

All fisherman dream of catching a big cod, I am not talking about a 10 or 15 pounder (4-7kg), but a metre long 50 pound (22kg) river monster.

At some stage most fishermen will tangle with a big fish by chance, accident or pure fluke. Whether they land this fish is another thing, but stories of 'fish that got away' are always common when talking about Murray cod.

When I started putting a lot of effort into angling about 15 years ago, I had no problem catching cod up to 3kg. In fact I was catching so many that I became frustrated with every fish of this size that came over the side of the boat. I couldn't find the recipe for snaring bigger fish. Back then I was also a keen lure fisherman and fished all the big cod hotspots for fish that barely made the legal length, let alone a fish that weighed as much as a small child!

My procession of small fish continued for a number of seasons and finally I gave up on the small fish and changed my fishing technique. I talked to good fisherman and read articles written by good fisherman and realised that I wasn't catching big cod because I wasn't targeting them. The biggest trick to consistently landing big fish and is actively fish for them.

Big cod are king of the river and take up the best positions. These spots are usually slow & deep with a large snag(s) lying on the bottom. The type of water you fish in also has a large bearing on the numbers of large fish that live there. Weir pools for example create an environment where slow, deep water is everywhere and most snags are submerged, creating perfect habitat for cod. In weir pools, cod grow faster than in high flow rivers and they have more places to live. In short, weir pools have more large cod which increases the chances of a hungry one biting your bait/lure.

To tempt large fish, you need to give them something worthwhile to eat. A 150mm hard-body lure or a ¾ or 1oz quadspin spinnerbait rigged with a soft plastic and stinger hook makes for a bulky offering that will make the fish's effort in eating it worthwhile.

Big fish aren't reckless and you need to have patience to keep presenting baits or lures for one, two or three (or more) days until one makes a mistake. By being selective in your technique you will catch less fish and most sessions get nothing, but when you are posing for a photo with a fish you can barely lift, it will all be worth it.