

Anguilla

The Official National Anguilla Club Magazine!

Volume 44
Issue 2
Winter 2006

IN THIS ISSUE

The Quest for
Blackspot!

Something
Different!

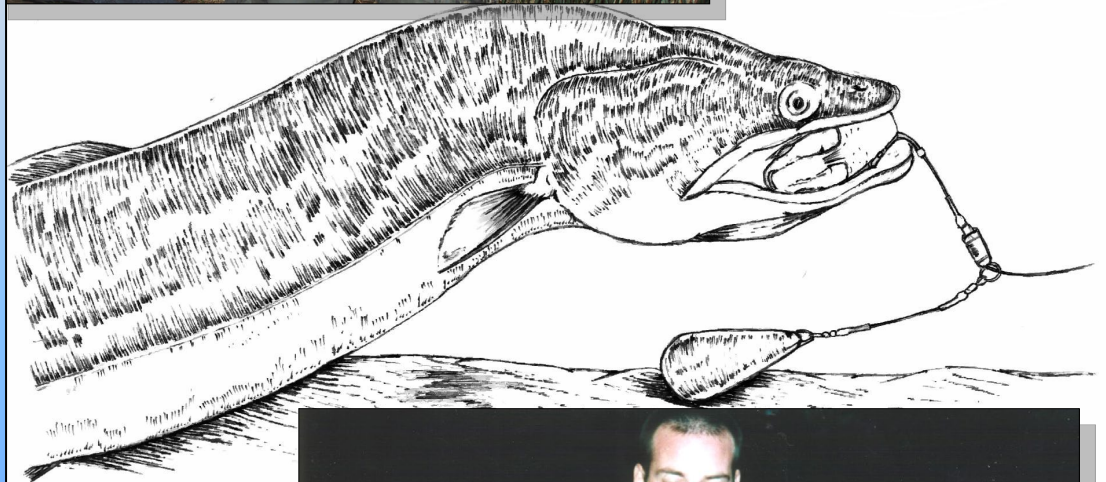
Views on the
Mag!

Winter Social
Write-Up

Winter Fish-in
Details

Forward
Thinking

And much
more!!!



CONTENTS

Page 1.	The Quest for “Blackspot”...	Miguel Mostyn.
Page 5.	Social Officers Fish-In Report...	Barry McConnell.
Page 7.	Winter Social Write-Up...	Steve Richardson.
Page 11	Press Report...	
Page 12.	Views on the Mag’...	Nick Rose.
Page 16.	Members Profile...	Neil Wilkinson.
Page 18.	Something Different...	Barry McConnell.
Page 24.	The Earth Worm...	Anthony Jolley.
Page 28.	Forward Thinking...	Damian Wood.
Page 37.	A Response to Anthony & Jimmy...	Nick Rose.
Page 38.	The Website...	Thomas Huish.
Page 39.	Winter Fish-In Details...	Barry McConnell.



The Quest for "Blackspot"

By

Miguel Mostyn.

I have been angling now as long as I can remember. I think I must have accompanied my dad from about five years old, just fishing from piers and rocks, when we went on our annual holidays to warmer climes and although my dad didn't catch much and I wasn't really fishing, just there to help pass floats and the like to him, but I can still remember the anticipation and excitement of maybe catching something!!

It was obviously due to my nagging that I was eventually kitted out with some basic tackle and an obsession was born. Through my teens I did a lot of fishing, concentrating on many species of course fish, mainly anything that came along, but it wasn't until I was around the age of sixteen that I was introduced to the world of the specimen hunter.

We had just moved to a new house that had a an area of common land nearby, which included three lakes which by today's standards would be considered only small pools by definition, only being around an acre or two in size. Only two of these pools could be fished, the other being a bird sanctuary. Because these lakes were on common land, owned by the local council, the fishing was absolutely free. Once I had discovered these lakes, they became my second home and nearly every spare minute was spent trying to catch roach, tench or anything that came along, but without much success.

A few weeks passed and I was with my dad in the car returning from a boot fair and as we drove by the lakes which were a short cut to get home, we noticed a large crowd had gathered by a corner of the main pool. It was raining quite hard but we decided to get out and see what all the fuss was about. Well, there was a man kneeling down at the waters edge with his rod bent to its full battle curve and his mate standing in the water up to his waist with a huge landing net. Soon a great cheer went up as the fish was netted. I pushed through the crowd and was amazed to see the most magnificent fish I had ever seen. It turned out to be one of the lakes biggest mirror carp....That was it; I was to be a carp angler. In the next year, I acquired some carp tackle and spent a lot of time getting to know the regulars and talking to as many other anglers as possible. I just wanted knowledge, and the more the merrier.

In the next few seasons I was fortunate enough to meet some great anglers and learnt lots from them. The lake turned out to be a very difficult water with one or two famous carp within its watery realms and in turn was fished by many clued up anglers in the know.

I was soon to discover that the main pool held an amazing stock of specimen fish. I don't quite know why but it did. The pools origins go back to Roman times and have obviously been there for a long time.

Over the years I had witnessed some very large roach, perch, tench and carp, not to mention a 30 lb plus pike, but then one day one of the carp anglers hooked and landed a huge eel of 8lb's exactly. I remember him trying to hold it for the photos and thinking to myself that I would never hold an eel of that size. It just looked so menacing with a big jaw and huge round eyes. It was then that I noticed a big black spot on the fish's tail.

I don't remember anyone fishing for eels specifically back then but they used to get caught fairly regularly in the three to five pound bracket and float anglers would regularly talk of monster eels that they had hooked and played for up to twenty minutes without much progress and which just had to be let go in the end, or were lost due the fish finding an underwater snag.

Eels were always blamed due to their interesting fighting qualities of moving up and down in the water column and trying to stand their ground.

All these fish were quickly forgotten as the carp bug had well and truly set in and after some success, I joined a proper carp syndicate lake and the rest of my time was spent concentrating on my new 'home'.

Although I didn't fish the pool much any more, I still used to enjoy walking around and talking to anglers to see what they had caught.

Eels seemed to get a mention quite a lot with stories of seven and even eight pounder's being told. I had of course seen the eight pounder with my own eyes and had also seen a few five pounder's over the years but the significance of this size of eel was not at the time realised.

Anyway, I eventually moved away from the area, but not far enough away to not go for the occasional walk round.

I spent all of my fishing time at the new syndicate lake and was again fortunate enough to meet some great anglers and after a few seasons had a few nice fish under my belt and eventually realised my dream of catching the lake biggie, a mysterious fish which had only ever been caught once before.

After climbing my personal mountain I took a bit of time out of fishing for large uncaught carp as it was no longer fun but an obsession that just demanded too much time and dedication, but of course was worth it!

I then started really enjoying fishing for other species but not just any fish but specimens. I wanted to catch the biggest of any chosen species by design and not luck; something that Richard Walker had first advocated and shown was possible.

Sorry if I'm boring you with all this background information, so I'll cut to the chase. It was around about July last year (2005) that I decided to go for a walk around my old stomping ground and I came across one of the old carp regulars who first gave me inspiration. He was sitting at the bank with two rods, a bucket of maggots, a pot of worms and a very slimy and smelly looking landing net beside him.

"Hi Gary, how are you mate, long time no see... What you up to?" I asked.

"Eels mate and plenty of em" he said. "Watch this". He then pulped a pouch of maggots about two rod lengths out to where he was fishing. Almost instantly the swim started fizzing and then before either of us said anything, his rod was away resulting in a 3½lb eel. A beautiful fish with dark olive green across the back turning to a glorious yellow underside.

I took a few photos for him and the eel was put back, a new lobworm threaded onto the hook and the rod recast.

He explained that as far as he knew no one else was fishing purposely for the eels and all us regulars knew the amount and size of the fish present so he thought he would fish seriously for

them in the hope of catching a five pounder. Well he did this on his first bite with a fish of 5lb 8oz.

Just as I started to roll up a smoke, his rod was away again, this time a fish of 4lb exactly!!

"Right, that's it!" I just had to get some maggots and worms and have a go at catching one of these beauties for myself. One thing that struck me about the eels that I witnessed Gary catch was how well they fought, I just couldn't believe it. He appeared to be using carp tackle equipped with strong line. Gary said that he had been having some amazing sport and that the size of the eels he was catching were of a specimen size, a quick flick through some back issues of the Anglers Mail confirmed that these were indeed very good sized fish. He said that he hadn't caught an eel smaller than three pounds and that his average size of eel was closer to five pounds....wow.

He then went on to mention that a tench angler recently had an epic battle on 4lb line with a huge eel that was weighed at just under nine pounds.....with a black spot on its tail!!

"That would win you a decent prize from the Anglers Mail and win you a weekly Specimen Cup" said Gary.

I just couldn't believe it. This was a monster by today's standards and I just had to catch it..... A new obsession was born.

I told Gary about the time I had witnessed the eight pounder and told him about the marking. We were amazed that this could be the same fish but from the size and marking it clearly must have been.



We named the fish "Black Spot" and vowed that we would fish the lake hard till one of us caught it.

One of the things that captivated me most was the fact that I didn't know of any other people who purposely targeted eels. The fish seemed to have so much mystery surrounding it, not just due to its incredible life and journey from and to the Sargasso Sea, but the fact that you really don't know what you're fishing for and the next bite could be the new record! Both Gary and I agreed that we had obviously stumbled upon a water with great potential.

First Blood

I had previously only ever caught two eels before, one of about a pound, float fishing a good 8 years or so ago when I was fishing a lake in Norfolk for tench and one at the carp syndicate lake. This eel was about a pound and a half and was caught on a king prawn intended for Mr Carp. Although I pretty much just wound this eel in I can still remember feeling a fair amount of resistance for such a small fish.

After speaking to Gary that afternoon, we set a date for the coming week to meet up and fish for a few hours. I went home and had a look on the internet to try and gain some knowledge on fishing for eels, tactics, rigs, methods etc.

I quickly discovered that a tough hook-link material was needed. At first I thought I could use 50Lb Spiderwire, but a quick chat to my mate Ian down at my local tackle shop put me right. He said that a wire trace would be essential, especially when trying to catch large predatory eels that could be armed with a formidable set of teeth. He showed me a relatively new product from Fox International called 'Soft Steel Wire'. This is a 25 strand fine wire with a 25lb breaking strain. As soon as I pulled some wire from the spool I was immediately impressed with the materials suppleness. Ian commented that this wire was so supple that pike anglers had been having trouble with using it for live-baiting because the swimming movements of the roach were creating tangles in the hook-link!

This sounded perfect and I would recommend it to anyone who wants an incredibly abrasion resistant hook-link, but which is supple enough to give a good presentation for the bait. Also a personal favourite if using live or dead baits with a large pike population.

I decided on a size 6 Korda Wide Gape hook on the end of 12 inches of Fox Soft Steel. The hook-link was tied direct to 15 Lb breaking strain line (Pro Gold). As for the rods and reels I decided to use my current carp outfit (12 foot 2 ¾ Lb test curve Free Spirit rods and Shimano XTE Baitrunners). I was then using a small 1-1 ½ ounce lead on a large run ring to avoid resistance.

Although Gary had only been trying for the eels for a few weeks, he had only been fishing afternoon sessions and had yet to try fishing after the hours of darkness. This was amazing, and thinking back I had never heard of an eel being caught at night from the lake, including the eight pounder, probably due to the fact that no one was fishing for them. He said that he always fished with two rods, one on roach head and the other on lobworms but he was yet to get a touch on the roach heads, so deciding that the population must be worm eater he stuck with them. This made me decide to use lobs as well. He said that he would get the swim going by puling about half a pint of maggots on his spot and then keep the bait going in a pouch full at a time fairly regularly, then another half pint top up after each eel bite.

With Gary's tips I raced down to the lake on the planned afternoon armed with five pints of maggots and two tubs of lobworms. I just couldn't wait to cast my rods out. I was buzzing from anticipation. What would my first ever eeling session bring. The thoughts of the mighty "Blackspot" filled my mind as I approached his swim.

A quick chat with Gary revealed that he had only been set up for an hour and he had already tricked a 3½ pounder!

I had previously discovered a freshwater mussel bed from when I used to fish the water for carp and it had been a bit of a hotspot but would the eels be here too.

Within twenty minutes I had baited two spots, one, about two rod lengths out, just off the mussel bed and the other about three rod lengths out by some thick lily pads. The method I was using was as described before but after casting to the spot, I tighten up to the lead, then take the bale arm off and fish completely free line but with the line running through the roller of a Steve Neville buzzer. Although on a slack line, these buzzers have a very light and sensitive plastic roller that will move and indicate a run.

Within half an hour both spots were fizzing and when I say fizzing it's probably a bit of an understatement because these bubblers were about fifty inches across, about the size of an average fishing broly. Even large feeding carp tend to produce smaller patches of bubbles unless they're rubbing themselves up on the bottom, but I was quite confident that my new quarries were to blame. Just as I was thinking about what must be happening down there the

Neville emitted an ear piercing scream as line started peeling off the spool. I stuck immediately to feel the rod pull down sharply....Eel on!!!

I just could not believe the power of this fish as my 2 ¾ Lb test curve rod took on its full battle curve. I could see huge plumes of bubbles erupting from the lakebed as the eel tried to bury itself in the substrate. A strange fight as the fish was standing its ground, I just seemed to pull the fish off the lakebed for it to try and swim back down to the bottom, the eel only kiting once safely back on the lake bed. I shouted over for Gary to help net the beast which he duly scooped up first time. I let out a shout of joy! My first eel by design and judging from its power it was a goodun!!

As I parted the mesh of my landing net I could see the fish was around three feet long with a girth thicker than my wrist. I unhooked the eel which was hooked perfectly in the incisor. On the scales she went 5lb 1oz and to say I was pleased was an understatement.

My first ever purposely caught eel and a specimen at that. Although handling my first specimen eel was a bit of a challenge we managed to take some decent pictures and I slipped the fish back to its watery home unharmed. Gary shook my hand and it was at this point that I realized how much my hands were shaking and how much I was buzzing on adrenaline. It bought back memories of when I first started carp fishing and how exciting it all was.



Miguel cradles his "First Blood" Eel of 5lb – 01oz

A specimen eel hunter was born and I just couldn't wait for my next session.

To be continued.....

Social Officers fishin Report

BY

Barry McConnell

Firstly, it's a big thank you to John Davis for organising all this year's fish-ins. I have taken over the role of social officer from him. John did the job so well that that it will be a hard act to follow. Anyway I wouldn't take the role if I wasn't up for it so I will give it a go. My first task is to write up the last fish-in.

NAC FISH-IN JUNE 16-18 2006 PORT TALBOT DOCKS

Thanks to Mark Taylor for getting the NAC on to this water which had never been night fished prior to this event.

