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Angler: Reece Thomas
Species: Snapper
Lure: ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ (Houdini)
Jighead: TT Lures HeadlockZ HD 1/6oz 3/0



SHALLOW WATER SNAPPER



BY REECE THOMAS

As an angler living in Brisbane I am lucky to have such a wide variety of areas to fish at my doorstep. From skinny water creeks to numerous freshwater impoundments, large rivers and creeks, all within a few hours drive of home. However, the main attraction here is Moreton Bay. The bay is a unique fishery with a lot to offer, from bream, flathead and whiting, to the usual reef dwellers like snapper, cod, grass emperor and mulloway, along with the pelagic species such as mackerel and tuna.

Moreton Bay is where I spend hours exploring in pursuit of shallow water snapper and there is nothing quite like the aggression and brute power these fish have. I use the term 'shallow water' to describe the water that I fish as it's not often that I find myself casting a lure for snapper any deeper than 5 metres. There is a vast variety of these areas situated throughout Moreton Bay that can be accessed easily by small boats and kayaks. Fishing in these shallow waters requires a lot of stealth, so keeping any boat noise to a minimum is vital.

Snapper are a forage feeder and also an aggressive hunter, so when using lures you are actively targeting the fish and finding structure is the first place to start. Structure can consist of reef, ledges, drop offs and gravel beds to manmade rock walls, pylons and artificial wrecks.

The 3" Scented ShrimpZ has accounted for a lot of Reece's snapper, rigged on a 1/8oz or 1/6oz 3/0XH HeadlockZ HD jighead.



Gear Selection - My approach to snapper fishing is to fish as light as possible. Generally reels in the 2000, 2500 and 3000 size, matched up on 7' graphite rods and spooled with 8-12lb braid will cover this. Some days a 6-8lb fluorocarbon leader is needed to entice wary fish in clear water, however a 10-12lb leader will be a general 'go-to' and give you a little more confidence when hooked up to that larger snapper.

Lure Selection - The main focus on lure fishing for snapper is soft plastics and the ZMan range suits every application I need when chasing snapper. Their 10X Tough ElaZtech material also means I can catch fish after fish on them.

ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ - I will start with the Curly TailZ range as snapper are a sucker for a well presented soft plastic with a strong tail action and the Curly TailZ fits this description.

These lures rigged on a 1/8oz or 1/6oz HeadlockZ are a deadly combination in the shallows and there has been numerous times where these plastics have been eaten on the drop by a snapper that has spotted it slowly wafting to the bottom. When selecting colours I like to 'match the hatch' with any baitfish present and Baby Bass and Motor Oil (UV) work extremely well in the areas that I fish.



The ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ in Motor Oil (UV) is a great colour for when the sun has risen above the horizon.

Josh King with an 80cm snapper on one of his go-to soft plastics, the 3.75" ZMan StreakZ in Redbone Glow colour, rigged on a 1/8oz or 1/6oz HeadlockZ jighead depending on water depth.



ZMan 3.75" StreakZ - The little finesse bait. The 3.75" StreakZ are always rigged on at least one of my rods when snapper fishing and don't be put off by their size as they have accounted for many snapper up to 75cm and some impressive by-catch.

Again rigged on a lightly weighted HeadlockZ jighead you can fish these slowly to imitate a cruising baitfish or with a faster paced retrieve to imitate a baitfish trying to evade a predator. With plenty of different colour variations in the 3.75" StreakZ range, there is plenty of options available.

ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ - What doesn't eat a prawn? These lures have been very successful for me on a range of species and were one of the first lures I used to target snapper over six years ago. The darker, more natural coloured ShrimpZ in Bloodworm, New Penny, Houdini and Redbone Glow suit my low light fishing for snapper, as these create a distinct silhouette against dimly lit skies. I have found that when fishing the shallows these rig perfectly on a 1/6oz 3/0 HeadlockZ HD and these jigheads have the strength to withstand the force of a snapper's powerful jaw. The most successful technique has been to fish these lures slowly, making sure they spend enough time making contact with the structure.

ZMan 3" MinnowZ - The 3" MinnowZ are a very versatile soft plastic for an array of species. I regularly incorporate the MinnowZ into my snapper fishing as the tail action that this lure puts off means that it can be slow rolled or hopped across a shallow reef. Baby Bass has been a standout colour in the MinnowZ and it's a close representation of the small hardy heads that inhabit the shallow reefs.

ZMan 2.5" GrubZ - The 2.5" GrubZ are a great all rounder for many species. I commonly have one rigged on a light jighead, either 1/8oz or 1/12oz and use this to 'deadstick', which is basically leaving it secure in a rod holder and letting the plastic drag or bounce across the bottom. The buoyancy of the ZMan means the GrubZ sits tail up, bouncing along the bottom, which is appealing to many fish.



One of Reece's favourites, the ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ.

Shallow feeding snapper from two metres of water on a ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ in Houdini colour, rigged on a 1/6oz 3/0XH HeadlockZ HD jighead.



Switchblading Snapper- TT Lures' Switchblades in 1/8oz and 1/4oz are a great vibration lure to use when searching ground for snapper or fishing schooled fish.

These put out a really strong vibration that can trigger a bite from an aggressive fish. The best technique is small subtle lifts and to keep in contact with the lure at all times, allowing it to pause for only a few seconds on the bottom.

Micro Jigging - Micro jigging is a relatively similar approach as using a vibration blade, except this application is more suited to deeper reefs and artificial wrecks or schooled fish you may have located with a sounder. The TT Vector micro jigs come in a range of weights to cover various depths of water and the 15g and 25g Vectors have been more suited to the wrecks located in Moreton Bay.

Scents - I have a strong belief that adding scent can help increase the chance of catching fish. The Pro-Cure range has a huge line up of which I have been able to use numerous flavours. Shrimp, Mullet and Inshore Saltwater have been used with good success. The effectiveness of Pro-Cure Super Gel means that you only need to apply a small amount to the lure to achieve a result.

Reece Thomas

Some common snapper by-catch around structure.



A solid bream landed while chasing snapper.



Mark Masters with a night snapper on a ZMan ShrimpZ.



Reece with a snapper recaptured 5 days after they originally tagged it





**THE ADVANTAGES OF
WEEDLESS RIGGING**

By Shaun Taylor

Tackle Tactics Pro Angler and professional fishing guide Shaun Taylor talks us through weedless rigging and how it is a blessing for fishing guides and an advantage for anglers.

