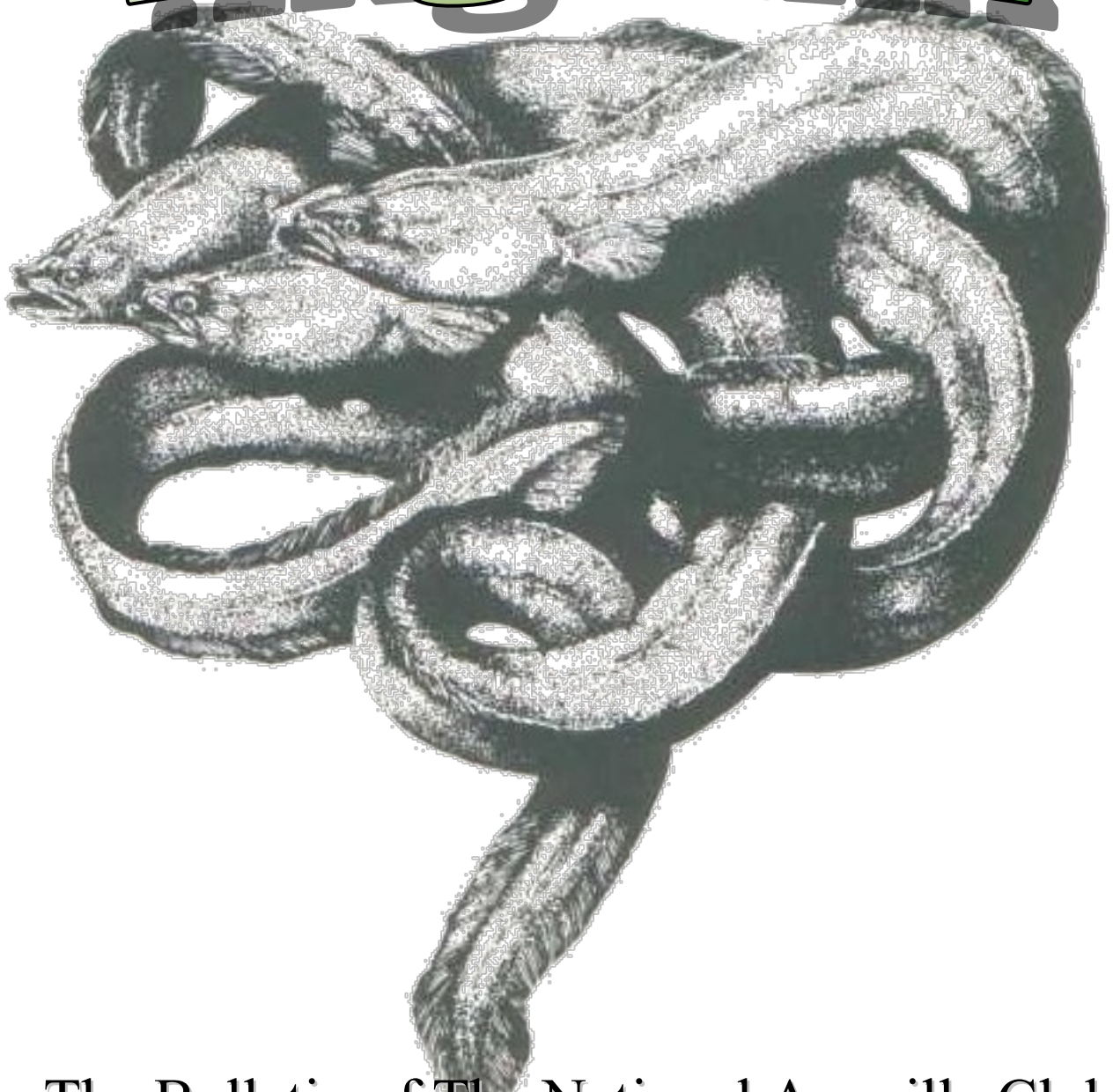


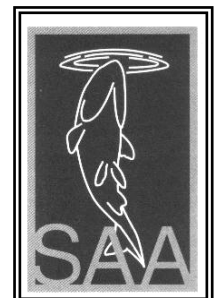
"Anguilla"



The Bulletin of The National Anguilla Club

Volume 41, Issue 2.

Winter 2003/4.



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(Winter 2003/4)

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"Heads or Tails"

"Team Talk"

By Jimmy Jolley.

Well, what a challenge this issue of "Anguilla" has been for me, what with my father taking a bad fall resulting in a double fracture of the hip which meant him spending the last two months in hospital and then in rehabilitation its been quite hectic for Anthony and myself , but hopefully, he'll soon be on the mend.....now on to other more pressing things concerning YOU the membership of The National Anguilla Club!!!

You may notice the distinct lack of articles and new contributors in this issue of the club magazine....for the first time since taking over as editor, I have had to ask certain members of the club for material. Now I don't intend going "cap-in-hand" to these guys again for the Spring/Summer issue, what I receive is what I will produce, be it 20, 15 or god forbid 10 pages then that is what you will get.

I've sometimes thought.... " Why bother.....no one else does" but then I think the membership have paid their subscriptions for the year, and if you think about it...all they receive is two magazines per year plus the newsletters that our Chairman Nick produces plus the chance of going on one of the organised Club Fish-In's ... oh, and not forgetting the Winter Social & A.G.M (if anyone bothers to turn up that is!!!)... not a lot is it. So, you have all been warned, expect a thin package when the next magazine is due!!!

You will also notice there are quite a few pages in this issue dedicated to material obtain from the Internet thanks to our General Secretary Anthony "B.T" Jolley..... thanks Bro. I make no apology for its inclusion, if it wasn't for this "stuff" the magazine would be much, much thinner and a lot less interesting. So if you have any objection to its inclusion then you know what you must do and that's to get rid of the guy who put it in, namely me, or sit down and contribute something too the next issue of "Anguilla".

It seems that every time it comes round to putting the magazine together....it's the same "old" names that come up time after time, Steve "Big Eel" Ricketts, Barry "Only the Lonely" McConnell, Damian "The Burglar" Wood....these are the guys who never cease to amaze me by coming up with something for the magazine when its needed (the question is "how long can it last"...not long, me thinks). However, these aren't the only members I must thank for their contributions to this issue.

There's first time contributor Stephen Cotton with his article "A Tale of Two Fours" that should get some people thinking about possible re-captures. Then there's Arthur J. Sutton's piece "The Lost Years & Paradise Re-found" chronicling his return to reasonable health and him finding his renewed passion for eel fishing....part 1 (Can't wait for the second part). And Graham Wilkes' article "2+2=6" about his time as an "Eel Angler" in which Graham asks some thought provoking questions. And then there are the members who took the trouble to complete the Members Profiles that where sent out with the Summer issue (volume 41, issue 1) of the club magazine (I thought I would have received more than 4!!!!)..thanks Graham, Andy, Pete and Steve. Then there are the usual "official" pages namely, The Chairman's Page by Nick Rose, General Secretary's Page by Anthony Jolley, Social Scene by Graham Wilkes, Michael Brettle's Record Officer's Report and of course this Team Talk.....I hope you can see were I'm coming from here..... the same "old " names that have supplied other material for this issue of "Anguilla". I honestly think that this situation can not go on much longer, I can see a time when we will have an issue of the club magazine containing just the "official" pages plus the Products and Contents Page...that would make a total of just 7 pages...and if that day ever comes, you will need a new editor and magazine printer.....because I would be so disgusted with the membership that I would resign from my position within the Production Team and let someone else have all the hassle.

I hope you all had an excellent Xmas and I hope 2004 brings you all that you wish for....so until the next time...tight lines to you all.

The Lost Years & Paradise Refound.

PART ONE

By A. J. Sutton.

I have been out of action for almost two years. Not only with regard to angling, but to many other things. I have certainly not written for “ANGUILLA” like I should have, although there would be little current news to tell other than how the cobwebs were gathering on my rods. My health was at a low ebb and I felt unhappy about most things. My keyboard playing suffered, and I usually relied on that to lift me out of a gloomy mood. I should have been overjoyed when, at the start of the two year period, I took the record carp for a lake I was fishing. The lake was owned by an old established Club which stocked the water with large carp some years previously. The water was, as far as anyone could tell, a “dead - loss” where little could be caught. I fished there because the only walking I had to do was to get out of the car and unlock the gate, then fish from the boot of the car. I did not put much thought into the actual fishing, for all I wanted to do was to sit and rest. My legs were giving me a lot of grief, especially the one which had the hip replaced and I think that it was the continuous pain that led to this period of depression. However, it was while sitting cursing my fate that I had a fast take on the nearest rod. It kept going despite the delay in my rising from my chair. I contacted the fish which I think was as surprised as I was, and played it easily to the net. To say that it did not fight would be putting it mildly. It was a common carp which weighed thirty four pounds. I sacked the fish in case the club secretary should come by. This he did and we returned the fish, which appeared to be very old. The secretary said it would be one of the original stocking. Trust old Sutton to catch the oldest and most decrepit fish in the lake, or did it just feel sorry for me. And to you who ask what I was doing fishing for crap (I mean carp) I assure you that each time I fished the place I put out a dead bait, but in over thirty sessions there I never had a run. I would dearly have loved to catch an eel there. Any sort of eel. After that, my fishing ceased. Another visit to hospital and further painful and uncomfortable treatment was to no avail. I felt worse, and fishing was out of the question. My only activity was to sit and think about things and while doing this I recalled earlier work and experimentation done by myself and a colleague, who had since died in a motor cycle crash. The work had never been put to any useful purpose, but I decided to submit it to a firm dealing with inventions. They were most enthusiastic and after evaluating the idea suggested that they put it in the hands of a suitable company. This they did, and the Boeing Aircraft Corporation of American took up the idea. After studying same, I was invited to the States to discuss matters and to see preliminary work being done. I was treated like a celebrity and they soon realised that I was far from well, and was suffering a good deal. They insisted that they give me treatment at their expense. I stayed in the States for longer than I had expected but at the end of the treatment I did already feel like a new man. Even more so when they announce that I would receive an interim payment. They also said that they would pay all expenses including both medical and legal ones. I have been invited back again later in the year to see the final work being done. So, I returned

home.

I immediately felt the improvement, not only in health but in my general well being which was improving day by day. I had been advised to get as much fresh air as possible and to this end we purchased a four berth caravan and had it sited with electric hook-up within ten feet of a lake in Lincolnshire which was said to hold good carp. The first time I fished there I caught a four pound two ounce eel on a boilie, and I immediately decided that I would fish exclusively for eels in that lake. This I did for five days and nights each week for four weeks to the present date when the weather has put a stop to all activity. In that four week period I have taken nine eels of four pounds and over, with the best four reaching five pounds (Max 5lb 3oz). One of the fives was taken on two maggots while fishing for baits. I have also had countless eels of 2lb and under. I have spoken to local anglers who have witnessed eels estimated at six to seven pounds being played by pole anglers with the expected result. Now I have had to keep quiet about these eels as the owner insists on all eels being taken and NOT returned. Incidentally, the owner has a large tank into which all eels caught should be placed. They are then sold and the money ploughed back into the fishery in the form of more stock (carp). This is about the best eel fishing I have known and I hope and pray that it may continue so that I can nudge towards the 200 mark(next year) perhaps-To say that I am over the moon is to put it mildly. My son and daughter say they have never seen me looking happier. Boy, those eels had better watch out, for OLD Sutton is back.

While in America I had the fortune to meet some excellent anglers. They were mostly members of the SCIENTIFIC ANGLERS OF AMERICA and we had two or three discussions when eels were mentioned. They laughed their heads off when I outlined how we set up using a bivvy. They mostly do not fish for eels and an eel caught accidentally is despatched and thrown in the bushes. Eels are taken regularly on small spinners and flies. However, they did record quite a lot about eels and have promised me that a good deal of info will be available to me when I return. I was surprised to learn that the vast majority of American eels are on the small side. I will certainly be making this info available to this Club, and will also tell of my invention which led to all this and which has already made me comfortably off.

I almost forgot to mention the fact that the Americans are fast going over to barbless hooks. In fact a lot of their lures are now armed with barbless hooks They also stated that a large part of the Japanese fish hook industry is now making only barbless.

Going back to the eel fishing. I have searched diligently for a point of access to the lake for the eels, and cannot find one. There is a typical fenland drain within a hundred yards or so and without doubt this does hold eels though whether or not they would cross two fields to reach the lake is open to doubt. The owner of the lake, or rather her bailiff, has voiced the opinion that the eels only enter the lake when conditions are absolutely right, and this might only be every fifteen years or so. If this were the case, it would go some way to explaining why most of the eels are large -3lbs to 5lb plus - with a smaller head of eels in the weight range 1lb to 2lbs. Nothing in between and nothing smaller-.I have taken a fair number of the smaller eels, all on lobworm. The larger eels have been taken on Whitebait with the exception of two, one of which took a boilie and the other two white maggots. A worm lowered into the drain soon has several eels fighting over it. There are virtually no small fish in the lake and you can fish fine tackle all day long without taking one, so what these big eels grow-fat on is any ones guess. I have looked for other sources of food but cannot find any. Even tiny eels are non existent.

There are no mussels either. I have heard tell of the eels feeding on spawn which has been deposited by carp on the reed stems, but this could not sustain them throughout the year. Its a mystery.

Anyway, my two year spell of just dreaming is over, and if I don't catch another this year it as already been a good one. TIGHT LINES.

A.J.SUTTON.

2+2=6

By Graham "The Jockey" Wilkes.

First off may I make it clear that I am by no means a prolific eel angler nor do I pretend to be, this article is just me expressing my thoughts out loud and if it does provoke a response then I am thick skinned and I would in no way size, shape or form be offended if I get a reply that says "Wilkes you're a prat" or "tell me something I didn't know". At least the mag would have a bit more to print in the next issue.

When I began eel fishing 3 years ago I was just using worms as bait and getting the attention of Perch in the day and Bream at night something which I just put up with, but as I've done more sessions and having been shown the art of swishing my preference has now turned to lives. But how to hook them to get a better chance of hooking the eel is another story one I have yet to find, that has to be said. Having talked to more experienced eel anglers they all have their chosen method and favourite species. The more you investigate obviously the more you learn (trial and error my boy). I personally have no preference as yet as I'm still on the learning curve but it has to be said that I soon became unbothered by the size of the bait used. I found that Perch have an obvious liking for lives as do Pike and not so much of a problem Zander. I have yet to find a bait which only an eel has a liking for (any pointers there?) I have no hesitation what so ever in using a bait of 4 to 7 inches Duffy seemed a bit surprised when he saw me flicking out a 5 inch Roach one summers morning and was even more surprised when that 5 inch Roach was responsible for a 3lb 8oz eel on the bank. So to me size is not a problem (ask the girlfriend!!!!)

Now species, I hear the name Gudgeon used quite often when it comes to live bait, many anglers of which I have fished with all seem to be in favour of the bottom feeder. I can understand that as eels do seem to be in that area the majority of the time and lets face it Gudgeon do live in great shoals so the old anguilla can't surely fail to have one when it comes across a shoal. So yes a Gudgeon would to me seem a good bait.

Now the million dollar question (of which in eel fishing there are many) what if the eel is not feeding on the bottom but more inclined to attack from the bottom up and take a surface feeding fish and your humble Gudgeon is mooching 5 inches from the bottom, your knackered and going home with a dry net unless your using 4 or even 8 rods (Mr Davis) and your using different methods to catch the eel. Or is it more the case that the area in which you are fishing is inhabited by only one eel and that just fed 10 minutes before you set up and no matter what you try your going to blank before you have even wet a line. The above I think relates to myself or so it seems obviously the feeding times of the eel are something which we shall just have to predict.

So now its not so much about bait but just how to position it. Do you position it 3 inches off the bottom or an inch below the surface? Which ever I do the eel seems to have the opposite preference so it's the bait and the method of which we need to get right.

Now, how intelligent is the eel? Is it intelligent enough to realise the old Gudgeon never swims 2 inches below the surface and rejects the bait or is it going to think bollocks that's a meal I'm going to have it?

I was always lead to believe that you should always use resistance free methods, open bail arm, light bobbins and small leads what a kick in the teeth I get when I open the Angling Times and read about the capture of a 7lb eel taken by a Carp angler using a 5oz fixed lead to a tight bait runner and we are all trying to do it by the book. I firmly believe that we all worry far too much or am I wrong? If that eel is feeding it isn't bothered whether its fixed or free running, ledgered or suspended Gudgeon or Perch it's going to have it regardless.

Christ, thinking about it this article could go on forever, but I'm going to keep it short but one thing is for sure is that the more hours you put in the more eels your going to get out. For me eel fishing is a huge challenge and to be honest I never thought that 3 years on I would still be at it, but this season I managed to get in 45 sessions a lot of which were with Nick Duffy and his brother Mark a few with our Chairman "Rosey", Barry McConnell, Pete Drabble (mind you the sessions with Baz and Pete do seem a bit of a blur) Steve Richardson even came out. Thanks boys for all the fun and laughter we must all get together more often it makes the eel challenge a far more pleasurable experience.

If this article has provoked a response then please reply. Well that's all from me I hope your sessions have been good ones and that your captures were memorable. One thing is for sure next spring I shall be out there again during the last frosts waiting to capture my first eel of the season.

Graham Wilkes "The Jockey".

N.A.C Members Profile

- 1. N.A.C MEMBERS NAME ...** Graham "The Jockey" Wilkes.
- 2. STATUS...**Financially Embarrassed
- 3. WHEN DID YOU FIRST START EEL FISHING...** Summer of 2000.
- 4. REASONS FOR JOINING THE NAC...** To learn more about fishing for the European Eel.
- 5. FIRST EEL EVER CAUGHT...** A small Boot-lace as a kid.
- 6. PERSONAL BEST EEL TO DATE.....** An eel of 5lb – 2ozs.
- 7. BEST REMEMBERED EEL SESSION...** My first nights proper Eel fishing when I caught my P.B and a 2lb – 12ozs within 10 minutes of each other.

