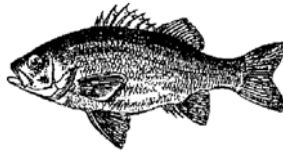


Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*

THE BRONZE BATTLER

GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 2nd FEBRUARY
GUEST SPEAKER
DANIEL WILLIAMS

Dan will be talking about the progress being made by Greening Western Sydney and Bass Sydney.

Northmead Bowling Recreation & Sorting Club
Ltd.

166 Windsor Rd Northmead
7.30pm start till about 10.30pm

PATRON:	Dr Wayne Erskine, PhD
President	Dave Claydon..... 9829-1503 (H)
Vice President	Domenic Squadrito..9799-1796(H)
Past President	Alan Izzard..... 9653- 2309 (H)
Secretary	Domenic Squadrito..9799-1796(H)
Treasurer/Membership	
Secretary	Garnet Noble.....9476-3881(H)
Points score &	
Basscatch Officer	Geoff Shadbolt.....9636-4340(H)
Publicity Officer	Alan Izzard.....9653-2309(H)
Editor:	Milton Lazarus.....9874-7323(H)
Project Officers:	
Parramatta River	Alan Fowkes.....9626-9938(H)
Hacking River	Warren Hackshall....9525 0090(H)

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

2005 will be an important year for BASS SYDNEY. For the club to survive we must increase club membership and increase member participation in events. If this is not achieved there is a danger that the club will fade away and cease to exist. The committee will work on this, but every member must make an effort to come along to meetings and events to show their support.

AGM elections. I am raising this now to give people enough time to think about what positions they could volunteer for in April. There are committee members now who would like to step down, as they have been performing roles for many years. They have devoted enough of their own time and effort into the club and need a break, therefore we need people to volunteer to fill these positions. You don't need any special qualifications just willing to have a go.

When elected my plan was to increase membership or at least maintain the present level, but it has decreased which is a great disappointment to me. I don't have a magic wand to fix this, so I am asking all members to have a think about what can be done to improve the club and methods to encourage participation.

The next event is the Hawkesbury Nepean Basscatch in February. We are trying to organise access and camping in the National park beside the river upstream from Devlin's Lane on the western shore. Full details will be outlined at the February GM.

Finally, please present your ideas to me via email (dave.claydon@pba.com.au) or raise them at our February GM.

Dave Claydon - President.

GENERAL MEETING

Our Christmas dinner was very poorly attended and it is very disappointing to report that only 10 people came along. Nice to see Barry and Trish make a huge effort and drive all the way from Woonona, near Australis Kayaks at Belambi. Actually their effort really puts all the local members that didn't bother to turn up to shame.

Georges River 2004

When our fearless leader, or more commonly called mad bastard, Dave Claydon suggested that we organise another trip on the Georges my first thought was to make sure my shooters licence was up to date. As usual we had a big Bass Sydney turnout, 4, Dave, Garnet, new member Rob Elliott and myself. Dave had suggested that we fish late in the afternoon and then return to his place at Glenfield for a Barbie afterwards.

Garnet and I left Galston about 2.00 on Sat afternoon and arrived at Dave's about 3.00 where we met up with Rob and Dave for the afternoons outing. We soon set off for the Cambridge Ave causeway, our put in spot and made ready. Dave had suggested that we make sure we had black crickethoppers and white plastic grubs, but I was more intent on making sure that I had enough ammo for the Glock, you just never know how many ferals you might encounter.

As this was Rob's first Bass outing as well as his intro to Bass Sydney we all tried to give him some advice, talk about the blind leading the blind, anyhow he seemed to catch on pretty quickly regardless. The water was clear but there seemed a lot of weed about which made casting a little difficult, but Dave had ensured us that it got better downstream. Garnet landed a 200+ fish within the first 10 minutes and then Dave one soon after, looked like this was going to be a great day. Looks, as they say can be deceiving. Pretty soon the wind picked up and made things even more difficult. About this time my shoulder started to play up a little and being fishless and really enjoying paddling into the wind I decided to go no further and let the wind blow me back. In between gusts I continued to cast, more for practice then believing that I would actually catch something, and changed lures often, just in case. As I neared the railway bridge I got a hit on the shoreline, could things be looking up? No hookup but encouraging none the less. Tried a few more lures and then went back to the soft plastic around the pylons, still nothing. More wind, keep drifting, keep casting. Started to snag up on the shore so a new system was called for. I decided to cast and, as I wind left handed, to begin

the retrieve as soon as the lure hit the water. Bingo, got smashed almost instantly by a 294mm, and this fish new how to fight dirty, but I finally managed to coax it from among the snags and weed, not before it pulled me and the kayak under the overhanging branches. A nice fat, dark fish with a red sore on it's back.

