

FEBRUARY FLY OF THE MONTH

By Todd A.Schotts

After much research (on the web, in my files, in books) trying to find a fly that is both unique and works great, I finally found this month's fly, in celebration of Warm Water Fishing February! I will tie the "Dredger."

This fly came to my attention a few years ago when searching for warm water flies on the internet. My travels took me the website "Warm Water Fly Tyer by Ward Bean" (www.warmwaterflytyer.com). The creator of the site, and this month's fly, is Ward Bean from Council Bluffs, Iowa. Now if you are into any type of warm water fly fishing, or are a warm water junkie like me, keep this site at your finger tips. There are a variety of patterns, step-by-step pictures, historic patterns, and other great fly fishing information that Ward Bean provides.

Through early retirement, Ward was able to do what he only dreamed of (and most of us do to) - fish every day. He also became a free lance writer. His flies, tying tips and featured articles have appeared in *Fly Tyer Magazine*, *Warm Water Fly Fishing*, and *Fly Fishing & Tying Journal*.

As it turns out, the "Dredger" is Ward Bean's version of Kelly Gallop's "Spark Plug." When I emailed Ward to find out more about the fly, he wasn't quite sure when he modified this pattern. He got the idea when he saw Kelly tie his "Spark Plug Fly" at a fly fishing and tying conclave.

When you tie the "Dredger," remember to keep the fly no shorter than three inches and no longer than four inches. The colors noted on his web site are black, purple, and chartreuse. I added another color to that combination - Crawfish Orange. Make sure you use strong thread because you don't want to break your thread when you torque down on the rabbit strip to tie it in. A couple of other things to take note of, make sure your hen neck feathers are very webby. Ward suggests adding rubber legs to any warm water pattern that will accommodate them, as a good addition. In the process, I made one little adjustment to the original pattern, using different color bead chain eyes.

On his site, Ward mentions the "Dredger" is an excellent swimming fly, but the best way to fish it is close to the bottom. This fly is designed to represent a crawfish or a leech, depending on how it's fished. He mentions you can fish the "Dredger" with either floating or sinking lines; with a nine-foot tapered leader on floating line; with a four foot level leader on a sink tip; or with an intermediate line. Fish the "Dredger" slowly in short strips, followed by brief pauses.

If you fish for smallmouth or largemouth bass, this is one fly you will want to have in your fly box in multiple colors. But always be aware, the weary pike can strike these at anytime, as I found out on the Flint River. Until next month, Tight Lines and Snazzy Flies.

Hook: *Salmon Wet Size 4*

Thread: *140 Denier or 6/0 Red*

Tail: *Magnum Zonker Strip (Black, Purple, Chartreuse, or Crawfish Orange)*

Body: *Silver Flashabou*

Collar: *Silver Flashabou*

Skirt: *Hen Hackle (to match Zonker strips)*

Legs: *Rubber Legs (round) Color see below*

(Black zonker – yellow / Purple Zonker – White / Chartreuse Zonker – Black / Crawfish Orange – Red)

Eyes: *Large Bead Chain*

Head: *Chenille Black Fine*

