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Around the Jetties

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We may say of angling as Dr Boteler said of strawberries:

“Doubtless God could have ever made a better berry, but doubtless God never did, and so if I might be judge, God never did make a more calm, innocent recreation than angling.”

Izaak Walton

The Compleat Angler (1653)

Editorial

Again the issue of Shore Crabs is raised in Around the Jetties, however we are now seeing factually unsupported claims as to the tonnage of crabs in the lake, and suggestions of paying commercial fishermen to catch and dump crabs despite research suggesting this will have little if any effect on the total crab population. Crabs have been in the lakes in plague proportions before although not the European variety. All the current claims and counter claims seem to indicate a research or assessment program is necessary to provide some solid facts on the effect of the crabs on the Gippsland Lakes, and certainly before any funds are allocated to catching and dumping crabs. It has been amazing how the media has been used to highlight this issue, and one might almost suggest it has been somewhat manipulated. This is just a further reason to establish the facts on this infestation by an immediate assessment or research program. This is a government responsibility.

European Shore Crabs in the News Again



Phillip Davis Upper House MP on the 30th July issued a press release stating that commercial fishermen are reporting European Shore Crabs are now killing fish and destroying breeding grounds He indicated that a mass of crabs a metre in depth and a kilometre in length are moving towards Lake Wellington, and he said in the release that “its huge, its massive.” Mr Davis said the crabs have multiplied into a plague. He further stated that “ soundings taken by fishermen have led to an estimate there is a mass of 22,000 tonnes of them in the lakes and numbers are rapidly increasing>” Now whilst it was this publication that raised the issue of Shore crabs in the Gippsland Lakes, it was raised in an effort to obtain some research or assessment into these crabs and their effect on the lake system. Mr Davis in his

media release suggested that commercial fishermen should be engaged to bulk catch and dump these crabs and he has taken this suggestion to Mr Joe Helper Minister for Agriculture.

Trapping the European Shore Crab

Perhaps before any program of employing commercial fishermen to catch and dump Shore crabs is undertaken the report commissioned by the Federal Government titled "National Control Plan for Carcenus maenas or Green Shore Crab" should be examined. With regard to trapping this report states "the efficacy of trapping is questionable when crabs are present in high densities, because significant numbers may be removed with negligible effect on the overall population numbers and impact." This report further states that the control of European Shore crabs on a large scale has not been effective and there is little evidence of the effectiveness of trapping except in small bays with low density. Finally the commercial fisherman's figure of 22,000 tonnes of crab in one mass must be questioned. In a recent ABC Lateline program the catch of 15 tonnes per month claimed by one commercial fisherman, was queried by another, and this just seems to indicate the total confusion associated with the claims made. This only serves to reinforce the need for a research program specific to the Gippsland Lakes to determine the extent of the problem and examine what possible solutions may be available if any. It would be unwise to accept the statement that 22,000 tonnes of European Shore Crabs are in the Lakes particularly if this fact is sourced from a commercial fisherman with a commercial interest in the European Shore Crab. The need for an independent assessment of the European Shore Crab has become critical to provide some understanding of the issue facing the Gippsland Lakes environment.

Crabs in the 1920's in the Gippsland lakes

The lakes in the 1920's had thick eel grass (Zostera) and motorboats were restricted to deep water as the eel grass could foul propellers. Frank Bury wrote "In my time undoubtedly the greatest change was in the summer of 1920 when the crab plague became intensive. I have a vague idea they came before this but did no damage and disappeared after a flood. It has been argued that these crabs are carnivorous and do not eat vegetable matter. That may be so but it cannot be denied that they cut all the weed off, whenever it tried to grow, and also ate all the fixed fishermen's nets, in fact the nets left overnight in the water were cut to pieces. It took less than a year to denude this end of the lake with weed, and that left the shores without any protection from erosion. At the time of writing these crabs, after forty years have disappeared and the eel grass is appearing in many places."

(The crab infesting the lakes and described by Frank Bury at this time were the red plague crab *Paragrapsus gaimardii* and not the European Shore crab, although the effects may be similar.)

