

# THE PELLETT SLIDER

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**W**e all know how fruitful the pellet waggler can be. As most of us can attest, though, the days of turning up, lashing in pellets and catching boatloads with this method are long gone. As the carp at many venues get wise, it's becoming ever harder to get a brown envelope from this method alone. That's certainly the case at most of the venues I go to, anyway.

Now, before you turn the page, thinking: 'I've heard it all before', let me share my thoughts on a development that I'm sure

will put more fish in your net. This is no miracle or anything new, just a little secret that will probably get me into a lot of trouble with the boys in the know!

Before I get on to that, we need to understand why this method is becoming harder and Darren Cox hit the nail on the head in his column some months ago. He explained how smaller pellets and floats were now being used to maximise the potential of the swim, as the fish were shying away from the bigger pellets and the large splashes of big, buoyant wagglers.

*Are you becoming frustrated by missing bites on the pellet waggler? Andy Neal was and in trying to find out why, he stumbled across an approach that would lead to countless match wins.*

ANGLER FILE

**Andy Neal**

Age: 31

From: Abergavenny

Sponsors: Frenzee/Bait-Tech

VENUE FILE

**Larford Lakes**

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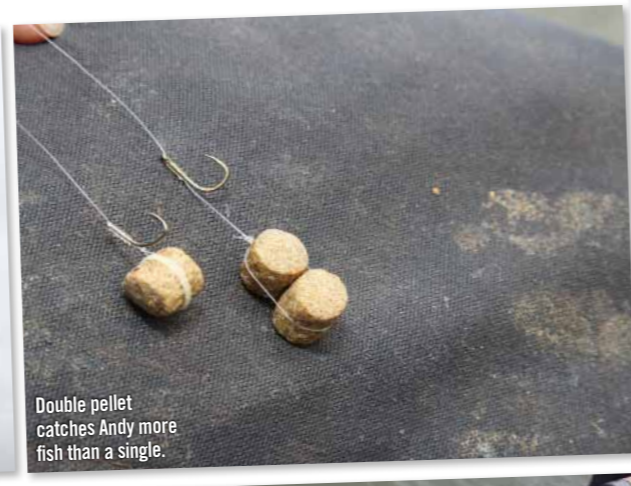
**THE PELLESLIDER**



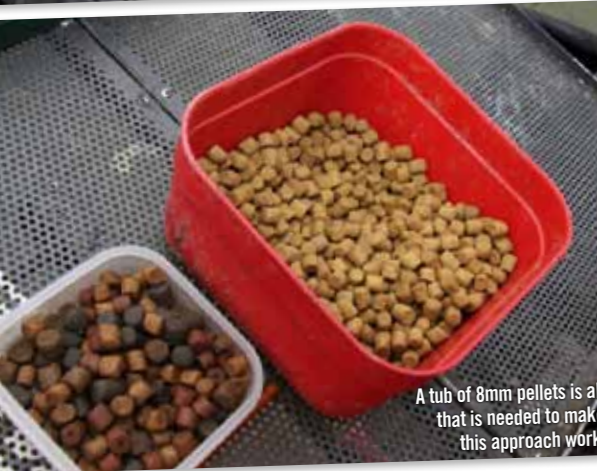
The sliding rig!



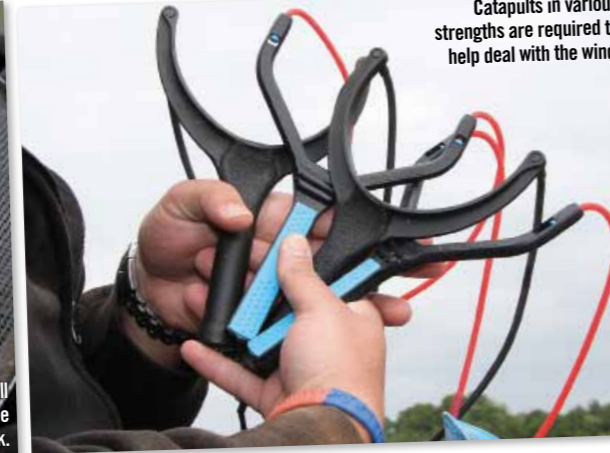
Short poly wags are used for fishing very shallow, but big flighted versions see the most use.



