Try Tathra for variety
Darren Redman | October 2006 » Area Articles / New South Wales / South Coast / Bermagui

If you haven’t already fished the Tathra area, you should! There are a power of options from estuaries to beach, rock, offshore, nearby lakes and a very good wharf jutting out over the ocean.

One of the main attractions to Tathra is the old historic wharf, built in the early 1890s to service the merchant trading vessels frequenting the coast. It now provides an excellent fishing platform and tourist destination.

I remember growing up in Bega in the early 1970s and paying regular visits to the wharf and seeing many fish caught off this structure. More to the point, what wasn’t caught there? Large sharks, stingrays, various tuna, kingfish and so many other small varieties of fish species have all laid on the deck at one time or another.

Like a lot of kids before me, I served my apprenticeship in the school holidays there, as many a young person has since. It is definitely a must for anyone visiting the area and with renovations now being carried out, the wharf will provide better facilities for future angling.

BEGA RIVER

The Bega River that enters the ocean near Tathra has long been a popular area for estuary fishing, especially for those who like to toss lures. Small to medium boats will handle the water conditions easily there, with the smaller punt-style boats allowing further access to the fresh/brackish water and bass populations upstream.

Shore-based access is available with some excellent easy-to-get-to locations and good prawning towards the entrance in the warmer months. October is a prime month to visit the river as fish start to chew in the warming water.

Starting up in the fresh, bass are responding well as they put on condition after spawning and any warm day should see fish feeding. Further down in the brackish water you will encounter good numbers of black bream and an increasing population of estuary perch. Hammer every little bit of structure you can find in varying depths with a wide range of lures.

Towards the middle section, large rock walls and deepening holes are areas to target jewfish, flathead, bream and other species. These are the places to use your large soft plastics down deep and along the rocky ledges. Don’t be frightened to troll some deep-diving hard lures there as well.

The flats and weed beds towards the entrance are prime areas to fish with bait and lures. Whiting, blackfish, bream and flathead make up the bulk of the captures with some nice tailor around the bridge pylons and adjacent rock ledges.

Some little lakes to the north and south are also worth exploring with Nelsons, to the north, popular for wading anglers.

Plenty of beaches surround the Tathra area and all produce their fair share of fish. Bournda Beach, to the south, has good numbers of salmon at this time of year with a few whiting starting to show.

The odd bream has been caught and with the weather warming, tailor and gummy sharks can be targeted at night on the moon.

Tathra’s main beach, towards the entrance of the river, is one of the best areas for whiting along the coast. Beachworms and light rods should see anglers account for some nice bags.

ROCK OPTIONS

The rock platforms surrounding Tathra are breathtaking and produce very good fishing. Drummer are the main targets, with the fishing excellent at present. Blackfish are caught regularly on cabbage weed and groper will hang around most areas.

The better areas include the point east of the wharf, down behind the pub and the ledges either side of Kianinny Bay. Garfish can be caught regularly in Kianinny and are usually of a good size.

Lurefishing for pelagics from the rocks is probably not done as much as it should in this area. Good deep-water access brings passing schools of kingfish, bonito, salmon and sometimes tuna within range of the lure-caster and the warm months are prime time for this.

Tathra has an excellent launching facility at Kianinny Bay, allowing good access to the ocean for offshore anglers and the reef fishing off there is terrific. To the north, boats fish the reefs off Aragunnu, Nelsons and the flathead grounds out from Wapengo. To the south, they work down off White Rock and Bournda.

Species encountered during Spring include good numbers of morwong (blue and jackass), snapper, pigfish, perch and other assorted species. Tiger flathead are prolific at present with the grounds out from Bournda producing well. The deeper water in around 70m is better and to the north some sand flathead should be showing closer to shore.
Gamefishing has never been highly regarded off Tathra although it can produce its share of exceptional captures from time to time. Fish like the Australian record striped marlin on 37kg line have been caught from here and many tuna species, sharks and marlin are encountered out wide around the Tathra Canyons. The warmer months will see fish venturing closer to shore.

Facts

FACILITIES

- Tackle store: Scott Taylor, owner of Tathra Tackle Box, knows the area well.
- Tathra Charter Service runs to sea from Tathra, book at the tackle store.
- R & R Sportsfishing runs estuary charters in the Tathra area. Mark Rose and I know the water well. Call 02 6493 4857, 0427 934 688 or email --e-mail address hidden--
- There is a boat ramp and cleaning facilities at Kianinny Bay for ocean access.
- There is a boat ramp adjacent to the bridge on the northern side for access to the Bega River.
- Tathra Wharf has meals, take-away food, some tackle and gift shop situated inside at Tathra Point.
- Historic Tathra Pub has meals and accommodation over looking the ocean near Tathra Point.
- Tathra Beach Country Club and Tathra Beach Bowling Club are both on Andy Poole Drive.
- A caravan park is adjacent to the main beach with another two just across the road. Camping is available, as are plenty of units and houses to let.
- Camping is allowed at designated areas in the Mimosa Rocks National Park, 10 minutes to the north and at Bournda Reserve, 10 minutes south.
- Bega is only 10 minutes west.
- There are superb beaches in the area for the whole family and are regularly patrolled.

Images

Scene of more than a century of fish conquests, Tathra Wharf is undergoing renovations so that further generations of fishos can enjoy it.
Kianinny Bay’s boat ramp is sheltered in all but the most atrocious conditions and there’s some good fishing from the surrounding rocks.

The launching ramp and fish-cleaning facilities at Kianinny are excellent and for river anglers, there’s a ramp on the northern side of the bridge over the Bega river.
The Bega River is home to many dusky flathead, which can be taken on lures and bait around weed beds and sandy drop-offs.

An average Bega River bass from the upper reaches. Brogo Dam also holds good numbers and should be firing up for the season any day now.