

in this issue...

Longtail Tuna

TT Snagless Weight System

Switchblading NZ

Deepwater ZMan Snapper

Switchblading Inshore

Snapper

*Jungle Perch Switchblading
the Tropics*



Jason Preece

Species: Sunshine Coast Snapper

Jighead: 3/4oz TT Lures Tournament Jig Head 7/0

Lure: ZMan 5" Jerk ShadZ - Shiner



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Tackle Tactics - Pro Tips

Switchblade Tips

Here's a few tips from the Team TT Pros for getting the most out of your Switchblade.

- The gill slots and grooves around the Switchblade's head are ideal for holding scent
- Vary your retrieve from more aggressive hops followed by a sink back to the bottom, through to small twitches while slow rolling until you find what the fish want
- When casting, pulling the cast up short can cause the blade to roll and catch the line - so get the cast distance right and allow it to fall naturally
- If you are using the same attachment point for a period of time you can replace the clip with a split ring - this minimises the chance of fouling and allows you to pull up the cast when targeting structure
- When fishing snaggy country you can run a single treble in the centre of the Switchblade and even upsize slightly, while ensuring it still retains its vibration
- In snaggy country you can also replace the trebles with lure singles to minimise snagging
- Try downsizing your Switchblade if taps aren't turning into hook-ups. Dizzy's favourites for inshore snapper are the 1/6 and 1/4oz



ZMan Tips

Here's a few tips from the Team TT Pros for getting the most out of the ZMan Plastics

- ZMan plastics are super tough, but also super soft and flexible for maximum action - so if you find the plastic slipping on smaller jig heads, a tiny dab of super glue is ideal for locking them in place and the pros have been doing it for years. This means:
 - More fish per lure
 - Less time re-rigging
 - More time fishing
 - Get a bite and you can be confident the lure is still sitting right...so keep fishing!
- Don't be scared to modify your plastics - the pros have been doing it for years. Cut them down to reduce profile size, cut them thinner, chop off heads, legs, claws and being 10X tougher the ZMan won't tear easily when modified
- ZMan plastics are constructed from a scientifically designed super plastic and it's important not to mix them up with other soft plastics as they don't play well with others and will eat them...seriously!



Longtail Assassins

By Declan Williams

See the fish, catch the fish! Some of the best fishing is visual, Bass and Barramundi blasting ZMan frogs off the surface, a StreakZ XL 8" getting engulfed off the top by a big Kingie or GT and the adrenalin pumping action of casting metal slugs at Longtail Tuna!

Brutal strikes, screaming runs and powerful tussles are the signature of the Longtail and one of the most effective ways to target them is retrieving metal lures at speed. The age old saying is 'match the hatch' which means match the lure to the bait that the fish are feeding on and metal lures allow you to drop to a tiny baitfish profile while still being able to cast far enough to reach these at times spooky fish.

The TT Lures Hard Core Assassin is one of my favourite slugs when chasing tuna and the 30g Hard Core is my go-to size when I first find a patch of fish. A good place to start, gear wise, is with 7' 8-12 kg spin rods, loaded with 30 lb braid and 20-40 lb leader, 60 lb if there is a chance of doing battle with a Spanish Mackerel. We fish with 30 lb braid in case we come across a monster Longy but also to make the fight reasonably quick to give us maximum chance of reviving and releasing the fish. A high speed spinning reel, with a gear ratio of 5.7:1 or quicker makes it much easier and less fatiguing to cast and retrieve metal slugs for an extended period of time.





Tuna will often feed into the wind or tide and are commonly scattered on the run in tide, making the run out tide a better option as the tuna tend to come together in schools and terrorise bait balls. When approaching schools as they are busting up on the surface, it's easy to spook them so we have two main methods of targeting a school. The first method is to work along slowly, a cast distance behind the school using the electric motor and cast over the school working the lure back through or alongside the school. The second approach is to observe the direction the fish are travelling in, position the boat in their line of travel and a bit more than a cast ahead and then cast your slugs back to them as they come into range.

