

## St. Mary's Fly



The fly we call the St. Mary's fly today is really an updated example of early flies tied for fishing St. Mary's River Atlantic salmon.

As late as the 1970's local St. Mary's anglers didn't tend to use established standard fly patterns. Instead, most flies were designed and tied for tomorrow's fishing.

If black bodies were favored by the salmon today, then black bodied flies were tied for tomorrow. If the salmon's preference

turned to green, then green became tomorrow's body shade.

Similarly with hackle color. Same with fly size. Also the optional jungle cock sides. And so on, whatever anglers believed gave them an edge for success tomorrow was used. These flies were often hackled such that the fly could be fished wet, dry or both, an obvious advantage on a turn over a crowded pool. One might have to wait 2 hrs or more for a turn, so it was important that each turn was a best effort.

If tomorrow's destination was a popular pool, the wise angler also needed a fly that was different than the popular choice for the day. This was because salmon often tire of seeing similar flies going past for hours at a time. Sometimes a very different fly "wakes them up".

Although color combinations, sizes, and the presence or absence of a tail or coveted jungle cock sides varied, there were common elements. For example, bronzed down-eyed hooks were favored. Many anglers believed, and still believe, that black up-eyed salmon hooks are inferior. Another common element was the pine squirrel wing.

These flies weren't standard patterns, so what were they called? Well, if someone asked a successful angler what fly he used, he might say "yellow squirrel tail" or "brown hackle orange squirrel tail". Good information. But if someone said they used a Cosseboom, it could be most anything!

The black and yellow color scheme of the fly in the photo worked very well on the St. Mary's most of the time, reminiscent of the famous Scottish classic, the Jock Scott. If you conclude that this was a rather crude and localized approach to salmon fishing you'd be wrong. These folks were experts, as visitors to the St. Mary's soon discovered!

## **St. Mary's Fly**

Thread: White 8/0 UniThread  
Hook: Partridge Bartleet Supreme salmon, hook sizes 1,2, 4, 6  
Tag: Extra fine oval silver tinsel with golden yellow (pumpkin) floss  
Tail: Medium oval silver tinsel  
Body: Black Antron Yarn or floss  
Underwing: 4 strands forest yellow Krystal Flash  
Wing: Pine squirrel  
Hackle: Yellow hen hackle folded backward and tied collar style  
Head: Black 8/0 UniThread finished with 2 coats of Angler's Corner Glossy Wet Head Cement.