

The National Anguilla Club

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# BULLETIN

Volume: 14

Number: 7

NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BULLETIN.

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EDITORIAL.

Firstly, I do wish to apologise to those of you who actually noticed what a mess the last issue was in. One page missing, several wrongly numbered, and some not even numbered at all. The fault is entirely with me and not with Terry Jefferson who was hard pressed to produce the Bulletin at all as I left it late getting the material to him. How he ever managed to get it all duplicated and sent out in the space of a couple of days beats me, and full credit to him for doing so. As I said, I do apologise, and will endeavour to get things right this time, and in future.

I will take advantage of my position as Editor to reply at no great length to K.Hardman - please do read his piece on page 60.

Kelvin has not, in my opinion, illustrated very clearly his argument in favour of trace wire. What he has illustrated is that a lot of eels were caught, admittedly on wire, on a water where a lot of eels will be caught on just about anything you care to use. I dare say that some would have been caught on tackle specifically designed NOT to catch eels. On such a water the argument against trace wire becomes nullified, as has ALREADY been proved for quite a few years now.

If Kelvin were to tell me that he had taken the only two eels to come from a particularly difficult water and that these eels had been taken on trace wire THEN I would sit up and take note. However, I submit that this is not the case and that his argument proves absolutely nothing other than that eels can be taken on wire in prolific eel waters. That we already know.

I have to hand a copy of the catalogue with the title "Continental Match Tackle" as issued by Messrs Dons of Edmonton. Although specifically aimed at the matchman, there are some items of interest for us. Well written and nicely illustrated, the catalogue is not without its touches of humour. For instance, in the section on additives it describes Pilchard Oil as being for 'Squeaky Pilchards' and at the end of the list of additives it lists Chanel No 5. Of this it says "A drop or two of this, upwind of a rival competitor, will take his mind off the fishing and enable you to win". If any member wishes to borrow my copy they are welcome as long as it is returned. Better still, obtain your own copy from Dons of Edmonton, 239 Fore Street, Edmonton, London. N.18 2TZ., remitting enough to cover the postage(12p).

A few of our members have said how very much they like seeing pictures of other members and their catches in the Bulletin. We shall make every effort to reproduce pictures as they come along. A criterion is that the original must be of suitable size and MUST have good contrast.

Whatever happened to those 'Letters to the Editor' ? I thought the venture was well worth while and was achieving something. It is, as I see it, YOUR platform for saying something - something which does not warrant a full blooded article. That it was of interest to members I do know. Remember that in writing to me you should make it quite clear as to what portion of your letter you wish me to publish under the title 'Letters to the Editor'. I look forward to receiving your letters in due course, and in anticipation I thank you for making the effort.

BITES TO AVOID

A.J.Sutton.

Recent events have prompted me to write this piece and though the advice herein may be a little late for 1977 it is perhaps worth remembering for future summers.

There are three species of snake indigenous to the British Isles if one excludes the 'slow worm' or Legless Lizard, which simply can't claim to be a snake. The more common of the three is the Grass snake. This is a harmless reptile quite common in parts of the country and especially near to water. I expect that most of you will have seen a grass snake swimming with its typical writhing action and head held clear of the water. Many will say that they saw a water snake, but it would be the grass snake they saw. Prettily marked and doing no harm to anyone, the grass snake attains a greater size than our other snakes and I have personally seen a wonderful specimen of well over three feet in length. Their diet consists mainly of the larger insects such as grasshoppers, caterpillars and the like, although they do also eat small animals. If disturbed they will eat their own young - a most unsocial habit.

The smooth snake is similar to the grass snake in habit and is also harmless. It is very localised in its distribution and the chances are you will never see one. The name is an apt description, for it is void of all scale. The eyes are somewhat larger than those in the other two snakes, but its sight less keen.

We come to the third snake, the only poisonous snake in the British Isles. This rather nasty reptile is the ADDER or VIPER. For the ignorant, a Viper is NOT a Jewish handkerchief. If we remember V for Viper we remember the easy clue to its identity, for the Viper has a very distinctive dark V shape to the rear of the eyes on the upper side of its head.

