

The National Anguilla Club

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VOL: 18. No: 6.

# BULLETIN

BULLETIN

VOL:18 NO: 6

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CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

As I write this piece, I realise that the new season is only just over a week away although it will be with us when you read it.

My own results so far have not been too encouraging. Only five eels (2 over 2lb) from 10 sessions. However, luck has not been with me I feel, nor was it with Steve Enkle on the Whit Trip when a very large eel straightened out his size 1 Au Lion D'Or hook. A similar occurrence happened to me just before the 1976 Whit Trip to Bra Lake.

Members were, of course, conspicuous by their absence. Present was myself, RB, SE, RL, GK, AH, Dave Taylor plus a friend. SE fished in a swim previously occupied by DT a few weeks ago and heavily groundbaited. SE, DT + friend all caught 2lb+ eels. The weather was rather wet with over 1" falling over the weekend.

The week after the Whit Trip I moved to a new swim previously unfished to catch a 2:2. I had several more runs, including the capture of a tench of 3:8 that was taken almost whole sideways by a hugh pike which eventually let go. The spread of the teethmarks of the tench were at least 9" as I judged it by my handspan.

Onto other items; the Anglian Water Authority has now proposed a fee of £6.00 (instead of £2.00) for eel nets per division or £12.00 per region which I feel is a great step forward. I am now in the process together with the lads in the North West, I hope, of objecting to the North West Water Authority's proposals on eel netting of fees of only 65p....YES 65p per net PLUS ONLY £6.60 per 25 traps equal to 26½p per trap.....I hope a copy of my letter will be published in the Bulletin and you can all have a go at objecting before July 3rd.

I noted with pleasure the letters published in Angling Times to object to that article on eel trapping. Unfortunately I was unable to but I am glad some members did.

In Coarse Fisherman, May 1981, the NASG Conference took a hammering in the "Snide Rumours and Dirty Lies" columns, but with respect to our club, the following was said "Once again the National Anguilla Club produced a very dramatic visual aid for the conference.....lots of hard-hitting posters about the mistreatment of eels.....one poster read "Smoked eels £1 per quarter pound....what price live ones?".....a gentleman who shall be nameless wrote "50p a pound" along the bottom....I gather members of the NAC were not amused.....".

I was requested to attend the NAC AGM in London on 16 May to propose that the British Record Rod Caught Fish Committee be dissolved. As was expected, all match anglers there (there were no other type) were not interested and so my resolution failed. Still it was a new experience. I hope to have my proposal and statement published via the NASG Magazine or Newsletter.

Now that you are all receiving your NASG Magazine how about some of you producing an article for it? Like our Bulletin it can only reflect readers' interests and it is dependent on contributions.

RB is hard at work analysing Part 2 of the 1979 - yes 1979 Reporting Scheme. Isn't he a good lad.

Well that's all for now. Best Wishes for the new season.

Regards

Brian Crawford

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# The National Anguilla Club

EEL ANGLING SPECIALISTS

Established 1962

<b>General Secretary:</b> Terry Jefferson 11 Middlemead West Hanningfield Nr. Chelmsford Essex CM2 8UT  Tel. 0245 400025	<b>Treasurer:</b> Mark Davies 31 Manchester Rd Knutsford Cheshire	<b>President:</b> Arthur Sutton 15 Westoe Road Edmonton London N9 0SH  01 803 2099	<b>Chairman:</b> Brian Crawford 129 Benland - Bretton Peterborough PE3 8EE  0733 269981	<b>Membership Sec.:</b> Tony Hollerbach 10 Carter Close Bedford MK42 0JP  0234 60858
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Communication from: BRIAN CRAWFORD

Date: June 1981

TO: The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food  
Division 1  
Room 249  
Great Westminster House  
Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 2AE

Copies To:  
G.W. Shaw  
Director of Administration  
North West Water Authority  
Dawson House, Great Sank  
Warrington. WA5 3LW.

Also The N.A.S.G.

Dear Sir,

North West Water Authority Proposed Fishing Licence Duties  
Statement of Objection to the Proposed Fishing Licence Duty for Commercial Eel Fishi

On behalf of the National Anguilla Club, a group of specialist eel anglers, of which I am Chairman, and the National Association of Specimen Groups (NASG), and all other specialist eel anglers in the North West Water Authority Area, all of whom of course may submit objections in their own right, I would like to submit the strongest possible objection to the ludicrous, petty charges proposed for commercial eel fishing of 65p per net per year for eels, and of £6.60 per 25 for traps, putcheons or baskets per year equivalent to only 26½p per item.

I base my arguments at this absurd discrimination against sincere anglers who return their catches and who are faced with a large increase in licence duties, with the case I stated against the Anglian Water Authority, a copy of which is enclosed. They proposed only £2.00 per net or trap etc., but as a result, partially of my arguments, now propose a more realistic fee of £6.00 per item per division or £12.00 per item for the whole region per annum.

I therefore propose that the N.W.W.A. follow a similar course of ensuring a continuance of eel stocks by adopting a higher licence level comparable with that of the A.W.A.

Bearing in mind the difference in regions, regarding demand for eel trapping, I would suggest that this be ignored as irrelevant, as from data achieved by specialist eel anglers, the N.W.W.A. has a wealth of excellent eel angling that is essential to preserve. If commercial eel anglers find the A.W.A. regions too expensive or of low productivity due to over trapping, then they would soon turn to the unexploited areas of the N.W.W.A.

Please bear in mind that the enclosed letter dated November 9th 1980 is for information only, as the new A.W.A. proposals, as published on 13/5/81 are to my satisfaction.

THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB

FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

The Secretary,  
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,  
(Fisheries 1B),  
Great Westminster House,  
Horseferry Road,  
London.  
SW1P 2A.

