

## in this issue...

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- Tonga Part II

Team TT angler Robbie Wells

Species: Wahoo

Jighead: TT Lures Extreme Head Hunter  
1/2oz 7/0XH jig head

Lure: ZMan 8" StreakZ XL in Glow



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# Latest@ZMan



## ZMan World Record (PENDING)

**Fish:** Barramundi  
**Angler:** Mark Hope  
**Location:** Tinaroo  
**Line Class:** 6kg  
**Length:** 127.5cm  
**Weight:** 28.3kg  
**Lure:** ZMan 6 Inch SwimmerZ - Yellow Back

"Z-man SwimmerZ are at least twice as good as the next best competitor. When combined with the TT Warhead, make that 3 times as good"

Mark Hope from World Record Barra Tackle at Yungaburra on Lake Tinaroo has just achieved his goal of 10 World Records! His latest capture is this monstrous Barra on 6kg line and fingers crossed it will be recognised as the World Record in this line class.

Mark's go-to lure for his latest 3 World Records (Pending) is the ZMan 6" SwimmerZ rigged on a TT Lures War Head or Head Hunter Extreme jig head. The SwimmerZ is a realistic swimbait, constructed from 10X Tough, yet super-soft and flexible ElaZtech that allows maximum action, even at super slow speeds.

Tinaroo is a stocked impoundment and these fish will not breed. Mark spends countless hours on the water in pursuit of these monsters on light line. Well done!



The ZMan 2.5" GrubZ are continuing to produce solid bream from around the country. Their 10X Tough construction makes them an ideal option in areas that are plagued with blowies (toadfish), leatherjacket, and pickers and toothies in general.



Ash with a bream from WA

Now that's a solid bream anywhere in the country!

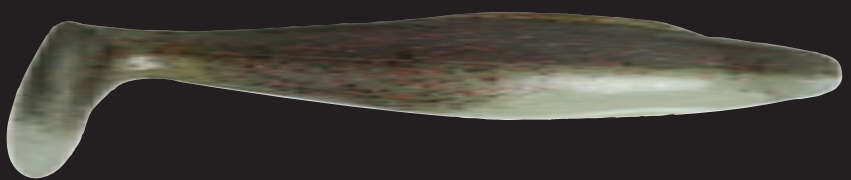
David with a Tassie bream on the 2.5" GrubZ



## Zman 5" Grass KickerZ

The latest release from Australia's fastest growing lure brand is the 5" Grass KickerZ. Features of this soft plastic include an oversized paddle tail that creates an aggressive swimming action, combined with a tapered nose and slim profile that makes it ideal for working over and around heavy cover. The tapered nose makes it ideal for rigging weedless, with a worm hook, TT Lures SWS or Snake Head. Alternatively you can rig the Grass KickerZ with a standard jig head to fish anywhere from the flats to deep offshore.

Grass KickerZ are constructed from space-age ElaZtech, making them 10X tougher than a standard soft plastic and yet super-soft and flexible for maximum action. Whether you are chasing barramundi and jacks around structure, weed beds or in the lilies, mulloway around the bridges or heading offshore, the 5" Grass KickerZ is worth including in your arsenal. The Grass KickerZ comes in a pack of 4 and is available in 8 colours - Pearl / Smokey Shad / Houdini / Redbone / New Penny / Electric Chicken / Opening Night and California Craw.



# Mangrove Jack - Snake Head Style

By Keith Stratford



The mangrove jack season around south east Queensland has been a cracker so far. Good numbers of 50cm+ fish have been hooked in most systems, with the odd 60cm fish turning up as well. Most anglers that have put in a fair amount of time chasing the red thugs this season have plenty of tales of bust ups and successes.

Mangrove jack are a snag dwelling species that like to sit deep in structure waiting for baitfish to swim within range, before attacking with lightning speed. A lot of anglers are under the impression that jacks will only bite during the low light periods, like early morning, late afternoon and during the night. This couldn't be much further from the truth. Jacks definitely move out of their snaggy homes during the night and patrol rock walls, gravel bars, deep holes, bridge pylons and mangrove edges, but during the daylight hours they prefer to sit in the comfort of their snaggy homes in deeper water.

Some of the mangrove jack's favourite hang outs include fallen trees, undercut ledges, rock walls and pontoons. The key to catching jacks during the day is to get your lure right in tight to their faces so they can't refuse it. Whether the fish is after a feed or just wants to kill the fish for invading its territory it doesn't matter. Once you get the jarring hit of a big jack, it's time to pull like hell and try to get it out before it turns it head and stitches you up.



