Mega mulloway month
Dan Selby | May 2016 = Area Articles / New South Wales / Sydney / The Hawkesbury /

What a year it’s been fishing professionally and socially. There have been plenty of fish and great sizes to boot with ample bream, kingfish, mulloway, flathead, estuary perch and bass to keep the avid angler busy on the rare day off.

This month sees the early close of the bass and estuary perch season until 1 September. It’s said you may still target and catch these two species, but many aficionados will pack up their bass/EP kit and look for other quarry through this period.

Winter breaming can be a great alternative, but realistically, they too are in spawning mode. They can be found schooling deep on the lower rock walls from Wisemans ferry to Broken Bay and in the lower sections of the smaller tributaries that meet the Hawkesbury. I like to hop small soft plastic grubs, minnows and blades down the walls until I find the depth they are holding. Once there is a pattern emerging on a preferred depth, indicated by where the bites are being had, I will then direct more parallel casts to intersect this zone on a more frequent basis, thus keeping my lure in the strike zone for a longer period of time each retrieve.

Anchoring up and wafting lightly weighted baits down a berley trail in these same areas will yield good results for those not interested in lure fishing. Chook pellets, bread, soaked wheat and barley all make great berley for bream, with a little bit thrown often the key to getting them on the bite. Whole or peeled prawns, nippers, half pilchards, bonito fillets and the odd ball of chicken breast marinated in many different concoctions are great baits for tempting that big, wily, blue-nosed bruiser onto your hook.

Flathead will be starting to make their way back downstream after venturing as far up as Windsor through the summer months. They will be making the most of the other species’ migrations as they prepare for the cold depths of winter. Moving locations allows these fish an abundance of bait and warmer, more comfortable water temperatures, as the ocean water is far more stable than the estuaries.

If in doubt, fish on the top of the tide and the start of the run-out, as this will see a peak of activity from these lizard like fish. Soft plastics and soft vibes for deeper areas are still the most versatile and effective way to secure a feed of flatties. Pinpointing major drop-offs and back eddies on major points and bends in the river will help you find better concentrations of fish so you can spend more time fishing and less time moving around looking for that next individual fish.

May is mulloway time on the Hawkesbury, and for me a really busy time of year guiding clients onto their first and hopefully biggest ever fish! Casting and retrieving lures is the most effective method I have found over the years and I will fish this technique through to the end of the next spring when the live bait becomes easier to source.

Live baiting is still an option and time spent securing a tank full of baits is still well worth the effort if you are after that trophy fish of a lifetime. Legal tailor, big yellowtail or cowanyoung, large squid (arrows or southern calamari) and pike make outstanding monster mulloway baits around Broken Bay. Time spent learning the habits and whereabouts of these species is time well invested when you are on the hunt for big mulloway.

Most keen mulloway anglers have an intimate knowledge of not only their quarry, but the ecosystem as a whole and how everything interacts throughout all the seasons.

Kingfish will still be on the bite around Pittwater if the water temperatures remain somewhat stable, around 20°C. Live yakkas and squid are the two main baits to secure at first light before you begin your search. Down rigging or anchoring up with a spread of baits set at varying depths are both effective methods at this time of year. Keep a good look out as there may be the odd surface bust up still occurring. Even if they are only salmon or tailor, the bigger cold water kingfish may be lurking beneath the school, so a prospective cast or two allowed to sink underneath or a quick down rig around the periphery may result in some drag peeling fun.
Monster Hawkesbury mulloway are on everyone’s wish list. Adrian got his wish with this 140cm fish on his birthday in March. There will be some big fish to be had this month around Broken Bay for those putting in time to gather big live baits and fishing

Kingfish will still be on offer in Pittwater this month with multiple fish an option once an active school has been located.
Big autumn bream are a standard attraction of the river and we will encounter plenty snaffling larger lures aimed at mulloway.

School mulloway on soft plastics are a popular target on charters over the colder months of the year, and with plenty of by-catch, the sessions are usually action packed and full of fun!