

Making Artificial Lures

INTRODUCTION

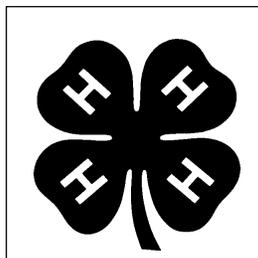
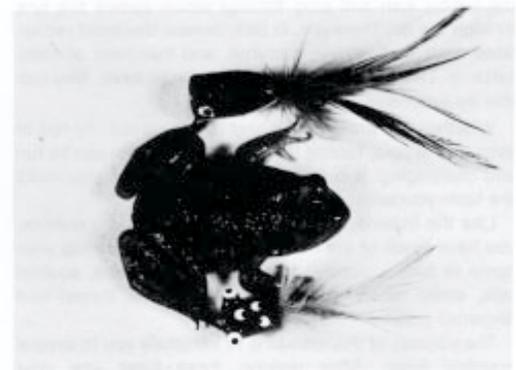
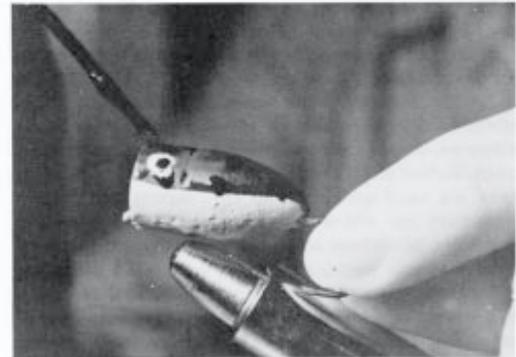
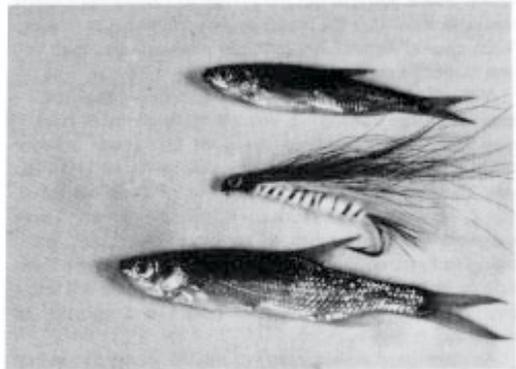
If you like to fish, chances are that you use worms, minnows, grasshoppers, frogs and other natural bait. Almost any tackle store you visit will have both natural or “live bait” and artificial lures which are made to imitate the real thing.

Artificial lures were used by many early civilizations and have been around literally thousands of years. Early lures were made of a variety of materials. For example, American Indians and Eskimos made lures out of the bones of certain birds and animals which resembled minnows.

Books were written as early as the 15th Century describing the art of fly fishing and fly tying. Even then, feathers, hair and thread helped early anglers to fool trout, salmon and bass.

Today, there are many types of artificial lures from which to choose — such as plastic worms, balsa wood minnows, metal spinners, spoons, lead jigs, swimming plugs, surface plugs and even battery-powered frogs. Such lures are used with spinning spin/casting and casting equipment (rod and reel) by fishermen in both fresh and salt water. Some lures are inexpensive, but others may cost more than your weekly allowance.

Fly fishermen also have a very large number of insect, frog and minnow imitations from which to select, many of which are made from animal hairs, feathers, yarn, cork and thread. Flies must be very lightweight, because it is the fly line (unlike spin and plug fishing) which carries the lure through the air. There are, in fact, several thousand recognized trout and salmon patterns, and hundreds of bass patterns. Like the heavier metal and plastic lures, flies can also be expensive.



Whether you prefer a spinning rod, plug rod, fly rod or even a cane pole, fooling fish with artificial lures can be fun and challenging. It is even more exciting when you make the lures yourself — and cheaper, too. Like the Indians, Eskimos and other early lure makers, you have much of the material to make lures around your home or farm: rooster feathers, duck feathers, squirrel tails, cedar wood, deer hair, nylon or silk thread, and fingernail polish.

The purpose of this manual is to introduce you to several practical lures. After making these lures, use your imagination to make different ones. If you like to fish, you will enjoy fishing more with your own lures.