8. WHICH MONTHS DO YOU FISH FOR EELS From March to November.

9. FAVOURITE VENUE..... Anywhere within walking distance of a pub.

10. ANY PARTICULAR BAIT PREFERENCES AND REASONS FOR THIS... Lives, as they are easy to capture and are free.

11. FAVOURITE ITEM OF TACKLE.... Bottle Opener!!!!

12. OTHER SPECIES THAT YOU FISH FOR..... Blondes & Brunettes!!!!

13. OF ALL THE SPECIES YOU HAVE CAUGHT, WHICH ONE IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY.... Blondes....they have more fun!!!!

14. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER ANGLING ORGANISATIONS... None.

15. ANY OTHER INTERESTS OUTSIDE ANGLING.... I like to “socialise” and enjoy my life.

16. DIS-LIKES IN ANGLING..... Clubs with too many rules and a ban on using more than two rods at venues.

17. HOW COULD THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BE IMPROVED..... By having meetings on the banks of fish-ins and by keeping the politics to a minimum.

18. AMBITIONS, IN ANGLING TERMS... To witness Nick Rose catching an eel, and too see Nick Duffy coping with hangovers better.

19. DO YOU HAVE ANY ANGLING HEROES OR HAS ANYONE INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER TO DATE.... My Father, as he first took me fishing....also, Nick Rose who makes my catch Return look exceptional.

20. DO YOU THINK THAT THE EXISTING RECORD OF 11lb-2oz WILL BE BROKEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF SO, WHAT TYPE OF VENUE DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE AND WILL IT BE TO AN EEL ANGLER OR AN ANGLER FISHING FOR ANOTHER SPECIES....
It could possibly be broken in the near future as there are a good number of good eel anglers going out enough to stand a chance of catching it....however, I think it will fall to either a pike angler or a carp angler, but such is life. There are several anglers within the N.A.C who I would like to see catch it and who deserve it because of the time and effort that they put into their fishing.



Graham's P.B eel of 5lb – 02oz.

The Resistance Movement Reloaded:

Afterthoughts Results and Theories

By Damian “The Burglar” Wood

Some of you may still be digesting the last article I wrote with probable confusion , or disbelief. Well after writing it I have had thoughts on how to transfer what I learnt last year to other areas in fishing for eels mainly ledger tactics and concepts and ideals to minimise the usual problems we come across .

I also mentioned about the “Withy-pool rig” and if this could be the answer to cutting down the problems of deep-hooking eels, aborted takes, missed runs and missed strikes, when using either fixed or running rigs.

Also the introduction of using fixed rigs with the new concept and ideals I have about eels and how they take baits in the first place and how the method can be catered to other presentation methods to get the same results as using the “SFR” rig and “withy-hook-link” and identifying the fact that eels associate baits with resistance and how this can be used to our advantage.

After using the SFR Rig including the curved hook-link and the concept, incorporating what I have learned from this gives me the conclusion that completely fixed and semi-fixed effective rigs is almost a reality , but may not 100% eradicate all the problems we have, but will reduce certain problems considerably or eradicate some of the problems completely.

As for using worm baits and other small baits like maggots I can basically say that it is a done deal as far as coming up with an instant lip-hooking one to one ratio rig. But like anything else the only way to come to these kind of conclusion is by “trail by fire”.

This hasn't happened over night it has taken seven years to get to where I am as far as rig development and the change me my ideals of what eel are doing and how to use there reaction to baits to utilise and take advantage of it to create the instant eel “Bolt-Rig”.

But as yet working with fish baits hasn't been smooth sailing and still will need further development and experimenting with, unfortunately due to the eels heads the hook up to run ratio has had the opposite effect to using worms, if on the other hand the eels had a predator wider tadpole head then the story and results would be more appealing to the eye.



Modifications to the SFR Rig:

Since then Two more eel have been successfully taken in this way with the same results as the eels in last article one being a low 4lber using a large single lobworms. The SFR Rig at the present this moment of writing this article stands at the run to hook up ratio is 4-4 and the lip hooking to deep hooking ratio is 4 –0. To me I personally don't need any more convincing how effective this method is and how it has eradicated certain problems we have about deep-hooking, missed strikes and aborted takes.

Since then the only modifications that have been made to the SFR Rig is the elimination of the cork-balls and the floats are in lined and attach to the top of the rig via the silicone sleeve provided when you buy them, also I have started using the clutch slackened off about 7 times and basically snag fish the rig so it can only run side ways using the line distance fished and can't take any more than that, or the clutch slows them down when they run away from you ,but this is just being experimented with at this moment in time and not a full conclusion as yet of it's efficiency or effectiveness.

The only draw back to doing this is that the clutch has to be tightened up very quickly before a strike is made or more accurately just bending into it as it is already hooked and lastly increased the lead to 3½ ounce, this is new to me and practise makes perfect as it has been seven years since I have undone a reel clutch due to playing eels the way we do with subtleness!

When last out with Peter on 18/06/03 fishing the canal a 4lber gave me a drop-back then a second later hurtled off down the canal with a 3½ dumpy lead, so are eels wary of resistance well the answer is yes and due to this and the rig used the eel was hooked in the corner of the left side of the mouth. I had no other runs that night. I know some members I have talked to recently are using it, but still have had no results back from this as yet so I will continue to keep recording my own for a bit longer.

Also I have started to reduce the amount if worms being used depending on the size of them cutting down to using single lobworms and bunching it into a tight ball, then using a pair of scissors just giving certain parts a snip to release more juices.

This has a massive advantage on waters where the runs have slowed down and twitchy or fishing waters where runs don't happen that often or fishing near surface visible snags.

Slight Variation of the SFR Rig:

The fully Fixed “Dyson Rig” or “**FDR Rig**”:

Also a fixed variation of the Dyson rig will work in the same way as the SFR Rig and this will be used next year on a few rods fished along side each other, both rigs can be utilised to present baits perfectly at distance and not to have to worry about tangles or parts of the rig splaying apart in the cast. One thing you would have to remember is to angle your rods and sky-line them to keep the bait off the bottom. You could probably present a bait up to or over a hundred yards with the right rod and reel only if that is required to hit those more un-fishable areas.

The only difference between the Dyson as we know it and the modified version is that the hook-link is fixed between two beads as shown in the diagram below.

Fishing in this manner can open a whole new era of ideas and presentation to over come various problems that are apparent with some of the older methods of presenting baits even though they will still catch eels in their own right but the deep hooking, missed runs, aborted runs and missed strikes are a lot higher than fishing totally fixed rigs.

Since then I have been beavering away on how to use the hook-link for other eel baits used mainly fish sections. Following on from the last article, I will go through the concept of the methods I will be utilising next year when the situation calls for it and other discoveries.

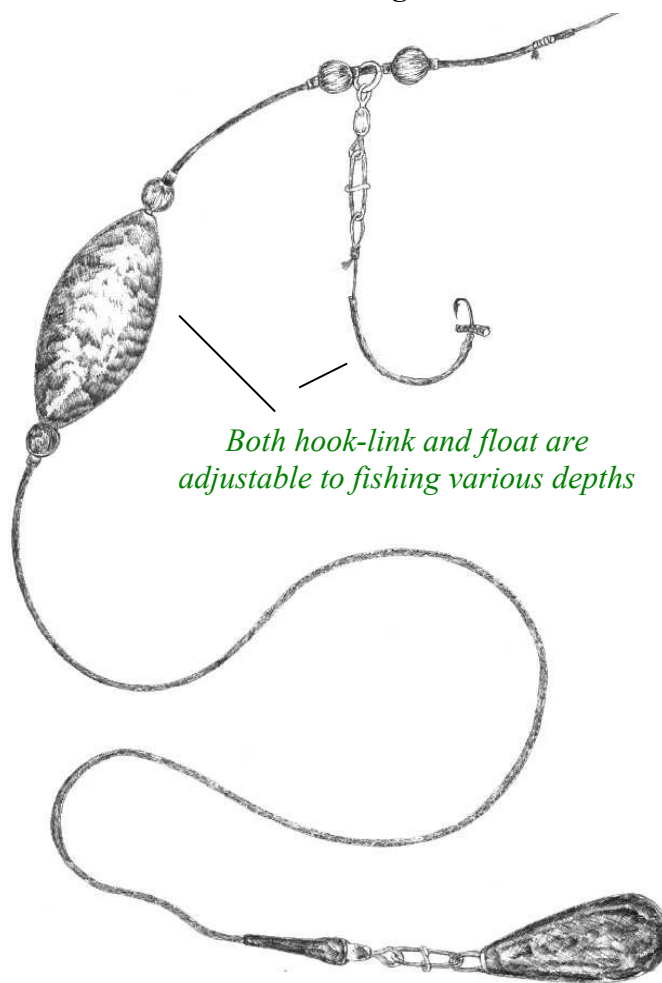
I have made suggestions on how to get round them, but and only but if you can realise the fact that eels are not unique and just like any other fish, they become wary and spooky of baits and may not leave a water when captured or die for that matter, not all the time! Only when they have been deep-hooked will this be increased. You have to bare in mind that some parts of this article is theory based and some have been proven beyond reasonable doubt

First I will list some of the problems that I have experienced fishing section baits the way I used to do, and why I fish them the way I do know.

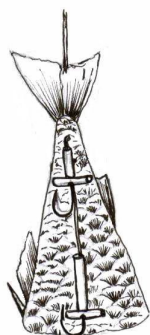
- When hooking the bait by either just putting the hook straight through the bait, or even hooking it through then re-hooking it again.
- What happen to the bait and how the hook ends up when the bait is either fished at range or the impact of the hitting the water does to it, this can happen when under-handing baits across the canal.
- How all these scenarios effect the hook to run ratio using a conventional bait hooking methods.

The next set of diagrams Will show you how I used to hook my baits up and then we will go through the stages of development to how I have decided to hook fish baits know. All these point will have a detrimental effect on the hook-up to run ratio.

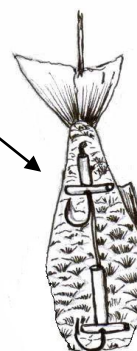
FDR Rig



Both hook-link and float are adjustable to fishing various depths

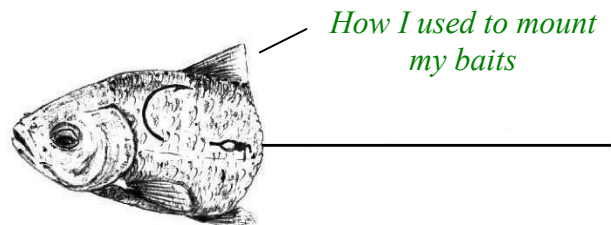


As I mentioned before about trimming the bait and still using a two hook system. I did a lot of thought on this and devised a different way of presenting the fish, using the withy- pool rig but in reverse instead. Don't ask me why, but I knew there was something in the curve to work on for other baits that may get the same result when using worms. A one to one hooking ratio.



Since then I have change presentation to hopefully find a better way of increasing my hook rate, when using the SFR Rig and using ledger tactics in conjunction with a fish bait presentation.

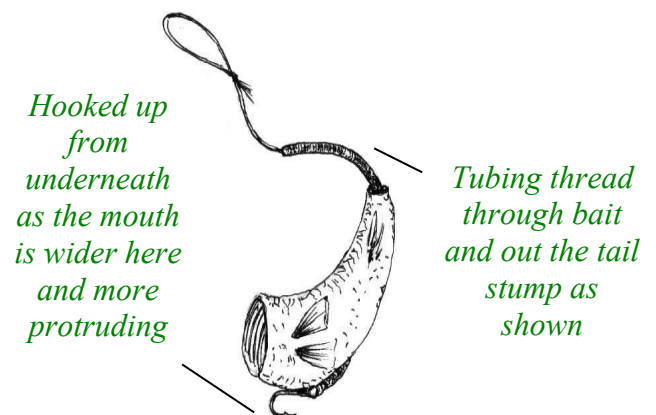
One of the problems I have found out when fishing the baits the way I did before as shown in the diagram below. I don't know when this happens, but either the bait would be reeled in, even slowly and the presentation was bobbins to say the least the braid would have sliced through the bait and it was dangling, or when the run did occur the run was missed, due to this. The main factor was either down to how far it was fished and also the impact as it hit the surface of the water, Water may be soft to the touch close in but with the velocity of the cast and arc of the bait through the air combined, the bait would be metaphorically hitting the surface of a brick wall, so it is no wonder a lot of runs are missed.



And this may happen with the other presentation if put through the same trauma of a cast and how the air effects it, as fish-baits are not exactly aero- dynamic. The last time I went fishing I did something different and found a few things out using the method I do know when it comes to presenting my fish baits using the “Withy-Pool Rig” in reverse as shown below.

As you can see I decided to use a reversed withy rig and, due to eels heads that I'm fishing for, I used a smaller bait than normal and cut the tail off completely, threading the whole rig through the fish and out the stump and hooking the bait-hook into the fish from underneath as shown in the diagram below.

Some interesting factures emerged when this was done, the bait seemed a lot more secure than the conventional way, secondly due to the tubing the chances of the bait being ripped of on the cast and contact with the water surface the bait came back in the morning the way it went out, the distance was only twenty feet or so but the other way I hooked them before it happened occasionally, but occasionally isn't good enough when the eel grabs the bait and there are no hooks there, especially using the SFR rig, or Dyson rig with the eel coming from underneath to get the bait.



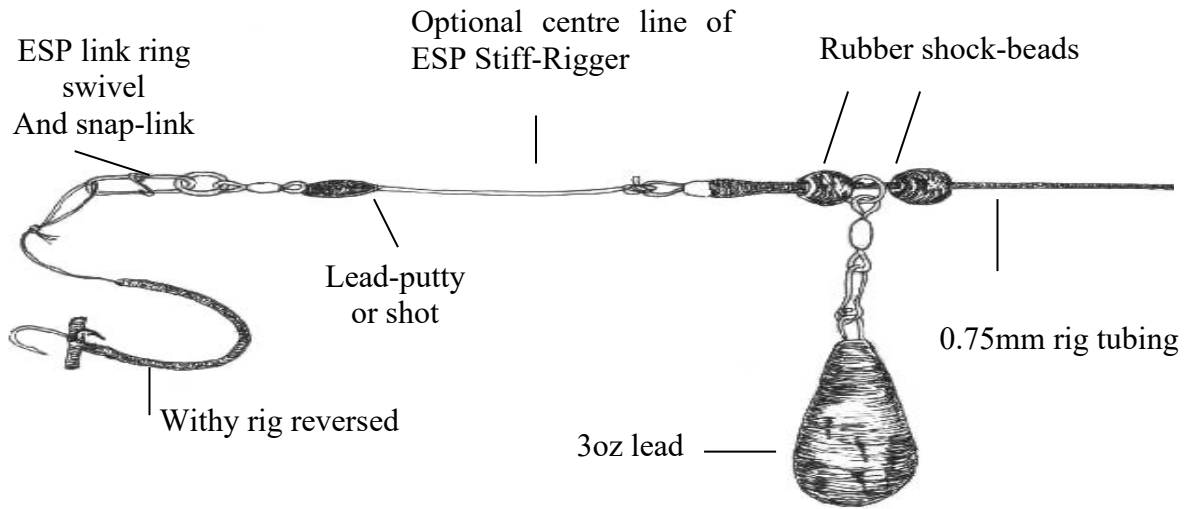
Also there is the added factor of the anti-deep hooking aspect as the tubing curves around the eels mouth on the initial take, or after the strike is made, depending if you are using semi-fixed via the run clip or a fully fixed set-up.

This is fine when fishing off-bottom rigs, but how do you get the same result fishing on the bottom or when you have to cast a longer distance to match the same results using the SFR rig? As I mentioned before that I will not fish a bait on the bottom, but I would fish a bait popped off bottom using either a free running rig or a fully fixed rig. This is how I would do it when the situation arises and I will go through some of the features, bearing in mind the concept of how I fish for eels today and the reason behind it and other lines of thought about eels and resistance as mentioned at the end of the last article I wrote “The Quest for Big Canal Eels”.

Going back to this idea of eels associating baits with resistance, the question you may be asking why use full resistance in the first place if that's the case? It all depends on how you look at it and how it can be

utilised and when it has to be changed for our advantage, I will explain the best way I can later. Firstly I will go through the bolt-rig ledger style, using the same concept as with the SFR Rig.

