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Around the Jetties

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Issue No 56

An Anglers Newsletter

The instinct to fish is part of the wider urge to hunt, and the struggle of a hooked fish is part of the elemental scale of things. A fisherman is no savage. The sport simply brings people of any age or walk of life closer to some of the ultimate truths, which are few enough. The fisherman homeward bound with fish in the bag is as complete as any man wants to be.

Vic McCristal "Freshwater Fighting Fish" 1964

Editorial.

This month is a somewhat mixed bag, but it does illustrate that recreational anglers always need to be on their guard against steps to reduce access to their sport. We need to be aware that many recreational anglers are now using kayaks and we must work together to share the water of our lakes and streams. I understand that there are now over 200,000 kayaks and canoes on our waters and this is a significant relatively recent addition to users of our waterways. These users do not have to register the kayaks and canoes. In the Gippsland Coastal Boards draft Boating Action Plan 2012 it seems as if legitimate launching areas for powerboats were to be allocated for the use of kayaks and canoes and the argument for this was to create a separation of the two. I believe this draft plan should be designating areas for canoes launching and working to develop these areas to cater for these users of waterways whilst at the same time maintaining ramp access for powerboats, which are also increasing according to registrations at almost 4% per year. The Commercial Fishing statistics are analysed, and do not give much joy to recreational anglers as the bream increase seems again to be the result of flood events, and if this is taken into account our bream stock is down again. Finally The Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Gippsland Lakes is set out in some detail for recreational anglers. I am sure we all hope for some positive results for the Gippsland lakes.

Gippsland Lakes Advisory Committee Formed

On the 29th of March the new Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee met for the first time with a meeting at Lakes Entrance. This new group replaces the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce. The former taskforce was made up of senior members of various Government agencies, however this new committee is said to be made up of "skills based" locals.

The following outline of the operation of the new committee was provided under the name Skipper Pete, alias Peter Johnstone a member of the committee and operator of the Lakes Explorer. (Eco tours and water Taxi) in an open letter, that was provided to this publication.

"The committee's first task is to oversee a new strategy (identify issues and actions) for the "health" of the Gippsland Lakes and its catchment. This is a major task, as it will need to fit in with other strategies. (Tourism, Environment, Rivers, Climate Change, Water Quality, Boating etc.) Hopefully a draft will be out midyear for public comment. This is an independent Committee from the DSE or Shire thus its temporary office is with the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The committee will appoint two permanent staff members to carry out the main tasks. The State and Commonwealth Governments have allocated up to

\$10m to implement the actions of the new strategy. Many of these actions will be in the river catchments from Warragul to Lakes Entrance."

Expressions of interest were called for positions on this Advisory Committee on the 22nd November 2011 and were part of an election commitment "to improve the health of the iconic Gippsland lakes." The Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development, Peter Ryan said, "the Ministerial Advisory Committee will develop an environmental strategy for the Gippsland Lakes to enhance opportunities for the state's recreational fishers and tourism related business in the area"

The following is the membership of the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee



Chair Dr Peter Veenker. (Also Chair of the EGCMA, **chair of statewide CMW and DSE industry forum, Landcare member and extensive CEO and director experience of various public entities**)

Arthur Allen (Professional Lakes Fisherman)

Wayne Bath (Previously EPA Traralgon, **current environmental officer for EG shire.**)

Roger Bilney (**Qualified and respected ecologist, lecturer and expert of bird life.** Previously Fisheries Inspector.)

Rachel Bromage (**Tourism industry rep,** McMillan Apartments and Boat Hire Metung)

Richard Ellis (East Gippsland Shire Mayor, **board of Gippsland Ports.**)

Michael Freshwater. (East Gippsland Shire Councillor, **primary producer**)

Angus Hume (Chairman of the WGCMA, **environmental management qualifications**)

Peter Johnstone (Eco Tourism Operator, former DSE officer, **director of Gippsland Coastal Board**)

Nick Murray (Gippsland Ports Committee of Management Inc. CEO, **business management**)

Margaret Supplitt (**tourism industry representative, regional development, engineering background**)

