

April 2022

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Australian Bass



Percalates Novemaculata

THE BRONZE BATTLER

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President's Message

I would like to thank Tham for his hard work, dedication and passion, along with the committee, for safely steering the club through its most difficult period. This consisted of a global pandemic, bush fires, floods and two La Nina weather events for good measure. A very big thankyou on behalf of all members for their hard work & tireless efforts. I am very thankful to the current committee, and I am motivated by their positive energy, it's an honour and a pleasure to work with them.

Bass Sydney is unique. We are a bass fishing club made up by good people with a strong social and environmental consciousness. We have a proven track record of achievements, and it is incumbent on us to ensure we continue this legacy.

I am optimistic about the future & look forward to catching up with everyone during the year.

Regards & tight Lines

Chris Ghosn

From The Editor

I cannot thank Lynn enough for producing the Battler since midway through 2018, over 20 issues. And of course, Milton has been instrumental in gathering the content and hounding us for submissions. I have always looked forward to reading the Battler and have been appreciative of the effort contributed by all. Rest assured I will give it my best efforts and hound all of you for good articles and great photos.

Matt McHugh

FEBRUARY BASS CATCH

Derek Sonter's Report (Bass Catch Officer)

So, another season has been and gone, from Covid to Floods and Storms. The Nepean and Hawkesbury has definitely seen the worst of the weather, the constant flows from Warragamba have definitely felt its effect along the system. It goes to show that from the accidents of boats going over the Penrith Weir and drownings that have occurred, this has been the worst season to wetting a line in the river I have seen since living and fishing in the area. Even now the water level is up, and the river is brown as brown, not the best to fish in.

Our first Bass Catch in October was very small with only 2 anglers recording catches, for the February Bass Catch there was 6 anglers recording catches. The pick of the day was Saturday where Alan Izzard and Matt McHugh teamed up to fish in Reach 5 and caught several good fish.

The top angler for this year goes to Matt McHugh with a total of 304 points, 2nd place to Tham with 176 points and 3rd Damian Balfour with 94 Points, congratulations to Matt for the second year in a row. Alan Izzard landed the largest Bass with a nice 390mm FL.

OCTOBER

Largest Fish	318
Smallest Fish	168
Most No. of Fish	12
Most points	60
Number of Anglers	2
Total No. of Fish	20
Total fish length	4636
Average fish size	232
Average No. of Fish/Angler	10.00

FEBRUARY

Largest Fish	390
Smallest Fish	101
Most No. of Fish	50
Most points	304
Number of Anglers	6
Total No. of Fish	136
Total fish length	27430
Average fish size	202
Average No. of Fish/Angler	22.67

This will be my last Bass Catch recording as Tham will be taking it over, it has been trying over the last couple of years getting together, fishing and camping etc, let's hope the next couple of years will get better.

Thanks again,

Derek Sonter
Bass Catch Officer

HS Tham's Report

I thought it was a minor miracle that we were even having the BassCatch. Somehow, we got 2 or 3 days of good weather in the middle of a very wet summer. I managed 2 days of fishing on the small yak, my most preferred way to fish for bass. It has been a while with me sick for 2 months in the Spring. Loved it! Caught a few fish too...



Friday

Got to campsite at Bents and didn't have to do much setting up with my (borrowed) big van. It was great to see Damian there for the whole weekend. He has a young family of 3 kids nowadays! It's hard to get away. I really hope the fishing will be OK to make it worth the journey up from the Illawarra. Chris Ghosn and his 15yo nephew was also camping as was perennial Bass Catch favourite, Garry Blount. Cool!

We decided on our different fishing plans for the next day. Chris & nephew launching at Wallacia and fish around there &/or go downstream towards Norton's Basin. Garry was invited to go with Damian and I from Bents to Wallacia. A nice float of around 9k's. Garry declined and went to fish Wallacia also. A decision he will rue.

I slept fine in my van with all its soundproofing, but I believe some loudmouth campers kept others awake until late. This is a BIG advantage of "camping" in the van!



Saturday

Damo & I had to do the car shuffle before we can launch and go fishing. That's about an hour just for that. The river was running very well. Not in flood and not too muddy. Water was stained but quite clear, not muddy.

Launching around 8:30am, I quickly found they were on the bite with many hits & misses on the Ripple Cicada. So it went for the next 3 or so hours. We had a steady bite for the whole first third of the trip. We both caught fish, mainly on surface for me, on buzzbait early and Ripple Cicada the rest of the time. I landed 8 bass on the buzzbait that day, 4 on cicada and 5 on jigspin. Not a single fish over 300mm.

