

# Flyfishing

FALL 2009

## & TYING JOURNAL

**Metolius Trout  
Paradise 38**

**Lewis**

**Oil-Filled  
Flies 56**

**Schollmeyer**

**Original Salmon  
Fly Discovery 54**

**Dec Hogan**

**American  
River  
Steelhead**

**32  
Vinci**

**Sea-Run  
Cutthroat  
Trout**

**28  
McMillan**

**B.C.'s  
First Fish  
Family**

**48  
Lingren**

**Colorado's  
Thompson  
River**

**22  
Hughes**

Display until Nov. 10, 2009

**K48802**

\$5.99

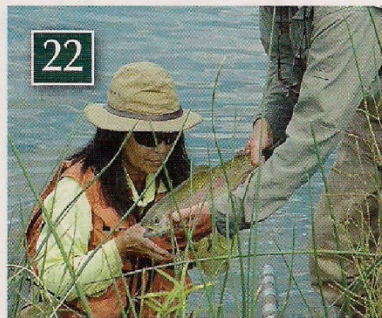


WWW.AMATOBOOKS.COM

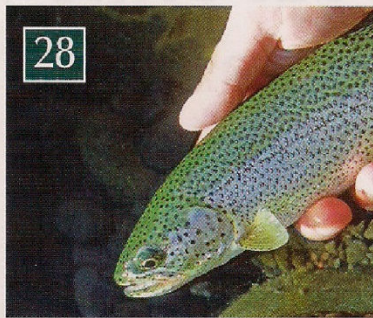


# CONTENTS

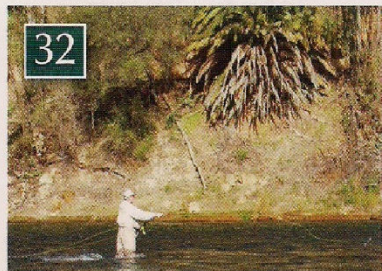
www.amatobooks.com



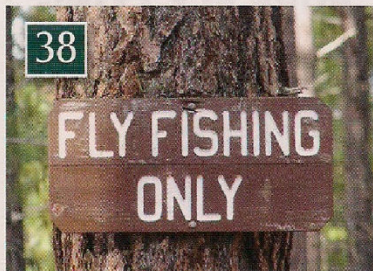
22



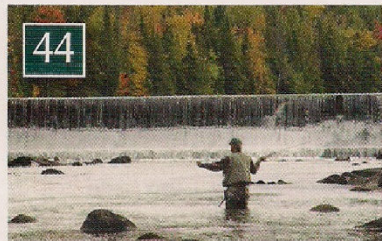
28



32



38



44



54



56



60



About the **COVER:**  
RAINBOW TROUT.  
BILL McMILLAN PHOTOGRAPH



78

## FEATURES

LESSONS ON COLORADO'S  
BIG THOMPSON..... 22

—Dave Hughes

COASTAL CUTTHROAT:  
DIVERSITY IN SPACE  
AND TIME..... 28

—John R. McMillan

STEELHEAD ON THE AMERICAN  
RIVER: FISHING  
UNDER THE PALMS..... 32

—Greg Vinci

OREGON'S METOLIUS..... 38

—Gary Lewis

FISHING THE  
ATTRACTOR DRY FLY..... 44

—Robert W. Streeter

THE STEELHEADING CLAYS:  
TRADITIONS ON THE  
KISPIOX RIVER..... 48

—Art Lingren

PRETTY IN PINK..... 54

—Dec Hogan

OIL-FILLED  
VINYL-TUBING FLIES..... 56

—Jim Schollmeyer

EGGS ALL DAY..... 60

—Glenn Zinkus

BALANCING FOAM FLIES..... 64

—Walter J. Wiese

THE STEELHEAD BEE..... 68

—Kevin W. Erickson

## DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR'S DESK..... 6

—Frank Amato

LETTERS..... 10

—Readers

ON THE TAKE!..... 12

—Readers

BOOK & DVD REVIEWS..... 18

—Preston Singletary

NEW PRODUCTS..... 20

—Preston Singletary

PATENT PATTERNS..... 78

—Readers





## Tying the Modern Classics Part Four: The Steelhead Bee

by Kevin W. Erickson

**D**ry flies for steelhead? Many anglers new to steelhead fly-fishing are skeptical at best and even long-time fly-fishers lack faith and prefer to use techniques that have worked for them in the past. They may try using a dry fly, but after a few casts go back to fishing a wet fly.

West Coast steelhead *will* take dry flies, especially in the warmer summer and fall months. All I can say is you won't catch them on a dry fly if you aren't fishing a dry fly, it's that simple. Which fly to use? A good example of a proven classic is the Steelhead Bee.

