

Chickabou Damsel

Sunriver Angler's Fly Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



I look forward to the damsel hatch every year on Crane Prairie, and other Central Oregon lakes. It occurs mid-day in later June and is characterized by a very splashy rise forms as trout take damselfish swimming just below the surface film. Damselfish look to find sticks, tules, anchor ropes, or any other object that enables them to crawl out of the water to hatch. They often swim just below the surface for some distance looking for these items latch onto. It is during this surface swimming action that the damselfish is the most vulnerable to trout. The damselfish nymph coloration matches the color of the environment that these insects live, and ranges from tan to a deep olive.

This month's pattern is the Chickabou Damsel, which is a pattern that I have used with good success casting towards rise forms and/or surface structures. The name Chickabou Damsel is attributable to the wound chickabou feather that gives the fly its characteristic look. Chickabou is the chicken equivalent of marabou, and the feathers are significantly smaller and more delicate; perfect for a damselfish pattern. The design of the Chickabou Damsel is simple; it features a wispy tail to mimic the undulating motion of the natural. The eyes are constructed from orange amnesia monofilament. And the collar is a long flowing dubbing that helps with creating the illusion of movement. To fish this pattern, strip back in short strips using a dry fly line or a hover line fishing the fly very shallow under the surface film. Offer long pauses during the retrieve. Trout will often take during these pauses.



Natural Damsel Nymph

Give the Chickabou Damsel pattern a try during early summer damsel hatches on a favorite local lake.

Chickabou Damsel Materials List:

Hook: Firehole 718, Size 14

Thread: Veevus 14/0, Olive

Weight: 6-8 wraps .015 Lead Wire

Eyes: Amnesia Monofilament, Orange

Tail/Abdomen: Whiting Chickabou, Olive

Rib: Copper Wire, Medium

Collar: Fly Fish Food Jr. Bruiser Blend, Medium Olive

Tying instructions and steps are being published in video form, and can be found on the Sunriver Anglers Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SunriverAnglers/>, or at the following YouTube URL: <https://youtu.be/LXOtQvmP3mQ>

Experiment with this pattern during the Damsel Hatch. If you have questions or would like additional information about the Chickabou Damsel pattern, please don't hesitate to email me. Or if you have suggestions on future patterns to feature in this column, I welcome your input. I can be reached at Philfischer@sbcglobal.net.