

in this issue...

- Night Jacks
- Natural Attraction
Bass in the Sticks
- Remote Island Adventure
- Surface Bassin'
- Mangrove Breaming
- Jigging
The Soft Option



Angler: Jay Noble
Species: Australian Bass
Lure: ZMan 3" MinnowZ (Houdini)
Jighead: TT Lures 1/4oz 3/0 SnakelockZ & TT Lures #3 Gold Jig Spinner



NIGHT JACKS



By Bryce Francis

Over the last few months I have been spending a lot of hours on the water chasing mangrove jack at night. Jacks are a very smart fish and in SEQ (southeast Queensland) can be quite hard to catch at times because of the amount of boat traffic. This is the main reason we fish at night, when there are less boats on the water. Big flathead, tailor, tarpon, jewfish, trevally and cod are the most common by-catch that we come across when fishing for mangrove jack.

Mangrove jack will hang around bridges, logs, jetties, pontoons, flats, back eddies and anywhere that there is some sort of structure. My favourite place to target them though is on rock bars. The rock bars that we fish vary in depth from 1m - 5m and some stretch for a long length of the river, while others are small patches of rock and rubble.

I like to use the 'spot lock' function on the Minn Kota electric motor to position the boat down current of the chosen area and cast back up, so that I can work the lure back to the boat with the tide. Although there aren't too many secret spots left in the rivers anymore, I try to work out which spots are receiving the least amount of fishing pressure at the time and fish these spots. People will often forget about spots that may have fished well many years ago, when they actually still hold good numbers of fish.



A quality jack on the measure.

This nice flatty was jack by-catch on a ZMan Scented ShrimpZ.



Another great option is to fish under the bigeye trevally schools. To locate them, look for bust ups in areas that normally hold a lot of bait. By using larger plastics and sinking them underneath the bigeye trevs, you can come across anything from big trevally and tailor, to barra and jacks. These bigger fish follow the bigeye schools around and wait for scraps of baitfish to sink down from the fish feeding on the surface.

I find the week before the full moon to be the most productive, however spending a lot of time on the water is the most important thing in terms of helping you to get to know what is going on in your river system at the time. I believe that the more time you spend on the water, the more you'll learn about jacks or any other species that you are targeting.

The run out tide is normally the best and when I catch the majority of my jacks, although they do feed on the run in, just not as aggressively. Before I go fishing for the night, I try to plan a few spots that I will fish, the time of night I will fish them and how long for, depending on the tides. Normally an hour is long enough to know if the spot is fishing well. I always arrive at my first spot an hour before dark and try to go somewhere at this time where I will have a chance at other species as well as jacks, including trevally, tailor, tarpon, grunter, jewfish etc., because these fish feed best in the last and first hour of daylight.



The gear I use when targeting jacks can be anything from 6lb - 30lb, depending on structure and current. Although it's not what most people would use, I mostly use my lightest set ups which consist of a 1-4kg rod and a 1000 size reel loaded with 6-10lb braid and 12-20lb leader. The reason I use such light gear is because I believe that it gives you the split second advantage at the start of the fight, where fish have not realised they have been hooked. It gives you a small time frame to get the first few winds on the fish and turn its head. I have found that when using a heavier rod, the jack seem to run a lot harder in the first stage of the fight and although you may have more pulling power, if a big jack is inches from a hole in the oyster encrusted rocks, chances are it's going to run you straight into it. On a light rod the jack just don't seem to run in the start of the fight, but once you get them a metre or two away from the bottom they then try to run back down. With the right knots and drag settings they can normally be stopped.



Jacks love hunting in low light.

If you want to give your bream gear a good stretch on the jacks, a good knot is essential. The knot I use is an FG Knot, which I believe is the strongest knot out there. They are quite difficult to learn and take some practice to get perfect, but are worth the effort. Having such a strong knot means that you can have confidence in running a fully locked drag when fishing really tight structure on light gear for jacks.

Bryce with a solid nigh jack.



The other setups that I use, when fishing bigger lures or heavier leaders are 3000 size reels, 4-8kg rods, 15-30lb braid and 20-30lb leaders. Most of the ZMan range of plastics will catch jacks at different times, however the ones that I have had most success on include the ZMan 4" SwimmerZ rigged on a 3/8oz 4/0 TT Lures HeadlockZ HD jighead,

ZMan 4" Scented ShrimpZ in New Penny colour rigged on a 1/4oz 4/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead, ZMan 3" MinnowZ in Gold Rush and Calico Candy colours, rigged on either a 1/4oz or 3/8oz 3/0 DemonZ jighead in Golden Boy colour and a ZMan 5" GrubZ in Copper Penny colour rigged on a 3/8oz 4/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead. I always use a small amount of Pro-Cure Mullet Super Gel on the ZMan.

The techniques that I use are always different, depending on the area, depth of water and strength of tide. I also mix up the techniques each cast, so that I can work out what is working on that particular night. I find that most of the time an aggressive retrieve normally works best with the paddle tails, while I use a slower retrieve for the ShrimpZ and GrubZ. With the MinnowZ and SwimmerZ, anything from one big aggressive hop to six small hops can work, with my favourite retrieve being two big, fast hops, with a pause long enough for the lure to hit the bottom. When using the ShrimpZ I use just a slow roll along the bottom, with the odd lift every now and again. When fishing the 5" GrubZ, one or two long lifts followed by a large pause works quite well, especially when the fish are being finicky.



Targeting jacks produces some nice by-catch.

In my boat I have two large live wells that are very useful when targeting jacks. I have found that jacks will feed in bite periods and you might catch nothing for an hour, then catch two or three in a few minutes. This is where the live wells are so useful. Once we catch one, we put it straight into the live well and get back to fishing. This means that instead of wasting time getting photos we can keep fishing and normally get a few fish (or bust-offs) in a short space of time. Once the bite has slowed down or we are leaving the spot, we go and get photos and then release them.

I always check all of the camera settings are right before getting the jacks out of the live well to take photos, ensuring that they are out of the water for the minimal length of time. Jacks are great fun as a sport fish and I always enjoy taking care and time when releasing them to make sure they swim off healthy.



Bryce goes three of a kind on night jacks.



NATURAL ATTRACTION



By Jay Noble

The sights and sounds of the Australian bush are something that is hard to describe unless you are lucky enough to spend some time out there appreciating what we have. The treasured memories from a trip gone by are something never far from my thoughts, along with planning when the next trip might be, if I will take a mate or spend some time out with family, where am I going to go and what fish are going to be the intended target.

Targeting Australian bass from my kayak is where I have been spending most of my available fishing time, especially over the past two years. Whether it is to the north or southwest of my home on the Gold Coast or just a twenty-minute drive to my local dam, I love it all. The scenery in these of locations is just amazing. Fishing from the kayak is a very addictive and challenging way to fish. There are plenty of advantages to this style of fishing, including access to remote areas where a boat cannot be launched and also quite often the amount wildlife seen when quietly working through areas is very surprising.

