

10 TIPS 'N' TRICKS FOR PARTICLES

Angler Profile

Shaun Harrison

Age: 43

Hometown: Stapleford, Notts.

Occupation: Bait company director

UK PB: 40lb 6oz

This month Shaun turns his attention to larger particle baits that really can give you an unrivalled edge on your next outing with the rods. >>>

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Ten Tips 'n' Tricks For Particles /// Shaun Harrison

On the last instalment I covered my top tips for the smaller 'mass bait' seeds. For my own convenience I tend to refer to all the tiny seeds (let's say smaller than tares), as seeds, and the larger particles, such as chickpeas, nuts, etc., as particles, when, in fact, they are all simply seeds. It does make it easier for me in my regular diary notes to know straight away if I am referring to baiting with mixed particles or mixed seeds without having to list everything.

Rod Hutchinson made giant leaps throughout the 1970s in bringing the effectiveness of particle baits to everybody's attention. Some of the catches he made at the time were nothing short of incredible, and he began to unlock many doors on a species which so many thought to be too difficult to catch to

warrant spending any time trying to do so. How things have changed – thanks to all the early pioneers of carp fishing. It's quite strange talking about the early pioneers of modern carp fishing because a lot of them are still out and about, wetting their lines. Carp fishing, as most of us see it these days, is a very young sport. Certainly, when I started carp fishing in the late 1970s it was a very different pursuit compared to today, and it attracted a very different type of person than I see on the banks these days. I'm in danger of writing a totally different type of article here than the one I wanted to, so back to the plot. I merely wanted to point out that Rod, through his writings, revolutionised carp fishing for many. Suddenly the world came to realise that the biggest fish didn't necessarily want to eat the biggest baits.

Tip 1 Mix the Sizes

If you have been following my 10 Tips articles you may have noticed a very common denominator occurring with all the bait-related ones, whether bolilies, pellets, seeds, or whatever. Each time I urge the reader to try mixing the sizes and types of bait used. With particle fishing I will make no exception. Again, it is so rare for me to bait with just one type and size of bait. I can't stress enough how carp are turned on more by a mixed feast, and by feeding different sizes of bait they become easier to catch because it is more difficult for them to regulate their suck and detect the weight of the hook and hooklink.



Mixing your particles helps to keep the carp on their toes.

Tip 3 Use the Juices as Bait Soaks

One of my all-time favourite bait additives is the excess juice from cooked hempseed. I have used it for various different things over the years, from mixing into groundbait, through to rehydrating air-dried bolilies. Another brilliant way of using this incredible liquid is to use it to soak and cook other particle baits. Try soaking and cooking tiger nuts in it for that extra edge, all the lovely sweet oil of the hempseed and the crush of a tiger nut. Keep it to yourself and no one will be any the wiser as to why you are catching more fish on your tigers than they are on theirs!



The juices from your particles are great for rehydrating bolilies.

Tip 2 Be Careful What You Buy

Nuts have received an awful lot of bad press over the years, and rightly so. The problems occur when anglers purchase cheap animal/bird grade nuts. Unfortunately these are at the very bottom of the food chain and really should be destroyed rather than sold. The problems start when they have not been handled and moved on quickly enough at the harvest stage, and dampness can get to them, which can then lead to contamination. It is not just peanuts either, maize often gets contaminated with aflatoxin, but peanuts are more likely to be contaminated with mycotoxins. Any animal or bird eating a quantity of these will die in a very short space of time. PLEASE be careful what you buy and try to avoid the bottom of the food chain at all costs. If it says it is not fit for human consumption, the chances are it is not fit for any animal consumption. I don't want to be too heavy, but it is so obviously critically important we don't poison our fish, or, indeed, the birds in the garden. Helping out our little feathered friends with a few nuts and the like isn't necessarily the best thing you can do for them. BE WARNED!



Mixing your particles helps to keep the carp on their toes.

Tip 4 Keep The Juices for Experimentation

On a similar theme, I save all the excess juice from particle preparation and freeze it down in sandwich bags for later experimentation. I find by freezing it in small amounts (usually a pint) it thaws out quickly when required. In my opinion these particle juices are the best thing for adding to groundbaits and stick mixes rather than plain water.



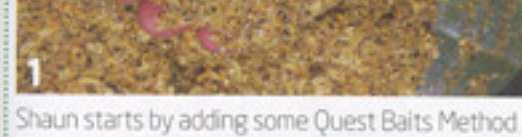
Don't throw away your particle juice. Freeze it and save it for future experimentation.

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HOW TO MAKE... SHAUN'S PARTICLE GROUND BAIT



1 Shaun starts by adding some Quest Baits Method Mix (this contains numerous crushed particles).



2 The first particle addition is a classic in the shape of some sweetcorn – add the juices too!



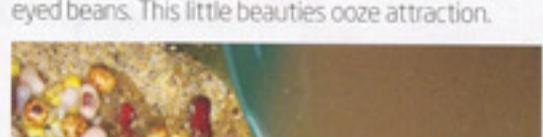
3 Red kidney beans are readily available from supermarkets and give added visual attraction.



4 Shaun also likes to add the much-underated black-eyed beans. This little beauties ooze attraction.



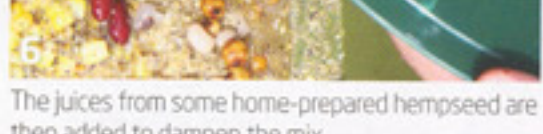
5 The next addition is some tiger nuts, an all-time classic particle and one of Shaun's favourites.



