

Fish and Chips

Exclusive by Greg Meenehan

NICKNAMING big fish could soon become unnecessary, with the arrival of microchipping in angling.

The first fishery has begun electronically chipping all of its specimens, suggesting an end to the era of Lumpy, Stumpy and Stumpy's Mate.

David de Vere has led the way, by fitting tags to the first fish to go into his new lake at Bury Hill, near Dorking, in Surrey, in readiness for its opening next March.

The 13 carp of between 20 lb and 26 lb, from Walthamstow No.1 Reservoir, were all weighed and recorded as they were stocked, so that their progress can be monitored at future captures.

The slim microchips – each the



These hi-tech tags could be the way forward for precious fishery stocks



David de Vere (back) inspects one of his new tagged carp



■ Bournemouth, Dorset-based David Basher bears more than a passing resemblance to the jogging, vest sporting 118 chaps, from the directory enquiries TV commercials.

The 23-year-old head chef certainly got his numbers right when he tempted this 7 lb 1 oz Hampshire Avon chub on a legered, undisclosed particle bait.

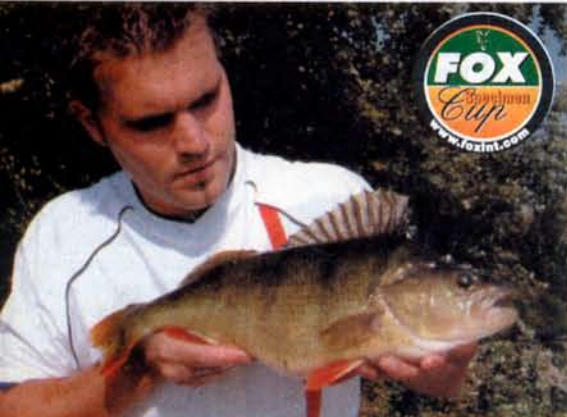
David spotted the giant two days previously, and only a week before he managed a specimen of 6 lb 12 oz from the same stretch.



■ This stunning 4 lb 9 oz 8 dr perch fell to Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire-based England fan Scott Shepherd. The 27-year-old office worker landed the awesome stripy from Hertfordshire specimen mecca Wilstone Reservoir, aiming to beat his previous best of 4 lb 1 oz from the same venue in November 1999.

Scott had to wade through hordes of small perch in the 4-10 oz range before taking the big, bristling beauty on his last cast of a morning session.

A maggot feeder approach, including 8 lb main line to 6 lb link and size 16 hook did the trick.



Top northern lake shuts

FISH-MUNCHING cormorants have forced the sad closure of popular day ticket venue Castle Howard Lake, near York.

The Great Lake - famed for premium piking with snappers to 43 lb 8 oz, huge nets of bream to double-figure bream and quality tench – is a shadow of its former self and no longer commercially viable.

Estate manager Duncan Peake said: 'The quality of the fishing has deteriorated largely due to the presence of predatory birds such as cormorant and goosander. Despite



size of a grain of rice – are inserted beneath the skin below the dorsal fin, and they will outlive the fish.

David will ask anglers at his new members-only water to ring a bailliff when they catch a fish and retain it until he can scan it to identify it.

'It's an important part of fishery

management to be able to tell your stock fish apart, and this is not always possible by sight, especially with commons,' he said. 'There's also a security factor. If we lost a fish and it appeared somewhere else we could prove that it was ours from the 16-digit reading.

'But as important to us is that as the fish grow and develop, we will have a complete record by recording their weight on a regular basis. We won't need to scan every capture, just from time to time. It's also nice for the angler to know what fish they have caught,' he added.

Just tag along...

THE electronic tags used at Bury Hill are the same as the ones pet owners have put in their dogs, cats, parrots and tortoises, so that ownership can be proven if they are lost or stolen and handed to police.

The cost per microchip is around £15, with discounts for bulk orders. Fitting can be done by fishery staff, without the need for anaesthetics or special training.

Fishery scientist Dr Bruno Broughton, an agent for Tracer tag manufacturers Bayer, said he believed microchipping fish will become increasingly common.

Bruno said: 'Large carp, or – indeed – other fish, are a substantial component in the investment in new fisheries and a major asset in existing waters. Until now, there's been no effective way of proving the ownership of these fish in the event of their theft and transfer. The launch of the scheme this week, using the best of modern technology, marks a new era in fish security.'

