

Fly of the Month- February 2018

By
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Yes it's almost that time again. As winter ends and hope springs eternal, anglers once again envision themselves on the Bitterroot River tight to a feisty Cutthroat, Brown or Rainbow. Such is the folly of all anglers. We are more likely to be rewarded for our efforts with snow, sleet and rain and no sight of the elusive Skwala.

The Skwala stonefly is named after the sound an angler makes choking on a mouth full of wind-driven



snow. Starting sometime in March (when water temps reach the 42^o mark) the Skwalas, like many stonefly nymphs, crawl to the shallows and onto the river bank to split out of their shucks and become adults. After mating, the female flies or crawls on to the surface of the river to deposit her eggs and coincidentally feed the hungry fish.

Gravid Skwala female - note the large egg sack (*and the frozen angler in back*)

How to tie the Skwala dry fly.

Thread

Brown 6/0 or 70 Diener UTC

Hook:	Size 8 or 10 Dai-Riki 280, 2X long "Hopper Hook" or equivalent.
Egg sack	Black crystal flash.
Abdomen	Peacock Herl or MFC Skwala Olive UV dubbing.
Foam	2mm Brown Cross-Link Foam and 1mm Orange
Wing	Tan (or white) Widows Web or similar poly wing material.
Legs	Black, brown or brown and orange Silicone or Rubber legs.

Pinch the barb on the hook and place it in your vice.

Start the thread an eye length behind the eye and wind to where the barb was, return the thread to about the midpoint of the hook shank.

Tie in eight strands of Black Chrystal Flash and bring the thread back to the barb.

Trim the Flash a little longer than the bend of the hook.

Tie in four or five strands of peacock or dubbing and wind the body all the way to the eye.

Cut a strip of the brown foam about an eighth of an inch wide and several inches long.

Round off the end of the foam strip with scissors or a body cutter and lay it along the top of the hook, ending just short of the hook bend and tie it in at the head.

Bring the thread over the foam to a point forward of the midpoint of the hook shank and wrap again snugly (see photo for position) being careful to keep the foam on the top of the hook shank.

Clip a small bunch of wing material about an inch long and tie in at its middle - fold over and secure.

Trim the wing slightly longer than the egg sack.

Fold the foam over to form the head and tie down securely.

Cut a strip of orange foam slightly narrower than the brown and add above the head.

Trim both pieces so they are about even with the hook point.

Tie in the legs and trim to size.

Whip finish where the thread is and NOT AT THE HEAD. Add lacquer on the whip finish and check to ensure all the foam is centered on top of the hook.

Remember stay warm and safe.