



NATIONAL
ANGUILLA
CLUB
BULLETIN

NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BULLETIN

VOLUME 23

NUMBER 3

MAY 1986

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
EDITORIAL	1
CHAIRMAN'S PAGE	2
THE SALMON & FRESHWATER FISHERIES ACT 1975	by Mark Davies 3-5
SESSION REPORTING 1985	by Terry Jefferson 5-12
THE REPORTING PAPERS FOR 1985-86	by John Sidley 13-14
THE BIG FISH SCENE	by Phil Smith 14-18
BE ON YOUR GUARD	by A J Sutton 18-19
THOUGHTS FROM THE DEAD WOODS	by Mark Davies 20-21
EDITORS COMMENT	by DPW 21
MY VIEW	by John Sidley 22

(Copyright NAC 1986 c)

David P. Walker

EDITOR

Last months cover was of Chris Davey an ex-member and a true gentleman. The venue was Abberton in Essex and the eel 4:01 (I think). Whilst on the subject of covers, we still have some left of Brian with his Bra Lake fish. BUT now he's caught a bigger one I hope that we can use one of his wife Jill's excellent photos of that eel?

DPW

EDITORIAL

Once again I am rather pleased with this edition, I just pray that this pleasant situation continues to be the case as without doubt the Bulletin is on a high at the moment and I for one wish to keep it there. I would however, like to see some different contributors who might shed some light on the rest of the memberships views and thoughts, because no matter how well and prolifically they write, Mark and John are not the only two members we have! So come on all you anonymous members out there write and tell us all what you think.....

With this edition you will receive the details for the Whit trip to Baston Fen. I expect to see a LOT of you there and really no excuse is sufficient to not see some of members who have not attended a Club trip since joining.

You will also find your session reports for this season in the envelope, those of you who are new to this wonderful experience will also find a guide for there completion. If you have any doubts or questions then contact Terry Jefferson direct and he will sort you out regarding the Reporting Scheme. If any of the older members need a guide then you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Incidentally, whilst talking about older members, it is very revealing to read just what used to be written about Messrs Orme, Sutton, Crawford (of whom more to come later) Jefferson, in the past Bulletins. So watch out some of you, articles will be accepted as payment not to print this like the.....Bulletin Xmas Poem Competition...or EVEN.....some of those very naughty 'SLASH' articles!!!!!!

Enough of history for now and no with the present day.

You will appreciate that there is a large amount of material included here and I therefore apologise for the slight delay in getting it out, you should have got this edition and all the other stuff about ten days ago, but thats life.

Mudman...sorry I mean Brian, taken as you will have read in the Newsletter, a great eel of 4:08. Now this is Brians best ever eel and is his fifth 4lb'er. It came from Colemere and was taken using a bolt rig. If this fish is not a great tonic to us all to go out and do battle then I don't know what is!

As a reminder to you all please do not forget that 1987 is our 25th year and so far we haven't had an overwhelming response to our call for ways of celebrating the event. Put those thinking caps on and get writting lads. (Spelt that wrong!!)

The last editorial I wrote contained the hope that you would all find something to comment on, it what was a very interesting edition. Sadly, as expected none of you did, I only hope that this time you will. Remember this is YOUR Club, and unless YOU help to make it tick then don't expect anything for YOUR subs. After that, you can expect the next Bulletin to be out around the start of the season.

I may attempt to print this edition both sides of the paper, so in case I make a complete hash of it I'm sorry. We will have to purchase some paper and definitely some envelopes, unless of course you don't wish your subs to go up next year and can find, beg, steal, borrow or whatever, some for your poor Editor.

Wouldn't it be nice, in the wake of the Spring Meeting, to sit back and think that the worst is past, and from here on it will be plain sailing?, with Bulletin articles and session reports pouring in as everyone is out there doing their bit for the Club.

Utopia?

More like cloud cuckoo land!

At one time it would have been very close to the truth, and it could be again, though I think it is a long way off at the moment. I don't expect a sudden and dramatic return to this state of "Utopia", but I do expect each and every one of you to put in more effort than you did last year.

Firstly, I want to see session reports from EVERYONE and what's more, I want them to be in my possession at the end of each month as they should be, and I hope most of you will manage a few more sessions than you did last year. In most cases that is not asking a lot I'm sure!

Secondly, between now and the AGM in November, I want to see at least one Bulletin contribution from all of you. I hope none of you will find that to be too great an imposition.

Nobody had better stand up at the AGM and say, 'I couldn't think of anything to write about'.

The last two editions of the Bulletin cover a very wide range of topics which should provide plenty of food for thought to get you started.

As was discussed at the Spring Meeting, 1987 will be the 25th year of the Club. The committee will have plenty to do in organising whatever event is decided upon, but we want your views and ideas, in writing, on how we should mark the event. Do we want a full blown stag night or a more sober affair, do we plan to include an overnight stay if desirable, who should we invite?

Several suggestions were offered at the meeting. The compilation of the best Bulletin articles over the years published in book form, is a marvellous idea. A commemorative badge is another good idea. Everyone of you should be involved in this, so lets have your thoughts on these, or any other ideas you may have. The time to organise something will dissappear all too quickly, and I don't want to have to wait another 25years for the next opportunity!!!

So lets have some action.....NOW!!!

I write this before the event, knowing that it won't be published until after the event, but I would like to take this opportunity of wishing AJS every success in presenting his paper at the Angling Conference in Reading. I hope all the preparation and worry proves worthwhile.

