

## Get The Jump On Cod Opening: By Rod McKenzie

With the open of the Murray cod season close at hand anglers are gearing up for what's set to be another very good season. With good flows along much of the Murray River these past few months the larger breeding fish will have spawned a new generation insuring future stocks of Murray cod should be in good health. Tackle stores are gearing up with all that's required to catch these fish, including the latest must have lures.

Amongst these the iconic StumpJumper is now available in several new colours that are sure to turn the heads of anglers and cod alike. A mix of lights and darks assures a preferred colour to suit a different range of water clarities depending on the location. I have a feeling the colour 103 Silver – Shiner will be a real hit on the cod this season.

Looking back to last season, we landed several very large fish on both the cast and troll using the larger number 1 StumpJumpers. These lures have a great action and are very easy to troll riding the timber well, hence the name. They are also very good on the cast especially when used in a stop start retrieve that sees the lure find depth before a pause allows it to slowly rise before it is once more cranked into gear. A deadly technique on large fish that are often hard to tempt with the standard straight retrieve. Best times for casting are early morning and late afternoon. With trolling more successful during the middle part of the day.

So where to head opening morning is the million dollar question. Lake Mulwala has fished well in the lead up to the opening with several quality sized cod over the metre mark caught whilst targeting golden perch. Good numbers of smaller fish have also been landed on the flats casting smaller lures.

Eildon too has seen a few cod in the mix in the run up to the start of the season. I guess the added bonus of fishing Eildon come the opening is if the cod are quiet there is always the chance of landing a giant golden perch or two. With excellent water clarity at this location I would be choosing to fish lures with a dark natural pattern.

The Murray River at Wemen fished very well for cod last year with reports of good fish filtering through for most of the season. Euston

was another location that produced good numbers of cod below the weir on bait and lures.

Swan Hill also has its share of cod with numerous fish caught along the Murray especially on bait in the lead up to the opening. These catches are incidental by anglers chasing perch and all cod have been returned in good health. The kerang lakes are another cod hot spot that's starting to produce. The lakes have been stocked for several seasons now with good numbers of cod and we are now starting to see the benefits of this work.

In the lead up to the opening it's a great time to check all your tackle and replace old or worn line. A few new lures can never go astray and be sure your fishing license has not expired and is relevant to the location you intend to fish. Other than that check out bag and size limits and get ready for what looks to be great cod opening.

Photos – Darker patterns are better used in good water clarity.



Murray cod of this size caught by Gus Storer are what we are all hoping to land come the opening of the cod season.



Even after scoffing down a large freshwater mussel this greedy cod still found room for a well presented Number 2 StumpJumper.



