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# Around the Jetties No 30

## November-December 2009

### On Fishing

“There is no use walking five miles when you can depend on being just as unsuccessful near home.”  
Mark Twain.

### Editorial

The recent Bream Classic fished on the Gippsland Lakes would seem to provide evidence of the current movement of black bream into the rivers to spawn. There were 50 boats in this competition and 20-30 of those boats fished in the first 200 metres of river at the mouth, and most of the fish weighed in came from this area according to my information. (Fishing Victoria Monthly suggested 40 boats fished this area.) Talking to anglers fishing from the bank in this area over a six-week period it was evident that almost all fish they caught were spawning fish and I would expect the same circumstances would apply to fish weighed in during the Bream Classic. (All of which were weighed and released.) Now all these fish had to escape mesh nets within 400 metres of the mouth of the river, and then the many recreational anglers fishing these areas before they could move up the river to spawn. It is acknowledged bream stocks are low and unfortunately both recreational and commercial fishermen are currently removing breeding stock as the fish move to spawning areas. In recent weeks most of these fish have been larger spawning fish and remembering that a mature fish may release between 300,000 and 1 million eggs we have a problem that I am sure could be resolved. In some ways we have it in our own hands to protect spawning black bream. How simple it would be to remove nets from the river mouths and to have a closed season for black bream in the rivers between October and November. This may require Fisheries Victoria and the Government to take this positive action by changing regulations to protect the black bream stock of the Gippsland Lakes. If such an action were undertaken both the commercial sector and recreational anglers would be making a contribution to the long-term future of the black bream fishery of the Gippsland Lakes. (Recreational anglers seem to be requesting closures for spawning in most areas of East Gippsland.) I am sure the East Gippsland Fisheries Management Plan will address the issue of closures, however as the Gippsland Lakes will be considered in a later management plan netting at the mouth of rivers will not be considered in the current plan. This decision has made a comprehensive management plan difficult to achieve.

On another matter we have now come to **Issue 30 of Around the Jetties**, and who would have thought, that what started as a letter to a number of fishing mates would now have a readership numbering several hundred and even for the publication to get a mention in State Parliament.

### **The Value of Recreational Fishing in Gippsland**

A survey by the National Institute of Economics and Industry Research 1997 suggested the financial contribution of recreational fishing to the Gippsland area was in the vicinity of \$144m annually whilst a study in 1999 (McIlgorm and Pepperall) suggested the Victorian recreational fishing expenditure to be around \$651 million. This figure has greatly increased in the last decade and may even have doubled.

## Readers Observations - Ron Brymer Comments

Ron is a reader of Around the Jetties and has provided added information to a number of issues raised in last month's publication. (Issue 29)

### **Southern Blue Spot Flathead (Yank)**

Ron says” I can confirm a very healthy population of “yanks” in the Gippsland Lakes but I don't think they are distributed any further along the system from the entrance than Metung, and I have never caught one above Metung or in the rivers. I personally have caught them up to 4-5lb and in terms of total catch, in a good year I will catch 200 plus, and while I do keep a few of the smaller ones for the table, I release most. Personally I prefer them to dusky flathead. The yank seems to have a “preferred habitat” in just a few locations and they co-exist with duskies in these areas. They turn up in late spring and in my view they come from the ocean and stay until April. They respond to the same techniques as the duskies with soft plastics being the standout method. They are a fantastic sporting fish and they are more muscular over the whole body than the duskies and pound for pound they are a far better fighting fish. Undoubtedly the bag limit should be lowered, and given they don't freeze well recreational anglers “take” numbers should be voluntarily kept low. In my view the minimum size limit should be 35cms and this should also apply to dusky flathead.

### **Silver Trevally**

I was amazed and shocked that the commercial fishing lobby could have a well thought out and a regulation based on consultation overturned with the stroke of a pen. I can't imagine 21cm silvers being much good for anything unless it is pet food.

