

## PLUMBING THE DEPTH



### What is it?

It is always good to know the depth of the water that you're fishing in. **PLUMBING THE DEPTH** will help you build a picture in your mind of what you imagine the bottom of the lake to look like.

Let's get something straight here...

You will **NEVER** be able to create an accurate picture of the bottom of any water you fish. Videos have proven that what anglers think the bottom looks like, is nothing like what it actually is.

What we can do is build an image of slopes, steps, depressions and lumps. We can imagine whether the bottom is soft and muddy (silty), or hard and stoney. We can even tell if there is weed or if it is clear to a large degree.

The most common things to look for are flat spots. Flat clean areas of the bottom that we can place a bait on and where it will not roll away, be

lost, or not be seen. These flat areas are commonly created by the fish themselves and so will be revisited regularly. As you can see from the image above, even the flattest bottoms are never completely flat.



## What is a Plummet?

A plummet is made from a heavy material and should have a wire loop on the top through which to pass the hook and line, a slot down the side to keep the line straight avoiding false readings, and something soft into which to push the point of the hook without damaging it. It should have a wide flat base to prevent it from sinking into anything soft. Look for plummets of around 20g. Note the word 'Plummets' plural. You WILL lose them. You WILL need more than one.

Another range of 'Plummets' you will need are SSG split shots which we will talk about next.

## How to plumb the depth with a rod and reel:

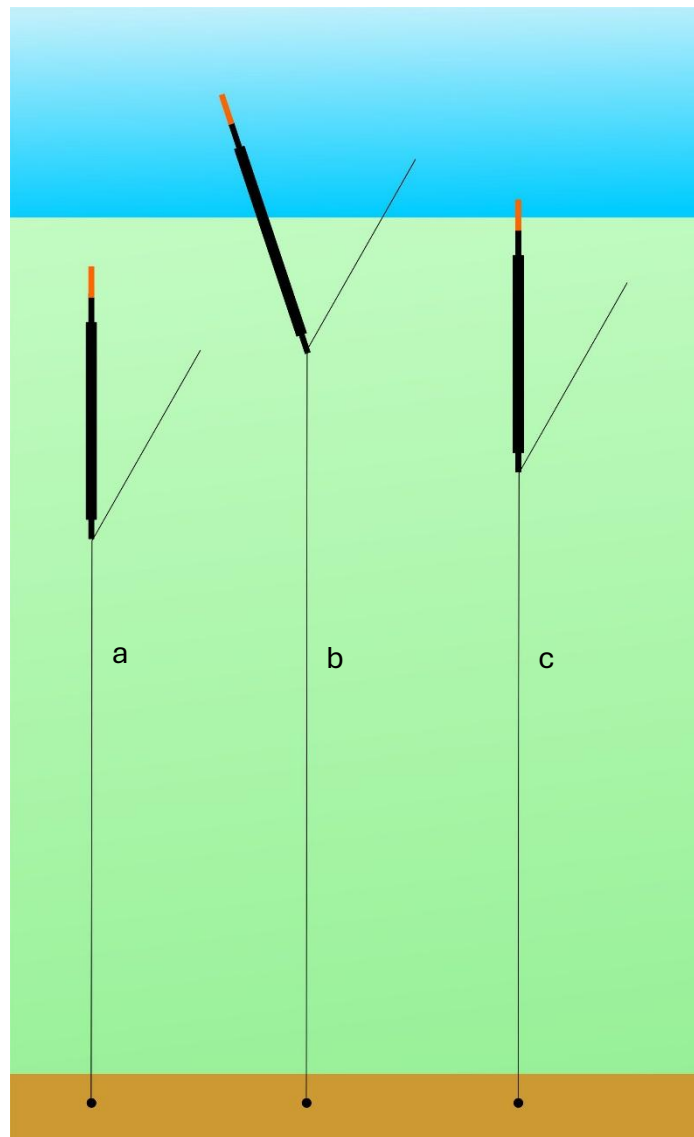
We can assume that a Waggler will be fished at a distance that will require a cast of some sort. If you cast out a plummet of even 10g in weight, it will make a substantial splash and disturb any fish in the area instantly.

To eliminate the risk of this happening, it is recommended that a large split shot is used instead. An **SSG** shot can be carefully pinched onto the hook leaving the point exposed so it will not be damaged. This will provide enough weight to be a useful plummet, without unnecessarily disturbing the fish.

(a) shows the float under the surface and out of sight of the angler. The float is set too shallow and needs to be moved further away from the hook.

(b) The float is set too deep and needs moving closer to the hook.

(c) The float has been adjusted and now sits at '**Dead Depth**' with a small part of the coloured tip showing. For general fishing, this is a good place to start with the bait and hook on or very near the bottom. Adjustments can be made from here.



If possible, if you can remove a shot from the main bulk that cocks the float, or remove the weight from a loaded float, you will get a far more positive reading. Because the float

will be more buoyant, it will push harder towards the surface. Just make sure that it doesn't lift your Plummets off the bottom.

Always cast carefully when using any kind of plummet with a Waggler. Good practice is just before everything hits the water during a cast, dab a finger onto the spool of the reel to cause a braking effect on the rig. This action is known as '**Feathering**' and will straighten your line before it lands in the water. Doing this will prevent tangles and save valuable fishing time spent untangling everything or even setting up all over again!



