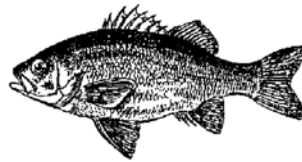




Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA



# THE BRONZE BATTLER

**NEXT MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY**

**5<sup>th</sup> APRIL**

**AGM**

**GUEST SPEAKER**

**Dave Sanegor will give a talk on  
Fly fishing for Bass**

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

**PATRON:** Dr Wayne Erskine, PhD

<b>President</b>	Dave Claydon..... 9829-1503 (H)
<b>Vice President</b>	Domenic Squadrito..9799-1796(H)
<b>Past President</b>	Alan Izzard..... 9653- 2309 (H)
<b>Secretary</b>	Domenic Squadrito..9799-1796(H)
<b>Treasurer/Membership</b>	
<b>Secretary</b>	Garnet Noble.....9476-3881(H)
<b>Points score &amp;</b>	
<b>Basscatch Officer</b>	Geoff Shadbolt.....9636-4340(H)
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Alan Izzard.....9653-2309(H)
<b>Editor:</b>	Alan Izzard.....9653 2309(H)

<b>Project Officers:</b>	
<b>Parramatta River</b>	Alan Fowkes.....9626-9938(H)
<b>Hacking River</b>	Warren Hackshall....9525 0090(H)

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Well another year has passed and I am approaching my final days as your President. It has been a good two years and I am very pleased with the progress of the projects that Bass Sydney has taken on. There have been some extremely good results on the fishways with all four weirs on the Parramatta river hopefully starting construction before the end of the calendar year. The other weir project, Audley, will also have construction started this year on the fishway, and considering the problems faced with the amount of government agencies involved this also is a huge success. Many thanks go to the two BS project officers, Alan Fowkes (Parramatta) and Warren Hackshall (Audley). Without their hard work these projects would still be a long way off.

Another good news story has been the alliance with Greening Western Sydney and the tree plantings that we have managed along South Creek, so far approx. 1000 + plants have been put into the ground, and there will be more plantings soon. We have been in contact with GWS and are planning another planting before winter.

Our Streamwatch crews are still at it with regular testing of the Lane Cove and Georges Rivers as well as South Creek. The teams also participated in a Streamwatch revue where all testers in the Sydney region were supplied with a water sample to test and to forward their results. Needless to say we passed with flying colours, all our tests were within the required range.

Our Bass Catch events are still forging ahead and the one held in October was very different this year and was attended by members of HNBA, and Sydney Fly Rodders, which bolstered the numbers. We were able to secure camping on private property at Wilberforce for this event and hopefully will be able to do so again next October.

Our membership has remained reasonably stable this past year and the good news there is that we now have a few younger members in the club, something that has been missing for several years.

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All in all it's been a very good year and I would like to thank all the committeemen for their hard work this past year, no club can survive without a dedicated bunch to turn up and organise things. I would also like to wish your incoming President good luck for his term in office.

Dave Claydon.

## Williams River March 06

A much smaller turn up this time with only 5 Bass Sydney members showing their faces. Whether it was due to the weather, the height of the river or apathy I do not know but the 5 that went had a pretty good time, well 4 anyway. We sorted out who was going to fish where on Friday night and Dave C and Chris rushing to put their hands up for Fosterton to Dungog, Geoff, Garnet and myself from Dungog to Alison, Les and Ari (of HNF) Alison to Glen William and 3 hardy souls from Newcastle volunteering to go from Glen William to the camp at Clarence Town. The river was a little high, which made the runs fairly quick but in no way dangerous. The 3 Newcastle guys caught about 20 Bass between them, evidently when they reached the tail of the weir pool they stopped fishing and paddled back. Les and Ari managed 73 I think, not bad for 2 fishermen. Garnet, Geoff and myself, last to start and finish I might add, managed 84 with the bulk coming after lunch approx 50-60 fish. To say the day was without incident would not be true. Geoff was a little paranoid with the rapids after his swim on the Shoalhaven and I must admit I approached them with a fair bit more caution, this was the same reach I took a swim in last November. But the problem of the day was Garnet's, or should I say problems. The mutterings from his kayak were constant most of the morning, he could not land a fish, then there was gear failure, the removal of several meters of line and when he re-tied he had not noticed that the leader was wrapped around the rod, re-cut it and re-tie it, we all know what it's like don't we? Well not long after he caught a fish and as he was trying to measure it he did not notice a wire strung across the river which was just below the surface and to his dismay the wire caught the slack line and pulled the rod and reel overboard. Luckily the water was fairly shallow and he had tied the line onto his reel properly and with a little help from Geoff was able to retrieve the rod and then had to rewind all the slack back on, meanwhile the lure which was now loose had been washed a little further downstream and was caught on a snag, again Geoff came to the rescue, see pic.