Brian Crawford  
129 Benland  
Bretton  
Peterborough  
PE3 8EE

Tel: 269981

November 9th 1980

Sir,

Anglian Water Authority Review of Fishing Licence Duties For The Period 1982 - 1984

On behalf of the National Anguilla Club, a group of specialist eel anglers, of which I am Chairman, and the National Association of Specimen Groups, representing the interests of specialist anglers of many species of freshwater fish, and of all other specialist eel anglers who fish in the Anglian Water Authority area, whom I hope to represent as a member of the Great Ouse Fisheries Consultative Committee, I would like to raise strong objections as outlined below, to the proposed Anglian Water Authority's biased increase in licence fees for the trapping of eels.

I will of course be presenting my case direct to my Consultative Association, together with the Anglian Water Authority, various angling bodies and the angling press in an attempt to ensure the widest and fullest hearing, and to inform all interested bodies of the deep concern of specialist eel anglers against the continued decimation of eel stocks in our freshwater fisheries by professional and semi-professional eel trappers.

SUMMARY OF THE ANGLIAN WATER AUTHORITY PROPOSALS

- 1. For rod licences: either-
  - a. A Regional Standard licence of £5.25 per rod only.
  - b. A Regional Standard licence of £6.00 with Divisional licences of £3.25.

These represent an increase in excess of 60%

- 2. For eel traps: either-
  - a. A licence of £2.00 per instrument.
  - b. A licence of £6.00 for the Norfolk and Suffolk River Division only with a licence of £2.00 for the rest of the Region.

These represent an increase of 40% (Neglecting the £6.00 licence which is proposed to cover extra bailiffing in that Division)

These proposals represent an obvious discrimination in favour of commercial interests and against recreational interests.

STATEMENT

The Anglian Water Authority states in Section 34 of the Report of the Fisheries Advisory Committee of the 3rd September 1980, "that views have been expressed to the effect that the licencing duty should reflect the high commercial value of eels and not the level of fisheries service provided by the Anglian Water Authority, to manage or protect the eel fisheries of the area, and to enforce licencing and byelaw requirements."

2.

This Committee also supported the views of the 'Anglian Eel Fisherman's Protection Society', (commercial trappers) who said that there was no justification for increasing licence duties substantially unless an increased level of service was to be provided. Again representing discrimination in favour of commercial interests and contrary to Section 18 of the Water Act.

Commercial eel trappers serve no useful function and actually experience a substantial income for petty outgoings, like parasites on the fisheries of Anglia.

Why should the Anglian Water Authority, who's duty it is to provide fisheries, clean water, drainage and facilities for recreation, have to subsidise the incomes of at least 25 commercial fishermen out of the income from rod licences

It is a fact that the more conscientiously the Authority performs its duties, the better will be the crop of eels for these trappers.

It is as though a farmer spends a good deal of time, effort and money in establishing excellent cultivated land, only to allow others to reap his crops for a pitifully small fee.

The Authority expects an annual income of £755,000 from rod licences, part of which pays the salaries of 150 bailiffs, against an expected annual income of about £3000 from eel trapping, covering little or no bailiffing, as the majority of trappers operate at night. For efficient supervision and enforcement of commercial eel licences, clearly the fee of £2.00 per instrument needs to be substantially raised, for the 1464 licence fees collected from traps at the present time, giving under £3000 at the proposed new rate, will not be sufficient. To cover suitable bailiffing, a fee of £6.00 per instrument would be more appropriate.

As Section 18 of the Water Act states that Water Authorities have a duty to maintain, improve and develop salmon, trout, freshwater fish and eels in the fisheries in their area, even by allowing commercial eel trappers to operate in their area, the Authority must be acting contrary to this Section.

The Authority admits that about 25 persons purchase most of the eel trapping licences issued and thus must be considered to be obtaining a substantial income. Bearing in mind the high commercial value of eels, if we only assumed an average income of £2000 per person from trapping, this would give a figure in excess of £50,000 per year, and for a nominal outlay in equipment and fees.

I also wish to point out that there is no close season for eel trapping and therefore persons in possession of a trap licence are free to trap and net all through the coarse fish spawning season, damaging and killing many millions of immature fish of all species.

The Authority states that its aim of the Review of Duties for 1982 - 84 is to cover fisheries expenditure from fishing licence income. In view of an increase of over 60% for rod anglers and only 40% for commercial trappers, are we to expect a large increase of services to rod anglers and a decline in services to commercial interests - I fear not, commercial trappers already have the support of the Fisheries Liason Committee as outlined above, and of course as fisheries improve, also must the quality of fish and therefore more cash for the trappers.

There have been extensive complaints of a lack of coarse fish in the Great Ouse system, particularly where 310 trapping licences were issued in 1979. Can this system continue to support these many instruments, or is there a reasonable argument for a severe reduction, not only in the number of traps, but in the areas they can be set and in the time of year also.

The Fisheries Advisory Committee set a figure of £1500 to cover a reasonable level of enforcement of regulations of trapping in the Norfolk and Suffolk Division as a reason for the higher proposed rate for that Division. However, there can be no reason why this Division should be set above all others. If all the Region was covered to the same high standard, a sum of £7500 would be required, or a minimum fee of £6.00 per instrument. Indeed, also worthy of consideration is the setting of a much higher fee of at least £10.00 per instrument so that not only enforcement of regulations can be observed, but there will be an income available for the improvement of fisheries on a wider scale. This will help offset losses of coarse fish due to the killing of immature fish and the sale of marketable coarse fish from unscrupulous trappers.