Fig 1: Pop-up Hinge Rig:



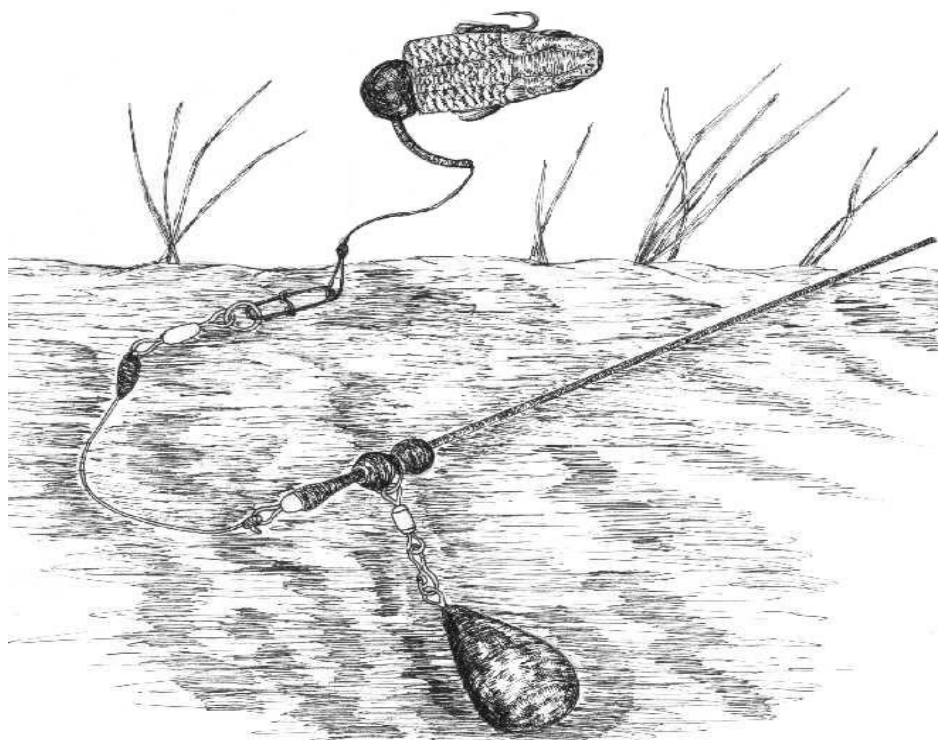
As you can see from the diagram the rig is fully fixed and the hole rig is presented on rig tubing and not lead-core due to the omission of a break-off, so the only thing left in the eels mouth would be the hook-link, this is the safest way of using a fixed rig unless a safety lead clip from Korda or Nash is going to be used. If using a helicopter fashion rig, then I would use lead-core as on the SFR rig, but that is to come yet.

Nothing new here as this has been used for carp for a number of years now, but the same effect could be used when in conjunction with a running lead, if you adjust the tension of the drop-back clips on your indicators, as there is more to it at first than meets the eye.

As you can see from the illustration to the left this is what it may act like on the bottom, depending on the consistency of the lake bed being fished and the lead design should be changed to cater this scenario, i.e. If the lake bed is gravel or heavy silt or hard clay bottom, or leaving or adding a centre section if the bottom is soft-silt.

When using running leads or rigs the whole rig can be transformed into a bolt rig by the adjustment of the indicator clips on the drop-back system, this I would class as a semi-fixed rig utilising the resistance of the clip to modify the rig, bending the rods around to the rig, this concepts date back to the very early bolt rig featured in "Carp Fever" by Kevin Maddocks.

As I have said in the past when using the methods that I do, the clip is the most important aspect of the whole concept as resistance is what eels associate



baits with either after being caught or having a bait ripped from their mouths on the initial strike. But this can be used to our advantage as I have mentioned before in past articles.



A 4lb 01oz canal eel, which was taken using a single worm on the SFR Rig. Another lipped hooked one to one run ratio beauty. This eel picked up a 3½ fixed lead and hurtled off with it. Giving me the conclusion the open bail arm could be a thing of the past. Again Peter Waterfield accompanied me on this session to witness the whole event.

Does this spell the end to the problem of deep-hooking eels and missed run and aborted takes using baits like worms or other small baits like maggots for example? Yes to the first aspect and almost yes to the second and third, but as with good laid plans one day a run will occur that will be the exception to the rule and wont be instantly hooked, that I could live with the exception to the rule! If it starts to happen to often then back to the drawing board and more modifications will have to be made to compensate this.

With this notion in mind the longevity of the eel has increased due to the immense decreasing of deep-hooking

and hopefully another step forward to finding what actually happens to eels after a capture by facts and not just theory. And maybe this could possibly be the beginning and the turning of a new page of the book on modern eel-fishing methods and tactics.

This season has been difficult to get out only managing roughly about ten to fifteen trips all year due to work commitments and also taking time out after spending lot of hours over the years fishing intensively. I think it is called a social life!

So what is to come?

Next year I will hopefully be getting in some hours to keep records of run ratio's to hook up rates and put some time back on the banking as the enthusiasm and hunger has returned after the club politics is at an end, which has taken a toll on all of the committee members and hopefully you will be seeing future articles by new writers and writers of old, who where spending all the hours god sends keeping the respectability of our club with out thanks within the specimen arena on various political defences of our club and our beloved species.

I'm looking forward to the new season too come and making plans already to hit the waters hard and get some good eels from them and also to have some thing new and challenging to write articles about, as I am running out of things to talk about for now! Also I have some other irons in the fire to look forward too next season hopefully it will be an interesting season to come. Well I will be leaving you there for now and hope all the very best for the New Year to come and the season to follow, tight lines and buckled rods!

With respects "The Burglar"

N.A.C Members Profile

1. N.A.C MEMBERS NAME...Steve Ricketts.

2. STATUS ...Married.

3. WHEN DID YOU FIRST START EEL FISHING ...About 6 years old.

4. REASONS FOR JOINING THE NAC ...To meet like minded “Lunes” and to pass on my experiences to others.



Eels of 6lb, 5lb – 15oz & 5lb – 02oz. Part of Steve’s multiple catch taken from Broadwater.

5. FIRST EEL EVER CAUGHT...Small fish from Lieston in Suffolk.

6. PERSONAL BEST EEL TO DATE...6lb – 02oz.

7. BEST REMEMBERED EEL SESSION... A multiple catch of big fish from Broadwater and more recently a similar catch from a Kent coastal pit.

8. WHICH MONTHS DO YOU FISH FOR EELS...February to December.

9. FAVOURITE VENUE...No particular favourite, but I do enjoy fishing large open pits.

10. ANY PARTICULAR BAIT PREFERENCES AND REASONS FOR THIS...Dead baits, as they are more selective on the waters I fish. However, given the choice, without nuisance fish I would always fish lobs.

11. FAVOURITE ITEM OF TACKLE...Custom built bivvie.

12. OTHER SPECIES THAT YOU FISH FOR...No other species unless the opportunity presents it self whilst I’m eeling.

13. OF ALL THE SPECIES YOU HAVE CAUGHT, WHICH ONE IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY... Eels, because they fascinate me and confound every darn attempt to catch a whacker even though I know their there!!! I think they are anyway.

14. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER ANGLING ORGANISATIONS... No, unless fishing clubs count.

15. ANY OTHER INTERESTS OUTSIDE ANGLING... Stain glass renovation and sex, when the opportunity’s there.

16. DIS-LIKES IN ANGLING... Being governed by people who have no interest in my style of fishing, and being “looked down” on by designer pratts who shall we say fish for other species, if that’s what its called.

17. HOW COULD THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BE IMPROVED...Difficult, the big fish scene has been taken over by carpers with little interest left of eels, zander, perch, roach etc. Maybe encourage people unused to eeling to come on the club fish-ins. Barring that, catch some monsters and get in the papers regularly to drum up interest.

18. AMBITIONS, IN ANGLING TERMS...Maybe have a book published. Catch an 8lb plus fish. Above all, be more consistent in catching big fish rather than the “boom and bust” angling I seem to suffer from.

19. DO YOU HAVE ANY ANGLING HEROES OR HAS ANYONE INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER TO DATE...John Sidley and Mick Bowles, I owe both these men much thanks for the encouragement I received as an elver basher.

20. DO YOU THINK THAT THE EXISTING RECORD OF 11lb-2oz WILL BE BROKEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF SO, WHAT TYPE OF VENUE DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE AND WILL IT BE TO AN EEL ANGLER OR AN ANGLER FISHING FOR ANOTHER SPECIES... There’s always that chance. The coastal pits in my manor are throwing up big fish on a regular basis, mostly to carpers but a 9lb fish did come from a Brighton coastal pit to an eeler. In this part of the country eeling is neglected in favour of carp, so who knows??? They are there to be caught, just need luck....a big slice of.

A Letter to the Editor.

From Jason “Eric-the-Eel” Morgan.

31/07/03

Hiya Jimmy.

Here’s the back page cartoon, really sorry it’s so late, hope you like it. Things have been weird lately, I have picked up a pencil many times but I just couldn’t get it right. Eric and his friends have been a tad elusive again this year with 6 eels from around 16 sessions (biggest thus far is a 3lb – 11oz fish caught way back in March). Maybe because the fishing as been so hard that I haven’t had the “buzz” to draw!!!...don’t know, this eeling lark does strange things to your brain!!! Sorry there’s no article I hope to have something sorted for the next issue of Anguilla (Vol 41 issue 2).

Last night a run of 4 fish on the bounce (1 each session, I’m not greedy!!!) came to a spectacular end with five or six good runs all missed, getting well and truly snagged twice. This, and a few more half-hearted runs, combined with a barge at 11:00pm plus partially blinding myself when a Denorobena (worm) flicked mud in my eye (I really shouldn’t be allowed out on my own!!!) meant I got around two hours kip.

It’s now 10:12pm, my eyes are sore (one more so than the other!!!) and I’m tired.

However, I have sorted the back page cartoon at last. Apologies to everyone for it being late...really got to go now...'causezzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz !!! zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!!!.

Uh!!!!....oh yes, before I fall asleep, please if possible can you include this letter in the mag', then my conscience will be clear.

Thanks.
Yours Scribblingly,
Pink-eye!!!
(Jason)

N.A.C Members Profile.

1. NAC MEMBERS NAME Peter Frost Drabble. Acquired nickname – The Anguilla Guerrilla.

2. STATUS.... Single and staying single. Two daughters from past mishaps.

3. WHEN DID YOU FIRST START EEL FISHING? 1995 when I moved on from pike fishing to try for a big eel.

4. REASONS FOR JOINING THE NAC.... In 1998 after meeting Arthur Sutton on a Shropshire water – he was fishing for carp, I was fishing for eels. He suggested I join the NAC as I was so interested in eels.

5. FIRST EEL EVER CAUGHT....
Aged about 9 at Rhyl in the river estuary. I caught an eel then started fishing for them after having weird bites on mackerel. I was there on holiday and had only just started fishing that summer- properly – I'd fished before that with a net and tied cotton to a bit of cane and caught stickleback on worm with no hook.

6. PERSONAL BEST EEL TO DATE.... 6:12 English eel in 1996.
16:03 New Zealand eel in 2001.



Pete with eels of 6lb – 12oz & 5lb – 04oz.

7. BEST REMEMBERED EEL SESSION.... For sheer impact I will never forget losing a monster eel from a 60ft deep clear, blue, china clay quarry in Cornwall. It was my first experience of a big eel - really

big eel. I was asleep (as usual) in the afternoon – was awoken by a run on the third rod baited with brandlings. Swiftly wound down and struck into an unstoppable, unseen force. I got it to the surface out in the middle. Big fish. Went off full pelt and bent the hook straight. I was left feeling optimistic that I could go back and catch a big eel there sometime but I've not had anything like it since with the biggest a 3:03. My first lesson on how hard it is to get a big eel on the bank.

8. WHICH MONTHS DO YOU FISH FOR EELS.... March to September.

9. FAVOURITE VENUE OR TYPE FISHERY.... Shropshire meres and wild Scottish lochs.

10. ANY PARTICULAR BAIT PREFERENCES AND REASONS FOR THIS.... Lobworms because they catch eels.

11. FAVOURITE ITEM OF TACKLE.... Delkim bite alarms and sounder box because they don't cause any noise pollution around the lake.

12. OTHER SPECIES THAT YOU FISH FOR..IF ANY.... Pike, perch and zander.

13. OF ALL THE SPECIES YOU HAVE CAUGHT WHICH ONE IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY.... Eels because of their sheer power and mystery.

14.ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER ANGLING ORGANISATIONS. ...No

15.ANY OTHER INTERESTS OUTSIDE ANGLING.... Pub, motorbike, canal boat, guitar and DIY.

16. DISLIKES IN ANGLING.... Bite alarms bleeping all night on small, overpopulated waters and 'anglers' not getting up to strike at runs – even had them coming to me next morning saying they've had no runs in the night.

Rod limits on super hard waters when I would like to use 4 rods on all such waters.

17. HOW COULD THE NAC BE IMPROVED.... Encourage people to have a more active part in the club and actually go to fish-ins and meetings. Choose better venues for the fish-ins would help and having a social afternoon on the fish-in.

18. AMBITIONS IN ANGLING TERMS.... Break my own personal best eel and live long enough to see an eel angler break the UK eel record.

19.DO YOU HAVE ANY ANGLING HEROES OR HAS ANYONE INFLUENCED YOUR ANGLING CAREER TO DATE... Sidley. McConnell. When I was a kid I used to be Peter out of Mr Crabtree but we always used to go pike fishing. The writings of Rickards and Fickling had an influence on my pike fishing.

20. DO YOU THINK THAT THE EXISTING EEL RECORD OF 11lb 2oz WILL BE BROKEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE IF SO WHAT TYPE OF VENUE DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE AND WILL IT BE BY AN EEL ANGLER OR AN ANGLER FISHING FOR ANOTHER SPECIES.... I live in hope but I honestly don't think it will.

Chairman's Page.

By Nick Rose.

Well here we are again its Christmas and a new year is approaching rapidly. I hope every one gets what they want from Father Christmas, it's just a shame he can't help out with catching our fish for us. I would like to remind you all that this will be my last Chairman's page as you all must know that I have done the three years I said I would and will resign from the position this AGM. It has been an honour to hold the chair and I hope I have not made to many blunders at the meeting. The first year was somewhat traumatic with much political and internal arguments but we have it seems come back to normality now and I hope to pass on the chair to the next man with the club in a much more stable environment.

I would like to thank Steve Richo for his help in the first 2 years and Anthony for this last year in there role as secretary and also all the committee and co-opted members for all there input. I don't like to mention names because I would forget someone who has been important to me but these few have helped me more than most. Jimmy, Steve, Pat and Kevin for always being there, Graham, Nick, Barry, Pete, Wayne, and Steve (of which there are 3) for the encouragement I have received fishing wise and of course any one else that knows me.

I will be putting my name forward for the products officers job again which has been so easy this year as no orders have been placed. My apologies for those few who have tried to order but as I have said before we need 6 items of clothing to make up an order. I will be bringing hopefully 2 new additions to the range at the AGM. They will be NAC mug (No that's not me) and a mouse mat.

For those that don't know Pete Waterfield was taken seriously ill late this year but is now on the road to recovery. He tells me he is left with a permanent headache and he cannot open his mouth as wide as before. Make of that what you want but I can think of at least two brill jokes. His troubles are not just his own health though as his young daughter Rachel is in and out of hospital and has been for all of the two years of her life so best wishes to her and the rest of the family.

Finally on a sad note I would just like to extend condolences from myself and the NAC to Steve Dawe and his Wife Lisa on the sad loss of their son Samuel, all our thoughts are with you both at this very sad time.

That's it I hope all your Christmas and New Year hopes are fulfilled and I hope to see you all next year, be it at the AGM or at a fish/in.

Yours Nick Rose.

Know more about your chosen bait. In this issue we take a look at The Gudgeon.

Supplied by Anthony Jolley.

The Gudgeon

Latin name
Gobio Gobio



Morphology : The gudgeon has a cylindrical shaped body with large scales. It has a slightly rounded back with a short but high fin, a forked caudal and a flat belly with pectoral fins fanning out. Its head is long and large and ends in a round snout and protruding mouth with thick lips and two barbels.

Coloration : The pigmentation of the gudgeon is quite close to that of the barbel and changes according to conditions

(temperature, reproduction...): the back varies from a yellowy-grey to brownish-green. The flanks are lighter and have brown markings along the whole length of the lateral line. Its belly is a greyish-yellow colour sometimes with pink or blue hues and with silvery glints. The fins have several rows of well defined black spots.

Behaviour and nutrition : The gudgeon is a sedentary fish which likes well-oxygenated clear water but adapts very well to ponds and lakes with stoney, gravelly or sandy bottoms. This small benthic predatory fish detects its prey with its barbels and is particularly fond of worms, insect larvae, molluscs, fish spawn and small crustaceans.... However it will eat vegetation and filamentous algae in particular.

Reproduction and development : The male reaches sexual maturity at 2 years of age and the female one year later. Ovulation takes place when the temperature of the water is between 16 and 20°C. During this period the males become covered with nuptial bumps.

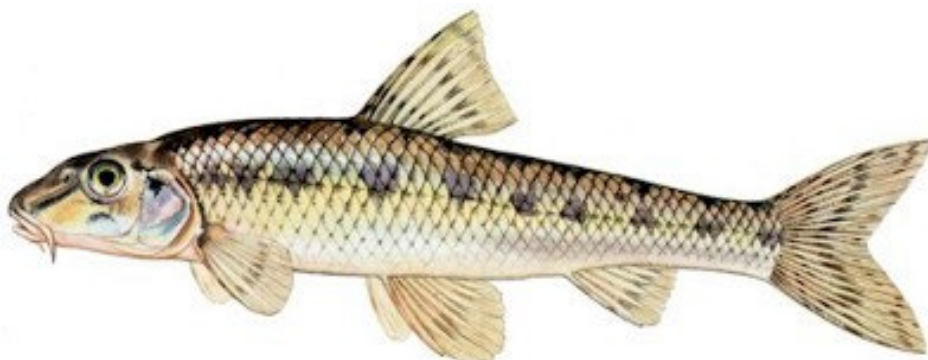
From May to August (depending on the region), the female deposits in several batches on the sandy bottom or on aquatic plants 1000 to 5000 eggs between 1,5 and 2 mm in diameter in small groups. Incubation varies from two to four weeks depending on the temperature.

The fry first of all feed on microscopic animals (protozoans, rotifers...), then insect and crustacean larvae (chironomids, trichoptera). Its development is rapid if it is in a favourable environment.

The gudgeon has such a short lifespan that it only seems to be able to reproduce once.

Geographical distribution : *Gobio gobio* is present in nearly all the European basins from the west to the Urals: It is absent from Italy (except for the north), from Greece (except for the north-east), and from the Scandinavian countries (except for the south) and from Scotland.

