

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER - THE GREY ZONKER



HOOK: Size 10 long shank.

THREAD: White, 6/0.

BACK/TAIL: Grey rabbit 'zonker strip'

RIB: Silver wire or fine silver tinsel

BODY: Pearl Fritz.

HACKLE: Orange cock.

This is a tremendous lure for back-end fishing for most waters, not just Hallington. It is designed to represent a small fish and the strip of fur gives it plenty of life-like movement in the water. It can be tied with some weight added but I prefer the unweighted version, the slow sinking lure with its sinuous action can often provoke a take on the drop. After use, make sure you dry the fly thoroughly before putting it back in your box. The strip of skin tends to hold moisture and this can make the hook prone to rusting and failing, especially at the bend.

I would generally fish this lure on an intermediate or Di3 line from a boat. Fishing from the bank, a floating, midge-tip or sink-tip line

might be more appropriate depending on the depth of water in front of you. It can be cold and windy at this time of the year and if there are no fish showing at the surface, I aim to fish my flies between about 4 and 8 feet deep much like early in the year. Don't forget that brown trout are out of season after the end of October at Hallington and must be released. You might wonder where all the brownies go during the summer when so many seem to show up at this time of year!



*Above: A slim November brownie from the west lake.
Below: Bluebottles and a wasp spooned from a November trout.*



If we are blessed with mild weather there may be a few fish rising here and there, especially if it is flat calm. Most small dark dry flies will work if you can get them in front of a rising fish. The bluebottles in the photo above were spooned from a rainbow which was rising regularly near the west lake waterfall last season and was caught on a Black & Peacock suspender.

Money spiders drifting on their silken threads often end up on the water surface and although tiny, fish will often take them at this time of year. The foam beetle in a size 16 as featured in September's 'Fly of the Month' is a good bet when spiders are being taken, as is the same size Black Gnat or Griffiths Gnat. In calm water it is important to make sure your leader is sunk when fishing a dry fly so a good quality fine fluorocarbon of about 0.16 mm diameter will help put fish in the net. Avoid handling the leader material with greasy fingers as this will make it harder to sink. A smear of detergent will help.

Apart from lures and dry flies, the usual nymphs and wet flies should work. Allow nymphs to sink well down and fish slowly for best results. A gold-head Hare's Lug on the point and Diawl Bach, Cruncher, Pheasant Tail or small Montana Nymph on the dropper(s) should produce fish. For wets, choose something with a bit of flash such as a Peter Ross or a Silver Invicta and fish them a bit quicker.

Phil Bilbrough