



**Lynton.G.Barr**  
**P.O.Box 23**  
**Swan Reach 3903**  
**Victoria**  
**Phone 03 5156 4674**  
**Email-**  
**[delbarr1@bigpond.com](mailto:delbarr1@bigpond.com)**

# **Around the Jetties**

## **No 34**

### **June Issue 2010**

**“ The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of something that is elusive but attainable. A perpetual series of occasions for hope.”**

John Buchan 1875-1940

#### **Editorial**

This edition of “Around the Jetties” provides a diversity of information including the summary of two Fisheries Victoria reports and a statement on salinity from Gippsland Ports, which adds to the information that is available on this matter of concern. There is also an article on the introduction of English Perch to this state, and hopefully this will bring back memories of those early days of fishing when the redfin was one of the most sought after fish. It is also worth remembering that the Ballarat Hatchery played a major role in introducing the English Perch to Victoria. That hatchery still plays a major role in fisheries in this state and today is working on the possible restocking of native blackfish, which once inhabited most streams in this state. We will return to the matter of native blackfish in future issues.

#### **The Good Old days**

The following was taken from a booklet published in 1886, and brought to my attention by Roger Keogh of Swan Reach. This provides anglers of today of what the Gippsland lakes were like for fish 120 years ago. Today the total commercial catch of estuary perch amounts to around one tonne per annum total catch and in some years the catch of estuary perch in the Gippsland lakes is too small to be registered. The following provides a vastly different picture.

“On October 1<sup>st</sup> 1885, Mr William Carstairs, a well known and respected fisherman, took 107 baskets of fish principally perch in one haul equal in weight to about 4000 lbs and worth 70-80 pounds. We were informed that up the North Arm 160 baskets chiefly bream and perch were taken at once near Hunters Bay, which is a little further up than Beauchamp’s Point.”

**Our Guide to the Lakes and Rivers of Gippsland 1886**

#### **The Humble English Perch.**

In 1648 in the book the Compleat Angler the author **Izaak Walton** wrote, “The perch is a very good and a very bold biting fish.... Yet he will not bite at all seasons of the year; he is very abstemious in winter.”

Anglers have sought that bold English Perch described by Walton for more than 400 years whilst in Australia they have provided sport for anglers since 1868.

In the sixties redbfin and trout provided all year round fishing in Lake Eildon and many other state waters, and the redbfin was regarded as one of the most important recreational fish in this state. Today Lake Eildon is stocked with native fish and between December 2008 and May 2009 50,000 Murray cod and 233,500 Golden Perch were released, and there have been additional substantial releases since then but still redbfin can be caught in this water.

Last month I read an article in a fishing magazine (Victorian Fishing Monthly) describing trophy type redbfin recently caught in the Khancoban pondage, and memories of my early redbfin fishing days in Lake Eildon came flooding back when I saw the photos that illustrated this article. I would imagine that many of the readers of Around the Jetties would remember their early days of fishing and the targeting of the humble English Perch and would be delighted to see perch of this quality still available to recreational anglers, although I doubt we will ever experience redbfin fishing like we did in the post 1945 period.

Redfin were brought to Victoria in 1868 and six small redbfin were placed in Kirks Reservoir near Ballarat. These fish quickly multiplied and within a couple of years their progeny were introduced to many Victorian waters including Lake Wendouree and they were the source of some amazing fishing. Ballarat became the major distributing centre for perch on the Australian mainland. It is thought perch were introduced to NSW in the early 1880's when perch were released into Lake George near Canberra. Interestingly English Perch have done well across this state with the exception of Gippsland where the species is rare. They were introduced to New Zealand from Ballarat, but they never thrived and most populations appear to be stunted and thus they have never attracted anglers, but this is not hard to understand given the excellent trout fishing in both the north and south islands. When the silver wobbler first appeared on the shelves of fishing shops (about 1946) as a boy I would use this lure in the lagoons along the Ovens River near Wangaratta, and I and other young anglers had amazing results with this lure on redbfin. I suppose most anglers still have a silver wobbler in their bag, and use it on a variety of fish including trout, tailor and salmon, the only difference from the original wobbler is it now comes in a variety of weights and sizes.

