



Australian Bass, MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA



THE BRONZE BATTLER

NEXT MEETING
WEDNESDAY
2nd August
GUEST SPEAKER
Glen Klatovsky

Glen is from Greening Australia and will update us on the next grant application and our new planting site.

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

PATRON:	Dr Wayne Erskine, PhD
President	Domenic Squadrito..9799-1796(H)
Vice President	Dave Sanegor.....0413 136 678
Past President	Dave Claydon..... 9829-1503 (H)
Secretary	Jim Taylor..... 9631 7485 (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)
Event Co-Ordinator	Chris Ghosn.....9636 6896 (H)
Project Officers:	
Parramatta River	Alan Fowkes.....9626-9938(H)
Hacking River	Warren Hackshall....9525 0090(H)

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hi all,

Winter has well and truly set in and with a bit of rain to boot (especially around the greater Sydney area. This time of year sees us all mostly indoors, instead of out in the cold and rain. There is no better time to catch up on some fishing reading or watching of DVD or video's and counting down the days for the first official Bass Sydney event, investigational or Bass Catch.

Which brings us nicely to a very important aspect or point for Bass Sydney Fishing Club; I would like to encourage all members attend and also to bring along anyone who may have a slightly interest in fishing or our club to the next GM to be held on August 2nd . Membership is the key to the clubs on going success and with only strengthen our club and the good work that is done.

Financial members that have not been to recent meetings should come along and collect their free Bass Sydney fishing cap with club emblem/ logo. There will also be a guest speaker, Glen Klatovsky of Greening Australia and a raffle on the night.

Looking forward to seeing you all there and hearing your fishing exploits

Take care and successful fishing.

Domenic Squadrito
President

GREAT SOUTH LAND TO THE DEEP SOUTH

Livin' & Fishin' in Alabama, USA

Final Installment (July '06)

Since the last installment (Installment 4), we have experienced much change and more changes are imminent. The company I came over to work for (The Meow Mix Co.) was owned by an investment group with a portfolio of companies. Everyone who works for TMMC has been working towards building up the company so that it may be sold. Well, we had a great year in 2005, with 25% growth. It was announced on March 2nd, 2006 that TMMC was being bought by Del Monte Foods, a large American company.

The timing couldn't have been worse as we had bought a house here less than 12 months previously, at the time of the announcement. We're also in the middle of renovations which have gone disastrously which means that we couldn't sell the house now even if we wanted to. I immediately went on job-search mode for the next couple of months.

Del Monte offered me a job in their R&D Center in Los Angeles, California and I went over to LA in late April to have a look at the job & the facilities. No doubt I was interested in going to LA - the job sounded OK, weather great, big city which Janet & I both like, ethnic diversity and good food. However, the package Del Monte offered was ~\$23k less than what I was earning at TMMC and they expected me to move to LA where the cost-of-living was 70 - 100% higher than where I am in Alabama. In effect, this means a pay cut of ~\$50k!

Luckily for me, my involvement with a great success story like TMMC has meant that I've become in demand in the USA. I had a few offers or possibilities to consider which has been unprecedented for me. I've had a lot of problems in recent years in finding alternative employment in Australia. I looked solidly for a whole year after I came back from Thailand and barely got an interview. I love Oz, but Aussie jobs don't like me!

After about 3 months of uncertainty, I've officially signed with a French-based company called SPF whose business is supplying palatants to the Petfood industry. SPF also represents a potential to get a paid trip home to Oz in a few years' time as they have a small plant in Beresfield, between Maitland & Newcastle, NSW.

Unfortunately, our pain and discomfort does not end as I'm going to have to move to the frozen north (Wisconsin) in September, leaving Janet behind in Alabama to finish off the house and then to sell it. SPF is currently based in Wisconsin as they bought a small, existing business about 5yrs ago. They have just announced the plan for a greenfields site in South Carolina where we'll be building a new factory, corporate HQ and kennel/cattery. Those employees moving south will move south by the end of 2007. I'm going to have to rent a room or something for up to a year before we move to South Carolina!

Hopefully, when the house is finally sold and we can get out of Alabama, I can send Janet home to Oz to buy us a small flat or something in Sydney. She can join me again before we make the move to SC. For the long term, I'm expecting to be in the US for another several years or at least until I (hopefully) will get a call to go back to Oz while still working for SPF. I can't see that happening for at least 4 or 5 years.

Aside from the recent house hassles & imminent career change, I have of course been fishing as much as I can. I last wrote in early Spring, just before I got serious about fishing again. I also wrote about the on-line community of river fishers I've found via the Web. Well, that has come along nicely with about 4 or 5 people in the local area that I've fished with or corresponded with. This has meant that we're able to do more river float trips where we need to have at least 2 cars (one at either end). This, in turn has introduced me to smallmouth bass fishing in the small, fast water streams around here.

