Taming the mighty Tyers

Situated around 3.5 hours drive east of Melbourne, Lake Tyers is a quaint little town, boasting some amazing fishing.

Hidden amongst the wild forest, Lake Tyers is an anglers’ dream. From big flathead, bream, silver trevally, mulloway, tailor and a host of others, it’s no wonder why many anglers head there throughout the year.

Although the fishing is top notch, it can change rapidly. Blocked off from the ocean for most of the year, winter rains and king tides bust open the sand dune to the sea every few years. This gives the lake a flush out, which improves the fishing weeks after it re-closes.

The Victorian DEPI continue to keep Lake Tyers as a sustainable fishery with the continual stocking of fish into the system. The most recent stocking was the release of 25,000 estuary perch in November 2015 along with 16,000 mulloway in 2015 and 2016. These fish have thrived in the system and despite the mass of fish released into the lake, catching them is still a challenge.

WHAT TO Chase

For such a little waterway, Lake Tyers has endless fishing opportunities. Dusky flathead and bream might be the most highly sought, however, silver trevally, mullet, estuary perch and the elusive mulloway are also a possibility.

Flathead

Dusky flathead would stand out as the most prized species, mainly due to their size, as catching a fish of over the metre mark isn’t uncommon.

The population of flathead in Tyers is of epic proportions, however they are most active during the warmer months of the year. For the cooler months, they go into hibernation and you’d be lucky to catch one in ten trips.

Throughout the summer months, they can be caught using a variety of techniques. Some anglers prefer to use bait with a running sinker rig. A small size 1 ball sinker can be threaded onto the leader and allowed to freely run down to a size 1/0 bait style hook, and this will cover most of your bases for flathead. This rig is particularly productive in the deeper section of the lake, as well as up both the Toorloo and Nowa Nowa arms when you set yourself on the edges of the banks.

Flathead tend to sit themselves on the edges of the banks waiting for prawns and minnows to swim over the edges where they ambush them. Finding the right ground is equally important, otherwise you could be getting yourself caught up in snags and on the weeded bottom. Where possible, try to locate the most shell grit-ridden bottom, as the soft mud and sand makes it easier for them to hide.

Flathead respond well to most baits, but with a huge prawn population in Tyers, freshly brought prawns from the local bait shop are a sure bet. Prawns can also be caught in the lake itself if you’re up there during the new moon period. A simple net and torch will do the job, and just wading in the shallows at night can see you easily catch a few kilos. When using them for bait, don’t forget to peel them. Leaving the shell on won’t be as effective a peeling it off.

Lure fishing for flathead is one of the most effective and popular techniques used today. Those fishing from a boat or kayak can access the more out of reach locations as opposed to those fishing from the bank. Lure fishing is a lot of fun, and arming yourself with the right selection is as important as peeling the shell from a fresh prawn. Lake Tyers isn’t that deep in the locations you’ll find flathead, so you can comfortably great away with using a 2/0 1/4oz jighead.

Soft plastic selection should be based on what the flathead are eating and with an abundance of prawns and small smelt in the system, prawn and baitfish imitations are deadly throughout the entire system.

Hardbody lures are also extremely effective, however selecting the right one is imperative. Because you’d be casting from the deep into the shallows, a diving lure that reaches a depth of around 1m is ideal. Hardbody lures work best with a slow winding retrieve and a long pause. This will allow the lure to dive down to the bottom and when left, will slowly rise up (assuming the chosen lure is a floating model).

Another effective lure is a small metal vibe. Commonly used on bream, metal vibes attract flathead to them because of the noise they emit when being retrieved. Vibes in the 30-50mm length are very effective, however many anglers tend to use them for bream rather than flathead. Flathead are quick to devour them, but due to the light leader used when targeting bream, flathead are often lost. When using vibes for flathead, upsize the leader to 12-15lb to ensure you’re not chewed off during the fight. Vibes work best when worked similar to soft plastics, however they do require a slower lift and a longer pause. Lifting the rod tip around a metre into the air at a slow pace will have the vibe do its thing. When lowering the rod tip back towards the surface, slowly retrieve the excess line until taught. Once you feel the resistance of the lure on the bottom, stop winding and pause for up to five seconds, then begin to lift the rod tip once again and repeat the process back to the boat.