Deep rocky creeks running along the bases of tall overhanging cliffs, fallen timber logs and trees on the edges of fast flowing crystal clear water, rocky outcrops in the middle of the river, grassy covered deep edges and forest-like sections of large standing timber are just some of the landscapes encountered. All of these mentioned areas are a great place to spend a few hours... or days investigating.



Bass inhabit some magic locations.

When visiting fishing locations in search of new ground, or even areas you have fished before, it can be very difficult to locate consistent numbers of fish. Floods in affected areas, long dry periods without rain, storm damage, weed build up and water clarity are just some of the obstacles to consider and these each add to the addictive challenge.



Targeting bass can be very tough when the barometer is low and when the weather conditions are not in your favour, including if the area is in flood or drought, however in recent times the trips away and even the local weather has been fairly consistent and allowed for some great fish to be caught.



Bass country.

Bass, on their day, will take a range of different lures but there are a few standouts that have been working really well, are consistent fish catchers and my confidence lures. These include the range of available spinnerbaits and added attractants, such as a Jig Spinner added to your jighead along with Pro-Cure scent.



Morning and afternoon are peak bite times and awesome times to be on the water.



The TT Vortex range of spinnerbaits are fantastic as they are designed with a small frame that is aimed at species such as bass, golden perch, saratoga and many others. Being a smaller profile spinnerbait doesn't mean that they won't stand up to heavier by-catch that you may come across such as cod and hard hitting golden perch. Vortex spinnerbaits are built on a strong Mustad chemically sharpened hook and fitted with a ball bearing swivel, nickel (silver) and 24k gold-plated blades. There are more than a dozen different colours to choose from and the weights range from 1/8oz right through to 3/4oz, meaning you can cover the skinniest water for bass, right out to deep schooling dam fish.

With such a range of colours and sizes it can be a tough decision in terms of where to start. The sizes that I normally find cover a large range of my fishing are the 3/8oz and 1/2oz weights. Fire Tiger is a standout colour for me, along with the Purple Nightmare, White Bony, Purple Blue Scale and the Chartreuse Olive, which are all producing fish.

Some of the features that make spinnerbaits so effective include their castability, excellent snag resistance, great flash and vibration... and simply they just work!



Fire Tiger is one of Jay's go-to colours in the Vortex.



Jay with a stonker yella on a Purple Nightmare Vortex.

With bass being an aggressive sportfish, a hard hitting and a dirty fighting fish that never gives up, this is where spinnerbaits come into their own. Quite often in the areas that I fish for bass there will be heavy timber or another form of heavy structure. With the snag resistance of the spinnerbait and great castability it is easier to work your lure in productive areas with less worry about snagging up and losing your lure.

Another very worthwhile addition to your tackle box is the TT Jig Spinner. The Jig Spinner can be easily attached to your jighead, adding extra flash and vibration to your lure and this can often turn a tough bite into a reaction bite. The Jig Spinner also allows your plastic to swing freely at the tow point and will help with snag resistance.



Jig Spinners can make a difference when the fish are shut down or feeding on smaller bait, where a plastic can also be downsized if need be. There are three sizes in the range, to suit your plastic of choice, available in both nickel (silver) and 24k gold-plated Colorado blade finishes.

A really great plastic option to match the Jig Spinner to is the ever-reliable ZMan 3" MinnowZ. There is a huge range of colours available and the MinnowZ has a realistic body roll and swimming action that represents a small bait fish very closely. This is why it is such a great producer.

Pinfish, Houdini, Mood Ring, Space Guppy and Motor Oil are all great colours to start with. Normally in cleaner water conditions and early mornings I tend to stick with the natural colours, like the Pinfish and Houdini. In overcast or dirty water the Mood Ring and Motor Oil seem to stand out as great fish catchers. During the heat of the day, when the sun is high and shade is hard to come by, the bright colour of the Space Guppy MinnowZ has produced a few cracking fish as well. Attach a Jig Spinner and you normally cannot go wrong.



Bass on a Jig Spinner rigged plastic.



Jay with a chunk of bass on the Mood Ring coloured MinnowZ.



Adding scent to your spinnerbaits and soft plastics can also change a tough session into a memorable one. Pro-Cure scents have a great range of flavours to suit a large range of fishing applications. Shrimp is one that comes to mind and is always with me, but all of the flavours in the range have their place.

Planning a couple of nights away with mates, a solo session in your local area or a family trip off the beaten track are all styles of fishing that are very special. Listening to the sound of a crackling camp fire, enjoying a cold drink, listening to water lapping up against your kayak, birds singing in the trees, fish feeding in the distance... it sure beats the sound of the hustle and bustle of the busy coastal areas.