August 2006 .

Smallmouth bass are considered the strongest fighters in the American "black bass" family. Here, northern Alabama, is the southernmost range of the smallmouth bass and I recently caught my first, real river smallmouth. Its fun fishing, with the smallies liking the open, fast water bits of a stream until late morning when they seem to abandon the open areas & retire back to the sides of the streams & cover. This means that early starts are necessary and even I have to do this if I want to catch a few more smallies locally.

About 2 weeks ago, I smashed my PB for largemouth bass. Some of you may recall me telling you about a ~4.5lb LMB I pulled out from a farm pond. I exceeded that when I went to the same farm pond to supplement a 1.5lb LM bass I kept from the "wild" to eat. Second cast with an unweighted SP fluke (they're a soft plastic jerkbait) I caught a LMB that went ~2.4kg (~5.2lb). It was so fat! I'm sure it was shorter in length than the 4.5lb biggie I kept last year, but it was much heavier. It took me all of 30 secs to land that lunker on 6lb Fireline with a 10lb mono leader! They just don't fight much, the largemouths. *Good eating though!*

With my impending move north to Wisconsin, what is next on the fishing horizon? Well, by the time I get there in September, it won't be long before it gets cold! I'm going to have to try ice-fishing at least once if someone is going to take me (only to say that I've done it). I really didn't want to have to spend up to a year in Wisconsin before moving South again. It's having to spend the next winter up there which has really got me worried - serious cold, snow, ice, etc. Has anyone seen ice-fishing on TV or videos? Basically, the lakes are frozen and the place swarms with snow mobiles & 4WD's dragging the ice fishing huts and gear to wherever people decide to fish. Next step is drill holes in the ice to drop your bait or lures down and then the hut is set up over the hole, yourself and your gear. It's like a little outhouse perched over a hole in the ice on a frozen lake. Its mainly panfish like bluegill, yellow perch (American cousin to the European Perch, aka redfin) & crappie, but I've seen shows where they drag these large walleye and pike up through these little holes. Ice fishing rods are about 1.5 - 2ft long (they're like one big nibble tip) attached to a fishing reel.

Up north, the FW fishing continues with a greater emphasis on Smallmouth bass and species more at home in the north, like walleye, northern pike, muskies (up to 50lb+), American sturgeon (fish up to 300lbs!), salmonid species as well as largemouth bass, crappie, etc. I'm not going to bother taking up the ol' kayak when I drive up in September as not only will the season be over soon, but I need to have space to take as much stuff (clothes, etc) up north as possible. You can be assured that I will be taking my fishing gear with me however!

Things with teeth & other disasters:

I'm sure many know me as a disaster area when it comes to cameras & water - I have a tragic record of destroying films of important family events which only marginally improved when I got myself a digital camera. Well, I have another two stories which feature my propensity for disaster with cameras in the vicinity of water, spiced up with creatures with lots of sharp teeth →

Story Part 1 -

A couple of months ago, I took Janet to a place off the Tennessee River to see if we can see some alligators. The spot, a series of inter-connected 'billabongs' is a well known local hotspot for alligators. Northern Alabama used to have an indigenous population of the American alligator, albeit at around their northernmost range. Most of them had disappeared by the middle of the 20th Century and it was decided to re-introduce them into north Alabama in the 1970's, partly for conservation purposes and partly (*get this!*) to control the local beaver population. I wondered why these industrious, cute-looking animals need "controlling". Well, the reason they needed controlling is that beavers like to build dams and can innocently cause localized flooding, waterways changing courses & other annoyances to the local human population. So, a dozen or so gators were introduced back into the Tennessee R waterways in northern Alabama. They have survived over the years and there is a population of gators in the local area. When Janet & I were there, there was a small (~4ft long) gator in the pool, but I had startled it and it swam off to the far side of the pool. Janet couldn't see it as she did not see it initially and I thought I'd throw a couple of rocks in its general area to make it move for Janet to see it (*you could just sense something disastrous was about to happen, can't you ?!*). My 1st throw was pathetic and I wound up to hoik the 2nd

August 2006 .

stone further. At this stage, you should know that my SONY digital camera was responsibly around my neck on a cord which reached to my chest. When I threw the 2nd rock much harder, my arm hit my camera dangling on its cord and broke it off, sending my camera about 10ft straight out into the pool !

Panic stations ! My beautiful camera ! Blow the little gator, I stripped off and jumped into the water ! It was only about 10' out from the edge, but the depth really dropped off fast. I finally located the camera on the bottom with my feet in water that was over my head. I dove down and picked it up. All this time of course, I asked Janet to look out for the gator which was difficult as she hadn't seen it yet ! I'm sure she was more nervous than I was.

