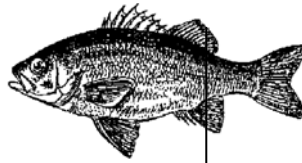




Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*



# THE BRONZE BATTLER

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VICE PRESIDENT: Chris Ghosn	phone 9636 6896 (h)	EDITOR: Milton Lazarus	phone 9874 7323 (h)
PAST PRESIDENT: Domenic Squadrito	phone 9799 1796 (h)	ENTERTAINMENT &	
SECRETARY: Jim Taylor	phone 9631 7485 (h)	EVENT ORGANISER: pending	
TREASURER/		PROJECT OFFICERS:	
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OFFICER: Geoff Shadbolt	phone 9636 4340 (h)	Lane Cove River: Milton Lazarus	phone 9874 7323 (h)

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

As most of you would be aware, the Hawkesbury/Nepean Bass Catch enters it's 20<sup>th</sup> year this month. We have had some interest from non Bass Sydney members registering via the website. I urge all members that intend to fish to do the same thing, the more hits we get the further up the website moves on Google. I must thank Danielle Ghosn from fisheries for her help in getting the Bass catch up and moving in the right direction, the article she wrote and had published in "NSW Fishing Monthly" was great and she has also arranged for new measurers to be made up as well as some other incentive prizes. We have also had some publicity through "Freshwater Fisher" the newsletter of the CFA and have lodged a small article with "Fishing World".

The Lantana clean up on the Grose River went well with several BS members and a heap of the Springwood lads clearing a very large patch. We will need to re-attend early next spring to follow up.

Our first event for the season saw only five members that I know of, fishing Reach 5 on the weekend 20/21 Sept. I believe we caught about 20 fish caught, with Jim Taylor catching a PB on the day.

Membership numbers are still down, we need to put our thinking caps on to see if we can come up with some ideas to attract some new blood. Maybe we could run a kids clinic, get them early, with the help of Fish Care Volunteers that may bring some adults along as well. Put your thinking caps on, especially the "Membership Committee" and see if we can come up with some new ideas.

Hope to see you all on the 14<sup>th</sup> for the Bass Catch briefing.

Alan Izzard.

## **BASSCATCH ARTICLE**

Article for NSW Fishing Monthly October 2008 Issue

### **Help celebrate 20 years of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River Basscatch**

Basscatch events provide a great excuse to go fishing and are for a good cause.

Danielle Ghosn and Amy Smoothey

NSW Department of Primary Industries in conjunction with freshwater fishing clubs developed the *Basscatch* project in 1988 following a strong interest from angling groups to participate in fisheries science and management. The project began in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system with Bass Sydney club members, with the aim of using a non-destructive method of sampling to collect long-term standardised catch and effort information on populations of Australian Bass. Early success of the program led to biannual events and expansion to the Williams and Manning Rivers in 1990 and 1991, respectively. The project also later expanded to other river systems such as the Shoalhaven, Clyde and Macleay Rivers. These data have facilitated comparisons of populations of Australian bass and provided an indication of the condition of the fish in NSW. This is achieved by anglers using common rules of fishing and standardised scoring and data recording methods. Biannual fishing events are held in each river system on weekends in the same month each year. Competitors participating in these events are asked to complete catch cards on which they record the fork length in mm of all fish caught and how many hours they fished and in which river reach. Other information is also recorded such as the method and lure types used. All fish caught in these events are measured, released and recorded.

Projects such as *Basscatch* provide an inexpensive and simple opportunity for obtaining qualitative and time-series data about catch and effort, allowing indications of long-term trends in the population structure of Australian bass. These data can be used as an effective measure of fishing quality of club anglers, provide length composition and catch rate data, which can be used for monitoring and management purposes. These data are also useful for assessing relationships between recreational catch and river flows.

The overall and long-term success of this project could however be threatened as participation rates have declined significantly since the projects' inception in 1988. With the aim to increase participation and better results, this project has received a boost over the past 12 months with concentrated efforts to improve data recording methods, reporting and feed-back to anglers. An increase in participation rates could improve results significantly by

allowing a greater spread of anglers throughout the river system, which is why this year, the 20<sup>th</sup> year of *Basscatch*, is so important.