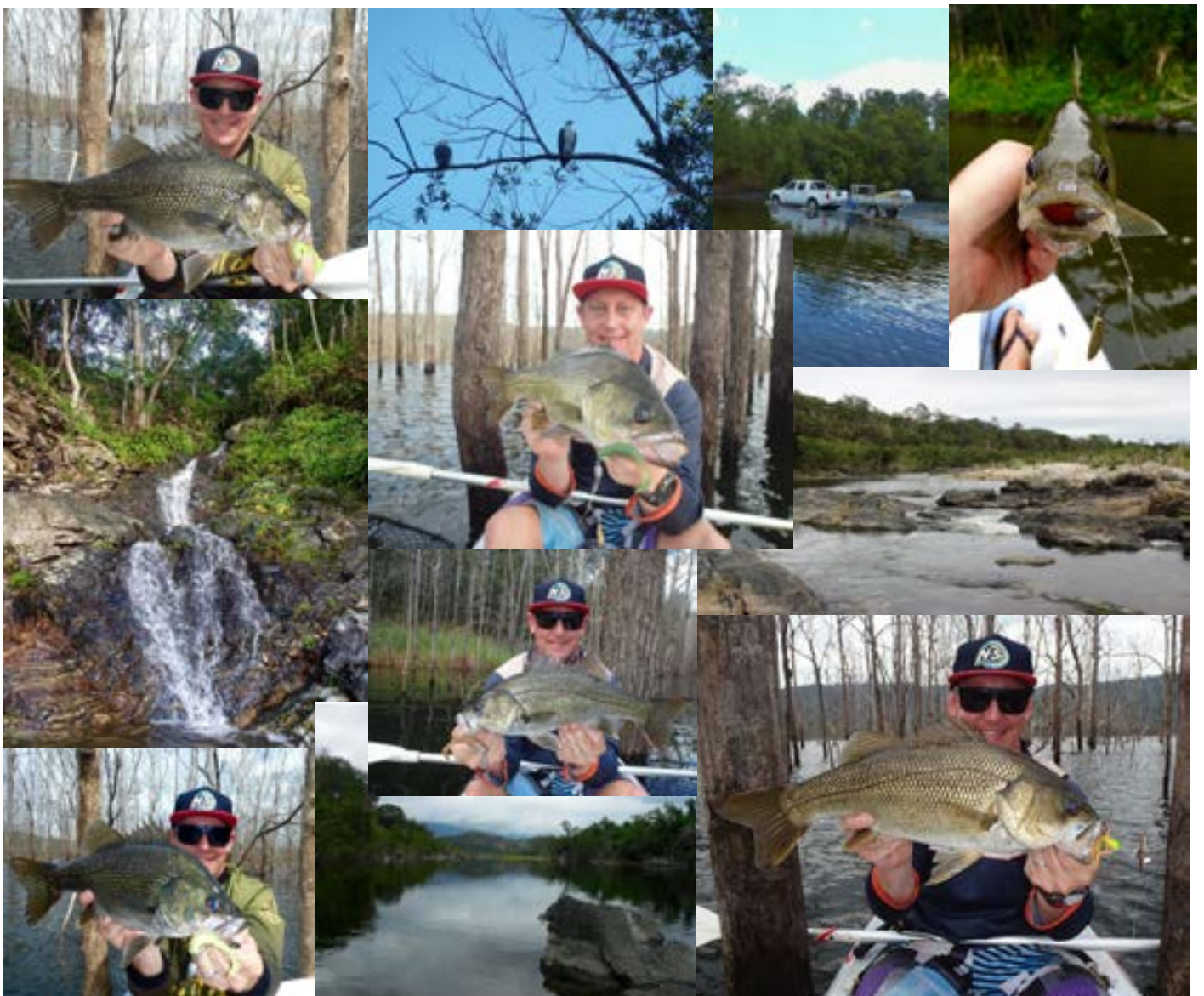


Stripping back your gear to whatever will fit in a couple of boxes in your kayak really makes you assess what tackle you take with the limited available space. With conditions changing regularly in rivers and dams it is really important that you take the gear that you're confident in to get you the results. Fishing spinnerbaits and Jig Spinner rigged plastics is definitely an exciting way to target bass and a consistent producer.

Hopefully these couple of suggestions will help point you in the right direction next time you are thinking about a trip away or a session on your local targeting our beautiful native fish.

By no means is this article a 'how to catch bass' write up, just sharing a few tips from my experiences and a few lures that have produced consistently in recent times, while also sharing some of my experiences fishing out of the kayak.

Jay



REMOTE ISLAND ADVENTURE



By Sue Wells

Clear skies and calm seas, the perfect combination for the anticipation of the three day's adventure and fishing that lay ahead. Jerry cans, camping gear, rods and esky packed full of supplies and we seamlessly rolled down the boat ramp into the water.

We plotted our journey into the GPS; destination exploratory mission to the Marble Island Group. With the motor engaged at full throttle, the mainland shrunk behind us. As the islands in front started to grow, I always have a huge smile... leaving civilization with that simple feeling of complete freedom, no boat traffic or people in this part of the world.



The forecast for our three day window of weather opportunity was for 5-10 knot SSE conditions and as we passed Roundish Island, in these glassy variable winds, you could begin to appreciate how untouched and unexplored the Broadsound really is. In the distance I could spot our halfway destination, Wild Duck Island, on our 80 km journey.

I could definitely make out a stationery large shape on the surface, about 10km ahead and as we approached I couldn't believe a female humpback whale had recently given birth, her baby beside her and seemingly

It's not just about the fishing.



teaching the newborn to surface and breath. Wow! They stayed on the surface for a few candid photos for us, magic! We soon discovered that the Broadsound, with its sheltered islands and shallow waters, is quite a nursery for numerous whale pods.

Not a bad home
away from home.



Beautiful Wild Duck Island, with its spectacular long white sandy beaches and a tidal range of 7 metres from high to low, is a green zone. Our destination has deeper water which lies around the marble islands. Reef edges, coral bommies and deep drop offs, around 5-20 metres, with lots of water movement. Situated 30km from Stanage Bay, our camp spot became visible and with a hundred metre high ridge around the island, and a horseshoe stretch of sand below, it's protected from most winds. This made an ideal place to set up camp, as we motored into the crystal waters on half tide. We engaged wheels down, the sand looked firm and we exited the water, driving up the beach to a spot near a shady tree.

Mossy, Robbie and I unloaded quickly in anticipation of rigging up our weapons of choice, from 4000 to 8000s, with 20-50lb braid, rigged with a diverse array of tackle, ranging from large poppers and shads, to StreakZ and micro jigs. We wanted to fish half tide to low, just around the NW edge, where coral bommies in 3-6 metres of water intercepted the drop off zone and current line. This had to be a great starting point to explore close to camp.



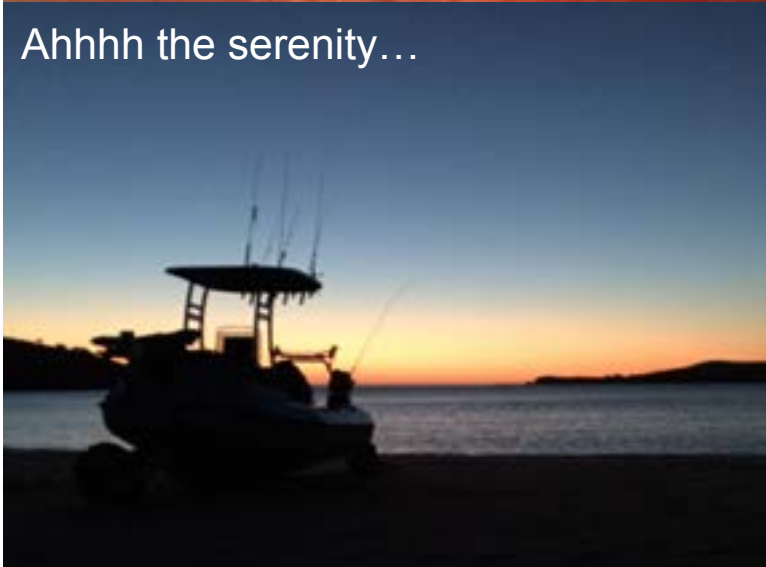
Mossy began working the edge of the coral, casting hard up near the rocks, hopping through the water column and working back into the open water. Rob concentrated on throwing poppers into the current line and I dropped my TT Vector, jiggging the coral below.

Boom! Mossy nearly fell out of the boat, as line peeled at a screaming rate. He managed to steer the fish out of the danger zone as we drifted to more open water. His rod was seriously bent, giving the 4000 Stella and 20lb braid a good workout. Half an hour later, after a lengthy chase, 1km from where we began, Mossy retrieved most of his line and the fish was finally starting to tire. Success! Landing a cracking 20kg+ GT on a ZMan 5" StreakZ in Electric Chicken colour.





Ahhhh the serenity...