The humble redbfin was the fish that initially attracted many young anglers to a lifetime of recreational fishing, and these same young anglers later developed their expertise to enjoy the vast variety of fishing experiences that are offered to anglers today. The last day I had fishing for redbfin was about 1990 on the Melbourne Cup day holiday. Dawn and I fished from our boat on a very still Lake Mokoan. On that morning we brought home four good sized English Perch. Today even Lake Mokoan no longer exists, and its demise with a tragic loss of fish including large cod was a story brought to readers by this publication that brought little credit to any of the parties involved, apart from a group of recreational anglers attempting to save some of the dying cod. Whilst fishing might change the memories remain of those past days and I guess it's the same for most readers, and for many of us, the humble redbfin has provided some of those great memories. I emailed Fishing Monthly to see if I could obtain permission to use the redbfin photographs quoted in this article, but unfortunately never had a reply from that publication.

### **Odd Spot**

I was cleaning out the lunch bag that I take in my boat for my morning fishing excursions when I found a number of "Uncle Tobys apricot muesli bars". They had been in the bag for some time, well probably a year or more. I looked at the use by date and found this somewhat difficult, as it seemed to be in Chinese. On looking at the small print I found a company in Singapore imported the bars and Goodman Fielder in Hong Kong produced the bar. And yes it had a "Made In Australia from local and imported ingredients." notice on the packet. Now I'm really confused. From here on I'm taking home made Anzac biscuits for my morning snack.

### **Catching Seahorses at Lakes Entrance**

A 25 year old Reservoir man, Yang Yu pleaded guilty in the Magistrates Court to taking two Pot-Bellied Seahorses while fishing for sand crabs using a hoop net in the Gippsland Lakes on January 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year. Fisheries Officers released the seahorses but they were not expected to survive after being kept in an esky with sand crabs for a considerable period of time. The Magistrate said the species needed protection but it could not be presumed the seahorses had died as they had been released back into the water. No conviction was recorded against Mr Yu however he was ordered to pay \$400 to the court fund.

### Dusky Flathead Important to Mallacoota Anglers.

Recreational Fishing Grants provided \$30,000 to fund a recreational survey of Mallacoota Inlet. Interviews with over 1,000 anglers indicated that dusky flathead had become the most important component of the summer catch of boat based anglers making up 74% of the catch. During autumn dusky catch rates decreased and black bream and tailor became more prominent. In winter and spring catches of Australian salmon by shore-based anglers were substantial making up half their catch. 80% of anglers surveyed stated they were satisfied with their fishing experience at Mallacoota. In the future data collected by anglers contributing to the diary program will be important in assessing the impact of fishing on black bream and dusky flathead stocks in Mallacoota inlet.

**Source Angler Diary Quarterly Newsletter Issue 5 March 2010.**

### Lake Boga

In Around the Jetties 33, I indicated that Geoff Cramer VRFish Chairman had announced at the VRFish Habitat Seminar on March 13th that water would be released by Murray Goulbourn Water for Lake Boga, which had been dry since 2007 after a substantial fish kill, when water flow to the lake was cut off by Murray Goulbourn Water. Geoff Cramer at the Habitat Seminar urged immediate restocking of the lake. It now appears that currently no restocking will take place as there has been no long term guarantee of water flow by Murray Goulbourn Water and the initial flow will do little more than dampen the floor of the lake, although it was noted a few native fish did enter the lake in that initial flow. Given the original fish kill in 2007 the position of Fisheries Victoria with regard to restocking is understandable. In March in a media release “VRFish chairman Geoff Cramer congratulated the Victorian Government and Goulbourn Murray Water for their initiative in filling the lake and recognizing its significant social and economic value to the community.” Perhaps the social and economic benefits and the economic value of recreational fishing have not been fully recognised at this time.

