

Words & pics: Marc Coulson

NIGHT FISHING



ANGLER FILE

ADAM PENNING

Age: 37

Nickname: Pendlebury

UK PB: 40lb 10oz

Sponsors: Korda and Mainline

Adam Penning makes ready for a night session, which he hopes will bring him some big carp.

Adam Penning guides you through the best ways to improve your fishing after dark and catch more night-time carp...

Night fishing is extremely popular with modern carp anglers and we all certainly seem to have plenty of the kit needed to do it. Adam Penning and I had planned to run a feature that helped you get the most of out fishing at night for some time, and we finally got around to organising an outing to do just that.

After one or two recent aborted trips, I meet up with Adam at the fabulous Par Lakes near West Horndon in Essex. The venue offers the best of both worlds to carp anglers. The front lake holds plenty of carp and catfish that will pull your string and the back lake is less well stocked, a little weedier and a tougher nut to crack, but with a head of very good fish, mostly over 20lb.

The rods are are out and Adam is set for the night ahead.



Adam always takes the mozzie front for his bivy.

It's the back lake that Adam has chosen and, mid-afternoon, I find him bivvied up in a swim at the top end. The water is essentially U-shaped and Adam has pitched up on the bend with each arm available, one left and one right. This gives him a good view of the entire lake and he has already seen a few carp.

Although the feature is a night fishing one, Adam is quick to point out that he is already doing his groundwork as the afternoon wears on.

"It's vital that all of my marker work and getting organised is done during daylight. It means that I can see what I am doing and create all the fuss while the fish are not necessarily feeding," he explains.

"It's hot today and most of the lake's residents are either cruising the surface or holed up in the weed beds in the two arms of the lake. I am getting my spots ready for baiting up in the hope that they'll get their heads down tonight.

"I have chosen an area to my left where I have seen one or two carp milling around in the weed. Using the marker float, I have established where the edge of the weed is and I am spread baiting with boilies to the left and right of the marker float.

"I have the float lined up with a far-bank marker, in this case an old, dead tree. This is clearly visible on the horizon and means that, after dark, I will know exactly what line I am fishing to.

"By spreading the bait left and right of the marker I allow myself to be able to cast one rod left of

Total Tips



There won't always be a Total Carp camera man with you, so try and master self-take photography in case you catch carp and want a picture.



Having a beer with your mates is part of the night fishing scene, but drink sensibly and make sure that you are alert enough to deal with fishing in the dark.



If you have a sounder box use it and turn the volume right up. Meanwhile, turn the volume on your alarm head right down to avoid annoying night-time noise.



If you do not have a sounder box then turn your alarm right up so that you don't sleep through runs. Turn the sensitivity down, though, or risk annoying fellow anglers.



His far-bank marker can even be seen into dusk.

the dead tree and one slightly to the right; giving maximum chances of picking feeding fish up.

"I am really excited about the night ahead and, although this is not a 'gimme' water, I do fancy my chances," he tells me with more than a little enthusiasm.

Adam is a man who truly loves his carp fishing and gets excited at every opportunity to wet a line. He's certainly making ready for the night ahead and I hope that his prediction of a bite will come true.

I ask him to take me through a few of the finer areas of his preparation and first ask him to explain why he is only fishing two rods.

"It's the fishery rule mate," comes the reply! "Actually, though, it's a really good tactic. How many times do you see people fish with three rods when, in actual fact, they don't necessarily need to? You see it all the time. Fishing with just two effective rods, and cutting down the number of lines in the water by a third, can often be a better ploy, especially on smaller waters like Par.

"If you are going to fish with three rods, it is often a good idea to fish two on the same spot, rather than having three spread all over the place. It can be more productive and can



As the light fades, Adam receives his first take.