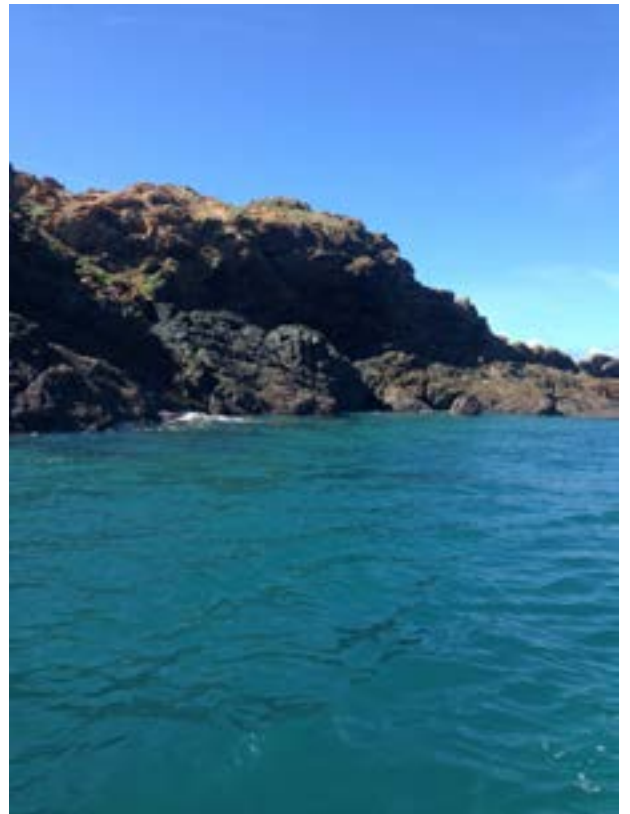


A mixed bag of reefies and pelagics were on offer..

As the sun began to fade behind us Rob cast into the shallow coral bombies, retrieving a nice coral trout that would become dinner over the hot coals that night. There are such a diverse array of species here, from dart, coral trout and cod, to queenies, mackerel, barracuda and trevally. After a delicious dinner by the campfire, a few drinks later it was time to sleep under the stars and to dream of the day's fishing ahead.

As dawn arrived we were up cooking our usual bacon and egg burgers and a cuppa, now ready and fuelled to go further afield for a full day's fishing. Our main objective for this trip was to do some sounding and exploring of the grounds within a 10km radius of our base, as a reference for future trips with longer weather windows.

Approaching a steep rocky outcrop with surface action apparent, my first cast into the frenzy produced a mac tuna, caught on a 40g TT Vector jig, fast burning along the surface. With half tide waning we fished along the coral edges, mainly catching cod, trout and trevally. Luring them from their shallow lairs using an assortment of lures, from ZMan 5" StreakZ to ZMan 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ, even throwing in a 10" HeroZ.



As we were drifting off the northern side there was a distinct 3-12m ledge, with the current roaring around the tip. I started hopping a 1 1/2oz TT HeadlockZ HD jighead and 5" Bubble Gum coloured StreakZ combo on the lee side. Three hops later, smashed I'm on! It was a solid hook up with some serious head shakes. About now I wished I had 40lb braid instead of 20lb. A few minutes of tug of war and I could see colour. Rob called it for a large queenie, but it ended up being my PB golden trevally and my turn to get fish of the day.

Sue with the fish of the day, a cracker golden trevally.



The next day we were up early and with a change in weather forecast we decided to leave on the high tide to fish a frequent stopover closer to home. We arrived with favourable tides, an hour up our sleeve to fish a rock bar and groin, masses of bait and an outgoing tide. This spot frequently produces barra and fingermark.

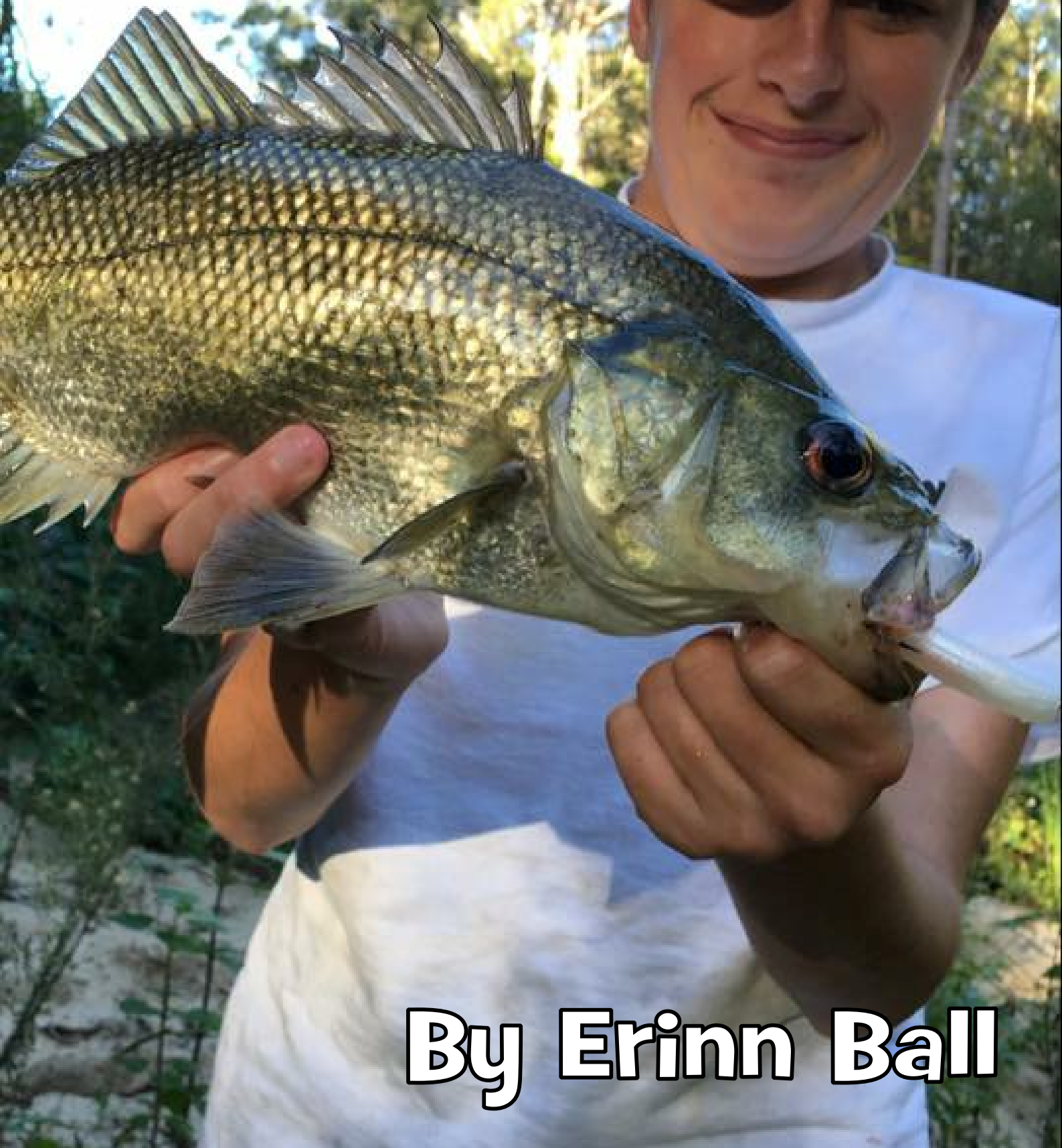
Armed with the go-to ZMan 4" SwimmerZ in Pearl and ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ in Glow, Rob's second cast landed an 80cm barra, a clear water headland fish full of chrome. Mossy and I managed a couple of nice fingermark and a small barra to top off the trip. As the tide started to drain off the rock bar, time was now of the essence and we started the final 35km leg of our trip.

