

Bronze Battler December 2018

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Australian Bass



Perch *Perca fluviatilis*

THE BRONZE BATTLER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hi all,

Another year almost gone and the October Bass Catch done and dusted.

Please send me or John Stokes the catch cards if not done already.

I hope you all got out for a bass fish a few times this season. I've been busy with work and haven't been able to do much fishing myself.

Need to get a better work-life balance, and warmer weather!

It's also time for our yearly Christmas Dinner get together. Keep an eye out for the invite in your mailbox. Hope to catch up with you all there.

We've been busy at our site in Russel Street. Planted and watered 150 new plants, brush cut the weeds (thanks Ash!). You won't recognise the site, changed so much the last few years.

Wishing you all a

*Merry Christmas & a
Happy New Year*

Tight lines,

~ Rico Van De Kerkhof

and an upgrade of your PB!

President Bass Sydney

BASS'N AT NORTH RICHMOND

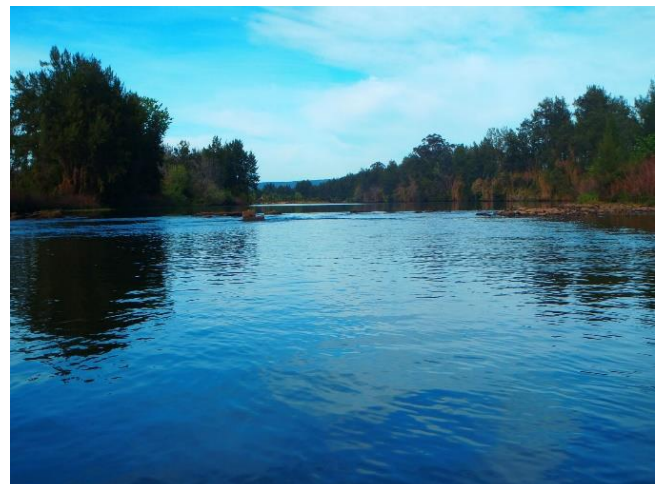
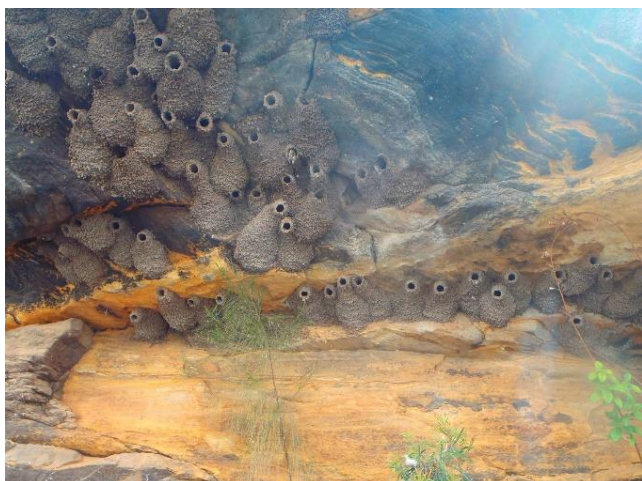
Milton Lazarus

The second Tuesday in October looked like a reasonable day, 28 degrees and no wind so it was a good excuse for Brian Shanley and myself to flick a lure or two during a morning session. Brian had never fished from Hanna Park beside the North Richmond Bridge before and after seeing a U-tube video posted about a very productive session there a few days earlier just after the rain he was as keen as. I'm not an early riser, but managed to tumble out of bed at 5.30am and meet Brian at his place nearby for a 6.30am departure, finally arriving on site and hitting the water about 7.45am. The river looked just beautiful with some residual fog drifting away, the sun coming up and glass - smooth water. What else can you ask for.

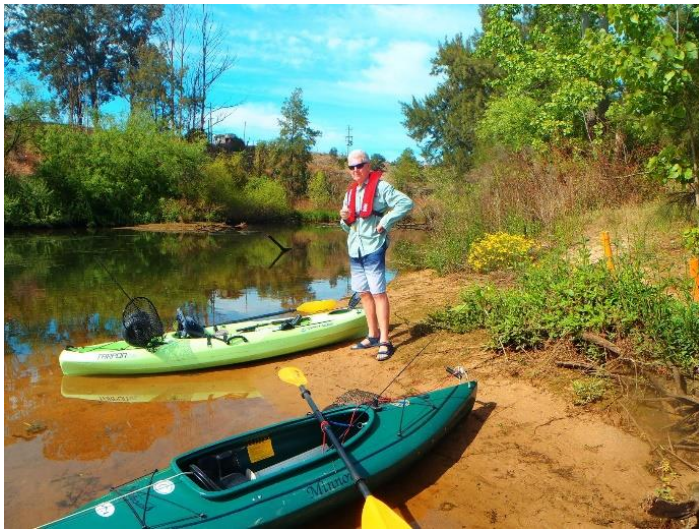


We fished upstream to the blind channel on the righthand side against a run - out tide. Just past the bridge Brian's sounder showed lots of fish action so we stopped for a bit and flicked here and there. The water was that lovely deep green, very clear with ribbon weeds wafting with the tide. Alas, nobody home. Maybe the sounder was confused by the weed movement - probably not - just a theory anyway.

We paddled up to the rock overhang on the right and cast lures under the mud swallow nests. The swallows were very active coming and going. Brian hooked a reasonable fish here, but lost it near the kayak. All I had was one hit. We fished the blind channel for zilch so moved on upstream to the rock bar tidal limit shown on the right hand picture below.



By then it was time to stretch the legs, spend a penny and have morning tea on a nice sandy beach just below the bar. There was a big carp cavorting in a patch of floating weed nearby but sadly it wasn't interested in Brian's lure. We both cast lures in a fan pattern for a bass for no result. I found a new atomic deep diver snagged on a root right at my feet just before Brian stepped on it. Nice.



We met a keen bass fisho there called Jason who lives at Emu Heights - a local who knows the river well, but after he fished down from Yarramundi without so much as a touch we all thought it was going to be a tough morning. But, things picked up. Not long after we started to fish back Brian hooked into a solid fish and lo and behold it was a lovely healthy bass of 383mm, that was followed by a 303mm from under a log used as a pelican perch. Brian's theory is all those droppings attract the fish, and so it did.

I tried under another log perch, but to no avail, however I did manage two small fish of 202mm and 192mm soon after. At least I'm on the board after my fruitless effort during our Karuah trip which you all read about in the October Battler.

