

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Episode 347



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Kevin has been fishing the central; coast area, particularly the Hawkesbury River system for a couple of decades, cutting his teeth on flathead before becoming obsessed with jewfish on lure. He's recently expanded his compulsive fishing disorder to include bream, competing in the ABT tournament. When Kev isn't on the water fishing, he's penning articles for Fishing World!



Kev's Hawkesbury Jewfish Fishing Tips

- It's important to understand the habits of the jewfish and use them to your advantage. Many people assume jewfish can only be caught on live or fresh baits at night. Kevin finds them easier to find and target on lures during the daylight hours.
- At night, jewfish tend to actively hunt and become scattered through the system wherever the bait and currents take them. During the day they retire to deep holes around creek mouths and rock walls and are easier to find. It's then just a matter of going through some lures and techniques until you find what works.
- Kev loves fishing deep water areas with strong currents using larger lures, but jewfish can also be caught in shallower, slower moving water by sizing down to 3 or 4 inch lures.

- May to August are prime months for the larger, better quality jewfish on lures. During winter the big tides occur at night and smaller tides during the day, making it ideal timing to pepper deep holes, channels or current deflecting structure that shelter resting jewfish from the flow.
- No one catch jewfish every trip. Understand that you might be marking a hundred or more fish on the sonar, resting in deeper water. It only takes a handful of those fish to take a lure to make your day. Have a few locations in mind to move between and be prepared to switch to more subtle lures if you're not getting results.
- A bycatch of flathead is a good sign that you're in the right place. Likewise, if you're using vibes and picking up estuary perch your probably not too far away from the jewfish.
- Jewfish can be caught on any tide, any conditions. But if you wanted to pick the prime conditions it would be 2 days either side of the new moon on the start of the runout tide or the end of the runout tide, especially when you have an early tide change (eg a 6am high).
- Everything in the Hawkesbury is governed by the movement of prawns, which probably explains the extra activity around the new moon.
- Long casting keeps your lures in the water for longer, gives fish more chance to see them and keeps the boat further from the fish. Drifting along a rockwall and making long casts at 45 degrees ahead of the drift allows Kev to get lighter jig heads to trickle down into deep holes, giving a more natural presentation.
- The Hawksbury is a heavily fished waterway, so Kevin often uses lures he gets from overseas so as to avoid jewfish recognising his offering.
- Bites on soft plastics are often not much more than a tick on the line, much lik a bream bite

Kevin's Jewfish Fishing Tackle

- Kevin uses the G Loomis NRX 7'4" rods in 15-30lb and 20-40lb line classes, although he's also recently being using the 7'4" Abu Garcia Rayrex rods, especially for heavier lures. A 3000 size Stella or Certate reel has a larger spool arbor than a 2500 size reel, contributing to longer casting. 10lb Power Pro braid is Kevs preference, with Ocea 17 or 20lb fluorocarbon leader.

Kevin's Top Jewfish Fishing Lures

- A Jerk Minnow style soft plastic (5") such as the Yum Houdini Shad in green pumpkin or chartreuse is great when the fish are a little shut down as it can be fished quite subtly. The Berkley Jerk Minnow is another good option. Rig these lures on Berkley Nitro Jig heads, (1/2 oz, 5/0) are a good starting point, adjust weight depending on water depth and current. Nitro

Jig Heads are shaped to impart darting action as jerk minnows don't have much inbuilt action. A Pop the slack line to make the lure dance on the spot. It's a mistake to jig these lures too aggressively, the aim is to make them dance on the spot, rather than jump a couple of metres up into the water column.

- A paddle tailed soft plastic lure is great when the fish are a little more active (6" where there is strong flow, 4" in slower moving water). A Lunker City Swimfish or Squidgy Fish is a good option. The TT HeadlockZ jig heads (6/0 and 1/2 oz is a good starting point) are ideal on the paddletails as they are a ball shaped head that doesn't impart much action to the lure and allows the tail to create maximum vibration. Lift and double hop off the bottom, using a similar finesse technique as for bream and letting the lure drop back on a semi-slack line.
- Soft Vibes have transformed Hawkesbury jewfish fishing and the best of them is the 100mm Samaki Vibelicious. They are the simplest way for any beginner to catch their first lure-caught jewfish as they cast long, sink fast even in a current, are easy to work and jewfish love them. Allow the lure to sink to the bottom and retrieve it with a series of long draws, allowing the lure to drop back down between draws while you retrieve the line.
- When jewfish aren't actively feeding they will sometimes reject a soft vibe. If you're inexperienced, simply move on to the next school of jewfish and keep throwing the vibe until you find a responsive fish. More experienced anglers can switch to fishing the paddletail plastics and if those are also refused, switch to soft plastic jerk minnows in the hopes a more subtle approach will stimulate a bite.