

# MacSheedy Bloodworm

## Tendipies – Bloodworm

(The real Bloodworm)



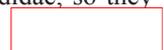
I have my pet peeves. For one thing, I don't like ketchup on my fries. The younger generation has entrenched this practice so thoroughly that it's hard to get the salt and vinegar that old man Flavelle used to anoint the hand-peeled fare that made him famous every summer in the town where I grew up. If old Tony was still alive, I'd gladly endure those lineups in the scorching heat of my boyhood summers to get a cone-shaped cupful -- although I'd probably still expect to get it filled for a dime.

That's another peeve. Lineups. And waiting for a woman who claimed she'd "only be a minute" so you "may as well stay in the car." Maybe you think that I don't know that she knows me, and knows that I'd drag her out of a lineup if I knew she was hung up in one? She knows. Hey, I don't even have to be there! I'm Irish. I can be unreasonable whenever I want to be. It's my birthright.

But none of the above compare to my distaste for armchair fly fishing columnists -- those writers who keep searching for something "new and fresh" to inscribe in order to meet another deadline in another slick edition of another glossed-over magazine. One of the more "knowledgeable" probably wrote something back in the 1950s, and it has since become law as each writer rehashed it into his own supposed words. And still does.

The one that completely hoists my Erie is the modern practice of terming all chironomids as bloodworms. In the real world, few species contain the hemoglobin that creates the bright red color of Tendipedidae. It's probably also a safe bet that very few of those scribes have spent enough time on the water to actually learn their habits. Most of them have probably never even seen an Eckman dredge, the device that opens up the benthic world.

Many chironomid species have higher oxygen requirements than Tendipedidae, so they



tend to migrate to whichever areas this amenity shifts as a lake stratifies. However, this doesn't hold for every species, for our Eckman dredge routinely plucks samples from anoxic levels where the mud is just right for the burrowers and subterranean, lake-bottom dwellers. The same dredge tells us that for every chironomid we'll get a dozen true bloodworms. These distinct populations might lead one to assume that they prefer living in the main lake basin, where they burrow into the matrix. Some burrow completely from sight, while others do so only partially. Likewise, some remain static while others wave to and fro, fulfilling their scant oxygen requirements. In actuality, during later summer periods when the stratification is complete, they become even more abundant in the matrix found outside of weed lines and, yes, in the weeds themselves. We have pulled Eckman samples -- 6x8-inch cuts -- of chara weeds and counted up to 600 interspersed throughout the matted weed, appearing for all the world like bright cherries on a limb. Do the trout remain unaware of their presence? I can tell you that trout forsake thermoclines and other more comfortable levels to travel briefly down to anoxic basin bottoms to graze on this wriggling fare, but they are more likely to hunt shallower areas where they don't have to emulate the movement of human snorkelers.

These days we tend to knot on a MacSheedy Bloodworm, then tackle shallower portions of a lake with floating lines and appropriate lengths of leader. The peacock herl seems to turn to the right color when wet, and the Danville floss appears to be perfect at providing the finishing touch. Since Tendipedidae have prominent pro-legs, we often fray the floss, which allows it to trail and wave, the same idea that was used in the San Juan Worm, a pattern that we stillwater fly fishers forsook long ago because it was too large, stiff and unwieldy.

We see these patterns tied on all sorts of intricately shaped hooks, usually curved radically in an attempt to mimic the movement of a bloodworm as it loops around in its environment. There's not much chance of mimicking that, so simply tie your pattern on a straight hook, then use a strike indicator to let the waves and frayed floss do their thing.

No wind and no waves? Use the indicator, which is simply a small float, by jiggling it with a finger-twist.

Curved hooks catch far more anglers than trout, and work very well in every fly shop that is out there flogging them.

Leave them in the bin.

## Pattern

Hook:	16 to 4 3x to 4x long - Curved hooks add nothing to pattern's effectiveness
Thread:	Day-Glo Red 3/0 Monocord
Tail:	Frayed Danville's bright red floss
Body:	Peacock herl, stroked so barbules are erect. For smaller sizes, use herl with shorter barbules and do not stroke them.
Rib:	Same red floss wound ahead to yield a segmented body
Wing(s):	Mac Warner's original has a shellback of brown pheasant tail; the Sheedy alteration uses none, as in photo
Beard:	Leave some frayed floss to trail under or over the shank -- your choice
Head:	Built up and shellacked.

### *Tying Instructions*

1. Tie in floss at the bend and fray the end
2. Tie in herl body and wind forward.
3. Wind remaining floss forward in evenly spaced wraps, bend end back under or over shank, tie off and fray it
4. Trim floss and build up head