

tackle



tactics

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Blades... and more

Declan Williams
Species: Sunshine Coast Yellowtail Kingfish
Jig Head: TT Tournament 4oz 9/0 XHD
Lure: ZMan StreakZ XL 8" Smokey Shad



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The Rigging Bench

What's new on the rigging bench this month?



New additions to the Switchblade family

Switchblades feature quality construction and components and an action that has proven successful on a wide range of species. After plenty of on water use and feedback from anglers there are a couple of new additions to the family.

1/6oz Switchblade

After braining the Bream on the 1/8th Dizzy decided he wanted a Switchblade the same size as the 1/8th, but with a bit more weight to fish the deeper bite and so the 1/6th was born. The 1/6th Switchblade allows you to fish deeper, especially in faster moving water, with that same irresistible action. The additional weight has also proven invaluable when fishing in windy conditions. The 1/6th Switchblade is an ideal lure option for deep water Breaming, as well as chasing other estuary and freshwater species around ledges, bridges, river mouths and deeper holes.

3/8th Switchblade

The 3/8th sits nicely in between the 1/4 and 1/2oz, with a profile and weight that is perfect for targeting Flathead across the flats and on the edge of drop offs, Bass and Yellowbelly along bank edges and out on the flats, as well as a wide range of other freshwater and estuary species.

Switchblade Colours

There have been 4 recent additions to the Switchblade colour range. These colours have proven to be dynamite on bream and flathead, in the freshwater for bass and yellowbelly and also in the 1/2oz size when fishing the shallow reefs. They are available in 1/8, 1/6, 1/4, 3/8 and 1/2oz sizes, with the Pink Hussar and Green Slimy also available in the heavy duty Switchblade HD 1 1/2oz for targeting larger species offshore.



Pink Bimbo

Orange O Ranga



Pink Hussar

Green Slimy

New 2oz Switchblade... coming soon!

The 2oz Switchblade is a heavy duty vibration blade that is perfect for vertical jigging and trolling when targeting offshore species. For those that have been using the 1 1/2oz Switchblade and are chasing a larger profile, or more weight to send into the depths, stay tuned!

Custom ShrimpZ



I grew up bait fishing with my father. We'd put as much time and effort into collecting bait as we would actually put into fishing and the rewards for having good fresh bait were normally outstanding. One of our favourite baits for just about anything that swims is a live prawn. I remember fishing competitions where we'd target the heaviest whiting and we'd curse bream after bream as they stole our hard worked for prawns. Bream just love prawns!

Since getting the bream on lures bug in the late 90s I've always looked for lures and soft plastics that look like a live prawn in the water. The team at TT Lures have just released a dead ringer, the ZMan ShrimpZ.

The Z-Man lure range has a 10X Tough ElaZtech construction for extreme durability. Unlike traditional soft plastic baits these lures are nearly indestructible and I've caught up to twenty fish on the one shrimp. Add to this the natural scent that these baits are impregnated with and you've got a lure ready to be fished hard!

It was the weekend before the Gamakatsu Team Series Bribie event and my team mate Dicko and I were fishing Redcliffe Peninsula looking for areas that might possibly hold a tournament winning bag of fish. The Peninsula gets a good flogging by bream enthusiasts these days so I tend to opt for a different lure than what most anglers throw, especially if it's bigger fish I'm looking for. I knew this would be a perfect time to try the new ShrimpZ.

Dicko stuck to the run of the mill crankbait patterns and was catching plenty of legal fish but the fish were small. I kept plugging away with the ShrimpZ getting plenty of hits but coming up short. I decided to cut the bait down to see if it made a difference.

It wasn't long before I put the ShrimpZ in front of a hungry bream that slammed the lure and we boated a fish of about 800 grams, a fish that we'd be more than happy with on tournament day. A few minutes later, fishing the same ShrimpZ, I felt a solid bump and drove the hooks into a snodger bream. After a short but hard fight we had a fish in the net that would have weighed at least 1.2kg. We were onto something!

The Saturday before the tournament we decided to fish Pumicestone Passage, just in case the weather turned bad on the Sunday, so we would at least have a plan B. We tried the ShrimpZ around weed beds, rock bars, moored boats and pontoons. It didn't seem to matter where we threw the ShrimpZ, they'd catch fish. The ElaZtech material that these baits are made from is quite buoyant which makes them deadly around pontoons. They skip cast perfectly and rigged with a 1/16oz TT jig head have a slow fall that bream can't resist!

