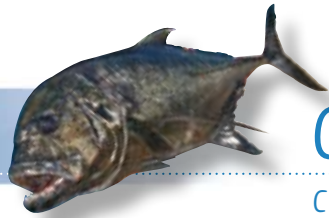


The Enforcer



Giant Trevally

Caranx ignobilis

Caranx ignobilis comes from the Latin meaning ignoble; of low birth or common origin. That sums up the giant trevally in a nutshell. Rarely glorified in the media, GTs must be the meanest fish in the ocean and those that make a career out of chasing them will tell you that they've never had one simply give up when hooked. They know every dirty trick in the book and don't mind pulling them all out after feeling the point of a well placed lure.



THIS PAGE: These massive black GTs are found from Exmouth right through to the northern Pilbara and are next to unstoppable unless your gear is top notch and you're ready for them!

BELOW & OVERLEAF: When working poppers for GTs, always wind them back slowly with big 'bloops' that GTs can't resist

If you've never felt the power (and speed for that matter) then it's hard to explain why 10kg fish can bust 24kg tackle like it's a spiderweb but, love them or hate them, the mighty GT is a fish that will sort out your technique, gear and patience all in the space of the first 10 seconds, so you have to give them respect.

Scientific Information

The giant trevally is part of the Carangidae family which also includes samsonfish, yellowtail kingfish, amberjacks and the rarely caught rainbow runner. So no tough fish there then! They can grow in excess of 90kg and have been seen but rarely landed in huge sizes around Exmouth, Broome, The Montebellos and the Rowley Shoals.



Not just powerful, they also have excellent maneuvering speed due to the scutes along the side of their caudal slot which are often used to slash their prey. In short, they are the Jonah Lomu of the ocean. GT chasers will often see their lures come back with slashes on them from where a GT will have tried to kill it with these scutes rather than risk injury to their mouth.

Like many other non-table species, little research has been done on the less-than-glamorous giant trevally and the very similar brassy trevally but juveniles are one of the most common young fish in the north.

True GTs are almost black and fierce looking while brassies are almost identical in shape and power but are silvery with yellow fins. Even more so than other trevally, GTs use their body to perfection in a battle and are even less inclined to give up (is that possible?).

How to Catch Them

It's not generally the case that folks find GTs as much as GTs find them. Many an angler who fishes the north west regularly will have tales of how a monster fish made a mockery of the 15kg line they were using to cast poppers at a reef.

Never underestimate what a GT can do to your gear. They'll break your heart, not to mention your back, so to be in with the best chance you really need some quality tackle. You won't have to necessarily go out and get a second mortgage to purchase some of the most prestigious fishing equipment on the market but at the very least you need a quality reel that's going to handle the pressure of a tussle with a big GT.

Fireline or another abrasion resistant braid around the 30 to 50 (and even up to 80) pound is almost a must should you be land based. Even from a boat it's going to be needed in most cases, just to get that turning power when your fish decides to head to the nearest bit of structure.

If you're land based then you are at the mercy of what the fish wants to do. A beefy rod is also a must as you really need to get your poppers working properly to be in with the best chance of hooking a GT, not to mention leaning back into it to stop these freight

trains. Speak to the crew at your local tackle store and they'll show you some appropriate outfits that suit your budget.

The next thing you should consider is how to rig up for targeting big trevally using poppers. The most exciting new lure to come onto the market over the past few years in the Dumbbell by River2Sea.

This is certainly a specialised popper because, quite frankly, few fish are actually going to be able to get their gob around its huge backside. The Dumbbell is made from wood and its huge cup face pushes amazing amounts of water away with each bloop. They also sit in the water with the back end hanging down at sort of a 45 degree angle, which is perfect.

Why perfect? Because this is a lure for big GTs and other fierce predators that prefer their poppers worked very slowly (it's nigh on impossible to wind this thing flat out anyway ... unless you want a hernia).

The key is to rip it forward and create a huge splash, but then let it sit and allow the rear to sink. Many of your takes are right at this moment and you rarely have the common popper problem of missed hookups. The Dumbbell also sits with the rear end lower than the front so hookups are rarely missed if you fish it right.

Other poppers are certainly

available and the Haymaker by Halco is certainly an option. They don't throw as much water but they are very hard to break compared to the Dumbbell, which is wooden and easily smashed by a large, rampaging GT. Any popper you buy, make sure it'll chuck a huge wake from the bib.

Your terminal tackle is also critical. We use a lengthy 120 pound coated mono leader tied directly to the braid using a deckies knot (or whatever braid to mono joining knot you are confident with such as an Albright). You can then crimp on a popper using a Flemish loop or even a uni knot will do in a pinch.

