

FISHERY MANAGEMENT:

FISH PROTECTION

CHRIS CURRIE sets out a few ground rules for the hot weather that will help protect the fish we love to catch.

The warm summer weather encourages the masses to dust off their gear, and

this influx of extra anglers fish many different waters throughout this busy period, while many also include the annual trip abroad to fish the holiday venues.

There is a greater concern for the fishery manager at this time, as the spread of disease is more prevalent in the warm temperatures and with the flitting between venues of multiple anglers. There are a number of steps that should be considered and employed by anglers to protect the industry and the fish we all enjoy catching so much.

PREVENTION

The first form of prevention is to thoroughly dry out the net, sling and mat at the end of each session, ideally in direct sunlight. The strong UV rays of the sun help to kill any pathogens that may have been carried from the water.

Most fish pathogens require water to survive, therefore thorough drying helps to kill the more hardy varieties such as virus. I would also mix up a solution of disinfectant like Virkon S and scrub or soak the items in it after drying, or my preferred Bio VX. Both offer further protection against any pathogens harboured on this sort of equipment. It would take less than 10 minutes to disinfect

Cross-contamination between fisheries can be caused by pathogens carried on wet nets.



this kit methodically and comprehensively.

The next preventative measure, which I feel should be an industry-wide initiative, would be the provision on each fishery for a disinfectant bath where the net, mat and sling could be dipped before starting fishing and then after your session, provided you have a fish of course, to stop any transfer of pathogens on to or off the site.



Release every fish you catch with care.

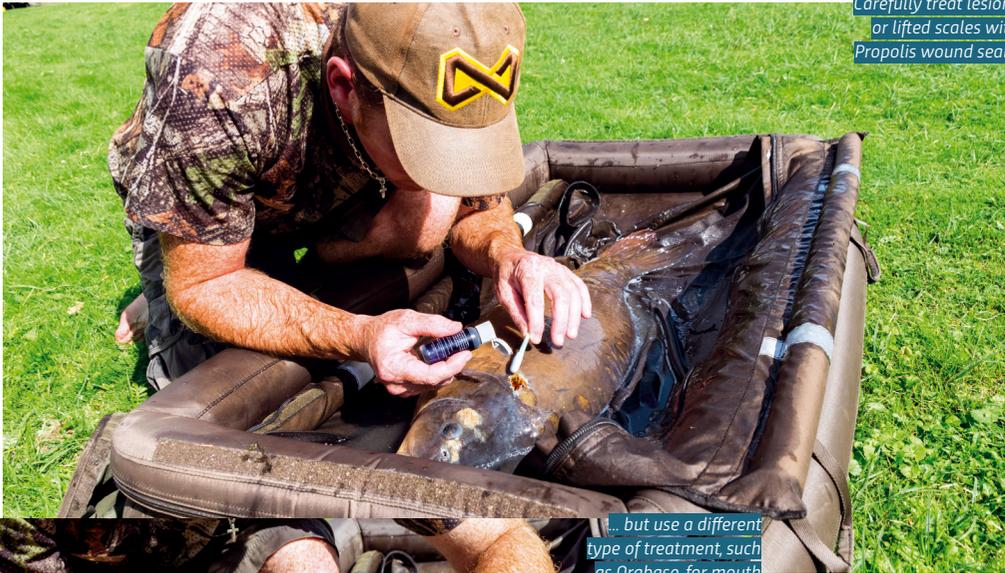
These sorts of dips are often considered, but neglected through time and end up being useless unless they are regularly monitored, and the correct levels are maintained to be effective at killing the pathogens. They are best placed in a tub deep enough to be able to fully submerge the equipment, and

importantly secured with a lid. An old water tank or similar works well as the lid will stop dilution by rainwater and any ingress into the disinfectant from plants, also stopping any animals drinking from the trough.

The safer way, and something that many of my clients have taken advantage of, is providing the anglers on site with nets, mats and slings, which will completely eradicate any doubts of pathogens finding their way on to the site from fishing equipment. This form of sensible fishery management offers both the angler and, more importantly, the fishery manager or owner peace of mind. I provide many of my

Fishery owners invest a lot of money in stocking fish – help keep them healthy.





Carefully treat lesions or lifted scales with Propolis wound seal...



