

# How to store a RAB

by Stephen Boshoff

**F**ew serious fly fishers in the Western Cape will be found without the RAB. An invention of Tony Biggs, it is a fly that meets all the criteria needed for fast, clear freestone streams. It descends gently, floats high, and is visible and durable. Ed Herbst has remarked on occasion: "Why do I use anything but the RAB?"

Its primary characteristics are a longer than normal tail, hackle and legs. These features, however, also present its major drawback for storage. Normal fly boxes, whether of open compartment or wave-foam construction, inevitably lead to bending of the hackles and tails. The same problem applies to other extraordinarily long-hackled flies like skaters.

The best way to store such flies is on the eye, tail up and hackles and legs horizontal with the bottom of the box.

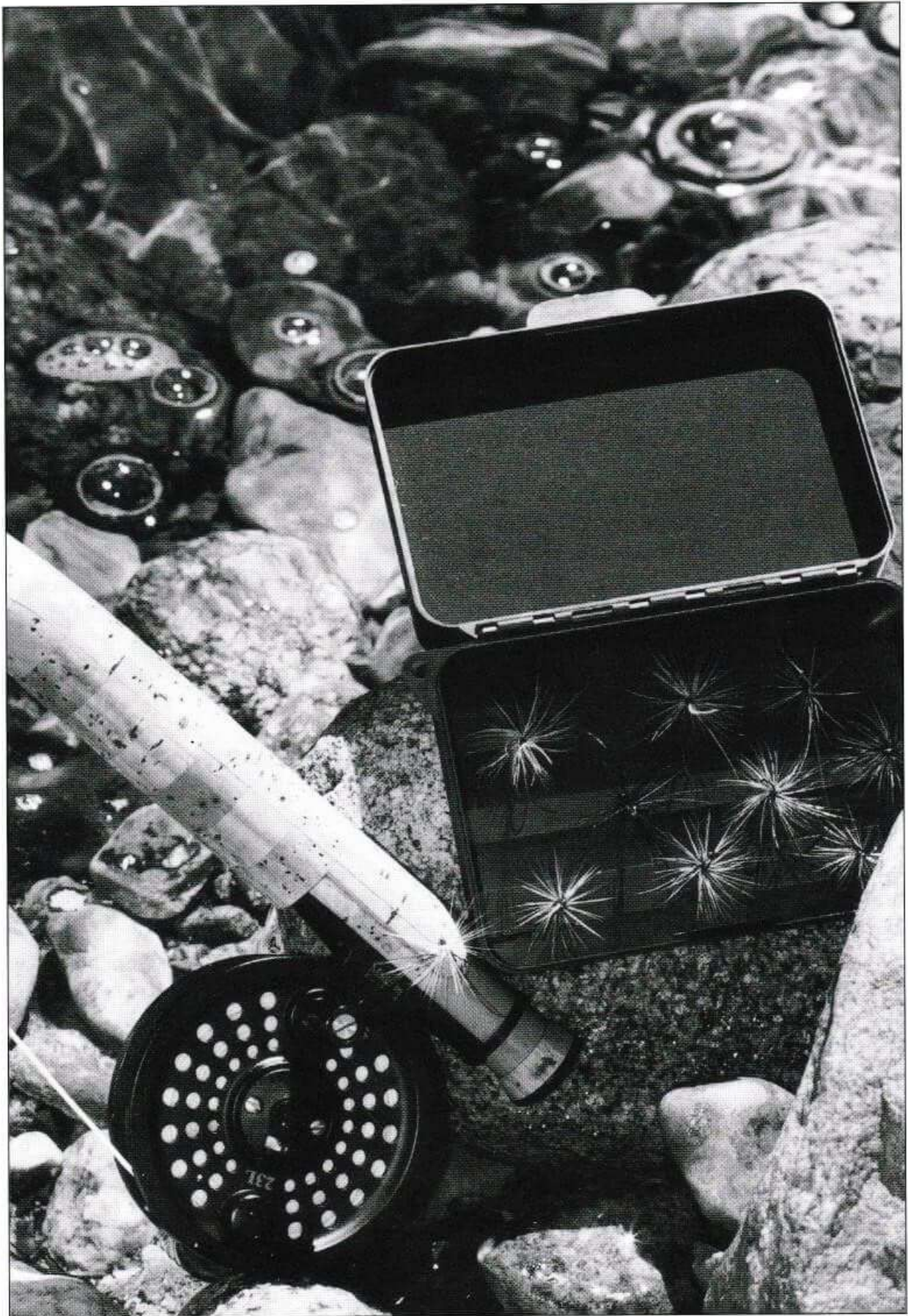
This is achieved through fitting parallel strips of magnetic tape - the kind used for fridge magnets and organisational design on whiteboards - to a standard, or other makeshift, fly box. Most modern mass-produced plastic fly boxes come fitted with wave-foam, easily stripped and its gluey residue removed with Brasso. The magnetic strips, normally about a centimetre in width and available from stationery supply dealers, are cut and fitted with epoxy to the bottom of the box, one to two centimetres apart.

In selecting a box, ensure that it has sufficient depth to ensure that the tail is not touched by the lid when closed - the tail of a RAB is often longer than the hook shank; a size 16 can have a body length of two centimeters.

An added advantage of the RAB box is fly fitting and removal: flies are easily stored and removed by the tail. There is no fiddling between fingers and the bottom of the box; flies are gently dropped in the box and as gently removed - the hackles never need to be touched.

*"Barometric pressure plays no momentous part in my day's fishing. Prior to deciding my place of fishing, I always consult it with great concern - if it is falling I may get wet, and therefore take a coat, but once on my way it can do what it likes. The suggestion that trout will not rise, or are difficult to catch on a fast-falling barometer has not been my experience. I do not say that barometric pressure has no effect on trout, but simply that I have caught fish on a fly in one way or another, regardless of this instrument's antics."*

*David Scholes, Fly-fisher in Tasmania.*



*The RAB box with its magnetic strips. Note the rod handle on the Orvis One Ounce built by Stephen Boshoff. For greater comfort it has a shelf of cork extending towards the butt.*