



April 2019

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VALE
 Janet Tham
 Condolences to Tham, Jayda and Family

President’s Message

The President’s message will be presented at the AGM Tuesday 9 April

~ Rico Van De Kerkhof

FEBRUARY 2019 BASS CATCH – BENTS BASIN

Matt's Report:

I wasn't sure where I was going to fish or for how long, just that I was going to fish on the Saturday. It turned out that Rico, Doug and Nathan were going to launch near Camden Airport and that seemed a better option than a solo launch at Douglas Park. We met at 6am and got prepped for what would be a long day, food, plenty of water and sun protection. It was still dark when we launched, the plan was for Doug and I to fish upstream and for Rico and Nathan to fish downstream.

We headed under the bridge and were soon alerted to some exclamations from Nathan. We paddled back to see what was going on and it was soon clear that he had buried one prong of a treble in his hand. Fortunately, I had done just that two nights previously and had a pair of good pliers in the car. Pretty soon we had done surgery on the treble to the point where I could push the barb out and cut it off. Nathan got some Dettol and Band-Aids and we were good to go again.



We headed under the bridge again and it wasn't long before Doug started getting hits on the cicada just past the bridge. He soon had his first fish, not a big one, but a good start. Once I got onto the good side of the river, I had my first, again on a cicada and again not a big fish. Then Doug picked up a couple more. I decided to swap the cicada for a jig spin and scored my best of the day, a 275 just before the weir.

We negotiated the weir, a 10-15-foot concrete job with a vertical slot fishway and had a bite to eat and a break at the top. The water changed immediately above, a bit browner, and more muck blown by the wind onto the northern bank where the shade and good fishing was. Doug picked up a couple more fish, but I couldn't get a touch on jig spin or cicada.

We went under another bridge and a walkway and stopped in the park near the Camden bypass, a nice spot for a break, stretch of legs and even refilled some bottles. We relaunched and started heading up under the bypass, I missed a good fish on a cicada opposite the launch and we started working upstream. By this time the sun was high in the sky and shade was scarce. It's really nice water above the Camden Bypass and it wasn't long before Doug was getting hits and landing a few fish. He got another five including his best of the day a 330 just as we turned around.



I couldn't seem to get many hits, a few half-hearted ones but nothing solid. We turned around at 1:30 and started heading back. I got two more small fish in a section just upstream of the walkway overpass, on a cicada. From then on neither of us landed another fish all the way back. I hooked and lost a solid fish just near the Cowpasture Bridge on a chatterbait but that was about it. We got back to the launch at 4:30pm.

Tally ended up 11 fish to Doug with only one bigger than 300 at 330. Five for me with the biggest at 275. It was a brilliant day for everything but fishing for me. Great company, a lovely few sections of river. Doug did pretty well in tough conditions, I think the combination of his more accurate casting and the whitish cicada really made the difference with more hits and hook ups.

Despite my inability to have a truly satisfying bass catch fishing wise, I

am really looking forward to testing myself next time and as always, the company and great river.



Doug's Report. Sunday - morning

After a relaxing Saturday evening catching up with club members and listening to the fishing chatter, Doug was the first one up Sunday morning to head off to Wallacia to meet Jeremy for 6.30am start. To date, no complaints have been made about disturbing the early morning tranquility at the camp site so his efforts to pack up and leave as quietly as possible seems to have worked.

Our plan was to spend the morning fishing downstream from bridge to weir before it got too hot. Tham and Steve fished upstream from Wallacia the day before, finding it very tough so we didn't want to try that stretch again.

From the bridge to weir didn't produce any fish for us nor any hit's - the water was pretty murky and there was a lot of bank side weed and surface scum. Early on another yak fisher had flashed past us and seemed intent on getting to the weir as quickly as possible -maybe he knew something about where the fishing would be better.

When we eventually made it to the weir, a look downstream made it a quick decision to try our luck and head further down even though we had no knowledge of what to expect. Neither of us had been up Nepean Gorge so it was all new to us. All I found out from Tham the night before was that the traverse of the weir wasn't "too hard" but unfortunately, I didn't seek any further information from him. The change in country was dramatic and the gorge country was stunning. We proceeded carefully, not wanting to commit ourselves without being sure of being able to make it back up easily. We are still not sure what the other yak fisher did - if he proceeded out at Norton's , went all the way to Penrith or managed to go back upstream on his own.

We ended up fishing the three small pools below the weir which required two short manageable



portages through the rapids. The third set of riffles above the pool prior to Norton's Basin looked a bit too daunting given we had to return upstream and then make it back to Wallacia in the heat.

Small hard body lures seem to work best with the fish only small but in very good condition. Most were hiding out among the rocks with the smaller fish also lurking among the weed and hitting shallow crank baits just skimming over

them. Jeremy ended up with nine bass mostly on his crankbait. Doug got six with the biggest of the day at 290mm, all of them on his Mazzy Popper fished with a slow roll just below the surface. A few fish also hit just as the lure splashed down. Unlike the Saturday fishing around Camden, the soft-shell cicadas didn't generate any interest. We probably could have fished the pools a bit harder and possibly used a jig spin to get a bit lower down, but I think we were both just as content to enjoy the

magnificent scenery of this gorge country and paddle around in the shade. It was good to see Jeremy get into some decent numbers of bass and rekindle his interest in the bronze battlers.



We did encounter two paddlers who were heading downstream, one of them in a pretty new fibreglass “longish” kayak more suited for the flatwater. They were also newbies to the area and told us their plan was to paddle down to the Nepean Rowing Club - hopefully they made it past the riffles before Norton’s Basin without too much damage to the yak.

