

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 505](#)



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

## Riley Ward

Sponsored Angler

Koombooloomba Dam and has invested a lot of time figuring out the fishy residents. This is a steep-sided dam system and requires some different approaches for best results, which Riley outlines in today's interview!



---

## Riley's Top Tips For Fishing Koombooloomba

- Koombooloomba Dam is situated on the Tully River system in Far North Queensland above the escarpment. Access roads are unsealed but in reasonable condition. There are no formal boat ramps, but the flat shorelines and hard, rocky bottom near the main access area is perfect for launching small boats. Check the regulations regarding motor sizes and so on.
- Most anglers seem to fish the main basin at Koombooloomba, but Riley recommends exploring the many bays and inlets because they contain a lot more timber and other structure – plus the fish tend to be a bit more eager to bite.
- Don't hesitate to get out of the boat and walk the banks as you'll find fish are less spooky and can be easily sight cast from the steep banks.
- The Tully River channel carves a deep channel through the dam and offers easy navigation as there are not trees in the channel.

- Riley has found that the biggest sooty grunter tend to congregate around the mouths of creeks that come into the lake, but because the creeks tend to bring quite cold water the barra tend to congregate more in adjacent bays away from the actual creek mouths.
- If you can find areas where the wind has whipped up and caused a bit of muddy water the barra won't be too far away.
- Due to the steep banks and depth, Koombooloomba Dam doesn't usually sport too many weed beds, but terrestrial grasses can colonise the banks in the drier months and get inundated during rapid water level rises in the wet season. Both barramundi and sooty grunter love to get into these areas, especially if you can find a small flat with some grass over it.
- Barra and sooties can be caught in Koombooloomba all year round, but the lead up to the wet is usually best for barra and the end of the wet season is best for sooties.
- Clear skies and fine weather with light winds around the new moon create perfect conditions for this system. Riley likes to start first thing in the morning and fish the low light period, but finds the fishing can get better and better as the sun rises and the morning wears on.
- During the cooler months it pays to use slower working lures for barra, but when the water warms up the fish get more aggressive and take faster moving lures. Sooties are the opposite, tending to be more active and aggressive during the cooler months.
- If you pull the boat up on a point and walk the bay sight casting fish it can pay to put a few casts in behind the boat when you return. For some reason there are often barra sitting at the back of the boat when you come back.

## Riley's Sooty Grunter And Barra Tackle

- A 7', 7-14lb spin rod with a 3000 Stradic with 20lb Fins Evolve braid and a 50-60 leader is great for the barra
- A 6'6", 7-14lb baitcast rod with a Shimano Tranx 200 reel, 20lb braid and 50-60lb leader is great for throwing heavier barra lures.
- A 4-8lb spin rod of just under 7' with a 2500 size reel and 10lb braid is perfect for the sooty grunter.

## Riley's Top Lures For Fishing Koombooloomba Dam

- The small gold Bomber (14A) is a great lure that will take both barramundi and sooty grunter from this system. Upgrade the trebles to BKK Fangs one size larger than those that come on the lure out of the packet. This slows the float rate down and will increase the strike rate. If there is a dirty water line, a straight, super slow retrieve that keeps the lure just under the surface and barely swimming can be

deadly. Around timber in clear water the lure can be fished with very aggressive twitches, allowing the lure to float back for 3-5 seconds after each rip.

- The small sized ZMan Hard Leg Frogz (4") works really well whenever you experience rainy conditions on Koombuloomba and again will be taken by both barramundi and sooty grunter. Rig the lure weedless on a ChinlockZ and cast into the very ends of bays, over shallow points or around areas where the grass has been inundated by rising water levels. A slow roll is all that's required, just fast enough to get the legs working.
- For sooty grunter a 2.5" ZMan grub on a ¼ oz jig head is effective and is probably the go-to lure for this species. Fish it around trees and structure and slow roll anywhere sooties might be present.
- The Atomic Hardz Shiner, medium-diving is a great option for barramundi in Koombuloomba Dam and can have terminal upgrades and be fished in the same way as the gold bomber, except it fishes better than the bomber in clear water around timber or on points that jut into the Tully River bed.
- The Zerek Affinity jointed, floating swimbait in pearl colour is very effective. Riley takes the light chin weight and cuts it in half so the lure swims sub-surface and can be worked through trees and around points. An aggressive crank of the reel now and then will make the lure work erratically.