



**August 2023
FLY OF THE MONTH
“Wool Wing Spruce”**



Edition: August 2023
Written by: Gretchen & Al Beatty
Photographed By: Al Beatty
Creator: The Beattys

Wool Wing Spruce

One of our favorite trout streamers is the Spruce Fly and it was only a matter of time before we applied the concept to our steelhead fishing as well. The fly did have one little (actually fairly big) problem; getting good quality, well-marked furnace hackle was a hit-or-miss proposition at best. We usually buy strung furnace hackle by the pound and matching four well marked feathers for a wing assembly often required considerable searching. It wasn't uncommon to discard as many as twenty or more feathers to get the four we needed. We even tried putting the black center in a brown feather with a black felt-tip marker but that was a lengthy process and the marking usually faded in the water in short order. The problem plagued us for a number of years and we finally quit tying the pattern commercially because of it. Let's press the pause button on this story for a minute while we share with you how the solution came to the fore.

One bright sunny morning last winter long time friend and fishing partner Bob Lay called wanting to know if we wanted to chase the steelhead in one of our local rivers. The idea gave us a much, needed break from our fly-tying workstations so we agreed to meet him that afternoon.

At the river Bob connect with a nice steelhead after only a few minutes in the water but lost it on the first adrenaline charged run. "What did you hook it on," Al shouted across the water? "This," Bob responded as he cast it up stream and swung it past for us to take a look. Al grabbed his leader and lifted the fly out of the water to take a closer look. "What is the wing," Al asked? "It sure looks good in the water." "Come on over and I'll tell you about it," Bob promised. We worked our way over to him to learn he tied the wing using sheep's wool. He gave us a couple of flies and we spent the afternoon swinging them through likely holding water. Gretchen bumped a fish but as often happens when steelhead fishing, the fishing was great but the catching was slow. When we got back to our vehicles Bob said, "I got some thing for you." He pulled a complete sheep hide out of his truck and handed it to Al; we had a lifetime supply. We thanked him and headed for home.

At home that evening we decided to dye some of the white wool. Al cut the hide into foot squares while Gretchen heated the first dye bath. Long story short we ended up with about a dozen different colors including tan and black. It didn't take us long to learn a multicolored built wing was possible using it and we can now press the play button to restart the Spruce Wing saga. We'll let all of you decide if it makes a good substitute for furnace hackle as we tie our version of a Spruce Fly Streamer.

