

No Limits By Jason Walker



Bryce Stevenson with a nice snapper caught at White Cliffs in Taranaki.

Like every angler I have lots of rods, reels, and tackle for all occasions, species, and fishing techniques - probably enough to open a small tackle shop - but do I need to take it all out with me each and every time I go fishing? Yes, of course I do, you never know when I might need that jigging rod, that lightweight softbait rod, or even that old glass trolling rod.

But, when fishing from a kayak can you take all that gear then? The quick answer is no, there simply isn't the room.

So does that mean you cannot do all the types of fishing on a kayak that you can on a boat? No, not at all. What it means is that you have to learn how to fish with a limited arsenal that although is physically less it in no way limits your ability to target the same number of species with all the same methods as you are used to.

There are two techniques you can apply to getting your kit sorted for kayak fishing; reduce and re-use. These will enable you to limit the amount of gear you take without limiting your ability to catch fish.

The third thing we'll look at is how you store your tackle and how you can assist yourself further if you think about how you store it.

REDUCE

Reduce is simple when you think about it, rather than taking all the tackle in your tackle box you review what you have and just take what you will use, plus a couple of spares. It's about reducing the number of duplicate or similar items you are taking and how you could combine them if possible. A good example is terminal tackle, how many hooks, swivels, jigheads, etc do you really need for a six hour fishing session. My boat tackle box will have at least ten or more of each size hook, swivel, and endless jig head variations, but realistically, how many would I use in one session?

Jig heads are a good example for me as I only softbait off my kayak. In my boat kit I'll have at least ten jig heads of each size and weight. When I'm kayak fishing I'm fishing inshore mostly at depths below 30 metres so do I really need a 2 oz jighead? My jighead collection is cut right down to half a dozen of my favourite brand, size, and weight which is 1/2 oz 1/0 Berkley Stealths, a couple at 1oz and one at 2 oz just in case. So that's eight spare jigheads plus the one that is already on my pre-rigged rod for a six hour session. If I lose all those jigheads in one session, I've been doing something wrong. It does raise the question though what if I find fish in very shallow water and need to go below the 1/2 oz? Simple, I've also got with me half a dozen worm hooks and a few egg sinkers in 1/4 oz for such an occasion.

The same technique can be applied to other terminal tackle. For example sinkers; I carry a small collection of egg and ball sinkers for softbaits and live baits and if I need more weight, I simply add two or three sinkers to the line till I achieve the desired weight. Swivels and other terminal tackle that come in larger packs can simply be decanted into other packets or storage boxes, I don't need 25 swivels just four or five will do for a session.

Yes, all of this arranging can add to the preparation time as I need to check what needs to be replaced before each trip, but it massively cuts down what I take with me and what I have to stow on the kayak where storage space is limited.

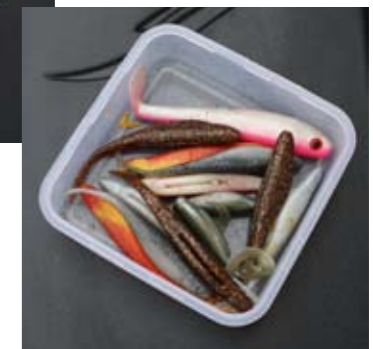
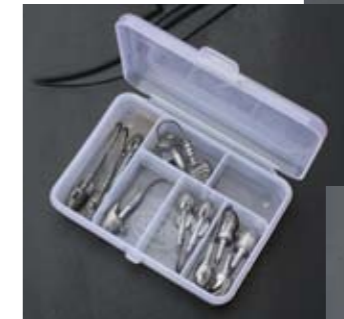
TECHNIQUE SEGREGATION

Segregation means setting apart from other things. Separate your tackle into the different techniques it will be used for, for example you don't need live bait balloons for softbaiting and you don't need jigheads if you are going out for a mechanical jigging session. Store all the tackle for each technique together. You can decide what needs to be loaded on the kayak, depending on the expected fishing technique on the day. You may end up with some duplication of tackle by using this method but at least you're not lugging around several kilos of extra gear you have no intention of using.

