Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA

THE BRONZE BATTLER

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EDITOR: Peter Hatzidimitriou
EVENTS, POINTS SCORE & BASSCATCH OFFICER: HS Tham

GENERAL COMMITTEE: Daniel Flood, Derek Sonter, Rico van de Kerkhof and Paul Matten

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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

President's Message

Another Basscatch is upon us and while some of us may be wondering where the season has gone, others in the club will be reflecting upon a great summer of Bass fishing with lots of big fish caught already this season. If the current weather continues the season should extend right into April, which is something we've missed the last few years.
Despite the lack of flows, the creeks are firing and the main rivers are producing Bass of mammoth proportions for those willing to put in the hours. Cicadas are definitely the "trendy diet" for the Bass this summer, they are out in numbers with an amazing range of species to be seen at various creeks around Sydney.

It's been a productive year off the water too, our Russell St project is coming along nicely with 300 canopy species planted in November and successful grant applications for further work on the Lane Cove and the Nepean River at Richmond.
We also welcome some new members to the club, I hope you all get something out of being in the club and I hope to see you all at the upcoming Basscatch. If recent conditions are anything to go by it should be a great weekend with plenty of Bass on offer.

NEWS

Bass Sydney would like to welcome the following new members

Mischelle: Meet Mischelle our newest member. Mischelle joined the club at our Russell St open day and caught the largest fish of the day (40cm), about 2mins after using a buzzbait for the very first time! Cracker fish Mischelle!

400mm model caught on a buzzbait

Scott Musk: Scott recently joined the club and wasted no time in participating in our Russell Street working bee day. Scott has also registered for his first BassCatch this weekend. Tightlines Scott!

The Editors message: Welcome to the first edition of 2014! My season has been rather slow in the New Year. My days of PB's seem like a distant memory. My last 2 sessions have resulted in doughnuts! I've since purchased a new kayak and now the proud owner of a mint condition Perception Minnow, a yak I bought to do some tighter water and low grade rapid. A little lighter and more manoeuvrable than the trusty old Loon. Hopefully the Bass gods will smile down upon me soon, if not there's always Murray Cod..but don't hold that against me! Tight lines. The Editor - Pete Hatzidimitriou.

RAPTURE OVER A FEW SMALL BASS!

The Parramatta River Bass Catch was on again in December. I dutifully arranged to fish with Damian and Fowkesy, as usual not expecting that much. We knew there are fish in The Pound, but in about 10yrs of trying, nobody in the club has managed to catch a bass upstream of the Marsden St weir. Well, that all changed this time. The plan was to repeat what Fowkesy and I did last year – launch under the O'Connell St Bridge and fish up to the "Kiosk weir" before returning to pack our yaks and walk down to The Pound for some land-based casting around dusk. So we all met around 4pm and launched. The weather was not looking too great – cool with S & SE winds. Fowkesy fished down to the Marsden St weir before coming back upstream. Damian and I just started at the bridge and moved up. About 200m up from the bridge, there was a snag complex next to a steepish bank and some tree cover. I had already prepared Damian to not expect much, but he was the first to hook up! Casting a jigspin into the snaggy bank, he lets out a cheer and I turned to see him hooked up! I just couldn't believe it! The "Damian Factor" has kicked in again! He has upgraded his PB 3 times so far this season and he is the first BS member to land a bass upstream of Marsden St! It was a chubby 295mm specimen. "My God!" I was thinking to myself. What fiendish Scottish luck is this??! After some pix and hearty congratulations, the fish was of course returned. Fowkesy had nearly caught up with us from his downstream jaunt and saw us taking photos and making noise, so he paddled over to see the fish. He said he would've been happy if that was it, but it got better.

Damian's 295:

Fowkesy in the background:

Not even 10m from where Damian caught his fish, I cast a black & purple Attack minnow (I was going ol' skool for a change) and I too hooked up! A 264mm bass! All 3 of us were within a 10m radius, so that was also heartily celebrated. I was stoked! "C'mon Al, have a cast", I said. He did and within a couple of casts, he too hooked up! A 294mm bass taken on a small spinnerbait! All 3 of us were on the scoreboard! I just wouldn't have believed it if I didn't see it myself. The smiles on Alan's and my face couldn't be wiped off! Just to underscore it all, I put a suicide cast right up the back of the snag and was promptly hit and I dragged a small (246mm) bass out and over the sticks to register my second bass of the day.

My 264

My 246

Fowkesy:

All this action was within a 20m stretch of bank. After flogging it for a while longer, we continued upstream with smiles on our faces. It proved to be very quiet with nothing right up to the next weir. On our paddle back to the launch, Damian managed his second bass with a 215mm model on a Purple Prince Nobroko Softcada, that's 5 bass in total.

