

CHARLIE'S FLY BOX, INC.



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## H & L Variant



### Fly Patterns brought to you by Charlie's FlyBox

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Charlie Craven and Charlie's FlyBox, Inc.

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### step: 1

#### Pattern Description

The H & L Variant is an old school fly that has never really fallen out of favor here in the Rockies. The white wings and tail make this pattern super visible and the subtle peacock and stripped quill body are attractive enough to pull fish in after close inspections. The H & L is a great pattern to hang a dropper from as its hair wings and tail create great buoyancy and visibility for subtle takes. These white beacons show up well even in the low light of the evening hours. The H & L is also commonly used as a Green Drake imitation on rivers like the Rio Grande, Roaring Fork and Colorado.

#### Materials Needed:

Hook: TMC 100SP-BL #10-20..... Thread: Brown, black or white 70 Denier, I used brown here for photo clarity but will typically use white to hide the thread in the wing bases. The fish don't care one way or another.....  
.. Wings/Tail: White Calf Body Hair.....  
Abdomen: Stripped Peacock Herl  
Quill.....  
Thorax: Peacock  
Herl..... Hackle: Brown Rooster neck or Saddle

### step: 2

Start the thread behind the hook eye and wrap a thread base back to the mid-point on the shank. Return the thread to one quarter shank length back from the eye, leaving it hanging at the seventy-five percent point.



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**step: 3**

Cut, clean and stack a generous clump of straight white calf body hair. Be sure to clean ALL of the short hairs from the clump before stacking the hair up nice and even. Measure this clump of hair against the shank so it is one shank length long.



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**step: 4**

Tie the calf hair in so the tips extend about one shank length forward from the seventy five percent point on the hook shank. Make a few tight turns of thread over the hair being sure to keep the hair on top of the hook.



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**step: 5**

Wrap a thread band back over the butt ends of the hair to just short of the mid-point on the hook.



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**step: 6**

Cut the butt ends from the hair at an angle as shown here. Cut from the bottom to the top of the hair bunch leaving a tapered stub as shown in the next photo.



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**step: 7**

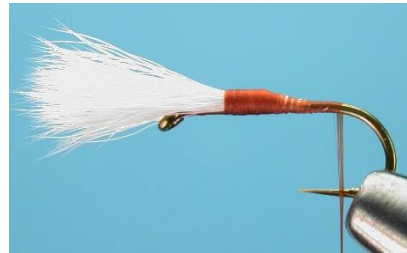
Note the long angle that the butts are cut at here. You do not want a short steep angle here, but more like this long sloping angle.



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**step: 8**

Wrap a smooth thread base back over the butts tapering down to the bare shank at the rear of the hook. Wrap the thread all the way back to the bend of the hook.



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**step: 9**

Cut, clean and stack another slightly smaller clump of calf body hair. Measure this clump against the wing, which should be a shank length long if you did it right the first time and if not then measure it against the hook shank so its right! Be more careful with the wing measurement next time if you were off!



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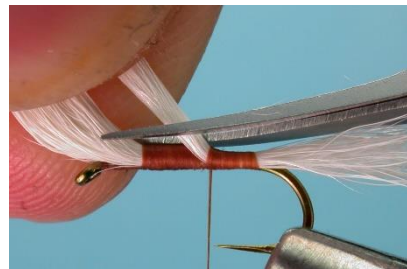
**step: 10**

Tie the tail clump in with the tips extending beyond the bend of the hook about one shank length. Wrap forward over the butt ends of the tail up to the base of the wing butts.



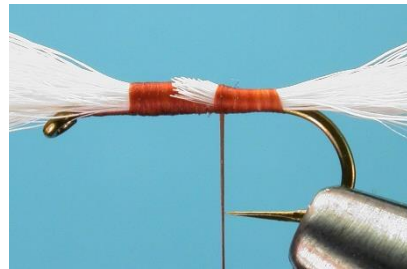
**step: 11**

Lift the butt ends of the tail and cut them at the opposite angle of the wing butts so the butts of the wing mesh perfectly into the butts of the tail.



**step: 12**

See how the butts from the tail lie nicely in line with the wing butts here? Clipping the wing and tail butts like this makes for a much smoother underbody. I'm a freakin' genius. LOL!



**step: 13**

Wrap forward over the clipped stubs of the tail all the way up to the base of the wing.



**step: 14**

Pull the wing fibers back up above the hook and make a tight thread dam against their front edge to prop them up. They don't have to be at a perfect ninety degrees just more toward upright than where they were.



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**step: 15**

About like this?



