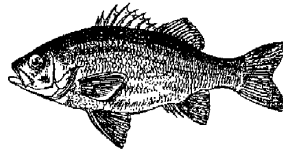


October 2009



Australian Bass, *MACQUARIA NOVEMACULEATA*



THE BRONZE BATTLER

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PRESIDENTS'S REPORT

It is bass season at last and the warm weather has started to return albeit sporadically. It's great to start spending some time on the water again. Winter whilst is normally a somber, subdued time of year, it is a busy time of year for Bass Sydney. This has been my first experience as President, to be involved in the organising of the Hawkesbury/Nepean Bass Catch, and I can tell you I can't speak highly enough of the efforts of Bass Sydney members who dedicate a lot of time in preparing this event. I know this year's event will be a huge success due to the efforts of Alan Izzard and many others. I encourage all Bass Sydney members to get involved and enjoy the weekend.

Early season bassin is a time of hope & optimism, it's a time to be looking to the future and planning upcoming trips. Although it doesn't have to involve a great deal of effort to enjoy yourself. The last couple of seasons has not been the huge success of those of past years and has resulted in a lot of disappointment from anglers. I find a change of approach and attitude is what is required to get the most out of your bassin. Try shorter sessions. Either fish the morning or late afternoon for a few hours, instead of spending a whole day on the water. Try and organise a BBQ or a few drinks after your fishing, which is a great way to unwind. At the end of the day fishing is suppose to be fun and although we all take it seriously its important to never forget the element of fun.

Regards and tight lines:

Chris Ghosn

Parramatta River "BassCatch" Oct 10 & 11th

For those of you who don't know, Bass Sydney has fished the Parramatta River twice before. Once in 1997 and again in 2006, for not a lot of return.

Whilst it's currently hard to get excited about your prospects of catching a fish there, the work done on the fishways to date makes it very important for us to build on our knowledge of the baseline fish population in the river. Parramatta City Council is certainly interested in receiving information on catch rates before and after fishway installation and DPI Fisheries have also expressed an interest.

With three out of four fishways complete and hopefully operational by the time you read this, our favourite fish will soon have it's first unfettered migration opportunity in the last 190 years. So now's the time to get out there and fish the river again!

Acknowledging the relative lack of prospects, and due to some other commitments on my part, I've decided to make it as easy for you to attend this event as possible. To this end, whilst our calendar might tell you the event is on the 10th October, you are actually free to fish it any time over the weekend of the 10th and 11th.

Of course, the hours may be flexible but we still need the same rigour around data so please take a standard catch card with you to record the times fished, reaches fished and fish caught. As usual, we need this info even if you

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catch nothing. Catch cards can be returned at the next meeting, dropped in the post or, if the list of fish isn't too long for you to type (yeah right!), you can drop me an email.

For my part, I'll be fishing on the afternoon of the 11th and intend to explore the upstream reaches. If you want to be a part of that then drop me a line. I know others of you prefer to fish the mornings and last time we fished we did just that before having a late breakfast at the café in the park. I'm certainly open to catching up at the café around midday if anyone wants to fish the morning then get together for a debrief. So, again, if that suits you please let me know.

You will find a map on a separate page hereabouts (*Ed: at the end, after our sponsor page*) and a legend below describing the reaches and the access points. I have checked with the Park Trust and can confirm that all day parking within Parramatta Park is permitted on the weekends –there are time limit signs but they apparently operate Mon-Fri only. However, outside the park on the Parramatta CBD side is typically metered parking and the “brown bombers” are pretty aggressive. The Park is open from 6am to 6pm and there are currently no scheduled special events for the weekend – so access should be hassle free.

In all seriousness, if you haven't fished this river before, I'd encourage you to check it out. It's certainly degraded but has genuine fish holding potential – particularly in the backed up water behind the various weirs and, so legend has it, in some good holes further up the creeks. You'll also have a rare opportunity to check out one of very few “lock” style fishways in Australia – as recently installed at Marsden Street Weir.

Er, in case you're wondering, at the earlier events we put in approx 25 angler hours for one fish (caught at the 1997 event). It was a 350'ish fish though so it must be HUGE by now!