After we got back to O'Connell St and put our yaks back on our cars, Alan had to go, leaving Damian and I to walk down to The Pound to meet up with new member Ming who got there an hour or two before us. Ming is a Pound regular and is now Bass Sydney's Parramatta River Project Officer. He alerted us to the slaughter of the trapped bass in The Pound by meat fishermen. Ming reported that he had caught a couple before we got there and dropped a big fish as well. Ming landed a 310 & a 250. The 3 of us fished for another 2hrs, but the fish had shut down and we didn't land another fish.

Damian's 215 on the Purple Prince Softcada

Daniel Flood put in a couple of hours at The Pound the next day, but failed to catch a fish. I am not aware of any other members that fished that weekend.

The numbers:

- Total No. of bass caught 14 & 15/12/13: **7**
- **5** caught between Marsden St weir and The Kiosk weir + **2** caught in The Pound
- Sizes: 215, 250, 246, 264, 294, 295 & 310mm FL
- Damian, Alan & I fished for 4hrs each above Marsden St
- Ming fished for approx. 3.5hrs at The Pound
- Damian & I fished for approx. 2hrs each at The Pound
- Daniel fished for approx. 2.5hrs at The Pound

So, what does it all mean? There's always the sneaking suspicion these bass were washed down from Lake Parramatta. There was a fair spread of sizes/year classes though, from 215 – 295mm and without sophisticated testing, it's impossible for us humble fishos to know. We can presume (or hope?!) that these bass came up the Marsden St weir fish lock during the times when it was working. Consulting with NSW Fisheries, the last 2 times Lake Parramatta was stocked was in 2003 and 2010. It's conceivable that the smaller ones of 215 – 246mm were washed down from the Lake, but the larger ones, in the "medium sized" category are most probably from natural recruitment.
Parra City Council's consultants did some fish trapping the weekend after our visit as they had installed traps in the fishway at Charles St weir and also in the Kiosk weir fishway. It will be interesting what they find. NSW Fisheries also conducted some electrofishing in The Pound area as well as at several spots upstream of Marsden St about 2 months before. Anecdotally, they caught several fish in the Pound but only 1 all the way up from Marsden St up to behind Westmead Hospital. These results were not surprising, but it was remarked that fewer fish were caught in The Pound than expected and this might be attributed to the harvest of those fish.
The Parramatta River Fishways project is at a critical juncture. The Marsden St Weir fish lock has not been performing as it should. At best it has been "intermittent". PCC are well aware of this and is working with their contractor and consultants to get it operating properly. The funding for the installation of another fish ladder at the weir just upstream of The Kiosk weir has been lost and it needs to be prioritized urgently. The other side of the equation is the proliferation of meat fishos at The Pound keeping multiple bass and (any other creature) they catch. The bass can get up to the Pound easily with the new fishway at Charles St weir, but are trapped in The Pound due to the Marsden St fish lock and are easy targets. As usual, nothing is simple and as I see it, the only way we can achieve our long-cherished dream to have a self-sustaining bass fishery in the upper Parramatta R, like we have in the Lane Cove R, is to tread a multi-organizational minefield to:

1. Protect the bass in The Pound by having it declared a “No Take Zone” like the LCR. Ideally, it should be “No Take” from Charles St weir and upstream, but one in The Pound alone would go a long way to protect the fish.
2. Get the Marsden St fish lock operational; AND
3. Install a fish ladder above The Kiosk.

The Club will need to work hard towards achieving these goals. We are close, but not there yet!

- **HS Tham**

How does barometric pressure affect bass fishing?

You know the feeling. It's raining, gloomy and the change of air pressure has you moving slow and fighting fatigue, you don’t feel like going outside and a movie on the couch with a bowl of popcorn seems more inviting than dragging out the yak right? Well, humans aren't alone in feeling this change in equilibrium! Barometric pressure is defined as the pressure of the atmosphere (you've probably heard the term "atmospheric pressure").

It's clear now, right? Try thinking of it this way. When barometric pressure is high, air is sinking and pushing on the ground. That same air must eventually rise because it has nowhere else to go. When it rises, air cools down and moisture condenses. With that condensation, barometric pressure goes down. The exact effect barometric pressure has on bass, if any, is not altogether clear. While there is very little scientific information to be found on the topic, many fisherman swear barometric pressure plays a large role in whether or not a fishing trip will be successful. And their specific theories are abundant.

