



The National Anguilla Club

BULLETIN

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The National Anguilla Club, 1968

EDITORIAL: QUOTATIONS

'None of us, probably, wishes deliberately to fish for eels.'

- Eric Parker, 'Fine Angling For Coarse Fish' (ca. 1930).

'The ele is a quasy fysshe a rauenour & a deuourer of the brode of fysshe. And for the pyke also is a deuourer of fysshe I put them bothe behynde all other to angle.'

- Dame Juliana Berners, 'A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle' (1496).

'The Eel...may be then caught by laying hooks, which you are to fasten to the bank, or twigs of a tree...But these things are, indeed, too common to be spoken of, and an hours fishing with any Angler will teach you better...than a week's discourse.'

- Izaak Walton, 'The Compleat Angler' (1653).

'Angling for eels as a sport is not of much consequence; and as it is a sport that any boy can successfully follow, few instructions are needed.'

- J.W.Martin (The Trent Otter), 'The Nottingham Style' (1882).

'Very large eels are not often caught on the rod, chiefly because anglers do not lay themselves out to catch them. Still, I owe him some amusing times...so I will not abuse him overmuch; and...he is admirable meat.'

- H.T.Sheringham, 'Coarse Fishing' (1912).

'If you search through all the various books on angling you will not find a great deal about eel fishing. Most that contain a reference to eels...have only the odd page or two, as if they were something...the author had to mention, but which he thought was really not worth a great many words.'

- Raymond Perrett, 'Eels: How To Catch Them' (1958).

'Eels are regarded by the majority of anglers as the bane of the fisherman's life...but catching eels intentionally can be fun. After a long spell in search of elusive carp or tench, a day (or a night) fishing for eels provides quite an entertaining 'time off' period. I see no point whatsoever in returning eels to the water...in fact, I have difficulty in getting enough eels to please all my friends.'

- Fred Taylor, 'Angling In Earnest' (1962).

'The record rod-caught eel weighed $8\frac{1}{2}$ lb., but many bigger eels than this have been taken in traps and nets or on night-lines. Some of the older stories of outsize eels may be exaggerated, but there is every reason to suppose that eels of up to 20 lb. weight subsist in British waters.'

- Kenneth Mansfield, 'The Art. Of Angling' (1957).

'If a number of good anglers, properly equipped, were to investigate the question of how big eels really do grow, we might learn a lot. There would undoubtedly be great battles and eel-fishing might come to be regarded with more respect.'

- Richard Walker, 'Still-Water Angling' (1953).

'The fight provided by a big eel is something that will not be quickly forgotten ...from the point of view of sheer tackle-breaking potential, it will hold its own with almost any other fish of equal weight. To the specimen hunter the eel offers a perpetual challenge, for it grows to great size, and there is probably no other British freshwater fish the ultimate size of which so greatly exceeds the recognised rod-caught record.'

- Maurice Ingham, 'Coarse Fishing With The Experts' (1957).

HOLDING PLACES

by Geoffrey Swailes

I have been meaning to write on this topic for some time, and now having put pen to paper I must first thank Ray Brown for providing the much needed stimulus. Ray touched on this topic in last month's Bulletin and said that the first visits to a spot were usually the most productive. I believe that this is the rule rather than the exception and the purpose of this article is to promote discussion on the subject.

My pattern of captures over the last two years has been very similar to Ray's even though the types of water involved (a gravel pit and a river) are quite different from the canals Ray wrote about.

Last year, I fished Thrapston Gravel Pit, which borders the R. Nene, with my 'old mate' Alan Hawkins and my brother. This was our first year at the pit and between us we took six eels between 2:4 and 4:6. With one exception, the eels were taken during the first night of fishing a certain area. I say 'a certain area' because this lake has little weed and no distinctive swims; it really is a matter of 'chuck and chance it'. The one exception was a 3:14 specimen that was taken from an area that had yielded two of 3:12 and 3:4 some six weeks previously. All eels were taken on bleak or gudgeon deadbaits.

This year has seen a complete reversal of fortunes. About the same fishing effort (some 250 rod-hours) has been put into the same overall area, but no eels were caught and only one abortive run occurred. As all six eels had been killed for otolith reading and culinary purposes, I am assuming that the reason for this year's failures was that no eels were present.

