

Dave Whitlock's Rubber Legged Bead Head Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph

By David Campbell

- I have mentioned before that I am a recovering Bass Fisherman. Actually, my start in fly fishing was to supplement my bass fishing in streams where a bass boat was not practical. Not knowing any thing about the sport, I google searched bass fishing with fly rod and started getting hits about a guy named Dave Whitlock and his flies for Smallmouth. One fly in particular that caught my attention was the Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph. Dave states that if he only had one fly to use for the rest of his days, it would be the RFSHN. This fly can be tied in several variations and sizes to imitate stone flies, caddis flies, mayflies, crawfish, and some saltwater crustaceans.

- One day while browsing in a local fly shop I stumbled across Dave Whitlock's Rubber Legged Bead Head RFSHN. Not knowing any better or that this was a variation of the original famous RFSHN, I purchased a ½ dozen or so. Success was almost immediate. Not only for the smallmouth but for trout also. I have caught almost everything on this fly; from Bluegill to Steelhead. It became my favorite "go-to" fly for years and is still one I would not leave home without today.

- So, I thought I would share how to tie the Rubber Legged Bead Head Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph (RLBHRFSHN).



Materials:

- **Hook** - #8 2x or 3x long nymph
- **Weight** – lead wire the same diameter as the hook shank and 5/32” brass bead
- **Thread** – 6/0 brown, orange, tan, or black. (I prefer orange)
- **Tail** – Hair from the back of a fox squirrel. Small pinch and use hair stacker to even the tips.
- **Rib** – Pearlescent flash-a-boo
- **Abdomen** – the orange belly hair of the Fox Squirrel skin or Dave Whitlock’s SLF RFSHN abdomen dubbing
- **Legs** – Medium round rubber (Brown, Yellow, or Orange)
- **Thorax** – Dave Whitlock’s SLF RFSHN Thorax dubbing
- **Hackle** – Dark Brown Partridge. One Wrap



- Mount the Brass Bead on the hook small end first and add about 8 wraps of lead the same diameter as your hook shank. In this case, I used .025 diameter lead. Push the lead wraps into the brass bead and start the thread.



- Secure the lead with thread wraps. Now is a good time to start the abdomen taper.



- Cut a small pinch of back hair from the Fox Squirrel skin keeping all the hair tips even and remove the “fuz” from the hair base. Tie the back hair down to form a tail about 1-1/2 times as long as the hook gap is wide.
- You must use the hair from the back of the Squirrel to do this fly justice. Squirrel Tail hair just will not work the same.



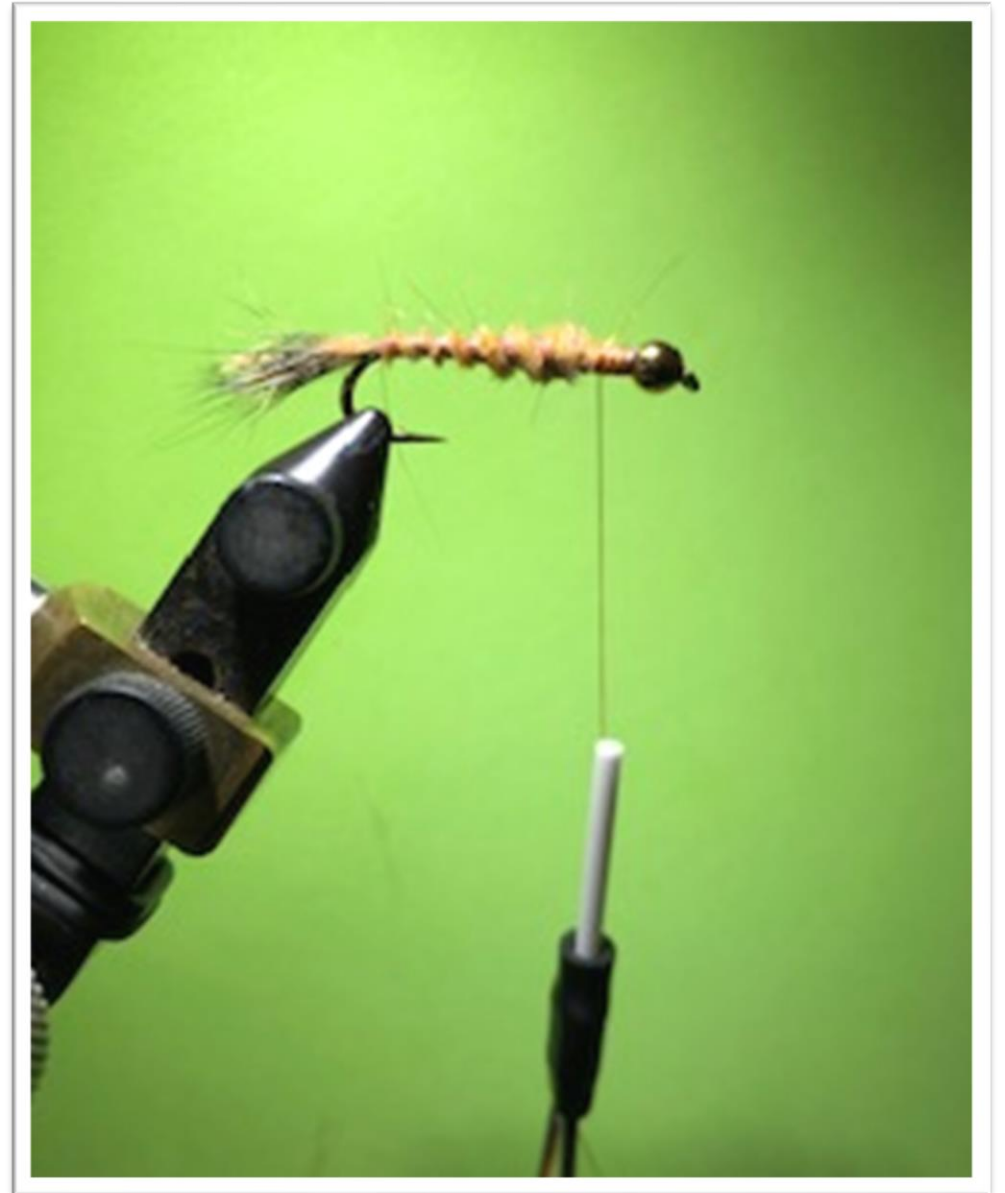
- Tie in a rib. The RLBHRFSHN calls for a pearlescent Flash-a-boo rib but I have seen the fly with a holographic rib and a gold oval tinsel also. Here I am using a pearlescent Flash-a-boo.



