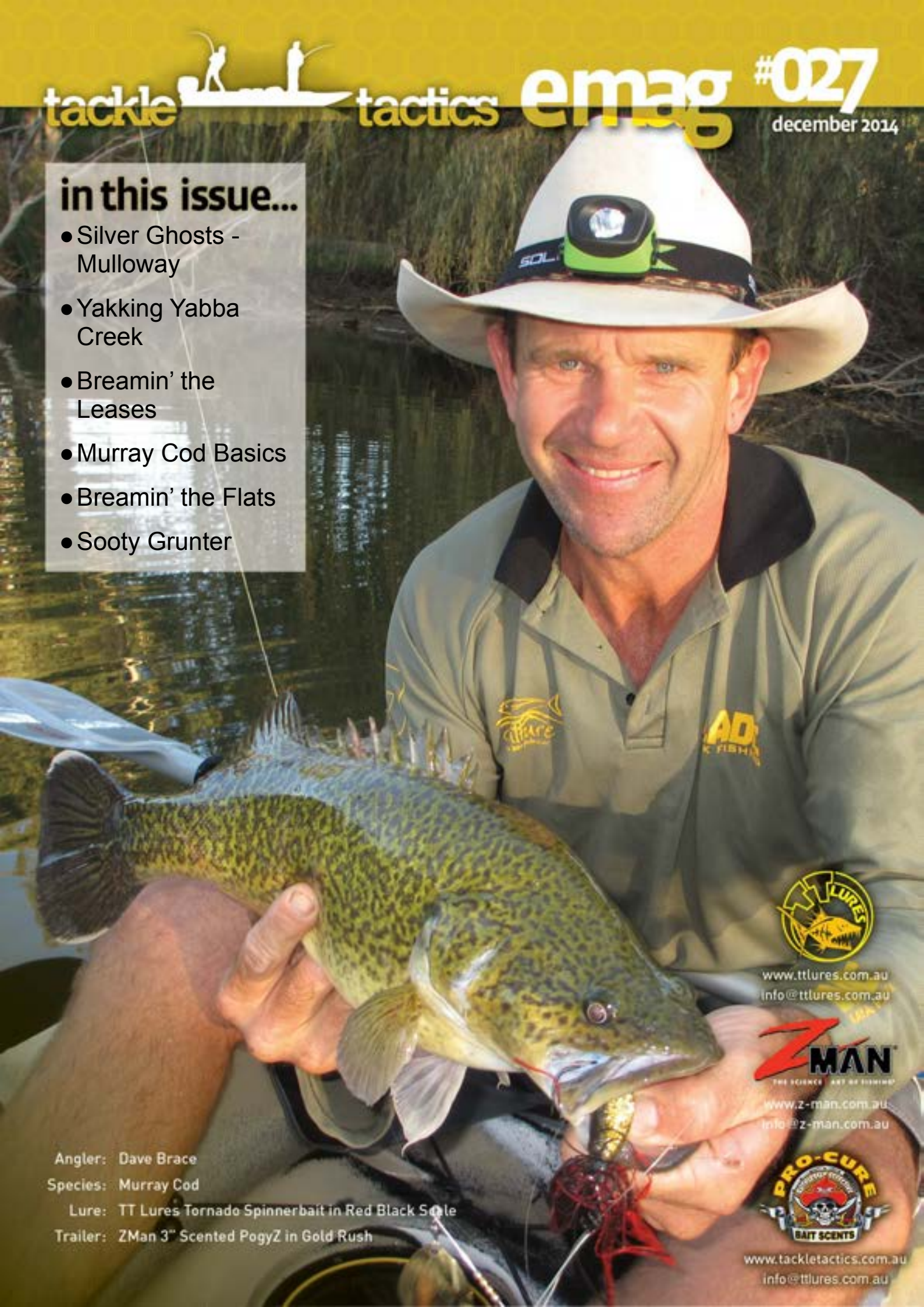




## in this issue...

- Silver Ghosts - Mulloway
- Yakking Yabba Creek
- Breamin' the Leases
- Murray Cod Basics
- Breamin' the Flats
- Sooty Grunter



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Angler: Dave Brace

Species: Murray Cod

Lure: TT Lures Tornado Spinnerbait in Red Black Sole

Trailer: ZMan 3" Scented PogyZ in Gold Rush

## Tackle Tactics Fishing Magazine #27

Firstly Merry Christmas from the team at Tackle Tactics. We hope you have a cracker Christmas and New Year, with plenty of time out on the water with friends and family.

In this issue of the Tackle Tactics Fishing Magazine we have a good mix of fresh and saltwater fishing, with loads of tips and techniques that you can apply to the species and locations that you fish.

Saltwater wise Luke Smith takes us fishing for mulloway in four systems in Victoria and with many of us having a bit of time off for Christmas we thought we would run a couple of stories about chasing a species that is readily available around the country - bream. Owen McPaul helps us extract a few bream from the racks, while Ryan Dixon gets away from the obvious structure and helps demystify the world of the flats.

The warmer weather also sees the freshwater fishing firing up, so Paul Chew takes us paddling down Yabba Creek, Dave Brace shares some tips for targeting his beloved Murray cod and I grab my wife Sheri, throw on the yaks and go chasing a new species for us - sooty grunter.

We hope you enjoy the read and feel free to pass the link to the magazine onto your fellow fishos. Fingers crossed Santa looks after you, stay safe on the water and remember to slip, slop, slap over the holiday season.

Fish On!

Justin & the Tackle Tactics Team



Another solid  
bream on the  
ZMan 2.5" Slim  
SwimZ &  
HeadlockZ  
Finesse.

# SILVER GHOSTS



BY LUKE SMITH

As we worked our way along my favourite bank, the first tell-tale 'jewie' bump appeared on the sounder screen. We were casting tight up against the reed beds and letting our Motor Oil GrubZ flutter to the bottom. Once there we slowly worked them over the drop and along the bottom, twitching them in between pauses. I was staring at the braid, waiting with anticipation for that first clunk that mulloway so often do. Braid began to peel off the little 2000 spin reel but unfortunately it was not connected to my rod, I was destined to be the netter this time.

In the past year the rivers of southwest Victoria have seen an influx of juvenile mulloway enter the systems and gorge themselves on baitfish. Four of the regions systems have been producing jewies on a regular basis. These rivers are the Glenelg, the Fitzroy, the Moyne and the Hopkins. Over this article I will give a brief rundown of each system and share some tips to help increase your mulloway results.



Luke with a fun size mulloway.



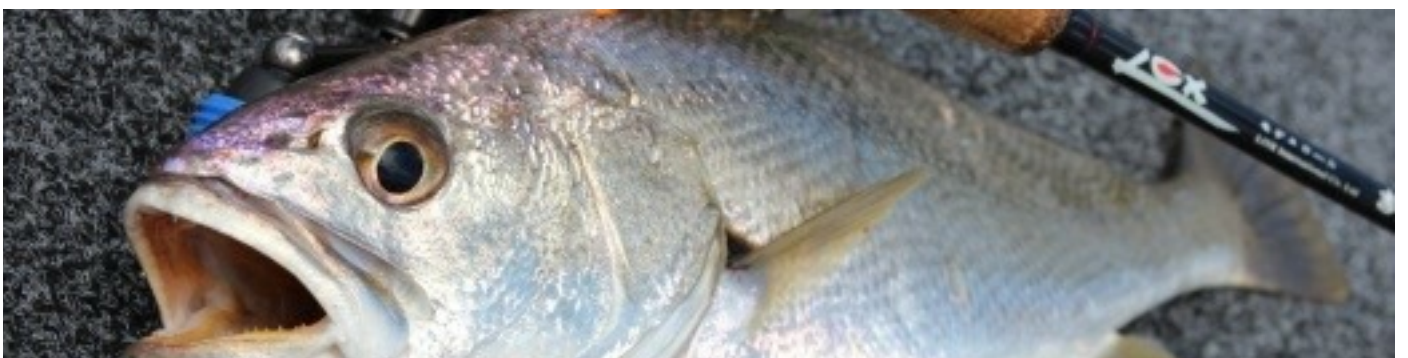
A couple of mulloway on light spin gear.



Fish of this size aren't out of the question.

The Glenelg River that lies on the border of Vic and SA is one of the most consistent mulloway producing locations in all of Victoria. It is a long river that is boat able for over 40km and there are mulloway caught almost every day of the year. Whilst most fish in the region range from undersize through to 70cm, this river has the ability to produce fish in excess of 50lb. Winter is peak time to target these big brutes as they enter the river's mouth and ambush schools of mullet and salmon with the aid of the some deep holes and the flowing water.

