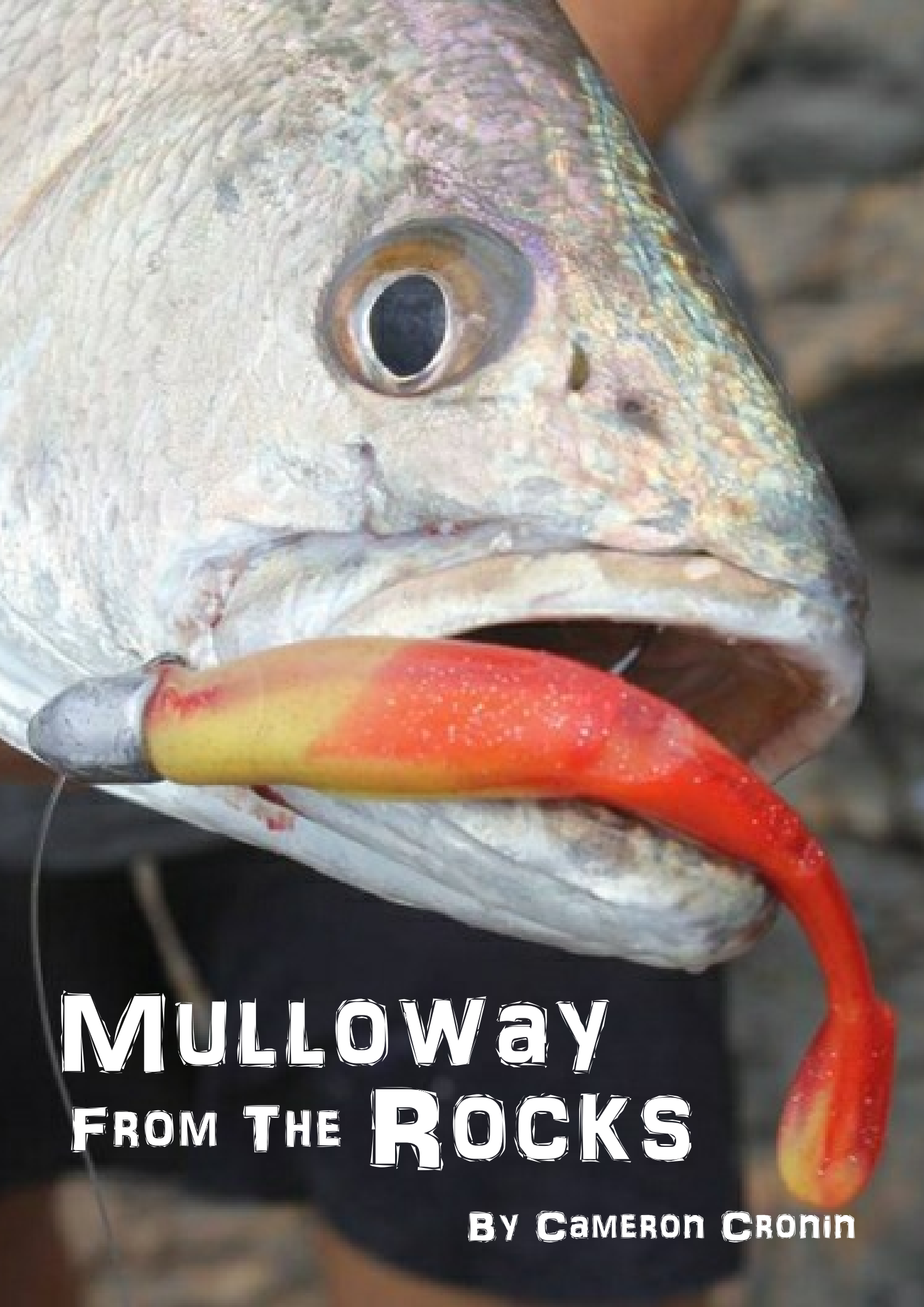




Angler: Angus Gorrie  
 Species: PNG Black Bass  
 Lure: ZMan 4" DieZel MinnowZ (New Penny)  
 Jighead: TT Lures 3/8oz 4/0 HeadlockZ HD



<b>in this issue...</b>		
● PNG on Plastics BLACK BASS	● SnakelockZ Bass	● Rigging Guide SnakelockZ
● Mulloway from the Rocks	● Seeing Red Redfin Tips	● Rigging Guide 4" Pop ShadZ
		● Trevs on Plastics



# MULLOWAY FROM THE ROCKS

BY CAMERON CRONIN



In recent years there is no doubt that mulloway have received a well-deserved surge in popularity as a light tackle sports fishing target for lure anglers. Just one look at my local estuary system of Sydney Harbour confirms this, with most promising jewfish (mulloway) haunts carpeted with hopeful anglers looking to cross paths with what is no doubt one of the most coveted species in Australian waters. However, whilst the light tackle estuary scene booms, there is one form of mulloway fishing, unbeknownst to many, that seems to fly under the radar, despite its incredible consistency and easy accessibility for lure anglers wherever they are found. That form is targeting mulloway from the ocean rocks.

In recent years, the jewfish (mulloway) rock hopping game has become a personal obsession of mine, to the point where it is now no doubt my favourite form of fishing. At the risk of sounding clichéd, there is literally nothing else like it. Countless hours of pouring over Google Earth, navigating overgrown trails and scaling crumbling headlands suddenly comes to fruition with that tell-tale crunch and screaming opening run as you fight to control a rampaging mulloway, in an area no larger than your backyard swimming pool, ticks all the right boxes for me and is most certainly a style of fishing that I think many would be interested in getting into. In this article I'll be outlining how I go about finding and fishing for mulloway on the ocean rocks of coastal NSW, as well as sharing a few small tips that will hopefully help fast track your mulloway success.

Cameron with his prize, a mulloway from the stones.



A mullo way  
from the foam.



Probably the toughest hurdle for any burgeoning coastal jewfish angler to overcome is the initial difficulty of finding a suitable location to hunt their quarry. In most cases you'd have a better chance of winning the lottery than having a successful mullo way angler divulge their favourite locations, so you're generally far better off finding your own sweet spots. Fortunately, with the advent of satellite imaging programs such as Google Earth, this is easily achieved from the comfort of your own home. By scanning the coastline at an altitude of around 1km, it becomes easy to pick out potential hotspots that can then be magnified for closer inspection and "pinned" for future investigation. Personally, this program has been instrumental in my mullo way success, whilst visiting new stretches of coastline and anyone without Google Earth should definitely get on it (it's a free download). However, no matter how proficient you are at Google-Earthing, there isn't really much you can do without a solid understanding of the kind of rocky structure that these fish call home.

