



RFCA-2020 Coarse Fishing New Season Review

As I write this pre-season report (15/06) the river is still at a summer-low level, 0.27 showing on Jumbles Rock Gauge on the RFCA website. This level on our stretches gauge is approximately minus 1-2"!! I have delayed in writing the report hoping for some better river conditions coming through to report on. There was hope last week that has not materialised unfortunately



Time	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Humid	Pres	UV	Vis
00:00	12	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
03:00	10	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
06:00	10	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
09:00	12	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
12:00	14	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
15:00	16	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
18:00	14	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10
21:00	12	10	100%	95%	1013	0	10



On a more positive note we have had two consecutive 1' lifts over the last two weekends. This did move some heavy build up of the green slimey-silk weed that tends to cover every rock across the river bed after any prolonged dry periods. These two lifts have been the only two "real" lifts since the season finished in March. I walked the river recently before these lifts and it was horrendous. So, it has got marginally better from a presentation point of view. The low levels should have helped spawning fish however with no floods to wash away eggs and spawning areas that could be left high and dry when the river drops as it was already as low as it could be!



I was told of barbel spawning in good numbers above the M6 bridges back in May and a lot more of all sizes than in previous years too. The other bonus of the prolonged dry spell is that it will give the hatching fry a chance to get established without a major amount of heavy water, so we do have a few positives.



*Spawning Barbel
courtesy
of John Pimlott*



*Barbel
courtesy
of John Pimlott*

So, what can we do when the river is as low as it currently is? Faster oxygenated water is the key, the Ribble has a number of bedrock gullies that lend themselves to two methods. The first and most effective yet vastly under-used is the float. Other than in mucky big water it's my first choice method. When the weathers warm it also a pleasant way to pass a few hours knee to waist deep!

So, what do you need without splashing out too much cash if it is a first go with the float? Ideally a 12-13' "specimen float" if its barbel you are after? I would reckon however that some of the new "pellet wagglers" about currently that are a relatively cheap could manage line control in most of the narrow gullies your likely to be fishing? Most of these are two piece too so are easy to set up at home are transport to the peg. If its dace/roach/chub then a "general" 12-14' float will fit the bill. Reels are a bit pf a personal choice but a general 3000-4000 size reel would cope. Reel line, for barbel 8lb on the beefier float rod is a good starting point. For other species id go for 4-6lb as you could well get hold of a barbel so higher the better. Make sure that it's a floating line, Bayer or Drennan float fish are two reliable floating lines.



*Chub on the float and
banded hookbait*

Top and bottom rubbered floats from Chubber styles when fishing heavier baits for Barbel through to general stick floats when targeting silver fish. As your tending to fish more or less off the rod tips control is pretty easy, just be mindful to keep the reel line behind the float making hitting bites much easier.

Bait wise, pellets take some beating and you can catch pretty much everything that swims. I have done well for the barbel and bigger chub on banded pellet feeding pellet and hemp. For a bag of silvers caster and hemp take some beating, fish maggot and you can end up being pestered by minnows. A tin of sweetcorn and a lump of breadflake every now and again and will give some options. Hopefully, this year will again prove to be good for the roach that will now have a free passage from tidal to Clitheroe!! Caster was my No1 bait last year but again I had them on banded pellet too.



Large stamp roach



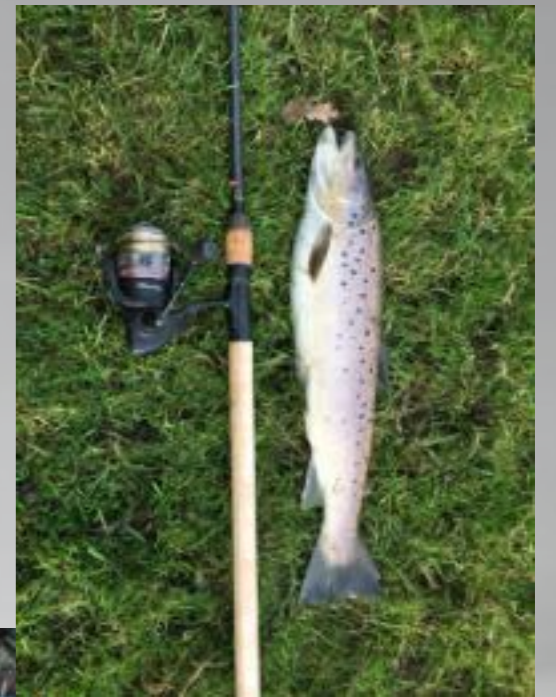
June 16th "If Only"

The second method is a bit of a purist method that can take a bit of practice. This again involves wading but is much more a search and feel method that can also really show you what the river bed is like where you fish. This is free lining baits like meat and paste. Meat would be my first choice as its buoyant so lends itself to being lifted and dropped. A lead wired weighted "meat hook" is beneficial as some meats practically float, Spam is my first choice. Takes can go from gentle tensioning of the line to the rod almost being pulled from your grasp. This is a hands-on method that and can be explosive.

Gear to do this style comprises of ideally a shorter rod of 10/11' 1.25-1.50tc, fix spool or better still a centripin. 12-15lb and a big strong hook that has a longer shank to wrap some lead wire! You can add some weight if needed with a link of split shot lightly pinched so as to pull free if snagged, plasticine etc. The ideal however is to weight the hook and trundle it through. The more weight you add the more snags you'll find! Flick up stream and let it pull through, lifting when necessary. There is some great footage on YouTube but what we are doing on a low water Ribble is under your feet in areas that you can see are gullies and deeper water below boulders and off bedrock.



A fish on the Jan Porter Memorial Day



Grayling, sea trout, & net of fish are Dave Pickering's of RADAC

One word of warning if you have not waded before. Use polaroid glasses so you can see where your putting your feet and ideally use a wading staff as per the Salmon lads. Some of those bedrock drop offs on the lower river are deadly if you are not careful! A salmon type collapsible net is ideal but make sure its got proper mesh, none of that fin-ripper that you see on those "gye" nets that for me should be banned.....I'm off on a pet hate!! Hang on this is a discussion for another day!!

Let's hope that we can carry on where we left off from last season as it was tremendous and that 2020 can be remembered for more than just CV19.

Tight Lines,
Neil.



summer barbel to Martin McDerby