

Riverina Sportfishing Report

22nd November 2008

The past couple of weeks have seen spectacular spring fishing. The weather has allowed the water temperature to hover around the twenty degree mark in most locations, which is the perfect environment for native fish.

Burrinjuck has been fishing fairly average for golden perch, but small to midde sized redfin have been filling gaps in the day. The Murray cod are big and cranky in the 'Juck at the moment with cod in the 20-30lb bracket being hooked semi-regularly and fat, strong fish around 60cm being



quite common. Remember not to be tempted to keep a cod as the season is still closed until December 1.

In the Murrumbidgee, my past three days guiding produced 48 fish. Apart from a quiet Sunday afternoon, the bites were forthcoming with persistence and accurate casting. Murray cod, trout cod, golden perch and a lone redfin saw three separate crews enjoy some of the best fishing the river has produced so far this season. The highlight could have been the 82cm cod to Joel Board, or the hard fighting trout cod to 65cm for Chris De La Rue & Rod

Drayton, but it went to a massive old 'silverback' Murray cod that decided my plastic boat was in its space and charged the boat. We had to look twice to make sure it wasn't a Great White Shark! Not something you see every day...

If you're fortunate to land a cod, make sure that you handle it correctly by supporting the fish under the belly when lifting and never 'hang' the fish by its jaw. Better still – remove the hooks with the fish still in the water, get a photo or two and let him swim away. If the fish is hooked deeply, cut the line leaving the hook in the fish. Fish are able to remove hooks themselves, but you will do too much damage if you try to extract a deeply set hook.

The opening of Murray cod season heralds the start of fishing for many anglers. The increase in size limit from 55cm to 60cm will make it hard for many fishermen to catch a fish they are allowed to keep, but if you consider why this change has been implemented we will all benefit in the not-so-long term.

At the previous limits of 50cm and even at 55cm, the Murray cod is a juvenile fish. At the new limit of 60cm there are a reasonably high percentage of mature fish that are able to pair up and spawn when the conditions are right. Under the old limits juvenile fish were being removed from the water before they had a chance to breed.



On the larger end of the spectrum, the really big cod are the fish that we need to have in our waterways. These fish have survived drought, flood, heat, cold, disease and whatever else is

thrown at them. These massive fish are capable of producing tens of thousands more eggs than an adolescent cod and with a strong genetic code that has protected them over decades, we need these big fish to continue breeding and give us hardy offspring each season.

Its good management to have wild fish breeding together enabling better genetic diversity and reducing the need for NSW Fisheries to stock waterways with hatchery bred fish. Keep this in mind when you set out on cod opening and enjoy catching one of Australia's icons.

Jamin Forbes