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TREASURER Doug Chang.

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

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## Presidents Message

April 2017

Another Bass Sydney Club season comes to a close and a new club year is on the cusp of starting. Bass Sydney continues to maintain its strong presence in the fight for *fish habitat rehabilitation* and with it, the increasing recruitment of wild Australian Bass into our local rivers. It's with much credit to all our members, past and present, and our sponsors that the club continues to grow from strength to strength. As well as acknowledging club members, we can also thank our: spouses, partners, families and maybe our bosses in their willingness to allow us such generous time that we spend with Bass Sydney. As an active fishing club, we'll continue to invest in our sport and thus gleam the enjoyment and rewards as we do.

As such, looking forward to seeing you all on Tuesday, at our **AGM**, being held at a new venue: Dundas Sports & Recreational Club for a seven thirty pm start; see Club Secretary Milton's article that's up next for full details.



Alan Izzard

(photo – John Stokes Bents Basin)

# **Club Secretary**

April 2017

Gents,

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at a new venue this year, it's at:

**Dundas Sports & Recreation Club** 

at

**9 Elder Rd, Dundas, 2117,**

**02 9638 5900**

[www.dundassports.com.au](http://www.dundassports.com.au).

The change of venue is as a direct result of our usual venue **North Mead Bowling Club** boardroom being unavailable – repairs are in progress, worryingly, they have also advised us of future fees associated with usage of their room.

We have selected **Dundas Sports & Recreation Club** at this stage. Time was upon us and the club has the usual bar facilities, a restaurant named *Dragon 88* serving nice Asian cuisine at reasonable prices and there's off street parking.

The meeting will be held in the board room at 7:30pm sharp.

Please arrive in advance, say 7-7:20pm so we can get seated & the meetings under way on time.

You may even wish to try *Dragon 88* with some of the club members beforehand, best to arrive 6:15 – 6:30pm if dinning.

On this occasion, we'll have the AGM first followed by the General Meeting.

**If you cannot attend please tender your apologies by email to Milton along with your proxy form [miltonlazarus@optusnet.com.au](mailto:miltonlazarus@optusnet.com.au), see end of Bronze Battler for proxy form, this'll need emailing to Milton asap.**

The proxy will allow anyone who is attending (e.g. Alan Izzard, Doug Chang, Milton Lazarus, Damian Balfour & Rico Van De Kerkhof. etc.) to vote on issues on your behalf, you'll have your say.

Worth noting, if the member numbers in attendance are less than expected we can still have the AGM as we'll meet the quorum with the proxy-forms, unlike last year where the meeting had to be rescheduled to May. Our constitution says an AGM quorum shall be 13 members so we appreciate your effort in supporting your club and attending. But we'd prefer to see you there in person, thanks.

Annual membership fees should be due at the AGM, however due to the future cost of hall hire it will be necessary to increase fees slightly. A fee increase will need to be discussed by the committee & club members and ratified at the AGM. I will advise the new fee as soon as possible.

Decisions on a regular club venue will need some consideration also, so this venue and any other venue deemed suitable are welcome suggestions and should be made known at the AGM and can then be given some thought.

If you enjoy 'Dundas Sports & Recreation Club' experience, memberships to the club itself are \$11/year or \$22/three years.

Cheers, Milton Lazarus.

## The Editors Message

*Welcome to the April edition of the Bronze Battler, this the second for 2017 and the last for our Bass Club 2016/17 season. It's also AGM time – hope to see you there; its being held at Dundas Sport & Recreational Club.*

In this edition, there's palpable excitement: AGM, club news, Bents Basin deluge I, Bass Catch deluge II, tube fishing (what?), pink flippers de rigour, rain blitz, 'run-of Barra, Marlins and mermaids, and a *90-metre long rock ramp fishway* trying to outshine our LCR fishway - that we're proud of – all topics included herein –

I've enjoyed editing the Bronze Battler these last two years, but at the moment family life – work – relocation etc. are making their demands; thus, it's time for a new editor to take charge, I look forward to supporting the next 'editor in chief' from June onwards and I'll hope to be supplying tales of surface tail-slaps and might surface implosions as I manage a fishing outing.

A huge amount of thanks and appreciation to all the Bronze Battler contributors as it's their variety of writings and content, their personal perspective and experiences that keeps this bimonthly behemoth still pulsing, pertinent and published – thankyou from us all.

Wishing you all 'screaming ratchet reels' louder than the 'cacophony of cicadas' - enjoy:

- **Presidents message**
- **Secretary message**
- **Editors message** - plus "can we go fishing?"
- **CLUB NEWS - AGM Tues 11<sup>th</sup> April 1930hrs**
- **Bents Basin State Conservation Area** by Damian
- **Russell Street Fish Habitat and Bush Regeneration** – an update by Margaret Somerville
- **My Bass Catch – February** by Rico van de Kerkhof
- **FLOAT FISHING NOVICES** by Doug Chang
- **FISHING the RUNOFF for BARRA.** by Wayne Erskine
- **Marlin Madness – 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2017** by Pete Hatzi
- **Australia's longest rock-ramp fishway declared a success** by Fishing World magazine
- Proxy form – Bass Sydney Fishing Club

