



there are lots of swims to choose from, even if the lake is relatively busy. I know it often looks as though there are too many pegs, but spending a bit of time in each one, even if it is between two anglers, can produce instant action.

The margins are the best place to target, unless of course you see the carp colouring up the bottom in open water.

I look for reed stems to twitch or tail patterns to hit the surface, and carefully lower my bait in off the rod top in the same spot.

These overgrown match carp feel most safe in the margins, and it is usually the biggest fish in the lake that will hold up in any type of marginal cover during the day.

It also doesn't hurt to have a walk round and drip a little bit of bait into likely-looking areas before you get your rods out of the motor.

Wold Farm action

My latest trip to a commercial water saw me setting up my rods on the banks of Northampton's Wold Farm fisheries.

I headed for The Oaks lake, which is a mature two-acre water heavily stocked with carp that head into double figures.

Although many of the 25 swims on this lake are close together there are reeds or pads separating them,

so each peg gives you your own little piece of water.


Location was not much of a problem because in nearly every empty peg I walked into there were obvious signs of carp being present.

Lowering small baits into the edge was the order of the day, and rewarded me with lots of savage bites and great scraps over the space of a couple of hours. Even freelining baits on the bottom worked well and allowed me to put my bait directly in front of fish without spooking them.

I lost count of how many carp I caught, and although none of them were over 12lb I enjoyed every second. It really does make a change from sitting behind static rods waiting (praying) for a big 'un to make a mistake.

I wouldn't want to spend all my fishing time on such commercial venues, but it is certainly great sport that can only help to improve your all-round skills.

I think those that knock a bit of 'pastie-bashing' take their fishing far too seriously – sure, you are not going to set any records, but you will enjoy your day and definitely get your money's worth.

For more information on Wold Farm at Northampton, visit its website www.woldfarmfisheries.co.uk 

Glued-on floaters

On some days the carp will be more happy spending their time in mid-water or on the surface. When floating baits are allowed, these lakes offer a great opportunity to bring your surface fishing skills up to scratch.

Even if the water is coloured and the carp are having the floaters big time, they can be hard to tempt unless you fine down your end gear as much as you feel you

can get away with.

Freelining is by far the most successful tactic for nailing these hungry fish off the top. I like to glue a floating pellet directly to the hookshank so that I can set the hook right away. By having no controller in place you make a more direct strike than is possible when you make contact with the float before the hook. With 8lb line you can cast a floating pellet around 20yds, which is usually more than enough on most commercial venues.



Not a monster, but a pretty mirror – one of many taken in just a few hours.