

Otter Nonsense

Good morning Mr Paisley,

I do hope you're well. This letter isn't sent as a criticism and I don't expect to see it published, however, I felt that I should write to you with reference to a statement you made in the May 2011 edition of *Carpworld*.

In your *Carp Leader* column you stated that 'otters were hunted to near extinction in this country because they are a menace'. That's not actually true. The truth is that during the early-1970s otter-hunting packs across the UK noticed a dramatic decline in the number of otters. Following a joint study between the Master of Otter Hounds Association and The Mammal Society, it was concluded that the reason for the decline in otter numbers was due to changes in farming practice, mainly the widespread use of new chemicals. In 1977 the Master of Otter Hounds Association decided unilaterally and voluntarily to stop hunting, and the Scots followed suit in 1978. Hunting with hounds has never been about a scorched earth policy around whatever animal is being pursued. People who hunt with hounds have far too much respect for their quarry for that to happen.

I am 100% behind your campaign against otters and cormorants. The RSPB's attitude towards the protection of birds of prey has left them blinkered to the plight of so many other birds. Their thinking is all skewed. Indeed, it's my belief that in 100 years' time our attitudes towards otters, cormorants, badgers, buzzards and sparrowhawks will be viewed with perplexion. They are all menaces to other species and to our ecosystem, and failure to control their numbers is a sad reflection on the Disney-fication of our countryside.

Keep up the excellent work. I loved *Carp Season* and have enjoyed all your writings for well over 25 years. *Carpworld* is head and shoulders above the competition. I look forward to your new book.

Yours sincerely, Chris Norkett.

Editor's Reply:

Hi Chris,
Many thanks for the letter, which I am quite happy to use in *Carpworld*; it is constructive and puts the position into perspective. Thanks for taking the trouble to write, for the kind words, and the information.
Best regards, Tim P.

Anglers Against Head in the Sand Brigade

I am chairman and head bailiff of Shropshire Anglers Federation and Shropshire Angling Development Board, responsible to some 2,000 permit holders and 19 clubs. I'm equally responsible to Shropshire County Council and Shrewsbury Council, our riparian owner.

So I feel justified in my remarks in this text with a rallying call to arms with regard to the increasing problem of the cormorant and goosander unsustainable/unnatural population levels.

The rallying call being the national vote of all clubs/commercial to announce that due to five years of talk with nothing being achieved, other than pacifying remarks and little or no action, we intend

to abstain from the purchase of rod licences for the year 2012! We too can dig in our heels in and put our heads in the sand.

Why do I say RSPB alleged neglect of duty? I will tell you! Taking a four-mile stretch of the Shrewsbury Severn as an example, starting five years ago I could have shown you 10 pairs of breeding heron in a well-known and established heronry – last season there were two pairs breeding. Over the same period, 10 pairs of kingfishers were breeding in the stretch – last year, one pair! The RSPB tell me that specific bird



populations fluctuate periodically and these relate to other stimuli, such as water quality. The RSPB stands behind the Environment Agency River Basin Management Plan for the River Severn, which shows that 60% of rivers in the catchment area are in moderate, poor, or bad condition for fish. Only around 25% are in 'good' condition and 15% in 'high'. The problems listed include diffuse agricultural pollution, point source pollution from sewage works, physical modification causing barriers to fish migration fish urbanisation, physical modifications to land drainage impacting on dissolved oxygen, diffuse pollution from urban runoff, the presence of alien species, and a host of new chemicals in the water, to name but a few, but

"If I were a farmer and allowed slurry to enter a waterway and it killed fish and wildlife, I would be up in the courts fighting a hefty fine for culpable neglect. So where is the white line here?"

it makes no mention of birds eating fish, which seems to be the only change to the river I have noted over the last decade and, as such, my case is unfounded.

Excuse me, the problem did not exist in the year 2000 when the EU created the Basin Management Plan.

Disregard for a moment the effect on fish populations, which is of no concern to the RSPB. They allow the cull of the UK ruddy duck population, for one reason only – to protect the white-headed duck in SPAIN! They protect the cormorant and goosander at the expense of weaker population

species, such as the heron and the kingfisher. Er, sorry, should I write that again? Or should I write The Royal Society of the Protection of Cormorant and Goosander?

I call it alleged culpable neglect! If I were a farmer and allowed slurry to enter a waterway and it killed fish and wildlife, I would be up in the courts fighting a hefty fine for culpable neglect. So where is the white line here, because I cannot see it.

Have Angling Trust got the ability to take on this action? Have the RSPB got the money to meet the damages claim if they lose, because every man and his dog can show financial loss in the angling community, both in stock and revenue?

No, enough talk on this subject, action is what we need. The loss of £28 million of revenue year in 2012 should focus the government's mind. A stiff claim for damages up the RSPB drainpipe would serve to force them to think and reconsider.

Five years ago, the EU put the cormorant on the wanted list; Slovenia pays a 40-euro bounty per head. Five years on, our Mr Richard Benyon, Minister for Agriculture (DEFRA) agreed to make cull licence applications less of a burden to obtain. This in itself is a government recognition of a national problem.

