Time for Merimbula’s monster mulloway
Stuart Hindson | November 2016 » Area Articles / New South Wales / Far South Coast / Merimbula /

It’s that time of year when the light bream outfits get pushed aside and the heavier, beefed-up mulloway sticks get their turn to shine! November is prime time for these silver marvels with Narooma’s Wagonga Inlet and Tuross Lake system to the north the areas to fish.

There’s already been a few mulloway caught in both systems over recent weeks, but expect a lot more over the next month or so. Anglers using large soft plastics and vibes will fare well, although live and dead baits will also produce, especially at night.

For me and many other anglers targeting them, softies are the go-to method, as you’re actively chasing them around moving bait schools and subsurface structure. Not to mention the fun of the chase and getting that bite, which certainly gets the adrenalin and blood flowing.

I expect to see big fish this month, as we got the rain at the right time over winter and spring, which gave the estuary systems the good flush they needed. This in turn has seen huge bait schools enter both systems, especially Tuross, as it’s the deepest at the entrance I’ve seen it for a very long time.

With more whitebait, glassies and pilchards in the calm water, tailor numbers have increased, and we all know that mulloway love tailor.

I’m a firm believer that fishing the edges of feeding tailor schools is the ultimate way to target mulloway in this neck of the woods.

I would say that 70% of all my mulloway captures over the last 15 years have come from tailor schools within these two estuary systems.

There are a few downfalls with this, as you do go through a lot of gear with softies, jigheads and leader all suffering, and it does become expensive, but if it’s a prize catch you want, the money is worth it.

I’d be concentrating in the main basins of both systems, looking out for diving terns above and bait schools below. Just keep casting, your turn will come.

If the mulloway don’t play the game, then mega flathead are a possibility as well.

It’s a great month for the crocs as they head downstream to do their thing and are hungry. A slower presentation fished close to the bottom is the go, as they are lazy buggers when they get to this size. Fishing the same type of plastics and vibes should entice the strike.

If the trophies are not for you and you want a feed, then the ribbon weed edges in 6-7m of water around the margins should produce ample 40-55cm flatties for the pan.

The sand flats in both systems will see bream and whiting starting to chew as the water warms further with anglers fishing nippers, worms and surface walkers getting amongst them. The channels will have ample blackfish, trevally and bream for those who want to anchor and berley.

Offshore has seen some cracking yellowfin tuna caught thus far this month with local Narooma gun angler Anthony Nelipa getting into them. Anthony has caught several solid fish up to 80kg on cubes fishing wide of the shelf.

It may seem a bit weird to be getting tuna at this time of year, but I think they have been there all winter and spring this year.

The water has remained above 18°C, the bait’s been there, the only problem has been the sea conditions with wind making it hard to get out there. When it’s been okay the fish have responded, which all looks promising for the coming months.

It’s possible we may see an early striped marlin run if the water warms a little further. If so, trolling a spread of mid sized pushers may be the go with the shelf and beyond the place to fish.

Closer to shore at Montague Island, the kingfish have been very patchy. You get a few one day, then nothing for the next three, so the consistency is certainly not there.

When anglers have had success, jigs have certainly worked best with the northeast corner the place to fish when the current is pushing south.

There’s been a lot of bonito around, so if the kings are slow, a feed of bonnies shouldn’t be too hard to get. These guys eat well when looked after either fresh or in the smoker.

The beaches have started to fire up with a few mulloway captures. I know of one visiting angler that did a guiding session with me recently who told me of two fish, 9 and 6kg, that he caught on Blackfellows Beach on the last moon. That’s pretty good fishing from the sand! He was using fresh tailor fillet strips on a paternoster rig.
Other beaches worth a look for a mulloway include Brou, Coila and Tilba to the south of Narooma.

If you’re after a feed of bream and whiting, then these same beaches should fish well. Use a smaller running sinker outfit with pipi or beachworm for best results and just fish past the shore dump.

On the rocks, the blackfish have been excellent in the washes. The northern end of the Golfie Rocks in the corner has been a stand-out with bag limits reached on most occasions. Those doing okay have used fresh cabbage with a sand and weed berley mix, though fresh prawns has been pretty good too.

There’s been a few groper, bream and drummer mixed in, so a heavier outfit might be on the cards if you’re after the bigger fish.

The front ledge has been okay for salmon and tailor, though they have been a little sporadic with the calmer sea conditions we have had of late. That will change once we get some white water around the ledges.

Images

Catching two mulloway in two casts isn’t the easiest thing to do, but these boys managed just that! These fish went 90 and 81cm, and both fish were tagged and released.
Gun offshore local angler Anthony Nelipa with a cracking 75-80kg yellowfin he caught while cubing off the shelf.