The mouth is located in the township of Nelson and has several boat ramps that are suitable to launch all manner of craft. This provides great access to some top notch mulloway action, as one of the hot spots is no more than 400m from the main ramp. This location is known as the poles as there are several poles on the river bend that mark out the channel. This is the deepest part of the river, with water up to 18m. The banks drop off sharply as it is only a narrow river, thus creating great ambush points for mulloway.





A selection of the author's favourites.



Low light periods are productive times.



Productive techniques in this area range from plastics and vibes, to bait fishing or trolling hard bodies and livies. Trolling and bait fishing after dark are great methods when the mulloway are more actively feeding and moving around. During the day however casting lures and bouncing them along the bottom is very hard to beat. Mulloway are generally lazy during the day and will hide along drop offs and ledges and lie in wait for food to pass by. In this situation lures will out fish bait most times as you are actively finding the fish.

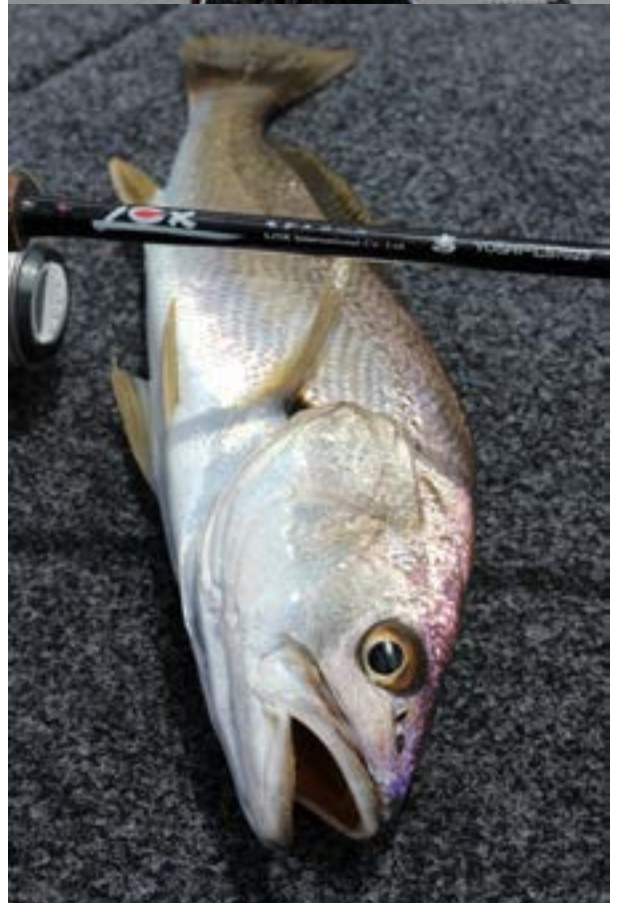
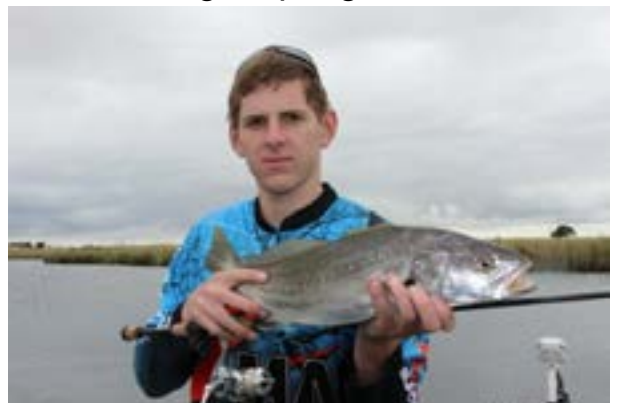
Lures such as the ZMan 2.5" GrubZ, 3.5" GrubZ and the 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ are great for working along the bottom and letting the current move them around. Motor Oil is a dynamite colour and often out fishes most other colours. Other productive lures are the 3.75" StreakZ, 2.5" Slim SwimZ and the 3" MinnowZ, again with Motor Oil being the pick of the colours, along with Shiner, Greasy Prawn and Bad Mood. 1/8oz and 1/4oz TT Switchblades are the alternative to plastics when lure fishing. The natural and dark colours usually work better than the bright colours. Simply hop them along the bottom and up the channel edges.

The Glenelg also has a lot of winding bends with steep rock walls. These are perfect for vibing up mulloway. Throw in at the wall and let them drop. Hopefully the lure gets crunched on the drop, as they so often do. The advice that I can offer is to cover ground until you find the bait as the jewies will not be far behind. The second piece of advice is to keep your lures in contact with the bottom. Mulloway love nothing more than a lure that is ripped up off the bottom.



Great fun for anglers using light spin gear.

The Fitzroy River is located between Codrington and Tyrendarra and is a hidden river that only the locals know about. It is only small and access by boat is limited to approximately 8km, with a few shallow reefs that can cause problems. Caution must be taken when boating in this system for the first time. To the west of the boat ramp there are two separate reefs that stretch the width of the river. The best option is to go slow and watch the sounder. Once passed these areas, the river offers reed lined banks along with mud flats. There are no secrets to working this river, apart from watching the sounder and covering ground. The river is narrow and with two anglers fishing, both banks can be prospected. Once fish are located you're laughing! The river is full of bream, usually of a good average size. There is also resident estuary perch, that come down from the fresh in the winter months when the river floods. However the time for mulloway is summer.



Again, the same lures apply but I would start with the GrubZ, Slim SwimZ and 1/8oz vibes as the mulloway are usually only small in this system. Whilst they will still readily take the other lures previously mentioned, you will limit your chances of the bream and perch by-catch.

The Moyne River mouth is located in the quiet township of Port Fairy. It is only a small system and boat access is limited to about 1km. The river spans out into a large shallow lake that has a mud and rock bottom. If adventurous, a small tinny may be taken into here but caution must be taken. However, this is a great advantage of a kayak. This system is also fantastic for land based access, as most of the mulloway fishing takes place from the road bridge to the mouth of the river.

Bait fishing is very productive over summer when the mulloway school up in good numbers. Pilchards, clickers and spew worms are the best options. Fishing at night near the boat ramp jetty is a great option as there are usually schools of small mullet and salmon feeding on the scraps from the cleaning tables.



Bream are on the cards.



The author's go-to lures will see you hooked up to a range of species.



During the day lures are far more productive as the fish are a bit more shutdown. A correctly worked lure is often too good to refuse for a mulloway. Afternoon is a great time to start flicking some lures as jewies become more active nearing dark, otherwise tide changes are your friend. The river is very tidal and fishing an hour either side of high tide can certainly help to increase your catch.

Lure choice remains the same with GrubZ, Slim SwimZ, vibes and 3.75" StreakZ all working well. Depending on the tidal movement, jighead size may have to be up to 1/8oz to be worked correctly. Motor Oil colour is a consistent performer in this river, however they do like Violet Sparkle and Chartreuse Sparkle in the GrubZ, Mood Ring in the Curly Tail SteakZ and Greasy Prawn in the Slim SwimZ, along with Shiner and Redbone Glow in the StreakZ. The river can be dirty after heavy rainfall and this is when vibes, such as Switchblades in Red Nightmare 1/8oz and 1/4oz work so well.

Whether land based or in a boat it is a matter of working your lures from the middle to the edge or from the edge to the middle. Most important thing is to keep your lures in contact with the bottom for as long as possible. When fish are found it is crucial to thoroughly work that spot with repetitive casts. Mix up the retrieves to try and entice the fish to bite.



The author with a schoolie on his go-to Motor Oil colour.



The silver ghost...

The Hopkins River, located in Warrnambool, is better known as a bream fishery but in recent years has been producing some excellent mullet fishing. The Hoppies, as it commonly referred to, offers many different structure types with mud banks, weed beds and rock walls being favourite locations to find jewies. Most of the mullet fishing occurs in the bottom half of the river but they are often caught at Jubilee Park and higher.

The Hopkins Bridge is a great spot to target mullet at sunset and later into the night. Bait fish congregate under the bridge lights and the jewies use this structure as a great ambush point. Dark vibes create a silhouette during the night that is very effective in the Hoppies. A 1/8oz vibe is all you need as the river is fairly shallow and a slower flutter gives it more chance of being eaten on the drop. The ZMan 3.75" StreakZ in Shiner colour is a favourite of mine at night, paired up with a 1/12oz jighead and some Mullet Pro-Cure scent to help entice the fish to bite.

