

GARFISH

You will locate them on ribbon weed banks in the bays and estuaries. Growing to around 350mm the run of the mill size will be about 225mm. Winds between 0 and 10 knots from all directions are suited to gar fishing while all sky conditions with the possible exception of rain are acceptable. Best time of the year seems to be from August to November. All daylight hours have proven to be successful. A certain amount of decorum is required when handling garfish. They are considerably safe but have a bad habit of excreting when handled, therefore it is wise to remain alert. Hold with a cloth by the top side of the body, just behind the head and aim the underside of the body towards the water. The use of an apron is advisable. Fishing at anchor is by far the wisest choice to make.

RODS, RIGS AND REELS

Most suited in the rod department will be a classic slow taper boat rod to three metres with sloppy action, united with your choice of a centre pin reel, a 100mm or 125mm side cast reel or a medium size egg-beater reel capable of 250m by 3kg mono.

BAIT

As garfish have a very small mouth it is best to cut baits of a size just large enough to cover the hook tip. Preparation or cutting up of a variety of baits in advance is advisable. Favourable baits will include small pieces of prawn, small pieces of dough, small pieces of squid and small pieces of bacon fat.

DOUGH RECIPE

Mix plain flour with water until a firm but pliable consistency is achieved

HOW TO CATCH GARFISH

Anchor close to, but not on top of, submerged ribbon weed banks. Lay a light berley trail of finely chopped breadcrumbs or a lightly dampened mixture of bran, pollen and breadcrumbs. The concept is to have the berley floating on top of the water towards the weed banks. Cast float and bait in the direction of the berley trail drift, hand feed line off reel to keep pace with the berley. Light splashes and swirls observed around berley and bait will indicate the presence of fish. Once berley has attracted fish near to you use only enough berley to hold fish in the area i.e. do not over berley. When fish take the bait the float will turn to either side, stand upright or submerge. If any of these actions occur raise tip of rod and strike firmly. After hook up, garfish may attempt to leave the water trying to dislodge the hook, so keep your line tight during retrieval. When hand feeding out the line keep the rod tip aimed directly at the float.

WHERE TO CATCH GARFISH

Refer to Map downloads.

GARFISH = G

PREPARATION

For whole gar, scale fish, open gut cavity and remove contents. At this stage a black membrane will be visible in the gut cavity.



“Exquisitely fine in flavour”

This membrane tastes bitter and is best removed with either a nail brush or tooth brush. Rinse in salt water. To butterfly fillet garfish, follow the above procedure and place fish on a cutting board with the gut cavity flaps facing outwards. Expose backbone with a knife and using a rolling pin or bottle roll down the length of the fish with sufficient downward pressure to separate backbone

