

1 February 2009



Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*



# THE BRONZE BATTLER

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## Reach 3a Wallacia January 09

Six Bass Sydney members fished the reach on what appeared to be a not so "good looking" day. After the 40 degree heat on several days prior to the weekend we woke up to an overcast drizzly day. It was cool enough for most of us to put on light jumpers. Garnet, Jim, Geoff and I had agreed to meet at the Blaxland Crossing Reserve, while Chris & Tham had decided to fish at Cobbitty. Garnet and I arrived at the Crossing at about 8.15 and had taken the kayaks off the car to get them ready to carry down to the river when I noticed that there was a chain hanging from one of the gates. Closer inspection revealed that the padlock had been removed (?) and a small piece of wire was hung over the catch to keep the gate closed. We immediately put the Yaks back on the ute and proceeded down to the waters edge to unload and just in case I then parked the car in a side street. As I was leaving, Jim & Geoff had just arrived and they did the same. Garnet & I had decided to fish upstream while the others went downstream to the weir. As it was so overcast Garnet & I chose surface lures to start with, Garnet a beetle and I a Bat. On my third cast, within sight of where we launched, the Bat was crunched almost immediately it hit the water, and after a short but dogged fight a Bass measuring 280mm was landed. I had moved no more than 20 meters and had another 3 hits before I had another hookup, this time a 275mm, what a great start to the day.

Garnet and I chose sides of the river and slowly moved upstream. I had about 4 in the boat before Garnet decided to change lures and pretty soon he was bringing fish to the boat as well. I was busy measuring and releasing a fish when he called out and asked me to come over and photograph a fish he had just caught, he was using a home made lure and this was the first fish he had caught on it.

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Meanwhile I had several fish smash the lure, take it to the bottom and then suddenly spit it out, very frustrating. At one stage I nearly came to grief. I had cast to a likely snag when a slight breeze skewed the kayak about, so I put the rod down and was making an adjustment with the paddle when a fish smashed the lure and my rod and Stradic reel were heading overboard. Luckily the rod was pointing towards the front which gave me enough time

to drop the paddle and grab the rod, lost the fish though. After I had landed nine fish and lost about 4 or 5 I decided that maybe a lure change was in order. We decided that it was lunchtime, so straight after lunch I tied on a mini chatterbait and landed 2 fish with my first 3 casts, things were looking up. Garnet continued using surface lures. As it was getting late in the day and we had agreed to meet at the Wallacia pub at 4pm we decided to paddle back a bit and then continue fishing back to the launch point. Again I landed 2 fish in 2 casts and then things went quiet again. We arrived back at the launch point to find Geoff and Jim already there. As usual the first question is "How did you go"? The others were surprised at our success, they had 5 between them while we had 26. We discussed what may have been the reason for this, was it a lack of fish between the bridge and the weir or was it tactics. Where we had used surface lures for most of the day, of our 26 fish, 20 were caught on the surface, the others had not used them at all. But that's Bass fishing. We will never know the reason. Chris and Tham met us at the pub later in the day and they also had had limited success. All in all Garnet and I had a great day, Tham scored the prize for the biggest fish, a 303mm. We all enjoyed a few beers before we headed for home. The river looked good from the bridge up with little weed for the first couple of K's, but after that the weed became more and more problematic where we had to paddle about 30-40 meters to find access to fishable water, with the heat on from now on it will only get worse.  
Alan Izzard

### **CLYDE RIVER AND BEYOND.**

Sometimes you plan an exciting fishing trip, organise gear, shop and make preparations, then suddenly it all goes off the rails.

Garnet and I planned to head down the South Coast via Canberra, Cooma, Dalgety and Nimitabel finally ending up Bega way. Maybe chase a Trout or two in the high country before seeking out some un-fished Bass water. I have an old workmate (Fred) who lives on the Clyde upstream from Neligen, so we planned to eventually base ourselves there and fish for Bass upstream at Brooman.

Late Christmas day I hurt my back lifting something that I shouldn't have, so things were put on hold until I could see a physiotherapist. We finally left on New Years day deciding to skip the big trip and head straight for Neligen.

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We planned to camp on a private property at Brooman allowing us to fish the beautiful stretch there after dark. I called the property owner a number of times prior to leaving home, but could not make contact. I finally caught up when we arrived in Neligen, but unfortunately he did not want us to camp as all the rellies were there. The only option was an afternoon session. It's not really a proposition to fish well into the evening at Brooman then drive back to Neligen. The most direct way to Neligen is 25 k's, but the road is windy, very dusty, rough in places with lots of Roos. This route also crosses the Clyde at Shallow Crossing so timing the low tide is important. Bugger.

So we had two afternoon sessions at Brooman. The first was more of a reconnaissance one, so we left our kayaks at Neligen and fished on foot. Another reason for this is that Fred does not have a kayak.

