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## President's Message

A very difficult year is coming to a close. Our Club's activities have been severely curtailed and the La Nina weather pattern (our second year in a row) has made it difficult to get out chasing our favourite fishy targets. We all hope that 2022 will be significantly better - interstate & international travel to recommence, weather settles down for the rest of our Summer and we get to see friends and family again. It is during times like this that the nagging thoughts regarding the continuing existence of our Club resurfaces. However, it looks like we will see the club survive into the new year. How long that will be will depend on our members – YOU

Nine members turned up for the Club Christmas Dinner on December 14th. We had a Vietnamese banquet which was overwhelmingly enjoyed by those present. It was great to catch up, especially with people that I have not seen in the flesh for ages. In the photo from the left clockwise: Jason, Dave, Damian, Tham, Brian, Milton, Steve, Michael and Chris



So... I wish all members and their families a great Christmas holiday period and a Happy New Year. Let's get together more often in 2022. Cheers Tham

## RUSSELL STREET RE-SNAGGING

There's been a good success rate with the tube stock and GA have planted yet another area – the middle of the paddock down where all the root balls were stored. They have also been maintaining the plantings as promised i.e., putting a spray circle around each plant and brush-cutting the broader area so things look good.

On the wider site, including our mature plantings, weedy grasses are prolific and annuals are also growing but the only one flowering in any numbers was mustard weed – not nearly as bad as Bidens or Fleabane in my opinion. Though the latter is likely to be off the chain by next month. Everything, including the natives, is lush. Lachlan even found a very good patch of Hedgehog Grass, a native we haven't historically seen much of on site.



The best weed news for me is that there were no real vine problems in our mature plantings – that focus we had on them for the last couple of weeding sessions seems to have really paid off.

And the best re-growth news is that I found at least one Native Hibiscus in the upstream patch (the area that got obliterated in the floods) – it was laying down but re-shooting so perhaps all is not lost there.

Then perhaps the biggest news of all is that some of the re-snagging work has been done. There may be more planned as a few root balls have been moved to the top of the crossing track with no obvious work done in the river near here. The work that is obvious is a little downstream and accessed from where all the logs were stored. The best part about it as there are at least 3 signs installed on site and Bass Sydney gets a mention on them – including our logo. Someone in the club may want to use this as a promotional opportunity.

Cheers Alan Fowkes







### **A TREVOR TO REMEMBER - LCR SALT**

Over the last few years, Doug, Jeremy, Rico and Tham and I have become autumn Lane Cove regulars. Last year it became a haven for me during the first Covid lockdown and this year it got another good going over. We've learnt a lot about fishing there, the bream can get big, the EPs can turn up just about anywhere, flathead are ubiquitous and occasionally a salmon or trevally will show up.



This year was very typical, a run of nice bream, I had 2x40cm FL and a string of mid 30s. Some good Eps in various parts of the river including my best fish from the Lane Cove and more trevally for me than usual.

I've become quite partial (as have the fish) to the Squidgies Prawn wriggler tail 65mm in bloodworm. This was originally Jason McMaster's fault (nice work), he has always been a fan and I have grown to like using them. I was very disappointed to see that they have discontinued the ones with feelers and eyes, but on the plus side the new release is more durable and is UV enhanced! What I can say about them is that they are a very popular lure, they look like a prawn, and I have had great success with them in the autumn and winter.



But one trip had something special. I was solo, on an early Sunday morning trip out of Burns Bay. A 5:30 high tide 1.65m and sunrise at 6:45. Looking forward to the run out. I missed a very good bream that was harassing bait fish in the shallows just down from the ramp on a bad hook set, typical autumn bruiser. Then a string of flatties and mid-sized bream around the mouth of Burns Bay, all promising. I decided to head upstream to the bridge to look for a few Eps and started casting around the pylons, just prospecting.

Nothing much near the channel pylons so I headed in towards the big sandbank on the electric casting ahead. A couple of pylons in I got a tap, a take, and on the hookset the fish took off, straight upstream away from the pylons. I thought from the size, that I had a rat king or maybe even a school jew. I backed the drag off a little and let it tow me upstream until it turned around and started to head downstream, so I had no choice but to follow it. Every time I exerted any pressure it took off, and with only 6lb leader I wasn't taking any chances.





Downstream with the run out, under the bridge, past the big yellow house. I started to exert a bit more pressure, it started to come in a bit, got near the boat, still no colour. It started towing me again, so I used the electric to take the tinny into the middle of the river between the bridge and the entrance to Burns Bay. I was starting to make a bit of ground by now and the fish which I thought at this stage was a jew, started to circle the boat, had to be a trevor but how big? I eventually saw some colour and sure enough a big silver trevally, in the net at 62cm and my biggest so far.

