



Chris Stratford with a good flattie from the Tweed River.



A 95cm croc taken on a 3/8 TT blade while pre-fishing for the Flathead Classic.



Shaun McDonald with a nice jack taken while chasing flatties at the Pin.



Estuary cod will turn up in flathead catches this month, especially around snaggy areas.



Jewies this size have been everywhere throughout the channels around the Pin.

Tackle tips for flathead

OCTOBER is my favourite month of the year.

The mighty mangrove jack will be very active this month smashing lures and baits and flathead will still be queued up around the river mouths up and down the coast.

The start of August was very slow for big lizards around the Pin and Gold Coast, with virtually no big fish to be found in the deep water.

The flats were firing though with big numbers of fish to 60cm feeding aggressively on most banks and the odd bigger fish thrown in to keep it interesting.

By the end of August the big girls had moved into the deep water around the Pin with Kalinga Bank, Swan Bay entrance and Crusoe Island holding plenty of fish over 80cm, but getting them to bite on some days has been tough.

The final ABT flathead comp drew a good turnout with teams getting impressive bags of fish.

Many big fish were caught during the competition, with the biggest going a massive 94cm.

Other monsters included two at 91cm, three at 89, an 85 and 82 and a few others over 75.

Most of these came from deep water, but a few were also caught on the flats, including one of the 91cm crocs.

My brother Chris and I fished the comp again as team Bush 'n Beach.

We started around Short Island and had three jewies within five minutes, all around 65cm.

It seems that every deep edge at the Pin holds plenty of jewies around this size.

We left the jew to it and decided to move out to the deep water around the mouth, which is where we stumbled across some good lizards.

After getting our bag of five fish for almost 4m by 10am we spent the rest of the day looking for new



Local Luring
by KEITH STRATFORD

spots for the flattie classic and hoping for an upgrade.

Unfortunately the action is never that good during the Classic, as the fish cop an absolute hammering by anglers pre-fishing for the comp and also by anglers live baiting for jewies.

No doubt I'll do a report on the Classic next month, as it will probably be running while this edition of BNB hits the stands.

Tackle
This month I'll run through the tackle and lures we like to use while chasing lizards around the Gold Coast area.

Most of the fish we target during the Flathead Classic are in deep water.

It's rare that we fish any shallower than 15ft, but it pays to have a backup plan if the fish are quiet in the deep and firing on the flats.

Anglers caught a lot of fish on the flats last year during the Classic and trolling worked really well.

I like to have three or four rods rigged and ready to go for different situations.

I'm a big fan of baitcasters for jigging as it's a lot easier to let line out to follow the bottom.

I like using larger lures so use rods on the heavy side.

My lighter jack rods, which are rated at 8kg, are perfect for jigging big lures and the stiffer action makes it easier to set the hooks in a big lizard's mouth.

I also like using shorter rods under 6ft in length.

Long rods are terrible for vertical jigging, especially when there is a bit of wind around.

Baitcasters are fine for casting as well, but a well-weighted spin stick will give you a lot more distance.

It's also a lot easier to

keep up with a big lizard swimming straight back at you with a spinning reel.

Once again I'm not a fan of long spin rods either and they are kept around 6ft as well.

It's really hard to buy a spin rod around 6ft in length these days, so I've been getting Anthony at Northside Marine to chop a bit off and spruce up my longer spin rods.

One of my Live Fibre Blade 'n' Tails rods was around 7ft long and is now just under 6ft and an absolute flattie killer.

It's also light enough to throw smaller plastics for trevally and tailor and has handled nice jacks to over 50cm.

If you need any work done on a new or old stick, pop in to Northside Marine and have a chat to Anthony.

Lures
Lures are always the main topic among anglers fishing the Flathead Classic and rightly so.

You can have all of the greatest gear money can buy, but without a decent lure you won't catch a lot of fish.

Flatties aren't too fussy and will eat most things, but rigging them correctly will make a big difference in the number of fish you'll catch.

Make sure you have a good range of jig heads to cover all depths and use quality heads.

I make my own on Gamakatsu hooks but also use TTs which are made on Gamakatsu hooks as well.

Always make sure the plastic is threaded onto the head straight and check it in the water before throwing out to make sure it doesn't spin and that it sinks naturally.

Z-Man are the latest plastics filling most anglers' tackle boxes.

They are very durable

plastics that will catch a heap of fish.

The 4 and 6-inch SwimmerZ have worked really well on flatties for me and they have a really good colour range.

The good old 6-inch Gulp Grub still catches plenty of big lizards and is also very popular with flathead fishos.

Blades are also widely used and are an easy way to fish the deeper water.

Unfortunately they're also really good at finding snags.

Big lizards often can't help themselves when a small blade is bounced over their head and the super sharp trebles rarely miss the mark.

I recently managed a new PB lizard that measured 95cm on a 3/8 TT blade in deep water.

They take plenty of time to get up at that size on light gear and a light drag setting.

A lot of hard-bodies will be getting a swim this year after last year's success during the Flathead Classic and it's a good idea to have a few in the box.

The most popular are Micro Mulletts and deservedly so.

I also like Min Mins and Tilsan Bass for a troll and Brad Smith's Lil Mates work a treat in the shallows.

The flatties might be a little quiet for a week or two after the Classic but there will still be plenty around this month, along with jewies and a few jacks.

My mate got his first jack on a lure recently while chasing flatties during a pre-fish at the Pin, so they're definitely worth chasing.

The Gold Coast Sport-fishing Club is also holding a dash for cash flathead comp this month. The date is still being finalised, so keep an eye on their website.

Hope to see you out there.

Cheers ↴