This gregarious fish is a good indicator of water quality and is abundant in some regions but is threatened in polluted and silted up locations. It is very vulnerable as its small size makes it attractive to predators such as trout. This is why it is continually restocked.



A Tale of Two Fours.

By Stephen Cotton.

As a new member of the NAC I thought it would be a good idea to write a short story that may be of interest to the members. From May 2001 I had started to concentrate on eel fishing. Prior to this I had mainly spent my time fishing local meres for Bream and Tench, with some success. I always intended to “get around to” fishing for eels at some point and, faced with an uphill struggle to beat my PBs for the mentioned two species locally, I decided to fish for eels. At this point I had visions of 5 and even 6lb eels gracing my nets, remembering a cover photo of Dave Holman and a 7lb+ eel from the past. However it will be no surprise to members to find that by the end of 2001 my PB was 2lb 3oz. By June 2002 I had upped this to just over 3lb, but was unable to beat this for the remainder of the season, despite catching numbers of smaller fish. At this point I thought I could do with some help so I joined the club. Following this, during a phone call to Peter Waterfield it was suggested that I target some of my local canals. Up to this point I had dismissed canals, mainly due to “hassle factor” reasons. After my last canal visit many moons ago I vowed never to return when a bargie had turned his boat round right in front of me...

Anyway my quest now was for an elusive 4lb eel. I had planned to start at the end of April of this year, with rising temperatures etc, but by the end of March daytime temperatures were in the 20's so I decided to cancel the DIY and “go for it”. By the 18th of April I had fished a few interesting sessions and had decided to target a new area. The canal I was targeting was relatively narrow with towpath side built up with concrete and the land behind falling away rapidly. The bottom was deep close in at approx 4.5 feet and gradually sloped up to the far bank where trees overhung a gap between marginal reed beds. The bottom of the canal was thick with silt. With darkness approaching I caught a few roach and bream for bait purposes. Three rods were fished. The first using a John Sidley (JS) rig and roach head close to the far bank, the second using Damian Woods Sunken Semi-Fixed Float Rig (SSFR) and lobs next to the far bank reeds. The final rod was fished using a JS rig on the near shelf with lobs again.

By 8:30pm darkness was all around and as I listened to the noise of distant cars I hoped I wouldn't be disturbed by any nocturnal towpath travellers in the hours to come. At approx 10pm I was alerted by a liner to one of the far rods. There is a big population of carp in this area of the canal and I suspected it to be one of them. Soon after at 10:20pm I had a screaming run on the SSFF. This unfortunately didn't hook up. I had a think and increased the baitrunner tension to max. A while later I again missed a bite, this time on the near rod and lobs. This was a short stuttery run and I convinced myself it was a bream. Soon after however I had a good run on the far rod and roach head. After a few seconds I struck and the rod looped over into stubborn resistance. With the eel on a fairly short line and no snags present there could only be one outcome. As I unfolded the net I knew I was looking at a new PB. As I waited for her to calm down I noticed the hook had fallen out in the net. At this point the eel looked massive and I couldn't have put a weight on her, the scales said 4lb 3oz. I was over the moon with a big grin on my face, all the past seasons struggles now seemed worthwhile. Prior to sacking her up I examined her for a distinguishing marks, noticing a large black spot between the eyes.

After this fish I wasn't bothered if I got any further action, but there was a little more to come. At 1am I again missed a bite on the close in JS rig and lobs but at 1:35am the SSFR scored with a lip hooked 2lb 3oz eel. At 2am it was all over as a bargie came past me with the large front headlight blazing. Not even this could piss me off however and for the next week or two I was walking round with a big grin.

This time the date was the 27th of July and I was fishing the same canal but in a different area to last time. The canal at this point had less features and was approx 1 foot shallower all round with an

even thicker layer of silt. In fact the only feature in this area was a far bank overhanging tree level with the waters edge. Fishing JS rigs I placed a gudgeon head close to the tree and a gudgeon section about 50yards down the canal in the opposite direction. A third rod, again using a JS rig was placed close in using double lob. As darkness approached I soon had a bite on the gudgeon head next to the tree at approx 10pm. This was soon struck and following a spirited fight I had a good eel in the net. At this point I also had a bite on the gudgeon section rod. I quickly scanned the netted eel, again the hook had fallen out and I also noticed a familiar black spot! I struck the other rod and a perch around the 1lb mark quickly came to the bank. As I saw a dog walker rapidly approaching the eel was quickly sacked up. That was it for eel action for the night, the only other action being a 12lb carp caught on double lob close in at 1am and a further missed bite on the same rod at 2am. Come morning I retrieved the sacked eel and examined her more closely. She weighed 4lb 2.5oz and her measurements were 38" x 7 3/4". At this point I was convinced she was the same fish as previously caught. As if to say not you again, instead of struggling, she lay still on the mat waiting for me to get the photos over with! As I slipped her back I could only wish her good luck and wondered if we would meet again.

On arriving home it was out with maps and photos. The first photos were taken with a throw



Photo 1. Taken on the 18th April with a disposable camera shows the "black spot" over the left eye.



Photo 2. This time taken on the 27th July with a quality camera clearly shows the "black spot" over the same eye.

away camera as my usual one had packed up. When these were developed I had them put on CD ROM and using my PC blew them up. While slightly blurry it is still possible to see the black spot (judge for yourself!). The photos taken in July were taken using a recently purchased digital camera and clearly show the black spot. Incidentally the distance between the two captures was approx 5.5 miles (as the canal flows!), with no lock gates being present in that distance.

The recapture (I'm convinced it is) posed lots of questions. Assuming this level of mobility is normal then it's no wonder that recaptures are rare and that waters soon die a death. Also with only 3 eels caught in 9 sessions on the same venue, between the two capture dates, and the fact that I managed a recapture, doesn't this point to a very low eel population? I now had a new target, a 5 pounder. Catching this from a different venue and living up to one of my nicknames "golden balls" is another story!

"The Third Week in June"

By Barry McConnell.

It's the third week in June and the air is warm, the sky dark and grey, while the atmosphere has that heavy feeling that can lead to thunderstorms. These are optimum conditions for eels; its time to cancel all appointments and concentrate on the moment.

It starts raining just before dark. A warm drizzle, not heavy but just enough to dampen the short grass at the local cricket ground. At midnight I don my night crawling kit – waterproofs, wellies, head torch and bucket – and a worm picking I do go. On arriving at the ground I relax with a smoke, allowing myself a few minutes to acclimatise to the night and awaken those nocturnal instincts that make me the night time angler that I am. I tune in to the smell of a worm pickers night – the smell of freshly mown grass and that earthy kind of leaf mould smell from damp soil. I turn on the head torch and its beam becomes my world. This is my night vision, whichever direction I turn my head, the torch goes too, it's sufficient, I'm used to it, I can see in the dark.

Plenty of worms are up on the surface. It's a good night as the worms have most of their bodies stretched out on the grass. A worm will keep its tail in the hole but will stretch out on to the damp grass to feed and mate. The warmer, wetter and calmer the weather; the further out of the hole it will venture. Like an eel, it must keep its skin from drying. When it is windy, cold or dry the worm won't come far onto the grass, only the very tip of its nose can be seen and it will be hard to catch. Tonight they will be easy, as they have ventured too far out to make a hasty retreat. If you are fast and light-footed it's possible to whip the worm from its hole quickly before it's able to respond to the invading torchlight. If you are too slow or heavy footed, the worm will be alerted to your presence and it may vanish in an instant, leaving you grabbing at thin air; or you may get hold of the worm but it has already gained sufficient grip to engage a tug of war, which can result in damage to the worm. Two and a half hours later there are 670 worms in the bucket. A few hours out in the damp night air, a good haul of worms and the fact that I am going eel fishing has got me feeling pleased, quite heady, as though something is about to happen. I'm excited. Destination – a neglected mere.

The mere covers over 60 acres. Most of the water less is less than 15ft deep but there are a couple of very deep holes, which is usually the case in a glacially formed mere. A lot of the bank is covered in old woodlands, which are semi managed for a pheasant shoot. Some areas are private and others too swampy to get to.

I unlock the gate and draw the van into the angler's car park. It's deserted and peaceful as I have the place to myself. Today the rain induces songbirds to sing loudly from the treetops high above green, lush bank side vegetation that droops, top-heavy with raindrops. Middle June at its finest, a great time for big eels; and I felt high on the season, I felt so glad to be alive.

Following the path along the bank, through a wood, I come from behind a bush and startle a farm

worker, busy scything nettles beside the path. He remembers me, “ Eh up lad – you be after eels then. Those two swims you fished last time haven’t been fished since - all overgrown. Tell you what, I’ll scythe the undergrowth and clear room for your shelter and you see if you don’t have a real good catch.” An offer I can’t refuse. This one feels good - my own hunch backed up by local knowledge. As we all know, big eels thrive on neglect – and these swims have five years of growth on the bank since last fished.

Access to the wood swims is by the angling club boat. It’s cooler out on the water as I struggle to manoeuvre the over-laden boat full of fishing tackle. The water is clear and I can see weed-beds rising from the bottom. The weed grows in water up to about 8ft deep. I follow this contour along the lake, noting where the weed runs out. I fancy fishing my baits at 10ft deep where there is no weed. The boat glides silently through the shallows and masses of perch fry scatter in the sun-warmed waters as I nose the boat ashore to deposit my gear.

Having returned the boat, I set up in the end swim. Overhead tree branches force the angle of my cast so I have to fish in shallow, weedy water. Within minutes I have a run, which results in a 12lb carp. There are a few carp on the move in the warm shallows. I decide to move to the other swim where I can fish into more open, deeper water. I move the bivvy and all then, just as I’m about to take the last rod out, I get a run from a 19lb carp. As I’m playing the fish the boat appears with an angler in it – Pete Drabble, and he’s mocking me, “Caught you- Carp angling- Carp man- Carp van,” and so on. I tell him I’ve just moved so that he can have the hot swim full of fish and weed-beds. Pete likes fishing into weed-beds and he fished this swim last time when he caught tench to over 6lb right from the thick of the weed.

In my swim it is once again difficult to cast to the clearer, deeper water. I manage it by wading out into the lake a long, long way then whacking 4oz legers as far as I can. As I cast all 4 rods into the desired area, I wonder if anyone has ever cast to this area before. Probably not, unless from a boat. (That’s me, you see, always trying to find un-fished, virgin water.) Each time I wind in, I find lots of bloodworms and a fine, leaf mould type silt draped around the leger. Bingo, just what I wanted.

Rods in and all prepared when Pete’s mock owl whistle summons me to his bivvy for brewing up rituals. At 8.15pm I get a run and its still full daylight. “Bloody carp,” I say as I run back to my swim. “No. Eel,” I hear Pete say. It is too, a 4:14. Most of my big eels have been caught at night so the daylight visuals make this fight more exciting as a big bronze coloured eel thrashes and slaps its tail on the surface as it comes to the net.

The weather is still very warm, muggy and sultry. The air seems to be getting heavier, as though building up to thunder, but it never actually does. It’s too hot and clammy for a t-shirt so I don a sleeveless vest for comfort. At night it’s too warm to wear the hat, which I usually wear for warmth and keeping out insects, etc. It starts to rain, a warm rain. I look out over the water as its going dark and everything seems right. The lake is sizzling and giving off a feeling of.. of...of perfect eeling conditions. And I am hopeful.

At 2.05am I get a run on 5 lobworms legered at long range and a lengthy tussle results in A 5.07 eel. I’m really pleased at this. Two big eels in one session; it seems to be my lucky night.



Barrv with his eel of 5lb – 07oz

Perhaps I may get another. Little did I know what was to come.

At 5.15am, I take the 5:07 to Pete's swim for a photo session. As I am wrestling with the eel on the bank, my alarm sounds in the other swim and I ask Pete to get it for me. While I am re-sacking the eel I can hear various Delkim tones coming from the other swim. I arrive there to find Pete, rod bent into a good fish and a bemused, sort of puzzled, expression on his face as he looks at the other three rods. Each rod has line peeling off the spool at a different speed, each rod is pointing in a different direction and each alarm is sounding a different tone. Finally the penny drops with Pete – a full flush, 4 runs at once. I come to his assistance and land eels on rods 2 and 3 (3:02 and 2:02) while the run on rod 4 stops. On Pete's rod it's not an eel but a massive tench of 7or 8lb which, during the heat of the moment, we regretfully put back un-weighed, especially when Pete confesses that it is a personal best. Finally we remember the 5lb eel on the bank. I start to pose for the photo and rod 4 starts up again- the only rod with any bait in the water. I go and land another eel.

The eels continue to feed all day and seven more eels come to my net - 4:08, 3:01, 3:04, 4:01, 3:07, 3:14 and a boot. At midnight I put a deadbait on each rod, turn on the sounder box, attach it to my bedchair, then get 4 hours sleep. On waking I re-bait with lobworms once again and get a run straight away. This proves that most eels in this water are worm feeders (pretty obvious when you consider the numbers of bloodworms draped around the leger). I am using big bunches of lobworms with 4 or 5 worms hooked



*Barry displays his catch of 8 eels to
4lb – 08oz.*

near to the head where they are thinner – that way you can fit more on a size 4 hook. I have bobbins hanging between reel and butt ring. Bobbins seem to be a peculiarity of mine as I've noticed most other eel anglers using line clips or monkey climbers. I prefer something free hanging not attached to any cord, something that will just drop off when reaching the rod and will give minimal resistance. I started with washing-up liquid bottle tops when carping in the 70's. Now, as a new-age eel angler, I've progressed through lightweight plastic curtain hooks to plastic covered metal cup hooks, which are just the right weight. Larger, heavier hooks can be used to combat differing flows and wind strengths.

Pete went on to catch a few eels from his swim. His approach to the weed entails playing an eel in the thick of it then he hauls the rod bending bundle to the margins where he proceeds to net as much weed as he can. Dragging the mass ashore, he prises the weed apart and lifts out a good eel. He does this four times with eels of 2:00, 3:13, 3:09 and 2:04. With 3lb t.c. rods and 15lb line, he probably dragged in a wheelbarrow full of weed with each eel. Brute force was the order of the day and Pete's stepped-up tactics conquered the swim. Well done Anguilla Guerrilla.

I keep on catching eels regularly throughout the session with most of the activity coming during daylight. Big eel fishing is usually a slow game with most runs coming in the dark. I've had multiple catches of small eels before but on this session I'm hauling in big eels as though boot bashing at an easy water. I've never experienced such sport before and the catch is my best ever. By the end of the two day session I've taken an incredible haul of 18 eels, with the biggest going 5:07, along with four 4's, seven 3's, five 2's and a boot for a total weight of 60lb 12oz. All the eels took big bunches of lobworms fished at long range when the weather was very warm and very wet weather during the third week of June.

General Secretary's Page.

By Anthony Jolley.

Well here we are in the middle of winter, its really cold outside tonight although I heard somewhere it's the warmest year on record, sure does not feel it. I'll try to keep this report as short as I can as I will be doing the main report at the A, G, M, in March. I have as ever been putting the N, A, C `s concerns forward to "Those in power" regards eel conservation, Along with Clive Dennison of the E, S, G. under OUR umbrella group the Eel Conservation Society (E, C, S.). I was going to try and up date you all on the behind the scenes work, then I thought I couldn't do anywhere near as good a job as what was on the NEWLY updated website of the E, C, S. I also thought there maybe some members who aren't able to view the internet so I thought "SOD IT" I'll reproduce the whole site and give it to Jimmy for the magazine. I hope you will enjoy reading it though, There was a lot of effort put in to the documentation by Clive and then Ken Ward had to build us a totally new outlet for it. If you get the chance to view the site on line please do, <http://www.angling.freemove.co.uk/ecsweb.htm>

At the winter social meeting in November Chris Siddall expressed his desire to step down as social officer, he confirmed that he had spoken with Graham Wilkes who has offered his services up to the date of the A.G.M. This move to install Graham as Social officer will hopefully give him time to put in place the dates and venues for next years fish-ins. My thanks go to Chris for the effort he has put in over the years.

On a very serious note, I have contacted the Zander Anglers Club about my concerns regarding an article within a copy of their magazine "Snapper" The article is condoning the use of home made equipment to trap eels for the use as bait. We as anglers need to defend the rights of all anglers to use all legal methods to capture their chosen species of fish, This should range from the use of live fish as bait right through to the appropriate use of keep nets. However the article within the Z, A, C, magazine is clearly condoning the use of un-licensed equipment, and suggests the breaking of various byelaws. Obviously there are some conservational issues involved. I will do my best to point Z, A, C, in the right direction, we can only try to educate the general angling public about the decline in eel numbers, we cannot say "Don't use eels as bait" when we as anglers wish to use other fish to catch our eels. However I would hope that our own members who know the problems facing the eel would consider the use of eels as bait to catch which ever fish they fish for to be adding to the weight the eel is under. I have heard it said many times on the web forums "I don't take enough eels to make any difference to the decline in eels". That is a rubbish statement when you consider the eels they take could be uninfected by the parasite *Anguillacoli crassus*, These "FEW" eels could at the right time (if survived) be responsible for the continuance of a fish in decline. The eel is a European stock so all eels are valuable to the continuance of the species.

I hope you all manage to attend the A, G, M, in March, I know its been said loads of times. BUT! The A, G, M, is the most important meeting of the year, it's the time when the members present chart the course the club will take for the following 12 months, It is the meeting at which you as a member can take up a committee position, (you can have mine if you want it), all the committee positions are available if you feel you would like to have your input as a committee member consider a role.

