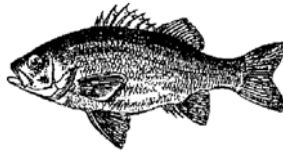


Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*

THE BRONZE BATTLER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY 6th APRIL

Northmead Bowling Recreation
& Sporting Club Ltd.
166 Windsor Rd Northmead
7.30pm start till about 10.30pm

www.basssydney.com

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 REPORT 04-05

Bass Sydney has had an eventful year in 2004-05. Our calendar of events was varied to try to include as many people as possible, whether they fished from boat or canoe. Unfortunately the numbers at each event were low and very few turned up regularly. Alan Izzard won the point score and the runner up was Geoff Shadbolt, the two guys who attended most events during the year. Our first Bass Catch in October was well attended, even by the fish, with one angler recording 110 Bass of varying sizes over the two days. The second Bass Catch in February was less attended with fewer anglers and a lot less fish caught.

The club is still active with Streamwatch with members regularly testing the Lane Cove River and South Creek, off the Hawkesbury Nepean. We have ceased to test at Audley, political reasons, and have returned the kit. Results at both locations have been consistent so far.

We have recently had another tree planting day on South Creek with a number of Bass Sydney members and two Greening Western Sydney staff where another 250 trees and plants were put in bringing the total for the last 2 years to approx 700. We have been advised that there is an approx. 10% mortality rate, which was borne out when we checked the first plantings

survivors. We hope to organise another planting very soon, possibly in the next couple of months.

Our project officers have had a busy time of late and I am extremely happy to report that the construction on the fishway on the Hacking River at Audley will begin in the very near future. Same result on the Parramatta River weirs (4) with plans and funds being approved for three of the fishways, and Bass Sydney has applied for funds from the Heritage Trust to help Parramatta Council and the Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust to finalise plans and funding for the fourth. At the time of writing this report we have not received a reply from the Heritage Trust but remain hopeful.

Attendance at club meetings has remained static with the same faces at just about every meeting. We have had a couple of notable speakers this year, the first being Rebecca Wrights from Penrith Lakes Development Corporation who spoke to the club regarding the environmental aspect of the scheme. The second was the renowned fly fisherman Peter Morse, who attracted more than fifty people to the meeting some of which became members.

The club membership has remained at about the same level as previous years, give or take, and our finances remain buoyant. With the public liability problem seemingly solved I do not see why the finances should alter too much in the coming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for all their hard work this past year, and for agreeing to stay on, albeit some taking up different roles, for the next twelve months. We have devised a new program of events centred closer to the Sydney area and have tried to incorporate as many rivers and streams in localities that are closer to the much varied membership of the club.

It has been an interesting twelve months with many of the initiatives taken up over the last couple of years coming to fruition and we will be looking to take up new programs when and if our current ones are completed.

Dave Claydon.
President.

GENERAL MEETING

Well, I can't write with much authority about this meeting because I wasn't there, however I hear that the elusive Mr Dan Williams didn't make it either. He's a hard man to organise.

Not to worry, we had 13 members and everybody had a chance to sit and chat for a change.

NEPEAN RIVER BASSCATCH

This February participating teams spread themselves out and fished different parts of the river. Normally we try and camp together to add a social side to the weekend, but this February it was different.

Alan Fowkes and Barry Cole fished Bents Basin, Geoff Bennett and the Springwood boys fished Wallacia and Devlins Lane, Geoff Shadbolt and Rob Elliot fished below Penrith Weir whilst Garnet Noble and the Editor fished Devlin's Lane. Each team leader was asked to submit a few paragraphs of their experiences and results. A more detailed catch report will appear in the June Battler.

Garnet and the Ed were on the water at Devlin's by 6.20am. The first thing we noticed was that the river was well up and the rapids just upstream from the lane were well under water. This was an encouraging beginning. The river had received quite a flush by the height of the Alligator weed wrapped around the trunks of shoreline trees.

We fished our way upstream on the eastern side, but the action was very slow. The water flow was such that it was impossible to walk up in the shallows of the bigger rapids. We weren't complaining though, it was just great to see all that water coming down for a change. We reached the large pool above, looking forward to working the willows, however the alligator weed had grown out from each shore to a point that you cannot fish in the shade of the willows. Bugger, we gave up in frustration and retired for lunch. The manicured lawns of the property at the northern end of this long pool always provide a good spot. Having been up since 4 o'clock, it didn't take long to nod off for a while. We did have a chat with one of the gardeners of this magnificent 13 acre property. It appears there is 10 acres of lawns and it takes him 5 days to mow, the other guy takes 5 days to wiper-snip. Imagine that! anyhow we are quite welcome to sit under the trees at any time as their boundary is back from the shore about 25 metres. Nice to know they mow the shore-side lawns and plant shady trees just for Bass Sydney lunch breaks.