When you are starting out on Tyers in search of flatties, a good place to begin is along the bank to the north just out of boat ramp number
two. I usually begin on the point to the left just before heading up the Toorlo Arm and work it back towards the Nowa Nowa arm on first light. From there, I like to drive the boat over the shallow bank to the right of the Nowa Nowa Arm, pull up on the bank, anchor the boat and jump out to wade the edge, casting out into the deep water under the powerlines.

Following that, I like to travel up either arm, stopping and hitting every point or bend that I round as I travel up the system. Most of the banks extend from the hills out into the water and while shallow, I work the edges as they drop off into the deeper water.

**Bream**

Bream are secondary to flathead when it comes to flicking about Tyers, except rather than working the banks, the snags and coastline is where you’ll find most of the action.

Bream tend to be targeted more in winter, mainly due to the hordes of anglers focusing on flathead throughout the warmer months, but can still be caught in summer on the shallow flats in the early morning rather than in the deep.

Throughout summer, bream tend to hide and become quite cagey. Whether that’s something to do with the increased sunlight making them shy I’m not quite sure, but I do know that at first light, fishing the flats is where you’ll tend to catch most of them. As the morning wears on, you’ll need to hit the banks, especially the snags where they seek shelter and can hide from birds that might fly down for an easy meal.

While bait fishing is popular among the older generation, it is very productive when using freshly peeled prawns in the same manner as you would when bait fishing for flathead. Pulling the boat up onto the edge of the bank will give you a fair area to flick out baits back into the deeper water. If you’re near a bunch of fallen trees, flick an unweighted prawn among the timber limbs, and hold on. The fight will be fast and furious and most end up getting busted off, but if you want big bream, you have to cast into these areas.

Bream have quite a small mouth, however they still have no worries devouring a 5” prawn in one mouthful. Hooks should be kept quite small though, with a no. 4-5 size the biggest you should go.

Lure fishing on the other hand is a much more popular fishing technique used these days and is very effective in these areas. Knowing that bream mostly inhabit the bank edges and snags, anglers have to be super quiet when hitting these features. Sitting a good 10m from the bank or snag will give a good area to cast lures to. Depending on the time of day, different lures will work best. In the morning, 40-50mm shallow diving crankbaits will work wonders. Towards the afternoon, you may want to hit the snags and use deep diving models and or sinking stickbaits, however the snags are often covered with barnacles and this can be costly for those throwing hardbody lures. As an alternative, 70mm grub style soft plastics will still get their fair share of fish and won’t hurt the bank account as much.

Throughout the winter period, bream tend to come away from the banks and snags and school up in the main body of the arms. Locating them is easy with a good fish finder and when you do, metal vibes in the 30-40mm range are deadly.

**Tailor**

Lake Tyers has quite a healthy population of tailor and many tend to be lost due to anglers using light leader that doesn’t stand up to their sharp teeth. Tailor are usually caught as a by-catch by those fortunate enough to stay connected, however to specifically target them, trolling small 17-90mm diving lures is the most effective technique.

Tailor tend to be found in schools in the bottom lake and as soon as you leave from boat ramp number two, your lures should be deployed. Trolling between the Toorlo and Nowa Nowa area is where you’ll find the majority of them and while the majority aren’t that big, you do strike it rich with a solid kilo model from time to time.

**Silver trevally**

Trevally are another species that are abundant throughout the Tyers system, but rarely specifically targeted. Once again, they tend to be caught as a by-catch while flicking hardbodies and soft plastics for bream and flathead.

Although they can be caught throughout the system, specifically targeting them can be a challenge. Most of the trevally caught are from the deep channels in the main lake around the two islands as well as up the Nowa Nowa Arm in the Devils Hole. If you are going to try your hand at targeting them, stick to throwing 3” soft plastics throughout the deeper channels.