You may notice there is a lack of articles by club members in this copy of "Anguilla", as far as I know nothing put forward by our members has been left out to make room for other material. I can sense the first signs of frustration from the "Team" a lack of contribution from members and a general complacency within the club in regards feedback (whether good or bad) concerning the production and contents, will I feel eventually take its toll. I know the members of the "team" well; none of them are fulfilling the role for gratitude. BUT I'm sure it must be frustrating to work hard on a product (for no financial gain) and receive no feedback, I hope we don't come to the point were we loose the magazine in its present format just because we are too lazy to acknowledge the efforts of the team and all the contributors to the magazine, I hope that there is at least one thing in this magazine which will prick at your brain and hopefully get you to put your thoughts down on paper. If you are not happy with any of my comments.... say so!! At least that would be a step in the right direction.

Keep well. Anthony 'BT' Jolley.

N.A.C Products Page.

From
The Products Officer

**Mr Nick Rose, 131 Goosemoor Lane, Erdington, Birmingham.
B23 5QG.**

Hooded Sweatshirts..... price £18-50p Plus postage of £2-20p
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Internet Resources.

Supplied by Anthony Jolley.

It is hoped to make this a regular feature within "Anguilla". The idea being to "lift" information from the internet so that those members who may not have access to the "net" can get to see what information there is to be had about the eel, its life cycle and any other aspects that may be relevant to the members of the N. A. C either as anglers or in the general search for information on the species we fish for.

I hope you enjoy this, the first piece I have re-produced for you, It details the research being carried out on the ability of the eel to reach their suspected spawning grounds. I'm sorry for the foreign chapter titles but I'm sure you'll get the gist of it all.... So, read on.....

Simulated migration of European silver eel: effects of long term swimming and parasitic infection pressure on energy balance and gonadal development



Titel van het onderzoek

Simulated migration of European silver eel: effects of long term swimming and parasitic infection pressure on energy balance and gonadal development (LBI.4199).

Omschrijving van het onderzoek

The European eel (*Anguilla anguilla* L.) is an important species for aquaculture and fisheries. Recently a decrease was observed in the influx of glass eel. The question arises if this phenomenon can be ascribed to a reduced capacity of the spawners (silver eel) to reach the 6000 km from Europe located proposed spawning grounds in the Sargasso sea. Several possible causes can be given to explain the reduced influx of glass eel..

1. the silver eels have not enough energy supplies to reach the spawning grounds,
2. the animals become poisoned by the PCB levels which are released when fat is used,

3. the swim-bladder of the animals is infected with the parasitic nematode *Anguillicola crassus*.

From a pilot experiment conducted in Leiden in a specially developed swim tunnel we demonstrated that eel can be induced to swim continuously (day and night) at a current velocity of 0.4 meter per second. The animal covered without signs of fatigue 4000 km. For migrating silver eel it is assumed that they perform the journey to the Sargasso sea without feeding. They migrate the distance of 6000 km during a period of 4-6 months, probably at a constant cruising speed. Furthermore it is generally believed a maturation of the gonads occurs during this migration period. However, never before an adult silver eel spawner has been observed in the Sargasso sea. Based only on the observation that the larvae (*Leptocephali*) of eel were observed in the Sargasso sea it is assumed that their spawning grounds are located in this area. To elucidate this paradox and to give an answer to the question whether starving silver eel can swim this distance, experiments have to be conducted in a large swim tunnel. Silver eel will be forced to swim 6000 km over a period of 4-6 months. This allows to analyse the physiological and endocrinological status, the release of PCB from the fat to the blood, the PCB pools in the blood and tissues and the development of the gonads. Furthermore the correlation between infection pressure with the swim-bladder parasite *Anguillicola crassus* and the swimming performance will be examined. Results can directly be translated into policy making decisions such as maximally acceptable level of pollution of the inland waters with PCBS, and measures to limit infection of elvers with the swim-bladder parasites in nature or on fish farm's. Furthermore if migration will result in gonad development and maturation under laboratory conditions this will be an important breakthrough in the knowledge of the reproduction physiology of eel.

Gebruikers

Er zijn 66n bedrijf en three non-profit organisaties bij dit onderzoek betrokken.

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21-11-2000

Anal redness in European eels as an indicator of infection by the swim bladder nematode, *Anguillicola crassus*

Supplied by Anthony Jolley.

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Anal redness in European eels *Anguilla anguilla* is related to the prevalence and mean abundance of the swim bladder nematode *Anguillicola crassus* and may provide a simple, non-invasive diagnostic tool for *A. crassus* infection.

Key words: *Anguilla anguilla*; *Anguillicola crassus*; eel; nematode; swim bladder.

Anguillicola crassus larvae occupy and feed on the wall of the European eel *Anguilla anguilla* (L.) swim bladder, whilst pre-adults and adults occupy the lumen and feed on host blood (Wurtz *et al.*, 1996). *Anguillicola crassus* infection is normally determined by dissection of the swim bladder. Several studies (Buchmann *et al.*, 1991; Høglund & Pilstrom, 1995; Nielsen & Buchmann, 1997), however, have demonstrated that the cuticle of *A. crassus* contains specific antigens, thus allowing parasite detection by ELISA (Knopf *et al.*, 2000). More recently, Beregi *et al.* (1998) developed a radio-diagnostic method for studying swim bladder inflammation caused by *A. crassus*, enabling assessment of the air, worm and exudate content of the swim bladder. These detection methods are either invasive or require technical expertise. European eels infected with *A. crassus*, however, exhibit different anal colouration in comparison to their uninfected counterparts. This study therefore investigated the possibility of using this as a non-invasive diagnostic tool for *A. crassus* infection of *A. anguilla*.

Monthly samples of European eels were collected from Lower Lough Erne, Northern Ireland (54°30' N; 80°50' W), between October 2000 and October 2001 using a fyke net, yielding 198 European eels ranging from 18.1 to 31.6 cm in total length (LT). They were killed on-site with MS222 and frozen at -20° C to preserve skin colouration. Fish were then defrosted and assessed for colouration of the anal region as normal, yellow-orange, pink or red. Normal anal colour was defined for the purpose of this study as that of ventral skin. The European eels were dissected, swim bladders removed and the presence and number of *A. crassus* recorded.

Of the 198 fish examined, 115 were infected with *A. crassus* (58%) and a further 15 showed signs of previous infection (eight with blood filled swim bladders and seven with thickened swim bladder walls), giving a revised prevalence of 66%. There was a significant increase in the proportion of European eels infected with *A. crassus* as anal redness increased, both considering currently parasitized' and 'currently plus previously parasitized eels ($X^2 = 63.2$ and 96.1 , respectively, d.f. = 3, both $P < 0.001$; Fig. 1).

Considering all 198 European eels, there were significant increases in mean worm abundance (Bush *et al.*, 1997) as anal redness increased [one-factor ANOVA; $F_{3,194} = 26.1$, $P < 0.0001$; Fig. 2(a)]. As worm number could not be determined for 15 cases, the analysis was repeated omitting these data. This gave a clearer distinction in mean worm abundance as anal redness increased [one-factor ANOVA; $F_{3,179} = 36.9$, $P < 0.0001$; Fig. 2(b)].

To minimize the numbers of individuals killed, non-invasive diagnostic approaches to fish health are needed (Stamp Dawkins & Gosling, 1992; Barber, 1997). Despite extensive interest in *A. crassus*, no method has been developed that allows for non-invasive evaluation of its occurrence and

level of infection of *A. anguilla*. The present investigation indicates that any divergence from normal through to red anal colouration could be used as a diagnostic tool. A red anus indicated a high probability of infection and high parasite abundance. The causal mechanism may be associated with the parasite eggs and larvae, which pass through the pneumatic duct and intestine (de Charleroy *et al.*, 1990). Indeed, in perch *Perca fluviatilis* L., the intestinal nematode *Camallanus lacustris* causes inflamed reproductive organs and anuses (Woo, 1995).

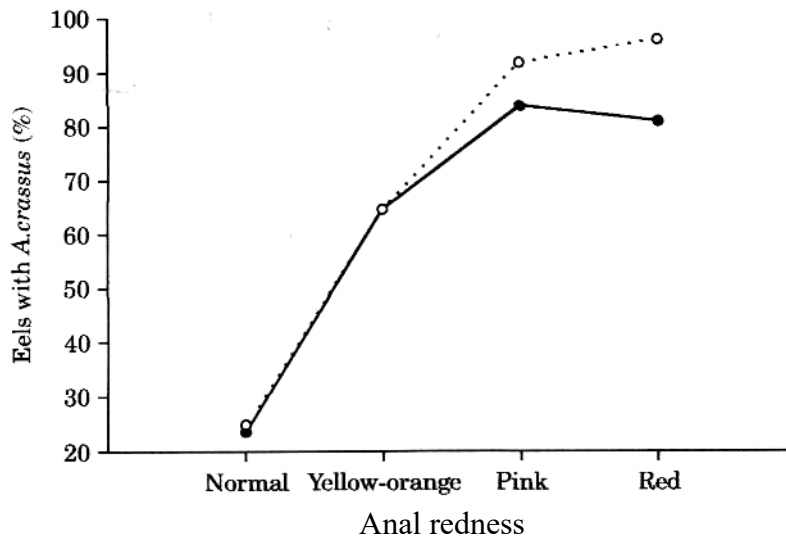


FIG 1 *Anguillicola crassus* prevalence in relation to *Anguilla anguilla* anal redness ●, currently parasitized; ○, currently plus previously parasitized.

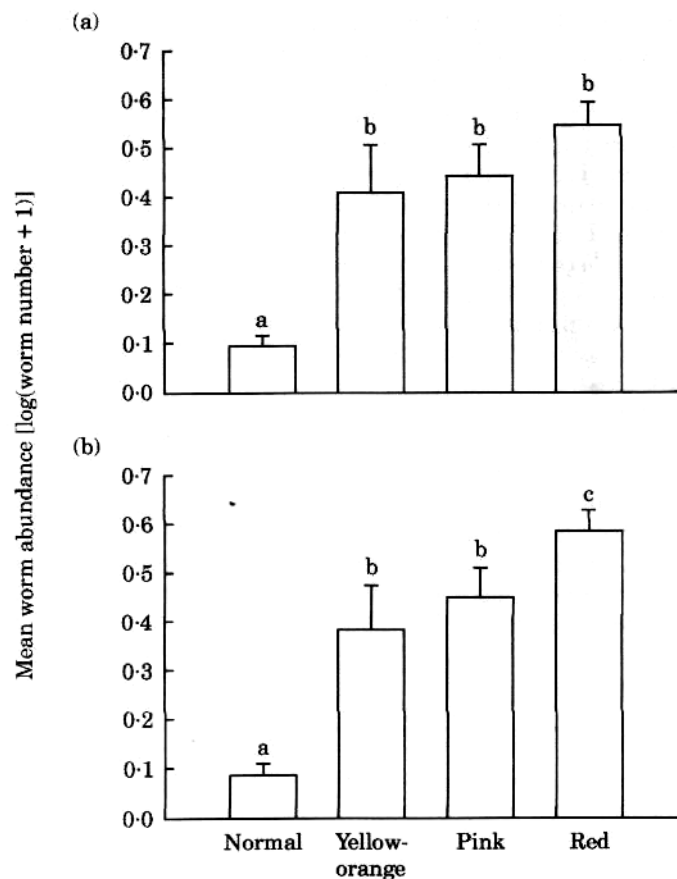


FIG. 2. Mean + SE. worm abundance in relation to anal redness: (a) all 198 *Anguilla anguilla* sampled and (b) with 15 indeterminate cases omitted (see text). Means sharing the same letter are not significantly different.

Whilst assigning anal colour is somewhat subjective, this may be used as an indicator of the presence and levels of *A. crassus* infection of *A. anguilla*. In particular, in fresh water where *A. crassus* is known to occur in European eels, anal redness may provide a rapid assessment of differences in infection among populations, between areas, through seasons and over time. Anal colouration may, however, have other causes and thus dissection of sample specimens would be necessary to validate what may be a useful diagnostic tool in fisheries management.

This study was funded by a Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland Studentship to S. Crean. We thank C. Kennedy, N. Marks, I. Montgomery and A. Kirkpatrick for helpful comments and J. Brazil and R. Shaw for help with eel collections.

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(The above information for this issue of "Anguilla" was supplied by Anthony Jolley, below is the e-mail that accompanied it to explain where it came from.)

Hi Jimmy,

Just got this paper from Clive Dennison, I sent him a link to an abstract which we also passed on to Garry Jones of the E,A he in turn has obtained the FULL article (which needed to be subscribed to at a fair cost) and returned us the complement.

It is a bit complicated but it tells us how we as anglers are able to identify the existence of A/C in the eels we catch through external observation,

Put it in the mag along with this e-mail to explain how we have got the information.

Be good!!!,
Tony.

ps Sorry its in acrobat reader,

Up-date on the work of the Eel conservation society.

Supplied by Anthony Jolley.

Formulated from the contents of the E,C,S website
produced by **Clive Dennison and Ken Ward.**

Dear All,

As promised in the last “Anguilla” I have now managed to formulate a complete update to the work of the Eel Conservation Society, I have reproduced the E,C,S website for ALL members to see. As some members are not on line they would obviously not be able to view it.

I make no apologies for the length of the following piece as this is I feel important that the contents of the website are reproduced within the N,A,C magazine.

I would like to thank Clive Dennison (E,S,G) for his work on the production of the website and his efforts within eel conservation. Also I wish to thank Ken Ward for the “I,T” skills he has used to put the E,C,S website in place.

I hope you enjoy reading the contents of the reproduced website.

Regards,
Anthony Jolley.

The Eel Conservation Society.



A Joint Initiative
Supported by
The Eel Study Group
And
The National Anguilla Club

Formation: The ECS was formed in 1995 following on from a meeting attended by representatives from the specialist Eel angling groups to discuss the need for conservation measures to protect the UK stocks of the freshwater Eel.

Representative Groups. The Eel Study Group and the National Anguilla Club are collectively represented by the ECS on matters relating to Eel conservation. Both groups however, still retain their individual membership conditions and services to members.

Current Eel and Elver Fisheries

Elver:

In the UK the Elver fisheries are concentrated primarily in the South Western quarter of the country particularly around the Rivers Severn and Wye and areas / river systems draining into the Bristol Channel (Devon, Somerset, South Wales) Some Elver fishing is carried out on the south coast.

Numbers of Elver net licenses have varied to meet fluctuating supply and demand of the international trade. Approximately 1000 licenses were issued during the 1980's; Licences peaked at 2500 during 1998, and approximately 1900 during 1999.

The vast majority of the catch is exported to Europe and the Far East to supply aquaculture needs for growing on to provide Eels for food markets. Some European supplies are for restocking purposes again to sustain the commercial fisheries of the Eel.

In Europe the main Elver fisheries are primarily in France around the Atlantic coast, which produces around 200 tonne of Elvers per annum. Fishing also takes place in Spain and Portugal.

Export of Elvers to the Far East account for 100 tonne of Elvers

Elvers can demand extremely high prices, in the 1997/8 season prices were reported as high as 200 pounds per KILOGRAM but prices have reduced recently but still demand around 60 –100 pounds per KILOGRAM

Catches of Elvers for England and Wales are approximately 10 tonne per annum but then one should consider that one kilo of Elvers can contain between 3500 and 4000 individual baby Eels, the 10 tonne catch therefore representing between **35 and 40 million individual baby Eels.**

License fees for Elver dip nets vary according to the regional areas, since they are still currently regulated and prices set by the old Regional NRA byelaws, many of which were last reviewed in the mid 80's, prices are currently between 11 and 50 (2003 prices) with proposals by the EA are currently under review to increase these to just 65pounds. (The sale price of just a kilo of Elver catches).

Yellow and Silver Eels Fisheries

In England and Wales a number of methods are used for catching yellow and Silver Eels. There were approximately 100 block licences for numerous traps, 2000 licenses for Fyke nets, a small number of licenses for trawl fishing in southern estuaries (primarily the River Thames and South coast) and 15 licenses for fixed permanent weir traps.

There is an intensive Eel fishery in Northern Ireland centred around the Lough Neagh and Erne systems which is sustained by Elver transfers, catches for Lough Neagh are around 600 tonne per year.

Much of the catch goes to Europe, primarily Holland, Belgium and Germany to be processed by smoking of for fresh consumption.

Some limited netting activity takes place in Scotland.

Catches of Eels from England and Wales are approximately 200 tonne per annum

The estimates of European wild caught Eels is around 22-30,000 tonne per annum

The estimates of European Aquaculture farmed Eels is around 11,000 tonne per annum

License fees for traps, nets and weir traps vary according to differing sizes and type and again vary dependent upon the regional areas, since they are still currently regulated and prices set by the old Regional NRA byelaws, many of which were last reviewed in the mid 80's.

2003 prices are currently between just 30 pence and 20 pounds dependent on size and type. Proposals by the EA are currently under review to increase these to 10 pound for a group of 10 traps, 5 pounds per medium sized Fyke net and 25 pounds for large Gloucester type Fyke nets, again these represent the sale price of just a few kilos of Eel catch.

Current Threats to UK and European Eel Stocks

Commercial pressures:

The European wide commercial fisheries for Eels and Elvers at all stages of the Eels lifecycle have all put the Eel under increasing pressures, whilst pointing out that these are not the sole reason for the Eel stock declines, they are yet another aspect that is continuing to drive the stock into continued decline and hindering and chances of stock recovery already reeling from a number of other environmental pressure.

There is now a complex international trade in the Eel at Elver, yellow and silver stages. In the UK we have seen the UK Elver trade exports increase from a value of around 200,000 pound in the late 1970's early 80's to a peak of 2.6 million pounds in 1997/98. The trade in Yellow / silver Eels has also seen major changes in income with exports peaking in 1997 at an estimated 2.5 million pounds, declining to a figure of around 500,000 pound in 2000 (B Knight 2001) - this is no longer just a 'cottage industry' that many of the Eel industry people would wish it to be portrayed!!

