Introducing the third model in the Haines Signature 460 Series which thus far has seen the release of the 460 C (Cabin) model, the 460 R (Runabout), and now the 'extreme' Sportfishing platform - the 460 SF.

Haines Signature 460 SF

This is a very special fibreglass fishing boat. It is one of the most highly engineered fibreglass boats ever produced in Australia.

Linked to the unique Haines Signature variable deadrise hull and Suzuki's awesome new 70 hp 4-stroke engine, the package is a quantum leap away from the specialist aluminium fishing boats in this field. It is truly the BMW 328i of fishing boats - with a price tag to match.

For a 4.6 m boat, I reckon it has the softest ride thus far made available in a boat this size, and linked to the incredibly smooth Suzuki 70 hp 4-stroke outboard, creates a combination of product like no other produced in this country.

Design: As we noted in a previous issue, this 460 Series is really a mistake - the Haines Signature factory were targeting a smaller boat, but by the time the tooling was 'cut and shut" from one model to another, and the good features of one model were incorporated with another, the boat's tooling "grew" until it was finally stretched out to 4.60 metres.

More to the point perhaps, the beam grew up to 2.0 m, putting Haines Signature in the unusual situation where their 4.6 m boats are actually wider (2.09 m) than the longer 4.93 m model (2.01 m).

Nevertheless, this new 460 Series has brought the many advantages of the Signature variable deadrise technology down to the man on the street level.

As noted in the introduction, this boat is the third in a series that will ultimately include a centre console, a bowrider, a day fisher, plus the existing runabout (460 R) and cuddy cabin (460 C) models.

The origins of this 460 SF go back to a conference about 18 months ago, when the Haines Signature dealers were pushing the Haines family hard for the development of more entry level models. On the dealers' wish list at that time was a fibreglass boat with a forward casting platform, so the dealers could compete against the flock of aluminium boats thus fitted. But the dealers wanted to offer the advantages of fibreglass construction by way of its (usually) much softer ride, better styling and a higher standard of finish.

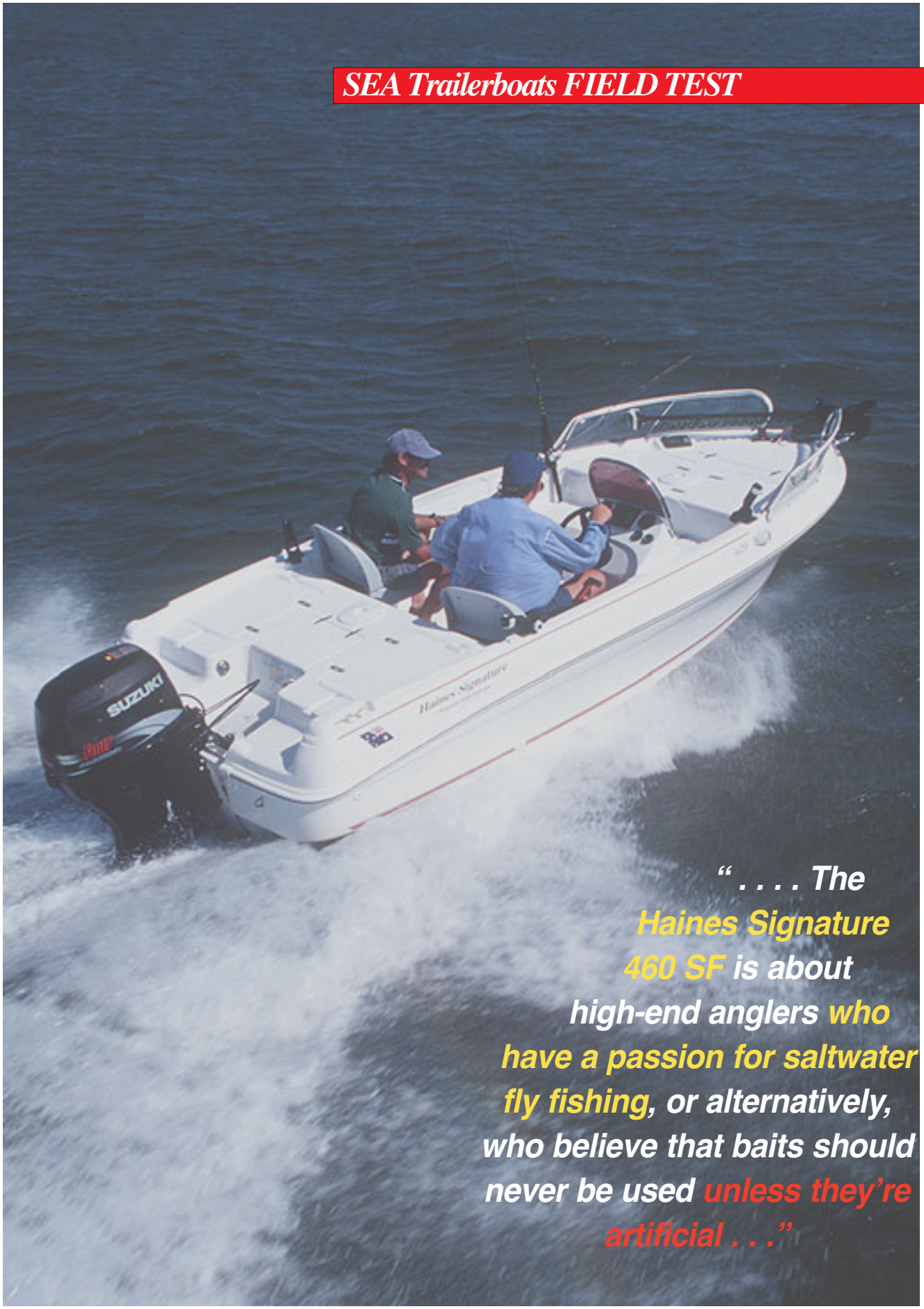
This all went into the Haines Signature R&D notebook, and after much analysis and research, the 460 SF model was earmarked as the third boat to come down the line off the 460 Series.

Interestingly, John Haines (Snr) then took a break from his development program for a week's fishing up off Bathurst Island, NT earlier this year, and there's no doubt whatsoever that the 460 SF got a big kick in the pants when he returned. Basically, it is fair to say the trip crystallised the 460 SF in Hainsey's mind.

Within days of his return, veteran toolmaker Karl Festera and his son Ricky were up to their armpits in "torture boards" and dust, and the 460 SF started to take shape in the R&D section of the Haines Signature plant in Brisbane.

The concept of the boat is very simple.

Haines Signature has created a boat for dedicated, if not professional



"**. . . . The Haines Signature 460 SF is about high-end anglers who have a passion for saltwater fly fishing, or alternatively, who believe that baits should never be used unless they're artificial . . .**"




Detail finish on the 460 SF is exceptionally high, with something like 27 different and often quite complex mouldings going into the construction of this craft. There isn't an inch of space that hasn't been planned carefully, or used thoughtfully. It is one of the very few fishing boats around where there is literally nothing left to do - just stow your tackle, and go fishing !

anglers. Note the emphasis here on "anglers" as distinct from fishermen. This is not a boat for bottom bashers or people who just want to catch a few estuary fish with a frozen prawn on a rare Saturday morning outing on the river.

The Haines Signature 460 SF is about high-end anglers who have a passion for saltwater fly fishing, or alternatively, who believe that baits should never be used unless they're artificial ie, they love casting lures from a dedicated casting platform working over snags and any other structure they might find in creeks, rivers and estuaries around Australia.

Over the last couple of years, the "wildfish" concept has grown from being the brainchild of a few purist fly fishermen into an entire fishing movement. Now, there are hundreds of anglers around Australia who are committed to the concept of tag and release fishing; anglers who have taken up fly fishing as an alternative to using baits (alive or dead) to make the capture.

For this new breed of fishermen, the art of fishing itself is more important than the number of fish they capture, much less kill.

In this context, the timing of the 460 SF's development is nigh on perfect.

Safety & Stability: Already, the wildfish movement has spawned any number of aluminium boats, by a dozen or more pressed aluminium boat builders. Further, second and third generation versions of these boats have now been developed with some truly outstanding aluminium craft emerging from the Quintrex factory (the Wildfish/Trophy series) the Mayfairs organisation (the Magnum) Ally Craft (their Big Bass Explorers) and so on.

In objective terms, the 460 SF now offers a number of specific advantages no aluminium craft can match.

This 460 SF (that's just 15' 6" long in the old measure) has a fully moulded, self draining cockpit in the centre section !

It is completely unsinkable and contains sufficient foam buoyancy to make sure it's unsinkable even with the crew, batteries and electrics (etc) onboard.

It can safely handle big guys fishing at either end of the boat, or just one big bloke standing right forward on the forward casting platform - in safety.

The combination of the variable deadrise hull and the 2.09m beam gives this boat excellent stability - so much so, walking around its middle cockpit is like being inside a 5.0-6.0 m cat.

From a design point of view, the Haines Signature R&D people have used every single millimetre of available space.

The centre cockpit measures 1.49 m long by 1.57 m wide, with a very smartly designed side console some 740 mm high and 510 mm wide. Freeboard behind the side console is

Continued Over, on P.24

SOUND LEVELS

(Measured on the dB(A) Scale, using a certified Bruel & Kjær sound level meter sitting on the top of the outboard well)

SUZUKI 70 hp 4-Stroke

Ambient Sound . . . . . 48-55 dB(A)
(Engine off, boat at rest)

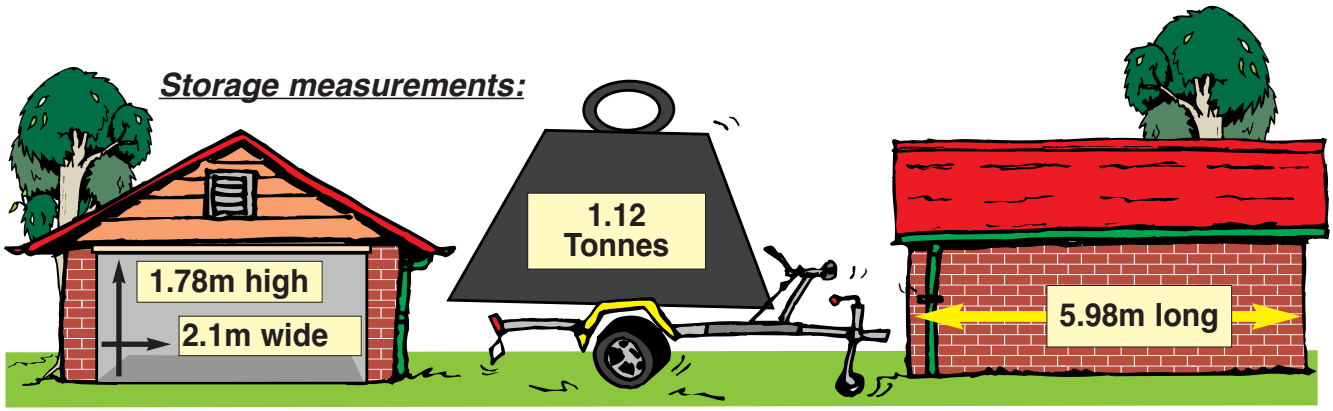
Engine at Idle . . . . . 59.0 dB(A)

