

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 287



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Al McGlashan

Fishing Personality, Videographer And Photographer

Al is a very well known Sydney-based fishing personality, author of 9 fishing books, presenter and producer of the top fishing TV series “Fishing With Mates”. Al frequently makes appearances from stage to talk about his fishing exploits and has taken Australian fishing photography and videography to new levels. Al recently launched his own podcast series “Best Job In The World” in which he describes the many fishing adventures he has embarked on over the years.



Al's Sydney Mahi Mahi Fishing Tips

- There are two basic ways to target mahi mahi (dolphin fish) in the Sydney area. The first is to go to the fish attracting devices (FADs), fish traps or other known mahi-holding locations, where you'll usually find smaller fish in good quantities. The second is to go well offshore to the blue Marlin grounds where finding fish is more challenging, but you'll usually get larger specimens.
- When fishing the FADs it's important to get there very early. Once a boat or two have fished the FAD the mahi mahi become wary and more difficult to tempt. Don't fish right on top of the FAD or fish trap, the bigger fish will typically be a little further away from the device.

- When fishing bluewater keep an eye open for any kind of floating flotsam, no matter how small. For reasons unknown, mahi mahi often hang about near anything floating on the surface.
- Once located, mahi are generally not particularly difficult to tempt and will take almost any lure you throw at them, even hitting large trolled skirts intended for blue marlin. Switch techniques allow the bluewater angler to drop a small lure on light tackle back to a mahi, making for much better sport than the heavy billfish tackle would allow.
- Mahi can generally be readily caught irrespective of time and tide or weather conditions. Al prefers calm, sunny days, reasoning that they are more pleasant for the angler and don't bother the mahi.
- Water temps of around 24 degrees are perfect for mahi mahi and a range of other offshore species.
- Press the barbs of your hooks down. Mahi mahi go nuts in the boat and you don't need a hook in any part of your body while the lure is attached to a feisty fish.
- Mahi mahi are very fast growing, reaching up to 10kg in the first year of growth. They also breed prolifically and are not targeted by commercial fishers, so they're not under much pressure, despite being great eating. This is partly because the flesh deteriorates quickly after capture and doesn't freeze that well. Fish intended for eating should be retrained to prevent bruising as they thrash about, killed, gilled and gutted immediately, then put into an ice slurry.

Al's Suggested Mahi Mahi Tackle

- For around the FADs and fish traps Al prefers a 7 foot rod with a 4000 size reel and 40-50lb line and an 80lb leader. The line and leader are intentionally heavy because it's inevitable that if you go lighter you'll hook a marlin, giant kingfish or other fish that may be lost.
- For trolling offshore Al suggests a TLD 15 or 20 with 50-60lb braid and 80lb leader if you're willing to run the gauntlet of accidentally hooking a marlin or big tuna on light gear.
- For switch-baiting or for casting to floating debris offshore a longer rod with an 8000 Stella spin reel, 50-80lb braid and 100lb leader.
- Rods with a bit of softness in the tip help the mahi from throwing hooks as they throw themselves about.

Al's Mahi Mahi Fishing Lures

- The Halco Roosta popper (105 and 145 are perfect for in close, larger for offshore) is a great option. Cast these lures long and work them back with big sweeps of the rod to create plenty

of noise, leaving the lure stationary for a few seconds after each sweep. Al reckons most anglers make the mistake of not leaving enough of a pause between sweeps and as a result they get less bites.

- A large stickbait style soft plastic, such as a Lunker City Sluggo in 9-12" size can be snaked with a seductive wiggle across the surface when rigged on an unweighted worm hook or can be fished on jig heads or various weights if you need to get them down deeper. Soft plastic stickbaits are best fished with a "burn and kill" approach, winding flat out for a few turns and then stopping for a few seconds.
- When fishing offshore a small skirt is fine for tempting mahi provided you use some of the modern fine gauge-heavy duty hooks. No position in the spread stands out as being the prime spot for these lures, as long as they're working and not blowing out.
- The larger size Halco Mack Baits are perfect for trolling and have the versatility of being able to work them more. Al likes to switch out the treble hooks for inline singles, which results in some missed bites but less of the hooked fish will be lost. Troll these at constant speed, but work the rod if you miss a bit or see a fish that isn't immediately taking your lures.