At 2 pm we made waves and fished down the western side. The rise in the river allowed us to drift all the way down to Devlins without touching bottom, quite a change really, especially when you are buggered.

We ended up with 9 Bass each. Garnet's largest was 345, whilst mine was 301. Garnet lost a horse of a fish in that bloody alligator weed. Unless you turn them immediately, forget it.

The general prognosis is the salvinia and alligator weeds are making Bass difficult. There are definitely less places to fish as the weeds take over. Our only hope is a huge flood to rip most of this out, but sadly this appears unlikely.

ALAN FOWKES - REPORT

Barry Cole and I fished up at Bents Basin this year.

The plan was perfect. Baz would set up his flash 4WD camper at the State Recreation Area on Friday arvo and I'd meet him there after work armed with my canoe and a few cold beers. What could be simpler?

Lesson 1: on arriving at Bents Basin at 6.45pm I was confronted with the news that the gates close at 6pm. Bugger! What's more, they don't open till 9am. Of course, those who know me would be aware that this was perceived as good news - what better excuse for a sleep in? There was no way that we were going to lug that canoe all the way down from the road and bass don't bite before 10am anyway (that's my story).

Next morning there was a further minor problem. The access we had used previously to get to the river downstream of the Basin was now fenced off as a bush regeneration area. However, the slack fencing wire and obvious track through the grass suggested that this rule was regularly flouted. After the disappointment of the night before, we had no hesitation in joining the mob and stepping through the fence.

For future reference, there aren't many choices here. The narrow channel immediately below the Basin has a trash screen strung across it that would make it difficult to navigate by water. Jumping through the fence was the only opportunity to access the river downstream of the trash rack. Just another example of access getting tougher.

We spent the next 8½ hours fishing downstream and whilst we didn't set the world on fire numbers wise the fishing was really interesting. You would spend long periods without a touch and then come across a productive patch where a few fish would be contacted in quick succession.

Just about every hit was a surface strike and some of these were instant! And I mean instant - on a few occasions there was no opportunity to engage the reel. Baz in particular had some classic hookups of this nature.

Also interesting was the fact that the fish were coming from wildly different locations. Some from classic snaggy haunts but others from wide open, steep, grassy banks in full sunshine. I've had this experience in past years on this river reach. I've even seen a bass launch itself onto the grass to grab a 'hopper and slide back in. There were plenty of dragon flies about so maybe this had them fired up.

The pattern persisted until about 4.30pm when the fish just seemed to switch off altogether. We made our way back to camp by about 7pm stopping to annoy the fish that we'd seen stacked up under the trash rack that morning.

Baz ended up with 8 fish (3 over 300, largest 343, 1 under 200) whilst I got 5 (1 over 300 and the rest over 200). There were of course the usual few dropped fish, rubbed off fish etc.

The next morning we took a stroll in the gorge above the Basin. This is mostly shallow water but with some good patches and is worth a look just for something different.

On this day, we saw plenty of fish and ran all manner of things past their noses to absolutely no avail.

On the basis of these results we pulled the pin early and headed back to camp for lunch, a post mortem and to pack up camp. The post mortem revealed nothing - the barometer seemed steady despite the change that moved in the previous evening so we have absolutely no idea why the fish seemed to shut down. I'll be interested to compare notes with others to see how they fared.

Just one more comment on access at the Basin. Whilst we were walking in the gorge we came across a sign that said permits were required from the ranger to proceed any further upstream. I checked this with the ranger on the way out and they advised that it must be an outdated sign - they have no problems with walking access there so feel free to give it a go.

Thanks Al.

GEOFF BENNETT REPORT - SPRINGWOOD FISHING CLUB

This year we only had (8) members attend and they fished only on the SATURDAY.

A total of 81 BASS were caught ranging in size from 125 mm up to 402 mm. There were also several 320 - 350-mm fish taken during the day.

WAYNE got the 402 fish early on SATURDAY at DEVLINS along with his friend ROBERT who got a 322-mm fish at the same time.

