

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 338



[Go to the episode online](#) | [Download mp3](#)

Tony Riordan

NSW North Coast Flathead Enthusiast & Lure Maker

Tony fishes the estuaries around the Ballina area hard, even putting in time between split shifts at work and any time he can get 15 minutes or more on the water from shore or kayak. When he's not fishing, he's making handmade wooden lures to target flathead.

Tony's Ballina Flathead Fishing Tips

- There are two estuary systems in the Ballina area that fish well for flathead: The Richmond and the Evans. Both hold good numbers of quality fish, with 1m models a possibility.
- Tony finds that a rising tide on the flats fishes best, with flathead moving quickly up with the moving water. The start of the runout tide can also fish well as fish feed on food brought to them by the falling water.
- It's not a bad strategy to put in some casts with smaller lures and when plenty of smaller fish start to show up you can switch to larger lures knowing that bigger fish is likely to be in the area.
- Flathead in this system tend to be readily found along the rock walls in relatively deep water as well as on the sand and mudflats. Tony targets the sandflats adjacent to the rock walls and deeper water, running hard bodies down the face.
- Quality flathead can be taken from this system all year round but tend to be particularly active during autumn, up until the water cools in May, when they start to slow down a little.
- If you're seeing flathead but they're not responding to lures, move on and look for active fish, returning an hour or two later to see if the fish have become active.

Tony's Ballina Flathead Fishing Tackle

- A 9ft Savage Gear Salt in 2-4kg class is great for longer casting landbased fishing, coupled with a 3000 size reel 15 lb Suffix 832 braid and 20lb fluorocarbon leader will handle flathead landbased around structure as well as much of the by-catch you may encounter..
- An Abu Veritas 7'2" rod is suitable for the kayak, with a 2000 size reel, 12lb Suffix 832 braid and a 15lb fluorocarbon leader.

Tony's Best Flathead Fishing Lures

- A 100mm Atomic Shiner is a good choice of lure for casting around the sand flats and deeper areas along rock walls towards the mouth of the system. Tony likes the double deep, which he casts onto the flat and works down the face as the water drops off into deeper water. Give the rod a twitch or two and feel the lure contact the bottom, then wind a couple of turns and twitch again. Tony likes the Silver Wolf and Muddy Prawn colours in this lure.
- The MMD Splash Prawn (95mm) is perfect on the flats where shallow creeks run in. The yabby-like colourations and casts the lure long across flats and weed beds. Let the lure sit for long enough for the ripples to dissipate before retrieving with a twitch, twitch, pause style retrieve. If that's not working, more aggressive rips can sometimes do the job.
- The Atomic Slim Twitcher 110mm is a slow floating lure that can be worked across the flats, allowed to contact the bottom and then paused to let the lure rise back.