Originated by noted British Columbia fly-fishing author/conservationist/angler Roderick Haig-Brown, the Steelhead Bee was well ahead of its time in many ways. The Bee's design allows it to be fished not only in the traditional upstream drag-free dead-drift dry-fly approach, but also cast downstream on a tight line and fished with a "waking" or "skating" technique.

Waking flies sit low in the surface and create a disturbance with either wings and/or bodies designed to resist the current's

flow. Flies in this category include Harry Lemire's Greased Liner, Bill Bakke's Dragon Fly and Bill McMillan's Steelhead Caddis.

Skating flies are tied with traditional stiff, bushy dry-fly hackle intended to lift the fly up so it rides mainly on the hackle and tail. Traditional dries scaled up in size for steelhead include the Royal Wulff, Humpy, and Hairwing Black Gnat among others.

There is crossover between flies designed as "wakers" being fished as a "skater" and vice versa, but the only thing that matters is if the fish likes the presentation.

My first dry-fly steelhead experience was a real leap of faith for me. I was bound and determined to finally catch a steelhead on a dry fly or not at all. I fished with nothing but

*Above: Steelhead Dry Flies, top row (left) Steelhead Bee (right) Steelhead Caddis.  
Bottom row (left) Greased Liner, (right) Dragon Fly.*



a Steelhead Bee the whole day on a small secluded southwest Washington steelhead river. It was a warm June day that felt just perfect for fish to be active and, hopefully, looking up at my Steelhead Bee. I tried traditional upstream casts to visible fish in the river's crystal-clear canyon pools with no luck. I also skated the fly with a downstream presentation through fast bubbling pocket water as well. Nothing. But I wasn't going to give in to temptation and change to a wet fly.

Finally the magic time at the end of the day arrived. The sun was slowly setting and shade was now on the water. I cast a tight line down and across and immediately lifted the rod tip high to control the path of the line, and hence the fly. As it skated across a smooth, glassy tailout trailing a perfect "V" shape behind it, a deer and fawn stepped out of the trees on the other side of the river. I slowly turned my head to watch them and then froze, trying not to scare them away. Seconds later, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a large silver head pop up out of the water where my fly was and then disappear. Not wanting to scare the deer, I remained frozen. As luck would have it, this turned out to be the ideal thing to do.

## Steelhead Bee

**Hook:** Light wire salmon dry-fly hook; sizes 4 to 10.

**Thread:** Red.

**Tail:** Fox squirrel tail.

**Body:** Equal sections of brown, yellow, and brown dubbing.

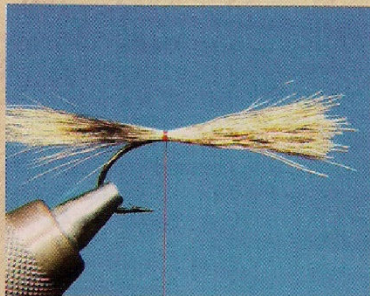
**Wing:** Upright divided wings of fox squirrel tail slanted forward at a 45° angle.

**Hackle:** Brown; stiff dry-fly quality or soft wet-fly quality; discussed in tying steps.

Most anglers will see the fish take and instinctively react by trying to set the hook; often this will pull the fly up and out of the fish's mouth. The preferred reaction is actually to drop the rod tip and *give slack line* to the fish so it can turn and then the current will bow the line and bring the hook back into the corner of their mouth. Then all the angler needs to do is gradually tighten the line until you feel the fish—then be ready for the action.

Needless to say, the stillness and quiet of the moment didn't last long for me. Next thing I knew, line was screaming off my reel and, as the deer fled the noise, I started downstream to try and catch up with the fish that had hooked itself. I got lucky and had managed to hold on. I'd like to say I landed that one, but it wasn't to be as it broke off after a cart-wheeling jump going over the tailout.

But sometimes the fish we *don't* land are the ones we remember most. This was the case for my first dry-fly-hooked steelhead. I'll never forget the scene and excitement of the moment. Try fishing for steelhead with a dry fly—you'll soon have some exciting new memories of your own!



**1** Attach your thread somewhere around the middle of the shank and wrap back to a position above the point.

Select a small amount (30 to 50 fibers) of fox squirrel tail and trim the clump off the tail. Hold the tip ends of the hair tightly in your left hand (for right-handed tiers) and begin pulling out all underfur and short fibers with your right hand. This evens the length of fibers (for a more natural look, I usually prefer not to stack the hair) and removes unwanted shorter fibers, thus reducing the bulk and making it easier to secure the fibers to the hook.



**2** Transfer the clump of remaining fibers for the tail to your left hand with the tips pointing to the left over the bend of the hook. Measure so the tips extend a shank length beyond the back end of the shank and tie in tightly. Trim the butt ends at a taper to the mid point of the shank and finish wrapping over the butt ends securely. Advance the thread to a position slightly forward of three-quarters of the way up the shank.



