

tackle



tactics

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in this issue...

ShrimpZing the Tropics

Blading SA

Flathead Fix

AFTA 2011

Bassin' Clarrie Hall

Bribie Island ABT
Flathead

New Gear!

Team TT angler Guy Struthers
Winner: R3 - KFT 2011 Gold Coast Series
Jighead: 1/28 and 1/20oz HWS jig heads
Lure: Cut-down ZMan ShrimpZ



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SA Bay Blades



Big silver trevally simply love Switchblades! The author with a solid fish.

By Shane Murton

Blades may have been somewhat slower on the uptake down south compared to more northern parts, but the word is well and truly out now as more fishos are incorporating them into their attack and the results are speaking for themselves.

Being based in SA, we may not have the bully-sized pelagics located in our shallow bays that you'll find in the more heated waters up north, but this fishing caper is all relative and scaling down your tackle and whipping around a few Switchblades of varying sizes will still get you connected to a long list of hard pulling fish. The best part about bay bashing is you don't need to burn up a lot of fuel for a session or require much more than a flick-stick outfit, spool of leader and a box of lures. Cheap thrills in my book.

There's hardly a lack of grounds to explore down this way, both remote and on the doorstep of more metro parts, so what are the species to be considering?

BAY SPECIES

Flicking from a small craft, be it yak or tinny, can be a ball and I'm often armed with a bundle of 1/4 or 1/2 ounce Switchblades and twitching the shallows at a leisurely smell-the-roses pace.

Aussie salmon are usually the first culprit to smash a blade down here in SA. These pack hunting fish are the most prolific target in our waters and it's nothing to catch fish to four or five kilos in some areas (and well beyond this in the far west of the State). The average bay sambo would be a kilo or two of muscle that is likely to be patrolling obvious bait holding points, including structure or rips and their presence is often given away by bird or bait activity. They're messy eaters!

A faster retrieve with a slightly larger blade is best on these fish. Sink the lure deep to work all levels of the water column and if you're getting fish following it up but not striking, try moving it faster again. They are suckers for a meal on the run and stick with a 1/2 ounce to 1 1/2 blade depending on the size of the fish and the amount of current you're fishing in. Even the small fish will tackle a large blade so don't be afraid of bumping up the size.

When working a combination bottom of weed/sand or weed/low reef, snook are on the hit list. These lean and mean predators will school up at times and tend to hold deeper in the water column during the day, hunting near the surface in low light conditions. So when the sun is up get your blade basically to the bottom before you start your retrieve. Conversely mid water to surface retrieves are deadly close to dark or around first light.

I've had good success using 1/4 oz Switchblades in Silver Minnow or Red Nightmare, with the silver pattern great when the fish are focused on whitebait and are looking for a shiny-coloured meal. When the snook are on you'll be hammered down deep and watching braid bleed from a blurred spool. Thankfully their teeth don't seem to come into the equation with blades too much, although an overly big fish on a smaller vibration bait could see leaders slashed up and fish lost.

Over a similar bottom type you'll encounter Australian herring and silver trevally. Both these fish will swipe at blades. For herring keep your lure small and the retrieve constant as they're more a nippy biter rather than fish which will rush a lure and inhale it in one mouthful.

Silver trevally, on the other hand like a slow, deep roll of the lure and short, subtle flinches. Blades are actually the best lure option I've found for silvers in my home waters and some rather big fish have fallen victim to a dark-hued Switchblade. Prospect structures such as reefs and jetty/bridge pylons and unfortunately they know how to use structure a little too well once hooked!

Rat kings equally adore pylons, channel markers and other natural or manmade creations and since the introduction of the 1/2 ounce Switchblade I've taken a lot more kings on blades.

