

# From the Fisher's Mouth

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Fishing is a challenging pastime. We spend countless thousands of dollars investing in boats, vehicles to tow the boat, the latest in fishing equipment and even locate our families closer to the fishing grounds so that we may spend more time trying to fool a wily fish into eating a lure or bait.

In days past, the action of fishing was purely to obtain a source of meat. Fish were treated like any other harvestable natural resource where in some cases localised



extinctions of some species became apparent due to overfishing. We have seen the error of our ways in the treatment of waterways (and the fish that inhabit them) and improved management practices are showing significant growth in fish numbers in many areas.

Identities such as Rex Hunt and his 'kiss and release' philosophy have educated a generation of younger fisherman that it's OK to catch a fish, kiss it (if you are in to that sort of thing) and release it, so that fish may continue to grow and reproduce. Future generations of fisherman may enjoy catching that fish again when it's bigger or catch its offspring. Either way, the fishery is better off with that fish being returned to the water.

Freshwater sport fishing grew from pioneers in the late 1960's that enjoyed catching fish, but had no desire to eat all they caught. In fact many sport fishermen don't eat fish (myself included). The nature of sport fishing is to hunt your quarry, trick it into eating an artificial bait, enjoy the fight of the fish, take a couple of quick photo's for proof, then release it unharmed to fight another day.

Riverina Sport Fishing focuses on teaching people how to use lures to catch our great native species in the Murrumbidgee and Murray River systems. The gift of education is the ideal Christmas Gift for the fisherman who has everything.

The fish I seek are Murray cod and golden perch, but also worth a mention are trout cod (that was all but extinct due to human activity) which NSW Fisheries have successfully managed to re-introduce into our region. Trout cod are totally protected, yet they can be unavoidable when fishing, so it's wise to be able to identify each species.

The Riverina has many waterways within a two hour drive from Wagga. The most common fishing locations are Blowering, Burrinjuck, Berembed Weir, Hume Weir, Lake Mulwala, but what about Bundigerry Creek, Buckingbong, Hay, Carrathool, Darlington Point, Gogeldrie Weir, Yanco Weir, Sandy Beach, Billabong Creek, Edward River, Bethungra Dam, and Mannus? I could go on, but the list is massive. We have so much water that I can never fish it all, but I certainly intend to try.

This is the first *Weekender* column and in future editions I will offer fishing reports, tips, photo's and also show you how to set up your boat and vehicle to make your fishing and camping experiences more enjoyable.

Happy fishing.

Jamin Forbes