

# Thread Trap

by Wayne Luallen

Some years ago while at a tying demonstration in San Francisco I met a young lady and fellow fly tier by the name of Susie Fork. She impressed in many ways, perhaps foremost that at the age of 13 she was doing a remarkable job in dressing feather wing Atlantic Salmon Flies. But there was a particular technique she performed that really caught my attention. It was so logical and simple, yet I had never seen anyone use it before.

There are a variety of approaches for tying silk or rayon floss onto a hook. Some tiers double the floss over the thread and slide it up to the shank to lock it in place. Some wet the tip, stiffening it, which allows more control at the tie-in point. With some, well, it seems that they just like to struggle. Susie, in my opinion, had them all beat. I soon discovered that her technique was not exclusively for floss. I found an amazing array of materials that could be attached to the hook more quickly, easily, and accurately than any other technique I had ever used. Here is what I saw Susie do:

1. (It is assumed that you are tying right handed.) Reach your left hand over to the far side of the hook. Slip the material to be secured under the hook shank between the hook bend and the thread hanging from the hook to the bobbin holder. Grasp the end of the material on the far side of the hook bend with your left fingers, and grasp the end at the hook eye with your right fingers.
2. Hold your left fingers stationary as you lift your right fingers up under the hook eye, slipping the material between the thread and the far side of the hook shank.
3. Slide the material around the shank toward you (still trapped under the single loop of thread) into the desired position. You can slide it around to the top, the near side, or the bottom of the hook, but if you choose to leave it on the far side, it will be barely trapped. It is wise in that situation to add one more wind of thread over the material.
4. The last step positions the material so that it is trapped with no waste to be trimmed off. Slide the material left or right as called for until the end is barely trapped. (Note: to avoid sliding it out of the trap, you may wish to add a wind or two more as you are sliding, either back or forward according to the direction you are pulling.) Finally tie down securely with thread going in the required direction to achieve the next tying step.

This method of trapping materials under just the tension supplied by the weight of the bobbin holder can be used for all sorts of materials: feather shafts and barbs, synthetics, thread, tinsels, floss, wire, etc. The only prerequisite is that the material slides easily under the thread without catching on it (as would occur with metal oval tinsel, chenille, etc.) or causing it to unstack (as would occur with a calf tail wing, etc.)

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