

Darren Cox

The slider is a positive and thoroughly rewarding method and a proven match winner in the right hands. Darren Cox tells you everything you need to know.

The Slider

I was privileged to have a very traditional upbringing, as far as angling is concerned. Being a Yorkshireman “things were grim oop north,” and we had to try every trick in the book to wrinkle out whatever we could.

A lot of the venues I fished were also very deep; the Yorkshire Ouse was one such venue, and a fond but difficult hunting ground for me in my teens when I started fishing opens with the Leeds lads. To catch fish, especially roach, I had to master the slider in both its top-and-bottom and waggler form. The slider is a method that a lot of people shy away from, as it appears to be very complex, but it really is a simple method if you follow some basic rules – and like all methods in angling you must practise it. After that it becomes easy and will become another weapon in your armoury for the future.

best set-ups, your rig must be simple and uncomplicated. There’s no room for fancy shotting patterns because they’ll simply cause major headaches, with tangles that are impossible to unravel! Depending on the size of the float (determined by distance and depth), I’ll use SSG or AAA shot for the bulk; I first thread fine Drennan pole-float silicone tubing onto the line, then pinch the shot on to that. This protects the line and lets me slide the bulk easily if needed.

The bulk sits 40cm to 60cm from the hook, and I’ll normally have three evenly spread dropper shot. These are either No8s or, if I’m fishing more positively, No6s. These are relatively large, but you need to be able to read what’s going on with these bigger floats; smaller shot will have no real influence on the rig. My last weight on the line is a Cralusso micro swivel, to which I attach a hooklength

depend on conditions, tow, distance and the depth where you’re fishing. Remember that the fish must move the bulk to get a bite, which can sometimes result in dropped takes if the float is too heavy, so use the smallest float that conditions allow.

The float’s tip is critical and the models I use have several options. Standard straight-peacock tips are highly visible and ideal for slowing your bait down in heavy tows. With these tips you can drag plenty of line and even one or two shot along the bottom, which really helps get bites. It’s not the most delicate of set-ups but it’s surprising how many fish you’ll catch when you get the presentation correct. This is the classic way to catch skimmers

The slider can also be better than a fixed waggler in shallower depths.

The slider is used a lot in international matches, as float-only rules mean that it’s often the only way to catch fish at distance in deep water. However, it can also be devastating in the UK. Alan Scotthorne proved that at Porth Reservoir in one of the festivals last year. The feeder usually dominates here, but on this occasion the skimmers were reluctant to feed on the bottom and wouldn’t come in close to the pole. Alan fished a slider at distance off the bottom with soft groundbait, and easily won the section!

The slider can also be better than a fixed waggler in shallower depths. Because the main bulk of shot is low down it excels when it’s important to pick up any undertow or counteract a skimming wind that could blow a conventional waggler off course. The fact that most of the shot is well down the line really helps with presentation in difficult conditions, and can get bites when all else fails.

As I mentioned, there are some basic rules to the slider. Firstly, like most of the

between 25cm or 30cm long. If you don’t bother with a swivel on waggler rigs I urge you to try one – you’ll be amazed how a good swivel reduces line twist and improves presentation!

It’s very important to get the right floats for the job. I use the Tamás Walter range, distributed in the UK by Angling Concepts. These are very well made and have the correct brass loading in the base. This helps the float stay against the bulk during the cast. Without any loading the float can slide back to the stop knot in flight, impeding distance and accuracy.

The size of the float you use will



The choice of tip has a large bearing on the sensitivity of your set-up.

– In Depth



Darren’s Slider Tips



01 The main bulk is a string of AAAs or SSGs pinched onto fine silicone tubing.



02 A white Sensas line marker helps maintain accuracy.



03 The Super G 14ft Slider has plenty of backbone to cope with big sliders.



04 Maggots, casters and pinkies are all worth a try on the hook.

The slider is an immensely satisfying running-line tactic.

in bad conditions and is often the only way to get bites, as the bait slows over the feed to enable a fish to eat it. It's usually important to use the tow to 'bounce' the rig through the swim to cover the feed area.

This method usually involves feeding 'sausages' of groundbait by catapult to gather the fish into a large area and then cover that. It's impossible to be as accurate as you'd be on the pole so you must search the swim. Getting the rig to move through at the right pace is down to trial and error, and balancing how many shot and how much line you need to drag on the bottom to slow it enough in the tow on the day.

The more tow there is, the more line and shot need to be dragged – at times

The rig is positive, so it's important to let bites develop and only strike when you're sure the fish is on.

I've fished four feet overdepth with all my droppers dragging and the bulk just inches from the lake bed to slow it enough. When conditions are like this the float literally bounces up and down as the shot dislodge and then resettle the rig in the undertow.

In more-favourable conditions with less tow, or for catching skimmers or roach off the bottom, a more delicate insert version will get you more bites. Match the size of the bristle to the conditions, the fish you expect to catch and the distance you'll be fishing. Slimmer, hollow-plastic bristles can pick fish up on the drop in good conditions; they're visible at distance yet delicate enough for smaller fish to register.

Finer still are the new carbon antennas from the Continent. These are very sensitive and good for promoting lift bites. They're also much easier to see at distance than a standard, slimmer tip. When a fish picks up the bait it will either dislodge or lift the lowest dropper shot, which shows as a massive lift of the float. If the float remains high for more than a few seconds then you can be sure it's a proper bite, which should result in a well-hooked fish.

Interpreting bites is also key. The rig is usually positive, so it's important to let bites develop and only strike when you're sure the fish is on. This is even more important with skimmers and bream – prick one of these by striking too early and the shoal could move to the next angler for the rest of the day!

