

OSPREY FLY BOX

ANTI-STATIC BAG BOMBER

contributed by
Will Wright

Ken Woodward is a high school teacher from Kelowna, he has a trailer at Tunkwa Lake resort year round and spends almost every weekend there when the water's not frozen, not to mention just about the entire summer holidays. Being one of the regulars up there "Woody" is usually one of the guys at Tunkwa, Leighton or just about any other lakes in the area that consistently does well on the water. One of the main flies in his arsenal is a chironomid tied with thin strips of anti static bag, his "Anti Static Bag Bomber". The fly here is his most productive variation of the pattern, but he also ties them with different coloured ribs depending on what's on the fish's menu any given day. Thanks to Ken for letting me share his pattern with our members.

For cutting the ribs I use the Olfa rotary knife, something Ken Baker showed me years ago.

Below is the Ken's discussion of his fly, the Anti Static Bag Bomber



The Anti-Static Bag Bomber

HISTORY AND PATTERN DEVELOPMENT (THE HOW, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, ETC.)

I heard about using anti-static bag material for chironomid pupa bodies about 10 years ago. I tried it back then and I wasn't impressed with the results, so I tucked the flies into the corner of my fly box and concentrated on shiny flies, typically tied with Flashabou and/or Frostbite. A couple of years later you published your "Early Season Bomber" and I tied a few of those. They worked, but not better than simpler patterns so I didn't tie any more of them. Three years ago, during the annual August chironomid frenzy at Leighton Lake, I was re-acquainted with anti-static bag after witnessing another angler catch fish after fish during a period of mediocre fishing for the rest of the crowd.

The annual Bomber hatch was in full swing on Leighton Lake and fishing was very good. It wasn't unusual to hook a fish on the first cast before even getting the second line in the water, and then enjoy multiple double-headers throughout the day. It was the annual hatch we'd all been eagerly anticipating. As usual, word got out and the crowds descended – the boat launch was busy every morning and productive shoals were soon covered in anchored boats daily. As days went by and the hatch progressed the fish got more selective and fishing slowed down.

One day a fellow showed up, rowed out into the crowd and found himself a spot. He cast out his lines and was very quickly into fish on both rods, despite it being relatively slow for the rest of us. He proceeded to put on a clinic, rarely going more than a few minutes without a fish. From time-to-time he'd change locations, and he'd hook fish seemingly at will no matter where he anchored. One day a couple of my fishing pals were fishing nearby this fellow and, as usual, he was badly out-fishing them. My pals are no slouches at fishing Leighton – they are

usually the guys out-fishing everyone else – so they were a bit chagrined to be so humbled. Eventually, my pals could bear it no longer and, swallowing their pride, rowed over and asked the fellow what he was using. He replied something like "I only show my flies to the fish cop!", but invited them over to have a look anyhow, introducing himself as "Terry". They ended up having a good chat and swapped flies with each other.

That evening, when we got together to compare notes as usual, Dick was very excited to tell me about what he had learned. "It's gunmetal with copper rib!" he exclaimed as he rushed over to show me the flies he had swapped with Terry. I had a look at the flies and I could tell right away that they were not tied with gunmetal (Flashabou), but were actually tied with anti-static bag. In addition, I noted the rib was copper-brown wire, not plain copper, and the bead was brown-olive.

Luckily, being the packrat I am, I still had several anti-static bags in my tying kit. I gave one to Dick and we got busy tying up some versions of Terry's flies. I tried them the next day and they were very effective. Terry had left and suddenly we were the guys catching lots of fish while others watched. I ended up giving anti-static bags away to several friends and acquaintances so they could also try tying with them. Soon many of us were fishing with various chironomid pupa imitations tied with anti-static bag material and we all found them to be very effective. A number of variations are now staples in our fly boxes.

FISHING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

All variations are usually fished close to the bottom using typical chironomid tactics. I fish it different ways depending on the weather (i.e. wind and water temperature), and whether or not I'm tending the rod. With untended rods I almost always set the indicator to suspend the fly 15-30 cm off the bottom, and then cast ~45 degrees downwind, set the rod in the holder and let

the wind swing the line. If I am actively fishing the rod, I also cast quartering downwind, but once the line is directly downwind and the fly has hung at depth for a moment or two, I retrieve very slowly with a hand-twist, pausing from time-to-time and also adding a couple of short, fast strips now and then ("the two twitch"). If the water is warm I know the naturals will be swimming quickly, so I speed up the retrieve accordingly. If it is really windy and there is a pronounced chop on the water, I'll forgo the indicator on the rod I'm holding and fish naked using the same quartering presentation. I have a feeling that a serious chop bounces the fly up and down too much; a naked presentation dampens the movement and, in my experience, can be more effective than using an indicator when the wind is brisk. Fish often take on the swing before the retrieve is even started.

