

# EAST BANK BEETLE

*Rob Denson ties a versatile terrestrial for high summer*

**H**ALSTEAD'S HIKE, David's Drain, Blackhouse Bay, The Boulders, and Curry's Cast: the named hotspots that comprise a whole kilometre of classic upland reservoir fishing along Stocks Reservoir's east bank. After almost 30 years of fishing Stocks, each and every one of those names is synonymous with a host of treasured memories: cricket scores, double-figure fish, and even the odd podium finish on competition days. "It's all good," as they say, on the east bank; if one wraps one's drogue around the prop, falls in, or hangs an Ace of Spades from one's earlobe, it will surely happen elsewhere.

Like many upland reservoirs and lochs, Stocks offers very little in the way of aquatic flora and fauna. Pickings can be slim - very slim indeed - but thanks to their rural settings, what they lack in home-grown produce they make up for with imports, literally "flown in" from surrounding areas: terrestrials. Without such manna from Heaven, most upland waters would be very dour, very tricky places to fish. The paucity of aquatic food and the abundance of terrestrials do, however, make life fun, not to mention a hell of a lot more interesting for the fly-fisherman. In the summer months, upland trout expect the unexpected, and expect their next meal to come from above. They are usually looking up, wide-eyed and eager.

Stocks is surrounded by prime farmland, grasses and woods, and boasts a cornucopia of terrestrial visitors: daddies, hawthorns, heather flies, ants, and more species of beetle than you can shake a stick at: soldiers, sailors, little green ones, and a variety of big black shiny ones.

The East Bank Beetle was tied around ten years ago as a general suggestion of the latter. Unlike most other terrestrials, one seldom encounters a *bona fide* fall of this kind of beetle. They seem to be more solitary and random in their emergence but, nevertheless, represent a substantial meal for a trout fortunate enough to be looking up at the right time. That's the key with this type of beetle pattern - not necessarily "matching the hatch", but exploiting the trout's opportunistic nature. Anglers are opportunistic, too, and arriving at Stocks one summer's day for a Lexus heat without my Booby box, the East Bank Beetle was given its inaugural swim, and the opportunity to do a job. With Hoppers on the droppers, and the Beetle on the tail, I built a significant bag and bagged a podium finish. Bet you can't guess where I fished?

Since that day, whenever I want to suggest



**Hook** Size 10 Kamasan B170

**Body** Fine synthetic flash dubbing  
- try peacock or gold Ice Dub

**Trapped wing** Very thin white or grey foam bag (used to package cameras, electronics)

**Back** Thicker black foam sheet

**Hackle** Black hen



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struggling terrestrials by holding a team of flies in the surface film, or literally an inch or two below, with a floating line, the East Bank Beetle gets the nod. It's a logical, co-ordinated and very effective choice for holding up a team of summer terrestrial patterns - Hoppers, small wet-flies, and scruffy emergers - and inching them back to the boat or bank very, very slowly. This can be a very killing tactic indeed, with the Beetle, to all intents and purposes fishing "dry", and the dropper patterns kicking and twisting in that critical inch.

For those of you that have issues with "reservoir nasties", or have not yet investigated the wonders of the "washing line", then I implore you to give the East Bank Beetle a run-out this summer. It does exactly the same job as a Booby, only I don't recall the last time I saw a fall of Boobies. **T&S**

## TYING TIPS

■ Starting from the back end of the hook, the tying sequence is: white foam, then black, then dub the body. Pull over the white "trapped" wing, then the black foam back, tie off the foam, trim, then add the hackle.

■ The body can be substituted for peacock herl.