

REEL TALK – JUNE 2023



Official newsletter of the Surf Casting and Angling Club of WA (Inc)



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Reel Talk – June 2023 Contents

Cover picture – Vince Tomazin with a 3kg Pink Snapper caught during the May field day at Rottnest

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CLUB COMMITTEE

September 2022 – August 2023

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SCAC Life Members

Ian Cook, Bob Henderson, Terry Fuller, Mal Head, Peter Osborne

Deceased life members:

Vic Davis, Doug Edward, Lloyd Dunn, Dudley Brown, Noel Knight, Les Shand, Ron Kildahl, Bob Klein, Jim Strong, Eric Parker, George Holman

Note from the Editor

A reminder to everyone that the June long weekend is our field day, so please notify John Curtis, acting on behalf of our new field day officer Ron Thomas, if you intend to fish, and also send through any results to him by June 7th for recording purposes. A second reminder that our next meeting will include the presentation night, so the club will be paying for members and guests. Please ensure you send in your RSVP for catering purposes.

Early in May, suggested changes to the club rules (the Constitution) and a draft copy of the Member's Handbook were circulated for review and comment by members. Please send through any feedback on these changes to the club secretary, John Curtis.

When you are fishing please keep in mind the open competition; if you catch any eligible fish please let the club know. Simply take a photo with a length and weight and send it to Peet Wessels or the club secretary, John Curtis, until further notice.



Helen Carnell; Editor

JUNE GENERAL MEETING

Incorporating club awards presentation night

Wednesday 14th June 2023

Address: Croatian Club in Wishart Street, Gwelup

Doors open no earlier than 6:45pm

Meal at 7.00pm with meeting at 8.00pm

Please RSVP to secretary for catering purposes by noon Sunday 11th June

June birthdays



Robert Wilding	June 5
Helen Tomazin	June 9
Christopher Stickells	June 11
Geoff Raftis	June 13
David Wessels	June 15
Dom Zangari	June 23
Jane Pekaar	June 24

FISHING CALENDAR

Competition year June 2023 – May 2024

Field day dates have **mostly** been set as the weekend immediately following each General Meeting
Long weekends have been noted

DATE	VENUE	BOUNDARIES
June 3 – 5 WA Day LWE	Open anywhere in WA Full moon – June 4	Open – no boundaries. Please fish together for safety
July 15 – 16	Open anywhere in WA New moon – July 18	Open – no boundaries. Please fish together for safety
August 19 – 21	Rottnest Island and open New moon – August 16	Open – no boundaries. Please fish together for safety
September 23 – 25 King's Birthday LWE	Lucky Bay / Wagoie and local Full moon – September 29	Local boundaries will be determined at the general meeting before the field day
October 14 - 15	Swan & Canning Rivers Full moon – October 29	Including the inside (harbour side) of North and South Moles
November 11 – 12	Tim's Thicket / Preston Beach and local Full moon – October 27	Local boundaries will be determined at the general meeting before the field day
December 16 – 17	Open anywhere in WA New moon – December 13	Open – no boundaries. Please fish together for safety
January 13 – 14 Australia Day LWE Friday 26	Wilbinga / Guilderton and local Full moon – January 26	Local boundaries will be determined at the general meeting before the field day
February 17 – 18	Cervantes / Hill River and local New moon – February 10	Local boundaries will be determined at the general meeting before the field day
March 2 – 4 Labour Day LWE	Reef Beach and open New moon – March 10	Open – no boundaries. Please fish together for safety
March 30 – April 1 Easter LWE Anzac Day April 25	Bluff Creek and open Full moon – April 25	Open – no boundaries. Please fish together for safety

Standard weekends

Lines down Saturday 0600
Lines up Sunday 0900

Long weekends and Rottnest

Lines down Saturday 0600
Lines up Monday 0900

Suggested local boundaries

The south side of Mandurah Cut to South Mole
North Mole to Two Rocks Marina
Cottesloe Groyne to Quinns Rocks
Yanchep to Lancelin
Swan and Canning River upstream from railway bridge
Ledge to Wedge Island
Seabird to Lancelin
Penguin Island to Mullaloo Point
South side of Mandurah Cut to north side of Bunbury Cut

Moore River mouth to Three Mile Reef
North Mole to Two Rocks Marina
Preston Beach to Mandurah Cut
North side of Peel Estuary to North Mole
Yanchep to Ledge
Cervantes to Jurien (LWE)
Floreat Groyne to Yanchep
Swan and Canning River including the inside (harbour side) of the North & South Moles
Seabird

DRY CASTING REPORT AND RESULTS

May 7, 2023

I keep wondering if I will ever cast 180m as this would be my best ever cast, but the more I think about it, the more I realize I have no chance. I think it has something to do with age, oh well.

Gary has improved quite a bit on the last year and I put that down to practise. This year will tell.

