



Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA



THE BRONZE BATTLER

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President's Message

Bass Season is now truly under way with many Bass Sydney members getting amongst their favourite rivers and creeks with the dust truly wiped off their kayaks and new and old favourite rod and reels ready to do them proud. For me personally, the time has come to try some of my new lure conceptions and test their effectiveness on our beloved bass. I wish everyone good luck for the season and hope to see you all at the October Bass Catch. Tight Lines – **Ash Thamm**.

NEWS

Additional committee members of 2013

Events Coordinator & Basscatch officer - HS Tham
Lane Cover River - Daniel Flood & Ron Rogers
Georges River and Raffles - Paul Matten

Parramatta River – Ashley Thamm
Hacking River - Warren Hackshall

The Editors message: It's been a very slow start to the season for me, with my first 3 bass missions proving fruitless last month. I am yet to land a bass for the new season and will have to wait until the Bass Catch this month to hopefully land my first fish. I have had some success on natives at Windamere Dam landing a few nice Golden Perch from the boat. I'm looking forward to exploring some new creeks and rivers in my home town of Newcastle this season, but also looking forward to fishing some of the better known waterways that I haven't had the pleasure of fishing yet. I've sold one of my kayaks and looking into buying a Wilderness Aspire 105. In the meantime I'm fishing from the trusty old Loon. Tight lines. The Editor - Pete Hatzidimitriou.



<https://www.facebook.com/BassSydneyFishing>

Hawkesbury-Nepean BassCatch October 19 & 20

It's that time of year again! The BassCatch is next month! It's always a fun occasion, so support your club and NSW Fisheries.

Please register via our website: <http://www.basssydney.com/basscatch/index.php>

Campsite:

- * Riverside Ski Park, 307-309 Cattai Rd, Cattai
- * Cost is unchanged from last time (\$14/full day)
- * Pay at the campground office as you first arrive
- * Camping Friday and/or Sat night

Food:

- * The Club will provide dinner on Friday night and Saturday night
- * Please advise which night you will be camping &/or having dinner when you register
- * Cost is not confirmed yet, but would not be much different to last time (<\$10 per dinner)
- * For those camping Sat night, Sunday breakfast is also provided and its FREE!

Briefing & Catch Cards:

- * Briefing for BassCatch virgins will be conducted either during our GM at Northmead BC on Tuesday, 8/10/13 or at the

Campsite

- * As always, Catch Cards will be issued at either the GM or at the campsite

Kayak Raffle

- Wilderness Systems Aspire 100 kayak.
- Worth \$900+ retail
- For BASS SYDNEY MEMBERS ONLY
- \$2 per ticket
- Unlimited no. of tickets can be bought
- Will be drawn at the Christmas Party 2014



Specifications:

Length:	10' / 305 cm
Width:	27.5" / 70 cm
Max Capacity:	300 lbs. / 136 kg
Deck Height:	14" / 36 cm
Weight:	44 lbs. / 20 kg
Cockpit Length:	49" / 124 cm
Cockpit Width:	22.25" / 57 cm

Open Season 2013 – By Joshua Pearson

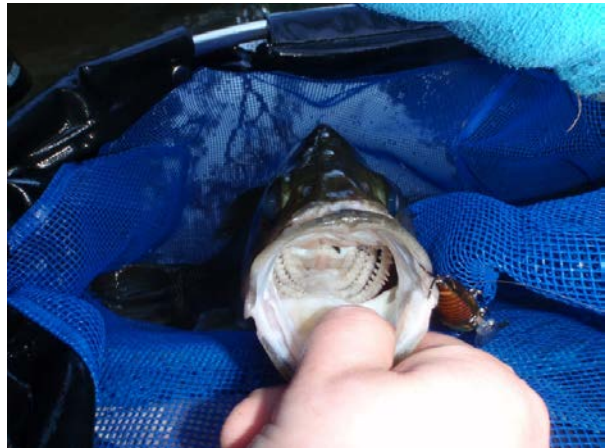
Grab a drink and relax as you read about some of my trials and tribulations so far this season! After a seemingly endless wait for the 1st September to roll through the day arrived and it looked to be a corker. Beautiful unseasonable warmth, a high barometer and very little recent rain, all of my thoughts were around targeting them in the brackish as I believed they must not have made their upstream movements due to the lack of said rain.

A new spot had been found, Google maps and earth copped a flogging in preparation and confidence was high, we launched pre-dawn full of expectation, alas the plan went awry, someone forgot to tell the bass where to be and the 3 of us struggled. We fished until the sun was high in the sky, trying all manner of lures with no love! We left with our tails between our legs wondering what we did wrong....