One small mishap occurred when Jeremy was helping push Doug in his yak between boulders. His hand was trapped between the back of Doug’s seat and the

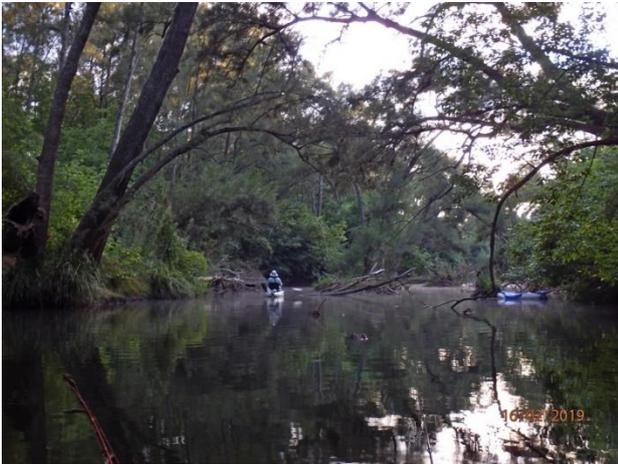
edge of the yak with Doug’s full weight leaning back! In true Jeremy fashion, all Doug heard was Jeremy quietly and calmly saying “lean forward a bit Doug”. As I was splashing about trying to move forward, Jeremy had to repeat himself three times. Each time was in true calm Jeremy fashion, with no change in his quiet tone before I realised what was happening. No doubt, with anybody else the message to lean forward would have been heard loud and clear throughout the gorge. Thankfully no damage was done and after a morning tea break among the boulders we were able to make it back to the weir. Jeremy got a few more hits in a shaded eddy just below the weir.

By this time, most of the shade had disappeared and the heat of the day had really hit. The stretch up to the bridge was pretty exposed and we tried the undercut banks for a while with no interest. I think we then both came to the conclusion to make our way quickly back to the bridge casting to the occasional shady snag on the way which was still few and far between. My finesse frog got a few hits deep in the shaded snags but I started to tire after a long day on the water yesterday and this morning so I didn’t really persist at it. We were thankful to be off the water for a snack at the shop up the road before heading on the long drive home.



Tham's Report

I fished the Saturday of Basscatch with flyfisho extraordinaire Steve Peach, doing the float between Bents Basin and Wallacia. After the car shuffle, we launched just below the Basin into the outflowing stream which is the Nepean R.



Usually there are few fish just where the river opens out a bit right at the start, but not this time. It wasn't until we had got to the river proper before I landed the 1st fish of the day. A tiny bass on a buzzbait of all things.



It proved to be a long tough day. Conditions were pleasant, but the fish weren't biting. I didn't catch anything for the last 2+ hours. I ended with nine bass, none over 300mm. Steve landed eight with two in the 300's. All of Peachy's fish were landed on his cicada fly while I landed mine on a mixture of subsurface & topwater lures. I did have a big hit on a cicada before I even got the bail arm over. It took the lure straight into a woody/twiggy snag next to it and I eventually got my lure back, but no fish.

Rico's Report:

Thanks to the volunteers that worked at Bents basin doing the Bush regen, we got special access for three people to go up and over the hill and get dropped off in a stretch of river that hasn't been fished much.

On Sunday morning, Jason, Steve and I loaded the kayaks up and the rangers took us to the spot, a bit of a drag and slide to get the yaks in, but it was a beautiful day, so we can't really complain. We fished downstream and Peachy was getting the first hits on his famous cicada fly, unfortunately no hook up.

He told me to try in that spot and I landed a mid 20ies Bass on the trusty jig-spin. We moved further downstream and got plenty of hits and landed a few. Most bass were around mid to high 200.

After reaching the fish ladder we turned around and fished upstream for another hour or so. Again, lots of hits and a few bass. Steve landed around seven bass and triple that in missed hits. Jason and I got nine fish each.



We fished from 11 am till 3pm. As we pulled the yaks up the hill, the rangers were there to pick us up and drop us off at the campsite. Many thanks to these folks for the taxi service over the mountain.

Bents Basin is a great spot for our February Bass Catch, whilst it's a very popular place for family camping week ends and can get crowded there are excellent amenities with hot showers etc. The river is accessible down from camp and other options are around Camden or do the 10k trip downstream from Bents to Wallacia.



THREE MEN IN A TINNIE

by Milton

As it happened the first week of March was free for Alan, Brian & myself, so we had time to get away and cast a lure or two somewhere up the north coast. With all the Bass rivers suffering from lack of flow and Alan not able to paddle we decided to visit Tuncurry and explore the Coolongolook, Wallamba and Wallingat rivers that can be reached with a decent boat capable of covering long distances.

One of Brain's relatives has a time share in the Tuncurry Lakes Resort which is a private park with cabins, powered sites for caravans and tents plus many other great facilities. Brian took his camper trailer, I took my boat and Alan his tent. We arrived mid afternoon on Monday and departed on Thursday morning giving us two full days exploring.

The amenities block was 30 metres away with a boat ramp right in front, so it was a great setup. We were totally spoilt using the new camp kitchen and dining area for our evening meals.



On Tuesday morning we left our base just before eight and headed up the Wallamba river toward Nabitac, stopping at good looking spots along the way. At a nice shady spot Alan caught three keeper Flathead that went in the live bait tank, but alas Brian and I lucked out. The odd touch here and there so we kept moving upstream and in the end all the way to Nabitac, 24k from camp. It was hot and frustrating, but what can you do. That's fishing as they say.



