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### What's new:

- Bass Sydney Sponsor Dreamfish is offering club members a 20% discount through their online store. Just add "Bass Sydney 20" as the coupon code.

## Bass Sydney Photo Competition

Hi members—after some nice pics circulating from recent fishing trips we've decided to run a monthly photo competition open to all members. You are encouraged to get involved and submit one photo per month. Photos can be of anything fishing related and do not need to include Bass so be as creative as you like. There are a few rules:

- Photos must be from the current season only (from April 2017 onwards)
- No Bass photos to be entered during closed season (May 1 to August 31)
- One photo per member per month

All entries to be emailed to Jason at [nmcmasterj@tradies.com.au](mailto:nmcmasterj@tradies.com.au) and the Committee will decide on one winner each month and will be published in the Battler. Each monthly winner will then be considered for the Photo of the Year to be voted on by all members before the 2018 AGM. The winner will receive a great prize (to be confirmed soon). We look forward to seeing some great pics!!

Cheers,  
~ Jason

## The Editors Message

I'm still not fishing as much as days gone by but have still managed to find some trips and Bass during the 2017/2018 season. A recent trip to Lake St Clair saw some good fishing with plenty of Bass, Golden and Silver Perch caught. The water level the lowest I've ever seen it there, the region still struggling with drought conditions this summer and massive amounts of water being pumped out of the dam to service the farms in the area and all along the catchments. Normally with rapidly declining water levels, I have found the fishing to be quite tough with fish shut down and reluctant to feed. Fortunately this was not the case once I figured out where the fish were holding. The key to producing the results for me this time was to locate healthy weed beds close to the bank, casting Jackall TN60's (silent or rattling), letting them fall down the face of the weedbeds edge and then start the retrieve with an initial fast jerk, then into a normal speed retrieve. This technique seem to bring undone the yellow belly more than any of the others, perhaps they had laid eggs in the weed beds and were super territorial? The Bass were still amongst the yellow belly, and the silvers sitting slightly closer to the bottom. It's great to see all these species flourishing in the dam! Years gone by I would catch the odd yellow belly but it was mostly just Bass — I had never caught a silver perch there until this trip! Of course, mornings and evenings this time of year can always entertain a fun surface bite, this trip I was targetting little flicking baitfish on the edges and casting my Kokoda Bug Chugger towards them and the Bass were finding it irresistible, I love Bass that hit surface lures on a retrieve, it's so exciting to watch that lure with anticipation make it's trail through the water and then watch an explosion from nowhere as line peels from your reel with the initial fast burst Bass are notorious for.

Cheers,  
~ Pete





## FEBRUARY 2018 BASS CATCH

The 2018 February Bass Catch reached an amazing milestone for Bass Sydney as it was our 30th year, when you think about it this is something special, it means a total of 60 individual weekends catching, measuring, releasing and recording catch data for NSW Fisheries. Not to mention members having a good time, catching some seriously big fish and maybe drinking too much. I've been involved for more than 20 years and thoroughly enjoyed every one I've managed to attend. To see new people, join the Club and participate in our Bass Catches is terrific. To see the look of exhaustion on their faces as they return to camp on Saturday afternoon and hear about their day, good or bad is something I will always remember. Some swear they'll never do it again, but generally turn up for the next one. I think the best part is happy hour on Saturday evening then dinner where members and visitors can tell their stories of the ones that got away, the snake they saw swimming across the bow of their kayak or the water dragon which followed their surface lure and climbed up onto the kayak. The horrendous thunderstorm they were caught in where the hail was bouncing off the kayak and of course the ultimate embarrassment where they ended upside down in the river after taking the wrong path down a rapid or becoming over eager to retrieve a lure from a tree.

This Bass Catch was also different due to a new venue at Bents Basin State Conservation Area. In September 2017 a group of members spent a day at Bents Basin removing African Olive seedlings, shrubs and trees. In acknowledgement of our efforts we were allowed to camp free for our February event. We have offered to do another bush regeneration day so please write April 14 & 21st as possible dates in your diary so you can join us.

Rico & I arrived around 2pm on Friday afternoon to check in, see Toni the Ranger then choose a suitable campsite. There were only two tents then, by Saturday afternoon there were many more, but everyone was very well behaved and having a good time. Great to see so many people out with their kids and friends pitching the old tent and enjoying themselves in true Aussie tradition. We set up camp in a semi-secluded spot ensuring there was plenty of space for the guys arriving on Saturday afternoon. Only four for dinner on Friday night and 11 on Saturday.

Rico and Damian were up and gone by five on Saturday morning to meet Nathan at Wallacia, their plan was to portage down Wallacia weir and fish downstream to Norton's Basin and beyond. I headed solo to Camden. Shayne fished Camden late on Sunday. The general spread of remaining members was as follows. Brian and his nephew Phil fished from Wallacia early on Saturday, Jeremy fished Wallacia and above on Saturday afternoon. Matt H & Tham boat fished upstream from Wallacia, Gary launched from Shaw's Farm upstream from Devlin's Lane and fished his favourite big pool, Steve & Sherif launched at Devlin's Lane and fished up and into Gary's big pool and Matt M together with Alan launched at Windsor and fished upstream on Freemans Reach. So, all in all there was a good spread of members from Windsor to Camden.

