

Microstone

If I could carry only one stonefly, it would be this one. It is the first of its kind to incorporate Midge tubing for an abdomen; the wire rib and UV-coated wing case create a stone fly designed to ride upside-down to avoid snags and create more positive hook sets.

Difficulty: ★★★

Tier's Choice: Size 12, pheasant tail

Season: All

Estimated Time to Tie: Beginner—10 to 12 minutes; intermediate—6 to 8 minutes; expert—2 to 3 minutes



Microstone—Pheasant tail

Hook: Tiemco 200R, sizes 10 to 14

Bead: Gun metal, tungsten, 2.7 millimeter for size 10, 2.4 millimeter for sizes 12 and 14

Thread: Black, 8/0 or 70

Abdomen: Pheasant tail, Midge tubing. Micro tubing for size 14

Rib: Hot yellow, Ultra Wire BR, small for size 14

Tail: Black, round rubber, small

Anal gill: Pale yellow, CDC

Wing case: Natural bustard, Thin Skin

Thorax: UV black, Ice Dub

Legs: Brown, speckled centipede, medium

Collar: Rusty brown, Ice Dub



Microstone—Golden

Hook: Tiemco 200R, sizes 10 to 14

Bead: Gun metal, tungsten 2.7 millimeter for size 10, 2.4 millimeter for sizes 12 and 14

Thread: Light cahill, 8/0 or 70

Abdomen: Light golden stone, Midge tubing. Micro tubing for size 14

Rib: Ginger, Ultra Wire BR, small for size 14

Tail: Red/black/yellow, speckled centipede legs, medium

Anal gill: Pale yellow, CDC

Wing case: Golden bustard, Thin Skin

Thorax: UV light yellow, Ice Dub

Legs: Red/black/yellow, speckled centipede legs, medium

Collar: Olive brown, Ice Dub

An impressionistic version of a stonefly, the Microstone is not intended to be an exact pattern. Realistic ties can be time consuming, and I would

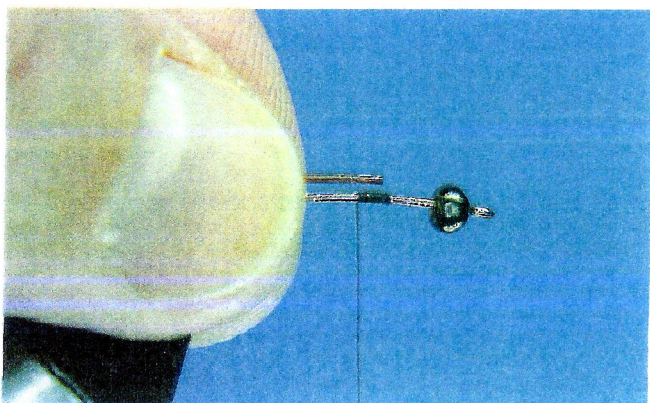
rather spend that time in the water. But tying the Microstone requires few materials, and it catches fish throughout the season.

Most great stonefly patterns share several characteristics: pronounced tails, weighted heads, and an ability to show lifelike motion. Adding three sets of legs to a pattern may make it look more realistic and add to the bin appeal, but I have yet to encounter fish with the ability to count appendages. Centipede legs are a great match for the real thing and give the fly an added source of motion as it tumbles down the stream. The tubing I use for the abdomen can withstand constant pounding along the bottom of the streambed. My two standby colors are pheasant tail and golden stone, but I have had great success fishing chartreuse and blue variations. While fishing, I like to add weight to my tippet, accommodating for the various flows and depths of a river. Often it is just the matter of adding or subtracting a weight to deliver the fly into the feeding zone.

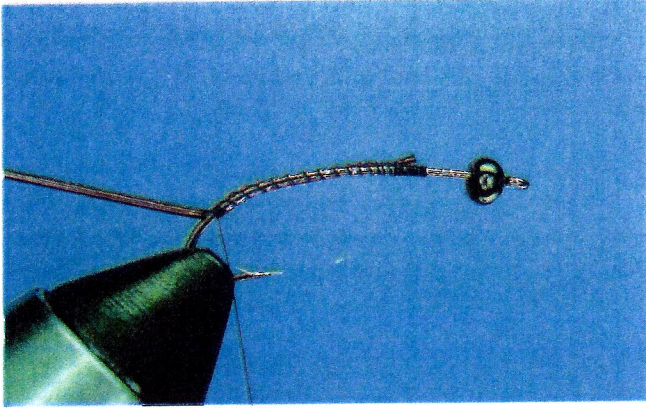
The most effective way to fish stonefly nymphs is to fish them on a dead drift along the bottom. Because stoneflies are not the best swimmers, they can be an easy target for feeding fish. Fish them in fast-moving, oxygenated riffles and the pools and pockets downstream of the riffles. As with nearly every nymph situation, your odds are increased if you fish more than one pattern on the end of your line. Depending on what is hatching, you may want to pair the Microstone with a caddis, midge, or mayfly imitation.