Keith with a solid jack taken on the deadly TT Lures Snake Head / ZMan 4" SwimmerZ Combo. The Sexy Lady SwimmerZ did the job on this occasion.

Snags are a common part of jack fishing and this is where the TT Lures Snake Head jig heads come into their own. The Snake Heads are built on strong worm hooks with a free rolling lead weight attached to the eye of the hook. They are designed to suit any brand of soft plastics and suit the ZMan range perfectly.

I've found the 4" range of ZMan SwimmerZ to be a perfect imitation of a poddy mullet and a lure that a jack can't resist. When rigged on the Snake Head jig heads, these plastics can be worked deep into the structure where the fish like to hold during the day. I like to fish them on fairly light gear by jack hunting standards with 10lb braid fished on a quality spin reel matched to 6 foot spin rod.

Instead of the 40 and 50lb leaders normally associated with jack fishing, I've found that sticking to a leader of around 20lb gets the best action out of the snakeheads and also attracts more bites. Bust offs are all part of jack fishing and a big jack hooked tight into structure doesn't give you much of a chance, especially on light gear. Getting stuck into the fish as soon as it hits the lure can be enough to shock the fish and will often turn its head in the right direction. Don't give the fish any slack during the fight on light gear, especially around heavy structure as they will bury you in the blink of an eye.



A cracker jack from natural structure



Snake Head+Golden Shiner SwimmerZ



Snake Head + Sexv Ladv SwimmerZ



The super-tough, but super-soft ElaZtech material ensures a solid hook-set, even when rigged virtually snagless



Red Shad 4" SwimmerZ have proven to be a popular jack colour



The 4 inch ZMan SwimmerZ are available in a great range of colours, with all of them producing fish for me so far. The Golden Shiner and Red Shad are a couple of the stand out colours, but with a few new colours to try, Black Back Shad, Yellow Back and Hitch, there may well be a new favourite in the tackle box by the end of the jack season. The Snake Heads are designed to suit all conditions and are available in a light weight 1/6oz for shallow areas, a 1/4oz for intermediate depths, right through to a 3/8oz for working the deeper snags or areas with stronger current flow. They come in 2/0, 4/0, 6/0 and 8/0, with the 4/0 hook being perfect for the ZMan 4" SwimmerZ and the 6/0 fit the 6" model perfectly if you're after a big bite. Get out there and get amongst one of the best jack seasons we've seen in years.



The author with another solid jack, this time on the Zman 4" SwimmerZ in Golden Shiner, again rigged on the TT Lures Snake Head jig head

# The Rigging Bench

## TT Lures Snake Head / ZMan 4" SwimmerZ

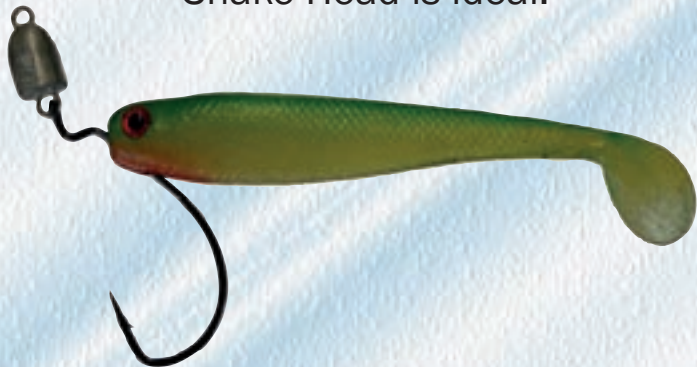
Let's have a look at how to rig the ZMan 4" SwimmerZ on the TT Lures Snake Head jig head for a virtually snagless presentation when chasing mangrove jack, barramundi, Murray Cod and other snag dwellers.



Step 1: Select the appropriate size hook to suit your plastic. In the case of a 4" ZMan SwimmerZ, a 4/0 Snake Head is ideal.



Step 2: Insert the hook point through the chin of the plastic at about 45 degrees.



Step 3: Slide the hook and weight through the plastic and stop before reaching the locking bend.



Step 4: Add a tiny dab of super glue to the locking bend and allow the hook to rotate as you slide the plastic into place.



Step 5: Measure where the hook needs to sit in the plastic, push it through and ensure it sits straight.



Step 6: Go and throw your TT Lures Snake Head into some snaggy country and catch some fish!