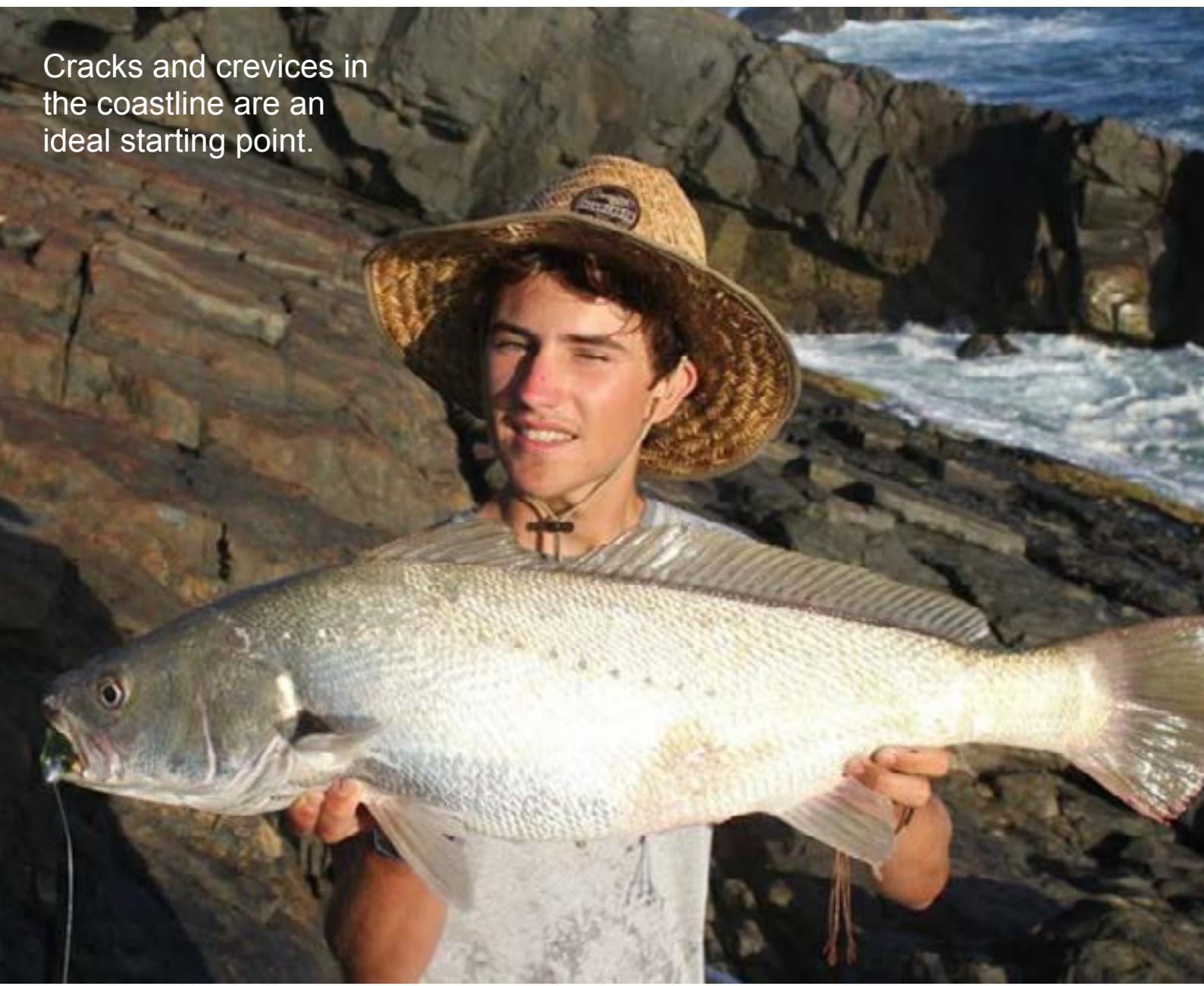
Whist admittedly difficult to describe in the text format that is this article, I find there are three different types of rocky structure that seem to hold mullo way wherever I go. The first of these, and perhaps the easiest to find on Google Earth occurs anywhere a bommie forms a wave break, creating a deep (although depth is not always necessary) foamy gutter between itself and the coastline. In my experience gutters of this type, with two distinct points of entrance or exit, fish far better than those without as schools of mullo way likely feel safer entering the confines of a gutter with an alternative escape route in the case of predation.



The next type of successful structure is formed by any kind of crack or crevice in the coastline, creating a whitewashed hole that mulloway use to shelter from the brunt of the swell. In order for this type of structure to be successful, a mix of rocky and sandy bottom structure and constant wash cover is optimal.

Finally rock platforms at the end of beaches can also be extremely successful, allowing for casts to be made into the back of deep surf gutters, which are excellent producers of mulloway in their own right. Once again, I can't stress the importance of whitewash cover enough, so make sure your location of choice has plenty in that department. In fact, with your own safety in mind, I would even go as far as fishing locations that receive the largest and most direct swell when the conditions are calm to ensure constant whitewash coverage. This is why having a wide variety of locations to try as a result of your Google Earth exploits is incredibly beneficial. It allows you to almost always have a location that will fish well, regardless of the prevailing conditions.

Cracks and crevices in the coastline are an ideal starting point.



So now you have the location factor down pat, it's time to gear up. Whilst light tackle mulloway fishing is no doubt possible in some cases from the ocean rocks, you're usually far better off leaving the bream gear at home. For lure fishing, braided line between 30 and 50lb connected with an FG knot to a long fluorocarbon leader of at least 40lb is ideal, with 50lb being a good starting point.

Daiwa spinning reels from 3500-4500 size and Shimano reels from 5000-8000 are perfectly matched with a powerful graphite rod of at least nine foot, rated somewhere around 5-10 kg, although personally I use heavier rods that are rated 10-20kgs. Keep in mind that while all this may seem excessive, in many locations your combination must be capable of lifting undersize (sub 70cm in my part of the world) jewfish without the aid of a gaff, as well as be able to stop a mulloway potentially in excess of 30kgs with minimal line taken. This is why I generally lean towards the heavier side of things.

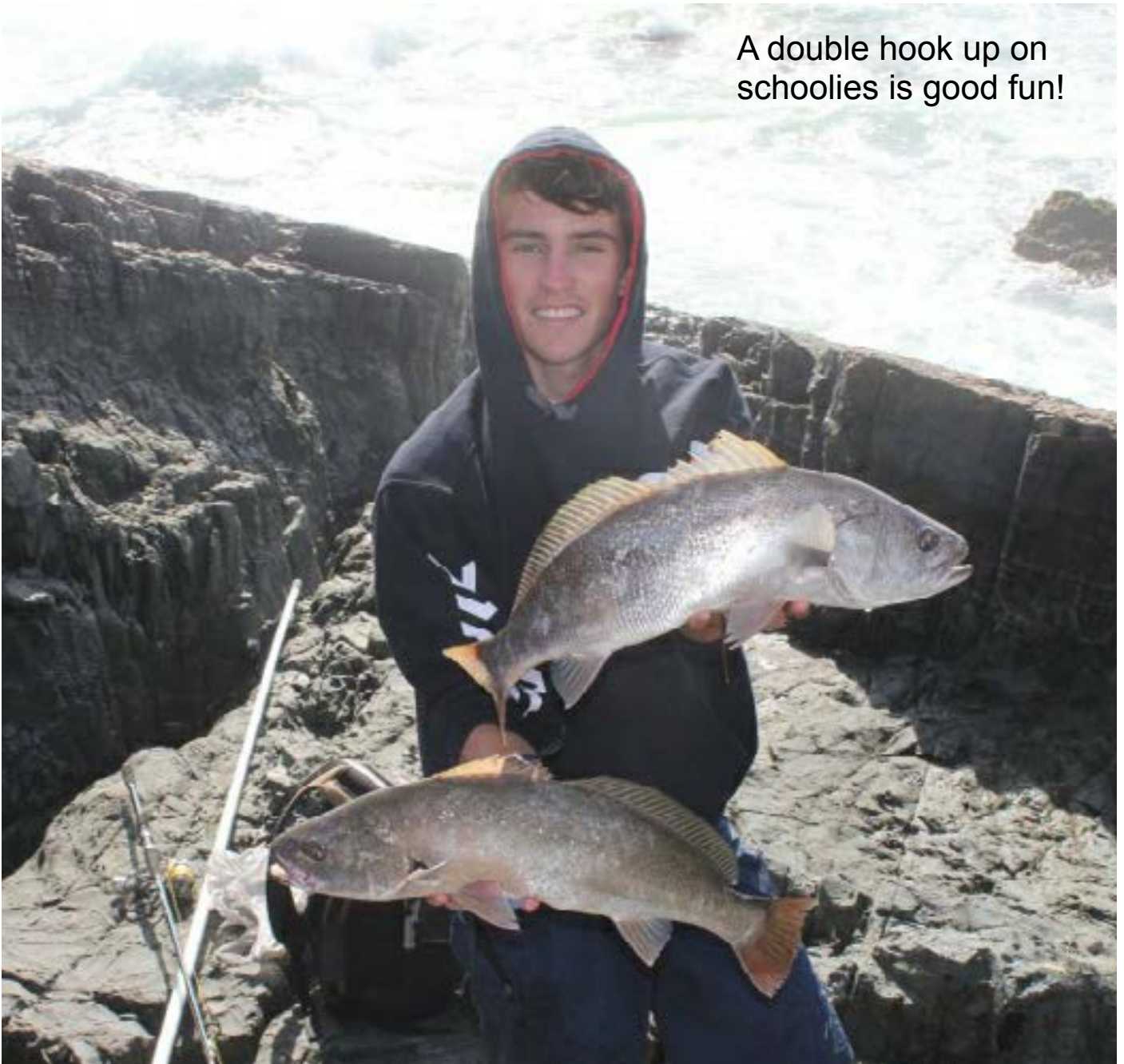
Lure wise the possibilities are almost endless, although nine times out of ten I find myself fishing soft plastics from four to seven inches in length. Out of these, by far the most successful lures for me have been the ZMan 5" Scented PaddlerZ and ZMan 6" SwimmerZ, with the 4" SwimmerZ and 5" and 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ also accounting for plenty of fish in their own right.

