

Rob Denson's trout fly of the month

Deer Hair Emerger

DHE (variant)

Hook Size 10-16 Kamasan B100 or similar light to medium wire curved buzzer/scud profile hook.

Body Hare's ear or seal's fur or squirrel or mixes thereof, dubbed in a slight taper.

Wing Deer hair



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. Website: www.robdenison.co.uk

HERE'S A genuine "crossover" pattern for you this month. Equally at home and equally killing on both still and running water, the Deer Hair Emerger, or DHE as it's known to its adherents, is as safe a bet as you can throw at a trout, wherever they swim, be it Lough Corrib, the streams of New Zealand, or Patagonia. Its creator, Bob Wyatt, famously manages a season's globe-trotting for trophy trout on one box of flies and half a dozen patterns. The DHE is one of those chosen few. May I suggest you make it one of yours.

I decided to cover the DHE for the May issue of *T&S* as it tackles a specific stillwater situation that starts to occur about now, and also, river fishing will now be under way in earnest.

Now that spring has taken a firm hold and air and water temperatures are rising, we'll begin to see regular surface activity on our stillwaters. At this time of year the bulk of such activity is caused by buzzers. It is surprisingly common when buzzers are active and trout are rising to see anglers excitedly tackle up with "surface" dry-flies and convince themselves that the first *bona fide* dry-fly sport of the

season is in the offing. The reality is that the trout are taking the emergent buzzers as they hang in the film just prior to, or during, eclosion. True dry-flies seldom the mustard in these situations and the smart rod will be opting for the half-in-half-out approach of a Shuttlecock or a DHE. This kind of presentation can be crucial to success – more so than colour, style and, to certain extent, size – as the trout key in on the buzzers at the most vulnerable stage of their life-cycle. The buzzer hangs under the film in familiar pose, its size, shape and attitude creating a "prey image", as Mr Wyatt likes to call it – something we must transfer to our artificial to make the difference between a fly that will be picked out time and time again, and one that will be picked out now and again. I say "transfer" rather than "copy", as there is a danger of getting bogged down with the minutiae of anatomical detail, and the devil does indeed lurk therein. The "prey image" is more the essence of the emerging buzzer. Think attitude, silhouette and approximate size, rather than number of legs or segments of abdomen, and you're pretty much there. Luckily for us, Mr Wyatt's creation knocks out a fiendishly

strong prey image for just about anything that swims to the surface then has a beggar of a time emerging when it gets there. The ephemerals, chironomids and sedges of our rivers and stillwaters all make that same treacherous journey, and create a very similar, or at least similar enough, prey image at that last critical moment before adulthood. The DHE, then, covers you for a whole host of families and species.

I do carry the DHE in a few colours, but this is mainly to suit different lighting conditions, rather than for reasons of matching the hatch. Rules of thumb that apply to wet-flies can also be loosely applied to emergers and dry-flies: clarets in poor light, hare's ear in good light and reds under a sunset, to name a few. Most important of all, though, is the tie itself. When you've got this right, the DHE will hang in the film with just the deer hair visible, all day long without floatant. If you worry about such things as matching colours and numbers of tails, all I can say to you is, don't. Place your faith in this pattern and you will be rewarded, of that I can assure you. The DHE will take fish when nothing stirs, but it comes into its own when fish are surface active. You might not be able to identify the hatch, but we can all spot a rise. Let the DHE do the rest.

TYING TIPS

- The balance between hook weight, body weight and wing size/volume is critical. If the hook is too heavy, it will sink. Try Partridge GRS 6A or Kamasan B100.
- Too much dubbing for the body will also pull the fly under. Not enough, and the fly will not cut through the film and "cock" correctly. Too much wing isn't necessarily a bad thing – at least the fly will float. Too little, though, and your fly will sink.
- My version differs slightly from Bob's in that I hide the base of the deer hair under the dubbing. Bob's tying sequence goes: abdomen-wing-thorax, the wing being planted on top of the abdomen and the butts trimmed to an angle and left exposed. I tie the wing with the butts trimmed to the same angle as Bob's but tied on to a bed of tying thread, followed by abdomen and thorax. This is to allow me to brush the dubbing from around the base of the wing up and into the wing. This provides extra buoyancy by creating air pockets. Whichever version you use, dub your abdomen from thorax to butt, coming back up the abdomen with bare thread as your rib.



"The DHE will hang in the film all day with just the deer hair visible and without floatant"