

Black and Red Holo Booby

A highly effective tail fly among a fall of terrestrials, tied by Rob Denson



Hook Size 10-12
Fulling Mill 1531 black or Kamasan B170 or B175
Rib Fine black wire
Body Red holographic tinsel
Body hackle Black hen
Eyes Black Booby cord trimmed to shape

TYING TIPS

My preferred tying sequence is:

Tie in the wire, starting just 2mm-3mm back from the eye to provide an even bed for the holographic tinsel. Cover the wire with touching turns of thread, working back to the bend, leaving 2in-3in of wire for the rib.

Tie in the holographic tinsel close to the eye, then wrap it down to the bend, then back up to the eye.

Tie in the black hen at the eye and then palmer it down to the bend. Then add the wire rib.

Add the eyes using tight figure-of-eight turns. Add a spot of varnish to the thread above and below the eyes.

Search online for videos of Booby-eye forming techniques.

AH, AH, AH... DON'T YOU dare turn that page! I am perfectly well aware that toes will be curling and nostrils flaring at the mere mention of the dreaded Booby, but you need to bear with me. Some think it's the work of the devil, but the Booby is much maligned and misunderstood. I think it is an important, intrinsic and indispensable part of the stillwater fly-fisherman's armoury. Fished in the right way and on the right occasions it can facilitate huge catches of fish without taking a fish itself.

First things first: you need to stop thinking of the Booby as an indiscriminate killer that invariably ends up halfway down the trout's digestive tract. This couldn't be further from the truth. Yes, this does occur when fished in the rather dubious manner of short leader and fast-sinking line. The Booby is either dragged along the bottom or through deep water with long pauses causing an irresistible upward movement. The Booby is taken at the trout's leisure, unnoticed by the angler, until the trout swims off resulting in a very deeply hooked and probably unreturnable fish. The best and simplest way of avoiding this is to never, ever do it; it's neither big nor clever. My Booby-caught fish are deeply hooked no more frequently than with any other fly - very rarely. The key to ethical Booby fishing is to fish them on or in the surface film where takes can be observed and felt, or to move them constantly when fished on sinking lines.

Perhaps the most common and most effective way of deploying a Booby is on the tail of a three- or



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

four-fly cast in conjunction with a floating line and an assortment of nymphs on droppers. This technique is, of course, known as the washing line - the nymphs are suspended between two points (the end of the fly-line and the Booby) with a gentle sagging of the line that presents the nymphs and buzzers just beneath the surface. The beauty of the washing line is the way it allows the nymphs to be held in the feeding zone for the duration of the retrieve - several minutes per cast is not unusual if an almost static presentation is found to be the trout's liking on the day. When fish are "on the fin" and the wind is light, there's no more effective way of targeting trout as accurately and effectively. If you're on the money with your nymph selection and the speed of your retrieve, then it's not uncommon to make a cricket score, and without taking a single fish on the Booby. On those occasions - usually in the first two-thirds of the season - your choice of Booby becomes largely irrelevant and the Booby is said to be sacrificial.

As the season wears on and terrestrials play an increasingly important role, I often engage the services of the Black and Red Holo Booby. Much easier to tie than it looks, this dressing pretty much designed itself: I already recognised black with red holographic as a killer combination; some legs were thrown in for a terrestrial feel. Again, fished on the tail but this time with skinny wet-flies, Hoppers or Cormorants (or a combination of the three), the leggy, buggy-looking Booby will be in the zone where the fish are expecting to see terrestrials and will, therefore, take its fair share of fish. This set-up can be fished as fast or as slow as you like - if the fish are high and looking for trouble then you'll soon get the required feedback.

Next month, the Squirmly Wormy. Only kidding - I'm not sure yet which is my favourite colour. **TKS**