Soft plastics are an extremely effective option off the rocks.





A double hook up on schoolies is good fun!



I find the ZMan brand of plastics especially successful from the ocean rocks, given their 10X Tough construction, allowing for increased resistance to the plastic destroying swarms of tailor that frequent most east coast rock ledges. This ultimately means less wasted time and money changing plastics.

When it comes to jigheads I find it hard to go past the super heavy duty TT HeadlockZ HD variety. These can be fished under heavy drag pressures, without fear of opening, as well as providing an effective means to lock your soft plastic of choice to your jighead, with no chance of slippage during aggressive retrieves or missed strikes. It is important to carry a wide range of jigheads to suit the conditions, with hook sizes from 5/0 to 8/0 and weights from 1/4oz to 1oz covering most bases.

Ross with a nice jewie from a foamy section.



Despite the negative stigma sometimes associated with keeping larger mullet, it is usually impossible to land any sizable fish from the ocean rocks without the aid of a gaff. If you intend to land your prize a 2-3 piece pole gaff of at least 14 feet is an invaluable tool, although be sure to take only what you can immediately eat to ensure the long term survival of this incredible species.

Now that you're all geared up, there's nothing left to do but go out and catch a few jewfish. When first arriving at a new spot, regardless how productive/unproductive it looks, I always scour the area for scales. Recently landed mullet almost always loose a few scales flapping against the rocks, and with a little practice it is possible to estimate the approximate size and date of capture from the clues left behind. If there are mullet scales in the location you intend to fish, you can be almost certain that at some time or another your spot has produced a fish or two, so even if you aren't successful on your first session be sure to visit the spot under different conditions until the successful pattern is discovered. It is worth noting though that scales can be easily dispersed by wind, waves or even other cautious anglers, so never be discouraged if their presence is lacking from your spot of choice.



Leave the light gear at home, even fish of this size can test your gear from the rocks.



When rigging up I use the lightest possible jighead that can comfortably be hopped close to the bottom without being washed around by the swell too much, although in big swell or around a rocky bottom it can pay to use a heavy weight and maintain a slow roll just off the bottom, with the occasional pause to keep the lure in the zone.

When choosing a time to fish there is no doubt that dawn and dusk are the best times to target mulloway off the rocks, with tide changes a relatively distant second. However, combine any low light period and a tide change and you have a recipe for success. Finally, if there was ever a saying that applied to rock dwelling jewfish, it would be that they are like clockwork. Through time and effort, it is possible to pinpoint exactly what conditions cause certain locations to fire and then, after accumulating a quiver of different and productive spots, it is simply unbelievable how consistent results can be on this seemingly illusive species.

Good luck and happy hunting,

Cam



Reward for effort - 124 centimetres of rock platform mulloway.

# PLASTICS in PNG

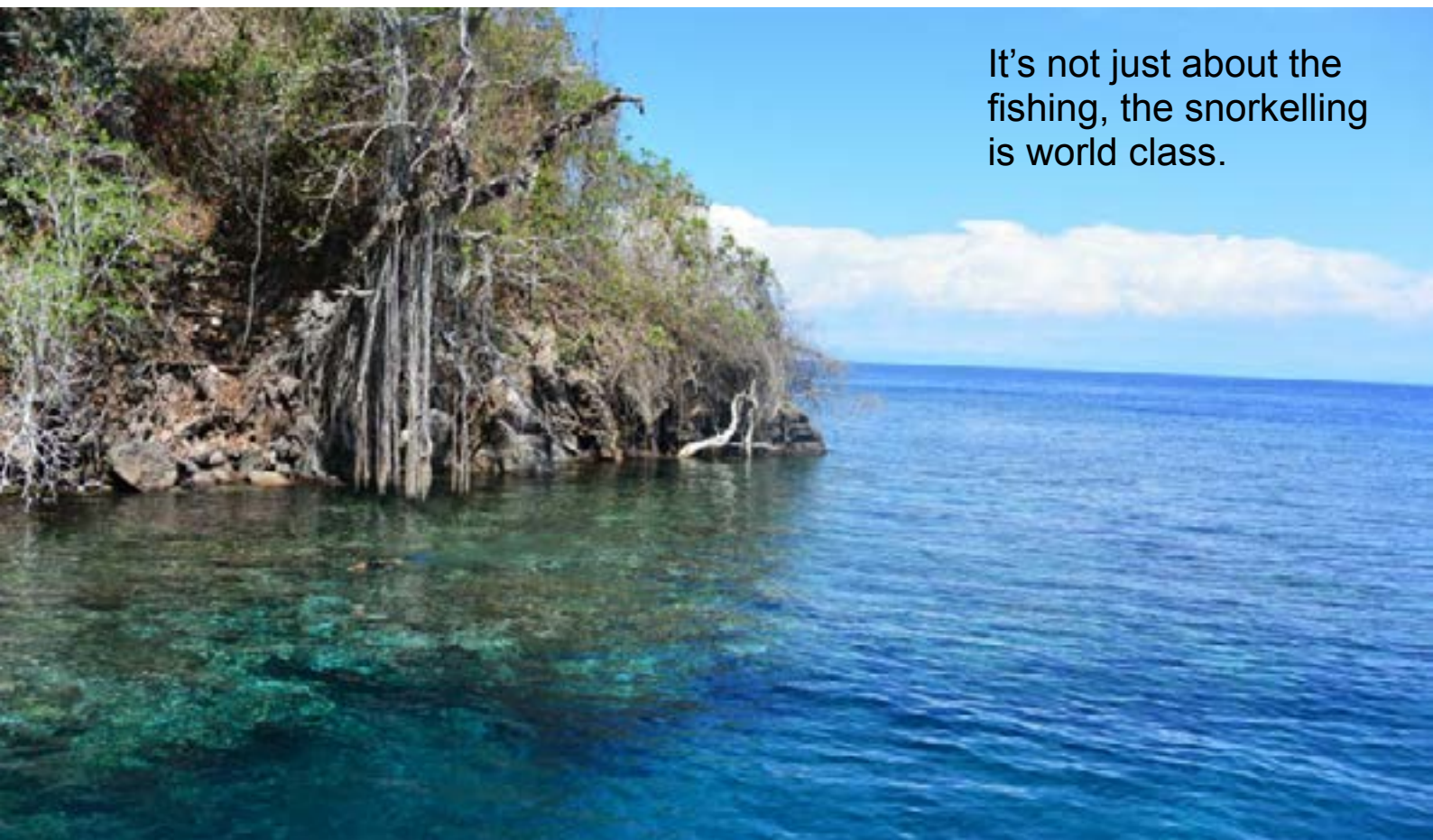
BY ANGUS GORRIE





My 2014 adventure to the wild rivers of Papua New Guinea left me wondering one very interesting thing. Why, no matter how much literature you read or how many anglers you talk to, do plastics not really get a mention in regards to black bass? Black bass (*Lutjanus goldiei*), are after all closely related to our more staple estuary brutes the mangrove jack (*Lutjanus argentimaculatus*) and we all know that jacks have a serious taste for plastics. It was with this thought in mind when packing for my 2015 expedition to Baia Lodge in the remote wilderness of West New Britain that I carefully selected and packed a variety of soft plastics and jigheads to put them to the test.

