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[www.ttlures.com.au](http://www.ttlures.com.au)  
[info@ttlures.com.au](mailto:info@ttlures.com.au)



[www.z-man.com.au](http://www.z-man.com.au)  
[info@z-man.com.au](mailto:info@z-man.com.au)

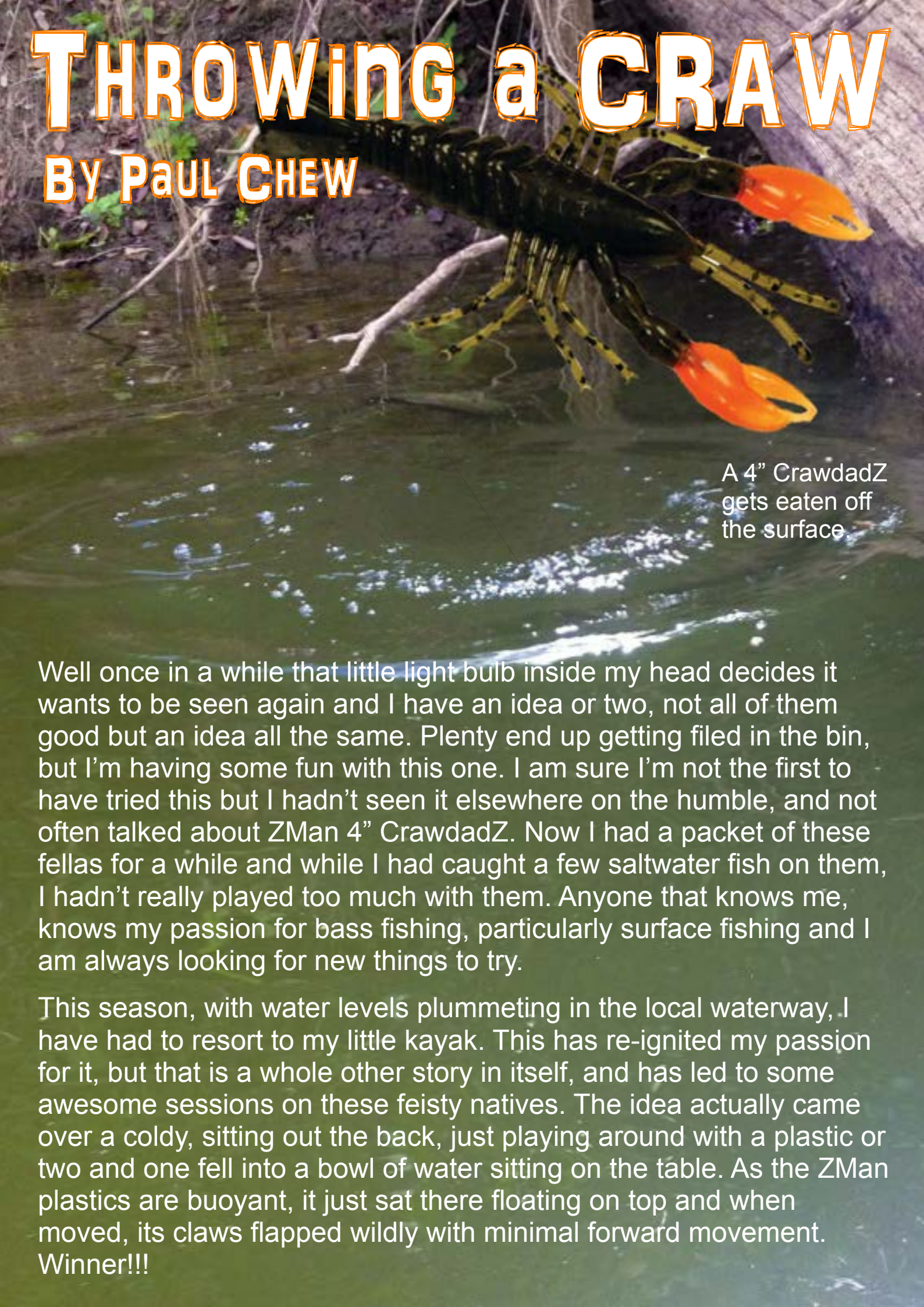


[www.tackletactics.com.au](http://www.tackletactics.com.au)  
[info@ttlures.com.au](mailto:info@ttlures.com.au)

Angler: Mick Horn  
 Species: Gold Coast Mangrove Jack  
 Lure: ZMan Pearl 4" DieZel MinnowZ  
 Jighead: TT Lures HeadlockZ HD 1/2oz 5/0

# THROWING a CRAW

By PAUL CHEW



A 4" CrawdadZ  
gets eaten off  
the surface.

Well once in a while that little light bulb inside my head decides it wants to be seen again and I have an idea or two, not all of them good but an idea all the same. Plenty end up getting filed in the bin, but I'm having some fun with this one. I am sure I'm not the first to have tried this but I hadn't seen it elsewhere on the humble, and not often talked about ZMan 4" CrawdadZ. Now I had a packet of these fellas for a while and while I had caught a few saltwater fish on them, I hadn't really played too much with them. Anyone that knows me, knows my passion for bass fishing, particularly surface fishing and I am always looking for new things to try.

This season, with water levels plummeting in the local waterway, I have had to resort to my little kayak. This has re-ignited my passion for it, but that is a whole other story in itself, and has led to some awesome sessions on these feisty natives. The idea actually came over a coldy, sitting out the back, just playing around with a plastic or two and one fell into a bowl of water sitting on the table. As the ZMan plastics are buoyant, it just sat there floating on top and when moved, its claws flapped wildly with minimal forward movement. Winner!!!

So, I played around with some worm hooks and worked out that an unweighted 1/0 worked out ok, but with the claws of the Craw rigged in a forward fashion so as to illicit the most action from it, using the smallest of rod tip twitches.

As with any new technique that we employ to try trick our piscatorial foes, there was a bit of a learning curve, not the least of which was using a bit more punch to skip the offering under the overhanging trees. Also, it seems when using this less is more, with the slightest twitch of the rod often resulting in a surface explosion to rival any hard body.

Mostly, I have settled on a standard retrieve, tossing the CrawdadZ in under any overhanging tree, or beside any large lay down tree. Going against the current convention of leaving the lure sit, I immediately give it three or four small twitches straight up to maximise surface disruption... then leave it sit for thirty seconds or more. Then, I not so much as twitch the rod, rather shake it. This is just enough to move the crawdad forward a couple of centimetres and normally enough to entice a bass to engulf the plastic in a shower of water and foam.

Those large eyes make Australian bass extremely effective surface feeders.



I am lucky enough to fish waters that aren't running and are clear enough to see the bass spot the ZMan in flight and position themselves under its apparent landing zone, pec fins flared to stop them in an instant. Here they wait for the first sign of movement to indicate that it is actually a food source.



One of the other huge benefits of fishing this system in a yak is that you only have one hook to deal with instead of a brace of trebles attached to a wild thrashing fish. Just having the single hook to worry about is a lot easier, both for the fish and angler. After quite a bit of testing, I am not convinced colour is a factor as I have had success with most. Recently I have been using Watermelon Chartreuse and Brown Orange, however I have been sticking with the darker Brown Orange early and switching to Watermelon Chartreuse later in the day.



Cast the CrawdadZ close to structure and hang on!



Using this pattern recently I managed around 20 bass for a morning session, still enticing bites at 11am, which is something I haven't done with hard bodies. Interestingly though, later in the day the bites became more subtle, more like a trout sipping off the surface. As a result you have to be on top of your game to set the hook, as often the CrawdadZ has been sucked under before you realise.

Another advantage is that the lure of choice is relatively cheap, giving you the confidence to toss them right back into the thickest of timber and try to bring them out. You don't win them all, but it's knee trembling fun trying! Sometimes all you are left with is some water in your face and your leader waving in the breeze.

So if you are looking for something a little outside the square, grab a packet of ZMan 4" CrawdadZ, rig them claws forward, get on the water early and get ready for some serious fun with our feisty Australian bass. Remember, rigged this way less is definitely more. Just a slight twitch, twitch is all you need to get a smashing surface bite!

