



Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*



THE BRONZE BATTLER

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A Public Service announcement from Club President Ashley Thamm..



NEWS

Special guest speaker John Ducksbury will be attending the General Meeting on October 14 to showcase pictures from his recent trip to the Amazon.

Damian and his wife Mai are proud to show off Bass Sydney's newest member (membership fee pending). At only 7 days old she thinks she'll manage a cast or two in between feeds.

Delighted with the Timber Wolf Long Tom110, but after catching up with the last edition of Bronze Battler; she'd prefer an Attack Minnow - in pink! What she's doing with the Shakespeare Sigma 2950-240 multiplier reel is anyone's guess, could be she likes the sound of the ratchet.

P.S. Damian thinks this'll qualify him for the '400 Club', she was landed in season, weighed 2.626kg and measure 440mm FL (fontanelle length).



Paul Matten and his wife have also welcomed a new edition to the family. Sienna Louise Matten was born on the 4th of August and weighed just over 4Kg. Everyone is going well and bubby is sleeping through the night already. Paul went for a quick fish on the Georges River last weekend and got six fish, the best two were a 350 and a 330. The water was nice and clear but there was plenty of slime/algae growing on the weed



Hawkesbury-Nepean Bass Catch Oct 18 & 19

It's always a fun occasion, so support our club and NSW Fisheries!

Please register via our website. This link is Live and ready:

<http://www.basssydney.com/basscatch/index.php>

Campsite:

- We will NOT be at Cattai this time!!
- Our campsite will be in Yellomundee Regional Park. A picnic area has been recently refurbished for day use and has a picnic shelter and toilets. We have been granted special permission to camp there over the Bass Catch weekend.
- If you wish to camp &/or have dinner with us, please advise during the registration process. Details & directions will follow.
- There are no showers nor any power.
- BYO water!
- Camping will be free of charge.
- Facilities will be more basic than Cattai, but it will be much, much closer to where most of us will be fishing. There is direct access to the river there also.
- Camping Friday and/or Sat night
- This site will NOT be as secure as the campgrounds at Cattai. Do not leave valuables in & around your tent when you're not there. Keep it basic and either don't bring them or lock them in your car.
- The Club will treat this site as a "trial" this time. If it's successful, we may use it for our Bass Catch's, but if not, we always have the option of going back to our previous campground.
- As always, camping is not mandatory.

Food:

- The Club will provide dinner at the campsite 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 it's FREE!

Briefing & Catch Cards:

- Briefing for Bass Catch virgins will be conducted during our GM at Northmead Bowling Club on Tuesday, 14/10/14 or at the campsite
- As always, Catch Cards will be issued at either the GM or at the campsite

Please have a good time and I hope to see you there!

- HS THAM

The Editors message: Coming up empty handed 27/9/14

Nearly October, I've waited an entire month for the local creeks to slow again and the muddy water to clear up since the big soaking Sydney received earlier in the month of September. I decided to fish a new spot for my season opener for a change of scenery and breathe of fresh air.

I launched the yak at 6am on a beautifully calm and clear morning, the barometer sitting on 1020.2, things were looking good! My obsession with surface fishing was whispering in my ear to tie on a Tiemco Soft Shell cicada, but with the lack of insect activity at this time of year I opted to start with a Sammy 65. On my second rod I had a small lightweight spinnerbait with single colarado blade and stinger ready to head subsurface if the top wasn't playing. The plan was to fish the low light on the surface heading upstream then fish back with the spinnerbait subsurface.

The trouble with fishing new water is the lack of knowledge and surrounds. What I found most annoying was that in the low light I would end up paddling over or too close to a submerged snag that would have been perfect to cast at! By the time I realized I would have already spooked whatever MAY have been residing there. Not to be disheartened I slowly and meticulously paddled up exploring and noting each of the snags and their characteristics. This may not be a session for catching a lot of fish but a good recon mission never the less. I switched over to a soft shell cicada after an hour of the Sammy and had a nice juvenile bass dart straight out from a submerged log in crystal clear water and grab the cicada....he took it down but failed to be pinned by the razor sharp brand new trebles....doh! Anyways, time to head back with the spinnerbait now and try my luck beneath the surface. As the sun had started to rise I decided to target the deeper water in hope that there were submerged structures beneath that I couldn't see. After another hour and a half of casting that spinnerbait I decided to concede defeat. The wind was picking up and my problematic back was starting to get cranky. As desperate as I was not to start the season with a doughnut that is sometimes the reality of fishing. Still, it was nice to be back in the kayak and enjoying nature again. I hope to possibly head up to St

Clair this long weekend to make good on the doughnut I had experienced back in July. Either that or fish a creek in Newcastle that I've been eying off since last year and have recently gotten private access to in the upper reaches by a friend of my fiancé's father.

