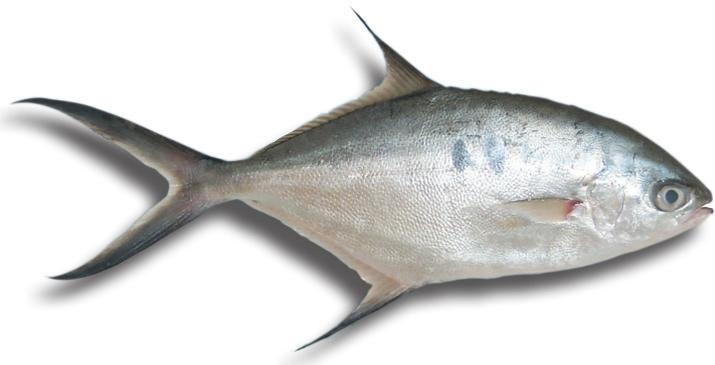


DART OR SWALLOWTAIL



**“A little Aussie battler
– Not bad tucker either!”**

When these guys are on the go, you'll be landing them nearly as fast as Pauline Hanson can get herself into a blue with an Aboriginal or Asian.

Claiming beach rights along our coastline and living in the breakers, although they will enter estuaries at times, it would be fair to say that they are present all year round.

Being a social type of fish, they usually tend to form into schools, making it a bit easier for the beach angler to catch a good feed. Hauls of double figures are not rare.

They supposedly reach 600mm in length, but expect the size to range between 225mm and 450mm around these parts. Take a bow if you land one 500mm or more.

The preferred time of day for dart fishing is in the early AM. (sun-up) and the late afternoon (one hour before sundown). Try to beat the beach to fish the first three hours of the incoming tide. This is not a set rule, as dart can be hooked up at any time of the day on the preferred tide.

Sacred baits to dart will include nippers, beach worms and pipis or eugari's, while ideal conditions will have a moderate sea swell around 1.5m combined with a 5 to 10 knot breeze blowing from either the south-east, east-south-east, north-east or west.

As mentioned earlier, dart live amongst the breakers, so you might as well stay at home and scratch your bum as go dart fishing when the sea is calm and flat.

HANDLING

Hold them with a cloth on the underside of the belly. Take care to avoid the pectoral fin, they can spike.

TIPS ON DART

1. Cut throat and bleed immediately.
2. Keep cool and moist. They dry out quickly otherwise.
3. Best eaten as skinned fillets.

RODS, REELS AND RIGS

Select a good quality surf rod to suit your taste and balance this to a 150mm to 175mm side cast reel.

HOW TO CATCH DART

Cast into wave swell, recover slack line as soon as possible. When on the bite these fish will take the bait at first contact with water. When dart are thick “like some public service staff” don't expect to catch anything but dart. When the dart are a bit scarce, let the bait move with the current and follow it along the beach as a whiting, bream or flathead could be the result.

If the current is running straight out to sea, cast out, let the bait settle and wait for a bite. Set the drag to just under breaking strain of line and strike at first indication of a bite. When a hook up occurs hold rod tip upright and retrieve fish.

Check for dart in the surf by looking into the middle of the waves just prior to breaking. You might find that they could be out of cast reach, but hang around as on most occasions they will move in closer on the recommended incoming tide.

WHERE TO CATCH DART BEACH

See Diagram How to Read the Beach

DART = D