Source of Frank Bury's description "The Story of Metung." Gay Halstead 1977.

Important

Fisheries Victoria introduce new regulations-

*Recreational anglers must not use European green shore crabs as live bait, or return live unused crabs to the water

*European green shore crabs can now be taken in unlimited numbers everywhere other than the intertidal zone of Port Phillip Bay.

A Note on Black Bream

"A mature black bream will spawn between 300,000 and 3 million eggs in a season." The fact that black bream have a vast egg-laying potential means that in a good breeding season and with a good survival rate the black bream can quickly restore its stock numbers. The last time all conditions satisfied breeding requirements was 1989 and a massive restocking took place. Today the Gippsland Lakes waters are more saline and little seagrass remains, so that the hope of another massive breeding season seems somewhat remote. In 1996 the commercial catch of black bream in the Gippsland Lakes dropped to 89 tonnes from the previous years 130 tonnes and urgent controls were introduced in the words of Fisheries **Victoria "to protect the small remaining adult bream stocks so sufficient reproductive capacity is maintained to ensure stock rebuilding occurs when conditions are more favourable."** The commercial catch recovered somewhat in the next five years then collapsed from 137 tonnes to 26 tonnes in 2002/3, and has remained at similar low levels since that date. With the average commercial catch of black bream being now around 30 tonnes per annum for the last five years the stocks of black bream in the Gippsland Lakes could be said to be severely depleted and far worse than the 1996 scene, and in addition, there is no evidence of any

improvement. It is this picture that should concern all anglers and lead to reconsideration of the approach to fishing competitions and how such competitions can be run whilst protecting the spawning of the species.

A perfect example of an angling competition whilst protecting the species was the recent Victorian Bream Classic held at Metung on August 7th and 8th which is the last of the five qualifying events across the state before a final on the Glenelg River at Nelson in South West Victoria. On the Saturday sixty-one two-man teams caught 170 black bream that were weighed and then carefully returned to the water. The care with which the fish were handled provided a wonderful example of an appreciation of one of our great sporting fish. Some excellent quality fish were caught with odd fish on both Saturday and Sunday topping 1.8kgs, however the fishing was difficult with the rivers being cloudy after recent rains. I would think that the catch of 170 bream on the Saturday from sixty-one teams might also reflect the black bream situation in local rivers at the moment.

At 2pm on the Sunday I saw the spectacular sight of 14 of the specialist designed boats heading across Lake King at speed on their way to the weigh in at Metung, and it was a rare sight to enjoy with a large plume of spray emanating from each craft. A big crowd in on the lawn in front of the Metung Hotel inspected boats and listened to the anglers indicate where they fished and the lures they had used to take their catch, whilst at the same time a number of large black bream caught in the competition were available for spectators to observe in a large glass tank prior to release. If you get the chance to observe the Bream Classic on water near you, take this opportunity as it provides an insight into modern fishing techniques and care of our fish resource whilst at the same time enjoying its challenge. This opportunity may be available to a number of readers on October 30 and 31 when the National Final of the Bream Classic will be held at Metung. Qualifiers from all around Australia will compete in this final so the best lure anglers for bream from every state will be featured in this competition.

Breaming with Knowledge

This is the title for a conference being held on Wednesday and Thursday the 27th and 28th of October at Bellvue on the Lakes in Lakes Entrance. The cost is \$50 for an individual and \$200 (if your employer is paying?) The conference would appear to be organised by the Victoria University and brings together some 17 speakers most of whom are prestigious academics. The conference speakers provide background to the lakes including geomorphology on the first morning, and in the afternoon the threats to the lakes are examined. On the second day issues such as climate change and algal blooms will be examined. The final sessions will deal with the future with an examination of NSW Coastal systems and the Coorong in SA.

The last similar conference on the Gippsland Lakes was held in 1995 and since then a great deal of research has been carried out. It is suggested, "the conference will provide a fascinating summary of the current condition of the Gippsland lakes, its social, economic and ecological significance and progress being made to better manage this jewel in the crown of south eastern Australia."

