

Heater



Fly Patterns brought to you by Charlie's FlyBox

© All images, slogans and content are strictly copyrighted and may not be used or copied without permission.

Charlie Craven and Charlie's FlyBox, Inc.

[print this page](#)

step: 1

Pattern Description

The Heater comes from the vise of Frank Smethurst of Telluride, Colorado. Frank is the Colorado manufacturer's representative for Scott Fly Rods, Korkers Wading Boots and Brookside Flies, to name a few. He has been a guide for several years in the Gunnison area of southwestern Colorado and has a variety of guide-style flies to his credit. Frank has also been a pioneer in chasing roosterfish off the coast of Mexico and wrote a feature article in 'Saltwater Flyfishing' magazine relaying his adventures. He's a truly nice guy with an unmatched passion for the sport. He keeps several great little fishing secrets up his sleeve, so if you ever corner him, be sure to ask specific questions! Frank shared the story of the Heater with me a few days ago. It seems he often had fish randomly eating his clients orange strike indicators on tough days. Frank's powers of reason overtook him and he decided he needed some flies with more orange in them. Now, Frank's style of tying can best be classified as "whatever's handy and will do the

Materials Needed:

Hook: TMC 5262 #6-13
Bead: Brass or tungsten, Sized to hook
Weight: Lead Wire, sized to hook
Thread: 6/0 or 70-denier color to match or contrast with body.
Tail: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers
Shellback: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers
Rib: Peacock Herl and Small Copper Wire
Abdomen: Orange, Chartreuse or Yellow Egg Yarn
Wingcase: Ringneck Pheasant Tail Fibers
Hackle: Brown Hen Neck
Thorax: Orange, Chartreuse or Yellow Egg Yarn

job" and the disaster area he calls a tying desk gives Type A personalities, like me, nightmares, but I have to admit, with the Heater, he really hit a home run. Common materials like pheasant tail, peacock herl, copper wire and egg yarn were collected into one of the most exciting combinations I've seen in a long time. Frank readily admits this fly has a mixed genealogy. Remnants of the Halfback, Tellico and 20 Incher Stone can all be seen in the Heater. A combination of these flies is sure to be a winner and while I have yet to wet a Heater, I can assure you this fly will be a big hit. Frank ties his Heater in a variety of colors. His favorite version is orange, closely followed by chartreuse and yellow. All the other parts remain the same; only the color of the egg yarn is changed. I suppose you could mix and match the colors of the abdomen and thorax to create a pattern for off-color water or to match a specific insect as well. Frank also freely changes the pattern according to his whim or material availability, (whatever is in within reach, I mean, the guy's arms are only so long!). I have included a couple color variations at the end of the directions that include both the palmered thorax version as well as a folded partridge leg rendition. Frank considers the bead optional but likes to weight the fly with lead wire either way. I have presented the pattern in a bead head version here, feel free to omit it if you like. Crank up the Heater this winter in preparation for spring run-off and the salmonfly hatch. This pattern is a sure winner. Personally, I can't wait to pull the Heater on a tough fish!

step: 2

Place the bead on the hook behind the eye. Wrap eight to fifteen wraps of lead wire around the hook, break off the excess ends and shove the wraps into the back of the bead.

step: 3

Start the thread at the rear edge of the lead wraps and form a taper up onto the lead. Cover the lead wraps and the shank back to the bend.

step: 4

Tie in a heavy clump of pheasant tail fibers for the tail at the bend of the hook. The tail should be about a gap width long. Wrap forward over the butt ends to the seventy percent point on the shank and clip the excess there.

step: 5

Peel another large clump of pheasant tail fibers from the quill and tie them in by their tips, with the inside of the fibers facing up, at the mid-point on the shank.

step: 6

Wrap back over the pheasant fibers to the base of the tail. This clump will later form the shellback that encases the abdomen.



step: 7

Tie in a six-inch length of copper wire along with two strands of peacock herl. Tie the peacock in by their tip ends.



step: 8

Wrap back over the wire and the peacock to the bend of the hook.



step: 9

Move the thread back to the mid-point on the shank and tie in about one-fifth of a strand of egg yarn.



step: 10

Wrap back over the egg yarn to the bend of the hook. Return the thread to the sixty percent point on the shank.



step: 11

Wrap the egg yarn forward to the thread (60% point) forming a smooth tapered abdomen. Tie the yarn off at the sixty percent point and clip the excess. Be careful not to creep the body too far forward.



step: 12

Hold the wire taut and wrap the peacock herls around it three or four times.



step: 13

Grasp the loose end of the wire and the butt ends of the peacock and roll the whole shebang between your thumb and index finger, twisting the herls around the wire. This makes an ultra-durable rope of peacock and wire.



step: 14

Spiral wrap the wire/peacock rib forward over the abdomen with three or four turns. Tie off the rib at the front edge of the abdomen and clip the excess.



step: 15

Pull the shellback fibers forward over the top of the abdomen and tie them down at the front edge. Be sure not to let the fibers separate or twist as you pull them over. They should lay flat over the top of the abdomen.



step: 16

Tie in another large clump of pheasant tail fibers by their tips, with the inside of the fibers facing up, at the back of the bead and wrap over them up to, and slightly overlapping onto, the front edge of the abdomen. Make sure that the wingcase fibers butt directly up against the shellback with no space in between them.



step: 17

Select a hen neck feather that has fibers equal to one and a half hook gaps. Prepare the hackle feather by cutting the fluff off the butt end and stripping the fibers to expose the quill for a length of about one quarter of a shank length. Strip a few more fibers from the quill on the far side of the feather. This will keep those fibers from becoming trapped on the first wrap.



step: 18

Tie the feather in by its butt end at the rear edge of the bead and wrap over the stripped quill to the base of the wingcase.



step: 19

Separate and tie in another piece of egg yarn at the rear edge of the bead and wrap back over it with the thread to the base of the wingcase. Return the thread to the rear edge of the bead.



step: 20

Wrap the egg yarn forward forming a solid, level thorax. Tie the egg yarn off at the back of the bead and clip the excess.



step: 21

Pull the hackle feather up and hold the tip in your thread hand. Dampen the tips of the thumb and forefinger of your material hand to stroke the hackle fibers to the backside of the quill. Start by working the fibers out away from the center quill, then grasp all the fibers and fold them to one side of the feather. I usually pull the fibers slightly up, and then back down toward the base, wiggling them back and forth as I go. Repeat as necessary until all the fibers are folded to the backside of the quill.



step: 22

Wrap the hackle forward over the thorax with three or four turns. Tie off the hackle at the rear edge of the bead.



step: 23

Pinch the wrapped hackle hard against the thorax, crushing it down and sweeping it back toward the bend.



step: 24

Detail of hackle after pinching. Notice that it is now sloped nicely back.



step: 25

Pull the hackle fibers that are on top of the hook down along the side of the shank.



step: 26

Fold the wingcase fibers over the top of the thorax while holding the hackle fibers down. Tie the wingcase off at the back edge of the bead.



step: 27

Clip off the excess pheasant tail fibers at the rear edge of the bead. Build a smooth thread head and whip finish behind the bead. Add a drop of head cement around the thread collar.



step: 28

Finished fly, side view. Notice the proportions of the wingcase and shellback, the angle of the hackle legs and the length of the tail as well as the volume and size of the yarn abdomen and thorax.



step: 29

Finished fly, top view.



step: 30

Finished fly, bottom view.



step: 31

Chartreuse Heater.



step: 32

Yellow Heater tied with folded partridge legs as on the 20 Incher stone.

