

Fly of the month

Black and Peacock Spider



Hook :- Wet fly 16-10, such as Kamasan B170 or B175

Thread :- Black 6/0

Body :- Peacock herl

Hackle :- Black hen

Rib :- Fine silver or gold wire (optional)

The Black and Peacock Spider has been around in one form or another since Isaac Walton's time. The most common variant used these days is similar to the one pictured above and was devised by Tom Ivens in the 1960s for use in the English reservoirs and other stillwaters. There was a boom in UK stillwater trout fishing in the 60s as water authorities began stocking their storages and charging to fish them as a bit of a revenue raiser.

The Black and Peacock must be one of the most simple flies to tie with just the two materials (if you don't count the thread and optional rib). Some say it represents a beetle or a snail, or maybe even a caddis fly or spider, although there aren't many spiders swimming around under water. But whatever the trout take it to be they certainly do take it, which accounts for its continuing popularity amongst stillwater anglers around the world. It is usually fished just below the surface with a very slow retrieve although it can be fished at any depth. A good fly for searching shallow, weedy water.

Start by laying your foundation thread from eye of hook to a point just above the barb. If you are going to rib the fly tie in the rib at this point and then attach a couple of strands of peacock herl. Take your thread forward to just behind the eye of the hook, twist the strands of peacock herl together, wind them forward to form the body and secure them with two or three turns of thread. If you are ribbing the fly wind that forward over the body and secure it. Next attach a black hen feather with barb lengths of about 1½ times the hook gape, wind on two or three turns and tie it off, using the tying thread to slope the hackle towards the rear. All that remains is to build up a small head and varnish it.



There aren't many variations to the basic pattern. You can add a red or green tag, or make a beadhead version if you wish to fish deep or flowing water. There is also a chunkier tie using the same materials that some like to use when chasing snail feeders. But sticking to the KISS principle is probably best if you want to use the fly for the purpose originally intended.



A.T.

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