A sleepless night for me followed, my son decided he was not sleeping so why should anyone else! It gave me time to reflect and realise that if bass were easy to catch I probably would not love them as much! At some stage during the night I decided that I needed to hit a different waterway, any fish at all would do so long as it was a bass! I decided to hit my favourite stretch of water, a spot close to my heart as it is close to my old home and I had some amazing experiences in the past. Again on the water pre-dawn I was in my comfort zone, I knew this creek well and was probing each likely spot methodically, a few half-hearted touches but nothing special. I noted how low the water level was and started to worry if I had made the right decision, this became more apparent the further up the creek I went, having to get out and walk through sections previously paddled added to this worry.

I arrived at the choice snag in this tiny system, a rock wall with a huge log laydown and deep water. This particular snag had produced some memorable fish in the past and also 2 spectacular bust offs so I was quietly confident. From past experience I knew it was imperative to anchor up/stake out to ensure I would have a chance at stopping a fish. I slowly worked my way up towards the snag, fanning casts to cover every bit of water, when I got to the end of the snag I put a magic cast in, looping under the overhanging stick into a foot of water all I saw was a swirl and the cicada was gone. The battle that ensued was memorable with screaming drag and heart in mouth moments. She was eventually led to the waiting landing net and a whoop of glee, knowing this was a PB I moved to the shallows to take a photo. What happened next would have been comical to watch, in the excitement I didn't stow my rods properly and as I got out I ended up with a Sammy lodged in my calf, tripped over and both rods and reels ended up in the sand and water..... I swear the big old girl was laughing at me from the safety of the landing net and she obliged with a few choice photos on the brag mat, 450mmFL the new margin to beat!



After the highs of this epic start, things got a bit quiet, sessions with one or two small fish were common as were donuts. The brackish sections that I so favour were not producing the numbers of fish I had expected though some were keen to play the game, my new local waterway produced some interesting fishing, best fish from there so far is 370mmFL on surface! I also managed to get some bass to bite on gulp shrimp, I was using the same retrieve as I would for flathead with lifts and long pauses and managed to get 2 bass and 3 flathead off the same snag! Could this be a new weapon in the bass arsenal? This remains to be seen...



This ongoing quest for bass has taken me to some cool locations both near and far from home, for me, there is nothing better than launching the kayak into new waters, the feeling of excitement and trepidation that you may or may not find your quarry. Variables include weather, barometer, ease of access, obstructions to passage etc. the one thing that remains constant is the anticipation, that feeling in your stomach that all the pressure comes from and can only be released by the first good fish of the day.

This is the feeling I had on the lengthy drive to my new location, a combination of sleeplessness and one litre of V to keep me going and allow me to be on the water at 4:45am also did not help with the nerves. Arriving at the location I was cheering, it was beautiful, mist was rising off the water beyond the reeds and the cloud cover was exactly what I wanted to see! Launching into the cool air of the pre-dawn I was surprised to find the water very warm, possibly a by-product of the unseasonably warm weather that we have been experiencing on the coast. I commented to my fishing partner for the day the very distinct smell of bass that was wafting through the air, thinking to myself "here goes, he'll think I'm batsh!t crazy", without any hesitation he agreed and responded "I didn't mention it because it sounds insane" I knew at once we were afflicted by the same disease caused by chasing these bronzed battlers.

A quick note before I go on, there are very few scenery shots throughout this report at the request of my new friend, there is a reason this place is not fished often and the knowledge available online is non-existent!

We had paddled approximately 100m from the launch and the river widened and got deeper quickly, this was to be where we would start our session and it was not long before we had some attention from the local bass population, I had the ever reliable cicada imitation tied on and was working it around the snag ridden banks. The structure on this river is incredible, bass heaven, sunken timber, undercut banks, overhanging trees, shrubs and grasses, steep rocky banks and boulders, it was seriously that good! The first few fish taken were very small, good signs of healthy recruitment though. My first hook-up came from one of the overhanging trees with a small log visible just under the surface, working the lure past it I got to the edge of the overhanging branches and it was belted, a torrid battle ensued which resulted in the bass being lost before getting a look. Spewing but a good sign.

Continuing upstream it was only about 50m before my next hit. The fish came off a log laydown in a little alcove that had structure all around the edges, it simply screamed bass and was one of those places you just have to cast at. Again it was in tight to the structure with plenty of twitches and pauses to get the attention of any fish in the vicinity. Surprised at the lure not getting smashed straight away I slowly worked it back out of the section only to have it smashed by a good hit which missed, I have been practising not pulling the lure back on the strike and was able to pause the lure, twitch it another couple of times before it got taken properly, screaming drag and a nice fight ended with a beautiful dark bass swimming around in the environet, very thickset but not lengthy she went 385mmFL on the measure.



