

30 Year wait

I started pike fishing just over 30 year ago and even then as youngster I knew that a target for a real monster pike is one of over 30lb.

I am a gravel pit angler and in those past 30 years I can count on one hand the amount of pike over that magic weight that I have heard of in the Stour valley pits that I fish, so in reality I had my work cut out to say the least.

I have never been one for fishing the Trout reservoirs, for me the goal has always been a coarse fed 30, a rare beast indeed. I've also probably not helped myself with the hard waters that I have fished, sometimes targeting near 200 acre pits. With very little pike fishing going on with most the anglers continuing to target carp through the winter months I have often found myself piking alone with very little in the way of reports to go on. Mostly going on instinct and sometimes a waters previous history of producing a big pike. Its often said that if a water has produced a big pike in the past it may well do so again at some point.

Previous winters I must admit to not fishing for them as much as I perhaps should have as ive got into other angling pursuits, but the past two winters ive been going 3 times week, fishing in some horrendous weather.



I am a firm believer in the saying “if you have a bait in the water you have a chance” and this has been the case a number of times this winter as I’ve caught on just about every trip I have had despite the conditions.

With the modern angling clothing and boots available there really is no excuse for not fishing, when conditions have been particularly rough I have perhaps not ventured to the swims that I might ordinarily have but you can be sure I have always managed to get some baits in the water.

It pays to keep up to date with what’s happening in your area regarding big pike, pike anglers as a whole are a secretive lot but by going to Pike Anglers Club meetings or chatting in your shop it is possible to pick up snippets of information, the web and angling club websites are also good places to look for big pike photos.

It was a photo of a 25lb pike on a clubs website that I first saw a couple of years ago that actually led me to the following capture. I had kept it in mind with a view to perhaps joining the club as some point in the future which is exactly what I did this winter. I had no idea whether the pike was still live or what size it had now become, or even if it had indeed continued to grow. With pike putting on 2 to 3lb per year if the habitat is right I figured she would probably be near that magic mark if all went well..

So this winter I spent almost every available pike trip on the one water, moving swims 2 or 3 times a day and presenting different baits on different rigs constantly tweaking to create the best chances for myself.

Finally on the 31st January my dream came true, a buoyant legered sardine was picked up and a fine battle ensued, when she went in the net I knew she was big and hoped I hadn’t caught her too early, I’m so thankful that she went 30lb 11oz. Again I had the lake to myself but was fortunate to have a friend who lived nearby who was only too keen to come and see her and what a great job he did with the photos.



I must admit that when the alarm went off at 530 the next morning for another days piking, with a smile on my face I very nearly rolled over. But that's the great thing about angling, there is always another lake and another challenge and so I moved onto a new water where I managed to catch quite a few doubles up to 18lb 12oz before I put the pike rods away and prepared for a spring campaign after some big Bream.