

The Advancing Angler

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The Efficiency of Yarn Indicators in Colorado

Yarn strike indicators arrived in Colorado more than a decade ago, and nothing has replaced them. The yarn had been in use for some time on the bigger waters of both the Bighorn River and the San Juan River.

As I researched yarn for Colorado, the question was whether the sensitive fish in the South Platte, especially in Cheesman Canyon, would allow yarn to be drifted over them as the fish in larger western tailwaters did. The short answer is Yes, as any fly angling club member who now fishes the Canyon will attest.

Week-ends on the river, and

other local fisheries, give the appearance of some mad macramé club trying to send messages by the dozens in golf ball sized bottles of yarn.

During that research several years ago, I spent with my fishing partner two years trying all colors, brands, and densities of yarn that I could find, to ensure the least number of spooked fish and the best floatability and color for the angler.

While my partner decided that white yarn served best, I settled on a tan or oatmeal color. Also, a twist yarn handled more easily the transition from macramé tool to fly fishing tool. Braided yarns are just too difficult to unbraid for the loose strands an indicator requires.

Yarn is the Best

Nothing has come along in this past decade to displace a well made yarn indicator for its visibility, sensitivity to subtle strikes,

durability in a full day of fishing or longer, and the economic

the air eases out of them late in the day.



value. Those “corkies” are still on fly shop shelves—I have a gallon zip-type freezer bag full of them somewhere still—along with the equally worthless foam stickies. Someone has tried small balloons like the Bass Boys in Florida use over their live bait, trout-sized shiners. The balloons work fairly well as a strike indicator, until

Adjustable Rubber Band

Just a couple of years ago, a huge improvement in the yarn indicator was put in place. With the first yarn, I used a Girth Hitch in the leader to keep the indicator in place. Slip knots were also used. Knots worked well, but were difficult to adjust up and down the leader for differing water depths.

“...began using tiny Orthodontic rubber bands to replace the Girth Hitch. Brilliant.”

The Efficiency of Yarn Indicators...*from page 1*

Clay Anselmo—a career medical supplies professional, occasional guide, and all-the-time good angler and oarsman—brought his medical tools knowledge to bear on the yarn and leader connection. He began using tiny rubber bands from the orthodontics world to replace the Girth Hitch in forming the loop in the leader. This allowed instant adjustability of the indicator, but held the yarn in place once adjusted. Brilliant.



The Right Yarn Source

Holly Twist brand yarn is the right density for indicators. As its name suggests, it's twisted,

not braided yarn. At this writing, the 6mm size costs less than \$6 per 100-yard skein. Tan or oatmeal colors work best, though the

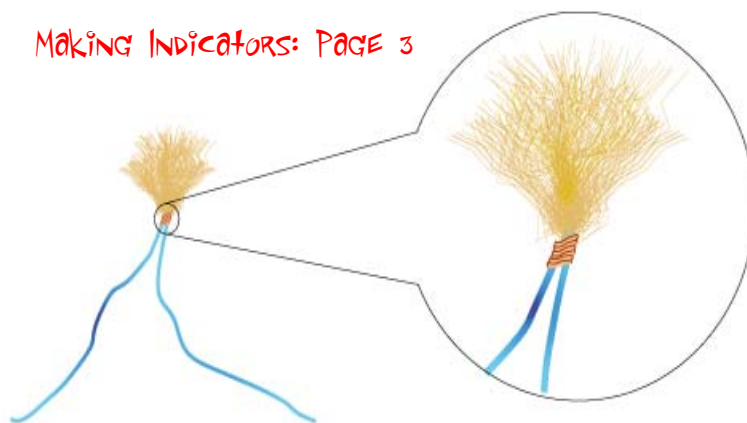
yarn is available in a range of colors. Holly Twist is made by the Pepperell Braiding Company in Pepperell, MA; call (800) 343-8114, ext. 10 for phone orders. Web orders can be made at www.macramesuperstore.com. Despite the pictures on the web site, the Holly Twist brand is a “twisted” yarn, not braided.

