

## Fly of the Month

### Green Butt Skunk

Tied by Bob Pearcy

It's steelhead time over the hill on the Salmon River so this month's pattern is an old standard. Ed Link, the outfitter in North Fork, says that you only need three flies, a Green Butt Skunk, a Green Butt Skunk, and another Green Butt Skunk. Another saying is that the fly to use for steelhead is the one you have confidence in. Pattern itself does not seem to make much of a difference, subject to a few rules. First, early in the season when the water is warmer the fly should be tied smaller and sparser. Under winter conditions really large 2 to 4 inch long flies are used. Second, use a dark fly on dark, cloudy days or at sunrise and sunset and a bright fly under sunny conditions. The Green Butt Skunk has some dark and some bright characteristics so it will work pretty well under all brightness conditions. The fly is cast down and across at about a 45 degree angle and, by mending, allowed to swing back across the run as slow as possible. Once it is directly below you, or on the dangle as they say, take two steps down the run and cast again. In this way you cover the run with the hope that your fly swings in front of a fish willing to grab it. When one does, hold on. One of our intrepid steelheaders uses a tandem rig with two Green Butt Skunks and casts upstream and across so that the flies drift deeply along a seam in a run. It is not exactly the classic presentation but hey it works! We have seen the picture to prove it. Although there has been an ongoing debate about whether or not steelhead feed while in the river, the consensus now is that they do at least to a limited extent. However, they probably grab a steelhead fly more out of a territorial than a feeding response.



#### Recipe

Hook: Tiemco 7999 or equivalent, size 4 to 8 (the hook in the photo is an Alex Jackson Spey)

Thread: black 6/0

Tail: red hackle fibers

Butt: green chenille

Body: black chenille

Collar: black saddle hackle tied swept back

Ribbing: silver mylar or oval tinsel

Wing: white calf tail with a 6 or 8 strands of crystal flash on top