

BEWL WATER FISHING REPORT

Week ending Friday 10th February.

by Ray French.

After last week, where the fishing had been good but inconsistent, this week turned out to be very good and very consistent. It has fished well all week with both the Any Method and Fly rods enjoying good sport, with some of the AM's returning to the fishing lodge for second tickets. Of course, not everyone hit the jackpot, that's fishing, but most have had their string pulled showing the potential for Bewl's new season opening in mid-March. By this time, the reservoir would have received a further 6,000 freshly grown Rainbow Trout as the first batch of a regular stocking programme operating throughout the 23/24 season.

Before I go onto the fishing it must be said that the change in weather last week contributed greatly to the success of this week. The wind has been light to flat calm, there has been little rain, and the sun has shone at some point on most days.

In recent reports I have commented on the Trout finding favour in the sun at midday with a few sightings and a definite inclination to feed between 11am and 2pm. They have also shown a total aversion to wind, especially a cold wind, and will stay down on the bottom and sulk. So, this week the fish have had conditions more to their liking.....

FISHING / Fly

During the winter reports my 'go to' tactic on the 'fly' has been two Minky Boobies spaced on a 5ft leader attached to a D18 fast sink line (Booby Basher') fished hard on the bottom. However, I also reported last week that after a couple of fly rods had done well on a Sink Tip line and Cormorant flies, my boat partner John Turner and I had tried it and also caught on Cormorants in the top 5ft. Only a couple but it showed promise.

Last weekend, in the calm conditions, those tactics scored again for the same fly boys as previous with one of the rods having five fish, this time on the drift.

Worth mentioning here that the bank anglers have been doing well over the last couple of weeks along Lodge bank up to the Aqua Park. It can be a bit hit and miss but there have been regular 2's and 3's caught and a 5 from the Canoe jetty. Again, sunny days are best. The water warms a tad, and the fish move close to the banks in the shallow water. Best advice, don't wade!!

I haven't seen bank anglers anywhere else or heard reports so cannot comment further. On Wednesday, John Turner and I were back down to Bewl meeting up with Bewl Club colleagues Rob Toptalo and Paul Cramp.

My, was it cold first thing. Heavy frosted boats and fog. Instantly regrettable, but it did clear and by 11am the sun was out and just a slight ripple disturbed the lake. Lovely. However, the 'damage' had been done with the freezing conditions.

On my recommendation we went out on a mixture of lines, flies and lures thinking the fish could well be on the move as on our previous trip. Wrong! All we had were a few half-hearted takes. I think Rob had a fish but that was about it. The same for the bank boys along the Lodge bank

who had been out early, nothing. We had been watching them. The fish had obviously resorted back to Winter mode, sitting on the bottom, sulking.....

So, it was back on the D18 with short leader and Minky Boobies, slow fig 8 and patience. Rob and Paul had a similar set up except that they decided to use normal size coloured Boobies. By then we were drifting off the Lodge Bank. Rob and Paul were close by and there was one anchored Any Method guy nearer the Lodge, spinning.

The move back to 'slow and low' was a game changer.... by 12 o'clock we had all had a fish.... they were back but late, by an hour!

We were quite a way out in about 20ft of water and got immediate interest with plucks and pulls and a couple of Silver bars. Game on. Over the next two hours fish were coming steadily to both boats, but in truth Rob and Paul were catching far more consistently than us. We had interest ok but minimal conversion. Our set up and retrieve was the same, so it had to be the flies. I changed mine to normal size 10 Boobies with immediate effect picking up another fish on their first drift.

Worth mentioning that the wind that had started as almost nothing, had moved round, increased a tad, and by 2pm was pushing straight into the Lodge shore proving to be the last straw for the bank boys who gave it best and disappeared. Shame, because at that point the fish had now moved out to in with the wind and were right into the bank in no more than 4ft of water!!

John and I left at our normal time around 2.30 when it started to get cold. John had his bag of four fish, I had put mine back. It had been a good session.

For Rob and Paul, it had been an excellent day, catching and releasing into double figures. We caught about half their number, maybe less, but I think the larger size of our Minkies was inhibitive. Our catching improved dramatically when we switched to smaller normal Boobies but we had left it late. Talking to Rob later, after we left, the fishing died with the cold, albeit they had another couple and left at 4.

ANY METHOD

It must be said that in winter and high summer with the fish preferring to lie close to or on the bottom, the AM lads have the greater success. Certainly, they have been doing so of late. In talking to a few recently it is clear that they have found a variant in tactics in the last few days as we have. For much of this winter they have been fishing hard on the bottom, ledgering with bait and paste. Spinning has not had the same success. But like us the change in fish activity changed their game. This week the slider floats have been an option and the spinners evident again and very successful, especially the small Mepps type worked around the lakebed on a light rod. One guy told me his float suspends the hook about 2ft off the bottom baited with paste and is deadly. It's their version of the 'Bung' or is it the other way round. Anyway, you can see why our short leader with Boobies can be so effective and this week all our fish came on the dropper nearest the fly line which shows they were on the carpet!

SUMMARY

The fishing has certainly improved with the high pressure and should stay the same over the weekend. Apart from the Lodge side of the reservoir the fish are being caught at the Dam, along Chingley Wood and Point, Beauman's and Ferry Point, mostly close to the banks in a maximum depth of 20 ft. There is nothing coming on open water that I know of.

The majority of fish are being caught off the bottom but as I have reported each day is different and there have been exceptions.

Water clarity is improving slowly but some downwind areas were murky on Wednesday. The Dam was one and worth a check. Pumping has stopped and the reservoir is approx. 98% full. It's certainly worth a visit before the season ends so fingers crossed the weather holds. I have so say it was good to see the lads down and catch well. I write these reports and I am sure some think I am making it up. Bewl is not easy in winter, nowhere is, but it just shows its potential when conditions are right!

Tight lines. Ray F.

