



# ALF Podcast – Flathead Tackle Guide

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## Rod, Reel, Line And Leader Combo's

### Choosing A Flathead Fishing Rod

Flathead are a surprisingly good sportfishing species and many people are surprised to hear about their aerial antics and willingness to smash surface lures in shallow water. That said, they're not renowned for taking long, searing runs or bricking anglers in structure, so massive stopping power isn't required. Many a big flathead has been hooked whilst bream fishing – and the majority can be landed if they are played sensibly.

Choosing a rod for flathead fishing therefore comes down to the style of fishing – and often about what lures you'll be using.

### Light Tackle

The majority of flathead specialists will use light tackle most of the time. A 1-3kg or 2-4kg line class spin rod of 6'6" to 7'7", coupled with a 2500-3000 size reel, 4-5kg braided mainline and 5-8kg fluorocarbon leader is a great starting point. This style of tackle will allow the angler to easily cast very light lures good distances.

Avoid super slow action rods with very soft tips as they can make it very hard to work some of the more popular lure styles such as metal blades, soft plastic paddletails, shads and prawns or soft vibes. Fast action rods allow lures to be worked with short, sharp jabs, as is often required.

On the other hand, rods with a medium action have a little extra tip softness that can help when working hard body lures or topwater stickbaits and plastics. This style of rod can also be very effective when trolling plastic or hard bodies for flathead.

### Medium Tackle

In recent years it's become very popular to use larger lures for flathead, and many big fish specialists have found that they can "filter" out the smaller fish and bycatch, plus increase their chances of tangling with seriously big flathead by using large lures. Of course, these lures can't be cast or worked with very light tackle, so many people step up to gear that would previously have been more at home fishing plastics for snapper or barramundi.

The other application for this style of tackle is when you're fishing deeper water, especially when there might be strong currents. Heavier gear enables the angler to use jig heads, soft vibes and other offerings up to 1.5 or 2 ounces effectively, especially if a fast action and very sensitive carbon fibre rod is chosen. Of course, a bycatch of jewfish, snapper or other large and tough fish is also common in the deeper water, but can be managed on medium tackle.

Spin rods in the 3-5, 4-8 or even 6-12kg line class and up to 7'6" in length are well suited to this style of fishing. A 3000-4000 reel is usually sufficient and can be loaded with 8kg braid and tipped with an 8-10kg fluorocarbon or monofilament leader.

Baitcast tackle is also well suited to this style of flathead fishing, and those who prefer this style of gear would do well to arm themselves with a 6'6", 5-8kg rod and 200 size reel loaded with 10kg braid and an 8-10kg leader.



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## Heavy Tackle

It's not so long ago that most anglers would have considered you crazy if you turned up on the flats with heavy rods commonly used for targeting cod. But since the discovery that really big flathead like really big lures things have changed.

There is a growing contingent of anglers having all kinds of fun chasing flathead with large swimbaits and glidebaits, or soft plastics up to 12" long. Due to their massive weight these big lures can't be cast or worked with anything but heavy, specialist gear.

Baitcast outfits are often favoured for this style of fishing, and a 7' to 7'6", 6-10 or 10-15kg outfit is perfect for casting and working the really big lures. A 200 size baitcast reel, 15kg braid and 15kg fluorocarbon leader complete the setup.

For those who prefer spin gear, a 7' plus, 6-10kg rod, 4000 size reel, 15kg braided mainline and 15kg fluorocarbon leader is a good setup.

## Lures

The following summarises information shared by ALF guests regarding their lure preferences for flathead fishing. Please keep in mind, that many guests modify these lures by upgrading the terminal tackle, changing the weighting, adding stinger hooks and so on. It is advisable to [listen to podcast audio and refer to show notes](#) for the locations you'll be fishing for more detailed information on how to use these lures in specific locations and conditions.



# Flathead Tackle Guide

Flathead Lure Styles Most Frequently Recommended By ALF Podcast Guests

| Lure                 | Size       | Shallow Water (0-2m) |       |                   |              | Deeper Water (>2m) |                  |                 |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                      |            | Tidal Lakes          | Flats | Channels/Dropoffs | Creek Mouths | Tidal Lakes        | Holes & Channels | Bays and Inlets |
| <b>Hard Bodies</b>   |            |                      |       |                   |              |                    |                  |                 |
| Suspending           | 75-100mm   | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
|                      | 100-120mm  | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
| Shallow Running      | 50-100mm   | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
|                      | 100-120mm  | ✓                    | ✓     |                   | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
| Deep Running         | 65-100mm   | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| Sinking              | 75-100mm   |                      |       | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| <b>Soft Plastics</b> |            |                      |       |                   |              |                    |                  |                 |
| Paddle Tail          | 75-100 mm  | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
|                      | 100-120 mm | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
|                      | 120-130 mm | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
|                      | 130-150 mm | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
|                      | >150mm     |                      |       |                   |              | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| Soft Prawns          | >75mm      | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
|                      | 75-100mm   | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
|                      | 120-130 mm | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |



