

Blue Ridge NC Trout Unlimited



May 2026 Newsletter

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This month we dedicate the newsletter to fly tying. I am not going to get into the basics of learning to tie flies. If you have not yet done that I recommend you start by attending a Wildlife Resources class or a chapter class.. Check out the coming events section of the newsletter.

If you can afford it, I recommend you buy a more advanced kit that includes a rotating vise. Sooner or later you will want to make that step as it makes tying a lot easier. This newsletter is dedicated to those of you who have begun tying flies, but want to improve your skills and speed.

And one last point, don't be taken in by those who say it is cheaper to tie your own flies. They are correct that the materials used for a fly are cheaper than the storebought fly, but to tie that \$4 fly you'll likely be buying a few hundred dollars in equipment and materials. If you use a hundred flies per year of the same fly you might save a little money, but for nearly every type of fly you'll be buying more materials.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At our April meeting, we welcomed guest speaker Jeff Slevin, a TU member from Pittsburgh, PA. Jeff began fly fishing in England in 2013, and his presentation opened with a look at his unique lifestyle—full-time RV living since 2023. He set an ambitious goal: to catch trout and summit the highest peak in all 50 states. So far, he has accomplished this in 39 states plus Canada—an impressive journey by any measure.

Jeff also shared how he researches new streams, as most of the waters he fishes are first-time visits. He wrapped up with an engaging discussion on fly selection. His go-to patterns include the Frenchie, Walt's Worm, and the UV Polar Jig Streamer. I can personally vouch for the Frenchie and Walt's Worm—especially Lance Egan's Frenchie and the Blowtorch Walt's Worm. If you don't already have these in your fly box, you should! Thank you, Jeff, for a great presentation.

The first phase of the temperature monitoring project at Stone Mountain has been completed. All sensors are now deployed and actively recording stream temperatures. Phase two will take place this fall, when we retrieve the data and submit it to the NCWRC. We will, of course, share the results with BRTU members.

Tree protectors have been delivered to the New River Conservancy, which will distribute them to the appropriate locations.

We also completed our Trout in the Classroom releases:

- April 14: 103 trout released from Davidson Community College, Davie High, and Forbush High
- April 15: 21 trout released from Reagan High School and UNC School of the Arts
- April 20: 129 trout released from East Davidson, North Forsyth, Oak Grove High Schools, and Salisbury Academy

Congratulations to all participating schools on a successful year and thank you to the BRTU volunteers who make this program possible. A special thanks to Rick Conner for his leadership as TIC coordinator.

Unfortunately, our spring Balsam trip was canceled by the National Forest Service due to cabin renovations. The good news is that we have rescheduled for October 23–26—be sure to mark your calendars.

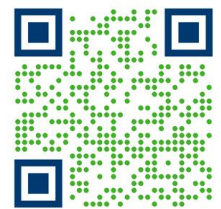
Our BRTU Banquet and Auction, scheduled for June 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., is coming together nicely. This is our primary fundraiser—the last one was held in September 2024—so your support is important.

An online auction will run from June 1 through June 10, with 35 items already collected and more on the way. The banquet itself will feature additional silent auction items, as well as a live auction for trips. Dinner will include barbecue chicken, beef brisket, and all the fixings.

We are also excited to welcome back guest speaker Patrick Weaver, who will present “Understanding Angles in Fly Fishing.” You won't want to miss it.

Tickets are now available via the QR code or on our website. We've kept the price at \$45 per person for many years. Please join us and support your BRTU chapter!

Fred Frank



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 BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com and let us know.

BRTU LOGO GEAR

Our new **BRTU logo apparel** is now available on our website and at chapter meetings. Items include:

- Gray and salmon long-sleeve hooded fly-fishing shirts — **\$40**
- BRTU hats — **\$25**
- Logo gaiters (tan or green/blue) — **\$15**

MAY MEETING

When: Tuesday, May 21st, 6 PM

Where: Little Richard's BBQ
109 S Stratford Rd, Winson-Salem

Who: Tom Jackson

What: A fly tying session with lessons we can all learn how to tie better.

Weekly Fly-Tying Classes every Wednesday at the South Fork Community Center (4401 Country Club Rd, Winston-Salem): 9 AM – 12 PM & 6 PM – 8 PM Instruction by Master Fly-Tyer Rusty Berrier. Come learn to tie your favorite patterns!

