

From the Fisher's Mouth

29th March 2010

April is a special month amongst the cod fishing fraternity. This time of year heralds the start of comfortable weather conditions (for humans), dropping water temperatures (which sparks the hunger of the large cod) and we have the fisherman's holidays (Easter and ANZAC day).

Autumn is the time to start targeting bigger fish along our waterways. Throughout summer the big fish are reasonably difficult to target, however once the water cools, the



big fish become more active. When targeting big cod, you need to change the way you fish in order to maximise your chances of tricking one. The first step is to think like a fish, not like a human.

Cod spend most of their lives within a metre of a snag. A large bodied fish such as a 20kg cod feels comfortable hiding amongst red gum logs where he can lay in ambush. If the timber is too small, that 20kg fish is less able to hide from potential meals (small fish etc) and won't be able to hunt effectively. This is one reason why large cod, live on large snags. They are able to maintain a stealthy approach to prey and lunge out and swallow in the blink of an eye.

Cod are also a lazy fish. Murray's prefer to live just out of the current flow. They will often align themselves adjacent to the flow of water, but not often will you hook one in high flow.

If you plan to target big cod, you need to fish big snags. If you spend more time fishing large, complex structure, your lure/bait is presented in front of more fish which in turn increases your chance that one of those large fish will make a mistake and eat your lure/bait.

If you are fortunate enough to catch a big cod, there are a few simple things to consider that will enable that fish to swim away healthy so that you (or your children) may catch that fish again one day. The golden rule is never lift a fish by the head, jaw or gills. Secondly, never place a fish on a hot, dry boat deck (if possible leave the fish in the water – lifting only for a quick photo), thirdly, have the fish out of the water for seconds, not minutes, and lastly; always support a large fish under the head and belly should you have to lift it up.