Anglers quite often crank the lure as fast as they possibly can, which sees it skipping across the surface. From experience we have found that this retrieve can quite often excite the Mac Tuna and these fish are great fun, but it can be frustrating when you keep working to get the boat in the perfect position for a shot at a Longtail Tuna and instead it's one Mac after another. Try mixing the speed up a little as we have found that the Longtail Tuna often prefer a bit slower retrieve with the lure below the surface.

When fishing tuna that are busting up on the surface, other species will often lurk below the school cleaning up dead and injured baitfish and also eating the occasional tuna. It's worth letting the slug sink below the school sometimes to see

if you can tempt any predators below. If they don't hit the lure on the drop as it falls below the school, they will often smash the lure as you take up the slack and commence your retrieve. Species you may connect with using this technique include Mackerel, GT's and Golden Trevally.

Spinning for Longtail Tuna is heart stopping! 20 kg+ fish throwing themselves from the water and smashing bait off the surface...you position the boat perfectly, throw a long cast across the front of the school, start to crank the Assassin back quickly, a couple of solid Longtail break from the school and start pushing water behind your lure like a couple of big, black torpedo's...eat it, eat it...the water explodes, the rod buckles over, drag starts screaming and you look over at your fishing mate with a massive grin on your face...oh yeah, this is Longtail fishing!



Unlocking the Snags with the TT Lures SWS

By Justin Willmer



There's some big fish in those mangrove prop roots...I know they're there but the trick is how am I going to get my lure to them and then get it back out without snagging. There is an answer to this question and it's three magic letters, SWS.

The TT Lures SWS (Snagless Weight System) allows you to cast that plastic right into heavy cover and work it back out with a pretty good chance of it not hanging up. It consists of a worm hook, allowing you to rig the soft plastic snagless and a centre weight on the shank of the hook that gives you the casting distance and sinks the lure slowly and with a seductive, natural drift down into the snags.

I recently fished Hinchinbrook, an area loaded with a myriad of species including Barramundi, Mangrove Jack, Cod and Fingermark. It's also an area that is loaded with structure, predominately the prop roots of mangroves that form cages the fish call home. Fishing in cooler weather meant the fish were holding right up inside these cages and it wasn't going to be easy to draw them out of the snag...we needed to put the lure right in their face to get them to eat it.





Our weapon of choice the SWS rigged with a ZMan 3" ShrimpZ or 3" MinnowZ. Tough plastic, snagless rig, it was time to hit some snags. When fishing shallower water or less run we fished the 1/8 oz with a 4/0 hook and when the tide was higher, the run stronger or wind blowing we switched to the 1/6 oz 4/0 for increased casting distance and slightly faster sink so that we could stay in touch with the lure.

Applying a tiny amount of superglue on the shank of the hook, near the eye, will lock the plastic in place and stay in position and swim correctly even after a strike. With the durability of the ZMan and the snagless presentation, we were able to land 20 or more fish on a single lure. Our approach was to target open water snags on the flats when the tide was higher and then work the mangrove edges during the second half of the run out tide and first half of the run in. Cast the SWS right into the structure, targeting lay down timber and especially any forks in this timber, areas of dense branches and sticks as these always seem to hold bait and also getting that lure into the cages of prop roots.

There were a couple of retrieves that worked well for us. Firstly we cast the SWS into the structure, allowed it to sink for a second or two and then gave it a sharp lift and wound up the slack as the lure drifted back down. We continued this lift and drop back to the boat but it was often on the first or second lift that the lure was belted by Barra. This technique produced plenty of Barramundi and as the lure moved further from the snags the Queenfish and Trevally took over, which was great fun.

