

Rob Denson's trout fly of the month

Black-and-gold Micro Straggle Dabbler

Hook Size 10-12 Kamasan B170, B175 or Fulling Mill 31531

Thread Black

Tail Black cock or bronze mallard **Rib** Silver wire

Body Black and gold micro straggle or black/gold and UV micro straggle, if you can get it)

Body hackle Black hen

Cloak Bronze mallard

Cheeks (optional)
Jungle cock



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. Website: www.robdenison.co.uk

WE FLY-TYERS are like magpies. Straggle fritz, among other things, in its myriad guises, was sent to test us. Many of us failed. I, for one, was weak, and hoarded. But after the initial fuss had subsided, and we'd all got it out of our systems, precious few of the plethora of colours and sizes collected and hoarded over the past decade or so manage to find their way out of my tying cabinet and on to a hook. There's no doubt that straggle fritz is a truly wonderful material for the fly-tyer, but just like any other material, natural or synthetic, it holds no magical powers and

must, whether by serendipity or rigorous testing and design, somehow find its niche with materials and colours that complement and bring the best out of it. The various "micro straggles" are for me among the most versatile and useful of the straggle fritz family and I still use them regularly.

I'll count the Micro Straggle Dabbler (MSD) as another friend's fly, but don't ask me from whose box it came, because I couldn't tell you. Suffice it to say that anyone who has picked up some micro-straggle, and has a penchant for Dabblers, has probably come up with this tying, or something remarkably similar. The body

cries out for a black hackle, the hackle screams out for a tail to match, *et voilà!* Some flies do actually tie themselves, you know!

Joking apart, certain materials simply beg to be used in a certain way, or are ideally suited to certain types of fly. This can often give rise to a surprising ubiquity of strikingly similar patterns. This fly catches fish - and lots of them. After my four or five seasons using this pattern, I can honestly not remember another wet-fly with a higher hit-rate. I've considered submitting the MSD fly as my fly of the month every month since I began writing this series, but hitherto could not work out its best month, such is its versatility. The MSD has caught fish for me in each and every month that I've fished it - March to November - with no month or season in particular standing out. It's the same story with lines, taking its share of trout on everything from a floater to a Di-7. As for position on the leader, the MSD cares not one jot, and if you're the sort of person who often spends an inordinate amount of time choosing a middle dropper then the MSD is Heaven sent. The middle is the position most often chosen for the MSD by myself. Sun, wind, bright or dark day, I have found no weakness in this fly. I am, however, trying, as I bring this piece to a close, to think of a negative or two for you to file away - forewarned is forearmed - lest you try to fish this fly beyond its remit.

It's not a great dry-fly.

TYING TIPS

- I mainly use the Fulling Mill 31531 for the MSD, purely for aesthetic reasons to keep the theme black.
- If you come across black/gold and UV micro-straggle (as in the fly shown here) on your travels, snap it up - it gives an added edge on bright days.
- Keep the body hackle and the cloak on the sparse side to let the straggle shine through.
- Size 10s will have their day, but a size 12 for me is by far the best size for the MSD.



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