

DDAS JUNIORS BASIC GUIDE TO COARSE FISHING



WARNING

Carbon Fibre is extremely good at conducting electricity.

Do not fish near High Voltage Electricity lines, particularly in the rain.

Cattle fences will probably make you jump and be midly uncomfortable.

But the real threat is Lightning.

**If you are out fishing and a storm brews up,
Please, pack up and go home.**

So much fishing equipment is now made from carbon that you may be at risk from serious injury or worse.

Pack away and live to fish another day.

INTRODUCTION

Basic information to help you start Fishing

Choosing the right tackle

Advice on starter set up

How to decide what bait to use and how to look after it

Welcome to the Dorchester & District Angling Society's beginners guide to coarse fishing.

Throughout this booklet I will cover some of the basic information that will help new starters on their way to fishing more independently.

We will look at what to buy for your first rods and reels, how to choose and set up your equipment, what bait to use, when to use it and how to look after it.

As you spend more time fishing, you will meet more experienced anglers, most of whom will be more than happy to pass on their experience to younger anglers. They will all have their own ways of doing different things and it will be up to you to decide what works best for you.

This booklet is no different. It is just a collection of tips and ideas gathered together over the years.

My hope is that it will help you as you begin your own fishing journey.

Graham Howard
Junior Secretary
Dorchester & District Angling Society

**SERIES OF BOOKS
FOR JUNIORS**

**Book One:
A Basic Guide to
Coarse Fishing**

**Book Two:
A Basic guide to
Pole Fishing**

**Book Three:
A Basic Guide to
River Fishing**

**Book Four:
A Basic Guide to
Carp Fishing**

**Book Five:
A Basic Guide to
Pike Fishing**

**Fishing
is not
just a
sport**

**It is a
way of
life**

WHY DO WE FISH? -

There are so many reasons to go fishing. For the fresh air and the love of the outdoors, to be close to nature and to experience things that you would not see otherwise. Maybe you just like to be out fishing with friends and family or meeting different people. Some anglers like to fish alone and actively seek solitude away from others.

Maybe it's the thrill of competing in matches and the banter that is usually thrown about before and after a competition. Maybe it doesn't matter if you catch anything at all? Whatever style of fishing that you choose to do, we all have one thing in common, the love of fishing.

Most anglers can remember their first fish. It is a special fish and there will never be another. For some it comes early in life, before school age. For others it may come later in life, with friends or family. Once you've been fishing and caught a fish, you are usually hooked for life.

There is a therapy in fishing too. Angling has been scientifically proven to reduce stress, anxiety and can help ADHD, to calm a troubled soul and to help mend a broken mind. Mental illnesses like depression and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) have shown to be greatly eased during and after a fishing session. Whatever your reasons for going fishing, make sure one of them is to have fun.

For me, the greatest part of fishing is the social side. Once you have become an angler, you will be part of a club with millions of members. An angling family. People you meet may become good friends, some of them may even become friends for life.

HEALTH AND SAFETY WHEN FISHING -

For fishing to be fun, it has to be safe. There are things you can do to make fishing safe for you and for others. Obviously, you will be fishing near water. Water doesn't have to be deep to be dangerous, particularly when it is cold. Be mindful of where the waters edge is at all times, even when your mind is on other things.

The water itself can be harmful with diseases like *Weils Disease* which comes from rats. You won't usually see any, but they are never far away. Fortunately, Weils Disease can be easily prevented by simply washing or sanitising your hands before you eat anything.

If you have to use medication, then make sure you have it with you at all times or that you have taken it before you go fishing. Conditions like epilepsy and diabetes can be disastrous next to water. Always tell someone where you are going. You need to make sure that someone knows where you are just in case something unfortunate should happen.

If you are new to DDAS Juniors, then the other Juniors will tell you that one of our unwritten rules is **DO NOT RUN!** Running can cause you to trip and have an accident. Fishing tackle can get VERY expensive too. If you are running around and tread on a rod or a pole section, I can assure you that it will not make you very popular.

In the sunshine you might wear sunglasses. This is a good thing because you can see the water better and they will protect your eyes from flying tackle during a fishing session. Sunglasses are not always worn during poor light conditions, so a hat is the next best thing. A peaked cap can help protect your face and also help you to concentrate. We all get caught up in trees and bushes from time to time and it can get really frustrating. The worst thing you can do is to try to pull it free in a temper. It could be a ticket for a trip to hospital and can cause some terrible injuries. If you can, **always** get an adult to help you retrieve your tackle.

RULES TO FOLLOW WHEN YOU GO FISHING -

Rules are there for all of us to follow and there is nothing clever about breaking them. One important rule is a rod licence. Fortunately, Juniors will not require a rod licence until they are 13, and even then they are free. You won't have to pay until you turn 16. Make sure you have a licence if you need one and follow the rod licence rules. Unless you have a spare £2500 laying around for your trip to court.

Clubs and fisheries will have their own rules which you must make sure that you are familiar with before you go fishing. Particularly if it is a venue that you have not visited before. Club rules are laid out in the club handbook and on the club website. These rules must be followed at all times.

ANGLING AND THE ENVIRONMENT -

As an angler you have a responsibility for yourself, the safety of those around you, to the fish you catch and the environment in which you are fishing. We can all play our part by picking up any litter we may find, even if it is not ours. Don't forget, litter is not always carelessly left or dropped. It can blow away on windy days. Removing litter will help to make the water a nice place to be and you will be creating a safer place for wildlife to live in too. The very worst litter is fishing tackle and there is no excuse for it if you can pick it up. Nothing can damage angling more than thoughtlessly discarded line, weights and worst still, hooks. Pick it up and take it home, even if it isn't yours. The same can be said for unwanted bait. If you don't want to use it or have some left over, take it home and dispose of it there when you can.

RODS AND REELS

I could write an entire book on it's own if I were to cover every kind of rod available, so I'm going to try to keep it as simple as possible. To begin with, there are only really two types of rods to consider. The first of those is a float or 'Waggler' rod.



FLOAT ROD -

For your first float rod, you will not go far wrong by buying a *Pellet Waggler Rod*. Usually between 10 and 12ft long (3.0 to 3.6 metres), Pellet Waggler rods are designed for fishing shallow for Carp. But they are just soft enough to be used for general float fishing too. Plus you will be buying two rods for the price of one in a way. Try to choose one that has a good '*Through action*' (more on that later). Personally, I prefer a 11ft (3.3m) version, but I would recommend a 10ft (3.0m) rod to start with because they will be easier to handle for smaller hands.



FEEDER ROD -

Feeder rods are short and fairly powerful, with a nice '*through action*' and a sensitive tip. The tips are brightly coloured (above) and are used to detect bites from hungry fish. A length of 10ft (3.0m) is recommended for a feeder rod, but for smaller hands, a 9ft (2.7m) rod is just as good, although it will not be able to cast as much weight as the longer rod. 9ft feeder rods usually categorised as '*Bomb rods*', used for casting small lead weights in winter. But they will perform well enough to be used for feeder work for a beginner. Feeder rods will usually come with two or three tips in different colours and sizes. I try to fit the lightest tip I can get away with. However a tip that says '2ozs' is fine to start with.

This number is known as the *Test Curve*. The test curve is measured by the amount of weight that it takes to make the rod, or tip in this case, bend to 90°. The smaller the number, the more sensitive the tip.

Just to confuse things a bit, some rods are given a *Line Rating* instead. This is the recommended 'weight' of line that should be used with that particular rod.



Once you have bought your nice shiny new rods, you are going to need something to carry and store them in. The latest and best way by far is to put them in a *Ready Rod Holdall*. These holdalls are made from a protective, rigid material with a solid base and a full length zip. Some have pockets and/or velcro straps to hold your precious rods securely during transportation. A ready rod holdall will take anything from one up to six rods, depending on the model. You will only need to take two rods to start with, so get one of those.

So why '*Ready Rod*'?

These holdalls are designed so you can assemble your rods at home with reels, line, floats and weights or feeders and hooks, and store them ready for use when you get to the water. They were designed for match fishing originally, but any time saved can be used for fishing. Not only that but, you can take all the time you need to at home to get your tackle perfectly ready for catching a net full.

Like so many sports and activities, the deeper you go into them, the more expensive it can get. You don't HAVE to spend a fortune however, and tackle companies have catered for most budgets.

You can pick up Waggler and Feeder rods, brand new, for between £30 to £50 for some decent tackle. Ready Rod bags will start at around £35. For a beginner, nearly £100 spent is a lot of money and don't even have a reel yet. But look around and you may find some deals out there somewhere, or talk nicely to your local tackle dealer and they may be able to help you out a little.

DDAS Juniors has a *Tackle Regeneration Scheme* where donated tackle is loaned out until you get your own equipment. Just ask and we may be able help you start on the right foot.

Advice is always free (if not always welcome!). If you need help choosing that important first rod or rods, just ask and I can help steer you in the right direction. These days there is not usually a bad choice of tackle, but there is definitely a better choice to be had if you know what to look for.

So that's your rods sorted, let's take a look at some reels to go with them.

WHICH REEL? -

Like rods and so many other things in fishing, as you will discover, there is an endless number of options to choose from. Again we will try to make your decisions easier by looking just two types of reel to start with.

Throughout this booklet you will read about '*balanced tackle*'. This means that we will be trying to use the right equipment for the fish we are trying to catch. Heavy rods and reels are pointless for small Roach and lightweight tackle will usually lose against big, tough Carp or Barbel.

Reels are usually graded from 1000 right up to 14,000 for the really big stuff. For our rods, we need only look at the **3000** for the float rod, and **4000** for the feeder rod.

The smaller 3000 reel is lighter and will usually only hold 100 metres of line. Some kinds of float fishing will require you to hold your rod for long periods of time. So you don't want to be holding a heavy reel all day. For float fishing, we will be using 3 or 4lb line on the reel (Main Line) because the weight you will be casting is much lighter than a feeder rod has to. Lighter line, small reel, light rod, balanced tackle....

For feeder fishing, the weight being cast is much heavier by comparison. So we need a heavier line to cope with the extra weight. You will also be able to cast much further with a feeder, so you will need more line capacity on the reel. A 4000 sized reel is perfect for feeder fishing. It will have the power to wind the feeder in and the line capacity to cast it a long way. You will read about '*Gear Ratios*' shortly but a feeder reel has a lower gear ratio to generate more power through the handle.

Talking of line choice, lines are graded by their *Breaking Strain*. This is how much weight the line can lift before it breaks and is measured in pounds (lbs) and/or kilograms (kg). Modern match fishing has become obsessed with line diameters. you will hear a lot of 0.17 this and '*Oh eleven*' that. It's like a different language! To start with, stick to breaking strains until you become more experienced, or sad enough to learn your line diameters....

It is important to know that lines are measured by knot strength. The weakest part of any undamaged line is at the knot. It doesn't matter how good you are at tying knots, it will always be a weak point. Lines are usually way under rated anyway. 4lb line will quite often break at more than 4lbs, even at the knot.

FRONT OR REAR DRAG? -

The *Drag* or *Clutch* system on the reel controls how easily line can be pulled from the spool by a large fish. Even light lines can handle much bigger

fish than the line rating says it can if the drag is set correctly. Set your drag so the reel just 'ticks' when you are playing a bigger fish. That way if the fish needs to pull line from the reel, the spool is already turning slowly and will put less pressure on your line.

Personally, I prefer *Front Drag* reels for all of my fishing because I believe that they have a smoother pressure on the spool. The drag acts on the spool directly whereas, the rear drag reel puts pressure on the drive shaft from the back of the reel.

There is one advantage to a rear drag reel however. When you come to change the spool on a front drag reel, you have to undo the drag control completely, messing up the setting. A rear drag reel will have a push button spool release, leaving the drag setting untouched.

Rear drag reels are much improved in modern times, but I like my front drag reels, so I'll stick with them for now.

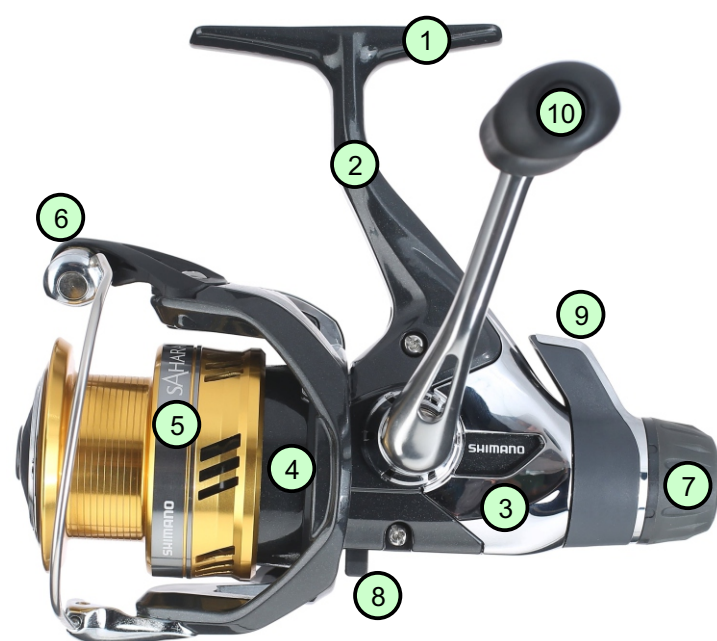
I would recommend that you aim for the upper limits of your budget, what ever that is, when you are looking to buy your reels. You can buy cheap items and they will work well for you. But experience has shown me that quality comes at a price and paying a bit more pays off in the long term. £45 to £50 (each) should get you a decent reel to start you off.

GEAR RATIOS -

The *Gear Ratio* of a reel is the number of times the reel spins for every one turn of the handle. So a reel with a gear ratio of **1:6.1** means that the reel rotor spins 6.1 times with each turn of the handle. A reel with a gear ratio of **1:4.5** will turn much slower. What does this all mean? Well faster reels are used for float fishing where speed is the key, where as feeder reels need a slower ratio for more power or '*Torque*'.



If you look after your equipment, particularly your reels, they will give you years of service. Dirt, grit, water and even groundbait can get inside your reel and wear it out very quickly if not looked after properly. Just clean them now and then.



1. The FOOT. the part of the reel that is used to attach it to the rod.
2. The STEM. Angled leg that holds the reel in a balanced position and at a fixed distance from the rod.
3. The BODY. A water tight casing that holds the inner workings of the reel. Sometimes weighted to act as a counter balance to the rod.
4. The ROTOR. Usually a carefully designed and highly engineered part of the reel. Time and money is invested on the rotor. When the reel is in use, it can spin at tremendous speed. If the rotor has been poorly designed, it will wobble, shake and be out of balance making it horrible to use.
5. The SPOOL. There is a wide variety of spool designs. From deep, long cast spools that can cast huge distances and hold hundreds of metres of line, to shallow match spools holding only 100 metres or less. Somewhere on the lower edge of the spool you may find a line clip. You will find this extremely useful when you want to limit your cast, particularly when fishing to an island, bushes or reeds etc.
6. The BAIL ARM. Controls the free movement of the line. Opened before casting and closed to reel in. Contains roller over which the line passes and reduces line twist to prevent tangles. Also the roller prevents the line from getting damaged.
7. The CLUTCH or DRAG. An adjustment system to apply pressure on the spool to control the line during a fight with a larger fish. How much pressure from the drag will depend on the weight of line loaded on the spool. How you have it set can be critical to landing or losing a fish. Too tight and you will snap your line. Too loose and you will have no control over the fish.
8. The ANTI - REVERSE. There are two settings for the AR, on or off. When it's on, the handle will only turn in one direction. Off and the handle is free to turn in either direction. Some anglers use the reel with the AR off instead of using the clutch. But without experience this can lead to all sorts of problems. The beginner is better off leaving the AR on.
9. The FIGHTING DRAG. A lever on rear drag reels that can increase or reduce the setting of the drag faster than turning the adjustment knob. Handy for hard fighting fish.
10. The HANDLE. Quite simply, it's how you make the reel work. The handle can be used on either right or left, depending on your preference, and come in either a single or double handled versions.



FREE SPOOL REEL -
Mainly used for Carp or specimen fishing and have a small lever at the back of the Stem or Body. In the open position, the spool is allowed to spin freely so a running fish can take line. The free Spool is turned off by simply winding the handle or by operating the lever by hand. The spool will then be locked and re-engaged with the normal drag system.



CENTRE PIN REELS -
A design from the mists of angling history and a proper purists reel. Perfectly balanced and smooth running, so much so that just the current on a river can pull line from the spool. No mechanical workings at all, other than a ratchet setting to control the spool when not in use.



CLOSED FACE REELS -
Lovely to use on running water as there is no bail arm to get in the way. Just a small pin inside the casing that retracts when the button is pressed and pops out again when the handle is turned. Just press the large black button on the front to cast. Not often seen these days, but a joy to use. I have a particular soft spot for these reels.

THE EIGHT STEP TO CASTING -

So, we have our rods and reels sorted. Now what? Well, you now need to learn how to cast. I feel that casting must be learned rather than taught, but I will do my best to help you with my 8 steps to casting. Spend some time doing lazy casts that will help you to develop your casting style. When you practice, cast a short distance at first, take your time, slow down and think about your casting. Soon you will be surprised at how little effort it takes to cast to where you want your bait to land. This is because you are using the rod properly rather than forcing it to cast. Here is my eight step check list.



Step One

Check your drop.

The drop is the distance between your rod tip and either your feeder or float.

A good guide to how long the drop should be, is about half of your rod length.

Step Two

Check your line.

The next step is to check to see if your line is wrapped around your rod.

If you cast without checking, you may break your line or even your rod.

Pinch the line above your reel and give it a couple of little tugs to make sure it is running freely.



Step Three

Gather the line.

Pick the line up over your first finger.

Having the roller on the bail arm in a position close to your finger will make this part much easier.

Turn the handle so the roller is in position, but keep an eye on the drop to make sure that it is not too short.

Step Four

Open the Bail Arm.

Before you cast, you must remember to open the bail arm to allow the line to be released from the spool.

It's easy to forget it, particularly when you are concentrating. If you do forget, it could be an embarrassingly short cast or, worse still, an expensive one.





Step Five

Safety Zone Check.

Health and safety is the most important thing to think about for any activity.

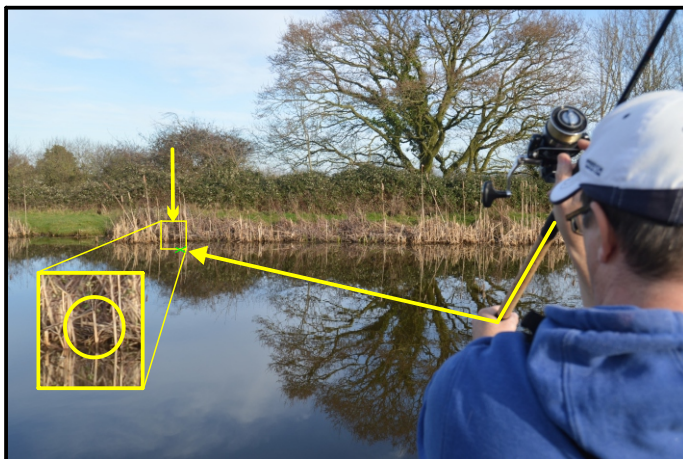
Behind every Junior there is a safety zone that you need to make sure is clear before you cast. Of all the steps in this section, this is the most important one.