I hope everyone has had some success this season and look forward to catching up with some of you in the near future. Good luck to all anglers!



- **Pete**

Reach 5 Outing 13/9/14 – Report by HS Tham

7 keen fishos turned up to fish North Richmond for the first club outing of the new season. Conditions looked OK, not too cold and the water only looked slightly discoloured. However, it was a tough day with the water still feeling very cold. A few fish were caught, mainly by Garry Blount who managed to pull out about half a dozen bass. Ged Delaney got a couple and Craig Somerville managed to catch one as well. The rest of us, Damian Balfour, Derek Sonter, Ged's mate Lee and me donutted. It was nice to get together afterwards for lunch and Damian brought a season opener chocolate marble cake. It was nice too! The mystery length prize will be drawn at the October GM.

Know Your Lure # 15 Cicada (Scoot Coot) – By Damien Balfour

Cicada, no-one's going to disagree that last season was phenomenal for cicada style lures, soft or hard shell. On any evening 'yaking & Bassing, cicadas were abundant enough that their sound was drowning out the roar of low flying planes, tree trunks were getting crowded out with cicada husks - the exuvia remaining, clinging to the bark of trees like brooches. So numerous were they that the Australian Bass must have been feasting.

On the water Bass Sydney members in their astuteness were flicking cicadas across the surface morning, noon and night. My own cicada success was a plump bass, a PB of 395mm (FL) at lunchtime, midweek after casting upstream of a riffle and being unable to retrieve line fast enough, I watched it being swept under the overhanging branches and disappeared way, way before I'd expect it too. I knew a good size bass was on and became worried as my kayak was getting pulled aside, but then the faster flowing water from the riffle caught my kayak and turned it and so the bass moved out of the riffle, away from the snags and into a deeper pool where the water's velocity eased off helpfully and I played out my best Bass in front of my mate who'd never fished for bass before, never fished from a kayak and was a mightily impressed witness.

The cicada lures pictured are not the one I used on that afternoon, but they're feature for their own reasons. The top lure is a soft shell cicada, nice black and yellow colour, perfectly fine with both wings intact and an unfortunate pair of ole rusty trebles. I acquired this one on my first bass outing this season, it lifted my spirits when I saw it propped up on a branch, only metres from the shore – a great find and was somewhat compensatory for a blank outing that morning.

The second cicada is hard bodied and purple underneath, olive green and black on top with a come hither, seductive, red eye. It has a broken bib and a mean streak; don't be fooled by the soft glint of its eye. This lure was also acquired at the last bass catch but in less fortunate circumstances. I'd just shot through a narrow rapid that led into a wider slower moving body of water where the vegetation on one side was thick, green and lying flat with the bank, there must have been a larger volume of water pass through recently that flattened the reeds. I heard a rustle amongst that flattened flora and was curious enough to investigate, unusually the rustling continued and paddling over towards it, it increased. By now I'd expect the rustling in the reeds and under the low lying leaves to cease as some mammal made an exit. The rustling was continuing and I found an adult coot, on its belly, wings spread out and desperately trying to pull itself into the undergrowth. I quickly saw that it was distressed and its leg was tethered to the flattened reeds by the silver treble in the hard bodied cicada,

which was further entangled with the reeds and complicated by a stretch of line wrapping around the coot's leg and reeds. Who knows how long the coot had been there, but it was struggling impressively and not bothering to respond to my soothing Scottish lilt. Fortunately I had a small towel that I placed over the coot's head and calmed it down, I snipped the line and removed the lure from the coot's leg and reeds. The leg was healthy and the wound superficial, before I could lift the towel, the coot had got its leg underneath itself and scurried off, rudely, into the riparian zone, no word of thanks. It was with mixed feelings that I scrutinized the cicada lure. I was irked that an angler's lure had entrapped the coot and without assistance it would surely have suffered a lingering death or been predated upon. I was further disgruntled after selfishly discovering that the lure was mostly useless due to its broken bib. It did have a decent pair of trebles on it and a split ring and link that was salvageable.

