

From the Fishers Mouth

26 July 2010

The depths of winter begin to stir the hardest of fisherman with reports trickling in from those braving the elements to fish the highland lakes.

Dave Harp of Mudguts Spinnerbaits is one such intrepid soul who regularly dons snow apparel to chase winter trout in Lake Eucumbene. Dave fished last weekend with over



twenty hookups in twelve hours fishing, landing a dozen nice trout. The fish were deep with downriggers and leadline trolled Crickhoppers and J7 Rapala's fooling the bulk of the trout.

Eucumbene, Jindabyne and the other lakes dotted through the Snowy Mountains are an idyllic place to fish in spring, summer and autumn with cool

weather and stunning scenery, yet these dams can turn vicious with alpine gales whipping the lakes into a dangerous state.

To fish alpine lakes in winter you need to be prepared. Clothing should start with thermal 'long johns' and then layered up with polar fleece to a water & wind proof external jacket. If you layer up correctly you will still be able to move about and not be too bulky (or look like the 'Michelin Man').

Given that you have several layers of clothing on, gloves and a pair of waterproof boots, you will also need to consider the possibility of drowning should you happen to fall in or capsize. Immersed in water approaching freezing you will have a minute or two before hypothermia sets in. A good insurance policy is to wear an inflatable PFD.

Personal PFD's come in a wide range of styles and ideal for alpine fishing are the 'Stormy' range of PFD jackets available from Wagga Marine. Wagga Marine is also the authorised service agent for inflatable PFD's in the Riverina region.

There are new regulations coming in for NSW as of the 1st of November regarding the wearing of lifejackets. The new rules for wearing lifejackets include:

- By children less than 12 years of age when:
 - in a vessel less than 4.8 metres;
 - when in an open area of a vessel less than 8 metres in length that is underway;
- By all boaters in a vessel less than 4.8 metres in the following heightened risk situations:
 - at night;
 - on open (ocean) waters;
 - on alpine lakes;
 - when boating alone; and
 - when the boat is being used as a tender more than 400 metres from shore;

- At times of ‘Skipper Judgement and Direction’ in ‘heightened risk’ situations such as when the weather worsens or the boat breaks down;
- When water-skiing or wakeboarding;
- When operating a canoe or kayak on:
 - enclosed waters, when more than 100 metres from shore; and
 - ocean waters.

For more information visit http://maritime.nsw.gov.au/wh/lifejacket_reforms.html