

A List of Charles Cotton's Flies

JANUARY

1. A **RED BROWN**, with the wings of a male of a mallard, almost white; the dubbing, of the tail of a black long-coated cur, such as they commonly make muffs of; for the hair on the tail of such a dog dyes and turns to a red brown, but the hair of a smooth coated dog of the same colour will not do, because it will not dye, but retains its natural colour. And this fly is taken, in a warm sun, the whole month through.

2. There is also a very little **BRIGHT-DUN GNAT**, as little as can possibly be made, so little as never to be fished with above one hair next to the hook: and this is to be made of a mixed dubbing of marten's fur, and the white of hare's scut; with a very white and small wing. And 't is no great matter how fine you fish, for nothing will rise in this month but a Grayling; and of them I never, at this season, saw any taken with a fly, of above a foot long, in my life; but of little ones, about the bigness of a smelt, in a warm day and a glowing sun, you may take enough with these two flies; and they are both taken the whole month through.

FEBRUARY

1. Where the **RED BROWN** of the last month ends, another, almost of the same colour, begins with this; saving, that the dubbing of this must be something of a blacker colour, and both of them warped on with red silk. The dubbing that should make this fly, and that is the truest colour, is to be got off the black spot of a hog's ear: not that a black spot in any part of the hog will not afford the same colour, but that the hair in that place is many degrees softer, and more fit for the purpose: his wing must be as the other; and this kills all this month, and is called the **LESSER RED-BROWN**.

2. This month also a **PLAIN HACKLE**, or Palmer-fly, made with a rough black body, either of black spaniel's fur, or the whirl of an ostrich-feather, and the red hackle of a capon over all, will kill; and, if the weather be right, make very good sport.

3. Also a **LESSER HACKLE** with a black body also, silver twist over that, and a red feather over all, will fill your panner, if the month be open, and not bound up in ice, and snow, with very good fish; but in a case of a frost and snow, you are to angle only with the smallest gnats, browns, and duns, you can make; and with those are only to expect Graylings no bigger than sprats.

4. In this month, upon a whirling round water, we have a **GREAT HACKLE**; the body black, and wrapped with a red feather of a capon untrimmed; that is, the whole length of the hackle staring out (for we sometimes barb the hackle feather short all over, sometimes barb it only a little, and sometimes barb it close underneath); leaving the whole length of the feather on the top or back of the fly, which makes it swim better, and, as occasion serves, kills very great fish.

5. We make use also, in this month, of another **GREAT HACKLE**; the body black, and ribbed all over with gold twist, and a red feather over all; which also does great execution.

6. Also a **GREAT DUN**, made with dun bear's hair, and the wings of the grey feather of a mallard near unto his tail; which is absolutely the best fly can be thrown upon a river this month, and with which an angler shall have excellent sport.

7. We have also this month the **GREAT BLUE DUN**; the dubbing of the bottom of a bear's hair next to the roots, mixed with a little blue camlet; the wings of the dark grey feather of a mallard.

8. We have also this month a **DARK BROWN**; the dubbing of a brown hair off the flank of a breded cow, and the wings of the grey drake's feather.

MARCH

For this month you are to use all the same hackles, and flies with the other; but you are to make them less.

1. We have besides for this month, a little dun called a **WHIRLING-DUN**, though it is not the Whirling-Dun indeed, which is one of the best flies we have; and for this the dubbing must be of the bottom fur of a squirrel's tail, and the wing of the grey feather of a drake.

2. Also a **BRIGHT BROWN**; the dubbing either of the brown of a spaniel, or that of a cow's flank, with a gray wing.

3. Also a **WHITISH-DUN**, made of the roots of camel's hair, and the wings of the grey feather of a mallard.

4. There is also for this month a fly, called the **THORN-TREE FLY**; the dubbing an absolute black, mixed with eight or ten hair's of Isabella coloured mohair, the body as little as can be made, and the wings of a bright mallard's feather: an admirable fly, and in great repute amongst us for a killer.

5. There is, beside this, another **BLUE-DUN**, the dubbing of which is made thus to be got. Take a small-tooth comb, and with it comb the neck of a black greyhound, and the down that sticks in the teeth will be the finest blue that you ever saw. The wings of this fly can hardly be too white; and he is taken about the tenth of this month, and lasteth until the four-and-twentieth.

6. From the tenth of this month also, till towards the end, is taken a little **BLACK GNAT**: the dubbing either of the fur of a black water-dog, or the down of a young black water-coot; the wings of the male of a mallard, as white as may be; the body as little as you can possibly make it, and the wings as short as his body.

7. From the sixteenth of this month also, to the end of it, we use a **BRIGHT BROWN**; the dubbing for which is to be had out of a skinner's lime-pits, and of the hair of an abortive calf, which the lime will turn so bright as to shine like gold; for the wings of this fly, the feather of a brown hen is best; which fly is also taken till the tenth of April.

APRIL

All the same Hackles and flies that were taken in March will be taken in this month also; with this distinction only concerning the flies, that all the browns be lapped with red silk, and all the duns with yellow.

