



Flinders Pier

Flinders Pier is situated just inside Westernport Bay, separated from Bass Strait by the headland known as West Head. The pier is located approximately 55 minutes from Dandenong, just down hill from the township of Flinders.

Flinders pier is a very popular fishing location for many; and being a long pier close to the oceanic waters of Bass Strait it can provide some excellent fishing and good a variety of species.

The water surrounding Flinders pier is made up predominately of kelp and weed forests which extend from the ocean floor up halfway through the water column in some areas. While this might not seem friendly to anglers, there are also extensive sand patches and 'holes' that provide clear zones to place baits and lures without fear of them snagging up.

Amongst the weed there are a flotilla of moored yachts and boats – with attached mooring chains and blocks, which all provide

small patches of shade and cover for baitfish and food for predators.

The pier structure itself also provides excellent habitat for nearly all species that frequent the area. With plenty of pylons and beams, there is ample shelter for both predator and prey in the pier's shadows.

Like every other fishing location however, it is imperative to pay attention to the surroundings and identify what structure, cover and food sources are available for the fish and Flinders pier is certainly no different.

A good set of polarized sunglasses will help highlight any zones of interest in the clear water.

Squid

Most anglers travelling to Flinders pier do so in search of the 'monster' squid that it produces. Southern calamari squid are prolific throughout the waters surrounding the pier – with some of the best squid fishing in the state coming from this pier.

The pier is very well known for producing some of the largest Calamari squid in southern Australia, with 3kg squid hitting the planks on with more regularity than elsewhere. These larger squid don't always come in large numbers, but the reward is worth the effort.

There are two commonly used methods for targeting squid at Flinders – casting artificial jigs and working them back, or leaving a baited jig static under a float. They both work and can be used at the same time.

If leaving a baited jig out, a simple running flasher float rig is best. A soft, castable stopper bead is set about 2m from the baited jig, float is slid on and a decent sized quick-change clip is tied on. The jig is then spiked through your baitfish of choice and attached to clip. Silver whiting are one of the best performers, but yakka and grass whiting are also excellent.

Once this rig is cast out, you can cast artificial jigs. Picking jigs in size 3.0 and 3.5 are the ideal starting point at Flinders, as their bigger presence drags the squid from their ambush zone more effectively. Colour choices in passive, natural and aggressive are the best way to work out what's working.

Warehou

Warehou are much more commonly known as Snotty trevally or 'snotties' and can be caught around the pier. Snotties aren't always around but during Winter and Spring large schools turn up and hold around the pier. They can be seen getting close to 2kg but are commonly seen 500g or so, and give a good account for themselves when hooked.

Targeting snotties is generally most effective during the night, and they can be fished for in much the same method as the mackerel. A fine mist berley is key to keeping these fish around, with some smashed pilchards in the mix really helping create a strong scent trail.

Fishing a mackerel style float rig mid-water with a strong wire size 8 chinu hook baited with small pieces of pipi or pilchard is the best method of getting a bite from them.

Mackerel

Mackerel are very common around the pier, with both horse and slimey mackerel found. Horse mackerel make up the bulk of the numbers and are best fished for during the night.

Berley is a must and the mix is also the same for snotty and silver trevally. Fishing close to the jetty pylons and along the edge of the pier lights spread is where you will find the mackerel. Fishing a Sabiki style rig mid water is effective, as is a lightly weighted float rig. Small baits of pilchard are very effective when fished on size 12-14 'chinu' pattern hooks.

Silver Trevally

Spring through to Summer brings numbers of silver trevally. They love to school around structure and the cover of the pylons provides this, so you can fish under your feet.

Fishing unweighted or with a small split shot running down to a size 4 wide gap hook is the best tactic. Like snotty trevally, small pieces of pilchard or pipi are excellent baits, with the same style of berley used to keep the schools in the area.

King George Whiting

King George whiting are not the easiest fish to target on Flinders Pier but the ones caught can be excellent quality. Early Spring through until late Summer is the best time to be in search of them. The key to KGW success here is to be able to pinpoint fish the sand holes with accuracy.

The KGW will dart out from the kelp margins to hammer baits of pipi and mussel, but only if they aren't weeded up. An extended paternoster rig is the best style of rig to employ, with hi-vis tubing and bead wafting above the hook to trigger the whiting's visual attention. Having a quality outfit that lets you fish these zones with precision will turn into KGW in the bucket.

Other species

Among the mentioned species, commonly encountered species are grass whiting, leatherjacket, wrasse and pike. All can be caught year-round and are found close to the cover of the weed.

Fishing small baits of pipi, pilchard and even freshwater worms on number 10 or 12 mid-

shank hook styles on a paternoster rig just above the weed is the best method of catching these species, with the exception of the pike.

Targeting pike entails the use of soft plastics, fished mid water through to just above the kelp beds. Plastics that imitate small baitfish in the 2-3 inch range are ideal when fished on jighead weights between 1/16th and 1/8th oz.

When your plastic is in the strike zone, a constant dead slow 'pike' roll is employed while subtly 'shaking' the rod tip. A bit like patting your head and rubbing your stomach but deadly on pike at Flinders.

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

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