

This year has seen a shift in trends as far as I can see. So many more clubs have approached me to help them develop sustainable stocks, rather than simply throwing money at new fish every time a (useless) angler has a bad day!

I promote simple basic fishery management. Of course some lakes need new stock, with the furred and winged predators ever more present, I sell out of fish each winter, as do all reputable farmers. It seems many clubs have tried for years to please every member, but they are finding that to be impossible. I get grief from the match angling fraternity of some clubs, as they think my "mad" ideas to regularly crop juveniles to make space, to feed a small percentage of what the fish needs each week, to improve water quality so the fish live longer and improve condition, these basic methods are what makes a great fishery. Some simply want to get loads of bites with no effort, and of course there are venues for these people, but please don't moan to your club when you can't get a bite, it really is your own fault, not your clubs!

As summer approaches we are still booked out on many different jobs, planting new lakes, digging a new fishery, surveys and logistics. With the new cereal based pellet now available, of which I am very proud, I feel my company has grown to a point where I am a trusted source in the industry, and that shows when I am asked to talk at seminars, or more recently advise the Environment Agency on supplementary feeding, all of these things make it all worthwhile, and long may it continue!

The pellet has been a long time coming. I tried for years to get it made, I approached loads of companies, but all made it uneconomical. Then one of my old students and I were discussing it, and ended up using his farm as a base for the new venture, we developed a base blend of cereal and soya, mixed other essentials to it and got some made up. We fed our fish on it and were really happy, achieving great results for a non fishmeal pellet!

The whole point was to create something that people can throw in their lakes and not worry. It does break down faster than high oil pellets, but it's made as a supplementary feed, and at £450 per tonne, its much cheaper than fishmeal pellets. It has 25% protein, much more than base cereal.

The pellet is available through us, in 12mm and 6mm. It really is good stuff to feed your fish on, and very cost effective compared to other feeds.

Otter predation is killing sport on many lakes. To the extent that fencing companies are cropping up all over the place, which is a good thing as it will bring the cost down. Dave Marvell at Otterstop is the guy I would use. I know him well, help him develop his fishery, and know he does a good job.

Fencing seems the best answer, as there seems to be more otters around. Netting every day I do see much more signs of predation than a few years ago, but a fair percentage is always down to mink. One small fishery I stocked a long time ago lost all their big fish over a week to otters. Devastating, as they had got to an average of almost 30lb.

Predation is part of running a fishery, you must be aware of what's going on at your waters. just moaning about it won't do any good. As with all things, get on and do something about it. It's not the otters fault, and we won't get any help from government, so it's up to everyone involved to help prevent devastation of our specimen fish stocks.