They prefer dry moorland to marshland but are occasionally found near to water as long as the surrounding terrain is of a dry nature. This is likely to be the case where gravel pits are concerned, but hardly so with natural lakes. The distribution of the Adder or Viper is somewhat localised but where it is found it usually abounds. It is perhaps fortunate for us that the offspring are few in number.

The Adder has a keen appetite, with a liking for frogs, mice and voles, young birds and, sometimes, anglers ankles. It does not attack man(woman) normally but will bite if it is disturbed and has an aversion to being trodden on. If bitten, you have perhaps two hours in which to seek attention before the nasty effects set in. If you are a healthy adult, which I'm sure you all are, you are unlikely to die from the bite. Those with a dodgy heart or any form of thrombosis should view the snake bite with the gravest concern. Even a healthy adult can die, not from the bite itself, but from side effects - like walking into the lake at the deep end while in a state of coma. Or by leaving it too long before seeking attention and driving to the hospital in a state of panic. In areas where the snake is common, all hospitals and most doctors will be able to treat you, but DO state that you have been bitten by a snake. The treatment is very effective but even so, the effects from the bite are likely to last a few days, which is as good an excuse for staying off work and going fishing as any.

However, some of our more sober members may actually LIKE work, and many more may not relish being bitten. So remember - even if the ground is dry and parched DO wear those Wellington boots. The snake is a small one rarely exceeding twelve inches in length(I've not taken girth measurements for obvious reasons). Thus, the bite is usually around the ankle or the lower part of the leg. Of course, if you insist on sitting on the ground, a bite in the nether region is possible and, I would imagine, rather painful. These snakes enjoy hot dry weather, and that is the most urgent time to be on your guard. Lastly, if you see snakes where it is known that none exist, a couple of Aspirins and a good rest should help. Or stick to Lemonade.

MORE ABOUT TRACES

K.Hardman.

In reply to Dave Holmans piece in the issue before last I must say that Dave missed the point I was trying to make about the use of traces - or should I say Seastrand or Marlinsteel, whichever is your want.

You see, Dave, this trace material is so fine that when dropped on the bank or even in the house on the floor it is extremely hard to find. The only way of locating a trace when dropped is to look for the hook or the swivel.

As for Black Seal, I looked at it about three years ago when I was searching for a better trace material and never even used the stuff. To my mind it is bloody diabolical and should never grace an N.A.C. members tackle box. I'm sorry if that is a bit harsh but that is the way I feel about it. I have never been a person to have polished reels, immaculate rods and all the rest of what goes to make a super duper specimen hunter, but when it comes to the presentation of the bait I get very hard to live with. It is that all-important last few feet of line or trace which matter, as you will probably know.

In my search for a better trace material I must have tried around ten or twelve different types. That includes those which never even got put into water (such as Black Seal). Every year I hear stories of big eels played and lost by anglers. Some of these eels are hooked by design, some by accident. Comes the million dollar question "were you using a trace?" and the reply - "oh no, there is no need to in here". "I catch eels without them". Baffled, and bemused I wander off to some dark corner and wonder why some people go fishing at all.

By the way, I have never lost a big eel. I do not use heavy gear and never will unless the situation arises when it is called for. The heaviest rods I use in terms of test curve are Hardy Fibatube 10 ft slow taper of two pound test and North Western slow taper SS5. I use Maxima 10 lb line for pike and eel fishing and only once has this line let me down. That's in five years.

I change my line at the start of each eel season and at the start of piking. On this set-up I have enjoyed some success. I've had pike to 28:12, zander to 10:13, perch to 2:01 and eels to 5:09. Some people say that I fish too light but I do not think so. On rods with slow taper action it is rare to break off, the rod cushions the sharp digs and turns of a better fish when hooked, and with the added advantage of the stretch of 10LB Maxima I am confident of playing any large fish in open water.

Ian Mann, myself and a friend have just taken 26 eels in one night in a water where supposedly the eels will not look at a trace. The eels weighed in at 3:10, 3:03, 2:14, 2:13, 2:13, 2:12, 2:10, 2:08, 2:04, 2:02, 2:01, 1:14, 1:14, 1:12, 1:11, 1:11, 1:08, 1:08 1:07, 1:07, 1:06, 1:01, 1:01, 1:0 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 1:00 and 1:00.

