

Deer Hair Popper

Materials Needed:





Hook: TMC 811S #1/0

Thread: 140 Denier UTC, White for weed guard and tail, Kevlar or GSP 200 for Hair portion and red 8/0 UNI for head.

Weed Guard: 20-25 pound test hard mono

Tail: Superfloss, mixed colors

Body: Stacked, trimmed and steamed Deer Hair, colors of your choice.

<p>Start the 140 denier thread at the bend of the hook and make a smooth thread base just short of halfway down the curve of the hook. Return the thread to the starting point and tie in a length of hard mono. Wrap back over the mono to halfway down the bend, securing it along the top of the shank and return the thread to the starting point once again.</p>		
<p>Select three or four strands of four different colors of Super Floss and tie them in at the center of their length with a tight band of stacked thread wraps.</p>		
<p>Pull the front ends of the Super Floss back along with the back ends and draw them all tight. Make another tight band of thread over the fold at the bend of the hook to sweep all the strands rearward.</p>		
<p>Whip finish and clip the thread. I like to spiral wrap a scrap piece of lead wire around the tail strands for the time being to keep them out of the way while I tie the rest of the fly.</p>		

Invert the hook in the vise and start the Kevlar or GSP thread behind the hook eye. Make a smooth thread base back to the bend, forward again to the hook eye and back once more to the base of the tail.



Cut, clean and stack a large clump of deer hair in the color of your choice for the belly of your bug. Measure the tips of the hair so they extend just past the hook bend. Place three wraps of thread over the bunch of hair right at the bend of the hook. These wraps are taut but not yet tightened and should be right on top of one another.



While holding tight to the butt ends of the hair with your thread hand, tighten the thread by pulling straight down on the bobbin, flaring the hair in place on the underside of the shank. Your thread hand will prevent the hair from spinning around the hook and only allow it to flare, keeping it positioned along the bottom of the hook shank. Leave the thread hanging right in the middle of the bunch.



Turn the hook over so the point is on the bottom and cut, clean and stack another, smaller clump of hair of the same color as the first. Measure the tips of this clump so they reach those of the first bunch.



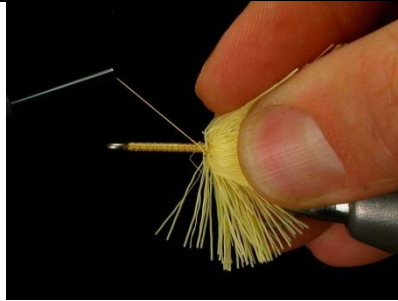
Make two turns of thread over the second bunch of hair directly on top of the first bunch. The thread should be working through the center of both the bottom and top bunches of hair. Hold the butt ends of the hair in place as you again tighten the thread by drawing it firmly downward, flaring the new bunch of hair on top of the first bunch.



Cut, clean and stack a third bunch of hair in a different (typically darker) color than the first. Measure the tips so they are even with the first two bunches and place two turns of thread over it, running straight through the center of all three clumps. Draw the thread down to flare it in place on the top of the second bunch. Make sure all the wraps are cinched down as tightly as possible.



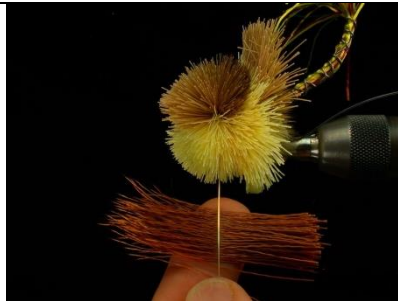
Draw all the hair back toward the bend and bring the thread up and around the shank as close to the front of the hair clumps as possible.



Repeat the previous procedure one more time, first flaring a clump on the bottom of the hook, then flaring another directly on top of it, and finally flaring the third, darker clump of hair on top of the shank. This second batch of hair clumps do not need their tips for the collar as the first clumps did so I like to trim them out to make the hair easier to work with. This also eliminates the need to stack any of the remaining bunches.



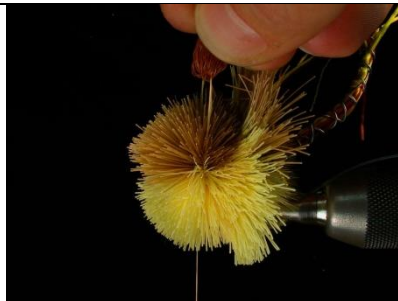
To add a fourth color spot or band of color, cut and clean a smaller bunch of hair and lay it under and against the working thread with the tips toward the hook eye.



Fold the tips back so the hair is folded around the thread and you have both the tips and the butts pinched tightly in the fingertips of your material hand. Try to keep your thumb on the bottom of the bunch and your index and middle finger on the top. In this photo my thumb should be rotated down and away a bit more to reflect this, but hey, there's an awful lot going on here...



Bring the thread up through the center of the hair bunches, dragging the pinched clump of hair to the top of the hook as you bring the thread over the top of the hook and down again on the far side. Do not let the thread draw the clump of hair down into the main bunch, but instead hold the clump above the shank for the moment.



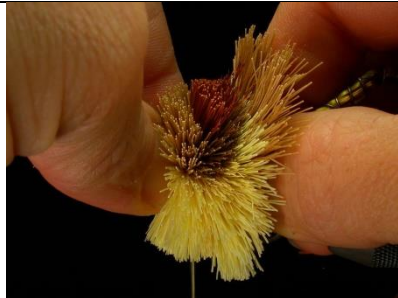
Pull down on the thread and lower the bunch of hair into place in the center of the third bunch of hair (in this case, the rusty brown colored hair is placed into the center of the tan bunch of hair). Bring one more wrap of thread through the center of all four bunches and tighten it down firmly.



