

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 591](#)



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Jono Clark

Tournament Barra Angler

Jono has been a tournament barra enthusiast for years but also fishes the headlands of the Mackay area recreationally and socially. He's spent a fair bit of time snorkelling and spearfishing these areas, observing the fish communities and it's helped him figure out the rod and line strategy.



Jono's Headland Barra Fishing Tips

- Scum lines and dirty water lines are a dead giveaway that barra will be around. If you have a decent breeze blowing onto a headland on an outgoing tide, especially if there is a bommie creating an eddy there is likely to be barra, black jew, fingermark, trout, tuskfish and other species close to shore in the dirty water.
- The baitfish get washed into these areas and the predators are usually sitting on the edge of the dirty water waiting to pounce. The bigger tides are the better times to fish headlands, on the smaller tides the fish seem to move into the estuaries.
- Weather must be good for the headlands to be safe to fish. Big tides, strong winds (especially a northerly) and shallow, dirty water with bommies requires respect.
- Jono does a lot of headland fishing at night, but he and his mates have been fishing these areas for years and are super familiar with the areas. It's very worthwhile fishing

during daylight hours, provided there is plenty of dirty water. Look for headlands close to small creeks that have extensive mudflats and you'll find the dirty water gets pushed into the area on the lee side of the headland. Look for bubble mats, they're worth fishing!

- It's not a bad idea to sit out from the headland and use sidescan to find where the fish are sitting, often they are only in 2-3 feet of water if the mudline is close to shore.
- The making tides leading up to a full moon are great, and those leading to a new moon are almost as good.
- Pay a lot of attention to conditions and keep a diary so you can figure out what happens and when. After a while you'll start to figure out where the fish will be and what they'll eat.

Jono's Headland Barra Fishing Tackle

- Jono's light headland outfit consists of a 4000 size Shimano Twinpower reel on a 12-30lb Venom spin rod.
- A 5000 size ATC Virtuous reel on a 15-40lb Venom spin rod is his heavy outfit and pulls up most (but not all) fish.
- The Bone Voyage extra, extra heavy duty rod with 30lb braid and a ATC Combat V2 reel is a great option for the heavy duty stuff.
- A 30-60lb Blade 'n' Tails rod with a 300 Curado and 40lb braid is another good outfit. 120-130cm jew are common when chasing barra and will often destroy tackle and steal lures.
- Leaders start at 80lb, but 100lb is more common as you never know what you'll hook.

Jono's Best Headland Barra Lures

- The 5" Zerek Flat Shad can be rigged weedless on with a jighead or snakelock head, as appropriate. When the fish are up in the very shallow stuff and you're slow rolling the lure back through bommies it's worth using the standard weedless rig. When it's less snaggy Jono likes the Mustad Darter jig heads in 7/0 for a 5" Flat Shad. They can be rigged with stinger hooks as well in the clearer open water. You'll find that a few bites won't convert to hookups when fishing weedless, but you can fish tough places and get more bites. Rig with an exposed point whenever you can get away with it.
- The Wilson's 120mm Barra X Pro is a floating jerkbait that's perfect for headland barra, trout, fingermark. Fat Betty, Chartreuse and Slimy Mackerel colours. Fish them floating in the shallow water with short, sharp rips, allowing the lure to float back up between rips

– they're usually taken on the float. Then use sticky weights in the deeper water to make them suspend. Fish with short

- A 95mm or 110mm Zerek Fishtrap is worth having when you're out a bit wider fishing the big sand drop offs in front of the reef. Barra will eat them, but you'll also get numerous other species on them. They can be bounced back along the bottom, bounced midwater, slow rolled or burned through shallow water or "burn and kill" fished anywhere there is clean bottom.