

### *The Diary of a Day-Only Eeler - Part 3*

I have decided this year to fish my specific Eel venue every fortnight. Even though two out of the three ponds have Eels in them, last year, I fished the same water week in, week out and in the end, I feel it affected my results and I could have done better.

Last week I tried a water that I fish very often just for a bit of bagging. One of those where you can still catch breaking through the ice! The thing is, I've never taken an Eel from there and with all the talk of the best waters being ones with no Eels thought to be in there, it had to be worth a shot. These ponds are 18yrs plus, full of small fish, there's a stream running along the bottom and Eels were coming out by the digger bucket full when the 1<sup>st</sup> pond was dug 30 yrs ago! Ideal I here you cry, well, I blanked! One thing that I found a real eye opener was the species I did catch though. I took a Tench of about 8oz, a 12oz Roach and a 1lb Perch on size 2 hooks and 20lb wire traces! The 1<sup>st</sup> two on worms and the perch on a dead. I can now say I am firmly in the wire camp after that session. As the late John Sidley said, it's the hook that's more of a worry than the wire.



*The best of the day at 2lb 4oz.*

Back to the current session. I decided to try the other pond this session as from what the owner had said, it had fewer Eels in it and bigger carp. Surely that meant there were the bigger fish in there! When I got there, the owner came out for a chat and said that the lake I wanted to fish was shut from 3pm onwards as was the joint bank of the pond I had fished before. That meant I would have to move before the end of my session. I decided to give the same pond another go but this time, I wasn't going to make my cardinal mistake I made

last season and fish the same swim as I had before without exploring the others first. I decided only to move up two pegs from the area I fished two weeks ago but it gave me another island to target.

I decided to stick with the two J.S. ledger rods that were successful the last two sessions but try worms on one rod and dead bait on the other. I had only picked up eels before on the worms in my 1<sup>st</sup> session but on my previous session, they were ignored. The weather conditions though were bright and sunny last time though but being overcast and rainy this time, it may make a difference.

I got the worm rod out to the bottom of the island and set about catching small bait for the dead bait rod. I took a skimmer Bream and then all of a sudden, the worm rod was away! I was shocked but hit it quick and actually connected! It wasn't a big fish so it came in quickly and was nicely hooked in the scissors. One in the keep net on the 1<sup>st</sup> run of the day!

I put the worms back out to a same spot and set about getting a dead bait. I took a couple more skimmers before I got one of the small Rudd that I like. Just as I've got that rod out, the worms away again but unfortunately, I miss it. Another 10 minutes and it's away again, another miss! I thought it was easy to hook eels on worms!



*Six daytime fish.*

About 10.50am, the dead bait wakes up and is away on a very positive run. I give it a few seconds and hit it and I actually connect. This feels like a much better fish and although it doesn't run far, it puts up a good account for itself and goes into the net fairly easily. I reckon this one could go 3lb so while it's in the net, I ask one of the other anglers on the lake to come down and give me a hand with the pictures. On the scales it only goes 2lb 4oz. It's not as big as I thought but being my 1<sup>st</sup> two from the water and my only my 3<sup>rd</sup> ever two, I'm pretty pleased. It takes a while to calm this fish down for the pictures and at one point it

tries to bite me on the heel of my hand. It's always been a bit of a fear being bitten by an Eel but hopefully, now it has happened, it won't be so bad next time! I slip it into the keep net and get out a new trace. Just as I'm putting closing the link on the new hook link, the worm rod is away again. Finally, I manage to connect with this one. Another fairly small one but it's my 3<sup>rd</sup> fish out of five runs in only 35 minutes! With both rods out of the water, I take five minutes to chill out! I don't smoke but feel I could after all that!

Just before 12pm, my tally comes up to another two missed runs on the worm and an odd run on the dead bait that reveals a feeder and long length of line (hook, line and sinker!). The worm rod is off again and this one connects. Another small fish and it's a proper little knotty one. Odd thing is, this one demonstrates trying to unhook itself with its tail, something Barry has mentioned before. It's the smallest of the day at about 8oz but it turns out to be my 1<sup>st</sup> ever proper narrow head! This one goes in the keep net and within a couple of minutes the dead bait tears off again and there's resistance for a few seconds after the strike but it's gone.



The two better fish on the mat. We can clearly see the bigger fish had more length to it.

I get a few more odd runs on the dead bait and the Rudd is getting more and more knackered. I tried an experiment pike fishing last season and a more battered bait didn't seem to up the fish off, also, it is thought that Eels were the responsible ones that day! It's away again fairly quickly and after leaving this run a little longer, I manage to connect. It turns out to be one of the mega rare perch just under a pound. They say perch don't like deads and only like livies. I agree that lives are more productive but with two perch in two weeks on the deads, it's starting to prove that theory wrong!

After another missed run on the worm rod, I'm a little worried about the mechanics of the rig. I got caught on an unseen snag casting out after the last fish and had to pull for a break. Plenty of mainline come back but minus the lead onwards. I put on a lead about 1 ½ - 2oz as it is a browny colour more than anything. I feel that maybe this isn't quite heavy enough so I revert back to a 3oz lead. Hopefully that will do the trick.

Just after 1pm, the weather breaks and the heavens open. It absolutely tips it down! Prime time for a bite as fish seem to love to get the angler wet for catching them! It only takes 10

minutes for the dead bait to go off and this one is connected with and proves to be another good scrap. At one point though, it plays one of its famous trump cards. It swims towards me and for a few seconds, and I think I've lost it! I gain all the line and it's still on but inches from my feet! That was a really quick run! Trying to get this fish into the fisheries own special spoon nets is a nightmare though as I just can't get its tail in! When it's on the mat, it's a good chunky fish and I hope it's bigger than the other one. Turns out not to be and is only 2lb but it's much better behaved and gives me some time to try and get used to handling fish for the camera.

Several more missed runs follow and then comes another 1<sup>st</sup>. I recast the worm rod to the bottom of the island, sink the line, pull some off the spool to set the rollover and the lines pulling out already! I hit it automatically and I connect! Unbelievable! It's another one of the small Eels but that bait couldn't have been in the water for more than 10 seconds!

As I pack up about 4pm, I reflect on what a day it has been. The final tally worked out at an amazing 22 runs resulting in six fish banked, four lost (one was defiantly an eel as I got it on the surface before it just fell off!) eleven missed runs (three on deads, eight on worms) and that one rare perch! Things are definitely coming together for this novice day only Eeler and next time, I will get on that other pond for what could be a really big, special fish!