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

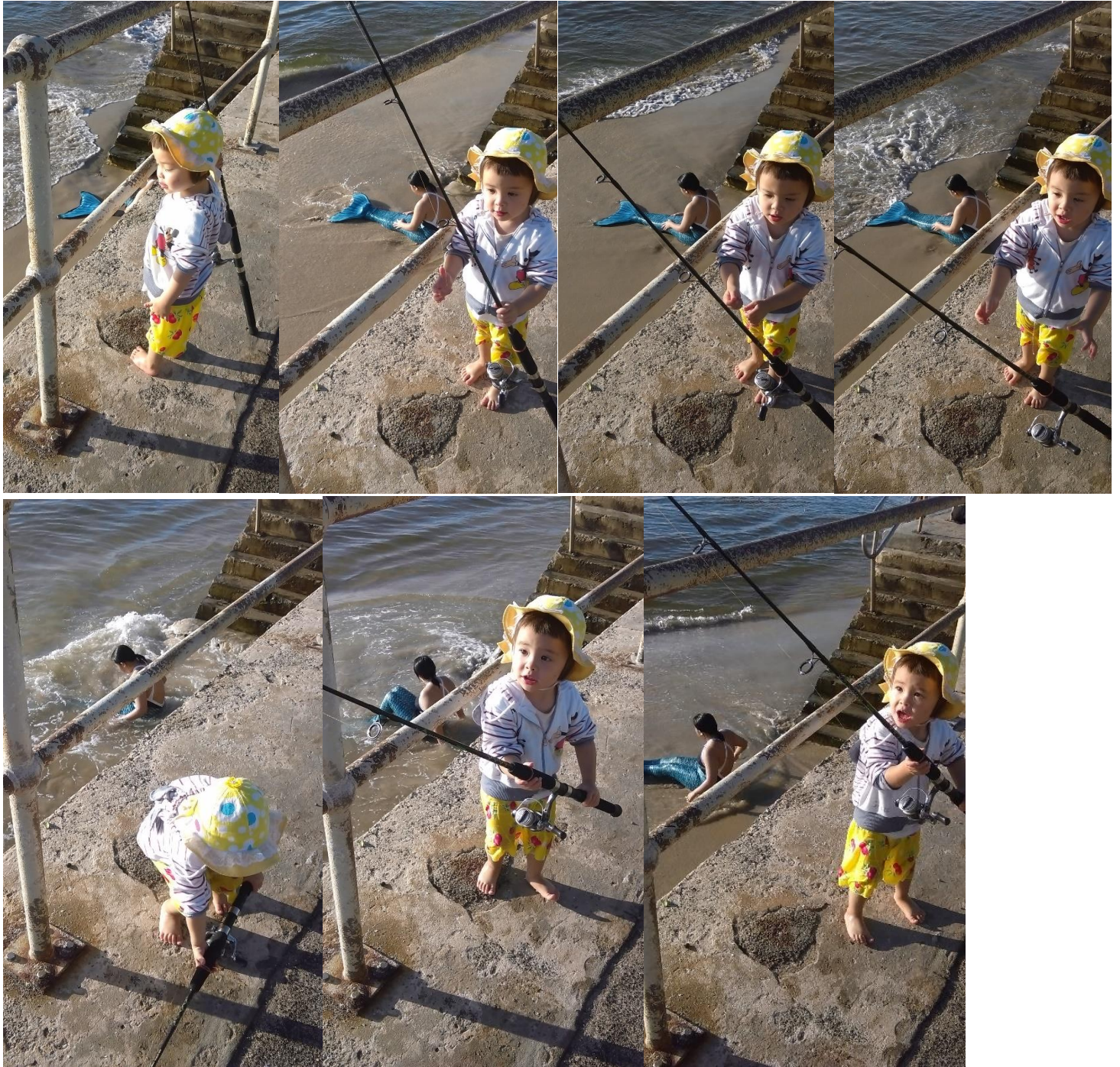
*d a m i a n*



Q. Can we go fishing daddy?

A. Yes we can.

Indulgent editor.



**My daughter Grace, 2yrs 7 months, gets excited at a future catch. Bents Basin club outing got cancelled – we went to Botany Bay instead, to see what we could catch.**

Damian Balfour – editor.



# CLUB NEWS

**AGM Tues 11<sup>th</sup> April 1930hrs at**

Dundas Sports & Recreational Club, 9 Elder Rd, Dundas, N.S.W., 2117.



## **Bents Basin State Conservation Area**

Unfortunately, our recent club outing to 'Bents Basin' got cancelled/postponed/reconvened - our decision about fishing it soon is still pending as rain and river rises persist. The Bents Basin National Park venue was closed due to flooding with what was much needed rain, but the generous deluge scuppered the opportunity for free camping from the National



Parks in reward for some volunteering from us. We had planned on some light bush regeneration on Saturday AM, with plenty of fishing afterwards – it was to be a Fri-Sun weekend where family members could attend and enjoy the parks many different amenities (Pictures from John Stokes, with thanks).

Damian

## Russell Street Fish Habitat and Bush Regeneration – an update

Margaret Somerville

Hi Alan, Milton and Bass Sydney,

I'm not sure that we will get a day at Russell St next weekend because of this tremendous rain, but a couple of updates: All of the green guards were washed away from the newly planted trees on the bank near the river from flooding. I'm not sure how the trees themselves have fared as the water level has been up and down and I have not been able to go down there due to my allergies (I will revisit soon, as river flows allow).

