



**October 2022**  
**FLY OF THE MONTH**  
**"Gray Ghost"**



**Edition:** October 2022  
**Written by:** Eric Austin  
**Photographed By:** Eric Austin  
**Creator:** Carrie Stevens

**Gray Ghost**

Carrie Steven's Gray Ghost is arguably the greatest feather wing streamer ever produced. Invented at her home at Upper Dam Maine, it has caught fish everywhere in the country from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to today. The step-by-step sequences here show it tied using a vise, but Carrie Stevens never used a vise. The video shows the fly done "in hand", as she might have done it.

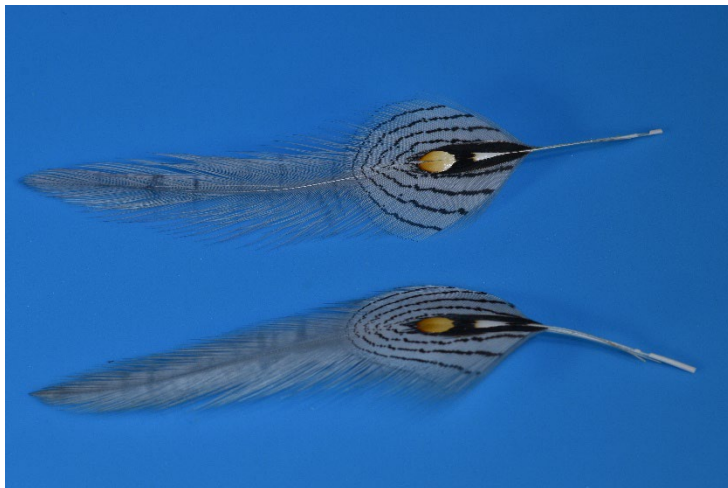
**Tying Video:** <https://1drv.ms/v/s!AoSM3c-4q-g3hOOQ9wrIJF0NxMRAk9A?e=UzTNQn>

## MATERIALS

<b>Hook:</b>	Partridge Carrie Stevens 10xl Size 4 streamer hook or similar
<b>Thread:</b>	White throughout, black at head with an orange thread band
<b>Tag:</b>	Flat silver tinsel
<b>Body:</b>	Orange floss
<b>Underbelly:</b>	White bucktail under the shank, 4-6 strands of peacock herl over the shank
<b>Throat:</b>	Bunches of white schlappen followed by a golden pheasant crest
<b>Wing:</b>	Golden pheasant crest, then four gray hackles; crest and hackles are of equal length
<b>Shoulders:</b>	Silver pheasant body feathers
<b>Cheeks:</b>	Jungle Cock
<b>Head:</b>	Black with an orange band

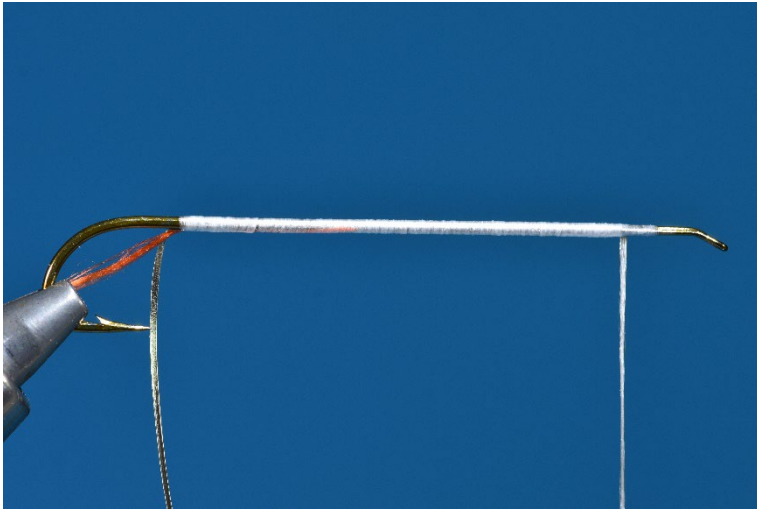


1. The wing consists of 2 sides each made up of 2 hackles, a silver pheasant body feather, and a jungle cock nail. Run a fine bead of rubber cement along the stems extending into the feather a bit. Let the cement dry for a couple of minutes and press them together. Apply cement to the entire back of the jungle cock eye. It won't bleed through, one of the beauties of using rubber cement. Carrie Stevens used lacquer, but it doesn't work as well.