In retrospect, I'm glad that we took it very easy and slow on that first third because we were to find that the more downstream we got, the muddier the water became. With the last third basically a paddle as there were no fish biting in the shitty-looking water. I barely caught a handful of fish in the last 3 or 4 hours of that float. The guys that fished out of Wallacia sure lucked out! Very tough apparently. Should've come with us Garry!

Dinner was simple – takeaway burger and chips from Wallacia. Didn't have to cook after a long day. Milton dropped in to chat at the campsite. Garry a little shell-shocked at the lack of fish. Chris' nephew only caught 1 fish, but it was the fish of the day at 36cm (I think?). Pulled it out on a spinnerbait from some nasty country according to proud uncle Chris.

Sunday

Chris & Garry were going to be taken down the Gulguer Reserve by the Bents Basin rangers. Damo and I broke camp and decided to have a quicky at Camden, near the aerodrome. Always a nice, easy to reach stretch.



Water was a little muddier than the top third of the Bents to Wallacia stretch and it was of course already 10am when we launched. Bright sunny day. I was to land another 8 bass on the Sunday, all on a SSC and including 2 consecutive fish over the 300mm mark. My weekend total was 26 bass.



Alan Izzard's Report

To say that I had been having a shocker of a year fishing wise would be an understatement, with tendonitis in both shoulders and the miserable weather I was rather lethargic with life at the time. Then Doug Chang invited me for a day on his boat to fish the McDonald River and I really enjoyed the day, sort of got me enthused again.

Then when the Bass Catch came around, I had decided that with the amount of water about that kayaking was not for me at the time. Then when Matt asked me to join him in his boat for a morning session at a spot he had been investigating for some time I jumped at the chance.



He picked me up early, before daybreak, and we travelled to his selected area, launched the boat and then proceeded to fish the main river around Wiseman's Ferry. We had a most enjoyable morning, he told me that surface lures had been working well there before so on went an SSC, and it never came off. Matt boated a couple of fish quickly, and they were decent size fish, I hooked and lost a couple before I finally boated one. My second boated fish went 390mm fork, I was over the moon. We fished along the rock wall for a couple of hours before calling quits about lunch time, we had boated somewhere in the vicinity of 27-30 fish, biggest my 390 and approx. 11 in the 300's and the rest high 200's. I personally had landed 11 fish in the session and lost several near the boat, squashed barbs I would guess was the reason for the droppages. Matt landed several more than I, not sure exactly how many. All in all, a very successful mornings fishing and I managed to get home for lunch as well.

Matt's Report

Alan has done a great job of describing our Saturday morning, so I can leave that bit out, except to say that we had a fun morning. Al is good company in the boat and we had a very economical time, quality fish and constant attention on our lures.



I was keen to fish around Camden again as I had a great session there last year and it is a lovely section of the river. I was also keen to fish with Doug, we decided on the float down from Menangle. I had never done that top part of the reach 2 before, and after an early car drop off at Belgenny Reserve we hit the water at Menangle just before first light.



We both got a couple of fish in the big pool at the launch spot below the weir and then we both had a moment at the riffle below the top pool. I shot straight into a tree branch and nearly filled the kayak when I tipped, it was a very near thing.



From there all the way to where the river veers west we picked up fish on surface lures, no really big fish, I think my biggest was 310. I ended up with 34 and Doug had close to 30 from memory. As the sun got high the bass were sitting in tiny pockets of shade, all you had to do was get a cicada in there and whack! We barely got a fish after 11am and paddled all the way back to Belgenny ramp.

A great bass catch for me. Sadly, I didn't camp as I had family commitments, but it did set me up for 2 memorable sessions at either end of the system in Reach 2 and Reach 5.

South Coast Sojourn

When plans on another trip fell through, I needed a fishing fix. With leave already sorted I decided to make the most of the opportunity and planned a catch up with fellow Bass Sydney member Ryan Keith and my brother Tim. After a brief discussion on possible locations and a survey of the weather we decided on Lake Conjola with some time on St Georges Basin a possibility also. With it being late January, the hope was that water temps would be prime and we would be able to connect with some of Conjola's resident crocodiles and some bream and whiting on the surface. I'd fished the system a few times before but not for about 7 years. Having done relatively well there previously I was optimistic about our chances, however when we launched on the first morning and the water temp was just under 29 degrees, I was not so hopeful. In my experience on the south coast lakes, high water temps (above 26C or so) generally make for very tough fishing. In fact, if the water is up around 28C I will not often choose to not go out, or to wait for the first push of run-in tide which will bring with it a slightly cooler flush of ocean water. This can often fire up the bite.