Everyone apart from one old bloke caught fish, strange as the river at Camden looked so good. The catch data beginning upstream was as follows: Shayne fished for two hours landing four fish to 277, Tham landed seven fish up to 317, Matt Hahn landed seven fish to 210, Jeremy landed nine fish to 200, Brian landed one fish to 172 & his Nephew Phil landed 5 fish to 240, Damian landed seven fish to 280, Nathan landed two fish to 175, Rico landed 11 Fish to 281, Matt McHugh landed nine fish to 250, Alan landed six fish to 265, Jason landed 10 fish to 263, Gary landed 25 fish to 216, Steve landed 10 fish to 335 and Sherif landed seven fish to 280. Sherif also lost a big fish that hit his soft-shell cicada and sadly popped his leader. So, the most number of fish caught was 25 by Gary and the largest was 335 caught by Steve on fly. The fish seemed to be smaller this February so it will be interesting to compare our catch data with February 2019.

Maybe you saw that series on the ABC, Two Men in a Tinny. Well that series made me think of Matt & Tham, two highly competitive Bass fishers in a little tinny all day long trying to out fish each other. Would have loved being a fly on the gunwale watching the action and listening to the unmentionables as they went fish for fish. You probably noticed above they both ended up with seven, so a tie it was, no argument and no skiting. Great stuff.

On Saturday afternoon Alan & I were treated to an impromptu tour of some out of bounds areas with a couple of the Bents Basin guys. Nice to be chauffeured to spots unknown.

Saturday's happy hour was a time to relax, rest tired muscles and discuss with everyone their experiences of the day and of course have a beer or three. Resident Bass Sydney Chef Jeremy cooked the evening meal on our trusty Bunnings BBQ. Sausages, rissoles, spicy patties, onions and potato salad. After dinner Rico organized a raffle and the lucky ones did well. I was delighted to win a \$25 BCF gift card. That will be spent on a Tiemco soft shell Cicada as apparently, they are the surface lure of choice and we all should have one.

Rico had built a fire on Friday afternoon and set it alight after dinner on Saturday but we didn't sit around it. I think everyone was pretty much exhausted after a very early start on Saturday and lots of casting. In fact, we didn't even celebrate a gathering of the Bass Sydney Port Appreciation Club, I must say this is very unusual as it doesn't take too much arm twisting to crack a bottle of good port. Just shows you how tired everyone felt.



Jeremy once again excelled on Sunday morning cooking a great big breakfast for all, bacon, eggs, sausages and tomatoes after which we packed up all the gear and headed home for a well- deserved rest and an early night.

Thanks to members who managed to get a leave pass from the Missus and join us as it turned out a very enjoyable 30th anniversary Bass Catch. Thanks also to our President and Bass Catch officer along with other committee members who made it happen.

Cheers, Milton.

## **Bass Sydney Bents Basin Bush Regeneration**

On Saturday September 23 six members Rico, Doug, Brian, Jason, Milton & Damian along with some family spent the morning cutting, poisoning and removing African Olive seedlings, shrubs and trees that infest the bush within this conservation area. It was hot hard work with the temperature hovering around 36 degrees, but the enthusiasm shown by all was impressive considering the conditions. A break around ten with cool drinks, Rico's cookies and hot tea kept members going. A BBQ under a shady wattle tree followed around 1pm with food provided by Ranger Toni.



Then Damian & Jason grabbed their rods and headed for the Basin to have a flick or two. Damian set up with Mia (?) & Grace whilst Rico, Jason & Milton headed off downstream to find some decent fishable water. Jason got the fright of his life almost stepping on a black snake, luckily, it beat a hasty retreat across the river and up the opposite bank. The highlight of the walk downstream was a very nice 350 landed by Jason which I think made up for the snake fright five minutes earlier. Thanks to all who made the effort and it was nice to see Doug bring his teenage family members Jacinta & Justin.



## **Bass Sydney Karuah Weekend**

I'm sure most Bass fishers were eagerly awaiting an opportunity to wet a line when the season opened on September 1, however the first real chance came during our Club weekend on September 16/17 beside the Karuah River at Booral. Some members were lucky enough to make it an extra-long weekend from Thursday to Monday.

John and mate Shayne arrived on Thursday and after setting up camp were eager to fish the camp pool. The river was extremely low after the long dry spell and just a trickle flowed down through the river stones at the launching spot. Not only that, but the water was icy, a bad sign no doubt and these factors together with the ever present cool wind were a major reason why the fishing was really tough going all weekend.

However, we just have to take this stuff on the chin and press on and try our best to land a fish or two. Doug and Rico left Chatswood early on Friday and fished the Branch river on the way and the results were negative. Alan and I arrived on Friday around lunch and whilst setting up John & Shayne returned from a session on the camp pool for zilch. Sadly, this was to be a tough introduction for Shayne as his first Bass fishing experience. As we all know when one starts chasing Bass for the first time it can become a steep learning curve initially and the catch rate is extremely low mainly due to casting inaccuracy and lure presentation particularly if the fish are shut down.





Once Rico and Doug set up camp they joined Alan and I for a fish on the camp pool later in the afternoon. There was absolutely nothing happening, no Cicadas, no moths or water dragons which pretty much summed up the afternoon. The river was just dead and the air was cool with a keen breeze blowing downstream, typical of early season fishing after a drought. Amazingly not long after we started I managed to land a healthy Bass that went 355 on a 1/16 ounce Chatterbait, a solid fish and would you believe the leader knot parted just as the fish was scooped up in the net. I always struggled with that improved Albright. Doug had issues with his leader too, but did not have any spare, I had some leader, but couldn't remember how to tie a leader knot, truly a comedy of errors. So, we rafted our kayaks together midstream while Doug retied two new leaders using Slim Beauties. Being blown into the overhanging branches didn't help where Doug's line became hopelessly tangled just down from the rod tip. Fishing rivers with low branches and snags is a test of one's patience. At the end of the session the total was two fish, my 355 and a 329 to Rico.