Our destination was the internationally acclaimed Baia Fishing Lodge, owned by none other than Riccard Reimann, a true pioneer of Papuan bass fishing. It was many conversations with Riccard in fact and our discussions about the potential of soft plastics in rivers around Baia, that got me to overthinking the possibilities in the first place. Most anglers, who visit the rivers of West New Britain to fish, are often armed to the teeth with large lures, heavy lines and big reels. No doubt this is often required as the black bass does not get its reputation as one of the hardest fighting fish for no reason. However, much of the black bass and other local species diet consists of smaller prey. On a daily basis this consists of poddy mullet, archer fish and small jungle perch and every month during specific moon phases, prolific white bait. These more common smaller mouthfuls really convinced me that some three and four inch plastics could be the go.



It's not just about the fishing, the snorkelling is world class.



The saying kids should not play with knives does not exist in the jungle.



Baia Lodge itself is located in one of the most isolated coastal parts of West New Britain, causing it to be a truly pristine and beautiful location. One of the standout features for me, in comparison to other black bass trips I have researched, are the crystal clear waters in most of the surrounding rivers. It is accessed via Kimbe, the capital of West New Britain, where a stopover at the Liamo Reef Resort breaks up the trip nicely. The reef fronting the lodge and the natural harbour make it probably the most ideal location possible for such an establishment. One of the really noticeable and endearing features of Baia Fishing Lodge is its connectivity with Baia Village located adjacent to the lodge itself. Most of the guides and staff at the lodge come straight from the village and many local projects including the school and the church were funded by the lodge itself. These factors are no doubt responsible for the incredibly warm and welcoming feel you have as a guest arriving on the sandy path leading from the pier to the lodge itself. It certainly kicks the trip off in a very positive light!



The first day we arrived we were off to the Torio River, a relatively brackish river about a 45 minute cruise from the lodge itself. To be blunt this day proved my plastics hypothesis from the get go. The morning bite was not overly hot for the guys casting large hard bodies but carefully presented ZMan DieZel MinnowZ lobbed under the multitude of overhanging mangroves and pandanus fast began to produce. Mangrove jack seemed unable to resist these offerings, with New Penny and Houdini being the standout colours. Various other bycatch such as javelin fish, speckled cod and archer fish were also bagged using plastics in the river, while the hard bodies were doing it tough.

Jighead choice was dependant on the time of day as the flow did rip through at times. This lead to a logical rotation through 1/6, 1/4 and 3/8oz TT HeadLockZ HD jigheads to ensure that the plastic could swim appropriately through the current. Although slow rolling the plastics was a successful option, giving the plastic short hopping movements to get some more dramatic action out of the paddle tail also produced some good reaction strikes when the bite was a bit slower.

Jacks a plenty on the ZMan 4" DieZel MinnowZ.



Smallest bass for the trip. Note the similarity to jacks.



The guide would often keep a small spot tail and smoke it for lunch.







Deep jigging plastics was a sure recipe for big eyes and doggies.



Sashimi was a popular option.



Dozens of trevally between more serious prey.



The river mouths often held a plethora of predatory fish willing to eat a plastic.



Keeping a StreakZ rigged on the way to and from the rivers paid off.

While talking to the guides about why more people do not use soft plastics, one logical answer was presented that often the gear people bring is too heavy to throw plastics all day. This was a fair point as often black bass are only tamed with the application of 50lb main lines and 80lb leader. However, being a light tackle nut, I usually opted for one of two set ups. Either my Nordic Stage Cheater 6-14lb rod matched with a Shimano Sustain 4000 and 16lb line, or a Nordic Stage Cheater 10-22lb rod matched with a Shimano Stradic 5000 with 30lb line.

Like jacks, black bass seem to fight harder the more hurt you put on, but if played properly can be subdued on lighter tackle. The above two set ups have claimed their fair share of decent bass. I am not even going to suggest you will never get smoked by some of the beasts that inhabit these rivers on such gear, but with trust in knots and locked drags you have a much better chance than many people think. These respective combinations are also ideal for throwing medium to heavily weighted plastics around all day.

Hot tip: Leave the rods rigged for the run home as it is far from uncommon to see large schools of tuna and dolphinfish busting up in the blue water between river and lodge. Quite a few decent pelagic fish were landed casting into such a school with ZMan 5 inch StreakZ.



So the proof had been had, plastics worked in PNG. But what about on bass?

Although a lot of fish had been caught on plastics over the course of the morning, thus far an actual black bass had eluded me. This was all about to change with the tide.

As early afternoon of the first day approached we were flicking a large rock bar when

my 4" DieZel MinnowZ in New Penny got clobbered. After a short but vigorous fight a black bass was landed. Truth be told it was the smallest black bass I had ever seen but this was ok in my books and gave me the enthusiasm to continue. It was only a short time later while casting a likely looking snag that my plastic was once again smashed, this time properly smashed. After a much more brutal fight and some hairy moments one of my bigger blacks was landed, pinned precisely in the corner of the mouth with a TT 1/4oz HeadlockZ HD jighead. Satisfaction was an understatement as every angler knows that feeling of putting a theory to the test and coming up trumps.

First Spot on a ZMan 4" DieZel MinnowZ.



Overhangs holding plenty of fish this size were accessible skip casting ZMans.



So the moral of the story... Plastics are definitely a viable option when travelling to PNG in search of the mighty black bass. As always we learnt so much more this trip and I look forward to applying new tactics with plastics next trip. A lot of our trip was spent using surface lures and I am certainly keen to give some ZMan Pop FrogZ and Pop ShadZ a good go on our 2016 adventure!



A solid black bass on a ZMan 4" DieZel MinnowZ... theory proven accurate.

[www.baiafishingpng.com](http://www.baiafishingpng.com)





# RIGGING - ZMAN 4" Pop ShadZ



ZMan's revolutionary 10X Tough, ElaZtech soft plastic popper is now available in a 4" version, the perfect floating bite-size snack for bass, mangrove jack, barra, trevally, cod, saratoga, pelagic species and more. Pop it, walk it, pause it, BOOF! Fish on!

## Weedless Rigging

Weedless rigging on a TT Lures 3/0 ChinlockZ head allows you to cast this soft popper over, into and through structure in search of fish... areas where you would never have been able to cast a standard popper. It floats, responds well to various retrieves, feels soft and realistic and fish love it!



**Step 1** - Tie on your TT 3/0 ChinlockZ jighead. Thread it through the centre of the cup face and out behind the gill plates on the underside of the Pop ShadZ.

**Step 2** - Pull the hook through until you reach the silver 'chin lock' and then slowly pull the 'chin lock' through the plastic.



**Step 3** - As the 'chin lock' exits the underside of the plastic it will lock in place and the hook will turn to face point up.

**Step 4** - The hook will now lay against the side of the plastic. Bend the tail section of the plastic up a little to make it easier to push the hook point straight through from the end of the underside rigging channel out through the rigging channel on top of the plastic.



