

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 317



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Steve Norris

Lake Macquarie Flathead Tagging Icon

Steve has been fishing the Lake Macquarie area for most of his life, although he's fished all over the world and also been associated with game fishing clubs since the 1970's. Of the ten individuals who are registered flathead taggers in lake Macquarie, Steve has tagged around 40% of all flathead tagged in the program, amassing 199 tagged fish over 70cm in the past three years.



Steve's Lake Mac Flathead Fishing Tips

- During the warmer months the fish feed in the shallow margins of the lake. During the cooler months they retreat to deeper water. It's important to find times or places where boating traffic is light, as excessive noise makes the flathead go a little quiet.
- The Swansea Channel is a renowned flathead hotspot, but cops a lot of fishing pressure at this time of year. Throughout the rest of the lake, look for areas of broken weed, especially where there's a drop-off into deeper water nearby.
- Rocky points away from populations are good places to start a summer flathead search in lake Macquarie. Work the point areas and into adjacent shallow bays.
- Steve likes the last part of the runout tide at the Swansea Channel and reckons the majority of fish come from the runout in this part of the system. Elsewhere he prefers the run in tide.

- Water clarity is an important factor. Fishing is tough when the water is very clear, part of the reason the runout tide fishes well in the channel is that it brings dirty water.
- The days leading up to the new moon are best during the winter months, but the days leading up to the full moon seem to fish best in the summer months.
- Persistence is the key and time on the water will be rewarded. Find places where you are confident there will be fish and give them a good working over, don't be tempted to move on if you don't immediately catch fish.
- If the fishing is tough Steve recommends rotating through different lures or different lure colours. Summer is the "squid bloom" period in Lake Macquarie and squid colour lures can help if the fish are being difficult.

Steve's Lake Macquarie Flathead Tackle

- Steve uses an 8-17lb Samaki Zing spin rod, 3000 size Daiwa Certate reel, 8kg braid and a 20lb FC Rock fluorocarbon leader. Although this may seem heavy for flathead, he finds it doesn't reduce his bites but does reduce lost fish, as well as minimising the fight duration, ensuring that fish are in the best health on their release.

Steve's Favourite Flathead Fishing Lures

- A 100mm Paddle Tailed soft plastic lure rigged on a 3/8oz jig head is a good starting point, although the jig weight could vary from 1/4 to 1/2 oz, depending on the water depth. Lots of lures fitting this category will work just fine, though Steve suggests the Squidgies Fish is a good option. He likes the silver fox colour, but says plenty of other colours work fine. To work this lure, make a cast and let it sink to bottom, then lift the rod from 30-60 degrees a couple of times in a fairly sharp twitch before letting the lure sink to the bottom again, staying in contact on a semi taut line. Repeat until the lure is back at the boat.
- Samaki 100mm soft vibes are great for when the fish are deeper. Steve likes the squid colour over the summer months, black during low light conditions and reckons plenty of other colours work too. He doesn't use this lure in much less than 10 feet of water and fishes it in much the same way as the soft plastic paddle tail, only quite a bit slower.
- The 100mm Berkley Gulp Jerk Shad is a lure of last resort or one that Steve uses when he's teaching novice anglers. Due to the impregnated scent, this lure is a little like bait fishing and will pick up fish even if left on the bottom with no movement. However, it is normally fished in much the same way as the paddle tail plastic. Nuclear chicken is a good colour choice, but as with the other lures, plenty of colours will work.