We managed only two Bass, Garnet a 265??? on a surface beetle and me a surprise 390 on a Fina spinnerbait. You know I've thrown lots of Fina spinnerbaits around over the years, but I've never caught a Bass on one. They look great, but rarely do the job. The Clyde River Bass are really dark. Just take a peak below.



The second afternoon session was more productive with 9 Bass, but nothing above 246. Unfortunately the big girls only come out after dark. Garnet used his kayak and Fred and I fished from a canoe kindly loaned by the property owner. A strong wind was blowing down the reach we fished which made casting difficult. We returned to Neligen sort of disappointed.

The next day was a lay day. We just fished off the beach at Fred's place, but had to contend with ski boats. Unfortunately early January is ski time.

We fished long beach which is just north of Batemans Bay for Bream and Flatties, but no luck. This is a very pretty beach with crystal clear turquoise water. This was probably the reason the fish were scarce although Garnet did hook a honker Bream, but lost it.

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Probably the most fun we had was fishing the surf beach at Broulee. Fred, Garnet and I went with Theo and Lindsay. Theo owns the 40 acre property on the Clyde where we were staying and Lindsay is a good mate.

It turns out that Lindsay is an expert at catching beach worms. And so for the first time both Garnet and I watched this process. On the day the worms were very co-operative and we caught 22 in about 30 minutes.

All five of us fished for Whiting and it wasn't long before we have 15 or so nice fish. Fishing the surf with a 1 – 2 kilo Bass rod isn't the best idea, but we had no option. Garnet caught one and I lost one. Never mind it was something different.

By lunchtime it was getting really hot so we returned to Neligen for an afternoon nap.

That evening eight of us went to a little Thai restaurant overlooking the Clyde at Neligen for dinner. It was a very enjoyable meal with good company. Not a bad way to finish off our trip down south even though we came home sunburnt, tired and with one dicky back.

### **COBBITY REACH 3A TRIP**

Tham and myself fished Cobbitty for the Bass Sydney January reach 3A social event. This took place on a week that included multiple days in the 40s in the Sydney basin, however the day of the event we awoke to black clouds and a southerly squall. I arrived at the bridge just on 7 and began setting up. I turned up in a singlet and shorts and was shivering as I tied my leaders, so I had to rug up. Tham arrived a few minutes later and soon we were on the water.

The choice to fish Cobbitty was to add a bit of variety to the clubs knowledge in terms of fish numbers / conditions of the river etc, I knew the other fellers were fishing Wallacia so I was happy enough to fish further upstream. In light of the previous Bass catch with so many people fishing the more popular areas, I was looking forward to exploring a different section, and was quite fortunate to have Tham join me. The river was down and we had to get below the first weir by walking though the fish way. The fish way was actually reasonably constructed and had some deeper holding areas which I can tell you was quite deep as we pushed our kayaks through waste deep water over slippery rocks. Fortunately on the way back we were able to get out of the water and drag our kayaks right around and put in again on the other side.

Tham hooked up first with a black cricket hopper on a fish that hit his lure on the surface. There was a reasonable time between when we put in and when the first fish came along so he was most pleased. Tham continued to get hits so I changed from a diving lure to a surface lure. A black bugii pop. First cast bang fish. It was another little fish of about 180mm. Next cast two pops of my lure bang again! Two cast two fish! I was now happy and could leave there contented with that effort. I say that because the vibe of the place was not good we didn't feel confident the whole time. The sun finally came out which warmed things up. Not long after Tham got a good fish of 303mm and I

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got one of 285mm. Maybe things were about to change as the cicadas came out also. Alas this was not the case as things went quiet again. We traversed one more weir, an ancient one at that with an old salmonoid fish-way right down the middle. This pool was horrible, very shallow with algae on the edges. We turned around and headed back. We fished our way back to the bridge it was right on 3pm and Tham nailed a fish under the bridge. There is always one near the bridge.

We were off the water not long after that and made our way to the Wallacia pub to meet the boys who had done really well. It was good to hear and it made it more memorable as they were mostly on the surface. Overall, a great way to spend a day. It wasn't an overly early start and it was most enjoyable spending time in the beer garden having a quite drink talking fishing with the boys. We even came across a black snake on one of the banks that stood out from the water. Cobbitty is a great stretch of river that contains big fish, but on this occasion they just weren't on the job, I think the weather added to this, usually the air in this area is thick and dank with high humidity and lots of terrestrials. The atmosphere resembled that of mid winter let alone a summer's day.

