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Sili-Legs Bonefish Fly

By Barry and Cathy Beck | June 2021

One look at the Sili-Legs bonefish fly and you might say, “That’s a hybrid Gotcha.” The basic Gotcha, which has been around for a long time, is a must-have pattern for bonefish. I like to think that the Sili-Legs is a new look at an old favorite and that Jim McVay, the originator of the Gotcha, would approve.

I created the Sili-Legs by accident when fishing out of Los Roques, Venezuela. Each night I was tying flies because, well, there’s not much to do after sundown on that little island. I came across a pack of sili-legs in a spotted pattern. I tried them on a standard Gotcha and liked the look. The following day confirmed that the bonefish liked that look, too. Silicone legs float, so when the fly is retrieved the legs lay back against the fly. With each pause the legs flare out, giving life-like action.

I knew I was onto something and after Los Roques, I tried the Sili-Legs at a couple of lodges in the Bahamas and it brought a double-digit bonefish to the boat. In time we fished it in Belize and Mexico with more positive results. I was excited and was sharing the fly with friends and clients and it was well received by everyone . . . but most importantly the fish loved it wherever it was thrown.

Bonus: the fly is easy to tie. I like a size 4 for Andros Island and most of the Bahamas, and a smaller size 6 or 8 for the Yucatan and Belize. On the rare occasion, a permit will pick it up. Now that’s icing on the cake!

RECIPE

Hook: TIMECO 811S Sizes 4 through 8

Eyes: Silver doll eyes or bead chain for skinny water

Thread: Pink flat nylon

Tinsel: Flat variegated silver

Wing: Deer hair dyed tan, preferably a doe tail, or tan kip tail, or tan craft yarn (lots of choices that will work).

Legs: Sili legs in sand orange black flake



STEP 1

Secure the doll eyes at the thorax position on the hook.



STEP 2

Secure flat tinsel using part for the tail. Take a dubbing needle and separate the tinsel apart into strands.



STEP 3

Wind the tinsel forward to the eyes and figure eight around the eyes.



STEP 4

Invert the hook and securely fasten the tail.



STEP 5

Attach the Sili legs and finish the head.

Note:
The heavier eyes can be substituted with bead chain eyes for fishing in skinny water



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Cathy Beck needs no introduction to the fly fishing community. For many years she co-owned Fishing Creek Outfitters, a retail and mail order fly fishing shop in Benton, PA. Today she operates an online fly shop at www.barryandcathy-beck.com, and is a contract fly tier for Umpqua Feather Merchants. Cathy has written or co-authored a number of books which include *Fly Waters Near & Far*, *Cathy Beck's Fly Fishing Handbook*, *Seasons of the Bighorn*, *Fly Fishing the Flats*, *Outdoor Photographer's Handbook*, *PA Fly Fishing Guide*, and an instructional video, *From First Cast to Double Haul*. She was inducted into the Catskill Fly Fishing Museum Hall of Fame in 2014 and to the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum Hall of Fame.





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