

## Four Weeks on the N-Gage *by Adam Smith*

I started using this bait four weeks ago, not really time to give it a good test you might say. In that time I have been fishing a heavily pressured water in Oxford and those four weeks have been, in my opinion, incredible!

On my first trip using the new bait, I decided to fish the middle section of the pit. From previous experience I knew that this area was worth a go as fish continually patrol the area. My thinking was that a decent bed of bait would hopefully get their attention, pull them down and get them munching.

I put two rods tight on a spot that I had found beforehand at 70 yards, to accompany these out went 3.5k of chops and a kilo of whole N-Gage boilies. These went out in the spod and, with no major dramas; everything was set beautifully on those two rods. The remaining rod was fished as a single, in close, in small gap in the weed. For this I used my own "Southern Special" pop-ups which largely consisted of CC Moore pop-up mix to make up two different colored paste mixes. In using the same attractors, I took a piece of each paste, placing them around a 10mm cork ball and hand rolling until finished with a buoyant, two-tone 14mm bait...pukka for a choddy and my version of the 'Johnny Mac' rig.

Although I was confident, the night slipped by without a single show and that horrible feeling that bite time had passed was starting to creep in at 9am when, out of the blue, the left hander on the single ripped off! The fish put up a good fight



**Baby Pooley's**

and it felt like a reasonable one throughout, I was buzzing to slip the net under her without any problems. It was a looker, one known as "Baby Pooley's" and at 36.10 was a lovely fish to get under my belt early on. Photos done and the fish returned I threw out the single once again. I had made the decision to leave the middle and right hand rods on the baited spot for the forthcoming night, I knew they were out mint and saw no reason to disturb the spots by recasting. If everything was going as I had hoped then a good proportion of the lakes stock would have passed over the bait and figured that it was there by now. Maybe they would return when it was more washed out and treat it with less caution. It seemed logical to me, I guess time would tell...

The day crept by and things started to get interesting around midnight, I could hear fish showing on the baited spot. I'd been up since 4am the previous day and was seriously knackered, but now things were looking good and I was running on adrenaline!

At just after 3am the left hander was away. This fight was different, heavier and involving a lot of slow plodding. Everything held firm though and I was soon peering at "Pooley's" in the net. What are the chances after nailing "Baby Pooley's" earlier!

She went 43.14 and set a new P.B for me



**"Pooley's"**



The two rods on the spot were only fished about a foot apart and, not wanting to recast the middle rod for fear of spooking any fish remaining in the area, I left that one leaned up against the tree.

It paid off in fine style when the right hander on the bait signaled another take. This was really coming together nicely and a 35.8 common obviously agreed with "Pooley's" and rather liked the N-Gage too.

**35.8lb Common**

Both rods clipped up accurately and back on the money it was time for a brew! I was looking forward to getting these beauties photographed and returned; time seemed to drag whilst waiting for first light. When the pictures were done I could finally relax and reflect on the session so far.

Nine O'clock arrived and I was shattered. The night's events taking their toll, I needed kip! It didn't take long to start drifting. I'd just closed my eyes when the left hander, on the single was away again! This time resulting in a 31.8 mirror. What a session!

The final night was quiet but thoughts of my return visit were already occupying my mind.



**31.8lb Mirror**

The time spent at home was put to good use and more cork ball specials were carefully hand rolled for the next trip.

I turned up at the lake to find the same swim vacant; job done I thought. How wrong was I? Two nights in there proved uneventful, and a move was needed A.S.A.P.

I packed down in the early hours and moved into "The New Bay" for a number of reasons; I knew it fished well on a northerly wind and in high pressure and it also held the shallowest feature in the pit, a nice pronounced gravel bar. I felt the fish would use this feature in the warm weather and maybe hang around if I could get a bit of bait out there to hold them.

