

**TACTICS** | MY NEW FLOAT PATTERN IS PERFECT FOR THOSE SHALLOW

SUMMER SWIMS ON THE SUPER SEVERN

# Wade into a catch of river chub



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UK'S NO1 RIVER ANGLER

After the start we had to the river season, with high and coloured water everywhere, it's been good to see the levels drop back to a more seasonal norm over the past couple of weeks.

I spent so much time on the feeder for those first few weeks I was starting to get neck ache so, for my last few sessions on the Severn and the Wye, the feeders have been left at home as I've been targeting well-oxygenated shallow water where I can floatfish for barbel and chub with a new float pattern I've added to my range.

The Barbel Missile is an all-balsa float, which I've designed in sizes from 3g to 10g, and it's perfect for fast, shallow water swims from 3ft to 6ft deep. The thick tip allows it to be seen a long way down the swim, and the buoyancy of the float means it can support big baits like bunches of maggots, bread, meat and pellets. It's very simple to use, as the shooting is based around one big bulk arrangement with just one dropper shot.

My best day recently came at one of

my favourite summer venues of the River Severn, at Arley on the Birmingham Anglers Association stretch. It's a great piece of water with plenty of good float pegs, and you can wade out on many of the swims and get right behind your float to control it all the way down the swim.

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

Before we look at actually using the float, it's worth mentioning a few things that I think are very important if you want to get the best out of your sessions on fast-moving, shallow water.

First, I always have a platform barrow in my car wherever I go as this not only makes transporting your kit easy, but it also gives me a 'table' to put into the river on swims where I need to wade out a long way.

On to this I can put everything I need in terms of tackle and bait, and if I want to use a keepnet, I simply attach it to one of the front legs with a bracket.

One other thing I find important for wading situations is a pole roost, which I position a couple of metres away from my platform. This holds any spare rods and also my landing net.

I think it's important not to keep going in and out of the water once you start fishing because it's easy to spook fish, especially if the water is clear.

That's why a big platform is so useful, because you can have everything out there with you.

Before setting up, always make sure that the swim is safe for wading, as no fish is worth risking your life for. Before I set up I always walk out slowly with a long bankstick to make sure the bottom is safe to walk on and that the current isn't too strong to stand in.

**ON THE RIGHT LEVEL**

I also make sure before leaving home that the river isn't going to rise during the day by checking the levels upstream on the Environment Agency website at: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels) because there's nothing worse than setting up then having to move everything back if the river starts to rise during the day.

The next important consideration is waders. I always use neoprene-lined ones, either chest waders or thigh waders depending on how far I need to venture out. It amazes me how many people buy expensive tackle but spend little when it comes to waders. If you've never tried neoprene-lined ones but like to stand in rivers I'd urge you to give them a try.

**GROUND BAIT MIX Q&A**

This week's question comes from Steve Green, who asks:

*"What is the best groundbait mix to use when I'm floatfishing for a mixture of species like roach, dace and chub on deep, fast-water swims? How much should I take for a five-hour match and how should I mix it?"*

**Dave says:** "My favourite mix for this sort of situation is Bait-Tech Mantra. It's a groundbait that mixes really easily and is sticky enough to hold plenty of loosefeed like casters and hemp. In terms of how much, it's a difficult one to answer as every river is different, but to give you some idea of extremes I've caught some really big bags of fish using just a couple of kilos of groundbait.

"At the other end of the scale I've used up to eight kilos on matches on the Wye. To keep the cost down and to make the groundbait work better for you on deep, fast swims I'd add riddled molehill soil to the groundbait after you've mixed it.

"A ball will go straight to the bottom, exactly where you want it to. For every two parts groundbait, add one part soil."

● Got a question for our resident river expert? If so, just write it down and email it to [info@daveharrellangling.com](mailto:info@daveharrellangling.com)

Arley is a great piece of water with plenty of good float pegs



A 60lb-plus net in a day session - not a bad result.

Looked after correctly, they will last you for years, and apart from being much warmer on your feet and legs when you're standing in the river, they're far more comfortable to walk in too.

**LET'S GET FISHING!**

Back to Arley, then, and those missiles. My tackle comprised two 13ft Daiwa Connoisseur 13XP rods paired with Daiwa TDR reels and 6lb mainlines. The only difference to the rigs was float size - one was 5g and the other 10g.

The swim I chose had all the main flow channelling down the far side of the river, so I waded out and set up my station just past mid-river, but before I set up any rigs I threaded a float on to the line and tied a 2oz Arlesey bomb on to the end of the line.

This might look odd but it is a great way to search out the depths, as all you need do is cast the bomb downstream and work it back up the river slowly, making a note of what it does.

By slackening the line off, the buoyancy of the float then brings it upwards, and what I'm looking for is the float to pop up above the surface before disappearing again as the current pushes it down.

I spend a fair amount of time doing this, as it's important to know exactly how deep the swim is. I am certain that doing it this way has caught me many more fish than I would have caught otherwise as it's allowed me to find deeper or shallower areas that were not obvious by just looking at the swim.

**WHICH OLIVETTES?**

I found a consistent depth of around 4ft in this swim and the current was really strong down the far side so I decided to start on the 5g float.

This was shotted with an inline Drennan olivette, locked on to the 6lb

Shallow fast swims are no match for the new Missiles.

line about a foot from the hook with a pole bristle, with a No1 shot positioned midway between the olivette and hook. On the subject of olivettes, I love the new Drennan designs (opposite left) as I can now mix them all up in my accessories box and easily find what I'm looking for. The size is stamped on the side in case you forget!

Bait for the day comprised four pints of bronze maggots, four of casters and four of hemp. I also had a 2kg bag of 8mm Bait-Tech Carp Pellets with me which I intended to try at some point, especially if small fish were being a problem, and I started by feeding fairly heavily with a 50/50 mix of casters and hemp. By the end of the first hour I had used around two pints in total.

**THE PELLET CHANGE**

My first fish, a chub of about 3lb, came after 30 minutes and fell to three maggots fished on a size 14 Kamasan Animal Spade hook tied to a 5lb hooklength. A quick check inside it showed just a small amount of chopped-up bait. This is always a good sign when you're feeding heavy, as it normally means there are plenty of fish present.

I continued to feed fairly heavily and a few more chub to nearly 4lb followed on the maggot hookbait. The day had started with little or no wind, but a downstream breeze then got up and made control more difficult. The answer was simple, though.

I switched over to the 10g rig and control became much better. At the same time I started to introduce a few pellets and after dripping these in for half-an-hour I slipped a pellet band on to the hook and fixed a pellet into the band. The result was a near-6lb barbel on the first run through!

More barbel followed, and by the end of the session I'd landed over 60lb of big chub and those late barbel - a fabulous day's fishing an awkward swim and a great result on the new Missile floats!

**COACHING DAYS**

Dave Harrell is recognised as one of the country's best-ever river anglers and has devoted his life to learning different skills on running water. He has fished for England at World and European level and now owns his own tackle company, Dave Harrell Angling. One-to-one or small group coaching days are available between June and March. For more details about these you can email Dave at [info@daveharrellangling.com](mailto:info@daveharrellangling.com) and for details of the DH Angling product range, including Dave's new Barbel Missiles, go to [www.daveharrellangling.com](http://www.daveharrellangling.com)

