

MOEBIUS SWAN TEA COZY

BY CAT BORDHI



The Moebius Swan Tea Cozy was inspired by a recent trip to Bainbridge Island, Washington, where I taught a weekend retreat at Churchmouse Yarns & Teas. A half hour ferry ride from downtown Seattle, this shop is one of the most welcoming, luminous, and inspiring gathering places for knitters I've ever visited. Kit Hutchin, the owner, also carries amazing teas - and I came home with an assortment of teas that have changed the way I start my mornings. The cozy is knit with Ashford Tekapo yarn, which sails all the way from New Zealand nestled among spinning wheels and looms, to the US distributor, Foxglove Fiberarts Supply, also located on Bainbridge Island.

Note: This pattern is a gift to my readers, and you will need the basic Moebius-knitting instructions found in either *A Treasury of Magical Knitting* or *A Second Treasury of Magical Knitting*. Follow instructions for the Moebius Cast-On (MCO), paying careful attention to directions for counting MCO stitches and working the first round.

Yarn: Ashford Tekapo (100% wool, 100 g/ 218 yds), 2 balls blue #28, 1 ball granite #42, strand of smooth, contrast color waste yarn

Needles: size 11 (8 mm) circular needles, 47" and 16" lengths

Notions: tapestry needle, stitch marker

Gauge: 15 sts = 4" (10 cm)

Finished size: to fit a 16-oz teapot

Moebius cast-on (MCO) for base of tea cozy

With blue yarn and 47" needle, MCO 95 sts (see books for instructions).

How to create 5 crossings instead of the usual 1

Begin by checking to be certain there is only 1 crossing of needle and cable (see books for instructions). Then rotate this needle completely around the cable once more. Check to be sure this has given you more crossings (the right way gives you more crossings, and the other way does not, so if you still have just 1 crossing, rotate the needle back to where you began and then rotate once more in the same direction). Once you have established that you have created more crossings (you now have 3), rotate the needle around the cable one more time in the same direction. You now have 5 crossings.



Begin knitting

Note: Because of the 5 crossings, your knitting will seem unusually twisted - but don't worry, this is as it should be. Place a marker on right needle. Knit the first stitch, which is the slip knot. The next 94 stitches will alternate between being mounted with the front leg first (as you are probably used to) and the back leg first. Knit into the leg that comes first. When the marker appears *beneath* your needles on the cable below, you have completed the 94 stitches. From now on all stitches will appear mounted "normally" with the front leg first. The next stitch is formed by the double sides of the slip knot as it loops down around the cable below. Knit this stitch as if the double sides are one strand. Continue knitting until the marker reappears *in between* your needles, signaling that you have completed your first round.

Continue

Each time the marker appears *in between* your needles (*not* on the cable below) you are at the end of a round. Purl 1 round. Knit 1 round. Repeat these two rounds twice more. Purl 1 round. Cut tail of blue yarn.

Finish edge of base with applied I-cord

With granite yarn, cast 4 sts onto left needle. *Knit 3, k2tog (last granite st and first blue st on left needle), move 4 sts from right needle to left needle. Repeat from * until all blue sts are used up. Either weave ends of granite I-cord together or bind off and sew together.

Pick up stitches for tea cozy body

Lay finished base out as shown on previous page. You will have to fiddle with the twists to get them to lie flat as shown - at first you will think something is wrong. When the base is ready, pin each doubled section so base will not undo itself while you pick up sts. Pick up 20 sts in each of the five sections - starting from a granite I-cord and traveling along the blue purl bumps. You have a total of 100 sts.



Knit the tea cozy body

With blue yarn and 16" needle, place marker and knit 5 rounds (no longer knitting in a Moebius shape, but in a simple round). Work an increase round: *Knit 2, k1f&b, repeat until 1 st remains before marker, k1. (133 sts) Knit rounds until body measures 5" from base. On next round, decrease 3 sts distributed around the round. (130 sts)

Decrease for top of the tea cozy

Note: near bottom of cozy you will need to use both circular needles or a set of double pointed needles.

*Knit 11, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (120 sts)

*Knit 10, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (110 sts)

*Knit 9, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 1 round. Knit 12 sts with waste yarn. Replace 12 waste yarn sts on left needle. Knit over 12 waste yarn sts with blue yarn and continue to end of round. Knit 1 round. (100 sts)

*Knit 8, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (90 sts)

*Knit 7, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (80 sts)

*Knit 6, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (70 sts)

*Knit 5, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (60 sts)

*Knit 4, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 3 rounds. (50 sts)

*Knit 3, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 1 round. (40 sts)

*Knit 3, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 1 round. (32 sts)

*Knit 2, k2tog, repeat from * to marker. Knit 1 round. (24 sts)

*Knit 2 tog, repeat from * to marker. (12 sts) Cut 8" tail and with tapestry needle, weave yarn through remaining sts and pull tightly closed. Weave end in securely.

Swan's neck

Place bottom row of 12 sts held by waste yarn on one needle, and the upper row of 12 sts on a second needle. Remove waste yarn. With blue yarn, knit bottom 12 sts, right side of work facing. *Pick up and knit 2 sts in intersection between needles. Repeat from * on other needle. Knit 2 rounds. Cut tail of blue and resume knitting with granite. Knit 3 rounds. Begin regular decreases as follows: Knit 2 tog in middle of each needle. Knit 4 rounds. Knit 2 tog near right side of each needle. Knit 4 rounds. Knit 2 tog near left side of each needle. Knit 4 rounds. Repeat until a total of 8 sts remain. Knit 2 rounds, then k2tog every other needle until 2 sts remain. Cut tail, weave yarn through remaining sts, and weave in all ends of tea cozy.



At this point your cozy is huge and resembles this object. It will transform magically inside your washing machine.

Felting

Place tea cozy inside a zippered pillowcase (or close a pillowcase with bulldog clips or very strong rubber bands) in washing machine with a pair of jeans or a half-dozen tennis balls. Set machine for low, hot water, and add two teaspoons of detergent. Set timer and check progress every few minutes. Reset the machine to continue washing until tea cozy is desired size (try it on your teapot to know when to stop). Press between towels to remove excess water, then push and pat into shape. To form the curve of the swan's neck, first stretch the opening of the neck by inserting two wooden spoon handles as far inside as you can, and pulling them apart. Then coax the neck into a curve, pinning if necessary, and let the cozy dry. Before actually using the cozy, trim fuzz from the inside, and vacuum out all loose hairs so your tea remains fiber-free.

For comprehensive discussions of felting, see either *Treasury of Magical Knitting* (the second *Treasury* contains the most detailed instructions).

ASHFORD TEKAPO YARN may be ordered online from www.achildsdream.com, or telephone this lovely shop full of enchanting handcrafts for children and families at 800-359-2906.

Abbreviations

K2tog - knit 2 stitches together

K1f&b - knit once into the front and once into the back of the same stitch (an increase)

st - stitch