

# YELLOWTAIL KINGFISH

Peaking out around 60kg, not too many around this neck of the woods would argue that pound for pound this raging hunk of aggression will be the best fighting fish one could hope to get on the end of a line.

Fair dinkum, make sure you're real fit, if your going after these fellas, as the tenacity of the brute, combined with enough power to drag a Mack truck will have you on your knees.

Reports have them roaming from around Rockhampton in Qld. and heading south all the way around to mid W.A. I reckon they swim this distance once a week,"that's how they get their strength".

In the main they prefer to stay out at sea and hang around wrecks,peaks,dropoffs, floating bouys and beacons etc. They appear quite regularly around rocky headlands and ledges that have deep water running up to this type of structure. It is presumed they visit these spots in search of bait fish etc. In the November- December-January period, approx. they'll form into schools and visit some of our more open estuaries and bays. Once again they tend to hang around the deeper water or close to beacons, jetties and underwater structure where a feed of bait fish may be on offer.

Although not a strict rule, for off shore we suggest you fish the daylight hours for obvious safety reasons. A blow from the south / east up to 15 knots is the preferred wind. It is not uncommon to catch good numbers of these fellas.

Research has shown that when young, they form into large schools with the majority being roughly the same size. By the time they reach 20kg approx the school has either split up or been diminished by anglers or natural attrition to a half dozen or less.

It is widely accepted that a bigger size kingfish will be available in the spring and winter, although they will be had in smaller numbers than the summer months will produce.

When dining out this species is rather partial to a feed of live baits such as slimy mackerel, pike, yakkas and garfish. Dead baits will include W.A. pilchards and fresh whole squid. A minnow type lure or surface popper can be deadly, along with wonder wobblers and chrome plated slices around 35g. soft rubber tail jigs and metal spoons up to 200g approx make perfect jigs.

Although they have been taken around the 30kg mark, in the main, around these parts be content with fish up to 10kg.

Yellowtail kingfish seem to spend their time feeding in the area from the seabed floor up to and above underwater pinnacles, but are not perturbed at all about hitting the surface in pursuit of a feed.

## HOW TO CATCH YELLOWTAIL KINGFISH.

With jigging simply lower a lure to the bottom. Current strength will dictate the size and weight of the lure. Once the lure has hit the bottom the trick is to retrieve the lure at high speeds whilst



## *"Hope The Back's In Good Nick"*

violently raising and lowering the rod tip. The idea is to make the lure behave like a fish in trouble. Although this is a very effective method of scoring fish, it's a bloody good man and even a better woman that can keep this technique up for long. To avoid a heart attack, leave this to the Rambo types. ie. strong and strange.

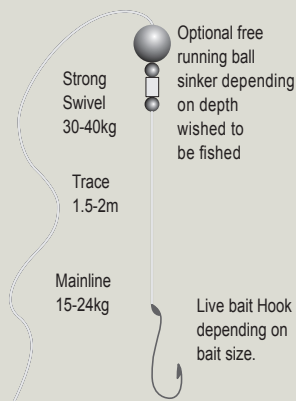
Other more relaxed methods include the use of the paternoster and floater rigs

Live baiting is also popular with those who hunt kingies. They can be trolled at slow speeds or used from an anchored or drifting boat. If the fish are deep down a barrel sinker can be added to the rig to help reach the right depth.

Usually the first indication of a kingies presence is a thumping great whack echoed up the mainline and into the rod. If jigging make sure the rod is secure at all times and the drag is set to just under the breaking strain of the mainline. At this stage the fish will start pulling down rather forcefully. It is important to strike immediately and do your best to hold the fish as it will be trying to get to any

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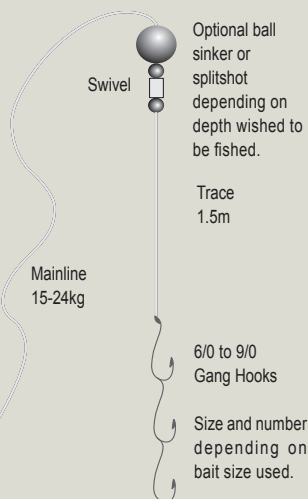
## LIVE BAIT RIG



### LIVE BAITS:

Pike, yakkas and striped tuna.

## DEAD BAIT RIG



### DEAD BAITS:

W.A. pilchards, squid, fresh fish cubes, whole yakkas.

## TROLL / LURE



### LURES:

Wonder wobbler, minnows, surface poppers

obstacle to foul the mainline. If drifting, you may choose to move away from the reef etc. to the deeper water where the fish may be played a little easier. Keep a tight line at all times, don't give the beast an inch. Retrieve fish with a pump and wind action.

Kingies will behave in a similar way when a lure is taken. Trolling speeds will be between 2 and 4 knots. Try a jet-head or large skirted lure.

At times, when using live or dead baits, this fish will behave quite differently from that as suggested above. Set

your drag lightly. The fishes presence will be indicated by a slight trembling of the mainline. Do not strike at this stage as the fish is more than likely just mouthing the bait. Play out more line and allow time for the bait to be taken wholeheartedly, say about 10 to 20 seconds and then strike in a firm flowing fashion. Set drag to just under breaking strain of mainline and play the fish as indicated above. Only experience will teach you the right time to strike.

## RODS, REELS & RIGS.

There are a few different types of rods and reels that can be used for the various specialized methods for catching kingfish, but taking into consideration the cost we have suggested what we consider to be the best all round set up.

A fast tapered off shore rod to 2m with a flexible tip and big heaps of grunt at the butt end will do the job. Lash either a sidecast, eggbeater or the preferred overhead reel capable of 250m x 20kg mono to the stick.



### TIPS.

1. When using live baits, pass the hook sideways through the fish just in front of the nose or just behind the head underneath the backbone.
2. If using W.A. pilchards cut on a 30 degree angle across the body.
3. Try to cover the hook completely when using cut baits.
4. When using whole dead baits such as gar or tailor, break the backbone in a few places to make the fish flexible. This will help to give the bait a more natural swimming action when being trolled through the water.
5. Whole dead baits such as pilchards, gar and tailor should go onto gang hooks.
6. A berley bucket ( available at bait & tackle shops ) attached to the back of the boat makes good sense in trying to attract fish to your area when anchored or on the drift. Fill the bucket with old pilchards, finely chopped fish pieces and a good splash of tuna oil. Lower into water and stir up every so often to allow a berley trail to form.
7. When fishing at anchor, it's a good idea to stay well clear of other boats, say 200m minimum. This will reduce the chance of the fish fouling up on other lines and anchors when it makes its run. Show good manners and give everyone a bit of space.
8. It's best to cut the throat of kingfish as soon as possible and allow to bleed, then place into an ice slurry to keep cool. Can be eaten whole or as fillets, or cut across the body for steaks or cutlets. If your taste buds run to raw fish word has it that this one is as good as it gets.