... but use a different type of treatment, such as Orabase, for mouth marks

For mouth marks I have been using Orabase, another recommendation from a koi expert. This substance is provided in gel or powder form – the gel is the most user-friendly and because it's used in the mouth it clings to the hook marks in that situation well. There are many available on the market from tackle manufacturers and I have seen many used on fisheries across the UK.

I believe that any treatment is better than nothing and should a fishery need more advice on this subject I would be happy to talk you through the best available options.

STOCK MANAGEMENT

The last factor, but certainly one that can have big effects if the wrong decision is made by the fishery manager/owner, is to fully consider the stocking of new fish and the possible new pathogens you may be adding to the existing stock.

You should look to minimise the risks by ensuring the fish have a valid health certificate, although it should be noted that viral or bacterial diseases do not usually form part of this detailed analysis unless the fish show obvious signs of these types of disease, such as internal bleeding, when a sample would be sent off for detailed examination.

It is very possible for fish ☉

contamination and actually make the lesion or hook mark worse and take longer to heal. You can keep a small amount of spare buds in the pack with your treatments.

I use Ulcer Swab from NT Labs, with a Propolis wound seal. The Liquid Bee Propolis can be bought from health food shops such

as Holland & Barrett; this is pretty good as it sticks and covers the wound, meaning the ulcer swab treatment doesn't get washed off for body lesions or lifted scales.

When you apply it, dry the area totally with a clean cloth and really make sure you seal the area off with the swab cream, ensuring all of the wound is covered. You can dab it on covering the wound – I would advise doing this after your photos – and then cover the area with the Propolis wound seal.

Reputable fish suppliers are successful for a reason.



Ten minutes' work with a medicarp solution will treat all your nets, mats and slings.



clients with trade deals from a leading manufacturer for the nets, mats, slings bought in bulk, and should anyone need further information please get in contact.

I provide my anglers with all the equipment to look after my stock, and I feel it is suitable to handle all large UK fish with care on the bank. The implementation of this would help prevent any unnecessary damage and would go a long way to securing the future of our sport, if the same was instigated on sites across the UK. The quality of the equipment is guaranteed to help prevent any unnecessary damage to your prized stock.

TREATMENT

The biosecurity on your site shouldn't stop there; many of my clients' fisheries and well-established waters across the UK have employed the use of a good carp-care kit. In my opinion these should be carried by all anglers, to provide protection against infection from waterborne bacteria after a hook wound or bumped scale

has happened during the interaction with the angler. This helps the fish repair the damage and is a preventative measure that will in turn cause the fish less exhaustive and excessive stress during the repair process.

Now I know there are many different versions available and I have spent a long trialling and researching them and have discussed this very subject with some leading people in the koi carp industry, who handle and look after prize-winning fish. Those experts have confirmed that in their opinion the protective for the mouth and protective for the body should be different, purely because they offer different environments for the protective liquid to adhere to.

The treatment of a lesion on a fish is for a different bacterial make-up to a hook mark in the mouth, and the type of liquid is slightly different for each application on the fish. The use of the same application bud with the different treatments is a no-no though, as the different bacteria can cause cross