Bass Sydney in conjunction with NSW DPI invites all bass anglers to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Hawkesbury-Nepean River *Basscatch* on the weekend of the 18-19<sup>th</sup> October, 2008. Event entry is free of charge and only requires your presence at a social briefing night on the 14<sup>th</sup> October (Tuesday night prior to the event) at the Northmead Bowling and Recreation Club. This event is jointly funded by Bass Sydney, the NSW Freshwater Recreational Fishing Trust and NSW DPI. Measuring rulers and catch cards for recording your catch will be supplied and participation prizes will be awarded by drawing from all completed catch cards at the cessation of the event. If you wish to fish this event, please visit [www.basssydney.com](http://www.basssydney.com) to register or contact Geoff Shadbolt on (02) 9636 4340.

*Basscatch* events provide a great excuse to go fishing and are for a good cause. They help support your sport through data collection for science and management of Australian bass fisheries in NSW. They are always a relaxed, low-cost affair where you can lure or fly fish amongst a small group of single kayak-based anglers or with friends or family members in a canoe or boat. The 2007 October Hawkesbury-Nepean event saw 25 anglers fishing, which resulted in the catch, release and recording of 428 Australian bass that ranged in size from 40mm to 400mm fork length (average fork length of 201mm).

However, if you are not available on the weekend of the 2008 Hawkesbury-Nepean event there may be other *Basscatch* events for you to fish such as the Wingham Anglers Manning River event in October or the Hunter Native Fish Williams River event in November. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Danielle Ghosn on (02) 9527 8549 or [danielle.ghosn@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:danielle.ghosn@dpi.nsw.gov.au) from the NSW DPI Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre for event dates and locations, event contact details and other project information.



## FISHWAY UPDATE

### LIVERPOOL

Remediation works are being carried out by Department of Environment and Climate Change. The work is required to stop leaks in the weir wall that threaten the dam wall if not corrected. The work involves placing vertical steel sheeting approximately 20cm in front of the wall and filling the gap with marine grade concrete to form a water tight seal. This work will take around two months.

There will be no disruption to the fishway. Protective plates have been placed on the fishway grating to prevent damage from heavy equipment. In addition, cloth has been placed over the grating to prevent debris from the construction work falling into the fishway.

### AUDLEY

Initially the design for the fishway was for a rock ramp style, but during construction a major problem with foundations for the rock ramp was discovered, therefore a complete redesign has been necessary. Now the new design is a vertical slot fishway similar to the Liverpool weir. The design is being finalised now and work will begin when funding has been acquired.



