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Around the Jetties

No 35

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With the exception of painting, nothing in this life has held my interest as much as fishing. Fishing with a fly, bait, handline, I don't much care. Fishing in my estimation is not a hobby, a diversion, a pastime, a sport an interest a challenge, or an escape. It is a necessary passion.

Russell Chatham (Dark Waters 1988)

Editorial

This issue has a great variety of reports, however nothing quite matches the suggestion of restocking Lake Tyers with Eastern King prawns. I am quite surprised that with all the publicity emanating from Fisheries Victoria this and similar projects have not been part of a media release providing information and seeking support from the local East Gippsland communities who are avid users of Lake Tyers. Perhaps the report in this publication will commence that discussion. The other point of interest is the suggestion from the local commercial fisherman who is the main crab fisherman, that the current Shore Crab infestation may crush tourism in the Gippsland Lakes, and he also suggests we have a 22,000 tonne crab plague. Such sensationalism does little to advance the debate on the effect of Shore Crabs on our Lakes. What is urgently needed is a scientific study to assess the scope of the problem and the effect of these crabs on the crustaceans, bivalves, shrimp and fish of the system. Finally an excellent report on dusky flathead in Mallacoota provides an insight into this fish in these waters. What I find particularly interesting is the continuing requests from anglers for increased minimum size limits, and the seeming reluctance of Fisheries Victoria to meet these requests. In Victoria the minimum size limit for dusky flathead is 27cms whilst in NSW the minimum size is 40cms and likely to be increased in the near future, and this size limit has been determined with excellent research backing. It occurs to me that whilst it seems extremely difficult to increase the size of dusky flathead in Victoria, there did not seem any difficulty in reducing the silver trevally size limit to a low 22cms when Fisheries Victoria acceded to this request made by commercial fishermen in 2008.

Working Together

In the last issue of *Around the Jetties* (issue 34) I wrote of the two recreation anglers at Werribee one of who had caught a gummy shark 2cms under the legal limit. An attempt was made by the anglers to measure this fish, but in the choppy conditions of the day whilst their measurement seemed to satisfy the legal minimum size the fish was 2cms undersize. This was the type of problem that could happen to any angler and I was critical at the approach of two Fisheries Officers who inspected their bag and found one fish amongst nine including three gummies that was 2cms undersize. The officers approach included issuing an official warning prior to any questioning, and lecturing the anglers as well as indicating they would be undertaking a check to see if they had any previous convictions for taking undersize fish. It would seem obvious that this was a mistake by a couple of recreational anglers who should not have been treated as possible fish thieves. Both anglers had never had a previous conviction for any fish related misdemeanour or for that matter any conviction on any matter. They were a couple of ordinary recreational anglers who made a human mistake.

I had a discussion on this matter with Kevin Brown, State Compliance Manager for Fisheries Victoria, who visited me to at his own initiative to discuss the issue I had raised. This very action of the State Compliance Manager should give great confidence to recreational anglers. Kevin after discussing the matter agreed that the approach of the Fisheries Officers was unusual, and he gave an undertaking to discuss the issue with the staff involved. He agreed the approaches such as described were counter productive to the type of relations that Fisheries Victoria wanted to establish with recreational anglers. In Kevin Brown's words he would hope that "Fisheries Officers would use discretion and common sense in relationships with recreational anglers." With the application of this principle in this case both parties could have been part of a very satisfactory outcome. Kevin Brown indicated that he would be working to develop a common sense approach in the area of compliance, and we as anglers can ask for no better outcome.

Fisheries Officers in Victoria.

In the same *Around the Jetties* I had used some material on numbers of Fisheries Officers in Victoria that had been part of a radio broadcast by Jim Walton Assistant Secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union. It seems the numbers provided in this broadcast were incorrect according to Kevin Brown, and so for the sake of accuracy I publish the following figures, which are currently up to date and supplied by the State Compliance Manager. (20/5/2010)

Uniformed Officers 63. These are spread across Victoria with numbers ranging from six at a number of large Metropolitan stations to two at the inland stations with several variations in between. As well as the above there are four dedicated Operations Managers placed strategically in regional locations.

