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Around the Jetties

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An Anglers Newsletter

“The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive, but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope.”

John Buchan Author of the classic “The 39 Steps.”

Editorial

I have just read the front page of the Bairnsdale Advertiser Friday October 17th 2003 with its heading “**Bream Fishery Crisis,**” including the statement from the 2003 black bream assessment **stating, “Saturdays session was led by Mr Sandy Morrison from MAFFRI. A range of data was presented which supported the belief that the bream fishery had collapsed.”** Further **“it was stated at Saturday’s meeting the commercial catch of black bream had dropped from 154 tonnes in 2001/2 to 28 tonnes in 2003/4. This represents an 82% drop and is the smallest commercial catch of black bream since 1959.”** The 2005 black bream Stock Assessment showed no improvement and a total closure or spatial closures of the black bream fishery was discussed. This meeting was not attended by commercial fishermen and that was the last black bream stock assessment conducted, **however there is no evidence that the black bream fishery in the Gippsland Lakes has improved.** The question then arises how the Australian Conservation Fund and its scientific committee could get the situation so wrong as to **declare the black bream a sustainable species.** (See next item) The unknown factor in this decision is what evidence was provided by Fisheries Victoria to the scientific committee who made this decision. Dr Murray MacDonald did indicate in a letter “my role included providing information held by the Department on the monitoring, assessment, and management of fisheries for key Victorian seafood species including Gippsland lakes bream to help the independent Science Reference panel to make assessments and recommendations.” I would think recreational anglers would like to know the details of the monitoring, assessment, and management of black bream that was contributed by Fisheries Victoria to the Scientific Committee that would lead it to arrive at the decision that black bream was a sustainable commercial fishery.

Black Bream Commercial Fishery Sustainable?

I was surprised to read in the Lakes Post 27th June a heading of **Sustainable Seafood** and a report that, **“The Gippsland Lakes Black Bream Fishery recently received a third party sustainability assessment from the Australian Conservation Fund (ACF) under their sustainable Australian Seafood Assessment Program.”** The article went on to say “the fishery contributes substantially to the local economy and provides secure employment for many of the regions population.”

I was concerned at the black bream being classed as sustainable, so I contacted the Australian Conservation fund to find out how this determination had been arrived at, given that all the information I

had and after attending a number of Black Bream assessment days conducted by Fisheries Victoria all pointed to the black bream being under considerable threat.

I was informed this assessment had been arrived at after a Science Research Team liaised with Fisheries Victoria managers and commercial fishers to help gather and analyse the best available data to assist the Science Reference Panel make its decision.

Now I suppose that commercial fishers would have been represented by the Estuarine Fishermen's Association, given there are only ten commercial fishermen actually fishing for black bream in the Gippsland Lakes, and I was informed by Fisheries Victoria that Dr Murray MacDonald was appointed to provide information on the wild catch of black bream on behalf of fisheries managers. In a letter Dr MacDonald pointed out that whilst fisheries Victoria provided monitoring, assessment and management information on black bream in the Gippsland Lakes to the scientists engaged by the Australian Conservation Fund, they were not involved in the sustainability assessment and the rating of the Gippsland Lakes bream fishery.

An outline of the detailed criteria used in assessing sustainability was provided, by the Australian Conservation Foundation, but how black bream rated when applied to each criteria was not made available despite a number of communications to the Conservation Fund. The result is that **Black Bream in the Gippsland Lakes is classed as a sustainable seafood** by the **Australian Conservation Fund** and this status of black bream is publicised for the general public and obviously is a great support to the commercial fishery. Neither recreational anglers nor their Peak Body were approached.



Some Facts on Black Bream to Consider.

