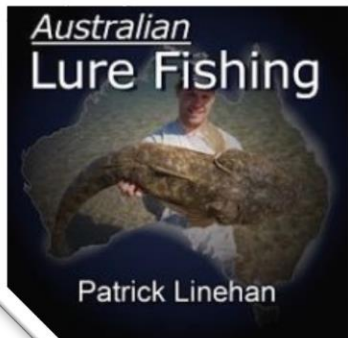


Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 333



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Patrick Linehan

Trophy Flathead Enthusiast

Patrick is a northern NSW land-based luring enthusiast who loves to target tuna and kingfish from the shore, but also turns his attention to the trophy flathead available in the northern NSW estuaries. Working in the fishing industry has given him plenty of opportunity and insights that helped him catch the unicorn – a metre-plus flathead.



Patrick's Hastings River Flathead Fishing Tips

- Flathead will hunt over all substrate types in the Hastings river system – sand, mud, shell and broken bottom. Look around at low tide – you can see where flathead have been laying by the coffin shaped impressions in the sand or mud. The direction they point will tell you what stage of the tide they were there, and are give clues about when they'll return.
- Patrick focusses his efforts in water of around 1 to 1.5m depth, especially where there is deeper water adjacent. He likes the lower reaches of the system, which have tons of this type of habitat.
- Flathead can be taken on any stage of the tide. The top of the tide fishes well, and bottom of the tide is good if the water is clear. When using suspending or slow sinking, unweighted soft plastics it's best to fish around the tide change when water flow is low as the lures are easier to work.

- Fishing around low light periods is usually more productive. The presence of bait, including quite large mullet, whiting, bream or blackfish is a good sign that flathead might be around.
- During the winter and early spring it's best to fish calm, sunny days or areas protected from the wind, where the water has a chance to warm up a little. During summer the water gets a little too warm for the fish and they then tend to be more active through the cooler parts of the day and tides become more important.
- Look for parts of the river that have water moving via an eddy, rather than being in the direct flow. This changes as the tide switches from incoming to outgoing.
- Small amounts of freshwater coming into the system don't affect the bite too badly and can even stimulate fish. Dirty chocolatey water does affect them though, but you'll still get plenty of smaller fish right down near the mouth.

Patrick's Flathead Fishing Tackle

- The focus on very large flathead means that Patrick uses gear that might normally be used to target snapper on soft plastic lures. A 7ft to 7'6", 6-10kg rod capable of casting 40g lures, 3000 size reel, 15lb braid and 20lb mono leader will do the trick.

Patrick's 3 Top Flathead Fishing Lures

- The 150mm Squidgies Fish is one of the first lures Patrick will try. He fishes these unweighted and finds that the chunky body and paddle tail is perfect for attracting more active fish or when the conditions are rough, water is dirty or light is low. Screwing a tow point into the front of the lure and then using a single strand wire harness with 2 sets of trebles is effective. White colours and black with gold flecks work well.
- The Keitech 8" Easy Shiner is good for a more subtle presentation when the fish aren't overly active and is best rigged on a large worm hook with a stinger treble hook attached to the hook bend with a short length of nylon. One point of the treble is inserted into the underside of the lure.
- 9" Lunker City Sluggo's are great for very subtle presentations when the water is calm and clear or the fish are found to be spooky. It's rigged the same way as the Keitech and can be slow rolled with occasional pauses or worked with a gentle twitch-pause approach to imitate garfish and other bait species.