



Target Species

Blue Morwong (Queen Snapper) - *Nemadactylus valenciennesi*

Where to fish

Blue morwong, hereafter referred to as Queen snapper, inhabit deeper offshore reefs and sponge gardens along Australia's southern coastline from WA to VIC and TAS. They are often found around prominent ledges, lumps, patches of pinnacles, and other areas of structure in 30-60m of water, and as far out as the continental shelf. When targeting Queen snapper, fish the tapering edge of the structure rather than the top.



Matt Baird,
An absolute horse of a Queen Snapper

How to target

When targeting Queen snapper use your charts and sounder to find suitable ground, rather than patches of fish. The ground they're found in is usually too deep to anchor and berley, so once you're found an area plot it in your GPS and drift over it. Do a few drifts then move on to the next area, as these fish generally don't school in large numbers. The rig of choice is a basic Paternoster rig with two droppers, each with a 7/0 octopus style hook. Lead weight will depend on depth and drift speed but 6-8oz is usually suitable.



Jamie Crawford,
Queen Snapper put up a tough fight



Blue morwong



▶▶ Hints & Tips

Queen snapper are caught around deep offshore reef systems and sponge gardens in cooler waters between southern WA and VIC/TAS. Anglers use onboard electronics to search for suitable ground, then drift over the area with bottom bouncing rigs.

- 1 Look for prominent ledges and lumps. Mark ground on your GPS then perform a 'dummy' drift to work out the drift speed and direction.
- 2 Continually let out line to keep the bait as close to the reef as possible. A sea anchor or heavier sinker will also help.
- 3 Use braid for greater bite sensitivity, and for shock absorption use a 2-3m mono leader.
- 4 Queen snapper are a good eating table fish. Make the most of their eating qualities by bleeding and placing on ice immediately after capture.

Rod & Reel

Queen snapper average around 2-3kg but they can grow up to 11kg and any fish over 4-5kg is going to require quite a bit of stopping power. That said, you still want an outfit that is light enough to fish with all day and sporting enough that when you hook a good fish you're still provided with a challenge. An appropriate outfit would be a small overhead reel such as the Shimano Torium 16 matched with an 8-12kg overhead rod around 6 foot in length. Choose a rod with sensitivity in the tip but plenty of power down low.

Line and leader

- Line: 50lb braid
- Leader: 80lb mono wind-on leader for shock absorption, running 2-3m above the paternoster rig.

Terminal Tackle

7/0 Gamakatsu black Octopus hooks, 6-8oz snapper leads, size 2-4 crane swivel.

Best Lures

- Soft Plastics: 145mm Squidgie Flick Baits with 1oz Jig Heads.

Best Bait

Squid, pilchards, cockles, and fresh fillets of salmon trout, herring, trevally, mackerel, etc.

Filleting

See the 'Fillet Snapper' video for an example of how to fillet Queen snapper.



Richard Katschner,
 A regular sized Port Lincoln Queen Snapper



RIGGING FOR DRIFTING

This method involves drifting baits over prominent structures such as ledges and pinnacles in about 30-60m of water. Use a basic double Paternoster rig with two droppers each with an octopus style hook, a 6-8oz snapper lead on the bottom, and a size 2-4 crane swivel on the top. Allow 40cm between each hook and the sinker, and 10cm between the top hook and swivel. In deep water braided mainline aids in bite sensitivity. Counteract the low stretch with a 2-3m wind-on leader for shock absorption.



Queen Snapper,
Check out the stunning colours on display!