I have been trying to cut down the number of eels which are gut hooked and have been having some success in hitting the runs the moment they start. Of course, you can only do this if you sit close to your rods - not when a rod is placed yards and yards away like some people we read about. Time for a rethink here, so what about it? As for Phil Smiths eels, they are nearly always lip hooked, and you cannot get trace wire of thicker guage than the guage of a hook can you? Dave also forgets to mention those fish which he does NOT put on the bank. Perhaps one day a really big eel will pick up my bait. A trace follows, for I don't like taking chances. I can see it all now, somebody telling me "Oh you don't need traces as the eels from here have no teeth", then up pops the one which does not conform and there it all hangs all tattered and torn, a piece of nylon like a Christmas tree. Seastrand is now available from Terry Eustace at 6:08 for a 300ft spool. A bit steep I know, but well worth it. I wrote this piece before the weekend and Ian Mann, myself, Reg Whitehouse and a friend too a further 23 eels. The best weighed 4:04 with thirteen of them over two pounds. Bob Croxall uses Seastrand and had no problem landing seventeen eels in a handfull of days with most going over two pounds. Not very convincing is it?

\* \* \* \* \*

HOOKS.

K. Richmond.

1976 saw several members and others trying the possibility of light line angling for eels. Results achieved by myself were greater than expected with eels of over four pounds being landed. However, I did find that a percentage of my eels slipped the hook at the surface. This led me to think about my terminal tackle.

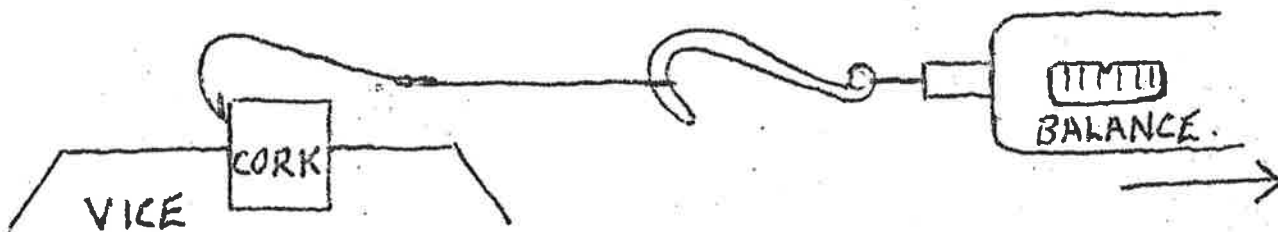
Even when we are fishing relatively close to the bank various factors (such as line stretch, blunt hooks or a wrongly set clutch) can nullify hook penetration to the extent of losing fish. If it is possible to cancell out some of these unwanted effects it is logical to assume that catches will increase accordingly. I will not dwell on the subject of stretch in monofilament nylon or the setting of ones clutch, but will concentrate on hooking problems.

After collecting various samples of hooks that I use I applied a simple test to them. It consisted of a piece of mono nylon tied to a hook at one end and to a spring balance at the other. A cork was tightened in a vice and, placing the hook point against the cork, a steady pressure was applied by pulling on the balance (see diagram) until the hook pierced the cork right up to the barb. (diagram overleaf - Ed). The following scale readings were obtained by testing four separate hooks of the same pattern (A) unsharpened barb, (B) sharpened barb, (C) unsharpened barbless and (D) sharpened barbless.

HOOK TYPE.	Unsharpened Barbed	Sharpened Barbed	Unsharpened Barbless	Sharpened Barbless
<b>SIZE 1/0</b>				
Sundridge Specimen	3 1/2 lb	3 1/4 lb	2 1/4 lb	2 1/2 lb
Mustad 3164A	3 1/2 lb	3 1/4 lb	3 1/4 lb	2 1/2 lb
Aberdeen	3 lb	2 1/2 lb	2 lb	1 1/2 lb
<b>SIZE 2</b>				
Sundridge Specimen	3 1/4 lb	2 1/4 lb	2 1/2 lb	2 1/2 lb
Sealy Baitholders	2 1/2 lb	2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb
Aberdeen	2 1/4 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb
Sundridge Fine Wire	2 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	2 lb	1 1/2 lb
Mustad 39838 (extra strong)	3 1/4 lb	3 1/4 lb	3 lb	2 1/2 lb
<b>SIZE 4</b>				
Mustad 3164A	2 1/2 lb	2 1/2 lb	2 1/2 lb	2 lb
Sealy Baitholders	2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb
Aberdeen	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb
Sundridge Fine wire	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb
Mustad 39838 (Ex Strong)	2 1/2 lb	2 1/2 lb	2 1/2 lb	2 1/2 lb
<b>SIZE 6</b>				
Sealy Baitholders	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 lb
Mustad 39838 (Ex strong)	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 1/2 lb	1 lb
Aberdeen	2 1/2 lb	2 lb	2 lb	1 1/2 lb

