

Fly of the Month: The Ugly Duckling

By Jojo Bulan

I wanted to share for the club. I used this pattern to land my first tarpon and all other successive successful trips in the salt. I used one fly to land over 20 mangrove snappers and five jacks in Key West during a blitz. The material used is acrylic yarn which can be bought at a hobby shop or even Walmart. Make sure the material states 100% acrylic. I've tied them all white and colored them when done into different combinations. I've also used an all-purple fly when fishing at night for tarpon in the Keys. The material sinks fast, does not absorb water(single false cast will rid it of water) , and readily accepts color from permanent markers.



Ingredients:

Hooks: Gamakatsu SC-15, size 1/0 (Stock Number: 82511-2)

Hookpoint Guard: 30# Fluorocarbon, about 1.5 inches

Eyes: Holographic yellow, 7mm

Thread: Fluorescent green but any would do. I use 2# mono when tying for tarpon.

Tail : White Acrylic Yarn



Body: Rootbeer Chenille






Head: Medium Pearl Chenille or Pearl Estaz.






Wing Acrylic Yarn in white, tan, and black






Miscellaneous tools: fine toothed comb, super glue, glue gun with clear glue stick, permanent markers in different colors.

Steps:

1		<p>Wrap your thread base and return thread to eye of the hook. Attach one side of 30# fluorocarbon parallel to the shank and wrap aft keeping material on one side then move back thread to the eye position.</p> <p>Do the same to the near side of the hook with the opposite side of the hook point guard. Make sure the material stays parallel with the hook shank and extending an open loop about half an inch behind. Acrylic yarn is very supple when wet so this guard is very essential in preventing material from fouling the hook point.</p>
2		<p>Cut your acrylic yarn about 3 times the length of your hook. I use 2 pieces of white, 1 of tan, and one of black. If you want the finished fly to look like pinfish, replace the tan with green yarn.</p>

3		<p>Separate the strands and separate them into three piles with their respective colors.</p>
4		<p>Capture the white acrylic with thread in the middle and tie to the end of the hook where the loop begins. Do two wraps to capture the material tying it on one side then fold the material to the other side and do about 5 to 6 turns over to secure. Ensure all the yarn are tied on top of the fluorocarbon guard. If you like adding flash, take two pieces of crystal flash and tie them the same way now.(Two on each side with material doubled.)</p>
5		<p>Move tying thread toward eye of the hook and secure the end of your root beer chenille all the way to the base of the white acrylic stack. Wrap chenille twice around and secure in place with two wraps of thread. Pull chenille away from tying area to keep material from interfering with the next step.</p>
6		<p>Capture the tan acrylic in the middle and secure to one side with two wraps. Bring the other half of the material to the other side and secure with 5 to 6 wraps. Do two wraps of the chenille then secure with two thread wraps.</p>
7		<p>Tie in the middle of black acrylic yarn to one side with two wraps then fold other half to the other side with 5 to 6 wraps. Snip off the chenille at this point.</p>

8		<p>The eyes need preparation for this. Use three separated strands of white acrylic as the base and first glue them in with CA glue (i.e. superglue). Then use your hot glue to fix them in place. Tie the material with the eyes on each side like tying cheek materials for a streamer. If you don't like dealing with hot glue. Buy some tabbed eyes and use those instead. Whip finish the head and apply coating of choice.</p>	
9		<p>You are only half done because it is still an ugly duckling. We need to turn it to a goose to look beautiful</p>	
10		<p>Put it back in the vise and start combing out the materials. Start from the ends and slowly advance the comb forward. Material will start coming off and get stuck with the comb and would need to be removed from the comb after 3 to 4 strokes. Combing straightens up the fibers and gets rid of material that is not actually anchored to the fly.</p>	
11			<p>Combing also tapers the fly naturally, removing excess material. Excess can be used as dubbing for other projects.</p>

12		Should the fly need additional trimming for a better profile, use the open scissor blades and push the material through. The blade cuts the material in a more natural looking profile as the materials are getting cut with a natural taper.
13		 <p>Color your fly with permanent markers. Do 4 to 5 vertical stripes with a black marker. Use red for gill slits. Use green and yellow spots for highlights.</p>
14		Lastly, put a drop of hot glue at the base of each eye. On some flies, I use reflective eyes and coat the whole thing with hot glue. Epoxy and UV epoxy are both brittle and you end up with eyeless flies when they hit rock, oyster beds, barnacles or concrete. Hot glued eyes flex and never come off.
15		Here is what the fly looks when it is wet. When tied for tarpon, I use a Mustad UltraPoint Demon circle hook Size 3/0 to 5/0 without a hook point guard. Fish it with a loop connection with fluorocarbon shock tippet.

Here are what tabbed eyes look like for the curious. Pro Sportfisher Tabbed Eyes-5mm sell for \$6.99 at Trident Fly Fishing. I can't find it in Amazon.

