

# Black Hog

Few stillwater trout can resist this dark version of a modern classic, writes **Rob Denson**



**Hook** Size 10-14 Kamasan B170 or B175 **Body** Black or dark brown seal fur **Wing** Black or dark brown roe **Thread** Black or dark brown



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**H**OGS ARE FIENDISHLY simple things, as indeed are most of the truly great fish-catchers. Take a look at some of the big guns – Griffith’s Gnat, Hare’s Ear, Loch Ordie, Shipman’s Buzzer, Cormorant, Deer Hair Emerger, and of course, the Hog – the common thread, if you’ll pardon the pun, is the way in which two, three at the most, natural, drab materials combine somewhat paradoxically to create something truly unique in appearance, not to mention devastatingly effective. Yes, I’m swinging that old “less is more” hammer again, for which I make no apology. I’ve never been a fan of the alternative, which is to throw the kitchen sink at a hook, looking for “triggers” as if trying to force the fish to take the fly. On most days, fish want to take our flies. They are opportunistic, usually hungry and usually willing; over-egging the pudding can be counter-productive. A blank canvas, minimal approach is invariably the best, especially

when fish are on the fin and looking for trouble.

The Hog is as simple as it gets: two components – deer hair and dubbing. The tying can take a little time to get the hang of, but it’s well worth it. Still, people insist on “pimping” things up and making life more complicated than it needs to be. I’ve seen it all on Hogs: multi-coloured dubbed bodies, straggle bodies, legs, hackles, jungle cock, the lot. All, in my humble opinion, a waste of time, effort and materials. To pimp a Hog is to fail to grasp the concept of why it works. A well-tied, proportioned,

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and well-presented Hog is a living, breathing bundle of protein. It screams “Eat me!” The deception, as with the Griffith’s Gnat or the Shipman’s Buzzer, works by providing just enough of a suggestion of food, and daring the fish to refuse it. Adding to it ultimately subtracts.

In recent years Hogs have become a first-choice stillwater dry-fly for me, and the Black Hog truly excels in this role. Size is very important: 12s and 14s elicit exponentially more interest than a 10, which I use exclusively for wet-fly top-dropper work, and in a big blow at that. As a rule of thumb: size 14 for dry work; size 12 wet or dry; and size 10 for wet. Boat or bank, whether targeting rising fish or fishing blind, on practically any given day of the season, a small Black Hog will ask the ultimate question of the fish and dare them to refuse. They seldom do. **T&S**

## TYING TIPS

- I prefer the heavier B175 hook, which won’t sink a well-tied Hog.
- Follow this tying sequence: apply a base layer of thread then, working from the bend, bind down a small bunch of deer hair, trim the roots, apply a small amount of dubbing over the roots, and then repeat four or five times.
- Use a good strong thread – you need to bind down each bunch very tightly to produce a durable fly.
- Finish with a few turns of dubbing.
- Brush dubbing up into the wing with velcro. This creates more air pockets – a well-tied and proportioned Hog will float all day without dressing.