

Anguilla



The Bulletin of the National Anguilla Club.

Volume 43, Issue 2.

WINTER 2005.



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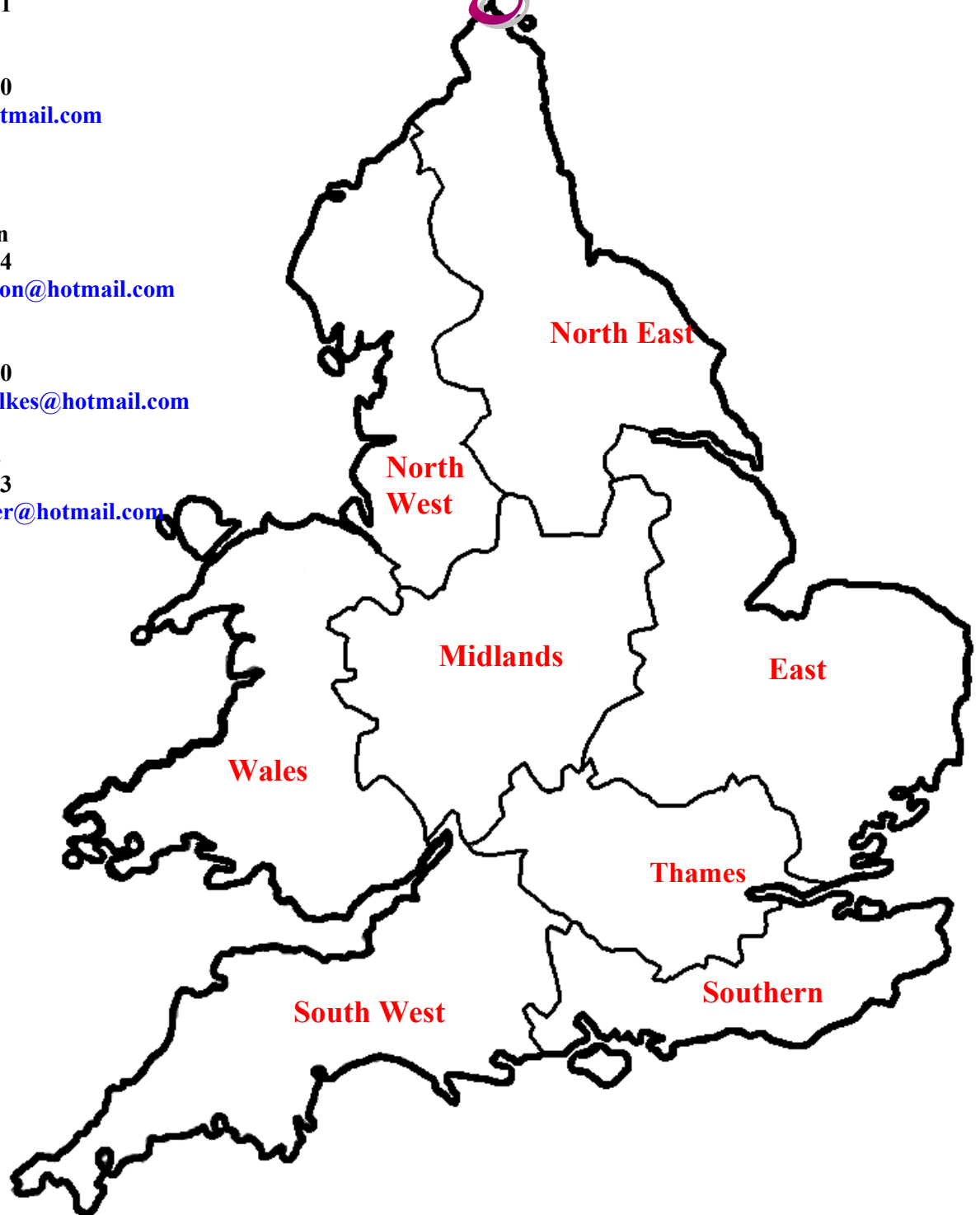
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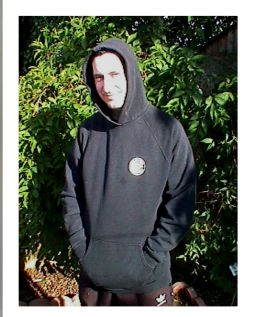
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(from the internet)

"Team Talk"

By Jimmy Jolley.

Well, I thought that I would never be writing this "Team Talk" but here I am, doing just that... the reason I am writing this is the fact that Damian's computer has died ... big style.... Listening to Damian describing his "woes"... it reminded me of the old Monty Python sketch, you know the one, the one about the dead parrot... "this computer is dead, deceased, no longer with us" and so on. I heard that the memorial service will be held at Wigan Metropolitan Recycle Depot sometime in the new year! .So I've taken over the editing of this issue of "Anguilla"... or until Damian "fixes" the problems with his PC.... So for the meantime, you've got me!

So, here we go!!!... I want to go on record and state that I am very disappointed with the response of the general membership regarding material for this edition of our club magazine, I've been in contact with Damian on a regular basis since I gave up the magazine editor's role... and to be honest... the whole situation STINKS!!!... the Bulletin Team of the National Anguilla Club try their best to bring you a publication to be proud of, however, if the editor has no material... then you, the membership, will receive what we have.... If that's 10 pages then that is what you will get... and you will have to accept it!! ... weather you like it or not. If you want the magazine to continue in the form it is at the moment, meaning, two issues per year then you will have to get your finger out ...quick!, or you will lose this publication... and I'm not kidding.

Once again, the same members that come up with the goods the last time we needed material have come to **your** rescue again and written articles for this issue of "Anguilla", however, that can not continue indefinitely.... One day they will get pissed-off putting "pen to paper" and that will be it... NO MAGAZINE... I'll stop there! As I know that within these pages our Chairman, Steve Richardson has something to say on the subject, and Steve "**tells-it-as-it-is**"!!!!

You will no doubt have noticed that I've written this "Team Talk" in bigger font size than the usual size12 font, this is size14... and I've also widened the left and right margins slightly... basically to "fill" or "bulk" the pages out so that you, the membership, can see just where we are going with this... more pages... less content. And if that is what you want... then that is exactly what you will get!

YOUR CLUB NEEDS YOU!

Your club need you to send material for the next issue of the Bulletin of the National Anguilla Club, "Anguilla". Anything will do!... articles, tackle reviews, rigs, photos, anything is better than nothing!!! So send all materials to me Jimmy Jolley, 23, Abingdon Dr, Platt Bridge, Wigan. WN2 5JQ. Or e-mail to jimmyjolley@hotmail.com



The Chairman's Page

By Steve Richardson.

Welcome to another edition of 'Anguilla'.....I would like to offer my thanks to Damian for managing to put an issue together this time around.

Having the responsibility for putting the magazine together is big enough but having to put something cohesive together and in some form of readable piece is difficult to say the least, when all you have for publication is a few items from the membership.....and the same old membership at that.

Now then.....there seems to be a distinct lack of input from the general membership into all things 'National Anguilla Club'. A bit harsh you may think.....well, I think not.

This magazine is nowhere near full enough to be considered a magazine in terms of past editions.....it's more like a puffed up newsletter. My personal thoughts on this is as follows, "If the membership don't send in enough articles for a sizable magazine to be published then we, the committee, shall have to consider if there is a need for two magazines per year from the club".

I couldn't give a toss what those members who disagree with me think about my stance on this.....my opinion comes from many, many years of contribution to this fine organisation, and as such, it is one that I feel justified in expressing. I really cannot understand why so many members of this club cannot sit down and write a short article on their eel fishing over the past season.....you could write about how your season has gone, write about the way in which you approach your eel fishing, write a brief account of a successful session, write down your thoughts on the last magazine, write about your time on one of the club fish-ins if you attended.....or simply send in a photo of one of your eels.

They'll be those of you out there who have never written anything before and are a tad shy in coming forward....well don't be. There's not one professional writer in our ranks and even if there were, I am sure that they would be delighted to read new thoughts from new members in our esteemed magazine.

If you look at the last magazine and compare the 'contents page' with this one, you'll find that the same old names are still doing their bit for the magazine. Just ask yourself what you want from the club regarding magazine content....take out all those who have contributed to both of this years magazines and see what is left for Damian to create a magazine with.....I shouldn't be surprised if there was anything he could do but to put out a four page newsletter instead.

Is this Chairman chap, Steve Richardson, being too unfair with his critical appraisal of the clubs members in their none contribution to the life blood of the club, the magazine???.....I would suggest that none will stand before me at the AGM and say that I am.

Damian is trying to perform his duties as the magazine editor by putting together two good magazines per year for the benefit of the membership.....that's the crux of the matter.....'for the benefit of the membership'.....and being the honourable guy that he is, he is self critical of his inability to carry out this simple task. I have told Damian in no uncertain terms that he has nothing to concern himself about with regard to the quality and quantity of the magazine....his only concern is to produce two magazines, initially for proof reading and then on to Jimmy for publication.....if the resulting magazine is no better than a newsletter, then so be it.

The committee can decide whether it is financially sensible to produce two magazines per year at the cost it is to the club.....that's their responsibility.

The membership's main responsibility to the club is ensuring that the club magazine has the articles it needs to make the publication viable from a production point of view and from a readable point of view.

I am now going to make a plea to 'you all' to sit down in the next couple of weeks and write something for the next magazine.....ten pages or one page.....it don't matter.....spelling or rubbish spelling.....it don't matter.....please, please, please try and put something down on paper and send it into Damian (or Jimmy, see "Team Talk").

There is one other small point that a lack of articles could induce and that is the subsequent possibility of only one magazine per year being produced.....and be very aware that if the trend continues, then we could have to revert back to the 'old days' of no magazine and only newsletters being sent out.....that would be a bad day decision all round, as it would also take one of the club trophies, 'The Steve Mahoney Trophy' for the 'Best Article of the Year', out of the line up in the trophy presentation section of the Winter Social meeting.

Right then.....I've sounded off.....and hopefully you have heard the rumble and also received the message....get writing and support your club magazine.

Before I finish this Chairman's page, I should like to say how superb it was to attend the Winter Social Meeting and to meet our guest speaker and ex-NAC club member Dave Holman. For me it was an honour to actually shake hands with him after reading so much about his past eel fishing and his contributions to the National Anguilla Club. His talk was first rate and very interesting.....I would like to thank Dave for his time in attending the meeting and in giving his talk.....certainly a candidate for the next instalment of 'Archive Article'.

Talking about the Winter Social Meeting, I know that Arthur J. Sutton was also pleased to be able to attend the meeting and to once again meet up with his old friend Dave Holman and also to meet the proportion of the present membership of the NAC that attended on the day. I certainly enjoyed Arthur's company during the day. The conversations held between us to and from the meeting were very enlightening.

To end on the Winter Social Meeting, I should like to point out that slide shows and talks seem an easy thing to do but believe me, it isn't.....its certainly easier to write an article for the magazine (Oopps, banging that drum again) and so I should like to also offer my sincere thanks to Mike Brettle and Jason Morgan for their entertaining two man show at the same meeting....well done guys, you done the NAC proud.

Lastly, I am not sure when this will arrive on your doormat but I shall take the opportunity to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous, Enjoyable and Successful Eeling New Year.

Steve Richardson, N.A.C Chairman.

(Editors footnote:- When Steve wrote his Chairman's Page we actually had only 10 pages for this issue of "Anguilla"... however, since then the page number as increased to its present number but I decided to leave Steve's page in its original form, as Steve makes some extremely valid points .)

The Winter Social 2005.

The Winter Social, 2005.

By Jimmy Jolley.

On a fine, crisp November morning my brother Anthony and I arrived at the Queen's Hotel, Long Eaton, Nottingham at the usual time of 10:30am, and what did we find, no one there.... The landlord had once again forgotten we had a meeting arranged so once again the meeting started late... however, the wait was well worth it!!!

Our Chairman, Steve Richardson opened the meeting and the members and guests present introduced themselves in the time-honoured N.A.C way.

On the agenda for the day was a slide show given by our General Secretary, Jason Morgan and our Record Officer Michael Brettle and a talk by one-time N.A.C member and well known eel angler Mr Dave Holman.

Its always good to see the members that I haven't seen for a while, same old faces and one or two new ones as well.... Most of the "new" ones being guests of members in attendance.

The presentation of trophies saw the trophy for the biggest eel of the year go too two members this year, Mr Nick Duffy and Mr Janssen Bostock for their eels of **5lb – 08oz**. Then we had the presentation of the trophy for the biggest Eel on a Club trip, won by Mr Neil Wilkinson for his eel of **3lb - 01oz** taken on the Richmond Lakes Fish-in at North Hykeham Lincs.

