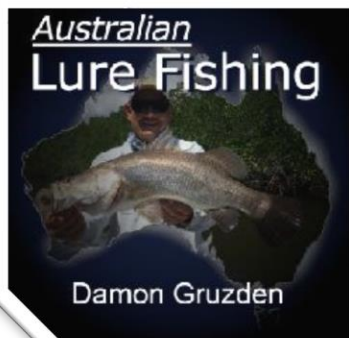


Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 274



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Damon Gruzden

Far North Queensland Fishing Guide 0487 354 654

Damon has been fishing the Daintree River system for nearly a quarter of a century, so he's on a first name basis with many of the resident barramundi! Whilst he spends much of his time helping clients catch Daintree barra, he also operates a mothership service on western Cape York and takes clients offshore targeting all manner of pelagic and reef species



Damon's Daintree River Barramundi Tips

- Focussing your efforts on the snags isn't necessarily the best strategy in the Daintree system. Barra are there at times, but are generally not feeding aggressively when they're in the sticks.
- For the best chances of tangling with barramundi, head upstream from the ferry boat ramp and look for weedbeds. Many fish will be 55-65cm, with reasonable numbers of 80cm fish. The Daintree is not famous for really large barra, but bigger specimens are there and are usually found down near the mouth.
- Barra can be caught on any tide, but Damon particularly likes the run in on the neapish tides. He'll look for weedbeds that are touching the surface at low tide and will fish them once the water is 6 inches or more over the weed. Big tides are usually harder to fish due to the massive currents and the much shorter bite windows
- Wind is generally a problem for barra fishing on the Daintree River. Damon prefers relatively calm days and doesn't really watch the barometer or other factors too much. He likes the

dawn bite, but also finds that fish often become more active in weedbeds during the mid to late arvo because the water has had an opportunity to warm up.

Damon's Suggested Barra Fishing Tackle

- Light spin tackle is perfect for enjoying the sport of catching the size of barra most commonly caught in the Daintree system. Damon likes baitcast gear for himself, but his clients use Fish Arrows spin rods with 3000 sized reels loaded with 20 to 30 lb braid and a 20 to 30 lb fluorocarbon leader. There is not much structure, so even when a bigger fish is hooked it can usually be landed if it's played carefully.

Damon's Favourite Barramundi Fishing Lures

- A 4" Z-Man SwimmerZ on an unweighted work hook (rigged weedless) is great for extracting barramundi from the weedbeds. Damon reckons any colour will catch fish but tends to gravitate back to green lures, which give him confidence in this system. If it's windy or he needs to work a lure deeper, Damon will use a small SnakelockZ jig head instead of a worm hook, or he'll add a size 1 ball sinker to the loop knot. This lure is typically simply slow rolled for best results.
- A 65mm Squidgies Soft Prawn is deadly on Daintree Barra and is often fished in very much the same way as the Z-Mam SwimmerZ. However, Damon will sometimes also allow this lure to drop to the bottom and sit stationary for a bit, then twitch it, or work it with short hops to imitate a fleeing prawn.
- A 67mm Jackall Squirrel suspending hard body will often take better quality barramundi and is often Damon's pick when fishing snags or down around the river mouth. It's important to work this lure with twitches interspersed with lengthy pauses of at least 3-5 seconds.