New River Cleanup; Green Valley to Big Hill; May 2 10:2:30 3896 Big Hill Road, Todd [Signup](#)

New River Cleanup; Big Hill to Todd Island, May 9 @ 10:00 am - 2:30 pm [Signup](#)

New River Cleanup: Todd Island to Green Meadows May 16 @ 10:00 am - 2:30 pm, [Signup](#)

New River Cleanup: Green Meadows to New River Bridge May 23 @ 10:00 am - 2:30 pm, [Signup](#)

New River Cleanup: New River Bridge to Fleetwood Falls June 6 @ 10:00 am - 2:30 pm, [Signup](#)

Maggie Valley Fly Fishing Show, May 22&23. We are assembling our team of fly tyers. Last year we had 52 tyers from four different states, and this year will be even bigger as we move into a more public area of the festival. If you are interested in demonstrating flies or helping teach, please RSVP to Bill Jewett, theflyfishingsanta24@gmail.com so we can plan the tying schedule.

Note: If your organization has an upcoming event and would like it in the newsletter, send it to HkyNCTU@gmail.org.

NCWRC FLY FISHING CLASSES

<u>5/1/2026 - Soft Plastic Rigging & Presentation- Marion</u>
<u>5/2/2026 - Family Fishing Workshop</u>
<u>5/8/2026 - On the Water Fly-fishing Experience- Jacob Fork</u>
<u>5/9/2026 - The Fly Angler's Next Steps: Trout Bugs & Fly Patterns Streamside - Lenoir</u>
<u>5/13/2026 - Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual</u>
<u>5/15/2026 - On the Water Fly-fishing Experience - Catawba Greenway</u>

5/16/2026 - Family Fishing Workshop - Marion

5/30/2026 - Basic Fly-casting Workshop - Marion

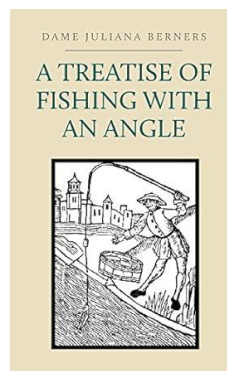
QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"No matter it's size, the fish you will remember the rest of your life is the one you caught on a fly you tied." Chick Woodward

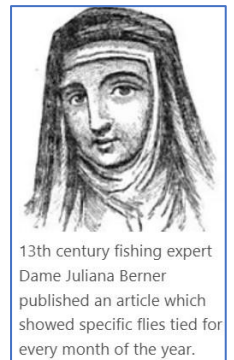
2026 DELAYED HARVEST STOCKING WEEKS

COUNTY	STREAM	WEEK OF							
		3/2-3/6	3/9-3/13	3/30-4/3	4/6-4/10	4/27-5/1	5/4-5/8	5/11-5/15	
Ashe	Helton Creek	X						X	
	Trout Lake	X						X	
	Big Horse Creek	X							X
	South Fork New River	X							X
Burke	Jacobs Fork	X						X	
Caldwell	Wilson Creek	X						X	
Clay	Fires Creek	X						X	
Graham	Big Snowbird				X			X	
Haywood	West Fork Pigeon River	X				X			
Henderson	North Fork Mills River	X				X			
Jackson	Tuckasegee River	X						X	
Macon	Nantahala	X						X	
Madison	Big Laurel Creek			X				X	
	Shelton Laurel Creek			X				X	
	Spring Creek				X			X	
McDowell	Curtis Creek		X						X
	Mill Creek		X						X
	Catawba River		X						X
Mitchell	Cane Creek		X						X
	North Toe River	X						X	
Polk	Green River				X			X	
Surry	Ararat River	X							X
	Mitchell River	X						X	
Swain	Tuckasegee River			X				X	
Transylvania	East Fork French Broad River	X				X			
	Little River			X				X	
Watauga	Watauga River	X						X	
	Lake Coffey	X						X	
Wilkes	East Prong Roaring River	X				X			
	Stone Mountain Creek	X				X			
	Reddies River	X				X			
	Elk Creek	X				X			
Yancey	Cane River		X						X

Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle



The *Treatise on Fishing*, which was added to the 1496 edition printed by Wynkyn de Worde, is the earliest known English language work on fly fishing. More than 150 years later it was an influence



on Izaak Walton, another English writer, when he wrote *The Compleat Angler*.^{[6][3]}

If you would like to read her book it is free on-line at [A Treatyse of Fysshynge Wyth an Angle; by Dame Juliana Berners; a Project Gutenberg ebook.](#)

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

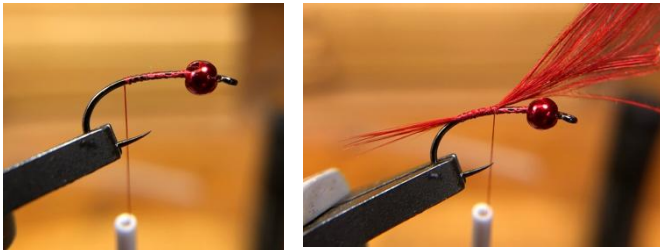
In spite of the low water this spring, the bite has been pretty decent. I've been clocking some hours last month and have a pattern that I wanted to share nymph that's been a really good producer pretty much every here I used it. While it's a pretty basic fly, it's got a couple things- goose biot and hackle collars that can be tricky- so I'll include some tips to make those easier.