Now turning to rivers, results on the Gt. Ouse have indicated a similar pattern of events. Here, the eel spots are obvious and if an eel is going to be taken at all then it is invariably taken on the first visit, as long as conditions are not seriously adverse. Even in a uniform stretch of river, I have found that the first visit to a stretch of, say, 100 yards length, gives the most prolific results. On the Gt. Ouse, however, the eel distribution seems to be 'normalised' within a year, unlike Thrapston Pit.

If, as I suspect, Ray's experiences and mine are more widespread, then some of us (for example, me) might be wasting time flogging empty swims. By skipping from swim to swim, we might make more efficient use of our time and increase our chances of a specimen.

In conclusion, then, I would like to know if Ray's findings and my own are in accord with those of other members, and I would like to see more comments on this topic in the Bulletin.

*

FIRST SESSIONS

by Terence Coulson

In this and the previous issue of the Bulletin, Ray Brown and Geoffrey Swailes have raised an interesting topic for discussion, and one so important that we really should try to thresh it out. I hope many members will contribute to the debate and I should like to make my own contribution under three headings: (1) to try to clarify exactly what the discussion is about; (2) to comment on how we might try to tackle it and what the difficulties are; and (3) to summarise relevant parts of my own eel-fishing records to add to the pool.

What Are We Discussing?

If I have understood the discussion so far, there is one basic question of eel-fishing fact at issue: assuming eels caught are taken away, is it a fact that first sessions at individual 'spots' generally yield the biggest eel? If the answer to that is positive, the subsidiary question arises: how long does it take for the 'spot' to recover?

Ray Brown's experience of canal tunnels suggests to him that you get your eel on the first session or not at all; and that it takes more than a year for the spot to become re-inhabited (it is, perhaps, relevant that Ray's canals are relatively thinly populated with eels). Geoff Swailes' experiences suggest to him that this may be true not only of canals, but of waters in general, and he thinks that in the Gt. Ouse (with a fairly dense eel population, incidentally) the eels redistribute themselves within a year.

Ray and Geoff are not alone in these views. For instance, after catching his 6½ pounder from the Grand Union Canal this year, Peter Bunce told me in correspondence that if he had a blank session, he concluded that there was no eel in the swim, and moved on. In contrast, many members think it worthwhile fishing a fancied spot repeatedly, even if results do not come at first. Clearly, we should try to resolve this question if we can, because of its obvious implications in our tactics.

How Can We Tackle It?

There are two obvious approaches. Firstly, we might consider what we know or surmise about the eel's natural history, feeding habits, territorial behaviour etc., and try to deduce the angling inferences. Secondly, we might collect detailed records of angling results at particular 'spots' and analyse them to see what patterns emerge.

I think it is important to recognise that the first approach, though valuable, cannot actually provide the answer. It can help to explain the answer once it is known, and it can help to suggest questions for investigation; but only the second type of approach can give a scientifically valid answer in terms of the actual angling facts of life.

Both Ray and Geoff have approached the question in this way, which is excellent, and I strongly suggest that we continue and, indeed, further develop this approach. In contributing to the debate, let us concentrate on stating in detail what our evidence is; firstly, so that all may see what is the strength of our conclusions and secondly, so that we can consider the whole of the evidence in due course and see what the sum total of our combined experience adds up to objectively.

If we are to do this, obviously each member who contributes evidence must present it in the same form, so that it lends itself to being 'added up'. We