Trolling (2,000 r/min) . . . . . 68.7 dB(A)

Cruising (4,000 r/min) . . . . 82.9 dB(A)

Wide Open Throttle . . . . . 93.5 dB(A)

Storage measurements:



SEA Trailerboats Test Evaluation

Boat/Model **Haines Signature 460 SF**

Rating Poor → Excellent

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Design / Styling											
General Handling											
"Downhill" Handling											
Ride Softness											
Dryness											
Helm Comfort											
Fishability											
Stability At Rest											
Seaworthiness											
Inherent Safety											
Finish & Fit-out											
Value For Money											

SPECIFICATIONS

Model . . . . . **460 SF**
Construction . . . . . **Fibreglass**
Configuration . **Casting Console**
Centreline Length . . . . . **4.60 m**
Max Beam . . . . . **2.09 m**
Deadrise . . . . . **(SVH) 33-21°**
Berths . . . . . **n/a**

Fixed Std Seats . . . . . **Two**
Hull Weight (dry) . . . . . **450 kg**
Weight On Trailer . . . . **1,040 kg**
Maximum Power:
- Outboard . . . . . 90 **hp**
- Sterndrive . . . . . **n/a**
Fuel Capacity . . . . . **85 L**
Water Capacity . . . . . **(opt) L**
Price As Tested . . . **$27 - $33 K**

SEA Trailerboats Performance Graph

Haines Signature 460 SF/ Suzuki 70 hp Outboard

R/Min	L/ph	G/PH	N.Mpg	Knots	Kms	Range*
1,000	1.32	0.29	9.65	2.8	5.2	180
1,500	2.10	0.46	8.47	3.9	7.2	157
2,000	3.90	0.85	6.23	5.3	9.8	115
2,500	5.46	1.19	5.12	6.1	11.3	95
3,000	9.30	2.03	3.74	7.6	14.0	69
3,500	11.10	2.43	6.99	17.0	31.5	130
4,000	**13.50**	**2.95**	**7.05**	**20.8**	**38.5**	**131**
4,500	17.70	3.87	6.30	24.4	45.2	117
5,000	19.80	4.33	6.32	27.4	50.7	117
5,500	22.20	4.86	6.23	30.3	56.1	116
6,000	5.55	5.55	5.55	5.55	5.55	5.55

**Nautical miles, based on 95% of the 85 L tank*

What You Get In The Standard Boat

Feature	N/a	Std	Opt
Bow Sprit		✔	
Berth Cushions	✔		
Cabin Shelf	✔		
Cockpit Carpet			✔
Two Colour Hull		✔	
Two Tone Deck		✔	
Anchor Locker With Hatch		✔	
Underfloor Fuel Tank & Gauge		✔	
Cabin Light	✔		
Navigation Lights		✔	
Cabin Windows	✔		
Mech. Steering		✔	
Hydraulic Steering			✔
Enclosed, off-floor Battery locker		✔	
Unsinkable Rating (foam)		✔	
Canopy			✔
Hardtop	✔		
Toughened Glass Windscreen	✔		
Swim Boards		✔	
Boarding Ladder		✔	
Foam Insulated Ice Chest			✔
Live Bait Tank		✔	
Live Bait Tank Plumbing			✔
U/FloorKill Tank	✔		
O/Head Targa or Rod Rack			✔
Std. Rod Holders	✔		
Cockpit Side Storage (length)		✔	
Switch Panel		✔	
Bilge Pump		✔	
Float Switch		✔	
Deck Wash			✔
Transducer			✔
Pre-Rigging			✔

The information shown here was correct at the time of going to press insofar as SEA Media can check; always obtain the latest prices and specifications from the factory or dealer before making a purchase decision.

480 mm, but forward, it's even more, at 530 mm.

The all important casting platform forward is well designed with excellent detail fit-out. Observe the installation of the depth sounder to port side just behind the electric motor stand - that's a neat trick, and a real boon for the forward angler.

Not only has the skipper a sounder back on the side console, but the master angler who's expected to be up there working the foot controls for the bow-mount electric motor, has his own depth sounder to look for structure whilst fishing, casting and driving off the forward platform.

Beside him or her, the forward platform houses two huge lockers (500 mm L x 290 mm H x 440 mm W) on either side of the pedestal seat mount.

The anchor locker is really neat, too. It's big and divided into two - but not, as you might think, for a second anchor.

No, they actually had some good advice here - it's specifically designed so the angler can stow his dripping wet, cast net in its own compartment next to the anchor well. Any water in the net just drips and drains over the side, just like the anchor locker.

The good thinking continues all round this boat.

The battery compartment is on the step behind the forward pedestal (see photo) and is fully moulded so you can safely install two huge 80 amp hour batteries if necessary, to keep the juice up to your favourite electric outboard.

Another nice touch is the provision of a fully lined, lockable fishing rod rack compartment. This is specifically designed to stow fly rods up to 9' in length with complete safety and security. Obviously, shorter bait casters and spinning outfits go in as well, but the locker was actually designed for the fly rod's extra length.

Abaft the centre console area, rising up onto the back ledge, more lockers are placed carefully to provide the option of having two completely separate live bait tanks - if you want to use different live baits you can, with fish (yakkas, herring ?) one side and (say) prawn the other. Alternatively, one tank can be used to keep the bass alive when you're bringing it back to enter in the Bass comps . . yes, Haines Signature are certainly fair dinkum about their attention to detail in this rig.

A third compartment lies between the two rear bait wells. This is designed for the engine's battery and oil bottle - presuming it's one of the outboards still using a separate oil bottle.

All in all, the 460 SF is cleverly designed in terms of its storage compartments, fishing features and facilities for the very experienced and demanding anglers in the wildfish movement.

Construction And Finish: As you would expect, the Haines Signature is beautifully built, and the tooling is a real treat. When you get to have a look at it, particularly admire the long piano hinge on the fly rod box - despite being a curved shape in no less than two different planes, the factory managed to have the long hinge work perfectly, in a really masterful piece of tool making.

Similarly, it's great to see all the lockers are fully lined, and all the storage compartments are basically double moulded GRP - so the finish is right up with the best of any of the American imports, and streets ahead of the typical Australian flow-coat finish to compartments made of glassed over plywood.

In this first model there were a couple of "glitches" made as it came down the production line, but that's what prototypes are all about. What you're seeing on these pages, is the first boat ever made.

As a result, a whole heap of little changes have been made in subsequent production models, the most obvious being to move the skipper and passenger's seats inboard slightly so they swivel without hitting the sides, and allow the (standard) tackle box locker to open without hitting the seat.

Overall though, it has a very high standard of finish already. It's interesting to study how the Haines Signature factory's new foam floatation "gun" works, and attaches the foam to the undersides of the moulding - out of sight perhaps, but very definitely there, providing the critically important floatation Haines Signature believe is going to become legally necessary in a couple of year's time.

In the meantime, they've made the investment in the floatation equipment now so they can have the tooling in place ready to go when (or *if*) the legislation arrives.

But there's more to the foam than the issue of floatation and safety - the Americans have been using it for years as a structural entity, and also acknowledged many years ago that it made their boats a lot quieter too.

We experienced this first hand with our Haines Signature 702 Walkaround *Take Two,* which had foam floatation underfloor and throughout all of the hidden compartments. There is no doubt that a stiffer hull and much quieter hull was the result - and it's the same in the smaller 460 SF.

Performance: The 460 SF was powered by the Suzuki 70 hp 4-stroke engine. As we've noted before in our first release test of the Suzuki, this has been fairly described as one of the best outboard engines ever made in the world.

You just have to try this engine to believe how good it is. As you can see in the new decibel readings' box, its quietness is not just my imagination - this is the quietest engine we have ever tested, bar none. At low speed, even in an open side console boat, it's difficult to hear the engine running at all. Cruising along at 4000 r/min, normal conversation is held between the passengers and crew because the Suzuki is so quiet, and (almost) completely free of vibration.

It's not a small engine though, and it weighs in at a hefty 152 kgs in the long shaft configuration, so it definitely suits some boats better than others. In this case, it's an almost perfect match to the 460 SF.

Typically, even though it's got the special extractor exhaust system for better mid-range performance, the fuel injected Suzuki 70 is still slower to wind up in the mid-range than a regular 2-stroke outboard.

Once it's up and going, it flys - and we were very happy with the 30 knot performance we recorded with the 70 hp engine on what is quite a heavy boat and motor package.

The Haines Signature is not light - and neither is the Suzuki, so between the two of them, it all adds up to a fairly heavy boat to move across the water.

But there again, just have another look at the table of figures accompanying this report.

It's hard to believe we can pull up 7.05 n mpg cruising along at 4,000 revs for 21 knots. This is an astonishingly good figure - and it's matched by a clutch of other extra good figures as well.

Look at the fuel consumption of the boat running at 25 knots - just under 18 L/ph, and that's not bad for 25 knots, is it? Off plane and in the trolling area, of course these 4-strokes really shine and the Suzuki 70 is no exception. Haines Signature rate the 460 SF for 90 hp and whilst it's true it doesn't need any more (other than to get the adrenaline pumping!) the fact is, many guys will be very tempted to run up to things like 115 hp FICHT engines on this model, not to mention some of the Optimax series.

In the same way that the American bass boats go ape over big engines on small boats, that's a trend that's already starting to emerge in this country, and with a hull as good as the 460 SF, it's pretty easy to see why.

This boat could easily handle more horsepower. I suspect it would be truly magic with something like a 90 hp light weight, 2-stroke outboard motor. You may not get the terrific fuel consumption of the Suzuki 70 hp, but a lot of people are less concerned about fuel consumption than getting a balanced, high performance package - and this sure has the potential to do that.

Handling And Ride: As I said in the beginning, this is the softest riding small production boat made in Australia at the moment. I'd also make the observation that it's so far ahead of aluminium boats of this length, the gap is embarrassing.

You can't make aluminium boats with a shape like this underneath the waterline. Stand back and admire the photographs we've taken of the forefoot area of this boat - truly, it's like a baby Formula 233, or more specifically, it's obviously a direct descendant from the awesome Haines Signature 702 variable deadrise hull used in the top end models in the Signature fleet.

It is so soft you have to drive it to

believe it's possible to get a ride this good, in a boat this small. The ride is also dry, the spray being turned back by the spray rails and chines built into this complex hull.

But the 460 SF is also a *fun* machine. You can do anything to it - we were throwing donuts, chicane slides, stops, starts - we did everything we could to unsettle the boat and the only thing that happened was the grins on our faces grew bigger the longer we spent in the boat.