Finally, I will once again welcome our three new Provisional Members to the Club. Luke Szarowicz, Michael Sutton and John Mitchell. I hope you all enjoy long and Successful membership of the Club and I look forward to seeing the results of your efforts as the forthcoming season progresses.

Terry Jefferson

CHAIRMAN

This is the principal Act of Parliament legislating for the fish and fisheries and is the act that is most likely to effect the angler fishing with rod and line.

Firstly, eels come within the Act by reason of Section 41, which defines FRESHWATER FISH, as any fish living in fresh water exclusive of salmon and trout and any kinds of fish which migrate to and from tidal waters and of eels.

Below are some sections which may effect the coarse angler.

PROHIBITED INSTRUMENTS:

It might appear fairly obvious to any angler who fishes for sport that is to say fishes with rod and line, but Section 1 says that no person shall,

(a) Use any of the following instruments, that is to say,

(I) a firearm within the meaning of the Firearms Act 1968.

(II) an otter, lath or jack, wire or snare.

(III) a crossline or setline.

(IV) a spear, stroke haul or snatch or other like instrument (this does not include a gaff or taylor) It would include an eel spear.

(V) a light.

for the purpose of taking (catching) or killing salmon trout or freshwater fish.

(b) Possess any instrument mentioned above.

(c) Throw or discharge any stone or other missile for the purpose of taking or killing etc.

Comment; Although the courts have never been asked to decide on the point, the use of a light to take or kill could lead to difficulties for anglers if this section was given a wide meaning.

A carp angler is playing a good fish. It has run for some bushes and gets caught in them. The angler tries everything he knows to force the fish out. Nothing works. He picks up a stone and throws it at the bush, the carp moves out and he lands it. He has taken the fish and in my opinion technically committed the offence under Section 1 (c) of the Act.

ROE, SPAWNING & UNCLEAN FISH:

Section 2 says,

(a) Any person who knowingly takes, kills or injures or attempts to take kill or injure any freshwater fish which is unclean or immature or

(b) buys sells or exposes for sale or has in his possession freshwater fish which is unclean or immature or any part of any such fish.

shall be guilty of an offence.

The above does not apply to a person who takes a fish accidentally and returns it to the water with the least possible injury.

Comment; A tench angler, early in the season fishes in an area of the lake where he knows the tench will be gathering to spawn. He fishes for and catches an unclean fish (a spawnbound fish). If he has set out to deliberately catch that

fish he has committed an offence. How many spawned-up tench do we see photos of in the angling press early in the season!

Section 2 (4) says,

Any person who, except in the exercise of a legal right take materials from any water, willfully disturbs any spawn or spawning fish or any bed bank or shallow on which any spawn or spawning may be, shall be guilty of an offence.

Comment; Willfully, means intending to do so. A tench angler sees tench in pre-spawning activity in the shallows. He knows what they are doing, he rakes the shallows to create feeding activity. He commits an offence.

POISONOUS MATTER & POLLUTING EFFLUENT:

Section 4 says,

A person who causes or knowingly permits to flow or puts or knowingly permits to be put into any waters containing fish any liquid or solid matter to such an extent as to cause the waters to be poisonous or injurious to fish or the spawning grounds, spawn or food of fish shall be guilty of an offence.

Comment; Someone who prebait a swim with 4 tons of dead hedgehogs and 2 tons of stillborn pups commits an offence! (Dear dear Mark, how do you think John carried that lot on his motorbike? ED)

INTRODUCTION OF FISH INTO INLAND WATERS:

Section 30 says,

A person shall be guilty of an offence if he introduces any fish or spawn of fish into an inland water or has in his possession any fish or spawn of fish intending to introduce it into an inland water, unless he first obtains the written consent of the water authority within whose area any part of that water is situated.

Comment; It is well known that anglers stock waters without permission. A person commits an offence above if at the end of the day he empties his livebaits from piking into the water, if those baits were caught from another water. An angler commits an offence if he catches small eels from the Shropshire Union Canal at Ellesmere and then transfers them to Blakemere! AJS, Ernie & Dave Holman you stand condemned under this section of the Act!!

POWERS OF SEARCH:

Section 31 says,

Any water bailiff appointed by a water authority and any person appointed by the Minister may, examine any instrument or bait which he has reasonable cause to suspect of having been or being used or likely to be used in taking fish in contravention of the Act or any container which he has reasonable cause to suspect of having been or being used or likely to be used for holding any such instrument bait or fish.

Such an appointed person may seize any such fish, vessel or instruments and if conviction follows apply to the courts for the forfeiture of these items.

Any person who refuses to allow the above or obstructs a water bailiff commits an offence.

OVERALL EFFORT

MARCH NIGHT HOURS: 19.30 - 07.00 = 11 1/2 HRS.
 APRIL " " " : 20.30 - 05.30 = 9 HRS

MARCH
 MONTH: APRIL 8

NAME OF MEMBER	N. EVANS.	J. SIDLEY.	B. CRAWFORD.	K. STEPHENSON										
SESSIONS	3	6	3	1										
ROD HOURS	75	127	62	41										
TOTAL EELS	1	0	0	3										
R-H/E	75	-	-	18 1/2										
2:00+	-	-	-	-										
R-H/2:00+	-	-	-	-										
3:00+	-	-	-	-										
R-H/3:00+	-	-	-	-										
4:00+	-	-	-	-										
R-H/4:00+	-	-	-	-										
5:00+	-	-	-	-										
R-H/5:00+	-	-	-	-										
EELS worm/day	-	-	-	-										
R-H worm/day	-	11	1/2	4 1/2										
R-H/E worm/day	-	-	-	-										
EELS worm/night	1	-	-	3										
R-H worm/night	4 1/2	116	22 1/2	27										
R-H/E worm night	4 1/2	-	-	9										
EELS db/day	-	-	-	-										
R-H/E db/day	8	-	1/2	1 1/2										
R-H/E db/day	-	-	-	-										
EELS db/night	-	-	-	-										
R-H db/night	44	-	31 1/2	9										
R-H/E db/night	-	-	-	-										
EELS other/day	-	-	-	-										
R-H other/day	1	-	-	-										
R-H/E other/day	-	-	-	-										
EELS other/night	-	-	-	-										
R-H other/night	17 1/2	-	7	-										
R-H/E other/night	-	-	-	-										

