



Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA



THE BRONZE BATTLER

NEXT MEETING
WEDNESDAY
1st June
GUEST SPEAKER
Simon Annabel

"The Georges River Keeper"

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

Hello members,

Welcome everyone to another Bass Sydney Calendar year, last April, new committee members were elected and I would like thank everyone who accepted positions. The committee is keen to make it another successful year, all we need is everyone to make an effort to come along to meetings and planned outings.

There is a lot to look forward to this year, construction starting on the Parramatta and Hacking fishways, regulation changes to help protect Bass and the continual work by Bass Sydney to help improve the Bass habitat, we will keep you updated on progress. It encourages me to have members who are so willing to dedicate time and effort and to follow through to achieve outcomes that will enhance the Bass habitat.

Georges River. Over the past weeks the Campbelltown Community paper has printed articles raising the alarm to the poor condition of the river caused by pollution, drought and introduced weeds etc. This should be of great concern for all members as we have had a long association with the Georges, one being the large amount of work put in by members into the building of the Liverpool Fishway. Bass catch results over the years have recorded small Bass being caught, indicating recruitment, but it appears the state of the river habitat is decreasing and there is a real concern it may become open an sewer that supports no life.

We need to become involved in turning the situation around, the first step is at the next meeting. I have asked Simon Annabel who organizes restoration groups along to the Georges to be the guest speaker, Simon will be able to offer ideas in ways we can make a difference.

Looking forward to seeing you next month at the meeting and Picnic day.

Dave Claydon.

STOP PRESS

We have recently been informed that we were not successful in our application for funds for the fourth weir on Parramatta River. The reason given is "The application was not recommended for funding as there was no clear evidence of support from NSW Fisheries and it was considered the responsibility of another agency." The work will still go ahead but we are not sure how the funding failure will affect the timing. More news later.

Williams River Bass Catch April 2005

Due to constant rain and the fact that the river rose about 4 to 5 meters on the scheduled bass catch weekend the Hunter Native Fish Club decided to postpone the event to Anzac day. Eight members from Bass Sydney ventured north to Clarence Town for the weekend, and from most accounts I believe that all had a pretty good time. The amazing thing was that we actually outnumbered the HNF guys for most of the weekend. Our members were, Geoff Shadbolt, Domenic Squadrito, Alberto Moscarello, Milton Lazarus, David Sanegor, Garnet Noble, our newest member Dallas Smith and myself. Due to work commitments Garnet and I left Sydney about 2.30 on the Friday and we were pleasantly surprised by the lack of traffic hold ups on the freeway. We arrived at Clarence Town about 5.30 and set up camp and then we had our first little hiccup, someone had borrowed Garnet's airbed and had returned it without the plug. Considering he has a bad back this was a big problem, however he discovered that the cork from a bottle of port fitted perfectly and so now we have a new camping rule: **At all times when going camping a bottle of port MUST be taken along for emergencies.**

After that little drama we finally managed to set up the tent etc and get prepared for the next days fishing. Dallas had come along and introduced himself earlier and then disappeared. No one could find him for about an hour when he reappeared at the campfire. As Dick Adler from HNF put it he had been with them all the time and had gone over to the "Dark Side". All that sorted out, we worked out who would fish what stretch and what cars would be left where.

Geoff, Garnet and Dallas fished from Fosterton to Dungog, Domenic, Alberto and myself would fish Up from Alison to a large pool there and Milton and Dave would fish from a boat around Clarence Town. The fishing was a little slower than the November trip with much smaller numbers recorded, but the flow in the river made kayaking much easier. From memory I think the Fosterton to Dungog stretch produced about 25 fish compared to 89 in November. The large pool upstream from Alison produced about the same, however we did not fish that section last year. It was Dom's and Albertos first time kayaking and maybe their last, not overly impressed I gathered, however I had a pretty good time at the end catching 7 fish in 10 minutes in the faster flowing water heading back downstream. We 3 were off the water about 2.00pm and I sent the others back to camp and headed back to Dungog to pick up the others as agreed at about 4.00pm. They finally turned up at 5.30pm, you know the story, just one more cast, blah blah blah.

