

Reviews

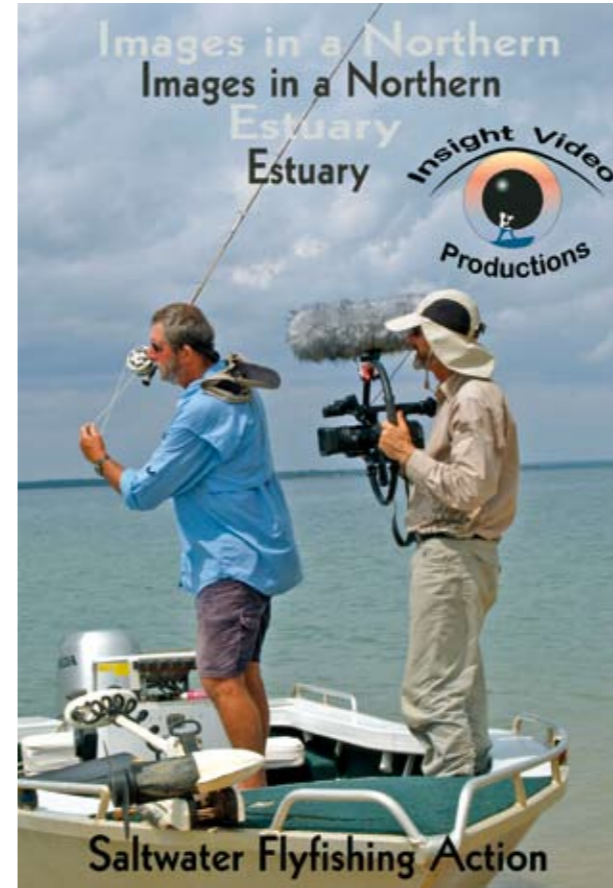


With barramundi becoming far more accessible to anglers there is a need for a fly rod to meet the demand. Obviously it needs to be strong to stop these potentially big fish, and able to cast big flies as the situation demands. So a 10 weight comes to mind. But it has to be light to cast, as repeated casting with a heavy rod is more of a chore than anything else. With that in mind it should load very quickly to avoid excess false casting. It would also be nice if it was smaller than average to put the advantage on the side of the angler in the closing stages of the fight and assist with the landing. Am I asking too much?

Sage have just released their amazing BASS rod range in Smallmouth and Largemouth versions. Weighing in at just 3 5/8 oz for the Largemouth (that is barely 1.7 grams heavier than my Sage 5 weight) and measures 7'11". The rod comes as you would expect in a stylish protective case, but unusually it comes with a specialty fly line to compliment the rod's outstanding abilities. This line is a super aggressive weight forward floater that loads this responsive rod very quickly, and makes casting large flies into small, scary places easier than you can imagine. I found that casting this rod required no change at all to my normal casting stroke. However, when the wind picked up, or I was required to make a very quick presentation, the rod responded like a sports car, changing down a gear to give maximum acceleration. The finish on the rod is a very attractive gold with red binding.

The rods are described in grains rather than weights, which seems a bit strange until you run different lines through them. The Smallmouth for example is a 290 grain rod, ideally an 8 weight shooting head. The rod though will cast lines 6 through 8 weight very comfortably. Run a 9 weight intermediate through the Largemouth and you won't lack for distance!

The hardest thing to believe is that this impossibly light rod can throw enormous flies, and conquer big fish. The price on these rods is not prohibitive, and brings previously elite craftsmanship into the hands of Joe Worker. Get down to your Sage dealer and try one for yourself. For those living in the southern states, this rod is equally at home on cod waters, and the Smallmouth is a treat on bass and mangrove jacks. *Reviewed by Andrew Grabham.*



