

Kayaking options along Dawson River

■ Hitting remote waterholes

YOU know how when you're driving between towns, up the highway or down a track somewhere, that you often check out the creeks.

First you see if there's water in the creek and, if there is, you speculate on what species you might find, and then you wonder if you could actually get a boat in there.

Well I've discovered kayaks and now it is easier to do just.

I haven't got my own kayak yet, but I'm working on finding the right one.

Years ago I had a canoe, well not that many years ago, and even though it was fantastic fishing out of it, it really was a two person job to load and unload the thing and it was very unstable so I just never felt safe on the water.

Then there is all the gear you have with you that you don't want to lose if or when you tip over, which I never did but saw some who did.

So jumping into another canoe just wasn't something I was going to rush into.

I work with someone who moves around working different sites and he has his 3m kayak with him and puts it in just about everywhere, fresh or salt.

This size is pretty easy to handle for one person.

They don't take up much room and are reasonably lightweight so are fairly easy to load and unload by yourself.

Friends here in Moura bought one similar for their granddaughter who doesn't use it much at all so I've been getting used to kayak fishing and I absolutely love it.

I have put the Sea Jay Viper into some spots where I have managed a scratch or two but some places are just totally inaccessible for boats.

So having the kayak



Kayaking
by HELEN ABDY

gives you the best of both worlds.

I still have my property at Monto but I'm based now in the mining town of Moura, a couple of hours west and it's right on the lovely Dawson River, which you may know is a big favourite of mine.

And there are just so many spots on the Dawson that are inaccessible for boats and even inaccessible to walking the banks for a flick.

The Dawson is a huge river system with many weirs and even though a lot of them are still full there are many areas that are cut off by either rock ledges or a build up of timber.

However there are many waterholes that you can get a kayak into and the fishing is absolutely fantastic.

The main species I catch here are saratoga, yellowbelly and the old forky catfish.

Love or hate the catties, and I love them as they are a fantastic sport fish.

The best I have managed so far is a 5kg model which towed me around up and over some logs and into timber but I had a ball.

I take two rods with me; a No.7 fly rod rigged with a floating line and a 6'6" spin rod.

You do learn to pack conservatively when it comes to all the other gear and it only takes a few trips to fine-tune what you take.

I pack an assortment of flies plus an intermediate line and have some leaders premade... as you do.

For the spin rod I absolutely love using spinnerbaits.

In this environment there is a lot of timber under the

water and the spinnerbaits cover all depths.

They are relatively hard to snag and you can use them on the surface as well as deeper down.

All the species here readily take them although saratoga are quite a bit more timid than in the dams.

Lures like the Muzzy poppers are a big hit with them.

These lures can be worked like poppers but they are also shallow diving lures with a lot of movement.

When the togas are very timid and not actively chasing food they will cruise around up on the surface but will be attracted to movement on the surface.

Slap one of these on the surface and let it sit for a while and then every now and again give the rod tip a little twitch which will send ripples out from the lure and could entice a strike.

I've especially been having fun with the smaller toga which have been really keen.

The other day I was using a spinnerbait and as soon as it landed it was taken by a smaller toga.

It wasn't a solid hook-up and it dropped the lure pretty quickly.

I was still retrieving when it grabbed it again and again dropped it.

By this time the spinnerbait was nearly back at the kayak so I lifted it from the water with intentions of recasting into the same area but as I lifted it a saratoga come out of the water and grabbed it again – just priceless!

I'm certainly enjoying being able to get into these quiet locations of the Dawson.

If anyone is interested in checking out some new kayaking places to fish, the Dawson certainly is a river to put on your wish list.

