

Troth Bullhead



Designed by Al Troth



Tied by: Jim Murphy
Fly Type: Streamer
Target Species: Smallmouth Bass...originally designed for Big Brown Trout in slightly smaller sizes.
Region: Central United States
Imitation: Small Catfish, in Particular the Mad Tom (Stone Cat)

Material List and Tying Tips

Hook: Any Up-Eye Salmon Hook Size 2 to 5/0 such as Gamakatsu T10-6H (I used a Bass Hook For This Demo)

Thread: Black 3/0 or 6/0 for wire, tail and body...begin by tying in at the eye and wrapping a thread base toward the rear of the hook stopping just above the hook barb.

Thread II: G.S.P. or similar for collar and head

Weight: 15 to 20 wraps of .025 lead wire on back 1/3 of shank use tying thread to lock in place by wrapping thread forward and then back stopping above hook barb...add a drop of head cement

Tail: Cream or White Marabou (1 ½ X hook shank length) tied in above hook barb and a bit behind the wire then 10 –12 fibers of Dark Dun or Black Ostrich Hurl (a bit longer) over Marabou and then 10 –12 fibers of Peacock Hurl (same length as Ostrich) over Ostrich do not trim any butts but allow them to extend forward to cover the wire.

Back: Continuation of butts of Marabou, Ostrich and Peacock used for tail. The thread should be at the tie in point of the tail. Now wrap thread forward over butts covering wire. Tie off in front of the wire with several wraps and leave the tying thread there. Now trim off butts of tail fibers. This provides a nice full under base for yarn body. Thread remains forward.

Body: Cream or white yarn – Aunt Lydia’s craft yarn suggested... (I prefer large cream sparkle chenille) Tie in in front of wire and palmer back over butts to the to the original tie in of the tail...then wrap forward to front of wire tie off thread with several half hitches and add a dab of head cement

Collar: Tie in G.S.P., (matching color), and Spin, Black or Dark Dun Deer Body Hair collar ,or as I prefer stack a collar on top ½ of hook only.

Head: Spin Black or Dark Dun Deer Body Hair if head is one color. Or as you see in photo I STACKED blue deer hair below black to make the head and spun the last two pinches of blue hair to make a blue nose. Do not pack deer hair as tightly as this little cat is meant to sink.

Notice that the underside of the head has been trimmed flat with a new razor blade to expose the hook point. This is an essential step if you have spun the collar. Continue to use the razor blade to form a cone shaped head.

Other Tying info: This fly is meant to be fished on the bottom. Its deer hair head will cause it to float if it is not weighted. An attempt has been made to keep fly just on the heavy side of neutral buoyancy so it sinks slowly on a sinking or sink-tip line. Many who call this, their go to fly, like it big and carry it in size 1/0 and size 2. They tell me If you have the tackle to cast it, and want to hunt for monsters, fish this fly in size 3/0 or 5/0 late at night or very early in the morning before the sun hits the water. I’ve not tried it.

Troth’s original fly used natural gray deer body hair much like the more traditional Muddler. A fellow fisher suggested black over blue with a blue nose as that may better match the mad toms in the Midwest. But go wild. I plan to tie dark brown over light and dark brown over olive before the next season.

Presentation Tips: Mad tom is a baitfish of great importance in the earliest part of the season. This little catfish is a slow swimmer who likes to live under rocks at the tail end of riffles. While the crayfish are still in hibernation the mad tom is available to smallmouth bass. Two time-tried techniques include the “hand twist” and pause and short

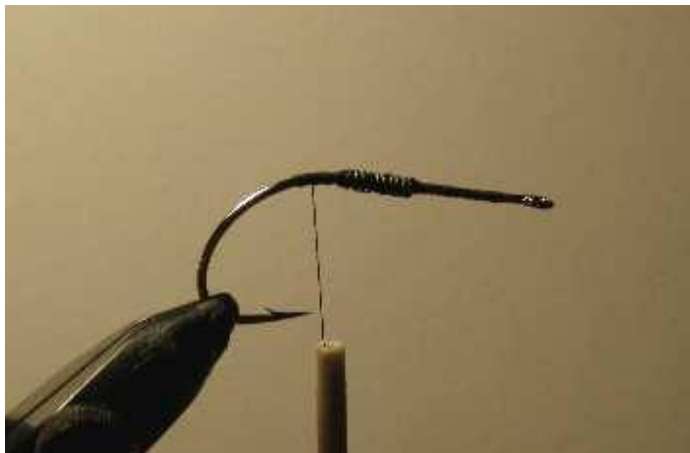
strips of 3" – 6" and pause.

The mad tom, is typically one to three inches long with mature adults reaching to eight or nine inches. They are black to blue-black in color with a cream or yellow belly. Like the smallmouth, mad tom prefers water that is moving at a fair clip- though not fast - and is free of sediment and mud. The mad tom lives in the same clean water as the best smallie populations, so where you find one you will invariably find the other.

Originated by master fly fisherman Al Troth, the fellow who brought us the Elk Hair Caddis, the American Pheasant Tail Nymph and many other now classic fly patterns, the Troth Bullhead is a BIG fly designed to entice BIG fish. Go Gettun and Good Luck!

STEP BY STEP:

Step 1 - Mount the hook in the vice and wrap a thread base from the eye to a point above the barb. Wrap the middle 1/3 of the hook with ten – twelve turns of .030 lead wire (2/0 hook). Create a tapered thread ramp at the back of wire, wrap thread forward, create a thread ramp at front of wire and wrap back to a point above hook barb.



Step 2 - Select the marabou for the tail, cream, yellow or another light shade. Tie in at bend so that it extends 1.5 times shank length. Allow butts to extend forward past forward edge of wire to build a base and cover the wire. Wrap thread forward over wire and back to point of marabou tie in.



Step 3 - Tie in 12 – 20 ostrich hurls over marabou, to extend 20% beyond marabou and then tie in 10 – 12 peacock hurl over ostrich to extend slightly beyond ostrich. Once again allow the butts to extend forward in front of wire. Advance thread forward over butts to provide a full underbody. Trim butts and leave thread forward.



Step 4 - Tie in yarn and palmer back to tail tie in point and then forward over itself making a thick body. Tie off body material in front of wire. Add a few half hitches and clip off thread...add a few drops of head cement and tie in heavier thread (GSP).



Step 5 - Clip and stack a bunch of black or dark deer hair tie in with two loose wraps and roll a collar across the top half of hook only.



Step 6 - Cut and stack another bunch of deer hair and if using one color for the head spin, repeating this step to cover remaining portion of the hook. Or as seen here, tie in a pinch of blue deer hair with two loose wraps and roll to the bottom of the hook, do not tighten yet.



Step 7 - Stack a pinch of black or dark deer hair directly over the blue with two loose wraps. Use the thumb and forefinger of the left hand to hold in place and pull tying thread straight down to tighten.



Step 8 - Closer view of Step 7.



Step 9 - Continue adding a pinch of blue under and a inch of dark deer hair on top using the stacking method until the hook shank is nearly covered. Spin one or two pinches of blue near the eye of the hook to add a blue “nose”. Tie off with two or three double half hitches (easier than whip finishing and just a solid...add head cement).



Step 10 - Use a fresh double-edge razor blade to trim the head. The first cut should produce a flat cut on the lower side of the head to clear the hook. Use the blade to rough out a cone shaped head and continue trimming until you get the desired “toad shape”. (I actually remove fly from vise for this step)



Step 11 - The fly is removed from the vise for fine tuning with the razor blade and scissors.



The finished product tied by Jim Murphy.

