

Are we headed for one of the best Ouse winters in years?

DON'T hold your breath, but we could be in for one of the best Upper Ouse winters – especially on the float – for decades!

Obviously sport will depend on the weather... but much of the river is heaving with fish.

Double-figure nets of chunky silvers are seemingly routine, and this summer's Environment Agency surveys showed up to TEN TIMES more fish than last year.

But, while small fish are on the up, there are some 'lumps' to be caught, too – like the 6-3 chub (pictured) which took Roger Stratton's trotted maggots near Newport, and barbel of 11-2 and 10-5 which Adam Short had in an Olney evening session.

Why are there now so many small fish, following years of apparent dearth?

Apparently, three to four years back we had ideal spawning and survival conditions, and far more juvenile fish than usual made it through to the point where they could survive most anything – other than predators – nature can throw at them.

And this year may yet produce a similar boost to future stocks.

■ Not all the action has been in running water and Michael Ford is pictured below with a 5-9 Bradwell tench. He's also been having fun with the lake's smaller pike on lures.

■ Nine White Hart members totalled almost 50lb from the Toombes Ouse – mostly small roach, dace, chublets, perch and lots of gudgeon to stick-floated maggot. Jim Ryan had 11-10, Mike Elsom 6-9 and Ray Golding 6-2.



● Michael Ford with Brad'll tench

■ At Olney Ernie Sattler won MKAA's club get-together with 10-13 of hemp roach. Steve Glidewell included a 5-9 slab in his 9-0-8, with Lee Jones on 8-11... of bleak.



● 6-3 Ouse chub with Roger Stratton

■ Small fish also ruled in Kingfisher's Brushmill do. Steve Chilton won with 10-8 as Jeff Dougall and Keith Harrison tied on 8-10.

Picture this as part of the entertainment: Mick Reynolds stood up, allowing the wind under his umbrella to up-end his box and break his pole top two sections, then stepped back and broke another section, and then watched as a fourth section slid down the bank into the river. Hardly Mary Poppins, was it Mick?

■ Towcester made the most of Astwell Mill's weed starting to die down. Jim Harris had six tench for 19-8, Wayne Robinson three and some skimmers for 17-4, and Mark Read 8-8 – mostly rudd.

■ OLNEY midweek Ouse open: Neale Shearn 10-8 (roach), Pete Hawley 10-3, Chez Kaciniel 9-1.

■ MK VETS, Black Horse cut: Dave McLennan 11-2 (tench, bream, roach), Nigel Steele 7-10, John Harvey 5-11.

■ CALVERT, Claydon lake: Derek Bishop 4-2, Dave Ridgeway 4lb, Dave Lewis 2-13.

■ LINFORD, boatyard canal: Dave Tysoe 4-7-8, Roy Hefferon 3-4, Mick Hefferon 2-11.

■ OSPREY, Piddley lake (Hunts): Ian Millin 87lb; Tony McGregor 75lb, Trevor Watkins 71lb.

■ TOWCESTER VETS, Tofts: Tosh Saunders 63-13, Gerald Green 58-4, John Balhatchett 56-5.

■ FIXTURES: Saturday MKAA junior teach-in, Galleon canal 1pm 01908 320007; Sunday Olney's Two Brewers Ouse open 01234 240061.

Matches, catches, even rough patches? If there's a tale to tell call Trevor Johnson on 01908 270000 (office) or 07801 183381 or email angling@intermediauk.com (click link to email)