

	Australian Bass, <i>MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA</i>	
		
<h1>THE BRONZE BATTLER</h1>		
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GENERAL COMMITTEE: Daniel Flood, Derek Sonter, Rico van de Kerkhof and Paul Matten		
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President's Message

Due to technical difficulties this editions President's message was unable to be published. Please find below something I stumbled across in the media recently to replace it.



New President Ashley Thamm relieves Julia Gillard of her position and promises all Bass Sydney members a great fishing season to come in September 2013.

NEWS

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 Reminders

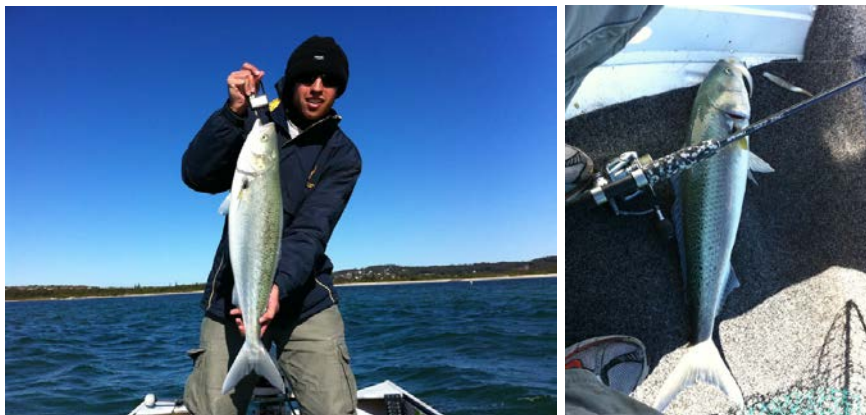
2013 membership fees are now due. If you have not paid for your membership please do so ASAP by contacting John Stokes.

GUEST SPEAKER General Meeting 13th August

Zhan Patterson & Tony Collins from the NSW Metropolitan Water Directorate will give Bass Sydney a briefing on the Warragamba Environmental Flows Options Assessment.

August 2013

The Editors message: It's been a very quiet off-season for me so far mainly due to a back injury and possibly a shoulder operation on the horizon. It's been a rather mild winter this year which has affected the annual Australian Salmon migration into Swansea channel up in Newcastle. The warmer currents have prolonged the salmon's entrance into Lake Macquarie and very few schools of Salmon or Tailor have been reported. This is usually my winter solace when the fresh is not an option. Seems the stars have not aligned for me this year...but that's okay, bass season is only round the corner!



Pete's monster 800mm Aust. Salmon – July 2011

Upcoming Events:

First event for Season Open is on September 1 on the **Colo River**. A canoe / kayak map of the Colo is available [here](#).



History of the Colo River

The original inhabitants of the Colo river valley were the aborigines. The Darug language group lived peacefully in the Colo area until the advent of white settlers from England.

A second expedition up the Hawkesbury was commenced on 28th June, 1789 by Governor Phillip, who was accompanied by Captains Hunter, Collins and George Johnston and Surgeon White. During this expedition the Colo River was explored and named 'Second Branch', the first branch on the Hawkesbury River being the Macdonald River. It is believed that they rowed approximately 12kms up the Colo from the Hawkesbury and stopped at the sand bank just east of the present day bridge on the Putty road.

August 2013

White settlers were living on the bank of the Colo from early 1800s with the first land grants being made in 1804 on the banks near the mouth of the river where it joins the Hawkesbury. Significant other land grants were made in 1933.

In the pre-motor vehicle era the Colo was serviced by boats which brought in goods for sale and took farm produce to the Hawkesbury River at Lower Portland from where the goods were put on bigger boats for Sydney. There was a wharf, "Gees Wharf" at the end of the tidal zone just east of the point where Wheeny creek flows into the Colo.

About the Colo River

The Colo River is a river in New South Wales, Australia. The Colo River begins at the confluence of the Wolgan River and the Capertee Rivers, north of Lithgow. The river flows eastwards and then south through a deep gorge in the northern Blue Mountains and ultimately ends at the point at which it flows into the Hawkesbury River at Lower Portland. The Colo River is approximately 97 kms in length.

The first 62kms of the Colo is inaccessible due to cliffs on either side of the river, except by experienced and hardy bushwalkers who brave the trackless scrub to experience a truly wild place less than 100km from the CBD of Sydney. The lower part of the Colo (35 kms) is developed and has farms on either side of the river.

The Colo wilderness was saved from development, logging and damming, in the late 1970's by the Colo Wilderness Preservation Society and other environmentalists. The Blue Mountains NP area, including the Wollemi NP, has received World Heritage listing, due in part to the discovery of the Wollemi Pine, often described as a 'living fossil' from the age of the dinosaurs.

