

As Far North as They Come (Part 2)

[Intro]

In the previous segment of this series, I introduced the world of Swedish carp fishing and how I managed to find and fish a 120-acre wild lake in the heart of the Swedish countryside. In this instalment, we embark on the next chapter of my angling endeavours, following the spring capture of the wild lake mirror.

Let's begin where we left off.

After the capture of my first carp from the wild lake, I left Maarten to fish the remainder of his time there in solitude. I decided to search for carp elsewhere so he could fish in peace between his work as a dog handler.

The remainder of the spring was spent targeting the pristine carp of the park lake.

I began a baiting campaign on the north end of the lake. I would head down two to three times per week, introducing heat-treated and glugged boilie to a few bucket lid-sized spots in the margins. The silt deposits on the park lake are like nothing I've ever experienced, so finding slightly firmer spots and introducing swollen, high-quality baits was the way to go.

Whenever I got the chance, I'd go out for one or two nights to fish the baited spots. This worked well, with a handful of carp landed over three or four sessions.

The highlight of my spring campaign on the park lake wasn't the biggest carp, but one of the smallest. A scraper 20 but one of the darkest, prettiest carp I've ever laid eyes on.

The Fast Arrival of Midsommar

Before I knew it, Midsommar had arrived. From here on out the days would begin to shorten and the temperatures would slowly decline, making way for autumn.

The period over Midsommar (the last week of June into July) was extremely hot and humid. Temperatures were in the 30s and swarms of mosquitoes were everywhere. The light levels during the summer are also crazy, with the sun barely dropping below the horizon all night. These conditions made fishing challenging.

Long humid days drew long into the night and the lack of darkness made it difficult to sleep on the bank.

I managed to squeeze in one session on the wild lake over the summer. I baited up an area only a couple of rod lengths out a few days before I planned to arrive. I'd seen carp milling about close in, so this was an obvious plan of attack.

When I arrived in the evening the weather was all over the place. Flat calm waters, sunshine, and intense heat gave way to fierce thunderstorms and torrential rain. During a dry spell, I dropped a couple of rigs on the area and scattered 20 baits over the top of each.

As much as I wanted to sit out and enjoy the evening sunshine, the mosquitoes were rife. Even the strongest of repellents are useless at this time of year. I spent most of my time behind the mesh panels of my brolly system, escaping the relentless mozzies and sweating from the humidity.

Summer carping in Sweden definitely isn't for me. I got an hour of sleep at best in the early hours of the morning before being awoken by the unmistakable sound of a bite alarm in meltdown.

I hit the rod and found myself playing a powerful carp in the warm morning mist. After a short scrap, I had a mid-double in the net. This one wasn't typical of the carp I'd seen from the lake so far. It had fewer scales but was dark, wild and probably uncaught until now. I unhooked it in the net and got the rod back out on the money.

Just as I was preparing for a couple of self-takes, the same rod sprung into action again. In a rush, I secured the first carp and found myself playing another of a similar size.

After a short fight, the second carp graced the net. It looked identical in weight but was far more typical of the Swedish carp I'd seen so far. Covered in scales and beautifully coloured.

I topped up the spot, flicked a fresh rig out and took a couple of quick photos. The morning sun quickly lifted the mist and the temperature rapidly increased. That was my cue to leave.

After my uncomfortable yet successful night, I took a step back and adjusted my summertime approach. I decided to continue the baiting campaign on the park lake and fish quick overnights, arriving as the sun set and leaving shortly after it rose. I'd get back to the mosquito-infested wild lake once the temperatures dropped.

By concentrating my time in this way, I was able to avoid the heat and humidity of the day while catching a few carp along the way.

My tactics proved successful on the park lake, with a number of fish up to mid-30 landed including an ancient-looking creature known as Träsket (The Swamp Monster). I won't go into too much detail about the park lake campaign, that's a story for another time.

The Arrival of Autumn

As the weather cooled, I set aside more time to get out on the bank. I was ready to fish longer sessions again. I started to think about the wild lake and decided to begin baiting an area regularly.

A friend of mine had planned to come over from England around the end of August for 10 days of fishing. We planned to target a few different venues, but we'd spend a large portion of our time on the wild lake to hopefully uncover a couple of its gems.

I knew we'd need a decent amount of bait if we were to have any chance of success on the wild water. Bait quickly disappears in that lake. It's full of big bream, tench, and colossal rudd that I'd seen snatch away baits as large as 14mm!

