

June 2022

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Australian Bass



Percalates Novemaculata

# THE BRONZE BATTLER

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## President's Message

The heart of winter represents a time to look ahead to the excitement of a new bass season and to reflect upon good times of the past. I was buoyed by the participation of our Burns Bay event. It was good to catch up with everybody and I had a thoroughly good time. I am very appreciative of everyone's efforts in organising the event.

This time of year, we begin to look forward to our October bass catch, it will be here before we know it. This year represents extra special incentive after several years of floods. It's an exciting opportunity to begin the process again in locating where the fish will be, what mood they will be in and what lure will they be interested in taking.

I am looking forward to it already

Regards & tightlines Chris Ghosn

## From The Editor

Thanks so much for the contributions I have been getting for Battler articles. We are going into the August edition which is usually a bit quiet on the fishing front, so I will be on the lookout for articles, could be anything, preferably fishing related.

Thanks, and Best Regards

Matt McHugh

## Macleay River – February 2022

Having fished the Macleay in Nov 2021 we were keen to back up ASAP, however the regularity of rises in the water level stifled about 3 false starts in late January, early February.

We did get away on 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> of February, Don & Helen, Robert C (Don's youngest brother, only 78), Irene and myself.

We had accommodation at the house adjacent to the Bellbrook Hotel, and as before, Shirley put meals in the fridge each day for us to microwave in the evening – fantastic, and older version of UBER eats! Incidentally, the cabins always appear to be occupied but gee they look pretty sad.



We did the usual runs in the raft quite comfortably, though Devils Nook exit and re-entry the next morning were struggling exercises. Exit at Toorooka involves roping the raft under the bridge downstream to where we can back in the trailer and using rope extensions on the winch, extract the raft. Not too arduous now that we have done it a few times – practice makes perfect.



On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day we had an easy short day, went to Drummer's Flat with a view to flogging the pool there. Also, I wanted to take some photos of the Comara Cemetery on the way in, sounds a little odd but ... I have a cousin (John) whose father was born in 1905 at Comara, the son of a ganger involved in construction of the Kempsey to Armidale Road. John's father left home at the young age of 17 in 1922 to join the navy (to get 3 meals a day). He was in the navy right through the war, was torpedoed on the Hobart (survived that), and unfortunately was killed by an out-of-control semi on the old Pacific Highway at Kundabung. Some of John's relatives are buried in the Comara Cemetery and over the years when we were going to stay and fish with his widowed mother at Arakoon, we would call into the Kempsey Council and John would make enquiries re Cemetery records to no avail.



The cemetery is located off the access road to Drummers Flat and is situated on what is now Comara Station. Previously when in drought conditions I have walked over the hillside around the sign indicating the cemetery location and found no visible signs of its existence. I've since been advised by an indigenous friend that there are no records of precise plots or who has been interred there. I did take some photos for John this trip, but couldn't get close to the sign as the overgrown grasses were fence high.



## **Fishing Results in cm's**

### **Bellbrook to Devil's**

<u>Don</u>	<u>Robert</u>	<u>Warren</u>
36	36	10
34	32	10
	32	32
		38

### **Devil to Toorooka**

<u>Don</u>	<u>Robert</u>	<u>Warren</u>
35	42	25
33	35	34
		32
		10
		34
		10

### **Drummers to Half Day**

<u>Don</u>	<u>Robert</u>	<u>Warren</u>
36	20	10

We were very lucky to be able to have the trip as there has been so much rain (and flooding all over NSW) since then, at the time I did sense / feel the water was quite cold.

Can only hope that things will have settled down and we can make an early start in September

Warren Chalmers 19/4/2022

## **LAKE ST CLAIR MAY 2022**

The three Bass Sydney old farts, Alan, Brian and myself were keen to squeeze a trip to one of our impoundments before the winter and also praying for a window of reasonable weather, luckily the first week in May was looking good.

Alan took some convincing, but in the end, we packed our gear and headed off. Brian and Alan handling the pre-book and hitting the road on Monday morning May 2<sup>nd</sup>. For anyone that hasn't been there for a long time you have to book in advance with Singleton Council and during the process you get a gate code to use at the boom gate on entry. Each car needs a separate gate code, Council controls the numbers now due to the limited amenities which is a good thing, and the boom gate prevents unwanted drop ins roaming around at night like the old days.

