

## JANUARY FEATURED FLY

By Todd A.Schotts

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a glorious New Year! Hopefully you got those fly tying and fly fishing items that were on your list for Santa. If you are still looking for that special fly pattern to fill your new fly boxes, here is one that you really should have in your fly box.

This month's Featured Fly will be the famed "Thunder Creek Minnow." This fly was originally designed by Keith Fulsher from Eastchester, New York, who early on tied flies for the renowned Angler's Cove in Manhattan. That was when he came in contact with Lew Oatman and Alex Rogan, two great Streamer Fly Tiers. After this encounter Keith started experimenting with streamer construction so he could come up with more precise imitation for bait fish.

This fly is tied in a way which the bucktail is tied in by the butts right behind the eye of the hook, with the tips extending forward and then pulled back. This was not a new idea at the time, but it created what Keith was looking for, a more streamlined minnow with a big head which was able to sustain large eyes. This reverse tying style evolved from wet flies that used the same process where the stem was bent back over the shank and secured again. Mary Orvis Marbury included these reversed heads in *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*. Carrie Stevens was an early practitioner of this style for her saltwater flies. However, in Keith's designs, the idea was to match the fly to the local baitfish in the watershed. By using these techniques he was able to match the form and coloration of these tiny stream lined morsels.

The flies got their name from the location where Keith tested his new creations, Thunder Creek, which is a low flow, tannic, small stream with a large quantity of beaver ponds in Northern Wisconsin. The first members of this new family of flies were tied back in 1962. Then in 1972, he published his book *Tying and Fishing the Thunder Creek Series*. In addition to his book, he has contributed articles regarding the flies in the first editions of Fly Tye Magazine. At that time, the entire family of Thunder Creek flies consisted of Shiners, Darters, various minnows, trout, bass, and attractor styles.

Now many tiers use the molded stick on eyes instead of painting on the eyes as in the original pattern. Another major change is from the red band for gills to painted gills just on the bottom side of the fly. The last change is that the original pattern used lacquer to glue the heads, while epoxy is now favored of many tiers - except for us few who are epoxy illiterate. One common, major mistake, made when tying these flies is to not streamline the bodies. If the body of the minnow becomes too bulky, or thick, the fly will not "match the hatch" and most likely will tangle up your line by twisting and rolling. It will not look like a natural wounded minnow. So remember when tying these wonderful flies, sparse is a must!!

Other changes that have taken place since the first Thunder Creek Minnows were conceived is the invention of synthetic furs, flash materials, and the use of marabou as body material. However you tie them, just remember the flies must be slim and streamlined, with a big head and large eyes, just like the baitfish you are trying to imitate. Until next month, tight lines and snazzy flies!!

### Thunder Creek Emerald Shiner

**Hook:** TMC 9394, Mustad R75S, Daiichi 1750 Sizes 2 - 10

**Thread:** 6/0 or 140 Denier - White

**Flash:** Peacock Krystal Flash

**Belly:** White Buck Tail

**Back:** Green Buck Tail

**Gills:** Red Paint

**Eyes:** Black Pupil on White eye or Stick on Eyes

**Head:** Epoxy, Tuffeleye, Cure Goo Glue, or Lacquer