Attractors or search patterns like the B.T. Special, Prince Charming, or Superman will cover nearly every situation imaginable.

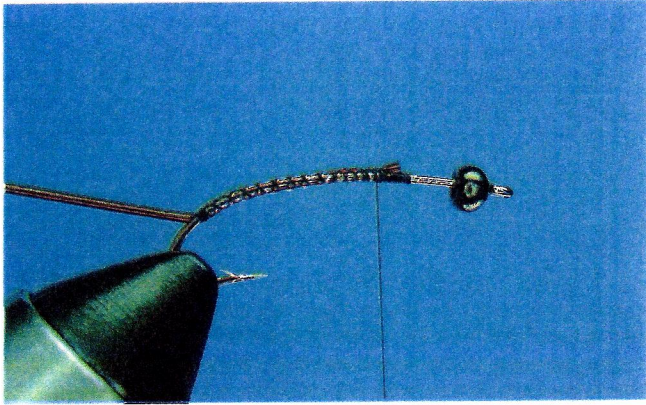
Figuring out if stoneflies are actively hatching is as easy as looking on the rocks and woody debris in the stream to see if there are empty shucks. Depending on where you fish, stonefly activity peaks between late May and the end of August. For some years now I have believed that stonefly nymphs will become the next caddis of our industry, meaning that the stonefly will be tied, bought, and fished with the same frequency as caddis fly nymphs. Up until the late 1970s caddis larvae were mostly thought of as an irrelevant food source; now it would be unheard of to not have caddis larvae imitations in your nymph box. There is no doubt that cold, oxygen-rich streams produce ample populations of stoneflies, and although most anglers are aware of their existence, I find that they are usually unaware of the year-round availability. Because most stoneflies take several years and many molts to reach maturity, they can become trout food at any stage of their life. Even though the predominant time to fish them may be between the first sign of runoff and September, they are ever present in various sizes. But as a bonus, the Microstone can also imitate an *Isonychia* nymph, increasing its effectiveness toward the end of the season.



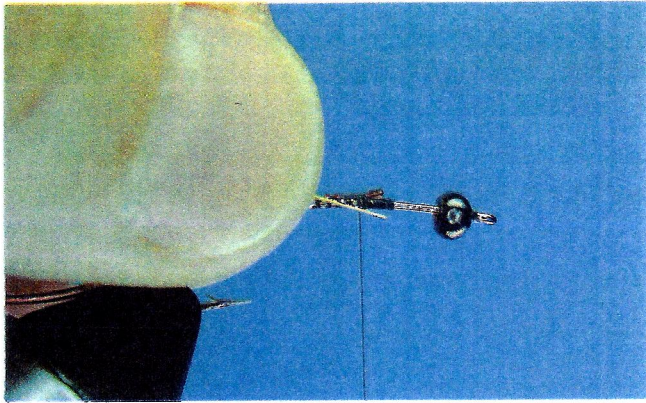
1. Start the thread several bead widths behind the bead. Take the tubing and hold it so the tag is extended just beyond the thread. If you position the tubing on top of the hook, it will roll to the far side from the friction applied when it's tied in with the thread.



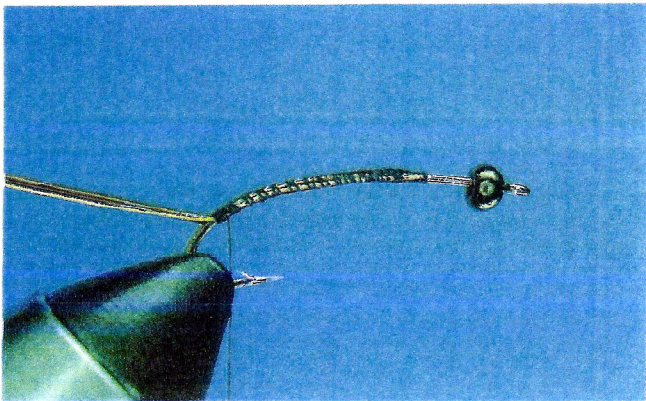
2. Wrap the thread down the shank, keeping the tubing parallel to the far side of the hook. Notice the gaps in the thread. This will form your X pattern in the following step. Don't go too far down the bend, or else you will close off the gape.



