

Riverina Sportfishing Report

28th February 2008

In the past ten years many fisherman have progressed from fishing to purely obtain a meal, to targeting fish for the anticipation, enjoyment and satisfaction of tricking a fish into biting and then releasing that fish unharmed.

The move to sport fishing is a world away from previous generations who largely dismissed any fish that was inedible as a lesser species. This same tag is still applied to an extent to the endangered trout cod, which due to its protected status, some fisherman still treat with unfair disdain. This is despite the fact that the trout cod is a voracious feeder attacking lures and baits ferociously and once hooked they fight harder than a Murray cod. Whilst we aren't allowed to target trout cod, they are largely unavoidable in our section of the Murrumbidgee and deserve great respect as they are a fantastic sportfish that our children will enjoy for many generations if we manage the fishery correctly in our era.

Still on the subject of sport fishing, I recently hosted a Scotsman for two days fishing and we caught quite a few Murray cod and golden perch, but the thing he was most interested in was the size and volume of carp. Throughout Europe, carp are the largest and most powerful fish in many waterways and the English in particular spend a lot of time chasing them. My Scot was amazed to hear that in Australia they are vermin and aren't allowed to be returned to the water.

I have always used carp as a tool to teach kids and new fisherman how to use a rod and reel as carp are tough fighters and are relatively easy to catch. Lake Albert at present has spawning carp schooled up on the surface in huge numbers. These fish average 3-4kg with some specimens well above this size. To catch these fish, make sure that you berley with crushed up bread spread in the area where you are fishing. Don't use too much berley as you want to keep them interested, not feed them. You will be able to see the carp swimming in very shallow water so don't cast out too far. Fish with 3-5kg line and cast out unweighted dough baits and hang on.

To dispose of the carp, don't leave them in a big smelly pile on the shore, but use the bins provided around the foreshore or freeze the fish whole for yabby or lobster bait.

It's a carpy time of year with South Wagga Apex Club's Wollundry Lagoon Fisherama on Sunday the 30th March from 7.00am – 2.00pm. There are over \$1,000 in prizes on offer with entry at \$10 for a family or \$4 for a single entry (all proceeds go back into the community). This is a great competition with several hundred massive carp being removed from the lagoon each year and is an ideal day out for the family.

I have been fortunate to guide several international fishermen with Riverina Sport Fishing in the past couple of weeks, and whilst their fishing experiences were good, I was embarrassed by the amount of rubbish left at the reserves that we visited. Much of this rubbish is not from fisherman, but is domestic rubbish from people too lazy to take it to the tip. Make sure that if you see rubbish being dumped that you advise Council of registration numbers etc, so that we can all appreciate pristine campsites.