**3** Repeat the process with slightly less than double the amount of hair used for the tail. Again, it is important to clean out as much underfur and all possible shorter fibers thoroughly to minimize the amount of hair to be tied in.

This time, transfer the hair to the right hand with the tips pointing to the right over the eye of the hook. Measure the hair and tie in so the wings are equal to the shank in length and are extending forward on top of the hook over the eye. Trim the butt ends at a taper to the back of the shank. This should overlap the taper of the butts from the tail and provide a smooth, even underbody. Tie the butts down tightly and securely.





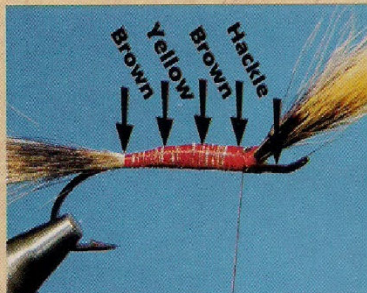
**4** Lift up the hair for the wings and wrap the thread tightly underneath the hair and against the base to start lifting the hair up from the hook. Now take the hair and divide it into two equal wings. Start criss-cross wrapping between the wings, by alternately taking a few wraps from behind the near wing to in front of the far wing, then switch to wrapping from in front of the near wing to behind the far wing. Help divide and define the wings with every wrap.



**5** Now you want to "post" the wing bases. Take the thread and wrap tightly around only the hair at the very base of each wing. For either wading or skating flies, this is an important step if you have upright divided wings. You may need to support the hair between each complete wrap to keep the wing from folding over and allowing your thread wrap to slip off. Post one wing then make a few wraps around the shank and then post the other. Work the thread up the base of each wing about a sixteenth of an inch or so. Once completed, add a drop of head cement to the base of each wing to help lock the thread wraps and stiffen the wings.



**6** Finally, make several wraps tightly behind both wings to force them forward to about a 45° angle sloping over the eye. The final position should be as shown—a 45° slant toward over the eye and each wing at about a 45° angle off the vertical (90° between the wings) when viewed from the front. Again add a drop or two of cement to lock the thread wraps and wing bases in place and help stiffen them up for their work ahead pushing back against currents.



**7** Next is the body. Three equal sections of dubbing consisting of brown, then yellow, then brown again. Decide on the style of fly you're going to create at this point. If tied to be a skater, deduct the amount of room the hackle will occupy behind the wing and divide the remaining space back to the tail into thirds. This way you'll not be crowding the wing or hackle space. If you're making a wading style, then build the body in thirds all the way up to the wing base.



**8** Select the hackle you will use depending on the style of tie you are creating. With either style, you want hackle that has fibers about 1 1/2 the length of the hook gape. If tied as a wading fly, simply add three or four turns of a soft, wet-fly-grade hackle in front of the wing, tie it off at the back of the head space, build a small head and finish.

If tied as a skater, select two good dry-fly-quality hackles and trim the stem at the beginning of any soft fibers at the base. Strip off a few fibers from the base and tie them in one at a time, good side (shiny side) down, at the front of the body pointing back toward the hook bend. Tie in one on top of the other with good tight wraps.

Advance your thread to the back of the head space. Wrap three to five equally spaced wraps



behind the wing and the same number in front of the wing. The goal is to leave one stem-width worth of space between every wrap for the next hackle to fill in. Don't spread the wraps too wide or crowd them too close. Tie off the first feather but don't trim it yet, in case you need to unwrap and rewind it.

Now wrap the second feather in between the wraps of the first. Move the feather forward and backward as you wrap to allow the fibers of the first hackle to move out of the way as you work forward. Tie off the second hackle as well then inspect and untie, unwrap, rewrap and tie off again as needed. Once you're satisfied make a few extra wraps, trim off the excess, wrap a small head, finish and you're done.

## Visit Kevin's website at [www.professorfeather.com](http://www.professorfeather.com)

All of the patterns featured in my "Tying the Modern Classics" articles in *Flyfishing & Tying Journal* are available in detailed step-by-step Flash Slideshows on my web site: [www.modernclassicsflytying.com](http://www.modernclassicsflytying.com). I also encourage you to contact me with any questions or suggestions for other patterns you'd like to see tied and featured. Email me at [info@modernclassicsflytying.com](mailto:info@modernclassicsflytying.com).

*Kevin W. Erickson worked in the fly-fishing business for over 25 years as a full-time professional outfitting anglers, booking fly-fishing trips worldwide, and instructing fly-fishing, fly-casting, and fly-tying classes at all levels. He has traveled extensively and acted as host of angling groups to both fresh- and saltwater destinations around the globe. Also a published fly-tier and author, his work includes contributions in Randy Stetzer's book *Flies: The Best 1000* and Randall Kaufmann's epic *Bonefishing*. He currently works in the software industry in Beaverton, Oregon.*