The bass continued to play the game on the way upstream with a couple more fish dropped, my fishing buddy scolded me for having my drag too light so I tightened up a fair whack, he had fished this area before and been demolished on 14lb braid with 20lb FC rock... I had come to yet another overhung section of bank that ticked all the boxes; overhang, check, shade, check, structure, check, the cast was magnificent, getting a good 5m back under the overhang and within a couple of cm of the underlying snag. I let it sit for what seemed an immeasurable amount of time before the standard twitch pause retrieve was started, it had moved all of 10cm on the first twitch and during the pause there was a swirl, no hit so another twitch and another swirl, it took one more go and it was taken rather subtly, a short fight on tightened drag ensured this fish was in the net safely and I was high on life! At 375mmFL she was a bit smaller but still in amazing condition and very dark again!



One more fish was taken before the wind came up and we decided to pull the pin and investigate other options, it was only about 9am so we headed to another river and had a poke around but the wind was atrocious there too. I spent the rest of the morning exploring likely looking launch points and relaxing by the water waiting for the afternoon session to roll around. It got to around 2 o'clock and the itch had set in already, I had been flicking some lures around land based and had a few touches so decided to launch and head back out. I decided to try a different strategy and headed upstream to some unfished water that looked like it should produce fish, the plan to fish back down to the launch and get the afternoon bite in the snaggiest section of water.

All was quiet and I patiently worked my way back downstream flicking the cicada and a small subsurface lure just thinking about the serenity. I had a bit of a break for a drink and observed all manner of wildlife that called the river home, a pair of eagles circled overhead, plenty of reptiles including monitors and water dragons, seemingly hundreds of kingfishers and all other manner of birdlife made for a very peaceful place to relax and ponder what may work on these fish. I got to a section of river near the entry to a creek that was overgrown with all manner of grass but otherwise looked pretty featureless.

Firing a cast in tight to some grass I slowly worked it out, something caught my eye on the bank and I paused to look and see what it could be. This daydream was interrupted by the mother of all hits, the amount of water displaced was ridiculous and my tightened drag that was close to locked sung, I could not do anything but hold on and watch the biggest bass of my life run me straight down along the bank before PING, lure parted at the leader and a paddle in to the bank uncovered the cause, the seemingly featureless bank had heavy structure under the surface. These hits are the reason I love bassing, though I hate losing fish it really keeps you coming back for more.

At this stage I was pretty inconsolable, dirty on myself for not doing things differently and being able to get her out. Floating back downstream my casting was without its accuracy for about 100m until I snapped out of my funk and reminded myself "That's Fishing". I was at the best snag in the river, a huge fallen gum with multiple smaller snags that fan out around it in very deep water. I worked my lure from the bankside out and it was my third cast that was accosted. The fish came out and in a typical bigger fish take was quite subtle compared to the splash that the smaller bass do, it's more like an implosion followed by a boil. It went hard but my last fish had steeled my resolve and I was brutal in this battle, locked up drag still able to be pulled in small amounts and she had me almost back in before I turned her head and got her into the open water and played her out before bringing to the waiting net. Seriously thick and heavier in feeling than my PB had me wondering if the PB had been broken. Again I was alone so only got some brag mat shots but you can see the sheer bulk in a couple of the photos, hard to keep still she was between 430 & 440 so will call her 435mmFL. Check out how deep she is compared to the brag mat!



The relief was palpable after the demoralising low of losing the fish, I was loving it and the pain of the loss was subsiding somewhat. I continued to work this snag to the tip of the snag, it is an interesting one in that 5m or so downstream there is another large log lay down that points at the tip of the big snag, rather than fish the big snag on the opposite side I put a cast into this secondary snag, it was on the water for moments before I heard something, different to a hit but something under the water. Nothing happened, my lure was still there??? I twitched it once and it got smashed and another bulldog fight ensued, nowhere near as large but another specimen of 370mmFL was netted, probably the blackest bass of the trip and again in beautiful condition.



The sun set properly and I headed back to the launch for a feed and rest. I contacted Shane to see what time he would be coming up to meet me and jumped in the car for a quick 2hr power nap before the midnight session rolled around! After my persistent SMS updates Shane was obviously very keen to get out and amongst it so we launched into the dark and paddled upstream into the fog. It had rolled in and was very thick so made navigation difficult, head lamps couldn't be used even to find general position and no moon made it quite eerie. We got to the vicinity of the big snag without much action, I had put a cast in to where I thought the snag started and worked it out slowly, not bringing any attention after a couple of casts so I switched it up and did a steady retrieve with the cicada, halfway into the retrieve and I heard a pop followed by steady pressure, thinking snag I paused, then it moved so I struck and came up tight to a nice fish! This was the smallest decent one so far at 365mmFL, he really wanted the cicada and a bit of delicate surgery was needed to get the lure out but she swam away strong in the end!