If someone is in your safety zone, then POLITELY ask them to move.

Step Six

Position the rod.

Once you are sure that your safety zone is clear, you can position the rod. The hand over the reel should be in the centre of your body, just above your head. Your left hand will be at the end of the handle, ready to aim your cast.



Step Seven

Use your left hand to aim.

Your rod is in position and now you need to pick your spot to cast to. Your right hand will control the line.

Your left hand will provide the power and the direction of your cast. Pick a marker on the far side as a target to aim at. In the picture you can see a reed that is slightly shorter than the rest. It stands out and is easy to find again.

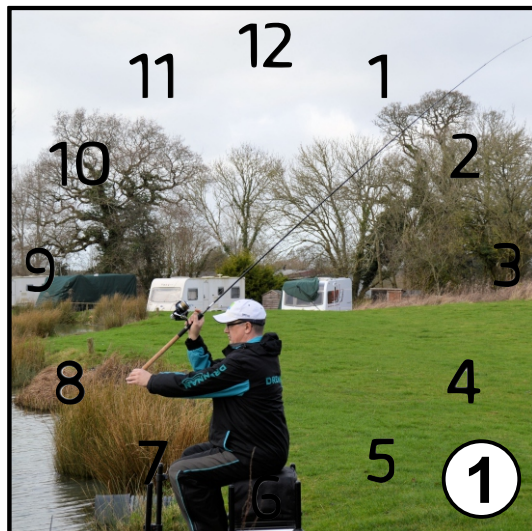
Step Eight

Everything is set and you're ready to get that bait back into the water. Push with your top hand pull gently with your left (aiming hand).

Because the distance across this lake is short, the effort put into the rod is very small.

Obviously, longer casts will need more effort to hit the spot.





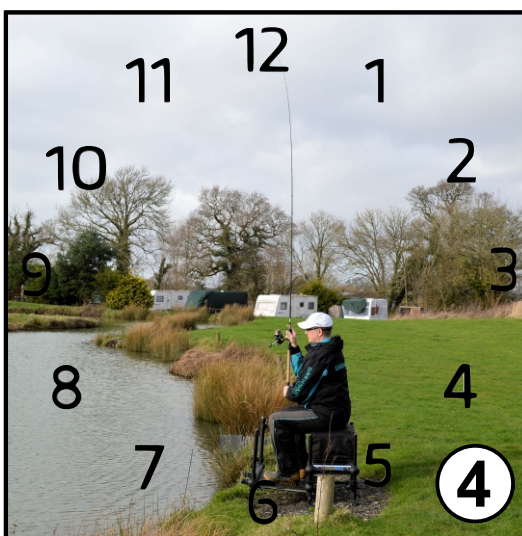
ROD READY - The rod is ready to cast at roughly the 1 to 2 o'clock position depending on the power you may need to reach your chosen fishing area.



ROD LOADED/RELEASE - The rod is now bent or *loaded* and the cast has begun. Pushing forward with the reel hand and pulling with the other. When you release the line is the part that you will need to practice most.



FOLLOW THROUGH - After you have released the line, the rod naturally straighten out, propelling the weight forwards. Stop the rod at roughly 9 o'clock to allow the line peel out smoothly. Don't let the rod hit the water.



LIFT TO CLIP - If you are using a line clip (*Clipped up*), you will need to lift the rod to meet the clip on the reel. As soon as you release the line, lift the rod quickly to about 12 to 1 o'clock position and hold it there.



HITTING THE LINE CLIP - As soon as you hear and feel the line tighten, the weight will pull the rod naturally forwards. You need to hold the rod with gentle hands and almost let the rod be pulled forward by the weight.



FOLLOW DOWN OR FEATHERING - Once the clip is hit, try to keep a tight line and slow the weight down so it lands in the water with a gentle 'plop' rather than a big splash. *Feathering the cast* like this is like putting the brakes on the feeder/float. Allow the rod to come forward to which ever side you have your rod rest set up.

PATIENCE -

When you are learning to cast, take your time at the start, be patient. The rewards will be much better than if you rush it. Time spent improving your accuracy is time well spent.

One good tip for feeder fishing is to set your clip using a lead weigh rather than a feeder. You will disturb the water much less by using a smaller bomb.

UNDER ARM CAST -

For short range fishing a simple under arm cast will do the job nicely. Just release the line at the furthest part of the swing.

POWER -

More for float fishing rather than the feeder. If you find yourself thrashing your rod to get the float out to where you need it, making a loud swishing sound, then the chances are that your float is too light. Step up the size of the float to give you some extra weight to cast with.

EFFORT -

Most of our local waters do not require a huge amount of effort to reach the feeding areas. Even so you need to think about your tackle choice to make sure you have the balance that you need. The weight of a float may need to battle against the wind or strong currents. The weight of the feeder may need to cling to steep sided islands. If there was a one size that fits all solution to all of this, then fishing would be too easy. Getting your tackle to where it needs to be and getting it to stay there is all part of the challenge.

This challenge may take many years to get used to, but that is the journey that makes fishing so much fun.

FLOATS

Fishing floats come in an almost countless number of patterns, shapes and materials. To make life a little easier for ourselves, we are only going to look at the floats that may be useful to us on our local fisheries. They can all be grouped into one family of floats called *Wagglers*.

Wagglers are so called because they are attached to the line at the bottom end of the float only (Bottom end only) and therefore they 'waggle' around on the line when they are used.

Common types of materials that floats are made from include Peacock quills (made from Peacock feathers), Balsa wood and plastic. Other more traditional materials used are Cork, Sarcandas Reed and Porcupine quills. Largely unused these days, particularly as Porcupines are now more protected than they used to be.

Wagglers can be grouped into two categories. loaded and unloaded. Loaded floats have a weight built into them that is almost enough to set or 'Cock' them correctly, with only a few shots to be added. Unloaded floats require all of the weight needed to be added to the line using *Split Shot*. But more on that later.

It can be easy to have one or two 'favourite' floats that have caught you some fish before. Confidence is a big part of fishing but if you look into it a bit deeper, you will learn that if you carefully select the right floats for the right conditions, your fishing will be much more productive. Things like the weather conditions, quality of light, target species and your choice of bait, will all have a dramatic impact on which float you should choose.

The first lesson about floats, is that they sometimes tell the biggest lies!

The numbers on the floats or *Shooting* tells us how many weights to put on the line to use the it. Sometimes this information is far from accurate, other times it may be missing altogether. The best way to see if you have a fibbing float, is to test it at home first. With the wide use of ready rod holdalls, setting you equipment up at the lake is largely unnecessary. You can take all the time you at home to get your tackle set up perfectly.

DRENNAN PEACOCK 1.75g 2AA+

Personally, my starting point with a Waggler float is an unloaded Drennan Peacock about 2AA in size or 1.2 to 1.5g for a loaded float. I can go up or down in size from there. Split Shot will be covered later, so don't worry if this does not mean anything

to you right now.

Sometimes the little things can make a big difference. Here are a couple of little things that are well worth knowing.



The first is a *Silicone Float Adapter* (Above Left). As the name suggests, they are made from silicone tubing with one end flattened with a hole. The tube is pushed on to the bottom of the float then the line is threaded through the hole. Using an adapter makes it easy to change the float if you need to. I tend to only use these adapters for unloaded floats.

For loaded floats I will opt for the adapter on the right, a *Guru Waggler Adapter*. These add a bit more weight to the float. Weight that I won't need to add to the line. This adapter also allows the float to 'collapse' or 'fold' on the strike. So you are not having to strike through the float before you connect with the fish.



VISION OVER PERFORMANCE -

The whole point of using a float is to indicate to the angler above, the presence of a biting fish below. Ideally you try to have as little of the float showing as you possibly can, taking into consideration light and weather conditions. But to begin with, try to set the float so about 1 cm of the tip of the float is visible. this will make the float easy enough to see, yet sensitive enough to pick up bites from small fish.

Wide diameter floats have a higher buoyancy and can carry heavier baits, but you will need to *dot them down* as low in the water as possible.

Thinner floats are more sensitive allowing you to have more of the float showing, but they can only carry lightweight baits. We're back to balanced tackle again...

TYPES OF FLOATS -

At the beginning, I mentioned that we will cover the floats that you may need to know about to start with. Let's take a look at them.



STRAIGHT WAGGLER -

A simple float that best suits larger, heavier baits such as Sweetcorn, Meat or Worms. Because they have a thicker diameter, they can be fished over depth to lay line on or drag line over the bottom of the lake or river bed.



INSERT WAGGLER -

Similar in design to that of a Straight Waggler only with a thinner piece of cane, quill, balsa, nylon or plastic fixed into the top. Some floats have removable, interchangeable tip for different light conditions. The main advantage though is the increased sensitivity that a thinner tip provides. Perfect for those shy biting fish.



STEPPED WAGGLER -

These Waggles have two or more inserts. As with the standard Insert Waggler, each 'step' makes the float a little bit more sensitive. Not that often seen these days, but useful if you can find some for large, deep still waters.



BODIED STRAIGHT WAGGLER -

A straight Waggler with a bulb or body made traditionally from cork, but more lately from balsa or high density foam. The body sits well below the surface making the float very stable in difficult, windy conditions.



BODIED INSERT WAGGLER -

Combining all the qualities of an Insert Waggler with those of a Bodied Waggler.



LOADED VISI WAG -

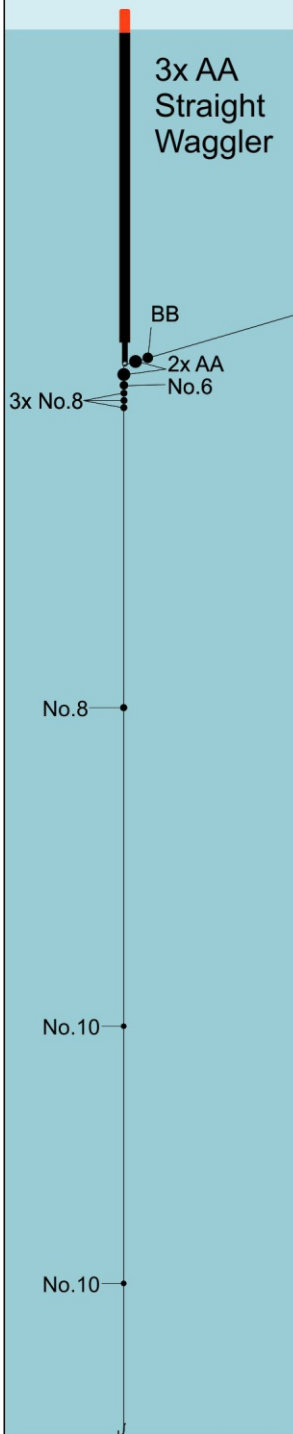
This is the only float that I have singled out as a 'must have' float. Beautifully slim, well balanced with a long, fine tip. With a few *drop shots* down the line, you can 'see' each one settle on the tip as it slowly sinks to where it was shotted to. Brilliant floats.



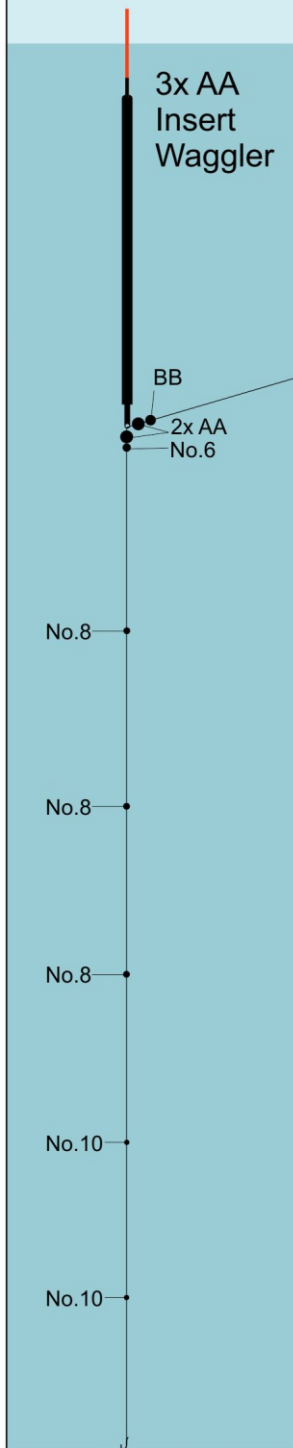
PELLET WAGGLER -

We are going to look at this float in depth next, so I'll just say, for now, that it is used for fishing shallow for Carp in the warmer months.

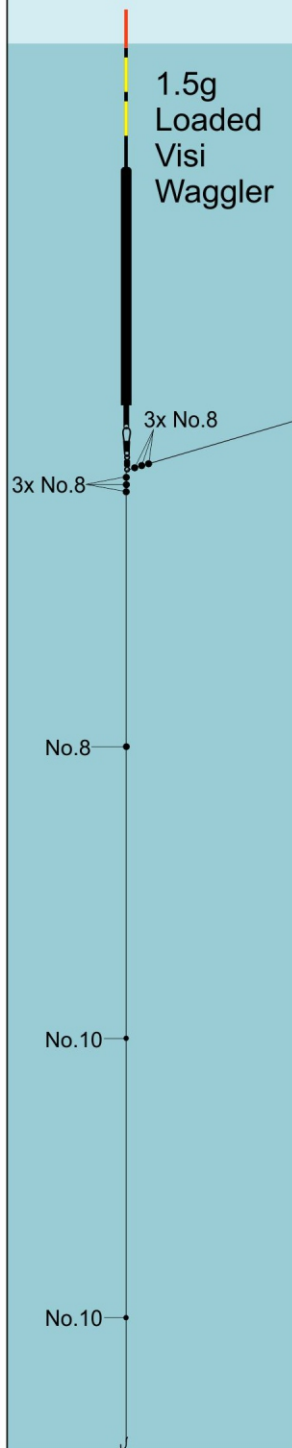
STRAIGHT WAGGLER



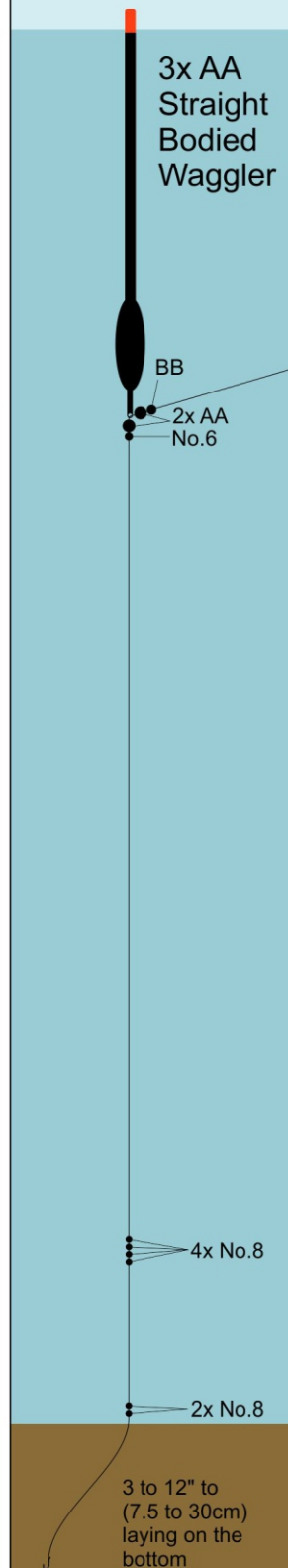
INSERT WAGGLER



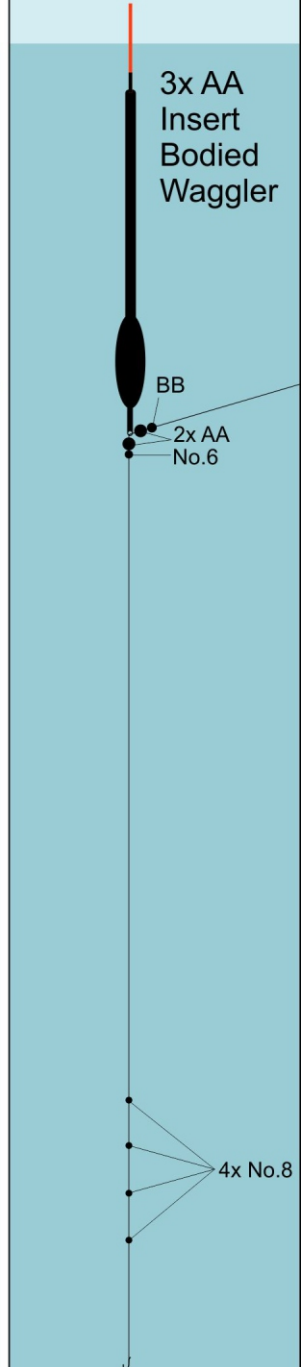
VISI WAGGLER



BODIED STRAIGHT WAGGLER



BODIED INSERT WAGGLER



**'LAYING ON'
WITH A
STRAIGHT
WAGGLER**

3AA Straight Wagglers
fished 1 or 2 feet
(30 to 60cm)
overdepth

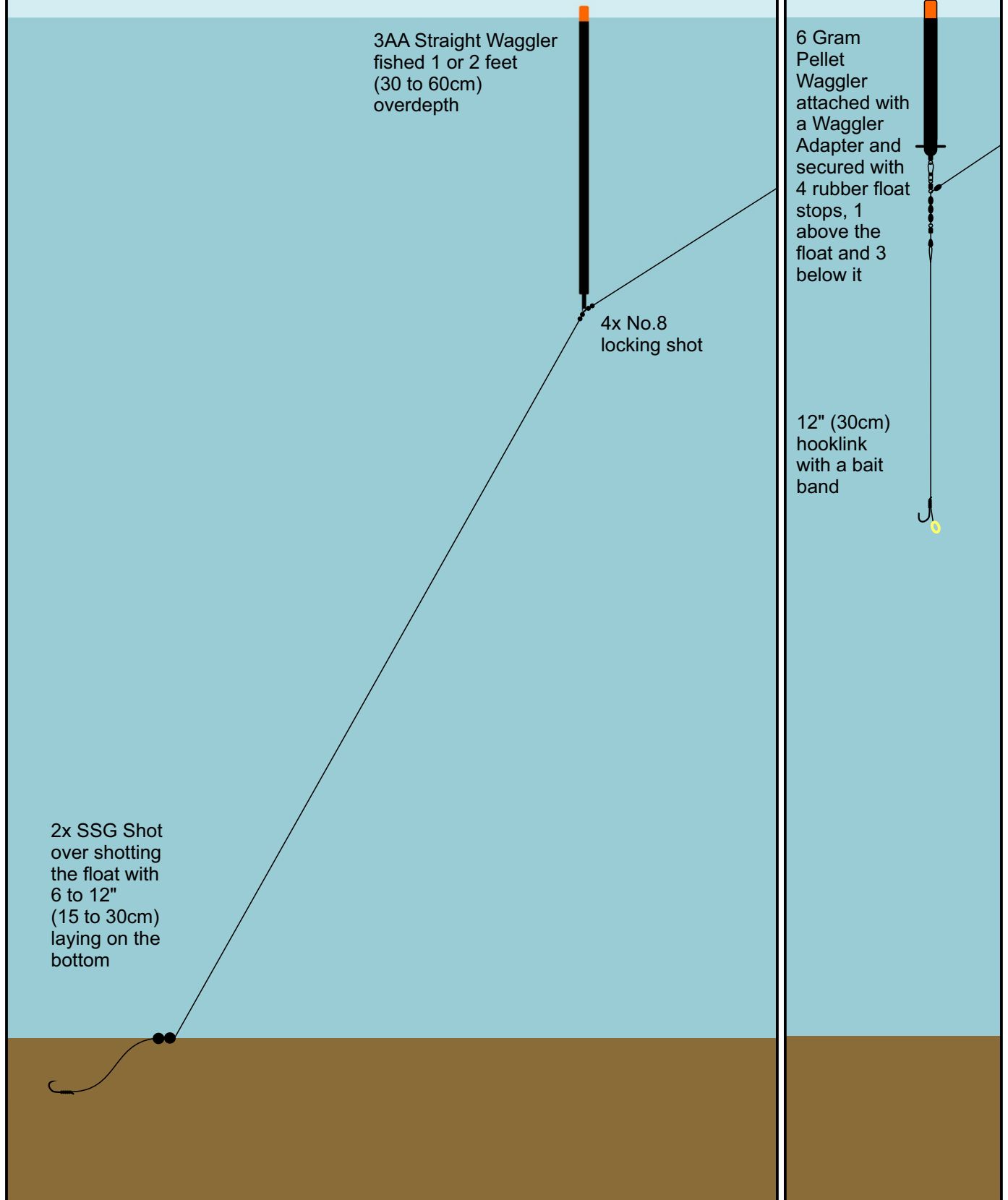
4x No.8
locking shot

2x SSG Shot
over shotting
the float with
6 to 12"
(15 to 30cm)
laying on the
bottom

