

The Mohawk or Pic's Special

History of the fly pattern:

All saltwater fly fishers are familiar with the “everyday gold spoon fly”. Thanks to Jon Cave of Geneva, Florida, it has become a mainstay in almost everyone’s fly fishing arsenal for reds and specks; some even use it on largemouth and striped bass. A few fly tiers have made local adaptations to the spoon fly from its original design, which is basically a curved, wobbling creation with little frill. Regardless of the adaptation, it did, and still does work. Most local adaptations involved only a few dabs of color with paint or a marking pen and the addition of various painted eyes. Based on my research, and discussions with Jon, other than for minor bends and kinks, there have not been any major structural changes to the fly since his creation, until this fly. I started working on various structural changes in order to stabilize the fly for a very slow, even wobble, along with a little organic movement and more flash. I’ve been using the Mohawk adaptation for approx. five years now, changing a few things here and there, adding more weight to the eyes and making it weed less with the addition a mono guard at the hooks eye. The weed guard addition, along with the fact that the fly rides hook – up, makes it almost impossible to snag. As for color, I have used the fly in both gold and silver, with no apparent change in effectiveness. The original color combination was a natural gray zonker strip, yellow or gray dumb bell eyes and pearl Flashabou with a gold spoon. However the pattern works well with olive, pink or chartreuse combinations. The pattern represented is the olive version; one of my favorites.

After the design was more or less “perfected”, I wanted to get outside opinions as to its effectiveness, particularly for Redfish. Tom Piccolo (Pic) was my field tester, as he fished the marshes of South Louisiana almost daily. Armed with a few different “species” of the new pattern, he fished it for approx. four months. Tom reported catches under almost every conceivable condition. The primary color combination turned out to be that as noted in the recipe. The range in fly size was between 1/0 and 2. In the beginning, Tom’s major concern was not the style or shape of the fly, but its durability, as I do not use the old fashioned forms and EPOXY as a coating and sealing agent. Instead, I use super glue, the quick flowing variety. Super glue binds well with underlying threads and the Mylar tubing. The question of durability was quickly answered as eight Reds were caught on one individual fly, a weed less variety. Tom then decided to see how many fish he could catch with that one fly. The total was 34, including Reds, Specks and Largemouth. The total was 56 fish on that one fly, including fish that were hooked, but not landed. At that time, he retired the fly so it would not get lost in some fishes belly. However, it was still in good enough condition to catch more fish.

Fishing the pattern:

The Mohawk is one of the best all around Redfish patterns I've ever used; it's effective under all weather, water and sky conditions. I've even tied it on a 7/0 hook and used it at night on big black drum and sheephead. You really never know what you'll dredge up when using the Mohawk; large bass are also common victims. To be effective, the best size is 1/0 or 2/0 – that size allows the fly to work best. I use a 8 ½ or 9' - 7 or 8 weight rod and a 10 to 11' OX, (or heavier) leader. (I like long leaders – I think you achieve better action and smoother casting loops.) Casts should be less than 60'; that avoids too much slack in the line for fast strikes. As far as retrieves, I use a very slow, 3" strip – stop - 3" strip – stop, retrieve. This type of retrieve allows the design of the fly to work best. Although it is weed-less / snag-less, I seldom use this pattern on the bottom

Pattern recipe:

Hook: Mustad 34007 or similar; size 2/0 - 2; as a note, 2x – 4x long streamer hooks also work well

Thread: 3/0 Nylon, olive or red

Tail: olive or pearl Flashabou type materials, olive marabou, and the rear, side flank feathers from a cock ring neck pheasant (or a suitable – patterned substitute)

Eyes: Yellow, pearl, or lead dumb bell

Body: ¾" wide gold Mylar tubing, hot pressed flat, olive Zonker strip (rabbit or fox), cut ¼ " wide

Forelegs: red rubber strips (if desired)

Clear nail polish with iridescent flecks

Pattern tying steps:

Wrap the shank of the hook with red thread and fasten with super glue. Tie on the olive marabou over which is tied the Flashabou material

On each side of the tail material, tie in the pheasant feathers - tied curving out as shown

On top of the tail materials is placed the zonker strip – tied upside down and backwards so when pulled forward later, it's hair lays down towards the tail of the fly. Place the gold Mylar tubing over the tied base of the tail wrappings/materials and secure as shown

The lead eye is placed over the end of the Mylar tubing wraps – a final knot is tied in the tying thread at this point. Pinch the Mylar tubing with your left index finger and thumb, just behind the eye of the fly, and tie it off, placing the thread just behind the eye of the hook; make a small head with the thread

Pull the Zonker strip forward over the Mylar and secure just behind the eye of the hook; the red rubber legs are tied in on each side of the head and trimmed approx. 2" long.

If desired, a weed guard can be tied in at this point, extending just past the barb of the hook. The Mylar tubing is made ridged by applying a "line" of super glue on the bottom (barb side) of the tubing, between the attached lead eye and the eye of the hook. Apply just enough so that it soaks through and grabs the bottom of the Zonker strip, but does not penetrate its hair. The super glue will spread through out the Mylar tubing by capillary action, and attach to the thread on the shank of the hook, thus keeping the fly materials from twisting around the shank of the hook while fishing.

When the super glue has dried, apply a thin coat of a clear iridescent nail polish on the bottom of the Mylar tubing. (I used gold flecks and light green flecks on this fly – adding a little more flash to the fly body.) If there are specific questions, please call me from 5 until 10 PM, Central – 504-451-9235, I'll try to help out.