### **Bream Spawning**

Generally I support the closure of all rivers with bream populations during the spawning season, and I believe commercial netting should be banned within 1 kilometre of the mouth of rivers for three months covering the river spawning period. Finally whilst I have no scientific data to support my opinion, my observation of seagrass in the Gippsland lakes over the last three years would suggest a decline of 70%

### **Editor**

Thanks to Ron for these observations and for the details of his experience with Southern Blue Spot flathead or yanks. This provides a considerable amount of information on a fish that has had little recognition from authorities or recreational anglers as being a sporting fish of the Gippsland Lakes. Obviously we have little understanding of the life and movements of the yank flathead, and in many meetings on habitat and fish assessments I have never heard the Southern Blue Spot Flathead mentioned in relation to local estuaries. This raises the possibility of Southern Blue Spot flathead in Lake Tyers.? I also wonder are many of these fish being caught and identified as a light coloured dusky flathead? Out of interest I asked a number of estuary and river anglers could they identify a “yank” flathead, and not one was able to provide any identification for this fish and many had never heard of the species. The issue of the yank flathead has raised a number of questions and few answers.

### **A Rare Fish**

Ron Brymer also provided this fascinating estuary perch photograph showing a fish of 44cms with a strange dorsal fin configuration, and he raised the question “I wonder if any of your readers have seen something similar?”



I went to Frank Milito who has provided information for “Around the Jetties” in the past to get a comment on this photo. Frank has worked with estuary perch and bass in recent years in the “Bass Project” as well as conducting a Catch and Release fishing charter

Frank commented, “This is an interesting photograph and the fish held by Ron Brymer is almost certainly a hybrid estuary perch. It is somewhat rare today to catch a perch that is not a hybrid as it appears about 80% of estuary perch are hybrids. There is now anecdotal evidence that hybrid bream may be occurring in some waters as a result of cross breeding between black bream and southern or yellow fin bream. The overlarge dorsal fin on this perch would appear to be a growth deformity, and I have not seen this in any other fish, even whilst dealing with hundreds of perch and bass during the recent Bass Project. This would have been a deformity from initial spawning and I would think that this would be extremely rare.”

## **Editor**

I would be interested in comments from other readers, regarding hybridisation between black and yellow fin bream. Amongst my papers I found a scientific paper by S.J.Rowland (1984), in which he gives examples of hybridisation, however at the time of the study he says this only appears “in the unusual environmental condition of closed lakes,” and cites the Wallaga Lake near Narooma where this hybridisation has taken place. In this study he looked at 46 bream in the Gippsland Lakes, of which 4 were yellow fin but makes no specific comment about hybrid bream in this water. 7 bream were scientifically identified as hybrids and all came from Wallaga Lake, however a number of fish shared similar characteristics but could not be positively identified as hybrid bream. Given this work it is quite possible that more hybridisation has taken place since that original study. I would also be interested to publish any information that updates the Rowland research of 1984.

## **Silver Trevally Minimum Size Change**

Readers would recall that in issue 29 we questioned the reduction in the minimum size of silver trevally so soon after the new regulations were introduced, and the grounds for that size reduction. In a press release it was stated recreation anglers had been consulted on this change. I am still unaware as to who represented recreational anglers in any discussion with Fisheries Victoria on the reduction in minimum size of silver trevally. I feel sure that if VRFish had been involved in discussions on this matter they would have sought angler’s views, and published details in the monthly newsletter. Who represented recreational anglers and supported the change remains a mystery to recreational anglers.

## **Comments of the Concerned Angler**

The “Concerned Angler” is a keen recreational angler who voluntarily works towards the preservation of our fish stocks and writes occasional contributions for this publication which are valued. He writes-

### **Seagrass**

I agree the lack of accumulated seagrass around the waterline is clear and strong evidence of the poor condition of the seagrass meadows. The Lakes Entrance end of the lakes is barren of grasses both in the water and around the tide line even with the threatening high water in the streets of lakes in early October there was no dump of seagrasses after the severe winds. I am tipping that the poor availability is also directly related to the loss of seagrasses. Perhaps we should be protecting the seagrass areas that remain by banning anchoring of boats or haul netting over existing seagrass beds. I find it interesting that both Lake Tyers and Mallacoota are also largely devoid of seagrass, and this suggests the need for research in the three areas. It is pleasing to see the Gippsland Taskforce using snapshots to monitor fish stocks and seagrass but it is a longbow to suggest there is a recovery at hand. It is important that monitoring of the lakes continues on a regular basis.

