

Fly of the Month

By Mike Ott

A Hare's Ear by Any Other Name... Classic Nymph Emergers

When you speak with some of the top competitive fly fishers in the country and ask them which flies they use and which flies catch fish with the greatest regularity, everyone has a few favorites, but all of them have a few flies in common – variations on the classic hare's ear nymphs, pheasant tail nymphs, and prince nymphs. I actually spotted this pattern on someone's Facebook post, but as is often the case, I can never find it again. While it is mostly a Hare's Ear Nymph, it is a variation that is different enough to attract attention. It merges a traditional nymph with a soft hackle.



Unlike most Euro-style nymphs, it has no tungsten bead. In fact, I added a tiny bit of weight to the thorax – 6 wraps of .01 lead – just because it makes it a little more versatile to my style of fishing. It uses brown partridge for the tail and legs instead of hare's mask which add movement and less water resistance. The legs are actually tied soft hackle style, and the wing case is scud back colored with a sharpie for translucence imitating an emerging insect.

- Hook: Firehole Sticks #317 size 14 or 16
- Thread: Veevus 10/0 to 14/0 Red
- Weight: .01 Lead Wire
- Tail: Brown Partridge Fibers
- Ribbing: Small Gold Oval Tinsel
- Body: Hare's Ear Dubbing
- Wing Case: 1/8" Summer Duck colored Scud Back
- Thorax: Hare's Ear Dubbing
- Hackle: Brown Partridge Feather

- 1) Secure hook in vise, add 5 or 6 wraps of .01" lead wire at the thorax, and secure with thread wraps. Advance thread to hook bend adjacent to where the barb would be. You can also vary the fly size by using more or less of the hook shank. Tie in brown partridge fibers stripped from the shaft extending about the length of the body and trim the butt ends.
- 2) Tie in a length of gold oval tinsel on the near side of the hook.
- 3) Dub a sparse tapered body to the thorax, and brush out to make it somewhat fuzzy.
- 4) Spiral wrap the ribbing making 5 or wraps to the thorax, and secure with thread wraps. Trim the excess.
- 5) Tie in scud back on top of hook at the thorax extending rearward.
- 6) Dub a loose thorax to just behind the hook eye and make a few thread wraps for a base.
- 7) Tie in an appropriately-sized brown partridge feather by the tip. Make two wraps in front of the thread stroking the fibers back as you wrap. Wind thread through the hackle to the eye and secure the shaft of the feather. Trim the excess hackle.
- 8) Stroke the fibers to the rear and make several thread wraps to start the head.
- 9) Separate the hackle on to the sides, and pull the scud back wing case forward and secure at the head. Pull tight and trim any excess.

- 10) Finish the head and whip finish.
- 11) Use a brown sharpie to color the thorax.

I like to fish this fly as the first of two soft hackles, or as a dropper under a standard nymph. It is the perfect fly for swinging through those runs where you just cannot get a good drift, and when fish are actively feeding on emerging mayflies or caddis. I also tie this same style in pheasant tail nymph and red fox squirrel nymph patterns. All seem to work equally well based on what colors the fish are taking.