

## BRITISH BREAM TOURISTS

The Netherlands is the ultimate angling destination. According to Alan Thinnesen (70) there's no doubt about it. "So many large breams, that's unheard of in England." The Netherlands has been his go-to fishing holiday destination for the last seventeen years – at least twice a year.

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Thinnesen's Dutch fishing roots are in Vorne-Putten. The now-retired trawler captain randomly cast a line once after returning from a humanitarian trip to Tsjernobyl – he was well on time for his ferry from the Eurogate to Hull and had some time to kill. "I always had a pole with me in the truck so I could do some angling on the way home after delivering the relief supplies in Ukraine. The first time I was fishing in the Netherlands I was *shocked* about how large the breams were here."



*Our bream sessions at the Dutch Vecht. Behind us you see the cabins! Love it!*

## DUTCH NETWORK

Given the fact that he did a lot of humanitarian trips back then, he often went fishing in the Netherlands. He soon found out these large breams were no exception. He then decided to pick the Netherlands as his standard fishing destination. "Up until then I only went fishing in Ireland when outside of England, however the bream fishing experience there was somewhat disappointing. Exit Ireland." His first few fishing trips made him familiar with the area surrounding Vorne-Putten. "Over time I

acquired a network and me and my fishing mates made some Dutch fishing friends. Cor Blenk from Brielle – who’s sadly passed away – even let me stay in his caravan.”

## FROM VOORNE TO OMMEN

Brielle, Voornse kanaal, Hellevoetsluis (‘Hellevuutslaus’), Haringvliet; Thinnesen names just a few. Just like all of his fishing mates the friendly bearded Englishman lives in Grimsby (Lincolnshire), a fishing port at the British North Sea coast, near Hull. The ferry between Hull and the Eurogate was his connection with his fishing spots in Voorne-Putten. Nevertheless in the last two years Thinnesen moved his fishing trips to ‘the North’. To the Overijsselse Vecht near Ommen (‘Oowmen’) to be exact. “The catches near Brielle and Hellevoetsluis started to dwindle, so I went looking for an alternative. That’s how I ended up here.”

## TWO SESSIONS A DAY

When Thinnesen tried angling in the Vecht for the first time in 2016 he was sold immediately. “The first ten days I was angling there I easily caught about 120 to 150 lbs of fish a day.” Needless to say Thinnesen and his mates will try their luck once again this year and stay at holiday resort De Arendshorst. We immediately recognise Alan and his fishing mates John Elliott (65) and John Stockton (54). Some ten metres from the bungalow three men are already outside at a time that most other guests are still in bed. “We usually go angling from 04:00 to 09:00 and from 15:00 to 18:00, in between we often go to Ommen or Zwolle”, says Elliott.



John Stockton with a bream at the Overijsselse Vecht.

## VERY CONTENT

Up until this point the men haven't had a lot of luck fishing – 'Of course you get spoiled after such a successful first trip' – and they can tally up some twenty breams a day each. "We usually catch about fifty a day each. Perhaps it's the hot and muggy weather early this June", they figure. Still the three gentlemen are satisfied about the results. "We have a lot of bites ('Fish on!') and the breams weigh a respectable four to six pounds. On top of that I caught a bonus fish yesterday, a large Ide."

## WATERY

They also enjoy the watery Dutch landscape. "You have such a great array of large, public bodies of water, rivers, lakes, canals, you name it. Even in the cities it's usually good angling. That's certainly not the case in the UK", John Stockton says. "Moreover the cities in this area are so peaceful and quiet. That's especially appealing to pensioners", he says just a bit too loud to his two fishing comrades. He subsequently cleverly dodges the small, sticky chunk of bait that's rapidly coming his way. "And last but not least, the Dutch are very helpful, almost everyone knows English and there's lots of good angling shops."



*We like to fish big and wild bodies of water like rivers.*

## FISHING IN HOLLAND

The men also like the VISpas. "It's a truly great idea, albeit the 'Gezamenlijke Lijst van Nederlandse Viswateren' (only in Dutch) is bit of a challenge to figure out", Elliot says. Dutch anglers showed them the VISplanner (a useful App). It shows perfectly clear where you are and aren't allowed to cast a line, using blue and red markings.

“Colours know no language barriers.” They also recently got acquainted with the *Fishing in Holland* website ([www.fishinginholland.nl](http://www.fishinginholland.nl)). “Thanks to the loads of information on it we highly recommend it to any foreign angling tourist” says Elliot. “It allows you to optimally prepare yourself and to save time, which in turn you can spend on what you like doing best: fishing.”

## 100 LBS OF BREAM

The Netherlands is a famous fishing destination with the English. “Your country has a good reputation as a fishing destination in England. There are numerous spots throughout the Netherlands where you can easily catch 100 lbs of bream a day. Easily.” The fact that Thinnesen has already booked his next stay at De Arendshorst only a few days after returning home in Grimsby is a testimony to his fondness of the Netherlands. He loves being at the water’s edge at de Vecht with his fishing buddy. “On our way home to the Eurogate we visited Cor Blenk’s widow and his son, as well as a few acquaintances from back home who were fishing at the Voornse Kanaal. They said their catches were not so well, so we had an easy choice.”



*Alan Thinnesen has been coming to the Netherlands to angle for seventeen years.*



*Michael Snoek makes his angling guests as comfortable as possible.*

## ANGLING TOURISM AT DE ARENDSHORST

“About fifteen percent of all visitors of De Arendshorst are anglers. And that figure is still increasing”, owner Michael Snoek tells us. “About ninety percent of them are English, the remainder consists of Germans and Belgians.” They usually rent an accommodation at the holiday park in Ommen or they bring their tent to camp at the Overijsselse Vecht. The Vechtoever is one of the main attractions. This private owned area was recently expanded and is only open to the guests.

Snoek is one of the Dutch entrepreneurs in the recreational sector who have also been focusing on foreign angling tourists. “I present myself as a *one stop shop*. You can order maggots and worms even before you arrive, the shop at the park sells rods and I pre-arrange the VISpas for my guests. A while ago a guest required an additional refrigerator for his bait. No problem!”

Snoek also applauds the project Fishing in Holland, set up to promote angling tourism in the Netherlands. Snoek has also been promoting himself internationally through various online channels. “For instance, I have a separate English website ([www.arendshorst.co.uk](http://www.arendshorst.co.uk)), I am very active on Facebook, I use Google Adwords and I upload testimonials of my guests to YouTube. I’m also working with a specialised English angling travel agency. Angling is one of my *unique selling points*.”