#### **How to plumb the depth with a pole:**

The process is similar with a pole but is far more accurate because you have far better control over the float. A more traditional plummet is used to 'feel' your way on the bottom much more accurately than a Waggler set up. For most pole situations the rig will be suspended directly below the pole tip. This enables you to 'hop' the plummet along the bottom a few cm's at a time, finding all the dips and bumps along the way. You can also find out what you will be fishing over.

#### **Hard Bottom:**



By lifting the plummet up off the bottom and allowing it to drop under its own weight. As you lift it again, if it comes up again with no resistance, then you are fishing over a firm or hard bottom. It could be gravel, stone or large rocks, so pay attention to any sharp depth changes or you can feel the plummet slipping down steep surfaces. Fishing over

hard smooth ground is fine, and the same for gravelly bottoms. Be aware of pebbles, large rocks, or even swan muscles as the bait you feed can be easily lost in the gaps and crevices.

#### **Moderate Bottom:**



If you try to lift it and find a little resistance, then the bottom is probably a little ‘muddy’. Clay or mud can leave residue on the plummet telling you even more.

#### **Soft, Silty, or Weedy Bottom:**



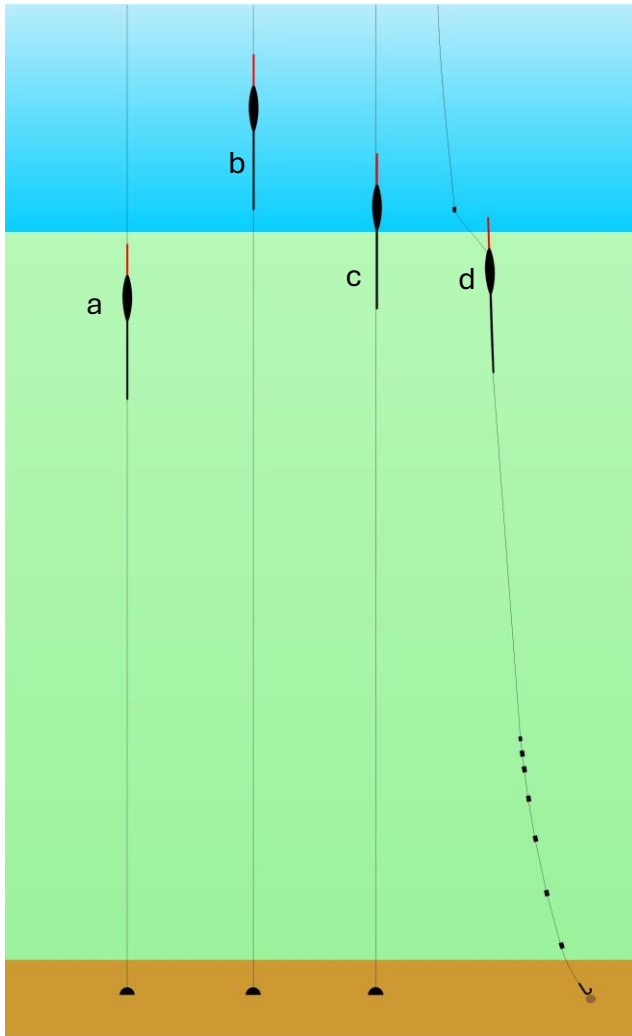
If you find you must use some force to pull out a ‘Plugged’ plummet, then you have found some deep silt. Fish are less likely to feed over a bottom like this.

The object of finding the depth on the pole is to locate a nice hard flat area over which to fish. Any bait you feed over this area will not roll or crawl away. The fish will find the bait easier to find and will be easier to catch. The chances are that any clear, hard, flat areas you do find will have been created by the fish themselves. So, it makes sense to fish in these areas.

Another trick you can try with a plummet is to pull it gently left and right to see if there could be some larger sticks, twigs or even weed. Be warned, doing this is a great way to lose plummets! If the plummet seems to rattle along the bottom, then there may be rock, shells, or stones. If it is fairly smooth across the bottom, then it may be good ground or at least clay or firm mud. If the plummet is ‘heavy’ across the bottom or even stops, then you have found some silt or even weed and twigs.



Let us get one thing straight here. Whatever you THINK the bottom looks like, it probably looks NOTHING like that! Underwater films have shown us that what the angler sees in his mind is far removed from that which the camera sees, and the camera never lies as they say...



The process of plumbing the depth with a pole is very similar to that with a Waggler.

(a) shows the float beneath the surface and is therefore too shallow and needs deepening.

(b) shows the float to be set too deep and needs to be shallower.

(c) shows the body of the float to be just on or close to the surface of the water. This is at the perfect depth for most fishing situations.

(d) shows the rig being fished with a bait on. Note how the rig sits with slight curve to it. The bait is used as tiny 'anchor' to keep the float stationary. As soon as the bait is moved, it will register on the float as a bite. The curve also prevents the fish from being 'spooked' by line going straight down through the water. The back shot above the float reduces the amount of line picked up on the strike.

### SUMMARY:

The plummet is your friend, your fingers along the bed of any water you fish with rod or pole.

Always take your time to carefully plumb the depth because it can really make a difference between a good and a great day. Never be afraid to check your depth during a session, but use a smaller, lighter plummet or a large split shot so you don't spook any fish that are present.

Look for flat areas, but do not ignore slopes, shelves, and drop offs. These areas can hold fish too.

ALWAYS mark the depth on your rod or pole with tape, Tipp-ex or a Chinagraph pencil.

That way you always know where to go back to if you do move your float up or down.

Juniors Sec...