EFFECT OF BAIT TYPE AND ADDITIVE
PREBAITING AND GROUND BAIT ON CATCH RATE AND SIZE DURING DAY

MONTH: MARCH
APRIL 85

BAIT DETAILS	BAIT TYPE			ADDITIVE		PRE-BAIT		GROUND BAIT	
	WORM	DB	OTHER	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
ROD HOURS	16	10	1	3	23	0	26	2½	28
TOTAL EELS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R-H/E									
2:00+									
R-H/2:00+									
3:00+									
R-H/3:00+									
4:00+									
R-H/4:00+									
5:00+									
R-H/5:00+									

EFFECT OF BAIT TYPE AND ADDITIVE
PREBAITING AND GROUND BAIT ON CATCH RATE AND SIZE DURING NIGHT

BAIT DETAILS	BAIT TYPE			ADDITIVE		PRE-BAIT		GROUND BAIT	
	WORM	DB	OTHER	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
ROD HOURS	170	84½	24½	33	246	4½	274½	26½	282
TOTAL EELS	4	0	0	0	4	0	4	1	3
R-H/E	42½	—	—	—	61½	—	68½	26½	84
2:00+									
R-H/2:00+									
3:00+									
R-H/3:00+									
4:00+									
R-H/4:00+									
5:00+									
R-H/5:00+									

EFFECT OF WEATHER AGAINST CATCH RATE & SIZE

MONTH: MARCH APRIL 85		EELS	R.H.	2:00+	R-H/2	3:00+	R-H/3	4:00+	R-H/4	5:00+	R-H/5
BAROMETRIC PRESSURE	LOW	3	156½								
	MED	1	132½								
	HIGH	0	16								
	FALL	3	174								
	STEADY	1	115								
	RISE	0	16								
CLOUD COVER	0- 25	0	186								
	25- 50	0	27½								
	50- 75	3	74								
	75-100	1	17½								
RAIN	NIL	0	201								
	SHOWERS	4	54½								
	HEAVY	0	49½								
WIND	NW-NE	3	171								
	NE-SE	0	0								
	NO WIND	0	80½								
	SE-SW	0	20								
	SW-NW	1	37½								
MOON PHASE	NEW	3	146								
	FIRST Q	1	43½								
	FULL	0	40								
	LAST Q	0	75½								
AIR TEMP	0-10	4	305								
	10-20	0	0								
	20-30	0	0								
WATER TEMP.	0- 4	0	0								
	5- 9	3	166								
	10-14	1	139								
	15-19	0	0								
	20-25	0	0								

OVERALL EFFORT

MAY NIGHT HOURS: 21.15 - 04.45 = 7½ HRS.

MONTH: MAY 85

NAME OF MEMBER	D. WALKER	T. JEFFERSON	J. SIDNEY	M. DAVIES	E. ORME	K. STEPHENSON	B. CRAWFORD	N. EVANS				
SESSIONS	2	2	4	3	2	6	5	5				
ROD HOURS	96	73½	117	103	57	139	132	115½				
TOTAL EELS	1	0	11	9	0	4	1	11				
R-H/E	96	—	10½	11½	—	35	132	10½				
2:00+	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H/2:00+	—	—	39	—	—	—	—	—				
3:00+	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H/3:00+	—	—	23½	—	—	—	—	—				
4:00+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H/4:00+	—	—	—	—	—	139	—	—				
5:00+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H/5:00+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
EELS worm/day	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H worm/day	5	—	35	12½	—	10	4	2½				
R-H/E worm/day	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
EELS worm/night	1	—	11	9	—	4	—	10				
R-H worm/night	7½	—	72	52½	—	42	34	14½				
R-H/E worm night	7½	—	6½	6	—	10½	—	1½				
EELS db/day	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H/E db/day	31	33	½	8	19½	18	4	17				
EELS db/night	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1				
R-H db/night	52½	40½	9½	30	37½	59½	66½	81½				
R-H/E db/night	—	—	—	—	—	—	66½	81½				
EELS other/day	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H other/day	—	—	—	—	—	2	2½	—				
R-H/E other/day	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
EELS other/night	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
R-H other/night	—	—	—	—	—	7½	21	—				
R-H/E other/night	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				

EELS CAUGHT (2:00+)

MONTH: MAY 85

CAPTURE DETAILS: BAIT, WEATHER ETC.

