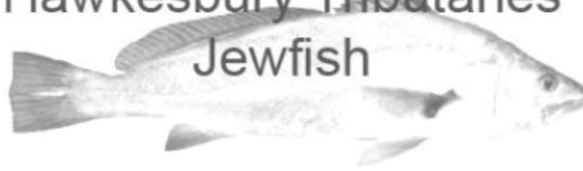


Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 396](#)



Hawkesbury Tributaries Jewfish



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Aaron Papas

NSW Central Coast Jewfish Specialist

Aaron has been fishing the NSW Central Coast for jewfish for 30 years, starting out as a kid livebaiting and progressing to 100% lure only and almost exclusively targeting jewies. He finds that a lot of people fish the Hawkesbury system for this species, but overlook the highly productive tributary systems.



Aaron's Hawkesbury Jewfish Tips

- The Hawkesbury system is vast and being nestled between the major populations of Sydney and the NSW Central Coast cops plenty of fishing pressure. Aaron finds that a lot of people fish the main arm of the system and overlook the tributaries where lots of action can be found.
- Each of the Hawkesbury tributaries has it's own characteristics and they all fish differently. It's a case of putting in the hours to get to know each sub-system well.
- When Aaron first started to target jewfish on livebaits years ago he fell for the common belief that they were a summertime species. Since becoming a "jewfish on lure" specialist he's found that the winter months can fish extremely well, especially further upstream, away from the mouth.

- Keeping a detailed diary is a great way to try and figure out the patterns that lead to quality catches. Use social media and the internet to get some intel -keeping in mind that everything that's said may not always be 100% accurate 😊
- It's worth spending some time on Navionics charts or Google earth exploring the Hawkesbury tributaries, looking for places where currents strike points, channels off flats or the many and extensive rock wall systems.
- Breaks in tidal flow, eddies, rockwalls etc tend to hold bait, so travel around on the electric exploring until you find bait or fish and then pepper the area with casts. Try not to focus on areas where other people fish, but look for your own patches of fish.
- Deeper rockwalls tend to fish well on an incoming tide, so drift along them prospecting for bait and firing casts to the wall. It's also worth fishing beneath schools of tailor when they are busting up, as is common on Cowan Creek.
- Early morning tide changes are always good for fishing, but Adam finds that the slack water on the turn of the tide doesn't fish so well as those periods just before and just after the turn when there is flow but it's slowing – though Aaron often catches them even during the strongest flowing periods during the mid-run. This latter scenario is often the case on gravelly flats, where the jewies will sit off the edge where they're out of the current.
- Jewfish are typically holding on the leading edge of structure, where prawns and baitfish are brought to them by the flow.
- Fish whenever you can, but the leadup to the new moon is often good due to prawn movements. That said, you'll catch them on any phase of the moon.
- If the fishing is tough, be prepared to be mobile, keep sounding around and trying different schools of fish until you get the bite.

Aaron's Jewfish Tackle

- Although it's possible to fish quite light for jewfish, there's always the possibility of a monster in this system, so Adam usually fishes 10lb braid with a 20lb fluorocarbon leader. A 3-6kg rod with a 2500 to 3000 size reel is ideal.
- If there's a good chance of better quality fish then a 4-9kg rod with a 4000 size spin reel, 20lb braid and 40lb leader.

Aaron's Hawkesbury Jewfish Lures

- The new 5" ZMan Diezel Minnowz in any colour, match with a 5/8 TT Headlocks jig head in 7/0 is a great option where there's tidal movement. It will take fish from 60cm to monstrous, especially when fluttered along rock walls. Let the boat drift parallel and make casts ahead

of the boat, towards the bank. Work the lure down the wall, then when it hits the bottom work it back to the boat in short little hops. The bite can be subtle with soft plastic lures fished in this way and it's important to strike at the slightest "tick" of the line.

- The 30g Zerek Fishtrap is a great exploration lure for deeper water and stronger currents, allowing anglers to cover large areas when jewfish are schooled up in the open. Aaron likes to use fairly large lifts of the rod and finds that the fish often smack it just as it starts to sink back down.
- The ZMan PaddlerZ in 4-5" are like a hybrid between a jerkbait and a paddletail and works really well in very clear water such as in Cowan Creek. These are a versatile lure that picks up plenty of bycatch. Rig these on 4/0 or 5/0 TT Headlockz jig heads using a hopping retrieve in much the same way as the Diezel minnow. A great lure for using out in the main body of the river when jewfish are feeding beneath tailor schools and also along rockwalls.