On Wednesday we did more exploring, heading downstream towards Forster then south through a maze of channels into the top end of Wallis lake. Boy, this is a huge system with endless fishing possibilities and very easy to get lost due to the complexity of the system and some of the channel markers are so far apart it's easy to run aground, as we soon found out at one

point. All out to drag the boat off the sand bar into deeper water and move on. At this point we decided to head back another way through



new channels towards the Wallingat river. We didn't have a map of the system, but my Raymarine Dragonfly sounder has an inbuilt GPS and a Navionics card which made it relatively easy to find our way. Without this it would be easy to get lost and run out of fuel as the system is just so vast. If you have Google Earth on your computer just take look at Tuncurry to see what I mean. Although, these days with Google maps on most phones one could use this feature if service was available.

We tried a few spots then started fishing the oyster racks where Brian caught two small Bream and I finally managed a small Flattie. We had intended to go up the Coolongolook, but to get anywhere near Bass water was a long way upstream and whilst I had a spare fuel, we decided it was too far and too hot. In addition, my maps pointed out areas of caution with submerged rocks and after being caught out with one uncharted one on Tuesday, I was pretty wary.

We headed back up towards the Wallambe again and were delighted to be escorted by a pair of Dolphins running parallel to the boat in close proximity. We tried some racks upstream of camp, but to no avail, so headed back to camp for an early retirement after being stuck again in some shallow water. I was tired after two days of concentrating on water depth, speed, rocks, shallows and navigation etc. When you're boating in unfamiliar waters the submerged trees and logs are a constant worry. Thanks to my two deckies for their help launching, retrieving and keeping an eye out whilst on the water.

Finally, this is a great spot to take your boat and camp right on the river, whilst you would not be able to stay where we did, the Big4 Caravan Park is just downstream so it's achievable and I'm keen to go back again. A special thanks to Brian for organising our accommodation and bringing his camper trailer so I didn't have to bother with my tent.

Cheers, Milton.

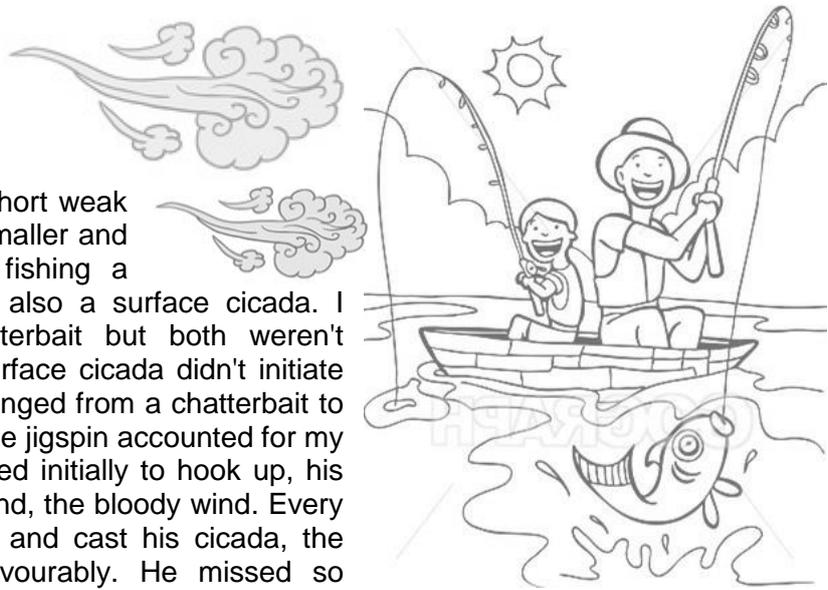


octane fun...

By Damian

I fished the final day of the February Bass catch thanks to fellow club member, Matt Hann, he'd agreed to let me fish with him on his tinny. I'd missed the bulk of the Bass Catch due to working and finishing my nightshifts and Matt had just got back from Singapore. We were both carrying some fatigue of sorts, jet lag and sleep deprivation. We met up at South Creek boat ramp at Windsor and launched his tinny amidst a heavy carnival crowd, the parking was awash with motorboats, speed boats, jet ski boats, wake boats, old and new, customised and brightly coloured and there was much excitement and the smell of two stroke in the air. The boat-club outing of enthusiast in attendance didn't bode well for our stealth approach angling I thought. But Matt soon had it all in hand: he pattered the little tinny out of the very busy South Creek, weaving between even more boats and into the wide Hawkesbury river, we turned left and pushed upstream at speed, skimmed under the 'Bridge St' Bridge. We continued at full throttle for a while and soon had left all signs of boating activity behind us, we were on our own, the water colour changed from opaque to clear and we stopped to fish. For the next eight hours we both worked hard to get fish into the boat. I was aiming for around nine fish and had to persevere to get them. My first Bass was a poorly conditioned three hundred plus Bass with serious

dorsal fin rot, resulting in a short weak fight. After that my fish got smaller and smaller. I had started out fishing a small green chatterbait and also a surface cicada. I upgraded to a larger chatterbait but both weren't swimming effectively. The surface cicada didn't initiate any interest either. I then changed from a chatterbait to a small jigspin. And all day, the jigspin accounted for my fish. Matt, like myself struggled initially to hook up, his problem was the wind, the wind, the bloody wind. Every time he positioned the tinny and cast his cicada, the wind turned the tinny unfavourably. He missed so many Bass hits when attending to the motor and positioning of the tinny. The helpful incoming tidal push never materialised enough to help us, we drifted too fast or got blown out of position all the time. Matt consistently landed his cicada into clear water amongst the weed, sometimes only the size of a dinner plate. Lots of spits, splashes & bites, but the wind, the boat twisting etc often resulted in a missed hook up for Matt. I often found myself fishing the weed edge or casting out into clear water in the middle of the river with the jigspin as the boat pirouetted, with the wind constantly inhibiting Matt's careful tinny positioning I had to take my fishing chances and cast where I could; a lure out of the water isn't likely to catch fish. And it was there I picked up several Bass. Despite it being bright sunshine, an occasional hook up could be garnered from many a cast to the middle of the river. In fact, my best bass of the day, a 395mm fork length, came from there.