- 1.** The commercial catch of black bream has consistently declined eg 1983/4 **446tonnes** 2001/2 **154tonnes** 2002/3 **28tonnes**.
- 2.** Dr M. MacDonald in 1997 said, “in a study over the past two years over **1200 recreational anglers were interviewed and approximately 60% had not caught a fish.**”
- 3.** Controls were introduced in 1996 by Fisheries *Victoria* “**to protect the small remaining adult bream stocks so that sufficient reproductive capacity is maintained to ensure stock rebuilding occurs when conditions are more favourable.**”
Conditions have not changed The commercial catch at that time was 89 tonnes it averages 35 tonnes over the last decade.
- 4.** In the decade 1986-1996 commercial nets removed 1836 tonnes of black bream from the Gippsland Lakes with **an average of 183 tonnes per annum.**
The catch between 2002 and 2009 apart from the flood year of 2007 **averaged 35.3 tonnes per annum.**
- 5.** The 2010 Fisheries Victoria Black Bream Status Report said the commercial catch trend was “variable but **generally low since 2003.**” The commercial targeted effort trend was decreasing with the catch in that year 35 tonnes with a market value of just \$411,000.
- 6.** The above report stated, “**Victorian annual commercial bream catches declined significantly from 200-270 tonnes in the late 1980's to a low 42-43 tonnes in the 2000's.**
This trend is primarily a reflection of declining catches in the Gippsland Lakes”

7. “The absence of any strong year class since 1989 is likely to keep catches and catch rates in both commercial and recreational fisheries at or below current levels in the foreseeable future.”(Fisheries Victoria background Summary to 2005 black bream stock assessment.)

8. “In recent stock assessments (2001, 2004, 2004) it was evident that the commercial black bream fishery was at its lowest level in 30 years and the current fishery was based on two years of recruitment 1989 and 1995.”

Given the information above it is very hard to understand how the scientific committee provided information for the Australian Conservation Fund that could lead to a tick of approval for the black bream fishery being sustainable. I was also surprised at the Australian Conservation Fund placing the item in the local paper suggesting the lakes fishery with its ten licences “provides secure employment for many of the regions population.” I contacted the ACF on this matter and was informed that the Seafood Industry of Victoria asked could it release a media statement on sustainable black bream in the Gippsland Lakes and the ACF agreed. I looked up the membership of the Seafood Industry of Victoria and was surprised to find the President of the Estuarine Fishermen’s Association and the Secretary were both board members of the Seafood Industry Victoria. It was then not hard to understand the media release in the Lakes Entrance Post regarding sustainable black bream in the Gippsland Lakes.

I can readily understand commercial fishermen of the Gippsland Lakes, in their own interest, indicating the fishery was sustainable however, evidence would seem to indicate otherwise

The Encarta Dictionary definition of Sustainability is” *Maintaining ecological balance, exploiting natural resources without destroying the ecological balance of an area, and able to be maintained.*”

Interesting to consider this definition with regard to a commercial fishery that has declined from 200 tonnes per year to average now 35 tonnes per year with few guarantees for the future.



Interview with a Top Bream Angler

I recently had a yarn with well-known local recreational angler Jimmy Crane over a morning tea of scones and jam and cream and slices of nut loaf left for morning tea by Jenny his wife of 54 years.

Jimmy commenced fishing in this area some 75 years ago when he regularly fished the backwater of the Mitchell River. This was largely because it was within an easy bike ride of his home. Many know him as an angler who largely uses crab as his main bait. During our talk he said he uses other baits but always has a crab on one line as the crabs always produce the best fish. Quite often he just uses a crab claw; however he crushes the

claw with pliers before casting it out. He generally fishes from his 4.5m aluminium Quintrex boat, which he has had for over 30 years. A 70HP motor powers the boat and he has had some alterations done over the years on the boat, until the boat has its own profile and still looks great.

When Jimmy and Jenny married those fifty-four years ago Jenny had done little fishing, however she made up for that in the intervening years becoming an avid fisherwoman and capturing numerous Australian team Championships.

Both Jimmy and Jenny really enjoy competitive angling, and Jimmy was a member of the Estuary and Off Shore Victorian Team for many years competing in Victoria, NSW, and WA.



Last year Jimmy had a vision of being the oldest angler to win The Nicholson Angling Club’s Championship however he was beaten by a single kilogram, but then there is always another year. Jimmy

and Jenny have been members of the Nicholson Angling Club for 35 years and the Lakes Entrance Club for 25 years.

