

DA Fishing Column

27th September 2006

Several reports were floating around of good numbers of golden perch being captured in the river, so I organised a quick trip to Berembred Weir last Tuesday after work with plumbers extraordinaire, John & Troy Ashcroft. We arrived just on dark and it took a few minutes for Troy to find the first fish of the night which attacked his lure as it was being lifted from the water. This fish missed the hooks, but several lasts later Troy landed a 40cm cod which was likely to be the same fish.

Both Murray cod and golden perch will follow a lure right to the waters edge and attack as you lift the lure out of the water. You can increase the hookup rate by standing up the bank a rod length so that you can swim your lure right to the waters edge. This isn't as critical for shallow banks, but if you are fishing a steep bank or standing on top of a rock or log pile, quite often the fish will be hiding at your feet.

The fishing slowed for the next thirty minutes and I started working a mid-stream structure that I could just reach with a three quarter ounce spinnerbait. After belting out ten long casts, I had a nudge before hooking and landing a 40cm trout cod.

I persevered with the location and after twenty or so casts, my lure was inhaled by what was definitely not a small cod or golden perch. The fish ran hard and I was powerless to stop it reaching a snag. The fish didn't bust off, but somehow extracted the lure from its mouth and left me snagged up. I jiggled the lure off and on checking the hooks found that the arms on the spinnerbait were bent out of shape. This is a telltale sign that a big mouth had just sucked the whole lure in and given it a good chewing.

By this stage Troy had joined me and we were both pelting spinnerbaits into the darkness toward a structure that was getting difficult to see. I had a further ten casts or so which coaxed a Murray cod of just under 50cm into biting.

Some time after this small fish, the excitement of the night began waning into the repetitive cast and retrieve typical of inland lure fishing, when my lure stopped dead in its tracks. I instinctively struck, sparking the fish into the realisation that what it had just eaten wasn't food. I felt the power of what had to be a good cod (or possibly the mother of all golden perch) as it charged across the river. I was fishing off a high bank and had to chase the fish fifty metres downstream before I could coax it into the shallows and get the lip gripper on its jaw. At 84cm and estimated 10kg, it was a fit, strong river fish. My spinnerbait was mangled but intact and after posing for a quick photo, the cod was slipped back into the water to continue its spring breeding cycle.

We didn't even look like catching a golden perch, but the out-of-season cod certainly made the evening entertaining.

Jamin Forbes