The tree that was rammed down, lying horizontal with only the minimal of root attachment had multiple new shoots growing all along its trunk so, just like Damian said, it going to have multiple branches growing upright (*thanks Margaret, club member and*

*former president Ashley Thamm had pointed that similar situation with fallen tress out to me before, great to see it surviving - editor).*

It will be good to see you all first Saturday in April if it is not too wet and there will be plenty of tending and weeding to do (*sadly the weather was to wet on April's Saturday & riparian work got cancelled, looking forward to May's attendance and weeding and the tending to - editor*),

Best wishes

Margaret

## My Bass Catch - February '17y

Rico van de Kerkhof

February's Bass catch and Rain go hand in hand. Lots of Rain.

This year wasn't any different.

Friday I got to the campsite just after 12pm.

Thunder and clouds in the sky, exceedingly quickly and desperately attended to setting up my tent and left worrying about the rest till later.

It stayed dry!

After a well-deserved beer for setting up my tent in record time - all by myself (... and the editor was nowhere to be found to help, "oops" Editor)

We all went down for some carp fishing.

Not much action there and when thunder and lightning came a bit too close for our liking, we headed back for the Bar-B-Que, a few drinks and a chat. We formulated/calculated/debated and made plans for the next day's bass fishing.



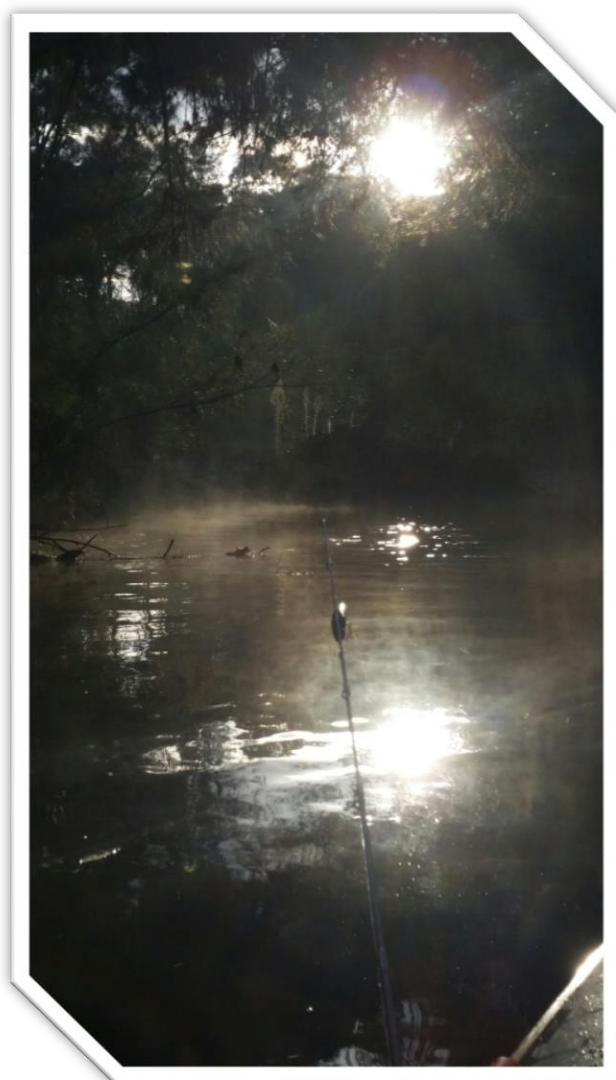
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From launching at 'Bents Basin State Conservation Area' and fishing to Wallacia our planned fishing trip for the Saturday was much anticipated.

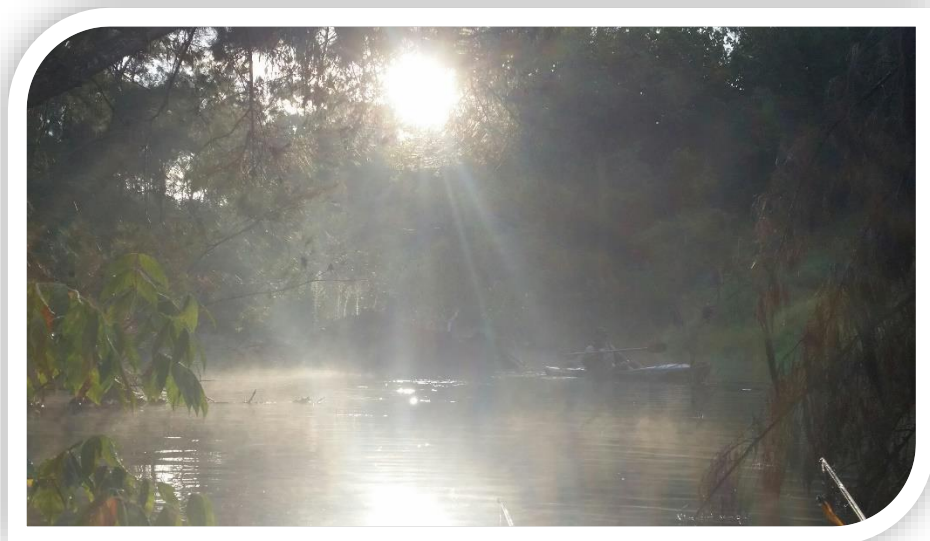
After the dark, early morning, cold car shuffle, the four of us launched at the 'Basin and Doug was the first to hook one.