DEVLINS stretch of the NEPAN RIVER suddenly got better due to some heavier than usual rain fall plus a little help from someone cutting free the weed boom letting the build up of weed wash down river.

DARYL BELL and myself fished on private property at WALLACIA, a set up very similar to that at ADRIAN DEVLIN'S FARM. Unfortunately we found out after several hours of fishing that the PENRITH CITY COUNCIL had sprayed the section of river we had chosen to fish with a weed-killing chemical. The Council also installed a weed-retaining boom across the river just out of sight from the Wallacia Road Bridge.

Following the poor fishing it was decided not to camp overnight and only fish the SATURDAY.

REGARDS

GEOFF BENNETT.

Thanks Geoff.

GEOFF SHADBOLT - REPORT

Hopefully we will hear about Geoff and Rob Elliot's exploits in the June Battler.

COWAN CREEK / COCKLE CREEK

5-3-05

Another big turnout for Bass Sydney this trip. Geoff and I managed to make it to Apple Tree Bay at about 6.30 on Sat morn, slightly overcast but looking good. We had decided that seeing there were only the 2 of us we could call an extraordinary committee meeting and move the venue from Cowan Creek to Cockle Creek, which is exactly what we did. The paddle back to the bridge at Bobbin Head was pleasant enough,

not many large craft moving about at that time to make things too rough. We started to fish not long after passing under the bridge at Bobbin Head. I tied on some K Mart special I had had in my lure box since the year dot, only because I looked a bit like a poddy mullet, a little fat one, and pulled a very nice silvery bream not long after. About a half an hour later I caught another, this one more the normal colouring, a lot darker along the back, both would have been keepers, but they both continue to swim today. Geoff at this point was fishless and trying to find a lure that worked. I managed a very small tailor, not much bigger than the lure, soon after.

We finally got to the rock bar that ends the tidal influence without any further fish, and decided to park the kayaks and venture upstream on foot. About 30 seconds after telling Geoff to be careful because the rocks were very slippery I fell arse over. No great damage done we moved off, very very carefully now. After about 20mins of slipping, hopping and almost crawling we came to a largish pool where we could see a Bass just hanging about. Geoff made a cast with a cricket and as the lure got close it was fascinating to watch the fish fire up, turn on its side and move up behind the lure. But all to no avail, it just hung there about 1 cm behind and would not take it. After a couple of more casts I decided that there was no more action to be seen there so I left Geoff to it and moved a little further up the pool. I cast my little cricket to what I thought were very fishy looking spots but got no action. Not far from where I was standing there was a small bush on the bank that was slightly overhanging the water, so I made a cast out into the pool that would bring the lure near to the bush on the retrieve, and as it passed I was rewarded with a sudden strike and pulled a nice Bass of about 250-300mm (forgot the measuring tape). Geoff moved up to the head of the pool and made a few cast from there and pulled an even bigger fish from the middle of the creek. Two nice Bass from 1-pool things were looking good, wrong again. That was the end of the action that morning. We mover further upstream but the going was very tough, and there was little fishable water, just lots and lots of bloody slippery rocks. Stopped for a snack and decided to head home. Just as we got back to the kayaks Geoff took a spill, luckily no damage done this time either. Fished all the way back to the boat ramp, tried around the moored boats and along the far shore but the tide was just too low. Had a few hits from what I think were the small tailor and toads that seem to abound in the area. All in all a pleasant mornings fishing.

You should have been there.

Alan Izzard.

Thanks Al,

SOUTH CREEK

What happened to all those members that were so enthusiastic and only to keen to volunteer their time to help plant a few native shrubs with the guys from Greening Western Sydney? Alan gave you plenty of notice I thought, sadly only 7 Bass Sydney members made the effort. Dave Claydon, Alan Izzard, Alan Fowkes, Geoff Shadbolt, Garnet Noble and the Ed. The committee you might say. Nice to see member Shan Fell from Springwood squeeze in a few hours in between preparing his ute for the Camden

Show and going into town to party, thanks Shane. New member Rob Elliot from Epping was coming, but unfortunately his body clock was out of sync.

We planted 240 shrubs in about 2 hours. This time we knew what to do and got a sort of production line going. Ben from GWS bar-b-qed some very nice gourmet sausages for lunch so we were all well fortified. I think we packed up and were on the road home about 12.30pm. We are going to organise another morning in a couple of month's time, so be prepared to be hassled into making an effort.

Whilst on the subject of tube planting, I think a few hints will be helpful to increase the survival rate.