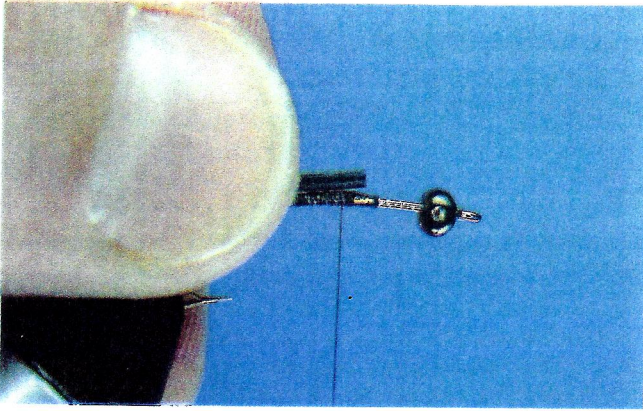
3. Now bring the thread back to the start point, forming the X pattern with your wraps on the way back up the shank.



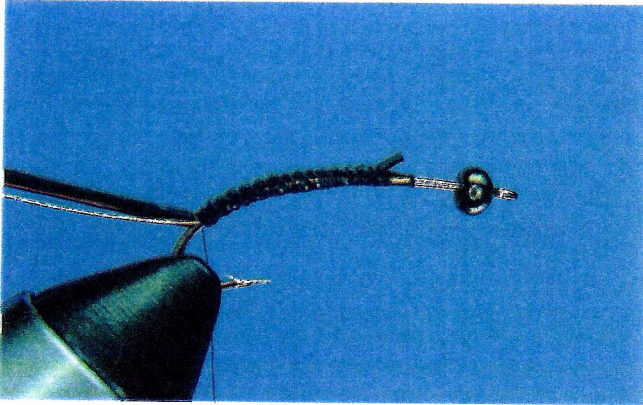
4. Hold the wire at a 45-degree angle to the shank on the near side.



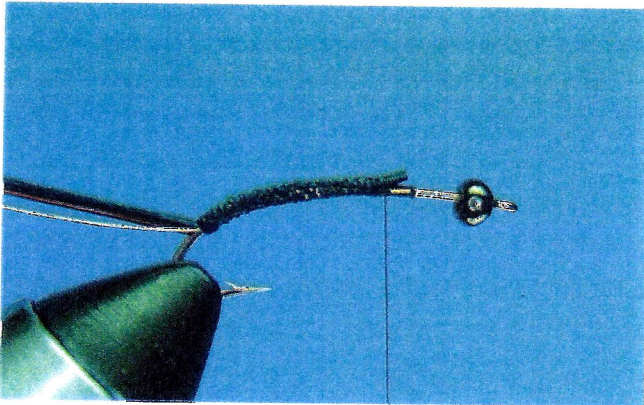
5. Tie the wire in on the near side of the shank, keeping it parallel to the hook. The wire balances the tubing tied in on the opposite side to create a more lateral profile.



6. Bring the thread back to the start point and take your rubber for the tail and lay it on top of the hook shank.



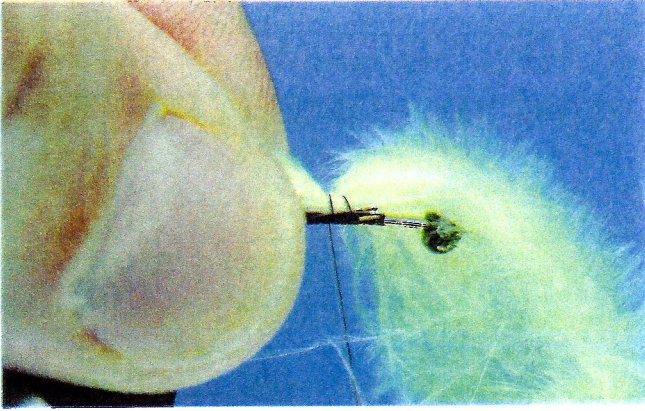
7. Keep the rubber directly on top of the hook as you tie it in with the thread. Notice again you are using the gap thread wraps. Tying in the rubber this way is easier and actually binds it better than straight wraps.