### Artificial Reefs

Artificial reefs in Port Phillip Bay have been rapidly colonised in particular by snapper and flathead, according to Fisheries Victoria research. The three reefs were installed in May 2009 so species acceptance of the reefs has been rapid. The overall assessment of the reefs will be concluded in March 2011. Similar reefs may be an option for Bancroft Bay and other areas of the Gippsland Lakes.

**Source-Fish Fax February 2010**

### Working Together

I recently had a call from a couple of anglers who are readers of this publication. They had an afternoon out from Werribee fishing, and had a mixed bag that included salmon (3); Whiting (1), Flathead (2) and they had 3 gummy sharks. They had released 6-7 gummy sharks and they had also released 11-12 banjo sharks. Whilst the area fished was choppy they felt they had a satisfying and enjoyable afternoons fishing, but that was about to change.

On returning to the launching ramp they were met by two fisheries officers, and both anglers felt this was good to see. The officers proceeded to measure the catch. All fish were size with the exception of one of the gummies that was 2cms undersize. Both anglers were totally surprised at this, as the gummy had been measured against a DSE fish size sticker on the side of the boat by one angler holding the fish whilst the other applied the measurement and they could only conclude that the boat movement, due to the chop, and movement of the freshly caught fish had caused the error, and that maybe the fish had been measured from a gill slit other than the rear most. That was the only conclusion they could draw after applying a careful measuring procedure.

The angler who had caught the gummy was given an immediate formal caution, “Your not obliged to say anything but anything you do say may be taken down and used as evidence,” and then followed an interview at the jetty regarding the matter

One of the officers then suggested that the smaller of the two legal fish would barely supply a fillet and should not have been kept either although it was of legal size. After being interviewed the angler who had caught the fish was given a further lecture about the keeping of undersize fish even though both anglers clearly stated they had taken all precautions to ensure the fish was not undersize, and there were no other undersize fish in the bag. The angler was then advised that a check would be conducted of the Fisheries Data Base and if there were no offences recorded he would be given a formal warning, which would be sent to him in the mail. If a conviction were recorded he would receive a fine of \$350 for taking an undersize fish. The offending fish was then confiscated.

## Editor

Now all actions of the Fisheries Officers were legitimate, even if a trifle heavy handed, it just seems to me there must be a better way of approaching anglers and dealing with what was obviously an angler mistake, and certainly could never be considered a deliberate attempt to illegally take an undersize fish. Both anglers were completely surprised at the approach taken by the Fisheries Officers remembering in a bag of nine fish covering four varieties, one was 2cms undersize, and the statement that they had released 6-7 undersize gummies and 11-12 banjo sharks was never queried. Christopher Collins, CEO of VRFish suggested the approach adopted by the Fisheries Officers in this case was “using a hammer to crack a nut.” I have the greatest respect for Fisheries Officers, and the important work they undertake, and have always had great assistance from them and I am sure this report in no way represents the approach of most compliance officers

## Deception By Anglers

Now the following is premeditated deception and not angler mistake. Fisheries Officers on April 10<sup>th</sup> charged two men with exceeding the bag limit for snapper when an esky containing 16 snapper with 14 more than 40cms. They attempted to avoid Fisheries Officers at St Kilda Marina by unloading at Kerford Road Pier. Athanasios Lazaris appeared at the Melbourne Magistrates Court and was given a six months good behaviour bond without conviction, and ordered to pay \$300 to the Royal Children’s Hospital. One male escaped. This publication congratulates the Fisheries Officers involved, but I do wonder at the lenient sentence

The bag limit for snapper is 10 of which only 3 may exceed 40cms.