GETTING STARTED

Many fishermen make their own lures. At most good tackle shops you can get the names of some local experts who will show you the basics of fly tying and lure making. Your county Extension agent can probably also give you the names of such people. Many books and pamphlets have been written on the subject of lure making, so you will have plenty of help. If you look in the back of many of the larger outdoor magazines such as *Outdoor Life*, *Sports Afield* and *Field and Stream*, you will find a number of suppliers listed, many of whom also produce instruction books. These suppliers sell many types of hooks, thread, paint, glue, hair, feathers, cork and plastic bodies, metal spoons, and lure-making tools. Search for more information about making lures, using your local library and internet resources. As mentioned earlier, many of the things needed in lure making are already in your home, but some equipment will be needed.

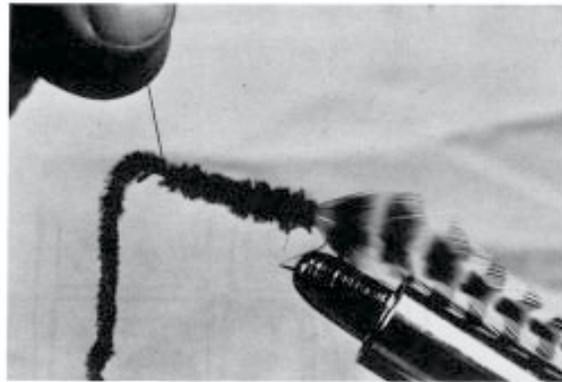
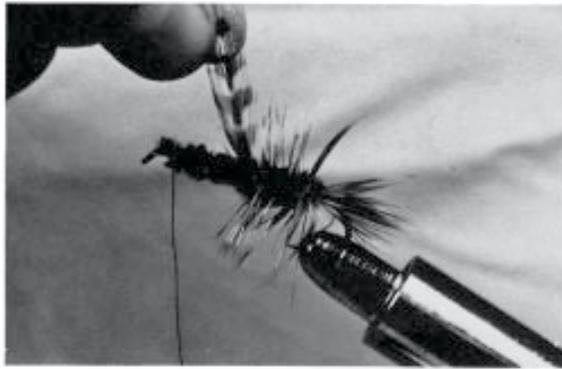
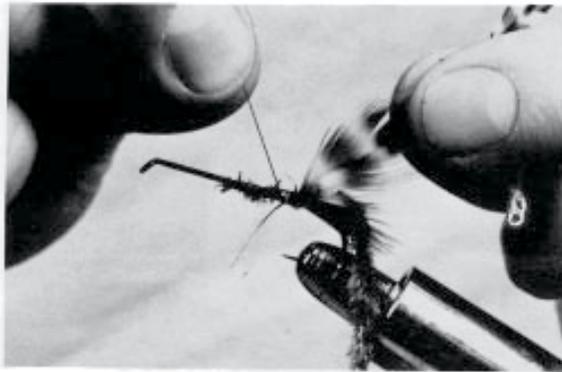
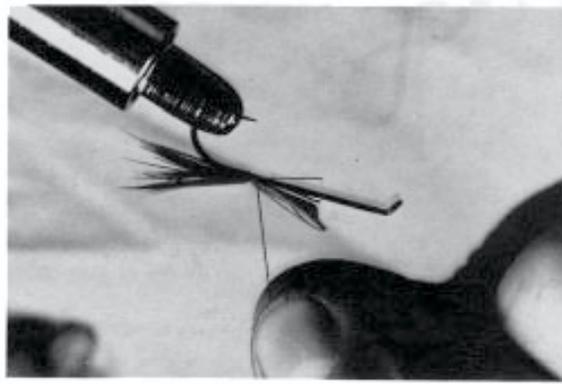
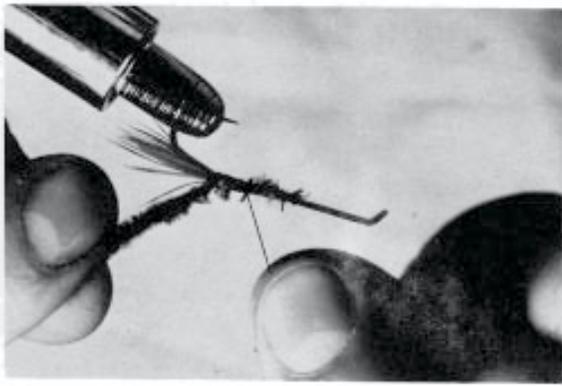
The following list covers much of the material needed for basic fly tying. Five of the lures described on the following pages will be made with this material.