The pattern was one I put together in just playing around with materials one evening. It's a bit of a play on my PT soft hackle, and a prince, and the fish seemed to approve- so I'll have to come up with a name. Anyhow, let's spin this one up, get a few in your box and get them wet.

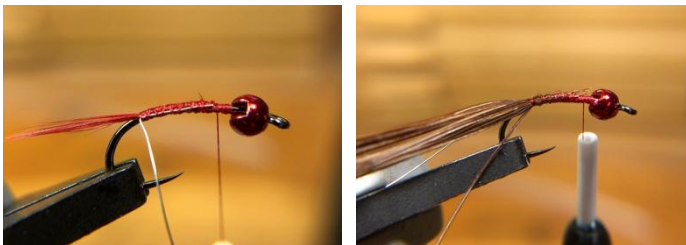
This is a Firehole713 nymph hook, but I also found them as effective on a jig hook if you want a euro version. A 3.3 red metallic bead, red CDL for the tail, silver rib, pheasant tail fibers for the body, white goose biot pair for the wing and a few turns of dry fly furnace hackle for the collar.

For each step, wax your thread with a 721 style wax.



It will make everything much easier to have a little tack to keep things in alignment.

Dress the hook to the bend, and tie in the tail fibers about the length of the hook shank.



Tie in the rib and some PT fibers. Don't feel like you need more than 5 or 6. A lot of tiers try and wrap a big clump and it is not only hard to do, but often makes the body uneven. Wrap those using touching turns from the bend to the bead and secure them in with a few wraps.



Trim out the butt ends and throw a couple wraps on the secure them. Counter-wrap the wire evenly to the bead and secure the rib in.



Instead of trying to manage slippery biots and trim the butts out-hoping they will hold, here's a trick that will make your prince tying much easier. Align the biots with the tips over the bead with the cup side up. Lay them, tip to bead and calculate the length based on the spot that falls at the bend. Move that spot to be your tie in point. With a waxed thread base, and waxed thread wrap the biots will be really secure. Take a couple snug wraps to set them, trim the butts. Fold the tips back, take a few wraps and you will have the most secure biots ever.



Strip about ¼ inch of fibers off the hackle and tie it in behind the bead with some snug waxed wraps.

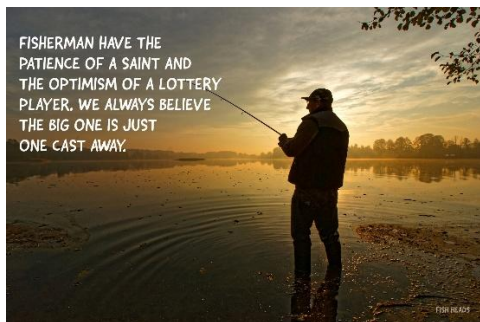
Take 3 wraps with the hackle, stroking the fibers back with each wrap, and secure in with a few snug wraps.



Trim out the hackle tip and a 5 turn whip finish gets you a ready to fish fly. Prince nymphs always seem to be big producers in the early spring, so don't shy away because biots are hard. Use this same fold over method for wings, tails or legs using biots and you will tie a more durable and less frustrating fly.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com with questions or to just talk tying. Please follow along on Instagram check out some current ties @ Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart



FISHERMAN HAVE THE PATIENCE OF A SAINT AND THE OPTIMISM OF A LOTTERY PLAYER. WE ALWAYS BELIEVE THE BIG ONE IS JUST ONE CAST AWAY.

FOR HEAD



Chick Woodward

THE PERFECT FLY TYING DESK

by Ben Kepka



FLY TYING DESK

- **Written By: Ben Kepka**

- **Last Updated: September 21, 2024**

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Fly tying can be almost as rewarding as fly fishing. There's nothing quite like knowing that you made a fly with your hands – and we all need something to do when the fly fishing season is over!

If you're anything like us, you probably spend hours away tying flies. You've got the supplies to show for it, too! That's why a fly-tying desk is an essential piece of furniture for all fly-tying and fly-fishing enthusiasts.

If you're eager to find your fly-tying bench set up, this guide's for you. We'll cover all the information on what makes the perfect fly-tying desk. What must you look for when shopping for a fly-tying desk?

Plus, we'll share some of our favorite examples of fly-tying desks to give you some inspiration for your own!

What Makes the Perfect Fly Tying Desk?

There are a few specific things that an excellent fly-tying desk will offer. Here's all our information on the most important factors of a fly-tying bench.

Generic Desk Vs. Fly Tying Desk

You might be thinking that you could save some money by buying a generic desk or even picking one up secondhand. It's true that you will save a lot of money if you go down this route.

