

FEATURE FINDING

Chris Lowe believes feature finding is one of the most important aspects of modern carp fishing. Here's why...

As lots of you are probably aware, I spend the majority of my time fishing Linear Fisheries in Oxford. Anglers regularly quiz me about the best tactics and the most important things to bear in mind when fishing such pressured venues. My answer is simple. Find the fish, find a feature and give them some good-quality bait. Rather than talking about feature finding in great detail and boring you half to death, I'm going to talk about a very special capture I had this year and how being able to use a marker float competently allowed me to catch one of the most sought after carp in the UK.

It was first thing Monday morning when I arrived at the Linear Fisheries complex for a week of tutorials. The angler who I would be fishing with for the week was keen to learn about finding clear spots in the weed, so we ended up starting the session on the famous St Johns. As well as being littered with gravel bars, silt channels and a whole host of other prominent features, there was new weed growth in the lake, making it perfect for the tutorial client to try his hand at finding clear areas.

We ended setting up on the beach and I spent most of Monday teaching him how to find clear spots and showing him how to fish and bait accurately in them. As the sun disappeared behind the distant tree line on Monday evening, I grabbed the marker float and started plumbing the swim for features. Now I know lots of anglers would advise against feature finding on pressured venues because of the disturbance but I don't think it makes a difference. I could have fished PVA bags and nicked a few bites but that's not my style. I want to find a feature, introduce a big bed of bait and catch lots of carp. I'm never going to catch dozens of fish using small PVA bags. If I can create a competitive feeding a confident feeding zone and get the carp competing for my bait, I can usually rack up a big hit of fish.

After twenty minutes flicking the marker rod around I found a large weed bed at about 60yds range. I gently pulled the lead towards



To make life easier, we sell a Marker Float Kit that contains everything you need to start feature finding.

me, until it pulled smoothly along the lake bed. This indicated that the weed bed had ended and I was pulling across a nice, clear bottom. I've found that carp will often patrol the edges of weed beds and are very confident feeding on beds of bait that are positioned tight to them.

With the float popped above the surface, I positioned three rods as tight as I could get them and

introduced a couple of kilos of my favourite spod mix, which consisted of Code Red boilies, S-Feed Pellets, Elliptical Pellets and Hemp 'N' Corn.

Just twenty minutes after introducing the bait my middle rod rattled off and I was rewarded with a stunning 31lb mirror. After landing the fish, carp were showing on my baited area repeatedly and I was confident of

more fish. Unfortunately though, as the night progressed, the shows stopped and the night passed without any more action.

At first light on the Wednesday morning, after a couple of cups of coffee, I started to re-evaluate my approach. There were certainly still fish in the swim but they'd moved further out into the lake and were showing at 80 yards. I reeled all three rods in and started having a lead around where I'd seen most of the fish show over the last couple of hours. After a couple of casts, it became clear why the fish were showing on the same spot repeatedly. I found an area of clean gravel that was absolutely rock hard – perfect. I popped the marker float up again,

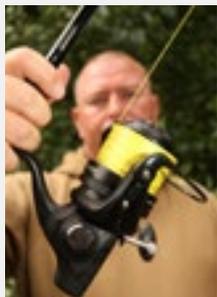
repositioned three rigs tight to it and introduced some more of my spod mix.

It may seem a little bit strange moving rods from an area that has produced fish but, like I have already said, I go carp fishing to catch numbers of fish. Catching one or two fish is nice, but I'd rather bag more if I can.

At 1am the following morning all hell broke loose. I can't remember how many fish I caught over the space of a few hours but it kicked off in style. I had a couple of stunning carp, a 34lb catfish and then all went quiet. I actually thought the carp had cleared me out and moved on, so I introduced ten more spodfuls of bait and sat on my

bedchair watching the sunrise. As I sipped my coffee, the bobbin on the left-hand rod twitched ever so slightly and line began slowly ticking from my spool. I knew the fish was big as soon as I picked up the rod. It stayed deep and I struggled to gain any line for the first couple of minutes. After a long, dogged battle I noticed a massive flank of scales simmering in the morning sun and knew exactly what I was playing. It was the Big Plated and one of the fish I so dearly wanted to catch from the pressured day-ticket venue. After what seemed like an eternity, the colossal mirror eventually gave in and I managed to slip all 44lb 12oz of it into the net.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS YOU WILL NEED TO START FEATURE FINDING



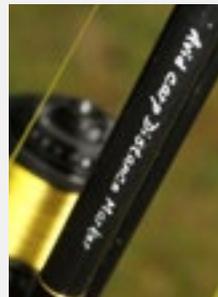
01. A big pit reel with a quick-drag system is perfect for marker work.



02. You will need a marker float, large lead and a buffer bead.



03. Braided main line is essential. Check out the Depth Gauge Marker Braid.



04. A rod with a stiff test curve. The Distance Marker rod is a great bit of kit.

HOW TO SETUP A MARKER FLOAT ARRANGEMENT



01. Pass your main line through the swivel on an Avid Marker Lead.



02. Now carefully slide a buffer bead onto the main line like this.



03. Pass your main line through the eye on the float and tie it in position.



04. Snip the tag end that's left behind using a pair of sharp scissors.



05. Slide the buffer bead down the braid and push it over the eye on the float.



06. If the arrangement is setup correctly it should look like this.

Chris caught the Big Plated from St Johns after spending a prolonged period feature finding. If you want to catch more fish, get your marker rod out.



Chris Lowe

ANGLER PROFILE: Chris Lowe

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