The other retrieve we used involved casting the SWS / ZMan combo tight into the structure, allowing it to sink to the bottom before lifting the rod tip sharply in a long twitch of the plastic. We then wound up the slack as the lure drifted back to the bottom, paused the lure on the bottom for a second and then repeated this twitch, pause and sink to the bottom back to the boat. This retrieve produced most of our Mangrove Jack and Cod as we were deeper in the snag. Anytime you hit the water though it's a matter of varying the



Destination New Zealand by Steven Riding

My mate Michael and I recently found some cheap flights to New Zealand online and decided to head over to try to catch a Trout or Salmon. The closest either of us had been to one of these fish, was when our wives cooked a couple of cutlets from the local supermarket. Hmmm, there was also a time when I had some at restaurant, oh and you can't beat them smoked.

So, with absolutely no idea how to catch one of these fish we loaded up the tackle tray with our favourite bream lures. The selection included a range of crank baits, stick baits and quite a few blades. Among the blades were the Aussie Green & Gold coloured Switchblade and Ghostblade. I actually thought I would include these in our gear as it would be pretty cool to catch a New Zealand fish on a lure from an Aussie company in Aussie colours..."suck on that All Blacks!"

We had no itinerary for the trip, but we decided not to fish too long in each location as we only had five days and two of them would be completely taken up by the 640km drive between Christchurch and Queenstown.

After flying into Christchurch we drove our campervan to the Tekapo region in the centre of the South Island. This area has several hydro electricity canals that hold some huge trout.

Our trip coincided with a period of heavy rain which reduced the visibility in the lakes, rivers and canals. Even while we were there the rain continued and in one night the region received a month's rain overnight. Our campervan stayed dry but there was localised flooding!

After having a chat to a few locals we decided our best chance of getting a fish was in the canals. We started fishing our bream lures but the current in the canals was seriously fast and we couldn't get them to stay in what we believed to be the strike zone. We then changed to some soft plastic minnows including the ZMan Minnows on 1/6oz, 2/O TT jig heads. These swam very well in the current and we cast them upstream allowing the current to swing them around in an arc downstream and then we slowly wound them back against the current. I had a couple of hits, solid enough to pull the tail back off the head of the jig and also had a follow from a cracker of a fish. I reckon I would still take some soft plastics with me on the next trip but a dab of superglue on the jig head and some stinger hooks would be my only changes.

I started to think that the poor visibility was the reason for the short hits on the softies, so I grabbed a blade and gave it a go using the same technique. When it was swinging around in the current I stayed in contact with it so I could feel the blade vibrating the entire time. At the end of the arc I slowly jigged and retrieved the Switchy against the current so it was vibrating aggressively. The first fish I hooked I thought was a snag as it hit the lure and just sat there holding against the current. I put some pressure on the fish and after a spirited fight I slid my first NZ trout up onto a small bank between the rocks of the canal wall. A NZ trout caught on an Aussie Green & Gold lure, I was stoked!

We ended up with a few fish between us before our supply of blades were gone. The canals are popular with fishermen chasing a feed and they seem to feel the need to do this with 40lb line. This meant the bottom was littered with snagged line and our 8lb braid was no competition against that whipper sniper line when we snagged up. I could feel the blade moving against the stretch of the line but no matter what I tried I couldn't get them back.

On my next trip to NZ or any trout water I will definitely be taking some blades with me. If Michael and I could score some trout on them, then they will be deadly with a bit more experience or in the hands of a gun trout angler.



Deep Water Snapper on Plastics

Chasing big snapper offshore in deep water is awesome fun. Bail arm open, braid feeding out as the jig head and plastic plummet into the dark blue water... that is until the line speeds up, you flick the bail arm over and all hell breaks loose as that big red realises it's hooked, the solid head shakes start and the fish starts powering down toward the wire weed. Big snapper really are a trophy fish in Australia and plastics are an extremely effective method of targeting them, let's have a look at what has worked for us when targeting snapper on plastics in deep water.

When chasing snapper in deep water the sounder is your best friend and we generally target ledges, wire weed and bait patches. We have been successful targeting snapper in water depths from 40-140m, but focus most of our attention around the 80-90m mark. Fishing in these depth demands the use of reasonable quality gear, especially when by-catch may include kingfish, amberjack and cobia.

