

Doc Lures Australian Lure Fishing Podcast

Episode 201: Hervey Bay Cobia

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Shaun Taylor

Former Fishing Guide & Fishing Writer

Shaun has been a professional line angler, tournament angler and fishing guide for 25 years, having managed the Arnhemland Barra Lodge for a time. He's also written for multiple magazines over the years and has had the opportunity to fish all over Australia.



Shaun's Cobia Fishing Tips

- Cobia fishing is hit and miss. They're unpredictable and hard to specifically target, but can turn up at any time offshore, inshore, even on the flats. When they appear they'll often come to the back of the boat as a pack and aggressively take any lure you put in front of them.
- Shaun recommends having a rod in the boat rigged for Cobia while targeting other species and being ready to sling a lure in front of them if/when they arrive. They're not fussy about baits or lures.
- This species seems to like water movement and usually fishes best on the 3-4 days leading to a full moon. Other factors such as weather conditions and barometer are less important, although Shaun prefers the low light periods at either end of the day.
- Reef, coral and rubble patches usually produce the best cobia fishing. Reasonably consistent places to try are areas around the Coral Patch, Coral Patch South, Rooney's Point and the Fraser Island side of Big Woody Island.

- Cobia are usually taken mid-water and are much less common on lures or baits that are weighted to sink straight to the bottom. Feeding lures out to float naturally on the current with occasional twitches of the rod is a good strategy.
- A characteristic of cobia is to fish deep at first, then come to the surface towards the end of the fight. They also tend to go into a death roll when gaffed or netted, wrapping the line around themselves and damaging gear and anglers with the gaff handle. This can be minimised by playing them out rather than rushing them to the boat green.

Important: Cobia can be a ciguatera carrying species and the Hervey Bay Area is well-known for producing ciguatera carrying fish. Big cobia from this area should be treated with caution and are best released.

Shaun's Cobia Fishing Tackle

- Cobies get quite large and are powerful fish, so every aspect of your tackle needs to be solid, including hooks. That said, they rarely attempt to drag an angler into the reef and they don't have sharp teeth, so they can be caught on quite light tackle with some care.
- Many Cobia are caught by snapper fishers using a standard 7-12 kg rod, a 4-5000 size spin reel and 30lb braid with a 20lb fluorocarbon leader.
- If specifically targeting cobia Shaun recommends an 8-10000 size reel and matching rod, 50lb braid and 60lb fluorocarbon leader. Whilst this is overkill for most cobia it's common to catch large Spanish mackerel and yellowtail fling fish in the same session, which will shred light gear.

Shaun's Cobia Fishing Lures

- A white [7" Berkley Gulp Jerk Shad](#) is Shaun's #1 Cobia lure and he reckons they find them very difficult to refuse. Shaun will typically fish these Using a technique similar to that used by snapper float liners. If fish are visible he'll cast in front of them, let the lure sink and twitch it to get attention. Otherwise, he'll allow the lure to sink a little, give it a couple of twitches, then free spool to let it sink a little more and repeat. A 3/8 oz jig head is usually sufficient and fish usually take these lures in the drop.
- A pink [5' Berkley Gulp Jerk Shad](#) is Shaun's next lure choice, and works well if he gets a refusal on the larger lure or if the fish are of a smaller size.
- A [100mm, 39g fish Candy crab](#) imitation is a great option towards the top and bottom of the tide as the flow starts to slow down. They're fished in the same way as the jerk shads, but with gentler, longer lifts of the rod. The aim is to make them look like they are footing naturally on the current and Shaun likes the blue swimmer crab imitation best.