

CAA Carp Fest – Sunday 18 Jan 26 – Any Style

Description:

Carp, also known as “Mud Marlins”, are an introduced species that has plagued our freshwater lakes and river systems. Even though they are a pest, they can be great fun and allow you to get some great practice for the more complicated fishing in the mountains. Some of you may recall Peter Morse highlighting that one of his most memorable days fishing in Australia was fishing dry flies for Carp. I've caught a few and they are great fun...and really solid fighters!

Please join us on a fun filled day fishing any style you like and a social catch-up at the end of the day.

Organiser: Claude

Date: Sunday 18 January 2026, any time you want. Optional end of day catch-up around 5:00 PM at the “Light House” Emu Bank - Belconnen ([Map to Lighthouse](#)) – let Claude know if you are interested in the catch-up.

Registration: Not essential but helpful if you want me to hook you up with other participants (and also for insurance). Registration is done by sending Claude an email (as above). Registration can be up to the day prior.

I'm happy to take out a new club member with me on the day. You will need to have medium fitness level, be happy to be in the water for a couple of hours (not much river bank to walk and cast from) and be able to cast 20 ft (two rod lengths) to make the best of the day.

Event WhatsApp Group. Let me know if you want to be connected to those also participating in the event please, or just want to see whats going on. You will be able to get constant updates from Peter K catching carp....normally up to 10 during the day 😊.

Fishing Style: Any style.

Safety: Snakes will be active in January, particularly near water, and even around the more bushy parts of the urban lakes. Take precautions with waders or gaiters, and have a snake bandage with you. I strongly recommend a wading stick if your spending time in a river with slippery rocks and don't enter flooded waters.

Meeting Point: The intent is that members can fish individually or in self-organised groups in any location around the Canberra region that suits them and we will meet up at the end of the day for a drink and bowls of hot chips. If you register I can connect you to likeminded fishers: bait or fly, and your preferred location.

Location: Any location you choose. Try any of the local lakes or rivers. The shallows where you can sight fish are best. I intend to tackle a part of the Murrumbidgee that will require a 45 minute walk-in. You may want to tackle something a little closer to town and easier on your thighs, e.g. below Scrivener Dam, Sullivan's Creek, Uriarra Crossing, Queanbeyan River. If it rains the week before the event and the rivers are dirty, I will be chilling out in a camp chair bait fishing at Lake Ginninderra!

Cancellation: It seems that I tend to break droughts by organising a club fishing activity! We have had to cancel a couple of times due to rain in the preceding days, or week, which can change the local rivers to a chocolate colour and to dangerous levels. I will notify the any registered participants on either deferring the event or recommend lake fishing spots in the event of bad weather.

Fishing Hints:

General. Carp are typically bottom feeders but they can also feed on the surface. Carp are easily tackled from shore, boat, kayak. I wouldn't recommend using a leader less than 6lb...they don't have great eye sight and are not leader shy. Use strong hooks – bait or fly.....there are some big suckers out there....below is the result of one of my hook-ups (and lost) carp!



Bait. Corn, bread and/or worms are all great baits. A small circle hook on a 50 cm leader, swivel and the lightest sinker you can cast is my preferred rig. There are plenty of options and suggestions on the web. Peter K can recommend a burley cage configuration if you are interested. I have had to chase a couple of rods into the water, so if you leave your rod out of your hand, don't forget to set a light drag and clip on a bell.

Fly Fishing. You can have a crack at either surface or subsurface tactics. My goal this year is to try to catch a carp on a dry! Nymphs, woolly buggers, bread flies are all options. Drop in and see the guys at the Boss Outdoors for some hints. I also have some fabulous hints from Jason Stratford who has caught over 1000 carp on fly – I'll provide the hints to those that register for the trip 😊. Another source of information is on his [Facebook site 'Kangaroo Carp'](#) or YouTube. Check out some of the photos from previous events on the last page.

Hope to hear from you!