The dockland provided an unusual and most interesting venue where two rivers meet the sea within an area of over 300 acres. The mixture of salt and fresh water is then warmed by outflows from steelworks and various industries which belch steam and flames into the sky. We arrived to find the water so warm it was steaming. Steve Cotton recorded a water temperature of 28 degrees centigrade. These warm waters make for good winter fishing and Pike anglers have taken big eels to over 7lb in winter. Nick Rose fancies fishing it in January or February and the fishery manager is keen to have us back. So if enough of you are interested we can have a winter fish-in.

An unexpected variety of species were caught by our members including eels, pike, perch, bass, mullet, bream, rudd and tench.

Mark Taylor blanked out on the first night when fishing a swim which had been prebaited by the fishery manager with a rubby dubby of deer guts and mackerel. Maybe this would have paid off in New Zealand but the Welsh eels weren't having it. Mind you, when you consider the warm water cooking a sack full of 'gone off' meat in your swim. Verdict – been watching too many New Zealand videos. Mark moved swim for the second night and used his local knowledge to land a 3lb perch along with a few small eels.

Stephen Cotton caught a total of 7 eels with the biggest weighing in at 1:12. Steve also managed to catch a 2:04 perch on a livey plus a 7 to 8lb pike along with rudd and bass on maggot.

Michael Brettle. I was calling him bassman at one stage after he was the first to catch a few young bass on maggot. He also added rudd, perch and a tench. On his eeling rods.....I'm not sure what he caught and have been unable to contact the records officer before this went to press.....

Peter Drabble caught 8 eels with the biggest weighing 2:15. He also caught a bass and hundreds of rudd. The rudd were boiling in his swim for loosefed maggots. I witnessed him catch 5 rudd in 5 casts with no bait on the hook as they snapped up his un-baited gold hook.

Barry McConnell. I caught 12 small eels all under 2lb on dead rudd and worms. Also lots of perch to about 2lb odd on deadbaits fished 3ft off-bottom. Couldn't catch a bass even though I tried – just one would have been a P.B.

Nick Rose blanked on the first night in the warm (too warm?) shallows. Relocated to deeper water for the second night where he caught 3 eels all about 1 to 1.5lb plus all the other unusual stuff - bass, mullet etc

John Davis was the first to catch on the fish-in. John came and showed the rest of us this impressive eel - all 6 inches of it - which took a single maggot. He looks set to run away with the honour of catching the smallest eel on a fish-in. John caught 5 eels altogether with the biggest going 2:06. He also caught mullet between 12oz and 1lb plus bass, rudd, perch and skimmers.

Roy Piggot - new member. Got off to a good start on his first NAC fish-in. Fishing next to John Davis, Roy showed John how to do it as he went on to catch 18 – 20 eels (sport was that hectic he lost count) and beat his personal best twice with eels of 3:08 and 4:11 which were the biggest eels caught on this fish-in. Well done Roy. He also had one of 2:08 and another

two 2's. The rest were smaller eels. Roy caught mainly on dead rudd but also caught one on a dead bass and one on bacon grill.

Kevin and Thomas Huish. Kevin and Thomas managed to catch some eels from the shallow side where Nick blanked. Also had a net full of rudd and a few bass. When I went to chat to Kevin he was excitedly enjoying some mullet bashing as he fed the swim with bread and took them on the drop. I haven't managed to contact Kevin and Thomas to find their final total.

Winter Social Meeting

Sunday 12th November 2006.

By Steve Richardson.

Once again the National Anguilla Club met up for its annual Winter Social Meeting at the Queens Hotel, Long Eaton. For a pleasant change the access to the room was open and the situation of a group of eel anglers standing outside getting cold was averted this time.

The turn out was quite good but it would have been really nice to have seen a few more faces, as this is the day when the Club trophies are handed out and at least one member puts themselves forward to give a slide show. Maybe next year a few more of you will find the time to come along and enjoy a relaxing day with your fellow club members.

In attendance as ever, were the regular guys who always show up and it was great to see them again, as they have all become good friends of mine over the years. In amongst the regular members were a couple of new faces and I was pleased to meet and get to know them during the day. Hopefully, they will become good friends of mine over the next few years as well. From what I could gather, they seemed to find the days activities well worth the effort in attending.

For those of you reading this who hasn't yet taken the step to come along to this meeting in our club calendar, the Winter Social Meeting consists of only a few items; the breakdown of the day is as follows. The meeting is opened by the Club Chairman who waffles on about a few things and then usually asks the President if he wants to waffle for a bit as well....this is usually very entertaining as his brief chat is made in 'Wenglish'.....a cut of English and Welsh. (Notice how I got the two countries the right way around.) We then ask for any important Officer's reports to be delivered and then the meeting is handed over to the Social Officer

to perform the duties of the day and run the show. This generally includes the Records Officer giving his report on the Club trophies and the awarding of them to the members who have been successful in that regard. We then break for a Social lunch where all types of eel chat takes place between those present. A raffle is usually held, rigged to ensure that everyone present receives a prize, unlike in the days gone by when Anthony Jolley used to win everything. Then the event turns to the speaker of the day. After this we have a formal closing of the meeting and we all go home.

The members and their guests present this year were Clive Dennison, Steve Richardson, Kevin Huish, Jimmy Jolley, Anthony Jolley, John Davis, Mike Brettle, Jason Morgan, Barry McConnell, Neil Wilkinson, Mark Salt, Graham Wilkes, Paul Davis, Roy Piggott, Steve Cotton, Thomas Huish (Guest) Apparently old Dick Walker was there but 'we' didn't see him.

Apologies were made by Nick Rose, Patricia Huish, Dave Jones and Paul Smith.

The meeting opened with a minutes silence in tune with Remembrance Sunday. Following this, the Chairman waffled for a bit and, within that waffle, announced that the committee members had held their recent committee meeting via 'electric mail'. This, it transpired, had been a resounding success and that it would be an option for us to consider again for future meetings unless we needed to meet up personally.



Barry McConnell being presented with the trophies for Biggest Eel of the year and the John Sidley Trophy for his eel of 6lb – 08ozs.

The President spoke about the club and was pleased to see everything going along nicely. He touched upon the Port Talbot fish in and said that he enjoyed attending that very much...he mentioned the word 'breakfast' at least a couple of times. He also touched upon the Web-Site and this was discussed by all in attendance. The general feeling was that we ALL need to access the web-site and get it used to its best capabilities. All members should seek to visit this site at least once a week in order to keep it active. As an aside, anyone wishing to have anything placed on the club web site should forward it to Thomas Huish.

At this juncture, the meeting was handed over to the Club Social Officer, Barry McConnell. Barry thanked everyone for finding the time to come along and attend the day's events and then introduced Mike Brettle to give his Records Officers report and present the Club trophies.

Mike thanked those members who had sent in their catch returns to him and gave a brief report on the number of eels caught by the membership over the season. He then read out the categories and the subsequent winners.

Biggest Eel of the year went to Barry McConnell for his fish of 6lb 8oz. This fabulous eel also won the John Sidley Trophy, presented to the captor of the biggest eel over 6lb's.



Roy Piggott is presented with trophies for Biggest Eel on a Club Trip and the Denys Lawrence Trophy for his 4lb – 11oz Port Tolbot Dock Fish-In.



Steve Cotton receives the Steve Mahoney Trophy for his article New Zealand Wanderer



John Davis receives his “prize” of a packet of jelly snakes for the smallest eel on a club trip



Roy Piggott is presented with a Lady's Shaving Kit... For something that occurred on the Port Talbot Fish-In during the summer???

The biggest eel on a club trip went to Roy Piggott for his Port Talbot Dock fish-in eel of 4lb 11oz. This also won The Denys Lawrence trophy for an eel over 4lb's on a club trip.

The Steve Mahoney trophy for best article of the year was awarded to Steve Cotton for his article New Zealand Wanderer.

The Nigel Jeyes trophy was awarded to Malcolm Law for volunteering to drive up to Brian Crawford's house and collect valuable NAC history that was being sold off by Mr. Crawford and which was put into a limited time period 'fetch or lose it' scenario.

Mike then handed out certificates for eel captures reported over the season.

The trophy presentations over, we moved to lunch and the selling of raffle tickets.....and a social chat amongst ourselves.

After lunch Barry introduced Clive Dennison as the slide show speaker for the day. The meeting had been arranged in between Clive's busy work schedule and with him working shifts on the oil rigs in the North Sea, the window of opportunity was very slim. However, Clive put himself out to get all his slides prepared and presented the whole show in a very professional manner. Clive gave three very informed slide shows, the first being about repeat captures, the second about his eel fishing to date and lastly a run down on the ECS and how far it has got thus far.

All in all it was an excellent and very entertaining talk and was delivered very well by Clive, who admitted he was very nervous before he stood up to speak. I would like to thank Clive for putting himself forward to giving a slide show on behalf of the membership. This is not an easy task and I doubt that anyone who has done it in the past, myself included, didn't have the jitters before going 'live'. However, having said that, I know that Clive's talk was greatly appreciated by all in attendance and rounded off a good day out with their fellow eel anglers.

The Chairman, good old me, ended the meeting by thanking Barry for arranging the day's events and also offering his thanks to everyone who attended and said that he looked forward to seeing them all at the AGM sometime in March 2007. The meeting was formally closed at 5.00pm.

Press Report !

Jun 12, 2006

ILLEGAL EEL NETS SEIZED AT HAMPSHIRE NATURE RESERVE

by

Elton Murphy

Environment Agency Fisheries Officers seized over £2,000 worth of illegally set fishing nets from a Hampshire nature reserve at the weekend.

Acting on information received from the public, the Dutch fyke nets were seen by Environment Agency Fisheries Officers stretched across the River Meon in the Tichfield Haven nature reserve. The river here is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is a protected conservation area.

The Fisheries team carried out surveillance on the site with the aim of apprehending the poachers. However it was decided that leaving the nets in place any longer posed an unacceptable environmental threat and subsequently action was taken to remove them. In all, twenty sets of nets were recovered containing 15kgs of eels.



Rob Waring, Environment Agency Fisheries and Biodiversity Team Leader for Hampshire, said: "These traps were posing a real threat to migratory sea trout stocks as well as eels. The Environment Agency regulates all methods of fishing on inland waters and these traps were unlicensed and set without any permissions or consideration for the possible damage to fragile fish stocks and bird communities, for which the reserve has a statutory duty to protect.

"In addition, the traps were not fitted with the necessary guards to prevent otters from drowning. The equipment seized has a market value of approximately £2,000 and the Environment Agency will have no hesitation in prosecuting any persons identified as being responsible for illegal fishing."

If members of the public have any information about this incident, they are requested to phone the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline in confidence on **0800 807060**.

(The previous piece was originally surfed from the web and shows that they don't get away with it all the time!)

Views on the Mag

By
Nick Rose

Well here I am sitting on the bank eel fishing and trying out a new second hand lap top (Times is hard so second hand is all I could afford). It is by sheer chance that I found this fishery. I was attending a wedding in Cornwall with friends and because of the distance we were to stay over the two nights Friday and Saturday, the wedding being on the Saturday afternoon and night. The place we were staying was an idyllic B n B out in the country. On the Sat morning the three women (not all with me I might add) were having a facial, nails, hair and massage in fact a total reconstruction for the forth coming event and this was to take about 4 hours. It's amazing how long it takes to rebuild a woman's face only for them to go back to the room and remove half of it cos they don't like it, anyway I digress.



This left me and Steve a non fishing mate with some time on our hands so a walk round the country lanes was in order and if we found a pub it may well be a bonus. We walked no more than a quarter of a mile and came across a fishery, two lakes, one a match lake and one a specimen lake with a small river running next to them. My thoughts immediately went to eels. I found that the lakes were at least 36 years old cos one of the guys fishing had known them ever since he had moved into the area. Then after a fairly round about way eels were mentioned in that a couple had been caught, one reputed to be 5lb (That's 5 ish cos it was never weighed properly). Bivies and over night stays were OK, dogs allowed thus saving me the problem of baby sitters for Billy, all in all it sounded very good, so the place was put in my memory database for a future expedition.

Then three weeks later I was asked if my niece and her fella could borrow my caravan and they would book it into a Cornish resort. My job was to take it down and pick it up the next week. Then my son Andy and his misses wanted to do the same thing so I arranged to leave it down there for two weeks and going down 3 times "taxiing" the family about. It stands to reason that after all this driving I would need a relaxing few days to recover, so my plans were sorted and no excuse needed for being away from work and the lady. Lets be honest I was being a real good egg doing all this ferrying about. HO HUM.

This is the first morning and I had two eels the previous night 3lb 6oz and 2lb 14oz, not bad as the 3 was my biggest so far this season, that's after 7 sessions elsewhere, I had a late start to the season, started in late June.

I had not read the Anguilla Mag and I have had it for a week 'cos I wanted to read it on the bank. So I started from the beginning with the contents. Missed out the team talk 'cos it started with the usual moaning and went on to the first article, Steve Cottons **New Zealand Wonderer**. Thought the spelling to "wonderer" was wrong until I read it and realized he was not doing a Barry Mc Connell and wandering round the Island but just wondering. It was a very interesting

article and confirmed all that Barry and Pete had said and done (Everyone MUST get one of Barry's DVDs on his trips as they are brill). I will one day make it to NZ or Aussie to catch an eel bigger than my UK dreams.

Then on to the next article Jimmy's response to an article by his bothers bit in the last mag. I actually rang Jimmy as I also had a response to it but was too late for the mag so you should get it the same mag as this article is in so I won't comment on it further, just read it (See page 37).

That brings me onto our new Secretary John Davies page. Firstly I would like to welcome John and I am sure he will do a good job. Secondly a big thanks to Jason for his year as Secretary, it has been a really hard year for Jason with work, job changes and house moving so I can understand him dropping down from the position. Good luck in the future Jason; I hope all goes well for you.



As I said I am fishing at the mo and the sun is now unbearable and it is only 10am and some t-t has cast over two of my rods. He has his young daughter with him so I am all smiles and niceness (B----r).

Tackle Tarts review by Damian, It looks a decent product and for those in the know, waterproof gear is probably best for Damian as his aim is not that brill when relieving himself. How come the Gunge has not got hold of that bit of info? In fact what has happened to the Mole and the gunge?

Archive Article by Arthur Sutton. Good to see conservation was going on way back in those early days and by our very own AJS.

Internet Resources, Anthony Jolley. Jesus it was hard going for a man of my limited intellect. People actually get paid millions for compiling volumes of this stuff, still it was read twice and I am still not sure if eels can swim as fast back as forward. Maybe next time you should print all of it so we could get a better idea. SOZ LADS that was a joke honest.

Moon Phases. This is an interesting jigsaw which I am sure has a massive effect on our eel fishing. You should check out your catches against the calendar to see if there is a period that is more prolific. I do periodically and you may be surprised at the results. Maybe someone could follow up Stuart Dean's stuff from years ago with an article. I would imagine that a lot of sessions need to be done to get the full picture.

