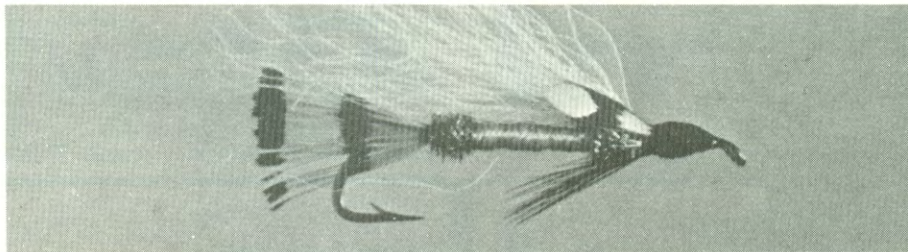


# Fly Tier's Bench

Conducted by Eric Leiser

## THE JUNGLE COCK SITUATION IN BRIEF



An integral feature of most streamer and salmon flies, such as the Royal Coachman bucktail streamer shown above, is the "eye" feather of the jungle cock. It resembles, at least to anglers, the eye and shoulders of small baitfish, but its importation to this country is now banned by law. Photo courtesy of the Orvis Co., Manchester, Vermont.

**I**N MARCH OF 1969 a regulation was issued by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior banning the importation into this country of the grey jungle fowl, or jungle cock. The only exception at that time was the importation, with a proper permit issued by the Bureau of Fisheries & Wildlife, of jungle cock feathers which had been exported from India to other countries prior to 1967. This exception was removed in the earlier part of this year. There is now a *total prohibition without exception* as far as importing jungle cock skins, or feathers thereof, or manufactured products containing these feathers. Besides the United States, England and Canada has also prohibited their import into their own countries.

Actually, India, the country to which grey jungle fowl are indigenous, had prohibited their export as early as January 1967. The reason for this action was due to the conviction that this species would be endangered if further hunting or taking of this wild bird continued. The representatives of the Indian Government claim that jungle cock cannot be raised anywhere else in the world and that only its own climate is conducive to the natural breeding and reproduction of the species. In this regard, I can only say that I have not found anyone who *has* successfully raised these birds in captivity, and yet I also hesitate to say that it cannot be done. I do not know.

All this is, of course, now irrelevant as far as the fly tier is concerned. Jungle Cock eyes have long been a tradition and one of the most used bits of material on any tier's bench. When the almost-exhausted legitimate supply of these skins and feathers are off the market what will the fly tier do?

There are only two answers to this question.

1. Where patterns, such as streamers or bucktails, call for their use . . . you simply tie without them.

2. You can substitute. I personally believe there is no substitution for the real thing, especially in this particular

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case, as far as looks and effects go. However, there are:

- (a) Plastic, cellophane or synthetic eyes on the market which can be used in place of the real thing.
- (b) There are a few other feathers, while not having the natural, waxy hardness of the jungle cock eye, will give the effect of an "eyed" streamer, etc. One is the breast feather of the common English starling, considered a pest bird in most states and unprotected by law. The other bird is the quail, which has some feathers up near the base of the

neck which can also be utilized. The quail is a game bird and its feathers may be used only when it has been legally taken. If you do not hunt yourself, ask your hunting buddies to save these skins or feathers for you. You can try lacquering these feathers with clear cement to get the glassy effect of the real jungle cock eye.

While quail and starling may seem plentiful, it may not be as easy to purchase them from fly-tying material houses, since their acquisition in any demandable quantity may present a dif-

ficulty for these firms.

We can at this point only hope that the grey jungle fowl of India may make a comeback and in the future again be available. However, as true sportsmen and conservationists, we must abide by this and any other restrictions which may arise. If a fisherman or hunter is not also a conservationist he is simply defeating the enjoyment of his endeavor.

At this point we should like to ask all the fly tiers for any suggestions they may have, other than the above, for a suitable substitute to take the place of jungle cock eyes.

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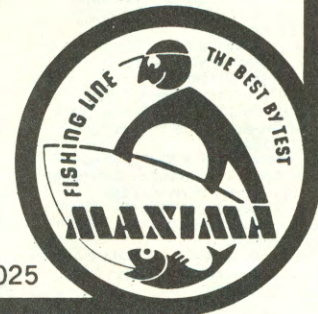


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