Paddling away from those flattened reeds I smiled reminiscently, thinking of the time I was in the Y.O.C. At primary school I'd joined Mrs Leah's 'Young Ornithologist Club - a bird watching club, when I was eight. Ornithology was a mouthful, its ethos was bird protection, but really the allure of the club was that we got out of class to go on field trips, bird watching – much better than punctuation or long division; and angling was not yet a school subject.

In the end, the hard bodied mean streak cicada served a greater purpose: I skinned it of its nice silver sharp trebles and utilised them for the soft shell cicada, just in time for this month's bass catch. The hard cicada body left over might make it as a keyring at the next club raffle?

As for the Coot that scoot, forgetting to say its thanks on departure, I've yet to be hit by a bird shit while kayaking; karma?

- **Damien B**

The close relative 6/9/14 – Pete Hatzi

Early in the month of September I decided the weather patterns and conditions of the river weren't conducive to good bass fishing, let alone surface fishing. Instead I decided that I would hit the salt and target a close relative, the Estuary Perch. The weapon of choice? A Luckycraft Sammy 65 of course! Having never caught an EP I was very excited at the prospect of landing my first! I targeted pylons and boat hulls casting as close as possible and letting the lure sit before giving it a few bobs and starting the nice slow retrieve, walking the Sammy like a tantalising bit of prey scooting across the mirror like surface. A small little disturbance, hmmm...just a small curious fish maybe? I continued the retrieve well out into the open water now. Another small disturbance....pause....twitch....SLURP! I

was on, although the fish felt as tiny as the slurps it had produced and I wasn't sure what little tiddler I had on the end of the line but it was a fish none the less. As it quickly approached the yak, a large glimmer of silver flashed me. Holy crap, the fish took one look at the yak and headed the opposite direction, the rod buckled over as I fought to stop the fish heading directly under the yak. All I could do was hold the rod and allow this fish to pull some line while it danced around the kayak finally coming back to the surface and swimming straight into my net. Woah! My first EP...and off the surface! I was stoked! It measured in a healthy 410mm and was very fat! I landed around 6 fish in total, with another tipping in at the 400 mark and a few high 300's.

I will say, that EP's (for me) don't seem to fight as hard as Bass, and the surface strikes are definitely not as spectacular, but the size of these fish make them quite heavy, putting a decent bend in the rod and are great fun when fishing for Bass isn't on the cards!

- **Pete**



Crushing your barbs by Pete Hatzl

A topic which comes under much debate, over the years I have switched back and forth between crushing barbs and leaving them be. The reason being at times when I've crushed my barbs I blame a dropped fish to the barbless hooks, when in actual fact it could have been a number of other reasons. I guess, being a strictly catch and release freshwater fisherman I consider myself not an angler, but a sport fishermen. I fish because we love it, I love the surrounds, I love the excitement, thrill and anticipation of that strike and the rod loading up, but most of all, I love taking a happy snap for the memory and watching that beautiful creature swim away to be caught and enjoyed again for someone just like me! Depending on how and where we fish, a lot of the time we retain the option of releasing our fish. Some of us like eating fish and will take the odd one for the table, and there is never anything wrong or illegal with that, but most of all we are meant to be the people who respect the fish we catch the most out of practically anybody out there who is in and around the water. But can we really call ourselves sport fishermen if we continue to fish for a species like bass and don't crush the barbs down on our treble hooks? This could be a delicate subject for some, but there's never any harm in bringing up a topic that can be quite controversial and often many can be quite opinionated about it swaying one way or the other.

I love the way that bass fishing is moving forward so rapidly, and clubs like Bass Sydney are doing their part to ensure the longevity and continued success of these fine fish and I am proud to be a part of that. I can't believe that so many of us (including myself) are still living in the dark ages and believe that the fish is going to get away if we crush the barbs down. It's time to dispel this myth once and for all. Let's face it, fish do get off from time to time, we've all dropped our fair share of Bass, but it's not as if a Bass goes leaping around like a salmon, or has a super strong mouth. If your fish happens to get off, it's probably just bad luck, or due to angler error (leaving slack in the line etc.). Fight the fish harder and keep a tight line to it. Rods were made to bend (just ask Josh Pearson).

