WIN DREAM CANADA TRIP ENTER THIS WEEK! PAGE 42

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AnglingTimes

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Inside

NEWS

Keep catching: How to beat flooded rivers

PLUS
- New hope in the fight against cormorants
- Win! Sundridge Siberian suits up-for-grabs

TACTICS

Wag and mag: How to make them work in the cold

PLUS – LEARN HOW TO:
- Cook, hook, and catch on hemp page 11
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FRONT PAGE PIC: Find out what's lurking in your canal. Matt Hayes and Jim Lightfoot show you the tactics for catching big fish. Page 14

Catch action

Bowler hits barbel form

MARTIN Bowler has enjoyed an incredible 10 days of barbel fishing, catching four specimens from four different rivers.

The first came from the Great Ouse and weighed in at 16 lb 6 oz, while a double from the Severn was quick to follow.

Then a switch to the Bristol Avon provided the Chippenham, Wilts-based angler with a 15 lb 2 oz giant – the second biggest of the species caught from the venue.

But that wasn't the end of it – he switched attention to the Dorset Stour and landed a fish of 14 lb 12 oz.

● Read how Martin landed the 16 lb 6 oz specimen in his 'Specialist' column on page 21.

Avon barbel

A VENUE record-nudging barbel of 14 lb 8 oz has been banked on the Warwickshire Avon by Fred Jones.

The fish was only 2 oz shy of the river best landed by Dean O'Brien this March.

Fred, from North London, was fishing a Manor Farm swim at Harvington.

He beat his previous best of 11 lb 10 oz, caught on the same stretch of river this year, with three maggots using a size 12 hook, 10 lb line and a maggot feeder.

In all, he took a great haul of 37 lb 2 oz of barbel during the session, having baited-up the swim over several days.

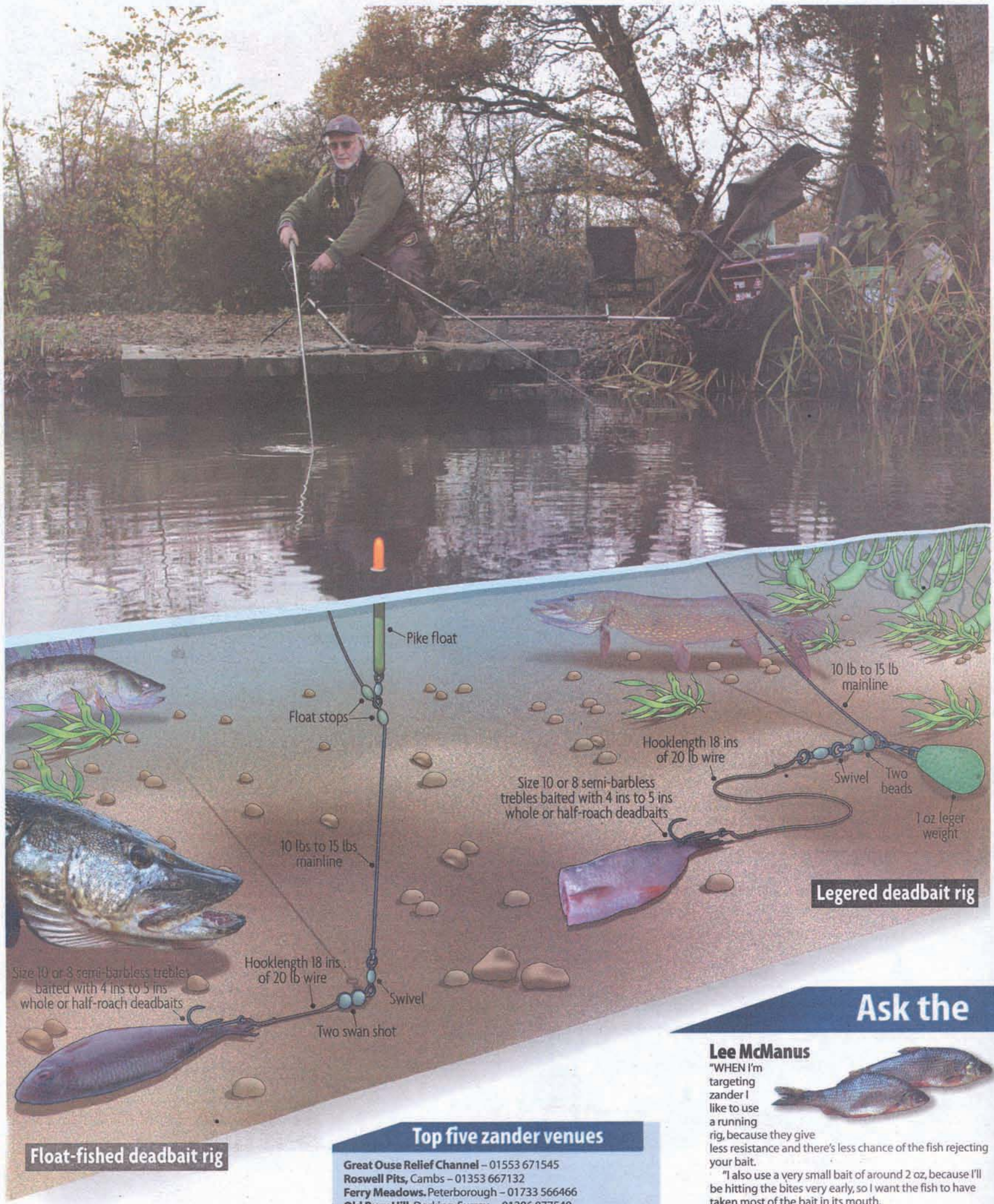
Roach brace?