TABLE OF RESULTS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WATER</u>		<u>DATES</u>	<u>R.H.</u>	<u>EELS</u>	<u>WEIGHTS</u>	
1966	Benniworth Carp	(a)	21/22.6	10	4	2:8, 2:4, 1:11, 1:10	
			6/7 .8	13	-		
				5/6 .9	21	2	0:6, 0:15
		(b)		9/10.9	24	1	0:12
				10/11.9	25	3	0:6, 1:5, 1:8
	Benniworth Low	(a)	3/4 .9	36	-		
			4/5 .9	48	2	1:5, 2:1	
	G.U. Canal, Weedon			27/28.5	31	-	
				28/29.5	48	-	
				29/30.5	40	1	2:7
	Langley Pit			16/17.7	30	1	2:0
				22/23.7	40	1	2:8
				19/20.8	44	-	
	Partney Pit			20/21.9	32	2	1:2, 2:5
				21/22.9	48	3	1:9, 2:7, 1:4
				22/23.9	42	1	1:9
	Stickney Pit	(a)		17/18.6	31	-	
				18/19.6	48	-	
				19/20.6	48	2	2:2, 2:12
		(b)		24/25.6	36	1	3:8
			25/26.6	48	3	3:3, 2:7, 2:3	
(c)			18/19.9	36	2	0:5, 0:5	
		19/20.9	48	1	0:5		
Tide Mills			23/24.9	24	4	3:15, 0:6, 0:6, 2:10	
			24/25.9	42	4	0:6, 0:4, 0:3, 1:15	
1967	Benniworth Low	(a)	26/27.8	38	-		
			27/28.8	69	2	1:1, 0:10	
			28/29.8	58	-		
			29/30.8	42	1	0:11	
	Butler's Pit			23/24.9	44	1	1:11
				29/30.9	19	-	
				30/1.10	51	-	
	Kingsmead Pit	(a)	3/4 .7	36	-		
			4/5 .7	48	-		
			5/6 .7	59	1	2:9	
			12 .7	7	-		
			14/15.7	24	-		
			28/29.7	23	1	2:7	
				plus additional sessions			
Stickney Pit	(c)	9/10.6	11	-			
		10/11.6	30	2	0:10, 2:6		
		30/31.8	36	4	0:5, 0:5, 2:5, 0:12		
		31/1 .9	40	3	0:5, 2:15, 3:9		

TABLE OF RESULTS (contd.)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WATER</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>R.H.</u>	<u>EELS</u>	<u>WEIGHTS</u>	
1968	Creenagh Lough	29.5	6	1	1:15	
		31/1 .6	14	1	0:13	
	Cartwright's Pit (a)	24/25.7	44	1	0:15	
		25/26.7	45	-		
		(b)	26/27.9	47	-	
		27/28.9	58	2	1:7, 2:3	
	Benniworth Carp (a)	28/29.9	68	2	2:5, 1:11	
		23/24.8	20	-		
	Benniworth Low (a)	24/25.8	35	2	1:7, 0:13	
		20/21.7	14	2	1:12, 1:15	
	Benniworth Low (b)	21/22.7	37	-		
		22/23.7	37	-		
		23/24.7	32	1	0:8	
		21/22.9	23	2	1:0, 0:12	
		22/23.9	24	1	1:2	
		23/24.9	27	3	1:4, 0:12, 1:8	
	Kingsmead Pit (b)	28/29.6	26	-		
		5/6 .7	23	-		
		6/7 .7	30	-		
12/13.7		26	-			
13/14.7		30	-			
3/4 .8		36	1	0:10		
				plus additional sessions		

(Contd. from p. 45)

shall therefore have to agree some 'House Rules' on what data are to be presented and exactly what we mean by 'a spot' and 'a first session'. The meaning of these terms is not as easy to decide as might appear at first thought!

Ray Brown considered quite small spots - the openings of canal tunnels. Geoff Swailes pointed out that many waters have large areas of apparent uniformity with no obvious 'spots' and considered results from these larger areas. In general, a pitch on the bank may give access to anything from a semicircle of water 40 yards in radius, or more, at one extreme; to almost literally one spot into which a bait may be dropped at the other. I can think of no unambiguous and generally applicable way of defining 'a spot' and therefore suggest that we shall have to interpret it liberally, taking results from a pitch on the bank even if they come from a fair area of water. This may have the effect of throwing our question somewhat 'out of focus', but if there is a significantly positive answer it ought nevertheless to show through.

With regard to 'first sessions', Geoff Swailes stated his conclusion with the sensible proviso 'as long as conditions are not seriously adverse'. In other words, if conditions are so bad that one could not reasonably expect to catch an eel anyway, the session should be discounted from the evidence. This is good sense, but it seems to me to present a severe problem. Obviously, we may safely discount a session fished through a hole in the ice; but, in practice, just how adverse have conditions got to be, before the session is discounted? For that matter, exactly what conditions are adverse? I constantly have blanks in what I thought were ideal conditions; and catch eels in conditions I thought so poor

that I scarcely had the heart to press on. If we cannot clearly define the conditions which permit us to discount a session, I think we must take into the evidence all relevant sessions between, say, May and September. Again, if the answer is significantly positive, it ought to show through.