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#### SUMMARY

1. Eel trappers paid £2055 in 1979 to obtain upwards of £50,000 value of eels.
2. The cost of eel trapping licences should represent the cost of correct enforcement of regulations. This would represent a minimum fee of £6.00.
3. Proposed increase in rod licence is 60%, eel trapping licences 40%
4. Eel traps could be a substantial source of coarse fish mortalities, especially during the spawning season and the following few months, and from the sale of mature fish found in traps
5. Eel trapping must be against Section 18 of the Water Act as it is definitely detrimental to eel fisheries in the Region and a possible source of loss to other fish species.

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#### ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

1. There should be a total ban on eel trapping in the AWA Region.
2. Introduce a close season for eel trapping, say from March 15th to July 1st.
3. Increase eel trap licences to at least £6.00.
4. All eel trapping in the AWA Region to be carried out by AWA staff only.
5. Restrict the numbers of traps in each Division.
6. Restrict the areas of Divisions where traps may be set.
7. A strict comparison needs to be made of trapping in other countries and here.
8. Frequent spot check must be made on the contents of eel traps during each season.

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If proposals 1 and 4 are not possible  
then the others are:

Brian Crawford  
Chairman  
The National Anguilla Club

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Copies of this document have been sent to:

The Anglian Water Authority  
The Secretary of the Great Ouse Fisheries Consultative Association  
The National Association of Specimen Groups  
The National Anglers Council  
The National Federation of Anglers  
The British Eel Anglers Club  
Essex Anglers Consultative Association  
Lincolnshire Rivers Anglers Consultative Association  
Norfolk & Suffolk Anglers Consultative Council  
Nene & Welland Anglers Consultative Association

Angling Times  
Anglers Mail  
Coarse Angler  
Coarse Fisherman

From those individuals I've received session report forms from, I have been able to make an interim analysis of the information so far obtained.

Only 19 members have been including in any eel fishing so far this season plus one ex-member who has been donating information.

However, those members who have made contributions have clocked up 52 sessions with a total rod-hours of 1,554½. That makes an average of 172½ rod hours per member so far. Though, all these rod hours don't indicate a massive income of eels. As you can see by the table below, the largest eel caught so far by our members is one of 2:12½ caught by Steve Enkel on the Whit Trip at Eye (Bra Lake).

CODE NO	MEMBER	S	E	RH	RH/E	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5
102	R Baczyk	9	-	279½	-	-	-	-	-	-
025	B Crawford	8	4	364	91	-	3	1	-	-
101	M Davies	6	4	236	59	1	3	-	-	-
103	S Enkel	8	8	148	18½	7	-	1	-	-
067	D Holman	6	2	226½	113¼	-	2	-	-	-
104	G Kent	5	2	92	46	2	-	-	-	-
090	A Listér	3	-	48½	-	-	-	-	-	-
096	A Mitchell	4	1	76	76	1	-	-	-	-
028	E Orme	3	-	84	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	9	52	21	1554½	-	11	8	2	-	-
MEAN	-	6	2½	173	45	-	-	-	-	-

As you can see, only two of our members have been fortunate to catch eels over the 2lb barrier. As for myself I've still to experience the fanatical tug-tug of an eel.

The average eel, so far this season, is only 0:15 lbs. The UQ = 1:04 and the LQ = BL. At this particular time it is only expected that the smaller and the odd one or two pounder will occur, due to the effects of Air and Water Temperatures being low as they are now. Where baits are concerned, the breakdown of rod hours shows that the worm at the moment is the most-used bait. With a rod hour usage of 890½. Followed by deadbaits with 586½ and finally the other baits with only 77½ rod hours. Taking each variable of baits, the analysis shows that when fishing with worm the eels caught so far is 18.

MEDIAN = 0:12    UQ = 1:04    LQ = BL    IQR = ?

While fishing with deadbaits the analysis showed that only 3 eels were caught. Where the MEDIAN = 1:02, UQ = 1:11, LQ = 0:15 and the IQR = 0:12. Sadly no eels have been caught in the OTHER bait category. Taking the information that I've already given you, the mean number of rod hours per eel where worms are concerned = 49½  
" deadbaits " " = 195½

So at the present rate, it is advisable to use wormbaits whenever possible. At the moment I've been unable to give you any idea of when and how to catch the larger eels, because as you can see for yourselves, with only two 2lb+ eels being caught, the analysis which I would have given may be totally inaccurate, as many of the conditions with which we are faced with now, will become obsolete as from the commencing date of the fishing season.

That is all for now, as I think I've given you a basic outline of what is happening and who's catching what. So until further analysis is available, I wish you a very enjoyable and rewarding season.

Richard Baczyk - Club Analyst

FOR FURTHER NOTICE PLEASE SEE CONTINUING PAGE

## ANALYSIS RUN DOWN AS FROM 6 JUNE 1981 - Cont'd

## NOTICE

Will the following please alter their records accordingly:

S Enkel        Cumulative total rod hours = 148.    And ditto for no of eels which should now read 8 and not 9 as stated on last session report form which I received ie no.8.

M Davies      Alter cumulative rod hours to = 236 as from session report form no.6  
Total rod hours for SRF No 6 = 32 and not 34 as stated.

Thank you.

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## EDITORS NOTE:

Before you all start asking why, when 10 members have been fishing so far this season, only nine sets of results are including in this interim report.

Richard was under the impression that Chris Lee was no longer a member of the Club, though he did send in report forms, and left his results out for the time being. Unless I am mistaken, Chris Lee is still with us.

## THE MERSEY AND WEAVER ANGLERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION

On Saturday, 14 February I attended a meeting of the above Association held in Nantwich, Cheshire, and was admitted as a member of the Association. I had been encouraged to contact the Consultative Association and to apply for membership by Brian Crawford's comments both at the AGM in November and the Committee meeting held at his home in January.

