

A New World Record Common Carp by Roger Hanley

I have fished in France for several years with my wife and friends at different venues, and have caught some wonderful big fish, so when I was asked if I would like to fish a new lake this year that had outstanding reports of huge fish being caught week after week the answer simple was yes !!!!.

We had booked on with Cross Channel Carping as a party for a week's fishing in June at their lake called LesTeillatts; a former gravel pit in France. We travelled through Friday night to reach the lake early the following morning. On arrival we were given the conducted tour around the lake by the bailiffs, showing us the different swims and were told the rules and regulations on the lake. We found it difficult to remember it all, then came the worst time of all - the dreaded draw for swims;, the point that could either make or break your week.

Having picked the 9 ball in the draw, I chose to fish in a swim called 'The Crescent' which had, the week before, fished well producing some 33 fish at better than average weights. Whilst we were setting up in our swim I noticed that the wind direction was blowing down the lake towards the field end of the lake and it appeared that the fish had followed.

We fished the swim for some 24hrs with no result and made the decision to up sticks and move the following morning. We moved down the lake into a space in 'The Inlet' swim in the field which faced into the oncoming wind. It didn't take long to get into the fish and catches of a 20lb 8oz mirror and 29lb 10oz mirror were soon on the bank. The rest of the day was quiet other than a few blips or liners on the optonics.

I was up at the crack of dawn the following morning, checking my rods that I had baited the night before with Odyssey XXX Shelf Life boilies at a distance of 80 to 90 yards in approx 12ft of water on clear spots. I looked over the lake whilst the mist was clearing from the water as the sun was coming up, watching for any signs of fish movement. As I stood there besides my rods I was wondering if I would get anymore fish today.

Then just about 05.45hrs one of my rods screamed off with a fish on it. Lifting my rod high into the air so as to clear any possible snags with razor mussels that we had been told about I still had the fear of being cut off. I called for my wife Carol, who was still fast asleep at the time, to wake up as we had a fish on. Whilst I played with the fish, she prepared the mat and got the landing net ready. I then caught a glimpse of the fish which appeared to be a large common. I didn't dare tell Carol what it was as she would probably have gone to pieces with the netting of the fish, as she had always known that I had wanted to land a big common as my personal best at that time was only 36lb 10oz.

Not knowing how big this fish was, and after a hard fight, it eventually came to the net - with Carol having taken off her shoes and getting knee deep in the water. It was only then that we realised what a lump it was. By this time we had been joined by our friend Trevor Anthony who was fishing next to us and had seen that we had landed a big fish, so came to see what it was. We all peered into the net looking at this huge lump and wondered what size it was?



Trevor reckoned the fish was around the 70lb mark, but at this stage I was high on cloud 9 and it all seemed to be a dream. I didn't care about the exact weight because the fish was mine; we both struggled to lift the fish out of the water and put it onto the landing mat.

The fish was then weighed on a tripod stand using Ruben Heaton Digital scales, having already zeroed the scales to the weight of the sling. By now my heart was pounding and almost coming out of my chest anticipating the announcement of the weight. It turned out to be a massive 88lb 2oz; this simply didn't sink in.

We carried out the same exercise on another set of scales and sling to confirm the weight was accurate.

By now Carol had rushed off to find the bailiffs to give them an early morning wake up call to “come and see my monster catch”! On arrival both Steve & John, the bailiffs, confirmed that this was the fish called ‘The Generals Mate’ and was possibly the biggest fish in the lake. They were not surprised when told the weight and seemed to think that because of the extreme weather conditions, hot then cold, this year that the fish hadn’t spawned properly and that this fish could still be carrying spawn.



By now the size of the catch had gone around the lake and some of the other fishermen and friends came to look at the fish before it was returned to the depths.

My week had now been made and nothing else seemed to matter. I went on to catch a further 2 fish; a catfish of 46lb 15oz and a mirror of 49lb 10oz - what a week! I will never forget this week and..... what a lake!

Thanks to all at Cross Channel Carping for a mind blowing experience, a fish that dreams are made of and for something I may never be able to repeat!

I would finally like to say a big thank you to my wife Carol for landing the fish, for her patience, for putting up with me when we are fishing and for the trying times when I don't catch anything.

Best wishes

Roger Hanley.