In up to about 90m of water we fish 30lb braid on 5000-6000 size spinning reels and 20-40lb rods. When fishing beyond 90m we up the braid to 50lb spooled on an 8000-10000 size spinning reel and fished through a 30-50lb rod. Fish in this depth aren't leader shy, so by fishing 80lb leader it makes it easier and safer when handling kingies and other fish off the leader and also provides some insurance when the snapper head for the wire weed.

By Declan Williams



Plastic and jig head selection is important as snapper will generally rise to a slowly falling plastic and eat it on the drop. The lighter the jig head the better and jig head selection will often be dictated by depth, wind and current. In 40m we commonly start with a TT Lures Tournament jig head in 3/4oz, 7/0, but have had a couple of magic days when the weather has glassed out and the current has been light enough for us to float our plastics down on 1/2oz jig heads. As you step into deeper water, a TT lures Extra Heavy Duty Tournament jig head with an SL12 hook is perfect. A good starting point is 2oz in the 80-90m depth range and 4oz once you get beyond 120m.

Soft plastics that have been doing the job for us include the ZMan 5" Jerk ShadZ, which has been dynamite from the shallows through to about 60m and then we tend to step up to the ZMan 8" StreakZ XL, which is a monster jerkbait in deeper water. These ZMan plastics are constructed from ElaZtech making them super soft and flexible with a great action, while also being 10X tougher than a standard soft plastic, making them perfect for the offshore environment as they stand up to the pickers, toothy critters and the power of big snapper.

When fishing around the 40m mark we allow the lure to sink to the bottom, if it makes it that far, give the lure a few hops, wind it up 15m, pause and drop it back. Once it starts to get too far from the boat we retrieve it rapidly with a few pauses, just in case there is a hungry kingfish in the area. In 80-90m we drop the lure to the bottom, again if a snapper doesn't smash it on the drop, give it a few flicks and work it up 20-30m, allow it to drop back down and repeat. Again once the lure is too far from the boat retrieve it rapidly with a few pauses. If you are continually being harassed by small pearlies and juvenile species keep the lure off the bottom. In 120m of water use a similar technique to when fishing 80-90m, but remember in this depth of water it is crucial that you use your sounder and work the lure through the bait and snapper... it's a long way down and back up again, especially if you keep missing the fish!



We drift when fishing plastics and it's important to pay attention to your line as the plastic sinks. If the line stops, twitches or takes off it could be game on. Flick the bail arm over, wind and strike. If there is no weight, pause the lure as sometimes the fish will come back. If not allow the lure to continue its descent.

By-catch when fishing deep water plastics may include kingies, amberjack, pearl perch, sweetlip and cobia. Peak bite times are generally dawn and dusk and remember to keep an eye out for mid-water bait balls as these attract snapper and a range of other species. Chasing snapper on plastics in deep water is great fun and extremely effective. There are also plenty of epic by-catch and memorable moments including dolphins, flying fish and multiple hook-ups.