We finally made it back to camp where the post mortem of the days events took place over dinner, and included Milton and Dave who had arrived early that morning, and the discussion then moved on to where we would fish the next day. Dave was a little put out, he had caught bugger all that day and was rueing the fact that he brought the boat and not his kayak while Milton thought that being chauffeured about with no paddling was the ants pants. Les from HNF came over and mentioned that he was without his fishing buddy the next day and did anyone want to do a trip. Garnet, Geoff, Dallas and myself put our hands up and it was decided to kick off at daybreak to fish from Dungog to Alison. We sat around the fire with the HNF guys who made us very welcome that night and we spread the BS very thick all night. They held 2 raffles that night, the first was a freebie so to speak, a bottle of red as a lucky door (?) prize and the second for a new Daiwa spinning reel. Harold from HNF won the red and Garnet won the reel. After many glasses of red and whatever else was available we finally found our way to our bunks for the night to get as much sleep as possible for the early start on Sunday.

And I do mean early, up at 4.30, had breakfast and got ready and it was still dark. The thick fog did not help. We dropped off a car at our finish point and headed to Dungog to get underway. Still too dark, we had to cool our heels for about 30 mins. until it was light enough to get on the water. We were expecting a very long day but again because the flow was just about perfect there was almost no portage and we finished with time to spare. Again not a great number of fish caught but enough to

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keep our interest up. Les seemed to be the only one catching fish consistently, but a severe headache soon put a stop to his enjoyment, however he had no choice but to push on as we were past the point of no return. I managed a couple of nice fish, 1 that I thought was going to put me into the 400 club, it took off like an express train taking the rod tip under the kayak with me hanging on hoping to keep it on. How disappointed I was when I finally landed it and measured it at 341mm, oh well another day maybe! Apart from the lack of fish it was one of the best trips I have had, the Williams here is really quite pretty and very secluded and I know that the others had a good day as well. When we finally made it back to the campground most of the others had packed up and left, and Milt and Dave soon followed leaving just 3 hardy souls to carry on.



Do we fish around the camp or not?

Nah, stuff it; we still had a couple of bottles of red and that bottle of port to dispose of. As luck would have it another group of campers came over and wanted to know what we were all about and we ended up at their campfire that night, very interesting this camping caper. We had another guy wander over, as we were packing up on Monday morning, also interested in what we were doing. Finally managed to pack up and leave about 10.00am and was dreading the traffic going home, but again there was no problems and we made it home in good time.
Alan Izzard

INFO ON THE LAST HAWKESBURY/NEPEAN BASS CATCH.

There were 12 anglers with a total of 141 fish caught. Gary Blount was again the biggest contributor with 64 fish and 294 points.

The biggest fish caught was 402mm by Wayne Bennett on reach 4 and Barry Cole 342mm on reach 3A.

It seemed that the total number of fish caught over the weekend was down on past Bass Catches.

There was only 2 reaches fished 3A and 4.

Geoff Shadbolt .

Snowy goes with the flow

Approaching the tangled banks of the Snowy River, deep in the Kosciuszko National Park's Byadbo Wilderness, there is a noise not easily forgotten.

It is the sound of rushing, clear water as it passes over cobblestoned rapids - music to the ears of those who have fought to save Australia's most famous inland waterway.

It is just under three years since the release of the first environmental flows into the river and experts say there are early signs of recovery.

Most significantly, the extra water is beginning to carve its way through the mountains of swampy, stagnant sediment that accumulated along almost the entire length of the river after four dams were built on it.

As the Snowy begins to flow colder, deeper and faster than it has for nearly four decades, the newly

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established Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority is racing to bring the river back to life. A Snowy River rehabilitation project officer with the authority, Danny Henderson, says the fact little floods are getting through means there is a more definite channel forming.

It was a fairly big, swampy, broad channel, Henderson says. "I suppose you could say the Snowy River is now looking like a pretty good little creek, and with more time and water it will be a healthy river - similar to what it was but on a smaller scale."

Since 1967, 99 per cent of the river's water has been diverted to the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, regarded as the nation's greatest engineering feat but one which effectively killed a national icon.

Then in 2000, under immense political pressure, ecology joined technology at the negotiating table and the Victorian, NSW and Federal governments agreed to restore as much as 28 per cent of the Snowy's original flows.

On August 28, 2002, the Mowamba River Weir was spilled, releasing back into the Snowy the first environmental flow of 128 million litres.

In her book *Snowy River Story*, the Age reporter Claire Millar describes that historic moment: "It seemed to take forever, but slowly, slowly, the water behind the weir rose. A dribble tinkled over the wall at the far end.

The dribble built up into a trickle. The trickle spread across the weir and became a murmuring veil. The veil thickened into a heavy curtain of water cascading over the edge. The politicians had to shout over the splendid splashing."

