



Eildon Pondage

Eildon Pondage is situated right next to the township of Eildon and is a leisurely 2 hour drive from Dandenong. The area is popular for many weekend and day trips and there are plenty of fishing options whether relaxed or technical is your thing. The pondage itself is divided into two parts; the 'upper' and 'lower' sections. The pondage divides Lake Eildon from the Goulburn River below and is mainly used as a 'regulator' between these two bodies of water – hence it's constant fluctuations of water level.

While it's family-friendly nature and proximity of amenities and accommodation make it a popular land-based fishing location, the quality of the fish that can realistically be caught for anglers of any skill draws anglers back time and time again – from all around the state.

The pondage has been created as a 'trophy' trout fishery, where trout as large as 5kg are on offer thanks to initiatives like that of the Victorian Fisheries Authority. Having trout hatcheries only a few minutes away is also very handy, as locally reared fish can be supplied for anglers at a great rate.

Many ex-brood stock rainbow and brown trout get relocated to the pondage after they have filled their roles at the hatcheries. Fish this size are hatchery raised and fed and are frequently stocked into the pondage in decent numbers, while fish in half kilo to 2kg mark are topped up around every school holiday period.



Aerial view of the Eildon pondage in relation to the adjoining Goulburn River and Lake Eildon

Baitfishing the pondage

Without a doubt the most effective way to land numbers of trout in the pondage is to bait fish. All manner of baits can be used on the pondage, but by far and away the deadliest method here is to coarse fish with a 'dough' style bait. These dough baits are specifically made from the same ingredients as the hatchery pellets.

Why is this so important? As these fish are grown in the hatcheries they are fed on a pellet-based diet, and become accustomed to the scent of these, so any baits based of this type of hatchery scent work wonders.

The best baits to take with you in this scenario are a specialized trout dough, and various forms of powerbait. Powerbait is a scented artificial dough-style bait that comes in various colours. Having a few different colours gives the fish the option, and like anything – options are good to have! The other massive advantage is that powerbait has a buoyancy to it, which when rigged correctly can help stay off the weed or grass on the bottom – and where the fish can see it.

Presenting the bait correctly

Having the correct bait is only one part of the solution; getting it out there and fishing it correctly are also vital, and this is where we look at tackle and rigging.

The truly ideal outfit for this particular form of finesse bait fishing consists of a long and light threadline outfit.

Having a light-tipped, parabolic action graphite rod in a length from 7'6" through to 10ft is the way to go – with the ideal length coming in at 9ft. Having a more 'forgiving' action in the rod will help greatly in keeping soft dough baits on the hook during the cast, and setting fine gauge hooks on soft bites.

Spin reels in the 2000-2500 size spooled with fine mono in the 4 – 8lb strength. The extra stretch in the line will also help in keeping small hooks in.

Nuts and bolts

Getting down to the specifics of the rig, we are looking at a modified 'running' rig. On our main line we first need an anti-tangle feeder cage boom, with feeder cage attached. Below this a small soft bead to absorb shock, then a tiny black rolling swivel. Black blends in on the bottom substrate with less chance of spooking the fish. A light fluorocarbon leader of around a metre in 4 – 8lb is attached to the other side of this swivel. At the business end we are using either a ULT style treble, or a fine gauge 'dough' style hook. Be sure to mould your dough style bait around the hook so it stays on as securely as possible.

Berley completes the cycle

Berley and what we use for berley is vital for success. Throwing sinking trout pellets into

the water will make a similar sound to when the trout are fed at the hatchery and they respond well to this – and this is one method of using this berley.

On top of this method another very effective use of these specialist pellets is to make a 'clay' consistency paste of it. Breaking these pellets down with hot water in a bucket and slowly adding a fine grit pollard style powder back in will thicken your mix up. Once you're happy with the consistency leave it to cool down.

When it comes time to deploy your berley at your chosen location, the best way is to use a berley spoon. The angle of this spoon lets the berley go where you want it to; and speaking of this, make sure you continuously cast your bait where this berley is going. You're 'preparing' the fish for your offering by berleying in one zone.

The other way to successfully use this berley is to pack your feeder cage with it. By doing this you are again sending a slow release berley to the area your bait is in.

Artificial offerings

There are many types of lure you can use on the pondage if you're more inclined to do so. Eildon pondage can be a challenging arena to catch seasoned trout in without a bit of thought into lure patterns, but freshly stocked fish can be a bit easier to tempt as they ravenously chase most things that move.

Many types of lures can be successful on the Eildon Pondage if the angler covers the water in front of them thoroughly. By that we mean choosing a lure that for the depth of water that you're fishing.

Of the various styles that work on trout in the pondage, a few different style to take are: Metal and plastic spoons, bibbed hardbodies of various running depths, various soft plastic styles and vibes. Picking the lure to suit the depth and terrain you're fishing is the first step, with colour choices second.

Switching between an aggressive, passive and natural colour scheme is the best way to induce a following trout to commit to the lure so if in doubt – tie on another colour.

For any additional information or specifics talk to us in-store.

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This handout is for use as information only, and the suggestions are based on our experiences for fishing this particular location and or species.