If any member wishes to try the same test it should be remembered that the density of the cork used can vary and may give results different from those above but they should be relevant. False reading could occur if the hook under test slipped into a hole left by a previous test.

As can be seen by the table above, sharpened barbed hooks gave an average 14% decrease in resistance over unsharpened barbed hooks. Sharpened barbless gave an average of 15% less resistance than unsharpened barbless hooks. However, if one compares unsharpened barbed hooks with unsharpened barbless and sharpened barbed with sharpened barbless, the barbless hooks have decreases in resistance of 19% and 20% respectively.



(diagram referred to on previous page)

The question now asked is "How can these results affect my angling technique?" I feel that if hook penetration can be increased by up to 20% by using barbless hooks then my catches should improve. I will be, in future, giving this item of tackle a lot more space in my tackle box.

Obviously, another problem arises. If we are prepared to use fine wire hooks to give a better hooking rate so do we increase the chances of the hook straightening under the pull of a large eel.

Tests by myself have shown the following distortion figures.

HOOK TYPE.	HOOK SIZE.	WEIGHT PULLED.	DEGREES OF DISTORTION.
ABERDEEN	2	5lb	45
ABERDEEN	4	3½lb	45
SUNDRIDGE FINE WIRE	2	5½lb	45
SUNDRIDGE FINE WIRE	4	4lb	45
SEALY BAITHOLDERS	2	11½lb	45
SEALY BAITHOLDERS	4	10½lb	45
MUSTAD 39838 Ex strong	2	13½lb	45
MUSTAD 39838 Ex strong	4	12 lb	45

Carp anglers in my area have, for the past few seasons, been using fine wire barbless hooks. It has been found that large carp (in excess of 15lb) can be landed on such hooks if a reasonably tight line is kept and the fish played carefully.

As regards to Anguilla I have found that on hooking a large one it tends to travel backwards, so making the problem of slack line negligible. As for hook distortion, have you ever tried to pull 3½lb on a light carp rod? On my own it is impossible.

Therefore, on more open waters, I maintain that light line and fine wire barbless hooks will increase catches. Heavier lines and forged barbless hooks will result in a greater proportion of runs being contacted with on more snaggy waters.

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As always, Kevin Richmond writes with a lucidity we have come to expect from him. He certainly packs some facts and figures into each of his articles. He approaches a task with a sense of purpose and a singlemindedness about reaching his goal which is hard for anyone to beat. Well done, Kevin. Editor.

Editors note to all members.

If YOU get a kick out of reading this issue, as I did myself, then how about YOU writing a piece for the Bulletin. Anything of interest to other members is welcome and will receive my attention for publication.

If YOU have any suggestions to make which you feel will help to make your Bulletin even more interesting, please do write direct to me. If it is something with which I can deal directly, then I will. Otherwise, I will contact our Committee to see what can be done.

As P.R.O. I took steps to reply to the recent article about eels by R.Walker in the pages of Angling Times. I have known for some time that Angling Times will only publish what IT wants to. It is increasingly obvious that Angling Times will not brook any criticism of its regular contributors, and Messrs Walker, Taylor and Co are surrounded by a force field which none can penetrate. Following R.Walkers article, several of our members wrote to Letter Page in A.T. Not one was published, although they did publish a letter from a chap named Sidley. The following is but one of the letters which Angling Times chose NOT to publish.

The Editor  
Angling Times.

Dear Sir,

I continue to read Angling Times with a great deal of interest, and I wish you and your paper continuing success. I trust that you can insert the following in your Letter Page at an early date. Many thanks. Yours faithfully,

A.J.Sutton.