# Soft Plastics in the Estuaries

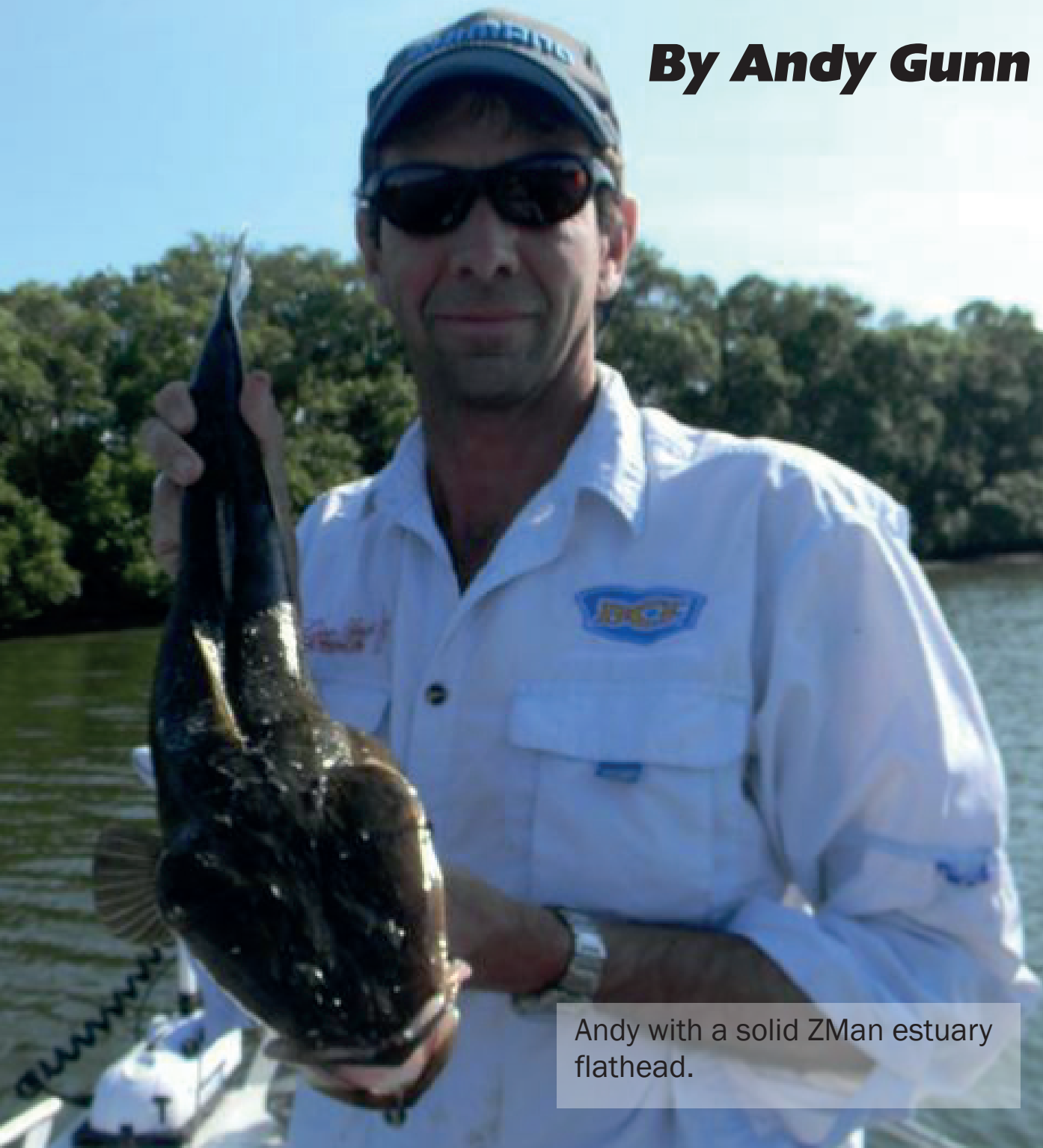
With the number of soft plastics available on the market these days it is good to see there are still some good quality plastics available. Using ZMan plastics in the estuaries you will be able to target everything from bream through to mangrove jacks , flatties and Jewies just to mention a few.

Lately I have been doing a lot of soft plastics fishing in my local estuaries, mainly using the ZMan curl tails in the GrubZ and StreakZ Curly TailZ. These are available in several sizes and a variety of colours.

I have been fishing the mud flats on the last of the run out tide and targeting any drains that can be seen. Sitting around these areas there will be any number of flathead waiting in ambush for the baitfish to come off the banks.