The weather on tournament day did turn out to be average so we decided against going to Redcliffe in the small boat we were fishing from. Instead we stuck close to the start line and caught over a dozen legal fish for the session, the majority on the new ShrimpZ! This was good enough to land us in the top 10.

There are that many of ways to rig the new ZMan ShrimpZ that even Bubba Gump wouldn't be disappointed! In the short time I've been playing with these baits the most successful method I've found is to cut the head off about 1cm in front of the legs. I then rig the bait on a size 1 TT jig head. I've used the ShrimpZ successfully on 1/20, 1/16, 1/12 and 1/8oz heads depending on the depth of water I'm fishing.

These baits are heavily scented and one of the first things I noticed with this bait is the amount of times a fish will come back to eat the bait if it doesn't hook up at first. To take advantage of this, I have started using super glue to help hold ShrimpZ to the jig head and stop the fish from pulling the ShrimpZ down the shank of the hook.

If the fish are timid, you can try using a stinger to the back of the bait. To do this use a size 12 treble and attach it to the eye of the jig head with a short length of 10lb braid. You want to allow enough line that you can stick the treble into the tail of the ShrimpZ. This is a deadly technique when the majority of fish are small.

The retrieve I tend to use with the ShrimpZ is very simple. Once the lure reaches the desired depth I want to fish, I hold the rod tip high and wind real slow. Every six to eight turns of the reel handle I give the lure a small hop by raising the rod tip and then continue to slow roll the ShrimpZ.

Don't just take my word for it; grab a packet of ShrimpZ, a couple of different weight TT jig heads and get out on the water. You won't be disappointed!



Blades Switch on the Redfin



Redfin are an introduced species found in southern parts of Australia. They are a popular target species for a variety of reasons; their accessibility, with Redfin available in most man-made lakes. They look good, are super-aggressive and hit lures hard, are one of the best freshwater table fish and they school allowing them to be caught in numbers once they have been located.

We recently had a chat to AFN's Ross Gould about the success he has been having targeting Redfin on TT Lures Switchblades and Ghostblades.

Why are blades so effective?

The vibration definitely attracts Redfin to the lure and they are an aggressive feeder so they hit them hard. They are like pelagic species, they just keep eating. In fact I caught a 40cm Redfin once and it coughed

up a 15cm Redfin that swam away, and this thing still ate my lure!

The other reason the Switchblade is so successful is that it can be cast a mile, allowing you to prospect areas until you find a school of Redfin and then it can be one after another.

Where do you target Redfin? Technique?

They are available in almost every man-made lake around Melbourne. We generally target weed beds and blades allow you to fish over the weed, at your desired depth, by allowing them to sink and then commencing a slow roll over the weed.

Fishing around reeds is also effective, as is a lift and drop over patchy bottom where weed would foul the hooks.

What gear should I use for Redfin?

As light as possible, so that you can have a bit of fun. I fish 1-3kg rods with small spinning reels, loaded with 6lb braid and 6lb leader. The braided line allows for longer casts which again is good for covering ground in search of schooled fish.

What colours work best?

I have had great success on the Switchblade in Aussie Green & Gold and Peacock Blue. Some anglers prefer the reds and oranges. Gold Noggin is also an effective colour.

Thanks to Ross for his tips on chasing Redfin on the TT Lures Switchblade and Ghost Blade lures. If you chase Redfin, give the blades a go, we have had heaps of feedback from anglers who are cleaning up on the Switchy and Ghosty with the Aussie Green & Gold being a revelation in Redfin fishing.

The Ghostblade is a transparent, polycarbonate blade that is available in 1/12oz and 10 colours.

The Switchblade is available in 20 colours and a range of weights, with the most popular weight for Redfin being 1/4oz.

To see the Switchblade and Ghost Blade in action on southern freshwater species check out:

Sport Fish DVD Vol 4: 'Lake Margin Trout on Blades'

and

Sport Fish DVD Vol 5: Due out in July 11 and featuring a segment on Redfin on blades.



The Lure of the Shallow Reefs

Declan Williams



The waters of Moreton Bay are relatively shallow, but that doesn't mean you won't find quality fish, including some really nice reef fish just a few hundred metres from the shore. The key, as is so often the case, is structure and bait. When we target Moreton Bay fish, we look for rubble patches, bombies and any other good looking structure. Locate quality structure and the anticipation starts to build, if the structure is holding bait you can feel your heart in your chest and the itch in your casting finger.