Export of Elver to Europe for intensive aquaculture rearing of Eels and particularly the Far east again to supply aquaculture are totally reliant upon European waters to provide the necessary Elvers needed for growing on for the food market, this has resulted in extensive pressure to exploit and remove from our UK and European environment massive numbers of the European Eel Elvers for exports to other European countries and the Far East.

Oceanic current changes / Reduction in Elver recruitment – Changes in the gulf stream ocean current are suspected of having effect on the distribution and numbers of Elvers reaching European waters. Similar declines have been monitored in the USA Elver numbers, which have also shown similar declines in numbers. In a report of the working group on Eels held at Brussels May 2003 data revealed that the number of Elvers reaching the majority of European river systems showed massive declines around the late 70's early 80's with **the numbers recorded in 2002 representing just 2% of the 1970/80's figures!!**

Habitat loss/Obstructions to passage.

Large-scale reduction in the areas of wetlands and dikes available to be colonized by Eels across Europe has resulting in restricted access to upper river catchments. Dams, weirs and flood control systems have all been instrumental in restricting access to upper river catchments and potential Stillwater environments.

Hydroelectric power stations have been shown to have a major mortality effect on Eels and Elver by restricting up-stream Elver migration and increased mortality of mature downstream migrating adult silver Eels. There has been major increase in the numbers of hydroelectric dam systems built across Europe particularly immediately following the Second World War.

Anguillicola Crassus: This is a nematode parasite that infects the swim bladder of the European freshwater Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*). It was introduced to Europe from its native Asia via the trade in live Eels traded back to Europe for the live food market.

First noted in Europe in the early 1980's spread rapidly to most of the European countries during 1985 /90, with the first recorded case in the UK reported in the mid 1980's.

A complex Lifecycle may inflict increased mortalities and affect the ability of Silver migratory Eels to successfully complete their migration back to the Sargasso Sea to breed. Increased research is needed to determine the exact effects on Eel migration.

Latest recommendations from ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Seas) Working Group on Eels –

From the report of their meeting held in Nantes, France, September 2002: reported the following recommendations:

1. A recovery plan for the Eel stock is compiled and implemented as a matter of urgency and that fishing and

- other anthropogenic (habitat loss etc) mortality be reduced to the lowest possible level until such a plan is agreed upon and implemented.
2. 2. Monitoring or recruitment, stocks, fisheries and escapement should at least be sustained at recent levels, whilst a stock recovery plan – including a comprehensive monitoring and research programme is agreed upon and implemented.
 3. 3. Member countries report annually on trends in their local populations and fisheries to the working group.

Summary of the report from the special ICES meeting held at Brussels 8th May 2003

The ECS members were given a summary by EA staff at our latest meeting with them (Stoke July 2003) of a special Working group meeting held at Brussels which was attended by EA Eel fisheries staff.

The report detailed the European stock status of the Eel and Elver fisheries, Possible causes of The declines in stocks i.e. Ocean Current changes, Habitat loss, predation, parasites, pollution, Fisheries and spawner quality due to Heavy metal pollution.

The European stock recovery measures were discussed with the European Union Commission concluding that there was a strong need for immediate action if the stock is to recover. The Commission hopes to present an action plan for the Eel by summer / Autumn 2003 possibly being published in the form of a directive.

ECS Legislative Involvement:

1995 - All regional NRA offices were contacted and information regarding then regional National Rivers Authority Eel fisheries byelaws gathered. This highlighted a large number of anomalies across the regions, which we have since been bringing to the attention of the authorities notice to bring about changes

During **1998 and 1999** we made representations to the SACG (Specialist Angler Conservation Group –now the SAA) and the Moran Committee in preparing for the forthcoming MAFF fisheries review.

1999 – Further information gathering from the 'new' EA regarding the Eel and \ Elver fisheries.

1999 / 2000 – MAFF Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries review: The ECS member groups made very detailed submissions to the MAFF Salmon and freshwater Fisheries reviews group. The report (published March 2000) contained 14 recommendations Specific to the Eel and Elver fisheries.

MAFF Freshwater Fisheries review – Final report and recommendations : Relevant to Eels and Elvers

Executive summary : Pages vii to xii (covers 5 and a half pages) section 12 relates to Eels.

Quote : Eels appear to be in serious decline. As all eels in Europe form part of a single stock, we urge the development of a Europe-wide stock recovery plan involving measures to reduce exploitation of eels at all stages of their life cycle as soon as possible. We would also like to see the introduction of a ban on fishing for Elvers other than in rivers in Estuaries where it is currently practised and a number of other changes made to current legislation to improve information on catches of eels and controls on exploitation.

Page 29 Chapter 5 Section 5.1 to 5.5 Outlines the lifecycle of the eel and the current pressures and threats to the UK stocks

A copy of these relevant sections is included with this information.

Page 74 R&D Programmes 4.21

Research on Eels should be continued in particular to elucidate the population dynamics of the species and to improve the monitoring of eel stocks. This work should be integrated with the studies on eels in other European countries (Recommendation 85)

Eels Chapter 10 section 6 Page 90 / 91 Eel Stocks
6.4

Measures to reduce exploitation of eels at all stages in their life-cycle and to develop a stock recovery plan as part of a wider European Management Programme should be pursued urgently as a matter of priority (Recommendation 28)

Regulation of Eel fisheries in England and Wales Chapter 10 section 6
page 91 6.5

In future legislation, eels should be treated in the same way as other fish except where special provisions are needed, (Recommendation 101)

Page 90 6.7

In future freshwater fisheries legislation the word 'Eel' should be restricted to the genus *Anguilla* and the Environment Agency should regulate fishing for eels in all waters within its jurisdiction. (Recommendation 102).

Page 90 6.8

New legislation should contain the necessary powers to limit numbers of eel nets, traps and other devices used for catching eels in specific areas (recommendation 103)

Page 92 6.9

The Environment Agency should consider as a matter of urgency ways of improving information on catches of Eels and Elvers (recommendation 29)

Page 92 6.10

Government should explore the practicalities of introducing a legal requirement for all sales of Eels and Elvers to be made to licensed dealers and , if such a requirement is feasible, introduce the necessary legislation . (recommendation 104)

Elvers Page 93 6.14

A ban on fishing for Elvers, other than in rivers and Estuaries where it is currently practised, should be introduced as rapidly as possible. (recommendation 30)

Adult Eel net and trap fisheries Page 93 6.17

Consideration should be given to impose minimum and maximum size limits for eels taken and retained in net and trap fisheries. (recommendation 31)

Page 93 6.19

The Environment Agency should review all factors likely to lead to by-catches in eel net and trap fisheries of other fish, with a view to providing consistent guidance on how by-catches can be reduced to the minimum. This should then be used to develop rules on the design of fyke nets, and the locations in which they are used, that can be enforced through byelaws and conditions of net licences. (recommendation 32)

Chapter 12 Obstructions to the passage of fish , Page 135 2.6

Anyone creating a new obstruction to the passage of any fish, or increasing or rebuilding an existing

one, either in whole or in part, on any river should be required by law to install a fish pass to a design approved by the Environment Agency unless excused from doing so by the Environment Agency. In approving the design, the Environment Agency should determine the purpose of the fish pass, in terms of the species and size of fish which should be able to use it, and should require it to be suitable for this purpose. (recommendation 126)

Page 135 2.7

It should be a requirement to install Elver passes (if the fish pass is not suitable for this purpose) on all new or altered dams and other obstructions, and their installation should be encouraged on existing ones (recommendation 127)

Chapter 13 Enforcement of freshwater fisheries legislation Section 5 Penalties and fines Page 139 5.3

Anyone convicted of a serious fisheries offence should be ineligible to hold a rod or net licence for a fixed period (recommendation 136)

Chapter 15 Public Expenditure Page 169 4.11

The Environment Agency should propose appropriate increases in licence duties on instruments used in Eel and Elver fisheries (recommendation 12)

Annex 111 Pages 179 to 186 includes a list of respondents : these are people who have forwarded documents for review by the review committee.

A total of 352 responses, of which 58 originate (at least in part) from Wales. A number of organisations and individuals commented more than once and this is reflected in this list

Midlands regional review of the Eel fisheries byelaws – The groups put forward views regarding proposed byelaw changes to retain the ` Close Season` Eel fishing in the Area (which was successfully retained) and to introduce tighter controls on commercial netting activities, which the group was keen to see introduced and wholeheartedly supported.

Environment Agency review for the drafting of an Eel fisheries management Strategy

Many of the MAFF recommendations specific to Eels and Elvers were subsequently incorporated into the EA National Eel Management Strategy and later byelaw review suggestions.

Hopefully when these changes in management strategy are implemented into byelaw changes by the EA they will greatly strengthen the conservation of UK Eel stocks

[Link to EA website for Eel Management Strategy Document](#)

(The website which contains the eel management strategy can not be reproduced here as it would fill the magazine, The E,A have produced a booklet containing the contents of their website freely available on request, Contact your local E,A office for one. Tony)

Environment Agency review for the drawing up of National Eel fisheries net licensing and net duties byelaws.

Meetings with EA Eel Fisheries Staff During the consultation process to debate the EA Eel net licensing and duties byelaws members of the ECS held direct meetings with EA fisheries staff at which a wide range of Eel fisheries management issues were discussed plus our views and concerns on specific byelaw proposals made known to the EA staff. EA staffs were also able to update us on the progress of the review and gain information on our stance on the issues:

The first of these meetings took place in Huddersfield on June 14th 2001

The second of these meetings took place at Stoke on July 23rd 2003

We continued to have a good working dialogue with Environment Agency staff responsible for Eel fisheries management.

European Anglers Alliance – Eel Resolution 2003: In January 2002 we made contact with the EAA (European

Anglers Alliance) and following an exchange of information made a submissions through the EAA of a Resolution on Eel conservation - A joint French / UK resolution was finally debated and Endorsed at the EAA's AGM during their meeting in Leipzig April 2003 – The EAA represent 5 million anglers across Europe in 19 different countries and it is expected that this resolution will be put forward for debate to the European Community Fisheries department as part of the process to draw up a European directive on Eel conservation measures in Autumn 2003.

RESOLUTION

The Continued Decline of the European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)

The European Anglers Alliance, which represents 19 European nations and more than 5 million anglers, held its 9th General Assembly on 4th – 7th April 2003 in Leipzig, and discussed the serious decline of the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) in European waters

Eel stocks across Europe have shown continued decline for many years. One contributing factor is the increasing pressure from commercial exploitation by netting, often illegally, at all stages of the lifecycle to supply the international trade across Europe and the Far East in both elvers and eels. The decline has been accelerated with increased pressures on breeding stocks from loss of habitats, obstructions to migration, and the possible effects from parasites (*Anguillicola crassus*). If measures are not implemented rapidly the long-term survival of the species will be threatened.

The complex life cycle of freshwater eels has been relatively understudied for many years, but it fills a major niche within the aquatic eco-system and is a major part of the diet for many species of water birds. Increased monitoring and survey work is needed so as to fully understand the current status of stocks, and to assess the future management options for this unique species.

The European Anglers Alliance requests:

- Increased co-operation across Europe to introduce measures that will contribute to, and secure, the long-term survival of the eel.
- Restrictions to limit the numbers of nets within the commercial fishery particularly in areas which show continued declines in population stocks - (ICES Recommendation to reduce effects of commercial fisheries at ALL stages of the eel's lifecycle)
- Measures to minimize obstructions to both upstream migration of elvers and downstream migration of mature eels.
- Introduction of a restocking programme of elvers into areas currently showing low population densities due to migration obstructions or that have shown a serious decline in mature eel escapement due to over-exploitation.
- Increased funding for survey work to accurately assess eel population dynamics so as to better monitor current stock status and the effects of management plan actions.
- Increased funding and commitment to intensify of the fight against illegal netmen.
- Introduction of legislation to require all sales and exports of elvers and eels to be through licensed registered dealerships, (UK recommendation from MAFF freshwater fisheries review 2000)
- Recognition and protection of the eel's role in the eco-system of the aquatic environment. A commitment to include the protection of eel stocks in wider plans to promote aquatic bio-diversity (Rio action plans, EU Habitats and Freshwater Fisheries Directives).
- Increased research into *Anguillicola crassus* to determine its possible effects on mature eel migration survival.
- Management plans at a river basin level (Water framework Directive), to promote increased numbers of escaping mature eels so as to increase breeding stock.

The European Anglers Alliance urges those responsible in all European countries and within the European Commission to acknowledge the importance of the European eel to European biodiversity and to act quickly to halt the decline of this unique species.

A power point slide presentation details all of the above involvements at both UK and European levels is available at: [Link to UK Eel Anglers Power-point file](#)

Photographs

– Link to photograph files

Double Fyke nets

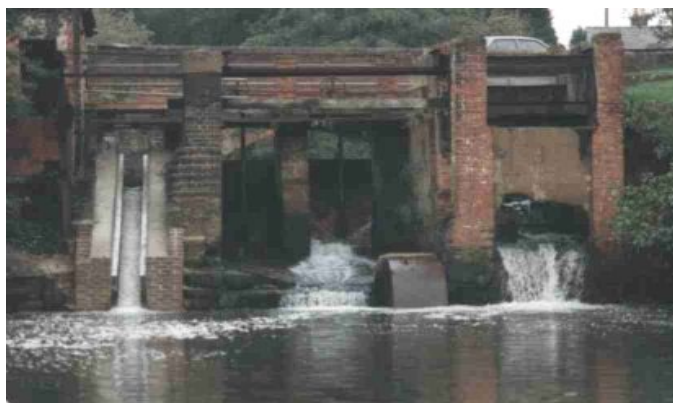


Eel Storage box





Eel migration



Eels travel in Style.....Once!



**Link to... [EU action to protect European eels](#) and download PDF file ([or click here](#))
E,U action plan....**

Commission proposes EU action to protect European eels

The European Commission has adopted a on the development of a Community Action Plan for the management of European eels. This stock is currently outside safe biological limits. This is mostly due to fishing at unsustainable levels and the effects of other human activity on the eels' habitats and migratory patterns. As eels are to be found at various stages of their life-cycle in the waters of the northern Atlantic and then in fresh and brackish waters in almost all of Europe and northern Africa, co-ordinated conservation measures are needed to safeguard the stock. This is why the Commission proposes that eel management be built up from a set of local actions to be put in place by the Member States according to an agreed standard. These actions should ensure the survival and the migration of the eel in all its habitats. While this plan is being developed, the Commission will propose urgent measures to ensure that mature eels can migrate back to the sea to spawn. The Commission intends to formulate the urgent measures at the beginning of next year and the long-term management system at the end of 2004.

"We need to ensure that this important resource both as a fishery and in aquaculture is safeguarded. The integrated approach proposed by the Commission will allow for common targets to be met through the application of measures tailored to local conditions", commented Franz Fischler, Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries.

A two-step process

According to scientific advice, there is an urgent need for a management plan for eels. Stock recovery requires that measures be implemented at all stages of the eel's life cycle. In estuaries, fisheries for glass eels that are used as seed for aquaculture need to be managed so that enough glass eels are left over to populate the river habitats. Upstream, fishing effort should be limited in order to allow a sufficient number of eels to survive until the start of the spawning migration. Finally, when the oldest eels start to migrate downstream, fisheries should be managed so as to make sure that eels are not all caught when migrating to the sea. It is also essential to make sure that river water is of good enough quality for eel survival and growth and that migrating eels are not hindered or killed by dams or hydroelectric installations.

These measures will have to be replicated across the area of distribution of the eel stock. Given their life cycle, this means that co-ordinated action is required from a whole range of players in a number of countries.

To formulate and co-ordinate this action, more data are needed on the stock and its habitats and on numerous fisheries. This is why the Commission proposes that while this information is being gathered, some emergency measures are put in place to

promote stock recovery.

The Commission proposes that measures to protect eels include the following:

- **Targets for eel management at different life stages**

These targets would reflect the three life stages of the eel from glass eel to yellow and silver eel. Thus, **settlement targets** would encourage measures such as the introduction of eel passes in dams to allow juvenile or glass eels to migrate upstream, while **stocking targets** for yellow eels could be met by imposing restrictions on local fisheries, extending and improving eel habitats or restocking using eels from aquaculture production. In the case of **escape targets**, local measures would be required to promote the escape of mature or silver eels from inland waters to the spawning grounds at sea by, for example, building eel passes in dams and/or prohibiting the use of some fishing gears. The guiding principle is that local management authorities should all work on eel conservation and management to a common standard throughout Europe.

- **Collation of information and reporting on the effects of the measures in place**

Knowledge of local conditions is essential to the setting and monitoring of the above targets. The Commission will propose, based on a scientific evaluation, a comprehensive data collection system for eel at Community level.

- **Establishing EU measures where they can reinforce local management**

While most recovery measures require decisions and action at the local level, some measures can only be implemented at EU level. Examples include the setting up of minimum sizes for marketing purposes or the licensing of trading in eels. The provision of EU financial aid to retrain the fishermen concerned or help them leave the sector will be considered by the Commission.

- **Provision of scientific and technical support to local management**

Information on the existing local measures is required to provide data and examples of good practice. The management systems and river basin authorities established under the Water Framework Directive offer a structure for the co-ordination of management authorities within river basins. Additional institutional systems may be required to address issues common to eel across several river basins.

- **The international dimension of eel conservation**

Given the trans-boundary distribution of eels, international co-operation is crucial to the success of a management plan. The relevant organisations include the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) together with the [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea \(ICES\)](#) and the [General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean \(GFCM\)](#). Other parties involved could include the [Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture \(ACFA\)](#). Bilateral agreements would also be required with some countries such as Norway and Russia.

Emergency measures

Scientific advice from [ICES](#) recommends that the rate of exploitation of eel be reduced to the lowest possible level while an effective management plan is being developed. The Commission invites Member States to consider the type of measures that could be applied. These range from a prohibition of fishing in specific areas or for specific life stages to setting minimum landing sizes through closed seasons and habitat restoration initiatives. The Commission believes that priority should be given to promoting the escape of silver (or mature) eels.