To have a good day with good scores all the way through, everything has to go right with no mistakes. I had one of those days up to the last cast and threw out, that was my chance that went begging. There is always next month.

The best DHA was 162 by myself followed by Gary with 155. Bob took out the SHA with 30, followed by myself with 27.

Gary had the longest 56gr with 133.22, the next best was by 132.56 by myself. 119.53 was the best in the Art Bait, and the best in the 112gr was 152.89 followed by Gary with 142.78.

Ron Thomas; Dry Casting Officer

Dry casting is held once a month at:

Perth Polo Club
Meadow St
Guildford WA 6055

Please contact Ron Thomas if you
are interested in joining in



Results

NAME	DHA	H/C	SCORE		SHA	H/C	SCORE	TOTAL
Bob H	113	10	123		30	1	31	154
Mal Head	96	35	131		21	9	30	161
Gary G	155	0	155		23	5	28	183
Ron T	162	18	180		27	0	27	207
Mark H	105	29	134		14	3	17	151

NAME	56 g	H/C	SCORE	ART BAIT	H/C	SCORE	112 g	H/C	SCORE	TOTAL
Bob H	127.21	12	139.21	92.79	15	107.79	128.07	15	143.07	
	124.70	12	136.70	102.12	15	117.12	121.33	15	136.33	934.22
Mal Head	90.77	50	140.77	89.67	39	128.67	98.15	52	150.15	
	100.99	50	150.99	84.58	39	123.58	102.06	52	154.06	1009.22
Gary G	129.73	11	140.73	111.43	9	120.43	134.92	15	149.92	
	133.22	11	144.22	100.46	9	109.46	142.78	15	157.78	1005.54
Ron T	130.93	0	130.93	119.53	0	119.53	152.89	0	152.89	
	132.56	0	132.56	118.65	0	118.65	0	0	0	861.56
Mark H	92.98	32	124.98	85.00	35	120.00	109.52	41	150.52	
	88.45	32	120.45	85.00	35	120.00	109.06	41	150.06	937.01

Overall Winner on Handicap **Mal Head 1009.22**

By an Inland Lake

William Stanley Braithwaite

Long drawn, the cool, green shadows

Steal o'er the lake's warm breast

And the ancient silence follows

The burning sun to rest.

The calm of a thousand summers,

And dreams of countless Junes,

Return when the lake-wind murmurs

Thro' golden, August noons.

FIELD DAY REPORTS

Rottnest Island, May 21 – 22

Vince Tomazin

There were 10 participants for the Rotto weekend including a first time Rotto junior member, Oliver Wessels. The weather looked good with low swell predicted for the weekend. Once we got to the chalets, Sabby got stuck into making his famous pizzas which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. I believe his Dad has perfected the crust over many years of trial and error. The real test is the sound of crunching pizza base as everyone was getting stuck into them on Friday night. We all look forward to the pizzas when Sabby goes to Rotto. Big thank you to Sabby and his parents.

Saturday

With the best part of the weekend over, the attention turned to preparing for the bus ride to West End on Saturday morning, after the mandatory bakery stop.

The three Wessels's, alongside Wally, Paul and Sabby, fished the "Golden Rock" at the Tennis Courts, whilst myself and Mark fished "Mark's rock". Tino was the roaming fisherman and fished various locations. Mark fished with a bare hook and small sinker and caught Herring. I fished with bait and caught nothing. Various fish were caught from the Tennis Courts. Sandra caught a Yellowtail and Peet caught a large Breaksea Cod. All participants caught various fish including Wrasse and Herring. Around 4pm we started to move to Radar Reef, where Sandra quickly caught her second Yellowtail. Thereafter the fishing was a bit quiet and the wind picked up after dark. Peet caught a massive Buffalo Bream as did David. There were a few unstoppable hook-ups which is always great to watch. We all left Radar a bit early. Tired but satisfied, and in anticipation for the next session, hoping the elusive Skippy would turn up.

Sunday

The bus picked us all up at 11am and after the bakery, we all made our way to West End. Paul and Wally came on the bus for the ride as they were going back home on the early ferry. The driver took a scenic route and gave us a run down on the different locations as we headed to West End. The running commentary was enjoyed by all. As per Saturday, we all started fishing in the same locations. Sabby hooked up and landed a Yellowtail Kingfish after David had hurriedly supplied him with a live herring. After releasing the Yellowtail, a Wobbegong promptly decided to eat him head first! What a rare thing to see and experience. Sabby was not impressed. David caught and released a small Dhufish; under the new rules, any size Dhufish can be kept. Herring were in plague proportions and everyone was getting stuck into them. Little Oliver managed to get his 20 herring with lots of excitement. Then they all shut down. Tino was the roaming fisherman again and fished various locations including either side of the Tennis Courts. With the low swell, much more of the reef was accessible for fishing including directly in front of where our fishing gear was parked. Everyone started to head for Radar Reef around 4pm. I had headed out straight in front and to the left, and managed some wrasse. Tino came out a bit later and fished the same area where I had fished. I headed out to keep Tino company. We fished together for a short time and Tino then headed back to get ready to go to Radar Reef. On my second cast, after Tino had left and while retrieving my line, something took my bait. I prayed it was not a Buffy. Soon after I had a 3kg Pink Snapper on the reef. I would like to thank Tino for burleying up the water! For me, it's only taken 6 years to get a Pink Snapper from Rotto. I then joined the rest of the group on Radar Reef. Again, David and Peet hooked up to some unstopables. Other than that, the evening was quite uneventful. Soon after dark we all headed back up top for the bus to take us back to the chalets.