This looked like a promising start of the day and with the cicadas waking up and singing their one favourite song, it was looking to get much better.



The sunrise was spectacular and so was the fishing, the weather forecast for heavy rain and thunderstorms was



wrong, or was it?

We fished the nine or so kilometre stretch, stopping for lunch and eating Jeremy's preprepared snack packs. We compared mental notes, speculated about the weather as much as about the fishing to come. When we were about a kilometre from Wallacia all hell broke loose a torrential hell befell us all. Precipitation, deluge, heavy& heavier rain rained upon us, the noise was all around us and the daylight turned dark, thunder cracked, lightning forked low in the sky. We grabbed shelter under some trees as close into the bank as we could squeeze, in a futile attempt to stay somewhat dry to no avail, but more importantly we avoided a lightning strike. In minutes, we were soaking through and there we sat it out, hunkered for half an hour or more. The huge downpour finished quite abruptly and so did our trip.



We got 39 fish between the four of us with a few Bass above the 300mm mark, but most were mid to high 200mm fork length. Jeremy got his first few Australian Bass on a 'soft-shell cicada' and it looks like we got another SSC addict! After a slight delay with the 'car-shuffle', we made it back to camp where Jeremy cooked us up a storm (ahem) on the BBQ – we dried out and ate, it was delicious!

Thank-you to all who attended the Feb Bass Catch, we enjoyed it immensely and congratulations to young Daniel McHugh for catching the biggest Australian Bass of the weekend. A nice and healthy 330mm (fork length) specimen (*Editor would like a picture if possible*).

Rico van de Kerkhof

## **FLOAT FISHING NOVICES**

By Doug Chang

After a bit of online research by Rico, some visits to the amazing Bass Pro stores in the USA by Doug while on family Christmas holiday, and some encouragement by Tham, in early February, some Caddis Nevada float tubes made their way back to Sydney in the baggage allowance of a Qantas employee. The dream was to be able to fish areas where you couldn't get a kayak into and the bush bashing was just too much hard work.



A bit more equipment was needed; such as short swim fins and a pump, but these were obtained quickly and we were keen to give this float/tube fishing technique a go while it was still warm enough.

The colours left a little to be desired but they were half price after all!



Rico and Doug were the first to try on the upper reaches of a tributary of the Georges River. It was a very steep 10min walk down to the water – Rico had done a reconnaissance once before and only made it half way pulling his yak before giving up. The race was on to get started with lungpower turning out to be quite easy and just as quick as the battery powered air pump. It was certainly a tranquil and picturesque place to start the float tube fishing journey.



Three minutes later, any onlooker would have been puzzled to hear the sound of two grown men giggling like kids with delight as we proceeded to get our first fish on double hookup. Only small bass but nice surface hits with SSC.



Double hookup 2<sup>nd</sup> cast!

We proceeded to kick our way backwards up the pool getting used to the fact that with these tubes, to go forward you had to turn backwards. We were getting hits in the open near the lily pads and in some pockets of shaded shallow water.



Rico got a very nice 340mm fish that followed his lure out from under vegetation . This turned out to be the biggest of the day by far.

After a few more fish, we hit the first set of small rapids and boulders, which just meant slipping off the flippers and lifting the float tube up and over, we continued unencumbered.



While this next pool also looked very fishy we only managed one fish between us while casting along the edges, before having to head back.

On the way back down, Doug managed a few more fish casting a small chatterbait along the shallow crevices around the edge of rocks sticking out of the shallows.





All up I think we ended up with about a dozen fish between us ranging from micro bass up with most in 200s.



Rather than quality or quantity, we both enjoyed ourselves immensely in a most relaxing way of fishing. The only thing that could have been better was to have a cold beer in the can holder we discovered at the front of the tube.

We can see ourselves doing a lot more of this style fishing when the location and conditions suit and it is a great adjunct to kayak fishing.

We then proceeded to pack up and brace ourselves for the 25min slog up the very steep hill to the car. We were two, tired but, very happy little kids!

Things we discovered about float fishing for next time:

- it pays to pack light and a fishing PFD with pockets is very useful.
- Use a reel that you don't mind getting dunked in the freshwater as despite best efforts, invariably it happens. You can buy rod holders for these tubes but still undecided if make any difference.
- Rico also took a landing net, while I had a pair of small lip grippers attached to my PFD.
- No need for air pump – not worth the weight of carrying then storing in side pocket when a pair of lungs is just as efficient.
- takes a little getting used to moving forward backwards and looking over the shoulder. I'm going to try a little hand paddle next time to make it easy to change direction
- Green shopping bags are a nice size to carry the folded up float tube in.
- Pack a small puncture repair kit as a precaution

A few weeks later, club member Tham christened his float tube on the upper reaches of the Lane Cove River but that's a different story.

