

# Catch Massive Perch

*It's freezing cold and your local lake looks lifeless, the carp have all but shut up shop and it seems nothing wants to feed... except the humble stripey! Here's Andy Kinder's guide to extracting the sergeant majors of the perch world.*

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**Andy Kinder**  
Age: 42  
Team: Ultimate Barnsley Blacks  
Sponsors: Maver, Marukyu  
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Best match win: Maver Paris Final win with  
Jamie Masson at Larford Lakes

Andy's radiant beam penetrates the wintry light as he holds aloft one of the smallest perch of the day.



In the hazy light of an early winter's morning, on the back straight of Island Lake at Woodside Fishery, in Worcestershire, sits a motionless Andy Kinder. Like a hawk with a rabbit in its sights he is fixed on the illuminated hollow orange tip of his 4x16 Maver Invincible Series 11 float positioned next to the sombre, discoloured patch of lilies in front of him; a token nod towards the plentiful beds that adorn the lake when it resides under the summer sun.

**Top Tip**  
Jig or draw your hook bait to entice a bite if the fishing is slow. Perch are suckers for a slow-moving hook bait... try it!

In a far cry from that blissful thought the sleet relentlessly throws its weight onto the ice-cold ground, yet Andy remains focused; a jittering pole tip giving away the only signs of life as he sits frozen to the core.

The sun is clearly in no hurry to rise above the impressive trees that line the east side of the lake, but as it wearily drags its heavy heels the penetrating rays climb their way up the branches. Slowly the



Strong, sharp hooks help to penetrate a bony mouth.



A thick tip gives buoyancy and visibility.

float dips, stops, dips again and then slides under in a typically unhurried perch-like fashion. It seems that nothing in this tranquil location is in any hurry.

"Wait, wait..." Andy says. One, two, three strike!

As he launches four sections of his Elite 88 pole skyward, grey Dual Core elastic pours from the pole

tip with the accompanying comment from the Maver man: "It's a perch, and it's not a small one either!" Andy skilfully steers the fish

away from the danger area before a dogged fight commences. "Perch can be a nightmare on light gear; they're not to be underestimated, so when I'm targeting them I purposely fish to win," he says.

"I've got 0.14mm line straight through to a size 14 Invincible CS23 spade-end hook – proper tackle for proper fish.

"The elastic choice is important too and nine times out of 10 I'll use this grey version. It's so important to set the hook in the perch's bony mouth," he exclaims, as a large boil on the surface is followed by a huge mouth that looks like it could engulf a small apple. Andy waits with a poised landing net to scoop up the striped

marvel, submerging the net as the glistening silver and red flank glides across the lake's mirror-like surface. Frozen in an angry pose the perch exudes presence as the sun glints from each of its sandpaper-like water-covered scales; it looks nothing short of glorious and Andy is taken aback by the beautifully coloured predator that resides in the bottom of his net.

Andy's infectious beaming

smile could light up a small village as he grabs the spreader block to lift the prehistoric-looking wonder from the water.

The tattered remains of a lobworm are the only indication of the hook bait that was its downfall. Although that seems like a big bait, it's nothing compared to what could fit in this fish's gaping cavern of a mouth.

"A super-sharp, durable hook is important for perch fishing – just look how bony those top and bottom jaws are!" Andy exclaims.

Slipping the fish carefully into the keepnet, which he has been given special permission to use for this feature, Andy refills his large pole pot.

**Andy ships out and deposits the mushy mess of shells, blood and guts into the swim.**

"Perch fishing isn't complicated and today I'm feeding a mixture of chopped dendrabaena worms, casters and a good helping of new Marukyu SFA 450 red-coloured krill liquid to give an attractive, scented cloud through the water column," he says.

Andy ships out and deposits the mushy mess of shells, blood and guts into the swim with machine-like precision.

"Feeding accurately means I can present my hook bait right over the top. When it's cold, even for perch, I like to know exactly where my feed is landing. This way I can fish right on top of the feed, short of it, or just past it.

"Today is easier because I'm fishing next to lilies, so they're an easy marker. If I were fishing in open water then I'd line up with a far-bank marker," he says.

Andy removes a whole lobworm from the tub before breaking the end off and passing his hook through the



The almost relentless sleet isn't enough to cause Andy's focus to wane.

broken part. Shipping out to the spot, just a top kit plus two sections in front of him, Andy lifts the baited rig clear of the water before laying the whole lot in place, right on top of the feed.

