

# Traffic Light Crippler

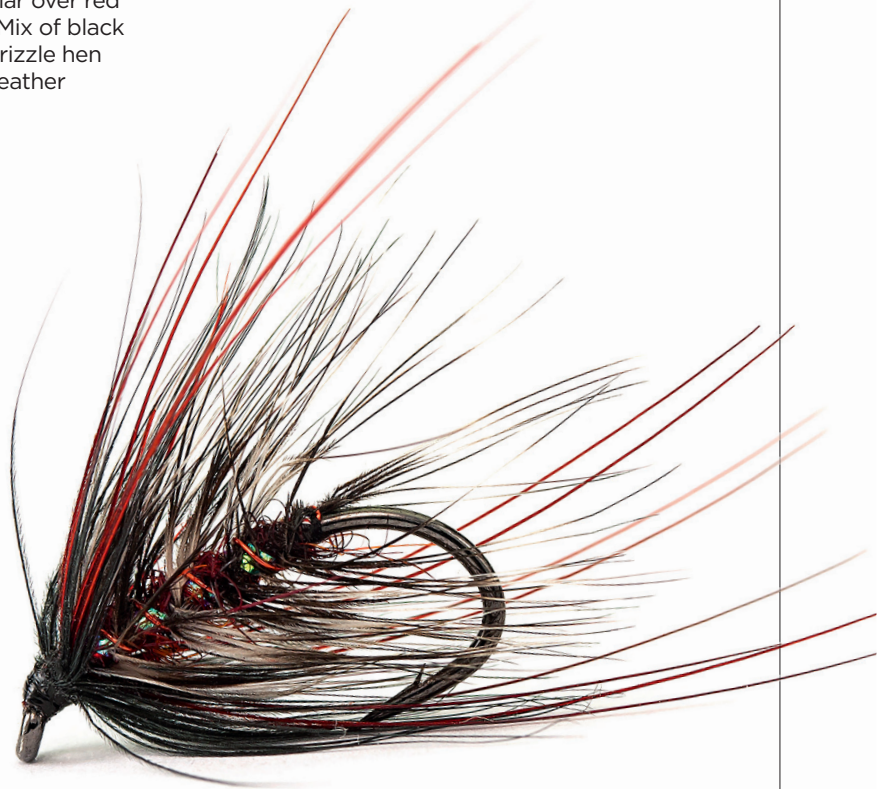
*Rob Denson reveals a fly that works best at the end of the season*

**Hook** Size 10-12 Kamasan B175 or Fulling Mill 31531  
**Thread** UTC 70 denier, black **Rib** Mirage or pearl mylar over red holographic, reinforced with red or black wire **Body** Mix of black seal's fur and grey squirrel - sparse **Body hackle** Grizzle hen  
**Shoulder hackle 1** Red golden-pheasant body feather  
**Shoulder hackle 2** Black hen

I'VE FIDDLED, fettled and fidgeted with countless variations on the Crippler theme over the past few years. Many - perhaps most - have eventually fallen foul of the Stanley knife, giving another chance of dignity, not to mention redemption, to a blameless B175 hook. This is the problem when one has a new vehicle on which to bestow one's brightest fly-tying notions - they all seem like a good idea at the time. The horrible truth is that most aren't. Still, much, or at least something, that is right invariably emerges from the chaos, managing somehow to look resplendent on a recycled hook. The Traffic Light Crippler seemed like a good idea at the time, and I'm glad to be able to tell you, after four or five seasons, that it was.

The original idea behind the Traffic Light Crippler was as an early-season buzzer suggestion for occasions when buzzers emerged in a reasonable wave, and small, slim nymph-type patterns lose a little of their edge. The Traffic Light (a rib of mirage or pearl over red holographic) Buzzer and Diawl Bach had served me extremely well in calm conditions for a few seasons previously, and I was keen to see how and if the mirage and red holo combination could be exploited on bulkier, palmered wet-flies and minilures. Dressed on a size 12, and kept on the lean side, the TLC met with some success in the cooler, early months, but whether this was because of, or despite, the buzzer colours and credentials is hard to say. What is certain is that after a little experimentation over several seasons, the TLC performed much better at the opposite end of the season. The wider variety of back-end food items readily suggested by the TLC appear to be the reason for this, being confidently taken for fry, corixa and of course, buzzers.

A splash of red never harmed any flies for wild, back-end browns, season and rules permitting, of course, and it was on Malham Tarn where the TLC drew first blood from our native fish. A steady retrieve on a Di3, middle dropper no less, and the TLC was taken with considerable aplomb.



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*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.robdenon.co.uk](http://www.robdenon.co.uk)*

The net eventually slid under 4 lb of angry, wild brown trout. However, fishing for wild browns in England and Wales will be all over by the end of September, with Scotland following on, closing its season a week later. Most mixed fisheries continue to provide sport for a good few months yet, many allowing sport to continue right through the winter. Rainbows are equally keen on the TLC, if not more so. The TLC has travelled well, with some of Rutland and Grafham's finest latching on, and leading a merry dance, as they say. The rainbows of kindred spirits, Stocks and Llyn Brenig, have both also expressed a liking for the TLC.

Nothing fancy is needed with the deployment of the TLC. It's a versatile, easy fly to fish, caring not in which position it is fished, nor on which line, and being equally at home fished classic loch-style, twiddled under the surface, or dragged through the depths on a sunk line. Good results have come to all lines and methods, confirming the TLC's ability to make a fist of a good many food items.

## TYING TIP

Remember, when tying in the mirage and red holo it's first in, last out. Tie in the mirage first, then the holo. Wind the red holo up to the eye, cover with the Mirage, then palmer the grizzle hen, finally ribbing as normal with the wire. **T&S**

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