Our plan was to fish the prime tides in hope of a big lizard and then to chase some surface excitement on the flats and edges. We started in some beautiful water where a narrow channel drained into 4 metres in one of the lake basins. Without a breath of wind, the underwater landscape was very easy to see, and with a plethora of life visible, anticipation was high. The area was rich in nipper and worm holes, extensive stands of zostera, there were floating oyster racks nearby, and there were stacks of bait in the form of mullet and whiting perusing the flats and patchy ground. We decided to "cover the bases" with three different techniques; Ryan with a tried and tested big 150mm plastic which he would slow roll through the shallows, Tim with a big bent minnow worked on and just below the surface

hoping for a violent surface strike from a big fish, and me with a more standard lightly weighted 100mm plastic worked on the edge of the flats and into the deeper water of the main basin. Despite our persistence over a few hours and spooking a few solid fish in the gin-clear shallows, it was clear the lizards were not keen to play on this day. We ended that session with one smallish fish each, the highlight being a roughly 50cm model that inhaled Tim's bent minnow just below the surface causing a decent implosion which only a flathead can produce.



We moved to a different section and brought out the lighter gear to fire some surface presentations at the local bream and whiting, with some surface flathead by-catch always a possibility. With the combination of 29C water, no breeze and a mirror calm surface, we figured it would be tough. The first couple of hours proved exactly that, however with the change of tide the action began to improve as soon as the ebb tide got moving. We sought out some windward shoreline, so the surface was slightly ruffled, and this proved to be a good move. During the first afternoon we had a ball firing long casts parallel to the edges and over the weed, raising aggressive strikes from hordes of bream ranging from undersized models up into the low 30cms. Despite the lack of size, the pack attacks and visual takes in plain sight close to the boat more than made up for it. There were a couple of nice mid-30s whiting thrown in and an over-zealous 45cm flathead that cartwheeled out of the water when it hit the surface presentation in about 20cm of water. The final tally after day 1 was approximately 30 bream. Highlights for the day included a small number of black bream (which I hadn't encountered in this system before) and a few hybrids joining in on the action, as well as the success we enjoyed in very high water temps (which peaked at 31C in few spots!). In future I would not be so reluctant in south coast bath water! A few beers on the deck of our cabin at dusk while tying new leaders and discussing the plan for day 2 was very relaxing.



Day 2 followed a very similar pattern. Despite our best effort we had limited success on the flathead, again with a few average fish between us. But the afternoon more than made up for it, with the bream bite being even better than the first afternoon! After a heap of fish in one section we moved to another arm of the lake basin where the breeze was pushing a little harder and the shade from the eucalypts on the hill extended a little further into the water. Firing casts parallel to the shoreline and deep amongst fallen timber we had a ball. There were several pack attacks and the average size in this section was significantly better, with a bunch of fish in the 34-37cm. The highlight was a beautiful yellowfin bream that smashed my sugapen in a shady pocket just wide of a shallow rock shelf. After it peeled of

several metres of drag on both its second and third runs, I knew it was a good fish. As it slid into the net we called it for 40 fork, but the lie detector told a different story at 397 fork and 430 tip. While Conjola is known primarily as a great big flathead and whiting fishery, it also holds some solid bream. Also worthy of mention was Tim's lovely 42cm whiting and Ryan scoring a string of nice fish on an old school Stiffy Top Dog. Between us, the tally for day 2 was another 40-45 bream, 6 nice whiting and a couple of flathead.



While the Sugapen was the standard lure, several nice fish also fell to bent minnows, the Stiffy dog, and the Maria MP1.

For day 3 we decided to hit St Georges basin for another shot at a big lizard and some more flats action. The pattern was almost identical; limited success on the lizards, but another fantastic afternoon surface bite with another 35 or so nice fish between us. There were a few small EPs included which was nice to see. After doing a heap of surface luring on the flats over the years, I hadn't done too much of it in recent times and it was great to get back to it. If you haven't tried this style of fishing, you need to!