The Steve Mahoney trophy presented for the best article was won by Mr Anthony Jolley for his article... *Fishing the Leeds & Liverpool Canal for Eels:- Thoughts & Theories* (volume 42, issue 2).



Anthony Jolley is presented with the Steve Mahoney Trophy by Record Officer Michael Brettle.



The trophy for the Biggest Eel of the Year is presented to Janssen Bostock (left) and Nick Duffy (right) by Michael Brettle (centre) for their eels of 5lb – 08oz.

Then we had the presentation of certificates, bronze, for eels over 3lb, silver, for eels over 4lb and gold, for eels in excess of 5lb... (I think the certificate scheme as become very popular with the membership over the last couple of seasons).

Then came the first of this years winter social events...Jason and Mike's slide show. I found their endeavour thoroughly enjoyable, and to think that this was the first slide-show presentation Jason and Mike had ever done ... I thought they made an excellent job of it.

To see slides of Jason and Mike... when they were much younger and to see the results of some of their antics, like almost setting fire to everything in sight, double exposed photographs of Mike with one of his eels (very creative), and one slide of bank side chaos, with every item of tackle including rods, bed-chairs, sleeping-bags and bait lying in disarray.... (And from what I remember of my own eeling sessions Quite the norm really!!!).... Very funny moments indeed.

After Jason and Michael's excellent slide-show we had the usual N.A.C raffle and as usual there were some really good prizes on offer to anyone lucky enough to win one. This year it was decided that each person present could purchase one raffle ticket, and one raffle ticket only, so that everyone got a chance to win something... unlike previous years when Anthony Jolley seemed to win all the raffle prizes.... Hard luck bro'.

I think it was at this point, or maybe just before the raffle took place, that our Products Officer Mr Nick Rose arrived. He'd had to work that Sunday, but was intent on being there to hear Dave Holman's talk... something Nick had been looking forward to for quite a while.

So with everyone in their places, it was time for Mr Dave Holman to give his long awaited talk... I had been looking forward to hearing Dave speak to the assembled membership of the National Anguilla Club ever since I heard from our Social Officer, Mr John Davis, that he was going to "grace" us with his presence at this years Winter Social... and at this point I would like to thank Janssen Bostock for persuading Dave Holman to give us this talk on his vast experience regarding his eel fishing over the years.

Although Dave no longer fishes for the European Freshwater Eel, *Anguilla anguilla* it was none the less most enjoyable to hear of Dave's encounters with large eels, his methods, thoughts and theories concerning our chosen quarry...and also his memories of fishing with some of the past members of the National Anguilla Club.

The members present at this years winter social were treated to one of the great talks that I've heard in my time in the National Anguilla Club. Everyone listened intensely to every word Dave spoke. I know things have changed in eel fishing over the years but regardless of this, Dave's accounts of encounters with his large eel captures still "rings true" to-day in many respects.



Michael Brettle presents Neil Wilkinson with the trophy for the Biggest Eel on a Club Trip for his fish of 3lb - 01oz taken on the Richmond Lakes Fish-in this year.

It was interesting to hear Dave speak about his day-time captures, something that I found very surprising... meaning.... just how many of Dave's eels were caught during day-light hours. His relating to us of the introduction of "special" additives and his methods of ground-baiting I found also very entertaining and more to the point... educational.

Dave concluded his talk, which seemed to be over in the blinking of an eye... with a thank you for allowing him to speak to the assembled members of the National Anguilla Club... there were no thanks needed... it was our privilege to be in the presence of one of eel anglings legends.

With all our good byes said it was off back up the motorway, back to the North West, back home to Wigan with the memories of an extraordinary day that will stay with me for a long, long time.

Members & Guests Present

Members

Kevin Huish.
Mrs Patricia Huish.
Arthur J. Sutton.
Steve Richardson.
Jason Morgan.
Jimmy Jolley.
Anthony Jolley
Michael Brettle.
John Davis.
Nick Rose. (arrived late).
Wayne Staddon.
Nick Duffy.
Barry McConnell.
Peter F. Drabble
Janssen Bostock.
Steve Ricketts.
Graham Wilkes.
Stephen Cotton.



Mr Dave Holman with founder member, Vice President, and Life Member Mr Arthur J. Sutton meeting up again after many, many years.

Members Guests.

Thomas Huish.
Paul Davis.
Roy Piggott

Special Guest Speaker

Dave Holman.

Jimmy Jolley.
(N.A.C Membership Secretary).

The next meeting of the National Anguilla Club will be the A.G.M to be held in the Spring of 2006 (March or April). Details of date and venue will be sent to the membership closer to the time. Please note:- It as been decided that at all future meetings there will be No Smoking in the meeting room... Members who wish to smoke may go outside, or use the public bar.

Tackle Review

The “Adventuridge” Adjustable Head Lamp.

By Jimmy Jolley.

Not everything to do with fishing has to cost an “arm and a leg”, no, you can get some really good bits of kit from your local supermarket!!!... and that is just what I did in the summer of 05.

My brother Tony called one night and during the ensuing conversation Tony happened to mention that he'd seen some head torches in his local branch of ALDI, he said they were “dead cheap” and looked OK to him... I couldn't quite believe him when he told the actual price..... “£2:50p each”, “how much” I enquired, “you heard” he quipped... “£2:50p”, “can't be that good for that price” I said, but I thought I'd have a look at them anyway.

The following week-end off I went, with my better half, Jean... (as I never go shopping ... if I can get away with not doing... she was very surprised... well to be honest, Jean doesn't take me shopping ... has it usually cost her a lot more money if I “tag along”)... but anyway I found myself in ALDI.

After wondering around for what seemed an eternity (that's another reason why Jean doesn't take me shopping... I soon get bored) we came across the said head torch's. At first glance they looked reasonably OK... so for £2:50p, I thought what the heck! So I slipped three of them in our trolley when Jean wasn't looking... (that's something I've learned over the 35 years we've been married... slight-of-hand).

So, what can I tell you about these remarkably cheap head torches, well they really are very good value for money. They have three settings, two, four and eight white LED's. They have a fully adjustable strap, are water resistant and the lamp itself has adjustable angle settings. A simple push button for ON/OFF, with the three light intensity settings in between the ON and OFF positions... (this is the only “flaw” I can see in them....as you have to go through all the light intensity settings to turn it off... but for £2:50p, that's something I can live with). The “Adventuridge” LED head torch's power supply is provided by three AAA sized batteries (not supplied... cheap skates!!!!).

So, that's just about all I can tell you about these affordable little gems.... Oh yes!... by the time you read this, one of you will have won one in the winter social raffle.... That's why I bought three, one of me, one as a spare... and one for some lucky N.A.C member.... I just hope Tony doesn't do what he usually does and win all the raffle prizes.



An Introduction to the Archive Article.

By

Steve Richardson

Big eels.....what a mystery they 'have' been and 'always' will be to the dedicated and specialist eel angler.

The following archive article was written and published by the author, Dr. Terry Coulson, many years ago when the then record eel stood at 8lb 8oz.....a seriously big fish even by today's captures.

Dr. Terry Coulson had bestowed upon him the title of 'Life Member' within the National Anguilla Club for his outstanding services to the Club. He was a founder member and a major contributor to the NAC in its formative years and his foresight of the possibilities within the realms of eel angling has stood the test of time....and has proved that he was no mere 'dreamer' or writer of 'myths'.

Stephen Terry's record eel of 11lb 2oz was caught some years after the following archive article was published in the famous fishing monthly entitled 'Fishing'. This fact alone, along with other notable captures over the 8lb 8oz weight of the then British eel record, shows that even back in 1967, Dr. Terry Coulson knew what he was talking about.....the present eel record and those other fish prove his point absolutely.

Today we specialist eel anglers firmly believe that Stephen Terry's record eel weight is breakable....we do not 'think' it can happen, we 'almost' know that one day it will be broken.....and many of us dream that it will be us who will manage that feat.

Realistically, the odds are that a carp or pike angler will accidentally put the record eel into another dimension by virtue of there being more of them fishing in 'environments' that have the potential to produce the beast to crack the weight of 11lb 2oz.

Un-officially, rumours have abounded over the last decade that eels over this magical weight have already been banked by rod and line anglers. None though, have been shown to be true and hold substance.....Talk of big eels breeds myths and legends.....huge beasts squirming on the waters surface only to destroy the tackle of the intrepid anglers who hooked the leviathans and then have to watch them disappear back into the inky depths....breathtaking stuff.

And, as you read this introduction to Terry's archive article, there is news that an angler fishing a syndicate carp lake in the Colne Valley has banked, by accident, an eel of 13lb.....1lb 14oz above the present and official eel record. The capture is surrounded by 'myth' and 'secrecy' due to a 'no publicity' ban being in force by the controlling fishing club. Unfortunately, the facts are that no photos at all were taken of the fish by the captor. The news surrounding this capture has rocked the angling world 'outside' of the eel angling fraternity.....those of us who fish for big eels 'know' there are eels of that size to be caught.

The 'Times' newspaper, after some journalistic scouting about, published details of the potential water and even named the angler concerned. (I won't put any of this in print due to protection of the NAC's credibility being called into question further down the line and potential problems that could arise from copying 'news-reports'.)

I have been told by someone whom I respect within the big fish scene, that the fish 'was' caughthe's as surprised as myself that no photos were taken though.

For me, the reported capture only cements my belief that eels of this size, and far bigger, are out there in our waters and can be caught....for sure, it must have been an awesome sight nestling within the folds of his landing net.....it's such a shame that the captor didn't realise the

significance of his capture and at least recorded its presence within our British recording system.

For me.....the target remains at 11lb 2oz.....it's stood as our official target for 27 years up to now....it's the weight to aim for and it's the weight to realise our dreams.

I hope you enjoy the following article.....read it as though the eel record stands at 8lb 8oz and that it has stood at that for the past 44 years.....incredible reading and a brave committal to paper in the light of 'thinking' in those days. It's a testament to Dr. Terry Coulson's vision of eels and the possibilities of what could come.

Supplied by Nick Rose.

This is a feature from Dr Terry Coulson. This was from the once very famous monthly publication called "Fishing" way back in 1967, and was subsequently re-printed in the National Anguilla Club magazine Volume 25 issue 3 in 1988.

"From the Archives"

Just how big is a really big eel?

By Terence Coulson.



There's more interest in eel-fishing these days,

than probably at any time in the past.

And a good thing, too, for the eel offers as much scope for sheer enjoyment and as much of a challenge as any other branch of the game.

Is it 10lb, 20lb, 30lb? TERENCE COULSON

examines the evidence and suggests we'll be due

for a surprise when that record's finally broken

Much of the challenge lies in the problem which really big eels present. The eel record has stood unequalled by any authenticated fish for 44 years, longer than any other coarse species. One might suppose from this that 8½ lb is pretty near the top limit of the eel's growth in this country, and that therefore the prospects of bettering it are slender, and the chances of beating it by a wide margin are almost non-existent.

Yet there are serious and knowledgeable eel specialists who entertain shrewdly reasoned hopes that, in the foreseeable future, we may learn how to catch double-figure eels - If not frequently, at least with reasonable consistency. They believe, and, for that matter, so do I that eel-fishing today may well be comparable to carp-fishing in the days before the C.C.C.

There was a time when Buckley's 26 lb Mapperley carp seemed likely to hold the record for a long time, when the chances of beating it by more than a slender margin seemed remote, when a man who said he was off to catch a double figure carp would have been thought a crack-pot! Now, the carp record has been upped by 70 per cent and carp fishers can set out at the

beginning of a season, if they wish, with good chances of a 20 pounder or two, and we wouldn't think them crack-pots for hoping for a 30 pounder.

Of course, the eel is a very different matter. But would it be any more revolutionary if the eel record were raised to around 14lb or 15lb, if the capture of eels in the 8lb bracket were to become a good but not startling result?

The first step with carp was to convince anglers that it was possible, that there were in fact enough 20 lb and 30 lb carp around for it to be worthwhile trying to tackle the problem. For similar reasons, the same step is important with eels: Is there any real evidence for the existence of eels so much bigger than the present, long-standing record?

Well, I know a of fellow members of the National Anguilla Club - In whose veracity and judgment I have every confidence, who tell me they have been within a hair's-breadth of landing eels which would have been way above the 8lb level. Its no good dismissing them as fairy stories. I'm all for healthy scepticism, but if one can accept an angler's judgment that an eel he has lost measured, say, about 3ft, there's no logic in assuming that he has taken leave of his sense of perspective when he says he has lost one which measured about 5ft. Either he is a plain liar, or he has lost a thundering great eel!! This is to say nothing of the unseen "monsters" which have left many an angler holding broken tackle, trembling and impotent.