## FISHING the RUNOFF for BARRA.

Wayne Erskine

Well, all you Mexicans (I guess I shouldn't be using this term in these days of the ravings of Donald Trump – ohh sorry President Trump) should be preparing for your annual pilgrimage north to the land of plenty where the only things bigger than Barra are crocs and sharks! I spent the Christmas before last in northern China with my wife's family in Fushun. It was -20°C every day and let me assure you that there is nothing pretty about a white Xmas. Central heating meant that inside was nice and warm but it was very cold outside. After a month, all I could think of was the warm wet back in Darwin and the Bass fishing when attending my family Xmas gathering in NSW. During this last Xmas, another person was killed by crocs when attempting to cross Cahill's Crossing on the East Alligator River (Figure 1A). I have also seen fishermen standing on the crossing, catching Barra and trying to fend off feeding crocs with nothing but a tubular fiberglass fishing rod! As you can see from Figure 1 where all the floating logs are in fact crocs, on a flood tide the crocs are thick on the upstream side of the crossing and some of them are big (Figure 1A, B and D). Further upstream where the tidal waters are clearer it is even possible to see the crocs in the water (Figure 1C).



Figure 1. Crocodiles on the East Alligator River where fisherman and people wading are occasionally taken.

This wet season has been very wet although most of the big falls occurred in late December and January. Still more rain is forecast and it has been a 'wet' wet season, unlike last year. You should be hitting the road soon and aiming to reach your favourite spot just as it becomes accessible. The South Alligator River in Kakadu is accessible for most of the wet but the East requires Magela Creek to recede at the S bends before you can cross and reach the East. When you can cross the S bends, the fishing is usually pretty spectacular. My fishing companion, Dr Mouse, and I like the East upstream of the upstream boat ramp. We like going up to the rock wall and further upstream where we know the bathymetry very well and the snags even better. It takes a couple of trips after the end of the wet season to map out where the snags have been realigned and where new sand bars have formed. Nevertheless, when you have figured out the new channel morphology the returns can be spectacular. Figure 2 shows our boss with a big Barra from the South Alligator River. Such fish keep being caught every year.





Figure 2. The boss with a big Barra from the South Alligator River.

My work companion and fishing buddy is Dr Mike Saynor or as he is more commonly known as, Mouse. He has been fishing up here for over 20 years now although his enthusiasm has dropped in recent years. I don't know how he can call himself a fisherman!!! Since 1996 we have been researching the East Alligator River and have published four papers in scientific journals. The first-time Mouse took me fishing there I fell in love with the place. It is sandstone country just like a lot of the Nepean, Colo and Macdonald Rivers where Dad and I learnt how to catch Bass, only the Barra are much bigger. The biodiversity is much greater than the Nepean also. This is because when it is wet there is water everywhere and the range of habitats means that speciation has occurred to allow greater utilization of the available habitat. The Nepean has about 22 native species of freshwater fish but the East Alligator has about 44 species. There are 3-4 species of Rainbow fishes, 4 Glass perchlets, 4 Eeltail catfish, etc. Barra spawn during the wet at river mouths and the juveniles then head upstream to spend their 1<sup>st</sup> 2-3 years in freshwater. Barra change sex at about age 4 from male to female and all big fish are females. The legal size in the NT is 55 cm and I have seen them up to about 140 cm. River whalers or Bull sharks are common and extend a long way into freshwater. There are also Glyphis species of sharks also. A common joke is that there used to be sharks in the river but the crocs ate them all.

We usually fish after dark and are very careful around the sides of the boat. There have been a few fishermen taken out of their boats over the last few years so you need to keep your eyes open for crocs at all times. Figure 3 shows one of our friends, Richard with a nice Barra caught after dark. Figure 4 shows Mouse with another Barra. My biggest so far is only 92 cm but Mouse has caught a few over 1m. One of our colleagues, Sean caught a Barra over 1 m from our favourite snag on the East so we do not talk to him anymore! In the tidal freshwater of the East we also catch Sooties, Tarpon, Catfish, Saratoga, Giant Gudgeon, etc. Above the estuary is Arnhem Land and you need permission from the traditional owners and the Northern Land Council to enter, let alone go fishing. When the Bony Herring and Mullet are common you usually catch Barra. One day with Mouse, I was chasing Archer Fish with my Bass gear and having a ball. Mouse would not fish for such small fish so he kept casting his large lures. Well my fighting Archer fish attracted an interested Barra and Mouse landed a 75-cm fish which fought really well. When it took the lure it gave us both a shower. On my telescopic Bass rod my best Barra is 66 cm and the rod was lucky to stay in one piece. I prefer baitcasters and they are great for use after dark.



Figure 3. Richard with a nice Barra from the East.



Figure 4. Dr. Mouse with a nice Barra from the East.



When the end of wet season runoff is pumping clear water into the main channel, fishing the clear water in the tributary or the mixing of the clear water with the turbid main channel flow can be very productive. Mouse and I had a very productive session where Catfish creek discharges into the East Alligator. We were catching a Barra every time we cast and retrieved a lure in the mixing zone. Our enjoyment was cut short by selfish anglers who cast lures either into our boat or hit the side of our aluminum boat. What was most annoying was that we motored upstream and stopped in a similar location and started catching fish again. As the clear water recedes, we have also found that good Barra often hold well up the tributary and some of these fish can be real horses. As I have learnt more and more about hydraulics or open channel flow during our research on floods, I have found many fish holding in slack water during floods. Mouse and I have had some extraordinary fishing in reverse currents (upstream flowing water) on the South Alligator when water is pouring off the floodplain into channel expansions. On one occasion we caught a Barra every cast in the reverse current. During even bigger floods you can move onto the floodplain and catch fish. But you need to be careful of crocs. I have known for some time that Cod and Bass behave somewhat similarly to Barra. I had a very successful Bass Catch during the early 1990s fishing the edge of a shear zone where flowing water moved along the edge of still water and I kept the lure right on the boundary.