The Colo River drains into the Hawkesbury River and then some 70 kms later out to sea. The Colo River is fresh water for its entire length but is tidal up to approximately 2 kms west of the Colo Bridge on the Putty Road. The tide at the Putty road bridge is approximately 4 hours behind that of Sydney Harbour at Fort Denison.

There is considerable community environmental activity through the Friends of Colo group and a number of riverbank management projects underway with private landholders. There are current efforts to rid the Colo of lantana which has taken hold in some of the lower parts of the river.

HCC Community Consultation Workshop

Hawkesbury City Council, with the support of NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, organized a Community Consultation Workshop as part of a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for the Upper Hawkesbury on 15/7/13 at the Deerubbin Centre, Windsor. Derek Sonter & Tham attended on behalf of the Club.

The stretch under discussion is from Yarramundi to Wisemans Ferry. The competing demands and pressures on the river in that area are diverse and intense. These are from urban development, agriculture, commercial fishing, mining, recreation, tourism and historical/cultural factors. The CZMP has to balance all of these demands! The Workshop was very well-attended with at least 40 people from all manner of groups & interests.

While Bass Sydney might only bass fish in the upper part of the stretch in question, let's not forget that every bass in the whole Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment, including those in the Colo R, Grose R, Macdonald R, Webbs Ck & Cattai Ck systems are spawned in that section! It is important that the Club be involved in any planning &/or discussion that may affect it.

The evening mainly consisted of "small group activities" aimed to identify those values (environmental, social & economic) that are important or are threatened in that stretch of river. The consultants that are contracted to do this study and generate the CZMP will use this sort of info as part of the Management Plan. Let's hope for the best!

One thing that I learnt from the evening is that there is a large sand-mining operation that has been approved at the Richmond Lowlands!! This prime agricultural land (and floodplain!) will be dug up! I don't know what the locals are doing about it or if it's all too late.

- HS Tham

Top Water Fishing 101

Top-water lures should come with a warning stuck to the packet, something along the lines of “This product is known to cause increased heart rate, sweaty palms, trembling limbs and in some cases, heart attacks”. These experiences would seem all too familiar to the top-water fisherman. That quiet moment when your lure is plopping or crawling away slowly back toward your kayak and the next second out of no-where ‘KASPLASH’ it explodes like an underwater grenade! Then, comes the fight our great Aussie Bass are famous for. Top-water lures come in a variety of choices from poppers to walk-the-dog style baits, buzzbaits, propbaits, pencils, crawlers, paddlers etc. They are the most exciting lures for bass anglers because you get to see the strike with your own eyes. One moment you’re working your lure across the top and the next a bass violently smashes it (and hopefully hooks up!) Bass can often stun their prey before swallowing it, and one powerful top-water strike will make you a firm believer in that.

Poppers are those lures with some type of concave face that catches water. They are retrieved with quick twitches of the rod tip to make the lure “bloop and blurl!” Twitches can be rapid or painfully slow. Propbaits feature metal propellers at the front and often the back of the lure. These propellers spin on the retrieve and really spit water when twitched with some force. Retrieve can be a constant slow motion or twitches.

Buzzbaits are wirebaits featuring a metal blade on a wire that bends and connects to a weighted head, hook and skirt. To properly work a buzzbait, cast and immediately begin your retrieve with constant cranking. Get the bait to the top as soon as possible and let it do the rest.

Walk-the-dog top-water lures take a little practice to master. Cast, then begin a twitch-twitch-twitch retrieve while slowly taking in line. The bait will sashay side-to-side when correctly retrieved. For best results, leave just a little slack in the line while twitching the rod tip. My favourite is the Lucky Craft Sammy 65.

Wobblers and Crawlers, these baits are particularly best at late afternoon/evening and early morning however can work throughout the day. Examples of these are the famous jitterbug, crazy crawler and our Bass Sydney Favourite, the soft shell cicadas. They make a loud plopping sound when retrieved steadily. Use a steady slow retrieve for best results and prepare yourself for bass annihilation!



Soft-shell Cicada



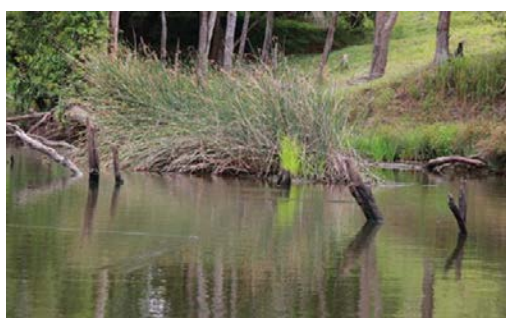
LuckyCraft Sammy 65



Arbogast Jitterbug



Purple and Black Buzzbait



Excellent surface structure



Surface strike

August 2013

Winter Options - Josh Pearson

For me, the end of May brings mixed emotions, elation reflecting on the season passed and devastation that I will not be able to target the mighty Bass until September again! Once over this initial depressing thought and associated 'crankiness' one can start thinking about the other piscatorial species discarded during the open season, that's right folks, there are other worthwhile targets apart from Bass lol!

