

	Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA	
		
<h1>THE BRONZE BATTLER</h1>		
PATRON: Dr Wayne Erskine PhD		
PRESIDENT: Ashley Thamm VICE PRESIDENT: Chris Ghosn SECRETARY: Gary Perry TREASURER John Stokes	ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT OFFICERS: Alan Izzard, Garry Blount PUBLICITY OFFICER: Andre Dukino EDITOR: Peter Hatzidimitriou EVENTS, POINTS SCORE & BASSCATCH OFFICER: HS Tham	
GENERAL COMMITTEE: Daniel Flood, Derek Sonter, Rico van de Kerkhof and Paul Matten		
Contact: info@basssydney.com		

President's Message

As I write this the rain is really coming down outside signalling the end of the 2012/13 season, though for a lot of us it's been over for a couple of months now already.

It's been a great season, with some big Bass caught and a lot of our rivers and creeks are looking better than they have in a long time. Let's hope we get warm temperatures and some decent rain this spring so we can get back into our favourite fishing ASAP.

As our membership slowly grows we are seeing that Bass Sydney members fish for a lot more than just Bass, with some memorable Cod caught in the fresh and everything from bream to kingfish being caught in the salt. John Ducksbury even showed that Bass Sydney members hold their own when fishing OS by capturing a few magnificent Peacock Bass over in the states. I look forward to hearing about a few of these memorable captures at the general meetings this winter. The most positive thing to come from this season for me was our AGM with many new faces joining the committee. Thanks to everyone that took on a new role and thanks also to those that have been doing these jobs for the last few years and can now take a bit of a break. The club is in good shape and I hope this will be a continuing trend into the future.

Tight Lines,
Ashley Thamm
President, Bass Sydney

NEWS

The Club would like to welcome the following new members:

Scott Maclean – Scott had heard about the clubs bush regeneration efforts and wanted to contribute, so he attended the April AGM and decided to join. Welcome aboard Scott!

Shane Griffiths – Shane is a friend of current member Anthony Hutt, it's great to see members friends getting on board.

Additional committee members of 2013

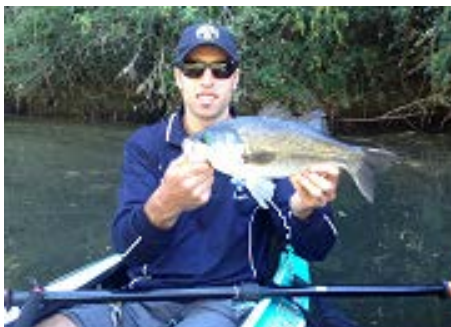
Events Coordinator & Basscatch officer - HS Tham
Lane Cover River - Daniel Flood & Ron Rogers
Georges River and Raffles - Paul Matten

Parramatta River – Ashley Thamm
Hacking River - Warren Hackshall

Important Reminder

2013 membership fees are now due. If you have not paid for your membership please do so ASAP by contacting John Stokes.

The Editors message: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for the opportunity and for entrusting me with the task of being the Editor for the prestigious Bronze Battler newsletter. I intend on continuing with the traditional layout of the Battler and adding my own personal twist that I hope you will all enjoy reading. A special thanks to Chris Ghosn for 'passing the torch' and for his previous contributions to the Battler. I hope to keep you up to date on the current and future club issues, events and all other Bass Sydney related information. – Pete H



Upcoming Events:

June 15 - Patonga Saltwater Outing

Pete & Josh's search for Codzilla

After postponing my annual trip to the Inverell/Ashford Region of Northern NSW due to the river flows and dirty water numerous times the stars began to align and conditions were greatly improving. During a conversation about cod fishing with fellow Bass Sydney member Josh Pearson we decided to make the long 1500km round trip journey together. After driving through treacherous downpours the whole way, passing over many very picturesque bass looking waters (including a reach of the Macleay) we approached the town of Uralla and suddenly the heavens began to open up...sunshine at last, hallelujah! A local contact of mine from Ashford, a fine young man named Joe had called me on the way up to see if we wanted to fish his private dam on his families property on Uralla where there are 3 cod over a metre in length and other smaller fish, how could we say no to that? Jumping with excitement at the prospect of tangling with a giant greenfish we followed Joe to the property which has 5 dams in total. Joe's grandfather had stocked this dam with cod over 30 years ago. The dam is about the size of a football field without much in the way of structure. It had one tree in the entire dam, which Joe has managed to pull a 105 and 103mm cod off. We quickly tied on our surface lures and began walking the bank and casting into pockets around weed and any drop offs or bits of structure we could find. After about 30 mins of casting Josh punched out his homemade 50mm timber surface lure made of rosewood, past a row of reeds and into a deep narrow channel. Twitch twitch BOOOF!! I knew the sound instantly and the deepness of the 'boof' suggested a sizeable fish. John tangled with the beast and even had to walk into the water to avoid being taken into the weeds. After a 5 min battle Josh had landed a very healthy sized fish, needless to say Josh spent the rest of the afternoon with a smile not even a good paint stripper would have removed! No fish for me from the dam unfortunately, although I managed to lose my brand new Tonic sunglasses which we managed to recover after walking around with head torches for 40mins in pitch black darkness...phew! We also heard a duck get taken off the surface by a very sizeable cod; the boof was massive and VERY deep. Joe advised us that the cod of this dam regularly take the ducks from the surface! Anyways, onwards to Inverell with a smile on our faces and great hope for the next few days to come.

The next morning another contact of mine from the area took us for a fish in his river boat to the Severn River at Wells Crossing. The pool looked great and we had access from a private property. Ron picked up a 40mm fish within 10 seconds of launching the boat and trolling a stump jumper. Things looked promising....Josh and I peppered every snag in that stretch of water for zilch! At the end of the pool we saw a bridge and a ramp...this spot had full public access and we would soon learn that it was the most overfished pool in the whole area...that explained a lot. Ron really wanted to put us onto some fish so over we went to try our luck on the McIntyre River. Ron found a gate and drove through about 30-40metres worth of scrub and grass that would have stood over my head. Finally we found a spot we could launch the boat, this looked like a better spot and one that hadn't been fished in a long time due to extremely poor access, even from the properties that lined the very thick vegetated bank. The McIntyre is a very weedy system and so you need to pick your

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casts and find breaks the weed to cast into. Josh had his surface lure on again and I wacked on my trusty massive 1oz twin Colorado spinnerbait. I managed 3 fish from this stretch with the largest going 610mm, a nice healthy river cod!



Day 2 - We decided that it was time to dust off the kayaks and venture off into some water that one of Josh's KFDU contacts has provided us with. Josh had me up at the crack of dawn to drive to the spot so we could hit the water at first light. A 14km drive down a dirt road and a kangaroo in the side of the car later we arrived at the launch spot. It was very dark so we waited for a little bit of light before launching the yaks as we had a walk through some riffles before being able to climb in and paddle. We got to the shallower skinny pools and began casting the surface lures. In the second pool I had casted towards a big overturned tree root which was causing a little bit of an eddy, damn, tangle in my line, as I was untangling the small birds nest I must have twitched the lure, BOOF, then nothing. Damn! Sorted the line out, took a few paddles back with the yak and tossed into the spot again, steadily retrieving the yak back, boof again, pause...retrieve back and thought I'd missed it again till BOOF about a metre from the yak my lure was engulfed and I was on. This little cod seemed very fired up and although small, it was still a fish and a great experience! It turned out to be our only fish out of this section of river which had some promising looking water; unfortunately they weren't out to play. Josh then took us to another spot up the back of Lake Inverell which took about 40mins of paddling to reach. I was buggered after a big morning already; however we were keen to get more fish to make up for the lacklustre morning. Despite our efforts all I managed was one half-hearted tap but no fish! We went and refuelled at a local Thai restaurant which did some amazing curries!

Day 3 - The following day Joe was back in action and was taking us to a private property on the Severn owned by another Pete who happens to be a lure maker, The property doesn't get fished much and it's generally catch and release anyway. The river had a good mix of smaller and larger pools, plenty of structure, boulders, trees, logs etc. After enticing a few smaller fish to take my big spinnerbait we arrived at Joe's favourite lagoon. I had my 120mm black mantis surface lure on and punched a cast across to the other side over a tree branch...BOOF...a fish took a swipe at my lure after it hit the water. I was about to flick the lure back over the branch when Joe said "no, leave it, just tea bag it a few times", once twice BOOF!! The tree branch snapped and I was on! The fish had some grunt and nearly pulled me into a fallen tree, I was using 30lb line and a 4-6kg rod so not overly light but this fish was not giving up easy! I eventually coerced the fish into the net and was jumping with joy...a new PB of 660mm. Not long after this my new rod went SNAP, mid-way through a cast (since replaced under warranty). We walked back up to the car so I could grab a spare, and we could refuel with a snack, glass of juice and most importantly some water!