- 1) A vise to hold the hook firmly
- 2) Scissors with a sharp point
- 3) A good selection of hooks
- 4) Several sizes and colors of nylon and silk thread
- 5) Clear nail polish for sealing fly heads
- 6) Colored enamel
- 7) A bucktail
- 8) Wool yarn and chenille in different colors
- 9) A variety of feathers in different sizes and colors
- 10) Cork or balsa wood for popper bodies

Many of the items listed are contained in kits. However, be careful when buying a kit because there is often much unneeded material.

With this equipment and material you can spend rainy and snowy days at home making lures which will catch fish when the weather and fish are ready!





WOOLLY WORM FLY

The woolly worm fly is a caterpillar imitation which is used with a fly rod. The preferred hook size is a long shank size 10. It can, however, be tied in a variety of colors and sizes and can be fished wet, under water, or dry, on the surface. It is an effective fly for trout and panfish.

- 1) Place hook firmly in vise.
- 2) Wrap thread around hook and secure with a couple of half-hitches.
- 3) Tie on a piece of red feather for a tail.
- 4) Tie chenille or yarn to hook.
- 5) Tie hackle to hook.
- 6) Wrap chenille and secure with half-hitches.
- 7) Wrap the hackle to create "legs" and secure.
- 8) Tie off head with half-hitches and cut excess thread.
- 9) Seal head with cement.



CEDAR OR PINE POPPER (SPINNING OR CASTING)

A top water popper can be a very good bait when fish are feeding near the surface. When the rod is jerked, the plug's hollowed mouth goes underwater and makes popping sounds that attract fish. It makes the noise and has the look of a thrashing, injured minnow. Poppers come in all sizes and are particularly effective for bass. For maximum noise and action, the face of the lure may be hollowed out to "dig" into the water better.

- 1) With a good pocketknife, carve a solid pine or cedar body with tapered sides and a flat face.
- 2) Sand the finished body when the desired shape is reached.
- 3) Place hooks with screw eyes in body with needle nose pliers. Place lure in water to see if it is properly balanced. Remove hooks.
- 4) Paint the entire body twice with desired color. In the picture the body is white.
- 5) Dip head of lure in paint, coloring the first third of the body.
- 6) Paint eyes.
- 7) Replace hooks and screw eyes. Place a screw eye in the center of the front of plug.

FROG POPPER

The frog popper is a cork bass lure which is fished on the surface to imitate a swimming frog. The body, made of cork or balsa wood, is glued to the shank of the hook. When pulled through the water with sharp jerks, a noise is made like a swimming frog. It is fished with a fly rod.

1) Split the cork or balsa wood body with a knife or saw. Be careful!

2) Fill the slit with glue and place hook in body.

3) Paint body: green and spotted on top and yellow on bottom.

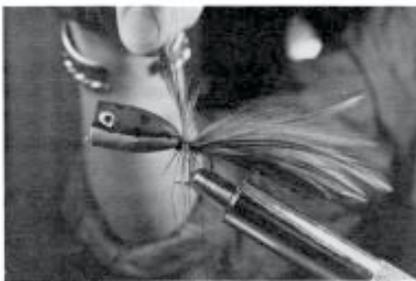
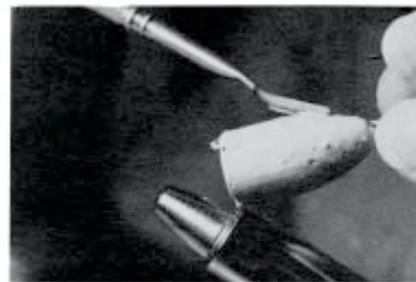
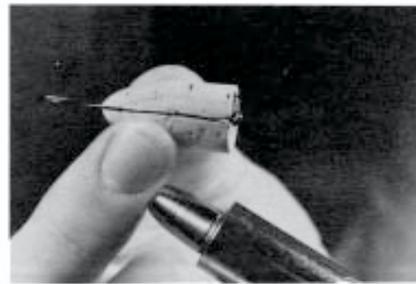
4) Secure thread to hood.

