

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 525](#)



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Damon Olsen

Sportfishing Guide And Tackle Industry Heavyweight

As founder of Nomad Sportfishing, Damon's record as a sportfishing guide is legendary. Over 20 years he fished pretty much every individual reef from Fraser Island to Torres Strait and beyond – including many that have since become green zones. More recently his company Nomad Design has disrupted the Australian tackle industry and pushed the bar on lure design and manufacture to new limits.



Damon's Top Sportfishing Destination #1: Shoalwater

- Located on Central Queensland's Capricorn Coast and accessible via large trailerboat either via Yeppoon or Stanage Bay, Shoalwater has diverse fisheries from barramundi to GT, black jewfish and fingermark to name just a couple.
- This area can be closed down to anglers at times due to military training and setting foot ashore is prohibited due to the potential for unexploded ordinance!
- Shoalwater is unique in Australia with rocky islands, 10m tides and massive current flow. There is lots of sheltered water in any conditions at Shoalwater, but getting there and getting home is a long, exposed run.
- April-May is the perfect time to fish this area, unless the wet season has been unusually wet, which tends to dirty the water. In that event September or October are

a better option. These times give anglers the opportunity to target both barramundi in coastal inlets and GT on rocky shorelines.

- For GT it's often preferable to have current, but with 10m tides the current can be too strong even for GTs. There is always somewhere to fish, but you'll need to look away from the usual pressure points and find back eddies where the fish can hang out of the current.

Damon's Top Sportfishing Destination #2: Kenn Reefs

- The Kenn Reef system is 350 nautical miles east of Mackay and is on this list because it is so different from the Great Barrier Reef. Extreme water clarity, incredibly bright colours and incredible pelagic fishing are the drawcard.
- Dogtooth tuns on topwater, wahoo on stickbaits, mega GT's and yellowfin tuna on poppers are on offer around the reef edges, whilst XOS coral trout and reefies are available in the lagoon. The shallow reef lagoon fishing is not as prolific as the Great Barrier Reef, but when you hook a fish it's going to be a monster.
- November to December is the time to visit as you're outside of the season where strong south easterly winds are a problem, but early enough in the wet season that cyclones are less likely.

Damon's Top Sportfishing Destination #3: T-Line Reef

- Just north of Swains Reefs, around 100 nautical miles east of Mackay, T-Line is a system of numerous small reefs that are unlike any coral reef systems anywhere else in the world.
- It's a long way out, but once you're there the area is very sheltered, and the reef dries out in many places at low tide. Be careful of anchorages though, sometimes an anchorage can be calm on one tide but have massive currents and whirlpools when the tide turns.
- The system is comprised of countless small reefs with very narrow channels and almost all of them containing blue holes! Massive currents are another feature of the area, creating lots of life and lots of fish.
- For Damon, massive GT's were the standout of this area and would move into the blue holes. 40-50kg GT's hunt in the shallows in sheltered blue holes and can be sight cast from the shore with poppers, with fish often taking lures right at your feet.
- Due to the currents and the drying of the reef at low tide the shallow reef flats probably don't fish as well as reef flats in other parts of the Great Barrier Reef.

Damon's Top Sportfishing Destination #4: Lockhardt River

- The area half way between Lockhardt River and Cape York has lots of green zones, but there is an area where there's a gap in the green zones and where the most of the reef systems don't even have names. This area offers spectacular, remote fishing.
- The attraction of this area is that it's not unlike Kenn Reefs with wahoo, Spanish mackerel, dogtooth and yellowfin tuna in the deep channels. However, the area also has the added option of fishing the shallows for an incredible range of species, such as Maori wrasse, coral trout and so on, with a bycatch of red bass, napoleon wrasse and more.
- This is a November-December destination to avoid the super-hot weather and warm water that drives the fish deeper – not to mention the cyclone season.

Damon's Top Sportfishing Destination #5: Diamond Islet

- 250-280 nautical miles east of Cairns, this area has vegetated islands and it's nice to be able to go ashore and have a break.
- The attraction to this area is really big dogtooth tuna, one of the toughest species to catch. On 200lb braid and 80 wide game reels you can expect to regularly get smoked by big doggies!
- Aside from the big dogtooth tuna, there is some amazing shallow reef fishing with poppers, stickbaits, jigs and so on.

Damon's Top Sportfishing Destination #6: Eurimbula Creek

- Eurimbula Creek is a small system just north of 1770 that requires picking the right tides and four-wheel driving in. It's far enough south that 50-60cm mangrove jacks are reasonably common.
- A very small boat with shallow draught is the key and the fact that crabbing is banned means there are few boats roaring around spooking the fish.
- Sight casting small hard bodies tight into mangrove banks will put you onto some quality jacks.