We decided to order around 100 kilos of boilie in mixed sizes from 14mm up to 24mm as well as a large amount of mixed pellet and tiger nut. This may sound like a lot, especially when you have no idea of the stock in a lake, but it quickly gets eaten at this time of year.

During the autumn, all the animals in Sweden, be that the fish, moose, bears, or beavers, are on a mission to feed up for the fast-encroaching winter.

Autumn is a prolific season for carp anglers across the whole of Europe, but for the angler in Sweden, it's all the more special. This is the time of year when carp are at their best weights, and they clearly know they must get on the feed to survive the many months of darkness under ice.

An Overlooked Advantage

With the bait ordered and due to arrive soon, I visited the wild lake as regularly as possible. I had a large amount of prepared maize that needed to be used soon as it was beginning to turn. I planned to use the maize to help clear off an area.

The wild lake was quite weedy by this point and the maize would encourage smaller species to come in and tear up the low-lying weed it settled on. This is a tactic that works extremely well.

In 120 acres of water, you'd probably assume that baiting up involved markers and several outings in the boat. Usually, that would be the case. However, the spot on the wild lake was different.

You see, the farmer's wife loved wildlife and she'd regularly feed the birds and deer on the land. She had been collecting stale bread and unsold sandwiches from local bakeries and feeding them down by the water religiously for more than 20 years.

At around 10 a.m. every day, the local animals would flock to the farmer's land, waiting for the woman to come and feed them. Birds of all varieties, large deer and even the odd badger would turn up like a scene out of a Disney film. Of course, the carp knew about the woman's habit too...

The farmer and his wife would often tell me of huge carp coming and eating the bread off the surface. The small bay I was lucky to have access to was not only a safe zone that had never seen angling pressure before, but it was also a food source. This couldn't be ignored.

Many would overlook what lay by their feet when arriving at a water so vast, taking to a boat to find spots over 100 yards out. It sounds utterly bizarre to bait up by hand from the bank on such a massive lake, but that's exactly what I did.

The first couple of visits to the wild lake were uneventful yet essential. I introduced five large buckets of maize, shovelling it out with a scoop over a wide area to no more than 10 yards out. Through the clear water, the blanket of bright-yellow maize looked ridiculous but it soon disappeared along with much of the low-lying weed.

On my last maize dump, I didn't return for a week to allow time for the spot to completely clear out. When I returned, I came armed with boilie, tigers, and pellet. It was a warm, sunny day and the visibility was perfect. I approached the spot and there wasn't a single piece of maize in sight. The lakebed had been polished clean.

Before I had a chance to introduce more bait, a small group of carp moved in. I watched as they actively searched for food between the fine sand and gravel. I waited for the carp to move out slowly and trickled in a handful of boilie to see if they'd come back in and feed.

Almost instantly, a couple of carp returned and dropped their heads down. This was unbelievable, I had two carp including an unmistakable two-tone mirror that looked to be a mid-30 feeding at my feet.

I spent a couple of hours building the carp's confidence, seeing how close I could get them to feed. After an hour or so, I had four or five decent carp feeding competitively less than a metre from the bank. This was great, but I soon had to leave and needed to get a significant amount of bait over the area.

I spooked the carp off the spot as subtly as I could by dropping a few boilies in the area while they were feeding. They drifted off slowly and I managed to introduce around 10 kilos of boilie, pellet, and tiger nuts.

I returned three days later and most of the bait was gone apart from a scattering of tiger nuts and the odd 24mm boilie. The bay was teeming with bream and several carp.

I noticed the two-tone fish feeding on the spot again among a few others. I scattered a couple of handfuls and observed the carp feeding once again. Just as I was about to introduce more, an absolute monster of a carp drifted in. It looked about a metre long and not far off 50lb. I was in awe at the scale of this creature and I was certain that it was the lake's biggun.

I waited for the carp to drift off the spot before introducing another 10kg, cutting out the smaller boilies and pellet from the mix to discourage the bream.

I returned twice before my friend Dan arrived to introduce similar amounts of bait. The day before he was due to fly in, I checked the spot and topped it up with a few kilos of 24mm boilies.

Half A Wrap

Dan arrived late the next day and after a big sort out, we got some rest in my apartment ready for the next morning.

Starting early, we packed up the car before heading to the supermarket and System Bolaget (the government-run alcohol store) to get supplies and a bottle of champagne to celebrate a significant capture.

It was a rainy autumn morning on the lake. The drizzle and chop on the water made it difficult to observe the spot. However, from the vantage of a tree, we sighted the two-tone mirror.