Internet Resources part two. Bugger me there's more of it. I know I treat this as a joke but it is an extremely important part of this club now and all credit to Anthony for getting involved in it so much. Also I do believe a certain younger member of the Huish household has put our NAC web site back on track (See page 38). A massive cheers Thomas and as I said to you at the Port Talbot fish/in, when your old enough I will take you out for a thank you drink without your dad 'cos he is old and boring now. Pat can come though.

Another Messed up Season. Mr. Dorman. God I would hate your job Martin. How much time do you manage to get in the UK? Do you get chance to do a bit over the side of the boat

(That's fishing) or is it all work and sleep on board? Anyway thanks for yet another article and good luck next season, that's not with the fishing but just being able to be in the UK.

Status and Management of the European Eel. A massive thanks to Clive for attending this event and thanks for putting the important bits on paper for us. Notice I said the important bits as most of it is extremely boring and you would not like to read it, thanks again for doing it Clive. At some stage the powers that be are gonna listen to you and realise that the likes of Brian Knight and Roger Castle are in it just for, the quick profit. The twisted stats provided by Mr. Knight are only there 'cos he tends to be closely involved with the commercial eel catchers. The EA are finally getting the message that there is a massive drop in eel numbers and elvers returning to our shores. Good luck and the NAC will be behind you and Anthony all the way.

After Thoughts by Damian. This has a lot of the content that the team talk has and I left it to recast my rods and have a beer.

Now you may think that I have been pretty dismissive of both our Editors comments and thoughts. To certain extent this is true as most of the content is a moan at the membership for not writing for the mag or actually getting involved. It's not just these editors now that I am on about as I have done the job in the past and a few others since and all we ever did was moan about the lack of material to put in the mag.

Oh and by the way as I write, this is now the next day and I had nowt last night, not even a pull, so it was time to move to the other end of the lake. I have set up and thank god I am under some trees out of this sun, the weather has been incredibly hot and it was murder yesterday.

Back to the mag. When I did the job of producing it we had no computers just an old typewriter and if we made a mistake it was rip it up and start all over again until we had about 20 to 25 pages of half readable stuff. I then took it to work and then sneaked on the photocopier early in the morning before the gaffer got in. It may seem as if it was a lot harder then but I managed to cajole a few of the lads to write on a regular basis and they were pretty good at it.

The likes of Steve Richardson, Jerry Parkin, Stuart Dean and of course John Sidley all wrote me at least one article an edition and John Sidley was very prolific at writing with 2 or 3 articles of at least 5 or 6 pages. The trouble was it needed an awful lot of editing 'cos most of it was either so long winded or repetitious that a 5 pager from him usually was cut down to a page and a half. I might add I am the second worse speller with bad grammar in the world; John was by far the worst.

So in the end my job was made a lot easier thanks to some good friends writing to fill the pages. As for the mag it was awful compared with today's brill job done by Jimmy and Damian. My Mag had pages upside down back to front, bad spelling and grammar.

I think the big turn around was when Steve Richo took over the publication in the mid 90s as although we had at the time a professional printer doing it for the club (he was a member at the time) we were in the end lucky to get one mag a year.

This was down from at the time from 4 a year. Steve got to work on his computer (They were just getting affordable for the home by now) and turned what was one or no mags a year, with bad spelling and grammar into three and then two a year of really good quality stuff.

So back to Jimmy and Damian and by the way I have just cast my rods out looking for a day time eel. It happens loads of times when its mega hot like today.

I have the greatest respect for what the lads are doing with the mag but its time to do what I did. Ring up your mates in the club and even members you don't know a few at a time for each edition and pester them, it really works honest. I am just as much to blame as the rest, if not more as I know what its like and so are the rest of the older members.

You know who you are.

Whoooo just had a blinding run, as I got to the rods the line was flying out sideward with a carp in panic mode shooting up the margin with my line under its pec. Re cast now and am going to stop writing till tomorrow, there's only another 2 days left for my rambling for you all to suffer.

So anyway here I am next day and an old mate turned up for some carping 'cos I told him what I was told that a few 20,s up to 27lb were in here so he fancied a change from Frampton and the Mere just to get his string pulled. Boy did he get it pulled! 18 carp the first night all about 8 to 12 lb. Since found out that the biggest in here is 19 touching 20lb.



Still he is still talking to me as all he wanted was a break from catching nowt from the other lakes. As for me, well I had another 3lb 6oz eel at 10ish pm and a 4lb 6oz at 5am. I am beginning to like this place.

So anyway back to Jimmy and Damian's problem of lack of material. I am doing my bit now not before time they will say, so let's get some stuff from you others. I would nominate someone but they maybe not the ones the editors wants?

So the ball is in your court lads and I will support the club stumping up for the phone calls (No not the whole phone bill).

My god this is 4 pages with the photos maybe 5. This writing is easy and having read through, it doesn't sound too bad.

The 4th night was a blank but all in all not a bad 4 days and yes I am coming back but that will be in the next article.

Get writing lads 'coz even if you think your crap at it we will enjoy reading your eeling exploits.

Nick Rose.

N.A.C Members Profile.

By Neil Wilkinson

1. N.A.C MEMBERS NAME... Neil "Batman" Wilkinson.

2. STATUS ... Single.

3. WHEN DID YOU FIRST START EEL FISHING ... More seriously in 2001.

4. REASONS FOR JOINING THE NAC ... It got quite lonely out there as I'd never found anyone else with an interest in eels. I also thought I could pick up, and share a few tips along the way.

5. FIRST EEL EVER CAUGHT... When I was about 10 years old from a local canal.

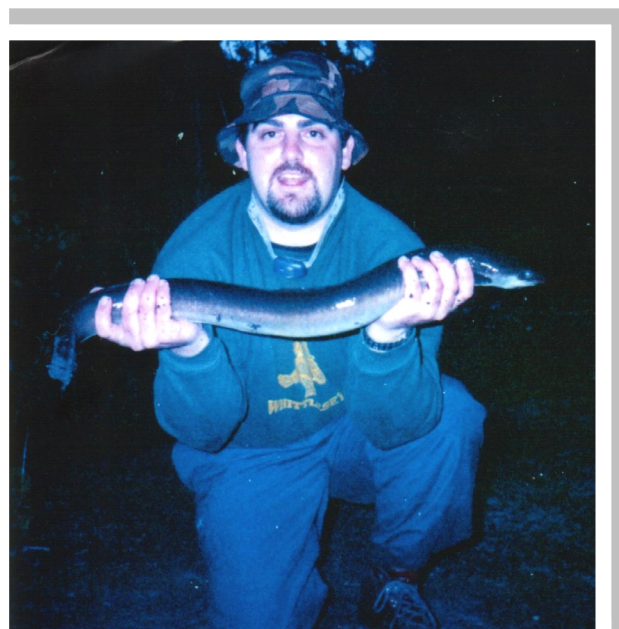
6. PERSONAL BEST EEL TO DATE...

A "staggering" 3lb – 09oz.

7. BEST REMEMBERED EEL SESSION... The night of my PB. I had fished the water for many nights and blanked, but still kept going. I was having a strange dream when the bite alarm awoke me, I couldn't believe it was an eel after waiting for so long to catch one from the water.

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

9. FAVOURITE VENUE... I love quiet secluded lakes lined with trees and full of features such as lily pads, islands, reeds etc. I don't really enjoy big open pits. I particularly enjoyed Bolesworth Castle and similar estate lakes.



Neil with his personal best eel of 3lb – 09oz.

10. ANY PARTICULAR BAIT

PREFERENCES AND REASONS FOR THIS ... I have had most success with small dead baits, either head or tail sections. Lobs have also produced a fair share of fish, although on one particular lake I fish you can't get through the bream and perch.

On the most recent fish-In at Hythe I ran out of worms so I decided to "scavenge" some natural bait. I caught several small eels on slugs which proved to be a nice alternative to the usual baits.

11. FAVOURITE ITEM OF TACKLE... The Shimano 8000's are the best reels I've ever used. They have yet to fail me and receive a lot of use both for my eeling and pike fishing. I also love the digital Delkims I have borrowed from my brother. The remote sounder box allows for a peaceful nights fishing.

12. OTHER SPECIES THAT YOU FISH FOR... Mainly eels during the summer months, with a bit of bream and tench fishing, and pike during the autumn and winter.

13. OF ALL THE SPECIES YOU HAVE CAUGHT, WHICH ONE IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY... Eels are so appealing to me as I find them so hard to catch, I enjoy the challenge. I also love the muscularity of eels and the beautiful variety of skin tones they possess. Pike and tench are close runners-up, but I find them a damn sight easier to catch.

14. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER ANGLING ORGANISATIONS... Yes!.. I am a member of the P.A.C.

15. ANY OTHER INTERESTS OUTSIDE ANGLING... I have many interests. They include Morris dancing, natural history, reading, weight training, taxidermy and music.

16. DIS-LIKES IN ANGLING... My pet hates with regards to angling are, the people who call themselves anglers, but think nothing of littering the bank-sides with their filth. I get fed up with seeing empty ground-bait packets, tins and discarded line at some of the places I fish. These are the individuals that give our sport a bad name. Another of my dislikes in angling, are those who have to turn up their bite alarms so that the rest of the lake can hear them. Many a time I've jumped up from my bed-chair to what I thought was a run, only to find its some cloth-eared individual half way round the lake.

17. HOW COULD THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BE IMPROVED... It would be nice if more of the general membership would get involved, either at fish-ins or the meetings instead of the same few faces. You wonder what some of the membership actually get out of belonging to the N.A.C, other than receiving the club bulletin.

18. AMBITIONS, IN ANGLING TERMS... Obviously I would like to increase my personal best eel. I'm sure it will come soon. Having never caught a barbel or a zander, they are next on my list of wants. Other than that, to keep on enjoying my fishing for the rest of my years.

19. DO YOU HAVE ANY ANGLING HEROES OR HAS ANYONE INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER TO DATE... I have my father to thank for encouraging me to fish as a boy and in my later years my brother for re-installing my interest after a long lay-off. I grew up influenced by the work of Neville Fickling with regards to pike fishing and always enjoyed John Wilson's TV programmes and writings in general.

20. DO YOU THINK THAT THE EXISTING RECORD OF 11lb-2oz WILL BE BROKEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IF SO, WHAT TYPE OF VENUE DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE AND WILL IT BE TO AN EEL ANGLER OR AN ANGLER FISHING FOR ANOTHER SPECIES... So reports have it, it already has by a carp angler. As there is no evidence to prove this was the case, I suppose it still stands at 11lb – 02oz. I quite expect the record to be officially broken as we all know there are bigger fish out there. I doubt very much that it will be an eel angler who achieves this as we are vastly out numbered by the carp fraternity.

Eels being the opportunists they are have recognised boilies as a nutritious food source and in some waters very easy to come by. A similar situation has occurred at the river Ebro with the cats switching to halibut pellets. I suppose this maybe an indication that we should try experimenting with high protein baits and follow in the carp angler's footsteps, but just think of all those carp you would have to get through!!!

Something Different !

By

Barry McConnell

The LIFT-OFF INDICATOR

This isn't yet another article about such and such a drop off indicator or monkey climber that is just a revamp of what already exists. This is something new. It lifts off the line by means of weights rolling down a tube.

Over the years there have been so many indicators. In the 1960's I learnt the art of legering for roach using bread paste as a dough bobbin. This was the most common indicator before the swingtip came along.

In the 70's, as a teenager, I became fascinated with a new way of thinking - specimen hunting - where thinking anglers refined techniques and tackle to catch big specimen fish by design. Silver foil wrapped into a cylinder shape replaced the dough bobbin and the bail arm was left open so that a run could develop. I can easily recall the magical sound of line rustling through the foil on a calm and sultry midsummer night as a rare specimen carp (yes - rare - the good old days when carp were rare) made off with the 'secret' catfood paste. This was the era when carp anglers fished with low resistance, free running rigs. The rod would be angled steeply downwards, pointing towards the bait and the bail arm left open.



During this era most anglers made their own indicators. One attempt at progress involved sliding the foil cylinder down a knitting needle that had been pushed into the ground at an angle. These were the first monkey climbers. Washing up bottle tops, corks, cords, hairgrips, map pins and more were used to make a variety of home made indicators. I remember seeing a pike angler using a drop-off indicator made with a hairgrip for the line grip and a table tennis ball as the sight bob.

During the 80's the introduction of hair rig/ bolt rig /boilie style of fishing resulted in a boom in carp angling tackle sales. The introduction of the baitrunner type of reel meant that rods could be fished with closed bail arms. This meant that the indicator could now be fixed to the front rest rather than at the back where it must be to retain line on the spool when open bailing. A whole new era of all singing, all dancing (all swinging, all dangling) style of glitzy indicators was born. These came with various different tension settings, adjustable line grips and sliding weights. Matching sets became the order of the day. Pike anglers had now developed the drop off arm and line clip which became commercially produced in various all swinging all dangling, adjustable styles.

After 7 or 8 years of fanatical carp angling I lost the bug and moved on to fish for other species. These days I prefer to seek truly wild fish, especially eels and zander, using my preferred 'old fashioned' approach of free-running low-resistance rig fished with open bail arm, rod angled towards the fish and lightweight bobbin hanging between reel and butt ring. Having tried many different indicators over the years my preferred choice for the last decade or so has been, if the conditions suit, the simple

lightweight, free-hanging bobbin such as a washing up bottle top, plumbers clip, curtain hook or a plastic coated cup hook. Or, second best, when conditions are too rough for bobbins, I use pike type drop off indicators instead. I have fished like this exclusively and extensively up until last year when I finally found something more suitable.

What I am going to tell you about now is how I discovered a new type of indicator that beats the pants off all the above mentioned indicators. This type lifts off rather than drops off. For the kind of angling I do it is just so much easier to use. I've used nothing else for the last year and have now made two sets of new, glitzy, all shining, jingling, carefully loaded, critically balanced lift off tubes and found them very user friendly; they don't sway in the wind, still work whether sun, rain or frost, are made of strong, shockproof materials and they actually make a noise when they flip off.



The idea of a lift off indicator was spawned whilst eel fishing one night. Problems occurred while fishing off a stage which was rather too high above the water. First it was bats hitting the line, which was overcome by angling the rods steeply until the tips were underwater. Next problem was the 'bit bites' as hordes of small fish whittled away at the bait. Each time the free hanging bobbin lifted, the steep angle of the rod was causing coils of line to spring from the fully loaded spool. I often suffer from a similar line spill whenever there is a strong wind from behind. When this happens I replace the free-hanging bobbins with pike type drop off arms. The ones with the adjustable line grip on the end. These stop the line spilling from the spool.

