

COPPER HOPPER

A fly that follows Rob Denson's autumn dictum



Hook Size 10-14 Kamasan B170 or equivalent medium or light hook **Thread** Red **Rib** Fine copper tinsel, holographic or wire **Body** Ginger seal's fur
Legs Natural or dyed-orange pheasant tail, knotted
Hackle Ginger, red game or orange cock

FLY ANGLERS LOVE PROVERBS. THE older, the better, the more popular, the more reliable, right? In truth, they often contain significant wisdom, and at worst provide a starting point when a change of tactic is needed. But what about those ideas that rattle around inside our heads but are never articulated? I have dozens, most based on nothing more than a lucky fish on a bright and breezy day.

For many years I obsessed about fishing orangey flies towards the back-end. I convinced myself that once summer was over, only a fool would fail to fish hues around the orange part of the spectrum. But I have no idea where this came from. I convinced myself it was a "thing" and everyone else was on board. I was deflated when I concluded I was on my own. Still, the delusion has spawned great flies – the Copper Hopper is one.

Here's another delusion: if you think the hopper is purely a dry-fly, you're missing a trick. The hopper

is also a good wet-fly. It works in any position on the leader (depending on the size and style of the other flies) or as a team of its kin. I've spent whole days with three hoppers, fishing them wet or dry: when takes to the dry hoppers stop I change from a floater to an intermediate line and fish them loch style, or even "nymph" them back.

As a dry-fly, despite my dubious theory, the Copper Hopper has proved superb throughout summer and into autumn. The colour scheme covers a lot of bases for terrestrials, many of which transmit red-orange-ginger hues when viewed from below or side on by trout. The Copper Hopper is a superb Soldier Beetle pattern thanks to the way it emits colour. Skinny hopper patterns are also suggestive of adult and emerging buzzers. The legs, hackles and raked-out seal's fur suspend the fly beautifully in the film while the light brings out the colour in the seal's fur.

Whatever variety of meat is on the water, apply a few basic dry-fly principles. Don't leave the flies in the same spot all day – step and cast, or fan-cast, from the bank; drift and fan-cast from the boat. Seven seconds on the water is enough. The initial plop and act of quickly moving the flies effectively doubles your chance of an offer with each cast. Be stealthy, cast within yourself, degrease regularly, use sunscreen, clean your teeth twice a day and all will be well. ■

TYING TIPS

■ I hear many of you asking: legs up, down or out to the side? My considered opinion after more than 30 years of tying hoppers is that ... it matters not one jot. Just don't overdo the amount and keep everything in proportion.

■ As always, keep the fly lean 'n' mean. Rake out the seal's fur.