Brian towed his Cub camper trailer; I took my boat and Alan his tent. We decided on a powered site for convenience to charge the deep cycle battery and the other benefits like an electric jug, toaster and a fluorescent light for the gazebo. Glad we took the Club gazebo as it rained on Wednesday night and Thursday morning.



After camp set up, we grabbed our gear and fished the standing timber in in bays of the Carrowbrook Arm. Brian caught a very nice Bass on a blade which went 35cm so a good start we thought, however it was soon evident that we would be working hard to produce many Bass. But as we all know dam fishing is essentially needle in a haystack stuff, anyhow it was a beautiful afternoon and great to get away with a couple of good mates and enjoy some peace and tranquillity. Al and I had donuts so we pulled the pin on dusk and headed for happy hour.

Brian bought his Ozpig look alike mini combustion stove, Al the fireman got it going and we enjoyed dips, cheese and red wine in abundance. This little stove radiates a lot of heat and the advantage being you can sit very close and not breathe smoke or get showered in sparks if its windy. Al cooked his sausages on it so it's a good thing. Available from 4WD Warehouse around \$90.

Monday and Tuesday nights were pretty fresh so we weren't on the water at first light, just enjoyed breakfast about 7am each morning and launched the boat at our leisure. On Tuesday morning we went to the top of the Falbrook Arm to a spot Brian thought might produce fish, but unfortunately there was another Bass boat working along the shore so we fished other shady spots to no avail. We did return to fish Brian's spot, but the morning turned out fishless. It was a sensational day weather wise, but the fishing was proving a challenge. On Tuesday afternoon we fished bays past St Clair Island and Al landed a small Bass about 22cm and I followed up soon with a similar sized fish.



Brian's 35

Al's 22

A nice spot nearby

Brian lucked out, but he kindly provided morning tea each day which we appreciated. We headed back to camp for lunch and a rethink.

The Lake looks so good at 100%, last time we were here it was down to about 37% and the surrounding country looks terrific after all the rain. Most people set up caravans and camps right on the grass at water's edge with their boats left in the water.

Wednesday morning, we fished the Carrowbook Arm, a place I'd never fished before and was surprised that it's not possible to go up very far. I decided to try something left field and clipped on a gold McGrath Attack with black cross stripes, cast it into the shade of some casuarinas. Two cranks of the handle and a huge swell erupted where my lure would be and I hooked up to a solid fish. Luckily, we were in clear water and not in close so I had plenty of time to fight the fish and just took it gently. I eased the drag a little and let the fish run until I was able to make headway, eventually a decent Bass appeared, Al landed a very healthy 42cm fish. I was very happy because I generally struggle to produce these days. After a few quick pix back she went, a wonderful solid impoundment Bass in great condition.

The boys became a bit more enthusiastic after that so we gave the area a good old going over, but alas nothing. We relocated back past St Clair Island again to the same spot where Alan & I had landed a fish each previously in case there might be one or two fish about without luck. We found a little bay with steep banks and a small creek running in and spent some time as it looked good and we thought the creek might attract fish. I put on a Chartreuse pony head with silver blades and a chartreuse plastic.





A lovely 42cm dam Bass



Yellow Belly at 43cm

After a few casts crunch, I hooked up solid just like the Bass earlier, so followed the same procedure and played the fish gently. It felt like a Bass, but to our surprise it was a nice Yellow-belly. It was close to 43cm so something different. Sometimes it's your day and today was mine.

We kept fishing along the banks and Al landed a very strange Bass, it looked half Bass and half Yellowbelly, with a scooped nose and thick short body as per the pix below. We moved to a point of Moore Bay as the general consensus is to always fish the points hoping to find Brian a farewell fish, but without luck, however Al landed a small Cat fish there. So, in total five Bass, one Golden perch and one Catfish, not great, but we still enjoyed the trip.



Al's weird Bass



Lovely conditions

Dave Mudd and Greg from Hunter Native Fish were camped nearby so it was good to catch up with them to chat, discuss our Club woes, catches and experiences.

The clouds were building during the afternoon and just on dark it started raining, not heavy, but consistent. We enjoyed happy hour, dinner and an early night. It was quite warm compared to the last two nights and when we woke up on Thursday morning the rain was pretty steady.

Well, we've all done it, but packing up in rain is a real pain especially if you have a ton of gear like we all had. I was last to leave just after 10am.



### A few random pictures

We enjoyed the trip, a few more fish would have capped it off, but the weather during the three days we were on the water was sensational. We could have been on the water earlier and stayed later, but that's not us these days.

Looking forward to going back in September or October.