As I said- these drop-off indicators are my second choice for eel angling, and although I use these for most of my zander angling on the fen drains, I've still never been entirely happy with them. Clips have to be adjusted to suit varying strengths of wind and water flow. Fishing on the fens both wind and flow can fluctuate. This leads to a tendency to over-tighten the line grip to compensate for any sudden wind gust or current surge.



With the clip too tight, when a fish takes the bait, what often happens is that the indicator will lift and pull tight at which point the fish rejects the bait as it feels the resistance of the over-tightened clip. When the clip isn't too tight; it's too loose, causing endless false runs. Also a clip may be gripping the line on a frosty night only to loosen off when the sun rises in the morning and the clip expands. I must have spent many hours of my life adjusting and readjusting these line clips – they always seem too tight or too loose. I've never been happy with them.

For years I have puzzled over alternatives to drop off alarms and their line grips. Tried various inventions along the way but always ended up going back to what works for me – free hanging bobbins or drop offs.

On the night it all changed, I had once again started puzzling over indicators and looking for improvements. A visit to Pete Drabbles bivvy turned into a discussion about our past discussions on indicators. Once again we ended up on an often mentioned topic - an article by Maurice Steeles in one of my old British Eel Angling Club magazines and some of the indicators that anglers such as he and John Sidley had tinkered with at that time. It is at this point that we always get stuck. The problem is that everything is fine as the indicator lifts towards the rod only for things to be not quite satisfactory at the drop off/ clip off point when the line is at its tightest.

I went back to my bivvy and sat up all night puzzling and puzzling it over and over. As always, there seemed to be something missing, something not quite right. I got determined, pitched my mind to it as though a cryptic crossword and tried to look for a new approach. A few sketches were drawn to try and get the ball rolling, followed by a really, really big think.

The first brainwave to be sketched was working on an idea of a line grip that would release itself. The idea was to try creating a line grip at the end of a tube which could be locked shut or released open by somehow using sand, lead balls, mercury or whatever to push against a backplate inside the tube and close the line gripper on the end. Once the indicator is raised then the medium will roll down the tube and release the end grip. This seemed like a long shot but you've got to start somewhere.



As I was drawing diagrams 1A and 1B the answer to this problem suddenly seemed obvious. In diagram E it can be seen how in tube (a) the medium is bearing down and closing the line grip. In tube (b), once the medium reaches the end of the tube there is still too much weight because of the weight of the tube bearing on the line grip end. As I looked at the diagram the answer hit me. It needs to lift off. I pencilled in the dotted extensions a and b in diagram E. This would allow the medium to roll past the pivot point which should act like a see saw and lift the other end off the line.

By the time it got light I had made the first prototype with a biro, some split shot and a quiver tip. See diagram 2. It worked too. I have been using them ever since but it hasn't been all plain sailing. I thought that the realisation of this see saw principle, along with the fact that I had finally managed to make one that works ok, would see these indicators ready to use. As the weeks went by it became obvious that an extensive period of research and development was needed to develop the indicator further. This stage involved trying various materials to test both their suitability and durability whilst trying various different designs in order to find the optimum weight, length and shape to produce a controlled lift off.

Using plastic plumber's pipes and plastic drinking straws, many different design shapes were tried. See diagram 3. After months of trials the penny finally dropped and I realised that the shape and weight of the indicator made little difference since the point of balance and see saw principle means that whatever weight is added to one side must be added to the other. It was therefore decided to settle for one straight tube of uniform diameter with enough drilled bullets in it to get some weight forward bearing down on the line. Smaller models were made with various different loadings of swan shot.

The test was to be on the fen drains when some good run offs could be expected as autumn rains added to the flow. When zander fishing the drains the indicator would need enough weight forward to hold against the flow when the drain is running off. They sort of worked but the drilled bullets and split shot weren't perfectly round. This stopped them rolling as freely as desired. Also, the whole thing is like a balance scale and any weight added forward has to be added to the rear to balance up the see saw. Attempts at getting more weight forward resulted in the whole thing getting a bit too chunky and heavy. It seemed that a slimmer, more lightweight body material was needed for the tube.

During winter they were rebuilt using aluminium tubing filled with ball bearings. These were then taken for a couple of trial trips to the fens in February and March, hoping for plenty of zander runs to lift off the indicator. The zander weren't feeding in the sub zero temperatures. The only run in two trips produced an unexpected sea trout of 6.09 on deadbait from the Relief Channel. This had no problem flipping over the indicator tube as it gave me the fastest run I've ever experienced on the fens. Despite this being the only run on which to test the indicator tubes, I was still able to test the ability of the indicator to hold in the current, their resistance to freezing temperatures and how they are, or aren't, affected by gusting wind. They worked ok until it got wet and the ball bearings rusted up inside the tube where they became a rusty coloured sludge that didn't want to roll freely. Also the aluminium proved to be a bit too thick in the wall so lighter materials were looked for.

The next improvement involved using lightweight, thin-walled, titanium tubing with rust-free stainless steel ball bearings. Various numbers of ball bearings were tried in each tube to find the optimum loading.

The final design wasn't an instant find and weeks were spent looking for something to replace the line grip. Altogether, a lot of time was spent tinkering with different means of attachment to the line with a groove, hook, claw, bent-clip or whatever. Once the bent claw was decided on, its optimum angle had to be decided on; also it was found necessary to add a line backstop which had to be made from lightweight materials. Further time was spent deciding where to put the pivot point as this has an effect on the resulting action and sensitivity of the indicator.



In the process it was discovered that placing the pivot point on the underside of the tube proved better for sensitivity than putting it on the top. Also the addition of a sliding counterbalance weight meant the pivot point could be further to the rear allowing a longer bit at the front where it has to reach from back rest to reel. At first it had been decided against a sliding weight for adjustment because this tends to dull the action and make it less sharp.

Instead, a model was made with three pivot points (diagram 4), giving low, medium and high weight loadings towards the front. To adjust sensitivity, the arm is relocated on the next pivot point. This was later altered to one pivot point with the addition of a sliding weight for adjustments (diagram 5) which would help to get more, or less, weight bearing down on the line at the front end of the indicator. It seemed worth sacrificing some of the sharpness of action for the sake of making the indicator more user-friendly. It was now so simple to adjust. Make things as basic as you can is my policy. With the final choice of design it is no longer necessary to fiddle about and relocate the pivot attachment; now you just slide the weight instead.



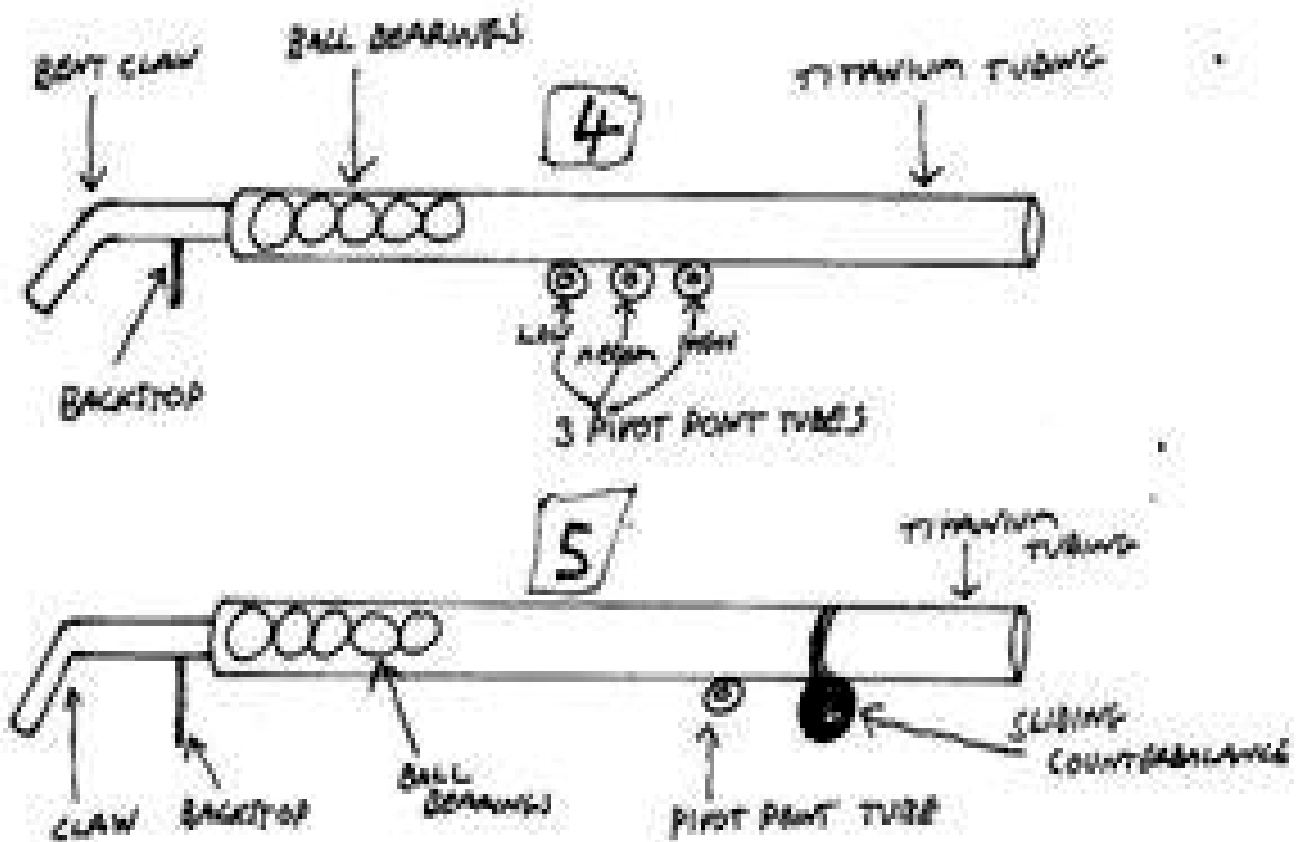
The reason that they are so easy to use (user friendly) is because whilst fishing with them for the last 1½ years I have been constantly assessing and modifying with a view to making them easier to use for the type of angling I practice. After getting fed up messing about with line clips I wanted something to simply push down onto the line when setting it after casting. Also, after getting fed up with flexible indicators that sway in strong gusting winds I wanted something rigid. It has worked out fine as they are now undoubtedly a joy to use.

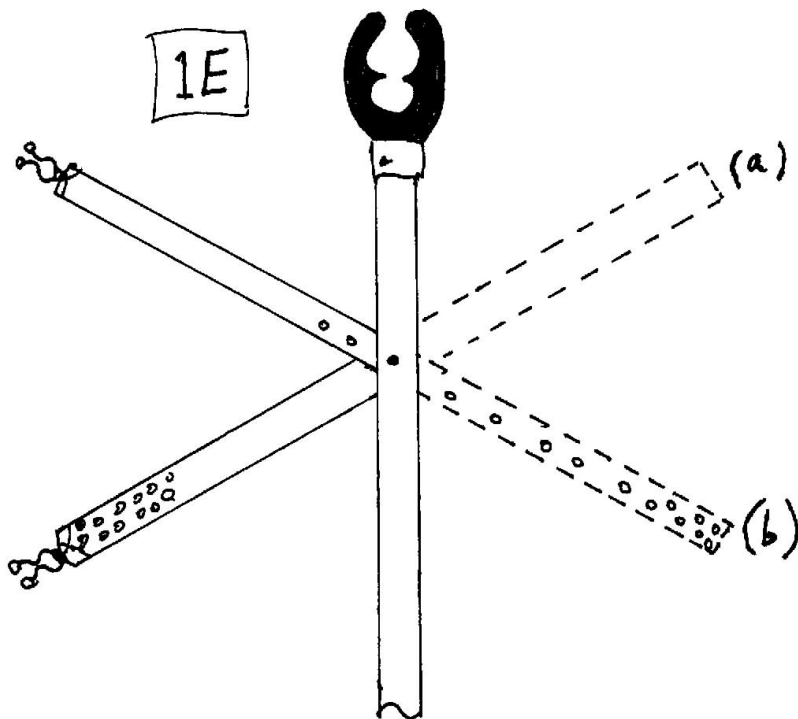
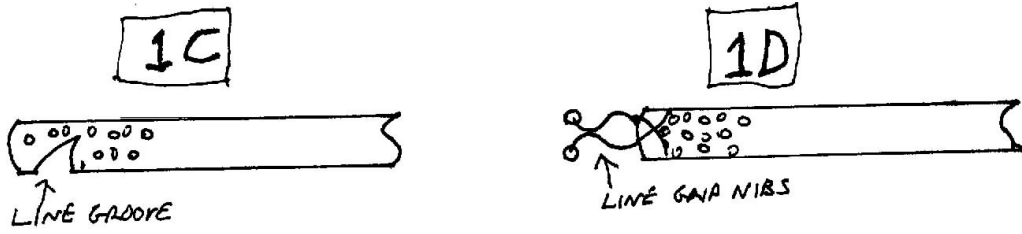
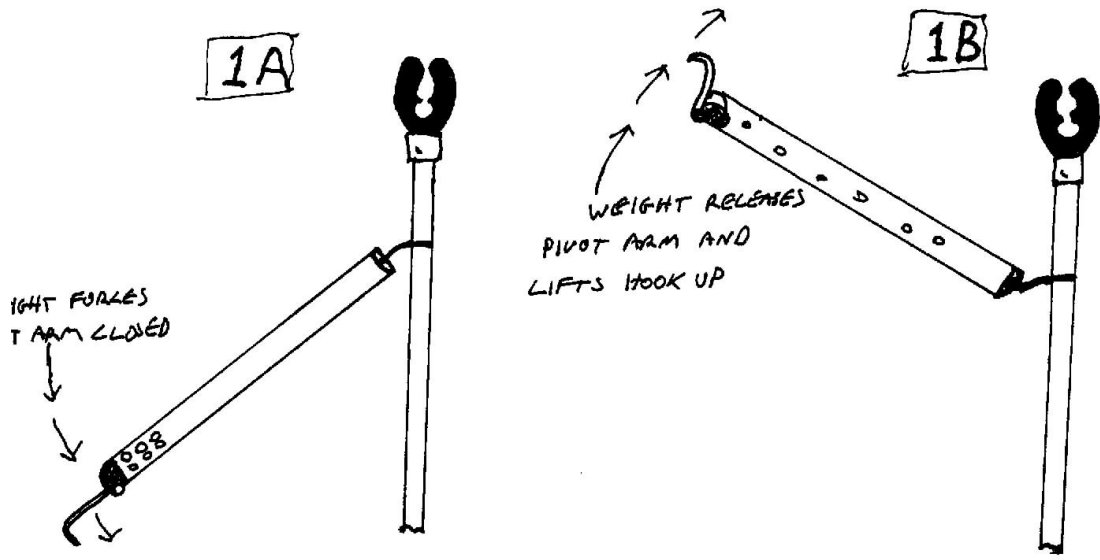
Once the final design of the indicator was formed, the heavier settings were found to be suitable for flowing water and live-baiting while the lighter settings passed the test for still conditions and small or finicky species. What fun the field testing has proved too. During the research and development trips I went either eel or zander fishing and caught loads of eels to 6.08 and zander to 10.06 using these indicators. Many other species were caught, more by accident than by design, including perch to 3.08; tench to 7+; bream to 6.00+; carp over 20lb as well as pike, roach, rudd, tench, ide, a sea trout and a few mitten crabs. So the indicators have been well tested.

