

Blasts from the past

Three for the Backend!

Stevie Munn brings three more blasts from his own colourful past which work for him at end backend of the season for salmon and dollaghan.

September and October have always been months when many fly anglers in my part of the world are looking to fish for migratory species like autumn run salmon or trout like my local dollaghan, the Lough Neagh wild brown that can grow as big as a salmon and which we fish for like sea trout. It's a trout that I have been fascinated with my entire life and maybe even have a bit of a love affair with, strange as that may sound to the non-fly angler. I truly love the annual runs of fish, whether they be big trout or salmon and always look forward to the last few months of the game angling season as it's the prime time to hook a large fish as it returns to its river of birth to spawn.

Don't get me wrong! Size isn't everything – I can almost hear the childish laughter as I type those words – as I adore all fly fishing and I am more than happy fishing for little trout in tiny brooks or streams. But like many on this island I'm a bit of an all-round fly angler and there is also something magical about fishing for salmon, sea trout and lake-run browns and part of the joy of it is perhaps the unknown, that feeling that the next cast could bring me a fish of a pound or a massive fish of a lifetime. I have been lucky to catch some great fish at this time of year and know a few anglers who have taken truly amazing fish. Yes, September and October can be great months to be fishing many of Ireland's spate rivers so get yourself out there! And why don't you try the three flies I list here, which all rightfully belong in the salmon or dollaghan angler's fly box.

FACT FILE

Stevie Munn has fished many places in the world but grew up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland where he now guides.

He is a member of the Hardy Greys Academy, and helps run teaching courses on the River Drowes in Ireland and in Canada.

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This fly was first shown to me by well-known Scottish angler Ally Gowans many years ago while I was working at the Scone Palace Game Fair. Its roots lie in two old Scottish salmon flies. I have found it a great fly when fish are not looking at brighter flies and want something a little more sombre. The dressing is loosely based on a Willie Gunn or Munro Killer but tied in the

THE TUMMEL SHRIMP

- Hook:** Size 8-14 single, treble or double
- Tail:** Mixed black, orange and yellow bucktail with 2 or 3 strands of Krystal Flash
- Rib:** Gold oval
- Body:** Black floss
- Wing:** Black squirrel or arctic fox
- Hackle:** Orange cock under blue Guinea fowl
- Head:** Black

Ally's Shrimp style so it's bound to be a winner as they are all fantastic salmon flies. Though Ally told me it was a summer fly it works well on dollaghan and salmon in autumn. It's named after the Tummel, one of the larger tributaries of the River Tay and a river I have fished many times, although not for some years. Incidentally, it was the first place I ever caught a grayling.



The Bann Special Shrimp is a must-have pattern and without doubt one of the greatest Irish shrimp patterns that has ever been invented. It originated in the Lower Bann as the name suggests, but is now widely used throughout Ireland and the UK. It's a very good fly to try when fish have been in the river a while and may be hard to take, as it can provoke a stale fish into a

BANN SPECIAL SHRIMP

- Hook:** Size 8-14 single, treble or double
- Tag:** Flat or oval silver tinsel
- Tail:** Golden pheasant red breast feather, if you like dyed orange.
- Rear Body:** Yellow floss, seal's fur or Lite Brite
- Rib:** Oval silver tinsel
- Mid Hackle:** Hot orange cock
- Front Body:** Black floss, seal's fur or Lite Brite
- Rib:** Oval silver tinsel
- Cheeks:** Jungle cock
- Front Hackle:** Badger cock
- Head:** Black or red

taking one. The original body in the pattern was floss, but more people now use seal's fur, though recently have even seen it dressed with Lite Brite in the body and it makes a very nice fly. The Bann Special, like most Irish shrimp patterns, also works on dollaghan and is great for these fish at dusk. Make sure you give this one a swim!



This fly is not as old as some of the great flies I have covered in this series, but I thought I would give it a mention as it's a fly that has worked for me and many others on my local rivers and streams. It was first dressed by Bert Atkins, a well-known fly tyer from Garvagh, Co Derry, who apparently kept it a secret for many years before he sold anyone the pattern. It's dressed in the Irish Shrimp fly style that has been widely used and works in many salmon

THE APACHE SHRIMP

- Hook:** Size 8-14 single, treble or double.
- Tag:** Fine oval or flat silver tinsel
- Rear hackle:** Golden pheasant rear red body feather
- Rear body:** Yellow floss or seal's fur
- Rib:** Fine or medium oval tinsel
- Centre hackle:** Yellow cock
- Front body:** Red floss or seal's fur
- Rib:** Fine or medium oval silver tinsel
- Wing:** Jungle cock (optional)
- Front hackle:** Red cock
- Head:** Black or red

rivers all over the country, including the Bann, Moy, Lackagh and Bush. I have found it an exceptionally good autumn fly for salmon and it's also a good choice for night fishing for dollaghan. One successful local angler I know, Brian Elliott, puts the Apache to good use for this. Well worth a place in your fly box.