If you want to buy a brand new fly-tying desk, you're looking at prices of up to and beyond \$1000.

However, a standard desk doesn't offer the specific features required of a fly-tying desk. If you take your fly-tying seriously enough to warrant your fly-tying station, you may end up frustrated by a regular desk. It won't offer the specialized features you need for frequent fly tying. For one thing, there's no suitable storage for all your supplies.

A Large Tying Surface

How good a desk is will depend mainly on the surface available for tying your flies. It's true that you'll need a significant amount of space to work on. You might want to mount a vise, and you'll need to have the [best fly-tying light](#) to shine some extra light up close on whatever you're working on. Some desks may even open out to make even more space.

Lots of Storage

An excellent fly-tying desk will offer ample [fly fishing gear storage](#) for all your materials. You need somewhere to store all your hooks, hackles, fur, beads, and other items that are essential for your next fly-tying session.

Easy Access to Fly Tying Materials

Not only do you need somewhere to store all your materials, but you want them to be in easy reach. Even better if you can quickly see what's in each drawer! Think carefully about how the drawers or storage compartments will open up without getting in the way of your work.

Size of the Desk

Do you have space for a full-sized desk, or do you want something a bit smaller? Think about how much space you have for your new desk before you start shopping!

Price

Fly-tying desks can range from several hundred dollars up to several thousand dollars. Fly-tying desks cost a lot because most are handmade from solid wood by talented carpenters. It's a very specialized product that requires hours upon hours of meticulous craftsmanship. Don't forget to factor in the cost of shipping, too.

If that's way out of your budget, you could consider DIY-ing your fly-tying bench or modifying a regular desk instead.

Materials



The best fly-tying desks will last for generations. For a desk that is built to last, look for one made from sturdy solid oak, maple, or cherry wood.

Hey, I'm Ben, a fly fisherman for over 20 years and also an aspiring blogger. I've been into fly fishing since my graduation from spin fishing when I was 12 years old. I started [flyfisherpro.com](#) to help introduce as many people into this amazing sport. Tight lines everyone! You can read more on our [about page](#) here

MY OPINION ON THE BEST DESK



Forgive me for bragging, but after over 55 years of fly tying, I believe my desk comes to as close to perfect as you can buy. About ten years ago I went onto Craigs list and discovered a 54" roll top desk and for only \$500. This desk has a large number of drawers at the top and right lower and on the left lower two roll out shelves that allow you to put large boxes of items.

The opening in the center allowed me to put in a materials cabinet that I'd used in the past.

I admit as you can see in the photo that even with this desk I have a lot of clutter, but a few years ago I added salt water flies including bonefish, tarpon, and permit to the flies I tie. That caused some of the overflow, but some of that is also the materials I have out for the current flies that I am tying.

You'll notice I have two lamps. I started originally with the folding desk lamp. It allows you to bring the light over the fly you are tying and folds out of the way when it comes time to bring down the roll top to close the desk. (*Another plus for this desk as we have cats that would just love to get at all those feathers and fur.*) Perhaps it's a bit due to my age, but I have found that two lights prevents shadows on parts of the fly. There are new fluorescent desk lamps available now that are wide so they could be used instead of two lamps.

The last nice feature is the roll out tray below the tying desk. If you've tied many flies you'll know that hooks and beads often wind up on the floor. To at least some degree this tray helps catch those things I drop. It's also a handy place to set some of the tying tools like scissors while you tie.

I checked on Amazon and you can get a similar new desk for about \$2000, but it is really worth checking out Craigs List or perhaps eBay before you buy one.



FLY TYING HACKS TO TRY TODAY

A look at some shortcuts, efficiencies and fly tying hacks that actually work.

There comes a time in every fly tyer's life—usually when you're tying the eighth Pheasant Tail of the night and the dog's already gone to bed—when you start looking for a better way.

Not a *reinvention of the wheel*, just a small trick that makes tying a little easier without making the flies, well, worse.

That's what we're talking about here: fly tying hacks that actually work.

Fly tying is one of those hobbies (lifestyles!) that punishes carelessness and rewards patience. But let's be honest—most of us aren't tying museum pieces. We're tying flies to get eaten (and lost in trees and fouled on rocks and weeds). And for that kind of work, a few hacks can go a long way.

Here are some of the best fly tying hacks I've picked up over the years—tested, field-approved, and guaranteed to keep your sanity mostly intact.

Fly Tying Hacks To Up Your Game

1. Batch Your Prep

*Oldest hack in the book but it took me a surprisingly long time to *actually* do it. If you're tying a dozen of the same fly, don't reinvent the wheel each time. Pre-cut your tails, strip your hackle, measure your wings. Get everything set out like a short-order cook at the grill. This isn't just about efficiency—it's about rhythm.

You'll tie faster, cleaner, and probably waste less marabou in the process.

