

South Australia

December '08 / January '09

Angler

**BUMPER
SUMMER
ISSUE!**

**Giant
Kingfish**

**Snook Tactics
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Sensational Salmon
Metro Tinny Action
Pondalowie Offshore**



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The author with a pair of good-sized nannygai

HIGH TIME



S AT PONDALOWIE

There can be no doubting the advantage provided when you engage the services of an experienced charter operator. **Peter Knott** discovered this recently while fishing with mates off lower Yorke Peninsula.

What better way to celebrate your 50th birthday than taking part in a wonderful fishing experience on a top notch charter? When Russell Whitehorn turned 50, his surprise birthday present was a weekend fishing on Mark Wynbergen's boat at Pondalowie Bay.

Part of the charter deal was staying in a shack at Pondalowie Bay. Five of us drove over to Yorke Peninsula in two cars, hoping that the weather and the fish were both going to co-operate. After arriving at the shack, we had to start the generator, and in the dark this was an interesting 20 minutes. Once that was going, we found that we would be staying in a basic, but comfortable shack with beds and bunks for ten people. Russ, as birthday boy, got possession of the double bed. Mark had provided a stack of bacon and eggs for our breakfast the next day, and we told stories and drank cold beverages until after midnight.

Saturday, March 10 dawned invitingly. The forecast of 37 degrees for Adelaide meant a hot, but calm day. The bacon and eggs were cooked on the barbecue at the rear of the shack, and a short climb up a sandhill gave us a beautiful view of the bay. A light northerly was blowing when Mark arrived promptly at 8:30am to take us to his boat.

We walked to the beach and climbed into an aluminium dinghy for the short ride to Mark's boat for the first day of our two day charter. After listening to Mark's simple instructions on what to do while on the boat, we powered out of Pondalowie Bay and headed for the reefs near Wedge Island. The scenery of this rugged coastline is truly beautiful and after 30 minutes Mark slowed his boat and began sounding over the deep reefs in 50 metres of water.

We had excellent conditions to fish in, as the breeze was light and swell was low. I brought my Penn Sports rod fitted with a Shimano Tekota 700 reel, but Mark provides heavy duty spinning reels with 12 kilo line and Ugly Stik rods. Bait was squid and rigs were simply two large single hooks above a heavy sinker.

We lowered our baits into the sparkling blue water and fish responded immediately.



Rugger snapper are pretty common off Pondie

I landed a nice 2.5 kilo snapper and Geoff James caught a similar sized red groper, while Lou Forte and Peter Parsons chimed in with impressive nannygai. Russell's son Peter hooked an obviously larger fish and after initially looking as if he was gaining the upper hand, his line was cut off on the reef. Mark thought this fish was likely to be a large blue morwong. Not long after this, Russell hooked another large fish and just when we were looking for colour, the hooks pulled out and a possible samson fish had won its freedom. More snapper and nannygai were landed, with the occasional blue throat parrot fish and rock cod being kept by Mark for his cray pots. Peter Whitehorn again hooked a larger fish and this time, after a tiring battle, he was rewarded with a beautiful blue morwong in the seven kilo range. After this the bite slowed, although we were still losing baits and we soon found the reason why when Geoff landed a large leatherjacket.

Mark decided on a move and after we had re-anchored, snapper and nannygai in the two to three kilo range once again bit freely until the leatherjackets returned.

Mark was quick to help with unhooking fish, taking photos with our cameras and also promptly moved spots once the dreaded leatherjackets returned. Two more shifts meant more quality fish and we happily called it a day with a lot of fish cleaning in front of us.



The whiting are nearly always thumpers

We cleaned the fish back at the beach, packed them into our eskies and returned to the shack. Later we climbed the hill at the rear of the shack and enjoyed a cold beer as the sun went down. Then we drove into Stenhouse Bay, about 15 minutes from



Blue morwong are always welcome

Pondalowie, and had a nice meal at Rhino's Tavern, with the first beer courtesy of Mark, before returning to the shack for a good night's sleep.

A southerly change was forecast for Sunday. From our vantage point on the hill we could see rain squalls coming from the north-east, but the weather was still warm and the wind was light. After another large breakfast of bacon and eggs, we set off for the reefs.

The fish were slow to react though, maybe due to the rapidly falling barometer. After an hour we only had six rugga snapper and three nannygai to show for our efforts. We then sat through a heavy shower of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, and large leatherjackets continued to bother us.

Mark decided to move spots and this resulted in an immediate improvement. Paul landed a double header of nannygai and Lou followed with a double header of snapper and nannygai. I caught a 'horse' of a nannygai and then Russell tangled with a hard fighting fish. Russ had declared before the day began that he wanted to catch a blue morwong, and his birthday wish was granted. The five kilo fish brought a huge

smile to his face. As quickly as the fish had come on the bite, they then disappeared and Mark had to move again.

By this stage the weather had turned from occasional showers to steady rain and the wind had changed from the north-east to south-west and was steadily building. At our next spot the tide had picked up and only occasional small snapper hit the deck. I hooked several fish only to lose them, believing them to be leatherjackets. Peter Parsons changed my mind, however, by pulling in a magnificent 53 cm whiting and promptly followed with another. Paul Kurczak landed another as we quickly changed to whiting rigs, but we had no more luck apart from a few small snapper.

At this point we were all wet through, having left our wet weather gear home, so we decided to return to shore. Conditions were unpleasant, but Mark's boat handled the return trip with ease.

Once again we cleaned our catch and packed the fish in ice. It had been a wonderful weekend and we each had 15 top quality table fish to take home. Mark certainly takes you to the fish and we can recommend his charter as an exciting fishing adventure.

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