

AnglingTimes Tips & Tactics

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EASY-TO-FOLLOW ADVICE FROM OUR EXPERTS WILL HELP YOU CATCH MORE THIS WEEK

Carry a good selection of floats to cope with different conditions.



Why you have to reach for the wag

FORGET THE BOMB, GO FOR A FLOAT

WHEN the fish push beyond pole range, most anglers reach for the straight lead or feeder.

Not England International Darren Cox - he believes that brushing up on your waggler skills will help you put more fish in the net this winter.

With temperatures dropping, stocks in your local commercial are likely to push into open water or gather close to islands, and one of the very best ways to reach them is by relying on this traditional tactic.

Many have dismissed the waggler to make way for more modern methods, but the Garbolino UK boss has never forgotten its pulling power, relying on it every season to keep up a winning record that few can match.

"It offers brilliant presentation that is ideal for this time of year.

"The straight lead and feeder certainly play a part, but they are more selective," explained Darren.

"Floatfishing like this also gives you the chance to catch lots of silverfish, and they can prove vital at the weigh-in at this time of year when ounces really count," he added.



TONY GRIGORJEVS
Senior reporter

PERFECT PRESENTATION

A typical commercial swim will have anywhere between 4ft and 8ft of water, and it can be extremely difficult to determine at what depth the fish will be sitting.

Unlike the feeder, the waggler can be used to search the water column at a slow pace, and Darren always sets up two rods to cover all bases.

The first aims to get the bait to the bottom quickly, with a small bulk set a couple of feet from the hook.

This will be a starting point, but as soon as he starts missing bites it's time to change.

"If I can't hit the bites it could mean that the fish have come up in the water and I am actually striking at false indications," he said.

"The second set-up has No10 shot strung out down the line. This makes the bait fall slowly and I will come off bottom a foot to start with.

"If I continue to get line bites, I'll keep shallowing-up gradually until I start landing fish."



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HOW I BEAT GRAFHAM



Darren favours a long rod when fishing a waggler.



A 2lb perch was a welcome bonus for Darren.



Feed casters and maggots little and often.



Darren took a better than average stamp of fish.

KEEP IT LIGHT

Silverfish species such as roach, skimmers and perch can be incredibly finicky at this time of year and light, sensitive rigs play a big part in putting match-winning catches together.

A mainline that sinks slowly is a good starting point, with 3lb Maxima normally Darren's first choice. If the water is crystal-clear then a 0.10mm or 0.12mm hooklength will accompany



A great mixed bag from Woodside Fishery.

this, stepping up to 0.14mm when there is a touch of colour and bigger fish such as bonus perch are a possibility.

Fine and medium wire hooks both come into the equation, with a size 18 Kamasan B911 or B911 F1 being called into play, the latter when a low weight is expected.

Tow, wind and water depth dictate what size of float will be needed, but in fairly calm conditions Darren will start on either a 2AAA or 3AAA on a commercial water, stepping up to 4AAA or more when it's windy. Both versions are Garbolino Hollow plastic insert wagglers that are locked in place with shot.

"The lighter you can fish the better, because silverfish – especially roach – hate feeling any resistance while feeding," he said.

"Always dot the waggler to a pimple to reduce the chance of fish ejecting the bait before you have chance to react."

Rod choice is also important, and in a world that seems obsessed with short versions, Darren goes against the grain for this style of fishing.

"When you are using light floats you need a long rod to help punch it out accurately. A soft tip will cushion the

strike and reduce fish losses, with a Garbolino G System Match 13ft Light Waggler Rod my choice."

GET YOUR FEED RIGHT

Keeping a trickle of bait going through the water will get the fish competing and, for Darren, there are only two baits worth considering for silvers.

"Maggots work well when the going gets tough, with casters a better option when you are getting more bites and better stamp fish," he said.

Missed bites can be put down to fishing at the wrong depth, but the other thing that could be causing the problem is feeding your swim inappropriately.

If you start getting line bites then it is time to cut back on the amount you are piling in.

"If you are putting a lot of maggots or casters in then the fish are likely to go into a frenzy every time you feed, brushing against the line and moving the float around.

"Reduce it and the fish will settle down, picking out the few freebies present with a better chance of finding the hookbait.

"Once you have mastered the right

quantity, feed, cast beyond the spot and then draw the rig back over the top to make sure your hookbait falls at the same pace as the loose offerings."

VENUE KNOWLEDGE

Doing a little homework before you fish will definitely help your catch rate, and one of the most important bits of information you can gather relates to the stamp of fish stocked.

If you are fishing on a lake that has roach averaging 6oz, but you are catching them at half that size, then you should make changes to try and improve the stamp. Altering the depth, changing hookbait and adjusting the position of your shot on a strung-out pattern could all achieve this.

"Today I've fished Shropshire's Woodside Fishery, targeting the House Pool for roach, rudd and skimmers. By sticking to the basics and making simple changes throughout the day, I've upped the stamp of fish and even located the odd bonus, including a 2lb perch!" said Darren.

"Leave the leads and feeders in the bag this weekend and work your magic with the waggler for a memorable winter session."

The perfect cast



1 Cast a few metres beyond your intended target zone.



2 Place a small quantity of maggots or casters into your catapult.



3 Feed them over the area you intend to fish.



4 Draw your float back over the target zone. This will make sure your hookbait falls at the same time as your loosefeed.



VENUE INFO

WOODSIDE Fishery is home to four lakes, and is open to day ticket anglers all-year round. For more details visit www.woodsidefishery.co.uk