Rex Hunt at one stage featured Jimmy in one of his television fishing programs, where Jimmy described and provided hints on bait gathering and bream fishing. A few weeks ago I was talking to Jenny at the Lake Tyers Cleaning table where Jimmy was cleaning his mornings catch. I said to Jenny “you must have been out early,” to which she replied, “We were on the water before daylight, and got up about 4am.” When I suggested this was a very early start to the day to Jimmy, he explained that by the time they had breakfast and were organised it worked out well and allowed them to get on the water before the sun rose. He did say that bait gathering is a great part of fishing, but now Jenny does most of the catching of spider crab by getting out in waders and turning over rocks. I must say I think this is a fine example for angler’s wives, although I didn’t get a great hearing when I suggested this. Jimmy remembers some years ago working with Dr Jeremy Hindell and a group of other anglers in obtaining black bream specimens for research

Jimmy was approached by Jarvis Walker to design a bream rod given his long experience as a bream angler. He suggested a bream rod should have a short butt and he placed where the runners should be. He also suggested 3-wrap fibreglass blank for the rod. As a result the Jimmy Crane Signature rod came onto the market and has been available for a many years.

SIGNATURE



This quality range of rods has been developed in conjunction with well-known fishing authorities, Bill Copeland and Jimmie Crane. These rods feature quality fibreglass blanks, reinforced graphite wickets and Fuji Hardloy guides. So when you chase your next bag of Bream, Whiting, or Trout, enhance your outing, fish with the gear the pro's use!

MODEL	LENGTH	PCS	LINE KG	DESCRIPTION
COPELAND WHITING	8'9" (2.67m)	2	2-4	Light Estuary/Freshwater
COPELAND LIGHT	8'9" (2.67m)	2	1-4	Light Estuary/Freshwater
CRANE BREAM	8'0" (2.44m)	2	2-4	Light Estuary/Freshwater
CRANE LIGHT	8'0" (2.44m)	2	1-4	Light Estuary/Freshwater

I have used Jimmy Crane rods over the last decade and I really do like these sensitive rods. Jenny uses a slightly shorter rod of around 2.3m and Jimmy suggested that women anglers have more sensitive hands than men do do and the shorter rod is more suitable.

Jimmy was able to show me a new Jimmy Crane Signature rod that has just come onto the market. This is a 2.6m very light rod and almost feels like a fly rod. I would think this would be a beautiful rod for the bait angler. It has me thinking as to whether I need another rod. The rod retails for around \$49.



Jimmy made the observation that bream are much scarcer today and the decline in seagrass is most noticeable with many areas totally devoid of this covering, which provides food and protection for young fish. It was interesting that one of our most experienced anglers links seagrass to the health of the black bream population. We talked about the difficulty today of getting shrimp with the lack of seagrass and how a few years ago it was so easy for the average angler to spend ten minutes with a net in the weed and have enough bait for a couple of days.

Jimmy talked of the days past when he went to the Grange surf fishing and made the observation that netting of salmon close to the beaches has changed beach fishing. Jimmy holds the Australian Record for a Butterfly Mackerel caught in 1981 at Waratah Bay. This fish weighed just a fraction over 1kg.

A pleasant hour concluded, and I left hoping that when I am 82 years old I have the energy and enthusiasm of this couple

of anglers, but then that’s only five years distant.

First step I have to get myself up earlier, but I do love a warm bed on these cold mornings.

A Warning for Anglers.

Recently I had a phone call from a reader with a tale that should perhaps cause all boat owners when launching their boats to have a look at the condition of the bowline on their boat. This chap was launching at Lake Tyers just before daylight on a cold morning a week or so ago, prior to the boat leaving the trailer he tied the bow rope to the jetty. The boat came off the trailer with a jerk and our reader headed up to the boat parking area and parked his vehicle and trailer and started to head back to the ramp pontoon. On looking up he was stunned to see his boat had broken free and with the outgoing tide was starting to head towards the open lake entrance of its own accord.

This chap, who was 60+, dived into the water without a second thought still wearing his glasses and swam to the boat in the freezing water. He managed to climb aboard and return to the ramp. As quickly as possible he retrieved the boat and dripping water and shivering, started to get the tie downs in place. At this moment a chap wandering past for a morning stroll as the sun was raising, stopped and looked at our reader and asked, "Been fishing or just going." Our intrepid shivering reader replied, "been bloody fishing" and got into his vehicle turned the heating to the highest level and travelled the 20kms home.



Now the cause of this event was a wearing in the bowline and it just snapped after years of use with the pressure of the boat leaving the trailer. This event also sounds a warning on the strength of the outgoing tide.

Our reader still had his glasses on after his swim, however his mobile phone was destroyed by the water as were his cigarettes and lighter, but he did retrieve his boat even at the expense of risking his life in the freezing waters. When asked about taking this risk he stated, "What else could I do? My bloody boat could have ended up in Tasmania."

