

been fishing well. We are seeing tuna schools in the mouth of the harbour and the odd mackie is getting around, they should really start firing up soon.

“Shoal Bay has been producing barra, and the harbour has a lot of mud crabs.”

Craig’s Fishing Warehouse’s Matt Smith said billabongs were fishing well.

“Corroboree has been good,” he said.

“There are still plenty of jewies on harbour wrecks.

“Shady Camp ramp construction has started, for fishos out there the threadies have been going sick in Chambers Bay.

“The Shady Camp coastal creeks were a bit sporadic for barra this year.

“I think the new moon was fishing better than the full moon on the coastal creeks.

“Not many barra were caught, though, compared with years past, instead fishos are getting a tonne of threadies.

“There are still barra biting in the rivers, but the water temperature is starting to drop.

“Once it stabilises it will be on again.

“On the bluewater the Spaniards are thick, the Stena Clyde drilling rig is still going nuts for pelagics.

“There are a few crabs getting around, and loads of pelagics at Dundee.

“The wind is blowing now though.”

Katherine Rod and Rifle’s Warren de With said the barra fishing was slowing down with the falling water temperature.

“The tides recently were perfect for the Victoria River and the water clarity was good and the river was low, but the fishing was not as good as expected,” he said.

“The water temperate had dropped and though it did warm a little on the weekend it may not have been enough to get the barra going.

“There were plenty of juvenile fish about.

“What is evident is that there are loads of 30-40cm fish in all the river systems, there has obviously been a big recruitment.

“They are presumably from this wet season’s stock, so it is a good sign for the future, there is whole schools of them being reported, people are seeing them.

“The sheer amount of food around has probably made it a bit hard to catch barra this year.

“At Shady the barra have been down a little, but the threadies keep fishos occupied.

“It is very windy at the moment with the south-easterly here in Katherine.

“Apparently it is going to get colder and dryer with a building southerly surge, it will push all the moisture away and hopefully we will get a proper dry season.”



Lauren Hicks with a 118cm threadfin salmon caught at the mouth of Shady Camp — her new personal best

Anaconda’s Jason Rogers said everywhere was fishing well.

“Bluewater is picking up, Lee Point has macks and tuna, there’s billies around off Dundee,” he said.

“Tuna and barra are going off.

“At the Finnis River they caught half as many fish in two days as the Barra Classic caught in a week.

“In my opinion the river barra fishing is really just starting now, the river levels are just right.

“Now is like March in a normal or poor wet season year.

“The cold might slow it down a bit but it will still fire up again, with all the barra having moved off the floodplains into the rivers.

“There have been jewel fish caught in the Finnis, as opposed to jewies, but the jewies

offshore have been good, Charles Point has been going off.

“The harbour wrecks have been producing big jewies at night, people are coming in to gear up with heavier gear after being busted off.

“Shoal Bay has been fishing and crabbing really well.

“Everywhere is fishing really well.

“I’d like to see a gill net closure from Cape Ford to Cape Don however, I don’t think people realise how much the nets still affect the fishing despite the closures we have had.”

On the www.fishingterritory.com forums a 130cm jewfish by “Sullo” is leading the May Round 4 in the Seadogs brag mat competition, with some cracking barra not enough to beat the big jewies.

June’s Round 5 will be Tuna and Queenfish plus Barra.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HAMMER GUNS, FROM FLINTLOCK TO PERCUSSION

A shotgun without hammers is like a pointer without ears — this pithy saying has been ascribed to many sportsmen, most important among them being HRH King George V, Lord Walsingham and the 2nd Marquis of Ripon.

Although hammer guns had been largely superseded by the late 1860s — Damascus steel barrels has been replaced by Whitworth steel ones, which were more easily produced and more durable — many eminent shotgunners refused to change.

Resisting the above ‘improvements’, Ripon, the doyen of Edwardian shotgunners, shot with three Damascus-barrelled hammer guns (with three loaders standing by, ready to exchange fired guns for newly-primed ones), until the day he died — on the shooting field.

He is reputed to have had his quartet practising late at night in the manor houses to which he was invited, to be assured of his fine shotgunning on the morrow. His tally books accounted for over half a million birds during his shotgunning lifetime, well in advance of other notable Royal shooters.

Lord Walsingham had his guns rebarrelled, exchanging Damascus for steel, but soon reverted to Damascus, stating that steel barrels gave him nasty headaches.