**Step 5** - Pull the hook point and barb down against the top of the plastic to minimise snagging and fouling. The hook will keel and right the plastic from the cast so it always swims true and you can cast it virtually anywhere. Fish on!

## Rigging for Open Water

The Pop ShadZ is also deadly in open water and if you're not worried about snagging or fouling it can simply be rigged with a treble or standard straight shank hook (J hook).

### Treble Rigging

**Step 1** - Use step 1 of weedless rigging, but pull the hook right through the plastic so that your leader enters the cup face and comes out under the gill plates.



**Step 2** - Cut off the ChinlockZ or 'J' hook and tie on a treble hook to suit.



**Step 3** - Secure one of the treble arms up into the rigging channel. The shank of the treble will lay in the rigging channel. Pull your leader back through the plastic.



**Step 4** - You now have two hook points exposed for open water fishing and enough weight for casting.



### Standard 'J' Hook Rigging

**Step 1** - Feed the 'J' hook in through the centre of the cup face and out through the rigging channel.



**Step 2** - Add a drop of Loctite Super Glue Gel Control a few millimetres back from the eye of the hook and slide the hook through until the eye is positioned snug in the centre of the cup face.



For more fact sheets, articles, rigging guides and videos, visit [www.tackletactics.com.au](http://www.tackletactics.com.au).



# SEEING RED



**By Luke Smith**



In recent times I have found myself opting to pass up the local estuary systems, in order to chase the European native species, redfin perch. My first experiences of chasing reddie, as they are more commonly referred to, were from my kayak about five years ago. My boss always talked about them and curiosity got the better of me. I had to see what all the fuss was about. I travelled ten minutes out of town to a local lake, launched the yak, flicked two hard bodies out behind me and I was officially fishing for reddie.

As I gently paddled my way along the weed edge it didn't take long to get my first buckie. When I caught the first glimpse of its red fins lighting up in the morning sun, I was hooked. I never tire of seeing a lit up red fin; the combination of the dark green stripes and bright red fins makes them an attractive fish.

Whilst I'm no expert on catching them, I have caught my fair share and over this article I am going to share my knowledge to help you get hooked up. I will concentrate on the lures and their corresponding techniques.



A handful of redfin on a TT Lures blade

## Vibes

Whenever exploring a lake for the first time or a favourite lake after a spell of absence, vibes are my go to lure. They allow me to cover the most water in the shortest period of time, thus allowing me to maximize my fishing time on the water. Being able to make long casts, even into headwinds, is super important as finding the fish is half the battle won.

When working vibes I start off by making a long cast, before allowing the lure to flutter its way to the bottom. Constant attention must be paid as redfin will hit vibes on the drop nine times out of ten and it is not uncommon to make a cast and be hit within a couple of seconds. Once the lure makes contact with the bottom I take up the slack and make a long draw of the rod at a steady speed, then let it fall again. Whilst it is falling I always wind in some line to try and keep almost tight to the vibe. This gives me a better feel as to what is happening at the business end and also keeps me in closer contact in case I need to strike. I then repeat this process for a dozen casts before mixing it up. For this technique I prefer to use the middle hole on top of the lures as I can work the lures reasonably fast but am still able to create a decent amount of vibration.

The next technique I employ utilizes the most rear whole on the vibe and is great at waking up shut down fish. When I have located fish by sounding around I like to sit on top of them and work the area thoroughly by making shorter casts and working the lure a lot slower. This method can be super effective when fishing in deeper water as the fish are not as boat shy. After the lure has rested I make a long and slow draw of the rod so that the lure is only just pulsating away, then let it drop again. I repeat this process all the way back to the boat and then lift and drop a few more times directly beneath the boat, just in case a fish has followed it. Slow and steady is the key with this technique as it is designed to mimic a wounded baitfish and be an easy meal. The TT Lures Ghostblade is perfect for this technique as it hangs in the strike zone for much longer and has a great 'flutter' when falling.



Redfin love  
TT Lures  
Ghostblades.



The hole closest to the head is used for my third technique, which I use to excite fish. When fish are feeding, a fast moving lure will quite often out-fish anything else. After making a long cast and allowing the vibe to sink, I bring the lure to life with a short sharp rip of the rod tip. When saying short rip, I only move the rod tip about 30 to 50cm. After resting again I might make two small rips, before letting it drop down and keeping a close eye on the line. I repeat this process, varying the retrieve with up to four rips in the one lift, all the way back to the boat. I don't follow any pattern with the amount of rips or lifts in a retrieve as I try to keep it random like a distressed baitfish.

The last thing a baitfish sees before being inhaled.



## StreakZ

Over the last month the ZMan 3.75" StreakZ has become my favourite plastic for chasing big reddies. In particular, the Nuked Chicken Glow colour has accounted for many fish over the 40cm mark. Bright and natural baitfish colour patterns are always a good starting point and the trick is to rig them light but with enough weight that they don't take too long to sink. My preferred combo is a Nuked Chicken Glow StreakZ paired with a 1/12oz #1 TT jighead. With this I am able to cast right into the shallows and work the lure back out into 5m of water comfortably. When over 5m deep, a heavier jighead may be needed to keep in constant contact with the bottom.

My technique is pretty simple when working the StreakZ, it involves hopping the lure along the bottom all the way back to the boat. Like with vibes, the redfin will usually always hit the plastics on the drop, so it is important to keep a close eye for any hits. I either make a single or double twitch of the rod to impart a darting action to the lure. This can be done with an upward motion of the rod tip or sideways as well. The trick is to mix it up and remember which method worked when you hook up.

The ZMan 3.75" StreakZ have been proving effective on the big reddies.





This technique can be employed in most situations, whether it is fishing tight against timber or along a weed lined bank, thus making it very versatile. When working weed edges don't be afraid to give it a really good rip and make it shoot up off the bottom. Doing this excites fish and it also helps to break any light, stringy weed the plastic may have picked up.

## **GrubZ & Slim SwimZ**

ZMan 2.5" GrubZ and ZMan 2.5" Slim SwimZ are very versatile lures and can be used in many different applications for many different species. For reddies I have two favourite techniques that I use to get the bites.

The first is my traditional GrubZ technique which is based on keeping the lure on the bottom. I cast the lure out, whether it be tight to timber or drop offs, let it hit the bottom and just sit there for a few seconds before moving it. The action I impart is small twitches with a downward pointing rod tip, this prevents the lure from lifting too high off the bottom. Pauses are important with this technique as it gives the fish a chance to inhale it. Redfin will more often than not engulf the whole plastic, rather than 'hit' it, so don't be in too much of a hurry.

Cracker redfin on a  
ZMan 2.5" Slim SwimZ.



Check out those fins... cool fish.



First step is to rig the plastics light and weedless. This can be done by using a worm style hook or jighead. To make it even more weedless, bury the hook point into the plastic ever so slightly so that the point is not exposed. I like weights of 1/16oz or 1/20oz, as these allow the plastics to sink but not plummet to the bottom.

When rigged up weedless, make a cast right over the shallow weed beds and allow the lure to fall. Use the rod tip to gently jiggle it along the tops of the weed beds. If you find it is sinking into the weed too much and fouling up, rig it lighter so that the lure rests on top of the weed. Pauses are your friend when working plastics like this. Fish them slow so the lure is in the strike zone for longer. Redfin will use the shallow weed beds around lake edges as cover and so will small minnows and shrimp, making this a great method for tempting those shy fish.

When a fish takes the lure, don't forget to strike and strike hard. The hook point is not exposed with this rigging method so it is important to set the hook when the redfin bites down on the plastic.

## Spinners

### Jig Spinners



With redfin being an aggressive predator, a lure that has added flash and vibration may be just what you need to tempt a bite. Working TT Lures Jig Spinners and Rev Head bladed jigheads on a slow day can sometimes be the key to turning your fortunes around.