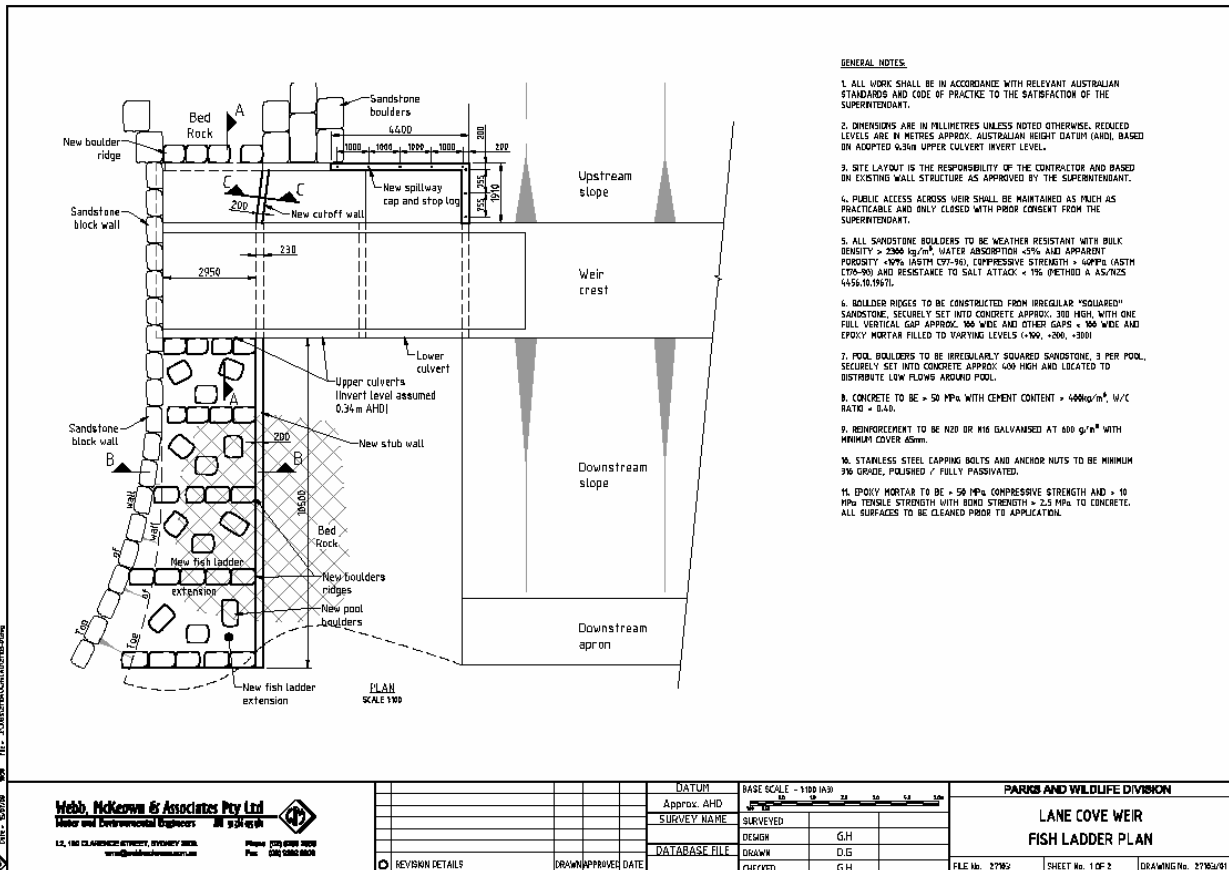
## LANE COVE NATIONAL PARK FISHWAY MODIFICATIONS

At last, moves are afoot to improve the existing fishway on Lane Cove river. For those not familiar with this area, the fishway is situated about 150 metres upstream of Fullers bridge. Delhi Road branches off Epping Road and crosses the river on the way to the Pacific Highway at Chatswood.

Originally Bass Sydney helped in securing the grant that provided funds for construction that started back in December 1999. Based on the results of our Basscatches since completion, the fishway has proven to be ineffective. Of course there are many theories, but the one that appears most likely is that traveling Bass can only return up the fishway at high tide as there is a substantial step in an old culvert at the bottom.

The design modifications should correct this problem. Please refer to the drawing below which illustrates a new 10.5 metre fish ladder extension on the left hand side below the weir crest.

The Water & Environmental Engineers Web McKeon & Associates have designed the modification work with input from Scott Nichols of DPI Fisheries and Lane Cove National Park Rangers Peter Draper and Andrew Duffy.



### **BASS SYDNEY REACH 5**

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September dawned a beautiful day with a promising forecast, not like Saturday with the heat and strong north westerlies. The barometer wasn't too bad either, so there was the possibility of a good fishing day, especially as this was our first fish of the new season.

The plan was to launch our kayaks at North Richmond and fish down stream. Dominic was to launch his boat at the ramp in Governor Phillip Park Windsor and fish upstream from Windsor bridge maybe to meet us.

Our plan succeeded whereas Domenic's did not. Unfortunately the ramp was closed on Saturday & Sunday for the Upper Hawkesbury Power Boat Club's 2008 Windsor Spectaculars (?). Can you believe that, especially after Domenic & Joe drove all the way from Haberfield. Commiserations Dom.