Things were looking up. 10 minutes later I got belted again and if I thought the first fish could fight this one had been taking lessons from Kosta Tszu, into the snag, got it out of there then out into the weeds, dragged it out from there then back under the kayak towards the snag again, it must be about 400 thinks I, this is great, but alas only 312mm, but what a beauty. Another fat dark coloured fish. By this time the other 3 were on their way back as it was now 7.30pm, where had the time gone. I drifted back to the causeway and as the others were still not quite there decided to have a couple of casts upstream and had a hit and hookup first go but lost a small fish.

Decided to call it quits as everyone was now back at the causeway. Dave had the best day landing 5 fish @, 200, 205, 201, 200 and a 100mm. Garnet landed 2 @ 208 and 248mm and Rob missed out losing his first Bass at the boat.

We all returned to Daves for the Barbie and had a bit of a BS session and got to know Rob a little better and before we new it, it was 10.00pm, and, as Rob had been working nightshift all week and had only had 2 hours sleep we decided to cut and run. Many thanks to Dave and Sue for their hospitality, it had turned out a good day, and I did not the Glock after all. Alan Izzard.

COLO RIVER 08-01-05.

The first Bass Sydney trip for 2005 was a pretty quiet affair. I had received a phone call from our newest member Rob Elliott on the Thursday preceding the trip asking if he could fit into the boat. As there were only two of us able to make the trip at that time this was no problem, and in this case three did not make a crowd. We left Galston at about 6.30am and made good time to the "Bridge to Nowhere" and launched at about 7.30am.

The tide was on the make and the water discoloured and very warm. This was Rob's 2nd trip chasing Bass and he was looking forward to breaking the ice and actually landing one. Big mouth me guaranteed that he would get something and for some time it looked like I was going to have egg on my face. However after about 2 hours he had a hit and landed his first ever bass, not very big as you can see from the photo but he was extremely happy.

Yes it is a fish not a lure!

It turned out to be a very quiet day on the fishing front, between the three of us we only managed 15 very small Bass, the largest going about 240mm, and surprise surprise, Rob caught that one as well. He finished the day with 6 Bass and was a very happy camper. I was happy as well because after opening my big mouth and promising that he would definitely catch something all turned out well in the end, even though I only managed 4 little scrappers myself.
Alan Izzard.

GREAT SOUTH LAND TO THE DEEP SOUTH *Livin' & Fishin' in Alabama, USA*

Bass Sydney member Tham now living and working in the USA files this very informative report.

Installment 2

It's now winter time in northern Alabama and its pretty cold ! The climate here is similar to Orange/Bathurst, NSW with hotter summers & shorter winters. Overnight temperatures regularly drop below freezing and scraping ice off the car in the morning is common. The shallow bays in the Tennessee R, which is now very low, has often been fringed with ice. Still, it's not like the northern states which are well into winter now.

As I mentioned before, fishing continues here through the winter with different species being pursued. In the cooler months, crappies and sauger are the main targets. I've not caught either species yet. If Largemouth Bass are America's #1 freshwater gamefish, crappies are probably America's favourite eating FW fish, second to catfish. They are more like the size of Aussie bass and are a striking looking fish. There is a fishing mag devoted entirely to them (entitled, you guessed it, "Crappie"). Sauger are the southern cousins of the walleye, a fish that looks like a cross between a whiting and a jewie and delectable eating. Bass are also caught in winter here with deepwater techniques and slow presentations.

Since Installment 1 three months ago, I've managed to be successful in a number of situations while the days were still warm. I've caught LM bass "in the wild" as well as numerous other ponds around the place. As LM bass can breed in any body of water, they can be found in many places - stocked and naturally recruited. I've since caught them on spinnerbaits, SP's, jerkbaits, jigs, plugs and most fun of all - buzzbaits. All this from the bank so far as my possessions (& my kayak) is still in transit. I've found jerkbaits to be very effective and as mentioned, buzzbaits to be a blast. Texas-rigged SP worms, stickbaits & craws are probably the most popular lures used by locals. I've written about using unweighted SP's in the 1st Installment, so I'll write about the following lures in more detail -

Jerkbaits:

Jerkbait is American for what Aussies call suspending (neutral buoyancy) minnows, like the Rapala Husky Jerk. I found them to be handy when the bass are a little negative like during bad weather or cold temperatures. They can be cast out, and after cranking them down to their operating depth (usually not very deep), paused, twitched, cranked, jerked and more pauses until they get hit. I've had most success with a Rapala HJ-8 which gives me enough mass to cast on baitcast tackle. This

lure, when used without a snap is weighted JUST RIGHT to suspend for long periods of time. I've also used a HJ-6, but it's too light to cast on anything besides spinning tackle. Could be a goer on Aussie bream though !

