

# Green Highlander Spey

Jack Cook



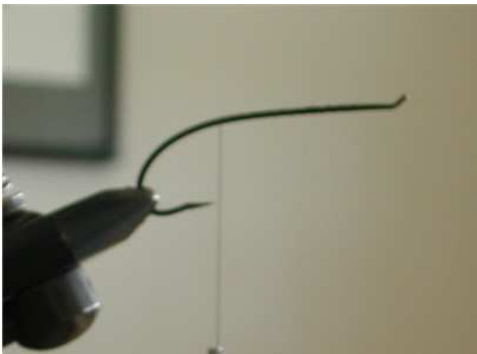
Hook – Alec Jackson Spey, Black  
Thread – Pearsall's Gossamer #9, Black  
Underlayment and Tag – Flat Gold Tinsel  
Tail – Topping from Golden Pheasant Crest and Golden Pheasant Tippet  
Butt - Alec Jackson Premium Silk Floss #27, Buttercup Yellow  
Spey Hackle – Steelhead Anglers Spey Hackle, Highlander Green  
Rib – Oval Gold Tinsel, 3/0-1.5 M, 3-5 S  
Body – Ronn Lucas Iridescent Dubbing, Highlander Green  
Collar – Gadwall Flank, Dyed Highlander Green and Dyed Yellow  
Underwing – Golden Pheasant Tippet, stripped one side, back to back  
Wing – Bronze Mallard  
Topping – Golden Pheasant Crest

**The Irish Angler**

(425) 922-5413 [www.irishangler.com](http://www.irishangler.com)

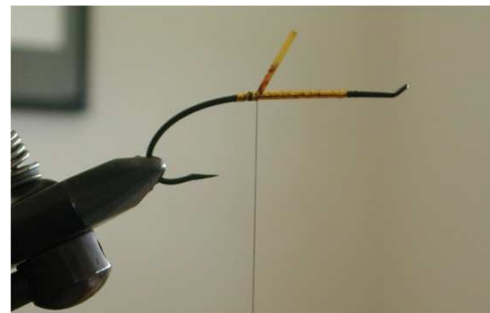
# Tying the Green Highlander Spey

Begin by looking carefully at the example fly I have given you. Remember the details of it as we tie the fly step by step. Keep it nearby where you can refer to it. If after any step the new fly does not look like the sample fly, back up and repeat the step carefully until it does. A fly will never get better looking by building on over a mistake.



Start by securing the black silk tying thread to the rear of the hook. Leave the thread hanging just in front of the point. Do not build up a lump of thread here. One or two wraps will do. When you are laying a smooth layer of silk or tinsel on the hook you must ensure that the underlying surface is smooth or the applied material will be bumpy and look poor.

The next step is to tie in the flat tinsel. Colored silk wrapped over a black hook will turn very dark when wet so we underlay the silk butt with gold tinsel. Cut a piece of tinsel about 6 inches long, this will do 3-4 speys. Secure it at the tie in point and wrap forward about half an inch. Wrap tightly instead of using a lot of thread. Tension is better than bulk and keep it smooth. Start wrapping the tinsel with the gold side out. Wrap smoothly and abut the wraps so we don't build up a lot of tinsel. Tie off with a couple of tight wraps



**The Irish Angler**

(425) 922-5413 [www.irishangler.com](http://www.irishangler.com)



The next step is to tie in the topping. Select a small feather from the Golden Pheasant Crest. The tip of this feather when tied in will be exactly at the top tip of the wing AND will match up with the bottom tip of the topping over the wing. Just like an Atlantic Salmon fly. Measure the topping carefully and strip the extra fibers. You can

also use flat pliers to bend the stem to get the angle right. This is a difficult step and is what makes this spey much more complicated than the Green Butt or von Hartmann. Just work at it and practice. Using topping like this is a great way to dress up hairwing patterns too and don't think this is only for looks. The gold outline on the fly drives Steelhead Crazy! Leave about 1/8" of gold tinsel showing as a tag.

The next step is to tie in the tail. We will use Golden Pheasant Tippet and tie in halfway up the topping just like an Atlantic Salmon fly. Strip down a smallish tippet feather until you have the right amount. Again you can use pliers to change the angle. Do not use too much thread, keep it small and make it perfect. Do not cut the remains off short as we want to keep thing very smooth for the silk floss.



The next step is to tie in the yellow silk floss. Cut a piece of floss about 6 inches long, this will do 3-4 speys. Tie it in leaving about half an inch protruding toward the hook eye. Do **NOT** cut this tag. Wrap the tying thread forward carefully and smooth everything as you go. Wrap the silk floss forward smoothly about 1/3 of the body length. Keep things smooth and flat. Pull a good deal of tension on the silk floss and wrap it carefully and smoothly and cover about half an inch of hook shank. The wraps should abut but not overlap. No gold tinsel should show through the cracks. It takes 8-10 wraps to get to where we want to be. At that point secure the floss with 2 wraps of tying silk and cut off the silk floss but leave a tag to reach to the eye loop back point. We use these materials as we go to build up the body to be smooth at the place where the tapered eye ends.