We catch Saratoga in freshwater all the way back to the Adelaide River and they are one of the best surface fish to catch in the Top End. In my early days I wasn't catching many Saratoga so I had a good long talk to Dr Bob Pidgeon who educated me on the habitats and lures for Saratoga. The billabongs lined by pandanus and their underwater roots with some Lillies are top spots and fizzers are good lures but you catch them on diving lures also. When caught they are a beautiful fish and I always treat them carefully and let them go alive (Figure 5). Unlike Barra, Saratoga taste awful. I hooked one a long way up Jim Jim Creek one day and was surprised when the dorsal fin of a bull shark started circling my fish. So I brought it to the boat quickly and let the fish go as far away from the shark that I could. You don't put your hands in the water because Bull sharks like a feed of Barra when connected to a fishing line. Figure 6 shows a small Barra that a school of Bull sharks took a liking to on the East Alligator River. I had a similar experience fishing the Daly River up at Tipperary station with the manager when I was working for the NT Government. Bull sharks have been caught up to about 400 km upstream of the estuary in various parts of the world. So expect to find them anywhere.

One of my favourite fish after Barra is Sooty Grunter. Pound for pound they fight as hard as Barra, if not even harder. During the wet they love holding up in snags and can be a real handful extracting from the timber. As the dry progresses, where you have rivers not fed by springs, Spangled grunter progressively replace Sooties in the timber. While I like catching Spangleds on very light line, Sooties test your skills with their brute strength. The first 6-7 Sooties that I ever caught surprised me by how hard they run and head for cover. I have caught them up to about 2 kg in the Top End but they grow much bigger in Far North Queensland (FNQ). Spangled's are a small but aggressive fish and will even take a surface lure. You tend to catch larger specimens during the wet but they are not an angling species. Mouse always complains when he catches a Spangled. I think that they are Australia's most widely distributed native freshwater fish. It is a pity that they do not grow bigger. There are other Grunters in the Top End but Sooties and Spangleds are the most common.

Tarpon are often common in large schools during the wet but Mouse and I are not great admirers. While I like all fish, Tarpon stink and the first one I caught put a hook right through my hand. So, I am clearly biased. Their big drawback in Australia is that they do not grow as big as they do in Florida. What a pity because they would have many more supporters if they topped the 50-kg mark. The biggest we have caught would be 1 to 1.5 kg. They like a surface lure but will also take a diver.

Many people believe they catch Sleepy cod (*Oxyeleotris lineolata*) in Kakadu but they are probably Giant Gudgeon (*Oxyeleotris selheimi*). I have caught Giant Gudgeon in Nourlangie Creek, Magela Creek, South Alligator River and East Alligator River but have never caught a Sleepy cod. Bob Pidgeon alerted me to the difference and whenever I have checked my catch - they have been Giant Gudgeon. The Giant Gudgeon in Figure 7 took a shallow running Nilsmaster when it run over the top of a log in the East Alligator. All the others I have caught have been bottom dwellers and taken jigs or deep running lures. Their characteristic fight is an exciting strike followed by ..... nothing. They are more exciting than the Mouth Almighty but that is only because they are bigger. I have only ever caught one Mouth Almighty and I didn't even know I had it on!

Well you should be prepared for your trip up north into the warmth and the big fish. If we get another 100 mm of rain, the Top End will exceed 2000 mm of rain this wet season. Conditions will be perfect for fishing the runoff and you will enjoy hot weather. If it keeps raining through April and May (very rare) it will be difficult to fish. Still, get your mates together and plan your trip to the Top End and fish Kakadu and the Daly and the Roper and Victoria and Adelaide and Finiss..... What's keeping you here - down south????? If it is that difficult to get away bring your wife and/or girlfriend with you.



Figure 5. A beautiful Saratoga which I caught from a Kakadu billabong.





Figure 6. A Barra cut in half by Bull sharks on the East.



Figure 7. The Giant Gudgeon is often misidentified as Sleepy Cod. They have a solid strike and then fight like a wet paper bag! This one was returned.

Kind regards - Wayne Erskine

## Marlin Madness – 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2017

by Pete Hatzi.

I can count on two hands how many times I've been out past the Sydney Heads in my life. The ocean and I definitely DO NOT mix! Most of my fishing is inshore, estuaries, creeks, lakes, rivers, dams etc. I suffer pretty badly from seasickness and it ends up ruining the day and I pray the whole time to return to solid land so the feeling will just stop.