Through sheer determination and a thousand casts Matt started getting more and more Bass, their sizes improved too, a relief for us both.

Both of us fished our own chosen lure, mine the jigspin and Matt the soft shell cicada (SSC), both methods caught fish for their own angler, but when we tried each other's methods zip, nothing, zilch. It was most unusual for both methods, surface and subsurface to only be

productive for the respective angler. Sticking to our guns we both managed get better bass, for me the 395 was the highlight, and then I looked at my catch card and I'd also managed three bass in a row that were over the 300mm length. Those three were well spaced out and at no point were the bass coming in thick and fast. But having another angler in the boat chomping at the bit, to hook up, helped sharpen the focus and maintain a higher level of concentration. Also Matt's frustration was getting pronounced with loud profanity echoing over the calm waters, the boats engine kicking madly into gear at times, furious revving, aggressive steering, Matts foot stamping loudly on the tinny seat repeatedly in frustration, his spontaneous outbursts of swear words dropping colourful cuss bombs of 'F's, S's, B's and C's helped to ward off my encroaching tiredness and kept my thinking out of the dwam that was only a few headnods and head-drops away.

It eventually fell dark, we'd fished from near one o'clock and then we tried jitterbugs, mini-pompadours and surface frogs to no avail. By nine o'clock my level of consciousness was barely hanging on and thankfully Matt kicked the motor into gear for the last time and pile-driven the tinny home at full speed, spraying river water airborne and thumping of the bow against the ripples, only slowing down at times to navigate banks of weed. The night sky was clear and the stars were well out, the occasional spray from the bow was refreshing me enough to stop me dozing off. We hauled out of the water, tidied up the tinny and binned all our rubbish (too easy). And went our separate ways. Matt refused my offer of petrol money and apparently I'll get the next tank full - of petrol, so another outing is on the cards. All I'd say is that ear plugs wont muffle out the cussing - its best to just join in and cast wildly, no zone is out of bounds. I'd suggest a well prepared well balanced sharpened jigspin or two as a lure of choice, Matt would probably cuss and disagree in favour of the SSC. Each catch fish for sure.

Thanks for the outing Matt, it was high octane fun.

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d a m i a n ;-)
Damian Balfour



SHOALHAVEN WEEKEND

by Milton

Members were keen for a weekend down the south coast in March, so we selected the Shoalhaven River camping at Grady's in Burrier, 18k upstream from Nowra. A nice spot right at the tidal limit with a decent boat ramp, good amenities and different fishing options for boat or kayak. There was also a Sunday option of fishing Broughton Creek on the way home, launching at either Berry or downstream where the creek meets the Shoalhaven as there's boat ramps at both spots.



Brian & I arrived just after lunch on Friday to find Barry Cole just setting up his slide on camper, Brian towed his Cub camper down so I was spoilt, camping in style again and Matt arrived soon after. Tham was to arrive later whilst Jason, Rico and Matt Hahn were coming on Saturday morning. Matt was super keen to fish on Friday afternoon, so we three kayakers headed upstream looking for some action. It was a beautiful afternoon; the water was clean and glassy with shady spots here and there. We paddled up and around the bend to the fast-flowing water then worked our way back. There was a storm brewing, but the Bass were playing hard ball, just the odd tap here and there, so we decided to get off the water before the storm and it was a good decision. The lightening was ferocious, the wind demolished gazebos and it bucketed down for at least 15 minutes.

Jason launched his boat early on Saturday morning with Rico whilst Matt, Brian and I tried the river again up and down from camp, Barry fished downstream by boat followed by Matt Hahn in his boat with Tham.



But the Bass were still hard to find.

After lunch Brian and I relocated to Flat Rock dam back towards Nowra whilst Matt launched at the kayak ramp in Calymea creek. Barry persisted in his boat after lunch. There were Bass in Flat Rock under the lily pads shown above, but no hook ups, only half-hearted hits, so we retired defeated and joined Barry back at camp for an early happy hour. Typical Bass fishing I guess, a lot of effort for little result sometimes, but that's fishing as they say.

The younger guys with more enthusiasm, fitness and staying power fared better. Their individual reports follow:

Tham: For me it's like another broken record, another tough couple of days. Of-course it's a 100% Bass focus fishing with Matt Hahn, but we both landed a few nice fish. Saturday, I landed five including my best Bass of the season, a 360 +. Matt landed seven including one a smidge bigger than mine, but my fish was in better condition. On Sunday we fished upper Broughton Creek, but it was even tougher. I had four or five big missed hits finally landing a fat 345. Only one for me. Matt only landed two, but both were nice. A season ending 385 on a Frogz & a 365. Very few bites but all hits and misses were good fish. No small fish at all, but the Bass in Broughton creek were in great condition. Beautiful bulky bronze fish. They weren't really on the bite.



Nearly all fish that hit and missed, boiled and swirled or were spotted eyeballing our lures did not come back for another go or could not be tempted with a change of lure. We fished for well over five hours, at least there's a few nice photos following for you, so hard work for three fish.



Jason: Mixed results from various sections of the Shoalhaven. I fished with Rico for two sessions on Saturday downstream of camp and Rico and Damian on Sunday morning in Nowra. Total catch: eight bass to 370, 41 EP's to 385, five Bream to 290, six Flathead to 450 and three Flounder.



Matt McHugh: A great location, plenty of options. I'm going to stay longer next time, it definitely deserves two full days. I ended up with nine Bass, three from the river near camp all small and six from Calymea Creek, best was 310 and only one other above 300. I had a top couple of hours in Broughton Creek for six Bream between 270 & 320 plus a solid EP over 300 and lost a few fish.

