

FLOAT FISHING

WITH LURES & BAIT

**MADE
EASY**



By Gary Brown

I guess my obsession with float fishing started as a kid when I watched these old guys float fish for luderick off a set of baths at one of my old haunts in Ramsgate, NSW. The baths are still there, but not in the form that they were previously. Nowadays you can't walk along the old timber structure, as it is now only wire netting.

Watching these old anglers do their balancing act, walking along these narrow timber structures, setting up camp at the platform at the end and chucking out a few handfuls of berley. They then carefully placed the stem float in amongst the maze of sand and finely chopped up weed and proceeded to sit and watch for that float to go under.

It wasn't long before I was taken under the wing by old Dick, who was a retired commercial fisherman who previously set nets out for mullet and prawns in Botany Bay. Dick let me borrow one of his outfits and sit beside him to learn the trade of fishing with a float.

Now these were stemmed floats that you would have a bent safety pin at the bottom, so that you could run the line through, and then at the top you would have to do a couple of half hitches to set the depth of your bait. Not only did this make kinks in your mainline, damaging it, it would reduce the time that you had your float in the water.

Green weed for the picking off a local rock platform.





We also used Styrofoam floats, with a hard plastic tube running from top to bottom. To stop it from moving up and down the line Dick would break off a piece of his matches and jam it into the top of the tube. This too damaged the line and the float, while sometimes the match stick would come out rendering the float useless.

Fishing with a float has come along in leaps and bounds since those early days. Stemmed floats now have rings at the top and bottom, you can get floats with rubber sleeves, you can buy plastic stoppers and the list goes on.

Just recently I was introduced to a Tackle Tactics product called A-Just-A Bubble Floats. They are a moulded, hollow, see through piece of plastic that is narrower at one end. Running through the middle is a piece of surgical silicone tube that runs from the top to the bottom. At each end there is a stopper that is attached to this piece of surgical tube that can be pulled out and twisted to lock and unlock the float onto the line.

They are available in Clear or Translucent Green and come in four sizes in the range, 3/8, 1/4, 3/16 and what they call Mini.

To give you a bit of an idea of the size of these floats I will give you the length from top to bottom, the diameter at the widest and smallest point.

Size	Length from top to bottom	Diameter at the widest and smallest point
Mini	41mm	19 to 8mm
3/16	53mm	19 to 6mm
1/4	55mm	21 to 8mm
3/8	63mm	28 to 8mm

Rigging the A-Just-A Bubble Float is very simple. Just feed your mainline through the float, slide it into the required position. Then gently pull out the top cap to twist (at least 5 to 6 turns) the internal surgical rubber. Then place the cap back into the slot, locking the float onto the line.

This allows the float position to be adjusted in seconds, without the use of pegging a match into it or doing a couple of half hitches around the top. This can be very time consuming and damage the line, and the A-Just-A Bubble Floats overcome this.

The A-Just-A Bubble Float can be used when either fishing with bait or a lure off the shore in the estuary or fishing a wash off the rocks or out of a boat. To give you a bit of an idea of the ways you could use the float I will take you through a few scenarios of how I have been using them.



The next time that you are in your local tackle shop keep a look out for A-Just-A Bubble.



These drummer were caught while using green cabbage and the larger 3/8 A-Just-A-Bubble float as it is easier for me to see in the wash.

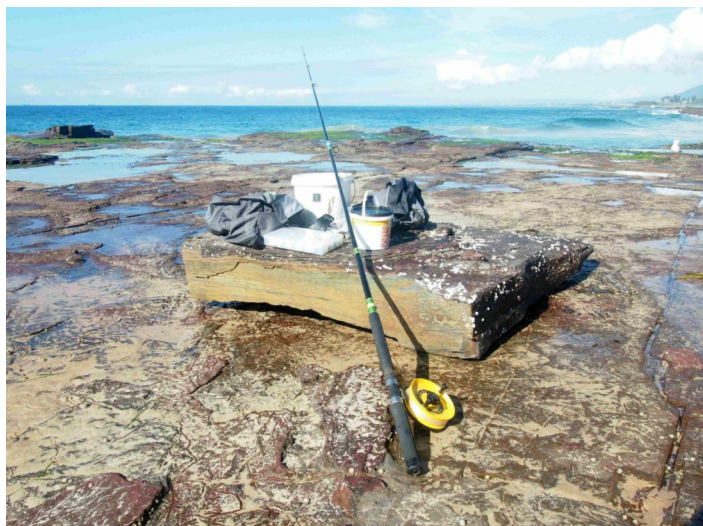
Drummer off the rocks

Now when using the A-Just-A Bubble off the ocean rocks when targeting drummer, I find that I need to always use the 3/8 bubble as the larger bubble is much easier to see in the wash.

The rig when using the 3/8 bubble is quite simple. A small running ball sinker down onto the top of the bait or a small ball sinker down onto a small swivel, with a leader of about 30cm to the hook.