Tying Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGneyT3XHMA>

MATERIALS

Thread: Black

Hook: Size 2 to 6, Mustad 80500BL

Tag: Flat silver tinsel

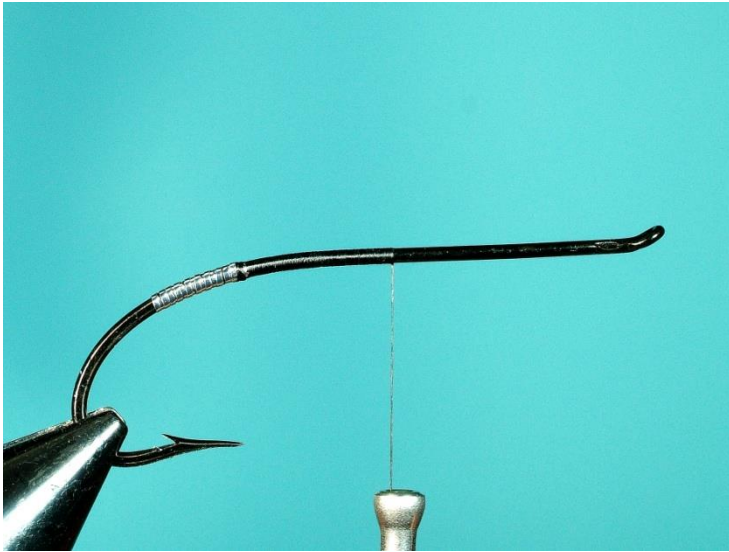
Tail: Peacock herl

Body: Red floss, peacock herl

Rib: Fine copper wire

Wing: Tan & black wool

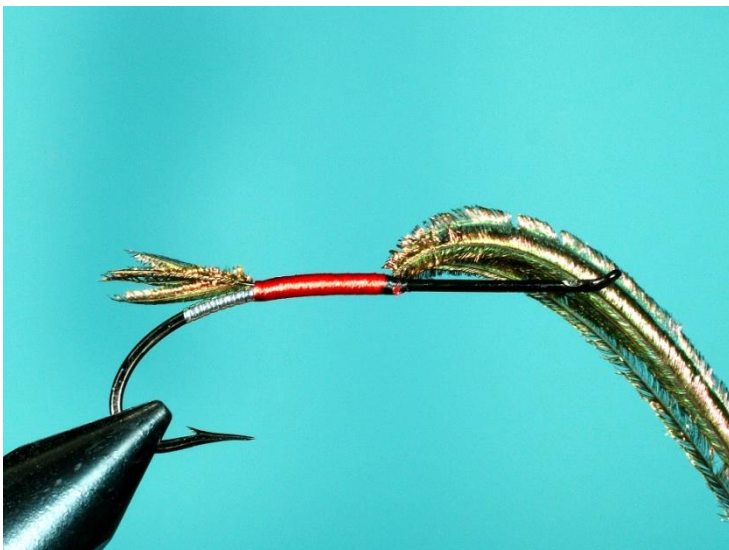
Hackle: Furnace neck feather, folded



1. Mount the hook in the vise and attach the thread above the point. Tie on a section of flat silver tinsel and construct a tag as illustrated. Wrap the thread to the center of the hook.



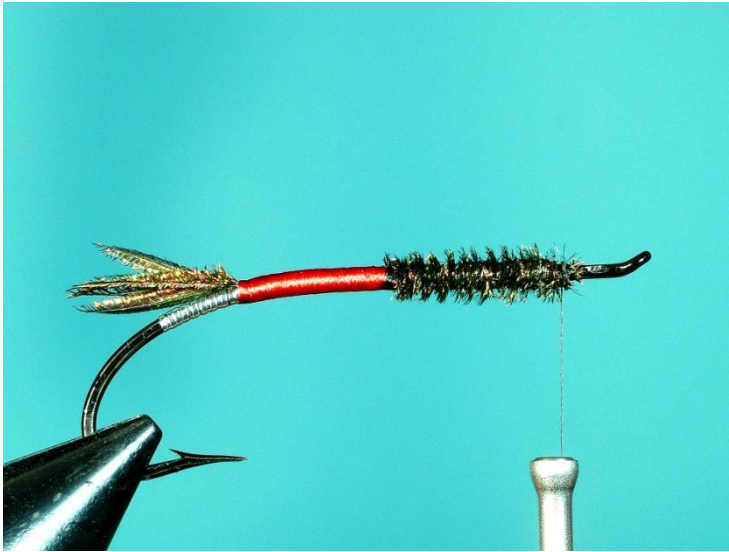
2. Select several peacock herls, even their tips, and tie them to the hook to form a tail as about long as the distance of the gape.



3. Tie on a strand of red floss and wrap the back half of the body. We prefer Danville's Nylong Stretch or size A thread but any floss will do.

4. Tie on the copper wire while advancing the thread to the front of the hook. Wrap the peacock body and counter rib it with the copper wire. Tie off and trim all waste ends. In the illustration, we wrapped the peacock butts first and in the video we wrapped them tips first. You decide which way you prefer.

5. Construct a wing using two clumps of tan and one of black sheep's wool. We like the wing to extend to the end of the tail. Trim any waste ends.



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.

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.

Please Credit FFI Website or FFI Fly Tying Group Fly of the Month with any use of the pattern. You can direct any questions or comments to ftg@flyfishersinternational.org.