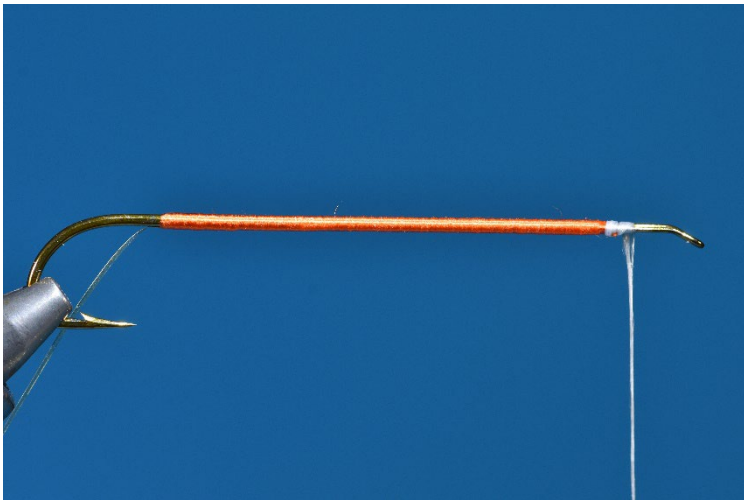


2. Here are the 2 completed wings. Note that the jungle cock extends about halfway into the silver pheasant shoulders. The hackle feathers curve in opposite directions on each wing, so that when mounted they'll both curve downward. They don't have to curve down, but make sure the feathers will be symmetrical after mounting when you select them.

Carrie Stevens wanted the wings to extend about  $\frac{3}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> of an inch beyond the hook.



**3.** Wind a thread base starting about an eye length back from the eye. Run flattened thread evenly back to short of the hook point, leaving room for the tag to extend to the point. Tie in the flat silver tinsel with 1 or 2 turns then attach the silk floss (or rayon is fine). If using Danville floss, use 2 strands of the 4 strands. Stop the thread just short of where you started it at the front of the hook.



**4.** Wind the floss forward as evenly as possible and tie off at the front. Burnish as necessary.



**5.** Carrie Stevens counter wrapped her ribbing. You don't have to, many of these were done conventionally. To counter wrap the tag and ribbing, bring the tinsel over the hook toward yourself as you wrap. Start by wrapping back 3 or 4 turns, then forward again to make the tag. Then keep going the entire length of the body, spacing as evenly as you can. Tie off at the front.





**6.** Cut a piece of white bucktail a bit wider than you want. Hold the butts with thumb and index finger and strip out all the short fibers. The resulting bundle should be sparse. Tie them in at the front of the hook and glue them. If you don't glue them, they'll likely pull out. The tips extend about 3/8" beyond the hook, just like the wings.



**7.** Tie in a bundle of peacock herl above the shank about the same length as the bucktail and wings. Carrie Stevens did some flies with the herl below the shank, just above the bucktail. The herl represents the lateral line on a baitfish, the bucktail the white underbelly.



**8.** Tie in 3-4 bunches of white schlappen underneath the hook at the front, about the length of the silver pheasant sides on the wings.



**9.** Add a short golden pheasant crest underneath the schlappen.



**10.** Tie in a golden pheasant crest feather extending to the end of the bucktail. This was sometimes called a “topping” but was rarely tied in that way. Usually, it sat high between the wings, but still showed through well. Switch to black thread.



**11.** Mount the wings so they tilt up just slightly, exposing some of the body. Notice that the crest shows through even though it's not absolutely on top. When the wings are just as you want them, trim the butts. Finish the head with one or more whip finishes. Cover with head cement, then a coat of lacquer. While it dries, start orange thread with 3 firm turns back toward the wing, trim the thread tag, then take 1 more turn back.



12. To complete the Gray Ghost whip finish the orange thread forward completing the orange band.

Carrie Stevens did a great number of colorful variations on this theme. Flies of this length were typically trolled, but smaller versions were often stripped as well.

**Editors Notes:** Comments from the editor.

Fly of the Month: Do you know someone who you think should be featured in the Fly of the Month? If so, feel free to refer them. If you have a camera and computer, you can write a Fly of the Month article to honor your favorite tier tying their best creation. For details contact the Fly Tying Group at [ftg@flyfishersinternational.org](mailto:ftg@flyfishersinternational.org).

Please note: The demonstration you are viewing makes no claim, implied or otherwise, that the presenter or demonstrator of the fly pattern was the original creator of the fly. This is the guest tier's version of this fly and it may differ from the creator's or other versions and variations.

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