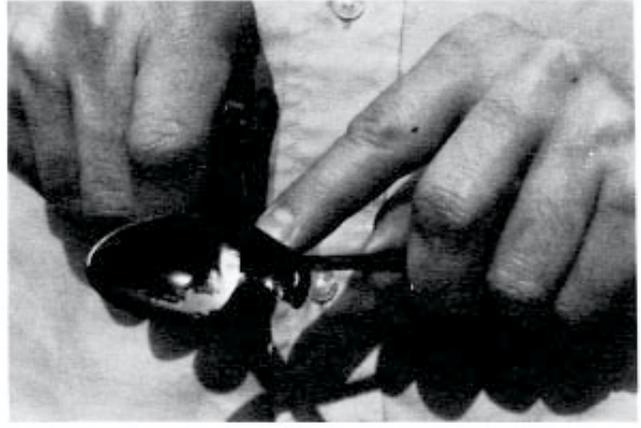
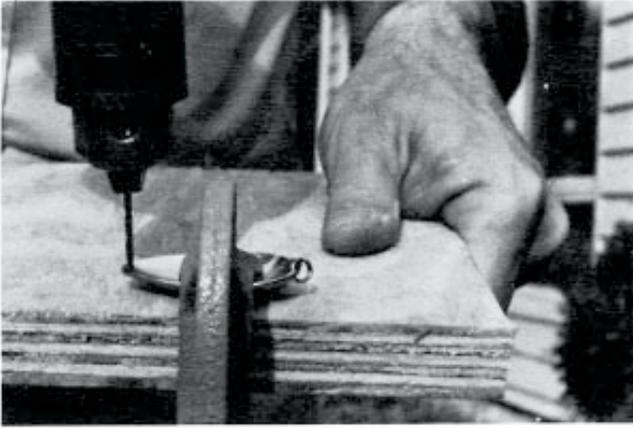
5) Tie three green and/or brown feathers on each side of hook with ends of feathers pointed out like legs.

6) Secure a single green feather just behind the frog body and wrap three or four times.

7) Wrap thread seven or eight times just behind body and secure with half-hitches.

8) Seal knot with nail polish.





SPOONS

Spoons move through the water with an erratic, wobbling or fluttering action. They come in many sizes and colors and are used to imitate frightened minnows

- 1) Use an *old* stainless steel or silver plated spoon.
- 2) Place the spoon in a vise to keep it from moving. Cut off handle with a hack saw. Use a metal file to clean off rough edges.
- 3) Secure the spoon with a clamp to a board or work table. Using a small bit, drill a hole at each end.
- 4) Place one split ring at each end. Place the treble hook at the wide end of the spoon for proper balance.