It looks something out of Fly Life doesn't it? After that things got better and we all caught a few fish. We got back to camp, pumped and bloody tired after a great day's fishing and expected to hear that everyone had done as well. Following is the count of fish per BS member:

Alan- 32, Geoff-27, Garnet-25, Chris-1 Dave-0. That's right Dave and Chris only managed 1 between them. To say we were gob smacked would be an understatement and we, unwittingly, kept repeating " **Only 1?**" to which Dave soon fired up and told us to stop rubbing it in. We would never think to make light of another's misfortune, after all we are gentlemen, and were a little miffed at Dave's attitude. However, **only 1**, all day, same river, it begs the question. Of course the question was asked repeatedly at the get together later that evening and it was agreed by the HNF guys that Dave should be awarded the large carp that was caught that day, Dave was not that impressed with that show of generosity either, you cannot please some people. Harold placed the unwanted prize in the front of Dave's tent while he was having a shower and the language could be heard all over the campground on his return. Geoff, Garnet and I decided not to fish on Sunday, we were a little tired from pulling in and measuring fish but Chris and his mentor decided that they just had to give it another go around Clarence Town. Again the novice was to show the master (?) up, Chris 6 and Dave 4, but at least he was on the board. We talked Dave into doing his Solo man impersonation and Chris did the same, the following pics. show their respective entries.

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To make Dave's weekend complete he had help unpacking when he arrived home and now has a 2 piece rod where before it was only 1, some days it just pays to stay in bed.

*Alan Izzard*

### **Rubber Dub Dub three men ???**

Three reports from H/Nepean basscatch. Draw your own conclusions.

#### **From Dave C:**

Feeling a bit better now, was totally tired from the weekend. A lot of paddling and not the best sleep on Saturday night. We were woken up by a tree falling down around midnight so then I was paranoid that one would fall on me. Before it fell there was branches snapping for around 10 mins sounded like something was coming towards us then it fell, I could see it falling in the Moonlight, it was very romantic.

We attempted an after dark fish, got on the water and got one fish then the storm came. Gave up and hit the sack by 9pm.

Dave was attacked by mossies all night, his mossie net had mesh as big as chicken wire, Chris slept in his swag and got wet and bitten by these mongrel Ants with nippers like tin snips. Me being a big girl bought my tent, see photos on what and how I carried it.

Also found a louder snorer than me. Chris kept Dave awake and we reckon his snoring caused the tree to fall over, the frequency of his snoring was the same of the tree trunk we reckon.

Woke up around 5.30am to fish and didn't get home to 5pm Sunday. The fishing was very slow only 12 fish caught between us, the river down from Douglas Park is in a bad state around 4kms of river covered with a floating Algae that looks like slime. The vegetation under this was dead. But the centre sections are very long deep pools that should hold some fish but we couldn't find them.

We are all keen to go back early next season before the weeds take hold. Overall it was a great weekend the scenery is great and I had a great time with Chris and Dave.



#### **From Chris:**

We headed downstream from Douglas park amongst blue sky and mild conditions everything appeared to be in our favour as we made our way down the Nepean. We by passed several pools that were unfishable due to excessive weed growth until we came into some good-looking water. Typical of the Nepean was some good looking long deep pools with fallen trees and plenty of likely looking bass areas yet we didn't have the emphatic start we were looking for. We continued to work the water with different techniques and lures without

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any success until Dave Clayton managed to nail a good fish. My first fish didn't come until late in the day by this stage the temperature had reached into the mid 30s. I cast deep snag and I hooked up right in the heart of the tree as I could feel my leader rubbing as the fish burrowed deeper into the fork of the tree I refused to budge and put a severe amount of pain on the fish and pretty soon he popped me. Despite my set back within a few minutes I hooked up again this time I blasted him out of the danger zone and after a long and arduous battle I released the pugnacious 320mm bass. The lure was chartreuse ausspin spinner bait. Again several hours elapsed without any luck as we continued our way down stream I hooked up unexpectedly, which woke me up it was a nice 280mm fish who again fell for the same spinner bait. After making camp and having dinner we headed off to try and generate some classic night time surface action after making our way to the middle of the river after a few casts I nailed a fish that measured 180mm on a black Kokoda gold "bat" within seconds of releasing the fish the heavens opened up and we could do nothing to avoid saturation so we made our way back to our camp and weathered the storm.

