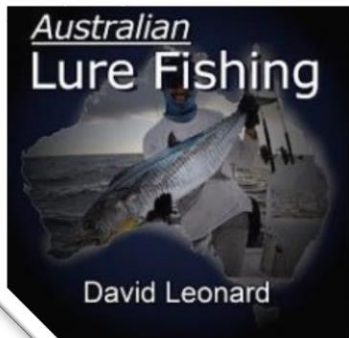


# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 292

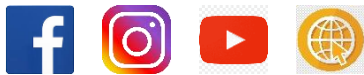


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## David Leonard

Sunshine Coast Fishing Videographer

David has been fishing targeting the Sunshine Coasts seasonal Spanish mackerel population, along with plenty of other species, for almost a decade. Having found plenty of consistency on quality Spanish he turned his skills to shooting and producing a video “Advanced Mackerel Techniques” to help others unravel some of the secrets to success on these toothy speedsters.



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## David’s Spanish Mackerel Tips

- Spanish mackerel fishing can be unpredictable. From year to year they can appear in different parts of the Sunshine Coast, different reefs, depths and behaviours. Regular time on the water and using a network of anglers who help each other locate fish is the best strategy to consistently find fish. Watching where the commercial fishers and charter operators fish also helps, but be sensible and respectful.
- The Spanish season in Noosa starts around December and runs through until around June, peaking in Feb-March.
- David’s first way of finding Spanish Mackerel once he’s on the water is to look for surface bait schools, birds and other signs of feeding. Often the predatory species on top will be

mack tuna or other species and it's necessary to fish below the bait as the Spanish Mackerel will be deeper.

- The second way David finds mackerel is to return to deeper areas where he's caught them before and look for baitfish. Once he's found bait, he'll wait around for a while and watch his sounder because Spanish mackerel are attracted to noise, so the motor, sounder etc will pique their curiosity. Alternatively, he'll troll a couple of lures in the vicinity of the bait for 10-15 min and if he doesn't get a strike assumes the fish are either not there or not interested in the lures he's selected.
- As with all coastal fishing, weather plays a large role. If the swell is less than 1.5m and the wind is below 15 knots David reckons the conditions are pretty good. Spanish mackerel are less affected by lunar cycles than many other species, although the bite windows are shorter around the new and full moons. The turn of the tide is often quiet, and the bite windows are usually longer (sometimes all day) in deeper water (50m+) than shallow water (<25m).
- Many people use 35-40g lures when casting metal jigs at Spaniards, but David finds he gets less biteoffs by using larger (70-90g) lures.
- When trolling, David runs a shallow diving minnow close to the boat (0-15m) and trims the motor up so as to create a little more white water to attract the mackerel to the boat. He runs a deeper diver about 30-40m behind the boat so it can reach maximum depth. He varies the boat speed from 5-8 knots, finding that mackerel sometimes respond better to different speeds. He'll troll in a figure eight pattern for 15-20 minutes where he's marked fish and if he doesn't get a strike it indicates the fish aren't feeding or aren't interested in trolled minnows. If you catch 2 or more fish on one of the lures, then switch the lure on the other trolling rod to the same lure.
- When fish are marking at 20-40 m David will drift slowly (if there's no wind) or spotlock with his electric motor and count a jig down to depth or use coloured braid to judge depth. He then cranks the lure back as fast as possible using smooth, constant speed and no rod action. Typically, the marked fish will hit his lure.
- Generally, the mackerel are up higher in the mornings for a couple of hours after dawn, so David starts his session by trolling. Later in the day they tend to go deeper, and he'll switch over to jigging.

## David's Suggested Spanish Mackerel Tackle

- A 6-10kg, 6'2" spin rod with a Daiwa Saltist Limited 4000 reel is great for fast retrieve jigging. He loads the reel with 30lb braid and adds a 40lb fluorocarbon leader

- An 8-12 kg spin rod and an 8-12kg overhead rod are David's trolling combos, with reels loaded with 50lb braid and 60-80lb mono leader.
- Late in the season David may also take a stickbait outfit for surface fishing for Spanish mackerel.
- Biteoffs are not common when trolling due to the lure size, so David doesn't use wire when trolling. When casting he'll start with a mono or fluoro leader and only switch over to a knotable, plastic coated wire leader if he finds he's losing too many lures.

## David's Top Spanish Mackerel Fishing Lures

- David's trolling strategy when searching for Spanish Mackerel involves a two-lure spread, with one being a shallower running hardbody minnow and the other being a deeper diving minnow. The Bluewater Classic F160 is the shallow lure of choice, running at 3-5m and easily handling boat speeds of 6 knots. He likes lures that are blue or blue/pink in colour for Spanish fishing.
- Either the Rapala X-Rap 30 or the Nomad DTX165 is a great choice for the deeper diving trolling lure, getting to 8-10m deep.
- The 70g Halco Twisty or 90g Armour Twisty have caught more Spanish Mackerel for David than any other lure. Often he'll mark fish on the sounder at 20-40m depth and will cast the lure a few metres from the boat, counting it down to depth or using multi coloured braid to judge the depth. He'll then simply crank the lure up at top speed on a constant wind with no additional rod action. If it's not taken he'll drop it back and start again.