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# **Around the Jetties**

## **June 2012**

### **Issue No 58**

#### **An Anglers Newsletter**

“Fishermen are born honest, but they get over it”  
Ed Zern “How to tell fish from Fishermen (1947)”

#### **Editorial**

I never cease to be amazed at this great sport and the added interest of attempting to gain an understanding of our fish species. I have had great respect for the recreational anglers who took part in the tagging of our species under the banner of VICTAG, and I have been disappointed to see the almost total decline of this organisation. Over 70,000 fish were tagged by recreational anglers who believed in the work they were doing, and I often looked at the dedication of anglers such as the late Peter Spehrs, who devoted themselves to the tagging of fish. He alone tagged over 5,000 including one black bream tagged in Lake Tyers 2/12/2006 and caught again 783 days later on the 23/01/09 in the Marlo estuary at the mouth of the Snowy. It had grown 30mm in that time and provided the only confirmed movement of a black bream between estuaries.

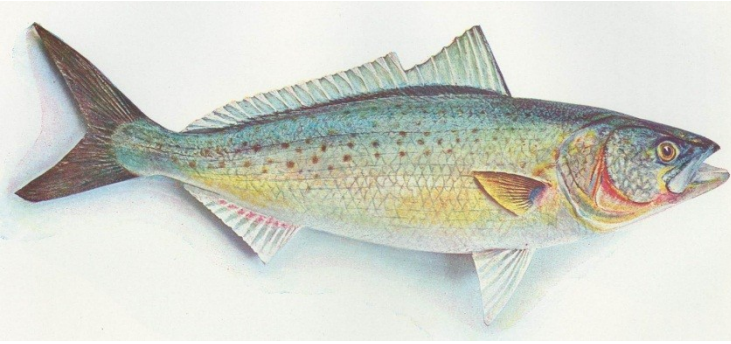
Tagging is currently suspended due to a lack of funding and management resources, both minimal requirements. (Records of reported recaptures are being maintained.) I am sure there are recreational anglers who would still give their time freely to continuing tagging if VICTAG could get a small amount of financial support and a little help with managing the program. It was seen by those who gave their time as contributing to fisheries research and at the same time involving recreational anglers.

Currently research is taking place on the movement of snapper in Port Phillip Bay by Fisheries Victoria using transmitters, however at the same time some remarkable complimentary information is available from VICTAG records. Just to quote one example a 290mm snapper tagged off Narrawong near Portland by Tony Jones (11/1/01) was recaptured on the (27/01/06) off Kingston SA with a reported length of 480mm. This fish was at liberty for 1,841 days and had travelled 264kms. Another snapper tagged by Tony Jones off Portland was recaptured in Port Phillip Bay after being 3,619 days at large and it had grown from 260mm to 460mm in that time.

This information surely has to assist research on any species, but even if it doesn't, it provides a wonderful source of information and increases the understanding of recreational anglers of our major species, and this is worth a great deal for a very small investment.

[This information based on a document Tagging Facts by Bruce Robinson VICTAG Coordinator \(Feb 2011\)](#)

## Salmon Bonanza



At the end of May we decided to have five days in Merimbula as a bit of a break from our normal life. On the first morning we headed up to the Aquarium Wharf to sit in the sun, have a bit of a read and to watch any fishing activity from the hopefuls fishing from the wharf. I wandered out on the structure and was taken by three young chaps who had caught four lovely salmon around the 3lb mark and two bonito of the same size.

They were catching small mackerel and using

them alive under a float, and between catching bait, servicing their bait rod and casting a silver lure these lads were flat out, and enjoying their mornings fishing. Back in the car I settled down, and suddenly became aware of more frenetic activity on the wharf. I headed back to see what was going on. Looking down into the water I suddenly saw the reason for the activity. The area around the wharf and as far as I could see was a mass of flashing bodies of large salmon. It was a massive shoal, and a couple of the lads immediately had hook ups with salmon in excess of 3lb. Another young chap had a bream rod and cast out a little vibe lure, which was immediately taken by a large salmon. He had a great tussle but was never going to lift the fish the 20feet or so to the wharf. It was a great morning that we thoroughly enjoyed, and were amazed at the enormous school of large salmon.

A couple of days later I surf fished the North Tura Beach for an hour or so, which is a quite delightful spot with good access for the surf fisherman. I landed a salmon of around 3-4lb on blue bait, and had several other fish on and some good bites. Apart from my fishing I was amazed to see a number of salmon leaping from the water at the top of waves. I have surf fished for well over 50 years and have never seen this occurrence.