Matt launched his boat at Allworth on the way to camp and fished the racks and caught two bream then tried the Branch river up to the first rock bar, but the wind was brutal and made fishing difficult for a nil result. John & Shayne fished downstream of Booral bridge and John caught a nice 380 in the riffles. Arriving back at camp it was time to scurry around and find some kindling to light the fire. John had kindly bought a load of firewood and Keith arrived with another so we were set for a night or two. Matt arrived with his boat, kayak and set up camp.

Happy hour was approaching so it was time for pre-dinner drinks and think about the dinner menu. As we finished dinner the temperature began to fall so it was time to sit around the fire, warm up and nut out a plan for Saturday. Of course the Bass Sydney Port Appreciation Club reconvened since our last meeting and we started with a bottle Rico bought along with tea, coffee and dark chocolate. Definitely the way to go and I can assure you the evenings around the campfire were really something special. Friday night was cold, but we all managed to get some sleep apart from Matt who unfortunately ended up with a very upset tummy and had to make two dashes to the loo during the night. According to

Matt, it was bloody freezing at 3am and the five-minute sprint to the toilet isn't great when you need to get there in a hurry. Thankfully he recovered and felt better by Saturday evening.

Saturday dawned and the plan was: John, Shayne and Matt would fish from Booral bridge down, Doug & Rico would fish from Booral bridge up. Whilst fishing about 400 meters from the bridge Rico came across a calf stuck beside the bank up to the chin in water, very cold and exhausted. Rico spent considerable time making a platform from branches and weeds and dug steps in the bank. He got a rope around the neck and was pulling whilst Doug was pushing from behind. That didn't work so Rico paddled back to the bridge and went up to the farm there, but there was no one home. When Rico returned he saw a wet trail along the bank and could hear the calf calling for mother, so a happy ending for one calf and the boys. One very lucky animal and full credit to Mark, Rico and Doug for their efforts and perseverance never giving up. They couldn't paddle away and just leave it to drown.



John, Shayne and Matt fished below the bridge for nil whilst Doug and Rico fared the same so that was it for Saturday.

Alan & I decided to give fishing a miss with drive to Gloucester and check out the river there, also have a look at the Barrington. Sadly, Keith arrived just as we were about to leave so the idea of making Gloucester for lunch went out the window. Two bananas each a Woolies in Gloucester was about the best we could do although a cup of coffee at Wards River on the return journey saved the day. Both the Barrington and Gloucester rivers looked good with ample depth and flow, much better than the Karuah. We took the loop road from Barrington back to Buckets way and you Ford the rivers



twice on the way. I think it would be worth camping in the caravan park in Gloucester and fishing both these rivers as they are close together.

Happy hour sitting around the fire with cheeses, dips, nuts and a glass of red on Saturday evening was a wonderful way to end a rather fishless day, but it's definitely the next best thing if it's cold. Matt calmed his tummy with a scotch or two so he must have been feeling better.

On Sunday morning there was an impromptu trophy presentation at camp as Alan presented Rico with the Club Person of the Year Award, nice and well deserved for one of the most liked and enthusiastic members and of course our new President. Congratulations Rico.



John had to hit the road so we helped pack up his gazebo etc. and bid him farewell. Shayne had left on Saturday afternoon. Doug & Rico headed to Bulahdelah to fish the Myall, whilst Alan & I decided to check out the boat ramp at Allworth. The Myall didn't fire so Doug & Rico joined by Matt headed for the Williams. After looking over Allworth Alan & I headed for Clarence Town hopefully to catch up with the boys, but whilst we saw their cars at the boat ramp they were still downstream. The Williams fished better than the other rivers and the end result was Doug managed two, Matt 2 and Rico 4 all around 250 so things were looking up. On return to camp Matt packed up and left as he had to work on Monday.

Trent and mate Taz arrived at camp just before dinner on Sunday evening after fishing above Stroud Road. They essentially walked the river, dragged their kayaks and fished the small pools, it was tough going and one fish each was the best they could do. Like Shayne, Taz had never been Bass fishing either, but he loved it and the bush bashing didn't seem to bother him. As the sun began to set below the hill behind camp a very cold southerly wind started to blow upstream and the temperature plummeted, Sunday night was freezing and most had two or three layers on to keep warm. By this time we were on the third bottle of port and we really needed it to keep warm.

After a leisurely breakfast Alan, Doug, Rico & I began the unenviable task of packing up ready to head home on Monday. Doug & Rico went home via Seaham and fished the Williams for nil result, but you have to give these two boys ten out of ten for perseverance and effort. I was last to leave and will look forward to returning after some rain when the river receives a rise and the weather warms up, hopefully with some Bass Sydney member company.



It was a wonderful weekend, whilst the fishing could have been a lot better the social aspect was excellent and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Also great to see guys like Matt, John and Trent with mates join us and experience the great campsite at Booral on the Karuah and give them the opportunity to fish some new spots.

Thanks to Alan who kindly gave me an in depth lesson tying the Improved Albright with some heavy cord so now I'm confident that my leaders and any future Bass will stay attached. He had showed me a number of times in the past, but I didn't practice and tie it enough to remember.

