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EVENTS, POINTS SCORE & BASSCATCH OFFICER: Rico van de Kerkhof

GENERAL COMMITTEE: Derek Sonter, Rico van de Kerkhof,, Trent Deaves & Damian Balfour.

EDITOR: Damian Balfour

Email : [info@basssydney.com](mailto:info@basssydney.com)

## Presidents Message

President's Report December 2016

Well, Christmas is almost upon us again, seems to be getting here quicker and quicker each year for me. Bass fishing has not been high on my "done that" list this season due to many different reasons, so I hope you all have made up for me? Our Christmas Dinner was on this week (Tues 13<sup>th</sup> Dec) and it was fantastic to see so many of you (& partners) there, apart from the Bass Catch events, this is the *one* time where we get quite a few members in the same spot for any length of time, thus it was pleasing to mingle with those able to attend at this busy time of year. Turnout was around twenty souls & the atmospheres along the long dining table was positively congenial. Tham had sourced a new venue *Pron Prohm*, Thai Restaurant in North Strathfield, the food and drink was good & plentiful and we had our own little dining area upstairs, for all the fun and noisy bits, certificates & raffles. The venue suited us and the staff were attentive.

Our special guests Steve Defina and Prof Culum Brown also attended.

Thanks to Steve Defina from Nepean River Fishing Tours [www.nepeanrivertours.com.au](http://www.nepeanrivertours.com.au), who regaled us with recent tales from the Nepean River and was there to congratulate Milton: Milton won this year's 'half day fishing trip' with Steve. Steve Defina, who as club sponsor,

encourages habitat rehabilitation and rewards club member attendance and continued riparian work at Russell St, Emu Heights.

Also in attendance was Associate Professor Culum Brown. Prof Culum Brown from Macquarie University's faculty of Science and Engineering, had some exciting updates for us, an early Christmas present so to speak, as he presented a brief overview of the ten 'tagged bass' in Lane Cove River that we caught and released earlier this year. Those basses are participating in research which is looking at migration and spawning as well as their other piscatorial activities. Prof Culum Brown stated that they had collected lots of data on their movements up and below the weir, using the fishway that Bass Sydney helps maintain. There will be more information to follow.

Seems there might be good news on the Parramatta River front as well with the new council keen to proceed with the last fishway, let's hope.

I have also been to a meeting with the Environmental Trust about fish habitat and have just received a draft of the new plan, another positive.

Alan Izzard

## The Editors Message

Welcome to the December edition of the Bronze Battler, the last for 2016. I'd like to thank all those this year that have made submissions – it's really appreciated. For some members, their contributions are the umpteenth and very much welcomed – keep them coming. And for others, it's their first submission – a somewhat daunting prospect maybe, but really appreciated by myself and the readers and club members I can assure you, we'd like more. I often get positive feedback from our readers and I endeavour to pass these on to the specific authors. Thus, a heartfelt thanks to all contributors and those that offer feedback.

I'd like to say thanks to Steve Defina from Nepean River Fishing Tours [www.nepeanrivertours.com.au](http://www.nepeanrivertours.com.au), who attended our Christmas dinner and congratulated Milton on winning the raffle for the 'guided fishing day' that Steve organises.

And thanks also to Ass. Prof. Culum Brown who attended and updated the party on the LCR Bass research project – there's more data, conclusions, observations to come as the piece gets written up for publication. On Tuesday (13<sup>th</sup> December) Bass Sydney had its Christmas dinner at a new venue, and thanks to Tham the Pron Prohm, Thai Restaurant 209 Concord Rd, North Strathfield proved to be a most suitable venue, easy parking, with an upstairs room that met our needs, food was delicious and service was speedy and tidy. We enjoyed ourselves and had time to catch up with each other for a chat. There were certificates awarded also.

**Damian**

Bronze Battler submissions to [bronzebattler@yahoo.com](mailto:bronzebattler@yahoo.com)

## **CLUB NEWS**

After we see in the New Year and commence 2017, there's the first club outing of the year on January 21/22 at the Upper Colo Reserve with the possibility of camping over the weekend.

There's also the first general meeting of the year on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017, 1930hrs at Northmead Bowling Club . Everyone is also welcome at the regular muster on the 'first Saturday of the month' at Russell Street, Emu Heights, for some Bush Regeneration, riparian repair work on our site that'll help our local Aussie Bass: those native saplings we've planted, this year will need some watering, weeding and followed by a BBQ we could deservedly fish on afterwards?

There's a great rod & reel raffle in progress, the rod can be customised to your own specifications and is to be drawn at the AGM, tickets can be bought from Rico at all club events.