Double pellet catches Andy more fish than a single.



A tub of 8mm pellets is all that is needed to make this approach work.



Catapults in various strengths are required to help deal with the wind.



Two waggler rods and a bomb rod ensure all depths are covered.

The pellet waggler tends to sort out the bigger carp, where the bomb normally gets you more bites but they are generally smaller.

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This is correct and the reasons we aren't getting proper bites on these wagglers are twofold, I think.

Firstly, it is so important to get the float to land properly. A diving waggler won't catch you many fish, so you need to brake the cast just as the float hits the water. This will make it sit up and catapult the pellet away from you and the float, giving you the two plops that you are looking for when the bait and waggler land.

Secondly and most importantly, I think we are getting bites, but these big wagglers are not showing them up.

Considering the whole ethos around the method, that probably sounds daft, but it is the reason we now use small, lighter floats, so that the bites show up more positively.

How many times have you fished the pellet waggler and caught well early on, only for you to start getting annoying little dips on the float? By being alert and with constant striking, you may connect with some of these, as they are true bites. But, the question is how do you transform them into positive bites? In an ideal world,

and this happens rarely these days, the rod gets pulled around as the fish compete heavily for the loose feed. What is more the norm now is the first few fish are good positive pulls, followed by these little dips on the float. So, why is this happening?

The simple answer is that the fish have seen it all before and are now used to being caught on this method. This has led them to change the way they feed. So, instead of piling through the swim, snatching at baits, they are now just sipping in baits as

only for them to be having their rods pulled in. As these lads, and the likes of Terry Whinstone, Nicky Dean and several others who used to take Boddington Reservoir apart will tell you, this is nothing new. But, learning how and why it worked was a revelation to me.

It took me a long time to be convinced by this and all of half an hour into my next match at Viaduct these stupid bites started occurring. After a switch to a sliding waggler I couldn't believe it, as my rod started being pulled around everywhere. My eyes were firmly wide open and the next task was to find out exactly why this was happening.

As described earlier, it was in fact the change in feeding habits of the fish that

made this method so effective. As the fish are now sipping these baits in instead of crashing into them and on the lookout for any resistance, with a sliding waggler there quite simply isn't any. This leads them to thinking it's just another loose-

to make it work. First, wagglers have to be loaded. There is no place for shot on your line, as this will only drag the main line and hook link down – a presentation that just doesn't work. The rigs themselves couldn't be simpler and all I do is slide a float stop

**As the fish are now sipping these baits, there's no resistance. Rod round, fish on: simple.**

they fall. I fully believe they have realised that anything with any resistance means danger and they spit it out again, whereas no resistance means it's safe to eat. This is why you only connect with a small percentage of those little dips on the float. By the time you have struck, you have missed the bite. Also, this is the reason for using light floats, as there is less resistance.

The answer is a sliding waggler. I was put onto this method some years ago by my good friends, Roger Young and Joff Rogers. They must have felt sorry for me, as they could see how frustrated I was getting when I was missing so many bites,