Of all the coarse species, the eel has probably received more attention from zoologists than any other. Perhaps we can review the zoological evidence at some future date, but for the moment, suffice it to say that many ordinary waters can and do grow a small proportion of their eels to 7lb and above during the course of their normal stay in freshwater of up to about 18 years.

We have regrettably little direct information about the actual growth rates of really big eels. However, according to a letter in the old *Fishing Gazette* for September 16, 1922, Tate Regan, of the British Museum estimated from the scales of the record eel that it had been 12 years in freshwater. Even allowing for the uncertainty inherent in readings of eels' scales, it implies an average growth rate of about 11oz per year. Obviously, If an eel maintained such a growth rate for its "full term" of 18 years, it would reach a weight of around 12-13 lb.

Apart from the growth possible during the normal period of 18 years or so, it is widely recognised that eels can - and occasionally do - stay in freshwater for much longer periods. They may be "abnormal" individuals which do not experience the call to migrate; or they may be individuals which have somehow become imprisoned in a water from which they cannot escape; I do not know. But the French zoologist Professor Desmaret kept an eel in captivity for 37 years, by which time it had grown to the length of 4 ft. 7 In. I don't think Desmaret recorded its weight, but an eel of this length in even moderate condition ought to weigh. say, 13lb. Again, eels seem to have survived for 50 years after their introduction into Lake Cauma - a totally enclosed water high in the Alps - and although it is futile to speculate what weight eels might reach in these long periods, it needs no stretch of the imagination to see that 8½ lb is really nowhere near the limit.

We have on record a fair number of accounts of much bigger eels. Frank Buckland, author of *Familiar History of British Fishes*, mentioned a nine-pounder from the River Arun. A number of writers - Richard Walker among them - have found the dead bodies of eels in the 9lb region. Victor Salmon has given a detailed account of the capture of a 9lb-2oz. eel some 50 years ago, and one of 9lb-3oz was reported in the angling press in December, 1966. James Wentworth Day has written about eels of 9lb and 11lb; which were taken in Norfolk in 1948.

Jonathan Couch, F.L.S., mentions a 10lb. eel in *A History of Fishes of the British Isles*, and Tate Regan wrote of the 10 pounder from the River Mole, of which Buckland had a cast. Another

101b eel was found in a River Avon eel trap a few years ago. In November, 1966, a London policeman found an eel of 10lb-2oz left stranded by the tide at North Woolwich on the Thames.

Cliff Glenton has recounted how he recovered the dead bodies of two eels measuring 4 ft. and 4 ft. 4 ins. from a pool after the vicious winter of 1963. I don't think he weighed either of them, but the larger one would have gone about 11lb if in fair condition, as it appears to be from a photograph. Raymond Perrett has put on record the finding of the dead bodies of eels weighing 11lb and 12lb at a lake in Somerset.

Thomas Boosey wrote in 1835 of a 15 pounder from the River Kennet at Newbury. Richard Walker has told us about the eel which he saw fall from a mass of weed, dredged from the Avon, which he estimated to weigh about 16lb. On July 16, 1926, the *Manchester Guardian* reported the capture of an eel of 16½lb. In a salmon fisher's net from the Whiteadder Water at Cantys, near Berwick.

I suppose a sceptic might take leave to doubt the precise details of some of them but many appear to be perfectly well authenticated and none, it seems to me, need stretch our credulity at all.

We have to go back a few years to find reports of still bigger eels. Walton wrote of an eel a yard and three-quarters long taken from the 'Peterborough River' in 1667; an eel of this length might weigh about 20lb. "If you do not believe me," wrote Walton, "then go and see for yourself at one of the coffeehouses in King Street in Westminster" - a challenge he is not likely to have made if the eel were not there to be seen.

Witness of the capture of another 20 pounder near Norwich in 1839, is given by the Rev. Richard Lubbock in his book *Fauna of Norfolk* an authentication which, as Tate Regan remarked, "can scarcely be questioned". In *A History of British Fishes* (1836) William Yarrell wrote of two eels weighing 23lb and 27lb which were taken when a dyke at Wisbech was drained. J. W. Martin, the "Trent Otter" an excellent angler and a down-to-earth fellow mentioned a 25 pounder shot in the Welland, and a 30 pounder taken from a Norfolk drain. Jonathan Couch records an eel of 27 lb caught in the "Hackney River".

During the 1920s, "Broadlander" (the pen-name, I think, of A. H. Patterson) wrote that he saw and handled eels of 24lb and 28lb taken at Yarmouth on September 30, 1911, and February 6, 1912, respectively. He said he had photographed one of them, the picture being reproduced in the *Daily Mirror* and a copy deposited with the British Museum. The Museum authorities tell me they no longer have a record of this photograph, but it would be interesting to search for it in the *Daily Mirror* around that time.

"Broadlander" went on to say that an eel of 32½lb had been taken at Lowestoft in February 1911; and he also mentioned a report of a 42lb "silver belly" taken in Yarmouth Harbour in March 1808, adding "it may have been a conger". No doubt most of us would agree with that reservation - but at least it shows "Broadlander" did not think other great eels were congers.

Apart from another 40 pounder mentioned by Couch, but which he evidently had some reservations about, there are three other eels of 30 odd pounds to complete the tally. One of 30¼ lb was shown at the International Fishes Exhibition at South Kensington Museum in 1883. One of 34lb was said by Couch to have been taken from the Medway near Rochester. One of 36lb was caught by A. E. Austin, of Cambridge University, near Denver Sluice on October 22, 1867, and exhibited in the shop of the local fishmonger Mr. Culling.

I don't know how your credulity stands up to all this! Of course, it is popular nowadays to discount these older accounts simply because they are "old", or on the grounds that "they were probably congers, anyway!" Personally, I find it hard to see how a conger shown at an

international technical exhibition or on a fishmongers slab could really have been passed off for a freshwater eel. And we all accept any number of historical stories on evidence no greater, and a great deal older than these accounts of eels. Moreover, if I'd told my old Granddad that he didn't know an eel when he saw one, or couldn't use a pair of scales and a yardstick properly, he'd have given a demonstration of Victorian materialism fit to singe hair!

I should be glad to hear from any reader, particularly about accounts of big eels which I may have overlooked. For my money, the evidence adds up to this, that there's no real doubt at all about the existence of eels in the 'teens of pounds, that occasional eels in the low twenties are probable, and in the upper twenties and thirties are, well, possible...Catching the brutes - ah! that's another thing, again! But I do believe the sceptics may be in for a surprise or two during the next few years.

N.A.C Fish-in's 2005

By John Davis.

THORPE PARK FISH-IN - 24th - 26th JUNE 2005.

Members present - John Davis, Graham Wilkes, Neil Wilkinson, Adam Pettitt, Nick Duffy, Mark Duffy, Kevin Huish, Mike Brettle, Jason Morgan, Malcolm Law, Wayne Staddon, Les Corsie and David Jones

There were 3 guests - Paul Davis, David Brettle and Nick Dutty's mate Neil, and two of the members lads, Billy Law and Thomas Huish.

This was the first fish-in I had organised for the N.A.C. so I was more than pleased with the reception when I told the membership I had arranged a weekend on the Water-Ski Lake at Thorpe Park.

Now as I stated in the Newsletter you can't fish there as its a syndicate water. Peter May who runs this water has not allowed Day Tickets for years and the local P.A.C. who regularly ask to hold fish-ins there get refused. On the day, myself, my son Paul, the Jockey and the Batman met up with Pete around midday and for the next hour or so we were given a tour of the areas we could fish.

There are two distinctive parts to this lake, a shallow end which averages 4-6 feet deep and a deep end which averages 11-12 feet deep, but this being a gravel pit, has bars and weed beds in various locations so there was plenty to go at.

Over the course of the next few hours faces old and new appeared, many with a pained look on them, not only was the weather not at its best to travel in but everyone got lost as well, still its all part of being on a fish-in!

The first night saw Mark Duffy strike the first blow, the night's results went like this -

Mark Duffy	2.04	dead bait
Malcolm law	2.05	dead bait
Myself	2.02	maggots
Wayne Staddon	2.02	dead bait
David Jones	2.12	worm

Neil (Nicks mate) 1.00 dead bait

Not exactly earth shattering but still some action on a new water.

During the night and into the morning some Pike were caught, Batman and Nick Duffy having a double each, Paul had a 4lb jack on a whip. Bream and Tench were also caught with 5lb and 6lb specimens taken. Catching bait wasn't that easy but the brook running alongside the shallow end of lake came up with the goods. Mike Brettle had a 5lb plus Bream and young Billy Law had a 2.08 Chub and a 1 lb Eel. Back on the lake things had gone a little quiet (apart from the water skiers).

We had all decided to meet up in the Cafe/Bar on the island where the ski club is, at midday on Saturday for a few beers and a bit of a social. After an hour or three we managed to cross the pontoon bridge back to our swims without failing in. Before settling down for some serious fishing, Nick Duffy and Paul hijacked Mike Brettle and persuaded him to drive Nicks car to Staines to find a Chinese Take-Away and while they were finding our feast we were entertained with a Morris Dance routine from Batman! The really worrying thing is Neil's applied to join the Police force! Imagine if you can, Neil dancing around some bemused Lager Lout before being hit on the head with a truncheon while he's singing 'Hey Nonnie Nonnie No' - marvellous! Anyway, with the hot Chinese food eaten and the motor boats stopping it was down to another night's eeling. With dead baits now being in great supply I fished all three rods on them only to catch one small Pike.

Results for Saturday night were -

Kevin Huish	1.12	worms
Nick Duffy	1.00	worms
Les Corsie	2.00	worm/cockle
David Jones	2.04, 2.02 & 1.08	on worms
Mike Brettle	13oz	worm

All too soon it was Sunday morning and we were saying our goodbyes, although most of my Eel fishing is by my self I really enjoy these social occasions. I must admit, given the potential of Thorpe Park I was a little disappointed with the results but that's Eel fishing for you.

Lastly, Peter May has congratulated the N.A.C. for our time on Thorpe and would be more than happy for us to return anytime we like.

RICHMOND LAKES FISH-IN - 2nd-4th SEPTEMBER 2005.

Members present - Nick Rose, Nick Duffy, Wayne Staddon, David Jones, Malcolm Law, Adam Petit, Steve Cotton, Janssen Bostock, Neil Wilkinson, John Davis, and a guest of Adam's, Nigel.

Now, if you follow the moon and its certain phases with all the theories of which more than a few enlightened anglers attribute to them, this weekend should have been a good one. Personally I couldn't care less, I'm out fishing! Everyone had to be at the fishery before 7pm as the on-site bailiff locks the gates and goes home until 7am when he returns.

There are three lakes on the complex and the most scenic is the Railway Lake, it has islands, reed beds and lots of marginal cover and did look the business. This is where most of the membership chose to fish.

At 17 acres and not as pretty was the Carp Lake. Nick Rose had this lake all to himself, with over a dozen Carpers for company.

The Match Lake, which apparently never gets match-fished anymore, was small and looked good but with much building work and JCB's roaring about close to the bank-side it didn't appeal to me. However, Janssen Bostock and Steve Cotton fished there and had the whole water to them selves.

With all three lakes being fished I hoped we would find some Eels that wanted to play and it happened that we did. I was more than happy with virtually everyone catching on the first night and on every lake too. Although most fish were only about a pound in weight with the odd one a bit bigger. Neil "Batman" Wilkinson had a 3lb loz fish which he thought only weighed about 21bs. Do we call him Batman because his eyesight is crap?!

Saturday passed by meeting up with everyone you don't see too often, with only 10 members present I thought I would be sociable and pay a visit to all, well, I am the Social Officer!

After a bite to eat and a half hearted attempt to catch some lives, which proved just as difficult as bait fishing at Thorpe, we settled in for the nights onslaught. Again, lots of Eels were caught but no biggies. Steve Cottons 2.05 was the best of the bunch.

As with all good things our time on Hykeham came to an end, we had to be off by 9.00am or ensure a charge for another day ticket.

Again, that is it for another year, I'll make sure we have at least three National fish-ins next year (2006). I believe these are just as important to the N.A.C. as the AGM and Winter Social and hopefully more members will make an effort to attend one or two more of these events.