When fishing with Jig Spinners and Rev Heads, I choose to use a 1/8oz jighead the majority of the time. This is so that there is enough weight to make long casts but more importantly, so there is enough weight that the blades work on the drop.



Fish on!



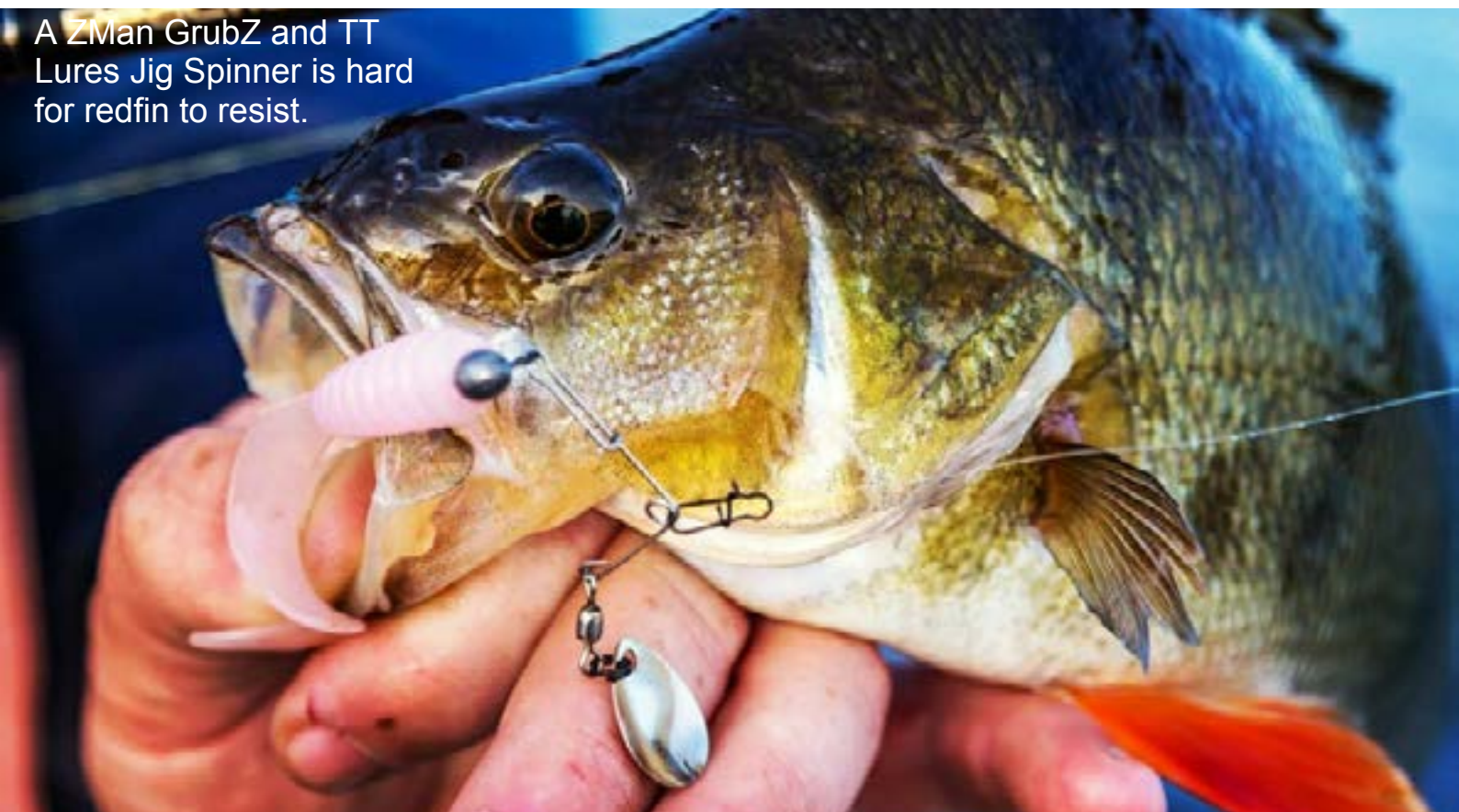
When choosing plastics I like something that will add additional action with minimal movement and this is why I love GrubZ. ZMan 2" GrubZ and 2.5" GrubZ work a treat with spinning blades. The tail beats with minimal effort and compliments the flash of the blades very well. Colour choice is personal but my theory is to rig up bright, loud colours that will stand out just as much as a flashing gold or silver spinning blade.

Through some trial and error I have settled on three retrieves that are effective on redbfin. They are three common techniques but are proven with these types of lures. I usually start with a slow rolling retrieve as it is a great way of covering the water quickly. After making a long cast, let the lure drop unimpeded to the bottom, then begin to slowly roll the lure all the way back to the boat. It's that simple! The second is a lift and drop technique, much the same as using a vibe. The last method is the burn and kill. This involves a few fast cranks of the reel (burning), then letting the lure drop back down (killing). This is repeated the whole way back to the boat. This method can and does excite fish when they are being fussy.

### **Mixing it up**

The best part about fishing is that there is no right or wrong way to fish. It all comes down to what works for you and what you enjoy the most. The above methods are my favourites but that does not mean I use them exclusively. Some days you have to try new and different things to get a bite from stubborn, shutdown fish. So don't get stuck doing the same thing for hours, especially when there is fish on the sounder... mix it up!

A ZMan GrubZ and TT Lures Jig Spinner is hard for redbfin to resist.







# SnakelockZ Bass

By Jay Noble



Most anglers have a particular species that they love to target and seem to spend more time chasing, depending on the time of year, conditions or ease of locating a few fish. Then comes the techniques that we choose to target this species, often dependant on the environment that the target species lives in and if you are fishing out of a boat, kayak or are a land based angler.

Like many I love to chase Australian bass, in particular in my local dam. Some of the reasons why include the ability to fish for them all year round, the fact they are a very aggressive feeder, take a range of well presented lures, hit hard and put up a great fight for their size. An added bonus is the locations that you get to discover while on the hunt and Hinze Dam is no exception; a beautiful location with a good range of structure around which to target these very popular sports fish. Ranging from grassy steep banks, rocky waterfalls and the most prominent feature you will find, tall standing and fallen timber lining the deep edges as well as the many points and bays in the dam.

SnakelockZ jigheads allow you to get your soft plastic deep into the sticks.





How I have been fishing lately and one of the ways that I love to fish the dam is to hit the water in my kayak. Paddling my way to the location that I have decided to fish, I then get into the thickest timber I can find and start fishing. This style of fishing can be very frustrating at times if you have not prepared your tackle to fish these areas. Further to that, it can become very expensive if you don't set yourself up with a few key items to increase your chances. That's where the TT Lures SnakelockZ jigheads come into their own.

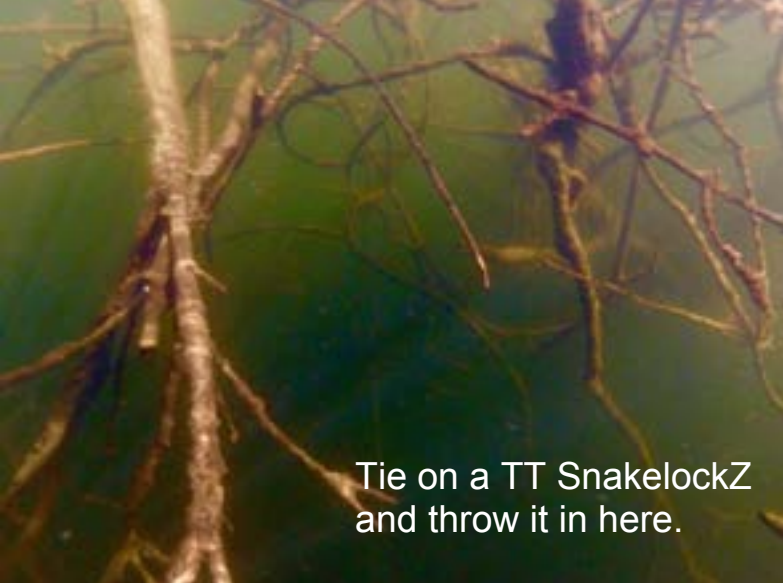
SnakelockZ are an award winning, weedless style of jighead, designed and manufactured by Tackle Tactics and they are fast becoming a very popular choice for anyone fishing heavy timber, rock bars and even weed beds. They are built on chemically sharpened, Mustad heavy duty black nickel worm hooks and the stainless steel through-wire head connection has been tested to 75lb. The range of SnakelockZ jigheads have weights and sizes to suit a wide range of applications and the stainless steel wire loop connecting the weight allows head weights to be interchanged, while the 'chin lock' on the hook keeps the plastic in place and swimming straight.