Peak bite times are dawn and dusk and these periods of lower light allow you to pull quality fish in as shallow as 20'. When the sun rises higher in the sky it's time to move to deeper water, 40-60' is common and maybe as deep as 80'. When fishing these shallow waters it's important to minimise noise, such as banging through the hull and excess anchor noise. We will general drift across structure as anchoring is a sure way to turn off fish. Slow drifts are generally preferred and we have definitely done better on sweetlip when there is less run.

In the bay we use relatively light spin gear with quality reels, as sticky drags equal pulled hooks. We start with 8lb braid and 15lb leader, but if we find some nasty looking structure with plenty of bait, or we get dusted, then it's up to the 15-20lb braid and 20lb leader.

There are a range of lures that suit this style of fishing, including blades, soft plastics and metal slugs. Depending on the depth and current we will use a 1/4, 3/8, or 1/2oz TT Switchblade. Smaller blades will get you more bites when fishing the shallows and when people ask me if big fish eat small blades it's a definite thumbs up, especially after recently losing a Cod of about 6kg on 8lb gear and a 1/4oz blade beside the boat as we didn't have a net! From our time on the water it seems that cod and squire prefer gold colours and naturals, while lippers prefer bright colours. Grassy Sweetlip and Red Throat are the primary target with 2-3kg fish being common and the odd 4-5kg fish turning up and more often than not smoking you.

Cast the blade out, allow it to hit the bottom and then give it a sharp rip up off the bottom, allow the lure to drop back to the bottom as you wind the slack up but hold it off the bottom for a few seconds. Most hits will come on the drop or on the pause and it's important to watch your line, if the line speeds up, twitches or stops, chances are a fish has it in their mouth so wind, strike and set the hook. By-catch includes a variety of random reefies, Parrot and School Mackerel love blades, but unfortunately also like biting you off, so you may want to move location or rig for Mackerel.

Soft plastics are also a great shallow reef lure. During the peak bite times of dawn and dusk most hits come on the drop, so the plastic won't even make its way to the bottom. This is especially true with Squire who love eating the lure on the drop, while Sweetlip prefer the lure on the bottom, so once the soft plastic touches down hop it a few times before you retrieve it. When retrieving the plastic from the bottom we use a rip, rip, and pause, then wind a few metres, pause and free spool the line back before retrieving the lure back to the boat. Sweetlip will often follow the lure up off the bottom and then whack it as it comes back to them. This is also a favourite retrieve for Mackerel.

Like with blades, soft plastics don't need to be big and you'd be surprised at times what eats a 3" plastic. Rubble patches and reef are loaded with small toothy critters that will chew plastics to pieces, so we have been fishing the ZMan which are up to 10X tougher than standard plastics, in the 3" MinnowZ, 3" ShrimpZ and 5" Jerk ShadZ. These are rigged on TT Tournament heads in 3/0 up to a 7/0 hook for the 5" plastics. By-catch when using soft plastics includes Longtail and Mack Tuna, along with the occasional Mackerel and a mixed back of reefies and estuary species.

When fishing shallow rubble patches another technique that has works well for us is jigging metal slugs. Again you would be surprised what will eat a slug. Drop a 20-30g TT Lures

Assassin slug to the bottom, jig it a few times and then retrieve it quickly for a few metres, pause and then retrieve it quickly to the surface. This technique is effective on Cod, Mackerel, Tuna... and yes, Sweetlip.

Moreton Bay is filled with gravel patches, reefy patches and bombies and all of these will hold fish and bait at different parts of the day and tide cycle. If you haven't fished Moreton Bay before, good places to start include Currumundi Reef, Brays Rocks, Murphy's Reef, Inner Gneerings, Mud Island and Peel Island. These techniques will not only be effective in Moreton Bay though, if you have some shallow reef and rubble patches in your area, give it a go. Grab your spin gear, a handful of blades, plastics and slugs, turn on the sounder and spend some time on the water, it won't be long until you find rubble patches, bait and the fish that are eating them.





Pop FrogZ Barramundi

Robbie Wells from Sun2Sea UV protection clothing contacted us recently to let us know that he was having a ball on the salty Barra with the ZMan Pop FrogZ. Robbie loves chasing Barra and when he can catch them on surface lures, even better.

The 6" white Pop FrogZ caught his eye on a recent northern trip and it wasn't long before he was rigged and the Pop FrogZ was happily doing its thing on the surface. That was until the water exploded and a Barra climbed all over the frog, the rod buckled and a slab of silver took to the air.