Safety And Seaworthiness: The Haines Signature SF has scored the highest rating we can apply for an open or closed fishing boat.

It's one of the very rare mono hull craft that is available with full foam floatation to make it unsinkable, and combined with the superb variable deadrise deep vee hull, creates a standard of seaworthiness that is exceptional in boats of this length.

To find that it also has a fully lined self draining cockpit amidships is just a huge bonus and moves this 460 SF into a class of its own. Hence the 9.5 score - the only way you could get a higher score with this boat is to have it turn into a catamaran, otherwise 9.5 is the highest score we record for mono hulls.

Trailering: The 460 SF weighs exactly 1.15 tonnes as shown here, with 75% fuel. That puts it into the *'very easy to tow'* category with almost anything, moreso because it has such a low wind profile. It needs a trailer with brakes, and we'd make very sure the trailer was fitted with good quality, high performance tyres, as this rig will sit on the highway for hours at speeds in the 90-110 k/ph zone.

Haines Signature 460 SF Specifications

Standard Features:

- 2 x large forward storage compartments
- Automatic bilge pump
- Forward and aft casting platforms
- Deluxe deck hardware
- Forward flush mounting for echo sounder
- Forward mounting for electric foot control outboard
- Forward self draining anchor well with hatch, partitioned for cast net storage
- Forward storage for twin deep cycle batteries for electric outboard
- Fuel tank and fittings
- Full non-skid floor
- Kill tank/ice box
- Live tank
- Moulded lockable horizontal rod storage
- Navigation and stern lights
- Positive foam floatation
- Rear battery and oil storage for main outboard
- Recessed aft deck hardware
- Self draining cockpit
- Stainless steel framed windscreen
- Wiring harness and switch panel

Options:

- Bait caster holders
- Clip in cockpit carpet
- Flush mounted seating positions
- Live bait tank plumbing
- "Poleing" platform
- Relocatable seats including bases
- Side console
- Stainless steel split rail
- Tackle cupboard (lockable)

Conclusion: Well, this is certainly a very special boat, and for the growing number of anglers and professional guides into flyfishing (fresh and salt), and lure casting, it challenges the tinnie's stranglehold on this end of the market.

In areas where the angler(s) have to cross a fair bit of open water, or maybe run down a coastal channel, river or estuary through indifferent water, or lakes and dams where the open water can get quite rough, the 460 SF will make the ride and handling of any similar length tinnie feel awfully painful and extremely wet by comparison.

With this boat, Haines Signature has done something else that is deeply significant for thinking fishermen - they've addressed the twin safety issues affecting all these 'wildfish' boats.

The 460 SF can carry not one, not two, but THREE big, deep cycle batteries safely, in a craft where the anglers can pick up these big, seriously heavy batteries, and move them (and themselves) around the boat in complete safety, thanks to the 460 SF's extremely high level of stability.

Further, because of the high levels of positive foam floatation installed, the 460 SF can be completely swamped (with a wave breaking right across the boat), and still remain afloat and ready for action! Apart from giving the crew an unwanted bath and very wet knees, the boat will remain afloat while the crew sort themselves out, get the engine going again *(none of 'em tend to run very well under water!)* and the self draining cockpit empties the water back out.

It will be fascinating to see if - *or how* - the major aluminium boatbuilders respond to this challenge from the Haines Signature team.

SEA Trailerboats

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* Domestic use only.

Make	HP	Model		RRP	Technology	Capacity (cc's)	Weight (Kg)	OEDA Star Rating	Emiss. HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Honda	2	B2D4 SCHD		$1,055	4c	57	12.2	3	24.9	388.2
Yamaha - premix	2	2CMHS		$814	2c	50	16.5	not rated		
Suzuki	2.2	DT2.2S		$799	2c	55	12.0	not rated		
Johnson	2.5	J2.5R4SD		$1,608	4c	68	13.0	3	25.5	434.1
Mercury	2.5	1F02201FK		$1,247	4c	85	17.0	3	27.7	468.8
Mercury	2.5	M		$870	2c	74.6	13	0	277.1	399.4
Suzuki	2.5	DF2.5S		$1,224	4c	68	13	3	23.3	378.6
Tohatsu	2.5	MFS2.5A	S	$1,294	4c	85.5	17.5	3	27.7	468.8
Tohatsu	2.5	M2.5A2 S		$826	2c	74.6	12.5	0	305.3	150.0
Yamaha	2.5	F2.5AMHS		$1,383	4c	72	17	2	42.9	466.2
Yamaha - premix	3	3AMHS		$995	2c	70	16.5	not rated		
Mercury	3.3	M		$1,012	2c	74.6	13	0	277.1	399.4
Mercury	3.5	1F03201FK		$1,325	4c	85	17.0	3	27.7	468.8
Tohatsu	3.5	MFS3.5A	S	$1,322	4c	85.5	17.5	3	27.7	468.8
Tohatsu	3.5	M3.5A2 S		$855	2c	74.6	12.5	0	305.3	150.0
Tohatsu	3.5B	M3.5B2 S		$1,003	2c	74.6	13	0	280.2	150.0
Johnson	4	J4R4SD		$1,742	4c	138	26.0	3	18.7	272.2
Mercury	4	1F04201FK		$1,637	4c	123	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Mercury	4	M		$1,351	2c	102	20	1	221.9	236.2
Suzuki	4	DF4S		$1,815	4c	138	26	3	18.7	272.2
Tohatsu	4	MFS4BD	S	$1,465	4c	123	26.0	3	24.3	468.9
Tohatsu	4	M4C S		$1,304	2c	102	19	1	204.0	258.4
Yamaha	4	F4AMHS		$1,680	4c	112	22	3	26.8	254.3
Yamaha - premix	4	4ACMHS		$1,331	2c	83	21	0	332.3	598.3
Honda	5	BF5A4 SB		$1,875	4c	127	27.0	3	20.5	374.0
Mercury	5	1F05201FK		$1,723	4c	123	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Mercury	5	M		$1,561	2c	102	20	1	221.9	236.2
Suzuki	5	DF5S		$1,903	4c	138	26	3	18.7	272.2
Tohatsu	5	MFS5BD	S	$1,508	4c	123	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Tohatsu	5	M5B S		$1,336	2c	102	19	1	204.0	258.4
Yamaha - premix	5	5CMHS		$1,616	2c	103	21	not rated		
Johnson	6	J6R4SD		$1,943	4c	138	26.0	3	18.7	272.2
Mercury	6	1F06201FK		$1,873	4c	123	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Mercury	6	M lite		$1,847	2c	169	26	0	306.1	225.5
Suzuki	6	DF6S		$1,992	4c	138	26	3	18.7	272.2
Tohatsu	6	MFS6B	S	$1,601	4c	123	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Tohatsu	6	M6B S		$1,860	2c	169	26	1	220.9	377.3
Yamaha - premix	6	6CMHS		$1,990	2c	165	27	0	322.7	331.7
Honda	8	BF8D2 SHD		$2,925	4c	222	42.0	3	17.9	336.2
Mercury	8	1F08201FK		$2,966	4c	209	25.0	3	20.7	144.4
Mercury	8	M lite		$1,993	2c	169	26	0	306.1	225.5
Tohatsu	8	MFS8A3	S	$2,638	4c	209	37.0	3	20.0	296.4
Tohatsu	8	M8B S		$1,885	2c	169	26	1	220.9	377.3
Yamaha	8	F8CMHS		$3,231	4c	197	38	3	29.3	365.3
Yamaha - high thrust	8	FT8DEP		$3,464	4c	197	49	3	29.3	365.3
Yamaha - premix	8	8CMHS		$2,236	2c	165	27	0	322.7	331.7
Tohatsu	9.8	MFS9.8A3	S	$2,702	4c	209	37.0	3	20.0	296.4
Tohatsu	9.8	M9.8B S		$2,113	2c	169	26	1	195.0	150.0
Johnson	9.9	J10R4SD		$3,939	4c	302	44.0	3	20.9	231.3

Notes: **Shaft length** - representative models shown use the following convention where possible. Up to 10hp, short shaft. 10hp to 150hp, long shaft. Over 150hp, extra long shaft. Up to 18hp, tiller steer. 20hp and over - forward steer. Readers are advised to make sure they check ***the latest prices*** with their local dealers, before making a purchase decision - and please note, freight costs will vary according to the location of the dealer.

Make	HP	Model	RRP	Technology	Capacity (cc's)	Weight (Kg)	OEDA Star Rating	Emiss. HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Mercury	9.9	1F06201FK	$3,142	4c	209	38.1	3	20.7	144.4
Mercury	9.9	M	$2,401	2c	262	35	0	323.2	533.4
Mercury - Big Foot	9.9	EL bigfoot	$4,179	4c	209	43	3	20.7	144.4
Suzuki	9.9	DT9.9S	$2,087	2c	284	38.5	not rated		
Tohatsu	9.9	M9.9D2 S	$2,305	2c	247	37	1	180.9	287.2
Yamaha	9.9 HT	F9.9GEPL	$4,491	4c	212	44.3	3 est		
Yamaha	9.9	F9.9FMHS	$3,289	4c	212	39.9	3 est		
Yamaha - high thrust	9.9	FT9.9DEL	$4,065	4c	323	50	3	22.3	229.0
Yamaha - premix	9.9	9.9FMHS	$2,546	2c	246	36	1	249.6	408.4
Honda	10	BF10D2 SHD	$3,370	4c	222	42.0	3	17.9	336.2
Johnson	10	J10RSD/U	$2,807	2c	255	34.0	0	332.3	629.6
Mercury	10	Sea Pro	$3,006	2c	262	34	0	323.2	533.4
Honda	15	BF15D3 LHD	$3,780	4c	350	46.5	3	15.5	172.6
Johnson	15	J15RSD/U	$2,941	2c	255	34.0	0	332.3	629.6
Johnson	15	J15R4SD	$3,906	4c	302	45.0	3	15.4	227.6
Mercury	15	ML	$3,570	4c	323	50	3	17.0	181.3
Mercury	15	M L super	$2,534	2c	294	42	1	173.5	270.3
Mercury	15	ML	$2,728	2c	262	35	0	323.2	533.4
Mercury	15	Sea Pro ML	$3,127	2c	262	34	0	323.2	533.4
Mercury - Big Foot	15	ML bigfoot	$3,980	4c	323	58	3	17.0	181.3
Suzuki	15	DT15L	$3,943	4c	302	49	3	15.4	227.6
Suzuki	15	DT15S	$2,222	2c	284	38.5	not rated		
Tohatsu	15	MFS15B2 S	$3,203	4c	328	52.0	3	18.3	262.5
Tohatsu	15	M15D2 S	$2,431	2c	247	37	1	180.9	287.2
Yamaha	15	F15CHMS	$3,793	4c	323	50	3	22.3	229.0
Yamaha - premix	15	15FMHL	$2,675	2c	246	36	1	249.6	408.4
Tohatsu	18	MFS18B2 L	$3,317	4c	328	52.0	3	18.3	262.5
Tohatsu	18	M18E2 S	$2,431	2c	294	37	1	173.5	270.3
Honda	20	BF20D3LHD	$4,220	4c	350	46.5	3	15.5	172.6
Yamaha	20	F20B MHL	$4,588	4c	362	53.7	3 est		
Yamaha - premix	20	20DMHL	$3,102	2c	395	48	1	201.9	200.4
Honda	25	BF25D4LHGD	$5,590	4c	552	72.5	3	14.1	217.2
Johnson	25	J25RL4SD	$5,212	4c	538	72.0	3	15.5	201.2
Mercury	25	ML	$5,097	4i	526	71	3	14.9	279.4
Mercury	25	ML	$2,947	2c	430	51	1	164.2	202.9
Suzuki	25	DF25L	$5,398	4c	538	72	3	15.5	201.2
Tohatsu	25	MFS25B (EFI) L	$4,597	4i	526	82.5	3	14.5	282.8
Tohatsu	25	M25C3 L	$3,071	2c	429	52	1	160.7	194.0
Yamaha	25	F25AETL	$5,700	4c	498	71	3	14.6	230.5
Yamaha - CV Premix	25	25BMHL	$3,134	2c	496	54.5	1	211.2	326.9
Yamaha - high thrust	25	FT25BETX	$5,997	4c	498	90	3	14.6	230.5
Yamaha - premix	25	25NMHL	$3,380	2c	395	48	1	201.9	200.4
Honda	30	BF30D4LHD	$5,680	4c	552	72.5	3	14.1	217.2
Johnson	30	J30PL4SD	$7,371	4c	597	96.0	3	16.4	317.5
Mercury	30	ML GA EFI	$5,686	4i	526	71	3	14.9	279.4
Mercury	30	MLH lite	$3,280	2c	430	48	1	164.2	202.9
Suzuki	30	DF30TL	$6,757	4c	597	96	3	16.4	317.5
Suzuki	30	DT30L	$3,590	2c	499	60.5	not rated		
Tohatsu	30	MFS30B (EFI) L	$4,690	4i	526	82.5	3	14.5	282.8
Tohatsu	30	M30A4 L	$2,115	2c	429	52	1	164.2	202.9

