

Partridge Caddis

July means excellent caddis hatches in many parts of the Rockies. Instead of trying to tie up precise matches of every caddis species I see, I often use a pattern that "averages" many of these species. Most of the time, the "average" fly I choose is the Partridge Caddis. With its neutral body, speckled partridge feather wing, and mixed grizzly and brown hackle, the Partridge Caddis has many different visual cues that a trout can respond to. Its partridge flank feather wing is particularly important. Because of the huge variation between individual feathers, a tier can match the wings of many different types of caddis without changing materials.

How-to

The Partridge Caddis can match many different stages in the caddis life cycle. The fly can be fished wet using the down-and-across swing method to imitate an emerging pupa. On the surface it can represent recently-emerged caddis, females spent after egg-laying, and even cripples that failed to emerge properly. For the latter two stages, fishing the fly in foamy backwaters is a particularly effective method. In rough water, it can be fished dead-drifted just under the surface to imitate a caddis of any stage that was swamped and drowned.

Tying Challenges

Because it is a low-floating fly, the Partridge Caddis must be tied on a light-wire hook and with high-quality hackle to prevent it from sinking. Otherwise, the most difficult part of tying the fly is getting the wing level. Even if it's not, don't despair: you just created a caddis cripple on accident.

Pattern

Hook: #12-18 dry fly hook

Thread: 8/0 black

Abdomen: Medium-olive beaver dubbing

Wing: Partridge flank feather tied flat over the body

Thorax: Peacock herl (optional)

Hackle: Grizzly and brown clipped flat on top and bottom (clipping is optional)

Note: The only key components of the fly are the partridge feather and grizzly hackle. Thread, body color, and second hackle can be altered as desired.