After moving up to the Central Coast at the end of April this year, I was spoilt with some cracker bass sessions on new waters which really whet my appetite, particularly as my previous local shuts down late in the season. This just made it harder when the end of May rolled around. Luckily for me, living on St Huberts Island comes with certain benefits, the ability to walk the yak to my launch spot (or if I'm lazy I can drive the 500m) and having heaps of fishing options available softens the end of season blues somewhat!



Beautiful winter's day

Saltwater Adventures

Predominantly my fishing in winter revolves around the bread and butter saltwater species of flathead, bream and whiting, I did a smattering of freshwater stuff but more on this later. Since getting bitten by the bass bug I kind of forgot about how much fun fishing the salt can be, it also gets me in the good books with the missus being able to bring home a nice feed of her favourite fish, flathead! Flathead are by far the most common catch for me in my local system and in recent times, double digit captures of these tasty bottom dwellers has been common.



Delicious 50cm fish that fell to a Gulp! Turtleback Worm in Watermelon colour.

The average size of the fish so far this winter have been around the 46-50cm mark, not many under 40cm which surprises me, I have been unlucky with a couple of bigger girls including one that was over 90cm grrrrr! For those that haven't targeted them I will share some basic tips in the hope you will be able to get amongst a few yourselves.

In my experience, tides have not affected my catch rate in a traditional sense, they do however determine the areas I target. I find that on a rising tide the flathead will become more active in the shallow flats areas, moving up to harass bait fish and prawns whereas on a falling tide they will retreat to the drop-offs where food will be flushed to them. A very important part of selecting fishing spots is the presence of this food, generally speaking if I am targeting flathead (or any estuary species for that matter) I look for structure, in shallow water this generally takes the form of ribbon weed or oyster

August 2013

racks. Both of these structures provide cover to baitfish and prawns which in turn attract the larger predatory fish such as flathead. In most instances these structures are also bordered by drop-offs into deeper water providing several options depending on the tide.



Structure!

I predominantly fish with soft plastics when targeting fish in the salt, I find them easy to work and exceptionally effective. For flathead I use plastics ranging from 2-4" in length and normally use either a prawn or worm pattern. Success for me has come on the Gulp! range of plastics and I am a firm believer in the scent attracting fish. The ones doing the damage for me this season have been the 2" shrimp and the 4" turtleback worm.



Turtleback worm is definitely effective

To rig my plastic to the leader I have started using a loop knot, this is only something new I have started to trial and so far have had great success. The additional movement afforded by the loop helps give the plastics a better action in my opinion, I personally use a Lefty's loop or a similar variation. Jig head choice comes down to current flow and depth but it should be noted I rarely use anything heavier than 1/8oz. This really does come down to where you are fishing, you want enough weight to get it down and still look natural on the drop, your retrieve style will also have a bearing on which weight you choose, in shallow water less than 2m I regularly fish typically "bream" weight jig heads ranging from 1/40-1/12oz. Choosing the size of hook comes down to the plastic of choice, e.g. for a Gulp Shrimp 2.5" I will generally use a #1 or 1/0, whereas a Gulp 2" grub needs a #2. Don't be scared of using smaller hooks if they suit the lure you are using, just use your judgement, the more movement in the plastic the better, test it out in the water next to the yak to make sure it looks natural before belting out a cast. One last thing on rigging your plastics, make sure they are rigged straight! The action of the lure is in 95% of cases dependent on how well you rig it, take your time and if it doesn't look right, do it again. One thing I have learnt is that if not straight and natural looking your catch rate definitely decreases.

Surface fishing can be very slow in winter but the fish you generally catch will be better specimens, my lure of choice for surface work in the salt is the Sammy 65, worked slow with lots of pauses will attract the breambos, particularly around structure. I have had sporadic success this winter chasing whiting on the surface on the flats but only caught a few, the ones I have got have been around 40cm though so quality is definitely good! These saltwater sessions will continue to wet the pallet until season open!

August 2013



Winter whiting



Winter bream

Freshwater Fever

Now just because it is closed season for bass doesn't mean that you can't fish the fresh! One of the species you can target is the mighty Murray Cod and while you will probably freeze your bollocks off chasing them, but there is nothing quite like the surface hit from a decent cod and the following is a brief recollection of my trip down to the mighty Bidgee.



Cold weather coddling

I had the opportunity to fish with Dave Cole from DC Spinnerbaits and Romen Dicoovski on the mighty Murrumbidgee outside of Canberra. Having never fished this location I was unsure what to expect, freezing weather was a certainty, around -5 degrees was the predicted low but the lure of cod kept me warm... sort of.

