

# *Effective Fishing Flies (Lures) Routinely Used In Mississippi Inshore, Near-shore and Offshore Waters*

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In saltwater fly-fishing the artificial baits that are commonly used to catch fish are usually called *flies* although none of these artificial baits are made to resemble flies. They are called flies in order not to confuse the general public with conventional artificial baits referred to as lures although the British still call those artificial baits "lures" when used in fly-fishing and made to resemble non-flies such as minnows and crustacea. The information below refers to all artificial baits used in fly-fishing as *FLIES*. Flies may be tied directly onto the hook or onto a tube through which the line passes to the hook.

This list was derived from inputs of several active saltwater fly anglers in the area including but not limited to such notables as Jim Magee, Rod Fields, Reed Guice, Don Abrams, Richard Schmidt and Rick Lauman and my own personal experiences and is only meant to be a guide for the novice angler seeking to get started in saltwater fly-fishing in and near Mississippi coastal waters and the Gulf of Mexico. However, these flies have also been used very effectively in other waters of the USA and in international waters. Only one offshore fly is listed in the interest of brevity.

In helping promote his new saltwater fly pattern book, I wrote to Angelo Peluso recently an endorsement, "The estuaries and saltwaters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Southeastern United States afford year round flyfishing opportunities for anglers young and old and from around the world. Amongst other challenges, fly selection in foreign or unfamiliar waters may be intimidating for the flyfishing angler. *Salt Water Flies of the Southeast and Gulf Coast* gives flyfishermen and fly tyers alike a spatial and temporal groundwork for fly selection and ideas heretofore unavailable for the area and from which all anglers and tyers may gain valuable information. From the waters of the outer banks of North Carolina to Texas' Laguna Madre are found waters and fly anglers that fish them with unique insight into what stimulates strikes in their home waters. This book provides an excellent snapshot of flies and tying techniques which are constantly evolving and transferrable to all waters and all species of fish." The flies included in Mr. Peluso's book from our area are included below and have since been updated.

This is an inventory of general types; or their specific styles (what and how the material is arranged on the hook); or patterns (the specific materials and colors used and how it is arranged on the hook); which you may wish to have on hand for specific species and are not listed in any order of merit. The closing summary at the end provides a

recommended list of basic flies to take with you for local waters for the species listed. **Deep Minnow style:** Most folks call these "Clousers" after Bob Clouser the constructor of the chartreuse over white bucktail fly incorporating lead barbell eyes. These type flies are more appropriately referred to as a style of tying a Deep Minnow. Tom Smuecker of Wapsi is credited with the invention of the modern day barbell eyes used in many of today's patterns and it is used here. Perhaps a more appropriate name for flies using any barbell eyes should be a Smuecker. These flies are usually tied on a #2 SS hook. There is no denying the effectiveness of these and other anterior weighted flies whereby the jiggling motion of fleeing baitfish and crustaceans are mimicked:

**FireFly pattern** - This pattern evolved from my personal favorite big brown trout fly, the Mickey Finn. Tied with fluorescent red over fluorescent yellow bucktail with pearl Krystal flash and gold barbell eyes, it is commonly called a FireFly. The FireFly is very effective on Redfish but it is also equally effective for seatrout and all other Mississippi saltwater species including pompano, cobia, flounder, etc. It mimics both the male and female ghost shrimp as well as local baitfish (anchovy) known as red minnows:



**Chandeleur Special pattern** - Made to portray an effective saltwater grub pattern, the Motor-Oil grub tail, it is tied with all olive bucktail mixed with red Krystal flash. Sometimes the Chandeleur Special is the only fly that may be effective in darker waters or dark days. A winter staple, especially around the Chandeleur Islands, hence it's name:



**Ubiquitous (Ubi) pattern** - Tied with bucktail chartreuse over white with pearl Krystal flash we call it the Ubi because you can find it in every fly shop and it is a variation of the original Deep Minnow tied by Bob Clouser:



**Silverside pattern** - Perfectly imitates an Atlantic Silverside or a Bay Anchovy. Tied with super hair and a lateral line strip of silver Mylar this is an awesome Spanish mackerel fly. These materials are much more sturdy and tough than bucktail and should be used when there is a likelihood of the presence of toothy fish such as Mackerels, Bluefish or Ladyfish:



**Electric Chicken pattern** - The original Electric Chicken combo of colors originated out of Texas and came to the Mississippi coast via the MirrOlure. The colors in combination, Pink over Yellow or Green Chartreuse (in reverse order it is sometimes called Tutti-Fruitti ); is very good for Specks, White trout, and other species:



