



Garfish Basics

Gar fish are a great fish to catch and are excellent for anglers of all skill levels – from complete novice right up to the seasoned pro who knows the pier back to front and inside out.

Locally our gars are southern sea garfish, which can grow over 50cm in length and are found in both Westernport and Port Phillip Bay throughout the whole year, but seem to be in their larger numbers through Autumn to late Spring. They seem to prefer open sandy bays and flats with eel-grass beds and scattered reef, but they really do turn up in most corners of our bays and inlets.

They make very good baits for snapper as well as being excellent in the fry pan, and can be found in the boat or from the many piers and rock groynes shoreline.

Garfish are excellent for this reason of being readily available, with a list of notable locations for them as follows;

Kerford rd pier, Brighton pier, Sandringham rock groynes, Black Rock pier, Beaumaris

pier, Mordialloc pier, Seaford pier, Frankston pier, Daveys Bay pier, Mornington pier, Dromana pier, Rosebud pier and Portsea pier in PPB. Popular locations in WPB are Flinders pier, Stony Point pier, Coronet Bay rocks and Dickies Bay shoreline. **Talk to us in-store for up to date location reports and information.**

Garfish tackle

While there isn't much strain on your gear when catching gars, the use of the right tackle will result in much easier fishing and more success at the end of the day. There are a few different outfits you could use for chasing gars but a simple one is as suggested below;

Rod – 7ft – 10ft ultra-light graphite with very soft and slow loading tip section

***Longer rods helps pick up line faster and set tiny hooks**

Reel – 1000 – 3000 size spin reel, ideally faster gear ratio

***Higher gear ratio helps collect slack faster so that fish don't throw the hook and keep fish from tangling rig up**

Line – 4-8lb soft touch monofilament

***Thin diameter mono casts small floats much easier and holds higher in water column which helps on hook-set, and reduces pulled hooks.**

Rigging for gars

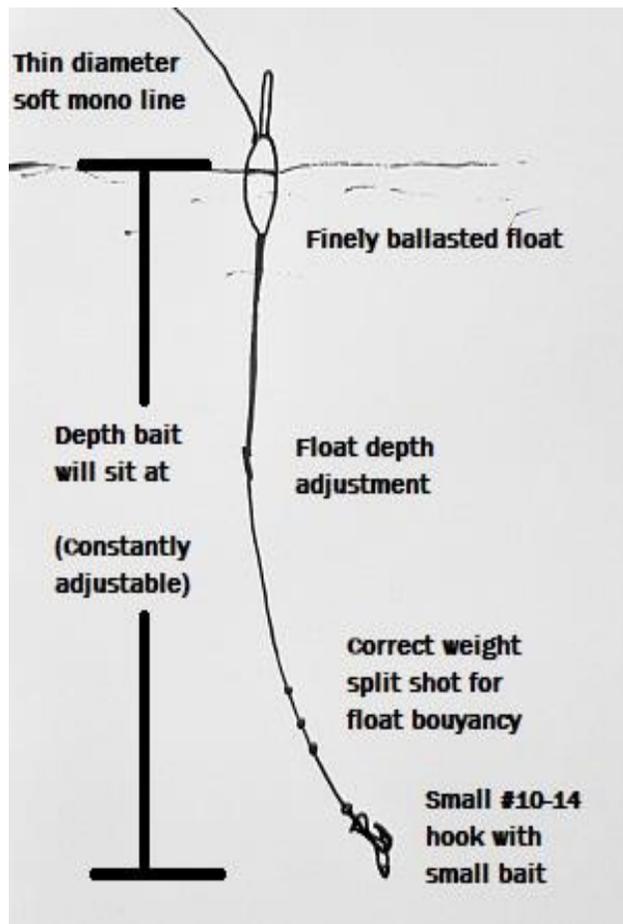
Float fishing is by far the most productive when chasing gars. The choice of float will be determined but surface chop and wind, and how far you are needing to cast it out – but

generally the smaller, more 'finesse' style of float will catch quicker than great big floats with high buoyancy.

Matching your splitshot weight to your float is also very critical – probably one of the most important things when trying for garfish. If your float is ballasted incorrectly you will either miss most of your bites due to no visual float movement or the fish feeling the resistance of the float on the surface – or your float will be pulled under too easily and the fish will eventually spit the hook due to drag under the surface. Most quality floats will have a number printed on the side of them, and this is the weight on the correct splitshot to use with the float. On the flipside, quality splitshot is precisely weighed and labelled so that the whole system matches up.

Having a sliding float or float stopper on your line is also critical as you will want your bait to be sitting at a precise depth. Sometimes you will need to adjust the depth at which your bait sits at multiple times a session as the fish move up and down in the water column in response to berley.

As many would expect, gars have a small mouth so choosing a hook with a narrow 'gape' can be paramount to actually converting bites into hook-ups. **Talk to us in-store for specific tackle choices and rigging information.**



Example of fine float rig for garfish

Bait and berley

It is rare to catch a good bag of gars without the correct berley. If there are large numbers of gars about you may catch some without berley, but generally you will only catch 5% without the use of berley. The correct berley is even deadlier. There are many forms of berley used for gars, but the trick is the same

for all of them – **don't feed the fish!** By this we mean don't simply throw some bread or similar into the water as the small pieces that break off will attract – but then feed the gars and they won't hang around for your baits.

The deadliest berley mix for garfish normally consists of a fine grit pollard like mix – which is almost dust-like in consistency, mixed with a SMALL amount of tuna oil. The oil sticks some of the mix together which can then be thrown out by hand or with the use of a proper berley spoon. The use of a pheromone – stimulate type scent also helps in 'triggering' the non-active fish to start feeding.

Once you get a decent berley trail happening (this will usually show as a slightly calmer 'slick' in the water) it is important to not break this trail. Even if the fish are around and active, a small handful every now and then will help in holding the fish there.

The other to pay attention to when berleying and fishing in your berley trail is the wind and current. There is no point throwing berley in one direction and letting the wind or tide take it to someone else's floats and baits. Taking in small weather details prior to starting your berley trail can make a big difference.

Also try and cast your baits back into the area you are berleying, this is where controlled, accurate casting will help out –

both with technique and tackle selection. A handy tip is to softly 'feather' the line before hitting the water so that your rig doesn't tangle up, rendering it useless.

Bait selection for garfish is generally simple. Small pieces of silverfish or maggots are two of the best performers, but also a small sliver of garfish flesh can work wonders sometimes when nothing else is. Just remember gars have a very small mouth so keep your baits to a size where the fish can find the hook without too much trouble.

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.