NAME OF MEMBER	WEIGHT	LENGTH	GIRTH	TIME	DATE	BAIT	BAIT POSITION	TRACE MATERIAL	ADDITIVE	PRE-BAIT	GRADED VEGNS.	AIR TEMP	WATER TEMP	BAR PRESS	BP MOVEMENT	CLOUD %	RAIN	WIND DIRECTION	WIND STRENGTH	MOON PHASE	NAME OF WATER
KEVIN S.	4:10	38 1/2"	8 1/4"	23:50	18/5/85	3 x LOBS.	BOTTOM	GRAINED JACOB	NO	NO	CHARTED VEGNS.	13°C	14°C	LOW	STEADY	100%	SHOWERS	0	0	NEW M.	GRAND UNION CANAL.
JOHN S.	3:01	30"	7 1/4"	22:15	28/5/85	4 x LOBS.	"	H/S	"	"	NO	9°C	15°C	HIGH	RISE	0	0	0	0	FO.	WESTWOOD PARK.
"	2:01	29 1/4"	6"	22:30	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"
"	3:10	-	-	22:20	30/5/85	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"
"	3:07	-	-	22:30	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"
"	3:07	-	-	00:05	31/5/85	"	"	"	"	"	"	5°C	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"
"	3:03	-	-	23:20	30/5/85	"	"	"	"	"	"	8°C	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"
"	2:15	-	-	23:00	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"
"	2:04	-	-	00:15	31/5/85	"	"	"	"	"	"	5°C	"	"	"	0	0	0	0	"	"

EFFECT OF BAIT TYPE AND ADDITIVE
PREBAITING AND GROUND BAIT ON CATCH RATE AND SIZE DURING DAY

MONTH: MAY 85

BAIT DETAILS	BAIT TYPE			ADDITIVE		PRE-BAIT		GROUND BAIT	
	WORM	DB	OTHER	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
ROD HOURS	45	131	4½	12	168½	0	180½	3½	177
TOTAL EELS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R-H/E									
2:00+									
R-H/2:00+									
3:00+									
R-H/3:00+									
4:00+									
R-H/4:00+									
5:00+									
R-H/5:00+									

EFFECT OF BAIT TYPE AND ADDITIVE
PREBAITING AND GROUND BAIT ON CATCH RATE AND SIZE DURING NIGHT

BAIT DETAILS	BAIT TYPE			ADDITIVE		PRE-BAIT		GROUND BAIT	
	WORM	DB	OTHER	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
ROD HOURS	177½	377½	28½	45	538½	0	583½	29½	554
TOTAL EELS	34	3	0	3	34	0	37	1	36
R-H/E	5	128	-	15	16	-	16	29½	15½
2:00+	3	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	3
R-H/2:00+	59	-	-	-	179½	-	194½	-	185
3:00+	5	-	-	-	5	-	5	-	5
R-H/3:00+	35½	-	-	-	108	-	117	-	111
4:00+	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-
R-H/4:00+	177½	-	-	-	538½	-	583½	29½	-
5:00+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
R-H/5:00+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

EFFECT OF WEATHER AGAINST CATCH RATE & SIZE

MONTH:	MAY 85	EELS	R.H.	2:00+	R-H/2	3:00+	R-H/3	4:00+	R-H/4	5:00+	R-H/E
BAROMETRIC PRESSURE	LOW	1	14	-	-	-	-	1	14	-	14
	MED	24	645	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
	HIGH	12	174	3	58	5	35	-	-	-	14½
	FALL	6	449	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75
	STEADY	14	211	-	-	-	-	1	211	-	15
	RISE	17	173	3	58	5	35	-	-	-	10
CLOUD COVER	0- 25	12	190	3	63	5	38	-	-	-	16
	25- 50	5	164½	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
	50- 75	3	134	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
	75-100	17	344½	-	-	-	-	1	344½	-	20
RAIN	NIL	27	569½	3	190	5	114	-	-	-	23
	SHOWERS	5	238	-	-	-	-	1	238	-	48
	HEAVY	5	25½	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
WIND	NW-NE	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
	NE-SE	10	94½	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9½
	NO WIND	14	210	3	70	5	42	1	210	-	15
	SE-SW	6	92½	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15½
	SW-NW	7	436	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62
MOON PHASE	NEW	6	71	-	-	-	-	1	71	-	12
	FIRST Q	23	593	3	198	5	119	-	-	-	26
	FULL	3	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
	LAST Q	5	86	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
AIR TEMP	0-10	27	570½	3	190	5	114	-	-	-	21
	10-20	10	262½	-	-	-	-	1	262½	-	26
	20-30	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
WATER TEMP.	0- 4	1	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
	5- 9	2	99½	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
	10-14	20	615½	-	-	-	-	1	615½	-	31
	15-19	14	105.	3	35	5	21	-	-	-	7½
	20-25	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

THE REPORTING PAPERS FOR 1985-86

Well my 1985 eel season has now come to an end, it was a funny season for me, my son Phillip has come back into my life after 15 years, there was all that aggro between the 3 eel clubs, my choosen big eel waters failing to give up their eels, in fact I never had a run from any of the 3, and to cap it all the Mrs has now refused to get my lobworms off the lawn at night while I'm away fishing. But after all this the icing on this rather stale cake was taking my best eel of the season from a water that I first thought would never produce such a great fish, we live and learn don't we.

During my first yaer with the Anguilla Club I filled in my reporting forms as best I could, and on every trip out, the blanks were noted along with the successes, baits, wind, moon, rain, cloud, the thing on the wall falling or rising, the depth you name it I tried my best to do it. But did it tell me anything?? Did it help me to catch bigger eels??? Did it tell me when to go out or when to stop in?? Did ti tell me what was the best bait to use?? Did it tell me the best swims to fish?? etc etc etc etc etc ????????

DID IT IN FACT TELL ME ANYTHING ??????????????????????????????????

The answer I'm sorry to say is a very big NO.

All that information that I so faithfully recorded did not help one little bit in the capture of the eels I took from 4lb to this seasons best of 6lb 6oz. The swims baits etc were told to me by my own knowlegde of eel fishing, my success was due to my own hard won experiences on my own waters.

