

TARGET SPECIES.

KING GEORGE WHITING.

HABITAT.

In our whiting season from September through to April, King George Whiting are generally found in or around sand holes, near grass beds, on the tops of banks at or near high tide. Along the drop off edges of these banks and channels, and in water depths between 1.5 meters and 4.5 meters [5 feet and 25 feet]. In deeper water they will be close to light reef or in the broken bottom areas of our bays and close inshore reef areas around the coast of Victoria.

BAIT.

Mussel, Pipsis, Squid, Cuttlefish, Octopus, Bass Yabbies, Prawns, Marine Worms and cut Pilchard Fillets. Prepare enough shellfish bait the day before. Shuck the thawed frozen pipsis and keep the pipsis in a suitable plastic storage container, Shuck fresh mussels and store in a similar plastic storage container. Place these containers into the fridge until you are ready to go fishing. Keep the shells in a bucket for your hand berly.

BERLEY.

A MUST. Crushed mussels in berley bags suspended 30 centimetres[one foot] above the bottom and attached to the rear of the boat.

In fast current, the crushed mussels are placed in an onion bag tied to the anchor chain.

When fishing along the banks and in the drop offs, a berley of chook pellets soaked overnight in tuna oil and mixed with mussel or pipi shells is thrown into likely sand holes close to the boat, and as soon as whiting are located.

TERMINAL RIGS.

Prepare the rigs at home when fishing in competitions. Do not waste fishing time!

Paternoster type for smaller fish, and when prospecting for fish. Consisting of a sinker dropper loop 10 centimetres and 15 centimetres [4 to 6 inches] long between two leaders between 30 centimetres and 45 centimetres [12 and 18 inches] long.

In fast water a single leader [18 to 24 inches] long with a sinker dropper loop 10 centimetres to 15 centimetres [4 to 6 inches] long.

As an alternative, use a running sinker dropper in the following form, a #12 swivel eye passed through the reel line, then a red/orange bead is threaded on as a knot protector/fish attractor and the reel line tag end tied to another # 12 swivel. The hook leader is tied to this swivel, and the sinker dropper loop is tied to the free swivel eye of the running or sliding swivel.

To enhance the bait presentation, 2.5 centimetres[an inch] of red plastic tubing and or red plastic attractor beads fitted on the line above the hooks may be used.

SINKERS.

Use bomb or teardrop type sinkers with sufficient weight to hold bottom, the lighter the better. Sinkers may be painted red or orange as an attractor. The sinkers are attached to the dropper loop by a snap swivel to allow for quick changing of weight to suit the tidal currents.

HOOKS.

Mustard types, 92647s, 92608 in stainless steel or 92647, 92247 in nickel-plated hooks. For faster current flows use 34007 or 8260 hooks to prevent the bait from spinning.

The size of the hook is dependent on the size of the fish and presentation of the bait used. Size numbers, 8, 6 and 4.

LINE.

Any good quality mono filament such as Maxima, Daiwa Showgan, Ande, Tortue or the new braided, gel spun spider wire type line with a breaking strain of at least 3 kilos [6 lbs.] for fish to 35 centimetres and 6 kilos [12 lbs.] for bigger target fish or when fishing in deep water. Use mono filament line for terminal ends with the gel spun line.

ROD & REEL.

Any 2 to 3 meter [7 foot to 10 foot] long rod with a soft tip and powerful butt is required for heavy sinkers and or strong tidal flows.

Nibble tips are the preferred type and should be balanced with a suitable reel such as Abu Cardinal C4 or Shimano spinning type reels.

WESTERNPORT.

MARINE CHARTS.

Study the marine chart, AUS. 156 to determine any likely whiting habitat. Such as sand or mud banks, gutters, channels, light reef and weed beds, that will retain water at low tide.

Consider which of these selected areas can be fished under various conditions, such as high or low tide, wind speed and direction, if the water is discoloured and from which boat ramp you may select.

TIDE CHARTS.

Use Westernport tide charts because they will include the correct tidal range for the area to be fished. Select the date and times for the fishing trip, then determine the tidal range [tide difference between low and high tides]

Prepare a "Rule of twelfths" chart. I use feet and inches to develop my day chart, because this is the finest scale of measurement in my depth sounder and that there are 12 inches in a foot. So if you have a 7 foot tidal range, then each of the tidal units would be 7 inches.

From these water depth ranges, compare the marine chart for bank drying heights at your selected whiting marks to see if you can save time by crossing banks with the tide instead of travelling completely around the edge of the selected bank or spit.

Prepare a strategy and action plan that can be determined on the day, when the conditions of wind direction, strength and water clarity are known.

FISHING TECHNIQUE.

Set the depth sounder keel alarm to 5 feet and travel to the selected area. When the keel alarm, alarms or when you are able to see the weed beds or bank edges, quietly move up current along the drop off or the edge of the bank and look for sand holes within the weed beds on the bank.

When a suitable sand hole or series of sand holes are located, do not travel directly over them, but run along the deep side of the area until you are well upstream of the tidal flow, from the selected sand holes.

Then move across until you are in line with the majority of the sand holes and quietly lower the anchor and let the anchor rope out until you are in casting distance to the first of the group of sand holes.

If possible anchor with the sun on the opposite side of the sand holes to prevent the shadow of the boat moving across the sand holes and spooking the fish.

Whiting generally congregate within small areas, cast to the closest sand hole and cast all around the weed edges first, then cover all of the sand holes in casting range. If necessary let out some more anchor rope to reach the other sand holes.

Or fish for whiting along the bank drop offs into deeper water. Look for drains or inlets into the mud, sand or weed banks where the fish will enter or depart with the tide.

If there is no action within 10 to 15 minutes move on along the bank another 50 meters or so and repeat until you locate the school of whiting.

As soon as the first fish is caught, cast back into the same spot and look at the background to identify a reference mark or object on the horizon. Use this reference mark because it is very important that you to cast into the same area.

The boat may be yawing on the anchor rope and moving from the school, at the same time cast some berley into the area to hold the school.

In deep water, when the tide is against the current flow set a sea anchor or drogue from the boats transom, so that the current acting on the sea anchor will cause the boat to lay with the current flow to allow you to fish normally out the back of the boat.

But make allowance for this technique when setting the anchor at your fishing mark.

Don't forget that there is a minimum length of 27 centimetres and a bag limit of 20 whiting per angler per day.

Target the larger fish first, and as the competition time runs down, top up with school fish if necessary.

Tight Lines,

Keith Collins