



"Most of those fish were moved up here a few years back and they have really grown.

"In matches over the last couple of years, the average stamp has been 5-7lb with plenty of 8-9lb and some pushing up to 12lbs."

So, how to catch a match winning weight of proper slabs? Or bag an autumn bonanza. We'll let Simon carry on with the story and explain in more detail...

My Tubertini Ethnic carp feeder rod is quite a beast, but it allows me to really punch the heavy feeder out to 50 yards. A wide-spooled reel loaded with 8lb Gorilla feeder line helps to keep everything tight at distance.

When looking to put a net of huge bream together, some aspects of the approach will be very familiar and require a couple of little tweaks. For complete success, there will be some bits of the approach which need a new way of thinking.



There are some very big carp in here, and a lot of anglers trying to catch them. As a consequence, the baits used most frequently are

South West Lakes Trust runs some incredible waters. Porth Reservoir will be well known to most readers, and Upper Tamar has been in the news for big nets on the whip or tip. Argal Reservoir, close to the laid back town of Falmouth, is right under the radar, unless you are one of the match men way out west who like their fish big.

Callington's Simon Poynter is a big fan of these lakes, he explains more for us. "When I was in my teens, we used to fish matches on College Reservoir, just below Argal here, and it was awesome. "It was a case of get some grub out through the feeder, ball it on the long pole and sack up on one or the other. 30-35lb of skimmers was the usual weight.



"I was quite disappointed to arrive here this morning and see it flat calm with the first hard frost of the year on the bank. The reservoir is down about 10' as well, but I have to hope it will concentrate the fish into a smaller area.

All the usual feeder fishing essentials will come into play. I spend some time getting myself comfortable with the box in the water. This will enable me to concentrate fully on the job in hand and have my keepnet fully pegged out. I have picked out a marker on the far bank to cast to, so I can feed accurately and build the swim after first getting a good bed of feed down. My first ten casts are done without a hooklength on and using a very large Nisa cage feeder.

fishmeal based.

The bream have gorged themselves on those baits, too, so it makes sense to use them as part of my attack. Boilies will be a good hookbait, and will also be crumbled into my groundbait.

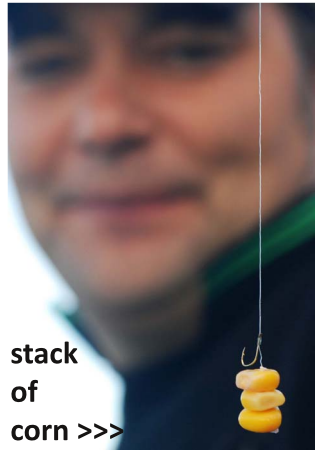




As well as the boilies, I also bring corn for hookbaits. Both red and

natural yellow corn have their moments. Bream are still the same as always: fussy eaters, so you need to have a few options available.

I like using Ringers White Shellfish 8mm



stack of corn >>>

boilies, or a stack of corn. Both choices will be fished on a hair rig, so you will need to have a few hooks tied with longer hairs for the stack of corn.

My groundbait is also based on fishmeal, but not exclusively. I like GOT Green Grub for the fishmeal content,

but mix it 50/50 with Yellow Peril, which is a corn based mix. A bag of brown crumb completes the groundbait, which is mixed as soon as I get to the swim so it soaks up plenty of water.

The mix is quite damp, as I will be fishing into at least 10' of water, and hopefully more like 15'. I don't want any particles breaking out of the feeder as it sinks, as this will attract small fish. I want it all downstairs where the slabs live.

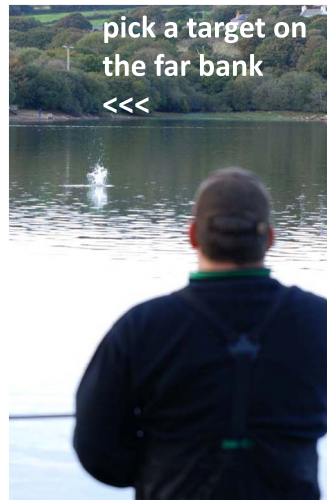
At the start, I will add a bit of chopped worm into the mix. It will help to keep it damp, and bream love worms. If I get loads of perch in

the swim, I will cut the chop out. You very rarely catch bream when you have perch in the swim. I'm not sure if the perch move in as the bream move out, or if the perch stop the bream from moving in. Either

way, perch are not a good sign, so I would prefer to not attract them. Once I start fishing, my feeder is a NISA Rocket. This comes in different sizes and has the weight at the base of the feeder.

