

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 338



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Beau Rixon

SE Queensland Fishing Instructor

Beau is a part-time Marine Biology student and part-time fishing instructor based in the SE corner of Queensland. He enjoys targeting a wide variety of sportfish both land-based and out on the water and has spent plenty of time figuring out the habits of giant herring and how to fool them.



Beau's SEQ Giant Herring Fishing Tips

- Giant herring are not uncommon in SE Queensland, but they can be difficult to catch. The reward for perseverance is to watch the line melt off your reel as a super-fast, powerful fish makes line burning runs and puts on an aerobatic display.
- The warmer months tend to fish best, but giant herring can be targeted year-round in landlocked lakes, where they tend to cruise the edges in search of baitfish.
- Over the coming months, the deeper holes in estuaries will be a good place to find a mix of predatory sportfish, including giant herring and tarpon. In the early mornings and late afternoons, they'll often take surface lures, even in water 5-6m deep.
- If you keep an eye open, you can find giant herring on Moreton Bay, in the estuaries and lakes from the Gold Coast to the Sunshine Coast.

- It's important to have needle sharp hooks, this species is a master at throwing lures. Sharp hooks, maintaining tension on a fish and using sideways and downwards movements of your rod to minimise jumping will help you to stay connected.
- During low light conditions these fish will often be in shallow water or feeding on the surface. As the sun gets brighter they'll head for deeper water.
- In landlocked lakes and in estuaries this species is often found around places where drains enter the system, bringing bait. A little freshwater coming into the system doesn't hurt to stir up some activity.
- Glass-out conditions fish well, especially for land-based fishing
- Giant herring need to be handled very carefully if they are to survive a capture and release. Their scales are soft and easily damaged and their large eyes make them prone to damage from bright sun. If you're not taking a photo then don't remove them from the water, hold them in a soft net and remove the hooks before emptying the net. If you're taking a picture, keep them in the net while you prepare the camera, wet the brag mat and wet your hands. Minimise handling, support them under the belly (no vertical holding). Keep them out of water for the shortest time possible and then revive and release.

Beau's Giant Herring Fishing Tackle

- A rod in the 4-12lb line class is a good choice, coupled with a 2000 or 2500 size reel, 6-12lb braid and a 20lb leader can handle most herring fishing. A softer tipped rod will absorb some of the blows caused by aerial antics, reducing the chance of hooks pulling out. If the fishing is tough you may need to switch down to a 12lb leader, but ease the drag back and play the fish more gently or there is a high chance their raspy teeth will rub through the leader.

Beau's Fishing Lures

- 60-80mm surface walker style lures often fish well when they're feeding off the surface. Beau likes the Daiwa Slippery Dog. The Bassday Sugapen is another good option, with the Atomic K9 working well if you need a larger profile lure. These lures are best used on glassy mornings or evenings when the light is low. Cast them long and work them back with a medium to fast walk the dog retrieve – no pauses with surface lures. If you see a fish cruising, cast well to the side and work the lure back, they spot leaders and lures and are easily spooked if you cast too close to them. Be aware that giant herring can be clumsy at taking surface lures, so expect a lot of missed bites and just keep persevering.
- Small soft plastic lures are very effective and can be worked in lots of different ways to tempt giant herring. Beau likes the 3" Holt Productions Prawn but has also had good success with

2.5" Daiwa Bait Junkies, Keitech and Samaki Boom Baits. Sometimes herring will take these hopped down deep when they reject soft vibes and you want a more finesse approach. They can be fished around bridges when land based and used at night when the giant herring are refusing surface lures. Technique varies, but could be slow rolled just below the surface or sunk down and cranked in at medium speed with no pauses.

- The Samaki Vibelicious 70mm is very effective in deeper water and can be either slow rolled through schools of herring from a drifting boat when they're schooled up and hugging the bottom. Or they can be fished vertically with just a slow to medium wind and no pauses.