Lake Bullen Merri

 Mitch Chapman  |  November 2013 » Regular Features / Hot Spot /

An old volcano, Lake Bullen Merri lies placid from any form of eruption for many of years now. However, with the stockings of brown and rainbow trout, Atlantic salmon, the newly released chinook salmon and the ever elusive Australian bass, this lake holds the key to any angler who are chasing trophy-sized fish.

PRIME TIME

Winter is the go. The uglier the weather the better the fishing is normally on the Crater Lakes; overcast days with a bit of chop on the surface is ideal. The trout feel safe and tend to feed better under these conditions and aren't sulking down in the depths in the cooler water.

THE GEAR

Graphite rods with a soft taper to absorb the initial hit, and fish jumping out of the water shaking their heads. These rods seem to have a better track record with keeping fish connected, than short, stumpy, heavy rods.

The fight may last longer but you increase your chances dramatically in keeping those hooks in the fish.

THE RIG

An 8-10lb braid with a minimum of 10lb leader is a must. You wouldn't want to fish anything lighter when trolling the lake as there are some trophy trout pushing 5kg+.

The initial hit from a big trout while trolling can easily pop a leader knot leaving you shaking your head in disbelief. Trust me I've seen this happen before!

BAIT AND LURES

Pink and white Tassie Devils are a favourite and are a must-have lure for the tackle box.

Downrigging bigger hardbodied lures and flatlining them is also popular with Rapala F7 and F9 and Daiwa Double Clutch minnows a standout.

Bait fishing from the shore with Powerbait and live bullhead under a float account for some very large fish, especially at night.

BEST METHOD

Flatline trolling on dawn is a really good method for big browns that cruise the shallows chasing smelt and other minnow.

As the sun gets high in the sky the fish like to head for deeper water so downrigging in depths of 40-80ft is a good place to start until you find where the fish are holding.

MOTHER NATURE

With the level of salt content in Lake Bullen Merri, be sure to wash down all your gear and, most importantly, your boat, motor and trailer. The salt in this lake is far worse than that of Port Phillip Bay or any other seawater.

HOT TIP

I find trolling into the wind works better than trolling with the wind. I don't know why, maybe it effects the action or the speed of the lure through the water?

When you are doing a run and you hook 3 or 4 fish trolling into it, then work your way back with even a hit, then do the run again back into it and pull a few more — for me, it says something.

If times are tough and you aren't getting any fish, see what way the wind is blowing and head towards it. Hopefully you have the same success as I do.

Images
Adam Ring with a lovely 4lb rainbow caught on a drop weight clip and Tassie Devil.

Mitch with a typical Bullen Merri Brown caught flatline trolling a Tassie Devil.