Good luck and tight lines... Chewy



# GOOD VIBRATIONS

By Owen McPaul

## Part 1 - Saltwater

The author with a solid Ghostblade bream.



Sharp, vigorous vibrations of a fleeing or injured baitfish, frantically pulsating and flashing its flanks, trying to make its profile appear larger as it attempts to avoid being devoured by a hungry, feeding predator. Hopping and diving in all attempts to avoid the inevitable. This is probably my best explanation of what I see in the action of a correctly working blade lure. There's probably no other hard bodied, bait imitation lure on the market that gives out as much water displacement for its size, while at the same time creating plenty of flash and vibration. Blades really give a feeding fish every chance of noticing its action and give this predator something to focus and hone in on. It's these characteristics of the blade that I believe can trigger a non-feeding fish into making an enquiry.

The fact that blades can be fished in a wide variety of locations, from freshwater shallow streams, beaches and rock walls to the deep blue, all the while covering all depths of a water column, probably make the blade lure one of the best bang for buck lures out there. Its applications are endless and with a little imagination and the patience to learn through trial and error, the rewards can be more than spectacular! However, to be perfectly honest I don't think there is a right or wrong way to swim a blade and if you can feel the action through your rod, it's working. Like anything in fishing, we all find our preferred tricks and retrieves that have the best results and we tend to continue using them.

I live on the mid north coast of NSW and spend the majority of my time in the estuarine systems of the surrounding areas, mainly fishing for the Australian wild river bass and your typical bread and butter species like bream and flathead. Whenever the tide and moon are right or a good flush of fresh hits the river I also jump at the chance of targeting the ghost of the river systems, the illusive jewfish, aka mulloway. With so many great locations at my fingertips, I'm pretty blessed with being able to swim blades in a variety of different scenarios, not to mention some of the unique places I have found myself up and down the coast and even interstate when taking time to travel and test my luck on those fish that we all like to try and knock off the bucket list.



A spectacular reward in the form of a stonker jewfish that ate a Pink Ghost 1/6oz Ghostblade.

I don't think there's many trips where I find myself without a couple of rods with blades rigged up at the ready and they are always my go to lure when testing a deep bank for the first time. I have also always looked at blades as being the perfect lure to use when the water is moving too fast to keep a plastic or other imitation in the zone, as well as when I'm trying to cover as much ground as possible in a small amount of time between tide changes. I find that when the water is moving at its minimum, fish tend to go deeper as the water clears. Here they feel safe and tend to keep down and tight to structure until a faster flow of water comes and they again feel more secure to come back out and move around to feed freely. During this period I generally go to blades to try trigger a reaction bite.

In this piece I hope to explain a few of my favorite retrieves when using blades and the structure I favour targeting. When it comes to fishing blades I have one rule and although it is not desirable – 'don't be scared about losing the odd one, if you're not snagging up occasionally or collecting the odd bit of weed, you're probably not in the right place to begin with'. I find that if I do end up attached to the bottom, maneuvering the boat in front of the lure and in the opposite direct line of where I fouled up the blade will usually get it back out and if it doesn't with a few firm strikes on the butt of the rod the blade will de-snag nine times out of ten.



Everything eats a blade.





## Targeting Deep Water

When targeting deeper water in the estuary I'm generally trying to work a couple of main areas; secondary drop offs out past the weed line or deep solid structure, like rock bars and reef. Usually in this scenario I'm targeting bream and jewfish. I find the best trick for targeting deeper structure is to put in big long casts and try to land a fair way past the intended target area. That way I can cover the area leading into the desired structure, before getting to the area where I'm hoping a fish will be sitting. I generally use the one retrieve as it has always been effective and the key is really to slow everything down. I try to do two small, sharp hops and the tip of my rod probably does not move any more than 10cm, then I let the blade rest for a few moments, maybe 3 to 5 seconds on the bottom, before repeating.

It is pretty amazing the amount of time the blade is actually taken off the bottom when motionless. It is also common that the second you go to lift your rod tip again, after the pause, you feel a solid clunk from a fish. I think they must follow it down and just eye it off, waiting for it to move again so they can have a go at it. Targeting deep water definitely comes with added bonuses because, while the intention is targeting one particular species, you often get a good mixed bag. It's often been fishing deeper structure that I have landed some unexpected fish of a lifetime.

Another quality jewie, this time on a Purple Glimmer Switchblade.



## Targeting the Shallows

When it comes to targeting the shallows, whether it be a sand flat, weed beds or shallow reef and rock bars, there's a stack of retrieves that can be used. My favourites are the simplest, including a fast burn where the lure is all but out of the water, creating a large amount of displacement on the surface of the water. I mainly try this retrieve in times of lower light or overcast conditions and like anything surface related, we are trying to resemble a fleeing baitfish or prawn.

Another retrieve I like to use is the slow roll. This retrieve stirs up the sand on the bottom as the lure is slowly retrieved back to your feet. The slow roll is also effective when used with the blade just bumping through the top of the weed. You can also mix up the slow retrieve, with a few lifts, twitches or pauses and when targeting these areas I'm always chasing bream, flathead and whiting, but other species are a welcome by-catch as they go hand in hand with bream in these areas. Don't be surprised if you occasionally have a solid luderick strip line away after belting your blade as it lunges out of the weed or shallow reef. I have managed a stack of them and although a supposed vegetarian, luderick love blades and are always a stack of fun on the finesse gear.



Don't be surprised if a luderick eats your blade.



## Targeting Around Oyster Leases

Targeting fish around oyster leases on blades is a tonne of fun. Nothing beats a locked up drag, stretched arms and white knuckle action, as you do everything in your capabilities to avoid letting a fish get you back into the super-sharp structure. These fish love claiming your lure to wear as a trophy piece, while you're back to retying leaders and checking knots, hoping you can prevent the same happening on your next hook up.

When targeting fish around the leases, the first thing I look for is the flow of the water around them. I like to try and use the current to my advantage, to try and hold the blade over as close to the leases as possible. Secondly I look for is the shaded side of the leases and the third key component, the deeper holes along oyster leases.

With all of this in mind, you definitely have a better chance of making contact with a fish. In most cases this will be a bream but occasionally you get the odd surprise, such as a soapy jewfish or large flathead that is using the structure and shade to its own advantage, as it's a great place for baitfish to try and hide.

Blades are a versatile lure that can be used to target bream in a wide range of environments.



When chucking blades around the racks I try get my cast to land within centimetres of the lease and slow wind it up alongside them, maneuvering my rod if I have to in an attempt to keep my lure as close as I can throughout the entire retrieve. I wind at a pace that allows the blade to sit almost directly halfway between the surface of the water and the bottom.

The other retrieve, that I have also found effective, is best presented with a lighter TT Ghostblade and I target the pylons used to keep the oyster leases up. I am trying to target the fish holding close to these pylons and tight to the bottom, so I try to cast just past the pylons, while attempting to keep the lure as tight as I can to the structure and do tight little continual hops past the pylons. You don't need to use a heap of rod action, just sharp little continual lifts of the rod tip as you slowly retrieve your line, keeping tension on the blade at all times.



A cracker bream that crunched a blade cast to a rock wall.

Whether it's deep banks or lay down timber, a blade can often entice a strike.



## Targeting Structure

I think structure, like lay down timber, tree roots and mangrove lined banks in the estuary systems are by far some of the most common areas that most anglers like to target. These are great places for fish to hide, ready to ambush and a great place for them to feel secure in the shade during times of high light. It is also a favourite hiding location for bait. I have personally had a lot of luck on blades in these areas and lay down timber has always been a favorite for me. This is where I cut my teeth when first learning the art of lure fishing and you know you're always in the right area when timber is around. Targeting timber can often be pretty visual, depending on water clarity and seeing a fish chase down your lure is a hoot in itself!

When targeting lay down timber with blades I try not to get too excited because as tempting as it is to rip a cast straight in, I like to first take a good look at the tree before making the cast. I try to inspect the snag and identify the safest paths out to minimize the chance of fouling up on twigs and branches. I also try to identify as many casting paths as possible so that I can work the tree pretty thoroughly.