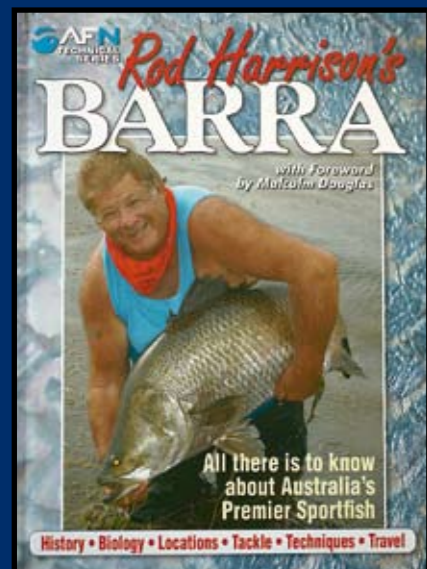
Graeme Williams, based in the Northern Territory, is one of Australia's most respected fly fishing guides. He teamed up with Barry Anderson to produce a compilation of fly fishing footage of northern tropical species. It has been around for some time now and is not typically narrated as we would expect from most fishing DVDs.

I think there is a misconception with this DVD that you just sit back with a drink and take in the sights and sounds of blokes catching fish that you'd like to be catching. That

would really do it an injustice. It should really be seen as a learning tool because each story interweaves numerous levels of information that everyone can learn from, and continue to learn from, as they progress in their fly fishing. That fact that all of this storytelling is almost wholly visual, and implied, rather than typically instructional, is where lateral thinking helps.

The DVD comprises a number of segments, with each segment devoted to a particular species. At a basic level, anglers would appreciate being able to visualise the process of sighting fish, judging distance and making a cast in their general direction. More advanced assessment for instance, would allow one to study the behaviour of spooky fish versus happy fish, to judge swim speeds and to react accordingly.

I would suggest to anyone going on a fishing trip to watch this before you go. Focus on the entire process of sighting fish all the way through to the hookset and boating the fish for all species presented. Watch the footage of tail flashes, bow waves, fin movement and all those other subtle signs that will help you locate fish more effectively. When you're on a boat fishing yourselves, you'll be able to visualise the process a lot better and probably reduce much of the fish fever we all get at the beginning of a trip. By using this DVD as a study tool, rather than as simple escapism, it will help us all to become better anglers. Images of a Northern Estuary is available from www.insightflyfishing.com.au. *Review by Mark Bantich.*



This book has been a long time in the fermentation process and the recent rapid evolution of the barra fishery has much to do with that. The last few years have seen the much lauded potential of the barra stocked Queensland impoundments live up to their promise. A good deal has happened in barra fishing in just the last five years and it would have been a pity if this had not been included in detail in this book – so has the wait been worth it?

Unfortunately this is not a fly fishing book – it's a book about barra, however there is one chapter dedicated to fly fishing. In a commercial reality this probably represents the numbers of fly fishers out there chasing these fish when compared with lure fishers. However the book does contain a wealth of knowledge of these great fish. There's no question they are the most important sport fish in the country and its surprising that volumes have been written on other lesser species, while this is only the second dedicated book on barra. I suspect it is because they really are a tough fish

to pin down. The range of behaviour they display, the variety of habitats and niches they occupy and the simple challenges of encountering the big ones make them a real challenge to pin down in a book. To the untrained they're like quicksilver and it takes vast experience and a considerable number of encounters to be able to sift through the fish and pin down some facts that fishers can 'go to the bank' with.

Harro has that experience and the book is a treasure trove of facts and anecdotes, as well as history and adventure. There's plenty of information in there for even experienced fly fishers to glean some assistance from, whether it's knots or reading water, fighting tactics, or places to fish, it's all meat and I thoroughly recommend it. It's been a long wait but the inclusion of the impoundment fisheries is vital to its contents and well worth it. It's also a vital contribution to Australian fishing literature. The book is available at all leading tackle stores, bookshops, BCF, KMart, Angus & Robertson, Rays, Ranger Outdoors and AMart. All enquiries AFN 03 97614044. *Review by Peter Morse.*