## Fisheries Compliance in Victoria.

In Victoria there were approximately 65 Compliance Officers according to the 2008 Fishery Status report and in 2006/7 874-infringement notices were issued in relation to fisheries offences. Abalone, rock lobster and snapper fisheries were the area generating the most prosecutions. It also needs to be remembered that over \$1million or approximately 25% of anglers licence fees goes to finance ten compliance officers. It seems now that this is a permanent charge on the licence fees, which I am sure was never the original intent. Despite this injection of anglers licence money it is suggested that the number of compliance officers is now only 58. (It was 75 in 2003)

In other words the number of inspectors has run down, and as they now work in pairs this has further reduced inspections of anglers bags etc by a further 50%. When was the last time your bag was inspected? From memory in my case it was in 1990 on Lake Mokoan. With the introduction of Marine Parks I understood a further 22 compliance officers were to be employed; however it seems this has not occurred either. It would seem our Fisheries Officers are being asked to undertake more work with less resources and whilst we can be critical at the aggressive approach of a couple of compliance officers, as anglers we can also be aware of the critical need for more Fisheries Officers across this state and given the economic value of recreational angling to this state this should not be a problem and should not rely on the use of anglers licence fees.

**Source Figures of Compliance Officers, Jim Walton Assistant Secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union-from radio interview April 15th**

## Post Mortem Fish Shrinkage

The matter of fish shrinkage was commented on in issue 30 of Around the Jetties and I wondered did fish shrinkage after death apply to gummy sharks. You may recall in late 1999 a commercial fisherman in the Gippsland Lakes when checked by Fisheries Officers was found to have a substantial number of black bream that were just under the legal size limit and as a result he was charged with being in possession of undersize fish. The case was withdrawn on the basis of fish shrinkage after death.

A.K. Morison undertook a study in late 1999 on the “Post Mortem Changes in the Length of Black Bream” which was an internal report for Fisheries Victoria dated December 1999. This research paper supports the proposition of fish shrinkage after death and indicates the average shrinkage on a sample of 71 black bream was 5.00mm after 24 hours. Importantly for recreational anglers the rate of shrinkage within one to two hours of capture was 2.5mm. The treatment of fish and whether they were iced or not had little effect on the rate of shrinkage. This report indicates that fish within 5mm of legal length have a high probability of shrinking below legal length within 24 hours.

Mr Ross Winstanley, Manager of Recreational Fisheries Victoria at that time indicated that the Morison paper “appeared to influence the outcome of this case” namely undersize bream. He went on to state “the outcomes of this case would be made available to commercial fishermen through the Seafood Victoria

Newsletter” and stated similar advice **had not** been prepared for recreational anglers, which in itself was strange. At that time in discussion it was also agreed that shrinkage would apply to other species including native fish.

Mr Winstanley in a letter dated 5th January 2001 stated that “Fisheries Officers will exercise discretion in this area, fishers should make allowance for the possibility of shrinkage occurring in bream.” I have seen no information on fish shrinkage provided to recreational anglers despite specific information being provided to commercial fishermen, and it would seem somewhat difficult for recreational anglers to make any allowance for shrinkage when the majority are totally unaware of the issue of post mortem shrinkage in fish. This would seem to be a problem that has no definitive answer for the recreational fishing community and has been ignored by Fisheries Victoria.

### **Fishing Platforms and Slow Progress**

I received a letter on the 31<sup>st</sup> March this year from the East Gippsland Shire following my meeting with the Shires relevant officers on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The Shire officer was able to indicate that the Shire-

1. Was responsible for the maintenance of the fishing areas on the Silt Jetties of the Mitchell River.
2. The Shire had not been able to ascertain who is responsible for fishing platforms on the Tambo River after six months, and therefore no planning permit investigations have been carried out for platforms on the Tambo and no maintenance.

Readers will remember the issue of fishing platforms was raised with this publication by the late Don Jolley AM, a handicapped angler in May, 2008, and the Eastwood platforms by a 78 year old angler who could not access those platforms despite the fact they were built by the East Gippsland Shire with anglers licence funds. No vehicle access was allowed for the handicapped or aged for the Eastwood Fishing Platforms. We will await with interest information from the Shire as to who is responsible for other fishing platforms, particularly those on the Tambo River. I understand from personal enquiry that the two fishing platforms above the Highway Bridge on the Tambo River were constructed by the Catchment Management Authority, and neither has vehicle access or ramps for handicapped and elderly anglers.