My first couple of casts are pretty much testing the water and I like to cast as hard and tight to the structure as possible and at the same time as close to the bank as possible. The second the blade lands I'm straight into a medium paced retrieve, with the odd rip of the rod tip to make the lure look a little more frantic. Once I've cast once or twice at the same spot and feel a little more confident, I then target the same spot with a deeper approach. Cast to the same location as the previous couple of casts and let the blade fall to the bottom. I then like to do tiny fast lifts of the rod, two to three hops at a time, before letting the lure re-settle on the bottom. Then simply repeat this back to the boat. It's a pretty straight forward approach, but one I have found to be very productive.

Like most things lure fishing related, there's always room for improvement and I'm still learning new things every day. I think it's a huge part of my love for fishing. So if you have any handy tricks when using these lures I would love to hear from you and if you see me out on the water come and say g'day. Thanks for taking the time to read this article, I hope there is a couple of things that might help you out next time you're on the water with a TT blade attached. Next month I'll have a small piece on freshwater fishing with blades. Until next time, tight lines and I wish you all a merry Christmas.

Owen McPaul



Blading mangrove edges and secondary drop offs is an effective way of targeting bream.

# NEW GEAR

## ZMan 3.75" StreakZ Motor Oil

The ZMan 2" and 2.5" GrubZ in Motor Oil have taken the bream tournament scene by storm, while also accounting for dozens of other species. Now it's time to add another Motor Oil plastic to the ZMan range.

The 3.75" StreakZ is a slim baitfish profile, with a split tail that produces maximum action with minimal movement, due to the super-soft and flexible, 10X Tough ElaZtech construction. Flick it, twitch it or retrieve it at speed.

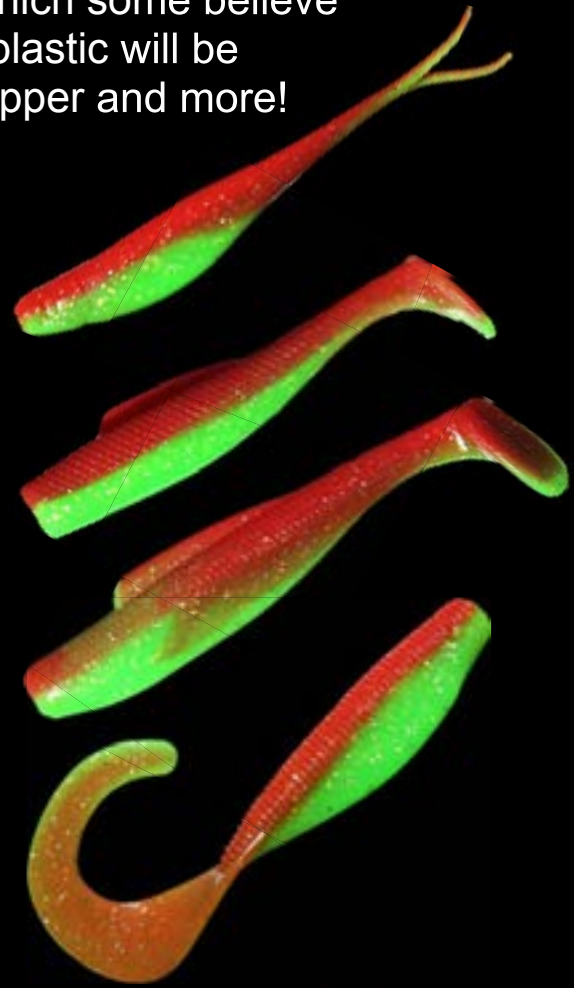
The Motor Oil colour responds well to UV, lighting up a bright green colour under a UV torch, which some believe is the reason for its effectiveness. This plastic will be dynamite on bream, bass, flathead, snapper and more!

### More models available in Nuked Chicken Glow!

After releasing the 5" and 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ in Nuked Chicken Glow, the team at ZMan Australia were overwhelmed with requests to grow the chicken range.

Other popular models that are now available in Nuked Chicken Glow are:

- 3.75" StreakZ
- 3" MinnowZ
- 4" DieZel MinnowZ
- 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ
- 8" StreakZ XL



**10X Tough** ELAZTECH  
Catch More Fish Per Bait!

# CAPE YORK'S

# SKARDON RIVER

Anglers with the luxury of owning a well set up four wheel drive; expansive untouched fishing territory can be explored and experienced within this remarkable country we all call home. We as anglers are extremely fortunate to have so many unbelievable locations and fisheries available to discover throughout Australia and none more so than the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, where countless rivers and creeks form to create a fishing mecca and paradise.

Recently, prior to the wet season, in a convoy of three vehicles travelling with family and friends, we had the opportunity to travel and explore many of these tidal areas of Cape York, one being the tremendously picturesque Skardon River.



## BY DAVE BRACE

A magic time of day in front of camp.





The Skardon River is situated on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula and is approximately 100 kilometres north of Weipa as the crow flies, with an approximate distance of 30 kilometres north from the township of Mapoon. Access to the river by four wheel drive is via the Old Telegraph Track, with the junction being about 10 kilometres south of the infamous Gunshot Creek Crossing.

The unsealed track leading to the beach and to the mouth of the Skardon River, before reaching camp, is very narrow in places with some of the track being quite overgrown with native trees and shrubs. There are also many windy sections of very soft sand that can be hazardous for the less experienced travelling angler in terms of becoming bogged steadfast.

Being fully loaded, we had to decrease the air pressure in our tyres quite considerably to get through these extremely soft sandy sections whilst on the track. However, the track has enough clearance in width to tow a small to medium trailer boat or camping trailer into the camp. The distance to the beach is only 75 kilometres, with another 13 kilometres northbound along the sand to the mouth of the river, before reaching the designated camping area of the river.

The track also meanders through the Camalco Mining Lease, with only one creek crossing prior on Boggy Creek, a tributary of the Dulhunty River that is part of the make-up of the Mapoon River system. Boggy Creek is of tidal influence and when crossing, caution is advised as it can be quite a deep crossing on a high tide. Often here the track is impassable until late in the dry season.



*The journey is all part  
of the adventure...*

In total a distance of approximately 90 kilometres was travelled from the Old Telegraph Track to the Skardon River camp, which took about four hours. Prior to exploring the Injinoo Aboriginal Land Trust area, of which the Skardon River is part, a Land Access Permit must be also obtained from the Mapoon Aboriginal Corporation Council.

Upon reaching the mouth of the Skardon River we were quite excited at the prospect of catching some great fish, especially after witnessing barra, trevally and blue salmon busting up small bait fish in the shallows while driving the final few kilometres along the beach and also directly in front of our camp whilst setting up on arrival!

The boats were pulled off the roofs of the vehicles, motors attached, fishing rods set up and we were on the water before sunset. This is a location that only dreams are made of and the fishing was incredible with many species caught. During our visit on the Skardon River some of the most productive fishing was land based, directly out the front of camp, although close by was some rocky outcrops and tributaries that held plenty of fish, whether it was an incoming or an ebbing tide.

The only disappointment with this location was the crocodiles that continually destroyed our crab pots, even after many repairs were undertaken. Hence the reason that not too many crabs were caught. The fishing however made up for our crab loses. Outside the mouth of the river and only two kilometres offshore, some tremendously hectic pelagic fishing was experienced, with copious amounts of tuna and mackerel being caught. However, with the wind getting up early on most mornings it was tough going in the smaller boats.



Spot the crab pot eater!

When matching the hatch out from the front of camp, a 2.5" ZMan GrubZ in the colour of Bloodworm was attached to TT Lures 1/0 (HWS) Hidden Weight System jighead with amazing results. This one lure caught over 50 fish on one particular day, before it fell victim to a trevally that hit with vengeance!

We were fishing quite light for this area, as we had no idea what larger species were hunting nearby, with a 7' graphite rod and a 2500 spinning reel, spooled with 10lb braid and a 12lb mono leader. The outfit soon got the nickname 'the Camp Rod', there for anyone to grab when they had the urge to feel a comprehensive tug from a fish on the end of the line. Blue salmon, tea leaf trevally and bream were the main species caught with this lure presentation from camp, land based off the beach. Chris however was overwhelmed one morning when a golden trevally of approximately 75cm took a liking to the 2.5" GrubZ. It fought gallantly and was terrific fun on the light gear.