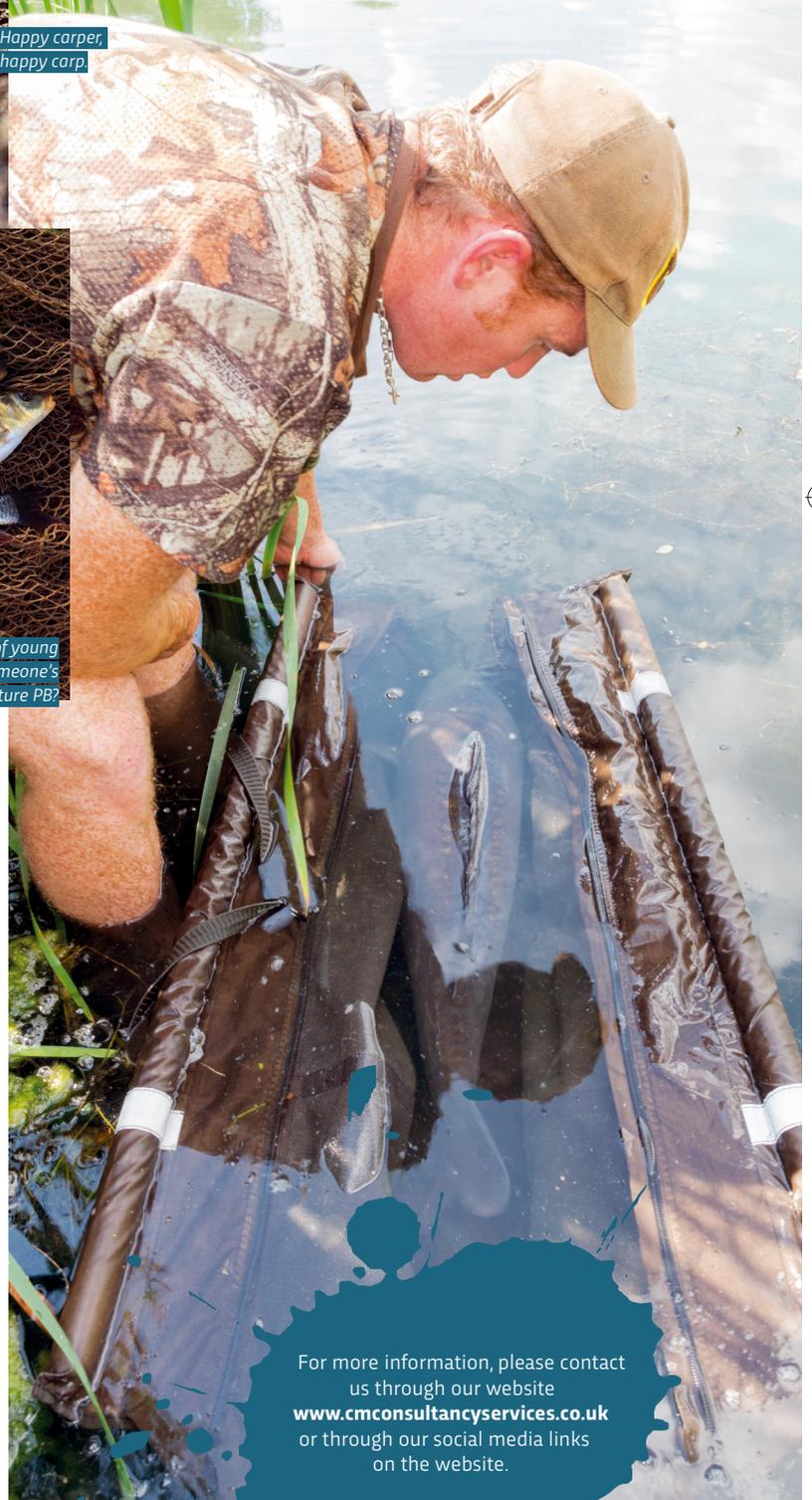
Leaving your nets in sunlight will help to kill off any pathogens.



Invest in a suitable carp mat, and every angler should carry a carp-care kit.



Happy carper, happy carp.



to carry viruses or bacteria without showing obvious signs. Looking to add small amounts of fish every year is



A healthy mix of young carp – someone's future PB?

preferable to large stockings every three to five years because a large change in fish stock and increased loading on the water quality can cause stress to the existing stock, lowering the immune system and opening them up to pathogen ingress.

Buy fish from a reliable source – ideally a fish farm as opposed to a fishery, as they will be less likely to be carriers of disease and be of a known age, also showing a proven growth rate.

The best way to integrate fish on to an existing site would be to introduce them to a neighbouring stock pond on a similar water supply and watch the fish over the preceding week to see if they show any clinical signs, or if no stock pond is available and the stocking is a small quantity of fish, maybe introduce the fish in a floating cage for a few days

in the fishery so they could be removed quickly if any problems were to occur.

The quality of the fish is paramount and this procedure should be carefully considered, and if you are in doubt seek advice from an independent expert in the field who can advise you and in some cases accompany you to pick your stock fish. Many have fallen foul of rushing this decision and ultimately ending up disappointed, or having fish delivered that are carrying disease and have unfortunately died quickly within a short period after introduction. This is distressing, especially when you have spent your hard-earned money.

I have spent many hours picking fish with clients and they have always come away happy and contented with the overall growth and look of the fish. ☺

For more information, please contact us through our website www.cmconsultancyservices.co.uk or through our social media links on the website.