I have thought about this topic a lot and what I am not doing saying is that the fish feels any sort of pain that our trebles may inflict on a fish in hook-up or during the fight itself. We fish, we love fishing, and we catch fish. If we were hung up on whether a hook in a fish's mouth caused immeasurable pain then we would not be fishing. But, in saying that there's a lot we can do to look after our fish, whether we return them or dispatch them quickly and humanely. There are 2 angles to this whole crushing barbs debate and that's 1. The damage that trying to remove barbed treble hooks can do to a fish after you have landed it, and 2. The fact that barbed trebles flying around can and do end up in hands and

fingers, and for anyone that's ever experienced this, it is NOT a funny experience!



As most of you know, I have done my fair share of fishing in different locations for different types of species. I have fished private dams and sections of rivers where the owners will simply not allow a hook that does not have the barb crushed enter the water, that's just the way it is! It guarantees a higher rate of survival for any fish that are caught and keeps their waterways stocked. If we didn't like it, bad luck...don't fish, simple as that! I can't say with 100% confidence that any fish I've dropped was due to a crushed barb. We might like to consider ourselves a "modern bass fishing generation" here, but I believe we can still find ourselves stuck in the dark ages about issues like these.

I don't subscribe to any argument at all that means you don't crush the barbs on all treble hooks. Fish getting off, hooks rusting where you crush the barb down etc., it's all a false premise. Don't want to carry a set of plyers? Crush the barbs at home before you even go fishing! Do it as soon as you buy a lure! Perhaps even one day manufacturers will provide an option for barbless hooks straight from the factory...wishful thinking but stranger things have happened in this world! I've fished a few yellow belly comps and the most common thing I overhear on the Friday night briefing when the organisers promote crushing the barbs is this.... "Stuff that, I might hook the fish of a lifetime and I don't want to drop a fish that could win me the comp!" Come on guys, learn to play a fish properly and load up that rod, there's an almost certain chance that hooks not going anywhere!

There is not one single argument that exists for keeping those barbs on your treble hooks. Barbless treble hooks don't just magically fall out of a fish because they are barbless.

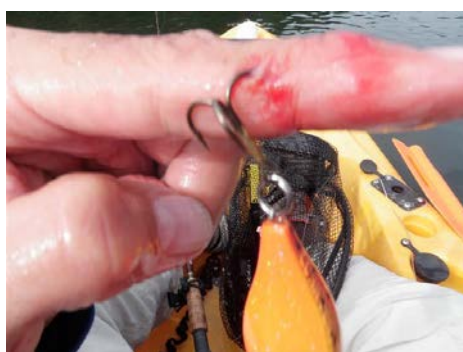
I have seen many bass at Lake St Clair being caused too much damage by anglers trying to rip out a set of little barbed hooks from a fishes mouth and anglers that will do whatever is necessary to "save their lure", and it makes me cringe. On the Hawkesbury Nepean Bass catch in 2012 I had a small Bass flip its way under my kayak seat, I tried desperately to reach the fish from behind but was unable

to, the amount of stress this was causing me was very unpleasant, eventually the fish flipped close enough to the back for me to grab it by the tail and to my grate delight the fish swam off. I have also had anglers tell me that Bass are bloody tough and hardy fish and trebles wouldn't hurt them if they tried, and that crushing the barbs is a waste of time. I've caught bass in dams before which had mouths mangled and healed into strangely deformed features, possibly from careless fisherman ripping trebles from their mouth with little care.

I tried I have done it myself in the past, but I thought about it and learnt from my mistakes. This is the part that most bothers me, that unhooking process. Respecting our quarry involves trying not to cause them any further harm after the hooking and playing process. I have seen and heard of too many stories of anglers ending up with barbed treble hooks in their hands and fingers because a fish is thrashing around and they get hooked up themselves. The treble hooks can end up all over the place. Crush the barbs properly and the hooks come out far more easily. Don't crush the barbs and more often than not you are doing a lot more damage to the fish that you might want to release. Why? For these reasons alone, I can see no good reason at all why any sport fisherman would want to not crush the barbs down on their treble hooks that sit on these lures.