Bass like this take some extracting so buckle up!







Tie on a TT SnakelockZ and throw it in here.



10X Tough ZMan super-soft and flexible plastics ensure a good hook up rate.

As I mentioned before, the technique that has worked for me in this location is to find the biggest, nastiest trees and snags, and then pepper them with accurate casts into the structure. The advantage that the SnakelockZ has over a standard jighead is its ability to be fished as hard and close to the structure as you can, with minimal chance of snagging. As an added advantage you will find yourself punching casts into areas that you may not have normally fished due to a fear of losing your tackle.

SnakelockZ allow you to cast into the middle of standing timber, as well as sunken trees, letting the plastic sink naturally to the bottom. It can be hopped and worked in and out of the branches of fallen trees as well as slow rolled through lily pads and weeded banks. Plenty of fish will hit a slowly rolled plastic when presented in the right areas.

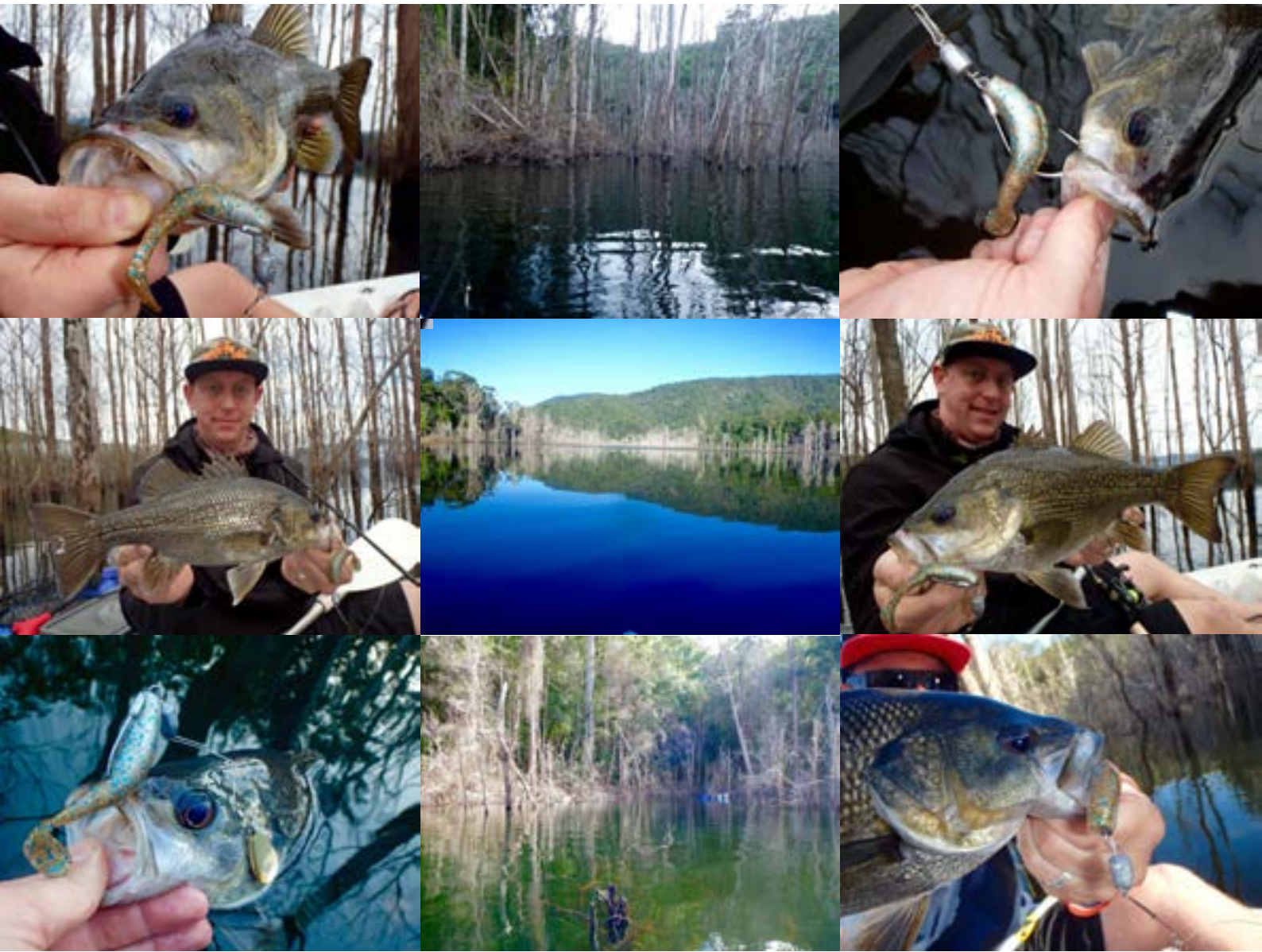
The design of the SnakelockZ features a free-swinging hook, only hinged at the stainless loop, allowing it to move very freely through structure to avoid fouling up or getting snagged. As well as its weedless design, this freedom of the wire hinge connection to the weight at the front to the hook allows for a great free flowing swimming action with maximum lure movement.



The SnakelockZ can be fished in different ways. Hopping the plastic off the bottom will allow the plastic to work its way up through the water column and naturally flutter back down with a great wobble. If you prefer to use the slow roll (slow wind) technique, then the weedless design will allow you to work the lure very close to the structure with very little resistance.

Areas with heavy cover are often where you will find the fish holding, especially when the sun starts to heat up and there is less shade available for the fish to use as cover. This is a very exciting way to fish, with reaction strikes and normally the battle is over fairly quickly... one way or the other. This style of fishing so close to structure normally requires heavy drag settings to extract these hard fighting fish or they will have you bricked in the timber in no time.

Having the SnakelockZ rigged with a plastic, that mirrors the bait in the area that the fish are feeding on, will always increase your chances of a bite. In saying that, the plastics that I have been rigging for the bass have been the ZMan 3" MinnowZ. There is a huge choice of colours in the range but just to name a few that have been producing for me, Pinfish, Houdini and Space Guppy as well as the newer Calico Candy colour.





These deadly little baitfish profile plastics, rigged on a 1/4oz 3/0 SnakelockZ jighead, have been a real winner. I have also been adding a #3 TT Lures Gold Jig Spinner to this combination to add a little extra flash as well as vibration to attract the fish.

There is something very exciting about taking a new product out fishing or trying a new technique and then there's also the added bonus of the picturesque environments where you get to spend the time putting these new products and techniques to the test in the field. There is something special about getting out on the dam and enjoying the sights and sounds of our great outdoors, while enjoying time away from the daily grind... and hopefully landing a few good fish.

This is by no means a how to target bass in impoundments article, rather a few words about an exciting new product in the Tackle Tactics range and some of the successes that I have had using the SnakelockZ over the past few months. So get out there and enjoy your time on the water and hopefully you can also crack a few nice fish on the SnakelockZ.