"A well-presented frog is a delicacy to a Barramundi and the Pop FrogZ has an awesome action. I was flicking it across to

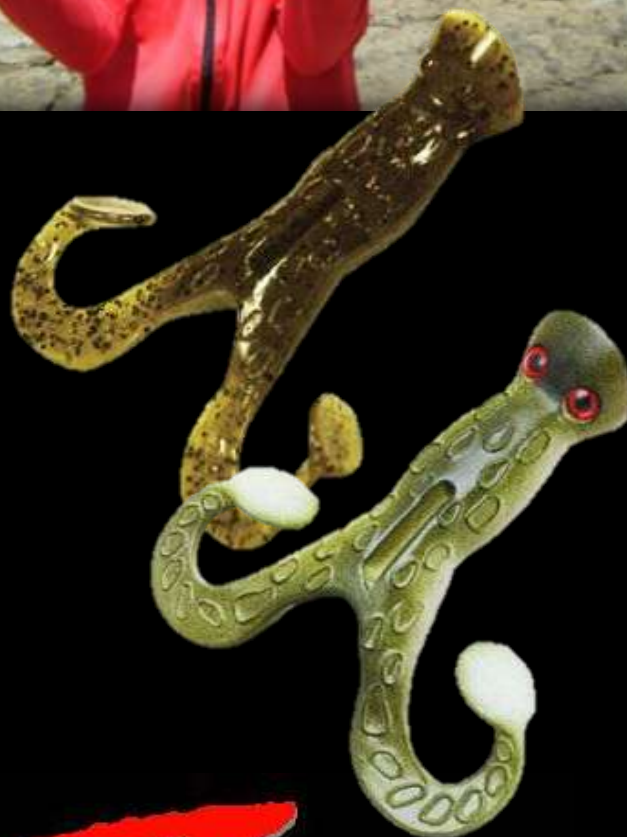
the fast flowing water and working it back to the slow water and eddies created by rocks just under the surface. I also had good success flicking the Pop FrogZ behind some of the larger rocks where there's no current and popping it right in the face of Barra that were holding in the eddy waiting for a feed.'

Robbie rigged the Pop FrogZ on an unweighted worm hook and the buoyancy of the ElaZtech material allows the lure to ride high and pop well, even in turbulent flowing water. Pop FrogZ will float and maintain a horizontal profile, even when motionless. The ElaZtech material is also extremely durable, so the frog doesn't tear as easily as a standard plastic can when rigged weedless.




“The soft feel of the ZMan is a lot more natural to the fish and they will have a second go at it if they just hit it on the first strike.”

Thanks to Robbie for dropping us a line and sharing his success. Robbie’s new favourite surface plastic ZMan’s Pop FrogZ is available in 4” and 6”, in white, hot chartreuse, green pumpkin and watermelon. An Elite Series is also available that feature genuine hand-painted bodies and realistic 3D eyes for an even more life-like appearance and additional attraction. The Elite Series colours include natural white belly and natural chartreuse belly.



ZMAN[®]
THE SCIENCE & ART OF FISHING[®]



Fishing Schooled Bass

Justin
Willmer

One of my favourite times of year to target Australian Bass is through the cooler months when they are in prime condition and school up in the impoundments.

You can catch schooled Bass on a wide range of lures, including hard bodies, soft plastics and spinnerbaits, but blades and more specifically the 1/2oz TT Lures Switchblade, have really turned on the fish for us in recent times.

The great thing about the Switchblade is that it is extremely versatile. It can be fished into and around structure, hopped or slow rolled down banks or across the flats, or throw a burn and kill retrieve in, with a few quicker winds to get the blade vibrating hard to call a fish or encourage a reaction bite and then a pause.

When the water gets deeper than 20' though, many anglers, especially those new to impoundment Bass fishing, struggle to fish soft plastics and spinnerbaits in this deeper water. They lose touch with the lure and the bottom, are unsure of running depths and don't pick up on the bites.

Hard bodies are a similar story, casting is out because the lure takes too long to get into the strike zone, so if you aren't into trolling you're looking for another option.

Bibless minnows seemed to solve the problem for me and produced plenty of fish, but then along came the Switchblade and I can basically get two Switchblades, sometimes even three for the price of one premium bibless minnow. That's two different colours, or two of my favourite coloured Switchies!

All we do is locate the school and if they are shut down and appear as flat lines either suspended or hugging the bottom we throw long casts across the school, allow the lure to sink to the bottom and then commence our retrieve through the school.

