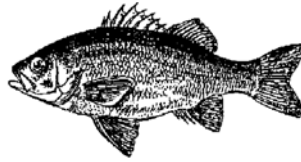


February 2006.



Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA



THE BRONZE BATTLER

NEXT MEETING
WEDNESDAY
1st February
GUEST SPEAKER

Scott Nichols

Scott is a Fisheries officer with NSW DPI and will give a talk on Audley Weir Fish Passage progress

Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club Ltd.
166 Windsor Rd Northmead.
7.30 pm start till 11pm.

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:	Alan Izzard.....9653 2309(H)
Project Officers:	
Parramatta River	Alan Fowkes.....9626-9938(H)
Hacking River	Warren Hackshall....9525 0090(H)

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hi all,
I was scratching my head to think of something to report in this message and time was running out but then on Friday I received some great news to report. Bass Sydney received notification that the application for additional Federal Government funding to help build four fishways on the Parramatta River was approved to the sum of \$45,000.

Bass Sydney has been involved with this project from the initial stages. Over the last two years Alan Fowkes, the clubs Parramatta River Project officer, has been liaising with the other parties involved and keeping us updated on progress. The club has committed to provide manpower to this project, not with the actual construction but with ongoing monitoring etc and at this time we have arranged the first sampling trip and talked about helping with a proposed Carp Catch.

These fishways will allow free passage of native fish to the reaches now blocked by weirs. Allowing access to these reaches will allow the Bass population in the Parramatta River to increase.

A Great news story to start the year off.

Bye
Dave

February 2006.

Fishing for Southern Bass

Day 1

Nearing the end of 2005 Dave Sanegor suggested that a trip to the Tuross River upper reaches might be in order. He had been working with Fisheries officers there earlier in the year and informed us that it was a very good looking spot. The only thing he forgot to mention was that it was strictly 4WD country. A couple of us decided to go along but had to change the plans at the last minute, lack of 4WD transport plus the fact that bushfires were starting up in the south. Garnet Noble, Geoff Shadbolt, Dave and myself had been planning for several weeks but unfortunately Dave developed car problems, severe enough that he pulled out so he could rectify the problem before he had to start work the following week. The change of plans saw us base ourselves at Vincentia, just past Huskisson, and travel on to our fishing destinations from there. We figured that having a unit to stay in with proper beds, shower and toilet more than made up for the extra mileage. Garnet and I left Galston at about 8.30 on Tuesday the 3rd of January with plans to meet up with Geoff on the road to re-arrange the loads, unfortunately I missed the turn off and with all the talking with Garnet we were at Mittagong before I realised what had happened. Thank goodness for mobile phones, how did we ever get by without them? We decided to meet at Berry, have morning tea and then fish Broughton Creek. Garnet advised Geoff to meet us at the BP just past the shops in Berry. Again, unfortunately, the BP is no longer a BP and Geoff carried on for several k's before again resorting to the mobile. Got that sorted and we finally managed to meet up. As we were wandering up to a coffee shop we noticed a parking cop/ranger in the street, he took digital photo's of all the cars parked there, try to argue your way out of that in future. After coffee and the re-arranging of kayaks etc we headed off to the creek, only a little way out of town. Looks great, good ramp to launch from, quite wide and tidal. We headed upstream casting as we went, only one hook-up, a nice bass, which managed to wrap my line around a twig and therefore got away, bugger. The creek looked good but the smell of the water was not that great, maybe they were having problems with the STP upstream. We pulled out and headed further south. I must thank Garnet at this point for arranging our accommodation, it was excellent, and we were soon settled in and making plans for the next day.

Day 2

We had decided to travel back to Nowra today and fish Flat Rock Dam first and, as it was very small, when we finished there to head up to Danjera Dam. We met a local on the water at Flat Rock who gave us a couple of clues as to the whereabouts of the fish there, which consequently saw the three of us thrashing around the weed beds. Geoff was the first to score with a small fish on his first cast and garnet got a hit almost immediately after. I was still stuffing about trying to get onto the water. We went upstream (?) from our launch position and Geoff continued catching fish while yours truly and Garnet watched from the sidelines, not even a touch for me at this stage. I decided that the other side of the bridge looked better and headed off in that direction, but to no avail. Garnet and Geoff soon followed and not long after Geoff must have lucked upon a small school, pulling about 6 from 1 spot. I continued towards the dam and finally started to catch some fish between the weed and the bank. At about 10.30 we decided to leave and move on to Danjera, lunch and then more fishing. At this point the tally was, Geoff 18, Garnet 7, Alan 8 for a total of 33, albeit all very small.

