

We're back in business!

EILDON
Peter
Burtchell

With the easing of travel restrictions and a lifting of the fishing ban in Victoria, many anglers released from isolation are now braving the cold conditions, traversing the lake and surrounds in search of trophy winter catches. Both the Lake and Eildon Pondage are year-round fisheries, and fish exceptionally well during the winter months.

Craig from Eildon Bait and Tackle recommends casting lures such as the Rapala F11 for the larger trout in the pondage and

the fish. In the first week after the isolation, reports of many a 1m+ Murray cod were streaming in on Facebook and other media feeds. Matt Ward and his mate Chris Galea were one of the first to hit the road post isolation, leaving Melbourne at 2:30am to launch at the Jerusalem Creek Boat Ramp. Within minutes of launching Matt had a good fight on his hands, with a 107cm Murray cod attached to his Mag Draft. Safely landed, photographed and released, it sure did make their morning.

Some great news post isolation was that Rita Caufield (wife of famous angler Mick Caufield) finally landed her first 1m+

on the Victorian Fisheries Facebook page and read, "Rita and Mick Caulfield fished the lake on Saturday, with Rita landing this magnificent metre-plus cod on a cast surface lure. More than 3.2 million Murray cod have been stocked into Lake Eildon over the last 20 years, thanks to your recreational fishing licence fees and more recently Target One Million. It's only going to get better too, because our slot limit will protect all cod over 75cm and there have been some huge stockings in recent seasons. Lake Eildon is also open year round so come September, October and November when other waters close to give cod a



Rita Caufield finally landed her first Lake Eildon 1m+ Murray cod.

Rita's, only a few hours from Melbourne! Congratulations Rita, that's one mighty Murray cod in your arms!"

It seemed like everybody who was anybody was out braving the cold post-isolation. Well respected angler and promoter of the Lake Eildon Fishery, Bob Hazler, was assisted by another well-known angler and promoter of Lake Eildon, Thomas 'The Captain' Pinter, to capture a great photograph of Bob's Murray cod. Bob runs the Lake Eildon Fishing Facebook Page where many an avid angler can pick up on the action that is happening around the lake with reference to catches, tackle and methods used.

Aaron Wilson jumped at the opportunity to learn all about the latest Garmin screen technology from great friend Darren Wolch who were soon amongst some of Lake Eildon's large schools of yellowbelly. Aaron says it is something else to find the fish, drop amongst them and watch them on the screen taking your lure. The pair ended up with a good bag of

winter yellowbelly.

Apart from Murray cod, yellowbelly, brown and rainbow trout, Lake Eildon is also a haven for Murray cray lovers during the winter months. *Euastacus Armatus* have a minimum legal size of 10cm carapace length to a maximum of 12cm carapace length, and at Lake Eildon you are able to use up to 10 drop nets per licensed angler. The crays are often easy to catch when you spend the time to identify their hibernating holes around the banks of the Lake. Drop netting into 8-10m of water depth close to their holes should prove successful. If you drop into Jerusalem Creek Bait and Tackle you can pick up a free Murray cray ruler and ask about the best parts of the lake to try your luck.

Whilst there you can check out the Australian Lure section where only Australian manufactured Lures are displayed. The manufacturers of the lures are great supporters of the fishing competitions that are run on the lake and can often be found somewhere on the lake

either competing in one of the comps or trying their new designs on the many a trophy size fish that Lake Eildon has to offer. It's important for we anglers to support our local markets in these tough times, just as Rita Caufield did using one of CJ's Thirsty Lures to entice her native opponent.

• We are looking forward to rescue the delayed fishing competitions and gatherings that were planned for Lake Eildon if the opportunities arise. Please Like their Facebook pages to obtain regular updates of new schedules and activities for when they'll be allowed to restart: Lake Eildon Fishing Challenge, Lake Eildon Cod Masters, Central Vic Lure Casters Super Series (Lake Eildon Round), Lake Eildon Big Fish Challenge; Victorian Fisheries Authority (Goulburn Fishing Festival); Boating Industry Association of Victoria (Lake Eildon Boating and Fishing Show); Jerusalem Creek Marina & Holiday Park (school holiday fishing programs); and Northern Waters Boat Hire (Fly Fishing for Natives Competition).



Joe with this nice brown from the Pondage.

flat-lining Tassie Devils in the lake. The Victorian Fisheries Authority's Snobs Creek Hatchery has stocked 103 ex-broodfish brown trout with an average per fish weight of 2kg into the pondage in late May, which will entice many an angler to try their luck. June 9 will see the closing of the rivers and streams to trout fishing, however the Lake Eildon Pondage and Lake remain open all year round to trout anglers.

Murray cod fishing on Lake Eildon is also a year round event with no closed season. Winter tends to bring out the larger Murray cod as they continue to feed on the large Murray cray and schools of roach. Migrating trout are also a main target for the Murray cod waiting in ambush in many parts of the lake.

Mid-May saw some great surface action as the migrating bogong moths were caught in the alpine country downdrafts that forced them onto the surface of the lake, where they were quickly consumed by

Lake Eildon Murray cod. According to all reports, Rita's blue nails assisted with the hook up. Her photograph was published

'rest on the nest', Lake Eildon will stay open and provide marvellous opportunities for fishers of all skill-levels to have a crack at fish like



Lauren with her brown trout captured in the Pondage.



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