Editor

I found it interesting that the only reference to fish in the lakes in the two day program was a 45 minute session with Dr Jeremy Hindell as speaker on "Freshwater Flows and Fish populations." Perhaps the dire situation with fish might be mentioned in some other areas.

To book a place for this conference contact Catherine Enriquez, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne Victoria 8001.

I attended the 1995 Conference on the Gippsland Lakes which was hosted by the Gippsland Lakes Management Council, and was held at the Bellvue in Lakes Entrance. The chairman of the Gippsland Lakes Management Council was The Hon. Phillip Davis MLC. Jane Malcolm who was responsible for the preparation of the Draft Gippsland Lakes Fisheries Plan, was the speaker in 1995 who addressed the issue of fisheries management and the proposed increase in the black bream size limit from 24 to 26cms was part of her address. The basis for this change was that black bream were not sexually mature at 24cms which in turn reduced successful breeding. She also stated that "**bream are being fished to a level that is reducing their capacity to replenish the fishing mortality in all but the most favourable spawning years.**" Now that was fifteen years ago and little has changed to protect this wonderful sporting fish. In 1995 the commercial catch had dropped to 130 tonnes, today the commercial catch is 36 tonnes and black bream must be considered as under greater threat than ever.

Sponsors for this conference include the DSE, local Catchment Management Authorities, East Gippsland Water and Parks Victoria.

Lake Tyers Fisheries Reserve Reference Group

I have received the following letter dated 23/8/2010 from the **Executive Director Fisheries Victoria Anthony Hurst**, who asked that the following information be made available to readers of Around the Jetties. I am pleased to accede to this request and here is his letter in full.

'I read with interest your recent edition of Around the Jetties and thank you for your support of a number of Fisheries Victoria programs.

I would like to make reference to your segment dealing with the Lake Tyers Fisheries reserve Reference Group and would be grateful if you would make the following available for the information of your readers.

Lake Tyers was declared a Fisheries reserve by order of the Governor in Council on the 22nd of January 2004, following the cessation of commercial netting in April 2003. This triggered the preparation of the Lake Tyers Fisheries Reserve Management Plan, declared by the Minister for Agriculture in May 2007. Some of your readers may have been involved in the public consultation process that accompanied the development of this Management Plan.

As you correctly point out, a significant volume of recreational fishery monitoring and assessment of key fish stocks in Lake Tyers, as specified in the Management Plan has now been completed and the results recently published. This information has greatly improved our understanding of the profile of the fishery and the status of key fish stocks. I recognise the important contribution of individual local anglers in the collection of much of this information and thank them for their efforts. With this information, Fisheries Victoria, in partnership with its Government and community stakeholders is now in a much better position to address the requirements of the Management Plan to review, and if necessary adjust, fishery management arrangements.

The role of the Reference Group is to advise Fisheries Victoria on progress in the implementation of activities and projects specified in the Management Plan, and to facilitate the development of partnerships between stakeholders. It may be helpful to clarify that the Reference Group will not be responsible for the delivery of activities and projects required by the Plan. This role will remain the responsibility of the Department of Primary Industries through Fisheries Victoria. I do, however, expect to work with the Reference Group as a valuable source of support and advice arising from its collective skills and knowledge of the Lake Tyers environment.

As you know the first meeting of the Lake Tyers reference Group will soon be held. I am pleased with the make up of the Group, comprising as it does, extensive local recreational fisher experience, along with traditional owner and agency representation.

Should you require any further information in relation to this process, please contact our Senior Fisheries management Officer in Gippsland, Mr Dick Brumley. Dick is based at Lakes Entrance and can be reached on 51558106. I look forward to working with this Group on the implementation phase of the Lake Tyers Fisheries Reserve Management Plan and thank you once again for your continuing interest in this matter"

Editor.