On shutdown fish I normally use two retrieves. The first retrieve is a slow roll, in which the lure is wound very slowly, just enough to produce vibration. During this retrieve I will sometimes throw in a pause so the Switchblade can fall back to the bottom, or a burn (faster wind) to increase the vibration and possibly trigger a strike.

The second retrieve I use is a hopping retrieve where I lift the rod tip between 30 and 60cm, pause and then drop the rod tip as I wind up the slack. Fish will often smash the lure as it drops back so be ready for a tick, or speeding up or stopping of the line as the fish picks it up... strike! Both of these retrieves can also be used to target shutdown fish that are suspended mid-water, simply allow the lure to sink to the desired depth and commence the retrieve.

If you find schooled fish and they appear as diagonal lines on your sounder (similar to the image below) buckle up! These fish are actively feeding.

In this situation cast over the school, watch for takes on the drop, let the lure fall to the desired depth or hit the bottom and commence your retrieve.

A more aggressive lift and drop has worked well for us, with two sharp lifts of the rod followed by a pause, then wind up the slack as you lower the rod tip. Bass will often strike on the drop so if you feel a tick on the line or see the line speed up or stop, set the hook. I have worked the Switchy both slowly and aggressively with success, just mix it up until you find what the fish want.

The 1/2oz Switchblade is a great baitfish profile for Bass; it will get down there quickly and emits plenty of vibration so the Bass can easily zero in on it. Our catch rate has increased since we started to use Switchblades, especially for deeper water Bassin', give them a go in your local Bass spot.



Rigging & Fishing the Hidden Weight System (HWS)

The Hidden Weight System (HWS) has been designed to present a lure with a more enticing and natural descent, which in tough conditions can mean the difference between strike and a look. The natural presentation that the HWS provides is ideal when a finesse presentation is required such as clear, still conditions and areas that have high levels of fishing pressure.

Placing the weight along the shank allows it to be concealed inside the soft plastic for a realistic presentation. The weight also now favours the middle of the bait, so the lure flutters down randomly like an injured baitfish or prawn, rather than falling head first.

HWS jig heads feature a multi-grip grub keeper to hold the plastic in place and razor-sharp Gamakatsu® hooks to hook and handle your favourite hard hitting light tackle species.

Available in a range of hook sizes, fine and heavy wire hooks and a variety of head weights, there is a HWS jig head to suit the species you are targeting. Smaller, lighter models are ideally suited to breamin' around the pontoons and marinas and have become the go to jig head for many competitive anglers when the tournament fishing gets tough.

The larger varieties of HWS jig heads have proven themselves as a deadly option for snapper over the shallow in-shore reefs and when targeting medium to large, fresh and saltwater species, especially in situations where the lure can be drifted down naturally into the strike zone.

Fishing the HWS

The natural fall of the HWS allows it to be presented realistically down the face of submerged rock walls, beside bridge pylons or standing timber, drifted under pontoons and into schools of fish. Due to its natural fall the lure is often hit on the drop. At times this means the line suddenly pulls up tight, the rod buckles over and game on. More often though the take is subtle and the first sign of any attention at the lure end is movement in the line.

As the lure sinks watch the line for any movement and strike. Movement could be the line stopping as a fish picks up the lure on the drop, a tick or sharp movement of the line as a fish hits the lure, or the line speeding up as a fish picks up the lure and swims off.



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A braided line that is highly visible and floats is ideal for fishing the HWS as it makes it easier to monitor the line for any movement and set the hook quickly.

Skip Casting

With the weight concealed inside, the lure is well balanced and has only the eye and part of the hook protruding, allowing it to be skip cast. Skip casting involves an underhand cast and a flick of the rod tip and you can skip the soft plastic across the water surface. This enables you to skip the lure hard against structure, under a jetty or overhanging vegetation or into gaps in pontoons and between boats and pontoons. This allows you access to pockets of water that are hard to reach with other lures and these pockets of water include shadowy sheltered pockets that big fish call home.



Barramundi on Blades

Declan Williams

After a few successful trips north, landing plenty of Barra on the 6" Z-Man SwimmerZ rigged on TT War Heads, we couldn't resist making the most of a few days off to do the 6 hour run north from Brisbane to chase a few more metre plus fish.