Jay with a solid bass on a Calico Candy ZMan 3" MinnowZ.





# SnakeLockZ - Rigging



TT Lures SnakeLockZ jigheads are designed to allow anglers to fish heavy cover such as weed, lilies, mangroves, timber and snag piles, with minimal chance of snagging or fouling.

They are built on Mustad, heavy duty, chemically sharpened black nickel hooks and feature a 'chin lock' to lock your soft plastic in place on the jighead and a free-swinging front weight for maximum action. The weighted head is attached with a 75lb test, stainless steel through wire for strength and the head weights are interchangeable, simply clipping off and on to change weights. How many fish are you missing out on because you can't get your lure in amongst the structure!?

## Step 1

Push the hook point into the centre of the nose of the plastic and at a 45 degree angle push it through and out of the underside of the plastic.



## Step 2

The hook will slide easily through the plastic until you reach the 'chin lock' and then it will take a little effort to slide the plastic over the 'chin lock'.

You effectively want to capture a few millimetres of plastic that will be locked into the 'chin lock' when rigging is complete.



Step 2



Holding the bend of the hook between your thumb and pointer finger (hook point down) and pulling the plastic over the 'chin lock' slowly is effective and avoids the pointy end of the hook.

## Step 3

As the 'chin lock' exits the plastic you will feel it 'pop' out and the hook will want to turn over to face point up as the 'chin' of the plastic positions itself neatly in the 'chin lock'.



Step 3



## Step 4

Measure where the hook needs to sit in the plastic. Bend the plastic a little so that you can pass the hook point directly from the centre of the underside of the plastic out through the topside of the plastic.



Step 4

## Step 5

Pull the barb and hook point down against the top of the plastic and you're ready to fish some heavy cover. Get that plastic in their and hang on!



Step 5







# TREVS ON PLASTICS

By Josh Dunn



If there's one thing that excites an angler about casting plastics in and around structure it has to be trevally. All species of trevally are well known for their powerful fight, making them an excellent sportfish on light tackle! One of my favourite techniques for these brutes of the salt is working plastics and surface poppers around jetties, along with rock and retaining walls.

## The Gear

I like to keep my gear rather heavy for targeting trevally, or any sort of pelagic species: A Shimano Raider 3-6kg matched with a Shimano Sustain 3000 size reel, spooled with 20lb Super PE braid. Leader will depend on where you're fishing. If they are going to easily bust you off on rocks or pylons, use 15-20lb fluorocarbon leader and if you're in open water use 12-15lb+. It comes down to common sense and personal preference with the gear you are using and if you have two set ups, fish one heavy and if they aren't biting downgrade to a lighter set up. Vary the lures depending on time of the day, water quality and desired fishing location.



Josh with a beautifully marked and coloured golden trevally.





This trevally responded to a ZMan 5" GrubZ fished deep.

Trevally follow the bait, so finding a lure that they want to eat can be the hard part and I tend to change up plastics if one isn't working. Definitely my utmost favourite plastic would be a ZMan 4" DieZel MinnowZ in Opening Night colour. This lure swims great and looks very similar to a baitfish, with flashes of silver throughout the lure. In saying that, other

colours and models in the ZMan range will work better on some days. Remember to change things up regularly, especially the weight of the jighead, until you find what the fish want.



DieZel MinnowZ trevally.

Fishing often comes down to experience, but the most experienced anglers will still have their bad days. Confidence is one thing I stick by in my fishing and it is one of those one percenters that can turn a bad day into a good day. If you aren't confident in

your fishing style or where you're fishing then change it up. Lack of confidence will result in not putting your full potential into that situation, which can result in a bad day on the fishing scene.



ZMan 3" MinnowZ in Calico Candy and Pearl Blue Glimmer colours, along with ZMan 3.75" StreakZ in Smokey Shad and Watermelon Red colours, are just a few more in the range that work a treat on trevally. By-catch will vary, including plenty of mangrove jacks in my part of the country as you will be fishing rock walls and jetties where jacks will sit and ambush bait. Flathead, tailor and even a game bream will try and eat your lure, moving at speeds where bream shouldn't be eating lures... but they still do!

Remember that there are many species of trevally, all known for their powerful fights, but they often feed differently, on different tides, eating a variety of foods, at varying times of the year, etc. Some will feed along the bottom, in search of small crustaceans. Others will feed on the surface, absolutely annihilating bait, so finding a lure that works well for that species is vital. Do some research and watch some videos on how to catch the trevally you're after!



There are a variety of trevally species around Australia, including the less common cale cale.



Slim SwimZ trevally.



## Where are the fish?

A great tactic is sounding up structure or bait on your sounder and dropping down a plastic. Drifting over the bait is a good option, once you've found where they are congregating. This could be around bridge pylons, rock walls, broken ground, trees, etc. Don't be surprised though if you find bait or a school of trevally in the middle of nowhere, for example in the middle of a canals system. I've found quite often that a few fish will sit in the open for various reasons; bait, water temperature and so on.



Bridges hold plenty of trevally.



Bridge pylons are definitely up there with my go-to structure. Sit at the back of the pylons, with your vessel facing into the current and the bow of your boat in line with the first pylon. Get a long cast in, about 2-3 metres past the last pylon. Why cast 2-3 metres past and not to the actual pylon? If the current is running quite strong your plastic will drift a few metres before it hits the bottom. So casting an extra few metres further than the pylon will get your plastic to hit the bottom around that last pylon.



Once the plastic is on the bottom I like to use two different techniques, normally one on the first cast and the other one on the second. Firstly the 'burn and kill', where you burn your lure through the water with about four quick winds of your reel, followed by a sudden pause to allow the lure to sink back to the bottom, repeating until the lure is back at the boat. The second retrieve involves simply hopping the plastic erratically, twice off the bottom, before lowering the rod tip and allowing the lure to hit the bottom. Again, repeat until your plastic is back at the boat, or in a fish's mouth in the net! My favourite and most effective technique would be the second retrieve.

Trevally are super fun on spin gear, especially with their exhilarating hit and they are always able to burn some line! Fishing for them with plastics and a surface lure is a productive way of fishing, learning the basics and doing some research will definitely help.



Structure attracts bait that in turn attracts predators, including the various trevally species.





# NEW GEAR

## DemonZ Jigheads



Featuring the AFTA award winning 'HeadlockZ' grub keeper, DemonZ are premium quality hand-painted jigheads, with realistic 3D eyes, built on Gamakatsu, black nickel, chemically sharpened, heavy wire hooks. The colour range has been customized by the Tackle Tactics Pro Team to match popular soft plastic colours and common baitfish species that inhabit our freshwater and saltwater systems.

The 'HeadlockZ' grub keeper is designed to suit the 10X Tough ZMan ElaZtech soft plastics, while also being suitable for other brands, locking the plastic in place on the jighead.

DemonZ are available in 1/6oz 1H & 1/0H, 1/4oz 1H, 1/0H, 2/0H & 3/0H and 3/8oz 2/0H & 3/0H in 7 colours – Golden Boy, Green, Purple Minnow, Red Nightmare, Pearl, Chartreuse and Pink, with 3 per pack. Bring it on!



## FLASH POINT Tail Spinners



Flash Point tail spinners feature a realistic baitfish profile and 3D eyes, hand-painted finishes, chemically sharpened, black nickel hook and a 24K gold plated or nickel plated blade designed to create flash and vibration to call fish to the lure and trigger strikes.

They have been tested and proven on bass, golden perch and cod, while also producing some surprise captures in the salt. Deadly on a slow roll, hopped retrieve or vertical presentation, Flash Point tail spinners are available in two weights – 14g and 20g, and eight of TT Lures most popular tested and proven colours.

Next time you're on the water, heat your session up to Flash Point!





# tackle tactics

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