

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 297



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## Sunny Sharman

Surface Fishing Addict

Sunny is a Southeast Queensland based angler who became addicted to surface fishing for big, tough saltwater pelagic species such as GT's and more recently, yellowtail kingfish. In this episode he lays out the strategy he has developed over three years of concentrating on springtime kingfish over the inshore reefs of the Tweed Heads area.



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## Sunny's Tweed Heads Kingfish Tips

- The kingfish in northern New South Wales and Southern Queensland tend to come into the shallow inshore reefs during spring and become a genuine target on surface lures. August sees the fish first start turning up, but the numbers are low early in the season. As the weather and water warm, the kingfish numbers increase, peaking in December and fading away through January in most years.
- Unlike the majority of pelagic species, Tweed's yellowtail kingfish population seems to bite best around the turn of the tide, when the run is greatly reduced.
- Periods leading up to full and new moons fish best (Sunny prefers the full), especially when a tide turn coincides with dawn or dusk. A light breeze usually helps with drift and encourages a bite. Glassed out days can be tough.

- Sunny looks for reefs rising up from 30 or so metres of water with some decent rocks or rises that create pressure points. As with most pelagic species, the presence of bait is always a good sign.
- Kingfish typically sit up-current of these reef systems and may be right in the pressure wave or could be 30-50m ahead of it. Sunny will usually make several drifts along suitable structure whilst making searching casts until he finds fish. Each drift will start 10 or so metres from the previous one, ensuring the whole area is fished thoroughly.
- The usual strategy Sunny employs is to fish poppers during low light periods, fanning casts out ahead of the drifting boat and constantly watching his sounder. When the sun is a little higher he'll switch to stickbaits and fish much the same way. If he sees fish marking deep he'll try dropping a jig down to them and if all else fails he'll switch to a soft plastic.
- Once kingfish are located it's usually possible to get several drifts over them before they move far.

## Sunny's Yellowtail Kingfish Tackle

- A PE 8 popping rod with a 14000 size Shimano Stella reel, 80lb braid and 140lb leader is preferred for casting and working poppers.
- A PE6 stickbait rod with an 8000 size Shimano Stella, PE6 braid and 140lb leader is the preferred stick baiting setup.
- For Jigging or working plastics, Sunny uses 6', PE 4 rods with 5000 size reels and 80lb leader.

## Sunny's Kingfish Fishing Lures

- Any popper will do, but Sunny likes the Cast Tackle 150g PTYD Popper in Fusi colour. He suggests casting this lure ahead of the drifting boat in low light conditions and working it with deliberate "pops" interspersed with decent pauses. The important thing is to create sharp, audible pops without pulling the lure out of the water. If he hasn't found fish yet, Sunny will fan casts out to cover more water.
- If fish aren't taking the popper or is it's too bight for the popper, Sunny will switch to an Ocea Rocket Dive floating stickbait, upgrading the rear treble to a ringed Kudako single hook. This lure is fished with long sweeps of the rod to pull the head beneath the water, create a swimming action and bubble trail. It's cast ahead of the drifting boat to where he knows or suspects fish will be, or casts are fanned out if he's prospecting.
- When kingfish are sounding down deeper and aren't coming to the surface offerings, Sunny will drop a 100g Jaw Droppers jig down to them and work it vertically with a fast, erratic

retrieve. Each time the boat drifts over the school he'll fish the jig a little slower than on the previous drift. Despite the Jaw Dropper being a slender, high speed jig, Sunny sometimes finds that kingfish will hit this lure while it's being worked quite slowly.

- If deeper fish can be tempted with a jig, Sunny switches to a 9" Z-Man Jerk Shad in Smokey Shad colour, rigged on a 3/4 to 1 oz jig head with a 6/0 to 7/0 hook. This lure is fished in a similar fashion to the way it would be used for snapper, working it with relatively gentle hops through the school of kingfish.