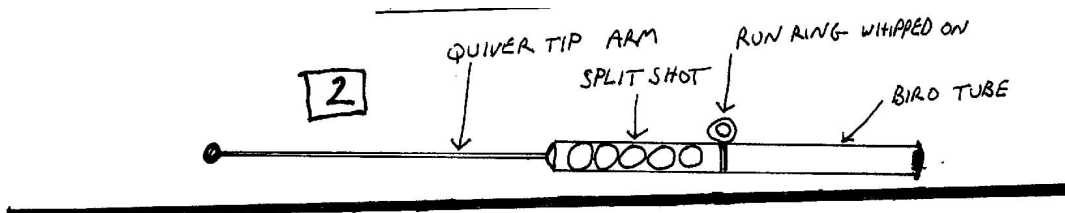
Another advantage of these indicators is that you hear a jingle noise when the ball bearings slide down to hit the bottom of the tube. This can alert the angler to a run without the need for a buzzer type alarm.

Recent articles in the angling weeklies announced that local anglers are in uproar because buzzer type alarms have been banned on a popular section of the Thames. Jingle jingle.....

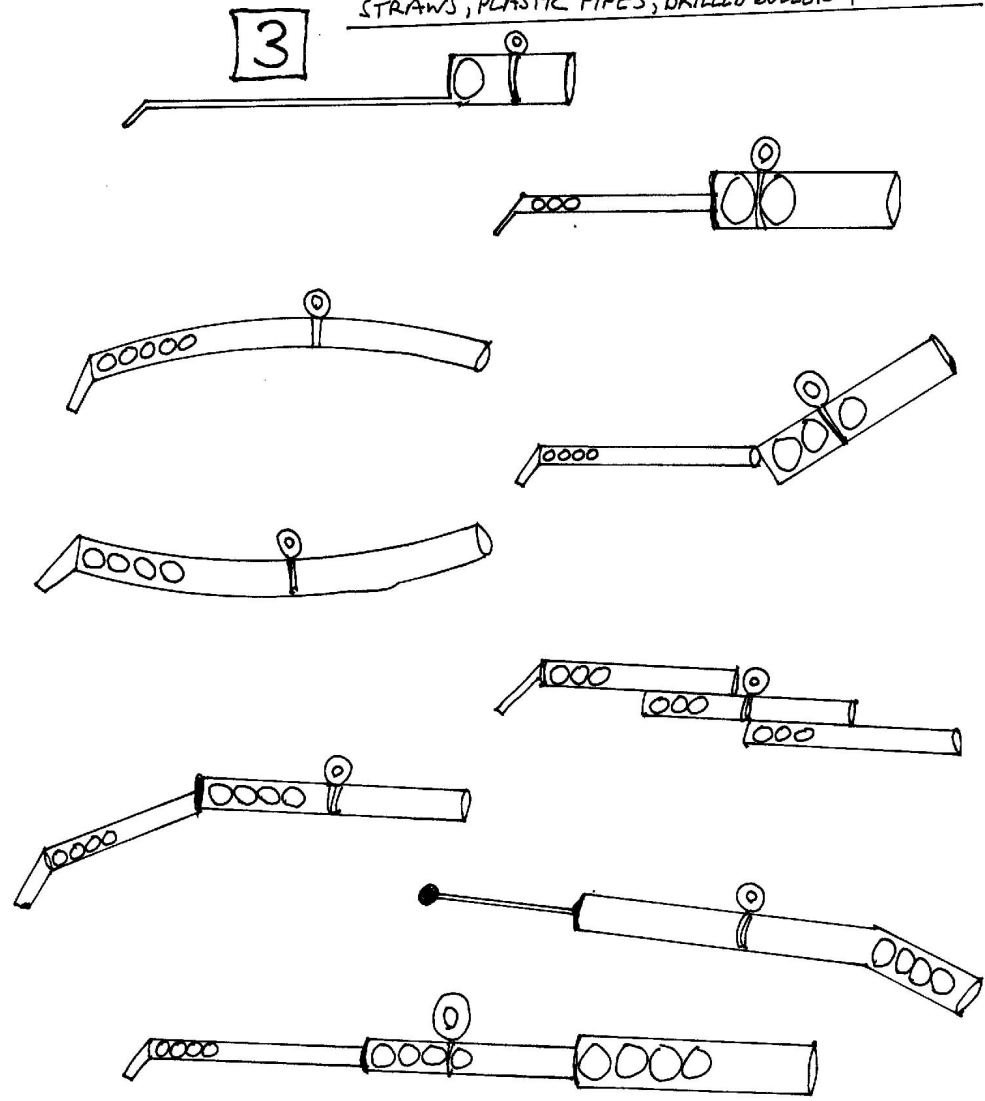
Pike anglers should note that although these were originally developed for zander and eel angling they are equally as good for pike. I wouldn't be surprised if they became favoured for perch, bream, tench and more. This summer I have been spotted using them by the occasional angler. Each one has instantly noticed the shiny metal indicators. On each occasion the reaction has been, "wow, superb, those would be much better than the drop-offs I use for pike fishing. Where can I buy some?" If other anglers find them as useful as I do, I can see these completely replacing the old type of drop off.....
Patent applied for.







VARIOUS MODELS MADE WITH DRINKING STRAWS, PLASTIC PIPES, DRILLED BULLETS + SPLIT SHOT



The Earth Worm

By
Anthony Jolley

Introduction:-

In some of the earlier editions of Anguilla I have given details of the background and anatomy of some of the baits we use, Giving us a better understanding of the bait and

its lifestyle in its natural environment. Below I have tried to focus on the Lobworm and its “Other” uses other than bait,

The earthworm *Lumbricus terrestris* has many virtues and should not be taken for granted:

Anatomy



The earthworm has a elongated body composed of 150 similar segments (metameres) and three different ones; the first segment or prostomium is pointed, the second peristomium bears the mouth and the anus is situated in the last segment, the pygidium. Four pairs of bristles emerge from the other segments and permit the animal to grip the walls of tunnels. The earth worm possesses a characteristic clitellum at the 37th and 38th segment which appears at sexual

maturity. The muscle structure of the earthworm is adapted to its mode of locomotion. It is made up of circular muscles under the skin and deeper longitudinal muscles. Small retractile and protractile muscles maintain the mobility of the bristles. The earthworm has no lungs but breathes through the integument which remains moist by means of glands in the skin which continually produce mucus. The circulatory system is well developed and is composed of two main blood vessels, a ventral and a dorsal together with a network of capillaries in the various organs. On the dorsal vessel five pairs of aortic arches (segments 7 and 11) act as a heart.

Locomotion

The earthworm moves by a succession of contractions. By contracting the circular muscles and retracting the bristles the anterior part of the segment advances. Then by contracting the longitudinal muscles and extending the bristles the segment is shortened by pulling its posterior part forwards.

Habitat and nutrition.

This saprophagous animal burrows and creates a multitude of tunnels down to two metres in depth by swallowing earth and feeding on the organic matter and dead leaves contained in it.

Reproduction

The earthworm possesses both male and female organs: They have testes in the 10th and 11th segments and ovaries in the 13th segment. Male products fall into the seminal vesicals situated in the 9th 11th and 12th segments where the formation of sperm takes place. At maturity the sperm is stored in seminal receptors in the 15th segment. The ovaries produce the eggs which are stored in the 14th segment of the body. Although earthworms are hermaphrodites they have to mate to reproduce. To do this the two worms overlap head to tail and a slime tube is secreted around them by the clitellum. The sperm of the other worm is stored in the seminal receptors in segments 9 and 10. The egg cocoon is also secreted by the clitellum. The worm slides the cocoon forward and the sperm penetrates as it passes over the 9th and 10th segments. Fertilization takes place in the cocoon. The young emerge as small but fully formed earthworms.

Behaviour and Function

The most active period for the earthworm is autumn when flowers, fruit and leaves decompose with the increasing humidity. During this period earthworms attack debris which is dragged down into their tunnels where it decomposes. It is easy to understand the importance of the earthworm in soil biology because of the enormous density of worms contained in it (up to 4 million individuals per hectare and 4000 km of tunnels!). In this way up to 250 tonnes of earth per hectare are ingested, and expelled in the form of faecal matter which then evolves very rapidly through microbial action.

By tunnelling and moving the earth upwards the earthworm contributes to the aeration and drainage of the soil. This avoids compacting and run off and favours the rooting of plants with a ready supply of water. Increased porosity also helps the sun to penetrate and dry the soil. Elements such as phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, iron and sulphur, which are necessary for plant life, are moved up to the surface.

There is no doubt that the earthworm is a very precious animal.

Earthworms are used by fishermen more than any other bait. They are the top choice for fish bait and will catch just about anything. Unfortunately, earthworms are more plentiful in the spring and late autumn when the soil is moist. Rather than pay high prices for earthworms during the off-season, it is possible to collect and store Lobworms for the future or raise red worms.

Kinds of Earthworms

Fishermen favour native Lobworms because of their large size, which is up to 8 to 10 inches long. Garden worms are found in damp soils and are about 5 to 7 inches long. Manure worms are found in manure-rich soils and are about 4 to 5 inches long. Red worms are about 3 to 4 inches long and the easiest to raise, representing 80 to 90 percent of the commercial market.

Obtaining Earthworms

Lobworms can be collected by flashlight after dark, following a steady, warm spring rain. Look for them near lawn edges. Cover the flashlight lens with plastic red cellophane to reduce light and keep worms from fleeing. By using the "elephant walk" which is the covers the ground in sideways movements, you can obtain the maximum harvesting of worms on the surface. Always take care not to damage the worm and only keep untainted worms for long term use. Damaged worms will kill off all the healthy worms as they decompose. Garden worms can be dug from moist soil under boards and stones, whereas manure worms can be dug from manure piles or manure-rich soils. Red worms can be obtained from a reputable worm dealer, usually advertised in gardening and fishing magazines.

Cages

Use wooden boxes, washtubs, steel drums cut lengthwise or other tight containers. Wooden containers 60 x 36 x 18 inches or metal tubs 2 feet in diameter and 12 inches deep are used as rearing boxes. Wooden containers should be well tarred on the outside and coated with hot paraffin wax inside. Metal containers should be coated inside with hot tar or two coats of good house paint.

Cage Preparation

Good loam or other porous soils containing organic matter work well. Organic matter (rotted or dead vegetation) may be added and mixed one part to three to four parts of soil if needed. Avoid using sandy or heavy clay soils. Fill the container to a depth of 8 to 10 inches with the

soil used. Moisten soil throughout, but do not soak. Add food (1 pound of 15 percent protein mash such as pig or broiler mash mixed with 1/2 pound of lard or cheap vegetable shortening) within the top 3 inches of soil. Cornmeal can be substituted for the mash in the mixture if desired. This amount of food provides one feeding ration for the rearing containers described.

Biology

Commercial hybrid red worms are best for rearing. A culture can be started by adding 100 worms and covering with a damp sack to prevent evaporation. Earthworms must mate to reproduce, even though one earthworm contains both male and female reproductive organs. Eggs are formed in a slime tube that slips over the worm's head and forms a cocoon or capsule that incubates them. Eggs develop into tiny worms in the cocoon and crawl out through one end when ready to emerge. Cocoons vary in size and shape and are about 1/25 to 1/3 inch long. Some fast-maturing worms mature three to four months after hatching and will start their breeding cycle. Eggs are laid on top of the ground at one-month intervals, with each egg capsule containing 5 to 15 baby worms. If starting with two breeder beds, the crop will be ready for harvesting in about five months and continuing thereafter with proper care. Lobworms are difficult to impossible to raise in homemade containers. Most resort to picking these worms from lawns, gardens and orchards for storing and future use. Worms can live for 10 to 15 years.

Feeding

Worms must be fed periodically to maintain production. Feed is added at the rate of one pound for each cubic foot of rearing space per month. Feeding once or twice each week is sufficient as uneaten food will contaminate the bed. Wetting the soil whenever food is added usually provides sufficient moisture.

Other Factors

The rearing container must be in a cool, protected place with the temperature about 60°F. A good place for the worms is a house basement. Maintain cultures at 60 to 65°F during the coldest weather by covering with a cardboard box. Be sure to have a thermometer. Heat may be provided by stringing a light bulb inside the cover, carefully avoiding any fire hazard. One finds young worms five to six weeks after "planting."

Provide good drainage with small holes covered with fine wire screen. Keep soil moist but not wet by spraying with water.

Worms can be harvested by emptying the box and sorting out those of suitable size. Some remove worms from the soil by transferring to a 10-quart bucket and allowing to stand for 30 minutes. Put top soil back in the tub and most worms will be found in the bucket bottom. The loam can be saved and transferred to a fresh box as egg capsules are present to start a new colony. Unused worms can be used as breeders.

Before sale or use, worms should be placed in sphagnum moss to "scour" for three to four days. Worms will become almost transparent but tough and lively. Haul worms to the lake in a moist bait box with damp sphagnum moss. Keep worms cool and out of the hot sun at all times.

I hope you have found some of the above interesting.

Good Worming and even better Eeling. Tony BT Jolley.

Forward Thinking

(Physics of anti deep hooking techniques, one to one ratio rigs and concepts)
Future development on original theories.

By
Damian "The Burglar" Wood

It seems quite a few years, when I first wrote about using the SFR (Sunken Fixed Rig) rig combined with a reversed Withy Pool rig fishing worms in a article called the Resistance movement and its sequel (2002) the next thing to look at was developing this success with other baits.

And further diagrams and explanations of using hooking arrangements where also mentioned in another article "In search of my Redmire" in both these previous articles I talked about a variety of things covering rig presentations, using PVA bags on Dyson rigs and eel behaviour for that particular water. In this piece I looked at the beginnings of creating the same effect of hooking on a one to one ratio using dead baits sections preferably fish head a personal favourite over the tail, but didn't go into too much detail on how they worked in a technical article type format that I normally do and will try and keep this article under 14 pages!!!!

One major change this season has been my hook selection, over the winter I have been mainly perch fishing and pike fishing and have on the odd occasion been carping on my local water when the conditions haven't been right for other species. While carping I used the Korda range of Long-shank X in sizes 8 and started to look at them for the forth coming eel season, but had to step down in size for the use of the rigs to be fished for eels to a size 10 and later using ESP size 11.

