

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 321



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Mikey Carter

NSW Fishing Tragic

Mikey grew up learning to fish for cod and yellowbelly in southern Queensland before moving to northern NSW, where bass were among the many species he turned his hand to. The Bellinger River system is one of his favourites for this species, holding good stocks of quality bass with the occasional monster.



Mikey's Bellinger Bass Tips

- Don't be fooled into thinking the bass are always in among structure. Mikey has caught tons of bass (and some of his best fish) over gravel beds in the middle of the river – even on bright, sunny days. Fish on gravel beds during the day are always feeding and often take lures freely.
- When fishing for trophies, Mikey will cast bigger lures and will work the area thoroughly. When he's just out for some fun he'll apply the 5 minute rule – fish a lure for 5 minutes and if he's caught nothing, change lures, colours or techniques. Rinse and repeat until you find active fish and crack the feeding pattern.
- Sometimes with Bellinger River Bass it's not about fishing slow. With some lure styles you are able to fish them much faster than you might expect and will get reaction bites when you do so.

- After dark is about large, noisy surface lures. Dawn and dusk are for more subtle surface lures and daytime is for fishing subsurface. That said, the subtle surface lure styles will often work all day if cast into shadows or if conditions are very overcast.
- Drizzly, overcast conditions fish especially well, particularly if the humidity is high. Barometer doesn't seem to make much difference though, plenty of fish can be caught on both rising and falling barometer.
- The Bellinger can get a bit of fishing pressure at times, so changing what you do or what lure you use from what most other anglers are doing or using can make a big difference at times.

Mikey's Bellinger River Bass Fishing Tackle

- A 2-4kg or 3-5 kg baitcast rod and a 200 Tranx baitcast reel loaded with 20lb braid tipped with a 20lb fluorocarbon leader is the only outfit Mikey needs for bass fishing the Bellinger. This may seem like overkill, but it's necessary to stop the better fish and reduce lost lures. Size down as far as a 12-15lb leader if the bite is shy.

Mikey's Bellinger Bass Fishing Lures

- A Whacked Lures 1/4oz buzzbait is Mikeys first choice of lure because it can be fished quickly to cover plenty of water. These are simply burned across the surface of the water at fairly high speed, particularly over weed beds or other open areas.
- The 128 Floating Jointed Claw from Gancraft is a big fish magnet and takes some trophy fish at times. Cast it out over open water and weed beds and fish it with a medium to fast series of twitches and pauses using half turns of the baitcast reel. This makes the lure glide from side to side and attracts bass from a long way off.
- A 4" Z-Man frog can be fished fast like the buzzbait, but can also be fished slower through the shadows if the fishing is slower. Rigged weedless it can be skipped cast under overhanging lantana, immediately cranking back for a reaction bite. It can also be rigged on a standard jig head as a subsurface lure sometimes.