

Eel poacher pays heavily for his crime

AN EASTERN European angler will pay more than £250 in fines and costs after being found guilty of poaching a small river.

Lancs-based Miroslaw Mierzwa was caught red handed by Environment Agency staff removing eels on rod and line from the River Eea in Cumbria in May last year.

Although he was able to produce a rod licence, further investigation found he had killed a series of eels, breaking the law.

EA officer David Hall said: "This prosecution sends out a clear message that we will take action to protect fish stocks."

Time runs out for alien fish

A POPULATION of topmouth gudgeon found in three Welsh lakes is being swiftly eradicated by the Environment Agency.

At Millennium Coastal Park in Llanelli the EA is using a natural pesticide for the operation, after it removed populations of native coarse fish. Topmouth gudgeon carry a deadly disease which can kill salmon and trout.

Four share in Oak Tree ton

OAK TREE Pond at Messingham Sands once again produced top winter sport when the top four shared almost 100lb of silverfish between them during the latest match.

Leading the way was Mike Chadwick on 27lb 12oz. The Hull-based rod used pellet on the pole line to net numerous skimmers and edge out Tony Noon on the next peg, who settled for second spot with 24lb 11oz.

For more details on the venue visit www.messinghamands.co.uk

Smaller carp in the frame

A LARGE-SCALE netting operation at a popular commercial fishery has ended, and early signs suggest the move is already benefiting anglers.

Officials at Stafford Moor removed all the large carp from Pines into Tanners Lake, relocating over 1,500lb of mirrors and commons.

The first match after the procedure saw plenty of bites for all competing, with eventual winner Ben Wright taking 24 fish for 77lb from peg 25 on Tanners.

For more details on the venue visit www.staffordmoor.co.uk

Meat feast gets

WHY MY BIG SMELLY BAITS ARE

HOW QUICKLY things change in this country. I was going to continue on my theme of catching fish in the snow in freezing cold conditions when all of a sudden the temperature came up and the snow and ice disappeared almost overnight.

The biggest problems all anglers are facing right now are snow melt and high water, but once levels have dropped and the cold water has gone through we can expect some good catches again, I reckon.

One bait which is often ignored at this time of year is luncheon meat, but I've had some excellent catches on it after a flood so it's well worth carrying a couple of tins in your bait bag if you're going to waters where barbel and chub are the main targets.

Over the years I've tried all sorts

of different meat and my current favourites are Boosted Meat, N-TICE Polony and Mighty Meat Halibut from Bait-Tech. All work well, and I've caught some very big barbel on them this season.

There are various ways to use meat on flooded rivers, but a simple straight lead approach with a heavy flat lead takes some beating.

I carry leads from 1oz up to 6oz to ensure I can hold the bottom and these are used on a simple running link swivel which is stopped two or three feet from the hook.

If there's a lot of colour in the water I always use big pieces of meat on a size 6 or even a 4 hook tied to lines from 6lb to 10lb.

A strong rod is obviously important for this sort of fishing and I favour either 1.75lb or 2.25lb 12ft Daiwa Infinity models in conjunction with 12lb mainline on

you bites

KEY TO BARBEL AS FLOODWATERS EASE



Dave Harrell

BRITAIN'S BEST RIVER ANGLER TELLS ALL - ONLY IN **AnglingTimes**

a Daiwa Exceller 4000 reel.

Once I'm happy that where I'm going to cast the lead is free of snags, the way I always start a session with luncheon meat is with several small pieces threaded on to the line.

I then carefully cast the rig to the chosen spot and once the lead has settled I strike quite hard to cut through these free offerings, which are then on the bottom to attract fish into the swim and hopefully on to my hookbait. I often carry this process out

several times to put a good bed of feed on the bottom, and then it's a case of putting a big piece on the hook, casting it to the same spot and sitting back for the bite.

I see a lot of anglers using a knife to cut up their meat and leaving clean cuts on all sides, but I much prefer to break pieces off and leave rough edges. I think the oil from the meat comes out much easier this way and attracts fish far better.

Another way of fishing with meat

when the river is up and coloured is to swap the lead for an open-end feeder.

