

Species:



Tactic: Difficulty:

■ Pole
■ Float



Day-ticket perch plan

The meanest species in the lake, commercial fishery perch are growing to specimen size

Words James Furness Photography Mark Peck

ELASTIC stretched from the pole tip as the unseen adversary was steered away from the overhanging tree.

Even before the aggressive spiked dorsal fin had broken the surface, the tell-tale 'jagged' fight had left no room for doubt that a perch was responsible.

This is what we had come here for – big day-ticket perch!

Cleobury Mortimer may be one of the smallest towns in Shropshire, but situated on the outskirts of the town, Woodside Fishery (www.woodsidefishery.co.uk) offers anglers the opportunity to fish for some of the biggest perch in the county.

The four lakes on the complex all hold perch of specimen size, with fish over 3lb taken on a regular basis. And with news of a four-pounder being caught from Charlies Pool the day before the IYCF cameras arrived, hopes were high...

Havens for big perch

The fact that specimen perch are found in commercial carp lakes across the country is no secret. With no pike present in the majority of such waters and the fact that most of the match anglers fish mainly corn and pellets for carp, the perch have enjoyed a life largely free of predation or angling pressure.

But catching these stripey specimens isn't quite as simple as rocking up with a few lobworms, casting out and waiting for your float to go under.

Although reared on a diet of mainly pellets, carp will also be more than happy to take a big juicy worm or prawn, and when they are more torpid they will frequently beat the perch to your carefully placed offering.

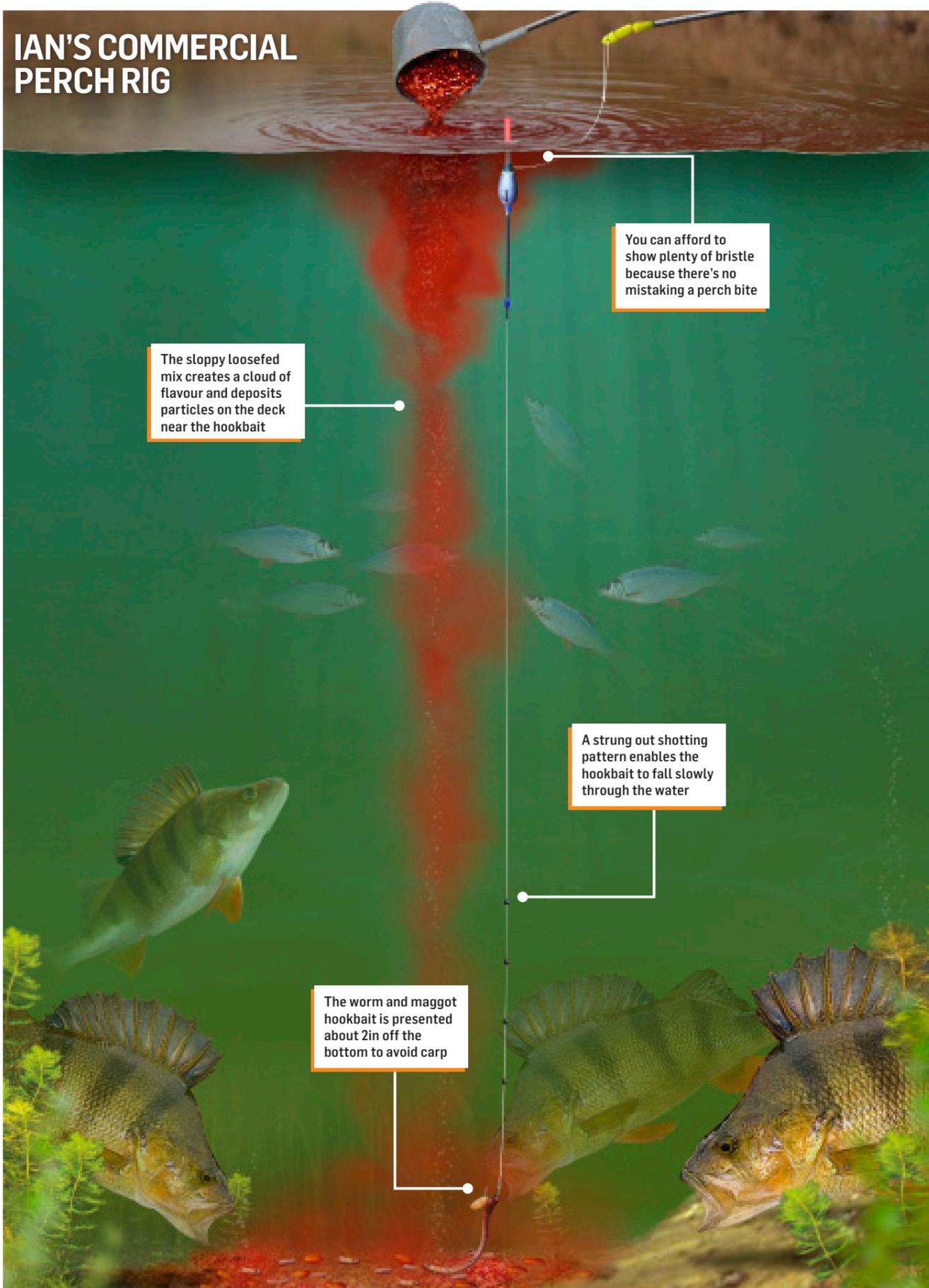
Thankfully, Ian Jones, a reporter on IYCF's sister title Angling Times, had a few tricks up his sleeve that he hoped would stack the odds of a big perch in his favour.