**Prawns**

Prawning is an extremely popular affair in Lake Tyers and while they are not available all year, any month with an ‘r’ in it is when they are out and about. Prawns grow around an inch a month, so the later you leave it to catch them in season, the bigger they will be. February, March and April tend to be the better times to catch the larger ones. During any night, you can catch prawns, however the lead up to a new moon is best.

Catching prawns is very easy, providing you have all the gear. Waders, a prawn net and an underwater light are mandatory, and although you can use a torch above the water, they can be difficult to see especially if there is any wind.

In Lake Tyers, the popular location to catch prawns is right in front of the Waterwheel Tavern. From here, just walk in the shallows around the edges and you’ll be sure to pick up a good feed.

**BOATING TECHNIQUES**
Lake Tyers is quite a popular fishery year-round, but it does see an influx of anglers in the summer months. Keep in mind, the lake is not mapped on any GPS Mapping System, so navigating around should be done with care. When you’re embarking on your first mission to Tyers, follow the channel markers out from the boat ramp, then stick to the middle of the arms as you travel up the system. The shallow banks jut out on each point quite some distance from the shoreline and you shouldn’t try to take any shortcuts, you could end up running aground!

While any size boat can be launched into Tyers, those specifically set up for lure fishing are recommended. An electric motor is an essential bit of gear, especially if you are lure tossing, so you can keep concentrating on specific features rather than having the wind blow you off course when drifting.

Working points and flats also requires certain techniques too. Don’t go in with all guns blazing, rather you should sneak in quietly and focus your casts on areas you think will hold fish like snags, sandy patches and the edges of weed beds.

Don’t be in a hurry to leave if you don’t get a hit on the first ten casts either, as flathead and bream can stay in the one area for quite some time before striking. This is the whole reason for ensuring that with every cast made, the retrieve makes the bait look as natural as a live bait swimming about.

**Land-based options**

There are many nooks and crannies land-based anglers can access for a spot of fishing, and while the usual haunts do get a few anglers at them on weekends and during holidays, you can always head down the access tracks to find your own little hideaway away from the crowds. Roads such as the Burnt Bridge Track around 5km from the Lake Tyers township give good water access. Bream and flathead are the main species to be targeted. Bait fishing is popular, but so is flicking around soft plastics along the edges.

Following the Princes Highway up past the Nowa Nowa township will lead you to the Lake Tyers House Road on your right. This leads down through the forest with many dirt tracks such as Morgans Landing Track, Ironbark Track, Reedy Arm Number Two Track and the Trident Arm Track, which all lead down to the lake. Once again, you can find your own secluded area and get to work wading the shallows while flicking to the edges. It is recommended that a 4x4 be taken down here, especially during winter, as the roads are dirt and can be tricky if wet.

If you’re a less adventurous angler, there are many opportunities around Lake Tyers township itself. The jetty located at boat ramp number two is a hotspot for bream and flathead during the night. Bait fishing is preferred, with a running sinker rig and peeled prawn bait the best rig.

Stick to using small hooks when you’re bait fishing. A #6 sized bait hook in a red colour is ideal for bream, while a 1/0 long shank hook is perfect for flathead.

Lake Tyers is full of potential and whether you’re fishing from a boat, kayak or land-based, there are plenty of locations to explore and flick. Being a year-round fishery and a nice place to stay either by yourself or with the family, Lake Tyers is one place that should be high on the agenda the next time you’re looking to find that little piece of paradise to relax.

**TYERS TACKLE**

**Flathead**

- **Rod**: Wilson Magnum 7ft 2-4kg spin or equivalent
- **Reel**: Shimano Sedona/Stradic 1000/2500 or equivalent
- **Line**: Mustad Thor 6lb or equivalent
- **Leader**: Wilson FC 15lb or equivalent
- **Lures**: Yakamito SXY Shad, Zerek Live Shrimp, Squidgy 100mm fish.
- **Bait**: Live or freshly peeled prawn.

**Bream**

- **Rod**: Wilson Magnum 6’6” 1-3, 7ft 2-4kg spin or equivalent
- **Reel**: Shimano Sedona/Stradic 1000/2500 or equivalent
- **Line**: Mustad Thor 6lb or equivalent
- **Leader**: Wilson FC 6lb or equivalent
- **Lures**: Yakamito Intruder S, Yakamito SXY Shad, Yakamito Slim Minnow 60mm, Zerek Flash Minnow.
Bait: Live or freshly peeled prawn.