1. To these a **SMALL BRIGHT BROWN**, made of spaniel's fur, with a light grey wing, in a bright day and clear water, is very well taken.

2. We have too a **LITTLE DARK BROWN**; the dubbing of that colour, and some violet camlet mixed, and the wing of a gray feather of a mallard.

3. From the sixth of this month to the tenth, we have also a fly called the **VIOLET-FLY**; made of a dark violet stuff, with the wings of the grey feather of a mallard.

4. About the twelfth of this month comes in the fly called the **WHIRLING-DUN**, which is taken every day, about the mid-time of the day, all this month through, and by fits from thence to the end of June; and is commonly made of the down of a fox-cub, which is of an ash colour at the roots, next to the skin, and ribbed about with yellow silk; the wings of the pale grey feather of a mallard.

5. There is also a **YELLOW DUN**; the dubbing of camel's hair, and yellow camlet or wool, mixed, and a white-grey wing.

6. There is also, this month, another **LITTLE BROWN**, besides that mentioned before; made with a very slender body, the dubbing of dark brown and violet camlet mixed, and a grey wing; which, though the direction for the making be near the other, is yet another fly; and will take when the other will not, especially in a bright day, and a clear water.

7. About the twentieth of this month comes in a fly called the **HORSE-FLESH FLY**; the dubbing of which is a blue mohair, with pink-coloured and red tammy mixed, a light coloured wing, and a dark brown head. This fly is taken best in an evening, and kills from two hours before sunset till twilight; and is taken the month through.

MAY

1. The **TURKEY FLY**; dubbing ravelled out of some blue stuff, and lapped about with yellow silk; the wings of a grey mallard's feather.

2. Next a **GREAT HACKLE or PALMER FLY**, with a yellow body; ribbed with gold twist, and large wings of mallard feather dyed yellow, with a red capon's hackle over all.

3. Then a **BLACK FLY**; the dubbing of a black spaniel's fur, and the wings of a grey mallard's feather.

4. After that a **LIGHT BROWN**, with a slender body; the dubbing twirled upon a small red silk, and raised with the point of a needle, that the ribs or rows of silk may appear through; the wings of the grey feather of a mallard.

5. Next a **LITTLE DUN**; the dubbing of bear's dun whirled upon yellow silk, the wings of the grey feather of a mallard.

6. Then a **WHITE GNAT**, with a pale gold wing, and a black head.

7. There is also this month a fly called the **PEACOCK-FLY**; the body made of a whirl of peacock's feather, with a red head, and wings of a mallard's feather.

8. We have then another very killing fly, known by the name of the **DUN-CUT**; the dubbing of which is a bear's dun, with a little blue and yellow mixed with it, a large dun wing, and two horns at the head, made of the hairs of a squirrel's tail.

9. The next is the **COW-LADY**, a little fly; the body of a peacock's feather, the wing of a red feather, or strips of the red hackle of a cock.

10. We have then the **COW-DUNG FLY**; the dubbing light brown and yellow mixed, the wing the dark grey feather of a mallard. And note that, besides these above mentioned, all the same Hackles and flies, the Hackles only brighter, and the flies smaller, that are taken in April, will also be taken this month, as also all Browns and Duns. Nb. there has been some editing of the text surrounding the description of the green drake, the grey drake, the stone fly and the little yellow may fly. Cotton is rather discursive!

11. The artificial **GREEN-DRAKE**, then, is made upon a large hook; the dubbing, camel's hair, bright bear's hair, the soft down that is combed from hog's bristles and yellow camlet, well mixed together; the body long, and ribbed about with green silk, or rather yellow, waxed with green wax, the whisks of the tail, of the long hairs of sables, or fitchet, and the wings of the white-grey feather of a mallard, dyed yellow; which is also to be dyed thus. Take the root of a Barbary-Tree, and shave it, and put it to woody viss, with as much alum as a walnut, and boil your feathers in it with rain-water; and they will be of a very fine yellow.

12. The **GREY-DRAKE**, which fly is thus made: the dubbing of the down of a hog's bristles, and black spaniel's fur mixed, and ribbed down the body with black silk, the whisks of the hairs of the beard of a black cat, and the wings of the black-grey feather of a mallard.

13. The **STONE-FLY**, which is to be made thus: the dubbing of a bear's dun with a little brown and yellow camlet very well mixed; but so placed, that your fly may be more yellow on the belly and towards the tail underneath than in any other part; and you are to place two or three hairs of a black cat's beard on the top of the hook, in your arming, so as to be turned up, when you warp on your dubbing, and to stand almost upright, and staring one from another: and note that your fly is to be ribbed with yellow silk and the wings long, and very large, the wings of the dark grey feather of a mallard.

14. The next fly is the **BLACK FLY**; made with a black body, of the whirl of an ostrich-feather, ribbed with silver twist, and the black hackle of a cock over all; and is a killing fly, but not to be named with either of the other.

15. The last May-fly, that is of the four pretenders, is the **LITTLE YELLOW MAY-FLY**; in shape exactly the same with the Green-Drake, but a very little one, and of as bright a yellow as can be seen; which is made of bright yellow camlet, and the wings of a white-grey feather died yellow.