In the red

His bright red-stained hands were the first clue that he was up to something sneaky. A quick ▶



IAN'S COMMERCIAL PERCH RIG



The sloppy loosefed mix creates a cloud of flavour and deposits particles on the deck near the hookbait

You can afford to show plenty of bristle because there's no mistaking a perch bite

A strung out shotted pattern enables the hookbait to fall slowly through the water

The worm and maggot hookbait is presented about 2in off the bottom to avoid carp



Red maggots, casters, lobworms and Ringers Red makes the mix

you're left with is a sloppy, pungent mix that will leave a flavoursome plume in the water as well as creating a trickle of large particles down to the lakebed."

Ian carefully shipped his pole pot towards the overhanging tree he was fishing next to in a corner of the lake, the water turning a deep red as soon as the mix was tipped in.

Avoiding carp

His hookbait, half a dendrobaena worm and a single red maggot, was then lowered into this red mist.

"I prefer to fish my hookbaits an inch or two off the deck for perch because this not only avoids the carp, but also puts your hookbait in the 'target zone'.

"Perch are a predatory species that thrive on movement, and a hookbait that is presented in clear view is simply irresistible to them.

"It's also important to keep lifting and dropping your rig into place, as this will often goad a perch into attacking your worm hookbait," he said.

Ian's tactics struck gold almost instantly. He'd only been fishing for around half an hour when his float shot under shortly after he'd dropped it back into place.

A typical jaggging perch fight followed before

glance at his bait tray revealed the cause – a bottle of Ringers Red liquid. This stood next to a bait bowl filled with what can only be described as a worm and maggot massacre.

"It looks like something out of a horror movie, I know, but big perch love the stuff!" joked Ian as he filled his pole pot with another generous scoop of the gory mix.

"I put around half a pint of red maggots, half a pint of casters and 10 big lobworms into a mixing bowl, and chop them around a dozen times with a pair of worm scissors," he said.

"Next I add a quarter pot of Ringers Red Liquid and a pole cup of lake water to help spread the dye from the flavouring. What

"It's important to keep lifting and dropping your rig, as this will often spur a perch into taking your bait"

a fish which certainly looked to be nudging 2lb slipped into the landing net.

Once on the scales it registered a weight of 1lb 13oz. "I can't imagine what a 4lb-plus perch would look like on the bank – there really are few fish more impressive than a big perch," said Ian as he slipped back his prize.

It wasn't long before a few carp moved into the swim to try and take advantage of the steady supply of worms and maggots falling through the water.

"When this happens I simply stop putting any loosefeed out and the carp soon lose interest and drift off again," explained Ian.

Sure enough, the next bite was again from a perch, albeit a slightly smaller one this time. Several more perch to just over a pound followed before it was time to call it a day.

Overall, if you can get the feeding right on day-ticket lakes you can enjoy some of the best perch fishing around.

You may catch more carp at first but I guarantee it won't be long before the big stripeys move in!



Ian's Tackle

- Pole: Maver Enigma 101
- Elastic: Middy Hi-Viz Hollow Pink 12-16
- Float: Maver
- Mainline: Preston Innovations Reflo Power 0.19mm
- Hook: Guru QM1 size 14
- Loosefeed: Red maggots, casters and lobworms coated in Ringers Red liquid
- Hookbait: Half a dendrobaena and a single red maggot