2. One Bobbin, One Thread—Unless You Absolutely Can't

Most of the time, the fish couldn't care less whether your Olive Hares Ear has black thread or olive thread. So unless you're going for a visible thread head or something extra specific, stick with one thread color (like black or tan) for an entire session.



Why You Need More Than One Bobbin
[Read more](#)

Fly Tying Bobbins 101: Everything You Need to Know [Read more](#)

3. Clean Up Bulky Heads with Mono and Flame

If you're spinning deer hair or building bulky streamer heads, keep a short loop of 6X mono on the bench. Once you've trimmed everything down, loop it over the head and give it a quick pass with a lighter. It cleans up flyaways better than scissors and shapes the head without mangling proportions.

4. Half-Hitch Like You Mean It

Here's a (semi) controversial one: you don't *always* need a whip finish. If you know how to make a solid thread base and follow it with a good few half-hitches under the eye (and a dab of head cement), it'll hold just fine.

This fly tying hack is especially useful for quick sessions or when you're tying in bulk and just want to keep the wheels turning.

5. Pre-Weight Your Hooks

If you're tying a run of nymphs or streamers that all require the same wire wraps, do it assembly-line style. Wrap a batch of hooks with lead or lead-free wire in advance and stash them in a cup. You'll fly through the rest of your tying and wonder why you didn't do it sooner.

6. Master One Way of Doing a Thing, and Stick With It

There are at least five ways to tie in a biot body, and a dozen ways to post a parachute. Learn the one that works best for *you* and don't worry about mastering them all.

One of the simplest but most effective fly tying hacks is eliminating decisions. Tying becomes less about figuring it out and more about flowing through it.

7. Keep a “Misfit Bag” for Flies That Deserve a Second Chance

Every tyer has them—flies that looked good in your head but didn't quite pan out in real life. Instead of trashing them, toss them in a labeled freezer bag. On a quiet night, you can salvage the materials or turn a “bad” fly into something useful with a tweak here or there.

Bonus: some of those weird ones turn out to be the patterns fish love most.

Why Fly Tying Hacks Matter

These aren't gimmicks. These are the kinds of fly tying hacks that help you spend less time fussing and more time fishing. They're about getting to the good part faster—without sacrificing quality where it counts.

Because at the end of the day, it's not the prettiest fly that gets eaten—it's the one that lands right, drifts true, and shows up when it needs to. If a couple of well-earned hacks help you get there faster? All the better.

Editor's note: This is a great time of year to get out with a fly and fish for bluegill on beds. A foam popper is a good choice.

BETTER TECHNIQUES FOR TYING FLIES WITH FOAM



Photo by Bob Reece

By Bob Reece

Mid summer kicks off the season of foam for most of the trout fisheries that I frequent.

Foam patterns are a blast to fish. However, the process of tying with this buoyant material can produce frustration at the vise.

If I had to rank my techniques for working with foam, “pinch and cinch” would be at the top of my list. Foam can have a mind of its own. Attaching this springy material to the

hook when and where a tier wants can be challenging. One key step to this is compressing the foam with your thumb and index finger when you take thread wraps around the material. This process results in tight wraps that hold the foam in its intended location. It also lowers the stress on the thread. This reduces the risk of breaking the thread or cutting the foam if a heavy gauge thread is being used.



When creating foam flies, I think of the process as sculpting. Foam's pliable nature allows the tier to twist, stretch and bend it into the desired shape and position. By applying slight tension to the foam a thinner profile is created. A reduction in that tension allows the foam to return to its original dimensions.

The excess use of glue should never take the place of proficient tying techniques. Yet, when tying with foam super glue is an essential element of long lived patterns. Foam is a smooth and slippery material. This property causes it to rotate and slide on the hook shank without the presence of glue. As a result of this, I always apply a thin layer of Zap-A-Gap between the applied foam and the shank of the hook. This helps to anchor the pattern and ease subsequent tying steps.

The season of foam is finally upon us! As you move forward in your growth as a tier, venture into the world of foam. When worked with properly, this versatile material can be used to create some of the most enjoyable fly patterns that you'll ever fish.

[Working With Foam](#)

Bob Reece

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PURPLE RAIN AND A COCAINE BONE



Last year on our bonefish trip to Exuma, the guide provided me with six flies that he thought were great for catching. I brought them home and tied up about 150 of them during the year with different sizes and different bead eyes. Five of the six I had tied in the past and knew the materials for them. The sixth fly was a last minute one he threw into the pack. That one had a brown furry body. I tried several materials that didn't match. I ordered a VeeVus small body fuzz BF8 that was listed as copper brown and while the base color may be copper brown it has a purple fuzz. I didn't notice it that much under my tying lamp, but in outdoor sunlight it was quite purple.