The advantages of weedless rigging and the leaps and bounds with which tackle development has advanced has made this system even more deadly. Gone are the days when an assortment of different size ball sinkers needed to be carried around to chin rig your weedless hook, to a weight required for the job at hand. Although this method worked well, it had its downsides. Occasionally the ball sinker would impact the loop knot on the strike, resulting in a bust off... often followed by some colourful language.

Research and development by the TT/ZMan team and the eventual release of the SnakelockZ system solved these problems, with interchangeable weights to fit a variety of sizes of the weedless ChinlockZ hooks, making life easier amongst the weeds and the snags.

The benefits that this system offers are magnified once you put yourself in a guiding scenario, with three anglers on your boat, often with limited experience and ability (but high expectations). As any lure angler knows, it can often be a matter of centimetres between getting the bite and drawing a blank. I always encourage my clients to get their lures right in amongst the snags. (To quote old Remy 'It's no good being where the fish ain't!') This of course can also be a guides' nightmare, with lures flying through the scrub, 30 metres up the bank, 100ft up a tree, or worse through your earlobe!



Barra love holding deep in structure and are a perfect target for weedless rigged soft plastics.

Weedless rigging makes snag dwelling species much more accessible to anglers.



This is where the SnakelockZ system has been gold for me. Once a client is shown how an errant cast up the bank, through the snag or around the wrong side of a log can be slowly walked through the snag, usually ending up smack bang in the bite zone, their confidence and in time accuracy grows.

I have seen it hundreds of times, where the initial response of clients trying to free a placcy from the trees is the 'violent jerk method' which usually results in a tree tangle that Houdini himself couldn't unravel. It is a common thing for a guide, once you spot a lure landing in a tree, to quickly instruct the angler to 'Hold Up' and then to instruct them to slow wind the weedless offering up, under, through or around the branches until it extricates itself and 'plops' straight into the mouth of a hungry barra, jack or toga. I have seen this happen many times.

Several of the systems that we fish in the Maningrida area have areas of spindly timber piles. Bank slides that have broken away in the wet and then settled downstream somewhere, providing perfect habitat for ambush predators. These spots are custom made for the SnakelockZ system, as it enables you to work your plastic (usually a ZMan 3" MinnowZ, 4" DieZel MinnowZ, or 4" SwimmerZ) through the gaps in the timber, or even right through the thickest areas. Quick rod work and a heavy drag setting is recommended as a decent fish doesn't have far to go to stitch you up in the rough stuff!

One of my favourite river systems, that holds quite a few jacks as well as the barra, fingermark, threadies and blue salmon, along with the occasional black jewfish, has seen me find a new favourite in the 3" MinnowZ range! It's no secret that Redbone Glow and Rootbeer Gold have been firm favourites of mine for years now, but in this particular system my old favourites have been relegated to the bench, with Chartruese Glow proving itself as best on ground!



Barra love holding in the prop roots and snag piles.

The mangrove jack especially have been all over this colour, like the proverbial fat kid on a Mars bar! I have had some amazing sessions this season, with up to 30 jacks falling for the little three inch 'green machine'. It brings to mind the old saying from fly fishing guru Lefty Kreh that 'if it ain't chartreuse, it ain't no use'.

In the interest of diversity I will usually have one angler on this lure, another on a Pearl 4" SwimmerZ and the third on a small suspending hard body. It has become standard now for the other punters to request 'one of those little green buggers' when the chartreuse is out fishing all other offerings.



Shaun with a SnakelockZ jack.

Of course another advantage to this weedless method is that when a bite goes quiet and fish retreat deep into the snags, this is pretty much the only method available that can put an offering in front of their face. I recall a great session earlier in the season, at the mouth of a feeder creek that runs into the mighty Liverpool River, where the barra were smashing my clients' lures, with many double and even triple hook ups. Just to the downstream side of the feeder stood an old bank slide of spindly timber and after picking fish off around the edges of the snag pile and the small back eddy associated with it, the bite went quiet. A quick change to 4" SwinmerZ rigged weedless and swum right into the thickest nastiest parts of the snag pile re-ignited the bite and another 12 or 15 barra were landed. Without this rig it would not have been possible to get a lure to them.

This is why this method has become a firm favourite in our guiding arsenal and when added to the durability and fish catching ability of the ZMan range (and of course a generous dollop of Mullet Pro-Cure) it makes for a user-friendly, fish catching system that's hard to beat.

Fish on!
Shaun



All sorts of species can be caught while fishing weedless.



SNAGLESS SOLUTIONS

Fish love structure, including weed beds, standing or fallen timber, rock bars and freshly flooded grass, but the problem for anglers is getting the lure in and out without snagging or fouling. Soft plastics rigged on one of TT Lures snagless solutions are the perfect option for fishing structure, allowing you to fish deep in the structure where the fish are holding... when a fish eats it though, it's over to you!

ChinlockZ are an unweighted worm hook that feature a 'chin lock' system to secure your soft plastic in place on the hook, allowing you to cast hard, work your plastic aggressively and maximise the chances of your plastic still swimming correctly even after a strike. Being unweighted it is ideal for fishing soft plastics on the surface through and over structure.



ChinlockZ SWS (Snagless Weight System) feature the TT 'chin lock' system along with a belly weight that creates a slow, natural, horizontal sink that fish find irresistible. It is ideal for slow sinking soft plastics deep into structure in slower currents and water depths up to a couple of metres. It is also a go-to when buzzing frogs over weed beds and timber, and through pockets for barra and cod.



SnakelockZ feature a 'chin lock' along with a free-swinging front weight for maximum action. This front weight is attached via a 75lb test rated, stainless steel through wire loop that allows the head to be removed for surface fishing or to mix and match hook sizes and head weights as required.



- TT Lures ChinlockZ, ChinlockZ SWS and SnakelockZ are built on Mustad, heavy duty, chemically sharpened, black nickel worm hooks.
- ZMan soft plastics are ideal for worm hook rigging due to their durability and buoyancy, along with their softness and flexibility that sees the plastic easily shifted and hook point exposed when a fish strikes.
- A general guide is 2/0-4/0 for 3-4" plastics, 4/0-6/0 for 5" and 6/0-8/0 for 6"+ plastics.
- When using FrogZ a 6/0 is ideal for 4" FrogZ and an 8/0 for 6" FrogZ when targeting cod, barra and other large mouthed predators.



ChinlockZ



ChinlockZ SWS



SnakelockZ



BREAM... **ONLY THE BEGINNING IN WINTER**



By Ryan Dixon

Early morning is a great time to target winter snapper.



