

Riverina Sportfishing Report

19th December 2008

The series of thunderstorms and unsettled weather leading up to Christmas has created a 'boom and bust' environment for the fishing. If you have been fortunate to be on the water in the build up to a storm the fish go crazy, but soon after they settle back into a holding pattern where they can be difficult to tempt.

Lure fisherman in particular do well before a storm whilst bait fishing seems to be more productive when the fish are in a more subdued mode.

The Murrumbidgee is full of small cod and they will eat just about anything, but bardi grubs, shrimps and scrub worms are the prime baits and spinnerbaits in purple, red or black are also working well. If you



like to troll then hard bodies in the 60-70mm size range will tempt a few fish, however if you want to target larger fish than you need to use a larger lure.

Two of my favourite lures for seeking bigger cod are the AC Invader and the Custom Crafted Hammerhead. The longer versions of these lures (from 90-150mm) will see less bites than if you were using a smaller lure, but you increase your chances of getting a bigger cod. If you only trolled 120-150mm lures you won't catch near as many fish each season, but when you get one it's usually a good fish and well worth the wait.

It can be hard to stay focussed on your big lure = big fish dream, when all around you people are heaving in juvenile fish on small lures, but if you're serious then stay big and just keep trying. A big fish will come.

When fishing rivers the number of snags can be daunting and selecting which ones to fish can be a task. Really big snags in deep water don't necessarily hold the most or the biggest fish, and the orientation of the snag in the water can have a lot to do with how easy it is for fish to hold on that particular structure. Pay attention to which snags produce fish in your area and you will develop a picture of where to concentrate your efforts.

Cod are a very lazy fish and don't like to travel far for a meal, but once they commit to chasing a bait or lure, they will have a good swipe at it to make sure that the energy they expend is returned by way of a meal. Having said that, cod are not stupid and quickly recognise that whatever they have eaten isn't right and spit it out. Sharp hooks and

paying close attention to your rod will hopefully connect you to the fish before the fish has the chance to reject your offering.

The Christmas holidays are a great time to fish, and you will be sharing the waterways with many other people, so be careful when navigating and catch a few fish.

Jamin Forbes