I was welcomed most warmly by the existing members of the Consultative Association and they listened with interest as I introduced myself and outlined to them the aims and objectives of the National Anguilla Club. As I anticipated the membership was made up principally of Angling Administrators belonging to the large angling clubs and associations in the North West area. Although it was quite clear after the meeting had been underway for a relatively short time that they represented the interests principally of match and pleasure anglers it was refreshing to note that throughout the meeting it was the interests of anglers and angling in general that were promoted and not the specific demands of any one particular branch of the sport. As was stated by one of the members, if anglers organise themselves into one united body they would have much more influence than they do have at the present time, being split up into specimen hunters, matchmen, game fishermen etc. The meeting was greatly assisted by there being present a member of the fisheries staff of the North West Water Authority who was able to answer any technical questions which arose. Although I believe that another member of the NASG is in fact on the Consultative he was not present at the meeting I attended.

The meeting dealt very much with the day-to-day issues that arise concerning anglers in the North West Water Authority and if I was to give a brief outline of the matters discussed that will give you some idea of the work of the Consultative Association whichever Water Authority area it is connected with. The question of there being no need to obtain a rod licence if fishing waters of less than one hectare with no inflow or outflow was raised and the fisheries officer present stated that as a matter of policy the Water Authority would not prosecute a person fishing without a rod licence in a water of less than one hectare where the inflow and outflow was not obvious on observation. Thus they would not prosecute when there was an underground outflow from such a water. It was brought to the attention of the meeting that there was an anomaly concerning a certain area of the Shropshire Union Canal south of Market Drayton where it appears it was not necessary to obtain a rod licence to fish. The Representative from the North West Water Authority said that in fact this was the situation and explained that it was due to the fact that the canal was so many feet above the level of the local river. Although I questioned him further about this (not understanding the point) his explanations did not help. There was discussion concerning an outbreak of perch disease at Lymm Dam a water controlled by Lymm Angling Club. The meeting was also told of difficulties experienced by various angling clubs in the area regarding Local Authorities sending them rate demands for their waters. This it seems is a nationwide problem and the Consultative were very concerned about it and have urged angling clubs to consult a solicitor before making any payment. The meeting was told of the changes proposed on the Local Fisheries Advisory Committee for which the Consultative provides three members: this Committee meets twice a year and advises the North West Water Authority on angling policy. Mention was made of the fact that the North West Water Authority are considering a reduced rate for anglers who take out more than one rod licence which should prove interesting to, for want of a better word, the "specimen hunting fraternity".

THE MERSEY AND WEAVER ANGLERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION - Cont'd

All in all I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the other members of the Consultative Association and the topics that were discussed were interesting. As far as this Consultative Association is concerned I feel that there is great scope for me to put forward the interests of anglers with similar thinking to myself whose attitudes often do not coincide with match and pleasure anglers, for no good reason other than a lack of understanding. I was very pleased to note that all the members of the Consultative were interested in promoting the interests of angling in general and as the majority of them represented large associations with many members they were able to have some influence purely on that basis alone. I feel that they will be of great assistance to relatively small groups like the NAC or the NASG and if we are prepared to discard our elitist tag and gain them as our allies we should be able to have far more say in the running of our sport.

I noted in the literature contained in Brian Crawford's bulletin on eel netting that the North West Water Authority were considering a change in their bye-laws to end the right of anglers to fish for eels during the coarse fishing season. It appears that they are considering this due to the abuse of this concession by anglers fishing for species other than eels. I am keeping a close eye on this situation and will be at the forefront if there are any definite proposals by the Water Authority to alter their bye-laws. The attitude of many anglers in the North West (as Dave Holman will confirm) to eel anglers is that "if we cannot fish why should you". I on a number of occasions whilst fishing quite legitimately in the close season have been confronted by other anglers and accused of not fishing for eels even though I have been using dead baits in the canal. There is a commonly-held belief that no-one fishes for eels and uses this as a device to fish throughout the year. Again this belief arises through ignorance and nothing else.

The next meeting of the Mersey and Weavers Anglers' Consultative Association is scheduled for the 16 May and if any members in or outside the North West Water Authority area wish me to raise any matters at this meeting perhaps they would let me know.

By joining your Local Consultative Association you are taking a positive step towards having your voice heard and I would encourage every member to make enquiries about their local association.

Mark Davies

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ODDS & SODS

With Terry calling for articles all the time and myself not knowing enough words to write out a cheque, I present the following. My annual squawling.

My season was very bad, with only a few eels to show for my effort. Dan and myself got off to a good start during the close season, fishing a small lake and catching eels, not big, but good fighters. We were just getting to know

the place. Catches were getting bigger, up to about 10 eels per night. Then a blank, then another.....it had been netted.

Our eels went up to about 2½ lbs but eels to over 4 lbs were taken by the netsmen. Golly knows the netsmen and they only did it for a bit of quick money. Golly has only just got to know the netsmen and was in no way involved with the netting, or so he says, funny how he can afford 10 pints of bitter every night!

My brother then found me an irrigation reservoir in Burnham out on the marshes. A stream from a slaughter house ran into the reservoir, a good sign. Packing up after one night caching an eel of about 11 oz, I found it had been netted. Who did it, I don't know, but I was the only one who didn't know. Was Golly involved, is he still drinking 10 pints a night?

At the AGM I won the book "Through a fishes eye" in the raffle and I would like to quote a passage from it:-

"Further tests demonstrated that salmon swimming through fish ladders on spawning runs turned tail and ran back downstream when a man rinsed his hands in the water some distance upstrea. However, the same migrating salmon were not affected by dozens of other substances tested, including tomato juice and even wine. It makes you wonder about touching baits or simply putting your hand in the water. Salmon are frightened by odours given off by man, seals and bears. The actual substance in the skin surface of mammals that is detected by fish is called L-serine.