All in all, it was a great weekend. For a so called quiet weekend, many fish were caught and released. 16 Species in total. Everyone enjoyed themselves, and are all looking forward to the August Rotto Weekend.

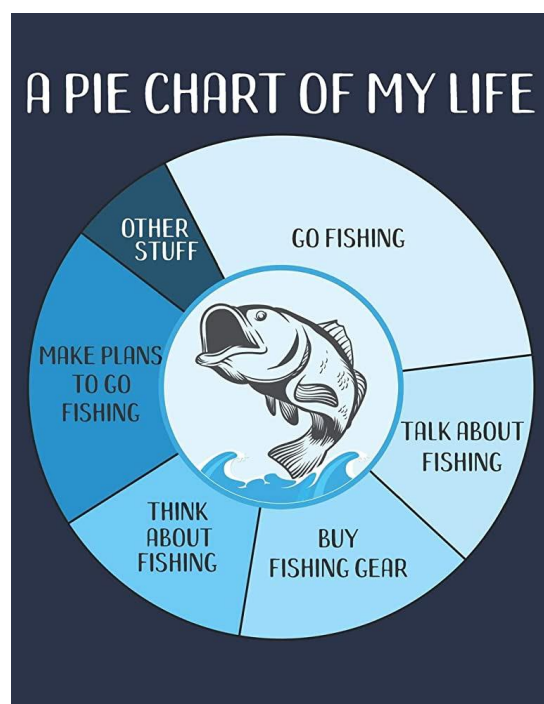
Results

RON THOMAS' MAY FIELD DAY RESULTS

Ron fished at Quobba, out of phone and email contact. He came in to Carnarvon and sent the following results from the Open Field Day.

Coral trout	3.510Kg
Sweet lip	0.945Kg
Sweet lip	0.855Kg
Estuary Cod	3.825Kg
Pink Snapper	1.170Kg
Spangled emperor	1.890Kg
Spangled emperor	1.350Kg
Striped Sea Perch	0.851Kg
Dark Tailed Sea Perch	0.945Kg
7 species	70 points
Total Weight	15.341Kg
9 fish	9 points

Field Day Score 232.41



Photos



Peet with his Breaksea Cod



Sandra with one of her Yellowtail Kingfish



Sabby with a Yellowtail Kingfish



David with his Dhufish



Vince with his 3kg Pink Snapper on Radar Reef



Vince back at the chalet with his Pink Snapper



Oliver with one of his full bag of herring



Oliver enjoying a beautiful day fishing on the rocks



*Field day participants enjoying camaraderie at one of the chalets
Top, left to right: David, Oliver, Sabby, Peet, Vince, and Mark
Bottom, left to right: Sandra, Oliver, Sabby, Peet, Vince, and Mark*



A Boy and His Dad

Edgar A. Guest

A boy and his dad on a fishing trip -
Now there is a glorious fellowship!
Father and son and the open sky
And the white clouds lazily drifting by,

And the laughing stream as it runs along
With the clicking reel like a martial song,
And the father teaching the youngster gay
How to land a fish in the sportsman's way.

Lucky Bay in Esperance named 'World's Best Beach'

Originally published by PerthNow on May 18, 2023

Elisia Seeber

It's hardly a surprise, but a pristine beach in Western Australia has been named the world's best.

With adorable kangaroos that hop over to say g'day, a long stretch of soft white sand and crystal clear turquoise water, most West Aussies could easily guess the location.

Yes, it's Lucky Bay in Esperance.

The stunning beach on the south coast of WA in the Cape Le Grand National Park, about an eight hours drive from Perth, was rated number one in Banana Boat's annual World's 50 Best Beaches list.

The list is a collaboration with more than 750 of the world's leading travel influencers, journalists and experts.

Lucky Bay was rated better than the breathtaking Anse Source D'Argent in Las Digue, Seychelles, arguably one of the most photographed beaches in the world, and the one-of-a-kind, secluded Hidden Beach tucked behind towering limestone cliffs in Palawan in the Philippines.

The beaches were ranked according to five important criteria: sheer untouched nature, remoteness, how swimmable it is, annual days of sunshine, and average annual temperature.