I had spots already sussed in this swim and after little fuss I had the right hander placed on top of the bar in 8ft of water and another rig on the drop off 5 yards to the left of that. I spread a kilo of 14mm N-Gage and a kilo of N-Gage chops over the two, brimming with confidence from the previous trip on the bait. The remaining rod went in the edge by an inlet.

It looked good for a take and I was happy with my decision to move when not long after, the middle rod on the drop off signaled a take and the result was a 25lb common in the net, a pleasing start.

After that I had an immense battle with a foul hooked fish and thought my chances were ruined.



**“The Box Common”**

Whilst the swim was disturbed I decided to re-chuck both rods on the bait and start spodding some more boilies over the top of them.

To my surprise I received a take whilst spodding. It was a very subtle drop back, so I wound down and connected with a fish that felt every bit a chunk from the off! A lot of its fighting was done in the margins, just going where it wanted to, whilst I applied constant pressure hoping it would eventually tire! I managed to win this battle though, and upon looking into the net this time, I was met with the sight of a scale perfect common of large proportions.

It was “The Box Common”, a fish I’d really wanted to catch from there. It capped another memorable trip to Oxford for me.

The icing on the cake being the fact that “The Box” was a new P.B. common at 43.8! You can safely say that as I left the complex that day, I was on cloud nine!



**23lb**

I returned the following week to try and continue my run of success but it was fishing hard and I really had to work at it. I moved swims numerous times before eventually being rewarded in the form of a brace of twenties, with the pick of the two being a 23lb mirror which was an absolute minter! The next session was to be the following week and, upon arriving I found the lake to be refreshingly quiet for a change, I took this opportunity to leave the barrow laden with gear and go to try and find some fish. It didn’t take long.

Upon reaching the bottom end of the lake it became apparent that there were a number of fish held up by a large reed bed, with most of them being biggies, I struggled to see anything under 30lbs! One fish that I found to be instantly recognizable was “The Hamster” and my word he looked big! Interestingly he was way more active than most of the

other fish in the swim. He was nudging the others, barging them to one side when coming face to face and generally asserting his authority as the lakes big’un! I could stay up the tree no longer, I’d seen enough, it was time to set a couple of traps, on a couple of spots that I’d seen him passing over regularly.

A couple of underarm flicks later and I'd found a couple of presentable spots that I was happy with. The right hander was placed near the edge of the reed bed, that was attracting this group of fish, on some clean ground with the "Johnny Mac" Rig. The left hander went a little further out from the reed bed in light weed; a choddy proving perfect for this spot. I kept the baiting light for obvious reasons; the fish were there in numbers and disturbance had to be kept to a minimum. Therefore a small amount of chopped and crushed particles were accompanied by 8 broken and 4 whole N-Gage 14mm. The lines were slackened off and back leads carefully placed on the marginal shelf, I could do no more, the traps were set.

As you can probably imagine I found it extremely hard to sit still that afternoon! The kettle was forced into overdrive and about ten brews and a couple of hours later, with the sun setting on the horizon, it happened. A subtle drop-back.

Leaning into this carp was almost scary, it was unstoppable! It stripped me of line at free will until deciding to kite to the right, on a tight line and into the reed bed...NOOOO! I could hear the fish crashing around in the reeds, trying desperately to shake the hook. There was absolutely no time to think about it, I went straight in with the rod and net.

This fish was, by now, quite far back into the reeds and there was little or no chance of getting it out. I had to net it in the reeds. This wasn't easy to put it mildly! After a bit of maneuvering though, I was close and I spotted that it was "The Hamster" - there was no doubt about it. I couldn't lose it, that wasn't an option!

To my absolute joy and immense relief I managed to shuffle him into the net. It seemed that I'd held my breath for an eternity!

A couple of mates had gathered in the swim by this point obviously curious about what was causing all the commotion! He looked more than impressive on the bank at a weight of 46.12. The photo shoot complete and "The Hamster" returned

it sank in that my P.B. had again been upped nicely.



"The Hamster" at 46lb 12oz



Gobsmacked!

*Tight Lines*

*Adam Smith*