

## Make Your Own Imitation Jungle Cock Eyes

*How to turn a Partridge Feather into a Jungle Cock Eye*

By Raymond Tucker (FTF screen name "letumgo")

I want to share with you a method and the materials I use to create my own imitation version of a Jungle Cock eye feather (sometimes called a Jungle Cock nail). I love the look of real Jungle Cock nails on flies, but find the real thing to be too expensive to justify putting on fishing flies. I have tried the imitation Jungle Cock feathers on the market (printed Mylar eyes), but I have generally been unhappy with the look of the imitations on the finished flies. I started playing around to see if I could come up with a better looking imitation of the real Jungle Cock nail. The photo on the right shows a real Jungle Cock nail (*the feather in the middle left edge*). The rest of the feathers are my imitations.



The imitations are not as good as the real thing, but I think these imitations look a whole lot better than the Mylar versions. These imitation Jungle Cock nails are very inexpensive (make them yourself) and I feel they will make a nice substitute on my fishing flies.

Here is how to make them...

### Ingredients:

- Hungarian Partridge Shoulder Feathers (from upper part of wing)
- Apple Barrel Gloss Acrylic Paint (20350 - Bright Citrus)
- Apple Barrel Gloss Acrylic Paint (20621 - White)

### Tools:

- Small Cup of Water (for dipping and shaping feathers)
- Sharpened Wooden Dowel (used for painting the eyes)
- Large Pad of Post-It Notes (used to hold feathers during painting process and as a working surface for the craft paints)

### Step-by-Step Instructions:



#### **Step 1 – Choosing Feathers**

Pluck out individual feathers from the upper part of the wing of a Hungarian Partridge skin. These feathers have a nice dark color to them and have a pale white stem that closely matches the center of the real Jungle Cock feather. I like the look of the Hungarian Partridge feather due to the additional brown and tan mottling at the ends of the feathers.



*This is a close up photo of the feathers before they are plucked from the skin.*



**Step 2 – Pluck & Prepare Feathers**

After you have plucked out the as many feathers as you want to work with, the feathers now need to be prepared. Strip the fluffy barbules off the base of each of the feathers.



*Here is what the feathers look like after the fluffy parts are stripped off.*





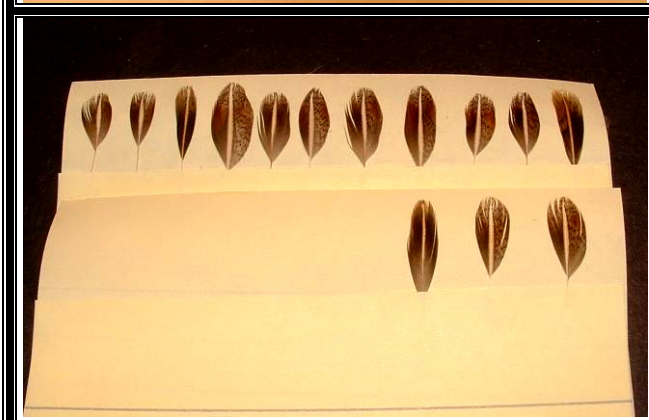
### **Step 3 – Shaping the Feathers**

After the feathers have been prepared, dip each feather into a small cup of tap water and pinch the feather between your thumb and index finger. Gently pull the feather through your fingers and it will straighten the barbules and give the feather a longer narrow profile.



*Set the feathers aside and allow them to air dry. This only takes a few minutes if you put them under your tanning light.*

*The feathers will retain the desired elongated narrow profile after drying.*



### **Step 4 – Preparing For Painting**

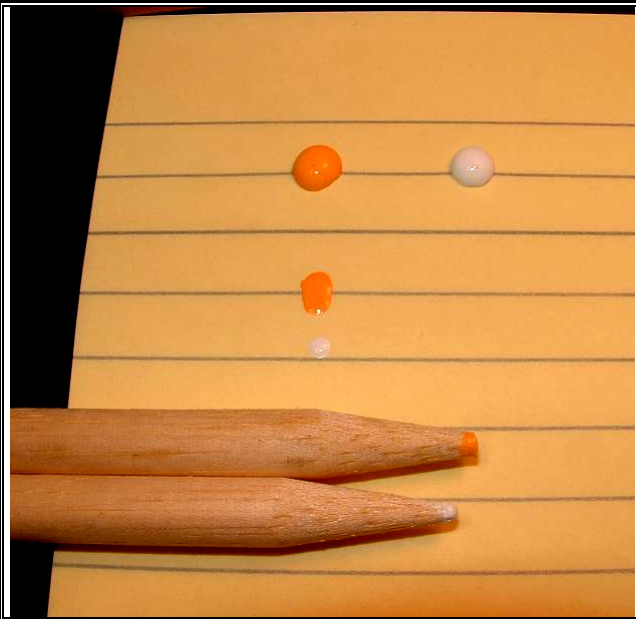
Take a large pad of Post-It notes and peel off a sheet. Flip the sheet over so the sticky side is facing upwards and is located along the top of the sheet. You can then gently press the feathers onto the sticky surface. Peel off a second sheet of Post-It paper and lay it over the stems of the feathers (sticky side down). This will then hold the feathers in place during the painting process.



Use a weather resistant acrylic paint that is suitable for indoor/outdoor use. I picked up a couple 2 oz. bottles of paint made by a company called Apple Barrel. I bought mine at a Michaels Craft Store, but you can probably find the same thing at Wal-Mart or Jo-Ann Fabrics.

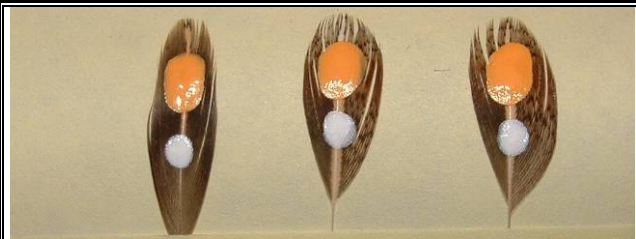
I use the Gloss version in the following colors (20350 Bright Citrus & 20621 White).

*If you want to get really creative, you could pick up a couple other colors to make some wild colored Jungle Cock eyes.*



### **Step 5 – Painting the Eyes**

Next place a drop of each of the craft paint onto the Post-It pad. Dip the end of a sharpened dowel into the paint. I like to practice a couple dots on the note pad to get the shape I'm looking for. I like to slide the dowel a bit to elongate the orange spot into a slight oval shape. The white spot tends to be smaller and more rounded. Once you are ready, start painting the feathers you have prepared. Go slowly and rest your hand on the desk to steady your hand. Be careful not to leave bubbles in the paint. If you see bubbles they can be popped with a head of your bodkin before the paint dries.



Set the feathers aside and allow them to completely dry. If you have any light spots you can then touch them up with a second coat of paint and allow them to dry.



The finished feathers can be peeled off the post-it pad, or stored this way to keep their shape until you are ready to use them in your fly tying.