Australian herring are an aggressive little species that will also attack smaller Switchblades



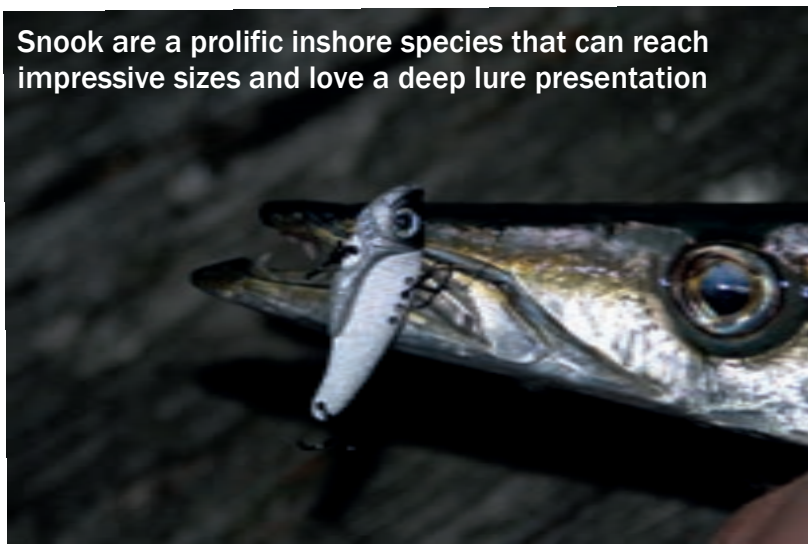
Salmon are avid eaters of blades and rarely look the other way



Silver trevally seem to go nuts over blades, with a slow and deep retrieve generally the best



Snook are a prolific inshore species that can reach impressive sizes and love a deep lure presentation



The extra weight of this lure is great when you need it to sink quickly down to a school of fish or rip out a long and accurate cast to a surface bust-up and the extra mass of the lure allows it to be worked more erratically through the water while having plenty of visual appeal.

The half ounce is a great compromise between stealth and a lure that has enough weight to be fished in many inshore saltwater situations and is ideal for many of the midsized fish talked about.

When conditions are calm and clear and you need to bump up the stealth factor then don't be afraid to drop your blade size down to a 1/4 ounce and the fish will be duped!

On the sand flats and broken ground that is so commonly found in SA, there's plenty of scope for flatties with the southern blue-spot the largest variety found in our waters. You don't hear a lot about flatties down this way, but that's mostly due to the lack of people chasing them, rather than an absence of fish or areas to hunt them down.

A slowly worked blade is best for these, with maximum time in the strike zone preferred. Blades can also be used to work deeper holes also and are versatile weapons when you think about it.

Snapper, KG whiting and many others are also on the cards when working blades in a southern bay setting and there's still plenty of learning to do. To help you out on those hard-water days be sure to take a spool of ultra light fluorocarbon, smaller blades and more natural coloured presentations for when the going gets tough. But mostly you shouldn't find it too difficult to put a bend in a rod in these cooler waters!



Blades in bays is all about getting bent up!

For more of Shane Murton's adventures, make sure you check out:

WILD COAST - Fishing South Australia and **Fishing Tips & Techniques** Magazines

Wading and throwing blades over drop-offs will also score you salmon



ShrimpZing

The Tropics

By Justin Willmer



Click play to see the Zman ShrimpZ in action!

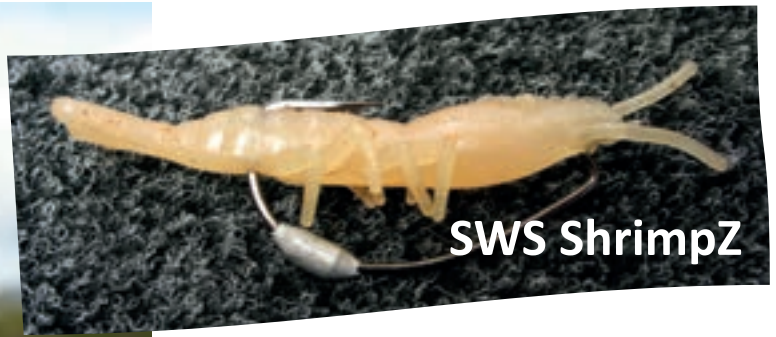
On a recent northern trip the ZMan ShrimpZ proved itself to be absolutely deadly on barramundi, jack, trevally, cod and a range of other species. There's not too many fish that won't eat a prawn and it seems that when fish hit a prawn they commit, hitting it hard and hooking up solidly. The ZMan ShrimpZ is constructed from ElaZtech making it super tough, 10X tougher than a standard soft plastic, which is perfect for the aggressive predators that inhabit northern waters... while also being super soft and flexible, giving the ShrimpZ maximum action and a seductive flick of the tail when twitched.