Today I'm going for the large sized Rocket, which has a 35g loading. It will enable me to hit the distance comfortably. I have taped up all the holes, again, so no groundbait escapes as it falls.

Before I put any bait out, I had a good ten minutes just casting around and counting a bomb down to get an idea of the depth and contours. Reeling in slowly let me feel if there



pick a target on the far bank <<<

were any snags, as I didn't want to pile a load of feed into an area where I couldn't fish properly.

Once I was happy with the chosen area, I had a final cast and clipped up with my rod pointing vertically. I could now hit the clip each cast, with the rod in the same position, and bring the rod forward as the feeder sank. This let me get some line back on the reel

without moving the feeder back towards me. It is time to get a hook and bait on and have that first cast...

clip up with the rod vertical



The important criteria for a hook are that it is reasonably strong, but not like a carp hook, has a wide gape and, for a natural venue, is a dull colour.



The Series 26 from Tubertini is my choice of hook for bream on the feeder. I have them ready tied to 3' of 0.16mm Matchteam. I tie some with a 10mm hair rig for boilies and others with a 25mm hair for corn stacks.

To set up the end tackle, I tie a 12" loop at in the mainline and cut it halfway up one side. This leaves two tails at the end of the line, one about 6" long, to which I tie a link swivel for attaching the feeder, the other is 18" long and will have the hooklength tied to it with a water knot.

This is the classic paternoster rig. I have found it to be ideal for bream fishing, as it does not tangle, and allows the bigger fish to pick up the bait with confidence before feeling any resistance from the line or quivertip.

I also think it keeps the mainline away from area where the hookbait is lying. This should, again, let the fish gain in confidence.

My quivertip is usually 1oz, but this may go up to 2oz if there is a strong tow on the water."



Simon settles into a steady routine. He is casting every five minutes, so that more feed is built up in the zone. A shoal of big bream would clear the initial feed out in a couple of minutes. To help keep them grubbing around, Simon is adding crumbled boilies and plenty of dampened micro pellets to the groundbait. Boilies can be crushed with a Korda Krusha, or put into a strong bag and bashed.

The micro pellets were left to soak, covered with just enough lake water to submerge them all. Once he had finished mixing his groundbait, Simon drained the micro pellets and they were ready.

The micros were added straight in to the groundbait, but the boilies and chopped worm are added every cast. This allows Simon to adjust the amount of feed going in to the swim, or leave out the worms if perch become a problem. It takes half an hour before there are any signs of interest in the swim. The first few twitches on the quivertip show that something is in the swim and moving around near the feeder or hookbait. It is important to not strike at any of these indications.

Striking and whacking the feeder into a bream will make them vacate the swim before they have settled. Smaller skimmers are often the first to move



in, and today is no exception. Simon nets a couple of fish around the 1 1/2lb mark, which are slipped straight back. These fish are usually followed by bigger ones, but the whole shoal will need to feel comfortable if the bigger ones are going to stop and eat. After another two casts, with a few twitches on the tip, but no proper bites, the tip pulls confidently and a better bream is on the way to the net. Simon is keen to stress how you should read bites.

"I always use a target board. It is quite an old fashioned way of fishing the feeder, but really helps you to distinguish between bites and liners.

The first few bites you get will often pull the tip round quite positively, but as the fish settle, they do not have to move so far to keep feeding. This means they will take the bait well, but not move the tip very far.



Fast pulls or rattles are usually liners. Slower pulls which hold, even if only half an inch or so, are bites. You will need to strike to set the hook, due to the stretch in the line at this distance.

Once the fish is on, keep the rod down to one side, the same as when fishing for carp and keep winding slowly. Big bream will often just follow with the pull, but

try to hold the rod away from your forearm so it will cushion any sudden lunges better. I'm getting some proper big fish now, so taking time to ensure every one goes in the net is important. If I tried to rush the fish to the net, I may pull the hook out and lose the fish. Not only is this a wasted opportunity, it also runs the risk of unsettling the shoal. So, no need to rush. Build the swim, wait for proper bites and drop another 6lb in your net."



A superb net of eight slabs for over 40lbs, with a biggest fish close to 8lbs shows off the venue and the method brilliantly. Simon has done us proud, now it's your turn...