

Hook Bait Experimentation – by Ollie Pearce

Playing around with various colours, flavours, sizes and buoyancies of hook baits is something I've looked at in great detail over the last year or so. By putting a bit of thought into how you want the hook bait to act on certain rigs, hook baits can be made to perfection and can be carefully tweaked to suit various hook patterns and/or rig materials being used. Fluoro's and bottom baits can be made in all sorts of colours and sizes – my personal favourites are two-tone coloured dumbbells (fluoro's) and washed out N-Gage wafers.

The attraction of your chosen hook baits can be increased by adding powdered additives and/or soluble liquids (no inclusion limit on natural powders or liquid foods). For example, boosting the GLM content in Odyssey XXX or N-Gage and also using a combination of Feedstim and Marine Amino to glug hook baits in after the drying process – awesome!

See the text and images below for some of the many possibilities with a range of CCM products:



Fluoro's

Stripey pink/white, green/yellow and blue/white in various sizes – the options are endless! Black versions are massively underrated when fishing on the bottom, yet on zig rigs this colour catches loads of fish throughout the year... As well as liquid flavours, powdered palatants like Fructose Concentrate are a great edge for repelling nasty silt/weed odours. They can also help to give off an acidic food signal, even after long periods immersed in water.

Cork Ball Fluoro's

Buoyancy on stiff rigs like the Chod is absolutely essential. If, like me, you use big hooks, this becomes even harder to achieve. However, to get around it, I incorporate 10mm cork balls and a lump of paste approx 13mm in diameter; this should produce a finished bait of around 14-15mm in size. Baits like this will still require a decent lump of putty to hold them down. Be sure to add at least 10% Egg Albumen to the base mix to ensure that a hard skin is created. For **really** firm baits, steps up to 25% inclusion. As well as fluoro's, try giving off the same food signal as the boilie you're using (N-Gage pictured), in conjunction with flecks of colour (white), but with guaranteed, prolonged buoyancy – a winner!



Cork Dust Wafers

Whether you're using one of the proven baits from the CCM range or your own recipe, cork dust wafers can be a versatile and useful addition in any bait bucket in order to open up more rig possibilities. For example, the small, dark 10x14mm dumbbells pictured here were made with 50% cork dust. As a result, when tied on, they lose little in the way of buoyancy and sit up nicely off the shank of the hook with a size 4 wide gape hook. By incorporating a high percentage of cork dust, I am able to get away with using smaller baits and big hooks but still have the peace of mind that the bait is critically balanced. I am of the opinion that smaller hook baits will be investigated and picked up with less caution.



To tweak wafers further, try adding 1 tsp of white dye per egg at the mixing stage. This will make the finished baits look washed out and it could be the edge you're looking for on pressured venues or for cagey fish in the margins. The pale ones pictured are based on N-Gage with 15% additional GLM extract and then regular coatings of Marine Amino and Feedstim at a 50:50 ratio until they stop absorbing liquid.

Hardened Hook Baits

Soluble boilies (as loose feed) are great, however, they do have their limitations when it comes to hook baits and hardened ones are often needed when baits are being left out overnight. Hardened baits can be trimmed down to alter the original shape and can also be used in conjunction with small (10mm) pop ups which will contribute towards counteracting the weight of the hook whilst also



adding some visual attraction too. The brown dumbbells pictured are made on the N-Gage base mix, whereas the red ones were made to accompany a Robin Red-based boilie, they also contain 40% Liver powder. This results in a superbly long-lasting, meaty aroma!

Depending on how hard you want your finished baits to be, use either WPC80 or Egg Albumen at 10% as a starting point. Whey Protein will harden right the way through to the centre of the bait, whereas an inclusion of Egg Albumen tends to produce a rubber-like, firm skin with a slightly softer centre. Again, powdered additives and liquid foods can also be included at elevated levels to try and trigger a feeding response.

Recipes

If you fancy giving homemade hook baits a go but aren't sure on recipes and where to start, take a look at the ideas below and tweak them to your heart's content. The following are based on 1 egg (50ml liquid) mixes:



Fruit

- 4ml Ultra Plum
- 4ml Ultra Pear Drop
- 2ml Talin
- 1 tsp Betaine
- ½ tsp Fructose Conc.
- 1 Heaped tsp Dye



Pineapple

- 6ml Ultra Pineapple
- 2ml Talin
- 1 tsp Betaine
- 1 tsp Lactose B+ Conc.
- 1 Heaped tsp Dye



Washed out N-Gage Wafers

- 5ml Marine Amino
- 5ml Feedstim XP
- 1 tsp white dye

- Part 1 – N-Gage Basemix (70%), WPC80 (15%) & GLM (15%)
- Part 2 – Cork Dust (50%) & Plain Pop Up Mix (50%)

Mix Part 1 and Part 2 at equal ratios i.e. 50:50. Once dried, repeatedly coat the baits with a 50:50 mix of Feedstim XP and Marine Amino liquid.



Hardened N-Gage Bottom Baits

5ml Marine Amino

5ml Feedstim XP

Base mix – N-Gage Base mix (70%), WPC80 (15%) & GLM (15%)

Once dried, repeatedly coat the baits with a 50:50 mix of Feedstim XP and Marine Amino liquid.

Hopefully the above information may help you put an extra carp or two on the bank this year – don't be afraid to experiment!

Be lucky

Ollie Pearce