We fished the ShrimpZ on a standard jig head and also on a SWS (Snagless Weight System) and Snake Head when fishing heavy structure.

Standard Jig Head - on a standard jig head the ShrimpZ is most commonly rigged through the head and out the back, however I have seen it rigged through the tail and it looks pretty good. With its buoyant construction the ShrimpZ sits on the bottom with its tail up making it an attractive meal for fish. On a standard head we allowed it to sink and worked it with a lift, drop and pause or a series of twitches followed by a pause.

SWS - The 3" ShrimpZ sits perfectly on the SWS (Snagless Weight System). This gives you the ability to drift it naturally into structure with minimal chance of snagging. On our northern adventure we found the SWS rig gave the ShrimpZ a slow, seductive, horizontal sink that was perfect for shallow water, up to a couple of metres and when fishing in less current. When resting on the bottom the SWS looks super-realistic as the belly weight of the hook sits on the bottom and the ShrimpZ floats horizontally just off the bottom swaying seductively with the water movement. Next time you have a ShrimpZ rigged on an SWS drop it in the shallows and check out how good it looks!





Snake Head – The Snake Head and ShrimpZ combo is ideal for shallow water and slow currents, but really comes into its own when the water gets deeper and the run faster. With weights up to 3/8oz available, this presentation allows you to fish drop offs and edges and get into the snags, even when the tide is pumping. Although not as natural as the SWS presentation, the Snake Head presentation still looks awesome when lifted or twitched and paused, and when at rest on the bottom the ShrimpZ floats up off the bottom making it extremely attractive to fish. This is the ideal snagless option for faster moving



Snake Head ShrimpZ



Scent in the belly slot

Scent – ShrimpZ are infused with a 100% natural scent, extracted from real baitfish and designed to attract fish and trigger strikes. The belly slot in the ShrimpZ is also ideal for holding additional scent if you have your own secret squirrel, favourite scent. I used the belly slot to hold Dizzy's Aniseed Scent and the red in the scent impregnates the plastic providing additional attraction and creating the appearance of roe or injury.

Legs – We fished the ShrimpZ with the legs on for a slow, seductive fall and maximum action with minimal movement. Removing the legs changed the action of the lure completely focussing all of the movement on the tail. With the legs off the ShrimpZ sink quicker and when twitched the tail kick is dramatic and when we followed the kick with a pause the barra just sucked it down.

The 3" ShrimpZ is quickly becoming one of my favourite lures when fishing the snags. It's super-realistic so you can fish it slow, scented, it rigs well snagless and everything eats a prawn!



FLATHEAD FIX!

My absolute favourite fish to catch on a soft plastic is the humble Flathead. I learnt how to fish soft plastics by targeting duskie and they were the ideal target to learn a new technique on. What is it they say about it being easier to pick the lowest hanging fruit first... well when it comes to plastics fishing I think Flatties are the lowest hanging fruit. If you are in the right zones Flathead find it very hard to resist a well presented soft plastic. If you are new to plastics fishing, give chasing Flathead a go!



Flicking for Flathead is now a real passion for me and I have tried and tested a great number of plastics and jig head combinations over the past few years and I am very excited about the ZMan range and the strength of the ElaZatech product. One of my preferred presentations is a plastic with a curl tail and I am looking forward to the using the ZMan GrubZ in the 5" size this flattie season as I'm positive they will find them irresistible.

My favourite area to chase flathead is in the deep water and I have scored some excellent size fish fishing the deep. I will usually team a larger plastic with a ½ ounce TT Jig head or heavier depending on how hard the current is running. I vary my jig style, using both slow hops and more erratic rips. Often, rather than casting too far away, only to be lost in the current I hop the plastics almost straight up and down, keeping pace with the drift.

My experience has seen the big Grub or Jerk style plastic perform better in these conditions. I usually up both my rod and line class in these situations and depending on the jig head I will use a 3-6 kg or 5-10 kg rod with 20lb Braid and 20lb Fluorocarbon leader.

