



Yeeeeeee Haaaaaa – buffalo carp!

Nottingham-based Quest Baits boss Shaun Harrison and Melton Mowbray-based British Carp Study Group secretary Ron Key have just returned from a two-week trip to Texas, USA, fishing for carp and buffalo carp.

Shaun told *Carp-Talk*: "It has been an ambition of mine to fish for buffalo carp ever since first seeing a picture of one several years ago, and the opportunity finally arose whereby this dream could eventually become reality. It's a long story, but I had a chance conversation with someone who fished the same lake as me in the eighties, and now resides in Texas. He put me



Shaun's 54¾lb 'helix' buffalo



Ron's third buffalo carp weighed 42½lb

anything about this fish, other than it appears to prefer small food items and is notorious for giving extremely delicate bite indications. I decided to stick with 10mm boilies, and for obvious reasons, I was determined to only use my own Quest Baits boilies.

"The first week saw Ron, Jason and I fishing on Lake Austin. It isn't really a lake at all; it forms part of the dammed Colorado River, and every so often there would be a push of water coming through. After we both caught a few channel catfish, Ron was soon into our first buffalo carp of the trip, all 41½lb of it – a great start. The following day Ron banked his third 'buff', this time at 42½lb, while other

than a succession of channel cats, I was still to get off the mark. Ron's fish were falling to Quest Fruity Trifle boilies, and a change to that flavour soon got me receiving a little action, too.

"The day that followed will be engraved on my mind for many years to come. I had caught my first couple of buffalo carp and had tweaked my rigs accordingly. In the middle of the afternoon I had a single bleep. I crouched by the rod and watched the bobbin merely flicker to another bleep. I struck hard and immediately knew I was into a good fish, which promptly crossed one of my other lines, all three of Ron's and one of Jason's! The power was very impressive; not

in touch with Jason Johonneson of www.texasbuffaloadventures.com, and before I knew it, I was asking Ron if he fancied a midwinter break.

"I knew we would be catching our beloved *Cyprinus carpio* whilst over there, but deep down I really

wanted to catch a buffalo carp, so I did everything I could in order to sway things that way. From what little information I could glean, buffalo carp have evolved very similarly to our common carp, but with much smaller mouths and no barbules. It was very difficult to find out



Ron's rare fully-scaled mirror

fast, but very powerful nonetheless.

"Jason, wearing knee-length snake boots, stood in the margins with the landing net, but after my first glimpse of the carp's back, I took the net off Jason and paddled out into deeper water to net it myself! The back looked huge and I didn't want to risk getting the fish grounded in the shallow margins. It was a massive relief when that fish fell into the folds of the net. It weighed 54¾lb and was what Jason referred to as a 'helix' buffalo with uneven mirror-like scales – the first one he had seen caught from the system.

"A couple of days later we headed six hours north to Lake Fork. The weather had really changed, which was part of the reason for the move. Although we had nice

warm days at Austin, the night time temperatures plummeted to below freezing. We'd thought that was bad, but with temperatures down to -12°C at Lake Fork (and a -19 windchill factor), we didn't know what had hit us!

"The fishing was difficult on Lake Fork due to the weather conditions, but we both managed to land 20lb-plus *Cyprinus carpio*s including what is so rare in



Lake Fork common – it was as cold as you like!

the USA, a 20lb fully-scaled mirror to Ron. I lost an absolutely monstrous buffalo carp on Lake Fork, but

followed it up with fish of 38¾lb and 47½lb.

"Will we go back? You bet we will!"



47½lb buffalo from Lake Fork

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