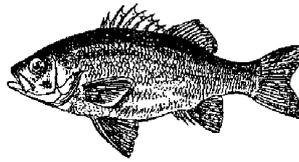


Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*

THE BRONZE BATTLER

NEXT MEETING

10th June

Guest Speaker

Danielle Williams from NSW DPI

PATRON:	Dr Wayne Erskine, PhD	
President	Alan Izzard	9653-2309 (H)
Vice President	Chris Goshn	9636-6896(H)
Past President	Domenic Squadrito	97991796(H)
Secretary	Jim Taylor	9631-7485(H)
Treasurer/Membership		
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Publicity Officer	Pending	
Editor:	Milton Lazarus.....	9874-7323(H)
Entertainment & Event Organiser	Pending	
Project Officers:		
Parramatta River	Alan Fowkes.....	9626-9938(H)
Hacking River	Warren Hackshall.....	9525 0090(H)
Lane Cove	Milton Lazarus	9874-7323(H)

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Some people never learn. It hardly seems like 4 years ago I stood down as your President and here I am, at it again. I only hope that your confidence in me is not misplaced. We are looking at a few changes in the coming months, some with the fishing events, Chris informs me that he has now got a couple of the saltwater days organised and hopefully he will present that info at the next meeting. Also after the CFA meeting I am intending to propose that the club moves forward on the proposed trusteeship of Lynch Creek Reserve, more on that at the meeting. I have a couple of other work related events in mind, just remember YOU voted for me so no use complaining now. See you on the 10th June when Danielle will give us an update on the Bass Catch Survey, something the club has worked on for over 20 years.

Alan Izzard

RIVER BASS MAGIC

What makes bass fishing so special?

It is quite hard to sum up the mystic surrounding bass fishing. It's more than just going fishing. All bass anglers know and understand exactly what I am talking about. It is a combination of the sights the smells and the places you go to along with the pugnacious qualities of the fish itself.

Bass fishing is a genre of angling that stands alone and is at the very pinnacle of the Australian sports fishing scene. What makes it so appealing is the fact that despite its premiere nature, fishing for bass does not discriminate as it is open to all, you certainly don't have to be a tweed coat wearer or a solicitor to pursuit them.

Bass fishing can be enjoyed by all manner of people. River Bass are special as the nature of the species dictates that they must travel into the brackish water to breed and return back to the fresh, so therefore the fish are distributed amongst varied sections of river. Each river, creek and stream has its own unique quality that differentiates it from one another. From long pools with fallen trees and deep sunken logs to tight gin clear water where fish hide in pockets, through to deep gorges existing within the big river country. One fish can have so many varied conditions in which he lives that you could spend a life time chasing Bass and never discover all there is.

The Australian native Bass is a tough voracious aggressive fish that always gives a good account of itself and certainly does not give its virtue away easily. After you catch your first Bass it becomes addictive and I haven't met a person yet who has been unable to break the addiction. I like to think of it as a passion as all Bass anglers are dedicated passionate people who would certainly be the most forthright of any other angling group. There is a definite bond between man and fish that stems from incredible respect of ones quarry.

Many words have been written over the years to try and sum up the feeling associated with Bass fishing. I feel that not enough words could ever be written to describe the feeling associated with it. There is a strong intrinsic nature that gives fishing for wild river Bass that special feeling and it is a defiant unique quality that sets it apart from all other piscatorial pursuits.

Chris Goshn.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES - BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO RECREATIONAL FISHING TRUSTS RESEARCH PROJECT

Quantifying and improving the survival of Murray cod, Golden perch and Australian Bass released by anglers in NSW

In 2002, a National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey estimated that more than 370 000 Murray cod, 810 000 golden perch and 860 000 Australian Bass (and other perches) were released by recreational anglers during 2000/01. These numbers represented approximately 78%, 44% and 76% of total catches, respectively, for these three species and are of concern, primarily because it is not known how many of these released fish survived.

Similar to other Australian states, the management of NSW's recreational hook-and-line fisheries is based mainly on closed seasons, legal sizes, daily and possession bag

limits and the assumption that the majority of released fish survive with few negative effects. While this latter requirement has been confirmed for some saltwater species, few studies have examined the issue for freshwater fish. The results for key saltwater species have shown that many different factors contribute towards the short-term mortality of released line-caught fish, but that in most cases survival rates can be improved via subtle modifications to the gear used and/or handling methods. For example, hooking location (mouth vs. swallowed) was a strong predictor of mortality in Yellow Fin bream and Mulloway, especially if ingested hooks were removed. Cutting the line and releasing the hook-ingested fish increased rates of survival from less than 20% to more than 80%. Furthermore, 76% of hook-ingested Yellow Fin bream subsequently passed their hooks with no apparent ill effects. In contrast, the time spent in onboard holding tanks was demonstrated to be the main factor influencing the survival of Trevally. Releasing individuals of this species as soon as possible after capture greatly improved their chances of survival. It is likely that similar simple changes to operational handling procedures could be used to maximise the survival of released Murray cod, Golden Perch and Australian Bass.

