

TACKLE UP

Insert WAGGLER here for a mixed bag

By September, you can bet that the fish have seen it all, but **DAVE COSTER** knows big catches of mixed species are still possible. It's just a case of scaling everything down - in combination with a good old insert waggler...



RODS FOR THE JOB

Short 11 ft two-piece rods are popular for waggler fishing, especially on the commercials. I'm a big fan and will be testing out a new Greys Prodigy TX Specialist Float design I've been working on. The rod's title tells you it's a bit more subtle than most, having enough power to boss bigger fish, but being forgiving enough to use when lighter tackle is required. Eleven to 12 ft float rods are great on smaller waters, while 13 ft models take over when longer casts are needed on bigger venues.



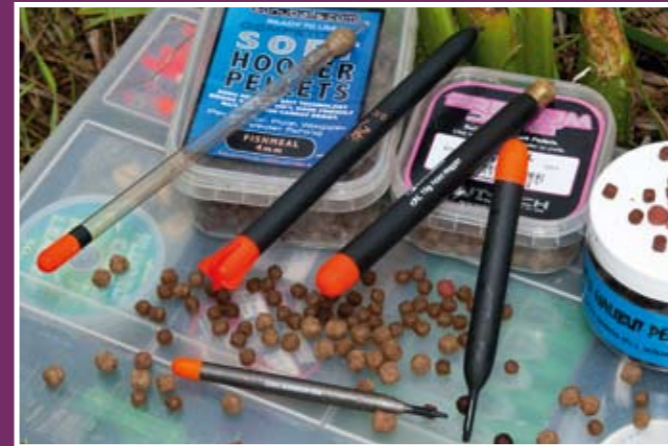
THE RIGHT REEL

I prefer a smooth front drag reel like this Daiwa TDR for all my waggler fishing and have the clutch tightened right down, simply relying on flicking the anti-reverse off for playing bigger fish. I load up with a good sinking line and have chosen a 4 lb breaking strain main mono on this occasion, combined with a 0.14 mm low diameter hook length.



A LITTLE finesse on the float can reward you with some great mixed sport on the float at this time of year.

WAGGLER CHOICE



A I like fishing with pellet wagglers but they start to lose their edge as the water cools down a bit going into Autumn. You miss too many bites from bonus fish like skimmers, crucians and roach, because these species take baits less positively than carp. Pellet wagglers have very buoyant tips, which create resistance, which often causes silver fish to reject the hook bait.



B To try to fool all species that turn up I use an insert waggler. Drennan's Merge Peacock design is hard to beat, casting accurately and being super sensitive with its finer tip, which also shows up bites on-the-drop. If surface drift is bad, requiring the rig to be anchored hard on the bottom, I'll switch to a straight waggler.



C If the going is hard I might scale down to a really fine tipped waggler. This might be a canal style balsa float or reed/peacock design with an ultra sensitive insert. This type of float works well with lighter baits like maggot, caster, small pellet and punched bread. It's good for skimmers, roach, rudd and crucians.



D Another area worth looking at if you intend to fish wagglers is changing tip colours to counter fluctuating light conditions. Clear plastic insert wagglers have interchangeable tips, which is a brilliant feature. With standard inserts you can black out a bright tip colour with a permanent marker pen.



E Whichever float you opt for it's best to use an adaptor. Apart from helping the float to collapse on the strike, cutting down on resistance, these essential accessories also let you change float sizes without breaking the rig down. You may need to step up a float size to combat wind, or fine the tackle down if bites are timid.

RIG ESSENTIALS



A Obviously it depends on the fishery rules as to the type of hook you use. On the commercials I'll normally use a medium wire barbless hook when there's lots of fish feeding, switching to a fine wire model on harder venues. I still prefer barbless when fishing caster, whatever the venue. Micro barb hooks are good with maggots, when allowed.



B Most shot go around the base of the float with insert wagglers, usually in the form of AAAs and BBs. Down the rig I use a swivel to join the main line to a finer hook length, with just a single No.9 dropper below. This set-up will catch fish on-the-drop and hard on the bottom, maybe shifting a little more weight around the swivel if there's bad drift.



C Best main lines for waggler fishing are ones that can be made to sink relatively easily. Maxima, Power Steel, Direct Mono and G-Tec Super Mainline all work well. In normal conditions a 4 to 6 lb main line works well, dropping down to 2.5 to 3 lb if the going is hard. If the line is new you can make it sink quicker by soaking it in washing up liquid.



D The best rig setting to start a session with is at exact depth. In order to gauge this I use a very small plummet like these Middy ones, or a piece of tungsten putty. Obviously as things develop you have to decide whether to stay on the bottom, maybe adjusting the rig over-depth, but more often shallowing up if the fish are competing for loose feed up-in-the-water.

THE BAIT KITCHEN



1 The trick with insert waggler fishing is feeding little and often to activate the fish into competing for free offerings. It's vital to use a bait table or tray so everything is close to hand. I like to work my way through several baits to find out exactly what the fish want. This is normally maggots, casters or pellets, although hemp and tares are always good back up baits.



2 Scissors are associated with chopping up worms, which is another option, although I often use them for something completely different! On venues where the fish like pellets and corn, I'll use scissors to mulch up soft pellets and corn, which makes a great holding feed in groundbait. It takes fish much longer to Hoover up mulched bait, which isn't so filling.