The all-out champion of underwater smell is the American eel. A set of remarkable experiments showed that this species of fish can sense a certain alcohol (B-Phenyl ethyl) at test dilutions equal to less than one billionth of a drop in a large swimming pool. At this degree of sensitivity, an eel needs just one single molecule within its nostril to detect the presence of alcohol. This super-keen olfactory ability is related to their habit of living and feeding around muddy bottoms where visibility is near zero and eyesight is of little use. It also serves them well in their juvenile migration from the Sargasso Sea south of Bermuda to coastal streams thousands of miles away along the Atlantic shoreline. And it is mainly done by sense of smell."

It sets you thinking about how we treat our baits when we bait up. Tony Hollerbach has this season been using gloves when baiting up. I think the passage proves a point that the smell of man must be kept off the bait at all times. Tests have been carried out parallel to this and it has been proved that Golly can detect a public house selling real ale five miles downwind. He was also placed in a swimming pool containing alcohol but unfortunately he drank the lot so nothing could be proved.

By the time this comes out Terry and Jan will be married and I would like to wish them the best from all the members for the future.

Bob Layland

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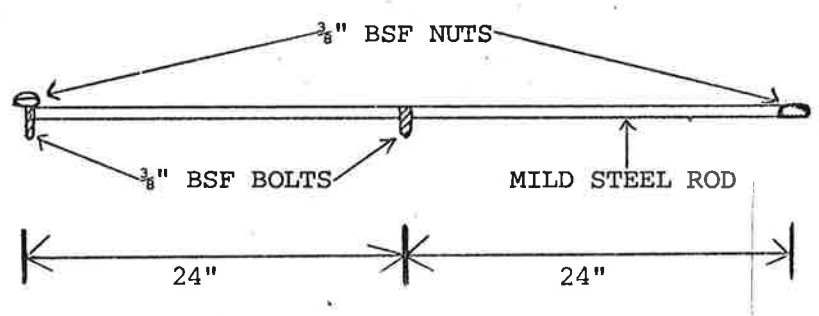
### EEL FISHING FROM BOATS (WITHOUT TEARS)

About four years ago I hired a punt from the Ellesmere Anglers and parked up some 35 yards from a most fishy area of Crosemere. It was a glorious evening and in the large punt I was able to set up all my usual eel fishing equipment without too much problem, even the bedchair was in use and with four rods poking out at different angles the whole unit must have resembled a machine gun post awaiting attack.

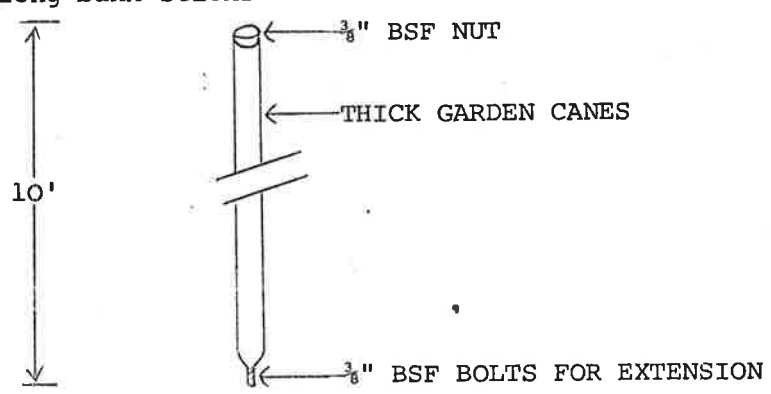
All was well until after dark when the wind picked up and began to blow across my pitch sending the punt first one way then the other and with each movement came some well orchestrated bleeps and buzzes from my bite alarms. Come morning and I vowed that boat fishing was not for me, the bank was far more friendly, and a hell of a lot quieter.

Since then I have fished with anglers far more experienced in the art of boat fishing and slowly I have come to grips with it and even started to enjoy the odd trip. First of all it is important that you get your rods and bite alarm set up detached from the boat, solve this one and you are half way there, then no matter how much the boat is pitching about, properly set, your alarms will not be playing you up.

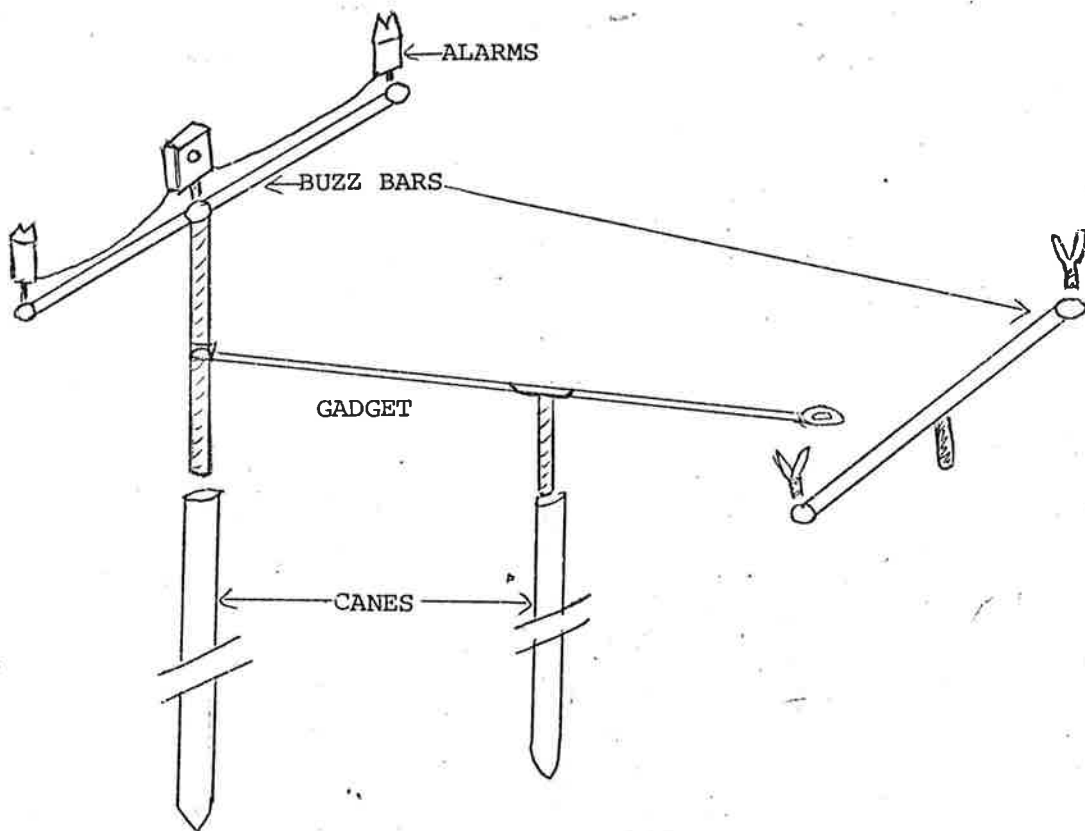
For this I would recommend you make a gadget like so:-