We awoke amongst an absolutely gorgeous morning both Daves headed off before sunrise and I opted to sleep in. After having breakfast we broke camp and continued our journey coming across some of the best looking water so far long real deep pools that were scattered with over hanging trees fallen timber and rock walls. Again despite the positive conditions the fishing was slow and I was lucky enough to take a 350mm fish on a lipless crank bait and soon after I caught a 320mm on the same lure. This was to be my last as I went another 6km without turning a real. None the less I managed 5 for the weekend in some tough conditions and a good time had by all.

**From Dave S:**

I fished with Chris and Dave.

Very ordinary

we fished from Douglas to Menangle.

Stinking algae blooms in shallows on surface  
water very clear underneath.

Deep pools were clean. Visibility to 2m depth (very clear for the Nepean).

No carp were seen

The two fish caught by Dave near the crap around Douglas were heavily ulcerated fish in the 350 class. See Dave for pics.

Bass in beaut pools towards Menangle were clean and healthy.

No surface action

I managed 8 fish over the weekend. 2 on sat. 6 on Sunday. Best fish went 320.

Dave and Chris managed fish to 350.

Chartreuse was the gun colour

**CHRIS IS NOW OFFICIALLY KNOWN AS 'CHAINSAW CHRIS', HE DID NOT STOP SNORING ALL NIGHT. NEXT TIME ILL CAMP A GOOD 100YDS FROM THIS BLOKE!**

Point Score Officer report:

February Basscatch details,

There were 9 anglers only, 129 fish caught, most fish caught was 52 by Gary

Blount (who else) also highest point score with 160 pts.

second highest number of fish caught was 31 by Wayne Bennett and runner up on points with 114 pts.

The biggest fish caught was 350mm by me that was Reach 4 and the next biggest was 345mm by Gary Blount also Reach 4.

There were only 2 anglers that didn't fish Reach 4, they fish Reach 3A.

From most reports there is a lot of weed in the river, in some places it was almost thick enough to walk on!

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BASS SYDNEY POINT SCORES:

Dave Claydon = 36 Garnet Noble = 30 Dave Sanegor = 30  
Chris Ghosn = 30 Jim Taylor = 20 Geoff Shadbolt = 20

Geoff Shadbolt.

## GREAT SOUTH LAND TO THE DEEP SOUTH

*Living & Fishing in Alabama, USA*

### Installment 4

I came to the sobering realization that I've been here for over a year now and have gone through an entire fishing year. I'm sure my feeling of places unexplored, rivers unfished and species still beckoning is common to many of us fishos. As they say, "So many rivers, so little time"!

As I write this latest installment in January '06 and not having fished much in the last 2 or so months due to it being winter, I'd like to focus on what it FEELS like to be an Aussie angler here in the USA. I'm going to write about my feelings and observations on what I've seen so far.

#### FW Fishing:

It may come to a surprise to some, but freshwater fishing is by far the bigger deal than saltwater fishing in the US. From east to west and from north to south, the US has a huge wealth of sweetwater fishing. While largemouth bass is the country's No. 1 FW sportfish, it is by no means the only shining light. There are literally dozens of species of FW fish of angling interest here.

One may have an image of American bass boats buzzing around and yes, they are there in much greater numbers than we see in Oz. However, that is only one side of it. The other side of the coin sees countless anglers fishing off the bank; oftentimes using the most rudimentary of gear. I'm talking of bamboo/cane poles with a length of line, bobby cork and hook. Now, it's been a long time since I've seen Aussie anglers fishing such gear (what would be called a 'Ned Kelly rig' in the old days). The numbers of small panfish (mainly bluegill), bass, crappies & catfish caught on these rigs are huge. I've seen 20L buckets overflowing with bluegill which are supposed to be quite nice to eat, but sorry, I just can't get too excited about a fish 6" long! Needless to say, economics is the main reason someone is fishing from a nice bass boat with a dozen rods compared to someone fishing off the bank with his/her pole.

