First catch a cuttlefish

Peter Le Blang | April 2009 » Area Articles / New South Wales / Sydney / Pittwater /

Over the next month we should expect the winds to shift and cold mornings will once again be the normal when going for a fish.

There is always an upside, though: The kingfish will be bigger inside Pittwater and there’ll be fewer boats on the water competing for the same fish.

We still should have squid about to catch as live bait but small cuttlefish are normally the dynamite bait for kingfish in Pittwater.

These little ink machines can be caught in the shallows along most of the western shoreline on small 1.8g squid jigs. You have to allow the jig to sink within 30cm of the bottom and rocks.

The small cuttlefish are normally easy to tempt but extremely difficult to hook because of their short tentacles. The trick is to smear a small bit of scent such as Halco paste to the last centimetre of the jig towards the spikes.

If the small jig is only twitched when the cuttlefish strikes, a hook up will normally follow.

Upon hook-up, the cuttlefish will normally spin like a top and this is where they are normally lost, or you get covered in ink. So if you want to stay in the good books with the domestic management, wear old clothes.

The kingfish in Pittwater will normally be hanging in close to the various wrecks along the river. This will mean that you will have to spend a lot more time in the area before a strike and that all sides of the wrecks have to be covered more than once.

The better areas are normally Jacks, the Kingfish Highway and Stokes Point but best of all is normally Bothams Reef. Bothams is easy to anchor at and normally baitfish are not too hard to find.

The area doesn’t have much current but if you pick a full moon, berley in this area can be quite effective.

Other fish that can be caught around Bothams include trevally, bream, jewfish, tailor and, towards the deeper areas, the odd flathead has been known to show up.

The various bays along the river will see Winter whiting starting to be caught along where the weed meets the sand. These tasty fish are normally caught with small squid strips, live nippers or bloodworms.

Flounder will also start to be caught along the drop-offs as well as some stud bream that are on the way towards the mouth of the river to spawn. Both of these fish can be targeted successfully with small clear poppers over the shallows and along the sand flat drop-offs.

KINGS ACTIVE

Over the past month kingfish have been caught on most charters and they have been surprisingly active for this time of year.

The hot downrigging bait has been big squid but, as I said, those cuttlefish will become the preferred bait over the next month.

The offshore fishing has been great with captures of most pelagic fish. We have been targeting mahi mahi off Broken Bay and Terrigal. On the odd day we saw a couple of decent fish captured but it wasn’t guaranteed, like it was last year.

Out wide, marlin are still coming in and the odd big mahi mahi has also been caught along the shelf and beyond.

In closer, the flathead drift is almost non-existent due to the leatherjackets. We have tried wider grounds and closer grounds but it seems if a container ship or the like has been waiting in an area for longer than a day, you can bet there won’t be anything other than leatherjackets.

The closer reefs are staring to show signs of life again, with some smaller snapper showing up at East Reef with some big kingfish on squid, cuttlefish and pillies.

Kingfish are still showing up along the coast but most we have caught have been in around 30m on slimy mackerel or yellowtail.

I am looking forward to our upcoming jigging charters in the hope we can tangle with some big kings on the offshore reefs. These charters can be heaps of fun for 6 people, so start working out your cranking arm.

Peter Le Blang operates Harbour & Estuary Fishing Charters out of Pittwater, phone 0410 633 351 or visit www.estuaryfishing.com.au.
This mahi mahi was one of the better ones for the day and at 91cm it was a pleasing capture in sloppy conditions.

Solid fish like this will become more common on the offshore reefs.