

# Fly Pattern Sheet - Articulated Water Rat

compliments of 2GuysFlyFishing.net

Rear Hook: 3 to 4xl streamer, sacrificed  
Front hook: Bass Stinger style  
Thread: 70 denier Danville Plus  
Underbody: Foam, closed cell  
Tail: optional  
Body: Bunny strip, natural  
Articulation Loop: Mono or favorite material  
Collar: Deer Hair tips, flaired  
Head: Deer hair; muddler style

Notes: First published in 2002 under the Alaska Fly Fishers, the photos on this pattern sheet are old. Like most of my flies, there's a few alterations I'd make now. But then that's where this pattern came from; my personal alterations to a commercially tied pattern back then. This fly floats low in the surface film and casts like a softball. Use a big rod and a stout leader.



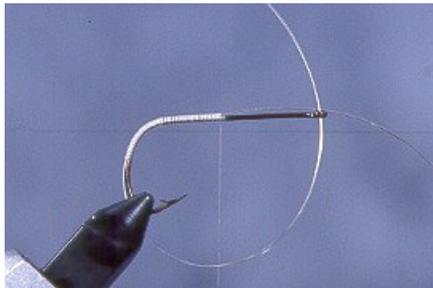
Lay down a thread base on the streamer hook and attach a bunny strip, hair down, at the rear of the shank.



Tie in the foam at the rear, bring your thread forward pull the foam over the top of the shank and tie off. (I like to use the foam that comes from the protective covering from a Japanese Pear/Apple. They require trimming, but are well worth the effort.)



Lightly wrap the bunny strip forward and tie off at the front. (Apply a bit of adhesive along the underside of the foam along the thread base. This helps hold the body together without having to use as tight of wraps as you would on a normal bunny fly.)



Using white thread, lay down a base on the rear half of the Stinger style hook shank. Tie down monofilament on top of the shank so that at least a shank length is projecting forward out of the wraps, and enough is coming off the bottom as to be able to be wrapped down the hook bend and come back through the hook eye as shown. When tying the monofilament down you will need to lash it at least half way down the bend and bring the thread back up to the top of the shank again. Put cement on these wraps on the bend to seal and protect them.

Oval monofilament ties down flat, but can be hard to come by. (I've had mine for years.) Round monofilament will work it just doesn't tie in as well.)



Fold the top piece of mono and lay it back on top of itself. Wrap it down towards the rear. Thread the back hook you just finished onto the monofilament.



Bring the monofilament forward on top of itself again, creating a small loop. Secure it with a layer of thread. Clip any excess that extends past the tie down area. Coat with cement.



Take the thread to the rear and attach a bunny strip, hair down, at the rear and then bring your thread forward, just off the monofilament. Wrap the bunny strip forward and tie off in front of the mono underbody.



Using a fairly good sized clump of deer hair spin and flare a collar directly in front of the bunny body.



Continue spinning a deer hair head. Do not crowd the eye! Half-hitch about four times and cut your thread. Clip the head into your preferred haircut. (A full bullet shape is shown.)



Reattach your thread directly behind the eye. Thread the monofilament that's coming off the hook bend through the bottom of the eye and adjust the loop size so that it is just a wider than the hook point.

(You may have to take the fly out of the vise to do this properly.)

Secure the monofilament on the bottom of the hook eye first with a couple of wraps and then pull the top piece to the rear and secure with a few more wraps. Cut the excess monofilament as close to the wraps as possible and finish the fly with a couple of half-hitched and a whip finish. Seal the wraps.



I usually cut the tail hook off on this type of fly as I figure that pike inhale everything anyway, and that's one less hook I have to worry about when I'm attempting to cast this monster.

The finished fly is a mouthful for any fish.



Even wet the Water Rat is an impressive size. With the foam underbody, weed guard, and a large deer hair head this fly was a definite improvement over the commercial available pattern.

As I mentioned earlier in the note section, these instructional photos are originally from 2002, and there are a few modifications I would make to this pattern in 2014.

First, I'd tie a version of this pattern with the rear hook intact, with a weed guard, and the front hook cut off. This pattern was created with pike in mind. However, since then I've been fishing some areas that hold rainbows big enough to eat one of these flies, and that a rear hook would have a better chance of finding a fish.

I'm convinced that our local rainbows eat mice and voles; but I think that they try to pull them underwater first to drown them. A "stinger hook" at the butt would have a much better chance at finding a jaw than a big bass style hook in the middle.

Second, I'd add some barred rubber legs. Both at the front of the back section and then again in front of the bunny wraps on the front section. We've been finding that rubberlegs work. And let's face it, this is a suggestive attractor pattern much more than an imitative fly so a few long rubberlegs wiggling in the water wouldn't hurt.

Thirdly, I'd downsized the whole pattern and use squirrel zonker strips instead of rabbit. Again, my thinking back in 2002 was pike. But truth be told, I have the opportunity to fish for rainbows and grayling much more than pike. A smaller pattern is much more apt to entice an average sized fish.

I'll try to create an opportunity to re-photograph this pattern and show variations. One can only hope.



This photo shows the extent of articulation that this fly is capable of.