I have just changed my bowline as I broke the line some years ago and then spliced the two broken ends together. For me it's not worth the risk and perhaps there may be other readers who may wish to have a look at the state of their ropes. Our reader is okay after the event but was quite definite when he said he had never been so cold in his life.

(I am bound not to disclose his name after substantial threat should I do so.)

This is a true story and the event took place at No2 ramp Lake Tyers in the early hours of the morning and the boat was a 5m aluminium craft.

A Different Approach to Bream Fishing

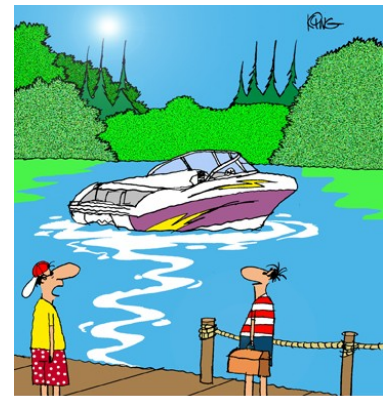
A week or two ago Dawn and I were having a three-day break in Merimbula and we drove the couple of kilometres to Pambula Inlet to sit in the sun and have a read. Shortly after arriving a chap walked up from the inlet to the car park carrying a light rod and bucket. As usual I like to have a yarn to anglers so I got out of the car and wandered across. He was on for a yarn and informed me he had caught seven black bream and kept two of 33-34cms. He had no hesitation in lifting the lid of the bucket and they were certainly nice fish but I had no doubt they were yellowfin bream. I suggested this but he was convinced they were black bream. I didn't argue, but rather asked, "What did you catch them on." With a wry grin he said, "guess." My answer was prawn or crab. He just smiled and removed from his bucket a partly opened plastic Cole's tray of Kangaroo filet.



He gave a laugh and said he uses nothing else, and at times has even taken a filet from road kills although he said this was illegal in NSW and could result in a substantial fine.

He told me that kangaroo was great bait at Wallagrah and he would never venture to that estuary without this bait. I found this surprising, as it's only a couple of issues ago that I reported on the young couple using chicken filet strips to catch dusky flathead in Lake Tyers.

Is this the new super bait?



"The last time we forgot to tie it down, I swam out to get it. It's your turn."

I do recall Roughly in that old standard book “*Fish and Fisheries of Australia*” writing “*the black bream will at times take any form of meat offered to it; at other times it can show a fastidiousness that is exasperating*”

This chap indicated he cut a piece of filet about the width and length of your little finger, and placed the hook in the very end of the bait. He fished with the bale on the reel open and a loose line. He finished by saying he hardly ever missed out on a fishmeal by using this bait. We parted with him saying to me “don’t pass this on as very few anglers would think of using kangaroo filet as bait.” Now you readers must keep this quiet but if you try kangaroo filet and have success do let me know.



The classification of the bream he had caught as black bream might well date from a publication like Roughly’s where he suggests the black bream includes (surf bream,

sea bream, yellowfin bream, and silver bream) and that the so called Southern bream is the black bream, but then this book was first published in 1953. It is fascinating that in this book an excellent plate (left) of the so called black bream has a distinct yellow in the ventral and anal fins and Roughly writes “*the southern bream can be distinguished from the black bream.... by the lack of the canary yellow colour so pronounced on the ventral and anal fins of the black bream.*”

I feel sure most Victorians will remain with our identification of the black bream and the yellowfin bream.

Bob McNeil’s Lake Tyers Diary Report June 15th to 15th July

Bob reports the fishing in this period was more difficult and could be described as typical winter fishing. The situation was made more difficult with the break out of Lake Tyers and the varying water depths. Bob mainly fished the Toorloo Arm and Blackfellows Arm. In this period Bob recorded 81 fish caught, with 66 being size, and makes the interesting comment that no other species was caught in this month. I found it quite remarkable reading this diary that even though we have had bitterly cold mornings Bob still commences fishing at 6.30am, although on a couple of mornings he did obviously sleep in and it was 6.30 am when he commenced and in the diary he notes “late start.” The best bream caught was



38cms whilst a large number of fish were in the size range of 28-32cms. According to Bob’s diary very little difference was made by the lake opening and four days after this event Bob caught 13 bream in the Toorloo Arm 5 of which were undersize. All of Bobs fishing involved prawn bait however he makes the interesting comment on several days he had good results using combined sandworm and prawn. Fishing near Devil’s hole in the Nowa Nowa Arm bob notes “definitely not my day, well up above Devil’s hole not catching much and losing a lot of bait and hooked a 6cm bream on a No2 hook.” Bob makes the interesting comment based on years of fishing Lake Tyers that he has experienced “incredible fishing for this time of the year” and adds “very, very cold.” On the 18th June, Bob did not get a size fish and he notes in the diary “its happened, not one size fish, what a blow-8-9 months since this happened.”

