Tips & Tricks

KNIVES

Although a knife has always been an important piece of equipment for anglers, from cutting or trimming line to gutting and filleting fish, in past years anglers caught short without one relied heavily on their teeth to bite tag ends on knots or cut through monofilament fishing line.

Since the rise of braided and fused lines, the old choppers are no longer up to the job, it is almost impossible to bite through these newer super lines so some form of cutting tool is a necessity.

Better than a knife for trimming super lines, a small pair of clippers or scissors have now become a necessity in every tackle box.

There are a large variety of clippers available in tackle shops these days.

They are similar to those you cut your nails with and designed specifically for anglers.

This style of cutter is handy because you can hang it around your neck or attach it to a retractable cord on your belt.

They are perfect for cutting off tag ends when you've tied a knot in braided line.

Another popular choice is a small pair of sharp scissors.

Slightly more bulky and prone to opening up and jabbing you, they are better suited to carrying in your tackle box rather than hanging off you somewhere.

The tried and proven tool, the fishing knife is still up to the job with these newer lines although the knife needs to be sharp to work properly.

Regardless of wether you choose clippers or scissors, you still need a knife to fillet fish and cut up bait.

As a guide, anglers away from their tackle box, wading streams or standing in the surf tend to choose clippers attached to themselves for the portability, safety and usefulness with braided lines.

Anglers that rig up at their tackle box, at home, land based or on a boat often find small scissors a better option as they generally stay sharp longer than clippers.

Regardless, neither clippers or scissors replace the fishing knife.

If you're wearing a knife on your belt, a good choice for safety reasons is a folding knife that keeps the blade covered preventing the angler from being accidentally stabbed if knocked over in the surf or when scrabbling around rocks.

THINK LIKE A FISH

There's an old saying, you have to think like a fish.

Loosely interpreted that means you have to think of the problems, threats and opportunities as if you were a fish.

To us humans, day and night is the difference between being able to see and not being able to see however it's not that way with fish.

Most species can see as good at night as they can during the day but they are presented with different threats and opportunities during these different time periods.

At night there is less human activity around our waterways and fish are more likely to venture into shallow water where they are more vulnerable.

At night fish also do not have the threat of predator birds which they doing during daylight hours.

During the day many species move out of the shallows into deeper water which offers some security, especially around submerged structure.

Anglers can take advantage of this knowledge to increase their catch.

A good rule of thumb is to fish the shallows at night and deeper water during the day.

If you're on the water before first light, start by working the shallows but being very quite so as not to spook fish while you're there.

As the sun gets up in the sky, move to areas that offer deeper submerged structure like wrecks, artificial reefs and snags.

You'll also find different baits work better in deep or shallow water.

I prefer natural baits like yabbies, worms or small baitfish when in the shallows.

These are the baits that the fish would normally find in this environment.

Once you move into deeper water and fish around snags and wrecks, cut baits that have some cent to attract fish to them work well, like fish cubes, fillets and squid.

The rules are never quite black and white when it comes to fishing but as a guide, fish the shallows in stealth mode at night and the deeper water with bait that will let the fish find you during the day.