The following afternoon I fished for an hour and a half on the rising tide at the same spot and caught a good 5lb salmon. On this occasion there were another 5 surf fishermen on the beach when I arrived and they were still fishing as I left. Talking to an old chap on the beach he said the salmon fishing had improved as the commercial netting of salmon in this area had decreased in recent years, and this had meant an increase of angler tourists in the winter months. I had noticed a marked decrease in the number of fishing trawlers at the Eden wharf the previous day. I was also surprised at a bag limit of 5 salmon being part of the NSW fishing regulations, although there is no minimum size limit. In Victoria the bag limit is 20 salmon with no minimum size limit.

## Recreational Salmon Fishing on the 90 Mile beach

Coming home as we drove through Lakes Entrance I was thinking of the local boat (the Maasbanker) that netted the beaches almost daily weather permitting for salmon and pilchards, and I recalled the request from several anglers at the recent Round Table discussion between recreational anglers and Fisheries Victoria on this very subject.

The question asked of Fisheries Victoria was could an exclusion zone to protect recreational salmon fishing on some beaches be introduced?

This seems a reasonable approach to sharing a resource, and given that both salmon and pilchards are transported by the truckload for cat food, it does seem that our priorities could well be examined. The beaches of East Gippsland could be the surf-fishing hub of Victoria, and advertised as such with positive benefits to tourism and local industry, but this will never happen whilst anglers watch the beaches being netted by this boat for the cat food industry.



Could an exclusion zone work, and what distance offshore would be necessary to protect the salmon beach fishery, whilst allowing netting of the species are questions that could be examined. As was said at the forum it is heartbreaking for anglers fishing the surf to see this boat within 100 metres of the shore netting whilst anglers attempt to catch a salmon and enjoy a days fishing. Salmon is a species that could support wonderful recreational fishing on the pristine beaches of East Gippsland.

### **A Note on Australian Salmon**

“ There are now generally accepted to be two different species of salmon. The eastern species extends from Tweed Heads to Port Phillip Bay, and including Tasmania, but is not common north of Sydney. The western species extends from Kalbarri in Western Australia around the south coast to Lakes Entrance in Victoria. The range and abundance is linked to commercial netting and current strength of tides on the east and west coast.”

Australian Fish Guide by Frank Prokop (2000)

“The Australian salmon is one of the finest small game fish in Victorian waters; it takes a lure or bait readily and when hooked it fights tenaciously; it moves with great speed, and frequently makes spectacular leaps from the water in its frantic efforts to throw the hook.”

Fish and Fisheries of Australia by T.C.Roughley (1953)

Both Prokop and Roughley regard Australian Salmon as a poor eating fish, however it is our experience that with careful cooking this species provides top eating. The following is a favourite salmon recipe used by Dawn, Try it the next time you catch an Australian salmon you may be very surprised at the result. Salmon barbecued fresh are also a delight, and they can be smoked for those summer salads. As can be seen we are fans of the eating quality of the versatile Australian Salmon



### **Fish patties.**

Fillet and debone the salmon, then remove the skin from the fillet.

Place in a food processor with chopped onion.

Spring onion gives colour but ordinary brown onion is fine. Puree.

Add Flavourings. Include as many or as few as you like.

Coriander leaves, Garlic, Fresh Basil leaves, chilli paste, fish sauce, fresh ginger, soy sauce

Mirim (rice wine) and Coconut milk (I leave out the coconut milk because of its high cholesterol value. I use sweet chilli sauce rather than hot chilli but that is a matter of taste preference)

Quantities depend on how much fish you are using; for half a kilo of prepared fillet, a dessertspoon of all the liquids and 1 teaspoon of garlic and ginger. Easy on the basil leaves as they have a dominating flavour and we do want to taste the fish.)

Blend in the processor until the mix is smooth and combined.

Dip a spoon (size depends on whether you want a main meal or an entry) in very hot water, almost boiling, and scoop out a fish ball. Continue until you have used all your mix.

Shallow or deep fry in hot oil only until brown then turn when Browned remove to a plate with kitchen paper to drain.

Alternatively, you may steam them or poach them in fish broth. A few minutes only. Do not overcook.

We serve the patties on a bed of stir-fry vegetables with Japanese noodles. Lovely.

You could change the flavourings to middle-eastern if that is your preference, using parsley, coriander, cumin, paprika and lemon juice.

