

BAIT GATHERING

PIPIS OR EUGARIES

OK, for starters, you might just as well invite Stevie Wonder along to help you locate them, as it is only occasionally you will get a glimpse of these little fellas before they bury themselves in the sand, leaving no visible sign that they are present.

You will locate them along our beaches in about 300mm to 450mm of water. The idea is to wriggle your feet in the sand, down to an approx. depth of 200mm, when a hard object is felt underfoot, gather it up in your hand and the result should be a pipi or eugari. Don't be surprised though, if Mandrake The Magician or David Copperfield have turned it into a small stone or empty shell.

The surge of the waves will assist in washing away the sand as you dig down. When you locate one, work the immediate area (say a 3m radius) as it is quite possible more will be there for the taking. Another method is to walk slowly and lightly along the waters edge until the sand appears to give way suddenly, but slightly under foot. When this happens, wriggle your foot down to approx. 200mm and a pipis or eugari could be the result.

Sometimes they will pop to the surface when there is a strong surge up the beach on a making tide. The surge will wash them up the beach and as the surge retreats they will wash back part way and quickly rebury themselves. If you're lucky enough to see this phenomenon, "grab Stevie, cause he won't head straight for that spot", and wriggle your foot down in the sand until they are located. Conversely, they will move back down the beach in the same manner. Keep them in a bucket of salt water, changing regularly. Either prise them open by inserting a knife into the narrow point of the shell and twisting, or hit them with a hard object such as a hammer. They can be used whole or cut into strips.

N.B – Some areas covered in this publication are closed to the taking of pipis and cockles. Check with relevant authorities

if in doubt. Bag limits may also apply.

TIP – When fishing the beach, move around a bit, wriggling your foot down into the sand in search of them.

NIPPERS

Possibly the most versatile bait used in this area. Nippers can be found on a lot of the sand banks in our bays and estuaries. They are located by looking for nipper holes (approx. 6mm dia.) on the banks. They are easier to catch at mid to low tides by using a hand nipper pump which extracts them from the banks. They can also be purchased at most bait and tackle shops. Keep alive in a bucket of salt water, change water at regular intervals.

If nipper has a large nipper, break the nipper off. Turn nipper belly side up with the tail aiming away from you. Work the hook into the anal opening at the tail end and down through the body bringing the hook tip out through the firmer shell between the legs, in the head section.

NB – The nipper can cause minor puncture wounds.

HERRING JIGS

The laid back way to catch live bait fish. Jigs are available at most of our local bait and tackle shops, but you'll probably find you will need a No 2 ball sinker to attach to the bottom of the jig, the jig is then attached to the line on your rod or hand reel.

Locate a spot where small bait fish are likely to congregate, such as around jetties, bridges, rock walls etc. with a minimum depth of approx. 2m. Lower jig into water until sinker hits the bottom. Bounce jig up and down by raising arm and rod tip approx. 300mm per time, until top hooks show on surface of



water. Lower sinker to bottom again and repeat action. In 2m of water this process will take about 10 to 15 seconds.

Try different spots until bait fish are located. You'll look a bit like Steady Eddie when you're doing this, but it's a very effective way of catching live bait fish.

PRAWNS AND SHRIMPS

Can be found at night time on a making tide around jetties, rock walls and where stormwater pipes enter the salt water, by shining a torch light into the water and using a fine mesh scoop net to pick them up.

Another method is to lower a prawn or shrimp trap about 600mm into the water at these same locations. Place some fish or meat into the trap for your bait. These traps can be purchased at bait and tackle shops or make your own.

Keep bait alive in a bucket of salt water with a lid on it. Prawns and shrimp will jump out otherwise. Change water regularly.

HAUL NETS

A haul net is best used by two people, working the sand banks at high tide. The idea is for one, to take one end of the net and stay in the shallow water, while the other hauls the other end out into waist or chest deep water. The net is then hauled through the water for varying distances and brought around in a quarter circle, back to shallow water (say 100mm), it is then hauled in by both operators. "In winter I've always found it best to be on the shallow end of the net". Keep the net in the water, return undersized and protected fish to the water, place legal size bait fish in a bucket of salt water, change water regularly.