It will now begin a wide-ranging debate with Member States and stakeholders, and will seek complementary scientific advice to develop the set of local management targets and relevant instruments. It will also look at ways to develop the information systems needed to inform local decisions. In addition, the Commission will examine the emergency measures that could be applied with immediate effect.

Background

Eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea in the Western Central Atlantic Ocean. The larvae drift and swim into river mouths all over Europe and northern Africa, when they migrate upstream to spend most of their lives. Eventually the oldest eels will migrate back downstream and across the Atlantic when they will spawn once and die. Because of the vast distances eels cover in their migrations, conservation measures need to be co-ordinated across all countries where eels are distributed, and they need to cover both fishing for eels and river management issues like dam construction and fish passes. The smallest eels are fished for

on-growing in aquaculture, whilst older eels are fished directly for food. All eels are threatened by river modifications such as dams and hydroelectric turbines that restrict migrations up and down rivers.

If there are any topic that you would wish to discuss regarding Eels and Eel Conservation, Contact either:

E-Mail to [Clive Dennison](mailto:CliveDennison@hotmail.com) or [Tony Jolley](mailto:aj001a5249@blueyonder.co.uk)
clivedennison@hotmail.com
Eel Study Group website – Link to www.anglersnet.co.uk/saa/esg/

National Anguilla Club website – link to <http://www.angling.freemove.co.uk/eelindex.htm>

Website last updated - *December 2003*.

Website text compiled by C Dennison / site set-up by Ken Ward on behalf of the members of the associated groups of the ECS

Record Officer's Report

October 2002 to September 2003

By Michael Brettle

I will start once again thanking every one who has taken the time to return their returns to me. The number of returns is down this year from 23 to 19. The total number of eels reported is also down by 55 to 3337 but the good news is the total number of boots caught this year is up by 31 to 75 caught. There is also a small increase in the 4lb to 5 lb category but the rest are down.

Right now on with the returns. Now with [Arthur J Sutton's](#) health much improved and fishing more he has reported three **5 lb** eels, one of which fell to two maggots. Six **4lb** eels and countless wrigglers of 2 pounds or less. [Nick Rose](#) is next up who after finding out that just writing sent and the date on his catch return it dose not mean that I will receive it until he actually takes it down to the post box and posts it. Nick blanked through out April and May and most of June until the 28th when a **1 lb 04 oz** eel fell to ledger worm at Emburton. Then on the 8th of July, using ledger dead baits Nick landed **4 1 lb 04 oz** eels and a **1 lb 08 oz**. In august Nick was fishing a syndicate water in Gloucestershire and caught a **2lb, 1 lb, 1lb 04 oz** and another **1lb**. Next is [Damian Wood](#) who caught a **5 lb 02 oz** eel back on the 2nd of October 2002 from the Leeds & Liverpool canal. Next to drop, me a line was [Peter Shefford](#). He caught a **2 lb 10 oz** eel from Nickolls Quarry on the 23rd of May using a roach head. In fact all of Peter's eels came from Nickolls Quarry weighing in at **1 lb 14 oz, 1 lb 11 oz, 1lb 06 oz** and **12 oz** respectively. They fall to dead and live roach and a bunch of worms. [Steve Ricketts](#) has done a number of nights at Nickolls Quarry and caught many eels through out the season. The four main eels falling to a mixture of dead baits and lobworms were **4 lb 09 oz, 4 lb 07, 4 lb 02 oz** and another **4 lb 02 oz**. [Wayne Staddon](#) reported eleven eels and they were all fished for using the J/S rig. The first caught was on the 24th of April on the G.U canal and fall to a Gudgeon head. It weighed in at **2 lb**. Wayne then returned on the 11th of May and landed a **14 oz** boot, which took a roach head. The next five eels caught were all on a north Lincs pond and all fall to a bunch of lobs bar one, which took a perch head. There weights were **3 lb 04 oz, 3 lb 06.5 oz, 2 lb 14.5 oz, 2 lb 13 oz** and **4 lb 0.5 oz**. August found Wayne fishing the oxford canal and took two eels of **4 lb 10 oz** and **2 lb 11.5 oz**. Both fall to roach. September came and Wayne changed his venue again, this time to Nickolls Quarry. Using perch as his hook bait, he landed a **1 lb 10 oz** and **1 lb** eel. [Martin J Dorman's](#) season started in June when he fished a local club lake with a bunch of lobworms on a running ledger, which tempted a **3lb 11 oz** eel. Martin then moved to a north elmham club lake in august and used a roach dead bait on a running ledger to land a **1lb 09 oz, 1 lb 02 oz, 08 oz** eels and a **8 lb 04 oz** carp. It is nice to see that an eel angler has caught a carp, as it always seems to be the other way round. Keith Grove's report was next to land on my carpet. He fished a fenns pool in July. His method was to be a paternoster roach and gudgeon. This landed him a **3 lb** and **3 lb 05 oz** eels. Next is [Jimmy Jolley](#) who caught three eels from Nickells Quarry all to free lined roach section they all weighed in at **1 lb 08 oz**. [Pete Nunn's](#) first fish came along on the 26th of June when he was fishing

stafford with a ledger roach. The roach caught him a **4 lb 02 oz** eel. Pete then returned in July and used the same method but this time the roach was replaced with a bunch of lobs. The change brought him two eels weighing in at **1 lb** and **1lb 12 oz**. In August Pete used the same method and landed a **1 lb'er** on his visit to Stratford. Jason Morgan's first trip of the season (29/03/03) was to a different canal where he used a running ledger and a head of a roach. This tactic saw him land a **2 lb 11 oz** and **3 lb 11oz** eels. Jason was then to return to the canal on the 15th of June and this time used a running ledger and a worm for his hook bait and landed a **2 lb 10 oz** eel. He then returned on the 19th of June and using the same method, he landed a **2 lb 13 oz** eel. In July, Jason caught a **2 lb 12 oz** and **1 lb 05 oz** eel. August was to be a red-letter month for Jason. On the 13th, he returned to his usual canal and stayed with his usual method, the running ledger, and used a roach head, which had a **4 lb 04 oz** eel chomping on it not after long, and this was to be a new **PB** for Jason, Well done. Jason also caught a **3 lb 10 oz** eel on the 28th of that month. Adam Pettitt season started back in April when he fished the T.M canal using the sidley rig and worm as his hook bait. On the 29th of that month, Adam landed himself two eels **1 lb 10 oz** and **2 lb 04 oz**. May saw a return to the T.M canal and using the method Adam caught a **1 lb** on the **02/05/03** and **2 lb 09 oz** on the **13/05/03**. In June, Adam changed his venue and started fishing a local lake. Again, he used a Sidley rig fishing with worm and roach. On his first trip, he landed six eels weighing up to **1 lb 08 oz**. On his second trip, he caught five eels weighing up to **1 lb 09 oz**. On his third, he caught six again with the top weight being **1 lb 04 oz**. Then on his next trip, his alarm sounded just gone midnight and a **4 lb 12 oz** eel has pulled out. The next two eels out of the lake were to be a **3 lb 04 oz** and **2 lb 12 oz**. Then on the 5th of July fishing a local gravel pit Adam landed a **1 lb 08 oz** eel using the Sidley rig and a dead roach as his hook bait. Adam returned to the lake on the 9th of July and again using the Sidley rig and roach he landed a **4 lb 03 oz** eel and if that was not enough he landed the seasons best of **5 lb 12 oz** eels. Again, well done to Adam. On The 23rd of July, Adam went to his local lake and using worm this time landed a **4 lb 04 oz** eel. Adam's final eel came to him on the 20th of August at a local gravel pi. It weighed in at **3 lb 08 oz**. Not a bad way to end the season if you ask me. Graham Wilkes's first eel came to him on the 2nd of May and using worm as his bait hooked, he hooked himself a **boot**. The next day, again fishing the GU he landed two eels. One on worm (**boot**) and the second to live bait (**2 lb 01 oz**). On The 4th of May, Graham moved and fished at Emberton and using worm as his bait, he landed a **2 lb 03 oz** eel. The 14th of July saw Graham returning to the GU and using live bait, he landed a **3 lb 07 oz** eel at just turned 4:00 am. Graham's final two eels came from the Ouse and using worms and dead baits, he landed a **1 lb** and **2 lb** eel. In total Graham fished 42 nights this season and no Graham I do not think there is a prize for camping. David Jones's method for all his fishing was the JS rig. The first three eel came on the 5th of May when he fished a midlands canal. They were **08 oz** and **10 oz**. Third weighed was not given. On The 30th of May, David caught a **3 lb 03 oz** using Gudgeon dead bait. The 30th of June David went to BC and used worms as his hook bait. He caught five eels, weighing in at **08 oz**, **10 oz**, **1 lb 06 oz**, **1 lb 02 oz** and **3 lb 10 oz**. On the 1st of August, David returned to a midlands canal and again using lobworms, he caught six eels. **1 lb 04 oz**, **1 lb 04 oz**, **1 lb 02 oz**, **1 lb, 14 oz**, and **10 oz**. On the 16th of August, David was at the canal again. This time using Gudgeon dead bait, he landed a **2 lb 08 oz** eel. Finally, David finished his season with two eels he took from C Mere using worms. **1 lb** and **1 lb 02 oz**. Stephen Cotton fished his local canal on the 30th of March and use a JS rig with a Gudgeon head and landed a **2 lb 12.5 oz** eel. In April, Stephen fished his local canal three times and landed an eel on each occasion. **2 lb 5.5 oz**, **4 lb 03 oz** and **2 lb 3.5 oz**. On the 2nd of May, Stephen was fishing the canal again using a sunken semi fixed float rig with a bunch of lobs on and landed a **10 oz** eel. Again, on the canal but this time on the whip Stephen, hooked and landed a boot, which took his two maggots, that was on offer. On the 25th/ 26th of May Stephen fished Nickells Quarry and took six eels on the J.S rig. With the biggest of these being **2 lb 12 oz**. He then returned to his local canal and using a J.S rig with a Gudgeon head, he landed a **3 lb 14 oz** eel. On The 27th of July at 22:00, he took a **4 lb 2.5 oz** eel with the use of the J.S rig and a Gudgeon head again. On the 3rd of August, he landed a **3 lb 05 oz** eel from his local canal. Then on the 16th of the month, Stephen moved onto a carp syndicate lake and using a live roach he hook a **5 lb 02 oz** eel. This was to turn out to be his best of the season. His last three eels were taken from Nickolls Quarry using the J.S rig in conjunction with rudd and lobworms. They were **12 oz**, **1 lb 08 oz** and **3 lb 06 oz**. In total, Stephen fished 33 sessions and blanked 18 times. Next is Stephen Pitts who seasons started way back on the 5th of October 2002 at lake H. Where he landed a **4 lb 04 oz** eel. Stephen then returned on the 11th of that month to take a **4 lb 06 oz** eel. On November the 9th, Stephen returned to

lake H to take two more eels, 2 lb 04 oz and 1 lb 02 oz. On the 15th /16 Stephen returned once more. This time he landed a 2 lb 09 oz and 2 lb 01 oz eel using rudd and roach dead baits. December came and Stephen did five sessions on Lake H and landed an eel on the 7th which took a roach tail. The weight was 1 lb 10 oz. Stephen did not stop fishing through January and February. He put in seven sessions and only had one run. He had to wait until the 21st of March to see his next eel. Which he took on a ledger roach from a Cambs pit (2 lb 05 oz). April came and Stephen returned to the pit on the 5th and took an eel on roach tail. It weighed in at 1 lb 12 oz. Then on the 12th he took two more 2 lb 08 oz and 2 lb 09 oz. Stephen then did four consecutive nights from the 17th to the 20th on a Kent water. In this time, he took eleven eels on roach head and tails. 1 lb 08 oz, 2 lb, 1 lb 08 oz, 2 lb 04 oz 2 lb 13 oz, 2 lb 02 oz, 2 lb 07 oz, 2 lb 08 oz, 2 lb 02 oz 1 lb 06 oz and finally a 1 lb 09 oz eel taken on roach tail. May came and this brought a change of water. Stephen was to fish a water, which he calls N.H Lake. On The 16th of May, he landed three eel; 2 lb 12 oz, 2 lb 14 oz and 2 lb 02 oz. Stephens's next fish was to come on the 25th from S.L Lake. This weighed in at 3 lb 05 oz and was taken on worm. On the 31st Stephen changed his water again and landed two more using his shock worm rig. 2 lb 13 oz and 3 lb. June came and with it, another good return of eels, nine in total. 3 lb 02 oz, 3 lb 07 oz, 1 lb 04 oz, 1 lb 10 oz, 1 lb 09 oz, 1 lb 06 oz, 1 lb 08 oz, 2 lb 07 oz and 1 lb 08 oz. In July, Stephen fished four waters but he only caught from the Big Pit on the 13th and the 24th. 3 lb 08 oz and 3 lb 02 oz. August saw Stephen take a tripe to Kent for seven days and returned with nine eels. 1 lb 07 oz, 1 lb 08 oz, 2 lb, 1 lb 08 oz, 2 lb 13 oz, 09 oz, 2 lb 07 oz, 1 lb 13 oz and 3 lb. The Stephen fished a stock pond using worm and landed him self a 1 lb 13 oz eel. On the 12th of September, Stephen fished the Big Pit again using an off bottom rig and landed a 3 lb 03 oz eel. On the 19th Stephen was to catch his last two eels of the season fishing at L. Pit. Both fell to worm and weighed in at 2 lb 02 oz and 2 lb 04 oz. The penultimate report is Nick Duffy's, who season started on the 22nd of March at Green Acres when he fished a J.S rig with a worm on the hook to take a 1 lb 08 oz eel. The next was to be caught at Green Acres on the 11th of April using live bait fished on the J.S rig. This produced a 3 lb 04 oz eel. Nick then moved on to the T.M canal were he fished a dead bait on the J.S rig and caught him self a 2 lb 03 oz eel. On The 20th of March, he returned to Green Acres and caught a 2 lb 06 oz eel on dead bait. The next three were to be landed at Green Acres and weighed in at 1 lb 04 oz; 1 lb and 2 lb 11 oz. Next was the NAC's fish in at Nicholls Quarry. All his eel caught were on the J.S rig. He caught eight 1 lb, 1 lb 07 oz and 4 lb 11 oz. Then on the 28th Nick returned to the T.M canal were he caught a 2lb 03 oz eel on dead bait and a 3 lb 07 oz on worm. The 30th saw Nick on the canal again and this time he hauled in a 3 lb 06 oz eel, which took his worm. The first trip in June saw Nick go back to Green Acres were he fished a live roach and caught a 1 lb 04 oz eel. On the 14th it was the canals turn to give Nick another eel, which weight in at 2 lb. This eel came to a pop upped perch. On the 19th, Nick returned to Green Acres and using the J.S rig caught a 2 lb 07 oz and a 1 lb 03 oz eel. All three of Nick's eels caught in July were from Green Acres. Again, on The J.S rig. They were 3 lb 02 oz, 2 lb and 3 lb 13 oz. August saw Nick take two eels from the river Avon on dead baits. They were 1 lb 2 oz and 2 lb. Nick then did a session on the B'Ham and Worcs canal. Were using a live Gudgeon he caught a 1 lb eel. Nicks final eel came on the 30th of August, from the G.U canal and again you guessed it he was using the J.S rig and a dead skimmer on the hook. The eel weighed in at 3 lb 04 oz. The final return to crash on to my mat was Barry McConnell's usual small novel. The first of Barry's 140 eels caught was on the 26th of October, from the Relief canal. His method was to ledger a dead roach. This produced a 2 lb 14 oz eel at 23:15. Barry's next two eels came on the 18th of November, from the relief canal. One coming to ledger roach and the other to a live roach fished on the Dyson rig. 2 lb 10 oz and 1 lb 08 oz. Barry caught one eel in December and again that was from the relief canal on ledger skimmer, 2 lb estimated (E). Barry's first eel of the New Year came on the 10th of March. His method was to fish the J.S rig (his method will be the J.S rig from now on unless stated). This caught him a boot. He then caught a second boot on the next night, again using worm as his hook bait. On the 12th, Barry landed a 1 lb 12 oz and 3 lb 06 oz eel. He then had a few blanks until on the 24th of March; he caught a boot on five brandlings at 21:00. The next night a 2 lb 10 oz eel was caught using a dead ruff. On The 5th of May, Barry moved on to the Leeds and Liverpool canal, and was reworded with a 4 lb 05 oz eel at 04:10 and a 1 lb 15 oz at 06:10. On the 9th to the 11th of May, Barry caught 2 boots, 2 lb 13 oz and 2 lb 10 oz (E). Barry then fished the usual mere on the 19th and 20th of May. Using lobs as his hook bait, he caught a 2 lb 13 oz and a 1 lb 10 oz (on the Dyson rig). Barry then did a night on the Trent and Mersey canal and used the Dyson rig to catch a 3 lb 07 oz eel. Nicholls Quarry was to be Barry's home from the 23rd to the

