

OSPREY FLY BOX

COHO JIG

contributed by
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I sometimes wander over to the “dark side” and fish hardware with a friend of mine that does not fly fish. “Twitching Jigs” is a technique used with spinning rods that has really taken off over the past decade. The first time I saw a jigs for fishing salmon was a presentation by Bent Rods years ago at Sportsman Show.

While fly fishers are fishing flies on hooks ranging from #4 to #10, coho jigs for spinning rods are tied on jig hooks up to sizes #1 to #3/0 and weights ranging from a 1/4 to 1 ounce. By comparison these jigs are huge in comparison to flies. And ... when fished properly they are very effective.

A couple years ago I was watching an episode of Sport Fishing on the Fly. Don and Dale Freschi were fishing “walking water” on the Skeena. They were fishing for coho and they were fishing jigs. Here is the link to the episode.

<https://youtu.be/mBUH54n3v14?si=ENeyLZ4Ma5JPgKaR>

Freschi’s preferred set up is a 11 to 12 foot switch rod. He likes using the Skagit head for its weight and ease of casting. A short short sink tip, ranging from 5 to a maximum of 7½ ft, is looped on to the Skagit Head. Depending on the speed and depth of the water, he uses T11 to T17 sink tips.

Don likes to have a swivel on the end of the sink tip to deal with any twisting that may happen. This is easily done if you are building your own sink tips. (November 2024 Method Session)

A short leader - two to three feet of fluorocarbon - and your fly completes the set up.

For slow moving water, 1/8 ounce jig is all you need. In heavier water, you’ll need to go with a faster sinking tip and up the weight to 1/4 ounce. Ideally, your jig will be ticking the bottom as it moves down river.

Keep the casts relatively short, coho tend to stay close to shore in slower water. Let the fly swing along the bottom and, by all means, experiment with the “twitch”.



Three jigs tied in Coho colours. Don’s Coho Jig on the bottom. Many of your favourite patterns can be tied as a jig pattern.

MATERIALS



DON’S COHO JIG

- Hook:** Mustad Jig Hook. Size #4.
- Bead:** Slotted Tungsten – 3/16” - Purple
- Thread:** Semperfli Nanosilk – 12/0 – Black
- Tail:** Maribou - Purple
- Legs:** Sili Legs – Fire Tip – Purple/Hot Pink
- Body:** Palmer Chenille – Medium – Pink
- Collar:** Ice Dub - UV Purple.

TYING INSTRUCTIONS



1. Slide slotted bead onto 90° Jig Hook. Rotate bead so that it slides around corner of jig. Put a thread base on the shank of the hook.



2. Strip fibres off one side of a marabou feather. Roll the fibres as they are stripped from the top of the feather towards the bottom. Trim butt ends and tie in behind the bead. Tail should be length of the hook. If too long, tear off excess.



3. Take two strands of Purple/Hot Pink sili legs. Fold in half and position so that purple extends about a third of the way down the tail. Tie two legs on each side. Tie in all the way down to the tail. Clip the excess behind the bead.



4. Tie in the palmer chenille in front of the tail. Spin the palmer chenille clockwise so that fibres radiate out from the core.



5. Wrap the palmer chenille forward to the bead. Stroke the fibres back towards the rear with each wrap, ensuring fibres are not trapped. Tie off and clip the excess.



6. With synthetic dubbings especially if it contains long fibres my preference is the "split thread" dubbing method. Semprefli Nanosilk is very strong and easy to split with bodkin. Spin thread counter clockwise to flatten thread. Split the thread and insert small pinches of dubbing -about 1½" in length. Spin clockwise to lock dubbing in twisted thread.



7. Wrap the dubbing filling the gap between the body and the bead. Put some head cement on the thread and whip finish. Brush the dubbing back with a Velcro Brush giving the collar a shaggy look. Trim the legs so they extend to end of tail.



8. Inverted in vise into fishing position.



Tight Lines & Good Luck!