

Crystal Waggler - the Most Versatile Float of All

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There are very few types of fishing float which can be said to have been invented. Nearly every shape and pattern in existence has simply evolved and developed a little bit at a time. Very often, the best anyone can claim is that the idea for a new float was personal and that they have thought of it themselves and not been influenced by or copied others. So perhaps invention is too much for anybody to claim and the best you can do is to have your own original idea for a float to help overcome a particular fishing problem; and that is what happened to me with Crystal Wagglers.

My long time fishing mate John Everard and I had been fishing for some big Tench in a large gravel pit. The water was shallow and very clear, with a heavy weed growth and a very sparse fish population. Fortunately these big Tench regularly patrolled the margins following the contours of the gravel pit around its perimeter. The fish moved along just at the bottom of the shelf, only some two or three metres out from the bank in just 1.5m of water. Inevitably, it was better to fish facing the wind but on



In shallow, clear water nothing beats using a clear plastic waggler.

such a big water, this meant conditions were often difficult with waves and lots of surface drift.

To hold a bait absolutely still

and prevent it dragging into weed or debris on the bottom, we found it necessary not only to use an anchor shot but also to really bury the rod top by about 35cm and



The evolution from the traditional black through grey to clear graphically demonstrates how the floats became progressively more discreet

The longest Insert Crystal with the longest Combo Tip Antenna extends up to 14" (35.5mm). That is a seriously long float, which really helps to beat the wind.

to use a long float of a similar 35cm in length to sink the line well below all the drift and disturbance.

We fished for most of one summer with long straight Peacock Quill floats, caught some big fish but were not satisfied with our level of success. Patrolling Tench would come into the swim, stop and appear to be feeding. We would see bubbles and small indications of their interest in our bait but too often, they would move on without either of us getting a bite.

One day, we were fishing in this manner from a narrow strip of land with a big, steep gravel bank immediately behind us. The bait was large pieces of white bread flake tipped with two red maggots, but the Tench had once again come and gone without either of us getting a bite. I climbed to the top of the gravel bank and on this relatively calm day, was able to see that the fish had taken all the free bait and left just our hook baits in position. Critically, however, there was also one free offering of white bread flake which had not been taken and this was positioned right next to my hook bait. Standing at the top of such a high gravel bank, my eye level must have been some 15ft or more above the water. This excellent vantage point made the long float look massive and it seemed to extend half way down through the shallow swim. In practice the proportions are exactly as illustrated in the diagram, with the float only taking up about a quarter of the 1.5m depth. Anyhow, on that day it just didn't look right and a little light went on in my head. It was not the fact that our baits were attached to a hook and line that was putting off the Tench, it was that long, solid coloured float sticking down so far into the

