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# FLY OF THE MONTH

## Bird's Nest

The Bird's Nest was designed by Cal Bird, in 1959 for catching Truckee River trout. This is one of SDFP member, John Kasten's favorite nymphs on all western trout rivers, lakes and streams. He was taught the pattern by Cal Bird many years ago. Fish it dead drift in the film or along the bottom with a split shot to mimic a nymph. It can be fished on the swing to imitate an ascending caddis pupa or stripped along the edges of weed beds to simulate a swimming nymph or baitfish. It is deadly when treated with Tite Lines dry fly powder or Orvis' Ultra Float to make it repel water and hold air bubbles. These bubbles look very much like a subsurface ovipositing caddis.

- HOOK:** TMC 3761, size 10 and 12 are John Kasten's favorites, (can be 14 and 16 for caddis) Daiichi 1710 - heavy wire 1X or 2X long nymph hooks.
- THREAD:** Match body, 8/0 or 6/0
- WEIGHT:** Lead wire .020 or the diameter of the hook shank
- TAIL:** Wood duck (or bronze mallard)
- RIB:** Gold wire (or copper)
- ABDOMEN:** Brown, gray or green buggy looking Australian opossum (Black is good.)
- LEGS:** Wood duck or (well marked mallard or teal dyed bronze)
- THORAX:** Same as abdomen



1. If you want to add lead, do so and secure the lead under thread; if not, start the thread two-thirds up the shank, tie in a section of fibers as tail (long; about three-quarter shank length). Trim off the fibers' butts. Tie in gold wire at the bend.

2. Dub a slightly tapered abdomen up two-thirds of the shank. Rib the abdomen with five or six turns of the copper wire. Secure the wire's end with thread and then add a half hitch.

3. If the fibers of your teal or mallard feather aren't squared at their tips, draw them to whatever angle to the stem will square them. Strip off, or snip off, the section. Hold the section flat over the hook shank for sizing. The tips should reach to the far edge of the hook's bend.

4. With your thumb and finger, roll the fibers around the shank and then press the fibers tight to the abdomen. Take a loose turn of thread around the fibers, and then pull the thread tight. Add a few tight thread turns. Trim the fibers' butts.

5. Build a thorax over the front third of the shank. Build and complete a thread head and whip finish to complete the Bird's Nest.

Credits: From [The Art of Tying the Nymph](#), Fly Anglers On Line

I picked this pattern for the FOM to honor John Kasten and the Wednesday Bunch. We were having a discussion at Lake Murray on the original Cal Bird recipe. Cal tied the hackle in several ways. The above method may be the easiest way to get the leg length correct. I often tie the soft hackle in by the tip and make 1.5 to two wraps of hackle. The second method involves selecting mallard or wood duck flank of the proper size. Like many soft hackle patterns, you do not want the legs to be too long or too full. Make a few thread wraps over the wood duck quill to lay the legs to the rear and then add the thorax as above. A bead head can be added for more weight and variation. The dry fly powder is a new trick to make the fly even better than the original.