We fished back and pulled the pin about 1pm after a very enjoyable morning. Hanna Park is a great spot to launch with good parking, toilets, shelters and even electric BBQs. The only minor downside is the steepish grassy climb up from the river. If you have wheels, too easy.



GONE FISHING DAY

Milton Lazarus

Fishing minded folk may know Gone Fishing Day (GDFs) was scheduled for Sunday October 14. As mentioned in the August Bronze Battler, the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) were holding their annual event at Dolls Point in Botany Bay right by the entrance to the Georges River. Other GFD's were held at Albury, Coffs Harbour, Inverell & Lake Illawarra. We thought a fresh water event would be more suitable to folk living in the Western Sydney Area, but could not convince DPI to commit, so we decided to organise one ourselves at Penrith. We were successful in obtaining a DPI grant to support our efforts.

There were lots of things planned, but unfortunately mother nature threw a spanner in the works and that Sunday turned out very wet, so we had to re-think a few activities. We planned to set up our gazebo at the weir. South Penrith Scouts were going to set up their gazebo beside us and do the BBQ. Penrith Council was supplying tubes for the kids to plant nearby and we intended to show the kids how to cast their new rod and reel combos they received, and so on.

In the end we set up in the permanent park gazebo above the weir, the planting and casting was cancelled and all we could do was hand out the rod and reels, a lure plus literature from DPI & Ozfish. South Penrith Scouts set up their BBQ etc. beside us and we waited for the visitors.

The rain did ease towards lunchtime, but it really did spoil the morning part of the event and that was very disappointing considering the amount of time and effort that went into making it happen. We were there at 8.30am to set up in the pouring rain, with the visitors expected from between ten and three, but we packed up and left just after 1pm.

A big thanks to Alan Izzard for all the work he put into this as the event was his idea, to Mark Schmidt the Secretary of Ozfish Hawkesbury Nepean Chapter who made a lot of things happen, to the South Penrith Scouts who arrived with their BBQ, sausages, onions, bread and drinks etc. and, unfortunately, their sales were low. Thanks also to Justine from Penrith Council who organized the tubes, and staff to show kids how to plant them.

To all the Bass Sydney members who braved the weather to help, Brian, Derek, Greg, Jeremy, Matt, Nathan & Rico, thank you. Thanks also to Doug, who being Treasurer, did most of the paperwork necessary to obtain the grant.

There was a huge puddle just beside the gazebo and when the parents were talking to us about Gone Fishing Day & Bass Sydney Fishing Club naturally their kids became bored and decided to play in the water - some were wet and splattered in mud, but they had a ball.

The event was a learning experience for us having never done anything like it before, but apart from the awful weather it had positives and to see the kids' faces when they were handed a new rod and reel made it all worthwhile, so we are keen to do it again next year.



Bass Sydney members, Justine from Penrith Council, Mark Schmidt from Ozfish & some of the early arrivals.

Cheers, Milton.

BASS SYDNEY AT BCF

Milton Lazarus

Our President Rico's second home is BCF Bankstown, he's always there and got to know the staff pretty well. BCF has club nights where they send out email invites to members, put on a free BBQ and give away amazing lucky door prizes, so generally these events are well attended. They also have two guest speakers so all in all it's a good night. Rico was asked if we'd like to run the BBQ. BCF supplies all the food, drinks, BBQ, tables and gazebo so all we had to do was set up and cook. Guests turn up and are ready to eat from 6pm. They received 260 RSVP's, but one of the BCF guys said we usually get about half that number. Suddenly we were worried, could we keep up the pace?

Brian, Rico & I arrived at five, followed by Jeremy, Nathan & Tham, we fired up the BBQ and had beef and chicken sausages, onions, sauces and bread ready to serve. Luckily Nathan has done a few Bunnings BBQs so his experience helped, and we were flat out with a decent queue ready to eat.

BCF suggested we put a donations box on the table and ask for a gold coin donation so we explained the donation was for us and most were very generous. We had our new Bass Sydney business cards and new flyers on the table which were of interest to some.

Then about 7pm guest speaker Gary Brown gave a long talk about saltwater fishing with plastics & lures, then a break, so we suddenly had more people to feed. Tham gave a presentation about Bass Sydney and afterwards we had more to feed, boy, these folks can eat we thought. Finally, they had a number of lucky door prizes. The prizes were amazing, Brain won a very nice Lowrance Hook 2 4X fish finder, Nathan a nice reel and Rico a bag of head torches and batteries etc.

After Tham finished we had a few more to feed and by 8.45pm we had pretty much served all the food we cooked, so cleaned up, packed all the gear and bid BCF farewell at 9pm. And, we collected \$139 – amazing. We enjoyed the night so thanks to all those who came along to help. Finally, a special thanks to Tham for doing his presentation.



Cheers, Milton.

OCTOBER BASS CATCH

Matt McHugh

October 20-21 saw club members gather for the 1st Bass Catch of the 31st year of Hawkesbury/Nepean Bass Catch. The venue was once again Shaw's Farm at Yellomundee, a great spot to camp, very central for the Bass Catch and with a very welcome shelter and toilet facilities. For me personally it was a great weekend, I had Daniel for company and we got to spend some quality time together and as always, the club members made him feel very welcome.

Highlights of the weekend for me were, the huge storm, the rainbow that followed, Gary's fire following

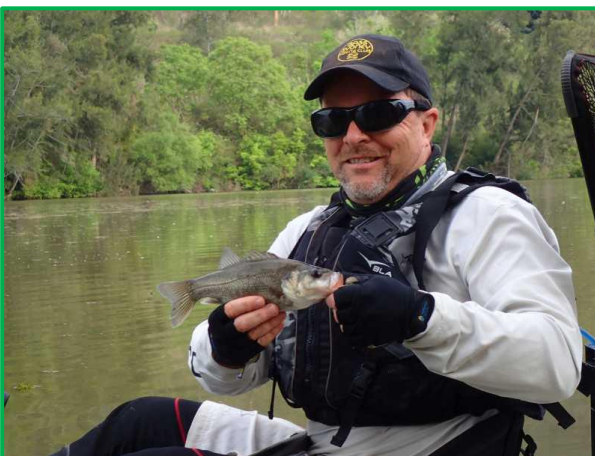
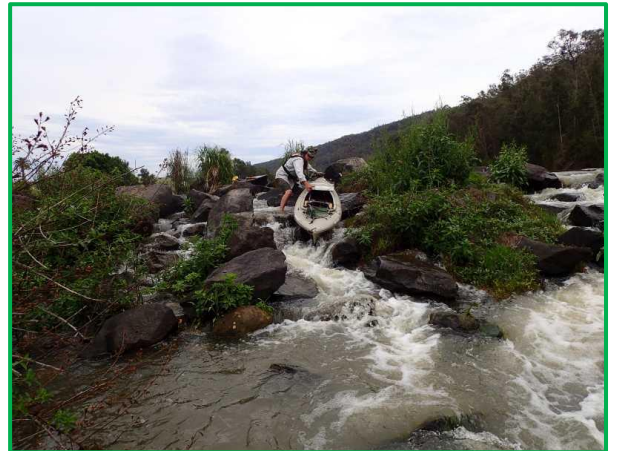
the storm, Jason's carp, Jason's EP and Damian's effort with the bass, not necessarily in that order. We had a pretty good turnout, Milton, Damian, Rico, Nathan, Matt H, Tham, Steve P, Shane, Gary and Kerry, Brian, Phil, Derek, Daniel and myself. Damian and Rico arrived early on the Friday and fished for carp and mullet in the afternoon. John Stokes had to work unfortunately, so Rico took over the catering and organisation. Milton took the long round trip to Alan Izzard's to pick up the trailer and returned it. A very long round trip!