Why did Lucky Bay get more points than the rest? The cute marsupials of course.

"Come on, kangaroos on the beach, do we really need to say more about why this stunning, unique beach is on top of the list," the judges wrote.

"Well, we will...The friendly kangaroos are not the only thing making this the best in the world, Lucky Bay has some of the most pristine snow-white sand and incredible turquoise water you will ever see.



Aerial view of Lucky Bay, near Esperance, WA

They also noted that the beach stretched more than 5km and guaranteed visitors a spot “less crowded to simply take in all the natural beauty”.

“Whether you just visit to see the kangaroos, or come to chill, dive, canoe, kayak, or walk the bushy trails and tracks, this beach is absolutely the best in the world!”

Lucky Bay was rated 9/10 for untouched nature and being swimmable.

Finnish travel blogger Helen Janneson Bense, who boasts more than 700k Instagram followers, and is currently gallivanting through WA, was also a big fan of the beach’s roos but says it’s important to give them space and let them come to you.



A resident kangaroo of Lucky Bay

“Lucky Bay is not only the most pristine beach you’ll ever lay eyes on, it has resident-friendly kangaroos that visit the beach daily,” she said.

“They are wild kangaroos though very tame and you’ll easily be able to snap photos with them.”

A couple of other WA beaches also got a mention, with Turquoise Bay in Exmouth in the State’s north, coming in at number 17, and Little Hellfire Bay, also in Esperance, in 28th spot.

The only other Aussie beach to get a mention was Queensland’s Whitehaven Beach in the Whitsundays, which was ranked No. 4.

Other beaches to make the list included, Flamenco in Puerto Rico, Moro in Spain, Pasjaca in Croatia, Capriccioli in Italy, Le Morne in Mauritius ... and many more dream locations.

It's not the first time Esperance has been thrust into the spotlight, in February the coastal location was ranked No.12 in the International Tourism Sentiment Index's 2023 edition of Leading Places: The 100 Most Loved Destinations Around the World.

At the time, Shire of Esperance president Ian Mickel congratulated the region's tourism industry on the ranking, noting its importance, as the score is directly related to what visitors "are actually saying".

"We have Australia's most stunning white beaches and spectacular scenery, but without efficient, friendly customer service and world-class facilities from our local tourism industry, we wouldn't gather the volume of amazing comments that have made this score possible," he said.

If you've never visited this stunning part of WA, the best time to check out Lucky Bay is anytime from mid-December to late March.

Travel bloggers recommend taking camping gear and securing a beachfront spot in the area.

"This way, you can enjoy the glorious sun, meet the kangaroos early before it becomes crowded, and marvel at the most phenomenal star-gazing at night," they said.



A kangaroo grazing along the shoreline of Lucky Bay, near Esperance, WA

Original article published online at: <https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/perth/lucky-bay-in-esperance-wa-named-no1-in-the-worlds-50-best-beaches-list--c-10691463>

Blast From The Past

A Crabbing Safari

Bob 'Hendo' Henderson

The Team had left to return to WA and now it was time to indulge in some other activities and enjoy the attractions of Wallaroo SA.

My previous attempts at crabbing had produced small results but enough to tantalise our tastebuds. Miniscule samples to Mal and Jenny had them anticipating a decent feed of crabs, depending on our efforts.

So, with a couple of extra crab nets on loan, we ventured out onto the Wallaroo wharf and adjoining jetty and selected a spot to drop our nets. A relaxed atmosphere, some gentle breezes and a warm sunny arvo put us all in cheery moods. When baited up, the four nets headed for the water with the retaining ropes securely tied to the wharf railing. The average wait of 10 minutes before pulling in the nets over the next half hour produced a couple of keepers and a few small returns. Encouragement was given to the Girls to be involved and laughter and joking filled the air.

Well, I then decided to move one of the crab nets a bit further out onto the jetty and observing a light switch assembly on one of the light poles, decided to place the crab pot retaining rope over the light switch. An expert Frisbee styled cast saw the crab net sail out, the retaining rope flick off the pole switch, and join the sinking crab pot.

PANIC!!!

A mad dash down the wharf, some grovelling to a fisherman to borrow a handline, a dash back, crazy casts trying to hook up the floating rope with some success and the rope and pot is back onto the jetty.

PHEW!!!

With a sigh of relief in not losing a loaned net I asked Mal to hold onto the rope while I cast out the net again. Another near perfect cast and the net sailed out with the rope following it.

“OOPS...” said Mal.

Many more frantic casts trying to retrieve the crab pot rope with good quick results, and the girls are killing themselves laughing in the background and giving unsympathetic comments on our capabilities. Bloody rope tied securely.

A few more crabs caught and into the bucket, especially my “big one” which had me crowing on my crab catching powers. A beauty.