Notes: **Shaft length** - representative models shown use the following convention where possible. Up to 10hp, short shaft. 10hp to 150hp, long shaft. Over 150hp, extra long shaft. Up to 18hp, tiller steer. 20hp and over - forward steer. Readers are advised to make sure they check ***the latest prices*** with their local dealers, before making a purchase decision - and please note, freight costs will vary according to the location of the dealer.

Make	HP	Model	RRP	Technology	Capacity (cc's)	Weight (Kg)	OEDA Star Rating	Emiss. HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Yamaha	30	F30AETL	$6,424	4c	747	90.4	3	14.7	158.1
Yamaha - CV Premix	30	30HMHL	$3,173	2c	496	54.5	1	237.6	425.6
Yamaha Precision Blend	30	30DETOL	$5,487	2c	496	66	1	237.6	425.6
Evinrude E-TEC	40	E40DRLSD	$8,314	2di	864	109	3	13.4	66.5
Honda	40	BF40A4 LHD	$6,940	4c	808	93	3	13.3	203.4
Johnson	40	J40PL4SD	$8,388	4i	815	110	3	13.8	235.3
Mercury	40	ML	$6,826	4c	747	93	3	13.0	185.4
Mercury	40	ELPTO	$6,609	2c	644	78	1	142.2	192.3
Mercury	40	MHL Lite	$4,811	2c	697	69	1	142.2	192.3
Mercury	40	Sea Pro MLG	$6,322	2c	645	74	1	142.2	192.3
Mercury - Big Foot	40	ELPT EFI bigfoot	$8,368	4i	995	120	3	14.2	188.9
Suzuki	40	DF40TL	$8,670	4i	814	110	3	13.8	235.3
Suzuki	40	DT40L	$4,134	2c	696	76	not rated		
Tohatsu	40	M40D2 L	$4,218	2c	697	85	1	153.0	150.0
Tohatsu - TLDI	40	MD40B EPTOL	$7,241	2DI	697	93.4	2	30.6	119.2
Yamaha	40	F40BETL	$7,632	4c	747	90.4	3	14.7	158.1
Yamaha - CV Premix	40	40XWTL	$5,319	2c	703	80.7	1	196.6	364.8
Yamaha Precision Blend	40	40VETOL	$6,146	2c	698	88	1	167.5	329.7
Evinrude E-TEC	50	E50DPLSD	$9,172	2di	864	109	3	13.4	66.5
Honda	50	BF50A4 LHDT	$8,500	4c	808	93	3	13.3	203.4
Johnson	50	J50PL4SD	$9,159	4i	815	110	3	13.8	235.3
Mercury	50	ELPT EFI	$8,708	4i	995	112	3	14.2	188.9
Mercury	50	ELPTO	$8,036	2c	967	93	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury - Big Foot	50	ELPT EFI bigfoot	$8,994	4i	995	120	3	14.2	188.9
Suzuki	50	DF50TL	$9,077	4i	814	110	3	13.8	235.3
Tohatsu	50	M50D2 EPTOL	$6,363	2c	697	85	1	167.8	387.0
Tohatsu - TLDI	50	MD50B EPTOL	$7,399	2DI	697	93.5	2	30.6	119.2
Yamaha	50	F50FEHTL	$8,382	4i	996	110	3	15.1	128.7
Yamaha - CV Premix	50	50HETL	$6,391	2c	698	87	1	167.5	329.7
Yamaha Precision Blend	50	50HETOL	$7,490	2c	698	5	1	167.5	329.7
Mercury	55	Sea Pro MHL	$7,510	2c	967	100	1	140.1	411.0
Evinrude E-TEC	60	E60DPLSD	$10,103	2di	864	109	3	13.4	66.5
Johnson	60	J60PL4SD	$10,680	4i	1298	162	3	12.6	199.3
Mercury	60	ELPT EFI	$8,708	4i	995	112	3	14.2	188.9
Mercury	60	ELPTO	$8,491	2c	967	99.5	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury	60	Sea Pro Big Foot	$7,695	2c	967	108	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury - Big Foot	60	ELPTO bigfoot	$8,693	2c	967	109	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury - Big Foot	60	ELPT EFI bigfoot	$9,451	4i	995	120	3	14.2	188.9
Suzuki	60	DF60TL	$10,350	4i	1298	162	3	12.6	199.3
Tohatsu	60	M60C EPTOL	$8,165	2c	938	115	1	157.9	298.1
Yamaha	60	F60CETL	$9,228	4i	996	110	3	15.1	128.7
Yamaha - CV Premix	60	60FETL	$7,447	2c	849	106	1	168.2	319.4
Yamaha - CV Premix	60	E60HMHDL	$6,883	2c	849	102	1	168.2	319.4
Yamaha - high thrust	60	FT60DETL	$9,390	4i	996	115	3	15.1	128.7
Yamaha Precision Blend	60	60FETOL	$7,994	2c	849	105	1	168.2	319.4
Johnson	70	J70PL4SD	$11,625	4i	1298	162	3	12.6	199.3
Suzuki	70	DF70TL	$11,806	4i	1298	162	3	12.6	199.3
Tohatsu	70	M70C EPTOL	$8,308	2c	938	115	1	151.4	291.2
Tohatsu - TLDI	70	MD70B EPTOL	$10,378	2DI	1267	143	2	31.2	91.2
Yamaha Precision Blend	70	70BETOL	$8,427	2c	849	105.5	1	168.2	319.4

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Make	HP	Model	RRP	Technology	Capacity (cc's)	Weight (Kg)	OEDA Star Rating	Emiss. HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Evinrude E-TEC	75	E75DPLSD	$11,720	2di	1295	145	3	12.3	69.8
Honda	75	BF75A2 LRTL	$12,680	4i	1497	162	3	16.1	61.0
Mercury	75	ELPT EFI	$12,779	4i	1732	181	3	15.4	336.0
Mercury	75	ELPTO	$8,825	2c	1386	138	1	122.9	401.5
Mercury	75	Sea Pro MLHG	$9,067	2c	1386	139	1	122.9	401.5
Mercury - Optimax	75	ELPT	$12,312	2DI	1526	170	3	13.3	127.5
Yamaha	80	F80BETL	$12,460	4i	1596	172	3	16.2	102.0
Evinrude E-TEC	90	E90DSLSD	$12,875	2di	1295	145	3	12.3	69.8
Honda	90	BF90A2 LRTL	$14,110	4i	1497	163	3	16.1	61.0
Mercury	90	ELPT EFI	$13,554	4i	1732	181	3	15.4	336.0
Mercury	90	ELPTO	$10,273	2c	1386	138	1	122.9	401.5
Mercury - Optimax	90	ELPT	$12,797	2DI	1526	170	3	13.3	127.5
Suzuki	90	DF90TL	$13,206	4i	1950	189	3	12.6	233.5
Tohatsu	90	M90A EPTOL	$9,081	2c	1267	135	1	147.7	286.0
Tohatsu - TLDI	90	MD90B EPTOL	$10,598	2DI	1267	143	2	31.2	91.2
Yamaha Precision Blend	90	90AETOL	$9,829	2c	1140	122.5	1	161.4	432.5
Yamaha	100	F100DETL	$13,984	4i	1596	172	3	16.2	102.0
Evinrude E-TEC	115	E115DPLSU	$15,569	2di	1726	167	3	12.5	114.9
Honda	115	BF115A2 LD	$16,260	4i	2254	225	3	12.7	151.8
Johnson	115	J115PXSD	$12,027	2c	1726	152	1	155.4	266.1
Johnson	115	J115PL4SD	$15,278	4i	1950	189	3	12.6	233.5
Mercury	115	ELPT EFI	$15,343	4i	1732	181	3	15.4	336.0
Mercury - Optimax	115	ELPT	$14,741	2DI	1526	170	3	13.3	127.5
Suzuki	115	DF115TL	$15,123	4i	1950	189	3	12.6	233.5
Tohatsu	115	M115A2 EPTOL	$11,261	2c	1768	164	1	199.6	150.0
Tohatsu - TLDI	115	MD115A EPTOL	$13,714	2DI	1768	173	2	31.1	128.5
Yamaha	115	F115AETL	$15,833	4i	1741	188	3	11.9	246.5
Yamaha Precision Blend	115	115CETOL	$10,818	2c	1730	167	1	169.4	356.4
Yamaha Precision Blend	130	130BETOL	$11,865	2c	1730	167	1	140.0	392.8
Honda	135	BF135A4 LD	$17,405	4i	2354	217	3	14.1	80.9
Mercury - Optimax	135	L	$18,031	2DI	2507	195	3	13.2	166.6
Mercury - Verado	135	L	$21,626	4i sc	1732	231	2	15.4	336.0
Johnson	140	J140PX4SD	$17,341	4i	2044	186	3	12.6	233.5
Suzuki	140	DF140TX	$17,040	4i	2044	186	3	12.6	233.5
Tohatsu	140	M140A2 EPTOL	$11,761	2c	1768	164	1	167.3	355.3
Evinrude E-TEC	150	E150DSLSU	$18,473	2di	2589	190	3	15.2	114.2
Evinrude E-TEC	150 HO	E150DHLSC	$20,092	2di	2589	190	3	15.2	114.2
Honda	150	BF150A4 LD	$19,160	4i	2354	217	3	14.1	80.9
Mercury	150	L EFI	$14,023	2i	2507	193	1	117.2	282.4
Mercury - Optimax	150	L	$18,783	2DI	2507	195	2	13.2	166.6
Mercury - Verado	150	L	$22,657	4i sc	1732	231	2	15.4	336.0
Suzuki	150	DF150TX	$21,274	4i	2867	211	3	12.9	159.0
Yamaha	150	F150AETL	$19,362	4i	2670	216	3	10.8	222.3
Yamaha - HPDI	150	Z150QETOL	$18,806	2DI	2596	220	2	30.5	89.2
Yamaha Precision Blend	150	150FETOL	$14,437	2c	2596	198	1	130.0	354.8
Evinrude E-TEC	175	E175DSLSU	$20,057	2di	2589	190	3	15.2	114.2
Honda	175	BF175A6 XD	$21,440	4i	3471	267	3	11.5	77.8
Mercury - Optimax	175	XL	$19,753	2DI	2507	195	2	26.3	146.2
Mercury - Verado	175	XL	$23,649	4i sc	1732	239	2	15.4	336.0
Suzuki	175	DF175TX	$22,756	4i	2867	211	3	12.9	159.0