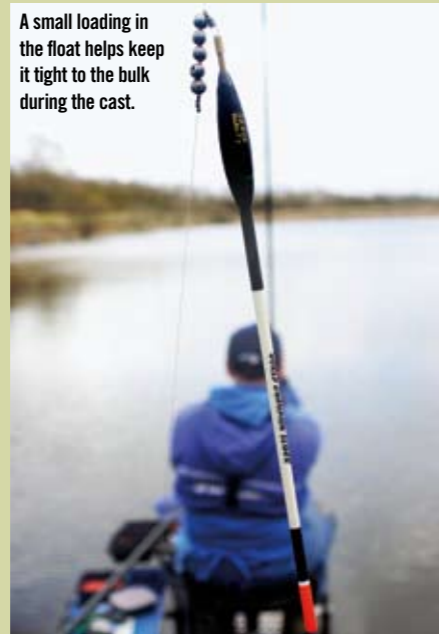
Your rod needs to have some power in the middle to be able to cast big floats and pick up line quickly, but also needs to be forgiving enough not to bump fish. My



Shotted correctly, even finicky roach can give positive bites on slider gear.

choice is a Garbolino Super G 14ft Slider, which is perfect for the job. The extra 12 inches makes a big difference, but a standard 13ft model would also do the job. The ideal diameter of main line is 0.18mm or 0.20mm, which will withstand the strain of casting but won't be too thick to impede presentation and be dragged out of position by wind or tow.

Hooks and line diameters will depend



A small loading in the float helps keep it tight to the bulk during the cast.

on the fish you expect to catch and the bait you plan to use. The hook gauge, however, doesn't want to be too fine or springy as you're moving quite a big bulk when you strike, and you don't want to pull out of the fish. The microbarbed Kamasan B560 is one of the best patterns for this style of fishing.

One of the most important factors is getting the distance right for accurate feeding. Drennan does some lovely groundbait catapults that can be used for most distances. You can become very accurate by cutting the elastics back, which determines the maximum distance the catapult will fire a certain size of ball. By shortening the elastics you can 'bottom it out' and hit the correct distance every time, as long as the angle of trajectory is the same. This attention to detail is something I've learned from being involved with Drennan Team England – by practising the distance you can fire a ball with various strengths and lengths of elastic you can quickly become very accurate.

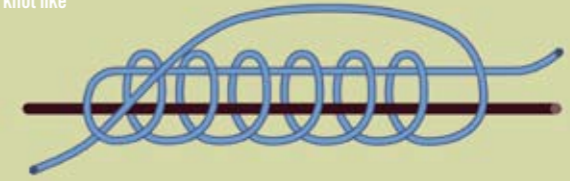
To be 100 per cent sure that I'm casting and feeding in the same spot each time I mark my line with a Sensas line-marker pen in conjunction with using my reel's line clip. I clip up 10 metres beyond where I want to fish and then reel back to the white mark on my line, sinking my line at the same time. This helps maintain good presentation right over the feed area.

With regards to groundbait, it's very important to get every ball the exact same size; any variation will increase or reduce the weight of that ball and result in it falling too short or going too far. I like to squeeze a sausage-shaped ball in one grab and then round off the edges to make them all similar shapes. The mix has to be right; too dry and it will make catapulting it impossible.

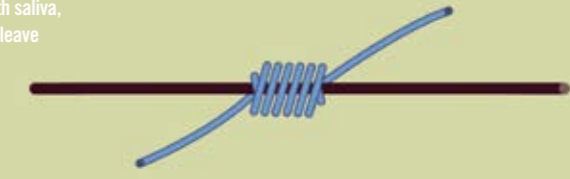
Groundbait is usually the key to accurate feeding due to the distances normally fished and the depths. Loose feed is very difficult to catapult any further than 25 metres and it also encourages fish to come up in the water. This can be very dangerous in deep water as you can lose track of your fish for long periods of time.

There are a few ways in which you can accurately plumb the depth with the slider. The first is to plumb 'off the bulk' by using the bulk as a plummet. With this method you must remember that you will be the distance between the bulk and the hook overdepth and must adjust this before you start. I find that a better way is to put a hooklength on, take off two big shot from the main bulk and use a big plummet. Removing the shot increases the float's buoyancy and helps to accentuate whether you are under or overdepth. This is a more accurate way of finding the exact depth. The final way, which is probably the most

Tie the sliding stop knot like this...



... then moisten with saliva, tighten, and trim to leave long tags.



accurate, is to use a long bolognese rod with a small cigar-shaped pike float and a 30g lead. This is a great way of finding the exact depth, as well as giving you a good marker to fire groundbait at the start!

A slider knot above the float sets the actual depth of the rig; it is this simple knot, which can be easily adjusted up and down the line, that allows you to fish depths deeper than the length of your rod. The only thing to remember is to leave long tags of around one inch, so that the knot passes through the rod rings unhindered.

Today I've used the deep Snitterfield Reservoir near Stratford-upon-Avon to highlight these tactics. Although the colder weather has meant that the bream have switched off, I've still managed to put together a wonderful 15lb bag of quality roach. This proves that, although it looks like a big, bulky, crass rig, when correctly balanced it will outfish other methods on the right day!

I've fished at 25 metres out in 14 feet of water and managed to throw my groundbait this distance by hand. By packing small balls with plenty of casters the roach eventually lined up on the bottom, and it was just a case of getting the float in the correct position every time. A single red maggot or caster resulted in really positive bites from these delicate feeders. It's been a great practice session today, so hopefully I'll draw a deep swim in a match soon, where I can put this wonderful method to good use!



A cracking bag of fish caught on a brilliant method.