Finally thanks also to those that made the effort to come along and make it an enjoyable weekend.

**~Milton**

## **Blayney with Tham & Shayne Easter 2017**

I felt I got lucky with this trout- a hen rainbow, as I hadn't fared well on our long weekend's extensive fishing sojourn that had taken us over much rough ground, river-bank fishing! We'd fished almost 22 hours in total and I had little to show for the many miles walked and a thousand or more casts. Little did I know my fishing was on the shallowest of ascendancies – a very slow ascension over the Easter weekend.

On Friday, Shayne Hodgson, Tham and I arrived at a great looking river, it was approaching mid-morning and we were keen to start catching. The early start that morning, the three hours or so of in-car chat and mental preparation, the unencumbered drive and the morning coffees had all played their

part – we were excited and optimistic and we needed lines in the water, we were keen to fish. I'd never caught a trout in Australia – it felt an exciting prospect.

Tham found the turnoff after turnoff on unsealed roads, Shayne provided 'walkie-talkies' and we communicated through the dust we were kicking up, we opened and shut farm gates, we joked about double demerit points, but silently we planned our attacks, strategies, lures and landing big trout. We then parked our two vehicles a little away from a small family of campers, said our 'hellos' and noted that there wasn't much evidence of angling - this bode well for us as they'd probably not flogged that stretch of river. Tham and Shayne headed upstream and I took ten minutes to sort out some tackle options. I quickly caught them up and the river looked promising. It was narrow in places, running shallow, clear and clean water with plenty of deeper pools, varying geological features such as pebble beaches, soil embankments, strewn boulders, erosion and deposition, river snags, flora and fauna (we saw a sly fox running for cover on the far bank) and shaded parts over the water. It was also obvious the negative impact cattle had on the area, as cows could freely access the stretch of river along where we were at. It was warmer now, the sun had risen, nary a cloud in the sky nor a breath of wind. A nice day, a nice river, good company and promising prospects. As we fished, some of us lagging here, others overtaking there, we eventually spaced ourselves out, fishing without disturbing each other or the mighty trout that surely lingered therein, we had found a tempo that suited. We each got to try new pools and runs, I had a few bites and a few 'follows' from small trout only, but nothing amazing. We co-joined for lunch, expressed our collateral deflation at the lack of trout so far and agreed on our collective persistence. The one memorable 'follow' and 'take' I got came late in the afternoon as the sun wasn't far from sinking. It was autumn and days were getting shorter, our elevation above sea level is around 900m and I think that makes for sunsets setting sooner – I could be wrong: it has something to do with measuring with trigonometry and is more obvious from mountain sides, but I can't say how it effects when up on plateaus. Obviously, I wasn't catching fish if I was pondering such things. The sunlight was still bright despite late afternoon and the sun was now hanging low over my shoulder, casting long shadows in the direction of my casting.

My last cast punched the lure off into the distance, leaving my braid stretched out well beyond my long roundish shadow and the lure I was using, a trout coloured hard-body diving minnow, plopped into the pool. This was a large deep wide pool, the river flowing in and curving round from my left.

I was targeting a possible 'lie' that would have a trout facing up stream, picking off any food or injured fish drifting by. Approaching from behind and casting upstream somewhat would avoid spooking any trout. As I steadily retrieved from what must've been the umpteenth cast, I felt a hit on my lure and almost instantaneously I saw the head and open mouth of a trout, illuminated by the bright low angled sunlight. It was the first decent trout to show itself thus far. I and the trout failed to hook up, instead it turned sharply, showing of its long silvery flank as it caught the sun, the trout quickly disappeared. I concluded that the beautiful Sun had dazzled the trout, blinding it and therefore misjudging its strike on



my lure. I was disappointed as the day was now ending - but not overly worried, as at that time who was to know that catching trout on Saturday & Sunday would prove equally challenging? Tham was even more disappointed as he was The Guide and the first spot was one of his favourite stretches on the Belubula R. He had many more stretches of that river, but he decided on another river for the next day out from Orange.

Saturday was looking to be a full-on day, same as Friday, with lots of riverbank scrambling. Lucky for us that morning we had a pitstop at Summer Hill Ck on the way to the final destination Ophir, the site of Australia's first paying gold strike in the 1860's. Shayne cooked us up a breakfast of generous portions of bacon & free-range eggs on fresh bread – delicious. We then added a freshly plucked Redfin from the river that Tham caught. It cooked in minutes wrapped in tinfoil. It was an excellent use of an invasive pest. Tham also landed an undersized rainbow trout which was promptly returned, it had been the first trout of the trip.

Saturday's fishing led us to a beautiful gorgeous gorge, so ideal, that the thought of not landing a decent trout felt remote. The water was beautiful, the river had all the features of a trout fishing book - from slow deep pools, timber structure, rocky outcrops, fast flowing narrows, eddies, riffles, tumbling white water & babbling brooks. The gorge had native trees, grasses, wildlife & birdlife, sunlight & shade, boulders & shale, undercut banks and shallow sunny spots, insects skated on pools out of the main current. There was very rough ground to cover going downstream, nil obvious path to lead the way but for some vague animal tracks. Plenty of brambles to pierce, rip, cut, trip and ensnare. Not forgetting the jaggy nettles to sting and impede.