The camera was utterly soaked and I took it apart to dry it out which it did, but I couldn't put it together again and ended up giving up. I bought a new camera - an OLYMPUS **waterproof & shockproof** digital camera. Quite nice & small, easily fitting into a shirt pocket.

Story Part 2 -

A couple of weeks later, I got together with the Huntsville kayak/river fishing guys for a day-long float down a small river about 45 mins away from home. It was a big group of 6 people that got together that day. One guy ("John") was relatively new to kayak fishing as he'd just bought a little sit-on-top only recently. It was a relatively short craft and I had wondered what it was like. I was told that it was a "bit tippy" - man, did this feature in the next drama !

After a slowish day, we had got to within a mile or less of our take out point which was on a broad, bigger river. The main river had islands and mid-stream log jams. John had just caught a small LM bass off a log jam when I caught up to him. Everyone else was ahead of us. While fishing the side of an island, I hooked up on a good ol' Aussie #3 Stumpjumper crankbait. It was real strong and I soon realized that I did not hook a bass, but a "spotted gar". Spotted gar are abundantly common throughout the waterways of northern Alabama and they look like a heavy-set long tom, complete with a double-beaked mouth and lots of long (6mm+), needle-like teeth. I hadn't landed one before, but they're always hanging around among cover or lily pads and sometimes they would have a slash at a slow-moving, shallow diving lure. Their toothy, narrow mouth makes them hard to hook and stay hooked. The spotted gar has a cousin, the alligator gar which lives in coastal/brackish waterways and grows to well over 200lbs and is considered to be Alabama's largest sportfish ! Spotted gars are the local equivalent of catching a Sergeant Baker or toadfish and they are hated by local anglers & according to local lore, unlucky if you catch one. Sometimes you see a lot of spotted gar carcasses about - victims of bow-fishers.

Spotted gar only grow to 8lbs or so, but the one I was attached to looked like it was 3ft long and I reckon it weighed around 5lbs. I hooked it on L spinning gear and it gave me a great fight, dragging me all over the place, in & out of the snags and it took a lot of one-handed back paddling & elbow paddling to have some measure of control. All the while I thought the gar would eventually become unpinned as there is not a lot of flesh to hook on to. Anyway, after a torrid struggle, I had it beaten at the side of the yak and that's when the real "fun" started !

The gar was hooked thru a bit of skin on the side of its mouth. I tried to tail it and lift it up (you can't jaw grip this fish !!) when I discovered that spotted gars are covered by a thick slime layer which made it impossible to get a grip on the fish. I eventually did a "comfort lift" and cradled it out of the water, settling half of the fish on my lap and half hanging out the side. In the meantime, John heard the commotion and paddled over to watch the action. After unhooking the gar, I handed my (new) camera to John to take a picture as it was an impressive-looking specimen. The fish was still half in the yak & half out, under my left arm. Just when John was about to press the button, the gar thrashed and leapt out from under my arm like you would squeeze a watermelon seed out from between your fingers and landed in the water between John & I. It startled John and the next thing I saw was him tipping over into the water ! Somehow, he hung on to my camera which was just as well as we subsequently discovered the water was well over his head. After recovering gear and getting back on, the damage was one lost rod & reel out of the 3 outfits he was carrying. My new camera proved itself ! Worst part for me was not

August 2006 .

getting the photo. I soon discovered that the abundant gar slime also had a unique and offensive smell which now clung to me (& all the way home !) as I had to virtually hug the fish to hold it. *Pee-yew!*

I have since showed my appreciation to John by giving him a few lures. I think he deserves more. I was thinking of getting a sit-on-top for my next yak, but now I'm not so sure !! There is no way that I would have tipped over on the Australis Bass kayak, not with such a small movement anyway.

I've included a file pic of a spotted gar below.

This will be my last installment of "Great South Land to the Deep South" as things are changing and I also feel that I've bored you poor old Bass Sydney people enough over the last 2 years with my scratchings.

On that note, I'll finish by showing some pix from some kayak action so far this season → *Spotted bass - they like clear water & current*
Close-up of a Spot, taken on a wacky worm



Brad holding a 2.8lb LMB I caught on a wacky worm

Spotted gar



Black crappie (black #3 Roostertail)

Smallie + regurgitated baitfish (weighted Rapala F-7 Perch)



Close-up of smallie

Local alligator (camera hole)



Until next time, good luck & tight lines !

HS Tham

BASS SYDNEY MEMBER PROFILE.