I am not trying to provoke in any way at all here, and note that I am talking about the crushing of barbs at the very least on the treble hooks that we use. I accept that removing trebles on a lot of these lures may kill the action. I don't know of any lures carrying treble hooks that come barbless, so it's up to us here. This topic has bothered me in the past and I have long been debating whether to publish this article in the Battler, but I personally I feel that it's time that I stuck my neck out and said exactly what I thought. After all, we are members of a Bass conservation club! It's all very well talking about how modern and forward thinking we are when it comes to modern bass fishing gear and the science behind the preservation of habitat etc. But we need to expand our knowledge into all areas. I know a lot of Bass fisherman do crush the barbs down on their treble hooks, and I also know of some guys who crush all barbs full stop. There is no way that any of us can actually make other anglers go ahead, get the pliers out, and flatten those barbs, but the least we can do is to try and get people talking and thinking about it. It's not as if by crushing those barbs that we are going to end up with lots more and bigger fish for us all to catch, but we are meant to be sport anglers and should do our part to do the right thing by the fish we love and the fish that provides us with a means to our passion.

I would hope that most (sport) fishermen agree with my sentiments here and I do apologise if I have ruffled any feathers, but I do welcome all opinions and comments on the matter, so feel free to send me an email letting me know your thoughts, I promise I will not judge. Still not convinced, perhaps this might persuade you to rethink your stance! Tight lines fellow anglers!



NEPEAN RIVER TOURS by Alan Fowkes

Some of you may remember that I was the lucky winner of the Nepean River Tours prize drawn at our last club Christmas party and kindly donated by Steve Defina.

Well, after agreeing to avoid the hectic school holiday and early February periods, Steve and I settled on a date in early March when a mate and I would join him for a 4 hour, late afternoon fishing session up the Nepean River Gorge.

On the agreed day, the weather was looking decidedly dodgy with bands of storms rolling through – thunder, lightning, the whole shooting match! After a few phone calls and radar checks we agreed to meet at the Tench Reserve boat ramp anyway and make a final “go” or “no go” decision once there. I have to say I was far from optimistic on the drive out ...

On arrival, Steve had the boat waiting at the jetty and the rain had stopped for the time being – it was a “go” decision, albeit with agreement that we’d stop halfway up the gorge for our first session where Steve knew of a cave to sit out any heavy showers and where we could quickly bolt for home if things got ugly.

As it turned out, the weather gods smiled with only a few light showers affecting us even though the rumble of distant thunder and thick, black cloud nearby were constant companions. Sadly, the fishing gods were not so kind!

The tour was a great success though. Steve's boat is an immaculately laid out shallow draft, side console, fully surveyed, custom built boat of around 5 metres in length. The bow mounted electric, great stability, and casting decks both forward and aft make this a fantastic fishing platform and Steve's intimate knowledge of the river means you don't waste any time getting from A to B.

Most of you will know that the Nepean River Gorge is quite a scenic place. Probably fewer of you have been far up the Warragamba River and the trek up here was a highlight. The scenery is fantastic and so is the opportunity to see the Warragamba Dam water releases in action.

Steve negotiates shallow water to get you just upstream of the creek gully where these releases enter the river and only a few hundred metres downstream of Warragamba Weir. The Dam itself is visible in the distance at probably something under a kilometre away.

The water releases are quite well engineered, being piped this kilometre or so from the dam and then allowed to drop over rocky cascades on the way down the gully before entering the river proper. This aerates the release water and probably also serves to raise its temperature a little. As I understand it, Warragamba Dam has only a limited "variable offtake" capability at present and this is used with a focus on water quality rather than avoidance of cold water pollution.

I also understand that the releases are currently directed at diluting the nearby treated sewage discharge and allowing for water offtake by the Richmond drinking water treatment plant downstream rather than environmental needs. However, improved offtake variability and improved environmental flows are on the agenda.

Back to the fishing and we failed in our attempts to troll up a trout on the way back down the Warragamba. On the Nepean once again, we thrashed the water to foam with surface lures in very fishy water near the Warragamba junction but all for only a few tiny tackers.

Negotiating the most hazardous shallow rocks up here in the last of the light we made the trek back downstream and Steve pulled up not far from the ramp in a last ditch, after dark attempt to get us a decent fish. It was not to be but we certainly couldn't blame Steve who had put in way more than the allotted time with us. I guess we should have been there just before the storms rather than just after.

In summary though, this was a great day out. I'd have no hesitation in recommending one of Steve's tours whether the half day fishing tour or the shorter "Eco" tour – the latter would make a great gift for your non fishing family and friends.

