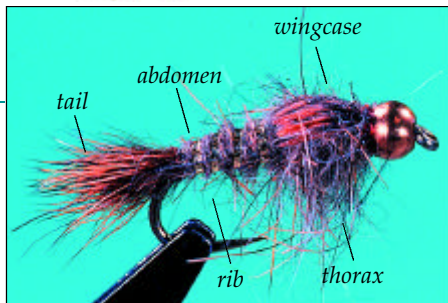


## Chapter 30

## Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear

**Hare's Ear, Gold-Ribbed**

Hook: 3761BL or 5262, sizes 8-18, weighted

Thread: Brown

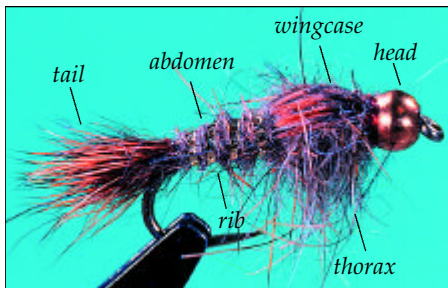
Tail: Hare's ear fur

Rib: Oval or flat gold mylar tinsel

Abdomen: Blended hare's ear

Wingcase: White tip turkey tail section

Thorax: Blended hare's ear, picked out



Tied by Umpqua Feather Merchants

**Gold Bead Hare's Ear**

Hook: 3761BL, or 5262, sizes 10-18, weight to suit

Head: Gold bead

Thread: Brown

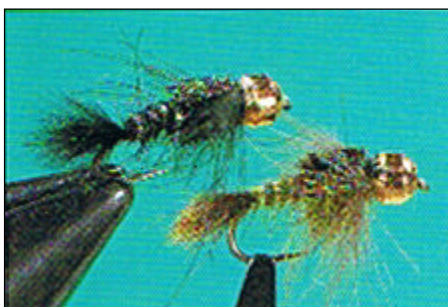
Tail: Hare's ear fur

Rib: Gold oval or flat mylar tinsel

Abdomen: Blended hare's ear

Wingcase: White tip turkey tail section

Thorax: Blended hare's ear, picked out



Tied by Umpqua Feather Merchants

**Kaufmann Hare's Ear**

Hook: 3761BL, sizes 10-16, weighted

Head: Gold tungsten bead

Thread: To match abdomen

Tail: Hare's ear fur

Rib: Gold flat mylar tinsel

Abdomen: Blended hare's ear

Wingcase: Peacock

Thorax: To match abdomen

Legs: CDC

Anglers and tyers have had a long fascination and love affair with mayflies. These beautiful, friendly, harmless insects belong to the order Ephemeroptera and are the symbol of fly fishing. More literature and imitations are devoted to mayflies than all other insects combined.

*Ephemeral* means "lasting but a day." Adult mayflies seldom live longer than 48 hours, but nymphs live over the winter before magically transforming into their beautiful and delicate adult stage.

Mayflies are found in almost all relatively unpolluted waters. Individual families and species populate specific habitat, including everything from silty seacoast bogs to alpine cascades. In entomological terms, mayflies have an incomplete metamorphosis consisting of egg, aquatic nymph, and air-breathing adult. Common identifying features include these major body areas:

1. The abdomen has 10 segments with gills located along the back or sides of some or all of the first seven segments. Three, sometimes only two, tails extend from the abdomen. Tail length varies.
2. The thorax consists of three segments with one pair of legs on each segment. Wingcases (often called wingpads), which contain the developing wings of the future adult, are found on the second and third segments, although the second thoracic wingcase covers the shorter wingcase located on the third thoracic joint.
3. The head area looks like a continuation of the thorax and sports relatively large compound eyes and two short antennae.

Common colors include tans, browns, olives, grays, and black with mottlings of almost every color of the spectrum. Once a mayfly nymph grows to about an eighth of an inch, it can become important to trout. The family Baetidae, genera *Baetis* and *Pseudocloeon*, are the most important group of small (one-eighth-inch) mayflies to anglers. The family Ephemeridae, genus *Hexagenia*, is the largest, up to 1¾ inches. Most mayfly imitations are tied on size 12 to 18 hooks.