Cheers, Milton.



## **Illawarra Trip Feb/March 2022- MattH, Tham and Damian Balfour**

Our Matt Hahn flew back to Oz in February to spend a few weeks visiting Aussie friends and family. He swiftly had a couple of days on the Hawkesbury with Doug Chang catching big bass from the main river around Wisemans Ferry. Matt's ability with the SSC remains undiminished despite being away from Oz for nearly 3 years.

I locked in a few days Annual Leave and planned a few days away with Matt, staying at Damian's place in Bomaderry. This would be the weekend after our February Bass Catch. The weather forecast was not the best, but we went anyway. I had to even drive through flood waters just to get to Damian's Street! My car even sustained a bit of damage doing that. Damian's place is big with a "granny flat" section with 2 rooms that Matt & I settled into. It was great to have a base...thanks Damian!

I had already borrowed a spare kayak from Peachy and I was looking forward to seeing Matt fish out of the yak as he is NOT a yak fishing fan! I took that second yak all the way south too, but due to Doug's outstanding generosity, he lent Matt his car and his boat so that we can use it for 4 days!! I thought it was funny that the first time I ever got on his boat was when he wasn't there! I'm sure Matt was even more thankful that he didn't have to "slum it" on a kayak!

### **Day 1 (arvo)**

We got to Damian's place early arvo on Saturday, Feb 26. Later that arvo, Matt & I decided to go for an arvo session, launching the boat out of the Nowra boat ramp. We fished the main Shoalhaven R around Nowra from around 4pm to dark. Of course, the Illawarra, like the rest of the Australian Eastern Seaboard, had been beset by weeks of rain and even though it wasn't raining on the day, the river was high and muddy. I donutted while Matt managed 1 bass and a flathead (caught on a chatterbait). Hmmmm.... Where will we fish tomorrow when Damo will join us? After a lot of map searching, we decided that evening that we would fish a tributary of Lake Illawarra, Mullet Ck. It looked good on Gmaps!



## **Day 2**

Mullet Ck proved to be quite pretty, looked bassy, but was also high and muddy. I think Matt caught a bream on jigspin, but that was it. Mullet Ck also has a VERY shallow entrance at Lake Illawarra, which required us to motor around a long way to get to the channel. Well! That was disappointing! Where shall we try next?

We pulled the boat out and we went to get something to eat. We then decided to try Broughton Ck and we launched from the lower boat ramp. Weather was still OK at this stage. Damian was the first to catch a nice fish, a low-30's EP when he ran his jigspin adjacent to and then under a mat (a raft?) of weed and flotsam caught by a snag jutting out into the river. A little later, on the next snag that had a mat of flotsam, Matt did the same thing and BANG! He catches a 38-forker EP! Nice! Then it was my turn – at the next “special snag”, I ran a quarter ounce spinnerbait and even though it took me 3 casts, I eventually ran my spinnerbait under the mat and yes...I catch an EP that was around 383mm FL! That's a PB-equalling EP for me. We didn't catch much else that day. Matt (of course!) lands a nice bass as well. We were to call that day “Mat Day”.



## **Day 3 (Culvert Day)**

The 3 of us decided that we had to fish Broughton Ck again. This time we launched at the upper boat ramp, near Berry. The nice weather had been banished by then and it was a very wet day. We headed upstream and started fishing the snags like we usually do when bass-fishing, but it was very slow. Matt picked up a nice bream on a jigspin again. We got right up to the weir near Berry which was interesting but fishless. We headed downstream again and a short distance below the boat ramp we saw a drainage ditch/culvert discharging tannin-stained, but clear water from the paddocks into the river. Damian was again the first to hook up – he landed 2 or 3 smallish bass casting a jigspin randomly around the mouth of the culvert. Nice we thought! It was when we got close to the entrance that I noticed big BOOFS hard up behind the reeds lining the culvert/ditch. We very slowly worked our way

up the culvert and a huge BOOF happened about a rod length away from me, who was in the middle position in the boat. I reached over to where the BOOF happened and dropped my Ripple Cicada next to the bank behind the reeds. KA-BOOF! It was engulfed instantly and a short, brutal fight ensued with Damo sliding the landing net under my gorgeous bass! It was typical of all the bass in that river at the time – beautiful light gold colour, not dark and not silvery. It was also unblemished and in great condition and went 41+cm fork length. And so, it went for the rest of that day, which very quickly became known as “Culvert Day”. The only fish we found were associated with these culverts, drains, ditches, call them what you want. Luckily, that section of the middle Broughton Ck had quite a few of them, all of which were discharging tannin-stained but clear water into the main, muddy river. I can’t remember the numbers now, but I think we all got half-dozen bass each. Most of them were quality fish in the mid-300’s.