Chris was stoked with this quality golden from in front of camp.

Dave with a barra  
on the SwimmerZ.



Off the main river, small drains and tributaries would ebb on the outgoing tides and these were a great location to pick up the odd barramundi and blue salmon, feeding on the baitfish that were also making their way to the larger body of water from these areas. Casting ZMan 4" SwimmerZ in Black Back Shad at these drains, where they met the river and retrieving the imitation bait back with a slow rolling motion saw barramundi in an ambush mode attacking this lure presentation with plenty of gusto!

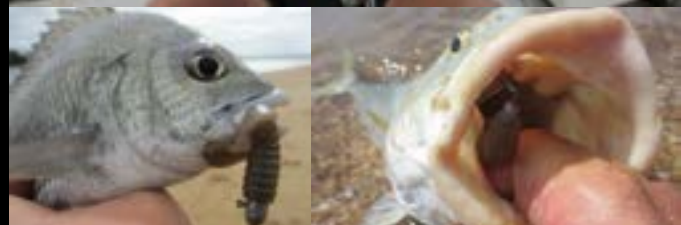
It was unbelievable to witness such a spectacle and even though the fish weren't of any great size, it was still incredibly exciting. This was especially so when sight casting to these poised barramundi, visualising the take and in turn the line ripping through the water as the fish loaded up the rod as it took up the slack line. Being shallow water, the acrobatic displays of these fish were insane, as we tried in vain sometimes to subdue these energetic and spirited fish.

Once the tide had ceased ebbing, we concentrated our efforts immediately around the rocky outcrops on the opposing side of the river, where baitfish were trying to seek cover from these predatory fish with the rising tide. Here we were fishing in approximately thirty centimetres of water, with the motor up and drifting with the wind over the submerged rocks. All the while we were casting at the explosive action of these feeding predatory fish.

Again it was barramundi, trevally and blue salmon in their hundreds that were contributing to these frenzied attacks on the baitfish. A different technique that we employed involved swimming the same ZMan 4" SwimmerZ but with more haste and just below the surface. The fish were attacking the lure more so as a reaction, making it extremely effective as the bite and feeding period was very furious, yet short lived.

We would have ideally liked to extend our stay at the river to continue exploring more of the river and other rivers further north via boat, as access by land was impossible. One river in particular would be the Jackson River... maybe on our next expedition north. Our experience at the Skardon River will be one to remember for a very long time, as the fishing was something most anglers wouldn't get to experience in a lifetime.

Dave Brace



It's not all about the fishing...



# Good Times on the NT Shallow Reefs

## By Richard Quincey

In late October I was lucky enough to score another inshore reef fishing adventure in the Northern Territory. It was made all the better as I got to catch up with family who enjoy fishing as much as I do. It is becoming an annual event and one I am keen to continue, or maybe even increase in frequency if the minister for finance agrees to a loosening of economic policy.

It was Friday morning when we headed out of Dundee, about 140 km drive southwest of Darwin, for a three day trip. In a very suitable eight metre aluminum plate boat, appropriately named '*Leviathan*', we were able to travel a little further than most and get to some of the less frequented, yet not remote places. Four of us slept comfortably on board in some unique canvas stretchers that run across the boat sitting on the gunwales. This is the third extended trip on *Leviathan* for me now and the best three night's sleep I have had on any boat.

A magic time to be on the water...



Our days were spent out on the shallow reefs and at night we anchored behind some headlands and islands. Having spent my life on the east coast, I still find it unusual that the sun rises over the mainland and sets out to sea. It is clear to me that sunrise and sunset are much more spectacular in the NT and worth the visit on its own.

Okay, so onto three days of fishing. We fished in water that ranged in depth from between 10 and 30 metres, and I generally used an outfit with a 4000 size spinning reel loaded with 30lb braid and a 10kg rod. I also kept my jigheads on the lighter side, using between 1/8oz and 1oz TT Lures HeadlockZ HD and Snake Heads, depending on the wind and current. We did a lot of drifting, which suited this approach. In fact, with the run that seven metre tides create, drifting was the only thing that let me use such light heads.

I am no expert at the soft plastics game, I just know that they work and I need to learn how to fish them properly. Most of my plastic surgery has been fishing estuaries or flats for flathead, barra and jacks, and I have just started using soft plastics on headlands and the reef. On my first offshore trips I went toward the larger plastics in the ZMan range and tended to work them hard all of the time. I caught good fish, however, the amount of fish I caught was often less than people on the boat using bait.



Bring it on!





Being out fished is frustrating and most of us have the urge to swap sides or request a change of spot. For some it even causes a case of the fake dry spews and a request of the skipper to head to shore. I was close at times during last year's Northern Territory trip and this made me rethink my approach this year.

I packed more plastics toward the middle sizes of the ZMan range and used a lot of 5 inch StreakZ and Scented Jerk ShadZ, as well as 3 inch MinnowZ and a few 5 inch GrubZ. I had some of the Pro-Cure scent in Bloody Tuna and Inshore Saltwater, and I used this regularly on all of the plastics I was sending down. I also took some advice from one of the Tackle Tactics Pro Team and reduced the action I was putting on the lure.

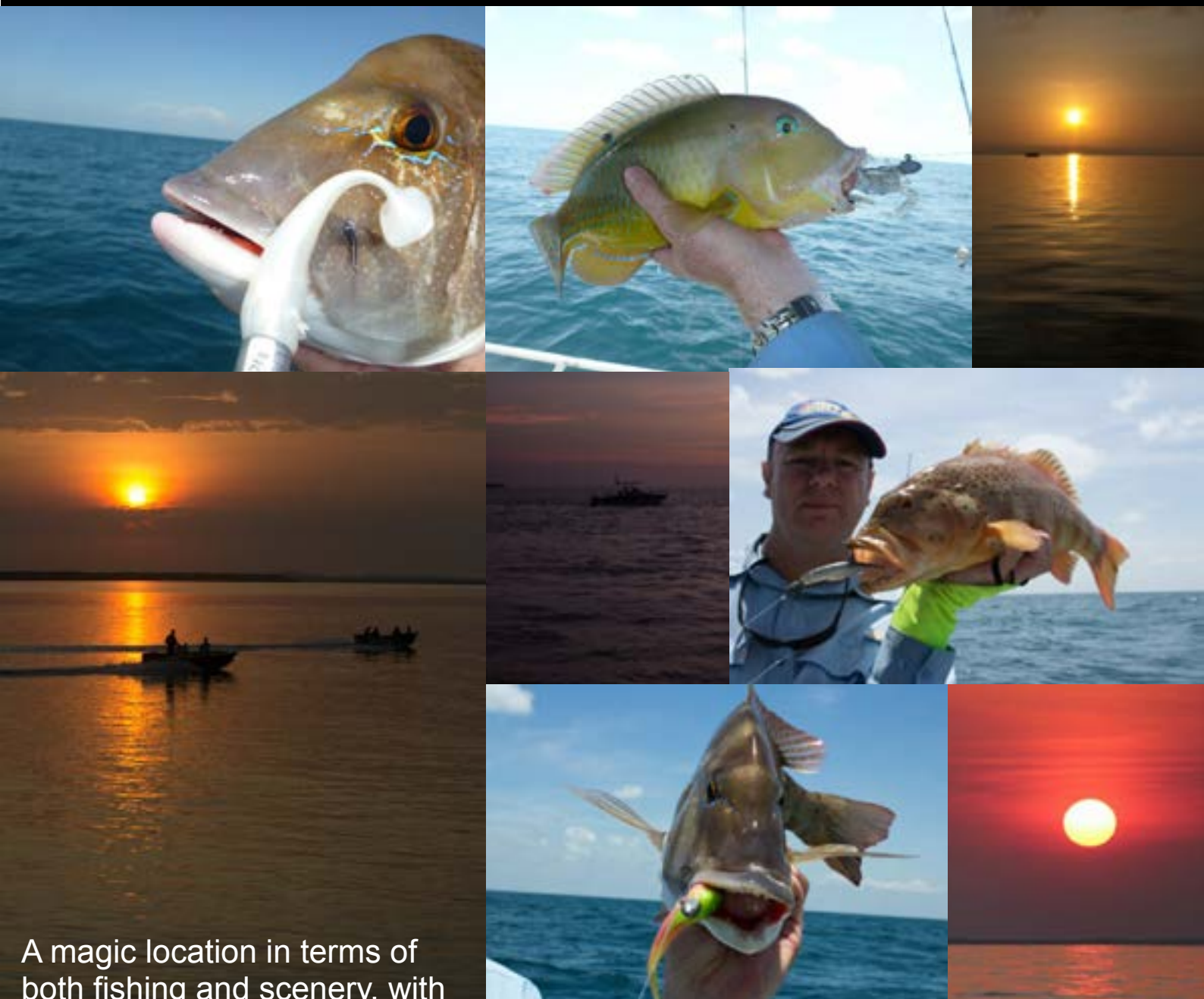
The results were good, with improvement in the frequency of hits. I caught my share of fish and a really good mix of species that included coral trout, tricky snapper, Spanish and school mackerel, black spot tusk fish, trevally, queenfish and many species of cod. I did not develop the urges to pack the plastics away and never thought of getting the dry spews.

