The Cayuga Fisher

Fly Pattern: Foam Popper Body

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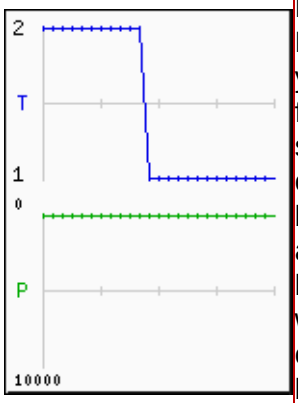
Cayuga Lake

Ithaca Climate

Light Snow and 1 F at Ithaca, Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, NY

Past 24 Hr. Temp and Pressure



Winds are from the Northwest at 16.1 gusting to

Materials:

- Hook: Gamakatsu B10S Stinger 6 - 2/0
- other: Dremel, sandpaper, foam, etc

Step 1:

Make your own foam popper and bass bug bodies! An endless variety of colors and sizes can be yours with a trip to the craft store and Lowe's. The craft store (I shop at Michael's) has lots of foam, paint, and glue. Look for firm foam products- I bought door hangers that were too soft at the dollar store. Too cheap! At the craft store, two millimeter foam sheets are 79 cents and are easily stacked. Foam crosses are a buck and are 6 mil, I love these! Foam letters are also a dollar and are an inch thick or more.

Step 2:

Next stop, Lowe's or Home Depot. For ten bucks you can have four different sizes of plug cutters, not a bad deal at all. If you have a drill with a 1/2 inch chuck you'll be set. The only drawback I found using

Random Photo Spotlight:

Conesus Pike!

Fish and Tips

2008 Goal: postponed...

Currently: ? species

More info

Hot Knots

Never tie an improved clinch again.

- Smaller.
- Stronger.
- Great for fluorocarbon.

The uni knot is versatile, easy to tie, and strong. Use it to tie on hooks or join two lines together with the double uni knot. Works great for tying dissimilar lines together or a leader to braid. For tying a braid backing to heavier mono or even a leader to braid the Red Phillips knot is faster and

25.3 MPH (14 gusting to 22 KT). The pressure is 1024.4 mb and the humidity is 76%. The wind chill is -19. Last Updated on Feb 13 2015, 8:56 am EST.

these PEX fittings was cutting depth- you can't drill foam more than an inch thick. That's plenty for most flies!

Step 3:

While at Lowe's be sure to pick up sandpaper. You'll want 100, 200, and 600 grit. Or 60, 150, 400, 600 grit. Shaping the plug cutters is first and requires a rough paper to start. Later you'll want to smooth out the foam so the 600 grit is a must.

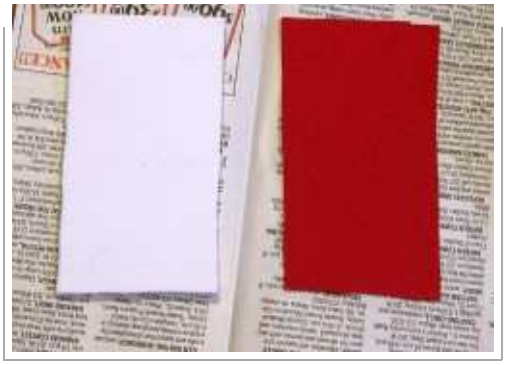
One by one, mount the PEX connectors in your drill and sand them to the proper shape. I used a tongue depressor (craft sticks) as a backbone for the sandpaper. The two smaller cutters had ridges on the sides; all four were sharpened at the tip. It doesn't hurt to sand down the thick walls as much as you have the patience for, it reduces friction when drilling the foam.

Step 4:

Don't forget glue while you're out shopping! Both of these worked great. The 3M was ten bucks, the Elmer's was five and contained enough glue for dozens and dozens of popper bodies.

Step 5:

smaller.



Cut up your foam! I make strips several inches wide. This photo shows a thick white piece from a cross and a thin red one from a foam sheet. When gluing, go easy, like spray paint. I give them each a quick shot to wet the surface. Wait five to ten seconds and take a look, you'll see where the glue was light and has soaked in. Spray again, wait ten to twenty seconds, and stick them together.

If it's too wet they slide around and don't align properly. Too dry and the bond isn't strong. This three step process (spray/pause, spray/pause, bond) works great.

Step 6:

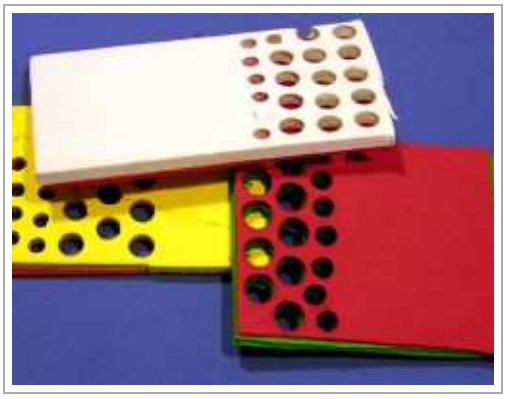
A few glued blocks, ready to clamp. When spraying the glue, spray both sides you are joining- if only one has glue and you try to bond them the foam curves and takes on a life of its own! The MDF board is a foot long, eight inches across. These three stacks (white/red, yellow/red, and green/red) are enough for dozens of poppers and the foam cost pennies.