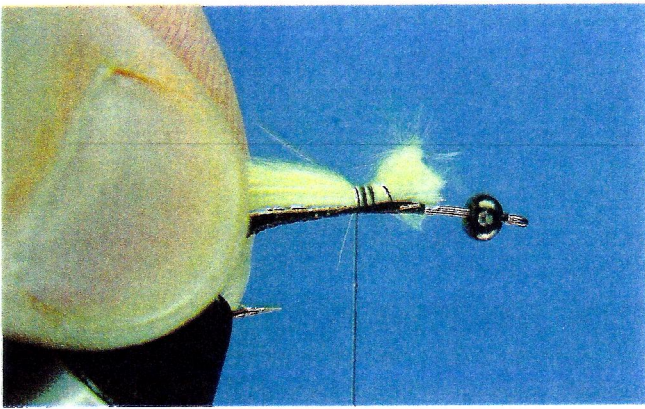
8. Return the thread to the start position forming the X pattern.



9. Take the anal gill material or egg sac material and preen the fibers. Pinch it down on top of the hook. The tips should extend beyond the rear of the hook.



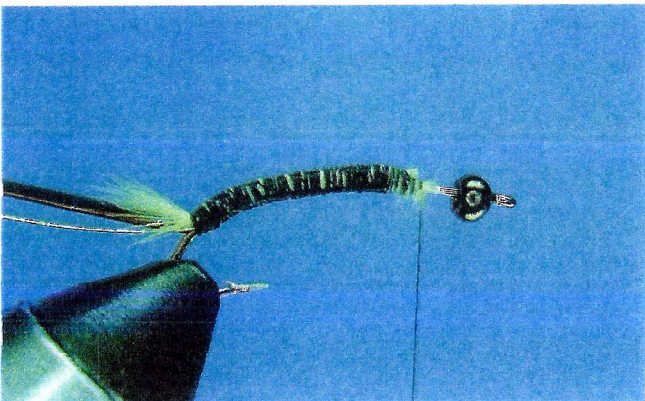
10. Switch hands and begin binding the fibers to the hook, wrapping the thread down the shank toward the bend.



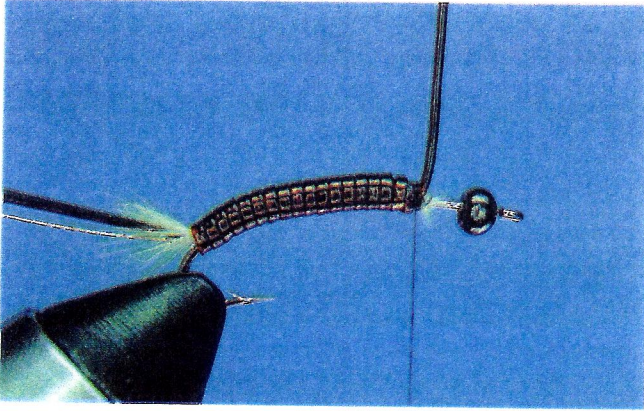
11. After you have made several tight wraps, you can remove the excess material to make tying in the rest of the fibers easier.



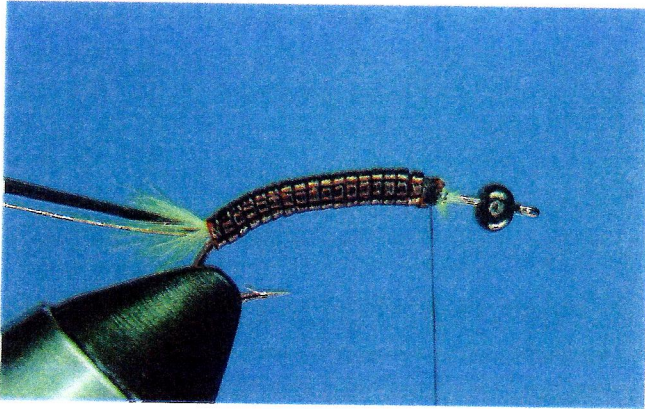
12. Go all the way down the shank with the thread.



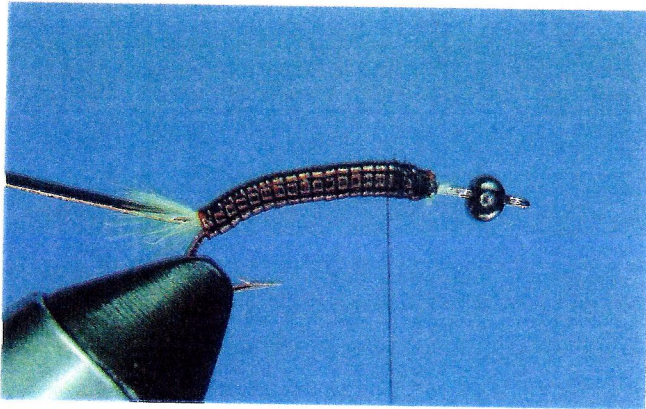
13. Return the thread to the start position.