These Edwardian shotgunners, under royal patronage, did the rounds of the rich and wealthy citizens’ manor houses, staying at times on a weekly basis. They were ‘amateur professionals’, often firing in excess of 10,000 rounds in a four-month shooting season.

Royalty was served lavishly in often

fortnightly visits sponsored by the ‘lucky’ manor owner. Walsingham, an extremely wealthy man, bankrupted himself with his sporting and gambling lifestyle.

Why did (and do) hammer runs retain their mystique? Remember the Napoleonic Wars introduced most of the male population, whether in the regular army, militia or navy, to the flintlock musket — a single-barrelled smoothbore muzzle-loader, whose firing was initiated by a hammer containing a piece of flint, which struck a steel plate, sending sparks into a pan, which ignited fine black powder, sending the flame through a small hole bored in the barrel, to the main powder charge, which, on firing, sent the round on its way.

Seamen had mainly pistols (and cutlasses, just as in all the good Hollywood movies), but a seven-barrelled flintlock rifle, of half an inch bore, was used by a burly sailor in the rigging to deter enemy sharpshooters.

Unfortunately, the combined detonation of seven charges deterred the person behind the barrels more than the opposition, and flames and sparks from the wadding inadvertently set fire to the ship’s sails and rigging.

This multi-barrelled rifle with its limited success was soon discarded. Readers of Bernard Cornwell’s ‘Sharpe’ series of novels will remember Sergeant Harper using seven barrels to great effect in quite a few of the tales.

Remember Colonel Hawker? On returning from his experiences in Spain, he ordered double-barrelled Damascus hammer shotguns from Joe Manton, one of the most respected, innovative and prestigious gunmakers of the day.

His diaries laud this maker of fine guns, and Hawker composed Manton’s epitaph. Hawker, an inveterate innovator and inventor (he invented a piano keyboard to practise on during his many travels), also had Manton build him a wheeled small bore (2”) cannon, and an 85 pound, 9 foot long punt gun, placed in a punt of his own design.

The problem with flintlocks was wet or damp weather, which made the powder deteriorate so as to be unfireable.

Scotland’s Reverend Alexander John Forsyth produced the percussion cap, which fitted over an extruded touch hole, and the cap’s ignition flowed through the touch hole to the main charge.

This was a better system, but was still liable to misfires due to damp affecting the open charges in the barrels.

Other major faults with muzzle loaders was the difficulty in extracting a wet charge, placing a double charge in a barrel — two charges in one barrel, and none in the other, blew up many guns (and shotgunners’ hands and faces).

The American Civil War’s battlefields demonstrated problems with multiple loading, with up to eight charges found in rifle barrels!

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— BUFFY



I NEED A HIRO

Land-based sensei HIROAKI NAKAMURA shares his hard-won knowledge on catching the mighty barramundi without a boat



I went fishing at Mindil beach after work at the setting of the sun.

The tide was coming into the rocky shallow water.

As a result, I caught a 62cm barramundi on Zerek Live Shrimp 127mm using the Jagla setting again.

However, this led to a troublesome situation.

A friend of mine was told to sell his boat and buy a scooter to fish, by his wife.

It would be a great error to suppose that land-based barramundi fishing should be easier and cheaper than barramundi fishing by boat.

My land-based barramundi fishing is cheek by jowl with the danger of the sea, because I normally waded in the water while fishing, especially during times of murky water.

Of course, I always fish with the greatest caution against crocodiles, stingrays, stonefish, sharks, snakes and box jellyfish.

As you know, I was stung by a stingray once.

I fell down and got seriously injured on my knees, elbows and hands.

I once had 3.9m, 4.2m, 4.9m and 6.4m boat to fish in Darwin.

I think that barramundi fishing by boat is much safer than my land-based barramundi fishing.

I understand that.

THE LOWDOWN

Zerek Live Shrimp using Jagla setting

Size: 127mm

Where: Shallow water, 30-50cm

Water: Murky incoming

Line: Fins 30lb

Leader line: Sunline FC Rock Fluorocarbon 40LB

Knot: The Slim Beauty

Reel: Shimano Scorpion 70XG

Rod: St. Croix 6’ Medium Power Fast

Action 10-17lb 1/4-3/4oz USA

Clip: Force Ten Stainless Duo Lock Snaps

#3

W-hook: Owner Nitro Stinger Double hook

#4

Action: Steady retrieving



Check out Hiro’s blog:
secretbarramundi.blogspot.com.au