

# Dreaming of giant rudd

Wouldn't it be fantastic to catch a huge rudd this summer? Top southern specialist Duncan Charman is your guide.

Evening on the lake, the rain's finally gone... but will the rudd feed?



## ANGLER FACT FILE

**Name:** Duncan Charman  
**Age:** 44  
**Hometown:** Aldershot  
**Sponsors:** Korum and Sonubaits

There are few more exciting moments in angling than watching a giant rudd slide gracefully over a landing net. Golden flanks and bright-red fins make the rudd one of the most beautiful of all Britain's freshwater fish.

Sadly, it's an all-too-rare sight these days, but believe me there's never been a better time to catch a rudd, and a big one too.

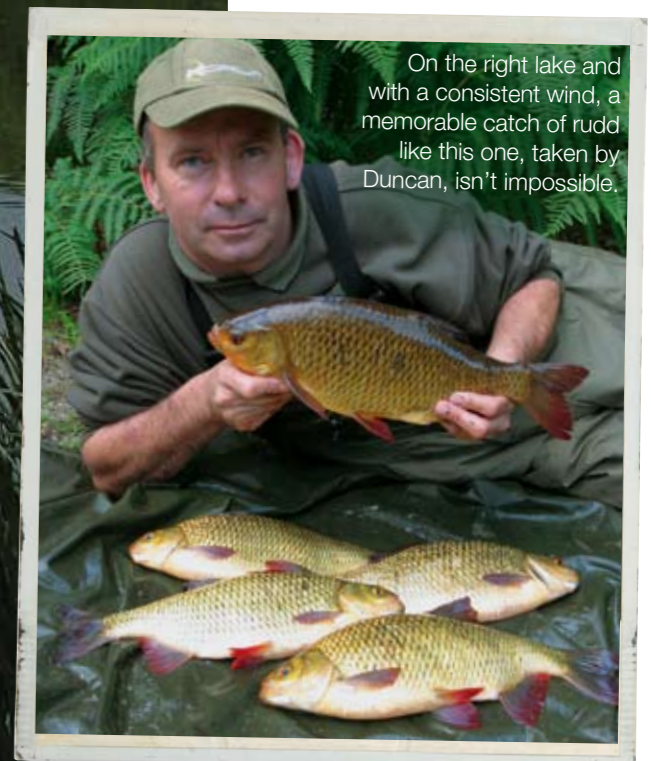
Over the past couple of seasons, I've been fortunate enough to catch a number of rudd over the magical 2lb mark but, if truth be told, I've been targeting the species for far longer than this.

So why have I only started to reap the rewards now, when I'm still fishing the same venues and adopting the same tactics?

I'll tell you why: I've caught more and bigger rudd since I've come to understand the species better, and I've come to realise just how temperamental they are to the tiniest change in the weather.

So let's start with two approaches that are in complete contrast to each other. Both can be used on any venue throughout the country and successfully catch you your fair share of fish.

A word of warning, though: if you're a lazy angler, I suggest you look at species other than rudd. Fishing for rudd is far from relaxing!



On the right lake and with a consistent wind, a memorable catch of rudd like this one, taken by Duncan, isn't impossible.

## THE FINE ART OF FLOAT FISHING

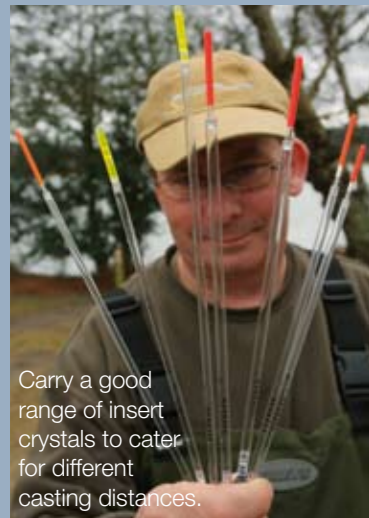
A rudd's mouth is designed to intercept items of food as they fall through the water as well as taking floating food from the surface. It follows, then, that float fishing is a supremely effective way of catching them.

Waggler fishing is ideal as the bulk of the shot is placed around the base of the float leaving just one or two tiny droppers to sink the hook bait slowly to the bottom.