## **November Road Trip**

In mid November I hit the road with the wife and kids in tow for a much needed break. We have family on the sunshine coast so the plan was to hop our way north, spend a few days with them and then make a few stops on the way back. Given that we had plenty planned with the kids I decided not to tow the boat as opportunities for anything more than short fishing sessions would be limited. I did put the yak (newly acquired from Rico) on the roof with the plan of chasing a few bass (and maybe a jack or two) when the opportunity arose. At that point I'd only used it on the trip to Karuah and for one night session on the Georges R in October so I was looking forward to some more time getting used to it.

### **Coomera River**

My first chance was an early morning start on the Gold Coast. We were all spent from a few big days at the theme parks so I took the chance when the kids were at least likely to sleep in a little (which didn't eventuate of course). I did the usual google earth searching and checked out a few you tube clips the night before and decided on the some likely looking water on the Coomera River.





With no daylight savings in QLD it was broad daylight by 4.45am. I was casting before 5am and although I figured I may have missed a possible early morning surface bite I decided to start with a surface lure. After about 30mins casting and only one surface boil to show for it I changed to a plastic. I slowly made my way upstream through some great looking water but only managed to land 1 bass (305mm) from 3 hits but was happy to break the duck. Twice I came across what I thought had to be lungfish air breathing (the mouth appeared far too big to be a carp although I knew there were carp in there). Also at one point I was startled by a huge surface take about 100m away that shattered the silence and sent nearby birds scattering. It seemed far too big to be a bass and at that point I wondered what else was in here. I paddled over and had several casts in the area but nothing eventuated.



There was also an encounter with two very decent sized spiders of unknown species that thought the bottom of my yak looked like a great place to run around. They had jumped aboard while I was retrieving my lure from a tree after an ordinary cast. If there were any onlookers I'm sure they would have pissed themselves.

On my way back I ran into two young guys on kayaks chasing bass who had just seen a platypus but hadn't caught anything. We ended up fishing the last stretch of the river together and sharing a few tales. They were from Brisbane but had never fished the Coomera either. I told them I planned to get out again the next morning but was planning on fishing another system and was considering either the Albert or Logan River. They were both very quick to say that the Albert was one of their locals and they regularly had good sessions on there. Jaydon, the younger of the two brothers also added that he had got his PB of 52cm from there in September! They quickly offered to join me for an early session the following day and were keen to show me their spots. We planned to meet at spot X at 3.30am.

That afternoon while the kids were asleep I had a quick search on the net to see if lungfish were present in Coomera (which they are so that confirmed my sightings) and also what else is in there that would be capable of the massive surface detonation I had seen. Turns out that some time back the Coomera was also stocked with Mary River Cod so that seems the most likely culprit.

I also did a bit more research on the Albert R but not much of it was positive. Apparently it has been stocked with bass several times by local clubs but everything I read suggested it fished poorly and was overrun with carp. There was also a



significant weir which had a very poorly functioning fish ladder on it. This did dampen my enthusiasm a bit but I was still keen to see what was on offer.



### **Albert River**

I met Jaydon & George (the two guys from the previous day) at 3.30am and after a short drag through the bush and a scramble/slide with the yaks down a very steep and long bank, we hit the Albert River at 3.40am. Anticipation was high after the boys had been talking it up when we arrived. It turned out that these guys hadn't been fishing for bass for very long and had rarely used surface lures. When I suggested that we could be in for a good surface bite they were quick to cut off their plastics and tie on a pair of Kokoda bats. I started with my most consistent surface producer, a black 1/4oz jitterbug.

It didn't take long for the action to start as Jaydon's lure was taken aggressively right beside his yak on the second cast of the morning. What followed was probably the best surface bite I have experienced. By 5am I had 22 bass and the boys had another 17 between them. The hits were savage and we must have missed at least that many fish again. I caught all 22 on the same lure and only had to change a scuffed leader once.

The river was narrow (very narrow in some sections) with tree canopy from opposite banks joining above the river for much of it. Any cast that was within a few metres of the bankside or overhanging branches got quick attention from the resident bass. Many of them were over 300mm with the best going 360mm but unfortunately we didn't encounter any big fish. What they lacked in size they certainly made up for in aggression.









As daylight took hold and the bite slowed we paddled upstream as far as the weir as I was keen to have a look at the fish ladder I had read about. I hadn't seen one of this design and it was clear that unless there was significant flow or minor flood that it was bordering on useless. I should have taken a pic while there but for some reason I didn't think to. It was badly clogged with leaves and debris at the top but there was still a small amount of flow coming over the weir (which was about a 4m drop to the river below). I took my paddle and used it to clear the top of the fish ladder and after that we turned and headed back downstream to the cars. I thanked the guys for the local's tour and we bid farewell with the promise of future trips when I'm up there next. I was pretty happy after scoring fish on two new systems and had definitely found some more water to explore on the next trip north. It was back to Wet n Wild for me that day and the Gold Coast fishing was over.

