

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 329



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Dick Pasfield

North Western Australian Fishing Writer

Dick has been fishing the Kimberley for a very long time, but his annual wet season pilgrimage to the skinny water, gin clear creeks of the East Kimberleys are his most treasured and therapeutic fishing adventures. When he's not fishing, Dick is writing about fishing and has authored 95 articles so far for popular fishing magazines.



Dick's East Kimberley Sooty Grunter Fishing Tips

- Sooty grunter can be targeted all year round in numerous shallow, skinny water streams around the East Kimberley, although the wet season offers the best opportunities. Quality sooty grunter to mid-40's sizes and occasionally larger make their way into the creek systems from the lakes and can be caught in as little as 12 inches of water.
- Access is the biggest challenge and is often through pastoral land or by boating to a spot and then getting out and walking. Most roads are impassable during the wet season.
- During the wet season the pools become connected and it can seem as though there are too many fish to fit in the creek. Sooties can be found in all types of habitat, from pools through to riffles. They're often in the flow at the head and tail of pools but can retreat to deeper water or edge structure as the sun gets higher.
- During the dry season the pools become disconnected, although sub-surface water movement maintains year-round inflow via springs. It can be 100-500m walk between pools

at times, usually less at the top end of the systems in gorge country, although the initial walk to get in there is longer.

- Sooties are generally aggressive and are not overly fussy about lures. However, when a grunter is caught and released or is otherwise spooked the entire school can go off the bit and it's time to move to the next pool.
- Sooty grunter are tough on terminal tackle but prefer relatively small lures. It can be a challenge to find hooks that are heavy-duty enough but not so heavy that they spoil the action of the lure.

Dick's Sooty Grunter Fishing Tackle

- Dick hates losing a fish with a lure in it's mouth, so tends towards heavier tackle – though he doesn't generally find that the heavier leader bothers sooty grunter. A 3-5kg Shimano Ian Miller Series rod, 2000 or 2500 size reel, 20lb braid and 20lb leader is his combo of choice.

Dick's Sooty Grunter Fishing Lures

- The 52mm Halco Scorpion in both shallow and deeper diving versions a good choice for skinny water sooty grunter, particularly when they're in fairly shallow water. Dick loves to wait until a fish or two is following and then speed his retrieve up until the lure almost "blows out". It's a race to see if he can get the lure back to the rod tip before a fish takes it. At other times the fish will be more interested in different retrieves, and since the water is clear you can mix it up and watch the fish to see how they respond.
- The 50mm Halco Poltergeist works well when the fish are near the bottom in slightly deeper water. Often at these times they're a little sluggish and the Poltergeist can be worked slower to stay in their faces for longer. As with the scorpion, watch how the fish respond and keep trying different things until you get results.
- Small surface poppers aren't any more effective than any other lure style, but it's a lot of fun to see them smashed off the surface. Once again, try different retrieves until you discover something that works on the day.