

15-stone catch of the day



GOTCHA: Duncan Rooke, above front, with the giant catfish shown by pals, right

By Geoff Maynard

IT weighs 15st 1lb 4oz and nearly got away - taking the angler with it.

But Duncan Rooke, 30, grimly held on and, helped by his four colleagues, landed the biggest freshwater fish ever caught by a British angler.

The 7ft 7ins mutant catfish also broke the Spanish record when it was heaved out of a lake near Barcelona. The five caught it on the last night of a week's expedition to the River Ebro.

It took them an hour to pull her out and carry her into the weighing net before the monster was returned to the lake.

Stephen Buss, 30, who helped to land her, said: "Two of us nearly had a hernia lifting her up the bank but we still had the energy to cheer and dance around her."

Duncan's rod nearly snapped as the giant fish took his bait of halibut pellets. She also took 400 yards of his line, pulling him off the bank and into the shallows.

The gas engineer, of Woking, Surrey, said: "She just kept on going."

Stephen, whose firm Carp and Cat Busters of Bordon, Hants, organised the trip, leapt into a boat and rowed out to the fish as the others pulled her in.

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