

# Easy Popper



This popper is not only easy to tie and catches lots of bass, but it's made from inexpensive locally available craft foam. The only glitch is that you will need a ½" cutter from the Soggy Bottom Fly shop. Unfortunately the fly shop is in process of being sold. Cutters are available in limited supply from the soggy Bottom Fly Shop until September 2015 when the fly shop is sold, then from the new vender when available.

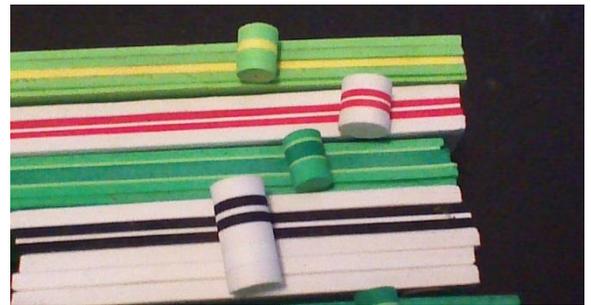
Directions include; 1. Making your own custom foam blocks. 2. Making the popper head complete with eyes and legs. 3. Making the tail section and assembling the fly. This is one of those flies that takes longer to read the directions than it does to tie the fly. With practice you will be able to complete this fly in about 15 minutes or less.



Sleazy Steve's bass cutters

# Custom Foam Blocks

1. High density foam blocks are readily available at various fly shop but come at a high price, especially when you add in the shipping. I make my own using a homemade press and craft foam. Craft foam is softer (chewier) than high density foam and I'm convinced bass hold on to the popper longer making setting the hook easier. Simply cut the craft foam to size to fit your press and glue using 3M 77 spray adhesive for a flexible waterproof bond. Place in the press and allow it to set.
2. You can create your own custom foam blocks by varying the foam's thickness and color. Craft foam is locally available in a multitude of colors in 2 and 5mm thickness. I found some on eBay from ½mm to 6mm. I use more white foam than any other color. White can easily painted with Ceramcoat paints, and finicky fish seem to prefer white.



## The Popper Head

### Materials:

- Foam block (created above)
- Cutter, nail file, razor blade, straight pins, paint brush or round toothpick, and a kabob stick
- 6mm Orvis plastic eyes
- Rubber legs

1. //Cut out foam cylinders using Steve's ½" bass cutter. I use a drill press for accuracy but a hand drill will work fine. Dip the cutter in a soapy solution between each cylinder to prevent overheating.

**Note:** Set the depth of the cutter slightly less than the thickness of the block. A paper thin layer will hold the cylinder in the block when you raise the cutter. You can easily pushed out with your finger as needed.



2. Place the cylinder on a shaping tool from Soggy Bottom Fly shop (or a finish nail) in a Dremel tool or drill and shape using a nail file from Sally's Beauty supplies.



**Note:** My cylinder was long, else I would have shaped it from the end rather than the center of the cylinder.



3. Place the popper head face down on a cutting board. Slice off a third with a razor blade to create a flat bottom.



4. Cut off  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the peg from a pair of solid plastic eyes. Mark the eye locations with 2 straight pins, widen the pinhole using a kabob stick and dry fit the eyes. Add a drop of superglue in the eye socket when satisfied with the placement and re-insert the eyes.

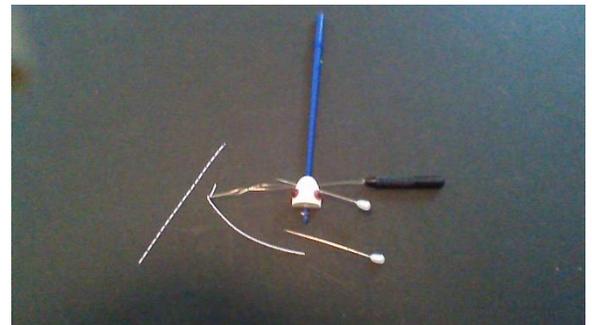


5. You can use doll eyes, stick on eyes or paint eyes in place of plastic eyes. I find Orvis plastic eyes to be more durable and will stay in place longer than any other option.



6. Insert a paint brush handle or toothpick in the popper to insure the hole will remain clear. Push 2 straight pins through the head in an X pattern for the rubber legs. Insert threader in the pinhole, pull 1 or 2 rubber legs through the foam. Repeat for the other pin and set aside.

**Note:** I rely on frictions to keep my rubber legs in place as superglue can distort the shape of the legs. I can also easily replace the legs should they break.

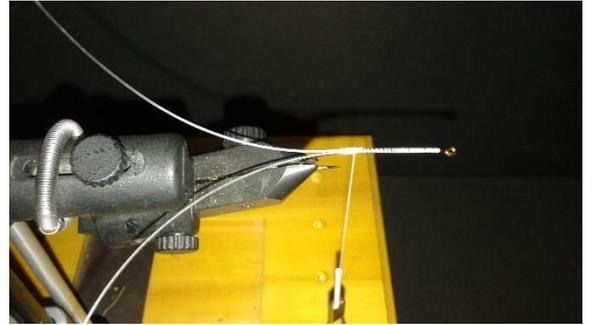


# The Tail Section

## Materials:

- Wooly Nylon or 3/0 thread
- Mason hard mono 16 lb.
- Saber #7060 Bass Bug/Salmon hook, size 6
- Buck Tail
- Flashabou
- Schlappen

1. Start the thread, lightly coat the shank with super glue and dress the hook to the bend and back to the point. Tie in a 3-4" section of 16 lb. Mason Hard Mono to the top with the natural curve of the mono flared away from you. Tie another piece to the top of the hook shank flared toward you.



2. Wrap the mono to the midpoint of the bend and return the thread to the tie in point. Coat the thread covering the mono with superglue.



3. Cut a small clump of buck tail, finger stack and tie to the top of the hook letting it extend  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 shank length past the tie in point. Wrap the buck tail forward to a point 2 eye widths behind the eye and trim. Add 6 pieces of Flashabou to the top of the buck tail.



4. Tie in 2 rooster hackle to each side with the concave side facing out and trim the butts.



5. Dry fit the head and note the space between the hackle and head. This is the area (about  $\frac{1}{4}$ ' or less) you will be filling in with schlappen. Remove the head.



6. Select a long schlappen, tie in immediately in front of the hackles and palmer towards the eye while folding the fibers back covering the gap noted in previous step. Tie off the hackles and whip finish.



7. **Dry fit the head.** You will only have 1 shot to position the head on the hook after you apply superglue. Make sure the head fits properly. When you are satisfied with the fit, remove, apply superglue to the front  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the shank and slide the head in place.



8. Mark 2 points a third of the head length behind the eye of the hook and angled out with pins as shown. This is where the weed guards will be attached.



9. Use the point of the kabob stick to widen the pinhole slightly. Adjust the length of the one weed guard so that it is 1 gape width above the hook when inserted in the pinhole. When satisfied with the fit, trim the other weed guard to the same length.



10. Add a drop of superglue to the tip of the weed guard and insert it in the pinhole. Repeat with the other weed guard.



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The finished fly

The head can be easily replaced after a hard day of fishing by cutting the head away from the hook, eyes and weed guards. Scrape all foam residue from the eyes and weed guards before inserting in the new head.