

AUTUMN ORDIE

Fish this wonderful top dropper just beneath the surface in a good wave, recommends Rob Denson

I'VE DONE A few naive and foolish things in my time, but an undertaking to establish the origins of the Loch Ordie has to rank up there with glueing new felt soles to my old wading boots with cheap bathroom sealant. Fly-fishermen and fly-tyers can be a precious bunch when it comes to the provenance of fly patterns. Claims are usually met with counter claims, and counter claims, on occasion, met with counter punches. As I referenced my collection of fly-fishing books, I quickly realised that the Loch Ordie, as we know it, is no different. In short, I was taken on a trail from the Catskills, across the pond to the Scottish highlands and islands, meeting a duke, a polymath and a Stromness tackle dealer along the way. Unlike the fly itself, the story is convoluted, confusing and lengthy - and best kept for another day.



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The classic Loch Ordie (wet version - not to be confused with the dapping version) is a true stillwater superstar. Appearance and simplicity belie efficacy - essentially a couple of chicken feathers wrapped around a hook - and as with most true classics, it is so much more than the sum of its parts. For the best part of a century, brown trout, rainbow trout, sea-trout and salmon, the length and breadth of these isles, have been cartwheeling through the waves and taking this fly with alacrity. Multiple theories abound as to what prompts the fevered reaction, and what the Loch Ordie actually represents. Who cares? Flies of such elegant simplicity are imbued with the "blank canvas" effect, inviting fish to project their predilections. If fly patterns need to make sense to you, and it makes you feel better, think big sedges, moths, daddies and bees. Like the fish, I have no such issues. Movement and mass are the major stimuli. The closely wound hen hackles provide a dense, strong silhouette, getting the fly noticed in a good wave. The soft hen hackle does the rest, pulsing with life and fatal attraction.

The Autumn Ordie does what it says on the tin - it makes me think that autumnal shades make all the difference. What I can tell you is that it works. I like to inject a dose of red into my autumn wet-flies, which seems to get the desired response from hormonal fish. Positioned in time-honoured Loch Ordie fashion - on the top dropper of a three-fly cast, fished on a floating or intermediate line - a good wave gets the best out of it. However, contrary to popular belief, Ordies are infinitely more killing fished in, or slightly below, the surface film, as opposed to being skated and bounced on the surface. The faster first half of the retrieve will often catch the attention of the fish, but pay close attention towards the end of the retrieve, when everything slows down. Aim to hold the fly an inch or two below the surface; the wave will ensure that you don't, and the movement and life imparted as a result is usually more than the fish can stand. **T&S**



Hook Size 8-12 Kamasan B170 or B175
Rear hackle Ginger, light brown or furnace hen
Middle hackle Hen dyed red
Front hackle Black or dark brown
Thread Black

TYING TIPS

- This fly uses three hen hackles - one of each colour. Tie the first in at roughly two thirds of the length of the shank.
- Tie the hackles in by the tip, then "double" (fold in half so that the fibre tips are touching) and wind the full hackle in touching turns towards the eye.
- Hackle number two should take you close to the eye, therefore the final (black) hackle requires only three or four turns.