

Balanced Damsel

Sunriver Angler's Fly Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



The Damsel hatch has been very reliable out on Crane Prairie this summer. It occurs mid-day on many of our local lakes in later June and is characterized by a very splashy rise form as trout take damsels swimming just below the surface film. Damsels 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 damsel is the most vulnerable to trout. The damsel nymph coloration matches the color of the environment that these insects live, which ranges from tan to a deep olive. In Crane Prairie, the Damsels are a very dark Olive Brown.

This month's pattern is the Balanced Damsel, which is a pattern that I have used with good success under a strike indicator, especially in the warmer mid-summer days as the fish migrate into deeper water. In mid-June the hatch begins in earnest in shallower water. And it progresses to deeper and deeper water as the lake warms. Recently, I have been fishing this pattern at Crane Prairie in the Deschutes, Cultus and Quinn channels, looking for water that is 10-13 feet deep. I cast it out and let the flies settle, and then initiate short strips, with long pauses in between. Most often, the fish take the fly on the pause.

The design of the Balanced Damsel is simple; I use a short shank jig hook with a wide gape to improve hooking consistency. The short shank allows me to keep the fly small; the natural is about 1" to 1 1/2" inches long. The fly features a long wispy tail to mimic the undulating motion of the natural. For the body, I use a blend of a dark olive dubbing, blended with some UV Ice Dub to give the fly some sparkle. I use the smallest Tungsten bead I can and still get the fly to balance horizontally in the water. Give this pattern a try during this summer's damsel hatches on a favorite local lake.

Balanced Damsel Pattern Recipe:

Hook: Firehole 516, Size 10-14
Thread: Olive Brown to match Marabou
Bead: 3/32 (for a size 14) Tungsten Bead painted Olive
Pin: Size 8 Sequin Pin
Tail: Dark Olive Marabou with very long fibers
Body: Olive Brown Euro Seal or Simi Seal to match Marabou

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/Oa3oRNKz0q8>

Experiment with this pattern during the Damsel Hatch. If you have questions or would like additional information about this 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.