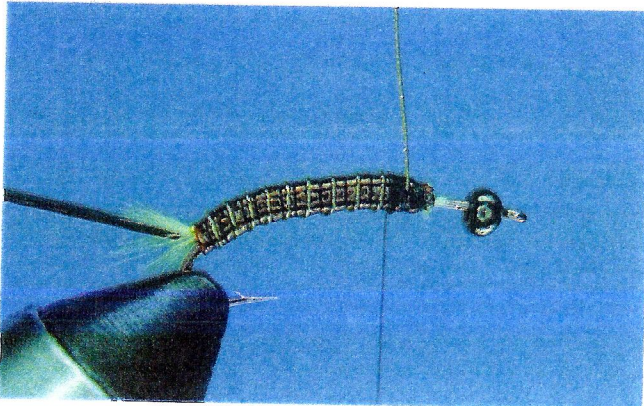
14. Take the tubing and use adjacent wraps until you reach the thorax area. When you reach the thorax, make six to eight tight thread wraps to secure the tubing.



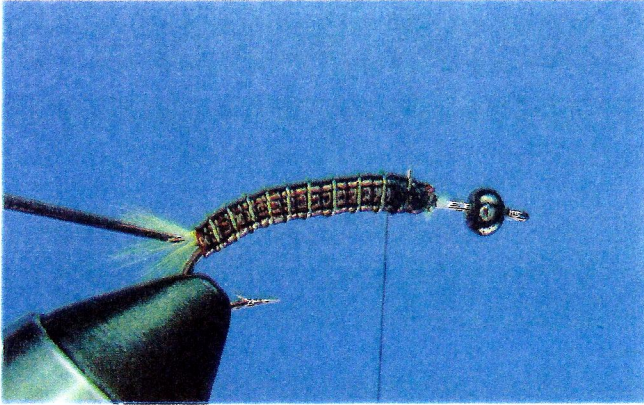
15. Trim the remaining tubing. Make sure you made enough thread wraps in the previous step, or else you risk the tubing unwinding.



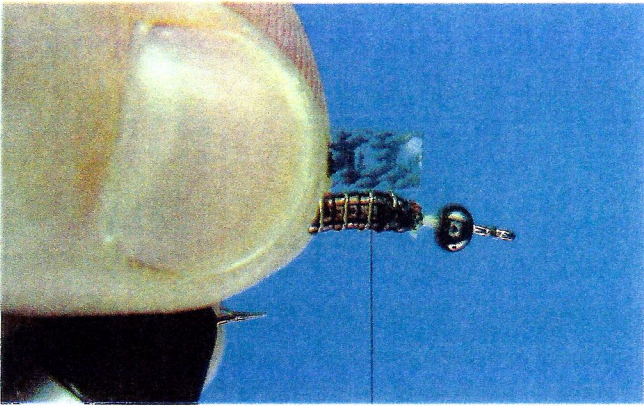
16. Make a few more thread wraps back down the shank to expand your thorax and get ready to tie the wire rib down.



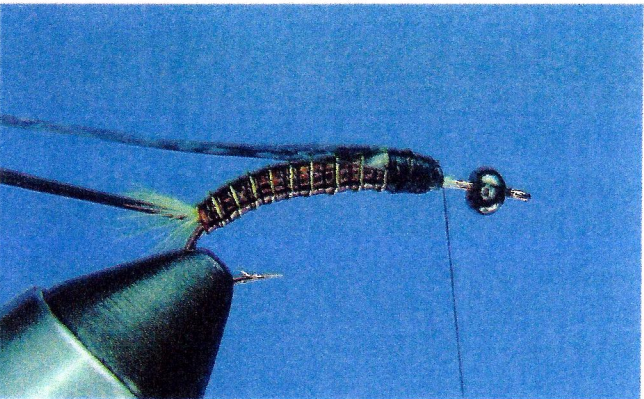
17. Make seven to ten evenly spaced ribs with the wire and then make several thread wraps over the wire to secure it to the hook.