Some years ago we conducted an experiment along the lines of the reporting scheme, I made phone calls to friends in the eeling world and asked them to fish exactly as we did on the same nights, right down to using the same number of worms on the hook. Now Gerry and I were fishing a series of gravel pits that were extremely hard, very few fish indeed were expected but when they came they were huge. One water in particular here has only ever produced 4 eels to us in 3 seasons fishing, but the smallest was 4lb 8oz with the other three all being over 6lb, the biggest falling to Gerry at 6lb 10oz. Now all this information was collected and very soon it became obvious that despite the other lads catching on their waters those same nights on our waters were big fat blanks over and over again. The other lads were catching large numbers of eels up to 3lb, including one lad who was fishing a lake only a few miles from us. When he caught we blenked and we are talking of the same weather conditions due to the closeness of the venues. Now all that information told us nothing except that smaller eels, up to 3lb'ers, did not feed at the same times as the real biggies despite the conditions being perfect for big catches of eels up to 4lb.

I did ask last season that we only took details of eels from 4lb upwards, and I still feel that I am right. To me jack pike are like small eels, they will feed regardless of the weather conditions experienced in summer, the onlything they

have in common with their big sisters is a reluctance to feed once the hard ground frosts arrive in winter. I think the reporting scheme is a waste of time in its present form and will not help us to catch bigger eels, it will provide good reading in the Bulletin where it will fill a few pages but is that what we want it to do?

I do not feel that anyone can turn round and say that tonight or today will be good, just as no-one can turn round and say that such and such a bait or swim will produce the real big snake on any water in the country. The only person who can hope to answer these questions is the angler who has learnt about his water and his quarry over the years, and the dream of huge fish is up to him to make come true. I have often heard anglers, after a fruitless session, say the conditions were pperfect yet we blanked. I myself have said the same thing, how foolish we are, the perfect conditions are when we have landed the species we are after, regardless of what the weather was doing, the bait we used or the swim we chose. The experts who tell you when to go fishing on your waters should be ignored, unless they got their information from the water you are fishing yourself. This all takes me back to the question of putting the effort in on the proven big eel waters, it takes us back to leaving those waters you have fished for years and years but never cracked the six pound barrier. To me the waters to concentrate on are those that have produced true sixex, if you can't do this then don't knock those who do, or moan when they catch the rel biggies.

John Sidley

THE BIG FISH SCENE

by PHIL SMITH

When Merv Wilkinson and I attended that fisheries management talk at BAA headquarters we little realised the time, effort, disappointments and elation that would result in the following seasons.

As with so many things it happened by chance, Merv and I were at the lecture by a then up and coming fisheries student named Keith Eastern, on the subject of classifying roach/rudd hybrids. After the lecture we got talking to Keith and the subject got round to our then favourite species of eels. We had for a considerable time been trying to catch a 5lb plus specimen, Merv had succeeded with a fish of 5lb 5oz from the Oxford Canal, but even that was dwarfed by the fish that Keith spoke of!

It would appear that during his work on a large reservoir he had recently eletro-fished eels over 6lb---we needed no more urging but as an added bonus it was known that there were bream into double figures present as well, their bodies having been found in the post spawning period of recent seasons.

It sounded like heaven and we couldn't wait.

Due to a peculiar set of circumstances we were allowed to fish the reservoir in the close season, so come the spring holiday at the end of May we were there. Merv and I arranged to go during the week but Bill Robinson and Merv's brother (Alwin) went on the Sunday.

Mid-morning on the Monday Merv's lorry pulled up outside with a toot on the horn, I walked out and was met with the question, "Would I believe the lads had bream of 9lb 10oz and an eel of 6lb 10oz?" Of course I didn't - not first visit, with enormous fish of both species, it took some doing but he finally convinced me he was not pulling my leg.

You don't need two guesses to know the rest, that evening saw us on the bankside along with Bill and Alwin. In front of us was up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft of water containing large bistort beds and further out from them the bed of the reservoir was covered in blanket weed. By wading out to the edge of the bistort bed we could find clear patches in the weeds where clean gravel areas of a couple of feet in diameter stood out like stars in the blackest night. Two big lobworms on a No 1 hook were carefully placed in the clear patches and the line layed back to the bank. Come dusk and four anglers waited with baited breath, was the first night a one off like so often happens? It was still just light when we got our answer and one of my rods quivered as the line snaked out in a smooth continuous run. The strike met solid resistance and the shallow water erupted as a fish turned in the weeds. After a short struggle Alwin waded out and engulfed the fish in the 42" net, looking in to the mesh he made what became one of the group's quotes "It's only a snotty". He came ashore and laid the net down and there was the dustbin lid - to our inexperienced eyes it looked even bigger than it was and a quick, though careful check showed it's weight to be 10lb 12oz. The edge was dulled being the close season but still elated the bait was again placed on the clear gravel. At 2.15am I was in action again this time it was the real thing, an eel of 4lb 13oz, what a night!! While this was going on the others were not sitting still and daylight saw Merv with bream of 6lb 6oz and 8lb 11oz along with eels of 3lb and 4lb 5oz, Bill had taken four eels to 3lb plus though Alwin was unfortunate to have had a blank.

Although the bream were of a very pleasing size the fact that it was close season stopped us celebrating their capture as much as would normally have been the case, but the eels, well we wondered just what could be done. Reluctant to catch the bream we only fished once more in the close season, with a 7lb 3oz bream plus a 4lb 9oz eel falling to my rods. The season just couldn't come quick enough. We did use the remaining time to build a stage to give access to the weedbeds and also the extensive shallows going out to water about 5ft deep, at a good cast from the bank.