We ended up getting off the water and in for a sleep at round 2:30, alarms set for 4:30 to get back out and do it all again!

The following day was a fair bit tougher, Shane managed some small fish but I was unable to trouble the scorers apart from a lost fish for me. We headed back and had a feed and a break to discuss a plan of attack. We decided to persist and fish harder with subsurface lures to try and entice some hits. A few more small ones for Shane and I was still to trouble the scorers and I had all but given up, we were on our way back to the cars to chill when we passed the alcove I caught my first fish for the trip from. I had just finished telling Shane that surely there was a bass in there. I fired the cast in tight to the bank and cranked it pretty hard to get it down a bit, the lure of choice was a prototype RV Lures shallow diver, as it was being burned back it got hit with such ferocity it was shocking, the fish really wanted to get back to her snag but I had the upper hand and was able to get her out and in the net for a photo or two. She was a typical fish for this river, thick and deep, measured 400mmFL and was from memory my first river fish on a diver (shocking I know!)



We called it after this and were sitting around talking sh!t and having a few cold ones in preparation for the afternoon session, the last session before heading home. The barometer had been great for the first half of the trip but had fallen and it was tough going again, I just wanted to put Shane onto a decent fish but we couldn't seem to find any to play the game, fishing the peak afternoon session all the way back down to the big snag that I pulled a couple fish from I left the snag itself for Shane and headed for the secondary snag, working it back from the snag I paused and the cicada was demolished

again by a brute of a bass, locked drag or no she screamed off and I slowly got the upper hand, steering her out under heavy drag pressure I was in a good spot, slowly working her to the boat while she lunged and I felt one set of trebles pull..... This should have sent alarm bells ringing.... I got to within leader length and then the pressure left... :-(devastated is an understatement, not as big as the one that busted me off but almost 100% certain to beat my PB of 450. Lesson learned that heavy drag is sometimes necessary to get these beasts out but to finish them off I should wind the drag back.

This session ended a solid 48hrs of fishing running on two 2hr sleeps... I was shagged. I thought I would give you one scenery shot of a standard bank there.... these were few and far between, the majority was structure/overhang/both!



The search for big wild bass will continue, watch this space!

Until then tight lines and screaming drags!

Josh

Pete's Adventure to Windamere Dam – October 27-29

So it's that time of the year again, when the start of spring signals the begging of the 'Golden Era', my favourite dam starts to fire up and this year brought some surprises. Many of you may know that before joining bass Sydney I was solely a dam fisherman, spending my days hitting impoundments over NSW for yellow belly, cod and of course bass. In fact, it was on my first trip to Windamere that I fell in love with freshwater fishing for natives and my passion for lure fishing.

The drive is about 3.5 hours from Newcastle, up through the hunter valley (closing my eyes through Singleton, as the destruction of the land there due to the coal mining industry is absolutely disgusting!) onto the Golden Highway and through some amazing country and scenery. Was very tempted to stop in at some of the wineries along the way but time didn't permit...the fish were waiting!

The dam is situated about 30km outside of Mudgee. The closest manned town is Rylstone, which is a gorgeous friendly country town, with a couple of cafes, 2 pubs, a bakery, a little mini mart, a few shops and a gas station. I always love stopping in at Rylstone for a coffee and a wood fired baked pie!

I was keen to start the days early this trip to maximise time on the water before the fish went deep as the sun reached high in the sky. It was a balmy 2 degrees at 5am and the fishing was slow until the water got some warmth in it. Most of my fish were caught in the afternoon session. Although being on the water before first light and seeing the mist rolling off the entire dam was totally worth the early rise, it felt rather surreal...Windamere is a magical place!

The dam level was at about 56%, not too different from my previous trip last October. My old faithful lure that always produces the goods for me wasn't doing its usual magic on the first day with only one fish landed. My mate Heath came up with a few fish including a nice 590mm model.

After contemplating the day's efforts I decided I needed to employ a different game plan. I went with a totally obscure coloured lure and it immediately paid dividends with a hot session resulting in 8 boated fish within an hour, including a nice chunky 560mm model that had the girth of Roosters front rower.

I am fishing in the Australian Yellow Belly Championships next month at Windamere which I placed 13th from 68 boats last year and I'm hoping to crack the top 10 this year... (I also now have a secret weapon lure I know is producing the goods!)

If you've never been to Windamere, I urge you to pay it a visit one day, in my opinion it is the best Golden Perch fishery in Australia, which consistently produces football sized fish!

Pete's Tip: Jackall TN60 lures are my go to arsenal at Windamere, darker colours work best.

Here's to a fruitful season for all!

– **Pete H**





Monthly Fishing Cartoon Funny



Feels like this on some days...

**Next Meeting is on , 7:30pm at
Northmead Bowling Club.
October, 8th, 2013**

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