### **Clarity of Water**

What has appeared over this winter is a great clarity of water. With water clarity measured on a seechi disc down to 5.6 metres it is little wonder the fish are easily spooked. It would be valuable to understand the reasons for this unusual clarity. Perhaps this is associated with the 2007 fires and the fallout of carbon and bearing in mind carbon is used to purify water, then this may be a possible cause. Again we need some basic research.

### **Black Bream**

I believe that black bream really need protection, as they have become an iconic recreational fishing species under great pressure and sadly our fisheries policy makers have seen the continued and dramatic decline in the annual bream harvest by commercial and recreational fishers and not seen the need to make the changes really necessary. I do not support generic closures because other species such as flathead, luderick, trevally and tailor overlap with bream during this proposed closure, and such a closure would have major ramifications for eco-tourism. In Lake Tyers spawning is geographically variable from year to year and is not restricted to above Burnt Bridge. I consider other strategies could be applied first and if the bag was reduced to 5 fish daily, this would have an impact on less

fish being harvested by recreational anglers. By having an upper size limit of 37cm this strategy would protect the aggregations of vulnerable large breeding fish. Other steps could involve a “no take” bream fishery for a designated three-month period and finally to declare some areas “wilderness areas” where recreational fishers are able to have a 2 fish bag limit.

### **Trevally Regulations**

The change in silver trevally legal minimum size limit seems to place at risk the consultation process when one recognises 23cm was a well-consulted change, and it seems strange that 10 commercial licence holders can bring such pressure to bear that without any consultation the minimum size limit is reduced. Like you said in issue 29, I sure hope this is not a sign of things to come.

### **Southern Blue Spot Flathead**

Whilst live baiting in the Gippsland Lakes from the late 1980's. I had caught occasional blue spot flathead but the numbers were not great, and they probably made up less than 1% of the flathead catch. Perhaps the numbers have increased with increasing salinity or maybe soft plastics are a better tool for catching them.

### **Editor**

Thanks to the writer for his comments on a number of matters raised in previous issues of this newsletter. The suggestion of a 3 month “no take” bream fishery in designated areas would vary little from a closed season on black bream during spawning if the designated areas were the rivers. Making other species open to anglers, during a closure would reduce the economic effects of a closed bream season in the rivers... In Lake Tyers the variable spawning areas might mean a different approach is necessary to protect fish stocks. The 37cm upper size limit is a sound proposal providing that same regulation applies to commercial fishermen in the Gippsland Lakes. (This was tried in 1997 when recreational anglers could only have 2 fish over 37cms in their bag.) Dr MacDonald, Manager of Bays and Inlets said this was for “social reasons.” This was not applied to commercial fishermen and recreational anglers felt the limitation only provided commercial fishermen with access to larger fish. Fisheries Victoria soon withdrew this regulation, after recreational anglers made their concerns known.” Currently recreational anglers have willingly accepted a five fish bag limit for dusky flathead, with only one fish over 60cms. Surprisingly no such limitation is placed on commercial netters.

### **A Thought**

The regulation limiting commercial netting within 400 metres of the mouths of rivers entering the Gippsland Lakes was introduced in 1962. Perhaps after almost 50 years and a massive decline in black bream, this regulation should again be examined again, particularly as there appears to be evidence that black bream are entering the rivers to spawn in increasing numbers, given the increasing salinity of the Gippsland Lakes.

The 400 metre limit was extended to 500 metres from the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2003 to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2004. This meant the extended 100 metre for commercial netting at the mouth of rivers was in place for 44 days. Some might consider this a token act and wonder if it was deemed effective why it was not permanently introduced given the commercial catch in 2003/4 had dropped to a mere 28 tonnes. I think most anglers would approve a 6-800 metre no netting zone at the mouth of rivers to protect black bream as they enter the rivers to spawn.