For the first three years the Snowy was given back 22-25 billion litres of water a year. Within a decade, environmental flows are expected to rise to 244 billion litres a year - or 21 per cent of its original flow.

A river, however, is much more than the water that flows down to the sea, and the Snowy is still in dire environmental health. Its native fish stocks have been decimated, replaced by swarms of feral species such as goldfish, which got into the river after being used as bait by anglers, and gambusia. The banks were covered in masses of weeds.

There is also a battle brewing over where the Snowy's water will come from.

Snowy Hydro wants to deliver the water from Jindabyne Dam, while scientists and conservationists believe the Snowy needs to have a wild source if it is to be a true river. The headwaters of the Mowamba, a major tributary, are the logical choice, say those who are fighting for the river.

Historically, the Snowy was treated like an irrigation ditch, says Brett Miners, landscape manager with the catchment management authority.

"The river's got a couple of decades of working out to do," he says. "It's changed so dramatically from what it used to be that it's going to take some time to re-establish its character. The willows have just eaten the sand beds."

Teams of workers are being flown into wild gorges by helicopter to undertake the biggest eradication of noxious willow trees ever attempted in NSW - and possibly in the nation. The river was choked with innumerable willows - some estimates put the number as high as 10,000 stems per kilometre of river - growing out of an understorey of blackberry.

Of the 184 kilometres of Snowy River in NSW, 165 kilometres have already had a first sweep of poisoning. If the weather holds and conditions remain good, the last 19 kilometres may be finished this year. Camping out for up to 10 days, chopping with tomahawks and poisoning from dawn until dusk, in the worst patches the bush regenerators are travelling downstream at a tortuous pace measured in kilometres per week. It is a backbreaking, wet, painful and relentless job, where serpent-sized eels and waist-deep mud are an occupational hazard.

The owner of Blackwood's River Restoration, Martin Blackwood, is contracted to guarantee a 98 per cent kill of willows. "If you get frustrated by it you won't last long, especially when we are poisoning among the blackberry and you get poked in the eye by a dead stick," Blackwood says. "It doesn't pay to look up too often; you just keep your head down and continue from willow tree to willow tree, otherwise you

just psych yourself out." Other teams have been catching native fish from remote tributaries so they can be bred in captivity for release in their hundreds of thousands.

Miners says this work is crucial because, as flows increase, there will be a window of opportunity for native fish to elbow the feral ones out of the way - but only if sufficient stocks are available for release. "We would like to put 50,000 Australian bass fingerlings per year for three years into the river below Snowy Falls," he says.

The vision is for the river to be restored to its former place as one of the nation's premier bass fishing waterways. Miners says Australian bass are a superior sport and table fish to the exotic trout, but notes that the two can coexist in rivers such as the Snowy. He hopes that over time people will realise the benefits of fishing for the native species. Numerically the river is currently dominated by goldfish,

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he says.

A crew of Aboriginal contractors has been planting tens of thousands of native trees, grasses and shrubs on denuded riverbanks. Scientists have been studying the rate of return of river invertebrates and the slow scouring away of foul sediments.

A program offering incentives to farmers who fence off their river frontage is also under way - so far agreements have been reached on keeping stock away from 6.5 kilometres of the Snowy. Miners says it is possible woody debris may also need to be placed back into the river to help create the turbulence required to scour out sediment and to provide habitat. He believes the job of returning the Snowy to ecological health will be finished when there are healthy populations of another native species - the river blackfish. "They can't cope with sediment so they're like a canary in the coalmine," he says. "If you can get blackfish reintroduced and successfully breeding it could be a seminal moment in indicating the river's got a long-term ecological viability. But that may be decades away." Author: James Woodford, Sydney Morning Herald. May 14 2005

The previous article was emailed to me by Craig Ingram, President of NFA.

Current Point Score standings as at 01/05/05

1. 40 points Alan Fowkes
 - 2/3. 35 points Milton Lazarus and Geoff Shadbolt
 - 4/5/6 30 points Dave Claydon, Garnet Noble and Alan Izzard.
- Information supplied by Geoff Shadbolt, Pointscore Officer.

WARNING

One of our members has recently discovered a hole in the bottom of his Bass Kayak. It originated from the strengthening tube that runs down the bottom on the inside of the kayak. Please check yours, simply unscrew the seat and slide it forward and then slip your hand in and have a feel to make sure that the tube is still in one piece. If not get in touch with Australis to see about repairs.



Williams River Bass Catch Report, April 23 – 24/04/2005.

