The fishing at Lake Cressbrook has been quite ordinary of late; a rise in the water levels would certainly help to improve the situation. Although the launch and retrieval of boats is still okay due to the efforts of the council to maintain a decent boat ramp, it enters the water at a shallow angle, which can make launching big boats a problem. Take care when launching and also when out on the water, as there are some hazards just below the surface.

On the fishing scene, you can expect the bass to be tough. Due to a warmer than normal winter, fish failed to move to the lake's edges as they have in past years, instead remaining in schools 6-10m down. The action should pick up as we start to see the fish move into two new locations over the coming weeks.

A big portion of the bass schools will migrate to the lake's edges, where they can be caught on lipless crankbaits, beetle spins and spinnerbaits. Look for areas with better weed growth. This growth tends to occur in the smaller bays and washouts where the bottom is softer due to topsoil washing into the dam.

The garfish will be active around the surface of the lake so this is sure to attract the attention of some bass. Surface luring in the early morning and late afternoon will be one of the best ways to catch the bigger fish on offer. It may even be worth trying some surface fishing during the day; if you do, look for steep, long gullies as these offer a bit of shade for fish during the middle of the day. Other areas to try are around snags in water over a few metres deep or close to any weed reefs.

Other schooled fish will move into the deeper water where they will suspend around the thermoclines. These pockets of warmer and cooler water attract the fish and provide comfort throughout the warmer months. A good sounder on a high sensitivity setting will display the thermocline as a horizontal line of clutter and the bass won't be too far away. These open water schooling bass can be caught on ultra deep trolled lures or even on smaller, shallow running models trolled behind a downrigger. Casting to these fish is certainly an option and in some circumstances works far better. In the open water, the bass tend to follow the noise of the sounder beam, which means that during a drift, the fish will often concentrate in big numbers right below your boat. Jigging lures like Slider Grubs or ice jigs in the middle of these fish will get them to bite, while baitfishing with live shrimp is another preferred option.

Live shrimp can also be used to catch both bass and golden perch around the points. Try fishing in 6-9m of water at one of the many points in the main basin.

Somerset

Somerset has been fishing extremely well for bass over the past couple of months and now that we're well into the warmer and longer days, the golden perch should be on the chew as well. Trolling medium to deep diving lures along the rock walls in the main basin is a good way to score some quality goldens. Working ultra-deep diving trolled lures in the middle of the lake around the old creek bed will pull some goldens and a few bass as well.

The schooled bass should be holding in the lower half of the lake. Individual schools seem to be fairly scattered although the schools themselves are holding tightly together, so sound around to find where the bass are on the day. Some of the better places to look for bass include the flats opposite Queen Street, out wide on Pelican Point, the hump in Red Buoy Bay (out wide from Beam's Creek), the bay opposite The Hump and on the eastern and southern sides of The Spit. Quite often, the bass will stay close to the drop-off into the old riverbed and if you locate any underwater gullies that run into the old riverbed, these are worth a closer look too.

If the fish remain on the bite, they'll take a range of lures, including ice jigs, soft plastics and Mask Vib Jackalls. If the action dies down and the bass become harder to tempt, they may prefer particular lures. Hopping soft Jackalls (Mask Vib 60; 22g) in most colours across the bottom around the schooled bass is one of the easiest yet most successful ways to tangle with Somerset's big bass. Reaction lures like spinnerbaits and TN60 Jackalls are another option and work particularly well when the fish are suspended off of the bottom. Slow roll these lures through the fish and drop them back down to the bottom before slow rolling again. Repeating this will keep the lure in the zone for the whole retrieve and improve your chances. If you're using spinnerbaits, opt for 5/8oz models with downsized blades because these heavier baits are easier to keep deeper.

When casting to the bass that school in the deeper water, a spin rod is a good option. A reel filled with 4lb Fireline and topped with a 10-15lb fluorocarbon leader will greatly increase your chances of catching fish. The fine diameter of the light Fireline is the secret to success when fishing for deeper fish, because less resistance in the water keeps the lures running deeper with a better action, for a longer period of time.

