Dark nights, tasty prawns
Peter Sanderson | December 2005 | Area Articles / New South Wales / Central Coast / Swansea /

From now until March are the best months to spend Summer nights catching prawns in Swansea Channel.

To increase your chances the key factors are a run-out tide, preferably the dark of the moon (third quarter to first quarter) and sometimes a strong north-easterly wind can add to the prawn numbers.

Fisheries law allows a net with a handle no longer than one metre. Use a head-mounted light so you have two hands to handle your scoop.

Imagine hovering over the channel on a run-out tide and seeing the water meander from bank to bank. As the water flows out, it will take with it large amounts of ribbon weed on the surface.

Along these ‘weed lines’ is where you will find the majority of prawns, which get caught up in the outgoing tide and cling to any object that they can, weed being the obvious candidate. Twigs, branches or anything else they can cling to will do.

So watch for the weed line and anchor in that stream. Best dates this month will be from December 25 to 29 with the run-out tide starting around 8pm on the 25th.

FUEL-SAVING TIPS

Many keen game anglers in recent years would have tried their luck for their first marlin of the season in November but this year high fuel costs have hampered them. The majority will venture out this month when the chances of fish are higher.

Even still, the crew should be on their guard and all eyes should be scanning the entire ocean for bird life, jumping baitfish, current lines, billfish finning through the surface, floating logs and all signs of obvious fish activity.

Too many times a boat skippers has just driven past what may have been a destiny-changing situation. He is not fully responsible for finding fish – the crew are there to find signs, not sleep on the deck!

In 1998 Jason Nunn and I were members of the crew that won the Australian International Billfish Tournament at Port Stephens. I attribute much of our success to sighting a flock of birds on the distant horizon and rewarding us with a large school of marlin and yellowfin tuna.

Don’t waste time and valuable fuel travelling around the ‘desert’ with crew members asleep.

Don’t be afraid to troll a high-speed lure when travelling from location to location.

One of the most effective methods is to switch-bait the marlin. Troll the lures and teasers without hooks and have at least one person to keep watch on the lures.

When a fish attacks the lures, bring the engine back to idle and cast a pre-rigged live bait back to the fish and within moments you’ll get a hook-up.

For GPS waypoints for our best game fishing, call me on 02 4945 2152.

This oceanic sunfish, estimated at 250kg to 300kg, paid a brief visit to Lake Macquarie recently. It was first spotted at Fishing Point and then decided to visit other areas of the lake such as Swan Bay, providing boaters and anglers a unique opportunity for a close look. It was last sighted travelling under the Swansea bridge out to sea.

Images