

## Fly Tying Bench — Most's Generic Blue Gill Fly *by Charlie Most*

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At the SFF August meeting, I tied and handed out some bluegill flies meant for deeper fishing. When asked what I would tie that evening, I said a “generic” bluegill fly. Generic in this case meant taking several different but widely accepted fly tying ideas and combining them into one fly.

Since sunny summer days are normal here, at least until afternoon thundershowers move in, the bigger fish will be four to eight feet deep. Deep is synonymous with snagging and few flies go deeper than Clouser’s deep minnow, and its upside down hook is more snag resistant. Weighting with barbells would be spot-on for deeper fishing. Even small lead barbells are a bit too heavy for bluegill flies but bead chain is lighter and just right.

Flies with peacock herl (strands from a peacock plume) bodies have an almost mystical appeal to most freshwater fish. It has an iridescent sparkle with a long history as a body material. Unfortunately, peacock is rather fragile and needs reinforcing. Thread, wire or tinsel adds that strength.

Adding some movement would liven any fly, so a near-peacock green soft hackle wound around the hook provides that illusion of life. The next decision was what color bead chain? I have bead chain in chrome, black and gold. Chrome seemed too shiny and black too dull, while gold adds highlights and was judged just right. There is a perhaps theoretical problem with using bead chain eyes; there’s always a small burr around the holes. Could this nick a leader while casting or playing a fish. Not being one to take things for granted, I’ve started filing those burrs smooth whenever I use bead chain eyes.

What size hook for bluegills? These fish have small mouths and a size 10 hook is probably the norm. But that size also entices those little tiddlers when we’re hopeful of bigger game. A size 8 hook with a longer shank makes a bigger fly to discourage smaller fish but still tempt “bull” bluegills we’re after.



Most's Generic Blue Gill Fly— tied by Charlie Most — Photo by Bill AuCoin

### MATERIALS

- **Hook** Size 8 Mustad 9672, 3X long, down eye.
- **Thread** 6/0 Olive UNI-thread
- **Head** Golden bead chain segment and peacock herl
- **Body** Peacock herl twisted around brass wire or oval tinsel, before wrapping. The tinsel is easiest.
- **Hackle** Olive dyed hen hackle.

Attach thread behind hook eye and wrap one eye-width back of eye. Wrap two little “humps” with space between. Hold chain segment between the humps and wrap criss-cross around hook and between the chain beads, making sure they are horizontal and at right angles to the shank. Then wrap under the beads and over the hook shank to tighten the initial wraps. Now wrap a couple of eye widths down the shank and half hitch. A drop of super-glue to the criss-cross wraps will lock them in.

Take three or four peacock herls and break off a half to three quarters inch of the fragile tips. Take some thin brass wire or better still, small gold oval tinsel, of the same length as the herls and hold it and remaining tips of the herls just behind the bead chain eyes and tie them all down. Wrap over herls and tinsel back to the hook bend and reverse wrap back to an eye width behind the bead chain eyes.

With hackle pliers, twist the herls and tinsel together but not too tightly or the herls will break. Twist until the inch or so next to the hook looks like a “rope” and then wrap this around the hook shank. Keep twisting and wrapping until you reach the thread behind the eyes. Tie off and clip excess (with brass wire, rock wire back and forth until it breaks).

The picture shows a hen body feather hackle but I’ve since changed to a hen neck hackle of olive dyed grizzly. The neck hackle has less body but more movement. Strip the fluffy base fibers off the hackle stem butt, clip the stem to leave an eighth inch or so and tie this in so the hackle fibers are back over body with the natural curve down. Grasp hackle tip with hackle pliers and wrap forward over its stem to just behind bead chain eyes. Take two thread wraps over the tip, cut off excess and half hitch the thread.

Take one more peacock herl, break off fragile tip and tie the end down just behind the eye beads. Wrap single herl two turns behind eyes and then between eyes both ways before wrapping three turns in front. Tie off, clip excess and whip finish head. Add head cement to whip finish and Mr. Generic is finished.

You want to fish this fly slow and deep, with either a sink tip line or a fairly long leader that lets it get down where it should be. A slow, hand twist retrieve is sure to entice any bluegill that sees it.