I found this recipe in Stephanie Alexander's book 'The Cook's Companion' It makes a great meal.

I expect you could use Flathead too but I am wary as they have those two hidden bones in the fillet, not always easy to find, and there are many other ways to cook flathead.

## A Historical Note

In October 1890, the Bairnsdale Advertiser reported that William Carstairs had caught over 300 baskets of salmon from the beach, five miles west of the entrance. So large were the salmon catches that fishermen such as Carstairs began to use stake nets inside the lakes in an attempt to hold the fish and regulate supply to the market. By 1892, the system of penning salmon inside the lakes was widely used.

Highways of Water by Peter Synan (1989)

## Bass Stocking of the Nicholson River



### Background

East Gippsland Water proposed in its summer newsletter the decommissioning of its redundant dam on the Nicholson River “in a move that would help restore the river and the surrounding catchment area to a more natural state.”

With this in mind DPI/Fisheries Victoria called a meeting of interested parties (Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2011) to examine support for the possibility of stocking bass in the Nicholson River, should the decommissioning of the Nicholson Dam take place, which in turn would allow the movement of stocked bass into the upper waters of the river. It was actually proposed that 50,000 fingerlings should be introduced to the river in each of three years. Whilst the meeting gave universal support to the project, some reservations were expressed as to the effect of commercial netting on the stock of bass. Offsetting this concern was the Government commitment prior to the election to remove commercial netting from the mouth of rivers to protect spawning fish and their movement into the estuary to spawn. The recommendation to stock was to be taken to the Translocation Committee of Fisheries Victoria to examine the proposal and assess any risks.

It was pointed out that the stocking of the river if approved would not be immediate, as it could take three years to decommission the dam.

Frank McShane Executive Manager of Operations, East Gippsland Water at that time stated, “East Gippsland Water fully supports any initiative to restock the river with native fish and the benefits this brings to accelerating the restoration of the river to its natural state and biodiversity.” He added, “This is good news for anglers and tourists who visit the area, restoring the connectivity of the rivers upper catchment and the Lakes.”

**The announcement of the immediate stocking of the river was quite surprising given that it was considered the dam would not be fully decommissioned for three years.**

### The Announcement

Member for East Gippsland Tim Bull in announcing the stocking of the Nicholson River with bass said, “With the decommissioning of the Nicholson Dam, this move to stock around 33,000 fingerlings per year over the next three years is good news. This species is a fine recreational sports fish and this will boost tourism. Research shows they should be at a catch size within 2-3 years.” This follows 15,000 bass being stocked in the Mitchell River in 2011. Mr Bull said it had been raised with him in the past whether it was worth stocking fish for recreational purposes in a system where commercial netting existed. “My view is that absolutely it is worth it. Any catch rates will be monitored and I would expect some may be caught, but this will be recorded for consideration”

The above information was taken from “The News” of Wednesday May 23<sup>rd</sup>.2012

### Some Thoughts on the Stocking

This stocking of bass is going to put additional pressure on the Government given the commitment that “**The Coalition would protect spawning fish by introducing controls on the practice of commercial netting near the mouths of river.**” Perhaps the facts regarding the movement of bass now need to be considered.

“Australian bass migrate into estuaries during winter (June to August) to breed at water temperatures of 14-16 degrees. Their eggs and sperm do not survive in fresh water. Present evidence suggests that salinities of at least 14parts per thousand are needed for successful spawning. Usually bass start migrating from mid June. The return of adults to fresh water occurs over several months from August to November.”

A Guide to the Freshwater Fish of Victoria by Cadwallader and Backhouse (1983)

Now this means there will be movement of fish through river mouths on their way to estuaries between June and November. It should also be noted that once in saline water the males congregate in large shoals of several hundred fish, and it is in these circumstances they also become a target for commercial nets. I think recreational anglers who are financing this stocking through their licence fees will want more than the commercial catch **to be monitored and the commercial catch recorded for consideration as suggested by the local member**. There must be regulations placed on commercial netting to protect the bass being stocked into the local rivers given that 15,000 fingerlings have been stocked in the Mitchell River in 2011 and over the next three years 100,000 fingerlings will be stocked in the Nicholson River. In real terms over \$115,000 of recreational anglers licence fees have been allocated to this project, and whilst recreational anglers will wholeheartedly support the bass stocking, **protection of this species from commercial nets must be a priority and part of any planning**.