By rigging the plastics on either 1/6 or 1/4 ounce TT Lures jig heads you can keep the plastic down near the bottom which is where the flathead will be waiting. By using a flicking retrieve you will be able to mimic a wounded or dying baitfish.

**By Andy Gunn**



Andy with a solid ZMan estuary flathead.

Mulloway are an apex predator within the estuary and an ideal target when using soft plastics



Once the tide has turned and started to run up you can still fish the banks as they are being covered with water, however you will find the flathead spread out over the banks. This is the time I turn my attention to the deeper holes in the estuary, where I go looking for Mangrove Jack and Jew (Mulloway). I find that you still need to keep the plastic close to the bottom or any structure that may be present.

When fishing the deeper holes I like to drift through the deeper section of the estuary, casting the plastic up drift and working it back to the boat. By drifting and casting you will cover more area.

If you locate the fish holding in one section of the estuary you can then concentrate on working that area by anchoring, or using your bow mount electric motor if you have one fitted to your boat. A bow mount electric is extremely handy as it can hold you in the area where the fish are sitting, without the need to, or the noise of anchoring.

**ZMAN** 4" Streakz Curly Tailz  
THE SCIENCE & ART OF FISHING®





# WA Breamin'

By Aaron Williams



Aaron with a WA bream that fell to the finesse approach of the 2.5" GrubZ

Over the last couple of weeks I have been lucky enough to try out the 2.5" ZMan GrubZ. At a glance they look a lot bigger than the grubs we would normally use here in WA, however I have seen some small bream hit other bigger plastics so I was quite confident the 2.5" would find its place.

The first noticeable benefit of the GrubZ is the super-durable ElaZtech plastic that ZMan are famous for. These hi-tech plastic baits are one of the few soft plastic that can withstand the plague like blowfish (also referred to as puffer fish and toadfish) population that inhabits the lower reaches of our WA rivers and estuaries.

My first day out was in some local canals that hold some great bream, as well as other toothy by-catch like tailor and tarwhine, both of which also do their part in damaging soft plastics. The aim was to get the baits under some jetties and boat hulls where the bream are often feeding on mussels. In this situation, most other plastics are destroyed in seconds by the hundreds of blowies that live and feed in the same area. Bream will move in after the blowies and if there is still a workable plastic remaining you have a better than fair chance of enticing a strike.

Throughout the day we caught quite a few bream, switching between different colours and head weights. I started out with 1/20oz Hidden Weight (HWS) early in the morning when things were quiet and a lead jig head hitting a boat hull could spook any shy fish. Then as the wind picked up and the boat started to move a bit faster I changed to a 1/12oz head.

Over the next couple of days we tried the GrubZ a ways up river where blowies are not such a problem. Here I was hoping the larger profile would assist me in skipping the bait deep into some heavy structure. I'm no expert when it comes to skipping plastics but these guys skip like a river stone on a mill pond. Again I started with a heavy Hidden Weight like I would use on some other flick bait, but as the sun rose and fish moved into deeper water I changed to a 1/16oz. Due to the lack of the swimming zombies, I gave Dizzy's super glue trick a go and it saved a bunch of time re-rigging the grub after it gets pulled down the shank on the hook due to tail grabs.

The standout colours for me were the Watermelon Red and Pumpkinseed, although Amber and Motor Oil will also be very effective in most locations. I guess the first two colours are my confidence colours, so I may have just used them more. I gave a few packs to some other hard core bream nuts and they found the same things as me; stronger than most other plastic and mega-easy to skip.

A few down sides are that they are a bit harder to get the body over the jig head and the tails can tangle over the hook sometimes but these problems are the same for most larger grub style bream plastics and can be overcome with a little practice in rigging. The durability benefits though outweigh anything else 100 to 1.

I can't wait to nail some great fish over this year's tournament calendar and I'm sure the Z GrubZ will find thier way into many other tackle bags over 2012.



The author with another solid GrubZ bream

# Surface Barra!

By David Brace



The author with a nice barra from the weed

We left home filled with anticipation, anxiety and excitement, along with the sense of unknown that fills you before you reach a new destination 1000 kilometres from home. Like any good trip to a Barra Impoundment some research is required before loading the trusty ute with your favourite fishing gear and lures. With Barramundi in our line of sights, we equipped ourselves with the arsenal needed to bring these fish boat side and hit the road.