The building of that first stage was a story in itself but suffice to ask you to imagine Merv and myself in an $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft fibreglass boat trying to drive 10ft X 4 inch square wooden posts in with a sledge hammer - all this in what seemed like a storm force 10 wind. How that hammer didn't go through the side of the boat I'll never

know. Still a full weekends work saw the stage built, about 10ft by 12ft and reasonably stable, after all that hard work we thought, look out fish you've got trouble coming. Just one week to go. Each evening saw one of us make the 40 mile journey to groundbait the swims - this was going to be murder!! First night came and went and with it went the dreams of the massive fish - we blanked!

Other members of the Coventry S.G. had elected to fish from the bank and a total of five eels to 4lb 3oz from them gave us hope and the following night I took an eel of 3lb 14oz whilst another member took a specimen of 4lb 12oz in the middle of the afternoon, with the sun blazing down, this fish being taken from 2ft of water in the middle of the most dense part of the bistort weeds, that really tested his tackle to the limit. The next night we were reduced to three members, the rest going to work - urg! - as it turned out they made the best choice on the night, Merv and I blanked off the stage and the third lad blanked from the bank. Night four of the season and I only had one eel to show for it, after the promise of those first couple of nights I was disappointed to say the least. For this night I decided to fish off the small island about 100 yards along from the stage.

Being alone on the island I thought four rods would be in order. Now I'd read the books and articles as well as speaking to quite knowledgeable lads on the subject, so I knew just what to do. The two eel rods would be fished alongside the weedbeds, one to each side of me. These were SS4 rods with 10lb line and double lobworm. For the bream I used 10ft Avons with swingtips combined with 6lb line. These would be fished straight out into a groundbaited area. It is said that the best laid plans of mice and men etc etc... and sure enough when the swingtip went up as sure as hell it was no bream at the other end of that line. Just trying to move the fish bent the poor Avon double and after a real battle an enormous eel came to the net. The scales showed 6lb 8oz and the tape gave 40" length and 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " girth, I'd got my 5 plus with aces!

Only one fish, but it was with re-fired enthusiasm that I sat on the island the following night. Merv had joined me and we again baited a swim with groundbait. About 35 to 40 yards out the swim was 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft deep. The baiting done from the big boat, this being an old canal boat 14ft x 4ft and made from 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch timber so it was solid. By anchoring the boat square to the bank I needed only to put the marker out of the back - opposite side to island - in a fairly central position then groundbait around the boat. The groundbait was quite sloppy mash put out in handfuls, looking into the water these were quite clearly seen spreading out as they landed to look like cowpats in a field.

Feeling we had done what we could we sat back and waited. Fishing flake on one rod and lobworm on the other, Merv had the first bite at 12.15am and hooked what was obviously a bream. His joy was shortlived as the prolific blanketweed jammed into the tip ring despite my attempts to clear the weed off before it got there. We found out later that I got away without the problem because of

the larger inside diameter of my rings. The fish slipped the hook and we again resumed fishing having a further three bites, all perfect, all missed. This took us to about 1.00am and there were no further indications until after dawn. 4am and again the bites started. In the next hour I missed about 20 bites, I tried every way I could think of to get them, from hitting the first twitch to letting them take 30 yards of line before striking. In desperation I tried a large missile float, perfect sailaway bites missed! By now I was at a loss and the next bite I just sat there watching the swingtip lift, then the line started to lift out of the water covered in blanket weed. Now the first 15 yards of line was clear of the water with blanket weed hanging from it like the Monday morning washing. The weight and drag must have been tremendous but it kept lifting, in the end I just picked the rod up and started to reel in, guess what? The bream was hooked and after a lot of line clearing it was duly landed, weighing in at 9lb 10oz. Another fish - the next bite - followed the same pattern this one going 8lb 4oz, then the bites stopped. It is very interesting to note that in all this time and in very shallow water not one fin showed above the surface, We went out to check the groundbait and there it was, not even one disturbed cowpat to show that big bream had been in the swim for over $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours and given us well over 20 good bites.

Of course now we've cracked the method, bream look out! The next night we're ready eager and waiting. We waited and waited and waited, TOTAL BLANK, no bites no nothing, we should have learnt by now!!!

The following night we fished from the boat, moored on the point of the reeds at the right hand end end of the weeds. This appeared to be the perfect spot with a big drop off extending well out into the reservoir. You could at a push just wade out to the boat through the reeds, though once there in hte boat within one rods length you were in 7ft and deeper water was within easy reach. After an eventful night of bailing the boat out (slight leak) and getting the odd small eel we decided that this would be a good spot for another landing stage. I should point out that we had seen the odd bream rolling in the deep water that such a stage would give access too.

This stage was smaller than the last though not by much. It was far easier to build since we could stand in the water to get the intial poles in plus we 'improved' to using scaffold poles for the framework. One weekend of hard graft during the day saw the stege ready and we were eager again.

We used a similar idea to the island swim, each of us fished rods into the deep water and a rod along side the weedbed, lobworm being the main bait now (because eels don't like bread all that much). Whilst building this stage we found that once a pole was in about 18" it was almost impossible to get it out again due to suction. Because of any error while building the stage there was a pole sticking out of the water in front of the stage on the slop. That led to a luaghable incident that first night, in the early hours of the morning I struck into what was obviously a good fish - not an eel, since it was 'kiting' to the

side, something that eels rarely if ever do. As the fish came closer to the stage we could see the width of its back and it was obviously a bream of record size. It managed to go around the pole and I stood yelling to Merv to jump in and get it off, I even threatened him to help him in if he didn't volunteer, this would have been alright except the pole was in about 6ft of water, and Merv's 5½ft and can't swim! Fortunately the fish came free itself which saved me drowning a good friend, when we landed it we found it to be one of just 13 carp known to be in the 100 acre plus reservoir, quite an exciting 15 minutes that.