It's not all small fish either. Over here, there's no shortage of BIG freshwater fish for anglers to target. In the big fish stakes, there are about 3 species of catfish which grow to 100lb or more; there are stocked striped bass which grow to 50-60lbs; Florida-strain largemouths of 10 - 20lb; there are various species of American sturgeon (I didn't know there are sturgeon in the US either!) some of which grow to well over 200lb; and then you have the big salmon species of the pacific northwest. The big fish most accessible to anglers throughout this country is catfish. There are big cat specialists that target nothing else and a night would not be considered successful unless the cats caught are over 40lb, preferably 50-60lb. The record blue catfish is now >120lbs which was caught in Texas recently. On a personal note, a few months ago, I caught two 5lb channel catfish in the same arvo, both caught on SP's while bass fishing. The 1<sup>st</sup> one gave me a very torrid time as I hooked it on UL spinning tackle & 6lb line out of the kayak.

#### Soft Plastix:

The US is the land of the soft plastic lure. I'd confidently say that the majority of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, inshore saltwater sportfish, crappies and many other fish are caught on a SP lure of some type. Even though I've stocked & used SP lures in my tackle packs for at least the last 10yrs; I've caught more fish on SP's in the last year than the previous 10 yrs put together. I've learnt about fishing SP's and much of what I've learnt is

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applicable at home in Oz. However, the main difference is the size of these lures; being much larger than types used for Aussie bream & bass. Bass Sydney's own SP-freak, David Sanegor & I have been corresponding on the use of "finesse worms", "wacky rigs", weedless presentations & other SP-speak for Aussie fish. The use of 1 - 1.5" tubes sold for crappies here might also be worth trying on Aussie Bass. Another very common practice here is the use of floats/bobby corks in conjunction with small SP jigs &/or tubes. I see this as being very applicable to AB's in Oz. Not new really, Craig McGill has espoused the use of SP's under Glitter Floats for Oz fish for about 10yrs.

### **Crappie:**

This is America's favourite "panfish", growing up to ~5lb max. & averaging 1-1.5lb. Supposed to be nice to eat, but I've only caught one small one so far (on a good ol' black Crickhopper) while spinning a small creek. The crappie specialists take it very seriously with numerous rods, live bait, lures, all with the aim of filling their live well with crappies in winter & spring. Many Aussie FW anglers know that some of the early spinnerbaits available in Oz were known as "Crappie Spins" as the smaller sized lures used for crappie was the best size bracket for Aussie Bass. What you may not know is that "crappie" is not pronounced "crappy", but "krah-pee".

### **Club & tournament fishing:**

Like it or not, this is a huge part of angling life here. Almost every club is dedicated to tournament fishing. It can be at any level - intra-club competition, inter-club competition, regional level where the B.A.S.S. Federated clubs compete, right through to the pro-angler tournaments. It's huge here; the pros have followings just like sports stars and the weigh-in is an eye-opener with hundreds or even thousands of people in the audience. In the last 2 or 3 years, the pro-angler concept has been taken up in Australia with the pro bass & bream circuits. However, it's not just bass fishing which has tournaments & a pro circuit. There is a pro walleye trail, crappie tournaments, pro redfish circuit & tarpon tournaments in the inshore saltwater. There is media & TV coverage of some of these tournaments. As an angler, I find the majority of these shows to be of very limited benefit. It's more about personality than being educational.

### **Kayak fishing:**

Depending on where you are, the popularity of kayak fishing varies. The big lakes where most bass fishing happens is not conducive to kayak fishing. The level of electronics needed to be very successful is generally out of reach to the average yak fisho. I tend to not see many kayaks & canoes on the big lakes. However, in other parts of the country, especially where inshore saltwater fishing is popular, there appears to be large, well-organized kayak fishing groups & clubs. Redfish, snook, flounder, speckled trout are regularly caught from yaks in shallow water in the Gulf of Mexico.

Having said all that, the popularity of yak fishing is increasing all the time in the USA. For all the usual reasons - flexibility, freedom, simplicity, more environmental, etc. In the last couple of months, I've managed to find an on-line community of kayak/canoe and generally small water anglers is emerging and getting organized. Over the next few months, when the fishing season re-commences, I'm expecting to have more to do with these fellow kayak fishos. Through this on-line forum, I've already located up to 2 or 3 yak fishos in my town alone who are keen to fish together more often. There are obvious & good reasons to do so - safety, knowledge sharing, second vehicle and a biggie for me, for company.

