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FLAVOURS - BAG UP WITH SUPERMARKET ADDITIVES

SWEET BREAMS



Sweet flavourings are deadly on waters where bream are prolific.



VENUE FILE

Bury Hill Fisheries

Location: Dorking, Surrey

Directions: Bury Hill Fisheries is approximately 20 miles from central London, travelling south on the A24. Head to Dorking from the M25 and follow the A25. As you leave Dorking on the A25 the fishery is on the left after one mile. There is a large tourist information sign indicating the fishery entrance

Contact: 01306 883621 or log on to www.buryhillfisheries.co.uk for more information

Day tickets: £11.50 on the bank (£8.50 for concessions)

Bury Hill Fisheries manager **Russ Evans** has a way of increasing the potency of his pellets when targeting the sweet-toothed bream.

It's a commonly known fact that bream across the country – and possibly the world – have a sweet tooth. Back in the days of Ivan Marks, when bream were probably the most popular match species, top bream anglers would add sugar or molasses to their simple brown-crumble mixes to give them a sweet taste. A popular additive for bream nowadays is Brasm, again a very sweet smell and taste.

Since the opening of commercial fisheries and the introduction of pellets, however, it's widely accepted that fishmeal groundbaits and pellets are the best bream and skimmer attractors around. At Bury Hill Fisheries near Dorking, in Surrey, the bream and skimmers are no different, but fishery manager Russ Evans has kept a close eye on the huge fish stocks and reckons you can combine the pulling powers of fishmeal and sweetness to catch bulging nets of bream. APF visited Russ as he enjoyed a morning session before work on Peg 44 on Old Bury Hill Lake.

Bream love pellets, but these are the same fish that used to love sweet flavourings just a few years ago.

APF: Hi Russ, it's a bit early in the morning but if you can catch us a bulging net of bream we'll forgive you for the crack-of-dawn start! Can you explain to us and the readers about this lake you're on today?

RUSS EVANS: Old Bury Hill Lake is 12½ acres in size and takes 75 pegs. Depths average between four and six feet deep on all pegs so it's very comfortable for pole anglers to fish. The high levels of stocking mean the fish are always competing for food and it's no surprise to see match catches exceed 100lb. You'd expect to catch more bream than anything else but there are plenty of other fish to be caught, including specimen-sized carp to over 30lb, crucians to 4lb 8oz, tench to 10lb and zander to 15lb. You really don't know what you'll hook next. »

Russ has settled on Crusha liquids to flavour his pellets.



They don't just work when the water is warm, either. I caught bream and skimmers with them in late winter while the water temperature was still cold.

APF: How do you use syrups to get the best from them? Have you caught just bream on these flavoured pellets?

RE: When I fish on this lake I only use pellets. The rules at Bury Hill state you can use only carp/coarse pellets so I elect to use a mix of Cotswold

APF: So with a large stocking of bream that regularly see piles of pellets from match and specimen hunters, how do you stay one step ahead of the rest?

RE: Bream love pellets and that's very obvious to see on commercial fisheries these days. But, these are the same fish that used to love sweet flavourings just a few years ago. I started to experiment with different sweet flavourings and I find a lot of products in the local supermarket. Every time I go shopping with the wife I'm on the lookout for new and exciting things that I could use for fishing.

One of my recent successful finds is the range of Crusha Milkshake syrups – these come in several flavours and I immediately knew they'd be great for flavouring pellets. The two I've been using are Chocolate and Strawberry. In the six months that I've been using them I've caught plenty of bream, so I know they don't put them off.

Bait Creations 3mm coarse pellets (75 per cent) and 3mm Bloodworm pellets (25 per cent) – this mixture can then be boosted by adding a dose of Crusha syrup. The Chocolate variety works particularly well over feed pellets as it slightly darkens their colour too.

I mainly use the syrups to boost my hooker pellets and help them stand out. I think a hooker pellet with added liquid will seep out flavours when it's on the bottom and should attract the attention of any feeding fish. To draw the flavours into the expander pellets I pump them using a pellet pump. I find Ringers Bag-Up Expander pellets are the best as they have a fibrous texture that doesn't go too soggy after continued soaking. They also seem to draw in and hold the flavours better than other lighter versions.

Before I start fishing I pump a few 6mm expanders in each flavour. These have to be left for about 30 minutes before they're fully

softened enough for the hook. There's no point in using 4mm pellets for this stamp of fish as you're trying to be selective and pick out bigger skimmers. A 6mm expander will stand out much more and means you can use a bigger hook, which in turn means you should bump less fish.

I've caught a lot of crucians here on the flavoured pellets and I've also tried them at Monk Lakes and Hartley Lands Farm, in Kent, when after carp and F1s. Any fish that like sweet baits – which is most of them, bar predatory fish – will take a flavoured expander pellet.

On venues that are densely stocked with bream I prefer not to give them a barrage of bait at the start.