Desmond Sinnot (Gippsland Coastal Board director, **long standing interest in Hart Morass rehabilitation**)

Kate Young (Member of EGCMA, **town planner with Crowther and Sadler**)

I thank Tim Bull MP for this outline of the membership of the committee. I did indicate to Tim that if this committee was to advise the Minister on the question of the protection of spawning fish at the mouth of rivers I would have hoped that the committee would have included some one with specific recreational fishing knowledge. Tim's response to this concern was as follows-

"The Committees terms of reference do not go into specific detail on individual projects, but my view is that this is an issue for Fisheries Victoria to consider rather than the committee as Fisheries Victoria has controls over various fishing regulations like closed area, seasons and size and bag limits etc. as well as the expertise in the fisheries sector. It is their core business. Judging by the terms of reference I see this Advisory Committee as being more involved in environmental issues and whilst I appreciate there is often a crossover between the two, it is my belief that specific fisheries matters would be left to Fisheries Victoria where the expertise and knowledge of fisheries exists."

I think this answer would resolve the concerns of anglers and others on the issue of protecting spawning fish at the mouth of rivers and particularly in flood events. .

The Ministerial Advisory body replaces the Gippsland Lakes and Catchment Taskforce, which in the period 2002-2009 expended \$18.8m under the leadership of Professor Barry Hart on nutrient reduction, however it was also responsible for the Report on "Fish assemblages and seagrass condition of the Gippsland Lakes 2008-2010."

There is a considerable challenge for the new Advisory Committee in replacing the Gippsland Lakes Taskforce to provide the Minister with advice that will save the Gippsland Lakes amid the competing pressures that at the present time are imposing enormous strain on this great system. In an article by Professor Graeme Harris entitled "A Dying Shame" he commented on the massive problems of the Gippsland Lakes.

He spoke in the article of the opening of the lakes to the ingress of saltwater and dredging said "*the consequences of these actions are lakes that now suffer habitat loss, salt ingress and the destruction of freshwater wetlands, increased nutrient*

loadings, overfishing and various kinds of pollution. The Gippsland lakes have all these problems and more.”

This Advisory Committee has an enormous task, and whilst the Government has allocated up to \$10m towards implementing the strategy of this new committee, it should be noted this is over 4 years or \$2.5m per annum, which is no greater financial commitment than was provided for the previous Gippsland Lakes Taskforce. Members have been appointed for a three-year term and will receive sitting fees.

I asked Tim Bull whether minutes of meetings would be made available to the public interested in the deliberations of this committee.



Tim responded, “My understanding is that as this is Ministerial Committee reporting directly to Ministers for Environment and Rural and Regional Development, and as is the case with similar committees, certain protocols apply. My belief is that minutes will not be made public under these protocols.

However, both the chair Peter Veenker and myself want the community to be aware with what issue it is involved with, and the intention is to make public statements through media releases.”

I thank the member for East Gippsland, Tim Bull, for readily providing information on the Ministerial Advisory Committee and its operation and for answering my queries.

Readers of this publication will have a great interest in this committee and its impact on the iconic Gippsland Lakes that were once a renowned recreational fishery.



The 2010/11 Commercial Catch in the Gippsland Lakes.

As readers would be aware the commercial catch in the Gippsland Lakes is the only guide to the current state of the fish stocks, in the lakes as the same number of commercial fishermen apply the same effort generally to catching fish year by year, and so a comparison of fish stocks can be made based on these catches. Of course events like floods or algal blooms can change the catches however generally the effect of these events can be seen in the statistics supplied by Fisheries Victoria.

Commercial Vessels North Arm Lakes Entrance

In these statistics price data is unavailable for the first time in the last 33 years and this is surprising given the advent of computerisation in that time. (An estimate of value can be made using the previous year’s figures and calculating the return per kg of fish caught.)

Black Bream

The production of black bream in 2010/11 was 53 tonnes and this is an increase on the previous year’s catch of 37 tonnes. It needs to be remembered that apart from 2007/8 when the catch rose to 144 tonnes due to a major flood event forcing the bream from the rivers, the average annually over the last 7 years has been 36 tonnes of this species. This increase in 2010/11 is almost certainly due to the flood conditions experienced during that period. The following appeared in the ABC Rural Report for 10/9/2010.