Of course, the movement of bass is only part of the problem facing the coalition if it intends to protect spawning fish. The estuary perch, which is regularly caught in the Mitchell River, also moves to saline waters to spawn and their movement seems to occur in Victoria according to Cadwallader and Backhouse in November and December in this part of the state, with a return in the January-February period.

It would be hoped that any regulation to protect spawning fish would also take into account protection of fish when events such as floods occur in the rivers, which in the past have seen heavy catches of black bream in commercial nets as black bream vacate the rivers to escape the fresh water. These fish are in the rivers to spawn. There is enough evidence to suggest this protection is urgent, if our fish stocks are to be protected from commercial netting.

\$100,000 was allocated from the **Recreational Grants Fund** in 2011/12 to stock the Nicholson River with bass.

#### **Estuary Perch**

As has been noted, estuary perch have a similar breeding pattern to Australian bass in that they move from the rivers into the estuaries to spawn and then return to the rivers. The Mitchell River has a population of estuary perch with a small population in other rivers that feed the Gippsland Lakes. The commercial catch of estuary perch in 2006/7 was 2 tonnes with a similar catch the following year. This may well illustrate the possible effect of commercial nets on stocked bass.



#### **Late News**

A spokesman for East Gippsland water has indicated that removal of the dam on the Nicholson River that would allow bass to move into the higher reaches of the river has not yet commenced and when commenced is still likely to take three years to complete the removal.



Research is taking place on the movement of sediment and the design of just how the dam will be removed. No money has even yet been allocated to this project, and it was suggested when the DSE resolves these issues, work may commence. Representatives of Fisheries have recently examined the dam site but no announcement has been made following the inspection.

Thanks to Frank McShane, Executive Manager of Operations East Gippsland Water, for the current photo of the Nicholson Dam, and any reader examining this photo would realize that no bass or any other species could move into the upper waters past this barrier. We now have the question, which is yet to be answered, "Will the stocking of bass in the Nicholson River proceed, or will the stocking be held over for the three years the dam removal is expected to take?"

## More on Bass Stocking

The following appeared in Issue 30 December 2009 and indicates that a considerable stocking of bass had taken place in the Snowy River

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

These fish were purchased from the Narooma Hatchery, and I understand the fish being stocked in the Nicholson were also to be purchased from this source.



This publication reported on attempts to breed bass in the TAFE facility at Bullock Island. Now this attempt was successful and I visited the facility and saw around 50,000 hatched bass. Unfortunately, these fish died and the cause was put down to water problems. A second attempt again was also initially successful but overnight both the hatched fish and the brood stock died, and again it was suggested water quality was responsible for the failure.

The TAFE facility has twenty large tanks, each capable of holding 50,000 fingerlings and at the moment this facility is not used and is falling into disrepair. It does seem a shame that such a valuable facility is not used, and may not be used again.

## Odd Bits and More

### Stocking of Black Bream

The following is taken from Issue 31 January 2010 and given the bass stocking, it does seem to raise the possibility of stocking the Gippsland Lakes with black bream, if the problem of their removal in commercial nets can be resolved.

“On the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004 the Minister responsible for Fisheries, Mr Bob Cameron released 14,000 black bream fingerlings in the Gippsland Lakes. No further releases of black bream have taken place in Victoria, and I understand that Fisheries Victoria no longer has the capacity to breed fingerling black bream, having disposed of the brood stock of black bream.



Whilst this was probably just a photo shoot for the Minister of the day, it is difficult to deny the importance of considering restocking black bream into Gippsland waterways in the future remembering that for every kilogram of fish caught by recreational anglers there is expenditure in the community of around \$200.”

Readers may remember that since that time 30,000 black bream fingerlings were bred in the TAFE facility on Bullock Island in a TAFE course on fish breeding. At the conclusion of the course, the fingerlings were euthanized and the killing of these fingerlings was reported in this publication. This decision according to the Tafe executive director resulted from “unforeseen difficulties that affected water quality made it unlikely that the fish would survive. In accordance with the conditions of the permit, and animal ethics standards, these fish were humanely euthanized.” I understood that the brood stock was also destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

Whilst this publication deplores the destruction of these fingerlings it does acknowledge that black bream could be bred at a facility such as that at Bullock Island for release in the Gippsland Lakes. By the way, the Minister Peter Walsh did commit prior to the election to **“investigate opportunities to stock black bream and estuary perch in the Anglesea River, subject to the scientific review of the estuary.”** For Gippsland Lakes anglers, this commitment may provide evidence that a similar stocking of the Gippsland Lakes could be successful in the future.