For much of the trip I was the only person on the boat using something other than bait. As it goes with fishing, we had our quiet times and other times the fish bit well. I had a couple of sessions where I was getting a good fish a drop, with tricky snapper (grass sweetlip) forming a good proportion of the catch. They are a good clean fighting reef fish and I enjoy catching them.



The soft plastic highlight of the trip was trying the ZMan 3 inch Scented CrabZ for the first time, rigged on a 5/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead. My verdict is that the CrabZ fished as well as any other plastic that I sent down and I will be adding a few more to my tackle box. As with the other plastics in the ZMan range, the TT Lures HeadlockZ is a winner with the CrabZ, holding them in perfect position.

Overall it was a great trip with lots of good company, amazing scenery, some memorable fishing and this trip reminded me that if I am not catching fish, I should change things around a little and try something different. It also reminded me to look up and enjoy the beauty of the places I get to fish and not take the experience for granted.



A magic location in terms of both fishing and scenery, with the sunrises and sunsets alone worth the visit.

# SWIMMING LESSONS

BY VINNIE VERSFELD

ZMan SwimmerZ are probably one of the most versatile and productive paddle tail style plastics I have come across in a while and since fishing them I have had amazing success on them. The reasons for this success is quite obvious; like all ZMan plastics they are made of Elaztech, this makes them incredibly durable and that means more fish per plastic.

Any plastic that can offer multiple fish per lure is already a winner. Secondly they have a great baitfish profile, the 4 and 6" sizes are perfectly matched to 95% of the baitfish that most of our predatory fish hunt down. Add to this a great colour range and a fantastic realistic swimming action and it's plain to see why tying one of these on will soon see you with bent rods, screaming reels and mega smiles.



The author with a SwimmerZ barra from the kayak.



## Rigging and Techniques:

There are quite a few different ways that I like rigging my SwimmerZ and this is mainly dependant on the environment that I am fishing.

**1) Standard Jigheads** - In terms of jigheads I like using the TT Lures range of HeadlockZ HD jigheads. The main reason for this is with the SwimmerZ being made of Elaztech they won't slide down the jig head on the HeadlockZ HD because of their unique grub keeper. The HeadlockZ HD also offer a super-strong and sharp hook that has never failed me.

When rigging the SwimmerZ onto the jig heads it's your usual 'guess where the hook will come out, while keeping it straight' deal. I find it works best pushing the plastic from its midriff over the "lock" on the HeadlockZ jighead and then seating it, rather than trying to seat it from the plastic's head.

When fishing SwimmerZ on jigheads it's really as simple as cast and retrieve. As their name suggests they are designed to swim and that's what they do best. I match my jig head to water depth, current etc., so that my plastic will swim, on a medium speed retrieve at the desired depth. For example I would throw a 6" SwimmerZ on a 1/2oz head to swim it approximately a metre off the bottom.

I find casting them out, letting them sink and then swimming them back to be the most effective technique for midrange and bottom dwelling fish. If fish are surface feeding or feeding just below the surface, I will down weight my jighead. For example a 4" SwimmerZ with a 1/8oz HeadlockZ HD, retrieved from when it lands, should run about 6" under the surface with a mid-retrieve.



Photo: David Granville



**2) Snake Head Jigheads** - In snags and weeds I like using the TT Lures Snake Heads. Again this gear is 100% suited to the SwimmerZ, with a variety of weight and hook sizes to suit the conditions you are fishing. As before rigging them dead straight is the key to an effective action. When rigging the SwimmerZ on Snake Heads I like to penetrate the hook point, to the point of the barb, into the nose of the SwimmerZ and then bring it out at a 90 degree angle. Hooking the nose too deep can limit the movement between the Snake Head's weight and hook, which might impede action of the plastic.

With the SwimmerZ rigged on the Snake Head the same applies as with the standard jighead, with a plain cast and retrieve all that's needed, but with the weedless advantage of the Snake Head jighead. Personally when fishing SwimmerZ like this I love slow rolling them right through the structure, be it snags or weed beds. This technique is particularly effective on shut down fish. Always be poised for an explosive strike and be ready to be buried!





**3) SWS – Snagless Weight System** - Another way I like rigging SwimmerZ is on the TT Lures SWS jigheads. I do this for buzzing the SwimmerZ on the surface and this paddle tail is the perfect imitation of a fleeing baitfish skipping on the surface.

This technique is really effective on surface feeding fish that are busting up baitfish or when night surface fishing for barra in the fresh, fishing them over weed beds under the moon.



As far as colour goes, I am a big believer in natural colours and matching the hatch. Don't be afraid to experiment and find what works for you. Hook ups are on the strike 90% due to the ferocity with which the fish hit these plastics. Be ready for some bone crunching hits!

Some anglers are intimidated by the size of the 6" SwimmerZ, but they are fast becoming one of my favourite big jack plastics and they definitely come into their own in the wet season when fishing run off drains for barra. The 4" models have caught me a wide mix of species, from Spanish mackerel through to bream and EVERYTHING in between!

I guarantee that your perseverance with these plastics will be handsomely rewarded!





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# TARGETING T GA

By Jamie Douglas



It's not all about the fishing, Borumba is a picturesque location.

Work was hectic with the end of the year looming and far too many tasks yet to complete before tools down. As per usual my phone was permanently attached to my head and having recently been handed control of six reps and three branches, this was becoming an all too familiar occurrence. The monotonous regularity of the ring tone that I have set for anyone related to work was finally broken up by the gritty tones of Slash ripping into the classic intro to Sweet Child of Mine, the tone that signals a call from my good mate Stuey. Stuey runs his own kitchen manufacturing business and he too was ticking boxes for the end of the year. With one job left on the board that was all but done and with the fitting date still over a week away, plans were put in place for the annual Kitchen Addiction Christmas fishing trip. The call was to let me know that I was invited, along with Nick, Stuey's nephew and apprentice. The venue, Lake Borumba, the target, the mighty saratoga... a fish that I was yet to catch, but one that was definitely high on my bucket list. It was decided we would head up early Friday, to avoid the plagues of water skiers, with a plan to be home early Saturday afternoon to at least keep one day of the weekend up our sleeves to spend with the families and keep the peace!





The day arrived and after a 2:30am start from the Gold Coast and a quick diversion to Brendale to pick up the boys and the boat, we were on our way. After a cruisy trip up the Bruce Highway, we hit the ramp and were on the water by 6:30am. The place looked epic, with fog just starting to lift off the water and the promise of a very hot day, with a possible afternoon storm to fire up the fish. We set off at full speed, filled with great anticipation and called on Stuey's experience after a recent successful trip he'd made to this location with Steve Andrews and Nigel Middleton.

The decision was made to head to a spot up the back of the Kingham Creek arm, where the boys had brained them last trip. We arrived at the spot, cruised in under electric power and the screen on the HDS10 lit up with bait and masses of bass. We were pumped and tripping over each other to get lines in the water, however, after a few minutes it became apparent the bass were not playing the game. They were definitely there, but they were far from active and after an hour of throwing everything but the anchor at them without success, we made the decision to call it quits on the bass and specifically go after the resident toga.



