



Portsea Pier

Portsea pier is located at the very southern end of Port Phillip Bay's Mornington Peninsula and is approximately 60 minutes drive from Dandenong. The Pier sits next the famous Portsea Pub and is just a few kilometres from 'The Rip' - Port Phillip's entrance border to Bass Strait.

Portsea pier is about average when it comes to length when compared to others in the bay, and offers the closest fishing to Bass Strait that the eastern side of the bay has to offer.

The water surrounding Portsea Pier is very clear due to its proximity to Bass Strait and therefore it is as popular for divers as it is for anglers. The water surrounding the pier varies in depth up to around 5m, but often looks much shallower due to its clarity.

Being so close to the rip the tidal influence around the pier is very strong, so being prepared for the conditions is a precursor to success.

The bottom structure around the pier is made up of sandy patches and ledges, with lots of different 'weed' and seagrasses. Some comprise of thick kelp beds, while there are extensive wire weed patches in the shallower water.

Due to the sheer amount of aquatic vegetation there is a large amount of fish species that can be found, and also why it is such a popular spot for divers.

Squid

Portsea Pier has always been renowned for its exceptional squid fishing and would be in the top 3 when it comes to piers around Melbourne for consistency and quality of squid. Treating Portsea pier like Flinders pier in terms of the sort of terrain that you will be fishing is smart, however the tidal impact here is much stronger than at Flinders.

Casting artificial squid jigs is possibly the most effective here but many also fish with baited jigs. Either silver or grass whiting suspended under a float can provide some success on the large squid here, but they must be fished in the shallower water before the 'L' section of the pier, otherwise they drag in the strong tide and the baited jig ends up out of the strike zone - which is in the bottom quarter of the water column.

For those casting and working artificial jigs here, jig size and sink rate selection can be critical. Any size jig can be fished, but the success of it will be determined but how strong the tide is, and if that jig is getting close enough to the bottom. The most popular sizes here tend to be size 3.0 and 3.5 'deeps' - which have more lead on them and a faster sink rate.

Garfish

Portsea Pier produces some fantastic garfish especially during the cooler months of the year. The garfish here tend to be excellent size compared to anywhere else in the bay and are quite often found right up in very shallow water around the first third of the pier amongst the weed patches as this offers ideal protection for them.

Fishing with a precisely ballasted quill or sliding float setup is most effective, as for garfish anywhere. Constantly changing your fishing depth is critical, as the fish may be holding 2m deep or less than 1m.

Fine gauge mid shank hooks from size 10 to 14 are preferred and the choice of baits are maggots, silverfish or small pieces of peeled prawn. A berley mixture of 'wet clay' consistency is needed when after garfish, with a fine grit powder and small amount of tuna oil creating the right type of berley that they respond to very well.

Australian Salmon

Big schools of salmon tend to turn up around the piers margins at first and last light. Sometimes the salmon here can be 3kg or more, and are generally some of the biggest seen inside the bay.

These salmon schools are almost always on the move chasing baitfish, therefore casting and retrieving lures is the best way of targeting them. Metal lures between 15-50g are a good option for increased tidal and or windy conditions. If conditions allow, soft plastics in the 2-4 inch size range are also very productive. Matching the size and colour of the plastic to the bait in the area can see big numbers of fish caught.

If bait fishing for the salmon, a double paternoster rig tied in 20lb leader is the best option. Hook sizes in the 1/0-3/0 range are best, with fish baits of whitebait, bluebait and pilchard all most effective. The addition of a 'kicking' tail styled soft plastic on one of the hook droppers is also a great way to catch fish once your bait has been ripped off by other fish.

Tommy Rough

Tommy Rough or Australian Herring are another popular target fish at Portsea pier, with this pier in particular being one of the most productive around Melbourne for them. The main method for fishing for 'tommies' is

to set up a float rig similar to garfish, but slightly bigger floats can be used as the tommy rough will pull the float around more when biting in comparison to garfish.

Size 8 or 10 mid shank hook patterns are popular, with baits such as maggots, peeled prawn pieces or pipi all working well. Berley is crucial for the tommies, as they will move about in large schools and disappear if there is no scent trail to hold them. A standard garfish berley is generally employed, with the generous addition of a thinner fish oil type scent helping tremendously.

King George Whiting

While generally not the most common fish to see here, Portsea pier has a reputation for providing some good catches of King George Whiting for anglers out to specifically target them.

KGW are a demersal feeder that dart out of weed and kelp into sand holes on the bottom in search of food, so fishing these holes in the best way to target them.

Rigging up a paternoster rig when fishing the deeper water at the end of the pier is best, while a running rig can be used if fishing the shallower water back towards the shore. Using zero-visibility fluorocarbon leader between 10 – 16lb is ideal here, as the fish can bury into the thick weed and break lighter leader.

Sinker size should be picked to suit the tidal conditions, with just enough weight to hold on the bottom being optimal. Fine gauge worm and shiner style hooks in sizes 4 and 6 are the best choices for KGW here.

Baits of pipi, mussel, banana prawn and tenderized squid are all excellent on the whiting.

When casting your baits out, very slowly winding them back in and feeling the difference in bottom terrain will help locate the sand between the weed. A very slowly moving bait can also get the attention of the whiting visually, as is a good way to stimulate a bite from them.

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

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