With knowledge gained from invaluable research and time on the water from past expeditions on some of these Barra impoundments, we headed north to Central Queensland. We left home knowing some of these impoundments we were to visit for the first time had some vast shallow weed beds that aligned their edges, along with deeper sections of interest. Before we left on our journey, a selection of lures were carefully chosen for all situations, but it was in the weed beds where lines were drawn in the water and this arena was to be where trials and challenges, heartache and tribulations lay before us... could we outwit these golden and silver flanked Barramundi that resided in these lush, green weed beds?

Armed with several varieties of soft plastics and hard bodied lures, it was the 6" ZMan SwimmerZ that stood triumphant over any other lure used throughout the duration of our fishing on these Barra Impoundments, whilst chasing these iconic fish. Our ZMan SwimmerZ were rigged with lightly weighted TT Lures Snake Head and Snagless Weight System jig heads, which from our own past experiences have proven to be reliable, robust and able to take any punishment that these freight trains could dish out.



It didn't take long to crack a pattern, retrieving these lures reasonably quickly across the surface, which resulted in hooking up to our first Barra for the trip, which buried itself in the weed after jumping on several occasions, as it attempted to throw the hook, to no avail. Soon after, an 85cm Barramundi found itself being photographed and measured before its release. This was to be the first of many more Barra caught on this particular trip.

Within these vast weed beds we soon discovered small pockets of deeper water that provided good cover for an ambush predator such as these feisty Barra. These pockets allowed them to smash unsuspecting baitfish, or in our case a lure, off the surface. Every hook-up we experienced saw the TT Lures jig head locked right in the hinge of the Barra's jaws, giving us extreme confidence that our odds were very high in terms of pulling these big fish boat side.



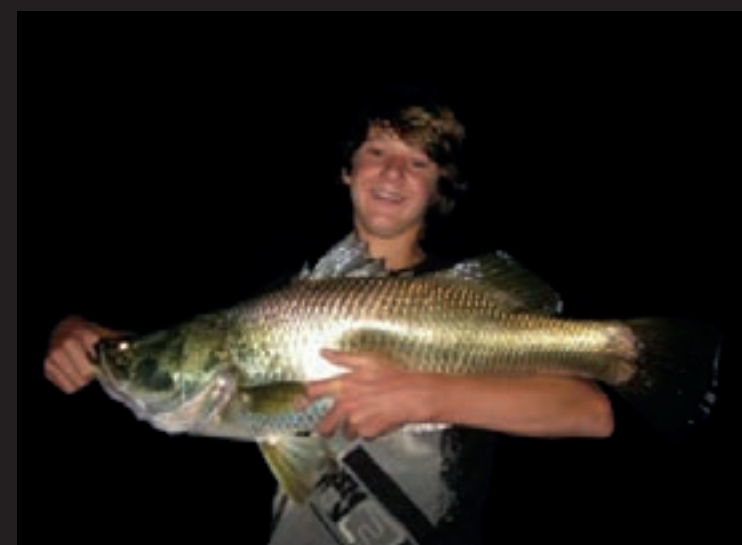
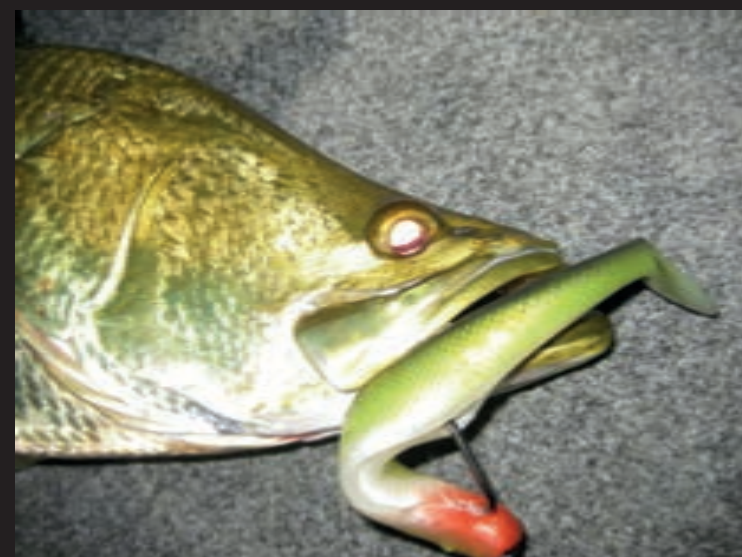
Weed beds provide shelter for the barramundi and an ambush point from which to smash baitfish.