Twice I encountered the front half of a red bellied black snake, the biting end and on the second time I thought I'd stood on it as my foot placed heavily onto a flat rock, the red bellied black snake shot forward trying to escape and as my foot came down directly on its trajectory and surely upon its black shiny body it had disappeared. I continued to jump-hop the next three steps as the instant-replay in my brain played catch-up and registered that the snake went under the very rock I put my foot down upon and, phew, it was unlikely to sink any fangs into me! I pushed on though and made it downstream to a very decent looking pool.

On the way, I fished the most desirable areas, approaching from a downstream perspective, keeping a low profile & out of sight - but with no success. The last pool I fished promised everything and delivered nothing. I felt pangs of despondency. One trout flashed its rear half, wafting its tail in my direction as it glided through a sunny spot and within casting distance too. It was gone, nil response to lure or my wishful thinking. Later one or two trout jumped in the pool - there were other surface ripples & swirling made by who knows what - possibly trouts. Then I looked across the wide pool from higher up on the steep bank, I was camouflaged by pine trees and looking out over the river's bend towards the far bank and I could see into the water flowing over the shallow, sloping, stony beach. And two

decent trout glided slowly from left to right heading downstream and out of casting distance. I was running out of time & the sun wasn't far off touching the topmost tree tops atop of the gorge. Up there were two deer making a racket, one was sticking his antlers up into the lower branches of fir tree & thrashing them around. The smaller deer, looked like a doe, was getting a feed from the fallen branches. Later Shayne said he could have shot one of them from that distance & angle. I considered moving further downstream again but resisted the job of walking around the pool, crossing over the shallower narrow section & peppering the beach area with spinners. It wouldn't have been difficult, it was just that up to this point every pool or water featured felt like the next best thing but they'd all failed to deliver. Defeated, I trudged my way back downstream, then trying to move quickly, in an attempt to catch up with Tham & Shayne, surely, they'd have done better. It gets cold quickly when the sun sets and being deep in the gorge, darkness would be quick. The thought of some ankle injury while scrambling over those boulders and brambles was enough to get my sprint on and forgo the trout's temptation.

I caught up with them both as they were targeting running water at the entrance of a great pool. The next pool upstream was the source of Tham's nice rainbow trout. At this point Tham was 'the man' as he'd made good on his promise of catching trout. Leading the score board by one trout, he was the only one - unfortunately, but no-one was going to begrudge another angler his trouty success, when Shayne and I had each failed, in landing not a fish.

We got back to Shayne's truck & viewed the rainbow trout, it was a good one, probably 45cms, hefty, freshly chilled post capture and while Tham went off to fillet his trout by the river, Shayne adorned us both with a chilled refreshing beer, 'St. Etienne', tasted great after all Our exertion in the pursuit of no trout.

Later that night we had the freshest of sashimi trout, soy & wasabi. It was the finest aperitif of the trip.

On our return to our pub hotel accommodation we deviated off the road and down a track to a bush reserve on another section of Summer Hill Ck Tham knew. Shayne's truck can take only one passenger shotgun, so I climbed atop and sat on a builder's plank and held onto a ladder, both were securely tied down and parallel to each other. All I had to do was hold on while we descended a steep and rough track. Tham & Shayne headed upstream to a big pool Tham knew & I went downstream for a moment I'd spied a quieter pool and thought that us splitting up might increase our successes. The never-ending fight with brambles & nettles continued as I searched for a gap in the bankside weeds and a possible way down to the water, in case I needed to land a fish. The pool wasn't too deep, the bottom was visible and fish weren't showing themselves. It was deeper over at the far bank. As I cast out a small silver spoon with a red flash & treble I worried that it was now the end of a second days

fishing and I was fishless, seconds after the light spoon hitting the water I had a feisty little fish on, a redfin and he didn't drop off either. I reeled him in, swung him over the weeds & 'done him in' with a spike to the brain. I got three larger Redfin, hooked and dropped several more, had some bites that failed to hook up and had multiple follows - sometimes two Redfin at a time. They're fun to catch & quite tenacious. I was surprised at how aggressive they are. There were some small trout also following occasionally, having a nip. The sound of Shayne's ute sounding its horn signaled that the short fishing visit was up and we exited right on dusk. Both Shayne & Tham had also landed redfin & Tham had a big fat specimen to show. On analysis those redfins would give a better account of themselves if they had bigger tails, a decent sized caudal fin for power and propulsion. Redfin look very similar to Australian Bass I thought. Looking at a Redfin head on, their profile is very bass like I think.

As mentioned, we had trout sashimi thanks to Tham's angling prowess, followed by Chinese food at the Hang Sing restaurant. Then beers at the Royal Hotel. Tham won a game of pool, Shayne went back to our accommodation - both are unrelated & with a few more schooners under our belt we discussed trout fishing, lure selection, brambles and that nettles are a forgotten hazard when kayak fishing, and the small trout lure I had, the CD1 with its one rear treble that I'd failed to use so far.

It was nippy, walking back to the Exchange, and the day's walking was taking its toll on Tham as he dawdled somewhat.

On Sunday, we rose at near five AM, and headed out fishing. But firstly, we had to retrace our previous day's movements in search of Tham's lost wallet, this highly important but time-consuming exercise involved visiting our starting and finishing points from yesterday. It was proving fruitless until luckily Tham searched his fishing bag again, for the fifth time we think and found it. This is in addition to Shayne and I also searching Tham's bag - he was sheepishly relieved. The bag had done the very thing it was designed for - keeping said wallet a secret, zipped, sealed in a pocket, a perfectly designed bag for Tham - we sighed with relief and cheered.