Bass Sydney event – Lane Cove River Salt And General Meeting

Date: Sunday 15th May 2022 , Lunch and General Meeting 12:30pm

Where: Burns Bay Reserve, Off Kooyong Road, Riverview NSW

[Link To Google Maps](#)



This event is in salt water, fishing for bream, flathead, trevally and whatever else you may catch. **We propose that we have a Bar-B-Q lunch (BYO) at about 12:30pm** and the Club General Meeting

SUN 15 May



1:32 am
0.44m



7:30 am
1.63m



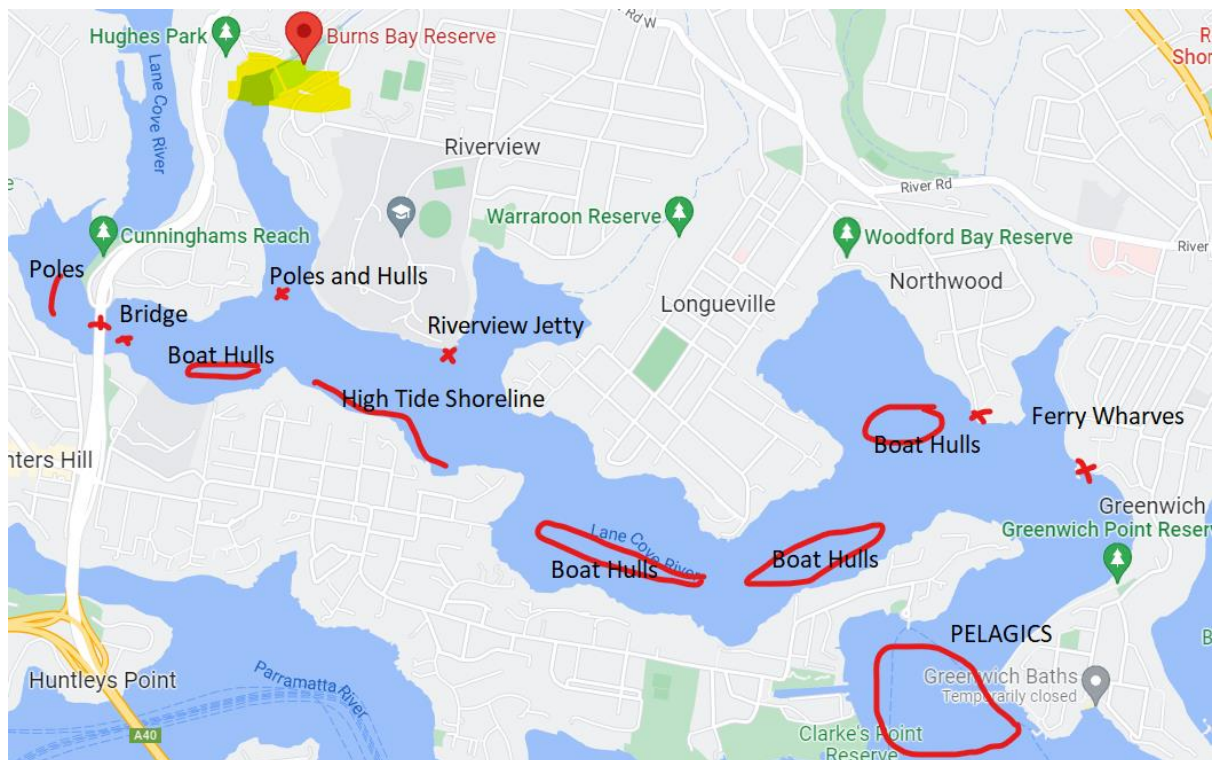
1:30 pm
0.41m



7:57 pm
1.92m

A Quick Guide to Lane Cove River Fishing

- The ramp is a good one but LIMITED PARKING. Get there early. Also the tide will be high early.
- The ramp is also suitable for a kayak launch.
- Target species are bream, estuary perch, flathead and trevally.
- If you are lucky, you will encounter salmon, bonito and even small kingfish.
- Have at least two outfits, one for standard bream fishing, 1-3kg, 6-7 foot and the other a heavier outfit for throwing metals etc, or trolling for pelagics.
- The number one target is bream, and they can be very solid fish around this area in May, keep lures small, imitate baitfish and prawns.
- On high tide they will be up around the shoreline, rock walls and pontoons.
- On low tide they will be around the boat hulls and marker poles in the river.
- Estuary Perch will be somewhere in the system but could be anywhere under a boat, under a pontoon or hanging around the bridge.
- Trevally again will turn up all over the place and are more of a welcome bycatch when bream fishing.
- I have marked up on the map the places that seem to produce the best. Boat hulls in 2-5 metres in a bit of current fish the best.
- On the high tide, out of the way rock piles, rock walls and jetties really produce.
- Keep an eye out for birds and surface bust ups for pelagics and keep an eye on the sounder looking for balls of bait.
- Give all of the big structures a workout, the bridge, the poles in the mouth of burns bay, all of the Ferry wharves and rowing clubs.



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