

The Butterfly – An Atlantic Salmon Wet Fly



I recall asking Jerry Doak, owner/operator of the WW Doak & Sons fly shop in Doaktown, New Brunswick, what the best salmon fly was for the Miramichi River. This was back in the 1970`s when young Jerry was tending the then tiny shop for his father. He replied that the Butterfly was responsible for about 90% of salmon caught that season, adding ``but 90% of our anglers were using Butterflies!``

And that`s how it went on the Miramichi, year after year. Soon the overwhelming favorite became the Green Machine, a Buck Bug variation created by John Lyons who worked in Jerry`s shop. Later it was the ``Same Thing, Murray``, and so on.

Although the Butterfly may not be as popular as it was in the 1970s, it is still carried by most salmon anglers that I know simply because it`s a reliable producer. The butterfly has a different profile (3-D) than the usual wet fly design, making it a useful change-of-pace pattern. The divided wings make it very visible in high or dirty flood waters, and it is usually my first choice in these conditions. The fluttering mobility of the divided wings also makes it an effective fall pattern, when slow, deep fishing is preferred. I`ve also tied it as a salmon dry fly and found that it worked very well fished over and under, like the MacIntosh, a very effective technique on the St. Mary`s River.

Reid Mason of Country Harbour, NS, can also thank the Butterfly for many of the Atlantic salmon he has caught over the years, and I recall one of about 30 lbs at Miller`s Bank on the St. Mary`s River. He ties his Butterflies using goat hair, coyote back hair or dyed calftail (yellow, orange, or green) for the wings, adding fluorescent or sparkle butts of various

shades. The neat and tidy Butterflies in the photo at right are by Reid. His skill, developed through nearly 40 years of tying and fishing the fly, is evident under close examination. Obviously the salmon agree!



Here is the recipe for the original Ingall`s Butterfly, tied by Maurice Ingalls of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 1956, for fishing the Miramichi River.

Ingall`s Butterfly

Hook:	Bronze down-eyed wet fly hook, eg Mustad 3399A, size 2-12
Thread:	Black
Tail:	Stiff red saddle fibers
Body:	Rusty peacock herl
Wing:	White goat hair, sparse, slightly longer than the body, divided, set slightly above the body and slanted at an angle of 45 degrees
Hackle:	Brown hackle wound on as a collar, two turns, one behind and one in front of the wing
Head:	2 coats of Pro Lac Wet Head Cement.