Bjelke Petersen

There are plenty of bass and yellowbelly to be caught on trolled deep diving lures, with Blitz Bags, Smak 16s and BROlags in darker colours like purple or pink/purple particularly good for yellowbelly. For those keen to try something different, trolling spinnerbaits and Jackalls at slow speeds will often outfish conventional trolling plugs. The best place to try is between the wall and Bass Point, where the majority of fish are
holding due to the deeper water. Soft plastics cast and retrieved close to the bottom should produce a few bass.

Goldens and bass can also be caught by casting to the lake's edges. Bjelke's edges can produce some awesome fishing at this time of year, as the fish are active and will smash reaction baits like spinnerbaits and TN60 and TN70 Jackalls.

Live shrimp are by far the best bait and there should be reasonable catches of goldens, jew and spangled perch. Again, try areas in the lower end of the lake. Out from the points, along the steeper banks and close to the old creek bed drop-off are all good places to drown a bait.

**Boondooma**

There should be plenty of bass in the deeper water and casting soft plastics to the bass holding around the outside of The Islands and near Pelican Point is just one way to get these fish to bite.

Lure casting around the banks is also productive at this time of year as both bass and golden perch will be patrolling the water around the lake's edges. Competitors from last year's ABT Bass Grand Final will recall the amazing edge bite during the tournament. Fish the shallower water in the early and late parts of the day. If the action is slow in the middle of the day, move out to work lures across the bottom in 2-3m of water. Bigger spinnerbaits and Jackalls are probably the best choices when it comes to turning these fish on.

Trolling deep diving lures in the main basin can also produce a mixed bag. The golden perch tend to favour the rocky outcrops and keeping the lure close to the bottom in these areas is a good way to snare some. In deeper water, bass become the dominant species and a deep diving lure swimming mid-water should do the trick.

Live shrimp will attract both goldens and jew. Try fishing bait at the start of the Boyne timber or alternatively, target fish out from the rocky points in the main part of the lake.

For all your fishing needs or the latest info on Boondooma and Bjelke, try a couple of the local tackle outlets. The kiosk at Bjelke sells food and a great selection of proven tackle for the dam. Bass to Barra Marine in Kingaroy also has an extensive range of gear.

**Cania**

There are plenty of bass and silver perch, as well as a few yellowbelly, taking baits at the moment.

Trolling lures such as the RMG Poltergeist 50 and the Team Daiwa Woofer will produce a good bag of goldens and bass. Casting spinnerbaits and soft plastics to the lake's edges can provide some awesome fishing for bass and saratoga.

Creek 2 Coast Tackle in Biloela offers a good range of tackle for fishing the lake. A trip to the store can be worthwhile as the staff will be able to give you some useful, up-to-date advice.

**Hinze**

Fishing the Hinze during October is a pleasant experience. With the warmer water, bass come out of their sluggish state and are waiting to smack lures and baits. Casting surface lures like the Cultiva Gobo Popper and Zip'n'Ziggy around the edges for the first few morning hours is a great way to tangle with topwater bass. The edges can also fish well when using unweighted plastics. Rigged weedless on a worm hook, plastics are ideal for fishing the lake's grassy perimeter and any other heavy cover.

By mid-morning, it's best to switch to reaction baits and work deeper water either along the lake's edges or around drop-offs. Both spinnerbaits and Jackalls are reliable lures for targeting bass in the deeper water and some of the better areas to try are around The Island, Bass Bay, The Narrows in the western arm or the many points and bays above the water tower in the eastern part of the lake.

There should be an increase in the number of saratoga captures. Fishing lightly weighted, small soft plastics around any of the shoreline structure is a good bet, while small spinnerbaits and shrimp pattern flies can also do the trick.