The results of the weekends fish-in were as follows

Nick Rose	3	Eels to 11b8oz plus a PB Perch of 2.02
Nick Duffy	4	Eels to 1 lb plus
Janssen Bostock	6	Eels to 11b8oz and a 11 lb Pike
Steve Cotton	6	Eels to 2 1b 5oz and a 5 1b 12oz Bream
Adam Petit	2	Eels to 1 lb
John Davis	5	Eels to 11b8oz
Neil Wilkinson	7	Eels to 3 1bloz
Malcolm Law	1	Eel to 1 lb
David Jones	2	Eels to 1 lb
Wayne Staddon		Blanked but a Jack Pike, saved a dry net
Nigel, Adams guest	4	Eels to 1 lb caught on pellets while playing at Carp fishing.

N.A.C Fish-ins for 2006.

The National Anguilla Club fish-ins for 2006 are still being organised, however, if any member has access or information for a water in their area that we, the N.A.C could hold a fish-in on in future could they please inform the Social Officer, Mr John Davis, 26, Eggesford Road, Stenson Fields, Derby. DE24 3BH. Tel:- 01332 723644.

Internet Resources

Supplied by
Anthony Jolley.

(Editor's note:- This Internet Resource is a follow on from "Anguilla" Volume 42, issue 2. In that piece Anthony informed us that more work was being done in the scientific world in regard to the artificial breeding of eels.

During the production of this magazine, and in particular this Internet Resources section I had to read it almost letter for letter, and not just word for word. This was done because it was originally produced in "Acrobat Reader" format and it was difficult to re-produce it in a format that could be used within these pages. Difficult as this may have been, I found it most interesting and informative, however, some members may think that we should not have such scientific studies included in a magazine about "eel fishing" this I feel should not be the case. As Anthony as stated numerous times that the European Eel is in serious decline and if the work being done all over the world to reverse this current trend is successful in the future, then this can only be a good thing. And, as an Eel Group, we need to be informed of any progress being made along these lines... and that is why I think it should be in our club publication... but then again... I don't know as I rarely get any feed-back from the general membership!!!

So, this is just a fraction of the reading that is available, from the Internet on the subject, and most likely we will be seeing more on this ground breaking work in future issues of "Anguilla").

Observations on reproduction techniques applicable to the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla* L.)

E.M. Amin

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SUMMARY- Immature silver male eels *Anguilla anguilla* were injected weekly with a human chorionic gonadotropin hormone (HCG) at a concentration of about 1.5 IU/gBW. The injection increased the gonadosomatic index (GSI) from 0.03 to 9.0. All treated males spermiated after the 5th injection and milt of high quality was obtained: pH amounted to 8.0, spermatocrit values = 75.0%, average sperm swimming speed was 6000 μ . Sperm required about five seconds to reach the opposite side of the ripe egg with average diameter of 1.2 mm. Sperm life span reached a maximum duration of 400 seconds at 967.8 mOsmole/kg. Sodium and calcium could be considered as having a direct stimulating effect on sperm motility, while the functional state potassium is essential to activation mechanism of sperm depending on the dose used. A good correlation seems to exist between experimental conditions, ovarian maturation and injection by a combination of (2 mg Carp Pituitary CP / 100 g BW) two times a week within 70 days.

GSI increased from 1.66 at the beginning of the experiment to 68.4 on reaching the ripe stage, with increased in body weight from 415 g to 500 g, about 342 g of ripe eggs were obtained. The absolute fecundity amounted to 1.48×10^6 . The ripe female and male eels were kept in the same tank, at a sea water temperature of 21-23°C. And although spawning behaviour was observed, spawning did not occur. Twenty minutes after insemination, fertilized eggs formed a moderate perivitelline space.

Key words: Artificial maturation, spermiation, ovulation, fertilized egg, European eel.

Introduction

The European eel (*Anguilla anguilla* L.) constitutes a considerable part of the catch in the Egyptian northern delta lakes fisheries, especially during the period of lake-sea migration.

The migrating European freshwater eels, undergo extensive migration from their feeding grounds in the lakes towards their spawning grounds in the Sargasso Sea. They leave their freshwater feeding grounds at an early stage of sexual maturation (Bertin, 1956; Amin, 1974; 1997 and Kokhnenko *et al.*, 1977). Induced maturation of the European eel in Egypt could be achieved in laboratory by gonadotropic preparation Amin (1986; 1988 a,b; 1990).

The techniques of artificial maturation of the European eel in Egypt has passed through several developmental stages, particularly the achievement of optimal, number of hormone injections and dosages giving adequate volumes and high quality milt and eggs. Few studies have been made on this subject.

This study aims to investigate: (i) the developmental changes and their synchronization with morphological changes, during the induced maturation of male silver eels, by the injection of the human chorionic gonadotropin hormone (HCG); (ii) the effect of five weeks of hormone injections on the sperm quality (motility, spermatocrit and pH of the milt); (iii) roles of osmolality and ionic composition to understand the environmental factors which regulate the sperm motility; (iv) the optimal dose of gonadotropic hormones for initiating the ovarian development from immature to full oocyte maturation; and (v) fertility of spermatozoa.

Material and methods

Experiments started on the migrating silver eels *Anguilla anguilla* L. obtained from commercial catch in lake Edku (one of the Egyptian northern delta lakes) during the period of spawning- migration that extend from November to February. Experimental fish were gradually acclimatized to seawater over 7 days. During the experiments, the fish were held without feeding in 500 to 700 litre circulating sea water (38.0%) metallic galvanized tightly covered tanks with air compressor in complete darkness. Water temperature ranged from 20 to 24°C oxygen content approximately 80% saturation. Two to three female eels were placed together in each tank, while eight to ten male eels were placed together in each tank.

One hundred and thirty live migrating silver eels were used. Two experiments were carried out. Experiment 1, comprised fifty specimens of male silver eels of 32.0 - 44.0 cm in length and 80-120 g in weight. Thirty eels were injected intramuscularly once each week with a human chorionic gonadotropin (500 IU HCG). The other twenty eels were used as a control. Four of these were killed each seven days to monitor gonadal development. The effects of weekly intramuscular injections HCG at a concentration of 500 IU/3 fish (1.5 IU/g BW) was currently examined, because in a previous experiment (Amin, 1986) the full testicular ripeness and spermiation were achieved with a GSI of 5.3% after the 7th injection in the period of 45 days through weekly intramuscular injection of HCG at a concentration of 250 IU/fish.

In experiment 2, eighty specimens of female silver eels of 56-80 cm in length and 400-900 g in weight were used. They were divided into seven groups, received intramuscular injections of 500 IU HCG or carp pituitary (CP) suspended in (112.7 mM NaCl + 3.37 mM KCl + 2.35 mM NaHCO₃, pH 7.5), in various doses, with or without 500 IU HCG, they were given once a week or twice weekly, and control

group. For invitro experiments, the stage of ovarian development of females injected twice weekly with 500 IU HCG was assessed histologically as early vitellogenic growth, fragments of ovarian tissues (10-50 mg) were isolated, immediately incubated in isotonic solution (ISIM), and supplemented with various concentrations of CP and 100000 U penicillin/l.

One micro litre of the semen was collected after spermiation and immediately diluted with one millilitre of each of the following solutions:

- (i) distilled water (DW);
- (ii) sea water (SW);
- (iii) isotonic solution for in vitro egg maturation (ISIM) (Amin, 1988 b), 123,9 mM NaCl + 5.10 mM KCl + 2.07 mM CaCl₂ + 3.41 mM NaH₂P₄ + 11.76 mM NaHCO₃ + 1.91 mM MgSO₄ + 5.21 mM glucose at pH 8.05 and 17°C;
- (iv) 154,7 mM NaCl + 3.2 mM KCl + 2.3 mM CaCl₂ of 322.7 mOsm osmolality;
- (v) 309.4 mM NaCl + 6.4 mM KCl + 4.6 mM CaCl₂ of 645.2 mOsm osmolality;
- (vi) 464.1 mM NaCl + 9.6 mM KCl + 6.9 mM CaCl₂ of 967.8 mOsm osmolality;
- (vii) 618.8 mM NaCl + 12.8 mM KCl + 9.2 mM CaCl₂ of 1290.4 mOsm osmolality;
- (viii) K free, 464.1 mM NaCl + 6.9 mM CaCl₂;
- (ix) Ca free, 464.2 mM NaCl + 9.6 mM KCl; and
- (x) Na free, 9.6 mM KCl + 6.9 mM CaCl₂.

Test solutions were prepared and kept at room temperature (17 to 22 °C).

Sperm motility was determined by measuring the time until spermatozoa ceased forward movement when observed with light microscope. Milt pH was measured with a portable pH meter, one drop of milt from the genital pore was placed quickly on the sensor of the pH meter. Spermatocrit (packed cell volume/ total milt volume X 100) of each male was determined by collecting semen in nonheparinized tubes and spinning in a centrifuge for 10 min at 12.000 rpm. Sperm speed was calculated by dividing the sperm travel distance by the travelling time in seconds. To trace the movement of sperm, we utilized the grid pattern of the haemocytometer (200 X 200 µm) according to Trippel and Neilson (1992).

The gonads were removed and weighed, a part of them was fixed in Bouins fixative and processed for histological examination using standard techniques. The gonadosomatic index GSI or gonad weight represented as a percentage of gutted body weight was determined.

Milt from one (500 IU HCG) injected eel was combined by the dry method, with about five grams ripe eggs from (8 mg CP + 500 IU HCG) injected female, and the eggs were incubated in static normal seawater at 23°C.

Results and discussion

Induced maturation *of* the male silver eel.

At the beginning of hormonal treatment, testes of silver males were quite immature and the most advanced stage was ascribed to spermatogonia (Fig. 1). Several changes in the morphology of the germ cells as a function of gonadotropin and steroid production was obtained. Soon, after the first injection, the seminiferous tubules and central lumen became differentiated, the spermatogonia were singly found settled around the lumen. After the second injection (15 days), the number of cysts of spermatogonia decreased and cysts of primary spermatocytes were noticed surrounding the narrow empty lumen; clusters of Sertoli and Leydig cells could be detected. After the third injection (3 weeks), sexual cells belonging to all stages of development were visible and completely formed spermatozoa were observed in the lumen of testis, many Sertoli and Leydig cells increase in size and number (Fig. 2). Active testicular development was observed after 27 days of treatment (four injections). A large numbers *of* spermatozoa, could be noted in the lumen of tubules and were distinguished by their elongated crescent-shaped bodies

and dark staining chromatin without any particular arrangement (Fig. 3). All treated males spermiated after the injection, (32 days), the GSI values increased from 0.03 ± 0.005 % at the time of capture coinciding with the onset of spawning migration to 9.0 ± 1.10 % at the time of spermiation (Fig. 4).

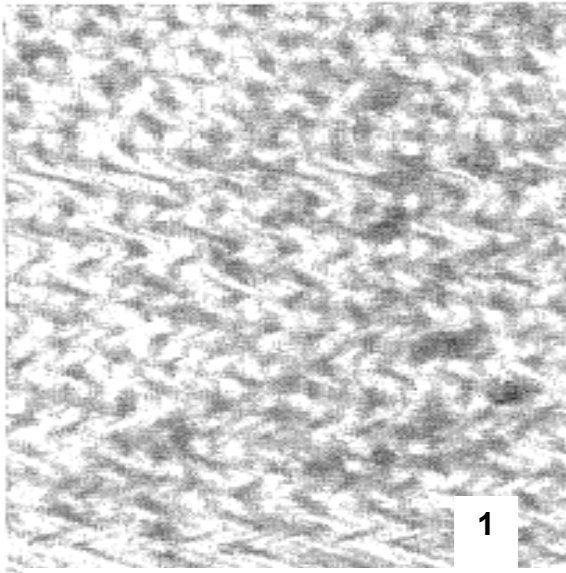


Fig 1. Testis of an immature European silver eel; spermatogonia (SG)-x 1,000.

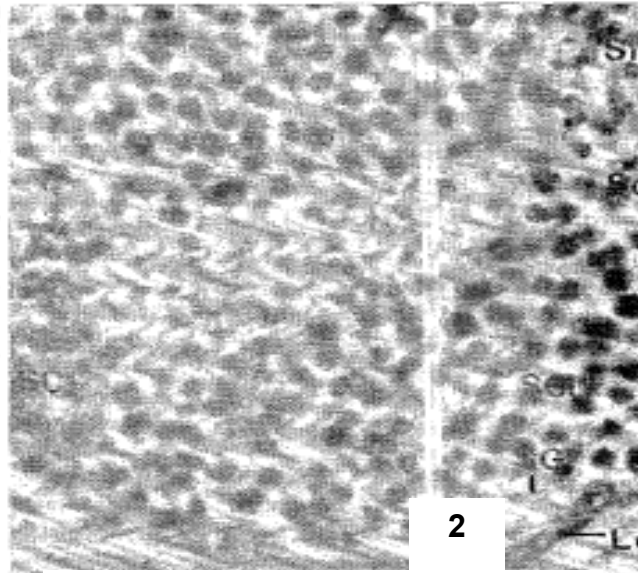


Fig 2. Testis at the end of the third week of HCG treatment of the European silver eel, containing spermatogonia (SG), primary and secondary spermatocytes (SCI, SCII), spermatids (ST), spermatozoa (S), Sertoli (Sc) and Leydig (LC) cells-x 1,000.