A quick snap and release, sadly the photos don't do it justice, it was a solid fish. Immediately after I had a string of Eps, not big, but topped off the day with a solid blue nosed 40cm FL bream. A top day and all fish taken on the Squidgie prawn wriggler tail.

Cheers Macman

### **CHATTERBAITS BY MACMAN**

Firstly, A Happy Christmas to you all. Another trying year with limited fishing opportunities, but hopefully a better 2022 with a few get-togethers and fishing trips. My 2021 has been remarkably good in fishing terms. The end of last season saw plenty of good local trips into the creeks and rivers around Sydney. At the end of the bass season, I was able to get some really great saltwater lure fishing in the Lane Cove River, the big autumn bream were in good form, the odd estuary perch and great trevally, including my biggest at 62cm. Then after the lockdown, I had to look to different areas in my LGA and had some good trips to Berowra waters. But the highlight for me in the last year and a bit has been the consistently good catches of bass. One of the main contributors to the consistency has been the new go-to lure for me, the 1/8<sup>th</sup> home made chatterbait.



Chatterbaits aren't particularly new, especially to Bass Sydney members, and I've used them a bit. I think I borrowed my first one from Doug on a bass catch and promptly had a bass steal it. I subsequently bought some 3/8<sup>th</sup> Zman chatterbaits from Ottos, but really didn't do much good on

them. They were maybe a bit big and were skirted, perhaps more suitable to dams. Then Tham put a note around to say he would do a bulk order from the states. I got a mix of 1/8<sup>th</sup> and 1/16<sup>th</sup> Zman Micro Chatterbaits and started to put them to use. Towards the back end of 2020 I started to get some really good results, especially with the 1/8<sup>th</sup>, slider tail combination.



Why are they good? Firstly, they cast well and rarely tangle. So much of bass fishing in the tight and heavily fished waters around Sydney, relies on plenty of accurate casts. The small profile and weight help in the cast and the fact that it moves well as soon as it hits the water really seems to attract a bite. Secondly the versatility of the small Zman, due to there being no skirt, simply attach whatever style and colour of soft plastic to suit the conditions, more of that later. Thirdly, they work on the drop, in a way that a jig spin doesn't, I have been getting a lot of takes as soon as they hit the water, especially if that is under a ledge or log.





But, the small Zman Micro Chatterbaits aren't very durable. They break easily, and they seem to rust quickly, resulting in the blade coming away from the lure, particularly annoying if that happens when a fish is attached. That's one thing if they are cheap and you can buy them locally but having to get them from the US makes it a bridge too far.

So, I decided to make my own. Not the first in the history of Bass Sydney according to Milton. I did a quick search on the Google machine and found that I could buy blades in lots of 100 from AliExpress in China for \$10. I bought 2 sizes, 20mm long and 16mm wide for the 1/8<sup>th</sup> and 15mm long and 13mm wide for the 1/12<sup>th</sup>. I looked around for jigs that I could use that were decent, reasonably priced but that I could open the eye on without breaking them. After a bit of trial and error I settled on the 1/8<sup>th</sup> and 1/12<sup>th</sup> TT Headhunter in a size 1. A small snap works best for the attachment, I found the smallest size Decoy snaps to work best.



They are easy to put together if a bit fiddly. You need a small jewellers screwdriver or an awl to help open the eye of the hook. You also need a soldering iron, a hobby blowtorch or the gas burner on the stove to slightly heat the hook eye to make it easier to open. You will need some good strong hobby pliers to slightly bend the lip of the blade to get it fitted into the hook eye.

A little bit of heat should be applied before closing the eye back up with pliers. Then it is simply a case of fitting the snap swivel to the blade, again, this is fiddly and you will need pliers.



Milton asked why I didn't use the Headlockz and the answer is in the picture following, generally it is too hard to get the eye open on those jigs. But any jigs that allow you to open and close the eye, AND have the eye at the right orientation should work (worm hooks often don't which makes weedless applications trickier).



As I said earlier, one of the best attributes of the chatterbait is ability to change the tails. Many of the waterways I fish are under a bit of pressure and small lures cast accurately make a big difference. These waterways are also prone to changes in water quality, from crystal clear, to tea tree black and after-rain brown. Tail changes really make a difference. The water colour in my local has been almost



black this season and black tails have been really turned it for me. I've been using the black gulp grubs that I bought to target yellowbelly, the 2 and 3 inch ones. Last season when the water colour was clear or a bit coloured from rain, the more natural Zman motor oil slim swim had some success. I have also had good success with the 3-inch slider in Junebug/Chartreuse usually with a bit cut off the front.