RE-USE

The second method I use to cut down on all the gear I take with me is to work out what gear I can reuse or repurpose across different techniques. This applies more to rod and reel setups than terminal tackle but there is some reuse than can be found if you look hard enough.

At a very high level, rod and reel combos can be broken down into two categories based on the reel type; spin, or fixed spool, and overhead or free spool. Generally techniques can also be grouped in this way, normally



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Rob Boyle with a 4.53 kg trevalley

based on whether or not you need to cast the lure or bait. Casting is best suited to spin reels, as there is less friction than an overhead reel where the spool carrying the line has to rotate to allow the line to feed out; whereas the overhead setup is much better for techniques where you are dropping or feeding out a lure or bait, as it allows you to feel and control the line peeling off the reel as the lure or bait descends and you can feel those bites on the drop much easier.

By assigning the techniques to the setups you can identify which techniques could be carried out on the one set up. Generally you'll only use one technique at a time, so you can get away with one setup for a couple of techniques. The perfect example of this is jigging and live baiting. Both can be carried out perfectly well on a jigging setup, my own jigging setup is a Tica Redback 250 gm rod with a Shimano Talica 8 reel. This setup has successfully been used for jigging at White Island and live baiting off the East Cape. Another example is my lighter weight overhead setup using a K-Labs rod and a Shimano Trinidad 14A reel which is used for trolling hard body lures, slow jigs like the Shimano Lucanus, and Inchiku jigs like the Jitterbugs from Ocean Angler. My third set up I take with me on my kayak is the trusty soft bait setup. Now there isn't a great deal of re-use here, but I can still cast a small lure for kahawai or even use the very small Inchiku jigs on it too. It's important to note; my softbait setups are normally on the heavier end of the scale which gives me the ability to fish with the same setup in various locations without having to take several rods with me. I do a lot of my kayak fishing outside the Hauraki Gulf, even though I live in Auckland. I go further afield looking for bigger fish be it up north, on the tip of the Coromandel Peninsula or on a mothership trip at Great Barrier Island. So I fish with a 20 lb rod from Okuma with a Shimano Stradic C14 4000 loaded with 14 lb Suffix braid – I told you it was heavy gear – but this rig is equally suited to a session to catch a feed in the Rangitoto Channel. The only change I'll make is the weight of the fluorocarbon leader I use to match the location and expected catch.

Heavy spin setups for jigging and live baiting whilst they can be used, are really not suited to kayak fishing because when you are hooked up to a strong string pulling fish, the rod will naturally be pulled down as the fish tries to run and/or go deep. This means as the reel is under the rod it will be pulled down onto your legs and the kayak making winding the handle on the reel difficult. Therefore you are better off with an overhead setup when fishing for the bigger fish as the reel is always above the rod and can still be wound even if the fish is pulling the rod all the way down on to the kayak.

STORAGE

So we've talked about all this gear and how rods and reels can be re-used for different techniques so how do I get all this gear on my kayak?

Jason Dassler with his 8.64 kg snapper





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That's simple: lots of plastic boxes, yes lots of them, even plastic boxes that fit inside other plastic boxes. I start back at the segregation stage and work out what I need for each fishing technique then grab a small compartment box and start to fill it with the tackle I've sorted out, a technique or a couple of similar techniques may spill across several boxes which are then grouped into larger boxes so they can be kept together and easily loaded into the kayak.

The trick is to find a supply of suitable boxes that you can fit your tackle into and that you can easily fit into your kayak without wasting that valuable storage space you have on your kayak. My small boxes I found at a Plastic Box store and the larger ones are from Systema which can be found at various stores including The Warehouse. These boxes are cheap, so having a few extra on hand makes loading them up for a fishing trip quick and easy.

One thing to note is that as much as they like to tell you how good the seals are on these plastic boxes they are very rarely 100% water tight, so you'll end up with water in them at some point. Keep an eye on them for water ingress as saltwater and most fishing tackle do not mix well. You'll soon end up with a bunch of rusted out hooks etc. If water does get into your boxes act quickly. You can often save your tackle from corrosion by simply removing the saltwater. When you get home, rinse it all in warm fresh water and dry it somewhere warm like the airing cupboard.

