



Grandma fishing report on Lough Allua

It was the 2nd of november ,a tuesday and as usual ,we've been preparing our boat for a day on "our lake"- Lough Allua, a system of lakes connected by the river Lee in Co. Cork .

From the end of october pike in this particular lake can be found in its deeper regions , not on bottom , as the deepest point measures some 100 feet , but about 30 feet , so deep running lures are required , or sophisticated systems to bring shallow runners down to the right depth .

In the morning we started trolling with some 12 inch Castaic softbait lures . Depending on your line and trolling speed , they will operate at about 20 feet . We first headed for an island called " the Crannog " , Which , apart from the ancient underwater pathway , is surrounded by deep water of 70 ft..We stopped the engine to drop the anchor for the first time , as we planned to try some dead baiting and spinning . Slowly but fairly irregularly we retrieved our Castaic trouts , well aware of the fact , that towards the end of a trolling run , pike will sometimes attack the lures , due to the changed pattern of bringing the lures in , and we were not disappointed that actually happened . After an initially shy attack , the pike grabbed the Softbait again -15 ft. from the boat at his 2nd attempt he was well hooked . After a brief struggle a pike of 17 lbs and exactly 100cm was returned to the water , what a start !

It didn't take long and our dead bait rigs found their positions , one on the bottom and the other on a sail float rig , just off the bottom at 20ft., gently drifting along the drop off from the Crannog into the deep water . We had to wait for half an hour before my float disappeared , very very slowly . Just as I was preparing to set the hook , Richies bait runner reel started buzzing , we were into a double fight...!

While Richies pike measured 90 cm at 14 lbs , mine was slightly heavier at 16lbs and 95cm ,two nice fish, making it 3 in all in a single spot , so after a lot of struggling it was time to move on to the next hot spot . Again we opted for some trolling with our Castaic baits following the boat at a distance of 50 feet.

Then a 2 mile run and the second hot spot proofed to be fruitless . As the lakes at first come to an end and the River Lee after being 27 feet deep soon becomes shallow , it's advisable to watch the propeller and eventually get some rowing exercise . After less than a mile of river , the Lee widens again to a mini lake , that's never-the-less 36ft. deep and continued as the 18 ft. dep Lee .

Many times in the past we've tried that mini lake , as it is pleasantly sheltered , but never produced a pike exceeding 8 lbs..So we carried on trolling without any great expectations , as a 12 inch lure will have to come across one very hungry Jack to be hit .Right on the "seam " of the mini lake and the River Lee , Richies Castaic rainbow trout was attacked and the pike , as expected , willingly followed up to the boat – 2 ft. plus? We know our spots...Right beside the boat the pike rethought its situation and Richie became aware , that there was another Grandma perforating his rubber bait . The pike started to square up size and fight , and a couple of minutes later the scale settled for 19 lbs at 101cm , the 2nd pike of the day to cross the magic 3 feet mark. One thing became fairly obvious – todays rule was : Ladies' excuse me .



During the summer and autumn, Lough Allua produces catches of up to 20 pike per angler, but rarely a pike tips the 20lbs. mark. At the end of the season, we can usually tot up our 20 lbs pike on one hand, while over the years I personally have only seen 3 fish over 30 lbs., two of them being caught by Roy Gretton within 10 days. That meant that today was the day to break some old Lough Allua records and we were sure we would...

Following the river into the lake on the Ballingearry side, we had almost reached the upper end of the system. This almost circular lake is hardly ever fished by any angler as its fringes are well overgrown and to get there by boat can be a bit of a challenge, only possible when water levels are high.

We dropped our anchor at the upper end, where the Lee enters the lake, sometimes carrying along small trees and branches. After a hard rain, the water can be very cloudy up there, but full of nourishing stuff, which small fish and pike are aware of. Fishing can be a bit tricky and one should possibly not use the dearest lures in the box, as you are bound to lose some amongst the roots, branches and stones.

On the other hand – no risk, no fun!

Our dead bait had been released a while back but no pike seemed to be interested in some easy prey and so we tried a bit of casting with small Storm swim shads in the shallow water where the river is just 5 feet deep. Two jacks of just over 2 feet must have decided to stay in the shallows. A far cry from Richies 102cm / 20 lbs. personal record, which he was still attempting to break. As it wasn't working out for us in the "run in", we decided to try the "run out" and moved back down the lake a couple of hundred feet, where the Lee leaves the upper lake and forms a steep slope. It was there we dropped our anchor and dead bait in 30 feet of water. One hour passed by and nothing happened, so we decided to move on back into the main lake to try some more trolling.

I had just retrieved my sail float system while Richie was still attempting to get his dead bait off the bottom as suddenly the bottom started moving. It was immediately clear we weren't dealing with an ordinary pike, as the fish had no intention to leave the bottom, nor had he made the slightest while grabbing the dead perch.

My camera unfortunately wasn't ready to take a shot of the 24lbs pike shooting out of the water, as it is a rare sight to see that caliber of pike 1 and a half feet horizontally above the water line. That lively fish gave its best and after weighing and releasing it, Richie had his new personal record, measuring 109 cm. It would have been the right decision to end the day at this stage but on our way back we couldn't resist giving the "Crannog" another try, which resulted in another 8 lbs fish, caught on a Storm rubber shad, being the 8th pike of the day and one of the smaller ones on "Grandma Day"....

by Greg Latour