

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 443](#)



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David “Hodgie” Hodge

“The Barefoot Fisherman”

Hodgie will be known to many ALF listeners as the host of “The Barefoot Fisherman” TV show. A cod enthusiast, Dave has reinvented himself as a gun mangrove jack specialist – but today's episode takes him back to his roots on freshwater natives. Hodgie writes for fishing magazines and speaks at boat shows and fishing events, where he frequently stars in trick casting exhibitions.

Hodgie’s Top Tips For Murray Cod

- Hodgie was one of the pioneers of Murray Cod on lures and spent a lot of time in the Berri back in the early days with Murray cod icons like Rod Mackenzie, Glenn Casey and Brian Dare. In those days most cod were caught on live baits, or occasionally by trolling aeroplane spinners.
- The Murray River at Berri is a wide, often shallow river system and the water quality and clarity depends largely on irrigation release rates upstream. There are some deeper areas with tons of heavy timber that hold good cod.
- Cod are very territorial and are usually associated with the large, old logs rather than the recently deposited timber.
- Be sure to check the fishing regs as there have been Murray Cod closures in South Australia from time to time to encourage recruitment of juvenile fish.
- Often cod will hunker down under a log and aren't actively feeding so the angler needs to harass them with multiple casts to annoy them into striking. Sometimes it can take 20 casts or more.

- An electric motor is an important piece of equipment for river cod fishers, sounders are less important as you can usually see the structure you want to cast to.
- A lure that floats away from the snag too fast is often not taken, whereas one that suspends after it hits timber will often get smashed.
- It's best not to point the rod at the lure as you retrieve. Cod are implosion feeders and need the lure to drop back and go into their mouth. Holding the rod up or to the side allows the tip to bend and the lure can drop back and have a greater chance of finding the fish.
- The number one rule is as soon as you set the hook to short stroke the fish as fast and furiously as you can. Your best chance is to not let them get anywhere near the timber, but if they get to cover, back the drag off and let them calm down, then coax them out gently.

Hodgies Murray Cod Fishing Tackle

- Hodgie likes baitcast gear and a 6'6" or 7' rod, 30lb braid is adequate for even the biggest river cod, although you need to know how to play them. When fish get into structure it's best to back off the pressure, reposition the boat and try and coax them out.

Hodgie's Top Murray Cod Fishing Lures

- A half ounce spinnerbait with large double Colorado blades is perfect for sinking down steep rock walls and cliffs and will often be taken as they fall. Hodgie likes the purple/brown colour combination and adds a 4-5" paddletail plastic to the lure with a siwash stinger hook.
- A twin blade 5/8 ounce spinnerbait with a tandem spinnerbait with a smaller Colorado and willow blade in front combination is great for faster water. Again, a soft plastic tail and a stinger hook are the key to maximising hookups.
- Hard bodied lures with slow, wide pulsing actions at slow speed are perfect for cod, either cast or trolled.
- The 80mm Halco Poltergeist with the 5m diving bib is a great hard body option for bumping through timber that casts as straight as an arrow and dives steeply to maximum depth. Whilst these lures aren't as wide actioned and slow swimming as most cod lures, Hodgie found that when they're retrofitted with heavier hooks they can be smashed into snags to create plenty of noise and don't float up too fast when the retrieve is paused.. He reckons the 100mm version would be deadly on cod too.
- The Mudeye Snake and similar jointed wakebaits also have a place in cod fishing, especially when they're fished over big laydown redgums and rock bars. You need some seriously heavy tackle just to be able to cast these lures but it is heart stopping when a huge cod slurps them from the surface.