**THE EEL - AN ENIGMA.**

Thus read the title of an article by Richard Walker in Angling Times, July 20th. First mistake. It should have read - 'Richard Walker, the enigma, writes about eels'. Dick does write some sense at times. Not often, but enough to make the reading of some interest. This latest feat of Richards is a mixture - a little sense laced with a great deal of rubbish. I sincerely hope that among readers of Angling Times there are but a few who go out fishing for the sake of what they can take home for the pot, and I think less of Richard for suggesting same. The eel is a fish, despite its being an immigrant, and should be treated as one. It is fair to say that there are fewer eels reaching our enclosed waters than in earlier years, and some thought ought to be given to their conservation rather than their wholesale destruction. One would have thought that Richard Walker was the man who ought to be preaching conservation, rather than the reverse, and I think Richard overlooks the fact that there are a lot of very serious eel anglers who are devoted to eel fishing for the sport it brings. Not because of the culinary rewards.

As for eels leaving the water to feed on the bank on wet grass, this certainly is a novel way for a beginner to fish. He would not even require a licence or permit and would certainly be able to place his bait exactly where he wanted it. Not in the stinging nettles, though, for eels ARE sensitive creatures! Perhaps that is what Dick meant when he said that one need not cast a long way in eel fishing. After all, we do not want our bait to actually land in the water, do we? Beware, for your bait may be taken by foxes, hedgehogs and the like. They are unpleasant to handle and not good eating at that.

Apart from the mysterious being who watches over Dick to ensure that he will catch no eels if he has a number of baits ready mounted, the rest of the article must rank as the best joke of 1977, for I can't see any beating it.

Come off it, Dick, or stick to trout fishing!

A.J.Sutton.



THE 1977 SESSION REPORTING SCHEME.

David Smith.

As most members of the committee are aware, I am very disappointed with their proposals for a revised session reporting scheme. My disappointment rests not with the format as such, but the aims it has which, apparently, are non-existent.

The aims of any reporting scheme should be twofold: it should provide for the collection of data for club records and also collect data to try to answer specific questions.

The scheme from 1967 to 1970 set out to answer a few very basic questions: Is night better than day for eel fishing? Does the state of the moon affect the feeding habits of eels? Is dead bait better than worm?

These questions, as basic as they are, had, until the Anguilla Club started to tackle them on an experimental basis, were written into angling folk-lore. By 1970 the answers had been discovered and from then on the information gained from the scheme served only to maintain the flow of data for club record purposes and corroborate the findings of the 1970 report. Let's be honest, as far as finding out anything new about eel fishing, the past 6 years have been a waste of time.

Everyone is agreed that we need a new session reporting scheme. We decided at the AGM that we wanted a new session reporting scheme. Alas, we did not have time to discuss it and, instead, instructed our committee to go away to look at it and report back at the SGM when their proposals could be discussed. But we've not been offered their proposals, we've been told what we're going to have to do!

Before we can agree upon the nature of a session reporting scheme, we have got to be clear upon its aims. In order to do that, we have to ask a few questions:

1. Do we want to collect data to maintain Club records?
2. Do we want that data to be comparable to previous years?
3. What are the current problems facing the eel specialist?

I shall take these questions in order.

Do we want to collect data to maintain Club records?

The answer to this question is bound to be "yes". If a group of anglers fish together, they maintain records of successes and/or failures. Perhaps it is the "corporate ego", but every angling club has records even if they are limited to winning weights in matches. It gives the Club a sense of purpose as well as indicating success or failure.

Do we want that data to be comparable to previous years?

Logically, the answer to this should also be yes. Having set out a yardstick by which individual and group performance can be measured, one should keep it unless it can be shown to be of little value. If the yardstick is changed, it will be some years before we can relate present performance to previous, and if there is any rapid improvement in our standards, we will either not know or be unable to prove it!

What information, then, should we be collecting for club record purposes? Or, to put it another way, what information have we been collecting that has been use

used for record purposes? I would suggest the following:

- a. No. of sessions per member.
- b. No of rod hours per member.
- c. No of eels per member plus weights.

This information can then be used to collate annual and overall records for individual members and the Club. This can be shown annually as:

- a. Performance of individual members
- b. Comparison of members' performance from 1967
- c. Overall effort
- d. Comparison of overall effort from 1967

In other words, the first four pages of the Report on the 1976 season form the basis of Club records. To collect Club data only we could use the previous years' session report forms completing sections 1-7 only omitting the optional section under rod usage, and ignoring day and night.