The other area I like to fish is along banks and drop offs where there is some current movement and for this sort of fishing I prefer the top of the run out. The trick here is to do some homework by studying your sounder and looking for underwater snags that are sitting off banks, drop-offs and uneven bottoms. Keep an eye out on your geography and remember where trees used to be that may have now fallen in becoming part of the Flathead's domain. The other tip is to fish these areas when the water is clear and the bait is plentiful. Cast your line up towards a bank or beyond the drop off and work the lure with the current. This strategy proved very successful for myself and Tracey Mammen when we fished the recent ABT Clarence Flathead Qualifier round, taking out second place.



Early that day Tracey and I fished unknown territory targeting Flathead on the flats of the Broadwater area of the Clarence River. This area is renowned for big Flathead and even though we did see lots of bait in the area the current flow was very slow and uneventful. Unfortunately I dropped a beauty early in the day and then an hour and a half passed without netting a fish... so we decided to head to more familiar territory and target the banks where we saw current movement and bait. Once we started working this strategy things began to turn around for us and we began boating good numbers of fish. Whilst there weren't any whoppers at this time of year in the Clarence it was the consistency and constant upgrading that got us there in the end. We used a combination of the ZMan GrubZ doused with Dizzy Scent and TT Switchblades on our lighter 2-4 kilo outfits with 10lb braid and 12lb fluorocarbon Leader.

The Flathead season has begun early this year and I am already hanging to get amongst them and get my Flattie fix! There are reports of good numbers of flathead showing up which means for me my preparation will soon begin for the Gold Coast Flathead Classic, which is on September 29-Oct 1. I am excited to have ZMan products teamed with TT jig heads in the kit and I know they will do the trick with flatties this season on the Duskie. If you are after information on the Classic go to www.flatheadclassic.com.au



Alright, it's not a Snapper, but some pretty nice by-catch. Josh Egan with a quality shallow water Sweetlip on a ZMan.

ZMAN SNAPPER

Words & Photos: David Granville



For the last few years I have really been getting into catching snapper on soft plastics on the shallow reefs off my home port of Mooloolaba. It's hard to beat the feeling of that braid snapping tight and the sound of a howling reel as a big red tries to bury you in the reef. It's heart in mouth stuff that gets the adrenalin going for even the most seasoned anglers.



Josh Egan with a solid snapper on a ZMan 5" Scented Jerk ShadZ in Shiner.



The author with a snapper on his favourite Electric Chicken 5" ZMan Jerk ShadZ.

Like most soft plastic snapper aficionados I was a big fan of compressed bait style, biodegradable jerk shads. But what I found frustrating was how little pickers would wreck your lure and also waste valuable fishing time. On average I was going through two packets per trip which at \$10 per pack meant I was spending more on plastics than on fuel for the boat!

This winter just gone was the first time I tried ZMan on the snapper and to say I am impressed is indeed an understatement. I started the season fishing my usual haunts with ZMan 5" Scented Jerk ShadZ on 1/4oz TT jig head. I was getting just as many bites as I would normally get on the bio baits and caught some really nice fish, but best of all I wasn't going through any plastics at all. Most trips I would just hook the jig head on to the rod with ZMan in situ ready for next time.

Even after catching a few fish they are still good to go. From memory at one stage I did three trips and caught six snapper on one ZMan. On another occasion fishing a bit deeper I caught over 20 reef fish on one plastic in one day.

