

TAILOR FISHING

Anglers in southern Queensland, New South Wales and many other parts of Australia where tailor are in abundance on their shores are indeed very fortunate for tailor not only provide excellent sport for anglers but also good supplies of fresh fish for the table.

The approximate maximum size of tailor is 48 inches long, weighing about 32 lbs but the majority of fish caught run between one and ten lbs. The minimum legal length is 12 inches.

Identification. The body is sea green above, silvery on sides. The scales are small; the flesh is rather soft. The jaws are armed with powerful cutting teeth, so be sure to keep your fingers at a safe distance when removing the hooks.

The tailor hunt their prey in ^{shoals or packs.} shoals. They have voracious appetites and cause great destruction amongst schools of other fish. They are excellent eating, but both their eating and keeping qualities are very much improved if they are bled immediately they are caught. This is done by breaking or cutting the narrow section below the gills and breaking the neck. The flesh then remains white and firm and is very different from that of fish caught in nets, packed on ice and sold in fish shops.

Tailor can be caught throughout the year but are most prolific in the months between January and September. The biggest tailor are usually caught late in the season.

Dawn and dusk are considered to be the best time to catch tailor, nevertheless they can be caught, often in big quantities at any time of the day or night and they do not seem to be influenced by the moon. Bright moonlight nights make it easier for the angler to find the right type of water to fish in.

This is one of the most important features of tailor fishing. It requires some experience to be able to select the right type of water but generally speaking, whether fishing from rocks or the beach, the fish will be found under the white water. By white water we mean the foam which is caused by the waves breaking on a sand bank and rushing over it into a gutter or hole. Tailor are never found in numbers in deep blue water. ^{seldom}

omit { The difference between gutters and holes is that gutters run parallel to the beach. They are formed by a submerged sand bank over which the waves rush into a deeper channel or gutter which often runs a long distance with an outlet at one end. Whilst there may be plenty of suitable white water long gutters are not considered as good as holes, as the fish could be spread over the entire length of the gutter. Holes on the other hand are short and have an outlet running out to sea. The waves break over the sand bank into the hole and it is under the white water here that tailor are usually more concentrated.

There are high tide and low tide gutters. By this we mean that some gutters fill up at high tide, and at low tide are almost dry. At high tide the low tide gutters are out too far to fish (you cannot cast that far) so a good knowledge of the beach is necessary before selecting the tide to fish.

As there are more low tide spots to fish than high tide areas, the best tide to fish is the ebb tide. This gives the maximum fishing time, as most gutters can be reached at half tide down and you are not forced too far back, until half tide up.

In calm weather white water is hard to find. It is then that tailor are caught in the open surf, on the flats and quite often well away from the holes and gutters.

Conditions on the beaches change from time to time according to weather conditions and where there was a good hole last week may be quite different this week so anglers are constantly watching the changing formations of the beaches and looking for suitable holes. The formations of the beach often determines the method of fishing for there are times when the white water is within easy reach of a cast with a gar or blue pilchard bait with no sinker at all. This is called bait spinning and will be discussed later. Some times you need to use a three or four oz. sinker to get your bait out far enough and sometimes you need to use a metal spinner (which will naturally cast much further than a bait even with a heavy sinker) to reach the white water.

Spinning is rather more strenuous than bait fishing for you are constantly casting as far as possible and immediately rewinding all the time; nevertheless, this method often produces fish when other methods fail due to the fish being too far out to be reached with a bait. So every angler should carry a few spinners just in case. They are available in various shapes and sizes and colours and every angler has his own choice. The spinner is cast out into the white water and immediately reeled in again. The best speed of recovery can only be judged by trial and error and should be varied from time to time until you find the speed that produces the best results. The depth of the troll should also be varied. This can be done to some extent by the speed of recovery and also by lowering the tip of the rod whilst reeling in. Always use a swivel above the spinner to prevent any accumulation of line twist.

When using bait it should be mounted on a four hook rig, which is made by pushing the hook through the eye of the next hook until the four hooks are together as shown. Unfortunately it is not just as easy as that. Kirby ringed hooks no. 4185 are often used to make these tailor rigs and as these hooks have straight shanks they have to be bent near the eye as shown so that the bait will be straight. Then the barb of the hook must be closed in slightly to get it through the eye of the next hook and opened up again after it is through so that it will not come out again. Alternatively the eye of one hook can be opened slightly and closed after passing the hook through it. This method is preferred by many anglers.

Before going fishing you should make up several sets of four 4/0 hook rigs and also a few 5/0 and 3/0 rigs which may be used for bigger or smaller baits. To each rig attach a trace about nine inches long made from strong nylon line with a swivel on the end to which you tie your line when bait spinning. In addition make up a few traces about three feet long with a swivel on one end, Also out of heavy nylon line. This is necessary when using a sinker which, when you have decided which size to use, you thread on to this trace and tie the trace to the swivel on the rig. The sinker is now free to run on the heavy trace between the two swivels. Your line is then attached to the top swivel and you are ready to bait up.