The ski run is another favourite spot of mine for bream or mullet. I love working the south bank of the river as it offers a shallow flat in the transit lane, before it drops into deeper water. Ninety percent of the time that I fish this bank I will be using a Motor Oil 2.5" GrubZ or a Motor Oil Slim Swimz, with a 1/16oz jighead. This combination is just deadly for working this shallow bank. I prefer to stay a cast length away from the bank and work the GrubZ along the bottom out into deeper water. By doing this I am able to keep an eye on the sounder and quite often fish can be sounded up on the drop off and with a quick shift in boat position I will work along the bigger drop off that is located 20-30m off the bank.



Mullet are readily available throughout many systems around Australia.



Another great spot is the bank immediately behind the Deakin University. This is on the north side of the river and offers mud banks with some weed beds and reef, as you head towards Rowans Lane. Again I love using the GrubZ but also the StreakZ. If fishing first or last light I will fish tight to the bank, otherwise I pull out a touch wider and work the 2m line, as the fish often move off the flat when the sun comes up.

The fourth spot I target a lot is the flats at Rowans Lane. There are great mud flats on the north and south bank of the river and both produce mulloway. Quite often many anglers only fish the north bank, but the south can fish even better at times. The same lures and techniques apply. The time of day and light conditions will dictate whether you focus on the shallow flat or the drop off.

The increase in mulloway numbers over the past few years is great to see and with this fishery improving, I hope everyone takes steps to ensure that it only becomes better. Hopefully the above information can help you get connected to one of these great fighting fish. Remember to check the size and bag limits for the area that you're fishing.

# YABBA CREEK YAKKING

A man wearing a blue and black fishing shirt, a cap with sunglasses, and a neck gaiter is sitting in a blue inflatable boat on a river. He is holding a fishing rod. The background is a dense forest. The text 'YABBA CREEK YAKKING' is written in a green, textured font at the top of the image.

BY PAUL CHEW

We'll paddle from here they said! It'll be fun they said! So with rushed preparation, 6am saw me sliding the Bandit into the extremely low, yet still gently running waters of the picturesque Yabba Creek... and so my Yabba virginity was broken.

For those unfamiliar with Yabba Creek, its tiny headwaters emanate from around Jimna in Queensland. From here it winds its way through the hinterland into Lake Borumba and then downstream, burbling through the sleepy town of Imbil, to its end where it meets up with the mighty Mary River about 8 km downstream, dropping about 450 metres in its 82 km length.

A few of us had gathered at the Borumba Deer Park, for the annual SEQ Fishing Borumba Bash, a charity event run to raise funds for the Albury Mercy Hospital Palliative Care Unit. It was a really well run event, with plenty of food and prizes on offer. With the dam being closed, due to an algae outbreak, a few of the lads and ladies were walking the creek on foot, while five of us had brought yaks in case the dam didn't reopen. This being the case, a quick chat around the fire the previous night had resulted in a loose... and I mean loose plan of an early start, after a hot bacon and egg roll, to begin at the park and end up at Crossing No.1 closest to Imbil.





A paddle with mates.

All things being equal, this was supposed to take until a bit after mid morning, maybe lunch at the latest. So the rods were readied, refreshments and a snack tossed into the esky, and we were ready to roll. It was at this point that I realised I had no footwear, either for myself or my better half, but it shouldn't be too bad... should it?

Honestly I was super keen, having wanted to fish this bit of water since I bought my yak. Now, the planets had aligned and even better, I was getting to do it with some great mates. And so, with the five yaks bobbing gently in the murky light of dawn, we set off. While I was getting myself settled for the paddle Pete was tossing a surface offering in tight to the bank, when pop, a nice little bass took a whack at it. However it missed the hooks, so we continued on down the pool to the first set of rapids. And this was where the fun started (it is fun right?)...

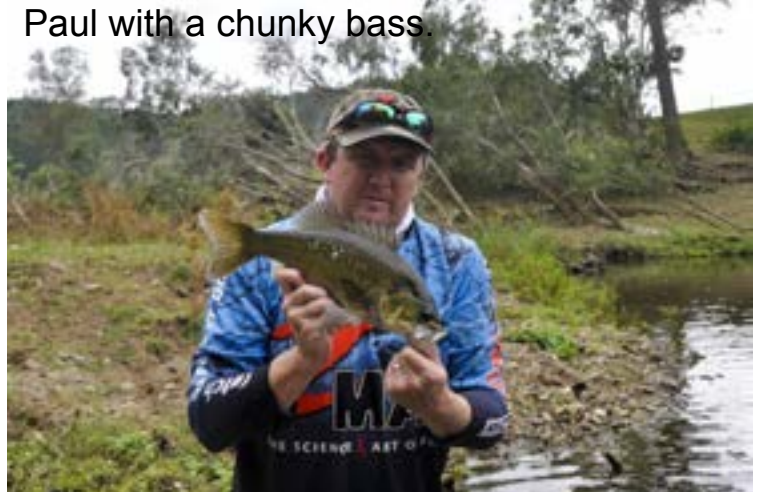
With the rapids at this end being fast flowing runs of twenty metres or so, over mostly small round gibbers and very shallow, I needed to get my butt out on occasion and shimmy the yak along. We had some interesting times, with Nath spearing past me a couple times leaving me in fear of my life. After each set of rapids came a fishable pool and as is my go I persisted with surface lures, a ZMan CrawdadZ on one rod and a Heddon Torpedo on the other.

As time went on it was obvious the fish were onto sub-surface presentations, as Nath and Pete were getting a few fish on spinnerbaits and lipless cranks. Eventually I tossed the craw in under a big fig and was hopping it back slowly over a tangle of submerged timber when it was scooped in a shower of water by a hungry little bass. No prize winner but at least I had landed one on surface.

After this, I changed to a TT spinnerbait, which I kept on for the rest of the day, as the sun and temperature was now getting higher. As far as places go that I have paddled, none come close to the beauty that was evident, regardless of which direction you looked. Whether it was the crystal clear water, catching the leaves as it eddied and sending them spiralling to the bottom, the fish eagles that soared above, or azure kingfishers that kept us company most of the day, flitting from fig tree to bottle brush, dipping sporadically into the creek to pluck a small fish from its watery home. Couple that with numerous staghorn ferns, hanging from the tallest of trees lining the bank, super lush rainforest lining the creek and the sound of water burbling over the next set of rapids and it was easy to drift off and let fishing take second place to just sucking up the serenity.



Un-weighted CrawdadZ



Paul with a chunky bass.



A Borumba local.



In search of bass.



Fish on!



Log limbo!



We stopped for a drink, a snack and some discussion with the boys that we were well into the trip. Pete also discovered a repair had come unstuck in his yak and he was taking a little water, so took this opportunity to drain it out. Too soon we were back on and heading down the creek. A couple more crossings and some friendly banter with some other competitors and we hit a big log jam, requiring some portage of the yaks. Shortly after it was a couple of electric fences and then some big low flying trees kept us on our toes, requiring some limbo skills to keep trucking on downstream. I have to commend the girls, who kept paddling, dragging, lifting and chatting all day without complaint... at least not too much.

Getting into the lower reaches, the creek widens notably and the bass became a little feistier, with a few bigger models hitting the mat and getting their picture taken with the competition tag. Somewhere along here Nath got three bass in three casts and Kirby got one, but somehow both her card and good sunglasses ended up at the bottom of the creek. It was all happening. I drifted past Kirby, who was snagged and next thing came across a commotion in a drowned bush, where to my surprise a seven foot python was trying to get out of the water and onto the bank. I judiciously back paddled and left him be, as having a snake in the yak with me is some excitement I can do without.

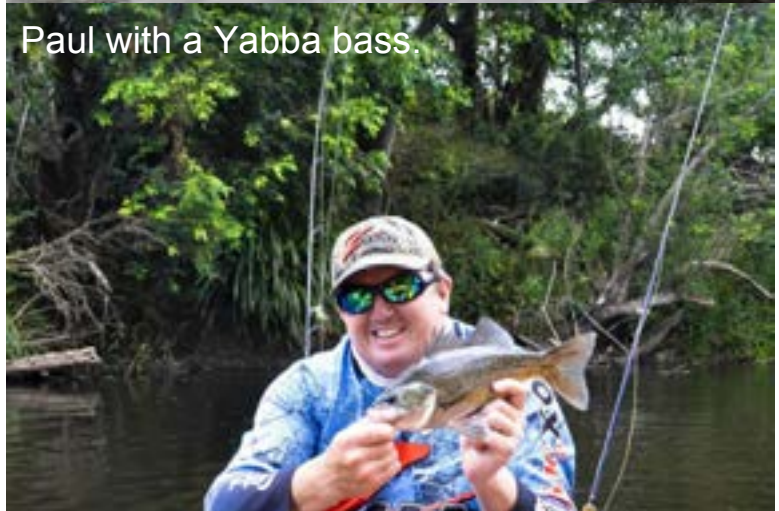
Eventually I lobbed my red/black spinnerbait into a little back corner eddy and it was hit hard on the drop, with a little line given by a protesting drag on the little Curado. The feisty bass tired and I slid him into the net. At 42.5cm, not a monster, but a nice fish all the same. I snapped a quick pic with the catch card and he was released to fight another day. One final set of rapids and a deep pool, where Pete lost a good fish, and our day down the Yabba was done.

