

Peck's Dun By Charles Peck

This pattern was developed by me in the 1960's & was acknowledged as a first successful imitation of the Australian mayflies by David Scholes .



Materials

Thread :- brown

Hooks :- Tasmania, 12,13,14. New Zealand, 14,16, even as small as 18 as their duns are much smaller where I have fished in Southland.

I now use Gamakatsu S10 in black finish when I can get them or Tiemco .I have tried Hanak barbless but the ones I tried were of heavy wire and do not float well. There may be lighter wire hooks available but I have not searched for them as the Gamakatsu are so reliable. Some Tiemco hooks have been a bit soft so I stick to what I trust.

Hackles and tail :- Dark chocolate brown cock for tail and very small body hackle. Main hackle is one dark brown and one grey barred rock (grizzle) cock hackle tied in back-to-back, dull sides together.

Wing :- Dark oak colour turkey secondary wing feather ,

Method :- Wind thread from eye to top of hook bend, then tie in three or four fibres as a tail about 2/3 length of hook, then continue the thread to about the middle of the hook. Tie in a very small (body) hackle and pass thread back to bend of hook, wind three or four turns of the body hackle back, widely spaced, towards tail, then pass thread back up through this body hackle to hold it in place. Then take thread forward to about 2/3 the hook length for the wing.

Prepare the wing by selecting a piece of dark oak turkey secondary wing feather, about an inch long by 3/8 inch wide (for size 12 hook, smaller as appropriate for other sizes). Fold it in half, then neatly sit it along top of hook, edges together on the hook and pinched between thumb and forefinger. It should overhang the tail end of the hook and be trimmed only after fixing and adding the hackles. It is fixed down by two turns on top, then one turn behind to lift and cock the wing at about 60 degrees. The thread is then taken forward to tie in the hackles, (allowing space for the head and tie off behind the eye).

The main hackles, short fibre cock, one brown, one grey are placed dull sides together in front of the wing, tied in with two turns of thread, then thread returned behind the wing in front of the small body hackle. Two turns of hackle are wound in front of wing, one turn behind, then thread passed forward through hackle, head formed and tied off. Waste hackle clipped off. The hackles should be shorter than the wing which should dominate the fly. I often lightly clip the bottom of the main hackle to help the fly stay upright in a crosswind.

The wing can now be shaped and clipped to resemble the natural dun. I also horizontally clip the main hackle under the hook at the same gape of the hook. This allows the fly to sit neatly upright on the water and not roll over. The important things with dun patterns are; high float on water, sparse hackle and prominent wing.

When the fish are taking duns their noses generally are seen as they close over the naturals or their excited head and tail rises when feeding hard. All too often at the start of a hatch we see the occasional dorsal fin or hear quiet sippy rises among patches of floating duns. That is the time to use an emerger pattern or a greased or sunk nymph or maybe a "duckfly" wet slowly twitched .

Over the years I have learned that there are several different species of mayfly in the highland lakes, dominantly the large (black) Highland Spinner with a dark grey dun, the Penstock Brown with a smaller dark brown dun and the Red Spinner, also a grey/brown dun. There seems to be an increase in the red spinner population at LPL in recent years and the caddis numbers in there last season were amazing. I have seen a few other mayfly types occasionally, a small orange one at Arthurs lake and a few cream coloured ones at LPL - maybe albino ?

There is a small grey dun (Baetis) which first appears in late October in some years on LPL and is usually the last to leave, and the tiny black bodied clear winged caenis (aka as smut) which can be very prolific on Penstock and Four Springs from November; also sometimes on LPL in February/March

On two occasions in the last season I experienced fish feeding selectively on large numbers of red spinner duns in one part of the lake and highland spinner duns in another, or just picking one species and ignoring the other when aggregations of both occurred. A frustrating time. I was categorically told my duns were useless by one friend who fished near the western shore where lots of red spinner duns had emerged in a clump. Another friend had boated eight fish on a duckfly nearby to him and I had four fish and botched a couple using my normal dun near the island.

I also tie an "economy" version of my dun which is a bit easier to tie and seems to work okay in early dun season or in heavy rough weather- a cross between a possum " emerger" and the older tie above which I still prefer in bright summer.

Simply tie a grey possum fur body instead of the small body hackle then add the wing and normal main hackle. Also, if you cannot get dark oak turkey secondary wing feathers try the secondary wing feathers of the crow, often lying around lake shores or road kill. The secondary feathers are wider, have rounded shape and seem more grey than black. They are durable and much cheaper as well.

Charles Peck

~~~~~