- (1) Drop the tube in the hole to check the depth. It is important not to plant the seedling any deeper than it is in the tube. In other words the earth at the tube top should be level with the ground after the shrub is planted and surrounding soil is pressed down.
- (2) If the hole is too deep fill it in to suit the tube.
- (3) Remove the tube by squeezing it, or even partially crushing it by hand, then gently withdraw the plant.
- (4) If the roots are really compacted in the tube free them up with the thumb and fore finger.
- (5) Place the plant in the hole and fill in around the roots, finally pressing the earth around the plant with the finger tips to compact the soil.
- (6) Remember, if you throw it in the hole and plant it too deeply it will probably die from collar rot. It is also important to compress the soil tightly around the roots to eliminate as much air as possible.

WILLIAMS RIVER BASSCATCH

On the Thursday prior to this annual event Dungog had the highest rainfall in NSW of 51mm and another 50 or so on Thursday night, consequently the Williams river rose to flood levels and the event had to be cancelled. Six of us were packed ready to roll, so it turned out to be a quiet dry weekend for us at home.

We are hoping it will be rescheduled before winter so keep your eyes and ears open.

AS WE AGE OUR PRIORITIES CHANGE

The other day I came home and was greeted by my loved one, dressed only in very sexy underwear and holding a couple of short velvet ropes.

"Tie me up", she purred "and you can do anything you want"

So I tied her up and went fishing.

TRACKING FISH IN THE HUNTER

The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Griffith University will conduct a project to track the movement of fish around structural woody habitat (snags) in a section of the Hunter river near Muswellbrook with \$5000 in funds from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust. Australian Bass and common Carp will be captured and then tagged with radio tracking transmitters. These fish will be monitored to determine movement patterns and distribution in relation to the habitat type. Physical features such as depth, velocity, substrate, aquatic vegetation and cover will be

recorded and the amount of time each tagged fish spends near each physical feature will be calculated. This will improve knowledge of how fish use these habitat components and why they are important. This article appeared in Newscast, the NSW DPI newsletter. February 2005. For more information contact www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

DATES TO REMEMBER

- (1) April 16-17 Bass Sydney weekend at Grady's Riverside Retreat on the Shoalhaven river. A good camping area right on the river at the tidal limit, has a boat ramp and excellent amenities. Kayaks paddle upstream, tinnies downstream. Definitely worth the effort of driving down.
- (2) The rescheduled Williams river Basscatch. Hopefully it will not coincide with our Grady's weekend.
- (3) April 20-30 NFA AGM at Burrinjuck dam. The meeting is on Saturday, if time permits it is possible to fit in a fish afterwards other than that it's Sunday morning fish prior to the trip home.

At the time of finalising this Battler the 2005 – 2006 club calendar was almost complete, however I have been unable to include it with this issue. It should be available at the AGM for financial members. That is, members that have paid their 2005 – 2006 subscription.

Well this is really the end of our fishing season. There are no events scheduled for May, so its time to clean up the Bass tackle and hang our rods till next September. Hope you all bagged a few fish and had some fun.

BLACKTOWN FISHING TACKLE

Glen Inglis, one of the original Bass Sydney members and owner of Blacktown Fishing Tackle has a good range of fishing gear available at his shop, so if any members or friends are looking for new tackle, please call in and see Glen at shop 3/28 Alpha Rd Blacktown. You can call Glen on 9671-3545. Thanks.

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 the Editor 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.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note that Club membership fees are due at the AGM on April 6th. If you cannot make it (and there's no excuse), please pop a cheque in the mail made payable to Bass Sydney Fishing Club Inc. for you renewal. Our address is P.O.BOX 136 NORTHMEAD NSW 2152
The fee structure is the same as last year:

Full members.....\$30.00
Family members.....\$30.00
Senior members.....\$10.00

Thanks for your support.

MY FINAL B.B.

Well I know I said this last year, but this is definitely my last Bronze Battler. After 6 years it's time to hang up the computer. Taking on the Editors job has taught me basic computing and typing skills, although I'm glad Microsoft Word has spell check. It has been a rewarding experience and it appears that I have not really upset any one. I hope all of you that have been reading this publication over the last 6 years have found it interesting, informative and have derived some pleasure from it. Maybe even the odd chuckle or two.

I would like to thank all those people who kindly contributed articles, particularly Alan Izzard who was always prepared to scribe a few lines at the drop of a hat on various outings that I didn't attend.

Cheers to all.

Milton Lazarus.