

A serendipitous fly

Deon Stamer

As many do, in winter, I spend a fair amount of time re-stocking my river fly boxes. These sessions are often motivated by inspiration from magazine articles. So, after last winter and some moments of inspiration, I found a couple of fly 'creatures' lurking in my box. You know, those flies that, in the wise, look like fish Armageddon but, when on the water ... well, let's just label them as 'save for a rainy day'.

And therein lies the story. Early in the season, it was just such a rainy day on the Smalblaar, beat 2, I recall. There was far too much water coming down the valley and not a fish to be seen or deceived. My friend and I tried practically everything. Heavy nymphs, heavy nymphs with droppers and every hideous creation in our boxes. Nothing!

We were nearing the end of the beat – beaten! With nothing to lose, I decided to change to dry fly as practise for the new season ... and there it was! The 'save for a rainy day' dry fly! Perfect – as it was a large fly with a mighty foam wing, so it could be easily seen in the raging torrent. Second cast (only because I duffed the first) and bang – I was on! My first fish of the season. At no stage did it stop there, though. The whooping soon got to the ears of my friend and it was not long before he too was using my 'save for a rainy day' fly. This foam-winged pattern was used fairly extensively and with great effect during the next few months. It proved successful even on smaller streams - as long as the current was fairly fast. In slower water it must be said that the results were nowhere near the same.

It proved equally attractive to trout on a trip to Rhodes in November 2010. They had just had their first rains, a mere week before our trip. This made the fishing a little tricky as the fish hadn't yet settled down and recolonised. On a cold and blustery day on the Boarmans Chase section of the Bell River, we were really hacking away. My thoughts returned to my now newly labelled 'Special Foam-Winged Fly'. On it went! And as true as trout have spots, out came the first fish!

Things continued being difficult though until a fish damaged the fly, and the hackle unwound and in doing so became part hackle, part tail. To my delight, suddenly I could not be stopped.

That evening I wasted no time tying a bunch of these flies in a slightly smaller size and with the hackle-tip tail. The tail definitely kicked it up a light year. Since then I have changed from the 'original' to the tailed version. The outcome was remarkable. The tailed version attracts fish like Lady Gaga attracts paparazzi.

The fly is aerodynamically sound too in that it has a set of wings and a tail. So, at the short range at which we fish on our rivers, one should have no twisting of tippet material on a cast.

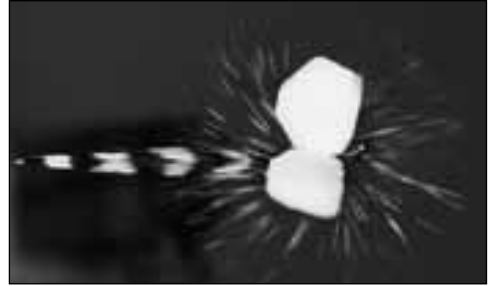
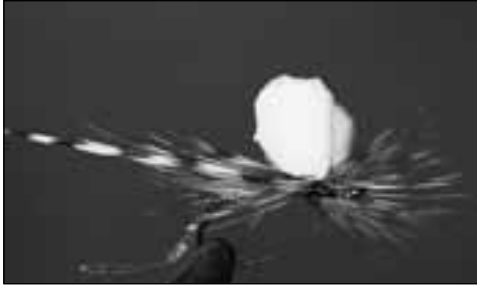
This, of course, is a fly in progress. This winter the pattern will be further upgraded with a set of fine, rubber legs.

And, come spring, I will be out on my testing ground again!

How to tie this fly

The fly - tied Klinkhamer style

Hook: Grip 14723 BL; Tail: Stretched cling wrap; Body: Tying thread; Thorax: Fine antron dubbing; Wing: Closed cell foam; Hackle: Grizzly hackle wrapped around the foam with the tip of the hackle feather sticking off the back of the fly.



Deon Stamer nets a trout, seduced by his Foam Wing Paraklink (above), on the Bokspruit near Rhodes.