In the last edition of Around the Jetties I made the comment that local anglers could be somewhat disappointed at not being specifically recognised for membership of this Reference Group.(Lake Tyers) At the time of writing the membership of the reference group had not been made public, and it still has not been published. I can now inform readers that the seven person Reference Group does include a substantial recreational angler membership. The members include, John Harrison a research angler who fishes Lake Tyers a couple of mornings most weeks and has an intimate knowledge of the Lake. Frank Millito a charter operator, bait licence holder, and keen angler with a long knowledge of Lake Tyers is also a member of the Reference Group as is Graeme Deare, CEO of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority who is also a top lure angler who regularly competes in the Black Bream Classic. Added to the above I have been asked to represent VRFish on the Reference Group and to which after some consideration I have agreed. The first meeting of this Reference Group was held on the 26th August between 9.30 and 3.30. It appears that the discussions of this group are to be confidential, and the approval of the chairman is required before any material from discussions of the Reference Group are distributed. The role of the reference Group is to monitor recommendations in the Management Plan and ensure Fisheries Victoria is advised of the views of stakeholders. I also discovered that the Mallacoota Reference Group had been in operation for some twelve

months, but have no indication of the membership of that Group. The next meeting of the Lake Tyers Reference group is scheduled for March 2011.

As a personal comment I would believe that the reference Group membership for both Mallacoota and Lake Tyers Management Plans could have been made public, and this would have been of interest to recreational anglers and the public.

Copies of the Lake Tyers and Mallacoota Management Plans can be obtained from Fisheries Victoria (Phone 136186) or online and the list of recommendations that Reference Groups are monitoring are contained in these publications. (Lake Tyers Plan pages 34-43)

I must say it is pleasing to see recreational anglers well represented on this Reference Group, given the seeming lack of representation on the Steering Committee that developed the Management Plan. This has been commented on previously in this publication.

Recreational Fishing and Trailer Boat Owners Advocacy and Support Group

I have just received the latest Member Bulletin from the above group and I would say that if you are a boat owner then you should apply to receive this free Bulletin. Bob Pearce former chairman of VRFish produces this Bulletin and it has great information. In this issue it publishes an article from Transport Victoria dealing with crossing bars. I was particularly interested in the New Product Review which examines a product called Boatcatch which is a coupling device designed by an abalone diver for his boat. It just so happens that the diver has also been a mechanical engineer.

To obtain this publication phone 03 9729 4444 or email rftboasg@optusnet.com.au

Hardly A Delicate Feeder?



In the last issue of Around the Jetties (37) I quoted T.C. Roughly's words from Fish and Fisheries of Australia that "the black bream is a scavenger so great a range of foods does this fish eat." Ron Brymer sent me this photo with the following information, which seems to add to the mystery of the black bream.

"Attached is a photo of a 34cm black bream I caught in the Mitchell River on an SX40 yesterday (26th July). I always knew bream were carnivorous and took small fish but nothing prepared me for what I pulled out of this fish's mouth. I immediately thought it was a leaf or something similar, so after removing the SX40 I pulled on what turned out to be a small fishes tail, and out popped a 4-5 inch gudgeon as thick as my index finger. I'm not sure of the real name, but I call these small fish "bullheads". The flathead just love these, and a 100mm

bloodworm wiggler makes a good imitation,-but bream?? I'm guessing that the head of the small fish was in the bream's stomach and the tail was protruding from the mouth. The bream was released in good condition."

Seagrass and the Lakes

Professor Graeme Harris in a paper he presented in 2006 stated "seagrass beds are probably the most valuable ecological assets in the lakes because of their importance in promoting the breeding of fish, and their beneficial nutrient cycling processes. Most seagrasses will only grow well in clear water." He goes on to say that increased nutrient loads leads to sea grass loss and the most sensitive indicator of a lake in trouble is the magnitude and nature of the nutrient cycling process. Once a lake has flipped out of the seagrass dominated state it is very difficult if not impossible to get it to go back in the view of Professor Harris. Currently there are grave doubts as to the state of seagrass in the Gippsland Lakes, and this in turn is having a marked affect on supporting fish spawning. The greatest concern is that the last major examination of seagrass in the Gippsland lakes was published in November 1997 and this detailed study suggested further monitoring. We have seen two small studies by Gippsland ports on seagrass near the entrance and the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce snapshot study by Dr Hindell, which also called for a further study. I would think it fair to suggest that the study of the seagrass status in the Gippsland Lakes has been largely neglected.