ALL-rounder Adrian Eves thought he had landed one of the biggest roach braces of all-time when he caught fish of 3 lb 15 oz and 3 lb 3 oz from an Oxfordshire stillwater.

But his moment of glory looks like being tarnished after a scale and fin count revealed the specimens to be possible hybrids.

Surrey-based Adrian, used maggot feeder tactics to tempt the fish.

● For more details, see next week's *AT*.



Top five zander venues

Great Ouse Relief Channel – 01553 671545
Roswell Pits, Cambs – 01353 667132
Ferry Meadows. Peterborough – 01733 566466
Old Bury Hill, Dorking, Surrey – 01306 877540
Coombe Abbey, Coventry – 0247 6453720

Ask the

Lee McManus

"WHEN I'm targeting zander I like to use a running rig, because they give less resistance and there's less chance of the fish rejecting your bait.

"I also use a very small bait of around 2 oz, because I'll be hitting the bites very early, so I want the fish to have taken most of the bait in its mouth.

Pike personal best: 24 lb 9 oz
Zander personal best: 15 lb 2 oz

TACKLE

On the bank: We test Abu Garcia's 'rods of the future'

PLUS – ON TEST...
- **Nash's new Outlaw carp range** page 37
- **New kit: rods, luggage, clothing, PVA** page 40

CARP

Tactics: A great baiting trick for winter carping

PLUS
- **Step-by-step guide to splicing lead core** page 34
- **Nash Masters – find out where the carp are** page 30

Biggest zander for two years is banked

18 lb specimen taken on roach during prolific two-hour spell

By Ben Miles
ben.miles@emap.com

A FEN drain has produced the biggest zander for two years, with a specimen that topped the scales at 18 lb.

The huge fish was landed during an overnight session by predator expert Mark Knowles, who also took others of 12 lb 5 oz and 8 lb 4 oz on the same trip.

A legered roach deadbait, fished just three rodlengths from the bank, lured the new personal best for the bakery manager from Woodston, Peterborough, who's previous biggest for the species stood at 13 lb 8 oz.

All of his fish, that fell in a prolific two-hour spell, were beaten with 20 lb wire traces, size 8 trebles and a 1 oz lead.

Mark's specimen falls 1 lb 5 oz 8 dr short of the current British record landed in 1998, and is the biggest reported zander taken since the capture of a 17 lb 4 oz fish from the Cut-Off Channel two years ago.

Mark's latest capture marks a prolific year for the 38-year-old, who has now banked four double-figure zander and three 20 lb pike from Fenland drains.

"The conditions were perfect for zander, as the drain was pushing through and very coloured. When I caught the 12 lb 5 oz fish, which was the first to pick up my bait, I would have gone home happy," Mark told *Angling Times*.

"Then, just before midnight, I struck into a really heavy specimen that took me out into the main flow, where the drain was really pushing through, and I thought it was a pike.

"But then it came to the surface and I realised that I'd landed the deepest and probably the best-looking zander I've ever seen in my 18 years as an angler.

"I thought that fish like this were a thing of the past, but the sheer girth of it shows that it has thrived on an abundance of baitfish, that are the result of the decline of anglers on the Fen drains."

And one man who is both surprised and relieved that a Fenland waterway has produced this massive fish is president of the Zander Anglers' Club, Neville Fickling

"A few years ago the drains used to produce all of the big zander, but over the past few seasons there's been a noticeable decline in anglers and fish caught," Neville said.

"But this is a tremendous capture and just shows that the Fens still hold huge potential."

● In the same week that saw the capture of this authenticated 18 lb zander, West Midlands angler Paul Astbury is claiming to have landed an even bigger one – this time at 18 lb 14 oz.

His fish was caught from the Warwickshire Avon near Tewkesbury – a venue that has previously never produced anything near that weight.

MARK Knowles with his 18 lb zander. It's the biggest of the species caught in two years and came from a drain.