We hit the water early, motored down to where we had fished previously, rigged the plastics and began casting, allowing the lure to sink and slowly retrieving as we had on previous successful missions... a couple of tiny taps. It seemed that the fish had shut down from the fishing pressure – they had probably seen every soft plastic in every colour over the last couple of months. The fish were there, we could see them on the sounder, but we couldn't get them to open their mouths!

Laying the lure trays out on the deck, we were confronted with hundreds of different style and size lures, in a kaleidoscope of colours... what to tie on?

We changed to hard bodies to try and stir them up and trolled up a couple of Barra but it was a long time between fish so we wanted a lure that would annoy them into biting.

We had been having great success on the Switchblade in the smaller sizes on bream, 1/2oz on impoundment Bass and 1 1/2oz HD on a stack of different offshore species and they really seem to switch the fish on. In one of the trays we had some new prototype 1oz Switchblades and this seemed like the perfect opportunity to give them a swim.



The 1oz Switchblade is a herring profile in a size that is perfect for Barramundi and a wide range of medium to large freshwater, northern estuary and offshore species, especially when targeting shallow reefs from 20 - 40m.

We moved in above the schooled fish and worked the lure vertically, allowing it to fall to the bottom and working it with an aggressive rip upward and then allowing it to fall. Fish on! A solid silver slab leapt from the water, grey hounded across the surface and put up a solid fight before sliding into the net.

The key was to work the Switchblade hard and then watch the line as it fell back through the water column. If you see movement in the line wind up on the lure and set the hooks.

Gear wise we were using 30lb Bionic Braid, 60lb Black Magic leader and we were tying the blade straight to the leader.

We were targeting schooled fish in 15-30' of water using a vertical retrieve and later in the afternoon, when the fish fired up a bit more, we also used a long cast, rip and watch the line as the lure drops. Strikes came as the lure fell back through the fish that had been switched on.

Several times the fish just engulfed the blade on the drop and were in the air before we could even wind up tight.

We decided to try one last spot before heading home and on the first drop in 3-4 knots of current I came up tight on a fish that had been holding behind a hump on the bottom. The fish didn't jump, which can often mean it's a big fish and after the best Barra fight I have experienced my new PB 121cm fish slid into the net!

The TT Lures 1oz Switchblade managed to annoy these schooled fish into biting and we landed over 30 fish in 2 ½ hours! I know what I am tying on next time I find shut down Barra schooled in impoundments!



Surface ShrimpZ



Will Lee and Ryan Dixon recently teamed up as Team Z-Man and took out 2nd place at the Gold Coast round of the Gamakatsu Team Series. Will had also recently finished 2nd with Grayson Fong at the QLD Bream Open using a cut-down Z-Man ShrimpZ to land some solid bream. The ShrimpZ was again part of Will's success on the Gold Coast this time though it was an unmodified Z-Man ShrimpZ in Natural, fished across the surface.

We caught up with Will to find out how they rigged and fished the ShrimpZ for the Gamakatsu comp.

How do you rig the ShrimpZ for surface fishing?

I rig the ShrimpZ on a light gauge 2/0 worm hook. By using a bit of Loctite superglue to hold the head of the shrimp in place it stops the bream from 'pulling the pants down' on their first attempt at eating it.

The use of a 'stinger' helped convert some of the short strikes into hook ups. I use a size 12 treble and like to squash two of the points together until they are on an angle of approximately 45 degrees. I then hook those two points into the tail of the Shrimp leaving the other point neatly exposed. To attach the stinger I tie a short piece of 10lb fluorocarbon between the eye of the worm hook and the eye of the treble.

Where did the idea come from to rig the ShrimpZ like this?

On a recent holiday to the USA I fished The Everglades in South Florida and had a red hot session catching largemouth bass on 'Texas' rigged worms fished on the surface.



Will Lee with a solid bream from the QLD Bream Open

After the trip I visited a tackle store there and bought a pile of different soft plastic worms and worm hooks to try back home. While playing with different rigs and set ups in my swimming pool I decided to rig a Zman ShrimpZ 'Texas' on a worm hook and see what it did on the surface! It looked just like a fleeing prawn and sung, 'please don't eat me, please don't eat me'.

Were most fish pinned on the stinger?

My first fish on this rig was a 32cm forker which I caught fifteen minutes into the session and it was hooked solid on the worm hook. The retrieve was constant and steady but in some cases when the fish were following but not biting you needed to stop the ShrimpZ before it got too close to the boat. This is where the stinger came into its own. While paused, cautious fish would just suck the ShrimpZ down 'tail first' ever so softly and with a slight sweep of the rod tip, I'd drive the stinger in.