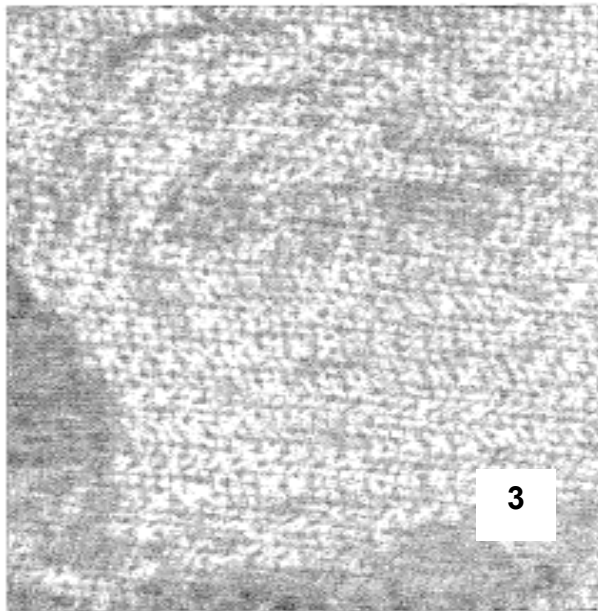


Fig. 3. Lumen packed with spermatozoa in the testis of the European silver eel-x 1,000.

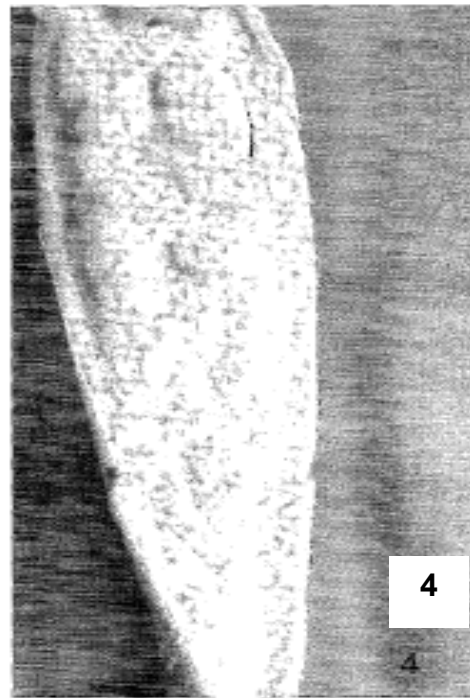


Fig. 4. Maximum development of the testes of a ripe European silver eel.

The spermatozoa was about 50 microns long, the average elongated head length was 5.0μ . The pH value ranged from 7.85 to 8.10 with average of $8.0 + 0.3$. Spermocrit ranged from 70.0 to 80.0 with average of $75.0 + 2.5\%$. The swimming speed of motile sperm was constant as it passed through the 200μ m field of view, the average swimming speed was $6000+200\mu$.

Within the testicular tubules the spermatozoa were still alive but motionless. The sperm motility occurred when the semen was diluted with distilled water. With ISIM solution (308.8 mOsm/kg) the duration of motility was about 2.5 times longer than that in distilled water (Fig. 5). With increasing osmolality the duration increased, reaching a maximum motility in solution (vi) at 967.8 mOsm/kg. Meanwhile, in seawater (1000mOsm/kg) the motility decreased. By increasing ion concentration (1 290.4 mOsm/kg) the sperm motility was inhibited. Sodium and calcium could be considered as having a direct stimulating effect on sperm motility (Fig. 6), in K free solution, duration of sperm motility extended 2.0-3.5 times longer than that in Ca and Na free solutions, and was shorter than that in solution (vi). In the medium consisting of NaCl and CaCl₂ (Fig. 7), the maximum duration of $600 + 30$ seconds was obtained for values of NaCl: 309.4 - 464.1 mM and CaCl₂: 60-70 mM.

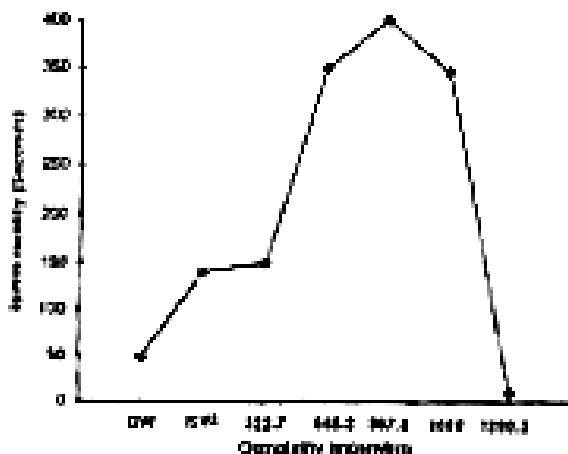


Fig 5. The effect of osmolality on sperm motility of the European eel.

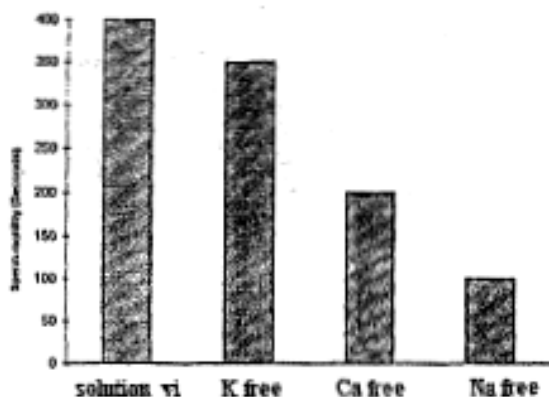


Fig. 6. The effect of NaCl, KCl, CaCl₂ on sperm motility of the European silver eel.

The spermiation induction of silver eel with weekly HCG dose (1.5 IU/g BW) giving rise to good sperm quantity and quality and produced fertile spermatozoa after the 5th injection (32 days), confirm the suitability of such injection for steroids secretion from Leydig cells and elevation of pH value.

Similar results obtained by (Ohta *et al.*, 1996) in Japanese eel, that sperm motility was attained during the 7th - 9th injections by HCG (250 IU) and percent motility at 15 sec after dilution with 450 mM NaCl was 70%. Miura *et al.* (1991) concluded that the gonadotropin stimulates the secretion of the fish androgen from Leydig cells, which in turn, activates Sertoli cells to stimulate premitotic spermatogonia and consequently the complete process of spermatogenesis. The spermatozoa have a longer life span at an osmolality between 645.2 and 1000.0 mOsm/kg, and significant correlation was noted between duration of motility and Na, K and Ca ions which suggest that sodium and calcium are involved in the acquisition of sperm motility; complete lack of potassium did not affect the motility. Baynes *et al.* (1981), reported that divalent ions especially Ca are potent stimulators of such motility in sperm of rainbow trout. Furthermore, Morisawa (1985) stated that K concentration was not involved in inhibiting sperm motility in seawater species.

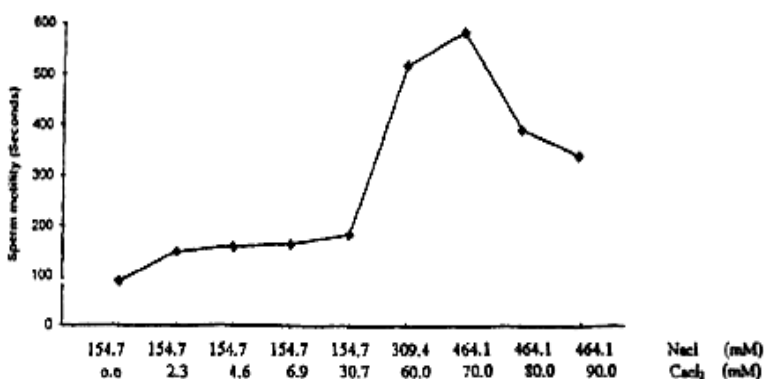


Fig 7. The effect of Na/Ca ratio constituting solution on sperm motility of the European silver eel.

Induced maturation of the female and breeding of the eel.

At the beginning of the treatment, or at the onset of the spawning migration, ovaries were quite immature (Fig. 8), the GSI averaged 1.66 ± 0.50 . The different practices revealed that:

- (i) Females injected twice weekly with 500 IU HCG did not demonstrate ovarian maturation. The ovary was still in early vitellogenic growth. Primary yolk stages were visible in the group injected 15 times.
- (ii) Ovarian tissues from previous responder females were used for invitro experiments. After 36 hours of incubation with a CP concentration of 0.1 mg/ml, the oocytes became fully ripe and contained small or large oil droplets.
- (iii) Females weekly injected with 4 mg CP or 4 mg CP + 500 IU HCG did not respond for a period of 80 days.
- (iv) Females weekly injected with 8 mg CP for 78 days, followed by two times a week injection, attained a nearly ripe ovary condition after 180 days.
- (v) Females weekly injected with 12 mg CP + 500 IU HCG showed a significant gonadal enlargement (GSI 12.0) after 47 to 72 days.
- (vi) Two injections per week with 12 mg CP + 500 IU HCG gave positive results after a period of 40 to 47 days with a GSI of 38.8%. About 25% of the total egg number attained full ripeness.
- (vii) Two injections per week with 8 mg CP + 500 IU HCG for 70 days injections produced ripeness whole ovaries, about 342 g of ripe eggs were obtained with a GSI of 68.4% (Fig. 9). On the other hand the body weight increased from 415 g at the start of the treatment to 500 g at dissection (about 120%). Transparent ripe eggs with average diameter of 1.2 ± 0.06 mm, were obtained (Fig. 10), they contained a large oil globules. The absolute fecundity amounted to 1.48×10^6 . The ripe

female and male eels were kept in the same tank at a sea water temperature of 21-23°C. Mating began with the males which gently touched the females very often, followed by moving together with bodies in contact near the surface. Spawning did not occur. By the dry method; eggs and milt were stripped from the fish into glass dishes; spermatozoa had about 85% fertilized eggs, 20 minutes after insemination, fertilized eggs formed a moderate perivitelline space (Fig.11). Cleavage and development of the eggs in normal seawater at 23°C were not obtained.

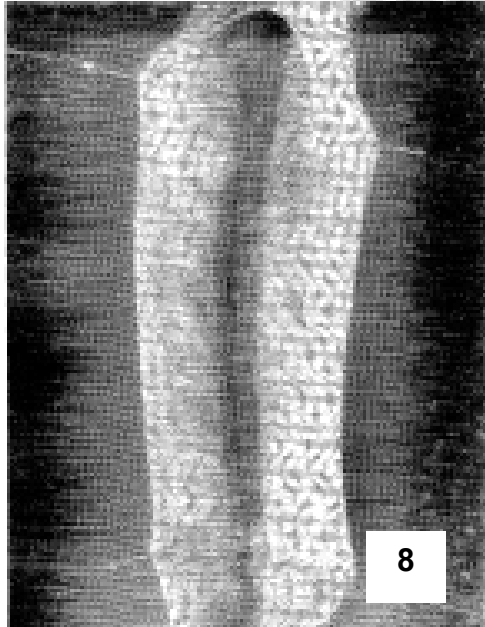


Fig 8. Ovaries of an immature European silver eel at the start of the experiment.

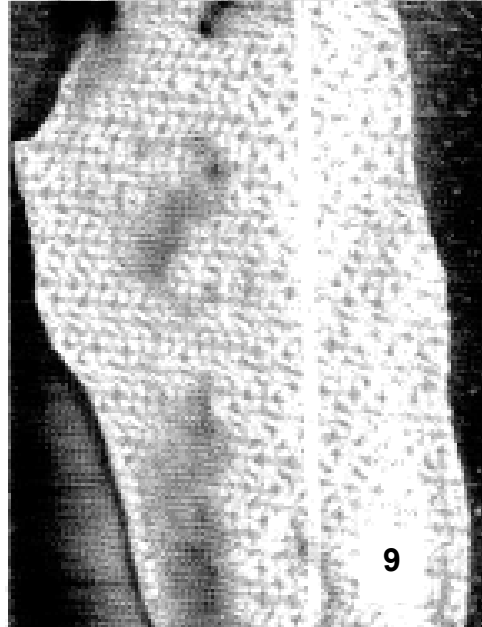


Fig 9. Maximum development of the ovaries of a ripe European silver eel.