In some areas, where past rains had formed creeks that flow into these lakes from heavy run off rain within their catchment areas, we also noticed that the underwater weed had formed weed hedges and passages of deeper water allowing us to venture further into this underwater wonderland, casting our ZMan lures deeper into the water column. However, it was on the top layer of water where the action was most prevalent. So that's where you'd find us casting lures in 6" inches of water above the weed with these Barramundi in an aggressive feeding mode, willingly picking off our ZMan lures.

Our hook-up rate was quite high considering we were using these weedless or snagless rigs, which was very encouraging. We were most impressed with the action of these lures though and they excited the barra. Another impressive feature of these plastics was their strength and durability, still fishable after the constant and demanding abuse that they received in our short time on these impoundments.

The technique used in the shallows was a high rod tip action with an above normal, fast retrieve, skimming the lure across the top of the water which made for a deadly action. Watching an explosion of water erupt before you as the reaction strike of the Barramundi engulfed the lure made for a tremendous visual spectacle.

In the slightly deeper water, a slower retrieve was possible. We were still using a high rod action to keep the lure above the weed, yet allowing it to be slightly submerged below the surface using a slower rolling retrieve. This provided a different, but still exhilarating view on how these fish hunt. Watching bow waves from the Barramundi appear behind the lure, getting larger and larger as these untamed fish encroached on the lures tail and leaving you waiting in extreme anticipation before your imitation bait was slammed by a fired up fish that was unaware of, or unconcerned about our presence.





With the rod loaded up and the Barra well and truly hooked, line screams off the reel, the sound of the ring side bell is rung in my head and another round begins. Fighting the fish with lower rod angles helps to prevent these notorious lure throwing fish from jumping, lessening the chance of the hooks coming free.

Sometimes battles are won, sometimes they're lost, but with the right preparation, equipment, and favourable lure presentations, battles with these Aussie Icons can be more often won than lost.



The SwimmerZ and the Snake Head jig head make a deadly combo

Like most Pacific regions the trade winds seem to blow for a few days before calming into a couple of oily calm days. Tonga was no different with the trade wind blowing 15-20 knots for two days straight. The upside to this was our Fale was on the lee side of the wind so we were able to pick pocket little bommies and reef structures on certain tides with 20-30g TT Assassins and ZMan JerkshadZ, hooking up to small GTs, blue trevally, barracuda and crazy longtom. This was great fun on light gear and in only a few feet of water... that was of course until the inevitable happens and a dark shape smashes you in an eruption of water and proceeds to head out to sea while zigzagging into every bit of reef structure. Some of these battles were short lived and your lure became another piece of lip jewelry for a local GT.



# Tonga Party! Part III

By Robbie Wells



After a couple of days of pick pocketing in the wind and enjoying our magical destination, we awoke to an absolute glass off! Awesome oily conditions... so after some quick breakfast we were off. One of our original plans was to head out to the outer reefs chasing the big GTs and Wahoo etc. on poppers and stick baits but we had been plagued by huge seas and even though the swell was dropping the keyway entrances out to the reef had been closed for a week and unfortunately stayed that way for all of our stay, breaking right across the entrances.



The great thing about Mounu is there are always options so we geared up and went searching for humpback whales and their calves. Of course while trolling some CD 19s, skirts and stopping for a quick flick into bait schools we encountered. The fishing was slow to say the least with not even a rattle for the hour it took before we saw our first whale.



Normal procedure was, bring the lines in, get your gear on while sussing out the behavior of the whales and allowing them to get used to the boat. It's not rushed but more regimented as we wait in single file for our window to swim with these huge animals. Fortunately our first sighting was a very relaxed mother and calf so we gently slid off the back of the duckboard to cautiously snorkel towards them.

Over the years I've been fortunate enough to have my share of whale encounters on the sunshine coast and one particular time kayaking with a mate Lindsay from Ocean Kayak. Lindsay and I had them popping up beside us off Caloundra, but nothing prepares you for the surreal feeling of swimming and free diving only three metres away from the mother and its calf. At times you're not sure whose checking who out. The underwater video footage taken was using a wide angle lens and when scooting along looking through the viewfinder at the whales then stopping for a real look your blown away how close you are and the way they effortlessly hold their position, they even stand vertically under water watching you.







The next two days seemed to fly by, with us in and out of the water chasing whales, including one other outstanding encounter with four big males in a pod together, in only ten metres of water and only 3-4 metres away from us. They swam around us, then straight towards us, before diving under us to the bottom and away. We dried off and then watched them breach for half an hour before it was time to head back to the island and troll a few more lures.