Step 7:

Clamp them down. I give it three to four hours minimum, even though the glue can says an hour. Overnight is better- sometimes the friction from cutting the plugs will

tear a layer apart. This stopped when I started waiting several hours.

Step 8:



Time to drill foam! For these I used the two smaller plug cutters. The smallest makes a foam core barely 1/4 inch in diameter, on the small side, but not for bluegill flies! Take a look at Step 1 for more examples.

Step 9:

Here's a pile of larger foam plugs, freshly cut. Be sure to stay perpendicular to the foam or you'll introduce unwanted angles on your plugs. (Or experiment with angled faces!) Also, take care when drilling foam deeper than your plug cutter- it's not hard as the foam compresses but extra care is needed to keep them straight.

Step 10:

Ready to turn that pile into this one? It's Dremel time!

Step 11:

First you'll need a few mandrels for the foam plugs. I was cheap and used old drill bits, just sand the tip into a blunt point.
Not too pointy as you want as much friction and holding power as possible. These are 5/64, 3/32, and 7/64. Most of the time I use the middle one but some stubborn bodies require the largest mandrel for maximum friction. The key is to sand lightly!

Also pictured are the tools I use for shaping the cup, a diamond burr point and a stone grinder. Most of the time I prefer the diamond point but they both have their place.

Step 12:

Here's my setup. I clamped the Dremel to a tabletop and hung a newspaper to catch the bulk of the foam debris.
Several strips of sandpaper are visible down there as well.

Step 13:

Next, poke a hole through the middle of your plug with a needle or bodkin. This helps center the hole and makes

threading the mandrel much easier. A centered (or nearly so) plug is much easier to work with. Thread the foam core onto the mandrel. I usually place the hook-eye end outward to make it easier to carve the cup. In the previous picture, the red lip is facing out.

Put in earplugs and fire it up! No need to max it out though, the low end speeds are fine.

Step 14:

Start shaping on the inside corner. If the plug is off center this helps by starting a centered edge to work from.

Step 15:

Keep the sandpaper moving and gently shape and center the whole plug. This is now perfectly round.

Step 16:

It's easy to use the sandpaper to slice off a little if you wish. I'm about to take a few millimeters off.

Step 17:

And done. This produces a great edge, much better than trying to trim it a little with scissors beforehand.

Step 18:

The final shaping with 600 grit sandpaper. I gave it a quick once over with 200 just before (not pictured.) This leaves a nice smooth finish.

Step 19:

When satisfied with the shape and finish, slide the foam body outward a little, over the point.

Step 20:

Using your favored tool, carve a cup into the front of the body. I like this diamond point

for the Dremel.
Don't buy just the one, get the "grind/carve" set or whatever it's called. For an extra seven bucks you get the same bit plus more, including a grinding stones and a diamond ball.

Step 21:

All done and ready for assembly. I gave this a bare touch-up on the lip after this photo was taken. Watch that lip, it's hard to get a clean surface because the foam compresses instead of being sanded.

Step 22:

The reason to use a Dremel instead of a drill for the lathe operation. The rough one was formed on a drill, which doesn't go fast enough and didn't give me a clean surface. The high speed of the Dremel works much better.

Step 23:

That's about it! Here's a few bodies I matched to hooks. This is also a good opportunity to use

something sharp and poke an off-center channel for the hook to sit in- this helps keep the hook gap as open as possible. I usually use a drill bit and the diamond point bit.

Step 24:

For kicks, here's my homemade drying wheel! It's not much to look at but it cost five bucks, which was the foam garden kneeling pad I cut into a rough circle. The motor came from my mom's wire and Christmas light lawn reindeer. Last winter these things were on sale for 10-20 dollars at the home improvement stores. I laughed at first but then the old lightbulb lit up and out came the screwdriver. A clamp, a little Super 77 and it's a dirt cheap drying wheel. I'm not sure what the ideal speed is but this one goes 4 RPM and suits me just fine.

Step 25:

My very first popper! I'll do a tutorial for a few of these soon, for now a few examples of what you can do...

Step 26:

The body is a sandwich of two foam crosses and a sheet.

Step 27:

A red sheet lip on two yellow crosses. If you're creative enough not much of a paint job is necessary, just some sealer, sparkle and finish.

Step 28:

A small marabou bass bug made from two crosses, one red, one white. That's all for now... use your imagination and have fun!

Step 29:

*many fly pictures have larger sizes, click images to view.

Return to the Vise