Notes: **Shaft length** - representative models shown use the following convention where possible. Up to 10hp, short shaft. 10hp to 150hp, long shaft. Over 150hp, extra long shaft. Up to 18hp, tiller steer. 20hp and over - forward steer. Readers are advised to make sure they check ***the latest prices*** with their local dealers, before making a purchase decision - and please note, freight costs will vary according to the location of the dealer.

SEA MEDIA's New Year Garage Sale

F-250 Chairs

Two perfectly good, as new, fully adjustable F-250 driver & passenger chairs. Replaced by a pair of Recaros. Will sell the pair (only) for $1,250 ono. Will bolt into just about any big vehicle, 4WD or truck. Freight your care.

Vacuum Brake System

This is the original PBR system we took off our Chev Suburban's 6.5 V-8 turbo diesel. We believe it will fit any diesel - but it needs a diesel engineer/brake expert to install. What offers? Originally cost $$$$s.

Personal EPIRBs

If you are going to get lost coming home from the club - or bushwalking - having one of these brand new, still in their packet (non-marine 'coz they don't float!) GME MT310 models could save your bacon . . we have two of them. Best offers around $190 ea will secure one for the farm.

Spotlights

(Type A)

We have **34** of these 500,000 candle power 12v spotlights left to clear - comes with 10' long car cord with cigarette light adaptor. Can be deck mounted, too. Great value at **$19.95 incl p&p**.

Spotlights

(Type B)

We have **11** of these slightly smaller, less powerful, all weather (250,000 candlepower) but more compact hand held spotties left over; 12' cord, cigarette lighter plug, nice hand grip - **yours for $14.95 incl p&p.** (12v 55watts)

Avon Inflatable

This is the classic Avon - it's only 'been used about four times, but it has been stored in our garage for years. Hyperlon is good; the tubes hold their shape/air for weeks. Mainly needs a proper Avon pump we can't source - but we have one that'll do. Gotta be a bloody cheap tender at around $990 ono to keep on deck and handle manually.

6lb / 240yds
8lb / 160yds
10lb / 140yds

Kids or Bait Spinning Reels

We know - *we should've done this for Xmas* - but we only found the box a few days ago! Made for Shakespeare, called the "135" and looks like the ideal start-up outfit for youngsters - or a bait reel you can hoick when it jams up in a couple of years. We've got 58 left - and we'll ship 'em out at **$19.95 incl p&p** on a 'first in, best dressed' basis.

To purchase any of these items, just log onto the SEA Media Web site; go to the 'Shopping Cart' shop, provide credit card details - and the goods will be sent to you the next working day!

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Queries by email to Ruth: admin@seamedia.com.au

Make	HP	Model	RRP	Technology	Capacity (cc's)	Weight (Kg)	OEDA Star Rating	Emiss. HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Yamaha - HPDI	175	Z175GETOX	$19,840	2DI	2596	220	2	30.5	89.2
Yamaha Precision Blend	175	175DETOL	$15,407	2c	2596	198	1	122.5	241.8
Evinrude E-TEC	200	E200DSLSU	$21,509	2di	2589	190	3	15.2	114.2
Evinrude E-TEC	200	E200DHXSD	$23,369	2di	3279	238	3	10.6	84.9
Honda	200	BF200A2 XD	$22,540	4i	3471	267	3	11.5	77.8
Johnson	200	J200PX4SD	$22,405	4i	3614	263	3	13.0	200.9
Mercury	200	XL EFI	$15,901	2i	2507	196	1	117.2	282.4
Mercury - Optimax	200	XL	$21,067	2DI	3032	225	2	26.3	146.2
Mercury - Optimax	200XS	200XLDTS	$23,786	2DI	2507	197	3 est		
Mercury - Verado	200	1200V13FD XL	$27,626	4i sc	2598	294	2	15.1	278.8
Mercury - Verado	200LW	XL	$24,861	4i sc	1732	239	2 est		
Suzuki	200	DF200TX	$24,116	4i	3614	263	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	200	F200AETX	$22,141	4i	3352	269	3	14.5	259.3
Yamaha - HPDI	200	Z200NETOX	$20,693	2DI	2596	220	2	30.5	89.2
Yamaha Precision Blend	200	200FETOX	$16,570	2c	2596	198	1	122.5	241.8
Evinrude E-TEC	225	E225DPXSD	$24,940	2di	3279	238	3	10.6	84.9
Evinrude E-TEC	225 HO	E225DHLSC	$26,485	2di	3279	238	3	10.6	84.9
Honda	225	BF225A6 XD	$24,030	4i	3471	267	3	11.5	77.8
Johnson	225	J225PX4SD	$23,745	4i	3614	263	3	13.0	200.9
Mercury	225	XL EFI	$21,089	2i	3032	218	1	103.6	248.3
Mercury - Optimax	225	XL	$22,829	2DI	3032	225	2	26.3	146.2
Mercury - Verado	225	XL	$29,190	4i sc	2598	294	2	15.1	278.8
Mercury	225 3L	Sea Pro XL	$20,450	2i	3047	209	2	26.3	146.2
Suzuki	225	DF225TXX	$25,951	4i	3614	263	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	225	F225AETX	$23,546	4i	3352	269	3	14.5	259.3
Evinrude E-TEC	250	E250DPXSD	$26,524	2di	3279	238	3	10.6	84.9
Mercury	250	XL EFI	$22,490	2i	3032	239	1	103.6	248.3
Mercury - Optimax	250XS	250 XL PRO XS	$28,336	2DI	3032	229			
Mercury - Verado	250	XL	$30,689	4i sc	2598	294	2	15.1	278.8
Suzuki	250	DF250TX	$27,222	4i	3614	263	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	250	F250AETX	$26,160	4i	3352	284	3	14.5	259.3
Mercury - Verado	275	XL	$33,308	4i sc	2598	294	2	15.1	278.8
Mercury - Verado	300	XL	$34,550	4i sc	2598	294	2 est		
Suzuki	300	DF300TX	$32,168	4i	4028	274	3	16.0	75.7
Yamaha	300	F300AETX	eta 2008	4i	5330	365	3	9.2	216.1
Yamaha	350	F350AETX	$37,087	4i	5330	365	3	9.2	216.1

Notes: **Shaft length** - representative models shown use the following convention where possible. Up to 10hp, short shaft. 10hp to 150hp, long shaft. Over 150hp, extra long shaft. Up to 18hp, tiller steer. 20hp and over - forward steer. Readers are advised to make sure they check ***the latest prices*** with their local dealers, before making a purchase decision - and please note, freight costs will vary according to the location of the dealer.

There are web sites that entertain . . .

. . and web sites that will surprise.

You really should check out SEA Media's web site, very soon.

www.seamedia.com.au

Home of the SEA Library (and hundreds of boat tests!)

The Ultimate Slug Fest: MANGROVE JACK

As most F&B readers know, ex-PM John Howard was often called a cricketing 'tragic' so it's only fair we call F&B's fishing & tackle editor Aaron Concord a 'Jack tragic' . . . because he just about lives, breathes, eats and sleeps dreaming about this little Aussie battler. A sportfish with a heart as big as Makybe Diva, the aggression of Costya Tszu, the cunning of Shane Warne and the speed of an FA-18 at WOT . . this is arguably the toughest fish of 'em all. But be warned - once you start trying to catch them, and get a BIG hit - you'll be hooked for life! And we'll all blame Aaron . . .

If you have done plenty of estuarine fishing in the tropics and sub tropics of Oz, there has probably been a time when, like a bolt from the blue, something has grabbed your lure or bait, reefing your rod downwards with amazing force, only to have your line snap before you could even react.

Your offering has been dragged through the most convenient snag, bridge pylon or rocky shelf with blinding speed. You have just been blitzed, smoked and busted up.

What the . . ! What was this unseen adversary?

It all points to a thug called a mangrove jack.

There aren't too many estuary dwellers that can do this with the same unflinching attitude. The speed of the attack and subsequent bust off, leaves many fishermen with legs like jelly, and has many people searching for the best tactics to try and survive an encounter.

Jacks have a personality that can have you on edge.

A landed jack usually has its eye follow you, watching every move, until you get too close to their maw . . then *snap!* They chop their jaws like a rabid dog.

I must admit I have had reservations doing an article that is focused on jacks, since they are a favourite fish. They have qualities that turn most who chase them into ardent admirers for life.

In reality, they need less pressure than more, to sustain the population.

However, as special as they are, I will divulge some tactics and places as a starting point. From here, it is up to you - and may you be lucky enough to end up with a crimson red mangrove jack in your landing net.

Whether you decide to keep it or release it, is your decision, although fortunately, more people are releasing them to fight another day.

Aussie Tough

To understand my feelings towards jacks, I just wanted to share a couple of interesting encounters.

No other fish has broken hooks, bent or broken lures, snapped lines and leader material or stuffed rods and reels like a serious run in with a large mangrove jack.

