

In the Vise

The Stomper/By Andrew Grillos



Materials

Hook:	TMC 3761, sizes 6–16
Thread:	Black UTC GSP 100
Tail:	Moose body hair
Overbody:	2 layers of 1 mm foam, same color as underbody with black on top
Underbody:	Holographic Flashabou
Wing:	McFlylon or poly yarn
Hackle:	Grizzly dry fly
Legs:	Barred fine round rubber legs
Third foam layer:	2 mm foam, same color as underbody
Indicator post:	Neon-pink poly yarn

The Humpy has always been one of my favorite general attractor dries. It's easy to see and floats well, two of my primary criteria for most "guiding flies." I've always thought there's no point in fishing flies that you can't see, and I really get frustrated when flies fall apart after only a couple of fish. I guess that explains why so many of my flies are big foam dries.

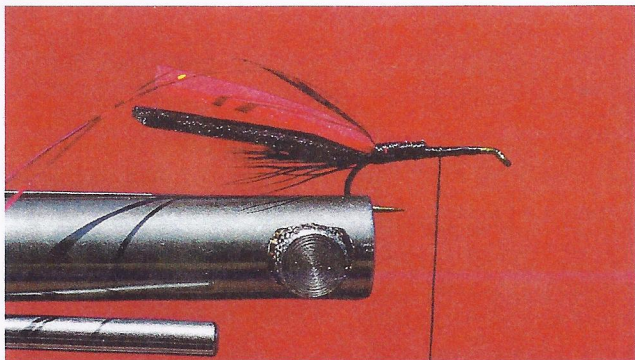
I began playing with the earliest versions of this fly while guiding in South America a few years back. The fish were not picky at all and liked giant foam flies, so I tied a few foam and synthetic Humpy-inspired flies on size 2/0 light-wire salmon hooks. The fish loved the flies, and I had a blast watching my anglers fish them. Once I got back to the States, I forgot about the giant foam Humpy idea for a year or so.

While going through a box of random fishing stuff a while back, I came across a single giant foam Humpy that was tied in an orange-and-black color combo. The timing coincided with the beginning of my season guiding for the stonefly hatch in the Gunnison Gorge, in Colorado, where the trout just happen to like giant black-and-orange flies. Despite not having what I'd view as an accurate salmonfly profile, my fly from South America pulled its weight and caught dozens of fish in a day during the Gunnison Gorge stonefly hatch.

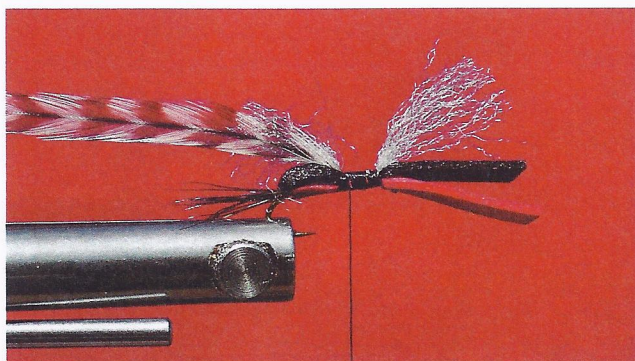
That experience spiked my interest in the foam Humpy, and I began tying more "normal-size" flies in this same style. My first Colorado-tied versions were tied in a size 6, and I use them as indicator flies for hopper/dropper fishing with my clients on the upper Gunnison. More fish ended up eating my indicator flies that day, so I knew I was on to something. I finally ended up toning my giant flies down to what would be considered normal by the rest of the fly-fishing public—sizes 10 through 16—and took them to a couple of small streams west of Gunnison, Colorado, where they held up to dozens of aggressive fish.

The fly's name came from something that I heard my friend Chris Mortimer, of Gunnison River Pro, saying to his clients one day. His anglers for the day were relative beginners, and they asked him the best way to release a fish if they actually caught one. His joking response, and the look on their faces, was priceless. He told them to "drag the fish up on the sand, give it the old stomp, yank the hook out, and kick it back to the water." Of course, he gave a real explanation afterward, but I thought the name Stomper would be perfect for a fly.

Colorado guide Andrew Grillos is a creative fly designer who now lives in western Washington.



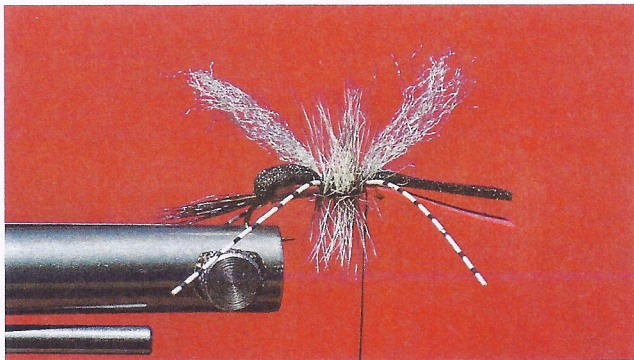
Step 1: Lay down a tight thread base. Tie in moose body hair tail about equal to the hook length. Cut two foam strips equal to or slightly wider than the hook gap. One will be the black overbody and one will be the colored underbody. To avoid creating a bulky tie-in, cut the end of the strips into a point before tying it in. Tie in two strands of holographic Flashabou, doubled over your thread.



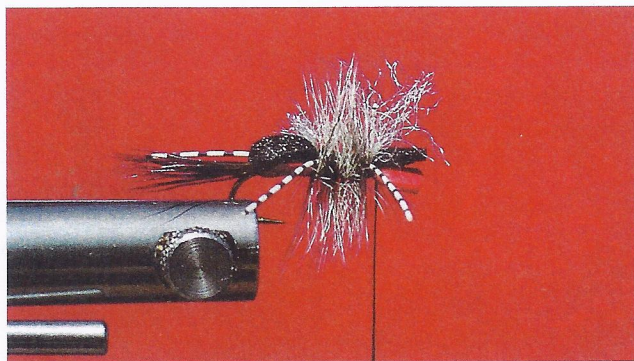
Step 2: Tightly wrap Flashabou to the midpoint of the hook and tie off. Pull underbody foam forward and tie off at the midpoint. Put a tiny drop of superglue on the top of the underbody; then pull the overbody forward and tie off. Advance thread to the end of the hook shank and tie off foam strips. Tie down and bury the foam thorax, and tie in a poly yarn wing on top. Tie in hackle.



Step 3: Tie in legs on either side of the hook shank. I like to start at the midpoint of the shank on the side closest to me and then stretch the legs forward while tying off to the front of the thorax. Stretching the rubber makes a less bulky tie-in. I then tie in the legs on the other side of the hook in the same manner.



Step 4: Wrap your hackle densely and tie off. I like this fly to be very heavily hackled; it's part of what makes it so buoyant.



Step 5: Carefully pull the foam head and wing out of the way and tie off the thread at the eye. Glue the tie-off. Trim the foam head so it's equal in length to the thorax. Trim the rear of the wing to half the length of the foam overbody. Trim the front of the wing so it's a little longer than the hackle. Trim the legs to be slightly shorter than the overall fly length.



Step 6: Trim the underside of the hackle nearly flat on the bottom. This doesn't affect the fly's buoyancy and ensures that it will float upright on nearly every cast. Trimming the hackle also forces the fly to sit lower in the water, giving the fish a better look at their next meal. Apply a tiny drop of head cement to the Flashabou body to make it more durable.