

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 293



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Shane Holding

Sponsored Angler And Mangrove Jack Enthusiast

Shane is a mangrove jack fishing enthusiast who targeted the species on the Gold Coast for 11 years before moving south to Coffs Harbour two years ago. Since the move he's found he needed to change his approach and his techniques to begin achieving consistent results on the northern NSW jack population.



Shane's Coff's Harbour Mangrove Jack Tips

- Compared with the Gold Coast, mangrove jack fishing in the rivers and creeks around Coffs Harbour requires a stealthier approach, with longer accurate casts.
- On the Gold Coast Shane used to target jacks around man-made structures, but around Coffs he has better success in larger river systems on a combination of manmade and natural structure. Bridges, oyster racks and rock walls are his most productive options. In the smaller creeks when fishing natural structure it's necessary to cast longer and more accurately as the stealth factor is key.
- Just before the tide change (either high or low) is a good time to fish, but Shane's favourite time to fish is when the tide first starts to run out. Because of his work commitments, Shane usually starts fishing around midday and focusses more on tide than anything else. Be sure to focus on shady areas.

- Afternoons fish best early and late in the season as the water can be cooler until the sun has been high for a few hours. Through the warmer months Shane will fish any time of day, but feels you need to get out on the water early if fishing small creeks during summer so as to be first to cast a lure to the fish for that day.
- A day or two before or after the new moon is prime time for jacks to become more aggressive and Shane makes sure he doesn't miss an opportunity to fish the first day or so after heavy rain when very dirty water starts to come down. After a day or two of floodwaters the jacks go off the bite, but the initial bite is frantic.
- When you approach structure, start by making short casts and fishing shallow, then make each successive cast longer and/or allow the lure to sink deeper. This allows you to have a crack at jacks that are at the edge of the structure or in shallow water without spooking fish that are further back or deeper.
- Shane will often put 10-20 casts into a piece of structure if the conditions are good and he feels like there might be a fish in there.
- Position your boat or kayak before making your cast so you have the best opportunity to extract a fish. Avoid casting it structure that you're drifting into and don't be afraid to use your electric motor to pull a fish out of cover after the initial strike.

Shane's Mangrove Jack Fishing Tackle

- Shane often uses fast taper 7' Kistler baitcast rods in the 17lb line class with a Shimano Curado or Daiwa Tatula reel, 30lb braid and 30-50lb Sunline FC Rock leader.
- A Kistler KLX spin rod 10-15lb with a 2500 Shimano Stradic with 30lb braid and 30-50lb Sunline FC Rock leader.
- A 20-50lb outfit loaded with 50lb braid is useful for heavy structure such as racks or bridge pylons where there's a good chance you'll get touched up by a large jack.

Shane's Top Mangrove Jack Fishing Lures

- The Keitech 3.5" Fat Impact Swing soft plastic in lime chartreuse colour with a 3/8 or heavier jig head depending on current and depth. These are versatile lures and can be fished in many ways, but Shane especially likes to burn them across oyster racks and then stop, allowing them to sink into deeper water off the edge of the rack before recommencing the retrieve. An initial couple of casts around the floating drums at the oyster racks is also very worthwhile. These lures can also be burned past bridges and pontoons where jacks will sit either in the pressure point in front of the bridge or in the back eddies behind the bridge.

- The Holts Production Prawn in 5" size works very well on mangrove jack around the Coffs area when rigged on a 1/2 to 5/8oz 5/0 or 6/0 jig hook and fished fairly fast for a reaction bite. The big tides and strong flows favour fishing with these lures and tend to result in the fish reacting and coming away from cover a little bit.
- 70-100mm deep diving hard bodies are a great lure to use when fishing trees that are submerged at high tide and can be twitched through the tops of the trees. Shane finds that he loses less fish fishing hard bodies in trees than with weedless soft plastics.