Quigley Cripple – Callibaetis  CS  8/05  Carl Sanders. Fly of the Month

It doesn’t matter if it’s the arctic seas, the African plains, the Brazilian rainforest or East Lake, if you are crippled, you’re easy prey. This same idea is the basis behind this month’s fly, the Quigley Cripple. It’s a rather easy fly to tie. If you can tie an elk hair caddis, you can tie this fly.

The version shown here is a good mimic of the speckled callibaetis mayfly, which is very common this time of year on many of the local stillwaters. East Lake is full of callibaetis. Hatches of these guys will begin in May, depending on the temperatures, and usually last until the end of September. As the season progresses, the insects get smaller and generally darker in body color. Start in the Spring with a size 14 and work down to a size 18 in the Fall. The hatches will normally begin mid-morning, with a smaller hatch again in the afternoon.

I like this crippled version over fishing adults or nymphs. It represents an insect that has begun to shed its nymphal shuck, but got stuck in the process and is now a prime meal. Fish seem to recognize this, and this pattern can often out fish a dry pattern when fish are seen rising to the surface. Put floatant on the front only (or only the top front). On lakes, cast out with a long leader and just let it sit, maybe a very small twitch every so often. It can’t get much easier than that. On rivers, fish as you would a dry fly.
Quigley Cripple – Callibaetis (Carl Sanders)

Hook: Tiemco 2312, Daiichi 1260 (2XL, straight eye, slt. curved)
Thread: grey or tan
Tail: Antron
Abdomen: Turkey biot
Thorax: cream to tan or greenish grey tan Antron dubbing
Wing: Deer hair
Hackle: Grizzly dry fly

Thread the body back and tie in some Antron fibers for the tail. I like to mix some colors, some dark, some light. Tie in the biot and wrap forward 2/3’s of the shank (you can usually find Callibaetis dyed turkey biots). Form a nice small thorax with some Antron dubbing, stopping the thread at the center of the thorax. I prefer the Antron dubbing, but the original pattern calls for hare’s ear dubbing, I believe. Tie in a small clump of deer hair with the tips extended out over the hook eye. Clip the butt ends, but don’t try to clip them too short. Tie in and standard wrap the hackle at the same place you tied in the deer hair. Tie up some densely hackled and some thinly hackled to accommodate water conditions. Tie off and you are done.
– Carl Sanders

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Here’s John Kreft’s Quigly PMD Cripple ( and there’s half dozen other Quigley style versions in his Mayfly section):


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