

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 400](#)



Gold Coast Snapper



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Will Kitching

SEQ Snapper

Will has been fishing for snapper on the Gold Coast for as long as he could walk. He's recently become a regular contributor to Fish and Boat magazine.



Will's Gold Coast Snapper Tips

- During the winter months the snapper come close inshore on the Gold Coast. Lines of reef run parallel to the coast in SEQ and the 18 fathom line, about 5-7 km offshore is a productive winter snapper spot.
- The Gold Coast Seaway is the safest and easiest way for small boats to access the inshore reefs as most other access points require a bar crossing. Good weather is still important though, especially in small boats.
- A swell of less than 1.1m and wind of less than 10 knots creates safe and productive conditions.
- When you arrive at the reef, start sounding around looking for bait or for larger fish to show up. Bommies and the gravelly patches to the sides of reef are top places to start, especially if there's plenty of bait present.
- Drift fishing for snapper is a good strategy. Start by switching the breadcrumb trails on your mapping and do a test drift over where the fish are holding. Once you have a feel for your

drift line, head back upcurrent or upwind of the fish and position the boat so that the next drift will carry you over them.

- Time of day is important. The three main bite periods for Gold Coast snapper occur during the light changes at dawn and dusk and when you're offshore, on the tide changes. Will would typically be on his mark and be fishing well before the sun hits the horizon and the bite window may only be one to one and a half hours.
- Later after sunrise it can be worth heading out to the 24 or 36 fathom reefs, as the fish will often bite later into the day in the deeper water.
- Alternatively, if you plan to stay on the closer reefs or the weather precludes going out further, drop your leader size and apply scent to your lures. The fish may not bite as freely, but they are still catchable if you work a little harder.
- In summer the East Australian Current comes down the coast and makes it impossible to fish for snapper, especially our wide.
- The bigger fish are often up off the bottom, so be ready for your lure to be taken as it falls – you may need to flick the bail arm over and set the hooks immediately.
- It's important not to drift through the area too fast, so if it's windy, fold down the canopy and deploy a sea anchor to slow down the drift and keep the lures in the right part of the water column.

Wills Gold Coast Snapper Fishing Tackle

- A six foot rod coupled with a 4000 size reel, 12 lb braided mainline and 14lb leader is a good combo for this style of fishing. This may seem very light but will handle even the largest snapper – very few fish will brick you in the reef.

Will's Gold Coast Snapper Fishing Lures

- 3" ZMan Paddletail soft plastics are perfect for snapper. The 10x elastomer used to make ZMan lures is tough enough that smaller fish and pest species don't nip the tails off and cause you to do a drift with an ineffective lure. Will typically starts with a 3/8 oz jig head, but wind, current and water depth dictate the weight that will work best on the day. Snapper love to take these lures on the drop, so the ideal scenario is to choose a jig head weight that gets the lure to within 10-15m of the bottom but as slowly as possible. Will fishes them both by casting ahead of the drift and working them back and by trailing them behind the drifting boat.

- Switching up to 5" ZMan paddle tails can help to filter out small fish when they're in numbers and are getting to the lure before the better quality fish. They can be fished on a larger jig head but still need to waft down slowly into the zone, not plummet to the depths.
- Lucanus and Kabura Jigs are excellent when they're dropped to very close to the bottom and the rod is simply placed in the rod holder. They can also be worked effectively to shut down snapper by holding the rod and slowly lifting the jig up and down.