**PELLET
WAGGLER**

6 Gram
Pellet
Wagglers
attached with
a Wagglers
Adapter and
secured with
4 rubber float
stops, 1
above the
float and 3
below it

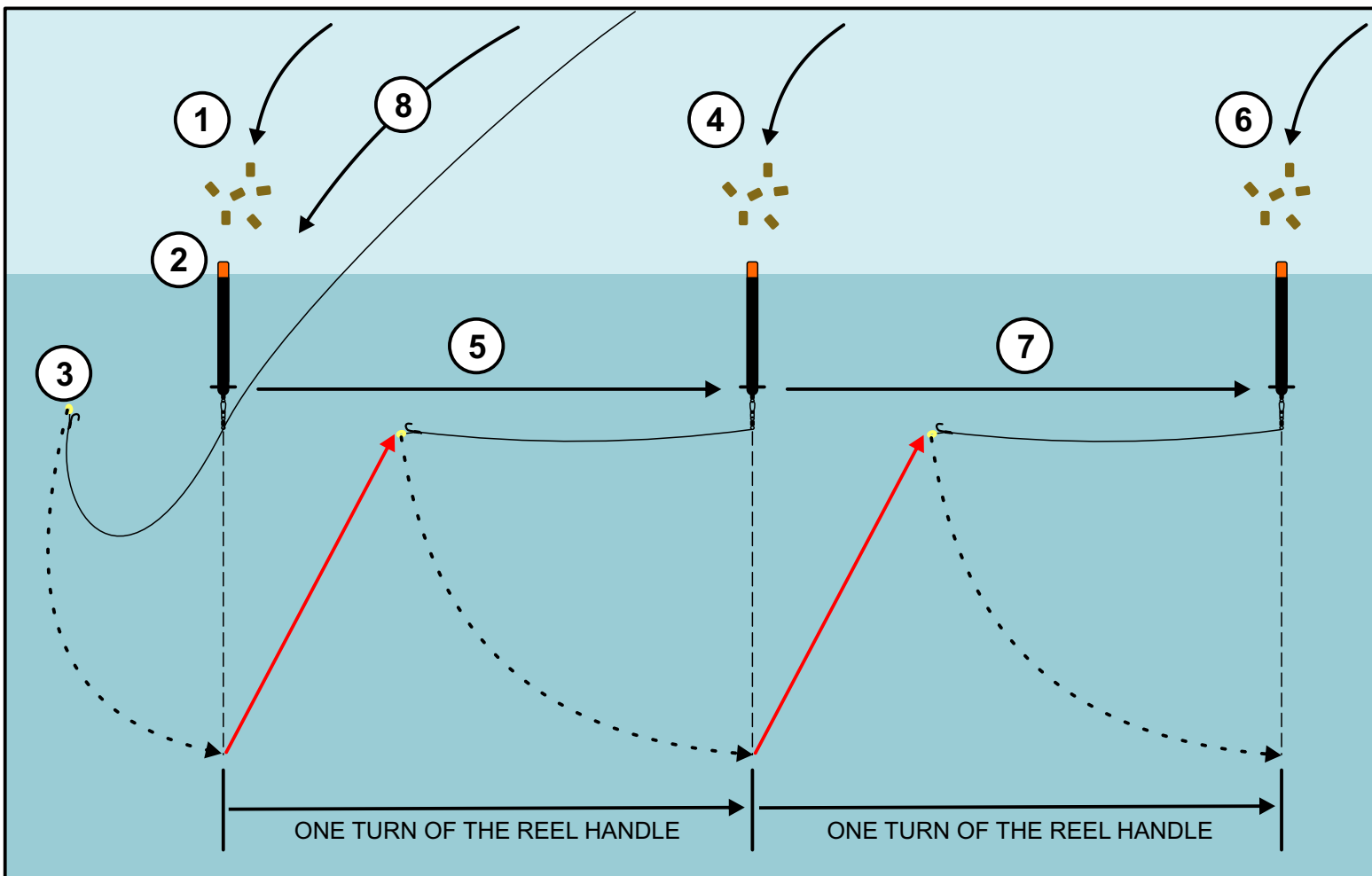
12" (30cm)
hooklink
with a bait
band



FISHING THE PELLET WAGGLER -

Pellet Waggler is one of those methods that is quite seasonal and heavily dependent on the fish. If you think the fish might be feeding shallow or on the surface, you can start to pre-feed or *prime* the swim. If you have read the situation wrong or the fish are not in the mood, they will let you know by ignoring the pellets or by disappearing completely. However, if they are in the mood they may start to splash and *boil* in the area you have been feeding. You need to create competition between the fish, get them fighting for every pellet. To do this, feed no more than half a dozen, 6mm pellets every 30 seconds to a minute. This process may take anything from 5 minutes up to 2 hours, so be patient. Once they are *committed to the feed* you can start thinking about how you are going to catch them.

Be warned, when large Carp are feeding like this, they can be violent and aggressive. The bites you will get will be instant. You may not see your float after it has hit the water, but your rod will be bent right round. It is very important to keep the rod in your hand, or at least very close to you. Use a *Gripper butt rest* if you do have to put it down for any reason.



Step 1. Fire out some pellets to the far side of the *feed zone* that you have been feeding or priming.

Step 2. Cast out to where you just fed and click the bail arm over as soon as the float lands.

Step 3. The hookbait will slowly fall through the water, following the feed down.

Step 4. Keeping an eye on your float at all times, fire some pellets out 1 metre short of where the float is.

Step 5. Twitch the rod or turn the reel handle once, so the float moves into the newly fed area. The pellet will rise in the water, ready to start the process over again.

Step 6. Back to step 4 and time to pick up the catapult again. Don't forget to watch that float at all times. fire some more pellets 1 metre short of the floats second position.

Step 7. As in step 5, twitch the rod or wind the reel handle again to move the float over the 3rd fed area.

Step 8. Feed long to the first position and start the whole process over again.

From step 1 to step 8 should take no longer than about 1 minute.

When the fish are really going for it, it will pay you not to let the float sit for too long. The fish want a moving bait close to the surface, so keep feeding, keep casting and you will keep catching. On the right day, this is a killer method.

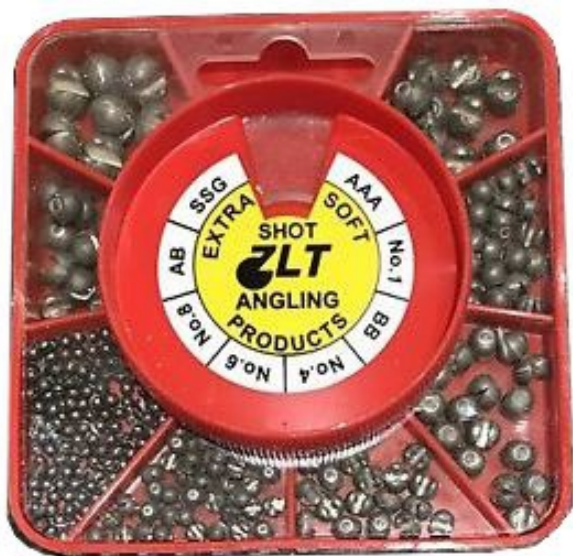
WEIGHTS & SPLIT SHOTS

Split shot as we know it today originally came from shotgun cartridges. Anglers would carefully cut splits or slots in the tiny lead balls from the cartridge and pinch them to the line to fish with. Using lead for fishing weights was not kind to animals, birds, or indeed, anglers and was banned in 1987 in sizes from No.6 shots up to 2oz (60g) bombs. It was, however, widely recognised that most of the lead shot eaten by birds came from Shotguns rather than fishing tackle.

Learning your split shot tables is tricky to get your head around at first. But the more you work at it, the easier it gets.

The biggest sizes of shot are given letters as names. From SSG, AA (sometimes known as AAA) and BB. The numbers then take over with No.1, going all the way down to No.13. The bigger the number, the smaller the shot.

In the days of lead shot, the larger sizes could be a real pain to use. Squeeze them on too hard and they would damage or even cut the line. If you wanted to move them, it could be disastrous. But now with more modern materials, shots can be moved and reused over and over again. They can be opened with a thumbnail. But you still have to be careful how you fix them to the line. The last thing you will want to do is damage it.



Split Shot is designed so you can break it down into smaller sizes, using smaller and smaller shots to balance your float so it sits correctly in the water.

The chart on this page shows how you can use the split shots so that they work together to produce a sensitive set up.

SHOT	WEIGHT	SHOT EQUIVALENT
SSG	1.6 g	2 x AA
AA or AAA	0.8 g	2 x BB
BB	0.4g	2 x No.4
No.4	0.2g	2 x No.6
No.6	0.1g	2 x No.8
No.8	0.06	2 x No.10
No.9	0.05	
No.10	0.04	2 x No.12
No.11	0.03	
No.12	0.02	2 x No.13
No.13	0.01	

As you can see, some of the numbers don't add up. But for the sake of simplicity, I don't think we need to worry about fractions of a gram too much. You will not really need to use the smallest shots until you get to making delicate pole rigs.

When you are learning to fix shot to the line, a good tip is to use a biscuit tin lid to catch any shots that you drop, and you will drop some I can assure you and you will be able to hear it when you do.

If you are using an unloaded float, you are going to have some *Bulk shot* around the float. It may seem a bit fussy but, I like to have all the slots lined up so they face the same way. It's not just OCD, a much better angler than me told me that it stops the line from twisting up, and who am I to argue? Only for larger shots from No.6 upwards.

For **SSG** down to **No.6** my recommendation is to use **ZLT shots** and for **No.8** to **No.13** I go for **Guru** split shots.

I tend to only use split shot for Silverfish. There is a good reason for that too. When you're fishing for Carp you will be using thicker lines, 5lb and upwards. Not only are split shots difficult to get on thicker lines, it's even harder to get them to stay there. Line stretches when you're playing a larger fish and split shots, particularly small ones, have a tendency to ping off. Leaving you with an under shot float.

For Carp fishing, particularly on the pole, I will use weights called *Stotz*.



STOTZ -

These little weights have revolutionised match fishing in particular and modern fishing in general. For the better I might add. The rise of commercial fisheries and the ever growing popularity of Carp, has seen the biggest change in fishing over the last number of years. As the target fish got bigger, line diameters went up and using split shot became a problem.

Stotz solved all that over night.

Because they are square in shape, the slots can be longer and deeper than the round split shot, they hold the line much better and don't ping off under stress.

They do have a tendency to slip up the line though, especially when they come into contact with the rim of your landing net. But, as we have mentioned earlier, the old shots would have simply cut the line instead. So it is the better of two evils and no great hardship to move your shots back to where they should be.



STYL LEADS -

Probably a forerunner to the Stotz. Longer and thinner, with a strange rating system. Maybe seen as a bit old fashioned these days, but definitely still relevant to modern fishing. They have an advantage of being 'trimable' to get the size of weights exactly as you need it to be. Ideal for extremely fine tipped pole floats.

SAFETY WITH FISHING WEIGHTS -

Split shot, particularly those made from lead, are not without risk however. Minimal though it may be. It is all too tempting to pop the shots on the line and nip them on with your teeth. I have to confess I and many other anglers have been doing exactly that since we started fishing with lead shot all those years ago.

But it is not the right way to do it and now, as an angling coach, I cannot condone using my teeth anymore. It isn't a good way to stay on the right side of your dentist either! Not to mention the years of lead you will absorb. Not Good...

The way to go is to use special tools like *Stotta Pliers*, *mini pinchers* or the special pincher for Styl leads. Any flat ended pliers will do the job though. Non serrated pliers are better.

I have had to retrain myself to use these and getting the right pressure on the pliers took a bit of getting used to.

Stotz are easier to get on because they don't roll around like split shots do. The tricky little devils are a pain to start with, but you can learn how to do it by practising.

STOTTA



STYL PINCHERS

LEDGERING -

You are more likely to hear it called *Fishing the bomb* or a *Straight lead* these days, especially in the winter.

Ledgering uses a fixed or running lead weight that anchors your rig to the bottom and provides something to tighten your quiver tip up to.

Traditionally, ledgering was fished with a large round lead weight with a hole through which the line is threaded known as a *Drilled Bullet*.

Later, two iconic anglers, Fred J Taylor and Richard 'Dick' Walker, came up with a lead that had a swivel cast into the end. First used at a Bedfordshire venue, Arlesey Lake. And so the famous Arlesey Bomb was created.

Ledgering hasn't changed all that much in the years since those Arlesey days. The technology has improved as you would expect, but the principles are the same.

The set up for Ledgering is very similar to that used for feeder fishing whereby the bomb is attached either to a *Paternoster* or as a free running lead.

The *ICS System* (Right) mentioned later on in the *Feeder* section will also come into play as a further option.

The straight lead can be a deadly option, especially in the winter with bread punch on the hook. But it's not just a winter method. In summer time, a straight lead can be amazingly effective on certain venues with pellets.



It's not just lakes where ledgering can score big either. Rivers lend themselves nicely to this method, with the current making the bait waft enticingly.

A very early ledgering technique that was taught to me many years ago, is a very simple one. The main line and hooklink are attached to each other using a feeder bead. A length of spare line is folded over the main line and a series of SSG shots are fixed to it so that a loop is created to let the ledgerlink run freely on the main line.

If the shots should get snagged on anything, they will simply pull off and free the rig. No tackle or even fish are lost.

Ledgering has borrowed tackle from *Pole fishing* too. Long, slim, inline weights called *Olivettes* have been used in winter to offer an extremely delicate way of presenting a ledged bait. Being inline, it can be prone to picking up debris from the bottom but, because of its slender shape, the Olivette ledger can usually find a way out. This ability of *low resistance* is why the rig is so good.

PATERNOSTER? -

A Paternoster rig is basically a large loop or a spare piece of line tied into/onto the main line to form a link or *Boom*. This boom enables the angler to fish the ledged bait off the bottom by varying the length of the boom. This helps to keep the hook bait away from debris on the river or lake bed. Using the spare line method, split shot can be added to the boom so that, if the weights become snagged, they simply pull off and free the rig. The Loop version works in a similar way only, instead of *Splicing* a second piece of line onto the main line, a large loop is tied in using a *Dropper knot*.

We will be looking at several useful knots later on in the booklet.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #1 -

Many fisheries today, commercial fisheries, have steeply sloped areas around the edges of the water and around any islands that may be present. These areas are known as *Margins*.

They may not have been dug that way though.

Carp by nature can be fairly destructive in large numbers. Anglers will encourage them to compete for food, so they feed very aggressively to gain all the food they can. Feeding activity like this can dig out the sides of islands and the marginal areas of a lake pretty quickly.

If you cast into an area like this with a round shaped bomb and tighten your quiver tip to it, you may find that you keep moving the bomb along the bottom or that it just rolls down the slope.

You could fit a heavier bomb, but this reduces the delicacy of your rig and increases the disturbance on the water when you cast.

That is the reason why most bombs are square or flattened these days, like the one on the left. The square shape has a better chance of staying where you want it to.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #2 -

When you are fishing with a quiver tip, be it with a feeder or a bomb, it is good practice to set your rod on the rests so the tip is as close to the water as possible. When it is windy, you may want to have the tip under the surface by a centimetre or two. This will stop false indications from the wind or by being buffeted by the waves and making detecting bites difficult.



PLUMMETS -

It's funny how the smallest of things can make the biggest of difference. Nothing in fishing falls into that category better than the humble *Plummet*.

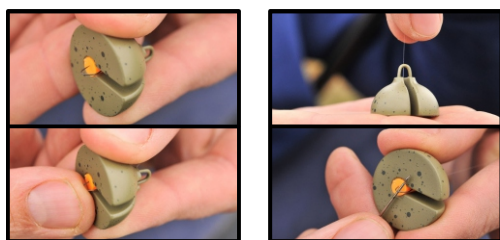
Plummetts are special weights with a hoop on the top and a soft material on the bottom or on the underside for you to be able to push your hook into with out damaging the *point*.

A Plummet can be your fingers and eyes on the end of your line. Feeling all the bumps and dips on the bottom, finding rocks and stones. You can even learn what the lake is sitting on. Clay, Silt, leaves, twigs or weed.

It is an advantage to have more than one size of Plummet too. Heavy Plummetts give a good positive reading, but will sink in soft mud or *Plug* (get stuck). This will stretch the line and give you a false reading. Medium sized Plummetts won't sink as much and they won't stretch the line. But you can't cast them with a Waggler. Light Plummetts will cast ok and are great for fine tuning your set up to get it absolutely spot on. They won't be as positive when you are *feeling* your way along the bottom.

I will start with a medium Plummet to find out how hard the bottom is. If it's soft, I'll go lighter. If it's hard, I'll go heavier.

If I have cast any distance further than say 6 metres or further than I can under arm cast to, I will use an SSG shot as a Plummet and pinch it on to the hook. Be careful not to damage the hook point.



The diagram on the right shows how to use a Plummet with a Straight Waggler float to find out how deep the water is.