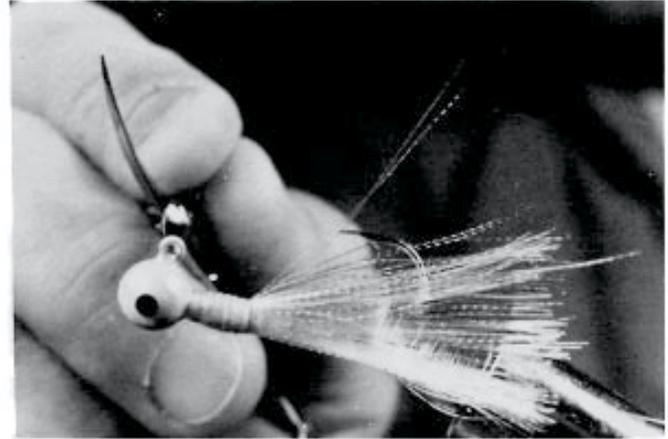
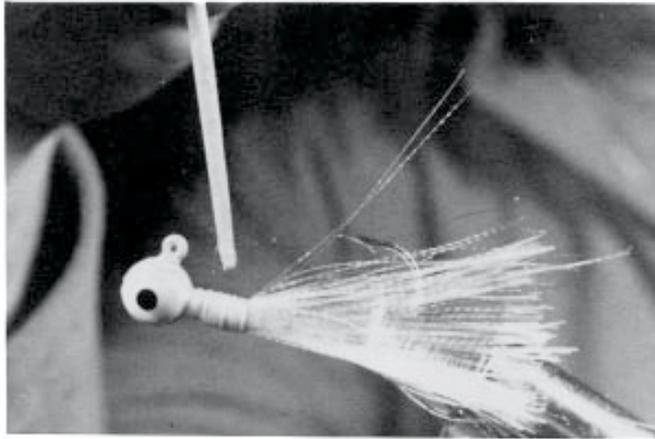
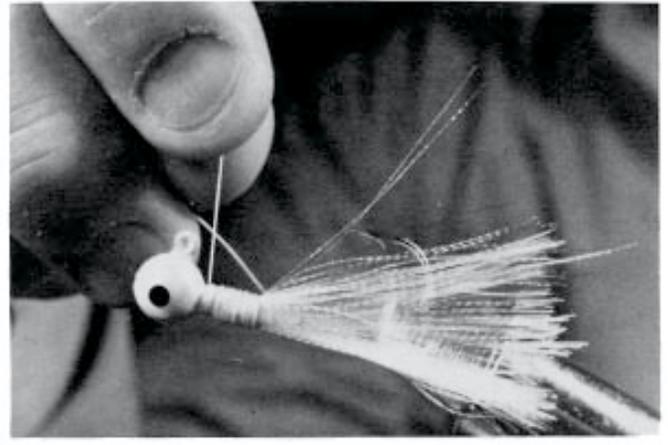
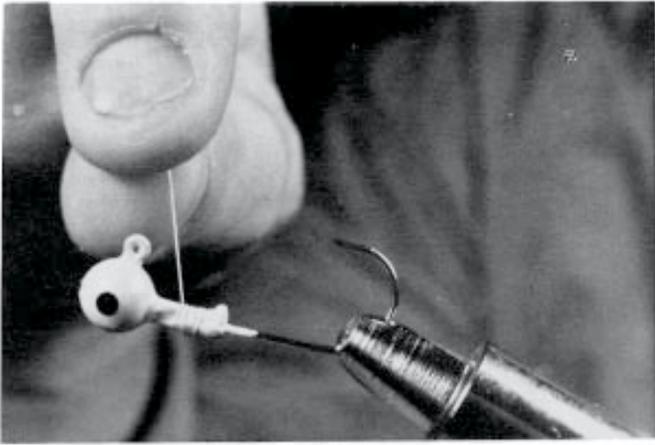
STREAMER FLY

Streamers are tied to imitate a variety of minnows and come in many sizes. Fished with a fly rod, they are especially effective when retrieved with a darting motion.

These are especially effective for trout and bass.

- 1) Tie on a piece of red feather for tail.
- 2) Secure white wool yarn to the hook.
- 3) Secure a piece of silver tinsel to hook and tie off with half-hitches.
- 4) Wrap yarn toward front of hook.
- 5) Follow yarn with silver tinsel, which adds "flash."
- 6) Tie a clump of white bucktail over hook body.
- 7) Place brown bucktail hair over white.
- 8) Complete head with thread and secure.
- 9) Paint head with black enamel.
- 10) Paint in eyes with a toothpick.