“Farmers aren’t the only ones benefiting from flooding rivers in Victoria’s east. Commercial fisherman Arthur Allen says it’s been a good week for lakes fishers, who have enjoyed a boost to their catches. The difference between fishermen and farmers is when it rains, farmers have got to wait for the grass to grow, but we get the benefits immediately,” he says.

“We’ve had a very good week, and a varied variety of fish too, and all in good numbers.”

On the 17/10/2010 Kath Sullivan on ABC Rural reported that, “Arthur Allen, secretary of the Estuarine Fisherman’s Association who has been fishing the lakes for 26 years, and is a fifth generation fisherman stated that, at the moment he’s having somewhat of a purple patch which he puts down to the July floods.”

Now it would seem that almost certainly the increase in the catch of black bream on the previous years 37 tonnes was due to the netting of fish exiting the rivers in the July floods, and this is verified by the statements of the secretary of the Estuarine Fisherman's Association on ABC.

What is concerning about this catch is that these fish would have entered the rivers on their spawning run, so the catch of the commercial fishermen would have a profound effect on the spawning of black bream and the future availability of black bream. It should also be noted in the 2007/8 commercial catch of black bream in a year of floods, the tonnage of black bream caught rose from 49 tonnes in 2006/7 to 144 tonnes in the following flood year. The catch in 2010/11 rose from 37 tonnes to 53 tonnes, which was a much smaller increase, when compared to the 2007/8 flood influenced

catch. The question must arise as to whether the numbers of black bream have declined dramatically following the removal of breeding fish in 2007/8 floods and this is reflected in the latest statistics.

As recreational anglers we can only wonder at reasons for this change, as little research seems to be currently undertaken on either black bream or dusky flathead in the Gippsland Lakes.

Dusky Flathead

The commercial catch of dusky flathead has declined every year since 2005/6 when it was 48 tonnes: apart from the 2010/11 year when it rose from 16 tonnes in the previous year to 19 tonnes in the year of these statistics. I was informed by a former commercial fisherman that this is a result of the badly discoloured water caused by the floods, which, he suggested was an aid to the catch of dusky flathead. Anecdotal information from anglers indicates a most significant decline in the catch of dusky flathead in the Gippsland Lakes to a point where few recreational anglers are catching this species. This is very different to the situation a few years ago when one would see the lies of flathead in the sand off the beach area at Metung when bait gathering or prawning. Today the recreational bait gatherer sees little evidence of dusky flathead.

Other Species

Whilst luderick is not considered a prime commercial species the catch of this species has declined from 43 tonnes in 2007/8 to only 10 tonnes in 2010/11 and the Australian salmon catch was only 4 tonnes, however the catch of tailor in the lakes remains around 30 tonnes per annum. Given the increasing salinity of the Gippsland Lakes, it might have been thought that these migratory sea species would have had a higher tonnage, however again the floods of the period may have mitigated against any marked increase in these species. The total commercial catch of fish in the Gippsland Lakes excluding carp was 197 tonnes of which 72 tonnes were made up of dusky flathead and black bream. Its worth considering that the 53 tonnes of black bream in the 2010/11 catch equates to 53,000 one kilogram fish. These fish based on the previous year's prices would be valued at \$11.31 per kilo to the commercial fisherman or a total return of approximately \$599,000 for this species.

A General Thought

One can only speculate as to what the allocation of this catch to recreational anglers would achieve for tourism and business in the Gippsland Lakes area. It is estimated according to a 1997 survey by the Institute of Economic Development, that for every kilo of fish caught by a recreational angler, a return of \$200 on goods and services is generated mostly in a local community. Of course this figure would probably have doubled by today. Even based on the 1997 figure the commercial catch of black bream in 2010/11 if applied to the recreational sector would have provided an input in excess of \$10m to the local community.