As for baits, you could try peeled prawns, cunje, brown or red crabs, cabbage, green weed and even white bread.

When fishing off the rocks I prefer to use my 3.6m, 3 to 6kg rod, mounted with a side cast reel and spooled with 6kg line.



Now using this method isn't just for drummer. You could target bream, trevally, mullet, squid, tailor, salmon and many more species off the rocks. Now baits aren't the only thing that these fish species will bite. Try substituting a peeled prawn with a 2" or 2.5" ZMan GrubZ, 3" Scented ShrimpZ, 2" CrusteaZ or a 3" Scented CrabZ for brown and red crabs. How about a ZMan 2.5" Slim SwimZ in Pearl for a white bait or what about as a substitute for a pilchard you could try the 5" Scented Jerk Shadz in Nuked Pilchard Glow colour.

Luderick in the estuaries

When targeting luderick in the estuaries and out of a boat I prefer to use two anchors, so that I can position the boat at 90 degrees to the shoreline. This enables me to move the boat sideways with the coming and going of the tide.

To save time you need to have a few rigs pre-made, spare tackle at the ready, berley prepared beforehand, bait and net at the ready and all of this close by.

Finding the correct depth for the bait is critical. Too high in the water and the smaller fish will take the bait and too low in the water the bait will drag along the bottom and get snagged, leading you to believe you have had a down. This is where the A-Just-A Bubble comes into its own, as it is so easy to change the depth with a few twists of the cap.



In this shot you will notice that the boat is perfectly positioned where the edge of the weed and sand meet.

It may have taken us a while to get a few fish, but spot 6 produced the results.



When the float has gone under I will usually allow about three seconds before I wind in any slack and then slow lift the rod to strike. As luderick are tough fighters and will use the current to put pressure on your gear, you will need to take your time when playing the fish back to the boat.

As you will see there is no stem on these floats, so at times you may find the bubble hard to see, especially when there is a fair amount of chop on the water. When the chop is high I will tend to use the 3/8 and if the water surface is very calm the Mini comes into play.

While using the A-Just-A Bubble targeting luderick in the estuaries I don't put any water inside the bubble, as I have already pre-determined the weights (spit shot sinkers) to suit the height I need the bubble to sit at.

My preferred outfit is a 3.2m, 2 to 5kg rod mounted with a threadline reel and spooled with 4kg floating line.

