

# ROGA NYMPH

Rob Denson's killer shrimp imitation has proved to be more than a one-trick pony



## MATERIALS

- Hook** Size 10-14 Kamasan B110 or 100
- Thread** Brown-olive UTC 70
- Rib** Gold wire or oval
- Body** 50/50 mix of hare's ear and grey squirrel with a pinch of pearl Ice Dub
- Hackle** Grizzle hen dyed golden-olive
- Head hackle** Grey partridge

**I**T DOESN'T SEEM LIKE FIVE MINUTES ago that we were all stunned by news of the latest invasive species to slip past the bouncers and make itself at home in UK waters. But it is, you may be even more stunned to hear, over ten years (September 3, 2010 to be precise) since *Dikerogammarus villosus*, aka the killer shrimp, was discovered in Grafham Water. Our collective hearts sank – and then we all rushed to the vice to copy it.

I had a day on Grafham planned within a week of the shrimp's discovery and was shown a tankful of the things by Anglian Water's John Mees. And what nasty little critters they are. Just watching them zip around that tank looking for trouble gave me the creeps. I concluded that mastering the retrieve – "thuggish, looking for aggro" in style – would be as important as the dressing, if not more so. For the

dressing, I stuck to my guns regarding simplicity. If you're fishing at the right depth with something roughly the right size, shape and colour, then cosmetic detail is, by and large, superfluous.

Anyway, subsequent visits to Grafham armed with my newfangled super-simple shrimp pattern proved inconclusive. Yes, I caught fish on the new pattern with an erratic, jerky retrieve and also with a slow, steady figure of eight. Neither method produced fish in numbers significant enough to draw meaningful conclusions. What I can tell you is that – shrimp or no shrimp – in the ten years since I tied it, the Roga nymph has become one of my most reliable patterns.

One of the first waters I fished it on after Grafham was Upper Roddlesworth, a small local reservoir that had/has no killer shrimp. What it does have is

## TYING TIP

As is often the case with very simple flies, there's nowhere to hide your mistakes, so bring your "A" game to the vice. Less is more – don't make too many turns of rib (four or five), hackle (same as rib) and head hackle (two). All that remains is to rake out the dubbing with velcro and you have a quick, simple but versatile and effective "nymph".

almost every sub-aquatic food item on the trout's menu – buzzer, hog-louse, shrimp, alder, sedge, damsel, mayfly. With the possible exception of damselfly and mayfly, the Roga does a passable turn of them all.

My visit to Roddlesworth that day was short. The response to the Roga was fevered to say the least, and a cricket score swiftly followed. Being on a sporting ticket, I was initially unable to explain the Roga's success. After five fish in 20 minutes, my first thoughts were that stocking had taken place the day before and new fish were piled up in my vicinity. Two passing members (struggling with lures) said not, and that I must be "on to something".

It wasn't until the next fish when I noticed a mouthful of medium-large olive buzzer pupae. That made sense – at least two of the fish took during a long pause of the slow figure-of-eight retrieve on the slow intermediate line. All the fish had taken the Roga on the middle dropper, so I promptly removed the black PTN from the tail and added a booby – any old booby – to allow me to slow the retrieve down but keep the Roga at a depth of a foot or so. Two hours later, I had started to feel slightly annoyed if I hadn't a pull for a couple of casts; time to head home. The Roga won't give you that kind of sport every time, but it's a rare day when it'll give you nothing. ■

## TIE THE ROGA NYMPH



1 Run the tying thread on at the eye and wind it along the shank until it reaches a point around the hook's curve. Catch in a length of gold wire



2 Blend equal amounts of grey squirrel and hare's fur, plus a touch pearl Ice Dub. Dub it on to the thread then wind along the shank in touching turns.



3 Continue until the dubbed fur has reached just short of the eye. Catch in a golden-olive hen hackle, having stripped the fibres from its base.



4 Using hackle pliers, take hold of the hackle by its tip and wind it along the body in four or five evenly spaced turns.



5 When the hackle has reached the end of the body, wind the gold wire up through it, locking the hackle turns in place.



6 Secure and remove the end of the wire plus the hackle tip. Catch in a grey partridge body feather by its tip, which has first been trimmed short.



7 Using hackle pliers, take hold of the feather's stem and apply two turns. Stroke the fibres back as each turn is applied.



8 Secure the feather's stem with the tying thread, then trim off the waste. Build a small head, then cast off the tying thread with a whip finish.