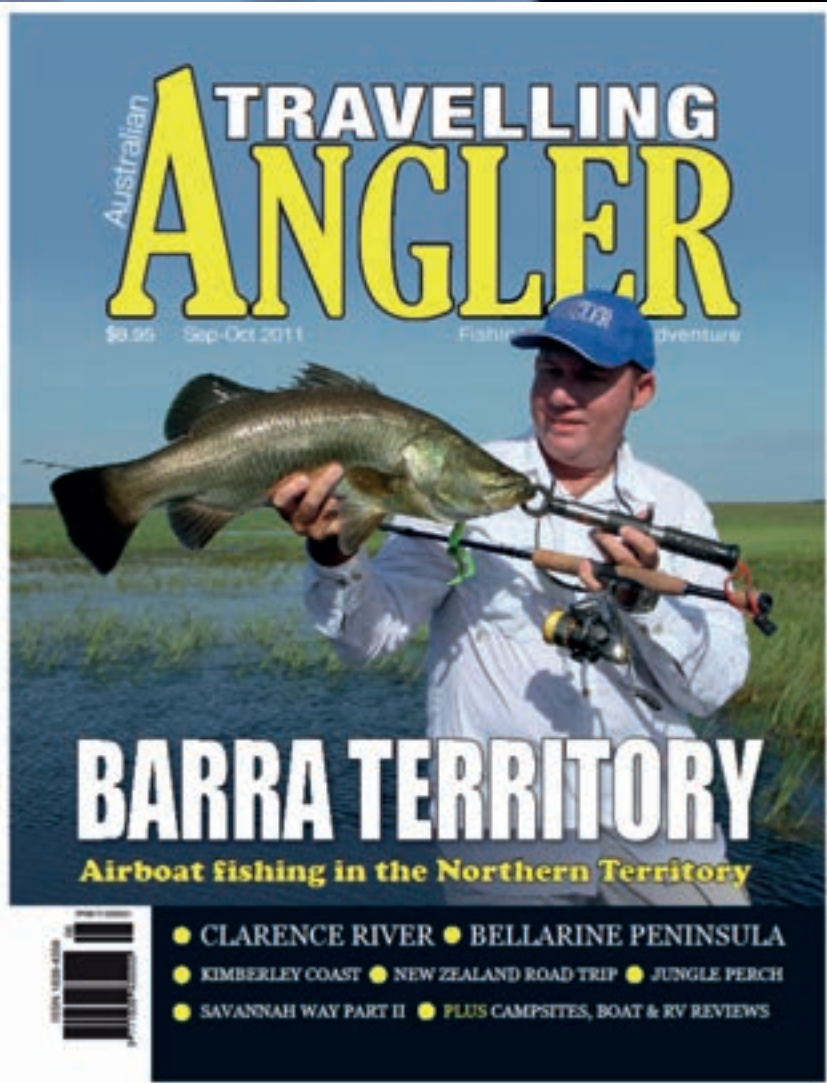
After my success on the 5" Jerk ShadZ, Justin at ZMan suggested I try the 8" StreakZ XL. So next trip I took his advice and loaded one with a 1oz TT jighead with SL12 Gamakatsu hook. I was fishing in about 50m on this occasion and the very first drop the big StreakZ got nailed. I knew it was a nice fish and just took my time as I wasn't in heavy cover. After a great fight a 6kg snapper came over the side. It was one of the biggest snapper I had caught for a long time and I was stoked.

We went marlin fishing for the day and had no luck but stopped on the same mark on the way home. You wouldn't believe it, first drop again with the 8" StreakZ in Electric Chicken and another great fish. This time a 7kg snapper which is my PB. What a great fish which after a few happy snaps we let go to fight another day.





A thumper snapper taken on a ZMan Scented 5" Jerk ShadZ



So that is my winter 2011 experience with ZMan. Looking at the new range of offshore lures I'm hoping summer will be just as busy...

Cheers,
David Granville

For more of David's adventures make sure you check out the latest edition of ATA, Australian Travelling Angler Magazine.

In the latest edition David spent some time fishing the wilds of the Northern Territory, including an airboat adventure. In his kit were some ZMan Lures including the ZMan Pop FrogZ that even made a guest appearance on the cover!

On sale August 26



- CLARENCE RIVER ● BELLARINE PENINSULA
- KIMBERLEY COAST ● NEW ZEALAND ROAD TRIP ● JUNGLE PERCH
- SAVANNAH WAY PART II ● PLUS CAMPSITES, BOAT & RV REVIEWS



AFTA 2011

The Australian Fishing Tackle Association Trade Show was held recently on Queensland's beautiful Gold Coast and the crew from Tackle Tactics loaded up our gear, including heaps of new products and headed down to the show.

The 'Tackle Show' is a great place for wholesalers to display their product range, including new releases and tackle shops from around the country travel to the show each year looking for show deals and new products to include in their range.

At this years show Tackle Tactics released new TT products including 2 new sizes in the Switchblade - 1oz and 2oz, Deep Demon jig heads, Aussie Bob and the Twitchin' Shrimp. They also released a new range of products under the AREA 51 banner designed in conjunction with Barra tournament angler and guide Jason Wilhelm - the Snake Head and Slick Jig.

Not to be left out, new ZMan products included 4" ShrimpZ, 3" CrabZ, 4" CrawdadZ, 4" Finesse ShadZ, 3.75" StreakZ, 9" GrubZ, 11" EelZ, 7" & 9" Ballyhooz, 5.5" & 9" BubblerZ and 16" RibbonZ... as well as some cool new colours including Houdini, Redbone and California Craw.