Diarist Bob McNeill Reports on Lake Tyers Fishing



The period of Bob's report is from the 17th January 2012 until the 18th March. In that period Bob recorded 90 dusky flathead and 128 bream in his diary. Early in January Bob noted that whilst dusky flathead were plentiful their size was down on the previous months. For example on the 17th January Bob caught 7 dusky flathead, however their sizes varied from only 35cms to 40cms whilst on the 31st January Bob caught 14 flathead between 28 and 42 cms. Of the 90 dusky flathead recorded in the three month fishing period there were only three dusky flathead over 55cms.(56,62,62) This provides an indication of the reason for the concern of many anglers at the small number of dusky flathead over 55cms, and this reflects on the small number of breeding females which place the fishery at some risk.

I also found it interesting that the estuary now seems to be totally dependent on the two recreational species namely black bream and dusky flathead, and in the three months recorded the only other species landed was a 47cm foul hooked poddy mullet. (See later for the story of

another poddy mullet catch.)

I find it surprising at the lack of tailor being caught especially when using live mullet for bait as Bob does when fishing for flathead. Prior to the estuary opening I could almost always count on a couple of good sized tailor being

included in my bag, but like Bob I have hardly seen a tailor and certainly have not caught one in the estuary for almost two years.

In the latter half of the diary period after 21st February, Bob turned to targeting bream and this meant changing to prawn as his bait whilst at the same time using live mullet on some mornings. In the remainder of the diary period he caught 128 black bream with most being 29-33cms and recorded only 1 black bream over 35cms (37). It appeared that the main black bream catch was from one or two year classes.

Looking at Bob's diary and analysing the catch over the diary period always provides material that anglers can think over and look to reasons for the changes that inevitably take place in the estuary.

For this material we are grateful to Bob McNeill' for sharing his results of those early morning outings.



Gippsland Boating Coastal Action Plan

Gippsland Coastal Board's Draft Gippsland Boating Coastal Action Plan.

Of great concern to anglers is the statement in this document that the *"Bemm River high water jetty and the Wingan Inlet Jetty have been identified as having a limited future role. These facilities may continue to be used as kayak and canoe landings. However in the future they will not be used for the launching of boats from trailers."*

It would seem that the above is quite clear, however when questioned on ABC morning by Gerard Callinan, the chair of the Gippsland Coastal Board, Helen Martin stated that power boats to 20hp could still be used on Wingan Inlet, and the situation at Bemm River would be re-examined given that the Coastal Board is now aware that when the lake at Bemm River is high, the high water ramp and jetty provide the only access to the estuary.

The Boating Coastal Action Plan is a 90-page document drawn up by Ainley Projects for the Coastal Board, and the statement on Bemm River and Wingan Inlet are only a few lines; however the impact on recreational anglers and other users of these waters is quite profound.

I understand that a community meeting is taking place in Bemm River on Tuesday the 24th April on this matter. Angling Club President Don Cunningham takes the report to task for inaccuracies and the rating of the Bemm River boat ramp, however rather strangely when questioned as to whether a member of the Coastal Board would attend the meeting; Ms Martin doubted that the Board would be represented at the meeting in Bemm River. Mr Cunningham said, *"The recommendation was not in anyway reflective of community needs."*

In the Snowy River Mail 17th April local member for East Gippsland Tim Bull said he would welcome clarification that boats under 20hp could continue to use Wingan Inlet and he added, *"It's a popular recreational fishing location and one that I enjoy myself."*

Ms Martin is quoted in the Snowy River Mail as suggesting, *"the unpowered boats recommendation was for the jetty use alone. Powered boats which launch next to the jetty would still be permitted to use the waterway."*

In reality it would seem both issues will be sorted out and that the High Water ramp at the Bemm River will continue to be used, and under 20hp powered boating on Wingan Inlet will continue. Rather than suggesting a "misinterpretation of the wording" was responsible for the current concern, as the chair of the board is quoted in the Snowy Mail as saying, the Coastal Board should come out with a statement suggesting they had got it wrong and provide a clear clarification.

This has not been a good exercise for the Coastal Board and detracts from the report.

Anglers if you are concerned at this aspect of the Coastal Board Boating Action Plan **you have until 9th May to get your submission into the Board at PO Box 483 574 Main St Bairnsdale 3875**

A copy of the Gippsland Coastal Boating Action Plan may be obtained on www.gcb.vic.gov.au or Google the plan by name. Alternately phone 5152 0451 and ask for a copy of the report to be mailed to you. Strangely they don't have printed copies but I understand they will print a copy off on request.

