

Eastern Fly Tying

Mackerel Yak Hair Deceiver/By Glenn Zinkus



When the mackerel move into your home waters, the striped bass will follow. However, big mackerel patterns are not always easy to cast. So when I looked at a selection of flies that fly tier extraordinaire Mike Rice of Mud Dog Saltwater Flies had assembled, I couldn't help but focus on the large, colorful patterns filling the center of his box and soon went off to cast a Yak Hair Deceiver into a fast rip off a beach.

As the name suggests, this style of fly is primarily constructed of yak hair. I've tried variations of this pattern in the past, but never with yak hair, and never quite like this. If you have not used yak hair before in your tying, you're going to like it. It ties in tight and secure. Even better, it fishes like a dream. Yak hair does not absorb or hold water, and it's surprisingly light. When cast, yak hair easily sheds whatever moisture is on the fly. This enables anglers to fish a larger, bulkier pattern, making for what I like to call a "gunslinger" fly—a fly that can be dangled in the ready position and fired off in rapid-fire casts. Yak hair provides great versatility; it can be picked up easily and recast quickly, making the Mackerel Yak Hair Deceiver a great fly for inshore waters as well as an excellent offshore pattern.

Yak hair is naturally translucent, and the wide range of dyed colors can be tied in various bunches that blend together to scream "BAITFISH!" Yak hair blends easily,

so you can devise precise shades to match local baitfish; shades of green, blue, and black imitate the flanks and back of a mackerel. Some anglers who fish with live bait—mackerel—have suggested to me that this fly might well compete with their bait for the attention of game fish.

Dress this fly with durability in mind. Repeated lifting and casting stresses the tie-in points, so be sure to glue

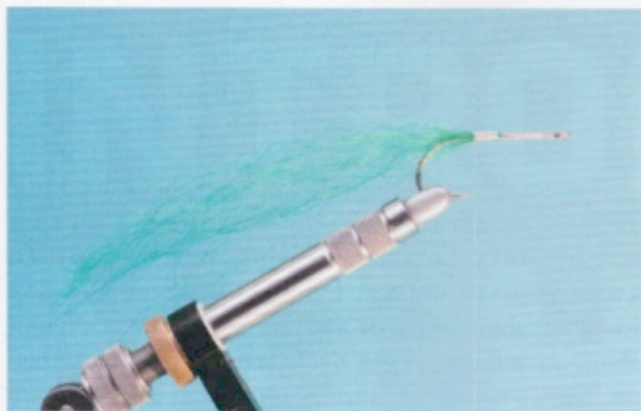
all ties and wraps with head cement or a similar adhesive. Once the fly is tied, you can taper and cut the tail and belly to the desired profile. The bucktail lends some stiffness to the fly design and acts as a "spreader" to help lift the body of the fly and provide a shoulder. The white bucktail on the bottom of the throat helps to maintain the fly profile, and holds the yak hair in place while casting.

As a finishing touch, be sure to add eyes to the Mackerel Yak Hair Deceiver. I'm firmly in the camp that places importance on the eyes on a fly. I'm drawn to the oversize eyes at the front of the head, and only then start to notice color and other details. I translate this to fly design and the attributes of effective flies—specifically what entices the fish to bite.

Glenn Zinkus is a creative fly tier who lives in Corvallis, Oregon, and frequents the East Coast for saltwater fishing.

Materials

- Hook:** Mustad 34007 or TMC 811S, size 4/0
- Thread:** White
- Tail/wing:** Green, black, chartreuse, and blue yak hair; pearl Flashabou; chartreuse bucktail; pearl Krystal Flash; peacock herl; pearl Polar Flash
- Belly:** White bucktail
- Throat:** Red Krystal Flash
- Eyes:** 1/2- to 5/8-inch Hareline 3-D Big Fish Eyes
- Head:** White thread finished with epoxy or Liquid Fusion



Step 1: Tie in a tuft of 7-inch-long green yak hair on top of the shank just above the hook point, wrapping back to the hook bend. Repeat directly below on the underside.



Step 4: Tie in a 7-inch tuft of black yak hair on top at the hook eye. Tie in a full pinch of white bucktail hairs on the bottom of the shank at the hook eye.



Step 2: Fold in four to six strands of pearl Flashabou on top of the green yak hair. Tie in a tuft of black yak hair just in front of the green yak hair tie-in point. Tie in a tuft of chartreuse bucktail directly in front of the black yak hair.



Step 5: Tie in seven to 10 strands of extra-long peacock herl on top at the hook eye. Tie in six to eight strands of red Krystal Flash on the bottom at the hook eye.



Step 3: Tie in a 5-inch tuft of chartreuse yak hair on the bottom side at the bucktail tie-in point. Fold in six to eight strands of pearl Krystal Flash on top of the chartreuse bucktail, then tie in a tuft of 7-inch-long blue yak hair in front of the Krystal Flash. Tie in six to 10 strands of pearl Krystal Flash on top of the blue yak hair.



Step 6: Fold in four to six strands of pearl Polar Flash at the hook eye, running it along the sides of the fly. Glue on the eyes and apply epoxy or your favorite glue along the head and between the eyes.