No other fish shows as much distain towards anglers and their gear, which is why, when you do land one, it is perfectly normal to do a victory dance!

A Bit of Biology

The mangrove jack *(lutjanus argentimaculatus)* belongs to a group of fishes known scientifically as the *Lutjanids,* which include coral trout, red emperor, red bass and fingermark bream.

Lutjanids have a worldwide distribution in tropical and sub-tropical waters, where they are usually described as snappers, due to their reflex chopping nature of their jaws. Their ability to snap their jaws is unbelievable. The popping, chopping noise is very distinct and if a lutjanid is doing this once caught, make sure your fingers are well clear, as the teeth they posses will puncture right through a fingernail.

All possess large, prominent teeth, muscular body, large eyes and a powerful tail.

This group of fish are well known for their fighting abilities as well as being some of the best table fish in the sea.

The colour of a mangrove jack can vary from "uniformly bright reddish pink to olive brown", according to Ern Grant's definitive *Guide to Fishes*.

Smaller fish exhibit vertical pale white bars and electric blue lines around the eyes and snout.

Depending on the location from which I have caught the jack from, most fish from shallow, dark areas exhibit darker colouration, where jacks pulled from deeper snags and rock bars have been pale in comparison. Most night time caught jacks have been fairly dark, so it seems they have the capacity to blend their colour to suit their chosen ambush point.

Jacks taken from the fresh water reaches of rivers are usually a rich,

Aaron's Mum, Teresa Concord, is a highly respected fisherperson in her own right, and naturally enough, points out that she and husband Ed Concord taught Aaron just about everything he knows !! *(Ah, don'tcha luv inter-family bragging!)* including explaining to Aaron how he could catch this superb 53 cm 'Jack from a well known Gold Coast tributary in F&B's Trailcraft 475 Pro Fish. *- PW)*

mangrove jack

dark colour.

Mangrove jacks have been caught from Sydney, stretching north along the entire Queensland coast, across to the Northern Territory and into Western Australia, where they have been recorded as far south as Shark Bay.

Immature jacks live in the sanctuary of creeks, rivers and lagoons, feeding on shrimp, prawns, small baitfish and crabs. Having a schooling tendency, it is not uncommon to find small packs of mangrove jacks patrolling a snaggy bank or rock bar in fairly shallow water.

As they grow to around 25 to 40cm, they tend to end up with a pecking order, with the larger jacks taking up the best part of a particular snag or structure, with the smaller fish having to contest the remaining vantage points.

Again, in waters that are less disturbed by noise and man, it is quite common for a lure, fly or bait to be attacked by several fish at once or on simultaneous casts, showing their schooling behaviour.

Once a couple of fish have been removed, hooked and lost, jacks do show a great affinity to learn. Once bitten, twice shy, at least in the short term.

"... the lure is cast typically into less than a foot of water and worked erratically from there to the deepest point..."

Over a length of 45cm, jacks tend to become a little less friendly to one another, showing an attitude that has the smaller jacks running for cover. It is this nasty habit for larger jacks to react to the invasion of smaller models that pushes the large fish to the best structure that the river holds, to the detriment to the smaller fish, at least until the larger individual is caught or reaches sexual maturity and heads off to spawn.

Recaptured jacks also have shown a tendency to stay in the original vicinity of their first capture. They are homebodies.

These larger jacks tend to freely hunt down mullet, whiting, crabs, squid, prawns, yabbies.... Basically, anything that moves!

During the worm hatch in the creeks at Cardwell last summer, the mangrove jacks caught were filled to the brim with them.

I have witnessed them in creeks rounding up prawns and herring, smashing through them like trevally, though the resounding chop of their snapping jaws makes their feeding sound very distinctive.

Interestingly, most jacks sampled by the DPI had crabs in them, showing that they are likely the dominant food particularly in tropical creeks.

Jacks of less than 60cm are considered juveniles, and spend their lives to at least this length in coastal estuaries and rivers, at least in my part of the world, which is SE Queensland. In the tropics, jacks have a tendency to only remain in estuaries to perhaps the mid to high forties in length.

The minimum breeding length is around 50 to 52cm for females and around 45cm for males. This reflects the tropical sampling of mangrove jacks. There is no hard data on the maturation sizes of the southern population at this time. At these sizes, only 50% of the jacks were mature.

Through the tagging efforts of Suntag, the sport fishing allied tagging program based in Rockhampton, Queensland, and the Department of Primary Industries of Queensland have embarked on tagging and electro-fishing studies to determine the sizes and sexual maturity of mangrove jacks.

In co-operation with John Russell from the DPI, they have found that jacks in the north move offshore when they are roughly 32cm to 43cm in length, and at this stage are anywhere from 3 to 11 years of age. Mangrove jacks have the ability to reach the age of 40 odd years.

Jacks in southern regions enjoy a faster growth rate, though it is assumed that at the higher lengths that they attain, they are still the same age as their northern brothers and sisters.

Interestingly, Bill Sawynok from Suntag, had a couple of other interesting facts.

Firstly, there is no data to suggest that larger jacks will move back into an estuary once they have left. All the traffic heads one way: offshore.

Secondly, apart from eels, Jacks are the only other fish that utilise all habitats from the fresh water swamps to offshore reefs and everywhere in between. This makes them very unusual and almost unique.

They do however, show no urge or drive to move offshore due to a sexual need. The movement seems more opportunistic in approach, rather than a

mass exodus at a certain size or age, such as salmon.

Once a jack has moved to the offshore reefs they gain sexual maturity where they may attain the size of up to 18kg and over 120cm long.

Some of the better-known areas that produce these outsized jacks are the reefs off Northern NSW and SE QLD, with the top of Fraser Island surely having some of the largest I have seen or heard of.

Less Numbers, Better Quality.

On the east coast, northern NSW and SE QLD certainly has fewer jacks than the tropics, though their individual size is certainly larger.

For instance, a jack of 50cm is a very large fish for places such as Hinchinbrook Island or the rivers around Cape York.

Most fish of that size have well and truly migrated to the offshore reefs.

In NE NSW and SE QLD, 45's are common. A 50 is a nice fish and fish of 60cm or better are caught (or lost!) each year. I saw a fish that was 68cm taken from a creek up towards Gladstone, though to stop a fish like this, is a creek fisherman's holy grail. Actually, I'd liken a 60cm creek jack to a 50lb barra or jew, that's how challenging they are at this size in a creek environment.

At 60cm they would weigh no more than 3 kilos, which is pretty impressive to stack a relatively small fish against other larger species. Though this just shows how much heart they have.

Once they get over 47 or 48cm, jacks can be a real test on equipment usually employed for lure casting.

For every centimetre they gain in length, there is a substantial increase in bulk, which translates into raw power and speed.

And the need for more fire power to stop them.

How, When and Where They Feed.

Mangrove jacks are an ambush feeder that uses the cover in a river or estuary to sneak around in the shadows until it lines up prey.

Once a jack has struck its target, he is already on his way home. They fire out with blinding speed, do a u-turn and attack on their way back in to their cover. It suggests a territorial response to any other jacks that may be in the area, since it is not uncommon to have several jacks attack at once from a school.

It is this behaviour that has anglers being broken off during a strike. The momentum they build up on their inbound dash is phenomenal.

By studying the river or estuary that you are fishing, look for clean water with good bank side snags or rocks that they can use as cover.

Good cover that falls away into deeper water is preferable. By deep, it only really needs to be 5 or 6 feet, though the deeper the better, with some of my preferred trolling and jigging spots having 25 to 30 feet of water. Most lure casting spots are up to 10 feet deep at the end of the snag, or where the rocks fall away to. The lure is cast typically into less than a foot of water and worked erratically from there to the deepest point.

Though they are called mangrove jacks, the vast majority are caught around rock bars and deeper gravel and rock filled holes.

Mangrove lined creeks that have trees and snags pushed into the water's edge that provide shade and cover are the next best thing to target.

If the waterway has been turned into canals, then bridges and their pylons, along with pontoons and even old moored boats can be focal areas. All you need is bait and current.

As for times that they feed, well, just look at their colour and the size of their eye.

The darker the better.

If targeting during daylight hours, a low tide around dawn or dusk is perfect. Apparently, jacks have the capacity, like tailor and other large predators, to cope better visually during periods of changing light, to the detriment of the bait they are after!

Being an ambush predator, mangrove jacks do prefer ebb tides, particularly the last few hours of the ebb, followed by the first hour or so of the flood tide. The less water between them and their prey, the easier it is for them to feed. Pretty simple.

In SE QLD, jacks are caught in every month of the year, through October through to April, when the water temp is high, is certainly the pick. Once the water temp has reached above 25 degrees and pushing towards 30, this is when jacks are at their most active.

In the tropics, extremely high water temps of over 32 degrees can have the jacks move off the banks and out of the snags, looking for some cooler water.

North easterly winds with high humidity tend to improve your chances even more, and combined with late afternoon storm activity, well, you have the best scenario going for you to get really stretched.

Jacks have a large air bladder, which I believe is affected by changes in barometer more so than the average creek dwelling fish. With the barometric upheaval that occurs with

an on coming frontal system packed with storms, jacks go bananas.

If you thought they had an attitude before such an event, wait until you hook up when a storm is approaching. My worst wipeouts have occurred when storms are around, though care must be taken not to get caught up in an electrified monster. If in doubt, get off the water, pronto.

As far as moon phases are concerned, I do prefer more run, which translates into the full or new moons. In areas up to 4 metres of tidal difference, this seems to be the best. In areas such as the Kimberley or around Darwin, you may need to fish between the moons to get clear water to fish for them.

Most of the better jack creeks do have clean sandy mouths with clean water that pushes up them. If the creek you want to fish is full of suspended mud at all tides and even when there has been no rain, I'd be looking elsewhere.

Jack Tackle

Mangrove jack tackle depends on what is going to be the enticement. Jacks can be targeted with strip baits, live baits, lure casting, lure trolling or on fly.

Probably the common element in all of the gear reflects in the ability to accurately present your offering. Mangrove jacks do not swim 3 feet away from their sanctuary, so accuracy even when live baiting or strip baiting is just as vital as presenting a cast lure or fly.

Another common denominator is a smooth casting reel with a flawless drag and a rod that has plenty of poke to turn a jack's head when hooked.

Live and Dead Bait Gear.

To chase jacks on dead or live baits, a quality spin or baitcasting outfit that can really pull the kinks out of 10kg braid or monofilament is required. Reels need to be able to cope with at least 3 to 4 kilos of drag pressure, day in day out just to help turn a jack's head as he bulldozes back to cover.

Rods for bait fishing can benefit with a bit of length i.e.: a spin rod around 7 feet to 8 feet and over head/baitcasters around 6'6" to 7'0" feet to aid in casting; it also helps in hooking fish on the longer length of line that is used when bait fishing.

