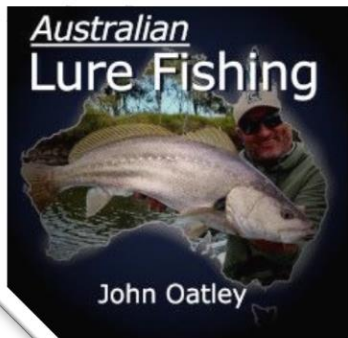


Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 411](#)



[Go to the episode online](#) | [Download mp3](#)

John Oatley

Ballina Lure Fishing Addict

John is a Ballina local who has fished the area for over 25 years, the last 15 or so of them almost exclusively with lures. Despite the many species he catches, jewfish are one of his favourites and he has put substantial time into figuring out how to catch them on lures!



John's Richmond River Jewfish Fishing Tips

- The main factor affecting jewies in the Richmond River system is tide. If you have at least 1.4m of tide and not too much wind then you're in with a good shot.
- Deeper water (3-4m or more) with structure such as rock walls is a good place to start. When the current is running hard they'll be in deeper water and holding tight to the rocks. As the current slows during the last quarter of the tide they'll move away from structure a s little more and become easier to target.
- Look for any sign that the flow is being diverted, such as current lines and back eddies. Sometimes a single rock can be enough to cause a current break that will hold jewfish.
- If there's been very little rainfall over the prior month the jewfish will move upstream and spread out through the system. During periods following rain they'll tend to be more around the river mouth. John doesn't target them much more than 10km up the river from the mouth.

- Herring and prawns are the main food items for jewfish, along with seasonal whitebait. The really big fish that come into the river mouth over winter are often chasing bigger prey, such as mullet.
- John finds that weather doesn't make a huge difference for jewfish in this system. He prefers overcast days, but has caught plenty on clear, sunny days. The main thing is to have not too much wind, as it affects the boat drift and makes it hard to get lures to where you need them and to work them naturally.
- It's possible to catch fish even when there's a bit of boating traffic around, don't give up trying just because there are others on the water, even skiers.
- Land-based fishing is a genuine option in this system and can be very effective for it's stealth factor. John actually fishes the opposite tides as when he's boat fishing and looks for river bends and use Google Earth for this, but also the Navionics app on your mobile phone is useful for finding deeper spots etc.
- Stealth is key, so when boat fishing, cut the main motor well away from your fishing spot and cruise in slowly on the electric, keeping the electric motor on the minimum setting you can get away with.
- When solo fishing from a boat, have a big net ready and be organised so as to be able to get your photo while minimising stress on the fish.
- If the fishing is really slow, John will give fish attractants a try but will also size down the lures slightly for a more subtle presentation.

John's Jewfish Fishing Tackle

- A 7', 5-7kg G Loomis spin rod with a 3000 Daiwa LT reel loaded with 200-300m of 10lb braid and a 12-20lb fluorocarbon leader is fine for boat fishing for jewfish.
- For land-based jewfish luring a 7'3", 10kg class spin rod with matching reel, 20-30lb braid and 40-50lb leader will help get fish through the structure at your feet.

John's Top Jewfish Fishing Lures

- 4" Diezel MinnowZ paddle tail in a white colour is a great lure for prospecting when you're looking for fish – if they are around and feeding they'll usually take this lure – though you might need to go for a slightly larger or smaller size sometimes. Jig head varies depending on the conditions, but 3/8oz is a pretty good starting point if you're in 7-8m, but switch down to 1/4oz as the tide slows down. Position your boat as close as you can to a rockwall and drift along it as much as possible, making casts tight to the wall and ahead of the boat. Use a

drift and lift technique if the current is fast and switch to a double hop as the current slows, pausing as much as you can.

- 6" ZMan SwimmerZ are great for landbased fishing, in part because they are tough enough to not get bitten off by tailor as much. When land-based fishing on rockwalls you're stuck in one spot and the fish are facing into the current, so your aim is to work the lure close to the bottom and keep it in the zone where rock and sand meet as much as possible.
- 4" Squidgies Shad in the now discontinued white lightning colour on a 1/4 oz jig head are especially good in the upstream areas. These lures are made of a firmer plastic and create a lot more vibration than the other lures.
- If there's a big swell event it's worth casting large hard body lures of the rocks and rockwalls at the mouth of the river.