

Travelling Australia with fishing in mind



Barra Classic lures have been designed with Aussie fish in mind. You'd be mad not to pack some if venturing north.



Purple spinnerbaits are gun lures when chasing the north's sooty grunter population.



Gulps are a winner on the reefs and will catch pretty much every fish in existence including delicious coral trout.



Gulp minnows will catch a bream no matter where you may be in this country.

WHEN venturing forth to tackle the fish that this country has on offer it's often a hard call to know precisely what gear you need to take with you.

Even if you are going on a quick one-week stint to Cape York for a barra fish I can bet that if you packed 100 lures, you still wouldn't have the gun lure that is catching the fish on the given day.

When Rob and I began packing for our trip we had a major dilemma on our hands on top of trying to pack the gun lure for every species.

Storage space was tight, however we wanted to make sure we had enough lures, flies, terminal tackle, line, rods and reels to cover all bases.

The last thing that we wanted to do was break the budget and work while travelling, so we were determined to utilise whatever we could from home.

The only fishing gear we didn't pack a lot of was sinkers as we wanted to keep the weight down in the van and knew it would be easy enough to buy something as generic as a sinker on the road.

Where to start?

Probably the best place to start is to look at the regions that you will be fishing in, as your requirements in the north will be somewhat different to those in the south.

Do your homework on each region with research tools including magazines, fishing websites and forums along with location specific books which may help identify what should be packed.

Of course your local tackle shop is a great source of information if the assistant has been to the area in question.

If they haven't you will find that yes, they may have sold you a barra or bass lure, however it may be totally inappropriate for the destination that you are fishing.

In some cases it pays to wait and buy your lures at your destination if possible.

Sometimes they can be more expensive on the shelf, however you can save money by buying the correct lure from a local expert instead of buying 20 inappropriate lures from home.

For example, a Halco Poltergeist that dives to 5m is perfect for some of the big rivers in the Northern Territory that have deep water however it will be totally inappropriate for chasing barra in the Pilbara or Cape York



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by LEEANN PAYNE

where a shallow lure of 1m is more suited.

In the north of the country the fish that you are most likely to encounter are reef species such as fingermark, cod and red emperor along with pelagics including longtail tuna, queenfish, giant and golden trevally, wahoo and spanish mackerel.

In the rivers, barramundi, mangrove jack, cod, blue salmon and threadfin salmon are going to be likely targets.

In fresh water, saratoga, barramundi and sooty grunter are available.

Possibly the most versatile lure that you'll ever take along is the soft plastic variety.

In the north, the Gulp Jerk Shad in the 5" size was suitable to cast in the rivers and billabongs and could also be used on the reefs as a substitute for bait.

Take a variety of weights to cover all depths and tidal movements.

The Berkley Hollow Belly was another very productive lure which we used weighted and weedless (the hook point was pushed into the plastic to avoid snagging up) in the rivers.

In the billabongs and dams the Hollow Belly was awesome rigged unweighted and weedless which meant that it could be retrieved over the top of lily pads.

On the hard-bodied side there are many choices depending on your preferred method of targeting barramundi and mangrove jack.

For casting and trolling in shallow water, try the Reidy's B52 and B52 Junior, the Halco Scorpion 125 1m lure as well as the Gold Bomber.

If trolling deeper obviously choose a lure with a bib that will take the lure down further.

Halco Scorpion 125 and Barra Classic 120s are a must-pack lure but choose a number of different depths to cover a broad range of trolling options.

When trolling big lures at speed for barra, the Reidy's Big Ass, Halco Laser Pro 190s and the Bomber B17As are incredibly good.

They will also work offshore for pelagics.

In the billabongs, smaller bass lures are more suited and one of the best is the Reidy's Little Lucifers.

I also like using spinnerbaits in the fresh water for both rivers and billabongs. Colour wise, pack an as-

sortment of gold, mullet colour, dark as well as fluoro lures.

As well as trolling for pelagics ensure that you pack a number of metal lures like the Prickly Pates in a variety of weight sizes (10-100g) that can be used to cast to schools of fish breaking the surface.

These can also be used on the reefs by dropping them to the bottom and jiggling back up, concentrating however on the bottom where most fish will be.

Southern choices

In the south you will find that you will be able to utilise a lot of the lures that you would use in the north.

For example the soft plastics will account for reef species including dhufish and snapper plus the south is also full of pelagics in the way of kingfish and tuna that will

take a metal lure.

In the rivers the main species will be flathead, whiting, bream, estuary perch and jew and therefore the lures used will be very much in line with those that we use locally in southeast Queensland.

The Gulp 3" minnows are versatile and can be fished at any depth and Jackall Chubbies are a terrific hard-bodied lure for casting or trolling for bream.

Flathead will also take these lures, however take a couple of extra hard-bodied lures like Tilsan Bass and Tilsan Minnow, Scorpion 35s, 52 or 68s.

Jewies will love a soft plastic (particularly those 5" Gulps I've mentioned) and whiting will take a popper.

In hindsight we packed way too much on the lure side of things but having said that we always managed to have the right lure for each circumstance.

I'll cover rods, reels and line next issue. ↴



Blue salmon are a welcome bycatch when targeting mangrove jack in the snags. This one fell to a soft plastic.



Jacks love soft plastics, with this one falling to the ever-reliable Gulp lures.