

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 469](#)



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Simon Fitzpatrick

Northern NSW Fishing Guide And Journalist

Simon operates the highly respected guiding service "Northern Rivers Sportfishing". A talented fisherman, he specialises in wild river bass and cod, as well as impoundment fishing for these and other native species. Simon is a Fisheries and Aquaculture Scientist by trade and is the President of the AusFish Tweed River Chapter. Simon recently appeared on television the Offroad Show, where he guided Steve and Jo Starling on a bass fishing adventure.



Simon's Clarrie Hall Bass Fishing Tips

- Clarrie Hall is a small and relatively shallow dam when compared with others in the region, such as Wivenhoe and Somerset. It's less than an hour from the southern Gold Coast.
- Petrol motors are not allowed to be on your boat and must be removed prior to launching.
- Clarrie Hall tends to stay close to full level most of the time and is usually crystal clear with extensive weedbeds. After heavy rain it can become a little more dirty due to incoming sediment and the weed can start to die off until the water clears and the weed starts to come back. This is a natural annual cycle in many lakes.
- Stealth is important in the clear water and bass can quickly become aware of your presence. Simon often finds that fish will sit in the shade under his boat and refuse to bite. Due to the shallow nature and lack of bony bream, the bass tend not to get pelagic like they do in other impoundments, but stay on the edges all year round.

- Fishing finesse with small lures and focussing on the weedbeds around points is always a good idea. Clarrie Hall is reasonably sheltered from wind, but the points still accumulate fish. Jumping from point to point until you find fish is a good strategy.
- Bass tend to be light sensitive and the lake is only open to anglers during daylight hours, so focus on the shady side of the weedbeds. Overcast days often tend to fish better than bright, sunny days.
- It's important to make getting your lure caught in the weed an advantage. Simon finds that when his lure gets snagged on the weed edges he can twitch it like a baitfish that's caught up and then rip the lure free. Usually a strike will come as the lure breaks through the weed.
- The best fishing tends to come from making long casts parallel to the weed beds and working your lure back along the edges. Fish with a reasonably heavy drag and be prepared to muscle fish from the weeds.
- There are tons of fish in this storage, so if you're not getting bites, move on and find some fish that are active.

Simon's Clarrie Hall Bass Fishing Tackle

- A 1-3kg or 2-4kg rated rod in the 7' length range, 2500 size spin reel, 10lb braided mainline and 10lb fluorocarbon leader is perfect for this system.
- For the fly angler a 6 weight rod, intermediate line and a handful of bass vampire flies will do the damage.

Simon's Bass Fishing Lures

- A 3" Paddle Tail grub in any good brand is a viable option, the Keitech paddle tail and the Noike Wobble Shad are excellent examples. These can be rigged on a 1/6oz jig head if the fish are higher in the water or a 1/4oz jig head if the fish are deeper or the wind is blowing a bit. Find what depth the fish are sitting and sink your lure down to them – bass will often follow the lure to the bottom and hit it on the first crank.... Flip the bail and stay in contact with the lure as it sinks, being ready to strike at any "ticks". Slow roll the lure back, stopping half way back to the boat to let it sink back down.
- Small hardbody lures and jerkbaits that dive to around 2m can be very effective. Simon likes the Jackall chubby suspending, which is also a rattle-free option and is great if the fish are skittish. Any good quality hardbody that's less than around 60-70mm will catch fish if worked effectively, bass are not usually too fussy. Putting plenty of pauses into the retrieve with a suspending hard body will usually increase the number of strikes.

- Skirted 1/4oz skirted jigs, such as those produced by Molix are deadly on Clarrie Hall bass, especially in depths of 5-8m. Adding a soft plastic tail such as a Squidgies Biotuff Wiggler increases the effectiveness and Simon customises the lure by trimming the weed guard to reduce the fibre and by reshaping the skirt by trimming. Let the lure sink, vibrate the rod tip and let it sit. It's important to fish this lure very slowly and with long pauses, being ready to strike when the fish sucks in a stationary jig.