Stuey with a nice yellowbelly



We made our way back to Swan Bay, a tight little bay with plenty of lily pads fringing the entrance and we could see some nice overhanging trees up the back. First cast into the bay and Stuey came up solid on a nice yellowbelly that took a liking to his ZMan 3" MinnowZ rigged on one of his 'custom' TT Jig Spinner, Snake Head, ChinlockZ concoctions.

We were on the board, YEWWWW! We took some pics, released the yella and carried on toward the back of the bay. Stuey went left, Nick went right and I nailed a cast right up the back, down the alley and dropped my little Jig Spinner rigged ZMan 2.5" GrubZ under a melaleuca tree. After three quick winds the GrubZ was belted and a feisty little Toga went aerial! Having never caught a toga before, the instructions from Stuey were welcomed and his advice to 'keep tight and go hard' were put into place. After a short but torrid battle the little sub 50cm fish came to the net. My first Toga and I was stoked!

The author is stoked with his first toga!



Steuy with a quality Lake Borumba saratoga.



By then we had drifted further into the bay and after seeing the amount of sunken timber from where I had hooked up, I'm convinced the only reason I got the fish to the boat was that it had spent so much time in the air. It had jumped over all of the obstacles and done me a massive favour, as the 6lb Sunline would not have stood a chance! Some happy snaps and the fine little specimen was promptly swum and sent on its way.

We then cruised into the next bay, where we managed to spook a nice toga and it was clear that the bays were the go, so we decided to concentrate on them. The next bay on the list was Shirli's Bay, just around from Pelican Point and upon entering the bay I put in a long cast with a 3" MinnowZ in Mud Minnow, rigged on a 3/8oz Depth Charge jighead with a #2 Jig Spinner attached. It was immediately belted by a nice toga of around 60cm, but unfortunately I gave it too much slack line and after a massive jump and head shake it was all over. I was gutted but still in good spirits as clearly they were on! We made our way right up to the back into Dog Leg Bay where Steuy belted a cast right up the alley and was met with a massive run. This fish stayed deep, fought hard and after a tense couple of minutes a nice 58cm toga was netted and it was high fives all round. More pics, a quick swim and it was released to terrorise some more baitfish.

By this time the mercury was pushing 40 degrees and the water temp had nearly hit 30! It was insanely hot, which no doubt helped fire the toga up. We headed across to a bay on the opposite bank, officially known as Double Bay, but affectionately labelled by us as 'Jamie Bay' after my last trip where I absolutely brained the Bass in this one bay.

Yet again, it did not disappoint. My first cast with the trusty 1/2oz FireTiger TT Vortex Spinnerbait was met with a solid thud and massive weight that was clearly too big for a bass. This fish too kept deep and pulled plenty of 10lb braid off the baitcaster. It then came to the boat but displayed a major dislike for it and the net! After a good five or six attempts, where it almost swam straight at the net, before exploding at the last minute and taking off in the opposite direction, Stuey swung my new PB toga into the boat. At bang on 70cm, I was stoked and was still shaking whilst the boys rustled up the brag mat and got the camera ready. WOOOOOHOOOOOOO, YEAH BABY, could be heard for miles around, along with more high fives, some photos and then off it went to hopefully bring some other angler the same joy that it brought me.

The author is all smiles with his hefty PB saratoga.



That was the end of our memorable trip. Here's a few key tips to help you make the most of a trip to Borumba to target the mighty saratoga.

- Plan your trip to coincide with expected hot weather or afternoon storms.
- Standout lures were the ZMan 3" MinnowZ and 2.5" GrubZ, both rigged on Jig Spinners. Rigging them weedless is certainly advisable due to the heavy cover you need to throw into to entice the fish to bite. Don't forget your Vortex Spinnerbaits.
- Colours that performed best were Pearl Blue Glimmer MinnowZ and Hardy Head GrubZ, along with Fire Tiger spinnerbaits.
- Target the bays and fish stealthy as toga are very easily spooked. It pays to be as quiet as possible and put in long casts to the back of the bays, as well as looking for pockets between lily pads and melaleuca trees.
- Once you hook up, GO HARD! No slack line or dropping the rod tip, as that's all a toga needs to throw the hook. Their upper and lower jaws are very bony and unless you happen to get a corner of the jaw hook up, any slack line will see them earn their freedom.
- We stayed at the Borumba Deer Park, which is only five minutes from the dam and very economical.



# SUMMER SPOTTIES

## BY ROBBIE WELLS

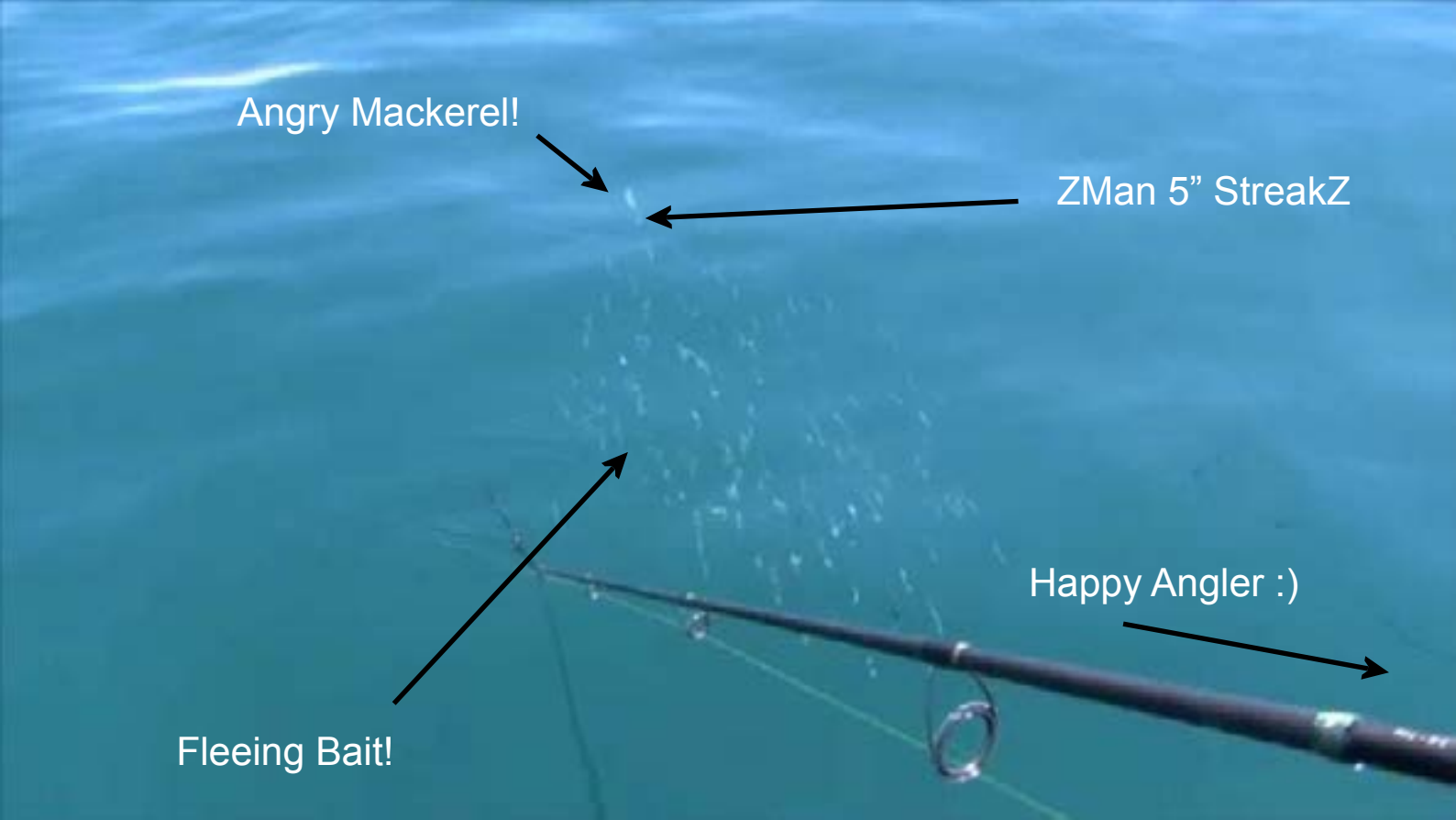
# On PLASTICS

With Christmas around the corner and the summer northerlies in full swing, the first piscatorial pursuit I think of is our annual spotty mackerel run and this year has already been a cracker. There's nothing quite like approaching a mass of dive bombing gulls, terns and those crazy mutton birds. As you motor closer the surface is boiling and erupting in a mass of our summer speedsters, as they engulf every bit of whitebait that moves around them.