After lunch at Danjera we set out again, Geoff headed straight over to the first bay on the other side of the dam, and Garnet followed him soon after. I thought that 2 in that bay was enough and headed into the next one along. I was not to sight the other 2 for quite some time. I caught 1 smallish fish and had a few knocks and slowly moved back out to the main body of water fully expecting to see the others heading in my direction, but no one in sight. I thought maybe there might be a few fish in that first bay and maybe I was missing out, but, 2 was plenty in there so I decided to move on to the next bay, having a few casts along the way. Into the next bay and I pulled in a couple of more fish and had several knocks as well, finished there and moved out again, still no sign of the other 2 so I carried on to the next bay, where I seemed to be getting the hang of it, pulling out several more fish and some much better size as well. This went on for some time and I could not help but wonder if the other 2 were doing better, they seemed to be fishing the one spot for over an hour. By the time we all managed to get back together it was getting late and we decided to head back. I just had to ask the question, by this time I had landed 30 fish and I was sure that the others were going to blow me away. However the tally at Danjera was: Alan 30, Garnet 18, Geoff 12 for a total of 60 and a grand total for the day of 93. To say that we were pumped would be an understatement, however the tiredness soon settled in and we were so stuffed by dinner time we could not even be bothered with opening a bottle or red, as a matter of fact we were waiting for darkness so we could get to bed and some well deserved sleep.

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Day 3

You would all know the saying " You know your having a bad day when...", well this was to be Geoff's bad day. What I forgot to mention earlier was the weather, overcast and occasional showers right through the day and this day was to be no exception. If any of you know Geoff you will know how fastidious he is about his car, even if it is a company car, and driving all the way to Coolendel on wet, muddy slippery roads was not his idea of fun. However, that is what we did and I must admit, that road is not very good in the wet. We finally arrived there at about 8.00am to find that the office did not open till 8.30am, bummer, however the very nice lady heard us and interrupted her breakfast to let us in, now that's service. We drove down to Canoe Flat and then carried our kayaks to the water. We had decided to go downstream first, come back for lunch and then try our luck upstream. Garnet was to catch a very nice fish on his very first cast and Geoff followed soon after, I just watched. Garnet was on fire, catching fish quite regularly while Geoff and I watched on. About 30 minutes after we set off I finally got my first for the day and soon woke up to where they were hiding. Pretty soon Garnet and I were catching fish but poor Geoff was having major gear problems. It seems that his newer reel was playing up and would not cast properly, with the result that he was watching us catch fish while he seethed. I gave him one of the soft plastics that I was using and on the first cast that he actually got to work was busted off instantly. I told him to use his other rod and when we got back for lunch he could borrow my reel that was similar to his. As it turned out we all experienced some small gear problems and decided to get back, sort out the problems and have lunch. Geoff put on the borrowed reel, I cut off a bloody great tangle and Garnet did whatever he had to do. Geoff thought that he would get the feel of my reel and made several casts from the beach where we were dining (?) and came to the conclusion that the reel was working perfectly. At that point I decided that I had better chuck out a cast to rewind the line and leader back tightly to the spool and I had only retrieved about 3 meters when I hooked a 320mm bass. I thought that this was extremely funny, however Geoff was not so sure and explained to me several times that he had thrown 3 casts to almost exactly the same spot with no result. His day was to get no better. After lunch we headed up-stream, through the recently modified rapid at the campground, evidently the child engineers had been at work to alter the flow so they could ride their li-lo's down, not much good for loaded kayak's though. Garnet carried on catching the odd fish while Geoff and I were not having much luck at all. We moved up through another set of rapids to a very shallow pool where I decided to do the right thing and leave Geoff to the fishiest looking water and paddled to the other bank. I managed 1 more fish while Geoff picked up several. By now it was getting late and we decided to head back, Garnet had just made it to the pool we were in, took a wrong turn on his way up and was severely sidetracked up some blind creek, but still managed to pull fish while we were talking to him, when your hot your hot! As we returned down the first rapid it was decided not to try to run the first section as there was a large tree down which forced a tight turn in fast flowing water, we would portage around that bit. Not wanting to drag my kayak too far I decided to get close before I got out and almost ended in the drink when my foot got caught inside the kayak and with the force of the water the little boat turned round and started heading downstream backwards. After a few nervous moments and much swearing I managed to clear my foot and drag the boat onto the shoal, I was sweating heavily having flashbacks to the Williams River where I managed to come out last year. However all was well and I managed to get past the tree with the other 2 following. Back into the kayak and into the fast flowing water my heart was still pounding, I did not want to tip over again so I decided to get the hell out of there and just concentrated on what I was doing, forget fishing. It was here that the rest of Geoff's day went all wrong. Evidently, as he set off down the rapid he accidentally dropped his lure overboard and Garnet called out to him to wind it in when he got to the bottom. Geoff turned around to have a look, was spun sideways into a log, where the carrier at the back of his kayak got caught on the log and over he went. Midriff high water, flowing quickly, tackle boxes gone, luckily managed to find both rods, not a happy chap you might say, and I missed it all. After all that no more fishing that day, the only good news is that he managed to find 1 tackle box caught up on a rock. And then we had to drive out on that very rough wet and muddy road, more cleaning to do. At the end of the day the count was: Garnet 19, Alan 13, Geoff 9 for a total of 41. Grand total for 2 days 134



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Coolendel early morning

The reengineered rapid

Alan Izzard.

