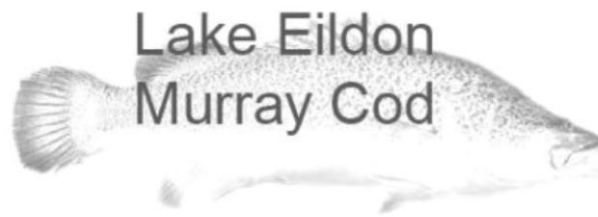


Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 327



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Steve Vidler

Murray Cod And Native Fish Guru

Steve learned to fish in country Victoria, growing up fishing for cod and other freshwater natives. An aquaculture expert, he's been a king pin in the native fish breeding program at Snobs Creek Hatchery and the consistent stocking of Victorian waterways with cod and other species. Since leaving the Victorian Fisheries Authority, Steve has created the business Fishtech Services provides expertise in the hatchery, fish health and fish stocking area, particularly for Australian native fish.



Steve's Eildon Murray Cod Fishing Tips

- Eildon is an irrigation dam. Once the irrigation season starts and water levels start to fall the cod are far less willing. When water levels are stable or rising the fish will bit much better.
- Murray Cod, like many fish, have amazing situational awareness. In other words, they are always aware when a boat comes into their sphere. Steve reckons a common mistake is to roar up to your intended fishing spot on the main motor. Cut the motor and cover the last couple of hundred metres by drifting or on the electric to avoid spooking fish.
- Winter is prime time for bigger fish, but better numbers of fish with occasional monsters tend to occur in autumn and spring.

- Low light periods are always prime, especially for surface fishing. Cod move onto flats and points at night and linger for a while at dawn before retreating to deeper water and structure as the sun rises. Surprisingly big fish will be in less than a metre of water at these times.
- Once fish have retreated to deeper water a spinnerbait or rattlebait is ideal for targeting them because it can sink directly to where they are holding, as opposed to a diving lure that takes a bit to reach the right depth.
- If you're not snagging lures on structure and losing the occasional one then you're not in the zone, at least during daylight hours.
- Moon rise and moon set are peak bite times, so keep an eye on the lunar charts!
- When using spinnerbaits and other sinking lures and seeing a fish following, try increasing the speed to entice the cod to bite.

Steve's Lake Eildon Cod Fishing Tackle

- A 6'8" to 6'9" baitcast rod and a 7'11" swimbait rod in the 4-7kg range with a Shimano Chronarch baitcast reel, 30lb braid and 30-40lb leader (50lb in heavy stuff). Spin gear works fine too, if you prefer. Look for rods that are able to handle the heavy weights of large spinnerbaits and swimbaits but are light enough that you can cast them all day without getting tired.

Steve's Top Murray Cod Lures

- A large spinnerbait with a 2oz head, 5-6 inch long beaten gold or brass willowleaf main blade and a smaller Colorado secondary blade. Steve rigs these with a large plastic tail, adding a stinger hook to the plastic. Steve recommends talking to local spinnerbait makers like Secret Creek, Primal or Obsession spinnerbaits and having some lures custom made to your needs – or buy some components and make your own. Spinnerbaits can be cast out and simply allowed to "helicopter" (free-fall) down to where the fish are, then slow rolled back out. They're deadly on cod, relatively cost effective and much more snag resistant than most other lure styles.
- For surface fishing Steve likes the Jackall Mega Pompadour or the Codger. With surface lures he finds that removing the rear treble and replacing it with either a single or double assist hook dramatically increases the conversion of strikes into hookups. He makes the assist hooks to suit his own needs, keeping the cord length to 25-60mm, and shrink wrapping the entire length of cord when the lure has a tail propellor. This minimises fouling of the propellor by the hooks. These lures work best in low light, especially in the mornings

when there's just a little ripple on the surface but can be used all day when it's overcast or rainy.

- The Jackall Giganterel is Steve's preferred swimbait and can be made to turn back on itself by simply varying the rate at which the lure handle is turned. He switches to these after the surface bite cools off and will fish them unweighted, especially if it's overcast. As the day progresses, he'll add chin-weights to get them deeper. Slow roll the lure for a few turns, then give it one very fast crank and stop dead. Repeat this pattern back to the rod tip and cast again.
- Big plastics fished with exposed hooks or weedless are game changers in Eildon, in part because few anglers are using them and they make for a very natural presentation. The Megabass Magdraft is a good option, but there are plenty of large, cost-effective soft plastic lures around. Simply cast out, allow to sink and then slow roll them back.