

Snowshoe BWO Emerger

Blue-winged Olives (BWO) are the most common spring mayflies throughout the Rockies, and they are an important food source for the trout as soon as rivers begin warming in late winter. Thus BWO imitations are an important tool in any angler's box from early March until June. In late winter and early spring, when wet, windy, cold weather still predominates, it can take a long time for nymphs to emerge into winged duns (standard dry flies), so emerger patterns are crucial. The Snowshoe BWO is quick to tie, visible, floats well, and best of all fools the fish.

How to Fish

The Snowshoe BWO should be fished on a dead drift whenever Blue-winged Olives are hatching. To keep it riding low in the water like the natural emergers, apply fly floatant only to the wing. During periods of flat light, such as under overcast skies or late in the evening, the fly can be hard to see, so it makes sense to fish it behind a larger dry fly like a Coachman Trude or Parachute Adams, which serves both as a strike indicator and a juicy second option for the trout.

Tying Challenges

Probably the hardest part of tying the Snowshoe BWO is finding snowshoe rabbit feet. This is a new material that many shops do not carry. If possible, try requesting it through a local shop. If you can't wait for a local shop to make an order, rabbit feet are widely available from large online and mail-order retailers. The other challenge is its size. Start with larger hooks and work down.

Snowshoe BWO Pattern

Hook: Light wire scud, #16-22.

Thread: 8/0 olive.

Tail: brown Zelon clipped short.

Abdomen: brown-olive rabbit or synthetic dubbing.

Rib: green or pearl Krystal Flash.

Thorax: medium olive dubbing.

Wing: tuft of natural medium dun snowshoe rabbit fur in middle of thorax. Tie it in so it is almost, but not quite, vertical.

