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324 words

Banded Beetle

Foam flies which roughly imitate grasshoppers and beetles are very effective on many Montana rivers in August. Some of these patterns can look homogenous, however, some float on their sides, and many simply have too much foam to be tied in small sizes. I designed the Banded Beetle to overcome these shortcomings. It floats upright every time, it can be tied down to size-14 with ease, and it features enough "buggy" materials in addition to the monotone foam that it looks natural rather than homogenous.

How to Fish

The Banded Beetle is one of my go-to patterns on meadow streams like Slough Creek, where terrestrials are key patterns all summer long. It should usually be fished on a dead drift, but an occasional small twitch to set the legs in motion in slow water can draw strikes when the dead drift is not working.

Tying Challenges

The Banded Beetle is constructed oddly compared to many hopper/beetle flies. The body should be dubbed all the way from the tail to the head. The dubbing should be applied roughly so the thread shows through in places. After dubbing the body, spiral the thread back to the band-point. Mark out the band with thread before securing the legs and winding the peacock herl, which is used to divide the legs. Fold back the foam strip and secure the head just in front of the band. Finally, tie in the indicator and whip finish.

Banded Beetle Pattern

Hook: Dai-Riki 280, #8-14

Thread: 6/0 to contrast foam and body, here rusty brown.

Shell: cinnamon, black, olive, or dark brown 2mm foam strip cut wide, here cinnamon.

Body: coarse nymph dubbing to contrast foam, here tan Spirit River Custom Nymph Blend.

Segment: peacock herl.

Legs: olive barred speckled Sili-Legs.

Head: remainder of foam strip folded back and tied down.

Indicator: bright foam.

Tying note: superglue is helpful when tying in the shell/head at the rear of the fly.

