

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 263



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## Ken Straford

Long-time Mallacoota Flathead Fishing Enthusiast

Ken is a passionate wade-fisher who has been targeting Mallacoota flathead on lures for 30 years. He's seen plenty of changes in tackle, techniques and attitude over that time and is committed to educating

anglers on the need to release all big flathead unharmed.



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## Ken's Mallacoota Flathead Fishing Tips

- Flathead are a year round target at Mallacoota, but the spring months see the fish starting to become more active and moving up onto the flats.
- A common mistake is to go straight past the fish without realising it. You can catch flathead within 200m of the boat ramp.
- Flathead are ambush predators and can usually be found anywhere that baitfish congregate. Look for pressure points, drop-offs hard structure such as timber, kelp etc and areas where water is running off paddocks and tidally inundated areas.
- When wading, it pays to make some casts before stepping into the water as fish are often right on the waters edge with their tails almost on the sand.
- Look for feeding pelicans, as they are a good indication of the presence of bait, and most likely, flathead. Stingrays also seem to be associated with big flathead, which seem to pair up, so if you see a stingray, follow it and keep casting.

- If you spook a big flathead and see it head for deep water, fire a cast or two at it. Four times out of five they'll grab it.
- The perfect flathead fishing day would be on a rising barometer (1010 or higher), overcast and with around 20 knots of wind. Still clear days are usually hard fishing as Mallacoota gets a lot of fishing pressure and fish are easily spooked.
- Ken likes to use relatively light leaders and manages the chance of a flathead wearing through by reducing the likelihood of headshakes during the fight.
- Ken likes to fan casts out to cover water but also likes to start with shorter casts initially and then make progressively longer casts so as not to put the line over the top of the fish.
- It's a good strategy to leave a lure stationary for 20 seconds after it hits the water, to give fish time to investigate the splash. Starting the retrieve immediately might pull the lure away from the area the fish has just moved to!

## Ken's Flathead Fishing Tackle

- It doesn't have to be too technical. For the lures Ken will discuss today a 7-foot rod in the 1-3kg class coupled with a 2000 size reel 10-15kg Sunline braid and a 10lb fluorocarbon leader will do the trick.

## Ken's Top Flathead Fishing Lures For Mallacoota

- The 110mm Crossfire is a favourite surface lure for flathead fishing. Ken likes it when the fish are more active and are feeding in water of 1-2m depth with plenty of weed. Cast it long, count to 20 and then give it three small bloop followed by a pause. Repeat until the lure is taken or the retrieve is complete.
- The 6" Ecogear Power Worm is actually more of an eel imitation and is great when the fish are less active. Ken likes to rig the lure weedless on the lightest weight torpedo style jig head he can get away with for the conditions so it can be worked through weed without fouling. Work this lure with a few short, aggressive jabs of the rod followed by a pause to let it sink back to bottom. Fish usually take the lure on the pause.
- The 4" Z-Man Paddle Tail is great when the weather is rough and the water is stirred up and dirty. Again, use the lightest head you can get away with, but work the lure more slowly and mix up the retrieve styles.
- The 2.5" Gulp prawn is great for those times when the fish are shut down and you're looking for a way to avoid a doughnut. Work it with three aggressive rod lifts followed by a pause to let the lure sink and be stationary.