**Bunker, Pinfish, or other such flat sided baitfish type:**

**Enrico Puglisi (EP) style** - using EP fibers - black over purple, chartreuse over white, or all white, all with molded eyes are very effective in deeper waters for species from Snapper to Kings but have shown recent success on Specks as well:



**Craft fur; Steve Farrars (SF) Flash Blend; Superhair; other hair, style - A basic bunker style with flat sides un-weighted or weighted. Dr. Fields swears by this style with a peacock herl topping. This basic style uses either mostly craft fur with a belly of calf-tail or saltwater Krystal flash on a 2/0 hook, Steve Farrar's Flash Blend, or any other hair in combo with flash. These flies are tied now using mono thread to reduce the nose size:**



**Deceiver Style - Feather tail, bucktail body. White over chartreuse with red Krystal flash beard on #2 hook to 3/0 hook big eye Deceivers (large molded pearl eyes or red eyes, thread build-up covered with epoxy); Electric Chicken, or Mickey Finn:**



Deceiver



Electric Chicken Deceiver



Mickey Finn Deceiver

**Half and Half style - Half deceiver/half deep minnow.** Tied olive over white bucktail, white feathers, with peacock herl back, heavy tungsten eyes, this is an awesome fly for deep water for almost every species:



Half & Half deep

**Rattle Rouser style - Mylar bodies with rattles inserted topped with material - bucktail or lepus, hook point up.** Add heavy barbell eyes, Sili-legs at the chin, on a 2/0 or larger hook and you have an exceptional King pattern we call The Big Ugly. Add a tail and it becomes a Roust. Also, use when lure sound is wanted for attraction for Reds, Specks, Flounder in stained water or in deep water:



Rattle Rouser



Big Ugly Tiger



Rattle Rouser LSU



Big Ugly Tiger



The Big Nasty



The Big Ugly Orange

**Double Lepus (double bunny) style-** In orange and ginger or yellow/red stripes this is the

go-to fly for Cobia and is also used routinely for Tarpon in the Keys. Black over purple makes a great Wahoo fly - 2/0 - 6/0. Add big eyes and crosscut lepus for Cobia Nehi using heavy tungsten barbell eyes covered with Glow-in-the-Dark eyes also in chartreuse:



**Top Water style and pattern** - Poppers, Chuggers, Crease Flies and Gurglers in all sizes from #6's to 6/0 depending on your quarry especially in white and chartreuse. Larger ones are tube flies. These are pure basic fishing fun when the action is on the surface:



Pop Popper



Chartreuse Pop



Red Bug



Orange Popper



Pink Shrimp Gurgler



Top Bait

**Redfish flash type-** Flash flies and spoon flies are best served with sinking lines but a lot of folks use floating or intermediate lines almost as effectively. Deadly on Reds but spoon flies have also proven excellent for enticing mega-size winter Specks:



Red Cross



Red Flasher Jig Fly



Pearl Jig Fly



**Brooks' Blondes style** - Easily tied and still a very effective bucktail fly especially in white or red & white on a jig hook (American blonde) or the Platinum for all species:



American Blonde Jig



Platinum Blonde

**Crab type:** Epoxy crabs, Merkins, Cessnas, Bunny Bugs, and Richard's Rattlin' (Crabe Voyant). Have at least 3 with lead eyes, 3 with light bead eyes - for all species that eat crabs:



Redfish Diamond



Sand Crab



Cessna Crab



Bunny Bug



Ghost Wiggle Crab



Richard's rattle Crab



Fleeing Crab



Bunny Bug



Rattle Crab E.C.



Wiggle Flies

Wiggle flies have proven to be very productive in enticing vicious strikes routinely. For best result these should be made onto jig hooks and heavy weights such as tungsten nymph bodies, lead or tungsten barbell eyes or tungsten beads molded into the body using Silly Putty as the mold, fine glitter and plastic worm dye are added to the epoxy.



**Keys Style** and other tarpon flies - with feathers or lepus & tarantula legs or marabou:



Tarpon Fly Keys style



EC Tarp



Chris Windram's Tarpon Tickler



Grape Crush



Olive Juice



Lime Crush



Ginger Crush



Sunrise Crush

**Shrimp Type:** Encompassing a wide range of flies including but not limited to Shrimp Gurglers, weedless and weighted Graveline Shrimps, Mantis Shrimp, Super Shrimp, and Haystack (and other Borski style shrimp patterns):



Tan Shrimp Gurgler



Graveline Shrimp



Graveline Shrimp weighted



Mantis Shrimp



Super Hair Ratbe Shrimp



Haystack



Bead-eye Mantis Shrimp



Bunny Bug



Magee's Shrimpy



Shrimp Fly Borski style



Shrimp Fly WB-style

**Bendback styles** - Tied to be weedless, this particular type is tied with the material extending up over the hook point making this fly semi-weedless with the hook point riding up. The hook may be bent back but in these patterns it is not.