Let's take a couple of pages in this E-Mag and a couple more in Issue #4 to have a quick look at these new products...



New Product Guide 2011

ZMan 16" RibbonZ

A lure that created a bit of a buzz at the show...

16 inches of high tech soft plastic in a realistic ribbon fish imitation. Work it with a slow lift and drop for a seductive action that mullet, pearl perch, dhufish and other reefies will find irresistible, or troll it for mackerel and other oceanic speedsters. We even had anglers at the show that are keen to throw some at their local Barra population! Super-soft and flexible and 10X Tough!



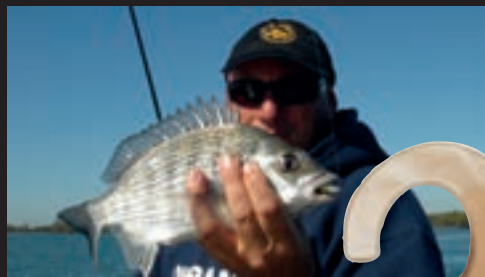
ZMan 7 & 9" BallyhooZ

A realistic gar imitation with a life-like swimming action, the BallyhooZ is available in 7 awesome colours and 2 sizes, 7" and 9". It is sure to prove deadly on a wide range of predatory species and can be cast, jigged or trolled.



ZMan 2.5" GrubZ

Not just another curl tail the 2.5" GrubZ is constructed from ElaZtech making it 10X tough, yet super-soft and flexible so it feels realistic when fish bite. Dizzy has already used samples of the 2.5" GrubZ as part of his tournament victories in the bream comps and was amazed how he could keep winding away from the fish and they would keep on eating until they found the hook. Available in 4 colours, including Dizzy's favourite Violet Sparkle... with 4 custom colours coming soon.



ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ

This curl tail has an amazing tail action that has already proven deadly on flathead, bass and snapper, while Dizzy has also utilised it as his bream upgrade lure. Due to the super-soft and realistic feel bream just keep on chewing until they have the whole 4" plastic down their throat. Available in 10 colours, so there's something for every location and species.



ZMan 4" CrawdadZ

CrawdadZ have already accounted for flathead, bass and snapper and with the built-in buoyancy of ElaZtech the CrawdadZ claws float up from the bottom in a defensive pose that triggers strikes. Soft and realistic, yet 10X Tough!



ZMan 4" ShrimpZ

The 3" ShrimpZ proved deadly on a wide range of species from mangrove jack to mullet and saratoga to snapper. After numerous requests from anglers the 4" ShrimpZ is now available in 6 colours. This realistic 4" ShrimpZ will be dynamite on large freshwater species, barra and other northern estuary species and even offshore. Infused with 100% natural scent to attract fish and trigger strikes.

ABT Bribie Island Flathead Round

By Keith Stratford



Winter and spring are great seasons to be out on the water chasing a few lizards. With the exceptionally cold winter we've been going through the lizards have been a bit patchy, due to the fluctuating water temperatures. Finding the fish has been a battle on some trips, with others producing huge numbers of fish. At this time of year I'm always looking for new lures and techniques to try for the upcoming Gold Coast Flathead Classic. The ABT have also been trialling a few flathead comps this year, which are also a good way to try out a few new lures in different waterways.



The Bribie round of the ABT comps was held in July and I spent a fair bit of time on the water pre-fishing for this event with mixed results. About a month before the comp we found some good fish right up in the shallows on a variety of lures. During an early morning session with my old man I had a few nice fish all around 60cm on the board and he hadn't converted a bite into a solid hook up. He obviously thought I had given him a dud lure to use and was keen for something different so I threw on a 4" ZMan SwimmerZ in Red Shad colour that I had sitting in the side pocket of my tinny. I hadn't given them a swim as yet and didn't think too much of it until he hooked up on his first cast in about a foot of water. Another 3 hook ups followed without a touch for me and I was starting to seriously think about tying one on myself.