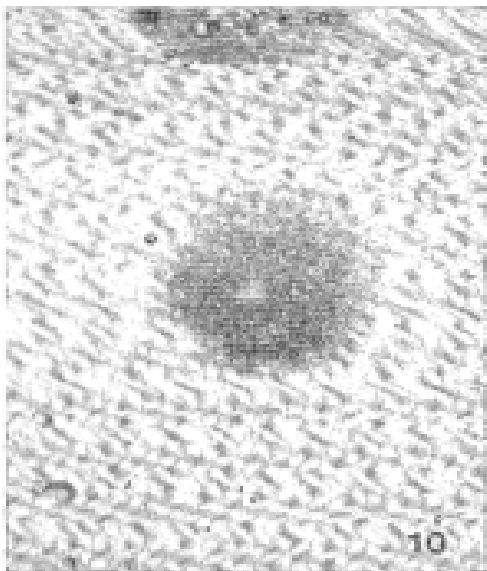
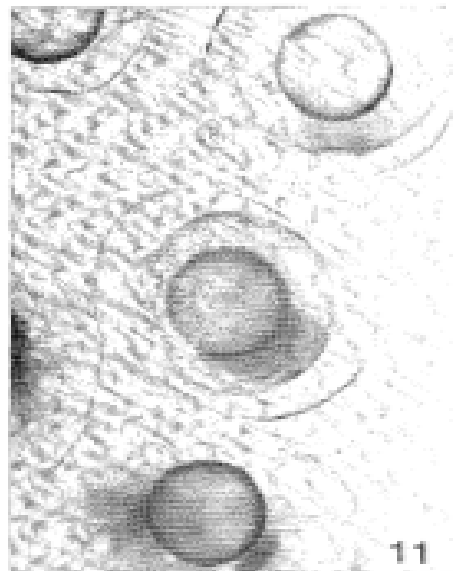


Fig. 10. Transparent ripe egg of the European silver eel with diameter of 1.2 mm.



Water quality, water temperature, time of injection, state of gonads prior to treatment, stocking density and methodology of hormone administration are all important factors in spawning induction.

Our results suggest that vitellogenic growth was not stimulated by (HCG), perhaps due to the inability of the gonadotropin (GTH) receptor on the follicular membrane to recognize HCG. When female eels were treated by the administration of only pituitary gland in various dosages, none of the eels matured. Sugimoto *et al.* (1976) reported that injection of salmon pituitary extract can often induce final maturation of oocytes and ovulation, but success rates are low and even if ovulated eggs are obtained, the eggs show low fertility and hatching rates. Ijiri *et al.* (1995) reported that chum salmon pituitary homogenate (SPH) administration over 25 weeks did not induce vitellogenic growth of ovarian follicle to the migratory nucleus stage in all cultivated Japanese eels. On the other hand, injection of 17,20 B-Dihydroxy-4-pregnen-3-one (DHP) induced final maturation and ovulation in artificially matured Japanese eel after injection with salmon pituitary extract as a priming dose Kagawa *et al.* (1997).

The administration of 8 mg CP and HCG gave positive results under our experimental conditions and good relationship between the increase in the body weight of the female eel and maturation. The concentration of milt from one eel with artificial seminal plasma added to the five grams of ripe eggs must be sufficient for obtaining good fertilization rate. A similar high value of gonadosomatic index (60.7) was obtained by Boetius and Boetius (1980) when female European eels were injected with 15 mg carp pituitary + 500 IU HCG twice a week. Satoh *et al.* (1992) reported that the normal body weight of female Japanese eels ranged between 110- 130% (about 120%) of that at the start of the experiment, and mature female eel with a body weight of more than 130% always gave rise to denatured eggs.

Amin (1991) determined, the energy consumed during gonadal development, migration, spawning and spent stage by silver female and male European eels *Anguilla anguilla*. She found that in almost all cases, females consume more energy to build up the ovaries than the energy needed to build up the male testes. The ovaries consume 25.08% of the total energy, while the testes consume 20.28%. Migration and simultaneous routine metabolism (ER) account for about 35.7 and 34.2% of the total energy was utilized by female and male silver eels, respectively. The energy of routine metabolism was higher in male (9.6%) than in female (6.0%) silver eel. Approximately 17.1% for ovulation and 15.8% for spermiation, of the total energy was utilized.

Conclusion

Injection of HCG was used to induce maturation of silver male *Anguilla anguilla*, and injection of a combination of 2 mg CPAOO g BW + 500 IU HCG two times a week has been used to induce maturation in silver female and produced about 342 g of ripe eggs. Milt and eggs with high quality were obtained. Fertilization rates of 85% were achieved. Although artificial breeding of eel in several countries is still not completely successful, we will adopt more advanced methodology for treating and incubation of fertilized eggs. The last experiments carried out by Ijiri *et al.* (1995) stressed on the identification of the deficiencies in the process of vitellogenesis and final maturation of the eggs of Japanese eel. Such deficiencies were thought to affect the hatched larvae which did not metamorphose into leptocephali (Yamauchi *et al.*, 1976). Obtaining of fertilized eggs with early embryonic development was a result of continuous and ongoing research through several years, the anticipated hatching did not take place.

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An **A to Z** of Another Busy Season.

By Barry McConnell - 2005

A jumble of eel angling tips, ideas and incidents occurring this season

- listed in A to Z format.

A is for Arm protectors.

At an NAC fish-in last year, Wayne Staddon showed me a very effective way of protecting a landing net. At the time my net was in tatters with holes at each corner where the netting pulls tight around the end of the arms. I tend to mistreat landing nets by using them to swish baits from margins where you often encounter a snaggy or hard bottom that wears out the net.

This year I 'Staddoned' the end of the net's arms and, for the first time, it is still in one piece at the end of the season - thanks Wayne.

Simply cut two lengths of hosepipe then push them over the end of the arms and secure with plastic cable ties. Trim the ties and you have a simple but very effective protector.



Here's a close-up photograph of my "Staddoned" landing net frame... note the green plastic hosepipe secured to the ends by means of cable-ties.... once again, Thanks Wayne!

B is for Barrow.

A builders' wheelbarrow has been part of my kit for the last ten years. I park it beside the bivvy, turn it upright so the handles are on the floor, then use it as a seat, swim-tidy, rod-prop and baiting centre. When lying on its side it can be used as a windshield for the cooking area. When standing upright, with the handles against the top of the bivvy, it can serve as a windshield and temporary porch, which has saved abandoning the trip before now when the wind has changed in the night and blown drifting snow directly on to the bivvy front. The barrow has served many uses. It has also suffered some abuses; it once got used as an amplifier in a farting competition.

After years of service the barrow recently started falling apart so I got hold of a brand new galvanized builders' barrow and added a few extra touches. A bigger tyre with 'off-road' tread.

Green paint to dull the silver shine. Heavy duty plastic sheeting as a liner to stop accidental noises such as leger-clang and rod-rattle. The plastic also insulates the bare metal so as to provide a warmer seat. Part of a cycle frame was attached to the front where it supports a basket which helps load the weight forward over the wheel. A bucket of livies can be hung on this front frame. I've even got hold of a milometer which I must get around to fitting. I've always found my way to remote fen swims by counting the paces. One of my favourites is a long distance at 12000 paces.

C is for circling.

This is a new word that has arisen from recent eel angling exploits. Circling occurs during the fight as the eel is brought to the net on a tight line and you have one hand on the net and one on the rod. It can be difficult to get the eel's whole body over the net and, on lifting the net, you find you have missed. Meanwhile, the eel bolts head-first away to the right on a short line. Now this is where you are about to circle the eel. Its headlong rush reaches the end of the short leash and the line starts to tighten. Now keeping the line tight you must direct the momentum of the eel to bring it round in a full circle until its in front of you and rushing towards the net for another attempt at netting it.

I wasn't aware of this circling until I watched myself on an Australia video and saw an 11lb eel go full circle to give another chance at the net.

It happened again this year at the clay pit a 4.12. Pete Drabble watched as I circled the eel twice with lots of commotion thrashing the water into spray. As I netted it on the third attempt Pete said, "Well circled".

D is for Depth

Charts which can help build up a bigger picture of a water. I have built up a collection of depth maps for most waters I fish. Adding further drawings of features such as bankside trees, weedbeds, areas of silt, sand or gravel bars, boulders, bulrush beds and so on. During the mapping of a water each bit of info added entails a search of the water that builds up an overall picture. This can sometimes prove to be the key which helps track down where the small population of eels may be lurking in a hard water.

One day this year Pete and I mapped the claypit using a Smartcast fish finder which speeded up the process as depth readings were taken at 1, 2 and 3 rod lengths to search the marginal shelf. It shelved steeply in a uniform and predictable shape. The only slight variation occurred in one swim where the shelf is slightly wider and not so steep. I fished the swim that night and caught 3 good eels which is one hell of a good result on this hard water.

E is for Eel books.

I have done a bit of book collecting over the years. Here I compile a list of eel books I have come across which may be of interest to members. This list is by no means comprehensive as there are other books that I haven't come across.

Many books have been written on the life history of the eel and many on their harvesting and aquaculture. Only a few books have ever been written on angling specifically for eels but there are a few more angling books which dedicate a chapter or two to eels.

Prices of the scarcer and more collectable books continue to rise and rare books can be expensive when they are in good condition. For reading purposes it is sometimes possible to pick up a battered copy in poor condition which has no value to collectors. A good place to find books is Internet sites such as ABE, Amazon and E-bay; also 2nd hand bookshops can be worth a quick look.. Prices can fluctuate and those listed are only intended as a rough guide.

BERTIN - EELS (life history) Over £40 for a collectable copy.

CAIRCROSS or Cairncross - THE ORIGIN OF THE SILVER EEL with remarks on bait and fly fishing.. A very rare book written in 1862. A fascinating book from the era when they thought that eels hatched out of long tailed beetle larvae. I don't know what a copy is worth. The collector refuses to part with the one I've seen.

CRAWFORD - FISHING FOR BIG EELS. Rare paperback now £40 to £50. Paperbacks don't age too well and many copies are now in poor condition.

CRAWFORD - CATCH MORE EELS. Small soft-back booklet. £15.00. Plenty of copies about.

FORT - THE BOOK OF EELS. 2002 Contains the same info and references (and little more) as American book by Schweidd. Paperback £4.50 new. Hardback £15.00

PERRETT - HOW TO CATCH THEM - EELS. Plenty of copies about. £10.00

RICKETTS As far as I know Steve has the only copy. Written but never taken on by the publisher. Such a limited edition of one must push the value up to collectors.

SIDLEY - EELS. Beekay.1990. Five years ago it was available for £10.99. Suddenly got scarcer and now over £50.

SIDLEY - EELS? Sidley's first book was a paperback. A rare book. I've seen the odd battered and falling apart copy. I'm not sure of the details because I've never owned a copy.

SCHWEIDD - CONSIDER THE EEL. North Carolina press 2002. New at £18.50 free postage. Contains same info and references (and more) as book of eels by Fort.

MORIARTY - EELS - a natural and unnatural history. David & Charles 1978. £30 upwards.

SINHA AND JONES - THE EUROPEAN FRESHWATER EEL . £40.00+

TESCH - THE EEL Blackwell publishing 2003 5th edition. English translation of 1999 German book. Up to date authority of scientific studies of eels. An essential book to all those working with the genus. New for over £100.00.

JACOBS - THE FRESHWATER EEL. Junior book on the life history. Value about £10.00

VAUGHAN - TOP TEN. Chapters on eels. Used copies £20.00+

ROGERS - RED LETTER DAYS. Contains articles on eels. Collectors now paying £80.00

BAILEY - FISH OF THE SUMMER STILLWATERS. Chapters on eels by other authors.£50.00 and collectable. Many other books by Bailey have sections on eels.

SMITH - RAINBOWS END. Chapters on the author's eel angling exploits. Collectors paying over £150.00.

BULLER & FALKUS - FRESHWATER FISHING. Good comprehensive chapters on eels. Hardback £20.00. Also in paperback.

COSGROVE - FEATHER FIN. Children's picture book available new as paperback for less than £5.00.

WALLACE - THINK OF AN EEL. Candlewick press 2001 For juniors. Well written life history. A few old paperbacks around for less than £5.00.

KATSUMI AIDA - EEL BIOLOGY. 2003 English translation of a Japanese book. New for £105.00.

F is for fluorocarbon.

A carp angler showed me some this year and sang its praises : low diameter to breaking strain ratio; expensive but justified by a longer life due to UV resistance; clear to the point of being invisible in the water; low memory and high abrasion resistance. That only leaves knot strength to consider so I chose a brand (Rivege) which is a unique multi-directional polymer giving greater knot strength. Other brands have a uni-directional structure giving a weaker knot strength. I've only used this line for the last couple of outings. So far it seems a bit sort of 'stringy' but otherwise behaves fairly like mono which I find much more pleasant to use than braid.