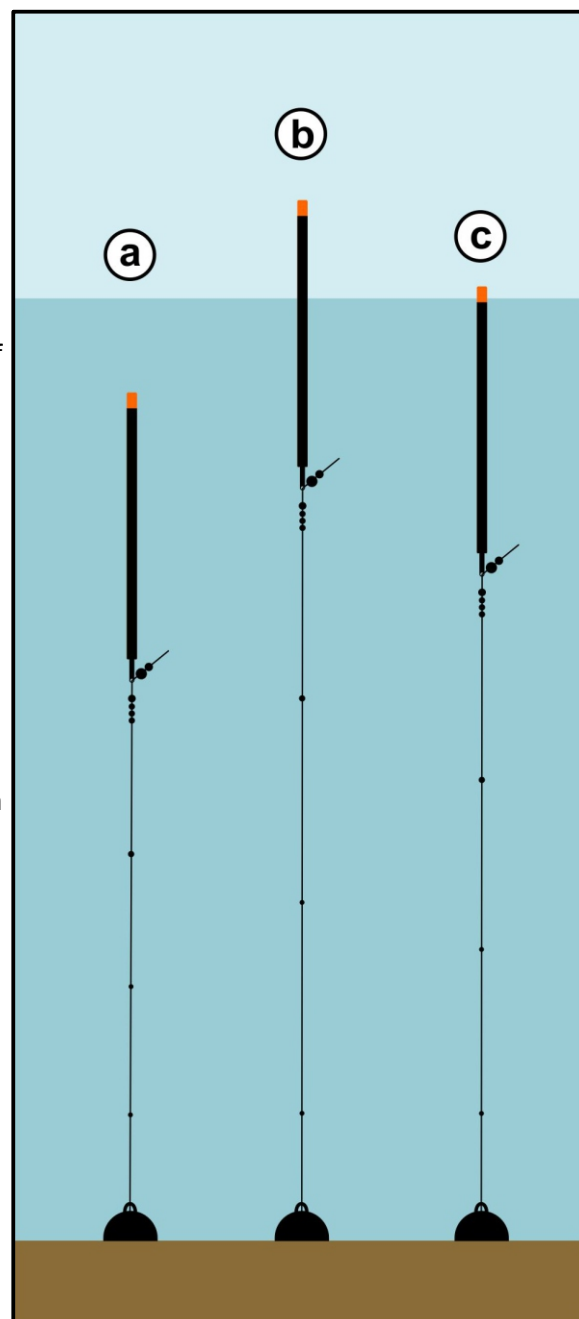
Note that the float has had one of the larger shots removed to make it more buoyant and give a more positive reading. Remember to replace the shot before you start fishing.

In figure (a) the float is set too shallow (too close to the hook). The float will sink when you cast it in the water.

Figure (b) shows a float set too deep and this where taking the shot off pays off. If you had left the shot on, the float would sit perfectly and you wouldn't know if it was too deep or not. Taking the shot off makes the float pop out of the water further than it should, indicating that you are too deep.

Figure (c) shows a float that is the right depth, perfect in fact. You can make a note of this depth on your rod with Tippex. Most rods will have a ring or a loop as a *Hook up*. Pop your hook in the hook up, take up the slack line and mark the rod with the Tippex. Don't worry, it will scratch off with a thumb nail. Marking the depth like this will give you a *Datum*. A mark to come back to if you decide to fish deeper or shallower, without having to use the Plummet again.

As I have said already, using a Plummet to 'see' the bottom of the lake is priceless when it comes to the battle of wits with nature. Take your time when you are using your Plummet. Get to know the shapes and contours of the water. Ridges and little hollows can also be a clue to where the fish may be found. Examine the Plummet when it comes out of the water. It may give you an indicator of mud or silt.



FEEDERS

The choice of feeders is every bit as wide and varied as floats. Feeder fishing has become one of the most popular methods today and is a great way to start learning about fishing.

So what is a feeder?

A *Swimfeeder*, to give it the full title, is a weighted bait holder that is attached to the line and cast out with a baited hook. There are dozens of variations of feeders to cover any situation you may encounter, and countless more shapes and sizes.

As before, we will take a look at which feeders will be of most use to us on the waters that we might visit. I recommend a feeder of between 15 and 30 grams. Which feeder type is up to you but, each feeder has it's own uses and you will find that you will get better results with some than with others.

Which feeder you choose will also depend on the bait you wish to use. Some feeders are designed for pellets only, some for particle baits like maggots, Casters, hemp etc, and others can be used with either Pellets or groundbait.

Probably the most popular feeder is the Method Feeder. Some love them, others hate them and a few have even banned them. But whatever your view, the Method Feeder is here to stay.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #3 - Method Feeders are designed to be used with a *Feeder Mould*. Make sure you get the mould to match your feeder. One size does not fit all and it DOES make a difference.



METHOD FEEDER - Inline (Running freely on the line) or Elasticated (Tied to the line or *fixed*), these flat bottomed feeders are, by far, the most common. With the weight of the feeder built into the frame at the bottom. Method Feeders will always land on the bottom the right way up. The ribs on the feeder are designed to hold the bait in place until it reaches the bottom. The hookbait is on a very short hooklink and hidden within the feed.



COMBI FEEDER - Inline or Elasticated and very similar to a Method Feeder. A Combi Feeder has higher built up sides and no ribs. There are holes in the bottom of the frame to allow water to soak into the feed to help release it. The high sides protect the bait from being '*blown off*' on impact with the water, making them good for long range casts and/or deep water. However the Combi Feeder can be used anywhere, with or without a mould.



PELLET FEEDER - The Pellet Feeder, as the name would suggest, is designed only for Pellets. Fish can attack a Method or a Combi feeder from almost any angle. But with a Pellet feeder, the fish are forced to feed at one end, where the hook is. Gently push some soaked micro pellets, place the hookbait inside and cover with more pellets. Don't push them in too hard because they won't be able to come out. Try meat to islands.



OPEN ENDED FEEDER - Probably the most commonly used feeder before the age of the Method Feeder. Groundbait can be loaded from either end, baits like maggots, corn, hemp, meat, etc can be used as a filling, with a plug of groundbait to seal the other end. Smaller versions are great in the winter with small amounts of liquidised bread. The Open Ended feeder is as happy in Rivers as it is in lakes.



CAGE FEEDER - Made from either wire or plastic, the bait in a Cage feeder is exposed from every angle. Bait will be introduced to the water very quickly so they are good for baiting up or priming your swim. For deeper swims you can slow down the release of the bait by wrapping electricians tape around the centre section to blank off some holes.



BLOCK END FEEDER - Mostly used on rivers and like all feeders come in many shapes and sizes. Block End feeders are designed to introduce particle baits and is probably more known for use with maggots. One end is fixed, the other removable so the feeder can be filled. The bait is washed from the feeder by the current in the river. Smaller versions can be used on still waters in the winter with maggots. Always bait your hook before filling your feeder.



DISTANCE FEEDER -

Basically a cage feeder with a large streamlined weight out in front to carry the feeder through the air over longer distances than regular feeders. In experienced hands, these feeders can travel a very long way, reaching fish that might think they are safe feeding 100 metres from the nasty anglers.



BAIT UP or SPOD FEEDERS -

Designed for only one purpose. Depositing large amounts of bait into your swim very quickly. In the picture you will see a very large feeder next to a Spod Feeder. They are not that heavy when they are empty, ranging from 20 to 40 grams. But load one up with bait and you are talking about something that a standard feeder rod probably will not be able to handle. A carp rod would be more up to the task.

Use the Spod at the beginning of a session or to pre-bait a swim for a future trip.

You can load up your Spod in the same way as a normal feeder, with particle baits trapped between groundbait plugs.



METHOD FEEDER MOULD -

Lay your hookbait in the centre of the mould and cover with pre-soaked pellets or a method groundbait mix.

Gently press down with your thumb and cover this again with some more pellets or groundbait.

Take your feeder and push the ribs into the mix in the mould. This is where you need to have the right mould for the job.

Now press the feeder into the mould as hard as you can!

Pop the whole lot out and you will be left with a perfect mound of pellets with the bait sat right on the top. I always like to give it one last squeeze before I cast out just to make sure everything is where it should be.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #4 -

If your pellets squish out of the feeder mould when you press the feeder in, then they are too wet. Adding a little *dry method mix* may help to dry them out a bit.

Feeder fishing requires some special equipment to work effectively. It is necessary to place the rod in some *Rod rests*.

If you are using a *Seatbox* this will be much easier because the attachment can be fixed to the legs of the box instead of having to be pushed into the ground. Many modern fisheries have hard standing areas from which to fish. Either stoney areas at the waters edge or wooden platforms. Either one will make it hard to get banksticks in the ground.



For the front rest, an extendable feeder arm that can be set at different lengths and adjusted up or down.



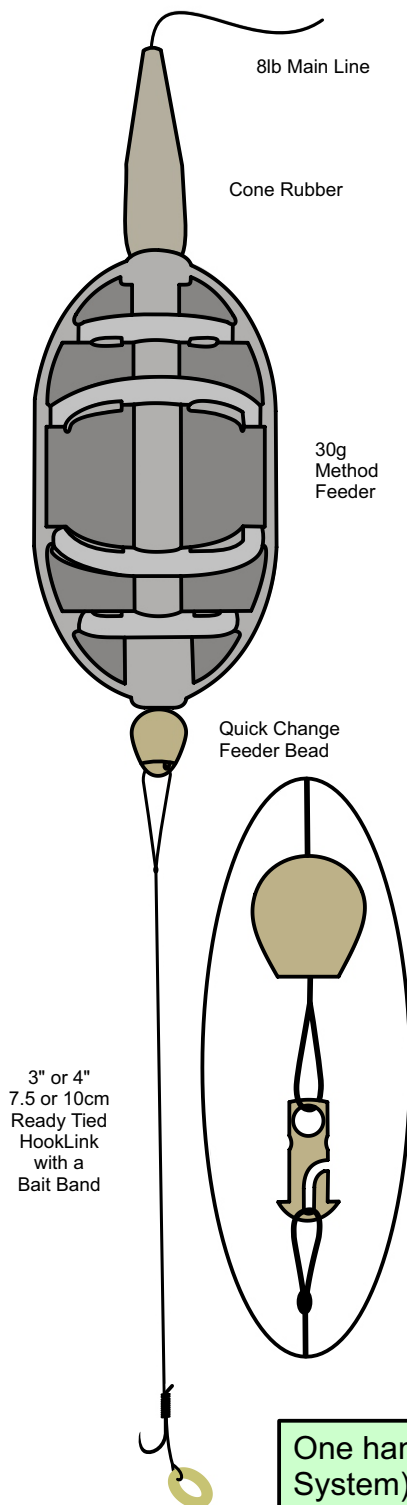
For the rear rest, I use a an angled arm into which I can fix a *Butt Gripper Rest*.

Both of these arms will require rod rest heads. I feel that the most important of these is the Butt Gripper rest. A Gripper rest kind of does what the name suggests and actually grips the rod. This extra security is essential for going to fisheries with large Carp.



At the front you can use several types of rest, but you might like to consider one that has multiple rod positions.





You will need at least two types of hooklinks for you Method Feeder rigs. A *banded hooklink* and a *Quickstop* hooklink. When you go to your local tackle shop, ask for the following;

For a Pellet hookbait -

Banded Method Feeder hooklinks in a size 14 and/or 16.

and for a soft hookbait (Sweetcorn, Meat, Bread etc.) -

Method Feeder hooklinks in a size 14 and/or 16 with Quickstops.

Method, Combi and Pellet Feeder hooklinks are short, maybe no longer than 3" or 4" (7.5cm or 10cm). You are more likely to get them in the 4" length, but if you can get your hands on some of the shorter ones, get some of those too.

Other feeder types require longer hooklinks, from 6" (15cm) right up to 2ft (60cm) and beyond. Longer hooklinks are now readily available from shops, so if you're planning on doing some conventional feeder work, go for those.

INLINE OR ELASTICATED? -

You do need to be a little careful here. Elasticated feeders are a great idea because the built in length of pole elastic absorbs the lunges of the fish brilliantly. The downside of these feeders is that they are tied directly to the line and therefore *fixed*. Many fisheries have banned fixed feeders because, if the line should snap, the fish will trail around a feeder until it's removed or it manages to get rid of it. Putting the fish at risk.

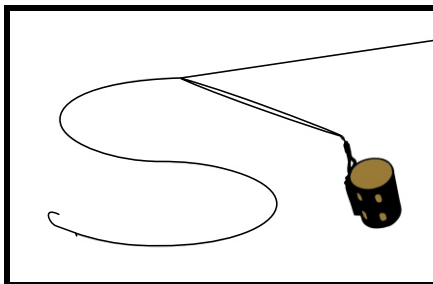
My advice to you to begin with, is to stick to the Inline versions that have the line running through a tube down the centre of the feeder. They are not fixed to the line and, should the line break, the feeder will simply fall away.

Tackle company Guru, have a design of elasticated feeder that is safer than a fixed feeder. But even they are frowned upon by some.

Stick with Inline feeders so you don't upset anyone or break any rules.



One handy system that I would like you to know about is the ICS (Inter Change System) by Preston innovations. The main stem of the feeder stays on the line and you can just change the feeder itself without breaking down your tackle each time. Method, Combi, Cage, Pellet & a Bomb all become available on one rod.

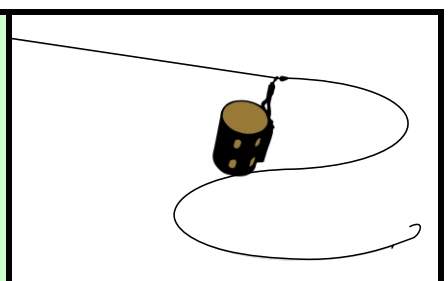


PATERNOSTER -

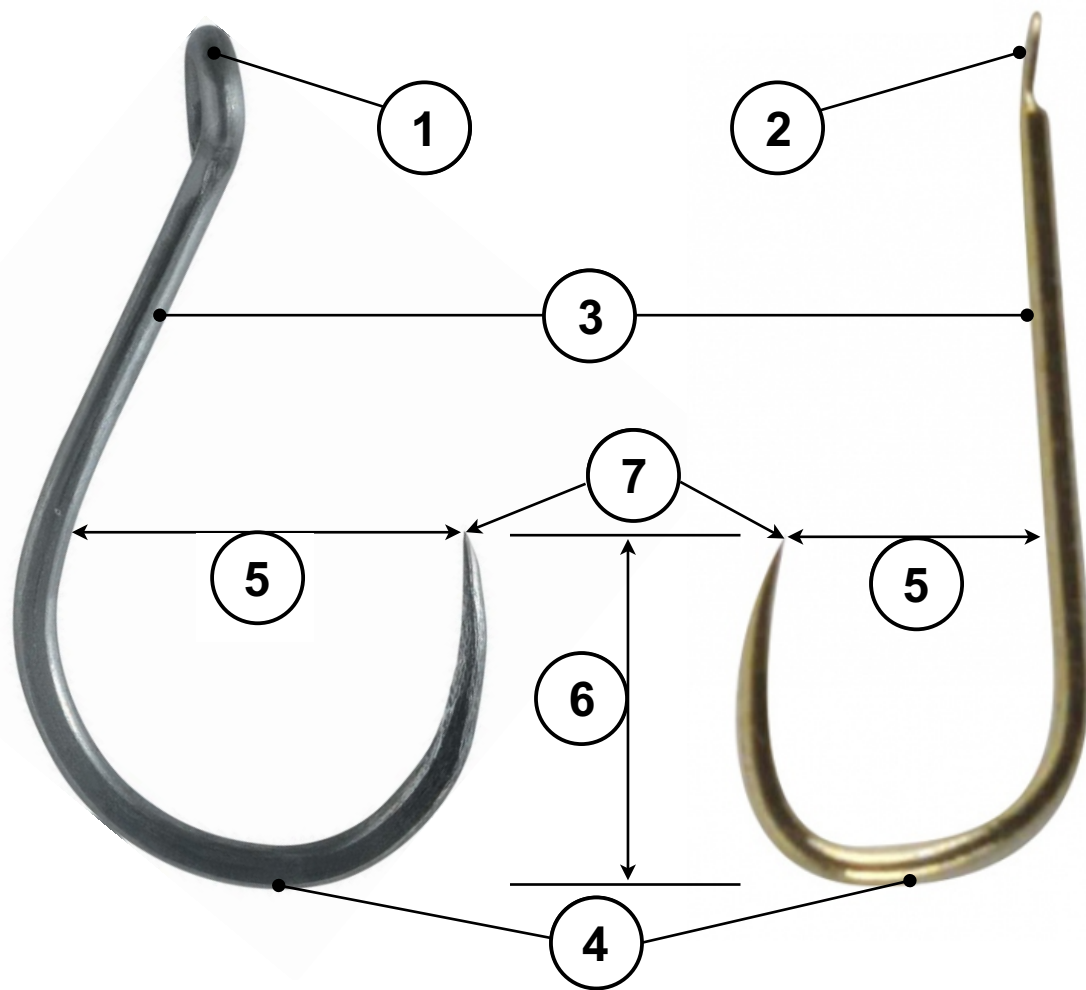
The feeder is attached to a large fixed loop. The amount of line the fish can take before it moves the feeder depends on the size of the loop. It will have to be long enough to register a good bite.

RUNNING FEEDER -

The feeder is free running on the line and sits against a feeder bead. This rig, unlike the fixed Paternoster will rely on you to actually set the hook by *striking*.



HOOKS



HOOKS -
Without one, you're not going to catch much and by now you will realise there are hundreds to choose from. I have picked out a few that I personally would recommend. Let's take a look at what makes a fishing hook first.

1. Eye
2. Spade
3. Shank
4. Bend
5. Gape
6. Throat
7. Point

BARBED or BARBLESS? -

Another area that you need to be very aware of. Nearly ALL fisheries today have banned barbed hooks completely. In fact all DDAS waters have a ban on barbed hooks for coarse fish. There is an exception for pike, read the handbook for details. To be honest, they are easier to use because they are easy to remove from anything they are not supposed to be hooked into and easy remove from things that they are. There is no doubt that fish have benefited greatly from the use of barbless hooks. Do not take a chance on using barbed hooks, you will get caught and you will be asked to remove them, or remove yourself. Your choice.

HOOKS TO NYLON -

There is a vast choice of hooks on the market and there is a forest of differing opinions to get lost in. My advice to those starting out, is to go for ready tied hooks. *Hooks to nylon*, as they are known, are a much better option. Tying your own hooks can be fiddley, frustrating and hard to get right in the beginning. However, like me, you just might be sad enough to actually enjoy it! Hooks to nylon really help new anglers, (and old ones) to get fishing quickly. Here are some hooks for you to look out for.



Preston MCM-B.
Brilliant hooks for the Method Feeder and bait band.
Sizes 12 to 16.
10cm.



Preston GPM-B.
Replaces the old PR434 and is available in either eyed or spade end. Nice hook for general soft or hard pellet fishing in the summer.
Sizes 18 & 16.
15cm.



Preston KKM-B.
Replaces the old PR36. An excellent hook for bigger fish on the Feeder, Waggler or Pole.
Sizes 12 to 16.
10 & 15cm.



Drennan Wide Gape Carp.
A great hook for soft pellets with a very short shank so the hook is out of sight of wary fish.
Sizes 16 to 20.
20cm.



Drennan Silverfish Maggot.
A reliable hook for....Silverfish. With maggots. Surprising right?
Sizes 16 to 20.
20cm.

GURU QM1 -
Beautifully tied hooks
on spools in a choice
of three options/
Bait Bands, Bayonets
and Quickstops.
15" (37.5cm) long
making them ideal for
fishing the Pellet
Waggler.
Sizes 12 to 16.



**VARIATIONS OF READY
TIED HOOKS -**
As if there wasn't enough
choices already, there are
four types of hooklinks to
choose from depending
on the type of hook you
need and the type of bait
you are using.
Straight hook for soft
pellets, bread and
maggots. Banded for hard
baits and pellets. Bayonet
for mini boilies and
Quickstops for soft baits
like meat, bread and corn.



GURU F1 -
Very fine but
surprisingly
strong hooks.
Particularly useful
in winter
because of how
light they are.
Two varieties,
pellet and
maggot.
Sizes 16 to 20
15cm.