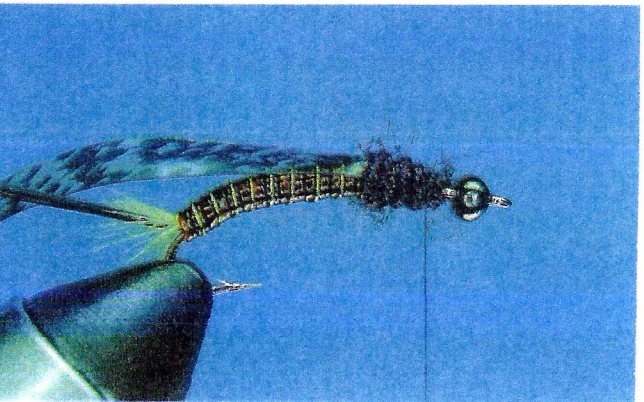
18. Trim the remaining wire with your utility scissors.



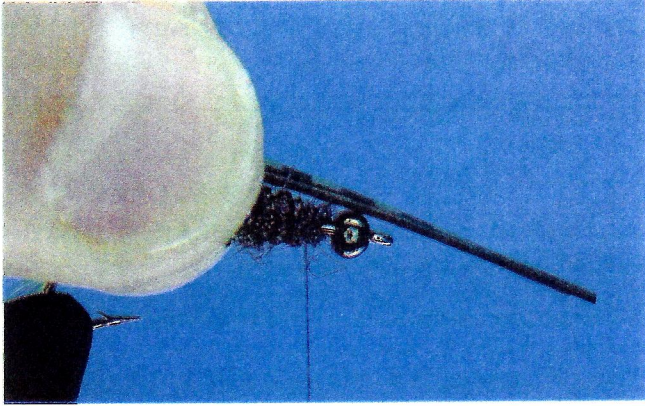
19. Get your Thin Skin for the wing case and position it on top of the hook. Leaving a tag hanging out beyond the thread will make it easier to tie it in.



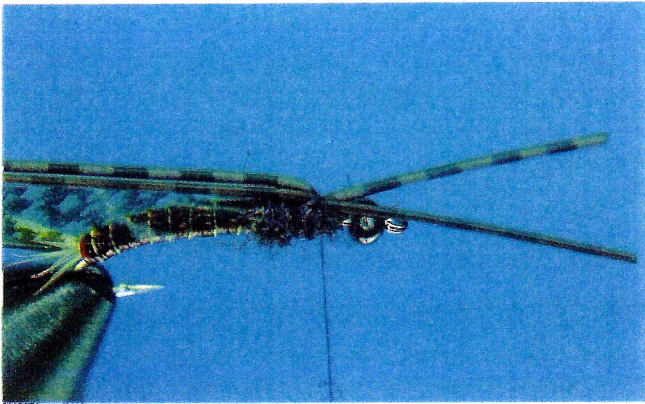
20. Use plenty of wraps to secure the wing case to the rear of the thorax and position the thread on the bare shank in front of the materials you have already tied down.



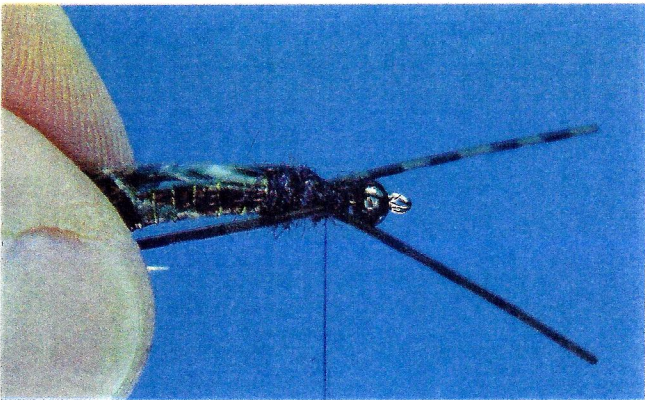
21. Form a small base of dubbing with a slight taper as shown. The taper will occur naturally as you dub over the bigger rear end.