Damian: I managed to fish the Shoalhaven River Club outing... just. Thanks to Jason & Rico, picking me up at the boat ramp in Nowra after work so I got to see EP fishing first hand, a new for me. But tide, wind, jellyfish, Mullet, heat and flotsam all played their part. Only one EP for me and a tiny Tailor but it felt like more as the fish were coming into the boat over the course of the day thanks to Jason and Rico's angling finesses. I was privy to some EP tactics, and as well I'll be lightening my leader, tidying up my leader knots, whence the next time EP's are on my radar. Finally, I got to fish my local river The Shoalhaven, looking forward to another outing soon.

As a Club venue I think the Shoalhaven has variety and much potential, maybe a future club mainstay yearly or every second year.



The picture on the left-hand side is the kayak launching ramp at Calymea creek where Matt fished from on Saturday afternoon. It's downstream from Grady's and is well sign posted with a parking area. It might be a deep-water launch, but a terrific local facility.

On Sunday morning we enjoyed the traditional big hot breakfast cooked by Brain before packing up, bidding farewell and heading home. We didn't bother fishing Broughton creek, but I'd like to give it a go another time.



Cheers, Milton..... and thanks guys for your reports.

LOSTOCK DAM TRIP

Recently I went on a trip to Lockstock Dam on the Patterson River with a few mates to try our luck on the Bass, camping at a nice camping area below the dam. The dam itself has a small gravel boat ramp and can take reasonable size boats and is kayak friendly.

I arrived there mid-week and there was minimal traffic on the dam. I fished a couple of sessions a day morning and afternoon with reasonable results each session, five to six fish per session with nothing under 300mm and the largest 465mm. Most were caught on a beetle spin rigged with a 6-gram head and 3-inch Powerbait Gottam shad.

Pretty much all of the fish came from rocky areas with reed edge, the weed beds also produced fish. It could possibly be a venue for a club outing.

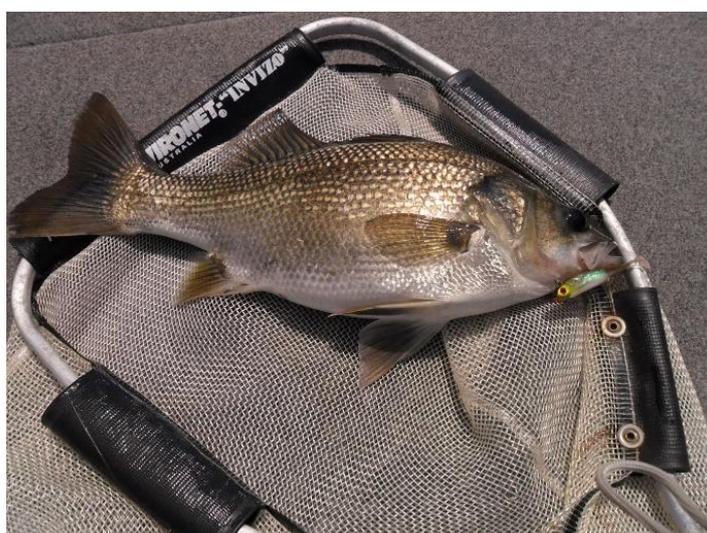


Lostock dam is situated in the Hunter Valley, 225k north west of Sydney via the M1, New England and Gresford road. It's about 65k north of Singleton & 65k west of Maitland.

The caravan park below the wall has unpowered sites for \$20 per night for two people and powered sites at \$30 for two people. Extra people are \$5 per night.

Powered boats are allowed, but an 8-knot limit applies.

Regards, Baz.



WHAT CAUSED FISH TO DIE?

THERE IS SOME COMPLEX SCIENCE BEHIND WHAT CAUSES MASS DIE-OFFS OF RIVER LIFE, WARREN BROWN REPORTS

When things go wrong in the tiny river town of Menindee they unravel in spectacular fashion.

It was right here on the Darling River in 1860 that Burke and Wills' ill-fated expedition to cross the continent almost collapsed in mutiny – two of the party's five officers quit and 13 others were sacked.

Burke split the group and pressed northward – and the rest is rather bleak history.

Menindee is now back on the map for another grim reason.

Only weeks ago residents woke to the abhorrent smell of a million rotting fish clogging the Darling River.

The scene was appalling – a solid carpet of fetid, silver-grey decay stretching as far as the eye could see. Countless native fish floating on the river's surface – bony herring, yellowbelly and the magnificent murray cod.

Photos of this unimaginable scene went viral on social media, igniting a storm of outrage and convicted, unshakeable, emotional opinion.

Fingers were pointed in all directions and accusations flew thick and fast. Some claimed it was due to rapacious cotton farm irrigators to the river's north – in particular the giant Cubbie Station was accused of stealing water.

Others blamed the NSW government whose mismanagement of the Menindee Lakes left the river low and dry.

It was the drought.

It was the heat.

But what precisely did cause so many fish to die overnight?

Retired NSW Fisheries Principal Research Scientist Dr Stuart Rowland is more than an expert on the Darling River's fish. Aside from his doctorate on the murray cod, he's discovered two separate species – the eastern freshwater cod and the murray river cod.

The mighty murray cod is the fish for which the river is famous – an ancient, hardy, long-lived species that over thousands of years has evolved to adapt to the worst droughts and floods. It can

survive whether the river is nothing more than a string of shallow waterholes or when it's a vast, mud-coloured ocean.

Yet even this survivor has no chance when the conditions become lethal, as Dr Rowland explains.

During the day, sunlight stimulates natural algae on the river's surface to create oxygen through photosynthesis, but this process stops at night and respiration by all organisms then reduces oxygen levels.

