

Spring into summer!

Now the spring is over we move into the summer. Indeed spawning may well already be over and done with where you are. Tony gives you a few things to consider as we move into the summer months.

I'll begin with bait. The general consensus is fishmeals in summer and milk proteins or birdfood-based baits in winter. Good idea, and why not? The oils in fishmeal baits solidify in the cold and therefore all the attraction is locked in, whereas the milk/birdfood-based baits are high leakage and very digestible, perfectly suited to the cold water. Back in the day I used fishmeals all year around but changed from normal fish oils to salmon oil in the winter, as the salmon oil didn't solidify.

These days, of course, bait development is at new levels and baits such as the Cell, Activ-8 and New Grange can be used with complete confidence all year round – easy! However, if you love your oily fishmeals in summer and plan to use a fishmeal this year, then here is one that comes highly recommended!

Summer fishmeal

As Mainline is renowned for top quality, all-year-round food baits, many anglers overlook the fact that the company also produces cracking fishmeal products which I highly recommend. This is what you need to make the fishmeal bait:

- 4 medium eggs.
- 500g Mainline Liver and Marine base mix
- 15ml Ultra Marine Oil
- 5ml Pacific Tuna Ade
- 2.5ml Response Salmon and Shrimp
- 2.5ml Response Mediterranean Shellfish

To put it together crack four medium eggs into a bowl and add the flavours and oils at the stated levels, whisk and add the base mix a little at a time until a malleable paste is achieved. Depending on the size of the eggs a little more or a little less base mix may be needed. Roll or barrel the baits out

using the Gardner gear and boil for 45 seconds. Boiling for 45 seconds may not seem long enough but trust me it is!

If you want to use a fishmeal hookbait straight out of the bag, so to speak, then just air dry a handful for a few days before going fishing. Alternatively, air dry some hookbaits for a week or so and then soak them in the oil for a potent oily hookbait!

Salt

Carp are partly made of water, as we are – that's a given! In layman's terms this water in a carp is saline, or salt water. Therefore a carp needs salt within its diet to maintain saline levels. This apparently is most evident in the spring when the fish are waking up from their winter rest, and especially during the spawning period. I'm no bait expert

and I don't think I need to be here; we have been told by the bait experts that carp need and actively seek out salt. That's good enough for me with my limited knowledge and understanding of a carp's internal workings!

The two ways I incorporate salt into my baits are as follows. First, with a PVA mesh bag of pure rock salt (or rock salt and broken baits). Secondly, I air dry a quantity of boilies for a week or so until they are totally dehydrated, then when I want to use them I cover them in lake water 24 hours before going fishing and at the same time I add a quantity of salt, so baits rehydrate in salty water. (If I fancy it other liquid attractors such as Multi-Stim, a fish feed inducer, can also be added at this stage.) The baits take on the salty water overnight and

Keep watching the water, and do everything you can to up your chances of success





Bowl of white rice and a juicy sultana

are ready for use the following day, and once rehydrated you can taste the salt inside the bait. Don't forget the other edges associated with rehydrated baits such as the washed-out effect and the softer consistency – both proven carp-catching edges.

Alternative hookbaits

I love fishing alternative hookbaits all year around but especially at this time of year. Imagine if you had a big plate of white rice with a juicy sultana sitting in the middle of it. How much rice would you eat before you couldn't resist the sultana any longer? Or would you just scoff the sultana straight away? I find a chod rig with a bright, potent pop-up, usually

pineapple, does the trick. This method works particularly well in April, May and June but will work all year round. If you don't fancy using a readymade pop-up then use the Polaris Pop-Up Mix to make your own flavour/colour combination.

Rigs

I hear and read all the time about the zig rig being a fantastic summer tactic. The closest thing I ever got to a new style zig rig was a pop-up straight off the lead. To this day I rarely use zigs, basically because I usually fish a low stocked (two fish per acre), deep reservoir (depths of over 15 feet). I may be wrong here, but from what I see zigs work better in venues that are stocked with more than two fish per acre and where a spod soup can be spodded over the top.

Nonetheless, I have had some success with the method and I can't really write an article at this time of year without including zigs. To be able to present a bait at any depth is a real edge and something that the lakes at my end of the country have yet to really see. When I've fished in and around the Oxford area it seems that there aren't any anglers who haven't used a zig. In fact I have some friends that wind the rods in as soon as the sun pops up and change all of them to zig rigs. Food for thought...

In contrast, I have used chod rigs a lot in the summer. A choddy in the winter months works well as a single hookbait tactic, but over the last year or so I have had lots of success fishing a home-made pineapple pop-up over Cell and a little maize. For me, maize comes into its own in early summer and a few spods full certainly get the fish going. I've used maize every spring/summer since my Salamander days.

There are certainly no issues with the carp missing your hookbait when using a pop-up presentation in conjunction with a particle, provided you don't go mad with the particles and stick loads in. Fish for a bite at a time and the fish won't get preoccupied on the maize. A bit of salt and extra liquid attraction with the maize won't hurt either.

General location

The old adage that the best baits and rigs in the world won't work unless you get on the fish is true. It should be fairly easy to locate carp at this time of year. Watercraft, research, word of mouth and knowing the lake all come into play. At certain times of year I break the lakes I fish down into areas where I think the fish will be, then concentrate within those areas to nail down the fish and find a swim. The more you



Ready-prepared maize from Kent Particles



Mainline's groundbaits make a great sloppy wet spod soup

Main pic: If it means getting to the lake at 4am to find feeding carp then that's what I'll do



The ingredients and kit required for making Tony's summer fishmeal



Small PVA bags of salt and rehydrating Cell in salty lake water



The gear I use to make my zig rigs

Spring into summer!

Make the most of warm summer winds



fish a lake the easier this becomes and big areas of a venue can be discounted even prior to arriving!

Get down to the lake at first light and look for showing fish. If this means getting up at 3.30am then just do it. If you see a few carp these are sure to be feeding fish, and note the weather conditions. If you can't do that due to travelling time or whatever reason then talk to people on the bank when you are there. It's not like the old days of carping any more where if you said hello outside a bivvy you were met with a grunt or nothing at all, because there are so many more anglers these days and the thirst

for information is so great any angler fishing may want a chat and some info out of you too!

Warm winds are a giveaway at this time of year. The fish should follow them and be at the end of a warm wind for the first 24 hours at least, especially post spawning. If the

wind continues in that direction they will start to back off it and move back up the lake. I used to be happy sitting on the end of a wind for days but after chatting with anglers who make underwater films they assure me the fish do back off of a stale wind! Obviously all lakes are different but this is a good general rule.

I hope I've given you a bit of food for thought here and some things to think about and apply to your own fishing at this time of year. I'll certainly be giving the zigs more of a try when conditions dictate. As always, put the effort in, tweak a few things and put yourself one step ahead.

A superb carp taken on some of the methods shown

