

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 372](#)



## Lake Macquarie Flathead



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### Nathan Debono

Lake Macquarie Trophy Flathead Fishery Tagger

Nathan is a quiet, unassuming bloke who doesn't write articles, fish tournaments or even post a lot on social media. But his flathead fishing skills on Lake Macquarie are second to none and his results in the Trophy Flathead tagging program show that he's consistently nailing the big crocs.....



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## Nathans Top Flathead Fishing Tips

- It's common these days to use some pretty large lures for flathead fishing, but Nathan finds that when the fishing is tough it can pay to downsize your offering to a small vibe or blade. He finds that very big flathead will eat a 40mm vibe, no problem. He nearly always starts fishing with a big lure though, and switched down if the big lure isn't working.
- At the time of recording the water in Lake Macquarie is still reasonably warm (over 20C) and the fish are still active in relatively shallow water. Nathan suggests starting in less than four metres early in the day and moving to deeper water as the day progresses.
- As we move into winter and the water cools the big fathead will move into deeper water (eight metres plus). Fishing the edges of the cockle beds that present as humps and bumps on your sounder is the best option at these times.
- Schools of working tailor and other species usually have both jewfish and big flathead beneath them.

- Fishing in the days around the new moon is usually considered to be a good strategy for trophy flathead in Lake Macquarie, although Nathan also finds the period around a full moon can be productive. These moons cause bigger tidal movement, and whilst there's still not a lot of rise and fall in the lake it seems to be enough to stimulate the flathead.
- Having some breeze helps a lot when fish are in the shallow water, especially a warm north easterly. When the fish are in the deeper water the breeze is less important.

## Nathan's Flathead Fishing Tackle

- Nathan tends to use a Loomis 4-8 lb spin rod and 2500 size Shimano reel loaded with 8lb braid. He suggests using 20lb fluorocarbon leaders and not dropping down the leader weight – the small lures he uses mean that flathead will often take the lure well into their mouth and there is a risk of the teeth rubbing through a light leader.
- A heavier outfit consisting of a Loomis spin rod in the 15 lb range, 2500 reel with 15lb braid and a 25lb leader is good when it's necessary to cast the larger soft plastics or when quality jewfish are a likely by-catch.

## Nathan's Best Flathead Fishing Lures

- The main lure Nathan uses is a ZMan 5" Paddle tail on a ¼ to 3/8 oz jig head, depending on the water depth and wind. The retrieve varies, sometimes the flathead seem to prefer the lure to be very tight to the bottom, slow rolled with pauses. Other times small hops or a "twitch, twitch, pause" approach work well.
- Samaki soft vibes have accounted for a massive proportion of the over 70cm flathead recorded during the trophy flathead tagging program. Any of the smaller sizes will work: 70, 85 or 100mm. These are worked with slow lifts, just fast enough to feel the lure vibrate, lifting them 40-50cm off the bottom and allowing them to sink on a semi-taut line
- Damiki Volt Blades (55mm) are great used on the deeper water (seven metres plus) when the fishing is quiet. These lures are quite heavy, sink fast and allow the angler to quickly cover lots of bottom in deeper water
- Imakatsu Alive Chatter are great in 1-4 metres of water, sometimes up to 5-6m. Being quite a large lure with two sets of trebles and creating lots of vibration it can often get some big bites from quality fish.