Quite some years ago I remember myself and Jimmy talking on the Leeds/Liverpool about deep hooking and a hook for the job and we did look at small Mustad hooks from the fly fishing section (Remember this is in the day prior to the abundance of hook selection we have today) and incorporating a bend in them as with the bent hook rig from the "Savey" days in the carping world.

I have found over the years a particular formula or rules that have to be followed when using "resistance rigs for eels" for them to work effectively. And recently I have been looking at indicators which I have written about before: One thing I didn't do was measure the amount of pressure or force that it would take using two types of indicators at the time being to find the reasons why it has been a very effective method for me and may not have been so successful for others who may have experimented with some of the things I have written about in the past.

So before going into the rigs, thoughts and theories I feel this is a good place to start because with out looking at the indicators (Drop backs) then using these rigs will not work until you have changed a few things on your indicators, mainly looking at the type of line attachment head which makes all the difference and also the restrictions of movement of you indicator.

Other matters we are going to look at is how an eel probably approaches the bait used, or more importantly how it possibly moves away from the rig once it has picked the bait up ready to run, or in some cases not run and sit there with its prize!

Experiment 1:

To the amusement of the local neighbours I set up in the front garden one rod on a single bank stick and set up two types of indicators, the tools that I use was

1: One rod set up on bank sticks

2: Two types of drop back indicators.

3: Two types of indicator head that attaches the line one standard adjustable made of plastic from "Solar" and the other a stainless attachment from "Solar".

4: Set of scales Avon 40lb and a tape measure to measure distance of rig to indicator to see if the measurement of force changes over distance, including line ejection lengths.

Now I am not going to blind you with mathematical equations as the measurement of force or pull and push, which comes under Newton 3 laws of gravity belief it or not, which I incidentally found out and to be quite frank maths is not my strong point so we are going to work in ounces of pressure to un-clip the line from the two types of indicators and indicator heads using the scales.

The first diagram shows a standard drop off indicator used by some eel anglers with either a hair clip or better still an adjustable line clip in plastic.

One thing I will state at this moment in time is that I use braided lines not mono, so I had to do a few tests with both and came across some very interesting results. Another thing is that I'm not criticising the J.S Rig as this was originally designed as a "Low" resistance rig in the first place as that was in its day the case and still the belief today, and still is fact that eels don't like resistance, this may seem a contradictory term with the subject I'm talking about now, but hopefully I will be able to explain in detail for you to understand the basic laws for bolt-rigging for eels or reducing the opportunities the eel has to deep-hook itself or you missing on the strike.

Using 10lb mono on a standard plastic clip and tightening the clip as far as it will go; I set the rig at 15 ft and repeated again at 26 ft away once my neighbour moved her car!! This measurement was taken from the lead to the tip of the indicator head and the same was done with the other indicator shown in the picture to the right of my standard indicators from Solar.

I attached the hook of the scales to the fishing hook of the rig (Type of rig is a standard running rig) zeroing the scales I pulled until the clip unclipped the line and took a reading three times for an average off the scales (Digital would have given a more accurate measurement) I got a reading of nothing it didn't register on the scales, crude I know but when you did the same with the Solar Stainless head tightened up this increased to almost 4oz on average, a huge difference! So is this a good think or a bad thing?

Well looking at it from a instant hooking angle using running rigs and a right way to mount the bait on the hook to pull the hook into the eels lip a very good thing!!!! This is what can make a difference on a take to eliminate deep hooking, missed runs or aborted takes, but obviously it



isn't as simple as that there are other permeable to look at as well, but may not make any change at on the end result at all.

Basically if you think about it when using a running rig, the amount of force using a standard plastic clip if it is changed to a stainless steel that has no moving parts from the Solar or similar the reason for this, is only other types I have seen like the Nash type have moving part on the head this will slide or rides up the line before unclipping using a standard pike style indicator for me they have too much movement compared to the type that I have been using since 2000.

The other factor you have to consider is the weight of the lead used, shape, length of the lead link if used. Does a short length or none at all, just having a lead direct increase the effectiveness or decrease of the rig? How much give on line does this make? And how does this effect the hooking potential of rig on a taking eel, including other factors, what the lake bed is constructed of weed, sand, clay soft silt or gravel as the lead should act as an anchor point I use anything from 3-4oz leads the type of lead will be dependant on the area fished to optimise this factor?

Second aspect you need to look at is the rig its self whether fishing off bottom, ledgered with bait hard on bottom, pop-up bait and the length of hook-link or if a second insert is being used i.e. J.S rig for example which has two identical lengths of trace with two swivels which is supposed to eliminate twist on playing an eel? The reason I say this is because swivels do not rotate when under pressure effectively than they do when not under pressure, they have a tendency to completely lock up (increase in friction), the way around it is to use ball-bearing swivels which Solar or from Bulldog do, they are small enough for our type of fishing as they have been used in big game sea fishing prior to that for a very long time.

The third is to look at how we mount our baits to get the best hooking potential possible and finally how does an eel run with the bait once it has picked it? Does it turn and run off head first or does it simply reverse in the same direction as it came? How can we tell this when all we see is a run light on the alarm??? Tony has given us the internet article that may give suggestion to this factor for me personally and have said it before I think the latter is more plausible.

The next thing you need to look at is how fast or slow does an eel run when it either attacks live baits or picks up dead baits or worms. How does it pick baits up? Does it suck it in from distance? Or does it just grab it and run tail so to speak?

The last thing is how far the rig is from the indicator and how much sag or gravity is on the line dependant on the rig used either off bottom or ledgered est. The last is a lot harder to predict with out the involvement of Einstein or Isaac Newton (3 laws of pull and push force) and I'm not going down that path adding up a shopping list is bad enough!

So where to start next? Probably the next best thing is look at possible ways an eel physically picks or grabs presented bait using certain rigs and hooking methods, now this is mainly theoretical with some practical experiments to back these theories up to a point.

Firstly we will look at the different hooking methods used to present a bait and what may happen from the initial pick to the strike using ledgered baits and dead bait sections mainly fish heads which I prefer of tail sections due to their smaller surface area compared to fish tail sections. Usually there are a few methods of hooking a bait, people most commonly will use a big hook anywhere between a size 4-2 hook with a large gape as shown in the diagram hooking it either right through the bait or hooking it through one side only so the point is protruding from the bait as shown.

When this method is being used the hook has a tendency to rotate from left to right when an eel takes the bait in its mouth flattening against the bait when a strike is being made the force of an eels mouth clamped around it will prevent the hook from turning into a better hookable position and will rip either through the bait sideways resulting in a higher miss strike ratio than a hit ratio, or dig into the bait with the same result.

Fig 1:

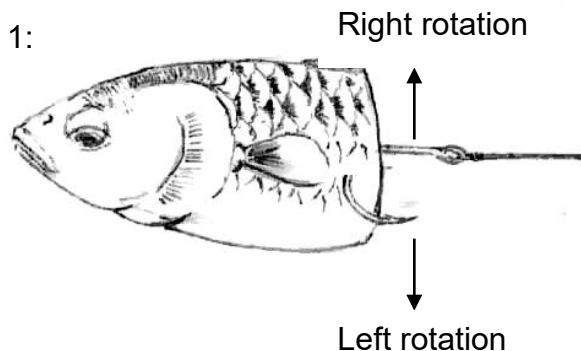
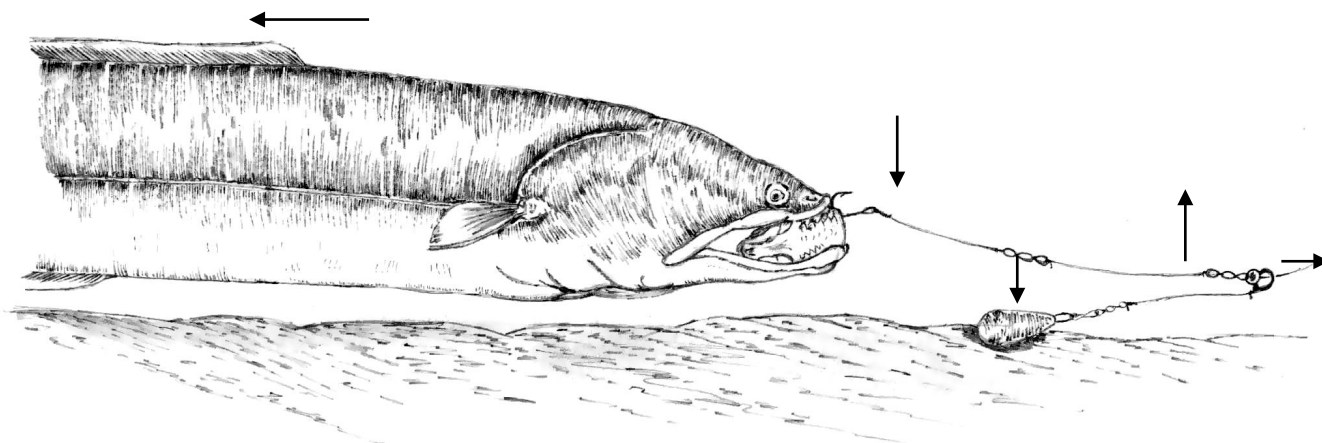


Fig 2:



Or another scenario is that the size of hook itself prevents it entering the eel's mouth and when a strike is made the same result will happen again a missed strike.

Another scenario is if you are using a longer hook-link or double link and a standard run clip as mentioned before there is nothing to stop the eel from swallowing the bait with no initial indication.

The off chance that an eel will hook it self is very remote on the initial pick up or on a run and a connection has to be made by a strike on the anglers part, but if you had a metal clip when the eel backs off the rig to run, the amount of force used to unclip (4oz) would try and rotate the hook into a possible better potential hooking position as the tension or sag is taken out of the line to the indicator clip, but this is if the bait is taken head first (and fished hard to the deck). If it doesn't hook on the initial run, it would have been missed anyway.

As the hook may have not have been in the hit zone in the first place resulting in a "missed strike". Or would the turning of the hook make the eel eject the bait resulting in a drop run dependant on the speed of the eel in the reverse mode?

Another interesting factor looking at the arrows on the rigs, this is to simulate what probably does happen; let's say that the hook-link and middle trace is accurately 20 inches in length and the lead link trace is exactly 8 inch how much movement over a distance of 20 ft from the hook to the clip does the eel have before any kind of indication (Clip irrelevant at this moment looking at the diagram fig 2: and the hooking arrangement in fig 1: incorporating a lead of 2¾-3oz, bait presented hard on the deck, using mono line of 10lb)

Fig 3:

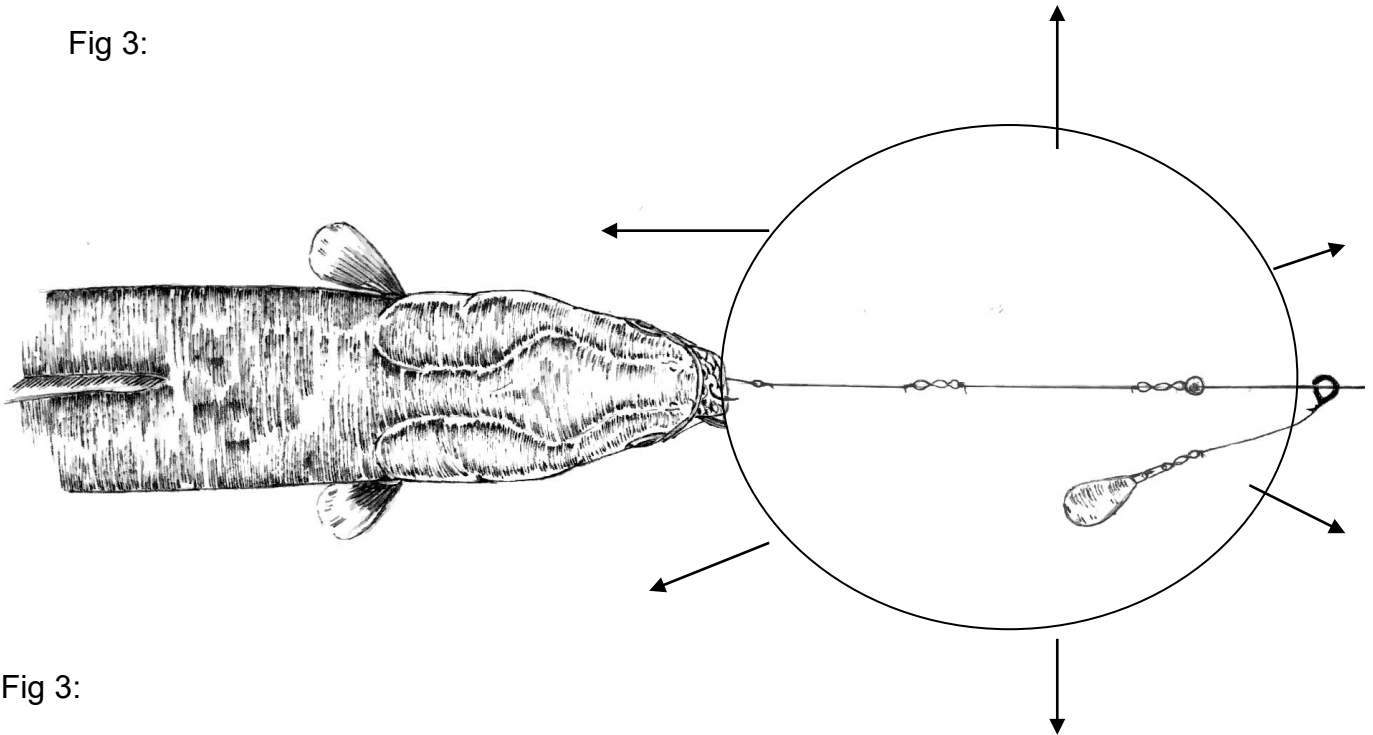


Fig 3:

This measurement is also including natural gravity of the line even tightening down till the line will not pull from a tightened clip, you have the hook-link (HKL) 20" a pivot lift height of the lead link of 0- 8 inches and a distance of line ejection (DLE) from the clip of 5 inches in total the eel can move 25 inches on a 300° circumference in any direction up to a height of 0-8 inches, this is a lot of movement with no indication an to be quite frank unnecessary movement. Now look at this way at 20 ft it can take 5 inches of line so at 40 feet it can take 10 inch or more (the greater the distance the greater gravity effects the sag on the line) increasing the circumference of 30 inches or more and a lift height of 0-8 inch and so on.

Using braid on the other hand the circumference is far less great down to just less than half over using mono due to the properties of braid and doesn't suffer as dramatically with gravity or stretch than mono. (Bearing in mind that's if the rig lands fully stretched and in a direct line not coiled this will also delay the indication reaction time even greater until the eel straightens the rig out and still the calculation has to be measured before a run is registered). Using a direct lead will only decrease the pivot lift (3 inch), but even this would increase minimally you indication, using a shorter hook-link would increase you registration even better and so on.