What are the current problems facing the eel specialist?

There are, of course, many problems ranging from intolerant wives to night fishing bans. Alas, they come outside the scope of any Reporting Scheme and cannot do much about them as a group. In less flippant vein, the main problem is staring us in the face and has done so since 1970. If we look at individual years, some are better than others, yet with the store of information the reporting scheme has given us, the best the average Anguilla Club member can do is 30 - 35RH/E, 100-120RH/2+ and 300RH/3.

Each and everyone of us should be seeking ways to break those barriers. We should be trying individually, and we should be doing it as a group. This is where the session reporting scheme comes into its own and it is where that proposed by the committee falls down.

I know very well that the retort will be: "But this is exactly what we're trying to do." Be that as it may, the proposed scheme has no aim other than the collection of data. The analyst will then see if the data fits a pattern and then see if there is a plausible question that will fit the pattern. Isn't that the wrong way round? If I am incorrect, why couldn't the committee tell the members present at the SGM the aim of the new scheme?

So, what questions should we be trying to answer? Bearing in mind that the most successful members are not necessarily those that clock up the most sessions or rod hours, the differences between individual members' performance must lie in their angling ability, the waters they fish or the tackle they use. We cannot quantify the first item, but we can ask questions about the remaining two. Put simply, they are:

1. Are certain types of waters, eg gravel pits, better than others for the capture of eels?
2. Does the tackle we use have a serious effect on our results?

I congratulate the committee on spotting these two aspects. Alas, too many side issues are raised to complicate the matter. Let's keep things simple and not try to run before we can walk. This is epitomised by the inclusion of all the old water questionnaire, much of which is irrelevant and, I dare say, the information received from same will be pretty meaningless to the Club analyst.

To summarise, then, my objections to the "new" scheme are:

1. It has been devised without due consideration for its objectives. It only satisfies the AGM's demand for a change.

2. Much of the information to be collected deals with problems that have already been solved pre-1970.

3. Much of the information collected will be irrelevant and serve only to complicate matters, and confuse answers to broad questions.

4. Information collected for Club record purposes will not readily conform with the previous format of Club records so only indirect comparisons can be made serving only to obscure improvement or deterioration of standards.

Before suggesting an alternative, I sincerely believe that we are going to lose much data this year which should be incorporated into the Club's records. This would not have happened if the committee had not taken unilateral action and had adhered to their instruction as given at the AGM, given proposals for a new session reporting scheme at the SGM and not foisted one upon us without the consent of the members. It may well be accepted at the AGM, but in case it is not, may I ask members to complete an old style SR form for every session this season. The important sections are those outlined above but it should be added that all that is really needed is the number of sessions, the rod hours fished and the eels taken - weights only in lbs:oz. If enough of us ask, I'm sure Terry Jefferson will produce some for us.

#### THE 1977 S.R. SCHEME - AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

By David Smith.

(Strike while the iron is hot, so the saying goes. Rather than wait for reaction to my comments, I have decided to immediately outline what I feel would be a more acceptable scheme. The following piece is written as a guide to my scheme for that is the easiest way to approach the subject not because I am so presumptive to suppose that my proposals will be accepted as they stand. Indeed, I hope that ultimately the committee will come up with some sound proposals. I apologise for any repetition of the preceding article but they were written seperately - in fact, this one was written first.)

The 1970 report saw the cumulation of four seasons' eel fishing results. With it the questions the Anguilla Club set out to answer were answered. In simple terms, it showed that night was better than day for the capture of eels; moonlight has a minimal effect on eels and worms are better than DB for the capture of both small eels and large eels, but DB is better for eels in the 2+3lb bracket.

The 1976 report saw the cumulation of six seasons' floundering. No new questions had been asked and it served only to corroborate those answers previously obtained and show that we are still taking as long to catch eels as we did in 1970 - i.e. 30-35RH/3, 100-120RH/2 and 300RH/3.

Such was the position that the 1976 AGM demanded that new life be injected into the scheme. To follow are my proposals as to how the scheme can be amended to obtain data to answer the problems we are currently facing.

