

## Rob Denson's trout fly of the month

# Hairwing Hare

**Hook** Size 10-14 Kamasan B175 or 170  
**Thread** Black UTC 70 denier  
**Tail** Grey squirrel or pine squirrel  
**Rib** Gold oval **Body** Hare's ear and grey/pine squirrel  
**Body hackle** Cree hen  
**Wing** Grey squirrel  
**Shoulder hackle** Cree hen



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

**A** FUNNY month, August. On both stillwater and stream, the wise and wily give the dog-day afternoons a wide berth and concentrate their efforts into brief but relatively productive morning or evening sessions. Like all other months of the season, though, August has its highlights and can produce some exceptional sport right through the day if you pick your moment; usually that means when terrestrials abound. Trout like nothing more, and will often leave perfectly good ground-floor grazing behind and make for the surface layers to furnish themselves with the exotic, meaty manna falling from above.

A sharp eye needs to be kept open, and an ear to the ground, in order to avail oneself of these opportunities. Trout can lie doggo for days in August, only breaking out of their torpor to bulge, slash, swirl and crash at things with wings. When they do, the fishing can be truly spectacular, and you need to be ready to mobilise at short notice. Keeping in touch

with fishing friends and fishery staff is a good way to keep abreast of developments.

The source of all the excitement can vary from day to day - hour to hour, even. Beetles, wasps, bees, daddy-longlegs, heather flies, shield bugs, spiders, ants and moths, to name but a few, are regularly encountered on our lochs, lakes and streams in August. Often, several different species will be encountered on the same day, with trout lazily cruising and grazing the smorgasbord in a very British, very relaxed, summer fashion! At other times, they may target a particular invertebrate. Either way, how should you prepare yourself, fly-wise, for such diversity and unpredictability? It's probably best you don't; or at least don't try too hard. Look at the list of terrestrials again, then look at the Hairwing Hare. Not convinced, are you? Trust me, the Hairwing Hare will cover all those bases and more, not to mention doing a jolly fine turn as aquatic fauna such as sedge,

hoglouse, shrimp and killer shrimp. Sometimes it's best not to ask too many questions and just accept the incontrovertible truth - trout like it vague.

The Hairwing Hare was one of the first hairwing wet-flies I acquainted myself with, followed by the HW Silver Invicta and, latterly, the HW Wickham. All three now have permanent slots in my fly-box, and all three have their moments - and lots of them - but the hare version has proved itself over many years to be by far the most versatile. For me, a floating or intermediate line brings out the very best in the HH. It will catch fish on deeper lines, especially when aquatic food items are the main focus of attention, but for trout feeding at the surface on terrestrials, the higher-riding lines work best, as that's where the food is. As for leader position, it's an obvious top-dropper candidate, seldom if ever on the middle, with occasional forays to the tail. The HH is comfortable in most kinds of light - another bonus for August - but is perhaps best suited to good, overcast light, although bright sunshine doesn't seem to dull its edge at all. Short lines, and classic loch-style stroking of the surface is all that is required.

In a sport (too) often preoccupied with matching the hatch, and replicating every last detail of the trout's prey, it remains a paradox of fly-fishing that the more specific and the more anatomically "accurate" a fly pattern tries to be, then the less useful it tends to be. Less is practically always more, and more or less covers one for everything. If you want to suggest everything, imitate nothing. It's a drum you've heard me bang before, and I'll continue to do so... because it's true.

### TYING TIPS

- For maximum movement of tail and wing, keep it lean.
- Bring the full force of your velcro stick to bear on the body of the fly. Scruffy flies catch fish!
- If you use a velcro stick, remember to cut, not rip, off the tail end of the body hackle to avoid the velcro pulling the hackle out from under the rib.
- Use either/or both grey or pine squirrel for tail, wing and body mix for a nice variety of tones.



**"Fishing in August can be truly spectacular, and you need to mobilise at short notice"**