As always its great to read of the fishing of one of Lake Tyers veterans, but I never ceased to be amazed at being out fishing at 6.15 on some of the recent mornings.

Odd Bits and More

The Bass Question

In the last issue it was noted that on the 23rd May the Member for East Gippsland announced the stocking of the Nicholson River with bass stating that with “*decommissioning of the Nicholson Dam, this move to stock around 33,000 fingerlings per year over the next three years is good news.*” Now in the last issue of Around the Jetties I pointed out that we had been advised by East Gippsland Water that it could be three years before the dam was removed, and at this stage planning was taking place as to how the removal would be undertaken.

No information has been supplied to recreational anglers following this disclosure as to whether the stocking of bass could go ahead given they would not have access to the upper reaches of the river. I think it is important that anglers are kept informed, particularly given that \$100,000 was allocated to bass stocking from the **Recreational Fishing Grant Fund in 2011/12** and this fund is derived from anglers licence fees. We will be interested in the next statement on the stocking of bass in the Nicholson River and the question is really will the stocking go ahead now, or will it be three years before bass can be stocked in the Nicholson River. Can an answer be provided?

The Question of Recreational Fishing Reefs

It was announced in a media release from the Department of Primary Industries on the 27th June, “*saltwater anglers will have better fishing in Port Phillip Bay when three new reefs are deployed later this year.*”

Fisheries Victoria Executive Director Anthony Hurst said, “*the reefs are funded by fishing licence fees and will improve opportunities for shore based anglers chasing popular species such as snapper and flathead*” as the reefs are within casting distance of Portarlington, Altona, and Frankston piers.

The three piers were selected in consultation with local angling groups and add to the success of the three reefs deployed for boat anglers in 2009. It was reported in the March issue of Around the Jetties that the cost of these three artificial reefs was \$400,000. It was also reported in Around the Jetties (March), and added to this on March



the 2nd the Hon. Peter Walsh the Minister responsible, announced the construction of a \$1m oceanic reef structure off the coast of Anglesea and Torquay. Mr Walsh went on to say “*this is a fantastic example of recreational fishing licence revenue being put straight back into projects that improve fishing in Victorian waters.*”

Now this is good news for Port Phillip Bay anglers, but the question arises again as to when consideration will be given to provide artificial fishing reefs for the Gippsland Lakes. **The funding of all these reefs is again from licence fees** contributed by all anglers but three reefs have been built in Port Phillip Bay and another three are to be deployed in the same waters plus a \$1m oceanic reef, yet the biggest estuary in Victoria and probably the most threatened fishing water, has not been involved in any discussion on the placement of artificial reefs, nor has it received any commitment for the establishment of artificial reefs. One could be excused for thinking that most of the recreational licence fees associated with artificial reefs are urban centred. I would hope in the next financial year that urgent consideration would be given to funding reefs in the Gippsland Lakes

Trout Stocking Delivers Good Results.

A media release on the 4th of July suggested, “*Victorian recreational fishers are enjoying the best trout fishing in 30 years thanks to the Victorian Governments extensive fish stocking program and the end of the drought.*” This is a very big claim by the Coalition Government; however what is true, is the fact that trout releases have been substantial after the recent prolonged drought. The media release reported that Mr Walsh, the responsible Minister said, “*as a result of more than a decade of drought, many lakes with high quality trout fisheries in central and west Victoria dried up, but when the rains arrived in the spring of 2010 many of them filled rapidly and came back to life.*” 187,000 trout were stocked in this area into formerly drought affected lakes and reservoirs. It was announced in this media release that 25,000 rainbow trout had been stocked into Lake Burrumbeet, including 10,000 on the day of the media release. The

growth rate experienced in Lake Bolac where 75gm trout released in late 2010 were being caught twelve months later weighing 3 kilograms was being experienced in other lakes including Lake Burrumbeet. (I still wonder at the release of 7,000 estuary perch fingerlings into Lake Bolac)