The following article was sent to me some time ago by Simon Kaminskis and I have not had space enough before now to include it.

**Heads and Tales
Recollections of a Fisheries and Wildlife Officer**

by
John O. (Jack) Rhodes

The Changing Scene

[Note: 'white eye' = Macquarie perch, 'blue nose' = Trout cod, 'greasies' = Blackfish]

Lingering in my in over many years has been the question of whether some poaching activities really mattered. However, to retain, if not improve, our wild populations the law of the moment must be enforced. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition that for the wellbeing of all creatures, including man, we must restore and maintain all habitats at the best possible levels and reverse poor environmental practices. It has been almost as though we have believed that apart from our own little project area, nothing would be affected or changed regardless of whatever we did. Now there is abundant evidence that this is not true. These observations are born of that clearest of all vision, 'hindsight', which together with long term observations creates a realisation that there have been serious changes. For fish and wildlife, the changes to original populations in some cases have been so slow and subtle as to be almost unnoticed, in others sudden and dramatic. [Meshing perfectly with comments I have made about a long slow decline with Macquarie perch numbers in Trout-dominated streams.]

There is something of a parallel in what we each experience by looking at our image in a mirror on a day to day basis and then at the photograph of years ago. Each day we appear exactly as we did yesterday, however the photograph shows the accumulated change.

After hearing old men talk of the changes to the fish and wildlife populations and habitats of north-east Victoria, I set out to solicit and record the information. Although only anecdotal it was all first hand, but I was disappointed that what I compiled did not survive in the records of the department, either in Melbourne or Victoria. [So in other words VIC Fisheries threw out most of this priceless information.] So, I am left to rely on only a few scraps of my original notes.

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...However, from 1928 when Alf bought a Chevrolet truck, **they enjoyed magnificent fishing in the Kiewa River on white eye [Macquarie perch] and blue nose [Trout cod]**. In 1939 after bushfires in the Kiewa River catchment, heavy rains brought ash into the river and many fish of all species died. Noticeable in the mortalities was a larger number of spiny crayfish [Murray crays] and Murray cod than has been thought to exist in the river. From that time in the Kiewa river [i.e. a natural event causing shift in dominance to introduced Trout] the small northern Blackfish (greasies) recovered in number, but the only other native fish ever caught there by Alf and Rusty was a small number of Murray cod. **The white eye and blue nose were gone, and the river became noted for the excellence of its brown and rainbow trout.** [Admittedly, the impacts of the hydro-electric scheme on the Kiewa would have had the same effect anyway].

I regret not knowing the name of a man I met at Tom Groggin Station, **a Victorian property on the Indi River near Mt Kosciusko**, who told me that he worked at Tom Groggin before he enlisted in the army and went to the first World War. **He had fished the Indi before he left and it carried a great number of blue nose [Trout cod], white eye [Macquarie perch] and greasies [Blackfish]**. While he was at war, he even dreamt about fishing the Indi. When he came home he returned to his old job at Tom Groggin and announced that before he did any work, he wanted to go fishing. **Very quickly he caught a fish about a foot (30cm) in length, the like of which he had never seen before.** So intrigued was he by this strange spotted but nicely shaped fish that he immediately took it to the homestead thinking it was something quite unique. **At the homestead, he was told it was a brown trout. From that time both the white eye [Macquarie perch] and the blue nose [Trout cod] numbers went into decline, while the numbers of brown and rainbow trout increased.** To my mind, this man did do something remarkable, he had set a very positive timeframe of a change over of fish species in the Indi River.

'Grandpa' Pendergast was over ninety years of age when I called to talk to him in Wodonga. I was greatly encouraged to be told that I would find him down in the shed making something, as I have always been able to talk to people who make things. This man was no exception. I had expected that we would talk, if he was a fisherman, about the west side [i.e. Hume Dam side] of the mountains and reinforce what others had said. How wrong I was, Grandpa Pendergast had **fished out of Omeo in the Big River of headwaters of the Mitta Mitta River**, to the eastern side of the mountains. The expeditions in his youth had been by horse-drawn vehicle in an area where even summer temperatures at night can produce 'brass monkey' conditions. **He said they would get to the**

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river on the first day and sometimes catch enough blue nose [Trout cod] and white eye [Macquarie perch] on the first night to be on the way home in the pre-dawn chill of the next day. He said, as any old white eye or cod fishermen might say, 'You know they bite best at night'.



