

▶ **HEMP and tares go together like strawberries and cream, and roach love them just as much. Dave Coster explains how to make them work for you, at a day ticket water full of prime silver fish that hardly ever gets fished.**



## Dave Coster demonstrates why... **ROACH GO WILD FOR SEED!**

**S**INCE moving from Essex up to the North East to work for Hardy & Greys, long-serving *Mail* contributor Dave Coster has strived to find good quality coarse angling opportunities, and now reckons he has unearthed a real gem. Great Southern Reservoir is located at the Northumbrian Water-run Whittle Dene complex just outside Hexham, and it's there that Dave invited the *Mail* to see how he's been enjoying some mega bag-ups on seed baits. Dave explained: 'This part of the country is more renowned for its game angling, but I'm gradually unearthing some great coarse fishing too.'

'Apart from the reservoirs that I've been spending a lot of time on, there are also some very good commercial fisheries such as the Angel of the North, along with three excellent rivers, which I'm only just beginning to explore. 'Where you find me today is on a venue that is solid with roach, and I have been making some outstanding catches here over the past year, and yet rather strangely you hardly ever see another soul fishing here! Maybe it's the ten-minute walk

that deters the modern tackle-laden angler?' Dave loves his silver fish sport, roach in particular, and he knows from experience that seed baits are tops once you get them working and start to have confidence in them. He suggests: 'A lot of anglers have probably never even tried hemp and tare fishing, but I can assure you that it is an effective combination. 'You just have to be a little bit patient and determined to make it work.'

**Angler's Mail** **RATING:** Dave is 'the daddy' of hemp and tare fishing, so we should be in for a masterclass today!

**08:00** Dave's first task is to kick-start some activity within his swim. He explains: 'I could fish hemp and fish tares on the hook from the start, but they can be slow baits, so what I usually do is to draw the fish into the swim by introducing three balls of groundbait accurately via a pole pot. The mix is fairly lightly squeezed and the balls will create a nice cloud of particles that should bring interest from the roach very swiftly. 'Sensas Noire is my preferred mix, diluted with some brown crumb. I'll add a couple of pouches of hempseed over the top, along with a few red maggots. 'I'll start by fishing a single red maggot on the hook and just catch what I can at the start, with a view to building up the feeding with hemp and eventually switching to tares on the hook to sort out the quality roach,' Dave outlines.

full depth, but with hemp and tares in mind. Once again this has Stotz weights in a spread bulk and three smaller droppers. The antenna on this float is a bit longer and thinner, which allows me to read bites better as the rig cocks, important because bites on hemp and tares often occur on the drop. 'My third rig is the one that I hope to put to most use today. It is a shallow set-up, incorporating a more specialised float pattern with a tapered cylindrical body shape, a long super-sensitive glassfibre tip and a wire stem. This is shotted with just three strung out No.13 Stotz to give a very natural fall to the hookbait which, of course, will be hemp and particularly tares,' Dave explains.

**08:10** Three distinctly different rigs are assembled for Dave to use during the session, and he explains the fundamentals behind them. 'I have a full-depth maggot rig, and I'll start with that,' said Dave. 'The float has a basic oval-shaped body, and I've weighted it with small Stotz leads, with a spread bulk and with three droppers to a size 20 hook. I should pick up fish at full depth with this at the start, as they flit around the fine bed of groundbait looking for larger morsels. 'I also have a fairly similar 0.5 gr rig set to fish

**08:45** Overcast skies and light winds make conditions perfect for Dave to control his pole and his rigs, and he is soon into his first roach of the session. 'It hasn't taken long to attract the fish. This place must be stuffed with roach! The margins are teeming with fry, too,' grins Dave. 'I'm not fishing all that far out, around nine metres, and with the float well dotted down, bites are easy to spot and very confident. The key to getting the roach weaned onto hemp is to feed religiously every cast with a few grains, the aim being to entice the shoal to compete, which makes them rise up towards the surface.'



'If I can get the roach in a feeding frenzy, it's almost guaranteed I'm in for a cracking day's sport. 'It is also worth noting that roach are quite aggressive feeders once they find a food source, and the larger fish in the shoals will out-compete the smaller ones by surging after the baits. Hemp and tares attract better fish anyway, certainly bigger than maggots,' Dave suggests, working hard to get fish to respond just how he wants them to.