### **Gummy Shark Now a Sustainable Fishery**

Gummy sharks are one of the most sought after fish by both surf anglers and boat fishermen, and for sometime there were fears that the stock of this fish and school shark was under threat. Intensive monitoring and research has led to a sustainable and well-managed fishery. Commercial net regulations in Victoria ensure juvenile gummy sharks are not caught and large breeding females avoid capture and this is vital to the long-term sustainability of the fishery. Most of the targeted commercial shark fishery comes from Port Phillip Bay or Corner Inlet. In Victoria the commercial catch of gummy and school shark is 20 tonnes whilst the recreational catch has a daily bag limit and possession limit of two fish per person.

### **Opera House Nets**

The possession of enclosed yabby pots such as the “Opera House Nets” on or next to Victorian inland waters is illegal, and offenders face fines of up to \$11,300, six months in jail or both, and possible vehicle seizure. Whilst opera house nets successfully trap yabbies according to Fisheries Officer Cameron McCallum they also catch platypus and other mammals that drown when trapped underwater. You can still use these nets in farm dams with a maximum of three nets per person, but Fisheries Victoria suggests hoop nets as an alternative to enclosed yabby traps.

### **Barramundi and the Hazelwood Pondage**

Recently writing in the Feathers and Fur Magazine I stated that stocking of Hazelwood pondage will depend on “Further advice that will be provided to Fisheries Victoria who will ultimately make the final decision on the stocking of the pondage” based on that advice. I had a note from Neil Lawson, Latrobe Valley Public Affairs Officer for Hazelwood International, who indicated that “as owners of the facility that supplies cooling water to Hazelwood,” International Power Hazelwood would make the final decision, and not Fisheries Victoria on the stocking of the pondage. I am sure that is understood by anglers, however I would have thought that Hazelwood would have approved the stocking of the pondage prior to Fisheries Victoria examining the feasibility of introducing a species of fish to that water, and giving approval for their release. This seems rather an exercise in semantics, as Fisheries Victoria will undoubtedly be responsible for approving the stocking of fish in any water, and International Power Hazelwood would ultimately determine whether it approves that stocking taking place in waters under its control.

## **Recreational Fishers to have a Say**

On Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of June a round table forum will be held at **the DPI offices 574 Main St Bairnsdale** where anglers are invited to exchange ideas with Fisheries staff, and consider key issues of concern. Similar evenings are being held around Victoria with the idea of building effective working relationships. A similar meeting will be held in Mallacoota on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June.

## **Salinity in the Gippsland Lakes A Statement from Gippsland Ports May 2010**

Gippsland Ports is aware of public concerns in regard to increasing salinity in the Gippsland Lakes. To establish the facts in regard to this issue Gippsland Ports obtained salinity level records for the Gippsland Lakes from the Environment Protection Authority. (EPA) The recordings are from five sites within the lakes and date from August 1986 until 2009.

As a general trend salinity at all sites remained relatively steady from 1986 until the mid 1990's with a small reduction at some sites. From the mid 1990s until 2009 there has been an overall trend of increasing salinity levels.

Although the trend is upward there is significant variance in the levels with significant peaks and troughs well above and below the trendline. Of significance is the increased level immediately before the 1998 and 2007 floods followed by severe plunges afterward. In fact the salinity level prior to both these events is higher than the present salinity level today.

At Point Tucker site in Lake Wellington the greatest percentage increase in salinity has been recorded. This site is remote from tidal influences and it is proposed the increase in salinity can only be attributable to reducing river flows, evaporation and increased saline runoff.

In regard to the recent Hopper Dredge campaigns undertaken by Gippsland Ports in 2008 and 2009 it is evident there is little correlation between the dredging and salinity levels with the salinity levels both rising and falling after the campaigns.

It is Gippsland Ports position that river inflows and evaporation are the major factors contributing to salinity levels in the Gippsland Lakes.

Andrew Fullard  
Acting CEO May 2010

### **Editor**

I thank Andrew Fullard for supplying this statement to this publication indicating the Gippsland Ports position on the issue of increasing salinity in the Gippsland Lakes.

