

THE TURN OF THE REDWORM

Chris Vandervleit is a master of chopped worm fishing. Here he explains why redworms are one of his biggest tactical edges.

Worms have to be one of the oldest fishing baits of all time and will never go out of fashion. As one of the most natural organisms a fish will ever stumble across, they are rarely treated with suspicion.

The humble earthworm, more commonly referred to as a lobworm by anglers, is perhaps the most common variety. You can buy these extra large worms in shops, dig them up or collect them off the lawn on a mild, damp night.

When it comes to shop-bought worms, however, it's the dendrobaena that has taken over the fishing world. These are the easiest worm to breed on a commercial

scale. They keep really well and are a nice and manageable size for both hook baits and feeding. Fish clearly love them, whether that's bream, perch, chub, tench or carp.

There is another variety of worm that is often overlooked, however. It's latin name is *Eisenia fetida*, but to you and I it's the redworm! This is an altogether more difficult variety to get from a tackle shop and you might actually find some tubs of so-called redworms are often just tiny dendrobaenas in disguise! These much smaller worms are full of attraction. Their juices are full of aminos and natural attractants which fish clearly cannot resist. Pop one on the hook and it will wriggle like mad. If it's tench and bream that you're after then this should be close to number one on your shopping list. Perch of all sizes like them too and some massive roach have succumbed to the pulling power of a redworm over the years.

The downside to these tiny little wrigglers is getting them. They are tricky to obtain commercially, but if you can find a supply you would be foolish not to take advantage of it. One man who knows just how effective they are and, just as importantly where to get them, is Southern match ace Chris Vandervleit.

"Horses are the key!" Chris explains. "Find someone who keeps horses and you're halfway towards getting some quality redworms."



www.drennantackle.com

ANGLER FILE

Name: **Chris Vandervleit**
Age: **52**
Lives: **Essex**

VENUE FILE

LAKE JOHN FISHERY
Galley Hill, Waltham
Abbey, Essex, EN9 2BJ
www.lakejohnfishery.co.uk



heap where there's a higher concentration of worms. It can take a while to sift through them and find the more concentrated clumps but the effort is worth it when you have a tub full of lovely redworms at your disposal.

"I keep larger quantities in an old pillow case along with some fresh manure and might add some shredded paper to keep them fed. I can then easily dip into this bag and grab enough for a session.

"Redworms are without doubt a top hook bait and that's my number one use for them. I will use them in various ways. A single, whole redworm is a great starting point, varying the size depending on the quarry and hook. Half a redworm – tail, middle or head – can work equally well. I will also split a worm and hook the two halves. You can also make a fantastic cocktail by combining redworms with maggots, pinkies, casters or even corn.

"You tend to get a real variety of worms so it's really easy to pick out the size you're after. Yes, it's a bit messy but you shouldn't go fishing if you don't like getting your hands dirty!

"I'm lucky as I have access to some stables and that means I have my own supply of lovely fresh horse manure to wade through! That's the real secret. Redworms love manure!

"Importantly, you want a stable that uses wood chips on the floor rather than straw. Worms will happily eat wood, bark, paper and cardboard, so the stable sweepings are one big banquet!

"Collecting them involves a bucket and donning some rubber gloves. You'll find there is always one part of the manure

TOP WORM TIPS

Chris keeps his redworms in fresh horse manure so they stay in perfect condition.



Standard dendrobaenas are still used for the majority of his chopped worm feed.



Casters and dead maggots work really well with worms.



A whole, half or two or three sections of redworm are all effective options.



"If you have enough of a supply, you can also feed some redworms. A few chopped up are great for roach and skimmers, especially on a canal or river. Usually I feed mostly dendrobaenas and/or lobworms and then add a smaller amount of chopped reds to give the fish a taster.

"Today, I'm at my favourite Lake John Fishery in Essex. There are stacks of fish in this place, so I don't think there's any need to feed any chopped redworms in my feed. Instead, I'm happy to use chopped dendras, plus casters and dead red maggots as well. These are fed in my favourite Bait-Tech Special G groundbait. On this venue I usually like to feed plenty of particles to hold the fish as they will soon get cleared up. I normally pot in two or three generous balls full of feed and will then pot in smaller balls regularly depending on bites and how the fish are responding.

"By giving the fish plenty of options I can also really vary things. The best hook bait can vary from day to day, so I'm prepared to try dead maggots, casters, bits of dendra and, of course, my smaller redworms.

"I think redworms really work so well because of their scent, their smaller size and the fact that they wriggle much more than any other hook bait. If I'm really struggling for a bite then one or two small redworms have to be my number one choice. They can almost excite the fish into taking them!

"As you can see from my catch, these tactics work for all species, big and small. At this time of year it's all about trying to keep yourself busy and keep popping something in the net. Whenever you fish with worms on a venue like this you never quite know what that next fish will be!

“YOU CAN ALSO MAKE A FANTASTIC COCKTAIL BY COMBINING REDWORMS WITH MAGGOTS, PINKIES, CASTERS OR EVEN CORN

