

TIPS & TACTICS



DROP IT FROM A HEIGHT

Small fish are curious creatures, and will react to anything out of the ordinary. Hold your pole a couple of feet above the surface and drop your sloop in so that it makes plenty of noise.

PLAY AWAY FROM HOME!

Once you've hooked a big perch, quickly draw it into open water. They often travel in small groups, and getting that one out of your target zone as soon as possible will prevent the rest from being spooked.

SEEK OUT THE RIGHT SPOT

The perfect commercial fishery peg for perch will combine a reasonable depth of 2ft 6ins-3ft, with a decent amount of cover in the form of reedbeds or other permanent structures.

BAG MORE THIS WEEK!

- Tactics to take to your water
- Tricks & tips for bigger bags
- Trusted knowledge
- Every week

IF YOU TRY ONE THING THIS WEEK...

GO 'SLOPPY' FOR PERCH

Mat Linforth reveals the margin feeding strategy that has served him well over many years

LOOSEFEEDING baits that your target species craves is the way forward in almost every angling situation... but there are always exceptions to the rule.

For big perch you need to introduce a mix that will prove attractive to small silverfish, so that your target's predatory instincts lead to them following in the roach and rudd.

Commercial fishery fanatic Mat Linforth loves nothing more than to bag a few big stripeys in winter, and has come up with a simple yet very effective way to draw them into his peg.

"I feed the margins with a groundbait sloop containing a handful of dead maggots, casters and minced worms, and it works on so many levels," Matt explained.

"It clouds the water up and this instantly draws the small fish in. Once they arrive, they start to feed on the groundbait particles and graze over the other loosefeed items.

"That activity will goad the perch into action, and they'll be willing to stay because the water will have coloured up and there'll be plenty of food for them to get stuck in to."

THE PERFECT MIX

Mat has experimented with several types of groundbait over the years, and for his winter fishing he always relies on a particular blend.

"A black or dark brown mix will instantly colour the water up. When you are fishing in the edge, that reduces the chances of the fish seeing the pole waving over the top of their heads," he revealed.

"It must contain ingredients that the silverfish want, and that means toning down the amount of fishmeal in it.

"My favourite blend is a rough 75/25 split of Dynamite Baits Swim Stim Silverfish Dark and SonuBaits Super Sweet groundbaits," he added.

"This is over-wetted at the start so that it becomes almost watery. Allow it to settle for 15 minutes and some of the moisture will be absorbed, leaving a sloppy offering that explodes on impact with the surface to produce the effect you want."



Mat's sloppy groundbait pulls in the silverfish.

COVER AND DEPTH

Mat's sloop will work a treat on any commercial with a head of silvers and big perch, but you must first find your fish. Scouring the lake, looking for a likely area, is the first job.

"Perch love cover and, once they come into the swim, they'll often sit tight to any features, ready to pounce when the moment arrives," Mat said.

"Depth is equally important,

GIVE IT A GO...



SET THE HOOK

A reasonably heavy elastic, set quite tight, is needed to set the hook into a big perch's bony mouth. Mat's choice is a grade 6-8 Garbolino Fighter Hi-Stretch.



PRIME THE PEG

A 100ml cupful of Mat's sloppy groundbait mixture kicks off the peg. Add half of that again whenever bites dry up or when you want to add more colour to the water.



DON'T WASTE TIME

Perch are predatory fish, and react to bait falling through the water. Drop a rig over the top, seconds after feeding, as there is every chance an instant bite will result.

SLOW THE FALL

Bites often come in the last foot before the hookbait hits the deck. Shot your rig with a tapered bulk, extending the gap between each shot so the hookbait flutters down.



WORK WITH MAGGOTS

A bunch of maggots is a reliable hookbait. Start with two reds on the hook, but don't be afraid to step up to three or four if small fish cause a problem.



DOT IT DOWN

Perch may be ferocious feeders, but bites can still be tentative. Shot your float down so that only a small pimple shows to help you spot every indication.

though, and you won't catch anything if you have a big bed of reeds that have only a foot of water next to them.

"I look for 2ft 6ins of water when plumbing up. This is enough for the silvers to settle in, but carp are reluctant to come into water this shallow, reducing the chances of them spooking your target species."

Once he has found an area with both these elements, he will lay his rig in, made up of

0.15mm mainline to a 0.11mm hooklength, and regularly lift and drop the hookbait to make it stand out to any perch in the swim. But he'll only do this once he has first set about working the small silvers into a frenzy with his 'worm sloop'. The rest will take care of itself, he says!

NEXT WEEK

Lee Kerry shows how to bag up on stillwater roach using the pole



A decent perch that fell to Mat's feeding regime.