The Hare's Ear, as it is commonly called, is an impressionistic nymph—a general simulation of many foods that fools enough fish enough of the time to make it one of the fishing world's favorite nymphs. When in doubt, fish a Hare's Ear.

There must be a secret ingredient in hare's ear dubbing that makes this nymph so successful. Perhaps its scraggly body and multitude of

tiny pulsating hairs contain the magic. If the Hare's Ear nymph is tied with yarn or even domestic rabbit dubbing, it is a dud. Tie it with hare's ear or squirrel, and it is a smashing success. The lesson is to choose materials wisely and always attempt to incorporate animation.

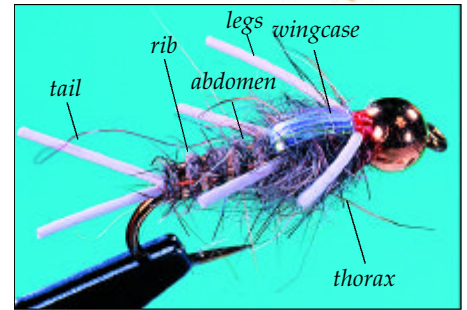
Blended packaged hare's ear is available, but it does not have the texture I like. The best source of hare's ear dubbing is the real thing—a complete mask with ears imported from Europe. Trim all the hair (fur) off the mask (especially the ears) except the really fluffy lighter-colored fur along the outside of the mask. It dilutes the good, buggy stuff. I like to save a small patch of short, dense fur in the center of the mask for tails. Toss the clipped hair in a blender and store it in a plastic bag.

There are many variations of the Hare's Ear, including my version, which incorporates a peacock wingcase, a copper wire rib, and CDC legs. A Flashabou back and/or wingcase adds flash, and rubber legs provide additional animation. A bead head opens the fifth dimension.

It was time consuming tying enough standard Hare's Ears, but, with all the recent innovations, you might need another fly box! Ah, the fun of filling those boxes and dreaming of trout to be enticed in waters both near and far.

The most common mistake tyers make is to tie the Hare's Ear too fat, obscuring the definition between the abdomen and thorax. Keep the abdomen *thin*, remembering how the naturals look—unless, of course, you are imitating a robust insect like a green drake. Another common problem is to not wind the rib tightly enough. You should not be able to pull it off the back of the abdomen. Mylar tinsel (rib) is slippery and slides easily. To help prevent slippage off the back of the abdomen, take a turn or two of dubbing *behind* where the tinsel is tied onto the hook. By doing this, the first wrap of tinsel exits between dubbing wraps, not from the back of the dubbed abdomen. Wrap it *tightly*. Pick out some abdomen fibers to simulate gills.

This pattern will demonstrate the classic nymph: tail, rib, abdomen, wingcase, and thorax. If you can tie this fly, you can tie many others. The tying technique remains the same, but the materials change.