Research of this nature is best done in close consultation with recreational anglers and as part of normal conventional fishing. This ensures that research remains relevant to current issues of concern and that the results are extended and more readily accepted and adopted by recreational anglers. Therefore, we propose to use catch-and-release events throughout NSW to investigate (i) the short-term post-release mortality (and key contributing factors) of Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Australian Bass after capture with hook and line; and (ii) the possibility of simple changes to operational and/or handling methods that will maximise survival. In addition, we propose to use subsequent aquaria experiments to investigate longer-term sub-lethal physiological effects of catch-and-release on the reproduction of these species.

COLLECTION OF DATA AT THE WILLIAMS RIVER BASSCATCH

For those of us that attended the Williams river Basscatch in March you will remember Chris Dowling from NSW DPI. At the briefing on Friday evening we all received our Basscatch forms, Chris then followed up with a briefing asking us to take a little more time and include additional data on our forms. The forms were quite complicated with columns to fill in such as hook position i.e. lip hooked or gut hooked, depth caught, duration of fight etc.

Chris's following email explains in a little more detail about his survey.

The work I did at the Williams River is part of my honours degree titled "The frequency of factors that cause mortality in caught and released Australian Bass". The project is part of a three year grant from the recreational fishing thrust that NSW DPI – Fisheries Conservation Technology Unit received to look at the effects of catch-and-release angling on Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Australian Bass. My project is a continuation of the previous Bass experiments, where we held angled Bass in cages for five days, the anglers filled out similar data sheets to what you filled out at the Williams River and from the ones that died we could work out what factors caused their deaths.

From the results of those experiments we found the main factors that lead to Bass mortality were: hook location (the most important), size of the fish (with smaller fish having a higher mortality) and depth of capture being a possible factor, but this is only present in dam populations. Using statistical analysis we were able to work out a probability of mortality for each factor. So from the data I'm collecting I will be able to determine the percentage of released Australian Bass that are likely to die from angling. In my study I'll be comparing tournament anglers to non tournament anglers and river to dam populations to see if there are any differences.

From what I've seen so far, it looks like the mortality will be low, but we don't have the data to verify it yet, so hopefully I will be able to do that at the end of this year. We know for instance that type of bait is a major factor that determines hook location and that 40% of the fish caught on natural bait swallow the hook leading to a higher mortality which I predict will be one of the major differences between tournament anglers who only use lures and other anglers who are more likely to use natural bait.

One of the benefits of this study will be providing information on the best angling, handling and releasing protocols to increase Bass survival, which will help to preserve wild river populations and reduce the cost of restocking dam populations.

I will be writing an article for a fishing magazine, as well as a scientific paper, so if all goes well they should be finished by December, so I'll be able to pass that information onto to you probably by early next year. I really enjoyed myself at the Williams River Basscatch so if I have the time I would like to be back there next year to fish this time. I will also be able to present my results there as well.

Thank you all for participating in my study and happy fishing.

Sincerely, Chris Dowling.

WILLIAMS RIVER BASSCATCH OVERVIEW & RESULTS

Weather leading up to the weekend was good but we did experience some rain in the weeks prior that brought about a rise in the river. The river height over the weekend was above the normal flow height with a noticeable drop of the river level at Mill Dam Falls on Saturday. Fishing overall was said to be a little on the slow side especially for the lower sections of the river. River reaches 1 and 2 were fished and producing some good catches.

Weather -

Clear, but warm nights to allow for BBQ and some stories.

Friday: Clear warm with light afternoon breeze.

Saturday: Area had a heavy fog, but cleared around 11am to clear skies with patchy cloud cover, with a light breeze, getting little stronger in the afternoon.

Sunday: Light fog, but cleared early, skies clear with very little breeze.

I could be a weatherman.

People that fished down stream said that the fishing was tough, and fish catch numbers were down.

Once again, surface poppers produced fish even through the midday period.

Total fisherman for the weekend was 23 down on 34 last outing.

Participants were from the local area, with great attendance from our Sydney mates with some new starters.

