

VARIETY Is The Spice Of Life!

Frenzee and Bait-Tech ace **Andy Oldham** lifts the lid on his caster attack, which will guarantee you an action-packed day on your local commercial.



TOP TIP!
When you're likely to be changing depths, always make sure you have a guide by placing a small Tipp-Ex mark on your pole. Once you've found dead depth, simply hook your hook into the bottom of the top kit and place a small mark on your pole where the top of the bristle is. This way, you can slide the float around to try different depths but can always come back to the original dead-depth mark.

You can enjoy a lovely day's fishing on most commercials with just a couple of pints of casters!

ANGLER FILE
ANDY OLDHAM
Age: '21'
Lives: Maltby
Sponsors: Frenzee, Bait-Tech
Pole: Frenzee Precision FXT

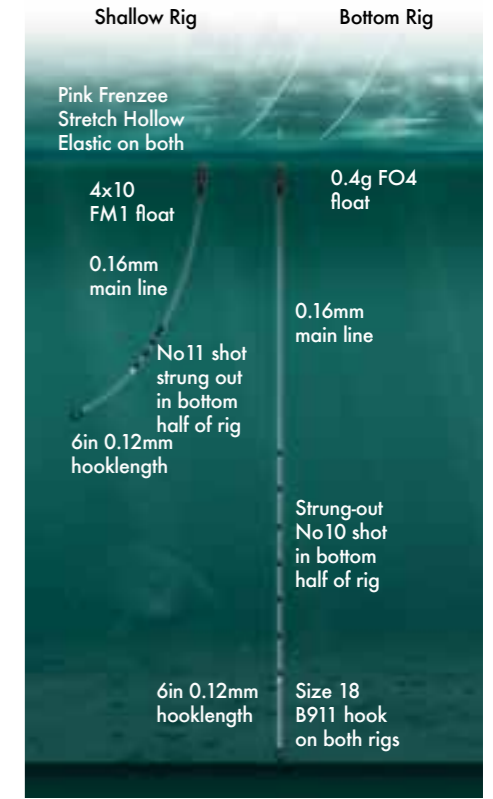
VENUE FILE
CLIMAX WOLD VIEW FISHERIES
Location: Just off the A46, near Claxby LN8 3YR
Day tickets: £7; concessions £5
Contact: 07742 220204/01673 828827
Web: www.woldviewfisheries.com
Contact: 01283 548540

I get frustrated when I see anglers sat around a commercial fishery in the summer months, catching very little or nothing at all! Most venues up and down the country are jam-packed with fish, and with an incredibly simple and appealingly cheap caster attack on the short pole, you can enjoy fantastic sport!

WHY CASTERS?
Every fish that swims in a commercial fishery loves eating casters! They will eat them at any time of year and you often find that the bigger stamp prefer them to maggots. Crispy casters make a nice fish-attracting noise when they enter the water, which I also believe makes them more effective than softer maggots. They're also heavier and easier to throw or catapult to where you're fishing.

THE LINE OF ATTACK
When plumbing up, I like to fish on or close to the bottom of the near shelf. When lakes are dug they often have a steady slope from the bank, out to around six metres. Fish love feeding on this slope and often live close to it, waiting for food to drop down to them! This is why fishing the short-pole swim in this area is successful. A great line to target a variety of species on a commercial is around six metres out.

PLUMBING UP
I like to plumb up to dead depth. By this I mean fishing at the perfect depth so that my hook is just touching the bottom. Make sure that you use a heavy plummet to get an accurate reading and slowly lower it down on a straight line. When you have just the bristle of the float sticking out of the water when the plummet is set on the bottom, you've got it perfect!
When trying to select quality fish, I like to fish with a little bit of line on the bottom. This helps to keep the hook bait static and the bigger fish seem to pick this up more confidently. On calm days when there is little wind, fishing two inches overdepth is ideal. This way, your bait is static but as a fish grabs it and swims off, it pulls the float under and you can strike. However, on days when the lake is towing and there's more wind, fishing six to eight inches overdepth is effective. This



ensures that your hook bait settles and is held on the bottom even if the float is being moved around in waves. Big, clever fish will notice if your bait is moving unnaturally and leave it alone.

