

I thought I'd start this year with my personal favorite fly, the ***Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph***, tied on a curved shank hook. I find this to be a very productive pattern for our area, and I believe the curved shank gives it a more realistic, more alluring profile in the water. Make sure to tie a few of these for your box this coming season; you'll be happy you have them, I'm sure!

### **The Curved Shank Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph**



Hook: Nymph 1XL to 2XL, size 8 to 16

Thread: Black, 6/0

Head: Copper bead

Tail: Pheasant tail fibers

Ribbing: Copper wire

Body: Pheasant tail fibers

Thorax: Peacock herl

Wing Case: Pheasant tail fibers

1. Load a bead onto the hook. Place the hook in the vice by the lower end of the bend. Try to keep the bend mostly exposed to facilitate the tying process.
2. Tie on the thread and make a thread base from behind the bead to partway around the bend of the hook. Return the thread to mid shank – this will be where you start to tie in the tail.
3. Maintaining proportions can be a little tricky with a curved shank hook, but with a little practice it's easy to master. Select and measure 3 or 4 pheasant tail fibers to create a tail that is equal to half the length of the shank (accounting for the curve of the hook.) It's easier to tie this in on top of the hook than at the bend (the vice jaws get in the way) and bind the fibers back along the shank of the hook until you reach the point where the tail should start. I try to have my tails angle down between 45 and 90 degrees, relative to the thorax of the fly.
4. Tie in a length of copper wire the same way, starting at mid-shank and binding the wire down to the shank to the point where the tail starts.
5. Now tie in a bunch of pheasant tail fibers at the bend where the tail/wire is attached, wrap the thread back toward the eye about 2/3 up the shank of the hook and wrap the fibers around the

hook in slightly overlapping turns to create the body. Again, the body should be about 2/3 the length of the fly (remember to account for the curve of the hook.)

6. Now counter-wrap the wire (e.g. – wrap in the opposite direction) to create a rib over the body. Counter-wrapping reinforces the fragile pheasant tail fibers and creates a more durable fly.
7. Tie in another bunch of pheasant tail fibers by the tips, butts facing the bend of the hook, at the front of the body. This slip will later be folded over to form a wing case.
8. Bring your thread to just behind the bead, run out a good bit of it and make a loop of thread around one of your fingers. Pull your bobbin up such that both legs of the loop are resting on the shank of the hook behind the bead, and secure both legs to the shank from the bead to the front of the body (like tying a jam knot when starting the thread on the hook.) Now clip one leg of the loop to create a tag end of thread. This will be used to reinforce the peacock herl thorax you'll make in the next step. (NOTE: This step is hard to describe, but you can see the technique on the video "beginner fly tying tips part 8 – the bead head pheasant tail nymph" on my website. Go to [scottcesariflytying.com](http://scottcesariflytying.com), click resources, click beginner fly tying class, and click on part 8 – the Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph.)
9. Tie in a few strands of peacock herl at the front of the body, twist the herl and the tag end of thread into a rope, and wrap a meaty thorax up to the bead. Tie off and clip away the excess.
10. Pull the pheasant tail fibers forward to form a wing case, tie off and trim. Whip finish behind the bead, add a drop of head cement, and your bead head pheasant tail nymph is ready to fish!

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions at [www.scottcesariflytying.com](http://www.scottcesariflytying.com), [smcesari@epix.net](mailto:smcesari@epix.net), or at 610-730-7928. For those of you submitting a fly for the fly tying contest (which I hope you all will do), I will be looking at the following parts of the fly during the judging:

1. Tail and thorax should be oriented 90 degrees to each other, or as close as possible to 90 degrees.
2. Symmetry/equality of the counter-wrapped rib.
3. Abdominal/thorax proportions of 2/3 to 1/3 respectively, accounting for the curvature of the hook.