



Freshwater Fishing with Kim Bain

Lessons From Somerset

Part 5 in our series on freshwater impoundments & rivers, written and photographed by Kim (and Steve) Bain

Somerset was possibly the first impoundment that I had ever camped at. Well before I'd become a teenager I can remember trolling for bass, golden perch (back in those days we called them yellowbelly) and silver perch.

Then after dark we'd soak earthworms (dug from the garden in our backyard) or fresh shrimps (caught from local creeks running into the dam where they were more plentiful than in the dam itself) for catfish and silver perch.

I well remember one night in the middle of a good bite on the silver perch, a friend and I from the fishing club were down by the bank catching silver after silver on earthworms. Well, actually my rod kept arcing over with the tough fighting little troopers, while my fishing buddy's stayed straight.

Meanwhile the club's campfire on the hill looked inviting and the adults from the club were cooking up a storm. Feeling hungry and desiring the warmth of a campfire I suggested that we pack up and go back to camp.

"Not before I catch a fish", said my friend. The next two bites came on his rod but it never loaded up. I was getting colder and hungrier. My rod arced over and I seized the opportunity.

I handed that rod over with enough force to drive the butt deep into his ribs. He was slightly winded but he enjoyed the walk up the hill to show off his catch. I was warmed by both the fire and a good meal.



Above: Lynn Bain with a fine pair of 4 lb Golden. Facing Page: The author found these fish on her portable Humminbird, and dropped a tiny metal jig down to them. The hookups were fast and furious, even though the fish weren't that big. Inset: A Golden Perch taken on a trolled deep diver.

I truly think that there is just as much fun telling tales around a campfire as there is in catching the fish

that generate the stories. I remember that this Dam was the location of my first ever "rod going off while I was having a swim" situation. And it wasn't the only time either. You would think that a kid would learn. Also I remember putting a cast up an old tree that was out in the middle of one of the coves. So I decided to climb the old thing to get my lure back. "Whoops!" was not quite the word that entered my mind as I peered down to watch my dingy drifting away. Yep, another swim! Somerset was the site of another first for me. The first night that I ever camped out under the stars! A little scary at first, snuggled up in my sleeping bag, gazing at the stars and going to sleep out in the open.

Background Somerset Dam, built on the Stanley River system, was constructed in 1959 as a means to supply town water to the S.E Queensland water system.

With the assistance of a number of fish stocking committees, Somerset has been stocked with some good freshwater sportfish. It literally is an angler's treasure trove. The stockings include a high percentage of Australian bass, golden perch (yellowbelly), silver perch and to a lesser extent Mary River Cod and a few saratoga.

Also found in Somerset Dam are snub-nosed gar, catfish, spangled perch, eels and unfortunately, an introduced species known as tilapia.