I'd say I have replaced the jig spin with the home-made chatterbait as my go to lure (when they aren't playing on top). A very cheap and productive lure for bass in hard fished waterways.

Cheers Matt McHugh



## **Macleay River November 2021**

Warren Chalmers

Friends, Don Clark, Bob Rolston and myself, were keen to fish Bellbrook earlier this year as the water condition and levels were favourable, however, like most of this year and our life, COVID impacted our life and travel restrictions delayed the trip till the 1<sup>st</sup> week in November.

We had been monitoring the water level at Toorooka, (there is no longer a gauge at Bellbrook) and aware that we were going when the level would make travel in the "AIRE" raft difficult, and this proved to be correct, it was an arduous three days.

Weather was good, rain was forecast but fortunately hardly occurred, not too hot (even though I got sunburnt legs despite sunscreen), barometer 1020 on the final day.

### **1. Bellbrook to Devil's Nook**

Don boated three fish – 42, 32 & 38, Bob also a 40 and me, a 29 & 32. Getting the raft out at Devil's was really hairy and hard as the trailer was up on an elevated bank about 15' higher than the water but we managed to winch it out.

### **2. Devil's Nook to Toorooka**

A long trip, lots of walking, staggering down gravel runs, only two fish caught on the day, myself a 39 & 26.

### **3. Drummer's Flat**

Beautiful looking water 20km's up from Bellbrook, Don landed a top scoring 45, and I caught a 15 shrimp on a monster spinner bait.

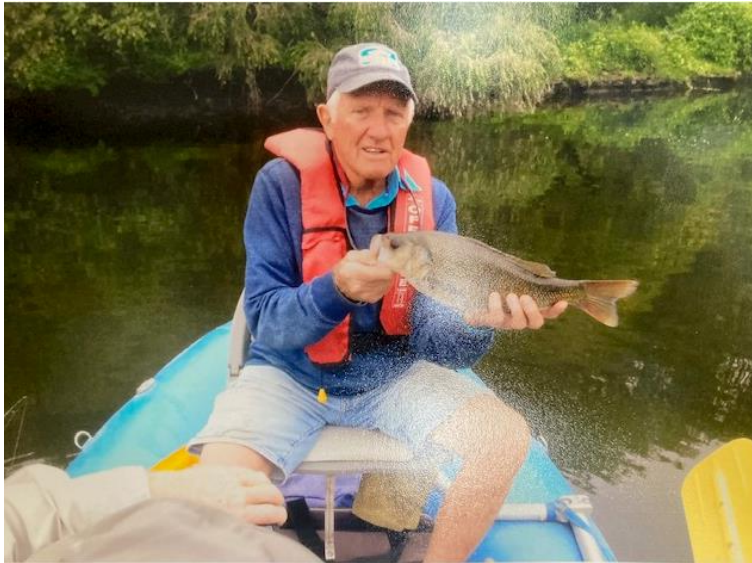
We had some travel issues this time as no accommodation was available in Bellbrook – cabins, hotels and B & B were permanently booked out by workers and it looks like it will be that way for some time. We stayed at the City Centre Motel in Kempsey, which is a good reasonably priced facility, but we had to travel each day to Bellbrook etc.

No restaurants were open in Kempsey, so we ate at the RSL (which was good food in a clean friendly environment), but we missed the variety that has been available to us on previous trips.

Despite our "maturity of years" and some difficulty handling the raft launching, especially at Devil's Nook and walking on rocks whilst wading in water (yes, all resultant knee grazes and elbow abrasions have been patched). Would we do it again....in more favourable water levels... YES.



