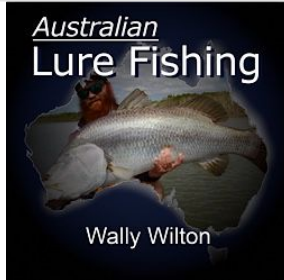




Episode 226: Mackay Saltwater Barramundi With Wally Wilton

Barramundi Fishing, Queensland



Wally Wilton

Barra Specialist And Social Media Personality

Wally has been fishing for barramundi and numerous other species in the Mackay area for many years. A sponsored angler who is active on social media, Wally reckons that the barra fishing during the dry season can be sensational!



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Wally's Salty Barra Fishing Tips

- Barramundi fishing is available right through the cooler months of the dry season, though the fish can be a little more sluggish when the water cools. There are numerous different types of structure ranging from shallow sandy creeks to rock bars, to timber and mangroves.
- Barramundi move about within these systems, so it's important to understand the habits of the fish and where they might be holding.
- Look for actively feeding fish. Usually fish on the upstream side of a piece of structure are more likely to be feeding than those on the downstream side.

Wally's Sponsors

Fish-Tec Solutions are distributors of the Edge fishing rods that Wally prefers, as well as high end Japanese lures such as Imakatsu.

Humminbird BLA looks after Wally's sonar needs and

- The three main factors for cool temperature barra fishing around Mackay are: Current, water colour and structure.
 - Currents: Look for places where the flow will bring food to fish, for example when a structure on one side of the river diverts current to the other side, eddies on inside banks etc.
 - Water Colour: Prawns and baitfish hide in dirty or coloured water coming from gullies or caused by wind. Good fishing can be had when the wind pushes the dirty water tight to the bank as fish will work the narrow band of coloured water. Areas where creek and ocean waters meet are also a good opportunity to find feeding barra.
 - Structure: Any major piece of structure in rivers around Mackay will generally hold barramundi, including snags, rock bars, fresh slips, rubble bars etc. The smaller laydown timber on flats can hold good numbers of fish.
- Smaller barramundi tend to aggregate into larger schools, while larger fish tend to be more solitary and hold in different parts of the system, often in more open water and headlands where there's deep water nearby. Use your side scan sonar to locate fish.
- Barra will move onto flats for warmer water during the winter, although they also like stable temps, so larger fish will sometimes stay deeper where the temperatures don't fluctuate as much
- Wally likes fishing when there's no wind, but reckons that the wind can also aggregate fish and improve the opportunities to find feeding fish.
- Neap tides are often good for finding schooling fish, but if there's too little tide they may be milling around not feeding to actively. A little more run will orientate the fish into the flow and make it easier to make a more natural lure presentation.
- Wally prefers to fish the run out tide and the first part of the run in, so best conditions are often when there's a high tide in the early morning when the skies are clear and the water colour is good – although a late afternoon high tide can fish well too.

Wally's Preferred Barramundi Fishing Tackle

- Wally is sponsored by Fish Tec Solutions and always has four Edge rods rigged and ready to use on his boat: His three baitcast rods are Edge Black Widow 666, Edge Black Widow 705, Edge 705 First Strike and are used for casting the majority of hard body lures, vibes and

ensure he can find the barra once he's on the water

BME North Queensland take care of Wally's boat and keep it in good shape for when he's ready to fish.

soft plastics. His spin rod is an Edge 706 Black Widow and is mainly used for throwing prawn imitations.

- Baitcast reels are Shimano Curados or Daiwa Zillions, his spin reels are Shimano Stellas and 3000 size Daiwa Certates.
- Lines are PE3 (30lb) braid with leaders are usually 52lb Dallas for most hard body lure fishing. For other styles he'll switch to 58lb leader, or even to 66 or 77lb Dallas Slim and Strong leader if he's targeting big fish in heavy structure.

Wally's Barra Lure Recommendations

- A prawn imitation is a great option for the cooler months, Wally likes the Zerek Prawn, but DOA Shrimp will also work. He rigs these with a small ball sinker under the chin and uses the weedless hooks that the lures are packaged with. Prawn imitations are perfect for running through all different types of structure such as rock bars and timber, but are also a great lure for searching when the fish are scattered through the system. In the structure the aim is to keep the lures in contact with the wood or rock. When searching he casts them long and rolls them back at a steady pace within a foot or two of the bottom.
- Wally loves timber lures for barramundi fishing and reckons that the BTD General in 10 foot diving depth is a great lure for Mackay barramundi. This is slow rolled over the fish with occasional short, sharp twitches. Wally sometimes adds some strip lead to the underside of the lure to help it suspend. The aim is to get maximum action and make the lure dance on the spot without retrieving it too quickly.
- A soft vibration bait is an essential lure for all northe estuary fishing. Wally likes the 20g Jackall Transam in 3-4m of water and finds that it sinks to the bottom quickly and can be worked with 3 or 4 fast rips like a fleeing prawn before letting it sink back down.
- 5 or 6 inch Paddle Tailed soft plastic lures such as Squidgies Slick Rigs are a worthwhile addition to the Mackay barra anglers arsenal. Wally likes to add stinger hooks to increase the hookup rates.

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