

Tenkara on Ceiriog

Most fly fisherman who are reasonably up to date with modern developments will be aware of tenkara. They will have read of its benefits and likely to have watched it on YouTube but questioned whether it's for them. It looks fascinating but not entirely suitable for all types of waters – it should perhaps be viewed as 'another tool in the tool box' and not the answer to every fishing situation.

I've been a convert for five years and know that it's significantly improved my catch rate – it's said that tenkara can out fish 'western style' by a ratio of 5:1 on suitable waters. All your favourite flies can be used, whether dry, wet or nymphs.

Many who have yet to try it have been known to say "It's just a fad", "It's not fly-fishing", "It's just dapping" but none of these accusations are true. There certainly is casting involved and quite precise - and the technique is slowly but healthily growing in popularity. There is even the UK Tenkara Forum which I'm sure you would find interesting and informative.

So what makes the Ceiriog so suitable ?. Way back in the mists of time, the Japanese would use it in the mountainous streams to catch vast numbers of small fish which were used either for food, or to sell for income. Interestingly, at the same time it was being widely used across Europe, particularly in Italy where it was called Valsesiana. The character of those streams made any other technique almost impossible due to the high speed rocky water with numerous pools and side eddies. Tenkara made it possible to hold the fly in places where trout would lie, without the line being swept away. Now the Ceiriog isn't so fast or rough but many of you will know just how difficult it can be to drift a fly without drag instantly occurring. Pools such as those in the Chippings area aren't so bad but there are many fast and rocky runs with so called pocket water, those quieter areas behind rocks and obstructions which are all but impossible to fish with conventional tackle – not so with Tenkara.

So how suitable is the Ceiriog and Ceiriog Fly Fishers club for Tenkara anglers? Put quite simply I would say there are within the eight miles of waters owned or rented by the club there are substantial lengths comprising of pocket water and deep rocky pools and gutters which are absolutely ideal for Tenkara

The main approach is by casting either upstream or up and across, however, the Ceiriog has many quieter, slightly deeper fish holding runs against the bank which are easily fished with tenkara, this being due to the short line we use. To use conventional tackle means a back cast which is almost invariably difficult or impossible due to foliage. This short line allows us to hold only the fly and a few inches of tippet in or on the water which allows an unhindered dead drift – absolutely natural and deadly.

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