In the end, most of the theories come to the same conclusion. When barometric pressure is at a high, bass fishing will be at a low, especially in shallower waters, where changes in pressure are more easily felt. Some say that the bass swim bladder is sensitive to changes in air pressure. When barometric pressure is high, the swim bladder feels increased pressure and the fish becomes slow and tired. Other anglers fail to explain why it occurs, but agree and claim bass fishing will be at its best during times of dropping, low or slowly rising pressure. It is important to remember that these are still just theories, and there are some who believe pressure has little to do whether bass will bite. But hey, who better to trust than people who have experienced the highs and lows first-hand?

The consensus among those anglers is to avoid fishing when barometric pressure has peaked. What do you think? What’s been your experience in terms of good or bad sessions during a low barometer? Definitely provides some food for thought.

- **Pete Hatzi**

Bass Sydney Members Recent Catches

Scott Maclean picked up this tidy Estuary Perch in late January on a duel Hardcore Moe-b. This fish measured 360mm.

Chris Ghosn picked up this healthy Murray Cod on a recent trip, his first I'm sure of many more to come, well done Chris!

Josh Pearson has been travelling up North Chasing some Mid North Coast bass and coming up with the goods. Onya bud!

Andre Dukino has been getting creative with his camera skills. Here are some artistic pics of some of Andre's recent catches.

https://www.facebook.com/BassSydneyFishing

Hawkesbury-Nepean BassCatch February 15 & 16

It's that time of year again! The BassCatch is this month! It's always a fun occasion, so support your club and NSW Fisheries.

Please register via our website: http://www.basssydney.com/basscatch/index.php

Campsite:
* Riverside Ski Park, 307-309 Cattai Rd, Cattai
* Cost is unchanged from last time ($14/full day)
* Pay at the campground office as you first arrive
* Camping Friday and/or Sat night

Food:
* The Club will provide dinner on Friday night and Saturday night
* Please advise which night you will be camping &/or having dinner when you register
* Cost is not confirmed yet, but would not be much different to last time (<$10 per dinner)
* For those camping Sat night, Sunday breakfast is also provided and it's FREE!

Briefing & Catch Cards:
* Briefing for BassCatch virgins will be conducted either during our GM at Northmead BC on Tuesday, 8/10/13 or at the

Campsite
* As always, Catch Cards will be issued at either the GM or at the campsite.

Next Meeting is on at 7:30pm Tuesday 12th of February at Northmead Bowling Club

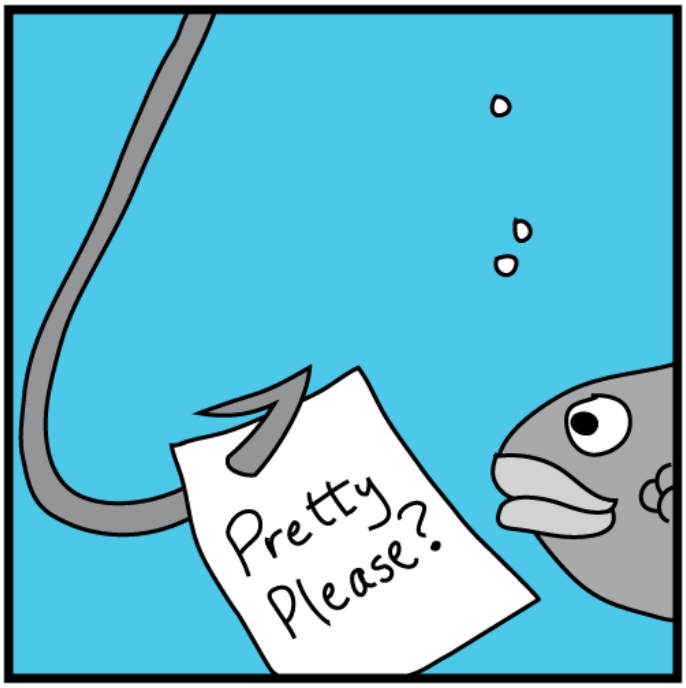
Kayak Raffle

- Wilderness Systems Aspire 100 kayak.
- Worth $900+ retail
- For BASS SYDNEY MEMBERS ONLY
- $2 per ticket
- Unlimited no. of tickets can be bought
- Will be drawn at the Christmas Party 2014

Specifications:

Length:	10' / 305 cm
Width:	27.5" / 70 cm
Max Capacity:	300 lbs. / 136 kg
Deck Height:	14" / 36 cm
Weight:	44 lbs. / 20 kg
Cockpit Length:	49" / 124 cm
Cockpit Width:	22.25" / 57 cm

Monthly Fishing Cartoon Funny



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