

If you can get the fish competing in shallow water, a really big weight can be on the cards!

VENUE FILE

FOREST LANE FISHERY

Location: Forest Lane, Alne, near York YO61 1TW

Day tickets: £5 full; £4 concessions

Contact: Eddy Gregory; 07770 692683

ANGLER FILE

STEVE BARRACLough

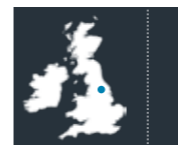
Age: 26

Lives: Tickhill

Sponsors: Frenzee, Bait-Tech

Pole: Frenzee Precision Range P1 666

ISLAND ADVENTURES



Steve Barraclough knows more than most about getting the best from island pegs. We took him to a venue he'd never been to before to discover his shallow-water secrets.

Canalised snake-type lakes are becoming increasingly popular, with many of the new commercials opening choosing to build more lakes in this style than any other. In many ways they are purpose built for pole anglers, with an island generally at something between 11 and 16 metres providing the perfect fish-holding feature to fish up to.

I have a decent record on this kind of venue, which is why Pole Fishing asked me to fish a totally new lake and show how lessons I have learnt at my usual venues can be applied to other waters with islands within pole range.

WHERE TO FISH?

This really is the million-dollar question and careful plumbing up and thought is vital to get the best from your session. In warm weather when the fish are expected to feed well, a gentle slope away from a mud bank is the ideal place to target. On this kind of surface, you can go as far up the bank as you need to stop fish moving behind your float and causing line bites.

There are obviously occasions when deeper water with cover is best, but this is generally when

you are expecting the fishing to be hard, or if you are fishing for just a few really big, wise fish. In these instances, the fish will almost certainly feel safer feeding in deep water up to cover. When this is the case, it is often worth plumbing up two or three lines so that you can rotate them as and when you need to.

With the sun shining and a few fish moving about, I expect to catch well. Consequently, I will fish just one line up to the mud bank in front of me. There is a deeper area up to some reeds to my right and a bit of broken banking to my left, but I would far rather catch them on a gentle slope that I have found between 15 and 16 metres.

DEPTH DILEMMA

Knowing exactly what depth of water to fish in can only be learnt with experience. Around 15 inches is a good starting point in warm weather and this is where I will be looking to catch from the start.

The great thing about fishing on a gentle slope is that you can go shallower if line bites are a problem,

or drop back down the slope into deeper water if bites are hard to come by. As the session progresses I try and catch in shallower water if possible because this is often a good way of sorting out better fish.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Other than margin fishing, I cannot think of a kind of approach that puts more strain on your gear than fishing up to an island. The rig is constantly being shipped in and out, laid and rubbed against the bank and, if you are catching well, stretched and rolled around in your net!

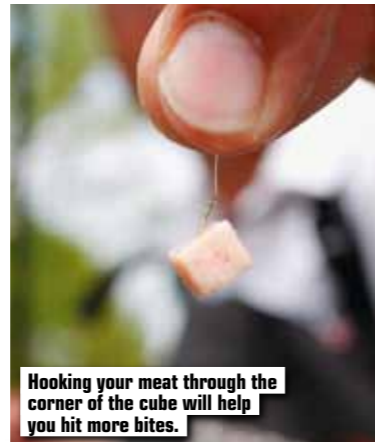
For this reason, I keep it as simple as possible. The less complicated it is, the less there is to go wrong. I use a Frenzee FP800 float tied to 0.17mm Reflo Power main line. I like to fish a 6in hooklength because this is the part of any rig that gets the most abuse. By carrying plenty of pre-tied spares I can change it when necessary without having to swap the entire rig.

As a starting point, I will generally use an 0.13mm Reflo Power hooklength if proper carp are the target, or a lighter 0.11mm one if I'm expecting predominantly F1s. »





Think carefully about your setup, so that you can lose feed easily while still holding the required length of pole.



Hooking your meat through the corner of the cube will help you hit more bites.



These new Frenzee pole pots work well when fishing at range.

bait as you ship out and it is less likely to bounce any out. By physically tapping the carbon once you get to the island, causing it to vibrate, the bait falls out of the pot and into the water.

The other great thing is that the slot that accommodates your pole is flexible, meaning the pot will fit securely at any number of places on the end of your top kit. I find it best to place it as far forward as possible when fishing up to islands so that your feed area is as close to your float as it can possibly be.

As a general rule, I start by fishing bang on top of my feed. However, if line bites become a problem I will then try fishing higher up the slope than I am feeding.

Fishing up to islands can often be a time-and-motion exercise and it is well worth spending time ensuring that your kit is set up in such a way that you can ship in and out as efficiently as possible. Think carefully about where you position your rollers so that you have to break down as little as



Puller kits are an essential piece of kit when carp like this are feeding.

THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT WHERE YOU POSITION YOUR POLE ROLLERS.

My shotting pattern is normally a simple bulk above the hooklength.

I start with approximately an inch of line laid on the bottom, which ensures the bait will be held fairly still, but also means that my rig remains sensitive and an indication will register on the float as soon as anything picks up the bait.