An Interest Story

The Wimmera River and Fish Deaths

This river, that runs north and empties into Lake Hindmarsh, which has been dry for more than twenty years. The river had a somewhat increased flow since the introduction of the Wimmera Mallee pipeline and the water savings that have resulted have led to optimism and a stocking of 50,000 Golden Perch in November 2009 by Fisheries Victoria. I received a note from a Horsham angler "Sporty" Abbott. He writes that after good rains the Wimmera River fired up for the first time in a decade. Fishing below the weir on the Wimmera Sporty and his brother in law Tony Lawes caught eight yellow belly ranging from 2lb to a monster 55cm 9lb fish in three visits. This was great fishing and both anglers felt the fishing does not get much better than this. On December 23rd 2009 with a thundery change on the way they headed down to the weir. In Sporty's words "when we arrived we noticed big gudgeon near the surface which we hadn't seen before." The fishing was slow then just on dark they couldn't believe what they were seeing. "Yellow belly and catfish were coming to the surface looking for oxygen. The yellow belly looked like they had been dipped in bleach and were swimming like ghostly figures. Then in front of us an 80cm cod broke the surface. Tony jumped in and caught him in a cradle hold. Colour wise he looked fine but he was distressed and disoriented, so we let him go with not a lot of confidence in his survival."



On Xmas eve morning the two anglers made a call to fisheries and they contacted the EPA who responded by ordering the weir to be opened on Xmas day. Unfortunately it was too late for many fish with between 150 and 200 native fish including four cod around 80cms dead. There were a number of stories circulating as to the cause of the fish deaths including a hayshed fire and the escape of water containing fire retardant into the river. Unfortunately neither "Sporty" Abbott, or Fisheries Victoria at Horsham, had received any definitive information from the EPA on the cause of the fish deaths. I contacted Kate Giddings of the EPA at Bendigo who indicated the investigation into this fish kill was ongoing and it was hoped to get a result in the near future, however she could not provide any more information at this stage. She did indicate that I, and other parties would be informed when the investigation was completed, of any action being undertaken by the EPA and hopefully the cause of the kill. Thanks to Sporty Abbott for his continuing interest in obtaining a result as to the cause of this fish kill.

Editor

The Wimmera River in recent weeks has been at minor flood level, and water has commenced flowing into Lake Hindmarsh from this river. This should mean the Wimmera River will have a good flush and improve in quality. The last time Lake Hindmarsh was full was thirty years ago and it was a mecca for water sports, fishing and in season duck shooting, but there is still a long way to go until the lake is full again. A local farmer indicated to me in the 1970's that the filling of Lake Hindmarsh and Lake Albacutya joined by Outlet creek is a once in a lifetime event For me the most fascinating aspect of these two lakes when full was the prolific quantities of yabbies that quickly appeared. At one stage these lakes supported eight professional fishermen catching yabbies and transporting bags of them to the Melbourne fish market.

A Sad Passing

Many anglers will be saddened to hear of the passing of Peter Spehr. Peter was a top estuary fisherman, but he was more than that. Over many years Peter had tagged thousands of fish in Lake Tyers and Mallacoota, and many of us had caught fish originally tagged by Peter and were able to send details to Vic Tag, where growth rates were determined. Given the paucity of information on dusky flathead, Peter contributed to the knowledge of fisheries scientists over many years. I would often see him before sunrise, launching his boat at Lake Tyers and with his dog in the bow heading out into the lake to catch, tag, and release both black bream and dusky flathead. Peter kept a diary of his fishing and was a leader in providing information on the declining size of dusky flathead. He was a respected angler who provided input to Fisheries Victoria meetings and the last time I saw Peter I was sitting beside him at a meeting with Travis Dowling of Fisheries Victoria. As we left the meeting he indicated we needed to continue to work to increase the minimum size of dusky flathead in line with 2008 NSW research.