We paddled and fished our way downstream, some had success whilst others struggled. As all Bass fisho's know, sometimes it all happens for you and sometimes it dosen't.

By mid afternoon the results were Jim, a beautiful 356mm PB Bass (as usual not far from where we launched), the Editor three, Geoff four, Alan six & Garnet seven. Interestingly enough Alan caught all his fish on a small surface lure. He also managed to catch a Bass after his lure was cast over a low slung branch. We always hear about it, but now I can show you.



I wonder what this Bass is saying.

Around 2pm we headed back, just a shortish paddle we thought, be blowed, it was a long way and by the time we eventually saw the old Richmond bridge we were all knackered. For those who know Hanna Match park, one is then faced with the task of dragging your kayak up a long steep grass bank and across the park to the car. Nothing like a bit of cardiovascular exercise to make one a little more exhausted. I guess 21 Bass is not too bad for starters.

### **PARRAMATTA RIVER CARP FISH OUT 2008**

Parramatta City Council is running another carp fish - out on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and Bass Sydney will again be manning a stall at the event.

The fish out occurs as part of the larger "Riverbeats" event which is staged on the stretch of river between Marsden Street and the Charles Street weir – an area commonly known as "The Pound" or, for those whose knowledge of Parramatta goes way back, the stretch near the old DJ's building. This area is worth a visit at any time as it is nicely grassed and has interpretive signage celebrating the original inhabitants as well as the early days of white settlement.

It's also worth visiting because Charles Street weir is the site of one of the completed fishways in PCC's fishways project and this is the one that we contributed to through the provision of grant funds. If you're still having trouble getting your bearings this is the weir that creates a tidal barrier and where the River Cats finish their run to Parramatta.

The fish - out will be run along the same lines as last year but with some planned improvements. Like last year there will be two fishing sessions – Session 1 from 10:00am till 1:00pm and Session 2 from 2:45pm till 4:00pm. Also like last year it is planned that there will be prizes for the fishing competition winners, an appearance by Ian Kiernan of Clean Up Australia fame – last year he gave an impassioned speech on the importance of clean rivers – and stalls from Anaconda, Absolutely Hooked and Sportfish Australia. And of course the most important one – us! Not to mention food and drinks nearby.

On the improvements front PCC is hoping to get DPI Fisheries assistance to net the fish down into a smaller area of the river between the pedestrian bridge and the Charles Street weir. This will hopefully improve the competitors' chances of catching a carp. Similarly, all the stalls will be pushed closer together which should create a busy atmosphere. There are also plans to provide tuition, casting lessons etc for beginners, make registration easier and have hire gear available.

This event usually gets some good press and this year there will be a mini "Riverbeats" magazine produced to promote the event. 80,000 copies of this magazine will be distributed via local cafes, art centres, stations etc as well as with rates notices. If you live in the area, keep an eye out as Bass Sydney should get a mention.

So keep the date free if you can. We'll certainly be looking for people to man our stall as this is a good chance to educate the public and talk to potential new members. You might also want to help out with the casting lessons if we're asked, or you might just want to fish. After all, relieving the river of a few carp and possibly winning prizes in the process is not a bad way to spend a day.



### LANTANA REMOVAL

Unfortunately only eight volunteers made it to the last Lantana removal day on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Some confusion reigned around the date which was originally set as September 28<sup>th</sup>. The Bass Sydney calendar said Reach 5, so four Lantana pullers went fishing.

Following is Alan Fowkes report on the day.

Only eight people on deck this time. We worked till 2.30pm so probably a total of around 40 man hours, and spent our time working up the creek line at the western boundary and down the river bank at the eastern or downstream end of the main river i.e. in both cases just starting where we finished off last time. Obviously, the site looks fantastic compared to when we first arrived but the job is still not finished. We continued to find significant patches of Lantana at either end of the work site and there were still some left when the poison ran out. In the last hour or two it was obvious we were going to be short of time so we did as much cutting and pasting as possible without bothering to do a good job of clearing out and stacking. So these last bits worked on won't provide as



immediate an opportunity for re-growth of desirable species but at least we have inflicted as much damage as possible on the Lantana.