Looking at same scenario using braid with the same rig and same conditions the result to me were not surprising as I been using braid for eels for over a decade, 20" hook-link, a pivot lift of 0-8 inches (Lead-link) but only had a clip ejection of 1 inch giving a total of 21 inch 300° circumference, with very little effect of gravity over a higher distance, or due to stretch. At 40ft that is a difference of 12 inches and a pivot height of 0-8 inches or 3 inch with a direct lead, compared to mono, this calculating the lowest number of the scale when in fact this difference will be higher.

Obviously if the bait is taken side ways then the hook is nowhere in the hooking zone no matter what indicator was used. When this happens our natural reaction is to leave the next run a bit longer before striking and eventually you are going to cause a deep hooked eel unintentionally, this would increase the possibilities to the inevitable. Looking at the picture above hopefully you can imagine these variables a lot better.

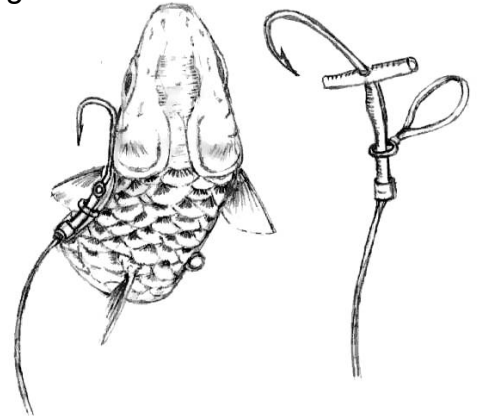
I firmly believe that when an eel takes the bait and we get a run on the alarm that is not swimming forwards but backwards and this is another factor to missing a strike presenting the

bait under the conditions mentioned above, this in itself has a large impact on the whole picture for me personally.

Fig 4:

Now changing the size of the hook to a smaller hook size 8-11 dependant on the hook and using a different method as shown in the diagram, using a bent hook with a curved piece of shrink wrap about half an inch long pushed up to the bend you have made in the long shank X slightly above the eye as shown in the diagram to the right using a small "Drennan" ring with an elastic bait band to secure your lightly hooked bait.

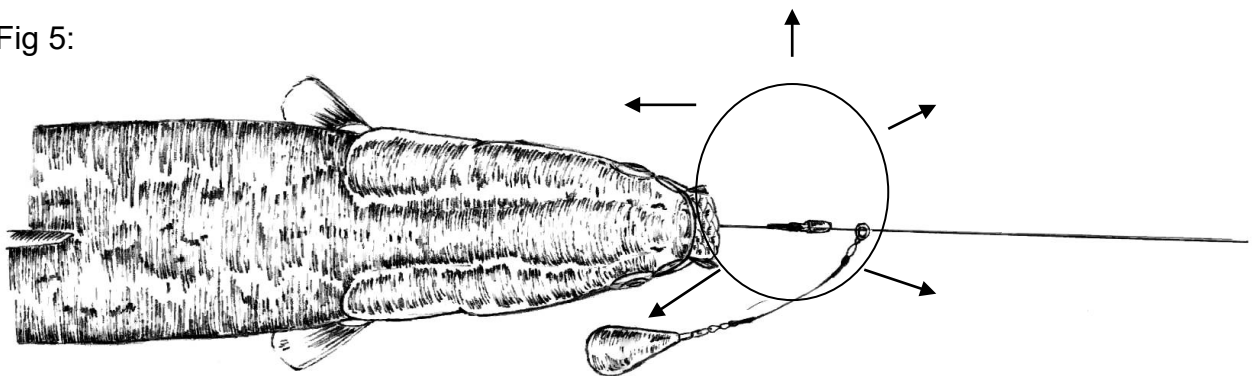
Fig 4:



The way I have found more effective is to hook the bait just before the gill plate and push the hook actually through the gill plate and using the band pulling it through the flesh section and securing it with a piece of stiff silicone and using a "T" bar on the small size 11 hook, this keeps the hook proud of the bait and prevents rotation and not too big for the eel not to take the bait in its mouth due to not using a larger gaped hook. Another factor is to use a short piece of hook-link keeping it down to 4" or less and using pop-up baits instead, and a metal clip with a 4oz force then this would increase your hooking potential or would it?

Bent hooks are more effective for eels I feel if the baits are either fished off-bottom or pop up style, as shown in the diagram below. Using the other type of plastic clip would it be more or less effective? The answer is yes it would make a difference I have taken eels to date over 5lb 01oz using these methods and quite a number of 4lbbers.

Fig 5:



We have now changed the hook-link to a 4 inch trace with no middle section and with a 8 inch lead link, using mono, you have a pivot length of 0-8 inches and a distance line ejection of 5 inches this in total is 9 inches over a 300° circumference with a lift of 0-8 inches at 20ft, so at 40ft this would increase to a minimal of 18 inches of movement before any indication, a big difference of 12 inches and possibly more using a conventional J.S rig.

And if you are using braid this will be, $4(\text{HKL}) + 1(\text{DLE}) = 5 \text{ inches} + (4\text{ozf})$ of movement at 20 ft with a 0-8 pivot lift or 0-3 having a direct lead, and a slight increase of 1-2 inches over 40ft, giving a total of 7 inch movement over this distance, more than 50% less over mono, increasing your indication by more than 50% this is not maths its fact and a better instant hooking mechanism.

On these findings alone the J.S rig as it stands conventionally is not the rig to look at for creating a bolt rig, but by getting rid of the middle section and popping the bait off bottom you

have increased the rigs bite indication a great deal, "Sidley's" strike timing must have been impeccable to lip hook eels every time, (I am not that gifted so I am going the hard way to get to the easy way so to speak!) and using it yourselves how many eel have been deep hooked fishing long hook-links and low resistance rigs, over the years, or is deep hooking "was" (past tense) and still accepted as a part of eel fishing an probably rarely reported because no one likes to admit to deep-hooking because we care for the eels welfare that we pursue, we know its not a good thing for the eel when it does happen and no one want an eel to die on them within the club I am certain of that?

This is not a criticism and hopefully seen as development, the J.S is nearly thirty years old since it first hit the head lines, and was a revolutionary rig at that time, but its time we try to move on, thinking about our techniques a bit more if you never want to see a deep -hooked eel or missed strikes and aborted runs anymore, for me personally it was 2000 since I first started using the SFR and curved hooks and as far back as the 99 season I have moved away from conventional eel fishing methods, I haven't deep hooked an eel since (touch wood) so there must be something in it, even though it is still only the tip of the ice-berg. You may see it as carp fishing for eels, but my main aim and sole purpose is to prevent and hopefully eradicate deep-hooking, this is the "Holy Grail".

Fig 7:

It is still a very basic ledger rig but still has slight movement due to having a lead link of no more than 3-6 inches and the hook-link being pulled will levitate the length of the link before unclipping if this is reduce to a lead directly being attached this would increase the hooking potential even more as there is less give on a taking eel, this as far as an eel run is concerned would be in tenths of seconds possibly from start to finish on a slow take it could make that little bit of difference on the effectiveness, but the bait must be off bottom for it to work and a very tight clip with a pulling force of 4oz.

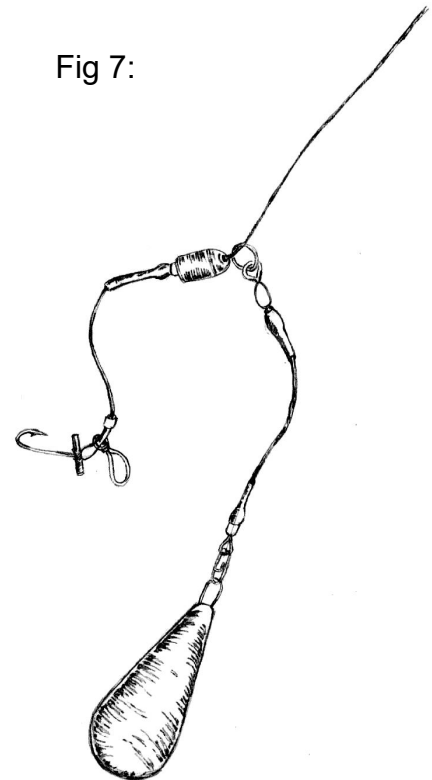
As shown in this diagram it looks different know and you can see the possibilities of the anti-deep hooking properties this rig fished on a tight line to a tight clip can make all the difference and a instant bolt rig using the force of the clip as the hooking mechanism, and the lack of tension on the line even bending the rod to the rig, when the eel reverses from the rig in any direction the hook is always in the hooking zone no matter how it takes it, why because smaller sections of baits can be used which will also increase your chances.

The other factor in the equation looking at the next diagram is that you are changing how the eel initially takes the bait in the first place by popping it up compared to picking baits up hard off the deck as shown in the last picture (Fig 2).

With the other method using longer hook-links the eel can basically suck in the bait, possibly like a carp does? While this way pop-up style it has to grab it or get closer to suck it in changing its head angle to do so.

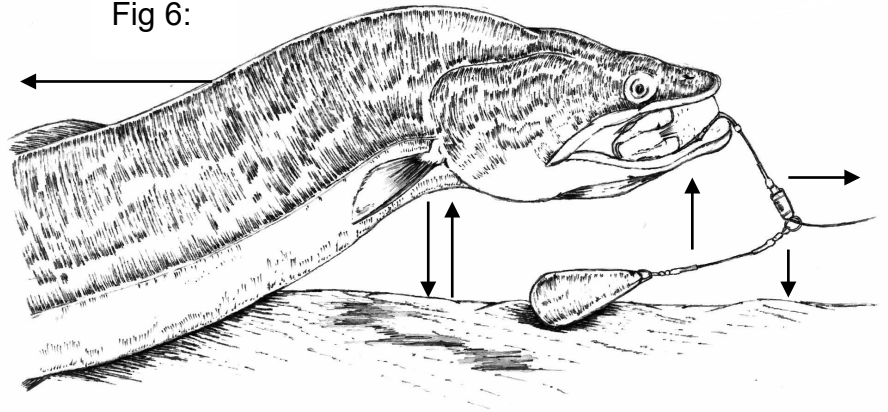
In turn this would increase the effectiveness of the rigs instant hooking capabilities using a tight line and a clip with a pull-force of 4oz?

Fig 7:



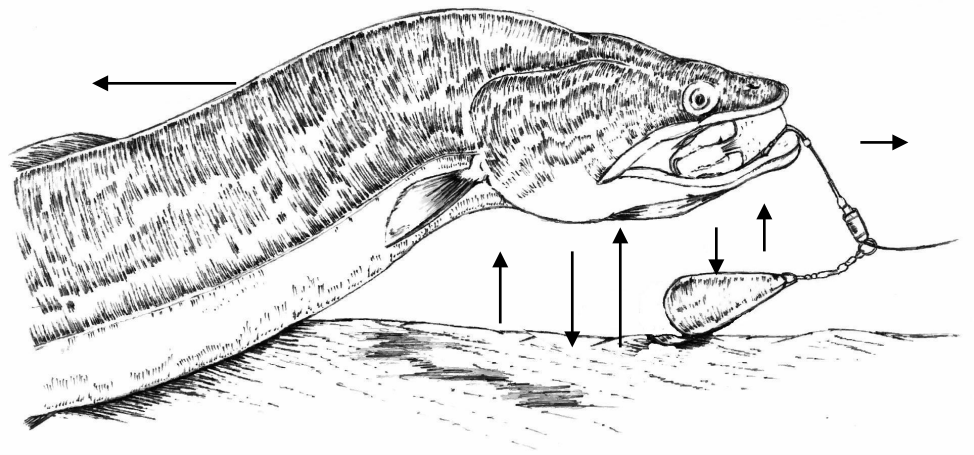
It may pick up the 4oz lead at the same time before it unclips the rig, this in turn will pull the hook straight into the bottom jaw even if taken side ways in theory an increase of 8oz of pressure or force on a taking eel or even if the lead has travelled some depth into a silty bottom this force may increase slightly.

Fig 6:

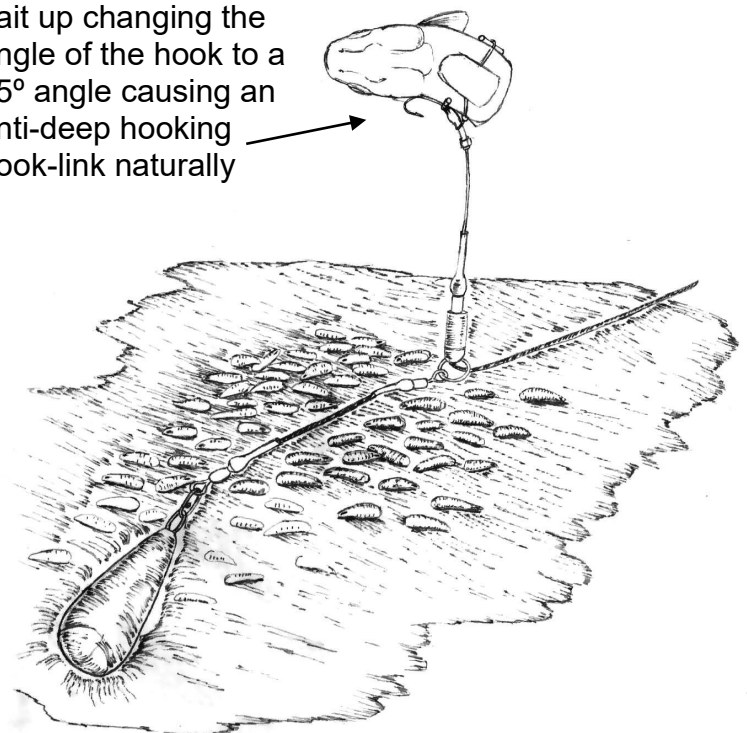


Looking at the rig in more detail with the next diagram the bait has an insert of foam cut to fit inside the bait the bait band is threaded through this; it will not come off and endanger the eel if it rips straight through the baits leaving the hook and foam still attached to the band.