## **Fisheries Management Plans**

Fisheries Victoria have just published a report indicating the status of key fish stocks in Andersons Inlet, Mallacoota Inlet, Lake Tyers, and the Glenelg and Hopkins River Estuaries. This report is available from Fisheries Victoria, however "Around the Jetties" will provide a summary on the findings for Lake Tyers with added reference to Mallacoota as both waters have largely common key species namely black bream and dusky flathead. Another report, "The Statewide Angler Diary Program" also just released includes the Gippsland Lakes and will be referred to in the next edition of this publication.

Method- Angler diaries were one of the tools used to determine the status of fish stocks, and this was supplemented with the use of research anglers who targeted fish both above and below the legal limit. This was seen as a cost effective method of monitoring fish stocks, and in particular the key species of individual waters, and was an important part of the Fisheries Management Plans of the named estuaries. It is hoped the findings from the diary program and the research anglers will provide information on angler catchrates, the structure of the fish stocks, the levels of recruitment and the composition of the anglers catch. The availability of this information will aid management today and planning for the future.

### **Lake Tyers.**

During 2002/3- 2008/9 the catch rates of black bream were relatively stable in Lake Tyers ranging from 2-5 fish per angling hour, and this was comparable with both the 5 and 10 year average. There were two successful spawning seasons for black bream 1998/99 and 1999/2000, and these seasons have sustained the bream fishery over the last seven years. During 2008/9 the majority of black bream were greater than 30cms and more than eight years old. Catchrates are expected to decline until the next successful spawning season occurs. Bream caught in Lake Tyers ranged from 11-45cms and ranged from 1-23 years old. Black Bream spawned in 1998/9 dominated the catch in 2003/4 (55%) and 2005/6 (64%) whilst in 2007/8 67% of the catch comprised fish spawned in 1998/9 and 1999/00. The Lake Tyers Black bream fishery has been largely sustained by these two recruitments.

Catchrates of black bream in Mallacoota inlet ranged from 1.87 in 1999/00 to 5.42 in 2004/5 and this was based on the strength of abundant year classes.

### **Dusky Flathead**

Dusky flathead are a fast growing short lived species with the majority of fish caught being between 2 and 4 years old with few fish older than 6 years. During 2008/9 73% of the fish caught were 2-4 years old. Over the last ten years there has been a decline in the proportion of flathead caught by research anglers over 50cms. The majority of fish over 50cms are female. This decline in larger fish may be attributable to increased fishing pressure on large fish in recent years. Further research into dusky flathead in eastern Victorian estuaries is necessary. Catchrates for dusky flathead in Lake Tyers have varied from .5 fish per hour in 1999/00 to 3.8 in 2007/8. Dusky flathead caught in Lake Tyers by research anglers varied from 0-10 years of age.

For Mallacoota Inlet the catchrate for dusky flathead 2008/9 was 4per hour and this was comparable with the five year average of 3 fish per hour.

This research was funded by the Recreational Fishing Grants Program.

Source- Angler Diary Monitoring of recreational Fish in Selected Estuaries, April 2010

Conran.S, Bridge.N, Grixti.D, Ward. M, Stokie. T.

### **Editor**

This report provides valuable information for anglers and helps in gaining an understanding of the factors underlying our sport. For me the working together of anglers in the diary program, and the dedicated research anglers with Fisheries Victoria and the fisheries scientists is an exciting development in fishing in this state. It will be interesting if the current observations by anglers of small bream in Lake Tyers are an indication of a major recruitment of this stock. Certainly based on anecdotal information from anglers the bream catchrate in 2009/10 has been generally well down. This report will make a lot of sense for many anglers and account for the variations in catchrate in Lake Tyers in the last decade. The decline in large dusky flathead in the Lake Tyers recreational catch is also noted and raises concerns that need investigation in the future. Congratulations to the reports authors and all anglers who have contributed with information.

### **Estuary Perch.**

‘Over exploitation by commercial fishermen in the past caused numbers to decline in some parts of its range.

