

## **Fly of the Month**

### **Copper Soft Hackle**

**by Greg Chester**



It's always gratifying to find a pattern that not only works well for its intended purpose but has some universal appeal to trout in other waters and seasons. Soft hackle patterns certainly fit this description and after my recent success in the Yellowstone area, large patterns should be in your boxes as well as smaller versions.

The folks in West Yellowstone have known this for some time but large flies (#6 or 8) with a full, bushy collar rather than the typical sparsely hackled small patterns are the ticket for big run-up browns on the Madison. I was a bit skeptical about this assuming streamers are the fall go-to patterns. This is still true but for the browns on the move in the early run up phase this big soft hackle clearly outfishes the streamers. I tried streamer/soft hackle double fly rigs alternating positions and the soft hackle won every time. Again, this is in the earlier run up phase, usually in early September. I was there the week after Labor Day this year. If I had been there in mid to late Sept then big streamers are still the way to go.

This pattern described below is what I used but I could imagine patterns with different abdomen material and color would work. Some of the guides swear by patterns with a ribbed hare's ear abdomen. The one common characteristic is the bushy, full soft hackle collar. I typically use partridge

but ruffed grouse would work equally well. As always feel free to experiment with different materials, ribbing and color. However I'd stay with big patterns.

## **Menu**

Thread 6/0 Rust Unithread

Hook Dai-Riki 730 size 8

Abdomen Copper or Rust Flashabou

Rib Medium Copper Wire

Collar Rust Ice Dub

Hackle Hungarian Partridge, 2 feathers, tied full

By the way I used a fast sinking 6 wt line (Rio Outbound) and a sinking leader deploying an across-and-down, swinging retrieve. I got bites during all phases of this retrieve, not just at the end where you might typically expect some action.