There's nothing quite like watching the sun rise on a glassed out Winter's morning over Moreton Bay... with the sound of a screaming reel, as a snapper swims off with what it thought would be its breakfast. Winter in South East Queensland is easily my favourite time of the year for fishing, with a wide range on species on offer for all types of fisherman. Flathead move into the rivers and creeks, bream start their spawning run at the river mouth and in the bay, tailor and bay snapper become easier targets and trophy fish such as threadfin salmon and mulloway (jewfish) become more concentrated in our river systems.

Making the decision on what to target is not always an easy one, however I let the weather make up my mind, with good days seeing me head into the bay chasing snapper and tailor, whilst on the days of not so perfect weather I chase the other mentioned species in my local river.

Will Lee with a school size threadfin salmon.



ZMan 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ are a favourite of Ryan's for the big bay snapper.



For people wanting to chase snapper, hours of low light seem to be best in shallow water and as the sun rises they will move deeper. Shallow reefs, rubble banks, cockle beds and drop offs are a good starting areas to cast soft plastics and small blades, with lightly weighted plastics being the best option. ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ are a favourite of mine for pan size fish, with the ZMan 7" Scented Jerk ShadZ being my go-to for big fish. By matching these two baits with a light jighead and a heavy gauge hook, such as a TT HeadlockZ HD, you're sure to become tangled with a bay bruiser. Finding areas away from heavy boat traffic is very important when chasing snapper, with mid-week sessions providing the best results.



This quality snapper ate a ZMan 3.75" StreakZ.

Walking the banks can produce plenty of flathead and river mouths are perfect.



Bream and flathead are both species that I target at the same time and are awesome fun once you have found an area where both are in numbers. When targeting bream and flathead I use a bait that is small enough for bream to eat, yet still a bait that a flathead won't hesitate to eat. I find the ZMan 2.5" GrubZ and ZMan 2.5" Slim SwimZ perfect, matched on a TT HeadlockZ Finesse, light wire hook. With plenty of Pro-Cure Inshore Saltwater or Mullet Super Gel Scent applied every dozen casts or once a fish has been hooked. Areas worth trying for bream and flathead include rocky shoals, bridge pylons, weed flats and drop offs. In hours of heavy sunlight I find that

areas that have plenty of shade are a good starting point.

Bream will be in good numbers in the winter and ZMan GrubZ are hard to beat.





A winter flathead and a Motor Oil coloured Slim SwimZ.

Most people associate tailor fishing with casting twelve foot rods into surf gutters on Fraser or Moreton Island in September. I find from June through to August the best time to target tailor in Moreton Bay, with good numbers of reasonable sized fish on offer. Early morning and late afternoon into the evening are the best times to target tailor and choosing a plastic similar to the baitfish in the area will yield the best results. The most common baitfish encountered in Moreton Bay are hardy heads and the ZMan 3" MinnowZ in Opening Night colour are the perfect imitation. ZMan 3.75" StreakZ are another favourite of mine, both matched on a TT HeadlockZ jighead. Tailor tend to feed high in the water column so a light jighead works well for a slow retrieve and a heavy jighead works well when making long casts and using a fast retrieve. When a school of surface feeding fish have been located, ZMan Pop ShadZ are the best option, rigged on a TT ChinlockZ hook, with plenty of Pro-Cure scent added.



Jay Noble with a couple of tailor on the Opening Night coloured MinnowZ.



Ryan with a threadfin pushing the magic metre mark.

Fishing for jew (mulloway) and threadfin salmon in South East Queensland's rivers and creeks is becoming increasingly popular, as the thought of catching fish between 80-120cm is a major incentive for lure fishos. Although both can be finicky feeders, having patience once locating a school will eventually show results. Having a good depth sounder and spending plenty of time driving around trying to locate fish is often boring, but is the best way to get confidence in the spot you are fishing.

It's no secret that deep holes are a good spot to fish for jew (mulloway) and threadfin, with bridges, drop offs and areas that hold plenty of bait being just as good. Paddle tail style plastics are perfect for both species, with ZMan 4" SwimmerZ and 6" SwimmerZ being hard to beat. ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ are equally as good as paddle tail plastics, with ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ and the 4" version being not far behind. By interchanging through your lures, you will maximize your chances of a hook up. Retrieves should be changed quite regularly, with small hops, a simple slow wind and a burn and kill all working on different days.

Although fishing in winter may not be the most comfortable time of year to fish, the chance of catching a trophy fish will soon make you forget about your frozen fingers. So pull out the Ugg boots, whack on a jumper and get out on the water to give yourself a chance at tangling with one of the many species on offer in South East Queensland and other parts of Australia.



A StreakZ Curly TailZ jewfish.

SWEETWATER TACTICS



By Angus James

There are so many great ways to enjoy fishing. It really is up to the individual as to how much they want to put in and experience. It can be extremely physical or very relaxing. It's what you make it. That's why so many people love this pastime... there are endless ways to learn and achieve from it. For me, as a young kid, I have so many memories of being outdoors with my father learning everything he knew, from collecting bait to finding the right places to fish, all that time outdoors set the path for what my passion is for the sport today.

Personally I love any style of fishing, but my favourite way to enjoy this magical pastime would have to be trekking the sweetwater streams. Walking up a sweetwater stream, with crystal clear water flowing, is such a great way to experience the great outdoors! The fresh air and sounds of the bush really take you away to a special place, with not a worry in the world. Except of course for that big jungle perch, mangrove jack, sooty grunter or barramundi that is about to destroy your lure and pump your body with line peeling adrenalin!



Angus with a solid skinny water sooty grunter on a TT spinnerbait.



Exploring new water
is part of the fun.

Living up here in far north Queensland I feel very privileged to have endless sweetwater to explore and experience. When planning a mission, often I will use Google Maps to come up with a solid game plan to find the untouched areas. If you put in the effort you will reap the rewards! Not all systems up here produce great results but if you keep exploring and searching you will eventually find some great honey holes and when you do the fishing can be off the chain! I have found places deep in the jungle where the jungle perch and sooty grunter will literally eat out of your hand!

Now firstly I'm going to go through some safety gear that should be packed before any sweetwater adventure. A first aid kit is must! There are plenty of small compact ones to choose from or you can make your own up and put it in a watertight container. Take plenty of water and enough food to keep hydrated and the energy levels up. Make sure you have communication with the outside world. Your phone will always have the emergency 000 to dial, even if out of range from networks. I always take a headlamp. It's a great idea to have a lighter or even some waterproof matches. There are so many compact items that will fit in a little backpack that could save your life in case something went wrong. Better to be safe than sorry. Also waterproof your gear!!