When we got out to the flats and I handed the guide the box of flies I had tied and you could have heard the mocking and laughter a mile away when they spotted the purple fly. I had

to admit that it was a very strange looking fly. The guide pulled out one of the other flies that he really liked and the first day we used that one. The second day we continued with the fly from the day before for a while and then when it came time for me to head up to the bow, with a few chuckles they put on my purple fly. It did not take long before a bonefish showed up. I did a perfect cast and in the blink of an eye it grabbed the fly and took off like a shot, taking me out well over 100' and then when I got him back near the boat he took me to the backing three more times before we landed him.

The third day we started out again with the guide's favorite from the first day. After about an hour of rejections he decided to try the purple fly again. In a short time another bone showed up and took the purple fly. The fish have totally vindicated me for the error I had made. Clearly bonefish see purple in a very different way than humans.

So perhaps you're wondering about the title including Cocaine Bones. That first fish that I caught on the purple fly that took me into my backing four times was less than two pounds. Apparently, the cocaine boats that have been sunk in past months were enough that they have found it when they have tested bonefish. We are certain that for this small fish to have fought so hard he must be on a cocaine high.

The moral of the story is that you should never mock a fly that doesn't match the hatch. I've found that to be true many times over the years. Sometimes a fish is going to try out something different that it has never seen before. Oh, and also get down to the flats for bonefish before all that cocaine wears off...and be careful swimming down there as it is reported that the sharks have also tested positive.



RAIN-X AS A PRE-TREATMENT by Domenick Swentosky



I apply Rain-X to all dry flies that leave my vise, if they don't have CDC. I do the same with my yarn indicators. A simple drop of Rain-X dries completely in a few hours, leaving behind an unseen film of silicone that goes a long way to waterproofing materials for the river. I'm surprised more anglers don't know about this. And no, Rain-X is not toxic after it dries.

A Very Effective Pre-Treatment

Decades ago, I learned about this novel use for Rain-X from a fly fishing message board. At the time, a product called

Watershed was gaining popularity, but the mark-up was enough to attract the DIY nature of common anglers. ([Watershed is still available](#) and now distributed by Hareline.)

I immediately co-opted the small, yellow Rain-X bottle from my garage. It had a few ounces of the liquid left, and it spent the next five years on my tying desk before I finally needed a new one.

The results were excellent. Rain-X waterproofed my flies to the point where I often went without an onstream floatant. When a fly did wet out, it was easily renewed by squeezing out excess water with a cloth.

The pre-treatment lasted for a very long time, not just for a few hours, but for days of use. Once I applied the Rain-X to a fly, I never went back and did it again, and I considered the application nearly permanent.

These days, Rain-X remains part of my process. And as I watch anglers try every new floatant that hits the shelves, I simply don't find a need to move away from what works for me: Rain-X at the tying desk and [Aquel](#) on the water. I also use desiccant powder for CDC and in times when I might want a dry fly to ride extra high. The only other floatant I carry is Payette Paste, which I like for greasing a sighter and occasionally dressing a yarn indy.

The Process

I've mentioned the Rain-X trick many times in Troutbitten podcasts and videos. And every time the question comes.

How do you use it?

Don't make this complicated.

A single drop of Rain-X easily coats a few flies. You don't need to soak them for any length of time, and you don't need to dunk the flies completely. Just drip a touch of Rain-X on the flies (or on a yarn indicator) and work it in with your fingers. That last step is important, because you can feel all the fibers gaining the liquid and wetting out in your fingertips. Work it in for a few seconds, and move on. Let the Rain-X dry overnight, or at least for a few hours, until it's fully dry.



Environmentally Sound?

When I mention Rain-X used this way, I'm occasionally reprimanded for using a product that is not environmentally safe.

But that is a misunderstanding of the process.

I use Rain-X as a pre-treatment, not as an onstream solution. Liquid Rain-X never makes it anywhere near the river.

Why does this matter?

Liquid Rain-X is indeed toxic, as listed by its own data sheet. It's also highly flammable as a liquid and a vapor. So don't lick your fingers after working it into the hackle of your Parachute Adams. And don't play with fire around liquid Rain-X, kids.

However, when Rain-X dries, the carrier solvents of ethanol, isopropanol, and acetone evaporate away, leaving a thin film of silicone that cleverly waterproofs the materials of your fly.

I've been asked about this so often that I looked into it deeply. If you'd like to do the same, here are resources:

[Here's the Safety Data Sheet for Original Rain-X](#)

The dried Rain-X film is known as a Polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS), and carries no toxicity. When a PDMS eventually breaks down, it does so into the naturally occurring substances of a river, like silica, water and carbon dioxide.

[More on that in the research document HERE.](#)

So, there ya go. Use Rain-X as a pre-treatment and love your life.

Fish hard, friends.