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## Dave's HEMP AND TARE FISHING TIPS



### FISH WITH FINESSE

Dave swears by light lines and lights hook lengths. Drennan Silverfish Match barbless in size 18 and 20, as well as the rather oddly named Middy Finesse Carp in size 20 are his preferred options, tied typically to a 0.08 mm Grey's prototype copolymer line.



### PERFECT FLOATS

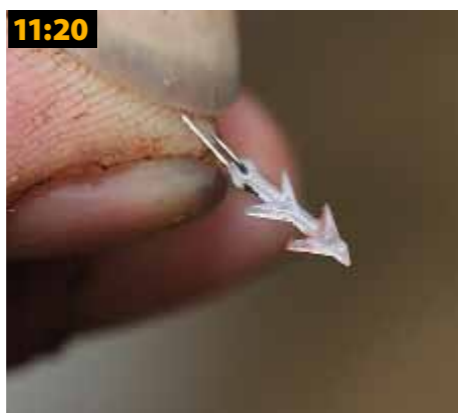
Finding the right float for fishing shallow is important. Dave treasures his home-made patterns, and if you can make copies of them then you'll have the perfect hemp and tare float in your collection.



**BE PATIENT** Hemp and tare fishing is rarely instant. It can often take an hour or two to get the bites coming thick and fast, so keep working the swim with regular hemp feed until bites begin to materialize.



**BLOODY GREAT?** Dave has been experimenting with artificial bloodworm with a fair measure of success. Once the autumn comes, it can pay to switch to this on the hook.



**10:30** Dave is very choosy about his hemp and tares: 'I like Bait-Tech's Super Seed hempseed. The grains are uniformly large and properly cooked. With tares, ideally I like to prepare my own, but these seeds aren't always easy to find these days, so I often fall back on the tinned Dynamite product.'

Dave mounts tares or hemp by piercing the point of the hook through the top edge of the bait, thus leaving a lot of hook exposed.

'Some anglers prefer to bury the hook inside the bait, but I find I miss too many bites and bump out of a lot of fish by adopting this method. By exposing as much hook as possible, I find I hit more bites, especially on the drop.'

**11:20** Dave is bagging now, like a well-oiled machine, and he has the fish up near the surface taking bait. He has been experimenting with two new products as well.

'I am mounting a Marukyu JPZ soft jelly pellet on one of the new mini-sized Grey's Prodigy Bait Anchors, which will be coming out later this year. These slide easily on small hooks, hanging neatly on the bend, and they anchor soft baits brilliantly,' he says.

'I have had some real quality roach on these pellets. They are certainly a bit easier for anglers to use than tares, and I am very impressed with them so far. However, you still need to feed with hempseed to keep the fish active near the surface,' Dave suggests.

**13:20** More fish come to Dave's expertly executed way of fishing. 'The key to this technique is to work hard with subtle control of the rig, combined with regular feeding of small amounts of hempseed.'

'It is important to lay the rig across the water so that everything falls in a straight line. The bites will be quick, and you will need to be ready to hit them when they come.'

'After a while you can almost anticipate the bites, and it's also important to make recasts if you don't get a response. Nine times out of ten the bait will be taken as it falls amongst the loose feed; it's fairly rare to have the fish hit it once it is sitting static.'

'The spread of tiny Stotz keep you in touch with the bait as it falls, and you can read the bites. I also make an effort to spread my loose feed slightly so that the fish are swimming quite widely for it and not too bunched. The latter can cause too many line bites.'

'It's a delicate way of fishing, and it demands total concentration and a lot of effort to keep the fish coming, but once they are feeding on these baits it can become a mega bagging-up experience, as it is proving to be today!' Dave explains with a smile, as he lands yet another superb Great Southern Reservoir roach.

### TICKET information

DAY tickets are: £7; or £5 after 2.30pm. Prepay at the onsite fishing lodge. Further details available on [www.nwl.co.uk/gofishing](http://www.nwl.co.uk/gofishing) or tel: 0845 155 0236. Apart from the Great Southern, the Lower Match Lake offers good skimmer fishing along with equally good roach sport, while The Northern Lake is another prime roach venue.



## THE END RESULT

A very impressive catch of roach for Dave, estimated at around 35 lb. 'I am delighted to show the potential of this reservoir, as well as the method. It's a pity more anglers don't fish here. I suppose that roach have lost their appeal to a degree in these carp-dominated days, and maybe the size of this venue can be a bit daunting to a lot of anglers, but so long as sport like this is available, then I'll certainly keep returning!' Dave concludes.