What colour were you using, do you think colour matters?

The most successful colour to date has been 'Natural' but this is not to say others won't work. More time 'Surface ShrimpZing' will tell!

What technique were you using and structure were you targeting?

We fished pontoons and boats. Using the buoyancy of the ShrimpZ and the weightless rig to our advantage, skip casting into tight corners and shady spots was a breeze.

The retrieve was simple; with my rod tip held high I would wind the ShrimpZ relatively quickly to leave a wake in its path. I would then watch for any bream following the lure. When a bream was following the ShrimpZ I would keep the retrieve the same until I was only left with 10ft of water between the boat and the

ShrimpZ. If the fish had not hit by then, I would kill it completely and let the ShrimpZ float on the surface in front of the bream. This technique allowed me to fish fast and cover a lot of water.

Why do you think the ShrimpZ was so effective?

A ShrimpZ fished across the top looks just like a prawn swimming scared, something bream just can't handle!



How did the event pan out for you guys, were there plenty of fish, big fish, lots of changing location?

We caught the majority of our fish early in the day while the fish were high in the water column. There were plenty of small fish in the areas we were fishing but the small ones tended to stay away from the bigger bait. We did start searching for upgrades later in the session but to no avail. We thought our bag was worthy of a top ten placing but to finish second was a dream result for Ryan and myself!

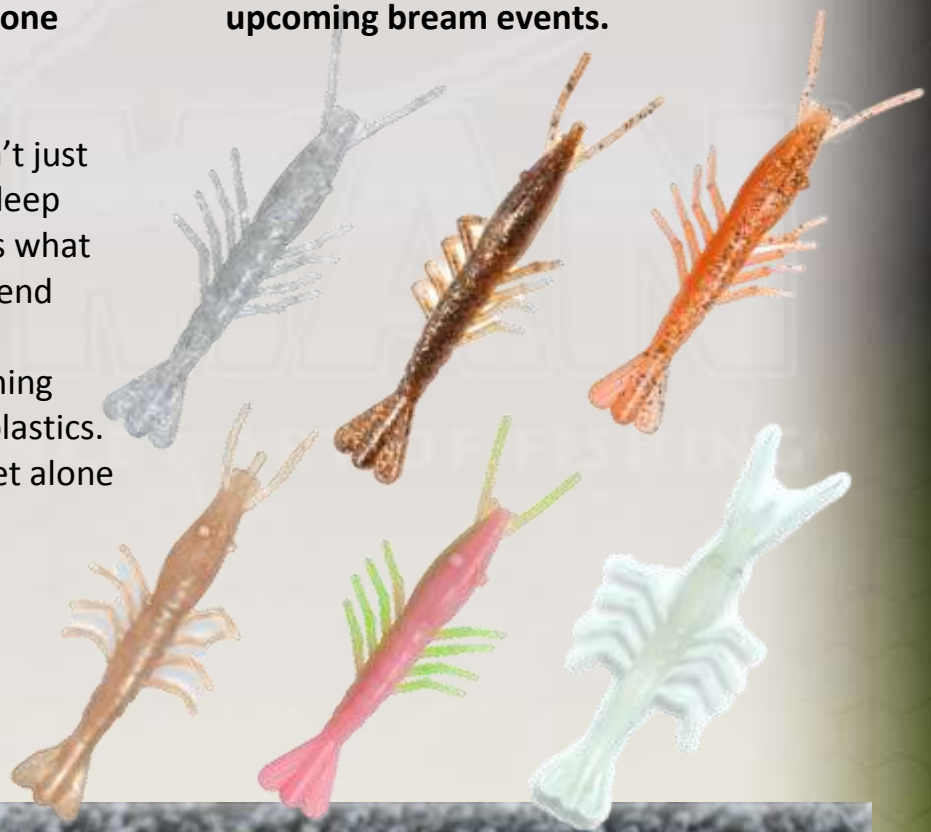
What advice would you give someone wanting to fish a tournament?

Be versatile and open minded. Don't just throw cranks on 3lb fluoro or fish deep with heavy jig heads because that's what you're most comfortable doing. Spend your time social fishing becoming proficient in all facets of Bream fishing from blades, top water, cranks to plastics. No two days fishing are the same let alone two tournaments.

When it comes to fishing tournaments I don't try to beat anybody, I just worry about what I'm doing! It's you versus the Bream and I figure that the weigh master takes care of the rest at the end of the session.

