

# Get THEM UP

Frenzee ace **Jon Whincup** reveals the shallow fishing secrets that have won him thousands of pounds over recent years.

**T**o get the most out of any peg that you fish, you need to be as efficient as possible. If you can prime a line where you hook a fish in the mouth, play it, land it, then go straight back in and catch another one – you will soon find that you have put a massive net of fish together! This is why I love shallow fishing so much. On the right day, it is one of the most efficient pole fishing methods out there and a deadly weapon to have in your armoury!

## MAKING SPACE

Because it's such a positive method, in which bait is loose fed regularly, it is important to feed it in an area of your peg where there is plenty of 'free' water nearby. By this, I mean, if possible, you don't really want to be feeding it too close to any of your other lines. You are trying to create competition among feeding fish so that they come up in the water to intercept your bait. If your swim

is located well away from any distractions or disturbances, there is an increased chance of you being able to do this.

You join me on Elm Pool, at the famous Decoy Lakes complex near Peterborough. This is a regular haunt of mine and because the purpose of this feature is to simply demonstrate how I approach my shallow fishing, I see no reason to feed any other swims. In a match situation, I might choose to feed a short-pole line to start on, or even chuck a feeder. Some days you do need somewhere else to go to rest your shallow line but I am very confident that fishing up in the water is going to work well.

## READING THE SIGNS

Certain conditions lend themselves to fishing shallow more than others and assessing when and where the tactic is going to work is very important.

There are two key things to watch here. The first is the weather. Shallow >>>

## FEEDING

Numerous anglers think that feeding for shallow fishing is as simple as blasting bait at the end of your pole tip and waiting for the float to go under. If you apply a bit more thought, you will definitely catch more fish. There aren't any hard-and-fast rules as to how much you should and shouldn't feed because it is all about reading your peg on a given day. Nevertheless, there are a few guidelines that it might pay you to bear in mind:

If you are getting plenty of bites, be aggressive. There are obviously a lot of feeding fish in your peg. By feeding more, your peg will get stronger. Aggressive doesn't necessarily mean large quantities of bait. Often, small amounts fed very regularly is far more effective.

Slapping (splashing your rig on the water to attract fish) is very much en vogue at the minute and on its day it can be very effective. Don't be a sheep to the trend, though; there are days when you are better not slapping and simply relying on your loose feed to attract fish into your swim. I always prefer to start off by loose feeding and laying my rig in regularly. Slapping is generally best when the fishing is harder and the fish are backing away from bait, but only do it if you feel that you have to. It is far better to have a peg full of feeding fish that are eating your loose feed, than the odd inquisitive fish that slapping attracts.

Vary the sizes. I always take a variety of sizes of pellets. On some days, for example, feeding 4mm pellets and fishing a bigger 6mm sample on the hook can be deadly, while on others, slipping an 8mm pellet in your band will catch you bigger carp. Generally, I keep things as simple as possible, and feeding 6mm pellets and fishing a 6mm pellet in the band is invariably my starting gambit. Because I have other-sized pellets with me, if I feel the need to make a change to try and keep fish coming later in the session, I have the option to do so.



A selection of different-sized pellets allows Jon to ring the changes throughout the day.



A good-quality catapult is the shallow angler's best friend. Jon uses the Drennan Match Catys.

With good fish like this coming every put-in, a big weight can be amassed in no time.



## ANGLER FILE

### JON WHINCUP

**Age:** 39  
**Lives:** Peterborough  
**Sponsors:** Frenzee, Bait-Tech  
**Pole:** Frenzee Precision FXT

## VENUE FILE

### DECOY LAKES

**Location:** Drybread Road, Peterborough PE7 2AD  
**Website:** www.decoylakes.co.uk/  
**Day tickets:** £7; concessions £4  
**Contact:** 01733 202230

fishing is generally seen as a warm-weather tactic and, by and large, this is a fair generalisation. The best conditions are warm, overcast days with a slight breeze on the water – very much like now in fact!

Another factor to consider is the amount of room you have. If an angler occupies every peg on your particular lake, then there is an increased amount of angling pressure, meaning that it will be more difficult to draw fish in and encourage them to compete. In short, the more room that you have, and the more water that you have to draw fish from, the better.

**TIMING**

A lot of top anglers advocate feeding a shallow swim for a period of time before going on it. However, on numerous occasions I have caught straightaway by going on the line as soon as I start fishing. For this reason, you are always best off starting up in the water to give yourself the chance of catching on it for the duration of the session. After all, if you don't catch shallow straightaway, you always have the option of resting the line and going elsewhere after a few minutes.