Most people fished on the Saturday, with mixed results. Those that fished the section from above Shaw's farm to Yellomundee did it tough. Gary Blount fished upstream from Shaw's farm and had a donut, a first for him I believe! He said that he thrashed the water to foam with all lures and trolled for miles without a hook-up! That's Gary below dragging his yak upstream from the camp pool.

Nathan and Derek also fished from Shaw's farm upstream to the big pool. Nathan went fishless and Derek ended up with 5, the biggest 272. Derek on the left above and Damian on the right.

Steve Peach gave it a good go from Devlin's and ended up with 4 for his troubles, a 220, 310, 175 and 270, after a long day on the water, he

also saw a Platypus upstream from Devlin's and took a photo of a black snake. He also met a potential club member that I have been talking to via Facebook.



Milton, Brian and Phil came from the other direction, launching at the lagoon in Yarramundi and heading upriver towards Devlin's. They got 9 between the three of them, biggest 275 to Milton. Brian below leaving our lunch spot after a goat gave us the evil eye.

Tham and Matt Hahn fished from Windsor up to the Gross River junction in Matt's little tinny. They did well, ending up with a dozen each, Matt got the only two over 300, with the fish of the day at 334. Most of their fish came between the laneway above Windsor to the terraces. Matt fished surface mainly and Tham mainly fished sub surface.

Daniel and I also fished from Windsor, but we really concentrated on the steep bank at the terraces and surface only. We ended up with 4 fish between us in 3 hours, Daniel got the biggest at 185! I think Daniel's hat frightened the big ones away. On our way back, we bumped into Jason who had a handful of small fish, he decided after a slow morning to target big Carp in the afternoon and landed an ugly 80cm brute of a thing for his troubles after dropping a string of similar fish.

The biggest effort came from Rico and Damian. They travelled to Russel St and did the float down in their kayak, ending up with a solid 9 fish each and 3 of Damian's fish topping the 300 mark.



We had a monster storm go over camp on Saturday at 5pm, wind, rain, hail, the lot, Followed by a full rainbow and part of a double. We managed to light a fire afterwards somehow, due to Gary Blount's persistence. We had a good BBQ feed followed by a raffle, for once I didn't win a frog!



We had a cool night and a good cooked breakfast the next morning, I think everyone



must have fished themselves to a standstill on Saturday, not many ventured out on the Sunday. Rico and Jason headed to the mouth of the Colo to target Perch and boy did they target perch. 50 or so fish including a 380FL for Jason.

The Bass Catch doesn't happen without people putting in some effort. Rico, John and Milton did the bulk of the heavy lifting, but others helped cook and pack up on Sunday. Thanks also to Gary Blount for organising the camp ground and keys etc. Also, thanks to all the members that attended, I can't wait for the Bents Basin instalment in February.

Cheers, Matt.

OCTOGENARIAN FISHING

Milton Lazarus

Late in October Bass Sydney member Warren invited me to join him and three old mates to fish the Macleay and try out his new tinnie. The team consisted of Don the earthmoving man 85, his brother John the diesel man 84, Bob the Irishman 83, Warren the moneyman 82 and Milton the fisherman 76. These four blokes have been mates forever and there's great stories and banter constantly, so the two days fishing were just a blast and I've never laughed so much during happy hour each evening.

I have fond memories of this wonderful river as I'm sure others do who have fished it over the years. There are many reaches to try your luck whether it be by kayak or boat. On this trip we planned to fish around Kempsey, something I hadn't done before. As it was early season I thought it would be a good idea. My past experiences had been fishing from West Kunderang, Gorges Junction, Dykes river, Five Day Creek, Bellbrook, Temagog, Toorooka then downstream to Belgrave Falls being the tidal limit. There are some wonderful Bass in this river and a kayak is generally the best option for the higher reaches.



However, Don, always up for a challenge, with Warren, John and others fished from Bellbrook to Devils Nook in 2013 using his inflatable and Warren's canoe. Getting this out at Devils Nook was a challenge, but we managed it in the end after much huffing and puffing. As you can see a very comfortable way to fish floating gracefully downstream, sometimes a bit sideways in the faster rapids.



After the customary stop at Heatherbrae Pie Shop we headed north, the Hastings and Manning rivers were discoloured after the recent rains so this was a concern, but thankfully the Macleay looked pretty good. We stopped at Woolworths to stock up on supplies and arrived at the City Centre Motel in Kempsey, our digs for three nights. By this time, it was late on Monday after picking up John at Old Bar on the way. After a few beers we went to the RSL for dinner, just a five-minute walk away for a very nice meal, just so convenient.

On Tuesday morning we headed to the Greenhill's boat ramp in West Kempsey and launched the tinnies. There was a lot of floating surface weed due to the recent rise, so it was a matter of looking for spots out of the tidal flow against the bank to cast a lure. We fished without result until morning tea, both boats were rafted up in the shade then muesli bars and tea were served. I did hook a small Bass after tea, but dropped it, so at least that gave us some encouragement.