By far the most important of all is to let a few people know exactly what system or creek you intend on walking up and what time you plan on being home. Often I will tell a few people and even screen shot the Google map image of the area I intend exploring and send it to them before I go. Last but not least always try to fish with a buddy. It's the safest way to go while enjoying these beautiful environments.

Now, with all the safety gear sorted, its time to pack some lures and the Tackle Tactics range has everything you need! My favorite ZMan to flick in the sweetwater is the ZMan 4" StreakZ Curly TailZ. These are the perfect bite-sized presentation that will get the attention of most species that thrive in our tropical waters! Rigged on a light HeadlockZ jighead, I love to burn these weapons across the surface and watch the jungle perch race out to attack them! It's such a fun way to get a bend in the rod. Allowing them to slowly float down into the deeper holes on a lightly weighted HeadlockZ will also see them get smashed! The buoyancy in the ElaZtech material almost brings them to life, making them hard to resist especially with a little bit of added Pro-Cure scent.



Another sweetwater prize, the mighty mangrove jack.



When the water is flowing hard a great option is the TT Lures Vortex spinnerbait. This presentation is perfect for keeping direct contact with in fast flowing water. Slip a ZMan 2" GrubZ on the stinger hook and you have a deadly action that is going to draw attention from any species!

Generally I will use a 1000 size reel with a nice whippy little rod for flicking light presentations. I load up the spool with 5lb braid, with an 8lb fluorocarbon leader. I find 8lb leader will take a beating on rocks and logs all day without too much abrasion. The best thing about this style of fishing is that because the water is crystal clear you get to watch it all happen right before your eyes! Seeing a hungry pack of sooty grunter and jungle perch race out from a snag to your lure is some pretty wild stuff!

Another champion of the sweetwater is the mighty mangrove jack! I absolutely love targeting these little guys in the fresh. They hit hard and fast, so you have to have your 'A' game on! They really test your finesse angling skills and it's amazing how far up the fresh they can be found. One of my favourite places to find them is a good 30km from the salt!

Much like stalking JPs, using the same tactics like working from the shadows, positioning yourself behind structure, keeping a low profile and making as little noise as possible will result in more fish. It's all about getting that cast right into the sweet spot without them knowing you're there. Often I will rig my ZMan lures weedless on the ChinlockZ / SnakelockZ combination. This allows me quick changes of weights and allows me to get deep into their strike zone. All the colours in the range are great with Mood Ring being my go-to choice and often, because jacks are very territorial, a quick switch to Red Shad or Calico Candy will tempt out a territorial strike!

I highly recommend this style of fishing to anyone, it's a great experience and will give you with plenty of great memories. Being outdoors and exploring new areas is what it's all about... get out there and seek the adventure! Remembering, safety first!

I look forward to seeing you out there!
Cheers Jimmy



Jungle perch are on the bucket list of many anglers.

BREAM BASICS



By Erinn Ball

By no means would I class myself as an expert when it comes to bream fishing, but I have learnt enough over the past couple of years to be able to successfully bag my fair share of fish. The great thing about bream fishing is that you don't need a boat or even a kayak to successfully target these fish, you just need a rod and a packet of plastics. Bream are a great species to target if you are new to the sport of lure fishing or you are wanting to take the kids for a quick fish on the weekend. You don't have to travel far to be able to hook into a bream either as most local estuaries, marinas, rock walls and beaches all hold an abundance of bream.

When targeting bream the main thing, like any fish, is you want to find structure and a food source. A great place to start the search for bream is around the local marinas and trawlers. The good thing about marinas is that there is ample cover for the fish to hide under, such as pontoons, boats and pylons. The key to fishing these locations is getting your cast as close to the structure as possible and working the lure with a slow retrieve. If you are fishing around trawlers always be courteous to the people that may be working around you and don't let the fishing hinder their work.

A great technique to learn is how to skip cast a plastic under and around overhanging structure. This will ensure that your plastic is right in the strike zone and give you the best opportunity of gaining a hook up from your cast. The lighter the jighead, the easier the lure is to skip cast. I believe that ZMan are one of the easiest lures to skip cast as they are naturally buoyant and are wanting to stay on the surface. The way in which to skip cast a lure is almost identical to the action of skipping a rock. You want to make sure that the lure is low towards the water, almost parallel with it and then it's up to you to release that lure at the correct time. As for anything new that you are learning, practice makes perfect.



A couple of ZMan CrusteaZ bream.

Erinn with a marina
bream on a cut down
ZMan 3" Scented
ShrimpZ.



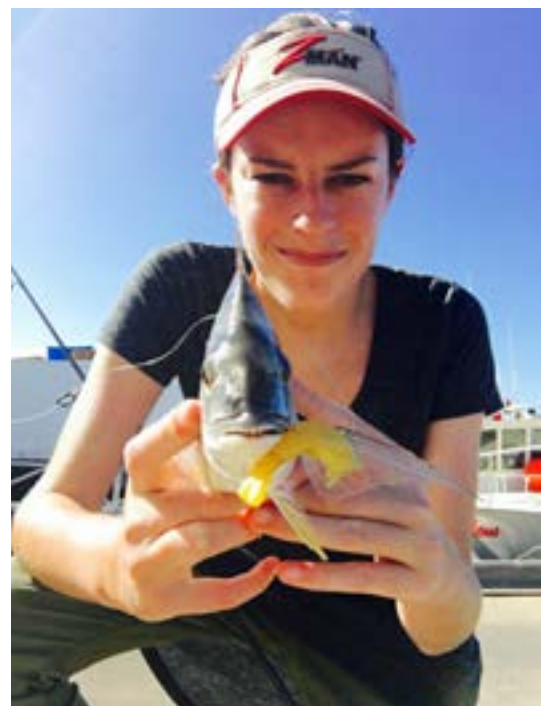
Almost every angler that you talk to will have his/her favourite lure to use. **When targeting bream around marinas my top two favourite plastics are:**

1. ZMan 3" Scented ShrimpZ in Natural colour – When I am fishing around the trawlers this is my go-to bait. When the fish are aggressive and willing to feed I like to throw a whole ShrimpZ, rigged on a 1/0 or even a 2/0 1/8oz HeadlockZ jighead. When the fish are more shut down and aren't willing to eat a larger profile lure, I like to cut the ShrimpZ in half. I will then rig the tail section of the lure on a 1H 1/16oz HeadlockZ jighead.

