



DES TAYLOR

THE WEATHER'S WARMING UP, SO HERE'S A GUIDE TO GET AT THE WEEKEND. WHAT I THINK IS THE BEST FISH CAUGHT

MY TOP 10 TIPS FOR SPRING



THE taste of spring is sweet when you can catch mirror carp like this in pleasant surroundings. Follow my guide and you could do the same.

THIS must have been the longest winter for over a decade and with it has come some pretty poor fishing, to say the least. I've certainly had my toughest few months for a while.

The rivers have been low, clear and cold and the temperatures on most stillwaters have jumped around like a yo-yo! But, thankfully, we can consign those days to history. The daffodils are now out in the garden, blackbirds are collecting nesting materials and it's still light at 7pm. In other words, spring is here.

All the summer species will be starting to move. My mate Rob Hales just told me that after weeks of slow fishing on The Monument three 30lb carp have come out in 24 hours, with a further six twenties too.

I've spent years on the bank at this time of year and here are my top 10 tips to catching in spring...

1 Although it's still a bit cool, carp will now start to turn their noses towards shallow water. The spring sun will soon warm these areas and they'll be the first to have a look.

The first drop off after the shallows is the place to target because the fish move in this area. Try a bait popped up off the bottom. If the deep water is 7ft and the shallow water 3ft, try presenting a boilie 4ft up. Often the carp will be swimming at the same depth when they leave the shallows.

2 The water on lakes and pits is still clear, so lines will have an effect on the movement of the fish – therefore, back lead all rods. Just as important is not to put too many rods in the same area. Remember, one rod and one line in the right spot is better than four rods at this time of year.

3 If you're fishing day sessions for carp in clear water, three casts with heavy leads can kill a swim for half the session and sometimes all day. This is when a bait boat is superb. I remember fishing in Oxford a few years ago and before

the boat could return to the bank I had a 25lb mirror grab the bait. What would have happened had I cast right on his head?

4 Let's move from carp to tench. Another great spring favourite is to pre-bait if possible. Buy old casters and maggots from the tackle dealer (you should get them cheap), add a tin of sweetcorn and a mix brown crumb and Corn Steep Liquor Meal 50/50. Try a drop of CSL Liquid too. I would put in a bucket of bait each evening for three nights.

5 When you're tench fishing, ring the changes between different baits. You might catch six on casters before it all goes quiet, but a switch to corn or maggots can keep the fish coming. If you use just one bait all day you will more than likely struggle.

6 Tench love maple flavouring on everything. Put 5ml in with your Corn Steep Liquor before mixing it in with the groundbait. Then put some in with the maize to add to the maggots and even add 2ml to a tin of corn. I promise you they love it. SBS and John Baker make the best maple extract I have ever used.

7 Roach are one of my favourite species at any time of the year and in spring they start feeding well off the bottom. They start on the deck and, after an hour of feeding, begin to compete for food and 'climb' over each other to get to the bait. So come up in the water.

You'll need to keep changing the depth to

stay in touch. I have taken 30lb-plus bags of roach, but have altered my rig a dozen times. Hard work, but worth it.

8 As soon as I get my first bite, or sign of roach, I stop fishing and introduce a couple of catapults of hempseed, a few maggots and casters. Then I will introduce bait little and often for the next half-an-hour before fishing.

Roach enter your peg hesitantly and one lost fish at this stage can scare them off. Get them feeding for a period at the start then gain their confidence and you'll put a good bag together. It takes discipline, but it works.

9 Crucians will be coming out of hibernation now but they can be finicky with conventional baits, so try a tiny piece of luncheon meat on a size 18 hook.

I remember fishing Willow Park one year and Kenny Collins tipped me off. Now I never go crucian fishing without a tub of finely-diced meat.

10 My last tip is for river anglers. So often the sport is slow on the first few days of the open season and very often it's because the fish haven't seen an angler's bait for nigh-on six months.

Bypass this situation by going to your favourite pegs from now and start feeding a little bait. A couple of kilos of mixed particles, pellets, boilies, old maggots and casters are perfect

Priming a few swims is well worth the effort rather than just rolling up on June 16 and expecting to empty the river.

