

# Loafers

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These are big buoyant floats which carry lots of shot and have big buoyant tips to help ride rough or turbulent waters. They were originally designed for bread fishing but of course most bread in England is quite different from bread in France. French bread is good to eat, whereas English bread, particularly the popular supermarket variety, in my opinion is best used as a fishing bait !

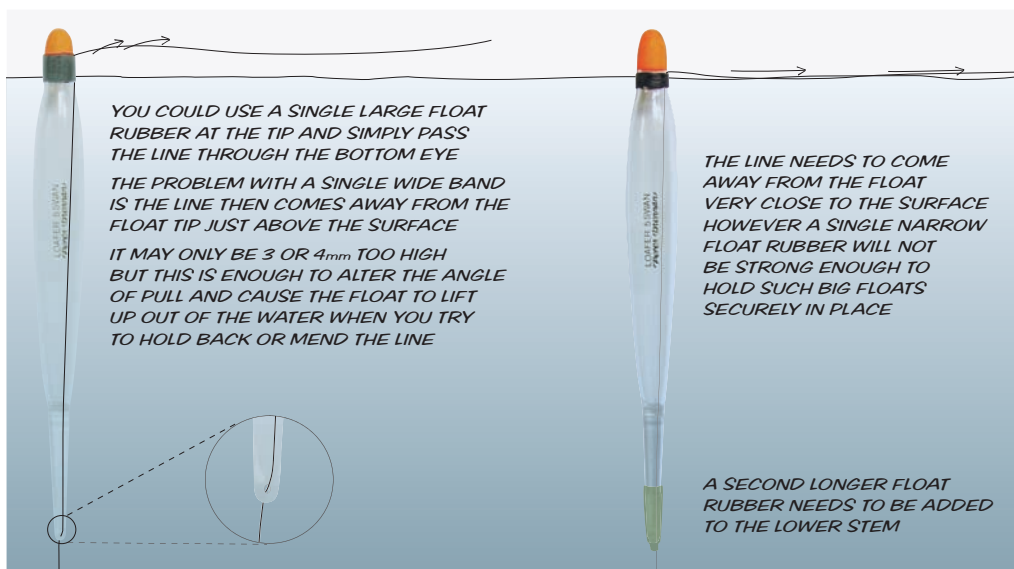
The key property of this type of English bread is its sticky, doughy consistency which allows it to be pinched around the shank of the hook and to remain in place. Fortunately, Loafers are very versatile and can be used with lots of different baits: Maggot, Worms, Sweetcorn etc, even proving ideal for minnow fishing for Trout, Perch and Zander.

This is another one of those English float patterns which are always fished attached top and bottom and with Loafers you need to use quite large float rubbers to hold the float firmly in place on the line.



**With the help of a long rod I can keep the line positioned directly behind the float so at least the tackle tends to precede in a straight line down the swim. The fast broken water with its small waves means that I have to leave a lot of the big, buoyant float tip showing above the surface, otherwise it will be dragged under too easily. Fortunately with the float travelling fast in this powerful current, bites show up clearly and even small fish bury the float instantly.**

Due to the extra resistance of striking into a big float, particularly when you are hooking into quality fish, it is very easy for the line to stretch, the float to slip and for you to lose the accuracy of depth. For this reason, we often use two float rubbers keeping the longer, tighter one at the bottom end and a short one at the top. This helps to ensure the line leaves the float tip close to the surface.



## Deadly method

Fishing breadflake on the hook and feeding mashed or liquidised bread is a really deadly running-water method. Mashed bread travels downstream much further than any particle feed like casters or maggots and in shallow, streamy water I have known it draw chub up into my swim from 70 or 80 yards downriver.

All this bread travels downstream in a very haphazard

manner with some particles sinking to the bottom and others being buoyed up in the current and just being carried along with the flow. Such variation means that you are unlikely to be presenting your hookbait incorrectly and also that it will be difficult for the fish to pick your hookbait out the mix and identify it as something to be avoided.

