

Puddle Chuckers - Shallow Water Crystals

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If you locate fish in shallow water, chances are they will be on the feed and therefore catchable... if you use a short and clear float. Use Puddle Chucker floats to catch fish like these - in just three feet of water, too!

Lots of fish can be caught in really shallow water and yet many anglers always look for deep water and don't feel confident fishing in anything under about 2 metres. Presumably this is because they feel it is just not deep enough to hold decent fish.

In practice even deep bodied species, like big Bream and big Carp are quite happy in under a metre of water and will often venture into really shallow places, less than half a metre deep. Admittedly they do feel slightly more vulnerable in these shallow

areas and are easier to scare, but I guarantee that nearly every time you find decent sized fish in really shallow water they will be on the feed.

The problem for the angler is how to drop a float on top of these fish without caus-



Unloaded Puddle Chuckers are ultra lightweight with individual floats only weighing a few grams. If you made the same thing in balsa and kept the paint finish thin & light, it would weigh about the same and carry much the same shot. The balsa model would however be far less durable, much more prone to damage and water absorption and could not of course be transparent.

ing too much disturbance and in the case of a shoal of fish, how to keep casting and striking without spooking them.

Obviously the float needs to be really short; say 10 cm (4") maximum, preferably unobtrusive, like modern crystal clear models, and attached bottom end only so you won't get any surface boil or splash on the strike. Puddle Chuckers are short, stumpy wagglers that fit the bill perfectly. They were originally designed for fishing on shallow commercial Carp puddles but

have proved extremely useful on a variety of lakes and rivers.

The Bream in the photograph were part of a big bag of fish all about the same size that came from a shallow area of river just one metre deep. The swim was a large area of slackish water immediately behind an island with quite a strong current on either side of the quieter water. All the Bream were caught on a caster and red worm cocktail fished under a 4AA No. 3 Puddle Chucker which was trapped between two SSG

shot with just a few No. 8 shot down the line. Casting distance was only about 20 metres, the rod was a standard 13ft Match with 3.2lb reel line and 0.13 (3lb) hook length.

This set up casts well and is virtually tangle free; importantly floats, which are fished trapped shot do not dive too deep. This is exactly the opposite of a loaded float with the weight built into the base. These can dive quite a long way down under the surface and could easily have scared the Bream in such a shallow swim.

Of course, you still have to feather down the trapped shot rig onto the surface and not simply allow it to splash down on a free running line. The only method of doing this effectively is to introduce your finger onto the lip of the spool and gently put the breaks on; interfering with the progress of the line as it spirals off the spool. I find this is much easier if you actually cast off the lip of the spool in the first place rather than casting with the line hooked over the index finger. In this particular swim behind the island I had the advantage of being able to over cast and draw the float back into position so the Bream were not disturbed at all by the float landing immediately above their heads.

The next problem when trying to compile a bag of fish from shallows is the disturbance created by repeated striking. A float attached top and bottom produces a significant splashy boil on the surface, particularly when you strike into big fish which don't initially move. That's why you need a short but streamlined little waggler which folds over completely on the strike and cuts back through the water with the

A N°3 4AA (3g+) PUDDLE CHUCKER IS ONLY ABOUT 11cm LONG AND BEING CRYSTAL CLEAR IS UNOBTRUSIVE IN SHALLOW WATER

THE COMBINATION OF A LARGE DIAMETER BUOYANT FLOAT TIP AND THE BAIT JUST DRAGGING ON THE BOTTOM ALLOWS YOU TO EXERCISE SOME LINE AND FLOAT CONTROL EVEN ON A WAGGLER RIG

BREAM LOVE BOTH CASTER AND RED WORM AND THE TWO TOGETHER CAN MAKE A VERY EFFECTIVE BAIT COMBINATION.

THE RED WORM IS PUT ON FIRST FOLLOWED BY THE CASTER. THIS HELPS PREVENT THE WORM FROM TURNING OVER THE HOOK POINT AND MASKING IT ON THE STRIKE

ON CASTING, LOADED FLOATS CAN DIVE QUITE DEEP BUT THE TRAPPED SHOT SYSTEM PREVENTS THIS. THE FLOAT DOESN'T DIVE AND STAYS NEAR THE SURFACE

IF WAGGLERS ARE SET UP WITH AT LEAST 80% OF THE SHOT AROUND THE FLOAT AND 20% OR LESS DOWN THEY WILL CAST VERY WELL AND WILL NOT BE INCLINED TO TANGLE

JUST THREE N°8 WERE USED TO GET THE BAIT DOWN TO PROVIDE A NICE FLUID BAIT PRESENTATION AND ACT AS INDICATORS FOR BITE REGISTRATION

absolute minimum of disturbance. The avoidance of this surface splash really does make the most enormous difference to the number of fish you can catch out of shallow swims, especially if they are big wise old Bream.

Of course, any sort of line management between rod top and float is much more difficult and limited with the waggler and its bottom end only attachment. With top and bottom fixing as used on Avons, Chubbers, Stick floats etc. you can hold back quite hard on the line and lift into the float controlling its speed and movement. With Wagglers, if you hold back too hard they tend to just sink out of sight.

If however, you use a really fat topped waggler and partly undershot it, leaving plenty of buoyancy in the tip you can hold back gently and exercise some line and float control without the float tip constantly disappearing. The No.3 Puddle Chucker has a tip which is actually a bigger diameter than a large Avon, so I was able to keep the line in the air and out of the fast current between the bank and the island. I left about 2cms ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") of the top protruding, which allowed me a reasonable amount of float control and line management. I also had the bait just dragging bottom and this helped to slow things down and provide an extra little bit of resistance against which to manage line. All in all, I was

able to hold the float in position and fish the slack quite effectively.

With the light terminal shooting of just three No.8's, the extra length of float tip left showing above the surface also gave me some chance to read the bites and differentiate between line bites and proper bites. I did not get it right all the time but only foul hooked one and managed to refrain from striking two or three obvious liners and avoided the extra risk of spooking the shoal. On the day this unobtrusive little waggler proved to be the perfect float for the job and helped me to coax fourteen big Bream out of just one metre of water.