### **Is This Overkill?**

Recently I received as a research angler some sheets from the Department of Primary Industry dealing with the approved method of euthanasing a fish that has been captured. The recommended method was a clubbing administered in a single heavy blow “to the dorsal area of the skull” and this should be followed by “exsanguination” by decapitating or severing the aorta during the stunned period. Accompanying this document was a draft protocol, for short term handling of fish in the field that could be applied to anglers who use live fish bait. Whilst recreational anglers should be aware of the best procedures for euthenasing fish, recreational angler organisations should also be aware of the proposals being put forward and possible impacts on the anglers who fish using live bait. The next step to ban live bait would seem to easily follow what has been put forward in these documents. Of course trout anglers have been known for years for humane killing of fish caught, using a wooden club called a “priest,” and they regard this act as respecting the fish that has given them wonderful sport. Perhaps all anglers might consider this approach.

### **Early Days on the Gippsland Lakes**

“There were few professional fishermen about (They were mostly at the 1914-18 war) and only a few motor boats, so that big yellow tail, salmon, and skipjack etc. on the surface with luderick, bass, bream, and snapper etc. on the bottom were plentiful and easy to catch. Of course the return of professional fishermen and **the crab plague from 1920 destroyed all that.**”

Written by L.Fell 1930 and published in “The Story of Metung” G. Halstead.



## Road to the Mouth of the Tambo

The Department of Primary Industry have contacted me to indicate they will try to obtain funding to grade this road as an interim step, with the aim of obtaining further funding next year to redevelop the road. Readers may recall that in 1995 several thousand trees were grown in our backyard and planted by Johnsonville primary school students to the mouth of the river. The Johnsonville Angling Club obtained funds to upgrade the road, and the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority carried this out. Since 1995 almost no maintenance has been carried out and the road has deteriorated. This road would provide wonderful fishing access for the elderly as a car can be driven within metres of the river, and upgrading this road would provide more river access than building ten fishing platforms.

## Population Growth and Recreational Angling

In recent months there has been considerable discussion on the suggested population growth that would give Australia a population of 35 million by 2050. Nowhere have I heard any discussion of what needs to be done to cater for a recreational fishery with that population or in the immediate years ahead as the population grows. Some basic facts provide reasons to be concerned for the future. In the twelve months prior to May 2000 an estimated 3.6 million Australians went fishing at least once and this represented a national participation rate of 19.6%. In Australia more than 511,000 boats with a capital value of \$3.3 billion were used for recreational fishing in the 12 months prior to May 2000 and in that year alone the expenditure on recreational fishing boats was \$940 million. Now given an increasing expenditure on boats at least equal to 2000, imagine the number of boats using estuarine waters and bays in the years ahead and the increasing pressure on access to ramps for these boats. Now add to this mix the fact that in 2000 the most fished species in each state was flathead whilst in Victoria over 3 million flathead, one million whiting and 500,000 bream and salmon were the main recreational species targeted by recreational anglers. There is little doubt that flathead and bream are under severe threat now so one can only imagine what the future holds for these species and recreational angling in Victoria. It would seem critical that in any discussion on recreational fishing the need for maintaining the threatened stocks should be the starting point of that consideration.

**Facts from “A Survey of Recreational and Indigenous Fishing in Australia 2001-2002”**

**Expenditure on boats and trailers in Victoria in 2000 amounted to \$159 million and Victorian anglers spent \$34 million on fishing gear and \$8.3 million on bait, and another \$8 million on licences and other fees. Some economists have suggested that these figures may have doubled in the last nine years.**

## Fisheries Victoria Information on European Shore Crabs

I have received information from Julia Menzies Acting Senior Fisheries Management Officer providing additional information on European Shore crabs. (Detailed issue 29) She states that the species has been in Victorian waters since the 1890's and is well established in waters east of Apollo Bay. She also states that recently there has been an increase in the commercial catch of the species in the Gippsland Lakes and according to Julia it is not clear whether this is due to an increase in numbers or the development of a small commercial fishery.