Investigating Officers- This section of Fisheries Victoria has 11 highly trained specialist investigators, with a further investigator to be appointed in the near future. Currently there is an increasing criminal element targeting Victorian fish stocks. Previously this was largely associated with abalone but now Murray River species are a prime target. It was indicated by Kevin that Murray Cod filets can bring up to \$50 per kilo on the black market. In the last "Around the Jetties" a late press release indicated a small group had taken \$75,000 of Murray cod and sold it on a black market in Melbourne. That is between five and seven tonnes of Murray cod and golden perch were sold on the black market. Whilst successful in this case, investigators working with Fisheries Officers are tackling a growing criminal element that is illegally targeting the iconic fish of the Murray and its tributaries. Kevin Brown also indicated that Fisheries Victoria is looking to modern technology to counter criminals operating in the Murray area. As well as the investigating officers a four-person intelligence unit operates within Fisheries Victoria to obtain and assess intelligence from a variety of sources.

Education Extension Unit has 7-8 officers whose role is to educate the public on many aspects of this states fisheries.

Incorporated within this staff is the added role of supervising the recently declared Marine Parks in this state.

The figures provided here give an up to date indication of the Compliance section of Fisheries Victoria and I thank Kevin Brown State Compliance Manger for the figures and the 1 hour 40 minute discussion over a cup of coffee of these matters.

Editor

The following is a personal comment whilst the report above is I hope an accurate account of our meeting.

I believe that in the near future Fisheries Victoria should get a substantial increase in its budget. I am aware, although it was not discussed that at times Fisheries Officers cannot be deployed on weekends due to lack of funds, and of course this is the time many offences take place, and it is also a time that officers should be seen by the public. Originally funds from anglers licence fees were to employ 10 fisheries Officers, and today these funds are only sufficient to employ seven officers and are declining. The employment and necessary expenses for Fisheries Victoria should be a charge on the fisheries budget, and this budget should be supported with sufficient funds, from Government to undertake its role including 24 hour availability seven days a week of compliance officers, given the increasing threat to this states fish stocks and the growing number of participants in this sport. Governments should also remember 750,000 participated in recreational fishing in 2008/9 and the direct expenditure on this activity in the same year was \$2.3 billion according to the independent Economic Study of Recreational Fishing in Victoria 2009 (VRFish)

It should also be noted that the employment contribution of recreational fishing in this state lies between 5,200 and 6,400 jobs. Recreational fishing is a major industry that needs adequate Government support given the basis of this industry is a natural resource that needs protection for the future.

A New Marine Act for Victoria,

The State Government is currently preparing changes to the Current Marine Act that will affect anglers. The Minister Tim Pallas made a presentation on the reasons for change at the Sandringham Yacht Club on the 19th March, and the Recreational Fishing and Trailer Boat Advocacy and Support Group were invited to attend. Material in his section is from their report and was published in their Member Bulletin.

The Minister pointed to the growth in commercial and recreational boat traffic and with it an increase in hoon behaviour as a reason for this new act. Also, recreational vessels are becoming bigger, more powerful and use increasingly sophisticated technology.

The government is taking the opportunity to align marine safety laws with current road laws where practicable, and as part of this change culpable driving part of the Crimes Act is now extended to the operation of a marine vessel. Police will now have powers to impound vessels, just as they have with motor vehicles. Powers to impound, immobilize or seize a vessel being operated dangerously will be proclaimed from September 2010.

Potential compliance and enforcement initiatives include introducing owner onus in the case of speed restrictions as already applies to road users. Under the new act penalties are to be increased and the act will provide for the power to undertake drug and alcohol testing whilst vessels are at anchor. A range of offences will be addressed through the issue of penalty notices rather than initiating court action, which is presently the case. It is intended to upgrade the knowledge test for obtaining a boating licence.

Thanks to The Recreational Fishing and Trailer Boat Advocacy and Support Group for making this information available. Email rftboasg@optusnet.com.au

Editor

I don't think any responsible angler will have any difficulty with these changes. however I remain concerned that hirers without a boating licence, or any knowledge of boating regulations can take a hire boat out into the Gippsland Lakes, particularly at peak periods such as Xmas when boat traffic is heaviest. I also have some concern that people with limited

or no boating knowledge, can hire large cruisers, and are then able to navigate, not only the Gippsland lakes but also our rivers. Most regular boat users can quote instances of dangerous practices observed amongst hire boat users. This issue does not seem to be addressed in this revision of the Marine Act. Of course its rather difficult to think of a method of resolving what seems to be an anomaly that is accentuated when an upgraded test will apply to boat owners seeking a licence whilst no test applies for hirers.

A Little Local Angling History

Thanks to one of our readers Geoff Trusler who has provided fishing reports from June 1988 to June 1989. These reports were made available as a service to anglers from Gippsland Tourism. In July 1989 this service ceased. We will publish from time to time some of these reports from twenty years ago and an example follows.