You don't have to go out and buy all of the hooks above, but some of hooks are very specific in their use. As you progress along your fishing journey you will collect a variety of hook patterns and if you have some of these in your collection, then you should be covered. Just remember to match the hook with the bait and tackle you are using. Balanced tackle.

HOOK STORAGE -

The enemy of fishing line is ultraviolet light (Sunshine). The enemy of hooks is water. If your hooks are exposed to either for prolonged periods of time, it will certainly reduce the performance of your equipment. The best way to reduce this problem is use properly designed hook boxes. They are water resistant, well organised and they will keep the sunlight off them.



STRAIGHT HOOK

BANDED HOOK



BAYONET



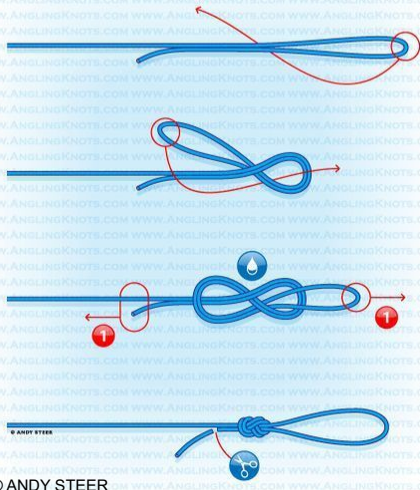
QUICKSTOP



KNOTS

You won't get far or catch much without them. Some knots are pretty easy to get used to, where as others need practice to get right. Knots in general do have one thing in common in that they will all need wetting before you tighten them. Monofilament in particular can get damaged during the tightening process and when Mono gets damaged, it is weakened. Good old spit (Saliva) is the best lubricant for knots. Here are some of the most useful knots that you will need to practice for your fishing sessions.

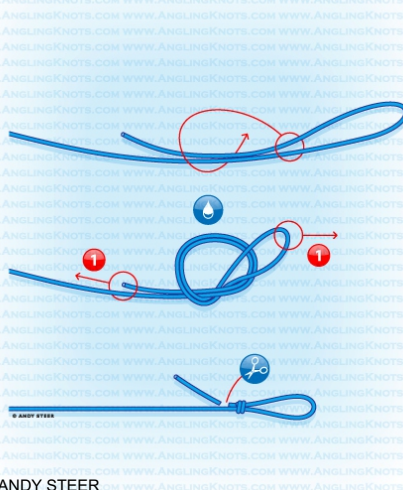
Figure of eight loop



© ANDY STEER

FIGURE OF EIGHT LOOP KNOT -
This knot is the most important for you to learn. Even if you use ready tied tackle, you will always need a loop somewhere in your set up and this one is the best.

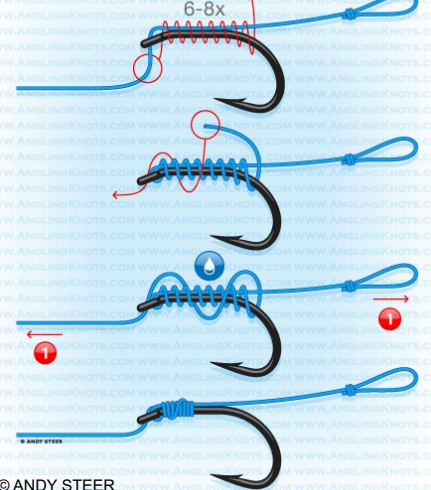
Hair loop



© ANDY STEER

HAIR LOOP KNOT -
the most basic of loop knots and one that you will need particularly if you are going to start tying your own rigs and hooklinks.

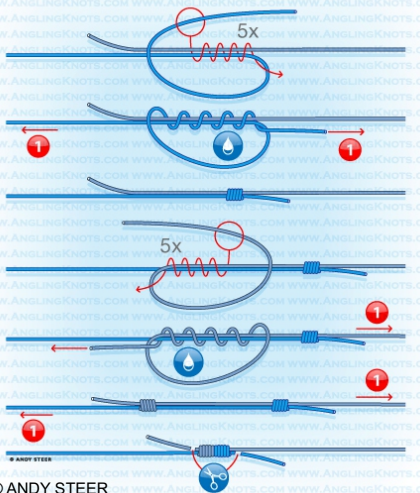
Knotless knot



© ANDY STEER

KNOTLESS KNOT -
A revolutionary knot that changed the way we way we fish forever. I normally like to whip the knot down so it is almost level with the hook point.

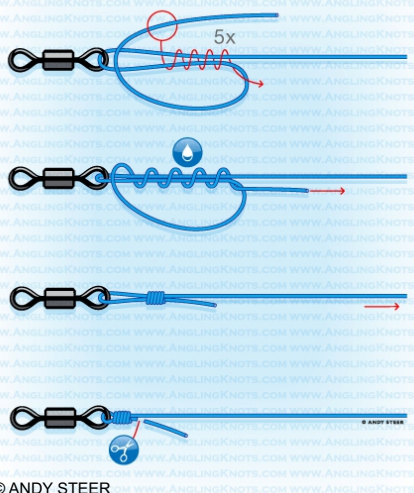
Double Grinner knot



© ANDY STEER

DOUBLE GRINNER KNOT -
A very secure knot for tying to pieces of line together. Useful if you want to lengthen a Pole rig or if you your line snaps. I would, however, rather start again than rely on any knot.

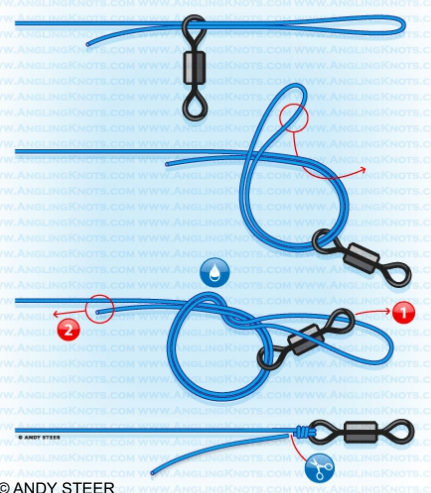
Grinner knot



© ANDY STEER

GRINNER KNOT -
My favourite knot for tying on large hooks for Carp for instance. Easily tied and easy to learn. Ease the knot down to tighten it, don't give it a big pull because it can damage the line.

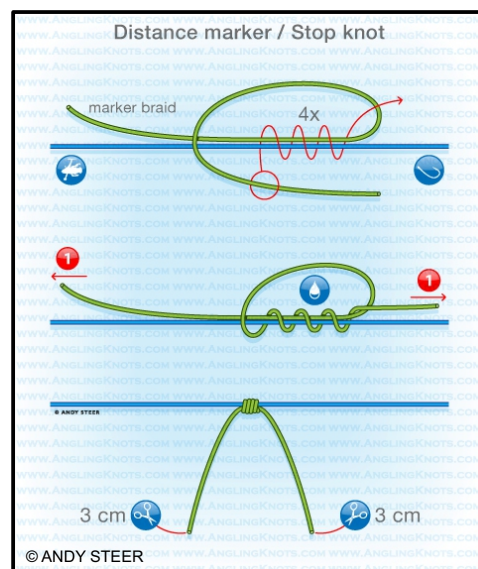
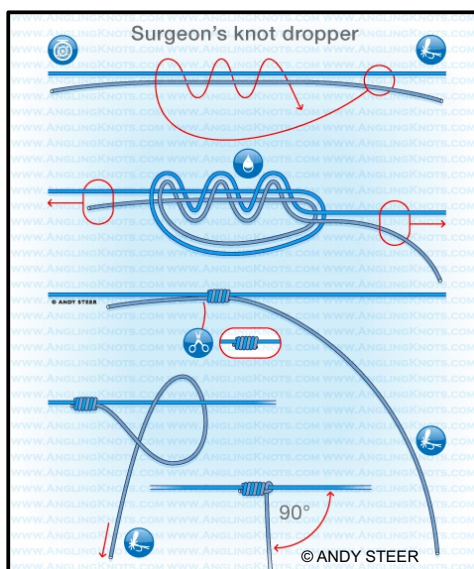
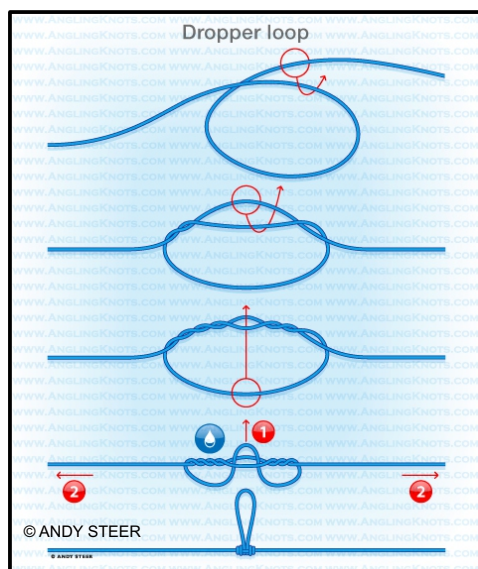
Palomar knot



© ANDY STEER

PALOMAR KNOT -
Probably the most reliable and the strongest knot that you will ever need. This is another knot that needs to be teased up rather than pulled. Use for hooks or swivels.

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DROPPER KNOT -

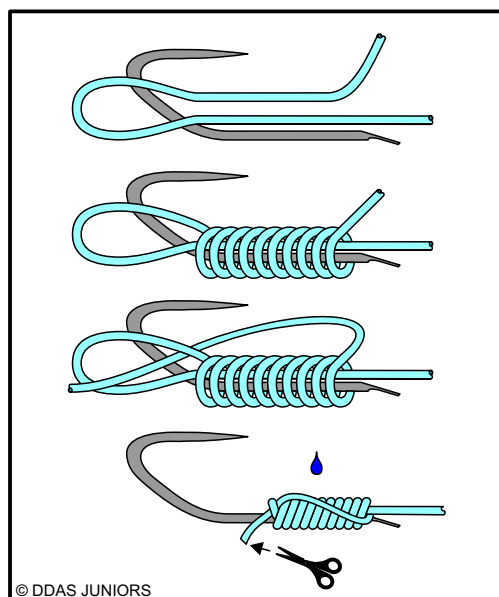
I always feel like I need three thumbs to tie this knot, but maybe I need more practice. A sturdy little knot for Feeder and Ledger fishing with a fixed link.

SURGEONS KNOT DROPPER -

Easier to tie than a Dropper knot and good if you only need one piece of line boom link. The last little tuck is handy because it kicks the boom out a 90° from the main line.

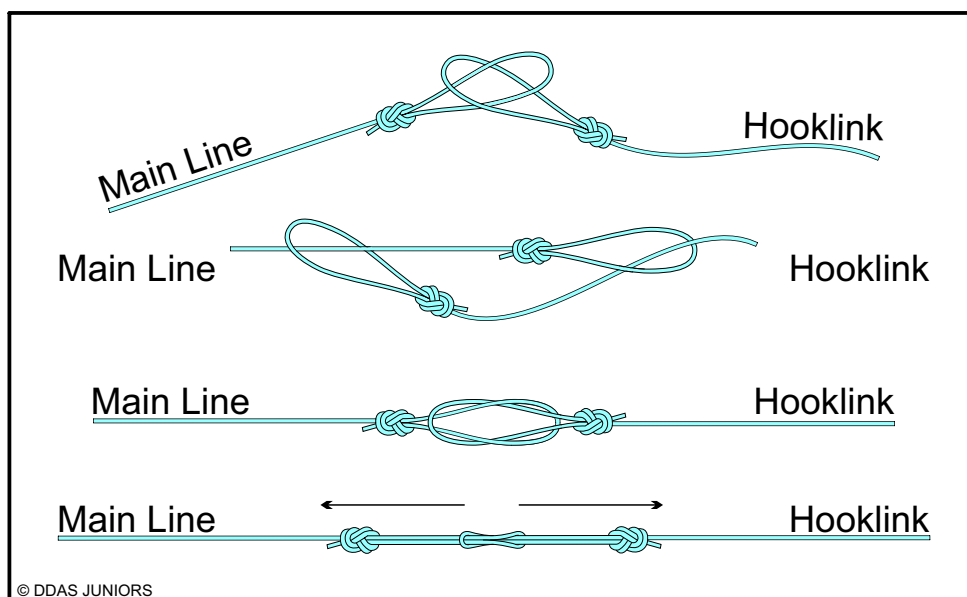
STOPPER KNOT -

An easy little knot for use with slider floats, controller floats and Pike bungs. Leave the tag ends long so they have less resistance as they pass through the rod rings.



SPADE or WHIPPING KNOT -

Essential to know about but probably the hardest to tie with small hooks. Spade End hooks tend to be on the small side making this a fiddly knot to tie. Even I use a hooktyer for this one.



TWO LOOPS KNOT -

The easiest knot to learn, but a very important one. Whether you tie your own or not, all ready pre-tied hooklinks are attached using this knot. This is where using a loop tyer really pays off. If your loops are all identical, they will all be the same and critically the same length. That also means your shooting pattern and depth won't be messed up by a new hooklink either.

BAIT

What you see in the picture opposite is not what you *must* have in your bait bag, it is simply the contents of my own. All anglers have their own, very different ideas and opinions on essential bait options.

I don't take bags of hard pellets with me. I put them in bait boxes instead. this should avoid spillages, unless I forget to replace the lid!

I use 1, 2 and 3 pint bait boxes, with plenty of spares for meat and corn. I also like to keep quantities to a minimum to keep the weight down.

HARD PELLETS:

2mm - 2 pts

4mm - 2 pts

6mm - 1pt/3pts in summer

8mm - 1pt/3pts in summer *

EXPANDER PELLETS:

4mm & 6mm, a bag of each.

METHOD MIX:

At least half a bag. **

FEED GROUNDBAIT:

At least half a bag. **

SWEETCORN:

At least one large tin.

LUNCHEON MEAT:

At least one tin if allowed.

HEMP:

One tin.

'BANDUM' STYLE PELLETS:.

A selection of sizes and colours.

PASTE:

At least half a bag in the summer months.

BREAD:

From a couple of slices, to a loaf. Plus punch crumb.

EQUIPMENT:

Pellet Pump, Bread punch box with punches, a fork or forks, Liquid Additives, Pellet Strainer & Method Moulds.

MAGGOTS:

At least one pint (not shown)

* If a venue likes a lot of bait, take 5 pints or more.

** If you won't use a whole bag, don't take it.



a) 2mm Pellets

b) 4mm Pellets

c) 6mm Pellets

d) 8mm Pellets

e) 4mm Expanders

f) 6mm Expanders

g) Method Mix

h) Feed Groundbait

i) Sweetcorn

j) Luncheon Meat

k) Hemp

l) Bandum Pellets

m) Paste

n) Bread

o) Punch Crumb

p) Pellet Pump

q) Bread Punch Box

r) Fork for mixing

s) Liquid Additives

t) Pellet Strainer

u) Method Mould

v) Large Bowl and Cover



PELLETS -

Modern fishing revolves around pellets and the variety is staggering. Available in hundreds of different colours, sizes and flavours, they are also very versatile. They can be used dry, soaked or oiled. Dyed, flavoured, pumped and drilled. The list goes on and on. We'll try to touch on a few basics with the pellets that are most commonly used.

6mm -

A great option for really big bags of fish on a commercial fishery. Easily fired some distance with a catapult, they make a lovely 'rattling sound' as they hit the water, which can drive Carp wild in the summer months. They can be used on the Pole, as a hookbait, on a Method Feeder or with a Waggler. A particularly good hookbait with a Pellet Waggler Float.



2mm or 'Micros' -

The most valuable pellet in any anglers bait bag. Usually used wetted or soaked in water to soften them and make them sink. They can be used for loose feed with Pole cup, can be made into tiny balls for throwing, cupping in with a Pole, moulded around a Method Feeder or in a Pellet Feeder.

8mm -

A big pellet that hits the water with a loud 'Plop' and can attract fish quickly from some distance. Brilliant as a hook bait for larger fish, especially in the margins. Excellent hook bait for a Method Feeder and a good one to start your session with.



4mm -

A good all round pellet for a banded hook or fed loosely, these pellets are better off being wetted otherwise they can float. Place the pellets on a strainer or a riddle and pour water over them. This 'flash soak' Method is so only the outside is moistened and not soaked through. They can be used dry with a bait band for Roach or Bream when they are really feeding well.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #5

Soaking times can vary from 30 seconds for some sticky, but firm pellets. To 2 minutes for softer, loose feed pellets for using with a Pole cup or pot.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #6

Pellets can be very filling sometimes and it is easy to overfeed. There are a couple of old sayings that you do well to remember. The first is, "*You can put it in the lake, but you can't take it out*" and "*Feed little and often*". Both carry the same message to be cautious at the beginning of a match or pleasure session, and build your swim slowly. Count how many pellets you are feeding each time. 3 pellets can become 5, 5 becomes 9 and pretty soon you've over done it, the fish are full and you're done.



SOFT HOOK PELLETS -

Commercially manufactured pellets that take all the effort out of preparing hook bait. They are easily hooked and are available in a variety of sizes, flavours and colours.



BANDED PELLETS -

These small, hard and usually colourful pellets are made from a similar mixture to *Boilies* used in Carp Fishing. As the name suggests, these are designed to be used on a bait band with all kinds of methods and are available in buoyant or floating (Pop ups), Semi buoyant or *Wafers* and regular sinking varieties.

EXPANDERS - Hard, light pellets that float and need soaking or pumping in order for them to be used as an effective hookbait. Even when thoroughly soaked, expanders can still float. But when they are hooked, the weight of the hook itself is enough to make it slowly sink. Mainly for use on the Pole. Sometimes used as a hookbait for a Method Feeder. Rarely used with a Waggler but it is possible at close range. There are basically four sizes of expanders, 2, 4, 6 & 8mm.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #7 - Pellets can be tricky to get into baits sometimes. A job made easier by using a *Pellet Bander* to hold the band open while you pop the pellet in.



MAGGOTS -

These little fellows have been used for fishing for a very, very, very long time. Bred from the Blue Bottle Fly, or 'Blow Fly' which lays it's eggs on dead and rotting meat.

Fortunately for us and all of our surrounding neighbours, maggots can be bought from virtually any fishing tackle shop and even online these days. Maggots come in many colours, not naturally, but dyed Red, Bronze, Pink and even Blue or Green. The natural colour of maggots is a creamy white. These and red maggots are the most popular. Bronze are a favourite of river anglers.

Every fish will eat maggots, even the mighty Pike can't resist a juicy wriggler.

Caring for maggots is fairly easy, but will require negotiation for use of a fridge. Maggots MUST be kept cold. Otherwise they continue their journey to becoming a fly and turn into their *chrysalis* stage, or *casters* as anglers call them.

When you get your maggots home from the shop, it is a good idea to run them through a large sieve called a *riddle*, and into a bowl. Once they have all wriggled through, you will be left with all the dead maggots, bones, feathers, old sawdust and old casters. You can get rid of them all.

The live maggots will be in the bowl, nice and clean. But if you put them into the fridge like this, they will sweat and release ammonia like smell, which is just nasty. Transfer them to a clean bait box and sprinkle some *Maize Meal Flour* over them, close the lid and give the a gentle shake to make sure every maggots has a coating of the flour.