Again, you'll need enough lead on the feeder to hold the bottom - maybe up to 6oz - but it's a great way of getting bait to the bottom and guaranteeing it will be close to your hookbait.

My chosen groundbait for this tactic is Bait-Tech Halibut, and into the mix I always put a few 4mm halibut pellets and some broken-up bits of the same meat I am using on the hook.

The bites when you get them are unmissable and it's a really exciting way of fishing when the conditions are difficult.

Give it a try over the next couple of weeks and you'll see what I mean.



Dave's River Fishing Clinic

DO YOU have a question for our river expert? Send an email to: info@daveharrellangling.com As well as having your question answered, there's a set of DH Angling floats up for grabs for the best one used.

ARE COLOURED MAGGOTS BETTER THAN WHITE ONES?

Q What are your views on coloured maggots? Do they really make a difference and are they better than ordinary whites? Also, a friend of mine has told me that turmeric powder on the maggots catches more roach. Is this true?

Stephen Gray

A I'm very fussy about bait, and I learned many years ago that top-quality maggots are important if you are to get the best results.

To that end I always buy the very best I can find and then look after them by keeping them at just above freezing point in a fridge right up to the point I am leaving for home to go fishing.

I believe coloured maggots do make a difference on some days, especially when the river is clear. I tend to use bronze mainly, but I also catch a lot of



Look after your maggots in their own fridge.

fish on red maggots.

Regarding turmeric, I used to use loads of it years ago as it did seem to make a difference at the time on rivers like the Warwickshire Avon - but in recent years I haven't noticed any marked difference whether I've had it on my bait or not. To that end, I've stopped using it now.

In addition to it not making any difference to my catches, my hands are no longer stained orange after a fishing session.

HOW DO I STOP WAGGLERS TANGLING ON THE CAST?

Q I recently bought some of your Thick Speci Wagglers but I'm struggling to get the shooting pattern right and I keep getting tangles when I use pellets as hookbait. Any tips on how to avoid them?

Brian Hastings

A First, you need to select a float big enough to easily get to the distance you want it to go to.

Now that might sound obvious, but think about the rig with an 8mm pellet on the end as it will work very differently to one with just a couple of maggots on the hook. For distance fishing on rivers I normally use 4SSG-6SSG for that reason.

Shooting needs to be kept simple. I lock the float on to the line with a few big shot and then use a No4 shot for every two foot of water down the line.

So, in a 6ft-deep swim all you'll need is three No4 shot down, and the bottom one should be about a foot from the hook.

The final thing to consider, and this is really important, is the wind direction. Even if there is only a slight breeze you should always cast off the side the wind is blowing to. This applies to all waggler fishing actually, so get into the habit of casting this way all the time.

DH ANGLING WINNER FLOATS



The simpler the shooting, the better.

STICK FLOAT OR AVON - WHICH IS BETTER IN DEEP SWIMS?

Q I fish a very fast flowing river that is about 12ft deep in parts.

There are plenty of roach and dace there but I'm unsure which float to use. Should I use a stick float or an Avon?

Mike Redmond

A There are no hard and fast rules on this subject, as on certain days you'll catch more on a big stick float with strung out shot while on others an Avon with a bulk well down towards the hook will work best. My advice would be to set

up two rods and try both rigs to see which works the better on the day.

How you feed the swim will also determine which rig is suitable. If you use groundbait and feed most runs through you'll probably find the Avon is the right float but if you just loosefeed there's a good chance that the strung out stick will be best.

For float sizes in fast water use a stick float taking two or three No4 shot per foot of water, or an Avon float taking a gram for every two foot.



Sometimes stick floats work best on the day, other times Avons.

Barbel love meat on rivers after floods.



MORE INFO

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. For details of the product range go to: www.daveharrellangling.com He is also available for one-to-one and group coaching sessions on the River Wye throughout the river season. Bookings are now being taken for the rest of this season and also for the summer months. For more details contact Dave at: info@daveharrellangling.com You can also follow Dave's daily and weekly exploits on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/DaveHarrellAngling and on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/dave_harrell