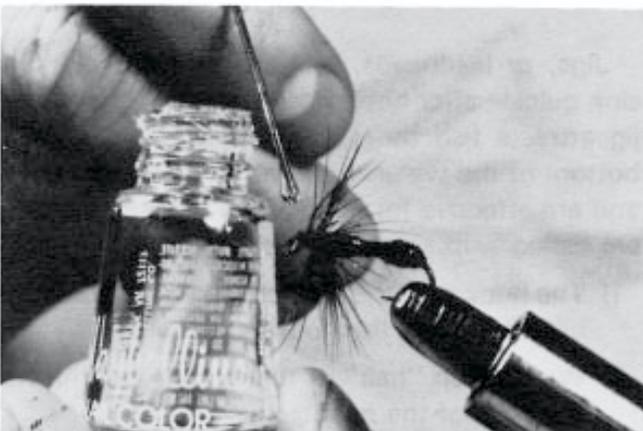
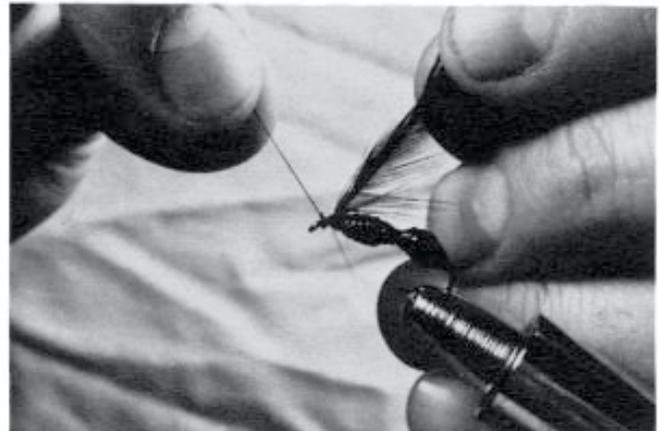
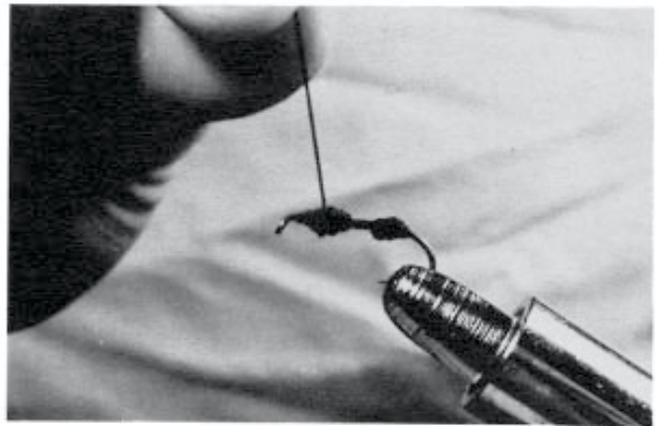
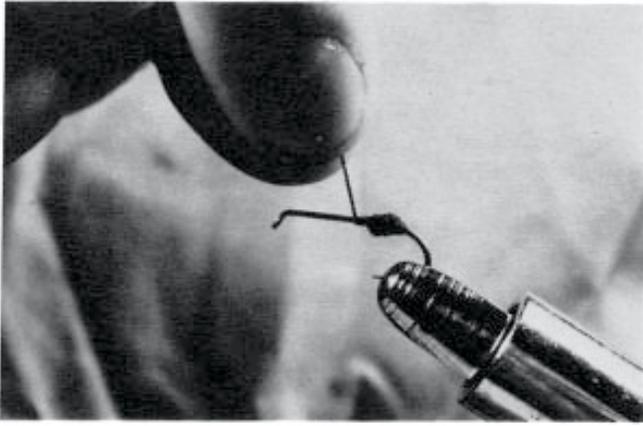




NYLON OR BUCKTAIL JIG

Jigs, or leadheads, are also minnow imitations. They sink quickly after hitting the water. As the rod is jerked, a jig attracts fish by making short, rapid hops along the bottom of the water. Jigs can be tied in a variety of sizes and are effective for many fresh- and saltwater fish. They are fished with spinning or casting rods.

- 1) The hook with the molded lead head should be painted before placing the hook in the vise.
- 2) Wrap nylon "hair" or real bucktail all the way around the base of the head.
- 3) Secure the hair with half-hitches and cut off excess thread.
- 4) Coat wrap with nail polish.
- 5) Clear hook eye with sharp object.



BLACK ANT FLY

The ant fly is also effective for trout and panfish. It should be allowed to sink slowly and retrieved in short jerks. As with the woolly worm, it can be tied in several sizes, but a size 10 hook is preferred.

- 1) Wrap a medium-size nylon thread on the hook tightly to form the ant body.
- 2) Put several coats of black enamel on body with a toothpick.
- 3) Tie a black feather to the front of the hook.
- 4) Wrap the feather around the hook at least three times before tying off with half-hitches.
- 5) Seal with nail polish.

ACTIVITIES

1. Assemble the materials for the artificial lures you wish to make, and make them following the instructions outlined in this activity guide.
2. Make a display of the lures you have created to show your 4-H club.
3. Demonstrate how to make one or more artificial lures at a club meeting, explaining the various steps in the process as you proceed. Demonstrate how to use the different kinds of lures at outdoor meetings or conservation activities.
4. Visit a sporting goods store and study the lures on display. Compare these with some of your own homemade lures.
5. Try catching fish using some of the lures you have made.

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