**Trevally and tailor**

Rod: Wilson Magnum 7ft 2-4kg spin or equivalent

Reel: Shimano Sedona/Stradic 1000/2500 or equivalent

Line: Mustad Thor 6lb or equivalent

Leader: Wilson FC 8lb or equivalent

Lures: Yakamito SXY Shad, Zerek Live Shrimp, Squidgy 100mm fish.

**Mulloway**

Rod: Wilson Magnum 7ft 2-4kg spin or equivalent

Reel: Shimano Sedona/Stradic 1000/2500 or equivalent

Line: Mustad Thor 10lb or equivalent

Leader: Wilson FC 15lb or equivalent

Lures: Zerek Live Shrimp, Squidgy 100mm fish.

Bait: Live mullet or tailor.

**BOAT RAMPS**

**Lake Tyers Number 1** Small concrete ramp that is not in operation. Best only used to launch kayaks.

**Lake Tyers Number 2** Excellent 2 lane ramp with floating pontoons, fish cleaning tables and public toilets.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mill Point</th>
<th>Fisherman’s Landing</th>
<th>Nowa Nowa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dirt ramp with good access to Toorloo Arm. Smaller craft recommended to launch here.</td>
<td>A good ramp located in the southern reaches of the lake to the east of Boat Ramp Number 2 and is located just off Mill Point Road.</td>
<td>Located in the township of Nowa Nowa near the top of the lake. This ramp gives good access into the Nowa Nowa Arm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mill Point has fewer facilities with just one fish cleaning table. Launching can be difficult as it has a high angle into the water.</td>
<td>Mainly used by smaller to medium sized boats, but is well maintained</td>
<td>It is about a 20-minute drive up the Princes Highway towards Orbost. Facilities include a playground and toilet facilities. There is also a floating pontoon.</td>
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Facilities include a floating pontoon and fish cleaning facilities and a public toilet.

**PLACES TO STAY**

**Lake Tyers**

Lake Tyers Camp and Caravan Park

558 Lake Tyers Rd, Lake Tyers Beach VIC 3909 laketyerscaravanpark.com.au

(03) 5156 5530

**Lake Tyers**

Lakes Beachfront Holiday Retreat

430 Lake Tyers Rd, Lake Tyers Beach VIC 3909 lakesbeachfront.com.au

(03) 5156 5582

**Lakes Entrance**

Lakes Entrance Tourist Park

127 Princes Hwy, Lakes Entrance VIC 3909 lakesentrancetouristpark.com.au

(03) 5155 1159

**Lakes Entrance**
Bush Camping

Bush Camping is also available along the Trident Arm but check local regulations first by heading to [www.parkweb.com.au](http://www.parkweb.com.au) or [http://www.exploreaustralia.net.au/Victoria/East-Gippsland/Lake-Tyers-Forest-Park/Trident-Arm-camping-area](http://www.exploreaustralia.net.au/Victoria/East-Gippsland/Lake-Tyers-Forest-Park/Trident-Arm-camping-area)

Images

Bream are abundant throughout Lake Tyers and are a willing lure taker.

Known as 'lure thieves', big tailor can be caught throughout the system.
Throughout the summer months' prawns are a viable option to catch in the shallows at night.

Prawns are a natural food for flathead in Lake Tyers and you'll find you get the best results when using prawn imitation style lures.
If you’re after big flathead, don’t use any lure under 100mm in length.

When searching for flathead, look for a mixture of shell grit and mud on the bottom. Most of the banks are shallow and finding these areas is quite easy.

Bream are a common catch for all anglers. Flicking the snags is where you’ll find them schooled up.
If you're going to search for bream, ensure your using the right gear.

Boat ramp number two offers the best launching facilities in the system.

When flicking the edges, always ensure you are within casting distance of the bank.
Small vibes are deadly on bream year-round.

Silver trevally might be more of a by-catch, but they are a lot of fun on light tackle.