Jenny suggested to Mal that a photo with him holding onto the “big one” would be nice. Mal gingerly extracted “big one” from the bucket and held it up ever so gently for a photo to be taken. Old butterfingers sat posing but the “big one” objected to sharing the limelight with Mal and must have made a threatening comment to Mal, for Mal dropped “big one” very quickly. The cranky “big one” staggered around Mal’s feet in a daze as Mal performing an old fashion Surfy Stomp style of dance. The “big one” feared of being stomped on, headed for the side of the jetty ignoring Mal’s cursing of it to desist in it’s efforts to escape. The “big one” executed a near perfect dive with one and a half summersaults before entering the water one claw stuck up giving a message to Mal.

“OOPS...” said Mal....

The laughter and jesting lasted for a while as we consumed consoling cold drinks and avoided Mal’s grovelling. Harmony regained our crab catching efforts continued.

“OOPS...” OH NOT AGAIN!!!

Mal calls out that his crab net’s bait box lid has come off and is floating away. Mal heads for the jetty ladder and climbs down to try and reach out for the lid while I used the bucket to try and collect the lid. Mal is unable to get to the lid but I’m successful and haul it in filling the bucket with sea water. Now what do you do with unwanted sea water, you pour it back into the sea don’t you.

“OOPS...” Sorry Mal, didn’t know you were still there.

Coughing and muttering Mal came topside, stepping over two silly females rolling on the jetty killing themselves with hysterics.

Well I did say sorry, but somehow Mal did not think I was genuine for I couldn’t wipe the silly smirk off my face. Mal’s comment of “Pigs Arse” didn’t seem to fit the moment!!!!!!

It took a while for Mal to dry out and our crabbing continued with our tally reaching ten crabs.

Then the laughter started again.

Lee was bent over the catch bucket checking our crab tally when Mal crept up and touched Lee with a wet rag just inside her leg. Guess how high she jumped. Blimey for a moment she was speechless but I can tell you from the look in her eye Mal came close to trying to extract himself from a crab bait box with hands and feet tied together.

Within the hour our efforts dwindled in results so we packed up and headed back to the caravan park. The crabs were cooked and cooled then feasted upon with pleasure as crab juices ran down our chins and arms. The cold medicinal beverages completed an enjoyable meal.

We sat back and reminisced on the afternoon’s events and added them to our eternal memories of great times together.

TIZ ALL TRUE

HENDO

On The Dunes

Bliss Carman

Here all night on the dunes	Till hark, in the chill of the dawn	The world is washed once more
In the rocking wind we sleep,	A field lark wakes and cries,	In a tide of purple and gold,
Watched by sentry stars,	And over the floor of the sea	And the heart of the land is filled
Lulled by the drone of the deep.	We watch the round sun rise.	With desires and dreams untold.

PLANNING TO CATCH A MULLOWAY?

John Curtis



Mulloway are one fish you have to specifically fish for if you are to stand any chance of being successful. I've caught a few, some of them real beauties. Not only that, I've had the privilege of fishing with anglers who were better at catching them than I was, so maybe I can make a few helpful suggestions.

The reason why so few big mulloway are caught is because so few anglers fish for them, or actually target them; rather catching them as a by-catch. Fishing for mulloway is 80% effort and 20% skill, it's all about putting in the hours, finding the fish and developing a successful method of catching them.

The largest mulloway caught in Australia was caught in South Australia, west of Kangaroo Island in 1985, and weighed in at 42.5 kilos. This is not an actual record capture as it was taken by a deep sea trawler. The National Record is 38.1Kg, caught at Shelley Beach, NSW in 1981. In Western Australia the largest fish to date was one caught at Reef Beach in July 1977 by Keith Jones which weighed 33.1Kg. That's a very big fish and extremely rare, and WA anglers are most unlikely to encounter fish anywhere near that huge size.

In fact, a 25kg mulloway is considered big in our waters and the majority of fish caught off our beaches and reefs range from three to 15 kilos, with schoolies of around 4 kilos probably the most common size. Some of our biggest mulloway come from the lower reaches of the Swan River and remote beaches along the far South Coast. I have heard stories of exceptionally large fish coming from the beaches to the east of Norseman before the cliffs of the Nullarbor Plain prevent anglers fishing. At the other end of the Great Australian Bight, around Ceduna in South Australia, many large mulloway have been taken over the years.

Mulloway have a vast range in West Australian waters – from Exmouth right around to the South Australian border. Though they are occasionally found well offshore in depths down to 150m, their most common habitat is surf beaches, reefs, and rocky headlands.

Sometimes they congregate in river mouths and estuaries when rivers are in flood. The Murchison River estuary is a good example – it's the place to be when dirty water comes pouring down as a result of heavy rainfall way back in the catchment area up around Meekatharra. Mulloway often feed around the current line defining the mix of dirty flood water and clean salt water pushing up against it on an incoming tide. Another location where this phenomenon occurs after heavy winter rains is on the North and South Moles. A larger bait cast out into the dirty water and allowed to drift out with the outflow will often attract the attention of a mulloway.