## Tilapia

Since the last newsletter when this publication raised the issue of tilapia in the Murray system and a species of tilapia in the Hazelwood Pondage, I have had a contact from Fisheries Victoria with specific information on the status of the Tilapia in Victoria. Readers will recall that in the last edition concern was expressed in national papers at the spread of the Tilapia in the Murray system, and this publication provided specific information on this species. A Fisheries Victoria spokesperson has stated that the “Tilapia is a declared noxious fish in this state, and as a result specific regulations apply to the species.



Section 76 of the 1995 Fisheries Act prohibits a person from bringing into Victoria, taking, hatching, keeping, possessing, selling, transporting, putting into any container or releasing into protected waters any declared Noxious Aquatic Species, which includes Tilapia.”

Protected waters are defined in Section 4 of the 1995 Fisheries Act as Victorian waters and any aquarium or hatchery or any other waters in Victoria whether or not private property. This would include Hazelwood pondage.

This would seem to infer that Hazelwood Power is responsible for possessing and allowing a noxious fish to hatch in its pondage. The warm water pondage is also evidently home to many varieties of aquarium and goldfish, some of which could easily enter our river system and photos of these fish and the pondage are available on the Internet. I was informed that following the Queensland experience of this fish entering the Murray system Fisheries Victoria is concerned at the spread of the Tilapia. The Tilapia in the Hazelwood pondage according to Cadwallader and Backhouse in their book “A Guide to the Freshwater Fish of Victoria” is a species of Tilapia that will not tolerate the cooler water temperatures of Victoria. It is different to the Queensland species, but then it is a noxious species and with the recent spread of the German strain of carp from the Gippsland area in the late 1950’s, perhaps we need to be very careful in allowing Hazelwood Pondage to be the only water in Victoria to have this species.

Special thanks to Kylie Wohlt, Principal Policy Analyst Fisheries Victoria for her assistance with the 1995 Act and its relation to Tilapia in the Hazelwood Pondage.



## Gippsland Coastal Board Boating Action Plan 2012

I recently received a brief letter from the Gippsland Coastal Board acknowledging my submission on the recent much-criticized Boating Action Plan for 2012. This letter indicated that in due course the results of the plan would be published on the Coastal Board website. What I found disturbing was that this approach immediately means that those who responded to the plan but do not have access to the website would be left without knowing of the proposed changes. I had heard it stated previously that some of the problems with the original report were due to a lack of funds to carry out the necessary consultation. Here again it may be a lack of funds, however surely those who provided submissions should receive a copy of the proposed changes in hard copy.

The Coastal Board website states

“The Board is now considering how potential feedback to the second draft can be targeted towards specific issues detailed in the submission. Watch this space for announcements.”

This is somewhat difficult if you do not have access to the Internet, as is the situation of some of the older anglers who have responded to this Boating Action Plan.

The VRFish executive officer Christopher Collins and Board member Franz Grasser met with representatives of the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Board and released a statement that in part stated, “VRFish made it absolutely clear in our response to the draft plan that we were not supportive and that we urged the Gippsland Coastal Board to go back to the drawing Board. What stood out for us was that there was absolutely no acknowledgement that fishing and boating in the Gippsland region was growing at a fantastic rate.”

The VRFish submission pointed out that that recreational fishing contributed \$172.9m in tackle purchases alone to the Gippsland region, and this did not take into account, boat sales, accommodation, fuel and other expenses that recreational anglers outlay when they go fishing.

Are readers aware that a detailed report on boating ramps in Westernport and Port Phillip Bay was undertaken by VRFish in 2010 and this report provided recommendations on such basic matters as ramp slope, surface grip and drainage and safety controls? I must say the Boating Action Plan undertaken by Gippsland Lakes Coastal Board examining ramps and jetties in the Gippsland Region seems very insignificant and contributes little when compared with the work of VRFish on this issue. The VRFish report provides a standard of what such a report should provide to the community.

### **Commercial Licence Buyback?**

In Issue 55, I reported that at a special meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> February the Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria, Anthony Hurst gave indications that there had been a request from some of the Gippsland Lakes commercial fishermen for the option of a buyback to be again placed on the table for their consideration. I reported in the same issue that local member Tim Bull provided the following statement.

