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Rudd on Lures

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Circle on the surface — rudd on lures

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When someone starts talking about fishing for rudd, the majority of anglers think about catching rudd while float fishing or when using light picker rod fishing for roach, bream, or for this species. Not many think first of lure fishing for these beauties, although when using little spinners or very tiny plugs for perch for instance, rudd may cause a nice surprise.

I was frequently watching fish cruising near surface while chasing asp on different waters. Rudds tend to make similar type of circles on the surface asp do while taking insects from the surface film. On numerous occasions I've misread these signs and thought there are asp looking for an easy meal, but rudd were not attracted by lures and styles of lure retrieve which worked for asp.

There have been some hurdles I had to take on my way in finding the key to target these flamboyant fishes effectively with lures. The first bite came on a tiny 1" plastic grub on a 1 gram jighead. I tried to catch their attention with that, but they only grabbed the end of the tail of the grub. One thing however caught my attention very much: the rudd always rushed to the place where the grub plunged into the water.



The second step on my way to success has been that I've been made familiar with the lifelike insect imitations of Microbait. In fact after the previously described unsuccessful attempts on rudd I did not chase them for months. Later on a trip I was looking for asp and tried these insect imitations I've managed to land my first lure caught rudd. After I recognized the typical circles under an overhanging branch and cast there, something slurped my hornet-imitation with a sudden move into the water. Based on the fighting qualities of the fish I hoped for a nice asp, but I could not believe my eyes when I saw a wonderful 14" rudd (around 400 grams) swimming in front of me.

Since that I've started searching for spots I can meet these "predators" more frequently. But there was still a major problem which had to be solved, that of casting distance. I've been unable to cast the tiny lures farther than 24 – 30 feet even with using 0,08mm diameter braided line. Both thin diameter fluorocarbon and monofilament were not helping me much in reaching rudd always a bit beyond the distance I've managed to reach with the Microbaits.

Finally the recent introduction of Nanofil line brought the breakthrough for me in my pursuit of rudd. But it was a bit of an accident too. I wanted to try this new type of line but there was only one spool of the thinnest diameter left in the shop. Anyway, I bought it, even if it had only 0,04mm diameter. Back home at first sight I was a bit scared of the thinness of the line, I've never tried such a thin line before.

First I tried to break the line with my hands, but it held. I knotted it to the monofilament line I used as a backing on the spool of my spinning reel, and by simply pulling the knot tight the next surprise came. The line broke even by applying minimal force. Perhaps I did something wrong, I tried it again, following the indication of applicable knot-types on the box of the line. It broke again, the thin line just cut itself when I pulled it tight.

I thought I'll still give the line a chance and did not pull the knot on the backing end as tight as I usually do. For the business end I've picked a "Not-a-knot" connector. The first fish I landed with that setup has been an 18" chub that tested the line and connections quite enthusiastically. Next testers were asp and all of them were landed safely with the hair-like nanofil line. The tiny lures were flying with it now further than I've ever hoped for and I've managed to reach so far incredible distances with little twisters with 3-5 gram jigheads.

Rudds – especially elder fish – are really smart. If you find a shoal you'll probably get one single bite on the lure. In case you catch one member of the shoal, they will not show any interest for the same lure again. Perhaps I should retain the fish I catch but I prefer immediate release. I never had a bite on retrieved lure, but they happily take the tiny imitation as it hits the surface. It is worth waiting couple of seconds after it hits the water and give it a tiny, careful twitch again to make circles on the surface, which seems to attract rudd more than anything else. Most important however is the accurate cast. We should offer the lure as close to the group of fish as possible. We should not bang the lure onto the water, it should look like an insect that lost its balance and fell off a leaf of an overhanging branch.

There are some points helping us differentiating surface signs of asp and rudd, however differences between them are rather minor. But there are some. We can be sure those rudds are on the hunt when we see 5-10, or even more fish moving together. Moving fast and making little waves with the back is revealing asp, rudd tend to move slower. Rudd put their back and head above surface quite often and can make surprisingly loud slurping sounds when inhaling insects from the surface film.

Since rudd's mouth is rather small, unfortunately there are many missed bites and lost fish while playing them. Very often they just drag the lure under the surface, but did not inhale it. In those cases you should stay calm, they often give you a second chance and bite again, if you do not move the lure. I am waiting until they pull on the tip of the rod, but do not strike, just take up contact by reeling in the slack line and start playing them.

Compared to its size rudd are hard fighters. We should take care with free hanging hooks of the lure to avoid injuries because a rudd never gives up and keeps on fighting in our hands too.

During autumn I've spent memorable hours and hours with chasing rudd, sight fishing for these wonderful creature is a unique experience. Especially since all of the bites occur on the surface and we can see it all. I admit I fell in love with this flamboyant fish and cant wait for better weather in spring when I can start watching the circles on the surface again.