Many anglers would not realize that Peter contributed to *Around the Jetties* under the pseudonym of "The Concerned Angler." I greatly appreciated his wise input into this publication, and in his writing he was constantly seeking a better understanding and protection of spawning dusky flathead. I will miss seeing Peter on the Lake Tyers jetty in the dark of the morning or seeing him pass us with a wave as we fished. Angling has lost a fine spokesman and a worker with a vision for the future of estuary fishing.

In the last email I received from Peter he said "we urgently need funds to study the dusky flathead female sexual maturity, and egg production, effects of harvesting immature female dusky flathead, and the habitat and diet requirements of dusky flathead that have been identified in other reports. I reckon they are fiddling and spending big dollars with gimmicky projects when a principal recreational species could be in serious decline. Have you read the report? What do you reckon?"

(Report referred to was "Changes in dusky flathead catches in Mallacoota Inlet" May 2010)

Rock Walling of River Banks Questioned

Bruce Robinson former Victag Coordinator makes the following comment on rock walling our river banks. "The damage done by de-snagging our rivers cannot be underestimated. The token effort to correct this damage to the natural environment for native species is far less than adequate. Rock banking slows erosion caused by boat wash, however tree roots provide a far better erosion control as they mat everything together. The rock banks may slow erosion but they are not as effective as the wave blasts through the gaps in the rocks and effectively washes out the soil from behind the rock wall, which then falls into the river. The Tambo River Rough Road area is testament to this. Log stacks provide a significantly reduced habitat, it does not provide the natural habitat required for sustainment of a species. A few stacked 200mm logs dropped into a river may provide some shelter to the larger of the species but they certainly do not provide the protection for the entire family as the head of a natural snag would."

Editor

Thanks to Bruce for raising this interesting matter. I believe Bruce is correct in his view of resnagging local rivers and rock walling. I have examined a most detailed study from the Murray Darling Commission on resnagging of the Murray River. Whilst this report dealt with native species there was a distinct correlation of fish to resnagged areas, however this report suggests more research needs to be undertaken on the log configuration for different species of native fish. Murray cod, trout cod and golden perch all required different configurations, also the Murray resnagging used much larger logs than those used on East Gippsland Rivers. I know that some work by Dr Jeremy Hindell has shown concentrations of fish around snags in local rivers, but probably more research is needed into the specific needs of estuarine fish with woody debris in our rivers. On the positive side this is a start to rehabilitate our rivers but there is a long way to go to recover from 150 years of snag removal. I did have another report a year or so ago of Toledo worms causing some snags to break away. Perhaps in years to come this may be detrimental to our rivers.

Odd Spots

The Good Old Days

The following is from the John Carstairs 1869-1952 diary published by Lakes Post in June 1999.

"My father and self with six perch nets about 300 fathoms in all by fireballing around fish we saw breaking the water in the channel opposite Fraser Island got 140 baskets of perch, it took two days unmeshing them." He also states "there were also for a year or two a great quantity of King fish which were a nuisance to the

light mesh nets giving plenty of mending. The seine netters getting a few of them most of them breaking through and being up to 70 pounds weight.” It is thought this referred to the 1890’s.

Ethanol in Marine Outboards

A reader Steve Atto has provided this information from VACC Tech Talk of August 2010 an industry newsletter he receives.

“Most outboards manufactured in the last five years are compatible with 10% Ethanol blend of petrol. However it is recommended that if 10% Ethanol is used, then the tanks should be drained after use. This is due to phase separation that occurs with ethanol blends. Phase separation is common in these systems because of their intermittent use and the unsealed breathers that fuel tanks use. If you can’t get ULP then you are better advised to use premium mix rather than ethanol.” Steve concluded his note with “I have lost a motor to bad fuel in the past (nothing \$22,000 didn’t fix.)