RIGS
Two rigs are all you need for this approach, one for fishing on the bottom and one for up in the water. My swim is around five feet deep and for the bottom rig I've chosen a 4x14 float. Although this rig is for fishing on the bottom, when you're loose feeding, fish will intercept the bait as it's falling or shortly after it's landed after watching it fall. My shotting pattern is based on these facts and incorporates a string of No10 shot starting just above the hooklength knot, spaced around three inches apart spread up the rig. Even when fishing on the bottom, this shotting pattern allows me to present the bait with a reasonably slow fall and sometimes fish will intercept the bait as it falls.
A light float is a big advantage when fishing shallow. It offers a slow fall of your bait and also means that fish don't feel much weight when they take your bait. My choice is a >>>

TOP TIPS

A

Slim-bodied floats like these are perfect for caster fishing.

B

A medium hook such as a B911 helps you land all sizes of fish.

C

Try and use a sensible line; 0.12mm is ideal for mixed fishing.

D

Keep hooking simple and nick a caster on like this.

E

Try two casters and increase your depth to catch bigger fish.

small 4x10 pattern with a string of No11 shot just above by hooklength. A good tip with the shallow rig is to leave a 3ft length of line between your float and pole tip to begin with. This way, you can start at a foot deep but if you feel that the fish are deeper, you can add another foot or even two to try and find where they are.

FEEDING

This is the single most important part of my caster attack and I cannot stress enough how important it is to feed regularly! If you throw 30 casters into a commercial fishery, the chances are that only a few of them will get to the bottom. There will be small roach and rudd eating them just below the surface, a few bigger fish beneath them, and then if a carp or bream comes along to suck a few up as they settle, they're gone! However, because all the bait is getting eaten, it means that fish are always competing for the feed, which is great when you're trying to catch them.

To kick the swim off, I like to lay a small bed of casters on the bottom by feeding half a large Frenzee pole pot of casters. This gives me a base of feed to fish over and I can hopefully maintain this with regular loose feed – that's if it doesn't all get eaten on the way down!

Generally, I like to feed every time I lay my rig in the water. I'll ship out, feed around 30 casters, and then lay my rig over the top. This way, the hook bait is settling with the feed and appears as natural as possible. If you find that you're catching a lot of small fish, a great tip is to feed after hooking one. Sometimes you find that the small fish dash straight in to eat the feed, meaning that your hook bait



When fishing on the deck, feed more casters but less often (left). Feeding fewer casters gets fish competing more, bringing them shallow.

feed amount and up the regularity, you hit a lot more bites and keep fish in the swim for longer.

A PROGRESSING SESSION...

The fish you catch at the start of a session will often be small silvers. Roach and rudd tend to feed first, before bigger silvers such as bream, hybrids and tench muscle in. These greedy bigger specimens are attracted by the activity of the smaller fish feeding.

As the session progresses you'll find that the action from smaller fish becomes slower, but even bigger fish will begin to make an appearance. This is when it pays to have a bit more patience and be prepared to wait a little longer for a bite on the deck rig, with a double-caster hook bait.

Balanced gear will help you land the variety of fish that you're likely to catch – a soft pink Frenzee Stretch Hollow elastic matched with a side puller wheel means that you don't bump silvers off, but can easily land big carp too.

If you fancy a session enjoying variety, grab yourself a couple of pints of casters and follow this simple advice for mixed-bag magic at your local fishery! ■

TOP TIP!
I'm a big believer that quality casters catch you more fish. I get fresh, crispy casters from my local tackle shop, Wickersley Angling Centre.



You don't need to fish far out with casters. Look for the bottom of the first shelf, which is usually about six metres out.