

When spring still feels like winter



A change to a tiny spinner on a slow day produced this respectable golden perch.



Another success for the little 1/8oz AusSpin, a saratoga from Lake Cania.



It isn't only freshwater fish that respond to a small lure when weather conditions are less than ideal.

A COUPLE of mates and I were sitting in the shed discussing recent fishing sessions where the fish had been less than cooperative.

Unseasonable cold snaps (3C overnight minimums in October) were most likely the cause for the sudden downturn in fish activity.

Our banter naturally questioned the best tactics for tempting at least a few fish when the weather shuts them down, as regularly happens in early spring as cold fronts pass through.

Consensus was eventually reached with the downsizing of lures agreed to be the most productive method for luring inactive fish.

Tony and I recalled a weekend at Lake Borumba that coincided with just such trying conditions brought on by a cold snap.

After a little experimenting, Tony's choice of technique was doodling soft plastics along the bottom.

I decided to give the fish a choice and started throwing my smallest whirligigs around the lake fringes.

The plastics were 75mm Berkley T-Tail Minnows in the ever-popular Jap Green Pumpkin and Bronze Pearl colours.

The spinner I was using was a purple AusSpin 1/8oz MiniSpin tandem, a tiny lure.

This switch to small lures worked a treat with immediate dividends in the form of several quality bass and a nice golden perch.

When we turned our attention to saratoga, they too would only respond to the smallest lures we could cast.

Diminutive 1/8oz spinners, 40mm MicroMins and 50mm Spaddlers were the only lures on which we drew any strikes from the saratoga on the day.

When the fishing goes quiet, especially in cool weather, downsizing your lure can turn the odds in your favour.

Small lures have turned fishless days into acceptable sessions or even great days for us on numerous occasions during the past decade or so that bass have been successfully stocked into dams.

This is a technique that we have relied on not only for impoundment bass in lakes scattered through two eastern states, but for goldens, sooties and barra as well.

Let's use a trip to Lake Cania as an example.

Conditions were varied throughout the weekend



Fishing for Sport
by NEIL SCHULTZ

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with a couple of fairly productive sessions replaced by quite tough periods as weather deteriorated.

Wind of 25 to 30 knots combined with Antarctic temperatures saw the bass become lethargic and the fishing very tough towards the end of the first day.

Tony and I started the weekend using totally different techniques.

Tried and proven winter bass lure, the diminutive MinMin, was Tony's selection.

I on the other hand was playing with some larger 100mm Berkley Hollow Belly Swim Baits, just to give them time in the water.

On the first morning both lures were taking fish but things changed when the front moved through and the fish became inactive.

After three hours of casting, Tony had landed seven bass between 38 and 46cm on the MinMin while I had had a handful of bumps without a hook-up; time for a change.

A quick rummage

through the tackle box saw me replace the large plastic with a tiny 1/8oz single willow AusSpin whirlingig.

Not only was the lure much smaller but it was fitted with a brass blade for more subtle flash and the single willow meant it gave off less sound and vibration; a less imposing lure all round.

The very first cast with the little 1/8oz spinner produced a 41cm bass that hit the lure as soon as the retrieve commenced.

A fluke? Maybe, but the six others in the next hour probably weren't.

We changed lures and varied techniques throughout the weekend, enjoying a relaxed, productive outing on a picturesque piece of water.

When the results were analysed we found that all of our fish bar two were taken on tiny lures, either MinMins or 1/8 and 1/16oz AusSpins.

For the statisticians, we boated 52 bass between 34 and 47cm during 12

hours on the water, in between driving around taking photos and platypus watching.

Those results were not due to some mystical fish finding powers.

The same sort of results could be had by anyone willing to experiment a little and try some tiny lures when their favourites fail.

Presenting a small offering may have something to do with anglers fishing fly being able to pull impoundment bass when the fishing is quiet for anglers using conventional tackle.

Regardless of what style of lure you are using, downsizing when the fish aren't playing ball can make the world of difference to your results.

That fish can react so differently simply because of a lure's size is astonishing.

Passive nudges often become determined strikes with enjoyable consequences for the angler.

If fishing a scenario that sees floating plugs in use we'll drop from our standard 65mm lures down to the tiny MinMin to stir wintertime bass into action.

When the fish are deep and scattered, running those little lures on lead-core can be the hot technique.

When fishing the snaggy margins as the sun warms them, we'll downsize from our usual 1/2oz tandem spinner to a single willow 1/8oz AusSpin if the fish are bumping lures but not hooking up.

The same goes for doodling plastics around schooled bass in deep water.

Our 100mm plastic is changed for a smaller offering, often a 60mm Berkley T-Tail grub, and fished on a 1/4oz jig instead of the 5/8oz.

Next time the fish refuse to cooperate, try breaking out the small bore lures and don't be concerned about not catching big fish on them.

After all, elephants eat peanuts don't they? 🐘



This ripper bass crashed a tiny Spaddler fished in shallow water.