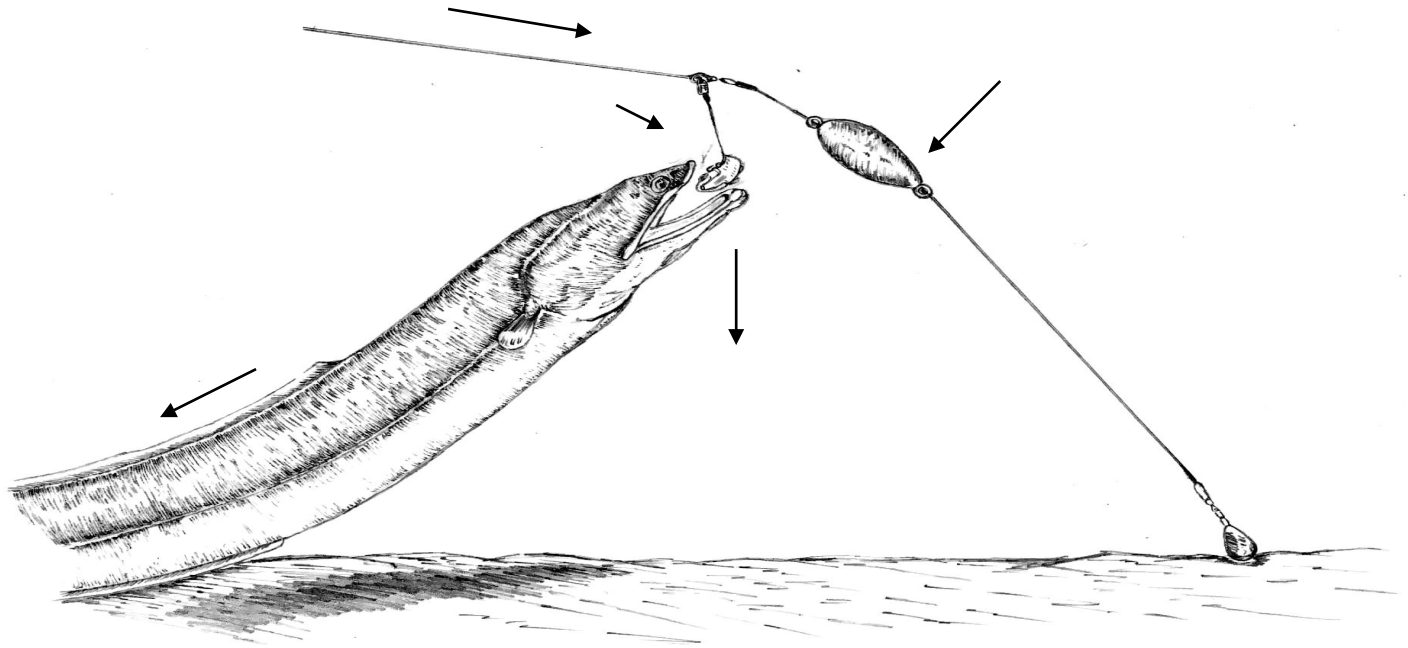
A perfect result with a fixed rig, with the eel running of with a fully fixed 3¼ oz dumpy lead resulting in a 4lb plus eel and also a five in the same week using worms 2002, this season I fished for eels to test the rigs using fish baits and leaned into every take and landed every run a had, even though my biggest eel this season has been 2lb 08oz.



Foam insert to pop bait up changing the angle of the hook to a 45° angle causing an anti-deep hooking hook-link naturally



The testing and development this year was more important than catching 4, 5 or a 6lb eel; next year will be different going back to hard venues, knowing when a run does occur it is hooked before I pick up the rod.



Looking at it the same way with the bait fished on a Dyson or any other type of off bottom rig you can see using the curved hook-link as mentioned above, but in this case hanging down having the same natural 45° bend on the bait, so when the eel comes off bottom as show to take the bait and pulls against a 4oz force of the line clip, the eel will be pulling both against the resistance of the clip and the buoyancy of the float pulling the hook home as shown above in this diagram.

Due to the hook having a curve which has been exaggerated with stiff shrink-wrap that is also curved, when put under pressure from a taking eel, either fished off bottom or on a pop up, the hook will rotate on a pivot axis from right to left in the eels mouth and fold around the out side, pushing downwards into the eels lip (top or bottom dependant on presentation), preventing the eel from swallowing the bait due to the amount of resistance transferred by either the rig or the indicator clip, this on its own is a sure way to go if we want to eliminate deep hooking for ever and start thinking about how we are fishing for eels to put deep-hooking into the N.A.C. history books.

These are the basic rules to follow when using bolt rigs for eels either fully fixed, semi (free running using the clip as the bolt)

- The bait has to be off bottom, either using an off-bottom rig or popped up baits.
- Heavy leads for anchorage, or to discourage more movement of the whole rig, using light leads will increase to circumference of rig-movement up to three times as much.
- A good metal ball clip to put on the amount of force on a taking eel to cause the eel to hook itself when reversing with the bait.
- You have to look at the hook-link and bait size and hooking arrangement and de-scaling your hooks to a smaller size and not using wide gapes, ESP G4, ESP longshanks, or Korda longshanks x are a good set of hooks to look at, or similar hooks in design.
- Curving the hook or using a curved extension to fold over the eel mouth to stop it taking the bait any further to prevent deep-hooking.

Get any of these factors wrong and you will have problems or will not get the desired effect and then the method is written off, get it right and it will open new doors on presentation and eel fishing concepts still yet to be discovered.

A Response to Anthony and Jimmy.

By Nick Rose

took me 23 years to beat that old PB so it did play on my mind a little. All I can say is “time eels” soz that should read “Time Heals” but I couldn’t resist the crap joke. I have spent most of my eeling fishing by myself with the exception a few sessions each year with some of the best mates and fishermen as company.

The early years were spent with a whole group of the who’s who of midland anglers in the South B,ham Specimen group and the South Staffs Specimen Group but as they all went on to better things (Carp and Barbel ??) I stuck with the eels. I don’t know why but I have always stuck with the eels. All I can say is if it’s in your blood Anthony and Jimmy then you will go back to it time and time again.

My expectations are a little different now and I fish for eels and not that one monster which is in a massive lake or pit and I endure 20, 30 ,or even 40 blank sessions chasing. I find I am enjoying my fishing again, enjoying being out at night, enjoying the wildlife and even the odd blank (more than odd blank if I am honest). I also have in recent years missed the company of a fellow eel angler with similar goals as myself but I have been fishing with a couple of carp anglers who know and understand my obsession with eels and give me all the help they can. Also some of the other members of the NAC ring and I try and get out with them.

So a word to the both of you and that is get out and fish together but make it fun not a chore.

Now then the last part of both letters by the Jolleys was regarding the ethics of fishing for eels when we are trying to protect them. Anthony and Jimmy how many eels have you caught in your years of eel fishing? I am gonna put a mythical figure on this so lets say an average 15 a year, it don’t sound a lot but when you fish as we do with the methods and baits we use on the waters with limited stocks of eels that we fish and bearing in mind that you aint done much in the last few years I think that’s a pretty optimistic figure. Anyway over 13 years that’s 195 eels each and I know that Jimmy has not fished for eels for as long as Anthony but it doesn’t matter, that’s a total of 390 eels caught. Lets say you lose a third of them to deep hooking or shock or something else that kills them that’s 130 eels over 13 years. That sounds a lot until you look at the other side of the story.

Anthony over the years has been the NAC conservation spokesperson and along with Clive Denison of the ESG both are now in partnership and have championed Eel conservation all over Britain and Europe, lobbied the EA and Government and now it looks like it is slowly being listened too by all of the bodies in power. How many eels have you saved Lads?

I witnessed one eel netting on Aqualight mere in Shropshire, I was called out by an NAC member who was thinking of joining the club. Under a bridge were 8 large nets the size of a matchmans keeps net all full of eels. Not swimming around but full, packed so tight they couldn’t move. Eels from ½ a pound up to what looked like 5 or 6 pound fish... In each net was more eels than I think I have caught in my whole fishing career. So think on this Lads your work for eel conservation far out weighs and accidental casualties you may have had and I think I have vastly overrated your catches anyway.

Just go fishing lads and enjoy being out in the wild, don’t take it so seriously and I bet you will catch and enjoy it again. Don’t think you need to be out doing 20, 30, or more sessions each season just do what you can and want to, it’s not a competition.

So anyway I think I have waffled on enough and you all must be bored now so have a good season and tight lines.

In Anthony’s original letter (winter mag 2005) he stated that he had been fishing for eels 13 years and was encountering problems with his fishing and commitment. Well I feel I am able to comment on his problems and Jimmy’s in his response (summer mag 2006). I have been fishing for eels since I was about 13, that’s 39 years and in those years I have gone through all of the problems and emotions that AJ and JJ have been through. All those except Anthony’s loss of a huge eel. My loss was of a PB when I was in my late teens and was not a result of a reel malfunction but because I was away from my rods. The eel was in the 5 to 6 pound bracket and would have beaten the 5lb 6oz PB that I had caught a year earlier. It then



The Website

(Information regarding the National Anguilla Club's new website)

The internet provides a major communications between individuals and organizations as well as a major means of locating and sharing information. For many, having access to the internet is the primary reason for having a computer in this modern age. Millions of people are using the internet at this very moment. Technology is changing each day, even mobile phones have internet connection capabilities now.

The world wide web usually called "the web", is one of the fastest growing areas on the internet and a increasing amount of people want to take advantage of this interactive and dynamic communications medium. Even we, the National Anguilla Club are taking advantage of the internet, since our old website was lost in cyberspace there has been a need for a website which was working. At the 2006 A.G.M, the need was solved as I volunteered to recreate the website as I see fit. For months the website as been running perfectly with sadly little viewings. At the winter social just recently past I showed the members present the pages of the website and told them the current status of the website. Some of the N.A.C members have visited the website and even joined our new forums.

The address to ours is www.eelnac.tk , and if you have any problems please email me on the_huish@hotmail.com

And I'll leave you now, tiger lines and get connected.

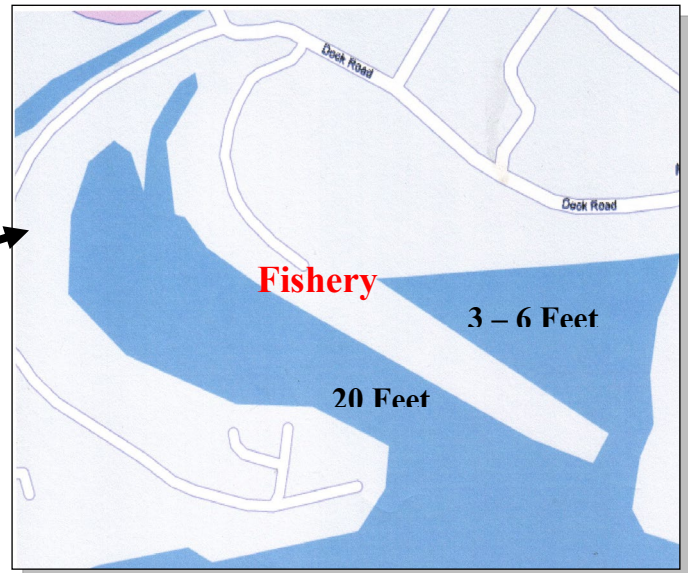
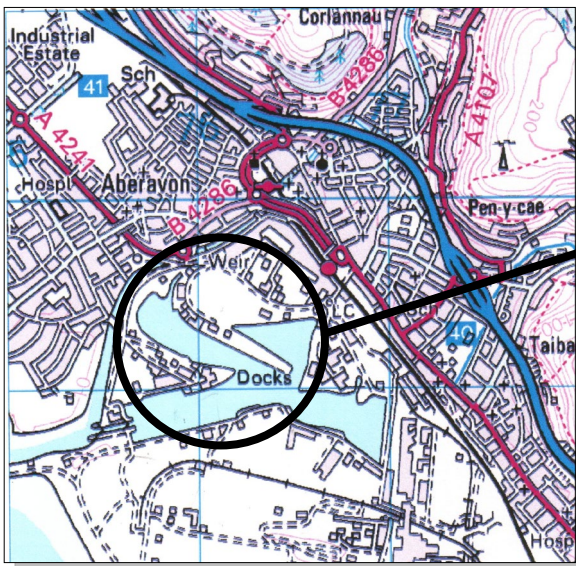
Thomas Huish
Web Man

Winter Fish-In.

From Barry McConnell

PORT TALBOT DOCK
Friday Feb 16th to Sunday Feb 18th 2007

The event will be from Friday afternoon till Sunday afternoon. The cost will be £20.00 per angler for the weekend. Each angler can use up to three rods and livebaiting is allowed. Plenty of rudd, perch and small bass can usually be caught at the venue.



Leave the M4 motorway at junction 40. Follow signs for the docks. This takes you along a dual carriageway and round a couple of roundabouts. On the roundabouts follow the yellow signs for Talbot Block. On approaching the industrial area you should be able to see a wall on a building painted bright yellow. This yellow wall can be seen from quite a long distance so keep looking ahead for it. The wall has Talbot Block written on it. Next door to the yellow wall are some green railings with spikes on top. This is the fishery entrance. The fishery manager usually keeps these gates locked. If these gates are locked, then please phone me on my mobile **07919316457**.

Steelworks and other industries have warm water outflows which increase the temperature at this venue to provide some prime winter fishing. It is popular with match anglers who can bag up with a net full of skimmers during the cold winter months when other venues are slow to respond due to the cold water temperature. Such a massive head of silver fish attracts pike and pike anglers who regularly catch 3 and 41b eels throughout winter, with eels

of 71b+ being caught from these warmed winter waters. We had a fish-in here in summer (see the write up in this issue) and the water was then actually too hot.

As well as eels, bream and pike there is also a massive population of rudd as well as roach, big perch, tench, bass and mullet. These are just the species we caught on the fish-in last June. Salmon, sea trout and various sea species are sometimes caught. Anything is possible in winter when great numbers of both fresh and saltwater species are attracted to the warm waters.

I spoke to the fishery manager last week (Mid November) who told me of a few 3 and 41b eels caught during the last fortnight. Pike anglers have their mackerel sections stripped to the bone by eels. Biggest pike last week was 21 lb; also a 3lb – 10oz perch was taken and also an 81b bass was caught, which should be in the angling press next week.



Port Tolbot docks at night

On hearing of the recent catches I just had to give it a go. So this week, first week in December, saw Pete Drabble and myself set out on a winter eeling trip. Result - I caught 8 eels up to 21b on the first night. It was so rough I couldn't fish properly and had to take off any indicator and fish straight off the bait runner. Second night my bivvy was flattened by gale force gusts. It was so rough it became completely un-

fishable. It was Pete's first trip since breaking his ankle. He struggled a bit but still managed to catch 3 eels to about 2 lb. The fish were all warm to the touch due to the water being so warm. Successful baits were frozen trout and mackerel. We had lots of runs from eels - not bad for December. I reckon we should all catch in February and it is highly likely that we will catch some of the larger eels which this fishery is known for.

Parking is convenient and close to the bank and there is plenty of dry ground to erect a bivvy on. There is a match on the Sunday so any of us fishing the match pegs will have to vacate the swim before 9.00 am. There are plenty of swims on the non match length so we will have no problem working round the match.

Night fishing is not normally allowed at this venue and has been granted due to respect for the NAC so lets see our catch return and our behaviour be worthy of that respect.

Any further queries about this event please contact Barry McConnell.