G is for Gunge

This year I have once again done a lot of fishing with Pete Drabble -. The Anguilla Guerrilla. His antics on the bank crack me up. There seems to be a comical incident every day, often to do with his sleeping habits, even when he goes fishing alone things happen.

One night last summer found him bivvied out beside the canal near Manchester city centre. The canal was pulling a bit so he put heavier bobbins on to counteract the tow, then got his head down. As Pete slept, the canal kept pulling off - and emptying. The banks had burst and the canal emptied itself into the River Irwell. Emergency canal repair crews were rushing about early that morning plus the usual crowds of locals coming for a nosey at the empty canal. I can't help but wonder what they thought about the snoring coming from the bivvy with a pod beside it and three lines leading to baits left high and dry on the exposed silt beds of an empty canal. And still he slept.

The following week saw Pete night fishing a canal in the Cheshire countryside - peaceful territory for a good sleep. He got up early in the morning to check that the canal hadn't emptied. It hadn't so he thought he would doze until the first boat of the day came. As Pete slept, the first boat of the day came. It caught the line on one rod which had been cast right across the canal. The reel on this rod had recently been filled with new line. As you perhaps know; new line is too glossy and smooth to cause enough friction to sound the bite alarm. It won't sound the alarm until it has been run in or roughed up a bit. So the boat is taking line, the alarm isn't sounding. As Pete sleeps, the spool is emptied. The rod is pulled sideways, the rod rest bends round to the right before it gives. The first narrow boat of the day drags in a 3lb Nash Outlaw complete with Shimano baitrunner spooled with new line. It must have been miles away by the time Pete awoke. He never got it back.

H is for hooks.

The beaked bait-holder hooks I have relied on for years are no longer available. Times change and so do fashions; even hooks. I started trying out different hooks, especially long-shank hooks which are better for worm fishing because they hold more worms. After trying just about every hook available in the shops, I find myself favouring and exclusively using the ones which I liked least at first sight. I now use a hook called a "nailer" which has a very long curved shank

that twists round to help hook the fish. These have really worked for me this year. Especially good for brandlings as a huge bunch can be threaded on the curve of the long shank. All eels on these hooks have been lip hooked so far.

I is for indicator.

Drop-off arms are my preferred indicator for zander angling. They aren't ideal but are the best of what is available in the shops. They are designed primarily for pike anglers and the adjustable line grip doesn't suit my style. I find them even less suited to eel angling. When eeling, I have always preferred light bobbins hanging on the line but not any more.read on.....

For years I have lived with the problem of bats hitting the line. If the rod rests are adjusted until the rod tip is underwater, then, the angle of the rod causes line to spring from the spool. Especially with brand new line. One night this year the bats were particularly bad so I sat up all night trying to solve the problem. A bobbin isn't ideal in these circumstances. A drop off arm would be better. I made a few sketches which helped me look at drop-off arms in a new way. By the time it got light I had sketched out a new invention which I have been using exclusively ever since.

I've made the prototypes in plastic and am currently looking into using aluminium to give them a bit of tackle tart appeal. There are still a couple of technical hitches to be overcome. If all goes well the product will be marketed next summer. I hope that other anglers will find them as useful as I do.

J is for Jet-Ski.

Jet-ski has been an expanding sport over the last 15 years or so. Their intrusion in to the angler's domain has been assisted by the fact that they pay more for their sport than anglers do. Quite a few waters I fish have become infested with them. Funny thing is, its always improved my sport. One small mere I fish always produces eel runs while the jet-ski are going round and round and round. This stirs up the water and the fish. Four eels to 2.06 in the afternoon last time I was there with no runs before or after jet-ski activity.

K is for knife.

On some of the longer trips there has often been a few spare hours. I sometimes whittle away the hours of the day (and night) with a knife and a tree branch, root or twig. Since I'm no good at drawing, clay modelling, or art in any form, you wouldn't expect me to be able to whittle a stick into an eel. Luckily it doesn't require any degree of talent to whittle wood and eels are easy.



*A few of Barry's "whittled" Eels.
(Editors note:- Quite artistic in a raw and "earthy" kind of way... nice one Baz!)*

L is for Loner.

With a nickname of "Only the Lonely" it becomes obvious that I often fish alone. Why? I enjoy company and like a laugh but still like to focus on the fishing and put a lot of effort in. An awful lot in my case. Over the years I have fished with many others but find that it slows down progress if the others aren't putting as much into the fishing and background preparation. I usually seem to apply more persistence than many others so for the sake of progress I often go it alone.

M is for Mosquito.

Here is a good tip for getting rid of mosquitoes from the bivvy. There is no need to zip the door up then squash them all individually, spray them, smoke them out, or whatever else.

Turn off all torches and light sources in the bivvy then open the door so the mozzies can see the way out. Now frantically bang the roof and walls of the bivvy in a full scale mozzy attack. Keep this up for 10 to 20 seconds or so. All the mozzies will evacuate the dark inner bivvy and make their escape into the night air. It works every time.

N is for Nightjars.

One of the loudest, most captivating and enchanting noises I hear while night fishing is the breeding call of the Nightjar. The reason that I am mentioning this now is because there has been a lot more of them about this year than ever before. This summer visitor seems to be coming in greater numbers. Is it global warming causing a change to migratory patterns or is there just a rise in overall numbers? I've seen and heard them in Shropshire, Cornwall, Wales and Norfolk this year and hope the trend continues in the future.

O is for Observation.

This year I did an interesting bit of eel observation on a very shallow private estate lake. Sitting in a boat I was able to look through a bucket with a glass bottom. When the sun is shining on the water it is possible to see the bottom quite clearly.

Drifting the lake, I searched the bottom for signs of eels. I was looking for a trail in the silt or an eels head poking out. It wasn't easy but eventually I saw an eels fin sticking out of the silt. It had buried itself away from the daylight but part of its fin wasn't covered and eagle eyed McConnell was able to spot it. At first I wasn't sure if it was an eels' fin, a leaf, bit of bark or whatever so I touched it with the oar. It was definitely an eel; an eel with very quick reflexes bolted and all I saw was a cloud of swirling silt. I couldn't spot any more eels that day as the sun went in and I lost vision.

Some carp anglers in the syndicate carried on the practice and phoned me later in the year to tell me they had managed to net the biggest eel they spotted and it weighed just under 4lbs.

P is for Prospecting.

Prospecting for unknown and new waters strengthens my interest in eel angling. Over the years I have used O.S. maps to explore the regions I fish. Hopefully, one day, that special water will be found - a sanctuary for big eels. It could be somewhere with no angling history - unmanaged, un-stocked, unknown and un-fished.

Eels can find their way in to a variety of fisheries. The list of waters I have found keeps on growing, many are in the most unusual settings and some are never visited by anyone. The quarry is an out of bounds danger area (**see Q**). The lost mere has been encroached by reed swamps which have been impassable for the last 15 years. Another water is in yet another danger area - an armed forces, firing and bombing, out of bounds zone. There are upland trout

reservoirs which are usually fly only with no eel fishing allowed. Some of these are undoubtedly prison waters with potential for the eel of dreams. I once caught a 7.02 from a tiny farm pond which is only of interest to a few local junior anglers. Small ponds full of stunted fish get little serious angling attention and can provide a haven for eels to grow big and old.

Take a look in your area. Are there any waters that general coarse anglers rarely or never fish. That flooded bomb crater; disused and weeded-over canal; unstocked gravel pit diggings; tiny, overgrown farm ponds and drinking holes. Are there unknown waters in your area that make you curious and rouse that pioneering spirit?

Q is for Quarry

The quarry has always interested me. A huge mountain has been quarried until a massive, very, very deep crater has formed where the mountain's guts have been hollowed out. The quarry was closed many years ago, fenced off, and condemned as a danger area. It was then flooded, left in neglect and forgotten.

This year we acquired a way of fishing there. What an experience. I've never fished anywhere so deep. A smart cast fish finder registered 90ft and the depth was much greater out of the limited range of this gadget. The water was completely crystal clear with blue-green depths. Such depths act as a huge settling tank leaving the water so completely clear. The quarry is still filling with water and the margins are full of submerged trees.

Anyway, the reason I'm telling you about this place is because of the newts. Yes, newts - thousands of them. The margins were full of smaller smooth and palmate newts, while the massive orange-bellied great crested newts were everywhere. I got a personal best great crested first cast on a bunch of brandlings at long range.

After a couple of hours at this "newtery" I suddenly jumped up saying to Pete, "That's it. There's no fish here, remember the New Zealand crayfish." It had suddenly become obvious - in New Zealand all the waters with loads of crayfish in had no eels. Same in the UK with newts. Think about it. Newts live in newt ponds not fisheries where the fish will eat them and their offspring. Newts thrive in shallow ponds which de-oxygenate in summer making them unsuitable for fish. Obviously the quarry has not yet been colonised by fish and there are no eels so the newts are thriving in massive numbers in a fish-free zone. There were no signs of fish whatsoever. No fry in the margins, no evening rise, nothing but newts.

We packed up after a couple of hours and spent the rest of the night at another oddball venue nearby - 200 paces into Chirk tunnel on the Llangollen Canal. This tunnel is full of eels and there isn't a newt in sight. If there had been lots of newts there I wouldn't have wasted my time.

R is for Rigs.

This year I made all my dyson rigs with fly fishing line instead of the rig tubing I used previously. It's brilliant stuff for the job. I've tried floating and neutral density. You can even get clear, memory-free fly line which I am using at the moment.

Plastic run-rings seem to have got softer over the years. These days I prefer to use a large eyed swivel instead. These are the ones with one eye much bigger than the other making it the same diameter as the run-rings I used to use..

A small, slim cigar-shaped float looked very nice and "tackle tarty" on this rig but I ran into a problem when using a heavier bobbin to deal with a strong, gusting wind. The bobbin moved slightly but no run developed. When I wound in to recast, there was a deep-hooked eel on the end. The buoyancy of the sunk-float on a dyson rig needs to have a greater loading capacity than the weight of the bobbin or indicator on the line. If the bobbin is too heavy then the sunk float will move before the bobbin; this gives the eel enough slack line to reach the lake bed without relaying any movement to the bobbin. Now I have realised what was going wrong, I am using much larger floats which has sorted things out.

A further advantage of the float having more buoyancy than the weight of the bobbin is that you will gain peace of mind and be absolutely certain that the rig is presented correctly and not cast into a weed-bed or wrapped round a snag. I will try to explain. You can actually feel if all is not well with the rig when you attach the bobbin or indicator. Try it. Using as light a bobbin as conditions allow, put it on the line between reel and butt ring and pull it down to the ground, thus tightening up to the float and pulling it down in the water. Now let go. The float should rise and pull the bobbin up off the ground. If it doesn't then I prefer to recast as its probably snagged.

I use this light bobbin system with mono and find it to be very sensitive. No need to worry about the loop of line between rod tip and bait where the weight of the mono stretches into a curve. No need to use braid to reduce this curve. When using a dyson rig keep the bobbin lighter than the float; then, when an eel takes line, even the smallest amount of line, that line is taken out of the curve. If the bobbin is light enough it will lift to replace line into the curve. Heavier bobbins can reduce sensitivity.

S is for Snags.

I've always preferred to fish near snags for eels. They live there. This year on the estate lake you had to cast into the thick weed to get a run. Casting into open water produced no runs. At the clay pit I've managed to catch 8 good eels during the last couple of seasons. Pete was struggling and no matter what he did, he couldn't catch an eel there - until we discussed snags and the fact that I had been placing my bait amongst them. Pete then managed to catch his first eel from the venue by bouncing his rig back until it was actually bumping against the snag. It was a nice eel of nearly 3lb with huge saucer eyes.

T is for Trebles.

Treble hooks have no place in eel angling. They are one of the best eel deterrents I know. I use them when zander fishing and get pestered by eels. They strip the deadbait between and around the trebles; they will also wrap the rig into a balled tangle as they twist on the bait between the trebles. Despite all their treble avoiding techniques, I still hook quite a few on trebles but the eels often get off the hook. They seem to be able to prise themselves off trebles so easily. I think they use their tail to lever and push the treble out of their mouth. Single hooks are many, many times more efficient for tempting an eel to take the bait, they also give a better hook hold to land an eel on. Trebles deter eels and provide a poor hook hold.

U is for Upper prison water.

(This was to be about prison waters then I juggled the upper in front to fill the U space of this A to Z).

