Chad Soper

Keen Angler, Kayak Enthusiast

Chad is both an accomplished South Australian boat and kayak fisher who punches well above his weight when it comes to catching the wily callop of the SA Murray River systems. He’s also heavily involved in Yak Hunters Australia, where he organises and runs the South Australian events.
Chad's Top Tips For Callop Fishing

- Callop at Blanchetown can be unpredictable. What works well one day may not work at all the next, so be prepared to persevere and try lots of different lures and techniques to improve your chances of success.
- Blanchetown fishes well for yellowbelly most of the year, the fish don't seem to be too affected by water temp, so Chad focuses on angler comfort. He gets best results during April – June, but others find July – September to be the peak time.
- Lots of people make the mistake of working their lures too fast. Chad finds that callop respond best to lures worked more slowly and often respond to pauses in the retrieve.
- Don't fish too light, Murray cod are a potential by-catch when targeting callop and have a better survival rate when they are played out faster on heavy gear and quickly released.
- Fish tend to be holding in close to structure, so look for snags in 10-20 ft of water and either troll your lures close by, or drift and cast. Plenty of fish are found among the willow roots, so look for areas with bait associated with structure.
- Water clarity is never brilliant in the lower Murray River, so bright lures tend to work well.
- Blanchetown callop seem to be unaffected by bright sun or overcast conditions, but a gentle breeze helps get a decent drift that allows plenty of casts at each piece of structure.
- From sunrise until 10am is normally prime time for callop, then again from about 1.30 onwards into the evening.

Chad's Preferred Tackle For Callop Fishing

- Chad isn't sponsored and has had a good experience with all major brands of tackle, but typically sticks with Daiwa.
- He uses a Daiwa Luvias rod in the 3-5 kg, 7ft rod coupled with a Caldia 3000 spinning reel and 20lb Daiwa J braid Grande line. He finds this outfit suitable for casting everything from the smallest callop lures to bigger models more suited to cod. This combo is also sufficient to give him a good fighting chance is a cod by-catch is encountered.
- For leaders, Chad uses 20lb Berkley Trilene mono.
Chad's Callop Lure Selection

- A Daiwa RPM Crankbait in Matt Tiger or Midnight Red is Chad's first choice in callop lures. This lure works best in the shallower areas as it has a 10-12 foot dive depth. It's great for taking mid-water fish near structure such as willows and logs. In shallower water the bib strikes the bottom to create puffs of mud that stir callop into action. This lure has such a strong action that the angler needs do nothing more than slow roll, perhaps with the occasional pause.
- The Storm Arashi hard body lure comes in dive depths of 10, 18 and 25 foot. Chad likes the purple with black stripes. This is a much larger lure than the RPM and has a very strong tail wobble. Running the 18ft dive model in 12-13 ft of water stirs a lot of mud and attracts plenty of fish. When you feel a snag, stop retrieving for a second or two to let the lure float up before recommencing the retrieve. This allows you to work though structure without getting hung up.
- Chad's third lure is the Kato Carnage, which has a head-down attitude in the water and casts a very long way. This is a good lure to try if the RPM isn't working and is used in similar circumstances using similar techniques.

Episode Sponsor

Make Wooden Lures is the place to quickly learn the art of hand-made wooden lures. This webpage is Doc's personal project and is packed with free and premium info, resources, downloads and classes for anyone interested in experiencing incredible fishing on their own lures.

About Yak Hunters Australia

Yak Hunters Australia is a family friendly, national kayak fishing organisation that organises low key fishing competitions aimed at encouraging all anglers to jump into a kayak and cast lures. They are well organised and support community events, fish stocking and mental health
camps. To get involved, check out their website or contact Chad at his details above.