

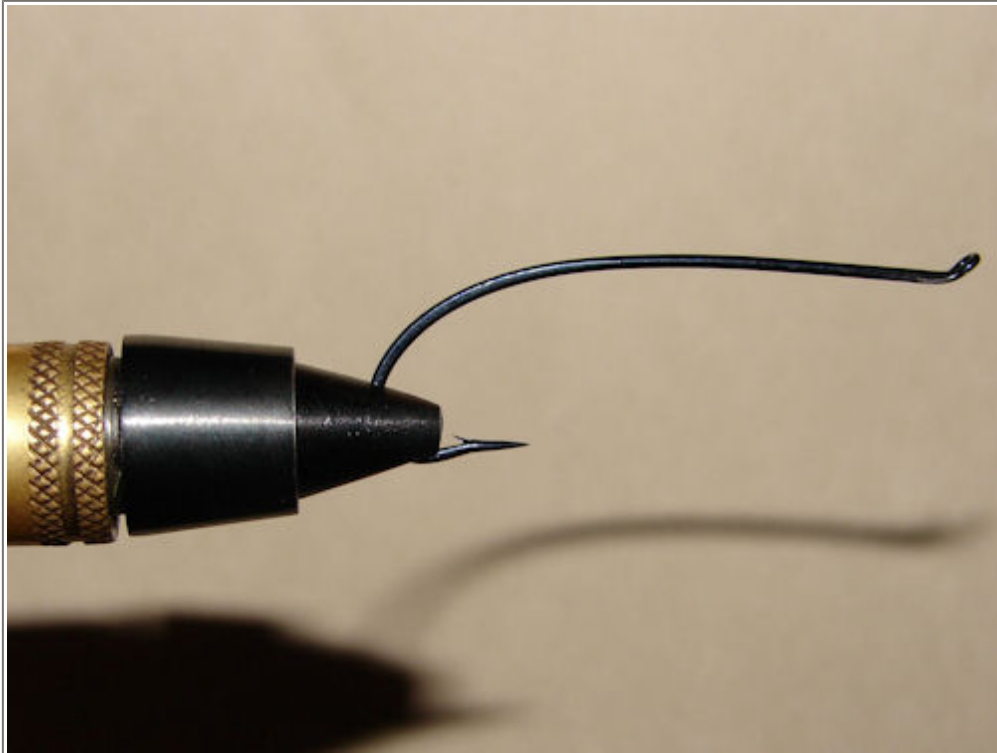
How to (and How not to) Tie a Spey Fly

The following is a step-by-step photographic sequence of the tying of the DC Cutthroat Spey fly originated by Rich Youngers, owner of Creekside Flyfishing in Salem, Oregon. Rich is a guide, master fly tier and all around great guy.

This pattern was developed by Rich as a spey fly to target Sea Run Cutthroats on the Oregon Coastal Streams, but evolved into a great pattern for Steelhead on the inland rivers.