### Maggots are my favourite bait, although they are expensive; sweetcorn is a great alternative.

Drennan Loaded Insert Crystal Wagglers have stood the test of time and when they were first introduced some 20 years ago, they took my waggler fishing to a new level. The Drennan Crystal series has an outstanding casting ability as well as having the versatility of being able to change the colour of the tip. The removable tip also allows a Starlight to be inserted, making night fishing and spotting bites at distance an absolute doddle.

Casting a waggler can be made easier by having a good float rod plus a reel that creates good line lay on the spool. Now I favour the Preston Innovations Carbon Excel 13ft Series float rod and a Preston PXR 3000, which not only has great line lay but incorporates a



Carry a good range of insert crystals to cater for different casting distances.

silky-smooth clutch that might be needed if a tench comes along.

To get the best from a session on the float you will need to keep plenty of bait falling through the water, so having a few catapults to hand is vital. Whatever you use, the amount of work they will be put through will see them almost certainly break.

Maggots are my favourite bait, although they are expensive; if you want to keep the cost down then sweetcorn is a great alternative. Pellets can also be used in conjunction with maggots – as long

as you keep feed falling through the water then eventually the rudd should turn up and turn on.

Most venues that contain specimen rudd are shallow, with reed-fringed margins, so a good set of chest waders would give you an advantage along with long banksticks and a bait-waiter.

I also use an old platform, which I put in the water and then place my seatbox on top. Sitting on a

cushioned seatbox for hours on end is far more comfortable than standing in the water and will inevitably make you fish better.

Feeding is the key to catching rudd consistently and you will need to get into a routine of catapulting feed – maggots or pellets – then casting over the top.

Some people like to set their float at half-depth and then feed. This is okay but sometimes you find that rudd will feed close to the bottom, so approaching your fishing in this manner may cost you fish. I much prefer to set my float at the depth of the water and reel in when the hook bait reaches the bottom, before casting out again.

Leaving your float out and spraying bait around will only catch you tench, so don't get lazy as the more you work at it, the more you will catch.

I've read about anglers using a 'puddle chucker' with a boilie suspended underneath in the hope that this will sort the bigger fish out and although this may work on the odd occasion, what I have found is that if you catch a small fish first cast then you will catch small fish all day!

## FLOAT TIPS FOR A BIG RUDD



**01** Squeeze locking shot around fine silicone rubber tubing to avoid line damage.



**02** Replace the tips in crystal wagglers with Night Lights to keep on fishing into darkness.



**03** A small sliver of rig foam is hooked before two red maggots for hook-bait buoyancy.



**04** Maggots can be supplemented by pellets for loose feeding – just keep it going in!



**05** Fluorocarbon makes a great hooklength, while you need a good, reliable reel line.



A 2lb rudd can truly be classed as the fish of a lifetime.

## POPPED-UP MAGGOTS ON A HELICOPTER RIG

This is a devastating tactic that will work all-year round for rudd feeding on or close to the bottom.

The helicopter rig sounds complex but believe me it's not, and once you master the art of tying up very short hook links you will probably never need to look at another rig for rudd again.

When using this rig I like to create a feeding area by spodding some hemp and maggots out. Clipping the main line of your rods in the reel clips so it's exactly the same distance as your spod will ensure accuracy and by tying a marker on your line just off the rod tip will allow you to reset this distance after each fish is landed.

It may seem weird that I spod bait out but what this is designed to do is to get other species of fish, normally tench, rooting up the bottom for the freebies. In turn this creates an area of coloured water with lots of particles being wafted around just off the bottom.

All this disturbance will attract rudd, who, by nature, will investigate this area and while doing so find lots of maggots suspended off the bottom, which they will readily grab. As they compete against each other to grab these free offerings, one will inevitably grab your hook bait and as it lifts up of the bottom the hook will embed in the bottom lip making this a devastating self-hooking rig.

The helicopter is also a fantastic rig for tench, which will readily intercept a bait off the bottom, so although it's not as selective as float fishing, a big mixed bag is possible once a feeding zone has been created.

If you want to avoid the tench or slow these down you can tie up a longer hook link of maybe a foot or two. However, I have never found a suspended bait in mid-water – either under a float or popped up from a feeder – to be as effective as one falling through the water or suspended two inches off the deck.

## THE HELICOPTER RUDD RIG

Small maggot feeder tied on below the helicopter rig.

