

Fly of the Month

The Cats Whiskers



Hook :- Long shank wet fly 10 or 8, Kamasan B830 or similar.

Tail :- White marabou

Body :- Bright yellow, lime green or chartreuse chenille

Rib :- Silver wire or fine tinsel

Wing :- White marabou

Beadhead (optional) :- Your choice of colour, size etc.

The Cats Whiskers is another of those UK stillwater flies that has proved its worth since it was devised in the 1980s. It gets its name because the originator, reputedly a David Train, had trouble with the wing wrapping itself around the body of the fly and fixed it by incorporating four whiskers shed by his cat into the wing. I don't recall ever seeing cats whiskers in fly tying catalogues so if you have that problem of errant wings try some shaving brush or paint brush bristles. Marabou wings are not usually a problem fouling the body of the fly. Perhaps it stemmed from the fact that the original had bead chain eyes on top of the hook and the fly tended to swim upside down.

The "Whiskers" is not a difficult fly to tie. Start by placing bead on the hook behind the eye. The original had beadchain eyes tied on top of the hook but most are tied these days with a single bead to avoid the upside down tendency. Brass is the favourite colour but red and orange are also popular. Next lay your foundation thread to the bend and attach a bunch of white marabou. Lash it firmly along the shank of the hook and then attach the ribbing material and chenille. Take thread forward to just behind the eye or bead and then wind the chenille forward and secure it. The ribbing is then counterwound forward over the body and secured at the same point. A generous bunch of marabou, which should reach to the end of the tail, is now tied in. Two or three strands of Krystal Flash added to the wing looks good and adds a touch of sparkle. A touch of head cement on the threads and the fly is finished.

The Cats Whiskers can be fished at any depth but excels in deep water fished in strict tempo fashion, i.e. slow-slow-quick-quick-slow, and with many pauses.

As for variants, there is a mini lure version tied on a regular wet fly hook, and the Cats Whiskers also lends itself to being a good booby fly. But if it doesn't have all that white marabou it isn't a Cats Whiskers.



Alan T.

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Still on fly tying, this link shows a neat little trick for tying in mayfly tails.

<https://globalflyfisher.com/video/trico-spent-spinner>

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