Finding the Spot

To have any realistic chance of catching a mulloway you must know where mulloway have been caught in the past. It can be a surf beach, an estuary, or any other location which has produced mulloway.

It is also important that the spot you select is close enough to where you live so you can spend sufficient time fishing it to have some realistic expectation of being successful. After all, it's going to be a lost cause if you have to drive half the day to go fishing for something you are most unlikely to catch on your first visit. You simply won't go back.

By way of example; a number of anglers used to read my fishing column and had noted that I had mentioned catching mulloway in the lower reaches of the Swan River. Several emailed me asking for specific locations, while others fished various locations in the lower reaches of the river for little or no result. They then complained that I had given them a bum steer. These anglers rarely caught any fish, let alone a mulloway, and rarer still do they go back and persist.

The Swan and Canning River estuaries supports a very healthy mulloway population, which is overlooked by all but a handful of diehards who fish for them regularly. Recfishwest has also stocked these estuaries with some juvenile fish a few years ago and now they should be getting up to around 90+ cm mark. The point I am making is do not overlook the fish right on your doorstep. Other stocked locations include the beaches around Dongara to the north and those around Mandurah.

Make a Commitment

Most anglers will never succeed as mulloway fishermen because they will never make a commitment to set aside the appropriate amount of time to be successful. Having selected the place where you are going to fish, you will need to make a firm commitment to spend the necessary time to be successful. I suggest that time is ten trips, each of at least four hours duration at the peak fishing times. We will look at the peak fishing times for mulloway in a minute but before that here are a few recommendations.

Make a Diary

I strongly recommend that you get a note book and set it aside to record your fishing activity, particularly when fishing for mulloway. Rule it up neatly with margins and write in the following headings:

- Date
- Moon phase
- Tide
- Time fished – start and finish
- Location where fished
- Who with
- Bait used
- Weather (wind speed and direction, and cloud cover, barometer rising/falling)
- Fish caught
- Other relevant comments

My diary records almost 50 years of fishing activity in Western Australia. It has these headings and several other notes that have given me a very valuable record that will allow me to predict what fish will be where throughout the year.

By now you should have some idea of whether mulloway fishing is your cup of tea or not. If you cannot take your mulloway fishing seriously enough to go set up your diary, and obtain a suitable Solunar calendar - that's if you don't already have one - before reading the rest of this article you are not really serious about seeking to catch them and will rely on luck and chance.

Peak Times:

Mulloway are hard to catch at any time. Big mulloway are even more difficult. They haven't reached that size without learning something. Often they will seem to be downright impossible to catch, even though they may be present. This is why we need to fish at those times when they are most vulnerable to being caught.

Most big mulloway are caught between sunset and midnight. Small school fish may come on the bite at any old time, even during the middle of the day, but to have any realistic chance of catching a big fish you should fish from sunset onwards.

Try places like The Narrows, Mosman jetty, Claremont jetty, The Fremantle wharves at 'E' Shed, inside the North and South Moles or on local beaches. Good beach locations include the beaches either side of the Peel Harvey estuary at Mandurah, the beaches of Warnbro, and Cockburn Sound.

In the northern suburbs the beaches at Swanbourne/Cottesloe, Floreat/Scarborough and Trigg all produce fish. Trigg Beach is well worth the effort as it has produced a number of good fish consistently over the years. Further north, the beaches of Mullaloo, Burns and Quinns as well as Yanchep and Two Rocks have all produced good fish. The beach at Club Capricorn holds a special place for me as I caught two 20Kg fish in two casts from the beach in a heavy downpour. My fishing mate didn't get a bite and I added a couple of 2Kg tailor to my bag that day. Further north, the beach at Wilbinga is also a good location that produces good fish, but requires a 4WD to access it.

Records show that you will need to choose an evening with a tide change, preferably a low tide change, just after dark; that is, the tide starts to rise. My notes record that not much seems to happen mid-tide but fish become more active on the tidal change. This means that if you are fishing a rising tide in the Swan you may need to move regularly to stay with the rising tide. The same applies to fishing the beaches listed above.

So far we have looked at the best times of day to fish for mullet. Time of the year is important too. Mullet start to be taken regularly from about the end of September through to February. March, April and May are the Autumn months and you will still catch a few around this time. However, this is possibly because autumn weather usually sees more fishermen about than winter, which is cold and wet.

Spring is the time when a lot of fish breed and there are a lot of juvenile fish around. Mullet are big fish and need a lot of food which these juvenile fish provide. There is a message there! Mullet are about throughout the year, but - for your first mullet project - I suggest fishing through the Spring. Statistically that is the best time of year for mullet.

