

MAYFLY COMPARADUNS

Jim Greco



I regularly fish comparadun patterns when I have the good fortune to find mayflies hatching on the water. From time proven Catskill flies with upright wings to biot bodied parachute patterns that look like they are about to pop off the water into the magic of flight, over the years I have used many patterns in my attempts to catch wary trout on dry flies.

Comparadun patterns have often proven themselves to be of great value. Once you learn a few tricks about how to set the wing, they are easy to tie, and they are durable. Most importantly, when you present them to a fish without any drag, they catch fish more consistently than many of the other patterns I use.

My wife, and favorite fishing partner, Pam, and I fish the Delaware River near Deposit, New York every spring. Consistently, the most productive pattern we use for Hendricksons, sulphurs, blue quills, blue wing olives, and even isonychias and green drakes are the comparadun style of fly. I have also used these flies with similar success in Pennsylvania waters and on our local streams.

For the comparadun wing, I use comparadun hair or coastal deer hair dyed to match the wing color of the dun mayfly I wish to imitate. For instance, when tying a Hendrickson comparadun, I use: light or dark Hendrickson turkey biot or beaver dubbing for the body, light or dark Hendrickson beaver dubbing for the thorax, and dark dun coastal deer hair for the wing.

For sulphurs, use the same materials, but switch to colors that match the body and wing of the sulphur you want to copy such as sulphur orange, sulphur yellow, or yellow/olive for the body and light dun comparadun hair for the wing. You can even make comparaduns that appear to be more like emerging duns simply by changing the tail from micro fibetts or hackle fibers to z-lon or antron yarn in the proper colors to emulate a trailing nymphal shuck. (Sparkle Dun)

Experiment a bit, and try tying a few of these comparadun patterns for your fly box just to see if your take rate improves as mine has improved.

Good fishing to all of you.

Tying Instructions

FLY: SULPHUR COMPARADUN

Type: Dry - Dun

Hook: TMC – 100, 101, or Mustad 94840 #14 - #20

Thread: Unithread 6/0 – 8/0 light Cahill or orange.....

Tail: micro fibetts, split into the proper number for the mayfly being tied, or splayed hackle fibers. **(Note:** for a sparkle comparadun, used as an emerger, use z-lon or antron yarn of medium copper brown color.)

Body: sulphur orange, sulphur yellow, or yellow/olive turkey biots, or the same colors in beaver or superfine dubbing to match natural

Thorax: beaver or superfine dubbing - sulphur yellow, sulphur orange, or yellow/olive to match natural

Wing: coastal deer hair or comparadun hair – light dun.....

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Tip: to tie in the tail, wrap your thread to a point over the barb of the hook and form a small ball of thread. Clip the tag end of the thread and reserve for later use. Tie in three micro fibetts stopping with a loose wrap just before the top of the ball of thread you made earlier. Retrieve the tag end of thread you reserved. Loop the tag end of that thread through the bend of the hook and capture the middle micro fibbet in its loop. Spread the micro fibetts by pulling the loop of thread towards the eye of the hook on top of the shank. Apply just enough tension to the thread to spread the micro fibetts. Wrap your tying thread around the shank of the hook locking in the tag end of thread used to spread the tail. This technique sounds difficult, but with some practice makes beautiful mayfly dun tails. When you need only two tails on a fly, the same process may be used to split them. Just carry the loop between the two tails and apply enough tension to spread them before tying in the tag end of thread used for the loop.

Tip: to tie in the wing, bind the comparadun hair down with ten or more very firm wraps on the top of the hook with the butt ends of the hair facing the bend of the hook. Clip the butts off at an angle to reduce bulk. With the tips of the hair pointing over the hook eye, pull up one fifth of the hair fibers and take a fairly tight wrap of thread between that bunch of hair and the remaining hair. Repeat this in small bunches of approximately a fifth of the hair until you have reached the front of the wing. Make a dam with ten or more turns of thread in front of the wing to keep it upright. Dub the body in a nice taper or use a biot and then dub the thorax, but leave a small gap between the dubbing on the back side of the wing to allow space for the wing to be pushed backwards by the dubbing you place in front of the wing. Without this small space, at this stage the wing will be pushed forward, something which should be avoided. Whip finish the head of the fly, then finish it by spreading the wing into a fan shape.