How to fish for predators

IN the wake of the big zander, *Angling Times* went to Bury Hill Fisheries – arguably the country's most prolific day-ticket water for a masterclass in catching predators.

In a great start to the 2002 predator season, which began on October 1, the Surrey venue has already produced 58 double-figure zander to 14 lb 10 oz to visiting anglers.

And one angler who has been at the forefront of this is venue bailiff and resident Pro-Fish coach Eric Bailey.

Tackle and location

"As far as rods, reels and line go, standard carp gear will be more than adequate for the job. But the biggest mistake many anglers make is getting carried away with heavy end tackle," said Eric.

"Inexperienced anglers tend to think that pike and zander are very much the same, but this couldn't be further from the truth.

"Pike give very confident, and sometimes, savage takes that result in the float being dragged across the surface, no matter how strong the rig.

"But zander will approach the bait and mouth it. If it feels resistance it will reject it – so balanced tackle is vital."

Eric uses Daiwa Sensor 12 lb line, which is ideal for both pike and zander. This is coupled with a 12 ft 2 lb test curve rods, Shimano Baitrunner reels and alarms.

"Bury Hill is fairly featureless when it comes to fishing for predators, but the pike and zander tend to patrol around the dying lily pads and other plants," Eric continued.

"Many anglers are under the impression that you have to cast over 100 yards to catch, but both species can more than often be taken right under the rod-tip."

Rigs and bait

One thing Eric tries to drum into his pupils when targeting zander is the necessity for minimum resistance, and this is achieved through his rigs.

"Most anglers know what sort of bite indications you get when a crayfish begins to maul your bait, and on many occasions this is how a zander will behave," Eric continued.

"This is why I will very rarely use a lead that exceeds 1 oz."

Most of the time Eric concentrates on two basic rigs, one a simple leger rig with a 1 oz lead, and the other sits under a light pencil float of 1.5 g *(see diagram, below)*.

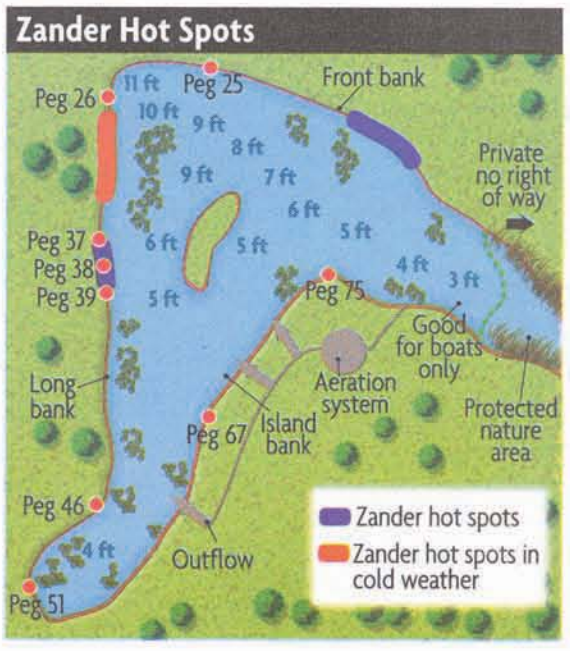
The leger rig is simplicity itself, as the bomb sits above two beads, then an 18 ins hooklength, coupled with size 8 or 10 semi-barbless hooks, is attached to a swivel and the set-up is complete.

To create a popped-up bait, add a large shot around 4 ins from the hooks and push a polystyrene stick inside the deadbait's mouth.

The construction of the float rig is exactly the same as the leger set-up, but two large shot are pinched on to the hooklength and the lead is replaced with a float, with two float stops placed either side.

"At this time of the year I've found that a small roach, whole or cut in half, is an excellent bait for both pike and zander, along with small pieces of eel section," added Eric.

Zander Hot Spots



experts: tips to keep you catching

Nige Williams

"THE most important aspect of any type of fishing is location, and this is half the battle when targeting pike and zander.

"You should look for an area of coloured water for zander, and water that is situated near overhead power cables, because these are areas that are never dredged and full of fish-holding features."

Pike personal best: 40 lb 12 oz
Zander personal best: 14 lb 14 oz

Keith Cracknell

"ONCE the cold weather arrives, lamprey is a top bait for both species.

"I like to use a head section of around five ins in length and hook it in the head and at the bottom. A top tip to inhance you bait is to slice it with a knife to let even more of the natural juices of the lamprey flood out."

Pike personal best: 37 lb
Zander personal best: 13 lb 6 oz

Neville Fickling

"PIKE can be caught throughout the day, but if it's zander you're after, you have to be prepared to fish at night because they are nocturnal feeders.

"Many people are still obsessed with casting and ignore the margins when targeting pike and zander, but this is a big mistake – especially after heavy rain."

Pike personal best: 41 lb 6 oz
Zander personal best: 13 lb 6 oz