After a chat with the owner of the property and tour of his lure making shed Josh still fishless from the dam in Uralla was desperate to land a river cod! He decided to upsize his lure and tied on a 100mm Jitterbug and it wasn't long before it was engulfed as it passed a submerged log. A nice fight and Josh had landed a nice beautifully coloured cod of 570mm.

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Day 4 - Joe finished an exam at school and told us he was taking us to a spot on the McIntyre River that had produced a few fish over 800 mm mark this season. After a ride through a property on the back of Joe's mates Ute tray we arrived at a nice looking bit of water filled with A LOT of weed. I'll never forget Joe's words as we approached the bank... "This is where we come for the bigger ones"... Joe dropped a fish early on a big spinnerbait but it was a good sign that there were fish about and actively feeding. A little further downstream Joe picked out a spot and Josh followed, once again Joe's big spinnerbait was hammered and he landed a very nice 740mm cod which had a bung eye that was quite swollen. Josh had purchased some new lures from the local tackle shop earlier that day and punched out his new Koolabung surface walker over the weed and into the shade of a tree on the opposite bank... nice cast! Twitch twitch, twitch, twitch BOOF! A big explosion with a nice splash indicated another good fish. The excitement and shock of the hit must have startled Josh and he lost his footing on the slippery rock he was standing on and fell straight back and onto his derriere, thankfully Josh managed to keep the rod tip high and the fish remained on! Finally the drought was broken! This was Josh's new PB of 715mm and what this fish lacked in pure length it certainly made up for it in girth, my lord this fish was broad and pure muscle!



I was yet to land a fish myself today and the boys let me know about it, cheekily heckling me as we worked our way down the river. We came to another nice looking pool which had a big boulder in the middle. Joe was behind me and I said to him "that boulder has my name alllll over it"... my first cast shot well wide of the boulder... grrr! I pulled it back in and tried again, perfect. I shot the lure about 2 metres past the rock which would ensure a retrieve had my surface lure tight against the boulder as it passed. I slowly rolled the lure back towards me and as it approached the rock I paused and with the next turn of the handle KASPLASH! The water dispersion was huge and the crack very loud, "big fish big fish" I yelled as I began walking to the right frantically to prevent the fish passing back around the boulder and making short work of my leader. I managed to change his direction and he began swimming toward me. I yelled to Joe to grab the net as I got a glimpse of the fish and the hooks on the treble didn't look very well set. Soon as the fish hit the shallows near the shore he took a few more nerve racking runs as Joe desperately tried to net the brute that barely fit in the net. He managed to scoop it up but it fell out and took off again. Finally Joe scooped the fish hugged the net against his body and ran to the shore. The lure fell out of the fishes mouth on the bank and the fish jumped from the net again and made its way back toward the water... Argghhhhhh... we managed to pick it back up and take it away from the water's edge. I grabbed a water bottle and wet the fish and removed the dirt from it... wow... I had to sit down and reflect on what just happened. I was slightly shaking and just blown away... did that really just happen? Will it ever happen again? When I finally gathered my thoughts I went over and picked up my green monster. What a beautiful fish! Joe must have thought I had issues but I explained to him that this for me was what I lived for. Fishing is my passion and this was the pinnacle for me. The top of the list, the experience I had always dreamed of. A big Murray Cod off the surface... in full daylight! A few pictures, some great cod thumb and I had the pleasure of releasing this magnificent creature back into the water to hopefully have the pleasure of meeting again in the future. I have the utmost adoration and respect for these fish, and what they allowed me to experience, a moment I'll never forget.