Tambo River 13th July 1989

On Saturday Steve Payne, Pat Dunn, Paul Meachan and Laurie Smith all from Reservoir landed 55 bream weighing up to 870 grams fishing below the Highway Bridge using shrimp. Fishing on Sunday John Evans and Graeme Blanning from Mulgrave landed 23 bream weighing up to 620 grams using shrimp near Whelan's. On Saturday Cheltenham anglers Bruce and Helen Toohey landed 20 bream using shrimp near Bennett's Brook. Over the weekend 16 employees from Davey pumps of Moorabin landed over 200 bream below the Highway Bridge using mainly prawn and shrimp.

This brings back memories for the older anglers of what the fishing was like in the good old days when anglers travelled from around the state to fish East Gippsland Rivers and no catch limits applied. I think most anglers thought this would last for ever, but this has not been the case. In 1989 the commercial catch of black bream in the Gippsland Lakes was 206 tonnes and this should be compared with the commercial catch in recent years of around 30 tonnes.

Mitchell River 13th July 1989

Fishing is excellent around the "Two Bells Area" Fishing over 4 days Keith McNairn from Paynesville and the Lovic family from Myrmiong landed 249 bream weighing up to 1.3kgs and 1 mullet at the two bells on spider crab, shrimp, prawn and sandworm. Over the weekend Mr Bolding from Hazelwood North landed 56 bream weighing up to 680 grams using shrimp in the lower reaches. Fishing on Friday and Saturday Greg Pearson from Endeavour Hills landed 68 bream using shrimp and sandworm in the lower reaches. Fishing over the weekend Chris Smithurst from Moorabin caught 27 bream using sandworm near the mouth of the river.

Anglers of today will see the above reports as a graphic illustration of the decline in the black bream fishery in the space of twenty years. This may mean hard decisions have to be made now to protect the remaining fish stocks of the Gippsland Lakes and rivers. Of course with the increasing salinity of the Gippsland Lakes the future for black bream in these waters becomes even more uncertain. Currently there are reports of small bream in the Tambo but regular anglers are finding the fishing in the Gippsland Lakes and Lake Tyers extremely quiet.

European Shore Crab Again

Liberal Member of Parliament Philip Davis recently indicated in the Bairnsdale Advertiser that following discussions with the Minister for Agriculture The Hon. Joe Helper on Green Shore Crabs the Minister agreed to some changes in the Victorian approach to the problem. The local commercial fisheries of the Gippsland Lakes can now harvest Shore Crabs for consumption or bait in Victoria. and discussions are taking place to remove the recreational bag limit for crabs. This move will have considerable support. It is surprising that the National Control Plan for European Green Shore Crabs has not been mentioned in any media discussions of this matter. This plan of 2008 prepared for the Australian Government suggests that direct targeting and physical removal is the most effective method of reducing crab

numbers, as they can be removed whilst causing no environmental damage, however this will never provide a total control but rather may mitigate some of the effects. On June 2nd a headline in the Lakes Post was “Crabs Could Crush Tourism Industry” and was based on a commercial fisherman’s view that the tourism industry could be wiped out if the 22,000 tonne crab plague was not eradicated. I think most would agree this is somewhat of an exaggeration and it is acknowledged in the Commonwealth report that physical removal will never eradicate these crabs. This type of statement is unhelpful when considering the European Crab problem, and certainly I have seen nothing to support the figures of tonnage and the suggestion the tourism industry could be wiped out because of the crabs, is quite fanciful and lacks any evidential support.

The United States Department of Agriculture suggests this crab is a serious threat to sea life all along the American coast. This report suggests that one crab “can consume 40 half inch clams in a day and will attack and devour other crabs even as large as itself. This pest also eats oysters, mussels, marine worms, small crustaceans and shellfish.” The report indicates that this food chain has an effect on birds and other fish, and concludes describing the crab as “a mean green eating machine.” There is also evidence in reports that this crab will attack sea horses and certainly the decline in spider crabs, shrimp and mussels in the Gippsland lakes may be associated with the increased numbers of Green Shore Crabs, and this will certainly put pressure on the Lakes environment including estuarine fish.

It is unfortunate that an Australia wide approach to controlling this pest cannot be introduced, and the fact that Victoria and NSW have very different approaches to the one problem is unfortunate.

I think it is interesting that an anglers publication like “Around the Jetties” can raise the matter of the Shore Crab and highlight a pest that has the potential to affect angling in this state, yet other fishing magazines and some authorities are yet to mention the problem of the European Shore Crab.