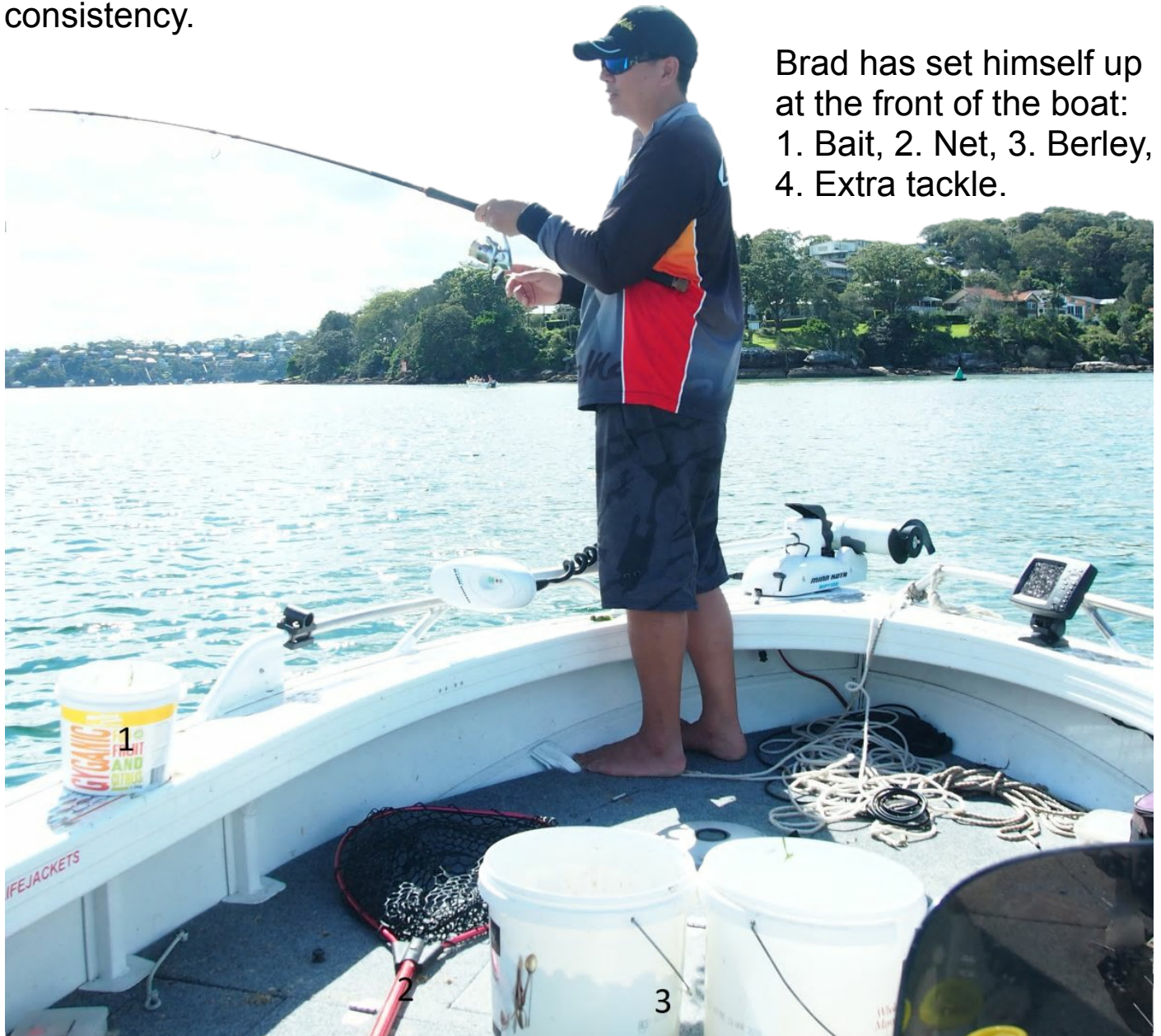


Mullet and garfish in the estuaries.

Most of my fishing for mullet and garfish is done in shallow water (30cm to 1.5 metres) and I will tend to only use the Mini bubble. Mainly due to the ease that the mullet and garfish will either pull the bubble under or move it from side to side as they try to eat the bait.

When rigging the bubble up it's just a matter of threading the line through the surgical tubing, twisting the cap about 5 to 6 times to set the depth, then tying on a small number 12 to 14 hook, putting on a small bit of pre-made pudding bait, then casting out and waiting for the mullet or garfish to take the bait. Berleying with bread crumbs does help to bring the fish on the bite.

My pre-made pudding bait consist of the following; white bread with crust cut off, water, flour and a couple of caps of the Pro-Cure Scent in either Bloodworm or Aniseed. This needs to be mixed into a plasticine consistency.



Brad has set himself up at the front of the boat:
1. Bait, 2. Net, 3. Berley, 4. Extra tackle.



Try suspending either a soft plastic or a bait under an A-Just-A Bubble and drifting it over the weed beds in your local estuary.



Used or disused oyster racks are prime snag country. Try suspending either a soft plastic or a bait under an A-Just-A Bubble and drifting it over them.



Try drifting either a live bait or a soft plastic under a float across the flats for flathead.

Flathead and Bream over the weed beds and flats

Have you ever thought of suspending a 2" or 2.5" ZMan GrubZ under an A-Just-A Bubble? I hadn't until I was doing some research on the net and came across a You Tube clip of using the bubble while fishing for bream beside a breakwall.

<https://youtu.be/qFbX0j3DPzM>

So, next time I was on the water I left the bait at home and concentrated on using the A-Just-A Bubble and instead of putting on a bait, I tried a soft plastic while fishing over a set of weed beds in my local waterway. On my first, second, third and fourth attempts, it didn't work. I would cast it out and let it drift around waiting for the bite. Much like when you are bait fishing. It was just bobbing around doing nothing. Each time I would get more frustrated as I quickly wound it in.

That was until I remembered what Will did in the You Tube clip that I watched earlier. Rather than just cast it out and let it float around, while waiting for the fish to find it, I used the tip of the rod to twitch the bubble so that the soft plastic would rise up from just above the weeds and then slowly float back down. It worked as the float disappeared out of sight and I was hooked up to a decent fish.

What you could also try is to let some water into the bubble so that it sits very shallow in the water. This will give you more casting distance and slightly more resistance in the water, keeping you in touch with the line and soft plastic. Much like when slow rolling a hard bodied lure.

I have found it effective if you rig the 1/4 A-Just-A Bubble Float with the narrower end of the float toward the rod tip when using soft plastics. When using a live bait, say a small poddy mullet, I rig it so that the wider end of the float is towards the rod tip. This will help stop the poddy mullet pulling the float under.

My preferred outfits when using these techniques are my 2.1m, 1 to 3 and 2 to 4kg outfits. Using this length of rod enables me to be able to fish weed beds and flats up to 1.5m in depth.

Even though the A-Just-A Bubble has been around for a number of years and I have only just been introduced to it, I have found that this extremely effective piece of tackle can be put to great use when it comes to using baits and soft plastics.

I have been told that you can use flies while using the A-Just-A Bubble and I can't see why this would not work. Maybe you will come up with a few more techniques when using it. If so you might like to share them with us.



Check out the beautiful markings that luderick have just out of the water.



Bridge pylons and rock walls are ideal spots to try the A-Just-A Bubble out.



Try suspending a squid jig under an A-Just-A Bubble.