

COMPARA DHE

Rob Denson merges two classic patterns to cover all stages of the mayfly hatch



MATERIALS

Hook Size 8-10 Kamasan B100, or similar medium weight curved hook
Thread Olive UTC **Rib** Tying thread or fine gold wire **Body** 50/50 olive seal fur and dyed olive hare's ear
Wing Dyed olive roe. Natural roe is also just fine

I'M FINDING MORE AND MORE THAT overly complicated creations turn me off, and simple flies — really simple — make me happier than ever. And we all know what happens to happy anglers... they catch fish.

Two or three components are plenty — five or more and I start pulling my face. A well-designed minimalistic pattern is quicker and cheaper to tie, and captures the essence of the food item that it's supposed to be. The clarity of form appeals to the instincts of the trout more than a pattern that tries to be too clever. That's the theory, and with many red-letter days, difficult fish and good fish under my belt when I've been using flies like the Shipman's Buzzer, Griffith's Gnat, and Bare Hare, I'm sticking to it.

This month's offering goes down a treat with mayfly feeders on stillwater and stream, thanks to the union of two devilishly simple classic designs — the Deer Hair Emerger and Comparadun. My reason for combining these two classics was to come up with a pattern that was equally effective at all stages of the hatch. Why tie and carry three or four patterns when one will do? The resulting fly has been more successful than I could have hoped for and is taken with alacrity at all stages. The profile or "prey image" of an emerging mayfly — hangs vertically, half in, half out of the surface film — is very different to that of a dun or spinner, which generally lies prostrate on the surface film. I wondered if there was mileage in combining the strongest elements of the two stages.

"I've always been drawn to minimalistic patterns. They're quicker and cheaper to tie — and they work"

I already knew from experience that an oversized DHE (Bob Wyatt's Deer Hair Emerger) in size 10 or 8 was a crafty choice for imitating emerging mayfly. No need, then, for tails, fancy segmented biot bodies or detached bodies — a simple dubbed body does the job nicely. All that was needed next was a wing that announced itself as belonging to a fat, juicy dun a little more ostentatiously than the slimmer DHE wing. Enter the Compara wing. I'd used an olive, mayfly-sized Compara to imitate floating duns many times, and with excellent results, so I gave it a go. Basically then, a Compara on a curved hook, with no adornments, is so much more than the sum of its parts.

Bonanzas like a mayfly hatch don't come along every day, so once the hatch is underway, it's a safe bet that the trout's attention will quickly be focused in an upwards direction, with a simple prey image in their mind's eye. "Prospecting" with a team of two or three flies is therefore unnecessary and I would advise stillwater anglers to fish the Compara DHE singly. Dry-flies of this size aren't really team players.

Regularly degrease your leader, cast within yourself, and fish stealthily. Do those things, and I assure you the Compara DHE will take care of the rest. ■

HOW TO TIE THE COMPARA DHE



1 Fix the hook in the vice and apply a bed of close thread turns just behind the eye. Catch in a bunch of dyed olive deer hair so that the tips project over the eye.



2 Ease the hair around the sides of the hook then trim off the waste ends. Catch in a length of gold wire then secure the hair and wire with close thread turns.



3 Wind the thread well round the curve of the hook, then dub on a pinch of olive seal and hare fur blend. Form a thin rope and apply it in touching turns.



4 Carry the fur along the shank until it reaches the bulge at the rear of the wing. Take hold of the gold wire and wind it over the body in evenly spaced turns.



5 Secure the loose end of the wire with thread turns then add a couple more turns of the dubbing. Wiggle the end of the wire until it snaps.



6 Draw the deer hair away from the eye and push it back against the body material. This will force the hair into an upright position.



7 Add a small amount of the olive fur blend to the thread and dub it on to form a thin rope. Apply the fur to fill the gap between the wing and the eye.



8 This small fur thorax will help the deer hair to flare around the top and sides of the hook, in the comparadun style. Finally, cast off with a whip finish.