

EL Clouser Deep Minnow Variation (draft)

Recommended and tied by *Elio Londero*



Materials

Hook:	Any normal length shank, straight, straight-eye hook with a slow developing curve; e.g. sproat bend.
Thread:	Flat waxed nylon 210 denier, match belly color
Eyes	Hourglass eyes
Tail	Synthetic braiding hair, color to match minnow belly.
Belly	Estaz chenille, color to match minnow, most common is white, pearlescent or opal.
Underwing	Synthetic braiding hair, color to match minnow
Topwing	Synthetic braiding hair, color to match minnow
Flash	Belly flash seems to suffice, but may add thinly cut flash to the wing.

Tying instructions (size 2 and larger)

1. Start by reading all instructions.

Mount the hook, start the thread, tie the eyes and continue wrapping a tight thread base until passing the end of the shank by about a quarter of the the bend.



2. Bring the thread back to the front, tie the tail material in front of the eyes, then bring the thread behind the eyes and continue wrapping the tail material to the end of the underwrap. Make sure to keep the fibers evenly distributed along the top half of the hook shank. At this stage you *may* want to incorporate two wraps under the tail fibers to enhance the anti-fouling properties of the fly (not done in the picture).



Secure the estaz at the end of the wrap. Consider adding a touch of glue for strength. Bring the thread to the front. Create the belly of the fly by palmering the estaz up to the eyes and securing it with four tight wraps. Bring the thread in front of the eyes. This is the best time to trim the inside estaz shiny fibers to the desired length.



Flip over (rotate 180°) the hook. Take as parse bunch of fibers twice the present length of the fly, taper it by pulling ends and place it at the center on the hook shank making it just a bit longer than the belly. Secure the fibers by wrapping two tight layers of thread leaving the hook eye completely open. Make sure that the fibers spread so as to cover an angle of about 30 degrees around the shank. The idea is to only partially cover the side estaz. At this stage you may also want to reverse-tie some sparse lateral flash.



Fold the fibers over themselves to double the underbody, make sure they are at the center and secure them with two tight layers of thread. In doing so, always leave a thin layer of fibers exposed so they make a ridge in front of the wraps. Leave the thread close to the eyes.



Take a small bunch of darker fibers half-inch longer than the underbody for the back of the fly. Place it extending opposite to the hook point and with the back extending 1/16" to 1/8" beyond the wrap. Then secure the fibers with a layer of tight wraps that should not extend beyond the ridge created in the preceding step.



Fold over the fibers, center them over the underbody, secure them with two tight layers of thread and whip finish. Make sure that the fly looks symmetrical, since this is your last opportunity to adjust the fibers sideways. This tying approach provides a strong durable fly. Once satisfied, soak head and the eye wraps with nail polish hardener.



The belly side of the fly looks like this ...



... and the side view like this.



I paint the eyes and the head using nail polish matching wing and belly colors. I let it dry and then apply nail polish top coat to both. You may want to consider tying and painting eyes on several hooks beforehand for a more efficient fly tying.



Since most synthetic fibers are not tapered, you will have to use your hair-dresser skills for tapering the fly to the desired shape.

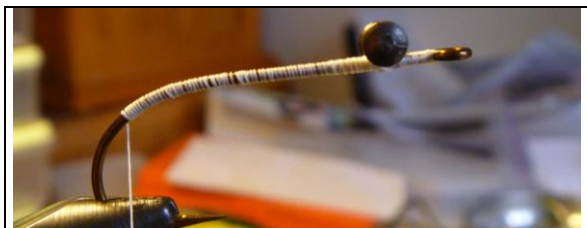


Tying instructions (size 4 and smaller)

The following instructions assume you have read the preceding ones, since only differences would be explained in detail.

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2. Bring the thread back to the front, tie the tail material in front of the eyes, then bring the thread behind the eyes and continue wrapping the tail material to the end of the underwrap. Make sure to keep the fibers evenly distributed along the top half of the hook shank. At this stage you *may* want to incorporate two wraps under the tail fibers to enhance the anti-fouling properties of the fly (not done in the picture).



Paint the belly with nailpolish (transparent with sparkle) or wrap the estaz, secure with a knot and bring the thread to the front.



Flip over (rotate 180°) the hook. Take as parse bunch of fibers twice the present length of the fly, taper it by pulling ends and place it at the center on the hook shank making it just a bit longer than the belly. Secure the fibers by wrapping two tight layers of thread leaving the hook eye completely open. Make sure that the fibers spread so as to cover an angle of about 30 degrees around the shank. The idea is for the silvery hair to be on top of the shank



Fold the fibers over themselves to double the underbody, make sure they are at the center and secure them with two tight layers of thread. In doing so, always leave a thin layer of fibers exposed so they make a ridge in front of the wraps. Leave the thread close to the eyes.



Take a small bunch of darker fibers half-inch longer than the underbody for the back of the fly. Place it extending opposite to the hook point and with the back extending 1/16" to 1/8" beyond the wrap. Then secure the fibers with a layer of tight wraps that should not extend beyond the ridge created in the preceding step.



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Notes

Originally designed by Robert Clouser, the Clouser Deep Minnow (aka clouser) was developed by Clouser and Lefty Kreh. This version takes as the starting point the original Clouser version with all the body tied on the underside of the hook and adds two main features. First, a belly tied along the full length of the shank and extended slightly upwards, thus helping to reduce fouling during the cast and adding swimming stability to the fly. Second, an estaz belly to increase visibility and provide a focal point to predators. The fly may not include any other flash material but you may consider adding some matching lateral flash or to the top (see pictures). The idea of using estaz most likely originates in my tying and fishing of Norm Ziegler's Schminnow. By matching body colors to those of the prevailing baitfish, this version of the Clouser Deep Minnow has been successfully used for catching smallmouth, channel catfish, largemouth bass, striped bass (rockfish) and snook. Walleyes and a small muskie also approved of it.

Other belly materials may be used to attract and serve as focal point. I also experimented with white antron yarn (picture on the right), which provides more belly volume, good contrast and limits light reflection. As in the original clouser, I added a first layer of flash as to create a shiny side. This version was also successful with the same species.

This fly is very durable due to the materials and the tying approach. In one afternoon of fishing on the tidal Rappahannock River, the size 1/0 olive fly caught twenty nine schoolie stripers (12-15 inches) and another two above 20 inches. On a different outing, the one with a silver belly, also a 1/0, caught five stripers between 16 and 18 inches. At the time of writing, both flies are still in use. Durability increases by adding glue to the wraps securing the tail and belly material, since with this tying approach wraps suffer when pulling the fly over the fish teeth to set the hook, as well as during the fight.



References

Clouser, Robert (2016), *Clouser's Flies: Tying and Fishing the Fly Patterns of Bob Clouser*, Stackpole Books.

Clouser, Robert (), "Tying the Clouser Minnow with Bob Clouser", filmed at a First Coast Fly Fishers meeting in Jacksonville, FL, ????
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0gX83J1Kvg&list=RDQManAk4nCCWTQ&start_radio=1

Ziegler, Norm (2007), *Snook on a Fly. Tackle, Tactics, and Tips for Catching the Great Saltwater Gamefish*, Stackpole Books.

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