

BEWL WATER FISHING REPORT

Week ending Friday 14th July 2023

by Ray French.

After last week's few days of active fishing, this week's strong winds and bright sun have made Bewl once again what I prefer to describe as challenging, in common with the majority of venues nationwide. Having said that, earlier in the week under the cover of cloud there were quite a few fish leaping about, especially in the Main Bowl, albeit they were not surface feeding and more likely coming from relatively deep. They also proved difficult to catch, especially for the drifting Fly man, whereas some of the anchored Any Method rods did well.

I was out on my own on Wednesday and such was the strength of the wind it was very uncomfortable in the Main Bowl and nigh impossible to Fly fish on the drift after 10am. I had given the Bowl a couple of long drifts first thing on the Fast Glass with Mini Tequila blobs and Pearly Cormorant like last week, but with no response this time. That, coupled with the fact that I not seen a fish, left me in no doubt they had gone down again. I have also noticed in the last couple of seasons that when there is a strong wind and it is effectively colder than the water, our Stockies don't want to show. You might say that this is because there is less chance of a hatch, but Bewl is not renowned for its hatches these days and yet the fish will swim consistently high in cooler water irrespective of a hatch, providing the wind is no more than moderate at most.

Anyway, on Wednesday I came off the Fast Glass just prior to the big blow and switched to the Fast-Sinking Di8 with two small Minkie Boobies on a 6ft leader (my 'go to' Winter tactic). I drifted out from Chingley Wood near the Dam corner, which although too fast a drift really, was at least possible. Well, to say I was lucky is a gross understatement. The fish I caught was hooked just behind the lip on the cheek. It had obviously had a go at the flies and was unlucky! Hooked at about 15ft, with a figure of eight retrieve on the up, in 20ft of water. Inevitably the wind made it impossible to drift and the only options left were to move out of the wind, tie up on a buoy or anchor.

I did move about. I went up Bewl Straight drifting around off the worst of the wind fishing on the bottom or mid water either side and did the same at Beauman's Point, the Cages, Belgrano Bay and Green Bank. All off the wind, in deep water and good fish holding areas. But I just couldn't contact them.

I also tied up to a couple of buoys in the main bowl, but both were uncomfortable in the conditions and neither yielded anything although I didn't stay on them long. I rarely go on buoys and never longer than half hour if I haven't caught. Very often you get a take in the first five minutes or nothing at all so half hour is plenty!

By far the most productive tactic in summer is that used by the AM rods. This is to anchor in a proven fish holding area and 'go through the gears', using a variety of methods and depths. It's often the same on the Fly especially at this time of year, in the wind, when the fish are deep.

However, being on my own and pulling the anchor & chain up on a pitching boat in 30ft of water is not my idea of relaxation. And actually, me getting to the anchor from the engine is like watching the balls in a glass tumbler get blown around prior to a Bingo call!!

I did have chat with a couple of the AM boys on the boat dock on Wednesday who came off at lunchtime because of the wind and whom I had seen catch fish in the Main Bowl. They had caught three fish through sheer perseverance by continuous drifting, dragging the anchor, from about 150m out into the Dam. They used a single Spinner with fix spool reel, level wound back at various depths

at a steady but medium retrieve, not fast. They were good anglers; I could tell that. They cast well, were fully kitted and actually they stood up all the time in that wave yet had total control of the boat working as a pair to land their fish.

Their Trout were not as deep as I had thought, or as deep as I had caught mine, but certainly not high. They said they had caught at around 4m. In fact, I did wonder what line I would have needed to get my leader and flies to hold at around 4m on a drogue drift that would be faster than an anchor drag. Oh well, I may well have to find out next week!

Anyway, it didn't rain, I had a morning's fishing and messed about in a boat. I really cannot think of better way to spend some time...well I can but age has been a handicap of late!

SUMMARY

There is no doubt to me that although there are a lot of fish spread out in the deeper water over the large area of Bewl reservoir at this time of year. The Main Bowl has the most concentration of Trout and therefore represents the best chance of success. And as the drawdown continues, relatively quickly as it is, this will become more so.

For all methods it is going to be a matter of patience and understanding. Bewl is not a big 'insect' water, but it is prolific in 'Jelly Fry' and Fry at this time of year and blown on Terrestrials. The Trout will therefore fill up fairly quickly if they find them and won't spend all day eating. Like most creatures I assume they eat to their fill when available and then digest which is why they switch off and on. Ok I'll say it, what do I know.

However, they will still attack a moving object by predator instinct, so it is prudent to switch from Bait or Fly to Lure occasionally or fish both. The Fly fisherman will often cover that situation by including both on his leader for such contingencies. Fab or Booby on point with Nymph/s on droppers and Blob on top. The combination of colour and natural, plus a variable speed of retrieve give both options and is pretty much the Fly Competition Angler's opening gambit.

Do remember to look for the best clarity of water, it's changing by the day and is important, as is the weather. With the wind, cloud, rain and sun the Trout are obviously not rooted in the really deep water but moving up and down on a daily basis and sometimes on an hourly basis. Be flexible!

LATE NEWS

The current overcast skies, rain and strong winds will hopefully cool Bewl's water temperature sufficient to bring the fish up nearer the surface. It should certainly liven them in the next few days.

Have a good week and enjoy your fishing, whatever the result....

Ray F.