At this stage Fisheries Victoria will not be listing the species as noxious or implementing any restrictions on its take. The reasons given are that it is believed there is a low risk of spread, and the marketing of this crab might help in its removal. It was also stated the species is used as bait in the recreational sector and this is another reason to take no action on the crab in the lakes. NSW recently implemented a declaration making it an offence to possess live European crabs.

### **Editor**

Whilst accepting Fisheries Victoria's approach to the European Shore Crab, anecdotal information seems to suggest the numbers of European Shore Crabs have greatly increased in the Gippsland Lake. Perhaps at the very least research should be undertaken on the effects of these crabs on the fish food chain, seagrass growth, and fish spawning and also on seagrass in the Gippsland Lakes. There is currently great pressure on fish stocks and to ignore the possible impact of these crabs may be a totally unacceptable risk given the history of crabs in the lakes and the past effects on seagrass and fish numbers of crabs. Regarding the use of these crabs for bait, this has only occurred with the almost total collapse in the availability of spider crab, shrimp, sandworm and shell, which have been the traditional baits for anglers fishing the Gippsland Lakes in the last 100 years. Twelve months ago European Shore Crabs were not used for bait and most anglers were totally unaware of the European Shore Crab. I find it a little worrying that NSW treats these crabs as noxious and makes it an offence to possess them, whilst

Victoria in reality does nothing. Whilst these crabs are different to the red crabs of the 1920's, we should be examining their effect on a stressed lake system.

### **The Effect of Crabs in the 1920's on the Gippsland Lakes**

**“The appearance of the “red crab” about 1920 had much to do with critically altering the conditions for fishing** in the lakes causing some species to disappear and others to take their place. In addition there was still urgent need to control netting in the lakes and to enforce the closure of certain areas to all fishing.”

Source –The Tambo Shire Centenary History John.D.Adams

## **East Gippsland Fisheries Management Plan**

The public meetings of anglers to discuss matters associated with the East Gippsland Fisheries Management Plan are underway, and it is clear that the level of interest among recreational anglers is not high with an average of 10 anglers attending each meeting. (After 3 meetings) This has not been helped with poor advertising and mistakes with advertised dates. The meeting at Bairnsdale was advertised on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October instead of November, and this was published in local papers, the VRFish monthly news and in the Fish Fax and was not noticed until I brought it to the attention of Fisheries Victoria on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October. A correction had not been made by the 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Anglers could obtain copies of a survey form from the Internet, but many anglers do not have access to computer facilities. The actual survey lacks any depth and questions provided would add little to knowledge of problems associated with fisheries management issues in East Gippsland. Finally some members of the steering committee have missed multiple meetings, and I find it difficult to understand how they will understand the recreational angler views. Perhaps in the final report the attendance of steering committee members at public meetings and steering committee meetings should be published. I think it is also important that the number of verbal and written submissions is listed in the final report. Finally I have not discovered where any submissions from anglers have been requested or where they should be sent. This has not been a good exercise in public relations and any report is only as good as the information it is based on.

## **Bass and the Snowy River**



Considerable talk took place at the Orbost meeting of anglers discussing the East Gippsland Fisheries Management Plan on the bass situation in the Snowy River. I indicated that the Catchment Management Authority had released over 100,000 bass fingerlings into the Snowy and many locals seemed surprised at this information, whilst Fisheries suggested the figure was closer to 60,000.

In issue (27 July 2009) of this newsletter I published the following.

(This publication reported on the purchase and release of **100,000 Bass** fingerlings in the Snowy River by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. In 2007 the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority suggested 80,000 Bass would be stocked in the NSW section of the Snowy River in 2007 with a further 170,000 Bass by 2009 being put in that section, whilst up to 250,000 Bass were planned to be stocked in the 150 km Victorian section of the river. It was stated that the Southern Rivers Authority for the NSW section of the river would purchase Australian Bass in the last issue.)

