



## Eel Fishing with Large Black Opera House Traps


Large black opera house traps are an easy and quick method of capturing eels from farm dams. Large black traps come in two types with ring and without ring. With rings are designed with a steel ring to keep out platypus and turtles that can drown in the trap. They will catch eels but with a large opening most eels will find the exit and escape.

Large black opera house traps without rings are not allowed in public waters. You cannot use these traps in the wild – you can only use them in your private farm dams. These type traps have a material flap entrance that sits flat, the eel must slide through to enter. Once it's entered the exit sits flat again so it's very hard for the eel to find its way out. These are the traps are very effective at catching eels in farm dams.

Each trap has a bait bag and it is important to use good bait to attract eels. Just about anything will catch an eel but some baits are far more attractive to them than other baits. The best and easiest baits are fish baits, those that you would use for saltwater fishing. We invariably use pilchards. You can purchase a 2kg frozen block of pilchards, keep it in the freezer and just pry off 2 or 3 pilchards to stuff into the bait bag that comes with the trap.

Pilchards are great, they send out a scent trail that the eels can follow back to the trap.

These traps are made in China as crab traps. (Small fingers, cheap wages and materials). The traps are great and work well but you must understand their limitations. The traps consist of lots of twine that is tied with a knot at the end. When an eel enters the trap and is captured it will try and escape after feeding. It will test every knot in the trap using both its head and its tail to push and squeeze through any small crevice or gap. If a weak spot is detected it will keep pushing, plying, thrusting, twisting and wriggling until it makes the hole large enough to escape. The first time you use the trap in 50% of cases the eel will escape as it has tested every knot and found the weak spot. That's okay, just get some twine and sew that hole up and you're back in business and you will get her the next night. Yes, I said her. If you are fishing in freshwater then it will be female eels you will be catching. They are the ones that travel up the freshwater rivers and streams and end up in your farm dams where they stay 10 to 20 years then migrate back to the sea. The males tend to stay in the brackish and saltwater sections of the rivers. Strange but true!



Just tie a rope to the trap, bait it up and throw it into your dam. Try for shallow water around 1.2 mtrs deep as the eels feed along the shallows at night. Best to set the trap in the afternoon and check in the morning, although you will catch eels during the day, they feed best at night.

Good fishing  
Rob.