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Concentrashun

What is, perhaps, the most important aspect of match fishing? Not being very good at it I am at a loss to know but I have one suggestion, CONCENTRATION.

A loss of concentration can result in a missed bite or a lost fish which could just be the match winner. How do we lose concentration? Just take time at the next match to look around and you will see!

We watch other anglers around us instead of watching our own float or tip. We talk and joke with our neighbours ruining not just ours but the concentration of others. We talk on the mobile again destroying our concentration and disturbing others. These factors are an every match occurrence, but what about other factors?

It is almost impossible to concentrate when you are cold. The answer is to dress warmly. Remember the old adage "If you are too hot you can take something off, but you can't put something on if you haven't got it.

Calls of nature are another break in the concentration levels. One very famous angler, Bob Nudd, had a unique way of dealing with the No 1 problem. He simply put his number 6 section, which he appeared to study closely, into his trousers and did what was needed. He taught many other internationals the trick but always ended with the saying, "most people use a number 6 section unless they are boasting". There are only two areas where care needs to be taken. First the edge of the section is very sharp and can cause a most nasty injury, second is the smell. Bob simply poured some lake water down the section and allowed it to dry, problem solved! If you want to improve learn to concentrate until you reach a point when or if another person speaks to you, you are unable to hear them just as we do when our partner asks us to do something.

Comments

A *ll those things which I used to nag you about seem to have almost disappeared. The litter problem seems to have been solved. Excessive noise and the use of mobile phones, seems to have been solved.*

Foul language is still a slight problem but I am sure that those who use the words either don't realise that they are doing it or they have become so used to using foul language that they are unable to find any other way to express their frustrations.

As you may know I am doing a little canal fishing at the moment and finding it interesting to say the least. I appreciate that the fish are not big and that they can be difficult to find, but they are there and increasing in numbers.

I am not advocating a canal match, but it would be different, but I am starting to wonder if our previous approach had been all wrong.

We would prepare our tackle and at the "all in" a virtual barrage of ground bait would pound the far shelf. Then ship out the pole to the far shelf and moan about the lack of fish.

Recently I have been fishing at no more than 4 metres and catching, even with all the usual disturbance on the bank.

We have all been disturbed and abused by cyclists- this is now considered to be anti-social behaviour. Cycle police now ride along the towpath to try to stop lycra louts performing. They are also checking on permits to fish and night lines of Eastern European origin.

I have no further comments to make, but if you have something to say, let me have it and I will put it in a future issue. Comments, and suggestions welcome, no PERSONAL attacks please.

Phil Maude

Hints and Tips

Over many years I have learnt some interesting tricks which may help you in becoming a better angler although they haven't really helped me. There are things that I have been told. There are some things I have picked up on the bank and there are some things that I have read somewhere.

Floats

It is not just pole floats which can have their life extended by a makeover. Stick floats and wagglers can have their tips re-varnished by using either nail varnish or fly tying varnish. The latter takes a lot longer to dry. Black bodies can be repainted with fly tying varnish, nail varnish or if not badly chipped try a coat of "Hard as Nails" nail varnish.

Hemp

There are two methods of preparing hemp. The first is to soak the seeds for 24 hours then boil until at least 50% have split. Have your own saucepan and be prepared for your partner to complain about the smell.

The second method, soak the seed as before then 1/3rd fill a vacuum flask with seed fill with boiling water and leave for at least 12 hours.

To make the seed go black add a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda to the cooking water. To improve the flavour of the seed add some sugar as well.

Don't throw away the cooking water. It can be used to mix your ground bait.

Hemp on the hook is a deadly bait but difficult to put in place. Here is a how to;

Select a grain of hemp which has just opened. Holding the pointed ends between your fingers gently squeeze, this opens the grain, place the bend of the hook in the split and release the grain. It will hold on the hook. When fishing hemp a few grains around the hook bait every cast will soon have bites coming very fast. Be prepared for lightning bites. Practice is the only way to conquer this method.

Corn

Corn is usually drained before taking it to the bank. Some fisheries have now banned tins of any kind on the bank.

Drain the corn but retain the sweet liquid for adding to your ground bait.

Spooling

When we transfer line from a spool to the reel we often impart line twist which will eventually lead to tangles. If you haven't got a spool holder place the spool in a container of warm water and fill the reel to within about 1/8 of an inch from the lip of the spool.

Finally look after your reels. After every session remove the spool and wash the line in cold water. Clean and grease the visible gears. At the end of the season carefully open the side plate of the reel, clean and grease the working parts. Although a lot of trouble these simple tips will add years to the life of your reels.