Pipi Poaching at Venus Bay

Congratulations to Fisheries Victoria for the apprehension of four men and a woman with 75 litres of pipi in the shell on August 6th in the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park. The pipis were loaded into packs and hidden in the dunes. Gippsland Fisheries Operations Manager, Peter Courteney said pipi collection was a legitimate recreational activity, but only provided each collector takes no more than 2 litres of pipis in the shell. All the pipis were returned to the water. A recreational fisheries licence is required by pipi gatherers, and no digging instruments are allowed other than feet and hands. Police were called to establish the identity of the five persons after they had attempted to hide. Pipis are a wonderful bait, but now they are also a sought after shellfish, and as a result are expensive to buy so much so that we seldom see bait pipis for sale as we once did.

A Tough Breed



I had an email from Ron Brymer on the 17th of August in the middle of that bitterly cold spell indicating that during that bitter weather he and his wife Kath had a few days at Mallacoota and in five days caught and released 94 dusky flathead. The photo shows Kath with the best fish, a 6lb 75cm fish before release. Now Ron and Kath are much keener than I am in this cold weather and full marks to Kath. What I found particularly interesting was the fact the dusky flathead were so active at Mallacoota and so quiet in this area. Its ages since I’ve had a report of a dusky locally. By the way Ron said the estuary was alive with schools of whitebait.

Black Bream Hatcheries

I was surprised to read an advertisement from East Gippsland TAFE in the Lakes Entrance News of August 18th for a two weeks hands on course to develop skills and knowledge for an indoor controlled hatchery operation for black bream. This poses the question as to where there is a market for black bream fingerlings. Now before you rush to sign up for the course in September, the cost of the course is \$2,000 plus \$114 for the book and CD to accompany the course. I am informed that some concessions will be available to participants.

Gippsland Lakes in the Future

Professor Barry Hart the current chairman of the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce in a newspaper article of a couple of years ago painted a picture of the lakes in the future.

“The lakes themselves will change due to a combination of rising sea levels and more intense storms. The sand barriers between the lakes and the ocean will be broken, probably in a number of places, with the lakes

becoming a more marine system. This marine dominated ecosystem will be in great shape with crystal clear waters, increased numbers of fish, healthy seagrass beds, and significantly reduced numbers of algal bloom. The catchment will also be transformed with almost 40% of the presently denuded agricultural catchments covered by native vegetation resulting in a more natural landscape with fewer nutrient inputs.” He went on to say there will be five times more visitors to the lakes than in 2008. He concluded saying that rather than “dying” the change “to a more marine system will see them become an even more treasured asset of great importance to the region and Victoria.”

Editor

This lakes environment described by Professor Hart would not seem to favour the survival of black bream or dusky flathead, and certainly with currently decreasing stocks of these fish and increasing visitors to the lakes the current future for these special estuarine species seems somewhat bleak. Perhaps in the future we will be seeking kingfish and snapper in the lakes, however any demise of black bream and dusky flathead would be a loss to this states largest estuarine environment. Thanks to Ross Scott for providing this cutting. Professor Barry Hart is the independent chairman of the Gippsland Lakes and Catchment Taskforce and emeritus professor at the Water Studies Centre, Monash University.

It's a Tradition

In August I got yarnning to a group of anglers on the banks of the Tambo River, and they informed me they were employees and former employees of Davey pumps, and they had been coming on this weekend each year to the Tambo River since the 1980's. They again had a great weekend but only had about ten keepable fish for the weekend shared amongst a number of fishermen.. Fishing has certainly changed and in recent months catches of bream have been generally very poor.

From the 1988 Fishing Report: for the 15th August “ Ray and Ken Rose with Graeme Coulter of Nunawading fished the Tambo last week for 150 bream up to 700grms on sandworm, mainly around the cliffs.”(From 1988/9 fishing reports supplied by Geoff Trusler) Those days of plenty are now just a memory.

Thanks to Fisheries Victoria and Travis Dowling, Director of Fisheries Management, for the excellent identification sheet on crabs including the European Shore crab provided to anglers and distributed to readers of this publication

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

The production and printing department (read wife) of this publication has been upgraded with a new computer and printer and we hope to be able to bring more photographs to you in future issues.