We then headed to the fishing grounds with a spring in our steps. Only to be usurped by two anglers who'd fished the same ~4km river stretch yesterday & landed 14 rainbows they told us. It might have been me who, with utterance aloud, thought "for fuck's sake, why would you flog the same stretch two days in a row?" As a result, we headed off opposite, going downstream towards the huge waterfalls. At least the two anglers had told us there was a path down the falls, and off we went. Today felt different as I hooked & dropped several small trout before climbing down this very impressive waterfall with its many pools and rugged rock walls.

My best chance of a trout came just below the falls, in the form of a deep rock fissure that had a strong flow, starting with babbling white-water. I dropped the silver & red spoon into the frothy white water &



raised a nice trout almost at my feet, its back, dorsal fin and tail all broke the surface & it was a nice fish, sinking back down. I changed lures to a soft plastic & got a bite but no hook-up, Tham had been offering encouragement, observing & now had a chance. He fished it and got a momentary hit. We persisted & fished it some more but for nothing. Just as Tham had left I stopped at the bottom of the pool & cast upstream to the start & a short way down I hooked it, played it a little too enthusiastically and dropped it. It hurt, but I was philosophical about it and thought there's always the return journey for a second crack at it.

Tham & I caught up with Shayne who'd bagged a nice Rainbow earlier, keeping it freshly dead in a cool pool for collection later on our return. As we fished these beautiful pools that all looked good enough to hold fish, it was Shayne only who landed a second Rainbow Trout, and proudly held it aloft - another Rainbow & bigger! He went on to lose a big nice Brown Trout which would have topped the day for him.

Back at the big waterfall, I was keen to retry that rock fissure with the missed trout. But by now the day was after lunchtime and there were people, families with an excitable dog in tow clambering over the falls and huge rock formations, diminishing their majestic-ness and our achievements in conquering the descent. By now we'd well and truly found our rock hopping feet and made short work of the 'falls ascent. As a result, I omitted fishing the pool with the right amount of gravitas and missed the opportunity for a trout that day. I didn't recognise the pool as the same on I tried on the descent. No more fish were to be had and we rendezvous at Shayne's truck for a cooked mid-afternoon lunch, consumed and appreciated heartily.

That was it, 2pm and the trout fishing was over, day three completed with mixed results, there was some disappointment at the numbers of trout being what they were, but some exhilaration as Shayne had now landed more trout than he'd ever done before; while simultaneously he'd landed more than Tham or I. We rejoiced in his success, relieved we'd not 'all blanked. In fact, there was some informative discussion about the trout caught so far and in-depth analysis of Shayne's trout that day, both of them around forty centimeters & plump, healthy looking. As Shayne gutted them and admired how pink & rich the flesh looked, we examined their stomach contents & Shayne extracted some crustacean heads and claws and then a perfect specimen of a dark green yabby. It looked immaculate, not yet digested and supportive evidence on what their diet was. We packed up, pondered fishing for Redfin again and decided against it, choosing instead for an early finish and a start to the evening. We were in need of muscle relaxants of some sort as muscles and joints were showing their wear, we could feel it, especially my left knee. Walking had become sore. Still, it was strange to be calling 'time gentleman' as they say in pubs after last orders. Tham usually fishes to the maximum and won't quit if there's a bee's dick's chance of another fish - his legs must have been hurting more than it showed.

Sunday night, after a lie down, shower, change of clothes and foot wear, we tagged along to Shayne's mate's house for dinner and it was the finest food we ate that trip. Karl BBQ'd up some fine sausages/snags, tasty tender steaks and succulent rack of lamb, wife Deb set us a splendid table, adorned with table cloth and the best tasting mushrooms in Blayney, sweet potatoes, roasted veges, salad, bread, butter, beer, wine and civility. At this point we were re-civilised, minded our P's and Q's then lost at a game of pool. Around lunchtime that day when we were having less trout success than we could tolerate, Karl, unknown to us, had jumped down a river crossing on the Belubula, cast a lure and landed a really nice 47cm rainbow trout, that was now chilling in the fridge for next day's dinner. Tham had abandoned the Belubula after Day 1! Shayne sparked up, Monday's drive home, dodging the holiday traffic could be juggled to include a last gasp early AM fishing session between 7 and 9 catching the earlier risers; I joined in, tagged along – last chance at a trout for me. Shayne offered encouragement declaring Monday 'Damian's trout day', nice sentiment, but I didn't hold much hope, but if fish are to be caught, then you have to be fishing, and Monday morning looked as fine a day for it as any. Plus, it'll be a long time before I'm back here, so better to make the most of it. Tham opted for a sleep in with instructions that I had to be back around 10am. His old legs had had enough.

Shayne and Karl were catching up - being long term mates, discussing stuff and headed upstream after we peppered the first pool; I ducked downstream, too many fishing the same pools can't be good. I was maintaining a silent presence, keeping a low profile and not trying not to spook any fish that might be facing upstream, spying my approach. Kept to the river side and cast upstream using bushes and the background to mask my profile/silhouette. The river was shallow and wide with thin green river grasses entangling the trebles of a shallow diver. I changed to a little chatterbait, a single hook facing upwards and caused less snagging on the riverbed. Further downstream the river swung left and small deeper pools appeared along the far sides, undercutting the bank. I started getting follows from little rainbows then hits and finally a hook up. I had finally landed a small rainbow trout, about 15cms and very wriggly, my first for the trip and a relief despite its small stature - I chuckled at catching a trout. At that size they're hard to photograph, so after a few attempts it was quickly returned and I'd try again. I got 8 rainbows between 12-18cms approx., it was getting easy, and they were following aggressively whenever the lure was nearby. These small Rainbows were nicely coloured and menacing any lures they saw, so much so that I had to reconsider the lure I was using, as the upwards facing hook of the Chatterbait was, on more than one occasion, penetrating the eye socket and to avoid further damage I changed to something with smaller hooks - a small crankbait lure a Rapala Countdown 1 Brook Trout colour, in the pub's night time session of reflection and beer, Tham had talked about the Rapala CD3 and its efficacy as a trout lure. The CD1 was around the same size as a CD3, but with only a rear treble. Tham thought it would be good as he usually removed the front treble & replaced the rear with a slightly larger treble to reduce tangling.

