Crustacean sensation

Darren Redman | December 2012 » Area Articles / New South Wales / Far South Coast / Tathra /

Good fishing relies on the fish having plenty to eat and the estuaries surrounding Tathra at present are crawling with prawns and alive with fish feeding on them.

I am a strong believer that time of day to fish an estuary is not as important as time of tide. However, to take best advantage of fish feeding on prawns, early morning starts are essential.

Sunrise often comes too fast for the prawns that haven’t already retired back to their muddy beds, making them easy food for the predators pursuing them.

This scenario is a lure angler’s dream with active fish pursuing any well-placed artificial. Soft, hard or popping lures work well on flathead, whiting, bream, estuary perch, tailor and even jewfish.

The warmer upper reaches of the Bega River are fishing especially well. Weed beds adjacent to timber or rocks are prime areas.

Also check the gravel areas further from shore, where packs of black bream work to secure a meal.

There is plenty of action for bait anglers, too. Fresh prawns or live mullet can produce some exciting angling.

Drop-offs around sand bars are prime areas, as are rocky outcrops and weed beds. These baits work well over the flats at high tide, as will nippers and worms for luderick, trevally, mullet or whiting.

Flats in nearby Nelsons Lagoon and Wapengo Lake are also producing well.

Those seeking a good feed of prawns should try south at Wallagoot Lake or in the Bega River. The new moon dark in January should be one of the best all year for prawners, although don’t expect to have it to yourself.

There is plenty of other action in the area.

Salmon are frequenting the beaches, the wharf and the rocks and are taking bait and lures. Beach anglers can expect tailor, bream, whiting, mullet and the occasional jewfish. Bournda to the south and Gillards to the north, and Tathra’s Main Beach are all worthwhile.

The wharf is a holiday focus where baitfish like slimy mackerel and yellowtail entertain the visitors and passing kingies, bonito and the occasional tuna can reward patience.

Garfish are popular here and can be caught with a bit of fresh prawn on a No 10 hook under a small float. Berley enhanced with tuna oil will add to your chances.

OFFSHORE

There is never a better time to catch a feed of fresh flathead.

Tigers are out in the deeper water, especially down south off Bournda in 50m-60m. Sand flatties are prolific in 30m out off most beaches.

Expect to get a few gummy sharks or red gurnard while chasing the flatties – they’re all good eating.

Kingfish numbers are increasing; troll lures to find them and then use bait or jigs.

Try out wide trolling lures for marlin, especially just inside the continental shelf in about 80 fathoms.

And for a different fishing experience check out the sweetwater fishing for bass in the Bega River or Brogo Dam. Both are producing fish up to 50cm but you need early starts or work well into the evening.

Images
The estuaries around Tathra are full of bream dining on prawns.

Silver trevally also like prawns.
When there are prawns around, what else would you use but an imitation prawn?