Unlike bass, saratoga can be caught by fishing the edges throughout the day – even on poppers. Be sure to use chemically sharpened hooks if you are targeting the saratoga, as they have hard, bony mouths. I would like to see anglers fishing only one set of trebles on their poppers when chasing 'togs as their eyes can be easily damaged by stray hooks due to the shape of their heads and mouths.

The guys at Gold Coast Fishing Tackle in Nind Street at Southport have plenty of gear to suit Hinze dam, as well as the coast and surrounding areas. For an up-to-date report on fishing the area, call in and see the guys.

**Callide**

The warmer months are back and the barra are again on the bite. Finding drop-offs and casting into the old creek bed from the bank or boat is a successful way to target the lake's big barra. When fishing the shallows, the B52 is a standout performer.

Trolling is always a good way to explore the lake and cover plenty of water, with Predatek Vipers, Classic Barras and Halco Crazy Deepsexcellent options.

Although most anglers are focusing on the lake's barra population, the yellowbelly have been on the bite as well, taking frozen prawns and the odd trolled lure.
This month’s warmer water temperatures are expected to kick-start yet another big barra season.

**Proserpine (Peter Faust)**

Normally by this time of year, the shallows have warmed to the point when the barra start to vacate. This year has been a little cooler than in the past so good numbers of fish may remain in shallow water. If targeting barra in this area, fish at night or in the early part of the morning before the heat of the sun chases them into deeper water. Night fishing around the full moon will produce some of the best catches, with fizzers and poppers great lures to use. When a big barra molests one of these, you may wish you’d packed your brown jocks.

There will be a good percentage of barra holding in the deeper water both day and night. Trolling along the outside of the tree line or even in the main basin can pull some mighty fish and the RMG Crazy Deep (8m) in fluoro green, ghost grey and red head all work extremely well when trolled or cast.

On October 14 and 15, the Lake Proserpine invitational catch and release comp will be held. Competitors only fish during the daytime – so a night trip on these days will see you out on the water without the extra company.

Proserpine can be a hard lake to work out if you’re new to it, but staff at Proserpine Bait and Tackle can give you an idea of where the best fishing is and which lures are working at the time of your visit. Lindsay and Jason also run charters on the lake and their experience will give you the best chance possible of boating that fish of a lifetime. You can find them in the main street at Proserpine or make booking enquiries on (07) 4945 4641.

**Awoonga**

The barra season is well and truly underway at Awoonga. There are good-sized barra to be caught while fishing the shallows of New Zealand Gully and Ken’s Bay and some of the best action will come from Predatek Sandvipers or Eddy Studman’s Koolabung lures. The range of Tropic Angler lures is creating quite a bit of interest, with the gold and white colours already catching the eye of plenty of Awoonga barra.

Ben Platten caught a 29kg early season barra in New Zealand Gully. It was apparently quite a wrestle between the 29kg beast and 55kg Ben, and both the barra and Ben ended up in the water before the contest was decided.

In the past, there has been some access to the lake via Gladstone Water Board land, however this access will be closed off. The first class launching facilities at the Lake Awoonga Recreation Area near the caravan park are a good, safe and central place to launch.

The tournament season kicks off on Thursday October 20 with the Lake Awoonga Pro-Am. For entry details contact Merv Hinneberg at the Caravan Park. Merv can also provide you with information and entry forms for the Lion’s Family Fishing Comp to be held on October 28 to 30. For accommodation bookings contact the park on (07) 4975 0155. The best part about staying in the park is that the staff will provide you with all the information you need to find success. Because of the number of people staying in the park, Merv and Meg always know how the fishing is going and what they’re biting on, so be sure to ask them what’s working when you arrive.

There is a Bass to Barra Trail marketing strategy under way. Keep an eye out for the great 28-page booklet, which details a magnificent inland fishing trail that includes eight dams and stretches from Boondooma, through to Lake Awoonga and across to Callide.

**Images**