In all honesty I didn't fish the bottom hole with much gusto, as I was done. It was a long hard day, with us pulling out around 3pm. We loaded all of the yaks up and headed back to camp for a steak burger and a hot relaxing shower. Our day culminated in some raffles, entering our pics, a great roast meal put on by the organisers and then a couple light refreshments around the fire, recounting the day's events. It's what yakking is all about to me; good mates, good times and a fire to finish the day.

We didn't fish the next day, but we ended up taking second and third in the bass section, which made a good end to the weekend. Too soon it was time to pack up and head home, eagerly awaiting my next chance to paddle this beautiful little creek.



The girls on the water.



Paul with a Yabba bass.



The girls negotiate a few snags.



A bass on the mat.

## The Washup...

It became clear fairly quickly that surface fishing in the running water was going to be a challenge. Following some tips from Nath, I began really concentrating on fishing the current lines and back eddies, created by rocky points and fallen trees, as this is where the fish were concentrated. Positioning the yak downstream and casting the little TT Spinnerbait back up to the back eddy was the most productive way to fish this creek I found.

Also, I would like to sincerely thank my Camera Armor Seattle Dry bag, which I have had now for a few years in the boat. It's proved itself super-durable and has paid for itself over and over... but none more so than on this trip. Coming into a tight corner, in a narrow set of rapids, the nose of the yak jammed under a log. Nothing dangerous but I was stuck and the water started filling the yak from the back. Too soon I was sitting almost waist deep in water. Luckily everything was secured as here was the Camera Armor bag, floating happily on its leash... my DSLR nice and dry inside. If anyone is looking at a waterproof option for a camera I can totally recommend this bag; tough as nails and waterproof, with some cushioning to protect the camera as well.

Since writing this we have had the rain we desperately needed and I have spent hours on Google Earth, looking at new launching spots in preparation for my next assault on this picturesque little creek... a search now for the elusive Saratoga, but that's a whole other story.

Also, anyone wanting a good weekend away should check out this competition, it is well organised and run, and it's for a great cause as well. Tight lines...



# Bream Around the Leases



By Owen McPaul

Bream would have to be one of the most commonly caught fish Australia wide. Most anglers will have memories of their first capture off a jetty, bridge or sand bank, fishing with a grandfather, father or a couple of mates after school during daylight savings. A bag of prawns and small tackle tray filled with sinkers and half rusted hooks and sinkers. It's amazing how things have evolved since I was a kid, riding my bike down to the local pier and testing my luck when there wasn't much else to do; nine times out of ten coming home empty handed, smelling like the local co-op.

To a full blown lure fishing addict, who will jump at any chance to launch the boat in the river and go target a bream on plastics, it's amazing how things have changed in that time, from the elderly teaching the young the arts of bait fishing, to a generation where the young are teaching the old the art of lure fishing.

There's a tonne of different ways of fishing for bream on lures, but if you ask me personally, there's not many better ways than the white knuckle action of a locked reel drag around the oyster leases. On this battlefield every fish, whether big or small, is a challenge and each fish extracted from the razor sharp oyster shells and barnacle encrusted pylons that hold the oyster leases in position is rewarding. There is a great rush of adrenaline with every hook up and for that reason, leases are my favourite place to be when in any river system that contains them.

Bream heaven.



Owen with a cracker from structure.



Here I hope to share a little of my experience when targeting bream around the oyster leases, from lures to jighead sizes, tides and a technique I use successfully, that hopefully can be of some benefit to you when targeting leases for the first time, those who are looking for a different edge or those who may have been unsuccessful in the past.

Before you even tackle the racks I highly recommend a stiffer rod with a bit of poke about it. Select 8lb to 10lb braid and between 8lb and 14lb fluorocarbon leader as oyster leases are unforgiving. You really need to take every advantage possible to give yourself the upper hand because the instant a bream hits, you have merely a split second between standing a chance of winning the battle and sitting down for a few minutes retying leaders and replacing lures.

When fishing oyster leases I personally favour the incoming tide, about two hours in, right through to about two hours to the run out. I look for a fair bit of flow, as generally when the tide is moving there is also bait moving and oyster rack fish become very active during this period.

Another reason I choose to fish during the fuller parts of the tide is that, depending on the depth around the leases, when the water level starts to fall the fish can often move out with the tide and into the security of the deeper flats around the leases.



The ZMan 2.5" GrubZ doing the damage.

When targeting leases there is also a few things I try to use to my advantage. First on the list is a precision cast. You really want your lure to land within centimetres of the sides of the oyster trays - the closer the cast, the better the chance of a hook up. Secondly, if I'm able to use the tide to my advantage, I will attempt to use the tide to wash my lure under the trays. This will position the lure so that it gives me a better chance of being right in the face of a bream that is looking for an easy meal. Third on the list is shadows. If the sun is in a position that offers me a shaded side, I will cast at this side nine times out of ten as I find bream favour the security of the shade. By taking these three things into consideration, I am giving myself a little more chance of encountering a hook up.

When it comes to lure and jighead selection when fishing for bream I'm a pretty firm believer in fishing as light and small as possible, especially when targeting the leases. I'm generally known to only cast a 1/20 to 1/12oz TT Lures Tournament Series jighead matched with a ZMan 2.5" GrubZ. I try to use them in the most natural colours, like Bloodworm, Gudgeon and Watermelon Red, but depending on the water clarity I will mix that up at times, throwing something that stands out a little more like Copper Penny and Violet Sparkle.

A handful of bream from a maze of structure.



Some serious  
bream by-catch.



There are four main reasons I choose to fish light heads. Firstly, I favour the middle section of the water column, as I am trying to avoid the bottom where I might pick up by-catch of flathead. Secondly, when a bream decides it wants my lure I don't want it feeling an unnatural amount of weight that may deter a second solid enquiry if I am unlucky enough to not to sink the hook on the first go.

The third reason is that I have found the lighter weight gives the GrubZ a nice, gradual drop with the tail action working the whole time it descends. With the 'controlled slack' technique I use I'm able to suspend the plastic during movements, giving a bream more time to slam the plastic before my next movement. When I say controlled slack, it means fishing with a small belly of line that I can watch for the slightest twitch and then strike, rather than depending solely on feel.



Fish on!





The fourth reason for keeping things light is that I often see bream over the top of the racks feeding, often referred to as 'tailing' and at times they can have their whole back out of the water. With a light presentation I am able to cast past that fish, on top of the oyster trays, without fear of snagging up and work the plastic in a way that imitates a prawn fleeing, encouraging the tailing fish to taking the lure. The reason I cast past the fish is because I don't want to land right on top of them as they can be very spooky when feeding inside the top of trays. By casting past the fish I limit the chance of spooking the fish and allow the fish to sense the lure moving towards them, hopefully triggering the fish into chasing the lure down.

There are many exciting ways to target bream around the leases but this is by far my preferred approach and a technique that I use 90% of the time. Hopefully for those that try it you have the same amount of success.