I checked with the CMA and the figure I provided was correct, but more importantly tenders have now been called for the further purchase of between 120 and 150,000 bass fingerlings for release in the Victorian section of the Snowy River bringing the total release in the Victorian section to around a quarter of a million fingerlings, and if Southern Rivers NSW meet their target this will mean half a million bass stocked in the Snowy River. It seems obvious that more publicity needs to be provided to anglers and Fisheries Victoria on the bass-restocking program

conducted by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. I understand each fingerling costs about \$1 so the cost of this restocking is substantial.

## Local Concerns at Bemm River

I talked with Dave Sturgess proprietor of Bemm Holiday Accomodation and he indicated that the Bemm River had an excellent run of black bream and the lake itself was the healthiest it had been in several years, however he was most concerned at the “massacre’ of black bream taking place in the river. He indicated that mounds of fish guts were being left on the bank of the river, and tragically most of the fish being taken were spawning fish, and this could impact on the future of the Bemm River recreational fishing. As a result all twenty locals who attended the East Gippsland Fisheries Management meeting actively supported closure of the river to all angling in September and October. The Bemm community is to be congratulated for taking this stand.

## Editor

It is to be hoped these concerns are taken into account. In both the Lake Tyers and Mallacoota Management plans anglers had put forward a case for closures in recognised spawning areas, however in the final reports the following was stated, “Closed seasons were not being considered due to the lack of scientific data and since the removal of commercial fishing, fishing pressure has been reduced.” Of course this takes no account of the greatly increased recreational fishing pressure in both waters but particularly in Lake Tyers. A recreational anglers’ advisory group could have provided this information to the steering committees for Mallacoota and Lake Tyers as well as other information that would have made the final reports more relevant to anglers.

## Worth Recalling

Some of our readers will recall the name Alf Dunbavin Butcher who was the first Director of Fisheries in Victoria He was the first biologist appointed to the Fisheries and Game Department (1941) and his first major project was a study of black bream in the Gippsland Lakes. In 1949 his title of Chief Inspector was changed to Director and with this act Alf Dunbavin Butcher became the first Director of Fisheries and Wildlife. The following was taken from a summary of his report on black bream.

“In 1945 Dunbavin Butcher reported that bream fisheries in the Gippsland Lakes had declined by 95% in 25 years. During World War 1 there were large catches in the Lakes with a peak year in 1919 when the catch was 432 tons reduced to 19 tons in 1940. He commented on the loss of the valuable Zostera seagrass beds, attacked by crabs and affected by salination, and was critical of overfishing and the use of mesh netting, which he believed should be prohibited. Cormorants were also a problem as they could more easily catch the fish when there was no weed for the fish to hide in.”

**Dunbavin Butcher’s report of 1945 could just as easily apply to the Gippsland Lakes today.**

This item was taken from “The Tambo Shire Centenary History” by John.D.Adams

## A Rare Find

I had a call from an excited Frank Milito the other day. His mother had attended a local auction and for 50 cents purchased a box of old fishing gear, which she passed on to Frank. When he had a look at the bits and pieces he was amazed to find an 1896 Hardy fly fishing reel in the box. For collectors this is a very valuable find and Frank is contacting Hardy’s of England to get more information on this reel. The trim on the reel is brass and Frank believes that when this is polished the reel will be quite eye catching. We will report on the history of this reel as more information comes to hand.



## **Recreational Fishing Licence Revenue**

Until relatively recently, recreational fishing licence funds were allocated to projects based on recommendations made by the Fisheries Revenue Allocation Committee (FRAC). As many would know, the FRAC has been abolished and is being replaced by a new group, entitled the Recreational Fishing Grants Working Group (RFGWG). Like the FRAC, the RFGWG will advise the Victorian Government on how fishing licence fees should be allocated to recreational fishing projects. The new Group has six members who are assessed as having collective knowledge of coastal, estuarine, freshwater native fish and salmonid (trout and salmon) recreational fisheries, and the Port Phillip Bay, South West, North East, North West, East Gippsland, West Gippsland and regions. Additionally, there is provision for one member of the group who is able to provide advice that is reflective or representative of the views of the Victorian recreational fishing business sector, such as the tackle trade, fishing guides, charter operators and the like. The new arrangements have the potential to improve the process of allocating recreational fishing licence revenues, but this will have to be assessed over time. The old arrangements were not as effective as they could have been for a number of reasons. Some members of the FRAC were not actually recreational fishers; the FRAC processes were subject to political interference at times; and the FRAC's governance processes left a lot to be desired. We wish the new body well for its future deliberations on behalf of recreational fishers and we will maintain an active interest in its progress.