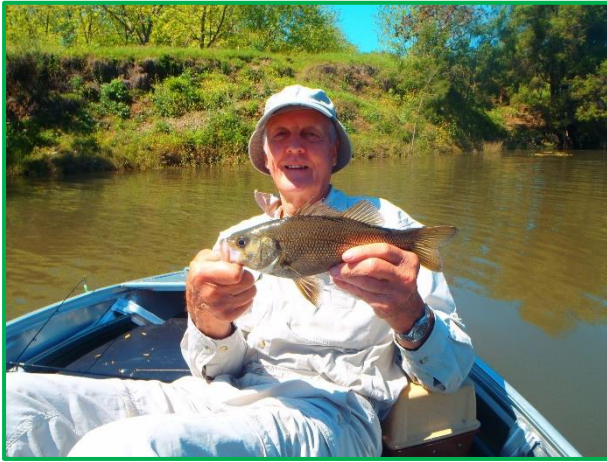


Warren's 3.1 Stessco with 6hp



Don's 3.8 Bluefin & 20HP Mercury

We continued upstream fishing towards Belgrave falls, but eventually the flow was too much for Warren's 6hp outboard so we retired for lunch. I managed two fish by then, a 302 and a 262, both solid river fish. Due to increased flow there were great eddies to fish where the river changed direction. After lunch we fished back and both Warren & I managed a Bass each. Mine, 283 & Warren's 263. The total trip distance was 16 kilometres so a good day. Don lucked out, John caught two and Bob one so the fishing was tough. Don's final comment was I'm never ever going to Greenhills again. I guess it's not the first time he'd fished here without result.



Milton 283



Warren 263

After showers and beers, we ate at a Chinese restaurant above our motel, great food, huge servings, convenient and very reasonable. On Wednesday morning we launched at Frederickton downstream from Kempsey just as local Tony the fireman was leaving the ramp in his tinnie. He suggested we fish the opposite shore along the reeds in the shade and later try Scalpel creek. Tony is a dedicated surface fisher and uses Tiemco soft shell cicadas pretty much exclusively. He showed us one that had caught 80 or 90 Bass and it was completely demolished, lost its colouring, was cracked and beaten up, but still caught fish. We fished along in the shade, but apart from Warren & I getting one hit each it was pretty ordinary



Frederickton boat ramp



My feisty 353

We then ventured into the creek and threw surface lures in the shade and sun, but to no avail, but near the end I threw my trusty gold Betts Spin with jig head and soft plastic upstream to be hammered. Oh boy, this felt like at least a 400 fish, it fought so hard and was all over the place and with rod bent half under the boat, reel almost in the water I was waiting for my leader or clip to let go. Finally, the fish tired enough so Warren could slip the net under whilst I was in a mild panic and the fish was in the boat. Whew. It was a very solid fish in beautiful condition, but the amazing thing was it only measured 353, from my experience it felt like a mid-400 fish, but I won't complain. Boy, these fish fight above their weight.

Time for lunch so we rafted up in the shade, great sandwiches followed by rock melon, apples, muesli bars and tea. Don still fishless was keen to land a Bass so started casting a big hard bodied lure around only for it to end up in a tree, it was well anchored, but after a final tug it came out like a bullet and embedded one treble in his left knee and one in his right. These were big trebles without the barbs crushed, oh dear! So, what to do. First thought was to tie a stout cord around the hook bend and rip it out, but that was going to tear out so much flesh and two barbs on each treble were well and truly deeply embedded. Bob & I suggested we head to Kempsey hospital and have them removed. Warren had removed a treble before from another mate Harley so always carried a surgical kit with scalpel's, swab's, band aids and sterilising solution etc. so Warren the moneyman was about to become Warren the surgeon. And so it was, Warren very carefully cut down the side of each hook to expose the treble and lifted it out. This procedure was repeated four times and all the barbs were removed. Don let the wounds bleed, flushed them with solution, patted dry and that was that. I wanted to take some photos, but it was a very tense situation and you could have heard a pin drop, so I didn't think photography was appropriate. I was looking at Don's face and he didn't flinch nor complain one bit during the procedure which was a credit to him.

After leaving the creek we fished along the opposite bank again and when both boats rendezvoused again Bob had caught a 510, wow that is the fish of a lifetime I thought and Warren asked what happened to it. Bob announced it was in the boat and he was taking it home to cook. My mouth dropped, Warren looked at me and we were speechless. I couldn't believe it, a big female Bass going into the frying pan! At this point we all decided to call it a day and head back. After loading and tying down the boats John quietly announced that the fish was a Flathead. Those few words were such a relief, Bob Irishman had conned Warren and I and we fell for it hook, line and sinker. Thank goodness I thought.

After showers and beers, we met Tony the fireman at the RSL and shouted him dinner for all the help and local knowledge he had passed on.

A good contact to have and he will be in touch when the Bass are really on the chew. Hopefully soon as I already have my bags packed.



Four great blokes, Left to right: Don, Warren, Bob & John.

It was great fun, so different to what I'm used to on a Bass trip, staying in a motel, eating out & Don making tasty sandwiches. It certainly beats staying in a tent and self-catering. If the fishing had been better it would have been perfect.

Hope Don's knees are on the mend now.

Cheers, Milton

PLANTING DAY AT EMU PLAINS

Milton Lazarus

Alan arranged more grasses, shrubs and small trees to replace those that had perished due to frost over the winter and the drought. This time we chose plants that flourished through the tough conditions and did not consider any that didn't. We had a great roll up to help dig, fertilise, plant and water over 100 tubes. Justine from Penrith Council arrived with the plants, Alan with his 1000 litre tank, our new pump, hose and other fittings bought with money from our Habitat Action Grant, the Club box trailer and me with the food.



Ashley and Rico worked on whipper snippers to clear areas to be planted, Alan Fowkes positioned the plants about the site, some people dug holes, I got the easy job to add water crystals and slow release fertilizer whilst others planted, then we staked and watered. Kerith organized the morning tea so we stopped for a cuppa and biscuit then back into it till lunch. Again, our resident chef Kerith prepared and cooked lunch. Nice to see Former President Ashley Thamm and his two boys join us. He, the boys and Damian Balfour had to leave before lunch, but we really appreciate them making an effort to help.



After lunch Alan made a presentation to our two wonderful volunteer ladies Kerith & Margaret, who turn up on the first Saturday of every month irrespective of the weather and help. Neither are club members, but just locals, so we appreciate their commitment and enthusiasm. Each was presented with a plaque in acknowledgement of their effort. Both were surprised and delighted.

We continued on until all the plants were in the ground and watered, finally finishing at 2-30pm. It was 36 degrees and hard, hot and dirty work, but when it was complete everyone felt a sense of achievement and once the plants grow, they will enhance the site, bring back more native insects and birds. We just hope some follow up rain appears between now and Christmas and others take their rubbish home.