Helicopter created from two float stops trapping a size 22 swivel. To create an anti-tangle set-up a micro sleeve forms a boom.

Size 16 hook tied to 0.135mm fluorocarbon hook link.

Buoyant maggots are a great hook bait, but instead of using a buoyant plastic maggot on the hook, which is the obvious answer, I like to cut a small sliver of Gardner rig foam shaped like a maggot and place this on to the hook before two real ones are added. Rudd are very good at realising what is real and what is fake, quickly spitting plastic out.

Try not to make the bait too buoyant; ideally all you want is for the hook and bait to lift off the deck slowly. Get this wrong or become lazy and place your bait on the bottom, and your catch results will

be greatly reduced as rudd find it almost impossible to pick a bait up off the bottom! When fishing this rig I would still recommend you to constantly spray maggots over the top of your rig because rudd swim in shoals and intercepting a shoal of specimen rudd is always a possibility.

If you do decide to approach your rudd fishing in this manner then make sure you fish a tight line. Keep your main line close to the lake bed by sinking your rod tips or maybe adding a Gardner flying back-lead a few feet up your line. If you fish this rig on slack lines then not only will

the hook bait look unnatural but the bolt, self-hooking properties will be lost.

Test the buoyancy of your hook bait in the margins as well as watching the way the rig acts on a slack line. When fishing tight lines you will need to make sure that you use a reel with a Baitrunner facility and that this is slackened right off, as a tight clutch will see your short hook links constantly broken. It all seems very technical but once again it comes down to making sure everything is balanced and working correctly.

switching on or off as quickly as flicking a light switch. One night they will be queuing up while the next you will be scratching your head, questioning if the water even contains rudd.

It's not just the rudd who switch off; the tench are equally as sensitive. Getting all the pieces of the puzzle to fit may take a long time when targeting specimen rudd but every now and again you will arrive at a lake and find quality fish in front of you that are easy to catch. Unfortunately there will be many a session when all you can catch is tiny rudd... or nothing at all.



Wagglers fishing for rudd isn't a time to relax; the action can be fast and furious.

## WHEN TO TARGET RUDD

Evenings are without a doubt the best time to fish for rudd. Hot, sticky still evenings have always been seen as the ideal conditions, but what I have found is that you need a wind direction that has been constant for a few days, ideally a south or southwesterly.

Rudd seem to get into a routine when the wind direction stays the same, becoming extremely predictable. However, if after a few days of consistent conditions the wind changes direction, and it only has to be by a few degrees, then the rudd will switch off, almost disappearing and taking days to recover.

Most anglers also think that rudd are a summer species – wrong! They are certainly active throughout summer but, as I recently discovered, rudd will feed aggressively throughout the year, including the coldest months. All you need to do, as previously mentioned, is get a constant wind direction and rudd can be caught during any month of the year.

### FIVE RUDD MUST-DOS

- 01 Float fishing is by far the most productive method in summer.
- 02 Constantly spray maggots and cast over the top for the best results.
- 03 Fish into darkness as this is when specimen rudd are most active.
- 04 Watch the weather for a period of consistent wind direction.
- 05 If you catch a big rudd early then make the most of it. Fish for as long as you can – these days are rare.

### VENUE FILE

**FRENHAM GREAT POND**  
Frensham Great Pond covers 60 acres, while the smaller pond is 30 acres. Both have a sandy bottom and lots of reed mace, bullrush and yellow iris in the margins. Each lake holds a good stock of tench and rudd with carp, perch, roach and pike backing these up all to specimen size. Amazingly, neither of these lakes seem to be over pressured, apart from the first few weeks of the new season – probably due to their temperamental nature. Fishing isn't always easy but with the right conditions tench to 6lb and 7lb are possible.

The rudd fishing can be frustrating, but 2lb specimens are realistic with the occasional three-pounder a possibility. Perch are making an excellent comeback in the Great Pond with loads of two-pounders showing.

**Tickets:** £70 per year and concessions are available. When you consider that a multitude of other prolific lakes and rivers are included in this price, it makes the ticket an absolute bargain.

**Details:** [www.famhamanglingsociety.com](http://www.famhamanglingsociety.com) or call 'The Creel' on 01252 320871 for more details.

