

Autumn Sport In The Beacons

Cantref Reservoir in the Brecon Beacons where the rainbows are as stunning as the scenery.

If you have ever travelled along the A470 in Wales, you might have noticed some lovely looking reservoirs in the Brecon Beacons on your way to or from Cardiff. This scenic chain of three are known as the Cwm Taff Reservoirs, built in the Victorian era as a water supply for Cardiff and the South Wales valleys.

We are fishing Cantref Reservoir, the middle and smallest one. It can be classed as an upland stillwater, being 1,073 feet above sea level. Once a fishery run by Welsh Water, Cantref was a popular put-and-take venue until 2012. At that time Welsh Water stopped the fishing and gave up the lease, much to the disappointment of local anglers.

After a few years in limbo, the sporting rights on the reservoir were eventually taken up by the local Merthyr Tydfil Angling Club, and under its stewardship the fishery is back on its feet after a couple of years off the map.

Perfect Size

At 40 acres or so, Cantref is a perfect size for bank fishing, with a mix of easy and difficult shoreline access making for interesting and engaging fishing. Being fed by two decent feeder streams, including the embryonic River Taff, it has a decent head of naturally producing wild brownies. These native fish can run upwards of 1lb, although half that is usually the norm. On a fine summer evening you can often find these fish rising at the neck end of the reservoir to prolific hatches of black buzzer, or to terrestrial insects being blown off the neighbouring hillsides.

Cantref is also trickle stocked with rainbow trout over the season, allowing the reservoir to remain open until November 30th, thus providing decent back-end sport in an area of South Wales where many other large stillwaters have shut

Airflo's Ceri Thomas and Tim Hughes sample back-end fishing in a Brecon Beacons stillwater, where the resident rainbows are simply the best looking in Wales.

Target the weed beds because these will hold an array of food for the trout during autumn.



Swapping to a Di3 brings further quality rainbows to the Black Dancer.

off the fly line jags away with a feisty Brecon Beacons rainbow attached. These fish really go well and while they are not giants by any standards, pound for pound they are true fighters.

I pick up a quick succession of fish, a mixture of stunning wild browns and truly beautiful rainbows. The majority take the point fly, although a few brownies take a liking to the Blue Zulu on the dropper.

Tim has been enjoying great sport round the corner, with a good number of wild brown-

ies nailing his dry Daddy fished off some weed beds and around an old river channel.

He comes over and, while I continue to catch fish on the intermediate, is struggling to get the rainbows to respond to the dries. It seems the rainbows prefer the fly retrieved on a level plane a foot or two beneath the surface, so Tim makes a change to a Di3 sinker with a single Black Dancer and is quickly rewarded with several lovely rainbows after working the fly back quite quickly to keep it in the taking

zone.

As the day progresses into early afternoon the wind increases in strength becoming almost unfishable, with gusts of over 20mph right into our faces. However, until this point it has been well worth braving the conditions because we have netted around 20 fish between us, so we call it a day. We've had great sport on an underrated, scenic fishery that can be enjoyed for just a tenner. And those rainbows – aren't they the prettiest you've ever seen? **TF**

Fishing on Cantref

Day tickets are £10. The season runs from March 1st to November 30th. Catch and release is encouraged and all brown trout must be returned before March 20th or after October 17th in any year.

Permits are available from Fishtec in Brecon or Tony Rees in Merthyr Tydfil. Visit www.mtaa.co.uk for further details.

Cantref is an underrated water that offers excellent fishing with probably the prettiest fish in Wales!