STEADY DOES IT

Shipping out long distances with a pole pot full of bait can be frustrating because the slightest jolt or jar can see bait spilling out everywhere, and you have to repeat the process all over again!

The new Frenzee rubberised pots certainly make life easier because their flexible shape means that they grip onto the

possible, and shipping in and out is as smooth as it can be.

LAY IT OUT

The next time you are fishing up to any kind of banking pay particular attention to how your rig behaves when you lay it in. I spent a few hours studying this on a recent pleasure fishing session and was quite surprised by what I found.

If you simply lower your rig straight down in a line it will, as you might expect, end up dead straight, with your hook bait directly below your pole tip.

By pulling your pole half a section away from the banking, then pushing your rig up to where you plan on holding it, your rig seems to gravitate past the pole tip and hug in tight to the slope. This is a lot better than having your rig going down in a straight line because the fish are far less likely to feel it as they come in to feed. Consequently, it will cut down the number of line bites and foul-hooked fish that you encounter. It really is quite surprising how tight your rig drifts at times. You can see this by slowly lifting your bait out after you have laid it in this way.

BACK SHOT RULE

As with all my fishing, I believe that it is vitally important to present your bait as naturally as possible and this means keeping your float still. Back shot are the best way to achieve this and by fishing with two or three spaced No8 shot between my pole tip and my float, provided I can hold my pole still, I know that my bait will be presented perfectly. An added advantage of fishing with back shot in this way is that you often find that a lot of fish hook themselves because they bolt against the resistance of the back shot and then set the hook against the weight of the pole.

SOFTLY, SOFTLY

As you can see, my whole approach to rigs revolves around presenting a bait to the fish as naturally as possible, with a view to causing very little unnecessary disturbance so that feeding fish aren't spooked.



STEVE'S TYPICAL ISLAND RIG

Preston 11 or 13 Hollo elastic

0.2g Frenzee FP800 float

DEPTH: 12IN-3FT

0.17mm main line

Bulk of No10s immediately above the hooklength

6in 0.13mm hooklength

No2 Tubertini 175

To this end, I fish as soft an elastic as I can get away with, so that hooked fish are encouraged to swim straight out of the peg and cause as little disturbance as possible.

For small carp and F1s I opt for a Preston No9 Hollo elastic fished in conjunction with a pull bung. I step this up to an 11h, or 13h when necessary, but rarely find that I need to go any heavier than this, unless snags are a problem.

LIFT INTO BITES RATHER THAN STRIKE SO THAT THE FISH SWIMS OUT OF YOUR PEG.

Another key tip is to lift into bites rather than strike so that the fish swims out of your peg rather than splashing around and bolting off.

WHICH BAIT?

This is another million-dollar question and really does warrant careful thought before you start fishing. Your best guide is to find out what is working well on the venue. Nevertheless, there is no point in being afraid of trying something different.

Chopped worms and casters, pellets and luncheon meat are probably the most popular baits for island work and they can all be winners on their day. However, corn, maggots or even bread can all bring you success at times.

It is worth bearing in mind the species present because fishing baits such as worms and casters or maggots can be problematic if there are large numbers of small fish present.

Pellets are always a safe option and I tend to feed a few of them with any of the bait combinations mentioned above.

With there being a lot of chub, roach and rudd present I have opted to go down a pellet and meat route, which will hopefully see me catching the better carp without me receiving too much trouble from nuisance fish.

A favourite method is to start by fishing pellets to get a few bites early in the session, before switching to meat later in the day when the fish really start feeding

well as the light levels drop. This is a more selective bait and helps you sort out the better fish in your peg.

PICK UP YOUR CATAPULT!

This is something that not enough anglers do when fishing up to islands. On some days, simply loose feeding bait instead of potting it can transform your peg from hardly getting any bites to catching a fish a chuck!

It is particularly effective with

luncheon meat, especially when you can get into really shallow water by a mud bank, as I can today. I fire my bait in so that some of it lands on the bank and some in the water. This will often see the fish sticking their heads out of the water to get at the meat on the bank!

When you can get the fish in really shallow water like this you can be on for a massive weight; the shallower the water that you can catch in, the bigger the fish will be! It is best to wait until the last couple of hours of a session before doing this, however.

HOW IT WENT

I started by feeding 4mm pellets via a pole pot and fishing a 4mm Bait-Tech Xpand pellet on the hook, which saw me catch crucians, goldfish and the odd chub early in the session.

As the day progressed I could feel my peg getting stronger but felt that feeding luncheon meat by catapult would bring better carp into my peg. The switch worked a treat and for the last couple of hours I caught better carp. I eventually managed to catch them in around six inches of water right up to the mud!

I ended up with around 70lb, consisting of 20lb of crucians, goldfish and chub and 50lb of carp! It was one of those rare sessions where everything went to plan and allowed me to demonstrate perfectly how effective giving careful thought to how you approach island pegs can be. **POLE**



Steve rates the FP800 as the perfect design for fishing up to islands.



Get everything right and you can also catch a net like this!