

# Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 531](#)



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## Zac Panaretos

Sponsored Angler

Zac spent a lot of time game fishing around Sydney before switching to more of a sportfishing focus and targeting snapper, among other species. A sponsored angler, he's written articles for fishing world and has done plenty of speaking from stage at fishing events and club nights.



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## Zac's Coffs Harbour Snapper Tips

- Just about any reef or piece of ground, large or small, around Coffs can hold snapper at times, but consistent results come with studying the currents and understanding where the bait and fish will aggregate.
- Zac's strategy is usually to start in shallow water around headlands and inshore areas during the pre-dawn period, then gradually head into deeper water as the day progresses, though he's often done fishing and on the way home by 10am.
- It's important to explore the reefs thoroughly and find the pressure edges on the day, rather than just motor out to a mark and anchor up. It's a good plan to have a lot of reefs in mind before leaving the ramp and to spend a short time on each one, moving quickly to the next if you don't find active fish.
- It's important not to motor over a reef before fishing it, as you'll spook wary snapper or bait. When approaching a reef, stop a few hundred metres short, kick the motor

out of gear and watch the GPS to find which way you're drifting. Then set up to drift over the patch you want to fish, turning the motor off. If the fish are quiet, Zac will turn the sounder off, too.

- On the inshore grounds, look for trails of foam or rippled water that provide clues as to the direction of the current.
- When figuring out the boat drift, keep an eye on the breadcrumb trail on the GPS..... if it deviates to one side or other of the direction of the wind you have a clue as to the direction the current is moving.
- Zac usually prefers to fish shallow water early in the morning or late in the arvo but will sometimes fish the deeper reefs through the day. He'll "power fish" by having 15 or so reefs mapped out and hitting all of them in a 3-4 hour session until he finds success.
- On the deeper reefs it can be worth risking spooking a fish or two by trolling over the structure for 20 minutes or so whilst mapping out the features and then fish the reef once you've identified where the fish are holding. Remembering that often the biggest snapper can be sitting over a sandy bottom 15-20 in front of the pressure edge.
- Zac has a small boat, so he's looking for calm conditions, especially around the new moon. He avoids the full moon periods if possible, but tries to be on the most likely spots at the tide change.
- Snapper are a year-round prospect around Coffs Harbour but the winter months definitely fish better.
- When using soft plastic lures and you miss a bite, take a look at the marks left on the lure. Scuffs and abrasions are usually indicative of sergeant bakers or rock cod, jagged punctures or cuts are often left by tailor. Snapper leave small indents and punctures that match their conical teeth.

## **Zac's Coff's Harbour Snapper Tackle**

- Zac likes the Samurai Reaction 7', 15-25 lb fast action spin rod, which he couples with a Penn Clash 4000. He spools the reel with 30lb Majorcraft Dangan X braid and completes the outfit with a 30lb fluorocarbon leader. The Dangan braid is important because it's super thin and gives extra casting distance and less drag in current.
- If you're likely to head out to the deeper reefs it can be worth throwing in a jigging rod. The above combo will do the job too, but a specialised jigging rod will work a bit better.

## Zac's Coffs Harbour Snapper Lures

- Atomic Plazo's in the 7" size in Grey Ghost, Ghost Pearl, White or Electric Chicken colours, rigged on a 6/0 XOS Seekers jig head. Weight the lure as lightly as possible, but as a general guide, for waters less than 10m deep, use 1/6 oz, in 10-25m a 1/4 to 1/3 oz, in 25-40 m start with 1/3 to 1/2 oz jig heads and in 50-60m step up to 3/4 or 1 oz as a starting point. Plazo's are super easy to rig and Zac likes the natural colours for fishing in shallow water or medium depths in the middle of the day. The electric chicken and white colours come into play in the deeper water. Make sure the plastic is rigged carefully to avoid bunching up or unnatural swimming actions. Cast the lure long ahead of the boat drift and let it sink all the way to the bottom before giving it 3-4 aggressive whips and allowing it to drop back to bottom. The vast majority of fish take it on the drop from the initial cast, so don't be concerned if you don't get much time to work the lure before the boat drifts over it.
- The 75mm Atomic Semi-Hard Vibe is an "idiotproof" lure that can be dropped over the back of the boat and "teabagged". Lift the rod so the lure gets lifted 3-4m off the bottom and then drop it down again. This lure can also be cast ahead of a drifting boat and fished in much the same way as the Plazo's plastics, allowing the angler to cover more ground.
- The Jig Para Vertical Slow Pitch Jig in 100g size and red/gold or pink colours are great for the deeper water but can also be allowed to flutter along behind a drifting boat. This jig can be rigged with Gamakatsu 4/0 Tuned Assist hook and Zac finds that the 100g jig is better than smaller sizes as the small jigs attract smaller snapper. This lure can be worked by slowly lifting it, then dropping it back down. Snapper usually hit at the start of the drop.