

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 498](#)



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Casey George

Victorian Estuary Specialist

Casey fishes Victorian estuaries hard and loves nothing more than a foray to South Gippsland to target the estuary perch. When he's not hassling the Gippsland EP population, Casey works in the tackle trade as co-owner of the tackle business Hook Up Bait and Tackle.



Casey's South Gippsland Estuary Perch Tips

- There are multiple systems in the lower South Gippsland area that hold good populations of estuary perch, including creeks in the Westernport area, the Bass River, Tarwin, the Port Albert system and so on.
- Sometimes days with perfect perch fishing conditions fail to fire and other days when conditions are terrible end up being great fishing days. However, you can narrow the odds by understanding the tides and the habits of the fish.
- There are two distinct areas to fish in most South Gippsland rivers: downstream is open mangrove estuary where the fish tend to school at what seems to be random locations. Upstream is narrower, more timbers water, often with spindly tea tree snags where the fish usually disperse throughout the snags. Casey focusses on the upper reaches.

- Tides are critical. Perch bite best when there is moving water, so big tides are good, but very high tides allow fish to get deep into bankside vegetation where they can't be targeted. On the runout tide they move back into the channel where they are accessible with an accurate cast.
- A little bit of rain that brings some fresh, coloured water into the system can stimulate a hot bite, fish will often move well upstream in search of food. If the rain gets too heavy and the system receives a lot of fresh the fish tend to move down towards the mouth where there's more salt.
- Estuary perch are an all-round option in South Gippsland and can be caught through the day on the brightest of days or when it's overcast and rainy. They definitely favour shady places when the sun is bright though. Wind improves the bite during the cooler months, especially when fishing weed edges.
- Sometimes the smallest and least significant looking snag can hold fish when better looking snags might be devoid of life.

Casey's Estuary Perch Fishing Tackle

- Casey prefers to fish light with a 2-4kg or 2-5kg rod (eg Millerods Brawler or Daiwa Infeet 671) with a 200 or 2500 size reel. He prefers a slightly thicker, more abrasion resistant 6-8lb braided line with a 6-12lb leader.
- Casey likes to have two rods set up at any time and fishes 6lb in open areas without a lot of structure and 8-12lb in areas where there are more snags.

Casey's Gippsland Perch Fishing Lures

- A 60mm Imakatsu Riprizer is a great suspending hard body lure and is Casey's number one favourite for estuary perch fishing. This is a suspending lure, which is super important as it allows the angler to work the lure in front of a snag and then pause it and leave it to suspend for 30 seconds or more. Perch often hit the lure the moment you move it again. The Rip Riser is more snag resistant than most other hard body lures and can be worked with a "hop, hop, pause" retrieve similar to a soft plastic.
- The Imakatsu Riprizer has been hard to get of late, but the slightly smaller Imakatsu Wasp is a good substitute.
- The 76mm OSP Bent Minnow is a great lure for perch fishing on the surface in and around snags and along weed edges. The topwater bite can take place at any time of day and year and isn't restricted to low light periods – don't be put off if there doesn't appear to be surface activity, topwater lures can still be effective. Cast the Bent Minnow into a snag and let it sit

stationary until the ripples dissipate. Then give the lure a couple of twitches and let it float back up and wait again for the ripples to dissipate. Repeat.

- A 2.75" Munroes Paddle Tail soft plastic is deadly in the lower reaches when the fish are schooled up, but any 2.5-3" paddletail will work. Motor oil is a good starting colour, but change colours to suit conditions in clear water a "sub-zero" colour seems to work well. Use a 1/12 to 1/6 oz jig head depending on depth and current and a spot of S Factor scent. Let the lure hit bottom and work with hops and pauses that allow the lure to get back to bottom. Often the bite comes on the drop or after the lure has hit bottom.