Hope to see you out there!

Alan Fowkes

Ashley got out on the first official day of the season and scored big time! He's treated us with a nice write-up of his day...

September 1 (by Ashley Thamm)

Arrived at Menangle at around 8:30am. Loaded up the yak and pulled it down to a little beach near the bridge. A small fire still smouldered from the night before, the smell of wood smoke mixing with the cool morning air made me think I was a long way from Sydney. A perfect morning for the first day of the Bass season.

I started throwing divers at a rockwall just opposite from the beach, when suddenly I get a phone call from my mate. He's just upstream, and he asks whether I need a hand getting over the weir. "How big is it?" I ask, "A couple of steps" he said. "OK I'll be fine then you go ahead and I'll catch up".

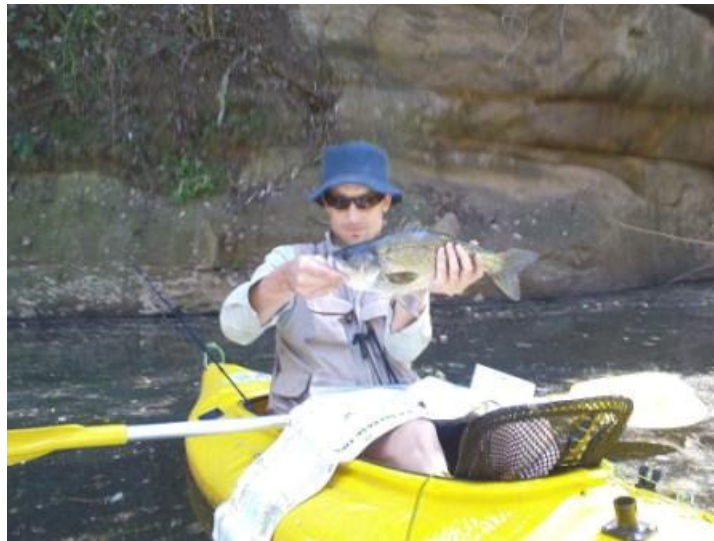
I hung around the lower pools having a flick, tiny insects were all over the surface, yet there was no movement in the water. It's going to be a slow day, I thought to myself. Let's go have a look at that weir. Hmm.... that's a bit bigger than a couple of steps!! After a very slippery climb dragging up a fully loaded yak I was on my way once again. Wow, back in the fresh; AND another beautiful stretch of the Nepean to explore. Fishing took a bit of a backseat as I happily watched Kingfishers, and other assorted little birds playing along the rockwalls.

A few snags were just too good to pass up, but produced no signs of fish. Casting was certainly not spectacular as I struggled to learn how to use a spincast, it was easy on my veranda not so easy when I'm trying to flick a lure sideways under a low hanging branch or ledge. Surface lures were producing nothing, I kept persisting though. Shallow divers weren't getting touched either. Should have gone to reach 3 or 4. Why the bloody hell am I fishing Menangle on the first of September? Then I saw it, probably the biggest collection of scum on the water I've seen outside the Lane Cove. Quickly tied on a spinnerbait, a little too quickly as I got about 4 loops through my uni stuffed up the fifth and thought stuff it. It's not like I'm going to get anything big. Chucked my little black/purple Secret Creek spinnerbait into the crap and began a slow wind. Got a big collection of sticks, etc as I wound in, so I let it drop, got all the crap off it and wound it in.

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Second cast... let it sink more. Wind, pause... let it sink, wind, pause... and I get a pull. Lifted my rod slightly and started reeling in. I was in deep water, so it took a few cranks to get it up to the top and as soon as I was close my rod doubled. %\$&*! I've caught a bloody carp is what I'm thinking. Pulled it back to the top and again it ran straight to the bottom, no sideways runs, just to the bottom then stop. We went through this four times before I got her to the surface. Soon as I did, my heart started racing, that's no carp! That's a Bass! Hands started shaking and I grabbed my net and got the big girl on board. Straight onto the ruler and she really didn't want to sit still. Lifted her up for a quick photo, (didn't know it was a bloody camera phone) was just putting her back into the water when she kicked around like all hell, jumped out of my hands and was free. Not the send off I wanted to give the big girl but I was happy that she disappeared instantly.