The third difficulty is what to do about other anglers' activities? Can one ever be sure that a spot has not been fished recently by someone else? Perhaps not very often and perhaps not very effectively; but where does one draw the line? Does it, in fact, matter? Does it matter, for example, if unbeknownst to us, somebody took a 6 pounder from the spot where we have just caught a 4 pounder? Is it not still legitimate to ask whether or not we subsequently catch a bigger one? Again, because I can see no other rational way of dealing with it, I suggest we ignore what results others may or may not have got, about which we may or may not know; and take into account just our own individual or group results at each pitch.

The Table of Results drawn up on pp. 46 & 47 are taken from my own records for 1966/8 on the basis indicated above. Each set of results corresponds to a pitch on the bank, and providing there was at least two sessions and at least one eel caught, all such sets are included: there has been no subjective selection such as might bias the data. I would emphasise that these are just my own preliminary ideas on how we might tackle the problem and try for a serious answer, and I hope they will be considered critically and debated to see if a better approach can be found. I feel sure, however, that we must have an objective presentation of data for analysis - otherwise, if we merely swap conclusions, we are most likely to end up with as wide a diversity of opinion as we started with.

Assuming for the moment that these suggestions are acceptable, I hope that many members will contribute similar Tables of Results, with their comments. If anyone whose personal records are not in sufficiently detailed form would like to supply a list of sessions fished from the same pitches, I can provide the session details from his session reports. A large enough collection of data on these lines could be subjected to quite searching statistical analysis, in due course, with excellent prospects of reaching a convincing answer.

Discussion

There are 21 sets of data in my Table of Results, and this is a useful start to a data collection. However, we should want to see much more data, and drawn from a variety of waters and anglers, before regarding it as truly representative, so there is no point in analysing my data in a great degree of detail. Still, it is interesting to examine it in a general way, to see roughly which way it seems to be pointing.

Of the 21 sets, there are 9 cases where no eel was caught on the first session, and an eel or eels were caught on one or more subsequent sessions. It may be pointed out that our basic question concerns 'big eels', and that in some of the above cases, the eel or eels subsequently caught were of no great size. Nevertheless, in 6 of the 9 cases of blank first sessions, an eel upwards of 2 lb. was caught later - not a 'big' eel perhaps, but a respectable one.

Of the 12 cases where an eel was caught on the first session, there are 5 cases where a subsequent session produced a bigger one. In all, therefore, there are 14 out of the 21 cases where the biggest eel for the year was not taken on the first session at the pitch.

Having given an objective statement of the evidence, it is now legitimate to consider what is known or can reasonably be surmised about the eel's behaviour, and see how it fits in with the angling evidence. In other words, to try a bit of theorising.

I suggest that a first visit to a spot could be expected to yield the biggest eel only if (1) the eels have localised and exclusive feeding areas; (2) they feed virtually every night of the season; and (3) our angling is virtually 100% effective.

On the first point, many species show some form of territorial behaviour e.g. trout may occupy definite 'stations' in a river; bream shoals may patrol definite feeding beats; etc. In aquaria, eels bury themselves in the gravel, or occupy crevices amongst stones, and skin divers and others have reported eels occupying similar stations in nature. It thus seems possible that eels might have quite a strong territorial habit in the occupation of 'living quarters'. We might go on to surmise that eels possibly have a 'peck order' such that dominant individuals occupy the more favourable stations; and when they move (through death, migration, etc.) individuals next down in the peck order move up into the vacated stations. If this surmise is correct, an important point is that its effects would vary from water to water; because how quickly a vacated station became re-occupied would depend on the density of the eel population and the pressure on living space.

However, the evidence (such as it is) that eels may occupy definite living stations has little bearing on whether they also have localised and exclusive feeding areas. The evidence indicates that several good eels can sometimes be taken in one session at virtually the same spot, suggesting that the eel is an opportunist feeder which (although it may occupy its own living station) emerges to forage for food in competition with other eels in the area. If this is true, it is again important to note that the effect will vary from water to water; with a dense population, a number of big eels might be foraging competitively in the same area, whereas in a thinly-populated water the eels might be so widely spread as to be seldom encountered feeding in the same area.