Jaydon rang me the next day to say that he had driven down to the river again that morning to see what difference it had made to the river height after clearing the fish ladder. I was surprised to hear that flow over the weir had stopped and the river below the weir had dropped by at least 30cm!

From there it was onto the Sunshine Coast and back south. I did have a good session on the Maroochy River and another on the Hunter's Wollombi Brook but will report on those next time.

Cheers,

Jason

## **Williams River Bass Catch – November 2016**

Always a friendly, well-run event on a gorgeous stream not that far from Sydney; I had not been to one for at least 3 years. On the last occasion, I attended, I landed 60 Bass with not a single one measuring more than 300mm. My float partner on that occasion, Ron Rogers got over 70 with 1 or 2 just falling over the 300mm mark. We would have caught more that time if it were not for a capsized boat and some lost gear. *Guess who??!* The story was that local pub fishing clubs and other clubs were stocking the Williams indiscriminately courtesy of the "\$ for \$" scheme. This had the negative effect of devaluing a nice fishery.

After a tough few months, I was desperate to get away for a weekend's fishing so I planned to fish Hunter Native Fish's Williams Bass Catch in November. I organized a small group of 4 BS members to go with me and I managed to get the last cabin available that weekend. Doug and I were to share his car while Daren Cade will meet us in Clarence Town leaving after work. Matt Hahn will join us when he got there later that night. After that weekend, I am very happy to report the better bass are back in the Williams!

I took the Friday (18<sup>th</sup>) off and Doug and I left his place at Chatswood just after 0500h with our yaks on Doug's Pajero. The plan was to fish a Hunter Valley stream before checking in at the Holiday Park at Clarence Town. I thought we'd fish either the Allyn R or the Paterson R. We soon pulled into the tiny village of Vacy where the Allyn runs into the Paterson. The Pato looked a bit low, but the Allyn looked like it was flowing well. It was more stained than I thought it would be, but not a problem for lure fishing. We checked out a couple of access points I'd mapped out beforehand and decided to launch at one that I had not been to before. Easy access to the water and Doug and I were soon on the water, heading upstream.

The Allyn R goes a long way up into the wilds of the Barrington Tops, but it is a small stream cutting through mostly rocky substrate. My previous experiences on that stream have always involved getting in and out of the yak many times per day. No difference this time around even though we were very low on the Allyn system.







My little bass on SSC to blood new rod -



The bass were not falling over themselves to hit our lures, but the action was fairly steady. Doug fished a SSC most of the day while I switched between that, a jigspin and 1 or 2 other lures. The fish that came our way were not huge, but they were all bright and healthy. My first fish of the day turned out the biggest at ~31cm FL. Doug ran out the easy winner that day with about a dozen to ~29cm. I think I landed 7 which included one on a SSC to blood my brand new Shimano Yak Raider 5'10" 2-4kg spin rod. It was hot that day and we put in a pretty full day from around 0800 – 1500h. Lowlight for me was losing a biggy that managed to partly straighten the jighead hook on a jigspin!



My 1<sup>st</sup> fish for the day on the Allyn ~31cm



After checking in to our cabin, having a shower and a couple of hours of relaxation (a little snooze from Doug, all worn out by the day's exertions) Doug & I joined the HNF boys for dinner. Darren soon arrived and we all had dinner and a few drinks with everybody. Matt was not to arrive until around midnight and I had to stay up to let him in.

My plan was for Doug, Darren and myself to fish from Dungog to Al's neighbour's property upstream of the Alison bridge. According to my calculations, this property is about 4k upstream of Alison. It's nearly 15 from Dungog to Alison which is a very long day, so it was good to reduce it by 4k. This Bass Catch was very well-attended and we found out that we would have to share that stretch with another party of 3. We managed to get going early Saturday and were on the water before the other group. However, the other group caught up with us after a few hours. At times, on such a skinny river, it felt crowded, but it can't be helped, especially as it was a well-attended event. (*Take note Bass Sydney!*)

Again, our Man of the Moment, Doug did very well, kicking my butt with 19 landed, most of them on the SSC. Darren also kicked my butt with an even dozen, including his first SSC bass. He landed several on the cicada that day and he declares he's hooked on surface bassin'! Doug landed 3 over 300mm and Darren also got at least one over that mark. Yours truly did not have a good day. I didn't catch a fish until after lunch! My "Dropped Fish Weekend" continued with me losing 2 good fish. An unseen one hit my jigspin next to a root ball and I was snagged deep within in about half a second! Got lure back, but no fish. Later, I was to lose another bass that was pushing 40cm just as I was about to net it! I ended with 9 for the day, failing to get into double figures and also failing to get one over 30cm. We all agreed that the fish were pulling hard! A darn sight better than the lethargic early season bass I have caught this season so far.



