



# PIKE SCENE

Seasonal advice from predator experts

Weekly predator series

**THIS WEEK:** Big water specialist **Andy Black** looks back over the pike season.

# Season reflections

**T**HIS pike season has been a bit of a funny one - some massive fish have come out, including a record rocker from Wykeham Lakes, North Yorkshire, but on the whole it's been quite slow for numbers of big fish. My pike fishing season started early, as back in September a couple of the large trout reservoirs opened up for lure fishing trials. Traditionally these waters open in mid-October, so it would be interesting to see what an earlier start would produce. Unfortunately the weather was still really hot in September and the

pike had moved into quite deep water, where it was quite hard to find them, and even harder to lure fish for them. I did manage to get a couple of nice fish, with the largest a chunky golden-coloured deepwater pike of just over 22 lb. Due to the warm weather I put the pike fishing on hold for a while and became distracted with perch fishing, after catching a couple a big ones on pike lures. While the weather stayed hot I perch fished, and managed to catch four cracking fish over the magical 4 lb mark!



■ OK it's not a pike, but after catching a couple of big perch on lures I finished up with four over 4 lb, including this one.



■ I was more than happy with this 31 lb 4 oz Chew pike after 11 blanks.

## Then the rain came...

**D**ECEMBER, January, and the majority of February were a total washout. With everywhere flooded, it got so bad that the army were drafted in to help sort out the standing water on the Somerset Levels. The rivers being flooded for months really scuppered my river pike fishing plans. Luckily there were still a couple of the large Anglian Water reservoirs remaining open, so I did manage to get my fishing fix, while I waited for the waters to recede. Due to the terrible weather, not many anglers were venturing out, and there was a lack of big pike reported during these months.

## Big expectations

**I**N FEBRUARY the first of this year's pike trials started on Chew Valley, and with a fist full of "Green Gold" (Chew Boat Tickets), I was there - full of anticipation that some mega-pike would be landed. Speculation was for a bumper trial full of big fish, as during the previous trials in the autumn, incredibly, the records show a 30-pounder came out EVERY day for 23 days on the bounce, which is, quite frankly, phenomenal! However, the constant two months of rain had filled the reservoir to the brim and significantly chilled the water, making the fishing very slow indeed, with only a couple of fish out each day - though being Chew at least one of those fish was over 30 lb, with a couple going over the mammoth 35 lb mark!



➤ **MOST** anglers had written the big Wykeham Lakes' croc off until Wyndon Coole banked it at a record rocking 46 lb 11 oz!

## Wykeham record rocker

**W**HILE Chew was in the spotlight, most anglers had written off the big Wykeham syndicate lake pike in North Yorkshire, suspecting that it had died a couple of years ago. Local Scarborough angler Wyndon Coole proved us all wrong, however, when he banked it at a massive 46 lb 11 oz - just 2 oz off the British record. To say this came out of the blue is an understatement. I think everyone thought that Chew would throw up something a bit special during the February trials, and it did - in the shape of Paul Millar's 44 lb 6 oz fish, which caused some problems for the netsman! What was surprising is that it was the same fish that came out at 43 lb in the autumn trials, so it hadn't put on as much weight as everyone was expecting. It was noticeable that the first week of the trials fished a lot better than the final two weeks, which were hard on everyone - with most anglers blanking - as Chew went out with damp fizzle rather than the expected bang. I think this was more to do with the extreme conditions rather than the lack of big fish.

March is usually zander time for me. I tend to leave the pike alone at this time of year as they should have just finished spawning, but not this year. With all the crazy weather the pike were still feeding when the river levels finally dropped, and I was lucky enough to save face, and bag another 20-pounder, before I switched over to the zander. All in all, quite a tough year on the pike fishing front, with just four fish over 20 lb, though with a new personal best I was more than happy. Let's hope that next season is even better.



■ Paul Millar set a new Chew Valley pike record with this 44 lb 6 oz cracker.