6 The juices from some home-prepared hempseed are then added to dampen the mix.



7 It's now time to get your hands dirty by mixing all the different particles together.



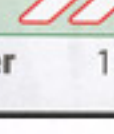
8 The finished mix is awesome and should be able to be balled up like this. Be sure to give it a go!

Tip 5 Tiger Nut for Hookbaits



"I give my hookbaits added attraction by scraping them to reveal a little of the white inner"

Tiger nuts can be an exceptional bait and most companies now offer these in a choice of size. Personally, I have always preferred the smaller ones, but I like to mix the odd larger one in with them. I give my hookbaits added attraction by scraping them to reveal a little of the white inner, which can really make the bait glow and stand out from the others.



SHAUN'S TIP

When using a tiger nut as a hookbait, try scraping away the skin with a penknife. This will reveal a bright, white inner that will make your hookbait stand out from your free offerings, often instigating quicker and more regular bites.

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Tip 6 Blitz Your Particles

A devastating method can be to chop up your particles to be able to offer a lot more natural flavour release and generally cloud up the surrounding area a little more. This, in turn, attracts many other smaller species to come in for a feed. Get anything feeding and this can act as a very big feeding stimulant to the carp.



Try chopping up a mixture of particles to increase the amount of natural attraction they release into your swim.

Tip 7 Give Hazelnuts a Whirl

One of my favourite quiet baits over the years, and one I've always kept quiet about, has been hazelnuts. I first started to use these in the mid-'80s. They have a hollow in the middle of them, which makes them sink very slowly because of their in-built flotation chamber. A great trick, and one I have employed an awful lot, is to split one in half, trap a small polystyrene ball in the hollow, then Superglue the two halves back together. I've caught loads of carp like that. One solitary popped up nut works really well on the waters that have seen a lot of corked-up tigers being used. Invariably anglers have a piece of cork, or similar, above their bait to help keep it buoyant, and when they have got used to this method, a single bait works incredibly well. There is no need to mess around with the Superglue if you utilise a float stop on your Hair to help keep the two halves of bait together.

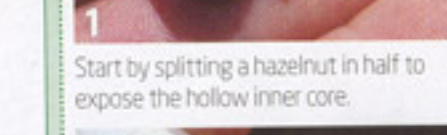
HOW TO MAKE... A BUOYANT HAZELNUT HOOKBAIT



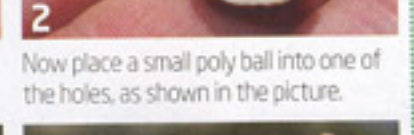
1 Start by splitting a hazelnut in half to expose the hollow inner core.



2 Now place a small polystyrene ball into one of the holes, as shown in the picture.



3 The next step is to carefully apply some Superglue to the inside of the nut.



4 Now place the two halves back together and hold tightly until the glue sets.



5 You now have a buoyant hookbait that can be threaded onto a rig.



6 Your hazelnut is simply deadly and should now sit on the lakebed like this.

Tip 8 Don't Go Overboard With Your Nuts

I purchase the nuts I use from the supermarket. This way I know I am buying them relatively fresh and that they are unlikely to be contaminated in any way. I only purchase small bags because I have never found the need to use loads of nuts. A crafty handful here and there is always enough to catch the carp.



"I purchase the nuts I use from the supermarket. This way I know I am buying them relatively fresh and that they are unlikely to be contaminated in any way"

Tip 9 Brazil Nuts for Avoiding Nuisance Species

Many anglers shy away from particle baits because of the fear of attracting too many so-called nuisance species into their swim. This is a valid point, but there are plenty of particle baits that nuisance species struggle with. After countless frustrations on the River Trent when trying to avoid the bream, I finally got through to a few carp by using brazil nuts. In fact, my very first brazil into the river with a castil produced a big double. Obviously it's an instant bait that requires no baiting up, which is a good job really – I couldn't afford to feed many of them!



Brazil nuts make an excellent alternative hookbait.



Experimenting with different particles can open up many avenues in your angling!

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Tip 10 Check out the Tinned Particles in Your Local Supermarket

The supermarket holds loads of useful ready-to-use particle baits, and it's a good idea to keep a few tins in the car for emergencies. Only this spring a friend of mine ran out of bait. After a winter of struggling he had got into the routine of carrying less bait with him. Then, on one session the carp really went for it, and three carp in the net meant he had no more bait to put out. He made a trip to the supermarket for some emergency tins of sweetcorn but there was none at all in stock – not even bags of frozen corn. Being old school this didn't put him off, and he spotted a few tins of chickpeas – a great bait that I rarely see used these days. Back at the lake and his recently purchased chickpeas were soon put out to the feeding area. His next take was a big 30!

The tinned particles I have personally used and caught carp on are:

Sweetcorn
Baked beans (both standard and curried)
Chickpeas
Black-eyed beans
Broad beans
Macadamia nuts
Kidney beans

I am sure there are many other items worth trying, but the ones listed will definitely catch you a carp.



It's always handy to have a few tins of supermarket-bought particles in the rucksack.



Well, that's about all I've got time for this month. I hope you get out there and on your next trip give these alternative particles a go. However, a word of warning – please check lake rules before using particles because different venues have different rules governing their use. CC

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