(Quotes are from the Snowy River Mail's excellent report on this matter, and the report itself.)

Odd Bits and More

Mallacoota Meeting Discusses Dusky Flathead.



Readers will recall the report in the last issue of *Around the Jetties* on a meeting in Lakes Entrance where the problem of a seeming lack of large dusky flathead was discussed with fisheries scientist Simon Conran together with diary angler Bob McNeil and scientific angler John Harrison and a number of other Lake Tyers recreational anglers.

It was suggested at this meeting chaired by Director of Fisheries Management Travis Dowling, that a slot size should be introduced of 30cm minimum size limit with a 55cm maximum size limit for dusky flathead. This would protect the larger dusky flathead over 55cms who according to the NSW research of Gray and Barnes are all female fish. At a similar meeting held in Mallacoota on Tuesday April 3rd attended by 45 recreational anglers, the slot size proposal was accepted with strong support, as research had shown a similar decline in large dusky flathead as was being experienced in Lake Tyers.

Travis Dowling has informed this publication that he will be making a recommendation to the Minister that this suggestion from the recreational anglers of East Gippsland is accepted. If accepted he Director of Fisheries management has indicated that the slot size would be introduced for a trial period and the results assessed. Hopefully this united action by anglers and Fisheries Victoria working together to protect a premier recreational species for the future will be accepted.

It is worth remembering that this species basically extends from the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria to Mackay in Queensland.

Commercial Fishermen Not Affected by Change in Regulations

The Director of Fisheries Management has informed recreational anglers fishing the Gippsland Lakes that any change in regulations applied to dusky flathead will not apply to commercial fishermen in the Gippsland Lakes. I can imagine the feelings of recreational anglers who fish the Gippsland Lakes with this ruling, which would seem to indicate that savings made by recreational anglers applying the suggested changes will ultimately benefit the few commercial fishermen of the lakes. I would appeal to recreational anglers to see this regulation, if introduced as protecting dusky flathead in all waters other than the Gippsland Lakes and this is a big gain for recreational angling. Undoubtedly the commercial catch of dusky flathead in the Gippsland Lakes will continue to be monitored and if the current decline evident over the last five years continues the matter will be the subject of discussion and research.

I note there are no "Reel Scientists" providing information on dusky flathead in the Gippsland Lakes and this may be due to the now small recreational catch of this species in this water. Apart from the commercial statistics most information is anecdotal on this species in this water.

Government Commitment to Protect Spawning Fish at the Mouth of Rivers

There is still no indication as to when an announcement will be made by the Minister Peter Walsh as to what steps will be taken by the government to protect spawning fish at the mouths of rivers from commercial nets. Readers would be well aware that the commercial catch of black bream rose from 49 tonnes in 2006/7 to 144 tonnes in the following year due to a flood event that forced black bream from the rivers into waiting commercial nets. The effect of the massive catch of spawning fish has undoubtedly a marked effect on the stock of black bream in the Gippsland Lakes, and of course ten commercial fishermen make a financial killing at the expense of thousands of recreational anglers, many of whom are tourists, who come to the Gippsland Lakes for the fishing. The commitment to protect these fish was a firm commitment from the Minister published in this newsletter in Issue 42 January 2011.

The wording of that commitment was-

"The Coalition would protect spawning fish by introducing controls on the practice of commercial netting near the mouths of rivers, and expand the artificial reef program."

The expansion of the artificial reef program has been announced, however no statement has been made on the protection of spawning fish.

I found the suggestion of Bruce Robson at the Metung Bream tournament some two months ago and published in the *Bairnsdale Advertiser*, that there should be a three kilometre exclusion zone for commercial netting from the mouth of rivers to be one option to be considered, however in talking to Bruce he made the point that this suggestion was made as a starting point to encourage discussion of the matter. A number of anglers have brought to my attention that the cut on the Mitchell River should be protected as spawning fish enter and leave the Mitchell River by the cut. It would be hoped that this entrance is also covered by the commitment of the Government. Another well-known local recreational

angler made the point that the zone protecting the fish should not be a matter of metres from the River mouths but rather from readily identified points to ensure the problem of determining whether nets are inside or outside the exclusion zone could be effectively managed.