**Pink Cactus Charlie pattern** - my variation of the Red Stick Fly-Fishers classic Pink Thing is tied with light/pale pink calf tail using coral pink Danville flat waxed nylon thread with a veil of pearl Krystal flash. Hundreds of Specks and Reds have been caught using this little fly as well as Bonefish. Use pearl Dan Bailey's Long Flash Chenille for the body:

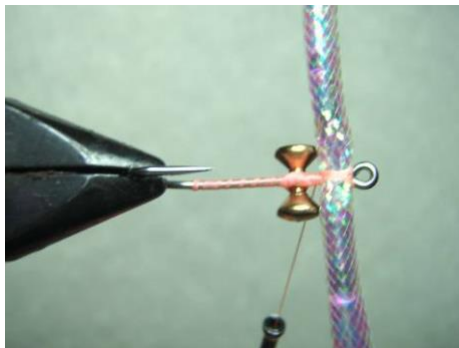


Pink Cactus Charlie

**Mardi Gras Mambeaux pattern** (purple over green with gold flash body and accents) has proven very effective for winter flounder, gold beadchain eyes:



**Pink Gotcha pattern** - Pearl body, Pink thread and flash, tan craft fur wing and tail. Some with bead heads some with lead heads. Good for any fish on the flats. The flat bottom Double Rattle Gotcha also provides noise and stability:



Double mylar, insert rattles, tie, then turn under hook and over barbell of eyes

**Frankie-Belle pattern** - superb all 'round fly for shallow water. I caught my first saltwater fish on this fly. A true classic fly to always have on hand:



**Spotted SeaTrout Fly patterns** - proven very effective for all inshore species but made specifically for specks:



**Flymen Sculpin Helmet patterns** - proven very useful for big Black Drum, Redfish and in try-outs for other species such as Cobia and smaller versions for Pompano:



**Slider style:** Muddlers are the ancestors. Mud Minnows, Meat Whistles, Mulletts and MirroLure or other similar type Sliders that resemble such larger baitfish. Good on all predators which eat baitfish:



Mud Minnow



Cobia Meal Whistle



Electric Slide



Redfish Muddler



Cocahoe



MirroLure Fly



Mullet - LSU



Mullet - EP Spun Pinfish color



Mullet - White spun EP fibers



Aaron Adam's Mantis Shrimp  
a version of F-C Sand Shrimp  
tied by Jim Magee



Oogum Boogum



Mugilis

**Polychaete flies** - At times the only food littoral species will eat are polychaetes. Usually tied on anterior weighted SS Kahle hooks which provide a natural upright stance:



Polychaete



Polychaete - Palolo



Polychaete extended body with floating foam tail

**Minnow style** - Epoxied super hair with silver Mylar representing the lateral line and with a touch of rust or red in the belly to imitate the little anchovies and silversides locally and seasonally known as Red Minnows. Little Tunny, Spanish Mackerel and Reds gorge on them when they school, also made with DNA fibers and all fluorofibre. Newer styles proven exceptional incorporate plastic lips and another, PolarFibre enveloping FisHair:



Red Anchovy



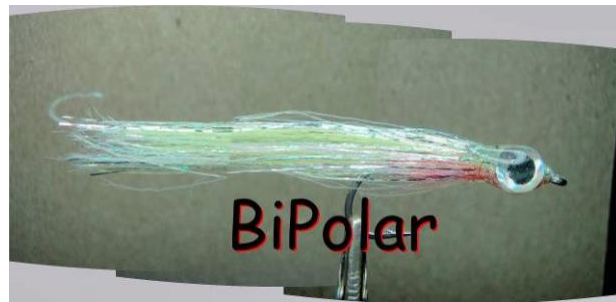
RedMinnow DNA



Fluorofibre



Angelina Lips



BiPolar

**Pompano Fly Paintbrush and others style and pattern:** Jim Magee has proven over and over again the effectiveness of simple Pomp patterns. Weighted, tied with lead barbell eyes and with FisHair cut square, this fly works on the elusive, ever moving Pompano. I have also had success with flies tied with chenille and marabou on jig hooks, weighted I have included those in red and yellow and an original Emerita:



Pompano Paintbrush Fly



Magee's Paintbrush Jig Fly



BT Pompano Fly



Pomp Fly w/Pearl



Pompano Fly - chartruse



Emerita

**BallyHoo (Balao, Half-Beaks) Fly style and pattern** - this is an all FisHair with pearl PolarFlash fly tied around the entire hook. The deep red interior and outer colors of this fly have found to be extremely effective for Dolphin. It is by far my favorite Mahi-Mahi fly:



**The Bird pattern** - tied with Bird Fur and foam barbell eyes - this is an awesome fly for Tarpon and in brown over orange for Cobia (sometimes locally referred to as Lemonfish, Ling or Brownfish):



**Cobia specific flies, other** - Tied especially for our big brown bruisers using fluorescent yellow marabou and cross-cut lepus:



**Flies showing promise** - These flies have been successfully used recently and are showing some promise but do not have a history as yet:



The Belly-Ache is tied with a large tungsten nymph body that flips the fly to ride hook point up for Specks and Flounder. Dave Whitlock's Sheep Minnow tied with Icelandic sheep wool is highly successful on lake stripers and now has caught Specks.

**Variations on a theme** - Seemingly new materials come out almost monthly now and flies tied with the new materials should be given separate names if one is to follow the coldwater fishery standard in fly naming nomenclature. However, no one envisioned the unending supply of new synthetics thus in saltwater flyfishing the patterns and names seem endless as well and probably should be addressed somehow. The following is just an example of variations on a theme where the tyer takes two major ingredients - Lepus (L)

& Enrico Puglisi (EP) Tarantula (T) legs to make a fly then simply change the way the fly is weighted. There are also many more different weights that could have been used - cross-eye cone, tungsten cone, brass cone, tungsten bead, plastic barbell, etc.:



In summary, the above is the most used flies of the experienced anglers mentioned. If we were to boil it down to only on a few flies to have on hand for the majority of the targeted species found in Mississippi waters, the flies would include:

1. Spotted Seatrout: Deep Minnows in Chartreuse over White with and without mylar side; Fire-Fly; Pink Cactus Charlie and Chandeleur Special.
2. Redfish: Firefly; Pink Cactus Charlie (sometimes all they want is pink); Flashabout flies, gold spoon Flies
3. For thin gin-clear water: Bendbacks in sand or pink like the Gotcha or DR Gotcha
4. Little Tunny, Spanish Mackerel: Epoxy style flies especially the Red Minnow; Silversides Deep Minnow
5. Summer Bottom Reds, Specks, Flounder - Crab Flies - almost any style works
6. Large Specks, Tuna, Dolphin - Deceiver or Bunker type flies - chartreuse over white and pink with dark topping
7. Pompano - Jim Magee's Paintbrush Jig flies in chartreuse and yellow
8. Cobia, Tarpon, Sharks - Orange flies like a Nehi, or Double Lepus

Notes:

- \$ Although red and yellow flies make good attractor colors, sometimes the only colors the fish will take are olive with red flash and darker colors like purple and black, or only baby pink.
- \$ When fishing for toothier fish like Mackerels and Wahoo it is advisable to use flies made of synthetic materials unless you only want to catch one fish; and, although wire leaders are tempting

and are used to some extent, heavy gauge fluorocarbon solicits more strikes since both Tunas and Mackerels can be very wire shy.

\$ To weight a fly use lead wire or non-toxic wire wraps, or lead or tungsten eyes, cone, bead heads, or bodies work well also. The new sculpin heads let the fly hug the bottom.

\$ To make a fly to ride with the hook up you can use weighted body, barbell or bead eyes on the side opposite the hook point, or tie buoyant materials only on the side extending over the hook point, or use a jig hook. Strips of tungsten or lead have also been used occasionally tied onto the side of the hook opposite the hook point to flip the point up.

#### AXIOMS for saltwater fly fishers:

1. One cannot catch fish without the fly being in or on the water;
2. Nothing beats time on the water. Go flyfishing and keep the fly in the water as much as possible;
3. Reduce your false casting;
4. Learn to double haul with a minimum of back-casts; and above all,
5. Learn how to cast regardless of the wind direction or speed. One cannot learn to cast in the wind without casting in the wind.

Tom Herrington, Charter/Lifetime Member & Founder

Historic Ocean Springs Saltwater Flyfishing Club

For any of the recipes for patterns listed above

E-mail Tom Herrington,

[THerrington@CableOne.Net](mailto:THerrington@CableOne.Net) or [ThomasLHerrington@GMail.Com](mailto:ThomasLHerrington@GMail.Com)