

Action replay

THIS WEEK: HOW NIFTY FISH LOCATION AND AN ATTRACTIVE BAIT COUNTS IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER.

Angler's Mail **RATING:** Nothing's a banker in winter, but this master of day ticket carp fishing will surely deliver!

IAN RUSSELL reveals how to catch...

LARGE CARP on single baits!

AVID CARP consultant Ian Russell regularly witnesses carp anglers introducing kilos of bait at the start of their session, before they've gauged how the carp are feeding.

Many carpers believe that the more bait they put out, the more carp they will catch. This just isn't the case, and there is a fine line between getting it right and totally ruining your chance of a bite.

Ian is a master at nicking bites, and at this time of year he loves fishing with single hook baits.

When the temperature plummets, and the carp are feeding with little gusto, a small hi-viz pop-up can often be enough to buy a couple of bites.

'I tend to fish short sessions, now. I've found if I travel light, move regularly and keep my eyes peeled for showing carp, there's no need to spend the night on the bank,' Ian reveals as he wanders around the banks of Manor Farm at Richworth Linear Fisheries, near Oxford.

SINGLE BAITS
such as these clearly stand out... but the man behind them, Ian Russell, thinks very carefully about where he puts them.

Ian's BAIT TIPS



1 EXTRA COLOUR
If you're using standard boilies, try an Avid Carp Floating Corn Stop. This will add a fleck of colour to the hook bait and make it harder for the carp to eject it.



2 IN THE PINK
At this time of year, Ian has found that bright pink pop-ups score well.

TICKET information

MANOR FARM is on the Linear Fisheries Complex, Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire. Sat nav: OX29 7QF. There are eight beautiful day ticket waters on the complex, and prices start from £7 per day. Facilities include a large shower block and toilets close to every lake. Tel: 07885 327708.



07:00 With a bucket in his hand, the former *Angler's Mail* carp champion marches around the 14-acre pit in search of carp. He always tries to find where the fish are holding up, before getting his gear out of the van.

'On large gravel pits such as this one, locating the carp is definitely the key to success. 'There are lots of factors that influence where the carp may be sitting, including angling pressure, water temperature and wind direction.'

It's a relatively calm day so it doesn't take Ian long to locate a few of Manor's old, scaly residents. As he peers out into open water, a carp crashes at range.

'That was a big fish!' exclaims Ian, pointing towards the splash.

Over the next ten minutes, he witness five more carp show around the same area, at approximately 100 yards range.

With the bucket left in the swim to reserve it, he rushes back to his van to grab his gear.

08:00 After watching a couple more carp show, Ian chucks a bare lead towards the area and feels it down until it hits the bottom. 'That went down with a firm donk,' he says, clipping-up his main line.

He casts the lead around the spot a few more times and every time it hits the bottom with a 'thud', revealing a large, firm area the size of a pool table, among a large weed bed. Clear areas are often created by feeding carp, so they're well worth targeting on lakes that contain weed. The fact carp have been crashing on the area this morning, indicates they could be feeding on the spot.'

Ian marks all three of his rods with pole elastic before tying up a couple of super-simple rigs.

'Because I've seen several fish show there, I'm going to fish with all three rods in the same area.



This may seem like I'm putting all my eggs in one basket, but if the fish are localised it will definitely increase the chances of getting a bite. If the carp start showing elsewhere, I will move one of the rods off the spot.'

08:35 Rustling around in his tackle box, Ian pulls out a spool of coated braid and a packet of wide gape hooks.

Knotless knot rigs are quickly tied up on the hook links, with baits on. Then it's leads on, and Ian's ready.

But not before pausing to explain his choices of winter single hook baits...

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Want a close look at the steps in creating Ian's rigs? Click on the Fishing Tips tab at www.anglersmail.co.uk

08:50 'I'm going to use standard bottom baits today,' begins Ian, delving into a bag of Sonubaits prototype boilies.

'If the bottom is clear of debris, I will use just use a standard boilie straight out of the bag.'