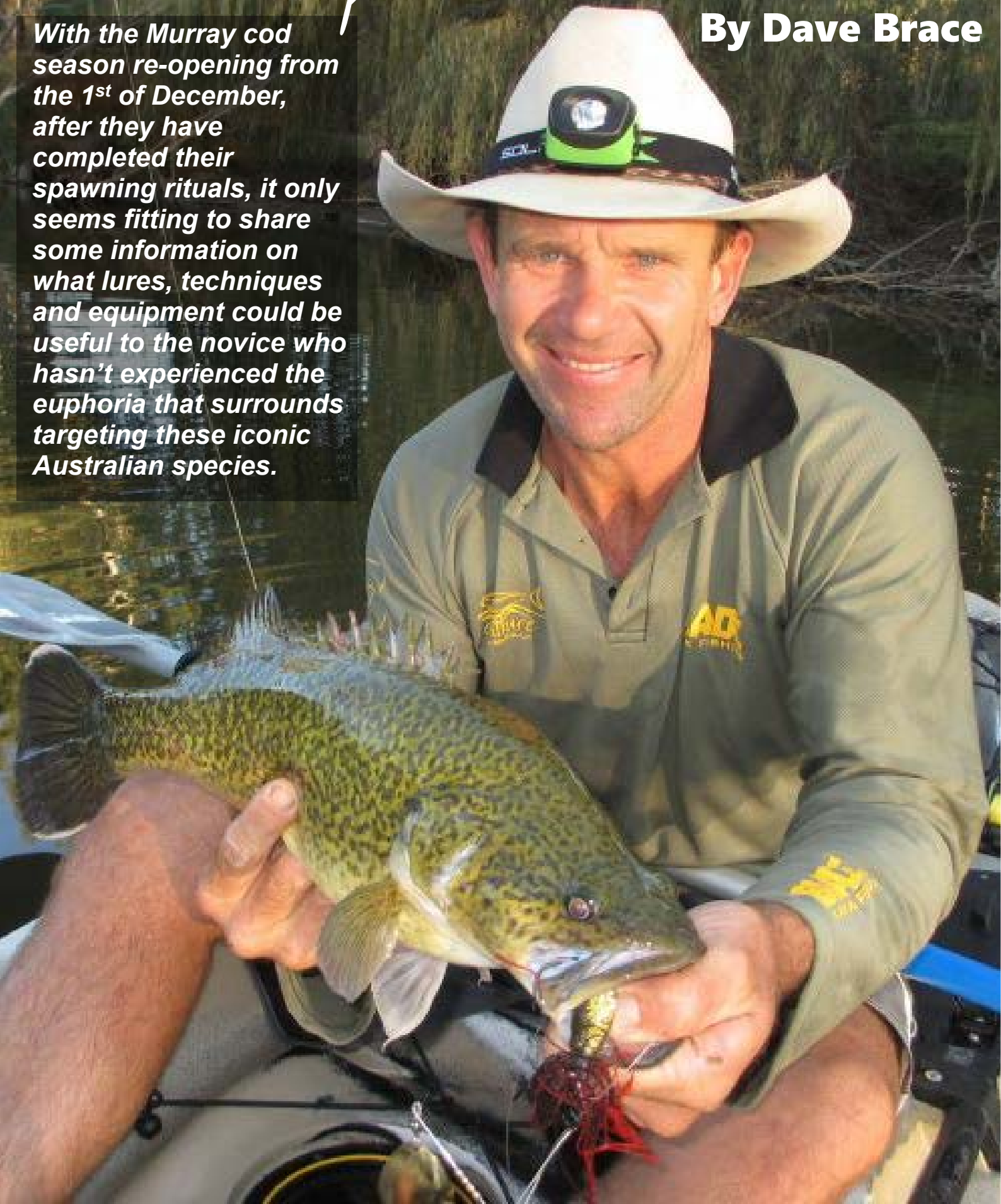
One of Owen's favourite techniques, breamin' the racks.



# Murray Cod Basics

**By Dave Brace**

*With the Murray cod season re-opening from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, after they have completed their spawning rituals, it only seems fitting to share some information on what lures, techniques and equipment could be useful to the novice who hasn't experienced the euphoria that surrounds targeting these iconic Australian species.*



A species endemic west of the Great Dividing Range within the Murray Darling Basin, these fish are Australia's largest freshwater species. Generally adult female fish will grow to between 80 and 100cm in length, however records have proven that they can grow to an astounding 1.8 metres in length and can weigh in excess of 110kg. Catching larger breeding fish these days is a rarity, due to various factors, so there is an emphasis on releasing these fish back into their natural environment after a few happy snaps to remember that momentous occasion. This is paramount for their survival.

### ***NEW REGULATIONS***

The New South Wales and Victorian Fisheries have recognised the importance of nurturing their existence and new regulations have been implemented and will be enforced from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2014 regarding the upper and lower size and take limits of Murray Cod. Be mindful also that these new regulations are also imposed on the river systems that are the QLD/NSW border and that you are also required to obtain a NSW Recreational Fishing Licence when fishing these same stretches of water.

The TT Tornado spinnerbait doing the job on this nice cod.



Dave in his element,  
chasing the mighty  
Murray cod.



### ***RODS, REELS, LINE & KNOTS***

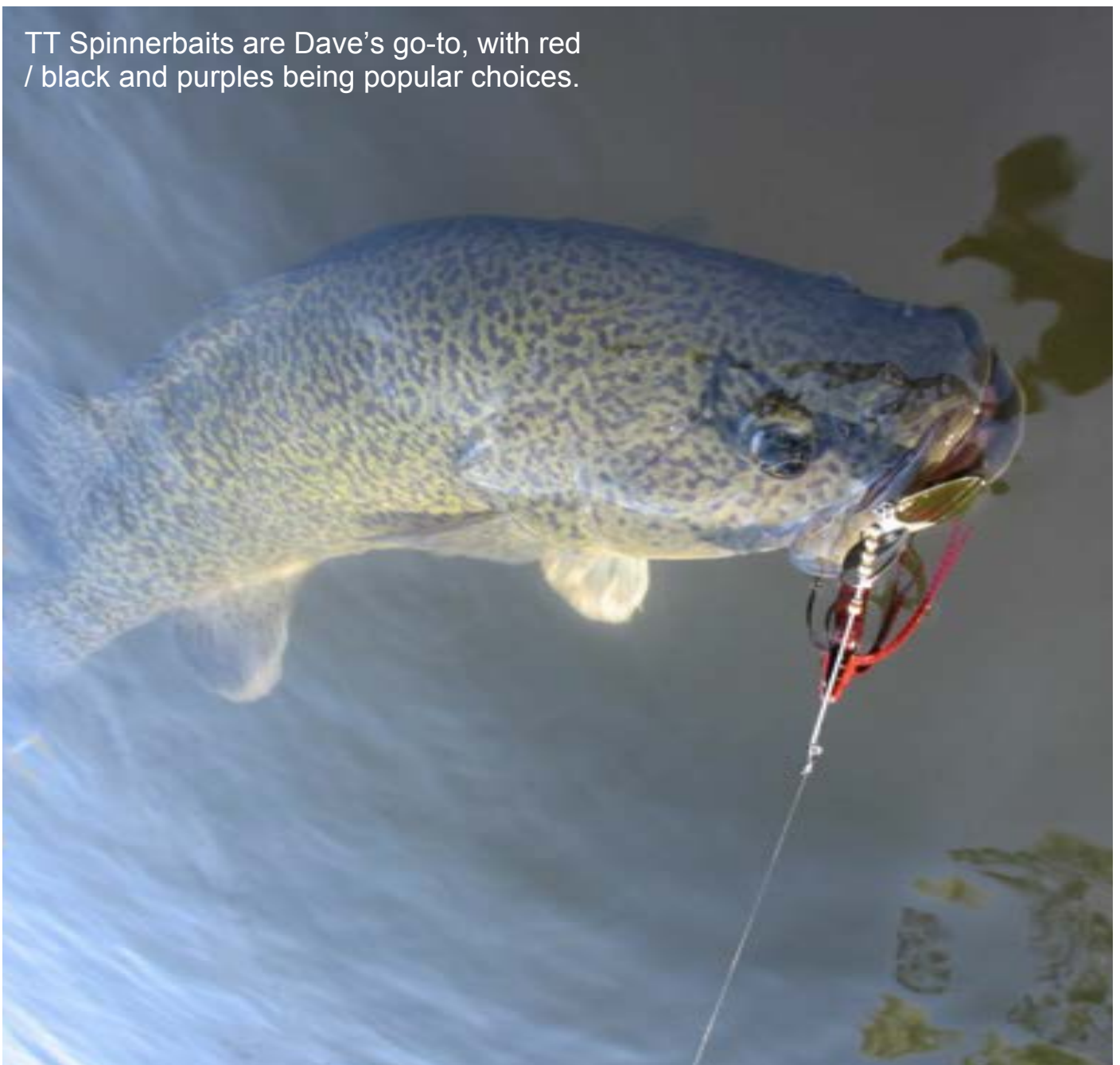
Although these fish can be caught on lighter gear, using rated equipment large enough for when that larger fish strikes is recommended. A 6-10kg spin or baitcasting rod, with a reel that has approximately 7kg of drag pressure, to pull these belligerent fish to a standstill, will be more than sufficient. When choosing a line to spool your reels for the new season, Platypus's new range of Platinum+ Braid in 20 or 30lb would be best suited for this application. This new line has been manufactured using a unique braiding process whereby the PE fibres have been woven closer together, which has not only decreased the diameter size, but has enhanced the strength by up to 25%. It is also recommended to use a leader with high abrasion resistant qualities. A 50-100cm length of 40lb fluorocarbon, Stealth Leader, is suggested to be attached to the mainline.

