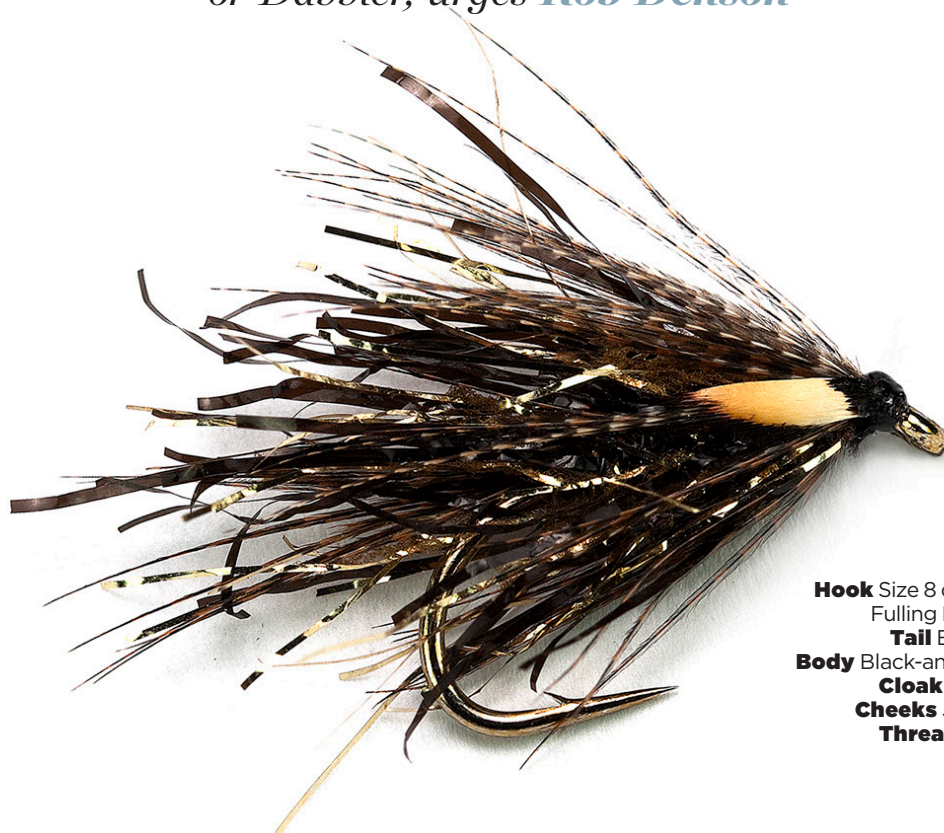


B&GSD

*Fish this fine fly as a mini-lure, fry pattern or Dabbler, urges **Rob Denson***



Hook Size 8 or 10 Kamasan B175 or Fulling Mill 31531 (black)

Tail Bronze mallard

Body Black-and-gold straggle (12mm)

Cloak Bronze mallard

Cheeks Jungle-cock splits

Thread Black UTC 70



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. Web: robdenson.co.uk



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IT MUST BE 15 YEARS SINCE STRAGGLE fritz burst on to the scene; possibly longer – I am a little slow on the uptake with such things. My immediate reaction was probably similar to yours – curiosity tinged with scepticism. Most new-fangled tying materials start life as yarns for the Fairy Godmother costume industry and are then taken on by fly-tying retailers. Invariably, intrigue then wins out and six months later I’ve all 112 colours in five sizes. I jest, but I have more than my fair share of impulse buys, most of which, ten years on, have not made it out of their packets.

The truth is that no matter how wise we are as fly-tyers, who among us can cast the first stone at the gullible soul who buys into rumours of a special material in a secret colour that is causing fish to form an orderly queue? Tragopan flank dyed with donkey urine and Vimto, anyone?

Of my straggle collection, I now only use five or six – black-and-gold, black-and-silver in two lengths and one or two with a touch of UV. Coloured, translucent straggles failed to convince me of any advantage over natural hackle and I seldom tie with them.

I touched briefly on the B&GSD (Black-and-Gold Straggle Dabbler) in my T&S April 2015 article, “Early Season Flies”, which is when it gets most of its leader time. To be fair, it’s such a solid performer that as the season progresses, conditions permitting,

barely a couple of outings go by without the B&GSD getting the nod. The black-and-gold combination makes it instantly at home on upland and peaty waters such as Stocks and Brenig, as well as many Scottish lochs and Welsh llyns. It’s not without its successes on clear, lowland waters, too: Rutland has responded well to the B&GSD over the years, particularly at the front and back ends of the season.

It’s important to adapt the way the fly is fished through the season. Early on, it’s more mini-lure than Dabbler, and a slow retrieve usually gets results when used with other lures or mini-lures on any line from a floater to a super-fast sinker. Its position on the leader is usually top or tail, but it will work in the middle, book-ended by more drab affairs.

As the air and water warm up, so does the speed of retrieve. I’ll be looking to fish the B&GSD as a true Dabbler, higher in the water (on floating and intermediate lines) and in loch-style fashion – short casts, short pulls or a fast figure-of-eight, then lift and hold, and repeat.

If the fish aren’t exactly on the fin and feeding, then it still works as a mini-lure through the summer months and into the back-end when the retrieve speed will usually be faster – sometimes very fast – to elicit an aggressive response and a solid thump.

To complete the circle, right at the back-end, the B&GSD is an excellent little fry pattern. **T&S**