Chris (dambuster) Ghosn:

1. How did you get your nickname. *Not really sure... Never really understood it*
Oh Really ? how many people do you know that have had their cars pulled out of farm dams? Editor
2. Best day's fishing *any day on the water*
3. Most memorable catch *First trout on fly and it was on a dry fly just magic!*
4. Worst day's fishing *Way too many to choose just one*
5. Most embarrassing fishing moment *once got stuck in the lower Georges river in a blow up boat without a paddle*
6. First fish *More than likely a bream*
7. When did you catch your first Bass *2001, Size 3 black and red stump jumper.*
8. Favourite lure... *changes after every trip or after being conned by a slick tackle shop assistant. Nowadays Betts spinners with 2inch tail cant go wrong*
9. Favourite style of fishing *Im odd I equally enjoy lure casting, bait fishing and fly fishing least favorite TROLLING!!*
10. Favourite fishing book or DVD *River somewhere!! Bethune on bass, anything by John Sawtel, David Schols*
11. Favourite fishing locations: *Greenwell point, Botany bay, In recent times Williams river place rocks.*
12. What do you do for a living *Chef /Branch Manager Hewitt Packard Sydney. Operation*
13. Are you married, if so Wife and Kids names...*No*
14. If not, are you thinking about or are you gay. *Im not gay but I am willing to learn. (See answer to 20)Ed*
15. What kind of watercraft do you use *Kayak Australis Bass*
16. Where do you live *Greystanes*
17. Where would you like to live, if elsewhere *Nashville Tennessee to pursuit my budding singing and acting carer. ...*
18. Where is your dream fishing location. *Los Rocco's fishing for bonefish*
19. Why *Beautiful white sand blue water plenty of rum*
20. Favourite other sport *Rodeo, cricket, rugby league Theatre cabaret, ballet both modern tap and traditional.*

August 2006 .

21. What do you fish for during winter The enemy Trout, recently started chasing bream, and carp are worth a shot

22. Why did you join Bass Sydney I was kicked out of & banned from most major sporting clubs but you jokers let me in so now your stuck with me ha ha.

Tell us why you enjoy fishing for Bass: There is something completely unique about bass fishing it's a combination of the places you fish the environment, both flora and fauna as well as the guile and tenacity of the bass itself, Also you get to spend heaps of money and play with cool lures and stuff.

Parra River Update

Some good news here as the construction contract for the fish-way at the Charles Street weir has been out to tender and received strong interest. Council received 12 tenders and these have already been through a review process to determine the preferred one.

The DA for this and the Kiosk Weir fish-way has still not received official approval but this is expected to happen in mid August. This then paves the way for council to approve the preferred tenderer. At present there doesn't appear to be any barrier to this happening by the end of August and that means we could actually see work commencing in September. Keep your fingers crossed!

I know our contacts in Council are keen for this to happen as they are still planning for the carp bash and education day in November. Don't forget to put this on your calendar!

While all this is going, on the DA for the Marsden Street weir is being expedited. It is hoped that this will receive approval during the construction of the Charles Street fish-way. With any luck, the successful contractor will be performing well and be able to offer some economies of scale through taking on this additional job.

The news on the upstream weir is not quite so rosy in terms of timing but at least seems to offer a clear way forward.

The Parramatta Park Trust have not been comfortable with the rock ramp fish-way proposed for this site and have asked Council to submit a design for a vertical slot. This of course will take some time and money but at least offers a mutually acceptable solution. Whilst it would have been nice to have a rock ramp on this site from a community education point of view the fish certainly won't care what sort of fish-way they are using!

Looking to the longer term, and once the fish-ways are in place, we will be planning an extended period of sampling to see if the remnant bass population is able to make a comeback under its own steam.

We know the numbers are currently very low in the weir pools but, with a boating ban above the Silverwater Bridge and no sampling done in this area to my knowledge, we can't know if there any fish hanging on in the river below the weir or in small tributaries.

If natural recruitment fails to restore the population, and as a last resort, we've already had unofficial word that DPI Fisheries would look

August 2006 .

favourably upon an application for a "kick start" re-stocking program that used brood stock from the Sydney Harbour drainage.

One way or another, we're still confident of bringing a healthy bass population back to the Parramatta River.



AUDLEY WEIR.

There may be some good news on the proposed fishway at Audley soon. Warren Hackshall has been keeping his finger on the pulse there and will let us know when something concrete is to happen..

Mary River Dam.

Members may have heard that the Queensland Government is about to build a dam on the Mary River. We ALL should write to Premier Beattie and let him know that it will be an environmental disaster. If no one does anything it cannot be stopped.

Kempsey Basscatch.

Latest report is that 10 Bass Sydney members (including myself) will be attending this years event in September. If it is anywhere near as good as last years event we are insured of a great weekend. Good fishing, lots of fun and a great raffle and no camping make this event not be missed.

Lane Cove Carp Catch.

Oceanwatch has organized a carp catch for the Lane Cove River on the 20th of August. We have been asked to help run the event and the feeling is we should have as many members there as possible to ensure that the Bass population is not depleted. We will discuss this further at the up coming meeting. Please be there for the meeting and the carp bash, we need all the help we can muster.