



# Record 6 lb perch!

**EXCLUSIVE REPORT & PICTURES**

GARY NEWMAN reports

**T**HE British perch record has been beaten by an ounce after Ricky Halliday banked this huge specimen of exactly 6 lb.

The 24-year-old disabled angler was pike fishing on an undisclosed water in the Cotswold Water Park, when the massive stripy hit his 40 gr. Abu Atom copper spoon and launched him into the history books, providing his record claim is accepted.

Ricky, who is based near Stroud, Gloucestershire, weighed the old, rotund fish on a set of Fox digital scales which will be officially tested this week.

He told *Angler's Mail* the full story of his magnificent catch: 'The lake has been there for about 14 years and is very rich, with lots of natural food and silver fish, plus it is next to the Thames and where that has flooded in there are now also loads of crayfish.'

'I've had pike to 23 lb and we've had perch to around 4 lb in the past but haven't weighed any of them.'

'I was fishing with a big spoon and the fish took in deep water. I knew immediately it wasn't a pike.'

'The water is gin clear and I could see it was a very big fish and was expecting it to come off at any time. When I landed it I knew it was big but didn't have a clue exactly how big as I had nothing to compare it with.'

'This fish was very wide and totally different-looking to the others I've seen from there, which tend to be green in colour with proper black stripes. This one must be a very old fish.'

'It could do an even bigger perch as I can't believe I've managed to catch the biggest one in there, and there are other virtually untapped waters around here that could produce something like this – the other two lakes on the complex have both done 'four's.'

'I fish for carp a lot of the time, but through the winter I tend to fish for other things and will be starting carping again soon,' he added.

Ricky landed the six-pounder on a 12 ft 2.5 lb Shimano Tribal rod with 12 lb main line and a Berkley wire trace.

## Better than ever!

PERCH have made a real come-back in the past two decades and there has never been a better time than right now to catch big stripies.

The species suffered a near wipe-out in the late 1970s and early 1980s through disease, and it became rare to catch a single perch, let alone a big one.

Now it seems that virtually every carp puddle in southern England, plus a number of rivers and canals can produce

fish in excess of 4 lb, and even five-pounders are not that uncommon.

The resurgence in the species

has also been coupled with a rise in the record weight, and that has now potentially broken the 6 lb mark.

The news should come as no great surprise.

Many years ago the late, great Richard Walker wrote of perch potentially in the 6 or 7 lb bracket being a possibility, with Arlesey Pit – where the Arlesey bomb leger weight originated – being named as one water that could produce a fish of this size.

**“ I was fishing with a big spoon and the fish took in deep water. I knew immediately it wasn't a pike.”**



Ricky's fat 6 lb perch took a copper-coloured spoon.

### YOU SAW IT HERE FIRST!

This exclusive picture of Ricky Halliday's 6 lb perch was taken by one of his independent witnesses on a camera phone.

For reporting his catch exclusively to your big value *Mail* he's a special weekly prize-winner of cash and tackle in our Fox Specimen Cup. Ricky stands a chance of more glory in the March judging, revealed next week.



## Perch - the record YOU could break!

PERCH have proved to be one of those species where anyone could break the record, be they a specimen hunter or just a pleasure angler who happens to be in the right place at the right time.

Dean Rawlings was just 11-years-old when he tempted a 5 lb 9 oz 8 dr monster from a tiny Oxfordshire day ticket water back in April 2002 to set a new record. The bait? Five red, white and blue maggots, float fished with a pike bung attached bottom end only, 10 lb line and a size 6 hook.

His record lasted until 2006 when Les Brown fished East Sussex's Stream Valley Lakes for a 5 lb 15 oz monster, which is still the official record. The bait – a bunch of maggots on a specialist clip rig, intended for carp.

A 6 lb 2 oz fish was reported 'from the River Thames' by Robert Townsend, who was livebaiting for pike, at the end of 2007. It was clearly photographed in a no fishing marina adjoining the lower river. Big Bob was subsequently found not to have a valid Environment Agency rod licence, and subsequently his claim was rejected by the BRFC.



Dean Rawlings' 5 lb 9 oz 8 dr former record. Note the pole angler fishing on whilst the picture is taken!



It was officially rejected but Robert Townsend's perch was reported, then claimed, at 6 lb 2 oz.



Breathtaking! The stunning pic of Les Brown's 5 lb 15 oz reigning record at a fishery still producing perch to over 5 lb.

## IAN WELCH weekly advice

**CARP:** some excellent canal sport to be found with turning bays and moored boats worth checking out.  
**ROACH:** good stillwater action to float and light feeder tactics with soft pellet or maggot hook baits.  
**SILVER BREAM:** limited distribution, I appreciate, but where present big fish are already active and responding well to pole or running line tactics.  
**TIP!** Fishing at this time of year can be very patchy so keep your options open and be prepared to fish to the conditions and for what is actually feeding rather than setting unrealistic targets.

### THIS WEEK'S FORECAST

DON'T expect it to be as mild as last week, with highs of 11 Celsius and dropping down to three degrees at night. It will be a wet start to the week but will brighten up towards the weekend, with fresh westerly winds. Best fishing dates according to [www.moonstrike.co.uk](http://www.moonstrike.co.uk) are March 30 and 31 and April 1 and 5.



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