

The warm days of spring herald the closure of the cod and lobster seasons, but spark another of our native species, golden perch, to form into large schools and migrate upstream in search of suitable spawning sites.

Golden's are creatures of habit and can be found in similar locations each year. Within 50km of Wagga we have hotspots that consistently produce plenty of fish. As I mentioned in a previous column, the pick of these would be the Beavers Creek Weir on the Old Man Creek behind Collingullie. This small weir forms a barrier to migration and subsequently fish congregate in the pool immediately below the weir wall. Casting small lures and baitfishing with shrimps at dusk and dawn will usually yield fish. Similar conditions also exist at Berembed weir where the wall slows movement of the fish upstream. Fishing downstream (observe the safe distance) early and late in the day is productive.

The weirs are not the only place you will catch golden perch. Last season I spent a few afternoons walking the banks of the Tarcutta Creek casting lures with Dave Longmore. It took us a few sessions before we found the fish, but in the lower reaches we caught plenty of golden perch. We found the fish holding hard amongst the snags and undercut banks whilst the sun was on the water and as the sun set, the fish moved out into the open water to feed. As is typical of golden perch, during the last thirty minutes of light they become suicidal and attack anything that moves.

When targeting golden perch in our rivers and creeks, look for snags, large rocks and undercut clay banks as the fish are rarely far away from these protective structures. Golden's will also lay up high in the water column in the branches of sunken trees. Don't discount shallow water either as they often feed along the edge of the bank seeking shrimps and yabbies. If you casting baits and lures into the deep water you are less likely to hook a golden. Casts should be concentrated along the waters edge near some sort of submerged feature.

Prior to it nearly drying up Lake Albert was (and hopefully still is) a golden perch stronghold. However, since it re-filled it has not produced any fish to speak of. October was always a great month to fish the Lake and the next few weeks should hopefully see the local kids starting to catch some fish in there again.

Following the successful launch of *Fishing and Camping Murrumbidgee River Gundagai to Narrandera* written by Marty Asmus and myself, we are just starting on the next book in the series covering the public access points along the Murrumbidgee River from Narrandera to where the river meets the Murray at Boundary Bend. Look out for it in the second half of 2007.