Chris Ghosn



### SALTWATER RAMBLINGS

With Christmas fast approaching my interest in the saltwater was rapidly increasing. With the Bass rods firmly stashed away I cracked out the saltwater gear in search for flathead. On my first few trips I would focus on areas with shallow bays. The method was to either jerk soft plastic lures or to troll tight action diving lures such as the SX40. Day 1 and I was on the water at sun up with a run up tide, I had a Berkley gulp worm on and slowly working it. To my surprise it wasn't working so I changed to a smaller 35mm lipless crank bait. The wind increased so I started to troll, first pass bang a nice flathead of 40cm was placed on ice for dinner. Another lure change produced another flathead of around about the same size which was also dually put on ice. With a couple more fish caught and released it was time for a lure change, on with a 65mm Squidgy soft plastic. First cast into the wind sent the plastic soaring, I let it sink to the bottom and began erratically jigging the plastic and the second it fell to the bottom for a second time it was hammered and a another keeper was swimming around my yak. This fish



released itself with violent thrashing of its head. Over the last few months of chasing flathead in the kayak one piece of equipment that is mandatory is a net. I have recently purchased a small handled Environet and I am very excited. As I type this I find it hard to use my thumb and index finger due to encounters with some big flathead. When flathead spike you it isn't a clean cut and it takes a long time to heal. The other thing to keep in mind is when a flathead comes to the surface with your favourite lure in its gob and your leader wears through you certainly know all about it. I have been lucky in this regard, but what annoys me more is when I loose a few jig head/ soft plastic combos in a session. It really puts a dent in my tackle box. Overall, having a net on board, preferably an Environet or the other one with soft mesh will pay at the end of the day. When you consider the cost of flathead per kilo, the increasing cost of lures not to mention your well being having a net is definitely the go.

In summary of my saltwater adventures I fished up and down the Sydney coast from as far North as Narrabeen to as far South as Maianbar. I didn't visit any exotic locations, but the criteria had to be a waterway with edible fish therefore the Parramatta river and urban surrounds were ruled out. I did enjoy Botany bay and the lower Georges with good results, but over a period of time the boat traffic and exposure wore thin on my senses.

For those of you who question when the next saltwater Bass Sydney event is, what's the delay! There has been a rethink of locations due to safety reasons for the kayak anglers. A number of my trips were done in research for finding suitable locations where 12 or more members could fish in a safe relatively calm environment for a minimum of 4 hours. On most occasions none of these conditions presented themselves.

As I Mentioned my first trip in early December saw me encounter a 35knot southerly at 7am. Dave Claydon and myself found a great location at Kogarah bay with parking and a huge bbq area only problem was the 100s of hoons in boats that would buzz up and down a very narrow channel to reach a dead end and turn around and do it again. My heart was in my mouth watching the wake of these high powered boats hit Dave's Kayak. There is a very real chance having one of these boats drive over you as these people have no idea what they are doing on the water. Where is the Maritime and Water Police in all of this?. In this period of revenue raising it would help to bail out a state that is broke. They could be making millions of dollars on fines issued and clean the waterways up. In search for locations my eyes have been awoken to this sad fact. However, politics aside I can reveal that there will be a minimum of 2 saltwater events. Both locations have been mentioned previously so look out for them. Overall I enjoyed my saltwater trips and in the future will do more and add a balance of fresh and salt. Personally I find it to be a great way to add some balance to my fishing life. I am a very passionate Bass angler and from September onwards put in hundreds of hours on the water as well as thousands of miles travelling and poring over maps and sussing out locations traversing rapids etc. So a change is as good as a holiday and it clears my mind to focus on Bass again later in the season. Also provides some memorable meals.

Chris Ghosn

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## **BRIDGE BLITZ**

In November Nev and myself fished the mid north coast of NSW for Bass. The weather was imperfect and the fishing was slow yet we persevered and managed to catch fish each day. Actually Nev excelled and averaged 7 fish a day with some days catching more. This is a big effort as numbers like that are reasonable on any waterway let alone the tough trophy waters of the North, particularly with a barometer of below 1000.

Nev's tactics were good, he finessed to success by lowering the size of his gear to 4lb braid 2-4kg rods and 8lb leaders. His gear was really working well for him and he had quality spin gear of Daiwa Sol 2000 and a Shimano 1000 Sustain, top shelf stuff. With the conditions we faced it paid off big time. He knew how to use it too. He was throwing small soft plastic lures into the snags and slowly cranking them and this was really starting to pay dividends.

With this Nev cracked a pattern of finding fish holed up under the bridges. This tactic proved itself time and time again as I have never seen any one successfully and consistently pull fish from bridges. At Bellbrook we fished upstream of the bridge from 7am and returned at 3:00am in front of the car Nev cast to a bridge pylon and was



instantly hooked up to a brute of a fish he went on to take 3 more fish before being



busted up by a fish well over 400 all right in front of the car, which was 2 minutes from where we were staying.

