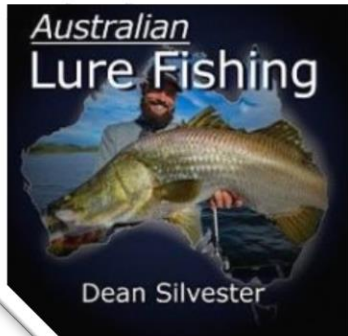


Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 392](#)



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Dean “Hollywood” Silvester

Sponsored Tournament Angler & Social Media Personality

Dean is one of Australia's most successful bass tournament fishermen with numerous Bass Champion and Angler of The Year Titles. Since 2013 he's been a familiar face on the televised Australian Fishing Championships and has won all three categories: Bass, Bream and Barra. If that's not enough, Dean is also having a crack at the US Bassmaster Elite Series.



Dean's Advice For Awoonga Dam Barramundi

- Following the 2012/13 flood event, the barra that remained in Awoonga Dam were left with plenty of habitat and lots of tucker. Fish stocked into the dam post flooding have utilised these conditions to grown rapidly and these days many of the fish being caught are in the 95cm to 1m mark.
- Barra seem to take a while to realised they're an apex predator. Once they reach a bigger size they tend to head for the weedbeds during the cooler month and feed more aggressively. A few fish then seem to stay in the weedbeds as permanent residents while the rest of the fish patrol the old river channels and ledges.
- Finding fish during July and August can be tough because the temperatures are low. Look for stable weather patterns where the water temperature doesn't fluctuate too much where possible, and look for any areas where there is slightly warmer water and an accumulation of bait.

- In August and September Dean will look for bays where the water is still and has a chance to warm up a little. It's not a bad strategy to go through shallow bays around lunch time on the trolling motor to see if you spook any barra. If you see fish, return around 4pm for the prime bite window and the fish will have settled back into their home and be feeding again.
- Obviously fish whenever you can, but when it comes to conditions where the barra seem to be biting best, Dean likes to fish around the new moon during the cooler months and at night on the full moon during the warmer months. He finds that the barra can almost disappear for a few days after a full moon.
- If you can find barra, you can catch them. But sometimes they're not so easy to find. If the conditions are good but you're not seeing barra on the sounder by 4 or 4.15 then don't waste time, move to another spot where there are some fish.
- Prior to Active Target, Dean would always run a split screen on his sounder, with 2D and sidescan running. Watch the bait on your 2D, they will often hang close to the bottom through the day and you mightn't see anything much at all on the sidescan. Around 4-4.30pm you might notice a fish or two coming through the sidescan and the bait starting to come up off the bottom and move. This is an indication that barra have moved in underneath.
- Active Target live sonar has changed the game, making it possible to see a lot more fish than you'd see on the sidescan. The frustrating part is that you can see them avoiding and ignoring your lures!
- One of the mistakes anglers make with the live sonar is to cast the lure too close to the fish. It's important to try and cast it far enough away so as not to spook the fish, but close enough that they don't get suspicious.
- When you're fishing weedbeds you'll often find that the depth tapers off slowly from 1 to 1.5 ft in depth to 15ft or more at the edge of the weedbed. It's important to land the lure in shallow water and start the retrieve instantly to avoid the lure sinking into weed. A baitcast outfit makes this easier because the casts are flatter, there are no loose loops of line and the reel can be instantly kicked into gear.
- If the fishing is shut down but you locate fish in around trees it's worth fishing a jerkbait with long pauses (up to 2 minutes). If you're on a point and can see fish but struggle to get a bite it could be that you're fishing too fast or they're not feeding and you need to trigger them with a speed up or a twitch. You're not trying to give the barra a lure, you're trying to take it away from them, that's what triggers strikes.

Dean's Recommended Barra Tackle

- For fishing jerkbaits Dean likes a 6'8" baitcast rod, but because you need to keep the rod low and impart erratic jabs of the rod tip, you might want a shorter rod if you're not as tall as Dean.
- For casting the larger soft plastic swimbaits Dean likes a 7'9", 6 rating baitcast rod that can handle the weight of the lures. This makes casting a heavy lure easy, but is also an important factor in getting solid hooksets because it makes it easy to pick up the slack line in the split second before a barra expels the lure.
- Dean uses 60lb fluorocarbon leader and finds it provides enough protection without impacting on the lure action. Regardless of what strength of leader you use, it's important to retie with fresh material whenever fish take a lure down deeper as the barra will eventually rub through the leader.

Deans Top Barramundi Lures

- The Jackall Squirrel 79mm is a great suspending jerkbait that is deadly when fished around timber. One of the characteristics of this lure that make it so deadly is the rate that it reaches maximum depth when you start to crank it in. You need the lure to get down to 6-8' and then work it with sharp jabs that impart an erratic action but don't move the lure too far forward with each twitch. The idea is to get it down around timber and keep it in their faces as long as possible.
- The Molix Shad 140 is a fantastic soft plastic swimbait that can be worked around weedbeds. The idea is to cast the lure as shallow as possible and work it so slowly that it's just clipping the weed. If you can scratch your nose mid-retrieve and not get hung up in weed you're not fishing deep or slow enough. Often when a lure clips a weed tower in areas of broken weed, a fish will take it when it breaks free. Dean finds that cranking at slower speed and occasionally winding a bit faster will often spur a strike.