I prefer graphite rods such as a G.Loomis L904 or L905, though graphite composites such as an Ugly Stik GB1800 will do the job on its ear. Regardless, the rod needs plenty of grunt in the butt section to help fight the fish and a lighter, sensitive tip to help with bite detection, as there are times when even jacks don't decide to fly off with your offering.

Lure Casting Gear.

Gear for snag bashing revolves around a spiny baitcaster from 5'4 to 6'6 in length, coupled with a baitcasting reel that can cast lures as light as 5 or 6 grams in weight, has a smooth drag and is capable of pulling the kinks out of 10kg braid. For some "jungle warfare", 15kg braid is even better, though getting a rod to cast very light lures then lock up on 15kg braid, is very hard to come by.

My favourite jack outfit is a G.Loomis GL3 663 baitcasting rod, custom built with Fuji Titanium Silicon Carbide guides, mated to a Shimano Chronarch 100SF reel, loaded with 11kg Yamatoyo PE Braid. It isn't a cheap outfit, though I have worked its butt off for 6 years now, so you get what you pay for. Best fish so far is 53.5cm long.

Brands to look for are the top G.Loomis, Xtreme, Daiwa and Precision Rods made from medium to ultra high modulus graphite.

Nothing beats casting accuracy, fighting ability and sensitivity than high and ultra high modulus graphite, though a medium modulus is more robust in the long run, particularly if you are not delicate with your tackle.

Other rods around the 4-6kg and 6-8kg rating work fine, though I am the first to admit I keep a solid 8-10kg outfit on board if the jacks are particularly cranky or the average size is large.

Reels from Penn, Shimano and Daiwa in low profile models tend to cast lighter lures the best and fit the palm of your hand better, though the choices are far greater to pick from than the rods.

Look for models that are "super free" or have other claims at casting very light lures. Drag systems should have carbon/stainless washers or be upgraded to have such. Carbon friction washers offer the best drag range as well as being super smooth, which is vital to cope with the hard-hitting mangrove jacks.

Overall, your baitcaster needs to be

very accurate at placing lures in amongst fallen trees, spindly snags and under pontoons and bridge pylons with ease, then be able to turn a pig-headed jack around so his snout points towards you and not the most convenient line cutting implement.

What's Good For Trolling?

Tackle for lure trolling revolves around baitcasters, though spin gear can be used.

It is the lighter nature in weight, not power, that puts the baitcasters ahead of spin gear for trolling.

A graphite rod around 5'8 to 6 feet in length that can redline 10kg though fish 15 on its ear, is about perfect. You may use lighter gear if you like, though with trolling, since you are making your lure run parallel to the structure, a jack doesn't even need to pull line off the reel to break you off. They only need to arch back into the structure to cause a line severing moment.

What About Jigging Gear?

Jigging with soft plastics has had a boom in growth, with the availability of suitable lures and jig heads to do the job. As a consequence, the evolution of rods and reels that can peg a 3 or 4-gram jig then stop 2kilos of red rampage has certainly improved over the last couple of seasons.

Spin gear allows the angler to cast small jigs further and enhances your ability to work a jig that may be 25m away and 5 to 7 metres down, with ease.

Serious jiggers use rods that are 6'6 or longer, with rods between 7 and 8 feet being the best. Rods from Precision, Gary Howard, G.Loomis, Shakespeare, Berkley and Xtreme come to mind. All of these manufacturers make rods rated 3-5kg and 4-6 kg which although they sound light, are capable of putting on the brakes when needed.

The amount of quality 2500 to 4000 size spin reels that have brilliant gears, smooth drags and metal bodies that can handle the high stress nature of jack fishing has exploded. Penn, Daiwa, Shakespeare, Shimano…the list is growing all the time and the cost is coming down as well

Using The "Long Wand".

Most readers know I love fly fishing, and believe it is another practical way of targeting these fish. The accuracy of fly gear, when snag bashing is brilliant. Coupled with a suitable fly, there isn't anywhere that you can't fish it properly.

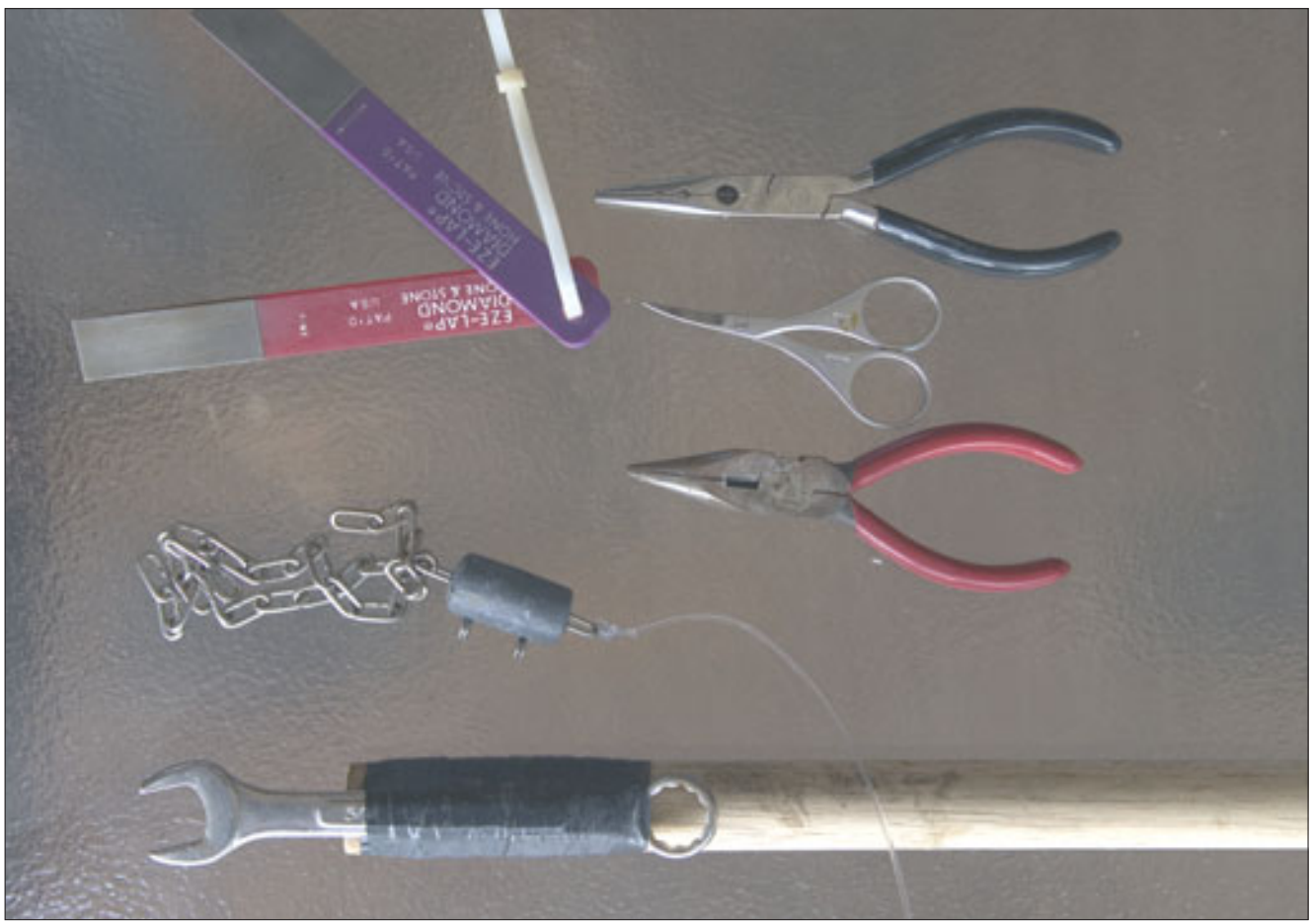
A well-made 8 to 10 weight rod coupled with 2 full length, sink tip fly lines will do it all. An intermediate sink for snag bashing and a quick descent 7 to 9 inch per second sink tip line for around deeper bridge pylons and rocky holes, will cover all your bases.

The beauty of fly gear is its direct contact. You are fishing a handline through a rod, so the sensitivity is intense. Also, once hooked up, when you pull in a metre of fly line, you have pulled the jack a metre further from his snag, if you are fast enough to do anything once hooked up!

Location, Location, Location!

Now I have the gear, where do I need to put my offering? It's all about where the location of your chosen offering ends up. Mangrove Jacks are not pelagics, so don't expect to troll a lure 10 feet down in 30 feet of water and have your lure blitzed.

Same with bait fishing. Near enough



isn't good enough.

If you aimed at the bridge pylons but ended 10 feet away from them, wind in and get your bait on the pylons.

Snags and rig losses to structure and fish are part and parcel with jack fishing. You must lose your fear of this. Gear loss is inevitable.

When live baiting or dead baiting, anchoring in the right position is vital. To fish with baits, anchor up-current of your chosen snag, bridge pylons or rocky hole. Baits must be presented accurately in the snag or right along the bridge pylons. Any noticeable ledge that also may have some larger rocks that a Jack can use as shelter, is where your bait should end up as the first place to start in a rocky hole.

When casting at snags and rock bars, the closer the lure gets to the shallowest part of the bank and the lure is worked parallel for as long as humanly possible into deeper water, the better.

Try getting the lure to swim with the current and not against it, since most jacks will sit facing upstream, waiting for some bait to end up being pushed into the structure they are sitting in.

With heavy timber, lay casts as close as possible to either side of the tree, then work your way into the snaggiest part of it.

By attacking all structure like this, you have more chance of pulling a fish out before you miss-cast and stuff the whole thing by having to go in with the boat to get the lure back.

For fly fishing it is the same as casting lures at snags and rock bars though when targeting bridges and pylons, try casting parallel to and upstream from where you are to allow the fly to sink deep enough to be retrieved along the buttresses.

Lure trolling involves using a quality sounder to show submerged trees, and rock bars that you can then attack with deep diving minnows. It's a case of getting your lure down and bumping the structure to entice a jack to fly out and nail it.

When confronted with rocky walls, bridge pylons or pontoons, the aim is to try and get your lure parallel to the structure and as deep as you can.

Most lures these days have an estimated depth rating in feet, so by changing the scale on your sounder to feet, you can gauge how deep the lure has to go to be literally in the face of the fish.

Jigging with soft plastics is a mix of casting at snags, rock bars, pontoons and bridge pylons mixed in with jigging in deeper rock ledges and holes.

The beauty of jigging is your ability for accurate casting as well as being able to fish deeper more easily than any other lure type.

In other words, with the correct jig you can mix up your ability to target a lot of different fishing situations with the same outfit.

When casting jigs at snags and visible rock bars, utilizing a weedless jig you again cast into the shallows and retrieve into deeper water, just as if using a diving minnow.

Around deeper structure such as pontoons and bridge pylons, cast parallel to them and also angle some back into the shallows, dragging the jig past the structure.