David de Vere says the current price for English mid-20 lb carp is around £1,000 each, due to the legal and health implications of far cheaper foreign fish. He plans to put around 80 English carp of between 20-40 lb into his new four-acre, 15-peg lake, and charge £50 for membership of all three of his big fish lakes, and £30 to fish them for 24 hours. Membership will be limited to 350.

Opening day will be March 1. More details on website www.buryhillfisheries.com or ring on 01306 877540.

More info on the fish microchipping scheme, and written quotes, can be obtained exclusively from Bruno on 01952 691515; e-mail: bruno.broughton@virgin.net



In goes the Tracer tag on a Bury Hill carp.



A quick scan confirms the fish's identity.

Cast offs

6 lb 2 oz 'record' perch

MYSTERY surrounds grapevine gossip of a record-husting 6 lb 2 oz perch from the Thames around Oxford. The *Mail* received a tip off that the huge stripy – well over the 5 lb 9 oz 8 dr best – fell to an unnamed angler using legered lobworm in front of two witnesses, the giant being weighed on conventional and digital scales. It was described as a long fish. Any info, call us on 0207 261 5980/6025.

Bob Clark reign over at NFA

BOB CLARK'S reign as National Federation of Anglers membership secretary has officially come to a sorry end. As reported, Bob was suspended over alleged financial irregularities. At the weekend, his wife Jan phoned Keith Arthur's TalkSport radio program to speak up for her husband and thank his supporters.

And as the *Mail* went to press, an official NFA statement confirmed: 'Having considered Bob's explanation and due to irreconcilable differences, it was mutually agreed that Bob should leave his post with immediate effect. All parties have agreed that the matter would remain confidential.'

'The NFA would like to place on record their recognition and thanks for all the good work that Bob has completed during his time in office, and wish him well for the future.'

'The NFA executive is committed to continuing to take angling forward as a modern, efficient sport.'

Biggest barbel Cort out

THE season's biggest barbel, a 19 lb 1 oz whopper, has been landed by Stuart Court from the Great Ouse in Bedfordshire. Known as The Traveller, it wasn't the only good news on the big beard grapevine as former record The Pope, that has evaded capture for two years, is said to have been spotted looking rather BIG. Picture next week.

118 - Soar zander number

THE infamous '118' was the winning number for Leicestershire's Bryan Culley, when he tempted a 11 lb 8 oz venue record zander from his local River Soar. Loughborough big fish ace Bryan believes predator entered the Soar from stillwaters during winter floods. After hearing of mini-zeds in matches, he explored the potential and had the big 'un on dead roach.



Trent barbel bonanza

THE Tidal Trent has been in great barbel form of late, for both large bags of fish and large individual specimens. Lincoln-based Stephen King had an awesome daytime haul of 30 fish, including two doubles of 10 lb 8 oz and 11 lb 12 oz (pictured left). Stephen added several of 9 lb-plus on boilies between 11.30am and 7.30pm on an undisclosed stretch. Also in action was self-employed Geoff Stead from Pontefract, West Yorkshire, with this 14 lb 6 oz barbus (far left). Geoff, 33, also opted for a boilie approach, tempting the beast on a Richworth fruit bait over pellets. He's a weekly Fox winner (full details in p.18).

a recent report commissioned by the Environment Agency it has not been possible to find a viable solution to reverse the problem of declining fish stocks on this water.

'If the authorities don't take the cormorant problem seriously then I don't see much of a future for stillwater fisheries in this country,' he blasted.

York tackle dealer and ladies star Rita Bell said: 'Castle Howard was as good as going over to Ireland with great bags of bream to the tip and feeder. But over the last five years sport has slumped and most anglers have deserted it for the commercial pools.'

Catch a carp, win a car!

WHICH match angler landed this brand new £18,000 two-litre Rover 75 car after catching a tagged carp at charity bash Fishathon last weekend?

He cracked open the champagne after taking part in the Prostate Cancer fundraiser, attended by TV presenter Chris Tarrant, at Roy Marlow's The Glebe fishery, near Leicester. Find out his name in our special report next week.



WEB BITES

www.crystalclearangling.com

STUNNING SLOVENIA: Looking for somewhere different for a fishing holiday? This site explains Slovenia - where to stay, what to do and where to catch. From giant carp to burbot, this eastern Europe country could be the place for you!

www.fishinginwsex.com

AVON AND STOUR: Everything you need to know about the legendary Hampshire Avon and Dorset Stour. Articles, galleries, a message board and up to date local news. Well worth a look for those interested in the area.