This drought recovery trout-stocking program **was funded from revenue derived from recreational anglers licence fees.**

Bluefin Tuna and Recreational Anglers

I was surprised to read that a survey conducted by the DPI estimated that last year's catch of southern bluefin tuna by recreational anglers operating from trailer boats off the southwest Victorian coast, to be around 19,700 fish equivalent to 240 tonnes of the species. A further 6,900 fish were caught and released. The Victorian Government is seeking assurances



from the Commonwealth that Victorian recreational anglers will continue to have access to this important fishery. (The Commonwealth controls waters over 5kms off the coast of Victoria.)

The economies of southwest towns such as Portland have become dependent on this recreational fishery with increasing numbers of charter operators and the hundreds of visiting anglers with their trailer boats visiting the town and bringing economic benefits to the entire community. This is a remarkable development of a fishery and demonstrates the value of recreational fishing to rural communities. Deloitte Access Economics is carrying out a study for the Glenelg Shire and the Coalition Government on the contribution made to Portland and the broader southwest economy by the recreational southern blue fin fishery. The funding of this survey was the **Recreational Fishing Grants Program** derived from anglers licence fees. A report on the Survey can be seen on the DPI/Fishing website and it is fascinating to see the growth of this fishery. The number of boat trips after tuna in the survey was 6,184 with 83% out of Portland and 99% of the anglers being Victorians.

Inland and Marine Waters in Lake Tyers.

This newsletter has sought publication of which waters are classed as inland and which are marine waters, for over 5 years, and so we were delighted when in the 2011/12 Fishing Guide a clear definition was provided accompanied by maps indicating where marine waters ended and inland waters began in areas such as Lake Tyers and the Merri and Yarra Rivers. In the Toorloo Arm of Lake Tyers the demarcation between marine and inland is clearly defined by the Highway Bridge, however the demarcation on the Nowa Nowa arm is extremely difficult to determine given that Boggy Creek and Ironstone Creek the demarcation points are unmarked and the actual creeks are almost impossible to identify. Fisheries indicated at a recent round table meeting that it would examine placing a notice on the bank of the arm for anglers to ascertain easily when they left marine waters and entered inland waters. This step together with the diagrams in the fishing guide will at last provide a conclusion to a matter that we first raised in 2002, and received a letter from Richard McLaughlin Director of Fisheries Victoria in October 2002 stating *"I have noted the potential confusion that could be generated by not clearly defining the above terms in the Guide. This matter will be rectified in futures editions."*

Anglers in 2002 were advised to read the 1995 Regulations to determine which waters were marine, and which were inland. When the notice is erected anglers will clearly understand where four rods may be used (marine waters) in the Nowa Nowa Arm, and where they will need to revert to two rods (inland waters) in the same arm of the estuary.

Shepherds Beaked Whale Washed Ashore at Marlo

Scientists from the Victorian Museum have spent three days at Marlo working on the remains of a rare beaked whale washed ashore. This is a deep-sea whale living in the open ocean, and diving to an amazing 300 metres. In the past remains of this species of whale has generally been found on New Zealand



beaches. Scientists believe that the whale washed ashore at Marlo is a first for Australia. This whale was thought to be about 50 years old and female and that it had died naturally prior to being washed ashore. This species of whale varies in length from 3-15 metres and are thought to live on squid diving to great depths to obtain this food. There are 11 species of beaked whales and George Shepherd, curator of the Wanganui Museum, first identified this species in 1933. He collected the specimen on the Wanganui beach and its skeleton remains in the Wanganui museum.

Because of the rarity and the fact that this species is seldom seen alive research has had to be carried out on the remains of stranded specimens. For this reason the Victorian museum scientists were most enthusiastic with this find, and the vital remains including skeleton was being taken back to the museum on Tuesday 10th July. There seems to be a great deal more to learn about these beaked whales given a pigmy beaked whale was discovered off South America in 1991

Source Gerard Hutching Beaked Whales The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand

Tidal River and Northern Sea Stars

Divers have removed 129 Northern Pacific Sea Stars from Tidal River estuary. Extensive searches in nearby estuaries, beaches and inlets have found no sign of the spread of Northern Sea Stars. Northern Pacific seastar females can produce 10-25 million eggs per year and from July to October larvae remain in the water column for up to 120 days providing a huge opportunity for the species to spread through the water movements along the coast.