There was some clear deep water right near her home so I sat back and told my mate to throw his bright coloured spinner that he had on right up into the back of the pool. No result... a few more casts by him and I just had to have a go... still nothing. It was about then that a big bass, at least as big as the bass I caught came up to the surface about a metre from my boat. Now this was clean water and there was only 1 leaf floating on the pool and it was about 6 inches from where the bass surfaced. Hmm, a bad shot or just checking things out? A second surface moments later from the other side of the pool where me mate now sat confirmed the big girl was teasing us. We sat there for about 15 minutes, and what I presume was the same fish surfaced about 10 times, sometimes near us, sometimes near fallen timber. The water was glassy and there was still only a single leaf floating just near my yak. It was clear there was no way in hell we were going to catch her so after a while we headed back to our cars.

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Snags were locked into the memory on the return paddle, the wind started blowing at our backs and the fishing rod was put down, the camera picked up and we drifted back to our access point. A start to the Bass season that will be hard to top, but I'm sure somehow our magnificent Sydney waterways and the incredible fish we chase will find a way.

Ashley Thamm

Great stuff Ashley! But wait! Ashley did manage to add further excitement, mystery and misery to his start of the bass season with a tale of woe, from a Hawkesbury-Nepean tributary just a few days later!

Tale of Woe

Went for a session a bit further down the Nepean, still wasn't convinced the breeders were moving up, but with a quick burst of rain the night before, I was hoping to find a few fish lurking around the mouths of the feeders.

I'd just been sent a Mud Guts spinnerbait the day before I went out. Just in time as I'd just broken the spinnerbait that landed me the 410. Promised the maker a few pics of it catching some bass. Flicked around for 5 mins waiting for my mate and we were on our way downstream. Within 10 min of launching I'd hooked a nice 250 bass, quick photo and release. Things are looking pretty good I thought.

Played around with a Sammy on my other rod, always hopeful of the surface strike. No luck again. My mate was throwing a shallow diver and a rover around with no results. A section of reed made me swap back to my spbait, threw out a cast and pointed out to my mate that's not how you cast. It landed a good 3 feet away from the edge of the reeds. Started cranking, 2 cranks later and I came up solid, another fish only ½ an hour in. Excellent!! Started reeling and it wasn't long before I noticed the fish wasn't moving towards me, I was moving towards the fish! Eventually, I was sitting right on top of her. She wasn't moving. Cranked my reel... drag clicked. Pulled my rod... drag clicked. It took a while to get her moving. Up she came, slowly, very slowly. She was right underneath me, very soon I saw leader. I only had about 3 feet of leader tied on so she was close. Water was very murky so I still couldn't see her. Suddenly she rose, head and back out of the water, a massive bulk of fish easily bigger than the 410 I caught a week previously. She looked at me, and with a well defined movement of the lips spat my new spinnerbait straight back at me! My net was about 20cms from her head.

Not much to report after that. Lent my mate my spare spinnerbait and he managed to hook it about 20ft up into a gum tree. It's still hanging there.

I managed to get another 250mm bass on the spinnerbait an hour or so afterwards, the fish was right on the bank and managed to slip off the spinner a few meters from the yak. I also managed to lose my spinnerbait on a choice snag right in the middle of the creek, a quick tug and my knot snapped, the spinnerbait dropping into the depths.

Still not sure if I'm sadder about losing the spinnerbait or the fish. All I know is it'll be playing over and over in my head for a while.

Ashley Thamm

The Ed's 1st Bass of the Season 2009

Like everyone else, I was desperate for my 1st bass of the season. On the Friday of the 1st week of the season, and after having been inspired by Ashley's great Day 1 fish (and the one that got away a couple of days later), I decided that I had to hit the Nepean. Getting to Devlins around 5:45pm, I wondered if I had made a stupid decision to come so late, having taken over an hour to get to the river. I wasn't going to get much more daylight! I wanted to make my way up from Devlins, but I never even got half as far as my modest expectations before it was dark. It was Full Moon though and I had plenty of light. Long story short, I fished the main Devlins pool until it got too cool and the only bite I got was a hit on a small black buzzbait. Tail between my legs, I went home.

