

The Perfect Morning Fishing!

By Daniel Moses





Over the Christmas/New Year break, like most families my family and I packed up the camping gear, shoved it in the car and headed off on a camping holiday.

We went to the Coromandel Peninsula to a little place called Waikawau Bay. If you have been there before you will know how beautiful a place it really is, but for those that haven't let me tell you a little bit about it. Waikawau is a beautiful bay with a sandy beach and a rocky coast line. It is surrounded by native bush and there is plenty of fun to be had in both the water and on land. The best part about this coast line is that it is scattered with plenty of good reefs for fishing and diving. So how do you get there...?

Waikawau Bay is about a 45 minute drive north of Coromandel township. You drive through Colville, after which the road becomes gravel, so it really feels like you are heading off the beaten track. You then drive over to the eastern side of the Coromandel Peninsula to Waikawau Bay. We stayed at the DOC campsite which is right on the beach and is an awesome camp ground if your into 'REAL CAMPING' with none of that fancy stuff like TV rooms, kitchens and hot showers.

Once we set up camp, I just wanted to get out there fishing. I had been dreaming for weeks about catching big snapper and kingfish from the




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kayak. But of course I had to build up some brownie points with the wife first... So I made the most of it and while the wife had her sleep-ins, the kids and I had a few little adventures of our own, exploring the little creeks and the bush nearby. There is also a small lagoon that fills up at high tide right next to the campground, so I grabbed the double kayak, chucked the buoyancy aids on and took the kids to explore the lagoon. It's not a big lagoon, but there are still plenty of fun things to explore like tree and root formations and little fish to see. It was also an outstanding place for the kids to try their kayaking skills. Whilst we were there it served as a great place for my oldest boy Jack, who is six, to master his paddling skills, and it didn't take long before he was paddling the double all by himself with his two younger siblings in front.

After a day or two of having some fun with the kids, the weather window opened up and the next day was looking perfect. So I ask my wife very nicely if I could have a hall pass to head out fishing in the morning. She said YES!

That night I prepped all my gear double checked every knot and rig,

loaded it all up into my Ultra 4.7 ready for the early start the next morning. As I lay in bed that night I couldn't stop thinking of the potential big fish to be caught. Needless to say it felt like forever for 5 am to roll around! Finally it did but I had one last challenge to overcome before I could get out fishing. That was to get up and out without waking up any of the kids, which is quite difficult when you have a two year old who sleeps like a feather and you're in a tent!

Finally I was on the beach with my kayak in tow looking out at a perfect sun rise and glassy blue water. YES – met. service got right this time! My dad and brother in law Johan then joined me. Once on the water we headed to the first potential spot about 1.5 km from the beach. It was a rocky out-crop with scattered reef surrounding it. We spent a bit of time there but unfortunately with not much luck, so we decided to head out deeper and try a little reef further off shore. On the way out there we came across a big pod of dolphins passing through. The morning couldn't get much better. It's always a bonus to see dolphins when out paddling and all we needed now was the fish to show up.




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When we arrived at the reef we paddled around the structure scoping it out with the fish finder. There was plenty of signs, but after a few passes over the reef and not much luck Johan got impatient and decided to head back in a little closer off the point of Waikawau Bay. My dad and I decided to stay for a little longer hoping that the fish would come on the bite. We did a quick radio check before he headed off, because after all if he started to catch more fish than me then I wanted to hear about it!

A bit of time went by and our hopes were fading when I heard a "Wahoo!"



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come over the radio from Johan bragging about the nice kahawai he just pulled in.

Deliberating to myself whether we should stay or go to join him, I thought well I'm really after a nice snap. So after a short discussion with dad, we decided to stay out deep but to drift over the sand and see what happened.

Not long after we drifted off the reef and onto the sand we started to get same hits on the soft bait. Being deep water I decided to rig my soft bait rod with a heavier jig head than normal and rigged it with a gulp nemesis. This seemed to work a treat and all of a sudden it was on. It seemed to be every second to third cast we were hooking up and it didn't take long before something big took my line. With the rod bending and line screaming off the reel I knew it was the one I had come for. After a few minutes went by and a few big runs, the line all of a sudden went slack.... I cried out in disbelief winding in the slack and then hung my head in shame. I inspected my trace, knot and jig head trying to figure out what when wrong, only to find the rig was fine and it was just bad luck that the fish wasn't well hooked.

Thinking to myself that I had blown my chances of landing the big one I cast my line out for another crack. A couple of casts later I was on to another good fish. This time I made sure the hook was set well and played it nicely. After a few big runs and about 20 minutes of fighting, the fish tired out and I wound in the big one I had longed for. As I tried to land it I realised that I was going to need a bigger landing net! Just managing to half fit it in the net, I flicked it on board and let out a big "WAHOO!" Finally I had the big Coromandel snapper I had come for. After bragging over the radio to Johan, we headed back in. We had plenty for a feed and my curfew of 12 pm was fast approaching so we started paddling back. It took a bit of patience but in the end it turned out to be a perfect morning fish.

Once back at the campsite I trolleyed my kayak back through camp with my head held high with dinner in the back. The one thing I forgot to bring with me though was a way to weigh or measure my big snapper. So I won't speculate too much, but all I can say is it was over the 60 cm mark. Take a look at the photo, I'll leave the rest up to you.

Check the video out on Canoe & Kayak BOP Facebook page.

