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JB LURES' 'CHOOK'

With Dave Venn's personal attention to a hand-made quality product, the JB Lures' 'Chook' is a serious bit of kit for those hoping to tempt sizeable billfish with a taste for surface commotion.

JB Lures need no introduction in NSW where they have a strong and loyal following based on numerous tournament wins and consistent fish-catching results. The fact they are still in business after setting up operation in 1993 is testament to the skills of lure maker Dave Venn. Quality product remains an important part of the gamefishing scene, and with every lure hand poured, quality control remains of foremost importance.

The 'Chook' lures that we recently tested form part of a larger stable. They range in size from 8.5 inches to 14.5 inches. We water tested the 12.5-inch model and were very impressed with what we saw.

To my mind, this is a short rigger lure. When run from the transom, it really doesn't get the same swimming and splashing action as it does when given some height from an outrigger. The higher towing angle provided by an outrigger produces a rooster tail on the lure that has to be seen to be believed. The Chook throws a lot of water and would certainly pull fish into a spread to see what all the commotion was about.

The lure's performance parameters were very good for a cut-faced design. It really started to swim at 5.5 to 6 knots; however, it excelled at around 7 knots. This produced a good deep-diving action combined with the violent surface-splashing action mentioned above. At this speed the lure completed its diving/breathing cycle every five seconds or so. Interestingly, there was not a very heavy underwater smoke trail. As speed was increased, it only started to lose grip in the water at around 9.5 knots.

The Chook's cut-faced head features a gentle taper that takes place around two-thirds of the way down the head. It is this taper that helps create the large bubble that encloses the head when it descends through the water. It is also significant that the edges of the face are sharp. This enhances the action and gives the lure greater traction on the water. It also reflects the quality of the moulds being used.

The lures we tested included a tinted head and a clear resin head. In addition, Dave also included one with shell inserts and another with reflective tape. The tinting is a really nice touch and when matched with skirts that have the red line running down them, creates a very attractive finished product. Of note, the tinted heads actually change colour when viewed from different angles. Given that many baitfish also have this characteristic when excited or stressed, this may work in the angler's favour.

The skirts used by JB Lures are a mix of Yamashita, Yo-Zuri and Ocean Lure concepts. It appeared that our Chooks were skirted with the Yo-Zuri brand, which has a reputation for quality, although a little lighter in construction than some other brands. Generally, lighter and thinner skirts produce less water drag. This translates into a lure with more freedom to move and therefore a better action.

However, there are those who make the counterargument that they are not as durable. But then, if the razor gang are out and about, I don't think there is a plastic skirt that will survive the teeth of a

wahoo, so that argument is kind of irrelevant.

The tube running through the Chook's head is brass and would easily swallow 400lb leader. For rigging, Chook's 11/0 hook is about right, run either in a single or twin-rig configuration. However, you will need to toothpick the rig to orient the hook as there is no rubber block at the back of the head to lock on to the hook's crimp – as is popular with other angle-faced lures these days.

A twin-hook rig with opposing hook points is a common rig these days, however, anglers need to remember that the natural trolling position for this rig is horizontal, not vertical as most would prefer. That's where the toothpick or rubber crimp jam helps to lock the hooks into the desired orientation.

Tackle of at least 15kg is required to tow the Chook, heavier if pushing the upper limit of its speed range. At 6.5 to 7.5 knots this would make a dynamite striped marlin lure on 15kg gear. I wouldn't hesitate to run the lure on 24kg or 37kg gear out over the canyons where a potential grander blue might be waiting in ambush.

If Aussie made is your thing, then the care and attention that goes into JB Lures' product will definitely be worth the effort of ordering online at: www.jbmarlinlures.com. Whether you are a novice or experienced angler, the JB Lure range has something for everyone.

Rather than looking for the goose that laid the golden egg, you might be better off using the Chook that catches the special fish – because there is more truth in that story. 🦈

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