#### Day 4

Where else were we going to go but back to Broughton Ck!? The 3 of us launched at the upper ramp again and went upstream again to see if they were biting. It was quite wet again this day and after an hour or so trying the usual spots & snags for not much except for a nice mid-300's that Damo "poached" off me. I was bringing back my lure quickly to the boat when it got boofed halfway to the boat without hooking up. Damian fired off a cast to the middle of the river and hooked up! Mai (Damian's wife) had never tasted a bass before so the decision was made by Damo to keep that one for the table.

The problem was that none of the culverts were flowing that day. This meant that the fish were not concentrated around them. So, we had to find fish wherever they were and even though it was even wetter than the previous day, we still managed to land a few fish each. Bloody soggy day though!

Matt was leaving for Sydney that arvo. He had to return car & boat to Doug. I decided to stay on for at least another night. Damo & I wanted to go yak fishing on Danjerra dam the



next day, but the forecast soon saw that idea canned but there was still one more highlight for me. Day 4 was my birthday and unbeknownst to me, Mai & the kids had made me a birthday cake & card! Nice dinner, including the bass which was steamed Chinese-style. It was the first bass that I've eaten for about 3yrs and was probably the second bass that I've eaten in 6 or 7 years at least.

### **Day 5**

It was even wetter than the days before. Definitely not going to Danjerra now! Instead, it was a day that Damian's cute 3yo daughter Isla was to go to day care, so I took Damian and Mai to lunch then I headed off home after that.

Yes, the weather played a part in making it difficult, but I'm so happy that we managed to squeeze in a few days of good fish, good company, great accommodation and cute kids! Dunno when Damian will be allowed out again after 3 full days of going fishing!

**HS Tham**



## Burns Bay Club Day – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May

We got lucky with a beautiful day for this club outing. The following report is from Milton:

Organised the boat, fishing gear, BBQ and hooked her up the day before for a quick departure on Sunday morning, but alas the alarm failed to go off at 15-15am cause dumb dumb here set it at 15-15pm and I woke at 6am, shit so I was under the pump to meet Alan and Tham at Burns Bay by 7am. As it turned out I broke all records and beat them to it, but felt under the pump which was not good for my stress levels.

Tham our Lane Cove River guide suggested we go upstream to fish the flats and mangroves, my first cast on the flat just upstream from Fig Tree bridge produced a small Bream on a Sugar Pen type lure so naturally I thought it might be a good morning on the water, but this was really just beginner's luck. After that I didn't get another hit all morning.



That way skipper      A spikey little lizard      Men talking serious stuff      Dave enjoying himself

Tham turned out to be the lizard king with four undersized and one just legal while Alan managed two. The further we worked upstream the worse the water quality became so we abandoned our plan to fish the Epping Highway Bridge for EP's and headed downstream to fish boat hulls. Half a dozen boat hulls later not a touch. We tried the blind channel just downstream of the bridge and did see some surface action, but no results.

We fished one other spot then relocated down to the mouth of the Lane Cove looking for surface bust ups, but nothing there either so then fished Cockatoo Island and finally Dawn Fraser Baths. By then I was running out of enthusiasm and energy so we headed back to Burns Bay much to Tham's disappointment as he wanted to fish Riverview rowing sheds for EP's. Another time Tham. We loaded the boat and set up the BBQ. Thanks, Guys, for your help with the BBQ assembly and pack up.