**The Irish Angler**

(425) 922-5413 [www.irishangler.com](http://www.irishangler.com)



Next we prepare and tie in the spey hackle. Take one of the spey hackles and remove the feather from one side of the stem. Keep the best side. When we wrap the hackle the stem will be against the hook so the side you cut determines which direction the wraps will take, it does not matter which we we go. Secure the tip of the hackle, with an authentic spey fly the hackle is tied in butt end first so the longest hackle is at the back but you have to get excellent spey

hackle with small stems for this to work. Secure with a few wraps of tying silk and do not cut the tip off. Do not make a messy bump here, a couple wraps will do.

Secure a piece of ribbing in the same place with a couple of wraps of tying silk. Do not make a messy bump here, a couple wraps will do. Leave the end, it will be wrapped over with tying silk and the dubbing loop to form a smooth body.



Create a 3 inch dubbing loop and load it up with a TINY bit of dubbing. Go easy here, these are wet flies and they sink and swim better with neat, trim bodies. Barely use any dubbing. You might wish to tie in and use a piece of Highlander Green thread for the dubbing loop. Wrap the tying thread forward quickly to just beyond the point where the return eye ends. Cover the return by about an eighth of an inch. Be sure to start the dubbing exactly at the point the silk floss ends, no bumps and no gaps here. The dubbing will be wrapped in the opposite direction, around the hook, than the spey hackle. This keeps the ribbing and hackle from digging down into the dubbing. The spey hackle and wire will remain behind for now. The dubbing loop will wrap over the end of the hackle and the wire and will continue forward until you meet up with the tying silk. Secure the dubbing loop with 2 turns and cut it off.



Next we wrap the ribbing in the OPPOSITE direction we wrapped the dubbing. This keeps the wire from digging into the dubbed body. The wire and the hackle must be wrapped in the same direction. Keep going until you reach the tying thread and secure with a couple of wraps. Make sure you keep a lot of tension on the wire as you wind it, this makes for a very durable fly. DO NOT build up a mess, we are getting to the front of the fly and want things small and neat.

Now carefully wrap the spey hackle forward. Keep it right in front of the ribbing wire. Manipulate the hackle as necessary to keep it at right angles as you wrap around the shank as this will keep the hackle flowing out and to the rear of the fly. If the hackle starts looking like a bad hair day you are failing to keep it perpendicular. Back it off and wrap again. Wrap until you are on the actual hook shank in front of the dubbing and tie off with the stem on the bottom of the hook. Put a couple of good wraps under good tension. Cut the



stem off and press and tie it in to the bottom of the separated eye. It will kind of disappear when you do it right. Do not crowd the end of the hook. At this point this is what the fly should look like. We all started somewhere so do not be frustrated if yours does not. Just back up to where you went awry and tune it up. Soon you will have it looking like this and will be ready to proceed. Note the small, neat point where the tying silk is waiting.



At this point prepare two matching Tippet Underwings, one for each side. The tip of the underwing should go just short of the topping under the tail. Strip off all unnecessary fibers and use the pliers if you need to modify the stem. Tie them in carefully, be patient. This is very

hard. They must match each other perfectly and align with the topping at the tail. One way to do this is to hold them back to back and preen them. This is called marrying the tips. After this you will be ready to tie some full dressed Atlantic Salmon patterns.

Prepare the guinea collars, first yellow and then highlander green, by stoking it perpendicular which holding the tip. Tie it in tip first, flush with the body, with the cupped side of the feather over the fly. Wrap 1-2 turns of each color, one next to the other, starting up against the last wrap of spey hackle. Stroke the fibres to the rear of the fly at the top or bottom of each wrap and manipulate the feature to keep perpendicular. The fibres will be perpendicular or lying back a bit when you do it well. If it makes a mess do it over. Be careful not to destroy the underwing. When you are finished secure with a couple of wraps on the bottom of the hook.



Note that the hackle is evenly divided top, bottom, and side. If you are tying a show fly you may want to pull it down as a beard. If you do this on a fishing fly it will not swim right. At this point you can cut it off close and make a first layer of head wraps over the last layer of collar, each wrap abuts the last going front to back. This will also push the fibres back a bit. DO not build up a mess of thread here, you are almost done.

**The Irish Angler**

(425) 922-5413 [www.irishangler.com](http://www.irishangler.com)



Now we start with the winging. Cut a wing, 1/4" wide, from the left and right bronze mallard. The left one is the one which curves away from you when you hold it alongside the far side of the hoof, tip towards the rear. Measure the wing against the body, it should go just to the topping under the tail. Hold it in place with fingers of your left hand and secure it in place against the side of the pre

formed head at about a 45 degree angle. Work at this until you get it perfect. Trim the end and apply the near wing in the same way. This is a place where you can be creative and substitute Oak Turkey if you have a matched pair of quills. It is quite a bit more expensive that way but it holds true to the hairwing version and really looks nice.

The last step is to apply topping over all. Select a large pheasant crest and measure against the fly. The tip of this one comes down and meets the tip of the topping over the tail. Use the pliers to adjust the angle of the stem and be patient. The stem will twist and all kinds of things will be hard, just keep going. Just like the wing the pressure on the thread should be applied while pulling up on the hook to eliminate any twist. Pretty soon you will get it perfect.



Once applied cover the head in with a scant layer of tying silk, trim, and cement. Use a good, thin cement which will penetrate the head and make the fly very secure. As you can see here my head has gotten a bit unruly. Even I need more practice.

We all started somewhere. Carefully follow these instructions and by the time you do all 10 in your kit you will have some good looking flies. Tight Lines and Small Heads!

**The Irish Angler**

(425) 922-5413 [www.irishangler.com](http://www.irishangler.com)