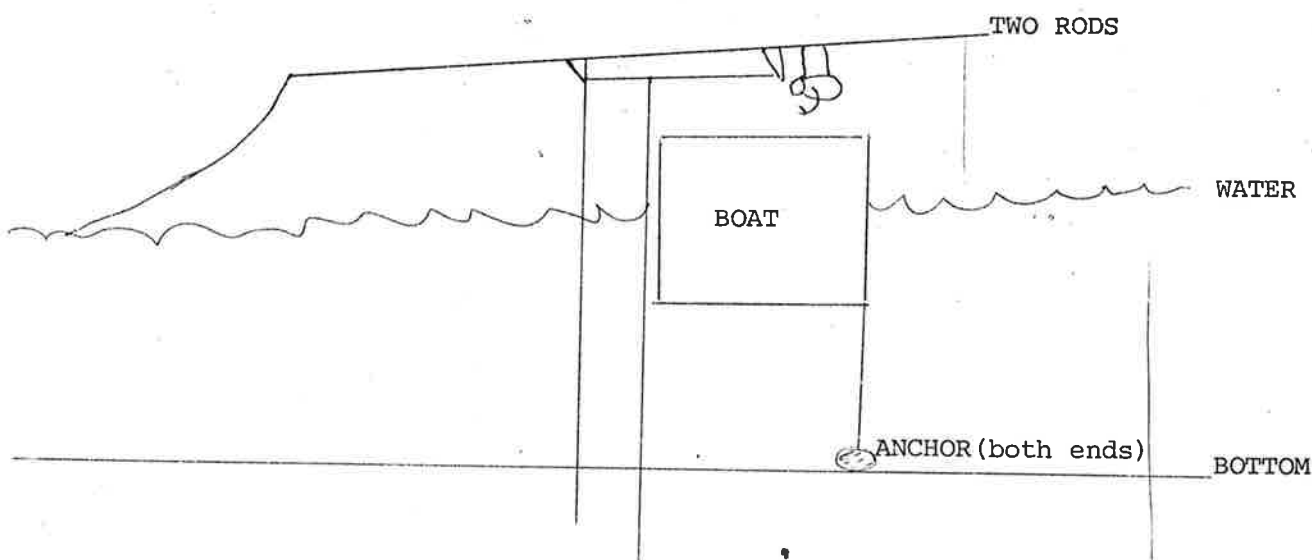
also a few extra long bank sticks



Then you can set up your rig, needing only a set of buzz-bars to complete it. Incidentally, there is no need to buy the nice, but costly, units supplied by Bait '78 (sorry Dave, even more so since I won your donated set in a recent club raffle).



And use like so:-



From the diagrams I hope it is obvious that the rod butt is well over the boat without any part of the rods or unit touching it, also if needed a glow bobbin can be used between the reel and first ring, and inside the boat.

The alarms to use must be either the AJS Mk IV or optonic type, it is no use if you have to lean out over the boat to place the line behind the antennae. Having solved the bit alarm problem we then consider the weather and here the only advice I can offer is to dress as if you were going for a day's piking in coldest January, then simply add a few more sweaters. By hell, it gets cool in the middle of a lake even in summer.

Happy boating chaps!

Dave Holman

## "WHAT IS WRONG WITH USING SPRATTS AS BAIT"

Ever since I wrote my article, "My Way", way back in Vol.17 issue No.1, I have had constant remarks made about my usage of the spratt, as at that time it was my most-used bait.

This article is an explanation, as to why I chose to use this particular bait, and how members of the National Anguilla Club tried to help me give up my bad habit.

The remarks which were made, were mostly that of criticism; I would like to thank all the members who bothered to write, or who 'phoned me, during my provisional year, explaining why I should give up using spratts as bait.

Way back in my earlier days of eel fishing, we (that is my brother, Les, Brian and the rest of the so-called "Stanground Specimen Group") couldn't be bothered to acquire any other baits, as we mainly did our eel fishing during the close season. The rules of the AWA specify that only sea-baits could be used in land-locked waters when fishing for eels. During those years, even before we heard of the National Anguilla Club, we fished very eagerly for eels, and we always used spratts, because that was the only bait we were catching eels on.