The seasonal closure of estuaries, which prevents tidal inflow, probably has more profound effects than up stream obstructions. (dams etc.)’

A Guide to Freshwater Fish of Victoria. Cadwallader and Backhouse

### **Estuary perch movement and habitat use in the Snowy River**

This study began in October 2003, with the report released in February 2010 and “was funded by the Victorian Government using Recreational Licence Fishing Fees.” The author of the report is John Douglas.

Whilst estuary perch are present in most estuaries along the Victorian coastline, even today many recreational fishers do not catch them. The sporting potential of this species has become better known amongst anglers since the introduction of soft plastics, purpose built boats and fish sounders. This growing awareness of estuary perch has placed additional pressure on the resource. This project aimed to provide information on-

1. The seasonal movements of estuary perch in the Snowy estuary.
2. Short term movement (Daily) of estuary perch in the estuary.
3. The association of the species with particular habitats.

This information would assist Fisheries Managers and researchers on the need for special consideration for the species if required, and the findings in the Snowy estuary are expected to be applicable to other estuaries.

In October 2003 twenty-three estuary perch were caught and while under anaesthetic an acoustic tag was surgically implanted in the abdominal cavity. Nine receivers were placed in the Snowy River upstream from the Marlo Jetty and two in the Brodribb River. The final download of information was taken in December 2005 from the receivers. This covered the long-term movement of estuary perch. As well as this tracking took place from a boat, which allowed the daily movement of fish to be followed. This is a simple summary of the technical recording of the movement of the 23 estuary perch over two years both seasonally and daily.

### **The following is a summary of the results of this interesting project**

- \* Individual perch were found to be highly mobile however no seasonal or tidal influences were evident.
- There was no evidence in this project of movement between estuaries and no fish were suspected of having left the estuary.
- There was a slight trend of perch being in the lower estuary in spring and being further upstream in April-May. Spawning may influence this trend, which in Victoria occurs in November-December.
- All the tagged fish visited the lower estuary while the upper reaches of the Snowy estuary only detected a few fish.
- In daylight hours estuary perch associated with in stream cover or deeper water whilst at night they tend to become mobile and move through the estuary.
- Whilst the Snowy estuary had low levels of tidal movement during the project there was no evidence that tidal movement had impact on the fish being studied and most movement was associated with light levels. (Movement at Night)
- The association of in stream habitat and water depth with estuary perch confirms the importance of such habitat in estuarine systems and may also influence the estuary perch to stay in the lower reaches of the Snowy and Brodribb Rivers.

### **Conclusion**

Cover in the form of snags overhanging trees or deep water is an important habitat feature for perch, and these fish preferred the lower sections of the estuary. No fish travelled into the freshwater sections of the Snowy above Orbost and perch preferred the lower reaches of the Brodribb below Lake Curlip. The estuary perch did not show patterns of seasonal movement or reaction to tidal change, remembering tidal exchange at this time was low due to the fact the entrance to the estuary was restricted by sand.

### **Editor**

The above is my short summary of the final report, and I hope I have provided accurately the major findings of this research project.

**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

### **Late Press Release 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

Three people two men and a woman from Mildura were found guilty in the Melbourne Magistrates Court this week of catching and selling on the Melbourne blackmarket between 5 and 7 tonnes of Murray Cod and golden perch, turning over \$75,000 which the court ordered repaid. This was the culmination of a five year operation by fisheries investigators. This week the woman was placed on a 12 month good behaviour bond and ordered to repay \$27,000 with costs of \$2000. In an earlier hearing a Mildura man was convicted and sentenced to 15 months goal, suspended for two years. He was ordered to pay \$46,810 and costs of \$1500. He was also banned from owning a boat or being on or next to Victorian waters for 10 years. A residential property owned by the Mildura couple was restrained against penalty order for money obtained from the proceeds of crime. A boat and more than 300 items of commercial fishing gear were forfeited.

Congratulations again to Fisheries Victoria. Anglers state wide would applaud this successful action against criminals who are intent on destroying a wonderful sport.