It was good to see Danielle Williams from Cronulla DPI, Chris Dowling & Millan from the Coffs branch and Simon from Oceanwatch. I think the people that attended got something more out of the weekend especially with the extra data collected and the explanation when handing out the sheets.

474 fish were captured and most released on the week end, some were kept for brood stock for hatchery, number unknown. The number of fish captured was 2 off last outings effort. So with numbers down from last outing the catch rate was up.

Largest fish was 390 mm and smallest 112mm.

See you next time

Harold Strahan

Bass Catch Officer / Treasurer

Hunter Native fish Inc.

SWEET TO SALT

A USER FRIENDLY GUIDE TO SALT WATER ANGLING BY CHRIS GHOSN

June will see the advent of Bass Sydney's foray into saltwater events to fill the void in the cooler months and help alleviate the boredom of not fishing for our mighty Aussie Bass. There is a world of difference in the different genres, so what a better time to take a look at what we can expect when fishing the brine.

Equipment:

For spinning for estuary species a 2-4kg spin stick of 6foot - 7foot is more than adequate. Thread line reels with (GSP) between 2lb-8lb is sufficient and will cover all options. Leaders of between 5lb-12lb will cover every thing from bream to flathead. Once on the water I find the longer rods will feel better in your hand and are a great fish fighting tool. They are better suited to saltwater fishing than that of Bass fishing as it makes longer casts into prevailing winds easier. They also allow you to gain more leverage on fish when fighting them around structure. Species such as Bream have many tricks up there sleeves and when

caught in close you do need to impart some fast rod work on them to quell they're escape plans.

Lures:

What lure? I know it is a tough question, none the less I will do my best to provide what I feel are the best overall fish catching lures available. To help prevent people from spending too much money on non productive items.

Hard body lures:

Without doubt the most popular lure in recent times is the SX40 from Eco Gear. Despite them being flavour of the month for a long time now they do catch fish and it isn't just hype! No wonder why they are so popular. They are a 40mm minnow with a rattle inside they have a tight shimmy action. They retail for about \$16.50. I favour the natural colours. Kokoda make a lure that is a replica of the SX40 called the Sprog which is slightly larger and comes at a price of \$5.95

Attack Lures are an Aussie made 50mm minnow that have a tight action and are extremely good. They retail between \$8 and \$12.

Rebel Crawdad. Are great lure has been around for years and will certainly catch bream and flathead. A great lure to have in your tackle box. Retail value varies and they are now getting up around \$15.95 or more.

Soft Plastics:

I guess a great many words have been written about the use of soft plastics on bream and I am certainly not about to add to this so I will list what I feel are lures that will work in all circumstances.

Berkley 3 inch Bass Minnows' (pumpkin seed/pearl watermelon)

Berkley gulp 6 inch Worms any colour

Berkley 2inch power Hawgs (pumpkinseed)

Berkley gulp Turtle Back Worm (natural colours)

Atomic 2 and 3 inch Curl Grubs in any natural colour.

The new Squidgie range of lures with the "s" factor in them look the goods and I have used them on snapper with great success so I cant see why they won't work on other species.

This is just a brief overview of what the most popular choices are on the market and by no means are the only choices. Feel free to experiment, but for those who don't want to take it too seriously and spend too much, just stick with the more widely used lures.

MIXED BAG FISHERY

Overall these events are designed to be fun, sociable and catching a fish is a bonus. The good thing about this style of fishing is that with every cast you have the possibility of catching a range of species.

In recent times the advent of bream comps have either captured the imaginations of people or made people

disillusioned and cynical of the whole revolution. Personally after being a big follower of the movement from the inception of the comps in 2000 I have come to a stage where I don't take it that seriously and just enjoy my fishing. A lot of guys try way too hard and get very frustrated with their fishing, which is unfortunate. I will be really honest with you guys catching fish on the new range of lures available isn't hard at all and in some cases is like bait fishing. When fishing structures cast as close as possible just like Bass fishing and use a slow retrieve. That's simplifying it, but at the end of the day that's about it. There is no need to get too technical about it all.

Bass Sydney has some excellent saltwater anglers such as Dom and Dave Sanagor. Guys like this are very skilled anglers as well as being open to passing on info if any one needs any advice prior to our events. I suggest they get in contact with them. I certainly have and have learnt a hell of a lot.

Overall I am excited and can't wait to get out on the water. I look forward to seeing you all there.