Even after I joined the National Anguilla Club, I was still using spratts as my main bait. It was not until I heard criticism from a few individuals who could not understand my use of spratts, that I changed my attitude where spratts are concerned. I think that the main reason for this change of attitude, was the artificial promises that were made, that I would increase my eel catches and double the size that I was catching, which was then an average of 1 lb per eel. Results proved negative. My average remained the same. Just to give you an outline in the changes that I made regarding baits, I took the advice of Andy Lister, who recommended eel steaks, the result again was negative. I did not get a touch from anything. Alan Mitchell recommended that I use very large baits, to avoid my so-called "bootlaces". And so I again used Rudd baits of about 4 ozs, all that I caught then was the odd jack pike. Arthur Sutton suggested that I use available baits, in whichever water I happened to be fishing in: I did this and all that I kept catching were bootlaces.

When returning from the 1980 Whit Trip, which was at Bala, where I caught an eel of 2 ozs (GASP), on worm (BY JOVE), I felt rather pleased when I caught an eel of 1 lb 5 ozs, on spratt from Butlers. I would like to point out that this particular bait, the spratt, seems to work only on certain waters, namely Butlers, Bra and NP2. Both Brian and myself have experimented with different baits, but in my case, the alternative baits just did not work. But the spratt did. Presentation of the other baits may be a reason, I hear you say. "RUBBISH".

I would, if I may, like to take you on an imaginary trip from the Sargasso sea to any particular water in the country you would care to imagine. The eel larvae, takes approximately three years to reach our freshwaters as is stated in most journals. The overall majority of these larvae eventually reach Britain's freshwater as little elvers, and after a few years develop into fully mature eels. A possibility comes to mind (just a possibility mind you) when you hear that thousands of tons of elvers are caught every year by these commercial fishermen on such rivers as the Severn, not much is said about larger eels being caught.

If this is so, they must have followed the same pattern as the larvae and elvers, but what "if" say a small percentage did mature while in the saltwater of the Atlantic Ocean. This is only speculation, but can any of you prove otherwise, that while in saltwater these eels, would in fact feed upon saltwater fish. NO NOT SHARKS! but smaller sea fish. The spratt for example. Possible isn't it?

I have over the years, heard stories that carp are very intelligent fish?????? Particularlly from these ultra-cult carp fishermen. For example, one story was that once a carp was caught on one particular bait, it would be a very long time till it would be caught again on that same bait. To tell the truth these so-called carp fishermen, if they were telling the truth about these so-called facts would have a very poor result in any particular season as there aren't all that many carp anyway, and if it was true that once a carp was caught on one particular bait, it would not touch that bait for another season at least, then why have so many carp been caught over and over again.

The relationship between the carp and eel, may be similar. With the probability that eels may not be as stupid as many anglers tend to think they are. If they are equal in intelligence to say that of the carp, and even that of the pike (which has no intelligence at all) then when fishing a water, why not introduce a totally alien bait. Imagine if you can, if you were an eel or fish for that example, would you turn your nose up to say fish & chips and then scoff yourself full of bacon butties. Two totally different foods of which either would wet your appetite.

The question here is do eels have enough intelligence regarding what they eat. If so in relation to humans, our childhood always brings back memories of ice-cream, tomato ketchup sandwiches, peanut butter, etc., the list is endless. And so regarding the spratt. Is it not possible that eels, remembering the saltiness of the ocean and probably gorge themselves silly on old-time favourites (SILLY ISN'T IT).

The answer I leave to you, as we all have our own opinions. My ideas may sound ludicrous but you must remember one thing, in Peterborough, particularly LBl, the spratt takes some beating; and that's a fact. Even though the big eels are not showing, maybe one day they will. I know that Andy Lister had an eel at LBl on spratt, which weighed in at 3lbs. It's a start, so if there is anyone out there who can prove to me that spratts are a waste of time, as a bait for eels, then I will be very interested in what their reasons actually are.

And so in my particular case, spratts are not a useless bait - on the contrary, they are worth much more than you think.

Richard Baczyk

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**TACKLE PURCHASING SCHEME**

I believe in the recent past the NAC has purchased in bulk, items of tackle (ie Black Seal Trace Wire) which in turn was sold to individual members. The primary advantages of this scheme were firstly that the item of tackle was easily available and could be obtained quickly and secondly as it was possible to buy the items in large quantities it could be offered at a price less than the recommended retail price and a small profit could be made for club funds.

It has been discussed recently both at the last committee meeting and between myself and individual members whether or not it would be feasible for the NAC to buy a varied range of small items of tackle for re-sale to members. For instance Marlin Steel is widely used by members for eel and pike fishing, but apart from one exception (Trevor Moss) it can only be bought in 100 yard spools.

TACKLE PURCHASING SCHEME - Cont'd

It would be an easy matter to buy one or two spools (perhaps of different breaking strains) and to sell this in shorter lengths to members. Jack Hilton Partridge Carp Hooks and Partridge Chevells are widely used and these again could be purchased in bulk perhaps direct from the manufacturer. The list is endless and no doubt members will suggest what particular items they would be interested in purchasing via such a scheme. It would be an easy matter for members to indicate on a specifically prepared questionnaire what items of tackle they need so that the demand can be ascertained before the particular item is purchased.

How would the initial finance be provided? As far as club funds are concerned we have a healthy bank balance and no extra finance need be arranged, ie there would be no need for members to pay in advance. The money is not wanted for any specific purpose and could be well used to start off such a bulk tackle purchasing scheme which after the initial outlay would be self-supporting.

I am of the opinion that the specialist fishing world is fortunate to have amongst its ranks good fishermen who have gone into the tackle business to provide fishing tackle of good quality, ie Dave Walker (Bait '78) Trevor Moss, Alan Brown, Terry Eustace etc. Specimen hunters demand the best and are willing to pay for it. Nevertheless, the aforementioned tackle dealers have to make a living and with due respect to them (and I am in particular speaking of one dealer) their prices tend to be high. Even so they generally provide a very quick return of post service. However, if you are prepared to shop around other non-specialist fishing tackle dealers are equally as good (have you tried Mullahey & Sons of Burton-on-Trent?).

