

# BALANCE YOUR RIGS TO BEAT THE WEED

Karlos White reveals a fresh approach to fishing over low-lying weed, using a tactic that has already helped him to catch more than 10 'thirties' this spring...

**T**HE water temperature is rising fast and, with that, the weed will be flourishing.

Even on lakes that don't become infested with underwater forests of Canadian pondweed, low-lying blanket weed often litters the lakebed. While it may be tricky to fish over, it holds a rich larder of natural food items that the carp plunder each spring.

From a rig perspective, the easiest and most common way of presenting a bait over blanket and silkweed is to fish the chod rig. However, this being such a common tactic these days, the fish soon get used to dealing with it, rendering the rig far less effective.

This season I've been fishing a lake that is festooned with silkweed, and I have had a fantastic run of big fish using a rig that is similar in concept to the 'choddy' inasmuch as it guarantees good presentation over the green stuff, but doesn't incorporate a pop-up boilie.

It's based around a helicopter set-up. As well as being one of the only ways of making sure that your rig is sitting nicely on top of the weed in full view of the carp, it incorporates a longer hooklink, a fluorocarbon mainline straight through to the terminal arrangement, and a balanced hookbait.

At the start of a session I make a few casts, trying to feel for a nice 'drop', using a textured lead. The silkweed will cling to this and show you whether it is present on the spot, and also how deep the weed is.

If the strands are, say, 5ins long, you can set the top bead 6ins from the lead, making sure that the rig sits on top of it.

To ensure that the hookbait sinks slowly and lies on top of the weed, I use a balanced or slow-sinking bait. Something like a straight-out-the-tub waffer, or a critically-balanced snowman is perfect in this respect.

I am supremely confident in the bait

RIGHT: A 27lb common landed by Karlos while shooting this feature.



A helicopter system is perfect. Just adjust the top bead to match the depth of the weed.

## TACTICS

I use, and know that the carp are eating it. In the past I have tended to fish a bright hookbait over the baited area, but now I adopt a 'match the hatch' approach, keeping my hookbait the same as the freebies I am feeding.

If I'm using a snowman, then sometimes I will use a small bright boilie on top of a bottom bait matching the loosefeed. This adds a visual attractor to the rig while retaining the same food signal as the freebies.

Now that the water has warmed up, the Krill comes in to its own. To boost the food signal of the boilies even further, I glaze them in Pure Krill liquid the night before I go fishing. It isn't all that pleasant to deal with, but boy do the carp love it! Plus, even when the carp have eaten the boilies, the scent and taste of the glazing liquid is still left in and around the weed.

Another trick I adopt when fishing over silkweed is to chop a few baits into halves. When fed over the spot, these will flutter down and gently nestle on top of the weed, whereas whole baits will sometimes fall through the layers of silkweed and the carp will have to root around to find them.

The reason I don't want them doing this is the same as not wanting any crumb or particles out there – in digging around, the carp will move the weed about, which could potentially ruin my presentation by masking the hookpoint.

Instead, I want them to graze around over an area, dropping down to pick off one or two baits at a time, before moving on to the next cluster of freebies and, hopefully, my hookbait!

With this tactic I don't use a leadcore leader, preferring to fish fluorocarbon mainline straight through to the lead to keep everything pinned down, with



Fluorocarbon mainline sinks through the light weed.

a tapered bead at the bottom of the set-up which the hooklink swivel rests on when I'm playing a carp, helping to protect the line from damage.

When it comes to what hooklink materials and hooks to use, the choices are endless these days.

Many permutations will work, but for the former I favour Gardner Invisilink in 20lb breaking strain – typically about 6ins-8ins long – terminating in a size 4 Covert dark Mugga hook.

So, there you have it, a brilliant alternative to the chod rig for fishing over silkweed or blanketweed. It will work anywhere, but particularly on waters where the fish have become wary of the most common, blatant pop-up presentations.

I have had some fantastic results using it this spring, particularly in the last month or so, landing a number of big fish to over 37lb.

Give it a go – you won't be disappointed!

***“I want them to graze around over an area, dropping down to pick off one or two baits at a time”***



Any weed will cling on to a textured lead.



Tipping a food bait with a bright one can get you quick bites when fishing over a bed of bait.



A 30lb-plus mirror caught live for the camera on a balanced rig.