**RIGS**

Because this is such an effective way of catching fish, many venues now have rules and stipulations as to how your rigs must look. Here at Decoy is just the same. You have to fish a minimum of 12 inches of line between your pole tip and your float and a



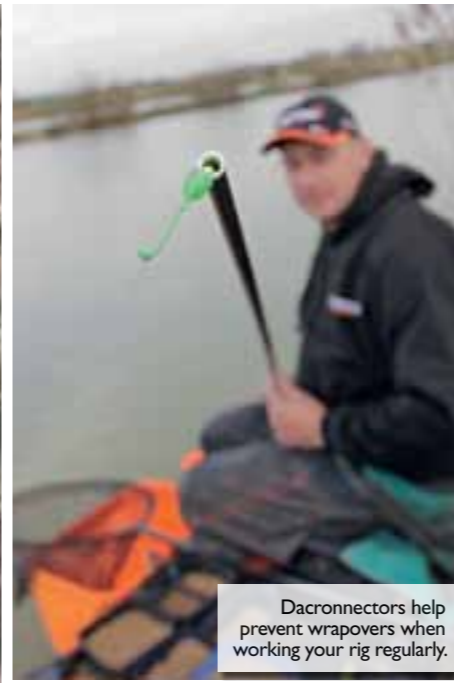
An Eeze Glyde kit sees Jon land big fish on light elastic in no time!



Sometimes, going on a shallow line straightaway sees instant action.



Decoy Lakes holds some massive F1s and they are suckers for shallow fishing!



Dacronnectors help prevent wrapovers when working your rig regularly.



Correct roller placement means you can ship back with your pole low to the water.



Feeding while playing fish helps ensure that the swim is primed when you ship back out.

minimum of 12 inches deep.

In fairness to the fishery, even if these rules didn't exist I would fish within them. Fishing two feet deep is invariably the best depth, although sometimes I go as deep as three, or come as shallow as one. I work on a fairly simple rule. I start off fishing two feet deep and go shallower if I am missing bites, or deeper if I am not getting bites.

One crucial thing that I do, which I believe makes a big difference here, is bulk all of my shot under my float in depths of two feet or less. This way, the bait has a very slow fall through the water column, looks as natural as it can and fish have plenty of chance to intercept it. Even when fishing further down in the water column, I will still keep the vast majority of my shot bulked under my float but might incorporate a couple of droppers further down the line to aid with bite registration. Using a thick 0.19mm main line also helps here because it gives the bait a slower fall through the water, keeps tangles to a minimum and never breaks!

In terms of float choice, I am a lover of a dibber. I am using an old Preston pattern but anything that takes a minimum of four No10 shot for stability and has the strength to handle being bashed around in your landing net is fine. I have blacked the lower part of the float out with a permanent marker. This is simply to aid with visibility. You generally find that you fish shallow at long lengths. The float is relatively small and at times visibility can be difficult.

**SMOOTHLY DOES IT...**

The session goes about as well as can possibly be expected and I soon find myself catching a fish every put-in! Feeding 6mm pellets and fishing the same on the hook, F1s and carp are soon coming to the net regularly.

Even when the fishing is as good as this, there are still things that you can do to help you to be as efficient as possible. The



Just under half of what Jon caught shallow, in only three short hours!

first, and most important, is elastic choice. The invention of puller-type kits has been a godsend for shallow fishing. The big advantage is that a relatively soft elastic can be used, so even a fish hooked just under the surface will swim out of your peg, causing little or no commotion. I am using Frenzee's Stretch Yellow, which is rated at an 8-12 in old money. Used in conjunction with my Eeze Glyde kit, I can simply hook a fish and ship back slowly to my top kit, feeding a couple of times along the way. I then strip a bit of elastic from the kit and net the fish quickly and easily.

A final point that needs to be made is roller placement. Spend time at the start of the session ensuring that yours are positioned so that you can ship back quickly and easily with your pole low to the water. This makes feeding while you have a fish on a doddle and ultimately leads to more fish in your net!

This has been a real red-letter day. I have caught well over 100lb in just a few hours fishing two feet deep, feeding 6mm pellets and fishing the same on the hook. If you know when to do it, and how to do it properly, shallow fishing is among the most simple and effective methods in the modern pole angler's armoury. ■