

## Fly of the Month

### The Pheasant Tail Nymph

So far thirteen members have chosen the six flies they would pick if they were the only ones they could use for a whole season in Tasmania and the pheasant tail nymph is the second most popular choice so it's about time it featured as fly of the month.

Frank Sawyer was the river keeper on what was known as the Officer's Water on the Hampshire Avon and is credited with the original version which he devised over a period of time in the 1930s and 40s. Simplicity is the keynote and Sawyer used only two materials, fine copper wire and fibres from a cock pheasant centre tail feather....no tying thread. He had studied mayflies and their nymphs and noticed that the ascending nymphs folded their legs flat against the body so he didn't include legs in the pattern. He had also noted that the nymphs had a coppery sheen so he let plenty of the copper wire show through when dressing the fly.

Over the years modern fly tyers have modified the design in various ways, the most popular variation being the addition of a peacock herl thorax, but in the opinion of many fly fishers nothing can beat the original for simplicity and effectiveness.

Original Frank Sawyer tie Typical present day version

A good description of the original Frank Sawyer tying method can be found here: [www.tomsutcliffe.co.za/fly-fishing/fly-tying/item/222-tying-the-ptn-to-the-originalpattern.Html](http://www.tomsutcliffe.co.za/fly-fishing/fly-tying/item/222-tying-the-ptn-to-the-originalpattern.Html)



A popular present day version  
Hook :- Nymph 16-10

Thread:- Brown

Tail :- Cock pheasant tail  
feather fibres

Body :- Cock pheasant tail  
feather fibres

Wing case :- Cock pheasant  
tail feather fibres

Rib :- Fine copper wire

Thorax :- Peacock herl



Take thread to bend of hook and tie in copper wire. Next select five or six pheasant tail fibres and tie them in with the tips forming a tail a bit less than half hook length. Make a rope of the tail fibres and wind them forward to about halfway along the shank, tie them down on top of the hook but do not trim them. Wind the copper rib forward in the opposite direction to that which the fibres were wound and tie off at the same point. Now tie in a couple of strands of peacock herl (one if it's good fluffy quality) and wind forward to just behind the eye, tie off and trim. Now bring the peacock fibres that you left uncut forward over the peacock herl to form the wing case and tie off. If you have any strands of fibre left hanging over the eye you can sweep them back and tie them down to form legs when finishing the head.

A.T.

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