

Winter has descended on us with a vengeance in the past week. Cold, windy and wet weather has most fisherman starting to think about cold water species such as redfin, trout and Murray crayfish, but you shouldn't put away your heavy tackle just yet.

Late Autumn and early winter is my favourite time of year to fish. It can be a little longer between bites, however the bigger fish cope better with the cold water and become somewhat easier to catch.

Bait fishing in the winter can be frustrating as the crays will maul just about any bait thrown into the water. Lure fishing is the ideal technique and by reading the river you can target fish with a mixture of trolling and casting from boat or bank.

Walking the bank with a backpack is an active way to target fish at the moment. Downstream from Wagga the banks are mainly sticky mud, but from Wagga upstream you can walk along the river bed on sand and stones in many places. From atop the bank you will be able to read where the deep holes and snags are located. Anywhere you have a big, old snag in deep water will hold fish and these locations are where you should be casting your lures. Fish will hold on the upstream and downstream sides of a snag and you should try to cover every angle and depth before moving on.

One thing to remember when walking the bank is to respect the property owners land. If you want to fish on private land, avoid an unpleasant confrontation by asking the landowner for permission. If you do the right thing, many landowners are generous with access and helpful to point you in the direction of the best fishing holes.

Wagga has long been known as the home of the hard-body lure with a swag of manufacturers of this lure style (it's no secret that I am a great fan of AC Lures and the Custom Crafted range), but Wagga is about to go through a boom in local produced spinnerbaits.

Mud Guts Spinnerbaits have burst on to the scene with Dave Harp offering a quality local product. A notable feature of the Mud Guts range is that they come ready rigged with a matched soft plastic trailer under the skirt adding to the fish catching ability without a need to retrofit the lure. I have been using them for a couple of weeks and they catch fish.

Bolstering the spinnerbait invasion of Wagga is Rod's Compleat Angler producing their own line of spinnerbaits. The experience of Rod and his staff at the Compleat Angler is second to none and with their combined input the spinnerbaits are premium quality and spark the attention of our cod and golden perch.

In the past couple of weeks I have guided successful trips by finding enough water to float my boat and casting spinnerbaits at the biggest logs I can find. The fish have been tucked in tight under the snags and won't move more than 20-30cm to grab a lure. Make sure your casts are well into the structure and with patience you will get fish.

I have vacancies on Saturday and Sunday this weekend, so if you want a guided tour call me on 0427 692 522 or visit www.riverinasportfishing.com

Jamin Forbes