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Gurnard fishing



Terrain

Primarily gurnard are found on the sand and can be prolific at certain times of the year. They eat worms, crustaceans, small fish and crabs. They seem to hang where there is a variation on the bottom like a hole, bank or incline. They can also just be out in the middle of nowhere too.

Berley and bait

A good berley trail will bring the fish to you especially if there is current running. Sometimes it takes 30 minutes or more to bring the fish on. A dispenser on the bottom is the way to berley. Minced tuna, pilchards, paua gut etc is good. Fillet baits like blue mackerel and trevally are proven performers as are strips of skipjack tuna and pilchard. Bait size of about half a finger is good but smaller cubes or squid tentacle size are good too.

water temp/time of year

They don't mind the water being a bit colder and are one of the first good quality fish coming back to Wellington are the winter break. When the temp comes up from 10-11 degrees (winter) up to 12-14 degrees celcius its time for the gurnard to return. They don't seem to mind the warm 16 – 18 degree temp but move off when the temp drops down again during our winter. I presume they go north.

Further north they are in good numbers throughout the winter and during summer. Spring time heralds the return of 'grunTERS' in wellington waters and they heard up in places like fitzroy and lyall bay and at the harbour entrance before spreading out through the harbour.

Spawning time in wgtN seems to be during November and December depending on the season. They don't go off the feed for long, only a week or two. They are in their best nick just prior to spawning then again late summer.

Rigs – Any rigs work well as long as your bait is near the bottom. The ledger rig or running rig are the most commonly used at present, also straylining or using jig heads, softbait and slow jigs. I normally fish a ledger and running rig and see which one works the best on the day. Normally the lighter the trace and smaller the hooks, the better the hookup rate.

Ledger (dropper) rig

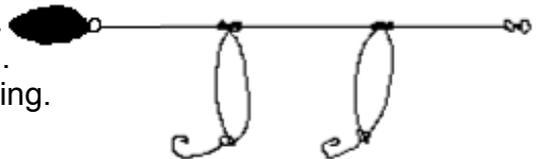
3-5oz sinker for surfcasting and 4 – 20oz sinker for boatfishing (depending on current)

The droppers can be single strand tied with unit knots

or dropper knots with double strands or cut into singles.

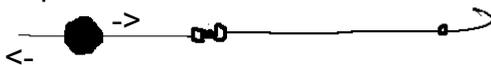
My preferred hook size is a 2/O but #1 to 3/O are good.

Recurves are good for mouth hookups and are self setting.



Running sinker

You need enough weight to get to the bottom. Sometimes this is 1/2oz sometimes 2oz, it depends on the tide. Stronger current or landbased fishing require a larger sinker to get the bait to the fish area. The sinker runs up and down the line and can be on top of the hook or on top of the swivel.



Shore fishing specifics

They are harder to catch off the shore but are the 1st good quality fish angler encounter after mastering redcod and kahawai. They certainly feed better around dawn and dusk but not usually before light and after dark.

Harbour hotspots - Miramar wharf, Seatoun wharf, on points or headlands along the Eastbourne coast,

Coastal hotspots - (Wairarapa) 'The Spit' in Palliser bay, White rock, Castlepoint (south coast) Fitzroy and Pencarrow bay, along the airport runway road in Lyall bay.

A lumo or flouro bead or small poly float above the hook has been known to attract gurnard