Tied by Unique Feather Merchants

#### Flashback Rubber Legs Hare's Ear

Hook: 3671BL, sizes 10-14, weighted

Head: Gold bead

Thread: Brown

Tail: Brown rubber, or color to suit

Antennae: Same as tail

Back: Pearl Flashabou

Rib: Flat gold tinsel

Abdomen: Hare's ear

Legs: Same as tail, tied at back of thorax

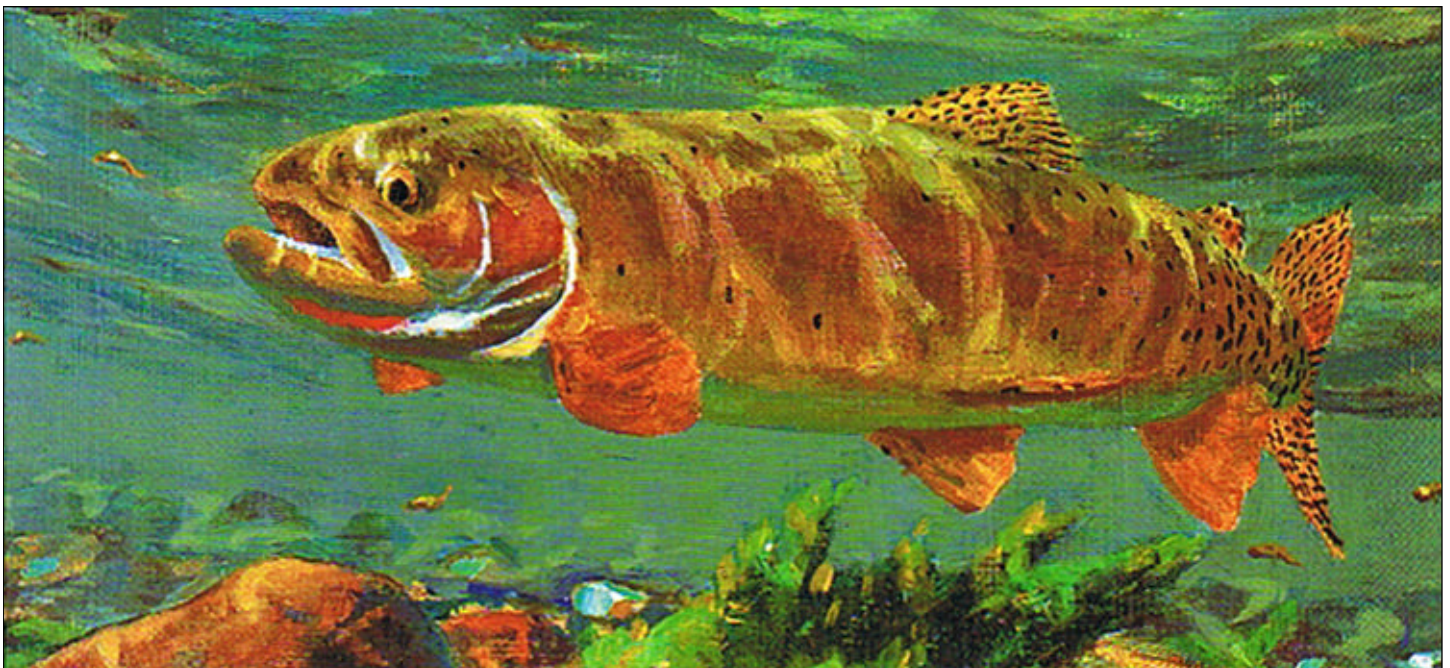
Wingcase: Pearl Flashabou

Thorax: Same as abdomen

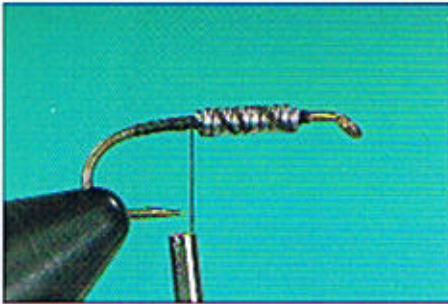


Tied by Unique Feather Merchants

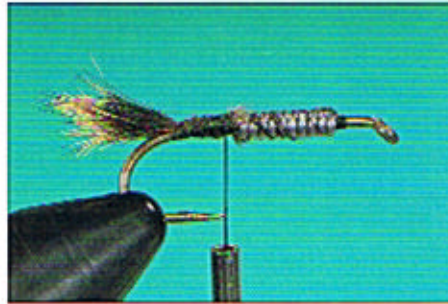
Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear tied medium sparse and a size 20 Micro Hare's Ear with a tungsten bead.



Snake River cutthroat trout.



1. Insert hook, cover hook shank with thread, and install wire for additional weight. Wrap thread forward and backward through wire. Check the wire, making certain it does not rotate around the hook.



2. Select a bunch of hare's ear fur and prepare the tail as we did for the Red Fox Squirrel. Tie on as shown.



3. Trim a section of oval gold tinsel and tie on. Notice that the tinsel and tail have been tied on behind the wire, creating a level foundation.



4. Using the direct dubbing technique, dub some blended hare's ear onto the thread and begin forming the abdomen. Keep it slender unless a more robust nymph is desired.



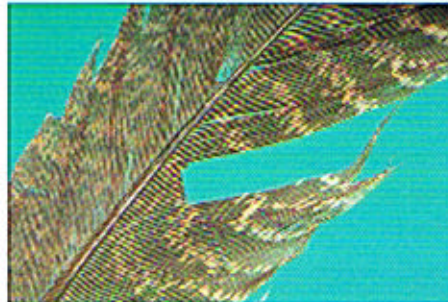
5. Position the thread at the front of the abdomen. Notice the slight taper in the abdomen and that the abdomen is dressed medium in diameter.