16. The last fly for this month, and which continues all June, though it comes in the middle of May, is the fly called the **CAMLET-FLY**; in shape like a moth, with fine diapered, or water wings, and with which, as I told you before, I

sometimes used to dabble; and Grayling will rise mightily at it. But the artificial fly, which is only in use amongst our Anglers, is made of a dark-brown shining camlet, ribbed over with a very small light-green silk, the wings of the double-grey feather of a mallard; and 't is a killing fly for small fish. And so much for May.

JUNE

From the first to the four-and -twentieth, the Green-Drake and the Stone-Fly are taken, as I told you before.

1. From the twelfth **to the four-and-twentieth, late at night, is taken a fly, called the OWLFLY**, the dubbing of a white weasel's tail, and a white-grey wing.

2. We have then another Dun, called the **BARM-FLY**, from its yeasty colour; the dubbing of the fur of a yellow-dun cat, and a grey wing of a mallard's feather.

3. We also have a **HACKLE WITH A PURPLE BODY**, whipped about with a red capon's feather.

4. As also a **GOLD-TWIST HACKLE** with a purple body, whipped about with a red capon's feather.

5. To these, we have, this month, a **FLESH-FLY**; the dubbing of a black spaniel's fur, and blue wool mixed, and a grey wing.

6. Also another **LITTLE FLESH-FLY**; the body made of the whirl of a peacock's feather, and the wings of the grey feather of a drake.

7. We have then the **PEACOCK-FLY**; the body and wing both made from the feather of that bird.

8. There is also the **FLYING-ANT, OR ANT-FLY**; the dubbing of brown and red camlet mixed, with a light grey wing.

9. We have likewise a **BROWN GNAT**; with a very slender body of brown and violet camlet well mixed, and a light grey wing.

10. And another little **BLACK GNAT**; the dubbing of black mohair, and a white-grey wing.

11. As also a **GREEN GRASSHOPPER**; the dubbing of green and yellow wool mixed, ribbed over with green silk, and a red capon's feather over all.

12. And lastly, a little **DUN GRASSHOPPER**; the body slender, made of a dun camlet, and a dun hackle at the top.

JULY

First, all the small flies that were taken in June are also taken in this month.

1. We have then the **ORANGE-FLY**; the dubbing of orange wool, and the wings of a black feather.

2. Also a little **WHITE DUN**; the body made of white mohair, and the wings blue, of a heron's feather.

3. We have likewise this month a **WASP-FLY**; made either of a dark brown dubbing, or else the fur of a black cat's tail, ribbed about with yellow silk, and the wing of the grey feather of a mallard.

4. Another fly taken this month is a **BLACK-HACKLE**; the body made of the whirl of a peacock's feather, and a black hackle feather on the top.

5. We also have another, made of a peacock's whirl without wings.

6. Another fly also is taken this month, called the **SHELL-FLY**; the dubbing of yellow-green Jersey-wool, and a little white hog's hair mixed, which I call the Palm-Fly: and do believe it is taken for a palm, that drops off the willows into the water; for this fly I have seen Trouts take little pieces of moss, as they swam down the river; by which I conclude that the best way to hit the right colour is to compare your dubbing with the moss, and mix the colours as near as you can.

7. There is also taken this month, a **BLACK-BLUE DUN**; the dubbing of the fur of a black rabbit mixed with a little yellow, the wings of the feather of a blue pigeon's wing.

AUGUST

The same flies with July.

1. Then another **ANT-FLY**; the dubbing of the black-brown hair of a cow, some red warped in for the tag of his tail, and a dark wing. A killing fly.

2. Next a fly called a **FERN-FLY**; the dubbing of the fur of a hare's neck, that is, of the colour of fern or bracken, with a darkish-grey wing of mallard's feather. A killer too.

3. Besides these, we have a **WHITE HACKLE**; the body of white mohair, and warped about with a white hackle-feather; and this is assuredly taken for thistle-down.

4. We have also this month a **HARRY-LONG-LEGS**; the body made of bear's dun and blue wool mixed, and a brown hackle feather over all. Lastly, in this month all the same browns and duns are taken that were taken in May.

SEPTEMBER

To this month the same flies that are taken in April.

1. To which I shall only add a **CAMEL-BROWN FLY**; the dubbing pulled out of the lime of a wall, whipped about with red silk, and a darkish grey mallard's feather for the wing.

2. And one other, for which we have no name, but is made of the black hair of a badger's skin, mixed with the yellow softest down of a sanded hog.

OCTOBER

The same flies are taken this month that were taken in March.

NOVEMBER

The same flies that were taken in February are taken this month.

DECEMBER

Few men angle with the fly this month, no more than they do in January; but yet, if the weather be warm, as I have known it sometimes in my life to be, even in this cold country, where it is least expected, - then a brown that looks red in the hand, and yellowish betwixt your eye and the sun, will both raise and kill in a clear water, and free from snow-broth; but, at the best, 't is hardly worth of a man's labour.