There are several knots that I have personally tried and tested over time, whilst targeting various species and there is one thing for certain that I have learnt and that is that all knots are not the same. Having self-assurance in the types of knots you use, where it is used and how it is tied is something that shouldn't be taken lightly and is somewhat overlooked as being important. After all, these are the small links that could possibly keep you connected to that fish of a lifetime... or not.

Be vigilant in checking your knots throughout the session. Don't be complacent, check your line for abrasion and be sure to retie these knots if you think they'll jeopardise you landing more fish. When joining the main braided line to the leader I advocate an Improved Albright knot to be used. The Improved Albright knot once tied correctly is a slim knot that has incredible strength and won't let you down.

Once you begin to use leader strengths of a thicker diameter, 40lb or higher, a Centauri knot is preferred to attach lures such as spinnerbaits to your leader line. The only other knot worthy of mentioning is a loop knot, which is used for attaching jigheads rigged with soft plastic lures for instance. This allows the lure to be swum more freely, ascetically replicating a real life baitfish.

TT Spinnerbaits are Dave's go-to, with red / black and purples being popular choices.



## **SPINNERBAIT LURES**

While many different lures can be used for targeting this particular species, pursuing them in the very heavily laden timber and rocky environments where they live can be problematic. Using TT Lures wide range of spinnerbaits minimises any concern of lures being snagged or fouled. They are an insanely productive and effective tool to utilise and are a fantastic fish attractant. In issue #8 of the Tackle Tactics Fishing Magazine I covered the attributes of the Vortex, Striker and Tornado range of spinnerbaits.

In the last few months TT Lures have released their FroggerZ spinnerbait range, which are an equally potent lure. These lures are constructed using a heavy duty wire frame, equipped with a heavy gauge chemically sharpened hook and fitted with quality silicone skirts. Exceptional quality hardware, such as ball bearing swivels and gold and nickel plated double Colorado blades are fitted as standard, allowing the lure to radiate vibrational characteristics for maximum attraction. As the name suggests, the lure replicates a frog and takes on the amphibian's appearance due to the lures moulded frog-shaped head and ZMan's FrogZ trailers, which amplify the spinnerbaits profiled shape. The FroggerZ range comes in a variety of colours and in three sizes at present, with the two junior models weighing 3/8oz and 1/2oz and the senior model being 3/4oz, which is perfect for luring those larger fish in deeper water.



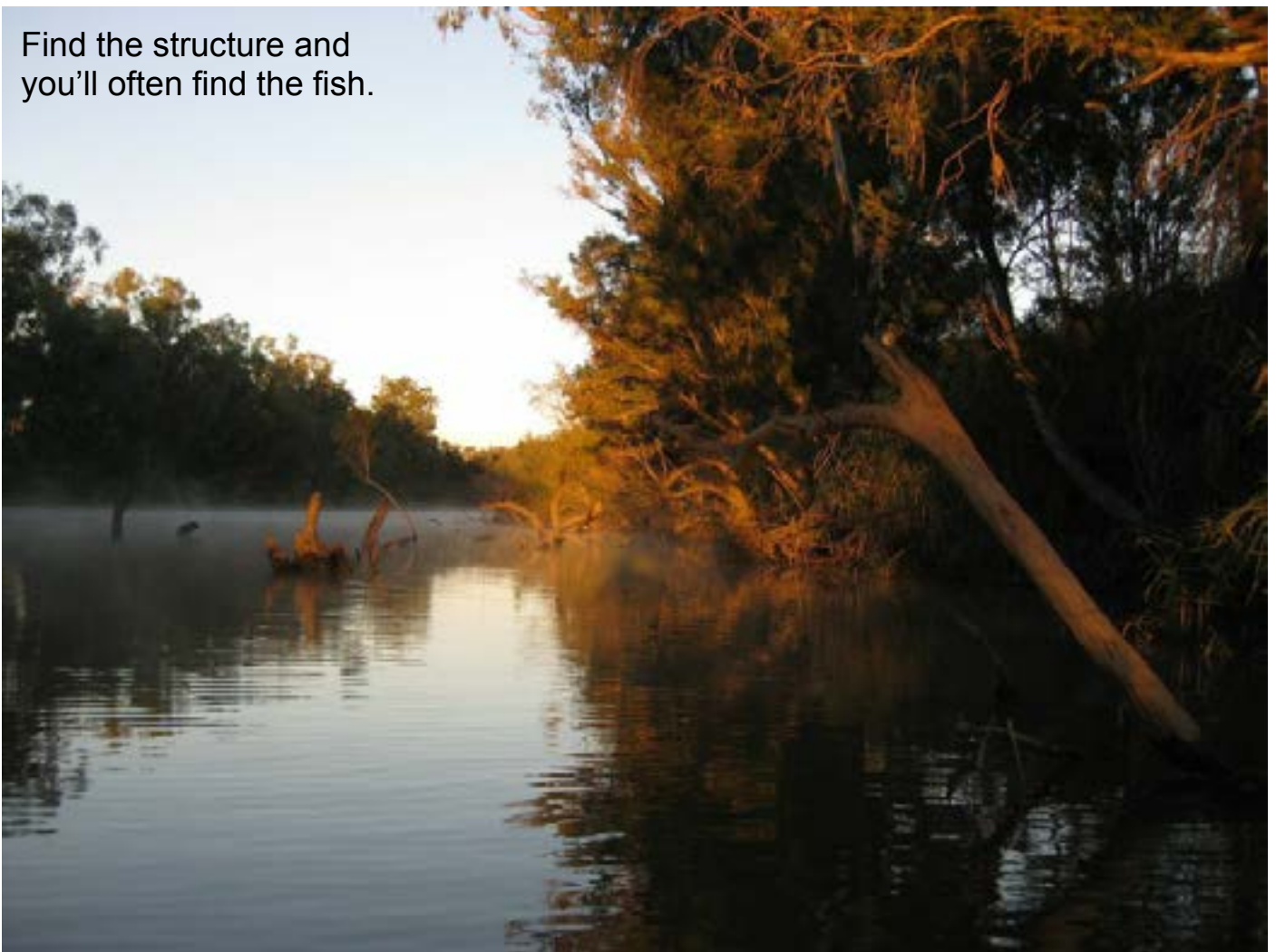
## **WHERE, HOW & WHEN**

Working on the theory that spinnerbaits will be utilised, there are many techniques that can be implemented to attract these fish, however the closer you can project your lure to the structure where the fish wait in an ambush mode, the more likely that you'll be successful. Vary your retrieval of the lure, from a slow rolling retrieval pattern, to burn and killing the lure with short pauses in between, allowing the lure to flutter amongst the labyrinth of timber.

If you require the lure to be swum higher in the water column raise your rod tip whilst winding. This will allow the lure to be swum closer to the surface. Don't be shy in permitting the lure to hit the submerged structure within the intertwined maze of branches. The lure will glide over the snags, dragging the settled sediment with it and leaving a trail for the fish to follow.



Find the structure and you'll often find the fish.



Dave is all smiles with this greenfish on a spinnerbait, rigged with a ZMan trailer.



Read the water, targeting eddies and backwaters; water flowing in the opposing direction of the main flow of the river, especially adjacent to structure along the timber lined banks. There is also a perception that Murray cod are only caught in deeper holes, however this is only a myth. Targeting these fish at night on a new moon, in less than half a metre of water, is unbelievably exciting and entertaining as they hunt away from their lairs in more open water and within less structured areas, feeding on small crustaceans such as shrimp and yabbies in the cover of darkness.

Now that you are equipped with some knowledge to set yourself up for the upcoming Murray cod season, I hope that you experience that adrenaline filled rush when it all transpires. There is nothing more exciting than witnessing a hard-hitting Murray cod engulfing your lure close to the surface... sounds and visions that will be etched into your memory and keep you returning for that insanely addictive rivalry between you and the fish. Best wishes!

Kind regards  
Dave Brace



# BREAMING THE FLATS

BY RYAN DIXON



Over the years bream fishing has become arguably the most popular type of fishing for lure enthusiasts. They are a highly sort after species, that will always test the patience and skill of even the best anglers. The yellow fin bream, black bream and pikey bream are the three most popular species and with each being found in different parts of the country, bream can be targeted Australia wide.

Bream are a species that I have been targeting for over 15 years on both bait and lures and I have seen a massive change in the way we target them. As a child I remember riding my bike down to my local river and sitting on the rocks with a ten foot rod my grandfather gave me and a big Alvey reel spooled with 30 pound monofilament line. Even fishing such a heavy line I would still manage to catch a bucket full of bream that I would take home for my father to fillet.