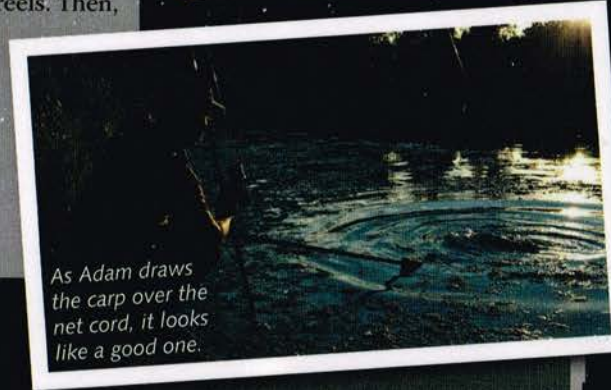
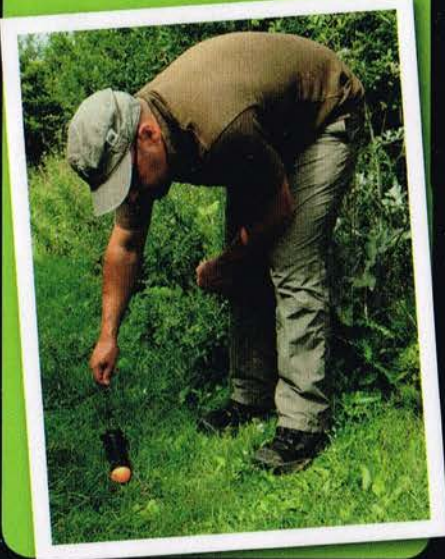
double your chances of harvesting a productive spot."

I note that Adam ensures that his feet are in exactly the same spot every time that he casts, thus ensuring that he is pinpoint accurate on every attempt.

Once the marker rod is in its location, Adam clips the line into the spool's clip on the marker-rod reel. He then winds the rod and float in before laying the rod on the floor. Next, he lays the fishing rod next to it and opens the bail arm on both reels. Then, he walks the two lines, parallel to one another, along the bank until the line on the marker reel hits the clip. He returns to the reels and clips up on the fishing rod. This ensures that he will hit the same

Total Tip

If measuring your spod out against your fishing lines, take some distance off it to allow for the arc of the drop on your rigs and lead.



As Adam draws the carp over the net cord, it looks like a good one.



Adam looking well pleased with the first carp of his overnight session – a 24lb common.

Total Tip

Try using a headtorch with a red lens cover or LED. These emit enough light to work with, but not too much. They also seem to attract fewer bugs.



Adam gets wet in order to safely return the first fish of his Par Lakes' trip.

spot that the marker was at when he casts the fishing rod. He then places a bivvy peg at each end of the walked-out marks for reference later on.

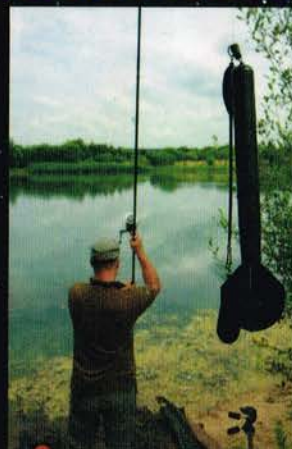
"This is the simplest way to set your lines at the correct distance and reduces the need for marker braid and suchlike. It's both simple and foolproof, provided nobody nicks your bivvy pegs!

"It's probably better to use two sticks because passing anglers seeing an apparently discarded bivvy peg will often pick it up. Even if they give it back to you it has ruined your preparation.

"Another key point is that, if walking out a spod in a similar fashion, it should always be marked a little short compared to the marker and fishing rods. This allows for the natural arc of the other rods when the rigs and lead sink to the bottom. I am fishing in seven feet of water so would allow for about two-and-a-bit feet of swing. It works out at about a foot for every three feet you are fishing depth-wise.

"Anyway, that's all sorted and the rods are clipped up and ready to cast out later. I do feel that the evening and night will prove the best time for a bite, so I am not going to cast out until I need to. We might as well look at a few more details in terms of what I bring along and do on a typical night session.

HOW TO CAST ACCURATELY AT NIGHT



STEP 1 Cast your marker float to your spot during the daylight hours.



STEP 2 Clip up the marker reel and then retrieve the marker float.



STEP 3 Lay your fishing rod and marker rod down and open the bail arms.



STEP 4 Place a bivvy peg to mark the spot and then walk out both lines.



STEP 5 Clip up your fishing rod to match the marker and then mark this spot.



STEP 6 Walk your line between the pegs, clip up and cast accurately at night.