

Duncan's the cat's whiskers with fish at 15st

A WOKING angler tore up the record books when he reeled in a fish bigger than himself after an epic battle in a Spanish river.

Duncan Rooke, from Send Marsh, was on an angling holiday in Mequinenza, Catalonia, when he caught the 15st 1 catfish — breaking the previous Spanish record for a landed catfish by 3lb.

Duncan, who has been fishing seriously for the past 12 years, was on the last day of an angling holiday on the banks of the river Segrae when he made the catch.

He said: "We fished from 6am until midday and then from 6pm until midnight.

"At 10.30pm on our final evening I hooked an unstoppable fish. It took about 300 yards of line from my reel."

He said the fish started to swim into reeds and trip organiser Steve Buss had to go out in a boat to head it back into open water.

Duncan added: "There were a couple of moments where my natural instinct was to let go — this fish is



Duncan Rooke, left, and the 15st catfish with fellow anglers Steve Buss and Brian Dunlop. Photo: Goldsworth Angling Centre

basically a freshwater shark. It dragged me down the bank and I nearly went in a couple of times.

"The fish pulled the rod right down flat. As I was trying to bring the fish in the line broke on one of the neon starlights we use to locate lines. My line was then covered in this fluorescent stuff,

which Steve saw flashing past his head like a laser.

"Steve then grabbed the line to help bring it in."

As soon as the 7ft 7 fish was close to the edge of the river, Duncan put on gloves so he could grasp the fish by its mouth and he carried it with the help of four others up the bank to be weighed. The

monster fish had taken 40 minutes to land.

He said: "We put it in the sling and the needle of the scales swung round to the magic number — we were all jumping up and down."

After weighing, the catfish was tied to a long rope and placed back in the river.

The following morning the

anglers recovered the giant fish from the river to have their photograph taken with it before it was released back into the Segrae.

Duncan added: "I was exhausted by the end of an epic battle."

For the record the fish weighed in at a stone more than Duncan.