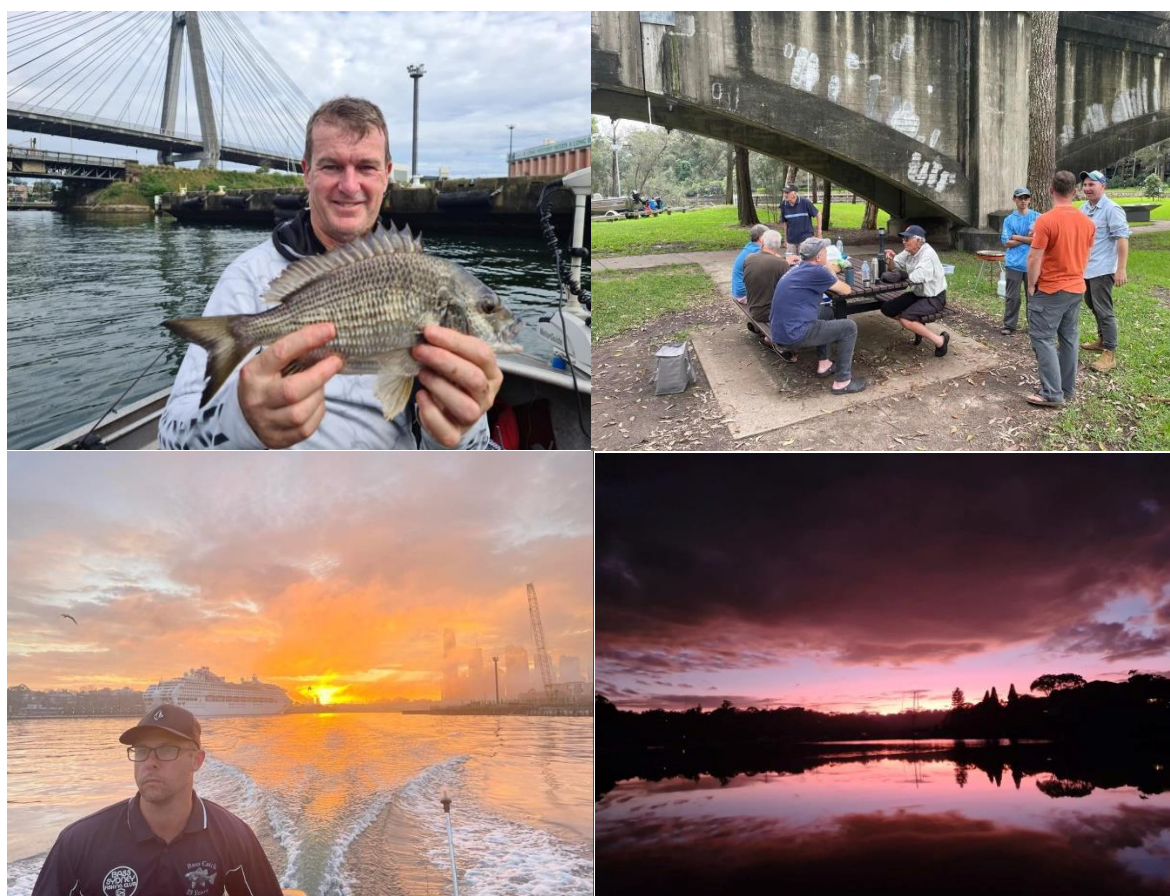
Apart from our poor results it was a good day out, we all enjoyed the BBQ, had a decent roll up with Alan, Tham, me, Doug & Jeremy, Matt & Rico, Chris & Paul and finally Dave. Cheers, Milton

### **From Matt and Rico – Lower Harbour**

I fished with Rico. We got a start right before first light and headed straight downstream. At this time of year, the bream seem to have moved a bit lower in the system and are sitting on vertical structure, pylons and walls. I decided to concentrate efforts at White Bay as I had been having some success there in previous trips.

My first fish was a legal bream, 25cm fork. Then it was Rico's turn except he pulled the hooks on his and had no luck along the big wharf at White Bay with follows and short strikes. We moved to the northern wall of white bay in amongst the tugs, and continued to get a few, a couple of 26 forks and then Rico with a 27 fork. Plastics seemed to be accounting for most of the fish.

We then moved around the corner and picked up a couple more on the big concrete wall leading into Blackwattle Bay, including a 32 fork. After that the rest of the morning was quiet, we looked for some surface schools, but they were few and scattered. A fun morning though with enough bites and fish to keep us entertained and a glorious sunrise.



Matt McHugh

# Bass Sydney event – Yarra Bay Blackfishing

Date: Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022 , Lunch @ 12:30pm BYO meat etc.

Where: Yarra Point, Koorringai Ave, La Perouse

Ample parking off Koorringai Ave, please don't park in the Sailing Club car park.

[Link To Google Maps](#)



This event is a blackfish specific event. If you need gear, please contact some of the committee members. Fishing should be good on the rising tide, starting at around 9am and then the run-out tide. Regular club blackfishers will provide bait and berley

**SUN 3 Jul**

▼	5:13 am 0.51m
▲	11:12 am 1.29m
▼	4:35 pm 0.7m
▲	11:03 pm 1.74m



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