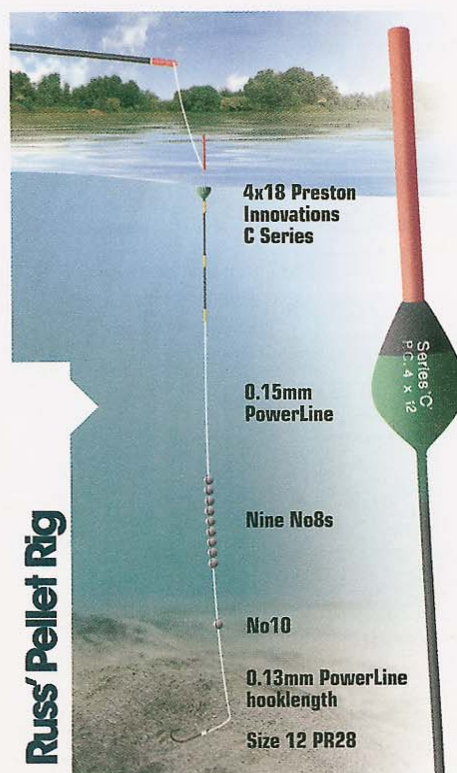
APF: What sort of quantity of bait do you feed, as bream are known as a grazing species and we see you only have a few pints of pellets with you?

RE: On venues that are densely stocked with bream I prefer not to give them a barrage of bait at the start – it's not as though you have to attract them from far and wide.

The fish here tend to patrol a small ledge that can be found from between 1.2 and 14 metres out. It's only a slight variation in depth (about four to six inches) but this seems to be the best area for the bream and



Throughout the year flavoured pellets will work for skimmers and bream.



skimmers. Once some skimmers have found your feed, you'll get action until you run out of bait!

I start the session with two 150ml potfuls of pellets that I spread over an area about one metre square. Bream are fish that don't like to feed in close proximity to each other, and this larger area gives me a good opportunity to try different places within the baited area to get a better response.

I'll always include a few pumped expanders in the cup at the start too. For a typical five-hour match here I'd have three pints of 3mm pellets on my tray. It's always wise to have another bag in your cool bag, though, as a red-letter day can occur at any time.

APF: As the session develops do you regularly add more feed or do you wait until the swim has virtually died?

RE: Rather than waiting for the swim to dwindle I want to keep several fish feeding over the pellets at any one time. Therefore I catapult in a pouchful of 3mms after every fish to start with, then I gauge their reaction to see if I should increase or slow down the feed rate as the session goes on. Bream are quite particular in how they feed, as I've noticed they don't like large amounts of bait fed on top of them while they are feeding. Therefore, avoid introducing potfuls of bait unless it's really necessary. The 3mm pellets make minimal noise

on impact, however, so a few raining down on the feeding fish doesn't disturb them.

APF: Your peg today is nearly six feet deep. What types of rigs do you use for this style of fishing?

RE: Durable rigs are a must because you're fishing to catch a lot of skimmers. About 70 of these fish will give you 100lb, which, when they are feeding aggressively, isn't that difficult. I have set up two rigs; one is a 4x16 and the other is a 4x18. I use a Preston Innovations PC Series C pole float that has a carbon stem and a fairly bulbous body for stability. The key to this pole float is the thick plastic bristle that helps to differentiate between proper bites and liners. It's still shotted to within about 10mm of the surface but this is still enough to prevent striking at liners.

My rig line is 0.15mm Preston PowerLine because it's durable, and in fact I tie most of my commercial-fishery rigs with it! The hooklength is more important and for this I use 0.13mm PowerLine. This is strong enough to

land most fish I'm going to hook but it's not too thick and it won't put the fish off, especially in this murky water. My hook is a size 12 Preston PR28 and this is perfect for a 6mm expander hook bait. I would probably step down to a smaller hook if it's fishing hard and would then use a size 16. The shotting pattern is simply a bulk of nine No8s positioned 16 inches from the hook. A No10 dropper is positioned just above the hooklength. This shotting pattern gets the bait to the bottom where the feeding fish are and it shows up the bites as positive lifts or guzzunders.

My elastic is grey Hydrolastic, which has plenty of give to cushion the lunges of soft-mouthed bream and skimmers. You need to have a fairly soft elastic at Bury Hill because some of the bream are 'flying' fish and jump out of the water once hooked. Soft elastic will prevent the hook from being pulled out.

This style of fishing is very simple; it's simply a case of feeding your bait and waiting for the skimmers to arrive. There's nothing complicated about it so you can easily get a couple of hours in before a work session.

APF: Now that the rigs and feeding have been covered, we'll let you get on with it and justify our early morning wake-up call! APF

THE SESSION

I can't say that I've done anything spectacular, apart from catch the skimmers that were in front of me. By fishing at this time of day it's a normal feeding time, so the fish only took about five minutes to find my bait. By the time I finished at lunch time I had over 100lb of skimmers in my net and I'd fed about two pints of pellets – just like normal.

I didn't have any carp today – they average over 10lb so they aren't really match-sized fish, and to be honest they aren't hooked that often on the pole on these pegs. If you want to catch one on the pole I'd suggest you sit next to the boathouse, but beware... they run to over 30lb!

Towards the end when the swim started to slow down I added some Chocolate Crusha to the feed pellets to boost them slightly and this seemed to help me catch the last few skimmers before the sun got quite bright at midday. Now, though, I have to go and work in the on-site tackle shop until we close tonight!

Next time you're dragged shopping to get the weekly shop, don't forget to have a peek on the shelves for potential baits and additives! And, get yourself down here early – I can guarantee you'll be able to leave by lunch time having caught a load of fish.