Over the two days with the whales we had trolled for about 6-7 hours, stopped on a few bait schools and didn't raise a scale. There seemed to be heaps of bait but nothing smashing them like you'd expect to see... we are in Tonga aren't we! As Mounu Island started to appear on the horizon and with only one full fishing day left (out the front on heartbreak reef) I thought of what could have been. My thoughts were shattered when one of the Tongan boys yelled and pointed at a reasonable size bait school and for the first time bigger fish hitting and carving sprays on the surface. Surely we're in for a shot here... small yellowfin maybe.



I changed tactics this time and as we slowed towards the school I rapidly retrieved my lure. I had excitedly changed over to a 1/2oz TT Lures jig head and a Pearl ZMan 8" StreakZ XL plastic with a short 6" wire trace connected to my 50lb leader, just in case any toothy critters decided to engulf my offerings. First cast was a cracker right in the middle of the school. I let it sink for two seconds and started my rapid retrieve, but no cigar. Next cast was to the very edge of the bait school, but this time I let it sink to the count of ten. It was probably 15-20 metres deep and about five cranks into the retrieve, dooosshhh, absolutely smashed, zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!



The first run was blistering, an easy 100 metres before I got some sort of composure back and thought I had turned him as I was starting to get back a little 40lb braid. How wrong was I?! He took another crazy run sideways and another 50 metres of line from my Sarogosa 6000. The reel has heaps of line capacity but this was insane. The speed of the runs and every time I thought I was getting on top of it, another 20 or 30 metres would be spooled off... by now it started to feel very mackerel like.



Thirty minutes had passed and our tug of war continued with me getting back more and more line using an aggressive pump and wind technique, until finally about 15 metres down I could see the outline and stripes of a nice wahoo shimmering through the clear water. After another few minutes, old man wahoo was taking his final run from the boat and then we had him gaffed and causing mass chaos on the bottom of the boat before Henry one of the Tongan boys jumped on him and was able to employ a brain spike. Henry also put dibs on the head for traditional Tongan soup. No arguments here. After a few high fives from the locals, they love their fishing; it was time for a few pics. The wahoo measured in at around 1.5 metres and I'm not sure of the weight but it is defiantly my PB for a Wahoo and my best fish caught flicking plastics, so I was super stoked. We knew what would be on the menu that night, that's for sure... Waaahhhooh!

