

## Introduction

I have never concealed my admiration for Sylvester Nemes's first two works, The Soft-Hackled Fly and its sequel The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict. They were written in clean tight prose, each about a single, simple subject. Each illuminated its subject in such a way that I was able to grasp it and enlist it into instant use where it's most practical and also most fun: out on trout streams.

I now take a high percentage of my fish, season after season, on soft-hackled wet flies.

Since meeting and fishing with Sylvester, I've acquired a similar admiration for the man--with some envy added. He's energetic, enthusiastic about his favorite subject, has a quick sense of humor. He's also retired now and living in Montana. He casts his soft-hackles on some of the most beautiful and productive trout streams on earth. His opportunities for education, in a school where the instructors scold with cold, disdainful noses, are limitless.

My fishing partners and I have encountered many difficult situations in recent years, over trout selective to specific insects, and solved them with soft-hackles. The brawling Deschutes has gentle backeddies where great dark forms arise to sip distressed mayflies from the foam. A soft-hackle awash in the film is about the only thing that fools them. The gentle Bighorn has extensive slick-topped flats where browns set up rise rhythms and accept only the occasional natural out of parades of



them floating by. Again, a greased soft-hackle is at times the only fly that will coax them into making a mistake.

I have long hoped that Sylvester would write a book about these situations: fishing soft-hackles when hatches are happening and trout are selective. But he needed lots of time for research; such a book could arise only out of his retirement to Montana.

Now we've got it.

Like Sylvester's earlier works, Soft-Hackled Fly Imitations takes a single subject--fishing hatches with soft-hackles--and shines clear, instructive prose on it. It doesn't cover all of the hatches; no book could. But it covers those most of us will encounter in a season astream.

This new book can be seen in one light as a treatise on the most important hatches: how to match them with soft-hackles, how to fish those flies and take trout in this new way. It's an important book in that respect alone. But it can also be seen as a method: as a departure point for learning to recognize your own hatches, and learning to construct your own soft-hackled magic to match them.

You'll learn from this beautiful creation of Syl's. You'll also enjoy it.

Dave Hughes  
Astoria, OR



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