It is a voracious predator feeding on a wide range of native animals and can have a major effect on native and commercially important shellfish that form part of the marine food chain. They directly compete with fish including snapper, which use native shellfish as a source of food.

Any sightings of suspected seastars outside Wilson Promontory National Park or Port Phillip Bay can be reported to the DSE on 136 186. The DSE recommends taking a photograph of the suspected seastar as well as providing a specific location.

Source Fish Fax 317 June 2012

Editor

All anglers should be aware of this danger and report any suspected sightings particularly in estuaries such as the Gippsland Lakes remembering our black bream also feed on crustaceans.

Netting at the Mouth of Rivers.

Now is the time that bream start to make their way up local rivers to spawn. It is a little sad that we still have no steps in place to protect these fish from commercial nets set within 400 metres of the mouth of rivers, and of course the Gippsland Lakes fish stocks suffer again. Last issue it was noted that VRFish representatives had met with the DPI to discuss some aspects of this Government commitment but neither the DPI or VRFish have provided any information to anglers generally, and particularly Gippsland Lakes anglers on the process to be taken to introduce this protection.

Macquarie Perch in Dartmouth

A recent study according to a DPI Media Release (July 12th) suggests the Macquarie perch fishery at Lake Dartmouth is being managed sustainably. DPI scientist Taylor Hunt said Lake Dartmouth was home to the largest self-sustaining population of Macquarie perch in Victoria, and was one of the few waters where this fish could be taken by recreational anglers.

The study indicated strong evidence of a decline in the Macquarie perch population from the mid 1980's, however the cause of this decline is unknown according to Taylor Hunt. The study suggested the impact of recreational fishing on the Macquarie perch population was very low, and the current size limit protects the perch from over-fishing. The report states, "This size limit ensures there are more than enough fish left in the lake to breed." The researchers are still to determine what has been the cause of the decline of numbers in Lake Dartmouth. The research into Macquarie perch was a collaborative effort between scientists from Fisheries Victoria, Arthur Rylah Institute and the University of Florida.

I found this very interesting given that in the late 1950's Macquarie perch migrated from Lake Eildon into the Jamieson River to spawn and an item in the Sun newspaper of the day reported that over a ton of Macquarie perch had been caught by dozens of anglers in the Jamieson swimming pool. At that time there

was no bag limit. Within a couple of years Macquarie perch no longer entered the Jamieson River and the stock of this wonderful species was totally depleted. In eight years fishing Lake Eildon in the sixties I caught one Macquarie perch of around 3lb. This is a sad episode in our recreational fishery and it makes the work on the Lake Dartmouth Macquarie perch all the more significant. Perhaps in the future this species might be returned to waters such as Lake Eildon where once they thrived.

Super Trawler off the Australian Coast



ABC News (July 9th) provided information on “a public meeting held in Devonport when over 400 people at a second protest meeting argued against allowing this massive trawler in Australian waters. A local spokesman for recreational anglers said the ship could decimate local fish stocks, of jack mackerel and redbait and this would have an effect on the food chain in the marine environment.”

Seafish Tasmania plans to use the 142-metre 9600 tonne ship the FV Margiris that is based in the Netherlands to catch 18,000 tonnes or 17.5m kilograms of redbait and jack mackerel in Commonwealth waters. This boat is twice as big as the biggest boat to ever fish in Australian waters. The ship will fish according to the Age newspaper (27th June) from waters off Queensland, the Bass Strait and Great Australian Bight. The fish being taken by this ship are the food of larger fish such as Tuna and Marlin according to recreational fishermen. The Commonwealth Minister for Fisheries Joe Ludwig has received many letters from national and state environment groups protesting at the quota of 18,000 tonnes allocated to the company bringing the Margiris to Australia. Currently Seafish Tasmania offers Jack mackerel in 20kg weight cartons for the commercial fishing bait industry, but hopes with the arrival of this ship “it is intended to be able to offer food grade product for human consumption.”

What I found particularly interesting was in the NSW “Wild Fisheries Research Program” the exploitation status of jack mackerel is listed as uncertain stating that, “a lack of assessment data has led to the status of the jack mackerel stock being classified as uncertain.

