Manning the best for years
Ian Pereira | December 2008 » Area Articles / New South Wales / Mid North Coast / Harrington /

Conditions in the Manning are the best they have been for some years. We have experienced a few freshes and the prawns are moving down the river.

Once they get to where Ghinni Ghinni Creek runs into the Manning then they are protected from netting and the only predators they face are the hungry fish.

I have mentioned the great improvement in the numbers of flathead before but they are becoming more numerous year by year.

There are also many more large breeders turning up at the mouth of the river. Thankfully, some of the enlightened anglers are releasing these big fish to allow them to breed and provide more flathead in the ensuing years.

January is the best month to target flathead on whitebait, live bait, yabbies and soft plastics. It is easy to catch a feed of good-sized flathead up to 2.5kgs, meanwhile releasing any bigger fish encountered.

Flathead can be caught from the retaining walls at Harrington and Manning Point and from boats fishing the edges the weed beds and drop-offs in the main part of the river.

ESTUARY

Anglers have been enjoying some great fishing with flathead, bream, luderick and whiting all being taken in healthy numbers.

Fishing for whiting with surface poppers has taken off at Harrington and there are many stories of monsters that were able to escape. The best fish I have seen weighed in the last couple of weeks went 700g, a good fish by any standard.

The luderick are biting best at night on live yabbies fished without a sinker.

The bream have moved up river and can be caught from wharves and jetties anywhere in the saltwater part of the river.

BEACH, ROCK

The local beaches have been so eroded that in some places there is only 4m or 5m of sand from the low tide mark to the vertical wall at the back of the beach.

This is OK when the sea is flat but when the swell is up, the waves run nearly up to the wall on low tide. Caution must be used when driving the beaches on a rising tide.

Tailor are becoming more plentiful and it is possible to spin 10 or a dozen fish in a session.

Salmon are competing with the tailor for the whitebait and are taking spinners as well as pilchards and squid.

The shallow washes on the edges of the spits are producing catches of bream to 900g on worms and pipis.

Not many jew have been hooked in the past weeks and it is time they showed up again. There are many schools of baitfish in the gutters on our beaches so the jew should not be too far away.

OFFSHORE

Boat anglers have been enjoying great sessions on snapper with soft plastics.

All the close reefs and bommies have produced fish. Most reds have been from 1kg to 3kg with occasional fish to 5kg.

Some good kingfish have been caught on live bait and jigs out around the 40-fathom mark and trag have been taken from the northern grounds.

All types of river, beach and sea fishing can be pursued in January. The estuary would be best for flathead and luderick while the beaches and headlands will produce tailor and salmon. Outside anglers will have to settle for snapper, jew, kings, trag, bonito and mackerel.
Graeme Andrews of Wingham with a nice 3kg lizard, one of many spuned in the Manning lately.

Flathead have not been more abundant in recent years.