The other advantage is that achieving perfect bait presentation is 10 times easier with breadflake than it is with mag-

got or caster. Flake is a big, showy bait which fluffs up in the water and has a substantial bulk. If you pinch it on the hook correctly, this bulk is neutrally buoyant; it doesn't exactly float but it only just sinks with the weight of the hook. Such a bait really does go with the flow and that's why it so regularly accounts for big roach and chub.



Big bags of quality chub can be taken fishing flake under a Loafer and feeding mashed bread.



## Critical weight

It is perhaps obvious that lightness and buoyancy go together and are inseparable. What is not generally appreciated is that the actual weight of the float itself is critical for smooth, efficient casting with rod and reel. When I first started taking an interest in float construction, it was back in the 1950's and most floats on sale in the English tackle shops were made of cork and cane. They were so heavy that they provided another significant point of weight on the line. Indeed they weighed so much, you could have a float which itself weighted more than 3 grams only carrying 2.5 grams of shot.

Whatever shotting pattern you used, the large single point of weight provided by these heavy old floats always made casting very difficult and caused numerous tangles. It was this problem which caused me to start producing my own hand made floats from bird quills and Balsa wood and Elder pith.

Due to modern technology, it is now possible to blow mould hollow floats like Loafers with a thin plastic wall and only lots of air inside. The float has become very light in weight and therefore more buoyant, the largest of the five floats in this family now weighs just 2.5grams and carries 5 SSG weighing approximately 10 grams. Now the ultra light weight float follows the extra shot smoothly through the air, gaining casting distance and reducing the risk of tangles.

When fishing the largest Loafers, you have to select your reel line quite carefully.

The line has to be strong enough to handle such big floats, and to strike through them and into the fish, perhaps doing so at distances of 40 or 50 metres. At the same time, the heavier the line you use, the more its weight and the pressure of wind and water on thicker monofilament will pull even these big floats about in an unnatural way and upset your bait presentation.

As a very rough guide for long trotting work you can match the five sizes of Loafers available to these line diameters:

1ssg	0.13
2ssg	0.14
3ssg	0.15
4ssg	0.16
5ssg	0.17

*BEING BLOW MOULDED THESE FLOATS ARE LIGHTWEIGHT EXTREMELY BUOYANT AND MUCH TOUGHER THAN Balsa WOOD SO TOUGH THAT LINE WILL NOT CUT INTO THE PLASTIC BODY EVEN IF YOU ARE USING VERY TIGHT FLOAT RUBBERS*

*ALTHOUGH I WANT TO GET LOTS OF BULK SHOT DOWN NEAR THE HOOK TO PRESENT THE BAIT CORRECTLY IN A STRONG CURRENT I STILL LIKE TO RETAIN A SMALL MARKER SHOT IMMEDIATELY UNDER THE FLOAT IT IS EASIER THAN TRYING TO CHECK AND REMEASURE DEPTH AGAINST THE ROD AND MUCH EASIER TO MAKE PRECISE ADJUSTMENTS TO DEPTH IF YOU LEAVE A SMALL GAP OF SAY JUST 2cm BETWEEN THIS MARKER SHOT AND THE BOTTOM OF THE FLOAT YOU CAN SEE AT A GLANCE WHETHER THIS GAP HAS CLOSED AND ANY SLIPPAGE HAS OCCURRED*

**← STRONG FLOW —**

*A 4 gram OLIVETTE HAS BEEN USED TO BOTH CONCENTRATE THE WEIGHT AND IMPROVE CASTING THE ADDITIONAL SHOT REQUIRED TO SETTLE THE FLOAT DOWN TO THE TIP HAS BEEN PLACED IMMEDIATELY UNDERNEATH TO KEEP THE BULK IN ONE AREA AND ALSO TO PREVENT THE OLIVETTE FROM SLIPPING*

2 N°4

2 N°6