Letters and Comments

Regarding Salmon Fishing

From John Blain (17th June)

Dear Lynton

I congratulate you on your comments about your recent salmon fishing experience and alerting readers of the potential for our local beaches to become a surf-fishing hub for Victoria. I heartily endorse your comments.

I have heard it stated that the local professional outfit (the Maasbanker) that harvests salmon and pilchards predominantly for pet food is a significant local employer etc.etc.

This might be true, but should we become the surf fishing hub for Victoria, I believe the employment potential for all those local services providers that support people who travel to the region including accommodation, food, fishing, travel industries etc. would benefit the region many times that claimed by supporters of this one outfit. In any event, if this outfit was excluded from say 3km east of Lake Tyers beach through to 3kms west of the entrance at Lakes Entrance (approx 16kms) to 1km offshore, it would not prevent the continued operation of the outfit, there are after all 90 miles of Beach!

We have had a beach shack and been pseudo locals for close to 25 years and have often been on the beach chasing the illusive salmon only to be disheartened to see the big boat (often just past casting distance) go by netting what we are chasing. I have often thought, this tells those fishing that you are wasting your time and who would travel the distance to return.

I find your newsletter a great read and thank you for your continued efforts.

Kind regards

John Blain (Director) Ninox Solutions Pty Ltd.

Salmon Size Limits

From Barrie Crombie 22nd June

I enjoy your e-magazine but have to point out there is a 21cm minimum size limit for salmon in Victoria

Regards

Barrie Crombie

Editor

Barrie of course you are right, and I'm just surprised I haven't heard from a host of other anglers. The minimum size limit for salmon has been in place for at least a decade. Thanks Barrie

Old Photo of Interest

From Bob McNeill

This photo was accompanied by the following-“This is a photo of my father Bob McNeill published in the Bairnsdale Advertiser (mid-seventies I think) of a 7-8lbs carp caught in the cliff area of the Mitchell River Backwater. Thought it might be interesting.”



Editor

“The Boolara strain of European carp introduced in the early 1960's was responsible for the massive invasion of carp in natural waterways.” National Carp Summit 1995

This fish was caught only a decade after the release and spread of this species in our waterways.

Carp were reported at Renmark in the Murray system in 1970, and this photo provides evidence of the early spread of carp into the Gippsland Lakes and Rivers. The Boolara name comes from the original town of the Gippsland importer of the strain.

Victorian Anglers Club Medal

From Don Ellis Metropolitan Anglers Association

Lynton,

Nice to hear from you. Whilst I have no updated knowledge of the Victorian Anglers Club, I have some older colleagues who may be able to provide some information. Will follow up and advise accordingly

Regards

Don Ellis

Commonwealth Marine Parks

From Doug Tandberg (17th June)

Hi Lynton

After the bombshell dropped by the Govt. on marine parks last week, all fishers are in a flap as no one knows how it is going to affect them.

Do you know how it will affect the average recreational fisherman? Because I shore as hell don't. Fishing is Australia's number 1 sport and to hamstring a huge industry is stupidity at the least. Hope you can shed some light on a very confusing issue.

Regards

Doug Tandberg

Editor

I responded to Doug indicating that for the vast majority of anglers the proposed Commonwealth Marine Parks would not affect them as the Commonwealth Government only has control of waters outside a five-mile limit. Inside that 5-mile limit is a state responsibility and this is not generally affected apart from isolated cases. The current negotiations of State Fisheries with the Commonwealth, regarding the Eastern Bluefin fishery, are an interesting case in point. Any Commonwealth decision on this fishery could have a profound effect on recreational anglers fishing outside the 5-mile limit, but also a major effect on the economies of coastal communities such as Portland Fisheries Victoria have had ongoing talks with the Commonwealth on snapper fishing outside the 5-mile limit, and a lack of regulation outside the 5-mile limit can affect recreational fishing for this species and also affect communities such as Lakes Entrance. Full marks to Fisheries Victoria for acting on behalf of Victorian anglers. Thanks Doug for raising this issue. I am sure we will hear much more of this in the future.

Next Issue of Around the Jetties

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

Contributions- Your contributions thoughts and letters 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. We do not advertise but rely on readers talking to others.

Thanks To those readers of hard copy who have forwarded stamps. Your thoughtful assistance is greatly appreciated, as with the success of the publication the costs of production have greatly increased.

Good Health and good fishing
Lynton Barr