Now what to look for when searching for an area to target GTs. First and foremost, structure is the most important aspect and this is normally in the form of a reef system adjoining to land (shore or an island). Combine this with swell, which creates large pockets of disturbed water, a deep dropoff nearby and plenty of baitfish, now you have the perfect recipe to tangle with a GT or three.

Most huge fish are found near jetties funnily enough. Two that spring to mind are the Exmouth Naval Jetty which is one of the world's great dives (some call it the aquarium) and the





Broome Jetty.

The Exmouth jetty has an exclusion zone for boats of 400 metres and it's strictly enforced. Some of the biggest GTs you will ever see live here and they are all but unstoppable on anything other than a 4WD with a mechanical winch.

The Broome Jetty is a much more accessible platform and, while the fish aren't quite so huge, they aren't far off. High tide is the best time to attack with live or fresh baits. Lures also work but it can get very expensive. The locals will certainly look at you very strangely as they don't bother with such a waste of time.

For those of us that take pleasure in getting our butts kicked by nasty fish, a small dinghy can be launched from the boat ramp not 100 metres from the jetty. You can fish from the jetty itself but you'll need a flying gaff to land anything.

Other hotspots are the islands off Point Samson, Rosily Cay in the Mackerel Islands group, Ningaloo Reef, Murion Islands, Peak Island and most reefy structure in the Pilbara.

Rosily Cay has perhaps the best shallow water XOS GT fishing in WA. It's a tiny speck of a place, a strange little island off Onslow and the Mackerel Islands, 1400km from Perth. The area is very special as far as desert islands go. It's really just two little exposed reefs with a small sand spit on the northern point. Generally, the water is as clear as a New Zealand mountain stream.

As we said, GTs like two things, wash and bommies and Rosily has both in spades. Interestingly, we've also found it's worth casting at bommies that are sitting some way in front of the reef. It often doesn't even matter if they have no white water, as the trevally love to hang around their ledges and gullies.

The tide is very important and, generally around islands, rising to the top of the high on the springs is perfect.



ABOVE: The lighter and yellow finned 'brassy trevally' is a very close relative of the GT and lives from Carnarvon right through to the northern Kimberley

Low tides are generally no good and don't leave enough space for the fish to hunt with, so most of your best action is going to come as the tide builds and creates some current. For this reason, neap tides are much harder work but we had bigger spring tides than usual and plenty of current to encourage the hunters to get active.

Bloop the poppers slow ... dead slow. Poppers that throw off a lot of spray do something to their heads and the GTs cannot resist having a go at them at any time. Work the lure by pointing the rod at the water and almost pulling downwards. This

creates a massive amount of bloop and spray but pause in between every pull to see what's lurking behind it. Action from Rosily Cay can be found on the Fishing WA Series 6 DVDs.

When you leave the Pilbara and head into the Kimberley, you leave the black ones behind and get into the brassies. These love fast moving water and literally anywhere with island structure and a good current can produce them in massive sizes and numbers. They are found in the Pilbara but not in the same numbers as the Kimberley.

When fighting huge trevally, it is considered that the best approach is to use a lighter drag which tends to panic them less so they are not inclined to run straight at snaggy areas. You can then guide them into safer water

RIGHT: This 32 kilo big black monster was pulled from two metres of water off Onslow at a place called Rosily Cay — no wonder Steve looks totally stoked!



before applying pressure for the landing. Easier said than done of course!

Mid size GTs in the 5-10kg range are normally found either lurking under reefy ledges near islands or around bommies in 15-20m of water offshore.


Another way to use poppers is to troll around islands in the Pilbara or Kimberley, yanking on the line violently as you go. It showers water in all directions and anyone that has our Fishing WA Series 5 DVD with the Peak Island story on it will see what we mean. It drives them nuts!

If you're fishing around groups of islands with tidal run such as the Buccaneer Archipelago, look to fish at the times of the greatest water movement. We have seen times where it has been non-stop action for two hours but as soon as that tide slows it just shuts down. This is because their cover is blown and also the tide is too high over the reef for the waves to get the action going.

Yeah they break your gear, they smash your poppers, they snap your leader, they break your back. Damn those GTs ... we love 'em.

Join using Albright Knot

10-24kg main line 60kg Coated Leader or Heavy Coated Wire (at least 3m)




White Leadhead Jig with Strong Hook or Metal Jig

JIGGING

Join Using Albright or Deckie's Knot

10-24kg main line 60kg Coated Mono Leader or Heavy Coated Wire (at least 3m)



CASTING OR TROLLING