

## Education

By Eddie Simons

Here in the Pacific Northwest, when someone mentions the word “steelhead”, we automatically think about cold days, fishing high, murky rivers with big and bright flies. The winter steelhead in the PNW is a trophy sought after by fishers from around the globe. What we often forget is that you can catch steelhead in PNW freshwater nearly year round.

Summer run steelhead may not be as big as the winter run, but the warmer waters allow them to be more active, giving the summer angler quite a nice fight. Lower, warmer, clear water makes fishing for summer runs different as well. Summer run flies are smaller and tied sparser than the winter run flies. If you were to use a giant intruder for summer runs, you would surely spook every fish in the river. Think about a Green Butt Skunk vs. a Popsicle Alaskabou. The skunk has a chenille body and a sparse deer tail wing while the Alaskabou is a big blob of multicolored marabou designed to be seen in the murky waters of winter.

If you want to learn more about fishing for summer run steelhead, you can hire a guide and pay attention. Or you can take an on the water class, like those taught by The Fly Fishing Shop (Welches, OR) on the Deschutes River (Oregon). Classes range from a One Day Floating Summer Steelhead School for \$275 to a 7 day Deschutes Summer Steelhead Spey Mega School for \$3,595. You can contact The Fly Fishing Shop by phone at 1 (800) 266-3971 or visit their website <http://www.flyfishusa.com/adventure-trips/fly-fishing-schools/deschutes-steelhead-schools/deschutes-steelhead-schools.htm>.

Another option when fishing for summer run steelhead is to fish dry. Skating or “waking” across the top can be very productive and very exciting. These flies need to be buoyant enough to stay on top even after many casts where they are dragged across the surface to create an attractive wake behind. To accomplish this buoyancy, a few techniques are employed. A lot of densely palmered hackle, foam bodies, and stacked deer hair in various combinations are used. The bomber series of flies uses the later technique. It is a very simple pattern with just a hair tail, hair wings, stacked hair body, and palmered dry hackle. Remember, in the clearer and calmer waters of summer, you will want smaller flies. To show you how simple it is, I will tie up my first spun deer hair fly this week and bring it in to show off. (Show up for our annual picnic meeting for the good food, great conversation and to laugh at my fly.)

**Bomber** (use your imagination for colors)

Photo and recipe from Fly of the Month Club ([www.flyofthemonthclub.com](http://www.flyofthemonthclub.com))

**Hook**- Your favorite streamer hook

**Hackle**- Tied in heavy thick collar

**Wings**- Two tufts of white calf's tail tied upright and separated

**Body**- deer hair spun and trimmed to shape tapering towards rear

**Ribbing**- Palmered hackle running entire length of body

**Tail**- White calf's tail short and thick.

