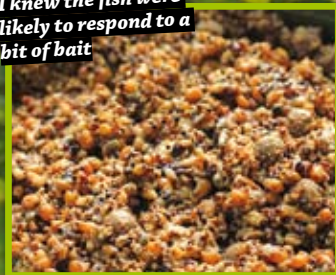




I knew the fish were likely to respond to a bit of bait



A GREAT YEAR

Kai looks back at some of his highlights of 2014.

I have had a great year's fishing, catching 10 thirties and my first UK forty. I have been concentrating on a syndicate water in Ringwood and this is currently my second year on there, but this year I have managed a few special ones.

My first memorable session was during the middle of March. I decided to set up on the Woods Bank, an area I hadn't fished before. I found a spot by casting a bare lead and got settled in for just before darkness fell, hoping a busy morning would follow.

At 5am I awoke to a screaming take! I was bivvied up on the top of the bank behind the swim, as it

wasn't fishable without waders. I quickly slipped them on and, after a five-minute battle, I slipped a 21½lb mirror in the net. An hour later I had another take and after a few minutes I landed my second fish at 23lb 2oz. An hour and a half later I had another take and after a great battle, which lasted for a good 30 minutes, I landed a 36lb 14oz mirror called the Football Lin. This really was the one we were all after – I was absolutely buzzing and couldn't believe my luck!

After a few pictures and getting the fish back safely, I reeled in to have a walk around the lake, still buzzing like hell. There wasn't much coming out anywhere else, so when I got back to my swim I decided to

The Football Lin at 36lb 14oz



I knew it was close to my PB common - it went 36lb exactly



The scales shot around to 44½lb, which confirmed it was Single and a new PB to boot



put a little more bait out. I put 10 spods out on the area and clipped up all three rods to the spot. I had to wait until the following morning before any action occurred and at 6am I had a take which resulted in a lovely scaly 19lb 10oz mirror, rounding off the session perfectly.

Another session I want to talk about is the capture of my first UK forty. As it was a Bank Holiday weekend, I was keen to get down before the Friday rush. As luck would have it I managed to get back into a swim I had fished the previous week. There were still fish in the area as I had seen a few showing that morning. I found the same spot that had done a few bites on my last session, which was about the size of a broly and surrounded by weed. I cast two rods towards this area and my third was cast to the main spot in the swim at 16 wraps. I knew the fish were likely to respond to a bit of bait, so I put out 18 spods over the area where I had two rods close together and 15 over the main spot.

At 2.30am, I had a take on the right-hand rod and after a short fight I slipped the net under a

17½lb mirror. After a couple of pics, I got the rod back out on the spot and grabbed some sleep. At 4am I had a take on the rod on the main spot, but unfortunately, after a fish slowly plodded around, the hook pulled. I was a bit gutted, but pleased to have bagged one on my first night. I recast the rods that evening and introduced 24 spods over each spot. There were plenty of fish in the area and I hoped they would get their heads down during the early hours.

The night passed quietly and I couldn't believe I hadn't had a single bleep. The fish were still in front of me, but I wondered if I had put in too much bait. I kept the baiting to the minimum that night and got the rods sorted for what I hoped would be a busy night ahead.

At 2.30am, I had a take on the right-hand rod, but unfortunately lost it in a thick weedbed. I was a bit gutted, but got the rod back out and headed back off to bed. I was awoken at dawn by a nice steady take, one of those you know a big fish is responsible for before you pick up the rod. The fish instantly flat-rodged me and was almost unstoppable before it weeded me up. I kept steady pressure on it for a few minutes before it came free of the weed, only for it to go into another weedbed nearby. I kept steady pressure on the fish again and after 25 minutes I could feel the weedbed slowly breaking up. On the misty surface I slowly led a weedbed the size of my bivvy back towards the bank. I had no idea at this point whether the fish was still on. As the weedbed got closer, I knew I wouldn't be able to scoop the whole lot up in the net. I put the rod back on the rest and went in with my waders on. As I broke away the weed from the leadcore, a big fish wallowed next to me and then shot off. I quickly grabbed the rod and my mate, who I was doubled up with, woke up to all the commotion. I slowly played the fish back in and within a few minutes the beast was safely in the net.

I saw it was a decent one and it had a big single scale on one of its flanks. I said to my mate it was Single, but he didn't believe me. The scales shot round to 44½lb, which confirmed it was Single and a new PB to boot! I got some great shots and, whilst doing some returners, my right-hand rod ripped off! After a 10-minute battle, I slipped the net

under a lovely 28lb common. A couple of hours later I rounded the session off with a 22lb 10oz mirror, which finished my month off perfectly!

The last session I would like to talk about is the capture of my PB common. I arrived at the lake around 3.45pm on Friday and managed to secure a swim where I had seen lots of activity during the previous weekend. I quickly found two spots on the edge of a weedbed and got the rods out for the night. I awoke the next morning without a single bleep.

I had seen a few fish that morning about 30 yards past the weedbed I was fishing to. After bite time had finished I got my spod rod out and my Gardner Weed Rake and started the task of raking a channel through the weed, just enough to sink the line and get a fish through easily. After an hour I had cleared a channel and made a couple of casts with a bare lead towards where I had seen the fish showing. I found a spot out at 16 wraps and put 18 spods of boilies and particles out and five on the old spot, which I kept the third rod on. The rods were soon out for the night and ready for tomorrow morning's bite time.

At four o'clock the following morning I had a screaming take from the new spot. After 20 minutes I had a decent sized common in the net. I unhooked it in the net and got the rod back out. I knew it was close to my PB common, so I got it on the scales

Super strong 15lb Pro Light Blend main line



and it went round to 36lb exactly! I was buzzing!

The other rod on the new spot was the next rod to roar off. It was just getting light as I struck into it and it turned out to be a very lively 22lb 6oz mirror. It was soon in a sack next to the common and the rod was back out on the spot. At 9am I got the trophy shots done and they were soon back to fight another day. Unfortunately no other fish were caught that session but I couldn't complain.

All of my fish were caught using the super strong 15lb Pro Light Blend main line, a length of CamFlex leadcore spliced to a Covert Kwik-Lok swivel, a Covert Lead Clip and Tail Rubber with a 3oz Gardner Distance lead. My rig consisted of 25lb brown Sink Skin and a size 6 Covert Incisor tied blow-back style. I had a lot of these fish using double 18mm Tuna & Garlic boilies.

I would like to say a massive thank you to Gardner Tackle and Sonik for helping me out this year and being great sponsors. Without them I wouldn't have caught the fish that I have this year.



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