During large algal blooms, oxygen can reach stressful – or sometimes lethal – levels near dawn. At high water temperatures, water holds less oxygen, but animals require more oxygen.

The larger the fish, the higher its oxygen requirements, and so the large murray cod die first.

If there is a sudden drop in temperature, the algae can die rapidly and the bloom "crashes".

Aerobic decomposition then further depletes oxygen. Under these conditions, the water can become anoxic and all animals die. This partly explains the recent sequence of fish kills.

"No oxygen for five minutes will kill everything," Dr Rowland explains.

"The Darling River was once considered a stronghold of native fish. Fish kills do happen periodically and generally fish stocks 'bounce back' but this might not always happen."

He's worried the murray cod might not recover because many generations have died in the current series of kills, and so much of its reproductive capacity and biological advantages have been lost in the Lower Darling.

"The Darling's been degraded and is now on a knife-edge," the doctor explains.

"Over decades, farming, stock, fertilisers, carp, loss of riparian vegetation, water extraction and infectious diseases – all these things eventually take their toll.

The fish kills, algal blooms and the periods of low and no flow are becoming more common."

Dr Rowland is frustrated at what's taken place.

"The Darling is a river in distress," he explains.

In 2003 the Fisheries Scientific Committee presented a report to government declaring the Darling an "endangered ecological community".

"But was this conservation classification considered by water managers?" he asks, scathing of irresponsible state and federal governments allowing poorly supervised irrigation farming, increases in water extraction, inter-basin transfers and water diversions.

"We're now seeing the results of long-term mismanagement."



PDF TESTING PROCEDURE

Just a reminder for those with inflatable PDF's. It's really easy to forget this annual procedure and whilst it requires a little bit of effort at the end of the day it may save your life. I use our kitchen scales to weigh the CO2 cylinder so you need one that can measure around 150 grams accurately. If the cylinder leaks and loses CO2 it will weigh less.

When inspecting the manual inflator piercing pin action, it will be necessary to replace (or remove) the green indicator clip. There are two types, a United Moulders or Halkey Roberts. Both are available from Whitworth's Marine & Leisure @ www.whitworths.com.au.

The remainder of the test is straight forward, but to print off the complete instruction (as it is here) and A4 single page PDF Certification Certificate go to www.burkemarine.com.au , scroll down to the bottom, click frequently asked then click on the dark blue rectangle on the left: Inflatable PFD'S Instruction Manual for Self -Inspection.

This reminds me of a story that happened to one of the HNF members. He bought a new PDF 150 and wore it for 12 months, then decided to do the inspection only to find out someone had removed the cylinder in the shop before he bought it. So, if you intend to buy one check it has a CO2 cylinder fitted. This person had fished dam Bass Tournaments so it was a good thing he didn't fall overboard.

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BURKE **INFLATABLE PFD'S**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANNUAL SELF INSPECTION

Applicable for PFDs in recreational use only, for PFD's in commercial use inspections should only be performed by an accredited agent.

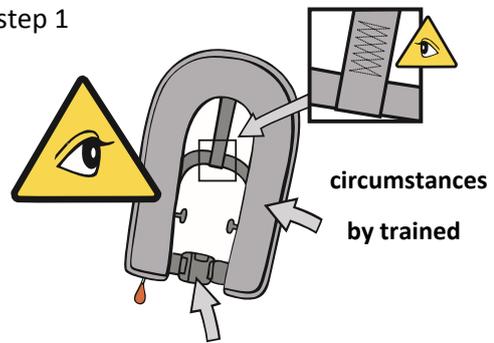
Before you start

1. Carefully read over all the instructions below
2. Ensure you have spare parts for your PFD. (See 'rearming components for Burke PFDs' in the PFD Service Section of the Burke web site. On inflator heads that use a green indicator clip to retain the manual firing lever, the clip will be broken during inspection. Ensure you have spare clips before you begin inspection. You may also need to replace the CO2 cylinder and on automatic models the cartridge/bobbin. All these parts can be purchased through a Burke retailer or service agent.

3. Ensure you have access to accurate kitchen or letter scales for checking the weight of the CO2 cylinder.
4. Print a copy of the Inflatable PFD self-inspection certificate for every PFD being inspected
5. Record on the certificate the PFDs serial/PI number, model no., inflator head brand / type (manual or automatic) and last service date.

Record each inspection step as it is completed with a **Pass, Fail** or **NA** in check boxes provided on the certificate. If the PFD or a component fails any inspection step 1

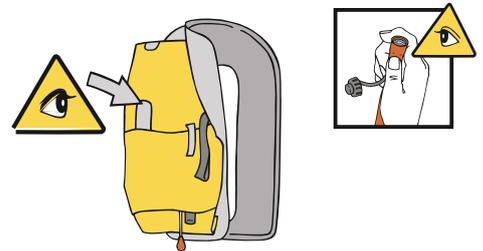
through 6, the PFD or faulty component must be replaced before using the PFD, alternatively send the PFD to an accredited service agent for further test. **Under no must you attempt any repairs, these must only be conducted service personnel.**



Step 1. General inspection

1.1 External Inspection - Check

- a) Cover has no excessive wear or visible damage.
- b) All cover closures (hook and loop, zippers etc) are serviceable.
- c) There is no visible damage or wear to any straps or stitching.
- d) All fastenings, adjustments and buckles are operating correctly.
- e) Safety lanyard attachment ring (when fitted) is not worn or damaged.



1.2 Internal Inspection - Open cover and check

- a) retro-reflective tape is firmly attached and not damaged.
- b) Lifting becket webbing and stitching is not worn or damaged.
- c) Whistle operation (blow to check operation) and that whistle is securely attached.
- d) Oral inflation tube has no visible signs of damage.
- e) If fitted with emergency light check lights expiry date (replace if expired).