[“Through my office there have been approaches to have a voluntary buyback of commercial licences put back on the table for consideration. I have advised the Minister of that and asked that it be considered.”](#)

Now that was in March 2012 and since that time, there has been no indication of the Ministers thinking on this matter.

I wonder at this delay for in the past the buyback of commercial licences have been cost neutral for the Government, as the funding for this procedure has been provided from recreational licences, and thus, recreational anglers meet the cost. The amount of the payment is specified in regulations based on the catch of the fisherman over several years, so the buyback does not involve individual negotiation. What might be a problem today, with almost \$2 million of licence receipts annually being used to fund Fisheries Officers, is that there may insufficient licence receipts to fund a buyback of commercial licences. Whatever the situation the buyback of commercial licences in the Gippsland Lakes would receive strong support from anglers, tourists and many environmentalists, and it is to be hoped an announcement will be made in the not too distant future.

### **Government Commitment on Protecting Spawning Fish.**

This commitment of the Government, to protect spawning fish at the mouth of rivers, as has been regularly commented on in this newsletter, is specific to the Gippsland Lakes where a number of rivers flow into the lakes and the area is currently netted by commercial fishermen within 400 metres of the mouth of rivers. This has long been a concern to recreational anglers in the Gippsland Lakes and a number of views of anglers have been published in this newsletter.

I was somewhat surprised to read in the VRFish monthly newsletter the executive officer reporting “We met with a member of the DPI’s Recreational Fishing Initiative team, responsible for the implementation of the coalition government’s election commitment of \$14.5m over four years. Our meeting focus was exploring the commitment to [‘Ensure commercial netting in the vicinity of river mouths does not interfere with spawning fish moving in and out of rivers during spawning season.’](#)”

This is a major issue for Gippsland Lakes recreational anglers, and what was an issue only associated with black bream now includes the protection of bass and estuary perch. What must also be included in any discussion is the practice of netting during flood events when commercial catches can drastically deplete fish stocks and impact on spawning fish.

I understand from the VRFish executive officer that DPI (Fisheries) will be bringing out a discussion paper that will be made available to anglers to ascertain their views on this important step to protect fish stocks in the Gippsland Lakes. I was informed this meeting was to look at this discussion paper. It will be important to ascertain how this discussion paper will be distributed to the Gippsland Lakes recreational anglers to access their views. I think it is important to remember that large numbers of anglers and tourists fish the Gippsland Lakes whilst only ten commercial fishermen net these waters, however these ten fishermen can each use up to 1300 metres of mesh net.

In 2007, the catch of black bream rose from 49 tonnes to 144 tonnes with a major flood event and returned to 36 tonnes the following year. This was the largest catch in six years being, 100 tonnes greater than any other year in this period, and could only be explained by the flood forcing spawning black bream from the rivers into commercial nets



## Lake Tyers Opens

On the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> of June Lake Tyers broke out naturally. This followed heavy rains that in the following days caused major floods and on that evening storm force conditions saw huge seas break into the lake. In the first 24 hours, the



lake seemed to drop very little, but then large waves were forcing water into the lake. The attached photos give an indication of the conditions that opened the lake.

Being a natural opening, it is likely that the lake will remain open longer and this in turn should mean a much larger influx of sea species than occurred with the last opening.

5th June -Ferocious seas and Froth in the car park near the Tavern blown by the high winds and photo on right was taken on the 10<sup>th</sup> when all had settled down again.



The opening will also mean that the Nowa Nowa launching ramp will become useable again after being under water for the last couple of months.

The lake last opened on the 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, and closed on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. The average length of time the lake has remained open from 1964 is 164 days. The Lake closed to the sea on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2011, which meant it was closed for 141 days to the current opening on the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> June. The big question is will this opening benefit the estuary with an influx of species such as tailor, snapper, gurnard and salmon

I have generally believed from previous experience that the estuary after opening takes a couple of weeks before reasonable fishing returns so I was most surprised to see top local angler Jim Crane and his wife cleaning a lovely bag of bream on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of June at the Lake Tyers ramp, a mere ten days after the opening. More on that in the future. When launching at No2 ramp be careful as the estuary is very low and on launching at low tide you have only about 18 inches of water under your boat.

In the next issue there will be an interview with bream angler Jim Crane, who is regarded as one of the great bream anglers, has a series of bream rods named after him.