Yet again another good weekend for fishing, weather wise anyway. Still days with cool nights to allow a fire and some stories.

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Mornings were foggy with Saturday not seeing full sun till about 10 – 11 am. Sunday fog lifted earlier, making both days good for fishing.

The river had returned to fishable levels with the upper reaches water level up between 200 and 300 mm on normal flow levels.

Water up from Mill Dam Falls had a hint of colour making fishing ideal. The lower sections of the river clean but not clear. Normal Williams River colour.

River looked as if would produce lots of fish, had that feeling but was to be mistaken. The fish appeared to be in schools of 2 to 3 fish with long sections of bank between them. Not the normal Williams River where each snag or good looking weed bank would produce a fish. This was the same up and down the river sections fished. Maybe the fresh experienced by the river couple weeks ago may have contributed to this.

Friday afternoon and evening, excellent weather and atmosphere at the camp, and all were looking forward to some good yarns and good fishing.

Total fisherman for the weekend was 19 ,of which 5 were for Saturday morning only.

Even though fishing was slow attendees were able to land 288 bass.

Fish responded to all types of lure, surface and wet fly's, surface and diving hard body lures to spinner baits, soft plastics and beetle spins (cutie spin).

Outing over all was well supported, thanks to our Sydney colleges, a bit more commitment needed by us to attend our core outings.

2 carp were also disposed of, both taking lures, one a soft plastic and the other a spinner bait, 570 and 750 mm long. These were caught by Dave Mudd and David Sanegor, good one guys, this was supposed to be a bass catch, but good to see 2 more feral's gone.

The upper reaches of the river produced better quality fish again and a more consistent size.

Largest fish was 385 mm and smallest 115mm.

Raffle and prize winners

Shirt winners from catch card draw were

Alan Izzard and Dallas Smith.

Free raffle – Bottle of plonk – Harold Strahan

Diawa Caprice 2000 - Garnet Noble (Reel supplied by Tackle Power)

Thanks to Harold Strahan from HNF for the above report.

CFA report.

As some may be aware I have become involved with CFA recently and along with Bill Spiers, formally from HNF, was instrumental in forming a Bass committee within that organization. To date the committee has delegates from, BMANDAA (Springwood), HNF, Bass Kempsey, HNBAA, Wingham Anglers, Mid North Coast Fly Rodders and Bass Sydney. Recently we have received an expression of interest from Southern Bass, as well. We believe that in time we will be able to make a difference to Bass and their habitat by working together, not just with Bass clubs but with all freshwater anglers.

The first projects we are working on are

- 1) To try and get trawlers off the Hawkesbury/Nepean during spawning.
- 2) Lower bag limits.
- 3) A slot size for taken fish.

These projects are just the tip of the iceberg and we envisage that as more clubs come on board we will have more projects to work on. The main thing is to have Bass groups working together and with the backing of the CFA we indeed have a much louder voice. I will endeavour to keep members informed as to what is happening in each issue of the "Battler".

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I have just returned from the latest CFA meeting held at Buckenderra Lode on Lake Eucumbene which was very informative. The guest speaker was from NSW Maritime Authority and he spoke about boat safety. Evidently 50% of deaths from boating accidents are fishermen, for salt water the average age is 40 years, for fresh 52 years and alcohol is a contributing factor in 28%. Most boats are unsuitable for the rough weather encountered on inland dams, as a matter of fact the speaker said that the moment the wind picks up when he is on a dam he heads for the boat ramp and puts the boat on the trailer.

At the meeting I raised the point that Bass Sydney had been knocked back for the funding for the fourth weir at Parramatta, and was given assurance that if we needed any assistance the CFA was willing to help.

Alan Izzard.

REMINDER

**ALL FEES BECAME DUE ON THE NIGHT OF THE AGM
PLEASE SEND YOUR CHEQUE ASAP TO:**

Garnet Noble, 372 Somerville Rd., Hornsby Heights, NSW, 2077

HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN MACQUARIE PERCH SURVEY

Over the past couple of months I have been involved in a threatened species survey, with Andrew Bruce, a fisheries scientist from the Threatened Species Unit based at the Port Stephens DPI facility. The Hawkesbury catchment Committee has been the primary catalyst for this survey, by providing the necessary funds for this project. The survey involves two threatened species in the Hawkesbury catchment, one is the Emerald dragonfly, the other is the Macquarie Perch, *Macquaria australis*.

