

We've got you covered!



Magic filters are now available in 3 options. Original Magic for use in blue water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance, Auto-Magic for compact cameras in automatic point and shoot mode. GreenWater Magic for use in green water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance. Prices start at just £22.



The Auto-Magic formula is now available in a Plexiglass filter that can be added or removed underwater.

www.magic-filters.com

Freshwater Fishes of Britain

by Jack Perks

I suppose when most underwater photographers think of freshwater photography in the UK, they instantly think of Stoney Cove, Leicestershire, with its leviathans like pike and bold perch. Some may even venture to Capernwray, Lancaster, with huge shoals of stocked trout and sturgeon hugging the lakebed. There's a whole host of species present in the British Isles, from tiny loach to huge catfish. It's been a great pleasure to try to film and photograph all 56 of them. I started off as an angler and naturalist, with photography coming much later to me. I was always mesmerised by watching fish from the bank but now I barely ever pick up a rod. I noticed, compared to bird photography, there were very few fish photographers (probably a reason for that!) but admired the work of such photographers as Trevor Rees, Michel Roggo and Rob Cuss who has become a good friend and funnily enough lives quite close to me!

Freshwater fish can be found in all manner of habitats, from the industrial canals that create ideal homes for Perch and Gudgeon to large torrent-filled rivers full of Atlantic Salmon and Grayling. They are an integral part of the ecosystem for many creatures as a food source but are much more than that and hold many fantastic behaviours and stories. Chub are a greedy river fish that will eat anything from beetles, small fish, mice and even fruit, with the chub hanging around under the bushes in the



Rainbow Trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss*. Max length 120cm (47.2in). Max weight 27.2kg (60lb)

Another American species imported for sport fishing, Rainbow Trout are found all over the British Isles.

They seldom breed in our climate, although exceptions include a notable population in the Derbyshire Wye.

HABITAT: Prefers fast-flowing rivers and streams but equally at home in large lakes and reservoirs.

Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm, 1/400th @ F7.1. 800 ISO

autumn waiting for a snack. They are the origin for the word chubby. Bitterling are a small fish that were accidentally introduced to the UK. They don't cause any major issues but have a fascinating way of breeding: in the spring, the female deposits eggs into a live swan mussel then the male fertilizes them. It's thought they do this to protect the young -

though it's not clear what the mussel gets out of this arrangement.

The book is designed as an easy guide to view every one of the 56 species of freshwater fish we presently have in the UK, including non-native species and marine species that will penetrate up river. It's a very visual ideal for children and anyone



Minnow *Phoxinus phoxinus*. Max length 14cm (5.5in). Max weight 20g (0.7oz)
The staple diet of many river predators, Minnows rely on numbers and quick reflexes in order to escape. They are one of the few native fish that can do well in aquariums.

HABITAT: *Rivers from the upper reaches right down to tidal areas.*
Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, 100mm, 1/80th @ F11. 125 ISO

else who wants to get a glimpse into the underwater world of freshwater fish. It includes chapters on how to spot and find fish which is harder than most would think; looking down from a bridge, they can all look the same, but scan them closer and you'll see subtle differences such as the broad back of a chub or slim shape of a

bleam. We have some real oddities turn up from time to time as well like albinos, deformities, hybrids and the unknown fish!

I go into detail about how I capture the underwater images, from scuba to wellies and everything in-between. Though I do scuba dive sometimes, for some of the deeper



Three-spined Stickleback *Gasterosteus aculeatus*. Max length 11cm (4.3in) Max weight 20g (0.7oz)

