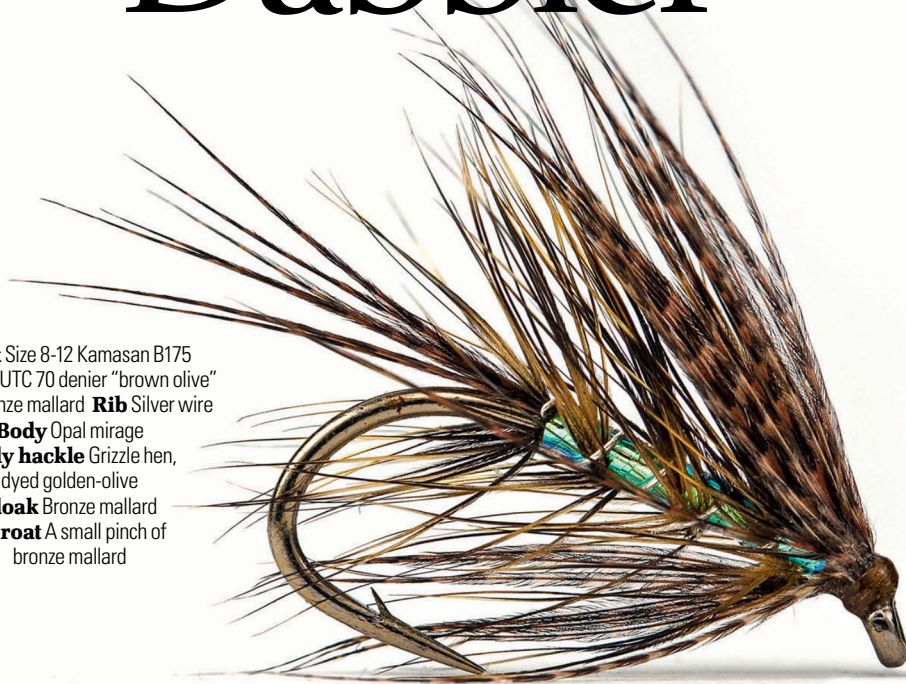


## Rob Denson's trout fly of the month

# Pearly Dabbler



**Hook** Size 8-12 Kamasan B175  
**Thread** UTC 70 denier "brown olive"  
**Tail** Bronze mallard **Rib** Silver wire  
**Body** Opal mirage  
**Body hackle** Grizzle hen, dyed golden-olive  
**Cloak** Bronze mallard  
**Throat** A small pinch of bronze mallard



**Rob Denson** has fly-fished for trout for 25 years, visiting all four corners of Britain and Ireland, combining his love of fly-tying, photography and a rolling wave.

**T**HE PEARLY DABBLER will catch you sackfuls of fish in most months of the year. It will probably catch you more fish in June than in October, but then again, you'll likely catch more fish in June than October regardless of your choice of pattern. So why the Pearly for October? Well, the thing with the Pearly Dabbler is that it's a different animal in every month. It can be a different animal several times a week, or day for that matter, seamlessly morphing between guises - corixa one minute, shrimp the next, and finally rounding the day off with a rather fetching and extremely passable ascending sedge impression.

What concerns us, though, in October, is fry. The Pearly Dabbler

can do fry, too. The terrestrials have all but gone, buzzers are patchy, but fry are a permanent and abundant protein-packed fixture, as trout eat as if there's no tomorrow in readiness for a long, lean winter.

The PD has been one of my most successful fry patterns of recent years, scoring well right at the back-end on Rutland and Grafham, where, incidentally, the PD will cover the killer shrimp base, too. The fry will be close in, seeking features that provide both shelter and food, and so will the trout. Lines, therefore, need seldom go much deeper than a Di3, with intermediates being my first choice. It's simple fishing - throw-it-out, pull-it-back sort of stuff - there's not much else one can do with rod and line to mimic fry, other than keep it on the slow

side, varying the retrieve here and there. As fry can, and often do, get away fast, takes will be on the positive side. Strong leaders and attention to knots is more important than ever.

As with most flies, you'll see the PD dressed good, bad and downright ugly. My advice is to buy, or tie, your PDs on the skinny side. For my money, the PD is most at home down the leader, the middle dropper being my preferred position, with the tail coming a close second; the reason being that, generally speaking, all the trout fodder impersonated by the PD live in, rather than on the water. Corixa, shrimp, damsels, sedge pupae, fry and so on are at home and abundant with a foot or two of water above them, so the PD is pretty much wasted on the top dropper of a leader coupled with a "shallow" line. One of my favourite back-end teams will have the PD in the middle with a couple of other Dabblers either side - a Silver Invicta Dabbler and a Cat Dabbler will keep to the fry theme. A size 10 will be my first choice, occasionally changing to an 8 if bigger fry seem to be interesting the trout. A size 12 can be useful, too, if pin-fry are on the menu.

You'll see plenty of fancy fry patterns in magazines at this time of year. It often pays, though, to keep things simple. Fish a Pearly Dabbler; even if fry are not the order of the day, there's a pretty good chance that the PD will be doing a mighty fine impression of what is!

### TYING TIPS

- Tie in the wire rib along the full length of the body. This provides a flat bed for the Mirage to rest, and a lump-free body.
- For a flat, gap-free body, tie in the Mirage at the head-end, winding down to the rear-end, and back up to the head.
- Keep the pattern on the lean side - four or five turns at the most of hackle and the same with the rib.
- Keep the bronze mallard cloak lean, too - there's no point spoiling the good work you've done on the body by overdoing the cloak.



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