Since that session I've been throwing a lot of ZMan plastics around and have found the 4" SwimmerZ to be deadly on flatties. Leading up to the comp we had some really good trips using the Red Shad and Sexy Lady colours and were confident with our game plan for the Bribie ABT comp. The best part about the ZMan plastics is the durability. The only time we needed to change lures was if it was busted off on a snag or a tailor chewed through the leader. We left the fish alone the week before the comp, as some of our spots can get fished out pretty quickly.

Only seven teams turned up on comp day, which was a bit disappointing, but thankfully the rain held off and the wind kept below 15 knots. My brother Chris and I shot off to our honey hole that had been producing an endless stream of 60cm fish during the pre fish only to find the place full of snot weed. The only fish we pulled from there was a nice tailor. Another tailor followed that one after a change of location before we finally got our first flatty almost an hour into the comp. At 40cm it was no record breaker, but it got rid of the dreaded donut!



Every place we tried was full of snot weed, which was fouling our plastics on almost every cast. We stuck to our confidence lure throughout the day though, which was the 4" SwimmerZ in a variety of colours and they got the job done. We only landed 6 fish all day, including three in the last hour, so there were definitely a lot of quiet times during the day. Our best five fish were enough to get us over the line to take out the win at the end of the day with 250cm. The best fish of the day taken by Jamie Douglas from "Need the Practice" was an absolute ripper at 88cm+ taken on a 3" ZMan MinnowZ. The next ABT round is on the Gold Coast on August 28. Hope to see you there. Cheers.



Bassin' Clarrie Hall Dam

By Justin Willmer

Clarrie Hall Dam is located in northern NSW, on a tributary of the Tweed River and surrounded by mountain ranges that include the towering lump of rock that is Mount Warning. Petrol and diesel powered vessels are not allowed on the dam, making it a perfect location to chase Australian Bass with a kayak or electric powered vessel.

A bass of 40cm+ is rare in Clarrie Hall, with most fish around the mid 20's to mid 30's. It's not the size of the Bass that attracted me to the dam though, it was the recommendation and all of the descriptive words used by others to describe this location. I was not disappointed, what an amazing place... truly one of the most picturesque locations I have ever fished and I will definitely be back there again soon.



The edges of the dam are lined with lilies, that not only add to the natural beauty of the fishery, they are also the home to the dark coloured, solid and feisty Clarrie Hall Bass.

Successful lures for fishing the dam include blades, such as the Ghostblade or smaller Switchblades, spinnerbaits and our weapon of choice, soft plastics. Steve and I fished the ZMan MinnowZ in Mud Minnow, rigged on a TT Lures 1/4oz Depth Charge jig head in gold, fitted to a TT Jig Spinner.

The MinnowZ is a 3" paddle tail with plenty of tail action and body roll that has proven deadly on a wide range of species. The Depth Charge jig head that features 3D eyes, painted finish and sculptured head for a realistic look. The Jig Spinner creates flash and vibration to attract fish. It simply clips onto the jig head and has a separate attachment point for the line.

A common technique for fishing the dam is casting to, or parallel along the weed and lily edges. A sounder can also come in handy as it will allow you to locate schools of Bass that often hold just out from the lilies and on the points.

Allowing the lure to sink to the desired depth, or all the way to the bottom and using a slow roll is effective.

The author with a 36cm Bass taken on the MizzowZ, Depth Charge and Jig Spinner combo



Throwing in the odd pause can also encourage a strike. On our trip quite a few fish simply picked the lure up off the weed or the bottom when it sitting still, so don't be afraid to fish really slow.