So, thanks to Kerith, Margaret, Alan Fowkes, Alan Izzard, Damian Balfour, Ashley Thamm, his boys and Rico van de Kerkhof for their effort, and of course Rico's dog Ginger for her help watering. Cheers, Milton.

Footnote:

Including the hours worked by the eight people on the Saturday in November, 1700 hours have been clocked up – congratulations!

WILLIAMS RIVER BASS CATCH 2018

Milton Lazarus

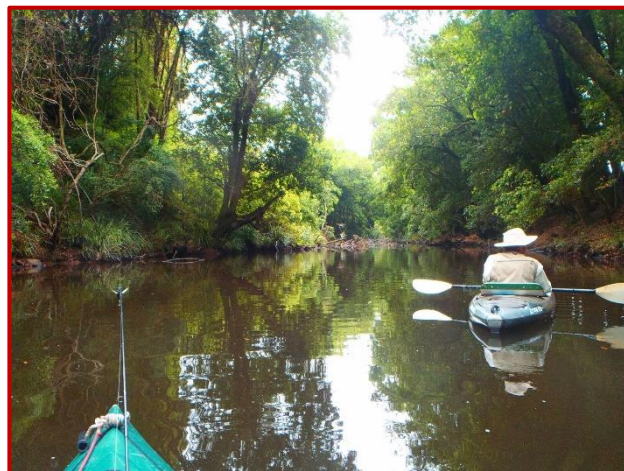
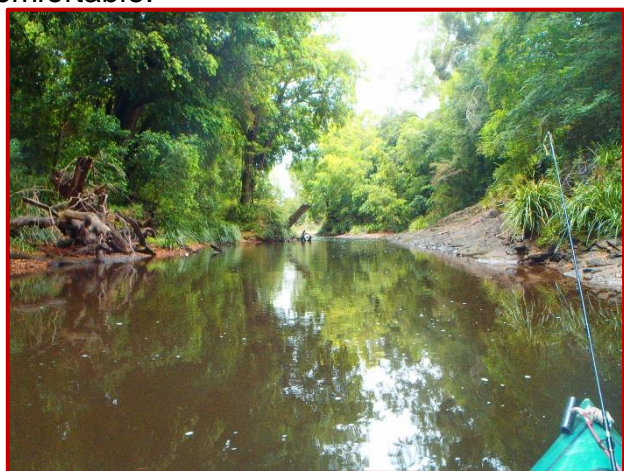
Some Bass Sydney members were keen to attend, but due to family and other commitments only Alan and I managed to make it. Maybe the weather had an influence too as showers were forecast for both Saturday and Sunday. We arrived on Friday afternoon after calling into Bakers Pies in East Metford, the pies and coffee here are as good as those at Heatherbrae so the place has always been a good driver reviver.

The plan was to take our camping gear, book a cabin at Clarence Town for Friday and Saturday nights to save putting up the tent then head over to Booral to camp and fish the Karuah. Unfortunately, all the cabins were booked so camping it was. In the early days of the HNF Bass Catch 20 years ago the camping ground was a relatively unknown, but now it's very popular with grey nomads and others, so by late Friday afternoon the place was packed. Kids and dogs, boats and caravans, swags and so on. Great to see Aussies out doing what so many of us enjoy.



Hunter Native Fish have moved up-market and set up three new gazebos in the usual spot down in the corner. Apparently, the old tarp we are so used to seeing was retired this year. Angus, Dave and Rod got the BBQ going whilst we enjoyed a glass or two of red and a catch up with the HNF members. Entree' consisted of barbequed chorizo pieces and marinated chicken wings, very tasty followed by steaks, great locally made sausages, onions, potato salad and cold slaw all squeezed into lovely fresh rolls. A great feed sitting around the traditional fire in a half 44-gallon drum.

Alan & I planned fish the reach down to Thalaba bridge in Allison, a big day so we hit the sack about ten knowing the first risers would be up very early. I think it was about 4-30am when the first tackle boxes started rattling so it was impossible to sleep after that, we had an early breakfast and after sorting out our cars which included me towing Alan's Hilux up the muddy track from the river, we started fishing at 7-30am. The river was low, clear and flowing so initially we fished up a tad then headed off downstream. Alan used a Cicada whilst I persisted with a Betts spin. The Bass were pretty eager on the surface, but nothing on the Betts spin. Then it started to rain, only light, but enough to wet everything and make it uncomfortable.



The next challenge was to find a way through a large lilipili tree right across the river. Luckily, we managed to pull and push our way through the foliage, but the next two trees there was no way. Both had to be portaged around, but we managed that and pressed on to our lunch stop. This is a lovely stretch of the river with over hanging trees providing total shade and ideal pools with eddies and slowly flowing water. Great Bass spots all the way.

Finally, we reached the Thalaba bridge, loaded our kayaks and headed back for a shower. The tally was 15 between us, Al with 9 & me 6. Alan's largest fish was 360, mine 310. An enjoyable day. We arrived at camp around three, boiled the Billy and just relaxed as the other guys returned in dribs and drabs. The number of fish caught was down from previous spring Bass Catches, but Ed & Mike who fished the long hard 14 kilometre reach from Thalaba to Glen William did well. Noel 27 up to 395 and Mike 19.

Saturday night's catering was a repeat of Friday's, but just as enjoyable after a hard slog on the river. This was followed by a raffle with a difference. Those camping paid \$15 per night for food plus \$5 for camping so \$50 for Friday and Saturday nights and a raffle ticket @\$10.00 was included. The corresponding ticket numbers went into a container, so everyone was guaranteed a prize, in fact with the number of prizes on offer each person ended up with three prizes in total after three draws. There were good quality rods, rod and reel combos for kids and so on. I came home with two tackle boxes and a pair of pliers from three consecutive draws. A good system.

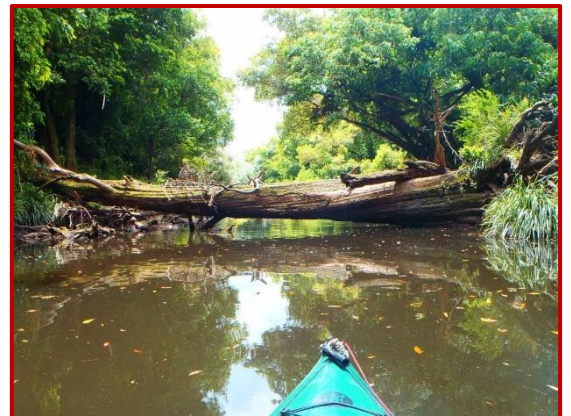
We sat around the fire late - ish and crashed into bed expecting everyone to sleep in on Sunday morning, but no, some folk were up at 5-30 ready to hit the water again in a thick Clarence Town fog. Alan and I had another early breakfast then packed up our camp ready to head over to Booral to set up again. As usual I was late leaving after bidding farewell to all the HNF guys only to receive a call from Alan who had already arrived at our camp site on the Karuah in pouring rain. After a brief chat we decided to pull the pin camping at Booral and head home. To be honest I was very pleased, really didn't feel like pitching an already wet tent in pouring rain for one night, so coming home was a relief.