Breeding and migration

Very little is known about the life history of mullet, which no doubt helps maintain the mystery that surrounds them. They are thought to congregate in the surf zone on our beaches in spring-summer where they breed, and tiny juveniles move into the estuaries when 15-16cm long. Depending on the abundance of suitable food sources, mullet reach 35cm in length during a year in the estuary after which they return to the ocean.

After six years they reach sexual maturity at 60-70cm. Mullet are long-lived with some fish reaching 30 years or more and growing to two metres. In September/October some big mullet move back into the Swan River to build up energy for spawning and return to the ocean after spawning in December/January.

Interestingly, preliminary stock identification indicates that there may be two sub-populations of mullet in WA waters, with the break point being at Mandurah. Adult fish often hunt and feed alone, or in just twos and threes. Studies on the east coast of Australia have shown that mullet can migrate over distances of several hundred kilometres north and south from their home range.

Moon Phase

Favourable tides at the locations mentioned occur on the new and full moon. Some anglers have found the phase of the moon important whether the area being fished is tidal or not. According to my Rothery Fish and Tide Master, the new moon period, from just before until just after, is the best time to fish; my general fishing experience and my diary supports this.

Sharks in particular were found to be very active around the new moon. In fact, catches of all mature fish seem to increase during this new moon period so it would be foolish to ignore it.

Choice of Tackle

When choosing tackle for mulloway fishing, it is important to consider the environment in which you will be fishing. Mulloway are often found in snaggy areas where reefs abound, and if your line can't take a bit of scrubbing then you are likely to lose most of the fish you hook.

Lines

I have caught big mulloway on lines testing between 4kg and 10kg; that should suggest a starting point. I've also taken a healthy school fish or two when fishing for live bait on light tackle, but these are happy accidents and don't occur often. Schoolies are often caught on bream tackle when casting lures for bream.

The choice is yours whether to use braid or monofilament, but when choosing the latter all your terminal rigging is done on monofilament. I generally use monofilament when fishing from the beach, and braid when fishing in a dinghy where I have an opportunity to chase a difficult fish. Monofilament allows a little stretch whereas braid doesn't allow for angler error.

Rods

The rod you choose should complement the line class chosen. Generally, I would allow for a rod to be able to cast a reasonable weight and a larger bait beyond the surf break. Choose a rod that is slightly longer and has a softer action, rather than a shorter, stiffer style of rod, for mulloway fishing. These are more suited to shark fishing rather than mulloway.

Beach and estuary land based fishing will require the longer rods, while with dinghy or boat fishing you can use shorter rods. Remember, too, that mulloway fishing is not a casting competition. Many big fish are caught just behind the first line of breakers, or cruising 30 metres out from an onshore reef, or right under the boat at the source of your berley trail.

Reels

Estuary and river fishing from a boat doesn't normally require any big gun outfits and a thread-line; overhead or side cast outfit loaded with 8kg mono or 10kg braid is just fine. I suggest that 8-10kg line fished from a surf rod is about right from the beach, reefs and rocks.

Leaders

When fishing for mulloway there is no need to use a wire trace. I believe you need a leader about twice the breaking strain of your main line. This is because large fish are often hooked up for fifteen, twenty minutes, sometimes longer, and in that period of time they can cause quite a bit of wear and tear on your leader.

I personally use either 60 and 80 lb Jinkai monofilament or fluorocarbon or similar for leaders - depending on which line happens to be on the reel I am using - and find them excellent. Jinkai is a nice soft line, yet it has abrasion resistant qualities. Anyway, that's a suggestion. I also use an FG knot to attach the leader to the line as this allows the line and leader to be readily wound through the guides as it is of minimal size. Another very good knot for tying leaders to line is the PR knot, however this is a little more difficult to tie as it requires some specialized tools.

Hooks

The Mustad 92554 Beak pattern has always been an excellent hook for mulloway fishing. The new hardened steel, chemically sharpened version (the 92554NPNR) is even better. Anglers preferring a slightly lighter gauge hook with the same characteristics could do no better than choose the Gamakatsu Octopus pattern in sizes 4/0 to 8/0. Hook size depends on bait, but two hooks are required to give the large baits used for mulloway fishing adequate cover. Sizes 4/0 to 6/0 are preferred for most bait presentations. Lately I have been using 4/0 to 6/0 Gamakatsu Octopus or Circle hooks as I find them quite effective and require less effort on the angler's part to score a hook up.

Baits

Mulloway will take live fish of suitable size, or fresh fish fillets. Octopus is also excellent bait for mulloway and so is fresh squid. In South Australia an acquaintance of mine has been using live squid and has been very successful. In fact, big mulloway will take just about any living thing occurring in their environment, but it must be living or freshly killed. Frozen bait will just not do for big mulloway because they are fussy brutes.



One of the most productive baits is a fresh fillet of tailor or mullet on either a gang of hooks or a pair of snelled hooks, which is my preference. I suspect that cut crab baits aren't fished much by beach anglers but logic suggests that they should work at the right time and in the right place, given that they feature in a mulloway's diet. Floreat Beach in April / May often produces snapper and mulloway on crab baits.