**I still want the weight of the float to help set the hook, almost like a bolt rig.**

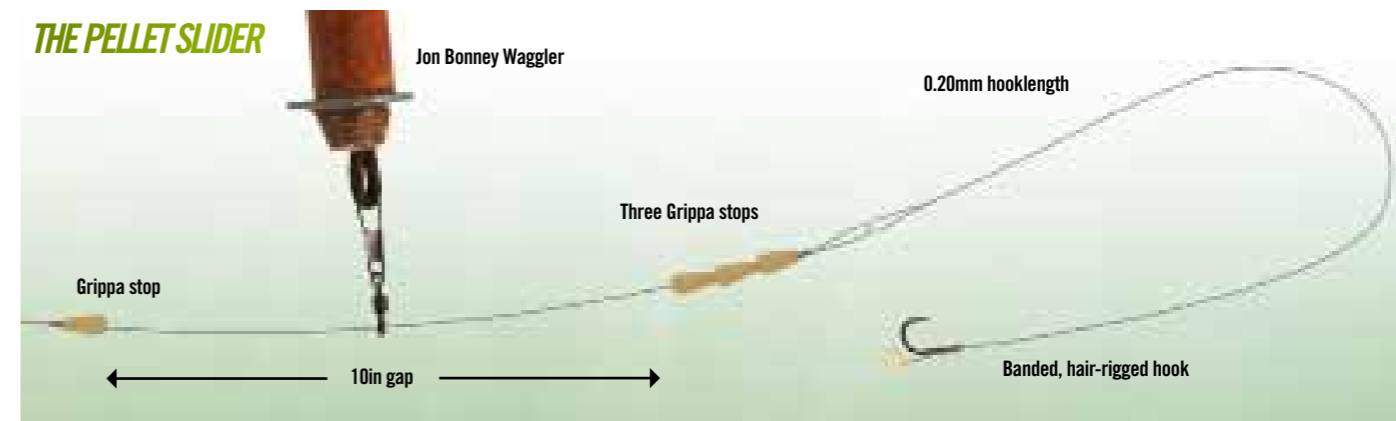
feed sample and they suck it in and swim off with it. No hassle, rod round, fish on: unbelievably simple.

There are, however, a few key things you must use when fishing in this style

on to my main line, then a snap link, then another three float stops. (I always use three beneath the float, to stop the float moving when casting). Next it's just a case of attaching your chosen waggler.



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I use Jon Bonney wagglers, as they fly like darts and are brilliant in crosswinds. I generally fish a gap of about 10 inches between the two stops, because I still want the weight of the float to help set the hook, almost like a bolt rig. I then tie a small loop in the end of my main line and attach a 12in hook link of usually 0.20mm.

With this set-up there are no weak spots and no shot that might damage your line. You can alter depth very easily by sliding the stops up and down. I do still use the poly-wags, but these are only for fishing up to 12 inches deep. Any more than that and I revert back to my favoured sliding waggler. When fishing really shallow, these poly-wags do land and sit up immediately, which is vital. At these depths I am looking for instant bites as the pellet lands and there is no mistaking these: generally when this is happening, they hit it as it lands and pull the rod anyway. This method of fishing ultra-shallow is a very busy one and I am constantly casting, usually only counting to 10 before reeling in and chucking out again.

Something I want to touch on is that people seem to be put off that I use strong hook links. Rather than fishing it delicately with light lines and small hooks, if I feel something isn't right I am more inclined to use a thicker hook link before dropping down to a finer one. This again may sound daft, but it's the mechanics of the method that lead me to do this.

You are always trying to achieve a slow fall of the hook bait and thin lines will help it fall faster, not slower. The thicker the line, the more 'resistance' there is, helping to hold up the pellet for longer. It is also a lot stiffer than a fine line and will give you a more direct contact with the float and rod. Some of the very best around employ this tactic and it can catch you vital extra fish, so it's definitely worth considering.

## THE BOMB

The straight lead is a complementary rig to the pellet slider and although very simple to set up and fish, you must pay attention to your hooking arrangement. I have spoken before about my thoughts on

hair length, so won't dwell on that now, but will talk to you more about the hook bait itself. With the fish we target now being of such varying sizes, there is one bait that stands out. Double 8mm pellet catches me more fish than anything else, (unless I'm fishing meat, but that's another story). Single 8mm or 11m pellets are made redundant by the double and I think this is for the simple reason that the carp find it hard to get rid of.

When pellet-waggler fishing, you use the float to tell you when you have a bite. When fishing the lead, you don't see bites – you just know when one is hooked, as the rod flies round. Your train of thought must therefore focus on 'how do I make sure I am hooking more fish?' A single 8mm pellet fished close to the hook will be sucked in and ejected many

methods and that is... time! To get the most from these methods, you have to be prepared to give them a large proportion of your match. Spending an hour here and half an hour there just won't cut it, as you have to dedicate time to this to make the methods work properly. Maintaining regular steady feeding is the key and it may take an hour or two or even three for this regime to really come to the fore. Then you will reap the rewards. Play at it and you will catch little or nothing, but focus and commit to it and have confidence that they will turn up.

