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Blue moki – the premiere 'southern' sport and table fish for surfcasters



(pic above) - A fine 5kg blue moki caught on Wellington's south coast on the turn of light.

Moki fight incredibly hard for their size and are dirty fighters heading for the reef and weed once hooked. They can be caught all year round but after the annual spawning run they are in good numbers and can be caught much easier. October through summer to autumn is the best time. The legal size limit for blue moki is 40cms (this is when they mature). That is about a 1kg fish.

Area they are found

shingle beaches on the edge of a reef. Moki come in close to shore around the turn of light and feed around patches of weed. The most common thing we have found in their stomachs are small paua, limpits and brown crunched weed with a sandhopper like creature mixed into it. They can also be found around wharf structures and rocks

With the rising tide the swell stirs up the decaying weed and sandhoppers anywhere on a shingle beach. This is where 'school' moki feed. Smaller hooks and bait can be more effective here

Big resident fish are more likely to feed around a particular rock and be susceptible to bigger baits.

Good moki spots

#1 is on the edge of a rocky patch

#2 is at a stream mouth

#3 is along side a reef area.

Bait

Cray, crab, paua gut, tua-tua, prawn or mussel all tied on with cotton.

The fresher the better.

Small baits seem to work better when the fish are hard to catch.

Berley

Berlying up a spot certainly helps.

You can throw it in, use berley cage sinkers or put a dispenser into the water (on outgoing tide) or into a nearby stream. Crushed up crab, cray boddies, kina,

mussel, prawn is all good product

When to fish

Primarily the turn of light or after dark are the best times. Sometimes you'll catch them during daylight hours. A rising tide can be good and the midpoint between moonrise and set can also be good.

Casting

Short casts just behind the breakers or next to a rock or reef.

The bite

Sometimes moki suck the bait in and 'steam off' like a run-away freight train. Other times they pick and suck the bait.

Rigs and terminal tackle and gear

With wind or swell running an upside down pyramid sinker grips into the shingle and helps you keep tight line and detect bites. Small hooks between #1 and 2/0 get more hookups than using larger 3 to 4/0 hooks. You need to use strong hooks and don't go too hard on a fish to risk pulling the hook.

10kg line is good but you may like to fish lighter or heavier depending on conditions and your target fish. Braid is very good for detecting bites (no stretch).

Many fishers use light line for a bit more fun and the fish find it harder to detect.

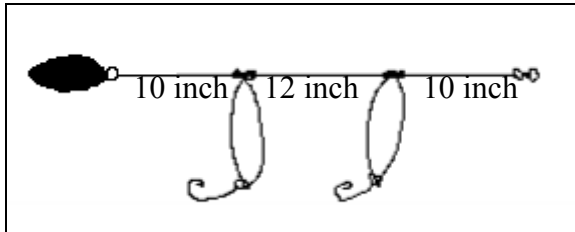


Rods and reels

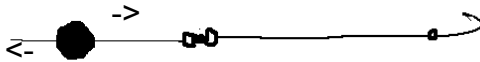
12 – 13ft surfcasters are the preferred rod but smaller rods can be used in good conditions. Carbon fibre are preferred for the extra power. Free-spools and fixed-spool reels are both used with no preference although free do have less line twist, a ratchet warning system and cast heavier line further.

Rigs/traces

The ledger rig with one or two hooks is the most common rig for most surfcasting in Wellington. 4 - 5oz sinker (either torpedo for rough ground or upside down pyramid or breakaway for clean ground). 1 - 4/0 hooks, 25 to 40lb trace line

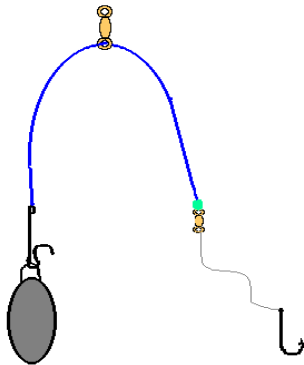


The running rig is a good rig for calm conditions. The sinker can sit on top of the swivel or the swivel and can be 1/4oz up to 6oz depending on conditions



You can have a 2nd hook running on top the main hook or have it fixed with a snood knot a inch or 2 up from the main hook

Pete McGrath (left) and Pete Lamb with a 4kg blue moki caught January 2009 at Long Beach.



The pully rig – the hook clips into the bait clip (just above the sinker) prior to casting and detaches when the sinker hits the water. This is one of the best rigs for big distance. The bait clip can also be an impact shield or imp clip.

(right) - a selection of **berley cage sinkers** – tie the sinker onto a ledger rig and scrunch a mixture of berley and breadcrumbs into the cage. It will handle the cast and take about 5 minutes to ooze out in the water, attracting the fish to your baits. 3 – 4oz berley cages are the best for surfcasting.

Extra gear

- a sturdy beachspike, 2 x spool of cotton/ bait elastic (for tying on baits)



- headlamp and torch (or antern) for nightfishing
- 2 x knives, bait board , chilly bag or bin
- Food and drink, warm clothing
- 10 x 4 to 5oz sinkers, 20 x 1/O to 4/O hooks
- 10 swivels, spare nylon, rod tip, gumboots, wet weather gear, 1st aid kit, rope

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