We went on fishing that stage and though we took a few eels it never came up with the bream that we hoped for. We still saw the occasional fish up to our left and our thoughts started on a third stage to be sighted about 100 yards further out along the drop off bar but more of that another time.

A double figure bream on eel gear, a 6½lb eel on bream gear, lots of time and effort with no rewards whilst other rewards came instantaneously, and of course the blanks, those intervals of time between fish that seem proportionatly as great as the fish that you are after. All these make up the big fish world and within this article you've seen a few weeks taken from hte diary of mine.

END OF PART ONE.....

...part two to follow in next Bulletin.

.....

.....

BE ON YOUR GUARD

by A J Sutton

Those of you who were at our Spring meeting will have heard me, in my Presidents Report, touch on the subject of the anti-angling movement and the necessity to avoid doing anything to load their guns, I wish in this short peice to expand on this and outline a few things which we could consider doing, along with one or two things which we shouldn't do.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not a righteous fool setting himself on a pedestal. I have done, and to some extent still do, many of the things which I now tell you to beware of. What I have done is to look closely at my own shortcomings and have determined to put many of them right. Above critisism? And as I am guilty of most things, this piece should encompass most of the points on which we should take care.

I think, and know, that one of the very worst things that we can do is to leave baited rods unattended. Now I'm not refering to those rods poked out in the next swim or even further, as long as they are under your control, although some will argue that you cannot possibly see the waterfowl which may swim into your line, What I refer to is the bad habit of wandering halfway round the lake in order to have a chat or to scrounge a cup of tea. It's definately not on, chaps, and could bring a heap of trouble. Perhaps you are an advocate of stainless steel hooks? Well if you are then you and your hooks ought to be relegated to a far distant corner of this planet. I have advocated the return of deeply hooked eels

provided they look OK otherwise. We all know that John Sidley has done so to. We have proved that a hook will gradually dissolve away inside an eel, leaving it to live out it's life span. But NOT a stainless steel hook. So if you have some, please throw them away.

With the present state of the art I know that it is not possible to have a biologically degradable line. Even were it possible it would hardly be feasible. So we have to live with the stuff we have, but by all means possible we must ensure that other creatures can live with it too. True, I've seen an Anguilla Club member leave line all over the bank where he was fishing. Its also true that I have seen another member strip off to his underpants and swim out to retrieve nylon after having been broken.

Whatever your thoughts on livebaiting, be warned that it is a subject which invariably tops the list when cruelty to animals (fish) is being discussed. Now I have always regarded livebaiting as something that I can turn to when things are difficult, and it works really well on many waters. I wonder if, however, the time has come when we should stop using live baits (fish)? One may feel that we have lost something - but that's better than losing angling altogether. Keepnets too, even the much improved ones of today, can be open to criticism. Perhaps not the nets themselves, but the manner in which they are used. We have all seen the very long net, tethered out at full length, but with the bottom end in only ten inches of water. And perhaps crammed with fish. It invites our opponents to have a go at us. Carp sacks are, I feel a much better idea, and the captives remain quiet. But do keep a watch on the number of inmates or they will suffer some distress. It's true that I do not have that problem, for my catches appear to be automatically limited to one fish, if any at all!

Cans of beer and bottles of booze are all very well and may help to make your trip enjoyable provided the empty containers travel home with you as well. In that respect I would commend Ernie Orme for he always travels home with his car full of bottles and cans - mostly other peoples. And I think I have covered half of Whitemere grubbing out bottles mostly broken, from the sand. When one considers how few anglers fish that place you can see that the bottle throwing practice must have been going on for years. So its not just a malady of recent times. I once helped chase a young foal with a large can securely stusk on it's head. It gave us no end of trouble, all in vain, for when the creature was caught it was in such a poor condition that it was sent to the knackers yard. It made me feel sick.

Well end of sermon. I hope you keep it in mind. Bear in mind also the fact that we all can do some good, too. Like going to the frozen lakes to feed and water the wildfowl. Like rescuing the lamb from the canal and making lifelong friends with the farmer.

Above all, take care and protect our sport.

Footnote. Whilst plastic bags are gradually giving way to bio-degradable ones, they should always finish up in one place. Your dustbin at home.

I was pleased to hear from Ernie Orme, who was able to attend the Spring Meeting that we've gained three new provisional members. I trust that their association with the Club will be a long and happy one.

I can remember when I joined the NAC way back in 1979 (I think). Remembering that period leads me to offer a bit of advice to our new members. When I joined I had had no contact with the 'Specimen Hunting' fraternity whatsoever, so that I was very impressed by the way the National Anguilla Club members went about their fishing and I was determined to change my style of fishing. In retrospect this was a mistake. I spent a lot of money and acquired a lot of tackle but I didn't catch bigger eels. Had I ploughed my own old fashioned furrow at least the number of eels I put on the bank would not have gone down. So you new members don't mimic the existing members methods without asking yourself why you are really doing it. If you've had success before coming into the Club stick to the tactics that you are used to. By all means draw inspiration from the Bulletins (I personally consider this to be unlikely looking at our most recent offerings) ED, Can't agree with you their Mark, just look at this and the last edition. DPW. The members of the Club who in the past have had the most success are those who have come up with original ideas.