I like to fish plastics as basically as possible, as I believe a lot of people tend to over work them. Allow the lure to sink to the bottom and rest for a couple of seconds, then simply implement a couple of light twitches into the rod to allow the lure to slowly hop along the bottom and then repeat. For a little extra attractant I always spread some Shrimp Pro-Cure onto my lure.



A family of cut-down ShrimpZ ready for action



2. TT Lures 1/8, 1/6 and 1/4oz Switchblades in Copper Head and Red Nightmare colours –

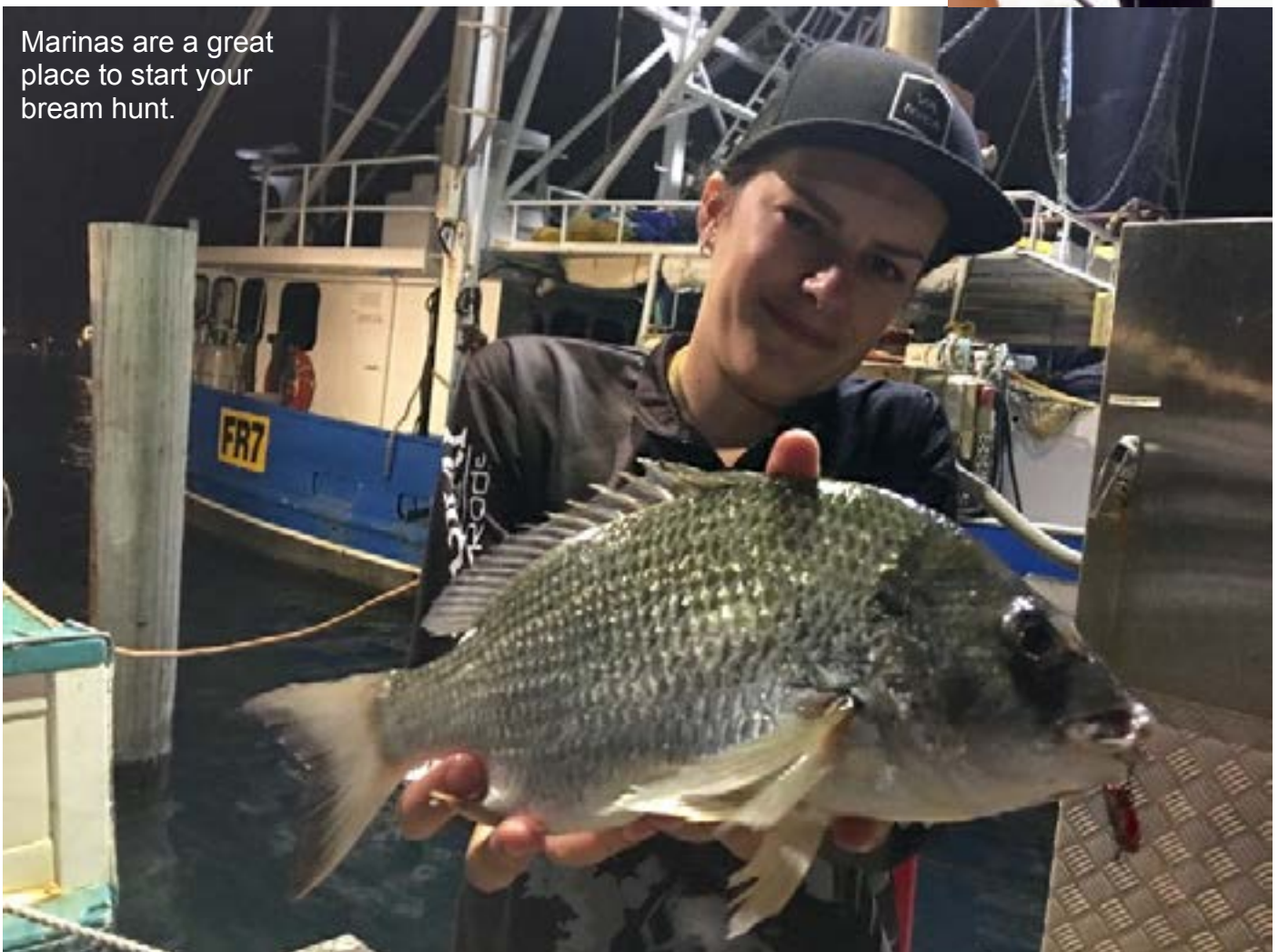
When I am bream fishing at night I mostly use a TT Lures Switchblade. The size of Switchblade I use depends on the current, depth and wind speed. I work the Switchblades in the lights of trawlers, as the smaller baitfish are attracted to the light, which in theory should then attract the larger predators.



I allow the Switchblade to sink to the bottom and straight away wind it back with a relatively slow retrieve. The fantastic thing about the Switchblades is that they are very versatile, which leads to great by-catch from species such as trevally.



Marinas are a great place to start your bream hunt.

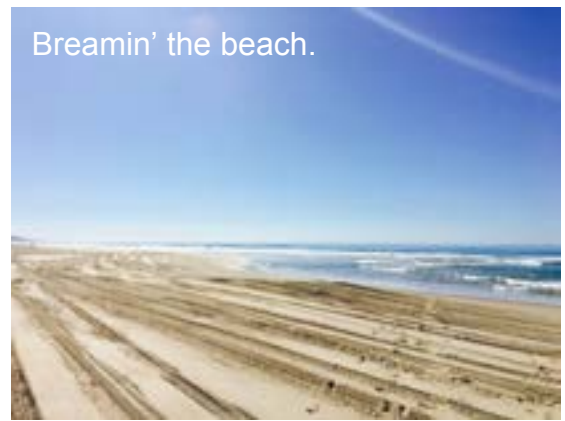


Beach fishing with plastics is something which I believe is quite underrated. When targeting bream in particular, I like to fish the first three hours of the run out tide. To find the right location I will drive along the beach until I find the perfect gutter, looking for depth changes, colour changes in the water and waves that are breaking short of the beach. I then start at one end of the gutter and work my way to the other, casting as I go. By walking the gutter and casting you will cover a lot more ground and the chance of a hook up will be increased. The species opportunities are endless and beach fishing can allow for some great by-catch species such as dart, whiting, flathead and tailor in the cooler months.