Top view of our four stacked bunches of hair.



Sneak your fingertips in at the front and the back of the fly as close to the shank as you can and firmly pack the bunches of hair toward the bend of the hook.



That was so much fun we're going to do it all one more time. Repeat steps blank through blank once more to create another band of color and stripes.



By now there should be very little hook left at the front of the fly. Bring the thread directly to the front of the last bunch of hair and get ready, because we are going to pack three more bunches of hair on this little bit of hook, only this time we are going to use all three bunches in the same light belly color to form the face of the bug. The procedure will be the exact same as it has been, flaring one bunch on the underside of the shank, another on the top of that one and a third, folded in as per the spot section on the top of that. This will create a densely packed face for our bug that can be shaped much more easily and will hold that shape when we fish it.



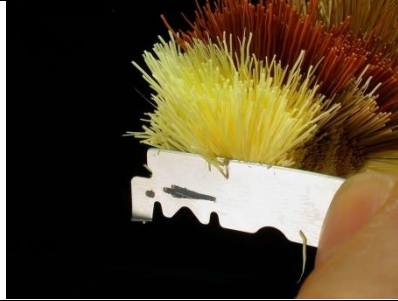
Now you didn't think we could pack three more bunches in there, but we did it. Bring the thread tightly behind the hook eye and whip finish it. Clip the heavy thread.



Take the fly out of the vise. Break or clip a double edged razor blade in half lengthwise and bend it slightly as you push it through the hair from the front of the hook to just short of the hair tip collar at the bend. These first cuts will be rough shaping and thus should be trimming the bug to slightly larger than the desired finished shape and size.



Drag the blade upward from the hook eye through the hair to flatten the face of the bug.



Bend the blade again to trim the top, pushing from the front to the back of the fly in an arc. I show this step with the fly in the vise, but usually hold it in my hands for better control.



Rough shape bug. Note that I have purposely left some of the butt ends in front of the collar to ensure that I don't accidentally trim the collar in the process. We can clean these butts up later with the blade and scissors as needed.



Take the fly from the vise and holding it in a pair of forceps by the hook bend, hold it over a steady stream of steam from a tea pot. The steam will enlarge the individual hairs and round them out again (they become flattened during handling and packing) as well as stand them up a bit. The steam also stiffens the hair making it stand up to the blade better and ensuring cleaner cuts. As the hair "grows" in diameter, it also becomes more tightly packed onto the shank.



Go back in with a fresh blade and finish up the trimming. There should be about a third of the bug diameter on the bottom of the shank and the other two thirds on the top. Final shape is a matter of personal taste, but I like a bit of a taper toward the rear of the fly.



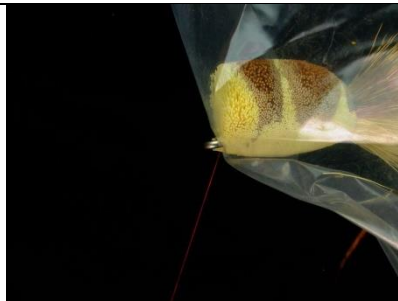
To trim the face of the bug flat, slide the blade from the center to the edges of the face exposing the ends of the hair to form a hard surface. Use fine tipped scissors to clean up stray hairs around the hook eye and face of the bug as well as for the final shaping of the front of the fly.



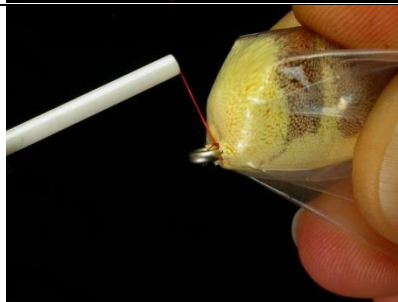
Place the hook back in the jaws of the vise with the mono coming down through the jaws. Be careful that the mono does not get pinched in the jaws however. Depending on the design of your vise, you may need to leave the mono on the outside of the jaws for this step. Measure the mono so it is within about a quarter inch of the hook point and flatten it where the end lines up with the hook eye. The large diameter mono will need to pass through the hook eye to secure the weed guard and flattening it will both leave enough room to thread our tippet later and make the mono tie down much easier.



Here I have taken a sheet of plastic baggie and poked a small hole in its center. Slide the hook eye through the hole and start the 8/0 thread right behind the hook eye, using the plastic to hold and force the hair back to make room for the thread work.



Bring the flattened section of mono up through the hook eye and bind it in place under the shank right behind the eye with several very tight turns of thread. Fold the top end of the mono back and bind it down tightly as well. Use the razor blade to trim the excess mono as close to the thread wraps as you can. Whip finish and trim the 8/0 thread.



Pop the sheet of plastic forward over the hook eye and make a scissor cut from the edge to the hole in its center to remove the plastic.



Remove the lead wraps from the tails strands and clean up any stray hairs as needed.



A standard tea kettle, like the one sitting on your stove right now is another requirement for tying hair bugs. After a preliminary rough shaping with the razor blade, hold the bug in a pair of forceps over the boiling kettle, allowing the steam to permeate the bug and open up the hair. The process of flaring and handling the hair flattens it, and the steaming process will bring each hair back to its original thickness, packing it tighter on the hook while at the same time stiffening the hair. Steamed hair will stand up better to the razor blade allowing perfect shaping and a bug that won't change shape when fished.

