

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 326



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Luke Opelt

Sunshine Coast Mangrove Jack Enthusiast

Being a mangrove jack addict and a resident of the Sunshine Coast is a great combination – opportunities abound throughout the many creek and river systems within a short drive of home. Luke grabs every opportunity he can to grab an hour or two before work or after dark and sling lures at the red dogs.



Luke's Maroochy Mangrove Jack Fishing Tips

- Be persistent. Luke finds newbies to jack fishing get bored after an hour or two of casting and want to give in. This is a species you need to stay focussed and keep working the structure until you find success, no matter how many hours it takes.
- The Maroochy River system contains all kinds of structure that all hold jacks. Pontoons and bridges fish well, but Luke prefers to focus his effort on natural structures as far up into the tributary headwaters as he can get. Mangrove roots are his favourite.
- The low light periods around dawn and dusk fish well, as do the hours of darkness, but jacks can be taken right through the day if you persevere. Just keep casting tight to structure and work the shadows.
- Low tide seems to fish best and periods leading to full and new moons are particularly good. Look for structure that still has water over it at low tide as these areas tend to hold jacks.

- Cloudy days tend to extend the surface bite and periods as a storm front is approaching tend result in good sessions before the storm hits.
- If there's a lot of fresh coming down, focus attention in the lower reaches of the river and perhaps even around the bridges, pontoons and other structures.
- Understand that mangrove jacks move around the system in response to tides and bait movement though and try probing every piece of structure with a cast or two.
- If the fishing is slow, try moving faster through the system, skipping marginal pieces of structure and working the best looking snags, especially those where there is good tidal movement, deep river bends and the areas either side of deep bends.

Luke's Mangrove Jack Fishing Tackle

- Luke reckons jack fishing is "baitcast only" territory. He's a fan of the Shimano SLX baitcast combo is a good entry level outfit that seems to take a fair beating and handles jacks well. He spools the reel with 30lb braid and adds a 30-40lb Black Magic leader to the setup.

Luke's Top Mangrove Jack Lures

- Z-Man 4" Diezel Minnowz are an ever-reliable option that consistently take mangrove jack. Fished on a 3/0, 1/4oz TT Lures Snakelockz jig head and rigged weedless, they can be cast into the toughest of structure and simply slow rolled back out, varying the speed of the retrieve occasionally. Luke occasionally lets them sink a little but usually clicks the reel into gear and starts retrieving as soon as it hits the water. All colours work and it doesn't hurt to size up to 5" if you're trying to find a trophy jack.
- Berkley Drift Walker 110mm is a great walk-the-dog style topwater lure, although the factory fitted hooks don't last too long with decent jacks. Upgrading the hooks to BKK Fangs is recommended, play around with sizes until you find what works without deadening the action of the lure. Cast this lure deep into structure, let it sit for a few seconds, then start the walk-the-dog retrieve, pausing here and there. Bites often come at the start or end of the pause. Once the lure is halfway back to the boat, crank it in and fire out another cast. Topwater lures tend to work best in the early mornings and late afternoons.
- MMD Splash Prawn 95mm is a very effective lure when cast into heavy cover and fished with short, sharp jerks interspersed with pauses.