

Bowden Springs, see five counties and catch hard-fighting fish

Bowden Springs reservoir started life in 1896 after six years of hard blasting and digging by Irish labourers and it was created to provide water for nearby Bo'ness.

It is set high in the hills above the West Lothian town of Linlithgow and you can see five counties from the entrance gate.

There are two ponds, the fly of two acres and the bait of five acres and in its heyday it provided sport for up to 120 anglers.

Fishing started here in the 1980s and there have only been two owners, Will Martin until 2004 and now Jim, a former international fisherman, and Jacqui Gargaro.

The couple currently run the popular facility which buys in trout from a river-fed fishery near Yarrow in the Borders.

It is full of hard-fishing fish of up to around 10lbs and anglers come from all over Central Scotland. Incidentally, I enjoyed great sport with a 2lbs 15oz specimen.

HOW TO GET THERE: Bowden is situated on the A706 and it is best to approach the fishery via Linlithgow if you are coming from Edinburgh or Glasgow.

Take the A706 out of Linlithgow Bridge signposted Lanark and the fishery is around three miles out of the town on the left.

FACTFILE:

Contacts: Jim or Jacqui Gargaro

Web: www.bowdensprings.co.uk

Address: Carribber. Linlithgow EH49 6QE

T: 07836 209050

Open: seven days a week (weather permitting)

Times: 8.30am to dusk except Saturday when the fishery closes at 6.30pm.

Car park: 30 cars

Species: brown, blue and rainbow trout

Hooks: barbless

Favoured patterns: buzzers, shrimps, mini-lures, cruncher, PTN and damsel patterns

Booby: allowed but only on a kill ticket

Line strength: anything less than 8lbs will be snapped by the strong fighting fish

Best approach: sub-surface

Best time: late evening

Ideal weight of rod: 5/6

Basic prices: fly loch (two acres): four hours and kill two fish £18.50; bait loch (five acres), two hours kill two fish £14

Stocked: regularly

Bank fishing only

Average depth: 9ft

Catching method: fly and bait

Pegs: up to 40 in the bait pond and 12 in the fly pond

Rod hire: yes

Boats: no

Bait: maggots and worms and both are available to buy on site

Outings: maximum number 30

On-site facilities: toilets, bothy with fridge, microwave and small cooker

Disabled area: yes

Shop: tackle essentials like flies, fly lines, nylon, weights and floats plus accessories

Food: none

Refreshments: free tea and coffee

CCTV: in all areas

Coaching: available on request from Ian Jardine and John Sher