4190 George
4185 Bright
4200 Tinned

The most popular bait for tailor is garfish preferably the long slender type commonly known as sea gar. Blue pilchards are also an excellent bait. The right method of baiting these four hook rigs is to enter the bottom hook first but it must be in such a position that the top hook will go into the head or eye of the bait as shown so in order to find where to enter the bottom hook hold the top hook near the eye and then see where the bottom hook must be entered to achieve this result. Drive the bottom hook right through the side of the bait, then the second, third and the top hook through the eye or head, pulling each hook firmly as you go. If properly hooked the bait will lay straight and look life like and natural but if badly hooked will not lay straight and will not look so attractive in the water.

Lay the flight of hooks along the side of the bait etc.

If the gar fish or blue pilchards are not available strips of mullet or other fish flesh can be used and placed on the hooks in a similar manner.

Having selected a suitable spot to try and a sinker that will enable you to cast your bait into the white water but not so heavy that it will stop your bait from moving in the wash, cast your bait out. If no bite is felt after a short time move it slightly or give it a good shake as movement attracts tailor. When a fish attacks, some times you feel the bite distinctly but quite often, tailor pick the bait up and run towards you so if you feel your line suddenly go slack take up the slack line quickly and most likely you will then feel the weight of the fish in which case you will lean and wind at the same time in order to set the hooks. Once hooked keep a good bend in your rod all the time whether you are taking or giving line. Never give any slack line to a tailor or he will quite often throw the hooks.

When the white water is within easy reach of a cast with little or no lead the bait spinning method can be used with advantage because these semifloating baits are most attractive day or night and when tailor are thick these baits are often taken as soon as they hit the water. One well known angler was timed for a period with a stop watch and caught an average of one fish every 33 seconds.

The tailor angler who at times desires to fish for other fish including big reef fish often prefer the Alvey light game reel which is ideally suitable for any type of fishing either from the beach rocks or launch. Light game drag reels are fitted with a powerful non reversing Star drag designed mainly to stop big reef fish quickly, before they can cut your line on the reef or wedge themselves firmly into a crevice in the rocks.

The drag is optional so this reel can be used if desired as an ordinary reel. However a flick of the lever is all that is necessary to bring the drag into immediate action.

Spare spools are available at extra cost for carrying various sized lines which can be changed in a few seconds.

With one of the following reels you will be suitably equipped for any type of fishing.

The Rod for tailor fishing must have sufficient strength to cast heavy sinkers or spinners but it should also have good tip action to prevent break offs when casting and to assist in hooking and playing fish.

Experienced surf anglers prefer one piece rods from 12 to 15 long either hollow Rangoon cane or tubular glass for lightness and strength. They have their reel about 8 inches from the butt and the first rod runner approximately half way between the reel and the tip of the rod. If placed too close to the reel the runner will restrict the cast. However an Alvey open runner can be bound into the rod a few inches above where the rod is normally held with the left hand. This serves the same purpose as an ordinary runner and controls the line when fishing and also prevents the cutting action of the line on the fingers when playing a fish but being an open runner the line can be slipped out when casting, therefore does not restrict the cast.

The Line. Light lines cast better than heavy ones but they need the strength to cast heavy sinkers or spinners. 12 to 15 lb lines are popular for beach fishing but for fishing from rocks where fish have to be lifted or winched up you may need 18 lb line.

The Reel. This can be the light surf, Supersurf, Ball Bearing or light Game drag. ALVEY of course, for this is the only type of reel that will do everything to the entire satisfaction of successful tailor angler, Amateur or professional.

For casting a bait with heavy surf sinkers, for spinning with metal lures or what is even more important for bait spinning with little or no lead at all, there are no better reels.

As tailor often run in with the bait, the fast, direct line recovery of the Alvey is most important as tailor will quite often throw the hooks if given slack line.

Their simplicity commends them. There are no gears or automatic gadgets which can be potential source of mechanical failures due to the effects of salt water or sand.

Lots of good tailor are caught around rocky headlands. Here again your Alvey reel with its powerful direct line recovery (no gears) will winch your fish up onto high rocks from which you can fish in safety.

These are just some of the reasons why anglers equipped with Alvey reels seem to have all the luck, but its not just luck, no sir, the reel can make all the difference.

You can choose any of the following reels with the knowledge that your reel is equal to the best and is similar to that being used by Australia's leading anglers.

Tailor can of course be caught on much smaller reels but for maximum efficiency we recommend the popular Surf Champion 6½ dia. 650/A1. 650/A3 or 7½ dia. 700/A3 light surf reels or the 6½ dia. 675/A1, 675/A3 or 7½ dia. 750/A3 super surf reels.

Ball Bearing reels. For those who specialize in metal spinning or who desire the ultimate in tailor fishing equipment should consider these reels with two specially enclosed ball races packed in grease to ensure long lasting operational perfection. A large star adjusting nut is provided to give instant spool tension when desired. Ball bearing reels are available in the following models 6½ inch dia. 650/D3 and 7½ dia. 700/D3 light surf reels; 6½ inch dia. 675/D3 and 7½ dia. 750/D3 super surf reels

Light Game Drag reels. Tailor anglers who by way of a change, enjoy fishing for other fish, including big reel fish, either from a launch or from rocks, often prefer non reversing drag reels. Reel fish have to be stopped quickly, before they cut your line on the reel or wedge themselves into a crevice in the rocks. These reels serve both purposes equally well. The drag is optional but when desired can, by flicking a lever, be brought into immediate action.

Spare spools, for carrying different sized lines are an available extra and can be changed over in a few seconds.