Bream, jew on the list

Steve Prott  |  July 2005  »  Area Articles / New South Wales / Freshwater / Sydney West /

I bet there’s been more than the odd request for the warmer weather to return, especially if you’ve been on the water.

But there are still the diehards who can’t help but wet a line no matter what time of the year it is, and there have been some reasonable results for those wishing to put in the effort.

Whether you’re fishing from the bank or from a boat, there’s enough species about at the moment to keep you enjoying yourself.

Bream are known to move into drinkable freshwater well above the upper tidal limits in coastal rivers and can be caught at times at Freemans Reach.

Using a light 2kg to 4kg rod around two metres long with a threadline reel spooled with mono or braid, there are a number of ways you can go after bream.

While bream are well known for their willingness to take hard-bodied and soft lures, bait anglers will be well advised to use chicken gut and steak.

Locally, one of the best baits, if not the best, is Hawkesbury prawns. Live prawns are definitely the best if you can get some but prawns that are in good condition from the freezer will take their share of bream as well.

When the right conditions occur, bream can be caught from Windsor all the way to the mouth of the river in Broken Bay. In Winter, these fish are often caught on the bottom around Wisemans Ferry on bait.

Bream can be found around Rosevale, Macdonald River, Webbs Creek, Walkers Beach, Lower Half Moon and all the way up to Windsor.

Ponderosa Corner, which is the next bend downstream from Dargle, has an array of weed beds, rocky shoreline and sandy bottom. A falling tide is best for bream here.

Whether you call them mulloway, jewfish or simply jewies, there are a few of these about at the moment, too. Up to 3kg they are known as soapis as they have a soft, mushy flesh which isn’t that appealing if you’re looking for a feed.

However, 3kg to 8kg schoolies are nice fish to put on the plate. Adult fish in the monster class reach 45kg and more but most fish in the Hawkesbury would be in the soapie and schoolie class.

Mulloway are mostly night feeders but will feed through the day when the water is murky or the day is overcast. Big fish hunt alone and smaller fish will form schools and lie in gutters and eat things like crabs and small to medium size fish like mullet and tailor.

Smaller jewies will fall for prawns, fish pieces, crabs and worms which may also attract the attention of flathead and bream. If you’re looking to catch larger fish, mullet or tailor used as live baits will be more likely to get the attention of the bigger fish.

After heavy rain, discoloured water will often be the place to get jewfish and places like the mouth of the Macdonald River on the run-out tide and off the wharf at Wisemans Ferry will be good spots to try. Rosevale, Webbs Creek, Lower Half Moon and up to the mouth of the Colo River will sometimes yield jewfish while bait soakers looking for a feed are often seen out in the middle at Dad’s Corner.

Flatties are about in reasonable numbers this month in the Hawkesbury and while some might be familiar with flathead being taken in the Lower Portland and Wisemans Ferry area, the highest point a flattie has been caught was witnessed in the Yarramundi Lagoon.

A lot of families are often seen fishing the banks of the Hawkesbury at Windsor and while most would be hoping to simply catch any fish to keep the kids entertained, there is the possibility of catching flathead here. Other popular spots for flathead are Webbs Creek and the Macdonald River, both near Wisemans Ferry, Dad’s Corner and Lower Portland.

Dargle is another spot that can be fished reasonably easily from the bank or on the drift in a boat with prawns or strips of mullet or tailor.

**BASS STILL BITING**

Bass have been caught in reasonable numbers recently and while not everyone feels chasing them in their spawning areas is the right thing to do, you can still target them in areas above the area considered to be their spawning zone.

Nitro Whiz Bangers in 1/4oz size, with a light spray of Stimulate scent, have been my first choice lately. The flash of the silver and gold blades, the action of the soft plastic and the scent have attracted bass well.

Most bites on the Whiz Bangers have felt more like baitfish pecking and on one recent session around a partly submerged tree I had a
number of bites before landing a fat 38cm bass.

One major key to success has been to work soft plastics slowly. Someone once said that working soft plastics in cold water is so slow it almost puts you to sleep. Think of them more like real bait and you’ll start to get the picture. I’ve seen bass play with a Mann’s 4” Dragin’ Finesse Worm like it was alive.

I’ve continued using lipless lures as well, which have caught fish worked slowly along the bottom in deeper water during the day with a slight lift-and-drop motion. Other successful lures have been Knol’s Native 50s and Predatek Boomerangs.

SMELL OF SUCCESS

For many of us, lure scent is an essential item in the tackle box these days. While many anglers may still be dubious, I’m convinced there that some live up to their claims. I’m definitely not part of a cash-for-comment scam here I’ve tried, Yum Garlic Ail, Spike It Dip ‘n’ Glo, Stimulate with Ultrabite and Spike It Tournament Strength in the spray can and all work effectively.

When the fish are quiet, scent on your lure can turn a dreary day into some fun. More fish activity seems to happen and when combined with the right lure, bass especially will chase a lure down from some distance.

I generally make about 10 to 15 casts before reapplying the scent and often notice during the retrieve that the scent leaves a nice oily trail for fish to follow. When the right amount of flash and vibration is not quiet enough to attract fish, appealing to the fishes sense of smell might just be what gets them keen.

ALL ABOUT PATIENCE

Having a two-and-a-half-year-old son, I hear words that are becoming all too familiar: “Go fishing, Daddy!” While music to my ears, it usually only means one thing for dear old Dad: I don’t get to do much fishing!

It usually starts with Nathan standing with his rod and reel in front of the TV when it’s playing a fishing DVD or video and pretending it’s he who is winding in the fish. “Oh, big fish!” and “Woohoo!” also are repeated when he’s pretending to catch fish from the boat. It’s very impressive the way nobody can cast as many times in a minute as he can, and even when the fishing line is in an awful mess, he continues on regardless.

My little mate hasn’t hooked his first fish yet. He turns the water beside the boat to foam and hasn’t learnt to keep the noise down – and he’s too determined to let me help him. As any Dad would know, it pays to be very patient and just concentrate on keeping him happy.

In the meantime, he’s very patiently developing his skills and dreaming of really catching a fish. Although I get little fishing time, I wouldn’t want it any other way when Nathan’s in the boat fishing. I can always sneak out for a day of solo fishing another time.

If you have young kids, take them fishing with you. You can’t buy back the years so make the most of the time you have with them.

If you have any news or photos you’d like to share with readers, call me on 0418 297 353 or email me.

You can’t buy back the years so make special time to go fishing with your kids. You don’t need a boat, there are plenty of spots you can fish from the bank.

The lure of the year, the Jackall, continues to do well, especially when worked slowly close to the bottom and. Adding some scent and a slow lift and drop of the rod tip has been successful.

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