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**step: 16**

Hold the wing fibers in a single bunch and take a wrap of thread from the base of the front of the wing to the base of the back of the wing. This wrap will group those few stray fibers all into a single clump and make them behave while we divide and post the wings in the next few steps.



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**step: 17**

See how the wing is all grouped together here? Look two pictures back and you'll see the difference that one wrap of thread made.



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**step: 18**

Divide the wing clump into two equal halves.



**step: 19**

Make three to five tight turns of thread between the wings from the near back side of the wing clump to the front far side. These are the first half of the X-wraps we will use to divide them.



**step: 20**

Make a single turn of thread around the shank in front of the wings. Now make three to five more turns of thread from the front of the near wing to the back of the far wing. This is the second half of the X-wraps.



**step: 21**

Make another single turn of thread around the shank. These single turns anchor the wraps against the shank and prevent the thread tension from pulling on either wing as you switch back and forth, just so you know. Now, for the posting: Grab the far wing and wrap the thread around the base of the hair in a tight band. This post wrap will group the hair in the far wing into a single clump. Make another turn of thread around the shank before going onto the near wing.



**step: 22**

Post the near wing in the same manner as the far wing. Try to make the post wraps about equal in height and not too tall. It doesn't matter which direction you wrap the thread around the wing either.



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**step: 23**

Make one last turn of thread around the shank of the hook to lock everything down. Prop the wings up at a right angle to the hook shank. If your thread posts are tight, you should be able to position the wings wherever you like. If you can't do this, go back and make sure to wrap those posts tighter this time.



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**step: 24**

The wings should be about thirty seven and a half degrees from each other as shown here. You may like them more at forty degrees or so but that would just be crazy.



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**step: 25**

Bring the thread back to the bend of the hook and make a couple of thread turns around the base of the tail like you did the wing posts. This will prop the tail up a bit and just makes the fly sit nicer on the water. It also makes the tail a bit more visible as well.



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**step: 26**

Here is what your fly ought to look like now. You can see here why I usually use white thread as it all blends together and doesn't show all the thread work so apparently. I told you so.



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**step: 27**

Strip the butt end of a peacock herl by running your thumbnail down the stem from the middle of the feather toward the base. You will need to do this on both sides of the feather to remove all the green fuzz. You want a clean quill left over from the base of the feather. Sometimes it helps to wet your fingers and run them down the stem to remove the last of the fibers. Pick one of the bushy herls near the base or middle of an eyed stem (not a herl from the eye itself, but from the eyed stem, rather than the strung stuff you bought for Prince Nymphs). Tie this stripped stem onto the hook at the bend as upright as you can by its butt end. If there is a more prominently dark edge on the stem, you want it to be at the rear of the hook so we don't overlap it as we wrap forward.



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**step: 28**

Wrap forward over the butt end of the quill up to the mid-point on the shank. Be sure to keep the thread base as smooth as possible as you wrap forward.



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**step: 29**

Wrap the stripped quill forward in slightly overlapping turns up to the sixty percent point or so and tie it off.





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**step: 30**

Put a generous drop of Gloss Coat on the entire hook shank at this point. Coat over the quill body, between the wings and make sure to get both the top and the bottom of the hook. If you goop too much on, wipe some of it off.



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**step: 31**

Tie in seven or eight fine peacock herls from the eye of the feather by their tips. Cut the tips so they are square first, then tie them in. Wrap back over the herls to about the mid-point on the shank.



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**step: 32**

Roll the herls in your fingertips to spin them into a cord. Cording the herl will keep them from spreading out and add some durability to the finished fly.



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**step: 33**

Wrap a short segment of peacock herl at the front of the stripped peacock body. This bunch should go from about the hook point to about two eye lengths back from the wings. Tie the herls off and clip the excess.



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**step: 34**

Prepare and size two hackle feathers. Peel the fibers from the butt end, leaving an exposed stem that is about half a hook shank long. Tie the feathers in by this bare stem at the front edge of the peacock herl bunch. There should be about half a turn of bare stem extending behind the tie down point and the tips of the bare stems should extend right up to the hook eye.



**step: 35**

Wrap forward over the bare stems all the way up to the hook eye. See why you tied them in at the right length?



**step: 36**

Wrap both of the hackles forward at the same time, starting at the front of the peacock herl bunch. Make two or three turns behind the wings, then cross to the front of the wings and make at least two more turns up to the hook eye. Tie the hackles off at the hook eye with a couple tight turns of thread.



**step: 37**

Whip finish and clip the thread. Add a drop of head cement to the thread head.



**step: 38**

Quarter front view.



**step: 39**

Now go tie a bunch of them.

