

{ MATERIAL OF THE MONTH }

HOT WIRE

Imitation, attraction, weight — Rob Denson makes clever use of a fly-tying essential



IT'S DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE FLY-TYING without wire, such is its ubiquity in nearly all our commonly used patterns. From delicate dry-flies to nymphs, wet-flies and lures, wire is an essential staple for all fly-tyers. Its main uses are: ribbing along the body of the fly, with open turns to keep in place and protect the materials underneath; to add weight to sub-surface flies such as nymphs and buzzers; to suggest segmentation; and to introduce colour and/or a small amount of flash.

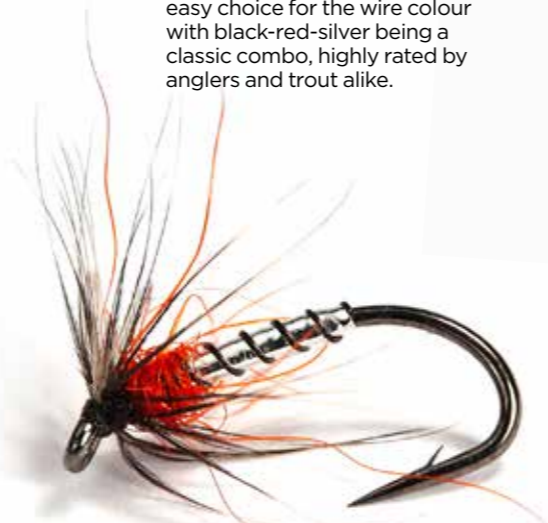
There are dozens of colours to choose from, offering limitless options for colour-coordination and contrast, but if I were forced to choose only five, they would be gold, silver, copper, red and black, no question. The only other thing to ponder is size. Most tyers will find much more use for fine and medium wires, with large and heavy wires used infrequently, depending, of course, on the type of flies you tie. In general, the size of your fly governs the size of the wire, so it's easy enough to work out what you're going to need.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB DENSON



BUZZER

Thanks to several coats of varnish, this heavyweight buzzer is already practically bulletproof, therefore the silver wire has been added purely as a creative choice rather than a structural one, in this case to suggest the abdominal segmentation seen in chironomid pupae. Silver was an easy choice for the wire colour with black-red-silver being a classic combo, highly rated by anglers and trout alike.



PETER ROSS SPIDER

Black-red-silver strikes again! This time though, it's structural. The primary function of the wire on this Peter Ross Spider is to protect the underlying silver tinsel. Choosing black was a creative choice to contrast nicely with the silver body, suggest segmentation, and keep to the Peter Ross colour-scheme. Four birds with one stone.



WEIGHTED HARE'S EAR

For sheer economy of time, effort and materials in relation to efficacy and reward, the humble Hare's Ear nymph must be one of the all-time greats. This version uses open turns of gold wire to keep the body fur in place, but with several touching turns hiding beneath the thorax fur, adding extra weight to get the nymph down and fishing quickly as well as giving that irresistible rise-and-fall motion on the retrieve.



WIRE DABBLER

Arthur MacDonald's Wire Dabbling not only injects bold, nicely contrasting colours into the mix, but also massively increases the weight of the pattern, resulting in a much faster sink rate and, again, an exaggerated, very attractive rise-and-fall motion during the retrieve. Vary the weight of the wire to match fly size, and mix wire colours to suit the pattern.

GREENWELL'S GLORY

When ribbing small, delicate dry-flies like this Greenwell's, you'll need to scale down the gauge of the wire to avoid sinking the fly. Look for fine wires (0.1mm or less) which will protect delicate bodies without significantly increasing weight. Gold wire was chosen here to blend with the thread body rather than contrast, but as always, segmentation is still suggested.



GOLD-BUTT NYMPH

Hiding touching turns of heavy and medium wire under the head or abdomen of a size 10 is one thing, especially if it's covered with scruffy hare's ear or seal's fur. Not so easy, though, if we're working on 14s or smaller and we want to add cheeks or thorax covers, which can cause things to get bulky and cluttered. Solution: add a wire butt at the rear-end and make a feature of it.



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. Web: robdenson.co.uk

WEIGHTING GAME

I stopped using lead to weight flies years ago and now use wire exclusively. Wire isn't manipulated as easily as lead, but it doesn't take long to master. I start by running thread down the length of the area to be covered by wire. This makes the base for your wire more secure. I then tie in the wire under the shank (or on top) to maintain symmetry and balance. On the side is fine, if you wish, with thinner wires. Bind the wire to the shank and thread base tightly or the wire will spin when you wind touching turns.



A simple forward-weighted base for tapered nymphs formed with turns of appropriately sized wire. Tie the wire in under the shank and behind the eye, run down 1/4 to 1/3 of the shank, cover tightly with thread, then wind the wire back to the eye. Tie off tightly, then worry the wire off.



A centre-weighted set-up for really fast-sinking flies. Tying sequence as above but elongated. Vary the wire gauge to control sink rate.



Forward-weighted with rib (as per Hare's Ear, left). Tie in tail, then wire (full length of shank). Dub body section with fur and add open turns of wire over fur. Add touching turns of wire at thorax. Cover with dubbing.



Exposed butt on the bend: tie the wire in at the head, under the shank, cover tightly with thread down to the farthest point of the butt, then wind the wire back up the bend.