

TACTICS DAVE EXPLAINS HOW UNDERSHOTTED WAGGLERS CAN BE

LAYING IT ON THICK

Slow your floats to get more bites

Following on from my revealing insight into slowing down your presentation with stick floats, this week I'm lifting the lid on how you can do the same with wagglers - an approach that will catch you more fish this season!

Many anglers think that waggler floats, attached bottom end only, are just for fishing off the bottom, but there is far more to it than that and in recent seasons I've transformed my river fishing success with a complete re-think on the float types I use, and how I set them up. For many years the only commercially available wagglers were made from peacock quill, sarcandas reed or thin-diameter plastic tube. All three materials were limited in their respective diameters, so to have a bottom end only float to carry even 3SSG resulted in a fairly long float.

I cringe when I think back to some of the matches that I fished in the 1980s and '90s because in 2000, when I moved to Bewdley, the penny finally dropped that we were all using the wrong type of floats in fast-flowing water. What followed resulted in range of floats that would have won me countless more matches if I'd had them all those years ago.

A NEW DESIGN IS BORN!

The move to Bewdley was the catalyst really, as I used to fish some lovely, fast, shallow swims there in the evenings, and for a while I simply hadn't got the right floats in my box. I wanted to use 5lb or 6lb line for barbel and chub, but to cast that sort of line easily you need a fairly big



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float. Mine were too long, so I set about thinking what I needed - and it was so obvious that I couldn't believe no-one had already sorted it.

I experimented with different diameters and grades of balsa, made a few samples to test, and one night it all came together as I landed barbel after barbel on 6lb line and a 4SSG float, which I later christened my Thick Speci Waggler. This float was spot-on and I could now floatfish with 6lb mainline as easily as using a 3AAA float with 2lb line. A thinner version proved to be the right diameter for steadier flows.

These much-copied floats became the forerunners of what we all now call pellet wagglers. It's amazing how a simple design can suddenly become so popular!

BIG AND BUOYANT

Back to the Bewdley project, I found that there was a secondary advantage to these thicker floats. Because of the thickness of the balsa I'd created a float that was incredibly buoyant, so I could now drag a lot more line along the riverbed.

Last week I mentioned five key points about float selection, and exactly the same applies when I'm wagglerfishing.

At one end of the scale you have thin insert wagglers, at the other there are the thick speci wagglers, with numerous lengths and diameters in between.

HOME-MADE SPECIALS

Some of my long, home-made peacock

wagglers take 5SSG but they will never become a commercially available float as they are so specialised.

I've had some big catches of roach on these at places like Shrewsbury, but can't remember using one for two years. When the situation is right for them, though, I know they'll definitely do the business again.

SENSITIVE OR BUOYANT?

To catch shy-biting roach you need sensitivity, but for barbel and chub in fast water, buoyancy is the key factor.

By changing the rig around slightly you

Balsa opens up a whole new world of wagglers.



THE KEY TO RIVER SUCCESS

can increase buoyancy. Lets say you've started on a 4SSG thick speci float and you've had a few fish but have stopped catching.

Time to experiment, but every time you go deeper the float drags under. You can take some shot off, but a better way would be to change the float to a bigger 5SSG model and start running it through the swim.

I know it might look silly to have so much float stuck out, but it will let you drag much more line.

DOWN THE LINE

When you're wagglerfishing, the bulk of all the float's capacity should always be used as locking shot. Down the line I keep things very simple. For peacock wagglers I use a No8 or No6 shot for every 2ft of depth, while for thick speci wagglers I use No4 shot in the same way.

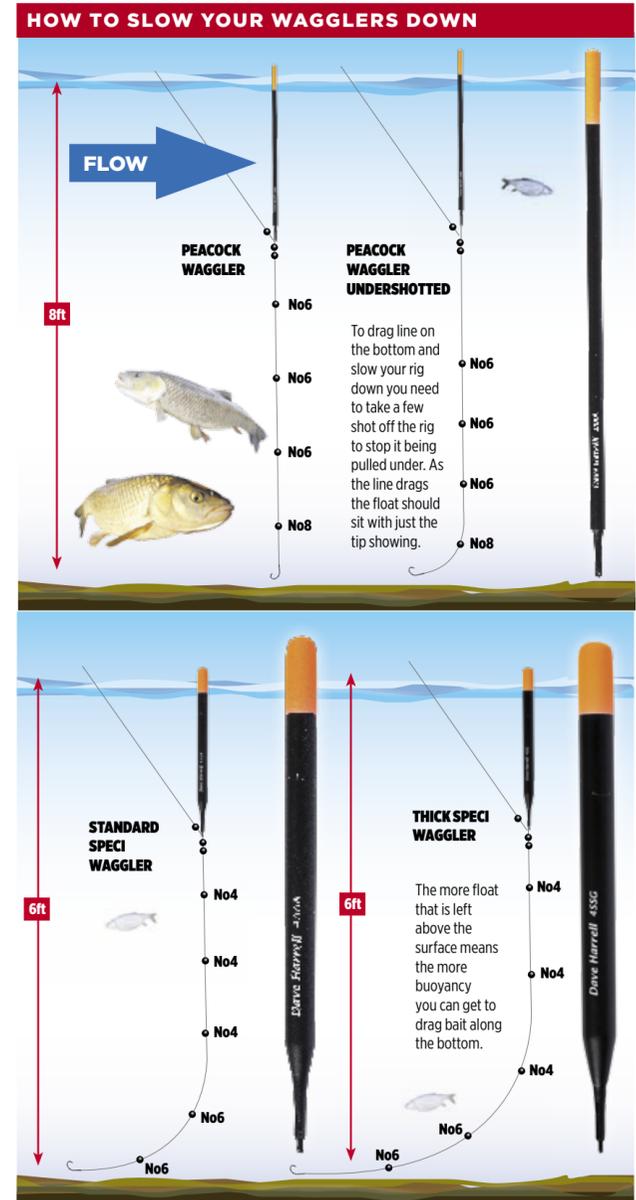
WHERE TO CAST

You need to cast your float downstream, and if you imagine a clock face, you want to be casting to a one o'clock, or even two o'clock position if the flow is from left to right.

Just before the rig lands, check the line coming off your spool with a finger to avoid tangles and you're now in the perfect position to start controlling your rig as it goes down the swim.

As with top and bottom-attached floats, if there's an upstream or no wind, it's pretty easy, but if it's blowing downstream you'll need to mend the line by lifting the rod every few seconds to keep the float from moving off course.

To help me I always spray the spool with floating line spray, then coat three yards of my line above the float with floating line grease as this makes it totally buoyant and easy to keep the rig running straight.



Chub on the waggler are great sport.