## TODAY'S SESSION

The ever-impressive Larford Lakes was home for today. I never tire of fishing here; in fact, I simply can't fish here enough, such is the diversity of the place. The Speci Lake is an amazing piece of water, as you never know what's going to turn up – 20lb-plus carp, 7lb bream, big tench and there are even rumours of mermaids!

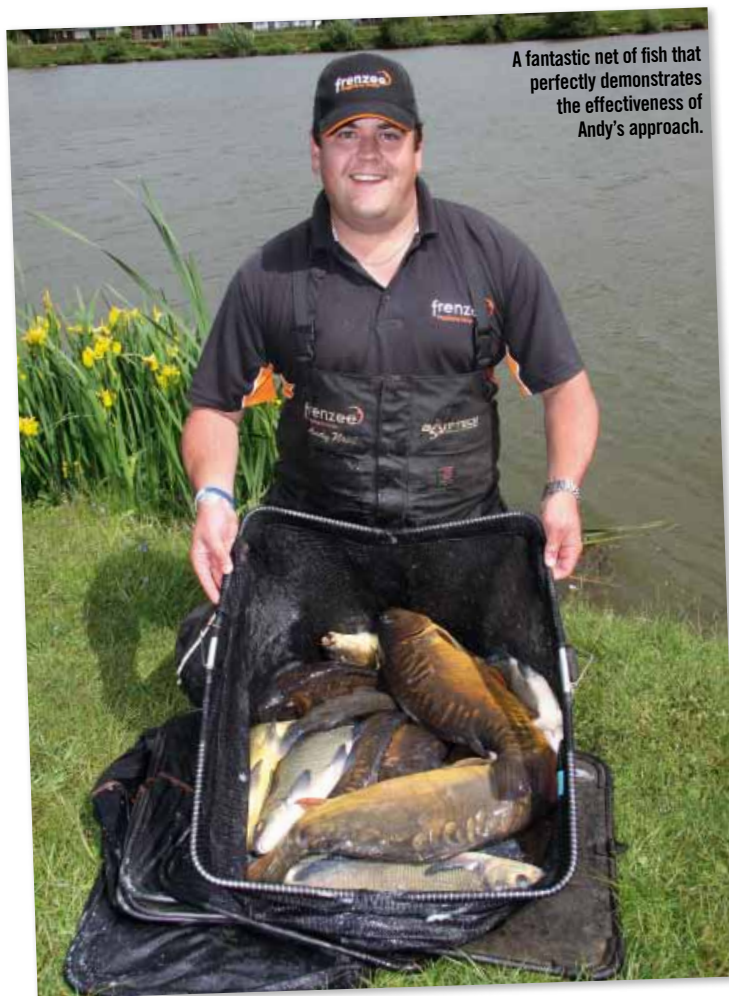
With the wind hacking up to the café end of the lake, my walk wasn't going to be a long one. So, I settled on Peg 9 on the burr bank. I set up three rods, got out a box of 8mm pellets and I was fishing. I started firing 8mm pellets to about 30 yards. A few quick casts with a waggler and a bite straightaway got me thinking I may be in for a decent day; next chuck and the rod flew round – fish on! A 2lb skimmer on an 8mm pellet two and a half feet deep in 10 feet of water!

It was a bream a chuck and I even managed a cheeky 5lb tench. Next I started to up the feeding from three to four pellets to eight to 10 pellets every 30 seconds. That saw me start to hook carp at about four feet and unfortunately I lost a beast at the net that looked every ounce of 20lb plus. As the day wore on, the swim was getting better and

better and a constant stream of carp and bream graced the net.

I did flick the bomb out four times and on each occasion it got dragged in within seconds of the bait landing.

However, I was having far too much fun on the waggler, so concentrated on that for the rest of the session. What was amazing was how – by using the sliding waggler – even the bream were pulling the rod round. A brilliant day's fishing in anyone's book and testament to how deadly the tactic can be!



times before you hook a fish. (Have a look at the size of a 6lb carp's mouth and you will realise why!) I believe it's the shape of the double bait that helps hook the fish, as they find it hard to spit it out. The longer profile of two pellets means that when in the mouth, it only has to turn or move slightly and it becomes harder to eject – thus giving the hook more time to take hold. The end result is more pulls and more fish!

There is one last, massively important thing I need to cover regarding these