Looking After Your Lifejacket

I wonder after five years since the introduction of regulations regarding the compulsory wearing of lifejackets in boats under 4.8 metres, how many anglers have actually inspected their Personal Flotation Device to see if it is currently working. I know I haven’t, but then I did not know what was needed to ensure my lifejacket was in working order. I rang the Paynesville Water Police and they informed me it was important that our jackets were checked every twelve months and they carried out their own inspection of their PFD’s and strongly suggested anglers should carry out this procedure. To aid you in this checking I approached Marine Safety Victoria who have provided a procedure for looking after your inflatable at least annually and ensuring it is in sound working order. (See attached information from Marine Safety Victoria.)

Bairnsdale Advertiser “Lakes as Healthy as Ever”

This was the heading on the front page of the Bairnsdale Advertiser of Wednesday April 28th. This article commences “Two anglers who have fished the Gippsland Lakes for years don’t believe the system is necessarily in bad shape.” Now both of these quoted anglers were former commercial fishermen. One went on to say “the lakes were as healthy as he had ever seen them.” I am not going to debate this statement, but I am bemused when we have a system with no shrimp, spider crab, limited worm and minimal seagrass beds that host so much of the lakes, life together with declining fish stocks could be described as “healthy as ever.”

I have walked around the beach of Lake King at Metung regularly over the last fortnight or so, and despite the south- westerly winds have seen no seagrass washed up on the shore whatsoever. This is a vast difference to a couple of years ago when piles of sea grass from large lake beds were washed onto the shore of Lake King and of course these sea grass beds

were the home to much of the animal and fish life of the estuaries. Perhaps one only needs to look back to the 1989 bream fishery quoted in this publication earlier to see fishing in healthy lakes and rivers.

Fishing Forum held in Bairnsdale.

On Tuesday the June 1st Fisheries Victoria, in Bairnsdale, held a Fishing Forum. Travis Dowling Director of Fisheries Management led the forum, however only seven anglers availed themselves of the opportunity to attend this informative session whilst ten Fisheries Officers were also present for the round table discussion. This will be an annual event as Fisheries Victoria strives to get the views of anglers, and next year the program will get wider publicity. I would suggest an evening such as this provides a wonderful opportunity for anglers to voice their concerns to Fisheries administration. Some of the matters that were discussed at Bairnsdale are listed below.

1. The success of the artificial reefs and fish colonisation of the reefs in Port Phillip Bay were shown on film.
2. Recreational fishing grants of under \$5,000 will be available to angling clubs and others and a simplified two page application form will be used for these grants.
3. Currently \$5.2 million is received from the Recreational Fishing Licence of which \$1.2 million is disbursed under the grants program. This amount should increase as repayments for commercial buybacks have now been completed.
4. Recreational Fishing Survey of over 4000 anglers found that habitat maintenance was the major concern of anglers surveyed, followed by the need for enforcement and the continued restocking of Victorian waters.
5. Common themes from the surveys were the need for improved boat ramps and fish size limits. (Boat ramps were not the responsibility of Fisheries Victoria.
6. Fisheries Victoria in an effort to keep anglers informed puts out more media releases than all the rest of the Department of Primary Industry together.
7. Considerable discussion took place on the current size limit of dusky flathead and the need for this to be increased. Currently 27cms and the anglers present argued for 35cms size limit at the same time pointing out the NSW size limit was 40cms.
8. Possession limits and bag limits were raised as being areas of confusion, and this
9. would be examined by Fisheries for the next Fisheries Handbook.

Concern was expressed at the commercial fishing of Australian bass in the Gippsland Lakes. It was reported that so far this year 1.6 million natives have been restocked in Victorian waters and this compares with the same figure for the whole of 2009. An interesting outcome from one of the other forums (Wodonga) was a call for the reintroduction of size limits for trout. It would also seem likely that Fisheries Victoria will announce that European Shore crabs cannot be **used as a live bait** to provide an added protection to East Gippsland waters.

Stocking Prawns in Lake Tyers

A preliminary Assessment of Victorian waters has been carried out by Dr Matt Taylor of the University of NSW for the Department of Primary Industries to assess the suitability of some Victorian waters for the stocking of marine fish. This report was published on the 2nd of February of this year.