Don 45cm at Drummers



The AIRE Raft

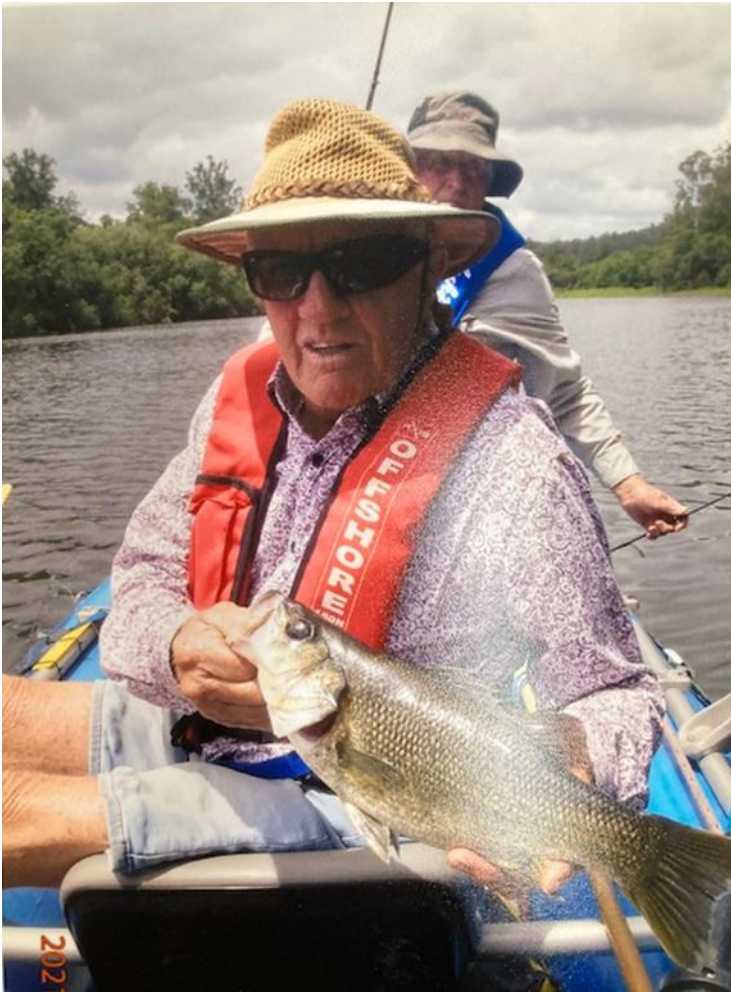


Launching the Raft at Devil's Nook, bound for Toorooka





Don 42cm below Bellbrook



Warren 39cm below Devil's





Sunday Telegraph July 8 2021

# Fish in comeback

RECORD numbers of endangered fish have been rediscovered in the River Murray after a boost in water.

Tens of thousands of critically endangered Murray hardyhead were found after water levels were raised.

South Australian Water Minister David Speirs said it was made possible thanks to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan: "We know how important the delivery of environmental water is under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and to have record numbers of critically-endangered fish rediscovered is a great result".

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The Murray hardyhead is a species of fish in the family Atherinidae endemic to inland parts of southeastern Australia. The fish is an omnivore, feeding on small crustaceans, aquatic insects and algae. [Wikipedia](#)

**Scientific**

**name:** *Craterocephalus fluviatilis*

**Higher**

**classification:** [Craterocephalus](#)

[S](#)

**Family:** [Atherinidae](#)



Sunday Telegraph June 11 2021

## Scientists finally get prized fish to breed in the lab

MALCOLM HOLLAND

GOVERNMENT scientists have finally “cracked the code” to breed in captivity one of NSW’s most prized predatory fish.

It has taken years of research for the boffins at the NSW Department of Primary Industries to be able to get jewfish to spawn and fertilise their eggs in a hatchery to rear their tiny babies.

They then released 80,000 jewfish fingerlings, just 40mm

long, into Sydney’s Georges River and Botany Bay.

Jewfish, also known as mullo-way, can grow to more than 1.8m long and are a prized angling and commercial fishing target, but their numbers have declined alarmingly in NSW and they are classified as “overfished”.

A team at the DPI’s Port Stephens Fisheries Institute marine hatchery managed to get wild-caught mullo-way broodstock – notoriously fickle and difficult to

handle – to spawn. An extra 10,000 fingerlings were released into the Hastings River on the NSW mid north coast. Both release locations are designated Recreational Fishing Havens.

The little jewfish are expected to grow very quickly, reaching the recreational fishing legal size of 70cm in about three to four years.

The stocked jewfish are being monitored by DPI researchers to see where they swim and their survival rates.



The jewfish is a popular sport fish.



My thanks go to Milton who has received the incoming articles on my behalf and placed the many excellent photos into a relevant space!

It has made my job of putting it all together so much easier – thanks Milton

It has been a very difficult two years for everyone – especially all you fishers who haven’t been able to get out and about to chase your beloved Aussie Bass – and others. Looking forward to 2022 when we (hopefully) will once again be able to produce “The Battler” every couple of months with more pages as usual! Also, thanks to all the contributors and the excellent photography to go with the very informative articles...

**Merry Christmas  
and  
Best Wishes  
for the  
New Year**

Lyn, editor



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