The following article was sent to me by a non fishing friend, said he came across it somewhere and thought that I might be interested. I recommend it to all. There are some valid points for each and every one of us.

Editor.

Etiquette

Proper etiquette is essential when fishing, it improves the image and reputation of anglers, and makes the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved. We suggest the following points to consider when fishing:

- Upon arriving be sure you have parked in an approved area and make sure your vehicle is off the road. Do not park on anyone's lawn and do not block any roads or driveways.
- Most of the streams and rivers are on private property. If you are fishing on private property, ask permission to fish if you can identify the landowner. Consider offering the landowner a fish or to clean up the area in return for the privilege of fishing on his or her property.
- If the water you are fishing is near houses or a residential area, remain quiet, especially at dawn.
- Walk in or along stream beds as much as possible; avoid private lawns as much as possible. Keep flashlights pointed at the ground.
- Never "relieve yourself" within sight of any person or home. Nothing will make the landowner mad faster.
- Be courteous to those already on the water. Walk behind other anglers and out of the water if possible. If you must stay in the water, walk with a minimum surface disturbance. Do not walk through the area where others are fishing. If the area is deep, you should probably be fishing it, not walking through it.
- When conditions are crowded be aware of your fellow anglers. Watch where you cast to avoid tangles and injury. Remember tangled lines happen even to the best anglers; just be patient and offer to untangle the lines.

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- If you have the good fortune to have a prime fishing spot and are therefore able to hook up multiple fish, consider rotating out of that spot. You may find it far more gratifying to let a frustrated angler have the spot and watch him or her catch a fish than for you to catch your twelfth fish while others are catching none.
- Just because you were "there first" does not mean you can continue to fish as large an area as you please regardless of how many other anglers arrive. Fish an area appropriate for the number of people fishing around you.
- In crowded conditions, play your catch only as much as necessary.
- If you are inexperienced, the best education is from watching those who are successful. Crowded stream conditions seem to form a cooperative camaraderie among anglers that can be enjoyed even when it is "elbow to elbow." Many anglers are more than willing to assist you if you ask.
- Foul language is unnecessary, especially around younger anglers.
- Be tolerant of the inexperienced angler . . . remember we were all beginners once.
- If in a crowd, alert others when you have a "fish on." If another angler is fighting a fish, bring in your line and, if necessary, move out of their way to let them land the fish, just as you want the same consideration if you were fighting the fish.
- Leave with everything you bring. Litter can be a real threat to our fishing privileges. Good anglers will demonstrate their respect for the fishery and the river by picking up even what they did not leave behind.
- Do not keep any more fish than you are realistically going to use. If you do not think you will eat the fish, put it back gently and give someone else the opportunity to enjoy the catch. These fish are not an inexhaustible resource.

The following would seem to be more relevant to Bass Sydney members.

When drifting rivers, you have to think about how your fishing is impacting on the other boats/canoes etc.

It's **not** a race to see who gets to fish all the best holes or snags first. You aren't honor bound to pass any boat that's passed you. Do **not** leave water unfished just so you can remain at the front of a group.

When you pass another boat, **don't** pull back to the bank one cast below them; give them two or three nice drifts (at least 30 to 50 metres) before you take back the bank. The least you can do is leave him a few set-ups in the water he's staked out. That will also take him some more time, and **help keep the leapfrogging to a minimum.**

It's not very good form to fish directly below someone, generally if someone is fishing on or just above water you just **have** to fish, you should wait above. If someone is fishing on good water and someone else is waiting, it's better just to move on.

If fishing in a group in tight water and you catch a fish, consider moving to the **rear** so that others have a chance to fish undisturbed water.

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Do not treat every outing as a competition, fishing is supposed to be **relaxing** and **fun** for **everyone**

A bank angler has priority over a fishing spot they are actively fishing when a boat approaches, and the boat should take extra care to avoid the area the bank angler is fishing. The reason being, the boat has much more water available to them than the bank angler and should simply move on to water that is not covered by a bank angler.

If you come upon a good stretch of water that someone is already fishing, wait your turn. Go to the head of the run and take a break. After the angler has moved down far enough, enter the water. If drifting from a boat, Give waders the right of way. **Don't** cast into the water in front of them as you drift by. Same goes for waders, if a boat is pulled up in a hole, **don't** assume you can fish the same water from the bank.

Some good points there I believe, can't hurt to be a little more enlightened when on the water. Maybe we should adopt the above as part of a "Code of Ethics". Remember that the water is there to share. If anyone has any other points they would like to share (for or against) with us, please send them to me and I will endeavour to print them in the next Battler.

Editor

Coming events.

February: 4th Parramatta River Sampling
18/19th Hawkesbury Nepean Bass catch.
March: Patonga trip, date to be advised
18/19th Williams River Bass catch.
April: 5th Bass Sydney AGM
Georges River trip - date to be advised.