At the Fisheries Forum it was reported that Dr Taylor is seeking funding of \$100,000 to stock Lake Tyers with eastern King Prawns. He also recommended that dusky flathead be investigated for further assessment as to their potential for restocking in Lake Tyers. Whilst this is a recommendation in his detailed report, it is now up to Fisheries Victoria to apply their strict guidelines to assess this possibility and after due process to make their final recommendation. This would undoubtedly need to involve consultation with the Lake Tyers anglers and community.

This project came about as the result of two workshops organised by Fisheries Victoria to establish a basis for marine stocking in Victorian Waters. These meetings resulted in preferred species being identified by the participants. The preferred species for Lake Tyers included

mulloway and estuary perch, however the only species recommended was the Eastern King prawn. The estuary perch in Lake Tyers lacked deep channelled riverine estuaries and it was suggested in the report the current small interest in estuary perch by anglers means cost benefits of any release would need to be carefully assessed. From what I hear there is considerable interest in estuary perch in Lake Tyers, and certainly this publication has identified catches over a tonne of estuary perch from this water in the 1980's.

The stocking of prawns is not a dream, as it has been successful in other waters previously as the next article will explain. By the way dusky flathead were the only species recommended for further investigation for the Brodribb and Snowy River estuary however the paper also indicates that more work will need to be done on dusky flathead before any releases are undertaken. Whilst some releases have been made in Queensland in the past these have not been judged as totally successful.

Restocking of Eastern King Prawns in Wallagoot Lake

The following is a publicity release from the University of Sydney on restocking Prawns.

Eastern King Prawns have returned to Wallagoot Lake in the estuary near to Merimbula following a prawn-restocking program that is yielding wins for both prawners and the environment.

Prawnners are reporting catches of up to 3 kilograms per hour and recreational anglers have used them for bait with excellent results. The Eastern King prawn accounts for more than 80% of the NSW recreational prawn catch.

Beginning eighteen months ago eight million juvenile King prawns were stocked in the Wallagoot and back Lakes near Merimbula. Since restocking began individual prawns have bulked up from 5milligrams in weight to average 30-40grams, an increase of between 6000-8000 per cent. To date the largest specimen recorded weighed 54 grams and measured 20 centimetres.

The phenomenal growth rate is occurring because the prawns are confined to the estuary system. Prawns only spawn when they enter the sea so the energy that would have been diverted to reproduction is being conserved for growth.

The restocking program has been a triumph for prawners according to project leader UNSW biologist Dr Matt Taylor. "Before the release program, Eastern King prawns had not been captured in Wallagoot Lake for more than seven years. We have tracked their growth and survival Rates and for the first time we tag prawns wit acoustic pingers. This will help us understand what is driving the prawns movements and food foraging activities so that we can target our release numbers to what the ecosystem can support."

The restocking program is part of a three year collaborative project between the University of NSW and the NSW Department of Primary Industry funded by Recreational Fishing Trusts and the Australian Research Council.

Source – University of Sydney

Repairing Fishing Lures

I was surprised to read in a fishing magazine of a firm that has been set up to repaint and repair lures. The name of the firm is "Pimp my Lure" and it is attracting tournament casters who have a favourite colour and they can now get even new lures painted in their specific colour scheme. Through this firm you can now turn those old lures at the bottom of the tackle box into a bright new lure ready for a new life. Email -dannys-stead@bigpond.com

Source- Fishing Monthly Magazine June 2010

Twin Rivers Fishing Competition.

On the 17th and 18th of July the annual Twin Rivers Bream Classic will be held on the Tambo and Nicholson Rivers and with \$20,000 in prizes is sure to attract numbers of anglers. I am not a fan of fishing competitions as I see my fishing a time of solitude in waters and an

environment I can enjoy in peace and quiet, but then everyone to their tastes. What does concern me is the impact of this competition on the river environment and in particular the Tambo River. Last year camping along the river, numerous fires and rubbish left after the event were a matter for concern and were highlighted with photos in this publication. It is to be hoped the organisers will meet with the East Gippsland Shire, the Catchment Management Authority and the Department of Primary Industry to put plans in place to protect the river environment. By the way thanks to Brad Fisher and the Department of Primary Industry for the work they have done on the road on the east bank of the Tambo river to the mouth, at the request of this publication. It is a top job and many anglers are using this area.

Evaluation of changes to Dusky Flathead catch limits in Mallacoota Inlet

The following is a summary of a Recreational Fishing Grant program Research Report
By Stokie T.K. Bridge. N.F. MacDonald M. and Conran S.