Distribution and ecology: Macquarie Perch have a very limited and irregular distribution, that includes the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Shoalhaven and Murray-Darling catchments. Macquarie perch inhabit clean well oxygenated streams. Siltation of streams smothers the eggs and prevents them from hatching. Mud also increases stream turbidity, and provides the ideal substrate for algae to flourish on. Macquarie perch require clean waterways with sand, gravel or rocky bottoms for spawning to be successful.

Habits: They are particularly fond of hiding under rocks and logs, and unlike bass will rarely reveal themselves during daylight hours. The colouration of macquaries varies from slate grey to black, with virtually no silvery sheen, as opposed to bass and silver perch. Eastern drainage macquaries have not yet officially been recorded above 260mm, with sizes of 80 – 220mm being par for the course in the Hawkesbury catchment.

The distribution of this fish has diminished significantly as a result of a number of factors that degrade water quality. Dam construction, sewage pollution, agriculture, industrial effluent, urban runoff etc are all possible contributing factors to the demise of this small, and highly elusive species.



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Sampling: We have been sampling various streams throughout the Hawkesbury nepean catchment using backpack electrofishing apparatus. This is an incredibly effective tool for stunning fish and eels in water less than 1m in depth. Electrofishing has been used for many years by fisheries scientists and has proven to be a harmless means of capturing fish, provided that the correct settings are used. It is a pulsed DC current, so if you're accidentally shocked its generally not fatal!(unless you have a weak heart). Its also is limited to stunning fish in the top 2m of the water column. My float tubes have proved to be an invaluable tool for backpack electrofishing streams. The added safety, ability to be transported to sampling sites and on-water mobility, permits the sampling of heavily overgrown streams, with deep pools with ease. This has proven to be a real bonus, and enabled us to more thoroughly sample areas that previously would have received only marginal effort. Its worth mentioning that the electrofishing apparatus costs upwards of \$12000, so keeping it dry is emeperative, and wading on uneven rocky stream beds is a hazard, so the float tube works great, by keeping gear and scientist from taking an unexpected dunking. Waders and long sleeve rubber gloves offer insulation necessary to prevent shock. I must say it's the wackiest environmental sampling you could imagine, and had the fisheries guys in stitches the first time we tried it!



David Sanegor.

NFA AGM 2005

Alan Fowkes and I travelled to Lake Burrinjuck for this years meeting, which Bass Sydney hosted. We arrived a little later than expected and was greeted by a bunch of Mexicans. After a few drinks and some chit chat we toddled off to bed so we could be bright eyed and bushy tailed for the meeting next morning. A couple of the Vics. decided to have a fish before the meeting and got up rather early and headed out. Did them no good , except to freeze their a#s*s off without turning a scale.

The meeting started basically on time in beautiful sunny conditions so much so that we decided to hold the meeting on the verandah. Elections produced no surprises and the committee is unchanged.

The Allan Thurbon shield was awarded to the SA Branch for their work on mapping threatened species (we think ???). We discussed the NFA position on trout stocking and decided to clearly state the NFA position by producing a paper ASAP. The key issue here is to try and stop any more trout being stocked into waters where Macquarie Perch exist or into some selected waters where they could be re-established.

Reefish membership has been reduced to affiliate status for this year.

It was decided to put forward a proposal to CFA to see wether the recent Bass Committee could be altered to a native fish committee that could act as a peak body for natives in NSW.

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We decided , that as there was less and less representation from branch clubs at AGM's to try and see if they could be held by email.

Meeting ended mid afternoon just in time for the weather change. Naturally the wind picked up as it was time to fish, after all Bass Sydney were the hosts. Al and I went out and showed the Vics. how it was done. Al caught a nice Yellow and I picked up a couple of small redfin. I believe the Mexicans managed a couple of carp and a yellow belly. Spent a pleasant night discussing many topics and drinking the usual intoxicating beverages. We put on a splendid bar-b-q (?) and retired rather late.

Sunday dawned with no change in the weather so we all packed up and headed off in different directions to our respective homes.

Alan Izzard.

This being my first " Battler " I would like to thank those who have contributed articles. As I have limited time I will not be able to write volumes for each newsletter and so I will need to rely on articles and tid bits from members and any other sources I can find. Editors from other clubs I ask that you also send me info regarding anything of interest that you may wish me to include. I would prefer all info in "Word" and any photos to be attached separately, not imbedded into the article. My email address is:

acutepri@bigpond.net.au

Thank you in anticipation, Alan Izzard (Editor).