

Alton Girl

January 23, 2003

Here's a winter project for you hardy souls who intend to brave early season conditions this spring. All over the greater northeast, ice will be receding in the colder lakes that support landlocked salmon.. Coincident with that, fresh-water smelt will be massing and running into the mouths of the inlets to spawn. This attracts the landlocks, who have been hidden in deeper water since this time last year, and maybe some large trout as well, if that particular lake has them.

In search of that illusive "go-to" pattern we all wish for, I've been playing around with some dressings. Here's one that's taken a few sizeable salmon for me over the last few years. I've named it the Alton Girl, Alton Bay, where the Merrymeeting River enters Lake Winnepesaukee.

The Alton Girl can be tied regular streamer style, if the tier so desires; however, I prefer the Thunder Creek method for this fly. This requires that the bunches of hair be tied in pointing forward, then folded back and secured.

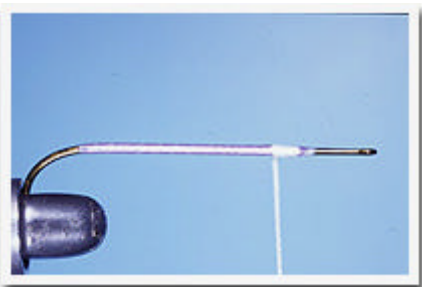
Some general information about tying Thunder Creek streamers. Even larger Thunder Creeks go together much better with fine, straight hair. Bucktail will work, provided it's just that; fine and straight. Other good hairs include goat, Arctic fox body hair, and finer synthetics, such as Craft Fur. **Keep in mind that the hair must be long enough to accommodate the folding-back process and still extend as far beyond the hook bend as you desire!**

For the tying procedure, refer to the photos and captions. And by the way, feel free to alter the colors to more closely match the smelt in the waters you fish. They do vary considerably from one habitat to another.

Here's my basic dressing:

Hook	Long-shanked streamer. Here the Daiichi model 2370, which I designed.
Thread	First, White Uni-Stretch (nylon stretch). Then Hot Red or Orange. Here, 8/0 Fire Orange Uni-Thread.
Body	Pearlescent wrap material. There are many; your choice.
Underwing	(Optional) Pinkish lavender hair, tied on in conventional streamer fashion.
Belly	White hair, tied underneath the hook, pointing forward.
Wing	Gray hair, tied on top, pointing forward.
Eyes	Stick-on or painted.
Head Coating	Any thick adhesive. I personally like Soft Body, a water-base substance.

Tying Procedure:



Step 1. Wrap a smooth underlayer with the Uni-Stretch. Then wrap the body material in a double layer (front-back-front) positioned as shown.

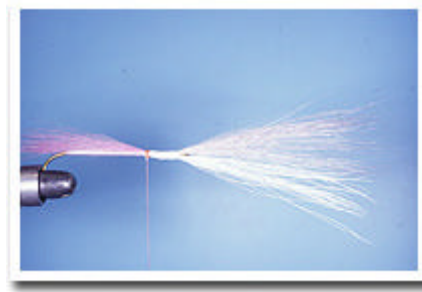


Step 2. Tie on the "underwing". Actually, this component represents the subtle coloration of the body of a smelt in spawning regalia.

Alton Girl continued



Step 3. Carefully measure the length of hair required for the white layer and tie it in as shown, securing it right up to the hook eye.



Step 4. Do the same with the gray hair that forms the top layer.



Step 5. Change to the hot orange thread now. Then draw back one of the hair bunches-it doesn't matter which one-and tie it down very securely.



Step 6. Do the same with the other hair bunch, then tie off the thread finish the fly by adding the eyes and coating the entire head area with a protective adhesive.

I do hope the Alton Girl lures some fat and sassy landlocks for you this spring at iceout -- if indeed we ever have iceout!

For other Fly Tying Projects, please visit my website at www.dicktalleur.com. You will also find information about past and upcoming guided fishing trips, my books and instructional videotapes, recommended products, and upcoming classes and shows.

