

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 257



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Phil Laycock

Cairns Local And Mangrove Jack Enthusiast

Phil has been fishing for mangrove jack in Trinity Inlet for almost 50 years, having grown up and spent his working life in Cairns. He's had stints various roles including a period as a fishing guide, a role with OzFish Unlimited and participation in the (successful) campaign to have Trinity Inlet and adjacent areas declared a "Net Free Zone".

Phil's Trinity Inlet Mangrove Jack Fishing Tips

- Trinity Inlet is one of Far North Queensland's premier mangrove jack fishing destinations and has been enhanced for a range of species by the implementation of a "Net Free Zone" aimed at enhancing recreational fishing opportunities.
- The Inlet offers multiple different types of fish-holding structure, but Phil prefers to fish the mangrove lined feeder creeks, coves and bays on the Eastern side of the inlet.
- Stealth is key. One of the biggest mistakes anglers make is to motor up a creek and fish back down, alerting the fish to their presence before a cast is even made.
- Phil likes the making tides, particularly those leading up to a new moon. These follow neap tides when the water has had a chance to clear but provide enough water movement to encourage jacks to bite.
- Fishing in the wider, deeper parts of the system for the last half of the run-out tide and then migrating to the narrower, smaller creeks for the first half of the incoming tide is a good strategy for Trinity Inlet mangrove jack.

- Learning to skip cast is a critical skill that enable the jack angler to get lures deep into structure and beneath undercut banks and overhanging vegetation.
- If a jack gets you back into structure, keep the pressure on to prevent it getting deeper into the snag and keep the braid away from touching anything. Move in and move the tree if that's what's required to extract the fish.

Phil's Mangrove Jack Fishing Tackle

- Phil uses lighter gear than most jack specialists, but finds this doesn't hinder his ability to get fish out of cover and to the boat.
- A 6'6" spin rod in the 8-17lb line class with a matching reel loaded with 20 lb braid and a rods length of 20-30lb leader is Phil's preference for throwing plastics and lighter lures.
- A 10-17lb baitcast outfit with 30lb braid and a rods length of 20-30 lb leader is great for heavier lures or when more accurate casting is required.

Phil's Mangrove Jack Fishing Lures

- The Squidgies Pro Paddletail Prawn in 80mm size and bloodworm colour is Phils first choice of lure and sometimes he'll fish that one lure all day without switching. Phil rigs this lure on a 4/0 or 5/0 Gamakatsu worm hook, tying the lure on with a non-slip loop knot and a size 0 ball sinker in the loop under the chin of the lure. This lure works on vertical banks and laydowns and is simply cast into deep cover, allowed to sink and then slow rolled out. Phil recommends pausing the retrieve 1m away from the target structure and then putting frequent pauses into the mix for the remainder of the retrieve.
- The 4" Samaki Paddletail Boom Bait in the very ugly green and red colour is a great option when rigged on a 4/0 or 5/0 Owner Beast hook with a 1/8 oz belly weight. This is a great lure to throw along the shallower banks on the inside of a bend, especially those that have deeper water not too far from the margins.
- The 7cm Rapala Shadrap SR7 has caught more Mangrove Jack for Phil than any other lure. It's his preferred option for fishing big laydown snags. He fires these lures deep into structure and slow rolls them out with intermittent pauses to allow the lure to float up and over structure.