



Medway Man

Bob Morris



The pair of Fallow deer gently push their way through the long grass on the far bank while overhead a buzzard cries and circles on the warm afternoon thermals. Butterflies flutter and bees buzz around the late season ivy berries and at this very moment a large Grass snake appears just down to my left. I remain totally still as it makes its way slowly across the front of the swim, gliding over my boots in the process. As you have probably sussed, events like these really make my day, particularly on a session like this when all is quiet on the fishing front.

A little later a Red kite appears high above me and a Hobby glides past chasing one of the large autumn dragonflies. These events however did not occur at an isolated stretch of river somewhere in the wilds of Herefordshire or up on the borders of Wales but just a couple of miles from Maidstone (the county town of Kent) in the lower Medway valley. It really is amazing what you can spot while you are out and about on the bank and all of these sightings certainly do serve to enrich my angling experience wherever I happen to be fishing. As it happened this session did not end as a blank and a late afternoon run of action on my maggot feeder produced a nice mixed bag of roach, perch and bream and although there were no monsters it was an enjoyable end to the days fishing -after a relatively quite start. My pike rod also found itself in use after a couple of late takes on the small paternostered dead baits produced a pair of pike in the 6-7lb range - particularly pleasing as they also fell to my single hook /hair rig presentation.

As I have mentioned before, river fishing at this time of year often gives me the option to hedge my bets by combining my pike fishing efforts with a spot of general stuff - which may target any of the other species present and when doing this, I find that a maggot feeder is a good place to start. If it appears that larger fish are moving in, then it is a relatively simple task to scale up the tackle and target them more seriously. It is also frequently the case that the constant feeding of an area will, sooner or later, attract a pike or two which seemed to be the case during the session that I just described. Sometimes



A bit of everything in the mix

after an afternoon of feeding a swim, an hour or two after dark is well worth a go as chub, bream, barbel and carp may be attracted in and, maybe caught up in the general feeding activity of the smaller fish, throw caution to the wind. A ploy that often works well is to start off with one of the normal, quick release feeders systems with a relatively light bottom and small maggot hook -16/14 but then change up to a method style ball with heavier link and a 12/10 for larger sized hook bait - say com/ pellet etc. When fishing this way my groundbait mix will include maggots and pellets and also other freebies - examples of any hook bait that I might choose to use a bit later. It is true that fishing this way often brings a lot of small fish, at least initially, but sometimes it is just good to be getting action and when you are using a light trace of 3-4lb or so then fish of a pound or more will start to feel like 'Bigguns' and I think that this sort of takes me back to my fishing roots of many years ago. Of you do hook a good fish then you have to use your skill to avoid losing it and when fishing this way, a 5lb bream with feel like a monster and there is always the possibility of a large roach and this is something that always 'floats my boat' as they say.



Back on the feeders



A five pounder is like a monster on light gear



Peacock Butterfly