



There's more to fishing than braid, bait and bevvies

You can't beat experience for building fishing knowledge but there are other ways which can help contribute. This article looks at a few simple ideas to get you started.

When a lot of people start fishing they think it's a sport or hobby that simply involves picking up a bag of frozen prawns and a Coke from the local servo, heading down to the closest stretch of water, throwing in a line and

waiting for the fish to hook themselves.

In these situations some people will catch fish but the numbers are low because catching fish is a bit more complicated than simply baiting a hook and putting it in a body of water. Many of the things you need to consider are

thoughts you'd probably have if you went to buy a new car. You might ask - "where is a good place to go to buy a Toyota?" Well in the same way that not all car dealers sell Toyotas only certain types of water hold certain types of fish, for example you won't catch spanish



Above: A walk along the river after a meal at the Red Herring can tell you where the squid are.
Above right: Walking the dog? Take it along the river and scout for fishy structure.

feeding hours or their spawning times, increases.

This sort of information can take a while to learn because each species has many different variables. Sure some are the same or have very similar characteristics but let's face it, they are all individual fish species so there has to be differences between them. Some fish feed at different times, some prefer a high tide and some an incoming tide, some prefer fish baits and some prefer maggots and some you'll only find in winter and others in summer... and that's only a few of the variables.

Obviously the best way to pick this information up is to get out there and

that bait or lure!

At the same time this doesn't mean that fishing needs to be complicated either. Arming yourself with some simple knowledge on what type of fish you're hoping to catch and what the best sort of location is to find them are simple steps in the right direction. Then areas such as baits, tides, rigs and other topics can come into it.

There are lots of ways to build this knowledge and in this article we're going to look at two methods outside the realm of fishing time or the traditional magazine or DVD purchase that can help you build your basic understanding of fishing.



mackerel in the Swan River at Guilford. "What is a good time for me to go and buy a Toyota?" I hear you ask... well just as you're more likely to buy a car during business hours as opposed to 2am the chances of catching certain fish during their business hours, for example their

give it a go – repeatedly. If you pay real attention to your fishing over time you will notice trends in your catch rates which can then be used to trace back to what those variables are – suddenly you realise that you can catch more of this species at that time of the day on this tide with

SCOUT WHEN YOU'RE OUT

Whenever you're near the water never waste an opportunity to look around for tell-tale pieces of information that can tell you something about the area you're near. Finding pieces of information can give you clues as to whether you are in



a reasonable spot and what people have caught there previously. It's amazing how much you can tell about a spot by the garbage that people leave around. Fish frames, hook sizes, bait packets and other junk that shouldn't be left lying around are all clues that can help you know more about a spot – and, unfortunately, the people that fish it.

In November last year I spent some time fishing the Ord River near Kununurra and on one occasion we were searching on our own for new areas trying to find what looked like a good place to fish for barramundi. Finally we pulled up at a spot deciding it was the place to be, caught some small Jenkins grunter for live bait and quickly got them hooked up

and out in the water. After we'd finished sorting ourselves out we began having a Captain Cook around the place and we found something that told us a lot – barra scales each the size of a fifty cent piece. We'd chosen a good spot.

It's not only when you're fishing that you can find this type of information either. You can actually scout fishing spots AND earn brownie points with your better half at the same time. Is such a thing possible I hear you say? The way to do it is simple - take them out for dinner and organise it somewhere near the water where you have read about recent fishing action. If it's on the beach get there while the sun is still up to help you to get a feel for any gutters that may be

around or what time people are coming to fish there. If it's by the river then pre-meal and post-meal walks along the river's edge offer you the chance to check sections of water – what is the depth like, is there too much weed, is there any structure, where are the sand spots I hear people are catching whiting, where are those people fishing and what are they catching – and yes I do love walking in the moonlight with you babe...

Reconnaissance missions whenever you're near the water are a great way to build up your knowledge about what is caught where.

