

Guide Flies

TONY LOLLI

HOOK: Daiichi 2220, size 4

THREAD: UTC Rusty Brown, 140

TAIL: 8 strands green Krystal flash on both sides of the shank; next, a crawfish orange rabbit strip, fur-side down, two-inch leather section

BODY: Rusty-brown Ice Dub palmered with fiery brown schlappen

LEGS: Golden yellow/pearl flake Barred Crazy Legs, 3 on each side

COLLAR: Rusty-brown deer hair, top of shank only, extending to hook point

HEAD: Rusty-brown deer hair, moderately packed, trimmed flat

(Total fly length is 4 inches)



Countermeasure

Okay, boys and girls, time to get your Little Orphan Annie Secret Decoder Ring ready. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to develop a smallmouth fly that has nothing to do with Ovaltine.

Steve Culton (currentseams.com) is a Connecticut guide, outdoor writer, speaker, and fly-tyer (but don't hold that against him; he might be working for the CIA, for all I know). He designed this fly for smallmouth bass on Connecticut's Housatonic River. The upper river is reminiscent of larger western rivers – it's wide and shallow yet sprinkled with deep pools, riffles, and pockets. Its warm run-of-river summer flows and rocky structure make it a smallmouth paradise.

Steve notes, "This bug riffs off several proven patterns such as the Zonker and the Zoo Cougar. I've simply taken the best elements and combined them into a fly that is loaded with bite triggers. I'm focused on movement—flies that create the illusion of life even when at rest. I also wanted a deer-hair head that didn't have to be perfectly trimmed to work. No two heads ever come out the same when I tie this fly, and yet everyone catches bass."

Steve developed the fly for smallmouth bass, but it has also proven to be a dependable producer for big trout on tailwaters around the U.S. His favorite time to fish the Countermeasure is during low-light periods, June through August.

He comments, "While I have used the Countermeasure as a searching pattern with great success, I like to target actively feeding smallies, especially those feeding near structure, drop-offs, and shallows. I'll make a reach cast and let the bug land with a SPLAT! on the surface. Many times, that's all I need to induce a furious strike. If there's no strike, I pause a moment, then give the bug a twitch with some very short micro strips. I fish the fly in current on the wet fly swing, the greased line swing, stripped, dead-drifted, and dangling/waking in the current below me. The bass always tell me how they want the fly presented. If I'm stripping the fly, I tend to favor drunken, erratic movement and pauses, trying to mimic a bait in distress."

I've also fished with drunken, erratic movements, but I digress.

Steve fishes the Countermeasure in low light, especially from the beginning of dusk as it transitions into night. It makes a very sexy silhouette, and it's dark enough to stand out in stained water. He primarily fishes it on a floating line. As the deer hair begins to get saturated, the fly begins to ride low in the film. The Countermeasure also works with a full sink tip, which acts as split shot, and the deer hair makes the fly ride up. For trophy trout, Steve likes the Countermeasure on a floating line, dead-drifted on the surface.

"I knew I had a winner the first night I tested this bug. It was a steamy evening in early August on the Housatonic. As late afternoon became twilight, I began tossing the Countermeasure at some of the bigger rise rings. A bass slaughtered the fly the moment it hit the water. This fish was a brute for the Housatonic, one worthy of being measured in pounds, with several acrobatic jumps to boot."

Next month: more on how to fish with drunken, erratic movements. 

If you're a guide with an innovative fly to share, contact me (at tonylolli@yahoo.com) and I'll send the details to submit it.