Even with five or six boats all looking for a piece of the action, the pleasure of everyone hooked up, young and old, experienced or novice, all rattling a few, is what fishing is about. It's also a great way to get them into some fishing with artificials.



Robbie with a quality spottie!



Angry Mackerel!

ZMan 5" StreakZ

Happy Angler :)

Fleeing Bait!

Once the schools are located, no doubt the most popular, if not the most productive form of spotty fishing, is using chromed metal slugs cast into the feeding frenzy and retrieved as fast as possible. Recently though I've been playing around with the ZMan 5" StreakZ in Pearl, Opening Night and Electric Chicken. I like the natural baitfish colors, but throw in a bit of chicken for some tuna or the odd kingy, as you never ever know what else is harassing those bait schools down deep.

Fish on!



We know the effectiveness of the 5" StreakZ when chasing tuna, but with the spotty mackerel the single most important thing is speed, speed, speed and of course making sure your plastic tracks straight. The TT HeadlockZ HD in a 5/0 is my go to jighead, it has a heavy duty hook that will handle just about anything, along with the extra bonus of slipping plastics being a thing of the past. As mentioned earlier speed is the essence, whether you are high speed retrieving on the surface or jigging off the bottom. I've been using a 4000 Shimano Stradic wound as fast as I can possibly wind it and unlike tuna, you can't tease the mackerel on a fast burn with a ZMan. If you slow down or pause, 9 out of 10 times the mackerel will shy away and if jigging off the bottom the other disadvantage is that larger fish will engulf the whole lure resulting in the dreaded bite off!

It's all about birds and bust ups!



A high speed ZMan 5" StreakZ was the undoing of this quality spottie.







Normal behavior with the spotty mackerel once the baitfish have dispersed or been spooked, often by boat traffic, is for them to dive deep, so keep an eye on your sounder for potential shows. This is by far my personal favorite, if not most productive style of mackerel fishing using soft plastics. Drop a 5" StreakZ to the bottom and make sure you keep an eye on the line for any exaggerated movement in case something grabs it on the drop. Once you are on the bottom retrieve your placcy with a super-fast retrieve, pausing every second cast halfway through the water column. If there are mackerel around, then they can't resist it! You also seem to pick up a few larger spotties and a few Spanish that are harassing the outer edges of the bait schools, along with a good chance of hooking up to a tuna or kingfish as bycatch.



Some quality by-catch while chasing spotties.

They hit hard on the plastics jigged off the bottom and I normally run 30lb leader but if there is larger fish around or you are getting bite offs, you may have to go to perhaps 50lb or even a small wire trace. I still try to persevere with the mono as the wire definitely decreases your hookup rate.

So with the school holidays upon us it's a great opportunity to grab a handful of plastics and mum, dad and the kids can go and rattle a few spotty mackerel for the morning. It's awesome fun and they are also not too bad on the chew.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. How Goods Australia!

Robbie Wells

[www.sun2seavprotection.com.au](http://www.sun2seavprotection.com.au)



Sue is all smiles with this quality spottie.



# Glenbawn Dam, Bass & Spinnerbaits

## All Go Together...

## By Gary Brown

The author with a couple of bass from the flats in the background.



Since 1997 I have fished Glenbawn Dam about 15 or 16 times, so in no way would I say that I am a specialist in fishing Glenbawn. What I would say is that three anglers who I have fished alongside a number of times are. Jorg Van Husen, Michael Collins and Joe Pukka are three anglers who I would say are up there with the best I know. These guys could catch bass in a rainwater puddle.

Back in early November 2013 nine of us headed up to Glenbawn for our yearly sojourn to tangle with as many bass as we could over three days and this year we decided it would be much easier to stay in the cabins that are situated inside the park, rather than the houses outside. This turned out to be one of the best decisions Jorg had made, as over the weekend we experienced 80km winds, lightening storms (have a look at the [You Tube clip](#)), torrential rain, several blackouts and there were even times when we had to strip down to tee shirt and shorts. We had it all. It was that bad at one stage that even a small kangaroo hid under our cabin for a couple of hours.

The last time we were up there fishing I didn't think that the fishing was what I would call great, but after my last trip I now realize that it wasn't the fishing's fault, it was my lack knowledge of how to target Australian bass in a dam. Over the years I had done a lot of shore and boat fishing chasing bass in rivers and creeks, but never in a dam. Back then I just thought it was all the same. How wrong was I?

Lake Glenbawn State Park offers a wonderful diversity of bushland and wildlife. Nature lovers and bushwalkers alike will enjoy the woodland, which provides a habitat for over 100 species of birds, as well as water sports, fishing, picnic areas, BBQs, playgrounds, tennis and boat hire. You can fish from the shore or fish out of a boat at Glenbawn, with a great chance of catching not only bass, but also golden perch, carp and catfish. Throughout spring and summer, when the lake water is high, water sports are popular, including canoeing, pleasure boating, sailing and wind surfing, swimming and water skiing.

On your first visit to Glenbawn Dam you may find the size of such a large impoundment very daunting. This is where it is extremely important that you do a fair amount of research of what you would expect to find there. My suggestion would be to break the dam up into a number of sections; 'The Main Basin', the 'Middle' section and the 'Back' of the Dam.



We were all seeking shelter from the weather, including the locals!



This went on for 8 minutes, before the boat was even in the water!

Last year we mainly concentrated our fishing to the lower section of the dam and we had a lot of success by working the shoreline, from the small timbered bay at the end of the dam wall to the entrance to Brushy Hill Bay. This year the water depth had increased by about five metres, so we decided to head up the back of the dam to places like the Pelican Point, the Narrows, the Paddock, the Dog-leg and the Boot.

## WHAT LURE TO USE?

With the amount of lures that I have I was finding it extremely hard to decide whether to take hard bodies, soft plastics, lipless crank baits, blades, surface lures, jigs or spinnerbaits. Trying to narrow it down and keep it simple was doing my head in. What I needed was a quick phone call to Jorg to discuss what he suggested. After about an hour he had gone through what he was going to take - hard bodies, soft plastics, blades, surface lures, jigs and spinnerbaits. He was going to throw everything at the bass, including the kitchen sink!

Now I was really confused. Where do I start? Do I use hard bodied, surface lures, jigs, spinnerbaits, lipless crank baits and or blades? There are so many different types of lures on the market for casting, jigging, surface lures all the way down the water column to deep cranks and jigs... it can become extremely hard in terms of which style to use first. I have tried them all and on even given day each of these styles will catch fish. The trick to work out is when do you use each different type? So to keep it simple I decided to mainly use TT's Vortex spinnerbaits, along with a small selection of surface lures, blades and soft plastics.

A selection of TT Vortex colours that did the job.



Spinnerbaits come in various sizes, weights, blade combinations and skirt colours. My preference leans towards either the TT Vortex or Tornado spinnerbaits in neutral colours.

Over the years I have found that spinnerbaits are really easy to use and everyone can have great success when using them. They are very popular with many anglers as they are nearly snag proof. Well most of the time. The next time you are out in a boat on a dam, try casting a spinnerbait into some drowned timber stands and allow it to sink for a few seconds. Then start your retrieve and you will find that the spinnerbait will bounce over and through the branches and logs of the trees. If I do feel the lure bump over branches, I'll stop the retrieve and let the lure freefall down the face of the branch. I've found a lot of native fish sit under these branches and will smash the spinnerbait as it freefalls. After the freefall I'll continue with a slow roll back to the bank.