3 Bringing groundbait into play with the waggler is a good idea when fish like skimmers, crucians and proper bream are on the cards. Carp will also home in on groundbait of course! Instead of using pure fishmeal mixes, I like to tone them down a bit with conventional roach or lake style groundbaits, which tends to prolong sport quite considerably later in the year.

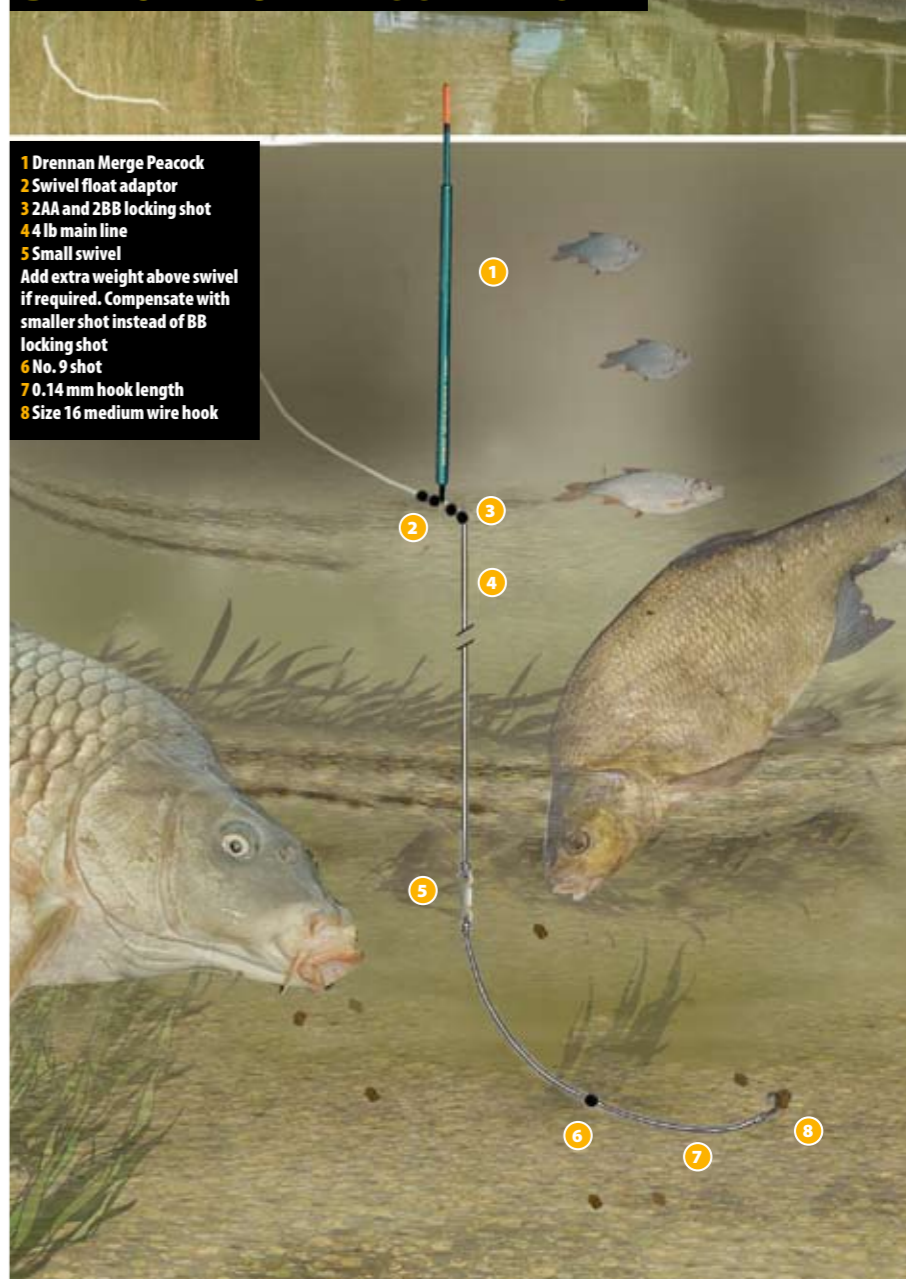


4 Apart from finding the right bait on the day, another important aspect is feeding it accurately. I carry several different strength catapults, ranging from light dinking designs to brute force models that can fire loose feed long distances. Use a flat framed catapult because you can lay it across a bait box and load up with your free hand, without having to put the rod down.



DAVE'S TYPICAL WAGGLER RIG

- 1 Drennan Merge Peacock
- 2 Swivel float adaptor
- 3 2AA and 2BB locking shot
- 4 4 lb main line
- 5 Small swivel
- Add extra weight above swivel if required. Compensate with smaller shot instead of BB locking shot
- 6 No. 9 shot
- 7 0.14 mm hook length
- 8 Size 16 medium wire hook



THE END RESULT

On this session in between the photos I only had about three hours proper fishing but still managed to put this healthy catch together. This comprised small carp, crucians and skimmers. I tried maggots and casters but these were constantly mauled by small silver fish. I ended up feeding 4 mm sinking pellets and used a soft 6 mm expander on the hook.

TICKET information

The venue I fished was Eye Kettleby near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire (Sat Nav LE14 2TD). This is a top class fishery with seven attractive lakes, offering great fishing for pleasure, specimen and match anglers alike. There's everything you need here from luxury lodges to a clubhouse that provides food and drink. Day tickets start at £6 one rod, visit: www.eyekettlebylakes.com or tel: 01664 565 900 for the full tariff. Midlands byelaws.