A week or so later, it was Sunday and I headed off to North Richmond. The original plan was for Ashley & I to float between Yarramundi and Richo, but I was late and Ashley also had to leave around

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midday; so we just launched from Richo and started heading upstream. It was nice, clear day and I had high hopes. Water sure felt cold though!

I had 3 outfits on board – L baitcaster and two L spin outfits. Started with a Jitterbug, small black spinnerbait and a small yellow buzzbait. A couple hours later and not a bite! Ashley had scored 2 or 3 by the time we met up at the rock bar just up from the bridge. He turned back while I pushed on ahead, still heading upstream. About 50m up from the barrier, I got my 1st fish, a nice, fat, 313mm fish. I was bringing my black spinnerbait through some weeds I saw a bass appear about 1.5m away and inhaled the lure almost under my yak. While fat, the cold water must have affected the fish's metabolism as it fought very sluggishly. Yay! My 1st bass of the season and it was even over 300mm! No pic as I had forgotten my camera.

Continuing on, I picked up another smaller one at 280. This was a classic capture – I saw & heard a very bass-like 'boof' deep at the back of a snag. It was not a carp breaching, nor was it a flip from a herring... it just had to be a bass! Straight away, I put a cast (lil' black spinnerbait) out and it was a pretty good one, landing about a foot to the side of the previous boof. Within a half dozen cranks of the reel handle, I got a good hit. Surprised it was a sub-300 specimen in the end.

Before I knew it, I was at Yarramundi where I stopped for lunch. After lunch, I headed back downstream. By the time I got back to Hannah Park, it was almost pitch dark and I had a tally of 5 for the day – 313, 280, 340 and a couple of tiddlers around 200mm. ALL the fish were caught on the small black spinnerbait with a gold blade, a little, no-name \$2 spinnerbait from the US. I wish I had brought back a few more as I only had the one black/gold blade model. I tried an identical spinnerbait, with a gold blade, but in light colours as well as 2 other larger tandem spinnerbaits and a Betts spin, all for nought. I tried at least a dozen different lures, including at least 3 surface lures throughout the day, but nothing.

My largest of the day was caught out in the middle, in full sun. I noticed a steep dropoff below a shallow race, not far up from the previously mentioned rock bar. I cast upstream and brought the spinnerbait back deep, with my rod tip deep in the water and I got a very tentative bite, almost like a bit of weed, but I struck anyway. Another fatty comes on board.

All the fish were very fat and all fought sluggishly. Are the fish still full of spawn or have they fed up big time post-spawn already? I guess the only way to tell is to gut one, so I guess I won't know. At least the first of the season is out of the way. Looking forward to the club's Reach 4 outing and the October BassCatch!

The Editor

International Regatta Centre Outing with the Springwood Club Jan 16th 2010

We have been invited by our old friends, the Springwood Club, to an arvo's bassin' the Warm Up Lake at the International Regatta Centre near Penrith. They tell me that the lake is full of bass in the 250 – 350mm range. Not huge, but apparently very willing! I guess they don't allow fishing there very often in a season. They will treat us to a BBQ! BYO drinks & chairs for the barbie. Details –

- \$6 or \$7 fee (to the Regatta Centre)
- Start 3pm, fish until sunset, BBQ & drinks until we get thrown out (*apparently!*)
- Go through Regatta Centre Main Entrance, over the bridge, car park to the left, and a boat ramp. The Springwood guys will be around the ramp with the BBQ.
- ##### PFD's (lifejackets) are **COMPULSORY!** #####
- We are under our hosts' insurance as their visitors
- Paddle &/or electric power only
- Toilets on site, shade trees, grassy banks

Sounds good! I'm looking forward to this for some strange, perverted reason! It's been a while since I've been bassin' a pond or small lake! I did a bit of that in the US.

[They need to know numbers by X'mas, so please tell me if you're going and I'll liaise with them!!!](#)

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Garnet emerges from his workshop after his latest gear-buying orgy with a handy hint for the chatterbait users out there!