Dead baits should be presented in such a way that they lay straight and not curled or bunched up. The hook, or hooks, should be standing clear of the bait and not obscured in any way. Attention to detail in this regard makes a good deal more difference than the average angler might think.

Live baiting

Some anglers fish on the bottom with a running sinker for mulloway and catch quite a few. The system works well with cut baits, fish fillets, etc. It does not work particularly well with live baits. A live bait anchored to the bottom will frequently swim around the main line and cause the line and leader to become hopelessly tangled. The problem can be overcome, but in overcoming one problem we create another.

By using a fairly long leader, say a metre or so in length, below the sinker, and by winding the sinker right up to the rod tip before casting out, it is possible to cast the bait several metres further than the sinker. This effectively extends the leader so the bait is well away from the pivotal point, which of course is the sinker.

In so doing, the bait can swim over a wide area without tangling the leader and main line together. However, given such a free reign, the bait will, very likely, find a hiding place under a rock or in a crevice somewhere out of harm's way. But even if it does not, a free swimming bait dragging a length of line behind it is likely to snag the line anyway.

With little or no tide running, live baits may be fished under a running float. How deep you set the bait will depend on how deep the water is, but mulloway will rise to a bait; no doubt of that. With a tide running, live baits will swim in the tide behind the boat.

The best way to set a live bait is to put the hook up through the lower jaw and out of the mouth or through the front of the upper jaw. This will allow the bait to swim freely into the current and not end up across it and drown as will happen if the hook is placed in front of the dorsal fin or adjacent to the anal fin.

If you use a glow stick attached to the tip of the rod you will soon notice when the live bait starts to become anxious when it is about to be taken.

Fishing Techniques

Anglers fishing for mulloway will use a variety of techniques. Here are some I have become familiar with. As discussed previously - fishing with bait, whether live or dead; again it is important that you use very fresh bait. Frozen mulies will work, but will not attract the bigger fish.

If you do hook a big mulloway, don't underestimate the power of the fish. A locked-up drag and heavy hands will surely lead to grief – give the mulloway its head on the initial run and then slip into a pump-and-wind routine until the fish is safely on the beach or at boat side.

Also be careful gaffing, especially in the surf. It's probably better to grab the trace and ease the fish up on to the sand. Flailing gaff shots can be disastrous when it hits the taut line and it snaps and the fish swims away! Also keep your fingers out of the gills when retrieving a fish from the shore. A big fish will quickly crush, or possibly break, your fingers if caught in their gill rakers.

Mulloway on lures

Mulloway certainly take lures of various types, but few anglers have the persistence to continually cast and retrieve lures for the hours involved in mulloway fishing. I was fishing with three mates at the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia using an ABU 7000 with 8 Kg line and casting a 20 cm Vibrotail lure on a 1 oz jig head. After seemingly casting it about 100 times in an hour and a half, I had a hit. I cast it out again and another hit and a solid hook up. About three quarters of an hour later I landed a fish of around 25Kg. I started to give my companions a bit of a hard time and rub it in a bit. We came away from that night with four fish, mine and three larger ones caught by the others. Over 100Kg of mulloway in one session.

To be successful at mulloway fishing you need to be both a strategist and philosopher. Strategy is the key to success in mulloway fishing. Philosophy is the key to accepting that your strategy may not be good enough when you keep missing out. Don't give up when chasing these fish, it will take many hours before you nail your first one, so don't lose hope! 'Go hard or go home' is the lifeblood of mulloway fishing, and the more you put in, the more rewarding the final result will be.



Two Years with Baby Blue

Chris Stickells

It's now been 2 years, as of May 19, since I took delivery of my little blue jelly box; 48000km and a whole lot of fun. The little blue box has taken me/us all over the place, from the south west beaches to out in the Wheatbelt to the State Forest and more. It's small size, being classified as a micro car, is not causing any issues; although the small size also comes with a think about what you're taking on a trip. The small cargo area and limited 170kg of cargo weight allowable certainly causes one to think about what one carries. Compact kitchen gear is in order, seating, sleeping gear, and anything else you may wanna cram in. There's a mere 85L of cargo space with the back seats up, and 377L with both back seats down. In time, I plan to add a few more accessories; roof rails, new rear bar with duel 20ltr can holders, tow ball kit, and a possible GVM upgrade to name a few. So far I am loving this car, as well as the way other Jimny drivers are so friendly and wave on road, park next to each other and have groups where we all get together go camping etc. I look forward to many more years with her. Happy birthday Baby Blue!



Discovering Jarrahdale



To prove its bonafides, a modified second-generation Jimny claimed the world record for the highest altitude attained by a four-wheeled vehicle in 2007, when it reached a height of 6688m in the Andes mountain range.



Offroad, on the beach for the first time