'If there's debris on the bottom, such as weed or silt, I will opt for my trusty pop-up rig. A pop-up will sit on top of any debris on the bottom, creating a much better presentation and increasing the chances of you getting a bite.'

'Don't be fooled into thinking you should always use hi-viz pop-ups when the weather gets cold. Recently, I've been catching well on standard bottom baits tipped with Avid Carp Corn Stops. If everyone is using bright baits, I will often do totally the opposite. If you do things your own way, and don't follow the latest trends, I'm certain you will catch more carp.'



09:00 We're ready to rock 'n' roll, now. Ian blasts three rods onto the clear area at range. It's a big chuck in the savage crosswind, but after a couple of attempts Ian gets the rigs bang on the money.

'If I see carp show anywhere else, I will cast straight onto them,' notes Ian.

'Now that the temperature has dropped, you have to make the most of every opportunity.'

'Casting a single hook bait onto a showing fish will often produce a quick bite and it can be the difference between catching and blanking.'

11:00 After spotting a carp crash at 50 yards, Ian frantically reels in his right-hand rod. He checks the hook point is still sharp before flicking onto the area where the carp leaped out of the water.

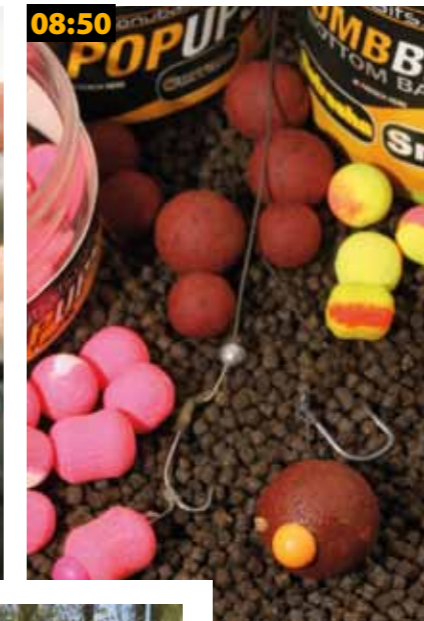
'That was a good fish. It looked well over 20 lb. I've seen a couple more fish show on the spot at range over the past 20 minutes so I'm confident of forthcoming action from both areas,' says Ian.

12:30 As Ian sips a cup of tea, his right-hand alarm screams into life and line tears from his reel.

'That'll be a bite,' he chuckles, chucking his tea onto the floor.

It quickly becomes apparent that Ian's into a good fish, as it plods around slowly in deep water. Several minutes later, a large, dark mirror emerges a few yards from the bank, just beyond the reach of Ian's landing net. After a few tense moments, and a couple of last-minute lunges from the angry mirror, Ian bundles it into the net.

'Get in there!' Ian screams. He's a happy man now!



With the fish on the mat, Ian peels back the landing net mesh to reveal a beautiful linear. The fin-perfect carp tips the scales to 23 lb, and after a couple of trophy shots he slips it back to its watery home.

'Well, that fish proves just how important it is to keep your options open. If I hadn't cast onto that showing fish, I'd still be blanking.'

14:00 'I've been watching the area at range for the past half hour through my binoculars,' explains Ian.

'I've seen six good carp show right over the top of my hook baits. Although I haven't caught one yet, I'm convinced it's going to happen. I'm just going to have to wait.'

15:15 Suddenly, the bobbin twitches on Ian's long rod and his rod tip shakes, indicating a fish has picked up his hook bait.

'Here we go!' Ian exclaims, lifting into the fish.

Ian plays it delicately towards the bank. Just as Ian looks to be gaining some line, the fish



THE END RESULT

MANOR FARM is by no means easy, but Ian manages to tempt two stunning 20 lb-plus carp. Keeping your options open, casting onto showing fish and avoiding large beds of bait will certainly catch you more carp on short sessions. Ian has proved that you don't need to spend days on the bank to catch big'uns.