

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 294



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## Curtis Parker

Sponsored Angler, Bass Enthusiast

Curtis' first passion is drift fishing the rivers and creeks of the Clarence system and casting for Australian bass, which he's been doing for decades. He's pretty accomplished on a few species though and has previously been on the ALF podcast talking Murray cod and barramundi, his two other passions!



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## Curtis' Aussie Bass Fishing Tips

- Bass can be caught in the many rivers and streams in the Clarence River basin all year round (excluding closed season), but Curtis likes to target them in the spring and summer months.
- Don't overlook the structure that sits beneath the water surface mid-stream. Many of the systems in this area get a bit of fishing pressure, but most anglers focus on fishing the banks and edge structure when the better and more catchable fish are often holding on structure in the middle of the river.
- Prime time to target bass in this area is just as the water levels start to rise from spring rainfall, but before the water gets dirty. Curtis' favourite way to fish the system is a two-day drift & camp trip from a canoe, so timing these exact conditions can be tricky! Still, overcast days are also advantageous.

- Topwater fishing is possible all day, and the bigger fish tend to come on the surface. If you want larger numbers but smaller fish, go sub-surface.
- Having a canoe or kayak that is stable enough that you can stand will enable you to polaroid the water ahead, looking for structure to cast to. Anything that sits above the bottom and causes the current to push upwards will create a pressure point that holds bass. Fish will be facing into the current, so cast across the stream and down current of the kayak to avoid spooking the fish you're casting to.
- During spring, fish are scattered right throughout the 50 or so kilometres of the freshwater in the Clarence. For scrappy, 50cm fish Curtis suggests fishing down nearer the brackish water, but he prefers to target the well-conditioned, football-shaped monsters in the upper headwaters.
- Sharpen up your casting skills, accurate casting is often critical to your success. The ability to skip cast lures under overhanging vegetation and deep into structure is also important and is more easily achieved using a quality baitcast outfit.
- Be prepared to rope canoes down some major rapids. The head and tail of rapids are always worth casting to, especially at night.

## Curtis' Aussie Bass Fishing Tackle

- Curtis typically brings three baitcast outfits in the 2-5 kg line class on a drift fishing expedition. All reels are loaded with 16lb line and typically a 16lb fluorocarbon leader, although he'll sometimes switch to 20lb in very tough country. Whilst these line classes might seem excessive, big, well-conditioned bass in flowing water with plenty of structure can take some stopping.
- Two shorter baitcast rods (6'10") are normally in the kit. One is usually rigged for skip casting, with the cast control pre-set and a suitable lure tied on. The second is rigged with a hard body, vibe, topwater or other lure for casting to structure.
- The third outfit is comprised of a longer (7') rod and is a searching/prospecting outfit. The longer rod allows Curtis to make longer casts ahead of the drift using a spinnerbait, chatterbait, swimbait or other searching lure to cover plenty of water.

## Curtis' Top Aussie Bass Fishing Lures

- The Imakatsu Alive Chatter 70 is Curtis' chosen search bait. It can be blind cast across and down current ahead of a drifting kayak, allowed to sink and then worked back at a fairly fast pace. Occasional twitches or pauses can be added in particularly promising spots, but generally they are best fished fast.

- The 95mm Jackall Bonnie Dogwalker is a great walk the dog lure that casts like a bullet and is a favourite for Curtis when casting at structure, tree trunks and under foliage. Curtis puts a little sticky weight on the chin of the lure to make it sit horizontal at rest. Fished with a standard walk the dog retrieve but allowed to sit a few seconds and given the occasional pause if the fish are slow.
- The Imakatsu Finesse Frog is not a great casting lure but is deadly rigged weedless and tossed around tussock mounds. They have a very lifelike action and can be deliberately cast into tussocks and then gently flipped off to land with a gentle splash. Very weedless and snagproof, so great for getting into tough spots but the hookup rate can be a little frustrating.
- The OSP bent minnow is deadly on bass, but very difficult to cast. Great lure to leave in the strike zone and work with short sharp jabs to make them move erratically without moving forward too much. Play around with hooks and rings or sticky weights to give them a range of different actions.
- The 90mm Biovex in clear colours with a small sticky weight under the chin is another great search bait. They don't cast that accurately, but can be used to cover lots of water as you drift the river.