

Aero wing as a CDC replacement

CDC has found a wide use for dry flies as it is highly buoyant. However, once wet it can be difficult to dry and often gets mangled in the fish's mouth, so normally you have to change fly every time you catch fish. I was therefore interested in looking for a replacement that is equally buoyant but more robust. There were mentions on internet discussion sites of using aero wing as a replacement, but I couldn't find any details on fly patterns. Aero wing is a hollow fibre polypropylene that is extremely buoyant and used for posts in Klink hammers and parachute flies. The main supplier is Tiemco, but you can also purchase a cheaper variety from e-bay. This cheaper version seems to be just as buoyant, but feels a bit coarser than the Tiemco, but I have used it for tying flies down to size 22 with no problem.

As there didn't seem to be any patterns out there, I decided to experiment by starting with two common CDC flies, the f-fly and the IOBO. As I was due to come up to Ilkley in September, when willow/needle flies should be about, I decided to start with dark brown bodied flies. Unfortunately, Tiemco no longer supplies the dark brown aero wing so I had to use the e-bay variety. The f-fly I tied with dark brown, fiery brown (ginger) and grey wing. To give the best chance for producing a good floating fly I used the fine wire Partridge SLD dry fly hooks in sizes 16 and 18. I don't have ready access to trout water so I tested these for buoyancy, visibility and fish acceptability on the dace in my local river. I found that the flies floated beautifully. When pulled under on mending the line, they immediately bobbed back up to surface and even the dark brown version was highly visible. I found the dace preferred the all dark brown fly. I also found that too much aero as the wing seemed to put the dace off, so a balance was needed between having enough aero to give the fly buoyancy, but not too much to make it unattractive to the fish (however, I subsequently found that the grayling and trout didn't mind the bushy flies). Best of all was that after catching the fish, simply shaking and blowing the fly made it ready to use again. I also tied some IOBO flies and again the dark brown was preferred by the dace.

I sent some of these flies to Dave Martin to try out on the Wharfe and his feedback was positive, in that he caught some nice trout on both the f-fly and IOBO and was pleased with their visibility, buoyancy and robustness. I also tried them on the Wharfe and caught some very nice trout and grayling. So the flies seem to work well and have all the properties I could have asked for.

I'm still experimenting with patterns. For example, in my recent visit a yellow bodied f-fly worked well for an evening rise, so I'll be looking at different coloured wings to find the best. I also tied some flies with the grey body of an Adams fly but tied the aero wing as in a spinner in the belief that in a parachute fly, the fish mainly see the feathers out to the side of the fly. Again the trout and grayling liked it, but sighting was difficult as the fly lay low in the surface film, so I am trying a sighting post to help with visibility.

So it looks as though aero wing is a good replacement for CDC and I would encourage anyone to try it out.

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