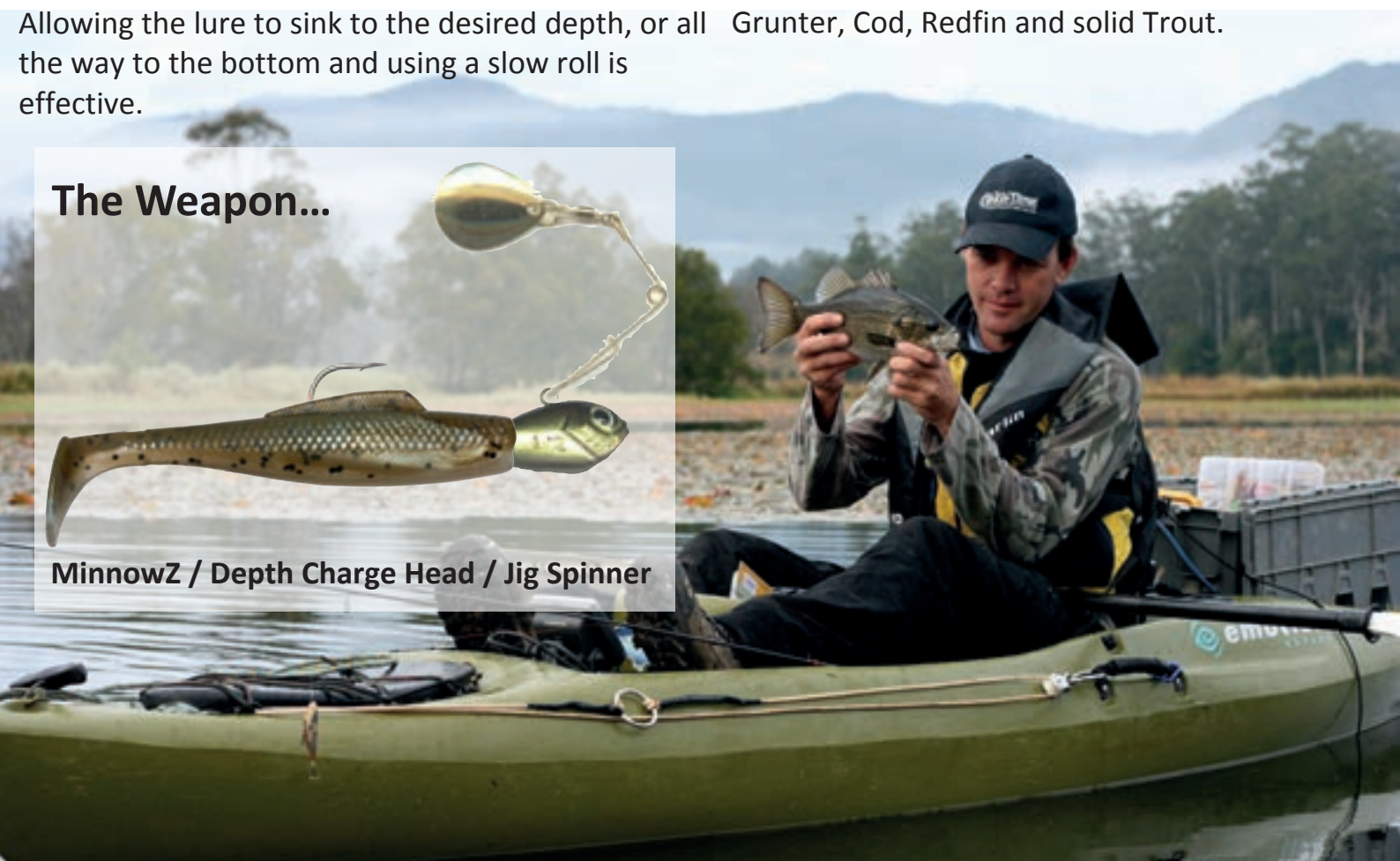
Clarrie Hall is a magic dam; amazing scenery, plenty of structure and Bass that are solid, dark in colour and smart when it comes to running for the lilies.

Highly recommended, but if you aren't able to make it to Clarrie Hall give the MinnowZ, Depth Charge and Jig Spinner combo a go in your favourite freshwater location, it is sure to be deadly on Bass, Golden Perch, Saratoga, Sooty Grunter, Cod, Redfin and solid Trout.

The Weapon...



MinnowZ / Depth Charge Head / Jig Spinner



Steven Riding with a 35cm Clarrie Hall Bass taken from a school holding on a point

Sign Up and receive the Tackle Tactics E-Mag straight to your inbox, absolutely free!

What's coming up in Issue #4?

- Robbie Wells loads up some ZMan and heads to Tonga!
- We grab the video camera and follow Dizzy on a day out breaming. Make sure you check out the videos of Dizzy in action fishing the ZMan 2.5" GrubZ and 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ.
- Dizzy sets himself a video challenge...how quickly can he land 3 bream on ZMan plastics!
- The new AREA 51 SNAKE HEAD in action in North QLD
- We grab a tray of Switchblades and head to Fraser Island to find out what lives in the surf and eats blades!



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