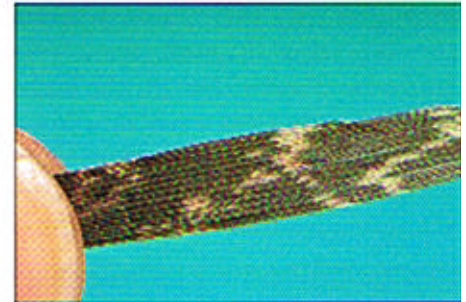
6. Wrap the oval tinsel through the abdomen, taking an extra turn or two at the thorax area. Tie down and trim excess. Position thread at the back of the thorax area.



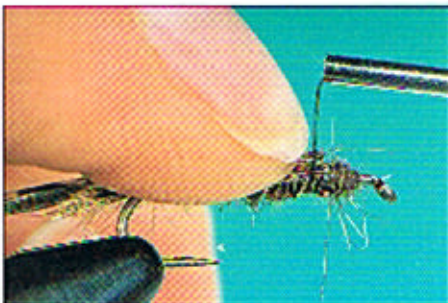
7. This is a white tip turkey tail feather that has been treated with vinyl cement.



8. Trim out a section from the feather. The width will depend on the size hare's ear being tied. It should cover the entire top of the thorax. A quarter-inch section would cover the thorax of a size 6 hook.



9. The fibers are coarser toward the center stem. Unless the feather is extremely fine grained or unless it has been coated with vinyl cement, it may split when you pull it forward. Use the center section of feather.



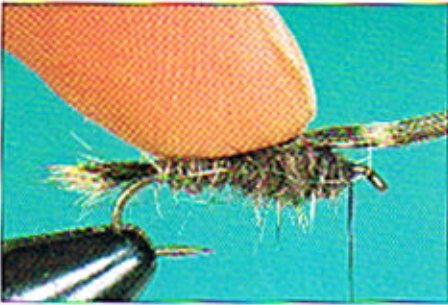
10. Position the feather exactly as shown here. Hold the feather flat with your thumb over the top of the abdomen at the center of the thorax area. Bring a loose wrap of thread over the end of the feather and cinch it in place.



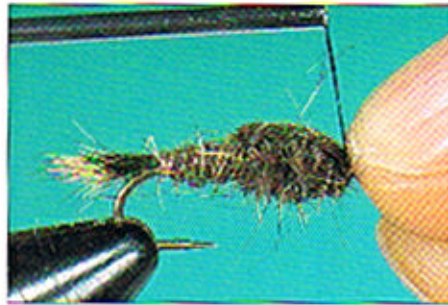
11. Continue to wrap the thread back over the turkey feather until it is positioned at the very back of where you want the thorax to begin. Standard mayfly nymphs, like this pattern, are usually 60-70% abdomen and 30-40% thorax.



12. Dub more blended hare's ear onto the thread and form the thorax. The thorax is usually larger in diameter than the abdomen. Do not crowd the thread head area. Position thread at the front of the thorax.



13. Push, or pull, the turkey feather over the top of the thorax. An untreated feather wingcase is less likely to split when it is pushed from behind rather than pulled forward.



14. Hold the wingcase in position directly over the top of the thorax while you place a few turns of thread over the top and immediately in front of the thorax.



15. Do not tie the material down all the way to the hook eye. This precludes you from making a close cut back from the hook eye and forming a neat, tapered head. Observe all the tiny fibers about the hook eye.



16. Notice the clean cut of the many fibers and turkey feather. There is ample room to complete a neat head. Ten turns is enough.



17. Finished Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear. We covered the black thread with brown thread. Pick out some thorax fibers if you wish.



18. Top nymph represents robust mayflies or dragonflies. The other is tied with medium weight and a bead eye.



This acrobatic rainbow was spotted half in shadow and camouflaged over colorful rubble in green water. It was actively feeding and grabbed the first drift. This was one of many jumps. Angler is Ross Hamilton, North Island, New Zealand, January 1997.