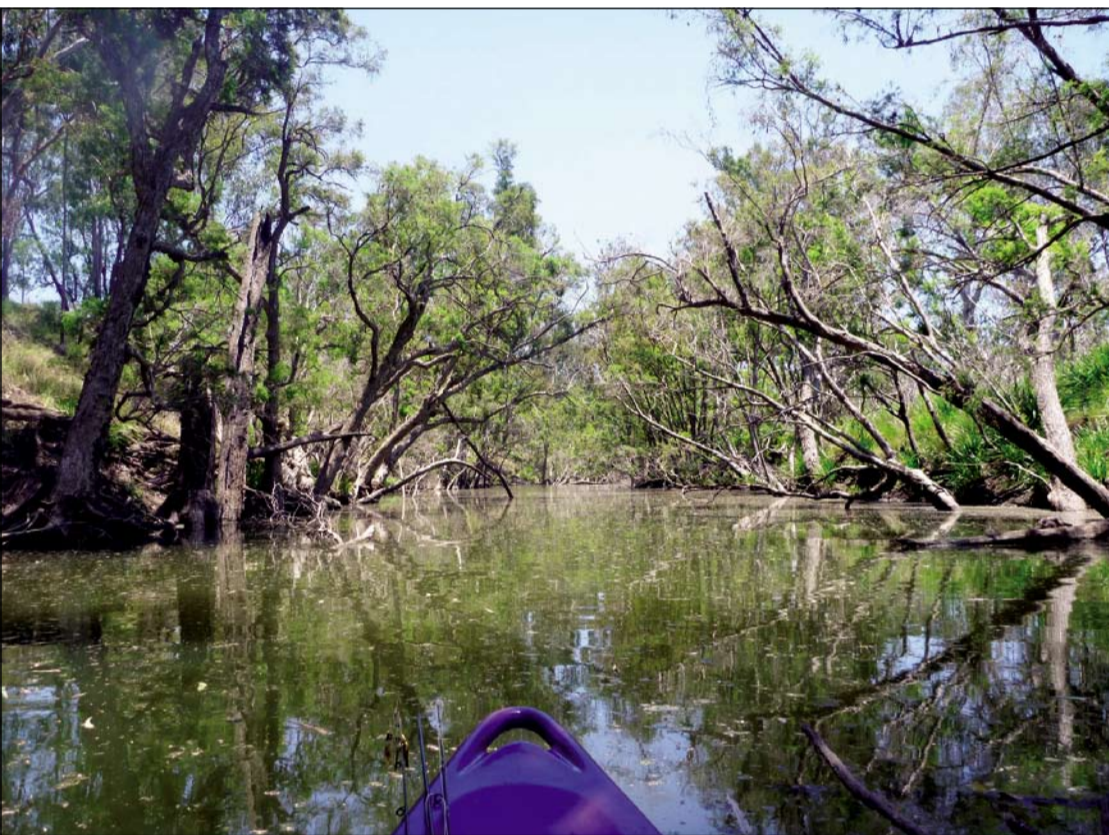
Not only is the fishing fantastic, the scenery is second to none, especially when you get into the gorge country.

If you need any info email me at h.abdy@bigpond.com

I hope everyone has a safe Chrissy break and please do the right thing on the water. ↵



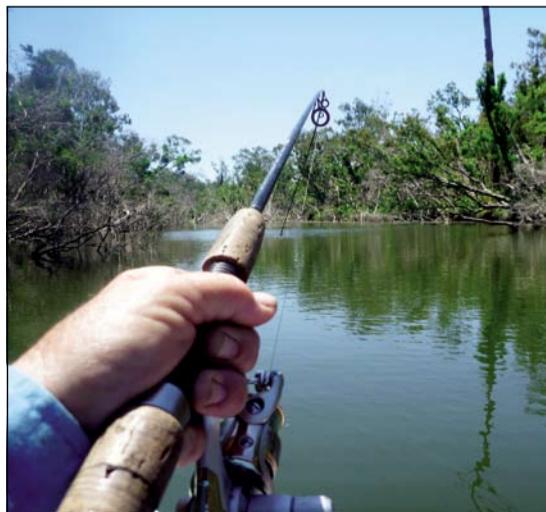
Saratoga are a magnificent species of which the Dawson River has plenty.



The Dawson is a fantastic river system.



This healthy yellowbelly couldn't resist a gold Crazy Charlie.



Those catties sure give you a workout.