

Watson's Fancy

Trout flies with Peter Watson



Hemingway's Stonefly...

Quiet days on streams can be particularly frustrating. The conditions look perfect but the usual prospecting rig of a dry with a nymph dropper has failed to elicit a response. What follows is a flurry of fly changes, usually getting smaller each time, while questioning the dubious parentage of the trout.

Progressively offering smaller flies is a common tactic which often produces the desired result. However, when faced with a quiet day on a stream we may just be making our predicament worse. Trout only benefit if the prey item consumed provides more energy than they expend catching it, so the smaller we go with our flies the less likely a trout is prepared to move to intercept it. If instead we choose a larger fly, then we are presenting a meal that is worth more effort and the trout may move further across the

current, subsequently getting us some takes on our slow day.

The majority of aquatic fauna present in our streams is reasonably small, in the size 12 to 16 range as evidenced by the contents of most stream fisher's fly boxes. Above this size range there are only a couple of common invertebrate foods, the most abundant and widespread of these being the larger stonefly nymphs. Stoneflies (Plecoptera) are common in most of our trout streams with some extraordinary representatives getting up to 60 mm in length—a 2/0 on your 3-weight anyone?

A look around the rocks on the edge of streams will reveal discarded shucks from any recent emergence and this will give you an idea of the size of your local species. Failing that, a size 6 or 8 covers the most common and widespread of the larger stoneflies.

HEMINGWAY'S STONEFLY

HOOK: *Tiemco 206BL #8*
THREAD: *Black 8/0 Uni Thread*
WEIGHT: *0.01 lead wire*
TAIL & ANTENNAE: *Goose biots*
RIB: *4 lb monofilament*
LEGS: *Hemingway's soft rubber legs, black size M*
DUBBINGS: *Black squirrel*
BACK & WING BUDS: *Hemingway's Stonefly buds and back, dark size S*

But what to tie on? You can just upsize your regular nymph patterns, but a size 6 Hare and Copper or Pheasant Tail lacks the subtlety and suggestion of life that their smaller counterparts have. I prefer larger patterns to have a little more realism, and this is where modern synthetic materials come into play. Several companies now produce realistic synthetic body parts for various tying applications. One of these is Hemingway's—a fly fishing products company based in Serbia (available in Australia through troutflies.com.au). They produce a range of printed nymph backs

TYING NOTES HEMINGWAY'S STONEFLY

1. Add weight and lay down a base of thread, leaving a small bump of tying thread at the rear.

2. Tie in two goose biots, ribbing material and secure the rear of the set of legs.

3. Dub the rear of the fly and select a nymph body.

4. Place the nymph body over the dubbing and rib over.

5. Tie in two goose biots and matching nymph buds over hook eye. Hold legs out of the way by piercing them on the hook point.

6. Dub plump body and secure legs.

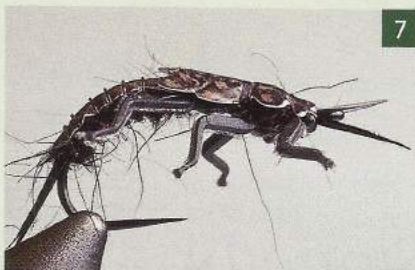
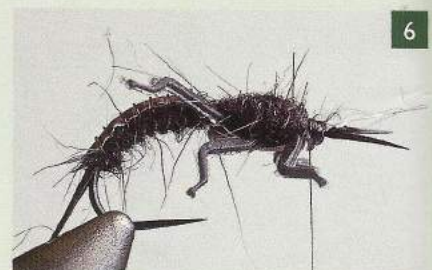
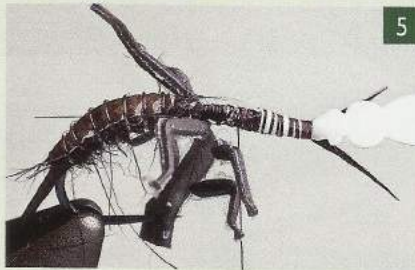
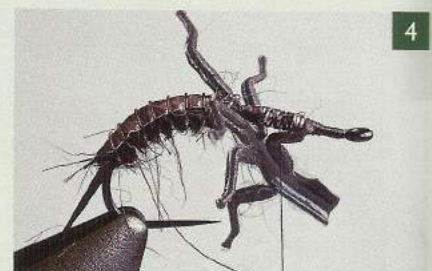
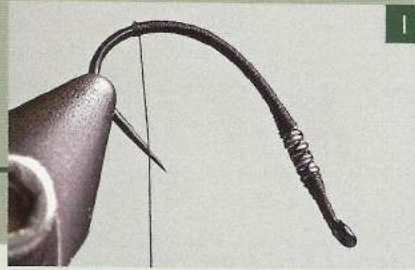
7. Fold nymph buds back and secure with wraps and a whip finish.

8. Present to hungry trout.

and wing buds, along with matching silicone rubber legs for tying semi-realistic stonefly nymphs. The backs and buds are pre cut from waterproof, UV resistant material with a self adhesive backing, and come printed with realistic stonefly nymph colouration. The matching legs are moulded from silicone rubber, soft enough not to provide any resistance to the fish but still resilient enough to handle the rough and tumble of a mountain stream and the teeth of its occupants.

These components are available in three sizes—small, medium and large—and in a range of colours covering everything from pale yellow through to black.

For a simple semi-realistic nymph, start by adding some weight to the hook shank and laying down a base of thread; finish with a couple of turns of thread to form a small lump as this



helps the goose biots splay out when tied down against it. Tie in the goose biots to represent the tail cerci and add a length of clear monofilament for ribbing later. Measure where your set of legs will sit and tie in the back end before dubbing the rear of the fly. Place a nymph back over the dubbing and rib over with the monofilament to hold it down: although the backing is

self adhesive, in reality it is not strong enough to stay in place by itself.

Add a couple more biots, one either side of the hook eye to represent antennae, then the matching nymph bud is tied upside down and facing forward over the hook eye ready to be folded back later.

Dub a plump body and bring the legs forward underneath and tie off behind the hook eye. Finally the wing bud is folded back over the top and secured with several wraps behind the head section and first pair of legs, before a whip finish behind the second section and second pair of legs.

Printed body parts and rubber legs may not be everyone's idea of traditional fly tying materials, but the end result is hard to argue with. At the very least you have a talking point when others sneak a peek into your fly box, and it gives you another useful option when the trout in your favourite stream refuse to play ball. **FL**



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