Like all trips, time seemed to fly and we were already planning the next trip out there!



Sue and Robbie's original Sealegs, upgraded since this trip.

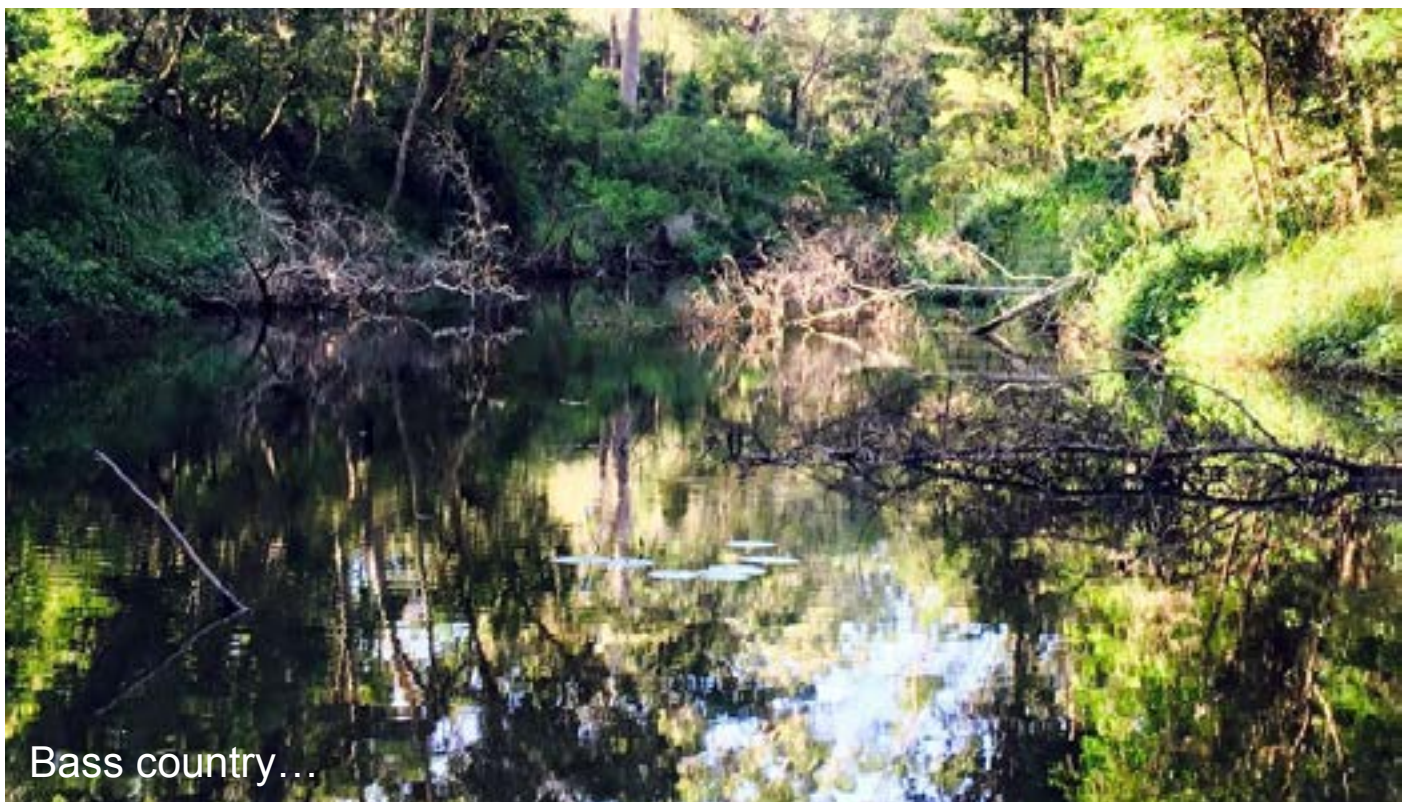
SURFACE BASSIN'



By Erinn Ball

There is nothing I love more than walking a small, skinny water creek in search of a healthy Australian bass. What attracts me to this style of fishing is that you don't need a fancy boat or kayak, just your feet and a mind open to exploring. Armed with this the land based fishing options are endless. Targeting bass in the skinny water can be physically demanding as the terrain you are fishing can be quite a challenge. I often have to fight my way down large embankments, over trees and through creeks... however it can be beautiful at the same time. Quite often it is just you and the surrounding wildlife; lizards, birds and the dreaded snake!

When it comes to fishing for bass in skinny water locations, everyone has their own favourite techniques that work for them, whether it is casting spinnerbaits, hard bodies or soft plastics. My go-to technique happens to be targeting them via the surface and I often hear people saying that surface lures are only good early morning or late afternoon. I happen to disagree with this statement when it comes to skinny water fishing and I often have my top bite periods during the middle of the day. Bass in this sort of country are opportunists as food can regularly become quite scarce, with limited rainfall causing pools to become shut off from one another. Due to the fact that food can become limited, I find that Bass are willing to eat a surface lure anytime of the day as it could potentially be the only possible meal for a while. ZMan plastics make for fantastic surface lures as they are naturally buoyant which means you can fish them slowly without having to worry about them sinking.



As the ZMan range is so big and forever expanding, my list of favourite lures is reasonably large. I usually like a lure that is quite large in size... in fact people would often say that it is too big. I like to keep my lures in the 3" to 5" size range. My top 3 go-to lures are:

ZMan 3" Minnowz (Pearl, Red Shad, Opening Night or Golden Boy)

This particular lure is the one that I like to use the most. I like to rig it on a 2/0 TT Lures ChinlockZ jighead, as it keeps the lure completely weedless and with the lure being weedless I am then able to cast it into heavy structure without having to worry about it getting snagged up. The great benefit of this setup is that it casts like a bullet, allowing you to cover a lot of ground with a single cast. It also skips very well, making it great for using around overhanging trees and or branches. This is also when I receive most of the hits.

