

Carey Special – A Trout Wet Fly



I recall buying fishing gear back in the 1970s at Bruce's Sport shop in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. One of the shop's most popular trout flies was the Carey Fly, or Carey Special. Thus, since Pictou County anglers often sought fishing destinations in neighbouring Guysborough or Antigonish Counties, the fly became a staple for stillwater fishing throughout eastern mainland Nova Scotia.

According to a 2003 article by Sheldon Seale in Canadian Fly Fisher magazine, the pattern was

developed about 1925 by a Dr. Lloyd A. Day of Quesnel, British Columbia. Its original name was The Monkey Faced Louise. However, a Colonel Thomas Carey popularized the pattern and the fly was eventually renamed in his honour. The timing of the Carey Special's development may have been related to the introduction of ringneck pheasant to North America from China. This would explain the use of pheasant flank for the collar rather than grouse or one of the various members of the duck family.

Primarily thought of as a lake and pond fly, the Carey Special is at home in many kinds of water. Its adaptability allows it to suggest a wide range of fish foods. These include damselfly and dragonfly nymphs, cased caddis, small fishes and even crayfish. The pattern can be weighted or not and tied in a wide variety of materials.

While the Carey Special is indeed at home in a pond or lake, it is a very useful fly in rivers -especially the slower and deeper portions. In streams and rivers, fish it as any wet fly or strip it in as you would a small streamer. In ponds, a slow, hand twist retrieve on a sinking line can prove deadly!

Carey Special

Hook: 1 - 3x long nymph or streamer hook, sizes 2-8.

Thread: Black 6/0.

Tail: Pheasant flank feather fibres (optional).

Rib: Copper wire or similar (optional).

Body: Peacock herl, dubbing or chenille, any color (optionally weighted).

Hackle: Ringneck pheasant flank feather, tied back.

Head: Black thread finished with 2 coats head cement