Regardless of the views of some of our present members I think it is very difficult to keep persevering on a water in the hope of a whopper when you experience blank after blank. I can see no reason why you should not move to an easier water where you can catch eels (albeit smaller ones) and thus keep interested. In the past I have reverted back to the more traditional baits after having fished unsuccessfully with new baits that seemed likely to succeed. Flexability seems the key to success. In previous Bulletins, some years back now, a great deal was written about choosing carefully the time when you go out to fish. Select the days when the conditions of weather make it most likely that you will catch eels. This is good sense but in my case not always possible. I go out eel fishing when I can fit it in with my work and the remainder of my interests. Because of this I may sometimes go out fishing when the odds may be against me being successful. But of course I do not simply go fishing to catch eels.

I'm glad that the Club has decided to visit the Montgomery Canal for its Summer trip. This water is an unknown quantity as far as eel fishing is concerned. It's received very little attention from specimen hunters so I await the results with great interest. I can guarantee that all members who attend will catch eels. I've had a number of fish over three pounds from the canal even though I've not fished it very intensively. If sport on the canal becomes a little slow a move to the nearby river Severn for eels or other species may be productive. A little further away the Vyrwny provides (in my opinion) some of the best chub fishing in Britain.

Easter used to be the time when our keener members ventured out for their first serious eel fishing session. A little to early in my opinion. Can you remember your easter at Balā with Dave Holman Ernie? For those of you who dont know about this, Ernie and Dave wre holed up in snow drifts on the shores of lake Bala for a few days. Looking out of my window the weather's not much different this year. If any member has been out fishing he needs his head examining. (Try telling our own Brian Crawford that now Mark!!)

At the time of writing this I have not yet received the Bulletin that was handed out at the Spring Meeting, si I am lacking in inspiration, as soon as I've read it there will be more to come.

P.S. Since writing this I've received the latest Bulletin. Its a vast improvement on the last one, so to some extent I have modified the views I expressed in my article entitled Reflections. Mark Davies.

90

((()))

EDITORS COMMENT

I think Mark is exactly right when he advises our new members to follow their own noses,so to speak. To many people who have joined the Club have tended to change what have been previously successful methods and waters for ways that have not allowed them to further their eel fishing.

The experience and knowledge contained in the Club should be used by new members to gather information and ideas for use on their own waters and in their own way. One good example is Luke who has a very good knowledge of the Great Ouse around the Eley area in Cambridgeshire. Now any of the members who know this would probably advise him to go and find some pits or something, but why? The river is the water he knows and is where he has taken some very good fish, the help we should give is to encourage him and try to answer any questions that he may put. I know, from talking to him, that our Luke probably knows more about river eel fishing than a lot of our older members, he certainly knows a vast amount more than I do! Perhaps we can persuade him to put some of his knowledge down on paper and along with one or two of his outstanding drawings produce a few articles. While on this subject I would like to see a few lines from our other two new members, something along the lines of, 'My way with eels'.... or similar? Perhaps a more valuable contribution would be our new members telling the rest of us what they would like to see in their Bulletin in future. Remember that we dont have a regular letters page but the space is there if we get the letters. I dont expect all of our membership to be as prolific as Mark or John in their article writing but surely a few lines in the form of a letter to the Editor wont break anybody.

How about it all you members????

Write and tell me what you think.

DPW

In the 3 eel clubs that I am in, at one time or another members have talked about tackle, baits, etc, etc, etc... All this is supposed to help us catch bigger eels. I feel there are 3 important things we must all know to help us land bigger eels, one is the rig we use, second is the water we fish and most important of all is the bait that we offer those big snakes.

At the present time most if not all of the big eels reported over the years have fallen to the standard legering rig, sifting through my records of big eels caught and those of the many anglers who I know have taken big eels, I feel that the standard legering rig or any bait fished hard on the bottom, whether any weed is present or not, will take some beating. Surface, sub-surface, and off the bottom rigs have all produced eels, but nothing compared to the numbers of big eels taken on the bottom, therefore I think it is not the type of rig being fished that will solve the problem of why we do not see more big eels landed. You could argue my point by saying that more anglers fish hard on the bottom so it is the law of averages that more eels will be so taken, but that is not so. Being in the 3 eel clubs I know that many of those members fish the other rigs on all their trips out, yet still those big snakes are taken on the bottom. No lads, its nothing to do with the rigs we use.

I now turn to the waters we fish, now there lies a big problem, for I think a lot of eel anglers fish waters that do not hold those big snakes. One thing above all other aspects of eeling or any other big fish pursuit is this, 'you cannot catch big fish if they are not in your water in the first place'. I believe an eel water should show its true eel potential in the first season that it is fished. Most, if not all, of my eel waters that have produced eels over 5lb have produced those fish in the first season. I then believe that a venue which has produced a 5 can, in turn, produce a 6, then a 6 water a 7 and so on. Yet I know of eel anglers who are still fishing waters after two seasons, some even longer, that have not yet broken the 5lb mark. One must then ask oneself how long are you prepared to keep on fishing that water?

Now baits, this is where I feel the real answer lies, if your water does hold those big snakes, if the right bait aint out there I feel you will be wasting your time. I would like to see a paper done on all the eels taken from 5lb up that the N.A.C. have on record. We could then get some idea on what those big eels like to tuck into?

Any views on the above would be most welcome.

++++
EDS COMMENT:

Next months Bulletin contains an article by John in which he goes on to examine the type of baits that he feels are needed to answer the problem as he sees it. Don't forget that you heard it here first in your very own no holds barred, all exciting N.A.C. Bulletin!!!!