When targeting bream on the beach my top plastic is:

ZMan 2" GrubZ in Bloodworm and Greasy Prawn colours – When bream fishing from the beach, I like to use a ZMan 2" GrubZ rigged on a #1 1/8oz HeadlockZ Finesse jighead. The reason that I like this particular plastic is that when it is resting on the bottom fish can commonly mistake it for a beach worm drifting around in the current.

To fish the GrubZ in a beach gutter I simply cast the lure to the other side of the gutter (if I can reach it) and let the current push the plastic around on the bottom, continually winding up slack line so that I am constantly in contact with the lure. Once you believe the lure is out of the strike zone, just repeat the process. If the fish aren't reacting to the lure when it is on the drift, I will then go back to the more conventional style of hopping the lure along the bottom.



Bream are accessible to anglers around the country and a great species to target on using lures.



Tackle

When I am bream fishing I usually take just one combo, a 1000 size reel and a 7' 2-6lb spinning rod. I like a rod that is quite whippy in the tip so that I can cast lightly weighted or even unweighted plastics a good distance. My reels are spooled up with either 4 or 6lb braid and a rod length of 6lb fluorocarbon leader. When I am fishing with such light line I like to connect my leader to the braid via a Slim Beauty knot as I find it easy to tie,

strong and small in profile so it casts through the guides easily.

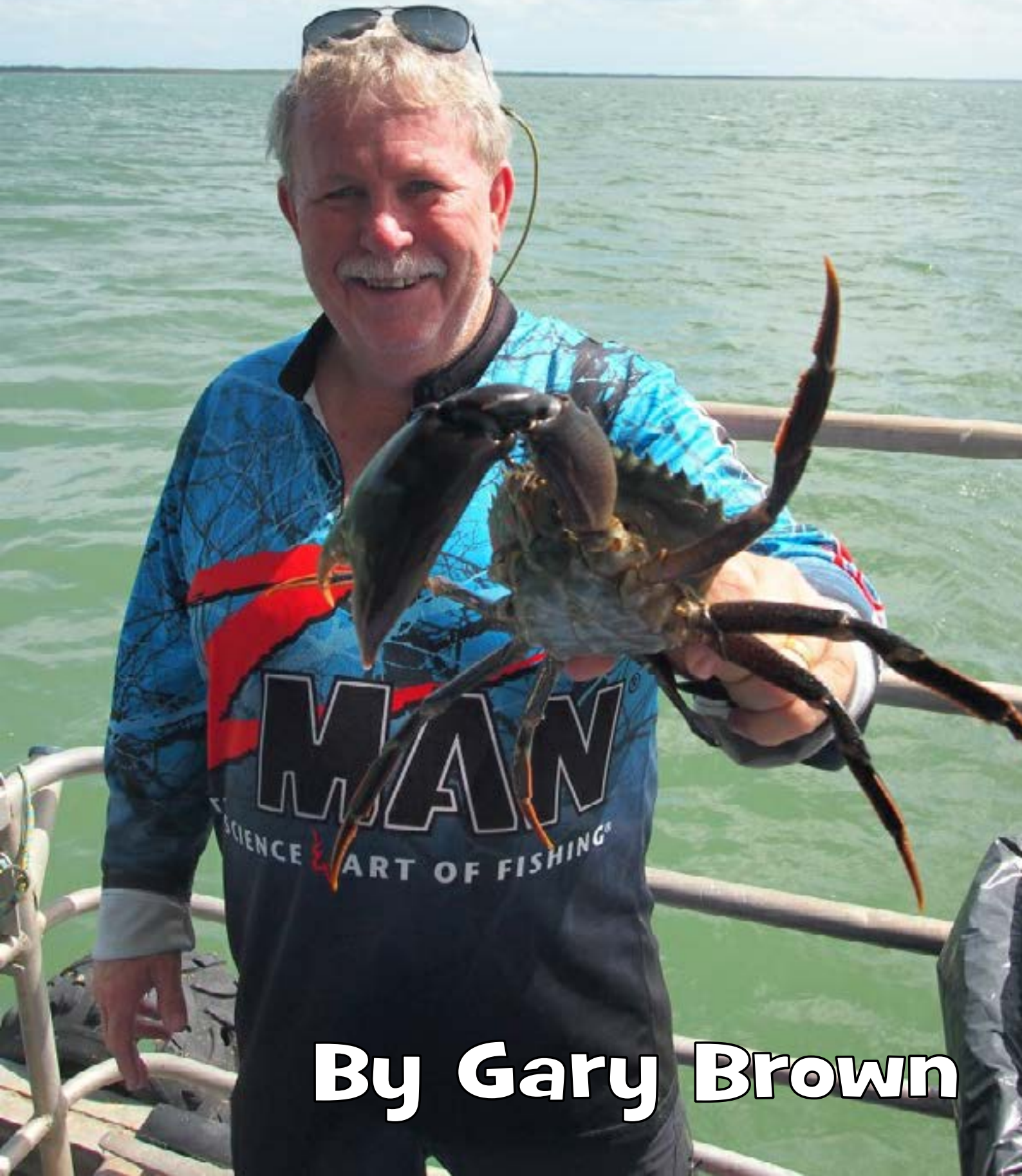
The most important thing to remember when fishing with any lure is that it is going to take time and practice to refine the skill. Patience is the key, but once you have caught a fish on a lure you will never want to go back to bait fishing. Fishing is meant to be fun and relaxing so if it's not working for you on that particular day, just pack it up and try again later.

If you are wanting to follow my fishing adventures a little closer, be sure to follow me on Facebook and Instagram at Erinn Ball – Girls Fish Too.