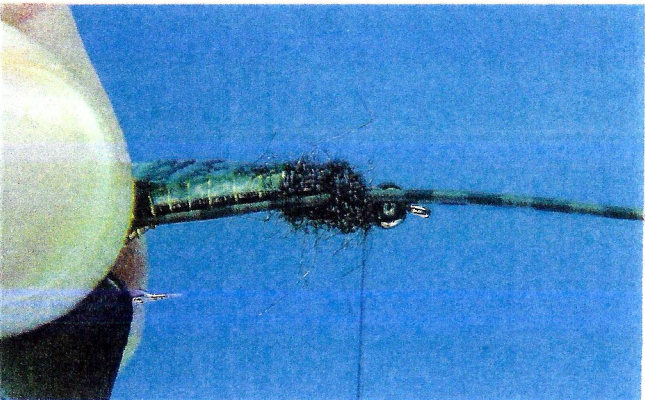
22. Take your rubber legs and hold them on top of the hook and parallel to each other. One end should extend beyond the hook as shown.



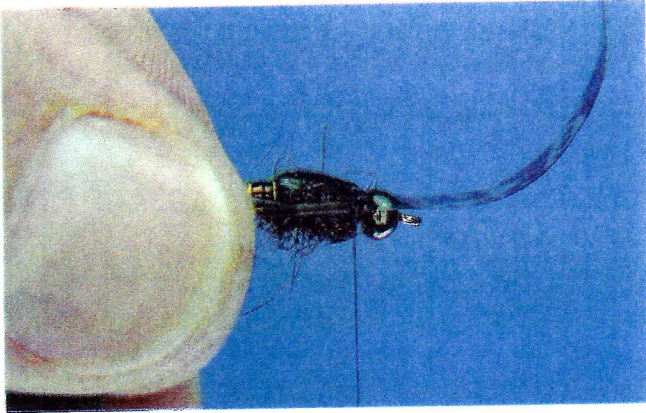
23. Make several firm (but not tight) wraps over the legs, one wrap over the top of the other. The dubbing applied in the previous step should give the rubber something to bind to and keep the legs from sliding around the shank.



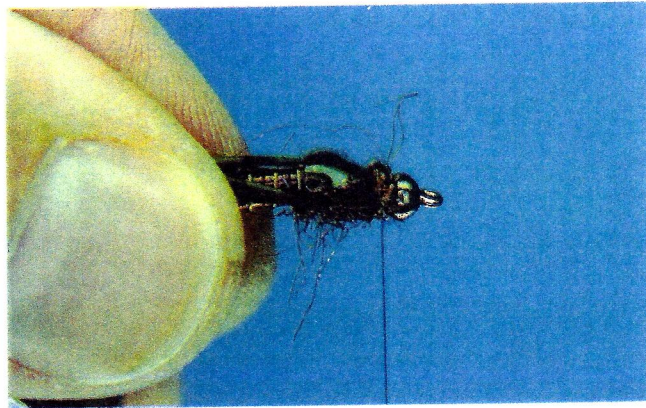
24. Take one leg at a time and slide it into position on the side of the hook. After the legs are in the correct position on each side, make several tight thread wraps over the top of each to secure them. This is the easiest technique I have ever used to apply the legs.



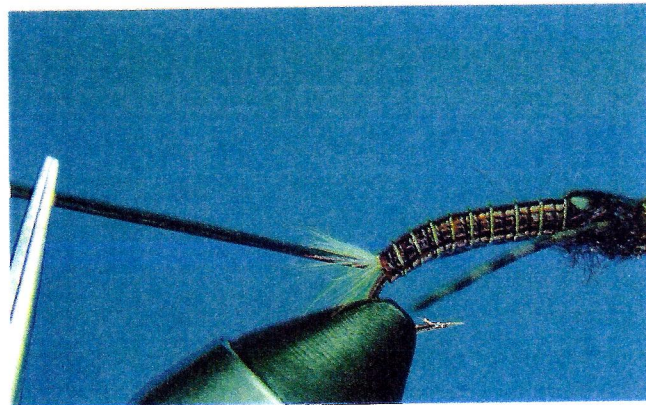
25. Take your dubbing and fill in the thorax between the legs. Make sure you use enough.



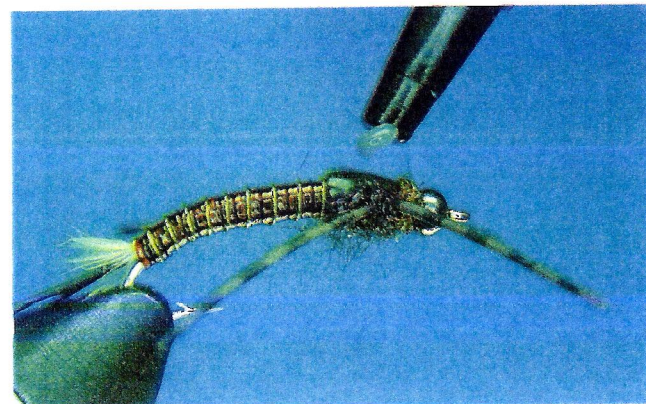
26. Pull the legs back gently and push the wing case forward. Use your third hand if you need to. Tie off the wing case just behind the bead using six to eight wraps to be sure it is fastened completely.