Perhaps a major concern of recreational anglers is that the steps to protect spawning fish should be in place before July when fish start to move up the rivers to spawn, remembering that with the lakes increasing salinity it would seem that almost all spawning of black bream now take place in the rivers.

Can You Help.

I recently had a very good angler who I have known for years and who fishes locally, come around one afternoon, and whilst sitting and yarning in my studio he raised this matter. On two occasions whilst fishing with a mate in Lake Tyers he out fished him by about 10 bream to 2 although the mate was a very good and experienced angler. On the first occasion the mate had been using copious quantities of sunscreen and on the other occasion he had a bad shoulder and had used a heat rub. On both occasions there was an indication of both products remaining on his hands. They both discussed this on the next trip and my informant said to his mate, "here let me bait up for you and see if it makes any difference." The result was that the catch was almost equally shared between the two anglers.

Apart from buying rubber gloves my friend has visions of spending much of his fishing time baiting his mate's rod. We did discuss using soft plastics but that was quickly discarded as both anglers were well over seventy and liked the sitting back with a cup of tea and waiting for a bite on bait, and had been fishing in this manner all their lives, rather than expending energy on non-stop casting.

Has any other reader experienced the same problem. How do you overcome this apart from not using such products. It's interesting and I am sure some readers would have experienced this or something similar. We would like to publish your thoughts on this matter, and how have you overcome the problem.

Its Never too Late to Learn,

Just before Easter I was in my boat on Lake Tyers and at about 10.00am I was heading slowly home just enjoying the last of the morning, when a young couple fishing close to the bank waved me over. I was surprised but the lass said, "if your after some flathead throw your line in here we are having a ball." I could see them thoroughly enjoying themselves and the young chap called out "we have both got our bag and are putting flathead back." I explained I had several nice flathead and 4 bream, which was more than enough, however I asked them out of interest what bait they were using. The young lass quickly responded, "we're using chicken strips which we soak over night in salt to harden them and they are a terrific bait." To prove her point even further she held up a luderick of about 2lbs and "even the luderick go for this bait." I congratulated the pair of them and thanked them for calling me over. As I headed off I thought to myself that I've been fishing for almost seventy years but this is the first time I have actually seen chicken strips being used successfully. I have been well aware of the use of rabbit and chicken in the Murray system, but using this bait for dusky flathead was new to me.

Estuary Perch in Lake Tyers

This publication has urged the stocking of estuary perch in Lake Tyers ever since the Management Plan of May 2007 rejected submissions from several sources for the stocking of this species. This publication has provided evidence of a large catch of this species in the early 1980's in Lake Tyers and also provided picture evidence of a fine estuary perch caught in Lake Tyers in 2009. Now Frank Milito, charter operator who recently has been assisting with commercial eel fishing in Lake Tyers has reported that about a dozen small estuary perch of 28-30cms were found in one of the eel nets and released recently. This surely adds to the case presented by the Association of Angling Clubs and the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club for stocking of this species in waters that were once the home to a substantial number of estuary perch, and which would seem to have the cover and snags so essential to this species. By the way Frank reported large numbers of luderick are being found and released from the eel nets. I saw this myself when fishing recently close to where an eel net was set. When retrieved I would guess there could have been up to 15 luderick of about 30cm in the net, which were released totally unharmed. Lake Tyers has large quantities of luderick, and they were a major catch of the commercial netters in this lake prior to 2003. As recreational anglers it seems we have not taken full advantage of this species. Talking luderick, several anglers in recent years have reported big catches of luderick when sand worms are moving in the water. One angler said the water boiled with luderick in the 2-4lb range that were feasting on sandworm. I have never seen this occurrence but have had numerous reports of this rare event occurring.