- Move thread to rear of hook and form a dubbing rope a few inches long from the abdomen dubbing.
- This dubbing is Dave Whitlock's Synthetic Living Fiber (SLF) RFSHN abdomen color. It was originally made from the belly hair of the RFS.



- Dub a tapered body up to about 2/3rds the hook shank, wrap the pearlescent rib to this spot and tie off.



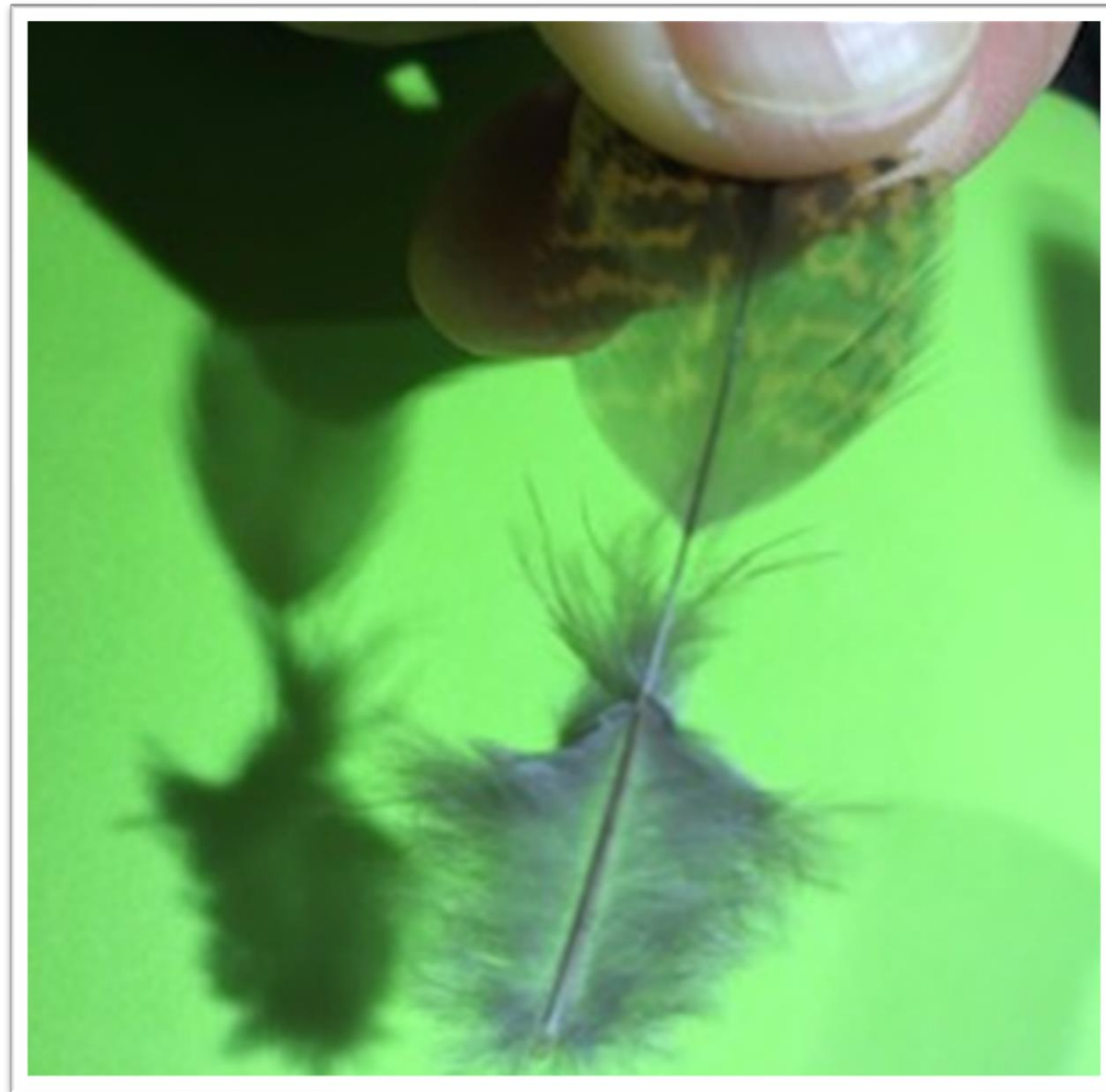
- Tie in the rubber legs (one to each side).
- I used medium round brown legs but you can use any color you prefer. I prefer pumpkin with green flake if you can find it.



- Dub a thorax from the thorax dubbing. Don't be afraid to use plenty of dubbing on the thorax.
- This dubbing is Dave Whitlock's SLF RFSHN Thorax color. It was originally blended from the back hair of the squirrel skin.



- Prepare a dark barred soft hackle feather pulling away the soft Webby fibers



- Palmer the dark barred soft hackle feather just in front of the thorax and whip finish.