Next there was an equally wide but now deeper, slower moving pool whose waters were dappled with bright sunshine as trees and bushes lined both banks. Midstream there was some structure - logs and rock formation but all subsurface. Ideal trout habitat. I tried a few casts before racing back to the parking area only to be met by Tham who, after a sleep in, couldn't resist and he offered "another quick hour of casting and then we'll go, beat the holiday traffic". I enthusiastically agreed. Shayne departed a few minutes later, just before 10am. We said our 'adios' and thanked Karl for his hospitality.

Without much further ado, we scurried down to the pool I'd touched upon earlier, Tham's legs were holding him back and he had a few fruitless casts at shallow riffles en route. At the long pool, we had several casts each, sneaking about staying out of view and generally being careful, using the bushes and trees to camouflage our presence, the riverbank was steep behind us so at least we weren't sticking out like the proverbial sore thumbs. Tham raised a nice trout several times at different spots up and down the bank. I had some follows too from slightly bigger and better trout than the eight I'd caught before, in fact I caught two more, taking my trout total to ten for the day and for the trip!

We enthusiastically flogged the water with a few score casts and ten, retrieving sub-surface lures from as far as the far bank, casting perpendicular, upstream and downstream, trying also the parallel water to the near bank. Trout came and went with hardly a touch, promising but not delivering. Eventually we started making our way back to the top of the pool, planning to head back to the car and the journey back to Sydney. At this point Tham hooked and landed a nice size Redfin, he offered it for dinner and I accepted, my Vietnamese 'outlaws' will do something delicious with it. Again I looked at it, they are quite ferocious but would fight better if they had a bigger caudal fin.

Tham shouted to me to come up for a cast, he raised a nice trout that had followed his offering. Tham was at a narrow gap in the trees, I finished my cast or two, not having much faith in the next offering feeling as surely as the previous, that it'll amount to naught. The spot was where I'd cast before. It wasn't ideal, the bank was steep, thick trees and bushes encroached on each side and in the water was branches lying on the water's surface and others sunken - some just sub surface.

I cast that little 16th of an ounce, sinking, brook trout coloured balsa CD1 lure across the river and it plunked in just short of the far bank, I retrieved and kept the rod tip low in order to keep the lure diving deeper as it tended to rise to the surface with the height we were fishing from. Well no hook up, but a nice trout did follow briefly before turning away, we both saw it, piquing my interest further. Several more casts without a sniffer had me resigning myself to failure from another trout feigning interest. On what was to be the LAST cast before we seriously returned to the car and set back to Sydney, a decent sized trout took interest and rose up from the depths and fell in behind my lure, following at pace, weaving behind the lure its visibility turning on and off, in and out of the dappled sunshine. This time it didn't turn away and followed across the half way mark and continued. It was close but at any



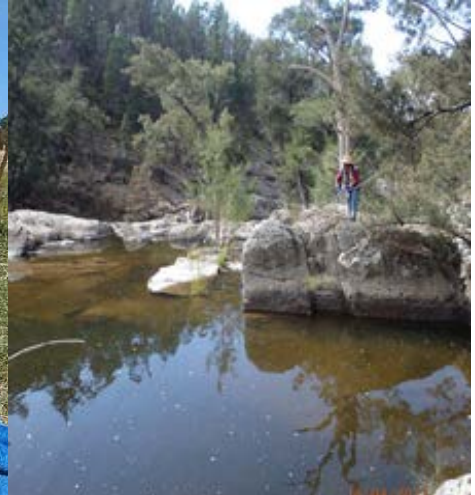
moment it could shy away. I kept retrieving and for a split second I was tempted to slow down, fighting this intuitiveness I made a conscious effort to speed up my retrieve and lost sight of the trout as my lure closed in on my rod tip at speed and the shade from the trees made visibility difficult. With no distance left and my excitement barely contained I awaited the tick of the lure hitting the rod-tips' top eye and it all being over, with nothing to show. With maybe a rod length of line to spare the rod loaded up, significant weight on the line and the rapid solid tugging on the line as the line arced back out from the bank and the trout was on, felt heavy and took some line, the drag zzzz'd a little and then it was more vigorous splashing and turning, a jump or two, lots of short runs each one showing more flank and rainbow colour and I'm thinking it's looking bigger with each turn, the hook could pull at any moment, my leader could snap, knots might give, but no long screaming runs, just to-ing and fro-ing in the confined space between the bushes and around the sunken branches. As it went on the trout was seemingly getting stronger and making short but powerful concerted efforts at running into branches, trying for deeper water and taking more line with each run, the arcs were getting bigger and it was taking me round to my right and into the bushes where for a heartbeat or two I lost sight of it before it emerged to my left and heading into those subsurface branches again. In one moment of dread it had its head out the water, side on, prized up hard against the branch and I thought this is when the treble snags the branches and she gets off, with more head shakes she was off the branch and still connected and powering into the water again, at this point I decided (maybe foolishly, time would tell) that I'd have to try and drag her up the grassy bank, I stepped a little further into the soft muddy soil at water level and leaned in, gripping the leader. Steadying the twisting and turning, I lifted as confidently as I could and slid her up the bank to chest height, where the grassy slope levelled off and I could place a firm hand across her midriff and prevent any last kick, flick, jump and lost fish happening. A nice healthy, fit, fat, colourful Rainbow Trout of 46cms lay on the grass. The Rapala CD1 had one point of the treble thinly hooked into the front top lip - not much, but it had held. I was relieved it had all come together. I couldn't believe that it had played out just like that without any disaster. It seemed counter-intuitive to keep winding and to wind in faster as I was running out of line and water with a nice trout in hot pursuit and in doing so, she'd snatched at the fleeing bait with nothing to spare. It was my eleventh trout of the day and my best, my best thus far. It was exciting. My previous contentment at catching redfin and all those small rainbows earlier and the enjoyment of a good fishing trip to new places was superseded with hearty joy that was evidenced by big grins and some pressure of speech as I talked about it for the next hours' home on the 5.5hr drive back to Sydney over the Blue Mountains (we had missed our window by leaving much later than Tham wanted). I couldn't believe my luck that I landed it without calamity, I'd avoided the disaster where one has to temper their own frustration and placate those around them that losing a nice fish isn't all that bad as fellow angler's express their disappointment and condolences.