## FINDING FISH

Rock walls, drop-offs, heavily timbered areas, flats, weed beds, sunken trees, steep sided bays and even in the middle of nowhere will all produce fish throughout the day and night.

What I have found is the most important thing you will need to remember when fishing this dam, is that you find the baitfish and you will find the bass. This is where a great sounder comes into play, as you can use it to locate baitfish schools and fishable structure.

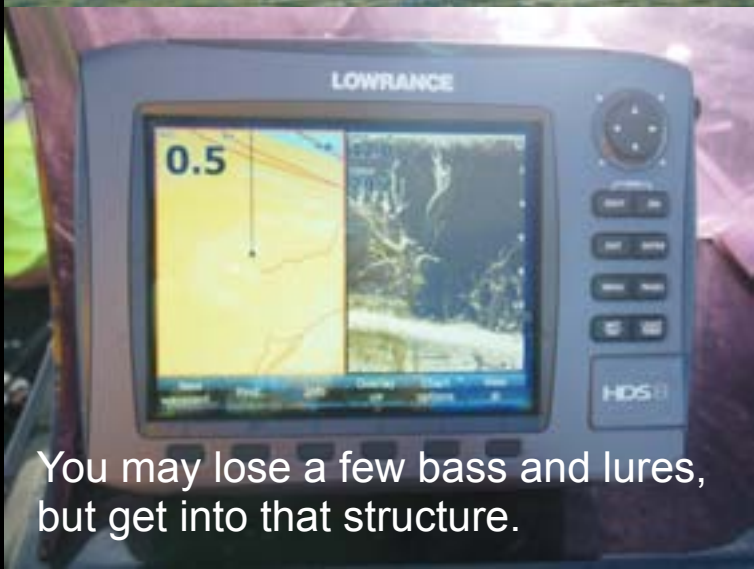
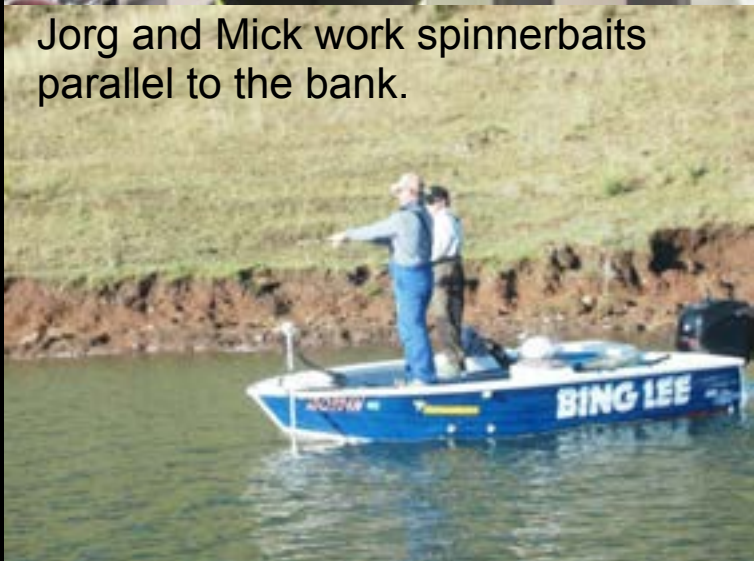
Chris and Dave were all smiles until the storm in the background hit!



Chris slow rolled this nice bass.



Jorg and Mick work spinnerbaits parallel to the bank.



You may lose a few bass and lures, but get into that structure.



A break in the weather.



Late afternoon brought on some quality fish.



Baby Bass was the outstanding colour.



4 kilo braid and 5 kilo leader at the ready.

If it is the first time that you have ever been to Glenbawn Dam I would suggest that you suss out where the locals go bait fishing for the bass, yellowbelly and catfish, and when they are not fishing there you should then put out a couple of lures and start trolling through the area, while at the same time keeping an eye on that sounder for any changes in the bottom, like humps or trees. You will also need to keep an eye out for schools of baitfish. We found a number of baitfish schools just out in the middle of nowhere.

This is where the GPS comes into its own and you can position yourself over the bait school and just try jiggging the blade, spinnerbait or weighted soft plastic up and down off the bottom.

### **MY SELECTION OF COLOURS.**

Once again, where do I start when it comes to which colours I prefer to use. I guess to keep it simple for the first time dam users I mainly use neutral colours. A couple of things you need to remember is that the clearer the water the better the vision for the fish. So colour, size and shape will make a difference as to whether you catch fish or not.

In dirty or deep water where there is less light penetration I prefer to use dark or fluorescent colours. The reason behind this is that I think that the colour starts to disappear and I reckon that they present a contrasting silhouette. So try using red, purple, orange, yellow, silver, white and black.

Try using red around October as the firetail gudgeons start to appear. Purple is a colour that is found in several food species in the dam. Yellow seems to stand out a fair bit in shaded areas. Green is a spring and summertime colour and it tends to blend in with the weed cover. White, silver and gold are very effective in dirty water. These colours also work very well in deep water. Now black will contrast against almost any background and is an excellent choice in deep water and down rigging.

## SPINNERBAIT TECHNIQUES

Here's a few techniques that have proven effective.

1. Cast out the spinnerbait and as soon as it hits the water start to retrieve it with your rod tip high, keeping the blades on the surface the entire time.
2. Allow the spinnerbait to swim just below the surface so that it produces a bulge and wake. Allow the blade to break the surface every now and then like a skittering shad being chased by a predator.
3. Cast out the spinnerbait and allow it to hit the bottom. Then lift the rod tip so that the spinnerbait just bounces off the bottom.
4. Slow roll the spinnerbait along the bottom, while trying to keep in contact with the bottom most of the retrieve. You should feel it scrape across gravel, sticks, and rocks. Keep it moving just fast enough to feel the vibration.



Another solid bass that couldn't resist the flash and vibration of the spinnerbait.



5. The drag technique is particularly effective as a cold-water technique around ambush points. I drop the bait just beyond ambush points, let it settle on the bottom and then pull it slowly along the bottom like a scuttling crayfish, with plenty of pauses.

6. Up against cliffs or bank walls, on the edge of drop-offs or a vertical face - lift or gently pop your rod tip so the lure clears the bottom and then allow it to flutter down. Stair-step the spinner bait all the way down the slope.

7. Any time you are able to guide your retrieve so it brushes against pilings, standing timber, stumps, boulders, brush piles and other structures or cover, kill the retrieve as the lure contacts the ambush point. Allow it to drop on a semi-slack line for a second or two. Blade vibration alerts predators to the approaching meal and the erratic flutter of the "dying" bait launches the attack.

8. Cast the spinnerbait up against brush piles, grass lines, into pockets in floating vegetation mats, against trunks of standing timber and shake your rod tip to make the bait flutter down through the branches. If there's a bass there, you'll know it! If you reach the bottom without a pickup, then carefully work your lure back up through the branches and then repeat the process one time.

Caution: This is a high-risk but potentially high-reward presentation. If you don't feel like losing a few spinnerbaits don't try this technique.

Chris with a bass and the rod in the background gets slammed!



Dave getting in on the action.



Mick can't stress enough, 'have confidence in your lure'.



## IN SUMMARY

Well after the latest trip up to Glenbawn I will humbly have to eat my words as the proof is in the pudding. Over the weekend between Thursday afternoon, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (nine four to five hour sessions) Jorg and Mick Collins caught and released well over 160 bass, but when they went out for a last go at them on Monday morning they only managed three between them.

I have known Jorg for a number of years now and I didn't realise how good a bass angler he is. Seriously, I used to listen to what he had to say and go "Yeah, that's extending the truth a bit far". I would think to myself, no way did he and his offsider catch 50 to 60 bass in a four hour session.

On the other hand Dave, Chris and I managed to boat 11 bass over the weekend (four three to four hour sessions). We did have a lot of missed strikes and lost fish and spinnerbaits in the heavily wooded areas. One of the main things that I did learn over the weekend was something that Mick Collins stated, "To do well with any lure you have to have confidence in it and you will catch fish".

Jorg with a couple of stonkers. He also found the Baby Bass to be effective.