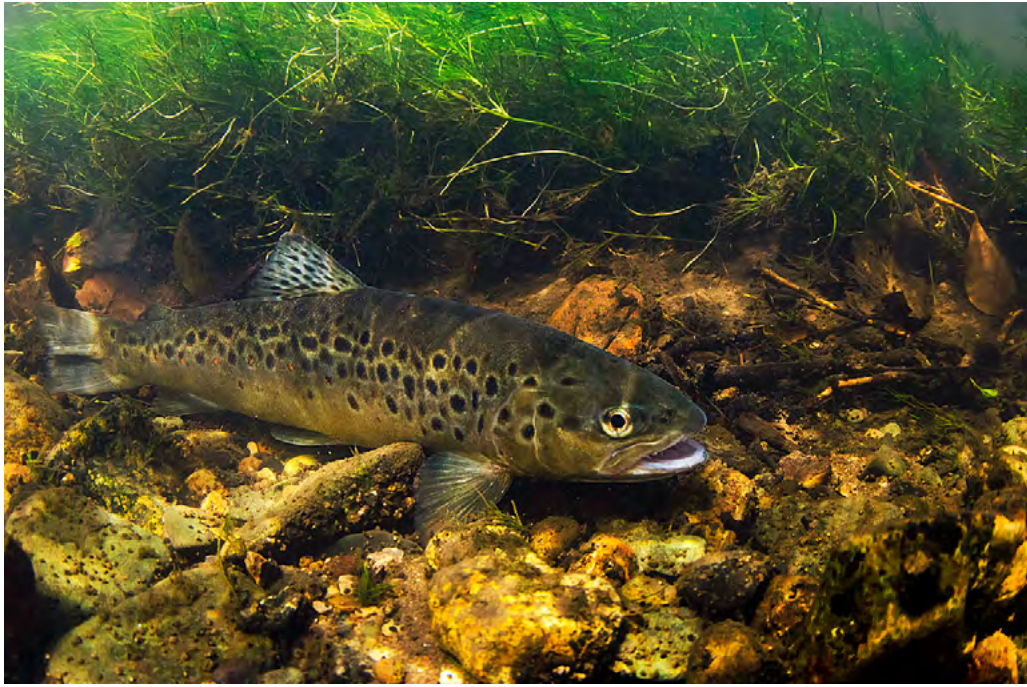
Despite its size the Three-spined Stickleback is a voracious predator, engulfing anything that will fit inside its mouth. When protecting its nest it will attack much larger fish in order to defend its young. Sticklebacks are fairly short-lived with three years being the normal lifespan.

HABITAT: *The most adaptable fish in the UK. It will inhabit most bodies of water, from silty ditches only inches deep to saline rockpools.*

Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm, 1/500th @ F5. 200 ISO

dwelling species and different perspectives it offers, I mostly use other techniques for my freshwater fish photography because most are found in fairly shallow water and, more often than not, rivers. The large quarries that we often dive in are biologically poor. Freshwater photography is not an easy task,

to say the least. Most fish are very skittish, though it varies from species to species and even in individuals some are more bold than others. I've had grayling hit me in the face when snorkelling one day and another day I struggle to get within 10 feet of them. Then there are the conditions: it's often cold and hazardous and



Brown Trout *Salmo trutta*. Max length 140cm (55in). Max weight 30kg (66lb)
*Probably Britain's most widespread freshwater fish, the Brown Trout is found from Cornwall to the Shetland Islands and everywhere in between. 'Sea Trout' is the anadromous form of Brown Trout and has been known to hybridise with Atlantic Salmon. Brown Trout which are landlocked in large lakes and lochs can reach huge sizes by eating Arctic Charr or even other Brown Trout. These are sometimes known as 'Ferox Trout' and they are considered by some to represent a separate species ('*Salmo ferox*').*

HABITAT: *More often associated with chalk streams and highland burns, they are very adaptable and are found in most types of waterways providing the water is clean enough.*

Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm, 1/500th @ F8. 100 ISO

the many diseases you can catch are always in the back of my mind (I figure I must have built up a tolerance by now with the amount of rivers I've been in). Weather is key as even the

slightest rain will colour the water, particularly for lowland rivers, while spate rivers will clear up faster and they still flow at a high rate.