Recently, my friend has been egging me on to go chase some Marlin with him, I had secretly been avoiding it as I knew there's generally lots and lots of hours between fish and that meant lots of feeling like crap! Regardless, I decided to man up, take some tablets and give it a shot. It has been a few years since I ventured out and I thought more time spent in the yak on busier waterways with the rocking around may have given me better sea legs right? Wrong! We were trying to raise a Kingfish on some live squid sitting in the main channel near the heads and I was already becoming queasy. It took around an hour of trolling before I was sick over the side of the boat, the next 4 hours seemed like a lifetime and 4 or 5 more episodes over the side of the boat and I was well and truly ready to call it a day. With the impending tide change due soon at 1.30pm, my friend told me to persist until then and if nothing was happening on the sounder we'd call it a day. The water was still dirty a fair way offshore, and bait was very sparse, many boats on the radios claiming they hadn't had much activity either.

At around 12.30pm my friend stood up, had a stretch, pondered some thoughts as he looked out to sea with his hands on his head and said "right, time to put us on to some fish" .... I kid you not, within five minutes of that statement as I was staring off into the distance he said .... "MARLIN", I said, "*piss off*" ..... "**MARLIN**" he emphatically said again .... as I turned around to check the back of the boat he said "ahhh it's turned off the lure...." three seconds later my reel went bezerk.....line started screaming off the spool as the T-Curve game rod loaded up, then the other reel started screaming....shit I thought, we've caught the other line....my friend screams "double hook up!!!" .... I picked up the rod and started cranking away, my legs were shaking, the adrenaline had well and truly kicked in, the fish started to cross, so we had a few tense moments of going over and under each other to prevent lines fouling, my friend has also managed to wind in the teaser so it was out of the way - thankfully.

To set the scene for you, we were in a very small boat, more akin to a boat you would see out in a Bass dam rather than out wide. We now had not only one but two Marlin hooked up, with no-one to drive the boat and no-one to grab a harness to put on any of us. This was old school stand up, rod butt jammed into the pubic region and some good old pump and wind! Luckily the fish took off in different directions, and I was left fighting my fish from the front of the boat, while my friend was fighting out the back. The first time I saw my Marlin jump from the water, I was gob smacked, it truly is a surreal sight to see these creatures leap out and skid across the water in front of you! Given this boat had a shallow casting deck I found myself struggling to retain my footing while fighting the fish and my legs were jelly. Mid-way through the fight as I fatigued, I resorted to dropping down to my knees, this is when the fight became brutal. I had exhausted my body's ability to pump and wind using my core strength, my legs and my back and was just using my arms to hold on! The Marlin was dictating this fight, not me! It felt like for every 5-10m I retrieved, the fish would take another 200m.. at one point I saw a fish jump out of the water in the distance....another Marlin I thought? Nope...it was mine about 250metres out the back of the boat. I don't know if it's because I had been ill for most of the day, or what it was but I was beginning to fatigue badly, my arms were exhausted and starting to cramp. In a deep dark recess of my mind I almost secretly hoped that this fish would jump and throw the lure so the battle would be over, but the better part of my brain urged me to push on and that what fisherman in his right mind would wish this away, this battle was every bit mental as it was physical!

I have to take my hat off to my friend the skipper, he managed to fight his own Marlin, wind in the teaser and intermittently reach back switch on the motor and re-orientate the boat so that we had decent fighting angles on the fish. At one point we had to reverse towards his fish so he could make some ground as the fish was taking too much line, then we had to drive forwards as I was down to my last few hundred meters as well. Eventually after around 35 minutes, he brought in his Marlin to the side of the boat, my fish had gone deep and felt like it weighed 2 tones. He managed to get his fish boat side and get it off as quickly as possible. He has caught a very respectable number of Marlin over the years so for him this was just another one to the tally, he was super eager for me to get my first, finally now I had someone to drive the



boat! We began to chase my fish down and I started to get some line back after what felt like a lifetime of fighting a losing battle. Within another 10 to 15 minutes I had a beautiful striped Marlin swimming alongside the boat. I said, "WOW, IT IS GORGEOUS" .... "Now how do we get it in the boat", he said, "we don't, it's too dangerous"! My friend put his gloves on, grabbed the leader, wrapped it around and dislodged the lure.... At this point, the process becomes very dangerous, the fish, my Marlin, thrash quite wildly and those beaks are both big, solid and extremely dangerous; the fish struck the side of the boat multiple times, you could hear and feel their awesome power, even after a 45-minute fight! Later back at the ramp we exhibited the lovely scratch it left on his black paintjob. It was high fives all around, 2-2-2 Striped Marlin off Bondi. I did manage to grab my phone of my pocket ¾ of the way through the fight and put the forward facing camera on and sit it in the front of the boat, this recorded both of us fighting our fish simultaneously. Unfortunately though, given the circumstances with two fish and limited crew on board, and myself who had NO experience with dealing with Marlin, to safely get the fish on board or time to take a proper photo was not possible. This however was a small trade off as the experience will stay with me for a life time! Maybe this is the fish that will help dissipate those nightmares of losing the monster Cod my friend failed to lip grip for me down in Canberra last winter....at least for now...

Needless to say, I was extremely lucky, Marlin are not easy to come by off Sydney, and to have gotten one on my first trip was pure ace. I am forever thankful though and have ticked yet another species off the bucket list. Next time, hopefully there's either a spare set of hands, a GoPro or only one fish to contend with, because I'd love that photo opportunity with one of those gorgeous fish! To properly bring a Marlin on board and on such a small vessel with limited hands, you would really need to exhaust the fish, and then there are times where people handle them incorrectly and actually harm the fish. I had zero intentions of keeping or killing this fish, I just wanted to appreciate it and give thanks to a moment the will last with me forever.