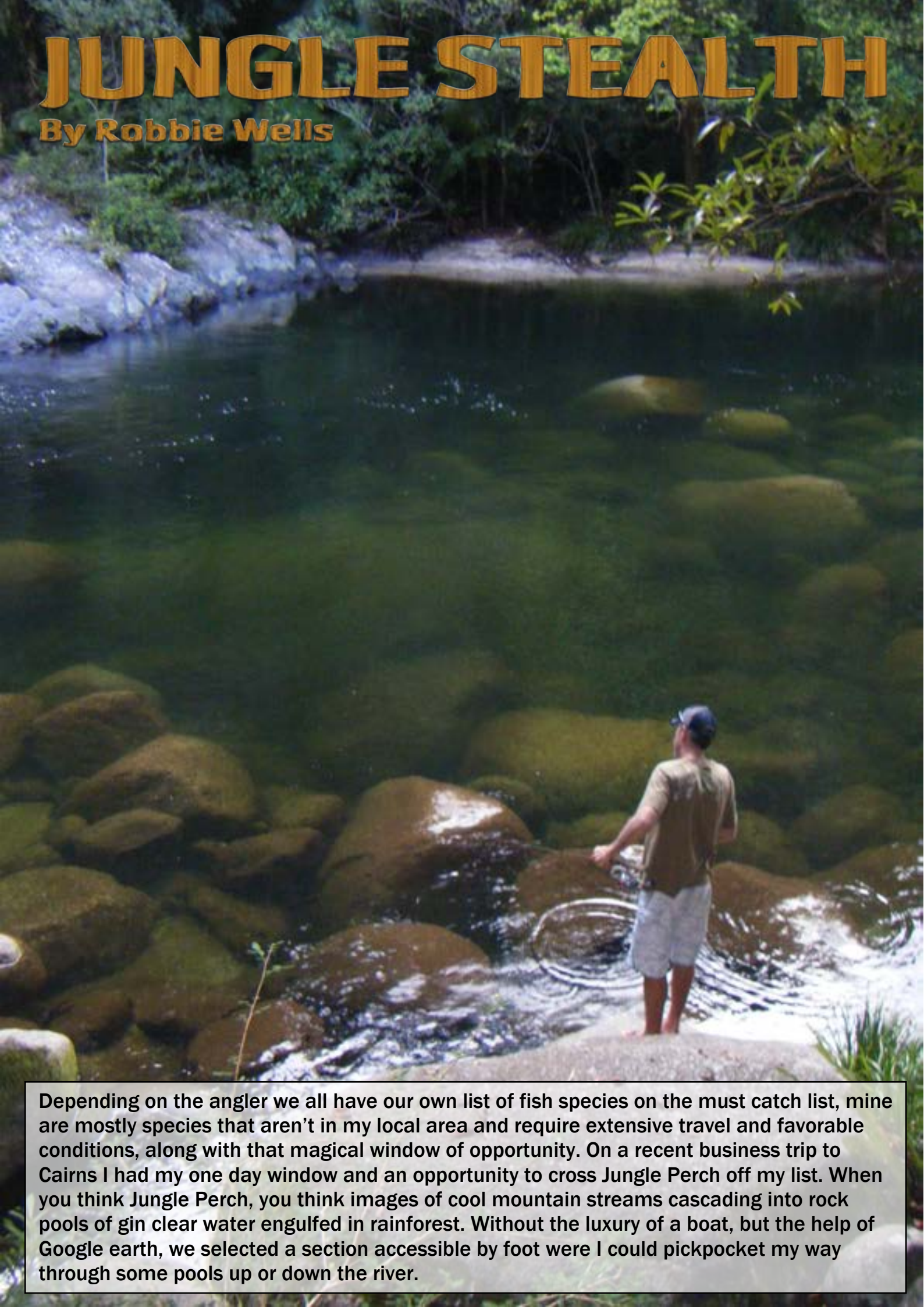
On a recent mission targeting deep water snapper on plastics we were driving over a show on the sounder 10m down in 80m that we believed to be kingfish that were balling bait to the surface. We dropped our plastics and were met with a triple hook-up of kingfish, absolute mayhem. Our jaws dropped as 5 Spanish mackerel around the 25-30kg mark leapt from the water with fusiliers in their mouths! Stunned we all just looked at each other in disbelief and then simultaneously commenced a crazy dance to try and shake the kingies off our plastics so we could get a shot at the Spaniards... to no avail... the jig heads held firm, so no mackerel for us, but still a triple hook-up on solid yellowtail kingfish isn't bad. We then went on to have a hot snapper session on fish up to 6kg, along with kingies, amberjack, cobia and pearl perch, with the ZMan StreakZ XL 8", in glow, bubble gum and opening night doing the job.



Declan Williams with a solid sunset snapper

JUNGLE STEALTH

By Robbie Wells



Depending on the angler we all have our own list of fish species on the must catch list, mine are mostly species that aren't in my local area and require extensive travel and favorable conditions, along with that magical window of opportunity. On a recent business trip to Cairns I had my one day window and an opportunity to cross Jungle Perch off my list. When you think Jungle Perch, you think images of cool mountain streams cascading into rock pools of gin clear water engulfed in rainforest. Without the luxury of a boat, but the help of Google earth, we selected a section accessible by foot were I could pickpocket my way through some pools up or down the river.