I often just use a very simple medium paced retrieve, with little to no pauses. The paddle tail on the MinnowZ creates a great wake in the water and the bass find it irresistible. For a little bit of extra attraction I like to dab a small amount of Pro-Cure Shrimp Super Gel on the lure.

One of Erinn's go-to surface plastics, the ZMan 3" MinnowZ.



Another victim of the ZMan 3" MinnowZ.



ZMan 4" Pop Shadz (Pearl or Watermelon Chartreuse)

This particular lure is the one that secured me my PB 54cm skinny water bass. The Pop ShadZ doesn't only make for a great popping lure, it is also a great 'walk the dog' lure. With a steady wind and small rod twitch this lure turns into a very impressive stickbait. It also makes for a fantastic casting lure as it's a little heavier than other plastics, while still having a very streamline profile that is great for casting long distances. The Pop ShadZ is best rigged on a 3/0 TT Lures ChinlockZ jighead, once again making the lure weedless.





ZMan 4" Streakz Curly Tailz (Red Shad and Pearl)

I also find that the Curly TailZ work most effectively when they are rigged on a 3/0 TT Lures Chinlockz jighead and I like to skip a cast into and under over hanging trees. The retrieve I use is a little different, compared to the other plastics, as I like to implement a lot of pauses and twitches into this particular lure. By implementing a pause and twitch action into the lure, the tail of the lure creates a spitting action across the surface and in turn leaves a great wake.



Weedless rigging allows you to fish almost anywhere.



Locations

Finding a great skinny water bass location takes a lot of time and effort. The theory that I have is, if it is hard to get to then potentially the location may be relatively untouched and therefore possibly fish better.

Websites, such as Google Maps, NearMap and Google Earth, are great tools to use when you are trying to find creeks that will hold bass. Simply zoom in on the creek and begin searching. Key things to look for when searching maps are spillways, bridges, colour changes in the water from fresh to salt, possible structure to fish and entry points.

Don't think that you can only target bass in strictly fresh water. I often target bass in water that is so brackish that I see other species, such as bull sharks, bream and mangrove jack, swimming amongst the structure. At times there won't be an entry point, so you may have to make your own and don't be surprised if you get to a location and there happens to be no water in the creek. This is all part of the fun when it comes to finding the perfect location.

Talking to the locals is a great way to find out information and this can possibly lead to new locations and even access to private properties. When I enter a new town, that I stop in to use the local facilities, such as servos, I have gained some fantastic locations just by talking to people and mentioning that I am in town to fish. I often get the response of "you should try here" or "I have a friend that owns a property on the creek" and this gives you a fantastic starting point. Of course safety comes first, so if it seems weird or unusual then best you keep on driving.

As I often fish by myself, safety to me is more important than catching a fish. I always have a first aid kit in the very front pocket of my pack, where it is easily accessible in case of an emergency. I also carry plenty of water, extra snacks and a phone with maps or a GPS in case I happen to get lost. Most importantly, as to if you were going fishing out at sea, is I always tell a family member, friend or even neighbour where I am going.

Tackle

I like to take two rod and reel options, one being a spin and the other being a baitcast combo. For my spin combo I generally use a 1000 size reel and 7 foot, 2-6lb rod, with 6lb braid. On my baitcast combo I like to run a heavier rod with heavier braid as this allows me to set the hooks a little quicker and turn the fish's head to drag it out of the snag. I like to run a 6-10lb rod and 12lb braid. With heavier braid on this reel it then becomes more versatile, ready for when I want to target other species such as saratoga. On both of these combos I like to run a rod length of either 6lb or 10lb leader, connected to my braid using either an FG Knot or the Slim Beauty.

I encourage everyone to get into the bush and experience skinny water bass fishing just once, then you will be hooked... The strikes from fish in such small creeks will automatically see you searching for more. Don't go into a session expecting to absolutely slay the fish as it may just not happen. It might take a couple of sessions to fine tune your skills before you nail that one surface bass. Just remember a bad day fishing is better than a good day at work.

If you are wanting to follow my adventures, fishing for species such as bass, bream, barramundi, marlin and dolphinfish to name a few, be sure to like my Facebook page

Erinn Ball – Girls Fish Too.
<https://www.facebook.com/Erinn-Ball-Girls-Fish-Too-1402456606749390/>



Fish like this make it all worthwhile.

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!



PLAY VIDEO

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.



MANGROVE BREAMING



By Rhett Gill

Prime bream terrain...
mangroves.



On the eastern side of St Vincent Gulf in SA, just north of Adelaide, is the start of the northern tidal flats that stretch up the coast to the very end of the gulf. The shoreline of the flats are lined with mangroves and a few nice size creeks that are home to some extra large bream that love snags and ZMan plastics.

These creeks are extremely tidal and full of man eating mozzies. Picking the right tides to fish them is essential as the current from rising and falling tides can bring a lot of weed, making fishing near impossible at times. An accurate cast is also essential or you will lose plenty of gear to trees and snags.

With plenty of bait fish and places to hide, the bream love it in these creeks and the creeks are perfect for kayak fishing for the bream. This has to be one of my favourite ways to fish. There are plenty of snags in these creeks and a stealthy approach, casting all around the snags, will normally attract a look at by a hungry fish.

Rhett with a couple of crackers.



A solid handful of mangrove bream.




The gear that I use when chasing these light line bruisers is a 5 to 12lb Daiwa Harrier rod and a Daiwa Steez 2508, loaded with 10lb Sunline Castaway braid and 6lb FC Rock leader. The first of the TT jigheads that I choose to use for this style of fishing is the TT 1/28oz HWS (Hidden Weight System) for when the tide is slowing down to the bottom of the

tide and for the first hour after the change. As the tide increases I will change to a TT HeadlockZ 1/20oz jighead. Being a bit heavier it will drop at around the same speed as the 1/28oz through the moving water and stay in the bream's face, hopefully long enough for them to hit it and hook up.

These mangroves are unforgiving to lures, so I choose not to flick \$30 hard bodies at these fish... a few bad casts and you have lost some serious \$\$\$\$. ZMan plastics are the best for this way of fishing as they are cheap to buy and a packet will last you quite a few trips if your casting is accurate.

A nice fish in the net.






Another victim of the
ZMan 2.5" GrubZ.

I'm an angler that won't change something if it works. The ZMan 2.5" GrubZ work and they work extremely well. In the creeks that I fish the bream are all over the colours Motor Oil, Bloodworm and Watermelon Red and matched with the aforementioned TT jigheads I don't think you can go wrong.

The way that I fish the 2.5" GrubZ involves a lot of skipping them in under the overhanging mangrove branches, into some very touch and go spots as that's where the fish are. As the plastic sinks, watch the line sinking back toward you. If you see it move or even the slightest touch, that's a bream grabbing it on the drop as it floats past them.

You must hook the fish and quickly get them away from where they are sitting or they will have you busted off in a second. Positioning the yak in a good place first, before you cast, helps a lot and having your drag set right plays a big part in this, allowing enough pressure on the fish without breaking your light leaders.



