

Over-winter checks

Having stored your fishing gear away it's easy to overlook some basic maintenance checks which could bring a nasty shock when we get out on the water again.

1. Completely empty your box and bag and make sure there is no water or dirt to hold moisture and mould.
2. Hang clothing up in a dry ventilated area and hang boots and waders upside down to avoid cracks and stretched seams.
3. Wash and re-proof and dry waterproofs following manufacturers' instructions.

Rods

4. Take rods out of tubes and bags to check they are dry, cork handles can go mouldy if stored damp and clean reel fittings.
5. Check rod rings for wear especially the tip ring and replace if there are any grooves.
6. Clean the joints and lightly rub bees or candle wax onto any stiff ones.

Reels

7. Remove spools from cassette reels so they don't stick to the O-rings.
8. Slacken off the drag screw.
9. Rinse in warm water and clear any dirt, dry and add a light smear of grease to the tip and base of the spindle, wipe away any excess.

Lines

10. Wash in warm water with a few drops of detergent, strip off the revolving spool (not the side to avoid twisting) stretch out (between door handles or chairs not on a carpet) and wipe with damp cloth. Check braided loops are not frayed and look for any cracks or other damage and treat floating lines with a line dressing eg Lineslick. Some use this on sinkers too. Minor damage can be repaired with superglue and whipping.
11. Check your hang markers are visible and touch them up with marker pens or whipping.
12. Once dry, wind back onto the cassette but loosely as a firm wind will create memory while in storage.

Flies

13. Discard any damaged or rusty flies and dry out foam boxes.
14. With plenty of time on our hands why not re-box them by pattern or barbed and barbless or competition size boxes.
15. A coat of varnish can rejuvenate your buzzers and heads of other flies.