On the second point, I think that when an eel (especially a big eel) decides to feed, it often gorges itself, if it can, and then lies up for several days digesting its meal, before feeding again. Even the small eels in my aquarium seem to do this; and the pattern of stomach contents of eels caught and examined is consistent with this type of feeding habit. Scientific evidence is that eels take upwards of 36 hours to digest a meal.

On the third point, I only question whether, even at a pitch with a big eel feeding in it, we can be sure it will find our bait before it has eaten its fill, find it attractive, and give a bite we can detect and strike successfully.

Finally, there is a 'theoretical' point worth noting about interpretation of the evidence. Obviously, if we catch the biggest eel from a water, we cannot expect a bigger one for some time, whether we fish the same spot or make a move. More realistically, if we remove any big eel or eels from a water, we inevitably reduce the overall chance of catching a big eel there in future. In a large water with a large eel population, this effect may be scarcely noticeable; but in a small water, or one thinly populated, it may be quickly apparent. Thus we must try not to mistake this 'overall effect' for evidence of a 'spot effect'.

Summing up, my own experience and the above arguments seem to me to suggest that, in general, a blank first session should not necessarily be taken to mean that there is not a decent eel to be caught from the pitch; and that one does not necessarily catch the biggest eel from the pitch on the first visit. The inference would be that it is probably worth trying a fancied spot for three or four sessions, at least, and not necessarily move even if a good eel is caught. But in the particular case of thinly-populated waters with low rates of catch, maybe we should not expect more than one or two eels from a pitch per season - though, again, not necessarily on the first session.

However, more evidence is needed and I hope we can look forward to many more contributions and an interesting, positive and factual discussion.

Notable Eels: LINCOLNSHIRE

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>GIRTH</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>BAIT</u>	<u>CAPTOR</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Denton Res., Grantham	2.1	8:4 4:0			1964 Jul 60		Found dead after severe freeze Worm	B.Atkin	A.T.? & M.Muse A.T. 15.7.60, p. 13
L. Helen, Wigtoft	2.1	4:7	40 $\frac{1}{2}$	7 $\frac{5}{4}$	1 Oct 66	20.10	Rudd db	A.J.Sutton	A.J.Sutton
Barton Broad, Barton-on-Humber	2.1	4:6			Aug 59			R.Osgerby	A.T. 4.9.59, p. 13
Stickney Pit, Boston	2.1	5:8	42	6	10 Oct 65	07.15	1 oz. Perch db	R.Bown	Locals & captor
Fenhouse Pit, Boston	2.2	5:3 4:7	38 37 $\frac{3}{8}$	8 $\frac{7}{8}$ 8 $\frac{3}{8}$	12 Jul 68 19 Jul 68	01.30 08.30	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Rudd db 4" Rudd db	D.Goodrum D.Ecob	D.Goodrum D.Ecob
London Rd. Pit, Boston	2.2	4:1	38 $\frac{1}{4}$	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	15 Sep 68	02.00	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Roach db	S.Hill	S.Hill
Field's Pond, Market Rasen	2.2	4:12	42	9	4 Jul 65	01.15	2 x Lobworms	B.Tinker	B.Tinker
Cyprinid's Pond, Louth	2.	5:0 4:4	38 $\frac{1}{2}$ 40 $\frac{1}{2}$	9	20 Jun 64 20 Jun 64	00.15 00.45	Roach db Lobworm	R.Storey R.A.Armstrong	A.T. 3.7.64, p. 19 R.Storey
A pit, Fulstow	2.	4:0			Jul 60		Deadbait	I.Richardson	(A.T. 19.8.60, p. 1 (F.G. 27.8.60 p 837
A pond, Louth	2.	5:12			Jul 61		Roach db	P.Linsard	A.T. 11.8.61, p. 1
Boston Fen	?	5:14			12 Sep 66	day	Lobworm	D.Martin	D.Martin
Tidal dyke, Mablethorpe	3.1	4:10			Jul 63		2" Bacon rind	G.Fellows	A.T. 2.8.63, p. 13

