



# On the Fly

Grass Carp Fly Recipe by Joshua W. Broer

In the previous issue I described the history of Grass Carp stocking in Florida lakes to control the growth of invasive aquatic plants, namely Hydrilla. Many lakefront residents have grown to dislike the fish because of their voracious appetite for anything that is both plantlike and edible in the lake. Sometimes they'll eat everything, reducing their lake to a large bowl of fresh water devoid of native plants and cover necessary for freshwater game fish such as Largemouth Bass and Bluegill. Others have discovered a unique fishery that is both fun and useful. In this follow-up to the story of Grass Carp stocking and fishing I will demonstrate how to successfully tie a fish-feed imitation pattern that is quick and simple and that will get you hooked up every time. Introducing the JB Pellet.

## MATERIALS

1. #8 - #6 Hook
2. Brown or White Thread
3. Light Brown Buck Tail
4. Head Cement

### Step 1

Using a small but sharp and sturdy hook (I prefer a Gamagatzu #6), make a few wraps around the shank in preparation for your buck tail. NOTE: Despite the necessary small hook size for this fish's relatively small mouth, it is imperative to find a hook that will not bend under the extreme pressure of these heavy fish. Small gold Shiner, Bluegill and Bream hooks will straighten out every time!

### Step 2

Choose a deer hair color that most closely matches the color of pond fish pellets that you can find at most Wal-Mart's and pet stores. Cut several sections of hair from the buck tail and stack them ready for use. Tie in the hair using a loose thread wrap and spin the hair until fully flared around the hook shank. Tie back this flared section of hair with a few tight wraps and repeat the process until you have a full, dense core to work with.



### Step 3

With several layers of hair tied back away from the eye of the hook, you should now have enough material to cut down to shape to the size of the small fish-feed pellets. The idea is to as exactly and neatly as you can cut and shape the existing material into a tight, dense, square or round-like pattern, as closely imitating the look of the natural pellet as possible. Be careful not to cut away too much material, as the result can sometimes be too much hook and too little fly. You may choose to either whip finish your fly prior to shaping or wait until your cut is down to size. This is simply a matter of preference. I sometimes like to wait on my whip finish in case I want to tie in some extra hair if the fly is too sparse.

Finish the fly by cutting off any loose ends and lightly cementing the head. Again, the more material you use on your initial wraps will allow you the flexibility of cutting down the fly significantly in order to create that dense mass of hair that will form your pattern. At this point, you can experiment by adding some head cement to the fly itself in order to keep it correctly shaped and strong when cast. If tied properly though, this last step is unnecessary.

### Step 4

Before putting to use, make sure that the fly is no bigger than a penny. Anything larger and the Carp will immediately notice the size difference and quickly turn away from your fly with no take. Another good test is to have some feed pellets on hand to compare and contrast your fly to the real thing. While your fly may be slightly larger than the pellets (which you will find come in all-different sizes from store to store), matching the color of the pellets is the more important goal here.

### Step 5

Break out the long stick and go fishing! These fish, despite their enormous size, are at first sluggish and reluctant to fight. It's as if they're almost unaware they're hooked. But beware, once you get them into landing distance and especially once you try to handle the fish, they come alive and trash and bolt for safety. A landing net or Boca Grip can come in handy.

To truly make this a challenge worth taking, I suggest using no more than a 6 weight fly rod and very light leader. A bite tippet is not necessary, as the Carp's mouth is soft and gummy. A gentle presentation of the fly, with no further movement once it hits the water, is all that is needed for a fast take. Me and a handful of angling friends have slowly but surely scaled down our tackle in order to win bragging rights for the biggest fish. Soon, I'm sure, one of us is going to land one of the true monsters on a 3 weight combo – or at least go out proud knowing that he or she wrestled them in with a thin stick – perhaps a thin stick snapped in half! Nevertheless, fly-fishing for Grass Carp with your own tied flies is surely an evolution from the days of loading up a big fat bread ball or corn pieces on a bass worm hook and letting it soak off the dock all day. If you live on a lake or know someone who does, try spotting or chumming up these giants at first light or dusk when they're most active. At the very least, you'll get a glimpse of some very big and prehistoric looking fish. At best, they will inhale your new fly without hesitation and you'll have yet another hunting and fishing hobby to add to your repertoire.

**NOTE: Before permanently removing any Grass Carp from your lake, please first check with your homeowners association, if one exists in your community, for rules and regulations on doing so.**