STRETCHING DECK SPACE

Finally I'll look at it utilising the space you have on your kayak. The space available on a kayak is always limited. It's not just where to store your tackle, there's also deck space where you have to mount rod holders, electronics, etc. This is where a TracPort from New Zealand company Railblaza has been used, allowing three items to be fitted into the space of one or two. The Railblaza system offers a variety of add on products that can be plugged into their StarPort system which are ideal for kayaks.



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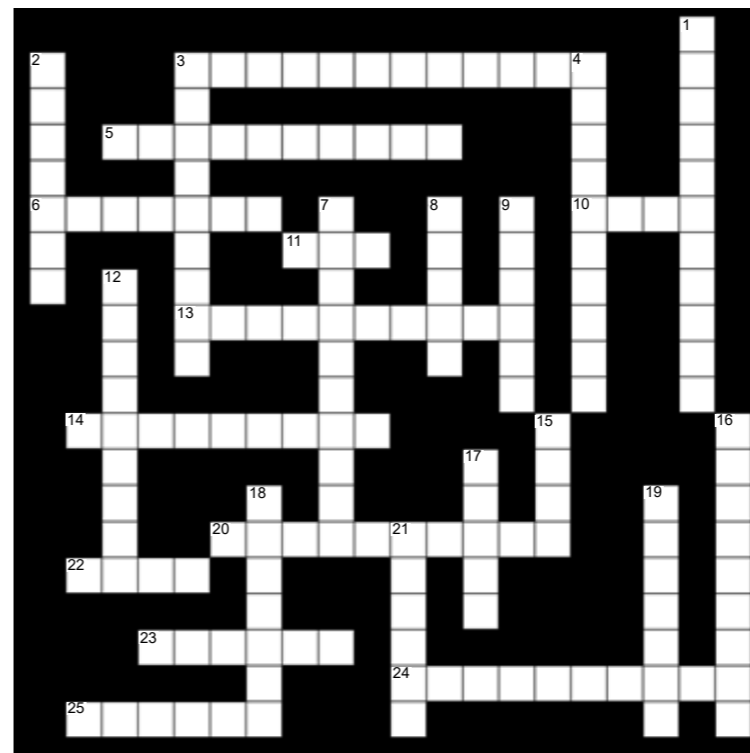
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Puzzles

Quick Crossword

Test your knowledge of kayaking and kayaking safety.



- 24. The meeting point of two rivers.
- 25. The amount of air trapped inside a boat.

Down

- 1. Used for self rescue.
- 2. Angle of the paddle blade.
- 3. Measure of how difficult it is to capsize.
- 4. Vertical vortices with a core of air that carry anything that falls into them down to the bed of the river, lake or sea.
- 7. To move at an angle to the wind or waves.
- 8. In-coming tide.
- 9. A material that gets cold quickly when wet.
- 12. The line of water along the hull of a kayak or other water craft when it is afloat.
- 15. The disturbed water following a moving vessel.
- 16. Clasp used for towing, in rescues and for general fastening.
- 17. When a kayak is inadvertently filled with water by passing waves.
- 18. Transporting paddlers or equipment by road to the opposite end of a paddling trip.
- 19. The rim of a kayak's cockpit.
- 21. An uncontrolled course change putting you broadside to the wave, current or obstacle.

Across

- 3. A technique that propels the boat continuously sideways towards the paddle.
- 5. A brief period of stillness that occurs between the ebb and flood.
- 6. The direction in which a kayak is pointing at a given moment.
- 10. Another term for rope or string.
- 11. A new paddling activity.
- 13. Notifying Coastguard of your intentions.
- 14. The distance between the waterline and the lowest point of the deck of the vessel.
- 20. Moulding in the cockpit to aid in boat control.
- 22. A shallow area created by a submerged ridge of rocks or coral.
- 23. Part of the rudder that inserts into gudgeons.

SUDOKU

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The objective is to fill the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 sub-grids that compose the grid contains all of the digits from 1 to 9. Solution on page 46

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