Notable Eels: LONDON

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>GIRTH</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>BAIT</u>	<u>CAPTOR</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
"Hackney River" (R.Lea?)	1.	27:0			J.Couch FLS, "A Hist. of the Fishes of the Brit. Isles"(1878) Vol IV p. 327				
E.Thames, N. Woolwich Greenwich	1.3	10:2	43	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	19 Nov 66	07.20	Ct. by hand	P.C. P.Ludwig	A.M. 25.11.66, p. 1
	1.3	7:0	42	6	May 67	day	Ct. by hand	B.Cottrell	(A.T. 25.5.67, p. 17(P)) (A.M. 26.5.67, p. 20(P))
Serpentine, Hyde Park	2.1	6:4 $\frac{3}{4}$ 6:0+			Jun 55		Ct. by hand		E:H.T.C.T.
					Oct 1869		Taken when Serpentine drained		E:H.T.C.T.
Hollow Pond, Whipp's Cross	2.	7:1 6:8	41	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 Jul 67	01.15	Roach db	S.Pennyl	A.T. 27.7.67, p. 14
						Sep 58	24.00	Lobworms	R.Smith,W.Busk
A pond, Wandsworth Common	2.	5:8 \sim 4:11			Jul 61		Small roach db	V.Hallows	A.T. 28.7.61, p. 2(P)
					Jun 64		Bread flake	B.Hill	A.T. 26.6.64, p. 19
Wimbledon Park Lake	2.	5:2			25 Sep 65	night	Live fish	M.W.Johnson	M.W.Johnson

CORRESPONDENCE

From David Marlborough: 'A Reply to the Editor' - Terry wrote, when he accepted my letter of the October issue, that he would have to add a note to my letter. I see the 'note' is substantially longer than the original letter, but no matter.

First, before I reply (I hope with more brevity) a sad piece of news. Ernie was removed from his sink, and put into a tank, which had been freshly caulked with a bituminous putty by a new and ignorant assistant. He died within 48 hours, but was frisky and active to within 6 hours of his death. Afterwards I examined the hook by pushing it through the body wall and skin: it was rusty but otherwise intact. 'Twas the putty, not the hook, which killed him.

Now, the reply. When Terry says he'll eat his old fishing hat, better make that a judge's black cap. When that goes on a judge's head, it is more than 'equivalent to a death sentence', for the prisoner is indeed 'all too likely to die'. That is the meaning of a death sentence, Terry.

Terry says that these eels will die to some purpose. This is true now, when we need all the corpses for study we can get. But if you don't want to dissect it, and you don't want to eat it, then surely bopping it on the head is ensuring it dies to no purpose whatever! As it happens, we do need the eels now; and where I want it, I clout it. But if I don't want it for anything, I'd rather give it a chance of life than clout it and leave it for the rats.

I do feel that Terry's condemnation of my likely sources of information - tag wounds and surgical implants - as 'quite irrelevant', is less than fair. Especially when he introduces a report on long-lining which is 'confidential'. Quoting a report nobody else has access to is not constructive. And why is a scientific report 'confidential' in the first place? Is it vital to national security perhaps?

Pardon the little dig; but I think long-lining is not comparable with angling in this matter. In angling, you strike after a fairly short time, and even though gorged, the hook will strike higher than with long lining, when the eel has many hours to chomp the bait and get it as near its vent as it can. Also the pressure is on the hook in angling for a very short time; in long-lining the eel is writhing on a hook until the line is taken up. All told, the damage is likely to be far greater than with angling. If this major argument is not based on a comparable case, Terry is left with anecdotes of eels which died, as little or as much relevant as those of eels which survive.

At least tag wounds and implant wounds have common ground with hook wounds caused by angling, in that they are all caused by a brief amount of pressure and trauma, then are left not under pressure, but liable to both infection and the body's own defences. They are not ripped and torn for many hours like long-line hooks!

Finally, Terry seems to hint that I am being inflexible in suggesting a 'policy' on this matter, while he, more inflexibly, seems to advocate bopping them all on the head if we think personally it to be desirable!

Shall I tell you why I advocate some sort of investigation and general agreement? Call it a policy, if you like. Because we are still gorgebaiting, and we are open to public criticism unless we can reply with a rational argument, either to allow us to return unwanted eels with a good chance of life, or to kill those needed for research or the table.

Terry and I both feel the need for some third alternative - efficient non-gorgebaiting. Shall we agree on this, and agree to differ on the rest?

** Come off it, Dave! You are arguing - and very wildly, if you don't mind me saying so - against things I have never even remotely suggested. What's the sense in that?