If we got a tackle scheme under way as I envisage above, eventually the scheme would have sufficient funds available to purchase larger items of tackle. I am sure if for instance it was discovered that a number of members wished to purchase a particular expensive item of equipment ie perhaps a broolly tent and if the manufacturer approached with such an order, good discount could be obtained.

Connected with such a scheme an ancillary to it could be a swop shop column printed in the Newsletter. There must be numerous items of tackle which members no longer want which may be of use to others. I am sure by this means Dave Holman could get rid of another set of Newerk Needle Floats and then I would not have to keep winning a set in the raffle at the AGM!

If I get any response to this little piece (highly unlikely) I will draw up a tackle questionnaire to be passed around at the next meeting so that people can indicate their requirements.

MARK DAVIES

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HAPPINESS IS A VERY SPLENDID THING

"Sod it, its raining, and I'm late all ready" so were my thoughts as I drove my car out of my garage, down the North Circular road and on towards Billericay in deepest Essex. Some "simple to follow" instructions from a girlfriend who used to live in Billericay soon got me lost. A quick call in at an off licence (handy that) soon put me straight, straight in the opposite direction to my previous

## HAPPINESS IS A VERY SPLENDID THING - Cont'd

instructions. "Good job my petrol is on the company" thought i, just as I sailed past my destination. A slick James Bond U-turn put me right.....in front of a dirty great lorry. Don't 32 ton Foden's have big lights and loud horns?

"Here we are - found it at last"

"Where's the bloody do then"

"Could do with some free beer right now"

"Must have built this place to rival Hampton Court Maze"

Lights and music penetrated my senses as I finally found the car park. Pressies in arms I strode towards the entrance. After trying six or seven doors I finally got in, by the door I walked past in the first place.

The sight that met me on getting out of the rain was more shocking than the AWA. Our general secretary, big Terry, in a most elegant resplendant pose. Not only that he was wearing a suit!!

After the initial shock I caught on "of course he's in a suit, it's his bloody wedding I've come to". The sight of the lovely Jan in a wedding dress convinced me that all the rain and the long drive were well worth it. So with a pint of Abbott in my hand I toasted the happy couple.....then got another pint. Thirsty work these wedding receptions.

On looking about I saw Chris Davy and old Ken Goward (no offence Ken). Familiar faces in a sea of revellers - boy don't Terry & Jan have energetic relations. On joining Chris & Ken, I had the pleasure of meeting Ken's wife Ann. We sat, drank and chatted about fishing and eels in particular. Ann took it very well including my bad jokes and a good time was had by all, especially Chris who seemed to be consuming a rather large amount of lager for one so new to the evil brew (all will be revealed one day. Ho Ho).

Terry (still wearing his suit) was looking eagerly at the wedding cake and would probably have devoured it given the chance.....he would have had to get past me first though.

All too soon it came to the time for Terry and Jan to depart but not the relations and friends - they were still going, dancing and drinking and making merry in all sorts of ways. Chris used up the rest of a roll of film on his camera, the candid shorts that result should prove very interesting.

At approximately 1.30 in the morning (very approximately after all that Abbott) Chris and I left and drove vaguely in the direction of Basildon, Chris seemed to know where he was going anyway. Coffee at Chris' house and a flick through his photo album rounded off a very pleasant evening and after getting lost on the way home (what else) I finally hit the pillows at 4.30.

Surfacing at 3.30 the next afternoon I rushed down stairs to get something to quieten down the little man banging big cymbals in between my ears. I then sat down and reflected on the previous evening's events and realised how lucky we are to have such good friends in the NAC.

I sincerely wish Terry and Jan all the very best for the future and feel sure that the rest of the club feel the same. Thank you for being such nice people you two, it's a pleasure to know you.

David Walker

THE LOST SOUL RETURNETH

He is not dead.  
He has not become a monk.  
He has not forgotten what eels are.  
He has paid his subs!!

Yes folks, Chris Lee is alive and well and hopefully returning to some eeling this year. What do you mean Chris who?

Escorted by his lovely lady, the long lost soul paid me a visit recently, and I can assure everyone he is fine and, given the time, raring to go (eeling that is). Perpetrated of the "Captain Beaky" rumour beware! Mr Lee may be knocking on your door when you least expect it, as he did to me. Indeed Chris and I are attempting to go eeling together this close season and I can see another active member in the not to distant future, helping to put the south of the club back on top. (Can't let Messrs Holman & Lister have it all their own way.)

Dave Walker

PS You'll have to go fishing this year, Chris mate, because you've got to use those buzzers I sold you.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Editor

Just a few lines to let you know that I am still alive. I'm writing this letter slowly because I know you can't read very quickly. You won't know the house when you come - we've moved.

Your mate Dave Walker. He has a lovely new job with 500 men under him - he's cutting the grass at the cemetary. Bob Layland is doing very well in the Army. He's only been a soldier for two weeks and they've made him a court martial.

There was a washing machine in the house when we moved in but it doesn't seem to be working very well. Last week I put fourteen shirts in it, pulled the chain and I haven't seen them since.

Jan, had a baby, but I don't know if its a boy or girl, so I can't tell you whether you're an aunt or uncle. Your Cousin Richard downed in a vat of whiskey last week. Some of the men at the brewery dived in to save him but he fought then off bravely. We cremated the body.. It took four days to put the fire out.

We had a week at Bala and it only rained twice. Once for four days and once for three. Last money it was so windy that one of the hens laid the same egg five times.

We've just had a letter from the undertaker. He says that if the last instalments on Golly's funeral isn't paid - up he comes. Brian made his own cider yesterday. He went out and crushed 500 woodpeckers.

Yours faithfully

Angry Willum

PS I was going to send you £5 for your birthday but I had already sealed the envelope.