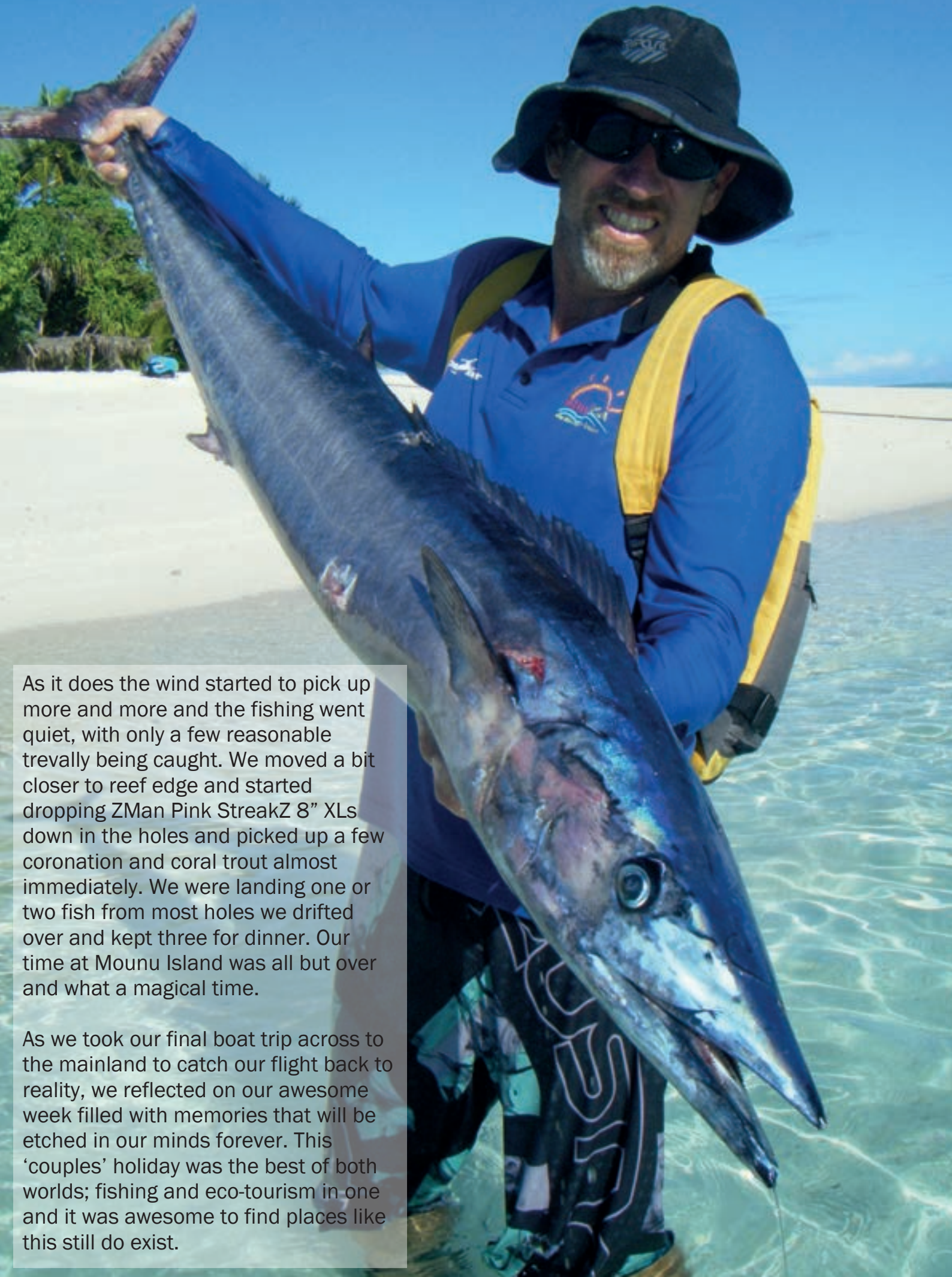


After sashimi Wahoo, Wahoo steaks, some baked Wahoo and some Maka's (local brew), we were done and looking forward to a good night's sleep for an early start in a small dingy we had organized over dinner. On the way back to the fale my wife commented on the spicy aromatic fishy smell wafting along the track and as we neared the staff area the smell intensified. There was Henry and a few of the boys with a big pot over an open fire, ah of course fish head stew.

Our last day was upon us and another glassy morning met us. We headed down the beach to sort out fishing gear and rig the little clinker hull boat with a 2hp Honda we were using today. Not ideal but our plan was to motor over and fish the bommies we had fished earlier in the week but this time we'd hopefully drag them out to the deep instead of towards the reef.



We finally got into position to fire a few casts off and a gentle trade wind started to blow toward us, aiding our positioning and blowing us away from the reef edge and swell, toward the deeper water, in a nice slow drift. We fired off cast after cast to the reef edge and back past the bommies before finally hooking up to a nice trevally of around 5kg on the same 8" StreakZ I had landed the Wahoo on... 10X TOUGH plastics, awesome! Sue then landed a barracuda on a 1.5oz Switchblade and next cast was smoked by another barracuda. This was an XOS model and after putting some extra drag on, in an attempt to slow it down, the hooks pulled.



As it does the wind started to pick up more and more and the fishing went quiet, with only a few reasonable trevally being caught. We moved a bit closer to reef edge and started dropping ZMan Pink StreakZ 8" XLs down in the holes and picked up a few coronation and coral trout almost immediately. We were landing one or two fish from most holes we drifted over and kept three for dinner. Our time at Mounu Island was all but over and what a magical time.

As we took our final boat trip across to the mainland to catch our flight back to reality, we reflected on our awesome week filled with memories that will be etched in our minds forever. This 'couples' holiday was the best of both worlds; fishing and eco-tourism in one and it was awesome to find places like this still do exist.



Thanks for checking out Issue #6 of the Tackle Tactics Fishing E-Mag! We hope you enjoyed the read and if someone sent you the link to this issue make sure you sign up via the TT Lures or ZMan FB page or website to receive the next issue straight to your inbox, absolutely free!



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**In the next issue...**



*Shallow Water Trouting*



*Welcome to the Jungle*



*Slick Jig Barra Bonanza!*

+ Saratoga, Redfin and Kayaking Flathead...

If you know someone that loves their fishing, make sure you send them the link to the E-Mag so that they can sign up for future issues.

Also keep an eye out in the next E-Mag where we will be launching our monthly E-Mag competition... to be in the running sign up for the Tackle Tactics Fishing E-Mag and keep an eye on your inbox... arriving the last week of March :)

Thanks for reading and we'll see you on the water! Team Tackle Tactics