

**Fly of the Month**

*By Scott Darrough*

**The Russell Fly**

As fly fishers, we have preferences as to how we fish. Do we drift nymphs, float dries, or strip streamers? I enjoy all of these variations but am most partial to stripping. With the technique of stripping I am able to bring out the predatory lust that resides in the belly of a fish! And to do this, my first choice of fly is the Russell Fly, a fly that is very simple to tie, but with amazing results.



Russell Wall is the originator of this fly and the most phenomenal trout fisherman I have ever witnessed. You'll know this master of the Bennett Spring waters when you see him at work. If you like to see nervous water created by multiple dorsals breaking and torpedoing the surface behind your fly, then tie one on.

**Materials:**

Hook: Mustad 9672, sizes 8 – 14

Thread: 8/0 Olive

Hackle: Saddle Hackle Olive

Braid: Kreinik Fine (#8) Gold

Note: Crafts stores carry the braid.

**Tying Instructions:**

1. Tie in where hook shank and bend meet. (Note: hackle and braid will also be tied in at this location in the following steps.)
2. Select hackle feather. You will want the barb fibers of the hackle feather when wrapped to be approximately one hook gap in length. The fiber length should be consistent throughout the fly. This is where the saddle hackle works well. Tie in base of hackle at the location mentioned in Step 1 with the colorful, shiny side facing the tyer.
3. Unspool approximately 3 1/2 inches of braid. Tie in at the location mentioned in Step 1. Wrap braid to the position just behind where the thread head will be formed. Tie off and clip excess braid.
4. Now wrap the hackle forward, spacing evenly. A size 10 hook will accommodate ten wraps, give or take. Wrap hackle to the position just behind where the thread head will be formed. Tie off, then trim excess hackle.
5. At this point your thread should be behind the eye. Spiral thread back to the bend of the hook, being careful not to bind fibers to the body. Then spiral wrap thread forward to the tie-off point behind the eye. This is important—binding of the hackle stem prevents the fish's teeth from severing it.
6. Form the fly head. Whip finish twice. Head cement is not necessary.

**To Fish:**

I fish this fly aggressively. I usually begin my strip the moment the fly hits the water. I tell people that you can't begin your strip soon enough. Typically these strips are with quick six inch tugs of the line. This will put the fly approximately one to two inches below the surface. If the fly drags on the surface at the beginning of the retrieve, "pop" it under with a good tug of the line hand.

Quite often you will miss fish on the retrieve. If this persists, you may wish to bend the hook gap open slightly. This will result in more hookups. After approximately ten casts, if no hits, I move downstream about five feet and present again, working my way along the water, looking for fish that are eager to bite.

Experiment at different stripping speeds and depths if need be. Typically a floating line is the rule of thumb. Russell varies his presentations and explains that a sinking line can really slay 'em.