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5 REASONS WHY YOU NEED A ROTARY VISE FOR FLY TYING

The Team @ J. Stockard



There's a moment in every fly tyer's life when they look at their vise, sigh, and think, there's got to be a better way. That's usually when they discover the beauty of a true rotary vise—not just a vise 'that spins' but one that rotates the hook on its axis, making fly tying easier, smoother, and (dare

we say) more enjoyable.

And if you're going to take the step up to a rotary vise, you might as well go with the company that started it all. Renzetti was the first to bring the true rotary vise to market, revolutionizing the way people tie flies. Today, the [Renzetti rotary vises](#) we stock—like the Presentation Series, Traveler Series, and Saltwater Traveler—continue to set the standard.

So if you're still tying on an old clamp vise that requires a thousand hand contortions, here are five reasons why it's time to upgrade.

How A Rotary Vise Will Change Your Fly Tying

1. You Can See What You're Doing

A rotary vise lets you rotate the hook 360 degrees, which means you can invert it for tying 'upside down,' as well as inspect every angle of your fly without unhooking it, flipping it over, or standing on your head. Ever wrapped a hackle feather perfectly on one side, only to turn the fly over and realize it looks like a tangled mess on the other? That doesn't happen when you can spin the hook and check your work as you go. Tying flies such as Clouser Minnows are super tricky when not using a rotary vise.

2. It Speeds Up the Process (Without Sacrificing Quality)

Look, we all know fly tying isn't exactly a race. But that doesn't mean you want to spend twice as long on a fly because your tools are slowing you down. With a true rotary vise, you can:

- Wrap hackle, dubbing, and ribbing in smooth, even rotations without stopping.
- Keep thread tension consistent, so you're not constantly re-tightening.
- Avoid the constant hand gymnastics of manually inverting a hook to tie on the bottom (and top) such as with a Clouser or Charlie.

3. Better Control Over Materials

Ever tried to wrap a ribbing wire by hand, only to have it twist, kink, or slip out of place? A rotary vise eliminates that frustration. Instead of trying to maneuver your hand around a fixed hook, just rotate the vise and let the material lay down naturally. This is especially useful for:

- Parachute hackles (no more uneven wraps!).
- Dubbing loops (keep everything tight and secure).
- Saltwater patterns (because big hooks demand big control).

If you're tying saltwater flies, the [Saltwater Traveler](#) is built to handle big hooks and tough materials—all while giving you the benefits of true rotary tying.

4. It's Easier on Your Hands

Fly tying is supposed to be enjoyable, but when you're constantly adjusting your grip, straining to reach tricky angles, or using clunky tools, it can feel more like a workout than a hobby. A rotary vise keeps your hands relaxed and movements natural, making it easier to tie for hours without cramping up.

5. It Just Makes Fly Tying More Fun

Let's be honest—we tie flies for a variety of reasons (from art to therapy to targeting very specific species and more) but also because we enjoy it. And there's something deeply satisfying about working with a piece of engineering that just 'feels' right. When your vise moves the way it's supposed to, materials behave the way they should, and your flies come out looking better than ever, tying becomes less of a chore and more of a joy.

And that's what it's all about, right?

THE YALLERHAMMER AN APPALACHIAN CLASSIC

Author [Phil Monahan](#) Excerpted from the new book [The Last Wild Road](#), by [T. Edward Nickens](#).



Appalachian browns like the Yallerhammer as well.

The old man called the fly the “skull crusher” because the brook trout would come after it so hard and fast that they’d bash their heads on boulders. He tied them with one arm, in the cool of the little store in the shadow of Grandfather Mountain, not far from the creek where he’d first heard of the fly when he was a kid, some 75 years earlier.

I thought I knew all about the Yallerhammer, arguably the most traditional of the old Southern Appalachian fly patterns, but this was news to me. The region has birthed a number of homegrown fly patterns—among them the Thunderhead, Jim Charley, Sheep Fly, and Tellico Nymph, the region’s true breakout to fame and widespread use. But the Yallerhammer is the fly that seems to hold the fancy of local anglers. Its history is as shrouded in mystery and lore as these old North Carolina mountains are in their famed blue mist. Some say the pattern was devised by the Cherokee. Others figure Scotch-Irish pioneers dreamed up the bug. It was originally tied from the split wing feather of a yellow-shafted flicker—what the old-timers called a “yellowhammer,” a large woodpecker once common across these mountains—but these days, of course, it’s illegal to shoot a songbird such as a flicker. Most of the flies are tied with dyed mourning dove feathers. You hardly ever see anyone fish it. The Yallerhammer is an attractor pattern, sort of a Bob Evans–buffet kind of offering, which tends to offend the purest of fly anglers. And the Yallerhammer was traditionally fished as a wet fly, although those have fallen out of favor these days.



