

## Helga Might The Spring Perch Fly



**Hook:** Sizes 6 to 4. Mustad 9671 or 38941  
**Tail:** Black Marabou, with a few strands of pearl Krystal Flash  
**Body:** Black Diamond Braid, wrapped with a strand of Krystal Flash  
**Thorax:** Olive yarn  
**Eyes:** Medium to small lead eyes  
**Head:** Brown yarn  
**Hackle:** Wrap abdomen, back to front, with large black hackle feather. Wrap brown thorax with olive hackle feather

## Perch Fry The Fall Perch Fly



**Hook:** Sizes 6 to 4. Mustad 9671 or 38941 (or jig hook)  
**Body:** Pearl or Yellow Diamond Braid or Poly Body Tube (white chenille also works)  
**Back & Sides:** Yellow Krystal Flash under green, and a little black Super hair stacked on top  
**Belly:** White deer hair  
**Eyes:** Medium to small lead eyes. Paint eyes or epoxy prism eyes to ends  
**Gills:** Sparse red hair or hackle fibers under lead eyes  
**Stripes:** Apply black vertical stripes across yellow and green sides with a permanent marker



Article by Brian Wiprud  
Photograph by Eric Engbretson

Midwest and West. And if you live in those areas and fish lakes, or know those who do, you will certainly have no trouble finding perch filled waters. While not usually considered standard fly gear, side-scanning sonar can be useful for locating the schools, especially in unfamiliar water. Hey, beat yourself up over 6X trout all you want, but your perchng now, and the point is to catch a mess o' fish.

In as much as they can be easy to catch, perchng isn't altogether simple. Except at certain times in spring when they skim the surface for emerging insects and zooplankton, yellows almost always take a fly on the drop, near the

bottom. Detecting the strike is often difficult, at times becoming a matter of intuition. They don't grab and run so much as peck and hold the fly. Strikes often feel like a series of taps. And stripes won't just hit anything that moves. In fact, a rule of thumb that has worked for me is bugs in the spring, perch in the fall. That is, small and large variations on the weighted, sparkly woolly bugger in the spring; Clouser-type perch fry patterns in the fall. Six pound mono tippets are usually the order of the day, and you can use sink tips, but I feel a floating line gives the fly a jiggly lift that encourages stripes to bite. To pump up the fun fac-

tor, break out the lightest rods you have that can cast weighted flies.

Depending on what other fish populate the lake, perchng often results in a surprise or two. All these schooling fish draw some other cool-water predators, like chain pickerel, pike and walleye. If the yellows will let you get away with it, try tying an inch or so of 50-pound mono bite guard at the front of the fly, which will help keep the toothy crowd from emptying your fly box. Longer-shanked streamer hooks will also buy some fang insurance.

**BRIAN WIPRUD** is a freelance writer from Brooklyn, New York.