www.facebook.com/erinnballgirlsfishtoo/

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WEIIPA



By Gary Brown

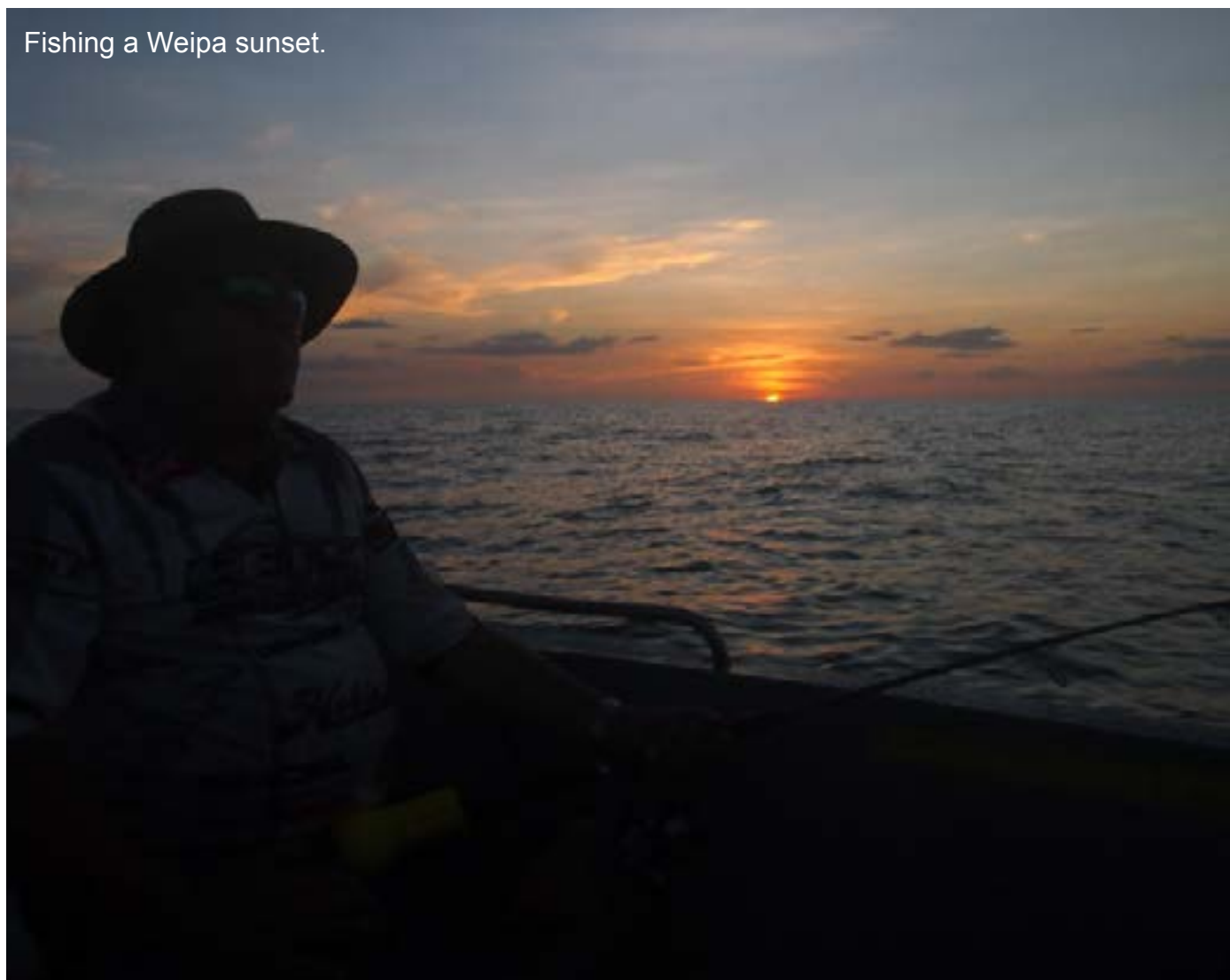
May 2016 had Dave Tosland and myself boarding a plane to spend a week fishing in the wilds of Weipa in far north Queensland. The trip had been over seven months in the planning and now it was really happening.

Scotty Lyons from Southern Sydney Fishing Tours runs a week long fishing trip out from Weipa in a 6 berth houseboat that has a couple of 4.5 metre Polycraft dories with 60hp Honda's.

The plan for the week was to take up as many soft plastics and jigheads as I could fit into my luggage and travel south and north of Weipa to fish as many places as we could in the short time that we were up there.

So, having not been up to Weipa and fished there before, it was a bit of a daunting task as to what should we take up in the way of soft plastics and jigheads. This was easily fixed by surfing through the many articles on the Tackle Tactics website's 'Tips and Techniques' that other angler/writers had put together. Anglers like Declan Williams, Robbie Wells and Justin Willmer.

Fishing a Weipa sunset.



Do you think the boat will be big enough for all of these lures.



After much deliberation it was decided to take the following gear up with us:

PLASTICS.

- 3 inch ZMan MinnowZ in Pearl, Sexy Mullet and Houdini.
- 4 inch ZMan SwimmerZ in Pearl, Shiner and Golden Boy.
- 6 inch ZMan SwimmerZ in Shinner and Gold Rush.
- 5 and 7 inch ZMan Jerk Shad in Pearl, Nuked Chicken and Coconut Ice.
- 5 inch ZMan GrubZ in Shimmer Pearl and Motor Oil.
- 5 inch ZMan Grass KickerZ in Pearl and Houdini.
-

JIG HEADS

- HeadlockZ 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, 1/2, 3/4 and 1oz in 3/0's, 4/0's, 5/0's and 7/0's.
- SnakelockZ 1/12, 1/8, 1/6, 1/4 and 3/8oz in 3/0's, 4/0's and 6/0's.
- ChinlockZ 1/8 and 1/6oz in 3/0's, 4/0's and 6/0's.

Did we have enough? Only time would tell.