It's likely now that we won't go back till next April or May. The ranger on deck for the day Mick, feels that the re-growth will be easy to control given the work we've done and we can continue work to mop up the remaining infestations at either end of the work next season. He also believes that the hazard reduction burn that is needed to deal with the stacked waste will occur next season as it is currently too soon since the last burn – if the burns are too close together you can damage the reproductive cycle of the desirable species.

So, in short we've done what we can for now and should plan to put some more effort into this project next off - season. The amount of Lantana we've cleared is incredible and I'm really looking forward to going back in a year to see what has grown in its place.

Interestingly, Mick was there in place of Dave Monaghan because Dave was working with a 4WD Club down at Yellowmundi to pull out dumped cars. We obviously have a couple of very keen and productive rangers here with some excellent work going on.

Alan Fowkes.

### **BASS SYDNEY POINTS SCORE SYSTEM**

Members have always wondered how our mystical point score system worked - well Geoff Shadbolt kindly put fingers to keys (in the old days that was pen to paper, I think) with the following explanation.

#### **Basscatch Scores:**

Fish caught up to 200mm	=	2 points each
Fish caught 2001 to 300mm	=	6 points each
Fish caught 301 up to 400mm	=	10 points each
Fish caught 401 and above	=	20 points each

**Halve the points if the fish is killed**

#### **The end of year trophy scores:**

Attend a general meeting	=	5 points
Attend the AGM	=	10 points
Attend an organised fishing event	=	5 points
Attend a Basscatch	=	10 points per day
Top five fish caught in any event	=	1 point per event

### CAPTION CONTEST

I'm sure you will all remember this great photo of Garnet looking and I guess wondering what he had left at home before setting off for a day's fishing the Colo.

This photo became a caption contest. The judges spent countless hours looking through the hundreds of entries and have made the following decision.

In the end the judging panel could not separate two entries, so there are joint winners.

The winners are:

Alan Izzard – *"I knew there were funding cuts, but this is ridiculous!"*

Domenic Squadrito – *"I've heard of some cost cutting to services, especially in the tough times where the user ends up paying, however this takes the cake!"*

Thanks guys,



## SOUTHERN SON

As a youngster growing up I was much accustomed to fishing the fish rich waters of the South Coast. However, as I became older my search for fish led me further north to fish the fresh. With the weather getting cooler it was time for me to return to my southern roots and start hitting the salt.

After talking with surface lure guru Mick Munns I managed to tag along on a South Coast adventure that included fishing for many different species. Our trip became a fishing road - show that rolled from town to town. Our first stop was Malones Beach a few kilometres from Bateman's Bay where we assessed a camp site upon arriving, and were confronted with magnificent vistas and many kangaroos. Being good fisherman we unpacked the 'yaks and headed offshore in search for anything that was big. I grabbed up my 7' 1" 3-6 kilo snapper Shimano T'curve loaded with 20 pound tuff line braid and 20 pound fluoro carbon leader and headed off. It was exciting and the adrenalin was pumping! It is a great experience being in the deep blue in a kayak and I highly recommend it to any one. I started jigging my 110mm Squidgy soft plastic and immediately experienced bone crushing strikes that made my rod buckle over and the braid sing, oh! how addictive is this. Unfortunately I only landed one small snapper, but had a good time.

The next stop on the fishing road - show was to a beautiful area ideal for catching whiting on poppers. This place looked like New Caledonia or Christmas Island and you would expect to see bone fish out on them flats. I was chomping at the bit to get out there. Unfortunately it wasn't our day as we could see massive fish but couldn't get them to strike. I switched to plastics and still couldn't elicit a bite. We packed up and headed for camp.