Last but not least, have fun! There's not a single tournament that I've fished and not learnt something from. A bad day's tournament fishing is still better than a good day at the office.

A huge thanks to Will for sharing his success with us and all the best in the upcoming bream events.





Richard Quincey with a Townsville Mangrove Jack on a ZMan 4" SwimmerZ

Richard Quincey took out our April ZMan Facebook photo comp with a Mangrove Jack taken on a ZMan 4" SwimmerZ in Gizzard Shad, rigged on a TT Lures SWS jig head. He was kind enough to write us a story on this trip where he picked up some ZMan plastics and headed to Hinchinbrook in north QLD to try and land a fish on a ZMan for the comp. Check out Facebook – Z-Man Lures Australia page for how to enter. Let's find out how his trip unfolded.

With Easter backing onto a long weekend it seemed like the perfect opportunity to head to Hinchinbrook for a few days to fish soft plastics on light to medium spin gear.

Day one was a warm up getting the casting arm going in the tidal creeks south of Townsville. It was also a chance to try my new stock of ZMan plastics and TT Lures jig



Hinchinbrook Island Adventure



heads. Are they as tough as the say? Will they work as well as my regular plastics?

Things started slowly, but as so often happens, a tide change in the early afternoon saw the fish come on the bite. A 4" SwimmerZ in Gizzard Shad, rigged on a 4/0 weedless worm hook, soon accounted for a couple of rat Barra, a nice Trevally and a 38cm Mangrove Jack. Being the first time I had used the ZMan I quickly learnt that the rubber rings that come with the TT War Head jig heads, or a tiny amount (not even a drop) of super glue really help keep these durable, but super soft and flexible plastics from slipping on the hook.

Day two began early as we headed to Hinchinbrook and started four days of good north Queensland Autumn fishing. Clear skies and 28 degrees.

Morning tides were high so we concentrated on the flats up against the mangrove edges. We used 6" and 4" SwimmerZ on 4/0 Tournament Series Snagless Weight System (SWS) jig heads. This allowed the plastic to be thrown deep into cover without getting connected to a prop root. The light, 1/6oz weights and the buoyancy of the plastics also meant that the ZMan did not snag before starting a retrieve. It wasn't long before the first two 65cm Barra were caught and released.

As the tides fell and with the wind steady between 15 and 20 knots it was into the creeks to work the snags and drop offs. The fishing kept improving with Barra willing to take both small and large plastics.

A successful first day at Hinchinbrook with a neat dozen Barra caught and released. Guess what... all ZMan plastics remained intact and swimming!

The next day saw us on the water early again fishing the flats. This time I opted toward the scented 3" ShrimpZ in Natural and Holographic rigged on 1/8 and 1/6oz SWS jig heads. The slowly drifting shrimp accounted for a few small Barra before we headed to a favourite hole in the creek.

Using soft plastics allows you to fish the hole with less risk of snagging than a hard body and to get the plastic down I made a change to a 6" SwimmerZ in Gizzard Shad rigged on a 1/2oz TT War Head. The hole really produced. Ten Barra all around the 68cm mark, half on the ZMan that I was using and try as they might the plastic I used could not be thrown from the rig by jumps or head shakes. It even had the jig head pulled right through it and got turned inside out at least another five times after being inhaled and spat out (not quick enough to strike in the wind), yet still the plastic swam like a brand new one, even after this punishment!

Hinchinbrook Island – What a magic location...



After two days and 32 Barra I was convinced about the fishability and durability of the ZMan and so decided to try a few different options including using a ½oz Aussie Green and Gold Switchblade. While needing to be a bit more accurate when casting, the Switchblade continued to see Barra landed. It also enticed a variety of other species including Trevally, Queenfish and the odd Javelin fish.

Over the five days my fishing mate found it hard to switch completely to ZMan plastics from his tried and tested soft plastic brand. We both caught fish, with the result of the friendly Hinchinbrook Barra rivalry decided with rock, paper, scissors, to split an 18 all Barra deadlock. I did catch one on a live bait that he maintains doesn't count.

This trip showed me though that the ZMan was as effective as the plastics I previously used, probably the most popular brand in Australia... the difference being after 5 days fishing and plenty of fish caught, I only sent a single ZMan to lure heaven when a trevally ripped a 4" SwimmerZ off a SWS jig head and then I watched as another one came and ate it off the surface. So are they as tough as they say, yes, do they work as well, definitely, five days fishing, plenty of fish and only one lure lost, thanks ZMan!

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