Freshwater fish conservation



Ruffe *Gymnocephalus cernua*. Max length 20cm (7.9in). Max weight 170g (6oz)
Locally common, Ruffe tend to hang around in large shoals. They have a liking for fish eggs and fry, and this has caused problems in the Scottish Highlands where they eat the eggs of rare fish such as Arctic Charr and Powan in glacial lakes. Like their larger cousin, the Zander, Ruffe prefer murky water or live deep down due to their photophobic eyes.

HABITAT: *Murky canals and rivers or deep lakes.*

Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, 60mm, 1/250th @ F7.1. 250 ISO

is something I hold very dear to me and although there's no specific organisation just for freshwater fish in the UK there are plenty that help them. The Wildlife Trusts manage

hundreds of reserves, many of which hold bodies of water, and fish can often go unnoticed. My local patch is Attenborough Nature Reserve, which is a 226-hectare wetland area and a



Arctic Charr *Salvelinus alpinus*. Max length 107cm (42.1in). Max weight 15kg (33lb)

There are around 340 separate populations in the British Isles. They arrived as sea-run charr, and then subsequently lost their sea-migratory tendencies and become freshwater resident populations, occupying mainly the deep lakes of Scotland, Ireland, north Wales and the Lake District of north-west England.
HABITAT: Exclusively found in large lakes and lochs, mostly in Scotland and the Lake District.

Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm, 1/200th @ F4.5. 800 ISO

magnet for birdlife and other species. When doing a survey, I asked how many fish species they have recorded over the 50 years that the site had been open - to which they replied, 'Two!' I picked a net up myself and added six new tiddlers to the list. Putting in reedbeds allows a home and nursery for many species and cleaning gravels allows spawning habitat for

many species.

Eels have declined by 95% in the last 50 years or so due to barriers, parasites and habitat loss while rivers are still in a bad way with pollutants entering them, though they have improved somewhat.

The book is an easy read full of facts, figures and of course plenty of underwater pictures of species that



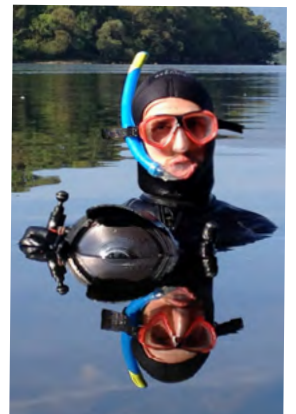
Pike *Esox lucius*. Max length 130cm (51in). Max weight 23kg (50lb)

The Pike is the largest native predatory fish. It has hundreds of serrated teeth which are coated in anticoagulants, so that when prey is bitten it won't stop bleeding and the Pike can follow the scent trail to claim its prize. As well as small fish, Pike will take frogs, small mammals and ducklings with ease.

HABITAT: Preferring clear, oxygenated water, Pike do well in both lakes and rivers.

Nikon D7000, Ikelite housing, Tokina 10-17mm, 1/100th @ F7.1. 800 ISO

many people just don't come into contact with. It can be read in one go or easily dipped in and out of. It's the culmination of years of research and hard work, which I'm immensely proud of. My work to try and help protect freshwater fish with photography continues with future projects in the pipeline.



Jack Perks

www.jackperksphotography.com

Back issues



99p per issue or
buy the complete
set of 94 issues for
just £19.95 (That's
about 21p per
issue!) Yours to
keep forever.

As you know, the current issue of Underwater Photography is free to download but all of the previous issues, going right back to Issue 1, are still available to download for just 99p per issue. It's a fantastic reference library chronicling all that has happened in underwater photography over the past 15 years.



Add UwP58 to cart

UwP58 — Jan/Feb 2011, 76 pages.

[Click to show or hide issue contents](#)



Add UwP57 to cart

UwP57 — Nov/Dec 2010, 85 pages.

[Click to show or hide issue contents](#)



Add UwP56 to cart

UwP56 — Sept/Oct 2010, 90 pages.

[Click to show or hide issue contents](#)



Add UwP55 to cart

UwP55 — July/Aug 2010, 75 pages.

[Click to show or hide issue contents](#)

Buy back issues
here