

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 413](#)



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## Ben "Notso" Bright

Weipa Sportfishing Guide

Ben has been in the sport and gamefishing industry forever, starting his career as a full-time gameboat deckie on the east coast and having spent more than a decade now guiding clients on a massive number of species out of Weipa. Over the last 4-5 years he's been operating his own charter business "Last Cast Guiding".



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## Ben's Weipa Barramundi Fishing Tips

- Weipa is not a destination renowned for quality barra in shallow water! There are limited large freshwater rivers entering the coastline near Weipa, so the barra behave a little differently to other areas as there's not a lot of prawns and crustaceans. The primary food for barra is baitfish, particularly mullet, that move right up onto the mud flats. Barra will swim on their sides in water too shallow to swim upright, in order to hunt mullet.
- It's important to study the Weipa flats at high tide and low tide and see what the water does and where the mullet move. As always, flats with shallow drains cutting through them are usually productive.
- Contrary to popular belief, not all barra start as males and not all males change into females.
- Weipa has experienced a cloudy, warmer winter in 2021, so the fishing has been better over the dry season than usual.

- Ben's preference is to fish the runout tide as the fish get concentrated around the drains and edges of flats as the water recedes. On the run-in tide the fish move onto the flats and disperse, often getting out of casting range in water too shallow to safely boat into.
- Moving into spring the water warms and the low tides are less low, encouraging flats feeding barra to swing into action. The tides in the Gulf are unique..... during the wet season the tides can be so big it's hard to even catch a barra. Around April the low tides start happening later in the day and this trend continues into August and September. At this time of year Weipa can experience a long, slow run in that lasts all day and doesn't dirty the water much and the barra can be a bit spooky. Look for a mudline or an area where the water touches the snags.
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- A good strategy is to start at the boat ramp and motor upstream looking for mud flats and mullet. Don't rush in to fish but spend some time creeping around super slowly figuring it out. Ben finds an electric motor on spotlock is likely to spook fish and prefers to deploy a plonk and fish.
- Find an area where your boat is in 0.8 to 1m of water and with a good cast you can land the lure on dry mud. "Moon Mud" is ideal – in other words flats that are pocked by lots of little holes and depressions for the barra to wait in ambush. 0.8m is too deep for most barra around Weipa, but gives the angler security of knowing the boat won't end up stuck.
- The slower a lure is moving, the more accurate a barra can be with its strike.
- NOTE: The closed season for barra in the Gulf is 7 October, closing a few weeks earlier than on the east coast.

## Ben's Weipa Barra Fishing Tackle

- A 6'6" to 7' 15-20lb spin rod coupled with a 3000-4000 size reel, 15-20lb braid and a 40lb fluorocarbon leader is a good combination. It's possible to fish quite light for barra on the Weipa flats because there's no structure and few sharks. This allows the angler to use strong, fine wire hooks that are easier to drive home, increasing the hookup rate.

## Bens Top Weipa Barramundi Lures

- The shallow running Samaki Redic is a great lure in all sizes, depending on where you're fishing and what technique you're using - choose a lure that matches the size of the baitfish. The smallest size has a magnetic weight transfer system that makes it cast long and straight, which is perfect in a very small, light lure. Don't be afraid to go either super small or super large.

- Even though Weipa barra are predominantly baitfish feeders, a soft plastic prawn imitation is hard for any fish to refuse. There are lots of good options around, but Zerek and Samaki both make some really good options. Ben likes the smaller size prawns as he finds that small to medium fish often miss the single hook in a large prawn pattern and it's easier to use a smaller lure than to rig a stinger hook that might impact on the lure action. These can be rigged with a small ball sinker in the loop knot and cast deep into mangrove roots and snags when the fish have moved off the flats. Cast it tight to structure and let it sink with the reel in gear, be prepared to strike the moment you feel a tap. They can often just be slow rolled with the current and will take barra when all else fails at times.
- Topwater bites can be a lot of fun and the Sebile Splasher was the perfect option, but is sadly no longer available. Ben finds a 100mm surface lure that has a subtle action for clean water or a noisier cup faced popper with rattles can be worth throwing when the water is dirtier. It's important to put plenty of pauses in the retrieve, count to five on each pause. Barra will usually take the lure on the pause, so resist the temptation to twitch it too quickly or you'll miss plenty of fish.