Here's some still shots of the video and some links to the clips on my Instagram:

[Clip 1 https://www.instagram.com/p/BSFobgMgrhL/](https://www.instagram.com/p/BSFobgMgrhL/)

[Clip 2 https://www.instagram.com/p/BSFpMmgAHZL/](https://www.instagram.com/p/BSFpMmgAHZL/)

(a few pics)



Pete H.

# Australia's longest rock-ramp fishway declared a success

Thanks to our club member Milton for pointing out this wonderful article in Fishing World Magazine and its relevance to fish passageways – something that Bass Sydney continues to advocate for the LCR, and at the weirs on the Parramatta R. amongst others.

***Fishing World Magazine - 23 March 2017***

image: [http://res.cloudinary.com/yaffa-publishing/image/fetch/q\\_auto,c\\_fit,w\\_630,f\\_auto/http%3A%2F%2Fyaffa-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fyaffadsp%2Fimages%2FdmlImage%2FSourcelImage%2Fcropped\\_Bremer-River-rock-ramp-fishway-1.jpg](http://res.cloudinary.com/yaffa-publishing/image/fetch/q_auto,c_fit,w_630,f_auto/http%3A%2F%2Fyaffa-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fyaffadsp%2Fimages%2FdmlImage%2FSourcelImage%2Fcropped_Bremer-River-rock-ramp-fishway-1.jpg)



THE recently constructed 90-metre long rock ramp fishway on the Bremer River has proven a huge success during recent sampling of fish crossings.

3,514 individual fish representing 21 different species were recorded passing through the fishway over a five-day period, which equates to 690 fish per day that can now freely move upstream.

Matt Moore from Catchment Solutions, who designed and implemented the fishway believes this is a positive for anglers targeting Australian Bass and Yellowfin Bream.

"We've opened up at least 41 kilometres of previously unreachable habitat for these species," Moore said.

"That's great news also for the endangered Mary River cod which through conservation efforts have been stocked into the system, as well as naturally occurring economically important sea mullet and long finned eels which were amongst the nineteen native species recorded.

"Usually, to get a fish over a 2.4m barrier, a vertical slot fishway would be constructed and cost upward of a million dollars, however for a fraction of the cost this rock ramp has proven itself.

Recent sampling demonstrates the unique ability of rock ramp fishways to allow small-bodied species and juvenile fish to move upstream. The smallest fish recorded was a 19mm empire gudgeon followed by a 30mm Australian bass.

"Projects like this are paramount to sustaining and restoring local fish populations of Jungle Perch and the Mary River Cod," said President of the local fish stocking association and keen recreational fisherman, Gary Fitzgerald.



Berry's Weir was constructed in the 1960s in the lower reaches of the Bremer River to impound water for power generation, impacting the life-cycle dependent migrations between downstream estuarine environments and upstream freshwater habitats.

Catchment Solutions recently conducted a fish barrier prioritisation project throughout south-east Queensland, of which the Berry's Weir site was identified as the seventh highest priority ranked barrier. The project was funded by the Australian Government and Ipswich City Council with in-kind assistance from asset owners Stanwell Power.

image: [http://res.cloudinary.com/yaffa-publishing/image/fetch/q\\_auto,c\\_fit,w\\_630,f\\_auto/http%3A%2F%2Fyaffa-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fyaffadsp%2Fimages%2FdmImage%2FSourcelImage%2Fpre-and-post-construction-images.jpg](http://res.cloudinary.com/yaffa-publishing/image/fetch/q_auto,c_fit,w_630,f_auto/http%3A%2F%2Fyaffa-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fyaffadsp%2Fimages%2FdmImage%2FSourcelImage%2Fpre-and-post-construction-images.jpg)



Read more at [http://www.fishingworld.com.au/news/australia-s-longest-rock-ramp-fishway-declared-a-success?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Newsletter%20230317&utm\\_content=Newsletter%20230317+CID\\_c9e26248a9676c48d5721016fb8a0335&utm\\_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm\\_term=Queenslands%20Bremer%20River#HFzLs7HgtXJ4Sys5.99](http://www.fishingworld.com.au/news/australia-s-longest-rock-ramp-fishway-declared-a-success?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter%20230317&utm_content=Newsletter%20230317+CID_c9e26248a9676c48d5721016fb8a0335&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Queenslands%20Bremer%20River#HFzLs7HgtXJ4Sys5.99)



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**Username: @bass\_sydney**

**Next Meeting**

**A.G.M.**

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**@ 7pm for prompt**

**7:30pm start, at:**

**Dundas Sports & Recreation Club**

**9 Elder Rd, Dundas, N.S.W., 2117. Tel: 02 9638 5900**



## *Fishing Cartoon*



(I got 'Red Fishin' Hole'!)

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**Bass Sydney Fishing Club  
Appointment of Proxy**

I the undersigned of \_\_\_\_\_  
do hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_  
to act as a proxy at The Bass Sydney AGM  
on \_\_\_\_\_ or as scheduled \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ duties as proxy include the following:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This appointment of proxy remains in effect until \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**