

# Ess Olive

*Fish this muted Muddler on a slowly sinking line, recommends **Rob Denson***




**Hook** Size 8-12 Kamasan B175  
**Thread** Olive UTC 70 for the body, UTC 140 for the head  
**Butt** Gold holographic or plain tinsel  
**Rib** Fine gold wire  
**Body** Sooty-olive seal's fur with a pinch of gold Ice Dub or similar  
**Wing** Two or three slim bunches of different shades of olive marabou  
**Wing slips** Short lengths of Opal Mirage and pearl Twinkle Flash or similar  
**Head** Olive roe deer

fishing more traditional Muddler styles on sinking lines, they are generally known for their exploits on, in and around the top few inches. Both types of Muddler will catch fish on any line, but if I'm sure that I'll be favouring one technique over the other on any given day, then I'll opt for the style that best suits.

As for fishing the Ess Olive, we're in the same territory as the Ess Cat - slow and steady. Fish like to conserve their energy through winter and into early spring. Sudden and prolonged bursts of speed are strictly limited to special occasions and emergencies. As the spring sun slowly warms the water and the water warms their blood, trout will start to respond to a livelier retrieve. As for depth, don't always assume the trout will be five fathoms down. They will be looking to enter the shallows and margins where the water warms more quickly and invertebrates can be picked off in a leisurely fashion. Surface sport will be the exception to the rule for most of March, but flies presented a foot or two down will tend to get steady results.

Deploying the Ess Olive in the point position on a very slowly sinking line is my favourite method. Its bulk and buoyancy (and therefore slower sink rate) keep the other flies in the same zone as the fly-line. Knowing where all your flies are swimming in the water column, and how, is vital when determining whether to go deeper or shallower.

I also deploy the Ess Olive on the tail when using fast-sinking lines. Again, the sink rate is slowed at the tail end, creating a lovely, sweeping presentation that allows the other flies in the team to track through a range of depths. Diawl Bachs and Cormorants are perfect partners for the Ess Olive.

Oh, by the way, it's also a cracking little damsel pattern in the warmer months. 

**I T SEEMS LIKE ONLY FIVE MINUTES** since my first Fly of the Month. It is, in fact, six years since I brought you my version of James Bews' Ess Cat. Looking through my box of mini-lures this morning, the drier day was illuminated by half-a-dozen of them, and I swear the temperature rose by half a degree, too.

The Ess Cat is a real attention-seeker. James designed it ten years ago to target daphnia-feeders on Orkney's Loch of Harray. It struck me that it might do a turn as a general early-season mini-lure and after a couple of minor alterations to the dressing it became a firm favourite and still gets regular and productive use every season.

It's great to have a few attention-seekers in the box, but sometimes a more subtle approach is needed. The Ess Olive was a response to this problem. The three main elements - head, wing and body - were toned down, swapping anything white or bright for muted olives.

One of the key features is the spun, or muddled, deer-hair head with soft, wispy marabou trailing behind. The head shifts water, constantly creating disturbance and keeping the marabou moving in seductive ways - a neat little trick that makes this style of Muddler eminently suitable for fishing far below the surface. While there is no law against



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