We decided to drop two rigs off the tips, fishing one rod each. We'd give it a few hours before putting the rest of the rods out to see if we could bag an early bite.

The shelters went up, coffee was made and then we hunkered down just in time for the heavens to open. The rain was relentless, neither of us had ever experienced anything like it while fishing.

A Quick Reward

While sitting in the brollies Dan's rod let out a series of bleeps before the bobbin began the unmistakable dance of the bream.

I peered at Dan from the dry comfort of my brolly and wished him good luck with that one. He reluctantly reeled in a whopping bream, checked his hook point and dropped the rig back on the spot before retreating from the rain.

Ten minutes later, the rod hooped over violently and Dan was into his first carp, no more than an hour and a half after arriving at the lake.

An intense close-quarters battle commenced in ridiculous weather. The carp fought hard under the rod tip and made several attempts to make for the reed line. Dan got the beast under control and a short while later we had the first carp in the bag, and what a carp it was.

Resting in the net before us was the most incredible two-tone linear. We were elated. Soaking wet and full of excitement, we retained the fish and waited for a break in the weather.

After 45 minutes, the rain eased just enough to weigh and photograph the carp. At 35lb, it was in fantastic condition and looked immense. What a start.

Feeling the Pressure

We never would've dreamed we'd be popping the champagne so soon. We enjoyed the bottle and celebrated before getting the rest of the rods out now the swim had been trashed.

With plans of a social, we braved the weather for a few hours before giving in and retiring to our shelters. The rain continued deep into the night before giving way to an atmospheric, misty sunrise.

In the early hours, one of Dan's rods was away again and after another intense close-quarters battle, the second carp was in the bag. A stunning, ancient-looking carp of just over 30lb.

The rest of the day passed without any activity but the sun made an appearance so we enjoyed some food and a couple of drinks during the latter half of the day.

I was starting to feel the pressure now even though it was still early days. That evening, I decided to put a rod slightly further out just off of a weed bed before scattering a few whole boilies over the top. With two carp caught, I was beginning to feel that my chances of a bite were fading. When fishing such a small area for wild carp on a water this large, it's not difficult to spook them off you.

Mind Blown

When I woke up the following morning to stationary rods, I won't deny, I was feeling a bit gutted. I had to remind myself that we'd had an insane start and there was plenty of time later in the week.

We were to leave the lake today to bait up another venue and spend the evening with friends catching up over a few beers.

We began packing down early with the rods still in place.

With most of our kit packed up, it was soon time to reel in. At 9 a.m. I was about to load some stuff into the car when the rod I'd placed off the weed bed the evening before let out a few bleeps. I turned around and watched as the tip buckled over slowly.

I picked up the rod and bent into a powerful fish. A slow, steady run commenced — a tell-tale sign of a large carp. I turned it and gained some ground before it briefly weeded me. The line came free and a long, serpent-like creature hit the surface. At this point, my knees started to shake as my adrenaline began to build.

I gained more line and the sheer scale of this carp became clear in the crystal water. Inside, I knew which fish it was.

We looked at each other with nervous disbelief. Dan calmly said, "I'll get the waders on and grab the net mate."

He stepped into the water as I took control of the goliath under the rod tip. It made several lunges toward the reeds going under my other lines. I had a lump in my throat by this point and prayed the hook hold was solid.

The fish turned from the reed line and made a fast dash toward Dan, almost swimming through his legs. With quick reactions, he swooped the net under the carp in one of the most unorthodox nettings I've ever seen. Nevertheless, we had it in our grasp.

I laid the rod down, lifted the net arms and inspected the carp in utter disbelief. This was it, a carp that looked near-on 50lb sat calmly in the net before us. I was so full of emotion, the sight of the carp almost made me wretch. My head was blown and I could barely compose myself.

I had to take a moment while Dan remained in the water with the fish. I prepared the mat, grabbed the retainer and we transported the carp safely to the bank. With the fish retained securely in the edge, the kettle went on and a couple of brews were consumed while we tried to comprehend what had just happened.

It took me a good 20 minutes to absorb the events that just passed. I was in pure ecstasy.

Once I'd calmed down, we weighed the carp and prepared for photos. 47.8lb — an absolute unit of a Swedish mirror. Dan captured the moment beautifully and I released the relic back into its watery home.

It was the perfect end to a short campaign shared with friends. The memories of the wild lake forever live in my head. The capture of that big male marks my greatest angling achievement and the bittersweet end to an adventure on a truly wild Swedish water.

Photo credits: [Daniel Turner](#) & [Connor McElroy](#)