A serious amount of wombats live along the river so we had to watch our step, hundreds of leg breaking holes all along there! We reached the river and proceeded to pepper all the likely looking spots including the moving water and deep holes. The sun was lighting the sky slightly when the temperature dropped significantly and it was definitely below zero! Romen decided to clamber out on a rock outcrop that involved getting your feet wet... unless you were clever like him and used a long net as a walking stick to make it across... Dave and I meanwhile continued upstream about 100m and started to cast in some good looking water, boulders with a nice log laydown with some flowing water coming into it. Romen shouted out that he had a massive cod follow his lure back to his feet and spirits were lifted significantly, I had a Kingfisher Mantis 88 Jointed lure in black tied on and my next cast landed right next to a steep boulder. Two cranks of the lure was all

August 2013

it took before my it was taken by a beautiful little cod of 50 something centimetres, as I was unhooking the fish I heard a big splash from Romen's direction followed by an enthusiastic shout of "ON!!!! BIG FISH!!!!" Dave took a quick snap of mine and tossed up going to help out or put one more cast in... Lucky he chose to put the cast in because he put the cast in the same spot as me and was greeted by a slightly bigger fish in the 60s. Quick photo and release before he raced back to clamber out to help Romen land his fish. After this 5 minute window they switched off but the session was sensational!



Cold water Bidgee cod



Dave's nice healthy Cod off the surface



Romen's horse!

I decided to fish the following morning and it was even colder. Romen and I had a couple of decent hits but this was between defrosting the ice that formed on the guides from the retrieve, the spool of the bait caster froze up and I had to breathe warm air on it to enable casting! No more fish for the trip but the itch had been scratched and should tide me over until opening day!

- Josh Pearson

August 2013

Message from the Port Appreciation Club

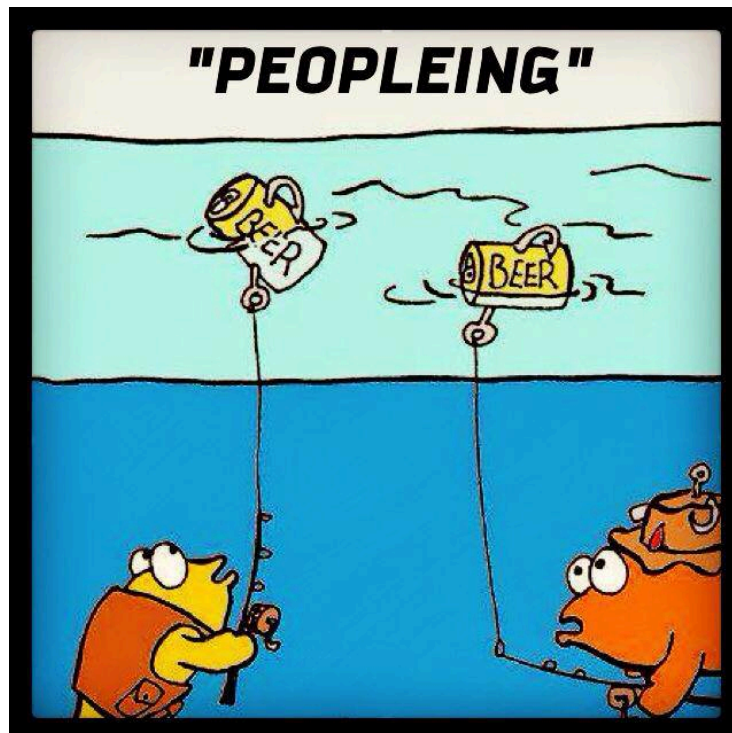
I went to the Farmers Markets at the Newcastle Show Ground earlier this month and had the privilege of tasting a few of the local winemaker's offerings. There's no surprise that as an enthusiastic member of PAC that I went straight to the Tawny Port offerings. A new port which stole my tastebuds for the day was one from local winemakers Draytons Family Wines with their Log Press Old Tawny Port. I hope to be able to bring a bottle along to our next event for members to sample and compare.

The other one I sampled was the infamous Dr Jurd's Jungle Juice. Formerly the only place you could purchase Jungle Juice was from the Wollombi Tavern, it is now being distributed under license by approved dealers. Still to this day, no-one knows the exact ingredients of Dr Jurd's Jungle juice, but I have tasted it and impressions are that is not a refined port to sit and appreciate, but a fun, fruity offering with a bit of zazz and that hint of something unique and special...it has been a must try for visitors of the Wollombi Wine Saloon since 1957! To read more about Dr Jurd and his Jungle Juice you can visit the Wollombi Tavern Website [here](#).



Monthly Fishing Cartoon Funny

Ever wondered "what-if" the shoe was on the other foot?



August 2013

Next Meeting is on , 7:30pm at
Northmead Bowling Club.
October, 8th, 2013

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August 2013



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