### **Mexico:**

I've written to some of you in the club about my Mexico sojourn recently, but to those I didn't write to, I was in Mexico with my wife & daughter (who was visiting the US) on holidays. We were in Puerto Vallarta which is on the Pacific coast of Mexico. Nice place, with beautiful weather this time of year, friendly people, touristy but not too much. Sideline to the holiday was me being talked in to taking out a *panga* which is an open long boat, which is launched through the surf. I went (alone) for a 3hr fishing trip on a panga which included 3 crew. We first went into a sheltered boat harbour where one of the deckies threw a cast net around for about 15mins until we had a large live well full of these 3 - 5" shad-like sardine-sized fish. I thought we had way too much bait for one angler until we started fishing.

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Fishing commenced when we motored out to a series of FAD's. They were not far offshore, 2-4 miles max. and only consisted of bottles & floats attached to the seabed somehow and coconut branches lashed to the floats. The crew then started throwing the live sardines into the water around the FAD. Within a minute or so, the sardines were being demolished by mahi-mahi (called *dorado* down there). The gear we had was very heavy - short sticks, some with roller runners and Penn trolling reels loaded with 50 - 100lb lines. You can't cast this type of gear and fishing consisted of baiting up a livie to a hook (4/0 or 5/0) connected directly to the main line. Line was let out of the reel and then the connected bait is thrown overboard. Well, it didn't take long - my 1<sup>st</sup> bait was put out, the rod handed to me and within a minute, the line pulled straight, I struck hard and it was on! The 1<sup>st</sup> fish of the day turned out to be the biggest - an est'd 12-14kg bull mahi-mahi. I was stoked and impressed with this one as, apart from the initial jump out of the water early on, the rest of the 15 min fight was spent slugging it out deep; even on such heavy gear. After going to 3 or 4 FAD's, I ended up with 6 mahi-mahi of various sizes. Most of the others got much more aerial than the 1<sup>st</sup> one, including one good sized one that headed straight into a FAD, crashed into it and then LEAPT OVER the FAD, all the time dragging line! I even landed it.

After being on the water for over 3hrs (including travel time to & from the bait collecting area) we headed back in. I was perfectly happy at this stage, but as we got nearly to our home beach, we stopped at a headland jutting out one end of the beach and got real close to the big swells crashing on shore. The crew starting berleying again and *Kapitan Nacho* told me we were going for roosterfish here. It didn't take long before the action started again. This time, it was much more difficult as we were surrounded by screaming, dive-bombing birds - big frigate birds, terns & pelicans. We lost every 2<sup>nd</sup> bait to the birds while we're frantically getting baits out & empty hooks back in. We had at least 2 bird hookups where the bird is hooked when it attacked a hooked baitfish. What we caught were jack crevalles (a toothy trevally native to the Pacific & Mexican Gulf coast) which were from 3-5lbs and they pulled like murder too. No match for the heavy gear, but you can't exactly flick them on board either. What I really wanted at that stage was to have a med-heavy casting rod with my Penn SS850 & 20lb line. Casting a popper or Magnum Rapalas would have been effective, awesomely exciting and we probably would have caught more fish as the attrition rate for the livies were very high. I managed to see a small pod of big roosterfish zip through our baits & berley, but we didn't actually land one. Roosterfish are like a big, long queenfish with several very long dorsal spines, thus their name.

Ended the day with 6 mahi-mahi & 6 jacks, all of which I gave away. All up, it cost me US\$125 (inc. tip), but I was very happy with 2 new species and a newly-discovered respect for mahi-mahi! If any of you have seaworthy boats, give the Sydney FAD's a go for Aussie dolphin fish!

*Pescador fanatico y dorado grandé!*



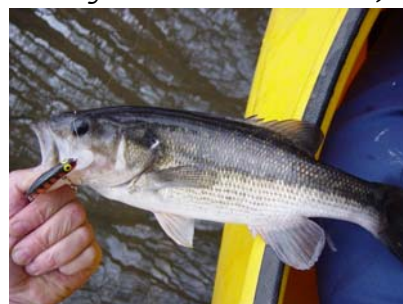
*Kapitan Nacho & jack crevalles*

*Cute raccoon I came across kayaking*



*Beaver lodge*

*Aussie Attack, Yankee victim (14 species on this great Aussie lure for me now)*



*2 x 5lb catfish caught on SP's*

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*Buzzbaitin' the lily pads in summer*



*This is NOT my smallest fish on a lure!*



*LM bass on wacky worm*



*Until next time, good luck & tight lines !*



*HS Tham*

REMEMBER APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup> BASS SYDNEY AGM FOLLOWED BY OUR  
APRIL GENERAL MEETING.  
Bring along a guest but just make sure that you are there.