a particular animal's hair for tying purposes is determined by heredity, food, age, and sex. A quality diet of corn, beans, apples, acorns, and many other plants is reflected in a healthy animal's hide. The age of the deer is also important, as the average deer only survives one and one and one-half to two years. Hair from slightly older deer - three to five years - is usually superior in terms of the qualities sought for spinning and stacking. It is extremely difficult to obtain hides from deer of that age since only one-half of one percent of all whitetails live to be five years of age. If you have access to a processing facility or meat market that handles deer for the hunter you will have the opportunity to view or inspect a large number of hides and begin to see the differences between them.

This drawing shows where to find different hair types on the hide of a Whitetail deer harvested after the directions described above.



Northern woodland whitetail deer harvested during November-January
Martin Joergensen

Chart legends

1. Mask
- short, medium texture, marginal for caddis, Comparaduns.
2. Spinal cord area
- fine texture, fairly long. For wings.
3. Body
- medium length, usually coarse to medium texture. Good for spinning medium to small bass bugs, also useful for Madame X, hopper patterns and others where floatability is required.
4. Rump and belly
- long coarse hair ideal for spinning large bass bugs, mice etc. White belly hair excellent for dyeing.
5. Legs
- short, fine textured hair. Good for small Wulff patterns, small caddis
6. Bucktail
- Ideal for streamers, trolling flies, Lefty's Deceivers

Explanations:

- **Fine**
- Will not flare; excellent for wings and tails
- **Medium**
- Will flare to a limited degree, maximum 45 degrees
- **Coarse**
- Will flare to almost 90 degrees; used for clipped hair body flies like muddlers and bass bugs.

Type	Texture	Stiffness	Length (")	Length (cm)
Elk				
Bull	Medium		1-2½	2.5-7
Cow	Coarse		1½-2½	3-7.5
Yearling	Medium		1½-2½	3.5-7
Hock	Medium		¼	0.6

Mane	Fine	3-6	7.5-15
Rump	Coarse	2½-4	7-10

Deer

Body	Coarse	1½-2½	3.5-7
Neck	Medium Soft	¾-1¾	2-7.5
Texas whitetail	Fine	¾-1¾	2-7.5
Early season	Medium Stiff	½-¾	1-2
Yearling	Medium Soft	1½-2½	3.5-7

Antelope

Generally	Coarse Brittle	1-1½	2.5-4
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Caribou

Generally	Fine	¾-1½	0.6-4
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Moose

Body		½-2	1.5-5
Mane	Coarse	2½-8	7-20

FURTHER STUDY

There is so much more you can learn about obtaining and processing your own materials, but I have limited space in the newsletter to cover it all. I hope you have enjoyed and given this some thought and the next time you are out hunting or see a dead animal along the road you give it some thought. Below are some on-line sites where you can get more information:

- [Microwave Dyeing](#)
- [Processing Fly Tying Materials at Home \(uky.edu\)](#)
- [Processing Fly Tying Materials at Home](#)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Life and fishing are very similar, you never know what’s at the end of the line.”David Humphries

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

As we head towards autumn, it’s an ideal time of the year to swing some wets. Trout are feeding in the entirety of the water column with the cooling temps and the shorter days stimulate them to pack in calories while there is still plenty of available food sources.



Wingless wets, Flymphs or Soft hackles-these all have the same thing in common-pulsating long hackle and a buggy body without much if any weight. Fishing these with a down and across motion, fish often rise to these either at the initial landing, or follow them to the end of the drift, often with some aggressive takes.

From a tying perspective, these are typically sparse patterns that are a great beginner’s pattern. These are very popular in the UK and I fished many of them while I lived there, especially in still or slow water.

For this pattern, I’m using .2302 hook in #14 for the wider gap, but any 1x ling nymph hook will be fine. For the body, an Antron and squirrel blend to get that spikey buggy body. I’m using brown, I stick to the natural browns, black, olives and tan shades. The hackle is the magic of this pattern. I’m using Brahma speckled hen saddle. It comes in lots of colors, and I like the webbed fibers to provide the pulsing leg movement that encourages a strike.

Start by dressing the hook from the eye to the just in front of the bend. With this pattern, I elected to not include a tail, or ribbing. Dub the thread, building a noodle and wrapping it forward to the eye.



Notice I did a little double wrap to leave a bump where the soft hackle will eventually rest.



Using a dubbing brush, give the body a good fluffing up to make it nicely buggy. The fibers trap micro air bubbles, lending it a more “alive” appearance.



Prepare the hackle feather by stripping the fluff off the bottom of the stem and using hackle pliers, grasp the tip of the hackle, and stroke the fibers down.

This leaves a triangle shape at the tip to be used as the tie-in point.



Wrap the hackle, sweeping the fibers rearward with each wrap, and secure the hackle with some snug wraps



Take several wraps to form a head behind the eye. Before the whip finish touch a few drops of head cement to your



thread. This method places a small amount very precisely on the head without filling the eye or impeding the hackle fibers.

Whip finish and that’s all to finish the fly.



In addition to the Brahma hen, pheasant, quail, grouse partridge all make excellent hackles for wets.

As always, I’m honored to answer questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly tying and fishing. Don’t hesitate to contact me at Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart

BRTU BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

Board members needed for the fall election: In October, 3 of our board members will finish their terms. If you have enjoyed all that Blue Ridge offers you, then it is time for you to step up and join the board. If you are interested, just talk to a board member at our chapter meetings or contact us at our website www.blueridgetu.org.

We’d love to hear your input. If there is a topic you’d like addressed or if you have something to share in the newsletter, please contact us at BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com.

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