

Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



Monster Snoek!



Sunday the 6th of March 2005 will always be a memorable day in my fishing life. It was the day that I caught one of the most beautiful pike, I had ever seen. She was in top condition, perfect fins and her markings could have been painted. I admit that I opened the pictures a hundred times that next week, to be sure that I wasn't dreaming and even now, when I see the pictures again I am tempted to dream about that day in March.

At that moment I did not suspect that the pictures would go all over the world, whether I liked it or not. After being on the front page of a magazine in the States, almost two years later, my picture was also used on the front page of an angling magazine in the UK. Not only was some of the information incorrect, all kinds of people had an opinion about the fish. In both cases they used the pictures without my permission and it was obvious that they didn't research very well. I can assure you that I wasn't very happy.

Just after the catch I had sent the pictures to a couple of friends and fishing mates and before I knew it the pictures went around the Dutch fishing scene and so on. A little naïve of me probably. At that time I was also asked to write something about the catch but I decided not to because my

passion is fishing and not being some trophy hunter in magazines or on the internet. I did allow some people to use the picture in a book just because I liked the way the pictures were presented.

After the publication in Angling Times I was contacted by Chico Winterton on a forum on a Dutch pike web-site. He told me about it and offered me to tell my story of the catch. After receiving some PAC magazines and thinking about it I decided to tell my story, the real story.

My name is Ewout Blom, I'm 27 years old and born in Rotterdam. At the moment I live in IJmuiden (close to Amsterdam) and lucky to be hatchery manager of a Dover sole farm in the Netherlands.

You could say my life is dominated by fish, because during my spare time I can be found on the big lakes and rivers in the Netherlands fishing for pike, zander and asp. When it comes to fishing I can say that we have the same kind of drive: we are not easily stopped by bad weather, low temperatures, rain, lack of sleep or predators that just do not seem to be there. By spending a lot of time on the water you learn more and more about the behaviour of fish, the different fishing techniques and quite importantly you learn more about your fishing spots in combination with the season.

I like to fish for big pike! It is not that I don't enjoy catching small pike, but for practical reasons you have to use heavier tackle. Catching smaller pike on light tackle can be fun but I prefer to catch the bigger fish. I like the thrill when a big pike takes the lure or just follows it. Sometimes seeing a (big) pike chasing the lure can be so much fun, ok you will not always catch it, but that's fishing.

In the Netherlands we are blessed with a huge variety of fishing waters. From big rivers and lakes to the smaller lakes and canals. You can catch plenty of pike (if the visibility is ok) everywhere. For the best chance to hook a big pike we spent most of our time on the big lakes and rivers. I dare to say that you can find big pike (catch and release) on almost every lake or river in the Netherlands: it is the skill of the fisherman to catch it. Okay, there is always some luck involved, but if you have the right tackle, spirit and experience everybody can catch big pike.

mates we knew that it was quiet hard to catch pike. Imagine our surprise when Michel hooked a nice pike after just 20 minutes of fishing. It was a beautiful fish of 116 cm and 14kg. I still remember that we said to each other, "Difficult water? No way, it is the easiest water to catch big pike!!!"

Ten fishing days later the spirit was a little lower, I hadn't hooked a single pike and Michel only managed to land two small jacks. It had been fairly cold that week, on the shores you could still see the remains of the snow, we had a couple of days earlier. The water temperature was still fairly low, a little over 2 degrees but the weather was nice and clear.

When trailering the boat we saw that the only other pikers were some fishing mates of ours. On the water we discussed where to fish, we decided to go to the part where Michel caught the pike on the first day. Five hours of trolling and casting later we hadn't seen any action and we decided to go back to the part where most fish are caught. When we enjoyed a nice warm cup of soup we saw our friends motoring towards us, four hands were up in the sky, they had seen some action or were joking us. It turned out that they had a super morning, they had caught 4 pike, two smaller ones and two big ones, 112cm and 123, the last one weight 16 kg - 35.2lb.

Of course we were happy for them but when they sailed away in search of even more pike I looked at Michel and said, "Today something must happen otherwise I will go nuts". All these days on the water and it can be cold on those big lakes in winter. Around four, our friends headed home and we were the only ones left except one boat fishing for zander. That morning I had noticed quiet a lot of baitfish in a certain area, we talked it over and decided to fish it before we would leave. Yeah, some success. Michel landed a pike of 75 cm. We put it back quickly and continued.

Somehow everything felt right; it was nice and quiet on the water, almost no wind, just the two of us in a boat. I was looking at my second rod when I saw it bend a little, then it came straight before it bent completely, something had taken the Super Shad Rap perch. "Yes. Fish." I yelled, and took the rod from its support. I could immediately feel that it was a good fish, the heavy weight and the way a big pike can shake its head are so typical.

Because we were going with the wind Michel could easily reel in the other three rods. Some thirty meters from the boat the fish shook its head on the surface, before it went down again. "That's a good fish" I told Michel. "I already know", he said! The next 5 minutes I had to really pull hard to get the thing next to the boat.

When Michel managed to get the fish on board, we could both see that it was a fairly big fish, but maybe from the cold and long day on the water we were both surprised to see the fish had a length of 127 cm, unbelievable!!! Quickly we weighed the fish, almost 20 kg, 19.5 (42.9lb) to be precise.

I lifted the fish from the weighing mat and Michel started to take pictures. After some pictures it got harder and harder to lift the fish. What a weight. After the pictures I quickly put her back in the water and as if nothing happened she almost immediately swam away, leaving a very happy angler behind.

"This is the pike of a lifetime" I said, after releasing a shout of happiness over the water. When Michel positioned the boat back on the drop off, we both sat in the boat still fishing but not believing what had just happened.

At half past five we called it a day, but not before we made a call to our fishing mates. They were also shocked and told us that they could not wait before they would see the pictures that night. I still remember their remarks, "I already knew you had caught a big fish but when I saw the pictures I knew enough".... My first pike on the lake, immediately a good one!! Since that day in March a lot of fishing days went by, bringing new experiences and a lot of pleasure.

I still think it is all about that, having fun. I don't care if you use this or that technique or if you catch big or small fish, as long as you enjoy the thing you are doing.

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