We headed to a section of the Mossman River north of Port Douglas and after a short 20 minute hike through some amazing rainforest I could finally hear and see glimpses of the river. We arrived to find an awesome section of rapids spilling into crystal clear small to medium size rock pools. I decided to climb a large rock for a look over the rock pools and to locate the best place to flick... bad idea, as I stood up 3 or 4 little shadows darted off into the rocks. The water is that clear it's hard to even tell how deep it is as you can see every rock and piece of structure on the bottom... a more stealth approach was needed.



Armed with an assortment small minnows, surface lures, cicadas, frogs even a spider imitation, I regrouped and moved up to next pool ducking and diving around the large granite boulders until I had good scope on the pool. I could see some small junglies just out of the main flow and they appeared to be sussing out anything that was getting washed down the rapids, darting in and out of the current and to the surface when anything floated past. I thought this will be easy pickings... 100 casts later and I had nothing to show except a few follows by some tiddlers. I tried switching between surface, sub surface minnows etc for no reward.



I moved up to another pool with a similar set up; fast rapids cascading down a ledge into a single 10 metre pool. This section had a lot more eddies and backwaters, with another small group of jungle perch darting around again as food was carried down with the water flow. This time I could see some larger shapes down deeper in the fast water but I was having trouble keeping the surface lures in the zone and my selection of small minnows weren't handling the fast flowing water and couldn't get deep enough. Another thing I noticed was that everything I threw at them seemed to be larger than what they were feeding on.



After another scrimmage through my tackle box I tied on a TT Lures Ghostblade in Green Spook, three casts later and fish on! My first JP, at only around 15cm not a big fish but a solid fight for its size and an awesome looking fish in great condition. I pulled another 3 small fish from this pool and got smoked on light line by another in the deeper faster water. I could flick the Ghostblade across and through the fast flowing water and into the back eddies, keeping it in the feeding zone. I could also drop it into the base of the rapids and hop it across the bottom with the flow.



Even in the crystal clear water the transparent profile of the Ghostblade was virtually invisible, prompting a lot more interest as it seemed to better mimic the smaller items the fish were feeding on. After a few more hours in this pristine environment and a few more small JPs landed, I was flicking the blade to a backwater between a rock and the main rapid and bang! On the drop and about a foot under the water the blade got smashed by a half decent Jungle Perch. They're quite a handful for their size, especially on light gear and in the fast flowing water. As I fought the jungle perch I was imagining all the underwater rocks they dart through and after what seemed like forever I had an awesome specimen at my feet.



Again in excellent condition with awesome markings, they are quite a thick fish for their size and the coloring really blends with the granite colored rocks, shadows and clear water they inhabit. They are a cool fish to stalk and catch, not to mention the amazing country you see while chasing them, but unfortunately my window had now closed and it was time to get back to real world and then maybe cross another species off that list. I have another window opening in the next couple of weeks on the way home and a GT or similar would be nice!



How Goods Australia
Robbie Wells

www.sun2seavprotection.com.au



This tea-leaf trevally was caught pulsing a 1.5oz TT Switchblade HD down a steep rocky ban

SWITCHBLADING TROPICAL SPECIES

By Cy & Kerrin Taylor

SWITCHBLADING TROPICAL SPECIES

The Switchblade from TT is a great little lure. It continues to demonstrate that it's a fish catcher, and not just on southern species, the success of the Switchblade has travelled north and spread into the tropics. Here it's found a home amongst the strong currents and hefty fish species that swim through them.

These lures are tough. Other types of lures such as soft plastics will damage quite easily but these blades are able to keep on catching fish. Virtually the only way you'll lose one is if you become snagged or your leader material is snapped through by a sharp-toothed fish...or maybe your mate might slip one into his pocket when you're not looking! However, if you're looking for durability in a lure, you can't go past the Switchblade. They come in a perfect range of sizes too, with different weights, so there's a Switchblade to suit any tropical fishing that you're into.

