Rich in the Richmond River

Joe Allan | September 2016 – Regular Features / Area Report /

Snapper have been in good numbers in the close reefs, off south Ballina. Most of the fish are in the 35-50cm range with the odd bigger fish of around the 70-80cm thrown in there. If you’re after a feed, then there is plenty around. Cut bonito or squid are the best baits for snapper, however, bigger ones will come on the soft plastics, like the Atomic Jerk Minnow 6” in Ghost Pearl, White or Radioactive Rooster.

Don’t be caught up in chasing the snapper in close on good days, if the weather allows, get out to the 100 fathoms and try for blue-eye trevally and bar cod. Use fresh squid and cuttlefish. Fishing this deep can be hard work on traditional tackle so electric reels are essential.

On the 32’s, there are plenty of pearl perch and teraglin, but if you want your arms pulled off, try jigging for amberjack in the 48’s.

Off the beaches and headlands, there are quality tailor showing up. Get out your spinning gear and throw metal slugs for these fish. This can be a great way to spend a morning and catch some fresh fish for brekkie. At night, try some cut bonito and blue pilchards on gang hooks. There are lots of dart and whiting along the gutters of South Ballina and you’ll come across some pretty nice snowy bream too.

Towards the end of September, when the westerlies start to blow the swell flat, throw soft plastics into the gutters. You’ll get everything from flathead to whiting, tailor, bream and dart. It can be great fun with young kids. The luderick numbers will start to dwindle around the end of August, start of September. There will still be good fish around.

Bream will be around a lot, through the middle reaches of the river, around Broadwater and Wardell. Fresh prawns and yabbies are always the best baits this time of year. Fresher is better. If you’re a lure thrower, this time of year, 1/4oz blades are best. Aim deep and work your way shallow up the rock walls until you find the active fish.

If there’s been some pressure on the fishery, drop your line size to a 6lb and 4lb leader, 6-7ft. This should bring on a few more bites. Keep crankbaits handy as well – fish should start to hold on the rock walls rather than deeper holes.

Towards the end of September, we should see the mud crabs show up. Leftover luderick skeletons are the best baits for these. Until next month, tight lines.

Michael Starkey’s morning catch of snapper, caught on an Atomic Semi Hardz Vibe.

2

Brody Moore with a snapper from the close reefs off Ballina.

3

Grant Clement with a cracking mulloway from the town stretch of the Richmond River caught on a live mullet.

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