

Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



A well deserved prize? By Gordon Mills



It all began last October, when Eric Ramsay, a well known Scottish piker, and myself, an unknown Scottish piker, went for a weekends fishing at a Highland loch.

We had used my 12ft boat as a means of transport, to get to the other side of the loch as we never really meant to use the boat for fishing. So, we bivvied up overnight, and during the course of the next 24hr period, I had a small 6lb fish on a Big 'S' in the afternoon.

Eric had a small fish at 4am, then a 12lb fish at 10am. As Eric was on nightshift we had agreed to leave at midday. I was still gagging for a double, so we packed everything in the boat except my lure rod. I put a hot orange 9cm floating rapala to troll back to the car. We hadn't gone 100meters when the rod bowed round and line started fizzing off the reel. I knew it wasn't a snag as we were in 30 feet of water. Eric immediately cut the electric motor.

It wasn't long before we realised that this was a big fish. I couldn't do a thing with it as it just stayed down deep, circling the boat. Unfortunately, the rod holdalls were the first thing we packed away in the boat. Eric managed to get a net out but not the handle. About twenty minutes had gone by and the fish was tiring. This was the first time we had seen her. I drew the fish over to the boat then disaster struck. A wave hit the boat at the same time Eric was trying to net the fish. The hooks got caught in the net and she pulled free. Just one of those things eh!

Eric was more gutted than I was. It was no ones fault, "Honest Eric I was not in the slightest bit pissed off at you".

So I drove home thinking about what could have been. Now I believe that big pike are territorial, and always planned to go back for another try. I spent a weekend there in December with another fishing buddy, Bob Brough, We both blanked but had a good night in the bar of the local hotel. It's the kind of place where you can leave your gear and bivvie for a few hours, safe in the knowledge that it will still be there. Well, reasonably safe! The third visit was on 17.02.01 with another good mate and fellow PAC member, Doug Martin and we arranged to meet with Stu Sutherland and his mate John Forret early the next morning of the 18th. Doug and I bivvied up in the same area where I had lost the big fish the previous October.

While I pitched the tent Doug set about pre-baiting the area with about 10lbs of rainbow trout fillets that had been in his freezer since the old King was alive! I had some huge herrings, about 12-14oz apiece and cast two of them out over the drop-off, which was 30ft at 30 yards. It was frosty by 5pm so we lit a small fire, had something to eat and a beer or eight!..

At about 7.30am Doug woke me up as one of my alarms had given a few beeps. I quickly pulled on my boots and ran, half sleeping and hungover, down to my rods. This was one of those lazy takes. I always imagine a group of smaller fish to be like a pack of dogs, one gets a food item and does a runner, hence screaming runs. On the other hand, lazy takes are often a big fish, (nothing to run away from) just making herself comfortable. So I picked up the rod and pulled into the fish. I knew it was a big one because the water temp was 37 degrees, very cold and this girl was taking line off a fairly tight clutch. I just had to let her go where she wanted under steady pressure for about 25 minutes, at which point she just stopped fighting. I drew her over to the bank where Doug was waiting with the net. At this point we thought it was a big double or even a twenty.

What we saw when I peeled back the mesh just blew us away. This girl was enormous. This was our first

experience with a monster of this size. Meanwhile, Stu and John had arrived, which was just as well as my scales only go to 30lb and we didn't have a camera either. Stuart helped me get her unhooked, and 30 seconds later she was in the weigh sling dangling from Stu's 50lb Reuben Heaton's, 36lb exactly.

A few pics. and she was back in the water. She didn't swim off right away, (I think she fancied me actually) and 30 minutes later we were still stepping over her.

Eventually she swam off to sulk. I reckon that fish will make 40lb next year. I won't be chasing her anymore though. I hope she doesn't get caught again, at least until she has spawned.

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