Buzzbaits:

Even though I've heard of them in Oz, I'd never used them before. They are a hoot to use as they can be used in heavy weedbeds, even those that break the surface and lily pad fields. Bays filled with water lilies are prime LM bass country even though they might only be a couple of foot deep. These areas are almost impossible to fish unless you use weedless plastics. Having a single, upturned hook makes them able to be buzzed over weeds & lily pads without snagging up (usually !). Unlike other surface lures, they are NOT subtle and doesn't require patient & subtle twitching - just cast them out and buzz them back at speed. They work on LM bass when its warm and they're active. Hookup rates are only about 50%, but its still fun. I've seen bass launch themselves well over a foot into the air while attempting to hit the buzzbait ! They can be used at any time of the day or night. There is a school of thought here that the lower the buzzbait hook rides in the water, the better the hookup rate. This has brought about buzzbaits which are 18" long ! I haven't tried these ultra-long ones yet (*hmmm, how do you fit'em into your tackle box ?*), but have noticed a better hookup rate when using a larger, 5" model compared to the small ones which are about 3" long. When I was back in Sydney for a month in Oct/Nov, I tried using them for Aussie bass, but conditions were still a bit cool and I was unsuccessful. Other people have used them in Oz with success. Trailer hooks are another option to improve hookups, but I'm sure snagging is increased. I've rigged 1 or 2 buzzers with trailer hooks ready for the warmer months to see how I go.

Skirted jigs:

The FW fishing press in Oz has recently started writing about these lures for native fish. I'd tried them once or twice in Australia. They are one of the US bass pro (more about that later) angler's 4 most used class of lure (along with spinnerbaits, SP worms & shallow-running plugs). Rigged with SP trailers (usually craws or critters), they are "pitched" & "flipped" into heavy cover with great effect. I've only recently caught my first couple of bass on this type of lure. This happened recently in cold water in a farm pond, using sticky shad flavour + YUM chunk trailer. Fish will pick them up when the lure is completely inert. I've got to learn more about setting the hook though.

Being such a huntin' & fishin' country, there are numerous outdoors shows on TV. The FW fishing shows are almost entirely about largemouth bass and there are many shows about the pro bass angler circuits of which there are 2 main ones. It seems to be the direction that the "pro" bass & bream thing seems to be heading in Oz. The money is staggering - I saw a program that showed the last round of a particular series which started off with 200 pro anglers and after a number of elimination rounds concluded with the final 12 or so anglers battling it out on the final weekend. The champion angler won a US\$500,000 cash prize !!

As so many TV shows about bassin' here are about pro anglers, its easy to lose sight of angling for angling's sake. Time is money to these guys and its common to see bass in the 5-6lb category literally flying through the air seconds after hookup ! I know that LM bass don't pull as hard as our Aussie bass, but still..... ! So far, the only gear I've used is the rod & reel I got here which is a bit heavy-handed for the smaller fish that I've been catching. So far, the biggest has been in the sub-kilo category. However, one area where I haven't felt that I'm over-gunned is when I've been buzzbaiting the lily pad fields & weedbeds. You have to drag them out otherwise you're snagged in the cover. I can't wait until I get my own gear here and start using some L or even UL spinning gear on some fish in the appropriate country.

On the personal front, we're still homeless & living out of suitcases, but at least our stuff is on the way, I've got my dreaded Social Security No. and a mortgage approval. Just have to find a house we can afford & we're set ! In my next installment, I'll write about some spring fishing which I'm looking forward to as well as a description of the angling scene here.

Pond bass on skirted jig

Husky Jerk victim

DATES TO REMEMBER

- February 26-27: Basscatch. More details will be available at the general meeting Feb. 2nd.
- March 5th: Cowan creek outing. No plans made as yet, but ask at the general meeting Feb. 2nd or call Alan Izzard (number above).
- March 12th: South Creek tree planting. We need as many members as possible to attend. Please put the morning aside and make an effort to attend. For details call Alan Izzard.
- March 19-20th: Williams river Basscatch. A great weekend. Camping will be on the banks of the Williams river at Clarencetown. Come and meet the Hunter Native fish guys and have some fun. Tinnies or kayals suitable.

BLACKTOWN FISHING TACKLE

As mentioned before, Glen Inglis, one of the original Bass Sydney members and owner of Blacktown Fishing Tackle has very kindly donated a thread-line reel , a very nice tackle box and some lures to Bass Sydney for raffle prizes. We acknowledge Glen's generosity and in response ask that any members or friends that are looking for new tackle to call in and see Glen at shop 3/28 Alpha Rd Blacktown. You can call Glen on 9671-3545.

BRONZE BATTLER BY EMAIL

Members please note that if you are still receiving your Battler by mail and have recently joined the internet, we would prefer to email your Battler as it saves me a lot of time and the club a lot of money for printing and postage. Please note: You will not receive any viruses as adequate precautions are in place to prevent this.

To receive an emailed Bronze Battler please make contact with Alan Izzard on acutepri@bigpond.net.au Thank you.

Please note, the committee decided not to hold a general meeting at our December meeting, so there are no minutes available. Milton Lazarus.