OTHER COMMENTS OR INFORMATION

The anti-static bag material has some disadvantages:

- Lack of durability. Even when coated with Super Glue fish teeth chew it up fairly readily.
- Thickness. It is tricky to tie small chironomids with it since it builds bulk rapidly when wrapped. Some anti-static bags are made from thinner material than others, so it's worth collecting a few and choosing thin ones.
- Lack of stretch. In order to wrap smooth bodies it must be stretched slightly, but pulling just a bit too hard results in breakage, which can be frustrating.
- Not commercially available. You must acquire the anti-static bags and prepare your own strips of it. That does warm the frugal heart, though

All that said, the effectiveness of patterns tied with this material outweighs the minor issues of tying with it.

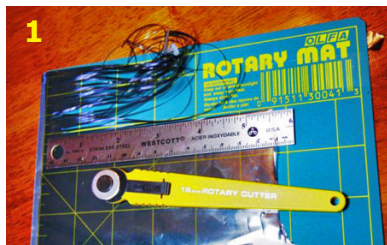
MATERIALS



- Hook:** Tiemco 2302 or equivalent - #8 to #16
- Thread:** Olive - 8/0
- Gills:** White Marabou
- Bead:** Black Cyclops Eyes - Size to suite hook.
- Body:** Strip of Anti-Static Bag (silver/grey)
- Rib:** Small Copper Wire
- Coating:** Super Glue

TYING INSTRUCTIONS

Photography by Peter Chatt



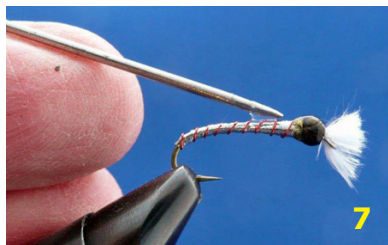
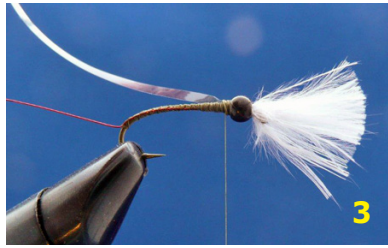
- Prepare a thin (~2 mm) strip of anti-static bag material. I like to prepare a number of strips in advance using a steel ruler, razor knife and cutting mat. I cut the strips almost all the way, leaving them attached at one end by a couple of millimeters of material. I can then tear them off as needed.

As mentioned above Will suggests the use of the OLAF Rotary Knife and Mat to cut the bag material into strips.

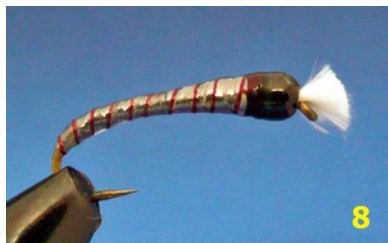


- Place bead on hook and hook in vise, and then slide the bead to the bend of the hook.
- Start 6/0 thread at hook eye.
- Bind a small, fluffy clump of white marabou over the eye, trim the butts at an angle, cover the butts with thread, whip-finish and cut thread.
- Slide bead up to eye.

TYING INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*



The Finished Fly



Anti-Static Bag Bomber

- Start thread behind bead.
- Tie in wire at bead and then, keeping wire straight and in line with hook shank, bind wire down into the bend. With smaller sizes I do not bind the wire into the bend with thread. In order to maintain the desired slimness I simply overwrap the wire with the anti-static bag.
- Build a slim, smoothly tapered thread underbody, keeping in mind you want the finished body to be thin at the bend of the hook and taper up to a bit less than the width of the bead at the thorax. The underbody is a lot thinner than chironomids tied with Flashabou since the anti-static bag material is a lot thicker than Flashabou, and may not even be necessary when tying the smaller sizes
- Move the thread up to the bead, adjusting the taper if necessary.
- Clip one end of a strip of anti-static bag into a point and bid it securely behind the bead on an angle so such that it is ready for wrapping.
- Carefully pull the material through your fingertips a couple of times to warm it up, then carefully stretch it slightly and wrap touching turns down into the bend of the hook.
- Wrap slightly overlapping turns back up the bead, tie off and clip excess material. If done properly there will be a small channel formed all the way up due to the slightly overlapping wraps.
- Wind the wire forward in the channel formed by the anti-static bag wraps. This has a couple of benefits: the wire settles into the channel so the body is not quite so thick, and the rib ends up very evenly wrapped with no bulges.
- Tie off the wire, build a neat thread thorax, whip finish and clip the thread.
- Lay your scissors at the back of the bead, pull the marabou over the scissors' edge and trim the marabou so that the length of the gills is about the same as the diameter of the bead. Mash the marabou back with your thumb to cause it to puff up a bit.
- Coat the entire abdomen and thorax with Super Glue.

Good Luck & Tight Lines