Small-stream trout seem extraordinarily drawn to the bright Yallerhammer’s origin is not clear, but the fly clearly work

Non of this mattered to me. I was hunting for Yallerhammers because of their historic and cultural significance. If they caused trout to bang their heads on the way to the hook, all the better. I bought the last four the old man had in stock, size 14s. “I’m fixing to tie some 10s when I get around to it,” he said, apologetically. But I couldn’t wait, because I was fixing to turn off the hard road and onto the Forest Service gravel, and climb high enough into the Southern Appalachians to leave behind cell service and stocked fish alike. Four Yallerhammers seemed like plenty to gamble the day on.

The last time I counted, there were 1.6 billion trout fly patterns, with more on the way, options made increasingly numerous through an ever-evolving array of new synthetic fly materials—stuff like holographic chenille, UV polar flash, translucent midge tubing, and photo-imprinted foam.

I’d hardly be called a traditionalist, with my graphite rod and sling pack, and I’m a sucker for sexy articulated streamers. Who wouldn’t want a Sex Dungeon in the fly box? But when it comes to tiny brook trout in ancient brookie water, there’s something to be said for dressing up in your Sunday best, fly-wise. Beloved though they are, rainbow and brown trout are interlopers in these parts, the rainbow hailing from western America, and the brown from the waters of Europe. Only the lovely little brook trout, whose name *Salvelinus fontinalis* means “dweller of springs,” can boast of being a true Southerner, hanging on in the highest headwater creeks since the last glaciers turned tail in retreat from Dixie heat. Drive far enough into these mountains and hike high enough into these headwater creeks, and chunking some gaudy postmodern polar-ice chenille fly at a fish like a wild Southern Appalachian brook trout seems a little off, like wearing Versace ankle boots to a rodeo.

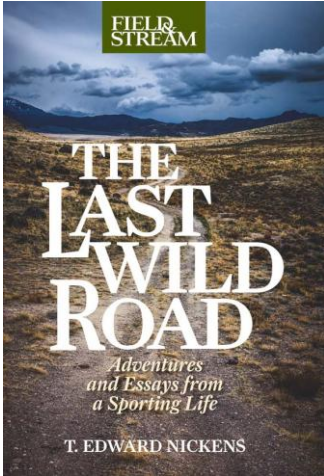


With the classics in my chest pocket, I drove past the stocked section of the creek and past the delayed-harvest waters, parked at a sign that designated the stream as catch-and-release/artificial lures only, and started hiking. Up and farther up, until the trail petered out and the rhododendrons were too thick to crawl under. Until it was time to fish.

By then, the creek had narrowed to a meager shimmer in the boulders. It’s hard to imagine a trout even living there, but this is where these Southern Appalachian brookies have to stay, hunkered down against the browns and rainbows that will out-compete them for food and the warmer waters in lower, less protected crannies. There’s no room for a real cast, but I’ve never been an old-school dabbler, dipping flies into tiny pocket water like a mayfly laying eggs. So I moved through the crazy-tight cover without concern of scattering fish,

threading the rod through the rhodos, holding my hat to my head, until the creek straightened out just enough.

I roll-cast a Yallerhammer into the foamiest part of the water and took in the slack line. The heavily palmered fly “sort of spins and twirls in the water,” the old man told me earlier, “and that drives the trout nuts.” I tried to imagine the fly doing just that, tumbling in the washing machine of the pour-over, then drifting in the calmer water, like something dazed and confused but still alive. And edible.



To learn more about the book and the author, visit tedwardnickens.com.

The fiberglass 4-weight bent deep, and the tip jerked like a dowitcher pointing fish. The little bugger ran straight at me, and I glimpsed a small slip back to the plunge pool. I took a half step forward, protecting the light tippet, then coaxed the brawler to hand.

The yellow fly was nearly the size of the brook trout’s head. The fish struggled in my palm with violent wiggles, leaping from my loose fingers twice before I could get the forceps on the hook and back it out. Forget all that stuff about swishing fresh water through the gills and babying a fish until it gathers back its strength. This little pig had gumption and attitude to spare. It burst back into the deep water, trailing orange sparks like a bottle rocket. If it could have flipped me a pectoral-fin bird, I’m sure it would have. Everything else was in miniature—the water, the rod, the fly, the cast—except for the outsize heart of that 12,000-year-old beast, its life a struggle, its future a stacked deck, but its fight and tenacious lust for life no mystery at all.

T. Edward Nickens, columnist and editor-at-large for Field & Stream, is a New York Times best-selling author and award-winning journalist who has written about hunting, fishing, and their modern expression across North America for more than 30 years. He also serves as a contributing editor for Garden & Gun, Ducks Unlimited, and Audubon, and is author of Field & Stream’s highly successful Total Outdoorsman Manual series. He lives and writes in Raleigh and Morehead City, North Carolina. Follow him on Instagram: @enickens.

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