Diary Angler Assaulted by a Poddy Mullet

Our regular correspondent on Lake Tyers, Diary Angler Bob McNeill had a somewhat unnerving experience recently when

fishing Lake Tyers in the early morning. Bob was hauling in one of the anchor poles on his boat when suddenly he received a strong blow on his shoulder. He looked around and in his own words “I stopped what I was doing and looked around to find the cause of the blow. It was then I saw a big poddy mullet flapping about in the bottom of the boat.” The mullet was a large 56cms, which probably means it was over 4lbs. This would give anyone a strong blow on the back when flying through the air. Has any other reader had such an unusual and startling occurrence when fishing? Of course there was the possibility that Bob a wiry small chap could have been knocked overboard and drowned as a result of this assault. Now I wonder whether Fisheries Victoria has Diary Anglers covered by insurance against injury or even death as a result of assault by a poddy mullet. Now this is true so be careful if turning your back on a school of poddy mullet.

Kow Swamp to become a Major Murray Cod Fishery



The Minister Peter Walsh has recently announced (18th April) a release of 100,000 Murray cod fingerlings into Kow Swamp near Gunbower. This is the first release of this species into this water and it is planned to release 300,000 cod fingerlings into these waters over the next three years. “Mr Walsh said Fisheries Victoria believed Kow Swamp had tremendous potential as a quality native fishery. Mr Walsh said the Murray cod release was in addition to Kow Swamp’s annual fish stocking allocation of 30,000 Golden Perch.

This allocation according to the Minister, “makes Kow Swamp the most heavily stocked native fishery in the state, now receiving 36 fish per hectare- more than popular Lake Eildon in the North East.”

The project will see the construction of eight boat ramps on the Campaspe and Loddon rivers, Gunbower Creek, and Kow swamp to improve access.

The funding for this comes from Recreational fishing licences (\$799,000) the Recreational Fishing Initiative of the Government (\$260,000) and from other Government Agencies (\$310,000).

This is a major project in establishing a native fishery with a total \$1.3m expenditure. Recreational anglers across the state will be delighted if another native fishery develops similar to Lake Mulwala or Lake Eildon, and this will have a major impact on the economy of the area, remembering VRFish research by Ernst and Young has shown that every angler visiting a regional fishery contributes over \$200 a day to local communities.

THESE RAMPS ARE DANGEROUS

The Status of Boat Ramps.

In reading the **Gippsland Coastal Boat Action Plan 2012** I was surprised, no amazed, to find the Metung boating ramp graded **1**, when **1** is the best and **5** is the worst, and the North Arm ramp was rated **2**. Readers will recall the recent petition to get repair work undertaken on both those ramps as they were regarded as positively dangerous, and evidence was provided in this publication of that danger including a somewhat dramatic photo. The Johnsonville ramp was given the highest rating **1**; however, during this week I had discussions with a member of the committee for that ramp, who described that ramp as a disaster. Don Cunningham, President of the Bemm River Angling Club, questioned the rating of the Luderick Point ramp as **2** and stated, “The ramp was in appalling condition and in desperate need of a major upgrade. **You can only wonder at the value of a report that gets it so wrong. The following is the rating.**

1(Well above required condition) 2 (Above required condition) 3 (At required condition) 4 (Below required condition) 5 (Well below required condition)

More on this in the next issue.

Red Algal Bloom

The DSE announced on 3rd of April that, “there is currently a bloom of red marine plankton or dinoflagellate otherwise known as “Red Tide” creating reddish brown to mahogany murky water in parts of Lake Victoria and around Paynesville. The algae do not affect human health on contact with the affected water, but the public is advised to avoid areas of discoloured water. The DSE and Department of Health are monitoring this algal situation.”

DSE Information

Next Issue of Around the Jetties

The next issue of Around the Jetties will be the May Issue and we aim at ten issues per year.

Contributions- Your contributions to this angling newsletter are most welcome and we look forward to publishing your items of interest. In this issue, a number of interesting contributed items are included and they certainly add to the interest of the publication.

Readers- Don't forget you may get a friend or an interested angler onto the mailing list for Around the Jetties by simply sending us an email with details of the person you are nominating and his email address or a letter with details of a mailing address. And of course if you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, tell us and we will remove you from the mailing list

**Good Health and good fishing
Lynton Barr**