

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 261



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John Costello

Gold Coast Fishing Personality

John has been fishing the Gold Coast for 25 years and is a well-known lure fishing YouTuber and blogger, posting numerous reviews of lures he has tested on his local waters. A keen kayak fisher, he's also produced some instructional DVD's for anglers wanting to get into kayak fishing and for those wanting to target mangrove jacks and flathead on the Gold Coast. John's not sponsored by tackle companies, preferring to keep his tackle reviews impartial.



John's Skinny Water SEQ Bass Fishing Tips

- John watches the weather in the weeks before bass season opening. Reasonable rainfall to raise the water levels a little and cause a little colouration will usually stimulate a good early-season bite. Too much rainfall obviously causes flooding and dirties the water to the point the bass go off the chew.
- Skinny water bass fishing requires a bit of effort on the anglers part. You need to be prepared to scrub bash at times, drag a yak over rocks or walk a distance. Once you're there you'll find yourself immersed in the tranquillity.
- Bass in the small streams are generally not large fish, but tend to be feisty, fit and hard fighting.

- John likes to be on the water by first light and usually finds the topwater fishing is great while the shadows are long. As the sun gets up it becomes necessary to get lures deeper in the water or deeper under cover to tempt fish.
- Use Google Maps or Queensland Globe to find the changes in vegetation changes that indicate the change from estuarine to freshwater habitat. Then look for the deep pools and bends that might hold bass.
- Steep banks with heavy vegetation result in insects dropping on the water, and these are the areas where topwater fishing is very effective. Watch the insect life – if you're seeing lots of flying insects then it's likely the bass are on the chew.
- Learn to skip cast! It will help you get your lures deeper into cover beneath overhanging vegetation and into snags.
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John's Skinny Water Bass Fishing Tackle

- John uses a spin combo consisting of with a 7 foot 702 3-6kg spin rod with a 2000 size Stradic reel, 10lb braid and 10lb leader. This is a medium taper rod that allows him to skip cast lures deep under overhanging cover.
- A 5'10" 4-7kg medium taper baitcast outfit with a 200 size Shimano Curado reel with 14lb braid and 14lb leader allows for accurate casting of heavier lures and also facilitates skip casting.

John's Top River Bass Fishing Lures

- John likes the 2.5" Z-Man Finesse Frogs, rigged weedless on a 1/0 Gamakatsu EWG Finesse worm hook with a small square of plastic pushed up under the chin to keep the lure from sliding down the hook. In contrast to the standard technique for topwater bass fishing, John gets these lures deep into cover and then burns them back at medium speed, finding that bass will often pursue them aggressively.
- Small, highly buoyant balsa minnows are perfect for bass fishing, a good example is the HJ 5cm (Rapala Husky Jerk 5cm). Small handmade balsa offerings are also a great option for wild river bass. You want a lure that stays horizontal on the surface when it's at rest. They can be cranked down to depth and allowed to float back up on the pause or can be twitched along close to the surface.
- The recently released MMD Soft Prawn is John's tip to be the next deadly bass lure. It's only recently come on the market and as the bass season hasn't opened at the time of writing John hasn't had the opportunity to test it on river bass yet. But he's been using it the

estuaries and has nailed plenty of bream, flathead and other species and is very confident this lure will be the perfect option when the bass are a bit shy and shut down. It's available in three weights - The lightest version is fine from a boat or kayak, but you'll want the medium one if you're land-based. The heavier of the three options is likely to be better in the storages. John recommends fishing this lure in a similar way as a Cranka Crab, essentially dead sticking and simply drifting it down on the fish.