If you are going to keep them for a while, use freshly sieved softwood sawdust. The sawdust will absorb the nasty stuff much better and for longer than maize. Whatever you put on them, it will need changing every few days, or whenever you notice them getting too sweaty. If you do all this, you should be able to keep your maggots fresh for anything from a few weeks to a month or more.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #8 -

Softwood sawdust will toughen the skin of a maggot and make them a bit more durable against smaller fish. Maize flour will soften them making them better for shy biting fish. Soft maggots get easily chewed or *ragged* by small hungry fish. choose your maggots wisely.



SWEETCORN -

'Corn' is a bright yellow bait that fish can sometimes find it hard to resist. Sweet and juicy, it is highly digestible and therefore very attractive to fish. The bright colour makes it very easy to see, even in the most cloudy and murky water.

Another plus point for corn, is that it is quite a large bait, with a moderately tough exterior. This makes it much more difficult for smaller, nuisance fish to eat it and it does tend to target better sized fish.

Most non predatory species will happily eat corn.



HEMP -

An oily seed bait sold in tins these days. It used to have to be boiled for at least an hour and had a slightly unpleasant smell to it. No more angry mums! Hemp is a little overlooked these days because of the fashionable pellet. But, make no mistake, Hemp is still deadly and can still hold it's own with the big baits on it's day. Hemp can hold fish in the swim for a long time, while they grub around for every last seed. Thought to look and feel a bit like water snails, Roach in particular are famous for their love of Hemp. Can be fiddley as a hook bait.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #9 -

If the lake you are going has a soft silty bottom, then don't use too much Hemp or Micro Pellets. Fish can become so totally preoccupied with rooting around in the mud, that they will ignore everything else you put in, however delicious it is. If it is deep silt, I would avoid using any small particle bait.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #10 -

Maggots must be kept dry. If maggots get wet the will escape everywhere, crawl into your tackle bag and then hatch into flies at home, making you extremely unpopular. Put the lid on the bait pot if it rains, cover it with towel or, better still, get a covered side tray. Never let *Pinkies* get wet. They're not called *Runners* for nothing.



LUNCHEON MEAT -

A tinned processed meat that Carp, Barbel and Tench love. It's very easy to use, easy to cut, easy to dye and to flavour. It stays on the hook pretty well, but I tend to use a Quickstop for meat anyway. Meat does have a downside to it though. It has a high fat content and fish have difficulty digesting fat. If used in large quantities, it can also affect the long term health of a fishery and increase algae growth. For this reason it is sometimes banned. So make sure it is allowed before you use it. Plumrose or Tulip brands are a favourite.



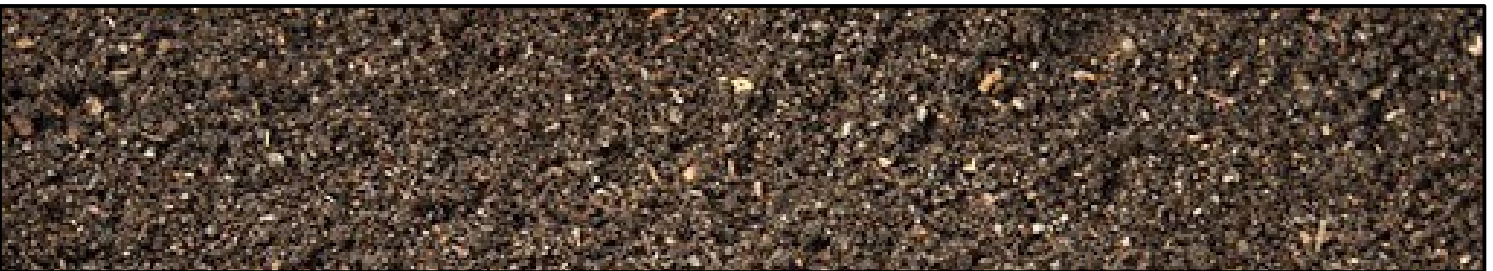
IMPORTANT

Some of the baits that we have looked at so far come in bags, tins or containers. Leaving this litter behind is bad for the environment and bad for angling. Take all your litter home with you and leave the lakes as you would want to find them. DDAS has a very strict policy on litter and the Juniors are no exception.

**TAKE ONLY PICTURES
LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS.**

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #11 -

When you have cut your meat up, pop in into a bait strainer and run it under a hot tap for a few minutes, this will dissolve the fat and wash it away leaving you with low fat meat and happier fish.



GROUNDBAIT -

If you have found the world of pellets and other baits confusing so far, welcome to the labyrinth of groundbait!

Go into any tackle shop and you are most likely to find row upon row, bag after bag of groundbait with fancy designs, telling you what you will DEFINITELY catch using this one or that one. Every groundbait is the best one ever and the likely hood of you ever needing anything else ever again is so remote, that there is no point in looking any further...

I am joking of course. Every bait company will put as much effort into enticing anglers to their products as they do making the product attractive to fish.

So which one is best?

I am sorry to inform you that there is no answer to that question. But we can make it easier to decide which to use and when.

Basically groundbait can be split into two groups, Cereal and Fishmeal.

CEREAL BASED GROUNDBAIT -

This more traditional style is centred around a *breadcrumb mix*. Ground cereals, coconut husk, ash and a whole host of sometimes very secret ingredients, are used to make groundbait that will attract fish like Roach and Bream, usually on more natural waters. The target species that the groundbait is designed to attract is sometimes emblazoned on the packaging. Of course the fish don't really care, they will eat anything. But time has proven the certain flavours attract certain fish. Sweeter mixes will attract Bream and Roach. Meatier mixes are a favourite of Barbel or Tench (Tench like *red* bait and I've never been able to work out why?) and Carp will just eat anything!

Finely ground mixes will hang in the water like a *cloud*, Hemp mixes will sink quickly and be more active or *Fizz* in the water. For me, *Sensas* has been a successful brand over the years, with *Sonubaits* coming a very close second in more modern times. Both give me the most vital ingredient of any groundbait mix, Confidence.

FISHMEAL BASED GROUNDBAITS -

Fishmeal mixes are relatively new by comparison with cereal mixes and, together with pellets, have taken over to a large degree from traditional mixes. That's not to say that the task of choosing which one to use has been made any easier. But we can split them into two categories.

METHOD MIX -

Does exactly what it says on the bag. Designed to be stickier and heavier than other mixes. They feature *binders* that hold the mix together and make it possible to include baits like pellets, maggots, casters or corn to add to the attraction. Most Method mixes will have the words 'Method Mix' printed on to the front and in the title. Any of these *Method Mixes* will do the job nicely, you will have plenty of choice.

FEED MIX -

General fishmeal groundbaits that can be used for attracting and holding fish in your swim in the same way as cereal groundbaits. Feed mixes can also be cut together with a Method Mix to add attraction or colour.

CRUSHED EXPANDERS -

Crushed or *Milled* Expander pellet groundbaits are generally for cold water fish species such as Carp, F1 Carp and Ide. They can be tricky to mix properly, probably due to the light expander pellets they are made from.

MIXING -

Empty it into a bowl and chuck water on it, right?
No. No, not at all.....

Mixing groundbait is the key to a successful mix and the difference between a good and a bad session. Here is a guide on how to do it...

- Mix the dry ingredients together thoroughly.
- Add some lake water a little at a time to slowly moisten the mix.
- Keep squeezing the mix while you are mixing it to test how it's coming together. It should hold together with a gentle squeeze, but break apart to crumbs between the palms of your hands.
- If you have planned your session well, you will be able to set aside your mix while you set the rest of your tackle up.
- Once you are ready, return to your mix and repeat the squeeze test again. You may find that your mix has dried out a little because the ingredients have absorbed all the water that you put in earlier. Your mix is now at a critical stage and from here it is very easy to mess it up completely.
- If it holds its shape with one squeeze, then leave it! If it takes an extra squeeze or two and still won't behave, then you will need to add some more water.
- Add VERY SMALL amounts and mix each one in thoroughly. Keep doing this until the squeeze test works, and it crumbles easily back to a crumb again afterwards.
- If your mix only needs a tiny amount of water to be spot on, the simply wet your hand and, without shaking any of the water off, use your wet hand for mixing. The water sticking to your hand will be transferred to the mix and change it ever so slightly. You can also use an indoor plant mist sprayer with a 'squirt and mix' technique until it feels right.

I can not stress enough how much time you should spend on this process.

Take your time to get it right because the extra care will really pay off.

Now you have got the moisture content right, it is time to finish off the job by removing any lumps.

If you are mixing by hand, you will always end up with a few lumps. These lumps are over wetted 'pebbles' of mixture that need dispersing into the rest of the mix. You could spend ages finding each pebble, breaking it up until you can find no more, or you can use a *maggot riddle*.

I use round riddles that fit perfectly over special bowls and buckets designed for the job of sieving large amounts of bait quickly.

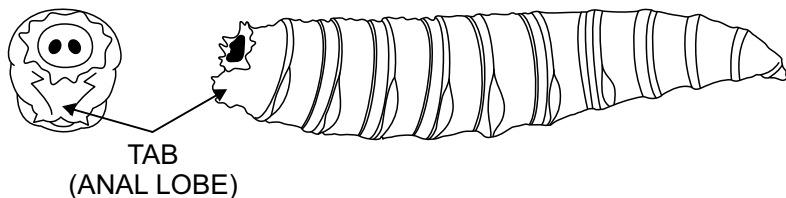
Just tip your mix onto the riddle and either shake or push it through. If you do find any lumps, either push them through and mix them in, or just discard them.

What you should be left with is a beautifully mixed, moist and fluffy groundbait that is ready for those hungry fish.

One thing I would advise, and this may seem picky but, once sieved I will not squeeze test the mix any further. I want the mix to remain as loose and fluffy as possible until it goes into the feeder or cup. In colder months especially, any lumps may potentially be enough to over feed fish if they are unwilling to feed on a lot of food.

If you are targeting Bream, you may want to refrigerate or even freeze the mix before your session. Freezing the mix will reduce the *action* of the bait. The mix will be much *flatter* in the water and will not *fizz* or be as active, much better for keeping the fish hard on the bottom.

You can mix by hand if you wish, there is nothing wrong with that. But if you have a large amount of bait to mix, a better option is a large whisk in a cordless drill. This makes the job much easier.



MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #12 -

Maggots have a blunt end and a pointy end. How you hook a maggot is important because you don't want to kill it. There is a little 'tab' at the blunt end that you want to try to lightly nip your hook through. If the maggot keeps bursting, change your hook because it may be blunt.

DEAD MAGGOTS -

Dead maggots can be a great bait on commercial fisheries or any fisheries with a soft or silty bottom. Live maggots can crawl away into the mud and the fish will spend ages looking for them instead of actively feeding, a bit like they do for Hemp or Micros.

You can buy them already killed or you can do it yourself, as horrible as that sounds. The easiest way, is to put them in the freezer.

- Clean them off as you would normally, but do not put any dust or maize on them.
- Place the maggots in a plastic bag, preferably one with a 'Zip-Loc'.
- Zip the bag up, but not quite to the end.
- Hold the bag against your tummy and, with the maggots at the bottom, roll the bag up to squeeze the air out. Don't squash them.
- Zip the bag closed.

The maggots are now ready for the freezer, 24 hours is usually enough. You can re-freeze them but, I only do it once because they go all black and mushy, and they just look nasty.

I keep my *Deads* in lake water when I'm fishing to slow down the blackening effect a bit more. Strain the water off before you bring them home if that's what you plan to do.



PINKIES -

The medium sized maggot and the larvae of the *Greenbottle Fly*. Pinkies are so called because their natural colour has a tinge of pink in it. They are about half the size of the '*Big Maggot*' (Bluebottle Fly larvae), which makes them a good cold weather bait in winter. Like the big maggots, Pinkies come in many colours, the most popular being Red, Fluorescent Pink (Left) and natural white. Care for Pinkies in the same way as you would maggots, but you will need a smaller meshed *Pinkie Riddle*, and just use sawdust, no maize.



SQUATTS -

The smallest of maggots used in fishing. Not quite so popular as they once were because anglers attentions have moved more towards Carp on commercials. That's not to say that no one uses them anymore. They are still an essential bait on some rivers and canals, and Bream absolutely love them! The creamy white Squatt is about 10 times smaller than a maggot and are purchased in soft brown foundry sand. Tricky to riddle because of their size. I found a fly screen from a doorway to use for mine.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #13

If you are missing bites from fussy fish, then try hooking the maggot through the side. It might just fool them.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #14

With two maggots on the hook, you may get a twisted hooklink. Try hooking one through the pointy end to reduce the spinning effect.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #15

For a different kind of bait, try using floating maggots.

- You will need a bait box and a lid.
- Cut a square hole in the lid just big enough to get your fingers through to pick the maggots up. (Get help with this bit)
- Put a little lake water in the box, enough to cover the bottom, JUST.
- Place a few maggots in the box, only enough for hook baits. You can always add more.
- After about 30 minutes the maggots should float when thrown in the lake. Leave them for a bit longer if they don't float.
- The maggots will be more buoyant when hooked and slow the bait down when it sinks.

CASTERS -

The chrysalis stage in the life of a Blow Fly, where it will turn from a larvae to a fly. You can buy casters from a shop or even online but, because of the work needed to create good quality casters, they tend to be a bit on the expensive side. Casters, however, can be a devastating bait on it's day and can really make a difference. Most fish like to eat nice crunchy casters, particularly Roach, Carp, Chub, Barbel and Bream. Even big Perch are partial to casters. Whatever species you are after, casters do tend to pick out the better sized fish.

When you buy casters, they will usually be sold in a plastic bag with the air squeezed out or in a vacuum packed sealed packet. In either case, keep them cold in a fridge. Do not freeze casters. They are a living bait, even though they do not move. If you put them in a freezer they will die.

Ideally, casters should be a light brown or chestnut red colour. Too pale or white and they will not yet be casters, too dark and they will float. To get perfect casters from a shop, you will need to go through them and pick out all the dead skins, pale and dark casters.

I must stress, you do not HAVE to do all this. But if you are fussy about having the best bait you can get, you will put the effort in.



MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #16

To hook casters properly, you will need to be using some long shanked 'Maggot' style hooks. These hooks will make it easier to get the hooks out of the fish and to get the bait on the hook. Place the hook point on the blunt end of the caster. As you push the hook point in turn the hook so you are pushing the whole hook into the caster. When it's nearly all in, work the hook point out through the side of the caster as shown in the picture.



You can produce your own casters at home. But the best bait will take time and commitment to get right.

- It takes roughly twice as many maggots to make the required number of caster. So for a 1 pint of casters, you'll need 2 pints of maggots.
- Ideally the maggots should kept out of the fridge in the same amount of sawdust as you have quantity of maggots.
- Keep the sawdust slightly damped with an atomiser every day.
- Replace the sawdust every two or three days.
- I first riddle of all the sawdust and set it aside if I am going to use it again.
- Now let the maggots run through on their own. in the beginning you will just get dead skins and 'white casters'. I usually discard these until I start getting brown casters and no dead skins.
- Once they start turning, they really go for it and you will have to keep riddling them off three or four times a day.

- The casters you are looking for are chestnut brown in colour. darker ones go in the bin. Pale ones get set aside to wait until they have turned a bit more in the fridge.
- Casters that have turned are wrapped in a parcel of damp newspaper. the parcel is then placed in a Zip-Loc bag with the air squeezed out.
- Remember that casters are still alive in the bag, so they need some fresh air everyday. Unzip the bag for a couple of minutes while you are riddling the maggots off and zip it up again after.
- The Zip-Loc bag will live in the fridge inside a lidless bait box.
- The whole process will take about 9 or 10 days, so you will need to plan well ahead.

It's a lot of work and 'hassle', but the results are worth it if you get it right. Your casters will be exactly as want them and you won't have to 'make do' anymore.

WORMS -

Worms are just Worms aren't they?

Well, no actually. I love Worms and even I did not know that there were 14 different kinds of Worms in the UK. Because of my affection for Worms, I was very tempted to go into extreme detail about these little fellows, but I promise to just stick to the information about Worms that will be useful to us as anglers.

DENDROBAENAS

Dendrobaena Veneta -

The most common Worm used in fishing. It is a blue, Pinky grey coloured worm that has pale yellow stripes around it and grows to about 7cm long. Lives in deep woodland litter or organically rich garden soils. Can be used whole, halved, sectioned or chopped. The head of the 'Dendra' can be useful because it can simulate a caster on the hook and is much tougher than a caster to withstand the attentions of smaller nuisance fish. Commonly used as feed when chopped or minced with *Worm Scissors*. How much you chop worms can make a big difference to the fish you catch. Sometimes they like big bits and others they may like a soup. Even the dark soil in which they live can be used in with the 'Choppie'. It makes a dark cloud in the water that hangs around and attracts fish.

More experience will help you to know when and how to use the bait on any given day.



LOBWORM

LOBWORM

Lumbricus Terrestris -

A large reddish coloured worm that lives happily in most gardens. Called a *Nightcrawler* in America because of its unusual habit of laying on the surface at night, looking for a mate. 'Lobs' can grow to around 20 to 25cm and make a great bait for large fish, especially predatory fish like Perch, Chub, Eels, Pike and Zander. If large Carp or Bream are the target and smaller nuisance fish are being a pest, then hooking a 2 or 3 centimetre piece of Lobworm head or tail, will be too big for the small fish to fit into their hungry mouths.

BRANGLINGS or REDWORMS

Eisenia Fetida -

Smaller, reddish brown coloured worms found in garden compost or manure. An excellent worm for smaller species or for inclusion in groundbait mixes for Roach and Bream. A little overlooked since the

popularity of *Dendrobaena* worms but, on their day, are still very effective.

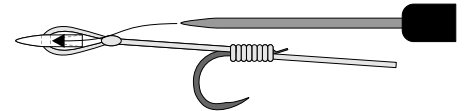


HOOKING WORMS -

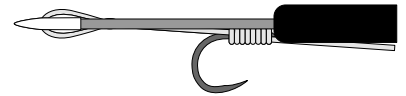
Through the head is the common way, but because of how slimey and slippery a worm is, they can wriggle their way off of a barbless hook. If you're using whole worms they can wrap themselves around the hook, masking the point. Even if you do get a fish to bite it, the point will not find its target.

There are a few things we can do to prevent this

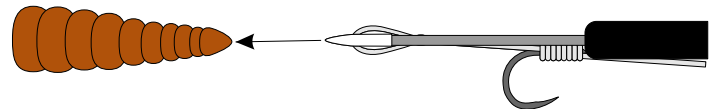
For most of my worm fishing, I like to use a Quickstop on a hair.



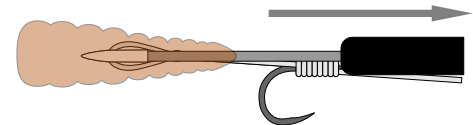
Push the Quickstop needle into the Quickstop.



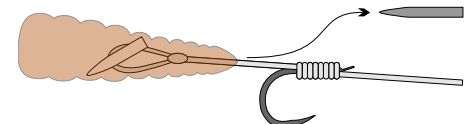
Hold the hooklink and the needle together.



Push the Quickstop with the needle into the end of the worm.



Take out the needle, leaving the Quickstop inside.



The Quickstop will turn inside the worm and prevent the worm from falling off.