COLO IN MAY

We had organised the last trip before winter to be at Del Rio, but, as there were not too many willing to camp, including myself, at this time of year we changed it to a day trip to the Colo River instead. We had 7 members that I know of plus Dom who brought along a mate to make 8. It was good to see father and son Dom and Joe out on the water together. Chris had organised Dallas to come along as well, good to see him, it's been a long time between drinks. The weather was pleasant for this time of year and the promised wind and rain held off till late in the day. Unfortunately the Bass must have seen the forecast and decided to stay away, bit of a bummer. It had been some time since I had been to the "bridge to nowhere" and I was so busy talking to Geoff that I missed a turn, not by much, and had to make a U-turn and retrace my steps. Garnet who was following me was scratching his head wondering what was going on. After making the turn I continued on and then sped past a sign, "What did that say about the ferry" I wondered? Too late, not going back, she'll be right. We got to the Lower Portland ferry and there was another sign, just like the previous one. Ferry out of action for 8 weeks. Bugger. Just as well we were fishing from kayaks today, we launched at the vacant ferry ramp and paddled across to the mouth of the Colo River, the tide was pushing in quite rapidly, it's amazing how much sideways movement a Bass kayak can get up.

We got across safely, apart from the tidal movement the water was very glassy. We decided to have a few casts just inside the mouth and on his second cast Garnet had a couple of taps, he believes that it was a Flattie. Unfortunately for Garnet, that was the extent of the action for him that day. We drifted up the river with the tide casting to every possible Bass haunt we came across all to no avail. We could hear a terrible racket up ahead, sounded like some kids beating the bottom of a tinnie with an oar, but I could see nothing. As the fishing was slow I decided to push on a bit further up river and not long after two kayaks could be seen coming down river, it was Chris and Dallas, and was them, or one of them, making all the noise. They had decided to head back to the mouth and try their luck around the bridge pylons. I could see a blue boat further up stream and was told that it was Dom so I paddled on and caught up. His mate had landed a small Bass, his very first I believe, but that was the extent of their action so far.

They had decided to go about another 2-300 meters and then head back to the Hawkesbury and try their luck there. I left them to it and decided I would fish up past the mark he had indicated he was going to turn back, I had gone about 50 meters when Dom called out and when I turned around he had landed a small Bass, that was 2 in the boat.

I paddled a little further and then decided to have a fish, the tide had turned and was pushing me back down river, so I paddled up into a corner and made a couple of casts, on the second I hooked up to a monster that came in at 175mm, I could hardly tell that there was a fish on. It was to be another 2 hours before I caught another, about 1 Km further upstream, this one measured 185mm, getting bigger at least. By this time I was by myself, Garnet and Geoff had paddled further up stream and were out of sight around a bend. I decided to drift back and cast to every likely looking spot. I had a couple of nudges which caused me to turn back upstream and try again in the same spot, but each time there was no further action. At about 1 O'clock I decided that I had had about as much fun that I could bear and headed back to the ferry ramp. I did not have to wait too long before Geoff and then Garnet came into view, they had even a worse time than me. Not a fish between them

We had arranged to come back to my place for a barbi, Dom had packed up early and gone home and Dallas could not make it. Geoff, Garnet and myself drove back, I decided to try a different way home to see if it was any quicker, missed another turn, and poor Garnet following had no bloody idea where he was, he said he was desperately trying to make sure that he did not lose sight of the old ute. Chris decided to come via the scenic route and arrived about 1 ½ hours later, as he has a rural type ute he appears to like circle work!!!

We cooked the food and drank a little wine and had a good talk before the eyes started to get droopy and the guys decided that it was time to head for home. We all enjoyed most of the day, even with no fish it was still better than mowing lawns. I am not sure the exact number of fish that were caught, Chris had a zero as well and Dallas caught the biggest that I know of 300+, do not know how Dom and his team fared.
Alan.

FOR SALE

Rolf Quaas from Wallsend has a once used 44lb Minn Kota electric motor with extra long shaft and cables. \$300 not negotiable. Give Rolf a call on 4951-6017.

NARRABEEN LAKES DAY

Members please note that Chris is organising this day on Sunday June 29th at 11am. A barbeque and social get together is planned afterwards. Please let Chris know by email or mobile as soon as possible. The location will be advised in due course.

CHRIS' S FIRST GLENBAWN BASS

After the CFA meeting at Glenbawn there was some time to wet a line and Chris nailed this nice Bass. Sorry about the resolution and placement. I hope to refine this technique next issue.



Well guys this is my first Battler for many years, so I hope you all enjoy it and future issues. Actually I've been really spoilt with the June edition as both Chris and Al have helped a lot with articles and I pinched a few here and there. Hope you haven't already read some of them.

Thanks, I really appreciate it. The ed, Milliebassin

Ps By the way gents, any contributions are most welcome and it really helps me come Battler time.