"Using a thick float bristle is important because I'm using a large, heavy hook bait. Perch aren't shy feeders and they fight hard, so there's no point fishing fine-bristled floats and light kit," he states.

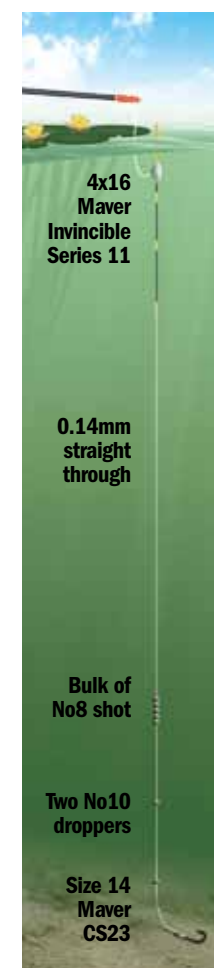
The cold winter air sees breath pluming from Andy's mouth like smoke across a battlefield – a stark reminder of the subzero temperatures that this species will feed in!

An hour passes with just one lost fish being the only further action to report.

"Although the fishing is very slow at the moment there's no way I'll lose faith in what I'm doing!" Andy confidently exclaims. "I'm feeding every half an hour with a pot, but I'm constantly loose feeding a dozen casters over the top of the float. Perch love movement so this, combined with dragging the hook bait every now and again, should result in a response.

"These big perch travel in very small shoals, maybe just two or three at a time, and once you catch one it can sometimes spook the rest, which is what I suspect has happened after catching that first one," he says.

As he finishes the sentence his float vanishes, which sees another big fish hooked. Not the expected perch, but a 6lb-plus common carp



that Andy soon reins in by using a puller kit.

"Well, that's a surprise," Andy chuckles. "How often would you fish great big lobworms at such close quarters and expect to catch carp?"

Not very often would be the obvious answer, but that fish is soon followed by a chub before the swim resumes its lifelessness once more.

Andy re-feeds after each fish with the same concoction of worms, casters and liquid.

"I know it looks like a lot of bait to be feeding, given

that the water's so clear I can see the entire keepnet in the margins, but perch are greedy fish! It's important to re-feed often, or after each fish," Andy reiterates.

Andy's focus is second to none as the session wears on and he adds a few smaller perch to the keepnet. Today 'small' means



The bait of perch champions!

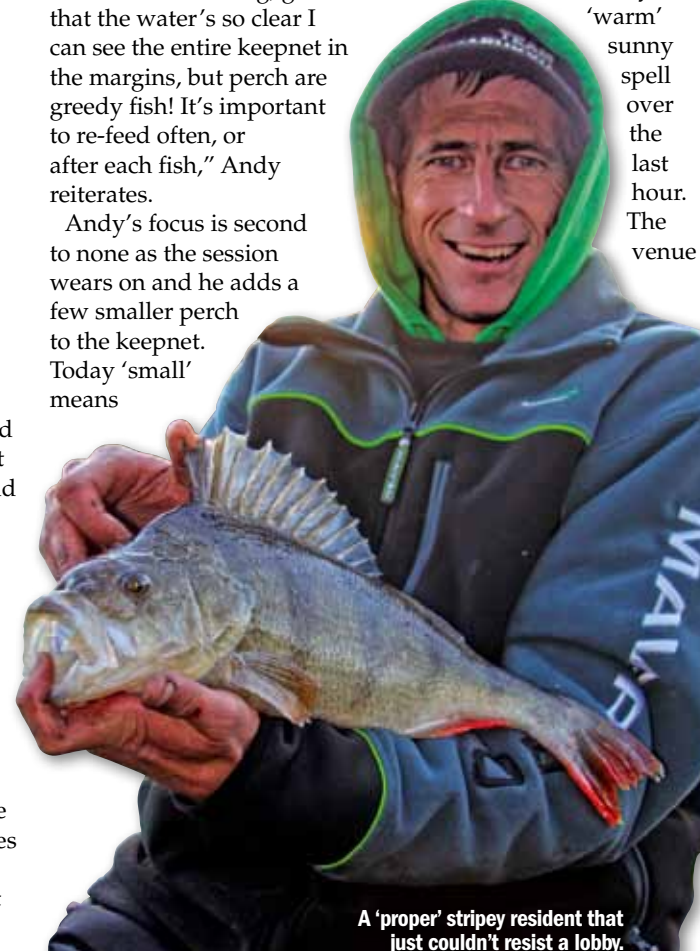
Three-quarters of a lobworm is Andy's number-one hook bait.

anything under 1lb 8oz as the stripeys in Island Lake run to over 5lb!