Motor Oil colour is
a favourite colour
for bream.

If the plastic hasn't been hit on the drop, a few hops and pauses on the bottom is normally all it takes before one of these bream nails the plastic. If you intend on trying this type of fishing I would suggest keeping a good supply of jigheads and plastics... if the trees aren't getting them, the big bream busting you off on snags will.

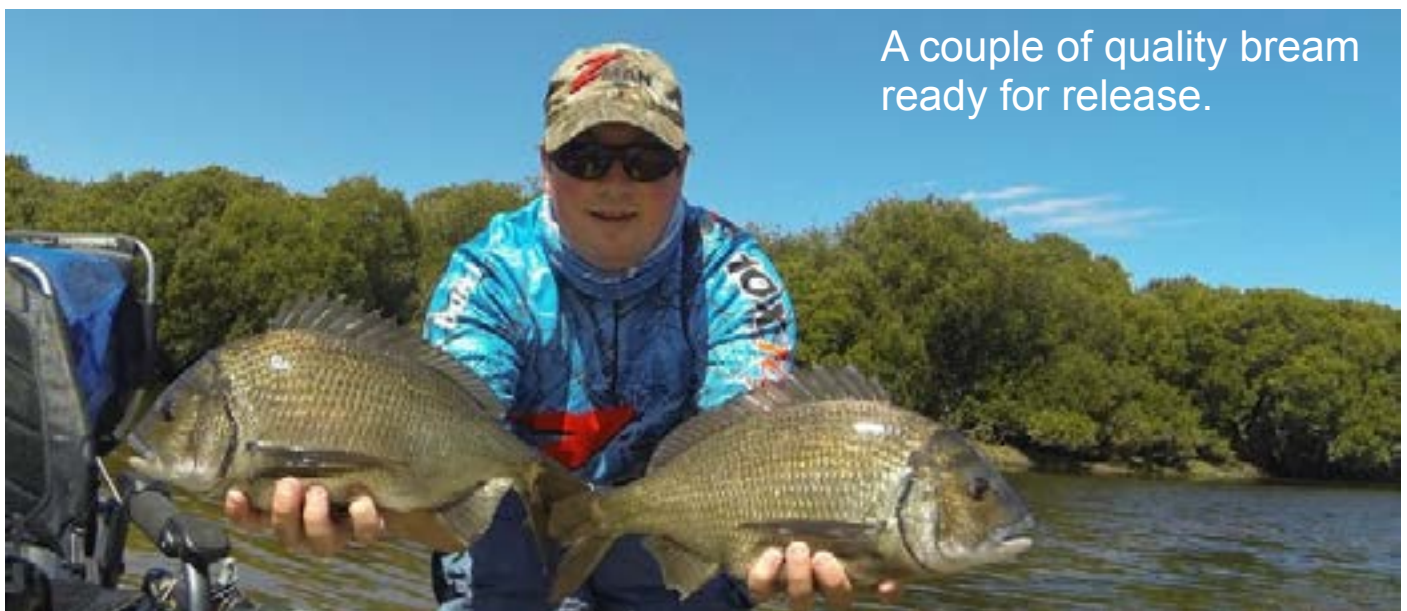


It can get quite frustrating some days and there will be days where you chuck everything at them but they are being very touchy. A smear of the Pro-Cure Garlic Super Gel scent on the plastic can get the bite happening and turn a slow day into a good day.

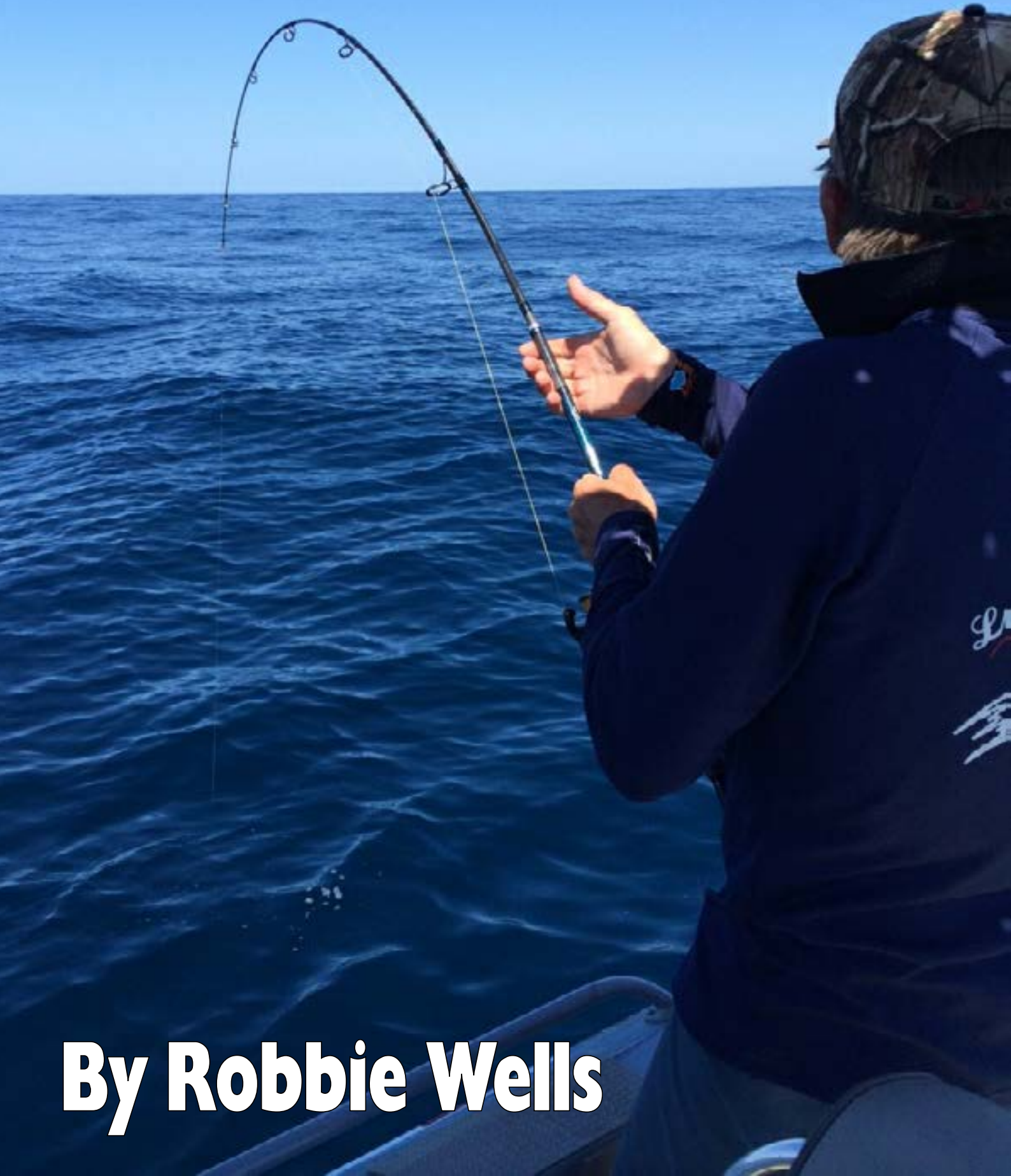


Fishing for these brutes out of a kayak is very enjoyable, but relaxing and stressful at the same time. These big bream that I catch are most times older than I am and I choose to release all of them so that they can go back to breed and allow someone else the enjoyment of catching them.