~ Damian Balfour









## Flying Doctor issues new snakebite advice, PUBLISHED - 05 Oct 2017

The Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern (RFDS SE) Section has updated its advice and procedures following the publication of a new snakebite study. [The Australian Snakebite Project](#) is the most comprehensive ever carried out, involved over 1500 patients and collated snakebite data from the past 10 years (2005-15).

“The publication of this study is very timely as the warm, dry winter and sudden rise in temperatures has brought snakes out early this year,” said Tracey King, Senior Flight Nurse at RFDS SE, who has attended snakebites during her career.

“As venomous snakes are found in every state and territory we urge everyone, not just those in the warmer Outback locations, to be vigilant.”

“There are around 3,000 reported snakebites each year in Australia, resulting in 500 hospital admissions and an average of two fatalities.”

The Australian Snakebite Project threw up some surprising statistics, which challenges many long-held perceptions about where snake attacks occur and how to treat them.

In those attacks in which the snake was positively identified, the brown snake was the most common biter (41%), followed by the tiger snake (17%) and red-bellied black snake (16%).

Three-quarters of the people bitten are males aged in their 30's. Most snake attacks occur near houses, not in the bush. Half of all bites occurred while people were out walking, with gardening and trying to catch a snake the most common other scenarios.

While only 20- 25 out of 835 cases they studied resulted in death, the effects of a snakebite can be debilitating and far-reaching. Three-quarters of those bitten experienced venom-induced consumption coagulopathy, which causes blood clotting and life-threatening hemorrhages. Acute kidney injuries, brain and muscle damage and cardiac arrest are other possible side effects.

***“That’s why it’s important that people act quickly after a possible bite,”***

said Tracey. “Surprisingly, they’re often painless and may go unnoticed as tissue damage is mostly light – lacerations, scratches or light bruising along with some bleeding or swelling. As over 90% of snakebites we found to occur on the upper and lower limbs, these are the places to check first.”

“Common symptoms include an unexplained collapse, vomiting and abdominal pain, bleeding or paralysis.”

Many dangerous myths surround the treatment of snakebites. The most important dos and don'ts include.

**Do NOT** wash the area of the bite or try to suck out the venom. It is extremely important to retain traces of venom for use with venom identification kits.

**Do NOT** incise or cut the bite, or apply a high tourniquet. Cutting or incising the bite won't help. High tourniquets are ineffective and can be fatal if released.

**Do** bandage firmly, splint and immobilise to stop the spread of venom. All the major medical associations recommend slowing the spread of venom by placing a folded pad over the bite area and then applying a firm bandage. It should not stop blood flow to the limb or congest the veins. Only



remove the bandage in a medical facility, as the release of pressure will cause a rapid flow of venom through the bloodstream.

**Do NOT** allow the victim to walk or move their limbs. Use a splint or sling to minimise all limb movement. Put the patient on a stretcher or bring transportation to the patient.

**Do** seek medical help immediately as the venom can cause severe damage to health or even death within a few hours.

The new study has prompted the RFDS SE to reverse previous long-standing advice about the importance of identifying the colour and type of snake.

“Staying in the area after an attack can be dangerous and recent advances in medication mean we can now treat any snakebite with a generic polyvalent anti-venom, so identification is no longer necessary.”

Original article from: <https://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/news/flying-doctor-issues-new-snakebite-advice/>

## New Bass Sydney Trophy

Former long-term committee member and local Bass enthusiast Warren Willoughby who moved from Glendenning to Narromine many years ago kindly donated a new club trophy. The trophy is for the Largest Bass of the Year and applies to wild river fish caught in the period from one AGM to the next.



Your fish must be witnessed by another member with photographic proof to be eligible.

The nameplate along the bottom is engraved BASS SYDNEY Donated by Warren Willoughby.

The committee would like to thank Warren for his generosity and we look forward to engraving the name of the member who manages to catch the largest Bass each year.

## Photos from Members







## Monthly Fishing Cartoon



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