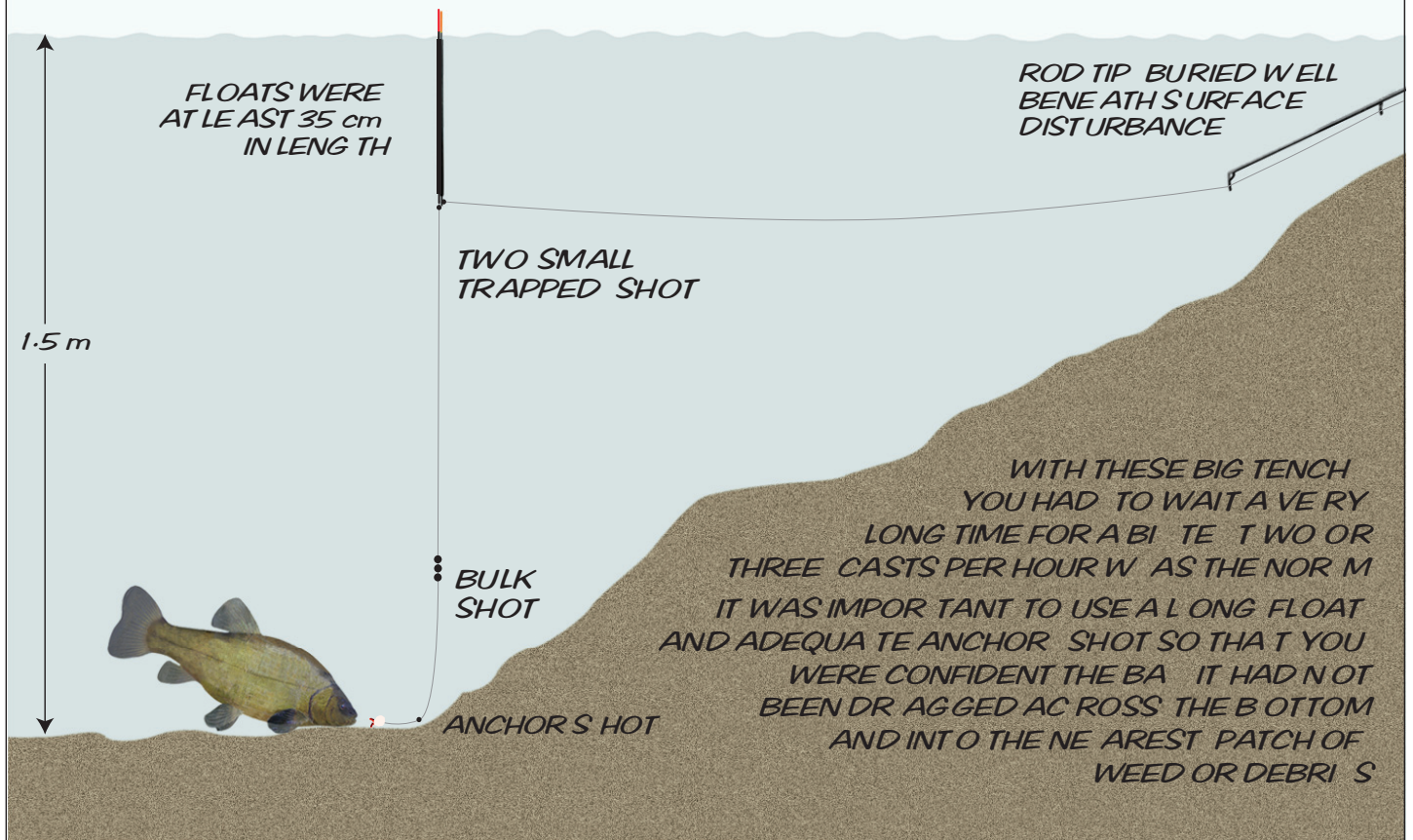
clear, shallow water immediately above the bait. The Tench did not like it over their heads and would not come right underneath it.

We tried fishing well over depth so that the float was no longer directly over the bait, but lost out on both presentation and bite detection. We even tried fishing a light leger but that did not work very well at such close range. I realised that what we really needed was a clear float which, being colourless, was practically invisible to the fish.

Crystal Wagglers were born and I have to say, worked very well, not only on those big Tench but on a number of different species and on a number of different waters. The fact that some fish could be "float shy" had not previously been considered to terribly significant, but we went on to prove at least to our own satisfaction that in any shallow or very clear water, a crystal clear float can make a big difference to your catches!

Crystal Wagglers have now become as light and buoyant as Peacock Quill. They are also quite a bit tougher and more durable than Peacock and extremely accurate on the shotting. In fact, some shots vary much more than the floats. In production, this accuracy also applied to the joints and ferrules so it became possible to have interchangeable tip sections. You can now alter the length, colour and style of tip, borrow tips from other models of float and even fit slim tips in place of larger diameter ones with the aid of small plastic collars. The general rules that apply to changing tip colour are: if the sun is in front of you and especially if it is sparkling off the water, a black topped float is most

IN THE EXCEPTIONALLY CLEAR SHALLOW WATER THE BIG TENCH SEEMED RELUCTANT TO COME RIGHT IN UNDERNEATH AN EXTRA LONG BLACK PAINTED FLOAT



Peter's waggler tench set-up

visible. On dark water where the light makes the surface look almost black, a fluorescent yellow top is most effective. When the light is from anywhere behind you, the stronger fluorescent colours of red and orange are best.

Perhaps more important than being able to change the tip colour is the ability to change the length and style of tip. Increasing the tip length by just a few centimetres can make a radical difference to the way your tackle behaves and to the amount of fish you catch. The longest Combo Tip antenna married to the longest Insert Crystal body produces a float which is 36cm (14") long. Such a float beats a lot of wind drift and can really improve your bait presentation in rough

conditions. Conveniently, you don't have to carry floats of this length with you, you can simply assemble them on the bank. When you make these tip changes, you obviously need to make corresponding adjustments to the shotting, but it is the extra length that makes the biggest difference to the way a Waggler behaves, not so much the extra shot.

The ridiculously simple idea for a clear float back in the 1970's has now developed into a whole modular system, just like the children's toy Lego. You can interchange components and construct exactly the length and style of Waggler you want for any conditions.