

Ft. Worth Fly Fishers

March 2018 Fly of the Month

Red Fox Squirrel Nymph

The Red Fox Squirrel Nymph is a famous pattern created by Dave Whitlock. Supposedly, the pattern is Dave's answer to Hare's ear nymph. It can be fished for a variety of fish species and imitates a very varied set of insects such as mayflies, stoneflies, scuds and other generally buggy looking insects. As such, it's a great pattern to keep in your box as a swiss army knife type of fly. You'll see various incarnations out there (with beads, with or without the hackle collar, etc). I've chosen to tie it with the hackle collar and without a bead, slightly weighted with lead wire.



Red Fox Squirrel Nymph

Hook: TMC 200R size 10 -18 or equivalent (tied here on an Allen N202 size 12)

Lead wire underbody: Lead or non-lead .020, about 8-10 wraps

Tail: Red Squirrel tail fibers

Abdomen: Whitlocks SLF in Red Fox Squirrel Abdomen color (convenient, huh)

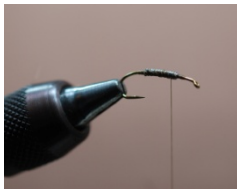
Thorax: Whitlocks SLF in Red Fox Squirrel Thorax color

Hackle: Whiting Brahma Hen died Natural Brown

Ribbing: UTC Ultra copper in Brassie size

Thread: Danville's Olive in 70 Denier size

Step 1: Wrap 8-10 turns of the lead wire on the bare hook shank. Position the lead wraps about at the middle of the hook shank and secure with a thread dam in front of the lead. While holding the tag end of the thread over the lead wraps, create a thread dam behind the lead wraps. Cover the lead wraps sparsely with thread to ensure a durable fly.



Step 2: Remove a clump of natural red squirrel tail fibers (I used about a #2 pencil lead diameter clump). Stack the fibers to even the ends and tie onto the hook shank with about a hook shank length of tail. Attach a length of copper wire to be used as a ribbing in later steps. Both the tail and the wire ribbing are secured at the point where the hook begins its bend. Note the thread position at the tie in point in the picture.

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Step 3: Use the Abdomen colored dubbing blend and create a sparse dubbing noodle. Wrap the dubbing noodle to a point about 2/3's of the way up the hook shank. You should try to create a tapered abdomen, skinnier in the back and fatter as you go forward.



Step 4: Now switch to the Thorax colored dubbing and add a small section in front of the abdomen. Be sure to leave room at the head for the hackle and a head section. Wrap the copper ribbing wire up thru the abdomen and thorax. Spiral the wire to give you 5-6 segments thru the abdomen and thorax. Tie off the wire ribbing using several thread wraps and then helicopter (or clip with nippers) the copper wire.



Step 5: Select a single Hen hackle from the skin and strip the fuzzy lower fibers from both sides. Strip the fibers on the left side of the hackle up to a point where a small triangle is left (which you'll use to secure the hackle to the hook). Refer to the two following pictures for guidance.



Step 6: Secure the hackle to the hook using the small triangle that was created as a tie in point. When you have used a couple of wraps of thread over the hackle, create a pinch wrap by lifting the small triangle, placing a couple

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of thread wraps in front of the hackle and then another couple of wraps on top of the hackle. This creates a thread "pinch" that locks in the hackle. You can trim the small triangle flush with the thread wraps and proceed to wrap the hackle collar.



Step 7: Wrap the hackle around the hook shank, creating a hackle collar. Use the fingers of your non dominant hand to preen the barbs toward the back and you will create a smooth, even hackle collar. Secure the hackle with a couple of thread wraps and clip the remaining stem (the stem is technically called the rachis) free from the hook. Depending on how much room you have left after wrapping the hackle collar, you can add a small amount of thorax dubbing and then create a neat thread head (or just create a small thread head). Finish by applying a small amount of head cement to the thread head.



Here's the completed Red Fox Squirrel Nymph:



Barry Webster

Tying Director