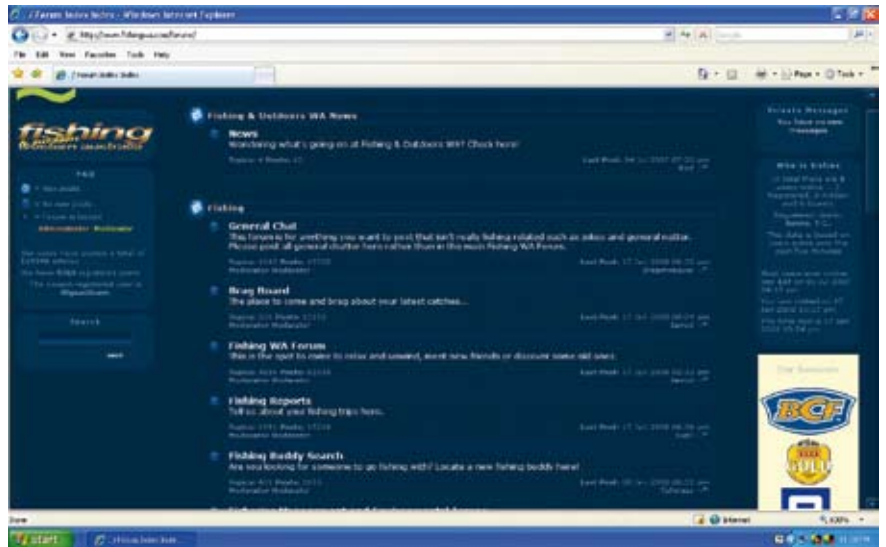
FISH AROUND ONLINE

There is enough fishing related



This picture: Get out there and give it a go. This bigeye tuna was picked up using online tips for fishing Exmouth.

Right: Get online for tips about everything. The FWA forums offer loads of information.



"... suddenly you will realise that you can catch more of this species at that time of the day on this tide with that bait!"

advice on so here you can read about tide information, rod and reel advice, types of rigs, how to use lures, knot types etc.

There are also other categories too which can help you build your knowledge of Western Australia's fisheries management, boat maintenance, 4X4 questions or even a spot to find yourself a fishing buddy or to get out with someone who wants a deckie or two for their boat.

These forums hold a lot of information and when you combine them with all the other forums and websites around the State there is enough information to answer all your questions and give you ample ideas about how to improve what you're currently doing.

Before you go on to any forums and ask those questions though there are a couple of things that are good to keep in mind, some simple forum etiquette:

1) All forums have a search function - use this to search for key words regarding your topic before you ask a question. It's quite likely your question has been asked many times before, especially if it's asking for advice on basic topics. The more frequently it has been asked the less likely you are to have people respond and give you pointers so searching through previous posts will help you find that information that people have already explained.

2) Don't ask people for their favourite spots. This happens from time to time and

people then wonder why no one responds to their questions. Many fishos work hard to find their spots and most aren't keen to give them away to anyone who asks - and rightly so. Some people are happy to email you more personal advice and from time to time you will be given spots, but if you start off keeping your questions to pointers, tips, advice and broad directions and you can't go wrong.

3) Remember that the forums are there for people to express opinions. You don't have to agree with what people say or recommend but that doesn't take away their right to be able to express it so keep that in mind if you respond. Some discussions have turned into real blues because of one person's inability to accept another opinion.

4) The final one is simple - help as you've been helped. If people on the forums notice you've been around a bit, involving yourself in discussions and sharing information and views firstly you'll get more help when you ask questions and secondly it helps keep these knowledge centres going.

These two methods can help you grow your fishing knowledge more than you would expect, so get out there and have a scout around to see what you can find, and next time you're on the 'Net' drop into the forums and say g'day, tell the online locals what you've been catching or what you're problems are, and start learning. ☺

information online to keep you informed for ten lifetimes. In Western Australia there are a number of local and regional forums that all have hints and tips, details of what is biting, debates on topics ranging from knot selection to prices of fishing tackle to how Port Power will be more successful than West Coast again this year and more. (Carn Port!)

The Fishing WA forum (www.fishingwa.com/forums) has a number of categories available such as the Brag Board and Fishing Reports which can give you an idea of what fish are moving around where or what rigs, lures or baits people are using. The Fishing WA section is for people wanting to discuss whatever fishing related topic they would like