

# TACTICS | DISCOVER THE RIVER FEEDER RIG TRICKS FOR BARBEL, ROACH, CHUB, AND BREAM ON RIVERS

## Hooklengths

Hooklengths can vary from as little as a few inches long up to 6ft, and it's always worth experimenting as a session goes on.

Fish can come close to the feeder or back off further downstream for the feed, and you need to be putting your hookbait right among them.

I tend to start with around 3ft then lengthen or shorten, depending on response.

In the colder months, especially with maggots, it often pays to go long and leave the feeder in for a while because big chub are quite crafty and often tend to hold back downstream.

I've had loads of big chub fishing in this way on the Wye, but you have to make sure there's enough feed in the swim to get the fish interested before you start leaving the feeder in for ages.

## The pellet approach

For barbel I favour halibut pellets, as they are a selective bait that is rarely attacked by small fish. This means I can hair-rig the hookbait and leave it in the water for up to 20 minutes, safe in the knowledge that the bait isn't damaged, as it can be where maggots are the hookbait.

Towards the end of last season I had a lot of success with the red coloured Bait Tech Super Marine Pellets and will be using these from

the start this time around.

These pellets seem to break down and release oils faster than the original halibuts and that, in turn, draws fish in faster. I've had some decent sized barbel up to double figures on them so far, so that proves they work well!

For feed, I use 4mm pellets in the feeder, while on the hair rig it's either one or two 8mm pellets or single 12mm, 16mm or even 20mm baits.



## Feeders

There are a lot of good feeder designs on the market, but my favourites are the Kamasan Black Cap and Nisa open end models.

Both feeder designs have been around for years and I've never had one let me down or break in all the time I have been using them.

I always carry a selection of spare add-on leads, made by Anchor Tackle, up to 6oz for the Black Caps and 4oz for the big Nisa feeders, to cope with changing river flows.



## BALANCE YOUR KIT



Match your tackle to the size of the river and strength of the current.

For small swimfeeders and straight lead fishing on venues like the narrow, upper reaches of the Warwickshire Avon I use a 10ft/11ft Daiwa Tournament combo rod with reel lines between 0.18mm and 0.22mm.

On lightly-flowing rivers like the middle reaches of the Avon and Thames I upgrade my kit to a 12ft/13ft rod with reel lines from 0.18mm to 0.22mm and hooklengths from 0.12mm to 0.20mm.

Big, fast-flowing rivers like the Wye and the Severn need sterner stuff and I favour a Daiwa Connoisseur 11ft/13ft combo at 13ft. I used this for my record-breaking 213lb bream catch from the Severn last September. Reel choice for all is a Daiwa TDR3012.

For heavy-duty, hit-and-hold barbel fishing, especially in snaggy swims, I've started using two 'proper' 12ft barbel rods - 1.75lb and 2.25lb Daiwa Infinity rods.

These are matched to Exceller4000 reels loaded with 0.28mm or 0.30mm line and size 10 or 8 hooks.

## Hooks

For light feeder and straight lead rigs I favour the Drennan Wide Gape and Wide Gape Match hooks in sizes from 22 to 14 with lines from 0.10mm to 0.14mm.

When it comes to stronger work I'll switch to either Kamasan Animal Spades in sizes 20 to 12 or Drennan Carbon Feeder in the same sizes. These are tied to lines from 0.12mm to 0.20mm.

For hair-rigging pellets I use Mustad Power Specialist hooks in sizes 16 up to 8, tied to lines from 0.22mm up to 0.30mm.

## Blockend bait

There are three approaches I use when blockend feederfishing - maggots, casters and hemp, or pellets.

My maggot attack is a mix of mainly bronze with a few reds mixed in and either single or double red or bronze maggots on the hook or a combination of the two colours.

Casters and hemp are used 50/50 in the feeder and with single or double caster on the hook. Both these approaches really appeal to roach and chub on all the rivers I fish.



## Groundbait feeder mixes

For open-end feeder bream fishing, I use Bait-Tech's Omen Bream and brown crumb mixed 50/50.

For barbel and chub my mix is neat Halibut Marine Method Mix, produced from crushed halibut pellets.

Both these groundbaits have been developed in conjunction with some very good river anglers and proved to be successful on a variety of different rivers.

They're very easy to use and I always mix mine on the bank before I tackle-up.

Before I start fishing I add a little more water to get the right consistency so that the groundbait stays in the feeder on the way down but empties fairly quickly once it's on the bottom.

You can add casters, hemp and pellets to both these mixes and switch your hookbaits around until you find out what the fish want.



# RECORD-BREAKING FEEDER TRICKS

## Learn to tie the set-ups that smashed the River Severn match record with 213lb



My first passion will always be floatfishing on rivers, but on some days you simply can't beat a feeder. Fish like barbel, bream and chub are

suckers for static baits, and when there's a tinge of colour in the river it's possible to enjoy some real heavyweight bagging sessions.

As with floatfishing, though, there is much to think about in terms of tactics and bait - and it's all too easy to get things wrong.

You've got a choice of tactics when it comes to feederfishing - blockend/maggot feeders for baits such as

maggots, casters, hemp and pellets, or open-end for groundbait and crushed pellet mixes.

I tend to use a blockend feeder when the river is running clear, as I have found that I get a better response to particle baits in these conditions.

But whenever there is colour in the water, the open end feeder with groundbait comes into play, especially where bream are present.

It's possible to switch between the two over the course of a session, and I know a lot of people who start off on an open-ender for barbel to introduce a lot of bait and smell into the water quickly before switching to a blockend feeder later in the session.

Another little trick worth trying when the fish are responding well is to switch to a straight bomb. Quite often you will get several fish in succession

doing this before you have to switch back to a feeder to introduce more feed.

I used this tactic when I broke the Severn match record at Upton-on-Severn last September and it brought me a lot of quick fish at different times in the match that I don't think I would have caught if I'd just kept the feeder crashing in all day.

There has never been a better time to get back on the rivers, give my feeder rigs a try this weekend...



Find one barbel and you'll often find more - as long as you keep the bait going in though!

**EXTRA! See Dave's Top 10 river feeder tips on Page 45**

If you want barbel you've got to keep putting halibut pellets through your feeder.