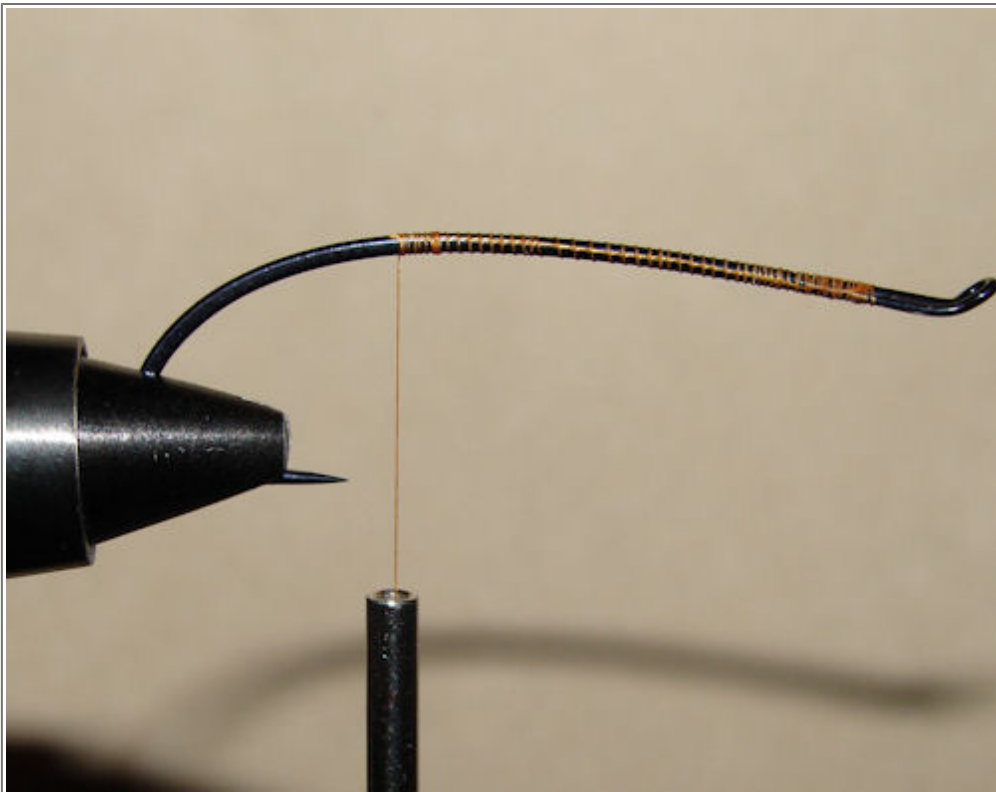
Materials for Original Pattern

- Hook: Daiichi Alec Jackson Size 1.5
- Thread: Orange 6/0
- Tag: Flat Silver
- Body: 2/3 Orange Floss, 1/3 Orange Dubbing
- Rib: Flat Silver and Fine Oval Silver
- Spey Hackle: Orange Dyed Blue Eared Pheasant
- Wing: Black Laced, Orange Dyed Hen Cape Feathers
- Collar: Orange Dyed Gadwall
- Cheek: Tragopan pheasant feathers



Step #1

The Alec Jackson Hook securely in vise



Step #2

Lay down the thread base

Note that hook is re-positioned in the vise.. hook wasn't quite secure in the vise from Step #1....

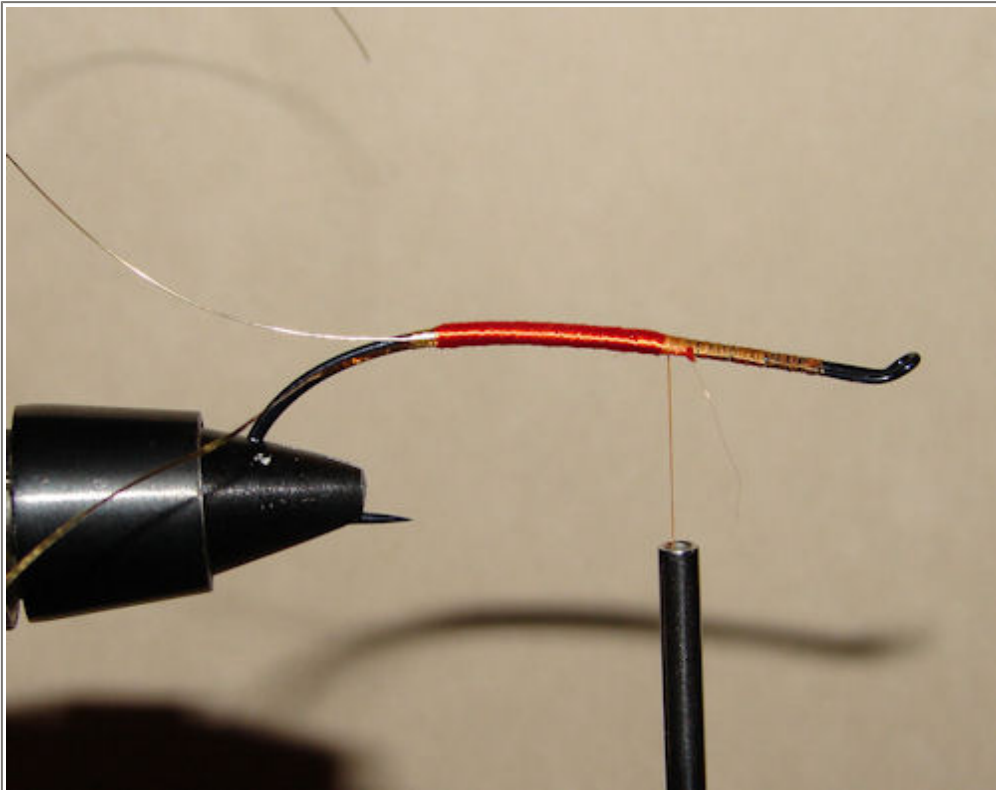


Step #3

Tie in Tag and Ribbing material

I tied in the oval from the eye to the back, and tied in the flat from the rear 1/3 to the back, create the tag, then tie down at the same location and the oval rib material.

