

After another good winter selling all our stockfish, I went for a quick break to catch some catfish in Thailand, then onto France to catch Carp to 54lb. Now back to reality and a busy summer ahead.

With fishery management projects all over the country, including work at Woburn Abbey, and consultancy clients on the increase mainly due to low water levels and otter predation, as well as two fisheries that spent fortunes on big carp of suspect origin!! That now regret it as they are dropping like flies, I will keep busy this year trying to convince people that they can achieve the same things they are trying to do with far better results if they actually understand what they are doing!!

Stocking lots of big carp into a relatively small lake, from a foreign source, is high risk anyway. But to reduce possible problems you MUST drain and empty the lake first, removing all the existing fish.

It amazes me how people won't spend a few thousand pounds draining emptying and liming a lake in preparation for a big stocking, but will spend tens of thousands of pounds buying fish from unknown sources! The fact they may have paperwork is irrelevant.

Anyway, they eventually need help and occasionally call me! It's very difficult for a fishery owner to accept the need for help, accept that they have caused the mortality of large numbers of fish through a lack of knowledge. But its better they do seek help rather than not learn from their mistakes and do it all again.

Throughout the year I visit many venues that have had high mortality, and whilst I understand that people are desperate to make money and try and please anglers, I have limited sympathy when it comes to these situations because most of the time, it is people that think they can keep pumping fish into lakes, with crap water quality, no feeding, lots of matches each week and expect things to be fine! They never are and many venues restock as often as trout fisheries!

Trying to please every angler is impossible. With the greatest of respect, a lot of anglers have less than adequate ability in basic watercraft, let alone angling skills. Again it's hard to admit, as a fisherman you don't want advice, you think you know it all, you have the best gear.

The thing is, every day I am on the front line. Either spending time at the fishery, removing line from islands, watching anglers not fishing where the fish are because it's a bit windy!

Then moaning! Or I am netting lakes, looking at people stocks, trying to convince them that spending all their money on fish won't mean they make a good profit at the end of the year!!

A fishery recently asked me to quote for my aquatic plants, to fringe a new lake properly. This is a great idea, as it is the best form of bank protection; it looks great, and provides nutrients and cover. NO NEGATIVES! However when I pointed out that to do it properly would cost more than a few hundred pounds, he forgot the idea and admitted that he would rather spend the money on fish. This is a fishery that has already had its share of problems due to lack of basic understanding.

It is important to have a good balance of stocks in your lakes, don't get me wrong, I have a relatively high biomass in some of my waters, but I maintain water quality, use aquatic vegetation, monitor levels, crop the offspring annually and feed the fish!

It's not all about chucking fish about!!

ANDREW ELLIS

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