

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 361](#)



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Dan Sim

Cocos Islands Sportfishing Guide

Dan is a quiet achiever, keeping a low profile on social media, staying away from tournaments and not writing too many articles. I suspect he's too busy enjoying extraordinary fishing to bother with any of that stuff. And the Complete Angler Nedlands employee also guides clients on the island for some unbelievable adventures.



Dan's Cocos Bonefish Fishing Tips

- Finding bonefish is relatively easy – look for shallow flats that are dry at low tide and contain lots of crab, yabby and shrimp burrows. Bonefish move into these areas on the rising tide feeding on the crustaceans that come out of their burrows as the water moves up.
- Spin gear is more effective on the larger tides because the bonefish tend to be plentiful but are usually moving faster. Under these conditions it's easier to fire out a cast quickly with spin gear. On smaller tides there are fewer fish but they move more slowly, giving more time for a shot with a fly rod.
- Dan prefers to target bonefish in in about 30cm of water and recommends putting a fly within a metre or so ahead of the fish, but on spin gear you'll need to cast a little further ahead to avoid spooking the fish when the lure splashes down. Figure out which direction the fish is moving and be sure to cast well ahead and start working the lure straight away.

- Bonefish at Cocos can be caught in a few inches down to a metre depth. The bigger fish tend to be in 70-100cm of water, but for a wading fisher they're no longer a sight fishing target at that depth.
- A slight breeze makes the fish a little less spooky, allowing spin anglers to get multiple shots without spooking fish. However, too much surface ripple can make sight fishing difficult or impossible.
- This style of fishing is very visual, so you'll usually know when the fish takes the lure either because you'll see the lure disappear or because the fish will momentarily become more vertical. Be sure to set the hook well when you feel the weight because they do have quite bony mouths and it's not unusual for the hooks to not set properly.
- There are two ways to play out bonefish. The first is to let the fish run on a very light drag, until it starts to tire, then play it hard and get it in fast to avoid getting sharked. The second is really only suitable for smaller fish and is essentially to play the fish on a heavier drag and try and get it in as fast as possible.
- It's important to spend plenty of time reviving bonefish so that when they're released they have recovered sufficiently to be able to outrun the sharks.

Dan's Bonefish Luring Tackle

- Spin gear at the heavier end of the scale is perfect for bonefish because it allows the angler to cast very light lures. A 7' spin rod in the 2-4kg range, capable of cast lures of 5g or less, coupled with a 2500 size reel and PE 0.6 to 0.8 braid with a 25lb fluorocarbon leader is perfect. Be sure to have a lot of line on your reel as bonies will run plenty of it off very quickly – shallow spooled reels are not recommended!

Dan's Cocos Bonefish Lures

- Big John's Fligs are dynamite on bonefish. These are essentially a bonefish style shrimp fly, but tied on a jig head of up to 5g.
- Bloodworm coloured ZMan grubs in the 2" and 2.5" sizes are great for Cocos bonefish. They're usually fished on a size 2 jig head of 1/16 to 1/20 oz.
- The Zipbaits Zoea is a small hard bodied shrimp imitation that can be very effective on bonefish.
- The technique is similar for all of the lures and there are two basic retrieves. The first is to gently hop the lure along the bottom in the same way as a bream fisher might hop small soft plastics for bream. The other technique is to drag the lure along the bottom really slowly,

with occasional pauses. Whatever lure you're using, the aim is to make it look like a fleeing shrimp or crab, so work the lure slowly and keep it on the bottom or very close to it.