So my thanks to the club and most importantly to Steve for this generous prize.

- Alan F



Lake St Clair 5/10/14 by Peter H

I took the opportunity of the long weekend to head back to St Clair about 20mins north of Singleton in the Hunter Valley to make good on my fishless session back in July. Now with warmer water temperatures I was hoping the bass would be keen to play.

With an hour less sleep due to daylight savings I woke up at 4am with only 3 hours sleep under my belt. We hitched up the boat and headed to the dam.

The newly opened Hunter Expressway now shaves off about 40 mins from the trip and makes it a much easier drive! Previously, all the mining trucks and cars would share a 1 lane road passing through small towns with 50km/h zones...now its 110km for the majority of the trip.

The temperature was sitting around 7.8 degrees in the morning and was quite brisk and chilly. By 9am the mercury had risen to about 25 and by midday it was 40 degrees, the rapid rise in heat was insane!!

The rise in heat also brought on the fish. There was virtually no action until about 9am when the water temp increased by 2 degrees and the fish started biting... well for me anyway!

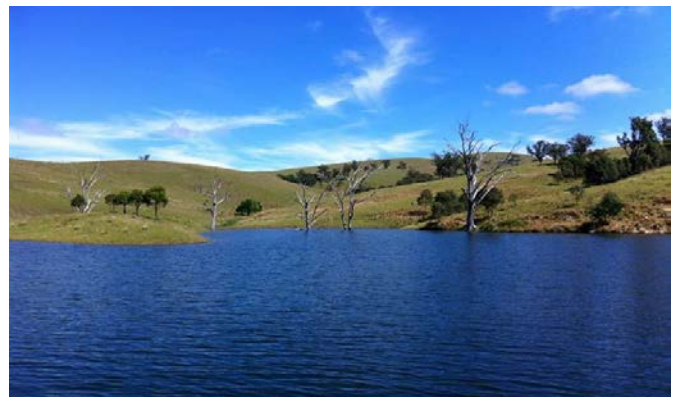
After fishing a few of my usual spots with limited success I found an awesome looking little bay where some muddy water had sort of gathered from the water skiers wake lapping the shore, which met some ultra-clear water. It had a mix of shade from tall trees on the bank, the trees in the water and another set deeper again....in other words, it looked PERFECT. It took about 5 casts into the same spot before I hooked up to my first bass. I managed to pull it away from the structure and netted it for a few snaps. Next I used my dad's custom Kistler Z-Bone and put another cast into the same spot...my lure being crunched a little further out this time, the Daiwa Steez baitcaster had line being stripped off it zzzz zzzzz zzzzz, as I scrambled to tighten my father's loose drag (typical), the fish bricked me into the submerged timber. I scrambled onto the electric motor and kept pressure on the fish, as I got closer a dark torpedo shot out to the right breaching the water like a crazed dolphin on shallow sand flats. After a nice tussle and few dives around the front of the boat I netted a very healthy fat bass of 410. The strength of the fish on this trip were excellent and a really good sign.

I was helping my younger brother fish with a baitcaster for the first time this trip. It took him a few hours to minimise the amount of slack line he kept getting when casting, despite this he managed quite a few casts and as his confidence grew he decided to go for a super long cast with a Jackall

TN60 which hooked into my Dad's new G.Loomis shirt putting a hole in it and creating a birds nest that I was unable to undo with 30mins of persistence....oh well....we've all been there at least once!

I ended up catching 6 very healthy and feisty bass...they seemed to be in super good condition, nice and fat from feeding up in the winter and extremely aggressive...so lots of fun! My 2 best were 400 and 410 respectively. I hope to go back up for an afternoon surface session; next trip though is to Windamere Dam on November 7 to chase some football sized yellow bellies!

- **Pete**





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

**Next Meeting is on Tuesday
October 14 - 7:30pm at
Northmead Bowling Club**

Just a friendly reminder the GM is on Tuesday Night.

- Member John Ducksbury will talk about his Amazon Fishing Adventure.
- This will be your third last chance to buy tickets in the Kayak Raffle.
- Bass Catch Briefing - Please register to advise any changes and help us cater correctly

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

Monthly Fishing Cartoon Funny



It's that time again!

Our great sponsors:

Nepean River Tours:



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