Rubber bands are more difficult to get, but can be found . If you can't find them, let me know. Various suppliers offer them for pennies.—Dan Wright

The Value of Using Yarn Indicators is Easy to See

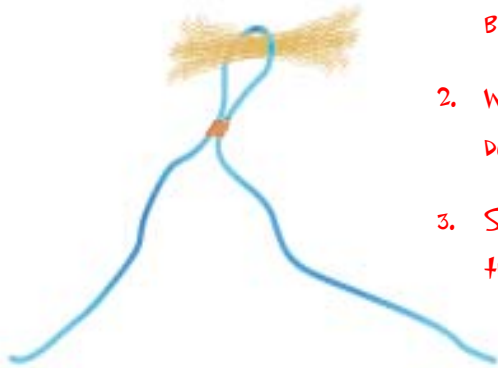
Some of the best features of yarn indicators include:

- Inexpensive by any indicator standard. A 100-yard skein of macramé yarn yields 2,400 indicators 1.5 inches long! At this moment, a skein costs less than \$6.
- Created by the angler each day and customized for the day's water and conditions—small for low flows or windy conditions, large for bigger water and heavier flies
- Easily adjusted along the leader for water depth, especially when held in place by a small rubber band
- Yarn available in many colors, easily adjusted for light conditions or particular waters
- Sensitive to the slightest movement of the weight and flies.
- It's easy to see.



MAKING YOUR OWN YARN INDICATORS

ILLUSTRATION 1: FORMING THE LOOP, INSERTING THE YARN



1. FORM A LOOP IN THE THICKEST SECTION OF THE LEADER'S BUTT SECTION.
2. WRAP THE SMALL RUBBER BAND AROUND THE LOOP A HALF-DOZEN TIMES; MAKE IT SNUG BUT NOT OVERLY TIGHT.
3. SNIP A 1.5 INCH PIECE OF THE YARN AND SLIDE IT INTO THE LOOP.

ILLUSTRATION 2: TIGHTENING THE LOOP, BRUSHING THE YARN WITH VELCRO

1. SNUG THE RUBBER BAND AGAINST THE YARN.
2. VELCRO THE YARN TO MAKE IT "BRUSHY," AS SHOWN.

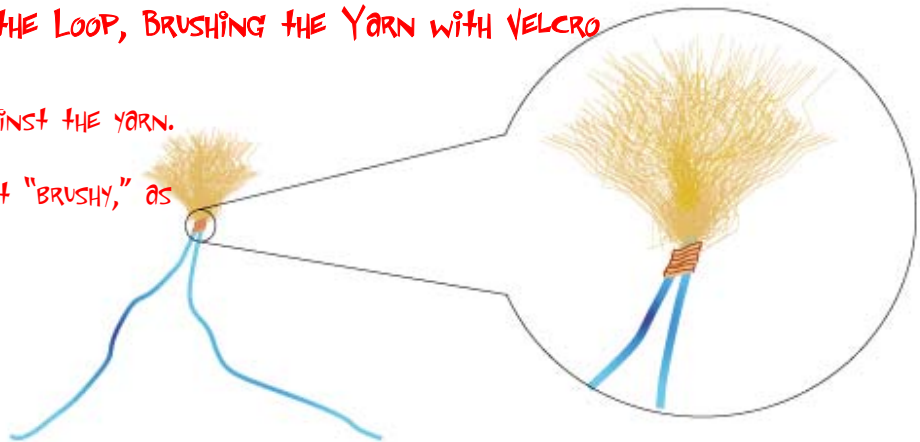


ILLUSTRATION 3: TRIMMING THE YARN

1. TRIM TO SIZE, AS SHOWN.
2. MOVE THE INDICATOR TO THE PROPER DEPTH POSITION ON THE LEADER.
3. FISH.