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Day 5 – We decided to fish the Gwydir River in Bingara as Wendy from Inverell Fishing and Hunting had put us in contact with Eric, the manager of the local hardware store. Eric was kind enough to drive us to a public access spot where he said the fisheries electro boat had recently conducted some surveys on and managed to raise 3 fish over a metre from. Hmmmm, I tend to take everything with a grain of salt and sometimes this publicity can do more harm than good as that sort of news would inspire all local anglers to hit those sections hard. Despite that we fished the big pools and I managed a couple of smaller cod on my 1oz Mother Frogger spinnerbait. Josh tried his luck on the surface to mix the technique up but unfortunately had no interest. That drew the conclusion of our 5 day adventure. I finished the trip with 10 cod to my name for 5 days' worth of fishing and Josh finished up with 3. What we lacked in numbers we certainly made up for in quality. The experience itself was one I'd have traded 9 of those fish for...ok...well maybe 8 of those fish! I can't wait to get back up there and tangle with some cod again.



February 16-17 Hawkesbury Nepean Bass Catch

My very first Bass Catch and what a wonderful weekend. A good showing of members and fine weather would ensure comfortable camping conditions. The fishing was slower than normal due to recent floods pushing a lot of dirty water down the rivers. Despite the tough conditions some 179 fish were caught with the largest being 357mm, by member Rico v d Kerkhof equipped with his new Millerod. Rico was quick to point out that there are many great historical quotes on the subject of luck (see below):

Shallow men believe in luck. Strong men believe in cause and effect. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Be prepared, work hard, and hope for a little luck. Recognize that the harder you work and the better prepared you are, the more luck you might have. - Ed Bradley

It is universal understanding that you create your own luck. I just buy raffle tickets. – Rico v d Kerkhof

Fishing is 90% skill and only 10% luck, unless of course you're me. – Rico v d Kerkhof

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February BassCatch Report

Quick Facts:

- 45 anglers registered to fish
- 6 anglers did not fish
- 179 fish caught (compared with 471 in October 2012)
- Most fish: 31 (Paul Matten)
- Largest bass: 357mm (Rico v d Kerkhof)
- Smallest bass: 95mm (Barry Cole)
- Average fish size: 197mm (211mm in October 2012)

The formation of PAC (Port Appreciation Club)

After a long and hard days fishing, some of the members all congregated under the tent of Alan Izzard and Milton Lazarus for a few quiet drinks and to reflect on the day that was. There was entertainment provided via local comedian Damian Balfour and the red honey soon starting flowing. Little did we know there were quite a few Bass Sydney members fond of the old Muscats, Liqueurs and Fortified wines, specifically an appreciation for a nice Tawny Port. We sampled every vintage on offer accompanied by the finest dark chocolate courtesy of our hosts Al and Milton. Some bottles later, the Port Appreciation Club was formed! I certainly hope this becomes a tradition and continues to be a regular occurrence at Bass Sydney events, as it was a great night had by all.



Menangle Bass Outing – May 11

For those of us finding it difficult to grasp the idea that the bass season is drawing to a close, the last club outing for the season was held at Menangle on the Nepean River. Seven Bass Sydney members in total showed up for the day with the early birds being myself and Andre Dukino. After making the hour long drive from the North Shore, we managed to find the launch spot despite the thick fog! I pulled my head torch out of my bag only to discover that it had accidentally turned on in my tackle bag and was now flat as a tack (doh!) With only Dre's head torch to 'shine the way' and a bit of yak transporting we were on the water by 5:45am. Conditions were a bit chilly but the wind was down and a nice mist coated the river.

We worked the rail bridge first Dre eagerly peppering the pylons with his surface lure before moving further up river. My first cast saw a lovely knot in my braid so I spent the next 10 mins trying to untangle it before deciding to use my other rod until the sun came up and I could actually see what I was doing! My other rod was equipped with my trusty black Megabass Siglett. There was a nice submerged tree near the outer edge of the bridge which had the main trunk to the left near some reeds and one of the larger branches protruding out near the concrete pylon of the bridge...hmmm this looks bassy! I cast over and landed the lure between the branch and the pylon and let it sit for a few seconds. I then proceeded to make a couple of slow subtle twitches and let it sit for a further 8 seconds or so before beginning a dead slow retrieve. About 30cm into the retrieve a nice decent splash came up behind my lure with some force and scared the hell out of me....darn it! No hook up! I spent the next 10 mins throwing at least 30 casts into the same spot before giving up and moving on...could this be the sign of a great day? As the sun rose Dre and I continued to work the banks of this very snaggy and beautiful stretch of river. Unfortunately that surface strike was my only action of the next 8 hours' worth of

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casting! Dre managed to pick up a nice little hungry bass of 220mm on a bet spin which turned out to be the only fish of the day.