25th of May. Were he caught 24 eels, mainly on lobworms. 1 lb (E), 1 lb (E), 4 lb 07 oz, 2 lb (E), boot, boot, 1 lb 14 oz (dead bait tail), 1 lb08 oz (E), boot, boot, boot, 1 lb (E), boot, boot, 3 lb 02 oz, 1lb 04 oz (rudd head), 1 lb 12 oz (E), 1 lb 04 oz (E), boot, boot, boot, 2lb (E), boot and a 1 lb 08 oz (E) on roach tail. On the 29th of May, Barry fished Llynllys pool and caught a 1 lb (E) that took his brandlings. On the 30th, Barry fished the Shropshire union Canal and caught seven eel on dead baits. Boot (lobs), 2 lb04 oz, 1 lb 14 oz (Dyson rig, lobs), 1 lb 08 oz (E), 1 lb (E), 2 lb 01 oz and a boot. Barry's first for June came at the Unusual Mere. When he float fished two lobworms to catch a 2 lb 03 oz eel. On The 9th of June, Barry fished Mont canal and caught a 1lb (E) eel. Barry then moved his attention back to Llynllys pool were over the next two nights he landed five eels all on lobworms. 2 lb 07 oz, boot, boot, 2lb 13 oz (Dyson rig) and 2 lb 07 oz. On the next two nights Barry fished three gates pool were he used a selection of dead baits and brandlings. He caught six boots. From the 16th to 20th of June Barry fished the Remote Mere were the bait he used was lobworms. Were he caught nine eels. 1 lb (E), boot, 1 lb 06 oz (E) (Dyson rig), 1lb (E), boot, 1 lb, boot, 2lb 13 oz and a boot. 23rd saw Barry on the banks of the Accessible Mere were he landed a 1 lb 02 oz eel on lobs. The 24th to the 27th of June saw Barry on the Accessible Mere where he had a truly red-letter day with 18 eels caught with a total weight of 60 lb 12 oz. They were all caught on lobworms 4 lb 14 oz, 5 lb 07 oz, 3 lb 02 oz, 2 lb 02 oz, 4 lb 08 oz, 3 lb 01 oz, 3 lb 04 oz, 4 lb 01 oz, 3 lb 07 oz, 3 lb 14 oz, boot, 3 lb 14 oz, 3 lb 15oz, 2 lb 15 oz, 2 lb 10 oz 2 lb 07oz, 4 lb 03 oz and finally a 2 lb 14 oz eel to round the day off. Barry then had a day away from the Mere to fish Emberton and blanked so he returned on the 28th of June to fish the Mere to the 7th of July. In those days, he caught six eels. 2 lb, 2 lb 12 oz, boot, 3 lb 11 oz, boot and boot. Barry then had a few days off but was to go and fish a highland lock on the 14th of July and returned with a catch of five eels all taken on brandlings. 3 lb 08 oz, 2 lb 06 oz 4 lb 08 oz, 2 lb 12 oz and 1 lb 14 oz. Barry then fished the Bridge water canal on the NAC fish in. 25th and 26th of July. He blanked on the first day and then landed a 3 lb 15.5 oz eel on the Dyson rig. Barry then fished Nickolls Quarry from the 15th to the 19th of September. Is main bait was to be lobworms. 2 lb 06 oz (Dyson rig, brandlings), boot, boot, boot (Dyson rig), boot, boot, 1 lb 02 oz (E), 1lb 04 oz (E), 1lb (E), 1lb (E), 1 lb (E), 2 lb 02 oz (Dyson rig), 1 lb (E), boot (Dyson rig), 1 lb 08 oz (E), boot, boot, boot, 1 lb (E), 1 lb, boot, boot, boot, boot, 2 lb 02 oz (roach head), boot, 1 lb 08 oz (E), boot, boot, boot, boot, 1 lb 08 oz and a boot. Barry's final eel came on the 26th of September when he fished the Relief Channel with a dead roach on a J.S rig and landed a 1 lb at 03:00. That concludes the eel returns but Steve Richardson did take the time to return his catch return. Just to let me know that he did not do any eel fishing. As his water was completely weeded up for the past year and he was not going to find a new water to fish. Well thank you all for returning the forms and I hope to see you all at the AGM in March, and as for me well no fishing was done as there were exams at the beginning of the year a change of camps in the middle and two moves and finally they had me out in fields with no water to fish. Well there is always next year. Tight lines to you all.

3 lb plus Eels list 2002/3

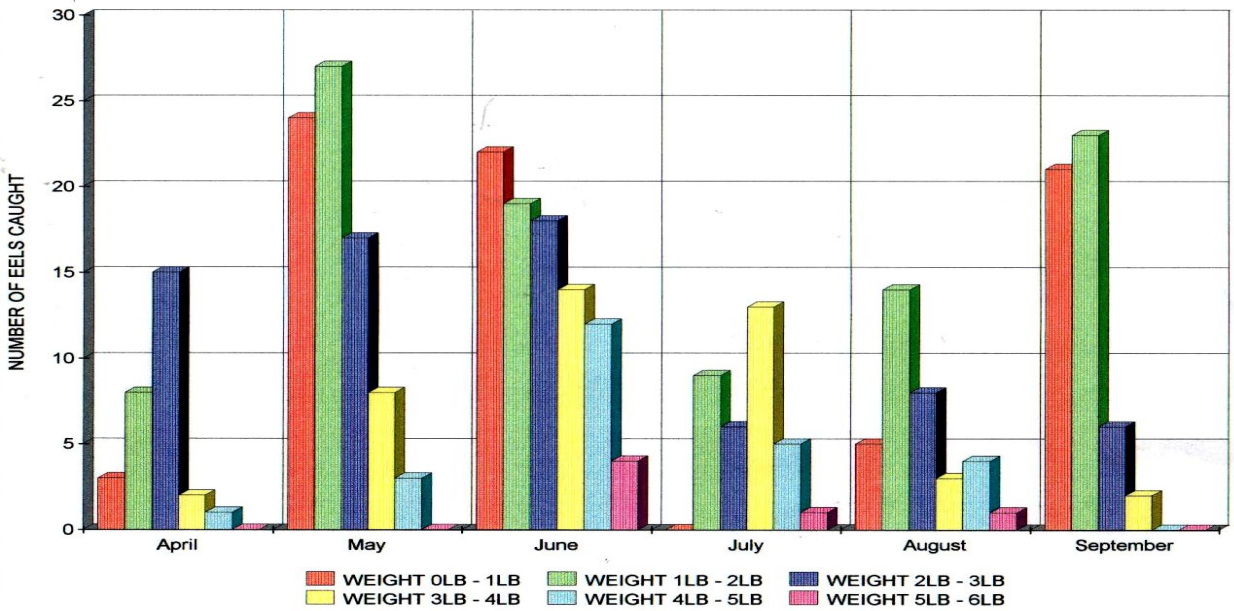
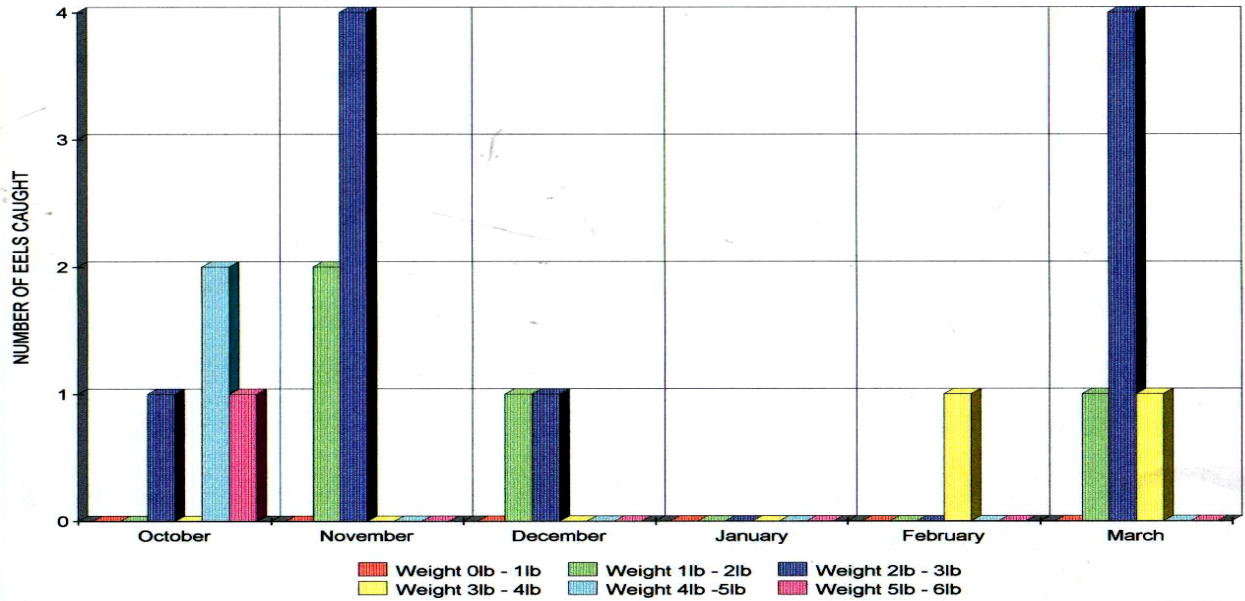
Name	Weight	Bait	Date caught
Adam Pettitt	5 lb 12 oz	Roach	09/07/03
Barry McConnell	5 lb 07 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Stephen Cotton	5 lb 02 oz	Live roach	16/08/03
Damian Wood	5 lb 02 oz	?	2/10/02
Arthur J Sutton	5 lb 00 oz	Maggot	?
Arthur J Sutton	5 lb 00 oz	?	?
Arthur J Sutton	5 lb 00 oz	?	?
Barry McConnell	4 lb 14 oz	Lobs	24/06/03
Adam Pettitt	4 lb 12 oz	Roach	June
Nick Duffy	4 lb 11 oz	Worm	24/05/03
Wayne Staddon	4 lb 10 oz	Roach head	10/08/03
Steve Ricketts	4 lb 09 oz	?	No date
Barry McConnell	4 lb 08 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Barry McConnell	4 lb 08 oz	Brandlings	14/07/03
Steve Ricketts	4 lb 07 oz	Dead bait	No date
Barry McConnell	4 lb 07 oz	Lobs	23/05/03
Steve Pitts	4 lb 06 oz	Liver	5/10/02

Barry McConnell	4 lb 05 oz	Lobs	5/05/03
Steve Pitts	4 lb 04 oz	Rudd	11/10/02
Adam Pettitt	4 lb 04 oz	Worm	23/07/03
Jason Morgan	4 lb 4 oz P.B	Roach head	13/08/03
Stephen Cotton	4 lb 03 oz	Roach head	18/04/03
Barry McConnell	4 lb 03 oz	Lobs	26/06/03
Adam Pettitt	4 lb 03 oz	Roach	09/07/03
Stephen Cotton	4 lb 02.5 oz	Gudgeon head	27/07/03
Pete Nunn	4 lb 02 oz	Roach	26/06/03
Steve Ricketts	4 lb 02 oz	Worm	No date
Steve Ricketts	4 lb 02 oz	?	No date
Barry McConnell	4 lb 01 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Wayne Staddon	4 lb 0.5 oz	Perch head	12/07/03
Arthur J Sutton	4 lb 00 oz	?	?
Arthur J Sutton	4 lb 00 oz	?	?
Arthur J Sutton	4 lb 00 oz	?	?
Arthur J Sutton	4 lb 00 oz	?	?
Arthur J Sutton	4 lb 00 oz	?	?
Arthur J Sutton	4 lb 00 oz	?	?
Barry McConnell	3 lb 15.5 oz	Lobs	26/07/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 15 oz	Lobs	26/06/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 14 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 14 oz	Lobs	26/06/03
Stephen Cotton	3 lb 14 oz	Gudgeon head	31/05/03
Nick Duffy	3 lb 13 oz	Dead bait	27/7/03
Jason Morgan	3 lb 11 oz	Roach tail	29/03/03
Martin J Dorman	3 lb 11 oz	Lobs	21/06/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 11 oz	Lobs	30/06/03
David Jones	3 lb 10 oz	Lobs	30/06/03
Jason Morgan	3 lb 10 oz	Roach	28/08/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 08 oz	Worm	13/07/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 08 oz	Brandlings	14/07/03
Adam Pettitt	3 lb 08 oz	worm	20/08/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 07 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Nick Duffy	3 lb 07 oz	Worm	28/05/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 07 oz	Worm	06/06/03
Graham Wilkes	3 lb 07 oz	Live bait	14/06/03
Wayne Staddon	3 lb 06.5 oz	Lobs	04/07/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 06 oz	Brandlings	12/04/03
Nick Duffy	3 lb 06 oz	Worm	30/05/03
Stephen Cotton	3 lb 06 oz	Rudd	21/09/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 05 oz	Worm	25/05/03
Keith Grove	3 lb 05 oz	Gudgeon	20/07/03
Nick Duffy	3 lb 04 oz	Live bait roach	11/04/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 04 oz	Lobs	21/05/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 04 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Adam Pettitt	3 lb 04 oz	Roach	June
Wayne Staddon	3 lb 04 oz	Lobs	04/07/03
Nick Duffy	3 lb 04 oz	Dead bait	30/08/03
David Jones	3 lb 03 oz	Gudgeon D, bait	10/05/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 03 oz	Worm	12/09/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 02 oz	Lobs	24/05/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 02 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 02 oz	Worm	06/06/03
Nick Duffy	3 lb 02 oz	Dead bait	11/07/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 02 oz	worm	24/07/03
Barry McConnell	3 lb 01 oz	Lobs	25/06/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 00 oz	Worm	09/08/03
Steve Pitts	3 lb 00 oz	Worm	31/ 05/03
Keith Grove	3 lb 00 oz	Roach	20/07/03

N.A.C Top 50 List.

1	8 lb 03 oz	Arthur Sutton	Shropshire Mere	Dead Bait	? 1986
2	8 lb 00 oz	Robert Jones	Greenstones Lake	Worm	May-69
3	7 lb 15 oz	Peter Climo	Greenstones Lake	Worm	May-69
4	7 lb 08 oz	Robert Jones	Greenstones Lake	Worm	May-68
	7 lb 08 oz	David Holman	Shropshire Mere	Worm	Jul-82
6	7 lb 04 oz	Chris Brown	Midlands Water	Dead Bait	Jul-86
	7 lb 04 oz	Barry McConnell	Shropshire Mere	Worm	May-99
8	7 lb 02 oz	Barry McConnell	Shropshire Pond	Worm	Jun-97
9	7 lb 01 oz	Arthur Sutton	Stanstead Abbots	Dead Bait	Aug-79
	7 lb 01 oz	Kevin Stephenson	Bluebell Lakes	Worm	Sep-95
11	6 lb 11 oz	Steve Gardner	Lancashire Pond	Dead Bait	May-95
12	6 lb 10 oz	John Sidley	Birmingham Lake	Dead Bait	Jul-86
	6 lb 10 oz	Keith Bradbury	Daisy field Lake	Dead Bait	Jul-96
14	6 lb 08 oz	David Taylor	Swan Pit, Lincs	Worm	May-86
15	6 lb 06 oz	John Sidley	Birmingham Lake	Worm	? 1985
16	6lb 05 oz	Barry McConnell	S Mere	?	July-02
17	6 lb 04 oz	Tony Hollerbach	Bedfordshire Lake	?	Aug-77
	6 lb 04 oz	Chris Hodgson	South West Lake	Live Bait	Jul-98
19	6 lb 02 oz	John Sidley	Midlands Water	Dead Bait	Feb-89
20	6 lb 01 oz	John Sidley	Birmingham Water	Dead Bait	Nov-86
	6 lb 01 oz	Chris Siddall	Grand Union Canal	Worm	Sep-98
	6 lb 01ozs	Damian Wood	Leeds/L'pool Canal	Worm	Jun-99
23	6 lb 00.5oz	Graham Booth	Gunhouse Pool	Worm	Aug-73
24	6 lb 00 oz	Neville Evans	Clwyd Water	Dead Bait	? 1985
	6 lb 00 oz	John Sidley	Midlands Water	Worm	Aug-88
	6 lb 00 oz	Steven Ricketts	?	Worm	Oct-01
27	5 lb 15 oz	Keith Sykes	?	?	?
	5 lb 15 oz	David Taylor	Baston Lakes	Worm	? 1984
	5 lb 15 oz	David Holman	Cheshire Mere	Worm	? 1984
	5 lb 15 oz	Keith Bradbury	The Crem	Octopus	Jun-98
	5 lb 15 oz	Steven Ricketts	?	Worm	Oct-01
32	5 lb 14 oz	Chris Davy	Woods Lake, Essex	Dead Bait	Jul-75
	5 lb 14 oz	Keith Bradbury	Lancashire Pond	Slug	Jul-95
	5 lb 14 oz	Stuart Dean	North West Lake	Dead Bait	Aug-97
35	5 lb 13 oz	Richard Hudson	Yorkshire Water	Worm	May-74
	5 lb 13 oz	Arthur Sutton	Kingsmead	Live Bait	Sep-85
	5 lb 13 oz	Stuart Dean	North West Lake	Live Bait	May-97
	5 lb 13 oz	Barry McConnell	Shropshire Mere	Brandlings	Jul-97
	5 lb 13 oz	Barry McConnell	Shropshire Mere	Worm	May-98
40	5 lb 12 oz	Steven Ricketts	?	?	Nov-01
	5 lb 12 oz	Adam Pettitt	Midlands lake	Roach	July-03
42	5 lb 11 oz	Keith Sykes	?	?	? 1978
	5 lb 11 oz	Malcolm Law	Daisyfield Lake	Dead Bait	Aug-96
	5 lb 11 oz	Nick Rose	Badens Pond	Cockle	Jul-97
45	5 lb 10 oz	Graham Booth	Haxby Pond	Worm	May-74
	5 lb 10 oz	A. Mills	Hatfield Forest	Dead Bait	Jul-82
	5 lb 10 oz	Maurice Steeles	Kempton Park	Worm	? 1991
	5 lb 10 oz	Barry McConnell	Shropshire Mere	Worm	Jun-98
	5 lb 10 oz	Steven Ricketts	?	?	Nov-01
50	5 lb 09 oz	Kelvin Hardman	Birmingham Water	Dead Bait	Jul-76

Eel Graphs for 2002/3



Time chart