Cheers, Rhett



JIGGING PLASTICS



By Robbie Wells

It's amazing how this recreation or sport called fishing keeps changing as new forms of tackle evolve and so does the fishing equipment we use to get the full benefit from what is presented to our fishy friends below the surface. The latest is our metal world of jig crazy... from knife jigs to butterfly style jigs, down to the ever popular smaller brothers the micro jigs. As micro jigging gets more popular, so do the other older styles of deeper water jigging with metals and the modern trailer boat also allows us such a large scope.

Speciality rods have been developed that are shorter in length, with longer butts and parabolic curves that keep bending past the reel seat, PE 1-3 is the norm. Don't get me wrong, I love this style of fishing, but sometimes I think we forget how we used to do it or the technique that we used to catch fish prior to evolution of these new styles. The humble chrome slug has come a long way and the thinking angler can also adapt or crossover other styles and techniques to make things more successful on any given day.



Sue with a cobia on a TT Vector Jig.



Vector Jig in action again.

For me its plastics. They are just so versatile and definitely appeal to a wider variety of species. I love chasing AJs, kingfish, cobia and Spanish on them and like to fish that 35 to 70 metre range in depth. Another good reason I chase these species is that they often frequent the areas that I like to fish, whether it be the local artificial reef, wreck or deeper water ledge and they are great fun, fight dirty, test your terminal tackle and pull heaps of string.



As with any fishing you have to fish where the fish are and the availability of bait for the predators is paramount when targeting them. Wrecks and artificial reefs normally have good populations of bait and in turn attract the above mentioned predators. Of course every area is different and may work better on certain tides, lunar activity, time of the day and season. A good starting point is an early morning tide change and a good sounder is also an advantage in separating the bait from the fish and perhaps identifying what species lurks below.

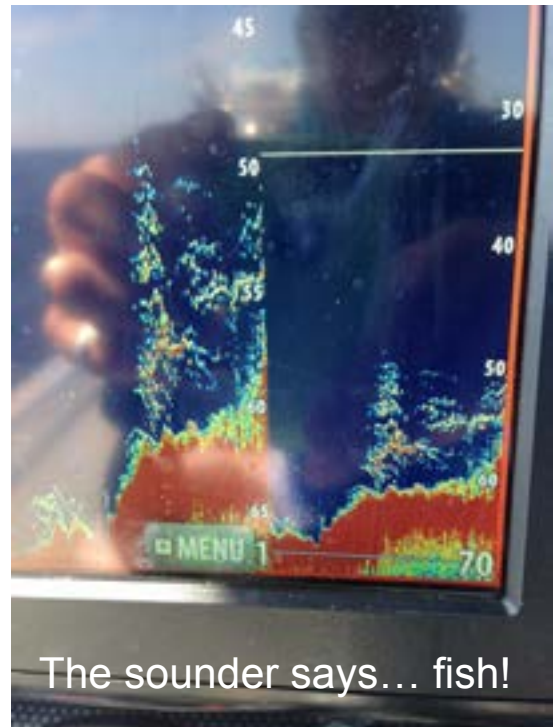


Personally, most of my success has been using the ZMan 5" StreakZ and ZMan 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ in Pearl, Coconut Ice Glow, Opening Night and Motor Oil colours, rigged with a TT Lures 5/0 - 7/0 HeadlockZ HD jighead. Weight will be dependent on current and depth, however don't be scared to fish a little heavier so that you have direct contact with your plastic. It will also track better and not spin through the water column on the retrieve.



AJs, cobia and dolphinfish, just a few that love a plastic.

My normal approach, once the bait and a potential show are located, is to free spool the plastic down to the target depth, slowing it down a little with my finger slightly on the spool. Watch for any increase in speed as there's a good chance that if fish are in the area you could get hit on the drop, the same as you would jigging metal. Otherwise, wait until the plastic gets to the bottom and then you can do the traditional pump and wind or even the 3, 6, 9, 12 wind, lifting the rod every quarter turn of the reel in a lively fashion, micro jig style. For me I like two or three fast jigs off the bottom, a fast burn to halfway up, jig again and then fast burn to the surface. This works a treat for AJs, cobia, etc. If there a few Spanish mackerel or spotties around and you are getting bite offs, a couple of jigs and a fast burn to the surface will normally stop this, or alternatively a small section of wire that is able to be tied can be added, but can reduce the number of bites.



The sounder says... fish!



These bruisers love the ZMan.

Sue with a hard pulling amberjack on the ZMan.



We always try and run different coloured plastics on our first drops as it is good to see if there are any preferences or patterns on the day. It is really important to ensure that your plastic is on the jighead dead straight and as mentioned earlier go a bit heavier so that when winding fast on the retrieve the plastic doesn't spin. TT HeadlockZ HD jigheads are a must as the grub keeper locks the plastic where it should be. There's nothing worse than wasting a drop, especially in the deeper water, from a lack of attention to detail.

Another game changer is the addition of a Rev Head HD jighead and I run the ones with a Willow nickel (silver) or gold blade attached. I prefer the gold, but that bit of spinning bling can really turn on a bite, especially in high traffic or pressured wrecks or artificial reefs. I fish this slightly slower on the retrieve, with a mix of fast burns and stop starts, along with a few violent rips of the rod tip thrown in. It might sound funny... but perhaps anything that they haven't seen before. Fish aren't silly and in pressured areas the same technique used by all can make for a dull quiet day.

A prime table fish, the pearl perch.





So next time you're out jigging or micro jigging some metal at your local, have that plastic ready to drop and likewise if you're just rattling plastics have a Vector Jig rod ready to roll. Like all fishing, if you mix it up, think back or think out of the square from the norm, your bad days can become good days.



How Goods Australia

Robbie Wells





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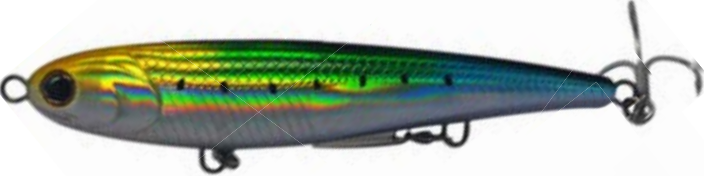
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