PS: Don't forget to support our club sponsors and local industry when getting your gear – Boss Outdoors and Tackleworld.

Cheers,

Claude

Leader set up...

If you keep a basic trout rig in mind when targeting carp, you won't go wrong. I used to hand tie up tapered leaders but found that debris would get caught on the knots. So now I use factory tapered leaders around 7.5' - 9' and just add 2-3' of tippet. Tippet is entirely dependent on the size of fish and the amount of structure...but for me...I can get away with 8-10lb if I want to muscle fish / using wet flies...6-7lb for dries. You can use tippet rings for wet fly leaders without much issue.

In some places where the fish are highly pressured, very clear water (rare) then I might drop to 5lb for dries but if you hook a 75cm+ carp...you won't win often as you will have trouble moving the 15 odd pound fish if they belly out on the bottom while you try and reel them in.

Sight fishing vs blind casting...

My style of fishing for carp is ALL sight fishing. By that I mean...I will rarely cast at a tailing fish if I cannot clearly see its head. Roiling fish (fish with head buried in a mud cloud) don't get much attention from me as I can normally walk a short distance and find a cruising fish or one feeding in the shallows...or on the surface (even better). Note: sometimes you will see plenty of fish together gulping on the surface. This is a spawning aggregation and generally the fish doing that won't eat. You need to scan the edges of the group and you will see the odd fish feeding / cruising around. Those are the fish to target. Also note that carp generally do not rise to a dry if they are actively feeding on the bottom (unless in very shallow water). They are 'built' to be bottom feeders primarily so are also very clumsy surface feeders and can move the fly with their lips (pushing it across the surface) or miss the fly all together. Patience is key...like trout...it's important to wait until the head drops before setting the hook.

Strip set vs trout strike...

Both work and while I do strip set a lot...the trout strike probably works easier for newcomers as the rod is bent but will still have some shock absorption available when the fish blisters away on its first run...whereas with a strip set...I see a lot of people try and hold the fish (momentarily) which leads to a bust off. Pound for Pound...a carp will pull the head off a trout!!! The easiest way is to just use a steady rod lift as the carp have soft (but very elastic) skin around their mouths so are easy to set the hook on and once set properly, it's rare for them to spit a hook.

Flies...

Flies are generally unweighted and very slow sinking on size 8-10 wide gape strong hooks. Barbless makes it easier to recover flies from the fish and get the fly back in the water to start fishing quickly. In some places (deeper / current or flow) you do need weighted flies to get the fly down to the fish. Again, my fly selection is different to the 'norm'. I tie some patterns that work as a dry and can be sunk through the surface file by giving them a twitch / small strip - where they slowly sink. A slow sinking fly that intercepts a mid-water cruising fish at their eye level will very often get a reactive take. There are so many patterns that will work for carp but the woolly worm is a good all round wet fly as are damsel nymphs, plain old woolly buggers, squirmy worm style flies and pretty much anything that looks 'buggy'. Here is a link to a simple each way bet fly.

<https://vimeo.com/194213054>

On the rod front...use what you are comfortable with.

The rod is merely the delivery method for the size of fly and type of fly line used. I fish a 2wt or 3wt most often as you are limited by the tippet breaking strain and I use fairly small flies compared to a lot of guys and only need to cast short distances (most often 8-10m). Small rods are a lot of fun...I have taken carp around 85cm on the 2wt!

Bigger flies - greater break strain tippet...use the heavier rods. (By that I mean 5 or 6) If you are however in heavy structure...then a beefier rod (7 or above) and heavier tippet may be needed to muscle the fish a bit.

If you use carp as 'training fish' you will quickly learn how much pressure you can pull through the rod without breaking tippets (which is a lot more than people think if you use good rod angles and 'roll' the fish a few times early in the fight).

Most of all...enjoy what you do and how you go about it. Don't follow what everyone says (use it as a start point and then adjust to suit your local water!)

Beware though...this carp on fly thing can be addictive!!!

Photos