Quickstop needle

BREAD -

Bread has had a bit of a comeback in recent years, particularly for winter Carp. When the water is clear and cold, bread is bright and highly visible. The slow fall of fluffy white bread in front of a cold fish, might just be enough to make it spend some vital energy to eat it. However, it can be handy to have some bread with you in the warmer months.

The most popular brand by far is *Warburton Toastie* in the Orange wrapper. You want a nice *doughy* bread for fishing and *Warby Orange* is just the ticket. In reality though, I guess any bread will do as long as it is white bread.

Now there is a lot of differing opinions on how to use bread. The way that works for you is probably the right way. It is a versatile bait though you can steam it, roll it, punch it, blend it, pinch it, float it or use it straight from the packet.

To keep it simple, I recommend that you try as follows;

- Take a slice and remember to reseal the packet otherwise all of your bread will go dry.
- Place the slice on something flat and flatten it with the back of your fingers.
- With a bread punch of about 8mm, punch out a couple of discs of bread.
- With the hook point over the centre of the one of the discs, push it on to the hook and roll it round the bend until it is on the shank, level with the hook point. When it gets wet, it will fluff up and cover the hook nicely. It won't stay on the hook forever and you will be rebaiting quite often.

This method of hooking bread will work with a Pole, but the chances are you may need a Quickstop to use bread with a Wagglers, feeder or a bomb.

Bread is as filling for fish as it is for us, so you really have to watch how much you feed. Bread crumb is deadly, but very easy to over feed. To make bread crumb for feeding is easy as long as you have a blender.

Run a loaf through the blender a slice at a time, crusts and all. When it's done, use your maggot riddle to get the big lumps out. You can use smaller riddles and sieves if you want a finer mix. Put it in an air tight bag with the air squeezed out and pop it in the fridge or freezer, depending on when you need it.



Punch crumb & punches

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #17 -

Bread needs to flutter through the water to be most effective. Which is why it really works best with a Pole. You can use a very light float that need almost no shots on the line. Just two dust shots like a No.12. You'll need light hooks too and a Preston PR490 is a good option.

In the winter, this lighter type of set up will be necessary just to get bites sometimes. Start with your bait about 10cm off the bottom. You may need to adjust your float often to find the depth at which the fish are sitting at and feel comfortable.



*Single punched bread disc (Left)
Multiple punched bread discs on a
Quickstop hair (Right)*

PASTE -

Like most baits, on it's day Paste can crush everything else. You will have noticed by now that, throughout this booklet, there many options and opinions on the same subject. Paste is no exception. You can use it in a dough like mixture, really sloppy like porridge and everywhere in between the two. If you use a *stiffer* mix, you may even be able to cast it with a rod and reel. But most of the time paste will be used with a Pole, with special, long bristled floats and little or no shot on the line.

Unlike normal Pole rigs, when you set up a Paste float, you will have the whole of the bristle showing when it's finished. The Paste acts as the weight to pull the float down to where you want it to be when you're fishing. If the Paste does come off the hook, then the float will pop up to show the whole of the bristle again, telling you the bait has gone.

Plumbing the depth becomes critical with a Paste rig. You need to take the time to find a firm, flattish area to fish over. When you think you have found a spot, set your float so it is as low as you can get it, and still be able to see it. (About 5 to 10mm of bristle showing).

Bites are notoriously difficult to hit with a Paste bait. Because you are using a bait that can be eaten in nibbles and bites (Basically a stiff groundbait mix), you will get dips and bobs from the float and you'll be striking at fresh air to start with. You are looking for that one bite that shoots under and just keeps going. It is frustrating at first, but with practice, you will be able to separate the bobs from the bites. When you do get your head around it, Paste is a deadly method that really pays off. Keep at it and trust the process.

MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #18 -

When you mix groundbait, you add the water to the dry mix. For paste it is the other way round.

- Put the enough water in a bait box for the amount of bait you want to use.
- Constantly stir with a fork as you add the powder slowly. How much powder you add will depend on how stiff you want your Paste.
- Leave it slightly wetter than you need it because like groundbait, Paste will absorb water when it's left to rest.

The best products I have found for Paste are *Dynamite Swim Stim Green* or *Bait Tech Special G*.

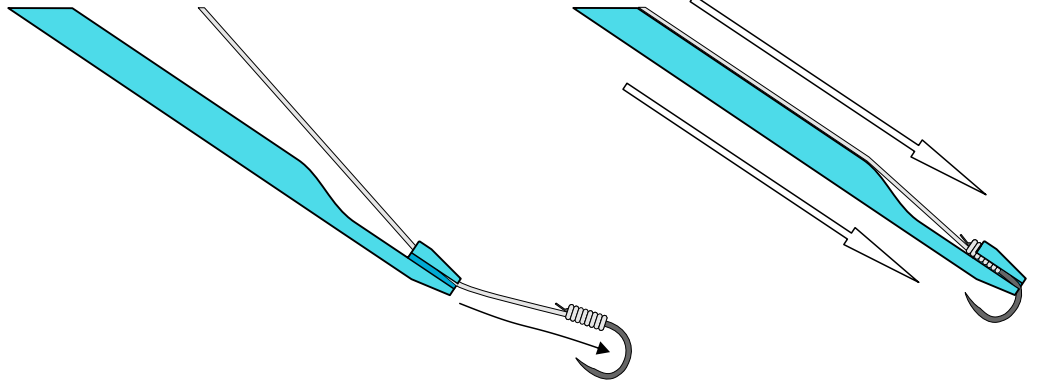
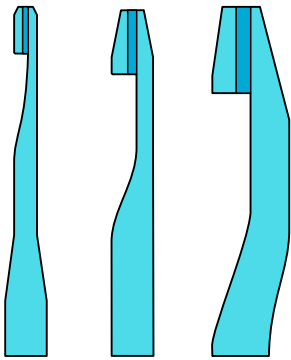


MODERATELY USEFUL TIP #19 -

Paste is a very messy bait to use. You and your gear can end up covered in the stuff. If you do a lot of Paste fishing it can get into the joints of your Pole, Landing net handle and top kits. It will act like a grinding paste and wear everything out quicker than they should. If you have a side tray, keep a tub of water next to you to quickly rinse your fingers/hands before shipping out your Pole.

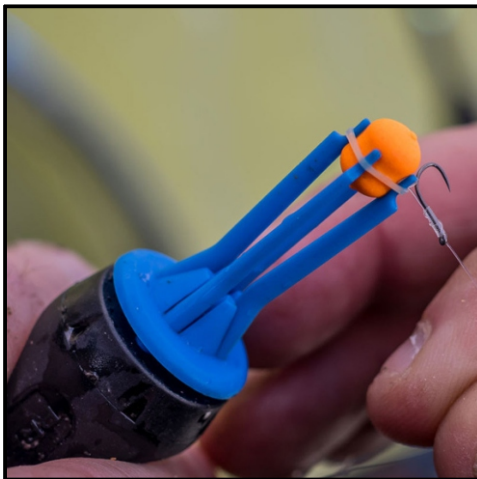


USEFUL ACCESSORIES



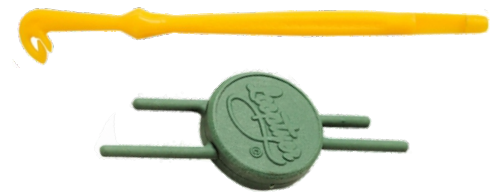
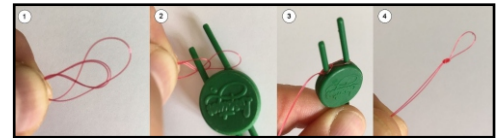
A *Disgorger* is something that you simply must take with you on every trip. Available in three basic sizes. You will need all three. See right for directions of use.

- Keeping the line tight, put the line into the slot on the Disgorger.
- Slide the Disgorger down until it meets the bend in the hook.
- holding the line tight against the Disgorger, push GENTLY to release the hook.
- If you have any trouble removing the hook, seek help quickly or cut the line as close to the hook as you can. This will give the fish a better chance of survival if you don't try and get your hook back at all costs.



LOOP TYERS -

Not vital but it will help to have a loop tyer with you. There are two types of loop tyers available to you. The twist type (Top) and the prong type (bottom). Personally I prefer the prong type. But you must use the one that works for you.



PELLET BANDER -

Tiny pellets can be fiddly to use. But this essential little gadget makes the job so much easier.

- Place the band over the ends of the bander.
- press the plunger to open the bander and the band.
- Put a pellet in the open prongs.
- Let go of the plunger to close the prongs, trapping the pellet.
- Slide the pellet out from the bander with the bait band. The pellet will be left within the bait band.



SCISSORS -

Sometimes called *Braid Blades*, scissors are definitely essential items. *Nylon Monofilament* is tough stuff and will destroy your teeth over time. Cutting line with scissors also leaves a nice flat end for threading line through feeders, etc. CLIPPERS do much the same job. But if you are going to be using braided lines in the future, you will need braid blades too.



Baiting
needle for
loop and
hook tying

Hook needle
for pulling
bait bands
through baits

Quickstop
needle
for pushing
Quickstops
through baits

Bait Drill
for drilling
holes in hard
baits like
pellets

Gated needle
for bait, Pole
elastics and
pretty much
everything!

FLOAT PAINT & MARKER PENS -

Floats can get damaged with use or get

coloured with a marker pen. It is important to *Contrast* your float tip against the background in which it sits. Pale backgrounds like the reflections of the sky need a *Black* float (Marker Pen). Most floats are *Red* or *Orange* for general use. For dark backgrounds like shadowed trees or bushes, *Yellow* is a better option. To change the float colour, try using float paint which is a Tippex like fluid that dries very quickly and can be removed with a finger nail. great for changeable light conditions.



CATAPULT -

Essential for getting your bait further than you can throw it. As usual there is a vast range of catapults to choose from and I can only guide you from personal preference.

In time, you may end up with quite a range of catapults in your bag, but for now we will look at three basic types of catapults that I think are necessary to have with you.

Before we start, as your Junior coach, I feel it necessary to remind you that catapults are NOT toys. It can be tempting to mess around with your friends and 'have a bit of a laugh'. But they can be dangerous if misused. Be sensible.

Well that's that out of the way.

There is no point in overstressing a lightweight catapult to fire further than it is designed to, the same as there is no point in caressing a powerful catapult to only fire a few metres. You need to find catapults that suit your style and that you feel comfortable using.

LIGHT or POLE CATAPULT -

Very *light* or *soft* elastics are fitted to Pole catapults because they only really have to fire to 16 metres maximum. They have smaller pouches to put the bait in, made from either nylon mesh, stiffer silicone or plastic. The *Guru* version with orange elastic is my choice for this kind of catapult.



MEDIUM CATAPULT -

There really is only one choice of catapult in this category for me and that is the ever reliable *Drennan Wagglers Range* catapult. I've used these catapults for longer than I care to admit and they rarely let me down. If I had to buy just one catapult for all occasions, then this would be it.



LONG RANGE -

Again, I would advise a Drennan catapult in the same range as the 'medium' catapult. It has the same frame but an upgraded elastic for extra power. If I need to feed a bit further out, then this is the catapult I use.



You don't have to buy a new catapult every time the elastic breaks. Get some spare elastics that fit your catapult so you can replace it fairly quickly if it does snap.

USING YOUR CATAPULT -

Never try to aim your catapult by using it in front of your face. It isn't a gun and doesn't need aiming as such. If the elastic does snap, and it will from time to time, there's only thing it's going to hit and it is going to hurt too.

I use mine the same way as is shown in the picture. Holding the catapult frame in my left hand (I am right handed), leaving my right hand to hold the Pole or rod.



To fire bait out, hold the catapult on its side. This will enable you to fire bait out and still hold your rod or Pole. Learning to do this is so important, especially when you are fishing with a long Pole or with a pellet waggler. Feeding whilst holding a Pole is tricky at first and will depend on which hand you use to hold your Pole. Because I am right handed I will speak from that point of view. Just swap it around if you're a lefty.

- With my left (free) hand, I will hold the catapult into my palm, leaving my fingers free to pick up the bait.
- With my finger tips grab a pinch pellets.
- Now move the catapult over so you can grab the pouch with the hand that is holding the Pole.
- You can drop the pellets into the pouch.
- There's a little string or cord on the back of the pouch. Grab that with your Pole hand, keeping the tension on the elastic by pushing away with your catapult.
- The distance you want to feed will depend on how far you push the catapult forward. Angle it slightly upwards so the bait doesn't fall out of the pouch.
- Release the string and watch your bait float through the air to land precisely where you wanted it to.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

Always check your elastics regularly.

It may be worth getting a zip up catapult bag. It keeps them nice and tidy and helps your elastics to last a bit longer.

NETS



KEEPNETS -

There was a time when every angler used a keepnet to see what they had caught during the day. These nets were harsh, knotted and extremely harmful to fish. But times have moved on and today, keepnets are designed and built with a conservation of fish welfare in mind. However 'safe' we try to make keepnets, there can not be any argument against the fact that they can sometimes still damage fish. On today's heavily stocked fisheries of Carp and other large species like Bream, Tench or even Barbel, keepnets are being increasingly frowned upon. On our own DDAS waters, keepnets are not allowed outside match events.

Having said all that, the technology that is used to make most modern keepnets, is much kinder to fish and the only thing that may need to change is how many fish we put in them.

With the weights in some matches exceeding 100, 200, 300 even 400lbs of fish, Net limits are essential to protect the welfare of the fish being caught. In my own opinion, a sensible limit is 50lbs, a limit which I stick to regardless of the venue limit. If I do catch a big weight, it doesn't make me popular with the scales people, but I prefer to upset the scalesman, than harm the fish I catch. I either use my own questionable maths skills to keep count, or use a *clicker* to estimate the weight levels of my keepnets.

Always be mindful of the fish you are catching. They are alive. They feel pain and stress. There is nothing more distasteful to me than a keepnet being heaved out of the water, absolutely solid with fish that have been trapped in there for hours on end. On some venues the net limit is 100lbs! So, do you need a keepnet?

The answer to that is, it is really up to you if you want to purchase one.

If you are looking to fish competitions, they are essential. I say 'THEY' because you will need at least two, one for Carp and one for smaller Silverfish. If you put them in the same keepnet, the Carp will batter the smaller fish to death. Plus, most matches will have a prize for silverfish only. The term Silverfish means anything that isn't a

Carp.

If you like seeing what you have caught at the end of the day, and you are allowed to use them, then by all means get a keepnet. If you are not bothered, then don't.

It will all depend on the fishery rules anyway

TRANSPORTATION -

Nice dry Keepnets on the way to your session is the way to go. But what happens when you've had a great day and put plenty of fish in your nets? Everything will be all wet and it will stink. So will the car if you don't have a *Netbag*.

Modern Netbags (Below) are made from a plastic material called *EVA (Ethylene-Vinyl Acetate)*. They are large watertight bags that keep the water and the smell from getting in to your car.



KHV -

I feel I almost need to write this section in capitals to make sure that I get across just how important this section is.

The **KOI HERPES VIRUS** can be devastating to a fishery and to the fish. **KHV** is transferred from fishery to fishery on wet nets.

**YOU MUST DRY YOUR
KEEPNETS, NETBAGS, MATS, CRADLES &
SLINGS,
AFTER EVERY TRIP!**

I hear some weak excuses about how anglers that fish different waters over the weekend can't get their nets dry.

If your fishing takes you to different venues over a weekend, make sure you have two or more sets of keepnets.

Quite frankly it is irresponsible not to...

DDAS protects its waters by not allowing Keepnets but anything that gets wet when you're fishing needs to be thoroughly dried before Reuse.

There are no excuses...



LANDING NETS -

Unlike Keepnets, Landing nets are a vital pieces of equipment. Like most things, they come in a mind blowing range of choices. From small 10" (250cm) match nets, to enormous 60" (152cm) nets for Catfish, and everything in between. You have to think about what fish you are likely to catch and which fish live in the waters you are visiting.

Fishery rules come in to consideration here too, with some fisheries insisting on a minimum size of Landing net. So it is wise to check before you visit to find out.

To start with, I would recommend the 22" (55cm) size of net. This will be big enough to fit most sizes of fish in and be light enough for smaller anglers.

HANDLES -

Again, a big range of choices. You need to get one the is long enough to reach out into the lake, but light enough to be able to handle. A handle of around 2.7 metres is a good length to start. When you buy a handle, ask if you can put a net on the end to give you a good idea of whether you can handle it or not and see how it feels.

UNHOOKING MATS -

If you are planning to photograph your fish, or you cannot unhook your fish in the landing net, you will need an unhooking mat. It may not be a rule that you need to carry one, but in today's world of conservation and fish welfare, there really is no excuse for not having one anyway.

Go for a deep foam or even a 'beanbag' style mat. It doesn't have to be huge, just as long as you have a mat with you at all times.

I have bought a GURU mat (pictured right) for our Junior events. Part beanbag, part foam, it is covered in a fish friendly material. It also zips up quite small and is very light to carry.



WEIGHING FISH -

There's nothing like catching a fish that looks like it could be your biggest ever, and then popping it on the scales to see if you're right.

Get a weighing sling that suits the kind of fishing that you want to do. You need a nice soft, fish friendly mesh. Preferably with a frame that supports the weigh sling and doesn't collapse in on itself when it's lifted with a fish inside.

As far as scales are concerned, I have to confess to not knowing a great deal about them. I know that you can get some fairly reliable digital scales these days, just make sure that they go as high as you need them to go and measure is a scale that suits you. Cost will depend on how much you want to spend really and that's as much as I know.

Whatever you use to weigh your catch, make sure that you do it safely.

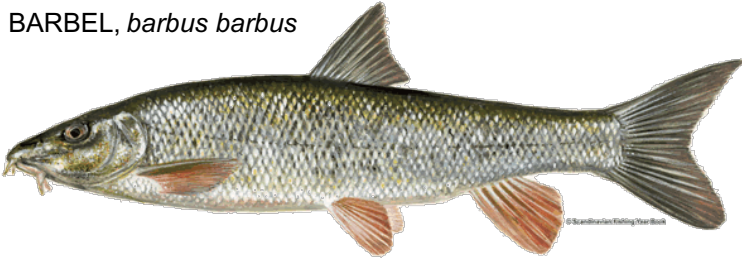
- When you set up your equipment, make sure your unhooking mat is easy to get to with no equipment in the way.
- Always have a spare bait box with water in it ready to wet the mat and sling. (Essential on hot days)
- Make sure all the fins are folded in and not caught in the net before you lift the fish out of the water.
- When you weigh your fish, never lift it too far off the ground, don't forget to check the fins and always do it over the unhooking mat.
- If you wish to have a photograph taken, never and I mean NEVER stand up with your fish. Always hold it as low to the ground as you can and always do it over a mat. If you look at the *Fish Anatomy* section in this booklet, you should make a note of where the heart is positioned inside the fish. The longer you hold a heavy fish, the more stress you put on it's heart. Pick it up for a picture and lay it straight back down again.
- It doesn't matter if the fish is only out of the water for a short period of time, you MUST keep it wet. The pot of water is used to wet the fish during the unhooking, weighing and photography period.
- It is good practice to carry a specially made antiseptic for hook wounds or other injuries from predators or spawning. Products like 'KLINIK' are ideal for this.
- When you do eventually return the fish to the water, give it time recover and never force it to swim off. It will tell you when it is ready to leave.

Any fish you catch is relying on you to look after it while it is out of the water. They suffer stress and feel pain the same as we do.