### Day Two, Wet Weather Breaming

The rain started early, however it didn't deter our sprits as we put our wet weather gear on and headed to Bateman's Bay. We put in at the boat ramp on the outgoing tide. The rain started again the moment I headed off and it was torrential, sadly, my old wet weather gear just wasn't up to the job and I was drenched. We headed into the oyster leases. The mission was simple to dong a bream on the top. I had both my rods armed with East Coast lures. My 6'6" T'curve was wearing are East Coast "Tantrum" whilst my 7' T'curve had a East Coast "pop 'n' bug" The tide was really moving and it was hard pushing our way further upstream as we were in water a foot deep with excellent visibility. This caused the fish to be spooky. I spied an area of oysters running parallel to some mangroves. I threw my small surface lure offering out there and worked it back with a tantalizing action like a bait fish and bang! I was on. This thing took off like a bat out of hell as my drag screamed off line at a rate of knots. I got a glimpse of the fish and I could see a silver flash. My first reaction was that it was a small mulloway. After a long spirited fight it revealed to be a great bream. I was so happy to finally score one off the surface. We managed to catch a few more fish before finally packing up and heading north. We set up camp and got a good night's sleep.

### Day 3, The Penultimate

Mick had promised us a secret creek which he knew about - upon arriving we weren't disappointed. Now at this point I should point out that for many years I have always been fascinated with bream in natural structure particularly mangroves such as the Lane Cove River down stream from the weir. To me it is not unlike Barra fishing but on a smaller scale. The reality is it's just like Bass fishing except you throw smaller, lighter less aero dynamic lures into jungle that has a habit of snagging up your lure. For years I have mucked around with this type of fishing without the confidence to carry on. It was about to change within minutes. Terry was on and boy what a fish a 40cm bream taken on a SX 40. Well CG put on his favourite SX40 and started casting the house down. I threw my lure amongst a section of mangrove called pneumatophores (*those pointy things that mangrove trees have. I remember from studying them at school yet I digress*). I slowly started my retrieve whilst mid sentence, wholly dooly!! My rod rocketed into life I screamed fish, fish! This thing angled towards the snags taking me with it and I was going to lose it if I didn't act. I did all I could do, locking my drag and muscle this thing out of the trees. I literally poled it into my 'yak. My heart was pounding as I released a beautiful big bream.

WOW! it does work. Big bream in close cover are up there as a top sport fish guys. I don't want to get controversial but if a bass and a bream had a fight who would win?.

The tide dropped and I focused my attention on fishing the discoloured water around the mouth of secret creek. I nailed four more bream and a beautiful estuary perch (*Maquarius colonorum*) all on hard bodied lures. I ended the day with a total of five bream, three tailor, one flathead and one E.P.

I certainly enjoyed my trip down south and can't wait to head down there again in search of those silver bullets.

Chris Ghosn



### **Weed Control on the Kangaroo River**

An extract from the Shoalhaven City Council Web Site  
[www.shoalhaven.gov.nsw.au](http://www.shoalhaven.gov.nsw.au)

"The Recreational Fishing Trust has offered an amount of \$9,996 for weed control and replanting on lands fronting Kangaroo River and Broughton Creek to improve the habitat of Australian Bass. The primary weed to be targeted in these areas is privet.

The work in the first year will mostly occur at sites in the upper catchments of three of the main tributaries: Upper Kangaroo River, Upper Brogers Creek and Bundewallah Creek. These sites include:

- The reserve at the Upper Kangaroo River hall;
- The Kangaroo River crossing at Kellys Road;
- The Reserve at Hampden Bridge;
- The Brogers Creek Reserve; and
- Two Reserves on Bundewallah Creek.

At each site, privet control and replanting will return a section of the creek bank to a more natural state. Replanting will focus on fringing and overhanging vegetation, which promotes additional food sources for Australian Bass.

It is expected that all sites will allow for public access to the river system for Bass fishers.

In addition to promoting Bass habitat, the works will support Council and community efforts to remove the privet seed source from several upper catchments, which will assist in its long term control downstream.

The funding from the Recreational Fishing Trust is being matched by an amount of \$9828 in cash and in - kind contribution from Shoalhaven City Council."

#### **NEXT MEETING**

It's hard to believe, but the next meeting will be our

**Christmas General Meeting on Tuesday December 9<sup>th</sup> 2008**

Cheers to al