With rocky holes, it's a matter of prospecting the drop offs and ridges that you can see on the sounder, always allowing the jig to get right down to the bottom, twitching it along as if it were a prawn or injured baitfish.

Baits, Lures and Flies That Work.

When live baiting, number one is a live prawn, hands down. If you can't get a supply of these, then live silver biddies, herring and mullet all work well.

Dead baits include very fresh large prawns, pilchards, and strip baits or butterfly baits of herring, mullet, whiting and silver biddies. Slimy mackerel and yellowtail scad work as well, both as strips or butterflied.

A butterflied bait is a whole fish that has had the backbone removed with the fillets and head remaining intact.

Hard body lures that work for casting are endless, though the list here are all lures that I have seen catch repeatedly. They include C-Lure Jack Snacks, Mini and Standard Barra Pros; Lively Lures Mad Mullets in 2.5 and 3 inch deep divers; 15A Bombers in Gold; Tilsan Barra; Halco RMG Scorpion's in Standard and Deep Diving 68mm and 90mm sizes; Leads Lures 3 and 4 inch clear bibbed deep divers.

There are literally new lures coming out of the woodwork, though these,

Tips On Courtesy

Jacks hate noise and boat washes. If you want to be successful at chasing jacks at all, the less noises that come from your boat or any other in the vicinity, the better.

That means not rattling out the anchor when bait fishing, or cranking the buggery out of your favourite CD at 2am when 3 other boats are trying to fish the same hole.

To stuff a spot completely for someone lure casting in a creek, just stay on the plane past them and the run of bank they were about to fish.

The noise alone is enough to give any aquatic animal the proverbial, but have you thought about the wash?

It is not normal for a fish that likes to hang out under a snag or in a crevasse in a rock bar in a creek with no waves to suddenly have a tsunami rock the life out of them and their home. The bank side usually turns to murk from the receding waves, so there is then no point fishing for them at all.

In fact, I have turned around and put the boat on the trailer, since it is a complete waste of time. The further away from noise and wash, hey presto, there are jacks after all!

So, if you round a corner in a creek and are confronted with a vessel that is engaged in casting lures, please slow to a crawl. Don't put a wave over everything and make it impossible to fish.

A mate has a 100m rule for when he is fishing. He stops the petrol engine and drops the electric motor at least 100m away from the bank he wishes to fish, they are that finicky.

Some people I have talked to down the Gold Coast think jacks live in 15 or more feet of water. Truth is, they prefer water much more shallow, though the constant barrage of watercraft has made them change their habits of where they are comfortable to feed and live. Also, if you see people live baiting or jigging around bridges and pontoons, please slow down and consider the noise you may be generating. Who knows, the favour may need to be returned one day by someone else. For the sake of going slow for a few minutes as you arrive up to, and then pass a vessel fishing - the courtesy will go along way.

- Aaron

apart from the Bomber, are all Aussie made or owned, tough and reliable. Others from Tropic Angler, Nils Master, Rapala and Storm are all great fish producers as well.

Colours to pick include burnt oranges and reds, gold chromes, bleeding mullet in chrome, banana fish and Nilsy Pink and Browns. With that range, you can fish in gin clear water, tannin stained; brown silted water or green tinged water. I'd tell you what is good for what, though I had to figure it out and so will you…it's half the fun and taken me 16 years to get a reasonable clue, so forgive me if I don't spill the beans completely!

The main aim is to represent patterns and colours of prawns, crabs and the general baitfish of your area.

Soft plastics in the 3 to 4-inch range, that again resemble jack prey in size and colour are the go.

Plastics that work includes Slider Bass Grubs in 3 inch; Storm Wild Eye Shads in 3 inch; Berkley Bass, Power and Realistix minnows in 3 and 4 inch; Squidgy Fish in 60mm and 70mm; DOA C.A.L jerk baits.

Look for paddle tail shads, grubs and stick baits in pearls, orange/browns, golds, greys and pinks.

Jig heads that work include the Squidgy Finesse jigs, Jig Tech's Nitro Jig heads and Tackle Tactics jig heads made with heavy wire Mustad, Owner or Gamakatsu hooks in sizes #2 to 2/0 to fit the plastic you are going to use. Weights from 3 to 5 grams being the most common, though having some 7 to 14gram heads will help in deeper water and heavy current.

Flies that work include Deceiver's, Clouser Deep Minnows, Pink Things, DNA Bush Pigs and 3-D flies tied to imitate the local prey.

Have them tied on quality hooks around #1 to 2/0 in size around 2.5" to 3.5" long.

If using weighted flies such as Clouser's or Pink Things, it pays to up the size of the eyes to give the fly move vertical action.

Line & Terminals.

Some of the terminal gear that will improve your chances from converting a hook up to a landed jack includes the leader material, the choice of hooks, your choice of lines and the retro fitting of lures.

Leader material that I use is Duel Fluorocarbon in 30, 40 or 60lb breaking strains and each strain is used on different gear.

I use 30 for jigging, since it allows a better presentation of the small jigs.

40lb seems the best for lure casting around snags and visible rock bars; actually it's probably the best all-round leader for jacks.

I pull out the 60lb on occasion for trolling mainly, since using large deep diving lures in scary places demand some thicker diameter line to prevent cut offs.

As far as I am concerned, the best line to use is PE braid in 10kg or 15kg. If I am casting smaller lures or live baiting with small baits, 10kg is the go. If I am doing battle in the jungle or hairy structure such as bridge pylons with bigger baits or large lures, then 15kg isn't silly.

After using monofilament for so long and battling with casting distance, accuracy and its stretchy tendencies, the availability of braid and other Gel Spun Polyethylene around 8 years ago, revolutionised my ability to cast small lures; it increased the depth capacity of cast and trolled lures through its finer nature, and since it has so little stretch, my ability to turn a jack attack into a capture has increased.

Braids I use are Bionic Braid in 20 or 30lb, or Yamatoyo PE braid in 11kg or 16kg.

There are many other lines that work, from Berkley Fireline to Penn Power Pro Braid; it comes down to a matter of choice.

Most hard body lures, unless it's an Aussie made creation, usually require an upgrade of the split rings and trebles, either when brand new and straight out of the pack, or after several jack encounters.

I use several brands of trebles and split rings to make sure when fitted with heavier gauge hooks and rings that I don't stuff up the balance and buoyancy of the retro fitted lure.

Top trebles include VMC 3X, 9626PS and 6X, T8527PS trebles, Owner ST-66N 4X trebles and Gamakatsu 4X Round Bend and Treble 16 4X.

Depending on lure size, #6 to 1/0 covers the lot, though most popular jack lures take #4's and #2's.

Split rings of choice are Halco Fish Rings in size 2 to 4XX or Owner Hyper Wire in size #4, 5 or 6 to suit the size and more importantly the balance of the lure. It is devastating to retro fit a perfect floating lure to find it sinks like a rock or using too heavy a hook and split ring combination dampens its action.

Hooks for live baiting need to be small and strong, around 1/0 to 3/0 in size. To improve hook ups, usually 2 are used to give good bait coverage, so the hooks need to be light enough to stop drowning the bait.

There are hooks available from Gamakatsu, Mustad and Owner that come to mind in wide gape models and "Octopus" suicide style hooks that work great for live and dead baiting.

mangrove jack

You're looking for a high carbon, chemically sharpened hook that is short shank in design, and there are a heap available off the rack to be tried. I reckon even small circle hooks would be great since they offer a higher resistance to snagging than most hooks and with a jack's tendency to eat and run, they would probably hook themselves. Only time on the water using them would give me a definitive answer. I'm usually too busy using lures, so maybe I need to try the circle hook theory…

Other Bits & Pieces

In this month's Tackle Box column, I've talked at length about forgetting my lure prodder. This piece of dowel with its taped on spanner is invaluable when lure casting, for retrieving snagged lures.

To be truthful, if you are going to indulge in lure casting and trolling, both a prodder and some sort of sinking tackle retriever, such as the Aussie made Tackle Back are mandatory equipment. The amount of dollars that these 2 items can save in snagged lures makes them worth every cent.

On the topic of lure casting and trolling, the type of motor used is a major factor if you wish to be successful in the long term.

For casting, an electric motor, preferably a bow-mounted type is a mandatory investment. As I said earlier, mangrove jacks totally dislike noise, so a quiet electric motor that you can sneak around with while fishing makes sense.

When trolling, if possible, use an electric motor or 4-stroke petrol. The pinging noise of a 2 stroke is a deterrent as well, though in deeper water it may be negligible.

My opinions are based on countless hours chasing jacks from Ballina to the tip of Cape York and their dislike of noise seems to be the same everywhere, even in pristine places.

An Enviro Net or some other knotless net to aid in landing jacks has many important attributes.

Firstly, a jack caught on a double hook rig or a treble-armed lure will invariably chop its jaws in the net, causing the hooks to move around. A net with standard knots always ends up with the hooks meshed in the net. It is more than just a pain in the bum to try and un-hook the jack and then get the hooks out of the mesh.

Damon with a favourite capture - the tough fighting mangrove jack

Secondly, mangrove jacks do shed scales easily, so if you are all about releasing your catch, a knotless net will ensure the jack is in the very best of health, since nets with knots do aid in scale removal as well as their protective slime.

Thirdly, most big jacks are lost at the boat, after all the hard work has been done at prying them loose from their cover, only to have a straightened or bent hook come loose 4 feet from the boat, so it is very much a case for me to net first, and ask questions later!

When removing lures or other hooks, use a decent pair of long nosed pliers. The chopping action is so damn fast and unpredictable; you really do not want to have one bite you. Their teeth are impressive to look at, though the wow factor diminishes fast when a fang punctures your thumbnail!

Wind-on leaders work a treat when casting, since there is no bulbous knots to clank through the guides. Casting distance and accuracy are far more impressive when using wind-ons.

Other useful things such as quality sunnies, a high pixel count sounder, sunscreen and insect repellent are all part and parcel with jack fishing.

Conclusion

So there you have it. About the only details I haven't supplied are exactly what creeks and rivers I fish, and why I fish them.

For the sake of evading death threats from other jack fishermen and friends, the areas they and I fish will remain anonymous. It is up to you, the reader, to piece this part of the puzzle together, as I have had to over the last 16 years. Keep in mind, just about every creek in tropical and subtropical Australia has a population of jacks in them. The hard part is spending time on the water unravelling the mystery.

As for the information in this article, may you use it for good use and please don't use it to abuse these wonderful fish, as they are truly fantastic on so many levels.

I hope to still be able to catch them when I am old and grey.

Acknowledgments and Sources:

I would like to thank these people for the critical information in the biology section of this article. My sincerest thanks to

Ern M Grant: Grant's Guide to Fishes.
Bill Sawynok: Suntag QLD Co-ordinator.
John Russell: Principal Investigator, DPI QLD, Cairns.

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