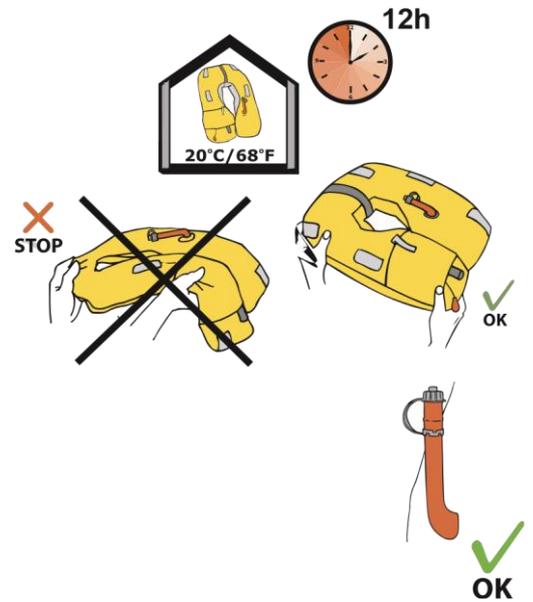
Step 2. Inspection of lung and oral valve

2.1 Check lung has no signs of excessive abrasion or wear.

Pay extra attention to the folds and areas around inflation systems



a) Remove Co2 cylinder from the inflator head by unscrewing the cylinder anti-clockwise. *On models fitted with a UML Pro Sensor inflator head check that the manual indicator status (top window) is red once cylinder has been removed. The Pro Sensor manual indicator status window should only show green when an unpierced CO2 cylinder is fitted correctly.* b) Inflate lung using the oral inflation tube.



b) Leave lung inflated with oral tube cap off in a room with a stable temperature of around 20°C for at least 12 hours (temperature changes will affect lung pressure) c) After 12 hours check there is no loss of pressure and no visible damage to lung. If lung is damaged or pressure falls the PFD must be replaced or sent to an accredited service station for further tests. Under no circumstances should you attempt to repair the PFD yourself

2.3 Deflate inflatable lung checking operation of oral inflation valve. Only deflate lung by inverting the oral tube cap and gently pressing the top of the inverted cap down into tube. **Do not put anything other than the inverted cap into the oral inflation tube, foreign objects may damage the oral valve.**

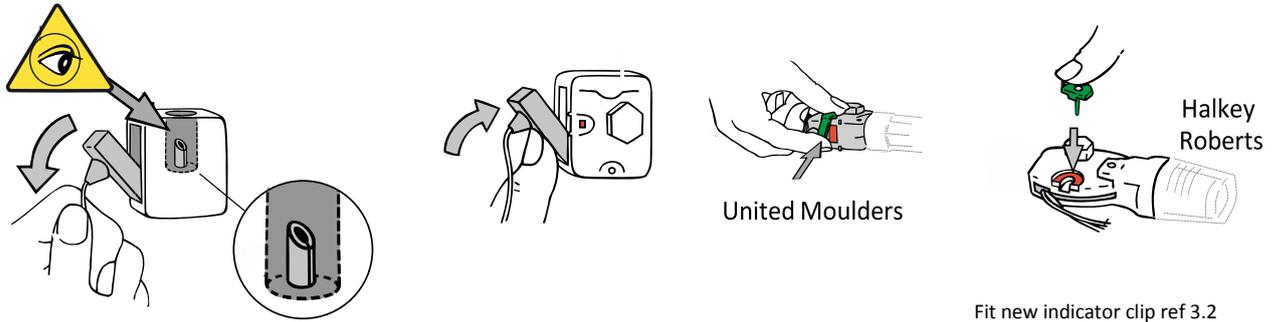
When the lung is fully deflated fit the oral tube cap back into its normal position.

Step 3. Examine operation of manual inflator (applicable for all inflator heads)

3.1 With CO2 cylinder removed pull manual firing lanyard down sharply to ensure lever moves freely and that the piercing cutter becomes proud of the sealing washer at base of the upper threaded section. On inflator heads where the lever is secured by a green indicator clip this action will break the indicator clip. If lever moves freely and piercing cutter becomes proud fold lever back up into normal position.

3.2 On inflator heads that use an indicator clip to secure the lever, fit a new green indicator clip now.

If the manual inflator does not operate properly the PFD must be replaced or sent to an accredited service agent for further action.



Step 4. Inspection and rearming automatic valve (Automatic inflation models only)

The automatic activation mechanism (Cartridge or bobbin as applicable) must be replaced if it has been immersed in water, is past its expiry date or if the expiry date falls before the PFDs next scheduled service.

Do not refit a Co2 cylinder unless the automatic valve is correctly armed.

4.1 For models using United Molders automatic inflators fitted with water sensing cartridge (Fig 1.) a) Unscrew the cartridge anti clockwise.

On models fitted with UML Pro Sensor inflator head the automatic indicator status (bottom window) should be red when the water sensing cartridge has been removed or activated. The Pro Sensor automatic indicator window should only show green when an armed cartridge is correctly fitted. b) Check that the cartridge is clean and completely dry.

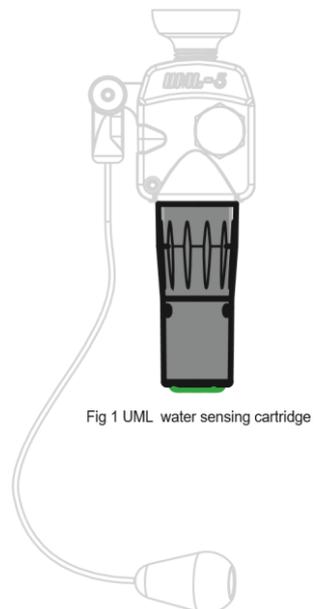


Fig 1 UML water sensing cartridge

- a) Record the expiry / replace by dates printed on cartridge on the service inspection certificate and check the green indicator status disc at base of cartridge is visible. Discard and replace with new cartridge if expiry / replace by date falls before next service due date or the green status indicator disc at the base of cartridge is not visible.

