

The sweetest things...

By Luke Galea



Well what can I say apart from the fact that I have been consumed whole-heartedly by a kayak fishing obsession. I wish I had caught this bug a long time ago but as they say, it is better late than never. The kayak fishing craze has undoubtedly cemented its strangle-hold on the angling fraternity and has been embraced by the nation, so much so that I am now a fully-fledged lifetime member of the Tupperware Navy and with good reason.

Since purchasing my new yak, I have experienced a definite and uncontrollable sense of attraction and allure to the simplicities of nature. I am sure many people have experienced a similar sensation but there truly is something special about having your behind sitting a few inches off the waterline and being immersed in the tranquillity of it all. You truly do feel like a part of the landscape. Despite the hard work at times, I have also found kayak fishing to be quite therapeutic. Obviously the lack of engine noise and ultimate

manoeuvrability enables an angler to have a far more stealthy approach as well as the advantage of getting into various nooks and crannies that may have seen little to no past fishing pressures. In a nutshell, my new yak has opened up countless doors of angling opportunity and I have no doubt you will read about these escapades in my future contributions to this publication.

I have just returned from visiting my family in Bundaberg and with the mighty Burnett and Kolan Rivers left absolutely decimated after recent and tragic flooding,

the possibility of finding a spot to wet a line looked bleak to say the least. It was quite sad to see my hometown in such a shocking state of disarray, a state that could only be likened to that of a war zone, particularly North and East Bundaberg.

At this point in time, purchasing a kayak seemed like a no-brainer and one of very few options available to me on this particular visit.

Lake Gregory (Isis Balancing Storage) has been put on the map via the bass rounds of the Australian Fishing Championships



A solid Lake Gregory bass falls victim to the Atomic Plazo Fat Grub



(AFC). This little dam is quite small, making it quite navigable via kayak. It is also very picturesque as it is nestled among pine forest.

My goal was to purchase a small yet robust kayak. One small enough to throw in the back of my Hilux without the hassle of roof/ladder racks and yet tough enough to survive being dragged over the rocks in the sweetwater locations in Mackay, where I currently reside.



Despite being a solid fish, there are much larger fish in the lake. The author just had to get a photo of his first yak bass on the lie detector

I purchased a 2.7m 'Glide' from a local Bundaberg company, Koastal Kayaks. The short length was the winner for me. It was shorter, constructed with a thicker hull (4mm) and was a better quality product than many similarly sized kayaks that were available on the market at the time of purchase. Its 79cm width ensured its stability and its light weight of 20kg made it a breeze to get on and off the ute and in and out of the water. It also boasts five rod holders and two 250mm storage hatches, complete with dry bags. These hatches are large enough to hold a Plano 6-21 tackle tray loaded with lures, as well as a camera, braid scissors and pliers – all the essentials you need. The kayak also came equipped with a comfy seat and paddle. David Treloar and his wife are really nice people and looked after my old man and I very well. Great customer service is getting rarer and rarer these days, but I had no trouble leaving my hard earned with this up and coming local Bundaberg business.

The old man also purchased a Glide and we set about our mission of trying to raise a few bass in Lake Gregory. We were both armed with the light spin gear and 3" Atomic Plazo Fat Grubs, an Atomic plastic that I had not used until this occasion (and just quietly, I will find myself using a whole lot more from here on). The long grub tail just screams 'eat me!' We rigged them



Extracting a fish from this structure required patience, poise and some fancy yak work

weedless on 2/0 Gamakatsu Worm hooks with a larger ball sinker in the bottom of the loop knot.

Working in a local tackle store, I am continually amazed by just how many anglers have not heard of this tried, tested and proven method. This is a technique that

I employ regularly, whether it be flicking plastics through the weed, bouncing them through the mangroves or over rock bars – the point of the Gamakatsu worm hook lays parallel with the plastic. By doing so, it remains virtually snag-free until the time a fish crunches it and the plastic slides down

into the gape of the uniquely designed hook and the point is exposed. The shape of this hook also aids in pinning the fish right in the jaw hinge, which occurs on over 90% of occasions. This enables you to use lighter leaders as you don't require the abrasion resistance for the teeth or raspy jaw plate of the predatory fish and this results in more bites and ultimately a lot more success as an angler. Going light to get the bite is a common term in angling circles and the utilisation of Gamakatsu Worm hooks enables you to do just that.

As a rule of thumb, I would always use as light a jighead (or loop knot sinker) as I could get away with, ensuring it had just enough weight to allow it to drift slowly through the water column, before eventually resting on the bottom (where I would 'double-hop' it). The larger sinker rather than a lighter, more naturally sinking weight was a bit of an experiment that I wanted to test. I have heard of local sooty grunter anglers using heavier weights in their spinnerbait style lures to allow it to sink faster, thus allowing more erratic movement in the blades as it sinks faster through the deep water. Similarly, Lake Gregory is also very deep and I wanted the large, tantalising, grub tail to waft erratically in its descent along the weed edges. We employed this

The new glide yaks on their maiden voyage



method along the wind-blown edges of the weed and it seemed to work a treat as the bass were smashing our offering half way down in about twenty feet of water. Many people get discouraged from throwing hard bodied lures amongst the weed, due to the irritation and likelihood of fouling up. Weedlessly rigging your plastics can eliminate this annoying aspect to a large degree.

I landed two nice bass of around the 40cm mark and also got smoked by a larger specimen in the weed. These fish were very solidly built and absolutely hammered, especially the one that broke me off. Getting dusted up in the structure every now and then is undoubtedly an inevitable part of fishing and needs to be accepted. You need to be hard up in the structure to get the bite, as this is where the fish are residing. There is absolutely no point in being out in the middle of water devoid of structure. Yes you may not have the hassle of fouling up on weed, but you will also have the pleasure of getting nowhere near the amount of strikes either. Even the newly converted soft plastic addict, Joe Galea (my old man), managed to snare a nice fish of around the 40cm mark. The bass were all caught on the Brown Crawdad and Rainbow Bass colourations



This 41cm fish made a good account of itself in the densely vegetated structure

of the Atomic Plazo Fat Grub. I was also impressed with how well the thinner gauge 2/0 Gamakatsu (I usually use 3/0) Worm hooks held up to the strength of these solid set bass.

I have no doubt that my 3.9m Hornet Trophy is going to gather dust for sometime

while I explore the endless possibilities that my little Glide opens up in the sweetwater reaches of Mackay. Jungle perch are on my bucket list and with this new yak in my arsenal, they are no longer off limits.

Stay tuned!

Kayaks allow you to access some awesome locations and get close to nature