In the last few years the different lure brands, rods, reels and line types have been evolving, in turn revolutionizing the way we target our chosen species. Nowadays my ten foot rod that my grandfather gave me collects dust and the Alvey still holds the 30 pound line that I haven't used for many years. My rod of choice is now a 7 foot graphite rod with a small spinning reel, spooled with 4 pound braided line that never existed back when I started fishing as a youngster. I wouldn't dream of catching bream



on 30 pound line now, which goes to show that bream are a forever changing and smart species that make us choose what we use to catch them wisely, as they become more switched on to what we are using.

The water covers the flats and below its surface the bream are starting to feed.



There are a variety of ways to target bream, as they are found in many different situations, but the technique I am going to talk about is catching them by casting lures on the flats.

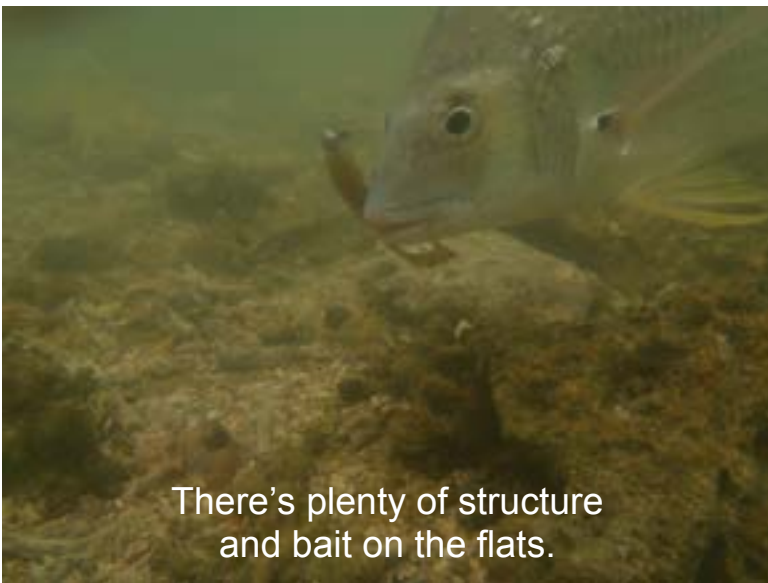
Flats can be found in many forms, including cockle beds, coral beds, weed beds, yabby or nipper banks or even just a big flat sandbank that is traditionally shallow. Flats are found in rivers, bays and even the saltwater lakes that are quite common in our southern states.

There are no rules when targeting bream on the flats and they can be fished either from a boat or land based. When fishing a large flat from a boat I find the best approach is to make a long wind or tide

assisted drift, making as little noise as possible and casting as far from the boat as possible. Having the wind at your back allows you to get maximum distance from your cast, even when using the lightest of lures. Casting accuracy is not essential when fishing the flats, which makes it the perfect learning ground for new lure anglers.

When looking for flats that I think will hold fish, I tend to look for one that has a drop off on at least one side of it. This allows the bream to wait in deep water until there is enough water on the flat for them to move up and onto the flat to feed. Believe me, in the right conditions, they will only require enough water to barely cover their backs. Although all types of flats will hold bream at different times of the tide, my favourite type is a weed flat - especially a weed flat that has small patches of sand in between the weed. Weed flats provide perfect cover for bream as they can sit in the weed and attack their prey, or cruise over the top of the weed searching for shrimp, crabs, small baitfish or other tasty morsels that they feed on.

There's plenty of structure and bait on the flats.

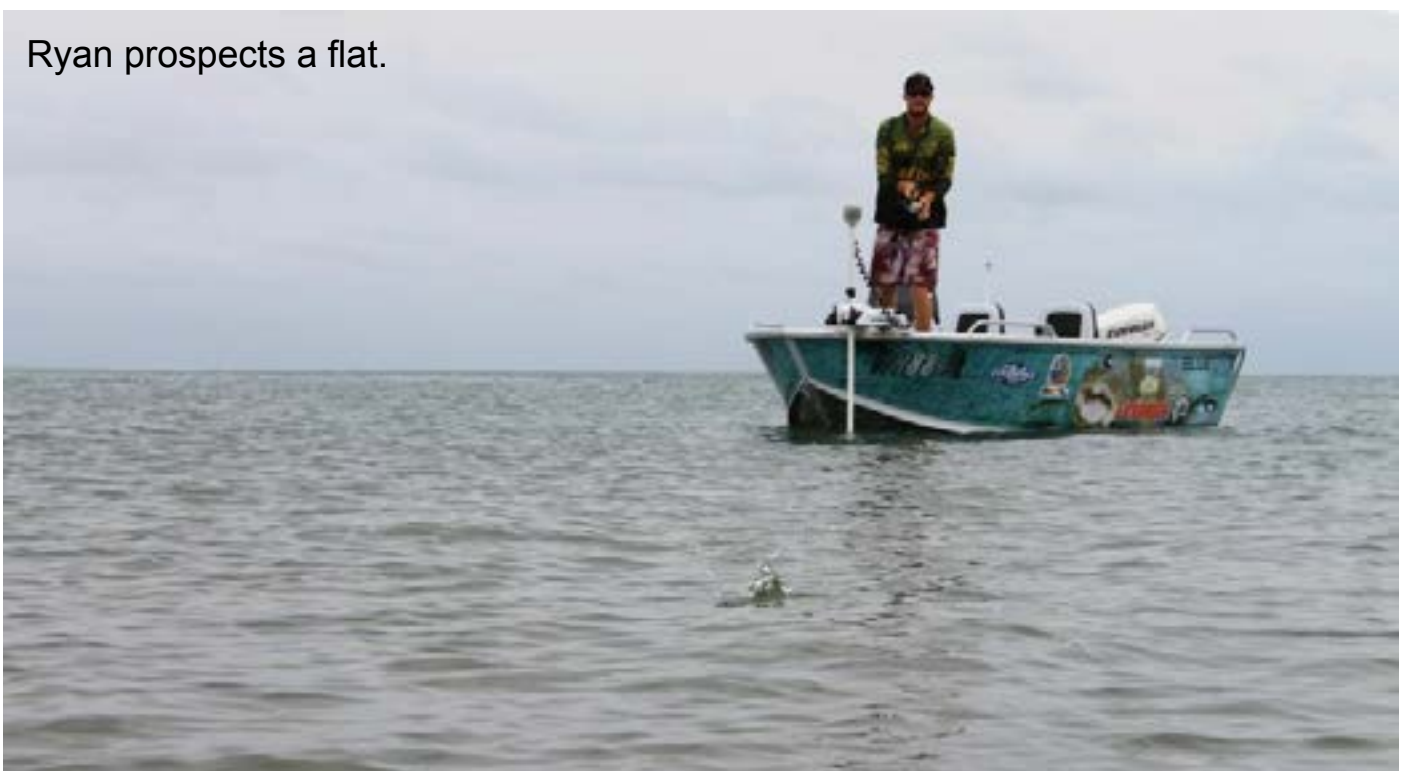


Knowing what lure to use is sometimes the hardest part of fishing the flats and making the right choice will often determine a good days fishing from a bad one. Generally I try to find what the bream are feeding on and use a lure that is similar in shape, size and colour to the bait in the area. This is often referred to as matching the hatch. This will change at different times of the year as the various bait comes in and out of season.

Having a good variety of lures in your tackle box is imperative with most types of lure fishing and bream fishing is no exception. Some days bream will eat one type of lure and then a totally different type the next day. When fishing with a friend in the boat I always use a totally different lure to them until one of us starts catching fish. This will help you eliminate what the bream don't want to eat and work out what they do want quicker.

There are a few different lures that I always have rigged and ready when fishing the flats and these lures rarely get taken off my rod for the next trip because I have so much confidence in their ability to catch fish. The 3" ZMan Scented ShrimpZ is a must have in my tackle box when fishing the flats. They are by far the most versatile lure I have ever used and when the prawns are running this lure is perfect and bream love them. ShrimpZ can be cut down into a chunky crab style pattern that is perfect for coral and cockle flats, fished weedless on the surface or rigged traditionally on a TT Lures jighead. The Houdini ShrimpZ colour is very similar to a banana prawn's colour, with Natural and Rootbeer Gold also being equal favourites of mine. The best retrieve I find for the ShrimpZ is a slow wind, with a couple of second pause allowing it to come into contact with the bottom again.

Ryan prospects a flat.



Ryan with a flats bream.



