

Fly of the Month - January 2018 by Jay Melzer

The Shop Vac is an effective and easy to tie pattern that can be fished throughout the year.



Although the origins of many fly patterns are subject to doubt the Shop Vac can claim a verifiable author. Rowan Nyman was a guide in West Yellowstone who worked at Blue Ribbon Flies. According to Craig Matthews in his book *Fly Patterns of Yellowstone - Volume Two*, Nyman invented this pattern in the 1990s. It is so named because it vacuums up every fish in the river.

Dead drift the Shop Vac as a trailer behind your favorite stonefly imitation or let it swing behind a wet fly. It serves as a good Beatis imitation and in small sizes trout may think it's a midge. Tie some up and try them.

Recipe:

Hook: Dai Riki 135 - Size 16.
Thread: Black UTC 70 or Uni 6/0.
Bead: Gold 2.5mm - 3/32nd.
Body: Ringneck Pheasant tail-feather.
Rib: Size small copper wire.
Wing: White Zelon or Poly yarn.

Tying the Shop Vac is straight forward.

Pinch the hook barb and slide on the bead. Clamp the hook in the vice leaving the bend exposed.

Start the thread behind the bead and tie in the copper wire rib along the hook shank.

Wrap the thread, capturing the wire as you wrap, to part way down the bend of the hook and then return wrap back to about half way along the shank.

Select six (or so) pheasant tail fibers, trim the tips and tie in. Wrap the thread back along the shank to the where the thread stopped earlier. Wrap the pheasant fibers up the shank bringing the thread forward with each wrap*. Tie off the fibers behind the bead.

Counter wrap the rib wire evenly up the body and tie off behind the bead.

Cut a one inch length of Zelon (or substitute) and tie it in at the mid point of the yarn behind the bead. Then fold the yarn over and finish tying in. Trim the wing to half the hook length.

Whip finish and add a drop of lacquer.

* There is an excellent video that illustrates how to tie this pattern and shows a terrific technique for wrapping the fibers to make the body. You can see it on the internet at: <https://vimeo.com/150250719>.