Saturday was thankfully cooler than Friday, but the constant in-and-out of the yaks took their toll on us. I was particularly happy to get to our exit point and was thankful that we didn't have another 4k's to do.

Pix from the day:



Doug's 1<sup>st</sup> fish of the day, a few minutes after starting. Nice low-30's on SSC.





More from Doug...





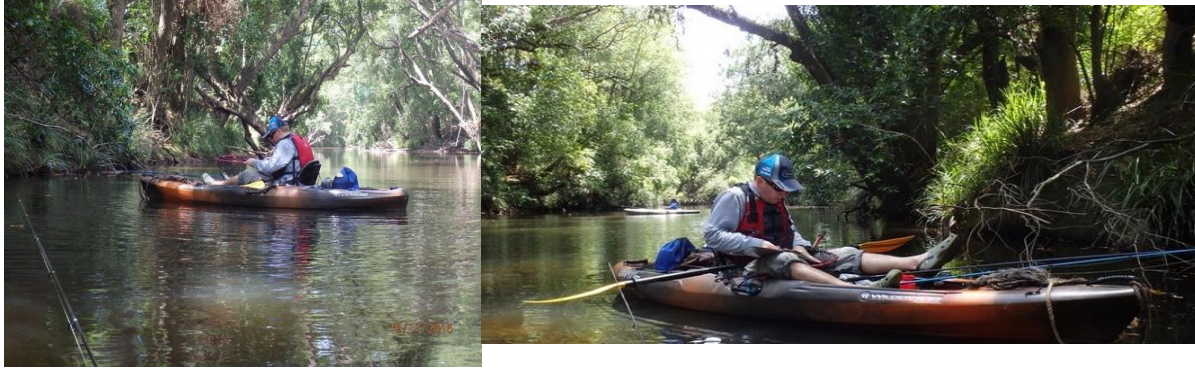


And more...





Lets not forget Darren:



Meanwhile, our kayak-averse American Bass Pro Matt spent the day solo on his tinny fishing between CT and Mill Dam Falls. I had primed him with low expectations of decent size fish, but when we caught up with him at dinner, he had a great day. He accounted for over 30 Bass with 5 over 300mm, several good dropped fish and even a bust-off. He thought it was a nice river. Of course, every single fish he caught was on the SSC!

The plan for Sunday was for Doug, Darren and myself to leave CT and to fish at Mooney Mooney Ck on the way home. Matt had such a good time, he put in another few hours on the Williams Bass Catch. Darren was tempted by Matt's invitation to fish with him Sunday, but Darren had migraine problems over the weekend and decided he should just head home instead.

Doug and I got to MMC just after 10am and met up with Jeremy Chan who had been there since early AM. MMC is the site of my first ever jewy on a lure earlier this year when Shayne Hodgson and I went up there. I hoped for a repeat of that and maybe encounter some flatties, bream and EP's. Nothing much was happening on the main creek with us getting a few just-legal flatties and Doug dropped what was either a bass or EP on a Zman grub. The tide was rising when we got there and I wanted to have a poke up a feeder creek to see if any EP's or even bass are up there. On our way back to the cars, we turned up the feeder as there was plenty of water then and still rising. Doug got a bass on a SSC and we soon found a population of cicada-munching tidal bass there. Doug got a nice one in the low-30's and 1 or 2 more in the mid-to-high-20's. I landed one on a



black Bat which I called for a mid-30 fish as it pulled so hard, but it was only around 28/29cm! I dropped another on the Bat a little later. It was great to see healthy bass in the tribs. I can see me going back in the future and getting out of the yak to explore further upstream of this tributary.

Tidal tributary of Mooney Mooney Ck:



Doug with a cicada-munching tidal bass:



Only 28/29cm but I thought it was a 35. Hard-pulling tidal bass.





I got to go away, everybody thought the Williams is gorgeous and everyone had a good time! What more can I ask for?? *Maybe a few more fish...?*

**HS Tham**



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**Next Meeting is on**  
**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017**  
**7:30pm**  
**@**  
**Northmead Bowling Club**

**Monthly Fishing Cartoon**



**BASS SYDNEY FISHING  
CLUB**

*Superstitious award*

Awarded to:

*Matt McHugh*

For believing all that Banana crap!





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