

Australian Lure Fishing Podcast [Episode 623](#)



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Justin Duggan

Sydney Fishing Personality And Sportfishing Guide

Justin is a highly skilled and sought-after fishing guide with a wealth of experience in various fishing techniques and species from around the world. He's brought the joy of fishing to countless anglers through media appearances, articles, and teaching. Justin's expertise extends beyond guiding and with a background in wildlife he offers unique tours that blend the beauty of Sydney's waterways with abundant wildlife. He also guides in different locations across Australia, including the captivating waters of Cape York Peninsula.



Justin's Tips For Sydney Kingfish

- While Sydney Harbour kingfish also feed on squid, yellowtail, and slimy mackerel, they spend a significant portion of their time feeding on anchovies and very small prawns. Mature anchovies are not big, so light tackle and small lures are needed to imitate them.
- Trying to imitate the bait the fish is a common approach, so using small lures and flies that resemble the tiny bait can be effective. But there's also the strategy of "shocking the flock," where you throw something larger to trigger a bite.
- The average size of kingfish in Sydney Harbour is around 65 to 95 centimetres, but larger fish exceeding a meter in length are possible. The harbour is filled with structures such as pylons, jetties, and rocky points, which are often where kingfish can be found.

- Even a 60-centimeter kingfish can put up a tough fight on light gear due to their speed, strength, and determination to free themselves from the hook. They are known for their stubbornness and willingness to rub the hook out on anything they can.
- During the winter months, Harbour kingfish can still be found with a notable concentration near the Harbor Bridge - though fishing by boat is not allowed in that area. From the Harbor Bridge, you can follow the Paramatta River to encounter more kingfish.
- Fish patrol the shoreline in these areas and form large schools, sometimes consisting of 60 to 200 fish, actively searching for jelly prawns, anchovies, and freshly hatched anchovies. Their feeding behaviour is like a "washing machine of open mouths" as they compete to devour as many jelly prawns as possible. The sound of their feeding frenzy is quite loud.
- Kingfish feeding in this manner are not specifically targeting a particular fish but rather engulfing the swarm of jelly prawns in their path. Presenting a lure that resembles the translucent jelly prawns and keeping it in the top layer of water can be effective.
- To achieve this, it's essential to use small, clear, floating stick baits, small clear floating minnows, or plastics with light jig heads are perfect for this. The key is to have the lure land with a tight line and keep it in the surface layer.
- While we have mainly focused on Kingfish, there are other species that can be encountered using the same techniques in the same areas. These include salmon, tailor, trevally, and even small jewfish. By dropping a slow sinking lure or plastic under the schools, you may catch other species as well.
- There are no firm rules when it comes to tides, weather conditions, time of day, and moon phases, although tides can play a role in concentrating the bait, and the runout tide is generally better for this type of fishing. However, the run-in tide may also be productive. Avoiding the full moon and a few days after it is advisable.
- Ultimately, spending time on the water and observing the behaviour of the fish and birds will greatly increase your chances of success. Reading the birds, particularly seagulls, can indicate the presence of feeding fish. If you see a group of seagulls on the water, it's likely there's a school of fish or baitfish in the area.

Justin's Sydney Kingfish Tackle

- For light lures, a rod of around seven feet in length, such as a 7'0" to 7'2" in 2-4 kg line class with a 2500 reel is suitable. This setup has successfully landed kings up to 90 centimetres in length. Ten-pound braid and a ten pound mono or fluorocarbon leader enable long casts with light lures.

- A 4-6 kilo or 6-8 kg, 7'0" to 7'2" spin rod is more appropriate and a general-purpose kingfish outfit. Look for well-built rods with a fast taper and couple them with a 3500-4000 size reel. 15–20-pound braid and 15-20 pound leader.
- Justin also carries a heavier outfit with a 30-pound braided line and similar leader, but this is more for other styles of kingfish fishing and doesn't get used too often on the shoreline fish that eat small bait. Heavier tackle decreases the number of bites.

Justin's Sydney Harbour Kingfish Lures

- There are numerous lures that can work effectively on these schooling kingfish. It ultimately comes down to the specific situation, the behaviour of the fish, and personal preference.
- A small, clear stick bait is one of Justin's favourites, partly because of the visual aspect. He likes 97mm Daiwa Slippery Dogs in colours like white bait and wakasagi. He'll usually retrofit them with size #1 Mustad or Gamakatsu inline single hooks to reduce damage to fish. Avoid working these lures too fast, especially in rippled water, or they may start tumbling or dig their nose in. Hold the tip of the rod high to keep the lure's head out of the water and create a wobbling action from its rear end. The key is to keep the lure in the strike zone since the fussy kingfish we're targeting are slow-moving. Try keeping the line fairly tight and shaking your wrist as you wind, with the tip of the rod held up at about a 45-degree angle.
- The Lunker City Sluggo in 6-inch or 9-inch sizes and salt and pepper colour, is consistently one of the best kingfish lures. It's best rigged on an unweighted worm hook – use a 5/0 for the 6-inch lure and a 7/0 to 10/0 for the 9-inch Sluggo. Fish with a walk the dog retrieve, similar to the stickbait.
- Bait Junkie 3.2" Minnows, either in the whitebait or baby bass colour have a slender profile and a paddle tail that provides subtle action when slowly wound near the surface. The tail can be trimmed to create a jerk shad profile for added versatility when a different approach is needed. Very light jig heads, or an unweighted presentation work best.