

10mm BOILIE

SIZE 2 HOOK

# DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Carp fishing convention dictates that it's important to match your hookbait to the size of the hook you're using in order to catch consistently, but **MARK WOZENCROFT'S** results suggest otherwise...

**O**VER the years I have read a number of articles and blogs that point anglers in the direction of matching their hook size to that of the hookbait they're using. Theoretically, this is correct, and stems back to the very basics of good angling practice and presentation.

However, let's take a moment to think outside the box. At times we often give far too much credit to our quarry. They are simple creatures of habit and will have basic survival needs on their minds – the important

things like feeding, spawning and finding 'safe' places to rest up.

I'm sure that many of you have seen footage on the internet or social media platforms of carp feeding.

The only way for a carp to 'inspect' potential food items is to take them into their mouths.

With the huge amount of debris on lakebeds, carp have to sift through twigs, leaves and weed to find food items, so with this in mind do you think that the size of the hook (in comparison to the hookbait) really matters?

Do you really think that when a carp comes across a potential morsel on the lakebed they will consider not sucking





**Sitting pretty**

Whipping his hair on to the shank negates the need for a hook swivel, which reduces the bait's buoyancy. Mark finds it sits better like this.

**Full circle**

The ring swivel to which the hook is attached means that the hookbait and hook still have plenty of movement to spin and catch hold when the bait is mouthed.

**Bombs away**

Nothing fancy at the anchor point for Mark. A textured Bait Bomb on a safety clip will fish effectively over any type of lakebed.



Mark's favourite bolle with this rig is 10mm CCMoore Live System. Most of the time he fishes over matching freebies, gugged in Roasted Nut Extract before being Spombed out. For 'change baits' he sometimes uses a trimmed-down white pop-up.



BELOW: Since switching to size 2 and size 4 Muggas, Mark's catch rate has soared.

it in because it's a hook?

What if your hook is too small and it affects the mechanics of the rig because it is too small to grab hold?

With the constant sucking and blowing action that carp use to feed, combined with the amount of rubbish entering and leaving the mouth, I think that the chance of a hook leaving the fish's mouth without taking hold can be quite high.

**"In fact, I tried this set-up for the first time on Orchid Lake during winter, and was rewarded with 15 carp in 48 hours!"**

**OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS**

Many moons ago I fished a water where I was able to watch carp feed at close quarters, and at the time I was of the same mindset – that the size of the hook was determined by the size of the hookbait being used, thereby creating a balanced set-up. To be fair, I caught my fair share while fishing the venue, but after watching the carp closely, and frequently 'getting away with it', I knew I had to change something.

At one point I saw a carp pick my bait up with the hook in its mouth and freeze on the spot, before starting to spin like a corkscrew until the hook popped out of its mouth!

At this time the 360 rig was in the early stages of development. However, after observing the way the carp were dealing with rigs, it seemed a presentation that would serve a purpose as it didn't matter how much the carp twisted, the swivel would

always be moving with the carp, eliminating the chance of it being ejected. Being fussy, I still wasn't 100 per cent happy with the hooking potential, so I played around with larger long-shank curved patterns and kept the hookbait the same size.

It certainly helped as more fish were being nailed, but I still felt the weight and size of the bait (a 15mm pop-up) was hindering the hooking process.

I decided to be bold and use super buoyant 10mm hookbaits on a size 6 longshank (a big hook at the time). After tying one up and lowering it in the edge it sat perfectly. Due to the size of the pop-up it only just lifted the hook, but not the swivel. This produced a low-lying presentation perfect for my type of fishing over corn, hemp and 10mm bottom baits.

I tried this set-up for the first time on Orchid Lake in the winter and I was rewarded with 15 carp in 48 hours!

**ENTER THE RONNIE RIG**

My confidence was high and I knew the rig was spot on and working exactly how I wanted it to.

Not long after that I was privy to a new rig that I knew would be 'the one' for me, the now famous 'Ronnie Rig'. It works on similar principles to the 360 rig, but I feel it is a lot more refined.

The Ronnie also avoids any concerns regarding the hook eye catching in the net and causing potential mouth damage, as the swivel connection to the hook is encased in a small length of shrink tube.

The angle at which the hook sits is very aggressive, but I felt that using a longshank-style hook might be working against me, so I switched to a Covert Dark Mugga hook. With their long, sharp point, aggressive curve and slightly in-turned eye, I knew these were perfect for what I wanted.

Initially I was using a size 6 or a size 4 with it, but still I wasn't happy with the gape of the hook, as I wanted to have it as wide as I could.

Eventually, I took the plunge and dropped to a size 2 hook with the 10mm pop-up, and although it looked big initially, I caught loads of carp on the combination, including fish from really tough 'circuit' venues.

However, such is the way my brain works, I was sure I could make the rig even better! I was using a small swivel on the shank of the hook to attach the bait, which added a bit of weight and therefore took away from the buoyancy of the pop-up.

I felt there must be a better way of mounting the bait. Naturally, I thought 'what if I used a hair rig?' This question soon became 'how could I use one without affecting the core mechanics of the rig?'



The rig works well with both coated braids and mono.

**EUREKA MOMENT!**

Then it came to me! How about if I whipped a hair on to the shank of the hook, held in place by a tiny section of the same shrink tubing being used over the swivel connecting the hook?

That was it – problem solved: I had retained the free movement of the hook due to the swivel mounted on the eye, and also reduced the weight of the hooking arrangement so that the tiny pop-up held the rig up in a more favourable position.

Using really small hookbaits with such a big hook certainly creates its own problems, mainly due to the lack of buoyancy offered by a lot of small





One of this summer's haul of big carp that have fallen to the 'big hook' rig.

***"I have supreme confidence in this rig, and I'm sure that it will put a few extra carp on the bank for you as well!"***

pop-ups. Some are better than others, and often, just to be on the safe side, I will add a tiny piece of fake corn or a small sliver of foam to give the extra lift I want.

Using foam gives me an added advantage, as it can be used to absorb flavouring and/or attractors, allowing me to boost my hookbaits before casting out.

Normally I have some already cut up and soaking in a tub for several weeks before I go fishing.

## THE RIGHT BOOM MATERIAL

The hooklength material or boom section I use is always adapted to suit whatever bottom I'm fishing over. Obviously, a stiff boom won't fish as effectively as a more supple one over a choddy bottom or weed, whereas when it comes to fishing on clear gravel or smooth clay then I'd have no problems fishing a stiffer material like Trip Wire or Trick Link for my boom section.

Conversely, a stiff coated braid or mono boom can offer better hooking mechanics over a firm lakebed.

Needless to say, it's vital that you find out what type of substrate you have in front of you and fish the correct type of material for your hookbait to be presented cleanly and unimpaired.

This year my carp fishing has taken me to the RK Leisure venues, and the Church Lake (Horton) venue has certainly given up some of its prizes to this set-up. I have supreme confidence in this rig and I'm sure that it will put a few extra carp on the bank for you as well. When you know your rigs are good you can focus on your watercraft, making sure that you're in the right area and have applied the correct baiting strategy.

Increasing your catch rate is all about piecing all the bits of the jigsaw together, and for me this rig has certainly been an important part of solving the puzzle of catching big carp.

Be lucky, and tight lines!

