



Darren Burns with over 10kg of Moreton Bay snapper on a soft plastic.



A recent trip to Hervey Bay produced plenty of spotted mackerel on Z-Man Streaks. Hopefully Moreton Bay will see good numbers of these mackerel this month.

You can take your pick of pelagics or reef species

JANUARY sees all the summertime favourites we like to catch on lures fired up and active as water temperatures are generally quite high and annual migration has species entering our waters at this time of year.

Plenty of options are available for the lure angler in Moreton Bay, with pelagic and reef species on offer.

Pelagic species to be had include spotted, school and the odd spanish mackerel, as well as longtail and mackerel tuna.

All these species will follow the bait schools and feed close to or on the surface, so travelling throughout the bay until surface activity is found is a good option this month.

School mackerel can also be caught in good numbers from the many beacons in the bay.

Driving from one to another dropping metals and plastics to the bottom and quickly jigging and spinning them alongside the beacon can be a very productive method.

Choose the weight and size of a lure appropriate to the amount of current and the size of baitfish



Luring Moreton Bay
by PETER HERBST

present in the area.

Current and baitfish are what bring the mackerel to the beacons, so seek out ones that have both.

Lure colour is something worth experimenting with as some days natural colours are the go and on others bright colours work better.

When the current slows on the change of tide it is worth working some plastics slowly at the base of the beacons, as fish like cod, cobia and other various reef species can be caught when there is less water movement.

Fishing for reef fish like snapper, sweetlip and parrot can be very productive this month.

Late November and early December produced good numbers and some very big snapper and sweetlip for anglers on a number of different lure styles such as blades, vibes, deep diving hard-bodies and soft plastics.

The new 13g FLT Transams are worth trying on the reefies in Moreton Bay, especially in the

shallower areas where the 20g versions sink too quickly.

In the shallows, the bite period can be short as sunlight can be strong early in the morning, so getting up early or fishing overcast days can see more fish caught.

Fishing deeper reefs will have fish feeding at any time of the day, however early morning, late afternoon and night will still be the better times to fish.

The weed beds of both Moreton and North Stradbroke islands will be worth throwing some jigs around for squid this month.

The squid may be holding fairly deep so covering different depths until they are found, then fishing that depth in different areas can produce plenty of tasty squid.

Bream, summer whiting and flathead should be up on the flats and shallow rubble this month.

Casting surface lures, sinking stick baits and

shallow running hard-bodies are all worth a go for these species this month.

Some new lures on the market worth a try are the super shallow Jackall Chubbies and Maria Crank 38s.

These lures swim down only a few centimetres so they can be cast over very shallow water and are less likely to snag on the bottom.

They also have plenty of weight so they can be cast a long distance to cover a large area of water.

If lure fishing the estuaries this month, expect a host of species to be out and about.

The most popular fish for the estuary lure fisher this summer has no doubt been mangrove jack.

Success on these jacks has been up and down for most lure anglers but with some hotter weather in November and December, plenty of fish have been caught and probably even more have been lost.

The Gold Coast waters have received a lot of attention, so trying to find some less fished areas may improve results as most obvious spots have been overfished.

While chasing jacks there can be plenty of other species happy to jump on a lure including cod, trevally, bream and flathead to name a few.

At the time of writing there have been good numbers of trevally, bream and flathead but estuary cod have not been found in the same numbers as in previous years.

For those who like to compete in the many lure fishing tournaments, January is an exciting time as the locations and dates for events are finalised.

Deciding which events to fish, when to prefish, looking at tides and planning where and what the fish will be taking at that time of year are all things a tournament angler looks at in the New Year.

Anyone keen to try their hand at tournament fishing should give it a go as it pushes you to be a better angler, you meet many like-minded people and when you do well it gives a great confidence boost in your own ability.

Bass events start at \$20 entry for the ABT Bass Electric Series or you can do an ABT Bass Pro for about \$110 as a non boater or about \$200 as a boater.

Bream events start at \$60 for a Minibucks team's event, ABT team's events start at \$150 and ABT Pro events are \$100 for non boaters and \$200-\$250 for boaters.

On top of that there are flathead, barra, kayak

bream and kayak bass events during the year.

So there are plenty of options for different styles of fishing for those who want to try their luck at some competitive fishing.



Shaun Pritchard hopped a Berkley prawn over some rocks to catch this 54cm mangrove jack.