Arrived home at 12 in full sun, pitched the tent and dried everything out ready for another trip north soon. All in all, a great weekend, caught some Bass, good food, wine and seeing old friends again made the effort worthwhile. Hope to return in March 2019 to do it all over again.

From Alan:

It really was a good trip, the fishing was excellent and the weather, apart from a couple of short showers, was pretty good too. Milton had to take a walk back to his car after we got to the river so I decided to have a bit of a flick where we launched while I waited, that is after spending about 5 minutes untangling my 2 rods. First cast with a Tiemco Cicada TT was hit by a small fish, no hook up, but that was enough for me to stick to it for some time. Caught a smallish fish soon after, so looking good. Moving downstream I managed to catch a couple more plus losing as many, still don't know why, maybe I was pulling too hard and pulled the lure out of the fish, lost a big fish at the yak, talk about a comedy of errors: the lure went over a branch that just popped out as I cast, I thought I would hurriedly just wind it back over the branch, naturally a fish grabbed it just as I was about to lift it out of the water, the yak was moving forward now and as I could not wind the fish over the branch I put the rod down, naturally it then got tangled with the other rod just laying there, what to do, I decided that I would hand line it in, got it to the yak and released it, another 300+, just got my hand under it and it pulled the hooks, needless to say the air turned blue. Actually the air turned blue several times that morning, I don't like losing fish. Anyway, we came around a bend and believe it not there was another yak fisherman heading towards us, we all got a bit of a surprise.

He told us he was with a mate and that they had followed 2 other guys for a while, so that made 4 guys had fished the water ahead of us. He and his mate turned around and headed back, not before telling us that there were 2 very large trees across the river downstream. We stopped, had lunch to let things settle and off we went again, after about 10 minutes without any action at all I decided to try something else, ratted through my lure box and came up with a Marz Bot Fly, and low and behold, caught a fish on the 3rd cast, ended up with 3 on it. About ½ hour after that we decided to give it away and headed off for home. As we took out there were 4 more guys just getting set to launch, very popular spot that!

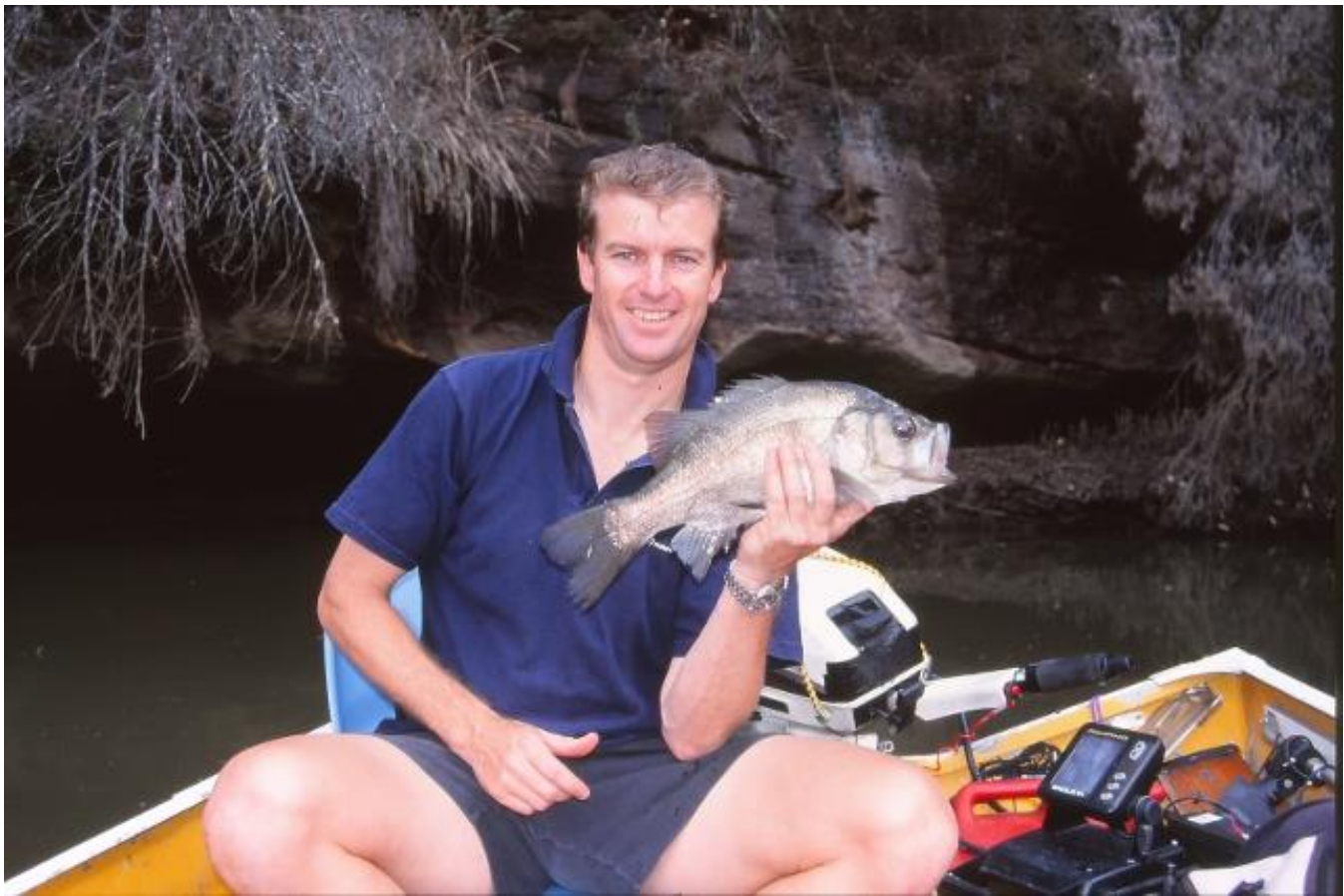


THE BATTLER'S COUSIN

Matt McHugh

In 2003 I wrote an article about Estuary Perch that was published in Fishing World. At the time, I had been fishing regularly for bream using soft plastics. Braided and fused superlines were just starting to be commonplace and Squidgies had been developed and marketed locally on the back of great success of Berkley soft plastics in the local market. Slider grubs were also used extensively in the local fishing scene, especially amongst the tournament bream fishermen. Fluorocarbon leaders were also getting some traction and there was a great range of affordable spinning reels and short graphite rods. In that article I described how I caught a few EPs by fluke and then targeted them more deliberately over a year with great results.