In December 2003, Fisheries Victoria introduced new recreational catch limits for dusky flathead. (Daily bag limit and possession limit 5 fish per day with no more than one over 60cms.) These regulations were introduced due to a substantial increase in the targeting of dusky flathead accompanied by an increase in the use of highly effective soft plastic lures. Access point surveys and other surveys undertaken in Mallacoota provided information to assess the new regulations. It confirmed that since the 1980's there had been increased targeting of dusky flathead, and anglers were in many cases using lures instead of bait. In recent years the Mallacoota dusky flathead fishery has exhibited the following features-

- * The dusky flathead fishery is seasonal with high catch rates in summer and low in winter.
- * The retained catch rates of dusky flathead were higher than for released fish.
- * The majority of dusky flathead caught have been retained. (70%) Few dusky flathead below 30cms were retained.
- * The majority of the dusky flathead catch was in the length range 35-45cms.
- * The proportion of larger dusky flathead that is greater than 50cms has considerably declined and few fish over 60cms have been recorded in catches since 2005/6.

Dusky Flathead Features

The growth of flathead is similar in the first three years but the females grow faster and reach a larger size than males. Dusky flathead are 1-2 years old when they reach legal size. During the 2000's few Mallacoota anglers caught their daily limit of 5 dusky flathead. The majority of anglers agreed with the current bag limit.

The few large dusky flathead caught since 2004/5 are likely to be females and if sexual maturity is the same as NSW (56cms) then possibly the catch of female dusky flathead are immature fish.

Angler Views

The majority of anglers felt the dusky flathead legal minimum size of 27cms was too small and should be increased to 30cms and a third of anglers wanted a 35cm size limit. If the legal minimum size limit was increased to 40cms this would reduce the retained catch by between 19-39%. Most anglers indicated they were satisfied with the overall quality of fishing in the Mallacoota Inlet.

From May 1998 to October 2008, 4,372 interviews were conducted with anglers in Mallacoota Inlet and anglers interviewed caught 27,588 fish of which 52% were kept. Almost half of those interviewed during fishing trips were targeting dusky flathead. Dusky flathead have been the dominant species targeted between 2003-2008 and the percentage of anglers using lures has fluctuated between 36-57% in recent years. The catchrate for dusky flathead in Mallacoota inlet varied between 0.28 in 2003 to 0.52 in 2005/6

Editor

This is a very brief summary of an excellent report covering 22 pages. I think one of the most important outcomes was that 93% of anglers interviewed thought the legal minimum length for dusky flathead should be at least 30cms, however an increase to 40cms, the same LML as NSW would have a major impact on reducing the retained catch. This also indicates that Fisheries Victoria size limits are somewhat out of touch with angler views on dusky flathead. The other matter of concern is the decline in the catch of larger flathead and the report states “few dusky flathead greater than 60cms have been caught by anglers since 2004/5.” The same statement could be applied to Lake Tyers and this is a matter for concern given that these larger fish are females and this may be having an effect on flathead numbers. Perhaps we should be using the current NSW research on dusky flathead until Victorian research is undertaken. Waiting for Victorian research to be undertaken may not be an option given the evidence of the Mallacoota report.

Fisheries Reports.

Congratulations to Fisheries Victoria on the release of important reports that have provided information to anglers on a wide variety of topics. Recent issues of Around the Jetties have included summaries of these reports in each issue and the report in this issue provides important information for dusky flathead anglers. It is unfortunate that the Commercial Catch Statistics for the Gippsland Lakes are so late given that they provide the only information currently available on the stock of black bream and dusky flathead in the Gippsland lakes.

Readers

Remember you may get an interested angler or friend on to our mailing list by simply sending us an email with details. Some angling clubs are using Around the Jetties as a news publication and are simply attaching a face sheet of club news for members, and this makes a simple club bulletin.

Contributions

Your contributions to this publication are most welcome, and we look forward to publishing your items of interest.

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
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Late News

I have been informed that a request has been made to Fisheries Victoria by a commercial fisherman to net Lake Tyers, targeting poddy or sea mullet. He suggests that the large number of poddy mullet are becoming a problem and may become a greater problem in the future. He believes that any bycatch of recreational species could be released, with low mortality, and he would use 4 inch mesh to protect juvenile fish. He proposes netting up the Nowa Nowa arm to the last bend before the boat ramp and using a 650 metres net and also netting the Toorloo Arm. Netting would take place between dusk and midnight. Lake Tyers Angling Club and the Aboriginal Trust have been asked to support this application. This publication makes no comment other than to bring the issue to the attention of anglers and to indicate that Lake Tyers was declared a recreational fishing reserve in 2003 after a considerable effort from recreational anglers.