Aims

The aims of the scheme are twofold. Firstly it is to collect data for Club record purposes. This is the basic data relating to the number of sessions, rod hours fished and eels caught. This data can be used to give a measure of performance so that individual members will be able to compare their season's activities with those of previous years and also allow the Club to compare the overall results with those of previous years.

The second aim is to try to help Anguilla Club members improve upon the present  $100RH/2$ . This can be best achieved by studying the types of waters fished for eels and the tackles used

Although it would be incorrect to see an immediate drop in  $RH/2$ , it is to be hoped that after a couple of seasons we could say with some degree of certainty that particular types of waters appear to be good places for larger eels and that a particular type of rig is most successful. It is then that members will be able to reap the benefits of the scheme and thereby improve their own results.

The Session Report Form

It will be noted that the form is similar in format to that of previous seasons. The reason for this is that we still require basic data about sessions for the overall annual results. However, there are several major alterations and there are no optional sections

Section 1

For obvious reasons, name is required.

Section 2

This is almost identical to previous years, but you will note that "Class of water" is no longer called for. This is because we now wish to be more specific with water type (see section 4)

Section 3

Session dates are required, but times are omitted.

Section 4

This relates to the type of water and replaces "Class". In 4a the type of water should be inserted, eg gravel pit, clay pit, tidal river, etc. In 4b say yes or no, so only waters formerly classified as 2.2 will be notated yes. 4c refers to the colour of the water when you fish it. Insert "clear" or "cloudy" as the case may be. If you know exactly what is causing the coloration, make a note - eg algal bloom or flood conditions.

Section 5

Older members will note that this section has the same format as the original SR form. We are no longer concerned with recording rod hours for day or night and members are requested to insert the bait they are using and the number of rod hours fished with that bait

Section 6.

This section for rod usage is very similar to that used in previous years. The main differences being that we wish you to record the number of eels caught on each tackle and basic information about the tackle itself. You are asked to say what hook size you are using, give the breaking strength of both your trace and main line and say what type of trace is being used, eg 18" nylon.

Section 7.

Again the format is similar to previous years, but eels should only be put down



7. Eels Taken

	Weight lbs:oz	Date	period	Bait No	Returned	Tag No	Remarks
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
13.							

8. General remarks

if either they weigh more than 2lb or have been tagged. If you do not tag eels, please state yes or no under the returned column. It is assumed that all members will return eels that have not been gut hooked, but if you fancy eating your quarry, please write "pot" or some similar euphamism to indicate that the fish did not die through being gut hooked.

Section 8

This section has been left blank for you to write in any relevant information.

Conclusion

We must show patience with any new scheme. There must be continuity of data in order to maintain records with the Club's performance, and the results of new aspects will take some time before we can see the practical results. At the end of this season we may see sufficient progress to allow us to extend the scope of the scheme and start asking more detailed questions; but we must not try to run before we walk.

Finally, it was agreed at the AGM that water questionnaires would be compulsory. Members are reminded that they must fill in one questionnaire for every water they fish, even if they only fish it once or even if they have filled one in during a previous season.

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Editors note.

Well, I think that David has certainly given us food for thought with his article. I do hope that you will read, re-read, and digest the contents. If you have an idea by which you feel that the present Reporting scheme might be improved, write to our Secretary and ask if it can be placed on the agenda for our A.G.M.

THOUGHTS FROM CHAIRMAN BRIAN.

Brian Crawford.

1977 seems to have been one of those years. The weather has been both unsettled and wet. Waters I fish have very low temperatures for this time of the year. I hear that several members have had good seasons, Kevin Richmond having had over one hundred eels - many of them 2lb + with four over 3lbs. A very good effort indeed. The Birmingham lads have had eels into three figures also, many being over 3lb and 2lb. Tony Hollerbach has taken the Clubs best eel this year at 6:4 and has also taken another two of 4lb +.