The 2.5" ZMan GrubZ is another soft plastic that I always have rigged when fishing the flats and with the range of colours that ZMan have on the market there is always a colour to suit the situation on any given day. In crystal clear water I prefer the Hardy Head colour, with Watermelon Red, Gudgeon, Bloodworm and Motor Oil being my picks when fishing weed flats. I find the best way to fish the GrubZ is to rig them as light as possible. Heavy enough to make a long cast and as slow as possible in terms of sink rate. My personal favourite is a 1/16oz or 1/12oz #1 light wire TT HeadlockZ Finesse jighead.

ZMan plastics are a very buoyant bait and will sit upright when at rest on the bottom. Often on the flats, bream will pick the GrubZ up off the bottom and when smeared with some Pro-Cure Super Gel scent they are sure to eat it. Not much action is needed when fishing GrubZ as they have a long curl tail and the slightest movement will get them working.

ZMan's 3.75" StreakZ is a classic baitfish style soft plastic that imitates a small baitfish perfectly. When a flat is littered with gar, small whiting, hardy heads or whitebait, this is my go to lure. Unlike to the 2.5" GrubZ the StreakZ requires action to be imparted through the rod tip. By using a slow shake and wind technique, the plastic will hold its line through the water and its tail will zip from side to side creating a perfect offering for hungry bream.



Another technique that I like to use is a very popular technique associated with soft plastics fishing. Simply make a long cast, allow the lure to sink to the bottom and give it a couple of quick hops, making sure that the lure comes back into contact with the bottom on the pause. TT's #1/0 Tournament Series and HeadlockZ Series jigheads are perfectly matched to this plastic and when rigged at the correct weight they are a must in a bream angler's arsenal.

Another very important part of fishing the flats is choosing the right line for a particular style of flat. Too light and they can bust you off, too heavy and you won't get them to bite. Weed, yabby or nipper flats rarely have anything that bream will be able to bust you off on, so I tend to stick to the lighter leaders on these flats. However cockle and coral flats often have razor sharp structure on them and if your line comes into contact with them whilst under pressure, more often than not it will break. This will make it very hard to know what size leader to use, however water clarity will often influence your decision. When fishing dirty water conditions you have the luxury of upgrading to 6 or 8lb leader, giving you a bit of extra security once you have hooked a bream. In times of extremely clear conditions, the lighter the leader the better, with fluorocarbon a must.

Ben with a quality bream from a flooded flat.





Scent can turn tentative taps into solid hook sets.

Whilst I have a large range of rods and reels that I use for bream fishing, nothing too special is required for chasing bream on the flats. A light 7'-7'6" graphite rod in the 1-4kg range is ample, matched with a 1000-2500 size spinning reel. Three pound braid line is my line of choice, with a rod length of leader attached to it.

I find the most important things to remember when flats fishing are to be extremely quiet, make long casts, fish as light as possible and have a good range of lures in the tackle box. By having at least the three different lures I have mentioned above, rigged on quality TT jigheads and with some Pro-Cure Super Gel on hand, you are sure to get stuck into some bream wherever you are fishing around our amazing country.

# THE SOOTY GRUNTER HUNTER



**BY JUSTIN WILLMER**



Over the years I have been lucky enough to catch a stack of different species but one that I had never had the opportunity to target was the sooty grunter. I had read plenty of stories about their aggression and power, the magic environments where they can be located and when the opportunity to chase a few arose, I was champing at the bit.

Sooty grunter are a solidly built freshwater fish that are distributed from around Bundaberg, a few hour's drive north of Brisbane, through to the tip of Queensland and the Northern Territory, into the top section of WA. Their coloration varies from a pale brownish grey through to a deep black colour, depending on the environment in which they reside.

Plans were locked and loaded, bass gear packed and we hit the road in search of sooties, as they are affectionately known. My wife Sheri and I were fishing from kayaks, while our friends Robbie and Sue had their Kingfisher canoe loaded for our river adventure. The plan was to visit a few different rivers on our travels, working some areas Robbie and Sue had fished previously and prospecting some new country.

Robbie & Sue in search of sooties.



I tied on a 1/4oz ZMan Chatterbait in Green Pumpkin / Black colour, while Sheri opted for a TT 1/4oz 1/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead, #2 TT Jig Spinner in Gold and a ZMan 2.5" GrubZ in Pumpkin. Both of these lure options are favourites of ours for bass, so we were confident in terms of action, retrieve and fish appeal.

A couple of casts and I was hooked up... but not to a sooty. The fish ran fast, jumped and I couldn't be disappointed with a nice 65cm toga, even if it wasn't our target species. A few photos, a release and it was back in search of sooties.



Justin with a ChatterBait toga.



Even at this size they take some stopping.



Casting close to an edge with plenty of overhanging vegetation and submerged timber, my ChatterBait was receiving plenty of attention, with continual taps on the retrieve. Next cast I mixed it up, adding a few pauses and was soon hooked up to a feisty little sooty. A few more followed before the ChatterBait was lost to a solid fish in heavy structure.

I opted for the same rig as Sheri and found that most fish came from overhanging vegetation, laydown timber and the 'V' created where submerged timbers intersected one another. Land a cast in the 'V', commence a slow retrieve and hang on. The beauty of fishing the soft plastic with a Jig Spinner is that it creates subtle flash and vibration that draws the fish to the lure, while also reducing the chance of the plastic snagging.

Robbie and Sue had also landed sooties and toga, with the ZMan 3" MinnowZ and TT Lures Vortex spinnerbaits doing the job for them. I was stoked with my 8 or so sooties I had landed for the session, although I hadn't really stopped to just look at one and appreciate their colouration and strength, so I was looking forward to another day on the water. Sheri had plenty of action and dropped a few, but her first sooty had eluded her, so tomorrow would hopefully be her time.

Not a bad way to open her account.



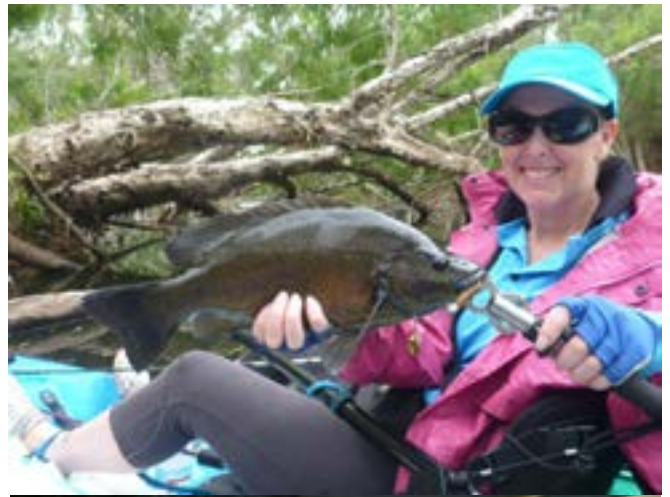
We enjoyed a good feed, a couple of coldies and plenty of yarns in our comfortable camp that night. I am always pretty fanatical about the camping checklist and making sure we have everything for our trip, so let's just say that when we curled up to sleep that night without our airbed I wasn't very popular... won't live that one down for a while.

Sheri wrestles a sooty out of structure.



The Jig Spinner rigged 2.5" GrubZ did the job again on day two, with Pumpkinseed and Black being our go-to colours. Sheri made a few pinpoint casts and was rewarded with some quality sooties, including a couple of 40cm models that had her dragged into the trees within a couple of seconds of hooking up. There is no doubt that these balls of muscle can pull and I found the audibles flowing as the taps turned into hook sets and solid runs into the structure soon followed.

Paddling toward a massive snag pile and casting across the submerged crisscross of fallen trees, deposited by earlier floods, I managed 7 sooties in 7 casts from what was one of the most impressive pieces of structure I had ever encountered. Allowing the lure to bump the timber as it was retrieved seemed to fire the fish up more, attracting multiple sooties to the lure and encouraging aggressive strikes. To wrap up the session I landed another toga around the 65cm mark, this time on the Jig Spinner rigged GrubZ. Robbie and Sue also got stuck into the fish and we were all left smiling at the end of a great couple of days.



Tackle wise, rods of around 7' 2-4kg, fitted with 2500 size reels and spooled with 8lb braid and 10lb leader were adequate for the bulk of the fish. A small net and lip grips made landing and handling the fish easy. Lure of choice was definitely the ZMan 2.5" GrubZ, rigged on a TT 1/4oz 1/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead, with a #2 Gold Jig Spinner attached, and I even managed to vertically jig a few fish on this combo from deep within structure piles.



Sheri and I were both pumped to land our first sooty grunter. They truly are a ball of muscle and they feed aggressively, fight hard and handle well. With a new year just around the corner it's time to pencil in a few trips to target some more new species. Bring it on!



# MERRY CHRISTMAS

From the team at Tackle Tactics



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