A young Matt McHugh in 2003



2018
has
really
seen
me
return
to
these
great
fish,

mainly thanks to Andre and Rico who reminded me what great fish they are, with some of their captures from the Cowan Creek system. Other club members have had some great fishing for EPs, including Doug and Jason, proving that they are still quite common and more than happy to chase lures.

In some ways, EP fishing is all about where rather than how. They aren't that complicated a fish, or that difficult to catch once you follow a few techniques, knowing where they like to school is really the secret. Estuary Perch are very closely related to Bass, and usually share some of their range with Bass, but they will rarely venture into fresh water, much preferring the brackish sections of coastal rivers, creeks and lakes. They can be found in the tributaries of Sydney Harbour and the Hawkesbury as well as coastal lake systems like Narrabeen Lakes and its tributaries, basically anywhere that has fresh and brackish headwaters.

They also love sandstone drop offs and boulders and deep sections of rivers and creeks. During the shoulder seasons, just before and after the Bass/EP closure you will find them in the lower sections of a system. They tend to school around structure at these times, road and rail bridges, fallen trees at a creek mouth, ferry landings. A classic schooling point is the road bridge at the mouth of Tuggerah lake, another is the road bridge near the Woolies at Narrabeen.

The style of fishing hasn't changed much for me, I haven't cracked the code when it comes to surface fishing during the day. Most of my fish have come from soft plastics fished deep in the deepest section of creeks. Find the deep sections in the upper reaches of the creeks, usually on the outside of a bend, and usually the deepest part of that section and you'll find fish. I have been using 1/12th jig heads and Zman Slim Swimz in very natural colours, Smoke Hologram and Greasy Prawn being the standouts. You'll need at least 6lb leader and higher, the schools of fish are mixed, and you will catch a 150mm fish one cast and then an unstoppable beast next cast and there is always some structure around, boulders and sunken timber.



Once you are finding the right spots, its simply a matter of getting your jig to sink into the deep water and watching your line. Quite often they will take it on the drop, all you'll see is a faint tick in the line. Sometimes as you start to retrieve you will feel a single tap. Raise the rod tip, if you don't hook up, drop the lure again and slow roll, drop it again and slow roll. It pays to really persevere in a promising spot, once you catch a few fish in some of these spots the confidence will grow.

In the shoulder season at the end of the last bass season in April, I had great fun fishing around the Colo River mouth. It was more about finding structure at and around the creek mouth, the ferry landing, fallen trees and any manmade structures on the river all held fish.



One last thing that I almost forgot, the rod. I've never been one to spend much on rods, preferring the convenience of 2 piece and price point of \$150. In mid-2017 I purchased a Loomis GL2, 7'1", 1/32 to 1/4 ounce in a 1 piece. I've never been happier about a purchase, the sensitivity and length is perfect for this type of fishing. I fished one day out of the kayak with a 6' Shimano rack raider and missed converting a number of EP bites into solid hook-ups. That extra foot really helps, especially with the sensitivity and quality of the Loomis tip.

I'm sure people have found other ways to target these fish but this works for me, good luck with it and have a great holiday season.

Cheers, Matt.

FISHING THE LANE COVE

Damian Balfour

I was keen on fishing LCR on Saturday 10th November; and I had a particular plan in mind. Arriving just after 6am, launched at the weir and paddled upstream towards Cottonwood Glen area. The fishway was flowing well, the water a little brown after the midweek rains, but mostly the river was 'up'.

I had arranged a rendezvous with Tham who'd launched not long before me and was already testing the waters.

Further on upstream I passed Matt McHugh. who had been on the water even earlier, pre-sunrise, and had landed a few thus far. Matt was heading back and I was just starting. This was the only time I saw three anglers on the water.

Usually, on the LCR, I'll fish as far upstream as I can before sunset then turning back to fish the gloom, heading downstream, but for this visit I wanted to fish an area of deep water that club member Steve Peach had scanned earlier in the year and found the water to be quite deep, about 20 feet. This was at Cottonwood Glen.

On the sounder Steve had seen some big fish there. So, I geared up for some 'slow trolling' or 'drifting', jigging soft plastics or vibe blades hoping to stir up any specimen Bass. I had set up two carp rods also. Fingers crossed, I thought fishing differently might yield some worthy results. I placed all my eggs in one basket so to speak and aimed for a quality fish from that one spot, maybe one that was a deep lurker, or a skulker. A 'devourer' even that might not be exposed to the surface lures and shallow divers recently fished around the banks and other structures.

I also had planned on berleying with bread and sweetcorn, trying some float fishing for carp.

Everything was in place, I'd rigged five rods in total for this Bass / carp bonanza, I was looking for a trophy and compost respectively.

Well some best laid plans don't work out. Some theory's and strategies fail. Pure and simple.

The odd cast here & there on the way to Cottonwood Glen produced only one Bass of 210mm FL, a fit plump looking healthy feisty little 'un, on a jig-spin, from underneath a most unhealthy-looking bush overhanging the river, the bulk of the bush's branches was devoid of any foliage except for a single long branch sporting fresh green leaves.

I might have taken a better picture if I'd known that this Bass would be my sole fish for the day.



With persistence and folly, I fished the deep waters around Cottonwood Glen, casting the vibe blade then bouncing a soft plastic and jig head around the bottom with the occasional snaggy encounter that for a miniscule moment felt like a bite.

My plan to float fish, or drift and jig were thwarted with the low steady persistent breeze that was moving upstream, just enough to push the float, the kayak and the bread burley all in the wrong direction. The wind turned my kayak, pushed me under foliage, drifting into dead branches & prompting a dusting with pollen and silt from more overhanging branches.

The odd fish that breached around me, probably mullet, didn't show the slightest interest in any of my offerings. There were no big croucher, no devourer, no ambusher nor bushwhacker! Nothing that took my slow trolled lure and no fish showed any interest in the floated bread. I hooked and wound in sluggish fighting encounter that turned out to be a freshwater turtle. Hooked in the beak, it wasn't long before it let go and slinked away, possibly as disgruntled as I.