Inserted with the kind permission of

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## **Fishing Platforms**

### **Meeting with East Gippsland Shire Officers 15/9/2009**

This meeting followed concerns raised by reader the late Don Jolley AM in January 2008. The added concerns of one of our elderly readers who cannot use the fishing platforms built by the Shire at the Eastwood Estate, as he has to walk more than 800 metres to access these platforms and carry all his fishing gear. The platforms are also inaccessible for handicapped anglers due to the 800-metre walk. I met with Ms Donna Mraz Rural Access Project Officer, Mr Ian Bate Environmental Officer, Mr Lee Holmes Community Program Coordinator, and Mr Graham Reeve Marine and Jetty Officer for an hour on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October to discuss improving access to fishing platforms for aged and handicapped anglers and to perhaps get vehicle access to the platforms. I believe this meeting achieved little and I will list some of the points that came out of that discussion several of which I found disturbing.

1. The shire acknowledged responsibility for six fishing platforms, however the Marine and Jetty Officer stated he had no idea where the Eastwood fishing platforms were located and was not sure about the others...
2. The Shire Environmental Officer stated a road to the Eastwood Platforms could not be constructed because of construction difficulties and by opening this area up it would create enforcement and vehicle control problems. This ruling meant elderly and handicapped anglers were precluded from using these fishing platforms.
3. It was acknowledged the platforms on Clifton Creek were built at the request of residents of the Eastwood estate, and whilst adding to the ambience of the estate, the platforms with the 800-metre walk to access them hardly provide for the anglers of the community.
4. There are no Shire platforms on the Tambo River despite the popularity of this river with tourists and local anglers. The Shire could provide no information on platforms built by others on the east bank of the Tambo River. The Shire is attempting to find out who built and who approved these platforms on the Tambo River.
5. A request has been made by the WyYung Angling Club for a platform to be constructed close to its clubrooms, and it was suggested that after meetings club members would use the platform, and Mr Bate indicated the Shire had applied for funding for this project.
6. It was suggested by the Shire officers that a strategic plan should be developed for the future construction of fishing platforms and I take this to mean that angling clubs would be consulted on the placement of platforms in the future, and I simply wonder why this has not taken place in the past where anglers licence fees have provided those funds.

In conclusion I was informed I would receive a letter outlining the areas of discussion. (A month has passed and no letter has yet been received.) My feeling was the matter of fishing platforms placement and responsibility for the platforms needs urgent investigation. The Catchment Management Authority accepts responsibility for the two platforms on the west bank of the Tambo above the highway bridge, but both platforms are unsuitable for



wheelchair or handicapped persons. There are some excellent fishing areas on the Mitchell River suitable for the handicapped but the Shire was unable to indicate who built them or who is responsible for maintenance.



An example of a good Fishing Jetty on the Mitchell River but who constructed it and who financed it?

## Merry Xmas

On behalf of Dawn, who does the editing and handles the emails, and myself, we wish all our readers a very Merry Xmas. The next copy of Around the Jetties will be in January-February so until then good fishing. Thanks also to the many anglers who have contributed to this news sheet.



**Early Morning Black Fellows Arm of Lake Tyers**  
**Original oil painting by L.G.Barr (What I do when I can't go fishing)**

We can provide a large print version of "Around the Jetties" to any reader having problems with the size of the print. Remember your contributions to this newsletter are welcomed.

**Good health and good fishing**  
**Lynton Barr**

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author unless otherwise acknowledged. MATERIAL FROM THIS NEWSLETTER MAY BE REPRODUCED BUT IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF THE AUTHOR AND PUBLICATION WERE NOTED