- b) Rearm by screwing cartridge clockwise onto base of inflator head. Tighten firmly by light hand force only (use no tools) Ensure thread is not obstructed and that green automatic status indicators are visible.



Fig 2. Halkey Roberts automatic inflator with transparent head fitted with water sensing bobbin

4.2 For models using Halkey Roberts automatic inflator with transparent head and water sensing bobbin (Fig 2.).

- a) Check green indicator is showing at base of the transparent head. If indicator is showing red the water sensing bobbin has been activated and should be replaced.

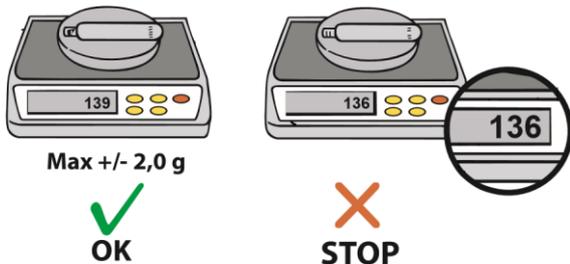
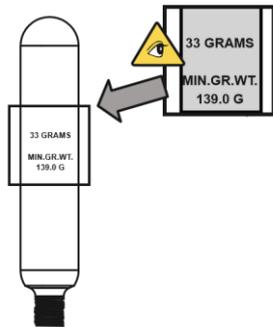
- b) Remove water sensing bobbin by unscrewing transparent head anti clockwise.

The Halkey Roberts water sensing bobbin has a 4-year expiry and is printed with the date of manufacture (Month, Day, and Year). Calculate when bobbin replacement is due by adding 4 years onto date of manufacture. Discard and replace bobbin if indicator at base of transparent head is red (refer 5.2.a) or the bobbin expiry date falls before the PFDs next service due date. c) Record the bobbin expiry / replacement date on service inspection certificate

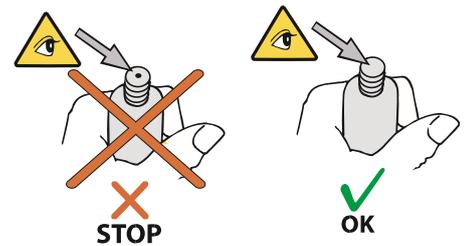
- c) Rearm automatic firing mechanism by fitting the bobbin onto base of the inflator head (white side facing away from head) and reinstalling the transparent head (screw clockwise by light hand force until tight). Ensure thread is not obstructed and automatic status indicator at base of transparent head is green.



Step 5. Inspection of CO2 cylinder



5.1 Check that the size / type of CO2 cylinder is correct for the PFD. The Cylinder size is displayed on the cylinder as well as on the PFD lung adjacent to the CO2 inflator head.



5.2 Check that the CO2 cylinder is not damaged, is free from rust and corrosion and has not been pierced. Replace any cylinder that is pierced, damaged or exhibiting any signs of rust or corrosion.

5.3 If cylinder is serviceable (refer 5.2) weigh the cylinder on kitchen or letter scales. The cylinders weight should correspond to MIN.GR.WT engraved on cylinder +/- 2 g. Record MIN.GR.WT and actual weight of cylinder on the inspection certificate.

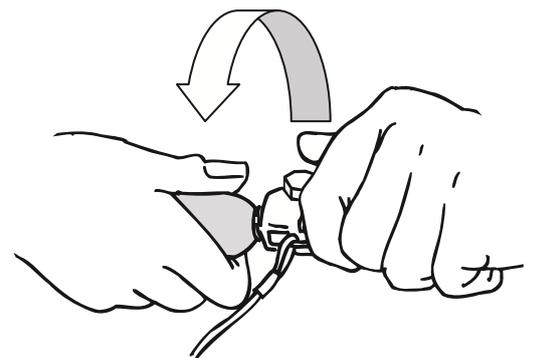
If cylinder weight is incorrect or cylinder is in anyway defective it must be replaced (Any replacement cylinder should be checked in same manner) *Dispose of scraped CO2 cylinders immediately.*

Step 6. Refit CO2 cylinder

6.1 Confirm

- manual inflator mechanism has passed inspection step 3
- On automatic models that the automatic valve is armed and has passed inspection step 4.
- the CO2 cylinder being fitted has passed inspection step 5

6.2 To refit cylinder hold the inflator head firmly and screw the CO2 cylinder clockwise into top of inflator head. Hand tighten until firm.



Do not use any tools or undue force

Note: For the piercing cutter to work correctly the CO2 cylinder (and automatic inflation mechanism on automatic models) must be firmly hand tightened onto the CO2 inflator head.

On UML Pro Sensor inflator heads the PFD is fully armed only when all indicator status windows are green.

Step 7. Record Service Inspection on PFD

7.1 If PFD has passed all applicable self-inspection steps 1 through 6 above Sign and date in permanent laundry marker the service inspection history label located on inflator head side of lung. For a self-inspection prefix the service date by the letters **SI** to indicate 'self-inspection'. The date format should be kept consistent across the PFDs service inspection history.

Step 8. Repack PFD

8.1 Repack PFD according to instructions provided in your PFDs owners-manual.

Ensure that the manual inflation pull lanyard and knob is not tangled and that it is accessible when PFD is donned.

Step 9. Certify the PFD self-inspection certificate.

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