

# TRAFFIC LIGHT BUZZER

*Rob Denson ties a top-dropper that's all blood and gas*

**G**IVE OR take a week or two, the biannual adjustments of the hour hand more or less bookend my season, and that's the way I like it. Fishing deep into the winter for grayling, salmon or pike would mean more fly-tying; I need more flies, and frostbite, like I need a hole in the head. No, this is the time of year when fishing-related activities should be kept within spitting distance of a roaring fire and easy reach of a bottle of Islay's finest. Inevitably, more flies will be tied, but equally important, flies must also be culled. Trout flies encompass such a diverse range of categories and styles that it's all too easy to get carried away. Before we know it we're overrun with countless thousands of the things, and don't the fly-box manufacturers just love us for it! More than any other branch of angling, fly-fishing and fly-tying is as much a creative and artistic expression as it is a scientific process, and as such, it's a never-ending journey. I have, however, long since reached the stage where I have too many flies; not good. Therefore, each winter, for the last five years or so, I set about a cull, and try, at least, to thin out the dead wood and show the door to the underperformers, the forgotten and the (not so) bright ideas. I say "cull", but despite my best intentions, the best I manage is to free up a little space in my fly-boxes, only to fill it again with new patterns.

Regardless of the magnitude of the cull, it's an interesting and useful exercise, if only to re-familiarise myself with the contents of my boxes, to make me think about the flies I have, why I tied them, and why I have or haven't used them.

As I write, this year's cull is well under way, and I intend to be ruthless. My *modus operandi* this year is the balloon debate - the balloon is sinking and each fly must justify its inclusion or it will be thrown over the side in order to save others. No fly is safe! The Buzzer box was first up and away, and round one produced a clear and emphatic winner: the Traffic Light Buzzer; so much so, it was exempt from the first "flight". No need for this little beauty to justify its existence to anyone. Aside from its proven and prolific fish-catching abilities, the Traffic Light Buzzer is still original - no tweaks, no variants, no messing - after seven years, that tells its own story; it's perfect as it is.

Traffic Light simply refers to the layering of mirage, or pearl mylar over red holographic tinsel. The red "flashes" through the translucent mirage, depending on the angle of view, giving the simultaneous illusion of both trapped gas and pumping blood. That's the theory at least, but either way it works, and it's a trick



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**Hook** Sizes 10-14 Gamakatsu Buzzer Light GP301  
**Ribs** Medium red holographic, medium mirage, fine red wire **Body** Black seal's fur **Thorax cover** Pheasant tail dyed black **Thorax** Hare's ear/grey squirrel mix  
**Thread** Black

that's transferable to many other styles of fly, such as nymphs, Cormorants, and wet-flies (see Traffic Light Crippler, *T&S* October 2014).

The dishevelled appearance and the suggestion of blood and gas should give you clues as to its favourite position on the cast - this is a top-dropper Buzzer. Everything works together to suggest the distressed state of the natural as it ends its pupal stage and nears eclosion. The ragged-out seal fur slows the sink-rate and keeps the Buzzer higher for longer, with skinny, varnished patterns positioned below, cutting through the water column to investigate the depths.

If you're a hardier angler than I, then try the Traffic Light Buzzer this winter, and right through next season, then put your Buzzer box to the balloon debate test. I have a funny feeling the Traffic Light Buzzer will fly high. As for me this winter: one box down, only a dozen or so to go! **T&S**

## TYING TIPS

- Use medium/light hooks to keep the fly high in the water.
- Rib tying-in sequence: wire - holographic - mirage.
- Keep the seal fur sparse. Too much makes the ribbing difficult.
- Adding a turn or two of seal fur behind the tying-in point of the ribs helps to bed the rib layers in.
- Rib winding sequence: mirage - holographic - wire.
- Rib the tinsels and wire as tightly as you can - if there is too much seal fur and the ribs are not tight enough, the ribs will work loose and slip.