

Fat Cat

Wild trout find this dazzling loch lure hard to ignore,
writes **Rob Denson**



TYING TIPS

■ The only tricky technique is spinning the marabou. Trap one side of a full marabou plume in a dubbing loop, spin, then wrap it around the body. Trim to length (about ½in) by pinching with thumb and fingernail – do not trim with scissors! Try YouTube for videos on this technique.

Hook Size 8-12 Kamasan B175
Tail Glo-Brite No.12 floss
Body Citrus-burst spun marabou
Wing White marabou **Wing slips** Four strands of pearl Crystal Flash
Hackle Orange hen
Thread Orange



ROB DENSON

has fly-fished for trout for 30 years, visiting all four corners of Britain and Ireland, combining his love of fly-tying, photography and a rolling wave. Web: robdenson.co.uk



Visit
www.veniard.com
for more information
and stockists

I FIRST CAME ACROSS THIS FLY ON the Orkney Trout Fishing Association (OTFA) website. Sadly, its description has since been removed. A great shame, considering the number of people who found the site a valuable resource for fly information when planning a trip to Orkney.

Anyway, the Fat Cat is Orcadian. I spotted it when researching flies for my first visit in 2011 – I was after those in-ye-face patterns for which Orkney is famous. All things being equal – whenever that is – Orkney trout are only too pleased to back-flip on to any reasonably presented flies.

When things are unequal (fish hiding in deep water, extreme light conditions, no hatches) it can pay to spice things up. Orcadian tyers, such as Jim Bews, Sandy McConnachie and Ian Hutcheon, have a knack for developing flies and tactics that produce when times are tough.

As it happened, things were very equal on my first Orcadian adventure. Conditions were good, the fish looking for trouble. Nothing more daring than a Kate Maclaren and a floating line were needed to elicit the cartwheels. The Fat Cat was not given meaningful leader time until later that season on Stocks Reservoir. It will not surprise you to learn that Cat colours are lethal on Stocks. The same

story panned out wherever I fished it – Bewl, Rutland, and finally, two seasons later, Orkney.

The red-orange, white and green combination is as reliable as it is ubiquitous. Just one glance at the fly on the OTFA website was enough to get me tying, but this fly has more to it than first meets the eye.

Take a close look at the body and you'll find that it consists of spun marabou, which is then pinched to length with the fingers. This technique gives a very bushy, bulky body, which reduces to nothing when wet and drawn through the water. Pause the retrieve for a split second, though, and life pulses and throbs through the fly. Fishing the fly is much easier than tying it.

The Fat Cat is as versatile a mini-lure as you'll get. The retrieve is critical. Speed is not so important, but pauses are – much more important than line density or type, or where on the leader the fly is placed.

Most standard retrieves inject a pause between pulls, which is perfect. The roly-poly, however, is almost seamless and therefore deliberate pauses must be added, as they must when using a figure-of-eight.

For further reading, check out my Fly of the Month in *T&S* March 2017 – the Black and Olive Lump. If you don't have a copy, try my website. **T&S**