

# In the Vise

Masked Marauder Stonefly/By Curtis Fry



## Materials

<b>Hook:</b>	Mustad C49 S, sizes 6–14
<b>Bead:</b>	To match hook
<b>Thread:</b>	Tan UTC Ultra Thread 70 Denier
<b>Underbody:</b>	Size 0.025 lead-free wire
<b>Tail and legs:</b>	Rubber or silicone legs, barred or colored to match naturals
<b>Abdomen:</b>	Tan marabou feathers, a piece of 2 mm MFC Skinny Skin (mottled gold), and 1 mm Mylar tinsel or Krystal Flash
<b>Ribbing:</b>	Brass or gold wire
<b>Thorax:</b>	Tan Arizona Synthetic Dubbing
<b>Thorax wing case:</b>	3 or 4 mm MFC Skinny Skin (mottled gold) and 1 or 2 mm holographic tinsel or Krystal Flash
<b>Wing-case coating:</b>	Clear Cure Goo Hydro

**W**hen you envision an ideal setting for trout fishing on a stream or river, you probably think of the classic runs, riffles, and pools where you're likely to see fish rising to dry flies or trout nipping at nymphs in the water column. The truth is that, while these types of water are fun and you can fish them effectively, a lot of water—smaller or deeper pockets and faster, less-defined water—is often overlooked in favor of the traditional spots. The Masked Marauder Stonefly—created by Clark “Cheech” Pierce—was built to be effective in such overlooked spots and any other type of water where bigger bugs come into play.

This pattern carries extra weight (a 4 mm tungsten bead and additional lead wraps)—it's intended to get down, and get down fast, which comes in handy when you're fishing faster water with tighter, smaller, deeper pockets.

Those were the conditions on a local small stream a few years ago. I'd been fishing during a relatively light Salmonfly hatch, but the water was running higher than normal and the standard holding lies didn't produce as many fish as I had seen on previous outings. I switched from the standard dry flies and nymphs used on the sexier runs and holes and tied on a shorter nymph rig with an indicator a scant 24 inches above a couple of bigger weighted nymphs, including the Masked Marauder. On the first cast into a small roily pocket directly beneath a cascading drop-off, the Marauder quickly descended into the dark depths. No sooner had the fly disappeared than a quick flash of buttery silver appeared, and the fight was on. This unremarkable little pocket produced my biggest fish of the day: a fat and sassy 17-inch brown. This scenario was repeated throughout the rest of the day and has since proven to be very effective on almost any river I've fished.

Of course, this style of stonefly pattern can be fished with any number of presentations in varying locations, but it's important to note that even in the more highly

pressured fishing locations, with supposedly finicky fish, throwing a bigger pattern into lightly fished holes consistently produced more and bigger fish.

As far as fly design goes, there are two important considerations. First, the fly must employ a distinct two-tone color scheme, with a lighter underside and a darker back. Second, because this is a heavier pattern, the beads and hook sizes are somewhat larger than what you might use to match the naturals' sizes. Remember, the type of water these patterns are designed for doesn't afford the fish much time to examine the offering before deciding to eat it or leave it. And because this pattern can also imitate other insects—such as mayflies, dragonflies, or damselflies—be prepared with a variety of sizes and color combinations. You never know what bugs you might encounter.

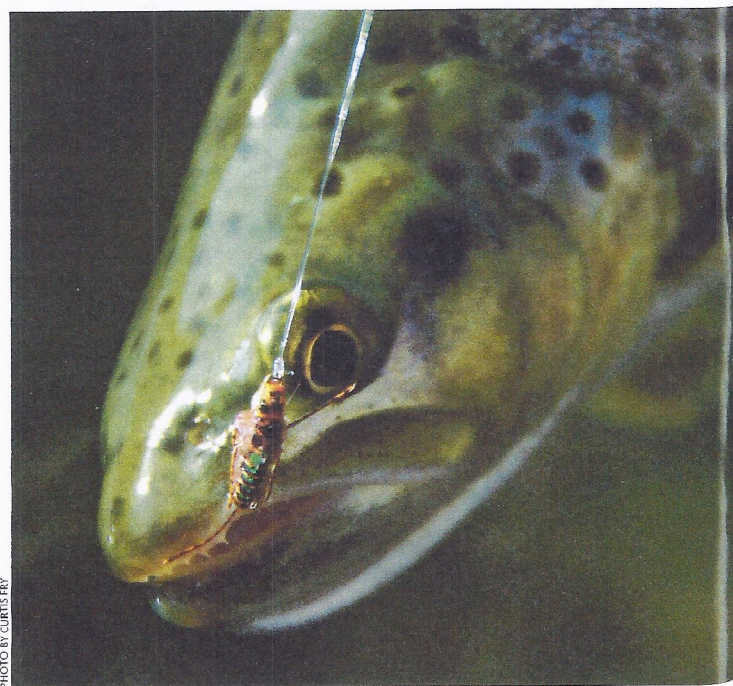


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**Step 1:** Thread the bead onto the hook and then attach the thread in front of the bead at the eye of the hook, building up a small thread “dam.” Whip-finish and cut the thread. Make 10 tight wraps of wire up close to the backside of the bead to secure it in place. Reattach the thread behind the lead wraps and work back to the bend of the hook. Next, tie in the split tail.



**Step 2:** Attach the wire, Mylar tinsel, Skinny Skin, and finally the marabou—tips first—in that order. Advance the thread to just above the hook point. Depending on the size you’re tying, you might want to build up a tapered body to meet the wire wraps.



**Step 3:** Wrap the marabou forward, keeping the fibers twisted as you wrap to ensure an evenly tapered body that allows the fibers to breathe. Follow the marabou with the Skinny Skin, the Mylar tinsel over that, and then rib the body with wire. Lightly “shake” the wire as you wrap it so that it doesn’t bind down and trap the marabou fibers. Tie off and clip excess pieces of material at this point and secure everything.



**Step 4:** Tie in another piece of Mylar tinsel and the wider piece of Skinny Skin at the thread’s current location, working the thread back over the tinsel and Skinny Skin to secure them. Apply a thorax of the dubbing and then create a small band of thread in the middle of the thorax, where you will tie in the rubber or silicone legs. Once the legs are secured, apply a small amount of dubbing to cover the thread and secure the legs.



**Step 5:** Advance the thread over the top of the bead and then pull the Skinny Skin and tinsel over the top of the bead, securing it very snugly with a downward motion to ensure that the Skinny Skin conforms to the shape of the bead and the tinsel is centered. Tie off with a few wraps of thread and trim the waste material before building up a thread head and whip-fining.



**Step 6:** Apply an even coat of Clear Cure Goo Hydro along the top of the fly over the Skinny Skin and tinsel. Use a UV light to cure it.

*Curtis Fry is a creative fly tier and freelance photographer who lives in Utah.*