So that was it, no leviathans from the deep, no monster carp dispatched and converted to garden fertiliser. No Bass, no mullet, no eel. Saw some red chested freshwater dragons - primed for mating, some colourful birds and the shrieking gallah's were around. And a medium sized goanna swim from one side to the other, directly across and climbed up on the bank and lazily disappear.



By late morning I gave up, the wind was not for abating. Recreational paddlers were now appearing and being blown upstream from the boat hire shed. So, I returned to the weir and the fishway was worth another look, with minimal obstructions on the saltwater side of the weir, and water levels were up and flowing well, the tide being in. On the freshwater side of the fishway, at the upper bend there was a substantial build-up of flotsam obstructing any upstream migration, but allowing a decent downflow.

Having nothing to show for my 'fishing plan' I wanted something worthwhile, so I waded in and quickly cleared out branches, logs, leaves and litter. A fitting antithesis to the non -removal of big carp or landing a huge Bass.

Feeling slightly better with the fishway unobstructed, I left with two small cherry coloured leaches feeding on my arm. EEK, I flicked them off and left a fishway cleared for future fish maneuverings, until the next log jam I suppose. My best laid plans came to naught and there were nil fish to speak off, that's fishing I suppose. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

A SURPRISE AT WANDA 24TH NOVEMBER 2018

HS Tham

A few weeks ago, I got an invitation from Jason McMaster to a 40th birthday celebration for both he and his partner, Jacki, at Wanda Surf Club. A fairly standard celebration I thought. I accepted.

Today was the day and I turned up at the surf club to see the sign at the bottom of the stairs. "Great, I was at the right place" I thought, so I walked up the stairs to be greeted by another sign. Whaaat??! Surprise!!

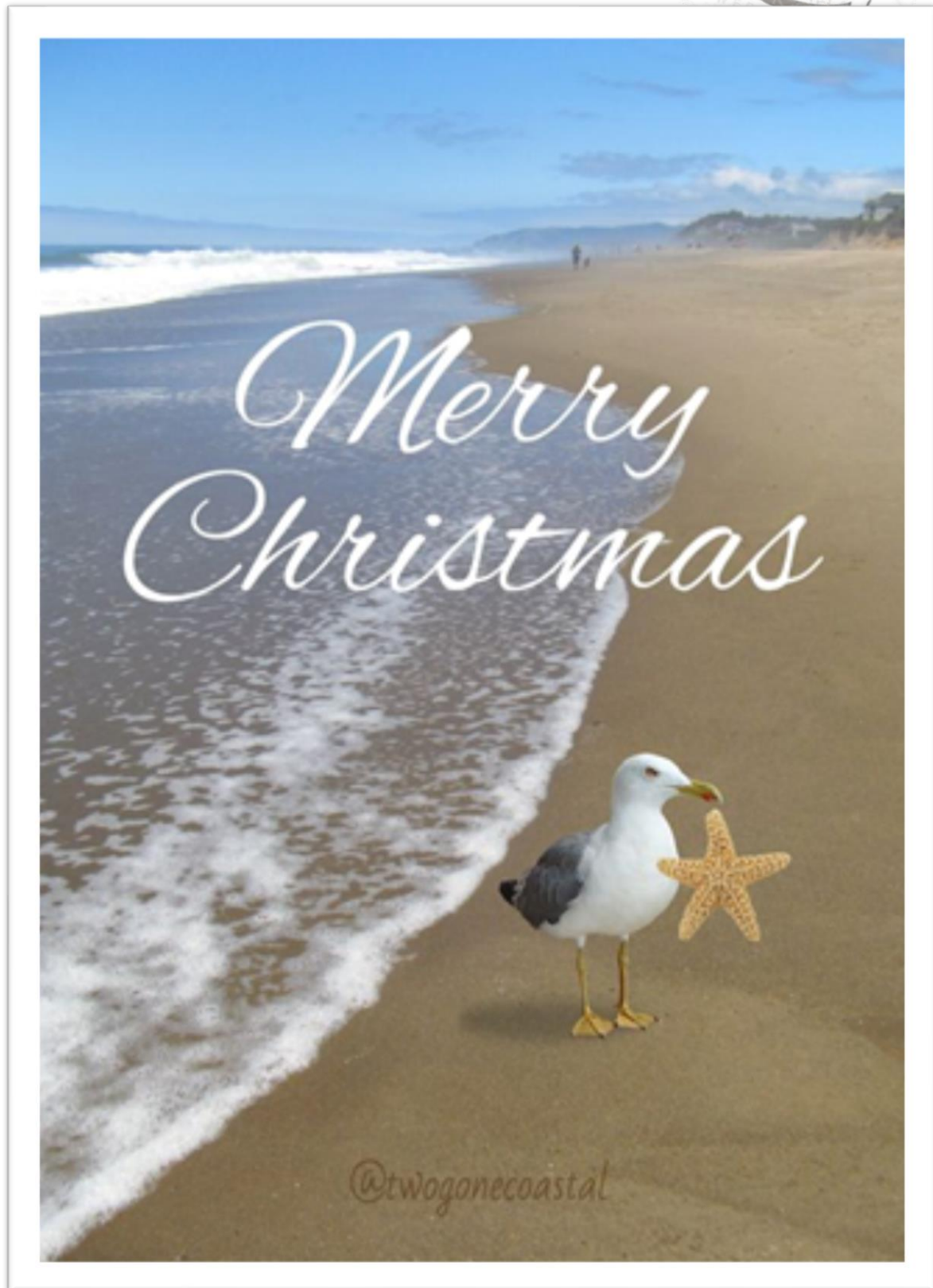
So, I was at a surprise wedding! I did not know a soul there besides Jason until Rico & Lanthy arrived. It was a

joyous occasion with the happy couple surrounded by friends and family and their three children. They had been a couple for 15yrs before tying the knot officially today.



Congratulations Jason & Jacki





*to all Bass Sydney members, friends
and supporters*

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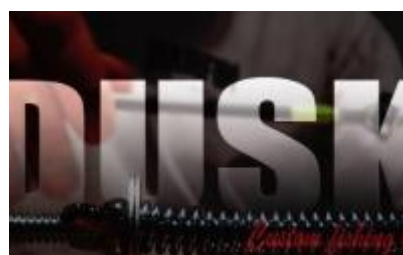


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