I decided to begin paddling back when I came across members Chris Ghosn and Dave Claydon who also had no interest shown in their offerings. Upon returning to the launch spot we met members Tham and Damian Balfour who decided to head downstream from the weir. They too had the same results as the rest of us without so much as an indication of any action. Thankfully Damian had brought along some Kangaroo meat patties and was making us some burgers for a feed. All that fruitless casting had made us hungry and I can happily say that Damian makes a mean roo burger! A nice warm cuppa and a belly full of food I sat back reflecting on the day that had been.

As we made our long journey back home I came to the realisation that I may have to finally concede that the bass season is over.....well.....at least for now!



Dumaresq R Murray Cod Project

Please see the following links to some interesting reading about the Dumaresq River Murray Cod project that I mentioned in my Caddysey story in the last issue of the Bronze Battler.

<http://anglingforconservation.org/determining-optimal-stocking-rates-for-murray-cod-in-the-dumaresq-river-the-study-of-an-icon/>

<http://frdc.com.au/knowledge/publications/fish/Documents/FISH%2020-1%20Taking%20stock%20getting%20the%20most%20out%20of%20our%20recreational%20fisheries.pdf>

Long time to go yet, but I would love to organise a group of us to go up for a week or so in April 2014. As I mentioned, we are free to camp at one of the TSR's or have a base camp at Brian Dare's Glenlyon Dam Tourist Park. We can be put on to the many day-long floats along the Dumaresq or fish the many different stretches of the Severn R (Qld), Tenterfield Ck, Mole R or the Macintire & Severn R (NSW) not that far away. I will put out something at the beginning of 2014. – HS THAM

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Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Action Plan

If you are interested in reading the latest draft for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Action Plan by the Catchment Management Authority HN, the latest draft version (3 May, 2013) can be found at the following link:

<http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au/multiattachments/6697.html>

Have your say on the review of NSW recreational fishing rules

The Department of Primary Industries has released a discussion paper 'Review of NSW Recreational Saltwater and Freshwater Fishing Rules', which outlines options and proposals to change a range of recreational fishing rules in NSW, including bag limits, some size limits and fishing methods.

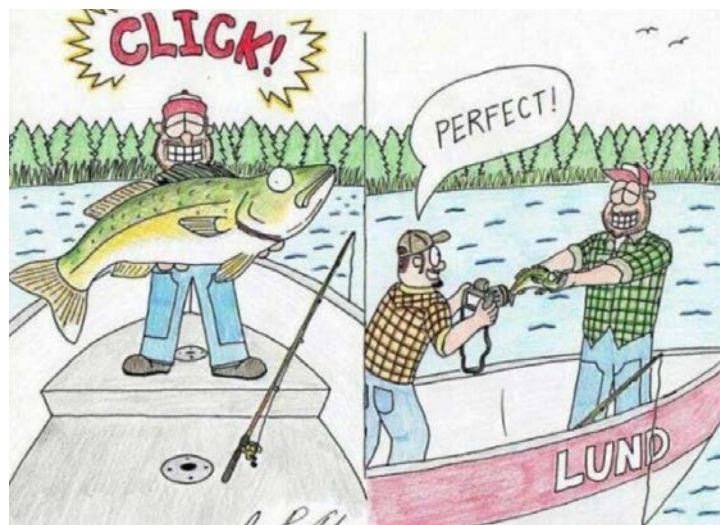
Anyone with an interest in our aquatic resources has the opportunity to comment on options for changes to current fishing rules.

The discussion paper is on public exhibition until 31 July 2013. Submissions from recreational fishers and members of the public can be lodged at any time during this period.

Link to website: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/info/review>

Monthly Fishing Cartoon Funny

Who is guilty of this?



Next Meeting is on , 7:30pm at
Northmead Bowling Club.
June, 11th, 2013

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