Yet for all this, I feel that 1977 will turn out to be a very poor year in terms of numbers. Nationally, only 24 eels over four pounds have been reported, 12 of which are over five pounds, 8 over six pounds and four over seven pounds with the best at 7:3. Those of you who remember my article in Vol11 No 3 on trends in eel catches will recall I said that catches of eels over five pounds seemed to go up and down at seven year cycles. 1974 seemed to be a peak year with 25 five pound plus eels taken - and I expected a decline for the next three years. 1975 was in line with that thinking with only 2½ eels over five pounds but last year, 1976, saw 31 eels over five pounds instead of the 16 or 17 expected - but bear in mind the exceptional weather! 1977 has to date yielded 12 eels over five pounds - much more in line with the graph. So, the question is, is the temperature of the water as all important as indicated by last years result. Perhaps we will find out when this years reporting is analysed. As an additional point, if the graph holds true, we will see an upturn of big eel catches over the next three years leading to about 30 eels over five pounds in the year 1980 (18 in 1978 and 24 in 1979). Are you going to see if one of them is your eel ?

Speaking of the Reporting scheme, I've only taken about 24 eels but think the reporting forms can be modified by only requiring one page 2 to be completed per water as it will be the same for all eels from that water. Apart from that I see no other problem unless any of you have a comment to make. So far I have heard nothing one way or the other.

Due to increasing pressure on my time Kevin Richmond has volunteered to take over the Club analysis work next year and we will work together on this. Unless any member has an objection Kevin will be proposed as Club Records Officer at our A.G.M.

I was sincerely very sorry to learn of Nigel Jeyes death as he was of great character and although a quiet member he did his bit in every way for this Club. I feel he should not be forgotten and hope the Club can keep his memory by setting up a Nigel Jeyes Memorial Trophy, to be awarded annually for, say, the best overall catch by a member or something similar. I hope we can discuss this at the A.G.M.

Member may like to know that this week in A.T. I saw a notice to the effect that the Yorkshire W.A. proposes no ban on eel angling during the Close Season. I have still to hear from the A.W.A. and the Severn/Trent authorities.

You may also like to know that on my summer holiday in Devon I caught two more double figure eels to give me three of which the best scaled 20lbs (conger of course). I can say that it really is an excellent fight on light tackle. Keith Sykes of the North Gloucester Specimen Group has taken an eel of 6 : 7 on a live crayfish.

On the Club Summer trip to Whitemere and the other meres I attended for the first weekend with three lads from my youth Club to let them meet some of our members and see various tackle set-ups. They were very impressed. Henry Hansen, Sid Mottram, Dave Holman, Terry Jefferson and Chris Davy were also there. Dave had been fishing at Whitemere for a few days before we arrived, to catch several eels of 3lb and 2lb + and many good perch over 2lb. He was a little upset when, one morning as he was at his car enjoying a breakfast Henry wandered over to Daves rods and saw a run. He called to Dave but on getting no response struck and landed an eel going 4:1. I cannot print Daves comments! I spent a couple of nights with Terry and Chris at Blankmere (Blakemere) to enjoy two uneventful nights, being disturbed at dawn by the boats charging down the canal only a few yards away. This was my first visit to the meres, but I can see myself paying many more visits to those waters. Our Ernie (Ernie Orme) managed a nights session



with us and we had several good chats. Ellesmere had its Carnival on the Saturday and this enabled the Pubs to stay open all day - resulting in my thrashing Terry at darts in the Red Lion.

To finish on a different tone - there is still a feeling within the Club that a couple of members are making little effort to justify their membership. I would suggest that they consider one of two alternatives. Either resign, or ask another member to propose them for consideration as Associate members.

As half of the members are to be reviewed this year I would hate to have to tell any member to go - but for the good of the Club I WILL if I must.

Finally, the NASG British Conference is only seven months away - April 1/2 1978. We want to make a real impact this time, with the raffle and display and a film slide show at the eel forum on the evening of the 1st. If you have any contribution by way of photographs, slides, or possible tackle to be displayed, PLEASE DO CONTACT ME SOON.

Brian Crawford.

Editors footnote.

Nice to welcome the Chairman back to these pages once more. Rightly or wrongly, the Chairman has become the 'Daddy' of the Anguilla Club, and we all look to him for guidance in many things. He usually does have something very relevant to say.

That being so, I hope, Brian, that you will remember that these pages are always at your disposal as your platform for a speech and I'm sure that we do all wish to see the Chairmans page as a regular feature once more. No charge - honestly!

With reference to the Conference having been made by Brian, I would like members to know that I am donating an Electronic Digital Clock for the Club to put up as a prize in the raffle at the Conference. There - I've made a start, so hows about YOU doing your little something too ?

STOP PRESS.

Hot news. Dave Smith caught an eel.

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