BLADING PELAGICS

When you dream of fishing in the tropics, it's hard to keep your thoughts away from the pelagics. A large GT, queenfish, golden trevally, mackerel or tuna is always a welcome encounter when fishing in the saltwater.

Pelagics love nothing more than chasing down a baitfish in distress. Whether it's slightly injured or just in a vulnerable position away from the safety of cover, a baitfish in danger will always get attention from predators.

When a baitfish senses that it's in a vulnerable position of being attacked, its swimming motions change. It will often kick away madly with quick stop-start, darty movements. This sends out signals to predatory fish both visually and through vibrations in the water that they feel through their lateral lines. The speedy tail movements of a panicking baitfish would be quite similar to the strong, rapid vibrations of a blade.

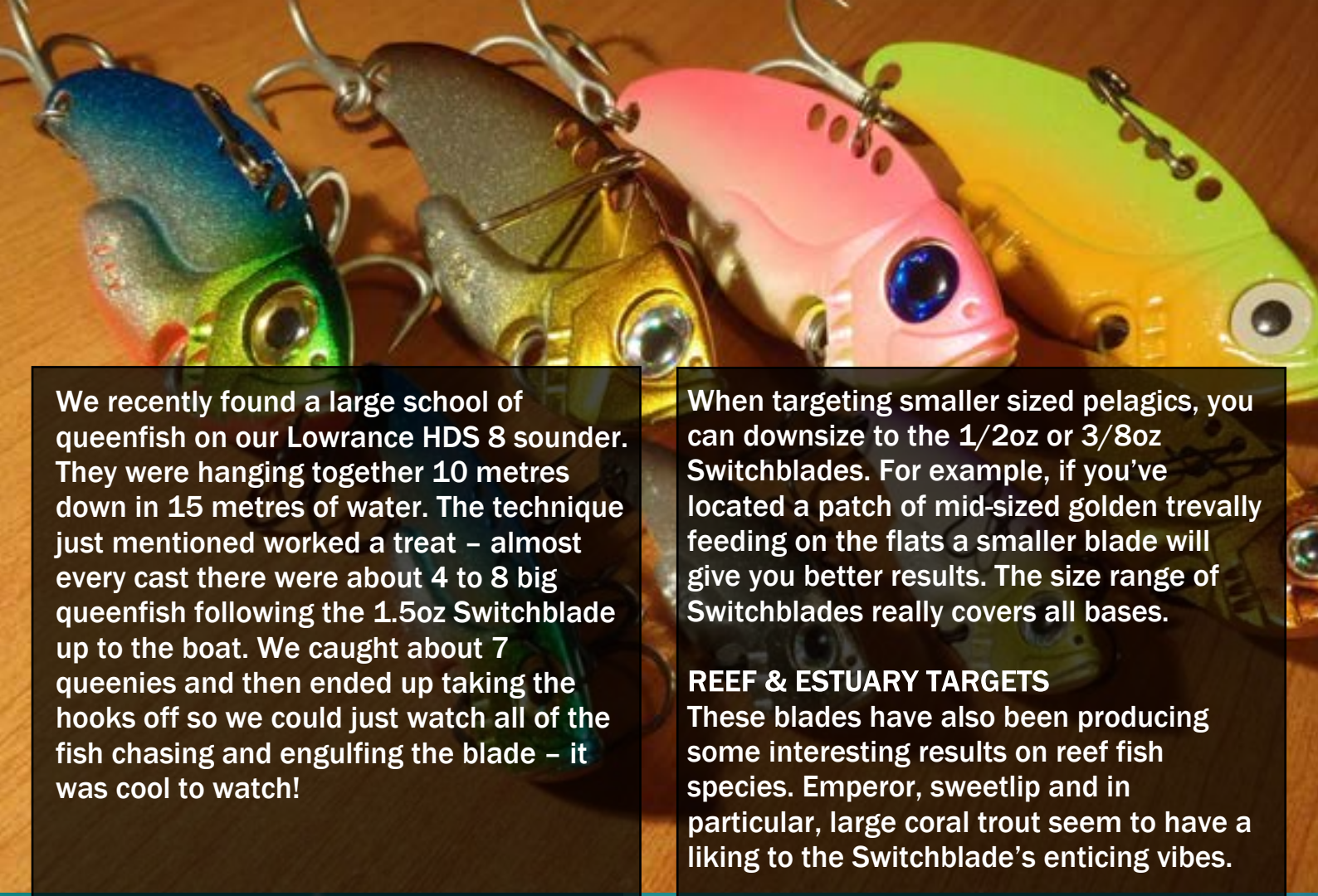
Coral trout seem to have a liking for the HD – this one was caught casting to some shallow-water coral bommies