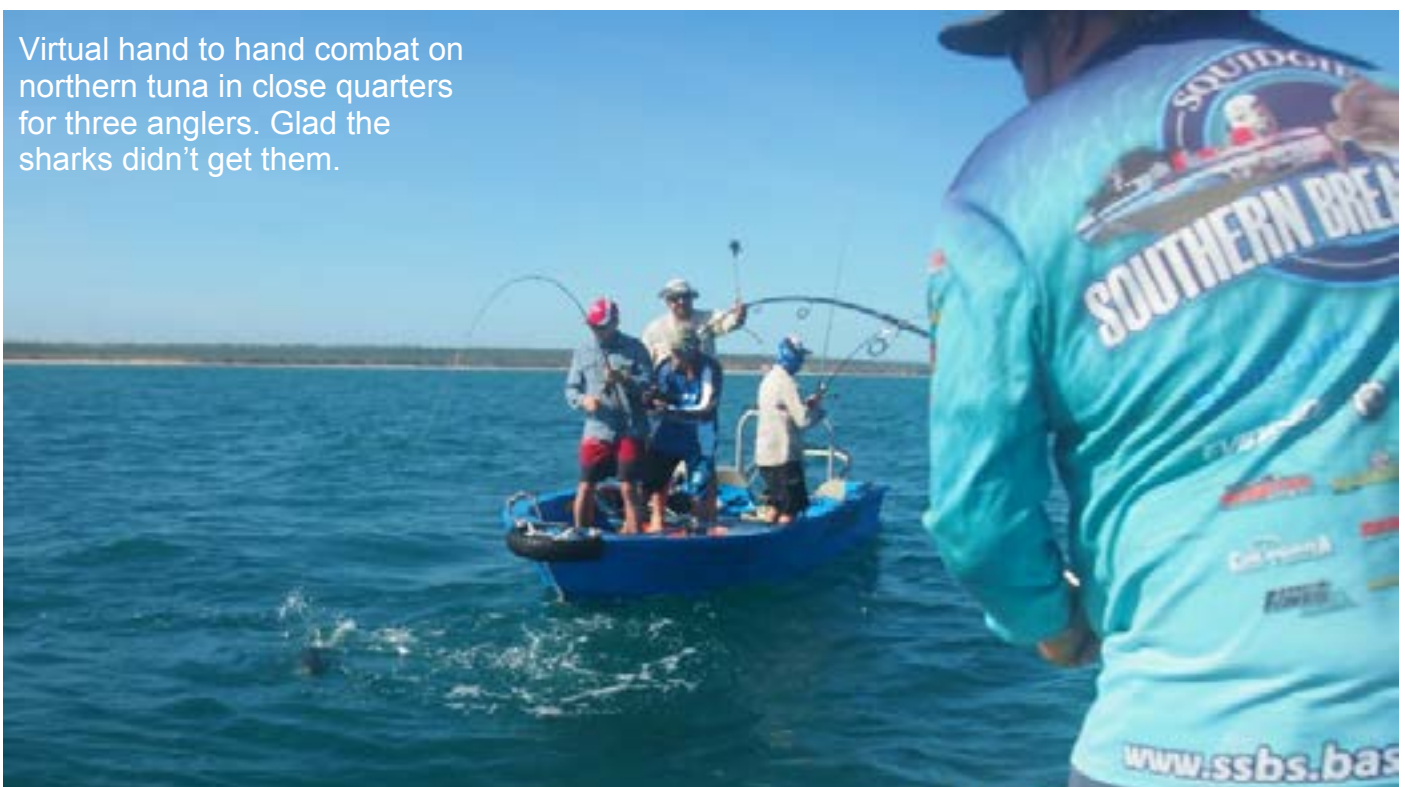
ZMan 4" SwimmerZ in Shiner colour the undoing of this tuna.

Not long after boarding the houseboat we were travelling south, rigging up our rods and getting ourselves ready for the next three days fishing the bluewater, coral bommies and beaches as far south as Boyds Bay and the three-mile reef.

The next three days virtually went into a blur, with so many northern bluefin (longtail) tuna coming aboard and getting eaten by ocean going bronze whalers that were longer than our boat. I have never seen so many tuna, smashing up bait balls four times the size of a car. It was total mayhem. It didn't seem to matter whether you cast a 3, 4 or 5-inch plastic at them or what colour you chose. They all got eaten.

What did matter was how fast or slow you retrieved the plastic. One morning they would only take the plastic skipped across the surface, while that afternoon they only wanted a slowly sinking soft plastics and then, to change it up a bit, the next morning they would only take the plastic as it was either jigged or ripped from off the bottom to the surface.

From memory there was one colour that seemed to work the best on the tuna and that was the Nuked Chicken Glow, followed by the Pearl. This is mainly because we didn't come back with any of these colours!



Virtual hand to hand combat on northern tuna in close quarters for three anglers. Glad the sharks didn't get them.

The coral trout, barramundi, stripes and diamond trevally on the other hand only responded to a slowly twitched soft plastic, over the sandy areas near the beaches or the shallow coral reefs.

My largest barramundi of 70cm was caught by casting a Motor Oil coloured ZMan GrubZ rigged on a HeadlockZ HD 1/4oz 4/0 jighead, just to the side of a couple of boulders on the corner of a beach. There was only a couple of taps, then all hell broke loose as it went under the boat, once around the motor leg and twice around the anchor rope. I kid you not. It took all the luck in the world to lift motor and pass the outfit around the anchor rope twice. Luckily I had thrown the bail arm open in the process.

When working the shallow coral bommies it was a matter of staying in touch with the plastic at all times. As they say, you snooze you lose. Many a time it was all over in the blink of an eye and the fish had got its prey back into its hidey hole... and no matter what you did, you couldn't get it out.

The main technique that we both used was to keep our rod tip at about 45 degrees to the water's surface, drag done up a bit more, while watching the soft plastic at all times. This is where a good set of polaroids is a must.



The author's largest barramundi of 70cm, caught casting a ZMan GrubZ in Motor Oil colour on a HeadlockZ jighead.

Our last three days were spent fishing north of Weipa in the Mission River, Nomenade and Crawford Creeks. Even though we had lost so many soft plastics and jigheads in the bluewater, we still had enough to keep us and the fish happy while fishing up north. There was not as many sharks to eat our fish before we could boat them, take some photos and release them back into the water. Well not all of them went back... some were turned into sushi, fish cutlets and fillets.

As you would know, if you have fished the rivers and creeks up here, the water can be much dirtier. So this is where I found the brighter lures seemed to work better for me, even though I still caught plenty more fish on the Motor Oil colour.

While here I found that casting up into the snags, drains and drop offs and slowly working them back had ten times the better results than trolling the plastics. Even though I did catch a few while trolling.

What I did find was that it was better to cast the plastic up onto the bank and then slowly hop it back into the water. As most of the explosive strikes happened within a metre of the bank, whether it was shallow or deep.



Check out the colours on the stripe.



Oh No! Another shark took a liking to an unknown reef species that took a liking to a 5 inch ZMan Grass KickerZ in Houdini colour.



A gold spot caught working over a rock near the houseboat.



Casting at snags and drains beat trolling hands down over the week at Weipa.

So over the six days which plastic and jighead worked the best? I would have to say all of them, as we didn't come back with a great deal. What worked in the morning may not have worked in the afternoon, let alone the next day? So my advice would be if you are going up to Weipa or anywhere else you should do your research before you go and one good place to start would be the Tips and Techniques page on the Tackle Tactic website.

So start clicking!

www.tackletactics.com.au/Articles/Tips-Techniques

And if that is not enough you could send them an email at

<http://www.tackletactics.com.au/Contact-Us>

Scotty Lyons our guide for the week and Glen our cook extraordinaire who cooked up a feast.



Now which plastic should Dave cast at this snag.

Dave's diamond trevally took a liking to a grub hopped over the sandy bottom.



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