## **Installation of Large Wood Structures in Local Rivers.**

2012/13 is the final year of a three-year program installing large wood structures in local rivers to enhance fish habitat. This work, carried out by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, is funded from the Recreational Fisheries Grant. In this year 60 single/ double log structures have been installed in the Nicholson River, and of course this will provide additional habitat for the stocking of the river with Australian bass. Attached photos are of the work being undertaken in the Nicholson River.



The East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority applies for Recreational Fishing Grants funding to undertake these projects and of course these funds come from the licence fees of recreational anglers. Other projects undertaken in this three-year program have been 30 double log structures on the Mitchell River silt jetties and 5 large root ball structures in Jones Bay, and 60 single/double log structures in the Tambo River. I found the large root ball structures in Jones Bay an interesting use of recreational licence funds given the level of commercial netting in this bay however; specific reasons for the location of these structures may exist. From the **Recreational Grants Fund** in 2010/11, \$215,781 was allocated to “improve Fish habitat in the Gippsland lakes tributaries through the installation of root balls and timber structures in the Mitchell, Nicholson and Tambo Rivers.”

Thanks to Becky Hemming Team Leader-Water Program East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority for the photos in this report.

## **An Interesting Catch in the Tambo River**

I had a note from John Spirason (7/5/2012) a local reader who regularly fishes the Tambo River with a report that fishing near Whelan's he caught a lovely 42cm whiting and asking was this a rare catch. This fish was caught prior to the rains and floods in the Tambo River. I have had one other report of a similar whiting caught at the cliffs below Johnsonville ramp, some months previously however it is a rare catch. Perhaps we may see more of this type of fish caught in the river system with the increasing salinity of the Gippsland Lakes. The following day above the highway bridge John caught and released a number of 20-26cm bream, but then he caught a 52cms dusky flathead followed by a 61cm fish. Both excellent flathead and this catch was also somewhat surprising, although some years ago I saw a couple of old chaps with several large dusky flathead above the cliffs on the Tambo. They said that they came from Melbourne every year in April and caught good flathead on whitebait. This was at a time that it was extremely rare to catch flathead in the river (some 10 years ago). John also reported that on the same day he landed a 29cm black bream and on cleaning he observed developed roe. This gives an indication of the start of the spawning run of black bream into our rivers. It is reports like John's that cause anglers to think about this wonderful sport.

## **Artificial Reefs**

In recent issues of Around the Jetties we have discussed the prospects of having artificial reefs installed in the Gippsland Lakes. In a publicity release on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March describing a “huge \$1million oceanic reef structure off the coast of Anglesea and Torquay, the first offshore reef in Victoria, the Minister Peter Walsh also stated that another eight additional reefs in addition to the three already deployed in port Phillip Bay would be constructed over the next four years using the Governments Fishing Initiative funding. He went onto say locations such as Gippsland Lakes, Westernport and Port Phillip Bay are being assessed. Many would suggest

there must be a strong case for the Gippsland Lakes to have artificial reefs installed and assessed given the current state of its fishery and the fact that it is the only estuarine system being assessed.

**Anthony Hurst Director of Fisheries Victoria on Artificial Reefs-**

“As always good science is the backbone of good policy. We’re now confident based on the results of the scientific assessment of the artificial reefs program in Port Phillip Bay, that they are environmentally friendly; they do produce great fishing opportunities for recreational fishers. Based on that work we can now go ahead quite confidently and design a program of building reefs across Victoria for the benefit of all fishers.”

Gippsland Lakes anglers look forward to working with Fisheries Victoria on locating sites for artificial reefs in the estuarine waters of the Gippsland Lakes.

I was somewhat surprised to see in recent Fisheries Newsletter 316 that \$162,000 had been allocated from Recreational Fishing Grants for the installation of recreational fishing reefs in the Kerang Lakes, however this will be interesting as it is the application of fishing reefs to native species in fresh water and these lakes have almost no timber structures.

I reported in the March issue that I had been informed that a meeting would be held in April at Lakes Entrance to discuss siting of artificial reefs in the Gippsland Lakes. No meeting has yet taken place as far as I am aware.

In 2010/11, \$1,070,000 was allocated from the **Recreational Fishing Grants Fund** to co-fund the deployment of eight fishing reefs in estuaries in Regional areas and the construction of one large offshore reef.

## **Some Brief Notes of Interest**

### **Welcome**

Around the Jetties welcomes the Richmond Angling Club to its readership. Richmond A.C is one of a number of Melbourne angling clubs taking this publication. An increasing number of clubs are now forwarding the newsletter to all members who are on the Internet. This can be done so easily with today’s technology.