The largest model of the Switchblade is the HD (Heavy Duty) and these are great choices for targeting large pelagic species. These are available in 1, 1.5 and 2oz versions. The best areas to use these lures are around deep water spots. Because these lures sink quite fast, you're able to get them right down deep and work them on or close to the bottom. This means they're perfect for targeting pelagic species hanging around deep structure such as wrecks, shoals and reef patches.

In this situation, you can look for baitfish or predatory fish on your sounder and simply drop your blade straight over the side of the boat. Then, sink it down to where the fish are and work it with either pulses of the rod or a fast straight wind back up to the boat. You can even use a combination of jerky rod movements and fast winding to get an even more stimulating retrieve.





We recently found a large school of queenfish on our Lowrance HDS 8 sounder. They were hanging together 10 metres down in 15 metres of water. The technique just mentioned worked a treat – almost every cast there were about 4 to 8 big queenfish following the 1.5oz Switchblade up to the boat. We caught about 7 queenies and then ended up taking the hooks off so we could just watch all of the fish chasing and engulfing the blade – it was cool to watch!

When targeting smaller sized pelagics, you can downsize to the 1/2oz or 3/8oz Switchblades. For example, if you've located a patch of mid-sized golden trevally feeding on the flats a smaller blade will give you better results. The size range of Switchblades really covers all bases.

REEF & ESTUARY TARGETS

These blades have also been producing some interesting results on reef fish species. Emperor, sweetlip and in particular, large coral trout seem to have a liking to the Switchblade's enticing vibes.



These images show packs of Queenfish attacking a 1.5oz Switchblade HD while vertically jigging under the boat

The best sizes seem to be the 3/8oz and 1/2oz when targeting average size fish and for chasing bigger fish, the HD is the best bet. We've been surprised how effectively the HD version has been tempting larger-than-average coral trout, not just from the deep water but the shallows as well.

Large rocky boulders that have fallen into the shallows and large coral bommies in 4 metres of water and shallower are often overlooked spots for big coral trout and you'd be surprised how many large trout are lurking underneath these shady spots. We've been catching some nice sized trout by casting these HD blades tight against this cover and working them back with a fairly fast, two-hop style retrieve. This basically means pulsing the rod twice to make the blade dart and vibrate and then winding up the slack line and repeating.

Moving in closer to shore, the tropical estuaries are prime places for blading. These estuaries attract a range of species – anything could show up. The range of sizes in the Switchblade (1/8, 1/6, 1/4, 3/8 and 1/2oz) means you can match the size of the prey the fish you're targeting.

Any deep cover or structure such as drop offs, rocky ledges and patches of rocks are perfect for blading. Fallen logs and bunches of mangrove roots are also prime spots to fish but aren't perfectly suited to blade fishing as the lure can easily snag-up against the branches.

If you're into tropical fishing, make sure you pack a few TT Switchblades into your tackle box. The blade has recently become a popular lure choice and the TT Switchblade would have to be the best on the market right now in terms of quality, size choice and wide-ranging fish-attracting capability!



The Switchblade HD has become a popular lure choice for targeting fun sportfish like large Queenfish.

tackle tactics

We hope you enjoyed Issue #2 of the Tackle Tactics E-Mag, feel free to forward it to your fisho friends!

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