

Fly of the Month

The Great Lake Beetle



*Clipped hackle version*

- Hook :- Dry fly 16- 10
- Body :- Clipped black cock hackle or spun black deer hair, clipped.
- Wings :- Hot orange hackle tips
- Hackle :- Hot orange



*Spun deer hair version*

Great Lake is one of the few places open for fishing in Tasmania at this time of year and, if you pick the right day, can actually be quite pleasant for a days fishing. What you want is one of those days when we're in the centre of a high pressure system with frosty mornings and windless, sunny days. Certainly it's cold but isn't that what they make all that fancy clothing for ?

As I type this the lake has come up more than two metres in the past six weeks and is still rising. That means lots of freshly covered ground and fossicking fish, hungry after the spawning run. In the past members of the club have been up there in just such conditions and drifted dries around in the shallows and caught fish. One of the flies that did the trick, for me anyway, was the Great Lake Beetle. The red tag also worked but the Great Lake Beetle has the advantage of being easier to see at a distance or in those awkward light conditions when there's sunlight on a ripple. And being so visible ( to fisherman and fish) it is useful when fishing two flies at a distance ..... a small dry that is hard to see and the Great Lake Beetle as a sighter.

There are two basic versions of the Great Lake Beetle, one tied with a clipped hackle body and one with spun black deer hair trimmed to shape. The clipped hackle version is easier to tie and I start it by tying on the matched pair of hackle tips about a quarter shank length back from the eye. Make a few turns of the thread in front of the wings to stand them up and then take the thread back to the bend and tie in two black saddle feathers. It's a good opportunity to use some of those feathers that are a bit long in the fibre for much else because they are going to be trimmed anyway. Take your thread forward to just in front of the wings and then wind one of the feathers forward and tie it off at that spot, *i.e.* with a couple of turns in front of the wings. Then wind the second feather forward through the turns of the first and tie that off in the same place. All that's left then is to tie in the front hot orange hackle and build up a small varnished head. Finish the fly by clipping the black hackles to a nice shape. Don't be too fussy about getting a nice smooth body shape, a bit spiky suggests legs. Actually, to avoid accidents it's probably better to do the trimming before tying in the orange hackle.

Tying the clipped deer hair version is slightly different in that the spun black deer hair body is best formed first and then the wings and hackle tied in front afterwards. I'm not sure that it's possible to get wings coming out in the middle of a spun deer hair body. If anyone knows how to do it please do tell !

By the way, Great Lake Beetle is just a name, it works on other waters too.

*Alan Taylor*