In New Zealand and Australia we located big eels in reservoirs where huge, impassable dams had been built. From the day these dams were built, all eels above the dam were imprisoned. Similar research in the UK could turn up dams built say 30 to 40 years ago. Any eels trapped above the structure should be a bit special - they are in Australia.

Then there is the upper prison water where there are two or more barriers hampering eel access. There will be few eels getting into such a water. The smaller the number of eels : the bigger they grow, so the growth rate will be good. Since the eels can't get out they have nothing better to do than grow big and old. A fine example of such an upper prison water was found in the 1960's by Bob Jones and Pete Climo. They caught quite a few eels over 7lb there including an 8.01 which was then the record. The water was actually two ponds separated by a dam with one being higher than the other. Eels gain access to the top pond first, through the piped-spring that tops the waters up. The water then overflows into the bottom pond through a floating pipe set some way out in to the lake. To get into the bottom pond eels have to find their way through this pipe floating on the surface far from the bank. Not many eels do this and the bottom pond

has very few but very big eels in it; while the top pond with the easier eel access is heavily populated with smaller eels. The confusing bit here is that the bottom pond is the upper prison water they visit last. I thought it may be of interest to you that the 1960's record eel was from an upper prison water and it was caught by design, by an eel angler -the good old days. Have you got any potential prison waters in your area. It's worth getting out for a look.

V is for Van.

I was driving along in my van. The sun came out and it was quite warm so I put the fan on. The radio was playing quite loud so when I heard a spluttering kind of grinding noise I thought, at first, that it was coming from the engine. I turned the radio off and realised the noise was coming from the fan which then seemed to unblock and whirr back into full speed. I thought no more of it until a few days later when the smell of a dead squirrel started to penetrate the van. I now sympathise with anyone using the phrase, " it smells like a dead rat". The tip to be gained here is - don't leave your doors open when fishing in rural areas you never know what critter may crawl in and hide in the fan box.

W is for Worm-farm.

I moved house about a year ago and took a few dustbins of livestock with me - worms packed in compost full of worm cocoons. I moved to the Shropshire countryside where there is a good supply of farm muck and plenty of space for my worm farming sidelines. I've also managed to get hold of some black sedge peat. When I used to breed worms on a bigger scale 10 or 12 years ago it was hard to get supplies of the black peat and we had to make do with sphagnum moss peat. Times change and now I can get the black stuff which is superior for worm breeding purposes. It makes a good mix for my fattening beds when blended 50/50 with cow or horse shit. I've built 4 beds so far which are 40ft long by 4ft wide and covered in black plastic silage sheeting available from farm suppliers.

Black sedge peat is the new "secret" compost which worms are commercially packed in these days. It is superb stuff to keep your brandlings in as it has the right alkalinity and moisture retention properties. You can even top feed worms kept in it. They will survive in a bait box for months like this. I have got loads of 25kg sacks of black peat stacked near my caravan. If anyone wants to buy a sack off me that wouldn't be a problem.

X is for eXcess.

My eel angling slowed up this year due to excess. This was my first season since moving house and lots of interesting local waters beckoned. I decided to 'go for it' and try to fish them all. I reckoned on doing 40 nights on the run which I have managed to do in New Zealand so why not in the UK.

It wasn't easy as I had to keep up with a few normal life tasks in the day. Anyway I managed to do 43 nights on lots of different waters but it did sort of burn out my enthusiasm for a while afterwards. Too many waters and too many small eels had done my head in. Once you stop enjoying it then there is no point so I went less as I lost interest. Its better to pace yourself as excess can kill it. I stopped eel fishing for a while. I started zander fishing earlier than usual this year and enjoyed it ever so much. Caught some good zander and got over the eel lag. Now back on track and ready for a more moderate approach next year. I intend to concentrate on just a couple of hard waters where the nights won't be spent boot bashing.

Y is for whY.

Why were some big eels caught in a landlocked shallow pond? Where did the eels in that pond come from? There are no eels in any other waters on this floodplain. The main river is polluted and definitely doesn't get a run of eels, so there are no eels in the streams and tributaries. You

wouldn't expect to find any eels in this valley but a small pond there had produced a few big ones. I have been puzzled over these eels for many years.

This year I finally discovered how the eels had got into the pond. The canal runs around the wooded hillside, at the top of the valley, high above the pond. Many years ago, the canal burst its banks in the middle of the night and emptied itself down the hillside, through the pond, then into the polluted river at the bottom of the valley. A few fish were left stranded high and dry in the field but most fish went into the pond or polluted river. Mystery solved.

It may be worth enquiring about the canal in your area to see if it has breached some time in the past. It happens quite often and eels get transported to places that they wouldn't otherwise be. Maybe to become stuck there with no way of return. This would be an interesting situation for a big eel angler to stumble upon.

Z is for Zander.

Z is my favourite letter. After a summer of eel fishing I transform in to a zed-head or zandophile as my interests turn to zander angling. I'm mad for it and have been driving around with zandavan written on the back of my van since 1995. It therefore seems appropriate to finish this article with one of the best tips of this article so far which I discovered while zander fishing. I am going to tell you about something that has had a major bearing on my success when zander fishing. It produces more eel runs too.

When dead baiting I have always cut the head off the bait. Just because it seems a good idea and produces more runs. I've always done this and it's always been effective but I never knew what was going on underwater until recently.

Try the following next time you go out dead baiting. Put your hook in to the tail-root area of the bait. Drop the baited rig in the margins and you will see the bait sink down to the bottom. It will sink tail first, then the head will sink down until the bait is lying flat on the bottom. It sinks tail first because of the weight of the hook. For zedding I use a size 8 treble which is quite heavy; smaller, lighter single hooks may require a split shot as extra weight to ensure the bait sinks tail first. Now cut the head off the dead fish and once again drop the baited rig in the margins. Again the bait will land tail first on the bottom but the headless body will remain popped up where it wafts enticingly in the current. The body weight of a fish is critically balanced to ensure that this beheading trick works every time. I like to cut the head off a live fish and cast it while freshly killed, with the nerves still twitching, which helps pump a trail of blood out just above the bottom. Now you know why I catch so many zander. Try it for eels, it will increase the number of runs you get.

Note. This only works with freshly killed baits not with frozen, old or damaged baits. As a dead fish starts to age it "gasses-up". If left on the hook for too many hours the baits will gas-up and rise from the bottom. This is one of the reasons why I put a fresh bait on every four or five hours.

I hope you've enjoyed my trip though the alphabet ... from A to Z of an other hard season? Tight Lines,

Barry "Only-the-Lonely" MacConnell.

A Letter to the National Anguilla Club.

Dear Member.

I had thought of a way to start this small piece for Anguilla, one which would give me an opportunity to get to the point and hope fully help me get over an obstacle which has hindered my fishing for a few years now. I feel in letterform to all the membership may help to get my plight to the eyes of the membership.

I can only try to explain my feelings to those of you who have not met me or don't know me that well, You would hopefully know me for my work on eel conservation through the ECS. I have tried to be involved with the subject of eel conservation and the resulting decline in eels in our country. This piece is not aimed at that message but at trying to release a demon, which has plagued my fishing in recent years.

I have fished for eels for 13 years this year (2006), I have at times been probably one of the most obsessed eel anglers, with the thought of catching eels and the problems involved in their capture constantly in my thoughts. Thoughts on rigs, location, bait choice, all the kinds of thoughts I am sure you as an eel angler can associate with. Some of the problems I have faced I have managed to come to terms with in my own way. There are however still some troubling aspects I either can't come to terms with, or which overshadow my fishing.

The first is a "ghost"!! This has haunted me for many years now. I hooked and lost a fish which I believe to be the biggest eel I have ever been in contact with. I relayed the story of its lose in a past Anguilla under the title "Harem Scarem", the main line had gone behind my reel and resulted in a one way battle which I could not win. I have thought about that night many times, I still get a shiver when I do. My problem with this particular ghost is the fact I know there are still some big eels in that water, I still hold a permit to fish it, the water still looks the best eel water I have ever seen. It has



The deep end at "Harem Scarem" and scene of my down fall!.

everything I would want in an eel water, Deep dark water (up-to 22ft), shallow areas bursting into life with small fish, Very few other anglers fishing it none of them interested in its eels.

So you may ask yourself “What’s my problem?, ideal water all to my self?”

I just find it difficult to be there. I have been fishing on my own for the last couple of years. My fishing with a long-term angling partner ending a few years back. My enthusiasm for eel angling is at an all time low and I can’t seem to raise my self. I believe that after fishing with someone for so many years, being able to communicate with a fell angler, who is experiencing the same problems as myself kept me eel angling from the beginning, I feel I can now associate with those members who may have joined our club looking for help and maybe someone close to fish with, especially when the going is difficult. When the help has not been received I can understand why they have ceased to be eel anglers. I don’t know if deep down I have ceased to be an eel angler, becoming someone who associates himself with members of an eel angling club. I know my way forward with this particular problem is to fish the water and get it out of my system. Its at times too daunting a thought. One which has seen me go from fishing for eels in excess of 50 times a season, which with a young family and work commitments, I believe is excessive, to fishing this last season for eels a total of 3 times. Perhaps there lies another problem. It’s been all too easy to sit back. Letting myself get involved with all the things that normal everyday people get involved in. It can be so easy to say “I can’t be arsed tonight, I will go next week instead!!”. Weeks soon became months and before I knew it, Full seasons have passed me by.

For me its not quite so simple as loosing a big fish and then my enthusiasm. I have seen and read the documentation, which I have managed to get access to which has highlighted the decline in eels. How can I get myself to fish for the fish I am trying to protect?.

I have told myself “I am fishing for eels to keep my association close with the species”, morally this is proving difficult for me. My hope is that there maybe some feed back to this letter from members who may have experienced similar thoughts.



My only eel from last season. Caught from my Harem Scarem.

I would be most interested to hear from members via Anguilla with their possible solutions to my dilemma.

Regards

Anthony Jolley.

Just a Tiny bit of Gunge !!!

Below is an e-mail I received from Damian Wood using his works PC. The e-mail is about some camouflaged clothing Damian got for Christmas and which I asked for details of ... what I didn't expect is the highlighted statement (For those of you who don't know... June is Damian's "friend")...

"Clothing is called StormKloth you will get details from Torbay angling, it's actually from America, proper deer hunting stuff, comes in real tree and mossy oak break up for under 60 quid, seems warm will be tested this week end , **tried it standing in the shower with it on, to the bemusement of June** and is 100% waterproof and breathable, get pants, jacket, gloves, and balaclava for that, there is no hood but the balaclava fits over the neck and high collar, so you don't need one, will be getting a boonie hat to match later in the year, for summer"
The Burglar.

Is it any wonder eel anglers are looked upon as being "a bit strange in the head" but then again, that's "The Burglar" for you!!

Actually, this reminded me that "The Burglar" **does** need a new fishing suit... (I think this next bit of Gunge was printed in a past issue of "Anguilla" but I'll repeat it for the newer members of the club)

I was fishing with "The Burglar" on a really hot summers night, back in 1999 on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal just at the back of my home. At the time, Damian was "a free spirit" so to speak... not working, no women in his life.. just eel fishing.... During the night Damian got up from his chair and "took-a-leek"... he came back and sat down. It must have been an hour later that he stood up to stretch and said .."I keep getting the smell of p**s, I've been smelling it for months now, and I don't know were its coming from". I turned and saw the root of the problem. "I think you need to cut 6 inches off the end of the draw cord on your camie pants", I said, smiling! So I really do think its about time The Burglar got some new fishing clothes.... Sorry Damian but it is funny after all !!!

The Last Word.

Well, that's it from me, well at least, for a while anyway. I hope you've enjoyed this issue of "**Anguilla**" (Volume 43, issue 2). You know, it isn't easy putting our club bulletin together for your enjoyment, in fact it's down-right bloody difficult at times... I just wonder what would happen if the Bulletin Team decided to "call it a day" and "pull-out" of the production of the magazine for one reason or another?.. or the "regular" contributors "hung up their pens" probably through frustration (and they know who I mean, thanks guys). There's one thing I do know, and that is that Steve Richardson would probably "step into the breech" and do what he could to get a publication out for the membership, that's the type of person Steve is, but if Steve didn't, then Nick Rose or Kevin Huish would fill the role. What I'm getting at is that only for a small fraction of the members of the N.A.C the club would be "up-shit-creek without a paddle". So please, everyone, try and help whoever puts the next issue together by sending in something, anything for the magazine, it doesn't matter what it is.... Anything to save the Bulletin of the National Anguilla Club, "**Anguilla**" for future members of the club.

Jimmy Jolley, Stand-in Editor.