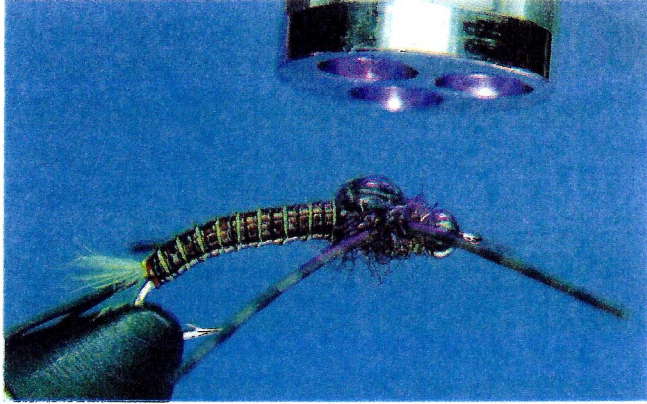
27. With the legs pulled back, trim the remaining Thin Skin and dub the collar.



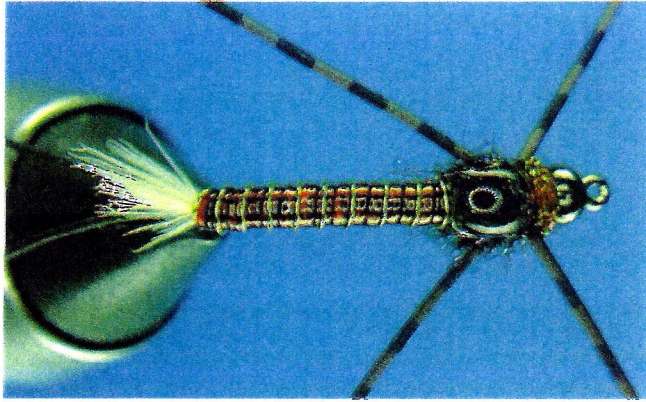
28. Trim the tail so that it is as long as the hook.



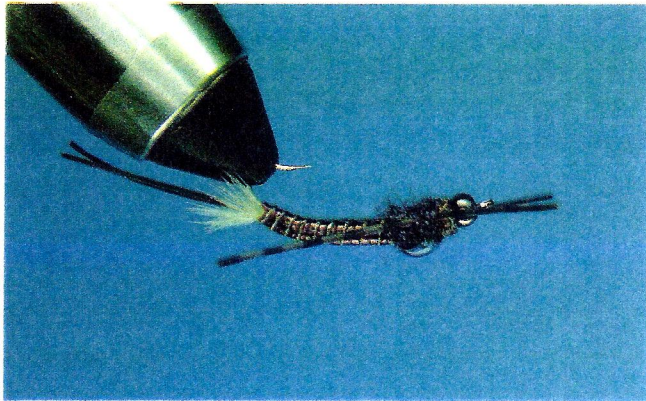
29. Take your Clear Cure Goo, UV Knot Sense, or epoxy and form a small bead on top of the wing case.



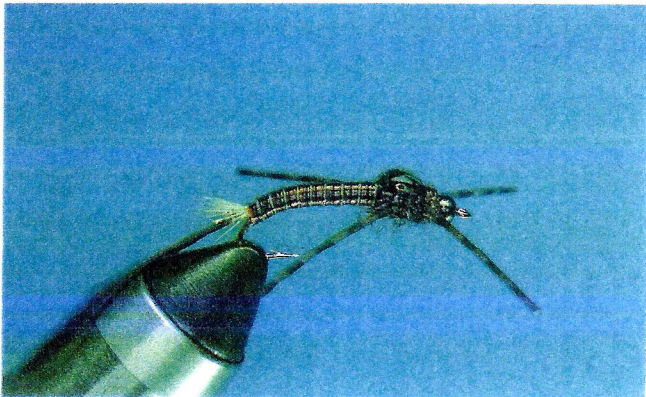
30. Because I am using a UV product, you can see that I take my curing light and cure the material to harden it on top of the fly.



An overhead shot shows the fly after it has been cured.



The finished fly should ride in the water upside-down. Applying the UV product to the wing case helps turn the fly over.



Finished fly.