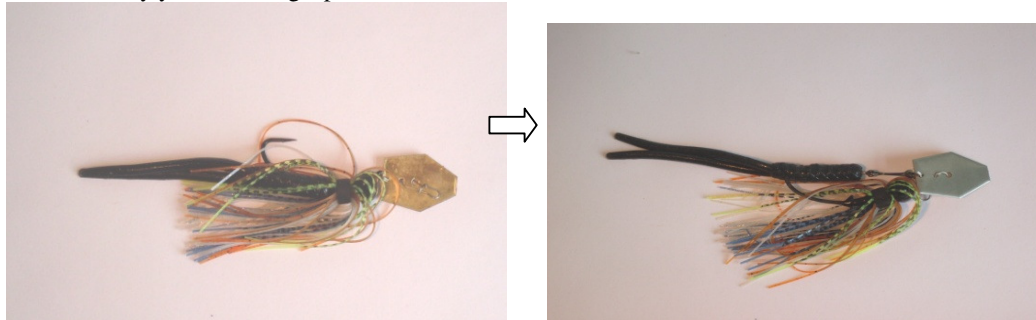
How to make your Chatterbaits weedless

Chatter lures have a tendency to hang up more often than ordinary spinnerbait or weedless jig. This can be greatly reduced by rigging your lure with a Hitch-Hiker and a soft plastic tail.

In the pictures shown here a Hitch-Hiker coil (medium size) has been added to the eye of a chatter lure. Attached to the coil is a soft plastic tail that is made snag free by inserting the point of the hook into the trailer the same as you would rig a plastic worm weedless. This is really simple, it really works and it does not affect the hook ups on fish. An added bonus is that you get extra action from the soft plastic tail. This weedless arrangement can be used on many different lures.



Another way of making a weedless arrangement is to use a bait holder hook. Remove the hook leaving a straight shaft with the bait holder barbs. Attach a clip to the split ring or eye of the jig head, and then attach the clip to the eye of the shaft. Insert the shaft into the soft plastic, and then insert the point of the hook into the soft plastic trailer the same way you would rig a plastic worm weedless.



Basser Demographics

Recently, the Committee was talking about membership and in subsequent days, I've pondered along various lines of thought, some useful, some not and some comical. One of those was to think about bass club members in terms of marketing/market research, demographics, categorisation. Ponder my attempt at dividing bass club (ours?) members into market segments –

“The Native Fish Conservationist” –

- ❖ A keen bass/native fish angler
- ❖ High conservation ideals
- ❖ Not interested in serious competitions/contests
- ❖ Enjoys the occasional organized event or outing
- ❖ Wants to “help” native fish by doing extra work, like tree plantings, etc
- ❖ Does not support river stocking
- ❖ Has probably owned a canoe for some time and looking at or have more recently bought a kayak
- ❖ If young & fit, probably goes on Wildman expeditions on foot or water craft
- ❖ If older and less fit, wishes he can still go on Wildman expeditions
- ❖ Doesn't like trout very much, but occasionally pursues them “for old time's sake” or to satisfy long-suppressed piscicidal tendencies
- ❖ Favourite lure – Jitterbug and diving ‘minnows’ (he/she struggles to call them ‘hard bodies’ or ‘crankbaits’). Thinks spinnerbaits are great, but still regards them as “new”. Huge lure collection, especially Aussie-made crankbaits.

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“The Young Gun” –

- ❖ Super keen
- ❖ Been bassin’ for a while, but probably <10yrs experience
- ❖ Young in age (probably 25 – 35)
- ❖ Pores the internet for fancy lures and “next-gen” techniques
- ❖ Wants to learn more about bassin’ and hopes to meet similar types at a club
- ❖ Enjoys the competitive element of fishing
- ❖ Enjoys the social element of a club
- ❖ Might want to join multiple bass clubs
- ❖ Needs education about the finer points of the bass life cycle, the effect of dams & barriers, environmental flows, stocking...
- ❖ Favourite lure – whatever is “hot”, with a few old faves. Huge lure collection.