### **Professor Barry Hart Awarded AO in Queens Birthday Honours**

Professor Hart was Chair of the Gippsland lakes Taskforce for a number of years, His citation read “For service to conservation and the environment, particularly in the areas of water quality, aquatic ecology, and catchment management and to education as an academic and researcher.”

The Gippsland Lakes Taskforce was recently disbanded and replaced by the Ministerial Gippsland Lakes Advisory Committee. For information and membership of this committee see Issue 56 March 2012.

This publication congratulates Prof. Hart on the award and thanks Prof. Hart for his leadership and work towards improving the Gippsland Lakes.

### **Estuary Perch**

In the March Issue we reported that the Lake Tyers Beach and the Gippsland Lakes Angling Clubs Association had both sought stocking of Lake Tyers with estuary perch. The following reply was received from Fisheries Victoria “estuary perch were not available for stocking and more information is required to understand any decline of stock numbers in this water.” This was a somewhat surprising response given this estuary had once had a substantial perch stock as evidenced by the early 80’s commercial catch of 1.5 tonnes and odd fish being caught today. What was even more surprising was to see in Fisheries Newsletter 316 that \$150,000 of **Recreational Fishing Grants Funds** had been allocated to “develop new estuary perch fisheries in southwest Victoria.” No information was provided as to where this stocking was to take place. Perhaps this is a further stocking of the problematic Lake Bolac.

### **The Floods in Brief.**

The rivers of East Gippsland are currently very muddy and high with an enormous amount of debris on the banks. In general it will take 2-3 weeks before recreational fishing resumes in the rivers.

Photo is the Tambo River below our home. The road is now open but river still loaded with silt and debris.

The Gippsland Lakes themselves are high and dirty with dirty water from the lakes colouring the sea for several



kilometres out to sea. Lake Tyers is very low however some bream are being caught, generally slow with an odd good “early” morning catch. The Marlo area has taken another battering and with tonnes of rubble around jetties and launching ramps it will be some time before reasonable fishing resumes. Don Cunningham informs me that fishing at the Bemm is slow but fish are being taken. In general dusky flathead fishing will be quiet until October. The area has taken a battering but it will recover quickly. This is in no way a comprehensive look at conditions but a rough guide for readers.



### Can You Help

Clive Blackwood of Johnsonville brought in this medal to show me. It is inscribed Victorian Anglers Club. We have been able to find an article on this club, but we would like to know does it still exist and does it still give out medals?

Clive’s medal has a different fish on it to the original first minted medal. We wonder if there were medals awarded in different categories. The original seems to be a bream and Clive’s is a trout. This medal has a number 185 on the back. Does anyone know if this was a membership number? The medal belonged to Clive’s father.

The Information below came from the Museum of Victoria Website.

## Victorian Anglers Club, Melbourne, Victoria

The Victorian Anglers Club was established in the nineteenth century. It aimed to protect fish in the Melbourne area, promote fellowship between anglers, particularly through a Club Room, facilitate the 'advancement and increased interest in the sport by prize contests', provide reliable information to members and reduce expenses such as tackle, bait and travel. The Club imported fishing equipment directly from England and sold it to members at 'a trifle over cost price'. Members paid an annual fee of one guinea, plus half a guinea to join.

In 1884 the patrons of the Club were landowner, stud breeder and philanthropist Sir William John Clarke and E.L. Cox, MP. The Club president was A.F. Rayroux. The committee met at least monthly, and an annual general meeting was held each February. New members were nominated and seconded by existing members. The Club Room was located at 57 Bourke St East, Melbourne. The Club banked through the Commercial Bank of Australia.



### Summary:

Australia		Victoria
c.	1900	(AD)
Mint:	not	recorded
Other Details: Victorian Anglers' Club medal. It has not been inscribed with a name, and therefore was probably not awarded. One of the aims of the Club, described in its rules issued in 1884, was to facilitate the 'advancement and increased interest in the sport by prize contests'. The Club also aimed to protect fish in the Melbourne area; promote fellowship between anglers - particularly through a Club Room; provide reliable information to members; and reduce expenses such as tackle, bait and travel. The Club imported fishing equipment directly from England and sold it to members at 'a trifle over cost price'. Members paid an annual fee of one guinea, plus half a guinea to join.		

### Next Issue of Around the Jetties

The next issue of Around the Jetties will be the July 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.

**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.

**Good Health and good fishing  
Lynton Barr**