"Perch are such impressive fish when they're in full coloration so the venue-record stripey here must be an incredible sight!" Andy adds.

The dark, looming clouds unleash another relentless torrent of sleet after a

relatively 'warm' sunny spell over the last hour. The venue



A 'proper' stripey resident that just couldn't resist a lobby.



becomes consumed in an almost horizontal display of freezing downfall, yet Andy is still undeterred.

His dedication is soon rewarded as the float slides away, before he connects with another fish that has his elastic working double time!

"It's another big perch," Andy guesses as yards of grey elastic stream into the watery wilderness.

It's clear it's a big perch as Andy can feel the telltale headshaking. Perched on the edge of his box he gingerly guides the fish through the swim as he ships back. Breaking down at the top kit Andy reins in some ground by using his puller kit before the surface is broken by what looks like a huge sheet of glistening spiny sandpaper!

He hurriedly slips the net under the huge perch's head, before it dives once more. Andy's heart is in his mouth as he attempts to get the fish under control once more. It makes a spirited bid for the nearby reed bed before Andy finally manages to get the net underneath what looks to be a 3lb-plus specimen! 'Impressive' doesn't even come close as a couple of quick snaps are taken.



Andy adds new SFA 450 krill liquid...



... then cups it into the swim.



The baits for stripey success.



Feeding is done via a large pole pot.

The weather is really turning cold as the low winter sun fails to offer heat for very long. It begins to slip behind the tree line once more, yet it seems the lure of catching another of these incredible fish is enough to keep Andy focused.

The temperature really is dropping and the fallen dead leaves that lay in the shadows haven't thawed out all day! Creeping behind his box to answer the obligatory call of nature after consuming half a flask of tea sees the silence transformed, as the frozen leaves shatter into a million unidentifiable pieces with every step.

Back on his box Andy

uses his pole pot to deposit another good helping of feed. Hurriedly baiting the rig once more with a large section of lobworm he has it in place almost before the feed had time to reach the bottom. Skilfully flicking a dozen more casters on top of the feed Andy thinks his eyes deceive him as the float vanishes while he drags the hook bait inch by inch across the 'killing zone'!

"I can't believe that," he beams. It's clear he's into another good fish and another specimen soon ends up in the net after a nail-biting battle.

As Andy gently slips that one into the keepnet laid in the crystal-clear margins he confidently exclaims: "I'll get another now!"

He then purposely ships out without feeding before, sure enough, he's into another one! Incredible fishing and Andy puts it down to the time of day on this occasion, along with perseverance.

"Perch can be late feeders, so if you know you're in a good perch area it's worth fishing for them all day.

"Fishing with such big hook baits really is the only way to avoid the 'nuisance' small perch, too.

"If there are big perch in the water you're fishing this is by far the best way to single them out!" he says.

Another huge perch takes Andy's tally to four over 3lb and half-a-dozen more between 1lb 2oz and 2lb 10oz. As the light begins to close on the session there's just time for a catch shot with the four biggest samples of the day as the other 'small' ones are returned.

This isn't the sort of catch shot you see very often! Four perch over 3lb apiece! Andy is rightfully delighted with the result and puts each back with the due care they deserve. A super-simple approach – one line, a few worms, a pint of casters and four sections of pole. Who'd have thought that a potential match-winning catch could be taken at such short range in the gloomy depths of our coldest season? **mf**

**8**

The number of seconds Andy will wait before striking a perch bite.

**100**

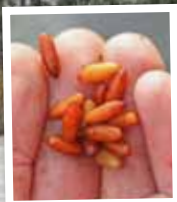
The minimum number of lobworms Andy will take for five hours' perch fishing.

**14**

The smallest hook size Andy will use for perch fishing. A size 8 being the largest.



Andy constantly loose feeds a few casters around the float.



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Just four of the largest sergeants from Mr Kinder's impressive catch.