With this experience safely filed away in the data bank we were on our last day of fishing all the way to Charity creek. This is really famous water that contains trophies. Whilst I was rigging up Nev was off like a flash down to the bridge. Nev screamed out I'm on, I scampered down to the water to discover Nev with another nice fish. There is no doubt about him, this guy can catch fish any where. To prove it wasn't a fluke he did it again 20 minutes later when we were kayak fishing. We pulled up on a shallow bank and sat in the shade, Nev threw a cast out a few meters parallel to where we were and would you believe it he nailed yet another fish, when you're hot your hot.

So the lesson in all of this is when fishing don't disregard bridges as a place to catch fish. For any tips give Nev a call. Chris Ghosn.

## **REACH 3A 17 JANUARY 2009**

Saturday morning was a typical Bass Sydney fishing day, cold, wet and windy. Fortunately upon arriving at Wallacia at 8.00am where Al and I were to meet

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Geoff and Jim, the rain and wind had stopped and the temperature had started to rise enough to remove our jumpers.

Geoff and Jim were going to head down stream and fish as far as the weir then fish back up stream and meet Al and me later in the afternoon.

We had not been on the water for more then a few minutes before Al was measuring his first fish. I had a couple of surface strikes but no hook ups. Al was using a black Bat surface lure and I was using a Christmas Beetle surface lure. Al had caught 4 bass before I had caught my first one. A couple of more missed strikes and I decided to change lures. When you carry as many lures as I do the decision is hard to choose what lure to use. I had a home made version of a jointed jitterbug which I had never used so I clipped it on. First cast I had a strike so I threw it back into the snag and came up tight. After a few nervous moments thinking that the hooks may come out of the lure I landed a 215mm bass. I needed a photo (maybe a couple) for bragging rights so Al obliged.



Not wanting to push my luck any further I changed lures to a black Bat. After the change a 272mm bass first cast. The poor bass might not have seen what caught him as he was blind in the right eye and also had several red spots on him. A lot of the bass we caught had the red sore spots on them. The black Bat was going great guns having many hits and five fish in the next hour. After lunch we continued up stream catching a few more bass, one on the clear version of the Bat which did not quite have the same great action as the black Bat. By this time we decided to head back down stream to meet Geoff and Jim.

Changed lures to a silver and black Predatek Spaddler and managed two more bass before calling it quits and heading back to base.

Jim, Geoff, Al and I headed to the Wallacia pub where we were to meet Tham and Chris, who fished at Cobbitty, for a few beers before heading home.

The results for the day were Al 15, Garnet 11, Chris and Geoff 4, Tham 3 and Jim 1.

Tham caught the largest bass of 303mm just edging out Geoff with a 300mm. Garnet Noble

### **A WORD FROM NEW MEMBER DAVE STEWART**

Warren Chalmers and I decided to fish the Nepean river between the Victoria & M4 bridges on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> of January.

We fished for about 3 hours for 3 Bass, the largest being 220mm.

Quite frankly there is so much weed in this section of the river that fishing is near impossible.

We don't know what the river is like on the SW side of the M4, but there is a lot of water ski activity there at the moment.

On Friday afternoon / Saturday morning Warren Chalmers and Geoff James fished the Karuah river at Country River Camp, Booral for 21 Bass, the largest

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being 380mm. The water level is low, but the stretch of water from the “rapids” to the gravel is still in good shape.

### **River Bass Catch results 2008.**

River	Macleay	Manning	H/Nepean	Williams
Host Club	Bass Kempsey	Wingham Anglers	Bass Sydney	Hunter Native Fish
Month	September	October	October	November
No Anglers	85	35	33	26
No of Fish	889	164	564	667
Biggest mm	570	480	395	360
Smallest mm	?	120	65	75

When collating these figures it became even more apparent that the further north you go the bigger the fish seem to be. The Macleay Bass catch produced 7 bass over 500mm and 100 Bass between 400mm & 499mm, while the Manning produced 15Bass over 400mm. Sadly the Williams & H/Nepean did not produce any over 400mm but produced many more fish on average per angler.

### **SPECIAL THANKS**

This issue was looking a bit light on. I only had my Clyde River and Beyond article in the beginning.

An email call to members resulted in articles from Alan Izzard, Chris Ghosn, Dave Stewart and Garnet Noble.

Thanks Gents, much appreciated.

The Editor

### **LANE COVE BASSCATCH**

Don't forget this event is on this coming Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> of February. A separate brief has been circulated to members advising the details.

This is the last chance for us to collect some catch data before the fish way modification this year so please come along and help the cause.

### **OTHER BASSCATCHES**

Nepean River Basscatch ..... 21 & 22 February

Manning River Basscatch.....13,14, & 15 March

Williams River Basscatch.....20 & 21<sup>st</sup> March

**Next Meeting  
Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> Feb.**