The fish has given itself to you for your pleasure and enjoyment. It is your DUTY as an angler to return it to the water with as little stress and harm as possible, regardless if it's size.

FISH SPECIES & ANATOMY

BARBEL, *barbus barbus*



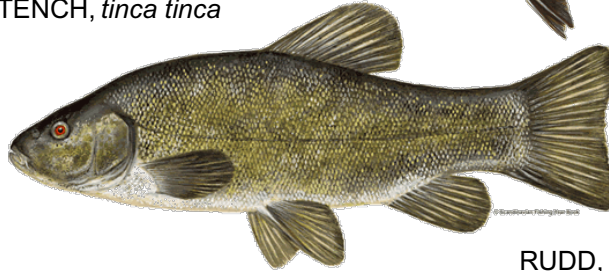
COMMON or BRONZE BREAM, *abramis brama*



ROACH, *rutilus rutilus*



TENCH, *tinca tinca*



GUDGEON, *gobio gobio*



RUDD, *scardinius erythrophthalmus*



CHUB, *leuciscus cephalus*



EEL, *anguilla anguilla*



CRUCIAN CARP, *carassius carassius*



LEATHER CARP, *cyprinus carpio*



PIKE, *Esox Lucius*



MIRROR CARP, *cyprinus carpio*



COMMON CARP, *cyprinus carpio*



PERCH, *perca fluviatilis*



The only fish missing from here are a **F1 Carp**, almost identical to a Common Carp only, smaller and with just two tiny barbules around the mouth instead of four. Engineered hybrid of Common and Crucian Carp.
Grass Carp, long, slender and fully scaled with no barbules.

EXTERNAL ANATOMY OF A COARSE FISH

The diagram below shows a Mirror Carp. But because most coarse fish are part of the Carp (Cyprinid) family, they will have similar features inside and out, with a few exceptions.

Fish will use their fins in different ways, depending on what they want to do. The Caudal Fin or Tail is, of course, used to propel the fish forwards and for turning. The Dorsal and Anal Fins are used for keeping the fish upright or for 'Stability', a bit like the keel on a boat. The Pectoral Fins are used to change direction and for manoeuvring around. The Pelvic Fins are used for smaller adjustments.

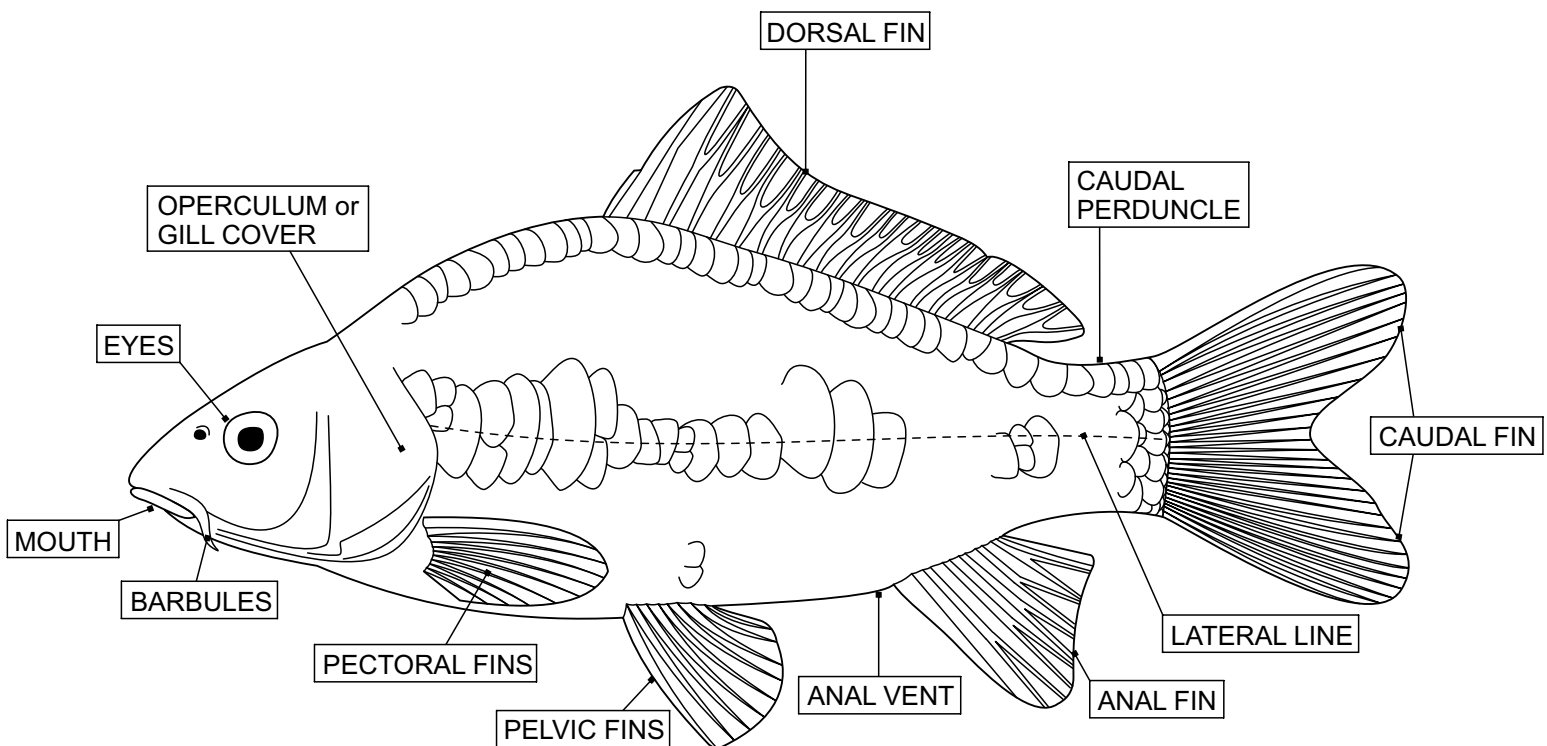
Some coarse fish have what look like whiskers at the corners of their mouths. These sensitive whiskers are called Barbules and are used when looking for food. Some fish will not have any but, fish like Carp have two, Barbel have four and others like Catfish will have many more.

An important part of a coarse fish is the Lateral Line. The Lateral Line runs down both sides of the fish from the Gill Covers all the way to the tail. This line is full of nerve endings and sensors that allow the fish to 'feel' vibrations in the water. Predators in particular will use this ability to detect injured or dying fish. The Lateral line is so sensitive it can pick up vibrations from human footsteps and loud noises. This is why it pays us anglers to be quiet when we are fishing and to keep our footsteps light. Dumping your gear on the ground when you arrive at the lake will only serve to let the fish know that you are there, alerting them to your presence.

Most coarse fish will have a covering of scales in all sorts of shapes and colours. These scales protect the fish, a bit like armour. Scales can be used by scientists to tell how old and how healthy a fish is.

Fish are also covered in slime, or mucus. This mucus protects the fish against disease and infections. It's important not to remove this mucus. Hold your fish with clean, wet hands and definitely **NOT** WITH A CLOTH. You must carry an unhooking mat to lay larger fish on too. This must be wetted with lake water before use, particularly in the summer when it can get hot. Fish are cold blooded creatures and it will be incredibly uncomfortable for them to be placed on a hot mat. A bit like us getting into a bath that is too hot.

Without fish, there is no point to fishing. We must look after every single fish that we catch in the best way possible. The fish has given itself to you so you can enjoy your fishing. It is our responsibility to look after it and return it to the water in good health. The very best part of fishing is seeing the fish swim away to fight another day.



INTERNAL ANATOMY OF A COARSE FISH

The diagram below shows a Mirror Carp. But because most coarse fish are part of the Carp (Cyprinid) family, they will have similar features inside and out.

THE BRAIN: Despite their reputation for being less than intelligent and forgetful, fish have proven to be more than capable of making intelligent decisions. It is well known, and not that surprising, that fish become more difficult to catch once they have been caught before. They will avoid areas where they have previously experienced stress and actively seek out new places to hang out. They can learn from watching other group members during feeding or mating, they can also learn and repeat tasks like patrol routes. If an individual fish hogs all the food, then other fish may choose to avoid it. This is possibly why some fish are always seen alone and rarely in a group.

SWIMBLADDER: A gas filled balloon inside the fish that keeps the fish upright and also allows fish to rise or fall in the water without having to waste energy on swimming.

KIDNEYS: Remove waste and keeps the blood clean.

GONAD: Primary gland used for reproduction.

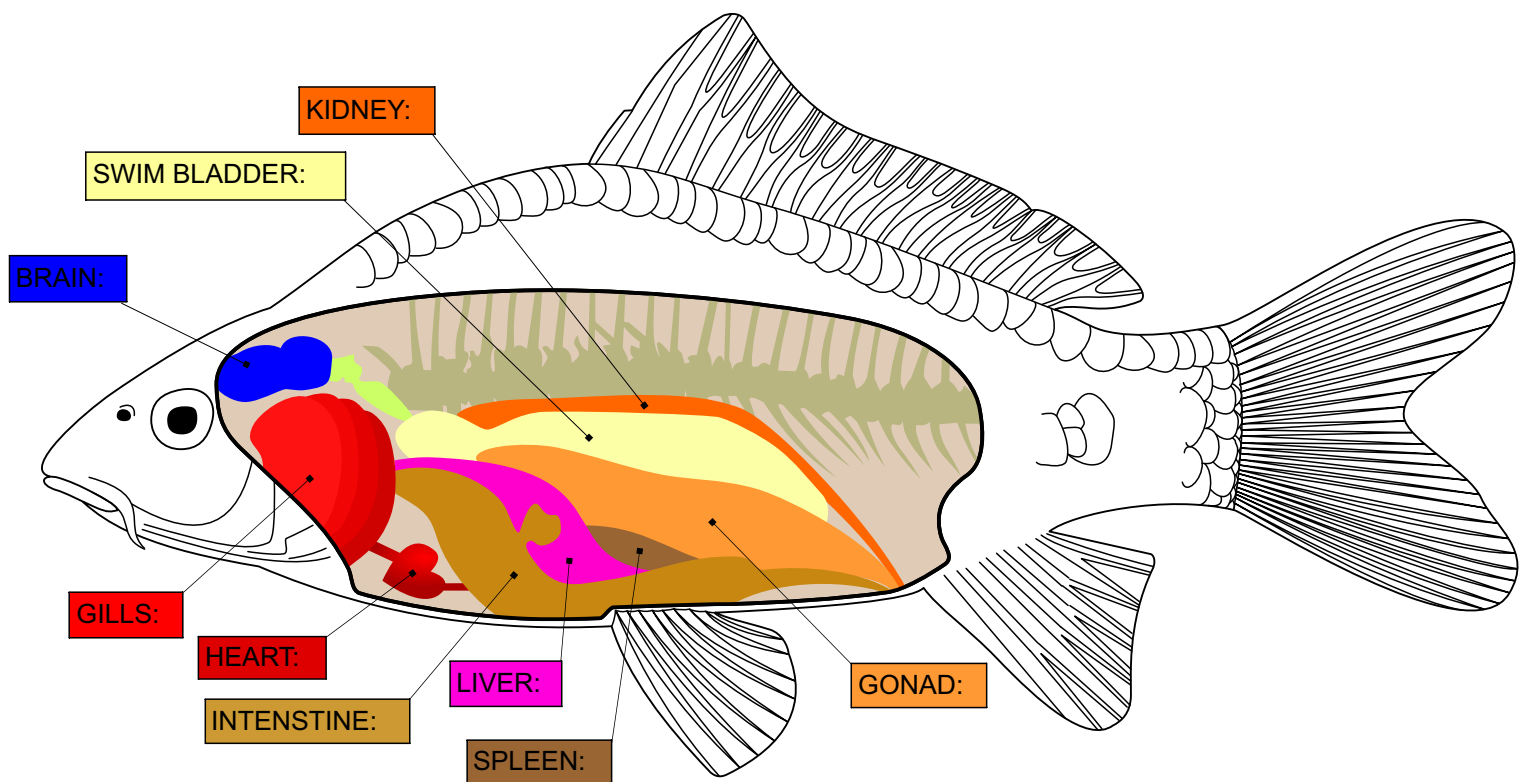
SPLEEN: Acts as a blood filter, removing old red blood cells. Holds a reserve of blood.

LIVER: Used to remove toxins and help digestion.

INTESTINE: Fairly short compared to the fishes body, around 1.5 times the length of the fish. Commonly has small pouches along its length to increase Digestion.

HEART: Pumps blood around the body.

GILLS: Filters oxygen from the water drawn over them through the mouth and out through the Gill cover.



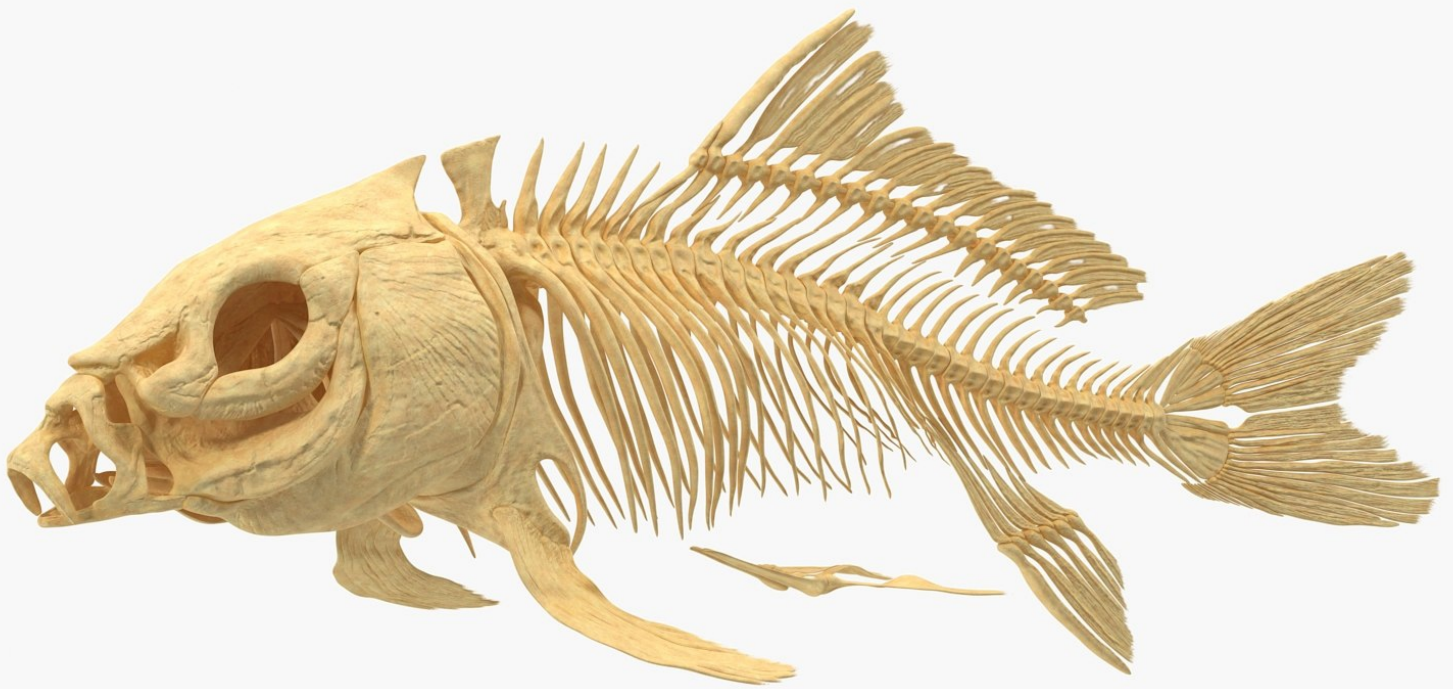
WHY 'COARSE' FISH? -

Throughout this and other books, you might be wondering why the fish are referred to as '*Coarse Fish*'? The word 'Coarse' is an older word meaning large or rough.

Compared to fish like Salmon and Trout, the scales on a coarse fish are very large. Huge in the case of a Mirror Carp.

This is where the term comes from. Because the scales are so big or 'Coarse', they known as Coarse Fish. Fish like Salmon and Trout are known as 'Game Fish'.

A couple of exceptions to this rule are Tench and Grayling as they both have tiny scales compared to fish like a Roach or Chub, but they are still Coarse fish. Nature doesn't care about Human rules...



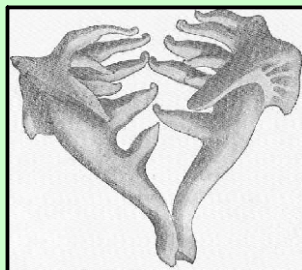
COARSE FISH SKELETON -

Coarse fish can all be classified as *Boney Fish*. They all have a basic boney skeleton to which all the muscles are attached to and that gives the internal organs protection. Of course, they are all different shapes and sizes but, basically, they are the same. The skeleton shown above, is that of a Carp. I was going to try to draw it for you, but I think I found the limit of my commitment.

The mouth on these type of fish is interesting because it is what is known as a *Sub Terminal* or *Inferior Mouth* (The top part is longer than the bottom part). Fish like Carp, Bream, Barbel and others, have a mouth that they can extend to root in the debris on the bottom to look for food or create a sucking effect like a vacuum cleaner. These type of fish will predominantly feed on the bottom. Other fish like Roach and Dace have a mouth shape that would suggest that they feed almost anywhere, with their mouth being at the front and in the middle. Whereas fish like Rudd and Bleak have an upturned mouth more used to feeding from the surface.

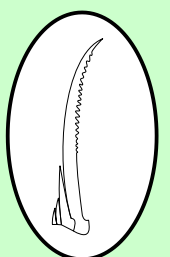
These are not hard rules of course, but it does give you a clue on how to fish for certain species.

Most coarse fish do have a rather inefficient intestinal tract. Their 'Stomach' is not very long and they can not break food items down like we do. Fish use something called *Pharyngeal Teeth* (Pronounced Fah-rin-gee-al) in their throat to mash food items down.



Above are Pharyngeal Teeth from (Left to right) a Common Carp, a Chub, a Grass Carp and a Bream. They look pretty fierce right? But on the whole they are quite small. But I still wouldn't fancy getting my fingers caught in them. Makes you think twice about shoving your thumb in a fishes mouth, doesn't it? (That doesn't work by the way, I don't care what people say.)

Some coarse fish have a boney spine at the leading edge of some of their fins (Right). This spine goes some way to helping to protect the fish from predators. This is one of the parts of a fish that we must try to protect when we use Landing nets, Keepnets and Weigh Slings. A lot of heavily fished waters have fish with damaged fins and, although it doesn't affect the fish on the whole, it looks horrible and we must do all we can to prevent it from happening.



SUMMARY



Fishing, to you,
should be what you either want or need it to be.
You can take advice from more experienced anglers that will
help you to improve, but there will come a time when you find
your own way of doing things.
Of course, there are some things that definitely have a right
and wrong to doing them. Fish welfare is one such subject.

But enjoy your days when you are fishing.
Try to find the beauty of your surroundings even if the weather
is not as nice as you'd like it to be.

Make each session a memory of days spent with Mum, Dad
and friends.

Go home at the end of the day knowing you have done your
best to improve as an angler, to feel you have enjoyed your
day doing the sport that you love, that you are part of the
solution to keeping our countryside looking it's best, that you
have been lucky enough to observe nature's creatures up close
and that you played your part in returning them safely to their
watery home.