Mr RSPB ruffles his feathers and digs in his heels. Although supported by taxpayers to the tune of £20 million annually, in a recent diatribe with West Midlands Region Head Office, they see no evidence of fish stock loss attributable to

the cormorant or goosander, and requested a meeting in Shrewsbury, presumably for me to prove my point. No, no way, there is no need, this is a national problem and they need to be made aware of this national problem. So I say to you in the national angling community, it is now time for you to stand up and be counted. Simply email the RSPB West Midlands H.O. with your experience of fish stock and fry loss. Let us not forget to protect the Spanish white-headed duck; the RSPB gave way to the eradication of thousands of these birds at a cost of 3.5 million. We just want to cull!

I say to these chaps, stick your fingers in your ears by all means. We are about to shove a charge up the breech and you are guaranteed to hear it.

However, I make a clear distinction here. Although I feel my position as chairman of various organisations gives justified reason to start off this action, in so doing I clearly state that the aforementioned views are not to be construed as the official position of the committee of the Shropshire Anglers Federation. They may well agree; I hope they do. Any comments/support to be forwarded. Let's have 'em! yourfishneedyou@gmail.com
Sincere regards,
Sir John Roberts of Kandahar
Chairman/head bailiff/Shropshire
Anglers Federation

Editor's Reply:

Dear Sir John,
Forgive me for the delay in reacting to your email of 14th April, which is of huge interest to me and many others. I'm reacting on two fronts (three really). The first is that I am the chairman of the recently formed national organisation The Predation Action Group. We are meeting later today and I will put your email before the

committee for their reaction.

Secondly, I run two carp waters in Shropshire, namely Marton Mere (nom de guerre The Mangrove) and Birch Grove, and feel that we should in some way be affiliated to your angling organisations. How do we go about this?

Thirdly, I am publishing editor of Carpworld and, as such, am devoting as much space as possible to the predation issue. I will be using your 'Head in the Sand' call to arms in the next (June) issue of Carpworld.

I'm taking the liberty of attaching the pdf describing the composition and aims of the Predation Action Group, and in this connection will be in touch with you again shortly.

All I would add at this point is that in addition to cormorants and goosanders, otters are becoming an absolute nightmare for carp fisheries in Shropshire, and on a national basis. The whole predation issue is out of control because of some weird philosophy that if it has feathers or fur then it has to be protected. Seemingly that takes no account of livelihoods, or the balance of nature.

Forgive me for the delay in reacting to your email, I am juggling too many balls in the air at this time of year!

Best regards, Tim Paisley.

"The next day Terry seemed a little fed up, so I got him to put one rod on my little baited area beside a small island and at 8.00 p.m. it happened for him – a chunky mirror of 38lb 2oz!"

Top Result for Carpworld Competition Winner

Dear Carpworld,
You may recall I won a Viper X Range Bait Boat in a recent competition in Carpworld, and thought I would drop you a note to let you know about my first trip using it.

My friend Terry and I went to Pavyotts, a place I like because you can take your car to the swim and there are wooden shelters from which to fish (I am 77 years of age now, but reasonably fit).

Terry and I settled in a wide swim and baits and freebies were duly despatched to likely areas using the Viper X Range. It's great to have the free offerings just where you want them. No runs came the first night but next day I had a grass carp of 17lb 3oz and Terry had fish of 6lb 15oz and 12lb 1oz.

The following day I had two fish, a lovely common of 24lb 7oz and a linear of 31lb 1oz. Terry had

a fish come off.

The next day Terry seemed a little fed up, so I got him to put one rod on my little baited area beside a small island and at 8.00 p.m. it happened for him – a chunky mirror of 38lb 2oz!

The bait boat was fine and we have now bought a solar-powered charger, which should prove useful.

Thank you very much for arranging the competition in Carpworld, which is full of useful information and good articles. With best wishes,
Don Wheeler.

COMPETITION WINNERS

from April's issue, no. 247

Angling Lines Competition

The one winner, who will receive a 2011 drive-and-survive trip to Beaupreire in France for one angler, including ferry crossing for a car is **Mr Paul Parham**, Pulborough, West Sussex.

Fox Competition

The two winners who will each receive a Fox FX luggage prize package worth £396.91 are:

Doug Ironside, Eastbourne, East Sussex, and **Alan Brown**, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Furzebray Lakes Competition

The two winners each receive a 48-hour ticket to Furzebray Lakes in North Devon.

Mr C. Hawkes, Bridgewater, Somerset.
Ross Clayton, Epping, Essex.

The Cranium Crushing Crossword

Sponsored by Nutrabait

The three winners who each receive 5kg of boilies from Nutrabait, plus a tub of pop-ups to match are: **Will Waterton**, Lancaster, Lancs; **Philip Gadd**, Lynton, North Devon; **Liam Walsh**, London.



The Winning Wordsearch

Sponsored by Fox

The three winners each receive a Fox FX Accessory Bag, Glug Pot Case and Cooler Bag: **Graeme Vanderhoven**, Peterborough, Cambs; **Jake Dean Foley**, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham; **John Baxter**, Nuneaton, Warks.

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