“The Newbie” –

- ❖ Very keen
- ❖ New to bassin’
- ❖ Probably no fishos in his/her circle of friends & family
- ❖ Could be of any age
- ❖ Wants to learn more about bassin’
- ❖ Wants to learn from more experienced members
- ❖ He doesn’t know yet, but he may enjoy the social element
- ❖ Hopes to get to fish spots he doesn’t know about via organized events/outings
- ❖ Might want to join multiple bass clubs
- ❖ May need education about the bass life cycle, the effect of dams & barriers, environmental flows, stocking
- ❖ Favourite lure – whatever is “hot” on the internet fishing forums + whatever the tackle store guy said
- ❖ May or may not own a watercraft yet – will see what the other club members use

“The Prodigal” –

- ❖ Used to fish for bass years ago as a younger person
- ❖ Might still think of them as ‘perch’, but have somehow learnt its more PC to call them ‘Australian bass’ or just ‘bass’
- ❖ Stopped bassin’ or fishing in general for any number of reasons (eg. Family, Career, no one to go with)
- ❖ Might be slightly older
- ❖ Have rediscovered or would like to rediscover the joys of ‘pulling perch’
- ❖ Remembers how they used to taste so good, cooked by the riverside !!
- ❖ Wants to learn more about the new bassin’ techniques
- ❖ Enjoys the social element
- ❖ Hopes to get to fish spots he doesn’t know about via organized events/outings
- ❖ Needs education about the bass life cycle, the effect of dams & barriers, environmental flows, stocking
- ❖ Favourite lure – whatever is not too rusty when he dusted off the ol’ tacklebox, and whatever is “hot” on the internet fishing forums. Might even have a ‘slightly’ perished Flopy in the said tacklebox.
- ❖ May or may not own a watercraft yet – will see what the other club members use

“The Guru”, “The...”, the list could go on & on.

NEWS

- October General Meeting Tuesday, 13th October.
- BassCatch!! October 17 & 18th. The campsite should be great. Members... you know what to do. Briefings at either the GM on the 13th or at the campsite in Wilberforce on Friday night, the 16th
- Grose R lantana removal – the last one of the season has just passed. Fowkesy and Jules were bloody heroes throughout as the stalwarts from Bass Sydney. As someone who ended up not contributing at all in this worthy effort last off-season, a big “thank you!” to all those people who gave their time and sweat.
- Club Pointscore update – Fowkesy & Ashley leading with 35 points, with Garnet
- Quite a few members turned out for the Reach 4 club outing on the the 1st weekend of the season and enjoyed the fishing as well as the BBQ after. REALLY nice day! *Ed – I got 13, but size eluded me with nothing over 300mm! Mine were caught on a variety of lures this time.*
- Torn Blue Fringe report – this issue is still simmering in the NSW angling fraternity’s consciousness. It has been helped along, to our advantage, by the Coalition stoking the embers with an e-campaign. Keep the anger & vigilance out there people!

HS Tham, The Editor

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Next Meeting is on
Tuesday 13th October

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Legend:

- Thick red bars are the weirs. From the top of the page these are the Upstream Weir (the only one without a fishway so far), the Kiosk Weir and the Marsden Street Weir. Charles Street Weir is just beyond the downstream limit of the map.
- Reach numbers are in red – Reach 1 is Toongabbie Creek (the left fork heading upstream from limit of map) and Reach 2 is Darling Mills Creek (right fork). There is a reach 4 below Charles Street Weir but no practical way to fish it given the watercraft exclusion zone between there and Silverwater Bridge (though you could have throw from the bank right at the weir and probably from parklands on the southern side).
- Easiest access is at the Kiosk Weir. From here you can fish upstream or downstream. Getting up over the Upstream Weir to Reach 3A is easy. Getting down over Marsden Street Weir to Reach 3D would be do-able.

Access to Reaches 1,2 and 3A is also relatively simple from the bottom of Brelogail Street in Northmead. Park in the street with no time limit and, walking down towards the creek, turn right into parklands. You'll only need to drag your kayak about 30 metres before angling down the bank to the bottom of a riffle and some easy launch sites.