

On the bench

MAGNUS ANGUS investigates a material for roped dubbing; a Whiting cape; and bulk Kamasan hooks

Hare, beaver and frosty

Hemingway's dubbings

Three quite different dubbings here – two blend, one pure synthetic – and all three seem like well prepared dubbings.

UV HareDubbing Plus

blends hare with “fine sparking Antron and UV ice dubbing”. Actually, the pack says, “hare’s ear guard hairs” but this has a high proportion of under-fur in the mix and is certainly not from the ear of any type of hare I’ve handled.

The staple lengths vary, seems like the hare is shorter than the synthetics, I can see plenty guard fibre in the mix, which is being held together by under-fur. Very well blended, exceptionally easy to twist onto a thread. The fibres in this mix absorb water quickly so this is an obvious choice for nymphs and sub-surface flies, the range of colours listed on the pack fit that idea.

Beaver Dubbing Plus blends beaver with a “touch of superfine sparking Antron”. Again, the main constituent in the mix is a natural under-fur. Beaver, like muskrat, has a very fine dense under-fur which does a fine job on dries. Personally, I think it’s the fine texture of the hair, which suits beaver to dries and small, sleek flies, more than its ability to float a fly. The fine Antron is well mixed into the blend, even a small tuft of dubbing has some in there. Again the natural under-fur binds the dubbing, holding the mix together. This dubs a tight, slim fly, I’d use it on smaller flies and of course on dries – but in my opinion it needs to be treated with a floatant.

Frosty Dubbing all one type

of fibre; curious stuff. Frosty looks translucent until you turn it and it seems to gleam. I guess this has a flashier side or angle to the fibre, but whatever it is that does it the effect is pleasing and prevents this becoming



Tan coloured UV Hare Plus on a #12 wet fly hook. The blend has held up and there are UV strands in there.

brush or harsh.

From the pack the fibres are a fairly long staple. That can twist onto a thread but it suits other dubbing methods more, which is fine in a loop or rolled into a noodle and caught in by the tip and twisted. For a shorter staple tear a pinch of Frosty Dubbing, the fibres can be

ripped shorter – which creates more ends and more spike. A fairly fine soft synthetic dubbing, I’d use this for wet flies and streamers of one sort or another.

Prices: £3.99 per pack (generous amount in these packs.)

From: Hemingway's stockists

Living in the material world This month: different ways to dub

Roped dubbing



1 Brown Frosty Dubbing on a #12 B175. The fibres in Frosty Dubbing are long, they are tangled but like most synthetics are fairly slippery. With this dubbing I have the option of making a noodle of dubbing and tying it in by the tip.



2 Then twisting the roll around my thread to form a fairly tight cord ...



3 ...which I can wrap onto the hook to make a segmented body.

Conventional twist dubbing



4 Alternatively I can tear and mix the fibres and twist them onto my thread. The more conventional method of dubbing a thread.



5 I can dub with Frosty this way but the fibres tend to slacken as I wind the body. I can prevent this by using a thinner noodle of dubbing and by twisting the dubbing as I go.

Don't be fooled by the grade

Whiting Pro Grade Rooster Neck – Grizzly Variant

This is Pro Grade? Seriously? If pushed to say what capes are needed for tying dry trout flies, I’d have about putting a grizzly cock neck in first or second place, before or after a red game cape. (Cock neck is English for rooster neck, red game translates as brown or coachman.)

This cape is slightly disturbing, Whiting grades this as Pro, meaning it fails to make Bronze, Silver etc – Whiting has six grades of cape which it rates higher than this. That Whiting grade means this cape should hold feathers to tie down to size 16 and the ‘sweet spot’ should be #12 to #16, one grade higher and a Bronze cape would tie down to #18 and have a ‘sweet spot’ from #14 to #18. This is disturbing because my grizzly capes from not that many years ago look a little shy next to this – regardless of their grade. I think it’s fair to say Whiting is the leading breeder, the leading producer of capes



A variant because the colours are not pure.

bred for fly tying. The breeding was for feathers with, first, cleaner colours, then less web – the aim was for dry fly capes first. Then came feather length, slender stems, the number of



Feathers in the ‘sweet spot’ of this cape are long, slim and beautifully marked.

feathers on a cape and so on.

As a variant this is a mix of grizzle and brown feathers, and even the straight grizzle feathers have more warmth, more brown than a pure grizzle feather, the white bars are a little creamy or the black bars are dark brown. Either way this is lovely stuff!

Going through the fine feather at the head I can tie into the 20s from this. Looking at the feathers in the ‘sweet spot’ the hackles are about 4in long – enough for a couple of dries each. This is Pro Grade? Damn!

Price: £36.50
From Lakeland Fly Tying

175's in 100s

Kamasan B175 – 100s

Unless you are a novice tyer you know B175 is a very common, very standard hook. Technically, a B175 is a ‘heavy’ down-eyed hook, with a sproat bend and standard shank length/gape. Used for all sorts of flies, from nymphs to lures and wets.

This sample is as much about the number of hooks in the box



as the hook. If you use a lot of a hook model and size it makes sense to look for larger packs.

Typically, we get 25 trout hooks in a pack, although increasingly we can also find packs of 100 hooks – and make a real saving. Harvey Angling offers 100 B175 for £7 – a very keen price!

From: Harvey Angling
Tel: 01443 400766

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