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|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                         |                | Tidal Lakes          | Flats | Channels/Dropoffs | Creek Mouths | Tidal Lakes        | Holes & Channels | Bays and Inlets |
| Curly Tail Grub         | 50-100mm       | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| Stick Baits             | 150-300mm      | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
| Jerk Shad               | 100mm<br>120mm | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| Swimbait                | 100-200mm      | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
|                         | >200mm         |                      | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
| <b>Soft Vibes</b>       |                |                      |       |                   |              |                    |                  |                 |
| Soft Vibes              | 75-90mm        |                      |       |                   |              | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
|                         | 95-100mm       |                      |       |                   |              | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| <b>Swimbait</b>         |                |                      |       |                   |              |                    |                  |                 |
| Multi-joint hard bodies | 100-200mm      | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
|                         | 200-300mm      | ✓                    | ✓     | ✓                 | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |



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|------------------------|----------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                        |          | Tidal Lakes          | Flats | Channels/Dropoffs | Creek Mouths | Tidal Lakes        | Holes & Channels | Bays and Inlets |
| <b>Other Styles</b>    |          |                      |       |                   |              |                    |                  |                 |
| Poppers and stickbaits | 75-100mm | ✓                    | ✓     |                   | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |
| Metal Blades           | 50-100mm |                      |       |                   |              | ✓                  | ✓                | ✓               |
| Bent Minnow            | >100mm   |                      |       |                   |              |                    |                  |                 |
|                        | <100mm   | ✓                    | ✓     |                   | ✓            |                    |                  |                 |



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## Flathead Lure Makes and Models Used By Australian Lure Fishing Podcast Guests

|                                 |   |                                      |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Soft Plastic Paddletails</b> | - ZMan Swimmerz, Minnowz and Diesel Minnowz | - Keitech Easy Shiner                |
|                                 | - Pro Lure Fishtail                         | - Gobbler Lures Paddletail           |
|                                 | - Squidgies Fish                            | - Hurricane Sprat                    |
|                                 | - Munroes Paddletail                        | - Zman Mag Swim                      |
|                                 | - Samaki Bomb Shad                          | - Zerek Flat Shad                    |
| <b>Soft Plastic Prawns</b>      | - Riptide Swimming Mullet                   | - Berkley Giant Ripple Shad          |
|                                 | - Zerek Prawn & Live Shrimp                 | - Berkley Gulp Shrimp                |
| <b>Soft Plastic Jerkbait</b>    | - ZMan EZ Shrimp                            |                                      |
|                                 | - Berkley Minnow & Gulp Jerkshad            | - Gobblers Lures Jerkshad            |
| <b>Soft Plastic Curly Tails</b> | - Squidgies Whipbait                        |                                      |
|                                 | - Berkley Turtleback Worm                   | - Squidgies Wrigglers                |
| <b>Soft Plastic Stick Baits</b> | - Gulp Swimming Mullet                      |                                      |
|                                 | - Lunker City Sluggo                        | - Ecogear Power worm                 |
| <b>Soft Plastic Swimbaits</b>   | - Slapstix                                  |                                      |
|                                 | - Squidgies Whip Bait                       | - Biwaa Dues                         |
|                                 | - Gancraft Bariki Shad                      | - Arachi                             |
| <b>Soft Vibes</b>               | - Molix Glidebait                           |                                      |
|                                 | - Zerek Fishtrap                            | - Samaki Vibelicious and Thumpertail |
| <b>Hard Bodies – suspending</b> | - Zerek Tango Shad                          |                                      |
| <b>Hardbodies – shallow</b>     | - Daiwa Double Clutch & Steez Shad          | - Atomic Slim Twitch                 |
|                                 | - Bassday Sugarswim                         | - Rapala Shadow Rap                  |
|                                 | - Gold Bomber                               |                                      |
| <b>Hardbodies - deep</b>        | - Atomic Hardz Shiner                       | - Lively Lures Micro Mullet          |
|                                 | - Mann's Stretch                            |                                      |
| <b>Hardbodies - sinking</b>     | - Imakatsu Alive Chatter                    | -                                    |



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### Swimbaits

- Savage Gear Shine Glide
- Westin Hypoteez
- Zerek Affinity
- Jackall Gantia
- Gancraft Jointed Claw
- Biovex Swimbait
- Lucky Craft Real Ayu

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### Topwater

- Crossfire Bent Minnow
  - Bassday Sugarpen
  - OSP Bent Minnow
  - MMD Splash Prawn
  - Hurricane Switch
  - River 2 Sea Sammy
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