Note that I substituted flat gold and fine oval gold for silver. I like the color combination better.



Step #4

Tie in the Orange Floss.

I tie in at the 2/3 point and work the first layer of floss to the rear, then return a layer to the start point.

Burnishing between the 1st and 2nd Layer and again on top will create a very smooth floss body.



Step #5

Tie in the spey hackle at the 2/3 point.

Note the substitution of Orange Saddle hackle for Orange Dyed Blue-Eared Pheasant (much cheaper and easier to find)



Step #6

Dub the thread with Orange dubbing and wind forward to behind the hook eye.



Step #7

Wind forward the flat tinsel rib - 3 behind the spey hackle, 2 forward of the spey hackle.

Step #8

Wind forward the flat tinsel rib - 3 behind the spey hackle, 2 forward of the spey hackle. (following the flat tinsel)

Step #9

Wind forward the Spey hackle following the ribbings.



Step #10

Tie in the "away" wing first, slightly tilted toward the center line of the hook. At first it will appear out of alignment, but when you add the near side wing, you end up with a nice "tent" over the entire fly.

Here I made a critical mistake! (I think..) Should I have tied in the collar prior to the wings? Most of the time, a pattern is written in the order the materials are applied to the hook. Hmmmm....



Step #11

Tie in the Collar material.

Here I substituted orange dyed guinea fowl for gadwall. I think mallard flank would look nice too. I had gadwall available, but I really like the looks of guinea on this fly - the black in the guinea goes very well with the wing, don't you think so too?.

Step #11

Fold and wrap collar material forward, pull



materials under the hook, tie off, build up a nice tapered head. Whip finish and apply two coats of head cement.

Usually I end up crowding the head to much and it all finishes up too close to the eye. However, this time I finished up a tad to short of the eye..... darn!

Still not too bad, until you closely examine it.....



Top View

Couple of problems here. By finishing off the fly a little short of the hook eye, you'll see a sizeable gap at the front of the head.

You'll also notice that my wings aren't quite even at the back. Close up macro photos are very humbling, aren't they?



Bottom View

Not too bad from the fish's perspective.... I don't think that Steelhead will take time to notice that the oval rib is not quite tucked up against the flat ribbing like it should be. I can balance out the guinea collar a bit before tying this to the leader and launching it.

Final Thoughts: I omitted the Tragopan Pheasant Feather Cheeks. I think they are optional, and besides... I don't have any, nor do I really know what they look like. Jungle Cock nails look really good on this fly though, but I'm saving up the beautiful nails that Carol sent me for some Atlantic Salmon flies.

I'm not sure why steelhead like this pattern so much. Does it look like a shrimp, or maybe a crawdad? The spey hackle moves beautifully under the water as it drifts through a run. I'm guessing it looks more like a shrimp with all those hackle "legs".

This pattern holds a special place for me. I caught my first steelhead (on a flyrod) with this pattern. Last January, I took a spey and dee style fly tying class from Mr. Youngers himself at his fly shop in Salem. We tied a Lady Caroline, an Syd Glasso Orange Heron and Rich's pattern that day.

The following day, I walked to the end of our road, waded into the 45 degree water of the Little North Fork of the Santiam River, tied on the DC Cutthroat, made 4 or 5 ugly casts and WHAM! - a pretty little holdover summer steelhead hen hit the fly. She jumped three times and fought for a short bit before joining me in the shallows along the edge of "My" river. (well.....97 feet of it are mine...)

Sorry, no photo of the fish available. First of all, I didn't expect to catch anything so I did not have a camera with me. (I've written to Santa Claus asking for a small, cheap digital camera to carry in my fly vest this year).

Second, upon making the short walk back to the house, I discovered that the "good" camera's batteries were dead.

Finally, by the time the batteries were charged up, all that remained of the fish was a well picked backbone and rib bones. It was delicious! Grilled on the BBQ, stuffed with lemon slices, butter slabs and a bit of dill all wrapped in tin foil and cooked on medium heat for about an hour (35-45 minutes if the temperature isn't 38 degrees outside).

A big thanks to Mr. Youngers for creating this pattern. I hooked three other steelhead on this fly from January - March. Sadly, I landed none of them. One gave me the shake and slip, the other two now proudly wear DC Cutthroat Spey flies as earrings (gillrings??).

Tight Lines Everyone.

Dave